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**BULLETIN
OF THE
CENTER FOR
CHILDREN'S
BOOKS**

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

EXPLANATION OF CODE SYMBOLS USED
WITH ANNOTATIONS

- * Asterisks denote books of special distinction.
- R Recommended.
- Ad Additional book of acceptable quality for collections needing more material in the area.
- M Marginal book that is so slight in content or has so many weaknesses in style or format that it should be given careful consideration before purchase.
- NR Not recommended.
- SpC Subject matter or treatment will tend to limit the book to specialized collections.
- SpR A book that will have appeal for the unusual reader only. Recommended for the special few who will read it.
- Except for pre-school years, reading range is given for grade rather than for age of child.
- CV Curricular Use.
- DV Developmental Values.

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Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO · GRADUATE LIBRARY SCHOOL

Volume 36

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New Titles for Children and Young People

Aardema, Verna, ad. *What's So Funny, Ketu?*; illus. by Marc Brown. Dial, 1982. 82-70195. Trade ed. ISBN 0-8037-9364-2; Library ed. ISBN 0-8037-9370-7. 30p. Trade ed. \$9.95; Library ed. \$9.89.

Ad K-3 Adapted from the author's *Otwe*, which was a retelling of "The Man and the Snake," a tale in Ray Huffman's *Nuer Customs and Folklore*, this is illustrated by boldly drawn and brightly colored pictures, often busily detailed, vigorous and comic. A snake to whom Ketu has been kind gives him the gift of understanding animals' thoughts, warning Ketu that if he tells, he will die. Ketu finds each instance of thought-transmission uproariously funny, but his wife is irritated when he repeatedly says he's laughing at nothing, and complains to the chief. Pressured, Ketu tells all, drops dead, but is brought back to life by the snake; he still has his magic gift, but his laughter is now acceptable to all the tribe. While children may enjoy the action, the humor, and the happy ending, the story seems weak in two respects: one is Ketu's laughing at such things as reading a rat's mind (it is wondering where Ketu's wife keeps her butter) and the other is that the cause and effect (tell and die) are nullified for no apparent reason.

D.V. Animals, kindness to

Abrams, Lawrence F. *Mysterious Powers of the Mind*. Messner, 1982. 82-3490. ISBN 0-671-43658-9. 63p. illus. with photographs. \$9.29.

NR 6-9 Short chapters describe various kinds of psychic powers and include anecdotes that illustrate the ways in which they operate. Although Abrams uses the names of people who have participated in experiments and demonstrated their abilities in extrasensory perception, psychokinesis, clairvoyance, levitation, etc. he does not furnish names of sponsoring agencies most of the time, but refers to "scientists" who supervised demonstrations. He also describes some incidents in which his own telepathic ability was demonstrated. The book concludes with an epilogue in which Abrams explains that ESP could "change the path of a missile" or be a fast way to send messages to other planets. "That is why scientists are studying ESP." This seems to ignore pure research, or to acknowledge the many other ways in which psychic powers might be useful. The subject is one that should appeal to readers, but the cursory treatment (a page of print on levitation, two pages on clairvoyance) and the lack of documentation seriously limit the usefulness and validity of the text, illustrated by photographs of variable usefulness, and with a one-page index.

Adler, Carole S. *The Once in a While Hero*. Coward, 1982. 82-1511. ISBN 0-698-20553-7. 112p. \$8.95.

In a story that explores peer relationships, sex roles, and self-esteem, the setting is a seventh-grade classroom in which the class bully, Chuck McGrew, persecutes both

R 5-7 the protagonist, Pat, and Pat's new friend Mud. Pat's slight and has regular features; already unhappy because he's several times been taken for a girl, Pat is even more upset when Mud asks if he's gay and when McGrew's taunting makes him feel he's a coward. There's no magical reversal after the one occasion on which Pat—angry because McGrew is annoying a girl Pat likes—fights back, but it does make him feel better about himself. Mud's unhappy family situation is contrasted with Pat's supportive family affection, as well as the lack of sex stereotyping they display. Although the pace of the story is uneven, it's a sensible and sensitive reflection of the maturation problems of early adolescence.

D.V. Age-mate relations; Family relations

Allan, Mabel Esther. *A Strange Enchantment*. Dodd, 1982. 82-5049. ISBN 0-396-08044-8. 191p. \$8.95.

Ad 7-9 The experiences Primrose has as a member of the Women's Land Army in the English countryside during World War II are based on the author's service in that group, and give the book enough validity and variety to compensate for the hackneyed plot. Prim, sixteen, pretends to be older so that she can enlist; during her arduous training, she becomes angry at one young man who is a teacher, but as the book progresses it becomes increasingly clear that an intensive rapport will be established. Not impressive structurally or stylistically, the story should appeal to readers because of the verisimilitude of the details of farm work and the local color.

Aoki, Hisako. *Santa's Favorite Story*; illus. by Ivan Gantshev. Neugebauer Press, 1982. ISBN 0-907234-16-X. 22p. \$9.95.

M K-2 When the animals of the forest wake Santa, sleeping under a tree, he tells them the story of the birth of Jesus and reminds them that the love given by God is the true gift. "How silly we have been," says the fox, "to think that Christmas was only about presents." Then they all go to Santa's house to prepare presents for Christmas Eve delivery. The best present, Santa concludes, is Christmas itself. The watercolor illustrations are soft and blurred, more effective in composition than in detail; the story is weakened by contrivance.

C.U. Christmas

Arnold, Caroline. *Where Do You Go to School?*; illus. with photographs by Carole Bertol. Watts, 1982. 82-8647. ISBN 0-531-04442-4. 32p. (Easy-Read Books) \$7.90.

Ad 2-3 A topically divided and simply, if choppy, written text describes various kinds of schools and the people who work in them as teachers, specialists, or maintenance staff; it also discusses various ways in which one learns and, briefly, areas of the curriculum. While the text gives information, it seems a patchwork job, not well balanced in coverage or treatment.

Baird, Thomas. *Finding Fever*. Harper, 1982. 81-48646. Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-020353-6; Library ed. ISBN 0-06-020354-4. 224p. Trade ed. \$10.50; Library ed. \$10.89.

Ad 7-9 Benny, the narrator, is fifteen and feels very protective toward his little sister Polly, so that he feels obliged to hunt for her dog Fever even though he's not very fond of the animal. Strill, one of his classmates and an odd loner, joins the hunt after it's discovered that the dogs of four neighbors are also missing. For two days they search intensively, following clues and exposing themselves to danger, since the dognappers are involved in selling dogs to laboratories at considerable profit. The hunt erupts into violence, and Benny is surprised at how rough he can be when he has to; he and Strill capture the criminals and turn them over to the police—but Fever is

dead. Polly is comforted by a new puppy, Benny by the fact that he's made a new friend. The story has plenty of action, an adequate structure, and a vigorous writing style; it is weakened by the inexplicable way in which Benny—not a weak person—repeatedly agrees to do things in a complicated way and not to tell the police just because Strill wants it that way.

D.V. Brothers-sisters; Resourcefulness

Baker, Betty. *And Me, Coyote!* illus. by Maria Horvath. Macmillan, 1982. 82-7134. ISBN 0-02-708280-6. 32p. \$8.95.

R
K-3 Strong stylized linoleum cut illustrations, dramatic in black and white, effectively echo the sturdy quality of a story based on creation myths of the California Indians, although they do not look like Indian art. A major figure in Native American mythology, Coyote is shrewd and arrogant, a braggart who often takes credit for the work of his brother, World Maker. World Maker makes the land and its animals, the sun and the creatures of the original deeps, and he makes people, two of each color of the earth. Nice to read aloud, read alone, or use for storytelling, this is adapted with humor and vitality.

C.U. Reading aloud; Storytelling

Branley, Franklyn Mansfield. *Water for the World*; illus. by True Kelley. T. Y. Crowell, 1982. 81-43321. Trade ed. ISBN 0-690-04172-1; Library ed. ISBN 0-690-04173-X. 95p. Trade ed. \$9.50; Library ed. \$8.89.

