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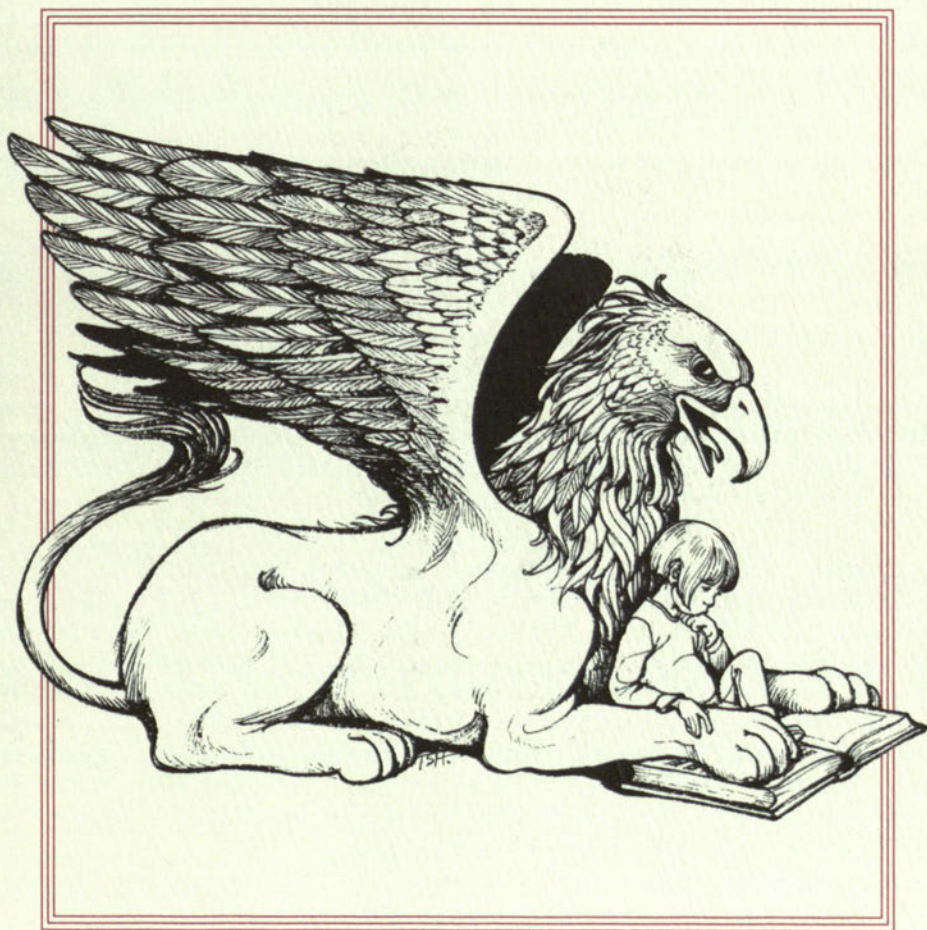
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BULLETIN OF THE CENTER FOR  
**CHILDREN'S BOOKS**

DECEMBER 1986  
VOLUME 40  
NUMBER 4



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS  
THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO GRADUATE LIBRARY SCHOOL



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.

C.U. Curricular Use.

D.V. Developmental Values.

\* \* \*

BULLETIN OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS (ISSN 0008-9036) is published monthly except August by The University of Chicago Press for The University of Chicago, Graduate Library School. Betsy Hearne, Editor; Zena Sutherland, Associate Editor. An advisory committee meets weekly to discuss books and reviews. The members are Carla Hayden, Isabel McCaul, Hazel Rochman, Robert Strang, and Roger Sutton.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: 1 year, \$23.00; \$15.00 per year for two or more subscriptions to the same address; \$15.00, student rate; in countries other than the United States, add \$3.00 per subscription for postage. Japanese subscription agent: Kinokuniya Company Ltd. Single copy rate: from vol. 25, \$2.25; vols. 17 through 24, 50¢. Reprinted volumes 1-16 (1947-1963) available from Kraus Reprint Co., Route 100, Millwood, New York 10546. Volumes available in microfilm from University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106. Complete volumes available in microfiche from Johnson Associates, P.O. Box 1017, Greenwich, Conn. 06830. Checks should be made payable to The University of Chicago Press. All notices of change of address should provide *both* the old and new address. Postmaster: Send address changes to BULLETIN OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS, The University of Chicago Press, Journals Division, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

SUBSCRIPTION CORRESPONDENCE. Address all inquiries about subscriptions to The University of Chicago Press, Journals Division, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE. Review copies and all correspondence about reviews should be sent to Betsy Hearne, 1100 East 57th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

Second-class postage paid at Chicago, Illinois.

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PRINTED IN U.S.A.



# Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO · GRADUATE LIBRARY SCHOOL

Volume 40

DECEMBER, 1986

Number 4

## *New Titles for Children and Young People*

Andersen, Hans Christian. *Thumbelina*; ad. by Marianna Mayer; illus. by John O'Brien. Messner, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-671-62089-4; Trade ed. ISBN 0-671-62088-6. 42p. Library and Trade ed. \$11.29.

NR  
K-2 Andersen's beloved story is retold here with an ineffective verbosity that vitiates his style although it maintains his structure. The tiny flower child who finds her tiny husband (the king who is the spirit of the Flowers) has always appealed to children, but the gaudy and sentimental paintings, crowded in composition, make this one of the less attractive versions of the story. ZS

Anderson, Joan. *Pioneer Children of Appalachia*; illus. with photographs by George Ancona. Houghton/Clarion, 1986. ISBN 0-89919-440-0. 48p. \$12.95.

Ad  
2-5 This does not flow quite as smoothly as Anderson and Ancona's previous "living history" books, partly because it's not focused around a holiday, as were *The First Thanksgiving Feast* and *Christmas on the Prairie*, but simply traces a family through several days' activities during a nineteenth-century West Virginia autumn. Black-and-white photographs of children and adults making soap, baskets, candles, linen thread from flax, food for a harvesting celebration, and quilts are posed but informational. The recreated village of Fort New Salem serves as model and gives a good, if somewhat laundered, idea of the old mountain way of life. BH

C.U. History—U.S.—pictorial presentation

Avi. *Wolf Rider: A Tale of Terror*. Bradbury, 1986. ISBN 0-02-707760-8. 202p. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R  
7-10 Fifteen-year-old Andrew Zadinsky receives a call from a mysterious man named Zeke, who says he has just killed a woman named Nina. Everyone Andy talks to, including his father, the school counselor, the police, his friends, and even the girl herself (once Andy finds her alive) believes the call is a crank, but Andy is convinced the caller is a dangerous psychotic and becomes obsessed with identifying and exposing him. The story is harrowing on two counts: one, the deepening trouble Andy gets into with authorities who believe he is disturbed as a result of his mother's recent death; and two, the approach of the inevitable encounter with the potential killer, who turns out to be a model professor in the mathematics department where Andy's father teaches. The ending is not a standard mystery wrap-up, but a disturbing, ambiguous parting of father and son. Perhaps just a touch too cold and calculating, this is nevertheless a gripping and above-average YA thriller. BH

D.V. Detective powers; Father-son relations

Banks, Lynne Reid. *The Return of the Indian*. Doubleday, 1986. 0-385-23497-X. \$11.95. Reviewed from galleys.

Ad  
4-6  
In a sequel to the British fantasy, *The Indian in the Cupboard*, Omri is reunited with his old friend Patrick, and both boys are reunited with the tiny people who come to life when a magic key is turned in the toy cupboard. So, once again, the little plastic figures of two American Indians (Little Bear and his wife Bright Stars) and a cowboy (Boone) come alive, removed from the place and the past time in which they exist as real people. The two boys become involved in the problems of their tiny friends, and they do two things: one is to bring other plastic figures to life to help, and the other is (after discovering that the magic key works in a chest big enough to hold a boy) to take turns traveling back to Little Bear's time/place, where a battle against another tribe, aided by the French, is destroying Little Bear's village. The first device works, as it did in the earlier book, the second becomes too complicated and seems a heavy-handed extension of what has been a deftly written story, its controlled style and dialogue marred only by a thick use of "Wa-ah-swaw" remarks from the cowboy Boone. ZS

Bellville, Cheryl Walsh. *Theater Magic: Behind the Scenes at a Children's Theater*; written and illus. with photographs by Cheryl Walsh Bellville. Carolrhoda Books, 1986. ISBN 0-87614-278-1. 44p. \$12.95.

