ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

PRODUCTION NOTE

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library
EXPLANATION OF CODE SYMBOLS USED
WITH ANNOTATIONS

* Asterisks denote books of special distinction.

R Recommended

Ad Additional book of acceptable quality for collections needing more material in the area.

M Marginal book that is so slight in content or has so many weaknesses in style or format that it should be given careful consideration before purchase.

NR Not recommended.

SpC Subject matter or treatment will tend to limit the book to specialized collections.

SpR A book that will have appeal for the unusual reader only. Recommended for the special few who will read it.

Except for pre-school years, reading range is given for grade rather than for age of child.

* * *

BULLETIN OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS is published monthly except August by The University of Chicago Press for The University of Chicago, Graduate Library School. Mrs. Zena Sutherland, Editor. An advisory committee meets weekly to discuss books and reviews, which are written by the editor. The members are Yolanda Federici, Sara Fenwick, Isabel McCaul, Charlemae Rollins, Robert Strang and Peggy Sullivan.

Subscription Rates: 1 year, $10.00; $7.20 per year for each additional subscription to the same address; $7.20, student rate. Single copy rate: from vol. 25, $1.25; vols. 17 through 24, $0.60. 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.

© 1977 by the University of Chicago. All rights reserved.

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


With his usual clarity, Asimov describes the accrued knowledge that, over a century, made it possible for scientists to perfect techniques of nuclear fusion and fission. The material is chronologically arranged, so that the reader can understand how each new discovery about atomic structure contributed to the body of nuclear knowledge, and can appreciate how discoveries in science may be based on the work of predecessors. The author concludes with a discussion of controlled nuclear fusion that could give new resources to an energy-starved world. Phonetic guides (some seeming unnecessary, like “EL-eh-ment”) are provided within the body of the text; an index is included.

Barker, Carol. *An Oba of Benin.* Addison-Wesley, 1977. 75-45370. 27p. illus. Trade ed. $6.95; Library ed. $5.21 net.

Barker's handsomely stylized details, which use African motifs, are in page-filling pictures, the double-page spreads alternately in black and white and in strong colors. The text, while it gives information, is weak in that it vacillates between history and story; purportedly the life story of an heir to the throne, Ewedo, this imposes a mythical heir on an actual ruler, Esigie, who did have a son. Included in the endpapers are maps and a small amount of information about the founding of the empire of Benin and the rulers who preceded and followed Esigie, who came to power in the beginning of the 16th century.


Great-grandmother, who had raised twelve-year-old Renny (Lorraine) was in the hospital, and Renny was put into a foster home run by the Becks, where among the other children was a small girl whose mother was emotionally disturbed, Karen. Mrs. Beck was an easy-going slattern who deferred completely to her husband, a handsome man, sternly pious. Renny was frightened and guilty after an episode in which Mr. Beck—ostensibly comforting her during an illness—caressed her. Frightened of what might happen next, guilty because she had enjoyed his petting, and worried because of what might happen to little Karen, Renny ran home, taking Karen with her. But an aunt had cleared the house of furniture and put Great-grandmother in a nursing home. The book ends on a hopeful note, since Karen’s mother, who has improved, comes home and takes Renny in. Bauer’s characterization is remarkable in vividness and depth: the other children in the Beck home are distinctively drawn. The story has pace, candor, and pathos that never becomes maudlin, and the writing style and dialogue are skilled.
Trade ed. $4.00; Library ed. $3.00 net.

Profusely illustrated with cartoon-style drawings, a book of riddles asks a series of questions on each page: answers are given at the foot of the page. Samples: “What’s the matter with a watermelon?” “It’s pitiful.” “What does an elk take for indigestion?” “elka-Seltzer.” “Why do the demon and ghoul like each other so much?” “Because a demon is a ghoul’s best friend. (Because a diamond is a girl’s best friend.)” The last is a good example of the quip that—even when parenthetically explained—is ill-suited to a juvenile audience that may not understand the reference. “What is Claustrophobia?” “Dread fear of Santa Claus,” similarly, may mean little to a child unfamiliar with the word “phobia.” Not an outstanding collection, although for children at the riddle stage, any such book is of interest.


