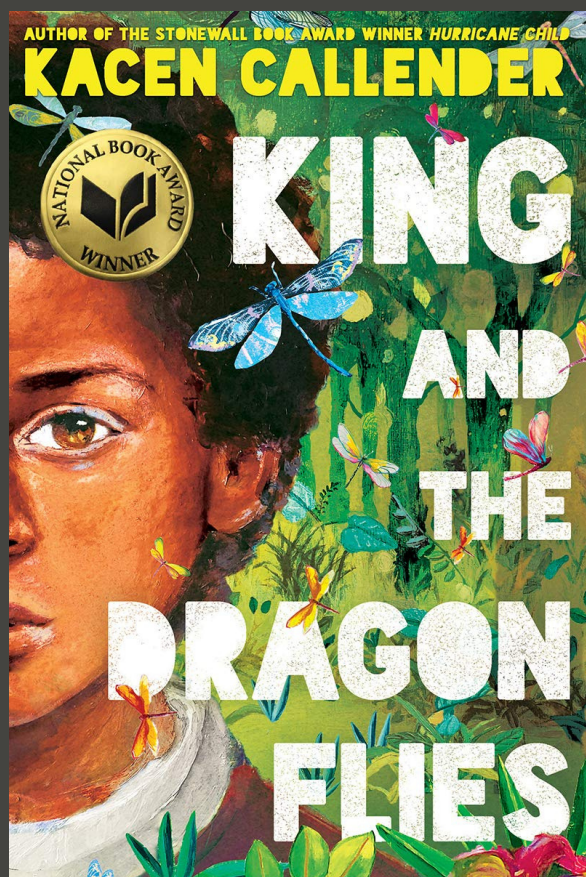


Community Matters Family Book Club

Discussion Guide

Monthly Book Pick:

King and the Dragonflies
by Kacen Callender



Season Dates and Times

Thursday, June 10th @ 6 pm CST

Thursday, July 8th @ 6 pm CST



This Month's Theme: Pride

This June we celebrate Pride and the LGBTIQ+ Community. Use this guide, along with Kacen Callender's novel *King and the Dragonflies* to explore concepts like loss, love, and self-discovery. Like any book club, please navigate these conversations with patience and kindness. Our intent is to better understand ourselves and the world around us.

Sincerely,
Sam, Jenny, Mary, Tiffany, Christina
The Community Matters Planning Team

JOHNSON COUNTY
KANSAS
Library



Photo of Author Kacen Callender

Conversation Starters

What surprised you about this book?

What was your favorite part?

King believes Khalid has turned into a dragonfly, and that he visits him in his dreams. Are there certain folklore/beliefs that you/your family has related to the passing of loved ones?

When Khalid was asleep words would come “free without worrying about what he’s supposed to sound like, how he’s supposed to act”. How do you think life would be different if we spent less time changing ourselves to act the way others expect us to act?

Themes

- Death
- Body Image
- Choosing friends
- Boundaries
- Self-awareness
- Communication
- Self-acceptance
- Therapy

Discussion Questions

1. This novel takes place in small-town Louisiana. What role does the setting play in the novel?
2. Compare the small town in Louisiana that King and Sandy are from to Mardi Gras. How is it different? Are there any things the same? Have you ever attended a big celebration like Mardi Gras?
3. What does King believe at the start of the novel? What does he believe at the end?

Discussion Questions: Continued...

4. King thinks “...saying you’re sorry for being wrong is like opening up your arms and letting yourself get hit in the face”. How do you feel when you have to admit you were wrong?

5. What did King say and do that helped him show other people who he was and still stay close to the people who cared about him?

6. Grief is a main theme in this novel. How does it affect the choices of King? How does it affect those around him?

7. One of the last things Khalid said to King was to stop being friends with Sandy because he might be gay. How does this affect King? Why would he want him to stop being friends with him?

8. Khalid was very philosophical, saying things like “There's no such thing as happiness. No such thing as sadness, or anger, or anything else...There's just you...That star inside you”. Where do you think that comes from?

9. When Sandy runs away, King doesn’t trust the Sheriff. Why?

10. King makes the decision to help Sandy when he finds him hiding in a tent. Why do you think he does this?

11. One of the lines in the novel often highlighted is: “Secrets are best kept hidden, because sometimes people aren’t ready to hear the truth. And that’s okay, King, he said, Because you don’t need other people to know the truth also. Just as long as you got that truth in you.” ... What do you think this means?

Discussion Questions: Continued...

12. Sandy and his brother had to learn to fish, cook and take care of themselves because their parents did not take care of them. What are some things you wish you knew how to do to take care of yourself?

13. King thinks Jasmine is beautiful and enjoys spending time with her so he feels confused about whether or not they should date. How do you know if you like someone as more than a friend?

14. King thinks if his Dad knows he is gay, his dad will stop loving him. How does King learn this is not true? Why is it important to communicate clearly with others even if we are afraid?

15. In the beginning of the book Khalid is convinced his brother has come back as a dragonfly, later on he says he sometimes pretends Khalid is still alive and he feels guilty when he tries not to think about him because it is painful. Have you ever lost someone and if so how did you handle the loss?

Additional Resources

- [King and the Dragonflies Resource Guide](#)
- [The Trevor Project](#)
- [Kansas City Center For Inclusion](#)
- [Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays \(KC/Overland Park Chapter\)](#)
- [Coney Island Mermaid Parade](#)



Art By Angie Quintanilla Coates