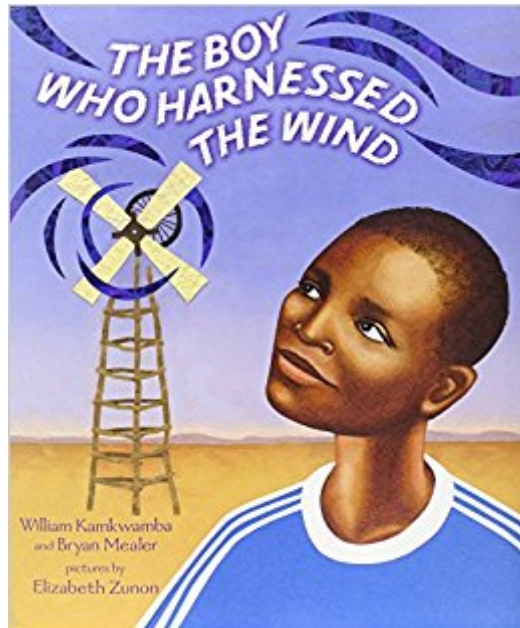


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# The Boy Who Harnessed The Wind: Picture Book Edition



## Synopsis

When fourteen-year-old William Kamkwamba's Malawi village was hit by a drought, everyone's crops began to fail. Without enough money for food, let alone school, William spent his days in the library . . . and figured out how to bring electricity to his village. Persevering against the odds, William built a functioning windmill out of junkyard scraps, and thus became the local hero who harnessed the wind. Lyrically told and gloriously illustrated, this story will inspire many as it shows how - even in the worst of times - a great idea and a lot of hard work can still rock the world.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 910L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Dial Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (January 19, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0803735111

ISBN-13: 978-0803735118

Product Dimensions: 9.4 x 0.3 x 11.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 194 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #75,348 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #10 in [Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > Science Studies > Electricity & Electronics](#) #51 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Africa](#) #55 in [Books > Children's Books > Science, Nature & How It Works > Experiments & Projects](#)

Age Range: 6 - 8 years

Grade Level: 1 - 3

## Customer Reviews

Gr 4-7 • This youth edition of the original adult book of the same title has been skillfully adapted for middle grade readers. Kamkwamba recounts a period from his childhood living in a small Malawi village. His family was poor, but they got by working as farmers. Kamkwamba was in elementary school, about to graduate to secondary school, when the drought and famine of the mid-2000s upset the patterns of local life. The author deftly describes the devastating effects upon his family: they ate insects, and rations were reduced to only a single mouthful daily. Many around them suffered even worse. Somehow, the family struggled through until the rains returned to nourish a new crop, but they couldn't afford Kamkwamba's school fees. He farmed with his father but also

discovered a local library, where he taught himself to engineer a windmill to draw water to irrigate the fields. Those around him thought he was crazy as he salvaged motor parts, a PVC pipe, his father's broken bicycle, and anything else he could find. Kamkwamba did successfully harness the wind, managing to light his family's house, charge community cell phones for a small income, and pump irrigation water. A school inspection team saw the windmill and brought educators to see the teen engineer, who was invited to speak at the African TED conference and given a scholarship. This is a fascinating, well-told account that will intrigue curious minds, even the somewhat anticlimactic closing chapters describing Kamkwamba's education. There is also a picture book version of this tale (Dial, 2012), making it of interest to all-school reading programs. An inspiring, incredible story. --Dorcas Hand, Annunciation Orthodox School, Houston, TX --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"[An] inspiring story of curiosity and ingenuity." -- Publishers Weekly "This book will appeal to adults eager to impart an uplifting Third World human-interest story, but it is also sure to resonate with children who will simply love the curiosity, resilience and resourcefulness of this doughty African youth." -- Wall Street Journal "A powerful, gorgeously illustrated children's picture book." -- The Boston Globe "This is a dynamic portrait of a young person whose connection to the land, concern for his community, and drive to solve problems offer an inspiring model." -- School Library Journal "Zunon illustrates handsomely, with contrasting cut-paper-collage details and broad, serene landscapes painted in visibly textured oils." -- Kirkus "This picture book in accessible free verse will draw kids who love to construct their own engineering gadgets." -- Booklist Cooperative Children's Book Center -- 2013 Best-of-the-year list. -- CCBC

I bought this for a great nephew, but read it myself first. Wonderful and inspiring, this would help young readers develop a feeling for what it's like to live in a country where most people are never far from disaster.