As she did for *Mary of Mile 18*, Anne Blades has recorded in her text and pictures the way of life of a community in which she spent a year as a teacher. The Carrier Indian reservation of Taché, in northwest Canada, has a dwindling population of people who live in solid, comfortable houses; one of their sources of income is beaver. In a story that has a realistic, modest plot, Charlie goes with his grandparents, Za and Virginia, on a trapping expedition that is halted when Za (age 74) becomes ill; Charlie takes their boat to a village to get help from Camille, who takes the boy to a trailer camp where there is a telephone. A rescue plane takes Za to a hospital, and Charlie knows that even if Za recovers, he will do no more beaver trapping: that will be Charlie’s job. The story gives a strong sense of the continuity of a cultural pattern, of ways that are tempered but not changed by progress. The writing is direct and simple, placed in a column of unfortunately small print at the side of the full color painting on each page: the paintings have a sturdy, primitive quality that is an effective foil for the delicacy of subtly colored skies and the patterns of trees.

Bodecker, N. M. *Hurry, Hurry, Mary Dear! And Other Nonsense Poems:* written and illus. by N. M. Bodecker. Atheneum, 1976. 76-14841. 118p. $5.95.

Copenhagen’s gift to the United States, the Great Dane of children’s poetry, has done it again. Witty pen sketches add to the ebullient fun of the poems, a few of which have serious moments but rely on their rhythm and humor for immediate appeal. And under the surface of that easy appeal are (at least, in some poems) some perceptive commentaries on human behavior. A few poems are sheer nonsense, some play with words, all are delightful to read aloud. Sample verse, and one of the shortest: “House Flies.” “What makes / common house flies / trying/ is / that they keep / multiflieing.”


Based on the play *The Adventures of Paddington Bear,* this has seven short playlets, each with two or three scenes that focus on one ploy of the bear from Peru who lives with a London family. Each play is preceded by a list of properties, and the dialogue and humor retain much of the flavor of the original Paddington stories, although no visual medium can retain the ingenuous quality of the original. Nevertheless, the adventures of the small creature who always manages to get out of the trouble he’s gotten into are good material and provide good theatrical fodder, and the brevity and simplicity of the plays make them useful for children’s productions.

After years as a migrant laborer, James Earl brings his family to settle down and work on the tobacco farm inherited by his younger brother Newt. Fourteen-year-old Stella is particularly pleased; she's anxious to have a better life, to make something more of herself than her timid, fearful mother has. Stella admires Newt's brisk wife, is admired by two boys and learns to care for one of them, and resists (eventually succumbing) the genuinely affectionate overtures made by her stepmother after her mother's death and James Earl's rather hasty second marriage. The plot is not outstanding, but the characters are solid, the dialogue true, and the setting and motivation most convincing.


Paul, sixteen, had been aware for ten years that there were blank periods in his life, hours or even days of "lost time" from which he would emerge finding himself in a strange place, or being told he had done or said things he could not remember. Unlike the film "Three Faces of Eve," in which suspense is based on finding the cause, the causes of Paul's multiple personality are known to the reader, although not to Paul, so there is less suspense in this study of a triple personality. The subject is one that most readers will find fascinating, and the author handles fairly well the emergence of "Mike" and "George," the alternates who take over Paul's body. But the young man who is a neighbor and a psychiatry student is the only one who understands Paul's plight, and it seems unconvincing that he would wait so long, trying to help Paul on his own, before suggesting therapy: it is also unconvincing that neither Paul's alcoholic mother nor his irascible, divorced father see anything more than moodiness until his problem is pointed out by a psychiatrist. His best friend is immediately understanding, but his girl (who is actually informed by "George" rather than Paul) doesn't react at all, but blandly and unquestioningly accepts the startling news.


The protagonist of *Where the Lilies Bloom* is now sixteen, not quite ready to fall in love but aware that two young men, Thad and Gaither, are smitten. Mary Call is still proud, strong, and independent; she refuses help from her brother-in-law, Kiser, and ekes out a living by gathering plants, "wildcrafting," with the help of a younger brother and sister who complain that she is a tyrant but rely on her love and judgment. Mary Call's love goes out to a small, abandoned boy, Jack, who clings to her rather than to her sister and brother-in-law, who are anxious to adopt the child. When Jack is lost, Mary Call realizes that she could never marry Thad, who is less concerned with the boy's welfare than with Mary Call's safety. She insists that Jack live with Kiser and Devola; she accepts Gaither's continuing help in managing her affairs, she feels a responsibility to her siblings, yet Mary Call isn't quite ready to give up her dreams of a better life, a chance for her to move on alone. She's standing at the brink. The writing style is fluent, the dialogue excellent save for a tendency to lean heavily on local idiom, which gives color to the book but results in Mary Call sounding at times like a young, poetic philosopher and at times—when she uses the idiom—like an educated hillbilly. But the overall effect of the story is still impressive: the setting is vividly evoked, the characters come alive, the relationships are perceptive.


