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EXPLANATION OF CODE SYMBOLS USED
WITH ANNOTATIONS

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.

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New Titles for Children and Young People


The distinctive Ardizzone illustrations are, as always, delightful in their economy of line and their humor, and the story is the usual Ardizzone blend of vigorous adventure and bland, calm style. Shipping as hands for a three-day trip, Tim and Ginger are bullied by the bosun; when the *Arabella* is caught in a horrendous storm, the bosun retires to his cabin with a bottle of rum, the coward, while brave Tim works on. And it is Tim, of course, who saves the crew when shipwreck is imminent; by a typical quirk, it is not a bit of heroics on Tim's part but the simple fact that he catches sight of his own home and is able to tell the stalwart captain that they are in the shallows and that a lifeboat will soon appear. Gently chided by his mother, Tim promises to go to sea no more.

Armstrong, William H. *The MacLeod Place*. Coward, 1972. 188p. $5.95.

Tor MacLeod lives with his grandfather on a mountain farm in Virginia, a homestead that has been in the family since the eighteenth century. Both are disturbed because the land may be preempted by the government; grandfather battles and loses, but his house is moved by neighbors to a new site. The strongest aspects of the book are in creating a vivid atmosphere and in the relationships between boy and his grandfather, but the writing style is ponderous and the plot moves slowly; the dialogue is not natural—especially when, in the beginning of the story, Tor takes several pages to give information via a monologue addressed to his dog—and the book is weakened by such pretentious passages as, "None of the red blood of Scotch Highlanders had been leached out by the generations which separated Angus MacLeod from his sturdy forebears who had crossed the sea, penetrated the wilderness, and tamed it."


Children as well as parents feel the strain in a situation in which the father has no work and the mother supports the family. In a story from Great Britain, the younger child in a Scottish family describes the tension and the consequent abrasion of family equanimity. Joanna's father has lost his newspaper job; her mother, also a journalist, is put on the panel of a television game show. Depressed, father is resentful of his wife's success—and she, in turn, resents his attitude. Joanna's brother leaves school to join a commune, and she goes along for the summer. Father goes off to take a temporary job, and the fragmentation of the household is complete. Not planned, not acrimonious, but enduring. This is not a story about divorce, but about a family drifting apart, torn between love and a desire for independence, the parental roles marred by bitterness and pride. It is a realistic story, it is unusual in presenting a family that is culturally sophisticated, and it is candid in describing the petty grievances of the commune members. Good style, convincing characters.

A pared-down retelling of the familiar tale. The chief appeal of this oversize edition is in the big, bold, uncluttered pictures that are just right for using with a group of children in story hour. The goats, their baleful eyes wide open, and the gnarled and hairy troll are Galdone at his vigorous best—but the retelling is prosaic.


A discussion of the beliefs about the earth that were held in the ancient world, and of the theories proposed by early scientists: the world was flat, was a bowl, was a cyclinder, et cetera. The text concludes with the hypotheses advanced by Philolaus, Aristotle, Eratosthenes, and Ptolemy and with the explorations of Columbus and Magellan. The writing is lucid and the material accurate and well-organized; this hasn’t the wit and polish of Asimov’s writing for older readers, but it is a good introduction to astronomy in a series that emphasizes the history of scientific discoveries. An index is appended.


Prefaced by an introductory page that explains how the Northmen of the eighth-to-tenth centuries came to China to trade, this long poem describes the marvels of the T’ang Dynasty. The lyric writing is replete with lovely descriptive passages, and the book gives information almost by osmosis. It is, however, in traditional picture book format, and it is problematical whether this is appropriate for readers old enough to understand and appreciate, “While their swift dragon-ships/Strake frost-cold seas/ Helmed straight as the gannet flies . . .” and the framing of the poem (the traders come, and at the end, they go, laden with wares and tales of China) contributes little to the picture of the rich, peacock-vivid, and sophisticated culture of the T’ang Dynasty.


A retelling of an old French folktale is illustrated by pictures that combine delicacy of execution with vigorous action, the drawings complementing and extending the peasant humor of the story. Balarin’s goat was petted and spoiled, while his wife Marinette was scolded and taken for granted. Marinette decided to take matters into her own hands. She stopped speaking and would only respond with a “Baaa” to Balarin’s overtures. Finally Balarin grew worried and appealed to Marinette to speak to him, which she agreed to—provided that he did for her all the things he used to do for his goat: he fed her the finest delicacies he could find, hugged and kissed her, crowned her with wreaths of flowers, and scratched her nose.


An adequate biography of Gertrude Stein, giving the major facts about her life in a highly fictionalized style, especially in the use of dialogue. The biography begins with an anecdote about an encounter with her father shortly before his death, an episode for which inadequate background is given; this is typical of the weakness of the book: there are many anecdotes; many figures of importance introduced,
but little exploration in depth. Selected bibliographies of books by and about Ger- 
trude Stein and an index are appended.

