



Mansa Musa: The Lion of Mali

By Khephra Burns

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When an evening celebration in his village is disrupted by the cries of slave raiders, young Kankan Musa runs to find his spear, but in a moment he is taken. Suddenly, the world he has known is gone. Is he to be a slave? Or will destiny carry this son of a proud people to a different future?

Caldecott Medalists Leo and Diane Dillon capture the grandeur of Africa's ancient empires, lands, and people in stunning paintings as this richly imagined tale of the boyhood of Mansa Musa, one of Mali's most celebrated kings, carries us across the continent on a triumphant journey of self-discovery.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

When a stranger in a sky blue robe appears in the 14th century Malian village of Kaba Kangaba, young Kankan Musa is spellbound. He joins the other villagers in an evening of stories and celebration... only to have the spell broken by the arrival of slave raiders who seize Kankan and carry him off to the desert. Here begins our hero's story: is he destined to be a slave for life? Or will this be the launch of a journey to self-discovery and maturity?

Khephra Burns's exquisitely told account of one of the greatest kings of Mali is based solidly in fact, although the details of his boyhood are imagined. Partnered with the rich, breathtaking illustrations by two-time Caldecott Medalists, Leo and Diane Dillon (*Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears* and *Ashanti to Zulu*), this beautifully formatted picture book will capture the imagination and fascination of children everywhere. (Ages 8 and older) --*Emilie Coulter*

From Publishers Weekly

Evocative, finely wrought gouache paintings by the Dillons (*Why Mosquitoes Buzz in People's Ears*) provide excellent accompaniment to this colorful introduction to the history of Mali. Burns (Black Stars in Orbit: NASA's African American Astronauts) embarks in 14th-century West Africa, creating a slightly embellished (as per an author's note) account of the mystery and greatness of the Mali kingdom. Employing a combination of mythical elements and historical fact, the author sets in motion a chain of events during which 14-year-old Kankan is kidnapped by slave traders, wanders the desert for six years with a captor/mentor and, after an important revelation, eventually returns to his Mali homeland. Kankan has discovered that he is a descendent of the legendary king Sundiata and is destined to rule his people as Mansa Musa. Though it contains several fascinating episodes, the very lengthy, highly detailed text may be off-putting for the usual picture book audience. In addition, the plot slows and drifts off course as Kankan wanders the desert, and younger readers may have difficulty keeping the names of people and places straight. As a highlight, the illustrations bring alive historic Africa and its people, dressed in elegant, flowing garments, bright gold jewelry and carefully draped turbans. Flashes of purple, yellow, white and turquoise sparkle against a desert background. The book may also be useful as a first introduction to the Muslim faith. All ages.

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From School Library Journal

Gr 3-5-In what amounts to a bildungsroman, Burns recounts the coming-of-age of Mansa Musa, one of Mali's most celebrated kings. After the death of Sundiata, the kingdom of Mali began to decline. Life, however, is still good in the countryside of the once-great nation. One evening, a shrouded stranger in blue arrives in the small village of Kaba Kangaba. Fascinated by the mysterious visitor, young Kankan Musa joins the rest of his village at a gathering to listen to Tariq al-Aya, a member of the Tuareg tribe of the north. The meeting is disrupted by a slave raid and Kankan is carried off. Thus begins his decade of tutelage under Tariq and his transformation from provincial village boy to king of Mali. Well told, with excellent use of pacing and suspense, this yarn would hold attention on its own, but the breathtaking layout of the book greatly enhances the narrative. Creamy buff paper backs the clear double-column text, embellished with inset borders and small illustrations. Half- to full-page detailed, jewel-toned art in the Dillons' signature style makes this a feast for the eyes as well as the mind. Booktalking Mansa Musa with David Wisniewski's

Sundiata (Clarion, 2001) will allow children to access the history of ancient Mali in a way that showcases two very different, but equally effective, storytelling and illustrative styles.

Ann Welton, Grant Elementary School, Tacoma, WA

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Christine Frazier:

Here thing why this particular Mansa Musa: The Lion of Mali are different and dependable to be yours. First of all reading a book is good but it really depends in the content of computer which is the content is as scrumptious as food or not. Mansa Musa: The Lion of Mali giving you information deeper and different ways, you can find any reserve out there but there is no reserve that similar with Mansa Musa: The Lion of Mali. It gives you thrill examining journey, its open up your own personal eyes about the thing which happened in the world which is might be can be happened around you. It is easy to bring everywhere like in park, café, or even in your approach home by train. If you are having difficulties in bringing the published book maybe the form of Mansa Musa: The Lion of Mali in e-book can be your option.

Rosemary Taylor:

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think you are the character on there. Therefore , not at all of book tend to be make you bored, any it offers up you feel happy, fun and chill out. Try to choose the best book for you and try to like reading which.

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