

Ruby Yayra Goka , Edmund Opare

Mama's Amazing Cover Cloth

Ghana (2018)

TAGS: [African Traditions](#)



We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
<i>Title of the work</i>	Mama's Amazing Cover Cloth
<i>Country of the First Edition</i>	Ghana
<i>Country/countries of popularity</i>	Ghana
<i>Original Language</i>	English
<i>First Edition Date</i>	2018
<i>First Edition Details</i>	Ruby Yayra Goka, <i>Mama's Amazing Cover Cloth</i> . Ill. by E. Opare, Legon-Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2018, 30 pp.
<i>ISBN</i>	9789988882969
<i>Genre</i>	Illustrated works, Juvenile fiction*, Picture books
<i>Target Audience</i>	Children
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Creators



Ruby Yayra Goka , b. 1982 (Author)

Ruby Yayra Goka is a Ghanaian dentist and writer. She was born on May 15th, 1982 to Simon Yao Goka, a diplomat, and Lydia Goka, a housewife. At the age of two, her family moved to Ethiopia where she attended Peter Pan International School and when she was six, they relocated back to Ghana where she continued studies up to university level. She obtained a BDS in the University of Ghana Dental School and later worked at Ridge Dental Hospital, Accra. In 2016, she became a member of the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons and is currently the head of the Dental Department of the Volta Regional Hospital. As a child, she was very passionate about stories and storytelling which eventually led her into writing. Her first published book for young adults, *The Mystery of the Haunted House* (2011), won the third prize in the Burt Award for African Literature competition in 2010. A year later, she published two other books, *Disfigured* and *In the Middle of Nowhere*. *Mama's Amazing Cover Cloth* won the 2019 Efua Sutherland Children's prize. Her other books include *Perfectly Imperfect* (2014), *The Lost Royal Treasure*, *When the Shackles Fall* and *The Step Monster* (2016).

Source:

Official [website](#) (accessed: July 30, 2021).

Bio prepared by Eleanor A. Dasi, University of Yaoundé I,
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Edmund Opare (Illustrator)

Edmund Opare holds a degree in graphic design from the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana. He is a full-time illustrator, renowned and experienced in Ghana, and has worked with many organisations across West Africa. He has illustrated many children's books including *Mimi Mystery*, *Nana and Me*, *City Sounds*, *Yennenga the Dagomba Princess*. He lives with his family in Accra, Ghana.

Sources:

africanbookscollective.com (accessed: July 30, 2021).

booknook.store (accessed: July 30, 2021).

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Additional information

Adaptations [Freda reads "Mama amazing cover cloth"](#), Ghana Book Development Council, YouTube (accessed: July 21, 2021).

Summary Mama uses her cover cloth (a piece of cloth that remains after the seamstress has sewn the *kaba**) for multiple purposes. These uses include: tying the cloth around her waist or head, protecting a newborn baby from the scorching sun, strapping the baby on her back, serving as a support to carry heavy objects as well as a bank where she saves money, and a mat on which the baby is laid to sleep. Most importantly, it is used by both men, women and children to perform different types of dances and as a carpet for the King to walk on during cultural festivities. Above all, Mama uses the cloth to tuck the daughter in before kissing her goodnight.

* A type of loose-fit outfit for women using traditionally designed and colourful fabric.

Analysis The narration is done by a little girl who has observed her mother use her cover cloth for different purposes to her amazement. The story portrays the ingenuity of the African woman and the various roles she plays in the home much to the admiration of her very young daughter. This admiration translates into the daughter's desire to be like the mother when she comes of age thus maintaining and sustaining cultural codes that relate to womanhood in African societies. The African woman is the pillar of the home and the society as seen in the different activities she uses her cover cloth for. These activities reveal her ability to take care of her home, bond with her daughter and positively participate in cultural events in her community.

What is also so peculiar about the story is the dressing of the African woman. The proper outfit for the woman is required to cover her body right down to her ankles as shown in the various flamboyant and colourful designs illustrated in the book. These illustrations portray clearly the various uses of the cover cloth as they move with the story.



In all, the story emphasizes the importance of maintaining Ghanaian cultural heritage through dressing/clothing and at the same time celebrating African womanhood in the transfer of values by example, both in the home and in the society at large. It is worth noting that the *kaba* is worn by women across southern, east and west Africa.

Classical, Mythological,
Traditional Motifs,
Characters, and
Concepts

[African Traditions](#)

Other Motifs, Figures,
and Concepts Relevant
for Children and Youth
Culture

[Child, children](#) [Gender expectations/construction](#) [Gender, female](#)
[Heritage](#) [Love](#) [Parents \(and children\)](#) [Relationships](#) [Tradition](#)

Further Reading

Gott, Suzanne, "The Ghanaian Kaba: Fashion that Sustains Culture", in Suzanne Gott and Kristyne Loughran, eds., *Contemporary African Fashion*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010.

Samuel, P., [Kabas and Couture: Contemporary Ghanaian Fashion](#), Harn Museum of Art: harn.ufl.edu (accessed: July 30, 2021).

Addenda

Origin: Ghana.