Carmer, Carl Lamson. The Boy Drummer of Vincennes; illus. by Seymour Fleishman. Har-
vey House, 1972. 20p. Trade ed. $3.95; Library ed. $3.79 net.

A narrative poem in first person celebrates a facet of the American Revolution.

R

Based on a true incident, the story is told by a drummer boy on the Western frontier;
in 1779, a band of patriotic volunteers led by George Rogers Clarke marched across
the soggy lands of Illinois to take from the British a small French outpost they
had won—Vincennes. The poem has a swinging rhythm that fits the jaunty mood
of the lad who defiantly thumps his drum and it is faithful in its language to the
speech of the period. Nice to read aloud, useful for its historical as well as its
poetic appeal, the poem incorporates some of the folklore and the contemporary
lyrics of the time.

165p. $5.95.

The story of the coming of the first white men to Tasmania gives a colorful picture
of the tribal cultures and the richness of their traditions, but it moves slowly, the
details that are interesting as a study of Aborigine patterns too intricate for literary
smoothness. The people of the Toogee and Loonty, hounded by Robinson and his
men, are shipped to Flinders Island, where they cannot tolerate the living conditions,
and they languish. The book ends with the author’s historical note on the fate of
the last of the Toogee, Mathinna. A glossary is appended.


First published in Australia, this story of a family’s problems in eking out a living
as opal miners is realistic in approach, written with vitality, and remarkable for
the evocation of its harsh and distinctive setting. Liz, who is fifteen, is the
protagonist; she and her mother are anxious to leave and move to Adelaide so
that they can be near a good school. Her father hopes for just one lucky strike
before they go, her younger brother resents having to leave his friend Steve. Even
Liz is unhappy at the thought of leaving her friend Kathy, and hopes that the house
in Adelaide will be big enough so that Steve and Kathy can live with the family.
While the book has a sturdy plot that centers on the finding of a good “parcel”
of opals, and the plot has suspense and satisfaction, it is given depth both by the
family’s affection for Steve and Kathy, who are aborigines, and by the object lesson
they learn in their unwarranted prejudice against a Greek neighbor.

Trade ed. $3.95; Library ed. $3.78 net.

A first-person story of a junior high school boy who discovers that he is clairvoyant.
Max’s first prediction is spontaneous; he soon discovers both that he cannot seem
to control the gift and that it arouses hostility in his classmates. With parental backing,
Max refuses to be exploited by the school authorities; he soon is ostracized by
his classmates, and the story ends with Max’s family moving away to a place where
his ability is not revealed; he has learned the conditions that make it possible for
him to make predictions at will, but his predictions are made only to his own family.
Maybe, the story ends, when he is older he will make predictions for other people.
The story is well-written, and the approach to extrasensory powers dignified and
convincing, especially in describing the attitudes of young people and adults toward
Max's difference: either they fear it because they can't understand it, or they want to exploit it for selfish reasons. The weakness of the story is that it presents little more than an expanded situation; there is little plot development or action.


What child hasn't thought enviously of the advantageous situation enjoyed by a friend? William never had to take a bath; William could watch the late, late show; William didn't have to eat brussels sprouts the way Jonathon did—he could breakfast on pizza or anything he wanted. Jonathon's mother was getting a bit tired of hearing about William, and she took Jonathon along when she went to visit William's mother. And that's how Jonathon discovered that William envied him: for having a brother, for living in a house rather than an apartment, for having a dog. Also he had needed dental work and could no longer have all the candy he wanted. Hmm. Not so bad, Jonathon decided, not to be William. The illustrations are stiff in execution, but light in mood to echo the tone of the writing; the story has an amused rather than a didactic message, and both the exaggeration of incident and the lively dialogue concerning a familiar situation should appeal to children.

De Regniers, Beatrice Schenk. *It Does Not Say Meow;* And Other Animal Riddle Rhymes; illus. by Paul Galdone. Seabury, 1972. 37p. $4.95.

There's not too much poetry for the very young child, and the verses here should please him both because they are rhythmic and because they have an element of game-playing. Sample: "Soft paws/ Sharp claws/ Thick fur/ Loud purr/ What is that?/
yrs. Yes! A . . ."


Realistic drawings in black and white (some without identifying labels) add to the informational value of another useful and accurate book about wild creatures. The continuous text contains descriptions by groups, although no headings separate the material about—for example—animals and birds. Unlike the Freschet book below, the continuous text seems rather burdensome visually, since here there is no white space to set off the text and illustrations that fill almost every page. Although the book can give readers a broad picture of the variety of life forms that feed as scavengers, it is neither comprehensive in that respect nor does it give much information about individual scavengers. A one-page index is appended.


