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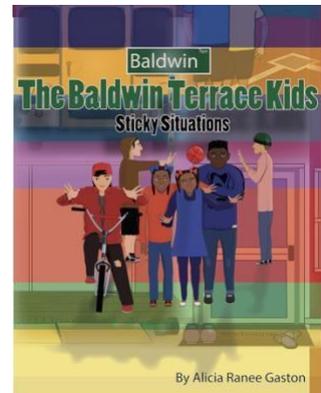
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**When several neighborhood kids encounter sticky situations that test their character, they learn how to navigate the awkwardness of adolescence and stay true to themselves.**

*The first volume in a thought-provoking and entertaining new middle-grade series which helps middle-graders develop strong social skills, establish good citizenship, and promote healthy socio-emotional development.*



HAMPTON ROADS, Virginia, June 1, 2021

The Baldwin Terrace Kids are a group of middle school friends whose experiences in their beloved neighborhood and schools challenge and build their character. Whether it's being mindful of the type of friends they keep, confronting bullies, or having good sportsmanship, the friends face challenges to learn the values and merits that are truly important. Author Alicia Rane Gaston masterfully weaves a story of adventure, self-discovery, strength of character, and problem-solving in the first volume of her new middle-grade series *The Baldwin Terrace Kids: Sticky Situation*.

Like most middle schoolers, The Baldwin Terrace Kids—a group of neighborhood friends—are learning how to navigate their world of friendships, social situations, emotional challenges, and good choices. One friend is conscientious and kind Nico, a thoughtful kid who has moved six times due to his father's military deployment. We also have the twins, Asha and Ashley, who have overcome several obstacles together including bullying, divorce, and challenges to friendships and their sisterhood. Or there's Candace, who is often conflicted by the principles of her faith and her desire to engage in secular activities like some of her peers. These are just a few of this affable group of friends.

Nico is new to town and is finding it difficult to make new friends. When a few kids finally invite him into their crowd, Nico finds that he is dealing with mischievous teens, ones who swear or mock a friend's religious customs. He has conflicting feelings about being part of this new group; would he be considered a troublemaker if he hung around them?

*“Nico ran after them, wondering to himself, again, what he was doing hanging with these two guys. He knew this was wrong and that he had no business getting involved in such misguided behavior, but, the truth is, he felt a sense of excitement and pleasure too...Nico felt an overwhelming sense of guilt as he made his way home...Was this the kind of company he wanted to keep...disrespectful, rude and insensitive?”*

The Block Lords are a group of previously sweet and ambitious school-aged kids, turned teen bullies, whose goal is to terrorize the other neighborhood youth and older residents. They are disrespectful toward their peers and elders and show no regard for other people’s feelings—especially The Baldwin Terrace Kids. The gang takes a liking to making trouble for twins Asha and Ashley, trying to intimidate them and even getting physically rough with them. Although Asha is strong and vocal against the bullies, Ashley’s personality isn’t the same as her sister’s and she is unsure how to handle their mean antics.

*“After a few weeks of ducking and dodging the Block Lords, Ashley had had enough. She wasn’t sure what to do but she knew that it was time to let an adult know what was going on and how anxious and scared she had been feeling.”*

The Baldwin Terrace Kids and the challenging situations they encounter are relatable to all middle schoolers and their families. Author Alicia Raneé Gaston expertly weaves stories that have a conflict that needs to be resolved, whether that is about holding true to your personal values, being an upstanding citizen, or having healthy socio-emotional development. Discussion questions at the back of the book feature character values noted throughout the book. *The Baldwin Terrace Kids: Sticky Situations* is an entertaining and valuable resource for not only kids, but also their families, educators, librarians and school counselors—anyone who is invested in a child’s character development and learning of social skills.

Alicia Raneé Gaston is a mental health professional specializing in case management, homeless services, youth behavioral health and intellectual and development services. She brings her knowledge and expertise to her masterfully written social emotional learning middle-grade book series. The first volume, *The Baldwin Terrace Kids: Sticky Situation* is available now wherever books are sold.

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If you would like more information about author Alicia Raneé Gaston and her new title *The Baldwin Terrace Kids: Sticky Situation* and other upcoming books in her series, please email [contact@aliciagaston.com](mailto:contact@aliciagaston.com)