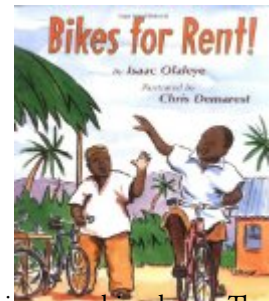


H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences

Isaac Olaleye. *Bikes for Rent!* Ages 5-8. New York: Orchard Books, 2001. Unpagged. \$16.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-531-30290-3.

Reviewed by Sarah Manyika (University of California, Berkeley)
Published on H-AfrTeach (April, 2002)



Bikes for Rent is a story set in Nigeria about a young boy, Lateef, who eagerly saves all his money to rent bicycles from Babatunde, the local bicycle shop owner.

At first, Babatunde only rents Lateef old, second-hand bicycles but one day, assured that Lateef will look after the bicycle and ride carefully, he rents Lateef a brand new bike. Lateef is thrilled and eager to show off to his friends. Not surprisingly, in showing off to his friends, he damages the bike and must work to pay off the damage. But all ends well when Babatunde allows Lateef to work for him and Lateef is able to save enough money to buy a bicycle of his own.

This is a simple and somewhat predictable story that will nevertheless appeal to young children who will identify with Lateef's desire to impress his friends and own his own bike. Children will also recognise the universal themes of the importance of saving and taking responsibility for one's own actions. The illustrations are colour-

ful and expressive but could be improved in places. The depiction of the women's head ties, for example, looks more like the tops of pineapples than actual head ties. The illustrations also suffer from stereotypes such as all the children being barefoot and the inclusion of a monkey riding on the mammy wagon along side the passengers. This book is reminiscent of another children's book about a young boy and his bike, Tololwa Mollel's *My Rows and Piles of Coins*. In contrast to *Bikes for Rent*, Tololwa's award-winning book benefits from better illustrations, a cleverer storyline, and more detailed insights (both visually and in the text) of life in another part of the continent.

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