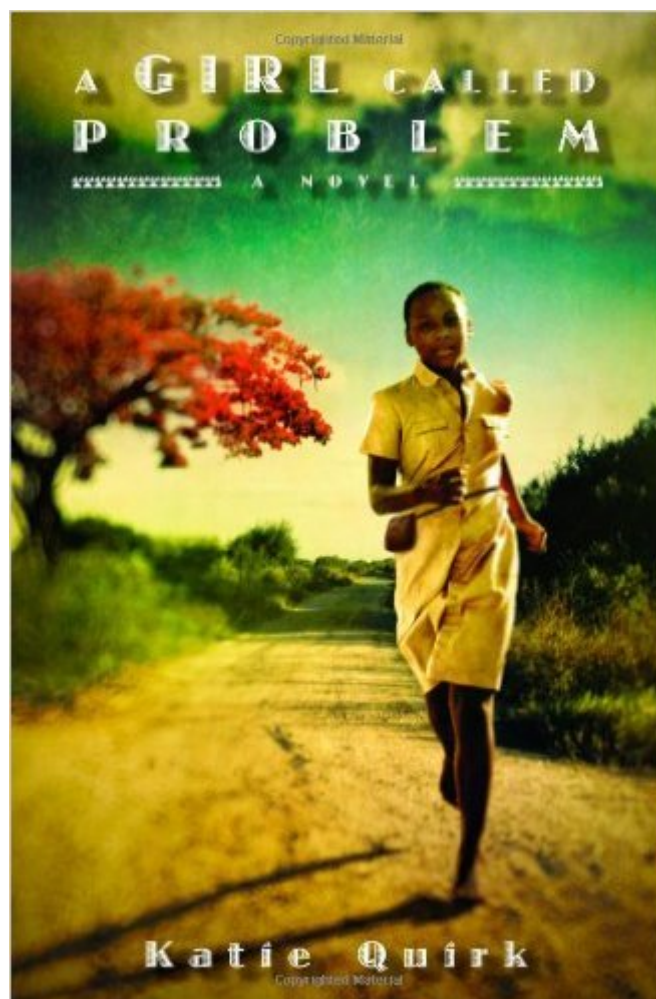


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# A Girl Called Problem



## Synopsis

Thirteen-year-old Shida, whose name means "problem" in Swahili, certainly has a lot of problems in her life -- her father is dead, her depressed mother is rumored to be a witch, her family bears the weight of a curse, and everyone in her rural Tanzanian village expects her to marry rather than pursue her dream of becoming a healer. So when the elders of Litongo make a controversial decision to move Shida's people to a nearby village, Shida welcomes the change. Surely the opportunity to go to school and learn from a nurse can only mean good things. Nonetheless, mysterious calamities plague Shida's people after their move. Desperate to stay, Shida must prove to her people that life can be better in their new home.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 770L (What's this?)

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers (April 18, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0802854044

ISBN-13: 978-0802854049

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 1 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (13 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #217,062 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #118 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Africa](#) #127 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Moving](#) #630 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > New Experiences](#)

Age Range: 10 - 14 years

Grade Level: 5 - 9

## Customer Reviews

Who says that mystery novels for kids all have to include the same tropes and settings? I tell you, half the time when a kid comes up to a reference desk asking for a mystery they think what they want is the standard white kids in suburbia model perfected by Encyclopedia Brown and his ilk. They're wrong. What they really want is great writing and a good mystery with a twist they don't see coming. So I will hereby give grand kudos and heaping helpings of praise to the librarian/bookseller/parent who hears a kid ask for a mystery and hands them Katie Quirk's "A Girl

Called Problem". This book is a trifecta of publishing rarities. A historical novel that is also a mystery set in a foreign country that just happens to be Tanzania. Trust me when I say your shelves aren't exactly filled to brimming with such books. Would that they were, or at the very least, would that you had as many good books as this one. Smart commentary, an honestly interesting storyline, and sharp writing from start to finish, Quirk quickly establishes herself as one author to watch. The thing about Shida is that in spite of her name (in Swahili it would be "problem") you just can't get her down. Sure, her mom is considered a witch, and every day she seems to make Shida's life harder rather than easier. Still, Shida's got dreams. She hopes to someday train to be a healer in her village of Litongo, and maybe even a village nurse. In light of all this, when the opportunity arises for all of Litongo to pick up and move to a new location, Shida's on board with the plan. In Nija Panda she would be able to go to school and maybe even learn medicine firsthand. Her fellow villagers are wary but game. They seem to have more to gain than to lose from such a move.

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