PRODUCTION NOTE

University of Illinois at
Urbana-Champaign Library
MARCH 1976
VOLUME 29
NUMBER 7

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
GRADUATE
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SCHOOL

BULLETIN OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
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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.

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES: 1 year, $8.00; $7.00 per year for each additional subscription to the same address. Single copy rate: from vol. 25, $1.00; vols. 17 through 24, 50c. Complete back volume (11 issues): vols. 17-22, $4.00; vols. 23-24, $5.00. 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 the new address.

SUBSCRIPTION CORRESPONDENCE. Address all inquiries about subscriptions to the The University of Chicago Press, 5801 Ellis Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

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

Second-class postage paid at Chicago, Illinois.

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PRINTED IN U.S.A.
New Titles for Children and Young People


This is not a new edition but a reissue of the 1945 publication. With its folkloristic commentary, notes, and index the book serves as resource material as well as being the definitive collection of Russian folklore for reading alone or aloud, or for storytelling.

Alderson, Brian, comp. Cakes and Custard; Children’s Rhymes chosen by Brian Alderson; illus. by Helen Oxenbury. Morrow, 1975. 75-24523. 156p. Trade ed. $9.95; Library ed. $7.96 net.

One of the best collections of nursery verses to come along since the Briggs’ Mother Goose, this has splendid illustrations and rhymes chosen by an astute expert in children’s literature. Alderson has included, in addition to Mother Goose rhymes, street chants and his own childhood favorites; he states in his prefatory note that he has felt free to make changes, and the changes he has made give a fresh fillip to the familiar. Oxenbury’s illustrations are deft, delicate, and humorous; for example, the framed vignette for “Eight o’clock is striking / Mother may I go out?” shows a miniskirted adolescent peering in at Mum, hair in curlers, raptly glued to the telly. The colors are soft but strong, the draughtsmanship elegant. This British import is a prime example of good page layout and good bookmaking.


The idea of a beastly party has been borrowed from the poem that was first printed in a magazine in 1806 and published as a book a year later, The Butterfly’s Ball, and the Grasshopper’s Feast, with illustrations by William Mulready that echoed the light fantasy of William Roscoe’s verses. The verses by Plomer occasionally have a modern note that doesn’t accord with the elaborate, deliberately old-fashioned quality of the Aldridge color plates: “They can kick in a can-can, or dance a calypso,” or “We’ll put on an airlift, I think it our duty . . . .” The verses are, as they were in the original, descriptions of the various creatures’ activities at a fairy picnic—but the whole quality of fantasy is, in this edition, brought abruptly to ground with a series of solemn nature notes at the back of the book. “Tabinid larvae appear to need moist conditions to live in, and eggs are often laid on vegetation overhanging water . . . .” doesn’t necessarily appeal to the child who might enjoy the text about the genus Tabanus, the gadfly: “Tantara, teroo! / I’m Harold the Herald / Gadfly and trumpeter too / Well equipped for my job, as you can see.”
Katherine had liked Michael when they met at a party, she was delighted when he asked for a date, and she knew it was only a question of time until they became lovers. Kath, who has her eighteenth birthday during the course of the book, tells her story most convincingly; she does not feel ashamed when she goes to a birth control clinic, although she tells nobody but Michael. They are deeply in love, wholly committed. Forever. And then, due to parental insistence, Kath goes to work in a summer camp and finds she is attracted to another man. And that’s it—the end of forever. No preaching (Blume never does) but the message is clear; no hedging (Blume never does) but a candid account by Kath gives intimate details of a first sexual relationship. The characters and dialogue are equally natural and vigorous, the language uncensored, the depiction of family relationships outstanding.

Paddington’s in good form in this latest collection of anecdotes about the Peruvian bear who lives with a London family, and the illustrations, small sketches with a marvelous economy of line, are also amusing. Each chapter is a separate incident, and Bond’s tried-and-true formula works very nicely as Paddington gets into trouble and (somehow) out again: secretly taking a lesson in waterskiing, being called to testify by mistake, ordered to attend school and making a nervous wreck of the teacher. Paddington’s bland, literal, amiable, gullible, and quite endearing.

Sarah Ida, not quite eleven, has come to spend the summer at Aunt Claudia’s because she and her mother haven’t been getting alone. Sarah Ida is hostile and uncooperative, especially because she wants pocket money and her aunt has been told not to give her any. She gets a job shining shoes, becomes proficient and loses some of her surliness, and even becomes friendly with her employer, Al. When Al is hit by a car, Sarah Ida carries on alone at the shoeshine stand. The more she is depended on and approved, the more she thaws. When it is finally time to go home, she is touched when Al gives her a medal he’s kept and loved since his boyhood—and Sarah Ida decides she’s ready to face and solve any problems that await her. This is a quiet story with little drama but it’s psychologically sound, well-structured, and satisfying in its realistic development of the changes in its protagonist.

In a suprisingly successful blend of quiet tenderness and contemporary, often slangy, dialogue, Betsy Byars has written a witty picture book, appealing despite the slight story line. The illustrations are spacious, with animals in strong, dark green and a contrasting note of delicate, lacy black on white. How does Snail make lace, the other creatures ask? She doesn’t know, it just happens; to each one asking for some lace, she gladly gives it for as long as it lasts, spinning it out behind her in an intricate trail. A sample of the dialogue: the crocodile, gloating over a delicate lace hammock, says, “I love it. I love it. I LOVE it! And you can give me a push every time you go by, all right? Everybody can give me a push. Everybody BETTER give me a push, if you get what I mean.”
Charlip, Remy, *Thirteen*; by Remy Charlip and Jerry Joyner. Parents' Magazine, 1975. 75-8875. 27p. illus. Trade ed. $4.95; Library ed. $4.59 net.

