

Book Reviews

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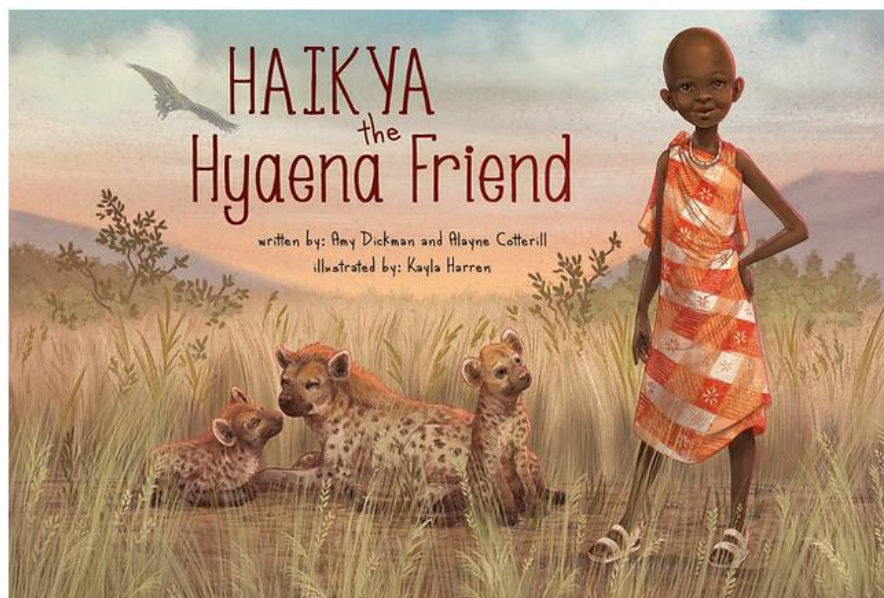
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DICKMAN, A. and COTTERILL, A. (2022). *Haikya the Hyaena Friend*. ISBN 978-1-9161916-1-7. Illustrated by K. Harren. 34 pp. Lion Landscapes, Oxford. Available to be downloaded from Lion Landscapes: <https://www.lionlandscapes.org/download-storybooks>

This is a short and sweet little story about a young Maasai girl called Haikya who lives with her mother and two sisters. From the illustrations she seems about 10 years old, and certainly before puberty. She has fallen in love with Spotted Hyaenas and vultures. The illustrations are rather good, especially of the hyaenas. One day they lose one of their (skinny) cows and Haikya finds it the next day, dead in the bush. Not finding any animal tracks, Haikya is sure it died of disease, but her mother is convinced it was killed by carnivores, and so arranges for it to be laced with poison. A couple of hyaenas and several vultures are found dead next to the carcass! In the end, the mother gets a job with the NGO, and Haikya can go to school and dream of becoming a conservationist.

Uniquely, the story is in both Kiswahili and English, so can immediately be appreciated in schools. The story is somewhat idealistic, though we are told how Haikya comes to love these animals. And she learns more about them from the local game guide. I was surprised to see mention of “penis” in the page of Hyaena Facts, and thought the authors could have given us more about hyaena myths, e.g. being hermaphrodite. Basically, it’s a story of human-wildlife conflict and presented in an unusual and nice way. Unusual too, because it’s told through the eyes and emotions of a young girl – hitherto a marginalised person in male-dominated Africa. Maybe in a sequel we can learn how Haikya gets on being an employed conservationist? Let’s have more happy stories!



BRULO, J. (2022). *Griff, Luke and Ariadne in the Kingdom of Trung Trung Karmo*. 106 pp. ISBN 978-1-9164183-7-0. Brulo Books, Atherstone, England. £8.99.

Here is the next (fifth) adventure of Luke Bright, this time with Ariadne, the girl from the last story, *The Buried City*. The team is now in the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan to defeat a bunch of hunters who are intent on hunting the Black-necked Crane, a special and revered bird in the country. Of course, the Eurasian Griffon ‘Griff’ is in and out of the story the whole way through, which is why I am reviewing the book here. Indeed, Griff brought the team to Bhutan in order to save this group of cranes. Luke would not succeed without the interventions of Griff who is now the leader of the gods.

The children are older (nearly 13 years) but still very mature for their age. They have to locate six signs on the route before the task is finished. I thought they discovered these signs rather too easily, and the book is short as a result. Never mind, it’s still a gripping read (not quite so much sci-fi), and even the Abominable Snowman features. I don’t want to give away any more incidents in the book, after all read it for yourself, you will surely enjoy it. So, I look forward to the next instalment of Griff and his little band of eco-warriors. Altogether these books are wonderfully inspiring in this current world of violence and pessimism, and all created around an amazing vulture. What a fertile imagination does Judy Brulo have! Find her here – judy@judybrulobooks.co.uk

Whoops, I nearly forgot – there are the same kind of happy illustrations by Foxhat (Emily Moore) which grace the book.
