



## Under the Same Sun

*Sharon Robinson*

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## **Under the Same Sun** Sharon Robinson

A Tanzanian family welcomes their Auntie Sharon and Grandmother Bibi from America for a very special occasion: a surprise safari in honor of the matriarch's 85th birthday. After three days of marveling at the sights and sounds of the Serengeti, Father—Auntie Sharon's brother—takes the group to the coastal town of Bagamoyo (Swahili for "to let go of one's heart") and tells its sad history as a slave-trading post. "We are much more fortunate than our African ancestors who were forced to leave the country that they loved and had no chance of returning," Father says. "We are blessed with the freedom to move back and forth." Robinson (Jackie's Gift), the daughter of baseball legend Jackie Robinson, bases this book on family history and a family trip, and while her tale isn't particularly dramatic, her pride in her family's resilience shines through. Ford's (Barack) acrylics don't add much emotional depth despite their detail and rich palette, but he brings a matter-of-fact approach to a distant landscape that underscores how a close family can transcend geography.

## **Under the Same Sun Details**

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Author : Sharon Robinson

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Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Family, Cultural, Africa, Realistic Fiction, Nonfiction, African American

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## From Reader Review Under the Same Sun for online ebook

### Emily says

1. This book tells the story of a family that lives in Tanzania and are awaiting the arrival of their Grandmother and Aunt, whom they haven't seen in years, to visit from America. When they arrive, all the children can think about is the safari they are taking their Grandmother on for her 85th birthday. She loves this surprise and they spend a few days exploring. On their way home they stop at an historic town called Bagamoyo which was home to a slave trading post and they tell the story of it to their children. After this trip, they start counting down the days until they will see each other again.
2. This is a beautifully illustrated and written story that has so much history and information in it. It tells the readers how important family is, about the African safari, about slavery and about never forgetting who you are or where you are from. The author's note in the back of the book gives the true story behind it and is a great thing to read to your students!
3. "Elephants and Giraffes" by Francois Bissonette gives facts, information and pictures about elephants and giraffes which are two animals they see in the book.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYpsf...> is a video of people going on an African safari and the animals that they saw.

4. "Early the next morning, their guide arrived to pick them up and told them the rules: 'The animals may look beautiful and harmless,' he said, 'but they are still wild! They are not caged like they are at the zoo, but roam freely. On a safari, it is humans who must stay in their cages!'"

This quote, along with the next pages in the book that talk about specific animals, would be a good reading to start a unit on animals in the African safari. They can research and write about another animal from the African safari on their own.

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### Sunah Chung says

Grandmother Bibi and Auntie Sharon, who is the author of this book, visit Tanzania from America to see their family. Their Tanzanian family has a plan to tour Serengeti and celebrate Grandmother Bibi's birthday. The last stop they visit is the place of the coastal town of Bagamoyo where it was once a slave-trading post. The author tells the history of African who were captured and shipped to America as slaves.

First, I thought this story would be about immigration. Immigrants live separately from their family in different countries, but they are still under the same sun as the title implies. Unlike my expectations, the author incorporates slave history into the separations of the family. I love the ways that the author illustrates what it means to be a slave. They were stolen from their families and country, forced to work without payment, and not allowed to go back to their families. The slave system is a tragedy in human history, and this book elaborates on the history with the story of a family reunion. However, the last page of the story has lots of text compared to the previous pages of the story, and it overwhelmed my feeling of being moved by the story. Illustrations were done in oil paintings, portraying beautiful landscapes of Serengeti. At the end of

the book, the author added photographs of her family in Tanzania and a map to show the location of the country. What I was interested in was the language, Swahili, which is predominantly used in East Africa. It tells that Bibi means Grandmother. So far, I thought Bibi is the grandmother's name. I am still confused about it because the author wrote that "Today Auntie Sharon and Grandmother Bibi were coming to Tanzania for a visit... (Unpaged)". Does it mean that Bibi is her name? In other words, does it mean that the word of a grandmother in Swahili is Bibi, and the grandmother's name is the same by chance? Overall, I liked the techniques to elaborate personal story and historical backgrounds. However, wordiness and confusion that may come from my lack of knowledge disturbed me to enjoy the book.

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### **Joni says**

Wonderful story with very happy illustrations.

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### **Rachael Dixon Eklund says**

Such a great story about extended family who lives far away. Perfect book to use as a compare and contrast of cultures. Excellent diverse book to add to your library.

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### **Shelli says**

This is a true story of the grandson of Jackie Robinson and his desire to reconnect with a heritage that was denied to him as it was to so many dependents of African people who were stolen from their homes and sold into a life of slavery. *Under the Same Sun* is a beautiful and touching read of a family separated by an ocean that works hard to remain connected.

