

Title: *The Sun is Also a Star*
Author: *Nicola Yoon*
Perspectives Category: *Race & Ethnicities*

Respondent Name and Grade: Judy Z., 8th Grade

Date Responded: March 22, 2021

1. *What is the main plot of the book?*

This book is told from multiple perspectives, but mainly those of Natasha Kingsley and Daniel Jae Ho Bae. At first, it seems like the only thing they have in common is that they both have struggles and hardships. Natasha, for one, is trying to find a lawyer that will stop her family's deportation to Jamaica. After her father had won himself a DUI, in his drunken state, he'd confessed to the police officer that his family was here illegally. This resulted in the deportation that Natasha is now trying to stop. Daniel, on the other hand, is trying to overcome the pressure put on him by his parents. When his brother Charlie was suspended from Harvard, his parents turned to him to become a successful doctor. However, he's not interested in pursuing medicine - rather, the opposite, since he's a budding poet. When Natasha and Daniel suddenly meet at a store, they become unexpected friends, have to work together to solve their problems and most importantly, have to convince themselves - and the entire world - that they were meant to be.

2. *Which character did you most identify with and why?*

I identified with Bev, a side character, the most. She was Natasha's best friend when she still lived in New York. On the day in question, she was touring Berkeley in California, however, she always knew Natasha was going to be deported. Although I haven't dealt with a friend being deported, I've had two friends move away before. They were both very saddening, but time heals all wounds.

3. *What do you believe is the main message of this book?*

I believe the main message of this book is to trust destiny and to have fate lead the way. Sometimes, it can be mind-blowing how every small move you make and everything that you've done up to now leads to what you're doing now. In the book, it all started when Daniel met a religious train conductor, so he noticed Natasha's *Deus Ex Machina* jacket. This led to a series of events that in turn led to Daniel and Natasha's love for each other.

4. *Do you think the main message of this book was effectively integrated into the story, or did it come across as too "preachy"?*

I think the main message of this book was very effectively integrated into the book. It showed that Natasha and Daniel couldn't have met each other without the little things that happened along the way.

5. *If two or more perspectives on an important topic were explored/presented in this book, which one did you agree with and why?*

Two or more perspectives on love were explored/presented in this book. Natasha, ever the scientist, looked at love from the perspective of chemistry, that everything is just combination and reaction. Daniel, the poet, thinks that love is due to fate and everything coming together because of God. I agree with both of them. I agree with Natasha in the sense that everything has a scientific explanation, and I agree with Daniel in the fact that everything now is the product of everything we've done in the past.

6. *In what ways (if any) were your beliefs about a topic changed or reaffirmed through reading this book?*

My beliefs about a topic were not changed through reading this book. However, my belief that everything we did in the past led to where we are now was reaffirmed.

7. *What perspective, if any, do you think was missing from this book?*

I don't think any perspective was missing. Natasha covered the rational perspective, and Daniel covered the dreamy one. If there were any missing point of views, the author also wrote from the perspectives of the side characters, which covered it all.

8. *Did this book encourage you to pursue any topics further through more reading, research, action, etc., and if so, how?*

No, this book did not encourage me to pursue any topics or dive down any rabbit holes.

9. *What type of reader (based on age, interests, perspectives, etc.) would you suggest this book to?*

I would suggest this book to a more mature audience, about 11+. I would also recommend it to a reader who is interested in the cheesy romance genre. However, the author also writes about a lot of scientific/informative things such as what the half-life on an isotope is, multiverses, and eyes. A reader who's interested in that could also consider giving this book a try.

10. *What other book(s) you have read that you think would make a good addition to this category of the Perspectives Bibliography, and why?*

Another book that I've read that I think would make a good addition to this category of the Perspectives Bibliography is Last Stop on Market Street. It's a good read for an audience of 5+. It's a short book that covers different topics, including blindness and racial injustices.

Respondent Name: Soraya M.

