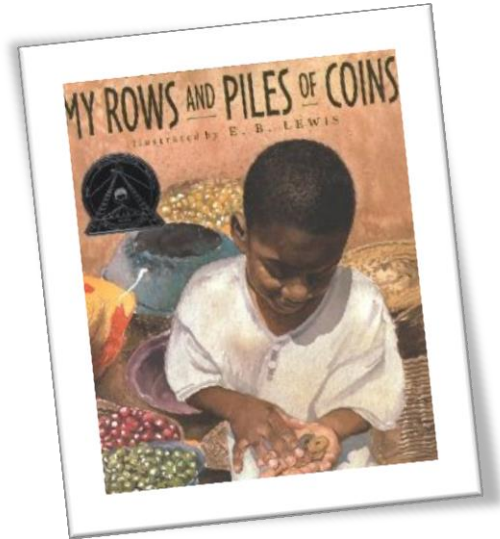


**Title:** My Rows and Piles of Coins  
**Author:** Tololwa M. Mollel  
**Grade Level:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade



## **SUMMARY**

Saruni is a hard working boy with a big dream: He wants to buy a bicycle of his very own. For many months, Saruni works in the market to earn money, saving all of his coins in a special box. As he counts his coins each week, Saruni loves to dream about his future bike and how he will be able to use it to help his mother in the market. Through beautiful watercolor illustrations and masterful storytelling, readers will be transported to a village in Tanzania. Your child will be excited to dive into these pages, which create a feeling of warmth between the boy and his family. Saruni's patience and determination is an inspiration to any child that is working hard to accomplish a goal.

## **QUESTIONS TO TALK ABOUT WHILE READING**

### **VOCABULARY**

It's important to make sure that your child has an understanding of key words in the book. Talking about words while reading is a great way for your child to learn new words.

In this book, you might talk about these words:

- nudged (pg. 5)
- clutched (pg. 6)
- longed (pg. 11)
- wearily (pg. 20)
- dismounted (pg. 27)
- load (pg. 31)

You might use a question like:

*In the book, what does the word *longed* mean? How does your knowledge about the boy and the other sentences on this page help you understand this word?*

### **KEY IDEAS and THEMES**

In addition to words, it's important to talk about key ideas and themes and how they develop over the course of the book. Here are some examples to get you started:

1. We can learn a lot about characters based on what they say, do, or think as they react to problems. How does Saruni respond when other children laugh at him? Have your child jot down what Saruni says, does, or thinks after this event. Then ask, “What does this show you about Saruni?”
2. On pages 22-24, how do you know that Saruni is proud of his hard work? Ask your child to point out words and phrases that show Saruni's feelings. Point to the illustrations as well. How does the illustrator show this pride in the pictures?
3. Who is telling this story? Direct your child to the pronouns used by the narrator. Why did the author choose to tell the story from this point of view? How would this story be different if told from a different point of view?
4. How do Saruni's parents help him to accomplish his goals? Be sure to reread pages 26-19 as you discuss.
5. What kind of kid is Saruni? With your child, brainstorm a list of different character trait words, like determined, patient, or hardworking. Ask your child to circle 2-3 words that describe Saruni, using Saruni's actions and words in the text to defend his or her choice.
6. In this story, Saruni learns that achieving goals requires hard work and patience. Flipping back through the pages of the story, ask your child to point out moments where Saruni needed to work hard or be patient, in order to buy a bicycle. Ask, “How do you know he has learned this lesson at the end of the story?”

### **EXTRA ACTIVITY**

*My Rows and Piles of Coins* gives families a glimpse into Tanzanian culture. Children can find many commonalities between themselves and Saruni, even though he lives in a different place. Have a discussion about the similarities and differences between your child's daily life and goals and Saruni's. You can use a Venn diagram like the one below to record your thinking, showing the similarities in the center section and the differences on the side sections.