R
5-8 In a well-organized and lucidly written text, a scientist describes the water cycle and devotes separate chapters to such subjects as surface water, oceans and glaciers, wells and springs, and other sources of water supply. Other chapters deal with water pollution and sewage disposal, and a final section considers water as a resource that should be husbanded, suggesting various ways in which this can be done by individuals. A brief bibliography and an index are appended.

C.U. Science; Social studies

Bunting, Eve. *The Ghosts of Departure Point*. Lippincott, 1982. 81-48602. Trade ed. ISBN 0-397-31997-5; Library ed. ISBN 0-397-31998-3. 113p. Trade ed. \$8.25; Library ed. \$8.89.

Ad
7-9 It was called Departure Point because so many people had died there, at a dangerous point in the road along the cliff. Vicki, the narrator, haunts the place—literally—for Vicki is a ghost, one of the accident victims. She is startled when she meets another ghost, Ted, who keeps coming back to the spot for the same reason: guilt; both of them are convinced that the accidents were their fault, that they had caused the death of the others in their cars. Desperate when still another death occurs, Vicki and Ted paint some balloons with the names of the victims, hoping the media coverage will result in a lax municipal council's voting to make the road safe, although they know that they may then disappear and lose each other. The story is strong to this point, a strangely convincing fantasy; however, there is a happy ending tacked on, as Vicki suddenly finds herself at that point in time when the accident can be avoided—a second chance at life, and a wholly unconvincing twist.

Callaway, Kathy. *The Bloodroot Flower*. Knopf, 1982. 81-20799. Trade ed. ISBN 0-394-85276-1; Library ed. ISBN 0-394-95276-6. 198p. Trade ed. \$9.95; Library ed. \$9.99.

M
5-7 Set in rural Minnesota at the turn of the century, this is the story of eleven-year-old Carrie Usher, the middle child in a family of five daughters, a family that suffers a series of blows when their father is killed after a kick by a mule, their aunt commits

suicide, and the two oldest daughters go off to the city to earn a living. Carrie knows that a marauding bear is prowling in the area; what she doesn't know—although the reader does—is that a strange man, lawless and usually intoxicated, is also in the neighborhood. The man, who has already done some damage, steals Carrie's baby sister just as a tornado hits St. Paul, where the two eldest have gone. Carrie and her friend Toivo chase the man who's taken the baby, find that he's stolen two other children, and are also caught and chained by him. The adults of the community go hunting for the children, ask the help of Crees, find that they are taking care of Carrie's friend, who has been mauled by the bear. The kidnapper's colleague comes for some children, they quarrel, the kidnapper is murdered, then the murderer dies after eating too many pieces of the bloodroot candy Carrie is carrying. Meanwhile, Carrie's mother has gone blind. Ma dies. Carrie carries on. Despite a good writing style, too much tragedy, too tortuous a plot, too many characters. Callaway conveys a sense of period and place, but has substituted a string of melodramatic incidents for a story line.

Carris, Joan Davenport. *When the Boys Ran the House*. Lippincott, 1982. 82-47762. Trade ed. ISBN 0-397-32019-1; Library ed. ISBN 0-397-32020-5. 160p. illus. Trade ed. \$9.50; Library ed. \$9.89.

Ad
4-6 Mom, having a slow recovery at home from encephalitis, doesn't want her husband, in Europe on business, to know she's ill; Jut, thirteen, and his younger brothers (ten, seven, and two) are responsible for running the household and taking care of Mom, helped by visits from a nurse. Nurse Brown becomes a friend; Mom's health improves; the boys find the source of the mysterious stench in the living room; Dad comes home and expresses his appreciation for all that the boys—especially Jut—have done. Episodic, repetitive, and occasionally funny, the story focuses on fraternal relations and the boys' chores, but it is marred by a self-conscious cuteness in the writing style.

D.V. Brothers; Responsibility

Cohen, Daniel. *How to Buy a Car*; illus. with photographs by Maureen McNicholas. Watts, 1982. 82-6899. ISBN 0-531-04494-7. 87p. \$8.40.

R
7- In a sensible, practical compendium of advice to the adolescent reader, Cohen addresses a range of problems and decisions in direct, informally written style. He suggests that one consider whether or not one really needs a car, discusses whether to buy a new or used car and what is entailed financially; and describes what to look for, how to guard against chicanery, and what legal measures and papers are required. An index gives access to the text.

C.U. Consumer education

Cohen, Miriam. *So What?*; illus. by Lillian Hoban. Greenwillow, 1982. 81-20101. Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-01202-7; Library ed. ISBN 0-688-01203-5. 32p. Trade ed. \$9.50; Library ed. \$8.59.

R
K-2 Fans who have enjoyed other stories about Jim and his first grade classmates should welcome this modest but perceptive story about self-confidence and peer rivalry. Illustrated again with Hoban's amicable children in wash and line, the story has a new character; Elinor is in class for just a short time, but her sensible "So what?" response to Jim's agonizing over being the shortest in class or having classmates quit the club he's organized leaves Jim freed of the need to conform or excel—and he's satisfied with just being himself and doing his best. Mildly funny, quietly sensitive, and crisply written.

D.V. Self-confidence

Cooke, Jean. *The Performing Arts*; by Jean Cooke and David Sharp; illus. with photographs. Silver Burdett, 1982. ISBN 0-382-06623-5. 69p. (World of Knowledge Books) \$15.96.

Ad
6- In an oversize book with crowded pages, the authors have a topical arrangement within each chapter; there are chapters on music, music on stage, dance, theatre, variety, cinema, and broadcasting. First published in England in 1981, the book is (intermittently) broad in coverage. Across the foot of each page there is a running band of alphabetically arranged biographical entries in very small print; occasionally there are other entries—for example, in the dance section, there are a half-a-dozen entries that are not biographical, and the biographies (while they include dancers and choreographers of major importance) are far from comprehensive in coverage. The body of the text gives a great deal of information, but is so compressed and often so arbitrarily arranged that the book is at times confusing rather than clarifying. An index contributes to minimal reference use.

Crowell, Robert L. *The Lore and Legends of Flowers*; illus. by Anne Ophelia Dowden. Crowell, 1982. 79-7829. Trade ed. ISBN 0-690-03991-3; Library ed. ISBN 0-690-04035-0. 80p. Trade ed. \$14.50; Library ed. \$13.89.

R
7- Impeccably detailed and quite beautiful, Dowden's color paintings are probably the most alluring part of a book that discusses carnations, crocuses, dahlias, dandelions, irises, marigolds, nasturtiums, narcissi, roses, and tulips. The text is a bit dry but informative, describing the origins, dispersal, varieties, and legends pertaining to each flower. An index gives access to the text.

C.U. Science

Cuyler, Margery. *The All-Around Christmas Book*; illus. by Corbett Jones. Holt, 1982. 82-3104. Hardcover ed. ISBN 0-03-060387-0; Paper ed. ISBN 0-03-062183-6. 88p. Hardcover ed. \$11.95; Paper ed. \$4.95.

R
3-6 A useful synthesis of information about Christmas begins with the story of the Nativity and a description of other (chiefly pagan) holidays from which some customs may have been borrowed. Cuyler discusses some of the ways in which Christmas is celebrated today, includes some Christmas crafts projects and recipes, describes some games (not really Christmas-oriented, they are charades, musical chairs, and carry-the-snowball) and provides information on visiting ethnic holiday festivals. The writing is crisp and direct, the instructions for crafts and cooking are clear, and the book concludes with a list of suggested readings and an index.

C.U. Christmas

Degens, T. *The Visit*; Viking, 1982. 82-2600. ISBN 0-670-74712-2. 150p. \$10.95.