Written in a direct and simple style, this biography of the late President is somewhat marred by an adulatory tone, but it gives good coverage, is well-organized and balanced in treatment, and is up-to-date, including Mr. Truman's death. Five books are suggested for further reading; an index is appended.


Dramatic illustrations in black and white show the gorilla, in a narrative that is really informational rather than fictional, growing from birth to adulthood. The gorilla clings to his mother, gains independence, learns to fend for himself, and
watches with awed interest the behavior of the tribe's leader. Captured and put in a zoo, the gorilla languishes at first; then he adjusts and finally is stirred by the new female gorilla that has been put in the next cage to drum his declaration of maturity as the leader of his tribe had done. The facts are accurate, the story-line rather extended; the writing is simple and direct, with a touch of the poetic.


Attractively illustrated and simply written, the description of the first experiences of a baby skunk are given just enough of a narrative framework to lend impetus to the book. Smallest of his litter, Skunk Baby investigates his small world with adventurous impunity; he knows no fear but obeys the danger signals his mother gives. Skunk Baby learns what fear is when he first encounters a predatory fox. The fox is young also, and he learns from the confrontation what a powerful weapon skunks have. The text and the illustrations have a quiet fidelity to nature.


First published in England, a book that comprises nine episodes in a child's life. Lucy lives in a Yorkshire town, and the time is pre-World War II. The stories are artfully light, poignantly childlike, sunny with humor, and they are written in a style that balances beautifully between crispness and nostalgia. Particularly felicitous: the dialogue, especially in the conversations among children. The plots are homely; Lucy runs off for a romp at the beach and returns for a high tea with three sedate, elderly grandaunts; she is rescued by a staunch elderly relative when alone and worried because her mother is incommunicado in the hospital; she plays imaginative games with her friends, quarrels and makes up, copes with a snobbish visitor. A refreshing book.


Although a "Preface for Parents" suggests that the book is intended for adult use with children, the simplified writing and rather choppy style indicate that it may more appropriately be used by independent readers. As he did in The Boys and Girls Book about Divorce, Dr. Gardner writes dispassionately about children's emotions and problems, but the narrative style used here is less effective than a text addressed directly to the reader. There are six stories in the book, an example being "The Girl Who Wouldn't Try." Helen is so afraid of failure that she will not participate, but she feels that she could have done better than those who did. A classmate encourages her to try, pointing out that you may not win, but it's fun to be included in projects and games. Helen tries out for a play, gets a role (not the lead part she has hoped for) and finds that it is, indeed, fun to be one of the group. After that, she tries other new things and finds that one doesn't always succeed, but that failure or partial success are bearable. When she goes to camp, she wins the award for the camper who has shown the most improvement. Unfortunately, the book smacks of the didactic.


A boy describes the companionship with his grandfather during a summer vacation at the shore, the activities they enjoy together, and the quiet coziness of bedtime conversation. The pictures and the text are imbued with the warmth of the relation-
ship and the enjoyment of natural phenomena, but the lack of action and the quiet, almost static quality of the text may limit the appeal for some readers.

Goodall, John S. *The Midnight Adventures of Kelly, Dot, and Esmeralda*. Atheneum, 1972. 34p. $3.95.

At the magic midnight hour, three toys on a nursery shelf come alive. After a koala bear and a doll have feasted with the mouse who lives in a dollhouse (or is it a mouse house?) they step into a painting and take off on a bucolic trip in a rowboat and go on to a series of adventures, culminating in the mouse being captured by a circus ringmaster cat. Rescued, the mouse and her friends speed back to the boat and out of the painting. The story, which has no words, ends as it began, with the three toys still and stiff in the quiet room. Since only the title endows the toys with names, children can apply any name to any character—unless an adult reads them the jacket copy. The technique of using half-page inserts that give a quick scene change is as intriguing here as in other Goodall books, the paintings are just as quaintly old-fashioned; the combination of animal and toy characters and the escape from danger should please children, and the fact that the pictures make the plot perfectly clear makes this a satisfying book for the pre-reader if he can understand the concept of stepping into a painting.


Like the other tales from *How God Fix Jonah (Every Man Heart Lay Down, David He No Fear)* this single-story picture book edition has the soft and colorful cadence of African speech patterns that adapt Biblical language. There is an appealing tenderness in the story of the young prodigal who comes home to be welcomed by his father and who is envied by his oldest brother until their father’s explanation touches him, too. The illustrations are bold in design but distracting because of their page-filling detail.


