

Wanting Mor Reading Guide



Questions and Ideas for Consideration

Awards: In what ways does *Wanting Mor* “contribute meaningfully to an understanding of the Middle East and its component societies and cultures,” which is described as the basis for winning the Middle East Book Award?

Cinderella: How does *Wanting Mor* fit with and depart from the stories of “Cinderella”? How does a realistic story change your perceptions of the tale?

Faith: Think about Jameela’s faith and spirituality in the story. How does this shape her character and offer a unique depiction of Islam?

Afghanistan: Given your previous knowledge and perceptions of Afghanistan, what possible ways might this book shape understanding of this country?

Culture: VOYA’s book review notes “Young readers’ eyes will be opened to life in another culture.” Why might this be important, and how does the book do so effectively/ineffectively? What factors complicate attempts to do so in this case?

America: How are Americans portrayed in *Wanting Mor*? Do you think this book is intended for an American audience, and if so, why offer this portrayal?

Extension Activity Possibilities

- Visit Rukhsana Khan’s website and learn a little about her through videos and other resources. Write about what you discover and how it changes your perception of the book.
- Look up and describe other books that have won the Middle East Book Award. Then research the authors of these books and write about what you can learn about children’s literature written about the Middle East.
- Do an internet search for “children” with various terms you associate with the Middle East. What do you discover about perceptions of children/childhood?
- Look up pictures to help you understand some of the Afghan or Muslim terminology or places and paste them in your daybook. Research a little about the history of Afghanistan and describe how this fits with the novel.
- How might you use or teach *Wanting Mor* or other books about the Middle East in your classroom? Brainstorm some lesson plan ideas, and write about limitations or considerations for doing so.
- Listen to Khan give an interview about her book at <http://www.cbc.ca/thenextchapter/2010/04/april-511-2010.html> and describe your reaction.

Resources and Critical Reading

“The Arab World in Children’s Books: Finding Palestine” by Elsa Marston*

“Radical Children’s Literature Now!” by Julia L. Mickenberg and Philip Nel*

Rukhsana Khan’s website :
<http://www.rukhsanakhan.com/index.html>

Middle East Children’s Book Award winners:
http://socialscience.tjc.edu/mkho/MEOC/middle_east_book_award.htm

*available through the Project Muse database

Background and Context

Rukhsana Khan was born in Lahore, Pakistan and immigrated to Canada with her family when she was three years old. She identifies herself as Pakistani, Canadian, and Muslim. *Wanting Mor*, which won the Middle East Book Award in 2009, is based on a true story about a girl in one of the orphanages Khan sponsors in Afghanistan through the royalties of her book *The Roses in My Carpets*.