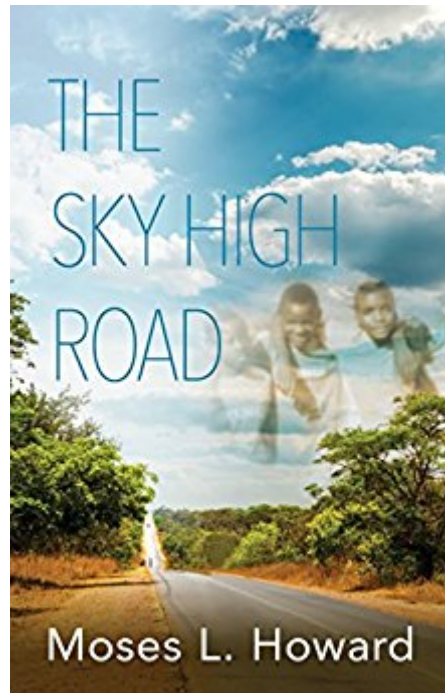




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# The Sky High Road



## Synopsis

A footballer faces crushing odds - against the Lord's Liberation Army! How to keep hope kindled for a brighter future? Jason, a teenage soccer player in a Ugandan village, is worried about his O-levels and grieving his father's death from AIDS. His grandmother sends Jason and his sister Katura on a journey to her home village. That unwanted chore turns to catastrophe when they are enslaved as child-soldiers in the Lord's Liberation Army. Jason and Katura battle their insane captors, who inflict hideous harm on the children they kidnap. Escaping, Jason and Katura encounter both helpers and new dangers on the journey home. Can they bring home more than a solar lantern for their grandmother, carrying new light for their future in Uganda? The Sky High Road is a coming-of-age story for readers in grades 7-12, young adults, and all readers interested in the coming-of-age challenges for educated adolescents in 21st century African villages.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A 21st Century Taste of Honey per Sweet Birds of Youth In an era in which there's a

paradoxical countrywide police extension of Jim Crowism, despite the election of America's first black president, it's a riveting, a completely engrossing and compelling experience to read an African American male writer who captures so wholesomely the sheer heart-rending and yet sanguine humanity of black youth coming of age. Such a writer is Moses Leon Howard.

Howard's chapters are like the scenes of a well-written screenplay, perhaps a television screenplay. I would say he's a past master of tension resolution and that his narrative structure is all about emotion. The co-protagonist Jason and his sister Katura suffer emotional shock after emotional shock on their extraordinarily suspenseful journey to their Grandpa at Nanansi, Uganda to fetch a special solar lamp for their Grandma, who has travelled to Ruizi Town, Uganda to take care of their mother who is dying of AIDS. They had already lost their father to AIDS. I expect Howard's readers will react to the emotional shocks exactly as he would wish them to where and when in the narrative. Each chapter is a story in miniature and possesses its own activity and change. Howard's rhythm and tempo as related to variation in chapter length is modern and very likely to keep a teenage reader's attention. "The Sky High Road" is allegorical particularly in the sense that the story can be interpreted to reveal hidden cultural meanings, which are moral and/or political. Jason passed the test for being a good young man by refusing the tempting opportunity to engage in sex with Selina, Katura's friend, and irresponsibly running the risk of contacting AIDS. "You need to know that everything in science is connected to everything else" seems to echo the Quantum Physics claim that the entire universe is likely to be connected atomically. Jason's best friend, Biraro, offers superb folk wisdom: "Sometimes life makes choices for us." Jason himself comes of age accepting he'll remain in Uganda, rather than study abroad, to become a surrogate parent to his younger sisters. A totally engaging read. Joseph F Towns III

Moses is a stalwart member of Teachers for East Africa Alumni/TEAA who has written books over the past 40 years. He has lived, worked, married in Uganda and knows the land well. Thus the wonderfully authentic background to his story; he provides us with details that make his story rich. The narrative line is strong. Jason and Katura have a wealth of experiences in this young adult novel that reveal the kinds of pressures that youth face in unstable lands. What rings truest is the sense of agency that the characters have and that they are "well, most of them are" good people. As the acknowledgments declare, this author has at least one more book in him, and I shall be looking for it. A great read.

I read *The Sky High Road* and purchased copies for a teenage niece and nephew. The story was thrilling! I was transported to another land and another culture as two teenagers struggled for freedom from capturers who wanted to turn them into child soldiers. The visual images in the story were transfixing. I felt I had a front row seat. The story was well written and appropriate for adults as well as teenagers.

I enjoyed this book and could not put it down. It combines a classic adventure story with the political realities and real-life dangers facing African children today. I have read this book over a few times and it shows me something new every single time.

*The Sky High Road* by Moses Howard is all that the previous commenters and the publisher have said. It is a thrilling adventure story and yes, as claimed, it is suitable for grades 7-12, though I believe adults too will be enthralled. With ten years on the ground in Uganda and neighboring Kenya, Mr. Howard brings a rich authenticity to this book and he does not shrink from difficult topics. Families who read this book will find much to discuss.

Moses Howard's young adult novel gives us an insight on what it might be like to grow up as a teen-ager in Uganda with the Lord's Liberation Army terrorizing the public, especially young people. The writing is lyrical and powerful, the story compelling and timely.

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