R
7-9 Kate begins her story by quoting Aunt Sylvia: "Hitler did a lot of wonderful things," and Kate comments "Not long ago I loved and admired Aunt Sylvia." Sylvia is visiting her brother in Berlin, and she is not aware of the fact that Kate has been reading the diary of another Kate, Sylvia's younger sister. The text moves between a narration of the present and the diary entries, giving both a perceptive development of the younger Kate's changing attitude toward Sylvia, and an acute, at times bitter, picture of the roles of the sisters when they were at a Nazi girls' camp. Inexorably the story moves from Sylvia's domineering flamboyance as a camp leader and Kate's subservience to the growing resentment and perspective that made Kate see how her sister used other people (masking her selfishness and cruelty with patriotic zeal) and, eventually, to Kate's efforts to help some prisoners of war and her resultant death.

D.V. Ethical concepts; Sisters

Dodson, Susan. *Have You Seen This Girl?*; Four Winds, 1982. 81-69516. ISBN 0-590-07633-7. 182p. \$9.95.

Ad
8-10 When his girl friend Kathy writes from New York (giving no address) sixteen-year-old Tom decides that he too will run away so that he can find her. He appears at his aunt's Manhattan apartment, and tolerant Aunt Maggie takes him in. The story of Tom's search is interrupted periodically by italicized passages that describe what is happening to Kathy, whose gullibility leads her into trouble; when, in fact, Tom finds Kathy she spurns him. Tom's search and Kathy's plight never quite merge into a story, although they run concurrently; while the book gives a fairly vivid picture of the street scene and the floating subculture of New York, it achieves strength only in the depiction of the relationship between Tom and Maggie, so that a peripheral aspect overbalances what should be the main thrust of the story.

D.V. Aunt-nephew relations

Florian, Douglas. *The City*; written and illus. by Douglas Florian. T. Y. Crowell, 1982. 81-43312. Trade ed. ISBN 0-690-04166-7; Library ed. ISBN 0-690-04167-5. 29p. Trade ed. \$8.95; Library ed. \$8.89.

NR
K-3 This may have some appeal to Manhattan children, but it is a wordless picture book that doesn't really tell a story. A woman with a bright red shopping bag walks through various neighborhoods, rides the subway, and comes home to hang the painting of an urban scene she's been carrying in her bag. Two double-page spreads, busy and bright, precede the entrance of the woman. There is usually some attraction for young children in busy scenes that include such sights as excavations and parades, but this offers little else.

Garfield, Leon. *King Nimrod's Tower*; illus. by Michael Bragg. Lothrop, 1982. 81-86470. ISBN 0-688-01288-4. 30p. \$10.50.

M
3-4 Based on the King James version of the Bible, this variant from Genesis, the story of the Tower of Babel, reflects the spirit rather than the structure of the lesson. Garfield and Bragg have introduced a small boy at the building site who tries, intermittently, to lure a small stray dog home but finds that the puppy won't obey commands. Meanwhile, the tower grows, as does Nimrod's pride. The whole procedure takes so long (but the boy, oddly, doesn't grow, nor the pup) that Nimrod can reach the clouds. "King Nimrod will be wearing God's dressing-gown and slippers before I can take you back to Babylon, to sleep beside my bed," the boy chides. The angels report this to God, who says "My slippers? My dressing-gown? That cannot be," and he asks how many miles to Babylon. "Three score miles and ten." "Can I get there by candlelight?" "Yes, and back again." Then God crosses His fingers on every tongue, and nobody can understand anyone else, and they all talk in languages they never heard before, and Nimrod cannot even understand himself—but the boy gives commands to the dog, and it obeys. "My Kingdom of Heaven," God says, "is better reached by a bridge than a tower." The illustrations, strongly composed, fill but do not crowd the pages; the style of writing is distinctive, but the combination of Biblical basis, nursery rhyme interjection, the inclusion of the boy/puppy thread, and the addition of narrative details that have a contemporary quality add up to a literary collage rather than a story.

Godden, Rumer. *The Mousewife*; illus. by Heidi Holder. Viking, 1982. 82-2617. ISBN 0-670-49180-2. 31p. \$9.95.

First published in this country in 1951, this newly illustrated edition of a story based on a tale by Dorothy Wordsworth is as charming in its nuance and pathos as

R
3-5 ever, the style indicating that it will be best appreciated by comparatively few readers; it can be used for reading aloud to younger children. Holder's soft drawings are often beautifully detailed, but they haven't the dramatic power of the equally lovely original pictures by William Pène du Bois. This is a story of love and sacrifice, as a mouse releases the caged dove who has become her friend, choosing to give him freedom even if it means loneliness for her.

C.U. Reading aloud

D.V. Friendship values

Gorsline, Marie. *The Pioneers*; by Marie and Douglas Warner Gorsline. Random House, 1982. 78-54960. Library ed. ISBN 0-394-93905-0; Paper ed. ISBN 0-394-83905-6. 32p. illus.; Library ed. \$4.99; Paper ed. \$1.50.

Ad
3-5 Profusely illustrated with mediocre paintings, this focuses on the Oregon Trail journey after giving some general information about the westward movement. The text describes the equipment, the dangers, and the tasks of a wagon train from Independence, Missouri to the Oregon Territory. The writing is fairly simple but static, and the style is plodding, albeit given some vitality by mention of some of the dangers or the exciting moments of a typical journey; the book may give readers the mistaken impression that only those who travelled to the Far West were pioneers.

C.U. History—U.S.

Graham, Harriet. *The Ring of Zoraya*. Atheneum, 1982. 81-8082. ISBN 0-689-30880-9. 177p. \$9.95.

Ad
5-7 In a turn-of-the-century adventure story by an English author, Samuel Rolandson and his two wards, William and Flora, are traveling to St. Petersburg where Flora is to audition with the Imperial Ballet School. On the Orient Express they meet a haughty youngster who announces he is Prince Michael of Slovadia, en route to Russia to attend the funeral of Tsar Alexander III. Agreeing to help Michael, who fears a tyrannical uncle, the three become involved in kidnapping, intrigue, smuggling, pursuit, and the other appurtenances of a complicated adventure story. Told by William, the story has suspense and a plethora of action, too much for credibility and too dependent on contrivance, but entertaining for thriller buffs.

Greene, Richard C. *The King of Instruments*; illus. with photographs. Carolrhoda, 1982. 82-4282. ISBN 0-87614-186-6. 32p. \$7.95.

Ad
3-6 Clear photographs illustrate a continuous text that describes the different kinds of organs but focuses on the pipe organ, explaining how each part of the system works. While there is nothing confusing about the information that is given, the book seems to give inadequate coverage: it provides no historical background, it has only one labelled diagram, and the index gives facts about each organ pictured (maker and site) but no citations for terms.

C.U. Music—Study and Teaching

Hann, Jacquie. *Follow the Leader*. Crown, 1982. 81-22172. ISBN 0-517-54603-5. 28p. illus. \$8.95.

Ad
K-2 The minimal text is brief and direct: "Follow the leader up the hill—over the wall—through the door—behind the grandfather clock . . ." and so on, until the attic, the bats, and the proximity of possible ghosts turns the frightened leader (whose four friends have deserted her, one by one) running down the winding stairs and out of the

house. It's never made clear whether the house is deserted or not (cobwebs and open doors vs. furniture and a cat) and the story line is slight, but the book is focused and succinct, and the group play and eerie ending should appeal to readers.

Henry, O. *The Gift of the Magi*; illus. by Lisbeth Zwerger. Neugebauer Press, 1982. ISBN 0-907234-17-8. 23p. \$11.95.

R
5- Zwerger's romantic drawings in the Rackham tradition are softly-colored and gentle, appropriate for the subject of O. Henry's story and given full scope by the oversize pages. The story itself, however, both in style and subject, seems less appropriate for young readers than for the adult audience for which it was written. Published early in the century, the tale of a poor young couple who sacrifice their dearest possessions to buy each other Christmas gifts is still touching albeit sentimental.

C.U. Christmas

D.V. Unselfishness

Hirsch, Linda. *You're Going Out There a Kid, But You're Coming Back a Star*; illus. by John Wallner. Hastings House, 1982. 82-2995. ISBN 0-8038-8603-9. 126p. \$9.95.