Paul was shorter than the other boys in his class, he had large ears that stuck out, and his skin, Gran said, was wasted on a boy. Shy, lonely, Paul hated being called “Rabbit” by the other boys; he lived with Gran and he dreamed of the day his mother would ask him to join her—but there always seemed some reason why it just wouldn’t work out—yet. When his mother remarried, Paul was sure there would be a home for him, but his week-end visit was so disastrous he cut it short. The only thing that gave him confidence were a friend, Gordon, who occasionally visited his grandmother (a neighbor) and an elderly storekeeper who treated Paul like a friend. After he reads a paper in class that divulges the truth about his one encounter with a peer group (invited to participate in a break-in, he had rebelled) Paul finds that his courage has achieved what he’d hoped for, an invitation to be one of the group that goes on sleep-outs. Staunchly he requests that he no longer be called “Rabbit”—and it works. The story is told with deft ease, the problems and solutions are realistic, and the characters are distinctive.


A discussion of the problem of supplying enough power for the world’s needs and the equally vexing problem of coping with the thermal pollution caused by
power plants. Nuclear fission plants are a partial solution, but the real promise lies in nuclear fusion, if scientists and engineers can solve the thorny questions of obtaining sufficient heat and maintaining it and of finding a practical coolant for the process. The subject is interesting and the treatment is authoritative, but the book is weakened by poor organization of material: after going into some complex descriptions of physical processes, the author occasionally moves to some tangential topic, or states, "But first . . .", losing the continuity. The diagrams are adequate but they and the photographs are often poorly placed in relation to the text. A glossary and an index are appended.


A survey of protest from earliest colonial times to today includes religious groups that did not believe in killing, men and women who protested as individuals against all war or against particular wars, organizations for peace, peaceful resistance in the black power struggle, and conscientious objectors in our time. The book is a useful adjunct to a study of American history, the material is interesting in itself, and the text is written in an informal and enthusiastic style. A list of books suggested for further reading and an index are appended.


All of the projects contained in this "how-to" book are fairly simple, and the instructions are clear. There are several instances, however, of poor placement of pictures (one page explains different kinds of canvas by stating "This is A . . . This is B . . ." et cetera, but all of the photographs of canvas are on the facing page and not immediately identifiable) and of inadequate illustrations. General information about materials and techniques is followed by instructions for making fifteen projects, all of which are shown in color photographs. The techniques for making and transferring patterns enable the reader to improvise.


Stories within a story are achieved by a nicely logical device: the children of Blue Bell School have a Balloon Day, during which they release balloons with their names attached and ask whoever finds the balloon to write. The inner stories are about some of the children who find the balloons, one set in a hospital, another at a circus, another at home, etc. The book closes as it begins, with the Blue Bell School children, when Lynette—the protagonist, on a small scale—finds her own balloon while on a field trip. The writing is simple and homely, the children's dialogue natural, and the everyday events appealing because of their familiarity. Only the illustrations show that Lynette is black, or so it would appear by the slightly peppercorn look of her hair. Placid style, but more varied than most of the author's stories.


Like the author's *Push-Pull, Empty-Full*, this consists of a series of photographs that illustrate the concepts in the title and others that are similar: in, on, around, across, between, beside, below, against, and behind. Since several photographs
follow each set of two or three words, the distinctions are not always perfectly clear; some of the photographs illustrate more than one concept. The book may require some help in interpretation, therefore.


Lavishly illustrated with photographs, this text is based on the activities of the Governors of Colorado, Maryland, Massachusetts, and Ohio. It includes a chart of the governmental structure of one state, and of the flow of legislation through the Congress of another, and describes the campaigns and the various roles a governor must fill in relation to the legislature, as head of the state, as an executor, and as the leader of his party within the state. Some of the text consists of explanatory captions for photographs, but the pictures—while not always informative—are interesting, and the text proper is written in a breezy, straightforward style.


Most of the poems included in this mini-anthology are not actually definite about the sex of the writer, and only because of the illustrations can they be thought of as poems about girls. However, it is a pleasant selection of poems for children and the things that concern them, and the illustrations have vigor and humor.


Jingling verses and cartoon-style illustrations describe some of the consequences of ignoring safety precepts; the first part of the book deals with rules for baseball, the second part with rules for the playground. A few suggestions for courteous behavior are tossed in, too. The advice is sensible, and the pictures show children who are black and white, boys and girls—plus a few sports-minded cats. The rhymes are on the pedestrian side, but they are brisk and practical.


A detailed account of the research and discoveries of vaccines that combat poliomyelitis would be dramatic in itself; here, competently written and researched, the story of that research is interwoven with the controversy about fund raising and publicity that made the names of many of the scientists involved notorious. A bibliography and an index are appended.


Early one morning, the little panda Milton goes out to play, but all the other animals are still asleep. He watches television for a time, plays about alone. Still the other animals—the Whippersnappers and the Nincompoops—slumber on. Then the vigor of Milton’s singing stirs a storm, mountains tremble, the sleepers wake. “Rise and shine,” says Milton’s father. But Milton, worn out from his exertions, has just fallen asleep. While the story line is nonsensical, the tale has an amiable aura, and the illustrations have a gay vitality.
Larrick, Nancy, comp. *The Wheels of the Bus Go Round and Round; School Bus Songs* and chants; illus. by Gene Holtan. Golden Gate, 1972. 48p. Trade ed. $4.95; Library ed. $4.79 net.

