



## **Kali the Elephant Learns from**

## **Socrates the Philosopher**

Neera K. Badhwar

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*Kali the Elephant Learns from Socrates the Philosopher* by Neera K. Badhwar is a highly imaginative look at how children can

better understand and combat bullying from their peers. In this story, readers get a front row seat as Kali learns to appreciate what makes her special and unique on the playground. The concept of Philosophy may be ancient, but in reading about Socrates, children can walk away with surprisingly relevant lessons on how to relate to their peers who want to ostracize or heckle them for their differences.

In *Kali the Elephant Learns from Socrates the Philosopher*, we meet a sweet young elephant named Kali. She is a regular elephant who likes attending her school, called Elephant Elementary, until one day her classmates start to tease her. Her classmates pick on Kali's physical characteristics, laughing at her ears and proclaiming them to be too big, then poking fun at her trunk and her eyes!

Because Kali's classmates are laughing and having fun ganging up on her, no one notices how much it hurts her feelings. Kali returns home and expresses her frustrations to Mama Elephant. She is determined to change her appearance and comes up with several ideas to do so, with Mama Elephant encouraging her to think of different options. Kali searches through her comic books for ideas and finds one about Socrates, the philosopher. The more she learns about Socrates, the more confident she becomes that she has her solution. Can Kali make tomorrow a better day at school? The story shows how this research equips Kali to stand up for herself and also to help her classmates to appreciate things about themselves.

Badhwar is excellent at setting the stakes high for her main character, Kali, demonstrating the emotional toll and frustration that bullying can have on children. This book could be strengthened by another line editing pass, particularly on pages 5 and 6, to make the dialogue tags a little more clear.

This is obviously a topic that is very close to the author's heart, and her passion for the subject and empowering children shines through. Accompanied by Ady Branzei's great illustrations, *Kali the Elephant Learns from Socrates the Philosopher* by Neera K. Badhwar makes for a compelling story focusing on an age-old problem.