

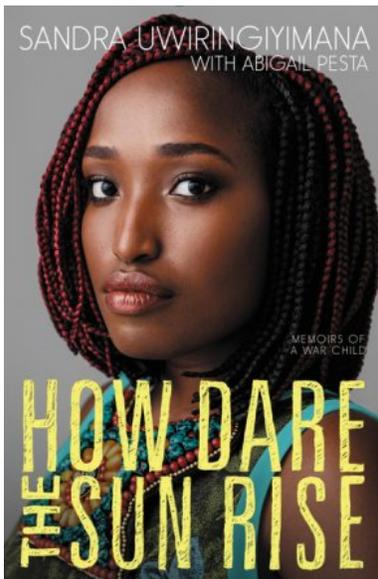
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English 112B

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Book Talk: *How Dare the Sun Rise: Memoirs of a War Child*



Sandra Uwiringiyimana-

Sandra grew up in the Congo and the member of a large traditional family. Her childhood inspired the storyline of this book. From great heartbreak, to feeling lost and what it is like to grow up as a refugee. She immigrated to Rochester New York at age twelve and eventually graduated from Mercy College.



Abigail Pesta-

“Abigail Pesta is an award-winning journalist and author who has lived and worked around the world, including New York, London and Hong Kong. She is the coauthor of "*How Dare the Sun Rise*," a

memoir of a young woman's phenomenal escape from a childhood massacre in Africa and her journey to a new life in America (HarperCollins, May 2017).” (<http://abigailpesta.com/>)

UWIRINGIYIMANA, SANDRA. HOW DARE THE SUN RISE: Memoirs of a War Child.
KATHERINE TEGEN BOOKS, 2018.

Summary:

For Sandra Uwiringiyimana and her family, every day was based on routine and tradition. Until one fateful night where her world was shaken forever. Living in Congo, she was used to mentions of war and the distant sound of gunfire. Her small village in Congo was raided by rebels who took the life of her youngest sister and severely injured a number of her family. From that moment on Sandra and her family were displaced throughout Africa until their case was approved to become refugees in America. Living in America posed a number of challenges for her as a teen and learning to fit in. In an attempt to forget the past she tries not to lose her tradition and even faces new heartbreak. However, sharing her story has led her to great heights, including the chance to speak in front of world leaders.

Three Quotes:

“I prayed to God. “If you keep my parents alive, I will be good,” I promised. At the same time, I knew my mother had just been gunned down. She must be dead. Deborah must be dead too... I begged God to please let us all survive” (p.9).

Though a gruesome quote, I included this to show how tragic the night was for her. It is the raw description of what happened to her and her family. It really shows the sense of panic she had in this moment. Though she lost her younger sister and the rest of her family survived, she truly did think the worst had happened. This quote also shows a fundamental component of her

life, her faith. Throughout the book she mentions how in times of need her family would call on God and how a church community helped her find her place in America.

“It was light out when we found them, the sun rising slowly in a pale-blue sky, casting a warm glow over the fields of sorrow and grief. I remember thinking: How dare the sun rise, as if it were just any other day, after such a gruesome night” (p. 82).

When I read this second quote I knew it had to be mentioned. I was intrigued by the title when picking this book and as I read this it all came full circle for me. It was truly heartbreaking for me to read. There are some parts of the day that will never change, in some manner the sun will always rise and it will always set. In America, for me personally, I just focus on how beautiful they are and do not take time to consider that this marks the start or the end of a tragedy somewhere that I could never fathom experiencing. Though I feel worlds away from Congo and what is described in this book, I am realizing that no matter where we are in the world we share the same sky, wants and wishes. This quote taught me that we aren't as distant as we think.

“No one knocked on our door. Mom was surprised by how lonely and isolated America felt... We never locked our doors” (p. 124).

For the third quote, I chose the one where that helped sum up their experiences in America. The raid and murder of her sister was just the start of a long journey for Sandra and her family. Though in many ways she was safer in the States, it was not easy for her to adjust to the customs here. In 7th grade, her family faced more tragedy while living in America. Her father, while riding his bike, was hit by a car and spent months in a coma. When he woke, he was never

the same and it started a time of frustration for her and her family as they learned to cope with having to care for their father. For her family, it was a set of new challenges for them to overcome. Sandra also speaks about overcoming challenges we all face as young teens which shows that we are more connected than we think. She struggles with wanting to look and dress a certain way and to be accepted by her peers.

4th Credit Enhancement - Evaluating the Author's Style

This book was much different from what I am used to reading. Sandra Uwiringiyimana co-wrote the story of her life with Abigail Pesta. Though it is a true story, it still makes for a page turner of a book. The book starts with the night of the raid and the book continues in a way to showcase the growth of both Sandra and her family. The style of Pesta and Uwiringiyimana is very honest and raw. There is no part of this book that seems filtered and it definitely not a book that is easy to digest. Though told only from the perspective of Sandra, both authors include quotes and the feelings of others involved in the storyline. Each chapter focuses on a different piece of her life which helps keep things in chronological order for the most part.

Why This Book Should Be Given to Teens:

- It is an eye opening read that exposes teens to a story that they might never get to hear in their history courses.
- This book shows that though in America, young adults can't identify with parts of this book, Sandra and her family still dealt with things many Americans do.

- Though hard to read at parts, this book is an honest story and ultimately inspiring for anyone who reads it.

Text Complexity:

The Lexile Score for *How Dare the Sun Rise: Memoirs of a War Child* is 790L. This makes the suggested reading level from ages 14-17. I believe this is the correct age range for young adults. However, I do think this book is beneficial for an older audience as well. At ages 14-17, teens are forming opinions on world issues through various history courses. I think this book would be a good component to show the unfiltered story of a girl who survived the unthinkable. Especially in this political climate, where immigration and foreign relations are taking the focus, it is important for young adults to know we share more similarities than is believed. Without a political agenda, this book tells the true story that is both relatable in some aspects and unfathomable in others. It is an eye-opening read that tugs at the heartstrings while fueling the inspiration to help make a change.



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