Ad
4-5 Although ten-year-old Margaret is often annoyed at her older sister Barbara, it's Barbara who is most sympathetic to Margaret's desire to grow up. This urge is based on Margaret's first crush on a boy who is, alas, much more interested in another girl. Margaret bleaches her hair and tries padding her chest, but none of her ploys is successful. Without her planning, however, she gets her first kiss (during a party game) and decides that it was very nice, but she isn't ready to date; she's really just as mature, she decides, as she wants to be. This has a good balance of home and school settings, and it's not unrealistic, but it's occasionally contrived, and the humor is a bit heavy-handed.

D.V. Sisters

Holland, Isabelle. *A Horse Named Peaceable*. Lothrop, 1982. 82-204. ISBN 0-688-00534-9. 160p. \$9.50.

Ad
5-7 Jessamy, twelve, has felt that her father, an Episcopal bishop, has rejected her since her mother's death; he has also insisted that she go away to boarding school and leave Peaceable, her beloved horse. When she learns that the stable bill was never paid (as the Bishop had promised it would be) and that the stable has burned down, Jess runs away from school, takes money from the Bishop's desk, and goes in search of her horse, joining another runaway who helps her, Rudd. Rudd is older, of mixed racial heritage, a clever and unhappy boy who has decamped because he fears that he will be arrested for a crime and because he has been rejected by his alcoholic father, also a minister. After a hunt, they do find Peaceable, but Jess is caught, resisting to the end—when there's an abrupt reconciliation between Jess and the Bishop (as the narrator, she always refers to him that way) after a clear-the-air talk—and defending Rudd. Holland has a smooth but vigorous writing style, and the book has good pace and structure, but it is weakened by some contrivance and by the not quite credible depiction of the Bishop as aloof, insensitive, unkind, obdurate, domineering, et cetera; what makes the characterization not credible is the man's quick conversion at the close of the story.

D.V. Friendship values

Holmes, Anita. *Cactus: The All-American Plant*; illus. by Joyce Ann Powzyk. Four Winds, 1982. 81-275. ISBN 0-590-07402-4. 178p. \$14.95.

R
7- Profusely illustrated by black and white line drawings, carefully detailed, of desert flora and fauna, this comprehensive text begins with a description of the ways in which cacti have adjusted to the dryness and heat of their environment and with a discussion of the ecological balance among desert plants and animals. The botanical details are explicit and accurate, as are the author's instructions on raising cacti; also included are some cactus recipes, information about sites (natural or cultivated) to visit, botanical terminology and classification, a glossary, a bibliography, and an index. The material is well-organized, the writing style smooth and casual, the scope broad; the book should be useful as a reference source, also, for younger readers.

C.U. Science

Jones, Adrienne. *Whistle Down a Dark Lane*. Harper, 1982. 81-48661. Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-023063-0; Library ed. ISBN 0-06-023064-9. 288p. Trade ed. \$12.95; Library ed. \$12.89.

R
6-9 The story Margery tells as an adult looks back to the years just after World War I, when she was seven and her sister Blainey ten. Although this is primarily the story of the children's reaction (and their mother's) to Daddy's decision to leave them, it is also a good period story that includes some trenchant and sensitive observations on black-white relationships, and on the suffragette movement. Jones is astute in describing the intricacies of relationships in the summer colony in the Blue Ridge Mountains where most of the action occurs, and equally perceptive in depicting the ways in which her major characters adapt to change; one of the most dramatic episodes of the book concerns the Ku Klux Klan. A strong story, smoothly structured and written.

D.V. Divorce, adjustment to; Intercultural understanding

Jones, Diana Wynne. *Witch Week*. Greenwillow, 1982. 82-6074. ISBN 0-688-01534-4. 211p. \$9.50.

R
5-7
* Why would a teacher in an English school be so disturbed when he finds an anonymous note saying that somebody in the class is a witch? Because, in this outstandingly crafted fantasy, witchcraft is the ultimate evil in the society, and several of the resident pupils are suspected of being witches—as indeed they are, although their witchery is not evil. Charles knows that he is a witch, but all he wants to do is get away from the school and its bullies; most of the class he's in suspect Nan, who doesn't even realize she's a witch until a broom she's been teased to fly actually takes off. They and three other children get into a fearful tangle and are saved by the urbane and omniscient Chrestomanci, the magician who has appeared in the author's earlier stories. This is a remarkably adroit blending of vivid fantasy, a funny and perceptive school story, and a thoughtful commentary on how thin the line is that separates what is from what might be.

Judy, Susan. *Putting on a Play*; by Susan and Stephen Judy. Scribner, 1982. 82-3179. ISBN 0-684-17452-9. 150p. illus. \$12.95.

R
5-9 The authors, English professors who have had experience in conducting theater workshops, address their readers in a casual, conversational style. Their general approach is to give advice on preparation, publicity, and performance but to leave the specifics of execution to the readers, i.e., to inform and encourage rather than to direct. Since they give a great deal of sensible advice about every aspect of putting on

a play, the approach should be successful in stimulating creative expression. The text includes discussions about warming up, role playing, tips on acting and using one's voice, and making costume, props, and scenery as well as the many kinds of plays one can put on (reader's theater, puppet plays, improvisations, radio plays, etc.) and it also gives suggestions for writing a play. This is comprehensive, practical, and often imaginative. An index and a glossary of stage terms are provided.

Larrick, Nancy. *Tambourines! Tambourines to Glory! Prayers and Poems*. illus. by Geri Greinke. Westminster, 1982. 81-23158. ISBN 0-664-32689-7. 117p. \$8.95.

Ad 3-6 The major contributor to this volume is Madeleine L'Engle; there are some Native American selections; other poets include writers from Dickens and Rossetti to such contemporary writers as Myra Cohn Livingston and Arthur Guiterman. Although the title does not make it clear, this is not a collection of prayers *and* poems, but of poems that are prayers. This is an anthology with selections of varying calibre, useful, adequately illustrated with line drawings, and provided with an index of first lines and an index of poems and poets.

C.U. Religious education

Lehrman, Robert. *Juggling*. Harper, 1982. 81-48654. Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-023818-6; Library ed. ISBN 0-06-023819-4. 256p. Trade ed. \$11.50; Library ed. \$11.89.

R 7-10 Howie Berger, the narrator, is baffled. His father had taught him to play soccer and cheered his prowess on the high school team. Now (1960) Howie wants to go to the one college that highlights soccer, and his father insists that he go to a better school than St. Louis University. That's the background for the immediate action of the book, Howie's participation in an all-Jewish team that consists mostly of older players, most of whom ignore or belittle him. The story ends with Howie's more realistic appraisal of his own game, his understanding of why the older members of the team have not accepted him, and his father's agreement that Howie may go to St. Louis. There's also a love interest (a first affair that ends with the girl going back to a former lover) to balance the emphasis on the father-son relationship and on the soccer team; these are smoothly fused, perceptively explored, and given contrast by the descriptions of game sequences.

D.V. Education, valuing and seeking; Father-son relations

Lewin, Betsy. *Hip, Hippo, Hooray!*; written and illus. by Betsy Lewin. Dodd, 1982. 81-19575. ISBN 0-396-08032-4. 30p. \$9.95.

M 3-5 yrs. A rhyming text describes the way in which the hundred hippos, marching in the hot July sun, succumb one by one to the heat of the day; the last stalwart is the drummer, who is acclaimed, as he topples, by the other hippos. The rhymes are jingly, weak in rhyming ("suit" and "boot") and in the forcing of rhymes, and is often metrically faulty. There's little to the story, its minimal usefulness being in the subtraction statements on the bottom of some pages (as the hundred decreases to one) and its minimal appeal being in the brightly colored if repetitive pictures of the hippos.

Mazer, Norma Fox. *Summer Girls, Love Boys and Other Stories*. Delacorte, 1982. 82-70320. ISBN 0-440-07990-X. 243p. \$11.95.