In a kaleidoscopic shifting of diary excerpts, letters, bits of a script written by the protagonist, fantasy episodes, and memories of the past, a young Englishman finds solace after coming to Greece to get over the loss of the girl he loves. He meets
someone he is sure is the Charioteer of Delphi, a statue comes to life, and in several fantasy episodes the two meet and merge. The writing style is arresting and many of the episodes dramatic, but there is less clarity at the end than ought to emerge out of the collage of brief, sometimes staccato first-person jottings.


Like Ogan's Tennis Bum (reviewed in the March, 1977 issue) this is the story of a boy who enters tournament competition and fights against prejudice at the same time. Charlie Jiminez Heath, twelve, asks the coach, Burtz, if he may have lessons in exchange for working at the Bay City Tennis Club. His prowess is admired by Susan Dodge, whose brother Harold is Charlie's chief persecutor. The Dodge family is wealthy and influential: Susan and Harold are consistent winners. Charlie finds as many friends as enemies, and he wins titles—both doubles and singles—to triumph over Harold and the bullies who have tried to trick and abuse him as well as oust the sympathetic Burtz. All ends are tied when Harold and his scheming father are exposed, the coach gets a new job, Charlie's mother gets a new and better job so that they don't have to move away, and Charlie beats Harold to take the singles title.

There aren't too many tennis stories, and this one has the game sequences that appeal to sports buffs, but the plot is basically a patterned one, despite the espousal of feminine liberation (Charlie's mother being passed over for promotion) and the worthy espousal of Cuban pride. The writing style is mediocre and occasionally florid: "He had never had a child of his own and the teaching had filled a gap in his innards, somewhere near his heart."


Most of the book consists of first-person descriptions of their training and their work by individual, fictional veterinarians, based on interviews with actual veterinarians by the author, who also provides information on veterinary schools, advance on applying to them, information on schools that give courses for animal technicians or technologists, and a brief history of veterinary medicine. The material in the book should appeal to any animal lover, but be particularly useful to anyone considering a career in the field, since it gives a good picture of a variety of specialties as well as of general practice, and it is—through the experiences of the "contributors"—candid about the difficulties and hazards of the profession.


There's a bit of everything in this collection of original material: realistic and fanciful stories, poems, articles, interviews, a play, a recipe, some wordless story-drawings. The age range is broad: the quality of the selections varies from mediocre to adequate, with a few high spots. Although many of the contributors are distinguished, few of the selections are.


A former staff member of an ocean science laboratory, Foster gives solid background information about plate tectonics and undersea formations and resources as a base for understanding his descriptions of the scientific, legal, and practical problems of exploring and exploiting marine resources, particularly minerals. He discusses international complications and the dangers of pollution in a text that is clearly written and competently organized, although the book is weakened slightly by occa-

[ 156 ]
sional writing down (describing the continental shelves in terms of a man standing with his head above water, and his submerged shoulders as the shelf) and by some poorly-marked maps. A glossary, a divided bibliography, and an index in deplorably small type are appended.


No, not a children’s version of the Anouilh play, but a compilation of riddles, rhymes, rounds, and songs—including “answer-back” songs—selected by an eminent Canadian folklorist. All the material is in the oral tradition, and is profusely and deftly illustrated by small sketches that are, like the text, printed in dark brown. The divided list of sources and references, the bibliography, and the index are printed in unfortunately small type, as are the lyrics and musical notation (the melody line only) for songs; nevertheless, the collection contains a substantial amount of varied, interesting, and often amusing material.


An elephant child learns a lesson about envy of others’ possessions in a pleasant story told in a deft, light writing style that ameliorates any note of didacticism. Trudy nags and coaxes her parents until they buy her a straw hat like her friend’s, but then she finds that the hat slips over her eyes, that she can’t hear as well with it on, and that she misses some enjoyable play with her brother because she is afraid that her hat will get wet. Finally she decides to save the hat for special occasions. The illustrations are somewhat stylized and static, with hues that are strong but not vibrant contrasting with a great deal of pale greys and tans.


The author, a specialist in childhood education, writes with direct simplicity about the ways in which caves are formed, the range of size from a small animal’s lair to an enormous cavern, and the lure of cave exploration to amateurs (spelunkers) and scientists (speleologists) alike. Save for the fact that a reader may infer that all caves are inhabited by bats, the text is clear in distinguishing between information that applies to all caves (“The temperature in caves stays about the same all year round.”) and that which may be a feature of some caves (“In some caves water trickles from place to place.”)) Nicely gauged in extent and difficulty for a young independent reader, the book describes stalactites and stalagmites, cave tunnels, and the blind fish that inhabit the water in some caves.


