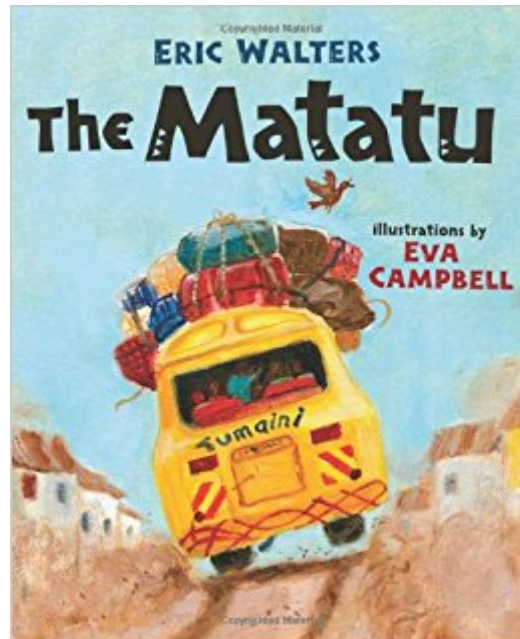




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# The Matatu



## Synopsis

Kioko had been watching the matatus come and go for as long as he could remember. But today, for his fifth birthday, he climbs aboard one with his grandfather. As the matatu pulls away from the market, the village dogs chase after them. When Kioko asks his grandfather why the dogs always bark and chase after matatus, his grandfather tells him an entertaining tale about a dog, a goat and a sheep. Set in East Africa, *The Matatu* is a colorful story filled with many unexpected turns and twists along the way.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 510L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Orca Book Publishers (April 1, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1554693012

ISBN-13: 978-1554693016

Product Dimensions: 8.8 x 0.3 x 10.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #823,852 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #35 in [Books > Children's Books > Fairy Tales, Folk Tales & Myths > African](#) #344 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Africa](#) #779 in [Books > Children's Books > Fairy Tales, Folk Tales & Myths > Multicultural](#)

Age Range: 5 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

"Campbell's illustrations effortlessly transport the reader to Kikima, Kenya. She evokes the richness of the Kenyan people and their culture by employing vivid colours and distinctive dress...*The Matatu* is both a beautiful and a light-hearted glimpse into the lives and stories of the Kenyan people. Walters expertly switches gears on the reader by turning a story of adventure into one of hilarity. However, *The Matatu* is not merely a folktale. Walters has also crafted a story that exemplifies the grandparent-grandchild relationship." (CM Magazine 2012-02-24)"Oil paintings provide realistic details of contemporary rural Kenya but include a few spreads in which the animals humorously take on anthropomorphic characteristics. The author's note, drawing upon his Kenyan experiences, will

amuse adults...The love and respect shown between Kioko and his grandfather is both universal and sweetly evident." (Kirkus Reviews 2012-03-15)"Campbell fills her oil paintings with bright colors and commotion, portraying her animals with trickster-like characteristics. Walters offers tender insight into a grandfather and grandson relationship, while depicting a unique cultural experience." (Publishers Weekly 2012-03-19)"The enjoyable view of life in this faraway country beautifully frames a universal special relationship between a child and a grandparent. Children and adults will smile at Kioko's concluding action in response to his grandfather's tale." (School Library Journal 2012-05-01)"With a wry mix of realism and folklore, Walters draws on his work in rural Kenya to tell the story of Kioko...Campbell's bright, mischievous watercolors show the passengers on the crowded seats with the conductor picking his way down the aisle collecting fares, along with close-up images of Kioko as he listens to his beloved grandpa tell a story while they drive through dusty roads past huts, houses, and market stalls. Along with the vivid setting, there is a playful story based on a Kamba folktale...The bond between Kioko and his grandpa will grab kids, and so will the sly twist when the boy tries to fix things and change the old folktale." (Booklist 2012-05-15)"Campbell's oil paintings capture the bright colours and designs on the matatu...[Walters] expands on a Kenyan folktale that is sure to amuse children and adults." (Resource Links 2012-04-01)"Both the folk tale and the love connection between Kioko and his grandfather are very appealing." (www.spiritualityandpractice.com 2012-05-30)"This tender story evokes the feeling of a grandfather and his grandson. The illustrations, too, transport the reader to East Africa. Children will love this story and will want to share it with their own grandparents." (Southwestern Ohio Young Adult Materials Review Group 2012-05-15)"Lively oil paintings illustrate the sunny Kenyan villages and the bustling yellow matatu." (BC Bookworld 2012-07-01)"Walters, who runs an organization that helps Kenyan orphans, does an exemplary job of providing a cultural snapshot of Kioko's world. The affection between Kioko and his grandfather is effectively captured in Campbell's lively oil paintings, which also depict a dynamic, color-filled village and expressive villagers." (The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books 2012-07-01)"Colorful, casual renderings of a village in Kenya surround the story of a boy's first bus ride with his grandfather...The relaxed and accepting culture of the Kamba people is reflected in the story and in the folktale that Kioko's grandfather tells him on the way...Campbell is a perfect match to paint the setting for this African tale within a tale with the beautiful faces, arms, and hands of the bus riders. Especially for first and second grade story times, this book is recommended for all elementary school libraries." (Library Media Connection 2012-11-01)"Jump aboard the Matatu and hear the delightful tale of young Kioko's first journey on this rugged bus that transports villagers across the dirt roads of East