A collection of songs suitable for singing while riding is intended particularly for school bus use, but the songs—many of which are old favorites—are appropriate for group use on many occasions. The drawings are scrabbly and humorous; musical notation giving the melodic line is included. Some of the selections are “This Old Man,” “Here We Go Looby-loom,” “The Bear Went Over the Mountain,” and there are others less well known; some parodies and chants are included. There is no table of contents, but a first-line index is appended.


Like Blue’s *Grandma Didn’t Wave Back,* this story describes a child’s adjustment to a grandparent who is in a nursing home and is senile. Here the child is much younger, however, and has not been abraded by the separation but comes to visit. It is Grandfather’s eighty-fifth birthday, and Matt has been told that his grandfather is almost like a baby—but he finds that Grandfather has his own way of keeping in touch with reality, and that it is a way that a small child can understand and feel empathetic about. The story, translated from the Swedish, is gentle and affectionate, told with grace and simplicity. A very good introduction to the concept of the changes that come with old age.


Although there are some words shown in signs that are part of the illustrations, this is a picture book without a text. A small boy buys a bottle of bubble-making liquid and sees a series of ferocious creatures in the bubbles he blows; although some threaten him, the imaginary beasts are always under his control. When he becomes bored, the child pours out the remaining liquid and walks off. A typical touch of Mayer humor: a wistful winged creature rises from the puddle of liquid and looks sadly at the departing boy’s back. Not very substantial, but engaging and mildly funny.


Background for the poems is provided by the editor’s introduction and notes on sources, her translations read smoothly, and the illustrations have a dreamy, poetic quality. The poems of ninety-six young Russian writers (ages 3–15) show the usual range in poetry written by children, from the naive and conventional to the crystalline and sophisticated and free-leaping. Although there are names of people or places that identify the source as Russian, the collection is notable for its universal quality; there are far fewer cultural differences observable between these poems and those by American children than there are between the latter and the contributors to *There Are Two Lives,* the collection of Japanese children’s poetry edited by Richard Lewis.

Eight comedies and eight mysteries, all one-act, royalty-free plays, are included in a volume designed for teenagers. Production notes follow each play. The material is pedestrian, the dialogue often contrived; the plots vary, some having originality and others quite patterned. The collection has little distinction, but it may be useful because of the constant demand for dramatic material that is brief, and it is weakened by such artificialities as this, for example: in one play, set in a department store, "A Triumph for Trimbly", an irate customer complains that she had ordered a birthday present for her husband, his own head in clay, and that Trimbly had actually put the man's head in clay—the man is, indeed, on stage with a clay mask.


Nine tales by one of the great early writers of fantasy are included in a delightfully illustrated volume; eight of the stories were published in *The Strand Magazine* (the first in 1899) and one was published posthumously. Although some of the stories don't have the firm control of fantasy that appears in the Bastable books, being a wee bit whimsical, they are still deft and imaginative, always grounding the fanciful in the real. They are a trifle Victorian, they are more than a trifle English, and yet they are timeless in their humor and their identification with the child's point of view.


First published in Italy, a book that is illustrated with colorful, beautifully designed but static pictures begins in realistic fashion. The text describes the system of dikes that protected and added to Dutch land; it then moves into fantasy with the story of an Italian ship named Augusta that went on a first trip down the inland waterways. Augusta thinks she is very wise because she has travelled so much, but she learns to stick to the middle of the canal after moving to one side to oblige some cows; she makes a windmill angry by ramming it, and she has to be repaired. The fantasy (interrupted at one point by straight information) is flat and unconvincing.


A story of a Shaker boy on a Vermont farm is anecdotal, with no story line but with a strong cohesive bond of love and an occasionally-quaint humor in the ingenuousness of the protagonist when he encounters words or practices foreign to the Shaker Way. Given a piglet by a neighbor, Rob raises his pet in hopes that she will be a brood sow, and is disappointed to find her sterile. His father, who is a pork butcher, kills Pinky, and Rob grieves although he knows it must be done. Knowing, also, that his father is near death, he forgives the act. And when his father dies, Rob becomes the man of the family, stoutly assuming his father's burdens. The book gives a vivid picture of the simplicity and goodness of the Shaker Way, but its real strength is in the depth of family love.


