

The background of the cover is a deep blue night sky filled with stars and several shooting stars with long, colorful trails. In the bottom left, a white horse with a yellow mane and tail is lying down, looking up at the sky. In the bottom right, there is a small white house with a chimney. In the center background, there are dark, pointed trees and rolling hills.

SBD

Susana
Balán
Digital

Link

AND THE
shooting stars

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Link and the shooting stars

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For anyone of any age who is searching for their own truth.
For the children who love their parents deeply and who suffer because they
don't feel understood by them.
For the parents who love these children deeply and who suffer because they
don't feel they understand them.

It's my great pleasure to write a few words on Susana Balan's latest book, a well-written story with beautifully colored and expressive drawings. It reminds me of Le Petit Prince as it is a mirror of inner feelings expressed metaphorically through a young, gentle horse who searches for peace of mind through foreign lands. It's a reading to be savored and will resonate with many readers, young and old.

ALBERT LEVY MD FAAFM (US), FNYAM (US), FRSM (UK)

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This is a wonderful and profound story to read with our children. Through the life of an adventurous and curious horse we will be enriched in a much-needed dialog to help them in the search of their own identity encouraging them to connect with themselves, even if this means sometimes feeling different.

This book is simply MAGICAL. While I was reading it, I remembered conversations, conclusions, critical moments that made me understand my journey... I heard myself many times in Link's voice... It's wonderful to have chosen a horse... the story would not be the same if you had chosen a person because the reader does not judge the horse, it has the innocence of an animal with the profound discovery of a human. I identified with each step in Link's search, I was moved by his need to illuminate others with flashlights, unaware of his own light, I was able to embrace him in his confusion because everything excited him and he wanted to become everything for the sake of exploring and knowing. I was able to understand when he felt that others judged him as an impostor because everything excited him, and he could become everything. I was able to cry with him with the feeling of not feeling at home until he felt at peace with himself, I got excited when I was able to recognize and name the key moments of his life in the stars and recognize what made him what he is now. I was able to see in the outline of his constellation the outline of mine. This book explores the issues that move the soul of all mutants, all

seekers, before reconciling with being “Link”. Links who enjoy connecting, inspiring, illuminating, looking at and imagining different places and settings, that often get bored because they need to keep exploring because by exploring others, they also discover themselves... Bravo Bravo Bravo!!! And my deepest thanks!!!

BEATRIZ CARMUEGA
Director Escuela Argentina in Greenwich, LLC

Link and The Shooting Stars takes you on a psychological journey from childhood to maturity. The strangeness and difficulty inherent to development is expressed through Link's experiences. This is truly a book that can help parents better understand their children, and help children better understand themselves. Even the best parents struggle to help their children resolve conflict. This story provides a powerful toolbox to identify, process, and resolve many issues. If the parent and child read the book together, it allows for thoughtful discussion in dealing with life's challenges. The writing is warm and empathetic, accompanied by dynamic and colorful illustrations. This is a story to be read by both parent and child! The journey is a fun and exciting adventure to healthy maturity!

A faculty member of NYU Medical School, LYNN BURKES M.D. has practiced psychiatry since 1975, specializing in children and adolescents.

I like Link because he's a horse who doesn't want to be like all the other horses, he wants to have his own decisions his own thoughts and he wants to be different. He goes on an adventure and he learns a lot of new things. He doesn't know if he wants to be like his mom or dad at first. Then he realizes that he can be his own self!

The Book is full of adventures and very interesting parts and climax changing from high to low and low to high.

He has his own personality and is not afraid to say what he thinks.

LYLA PRAVAZ NEVES, 12 year-old student, Guelph, Ontario.

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Chapter 1

The shooting stars

It was the end of a beautiful sunny day at a horse ranch in the mountains. As the last rays of the sun's bright orange light were glistening from behind the mountain range, the little horses knew it was time to prepare for bed. That is everyone but Link, a young horse with a flowing white mane and big, excitable brown eyes. As was usually the case, Link had become more and more energetic as the day went on and was far from tired. As the sun rapidly disappeared from view, he was eager to make the day stretch just a little bit longer.