Ad 7-10 Mazer's short stories have variety of style, mood, and subject, although they all have to do with love or the need for love or the pain of love. Least successful are such first-person pieces as "Avie Loves Ric Forever" which is a collection of unmailed letters by a girl, or "Do You Really Think It's Fair?" which is one voice in a series of

interviews between a school counselor and a girl whose younger sister has died; more effective are "Why Was Elena Crying?" the story of the inadequate feelings of a girl whose younger sister felt she was almost perfect, or the poignant final story, "Down Here on Greene Street," in which an elderly woman chooses the security of the familiar rather than chance the shift to a new kind of life with a late-blooming love.

Oram, Hiawyn. *Angry Arthur*; illus. by Satoshi Kitamura. Harcourt, 1982. 82-80196. ISBN 0-15-203547-8. 32p. \$11.95.

M
K-2 A small boy's anger wreaks havoc, in a story that is told as a fantasy but is less impressive as a story than as an exploration of the vehemence of juvenile wrath. Irate because he has been told by his mother that he may not stay up and watch a television program, Arthur gets so angry that "his anger became a stormcloud exploding thunder and lightning and hailstones." His mother says, "That's enough," but Arthur's anger becomes a hurricane, etc. etc. and the story ends with Arthur sitting on "a piece of Mars" unable to remember why he was so angry. The story, first published in Great Britain, is weak in structure and especially in its ending; the minimal text is illustrated by effectively composed drawings filled with color and movement.

Ormerod, Jan, illus. *Moonlight*; illus. by Jan Ormerod. Lothrop, 1982. 81-8290. Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-00846-1; Library ed. ISBN 0-688-00847-X. 26p. Trade ed. \$9.50; Library ed. \$8.59.

R
2-5
yrs.
* In a book as charming as its companion volume, *Sunshine* (reviewed in the January, 1982 issue) this wordless picture book, with soft, quiet line and wash illustrations, shows the amusingly protracted process of a child's bedtime. After she and her parents finish their meal, the child makes a boat to float in her bath; the bath is followed by her father's reading of a story; this is followed by some comforting hugs when the child is frightened, then by parental acceptance of the fact that the child might as well stay up and look at a book. The story ends with sleepy parents putting the child to bed again, in a still, moonlit room. The pictures are distinctive for their composition and use of light and shadow; the story is distinctive for its clarity, its atmosphere of patient love, and its demonstration of parental sharing of chores and child care.

D.V. Environmental concepts; Parent-child relations

Petrie, Catherine. *Joshua James Likes Trucks*; illus. by Jerry Warshaw. Childrens Press, 1982. 81-17076. ISBN 0-516-03525-8. 32p. \$6.50.

Ad
3-5
yrs. Cartoon-style drawings, ink and wash, have bright, clear colors and show that Joshua James is a small black boy. The text is simple enough for use by beginning independent readers, but the simplicity of concept and brevity of text indicate that the major use will be for reading aloud to younger children. The text uses several concepts: color, size, and movement; i.e., trucks that are blue or yellow, trucks that tilt up or down, and trucks that are big or little. There is no story line, the text simply reiterating that Joshua James likes each truck.

Prelutsky, Jack. *The Baby Uggs Are Hatching*; illus. by James Stevenson. Greenwillow, 1982. 81-7266. Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-00922-0; Library ed. ISBN 0-688-00923-9. 32p. Trade ed. \$9.50; Library ed. \$8.59.

R
K-3 Prelutsky, in a dozen breezy, lilting poems, creates twelve wildly improbable creatures and Stevenson matches them with wildly silly and totally engaging drawings. Children should enjoy the rhyme, the rhythm, the alliteration, the nonsense words and the comic pictures of, for example, "The Sneezysnoozer." "The Sneezy-

snoozer sneezes/ as the Sneezysnooser chooses/ it snoozes as it pleases/ it dozes, as it lazes/ and it sneezes with no causes/ as it muses, as it grazes."

Pringle, Laurence P. *Water: The Next Great Resource Battle*. Macmillan, 1982. 81-23694. ISBN 0-02-775400-6. 144p. illus. with photographs. \$8.95.

R
7-10 An addition to the publisher's "Science for Survival" series, this is a thoughtful and provocative assessment of the threatened attrition of a valuable resource. Pringle focuses on the United States, in which a combination of pollution, abusive use, or natural events such as drought, has produced shortages in some parts of the country and water that is unusable in others. As he has in other books, the author demonstrates that the problem and the solution are bound into the industrial practices, agricultural patterns, and legislative conflicts of the society, and that there are steps individuals can take in their own use of water and as citizens who may support public policies, irrigation practices, pollution control, and conservation. A glossary, a bibliography, and an index are provided.

C.U. Science; Social studies

Rau, Margaret. *The Minority Peoples of China*; illus. with photographs. Messner, 1982. 82-15311. ISBN 0-671-41545-X. 128p. \$8.79.

R
6-9 There are fifty-six minority groups in China, varying in size, and organized into Autonomous Regions and Autonomous Districts. Prefaced by a section that gives background information about ethnic strains and political changes, the text discusses the lifestyles and customs of some of these minority groups, most of whom live in mountain regions or along the country's borders. Each chapter is built around a fictional child character, and gives some geographical and historical information but focuses on the lives of the inhabitants: what they wear and eat and learn, their patterns of worship and work and play, how they live. A colorful, varied, and informative book is written in a relaxed, informal style; an index gives access to the contents.

C.U. Social studies

Rose, Anne K. *Pot Full of Luck*; illus. by Margot Tomes. Lothrop, 1982. 81-5750. Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-00392-3; Library ed. ISBN 0-688-00393-1. 30p. Trade ed. \$9.00; Library ed. \$8.59.

Ad
K-2 In a story based on Ashanti folklore, the kind sage Mumba grew weary of everyone coming to him for help with their problems and answers to their questions, so he decided he would store all his wisdom (shown as a gray cloud) in a pot. Climbing a tree to hide the pot, Mumba was hampered by the fact that it hung in front of him; when his son suggested that he tie the pot at his back Mumba, not used to being given advice, grew angry and lifted the pot to strike the boy; it fell from his hands and crashed, and all his wisdom flew away on the winds. All the villagers laughed, and after a time so did Mumba. The story ends, "How could a wise man like me be so foolish?" The ending is weak, and the story lacks the clear message that is usually found in folklore; it is simply told, however, and could be used as a source for storytelling. The pictures, line and wash, are delightful: spacious, humorous, nicely composed, and effective in the use of clear, pale colors.

C.U. Storytelling

Roy, Ron. *I Am a Thief*; illus. by Mel Williges. Dutton, 1982. 81-22079. ISBN 0-525-45114-5. 80p. \$8.95.

M
5-7
Brad and his newly-divorced mother had just moved to town, where she studied during the day and worked at night; alone and angry, Brad dreaded the opening of school. Hanging about a shopping mall, he eagerly responded to the friendly overtures of an older boy—and even when he learned that Chet’s friendliness was due to the fact that he wanted Brad to join his shoplifting operation, he didn’t back away. At least he had someone he knew, and some money. Already plagued by guilt, Brad’s terrified when two of the mall guards catch him and he realizes that they head the whole operation. He jumps from their speeding van, is hurt and hospitalized, tells all, and establishes a new rapport with his mother. It’s a slice-of-life story with pedantic overtones, adequate in concept but weak in structure and plodding in style.

Ryder, Joanne. *The Snail’s Spell*; illus. by Lynne Cherry. Warne, 1982. 80-24737. ISBN 0-7232-6197-0. 32p. \$10.95.

Ad
K-2
There’s little story here, just a concept and some very nice drawings of plants and animals, a bit repetitive but beautifully detailed, with fine lines and a restrained use of color. A small boy crouches as the text begins, “Imagine you are soft and have no bones inside you. Imagine you are grey, the color of smoke. You are shrinking.” The boy’s figure shrinks to the size of the tiny snail in the picture, and both are shown in a series of double-page spreads that has the boy feeling and moving and eating as the snail does. At the end, both sleep, and the last picture shows the boy, the snail held gently in his hand; the child is no longer dwarfed by an enormous lettuce and towering mushrooms. Nice to look at, with a concept that may stimulate a child’s imagination, this is nevertheless static and slight.

