



Same Sun Here

By Silas House, Neela Vaswani

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In this extraordinary novel in letters, an Indian immigrant girl in New York City and a Kentucky coal miner's son find strength and perspective by sharing their true selves across the miles.

Meena and River have a lot in common: fathers forced to work away from home to make ends meet, grandmothers who mean the world to them, and faithful dogs. But Meena is an Indian immigrant girl living in New York City's Chinatown, while River is a Kentucky coal miner's son. As Meena's family studies for citizenship exams and River's town faces devastating mountaintop removal, this unlikely pair become pen pals, sharing thoughts and, as their camaraderie deepens, discovering common ground in their disparate experiences. With honesty and humor, Meena and River bridge the miles between them, creating a friendship that inspires bravery and defeats cultural misconceptions. Narrated in two voices, each voice distinctly articulated by a separate gifted author, this chronicle of two lives powerfully conveys the great value of being and having a friend and the joys of opening our lives to others who live beneath the same sun.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 4-7-Meena, a recent immigrant from India, lives in Manhattan's Chinatown with her family. Through a program arranged by their schools, she becomes a pen pal with River, who lives in rural Kentucky and is the son of a coal miner. They exchange letters via snail mail and, as a result, learn about each other and themselves. Sharing day-to-day activities, secrets, opinions, and questions, Meena and River start to break down barriers and talk about their lives. Their letters reveal their many similarities and differences. They both have a close relationship with their grandmothers, love dogs, and their fathers work far away in order to provide for their families. They maintain their correspondence as they go through some difficult moments in their lives such as when Meena faces the death of her grandmother in India and when River's town faces environmental concerns related to coal mining. The novel (Candlewick, 2012) is perfectly narrated by authors Silas House (River) and Neela Vaswani (Meena), further invigorating the story with their Southern and Indian accents. This tale about debunking cultural stereotypes, friendship, and finding common ground will resonate with listeners.-Katie Llera, Sayreville Middle School, NJα(c) Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Review

Even better than reading a refreshingly honest story by one talented writer is reading one by two such writers. House and Vaswani alternate between the voices of Meena and River. The two connect as pen pals, and their letters reveal the unusual intersections and the stark contrasts in their lives... Readers will feel confident that their friendship will get them through whatever lies ahead.

—Publishers Weekly (starred review)

This tender and breathtakingly honest story about unlikely friendships and finding common ground will captivate readers... In an era when social media permeates every area of our lives, Meena and River's old-fashioned camaraderie through letters feels refreshing and true. Audiences will revel in this lovely story about a boy and girl who are not so different from one another after all.

—School Library Journal (starred review)

About the Author

Silas House is the nationally best-selling author of *Eli the Good* as well as the award-winning novels *Clay's Quilt*, *A Parchment of Leaves*, and *The Coal Tattoo*. He is an associate professor at Berea College and lives in eastern Kentucky.

Neela Vaswani is the award-winning author of *You Have Given Me a Country* and *Where the Long Grass Bends*. Her work has received an American Book Award, an O. Henry Prize, and a ForeWord Magazine Book of the Year Award. She teaches at Spalding University's MFA in writing program and is the founder of the Storylines Project with the New York Public Library. Neela Vaswani lives in New York City.

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