



Under the Mountain

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While vacationing with relatives in Auckland, twins Theo and Rachel discover that they are endowed with special powers to oppose mysterious giant creatures that are determined to destroy the world.

Under the Mountain Details

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Author : Maurice Gee

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From Reader Review Under the Mountain for online ebook

Linda says

My 3-stars shouldn't confuse this with a 'bad read'. It was just a bit, well, conveniently contrived in its solutions sometimes. Even kids don't need to be dumbed down to, or 'told' what to think. I was careful to read this story with a 9yr old's simplicity, not a 40+ jadedness, but there were moments of bluntness in tying up those threads that still jarred. Even leaving the ending where it was, so abruptly, with just a quick hint at how many other lives were lost had an unsatisfactory feel about it. Appropriate for the age group? Perhaps. But a shame it wasn't rounded out so well at the end.

The chase scenes were terrific, ranging all over Auckland's extinct volcanos; the alien antagonisers creepy and the children well suited to their role with an element of risk-taking and world awareness.

I now know that this story was made into an NZ mini-series: which I'm guessing is a great watch. All through the book I was thinking - "what a great scene that would make", "what awesome views", "this would translate so well to the screen". etc etc.

Great read for any kid living around Auckland, because the familiar landscape will make it even more exciting. 9yrs +

Kate Nicholson says

Why I decided to read this book: I read this book because I needed a book by a NZ author for my reading logs.

Which category: This fills the category a book by a NZ author. It was not really that interesting because the book was sort of science fiction and doesn't really say much about New Zealand which is what I would of expected.

Favourite quote: My favourite quote is said by Rachel and Theo as they threw their stones into the mountains "Go down people of the mud!" was said by Rachel and "We give you the gift of oblivion" was said by Theo. This is my favourite because it's a spell and finally kills the slugs and the Wilberforces.

something new I learned: I learned that with determination and hard work you can overcome anything, like when Theo couldn't hold his stone he kept trying until he could. And that if you try hard enough you can achieve any thing in the end.

Character I Like: My favourite character would have to be Mr Jones because he has been searching for these twins which could put an end to the Wilberforces. He loved another set of twins very much and when they died he didn't want to go on but he did and he protected Rachel and Theo with everything he had and sacrificed his life for them in the end.

Lara Mi says

Twins Theo and Rachel are drawn into an age-old alien war only to discover that they are the only ones with the power to stop it. Giant worm-like creatures live hidden under Auckland's volcanos and lie in waiting for the right moment to surface and contaminate the earth - and they don't intend on letting the twins interfere.

I was really keen to read something by a New Zealand author - when I first read this author's **O Trilogy**, I was somewhat let down. It wasn't bad, but it wasn't great either. I hoped that this stand-alone novel would turn out better for me. When I first started reading, I noticed that many elements of the story are **very** similar to the trilogy. The first chapters seemed promising enough but the further I read, the more I felt that the trilogy was, after all, the superior work.

Just like the **O Trilogy**, I can't really tell what the appropriate audience is. It's a children's book but some of the elements seem too creepy and grotesque which would usually make me think it's better for older teens or young adults. And yet, many things are so simplistic even for a children's book.

The two alien races - which have supposedly been hiding in New Zealand since even before the Maori came - have taken on human forms and have taken the names of Mr Wilberforces and Mr Jones. When the twins enquire what their races are called, they are told it's too difficult to say so just call them Wilberforces and Joneses. I don't think I have ever come across anything with such a lack of creativity.

I also have trouble taking a book seriously in which the main conflict lies in these worms who are set on turning the world into mud. I don't know, I just can't. I suppose earth being turned into mud wouldn't be great, but it just does not work as a plot for me.

Another thing that truly bothered me - neither of the twins acted in the slightest like the 11-year-olds they were meant to be. I refuse to believe that they are any younger than 14! Too much freedom, too mature and for goodness sake their relatives let them go out until late at night.

The ending was very abrupt and I don't feel satisfied with all the answers. Yet the story intrigued me so little that I can't say I care too much. The book does have a good opening and build up but just spirals down into something very short of a climax.

