

KWAME'S MAGIC QUEST

RACE TO THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN



Written by
Bernard Mensah

Art by
Natasha Nayo

 **BRANCHES™** 
SCHOLASTIC INC.

To all the children (and adults) that dream of African magic, this is for you!—BM

To my family and friends who have always supported me in my artistic journey.

Thank you so much for always being my inspiration and my strength.—NN

While Kwame's Magic Quest takes place in a fantasy world, many of the places, people, clothes, names, food, and cultures come from real African countries. The author would like to thank Adjei Kwesi Boateng for sharing his knowledge of Ghanaian culture for this book.

If you purchased this book without a cover, you should be aware that this book is stolen property. It was reported as "unsold and destroyed" to the publisher, and neither the author nor the publisher has received any payment for this "stripped book."

Text copyright © 2024 by Bernard Mensah
Illustrations copyright © 2024 by Natasha Nayo

All rights reserved. Published by Scholastic Inc., *Publishers since 1920*. SCHOLASTIC, BRANCHES, and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.

The publisher does not have any control over and does not assume any responsibility for author or third-party websites or their content.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission of the publisher. For information regarding permission, write to Scholastic Inc., Attention: Permissions Department, 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Mensah, Bernard (Children's author), author. | Nayo, Natasha, illustrator. Title: Race to the magic mountain / written by Bernard Mensah ; illustrated by Natasha Nayo. Description: First edition. | New York : Branches/Scholastic Inc., 2024. | Series: Kwame's magic quest ; 2 | Audience: Ages 6–8. | Audience: Grades 1–3. | Summary: Eight-year-old Kwame is called upon to save the world from the evil magic that has turned his friend into a green flame—new to magic he has four days to learn as much as he can before setting out on a dangerous journey to the Magic Mountain, where the flame is trying to create an all-powerful calabash.

Identifiers: LCCN 2023022976 (print) | ISBN 9781338843316 (paperback) | ISBN 9781338843323 (library binding) Subjects: LCSH: Magic—Juvenile fiction. | Gourds—Juvenile fiction. | Good and evil—Juvenile fiction. | Schools—Juvenile fiction. | Friendship—Juvenile fiction. | Ghana—Juvenile fiction. | CYAC: Magic—Fiction. | Gourds—Fiction. | Good and evil—Fiction. | Schools—Fiction. | Friendship—Fiction. | Ghana—Fiction. | LCGFT: Action and adventure fiction.

Classification: LCC PZ7.1.M47326 Rk 2024 (print) | DDC 823.92 [Fic]—dc23/eng/20230516
LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2023022976>

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

24 25 26 27 28

Printed in India 197
First edition, August 2024
Edited by Katie Carella
Cover design by Brian LaRossa
Book design by Jaime Lucero



CHAPTER 1

NO TIME TO WASTE



Kwame watched Principal Wari pour brown liquid on the ground. It smelled sweet and sour.

“This liquid is called pito. It’s the Earth Spirits’ favorite drink,” the principal said.

Kwame had only arrived at Nkonyaa School a few days ago. He didn’t know much magic yet. But he had just agreed to help save the world!

His friend Fifi had stolen the two most powerful calabashes. The evil Boni calabash had turned Fifi into a green flame. And the flame had escaped with both calabashes. Without these two calabashes safely at the school, the world had started to fall apart!



Kwame gripped his Omni calabash. He had used it to cast a stay-same spell to help keep the world from crumbling. But the spell wouldn't last long . . . Kwame had to bring the special calabashes back before it was too late!



The pito on the ground bubbled.

“Earth Spirits live inside the earth,” Principal Wari explained as he poured out more liquid. “They will know where the green flame is.”

The pito bubbled, making strange symbols in the soil. Principal Wari read them.



“What are the spirits saying?” Kwame asked.

“The green flame is headed to the top of the Magic Mountain,” Principal Wari replied. “It plans to cast a spell using the power of the mountain. It wants to combine the Boni and Omni calabashes to make one all-powerful calabash. If the evil flame succeeds, it will be too strong to stop. You must reach the mountain before it casts that spell.”

Suddenly, smoke came up out of the pito.

Principal Wari raised his eyebrows. “The spirits say they will send you something special to help you on your journey.”



Kwame gulped. *I need all the help I can get to reach the mountain and stop the flame from casting that spell!*