Slowly, slowly, Snail crawls along, patiently making his way toward the home of his friend the caterpillar—but when he reaches the cabbage-field, Caterpillar's
Ad home is gone. Snail asks other creatures what has happened, but not until he meets K-2 Bumble Bee does he learn that the cabbages have been cut and are being taken to market. Snail rescues his friend from a terrible fate, not without some dangers on the way, and when they are safe he realizes how lucky he is that his home travels with him. The story is a bit drawn-out, but it is simply told; the illustrations are enchanting, graceful and realistic paintings of the flora and fauna of woods and meadows, with especially lovely flowers.


First published in Germany under the title *Krabat*, this compelling fantasy was given the German Children’s Book Prize in 1972 as the best children’s book of the year. A beggar and a vagrant, fourteen-year-old Krabat comes to a mill whose master is a strange magician and whose apprentices are doomed to death after they have served the Master. Krabat has watched the older apprentices go, each one in his turn; he escapes through the power of love, and through his struggle saves those who are left. The story has pace and suspense, its mood created with skill, its characters strong; it also has running through the events the message of brotherhood.


No, not sex—parenthood. A fascinating discussion of vertebrate animals’ behavior patterns in courting and mating, nest-building, and caring for their young is arranged by activity. The text includes discussion of such preliminary patterns as establishing territorial rights and seasonal migration, but it concentrates on the varied ways in which animals attract mates, the hormone changes or the effects of the longer day that stimulate such behavior as gift-offerings, physical displays of prowess or beauty, and the physical changes that indicate a readiness to mate. Myriad examples are given for the behavior of vertebrates in attracting, mating, giving birth, and caring for the young, and the text is written in a brisk, informal style. Occasionally the author, an eminent scientist, permits himself a quip; for example, “Perhaps the reason monogamy is rare is that it may depend very greatly on competition between females, and there are relatively few species in which this has evolved. It is well established in humans, although this is skillfully camouflaged by the females themselves.” A bibliography, a glossary, and a relative index are appended.


Like the author’s *Friedrich*, this is autobiographical, and his introduction ends, “I was not merely an eyewitness. I believed—and I will never believe again.” The boy who tells the story, eight years old at its start, is anxious to join his friends in participating in the Hitler youth movement. He describes the stifling of any overt act of humanitarianism, the rigidity of the training, the harshness of the regime as reflected in the treatment of children in the ranks, and in his story it becomes increasingly clear that some of the boys are hostile to the dicta of the Third Reich, some willing to compromise, and others completely and fervently loyal. The story ends with the boys grown, encountering their first battle as enlisted men, and clearly facing imminent death. Dramatic, forceful in indicating the Nazi philosophy, the book has momentum, good characterization, and taut construction. The translation is smooth; notes explaining words and phrases, and a chronology of events from 1933 to 1943 are included.
Wayne Kaufman and Adele Bond have known each other for all of their twelve years; she’s pudgy and he calls her “Fatso”; she calls him “Puny” because he’s undersized. While some of the story is devoted to a quarrel and reconciliation and some to their programs of self-improvement (Adele diets, Wayne exercises and eats more) most of the plot is devoted to the mystery next door. A friendly neighbor is held incommunicado in her home by a scheming nephew and his wife. Object: the elderly woman’s fortune. It is Wayne and Adele who discover the real fortune, a jewelled crown hidden by a former employee. The plot has an element of suspense, but it moves slowly, hindered by the rather tedious Fatso-Puny conflict. The culprits are not convincing characters; the friendship between the children and their neighbor in the house next door is well-drawn.

Like Syme’s biography, reviewed below, this life of Juárez is comprehensive and well-rounded; the two differ only slightly in describing small incidents, Rouverol tending to use more flowery phrases. While not as well written as Syme’s Juárez this is equally informative, and it gives a more extensive list of sources as well as a glossary and an index.

A tract against smoking isn’t most effective in a picture book, nor does the story benefit from the message. Two children who are hunting the source of clouds of choking smoke interrogate a factory chimney (not guilty), a steamship, city traffic, etc. Finally they discover a dragon who has been the victim of cigarette advertising. They lecture him, pointing out all the dangers in inhaling; the dragon is converted and his wife, who has left him, returns. The drawings are sprightly, and the use of collage is a diverting variation. Despite the popularity of the pollution theme, it seems improbable that even the preschool child would accept the explanation of a single smoker—albeit a dragon—as the source of the rolling clouds of smoke rather than the factories and the dense urban traffic.

A description of such familiar food plants as onion, potato, parsley, celery, asparagus, et cetera includes the ways in which these plants propagate, with clear photographs—some in color—that expand the information given in the text. The writing is clear, concise, and informative, the information accurate and geared in its lack of complexity to the level of the intended audience. Since Mrs. Selsam writes even the simplest book with dignity, this can be used by slow older readers also. The title is third in a series of books that describe categories of vegetables, the others being roots and fruits; the series serves as a good introduction to botany.

