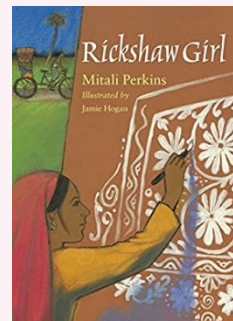




GIRL'S BOOK CLUB GUIDE

RICKSHAW GIRL By Mitali Perkins



"You're a girl. Girls stay home and help their mothers. Boys earn money and work with their fathers. That's just the way it is." – Saleem

GENRE

Children's Fiction

Novel

THEMES

Community

Poverty

Determination

Gender Roles

Determination: A firm decision to achieve a desired outcome.

CHARACTERS

Naima

Naima is a young girl with a gift for painting alpanas. She is creative and resourceful and doesn't mind breaking tradition to help her family in their time of need.

Saleem

Saleem is Naima's best friend. He rides rickshaws for his family to earn money, like most of the village boys.

Rashida

Rashida is Naima's sister and an encouraging presence in Naima's life.

STORYLINE

Naima lives in a small village in rural Bangladesh, where only boys are expected to work and earn money. Her father is a rickshaw driver, and her mother keeps the home, while Naima paints traditional alpanas and does chores. After discovering her family is struggling financially, Naima attempts to drive her father's rickshaw in hopes of earning money to help – but her plan goes terribly wrong, and she crashes the rickshaw, creating even more debt for the family. But Naima is resourceful and uses her painting gift to save the day.

This story is about overcoming the challenges of societal expectations, friendship, mistakes, and making amends.

1 QUESTION ONE

What did you find most inspirational about Naima's story?

2 QUESTION TWO

On page 21, Naima thinks, "If only I HAD been born a boy". How would Naima's life have been different if she was a boy?

3 QUESTION THREE

Naima cannot attend school because her family is poor and cannot afford to send her; instead, she remains home doing chores. How does this make you feel? Do you do any similar chores to Naima at your home?

4 QUESTION FOUR

Do you think Naima should have taken her father's rickshaw? Why or why not?

5 QUESTION FIVE

Naima's first attempt to help her family ends terribly. But she is determined to make things right and pay her debt. Have you ever tried to help but instead made things worse? What was your favourite thing about how the novel ended?
