



## The Price of Being Ashley Rich

**Aashka Pandya**

Lekha Publishers

(112pp)

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*This warm, intelligent, and imaginative book is about what's really important for a happy, well-rounded life.*

In teen author Aashka Pandya's bright and sassy book, *The Price of Being Ashley Rich*, a young girl has everything money can buy, but she lacks the one thing her less wealthy friends have—a real family. In facing the possible collapse of her financially secure world, Ashley learns that some things are more important than money and that real friends always have your back.

Fifteen-year-old Ashley Rich can't imagine being without a butler, a chauffeur, a gardener, her Olympic-sized swimming pool, her own bedroom suite, and a group of loyal, loving friends with whom to enjoy it all. But Ashley is uneasy with the secrets surrounding her mother's death, and her father, the founder and CEO of Plumeria, a wildly successful natural cosmetics company, always puts his work first. Plumeria is facing possible bankruptcy due to an insurance company's failure to pay its claim, but an even greater problem arises when an inspection shows Plumeria's base ingredient to be tainted with toxic chemicals. When the person responsible for the report is found to be someone close to Ashley and her father, things spiral out of control, threatening to destroy all that her father has worked for.

Pandya's young adult novel is briskly paced and engaging, with rich character development; lively and colorful descriptions of people and places; natural, flowing dialogue; and moving, insightful emotional development. Moreover, the attitudes and actions of her teen characters often suggest an above average level of insight; it is the teens, rather than the adults, who are able to look beyond what appears to be a disaster, see the potential good in it, and work to bring about a positive result. Pandya also highlights the meaning of true friendship; as her characters face life's ups and downs, misunderstandings, and hurtful things said and done, they are still able to see the bigger picture, think of possible outcomes, and choose to act in favor of their relationships.

Some of the events in the story are surprising and even a bit unbelievable, as when teenagers are admitted into a mediation session dealing with the fate of an international company. Conflicting information is sometimes presented as well. Occasional grammatical errors are a slight distraction.

Aashka Pandya's *The Price of Being Ashley Rich* shows teens and adults learning and growing together as they face an impending catastrophe. It is a warm, intelligent, and imaginative book about what's really important for a happy, well-rounded life.

KRISTINE MORRIS (August 26, 2016)

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