



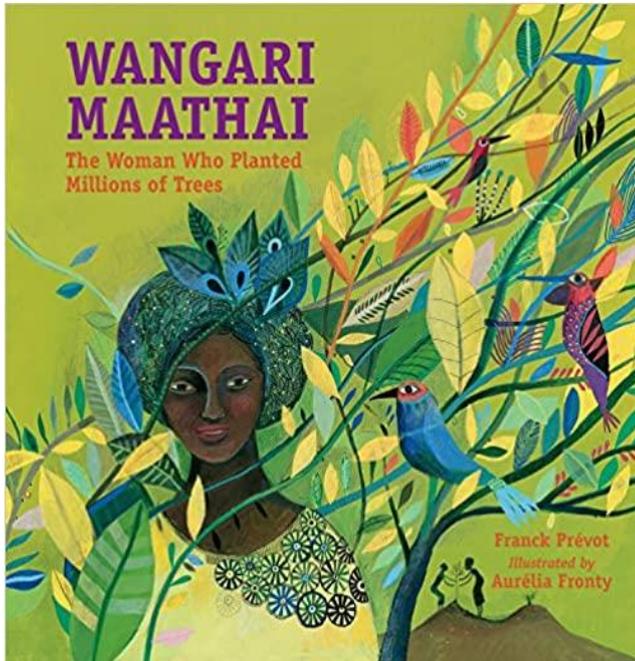
Suntrap Book Review

Wangari Maathai: The Woman Who Planted a Million Trees

By Franck Prevot (Author), Aurelia Fronty (Illustrator)

Published by Charlesbridge £5.99 (p/b)

Age range: Seven – ten years old



Description

Wangari Maathai received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 for her efforts to lead women in a nonviolent struggle to bring peace and democracy to Africa through its reforestation. Her organization planted over thirty million trees in thirty years. This beautiful picture book tells the story of an amazing woman and an inspiring idea.

Aurélia Fronty's beautiful illustrations show readers the colour and diversity of Wangari's Africa—the green trees and the flowering trees full of birds, monkeys, and other animals; the roots that dig deep into the earth; and the people who work and live on the land. Wangari Maathai changed the way the world thinks about nature, ecology, freedom, and democracy, inspiring radical efforts that continue to this day.

Reviews

The writing is artful, clear, and concise, with references to Maathai's native Swahili language and the cultural connections to the environment. This book provides students a beginning for research on her early life through the political turmoil of a corrupt Kenyan government which fell in 2002; it will also support deeper understanding of how she earned the Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 for starting the Green Belt Movement, an NGO dedicated to planting trees, protecting the environment, and promoting women's rights.

Fronty's art shines bright, expanding the text with styles that echo Henri Rousseau, Henri Matisse, and others. Of the other picture book biographies on Maathai, most focus on the tree planting rather than her life; this one offers appropriate information about the political upheavals that influenced Maathai.

-*School Library Journal*

Dramatic and dreamlike paintings celebrate Nobel Peace Prize–winner Wangari Maathai, founder of the Green Belt movement. As a child in Kenya, Maathai learned the importance of nurturing forests, and after receiving her high-school diploma “at a time when very few African women even learn[ed] to read,” she travelled to the U.S. There, she studied the connections between environmental destruction, poverty, and oppression before returning to Kenya: “She asks that people think about the future even if the present is harsh and difficult.”

Fronty's fluid artwork incorporates organic motifs and African textile patterns to stirring effect, and extensive appended materials offer powerful supplemental information to conclude this standout tribute to Maathai's perseverance and hard-won successes.

-*Publishers Weekly*

