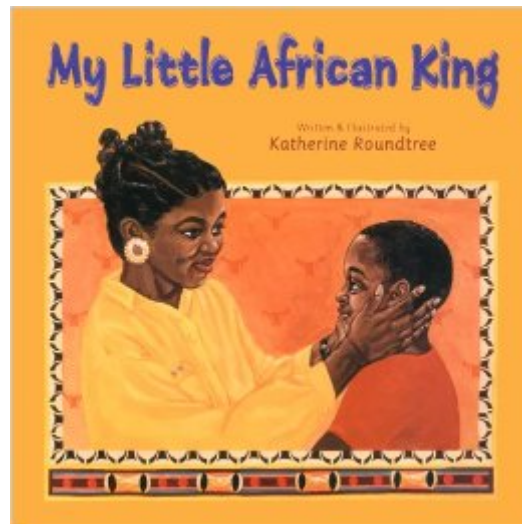


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# My Little African King



## Synopsis

Mansa Musa was one of the great rulers in African history. He was so extraordinary that the Mandinke considered him the "Black Moses," believing he had been sent from Allah to build Mali into a mighty empire, the greatest in the medieval world. In this book, a young boy beams in wonder and pride as his mother shares the rich history of his ancestors.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Writers & Readers (July 2000)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0863162495

ISBN-13: 978-0863162497

Product Dimensions: 0.5 x 10.2 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.1 ounces

Average Customer Review: 3.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (1 customer review)

Best Sellers Rank: #2,116,786 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #105 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Africa](#) #794 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Africa](#) #2211 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Multicultural Stories > African-American](#)

Age Range: 7 and up

Grade Level: 2 and up

## Customer Reviews

"My Little African King," written and illustrated by Katherine Roundtree, is a children's book with an Afrocentric flavor. In the book, a contemporary Black mother tells her son about Mansa Musa, the 14th century ruler of the African empire of Mali. Roundtree's simple rhyming text is accompanied by colorful, evocative artwork. My problem with the book lies in the author's portrayal of Mansa Musa, and with the values the book seems to promote. Throughout the book she focuses on Mansa Musa's wealth, military power, and authoritarian control of his domain. Typical illustrations show a decadent cache of coins and golden artifacts, soldiers riding with swords drawn, and armed security guards marching in formation. The text thus seems to celebrate a militaristic, violent, wealth-obsessed police state. Ironically, the text notes that Mansa Musa's empire stretched from "the salt mines of Taghaza to the copper mines of Kakedda." Of course, Roundtree conveniently avoids mentioning that these sites were probably worked by slave labor. One encyclopedia article I

consulted noted that Mansa Musa took a personal retinue of 12,000 slaves with him during a pilgrimage to Mecca. Thus there seems to be a bit of "politically correct" evasiveness to Roundtree's portrait. Roundtree is clearly a talented writer/illustrator, but this book raises some troubling questions. I recommend that concerned parents preview this book before sharing it with their children.

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