R  
3-6  
In an attractive photo-essay that is outstanding for the clarity with which it is written and for the accuracy and breadth of its coverage, author-photographer Bellville makes comprehensible the myriad activities of mounting a play. The pictures (some in color, some in black and white) are of excellent quality, and the two-column text is spaciouly set at the bottoms of pages. What the author does is to show how the elements of a production are worked on, separately and together, and what the roles of cast and staff are. The play is an adaptation of Andersen's "The Nightingale." ZS

C.U. Dramatics—study and teaching

Bible, Adaptations. *Noah's Ark*; ad. and illus. by Nonny Hogrogian. Knopf, 1986. ISBN 0-394-88191-5. 32p. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R  
3-5  
yrs.  
Actually beginning with the stories of creation and the garden of Eden, this joins the ranks of beautifully illustrated Noahs that include Peter Spier's, Warwick Hutton's, and others. Hogrogian's is ideal for young children because the adaptation is simple, brief, but dignified with Biblical tone and rhythms. The softly colored, textured illustrations are spacious and literal, with a fine balance between gentle humor and gravity. A satisfying addition. BH

C.U. Religious education—home training

Branscum, Robbie. *The Girl*. Harper, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-020703-5; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-020702-7. 113p. Library ed. \$10.89; Trade ed. \$11.50. Reviewed from galleys.

M  
5-7  
Abandoned by their mother after their father's death, the girl (no explanation of why the author does not give "the girl" a name as she does the girl's siblings) is physically abused by her grandmother and sexually abused by her uncle, Les, in some explicit scenes. The setting is an Arkansas farm, where the children do most of the work for their grandparents and accept the fact that Grandma spends the monthly welfare check sent for their care on treats for her favorite, Les. Les ignores his young, pregnant wife, who's protected by the girl's older brother Gene; Les is attracted to young girls, and most of his kinfolk know it. Branscum draws a brutal and convincing picture of child abuse—but readers may wonder why Les is tolerated by the adult males in the family and why it takes Gene so long to threaten Les and frighten him into departing. Tense though the situation is, the development is repetitive enough to weaken the story. ZS

D.V. Brothers-sisters; Fear, overcoming

Brett, Jan, illus. *The Twelve Days of Christmas*; illus. by Jan Brett. Dodd, 1986. ISBN 0-396-08821-X. 30p. \$12.95.

R  
4-7  
yrs. Using the same complex book design featured in *Annie and the Wild Animals*, Brett handsomely illustrates the verses for this traditional Christmas song. The music appears first, a welcome departure from most song-picture books, and there follows a series of other spreads, some striking, a few static, depicting the partridge in the pear tree, the two turtledoves, etc. Framing these literal images are borders showing Christmas-tree ornaments across the top, scenes from the courtship by the gift-giver, and animals or birds beside phrases of well-wishing in various languages. Although the human figures are stiff in stance and expression, the animals are well drawn and the colors festive. There is much for young listeners to identify, including the story scenario of the lovers choosing and decorating a tree (the children helping them must be siblings of the maiden courted but look more like her offspring—a minor quibble). Holiday decoration. BH

C.U. Christmas

Calvert, Patricia. *Yesterday's Daughter*. Scribner, 1986. ISBN 0-684-18746-9. 138p. \$11.95.

Ad  
7-9 "Some of the packages Mary Alice had sent for birthdays had never been opened at all." Leenie, now sixteen wanted nothing to do with Mary Alice, the mother who had left her infant daughter (father unknown) with her parents. Her grandmother had died; Leenie lived with Granda and helped him and elderly, motherly Hazel run a modest cabin-  
rental resort. Leenie's angry when Mary Alice announces she's coming for a visit and obdurately resists her mother's affection—until her own affection for a man who's renting one of the cabins and her trust in his wisdom lead her to accept Mary Alice, even to go with her to meet Father Unknown, living in a nearby town with his young family. This is a convincing development of a situation, but it is—although as well written—more dependent on contrivance than other stories by Calvert, and it's marred by such solecisms as "... he laid on the sleeping bag like somebody who..." ZS

D.V. Mother-daughter relations

Christopher, Matthew F. *The Hockey Machine*; illus. by Richard Schroepfel. Little, 1986. ISBN 0-316-16055-4. 137p. \$12.95.

M  
4-6 Save for the several game sequences that are always appealing to fans of a particular sport, this hockey story has less substance and credibility than most of the prolific Matt Christopher output. A fine skater and hockey player, young teenager Steve is kidnapped by a thirteen-year-old multimillionaire entrepreneur (Kenneth) who is a college graduate and who has a captive hockey team complete with guards and an isolation room to punish anyone who tries to get away. Although caught, Steve does manage to get away long enough to telephone the police, and his parents show up with police and FBI to rescue Steve and the other boys and break up the operation. During his captivity, Steve has continued to take part in games. Not a believable story, and the plot weakness is not compensated for by any depth of characterization, alleviated by humor, or distinguished by the writing style, which includes a lapse like: "Steve had never seen a look in the young co-owner's eyes as he was seeing now." ZS

Corbalis, Judy. *The Wrestling Princess and Other Stories*; illus. by Helen Craig. Andre Deutsch/Elsevier-Dutton, 1986. ISBN 0-233-97852-6. 159p. \$11.95.

Ad  
4-6 These feminist spoofs on fairy tales are variously successful, some concise and funny, others rambling and a bit self-conscious. The title story is one of the former, about "a princess who was six feet tall, who liked her own way and who loved to wrestle." She manages to end up with an equally individualistic—and much shorter—prince, and they speed off in their red forklift truck with a wedding cake shaped like an oil can. "The

Magic Parrot," on the other hand, seems more contrived than clever, with its metal bird that eats everything, grows huge, and shrinks back to normal with the twist of a few screws. "Georgiana and the Dragon" makes self-evident use of role reversals, but "The Enchanted Toad" has some real surprise twists as impatient Grizelda, in an attempt to ward off all suitors, releases her mother (a race-car driver) from an enchantment cast by a rival. In spite of occasional repetition and Briticisms, the best of these would be fun to recommend or read aloud to fairy tale fans and folklore students. BH

D.V. Sex Roles

Corcoran, Barbara. *I Am the Universe*. Atheneum, 1986. ISBN 0-689-31208-3. 136p. \$12.95.

R  
5-8 A daunting title for an engaging story about a thirteen-year-old girl who, in the space of a few weeks, is confronted with too much: Kit's mother's frequent, agonizing headaches have been diagnosed as symptoms of a brain tumor, compounding and magnifying Kit's usual problems with school and family, and her growing awareness of herself as a writer. This is a lot for an author, much less a thirteen-year-old, to handle, but Corcoran weaves the various plot strands with ease, and Kit's slightly caustic—though heartfelt—narration keeps the tone light. There are a few mis-steps (Kit being picked up by the cops for egg-throwing) where the characters act like psychological profiles, but on the whole, Kit and her family—especially her eccentrically gifted little brother—are warmly and carefully drawn. Give this one to Anastasia Krupnik fans who are looking for something a little "older." RS

D.V. Family relations

Dana, Barbara. *Necessary Parties*. Harper, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-023052-5; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-023051-7. 345p. Library ed. \$14.89; Trade ed. \$13.95. Reviewed from galleys.

Ad  
7-10 Chris is fifteen, his beloved sister Jenny is six, and he begins his story, "We started out seemingly regular, the Mills family. . ." and then describes his anguish and apprehension when his father moves out and divorce proceedings are instigated. Part of the pain, for Chris, is what is happening to Jenny. Convinced that there should be some way to participate in a decision that affects children as well as parents, Chris finds a young lawyer, Corelli, who is qualified but does not practice. An idealist, Corelli takes the case, arguing that Chris is a necessary party in the litigation. (Chris is sure his parents love each other, sure that they could work out their differences.) What happens in court is that the judge decides against Chris, but his parents, who have been deeply moved by his testimony and his lawyer's arguments, agree to terminate the divorce proceedings. Dana's characters are roundly drawn, her writing style is competent, and the issue she explores is an interesting one. Despite the slow pace and the unlikely conclusion, which lessen the story's effectiveness, it's an interesting book. ZS

D.V. Brother-sister relations; Parent-child relations

Domanska, Janina, ad. *The First Noel*; ad. and illus. by Janina Domanska. Greenwillow, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-04325-9; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-04324-0. 21p. Library ed. \$11.88; Trade ed. \$11.75.

M  
3-6 yrs. "The first Noel the Angel did say/Was to certain poor shepherds in fields as they lay" is better heard than read, but the old carol provides an adequate structure for Domanska's full-color rendition of the Nativity. While the rich colors and detailed drawings are attractive, some of the pages are crowded with too many figures and an overly ornamented sky. Children may also be puzzled by the dark blob illustrating "the place where Jesus lay"; it appears to be a cave. Lyrics and music are appended. RS

C.U. Christmas—music (unit)



Dubanevich, Arlene. *Pigs at Christmas*; written and illus. by Arlene Dubanevich. Bradbury, 1986. ISBN 0-02-733160-1. 28p. \$13.95.