An odd one, this, with intriguing illustrations that are deft, imaginative, and possibly confusing, as is the layout of the pages. The double-page spreads are numbered in reverse, from 13 to 1; each double-page spread carries thirteen separate illustrations, each illustration is developed separately, so that to follow the story of “Swans Becoming Water,” or “Getting Thin & Getting Fat Again Dance,” one must leaf through all the pages, going back to the beginning to trace the changes in each set. Although the titles are provided in a table of contents, none of the drawings is labeled. Some of the “stories” are easy to follow, while in others the changes are abrupt. One composite picture on each page shows a “Preview of Coming Attractions,” a miniature version of the next spread.


On the same theme as Steptoe's *Stevie*, one child finds she misses another after he's gone, although she's previously thought him a nuisance. Johnetta, who tells the story, is eight, her brother five; when he decides to leave home, she gladly helps him pack. But when he's gone, the house is too quiet... and she's restless... and she has nobody to play with... and she's really delighted to find her brother sitting on the front steps. From “Now he done run away, and I feel just like Dr. King say, free at last,” to “I done got used to him, you know. My brother fine with me.” The mood is tender, the psychology sound, and the writing style and illustrations are casual but firm. Yet the change of heart is a bit too quick, especially since Johnny's decision that she can't see her friend Peaches because Peaches' little sister won't have Johnny's little brother to play with (one can't take a child to a playground alone?) seems irrational and because it just doesn't seem quite believable that an eight-year-old deemed responsible enough by working parents to be left in charge of house and brother would encourage his departure and not worry about parental reaction. Johnny only thinks, “I figure I'll clean up some and then Mama and Daddy won't feel so bad when they get home and he's gone. I figure they'll miss him some at first but they get over it and then it be just like the old days.”


A strange and memorable story, this, with something of the evanescent quality of the foggy, mystical aura of the final scene. Living with a taciturn father and a hostile grandmother, Marra is a lonely child; she is dreamy, hapless, slow at her studies and the butt of her classmates' ridicule. She knows her mother was strangely silent, but her father will say no more about the wife who left him. Life changes for Marra when a new girl at school becomes her friend, and her friend's mother helps the child learn some skills, makes her new clothes, offers affection and approval. In the final scene, Marra and her friend Alison are in a boat, lost in the fog; Marra calls to her mother for help, and a grey seal steers the boat to the leading. Both girls immediately forget the episode, but Marra has a new sense of being loved. The story line is tenuous in ending, but that is amply compensated for by the creation of mood and setting, by the definitive characterization, and by the fluidity of the writing style.

Colman, Hila. *that's the way it is, amigo*; illus. by Glo Coalson. T. Y. Crowell, 1975. 74-30398. 90p. $5.95.

Irritated by the demands made by his mother and aunt after his father's death, resentful because he had been put on probation after breaking into an empty house,
fifteen-year-old David has run away to Mexico. Spanish had been his best subject at school, so he offers to translate when a Oaxacan boy his own age tries to sell some paintings to two American tourists. When the car belonging to the latter breaks down, both boys claim it; eventually they join forces and travel about selling Pedro’s uncle’s paintings. When an earthquake hits Oaxaca, the boys (who have fought on the road) go back to Pedro’s village and there David learns to appreciate the warmth and stability of Pedro’s extended family, to recognize the sincerity of Pedro’s friendship, and to admit—in his new maturity—that he had been intolerant and immature; he calls his mother and says that he is coming home. Although there is about the story an aura of purposiveness, as though the idea of contrasting a poor but happy family situation with one in which there is material comfort but frayed relationships then had a story built around it, the book has the appeals of an interesting setting, a project that required initiative, and a convincing growth of maturity in the protagonist.


Poems and stories that reflect the year’s cycle of holidays are chronologically arranged, and are illustrated with small, deft, black and white drawings as well as a full-page assemblage of appropriate images for each month. With the exception of “American Indian Day” being “Observed as proclaimed” and birthdays being chosen as the “holidays” for August, the round is the usual one—from New Year’s Day to Christmas. The selections have been chosen with care; although many of them are fairly familiar, this should be a useful book for adults searching for material for holidays despite the fact that there is not a broad selection for many of them.


Thirteen-year-old Ray, unable to get along with his stepmother, comes to stay with his mother’s kin in Twillys’ Green feeling bitter and resentful. He finds himself in an extended community in a pocket of the West Virginia hills, a warm, loving family that accepts him as one of their own—yet Ray knows there is something odd about the family. When he sees the avaricious local storekeeper curiously excited about Ray’s fossil find, the boy first suspects that there is something about the stone carving that is both arcane and important. This is a two-level story: the family fights against the depredation of the land and, like their ancestral Watchers, who are incorporated as a fantasy element, they fight as guardians of a sacred site. The two themes are adroitly meshed, and the author has created a colorful set of characters, a well-constructed story, and a vivid setting.


Although Des Jarlait’s story, transcribed from taped interviews, is told in a rather flat style, it is cohesive in form and engrossing in the picture it gives of Chippewa Indian life. Des Jarlait describes customs, ceremonies, children’s games, and the ways in which his people hunted and gathered crops; he speaks modestly of the artistic talent that became increasingly evident through the years in which he attended a series of government schools and for which he received a scholarship to study art in Arizona. His love of the Minnesota countryside and his pride in his people permeate the book and are evident in the reproductions of his bold, dramatic pictures in brilliant watercolor.

