



Light Up Your Life; Planet Ocean; Satellite Fever; The Space Place

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The Rolph/Balkwill combo has already recorded a string of hits making sense of science (e.g. **The Egg and Sperm Race**, Collins), so their involvement with this new series whets the appetite more than somewhat. And we are not disappointed; Rolph's flexibility as an illustrator accommodates all four subjects and, as always, greatly amplifies the meaning of the texts. These are highly readable, and in **Space Place** and **Planet Ocean** especially, provide no little humour. In the former, the girl from Mars (Britain's first space astronaut remember) takes us on a simulated space mission, concentrating on the everyday aspects of weightless living, so eating, sleeping and using the air-closet, often sneezing, never burping and drinking recycled urine - all regular parts of space-life - are engagingly featured. You can get better maps of most planetary surface than you can of our own seabed says Brian Bett in **Planet Ocean**, prior to taking us on another simulated journey. This time it is in a mini-sub (no proper lavatory there, either) to discover gulper eels, hydrothermal vents and, of course, discarded cola cans. **Satellite Fever** is necessarily a technical oeuvre and shows the versatility and range of these flying wonderboxes, of which there are now hundreds in orbit. With lots of help from Rolph, Phillips in **Light Up Your Life**, after explaining lots of other photo-phenomena, provides the best explanation of lasers I have seen yet and devotes plenty of space to them. See the author in hologram on the back cover, too.

This is a highly attractive quartet, all of which provide lots of well-expressed information and any of which may be read end-to-end for pleasure; in fact that is probably the best way to set about them, as there is not a shred of an index anywhere.

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