



# Book of the Month

Presented by ADL's Education Department

**About the Book of the Month Parent/Family Discussion Guide:** This collection of featured books is from Books Matter: The Best Kid Lit on Bias, Diversity and Social Justice. The books teach about bias and prejudice, promote respect for diversity, encourage social action and reinforce themes addressed in education programs of [A World of Difference® Institute](#), ADL's international anti-bias education and diversity training provider. For parents, guardians and family members, reading the books listed on this site with your children and integrating the concepts into your interactions with them is an excellent way to help children grapple with and learn about these important principles.



## Red, White, and Whole

Rajani LaRocca (Author)

ISBN: 978-0063047426

Publisher: Quill Tree Books

Year Published: 2021

Age Range: 8-12

### Book Themes

People, Identity, Culture, Living in Two Worlds, Similarities and Differences, Heroes, Friendship, Death

### About the Book

Reha feels torn between two worlds: school, where she's the only Indian American student, and home, with her family's traditions and holidays. But Reha's parents don't understand why she's conflicted—they only notice when

Reha doesn't meet their strict expectations. Reha feels disconnected from her mother, or Amma, although their names are linked—Reha means “star” and Punam means “moon”—but they are a universe apart. Then Reha finds out that her Amma is sick. Really sick. Reha, who dreams of becoming a doctor even though she can't stomach the sight of blood, is determined to make her Amma well again. She'll be the perfect daughter if it means saving her Amma's life.

## Conversation Starters

Whether you read the book along with your child or your child reads it on their own and you discuss it later, use these open-ended questions to deepen the conversation. Remember not to judge their responses and to listen thoughtfully and engage in a conversation that helps them expand upon their understanding of the book and its themes.

- What happens in the book?
- How does Reha talk about having “two lives” and feeling “split in two”? What does this mean for Reha? Have you ever felt this way? How so?
- How are Reha and Rachel similar and in what ways are they different? Do you have friends with both similarities and differences? What is that like?
- Why is Reha hesitant to ask her parents if she can go to school dance? What’s their reaction and how does she feel about it?
- What do Reha and her friend Pete say about heroes and bravery? In what ways is Reha brave and a hero?
- Why do you think Reha doesn’t send the aerogramme she wrote to Amma? Have you ever written a letter you didn’t send? Why didn’t you send it?
- What happens when Reha finds out her mother is very sick with leukemia? How does she feel and what does she do?
- How did you feel when the book ended?
- What do you think is the overall message of the book?

## Talking Points

Below are some important considerations that will make this a learning opportunity for your child and your family.

### 1. People, Identity and Culture

Talk with your child about how Reha and her family identify in terms of their culture (she is South Asian, Indian, and Hindu). With your child, talk about what “culture” means. You can define culture as: the patterns of daily life that can be seen in language, arts, customs, holiday celebrations, food, religion, beliefs/values, communication style, music, clothing and more that a group of people share. Explain that these aspects of culture can (but not always) be handed down from one generation to the next through family, relatives and ancestors. Culture can also come from the place where your family and ancestors live or are from. Explain that culture also can include one’s region of the country, whether you live in a city, suburban or rural setting, one’s family traditions including how you celebrate holidays, religion, other identity categories, etc. Elicit what they learned from reading the book about Reha and her family’s culture (i.e., family celebrations, holidays, ways of communicating, expectations, clothing, food, etc.). Talk with your child about the aspects of culture that are important in your family. Explain how you would define your family’s culture(s), and together identify what foods, holidays, customs, and other parts of daily life are important to your family. Your family may connect with more than one culture or may not have a strong cultural identity, and that can also be discussed. Talk with your child about what they know and don’t know about their culture, what they may have found out about their culture from you, grandparents or other relatives, what more they want to know and the questions they have in order to learn more. Also emphasize the importance of learning about other people’s culture, which helps us feel more connected to others and part of our diverse world.

## 2. Between Two Worlds

Elicit from your child that in the book, we see that Reha struggles with the idea of “being between two worlds” and feeling “split in two.” Talk about the places and spaces where she feels that way including her Indian family and friends vs. her friends and life at school, what her parents want her future to be vs. what she wants it to be, their life in the U.S. vs. most of their family’s life in India. Talk with your child about times you may have felt this way, of being in two worlds. Then ask them if they have ever felt this way, asking follow up questions such as: What did it feel like in each world? What did it feel like to be between two worlds? What was challenging about it? Were your two worlds ever brought together? You can also share that while this feeling and experience may be uncomfortable or upsetting, it is also a feeling that many people share. It’s also part of having different parts of our identity; we sometimes have different people in our lives that represent those different parts of our identity and they do not always come together as one.