Africa...Kioko's excitement and each animal's character come alive in the artwork of Ghanaian-born illustrator Eva Campbell. Her sense of colour and vibrancy authentically evoke the hustle and bustle of the Matatu journey, as well as Kioko's childlike wonder at this new experience. This picture book stems from a folktale that author Eric Walters was told during a trip to Kenya. His experiences with the people of the Kamba tribe, and his extensive travels in Africa, contribute to making this story an authentic look into the life and stories of an African community." (Canadian Children's Book News 2012-08-01)"The illustrations...are as colorful and lively as an African village. There's no shortage of excitement when a matatu rumbles through, and Campbell captures that spirit perfectly. Though the story of the dogs, goats and sheep forms the center of this story, the real heart of the book is Kioko's relationship with his Babu. It's terrific to see the esteem with which the other villagers treat Babu, and this and his wonderful stories add to Kioko's appreciation of all his grandfather is for him...The genuine respect Walters feels for the Kamba people is evident throughout, and Campbell's illustrations bolster that feeling, which will translate to readers as well. Just don't be surprised if your kiddos want to jump on a matatu themselves!" (Sprout's Bookshelf blog 2013-05-26)"A colorful story filled with many unexpected turns and twists along the way." (The International Educator 2013-04-01)

Come for an African bus ride with a dog, a goat and a sheep!

Fun story. Both my daughters loved it. It combines modern day kids and a classic tale.

Nice story

Set in East Africa and inspired by a Kamba folktale, *The Matatu* is a fun and educational picture book by author Eric Walters. For his fifth birthday, Kioko takes his first ride on a matatu (privately-owned bus transportation in East Africa) with his grandfather. Soon his grandfather is telling him to watch for goats, sheep, and dogs. As Kioko obediently looks out the window, his grandfather shares a folktale about why the dogs chase the mini-bus, the goats run away, and the sheep stand still. Eva Campbell delightfully complements the congenial story with bright and colorful watercolors. Even if readers skip the Forward from the Director of the Creation of Hope and the author's note, most American children will soon realize that *The Matatu* is about a different culture. Women carrying baskets on their heads isn't the norm in the United States. The marketplace with its huts, houses, and stalls isn't a common sight. Mandazi (fried bread or East African doughnuts)

might be an unknown term. And then there's the matatu, which attracts the attention of two dogs, and for which one deposits shillings to ride. The forward reveals that a Kamba folktale exists about matatus and animals. One day the Director of the Creation of Hope in Kenya shared a brief version of it with author Eric Walters. Finding the story hilarious, Walters decided to capture it in picture book format. Before Walters was allowed to do this, however, the Kamba people needed to designate Walters as one of their elders with the right to tell their stories. The author's note further reveals that drivers of the matatu "barrel along at whatever speed the road will allow" and drive on "whichever side of the road is least potholed". Although reading the two informational notes provides insight into *The Matatu*, the story can also stand on its own as a shared moment between a grandfather and a grandson. The bus ride contains twists and turns, as does the charming tale told by Kioko's grandfather. After reading *The Matatu*, young readers might become more curious about the stories their own grandparents have to share. They might also want to jump aboard an African bus for a ride with a dog, a goat, and a sheep!

Having lived there for a few years, I found this story a delightfully reminiscent visit with the people of one of the many cultures of Kenya. The illustrations give a great impression of Matatus, villages and people in the countryside. The story is similar to other stories I remember from our time there, where animals are the characters and a moral is taught - similar to Aesop's fables. When I read it to my almost-three-year-old grandson, it kept his attention all the way through, and I enjoyed it as much as he did! I'd love to find other books like this that give such a wonderful glimpse into everyday life in various places, with sensitivity and respect, and without being preachy.

This delightful story book to read aloud is one of the 2013 Best Books for Younger Children in the annual Children's Africana Book Award competition run by the K-12 Outreach Council of the African Studies Association. Eric Walters' charming tale is equally carried by Eva Campbell's vivid watercolors which depict the hustle and bustle of daily life in a rural village in contemporary Kenya. Walters' tale adapts folktales from the Kamba community in Kenya to show how a grandfather incorporates his vast repertoire of stories about animals to entertain and educate a five year old grandson during a long bus trip. For more information about the Children's Africana Book Awards, see [...]

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