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 ***Primates: The Fearless Science of Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey, and Biruté Galdikas by Jim Ottaviani (review)***

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REVIEW

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

Reviewed by:

Elizabeth Bush

Ottaviani, Jim. *Primates: The Fearless Science of Jane Goodall, Dian Fossey, and Biruté Galdikas*; illus. by Maris Wicks. First Second/Roaring Brook, 2013. 140p. ISBN 978-1-59643-865-1 \$19.99 R Gr. 6-10.

Ottaviani, who celebrated the accomplishments of a host of women scientists in *Two Fisted Science*, offers another graphic-novel account accessible to a slightly younger audience, focused on three pioneers of primatology, all of whom launched **[End Page 524]** their field studies under the patronage of paleontologist Louis Leakey. Although their individual careers are not examined in depth here, each woman's research area and contribution are clearly conveyed: Jane Goodall's observation of Tanzanian chimpanzee tool use redefined the meaning of "human"; Dian Fossey's work with mountain gorillas in Rwanda segued into a fierce battle for species conservation; Biruté Galdikas crossed a human/primate barrier to study the elusive orangutan in Borneo. Moreover, Ottaviani highlights how Leakey himself was vindicated time and again for putting his faith in un-credentialed women, rightly suspecting that their patience and perspicacity would gain them access to primate communities. Distinctive narration box colors and lettering styles identify and track each woman's story. Wicks' characterizations of both humans and primates sport an innocence that augments the title's approachability and also underscores the freshness of the scientists' approaches in developing close relationships with their subjects. Readers already familiar with this dynamic trio will certainly note, and possibly decry, the omission of significant drama—particularly the debated circumstances surrounding Fossey's violent death. Nonetheless, this is an inviting introduction that will undoubtedly lure many readers into further investigation of this groundbreaking fieldwork.

boring class photo ever—or will it? In *Class Pets*, Missy excitedly prepares to host class pets Eenie-Meenie, Miney, and Mo, but mean girl Tiffany beats her to the punch. Once again it looks like Missy's plans will fail—until Tiffany learns that Eenie-Meenie, Miney, and Moe are rats (she thought they were gerbils or hamsters), and Missy rescues them from the shrieking, rodent-tossing chaos that ensues. The plots in both titles are a bit thin, but the short, snappy text and plentiful illustrations fill a niche by providing a supportive textual and visual transition between more vocabulary-restricted easy readers and longer, more challenging chapter books. The frequently humorous text (“Tiffany was big. Tiffany was loud. Tiffany had hairy arms”) and the lively pace will keep novice readers engaged as well. The extensive full-color illustrations and lively composition suggest a missing link between early readers and graphic novels, and Nees’ cartoonish, button-nosed figures are attractive and dynamic, especially the sassy, springy-haired Missy. Hand this to fans of Fancy Nancy (or even Olivia the pig) who are ready for the next step up the reading ladder. JH

O'RYAN, RAY *Hello, Nebulon!*; illus. by Colin Jack. Little Simon, 2013. 115p
Trade ed. ISBN 978-1-4424-5387-6 \$15.99
Paper ed. ISBN 978-1-4424-5386-9 \$4.99
E-book ed. ISBN 978-1-4424-5388-3 \$4.99 R Gr. 2-4

When his family decides to move from Earth to planet Nebulon in 2120, eight-year-old Zack Nelson isn't happy; he has to leave his Earthling friends behind, and he is terrified that the kids on Nebulon will be insect-pizza-eating monsters. His new house, however, is engagingly equipped with Ira, an Indoor Robotic Assistant who's there to cater to his every whim. Add to that a classmate named Drake, a native Nebulite, who shares Zack's favorite class (planetology) and is happy to also share his high-tech space bike, and Zack might be able to adjust to life on Nebulon just fine. A standard tale of the culture shock of moving somewhere new, this beginning reader tones down the trauma with smile-inducing customs Zack must learn (“Yippee wah-wah” is what Nebulite kids say when they are happy,” Drake helpfully explains), and there's humor in Zack's sharing some of his own culture (Drake has never seen a dog before). Brief chapters with gently oversized print are enticingly readable. Cartoonish *Jetsons*-inspired black and white illustrations take up space on most pages (the illustrator also designs characters for DreamWorks Animation), with Zack's overactive imagination and the standard fare of a futuristic world, complete with space cars and hologram projectors, taking center stage. Particularly endearing are the Nebulites, humanoids with huge eyes, egg-shaped heads, three-piece suits, and expertly coiffed black hair. The start of a series of early readers, this is a solid choice to hand to kids yearning for a more extra-galactic adventure than *The Magic Treehouse* and its ilk. TA

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