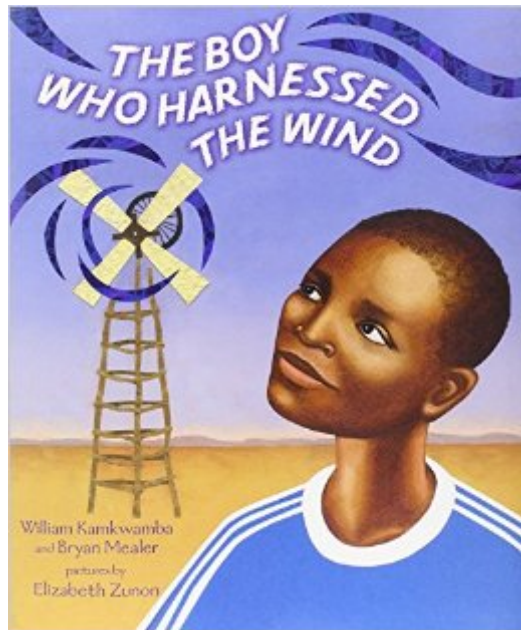


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# The Boy Who Harnessed The Wind: Picture Book Edition



## 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: 9.5 x 0.3 x 11.3 inches

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

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (138 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #54,894 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #6 in [Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > Science Studies > Electricity & Electronics](#) #36 in [Books > Children's Books > Science, Nature & How It Works > Experiments & Projects](#) #37 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Africa](#)

Age Range: 6 - 8 years

Grade Level: 1 - 3

## Customer Reviews

I confess to being a big fan of the adult version of "The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind." It is one of the most moving stories I've ever read. But how can you translate 30,000 words into a children's picture book? William Kamkwamba (24) and co-author Bryan Mealer have simmered the adult memoir into a fine-cuisine reduction of just 1000 perfectly-chosen words, illuminated by the oil-and-cut-paper illustrations of the very talented illustrator Elizabeth Zunon, who grew up in the Ivory Coast. Her use of color, composition and form informs while it entertains. While the story is linear, kids will enjoy re-viewing the multi-hued spreads to spot the tremendous detail evident on every page. Born and raised in Wimbe, Malawi, William Kamkwamba was just 14 when he was

forced to drop out of high school for lack of school fees, because his family needed every kwacha (Malawian money) for food to survive a deadly famine. Against this life-and-death backdrop, William, determined to create a future for himself, went to a recently-built community lending library. There he saw a picture of a windmill on the cover of a 8th grade U.S. science textbook called Using Energy. The book said you can use a windmill to pump water or generate electricity. That would help his family overcome hunger through crop irrigation and save money on kerosene for light. The kerosene funds could then be spent on more food. On the spot he decided to build a windmill, but he had no money or idea how to do so. While trying to solve this puzzle with the help of his loyal cousin and his best friend, he was mocked by members of his community who believed the boy was going mad, though William enjoyed the full support of his parents and six sisters. His quest to realize his windmill forms the core of "The Boy Who..." kid's edition. Particular notice should be paid to the work of 27-year old illustrator Elizabeth Zunon, whose sublime technique captures every face and object, and the layering effects in the collage elements render the book virtually 3D, without any need for glasses. Some of her illustrations are representational yet stylized, and some are pure visual poetry, such how she depicts the wind emanating from the windmill's blades. She is clearly a rising star in children's book illustrations and seems to be charting a course in the vein of the renowned illustrated book artist Kadir Nelson. Parents, your children six and up will love this book (younger, if you are doing the reading out loud). Teacher and librarians, this is sure to be popular with your students. More than just a story about building a windmill, this is about a family banding together to overcome extreme adversity. It's about a boy's journey from believing superstitions to becoming a young man of science. It's an uplifting story about Africa with a happy ending. But most of all, this is a story of a young man who came to embody courage, determination, hope and energy. And it's a true story! (William is now an environmental studies/engineering student at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire.) If you have young people in your life, (or even if you don't) I strongly recommend that you share this powerful and moving story with all of them, their schools and their libraries.

There may be much to admire in this story. However, there's also a lot of darkness. While I'm not opposed to some darkness in a book for children, the dark parts were too graphically described in this book for sensitive children. Kamkwamba gives a vivid description of starving, complete with details for specific people. He tells about how friends urged him to kill his dog instead of allowing the dog to starve to death. In the end, to keep his friends from killing his dog for him, he took his dog into the woods and left him tied to a tree so that the dog would finish dying in that place. It's the amount of detail in these scenes which became quite disturbing. These aren't brief bits which allow

a child to glimpse the horror while keeping a bit of emotional distance. Instead, the book includes page after page of descriptive passages about the people who were literally starving to death, the agonizing decision about his dog, and what he found when he returned to the spot where he'd left the dog. The School Library Journal review suggests this book for grades 4-7, but I consider this book highly inappropriate for children at the younger end of that range. Even some children at the upper end of that age range will find the book disturbing.

This story is a factual account of a young boy's search for a way to help his village. His interest in windmills to generate electricity led him to his community library where he researched the idea. I liked the way the story leads the reader from problem, to idea, to research, to solution, and finally extension. In education, teachers want young students to be able to do all of these steps: recognize, define, apply, evaluate, design, extend. All the lessons are incorporated in one story! The fact that this inventor was so young also helps students to realize that you don't have to be famous, rich, highly educated, or an adult to do something of great importance. The cultural part of the story suggests to students that not everyone has the advantages that we, as Americans, are able to enjoy, such as having water on demand. The book's mixture of illustration and authentic photos make the story more realistic, so students can realize that this event actually occurred and that the boy in the story is real. This makes it easier to identify with the boy...his life, his interests, his actions, his dreams. I bought this book for my eight-year-old grandson, but it could be read to a younger audience, and I would greatly recommend it to all age groups.

A fantastic and inspirational story about a boy who figures out how to bring electricity to his poor village in Africa using recycled materials. I read the book several years ago and purchased this copy for a classroom.

I love this book! I am a middle school Science teacher. The language arts teacher and I are planning on doing a book study this year with this book. It covers a lot of physical science topics! I think the kids will really enjoy it!

I knew about the story of William through his TED Talk in TED Global in Africa and I thought that it would not be possible to reflect his spontaneous character and curiosity behind his achievements in another format, and in any case a book. I must admit this book does. It is beautifully illustrated, the colors and the illustration style seem inspired by African artisan paintings which I think it is

wonderful. Also the text and the images are perfectly matched, both graphically and meaningfully. This book blows your mind for few seconds and i believe William is a new standards of 21st century children's super heros.

This is a very interesting, true story. It is written by the person who actually designed and developed this windmill out of... nothing. Certainly nothing that westerners would think of...He also tells the true story of a famine that strikes his neighborhood, village and country. It is difficult to read and may be hard for children younger than.. 12 or so to process.

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