

New YA Novel Victoria Stardust Goes to Camp Tackles Bullying, Belonging, and Girls in Science

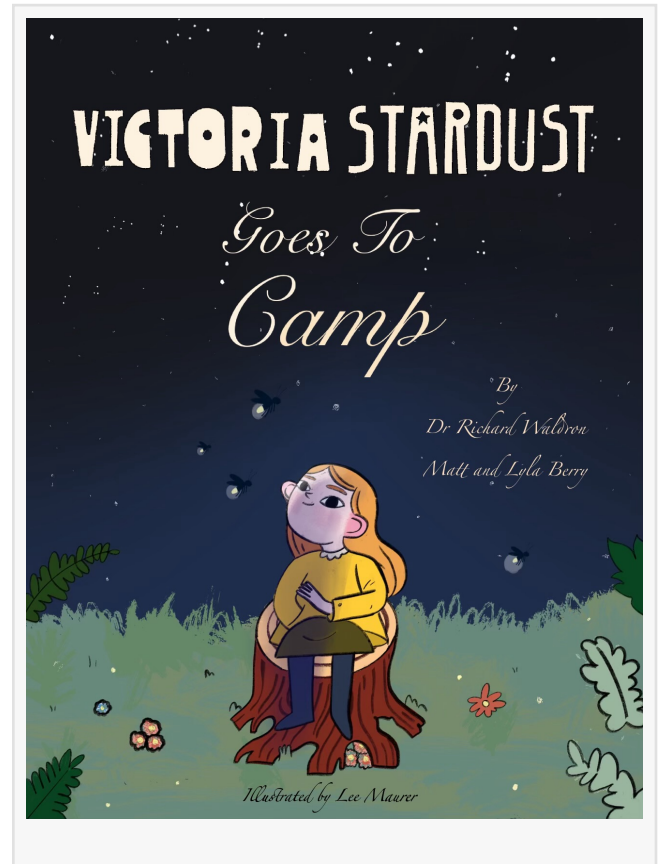
Co-authored by a teen and a psychologist, the novel sheds light on why so many girls feel out of place — and where they find strength.

CLOSTER, NJ, UNITED STATES, December 4, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As concerns about bullying and social pressures among teenage girls continue to rise, a new young adult novel is aiming to spark conversation — and offer hope. *Victoria Stardust Goes to Camp*, written by teenager Lyla Berry and psychologist Dr. Richard Waldron, explores the emotional challenges facing girls today, from exclusion and self-doubt to the struggle of standing out in academically or socially unconventional ways.

Recent national data underscores the relevance of the book's themes. A CDC National Health Interview Survey found that 34% of U.S. teens ages 12–17 experienced bullying within the past year, with girls reporting higher rates (38.3%) than boys (29.9%). Cyberbullying and appearance-based harassment remain particularly common among older teen girls.

Berry, now in ninth grade, co-wrote the novel with Waldron to reflect experiences she and her peers see daily. "Being a teenage girl comes with loads of stressful situations at school and online," Berry said. "I wanted to write a book that shows girls they're not alone — whether they're dealing with bullying, feeling out of place, or trying to be themselves in a world that pushes everyone to fit in."

The novel follows Victoria, a science-loving teen growing up in New York City. Surrounded by social pressure, school drama, and the constant scrutiny of digital culture, Victoria often feels like an outsider. Her yearly trip to Camp Star Lake offers a reprieve — a place where she can be herself without fear of judgment or ridicule.



Dr. Waldron, a licensed psychologist and psychiatric nurse practitioner, said many girls face unspoken rules about who they can be and what interests are considered acceptable. "If a girl loves science or doesn't follow the crowd, she can be labeled instantly," he said. "This book traces a young girl's awakening during one pivotal summer, where she finds confidence, connection, and a sense of belonging away from the pressures of city life."

Victoria Stardust Goes to Camp blends real-world issues with an uplifting narrative about friendship and self-discovery. The authors say they hope the story empowers girls who feel marginalized — and encourages conversations about bullying, identity, and supporting young women in STEM.

About the Authors

Dr. Richard Waldron is a licensed psychologist, psychiatric nurse practitioner and author of the books *Being Worthy* and *America on the Couch*, in private practice in Northern New Jersey. He has worked with more than 10,000 people over a 31-year career, including teaching, counseling, and advising individuals, couples, and families.

Lyla Berry is a high school student in New Jersey who has attended sleep-away camp for the past four years (Island Lake in Starrucca, PA). When she's not writing, Lyla loves cheerleading for her high school as well as teaching and coaching younger girls to cheer. Lyla is a middle child with younger and older brothers (Sam and Jack) and her dog Wilson.

Sarah Mathews
Fireheart Media
+1 201-304-8961
sarah@fireheartmedia.com

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