



A Campaign of the
Oakland Literacy Coalition

Read Aloud Guide

Title: *King for a Day* by Rukhsana Khan, illustrated by Christiane Krömer

Best for: 3rd - 5th grades

Summary: This book is about the spring festival of Basant in Lahore, Pakistan. There are feasts, parties, and kite-flying battles. Malik, the main character, has built a small and fast kite he names Falcon. He battles against other children's kites, including the Bully next door, and wins each one. At the end of the day, Malik is king of the kite fighters, but the Bully reappears one more time. Malik is able to win the kite fight, and also help a neighbor - showing his strength and kindness.

Why we chose this book: In this book, Rukhsana Khan shares a simple story with a strong message: it's great to be great, but it's even better to be kind. The book also offers a glimpse into a spring festival called Basant, that crosses religious and cultural boundaries in Pakistan and India. (There is currently a ban on Basant kite flying in Pakistan due to the dangerous materials in the kite strings (they were often made with pieces of crushed glass or aluminum to make them stronger) .) We also like that Malik is shown as using a wheelchair, but this is not a focus of the story.

Notes: Use the pronunciation guide at the front of the book before reading to help with unfamiliar words.

Central themes: Middle East, Pakistan, non-religious holiday, special needs, sharing and giving, kindness and compassion

Introducing the book: You can begin by showing the cover, reading the title and author, and then saying something like this:

"What do you notice about the boy on the cover?" (He's in a wheelchair; he's flying a kite.)

"This book takes places in a place called Lahore, Pakistan. Has anyone here ever heard of Pakistan?"

"This book is about a young boy named Malik who flies kites. In fact, his whole town flies kites together on one day as a celebration. We're going to read about this kite-flying celebration together."

After Reading: Debrief with students

"Malik won the Goliath kite because he was able to catch it with his kite. Why do you think he gives it to the young girl?" (Because the Bully pushed her down. The Goliath kite was the Bully's kite so Malik gave the young girl the Bully's kite.)

"Malik feels like he's King for the day of Basant. What makes him like a King?" (He won all the kites, he's generous and shares with his siblings, he cares for the young girl.)

"In what ways are you like Malik - successful and also kind?"