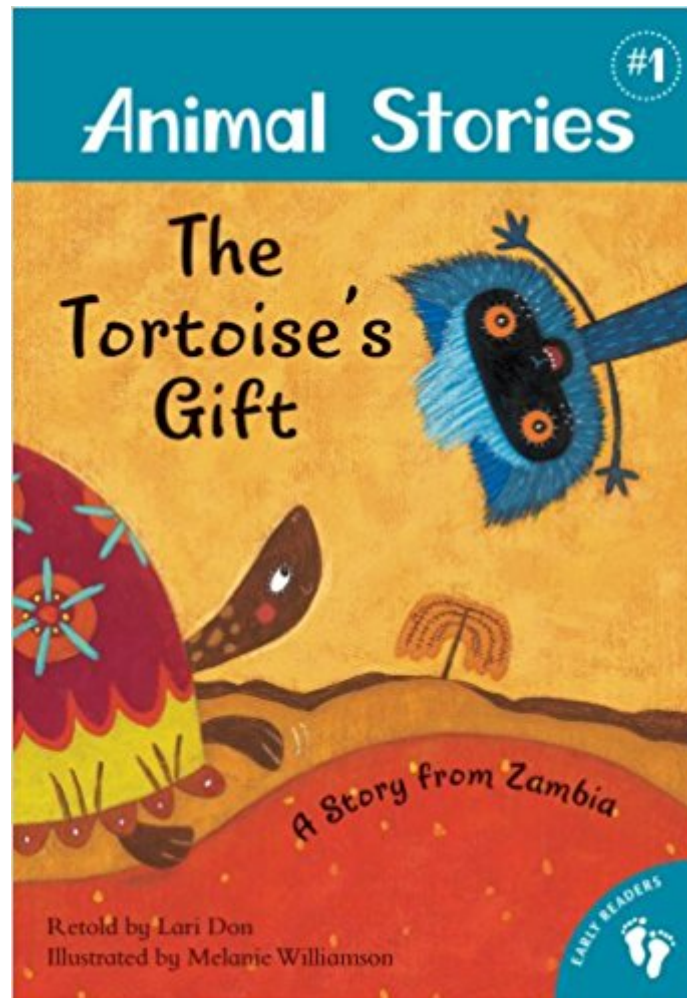




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The Tortoise's Gift: A Story From Zambia (Animal Stories)



Synopsis

One hot, dry summer in Zambia, the rain stops falling. Soon, the animals are very hungry and thirsty. How can they recover? They have heard of a wonderful tree that can produce fruit, but it will only do so if it is asked by name and no one can remember what it is called! The animals agree to send a messenger to the wise mountain to find out the name of the tree and bring it back. One by one, the animals set out, but remembering the name is not as easy as they had imagined . . .

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 530L (What's this?)

Series: Animal Stories (Book 1)

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Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #690,492 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #178 in [Books > Children's](#)

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Age Range: 7 - 9 years

Grade Level: 2 - 4

Customer Reviews

Tortoise is able to use his natural characteristics (slow and steady) to solve a dilemma that proves to be beyond the talents of defter animals. This Zambian folktale about a wonderful tree with a very tricky name, and the hungry animals who seek to learn (and remember) that name, has been adapted by Don as a chapter book for early readers. The repetitious nature of the story is well suited to the format, while the colorful and playful illustrations have the appeal of a picture book. Released simultaneously with *Never Trust a Tiger*, a story from Korea. Grades 1-3. --Kara Dean

Lari Don was born in Chile and brought up in Scotland. She has worked in politics and for the BBC,

but now spends her time passing on old stories and making up new ones. She is a traditional storyteller, as well as an award-winning children's author, whose love of myths, legends and fables inspires her fiction. Lari lives in Edinburgh, Scotland. Melanie Williamson draws her pictures in a cozy studio in Manchester, England and loves all things bright and quirky.

My daughter is little. She jumped out into the world a month earlier than her due date, standing upright in my belly, ready to hit the ground running! Well, her impatience cost her some in-belly baking time, and so she came out little, and it seems, that's how she'll remain. Don't get me wrong. She's a feisty miss with a firecracker personality. Her size hasn't stopped her from joining in and playing with (or bossing around) kids twice her size. When she was two, a four-year-old boy tried to cut in front of her in the line for the slide. She blocked him, raised her tiny finger, and said, "Wait your turn!" The boy was so shocked, he was cowed into meekly waiting behind her. As a parent, I find myself drawn to books with small heroes, underdogs who overcome challenges to save the day. I want to build up her self-confidence so she can continue to be courageous and inquisitive, even after she finally realizes that she's small. So when I found "The Tortoise's Gift," I was delighted. It's a book about animals in Zambia who are hungry and thirsty because it stopped raining. Their only hope is to awaken a wonderful tree that is said to grow everyone's favorite fruits when they are in need, but no one can remember the tree's name. The only one old enough to remember is the rocky mountain, but who among the animals has what it takes to go all the way to the mountain and bring the name back? The lion, elephant, and chimps all fail, and it is the tortoise, dismissed by everyone as being too small and too slow, who succeeds. There's a lot of repeating elements in the book that engaged my daughter and allowed her to memorize the text and participate just after the second reading. The illustrations are whimsical, and I particularly enjoy that sometimes, the animals have text bubbles where they share some thought or emotion. I get a guaranteed giggle when I read the text bubble and mimic what the animal is doing. "The Tortoise's Gift" is also a great introductory chapter book. My daughter is too impatient to wait for the next chapter until the next day, so we haven't yet been able to read any longer books. This book is short enough to read in one sitting, but it familiarizes you with the idea of chapters. Here's a fun activity to do with your child: * When the animals all ask the tree for their favorite fruit, have your child join in and ask for her favorite fruit as well. * Pretend that a dining room

chair is the mountain. Have your child go to the chair, ask its name, then walk back to you chanting the mountain's name with each step, just like the tortoise.* When she gets back to you, have a piece of fruit ready (preferably her favorite one), and let her have a bite!

I bought this book for my five year old daughter and this quickly turned into her favorite. It is a wonderful story about animals trying to find the name of a tree so it will wake up and feed them with all different kinds of fruit. It has a great moral and is a feel good story. Highly recommended!

I really enjoy this and the Monster series. I'll buy more. My 7 year old and I read it to each other.

My five year old and three year old love this story. I love it as well. The moral of the story is similar to the tortoise and the hare, slow and steady win the race. But it's such a better story. During a drought the hungry animals find a wonderful tree that can bear various fruit for all the animals. If only they knew the tree's name. They hatch a plot to travel to the mountain to see if he knows the tree's name. My kids ask to read it again and again, giggling when the mountain rumbles and how the animals each forget the name of the tree on their return trip. A slow and humble tortoise succeeds where the mighty lion, smart elephant, and clever monkeys fail. We love the illustrations, and how the animals are rendered. Recommend highly.

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