Date Responded: March 31, 2021

1. *What is the main plot of this book?*

The main plot of the sun is also a star is 2 teenagers Natasha Kingsley and Daniel Bae meet and fall in love they spend the day together. Daniel Bae wants to be a poet but his parents force him to go to an interview at Yale. Natasha Kingsley wants to stay in New York but her and her family are being deported back to Jamaica.

2. *Which character did you most identify with and why?*

I most identify myself with Natasha Kingsley because she takes care of her family and she is very independent.

3. *What do you believe is the main message of this book?*

The main message of this book is good things can come from difficult situations.

4. *Do you think the main message of this book was effectively integrated into the story, or did it come across as too "preachy"?*

The main message of the book was integrated into the story really well because it seemed like a love story which allowed me to think that it would have a love related theme however that is not the case it is more about the struggle and journey to get into the relationship.

5. *If two or more perspectives on an important topic were explored/presented in this book, which one did you agree with and why?*

I think I did not agree with any over another. They were both valid because they were both going through troubles of their own.

6. *In what ways (if any) were your beliefs about a topic changed or reaffirmed through reading this book?*

This book gave me a realization of what immigration does to families and how it affects lives of others

7. *What perspective, if any, do you think was missing from this book?*

I think that there should have been perspectives from the mom of Natasha Kingsley because she was struggling and it would have explained why she did many things that she did.

8. *Did this book encourage you to pursue any topics further through more reading, research, action, etc., And if so, how?*

This pursued me to do more research on immigration because of how rough it was for Natasha Kingsley and her family.

9. *What type of reader (based on age, interests, perspectives, etc.) would you suggest this book to?*

12 and older because I felt that there are some messages of coming of age but at the same time I feel that anyone should be able to enjoy a book but, there are some graphic explanations.

10. *What other book(s) you have read that you think would make a good addition to this category of the Perspectives Bibliography, and why?*

Some other books that give another perspective that I have not experienced are books like I am Malala because nothing like she experienced we would ever and it shows us that we should take advantage of how lucky we are to be living in a safe environment.

Respondent's Name and Grade: Hannah P., 12th Grade

Date of Response: April 13, 2021

1. *What is the main plot of this book?*

The book follows the two perspectives of Daniel and Natasha. Both protagonists come from different ethnic backgrounds and immigrant families, which leads to the hardships that ultimately break them apart. Daniel and Natasha meet the day her family is to be deported back to Jamaica. Natasha is a realist, while Daniel is a dreamer, yet they begin to fall in love that same day. Natasha's efforts to stay in the U.S. fail and her family is deported. Overtime, Daniel and Natasha lose touch, but 10 years later are reunited again due to the fate Daniel put so much trust in.

2. *What character do you identify most with and why?*

I identify more with Daniel, as we share similar values. Although not neglecting science, I find that believing in fate and destiny gives us a greater sense of purpose and fulfillment, and putting faith in our spirituality is beneficial to our lives. I can also relate to his situation of battling between his passions, and what others expect from him.

3. *What do you believe is the main message of this book?*

The story integrates many messages such as fate, destiny, and even some undertones of racism. But, the most important message in this book is that unfortunate situations can lead to good things, like the light at the end of the tunnel.

4. *Do you think the main message of this book was effectively integrated into the story, or did it come across as too "preachy"?*

These messages were well integrated while not being too obvious. I like how the author followed a "show don't tell" type of method. It left readers room for their own interpretations of these messages, but I think all reader's can agree the story left an emotional impact. The book touches upon many social issues, and each character represents a different message demonstrated through their actions. So, these messages were not "preachy," they were well represented through the characters.

5. *If two or more perspectives on an important topic were explored/presented in this book, which one did you agree with and why?*

Natasha and Daniel go about viewing life in completely different ways. Daniel relies on his beliefs in fate and destiny, while Natasha is strictly practical. Overall I agreed more with Daniel through the issues of what he wanted to do with his career.

6. *In what ways (if any) were your beliefs about a topic changed or reaffirmed through reading this book?*

Interracial relationships are undeniably still looked down upon, as presented through this novel. On top of that, our immigration system is flawed, as I believe there has to be a better way to handle illegal immigration, since it can be devastating for some families.