Ad  
K-2  
Pig William is back, this time writing a letter to Santa, forgetting to mail it till almost too late, but getting his surprise in the end—a six-seater pigcycle. Meanwhile the usual rampant confusion reigns: in the midst of baking, he burns his batch of cookies; slipping on the ice, he trips a sibling into a snowbank; he eats more popcorn than he strings, breaks decorations, spills hot chocolate, and wonders, like all insecure young children waiting for Christmas, “will Santa bring a present to a pig who’s not perfect?” The story is a bit unfocused, and this volume somewhat repetitive as a third in the series. But Dubanevich’s comical pigs and flat pastel backgrounds sprigged with simple lines and dots add up to an unusual cartoon style that will appeal to children as a relief from more sentimental Christmas offerings. BH

C.U. Christmas—stories

Erickson, Russell E. *Warton and the Contest*; illus. by Lawrence di Fiori. Lothrop, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-05819-1; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-05818-3. 90p. Library ed. \$10.88; Trade ed. \$10.25.

R  
2-4  
This latest adventure in the lives of two toads stars Warton on a quest to retrieve Grandpa Arbuckle’s prized watch-compass from a thieving pack of crows. Aiding and abetting him are Grandpa himself, an accident-prone meadow mouse named Neville, and a blind bluejay named Bike. This slightly disabled crew operates ingeniously in a neatly turned, exciting plot with natural dialogue and inventive details. At one point Bike says, “Warton, don’t you know that to someone who sits in a tree all day eating walnuts, a little danger sounds wonderful?” Children who like the suspense will also soak up some smooth writing and an underlying theme of the animals’ mutual affection and generosity toward each other. Young readers and younger listeners (this could be read aloud as early as kindergarten) may find especially sympathetic the depiction of a character who can’t seem to do anything right. . . and the noncritical tolerance of his friends. BH

C.U. Reading aloud

D.V. Friendship values

Featherly, Jay. *Mustangs: Wild Horses of the American West*. ISBN 0-87614-293-5. 46p. *Ko-hoh: The Call of the Trumpeter Swan*. ISBN 0-87614-288-9. 43p. Both books are written and illus. with photographs by Jay Featherly.

Schnieper, Claudia. *On the Trail of the Fox*; illus. with photographs by Felix Labhardt. ISBN 0-87614-287-0. 46p. All books are Carolrhoda, 1986. (Carolrhoda Nature Watch) \$12.95.

R  
4-6  
Each of these three “Nature Watch Books” features stunning color photographs of the animal subjects along with well-written texts that allow the characteristics of the species to dictate the organization of the book. *Mustangs*, for instance, dwells on the social order of the herd, *Foxes* on the creatures’ adaptability and reproduction, and the trumpeter swan volume on the bird’s comeback from near-extinction. All of the books include brief background histories as well as descriptions of environment, life cycle, feeding habits, etc. *Mustangs* will do double duty as a science research source and a horse-lovers’ browsing item. BH

C.U. Nature Study

Fisher, Leonard Everett. *Ellis Island: Gateway to the New World*. Holiday House, 1986. ISBN 0-8234-0612-1. 64p. illus. with photographs. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R  
5-7  
Profusely illustrated with photographs and with the author-artist’s handsome scratch-board drawings, this is a detailed history of the island in Upper New York Bay that eventually came to be called Ellis Island. It served for many years as the entry point for immi-

grants, and it is this aspect that Fisher stresses, describing the laws that affected immigrants and the procedures that were used to screen and process them. Always a fine artist and a dependably accurate writer, Fisher serves here, as he has done in many of the earlier books about facets of American life, as a social historian. A map and an index are included. ZS

C.U. History

Fox, Mary Virginia. *Princess Diana*. Enslow, 1986. ISBN 0-89490-129-X. 124p. illus. with photographs. \$12.95.

R  
4-6 In a biography that is candid, well-balanced, and admiring but not effusive, Fox describes the childhood of Diana Spencer, her life as a young woman who was shy and conservative, and her years of public attention and affection since she became the Princess of Wales. Since most of the photographs are official or at least formal, they are of good quality. The absence of any notes, bibliography, or list of sources is unfortunate, but few readers of this romantic true story will cavil. ZS

Froelich, Margaret Walden. *Reasons to Stay*. Houghton, 1986. ISBN 0-395-41068-1. 181p. \$12.95.

R  
6-9 In a story set in 1906, the three children of a broken family find a haven. Florence is older than Babe, but it is Babe who takes charge, playing mother to a younger brother during Mama's terminal illness and after her death. Their taciturn father (bully, thief, drunkard) decides to take the children away with him. Babe, who has learned that her "father" is not indeed her father, tries to find out about her own birth—and learns that her mother's kin have no interest in her. She goes back to her "sister" and half-brother, who are her reasons to stay. The cruel stepfather is rather conveniently disposed of, and the welcoming farm family with which all the children find a permanent home is almost too good and kind to be true. The story is, however, so strong in style, sensitivity, and depth of characterization as to amply compensate for such flaws. ZS

D.V. Brothers-sisters; Self-confidence; Stepparents, adjustment to

George, Jean Craighead. *One Day in the Prairie*, illus. by Bob Marstall. Crowell, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-690-04566-2; Trade ed. ISBN 0-690-04565-6. 42p. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$11.95.

R  
4-6 Black-and-white drawings, accurately detailed and nicely incorporated into the page layout, add visual appeal to an authoritative and informative continuous text. George uses a narrative framework to carry the description of a single day on a prairie wildlife refuge in Oklahoma. The text is given drama by the inclusion of a tornado and is given focus by the description of the actions and reflections of a boy who is an amateur photographer. Most of the material is about the animals of the prairie (including some like the buffalo and the longhorn steer that are, as threatened species, protected), but other aspects of the prairie ecology are included. George achieves an amazing concentration of facts without being either tedious or turgid. An index and a bibliography are supplied. ZS

C.U. Nature study; Science

Gerrard, Roy. *Sir Cedric Rides Again*; written and illus. by Roy Gerrard. Farrar, 1986. ISBN 374-36961-5. 32p. \$11.95.

R  
K-3 The corpulent, balding little knight of *Sir Cedric* (reviewed in the January, 1985 issue) rides off for "a change and a rest" accompanied by his patient wife, his hoydenish daughter Edwina, her weedy suiter, timid Hubert, and a sizeable corps of retainers. They sail to France from England, and "one night at nine," after days of weary walking, they reach Palestine. Naturally they are set on by the infidel oafs of Abdul the Heavy; naturally Hubert becomes an instant hero, rescuing Edwina and her mother from the toils of

Abdul, and just as naturally love conquers all. This is lively, witty narrative poetry, and the paintings are of comparably high quality: romantic (just a bit tongue in cheek) landscapes, handsome ornamental details, and fine use of color in effective compositions. Great fun, and the humor of Gerrard's tale may attract older readers as well as the read-aloud audience. ZS

Gilmore, Kate. *Remembrance of the Sun*. Houghton, 1986. ISBN 0-395-41104-1. 250p. \$13.95.

R  
7-10 Set in Tehran at the time of the first demonstrations against the Shah, this is the story of an American girl whose family has come to Iran because of the father's job. Jill, seventeen, is the narrator, and her involvement with an Iranian gives the story immediacy and color. Although fictional, the background for the book is based on the author's observations while living in Iran. This is both a love story (nicely done) and a piece of social history that is dramatic and poignant—poignant because the protesting students and their supporters failed to see the possibility of their bid for democracy being taken over by zealots no less oppressive than the Shah. Gilmore creates strong characters and tells the story with pace and polish. ZS

C.U. Social studies

D.V. Devotion to a cause

Graber, Richard. *Doc*. Harper, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-022094-5; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-022064-3. 150p. Library ed. \$13.89; Trade ed. \$13.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R  
7-10 Like Norma Klein's *Going Backwards*, this is a novel that focuses on an adolescent's reaction to a grandparent who has Alzheimer's disease. Doc, Brad's grandfather, is increasingly irrational, often forgetful or angry, usually confused. Brad has always adored Doc, and he finds it hard to acknowledge the implacable pattern of deterioration even when confronted by the facts of Doc's behavior. It is a comfort to Brad, in the end, when Doc rises to the occasion and uses his medical skills at the scene of a car crash, an expenditure of effort from which he dies. Graber gives good balance to the story with other aspects of Brad's life, so that the descriptions of Doc's behavior never become tedious. Honest but not somber, the story has believable characters and a strong narrative flow. ZS

D.V. Grandparent-child relations

Greene, Constance C. *The Love Letters of J. Timothy Owen*. Harper, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-022157-7; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-022156-9. 181p. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$11.95.

Ad  
7-9 Sixteen, shy, and totally smitten by Sophie, Tim uses material from an old book he's come across, *One Hundred of the World's Best Love Letters*, to send her doting but anonymous missives. Unfortunately, Sophie has a low opinion of whatever nut is writing the letters, and her father—who considers them the work of a sex maniac—is apopleptic. That just about takes care of the first crush. When a friend's younger sister (to whom Tim had been kind) suddenly blossoms from a pudgy thirteen to a slim and attractive fourteen, Tim is belatedly smitten again. This time there seems to be a response, but Tim reconsiders the whole business of love letters. Pleasant, amusing, and realistic, this is more impressive for its humor and smooth narrative flow than for depth of characterization or strong plot development. Not to be taken seriously, but easy to take. ZS

D.V. Boy-girl relations

Griffith, Helen V. *Georgia Music*; illus. by James Stevenson. Greenwillow, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-06072-2; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-06071-4. 22p. Library ed. \$11.88; Trade ed. \$11.75.