## 3. Who are our Heroes?

In the book, Reha and her friend Pete talk a lot about what makes someone a hero and Reha reflects on this concept on her own as well. Ask your child what they think it means to be a hero and what are the qualities of a hero. Remind them that Reha and Pete explained a hero as:

*Is brave, but not without fear.*  
*Says what they believe is right.*  
*Works to make the world better.*  
*Acts out of love for others.*

Ask your child to what extent they agree or disagree with this idea of being a hero and what examples in the book there are of people who are considered heroes and why. Explain that heroes can be historical or contemporary, famous or ordinary people, or fictional characters in a book, movie, TV show or video game. Elicit from them who their heroes are and why and share your own thoughts about what it means to be a hero as well as people or characters who you consider heroes. Together talk about Reha and Pete’s definition of hero and whether their explanation fits with who your and their heroes are.

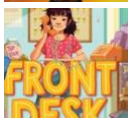
## Other Books You May Like



*Amina's Voice* by Hena Khan, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/aminas-voice](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/aminas-voice)



*Binny's Diwali* by Thrity Umrigar, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/binnys-diwali](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/binnys-diwali)



*Front Desk* by Kelly Yang, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/front-desk](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/front-desk)



*I Remember: Poems and Pictures of Heritage* by Lee Bennett Hopkins (Compiler), [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/i-remember-poems-and-pictures-of-heritage](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/childrens-literature/i-remember-poems-and-pictures-of-heritage)

## ADL Additional Resources

The following are curriculum and resources on people, identity and culture and people who are AAPI (Asian American Pacific Islander).

### Curriculum Resources

Diverse Books Matter, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/diverse-books-matter](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/diverse-books-matter).

Who Am I? Identity Poems, [www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/who-am-i-identity-poems](http://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/who-am-i-identity-poems).

### Websites

6 Ways to Be an Ally

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/6-ways-to-be-an-ally-en-espanol](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/6-ways-to-be-an-ally-en-espanol)

Some simple things a student can do to be an ally to targets of name-calling and bullying. (Also in Spanish.)

Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month Resources

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/asian-american-pacific-islander-aapi-heritage-month](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/asian-american-pacific-islander-aapi-heritage-month)

A collection of resources to use in school, communities and at home to help teach and commemorate the culture, traditions and history of Asian American and Pacific Islander people in the United States.

The Power of Poetry to Teach about Identity, Bias and Social Justice

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/the-power-of-poetry-to-teach-about-identity-bias-and](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/the-power-of-poetry-to-teach-about-identity-bias-and)

A collection of lesson plans and children's literature that use the reading and writing of poetry to teach about identity, diversity, bias and social justice.

Parent, Family and Caregiver Resources

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/parent-family-and-caregiver-resources](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/parent-family-and-caregiver-resources)

Strategies, tips, guiding principles and resources to help parents, family members and caregivers impart values and principles to the children in their lives.

The Question Corner: Early Childhood FAQs

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/question-corner](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/question-corner)

A collection of answers to frequently asked questions about anti-bias issues faced by early childhood professionals and family members interested in promoting respect for diversity among young children. See "[How Can I Help Children. Appreciate Diversity?](#)"

Table Talk: Family Conversations about Current Events

[www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk](http://www.adl.org/education/resources/tools-and-strategies/table-talk)

Provides the tools parents and family members need to engage their families in conversations about important news stories and other timely discussions about societal and world events. Includes discussion guides containing a topic summary, questions to start the conversation and dig deeper, ideas for taking action and additional resources.

### Children's Books

Below are links to lists of recommended anti-bias and multicultural books for the indicated category.

People, Identity & Culture: Immigrants, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid\[207\]=207](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid[207]=207)

People, Identity & Culture: Asian/Asian-American/South Asian/South-Asian American/Pacific Islander, [www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid\[203\]=203](http://www.adl.org/education-and-resources/resources-for-educators-parents-families/childrens-literature?tid[203]=203)