

Safe At Home

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A high-interest sports novel from the author of PROMISES TO KEEP: HOW JACKIE ROBINSON CHANGED AMERICA.

Ten-year-old Elijah Breeze, aka Jumper, is having the hardest summer of his life. His father has just died; his mother has moved them from the suburbs to New York City's Harlem area; and he has to spend the summer at baseball camp. Basketball is Jumper's game. He doesn't know anything about baseball, or city life, or how to keep going without his dad. Jumper struggles in his new life, but he's encouraged by the support of his coach and by his grandma's wisdom. He finds out it is possible to start over in a new place with new people . . . and still hold on to what's important from his past.

Sharon Robinson, daughter of baseball legend Jackie Robinson, is the author of several works of fiction and nonfiction. She has also written several widely praised nonfiction books about her father, including JACKIE'S NINE: BECOMING YOUR BEST SELF and PROMISES TO KEEP: HOW JACKIE ROBINSON CHANGED AMERICA.

PW

Safe at Home

Sharon Robinson. Scholastic, \$16.99 (160p) ISBN 0-439-67197-3

The author of several nonfiction books about her father, Jackie Robinson (Promises to Keep: How Jackie Robinson Changed America), offers a solid first novel about a likable 10-year-old who comes to terms with some big changes. Jumper's father died six months earlier of a heart attack, and the boy and his mother have moved from suburban Connecticut into his grandmother's Harlem brownstone. Missing his father and his friends, Jumper does not look forward to a hot, lonely summer in the city. Moreover, his mother didn't want to send him away to basketball camp, so he is going to a neighborhood baseball camp, playing a sport in which he has little interest or experience. Worse yet, the captain of his team is Marcus, a cocky, ace player who derisively dubs Jumper "the boy from the 'burbs" and scoffs at his minimal skills. Luckily, some additional characters give the hero a boost and leaven the proceedings. A supportive, perceptive coach offers to give Jumper extra help and names him team co-captain, emphasizing the need for cooperation between him and Marcus ("It takes two wings to fly"). Jumper's growing friendship with several other campers, including Marcus's plucky sister, also add dimension to the tale, along with some affecting moments—as when Jumper discovers his father's old baseball glove ("It fit perfectly"). The tale may end predictably, but readers will happily stick with these characters, and ball fans will appreciate the play-by-play account of on-diamond action. Ages 12-up. (July)

SLJ

ROBINSON, Sharon. Safe at Home. 151p. CIP. Scholastic. 2006. Tr \$16.99. ISBN 0-439-67197-3. LC 2005050250.

Gr 4-7—Soon after the sudden death of his beloved father, 10-year-old Elijah Breeze, nicknamed Jumper, moves with his bereaved mother from suburban Connecticut to Harlem, where she grew up, to live with his grandmother. He experiences culture shock from this abrupt change and still struggles with his grief. To make things worse, his mother has signed him up for a coed summer baseball camp where he has to cope with his undeveloped hitting and catching skills as well as a bully named Marcus. As the summer progresses, Jumper makes new friends and establishes a close relationship with his empathetic, knowledgeable coach. And, he eventually gains Marcus's respect after a

series of near fights. Although the baseball action permeating this message-laden, quick-reading novel often lacks the excitement of other sports stories, Robinson (who is Jackie Robinson's daughter) has created two intriguing protagonists and a group of equally colorful secondary characters (girls and boys). Regardless of their interest in baseball, readers will identify with these youngsters and appreciate the simple story. -Jack Forman, Mesa College Library, San Diego

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Safe at Home.

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