



Mooncalf

Linda L. Zern

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Over Olympia and Leah's heads, Americans race the Russians to the moon; on their television sets young men fight and struggle in the mud of Viet Nam; and America holds its breath between heartbreaking tragedies.

But on Miss Brinker's school bus, in the seat with the rip in the green plastic, Olympia and Leah fall in love, the way children do: immediately, completely, and without knowing or caring why they shouldn't. Olympia Crooms, with her happy hair, and Leah Breck, with her silly red dog, are two smart girls.

Olympia's father works other men's orange groves in rural Central Florida and tells his daughter that school is the best way to reach for the stars. Leah's father moves his family from the Space Coast to the country where she and her brother can climb orange trees, imagine lions in the tall grass, and learn to feed baby cows milk from a bottle.

At Evegan Elementary, two smart girls find each other and have to decide if they will learn the hardest lessons of all: the false traditions of their fathers.

Mooncalf Details

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From Reader Review Mooncalf for online ebook

Rebekah says

Original Review found at: www.beawesomebeabooknut.blogspot.com

Where do I begin? This book was amazing! I didn't know what to expect with this book. You know, with self published authors it's a hit or miss. Sometimes you get lucky and come across some AWESOME books and sometimes you just want to smile and say, "keep at it, you'll get it one day" well, this book GOT IT.

There is SO much imagery, metaphors, fore shadowing, symbols, decreative designs and patterns written throughout this entire book! It's a TINY book, but the writing was beautiful.

At first I couldn't get the gist of what this book was really about, all I knew was that it was a short story about 2 girls and their friendship, one girl being black and the other being white; during a time of great change in history. But this book is more than that, it's about growing up, facing the truth, figuring out what is right and what is wrong, stepping away from tradition and seeing what's REALLY beneath the surface of a person, white or black, looking beyond what is fed to us and coming to our own conclusions.

As I was reading it and enjoying the beautiful writing and all that mentioned above I knew this was going to be a 4 star rating book, it was just that good. But let me tell you, it was the last few pages, where the author took what she wanted you to understand and drove it home with such force I was reeling from the impact when it was all said and done, because it was so unexpected! I knew something had to happen, you could see it, you could feel that something was going to happen that something needed to happen and then it did and you thought, "oh ok, see there you go, how sweet" and yet you THINK that it's over and then....WHEM! the author throws a curve grenade that you weren't expecting that rips your heart out and you watch it and feel the ache and the pain. And THAT is what made me give it the full 5 star rating it completely deserved.

Trust me, I am NOT just saying this nice words to be nice. I was truly impressed by how, for such a short book, it was well written and I would recommend this book to bookclubs and people of ALL ages!

Sexual Content: none

Language: mild

Drugs/Alcohol: none

Violence: mild

Betty Horn says

Having grown up in the sixties in Central Florida, and next to an orange grove, this book came alive for me. The setting is real, the main characters are two little girls, one black, one white, who are best friends. The story moves through their lives in the backdrop of the orange groves and the space race, and I was really surprised at the end!

I can't say enough praise for this book! I heard another reviewer state that it would be a good read for a book club. I heartily agree! I can't help but give this book a 5 star review!

Elaine says

I received this book through First Reads on Goodreads in exchange for an honest review. I cannot say enough good things about this book-it is absolutely fantastic! I will say that people should behave more like Leah & Olympia-in their eyes, love knew no color barrier, & in my opinion, that's the way the world should be. Beautiful story. It had me in tears at the end.

thethousanderclub says

"Good writing is hard to find. I've read dozens of books this year, most of them have been mediocre. But there have been some really good ones, even some great ones. Mooncalf is a great book, and I hope it finds as large an audience as possible.

One of the most admirable things about Mooncalf is that it's difficult to find a single wasted word in the entire book. Granted the book is short; yet, it is very rare to find a book which treats with such delicacy the choosing of each word--each adjective, verb, and noun. Themes, motifs, and symbols are everywhere throughout Mooncalf, and most impressive of all none of it is discarded. Motifs and themes exist in big and small circles in Mooncalf, circling back in on themselves as well as intertwining themselves with the plot and the characters that inhabit it. And those motifs and themes, those messages and those symbols, don't go away once you've finished the book. They stick with you. It's hard to forget Mooncalf.

