***I Love You, Michael Collins***

by Lauren Baratz-Logsted

**Annotation**

It’s 1969 and America is about to put the first man on the moon. It’s an exciting time! Ten year old Mamie’s class is assigned to write to an astronaut. Mamie writes, and continues to write to her astronaut, Michael Collins, as a difficult and life changing summer unfolds.

**Book Talk**

It's the time of rock and roll, the space race is on, and summer is beginning. As an end of the year assignment, Mamie must write to an astronaut on Apollo 11. As her family unravels over the hot summer and Mamie keeps writing, America’s space race takes off!

**Author on the Internet**

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**Items to use in a library display**

* Rockets
* moon
* letters
* NASA
* old tv

**Book Club Discussion Questions/Topics**

* What does it mean to stay with the ship?
* How were Mamie and Michael Collins alike?
* In what ways did Mamie’s family troubles end up having a positive outcome?
* How are Mamie’s and Buster’s families different?
* Why did Mamie spend so much time writing to Michael Collins?

**First Line of the Book:**

“Dear Michael Collins, You’re going to the moon!”

**Non-Fiction Companion Title(s)**

* *Eight Days Gone* by Linda McReynolds
* *Space-Busters: The Race to the Moon* by Philip Wilkinson
* *Margaret and the Moon: How Margaret Hamilton Saved the First Lunar Landing* by Dean Robbins
* *Moonshot: The Flight of Apollo 11* by Brian Floca

**What to Read Next**

* *George’s Secret Key to the Universe* by Stephen Hawking
* *Willy Maykit in Space* by Greg Trine
* *Neil Armstrong is my Uncle &Other Lies Muscle Man McGinty Told Me* by Nan Marino

**Other Books by this Author**

* *The Sisters 8 Series*

**Additional Resources**

* Music: Space Oddity by David Bowie
* Poetry: Out of this World: Poems and Facts about Space by Amy Sklansky
* Art/craft idea: Have students build small rockets.
* Book Study:

-Divide book into manageable sections for daily readings

-decorate room with space objects and set up centers

-Check NASAs Teacher site for ideas for centers

-Have students write letters to current astronauts

-Locate news segments from particular parts in the book

**Name that Book**

“I thought of you then. I thought of you coming so close to the moon, how you’ll be coming closer to it than all but two other people in the entire history of the world so far, and you still won’t be able touch it, at least not on this trip.” (P. 11)

“Do you see what our parents did? They named each of their daughters after whichever First Lady happened to be in the White House on the day the daughter was born.” (P. 17)

“We have to play outside until it gets dark.The cocoa afterwards is good, but sometimes I think it is hardly worth the price of ice-block feet.”

“That thing we’d constructed together looked nothing like the $10.49 Apollo-Saturn rocket toy we’d seen in the ad, but that did not matter, not one bit, because nothing I’d ever seen in my whole life had ever looked so beautiful. Nothing.” (P. 51)

“Right then and there, I vowed to myself never to be a cheat-reader again. I realized that doing things the way I had been doing them before, not only was it wrong, but I was also running the risk of missing out on some of the good stuff- even if it made me the last one to finish reading at school.” (Pp. 55-56)

“The astronauts though? They’re real live superheroes, attempting to do the most extraordinary thing that any human being has ever attempted. And if they can pull this off? Who *knows* what people will be able to do next?” ( p. 74)

“Tomorrow’s going to come, Frank. Whether you like it or not, it’s going to come. Tomorrow morning, three men are going to leave this planet and try to do something no one has ever done before. Who knows? Maybe you’re right, Frank. Maybe the space race is dumb and it doesn’t matter who wins it. Maybe this is all just a big waste of taxpayer dollars. But so what? Since it’s going to happen anyway, why not enjoy it? Why not be excited? Whatever else happens in our lives, this will never happen again, not like this.” (Pp. 84-85)

“It turns out there’s some sad that even Froot Loops can’t fix.” (P. 97)

“*Doesn’t anyone stay with the ship anymore?”* (P. 165)