Due to being given too high a concentration of oxygen in an incubator for premature babies, Tom Sullivan has been blind from infancy. Derek Gill writes Sullivan’s story in first person with occasional florid or trite phrasing, but it is nevertheless an absorbing account of remarkable adjustment to, and triumph over, a severe physical handicap. Best known as a singer, Sullivan has had a life full of eventful participation in all sorts of activities (skydiving, golf, title-winning wrestling), of boyish pranks, and of the satisfactions of a happy marriage. Photographs show many of these activities, and include pictures of his two children, one of whom he once saved from drowning. “Inspirational” is a strong word, but it would be hard to read Sullivan’s story without being aware of the resiliency of the human spirit he exemplifies.
The tenderness of a simple, repetitive text avoids sentimentality—but just avoids it; the illustrations, black and white, show a small boy who cuddles a series of animals through a day that ends with his being cuddled in turn by his father. The pattern of the text is "I love you, kitten, and if I were a cat . . ." or "I love you, lamb, and if I were a sheep . . ." with indulgent, protective affection shown throughout. The sky darkens gradually, and in the last pages the boy's father comes to bring his child indoors and say, "I love you, baby, and since we're people I've built a house for you, and given you a bed with warm quilts, a cold drink of water, a kiss on the nose, and a quiet good-night." Not substantial, but it's nice to have a book that shows paternal love.


Mildred has just moved to California and misses her friends: she's very much on her own because all of the children of the neighborhood are away for the summer. Intrigued by the fact that an elderly woman who had paid a brief visit to some neighbors seems to have stolen back and taken up residence in their garage secretly, Mildred investigates. Gertie Wilson had come to California expecting to accept the invitation of an old friend and live there—and found that the friend (the neighbors' mother) had died. She is alone and poor, so Mildred befriends her and keeps her secret. There is a happy and believable solution to the story, which has a strong message about helping others as well as demonstrating a concern for the plight of the aged. Although the writing style is capable, it is not quite convincing as diary entries by a ten-year-old, especially in its use of dialogue.


Written with a simple, natural flow, this biography for younger readers does not have all the fascinating details of the life of the great educator, but it gives salient facts and is nicely balanced in treatment. The illustrations, rather scribbly pencil drawings, do not do justice to a woman who grew beautiful as she grew old, but they are adequate. The story of Mary McLeod, the only child in a poor family (seventeen children) who could go to school and who, through her devotion and courage, became a figure of national importance as an educator and a black leader, is always thrilling; Greenfield has wisely chosen not to laud, but to let the facts speak for themselves.


Thirteen-year-old Phoebe was the daughter of Sam Fraunces, a free black man who owned the Queen's Head Tavern (now Fraunces Tavern, and still functioning as a restaurant) in New York City, a favorite meeting place for patriots in 1776. Sent by her father, who served as Washington's steward after the General became President, to serve as Washington's housekeeper when he set up headquarters in New York, Phoebe had been asked to watch for a spy whose name began with T, a spy who (her father said) was expected to make an attempt on Washington's life. Catch him she did, in a dramatic incident which is led up to rather slowly. The story, an appended author's note states, is "essentially historically accurate," but some details of the fictionalization seem dubious: for example, the fact that a girl of thirteen should serve as housekeeper of a large household, that the housekeeper should serve...

In a novel set in a Russian village just before the revolution, Samuel is a young adolescent whose father is deeply religious and rejoices when the boy is admitted to the Yeshiva, the school where rabbis are trained. But in going to a larger town to attend the school, Samuel meets other young people who have liberal ideas. He not only becomes disenchanted with the strictures of the Yeshiva and drops out, but also becomes involved in the activist movement that preceded the revolution. Witnessing his first pogrom, Samuel decides that he will go to America; the book ends with his hopeful anticipation as he travels. While the message is somber, the writing is not; it is enlivened by good dialogue and by the vivid picture it gives of the Russian Jewish community and its reaction to the first stirrings of rebellion.


Hirsch discusses the first scientific investigations of sleep and dreams, particularly the discovery of rapid eye movement which occurs during one of the stages of sleep. He describes current research as well, examining both studies of physical aspects of the phenomenon of dreams and investigations into interpretation of dreams, the use of hypnosis and telepathy in influencing dreamers, and comparative studies of dreaming. These, and other aspects of an intriguing subject, are described in a free-flowing style that is eminently readable. The book is weakened, however, by periodic implications of oddity ("Dreams and science—what a strange pair of bedfellows!") or —referring to plans for a restful night—"But something went wrong," and there were dreams) and by the diffusion and, to some extent, repetition in the text. A bibliography and an index are appended.


