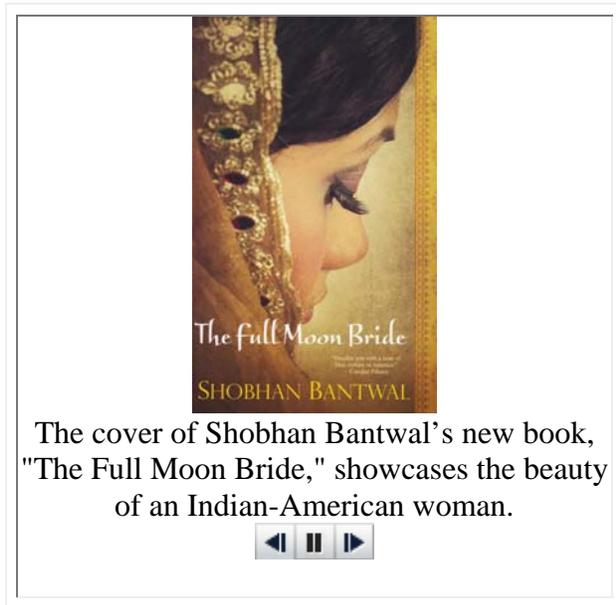


EAST WINDSOR: Area author pens fifth romantic novel
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By Jen Samuel, Managing Editor



The cover of Shobhan Bantwal's new book, "The Full Moon Bride," showcases the beauty of an Indian-American woman.

EAST WINDSOR — Author Shobhan Bantwal is a fan of Patidar Indo/Asian Supermarket.

"I love it. Every week, I'm there," she said Monday about the new grocery store at the Windsor Crossing Shopping Center on Route 130. "I was there yesterday."

Ms. Bantwal was a nine-year resident of East Windsor before she and her husband relocated to Robbinsville 26 years ago.

In addition to shopping at the Indian Grocery store and eating at the nearby restaurant Hot Peppers weekly, the Indian-born writer is set to release her fifth romantic novel, "The Full Moon Bride," this Tuesday

by Kensington Publishing Corporation in New York City.

"The Full Moon Bride" is a romantic tale about an arranged marriage featuring an Indian-American woman named Soorya Giri as the protagonist. She opts to pursue an arranged marriage only to discover her future husband, from Kansas, is a dashing aspiring playwright who is hoping she can finance his career.

It's women's fiction with romantic elements, said the author, and "also a social drama" highlighting Bollywood culture.

"I came to the United States 37 years as an arranged bride myself," Ms. Bantwal said.

Her writing has been chimed as "Bollywood in a book."

"The Full Moon Bride," written in first person from the perspective of the heroine, challenges the notion of love versus compatibility in marriage. Soorya, a lawyer who lives in New Jersey and works in New York City, ultimately must discover her own path between personal desire and social tradition.

"She must decide what matters most to her — not just in a husband, but in a family, a culture, and a life," according to a press release for "The Full Moon Bride."

In addition to penning five novels, Ms. Bantwal has been published in The Writer, India Abroad, Little India, India Currents and New Woman India.

The success of Ms. Bantwal's award-winning fiction has given her the opportunity to donate to women's charities, including a shelter for battered women.

Her first book, "The Dowry Bride," was released in 2007.

Ms. Bantwal held book-signing events twice at the Hickory Corner Library in East Windsor within the past two years.

Her next book signing and lecture begins 7 p.m. Aug. 2 at Barnes & Noble bookstore at Princeton Marketfair shopping center on Route 1 in West Windsor. She will be fielding questions and giving away a "dowry basket." It will be filled with items native to the Indian culture, including a sari, costume jewelry, wine, snacks and spices.

She embraced creative writing after turning 50.

"I find it very therapeutic," she explained.

Additionally, she saw an opportunity in the market to introduce Indian-American romance novels to readers. Her books are now displayed in bookstores alongside authors Nora Roberts and Danielle Steel.

She retires from her day job as a bureaucrat at the end of August.

To learn more, visit www.shobhanbantwal.com.