Translated from the Dutch, a story in diary form describes a fourteen-year-old’s experiences when he wakes in a strange world to find his memory gone and a peculiar behavior pattern on the part of those he meets, even the girl with whom he falls in love. The diary is fragmented, parts are written by other people, parts have been written before the boy came to the world with the two huge, empty buildings he calls the towers of February. The time-travel device proves to be the overlapping time zones of two worlds, with four years in one counting as a month in the other. The concept is intriguing, and Tom’s adventures are interesting, but the staccato, multi-voiced diary entries seem rather confusing.

Fegely, Thomas D. *Wonders of Wild Ducks*; illus. with photographs. Dodd, Mead, 1975. 75-11443. 80p. $4.95.

Good photographs and careful organization of material add to the reference use of a book that stresses conservation throughout the text. Fegely gives general information about duck species, habits of courtship and mating, flyways (with several maps), and the predators or forms of pollutants that threaten duck populations. The major part of the text describes about two dozen types of ducks, with added details about breeding, nesting, appearance, care of the young, et cetera. The writing is dry, brisk, and direct; an index is appended.


Dorcas had forgotten her husband’s injunction, on that Christmas Eve in 1775, to bar the door of their cabin when he was away; and so they had been captured, with their baby, by the Algonkin warrior Quanta and his men. Weakened and fearful, the colonial couple were being marched toward captivity and were stopped by the sight of some kneeling deer. When the story of animals kneeling at midnight on the eve of Christ’s birth was told Quanta, he was so impressed by the piety of Jasper and Dorcas that he set them free. Well, anything goes at Christmas, but this is a pretty mushy story, and it’s told in a pretentious style. “And at the very peak of the tree one such star seemed to be affixed there, gleaming blue-white as bright perhaps as that strange one that had appeared over Bethlehem so long ago.”

Gardner, John. *Dragon, Dragon and Other Tales*; illus. by Charles Shields. Knopf, 1975. 75-2542. 73p. Trade ed. $4.95; Library ed. $5.99 net.

Four stories in the fairytale tradition are told with a light touch that occasionally is coy or moves into comic strip territory, as when a wizard says, ‘Glmuzk, shkzmmp, blam!’ In the first tale, a youngest son saves a kingdom from a ravaging dragon by obediently taking his father’s advice, scorned by his older brothers; he also wins the princess, who derided his brothers because one had warts and the other was “a kind of humpback.” In another story, a timid man conquers a giant—but in actuality the fear-ridden tailor, meditating on his cowardice, has simply watched the giant go by and sink in quicksand. A third story has a nice twist on the usual animal who gives advice and furthers a protagonist’s cause; here the mule is selfish and scheming. The last tale, “The Last Piece of Light,” is the most inventive, with a darkened world narrowly missing a reprieve when a little chimney-girl almost forgets the magic formula that will bring the return of the lost light. Gardner’s irony lends vigor but when heavily stressed—as it occasionally is—disrupts the narrative flow.

Despite the fact that it is clear, long before he does so, that the crusty Mr. McFadden is going to succumb to eight-year-old Selina's determined ministrations and that he will deed the land for a park to the village, the author has managed to sustain the slow unwinding of the plot by polished style, good characterization, affectionate humor, and just enough sentiment to be bearable. Injured, Mr. McFadden accepts Selina's help when nobody else will come near him. A solitary, dour man, he has not been a good neighbor but has been tolerated. However, when the village is left a plump bequest for a park and McFadden refuses to sell the land (in the perfect spot, a central location) the citizens are outraged. Selina's mother has to shop for the old man; her father is dropped from the park committee. There is—and readers will probably be satisfied if not surprised—a happy finale after Mr. McFadden has relented and Selina honored for her influence. There's also enough about doughty Selina and her cantankerous pony to balance the book and make it truly a story for children.

Goldreich, Gloria. *What Can She Be? A Police Officer*; by Gloria and Esther Goldreich; photographs by Robert Ipcar. Lothrop, 1975. 75-14442. 48p. Trade ed. $4.75; Library ed. $4.32 net.

A simply written text is accompanied by clear and informative photographs. The latest in the publisher's series about careers for women, the book describes in detail the work of two sisters who are members of the police force in New York City. One walks a beat, and the emphasis is on the preventive aspect of Laura Ames' work, although she also investigates crimes. Nancy Ames is assigned to the Emergency Rescue Squad, working with a partner and responding to calls for help that range from a citizen who is locked out of her home to reports of accidents. The book gives a fairly good picture of the range of police work, with enough variety to compensate for the static writing style.


A medieval adventure is portrayed in a book without words, with alternate half and full pages used to change the scene economically and cleverly. Two mice approach the castle, followed by a stealthy, evil figure (another mouse) who locks them in. Our hero thwarts bats and a menacing dragon, pushes his fair lady out of a window and into the moat. He follows her; they are rescued by a frog, who ferries them to safety on his lily pad. They creep up on the villain, dump him into the pond just as he is about to shoot an arrow at a placid fowl, and caper ecstatically home. The story is clear, the plot sturdy, the pictures exciting and romantic. Great fun.

Gurney, Gene. *The Launching of Sputnik, October 4, 1957; The Space Age Begins*; by Gene and Clare Gurney. Watts, 1975. 75-5545. 86p. illus. $3.90.

