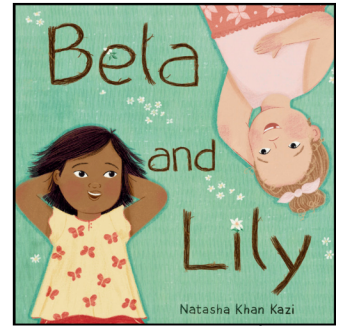


FRIENDSHIP CONVERSATIONS WITH *BELA AND LILY*

Discussion & Visual Literacy Guide for Librarians and Educators

When I wrote *Bela and Lily*, I tapped into the feelings of trying to make a friend when I didn't know English. Watching other kids carefully for clues and experiencing the little moments that build a friendship.

I hope *Bela and Lily* honors those joyful childhood moments while creating a space for richer classroom conversations about communication, belonging, and the language of kindness.



Before Reading

- How can you tell someone wants to be your friend?
- What helps people feel welcome?
- What are some ways people communicate without speaking?

Notice & Infer

- Facial expressions and body language
- Moments of hesitation or connection
- How characters communicate without words
- What the characters might be feeling

Discussion Invitations

- Why do misunderstandings happen even when kids want friendship?
- What moments in the story feel familiar to you?
- How does the friendship change over the story?

Grade Level Connections

K-1	friendship, emotions, visual storytelling
2-3	inferencing, empathy, communication
4-5	identity, belonging, perspective-taking

About Natasha

Natasha Khan Kazi writes and illustrates books for young readers, including *Moon's Ramadan*, *Lulu In the Spotlight*, and *Bela and Lily*. Born in Bangladesh and raised in Texas, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, she now lives in Redondo Beach, CA. Learn more at www.natashakhankazi.com.

Extend the Conversation

- Write, draw, or discuss a moment someone helped you feel included.
- Share a time when communication felt difficult.
- Create thought bubbles for a favorite illustration. What is the character thinking?
- Write, draw, or discuss ways people can show kindness without words.
- Compare how friendships can begin.