Of course, not all is bad! The twins themselves, apart from their age, are likeable enough as main characters. I like how they have different personalities and the author tries to make a point of both having their uses - one being rational and one being emotional. I loved how the story was set in New Zealand and made good use of local things. I was sure surprised to learn that the twins come from the same little town I used to go to school to - a town even people in New Zealand don't always seem to know.

Maurice Gee is quite the famous author in New Zealand and I'm sad to say that his stories don't seem to work for me. I didn't really enjoy any of his works and as a result, I don't think I shall venture to read any more. Perhaps I shall have more luck with his daughter's works.

Mina says

I chose to read this book because I was looking for a good book written by a New Zealand author and I came across this one. I read the blurb and thought that I would probably be able to read it without falling asleep. A friend of mine passed by and made a short comment that it was an interesting book.

This book is 'a book written by a New Zealander' on the bingo board. I am not a big fan of New Zealand authors and I do not enjoy any of their books because I do not find them interesting and end up forcing myself to read to the last page. This book was no different.

My favourite character is Mr Jones. He is a very strange old man who came from a different planet with his twin to stop the Wilberforces. He had failed and has been look for twins who are telepathically linked ever since. I like him because of his mysteriousness and kindness towards Rachel and Theo.

My favourite quote from this book is 'She needs you. And you need her.' This is where Theo finally realises he cannot destroy the wilberforces alone. He needs his sisters help and she needs his. They need to work together if they want to save the world.

I learned not to trust everyone in this book, and to be very cautious about opening the door to people who claim to be policemen. They may not turn out to be who they claim to be.

Rebecca McNutt says

Thrilling and evocative, *Under the Mountain* can sometimes be slowly paced, but overall it's a truly great novel.

Kenneth Zhu says

I have chosen to read this book because I am very interested about Auckland in NZ. Also, my reading tutor, Olvia have recommended me to read this book as part of Wide reading programme. My tutor told me what the book is about, and I felt interested with this book after she told me.

This book fits the category of a book is written by a New Zealander because this book is written by Maurice Gee who is the New Zealand author of the book. Also, the book cover tells me that the story is settled in Auckland,NZL probably One Tree Hill (the area I lived in now).

My favourite character of this story is the twins which they are called Theo and Rachel because they wanted to find out new things like the old man called Mr Jones who have been look at them and looking somewhere then vanished into the sky. This character is mysterious because he always vanished somewhere. The twins don't know why he vanished. Anyway, also twins like to go on adventure. For example for real: at the start of the story, the twins have disappeared from his parents house one night while his father was cutting the logs. His father never notice the twins have disappeared until he feel in his heart that something is wrong. So he looked and found out that twins have disappeared. He went into the house, tell his wife, called the police and neighbours!!!! When they all there, they started searching for them but by the end of the day, they never find it. This is described as adventure people in the story as they loved to wonder around going on the adventures.

I found that the quote called "Make for Rangitoto. Make for light" is very interesting because as they are running away from Wilberforces who is the evil people in the story, they will die because these Wilberforces could easily kill the humans using their powers. Theo and Rachel are trying to make a goal to get rid of them by running to the top of the mountain consistently. This is what we are expected to learn from the test etc. If you fail the test, you have to make the goal of how to get better in the test by doing what? This quote is very important in the future.

I have learned from the story is if you are the parent, you must fully supervise the children otherwise if they ran away, you call the police, neighbours etc. to start searching around the area. This will take a long time. Also I learned is to set the goal of every subject and try to achieve it so you will get good marks in the test.

This story talks about the adventure of the twins called Theo and Rachel who loves to go on adventures in Auckland, NZL. During the story, he met a wise man called Mr Jones. He teaches the twins how to use the stones. These stones are used to attack and defend bad people. This is very magical! I wish I could have one!!!! Anyway, during the story, the bloody enemy called Wilberforces was trying to eat them, so they ran off to Rangitoto which is a mountain in Auckland to hide away from the enemy as they try to use their stones to fight against them. If you want to find out more then I suggested you should read this book!

Another fact I learned is to think smart otherwise you might get tricked and attacked by someone like the twins think it carefully and they knew it was their person who has been looking for them as they are not the POLICE MAN!!!

Sweetp-1 says

Classic NZ children's (Middle grade) fiction read for March - NZ Book month.

I have vague and hazy memories of watching the TV series as a child - not really any memories of the plot but a sense of darkness and gloom and running from something terrible. I haven't seen the more recent movie adaptation but might seek it out now.

