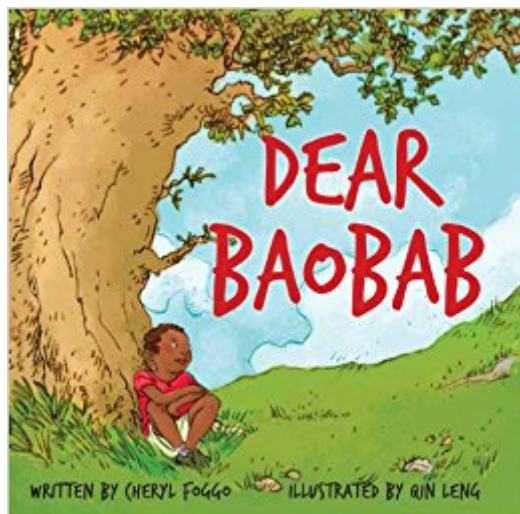


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# Dear Baobab



## Synopsis

Maiko has left his village in Tanzania far behind, moving to Canada with his aunt and uncle. When he thinks of home, he thinks of the beautiful big baobab tree at the center of the village. In his new home, Maiko feels a connection to the small spruce tree in the front yard "it's seven years old, the same age as he is. The tree sings to him and shares his secrets. When he learns that the roots of the tree are growing too close to the house, putting the little spruce in danger of being cut down, Maiko tries to save it. He knows all too well what it's like to be small and planted in the wrong place.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 890L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 24 pages

Publisher: Second Story Press (September 1, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1897187912

ISBN-13: 978-1897187913

Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 0.4 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #614,049 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #64 in Books > Children's Books

> Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Canada #860 in Books > Children's Books >

Growing Up & Facts of Life > Fiction #3391 in Books > Children's Books > Education &

Reference > Science Studies > Nature

Age Range: 5 - 8 years

Grade Level: 1 - 3

## Customer Reviews

Adopted by his loving uncle Peter and aunt Ajia, who live in a red-brick city home, orphan Maiko misses his African village, where his favorite baobab tree was more than 2,000 years old. At his new house, he listens and talks to a little spruce tree, which is also 7 years old: "Hello tree, same age as me." • Maiko struggles to fit into a strange new place, with its snow and a school bully, and when he hears that the spruce tree might need to be cut down, he is very upset: "He knew how it felt to be small and planted in the wrong place." • Then Uncle Peter makes a plan for the tree to be moved to a new place, where it can grow strong and tall, and Maiko makes a friend. Leng's bright ink-and-watercolor pictures express Maiko's loneliness and longing in his bedroom, at school,

and in the neighborhood, and kids will be caught by the wonder of the baobab tree and the connections to nature, along with the warm drama of finding home. Preschool-Grade 2. --Hazel Rochman

"Watercolors with pleasantly loose ink lines show generic scenes in Africa and multicultural North America...[A] gentle, purposeful story." (Kirkus Reviews 2011-08-15)"A charming read that, without being too syrupy-sweet, offers encouragement to anyone who has ever felt they're in the wrong place...The conversations between Maiko and the tree are particularly superb, capturing the charm and innocence expected of any seven-year-old, but containing the ache of someone who longs for the past. The spare narrative leaves room for readers to craft their own opinions, making the book a good tool for starting conversations...[and] the book's illustrations offer a window onto Maiko's different worlds." (Quill & Quire 2011-07-01)"A sweet story about a boy who moves from Africa to North America, and doesn't quite fit in...The themes of love, loss and belonging in Dear Baobab are universally appealing. Maiko's homesickness and his pain over the loss of his parents are treated honestly but delicately. Children facing upheaval in their lives will find this book especially engaging, and perhaps even inspiring. Foggo's lyrical text is perfect for reading aloud, and certain expressions nearly turn the story into poetry... Foggo clearly has a gift for descriptive writing...The beautiful illustrations, shaded in pencil, are bursting with emotion. The characters' facial expressions are particularly effective in revealing their feelings. Dear Baobab deals with serious, even tragic, subject matter with a great deal of grace. Maiko's identification with the spruce tree provides an uplifting metaphor which prevents the story from getting bogged down. Instead, Maiko's story is simple and buoyant and will appeal to a wide range of children. Highly Recommended." (CM Magazine 2011-09-30)"A wonderful story...[and] Leng's illustrations are a very good match." (Happy Nappy Bookseller blog 2011-10-20)"A suitable and engaging story for young children adapting to change...Qin Leng illustrates the story with sensitivity...This book is highly recommended for both school and public libraries." (Resource Links 2011-10-01)"This sweetly illustrated picture book is the story of a small boy's struggle to develop a sense of belonging in a new country. All primary aged children can relate to his vulnerability and to the many emotions expressed in Maiko's story, making it an ideal venue for teaching the concept of making connections." (Canadian Teacher 2011-11-01)"Heartfelt. Expressive, uncluttered illustrations help convey emotion." (The Horn Book Guide 2012-05-01)

