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Sundiata: Lion King Of Mali



Synopsis

In the thirteenth century, Sundiata overcame physical handicaps, social disgrace, and strong opposition to rule the West African trading empire of Mali.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 820L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Clarion Books; First Edition edition (October 19, 1992)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0395613027

ISBN-13: 978-0395613023

Product Dimensions: 9 x 0.1 x 10.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (18 customer reviews)

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Age Range: 10 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 - 7

Customer Reviews

Anyone who wants to introduce a child (or even someone who is not so young) to the REAL glories of ancient Africa could do a lot worse than start with this book. Beautifully illustrated, and simply written it retells the life of the great culture hero Sunjata (variously spelled Sundiata, Son-Jara or other ways depending on the language and inclination of the translator). According to the story, Sunjata defeated the sorcerer-king Suma'oro Kante and liberated the Manding people (of modern day Guinea, Mali, plus parts of Senegal, Gambia, Cote D'Ivoire and Burkina Faso) wielding them together into a great empire in the mid 13th century. To modern Manding people, Sunjata is roughly equivalent in stature to Abraham Lincoln, Moses or the first Qin Emperor. This version is very close to the original tale as told by the griots of west Africa (check out D.T. Niane's "Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali" for a traditional telling of the story or, for the really adventurous, D.W. Johnson and Fa-Digi Cissoko's scholarly rendition "Son-Jara: An African Epic"). A sung version of part of the Sunjata fassa (epic praise poem) can be found on the CD "An Be Kelen (We are One): Griot Music from

Mali" also available on .Sunjata's story includes sorcery, prodigious battles, and the triumph of nobility over gossip and envy. For modern readers, an especially powerful feature is the famous story of Sunjata overcoming childhood disability (he is crippled and -in some versions, unable to talk) to become the leader of the Malian people.

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