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The Queen of Katwe: One Girl's Triumphant Path to Becoming a Chess Champion

Tim Crothers

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Soon to be a major motion picture starring Academy Award winner Lupita Nyong'o and David Oyelowo, directed by Mira Nair.

The "astonishing" (*The New York Times Book Review*) and "inspirational" (*Shelf Awareness*) true story of Phiona Mutesi—a teenage chess prodigy from the slums of Uganda.

One day in 2005 while searching for food, nine-year-old Ugandan Phiona Mutesi followed her brother to a dusty veranda where she met Robert Katende.

Katende, a war refugee turned missionary, had an improbable dream: to empower kids in the Katwe slum through chess—a game so foreign there is no word for it in their native language. Laying a chessboard in the dirt, Robert began to teach. At first children came for a free bowl of porridge, but many grew to love the game that—like their daily lives—requires persevering against great obstacles. Of these kids, one girl stood out as an immense talent: Phiona.

By the age of eleven Phiona was her country's junior champion, and at fifteen, the national champion. Now a Woman Candidate Master—the first female titled player in her country's history—Phiona dreams of becoming a Grandmaster, the most elite level in chess. But to reach that goal, she must grapple with everyday life in one of the world's most unstable countries. *The Queen of Katwe* is a "remarkable" (NPR) and "riveting" (*New York Post*) book that shows how "Phiona's story transcends the limitations of the chessboard" (Robert Hess, US Grandmaster).

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