Ten turtle children and their parents live contentedly in their mudhole, taking sunbaths at the front door, rowing about in a hollow log, using what's at hand for entertainment. When a new turtle family moves next door, the older residents (save for wise father) are envious of the motorboat, the fancy water toys, etc. But the new turtle children are prone to bully and tease, the motorboat is noisy and pollutes the air, and the older family soon comes to appreciate the pleasures of the simple life. The "make-do" theme is commendable, but the equating of possessions with unpleasant behavior seems overdrawn; otherwise the book is adequate fare for Hoban's usual audience. The family relationships are realistic, there's enough action in pictures and text, and the pictures have a gentle appeal. Although issued as a book for beginning independent readers, this seems more appropriate for a preschool audience. What it lacks is the humorous and affectionate insight that is in the *Arthur* stories, the creation of a character with whom children can identify.


In the twelve years he's lived, Alan has been shunted from one relative to another. An orphan, he is living with a great-aunt who dies, unidentified, in a New York hospital, and Alan decides he's going to keep her death a secret because he's con-
vinced that the authorities will dispose of his beloved pets. Since Aunt Jessie was active in her church and community, there are many inquisitive friends to whom Alan lies, but his inventions about her absence from home and the fact that she doesn't respond to telephone messages become more and more suspect. He tells one classmate and, in desperation, a veterinarian to whom he's taken a sick pet. Dr. Harris, an alcoholic vet, becomes fond of the boy, even giving up liquor to win Alan's respect and confidence; even with his help, Alan is not able to keep up the pretense, and the school head finds out the truth. The book ends on an encouraging note but a realistic one, and the somber plight of the lonely child is alleviated by some deftly woven minor themes and even some lighter moments. What Holland has achieved here is the creation of a believable character in an unusual situation, and her book is rounded out by a group of strongly depicted minor characters, a convincing picture of an urban neighborhood community, and the depth and polish of the writing style.


First published in Switzerland, this book is intended to stimulate young children's interest by its "stories in pictures." Photographs fill the pages; there is no text save for the introduction. Any group of pictures can attract browsing interest, and most of these have appealing (clowns, vehicles) or familiar (food, toys) subjects. Unfortunately, the weaknesses of the book outweigh its potential as a contribution to reading readiness. It is large enough to be hard to handle, it is so tightly bound that the pages do not lie flat, and it has no separation of the "stories in pictures" referred to in the introduction, so that the viewer moves through a continuum of photographs. In some of the sequences there is some action, but often the "story" consists only of a series of foods, or of toys, and even within these there may be a picture that doesn't fit. For example: Three doll pictures, a puppet, a mouse climbing a solid "1," four more doll pictures, then what proves to be a new series of dog pictures. Why the mouse? Are the dogs meant to relate to the mouse? Often confusing.


A science fantasy set in the 21st century presupposes colonies both on the moon and on the continental shelf. Kepler, son of the Moon Governor, was finding it hard to adjust to earth gravity on his first visit to earth, and his father agreed that a visit with relatives on Conshelf Ten, where Kepler could more easily adjust physically, would be beneficial. Kepler stumbles into a plot by an insurgent group (some of whom are "gillers," who have chosen to have an operation that makes them sea creatures) and is accused of sabotage; he fights not only for his own safety but because a successful coup may damage his father's mission for improving relationships between the people of earth and moon, and may jeopardize the whole world. First published in England, the story has an interesting setting, and adequate writing style and dialogue; the plot is uneven in pace, however, and the characterization minimal.


In a story set in the Scottish Highlands, Colin Grant lives with his wife and three sons: a forester, he also has a small croft that supports his family nicely. But Colin has a terrible temper, and when he loses it and strikes at a supernatural creature, the Grollican, his troubles begin. His outbuildings are torn down, his haystacks ripped apart, and—worst of all—he falls in love with a beautiful, mischievous fairy. But there's a truce between the fairy folk and human beings, and his enchantress helps
Colin by giving him an enchanted horse that never tires, a horse that later proves to be a bewitched girl who is loved by the youngest son. Seeing no way to escape the Grollican, Colin goes to America. And guess who's come over on another boat? And is tricked into serving the Grant family for all time? A vigorous tale that incorporates many familiar folklore motifs, this is soundly supported by its realistic base and is told with fluent competence.


