

Alek Wek – Sudanese Superstar!

Did you know that there was a special person in town this week? Alek Wek is a very famous, very beautiful supermodel from Sudan who was in Melbourne as a part of Mercedes Fashion Week.

Alek is from the Dinka tribe and grew up in the Southern Sudanese village of Wau. When the war started, her family had to escape from the village, and they went to live in Khartoum. Alek's father became very sick and died, so when Alek was 14 her mother decided to send Alek and her sisters to England, where they would be safe.

Living as a refugee in England was hard for Alek. She had trouble learning English and she missed her mother, who was still in Sudan. Eventually her mother joined her, and so did some of her other siblings, but there are still members of her family that Alek doesn't see because she doesn't know where they are.



It was in London that Alek was spotted by a fashion agent and was soon on her way to success as a model. Alek is now 25 years old one of the hottest models in the world. She lives in New York and she has worked for many famous fashion designers including Gucci, Fendi and Chanel, and has appeared on the covers of magazines like Elle and Vogue. She has a role in a new movie about Sudan, starring Heath Ledger, called, 'Four Feathers.'

Alek has decided to use her fame and success to help people understand what is happening in Sudan. She is a member of the U.S. Committee for Refugees' Advisory Council. With this organization, she helps to raise awareness about the situation in Sudan, as well as the plight of refugees worldwide. She also designs bracelets which she sells to raise money for Sudanese refugees.

What Alek says:

About Beauty: I believe that true beauty comes from inside you and that always shows through. There isn't just one ideal image. Don't try and tell me that only one look is beautiful!

About Refugees: To be a refugee is to have no choice...no hope. You can't say what you want - you can't even get enough to eat, to keep you alive. People don't have the basic necessities of life. They have nothing. That's why I'm trying to give back to the people who are still living in Sudan. When you've been through something like this, you do not forget.

About Sudan: The other day I went to do a speech in a school and the kids asked if the war in Sudan made me angry, and I said, "If you spend a lot of time being angry you lose a lot of time." But what it does make me feel is that I can never forget where I came from and what is happening there. I want to go back to live there again some day. It's a beautiful country and it has amazing culture and history.

About helping people: I'd feel selfish if I didn't try to give back something. One of the most beautiful and positive things about being a model is that it has given me this voice, which is very powerful. The least thing I can try and do is help someone have a better life.

What do these words mean?

Escape _____ advisory _____

Plight _____ bracelet _____

What tribe is Alek, and where did she grow up?

Why did her mother send her to England?

Why was living in England hard for Alek?

What are two things that Alek has had success in doing?

What does Alek say about beauty? Do you agree or disagree – discuss with your tutor.

Why does she work so hard to help people understand what is happening in Sudan?

Imagine that you have to give a speech to some kids at a high school about your life. What would you say? Would you have any advice to give them?

If you want some photos of Alek to look at and cut out, come and see Anna Grace or Matthew.

Rove Live

Where did you go last Tuesday night with Matthew?

Who else went with you, and how did you get there?

What was the television studio like? Was it how you expected it to be?

Were there any rules that you had to follow in the studio, and who told you about them?

What do you think of Rove?

What else happened on the show that night?

If you could be a guest on any television show, which one would you like to be on, and why?