A solitary old man incorporates his granddaughter into his gardening routine when her

R  
K-3  
\* mother leaves her in Georgia for a long summer visit. In the morning the two hoe together, in the afternoon they snooze, in the evening Granddaddy plays the mouth organ "for the crickets and the grasshoppers." The two get along just fine, sharing quiet little jokes over a "sassy old bird" that mocks them from a fence post. But when the girl comes back to visit the next summer, Granddaddy is ill; they bring him back to Baltimore, where he pines for his cabin until the girl finally learns to play "Georgia music" to him on the harmonica, even the sounds of the "sassy old bird." This is a precise, poignant short story delicately enhanced by Stevenson's watercolor portraits of the two main characters set into homey, impressionistic rural scenes. Both art and narrative are low-key, letting the understated warmth of a relationship between two nontalkers emerge in quiet, strong harmony. Despite the picture-book format, the story, read aloud, will appeal to older children as well. BH

C.U. Reading Aloud

D.V. Grandfather-child relations

Hackwell, W. John. *Digging to the Past: Excavations in Ancient Lands*; written and illus. by W. John Hackwell. Scribner, 1986. ISBN 0-684-18692-6. 50p. \$13.95.

R  
6-9 Capably illustrated by the author, who is both an artist and a doctoral student in the field of archeology, this is a carefully detailed description of the division of labor and the step-by-step procedures in the work of members of an expedition. Hackwell's style of writing is dry, but it is both clear and authoritative, so that the work of the archeologist is comprehensible and its importance firmly stated. A one-page index is appended. ZS

C.U. Archeology (unit)

Hall, Lynn. *The Solitary*. Scribner, 1986. ISBN 0-684-18724-8. \$11.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R  
8-12  
\* Seventeen-year-old Jane's need for solitude derives from her bitter experience of living with relatives after her mother shot her father, who was a wife-beater and child-abuser. Jane has arrived to claim her inheritance of the rural cabin where she was born and to work her way toward some sense of self-worth, which she does through supporting herself by raising rabbits and vegetables, splitting kindling, and scrimping by on her savings. Hall's skill in developing Jane's character as a homely, self-questioning but determined entrepreneur sustains a patient unraveling and resolution to her tragic past, as she finally makes peace with who she is and seeks out her mother in the penitentiary. This is an absorbing portrayal, partly because the challenge of the protagonist's physical survival makes a good plot, and partly because she's an unusual and worthwhile subject. BH

D.V. Self-confidence; Self-reliance

Harvey, Brett. *My Prairie Year: Based on the Diary of Elenore Plaisted*; illus. by Deborah Kogan Ray. Holiday House, 1986. ISBN 0-8234-0604-0. 39p. \$11.95.

R  
3-5 Soft pencil drawings, spacious and often dramatic, illustrate a story that is descriptive rather than narrative, is simply written, and is based on the notes made by the author's grandmother, Elenore Plaisted. Elenore was nine when her family came to the isolated house in the vast, open spaces of the Dakota Territory. It was 1889, and the rest of the family came by train to join Daddy, who had gone ahead to build their house. Elenore describes daily tasks, seasonal events, and occasional dramatic natural disasters in a way that is immediate and vivid. This is an attractive book and an informative one; it should be interesting to readers curious about frontier life. ZS

Helgadóttir, Guðrún. *Flumbrá: An Icelandic Folktale*; tr. from the Icelandic by Christopher Sanders; illus. by Brian Pilkington. Carolrhoda, 1986. ISBN 0-87614-243-9. 27p. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R  
K-3  
\*  
In a story resonant with some ancient elements, an ugly giantess courts a lazy giant and delivers eight sons, each as revolting to the world as he is beautiful to his mother. She nurses them (in a bare-breasted pose) till milk runs down the mountainside and finally sets out to show them off to their distant father. But the way is long and the children dawdling. The sun rises and turns them all to stones—stones that no child should fear despite their intimidating size and shape. Details of the Icelandic landscape are vivid in these paintings, intriguing in their effects of spatterbrush contrasted with smooth textures, of rounded shapes with rough edges. It is a story of mythic dimension, out of time but also intimately poignant, and, not coincidentally, explanatory of some natural catastrophes ranging from earthquakes and volcanoes to landslides. BH  
C.U. Storytelling

Hirschi, Ron. *One Day on Pika's Peak*; illus. with photographs by Galen Burell. Dodd, 1986. ISBN 0-396-08778-7. 43p. \$10.95.

R  
2-4  
The author/illustrator team that produced *Headgear* (reviewed in the May, 1986 issue) has collaborated on a younger book with the same descriptive and photographic clarity but not as effective an organizing principle. Pika's Peak is a fictitious mountaintop named after a small animal unfamiliar to many children and not defined until the glossary. The activities and characteristics of a pika open the book; then a marmot appears, and a weasel makes its dramatic entrance with eight young ones on their way to a new burrow. The hunt is on, as the weasel catches one small animal after another to feed her hungry brood. She is really the focus here—the mother pika survives with a yawn. The ecological balance is more implied than stated, but there are some strong points for the book, among them the filmic quality of the sharp, vivid color photographs that are captioned clearly enough to form a sort of subtext for readers unready or unable to tackle the whole narrative, which is set in large, handsome type. BH  
C.U. Nature study

Hiser, Berniece T. *The Adventure of Charlie and His Wheat-Straw Hat: A Memorat*; illus. by Mary Szilagyi. Dodd, 1986. ISBN 0-396-08772-8. 38p. \$12.95.

R  
K-3  
This memorat (defined as “a folktale said by the teller really to have happened”) describes seven-year-old Charlie's helping his grandmother make a straw hat and then defending it from Confederate soldiers. The first half of the story has a how-to appeal and the second slips into the action of Charlie's accidental heroism—he drives off a neighbor's farm animals while hiding his coveted hat in the hay and thereby saves the herd from scavenging troops. Hiser has managed the difficult task of blending the Appalachian dialects of narrator and characters in a readable adaptation (although why words like “hoss” and “sunball” appear in a glossary while “piggin” does not is puzzling). While the illustrations are homespun in style, the colors and compositions are dramatically modern, a contrast that works as well as it does because of the simplicity of all the artistic elements. BH  
C.U. Storytelling

Hurwitz, Johanna. *Hurricane Elaine*; illus. by Diane DeGroat. Morrow, 1986. ISBN 0-688-06461-2. 99p. \$11.75.

Ad  
5-7  
Fifteen-year-old Elaine, sister of Aldo and Karen (*Aldo Applesauce* and *Tough-Luck Karen*) is the narrator in a mildly amusing story that stresses her impulsive nature and that is built around her reactions to the loss of her brother Aldo's pet. Guilty because she'd let the cat out of the house and felt responsible for its death (hit by a car), Elaine gets Aldo another cat, never stopping to ask if he would want it. (He doesn't, but later he gets a dog.) This plot is given a bit of contrast by the inclusion of some cheerful advances toward having a boyfriend and some almost equally cheerful progress by Elaine in learning to

control her emotions and her actions. Not Hurwitz's best story, but an entertaining easy read that has no major weaknesses. ZS

D.V. Brothers-sisters; Pets, care of

Keeler, Stephen. *Louis Braille*, illus. by Richard Hook and with photographs. Bookwright/Watts, 1986. ISBN 0-531-18071-9. 32p. (Great Lives) \$9.40.

R  
3-5 First published in England, a nicely balanced biography of Braille, whose own accident-inflicted blindness at the age of five led to his understanding of the need for a simpler system of book conversion than was then available. Born in 1809, Braille completed his system of raised dots when he was only fifteen; its advantages were not officially acknowledged until after his death. The page layout of Keeler's book is unattractive, the two-column format crowded by illustrations in a variety of media and with a variety of column-breaking placements, and the print bleeds through some pages. But the author has done a good job of showing Braille as inventor, musician, and teacher without rhapsodic praise. An index, a glossary, a chronology and a sadly brief, inadequate reading list are appended. ZS

D.V. Handicaps, overcoming

Keller, Beverly. *Desdemona—Twelve Going on Desperate*. Lothrop, 1986. ISBN 0-688-06076-5. 153p. \$10.25.

R  
5-8 Readers who chuckled over Keller's *No Beasts! No Children!* (reviewed in the April, 1983 issue) will welcome back this family, who, with no mother and no money, manage to survive a range of scrapes with their verve intact. This time, the landlord's brother is threatening to turn Desdemona's house into an expensive high-rise condo. Generating from this basic threat is a series of non-stop, biting funny episodes. At one point, Desdemona washes her hair from a shampoo bottle which the twins have used to save some leftover floor varnish—and has to live with an excruciatingly short haircut. At another, the twins find it necessary to relocate the inhabitants of their broken ant farm. And later on Desdemona discovers, while catering the landlord's mayoral party, that she has fed truffles to the dog and spread dogfood on the canapes being consumed by the guests. Keller has a gift for connecting absurd characters, themes, and situations with a logical certainty that builds into farce. Her style is unforced and even her villains familiarly human. A family comedian in the tradition of Helen Cresswell. BH

D.V. Boy-girl relations; Family relations

Kettlekamp, Larry. *Modern Sports Science*. Morrow, 1986. ISBN 0-688-05494-3. 144p. \$11.75.