Based on a medieval German legend, this is the story of a proud cat who thought none of his feline acquaintances was good enough to be his wife and went to a clever fox to ask advice. He wanted to marry "the finest lady" the fox knew, and she made a series of suggestions: the moon's daughter, the sun's daughter, the mist's, and so on. Each time the cat was pleased but asked if there were anyone stronger whose daughter he could consider; the cycle closed when Tom Cat learned that a cat could kill a mouse that destroyed a house that resisted the rain that put out the fire, etc. So Tom Cat gave up the idea of the daughters of moon, sun, mist... house, mice—and settled on Katy Cat, who came along just then. The cumulative catalog is appealing in folktale style, and the writing style is adequate, but the ending ("Tom Cat realized how silly he had been...") doesn't really follow and is abrupt. The illustrations have interesting texture and composition.


A vaguely medieval setting is the background for an adventure in the mythical country of Dalemark, where there is tension and intrigue in the conflict between the northern and southern earldoms. Exempt from the dangers to which other travellers are exposed, Clennen the singer and his family travel freely, giving performances and carrying news. When Clennen is murdered, his wife immediately marries her childhood suitor, and the children—with their passenger Kialin—run away. The cwidder, a musical instrument, proves to have magical powers that save the children when they are in danger, and they are constantly in danger. There's plenty of action and suspense, and the pace of the story is brisk, but the book is weakened by repetition (on pages 3, 8, and 19 it is stated that Clennen likes long names) and by the abruptness of some of the episodes.


Kherdian believes that the best poems for children are not those written for them, but those chosen wisely from the whole body of poetry. Some of his own work is included, as are selections from Kerouac, Brautigan, Roethke, Corso, Ferlinghetti, and others, including one by Ruth Krauss that was designed for children. The book is small: the small, framed paintings are bucolically charming: the subjects of the poems, most of which are very brief indeed, are primarily animals. With few exceptions, the poems are lyric fragments in haiku mood, and have little of the action, humor, rhyme, and narrative quality that appeal to the younger children for whom the book is intended.


Mr. and Mrs. Minus rise when the alarm clock rings at seven and they jump up, he to do exercises, she to check an engineering problem. Mrs. Minus wakes her eight
children (from Firsterix to Eightah) with a device she’s invented for pulling blankets off, and after a chaotic breakfast they all pile into Mother’s newest invention, Elec-trisnake Number One (looking like a carnival ride) and go to school over the rooftops. The principal cancels classes for an hour so that a photographer can record the entire school grouped around the vehicle. Father is delighted when he sees the picture. The Minuses are opossums or something like opossums, fully clothed: the illustrations have vigor but are a bit fussy with detail. The writing style is adequate, the mother-engineer a lively character, the plot rather undeveloped.


A deft blending of text and illustration gives the lap audience—or even the beginning reader—a chance to play with sounds while hearing a story. Edward gets up in the morning, and takes a bath: “When his stingers began to tinkle, he mumbled onto the floor. Edward tied his feet. Then he combed his bear.” The activities are familiar enough to enable the child to translate easily, and the illustrations show Edward tumbling out with wrinkled fingers, tying his feet into knots, combing a large bear, and flushing his teeth while standing on his owl. Breakfast over, our hero finally departs to catch the ghoul truss, a yellow vehicle parked at the corner. Not much as a story, but this is an amusing book which could be an adjunct to a reading-readiness program.


In a sequel to *The Wyndcliffe* (reviewed in the September, 1975 issue) in which young Anna Hennessy had a love affair with a spirit from the past, an older Anna comes back to the Wyndcliffe to die. The protagonist is her nephew Nicky, seventeen, a young man who is rebellious and—according to most of his family—destined for trouble. Nicky follows Anna, whom he loves dearly, to the old house on the cliff, and there he meets the spirit from her past, John, and fights to keep him from seeing Anna. The dialogue, characterization, and writing style are excellent, but the book is weakened by the fact that Nicky’s problems are almost overshadowed by the conflict with John, and by the fact that the dialogues between John and Nicky accentuate the story’s one weak aspect: John is treated as though he were a live character.


In the first of three stories of the future, Vinge’s “The Crystal Ship,” the last of the Star People live, drug-besotted, in an airship: one of the women goes back to earth to visit her dying mother and becomes curious about the creatures and the culture of the earth. She meets and learns to care for one of the alien creatures who is on earth, but who becomes an outcast because of their friendship. The story offers some commentary on decadence and communication, but it is slow-paced and repetitive. In Randall’s “Megan’s World” the writing is better in style and the plot in structure, as opposing viewpoints about the domination of one culture by another emerge in the tale of Terran explorers who come to an alien planet in which they have the opportunity to direct events toward peace or toward war and subjugation. “Screw-top,” by McIntyre, posits a hot, humid planet where dissident individuals are in forced-labor camps as prisoners. It is the most taut in structure and probably the most effective of the novellas, although it hasn’t the pace of “Megan’s World.” In sum, an interesting but not unusual or particularly impressive group of stories.

