

# Reading for Meaning

**Welcome to the Reading for  
Meaning programme.**

**We hope that you will have fun  
reading stories and doing activities  
with learners.**

**Remember, nurturing and  
supporting a child is important  
for their physical, emotional and  
academic development.**



**Part of the Zero Dropout campaign working towards  
halving the rate of school dropout by 2030.**

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for Meaning

# King of the birds

STORY GUIDE

STORY  
22

## **EACH READER NEEDS...**

The story

Pens or pencils

Paper

# The Story



## **INTRODUCE THE STORY**

Nkwazi the Fish eagle is tired of Bhubesi ruling the birds. He calls on all the birds to choose their own king. With everyone wanting to be King, Nkwazi comes up with a smart way for the birds to choose their King. Who will be king?



## **READ THE STORY...**

Read the story aloud, with expression. Change your voice when different characters speak.

Pause briefly for commas, full stops etc. and between paragraphs.

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# King of the birds



Long ago when the world was new, Nkwazi, the great fish eagle, called all the birds together.

“As you know,” he said, “Bhubesi the lion is king of the beasts. But why should he speak for us birds? We need to choose our own king ... and as I am so majestic, I say it should be me!”

All the birds began to chirp and chatter until one voice rose above the others. “Nkwazi, you are majestic, it’s true,” said the giant eagle owl, Khova. “But my huge eyes see everything that happens. This makes me very wise – and a king really needs wisdom!”

Again the birds twittered loudly, until the kori bustard, Ngqithi spoke. “I think I should be king!” he said. “Kings need to be big and strong, and I am the largest bird of all.”

The birds began arguing about who should be king. Then a shrill voice suddenly rose above the din, “Excuse me! Excuse me!” It was tiny Ncedo, the Neddicky bird. Although the crowd laughed

at his cheekiness, they allowed him to speak – but none of them could believe it when he said that HE should be king!

“And what exactly would make you a good king?” asked Nkwazi, after they had all stopped laughing.

“Nothing really,” said Ncede, “but I should have as much chance as anyone else!”

“All right,” said Nkwazi, “let’s have a competition!” All the birds liked this idea. They agreed that on the first day after the full moon, when the sun touched the tip of the highest mountain peak, they would all take to the air to see who could fly the highest. The winner would become their king.

The big day arrived. The birds watched patiently as the sun rose. Though little Ncede was determined to prove he could be king, he knew his wings were too weak to fly very high.

So, just before the birds took off, he crept silently underneath Nkwazi's wing feathers. The fish eagle was so busy watching the sun that he didn't feel a thing.

The instant the sun touched the tip of the mountain, the birds rose high into the sky. Soon most of them grew tired, and only the fish eagle, the owl and the bustard were left in the race.

Khova was the first to drop out. As he sank to the earth, Nkwazi and Ngqithi flew up higher and higher ... but after five minutes, the heavy bustard could go no further. "Ah, Nkwazi," he called sadly as he swooped to the ground, "you win!"

"WHEEE-WHEEE-WHEEE!" shrieked the fish eagle triumphantly, gathering his last drop of strength and climbing a little higher. But suddenly he heard a taunting voice. "Not so fast, Nkwazi!" chirped Ncede, shooting out from under his wing and rising a little above him.

“You haven’t won yet!” Poor fish eagle! He was utterly exhausted, and could climb no further. With a groan he fell to the earth.

The birds were furious at Ncedede’s trickery. As he hit the ground, they rushed angrily at him – but before they could act, the quick little bird zipped into a deserted snake hole.

“Come out!” screeched the birds, “and get the prize you deserve!” But although they guarded the hole all night, Ncedede stayed exactly where he was.

“Let’s take turns to stand guard!” said Nkwazi in the morning. Khova agreed to take the first watch while the others went off to sleep or hunt. He waited for ages, but there was no sign of Ncedede. “My eyes are so strong,” he said to himself, “I only need one. I’ll close my right eye and use my left.” A while later he swapped, opening his right eye and closing his left. This went on for some time, until finally he forgot to

keep one of his eyes open and fell fast asleep.

This was just what Ncede had been waiting for! Off he flew, straight into the forest. “You fool!” shouted Nkwazi, who had seen Ncede disappearing just as he came to relieve Khova, “YOU FELL ASLEEP!”

Khova was so embarrassed that he decided to hunt by night and sleep by day so that the other birds wouldn't have a chance to tease him. Meanwhile, Ncede flitters about in the forest, never stopping long enough to be caught. And who became king? Well, the truth is that the birds were so upset with Ncede that they never chose a king!

*By Joanne Bloch (Nal'ibali)*

*Illustration by Tamsin Hinrichsen*



## WORD FOCUS

Ask the Readers to choose words that they find difficult and write them on a sheet of paper.

Ask them to use a dictionary or ask someone else at home what those words mean in their home language. Help them out if necessary.



## SECOND READING...

Once you've worked out the meaning of the words, read the story again out loud.

# Activities

## WORDS FROM WORDS

- 1** Ask the Readers to copy the table on the next page in their book.
- 2** For each letter, ask the Reader to think of an animal, a person's name and a kind of food that starts with that letter.
- 3** Readers can use words from any language. To start you off, some examples have been filled in. (Notice that there are two "l"s in 'King of Birds'. You don't have to complete that second row.)

Ready, steady, go!

# Words from words

LETTER

ANIMAL

NAME

FOOD

K	kangaroo		
I			Ice cream
N		Nomonde	
G			
O			
F			
B			
I	-	-	-
R			
D			
S			

# Ending

Praise the Readers for their participation.

Ask if they enjoyed the story, and what they liked best. Tell them you enjoyed it too.

Say goodbye, and say how much you look forward to seeing them next time.

**ZERO  
DROP/OUT**

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