Ad  
7-10 Divided into four main sections on body structure, nutrition, training techniques, and medical treatment, this takes a no-nonsense approach that sometimes borders on boring in a straight read-through, but that will yield information for browsers or fact finders searching out specific aspects of the subject. The most interesting section is the last, which explores the implications of drugs and psychological training as well as standard procedures for treating injuries. Diagrams help considerably to supplement descriptions of the physics of motion, while black-and-white photos illustrate other points in the text. BH

C.U. Physical education

Kline, Suzy. *What's the Matter with Herbie Jones?*; illus. by Richard Williams. Putnam, 1986. ISBN 0-399-21315-5. 100p. \$11.95.

Ad  
2-4 Herbie falls in love—for a day and a half—with Annabelle Louisa Hodgekiss, but quickly discovers some of the drawbacks to third-grade romance and has to find a way back onto the doting Annabelle's blacklist. The scenes here are nicely if casually sketched, there's a current of humor, and the text is very easy without appearing babyish. Although



none of the elements is especially inventive, the school situation is typical enough to strike a chord of sympathy in readers looking for material at the reading level of Beverly Cleary or even Carolyn Haywood's work, and it is refreshing to find a young male character who admits to enjoying poetry and protests against a cheating scheme endorsed by all his friends. Lightweight. BH

D.V. Age-mate relations

Lawrence, Louise. *Moonwind*. Harper, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-023734-1; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-023733-3. 180p. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$12.50.

Ad 7-9 The only being left alive on a sentient space vehicle, Bethkahn is an astral being who is awakened by the crippled starship to avert a threat to the ship; Bethkahn (who has "shape without substance") has been asleep for ten thousand years. In an unusual love story, she falls in love with a teenage visitor to the ship's base, the moon, and he opts to stay with her rather than return to Earth. He is, to other people at the base, dead. On an astral plane, he has chosen to be with Bethkahn. This is not a convincing story even within its fantastic parameters, in part because Bethkahn is so often described (clothes, posture) as though she had substance, but it has a commendable smoothness of style and a concept that should appeal to science fiction buffs. ZS

McIntyre, Vonda N. *Barbary*. Houghton, 1986. ISBN 0-395-41029-0. 192p. \$12.95.

R 6-9 Winner of several awards for her adult science fiction, the author successfully adapts to a younger audience in this, her first juvenile novel. Her protagonist is an orphan, Barbary, who is hiding her pet cat on the journey to a space station where she will live (after a series of foster homes on Earth) with a man who was her mother's best friend at college and who has a daughter, Heather, of Barbary's age. The journey has suspense, the details of life at the space station are interesting, and the story describes the girls' encounter with the beings of an alien ship. The writing style has vigor and momentum, the characters are capably drawn, the structure and pace of the story are deftly handled. ZS

McMillan, Bruce A. *Becca Backward, Becca frontward: A Book of Concept Pairs*; written and illus. with photographs by Bruce McMillan. Lothrop, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-06283-0; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-06282-2. 25p. Library ed. \$11.88; Trade ed. \$11.75.

R 2-4 yrs. The author of a previous photographed concept book, *Counting Wild Flowers* (reviewed in the April, 1986 issue), McMillan here spotlights an attractive youngster in many natural poses illustrating opposites. "Bottom" is Becca's rear view in blue shorts, "Top" is Becca pulling on a red shirt; "Above" is Becca jumping on a bed; "Below" is Becca crawling under it. All of the white-framed compositions are simple, clear, appealing, and color-coordinated, with possibilities for small-group participation. After an adult reads "Full," as Becca pours milk to the top of her glass, it will be easy for listeners to guess "Empty" when she drains it on the next page. BH

Marshall, James. *Three Up a Tree*; written and illus. by James Marshall. Dial, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-8037-0329-5; Trade ed. ISBN 0-8037-0328-7. 43p. (Dial Easy-to-Read) Library ed. \$8.89; Trade ed. \$8.95.

R 1-3 \* Marshall is at his best in this funny beginning reader that incorporates the trio familiar from *Three By the Sea*, plus two of his recent favorite characters, a chicken and a fox, plus everychild's favorite green monster. These appear variously in a story-within-a-story pattern with ebulliently silly pictures and lines: says a hungry fox sidling up to a disguised hen waiting with her groceries for a bus, "I can smell that you're

having chicken tonight." And she, seeking to dissuade him from coming to dinner, explains that she will cook it "in sour chocolate milk with lots of pickles and rotten eggs. . . ." "It sounds delicious," says the fox. A treat for students struggling from one word to the next. BH

C.U. Reading, beginning

Martin, Ann M. *Missing Since Monday*. Holiday House, 1986. ISBN 0-8234-0626-1. 165p. \$12.95.

Ad 6-9 Maggie, the narrator, is sixteen; she and her older brother Mike have been left in charge of their half-sister Courtenay while their father and stepmother are away on a Caribbean holiday. One day Cortenay is delivered at nursery school by the bus driver—but she never gets inside the building. Thus the long agony of searching for clues, theorizing about the kidnapper and the motive, and fearing the worst begins. Maggie and Mike are angry at their father because, in investigating the possibility that his former wife (the children's mother, who had left years before) had taken Courtenay, he tells some harsh truths about his first wife. This has drama and, of course, suspense, and it is competently written, but it is weakened by an aura of case history purposiveness. ZS

D.V. Stepparents, adjustment to

Mattingley, Christobel. *The Miracle Tree*; illus. by Marianne Yamaguchi. Gulliver/Harcourt, 1986. ISBN 0-15-200530-7. 28p. \$12.95.

R 5-8 A story of three lives tragically altered by the bombing of Nagasaki, this traces the separate paths of an ex-soldier, his bride, and her mother as they search and mourn each other for twenty years, to meet finally because of a pine tree that has nourished hope in all of them. The author of *The Angel with a Mouth-Organ* has once again caught the sufferings of families victimized by war, but the tone here is more tragic in keeping with the ultimate threat of nuclear holocaust. In spite of its picture-book format, this is a story for older readers. The illustrations, subdued charcoal drawings with a green pine-bough motif, underscore the overall tone of sadness tempered with hope for peace. A thought-provoking Christmas story that will draw tears as the dying girl, bending over a nativity scene with her new-found husband and mother, yearns for the baby she can never have and places her paper cranes on the manger as a prayer for the future. BH

C.U. Christmas—stories

D.V. Faith; World peace

Meltzer, Milton. *George Washington and the Birth of Our Nation*. Watts, 1986. ISBN 0-531-10253-X. 176p. illus. \$12.90.

R 5-7 Unlike many biographies of the first president, this reaches beyond the symbolic leader to the man in context of his times, "a victim of both ignorance and prejudice" in his relations with Native Americans, a man who "treated his slaves more as property than as people." Yet Washington's qualities of leadership do emerge as almost super-human at times; most of his mistakes seem to have been made from inexperience in undertaking new endeavors rather than from misjudgment. In general, Meltzer does a compact job of covering an enormously complex period, from life in the colonies through the military highlights of the Revolution to the establishment of a Constitution and formation of a new government amidst fierce factions. In spite of some uncharacteristic lapses of style, as in the abrupt transition from past to present tense when Washington sets out for Boston as commander-in-chief of the rebellion, Meltzer's is a competently written and carefully documented book, well illustrated with reproductions of

historic art, manuscript pages, and maps. With a bibliographic essay and index. BH  
C.U. History—U.S.  
D.V. Leadership

Morrison, Marion. *Atahualpa and the Incas*. Bookwright/Watts, 1986. ISBN 0-531-18080-8. 59p. illus. (Life and Times). \$10.90.

R  
5-7 The title may be misleading, since most of this book about the Inca civilization does not deal primarily with Atahualpa, an illegitimate son of the Inca emperor Huayna Capac, who reigned from 1493 to 1532. However, the text does describe, in short topics, the establishment of the Inca empire, the ways it grew and functioned, and the conquest by Spanish soldiers. The format, a broad column of text on the inside of each page, leaves room for illustrations and captions in a wide margin; other illustrations (often gaudy) may spread across the top or bottom of a page, at times using half the space. The organization of material is weak, but the writing style is adequate, and the material itself is colorful in essence. Appended are a chronology, bibliography, glossary, and index, each a page or less long. In other words, a reliable if staccato introduction to the subject. ZS

C.U. History—South America

Mother Goose. *Cats*; comp. by Barbara Lucas; illus. by Carol Newsom. Lothrop, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-04635-5; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-04634-7. 31p. Library ed. \$10.88; Trade ed. \$10.25.

