

Wangari Maathai

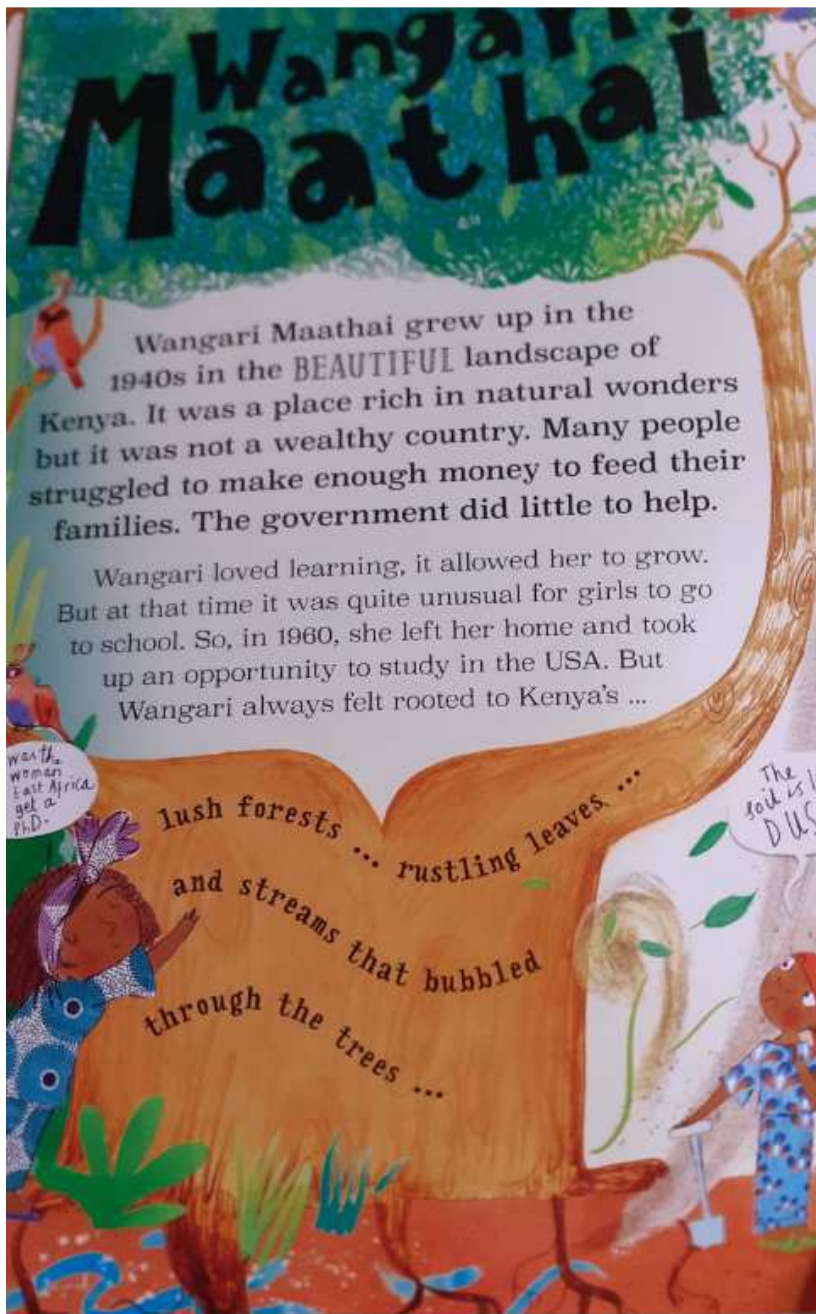
Wangari Maathai grew up in the 1940s in the BEAUTIFUL landscape of Kenya. It was a place rich in natural wonders but it was not a wealthy country. Many people struggled to make enough money to feed their families. The government did little to help.


Wangari loved learning, it allowed her to grow. But at that time it was quite unusual for girls to go to school. So, in 1960, she left her home and took up an opportunity to study in the USA. But Wangari always felt rooted to Kenya's ...

lush forests ... rustling leaves ...
and streams that bubbled
through the trees ...

Wangari
Maathai
East Africa
got a
Ph.D.

The
soil is
DUS





When Wangari moved back to Kenya the landscape had changed ...

Trees were **DISAPPEARING!**

The government was cutting down forests to make room for crops worth lots of money, like coffee. This is called **DEFORESTATION**. Without trees, things started to go very wrong ...

With no trees to trap water, streams have trickled away.

The soil is like DUST!

We can't grow crops!

Something must be done! The cost to the environment is too high.

We DO have the POWER to change our lives.

I don't like the way the country is run!

We won't let any more TREES be chopped down!

The government didn't like Wangari helping women to feel **powerful**. It wasn't used to anybody questioning what it did. Wangari faced threats and barriers to her work but she **REFUSED** to be **CUT DOWN**.

Things are GROWING well!

In 1977, Wangari started the **Green Belt Movement**. She taught people about how their actions can hurt the environment. Communities were encouraged to work together to plant new trees. **Wangari put women in charge!** With each new seed that was planted, **IDEAS** grew too ...

Wangari's movement has helped over **900,000** women sow seeds of change. Over **51 million** trees have been planted.

In 2002, Kenya's government finally changed and Wangari joined the new team so she could help them to protect the environment. In 2004, Wangari was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for her incredible work.

The Green Belt Movement continues to plant trees in Kenya and think of ideas and ways to tackle the threat of deforestation around the world.