D.V. Imaginative powers

Sachs, Marilyn. *Call Me Ruth*. Doubleday, 1982. 82-45208. ISBN 0-385-17607-4. 134p. \$11.95.

R
4-6
Rifka, the narrator, was eight when the long-awaited letter came from the father she’d never known because he had been in America working to save enough money to send for her and her mother. Young and timid, Rifka’s mother dreaded the change and found it hard to adjust; Rifka almost immediately fell in love with America, demanded that she be called Ruth, and was embarrassed by her mother’s old-country ways and speech. After her father died, Ruth and her mother lived with relatives and her mother worked, becoming increasingly involved with the union and engendering a mixed pride and discomfort in her daughter. The story gives a vivid picture of Jewish immigrants in New York at the turn of the century, as well as of the generation gap and the different ways in which newcomers adjusted to cultural change. The characters are strongly drawn, the writing style informal but controlled, the period convincingly recreated.

C.U. Social studies

D.V. Adaptability; Mother-daughter relations

Sadler, Catherine Edwards. *Sasha: The Life of Alexandra Tolstoy*. Putnam, 1982. 81-17911. ISBN 0-399-20857-7. 138p. illus. with photographs. \$9.95.

Ad
7-10
As a young child, Sasha (Alexandra) Tolstoy was ignored by her famous father; not until she was an adolescent did she understand and support her father’s political and educational theories, and become his aide and companion. After his death, Sasha served as a nurse (during World War I) and after the Russian Revolution was accused of anti-Soviet activities and imprisoned. Eventually she came to the United States

and founded the Tolstoy Foundation, an organization that has helped refugees the world over. The facts are interesting, the writing style rather heavy and marred by such awkward phrasing as, "She had been growing up in his midst all this time," or "He had large inquisitive blue eyes . . ." A bibliography and a full index are appended.

Scarry, Huck. *Life on a Barge*; written and illus. by Huck Scarry. Prentice-Hall, 1982. 81-20976. ISBN 0-13-535831-0. 69p. \$9.95.

Ad 5- Deft and detailed pencil sketches illustrate the author/artist's description of a journey on a Dutch barge and of barges in other countries. This is not comprehensive but it is informative; the writing is adequate, but the pages are marred by being busy, often with several sketches per page and with captions and text confusingly placed on some pages.

Schertle, Alice. *Hob Goblin and the Skeleton*; illus. by Katherine Coville. Lothrop, 1982. 80-19521. Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-00279-X; Library ed. ISBN 0-688-00282-X. 32p. Trade ed. \$8.50; Library ed. \$7.63.

R K-3 Small, old, and gnarled, Hob is disgruntled by the messy habits of his skeleton housemate (clad only in a plumed Cavalier hat) who drops Snail Crunchies on the floor. They quarrel, and Bones flounces out saying what Hob wants is not a friend but a slave. Right, Hob decides, and he goes flying off to hunt one. Unfortunately, it's Halloween, so that people who open their doors think he's in costume and give him treats. Given a prize for the ugliest mask, Hob angrily flies home and shares his trick-or-treat booty with Bones, and that's the end of the quarrel, the adventure, and the story. Black and white drawings, softly shadowed and lined, are framed by borders with Halloween motifs. The story is adequately written and structured and has good pace; its greatest appeal will probably be the situation of the goblin's being mistaken for a costumed child.

C.U. Halloween

Sevela, Ephraim. *Why There Is No Heaven On Earth*; tr. by Richard Lourie. Harper, 1982. 81-47736. Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-025502-1; Library ed. ISBN 0-06-025503-X. 205p. Trade ed. \$10.50; Library ed. \$9.89.

Ad 7-9 First published in Russian, this is a first-person account (fictional) by a Jewish boy about his childhood friend and hero, Berele Mats; the answer posed by the book's title is, in fact, that Berele is no longer alive. The story is set at the time of World War II, and consists primarily of the hero's exploits, which earned him parental punishment and peer glory. When the war is over the narrator—who had fled the town with his family—comes back to learn that Berele was killed by the Germans. Sevela gives a vivid picture of the setting and the period, but the book is weakened by the fact that most of the action is compressed at the end, preceded by anecdotal material that, while occasionally humorous, has little momentum and tends to be both repetitious and not quite credibly naive.

D.V. Courage; Friendship values

Sharmat, Marjorie Weinman. *Mysteriously Yours, Maggie Marmelstein*; illus. by Ben Shecter. Harper, 1982. 81-48656. Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-025516-1; Library ed. ISBN 0-06-025517-X. 160p. Trade ed. \$8.95; Library ed. \$8.89.

In this third story about Maggie and her classmates, the editor of the school paper, Noah, announces tryouts for a columnist who will be called the Mystery Person.

Ad 4-6 Maggie is elated when chosen, writes a successful first column, and works out an elaborate scheme for communicating with Noah: at the daily lunch bag auction, they will bid for each other's lunches—with the column in Maggie's bag. Eventually the scheme is unmasked, and Maggie turns over the column to a new Mystery Person. This has some hilarious moments, with a lot of breezy dialogue and some perceptive depiction of peer relationships, but it is weakened by the repetitive quality of the dialogue, amusing though it is.

D.V. Age-mate relations

Shreve, Susan. *The Revolution of Mary Leary*. Knopf, 1982. 82-185. Trade ed. ISBN 0-394-84776-8; Library ed. ISBN 0-394-94776-2. 186p. Trade ed. \$9.95; Library ed. \$9.99.

Ad 7-10 Mary's story begins, "I decided to leave home on a beautiful Monday afternoon the first of June . . ." and explains that she is tired of her mother's rhapsodizing about their Wonderful Family. Mother is head of the D.C. chapter of Life Chance, and has been horrified by a lecture given by a feminist, Sally Page. Mary is tired, too, of her mother's homilies, her sister Maud's passion for her lover, and her brother Eliot's daily pot sessions with his girl friend (neither of which the mother of the Wonderful Family knows about) and of Mother's "all-out campaign to make me a worthy child of God." Mary packs her belongings and goes off to the home of Sally Page to be a mother's helper. It's an odd household; the children are undisciplined, Sally's overworked, Sally's unemployed husband is having an affair with the Episcopal minister, Ruth, whose ordination cost him his own ministry. Eventually, when one of the children runs away and Mary finds him being solaced by her mother, there is a reconciliation; Mary stays on to help Sally but she no longer feels estranged from her own family. The book has some strengths and some weaknesses: it has strong characters, but there are several who don't contribute to the story; it has good style and dialogue, but Mary's narration is occasionally contrivedly cute, and it explores (via Sally and Mother, who instigates and then drops a campaign to get Sally fired from her teaching job) attitudes on contraception and abortion. It's frank, it's often funny, but it's overcrowded.

D.V. Mother-daughter relations; Sex roles

Simon, Norma. *Elly the Elephant*; illus. by Stanley Bleifeld. Whitman, 1982. 81-23990. ISBN 0-8075-1970-7. 38p. \$6.95.

Ad 2-4 yrs. A small child prattles ingenuously about her toy elephant and constant companion, describing how she got Elly, how much she loves him, and how they do everything together. There are a few episodes that have action (Elly misses her when she visits the dentist, Elly is mislaid at school) and there are some simple songs about Elly but this is a static, if pleasant, book. The line drawings have echoes of Ardizzone and Sheperd and the text has some gentle lessons about sitters, dentists, school, and positive reflections of separation or other anxieties that can assuage the lap audience.

Slate, Joseph. *How Little Porcupine Played Christmas*; illus. by Felicia Bond. Crowell, 1982. 81-43884. Trade ed. ISBN 0-690-04237-X; Library ed. ISBN 0-690-04238-8. 28p. Trade ed. \$7.95; Library ed. \$7.89.

