

San Francisco Book Review

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Sunbelievable

By Jo Ann Kairys, Daniel Kairys, Frank Thompson (illustrator)
Story Quest, \$15.95, 40 pages



Sunbelievable is the story of two young sisters who are forced to abandon their playtime on the beach for their home when darkness falls and their bedtime nears. Indoors, they weave fanciful stories about the Sun and what he likes to do: everything from riding rollercoasters, to teaching fireflies how to shine so they can eat pizza—with sun-dried tomatoes of course!

Sunbelievable offers young readers the best of both worlds: an amusing story about a personified Sun and a page of true facts about the star we call the Earth's Sun. While the Sun story will encourage readers to use their imagination to create even wilder stories about the Sun's life, the page of facts will encourage learning about the Earth's Sun. I wish there had been even more space dedicated to Sun facts or activities to complement the story. However, most teachers and parents will probably find many jumping-off points in the story to encourage factual learning...the seashore, fireflies, sunflowers.

There is also a sweet sub-plot of the family: the girl's love for each other and their relationship with their parents. When, so often, children's cartoons and books portray the relationship between siblings and parents as less than ideal, this is an encouraging detail.

The quirky illustrations of *Sunbelievable* not only burst with color, but also offer a "second-read" appeal. Young readers will discover new details in the illustrations each time they page through this book. The illustrations—like the book's story—are an interesting combination of realism and fantasy. Although the girls, the beach, and their home are portrayed realistically, the illustrators added intriguing detail, such as sprinkles of fairy dust and mice wearing top hats. And the pages that feature the Sun's life are unforgettable. You can't take your eyes off of them!

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