Ad  
2-4  
yrs. Twenty-one nursery rhymes featuring cats and their antics, all observed by the plump, staid figure of a traditional Mother Goose, are set into watercolor spreads that are sometimes entertaining, sometimes static, but always precisely rendered. This is an old-fashioned, jolly, round-faced lot with the exception of the "crooked man." There's almost a Norman Rockwell feel to the tidy, rural scenes. For cat lovers, it will be a must; others may prefer more general collections without the quality limitations imposed by the subject selection of verses. BH

Mother Goose. *Three Little Kittens*; illus. by Paul Galdone. Houghton/Clarion, 1986. ISBN 0-89919-426-5. 31p. \$13.95.

R  
2-4  
yrs. Galdone's characteristically exuberant pen-and-wash drawings fill these pages with feline faces, first rueful, then joyful, then repentant, and finally excited about the prospects of catching "a rat close by." This is one of those sustained nursery rhymes that initiates youngest listeners into the concentration required for stories, and there's enough dramatic movement and color contrast in the art to hold toddlers' attention. (The cat face on the pie featured on the back cover will not go unnoticed, either.) There are other attractive versions of this verse still in print, including Lorinda Cauley's, but Galdone's style is especially suited to group sessions. BH

Nichols, James. *Boundary Waters*. Holiday House, 1986. ISBN 0-8234-0616-4. 167p. \$12.95.

R  
7-10 Somewhere along the boundary waters between Canada and the United States, there is reputed to be half a million dollars, dropped by a parachuting hijacker. Drawn into adventure by a series of chance (but believable) events, adolescent Dave, who is the narrator, finds himself searching the desolate wilderness with an elderly flyer in an attempt to rescue Dave's distant relative May Belle, an elderly woman whose safety is threatened by the vicious companion who is directing their search for the treasure. The story has strong characters, plenty of action and suspense, convincing motivation and development. Nichols fuses people and plot nicely, only occasionally slowing the story's pace by long descriptive passages or monologues. ZS

Perrault, Charles. *Puss in Boots*; ad. and illus. by Lorinda Bryan Cauley. Harcourt, 1986. ISBN 0-15-264227-7. 29p. \$13.95.

R  
K-2 The season for traditional cat lore seems to have arrived with this Perrault fairy tale, Galdone's edition of *Three Little Kittens*, and Lucas' selections of Mother Goose cat rhymes (all reviewed in this issue). Cauley's retelling of *Puss in Boots* is slightly abbreviated by the omission of occasional phrases for a simplified effect. The color-pencil drawings are full-bodied, buoyant, and especially expressive in depicting a cat whose life depends on his cleverness. The art has a soft refinement very different from Paul Galdone's illustrations for the same story (Marcia Brown's version is out of print). BH

Pevear, Richard, ad. *Mister Cat-and-a-Half*; illus. by Robert Rayevsky. Macmillan, 1986. ISBN 0-02-773910-4. 29p. \$12.95.

R  
K-2 From Ukrainian folklore, this has the elements of wit, logic, and repetition that signal an eminently tellable story. A stray cat who gains a reputation as a fierce mouser turns lazy but gets lucky as well. Mistress Fox of the forest marries him, spreads word of his appetite and strength, and scares the wolf, boar, bear, and hare into providing a feast, at which the cat mistakes the boar's tail for a mouse and sets off a train of events that send the larger animals tumbling over each other to escape. The witty illustrations, with fine lines and earth tones set off by plenty of white space, avoid any hint of cartoon cuteness in favor of a robust respect for the archetypal animal characters. BH

C.U. Storytelling

Purtill, Richard. *Enchantment at Delphi*. Gulliver/Harcourt, 1986. ISBN 0-15-200447-5. 149p. \$14.95.

Ad  
7-9 Teenage Alice Grant is spending a summer studying in Greece; when she comes to Delphi from Athens, she has a series of travels back in time, encountering several of the Olympians and serving, in one episode, as a Pythia. Since her travels take Alice back to different periods, it is not surprising that she encounters the father of her Greek boyfriend in one episode, Athena in another, Apollo, etc. There's some interesting myth-analysis here, and some display of scholarship, but the book isn't quite convincing as a fantasy. Philosophical digressions slow the story at some points, and there are several instances of poor writing style like "The body spasmed..." or "In some ways this young man—or god—could hardly have been different from Apollo." ZS

Rettich, Margret. *Suleiman the Elephant*; written and illus. by Margret Rettich. Tr. from the German by Elizabeth D. Crawford. Lothrop, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-05742-X; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-05741-1. 31p. Library ed. \$11.88; Trade ed. \$11.75.

R  
2-4 A sophisticated picture book relates the betrothal and marriage of Prince Maximilian from Austria and Princess Maria in Spain, where the king of Portugal presents the couple with an elephant that impresses Max far more than Maria does. After the wedding, the three travel with their retinue through Italy and Austria to Vienna, with attention riveted on the elephant all the way. The creature survives the Alps, barely, and Max and Maria become friendly enough to produce, eventually, 16 children. There is quite a bit of humor in the text ("This animal is an elephant," says the king of Portugal. "He comes from India, which belongs to me. The elephant belongs to you"). The illustrations, in muted colors against a gray parchment background, are tumultuous with tastefully cartooned historical detail and humorous

action: Max probably didn't fall off his horse the first time he saw the elephant, as pictured here, but a page of notes at the end does establish the facts of the episode ("This is what really happened"), which are lively enough to support most of the story with only a little festoon of exaggeration. BH

C.U. History—world

Roop, Peter. *Buttons for General Washington*; by Peter and Connie Roop; illus. by Peter E. Hanson. Carolrhoda, 1986. ISBN 0-87614-294-3. 48p. (On My Own). \$8.95.

Ad  
2-4

Large print, spaciouly set, and a direct if dry writing style make this an easy-to-read historical narrative that is based on some facts in the records of the Darragh family, Quakers who lived in British-occupied Philadelphia during the Revolutionary War. Illustrated by subdued watercolors, the story of a boy who carries secret messages for Washington has a modicum of suspense. Young John Darragh did serve as a Patriot spy, but this incident tells "what might have happened" on one of his missions. Readers may find the use of the Friends' pronouns minimally obtrusive, but it is the flatness of the writing style that is more likely to limit the story's appeal. ZS

D.V. Courage; Patriotism

Sanchez, Gail Jones. *Overeating: Let's Talk About It*; written by Gail Jones Sanchez and Mary Gerbino; illus. by Lucy Miskiewicz. Dillon, 1986. ISBN 0-87518-319-0. 110p. \$10.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R  
5-7

An unusually sensitive approach to overweight urges children to look first at the problem that causes them to eat too much, usually lack of self-esteem due to family or peer pressures. Following a section on building confidence and rechanneling the reach for sweets is a section on basic nutrition, including shopping and cooking suggestions for those whose parents work and who eat a lot of restaurant or fast food meals as a result. Much more than a diet book, this will help break basic patterns of behavior that form the fat in the first place. With drawings (which feature pictures of children too young for the age level of the text), charts, diagrams, glossary, and index. BH

C.U. Health and hygiene

D.V. Self-evaluation

Schotter, Roni. *Efan the Great*; illus. by Rodney Pate. Lothrop, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-688-04987-7; Trade ed. ISBN 0-688-04986-9. 28p. Library ed. \$11.88; Trade ed. \$11.75.

R  
K-3

A touching and unusually substantial Christmas story is set in a poor black neighborhood on 128th street in New York. Ten-year-old Efan is determined, while his sister sleeps and his mother works, to buy the family a Christmas tree with his meager savings. He starts out eagerly ("... the whole day lay ahead of him like a huge uneaten cake") but soon finds he doesn't even have funds for the smallest tree. He does however have the determination to work all day at a Christmas tree lot, make a friend of the owner, and drag home the only tree left—an outsize evergreen that's way too big for his apartment but just right for brightening up the whole block. Efan's emotions are varied, genuine, and set into a context of vividly projected secondary characters. Listeners will sympathize with his quest; though the text is long for a picture book, the tight, short-story construction will hold attention. So will the friendly, full-page paintings, which offer some dramatic color contrasts of

green and gold in lively scenes from the story. BH

C.U. Christmas—stories

D.V. Perseverance

Silverstein, Alvin. *Aids: Deadly Threat*; by Alvin and Virginia Silverstein. Enslow, 1986. ISBN 0-89490-128-1. 92p. illus. \$12.95.

R  
7-12  
Like *Aids: What Does It Mean To You* by Margaret Hyde and Elizabeth Forsyth (reviewed in the May, 1986 issue), this is accurate, informative, and objective in tone, and it discusses legal and ethical issues as well as giving facts about the causes (viral variants) and the statistics on distribution and spread of AIDS, expedited research, projections and goals for the future, and the problems that being a victim or carrier have produced in relation to access to education, housing, jobs, etc. The Silversteins, practiced if occasionally repetitive science writers, go into greater details than do Hyde and Forsyth on some aspects of the topic—normal immunity processes, for example, or research developments—but do not include information on sources of further information or support groups. A bibliography, a glossary, and an index are provided. ZS

C.U. Science; Social studies

Smith, Elizabeth Simpson. *Five First Ladies: A Look into the Lives of Nancy Reagan, Rosalynn Carter, Betty Ford, Pat Nixon, and Lady Bird Johnson*. Walker, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-8027-6641-2; Trade ed. ISBN 0-8027-6640-4. illus. with photographs. Library ed. \$12.85; Trade ed. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.

