



# Reading Roundup

## One Plastic Bag

Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia

Written by Miranda Paul  
Illustrated by Elizabeth Zunon



Reading Roundup  
Partners



### Introduction

Gather the students around you so that they are able to see the illustrations of the book. Most classrooms will have an area rug defining this space. Introduce yourself and tell the students that you are excited to share One Plastic Bag: Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia, written by Miranda Paul and illustrated by Elizabeth Zunon.

### Before Reading

*One Plastic Bag: Isatou Ceesay and the Recycling Women of the Gambia* tells the true story of Isatou, a young woman who, with the help of friends, changes her village for the better. Isatou is from Gambia, a country in West Africa. She notices a problem that starts small, but over time, the problem is so serious she must solve the problem. Isatou not only solves the problem, she turns the problem into an adventure. Let's read together to learn what this creative woman does to make the world a better place.



## During Reading

- Begin reading the book by starting on the title page. Hold the book so that students are able to see the illustrations. Give plenty of time for students to “read” and think about the pictures. Continue to read through **page 5**.

- **Page 5 – T/T** – *Isatou is having a day like most days, carrying fruit from the market to her home. Suddenly, things change. The basket breaks, the fruit tumbles. Turn and talk to your partner about what you predict Isatou might do to carry the fruit to her home?* (Accept all logical answers. She may need to go home to get another basket, or she may have to ask for help.)

- **Page 6 – P** – *Something floats through the air in front of Isatou. She realizes it can carry things inside. What do you think she found? Do you think Isatou had ever seen something like this before?* (Accept all answers. If children don't have a prediction, continue to read.)

- **Page 13 – T/T** – *For many years, Isatou barely notices the plastic bags. Turn and talk to your partner about what the author means when she writes, “until the ugliness finds its way to her.”* (We don't always notice a problem until it affects us personally.) *Let's read on to learn how the ugliness finds its way to Isatou.*

- **Page 17 –T/T** – *Again and again, the author explains that most problems start small and gradually get bigger. Turn and talk to your partner about the words the author repeats to tell us that usually big problems are not just created over time, but also solved over time.* (The author repeats – One. Then two. Then ten. Then a hundred.)

- **Page 22 – T/T** – *Look at the faces of the women. Some people are making fun of them and calling them names. The women are working after dark to stay away from the people who are mocking them. Turn to your partner and talk about what the women might be saying to each other. Remember, they're tired and their feelings have been hurt.* (Accept all answers. Children may infer that the women encourage each other. Other children may conclude that the women are discouraged and want to quit the project.)

- **Page 28 – P** – *Isatou solved the garbage problem by making purses out of crocheted plastic. What happened to Isatou and the women of Gambia who helped make the purses.* (They made enough money to buy a goat for their village.)

## After Reading

*Isatou and the women of Gambia are still making purses from used plastic bags. You can buy the purses online. The money raised has been used to protect animals, fight diseases, and make the soil more fertile. The money is also used to send the girls who make the purses to school.*

**Remember**, most great plans start small. They start with a simple idea that may or may not, work. You'll never know until you try.

## Vocabulary

**emerge** – come forward, p. 8

**tote** - carry, p.10

**scamper** – hurry, p.17

**forage** – search, p. 17

**mock** – make fun of, p.23



**WORD  
WAGON**