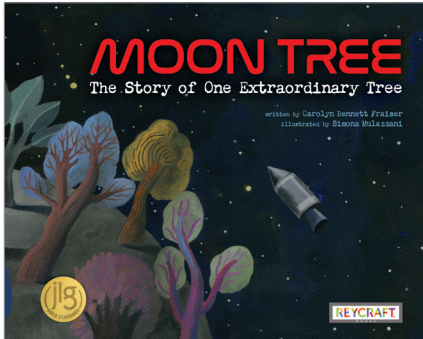




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*Moon Tree:*  
*The Story of One Extraordinary Tree*  
by Carolyn Bennett Fraiser  
illustrated by Simona Mulazzani

#### SUMMARY

A little girl finds a sycamore tree named a “moon tree” and wonders where its name came from. When no one knows, her third-grade class is determined to find the answer. Their quest leads them to NASA, an extraordinary boy who grew up to be an astronaut, a broken metal container, and a story more fascinating than they could ever have imagined.

#### SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL PERSPECTIVES

- Responsible Decision-Making: Demonstrating Curiosity and Open-Mindedness: Moon trees were a forgotten piece of NASA history until one curious young girl explored the history of a moon tree she encountered.
- For more about self-awareness and other social-emotional competencies, visit: <https://casel.org/>.

For read-aloud videos of the Reycraft books, visit [reycraftbooks.com/videos.html](https://reycraftbooks.com/videos.html).

# Teacher's Guide

BY JESSICA WALSH

## Book Talk Blurb

The title of this book is called *Moon Tree*. Have you ever heard of a “moon tree” before? Who wants to share what they think a moon tree might be? This book tells the true story of how one young girl’s curiosity led to the discovery of a piece of NASA history that was long forgotten!

## Set Purpose: Invitation to Readers

This story incorporates a lot of wondrous words related to plants and space. As we read with a writer’s eye, let’s create a collection of plant-related and space-related words that will help us grow our list of wondrous words to use in our own writing!

## During Reading

### Read-Aloud Conversation Starters

(Note: It may be helpful to number the pages of this book for reference, where the first two pages of the story are pages 2-3.)

- Page 4: *a story unearthed in the stars*. As I read this phrase again, listen to Carolyn Bennett Fraiser’s word choice. What words stand out for you? Why do you think the author decided on these words? (She uses the verb *unearth*, which can be related to plants and digging something up, but *earth* is also a space-related word. The author is using wordplay to add meaning.)
- Page 6: *At home, he watches war planes soar in the Oklahoma sky*. Let’s pause and consider the setting. What information does the author provide to help us determine the setting of this book? Can we tell place? Time? What details in the text or images support our ideas? (It is set in Oklahoma in the text; it is wartime, so probably WWII based on the images of the planes.)
- Page 12: *to take one small step . . . one giant leap . . .* Readers, have you heard the saying, “One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind?” Talk with your neighbor about what you know about this quote. Why do you think the author chose to include a reference to Neil Armstrong’s famous quote? (The author repeats the word *one* in the opening of many pages throughout the book.)
- Page 26: *One special story about one ordinary boy*. What do you notice about the word choice in the ending? (The author ends the book with *ordinary boy*, which connects back to the opening pages.)



## Respond, Reflect, React, or Research

- **Reflect on SEL Competency—Demonstrating Curiosity and Open-Mindedness:** The author repeats the word *ordinary* to describe the young girl who comes across the moon tree at camp and wants to know the answer to her question, “What is a moon tree?” [What can we learn from her actions that teach us about curiosity and open-mindedness?](#)
- **Reflect on Comprehension—Determining Theme/Main Message:** [As we read, we noticed Carolyn Bennett Frasier’s word choice and her use of repetition with the word \*one\*. In your notebooks, jot down your thinking about the main theme or message of this true story.](#)
- **Respond—Read Like a Writer:** Carolyn Bennett Frasier ends *Moon Tree* similarly to how she starts it—with a statement about one ordinary boy. This is called a circular ending, when the writer refers back to the beginning. [With a neighbor, talk about the benefits of a circular ending and whether you are working on a piece right now that you might be able to try this with.](#)
- **Respond—Collect Wondrous Words:** [As we read \*Moon Tree\*, we kept our eyes and ears open for wondrous words about plants and space. Let’s take a look at our lists. Now, take a few moments to collect your favorite words in your notebook so that you might include them in a current or future piece of writing.](#)

### Real World Action

The author of *Moon Tree* encourages readers to learn whether there is a moon tree near where they live. Using the information in the back of the book, along with credible resources, see if students might be able to visit or discover a moon tree near them and document and share their discoveries.

## If your students liked this book . . .

### *The Tree Told Me*

by Sophie Lescaut

illustrated by Thanh Portal

New York: Reyrcraft Books, 2021

What can be learned from a tree?

If we watch and listen, a tree has much to teach us about life—such as how you can be small and strong at the same time and how to weather storms. The author, a philosopher, offers an intriguing look at how children can navigate this thing we call “life” as they grow and change.

### *Footprints Across the Planet*

by Jennifer Swanson

New York: Reyrcraft Books, 2022

Every footprint—from the physical to the digital and the permanent to the fleeting—leaves a mark on Earth, telling a story of the past, the present, or the future. What type of imprint will YOU leave? Journey around the world and experience through these vivid photographs how every being on the planet leaves an imprint, with their feet, their words, their actions. Whether human or animal, voices or activity, each mark has a purpose. To remind us of our history, give us a glimpse of our future, and maybe even inspire us to change the world.

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