



Young science-heroes' quest to save the planet meets fierce resistance in this inspiring sequel, the follow-up to the admirably science-minded ARKO: The Dark Union, which found tween students, the sons and daughters of research scientists in the Yucatán, discovering ancient alien—"Arkonotic"—technology, preserved dinosaur eggs, and a mission to stop the destruction of the planet. Now teens rather than tweens, Gaia and her friends zip about on pterosaurs or in their ARKO-33 spaceship, tending an experimental preserve for dinosaurs near Area 51, all in a world where greenhouse gasses have been reduced and newborn humans aren't entirely human. The milieu is rich and appealing, but Leo wastes no time establishing a grabber of a plot: Their leader Ben—whose consciousness has joined with the ancient "Arkonots"—has gone missing somewhere near Gilgamesh-6, a mysterious dwarf planet in the Kuiper Belt.

Within just a few pages, the crew (and a new cyborg addition) is hurtling into the unknown, powered not just by alien tech but savvy science knowledge. As they face what feels like a galactic trap, Earth's powers that be, urged by a mega-corporation, stoke fear of changes to our lives and planet, denouncing Arkonotik influence and establishing re-education "camp"s to expunge it. The teens' problem-solving exemplifies the ethos of this diverse, upbeat series: They dig deep into the science, teaching each other as they face fascinating anomalies like Gilgamesh-6, which turns out to be partly made up of biological material—meaning, in some sense, it's alive.

The action is crisp and clear, though much of the storytelling occurs in lengthy, engaging dialogue scenes, often on heady, complex scientific topics as the crew works out problems and hypotheses together. On Earth, meanwhile, the stakes continually escalate as the military becomes involved. "We have to think freely," young Ariel says, facing troubles beyond any one person. The team does, of course, and invites readers to as well.

Takeaway: This upbeat, science-minded SF adventure pits eco-minded teens against the powers that be—and an intergalactic mystery.

Great for fans of: Joshua S. Levy's *Seventh Grade vs. the Galaxy*, Kwame Mbalia and Prince Joel David Makonnen's *Last Gate of the Emperor*.

Production grades

Cover: **A**

Design and typography: **A**

Illustrations: **N/A**

Editing: **A-**

Marketing copy: **A**