Wonderful, inspiring, educational. My 12 year old daughter just read this, was clearly so lit up and inspired. She found a non profit organization that raises money to help families in Africa build rain water tanks. Sadly every 21 seconds someone dies of a water contaminated illness and some have to walk 14 miles every single day for water. We can help. I'm so grateful to the author for the work he is doing and that he shared his story.

Great story, I purchased the book because he is married to a personal friend and know him a little bit! I wanted to understand his life and his story better! He is a great guy!

This was an interesting book, although I was not aware that it came in a young reader's version as well as the adult version - and I mistakenly ordered the wrong version and wondered why it was so highly recommended as literature. The writing has an authentic voice of William. His struggles are difficult to fathom - especially the issues regarding the famine and the great failings of the government. It is a miracle that William was even able to recreate his perilous journey through life through this book. This opened my eyes regarding the desperate condition of much of life in Africa. I appreciated the post script.

Themes/Discussion Topics: Self-empowerment, Ingenuity, Africa, English-Language Learning, Hunger, Famine, Education, Role of Libraries, Recycling Inventor William Kamkwamba and journalist Bryan Mealer collaborate with illustrator Elizabeth Zunon to masterfully share with the young reader the story of William's life in drought-ravaged Malawi and his ingenuity that inspired him to build a windmill that would illuminate his life and the lives of those around him. William was forced to drop out of school after a severe drought and famine struck Malawi. Instead of abandoning his education entirely, William started going to the local library in an effort to continue his education. He used the library books to teach himself how to build a windmill and dictionaries to learn English one word at a time. In order to build his windmill, William collected spare bicycle parts, a tractor fan, plastic pipes and other useful items that others had discarded as trash. Although the people in his village thought that he was crazy, he persisted and ultimately succeeded in building a windmill that provided enough electricity to power several light bulbs and two radios as well as provide water for his family. Kamkwamba and Mealer tell the story in a compelling manner that captures and maintains the young readers attention throughout the book. Issues such as poverty, famine and starvation are contrasted with concepts such as imagination, self-empowerment and education in way that a child can understand and appreciate without feeling overwhelmed. Zunon's intensely beautiful illustrations comprised of oil-painted backgrounds with carefully cut pieces of fabric, paper and old photographs create vibrant and textured collages that compliment the text and subtly mirror William's story by assembling old pieces of various materials to create a new whole that at times seem to have a story of their own to tell. Although the story told in the book culminates with the construction of the windmill, William's story does not end with that amazing accomplishment. An

update on the final pages about William's life after building the windmill is provided so that the young reader can be inspired by how William's hard work and determination paid off and continues to do so for William. I enjoyed reading *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* with my children and more importantly they benefitted from hearing William's story. The book provided us with an opportunity to discuss important issues like hunger, access to education and the transformative power of science and the imagination. As a parent, I remain appreciative of this heart-warming and thought-provoking book that inspired my children to ask "[c]ould we build a windmill?"

Great pictures! Great story. I loved the language in the book. Written with wonderful imagery and symbolism.

I read the adult version of William Kamkwamba's story when it was new, and I was floored. After reading his description of famine, I appreciated my food a lot more (and I don't think I'd been terribly unaware or careless about it before that). So, with my eight-year-old son being very particular about eating only the foods he was in the mood for, I wanted a way to make William's story accessible to him. I'm not sure yet if the one-meal-a-day thing really sank in, if it had the impact I'd like. But the story was worded very well, being honest without being scary--and William's interest in machines led my son to be drawn in right away, in spite of himself. He really enjoyed the story, and I think the illustrations are very accessible in the way they combine creative imagery and realism. Very well done, with exactly the right balance of simplicity and complexity. This book is worthy of the story it tells.

This is a book about courage and perseverance and the love of one's family and friends. These are the things that William possesses. He also has a curious mind that serves him well on his quest to fulfill his dream. Because of these possessions, he has the opportunity to experience the world and to see just how far his imagination and curiosity will take him. An amazing story.

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