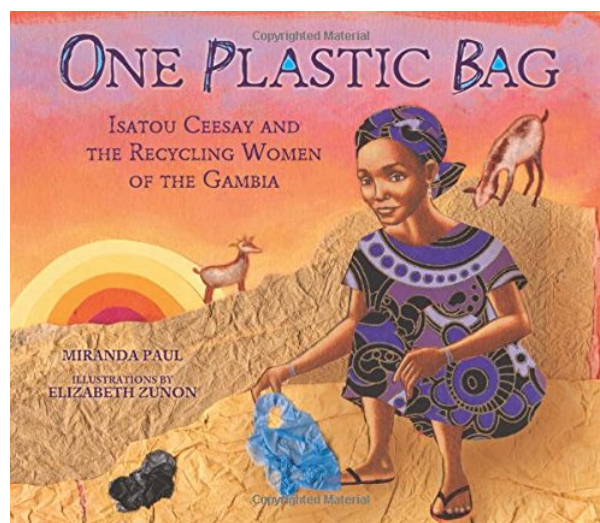
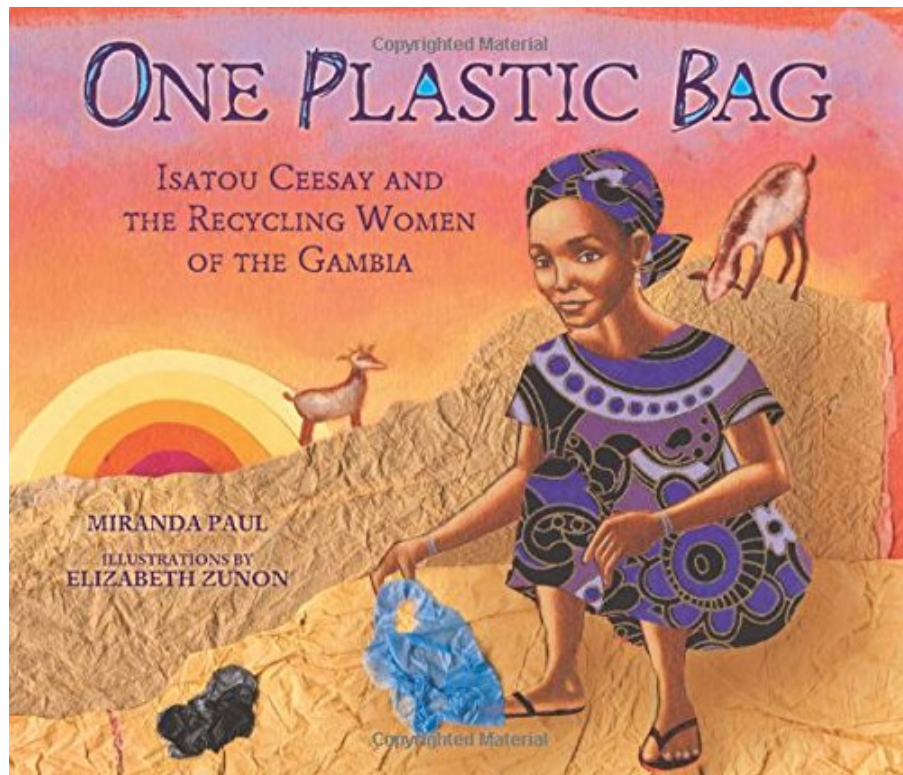


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THE RECYCLING WOMEN OF THE GAMBIA  
(MILLBROOK PICTURE BOOKS) BY  
MIRANDA PAUL**



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From School Library Journal

Gr 1–4—The simple format of this picture book belies the strength of its content, a story lovingly supported by charming collage illustrations. As a girl, Ceesay realized that the goats on which her village relied were dying because they were eating plastic bags. She also saw that people were tossing the used bags on the ground just as they had always thrown away their baskets when no longer useful—except the plastic bags, unlike the baskets, weren't biodegradable. So Ceesay figured out how to use crochet, a skill with which the villagers were already familiar, to make purses out of the plastic bags. Simple but lyrical text conveys this beautiful, thought-provoking tale of ecological awareness and recycling ("The basket tips. One fruit tumbles. Then two. Then ten."). An inspiring account.—Dorcas Hand, Annunciation Orthodox School, Houston, TX

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Miranda Paul was inspired by Isatou Ceesay's story while volunteering in the Gambia. She now lives in Green Bay, Wisconsin, with her husband and two children. Find out more at [mirandapaul.com](http://mirandapaul.com) and [oneplasticbag.com](http://oneplasticbag.com).