A review of the work of early rocketry experts (in Russia, Germany, and the United States primarily) gives some background for the descriptions of the successful V-2, Sputnik, and Redstone rockets' structure and their missions. The Gurneys discuss the secrecy that surrounded the construction and launching plans for the first Sputnik, announced in 1956, a year before it was sent into orbit; they also discuss the rivalry between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. in rocket and bomb research. A brief last section describes the ways in which information gleaned from space satellites has been useful to mankind. A bibliography and an index are appended. The writing is not too technical; the book is dignified and informative, although it is written in a dry and rather heavy style and is uneven in organization.

This is not a handbook on the rights of children and young people, but a survey of the development and present status of the rights of youth in five areas: labor, school, justice, in the home, and in choosing a home. In the chapter, “Youth and Rights at Home,” for example, the author discusses the first recognition of such rights during the nineteenth century, with intervention by the state in cases of child labor and physical abuse, and with a growing body of cases in which children were removed from homes with deleterious situations. A need, Haskins points out, exists still for healthy alternative housing for children who are taken out of their homes. There has also been a growing body of case law in which courts have decided that parents who are able to do so must provide minor children with a college education. Children still have no control over moneys they may earn—nor over their personal property. In only a few states is it possible for a minor to make a will, and Haskins points out that this is a complex problem and that, like other questions of control, this is one that many well change in the still-shifting area of parent-child relationships and rights.

Haskins is tempered and thoughtful, neither defensive nor accusatory, and he concludes by pointing out the fact that many young people are satisfied with the rights they have but should be aware that not all young people are satisfied or, indeed, have those rights, and that all young people’s rights are endangered if those rights are denied to any person. A bibliography and an index are appended.


It is usually the male who is depicted in our literature as the ruthless person whose successful career has been built on a calculated program of taking care of Number One. In this poignant story told by Sara, it is her shrewd and beautiful mother, Sally, whose goals in the political arena are meant to be achieved by the perfect setting and the right people. And for Sara that means separation from a father deemed “a lazy, slow, stupid ox” by Sally. But her father was love, warmth, laughter, and security to Sara; she finds a substitute adult in Maisie, an old woman who is sloppy and loving. Sally doesn’t know about Maisie; they’ve just moved to a new home where Sara can go to a “good” school, meet the “right” girls, and help bolster Sally’s perfectionist image. In a poignant dénouement, Sara not only rejects Maisie but derides her when she must choose between defending the friendship or jeering at it to cement a bond with the “right” girls her mother has arranged an acquaintance with. Sara’s careful comments on her mother and her acceptance of Sally’s materialistic values are beautifully contrasted with the freedom she enjoys with Maisie and the remembrances of the gaiety and affection in her relationship with her father. Subtle, and perhaps not for every reader, this is a sensitive and convincing study of a child who—torn between two value systems—responds to pressure and example, and chooses the expedient.


Through an examination of the work of anthropologists and naturalists (chiefly the latter) Hirsch explores some of the behavior patterns of animal forms of all kinds, emphasizing the male-female relationships and the behavior of each sex in such activities as courting, mating, choosing or caring for a home, and taking care of the young. Only the last chapter examines human behavior; it focuses on the work of Margaret Mead with several primitive cultures. The information is accurate, the
writing style competent, but there is so much material covered that no one topic or species is given treatment in depth. A bibliography and an index are appended.

Holz, Loretta. *Mobiles You Can Make*; illus. with drawings by the author; photographs by George and Loretta Holz. Lothrop, 1975. 75-8994. 128p. Trade ed. $5.95; Library ed. $5.11 net.

A very good book for the beginner, with helpful diagrams, clear explanations, and step-by-step instructions for making variants of three kinds of mobiles: string-hung, wire-armed, and base-hung. The author lists materials and describes techniques, encouraging the reader to design original mobiles; in the chapters on the three types, the examples progress from simpler projects to those more difficult. A bibliography, a list of sources of supplies, and an index are appended.


Both crafts and practical projects are included in this nicely illustrated book about the home products of colonial times. Each chapter begins with a brief description of pioneer practices related to the "how-to" instructions that follow; for example, the chapter on "Papyrotamia" discusses the way precious paper was saved and used over again, and the fact that colonial people made intricate decorative paper cuttings. Some instructions then follow for making pictures, cards, paper chains, etc. Most of the projects are fairly simple, and the instructions are clear, but quite often they are not full enough and would be more comprehensible if more details were given or more diagrams provided. A bibliography, divided into history and crafts, is appended.


Although the red of the red and white (what else?) illustrations is dulled, Tomie de Paola’s pictures are gay and perky, and are nicely fitted to the text on the pages. The poems are, with few exceptions, in a light mood and include some anonymous jingles and couplets; there’s nothing bad, there’s quite a bit that’s very good, and the book should prove a useful source of poems for younger celebrants of St. Valentine’s Day.


Pages are stapled into a heavy board cover that has wheels attached by a grommet, so that the cover rolls along like a "walking" valentine. The illustrations are pedestrian, the text stresses one concept: the young of each species do what their parents do. Each page gives the name of the animals shown; "Kangaroos," for example, has the text, "She jumps, I jump." "Snakes" has "She slithers, I slither." "Mom is pretty," the book ends, "and so am I." The package is a bit on the cute side, but the pictures are simple, as in the text, and the concept comes through clearly enough to be grasped by the very young child who can then "read" the book alone.