M  
5-7  
Perhaps it is the political tenor of the times, or perhaps it is the bland style with which these last five first ladies are presented, but they tend to blur into homogeneous characteristics despite their varied backgrounds. They are all industrious, ladylike, obedient, family-first women with a terror of making speeches but a tough-as-nails interior under their attractive demeanors. Only Betty Ford, who publicly admitted her addiction problems, is really shown to have any weaknesses or flaws. Their different talents, which lean toward theatre or business, are strictly secondary except for the two strongest willed, Rosalynn Carter and Lady Bird Johnson, who seemed to have had a genuine gift for politics. For this reason, a collective biography makes interesting discussion material and a good jumping off point for more extensive research on each subject. The facts here are sometimes distorted, however, by flowery prose, as in this closing remark: "In days not too distant, when America is burgeoning with wildflowers, we will all be able to smell the perfume and feel the presence of Lady Bird Johnson." BH

Steig, William. *Brave Irene*, written and illus. by William Steig. Farrar, 1986. ISBN 0-374-30947-7. 28p. \$12.95.

R  
K-3  
No talking animals or magic pebbles here; Steig instead tells, with vigor and fluency, the adventures of Irene, who braves a blizzard to get the duchess's new ball gown to the palace. Her mother has made the beautiful dress but becomes too ill to deliver it. She doesn't want Irene to go either. "'But I love snow,' Irene insisted." It proves to be the wind that torments Irene, driving her "along so rudely she had to hop, skip and go helter-skeltering over the knobby ground" and telling her to "GO-HO-WO-WOME." Even when the wind rips the dress from its box, Irene presses on, feeling she owes the duchess an explanation. She twists her ankle, gets lost, and falls into a snowdrift and into despair. "Why not freeze to death, she thought, and let all these troubles end. Why not? She was already buried." But Irene's fortitude



and resourcefulness get her to the palace, where—mysteriously—the dress awaits. The illustrations of Irene's solid little self, both brave and battered, are as immediate as the text, and the cold and wind are wonderfully evoked. This is one of Steig's simplest stories; it is also one of his best, a sturdily realistic tale that has the force of a legend. RS

D.V. Perseverance

Sutcliff, Rosemary. *Flame-Colored Taffeta*. Farrar, 1986. ISBN 0-374-32344-5. 128p. \$11.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R  
6-8 Set in the mid-eighteenth century in England, this is a novel that subtly incorporates historical details, well-developed characters, and as much action and suspense as any reader of adventure stories could want. Like most of Sutcliff's writing, this is not for facile reading, but it is well worth any extra effort. The story of how two children (Damaris is twelve, Peter thirteen) rescue and hide a wounded stranger at a time of high political tension, is romantic without ever becoming sentimental. ZS

C.U. History—England

D.V. Courage; Friendship values; Resourcefulness

Tayntor, Elizabeth. *Dive to the Coral Reefs: A New England Aquarium Book*; by Elizabeth Tayntor et al. Crown, 1986. ISBN 0-517-56311-8. 34p. illus. with photographs. \$12.95.

Ad  
3-5 Color photographs of the Pear Tree and Rio Bueno reefs (off the north coast of Jamaica) illustrate a book based on an investigative expedition mounted by Boston's New England Aquarium. The pictures are handsome and the text accurate in the information it provides. This is, however, less informative than other books on coral reefs and reef ecology, in part because the illustrations have no captions or labels, and in part because the text (despite its accuracy) is weakened by poor organization of material and gaps in the facts provided. ZS

C.U. Science

Tiger, Steven. *Heart Disease*; illus. by Michael Reingold. Messner, 1986. ISBN 0-671-60021-4. 60p. (Understanding Disease) \$10.79.

R  
6-12 In a survey of what is known about heart disease and what can be done to prevent or alleviate it, Tiger writes in dry and serious style. The text gives broad coverage, describing the circulatory system and the illnesses caused by malformation, malfunction, and infection of the heart or the pericardium that surrounds it. By far the greatest cause of deaths in the United States, heart disease now responds to increasingly sophisticated surgery and drug programs, and some of them are repeated in an eight-page color insert, separately paged but not included in the index. In addition to the latter, a glossary is provided. ZS

C.U. Biology; Health and hygiene

Townsend, John Rowe. *Tom Tiddler's Ground*. Lippincott, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-397-32191-0; Trade ed. ISBN 0-397-32190-2. Library ed. \$11.89; Trade ed. \$11.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R  
3-6 Victor, the narrator, and his chum Brain (Brian) don't want Samantha to come along, much less her little sister, but the rowboat has been given to them by Victor's Dad with the stipulation that Sam be one of their party. Later, one more is added, and the five children explore a canal and a derelict canalboat on the patch of land called "Tom Tiddler's ground." One day they find that intruders have vandalized

the boat, which they'd been repairing and furnishing, and in a subsequent encounter they realize that the intruders are the two tough canal scavengers Dad had warned them about. That is the beginning of the children's investigation into the past, and it includes finding lost treasure, reuniting two elderly people in a geriatric romance, and an exciting, fast-paced confrontation. Townsend makes the setting (the canals of England) vivid, and he is adept, as always, in blending a convincing plot and well-defined characters in a story written with a smooth narrative flow. ZS

D.V. Age-mate relations

Voigt, Cynthia. *Stories about Rosie*; illus. by Dennis Kendrick. Atheneum, 1986. ISBN 0-689-31296-2. 44p. \$12.95.

R  
2-4  
These stories are not only about Rosie, they are entirely from Rosie's point of view, ie., a dog's-eye vision of the world. "The family's job was to take care of Rosie... Her bed was exactly like Jessie's, only it smelled better." Rosie's mind works in contradictions, which are reflected in her conversational barks. When the children leave for school, for instance, she barks "Hello. Don't go. Good-bye. Take me with you." The four stories here are not terribly thick on plot: one establishes Rosie's routine at home, one describes her brief run outdoors, one romps through an escapade with a bat loose in the house, and the last is about Rosie's encounter with a deer during the family's vacation. The style is very simple, however, and funny as well, with the humor of Rosie's knowledge versus the humans' easily keeping the text afloat. The cartoon drawings, alternating color with black-and-white, are energetic in the canine department if stereotypical in the human. Good practice fare for young readers. BH

C.U. Reading, beginning

Waddell, Martin. *The Tough Princess*; illus. by Patrick Benson. Philomel, 1987. ISBN 0-399-21380-5. 28p. \$11.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R  
2-4  
A handsomely designed book, this nonsexist spoof of the traditional fairy tale has pages that spaciouly and artistically accommodate the blocks of clean type and sprightly, colorful pictures that have wit and vitality—and just occasionally, for contrast, a bit of the macabre. When Princess Rosamund is born to her impoverished parents, they agree to annoy a bad fairy so that their child will go through the usual rescue-by-handsome-prince routine. Alas, our heroine grows up to be very tall, very thin, and very courageous, but not very beautiful or very pitiable. She also slays dragons, knocks the glasses off the Bad Fairy, rescues princes, and bicycles around the kingdom being valiant. When at long last she finds a beautiful prince, fast asleep, she kisses him, he awakens, and they fall in love and live happily ever after. ZS

D.V. Self-reliance

Walter, Mildred Pitts. *Justin and the Best Biscuits in the World*; illus. by Catherine Stock. Lothrop, 1986. ISBN 0-688-06645-3. 122p. \$11.75. Reviewed from galleys.

Ad  
3-5  
Tired of being corrected or scolded by his mother and sisters, and tired of doing household chores, ten-year-old Justin is delighted when he's invited to pay a visit to Grandpa's ranch. It's Grandpa, however, who teaches Justin (biscuits, bedmaking, and all) that housework is for everybody, that it's not just "women's work." The message is worthy, as is the information Grandpa gives Justin about the contributions of black cowboys to the history of the West. What weakens the book are the intrusion of message on narrative and the occasional use of awkward phrasing or

belabored incident. ZS

D.V. Grandparent-child relations; Sex roles

White, Jack R. *How Computers Really Work*. Dodd, 1986. ISBN 0-396-08768-X. 102p. \$11.95.

