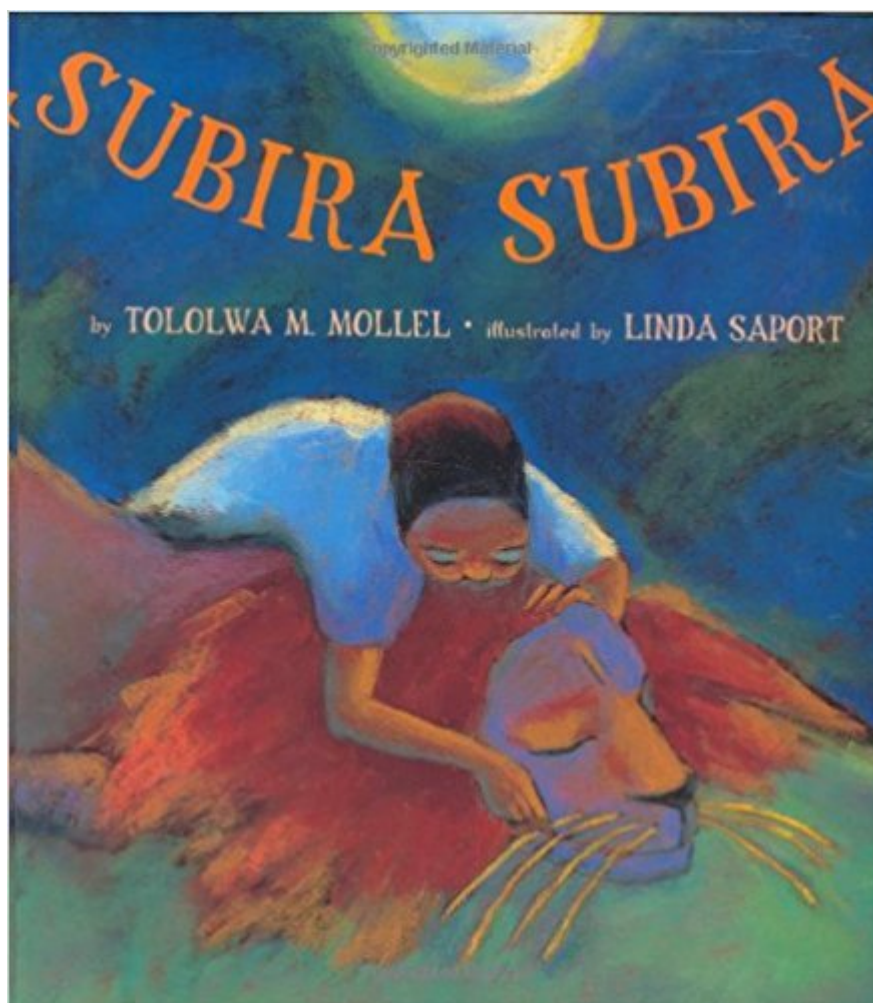


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Subira Subira



Synopsis

When Tatu finds she can do nothing to improve her little brother's hateful behavior and make him happy again, she goes to an old spirit woman for help. The spirit woman tells Tatu that to cure Maulidi, she must pluck three whiskers from a lion! Armed only with a song, Tatu steals out into the moonlit night to undertake her impossible task. Acclaimed storyteller Tololwa M. Mollel sets his satisfying retelling of a traditional folktale in contemporary Tanzania, beautifully depicted in Linda Saport's lush illustrations. An author's note and the music for Tatu's song follow the story.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: AD540L (What's this?)

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Age Range: 5 - 8 years

Grade Level: Kindergarten - 3

Customer Reviews

A Tanzanian girl discovers the all-important secret to getting along with her younger brother in this compelling adaptation of an African folktale. Following the death of their mother, Tatu must take on the responsibility of caring for Maulidi after school, while their father is still at work. Maulidi, obviously still grieving, disobeys and fights with his sister at every turn. Desperate, Tatu seeks advice from the spirit woman MaMzuka. MaMzuka promises that if Tatu can fetch three whiskers from a lion, she will have the power to change her brother's ways. Tatu soothes the lion with her beautiful singing voice and accomplishes the dangerous task. She also comes to understand that her singing--along with the same patience (the meaning of subira) and courage she showed the lion--will be just the remedy Maulidi needs. Mollel (*The Orphan Boy*) wondrously combines

otherworldly flourishes and heartfelt emotion in a contemporary African setting. His storytelling unfolds seamlessly, inviting readers to join Tatu's thought-provoking quest. Saport's (*All the Pretty Little Horses*) rough-hewn pastels skillfully blend elements of mystery and everyday life in depictions of a spooky nighttime forest and glowing-eyed lion or of village children walking to school. Her luminous, almost electric indigos and golds suggest not only exotic climes but the magic of the text. Ages 5-9. (Jan.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Kindergarten-Grade 4-This retelling of a traditional African folktale is about two siblings who live in a small village in Tanzania. Since their mother's death, Tatu is in charge of her younger brother, Maulidi. They are caught in a daily power struggle until Tatu finally seeks out a local spirit woman for advice. MaMzuka tells the girl to pluck three whiskers from a lion-"Your courage and patience will guide you." On the third try, Tatu successfully sings the animal to sleep and accomplishes her task. When she presents the whiskers to MaMzuka, the woman merely blows them away. "You don't need them-To change your brother, just remember how you got the whiskers." Love, patience, and song finally tame Maulidi as well and bring both children full circle back to memories of their mother. The coming-of-age slant enhances this adaptation, which traditionally tells of a woman trying to win her husband or stepson's affections, and the author's sensitivity infuses it with a bittersweet tenderness. The blending of intensely warm pastels creates a landscape in which the figures are prominent and the rich colors bring vibrancy to the uncluttered pages. Each folio is respected as a singular canvas, and the placement of the text does not interfere with its images. The marriage of a poignantly written tale with sophisticated artwork revitalizes a time-honored story. This is a book all libraries will want to own, especially those that offer family storytelling programs. Tina Hudak, Takoma Park Maryland Library, MD Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Retelling an ancient Tanzanian folktale, the author skillfully blends magic with a contemporary setting. When Tatu's little brother begins acting out, throwing stones, biting and refusing to behave, the older girl is at a loss. It is only when an elderly spirit woman, Ma Mzuka, relates the cure (three whiskers from a lion), that Tatu realizes what she must do, although she is terribly frightened. Armed with only a song, Tatu sets out to perform what seems an impossible task, to save her little brother from his terrible state. Despite recently losing her mother and the brother who will not behave, Tatu faces the horrible old woman, confronts her fears and a fearsome lion with a song, snatching the whiskers from the sleeping beast, who is lulled by her music. Through this ordeal, Tatu learns an important life lesson. Borne on the notes of a song, Tatu's brother is gradually seduced by music,

patience and love. The vivid illustrations bring forth the tumultuous emotions of two children who have lost their mother and must find their way together, Tatu guiding her younger sibling with patience and their mother's lullabies. As lush as the brilliant images, the text marries perfectly to illustrator Linda Saport's artwork, the whole an impressive tale of loss and love, couched in folklore and the rich history of music. This is a stunning, evocative piece of children's literature. Luan Gaines/2007.

Tololwa Mollel has shared the inner growth of a child through her story and the art of Linda Saport. This story is one way to share with children that they can do anything if they have a willingness to learn from their experiences. Subira Subira is a book that needs to be read many times by both adults and children. Thank you for a book that can only inspire self-growth.

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Subira Subira

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