Advice on improving study skills begins with such general suggestions as charting and scheduling study time, spacing out homework, keeping materials together and available, reviewing class notes, using flash cards, listening closely, skimming easy material, etc. Separate chapters are devoted to suggestions for sharpening skills in specific subject areas or in taking tests; one chapter discusses use of library re-
sources. It's all very practical, common sense, crisply given advice; inevitably, some of the suggestions will seem extraneous to individual readers. The rather choppy style does not provide smooth reading, but the same quality plus the short paragraphs and marginal comments ("read, plan, think... check it over... get the most out of your answers") may appeal better to the poor student than would a more cohesive but heavier looking text. An index is appended.


A rambling and realistic slice-of-life book, which has the appeals of everyday events and mild humor, is written in an easy style and has natural dialogue, but it has neither climax nor direction. Eight-year-old Valerie wishes her widowed mother didn't work and is surprised to learn that Mom wants to work even if she remarries; she wonders if their babysitter doesn't prefer her baby brother; she confides to her friend Leah that the sitter, Mrs. Weiss, didn't know the word "vagina" and defends her brother's ambition to be a dancer to a patronizing woman. There are reflections of such ideas as ending stereotyped sex roles, demonstrating that a working mother loves her children no less for being away, or learning that older people have ideas that conflict with your own... but there's no storyline.


An eminent Canadian poet, Dennis Lee wrote the first poems in this collection for his own children, and the published book won the award for the most outstanding children's book published in Canada in 1974. There are nonsensical narrative poems, rhymes for games, humorous and rhythmic four-liners, tongue-twisters, and verses based on Peter Rabbit and Winnie-the-Pooh. Jingly, sunny, silly poems. The illustrations have verve and variety, although some may be limited in appeal because of the dull greens that are combined with white. Not great poetry, but facile poetry that is great fun.


Like the preceding books in this well-written sequence of stories about a young Irish couple, *A Proper Place* gives American readers a vivid picture of the depth of religious prejudice existing in Ireland today. Kevin is Catholic, Sadie is not; there has been no way to sustain their marriage but leaving home. Here they are parents, living in a Liverpool slum; while the story takes them to a new life on a Cheshire farm, with a difficult adjustment for the gregarious Sadie, it is just as interesting for the problems it poses about familial acceptance of the marriage when the couple are visited first by Sadie's bigoted mother and then by Kevin's surly younger brother.


Pezzettino is a small orange square who wonders who he is, suspecting he might be a piece (the name means "little piece") of somebody else. He asks the one-who-runs (a long-legged arrangement of colored squares) and the strong-one and the swimming-one (different shapes, same pattern) etc. Each responds that he (or it) couldn't function if there were a piece missing. Finally the wise-one advises Pezzettino to go to the Island of Wham. After a rough ride, Pezzettino arrives and falls and breaks into other pieces and picks himself up, putting the pieces together. When he reaches home he shouts, "I am myself!" and his friends are happy for him. The colors of the squares are bright (although not as forceful as the Wildsmith palette) and true.
the figures have a primitive look, and the textures of the collage backgrounds are intriguing. The story is, despite its message, not substantial and not highly original, since there are many books about creatures that are happy to be themselves after an identity search. Two points may be confusing: one, Pezzettino, when he breaks into smaller pieces, thinks, "The wise-one had been right," whereas the wise-one says nothing about who or what Pezzettino is; two, all the other creatures are multicolor so that they seem different kinds of entities.

Little, Jean. *Stand in the Wind*; pictures by Emily Arnold McCully. Harper, 1975. 73-5486. 247p. Trade ed. $5.50; Library ed. $5.79 net.

Prevented by a broken arm from going to camp, Martha is already disgruntled, and she is not cheered by the fact that her parents are going back to the city to entertain guests. Then her sister Ellen suggests that the guests' two daughters come out to the cottage, so that the adults will be in town and the four girls at the lake cottage. There's no strong story line, but the small incidents are eventful enough to sustain interest, and the changes in attitudes of each of the four (who haven't hit it off in the beginning) are convincing. Characterization and relationships are well drawn, the dialogue is easy and natural, and the whole has the sympathetic perception of earlier books by Jean Little.


Grown now, Jane goes back to her childhood home, Medleycott, to take a last look before the estate is sold, and she remembers the years when she and her brother lived and played there. Those were the years of World War II, years when Jane and Edward, their mother dead and their coldly critical and remote father away on military service, lived happily with the servants and the land-girls who came to help. And best of all Mike, the conscientious objector who became a dear friend. Save for Edward's being sent off to school by Father—and running away rather than go back after a vacation—the years at Medleycott were a golden time. While this may fail to catch readers at the start (it begins with the adult Jane's nostalgic prowling about) it creates so convincingly a closed, intense, enchanted world of happy childhood that it should carry along those readers who do get caught by the perfect recapturing of that period. While Lively writes from the more sophisticated viewpoint of a reminiscent adult and never writes down to readers, she maintains to a high degree the viewpoint of the child Jane within the story.


A fictional framework supports in tenuous fashion the story of a boy's trip from Philadelphia to New York by stage coach. While there is evidence of considerable research, the findings are obtrusive within the narrative, as when the author says, "To young David, the coach looked as wonderful and as exciting as a rocket to the moon might look to us." There are also halts in the story line when the author digresses to explain how a colonial phrase has been changed into a familiar contemporary form. Informative though this is, it is a weak story.


Although the first two chapters of this biography are rather heavily fictionalized, it is on the whole a capably written book, objective in tone. Deborah Sampson Gannett's stófý (described for older readers and in greater detail by Cora Cheney in
The Incredible Deborah) is exciting as adventure, appealing because of the protagonist's departure from a conventional sex role, and timely because of the current emphasis on the revolutionary period in American history. This describes very simply—with adequate background information about colonial dissent and rebellion—Deborah's successful plan to pose as a man and join the Continental Army, her service as a soldier, the discovery that she was a female after she was wounded, and her career as a lecturer in later years, after she had married and her children were grown.


