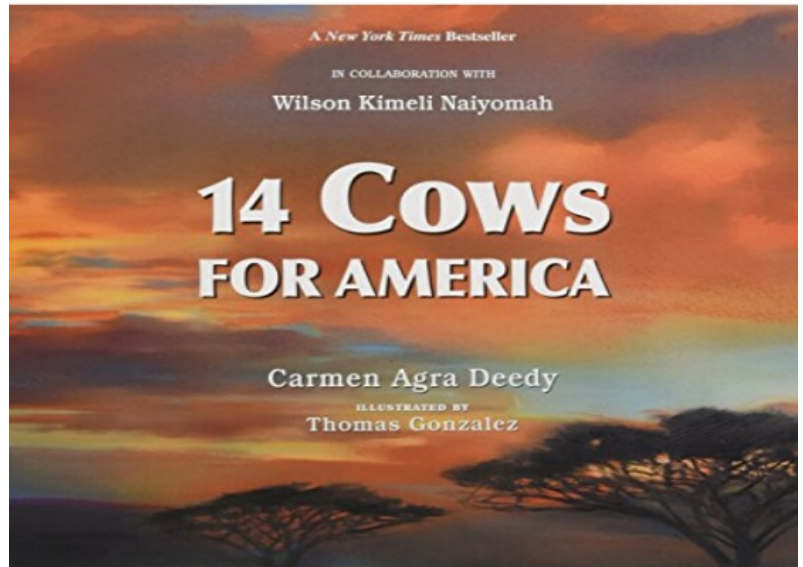




14 COWS FOR AMERICA

CARMEN AGRA DEEDY

When Kimeli, a Maasai boy, goes home to Africa and tells all of his tribe about the events in New York, where he goes to school. They are so moved that they decide to do whatever they can to help. They dedicate 14 cows to America.



Questions:

1. What would it be like to live that far away from all cities and from other people? What would it be like to have that many animals around?
2. Why are the kids so excited to see him? Is he dressed the same as they are?
3. Kimeli is Maasai, a ancient tribe of people in Africa that are still a tight-knit community today. What do you think it would be like to belong to such a strong community and culture and go somewhere else, where everything is very different?
4. Are cows important to your life? Why are they so important to the Maasai? How is your life different from the life of a Maasai person? How is it the same? How do you think Kimeli feels, coming home from so far away? How does he feel that he must leave again soon?
5. He lived in New York when September 11 happened. The story “burned a hole in his heart”. What do you think that means? How does he feel?
6. How do you think the Maasai felt hearing the story of what happened on September 11? The Maasai are “easily moved to kindness when they heard of suffering or injustice.” Is that a good thing or a bad thing? Are you easily moved to kindness, or can you work on being kinder?
7. To the Maasai, the cow is life. What do you think they will do to help?
8. Have you ever seen or been a part of a ceremony like that? How do you think people feel during these ceremonies? How does the man from the embassy feels when he sees it?
9. “There is no nation so powerful it cannot be wounded, nor a people so small they cannot offer mighty comfort.” Is this true of people too? Is there any person who cannot get hurt? Is there anyone who is too weak to help someone else somehow? Can we all do something for others?



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Questions:

10. Fourteen cows are a big deal for the Maasai people. They were symbolic- they did not slaughter and eat the cows, but instead they kept them healthy and took great care of them. When the American ambassador visited to see the cows and meet the Maasai tribe that was giving them up, he was moved to tears by the generosity and empathy of the Maasai. Did America get a physical gift from the Maasai? No. What they got was empathy, which is an even bigger gift.