Despite the book's age it didn't feel particularly dated (a reference to tolls on the harbour bridge about the only thing that I found jarring). It has a great sense of adventure and suspense and the Wilberforces were particularly creepy with their rubbery grey skin and morphing abilities. I also loved the science fiction element (grey slugs on a mission to turn the universe to mud...been watching too much Dr Who....could picture Jones as a companion lol).

I did find it a bit simplistic at times and a bit short - the ending is quite abrupt - but I think if it is viewed as middle grade/children's fiction rather than YA (something I tried to keep in mind while reading) then it works Ok. I have given this to my 11 year old to read next.

Amith Cheeran says

Yeah, I chose this book to read because I needed to read a book by a New Zealand author and heard not so

bad praises for it. But when I read the book I didn't awfully like it. The plot wasn't exiting at all. The cliche of evil monsters which need killing by a brother and sister who have special powers. The Mathesons are a alien force whose other people were at war with another race of aliens which turn planets into mud and stone. If the twins don't stop them, earth is next. There was nothing to be thrilled of except points where they find they have super powers and are aliens. Mr. Jones is always sticking onto his decisions. Killing the Wilberforces is the only option, their kind must be ripped out from the cosmos for others to survive. No other tactic will work – certainly not negotiation. These are the only main highlights. The writing style and suspense making is mediocre. I must say I have read better.

My favourite character is Theo Matheson because he likes adventures just like his sister Rachel. We see the evidence for this when the both (when they are small) go out for a stroll when their father is busy working and give their parents a scare. He is also interested in finding and learning new things unlike his sister. Her sister is a dreamer whereas Theo is a scientist always thinking.

My favourite quote is "Make for Rangitoto. Make for light". Here I found it heart warming that Maurice gives his country and surroundings respect and wants to us to love them too. It is also good to keep in mind that light is not always the literal light but the good there is. When we meet a crisis we have to go where there is light, hope, goodness to cleanse our body and mind.

What I learnt is not to procrastinate and do what has to be done, right here, right now. Don't let your guard down and relax till the deed is done and never regret. If you give up like Rachel was about to, the consequences might be severe.

I would put this on The Bingo Board 'A book by a New Zealand Author'.

Eric Hinkle says

The first Maurice Gee book I've read, because it was a dollar, I like kids books, I liked the one short story I read from him...plus he's quite famous in NZ!

I found it pretty hard to put down, and finished it in two sittings. He's got a ton of imagination, his descriptions are great and gross, his pacing is generally pretty exciting. I liked that he didn't make things pretty or easy (for example, he has an uncle drown and a volcano erupt on some of the people at the end). I always admire when authors do unnecessary, but fairly natural things, like when E.B. White kills off Charlotte. In this book, it's not jarring, because there's a really intense buildup and you're just glad the twins are alive (no spoiler, it's a kids book, of course they're alive).

I think kids who have never been to Auckland will be thrilled with all the talk of volcanoes and whatnot. And of course, those who've been there will have a lot to recognize!

Clint Harding says

Still very enjoyable 35 years after I first read the story of Theo and Rachel. Maurice Gee keeps a cracking pace with his story of bravery and kinship. I am still scared to this day of the evil Wilberforces and have never looked at Lake Pupuke the same way since first reading this book. A great story and strong reminder

of my childhood. A good story to share now with my own daughters.

Jack says

I decided to read 'Under the Mountain' by Maurice Gee because I have heard good things about it before. The book that I had looked exiting and mysterious at the same time. I love these types of books because I always get into story and pretend I'm in the book watching it all.

This book has been made into a movie twice. Once a long time ago and once quite recently. I watched the old one which was really good. The movie and book are really similar except when I was reading the book I imagined that the characters looked different to what I thought. I think this category was really interesting because the movie is usually different from the book.

The character I found most interesting was Mr Wilberforce. He is a shape-shifter from another planet. His true form is a form of a slug which gives off a stench of rotten cabbages. His main goal is to release his giant worms that live under the mountains and turn earth into a giant mud puddle. It is really cool how he is an alien and is trying to destroy the human race. It gives an almost believable twist to the book that makes me want to keep reading and see if the alien race will succeed in their mission.