Here it is, folks, proof positive that it is possible to write a book about hockey stars and exclude Bobby Hull and Bobby Orr. The text includes profiles of eight players:

5-7 Syl Apps, Bobby Clarke, Marcel Dionne, Mark Howe, Guy Lafleur, Rick Martin, Gil Perreault, and Denis Potvin. The author, a newspaper sportswriter, has chosen "a few of the new stars—or hot shots—who emerged in the 1970's." Most of the men play on expansion teams, and their brief biographies stress training and performance. The writing style is florid—and sometimes trite—journalese, but this is a book for hockey fans, and fans are not likely to care as much about writing style as they are to read details of their heroes, every one of whom, it appears, is a sterling chap.

Milne, Alan Alexander. Pooh's Alphabet Book; illus. by E. H. Shepard. Dutton, 1975. 75-12507. 52p. $3.95.

Extracted from Milne's two children's classics, The House at Pooh Corner and Winnie-the-Pooh, this small book contains quotations from "Animal" to "BuZZ":

4-6 yrs. 'It is hard to be brave,' said Piglet, sniffing slightly, 'when you're only a Very Small Animal . . . ,' to "'That buzzing noise means something . . . and the only reason for making a buzzing-noise that I know of is because you're a bee.'" The Shepard drawings from the books are also included, and (while this isn't the best alphabet book for learning letters) surely ready-to-readers who have heard the Pooh stories and loved the Pooh drawings will enjoy this ancillary catalyst immensely.


A fanciful story is told in grave, direct style and is illustrated with drawings in which a homely old woman and an ugly child are made completely sympathetic. The sentimental aspect of two lonely people (if a star can be accepted as a person) finding each other at Christmas may be more appealing to adult readers-aloud than to the picture book audience, but the sentiment is in the concept rather than the presentation. The Star Mother's youngest child is fussing and getting in her way as she tries to tidy up the sky for Christmas. What he wants is to celebrate Christmas just once as humans do, and he is sent down to earth, appearing at the door of the Old Woman. She grumbles and scolds, but gradually softens to the point of decorating a tree and giving the Ugly Child a present from her meagre belongings. They part with love, and after the Ugly Child is gone, the Old Woman opens the gift he left her: the sounds of bells and laughter, the lights of candles and stars. And the Ugly Child, back in the sky, is equally content.


A rollicking collection of poems, some of which have a wistful touch, is illustrated with black and white drawings that capture the eerie-merry mood of the writing very
nicely. The poetry is fresh, deft, and imaginative. A sample, "Bedtime Stories,"

'Tell me a story,' / Says Witch's Child / 'About the Beast / So fierce and
wild / About a Ghost / That shrieks and groans / A Skeleton / That rattles
bones / About a Monster / Crawly-creepy / Something nice / To make me
sleepy.'"


In a convoluted story of time travel, Gavin meets a man of ancient times on a
mastodon hunt and later participates in a battle that takes place in A.D. 2860. He's
with the same man again, also named Gavin... and all the Gavins are the same. In
several settings there are imaginary monsters—like the six-legged Kiv-Koorosh of
the future. There are minor inconsistencies within this science fantasy, but its
greatest weakness is the confusing duplication of Gavins, and, despite the time-shifts
and battles, the fact that there is no real plot development.


With dwindling energy resources, increasing pollution, and the continuing
difficulties of providing and maintaining roads for automobile traffic, the train sys-
tems of many countries are being improved, and new kinds of trains and train trans-
portation systems are being planned. Some are in use (and profitable) and others have
been found too expensive to maintain. Navarra examines the problems and solutions
in a comprehensive text arranged in brief topics, describing some of the new trains
and systems as well as those in the planning stage. Although some of the topics are
treated so briefly (a page or two of text) that they leave questions unanswered, the
book is on the whole informative and the prospects it raises are exciting. An index is
appended.


A science fantasy that has plenty of action, a soupçon of romance, a traditional
confrontation between good and evil, and some well-conceived details of another
world and time, is burdened by a plot that never deviates in its intensity. There are
few moments of quiet to balance the persistent clamor of pitched battles, narrow
escapes, and perilous masquerades. Ramsay, a denizen of our own world, wakes to
find that he is in the body of Prince Kaskar, heir to the throne and dupe of an evil
counselor, Ochall. He is in constant danger as he threads his way through the
intricate intrigues and counter-intrigues of royalty, seers, soldiers, and experiment-
ers in parapsychology. Dubbed the Knave of Dreams, Ramsay finally accepts the
fact that he is Kaskar and fights for the throne and a beautiful bride.

Pringle, Laurence. City and Suburb; Exploring an Ecosystem. Macmillan, 1975. 75-16161. 56p. illus. $5.95.

Although Pringle describes many ways in which man and the roads, pavements,
buildings, garbage, and pollution he produces affect the environment in which he
lives, this focuses on the flora and fauna that adapt to, and survive in, the urban-
suburban ecology. Much of the material can be found in other books about plants and
animals that can be found in cities, although not necessarily combined in any one
book. The writing style is straightforward and rather arid; the pages are made pleas-
ant by ample white space between topics. A glossary, a bibliography that includes
asterisks for the more difficult titles, and an index are appended.
A compilation of facts about animals, refuting some popular fallacies, is arranged as a series of questions and answers. Are owls wise? Do snakes sting with their tongues? Do camels store water in their humps? As the questions are posed, the answer is usually in the negative, with a paragraph or two explaining the possible reasons for the misconception and giving the facts. Although this may satisfy some readers' curiosity, it is neither extensive nor comprehensive, and the arrangement is random. The photographs are clear, the print large and well-spaced; the text ends with eight brief statements about odd things that are true: Box turtles can live more than a hundred years, horses sleep lying down as well as standing up, etc. It seems odd to have an occasional word like Arabian spelled out phonetically (Ah-RAY-bee-an) when words like hemisphere and Galapagos are in the text.