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Plastic bags are cheap and easy to use. But what happens when a bag breaks or is no longer needed? In Njau, Gambia, people simply dropped the bags and went on their way. One plastic bag became two. Then ten. Then a hundred.

The bags accumulated in ugly heaps alongside roads. Water pooled in them, bringing mosquitoes and disease. Some bags were burned, leaving behind a terrible smell. Some were buried, but they strangled gardens. They killed livestock that tried to eat them. Something had to change.

Isatou Ceesay was that change. She found a way to recycle the bags and transform her community. This inspirational true story shows how one person's actions really can make a difference in our world.

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- Published on: 2015-02-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .40" w x 10.80" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Library Binding
- 32 pages

From School Library Journal

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6 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

This is the amazing story of Isatou, a young woman who empowered others by looking for solutions ...

By Deb

Isatou held her head up high and soon would close in on Nijau, her village. Raindrops fell all around her, but soon her palm-leaf basket would tumble to the ground to mix with the rain and dirt. Isatou's fruit was scattered about the ground, but there was no way to carry it. There was some "strange fabric" dancing in the wind, a fabric that would hold her fruit. Her palm-leaf basket would be left behind to "crumble and mix back in with the dirt." Grandmother Mbombeh frowned at the sight of Isatou's strange fabric bag. "Plastic," she exclaimed, "There's more in the city."

The plastic bag didn't last and soon Isatou left it behind. The bags seemed to multiply with blue ones, red one, clear ones, and even purple. There were more and more because "one plastic bag becomes two ... then ten ... then a hundred." The years passed by and Isatou found herself to be a woman, hardly noticing "the ugliness around her." The goats had begun eating those very bags, the ugliness she had passed by, and were dying. The goats were foraging in the garbage, eating the bags. Isatou began collecting the bags, but what would she do with them?

This is the amazing story of Isatou, a young woman who empowered others by looking for solutions. Isatou Cheesay watched as garbage began to overtake and destroy Njau, Gambia. Rather than ignore it, she began to gather up the ugliness and turned it into a thing of beauty, "recycled plastic purses." Other women began to crochet and Isatou's solution began to reclaim her village. Young students will enjoy learning about her journey in an expanded author's note. There is a photograph of Isatou and some other women of Njau. In the back of the book is an index, a "Wolof Glossary and Pronunciation Guide, a Timeline (1970s to 2014), and additional recommended book resources to explore.

This book courtesy of the publisher.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

I highly recommend it!

By David's Wife

This is a beautifully illustrated book about how one woman in Gambia, West Africa decided to reduce the amount of plastic bags littering the area and killing animals when they ate them by crocheting items out of the plastic and selling them. I think that the book shows the problems from the plastic bag pollution and how one woman helped to change the situation. This book would be great in elementary school and middle school libraries to use when teaching about pollution and recycling. I have crocheted items from plastic bags and the plastic is not as gentle and comfortable to knit with as yarn or fabric. I received this book free to review from Netgalley and I highly recommend it.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

#### WHY I LIKE THIS BOOK

By Kirsten Larson

**WHY I LIKE THIS BOOK:** One Plastic Bag has so many hooks. First, Miranda incorporates Gambian culture and language into the text, immersing the reader into Isatou's world. Second, the book has great read aloud-ability. Miranda uses a repeating refrain: "first one, then two, then ten," which makes kids want to chant along. Finally, who can resist a story about one person seeing an insurmountable problem and taking a small step that leads to a giant change?

#### RESOURCES/ACTIVITIES:

One Plastic Bag's Web site is packed with activities and information, including a PowerPoint about The Gambia and instructions for turning plastic bags into purses.

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