

Footprints On The Moon

By Lorraine Marwood

Publisher: University of Queensland Press

ISBN 9780702262838 SCIS: 1990476

\$16.99

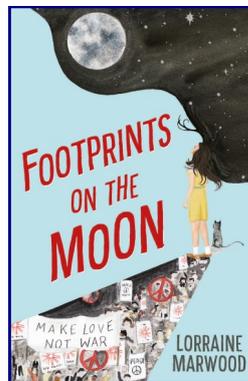
Blurb:

Humans are about to leave footprints on the moon, but what sort of mark can one girl make here on earth?

It's 1969 and life is changing fast. Sharnie Burley is starting high school and finding it tough to make new friends. As the world waits to see if humans will land on the moon, the Vietnam War rages overseas. While her little cousin, Lewis, makes pretend moon boots, young men are being called up to fight, sometimes without having any choice in the matter. Sometimes without ever coming home.

Dad thinks serving your country in a war is honourable, but when Sharnie's older sister, Cas, meets a returned soldier and starts getting involved in anti-war protests, a rift in their family begins to show. Sharnie would usually turn to her grandma for support, but lately Gran's been forgetting things.

Can she find her own way in this brave new world?



Lamont Review:

Footprints on the Moon is set in an important time in world history. It's 1969 and the race to the moon is nearing a climax, but with the war in Vietnam raging, young people are asking many questions.

Sharnie is just beginning high school and faces the usual friendship issues. This is not helped by her sixteen-year-old sister Cas basically ignoring her, and her wonderful Grandma's forgetfulness.

Dad is away for a month at a time as a travelling salesman, and when he is home, his ideas regarding conscription and the honour of war clash with Cas's.

But what is Sharnie supposed to make of all this? She is a young girl growing up and forming her own opinions. A girl who knows right from wrong.

Written in easy to read verse format, this book is filled with an array of important themes and makes a great book for classroom discussion in the upper primary and lower secondary year levels.

Reviewed by Rob

Balloon Girls

By Darrell Pitt

Publisher: Text Publishing

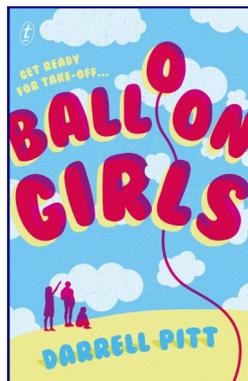
ISBN 9781922330567 SCIS: 1990481

\$16.99

Blurb:

Times are tough in the small town of Yallaroo where Ally Simpson has lived her whole life. The whole area is in drought and people are going broke or moving away. So when Ally hears about a competition to win the trip of a lifetime to visit the Smithsonian Museum in the USA, she knows she's got to do everything she can to try and win.

Ally enlists her best friends Harmony and Ping to help her plan the most impressive experiment she can imagine- to send a video camera to the edge of space, and prove once and for all that the earth is round. At first, Ally is pretty sure she's got the whole competition stitched up. But then, as one disaster after another derails her plans, she begins to learn the importance of staying grounded even while she's aiming for the sky...



Lamont Review:

Set in a small, rural town in Victoria, our main character, Ally, loves everything related to science. Ally is just beginning Year 7 and their teacher announces that they can enter a science competition with the prize being a trip to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington - her dream!

So together with her best friends Harmony and Ping, they decide to prove that the earth is round by using space going balloons to take a camera and GPS device over 30 kilometres up into the sky.

Things go wrong along the way, but with Ally's resilience and unwavering positive outlook they are sure to succeed - aren't they?

This story also has a wonderful cast of supporting characters including Ally's single parent Dad, who helps encourage her all the way, as well as her equally encouraging science teacher, Miss Kapoor. Also featuring local (possibly exaggerated) legends and bad guys, as well as communities who help each other, particularly in times of need, this is a much more than just a book about science.

With themes of resilience, the importance of science, bullying, friendship and family, this is a terrific novel for middle grade readers in Years 5 – 8.

