

Balloon Girls

By Darrell Pitt

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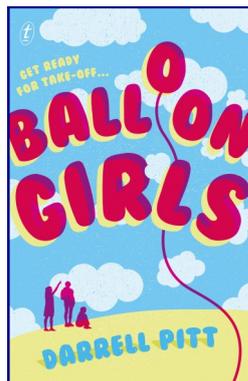
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Blurb:

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