Harriet, an elephant, makes an effort to be early and is first in line, anxious to have a good seat at a circus performance. Mouse is second, Duck is third, et cetera. Owl is tenth and last, but somebody opens a door near Owl—so Owl is first and Harriet is tenth in line. But all is well: ten chairs are arranged in a circle around the ring, so everybody has a front seat. The text is minimally useful in reinforcing number concepts; the story is slight but adequately told. The illustrations are simple in composition, with large areas of solid color; the background details are few and slightly stylized, while the figures of the animals have more details and provide a note of action against the static background.


Slight but engaging, this read aloud story is simply enough written and has print large and clear enough to make it appropriate for beginning independent readers as well. The bright crayon pictures are uncluttered and blandly humorous: the text consists of a letter from Uncle Clyde that gives instructions about his birthday gift to Charlie. "I know you are going to love Elfreda," Uncle Clyde writes, and the pictures show Elfreda, a purple hippopotamus, amiably letting children climb on her, having her teeth brushed, and playing backgammon.


Some mothers may cringe a bit, but most children will be delighted with John Philip’s quiet triumph over her. Not that J.P. does anything in the way of rebellion: he obeys Mother dutifully, but he gets exactly what he wants, privacy for more reading. Mother has decided that J.P. stays in his room and reads too much, so she sends him out for fresh air and exercise. He breaks a window playing ball, digs up some bulbs (accidentally) while hunting worms, gets paint on a neighbor’s rose bush, gets soaked while helping another neighbor wash her car. When he appears at lunchtime, Mother—who has repeatedly come to the door to scold—is horrified by his damp and dirty state and orders him to go to his room, get clean and dry, and stay in. John Philip complacently goes back to reading. The writing style is brisk and humorous, the dialogue casual, and the illustrations witty.


A clowning bully, Bruce is a bear whose idea of fun is watching other animals scamper away when he rolls huge boulders down a hill. Almost hit, an angry witch shrinks Bruce to a wee creature: the forest animals recognize and chase him, and the witch takes him home for a pet. The story ends with a tiny bear who hasn’t changed at all: when last seen, he is gleefully rolling small stones at helpless insects. The scrabbly illustrations are vigorous and colorful, and the story has vitality, but the ending seems weak—not because it lacks a punitive, didactic note (children may enjoy Bruce’s incorrigible mischievousness) but because it is anticlimactic structurally.


Desperately hunting for a turkey for Thanksgiving dinner, Arthur Bobowicz finds
that eccentric (to say the least) Professor Mazzochi has a substitute, a 266-pound chicken. Who could cook her? Arthur keeps her for a pet and names her Henrietta: when Henrietta roams the streets of Hoboken panic ensues: they even send for an expert chicken hunter, famed for capturing a renegade rooster called Everglades Ike. Henrietta is too wily even for him, and the authorities turn to Professor Mazzochi, who says that the chicken’s destructiveness was due to hostile reactions. “A perfectly sweet chicken can become a bitter destructive bird, if it feels that it is unwanted.” (This may be The Message of the book.) So a new effort is mounted to retrieve Henrietta, with an air-borne banner that says “Chickens Need your Love,” posters in five languages asking citizens to say hello and smile if they see Henrietta, and big white chickens painted on all police cars. The campaign succeeds, Arthur and his pet are reunited, and Hoboken issues its first chicken license. The slapstick, exaggerated humor has appeal, but there’s little to balance it or change the tempo: the illustrations are heavy-handed.


This is the most trenchant of the few stories for young readers on the subject of child abuse; while written in third person, it consistently sees developments from the viewpoint of the eleven-year-old protagonist, Laurie. Laurie’s father never communicates with her; her mother, who has remarried, periodically assaults her daughter viciously, although she does it only when they are alone. Laurie’s stepfather, Jack, is a pleasant man but often away on business trips: her younger stepbrother, Tim, is sympathetic, knowing that Annabelle (Laurie doesn’t think of her as “mother”) is cruel to his stepsister. The pattern of Laurie’s life has been that as soon as she makes a friend or is taken to one emergency room too many times, Annabelle moves. Matters come to a head when Tim witnesses a beating that leaves Laurie insensible. The children take refuge with Tim’s grandmother, and when Jack learns the whole story he takes Annabelle away for treatment. The events are inherently dramatic in a shocking sense, but Roberts deals with them matter-of-factly, and the book—which has excellent characterization and an easy narrative flow—is both realistic about the problem and realistically encouraging about its alleviation: first, Laurie learns that people do believe her story when she finally tells it and second, they help her. Roberts also closes with an encouraging note by having Jack explain to Laurie some of the causes of her mother’s illness, the changes that therapy should produce, and the fact that he still loves Annabelle, leaving the possibility that she will be a lovable mother when she recovers.

