

Sanity & Tallulah

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Sanity and Tallulah are best friends living in a space station somewhere deep in space. In this graphic science fiction story, the two girls have to navigate some difficult decisions after Sanity, who is a gifted scientist, creates a three-headed kitten that escapes, sending the girls on an adventure to find the animal, bring her home, and save the space station. The story's themes of sustainability and ethics are emphasized with detailed illustrations that add to the complexity of the storyline and the development of the characters. Middle-grade students may be challenged by the use of scientific language throughout the novel, while the concepts and plot could engage readers and inspire discussions about space, evolution, and the ethics of genetic modification. In the classroom, *Sanity & Tallulah* may be best-suited for literature circles or book clubs, and may be of particular interest to students who enjoy reading science fiction and strong readers looking for a challenge.

Subjects: English Language Arts, Science
Grades 6-8

Evaluation Date: Dec 2020



Social Considerations

Resource Evaluation

CURRICULUM FIT

Does the resource support BC curriculum?



Extensively

This graphic novel supports the Grade 6-8 Language Arts Big Idea that "exploring stories and other texts helps us understand ourselves and make connections to others and to the world. " It also supports the Grade 6-7 Big Idea that "developing our understanding of how language works allows us to use it purposefully. " As a science fiction text, the novel connects to the Grade 6-8 Science Competencies including "communicating ideas, findings, and solutions to problems using scientific language, " and "demonstrating a sustained intellectual curiosity about a scientific topic or problem of personal interest. " It also supports the ADST curriculum by modelling the engineering design process.

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM USAGE

This book would be best suited for literature circles or book clubs. This graphic novel would be a good fit in a class study of the science-fiction genre, or alongside a Grade 6 Science unit on space or a Grade 7 Science unit around evolution and the ethics of genetic modification. The scientific text within the novel elevates the reading level and provides an opportunity to discuss advanced decoding skills and the use of language to enhance mood and tone. The sophistication of the language would make this a good choice for stronger readers and students looking for a challenge.

SOCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Age

The adults in the novel are portrayed as reasonable and positive role models.

Multiculturalism

The characters in the novel show a wide range of skin tones, hairstyles, clothing styles, and facial features. The novel portrays a very diverse group of people in a range of roles.

Ability/Disability

One of the main character's fathers is portrayed in the images as having a mechanical leg that does not inhibit his role in the novel and is not explicitly mentioned in the text.

Violence

The climax involves a battle between the station director and oversized rats during which he uses a wrench to defend himself. There is no gratuitous violence and there are limited images of dead animals.

Ethical and Legal

One of the characters has created a new life form in the laboratory without following the ethical processes set out for this type of experimentation.

Safety

The main characters often ignore the safety advice of their parents, leading them into the difficult situations that they face.

Sustainability

The characters live in a space station that has to consider many aspects of sustainability for survival. For example, there are no pets allowed on the station and there is a crisis of power generation that is central to the storyline.

Do the social considerations support, rather than detract from, student learning?




Extensively


The premise of the novel is based on one of the main characters creating an experimental life form in the laboratory that gets out of control on the space station where they live. This presents numerous ethical and safety challenges that threaten the livelihood of the characters and the sustainability of their space station. The images in the novel portray a wide variety of cultures, gender roles, and abilities that is representative of a diverse and multicultural society.

Content


Is the resource engaging?

 Extensively


Is the content current for the intended curriculum and grade?

 Extensively

Is the content accurate for the intended curriculum and grade?


 Extensively

Is the content relevant and important for student broad understandings?


 Extensively

Audience


Is the content appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?

 Extensively


Does the resource provide opportunities for creative and critical thinking?

 Extensively

Is the level of detail appropriate?

 Extensively

Is the language use appropriate to the emotional maturity and cognitive level of students?

 Moderately

The extensive use of scientific language will make this a challenge for most middle-grade readers, while the concepts are age-appropriate. The plot of this novel is very engaging for readers, and students will relate to the two main female characters as they navigate the difficult decisions they are facing, figuring out how to be independent while still accepting support from their parents. As well, the setting of living and working in space provides opportunities for discussions about the future of the industry and highlights many of the choices that have to be made to live sustainably.

TECHNICAL DESIGN

Does the resource make effective use of the medium?



Extensively

Is the resource easy to use?



Extensively

Is the location of illustrations appropriate?



Extensively

Is the use of font, text size and presentation suitable?



Extensively

Are extraneous elements/illustrations kept to a minimum?



Extensively

This graphic novel uses a limited colour scheme, yet manages to create a very diverse population of characters. The detailed illustrations create a rich and complex environment that expands on the story set out in the text. There are no chapters, but the headings on the pages help to orient the reader in the time and location of the story. The use of text size and font also helps to give the reader a sense of volume and creates sound layers.

Does the text show insight into the complexity of the human condition?



Extensively

Does the text broaden students' experiences and understanding?



Extensively

To what degree is this text stylistically rich?



Extensively

Plot description

Tween girls, Sanity and Tallulah, are living in a space station somewhere in deep space. Sanity is a gifted science student and creates a three-headed kitten in secrecy. When the kitten escapes, the space station begins to have a variety of engineering difficulties, threatening the lives of the citizens. Sanity and her best friend, Tallulah, try to save their pet by finding it before the adults do. Readers will explore the themes of sustainability and ethics as the characters work to save the space station. Detailed illustrations add to the complexity of the storyline and the development of the characters.

Genre

- Illustrated novel

Literary Highlights

- Other (Please specify:)
- Technical language

Type

- Electronic version

Visual Highlights

- Other (specify)
- Electronic Version

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Reading Level

- Above intended grade level(s)

"Sanity & Tallulah" was a Junior Library Guild Graphic Novel selection for 2019. There is an educator guide available from the publisher as a downloadable PDF by searching "Sanity & Tallulah Educator Guide. "

GRADES AND SUBJECTS

Subjects

- Applied Design, Skills & Technology: 6-8
- English Language Arts: 6-8
- Science: 6-8

ADDITIONAL INFO

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