Their apartment was delightful. Their rapport was delightful. An eleven-year-old never had a happier home life than Dorrie O'Brien, only child of handsome, intelligent parents who doted on her and included her in many of their activities. Dorrie knew that her mother had been disappointed by several miscarriages, but that was long ago. And then—disaster! Not just a baby, but triplets. Goodbye to the lovely, small apartment and the lazy, happy Sunday mornings and the concerts and dinner parties. And peace. They moved to a dilapidated old house, the rooms full of crying babies and their equipment, and Dorrie's parents were always tired and often quarrelsome. The final blow came when two rejected children gradually moved in and were proposed as permanent wards: her parents left the decision to Dorrie, and she was faced with weighing values and ethics: to turn away the two dependent children selfishly or to accept the fact that space and parental attention would be even less available? Marilyn Sachs is especially adroit in describing tensions and problems within a familial situation and, while this isn't primarily a humorous story, the book is lightened by intrinsic humor and by the vitality of the characters and the directness of the writing style.

Schneider, Herman. *Science Fun For You in a Minute or Two; Quick Science Experiments You Can Do*; by Herman and Nina Schneider; illus. by Leonard Kessler. McGraw-Hill, 1975. 75-20175. 64p. $5.72.

How nice to have a book of experiments and home demonstrations that are simple to do, require little equipment, and take only a few minutes. The authors have grouped their suggestions: things to make, things to do at bath time, quick tricks, etc. Some of the projects are explained, some are open-ended, and they demonstrate physical phenomena without getting too technical. An index "for adults only" gives labels to the principles, phenomena, or devices covered, including fluid friction, equal expansion, Bernoulli's Law, surface tension, electrolytic action, and differential vision.


Excellent photographs (some enlarged, some in color) are carefully placed in relation to textual references in another impeccable science book for young readers. The writing is succinctly informative and carefully sequential as the many stages of molting are followed by cocoon, pupa, and finally the resplendent moth emerging to dry
its expanding wings, fly off, and mate to begin the cycle again with the caterpillar and its molting. Selsam concludes with a brief discussion of the fact that some caterpillars are useful, some harmful, some innocuous.


Despite Seton’s reputation as a popular writer of adult fiction, she fails here to write a convincing story. Amy Delatour is a high school senior who lives with a dour mother whose ancestors were early settlers in the Connecticut town in which the story’s set. Mrs. Delatour seems to hate her late French-Canadian husband, his old father, her daughter and herself. Lonely Amy is taken up by a new teacher, Martin, who is interested in psychology and parapsychology, when he finds that Amy is reliving a past existence as an Acadian refugee. He and his fiancée take Amy south for the wedding, and there’s a welter of coincidence as Amy finds that a nearby family are named Delatour; all this helps her work out her problems, and there’s a all-hands-’round happy ending. There’s also some offensive writing in the southern scenes, with faithful, doting black servants. “‘Mighty purty bride yo’ got,’ ” says Ben, “‘showing his white teeth in a dazzling smile.’” The book is heavily laden with stereotyped characters and overlaid with incidents of psychic manifestation.


Slightly raffish, deft drawings of the animal friends of a little girl illustrate an episodic story that is marred by a slightly sugary tone. Molly Path moves to the country and dispenses food, advice, and affection to Bear, Toad, Field Mouse, Chicken, et al. Each anecdote is followed by a verse headed, “A Page from Molly’s Notebook.” Sample: “sleep / gentle Bear / the winter / is long / we’ll wake you / again / with a / sweet spring song.”

Sleator, William. *Among the Dolls*; illus. by Trina Schart Hyman. Dutton, 1975. 75-5944. 70p. $6.95.

Vicky had wanted only one thing for her birthday, and it certainly wasn’t the antique dollhouse her parents gave her; when she did finally become interested enough to play with the family of tiny dolls, her play reflected the strife and tension in her own family. And then Vicky found she was in the dollhouse, shrunken to doll size, and frightened by the cold hostility of the stiff little figures who now taunted her and kept her prisoner. In the attic of the dollhouse was another dollhouse. And it was her house, with tiny figures of her mother and father—but no Vicky. She had disappeared among the dolls. The fantasy is adequately resolved and the role-reversal and world-within-a-world concept are presented with enough suspense and sense of horror to be satisfyingly chilling, but the world of the dollhouse has a bleak emptiness that is not quite convincing, nor is the manipulation of parental attitudes by the dolls.


The author, who has written impressively about the Salem hysteria of colonial times, has adapted and simplified the story for younger readers; Mikolaycak has illustrated the account with dramatic black and white pictures that are as subtly simple as posters, strongly outlined, with no background detail, and stark in mood. Starkey gives some background information about the piety and superstition, the winter boredom and the childish guilt, that led to the witch-hunting; she focuses on the involvement of John Alden, accused at random by the troubled girls, who had
spoken vaguely of "a tall man from Boston" first mentioned by the accused slave Tituba. A competent version for the middle grades; a handsome book.