Ad 3-5 yrs. Crayon-colored line drawings of young animals illustrate an anthropomorphic story about a little porcupine who yearns to participate in a school performance of the *Baby in the Manger* play. His classmates taunt him because of his appearance, but his mother says consolingly, "You are not funny looking. Your spines shine. Your eyes sparkle. You are the light of my life." When the play is in progress, it is suddenly discovered that there is no star, and then Little Porcupine (who's been an industrious

one-animal production crew) climbs to the top of the tree. The weakest point of the story is that there seems to be no teacher to intercede or halt the teasing; otherwise this is an adequately structured and written story with a strong element of loving parental support.

C.U. Christmas

Spinelli, Jerry. *Space Station, Seventh Grade*. Little, 1982. 82-047915. ISBN 0-316-80709-5. 192p. \$11.95.

Ad
5-7 There are connecting threads in this humorous, episodic, but weakly constructed story, told by Jason in a lively style that is marred by a plethora of flippancy. Jason's concerned about parental and step-parental domination, about the classmate on whom he has a crush, and about the space station that is his special project and that brings him an unexpected friendship. Since Jason's the narrator, the story is replete with slang, four-letter words, imaginative daydreams, and complaints about his stepfather. Believable but not consequential.

D.V. Stepparents, adjustment to

Stein, Conrad. *The Story of the Chicago Fire*; illus. by Richard Wahl. Childrens Press, 1982. 81-15543. ISBN 0-516-04633-0. 32p. \$5.95.

M
3-5 Illustrated with rough pencil drawings, this is a rather gushy account of the Chicago fire; the text does not adhere to the usual cow-and-lantern theory of the fire's origin, but makes it clear that the cause of the fire is not known. The author describes the spread of the fire in rather florid and overly dramatic prose that is liberally sprinkled with generalizations; he concludes with a flowery, "The image of the tower (referring to the Water Tower) filled the people with courage. That courage gave Chicagoans the strength to rebuild their great city."

Sullivan, Mary W. *Earthquake 2099*. Dutton, 1982. 82-7128. ISBN 0-525-66761-X. 119p. \$9.95.

R
6-9 As in many other science fiction books, this is set in a future time in which some people live in a controlled and highly technological society while others are outside the urban area living in open country. Here the protagonist is eleven-year-old Philip, who has never been out of the self-contained, electronically-controlled tower that is a city in itself. On a trip outside, it has been arranged that Vita, an older cousin from Open Country, will join Philip and his parents; an earthquake leaves the two children and "No Name," an almost-wild boy, to cope with solitude, live off the land, and evade the hostile searchers who want to take control of the stricken country. Economically cast and structured, this has the appeal of triumphing over the wilderness; it has suspense and brisk pace, and a change and growth in the relationships among the three children.

D.V. Cousins; Self-reliance

Sunshine, Tina. *An X-Rated Romance*. Avon/Flare, 1982. 81-70583. ISBN 0-380-79905-7. 140p. \$1.95.

NR
6-8 Emily, the narrator, is worried about her best friend Sara's passion for their teacher, Mr. Garfield. Sara stuffs her training bra in an effort to be more seductive, manages to convince herself that Mr. Garfield and his wife are on bad terms, and then both girls become convinced that Mr. Garfield and Emily's mother are in love. The girls are presented as stupid and gullible, their conversations are pseudo-sophisticated but actually nonsensical, and the final episode is the epitome of contrivance. Were the story line more believable, the slapstick action and the flippant

narration might seem funny; however, they are so blatant and pervasive that they are, instead, cloying.

D.V. Friendship values

Thayer, Jane. *Gus Was a Real Dumb Ghost*; illus. by Joyce Audy dos Santos. Morrow, 1982. 82-2303. Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-01442-9; Library ed. ISBN 0-688-01443-7. 32p. Trade ed. \$9.50; Library ed. \$8.59.

Ad
K-3
Gus, the hero of many Thayer stories, decides to go to school so that he can learn how to spell "ghost." He takes along his clanking equipment, and when she hears the distinctive noise, the first grade teacher knows there's a ghost in the room. Gus doesn't work very hard but is promoted to second grade; there the teacher is made of sterner stuff and, already irritated by the ghost's pranks, refuses to send Gus on to the third grade. So Gus buckles down, does his homework, is delighted when he learns that he's not a "gost" but a "ghost" and continues to work so hard that eventually he graduates. Although he had wanted to stay and be the school ghost, the teachers decide he should be out in the world doing a ghost's work. This is mildly humorous, a little tepid, simply written and adequately illustrated.

Thrasher, Crystal. *End of a Dark Road*. Atheneum, 1982. 82-3958. ISBN 0-689-50250-8. 228p. \$10.95.

R
6-8
Seeley is the protagonist and narrator in a third book (*The Dark Didn't Catch Me* and *Between Dark and Daylight*) about Seely and her family, set in a small town during the Depression Era. Seeley is fifteen now, deeply involved with her friends in the sophomore class, concerned about her friend Russell, whose stepfather abuses him and shoots him (which Seeley is convinced was deliberate) and protective toward Peedle, the retarded boy often taunted by others. After her father dies, Mr. Avery, the school bus driver who has helped her many times in many ways, and Mrs. Avery hire Seeley to work in their store; her mother earns money by baking, and the family plans to move to town so that Seeley and her brother can go to better schools. This doesn't have as strong a story line as the first two books, but it is equally perceptive in its characterization, smooth writing style, and vivid depiction of a period and a community.

D.V. Friendship values; Older-younger generations

Vaccaro, Michael A. *Strawberry Shortcake's Outdoor Fun*; written and illus. with photographs by Michael A. Vaccaro. Random House, 1982. 81-80985. ISBN 0-394-85174-9. 14p. \$3.50.

NR
2-4
yrs.
As in the Barrett book (reviewed in the October, 1982 issue), board pages are used for color photographs; here the fat-cheeked dolls and toys are posed for a series of pictures of children's play: Blindman's Buff, Tug o' War, using a slide and a seesaw, building a sand castle. Since the book begins, "Strawberry Shortcake and her friends are spending a day in the country," and the activities could just as well be in any other setting, this weak effort at a story line seems ineffectual; the rest of the text simply describes the activities: "At the beach is a seesaw. Up in the air goes Strawberry Shortcake." The bright colors, toys, and familiar activities may appeal to children, but the minimal text, the stiff pictures, and the contrivance of the book rob it of merit.

Wagner, Richard. *Lohengrin*; ad. by Alan Blyth; illus. by Maria Antonietta Gambaro. Watts, 1982. 80-85289. ISBN 0-531-04064-X. 27p. \$8.95.

In an oversize book, Gambaro's full-page paintings are dramatic in the style of Charles Keeping, richly colored and beautifully composed if occasionally marred by

Ad 7- cropping. The text, unfortunately, has the stilted quality of program notes (“Alone, the couple sing of their love and united bliss.”) and, while it describes the happenings of the opera, it lacks polish or momentum.

Walsh, Gillian Paton. *The Green Book*; illus. by Lloyd Bloom. Farrar, 1982. 81-12620. ISBN 0-374-32778-5. 73p. \$9.95.

R 4-6 It is one of three motherless children (although it’s not clear until the end which one, since the narrator at times uses “we” and “us” and at other times uses third person for Joe, Sarah, and Pattie) who tells the story of their flight with their father to a new space settlement. This has a roundly-conceived new world, a writing style that is polished and deceptively simple, and sturdy structure and characters in a well-paced story that has a Crusoe appeal.

Walter, Mildred Pitts. *The Girl on the Outside*. Lothrop, 1982. 82-267. ISBN 0-688-01438-0. 160p. \$9.50.

R 7-9 A story about school integration is based on an incident of 1957 in which a white woman shielded one of the black students who were attempting to integrate a high school in Little Rock, Arkansas. Walter has made her white character another high school student, Sophia, who is wealthy, popular, and prejudiced; the black girl, Eva, is bright and beautiful, and she’s guided by the advice of a woman based on the actual NAACP official in the case. The chapters more or less alternate, so that readers can see the attitudes of both girls: Sophia angry, fearful, but increasingly ashamed and eventually sympathetic; Eva fearful but courageous. In the aftermath of the final, shameful incident of mob hatred, it is Sophia who benefits most by the joint departure from the scene; Eva has simply gotten away from a hostile mob, but for Sophia, the book concludes, “What she had gained was the beginning to the end of her pain.” A vivid story is written with insight and compassion, its characters fully developed, its converging lines nicely controlled.