With the help of amusing illustrations and the use of brown print for directions, a participation game translates nicely into book form. “I’m going on a bear hunt
... And I'm not afraid . . . Goodbye, mother . . . Off we go through the tall jungle
grass . . . " is accompanied by brown-type instructions to "pound legs like you're
walking, wave, hands together sliding-swish sound." The boy and his dog climb
a tree, swim two lakes, cross a swamp, and find the glowing eyes of a bear in
a cave, so they back hurriedly off and reverse the whole pattern. Not a story, but
a game that leans on the storyteller's art and that uses words (in the directions)
with an appreciation of humorous effect.

$4.95.

First published in Great Britain, this is the plaintive story of nine-year-old Ray
Plumtree, member of an accident-prone family, only child, spider caught in his
own web. Ray, who refers to himself as Dreamy Ray, has three casts on his limbs
and is spending his time in a wheelchair on a balcony, brooding. He has found
a book with spells in it, and has been practicing one spell that will cause the other
children, by whom he has been (or feels he has been) ignored, to beg for mercy
or court his favor—or anything, anything that will bring him the attention he craves.
Spinning his chair about as the spell requires, Ray becomes dizzy, hangs upside
down from the balcony, and gets not only attention, but the supreme pleasure of
seeing the neighborhood's model boy come a cropper. The situation is interesting
and the psychology sound, the dialogue is lively—but the book is weakened because
so much of it is monologue and because the crucial episode is not quite lucid:
is Ray confused by his position to such an extent that he really thinks the world
has turned upside down—as he is calling out to warn the assembled children
below—or has the story assumed a fantastic turn?

Spinner, Stephanie, ed. Feminine Plural; Stories by Women about Growing Up. Macmillan,
1972. 240p. $5.95.

Eleven stories, chiefly by British and American writers, that focus on the transition
period between immaturity and comprehension of one's self and role. The selec-
tions—all by women—are primarily concerned with the sex role, although Tillie
Olsen's "Oh Yes" speaks to the poignancy of a white girl's realization that her close
friendship with a black girl is unacceptable to society. Most of the material might be
termed "Variations on a Theme"; they are skilled variations by such eminent writers
as Boyle, McCullers, O'Connor, and Porter, but as an anthology this is not broad
in scope.

Trade ed. $3.95; Library ed. $2.96 net.

A foreword points out to the adult that many children come from one-parent
homes and that this story may help them to adjust to that situation and to realize
that adults outside the immediate family can extend children's circle of affection.
The purpose is laudable, the story adequately told but somewhat contrived. Steve
doesn't want to attend open house at school because he has no father (it is implied
that his father is dead) and he's jealous of classmates who do. His mother says
there's nothing to be ashamed of, and Steve finally decides to go. To his great
pleasure, he sees his grandfather, uncle, and a neighbor file in. Steve is content,
and goes to bed that night feeling happy for the first time in a long time. This
may be reassuring to fatherless readers, but the quick acceptance of substitute
fathers is not quite convincing.

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Knute Rockne became a great name in football history, but when Notre Dame beat a powerful Army team in 1913, the man in the limelight was Gus Dorais, the frail quarterback with a golden arm. Rockne only caught the passes; Dorais threw them. Until that time there had been little attention given the forward pass. There's some reminiscing, but most of the book is devoted to analysis of the requisites for success as a quarterback and of each part of passing: throwing and catching, stopping the pass, types of passes, and (with diagrams) game strategy. Some tables of records and an index are appended. Good, crisp, reliable advice.


First published in England under the title *Emma's Afternoon*, this is a placid story about a child's small adventures. Recovering from the measles, missing her school activities, and bored, Betsy grumbles about, determined not to be pleased with anything. She goes off for a picnic walk with her doll, gets wet and dirty, is frightened by a dog, finds a bird's nest, meets one of her classmates, and comes home thinking what a lovely afternoon it has been. Slow-moving, but pleasant, and children may be amused by Betsy's wallowing in resentment, although this isn't basically a humorous story.


A biography of the man whose life was devoted to making Mexico a modern and democratic nation is also an excellent survey of Mexican history in the 19th century. Juárez overcame the double handicaps of being poor and Indian—almost synonymous in his day—to become a lawyer, a fighter against the corruption of the military and the abuse of power by the church. Exiled, he returned to become President and to wait out the farcical establishment of a monarchy by Napoleon. The book is well-researched and capably written, with no note of adulation and with little attention to the subject's personal life. Syme is particularly adept at clarifying the intricacies of the involvement of other nations in Mexican political life. A bibliography is appended.


After a long hiatus, another story about the children of *All-Of-A-Kind-Family* appears, as warm and wholesome as the first. The five girls of a New York Jewish family of the 1900's have acquired a baby brother now, and they are instrumental in bringing together an orphaned Italian-American boy and a nurse who, having lost her own child, adopts him. But it isn't the plot that lures the reader, it's the cozy, busy family life with its small joys and troubles and its reflection of the period and the cohesive affection of the family.


