

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind

The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind is an inspirational story that follows William Kamkwamba, a 13 year old boy living in Malawi, who creates a wind turbine to help restore water in his village after flooding ruins their grain fields. A corrupt and neglectful government's selfish decisions lead William's village to famine, causing a trickle down of catastrophic events. William, a gifted and curious student fascinated by electronics and making things work, believes he can provide enough electricity to water the dry land. He demonstrates courage by defying all odds and gathering enough information and material, despite having very minimal access to resources. This curiosity and drive can be attributed to his parents' constant encouragement to stay in school as a foundation of a better life than they had. Even when they struggle to make ends meet and provide school fees for their son, William perseveres through with the help of the school librarian and uses a borrowed book to gather enough information to build the wind turbine.

Overall, the latter half of *The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind* intensifies more than the light, community-oriented beginning. In the opening, Trywell is a calm, gentle father, but as his family gets hungrier, his rage toward his government, which has failed to help them thrive, grows bigger. As William's mother, Agnes, is a much steadier figure, the family hits their lowest point when also she grows pessimistic, after hungry men invade their home and forcibly steal grain, leaving them with little to nothing to survive off of. As food supplies slowly diminish, some of the villagers give in to buyouts and looters,

introducing the conflict between tradition and modernity. This theme can be further observed through the director, Ejifor's decision to force his characters to refrain from speaking English for the majority of the movie, despite the film being intended for a broader audience. This choice to swing between English and Chichewa, mostly using the latter, at a time when most film-makers are choosing to avoid subtitles, even when telling stories from foreign countries, is personally very refreshing and interestingly highlights the mentioned above idea of tradition versus modernity in rural Africa. When closely analyzed, it can be inferred that the movie is less about one town's famine stricken days, but more about a broader idea that people, particularly in underdeveloped countries, should have access to the education that can benefit their communities.

Throughout the entire movie, it is evident that William has inherited his father's sense of principle. When his friends encourage him to run away from his family and starving village, he refuses. Not only does William need to gather the materials needed for a windmill in a nearly empty town, but he also has to persuade his father to give up his bicycle, the only remaining possession he has, to create something that sounds impossible. This brings forth a complexity in the characterisation, as the father who's always craved education for his children must now deal with the consequences of feeling less intelligent than them and of the crippling financial impact. With his infectious enthusiasm, William acts as the glue holding together everything around him, as we follow his maturing journey from a youthful child to a solicitous rescuer. His story

showcases a lot of hardships, but with a little courage and perseverance, he fulfills his dream of turning wind into water, thereby restoring hope for the future of his village.