Ad  
5-8  
Considering the complexity of the topic, the text here is fairly successful in explaining the electronic principles and technical construction of computers. Some of the analogies White frequently draws on are apt and helpful, as in the comparison between the instruction decoder and a combination lock. As carefully as he tries to describe the basics, however, he sometimes assumes readers' knowledge pertinent to his discussion, as when he fails to define volts or voltage in the section dealing with transistor switches. If a reader has enough background or practical experience with computers, or can simply ride over such lapses, the book yields a good deal of information. Well organized, it nevertheless requires either close concentration in a consecutive reading or a bent for the subject. A few of the examples are dated, including the pictured computer boards and the discussion of printers, which excludes laser printers. With clearly captioned black-and-white photos and diagrams, and an index. BH

Wolf, Bernard. *Amazing Grace: Smith Island and the Chesapeake Watermen*; written and photographed by Bernard Wolf. Macmillan, 1986. ISBN 0-02-793330-X. 76p. \$14.95.

R  
5-7  
In a lively, sometimes witty text, Wolf describes the work and way of life traditional to the crabbing community on a small island of Chesapeake Bay. Shoreline "scraping" from small boats called barcats, crabbing from the bigger boats rigged with hydraulic scrapes, checking crab pots, culling crabs—all mean work from pre-dawn to dark for these watermen. (Women are given short shrift; the focus here, as defined by the title, is on men.) Wolf also describes their links with the mainland, including the mail boat captain who does all their banking and hauls their catches to waiting buyers. In spite of some odd organizational shifts in the text (from duck-banding to the wildlife refuge to a celebration of one couple's fiftieth wedding anniversary to another islander's unprofitable morning on the water), Wolf has projected the character of the community, even to the deeply felt and daily lived religious ties that bind individuals in strong, ongoing dynamics of faith. The black-and-white photographs capture, naturally and specifically, the common sights and stances of Wolf's subjects. BH

C.U. Rural life

Wright, Betty Ren. *The Summer of Mrs. MacGregor*. Holiday House, 1986. ISBN 0-8234-0628-8. 157p. \$12.95.

Ad  
5-7  
Caroline is twelve and, although she loves her invalid sister, she is jealous of the attention Linda gets from their mother and stepfather. While Mom and Linda are out of town for yet another medical review, Caroline becomes more and more involved with a young woman who's visiting neighbors; her name is Lillina MacGregor, she's seventeen and is separated from a rich, adoring husband—she says. She's going to be a model and is a writer—she says. Wright builds up and then exposes an interesting character, but she never makes Caroline's credulity believable, especially in view of many broad hints given by the author that Lillina is lying about everything. ZS

D.V. Friendship values; Sisters

Yarbro, Chelsea Quinn. *Floating Illusions*. Harper, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-026643-0; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-026642-2. Library ed. \$12.89; Trade ed. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R  
6-8 The time is the turn of the century, the setting is a luxurious ocean liner, the mystery is: who has murdered repeatedly, and why. Suspected: the magician, Anton, who is a passenger and who has become the friend of the protagonist, Millicent. Millicent is fourteen, shrewd and logical, and it's clear from the start that she is going to get in trouble (if not in danger) because of her dogged investigations. Add the credulous and snobbish aunt who is Millicent's escort, the medium she befriends, the fact that Anton is of noble blood, and the militant feminist who airs her views, and there is obviously something for everybody. The story is heavily loaded with colorful characters, and there are lag points, but on the whole this is a successful mystery-adventure story, the writing style smooth and the suspense nicely developed. Does Millicent spot the criminal? But of course. ZS

D.V. Courage; Self-reliance; Sex roles

Zolotow, Charlotte Shapiro, comp. *Early Sorrow: Ten Stories of Youth*. Harper, 1986. Library ed. ISBN 0-06-026937-5; Trade ed. ISBN 0-06-026936-7. Library ed. \$12.89; Trade ed. \$12.95. Reviewed from galleys.

R  
7-12 A companion volume to *An Overpraised Season*, this represents a range of styles, from Carson McCullers' ("Like That") to Stephen Vincent Benet's ("To Early Spring"), that blend smoothly despite their differences because of a sympathetic tone that runs throughout the selections. The sorrows each young protagonist feels may be loss for a parent, loss of innocence, loss of a friend or first love. In each case, the story is tightly crafted and accessible, conveying that sense of a full world briefly visited that distinguishes the best of the genre. E.L. Doctorow's "The Writer in the Family" and James Purdy's "Short Papa" are especially memorable. BH

D.V. Death, adjustment to; Growing up

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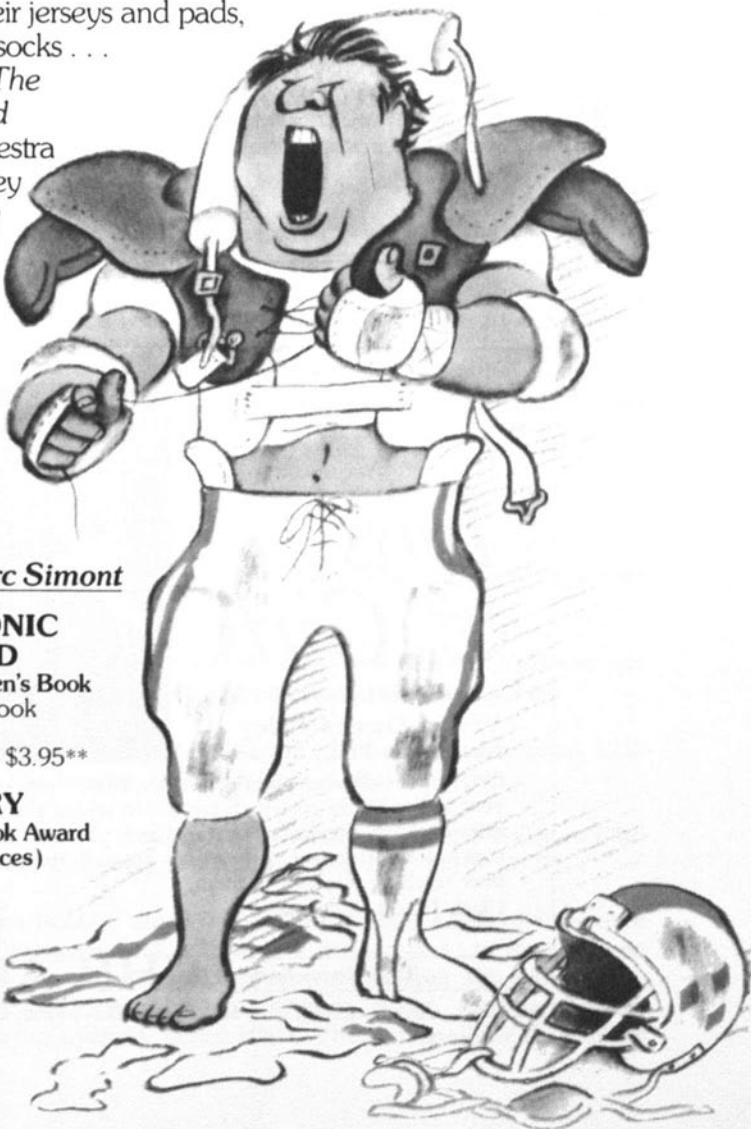
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To order any of the items listed below, please write directly to the publisher of the item, not to the Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books.

Commire, Anne. *Something About the Author: Facts and Pictures about Authors and Illustrators of Books for Young People*. Vol. 45. Gale Research, 1986. 304p. \$64.00. Gale Research Co., Book Tower, Detroit, Michigan 48226.

Estes, Glenn E. *American Writers for Children Since 1960*. (Dictionary of Literary Biography, vol. 52). Gale Research, 1986. 488p. \$88.00.

"Ethnic Groups in Children's Books: Southeast Asians"; and "Vietnamese Books for Children," *Booklist*, October 1, 1986.

Giblin, James. "Children's Book Publishing in America: 1919 to Now," *Children's Literature in Education*, Fall, 1986.

Harms, Jeanne McLain and Lettow, Lucille. "Poetry: Invitations to Participate," *Childhood Education*, October, 1986.

Lacy, Lyn Ellen. *Art & Design in Children's Picture Books*. American Library Assoc., 1986. 246p. \$19.95.

Manning, Pat and Newman, Alan R. "Safety Isn't Always First: A Disturbing Look at Chemistry Books," *School Library Journal*, Oct. 1986.

McKee, Barbara. "Van Allsburg: From a Different Perspective," *The Horn Book*, October, 1986.

Moss, Elaine. *Part of the Pattern: A Personal Journey through the World of Children's Books, 1960-1985*. Greenwillow, 1986. 223p. \$11.75.

Oldis, Katherine O. "Anorexia Nervosa: The More It Grows, the More It Starves," *English Journal*, January, 1986.

Payne, Diane L. "The Treatment of Death and Dying in Young Adult Fiction," *Top of the News*, Summer, 1986.

Senick, Gerard J., ed. *Children's Literature Review: Excerpts from Reviews, Criticism, and Commentary on Books for Children*. Vol. 11. Gale Research, 1986. 300p. \$78.00.

Shannon, Patrick. "Hidden Within the Pages: A Study of Social Perspective in Young Children's Favorite Books," *The Reading Teacher*, March, 1986.

Sutherland, Zena. *The Best in Children's Books: The University of Chicago Guide to Children's Literature, 1979-1984*. University of Chicago Press, 1986. 511p. \$35.00.

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