Linda L. Zern does an outstanding job of creating a place and time. Florida is uniquely equipped for stories. *Swamplandia!* was also able to evoke a similar feeling of being in a particular place at a particular time. (Too bad *Swamplandia!* wasn't very good). But creating a geographic location and a specific point in history doesn't make for a great story. Readers need characters to love or hate. Mooncalf has both types of characters. The two protagonists, young girls named Leah and Olympia, are vivid and real. You'll hope for them and hurt for them. They are what sticks with you when you complete Mooncalf and wonder what could have been different for them both.

Mooncalf is not perfect. My biggest grumble about the book are the illustrations. Although rendered well enough, with some being quite evocative, they felt superfluous and at times distracted from the story. The writing is more than sufficient to create a place and time, as mentioned earlier, and the addition of the illustrations wasn't really needed. Additionally, there is one particular perspective shift in the story (a shift to first person) that was extremely jarring from a reader's perspective and took me out of the story. Make no mistake, there is far, far more to love about Mooncalf than to not.

Mooncalf is a tragedy and, therefore, won't be for everyone. I even wonder if the story, especially its ending, could have been different and still been as poignant. Yet, after thinking it over several times, I wouldn't change a thing. There are several moments in the book that hit me as a reader like a punch to the chest and subsequently ripped my heart out. In the final analysis, it's a sad, sad book, but not hopeless. I think there is enough love between Leah and Olympia to show the audience that things could be different if we want them to be.

I can't help but compare Mooncalf to *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The setting, its message, its mood, and its characters all lend themselves to that comparison, and it's a fine comparison to make. Harper Lee told a great story and so has Linda L. Zern. Mooncalf should be read. It's one of the best books I've read this year and

most certainly one of the most memorable I've ever read. I wouldn't miss the chance to enjoy it, learn from it, and have your heart broken by it."

<http://thethousanderclub.blogspot.com/>

Carl says

A very good book! I would recommend it to everybody! Look forward to reading other books by this author! I won it through Goodreads! Thanks!

Maggie says

I was interested by the blurb about this book and so opted into review it. I was quickly drawn into this book and read ravenously, wondering if the calf would make it and if Leah and Olympia would ever get their sleepover. I was very surprised by the ending because it somewhat snuck up on me.

I enjoyed the descriptions of the work that is done in the orange groves. I had known a bit about this from reading other books and having family in Florida, but I liked that I was able to learn a few facts while reading this book. It was also interesting to read about how much different this town in Central Florida was versus Leah's old home on the Space Coast. Being that her father commuted, the two towns aren't that far from each other yet are still worlds apart.

While this book is classified as middle-grade, I quickly forgot about that. Don't let that classification stop you from picking up and reading Mooncalf. That being said, this is definitely for kids no younger than those middle grades of 4, 5 and 6. My 2nd grade daughter reads past her age level and I think this book would upset her.

I think Mooncalf is a moving story about how the world should be. We should all love like Olympia and Leah do. While they saw their differences, they appreciated the beauty in all of their characteristics, no matter how different they are.

I received this book as part of my involvement with Revell Reads. All opinions are my own.

Rachael says

Mooncalf is such a lovely little book about friendship and love. I fell in love with Leah and Olympia and was drawn into their story right from the beginning. This book is so beautifully written and I loved seeing the world through the eyes of these two carefree little girls.

The ending came as a bit of a shock (I cried), but it's such a wonderfully story and I'm so glad I got the chance to read it :)

Diane says

Takes place in the late 1950s or 1960. Aimed at middle grades.

Mallory says

I received this book through a giveaway in exchange for a fair review. Thank you so much!

I wasn't really sure what to expect from this book in the beginning, but I can honestly say that it was one of the best books I've read in a while. It should be on schools' reading lists. The ending left me shocked, but I think it was perfect. Thanks again!

Cindy says

*received for free through Goodreads First Reads

There was a lot of beautiful imagery and I liked the way the imagery reflected the characters mindsets (such as in the beginning when Leah imagines hiding in the belly of a whale.) Easy to become attached to the characters and their vulnerabilities help you relate.