"Come on, everybody!" he ran around shouting, in the hopes of inspiring his many friends. "Let's play just one more game, the last one of the day, I promise!"

One by one, ten sleepy young horses slowly walked toward Link, shaking out their manes and tails. Once they had all gathered together and snacked on a few bites of fresh grass, the play got underway.

Without even noticing the passage of time and the increasing darkness, the horses played for hours. Everyone was having so much fun that they only stopped occasionally to fill up on more grass when they got hungry. As usual, Link was the leader of the group. He was always full of countless ideas for new and inventive games.

“Listen up, everyone! I have a great idea! Let’s play a game called Linking Stars,” he said enthusiastically.

“What are the rules of the game, Link?” asked a sweet little yellow horse.

“It’s not about rules at all,” he said loudly, so everyone could hear. “Look, it’s easy. You just link the stars you see, drawing an imaginary line from one to the next, and then you see what shapes they form in the sky.”

But not everyone was convinced.

“How can you find shapes in stars? That’s impossible, Link. Stars are separate lights scattered across the sky. They don’t connect to make shapes,” said Gray, a young silver-colored horse. He was Link’s cousin and was well-known for his grumpiness.

“Well, why don’t we just see?” said Link, turning to the other horses. “Look up and lift your leg toward the sky.”

Slowly, the horses followed Link’s directions, one by one raising a foreleg toward the sky.

“Good,” said Link, pleased to see his game catching on. “Now use your leg to draw an imaginary line from one star to the next. Keep drawing until you start to see the shape of something appear. Go ahead, try it! It will be like magic, I swear.”

All the little horses, except for Gray, did what Link had told them to do.

“Wow! It’s true,” one of them shouted in amazement as the others, with increasing excitement, began calling out the names of the shapes they had drawn.

“I drew a tree!” shouted Pink, Link’s friendly cousin whose name came from the beautiful rose color of her coat. “And I

drew a bird!" a little brown horse said.

One by one the little horses eagerly started telling each other what they had drawn.

Only Gray refused to join in. Instead, he stood off to one side, looking bored. Link saw his cousin looking unhappy but didn't know what to do. Should he go over and talk to him, or should he keep playing with his other friends who were having fun with the game he'd invented? This confused feeling made him feel tight in his chest, like it was too much to think about. So he decided to stay with the other horses and keep playing.

Once this last game of the day was finally finished, the young horses reluctantly headed back toward the stable, their energy completely spent.

They only made it about five minutes down the path when Link shouted for them to stop and look up at the sky again. The horses looked up and saw many streams of light flying across the night sky above them.

"What's happening up there? What's going on?" asked one of the horses, perplexed.

None of them had ever seen anything like this before.

"Are those stars flying by?" another horse asked.

Everyone stood, transfixed, watching the light show above them. *But Link's curiosity made him restless.* He just had to know what he was seeing, so he ran immediately to his Grandmother Violet, who was standing patiently and quietly at the end of the path, as if waiting for the little horses to return. Surely, she would have an explanation.

"Grandma, Grandma, what are those lights moving fast across the sky?"

She raised her head to the sky and nodded, knowingly.

"Those, my dear grandchild, are called shooting stars," she replied softly.

"Wow, they are so beautiful," said Link, stunned with wonder and eager to know more about those fast-moving lights. "What happens after they travel across the sky? And where do they land?" he asked.

"Oh, I can't tell you that. I really don't know, and I don't know anybody who does! But you know, they do say you can make a wish any time you see one of them crossing the sky," Grandma replied.

Link thought hard for a moment and then turned to his grandmother.

"Well then, come close, Grandma. I have a secret to share only with you." Grandma leaned toward Link, and with a big, resolute smile on his face he said, "*My wish is that when I grow up I will be able to find out where the shooting stars land and go see for myself!*" He tossed his mane and pranced around in a circle with excitement.