D.V. Courage; Intercultural understanding

Washington, Rosemary G. *Cross-Country Skiing Is for Me*; illus. with photographs by Robert L. Wolfe. Lerner, 1982. 82-7225. ISBN 0-8225-1126-6. 48p. \$6.95.

R 2-4 Large, clear photographs on almost every page give good support to the text, in which a girl describes (within a thin but not obtrusive narrative framework) the clothing, the equipment, the care of equipment, and the techniques for cross-country skiing. Lois begins her direct, simple account with a discussion of the exercises she uses for basic fitness, and concludes with an account of a race in which she places third. The text is lucid and sequential; a glossary of terms is appended.

Webster, Joanne. *Gypsy Gift*. Dutton, 1982. 81-20823. ISBN 0-525-66763-6. 105p. \$9.95.

Ad 7-9 In a story set in a British town, Cassie suddenly discovers that she can see into the future, and then she remembers that Rollo, part Gypsy, has said he’d give her the gift of second sight if she became his girl. Cassie is seventeen, pretty and popular, and she resents Rollo’s jealousy; they quarrel, Cassie is alarmed because she’s seeing dire events of the future and begs Rollo to take his gift back. When she foresees Rollo’s twin brother committing a crime, she goes to Rollo and begs him to help avert the crime; he does, he takes the “gift” back, and the book ends with a hint that the two will be reconciled. Based on the Greek legend of Cassandra and Apollo, the story seems structurally contrived; although it is adequately written, it is slow-paced and not too successful in blending the real and the fantastic.

Weiss, Ann E. *God and Government: The Separation of Church and State*. Houghton, 1982. 81-17861. ISBN 0-395-32085-2. 132p. \$8.95.

R
6-9 Weiss begins with a general discussion of some of the current conflict about issues related to the separation of church and state, goes back for a look at the historical development of attitudes toward religion in the United States, and then proceeds to a broad scrutiny of practices, laws, arguments, examples, and issues of our society in relation to the topic. She describes the role of religion in schools (and the controversy about it) and the ways in which its inclusion gets political support, such related issues as abortion, homosexuality, cults, and the teaching of evolution. The text is objective, giving arguments on both sides of controversial issues; it is well-organized and written in a direct, sometimes conversational style; it is thoughtful and provocative. A brief bibliography and an extensive index are included.

C.U. Social studies.

Wolkoff, Judie. *Happily Ever After . . . Almost*. Bradbury, 1982. 81-18028. ISBN 0-87888-199-9. 192p. \$10.95.

R
4-6 Kitty, eleven, and her younger sister Sarah are delighted when their divorced mother decides to marry Seth, they like his son R. J., and they adore Seth's parents, who warmly welcome the girls into the family. They like their father's wife and are enthralled when she and Dad produce a baby brother. In fact, they have only two problems: adjusting to the move from a suburban house to a Soho loft that is being renovated (for months) and worrying about whether R. J.'s rather nasty mother will win custody of him. This is far from the usual story of adjustment to divorce; it's a happy mingling of families (one Jewish, one Lutheran) and, as told by Kitty, a lively account of the usually-smooth relationships within the extended family. There's a great deal of warmth and humor in the story, a brisk pace to its development, and a satisfying, believable happy ending.

D.V. Adaptability; Divorce, adjustment to; Stepparents, adjustment to

Yarmosky, Michael. *I'm Gonna Hit Myself a Home Run Today*; illus. by Bruce Heinrich. Holt, 1982. 79-19178. ISBN 0-03-052441-5. 28p. \$11.50.

M
4-6 The text, illustrated by photographs of no more than adequate quality, consists of a monologue by an attractive black girl who looks to be about twelve or thirteen. Diane comments on the passing scene as she walks about her neighborhood, wondering if a doctor who had taken care of her grandmother still works at the hospital, thinking about teachers as she passes the school, wondering—when she sees a woman with a large family—if her own mother wouldn't like to be out of the house instead of staying home to care for children. This is believable but it's static and formless; it does give some impression of the concerns and interests of a young girl, but it does so only superficially.

Yep, Laurence. *Dragon of the Lost Sea*. Harper, 1982. 81-48644. Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-026746; Library ed. ISBN 0-06-026747. 224p. Trade ed. \$10.50; Library ed. \$10.89.

R
6-9 Most of this fantasy-quest story is told by a dragon, centuries-old, who has magical powers; she first meets the boy, Thorn, when she's taken the shape of an old woman to whom he is kind, and their wary relationship grows into a loving friendship through the course of the story, some chapters of which are told by Thorn. He calls the dragon "Shimmer" and shares her valiant quest for the evil Civet who, years before, had stolen the waters in which Shimmer's people had lived. There are magical and dangerous adventures, many of the characters and events based on Chinese myths,

and the book shows Yep's versatility; this has the same fluent style as his realistic fiction, but it is beautifully adapted to the grand scope of high fantasy, it is deftly structured, and it's lightened by wry humor.

Zalben, Jane Breskin. *Maybe It Will Rain Tomorrow*. Farrar, 1982. 82-1567. ISBN 0-374-34878-2. 181p. \$9.95.

Ad
7-9 Beth, sixteen, tells her own story of the slow adjustment to a series of difficult or tragic events. Her father had left the family and later remarried, and after some years of trying to adjust, her mother had committed suicide. Now Beth lives with her father and a stepmother with whom she has a hostile relationship. When she falls in love, she again feels rejection after her lover announces he's going away because of a summer job. They meet once more, but the affair is over, and Beth begins to realize that she must accept change, must accept people as they are, and must rely on herself rather than others. This is adequately written save for an occasional awkward phrase such as "I glimpsed up, remembering. . ." or "(a woman) carefully placed down a five-dollar bill with the rest of the loose change." Although the characters and relationships are perceptively seen and are believable, the pace of the story is slow, so that the story line seems, at times, to halt for trivia.

D.V. Death, adjustment to; Stepparent-child relations

Zalben, Jane Breskin. *Porcupine's Christmas Blues*; written and illus. by Jane Breskin Zalben. Philomel, 1982. 81-20957. ISBN 0-399-20893-3. 26p. \$9.95.

R
K-2 Small framed paintings, cozy and busy, illustrate a gentle story sparked with humor, low-keyed in pace and plot. Porcupine, feeling melancholy, wakes his neighbor Bernard Beaver by late-night music. "I got those Porcupine Blues/running down my quills again . . ." he croons as he strums on his guitar. Bernard appears, consoles his friend, who then sings "I got those Porcupine highs. . ." On Christmas morning, Porcupine takes a walk, greets friends, plans Christmas dinner and sings "Jingle Bells." Slight but beguiling.

C.U. Christmas

Zemach, Margot. *Jake and Honey Bunch Go to Heaven*; written and illus. by Margot Zemach. Farrar, 1982. 82-71752. ISBN 0-374-33652-0. 35p. \$13.95.

M
K-2 Jake had always said that his contrary mule, Honeybunch, would be the death of him some day, so nobody is surprised when her dawdling at a railroad crossing has just that result. When Jake reaches the Pearly Gates, there is no answer, so he just walks into Heaven and puts on a pair of wings he finds hanging up to dry. Jake flies about, God scolds and evicts him; at the Pearly Gates he sees Honeybunch, who rampages through the gates and makes a nuisance of herself, and God has to send for Jake to catch her. Jake is hired as Moon Regulator, works industriously, eventually earns his wings. Zemach's exuberant paintings picture Heaven as a sort of Catfish Row, with jazz and barbecues; St. Peter is a lavender-suited dude. The pictures have vitality and humor, a humor that seems less spontaneous in the text, which may appeal more to adults who remember *Porgy* than to children.

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To order any of the items listed below, please write directly to the publisher of the item, not to the BULLETIN of the Center for Children's Books.

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