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JOURNAL OF LANGUAGE & LITERACY EDUCATION

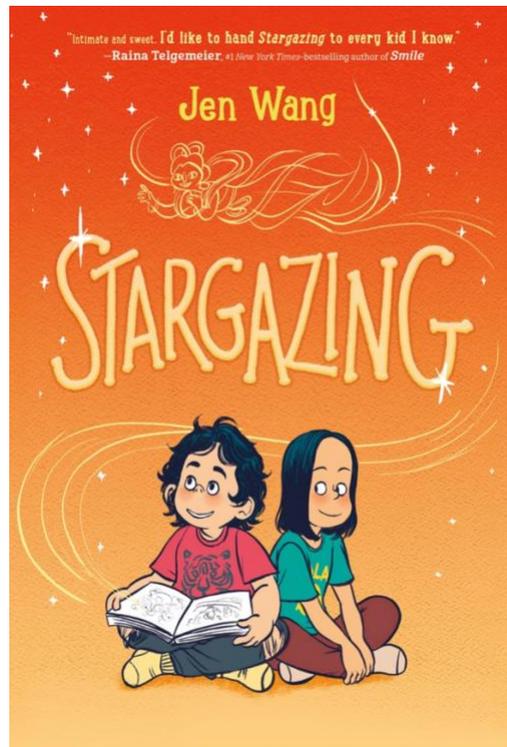
Review of *Stargazing*

Written by Jen Wang & Illustrated by Lark Pien

Adult/Educator Reviewer: Jennifer Fraser

The University of Georgia, Athens, GA

Student Reviewer: Jermany-Renee Haugabook, 6th Grade



Wang, J., & Pien, L. (Illustrator). (2019). *Stargazing*. New York, NY: First Second.

ISBN: 978-1-250-18388-0

Adult Review: Jennifer Fraser

Christine feels like a stereotypical second-generation Asian American. She plays violin competitively, is expected to do well in school, takes Chinese lessons, and spends time with a lot of people who are very similar to her. Then, a new girl moves into town. The new girl's name is Moon, and everything about her is different. Moon is Buddhist, vegan, a huge K-pop fan, a dancer, an artist, and nothing like Christine's other friends. She pulls Christine into a whole new world of possibilities, light and color. She even shares with Christine about how she feels as if she is a celestial being and not from Earth. Christine is deeply drawn to Moon but she begins to realize that Moon is not all that she seems. Moon is prone to aggression, sees images that are not there, and has a secret that Moon herself does not even know.

I chose to review this book because I want to encourage the representation of Asian Americans in literature. I want my Asian students to be able to see themselves in what they read. This book does a great job representing many different aspects of Asian culture. Even in the images, there are representations of Asian food and ways of life. There are images of Taiwanese shaved ice and bok choy and *dan dan mian*. There are pictures of Asian celebrities and lyrics to Asian songs. In addition, this book has a plot which is very relatable for all students dealing with friendship troubles. It appeals to students who are making new friends or struggling with fitting in.

This is a great book for educators to recommend. However, while it is a quicker read that can teach

about culture and friendship, it is not a very challenging read. It does not have a lot of words or very difficult vocabulary or syntax. In addition, this book does address a medical concern. This topic is addressed in a very conservative manner, but it may still upset some the end. Moon is diagnosed with a brain tumor. As a teacher, we ought to be aware of which students may be more sensitive to these issues.

Student Review: Jermany-Renee Haugabook

This story is about a girl, Christine, who meets her new best friend. It is Christine's big day performing the violin. Everything changes when she meets Moon. Moon had not gone to Christine's school. Her mother was struggling so she had nowhere else to go. Christine faces her fears and talks to her. She had not known this person would change her for the rest of her life.

I enjoyed this book but there are some things I would have changed in the story. I am talking about one of the main characters, i.e. the father. He showed very little emotion throughout the story. I would have liked to see him develop in the story as Christine did. Other than that, on a good note, the story is very great.

I really enjoyed the story. The transitions used in the story kept me wanting to read more. It was enjoyable with great characters. I would recommend it to the students in my class! This story's depth made me feel like I was there with the characters.