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### **Kelly Shiverdecker says**

Published: 2014

This realistic fiction book is about a family who is getting a visit from their grandma and aunt from a different continent and they shared each other's culture and learned from one another, having a great time.

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### **Gabbi says**

This book is such a powerful book. It incorporates history, culture, and family throughout the story. The characters in the story are from Africa and it discusses that their ancestors were taken from Africa and made slaves in America. The family's mother/grandmother visit from America and they go on a Safari. Without giving too much away, the children learn more about their ancestors and Bagamoyo. The illustrations in the story are very life like and colorful. There isn't any white used at all. I would give this story 4 out of 5 stars,

but only because there is some words in the story that may be hard to pronounce for children. Overall, it was a good book!

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### **Kristen says**

Realistic Fiction

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### **Crystal says**

First off, the illustrations were wonderful. I also appreciated that this book gives us a view of Tanzania. There wasn't really a storyline, but it was a recounting of a series of events in a family visit. I enjoyed seeing the market and the safari too. There is also a bit of a history lesson towards the end with a visit to a place that had been used for slave trafficking. Finally, the author's note gives background information. I like that this book shows another face of Africa.

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### **Jenny Humerickhouse says**

Very good book. I read this to Elementary aged kids, very good at explaining history and diversity.

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### **Christopher says**

An admirable effort from Sharon Robinson, Under The Same Sun suffers from too many elements in one story. In 32 pages, we get fun family times, an extensive African safari (featuring animals you would expect to see) plus a lesson about the slave trade. The last page comes off as preachy and more like a school lesson than the ending to a story about the fun times between a family reuniting for fun times. Noble but could have been better.

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### **Angela says**

This is a good story about family togetherness despite distance. The illustrations by AG Ford and the Author's Note at the end really make this book.

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### **Peg says**

Auntie Sharon (the author) and Grandmother Bibi travel from America to celebrate Bibi's eighty-fifth birthday with brother/son David and his family in Tanzania. And what a celebration! Bibi and Auntie spend a few days getting caught up with the family and reacclimated to life and culture there, having a joyous time together. Then the entire family drives to the Serengeti, where they go on a glorious safari, thoroughly

enjoying the animals and each other. On their way back home, they visit the museum and ruins at Bagamoyo, a slave-trading post, and the story shifts to their family history and the part slavery and oppression played in it. The joyous tone swiftly swings to one of sadness and pensiveness as the children hear their family's story and face Bibi's and Auntie's impending departure back to the States. This abrupt change is jarring. AG Ford's acrylic and oil paintings beautifully convey the beauty of the land, the energy of the local market, and the joy of this family reunion. When the story alters tone, he alters his palette as well, moving to subdued browns and sepia. The double-page spread of the family, in silhouette, walking along the beach is exquisite.

Photographs of the family and local foods, a small Swahili glossary, and a map complete the book. The story lacks drama, but is a sweet reminiscence of treasured time together, making it worthwhile exploration of cross-cultural, intergenerational ties that could be used in social studies or language arts classes, as well as at home. 2014, Scholastic, \$17.99. Ages 5 to 9.

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### **Andy says**

A wonderful, exquisite story that introduces Jackie Robinson's family to readers. Written by his daughter Sharon Robinson and beautifully illustrated by AG Ford, the story chronicles Sharon and her mother Ruth Robinson's visit to Africa to see brother/son David and his family and to celebrate Ruth's 85th birthday. This book is a treasure, full of love, laughter, lament and poignancy. A must read.

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### **Samantha says**

In honor of her 85th birthday, Grandmother Bibi and Auntie Sharon travel from America to Tanzania to celebrate with extended family. The family embarks on a three day safari and witness elephants, zebras, and giraffes on their native soil.

On the trip back home the family visits Bagamoyo, the ruins house a museum that was once home to a slave-trading post. Together the family explores their shared history and feel their impending goodbyes on the horizon.

Back matter includes an author's note that reveals the details of the real life trip that inspired this book, a map, a list of Swahili words, and a page (with pictures) of Tanzanian cuisine.

This book read very well. It is apparent even before flipping to the back matter that this story is inspired by an actual experience of the land, people, and animals of Tanzania. I liked all of the realistic details in both text and illustrations that help readers in America picture life in Tanzania. From the mosquito netting that is strung up around the guest room bed to the market trips the family makes for fresh fruit, readers are awash in a slice of life view of Tanzania.

Acrylic paintings finished in oil make up the artwork in the book. The illustrator excels at capturing the beauty and the majesty of the animals the family views while on safari and also at capturing the expressions of the various family members.

Recommended reading for PreK-2 that helps give youngsters a global view of family, animals, and history.

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