Reviewed by Rob

The World Between Blinks

By Amie Kaufman and Ryan Graudin
Publisher: Harper Collins
ISBN 9781460757628 SCIS: 1990690
\$16.99

Blurb:

Discover a magical world where lost things are found... Whenever cousins Jake and Marisol get together, adventure follows. They have their late Nana to thank for that. Her epic trips and treasure hunts were the stuff of family legend. This summer, with the whole family reuniting for one last vacation at Nana's home, the cousins are in for a legendary trip of their own. Following a map Nana left behind, Jake and Marisol sneak out to a nearby lighthouse - then accidentally slip into another world... The World Between Blinks is a magical place, where all kinds of lost things (and people!) end up. Everywhere they turn, the cousins find real mysteries from history - plus a few they thought were only myths. But the man who holds the key to Jake and Marisol's journey home doesn't want to be found... and if the cousins don't catch him fast, they could end up lost in this world forever.



Lamont Review:

Our story begins when cousins Marisol and Jake meet at their adventurous Nana's beach house to clear out her things after she has died.

The cousins follow a map that their Nana has written in a quest to find treasure. And what treasure they find!

In the blink of an eye they are transported to a magical world of lost things. Think Atlantis, dinosaurs, the Loch Ness Monster and many others...

Marisol treasures her memories and has a special ability of being able to find lost things. Whereas Jake, whose family are constantly moving, has learnt not to hold on to things.

Together they learn that memories can be both good and bad, but it is our life's work to make and treasure them.

In this mysterious world Marisol and Jake are assisted in their attempt to return home by Amelia Earhart and Oz, their trusty Thylacine. With guest appearances by Harold Holt and Friedrich Leichhardt as well, this mystery world has quite an Australian feel to it.

Although the book is accessible to confident readers as young as 9, it will resonate with reluctant readers in the lower secondary levels as well.

Reviewed by Rob

Teacher Notes prepared by the publisher are available for this title on our website.

Amari and the Night Brothers

By B.B. Alston

Publisher: Hardie Grant Children's Publishing

ISBN 9781760505882 SCIS: 1990696

\$17.99

Blurb:

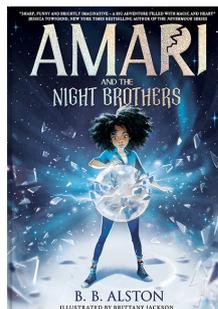
A 12-year-old girl from the housing projects discovers her brother was more than he seemed... And so is she. A gripping, fun, heartfelt new fantasy for an upper middle-grade audience.

Quinton Peters was the golden boy of the Rosewood City low-income housing projects, receiving full scholarship offers to two different Ivy League schools. When he mysteriously goes missing, his little sister, 12-year-old Amari Peters, can't understand why it's not a bigger deal. Why isn't his story all over the news? And why do the police automatically assume he was into something illegal?

Then Amari discovers a ticking briefcase in her brother's closet. A briefcase meant for her eyes only. There was far more to Quinton, it seems, than she ever knew. He's left her a nomination for a summer tryout at the secretive Bureau of Supernatural Affairs. Amari is certain the answer to finding out what happened to him lies somewhere inside – if only she can get her head around the idea of mermaids, dwarfs, aliens and magicians all being real things, something she has to instantly confront when she is given a weredragon as a roommate.

Amari must compete against kids who've known about the supernatural world their whole lives and are able to easily answer questions like 'Which two Great Beasts reside in the Atlantic Ocean?' and 'How old is Merlin?' Just getting around the Bureau is a lesson for Amari, with signs like Department of Hidden Places this way, or is it? If all that wasn't enough, every Bureau trainee has a talent that is enhanced to supernatural levels to help them do their jobs – but Amari's talent, when it's revealed, is illegal. As if she needed something else to make her stand out.

With an evil magician threatening the whole supernatural world, and her own classmates thinking she is an enemy, Amari has never felt more alone. But if she doesn't pass the three tryouts, she may never find out what happened to Quinton.



Lamont Review:

The story begins with scholarship student Amari Peters getting expelled from the elite Jefferson Academy. It seems she is nothing compared to her high achieving older brother Quinton, whose photo still holds pride of place at Jefferson. But Quinton went missing over a year ago, and everyone assumes he got mixed up with the wrong people.

But then Amari opens a mysterious briefcase that Quinton sent her and a whole new world opens. She is to spend her summer at camp at the Bureau of Supernatural affairs and soon discovers her amazing, magical powers.

These powers don't please everyone, but she knows that she has to use everything she has to find her brother - hopefully still alive!

With marvellous characters and an incredible supernatural world, readers will be captivated by Amari's quest and cheer her on her journey.

It is a brilliantly written story that I could not put down. It has magic, courage, good versus evil and so many amazing creatures and inventions, like talking elevators, that will utterly enthral readers aged 10 and up.

Reviewed by Rob