My favourite quote from the novel is something that Mr Jones (The leader of the people trying to destroy the aliens) says when the aliens finally disappear after trying to kill the main characters; Theo and Rachel Matherson. "your world is safe now Theo". This is the words that Theo and Rachel wanted to hear for so long, and it finally came. They could finally rest and not have to worry about alien creatures trying to kill them.

I Thought the book was brilliant over-all and I would read it again if I could. I thought that anyone could actually be an alien or a creature unknown from man, even though it is very unlikely. It helped that it was set in Auckland too because when they traveled around to all the beaches I knew exactly where they were. There could be a giant worm under Rangitoto or Mt Eden you never know.

Conor Davson says

I decided to read this book because it was written by a new Zealander Maurice Gee. It tells the story about twins Rachel and Theo who come to stay with their Auckland family and find themselves in the middle of a battle between two alien forces the slug like Wilberforce family and Mr Jones. It's pretty awful because there is only one option and that they must kill an entire race if there to survive.

The category that this book fills is a book that was written by a new Zealander. This is an interesting category because not a lot of books that have been written by new Zealanders have been made into movies but the movie was terrible.

Some characters I found interesting was the Wilberforce's. They are a worm like organism who conquer other worlds and turn their surfaces into mud and use up all their resources and then leave the planet dead.

a quote I liked was by Mr Jones who said 'you might as well talk to a school of sharks' when explaining how a moral the Wilberforce's are and how there is no benefit in talking or trying to negotiate.

something new I learned from this book was sometimes the only option is a bad one 'to kill or be killed'.

Michael Gardner says

This book and the subsequent TV series left such an impression on me that I still can't look at Rangitoto without thinking about slimy aliens, giant worms and those cool glowing stones. I wanted one just as much as I wanted my own lightsabre.

Undoubtedly a New Zealand classic. The only reason I'm rating it four stars is because I've always thought it kinda sits somewhere between a kids book and an adult book.

For kids, it's quite scary, the stuff of nightmares. Yes, I had a few after reading it. And again after watching the TV series. Not so much the recent movie though, but I saw that at the ripe young age of [spoilers removed].

Reading it as an adult, the twins are a bit hard to take as they're very mature for 11 years old. You might also struggle with the premise from an adult perspective: that aliens have been dwelling in New Zealand since before the Maori (who arrived here in the 1400s), doing absolutely nothing until now.

But those cool stones... man, I still want one.

royaevereads says

This was one of my childhood favourites, and this was the first time I'd read it since I was 9 or so. So great! Action that keeps you on the edge of your seat and the sibling bond is lovely. Flawless writing. And I love that it's set in a place that I now know so well, don't get that very often! (I have to say this is a bit of a niche book though - an essential read for kiwi kids but I think if I was reading it for the first time as an adult the lack of nostalgia for it would bump it down a bit, and if you're not from NZ you might not "get" it so much, but in saying that it's only the places that are referenced, otherwise it's not too specific to NZ).

Alex says

I decided to read this book because this was the only book that was recommended to me that was written by a New Zealander. I struggled to find a book for this category as I read the precis of the highly rated ones, but they all seemed boring and didn't interest me. I chose this one as it seemed intriguing because the plot was odd and different.

The category that this book completes is 'A book written by a New Zealander'. I didn't really find this category interesting as it didn't really seem any different from an American or British writer.

There was no particular standout quote that i liked as i didn't really enjoy the book as a whole. I didn't find anything meaningful, deep or funny. But if i had to choose a quote it would be "We give you the gift of oblivion". This spell eliminates the Wilberforces and the slugs, this is good because their race basically won bringing them on top to finally live in a peaceful society.

In this book I learnt what genocide meant. I have heard this word used in classroom conversations but i never knew what it meant. The author didn't use the word genocide but genocide is what each race intended to do. There were 3 races and they all wanted to wipe out each other, leaving one on top.

My favourite characters would be the Wilberforces, because they kept me entertained as they spoke another language when humans weren't around. They could also shape shift into different things, and if I had to choose a super power, that would be it.

In the end i was right, the book was a bit odd,as the precis made clear. For example there was a character named Mr Wilberforce. His main goal was to release his giant worms that lived under the mountains and to turn earth into a giant mud puddle. Yep, that's odd.