7. *What perspective, if any, do you think was missing from this book?*

What made this novel intriguing and unique, was that not only did the point of views switch between the two protagonists, a good majority of chapters were narrated in the third person, by an omniscient narrator that represented a greater power of knowledge. The book consists of multiple perspectives, and it is interesting to see how the chain of perspectives affect one another. So, I think the author did a great job in including several different perspectives so the audience can have a better understanding of the situation, all while knowing the characters' own thoughts.

8. *Did this book encourage you to pursue any topics further through more reading, research, action, etc., and if so, how?*

This book opened my curiosity to immigration limitations and illegal immigration. It also made me aware that small acts of kindness to strangers have the potential to completely transform a life.

9. *What type of reader (based on age, interests, perspectives, etc.) would you suggest this book to?*

This novel would resonate well with those coming from differing ethnic backgrounds, dealing with the hardships of immigration, stereotypes etc. For audiences who enjoy romance with witty and entertaining banter, this is a great read. The book deals with mature topics like suicide, so it is geared towards more mature audiences.

10. *What other book(s) you have read that you think would make a good addition to this category of Perspectives Bibliography, and why?*

The book *Stamped*, by Ibram X. Kendi and Jason Reynolds, offers a new voice to our country's history in regards to racism. It delivers a perspective that has never been taught or heard before. It reveals the hidden truths about our country's roots, while being an effortless, casual, and at times funny read, since the book is geared towards the younger generation. Even so, it still talks about mature topics that need to be brought to our attention, since racism is still a societal issue today.

Reviewer Name and Grade: Tatjana T., 11th grade

Date Reviewed: April 10, 2023

1. The main plot of this book is a love story between Natasha, a Jamaican-American girl facing deportation, and Daniel, a Korean-American boy struggling with parental expectations. The story follows their chance encounter and subsequent whirlwind romance over the course of a single day in New York City.

2. I most identify with Natasha because, like her, I also come from an immigrant family. I can relate to her experiences of navigating cultural expectations, dealing with family dynamics, and facing challenges related to identity and belonging.

3. The main message of this book is that love can transcend barriers, including race, culture, and societal expectations. It also explores the concept of fate and the idea that even seemingly insignificant moments can have a profound impact on our lives.

4. I think the main message of this book was effectively integrated into the story. While the book does touch on important social issues, such as immigration and racism, it does so in a way that feels authentic and organic to the characters and their experiences, rather than coming off as preachy.

5. One of the perspectives explored in the book is the pressure and expectations placed on children of immigrant families to fulfill their parents' dreams and aspirations. I agreed with this perspective as it resonated with my own experiences of navigating cultural expectations and the tension between pursuing personal desires and meeting family expectations.

6. Reading this book reaffirmed my belief in the power of love and human connection to overcome societal barriers. It also highlighted the importance of empathy and understanding towards individuals from different cultural backgrounds, as we all have unique stories and struggles.

7. One perspective that may be missing from this book is that of other marginalized groups, such as African-Americans or Latinx, who also face discrimination and prejudice. While the book focuses on the experiences of Asian-American characters, it would have been interesting to see more intersectional perspectives.

8. This book encouraged me to further research and learn about the experiences of immigrants, particularly the challenges they face in the U.S. immigration system. It also motivated me to engage in discussions about race, culture, and identity with my peers and family, learning about my own parents' experiences with coming to the US including the exams and barriers they had to overcome.

9. I would suggest this book to readers who are interested in contemporary young adult fiction, romance, and stories about immigrants and cultural identity. It may also resonate with readers who have experienced or are interested in interracial relationships, family dynamics, and societal expectations.

10. Another book that would make a good addition to this category of Perspectives biography is "American Born Chinese" by Gene Luen Yang, which explores the experiences of a Chinese-American boy struggling with his cultural identity and the pressure to assimilate in American society. This graphic novel also touches on themes of race, stereotypes, and self-acceptance in a relatable and engaging way.