With everything going on in the world today with refugees trying to find a home this book is very

timely (even though it was published a few years ago). Maiko has moved from Tanzania to Canada with his aunt and uncle. He has trouble fitting in at school, he is teased about having big ears, he misses his village and especially the Baobab tree. He sits on the porch and watches and listens to the spruce tree planted nearby. He tells the tree all about his feelings and what is happening in his new life. When he finds out that the tree might be cut down because it is too close to the house and might damage the foundation, he is upset, but does not tell anyone. This book is about changes in the life of this immigrant boy to Canada. It talks about how hard it is to fit in and explain your feelings to others. The illustrations are wonderful and help to explain the story. There is quite a bit of text on each page so this is not an early reader book, but one that can be used with older children, especially if they have new Canadians in their classroom. I received a copy of this book from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Seven year old Maiko must leave his African village and beloved Baobab trees to go live with his Aunt and Uncle in North America. Feeling connected with the 2000 year old, grounded tree, Maiko feels lost and uprooted in his new surroundings. Uprooted and moved unlike the Baobab tree he loves. Now surrounded by spruce trees, Maiko is trying to fit into his new school and new home. One little spruce tree that is also 7 years old that Maiko calls "tree, same age as me", comforts him as he hears the wind sing through its leaves. The little spruce tree is growing too close to the foundation of the house and Uncle Peter plans on cutting it down, not realizing how special it has become to Maiko. Maiko is able to find the courage to tell Uncle Peter and a new plan for the tree is devised. Change is hard on anyone but for such a young one to lose his parents and move to a completely different culture and way of life is exceptionally hard. I feel many children will relate to Maiko feeling out of place and being moved from what he knows and love. In our very transient society it isn't uncommon for children to move several times in their young lives. I have always had a fascination with the Baobab trees and this book illustrates and describes them so well. I loved how Maiko could feel connected and comforted by the big tree and had to transfer that love to another and through that he was able to realize that "We can't always grow where we are planted. But we still can grow somewhere else". Loved the original concept with the Baobab tree, and the universal concept of children having to move and try to fit in. Beautiful illustrations by Qin Leng who was born in Shanghai, China before moving to Montreal. Cheryl Fogo is a journalist, screenwriter, poet and playwright. She is the author of two books for young adults. This is her first picture book. Cheryl has a particular interest in history of Black pioneers on the prairies. She lives in Calgary. I received a copy of this book from secondstorypress in exchange for an honest review.

Maiko misses the giant baobab tree in his African village when he has to go live with his uncle and aunt. At his new school Maiko is teased about his ears. Maiko finds comfort in a young spruce tree under the mailbox. When he discovers that the young tree is about the same age as him, Maiko begins to confide in it. "After that, Maiko would say, " Hello tree, same age as me," on his way out and on his way in. Sometimes, he sat on the step and shared secrets that he told to no one else. He talked of his village and the baobabs, and how he missed his friends at the school where he had gone after his father and mother died. He told of how lonely he felt as the wind blew him across the wide ocean in an airplane, and how strange it was, at first, to sleep in the red brick house." When Maiko learns that his uncle and aunt plan on chopping down the spruce because they're worried about the house's foundation, Maiko does everything he can to save it. This is a wonderful story and I love the connection the author makes with Maiko and the spruce. Both find themselves rooted in an unexpected place. The cover art didn't grab me nor did it do the interior illustrations any justice. Once you open up the book, Leng's illustrations are a very good match for the story. Dear Baobab is text heavy making this great story, perfect for young listeners or readers ages 5 up.

Maiko misses his baobab tree, back home in Africa. He misses almost everything about home in Africa, but he really misses his baobab tree. He discovers a new confidant in the little spruce tree in his new home, a tree, he soon learns, that is growing too close to the house and will have to be cut down. A warm story about learning to fit in. "Sometimes, he sat on the step and shared secrets that he told to no one else. He talked of his village and the baobabs, and how he missed his friends at the school where he had gone after his father and mother died. He told of how lonely he felt as the wind blew him across the wide ocean in an airplane, and how strange it was, at first, to sleep in the red brick house."

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