Jason is twelve, an unhappy child whose father is almost a bully in his devotion to the "manliness" he urges on his son, who to him is a failure: Jason cannot swim, he dislikes shooting, he prefers his pet rat to training a dog. Even worse, his older sister Myra is good at all these things and not averse to taunting Jason. The boy's gradual maturation comes through a summer job; hired to help a neighbor
with some carpentry work, Jason becomes devoted to the six-year-old, autistic
nephew staying with the family. With slow patience (realistically, interrupted by
moments of exasperation) Jason wins little Buddy’s confidence and sees the begin-
nings of response and achievement. Both his success and his absorption in problems
of others contribute to a growth of perception and perspective that enable him to
accept his own family members as they are, and to relax the tension, particularly,
between him and his father. Psychologically sound, skillfully written, a percipient
story that is moving and realistic.

Trade ed. $3.95; Library ed. $3.78 net.

Told with simplicity and warmth and illustrated with pictures that express the
sunny aura of the story and show, by superimposition, the imaginary animals that
Andy and his mother are discussing. Andy wants his mother to guess what sort
of wild animal is in the house; he even imitates it. Mother, going along with the
game, pretends to be frightened and offers a series of snacks to tempt and identify
the beast. Having consumed several tasty offerings while Mother cooperatively has
left the room, Andy finally reveals that he is a worm just like the one he’s been
observing outdoors. Not substantial, this is nevertheless a very pleasant tale of
a child’s imagination and a mother’s understanding.


Effectively illustrated with black and white rice paper pictures, a story based
on fact is set in 1869, when a small group of Japanese settlers came to California
after the collapse of the Japanese feudal system. Koichi, son of a samurai, leaves
Japan with his father and others to found a farm, a farm that they hope will be
a sanctuary for the feudal lord they have served and to whom they are loyal. But
the climate and the lack of water prove potent enemies, and the small colony suffers
from the prejudice of some white people. The author gives a balanced picture: some of the neighbors are very helpful, and Koichi is befriended by an Indian;
the writing flows smoothly, the characters are well-defined, the period details unob-
trusively incorporated. Above this, the story has a brisk pace and a warmth in
its relationships, especially in Koichi’s growing understanding of his father and the
other colonists.

Unkelbach, Kurt. *Tiger Up a Tree; Knowing and Training Your Kitten*; illus. by Paul Frame.
Prentice-Hall, 1972. 28p. $4.95.

A simply written book gives sensible advice about training, feeding, and the physi-
cal care of kittens. Like the author’s books on dog training, this assumes that the
reader will take responsibility for a pet, rather than relinquishing the work to adults.
The information is given briskly and clearly, with no sentimentality. It includes
instructions for training a kitten to swim, heel while walking on a leash, and do
tricks. A list of random facts about cats is appended.

Urquhart, David Inglis. *The Bicycle and How It Works*; illus. by Enrico Arno. Walck,
1973. 47p. $4.50.

An explanation of how a bicycle works is clear and the illustrations are attractive;
unfortunately the pictures are not labelled and the text, which is continuous, moves
back and forth from descriptions of parts to their development, so that the historical
material (interesting in itself) is spread through the book. Nevertheless, a good
first book on bicycling, with some sensible advice about balancing and pedaling.

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Joel, who has just moved into a housing project, finds that a neighboring child, Valerie, is an instant friend and that another neighbor, never given a name, is always grouchy. She's especially grouchy when frightened by one of Joel's pets, and calls the superintendent of the building to say that there is an infestation of rats. What she has seen is actually Erwin, one of Joel's gerbils. The other is Fat Ernest; when Joel shows the superintendent and the grouchy lady his pets, it appears that Fat Ernest has just become a mother. Valerie gets one baby, the no-longer-grouchy-lady the other. The story has action, vindication, the appeal of animal characters, and—shown only in the lively illustrations—an interracial cast. It is, however, not quite convincing in the instant capitulation of the grouchy neighbor and the sweet ending.


A nonsensical story has a frail plot, depending for its appeal on the incongruity of the situation, the satisfactions of outwitting a curmudgeon, and the lively illustrations of hundreds of amiable mice. The mice live in a mill, detested by the miller, who obtains a large cat. The miller is "so mean" that he mistreats the cat, who is apathetic; the mice decide to make life more pleasant for the cat, so they pretend to fear him. The cat is happier, but he catches no mice, so he is tied in a sack by the miller. The compassionate mice replace the cat with objects of suitable weight after extracting a promise that there will be no mouse-catching if the cat's life is spared. The miller throws the sack in the river—and the cat thereafter lives in secret content at the top of the mill, playing happy games of cat and mouse. Mildly amusing, but the story has little punch and a very weak ending.
Bibliographies

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


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