Because of its length and the density of small and rather light type face, this may intimidate younger readers, but once into the story they may well be captured by the book. Set in London, where it was first published, the story has a taut, suspense-filled kidnapping; it is seen from the viewpoints of the kidnappers, the distraught parents, the police, and three children who have a special interest. The facets are smoothly meshed; the children are Stephen, Vicky, and Chris. Stephen has bought a wooden puzzle-egg; Vicky has found a lost piece of the egg; together they have precognitive flashes that enable them to see aspects of the kidnapping. They are not believed at first, but soon convince the police superintendent that their visions are genuine and are asked to help in the search. These aspects are nicely balanced by home problems, with sharply etched characterization, especially in the character of Stephen's father, a garrulous and rather obtuse psychologist.


While this doesn't explain the nuances of the game or include the usual diagram of the field, it's a good introduction for the reader who knows nothing about the world's most popular team sport. The author-photographers give basic rules (although they don't explain fouls) for playing the game; they don't explain techniques such as dribbling or mention the referee. What they do achieve is a sense of the fast pace and excitement of the game, in part attributable to the clear action photographs. Half the book is in English; reverse the book, and the full text is replicated in Spanish. The text is also available in an English-only edition.


Realistic black and white drawings illustrate a story that is really one incident drawn out and is written as a monologue, although eight-year-old Tad includes some conversation. Feeling ignored and bullied by his four older sisters, Tad slips off to buy his mother a birthday present and finds he doesn't have enough money to get home; most of the book is a description of his walk, the people he meets, the way he becomes increasingly apprehensive when the streets become dark and deserted. When he gets home, he decides to play it cool. Nothing happened, he says casually. The ending is weak, and the story is marred by the unsuccessful attempt to tie Tad's feelings about female domination and boys' lib to an episode that concerns self-reliance and overcoming fear rather than any kind of sex discrimination.

Tompert, Ann. *It May Come in Handy Someday*; illus. by Bruce Cayard. McGraw-Hill, 1975. 74-19487. 44p. Trade ed. $5.95; Library ed. $5.72 net.

This is a variant of the folktale in which the occupants of a house crowded with animals are so relieved when they have the place to themselves that they never again complain, as they did at the start, that the house was too crowded. Here, however, the learning-by-undoing aspect is weaker, since the little old man who started collecting junk because it might come in handy some day had never felt, nor had the little
old woman, that there was anything to complain about originally. The humor, however, is stronger, since the collected items get sillier as the pile grows and overflows. A vagabond passes the word along that anyone is welcome to the cans of paint, bathtubs, goldfish, furniture, cutlery, bricks, lumber, etc. which are available, and a stream of people relieve the little old man of his junk. The scribbly, scratchy line drawings, black on yellow-tinted pages, have some nonsensical details that should amuse young readers.

Wold, Jo Anne. *Well! Why Didn't You Say So?* illus. by Unada. Whitman, 1975. 75-8584. 29p. $3.50.

A small boy, Little John asks one person after another if they've seen Willie, who is missing. Willie is brown and has a long tail with white on it, he tells three girls; to an ice cream vendor he gives the same facts, adding a description of Willie's eyes, etc. etc. Little John never explains that Willie is a dog, nor does anyone ask. Only when, on L J's return trip, he finds that the girls think he's looking for a squirrel, the ice cream vendor thinks he's looking for a goat, somebody else thinks Willie is a pony (a pony? having been described as coming up to L J's chest?) does the boy realize he's never said dog—nor has anyone asked. The illustrations are adequate but pedestrian, the story carries a valid message but would be more effective if it were not carried to extremes: why should anyone think a lost pet is a squirrel or a goat rather than a cat or a dog? Why a miniature pony?

Wright, Dare. *Look at a Kitten.* Random House, 1975. 75-6977. 38p. illus. with photographs. $3.95.

Dare Wright is a capable photographer; photographs of soft, round-eyed kittens are always appealing; there is some information about the behavior of kittens, about how a mother cat trains her young, and about how people should treat them. What weakens the book is the fact that other aspects (cats in history, the differences in cats' tails, etc.) are interpolated and even that the comments on development of kittens are not in sequence. For example, there are four intervening pages between one picture of the mother cat nursing her litter and another, and these pages include material about breeds and a photograph of kittens eating from a dish. The text gives facts, but the facts are not well-organized. Selsam's *How Kittens Grow* (reviewed in the June, 1975 issue) is better organized and better written.


Translated from the Polish, this is based on records kept by the author during the Nazi occupation of Poland; Ziemian was a member of the Jewish Underground in Warsaw. The cigarette sellers were a group of children who had somehow fled the ghetto where Jews were dying of starvation and despair; they slept anywhere they could—occasionally with sympathetic Polish "Aryans" who were endangering their own lives by sheltering or feeding these children—and they earned money by selling cigarettes on the street, which meant pretending not to be Jewish. Photographs show the children then and now as adults, many of them living in Israel. The book is a compilation of individual records and encounters. The writing style is fairly heavy, but what may limit the appeal of the book is that, despite the aura of danger and daring that surrounded the children each day, every hour, the text is so detailed and so repetitious in the types of incidents. An epilogue, written since the original publication of the book eleven years earlier and since the death of the author in 1971, gives information about recent developments in the lives of the cigarette sellers.
BIBLIOGRAPHIES

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*Women: Yesterday and Today*. Annotated bibliography of books and audiovisual materials for junior high. $.50 (postage and handling). From Marion Solovay, Librarian, Madison Junior High School, Main St., Madison, NJ 07940.