Sanders, Deidre. *Would You Believe This, Too? More Useless Information You Can’t Afford to Be Without;* By Deidre Sanders and others; illus. by Joce Behr. Sterling, 1977. 76-19815. 96p. Trade ed. $3.95; Library ed. $3.99 net.

A compilation of odd facts, with no sources or authorities cited, is arranged in groups of listings, under such broad headings as “Facts About People,” “Historical Facts,” “Sports Facts,” “Facts from Business, Industry and Agriculture,” et cetera. Appended is a “Useless Index,” and it is, indeed, almost useless. Within each group, the facts are arranged in random fashion: for example, in the “people” category, in sequence, there are items about somebody buying a slice of Queen Victoria’s wedding cake for $200; one about women in Kashmir changing their clothes once a year; a passing fashion of wearing tiny, live snakes clipped to earrings; the centenarian who learned to fly; the Chinese man who paid $800 for obtaining the number 8888 for his car registration, and so on. A hodgepodge, but books like this always intrigue some readers.

An eminent marine biologist, Scheffer is distinguished also as a writer of pellucid prose; he communicates his zealous appreciation of natural marvels without embellishing fact. The text is logically arranged, thoughtful and informative: the illustrations by Parnall are impeccably detailed and beautifully drawn. Scheffer describes the evolution of the six groups of marine mammals (sea otters, walking seals, crawling seals, sirenians, toothed cetaceans, and baleen cetaceans) and then discusses them in relation to adjustment to ocean living, food preferences, reproduction and growth, intelligence, migration patterns, and hazards such as disease. He also describes the ways in which marine mammals are studied and considers their possibilities for survival. Appended material includes a list of places where marine mammals can be seen, a classification chart, an extensive bibliography, and an index.


"Perhaps he had escaped from the zoo, or perhaps from Jack's imagination," but when Jack was very, very young he was convinced that there was a gorilla behind the grandfather clock in the dark hall. But Jack had decided to do something about it when he was five, and now he was five. The gorilla tried all sorts of "scarey" faces, but Jack was unmoved. Finally the gorilla began to cry with frustration, then he cowered on top of the clock, then he knocked the clock over and had to put it back. Then Jack taught him to smile. So they shook hands, and the gorilla went back home to the zoo, or "To Jack's imagination, whichever it was." The illustrations are sprightly and the story is told with simple directness, but it isn't a very convincing story within the fantasy framework and it doesn't quite succeed as the story of a child overcoming a fear.


The Osborne family makes music: father plays in a string quartet, mother sings, son's in a combo, daughter is taking piano lessons, Consuelo the housekeeper is devoted to the saxophone. With each performance the dog, Viola, howls in anguish: in fact, she bites little Cynthia's piano teacher. She hates music. They think. But wise old Uncle Bert sees the real problem, and plays patron to the thwarted Viola, who goes off to take lessons and returns an accomplished bagpipe player. Again thwarted, because nobody will let her join their performances, Viola is again pacified when Uncle Bert writes a rock opera version of "Lassie Come Home" and Viola plays the lead. The pictures are brisk and amusing, each character a different animal. Only the dog is a dog; all the Osbornes are moose (Cynthia plays "Indian Moose Call"), Bert is a duck, the string quartet and combo members are a bear, rabbit, chicken, lion, etc. The story is as crisp and funny as the pictures.


Adapted by an American anthropologist from the work of an Israeli archeologist, this text is informative and authoritative, but written in dry style. Printed in two close-set columns of solid type, the book is weakened by this visual handicap and by the poor placement of illustrative material: in the chapter entitled "Egypt and Mesopotamia," for example, there are, in addition to pertinent diagrams, four photographs of structures: one is in Greece, one in Italy, one in France, and fourth is
a Roman structure in Jordan. Nevertheless, the author does very clearly establish the fact that planned cities existed in many parts of the ancient world, and discusses both the theories of city planning and the contrast between such projects and the casual patterns that evolved in unplanned cities. A glossary and an index are appended.


After describing the characteristics that differentiate vertebrates and invertebrates, the authors present major groups of the latter: arthropods, echinoderms, coelenterates, protozoa, etc. Phonetic spelling is included in the text, in some cases with little point, as is "ARTHROPODS (AR-thro-pods)" and is not always provided for captions in the illustrations—for example, for the words paramecium, amoeba, and flagellate. The text is accurate and the information clearly presented, however, and the large print and spacious format are well designed for readers in the primary grades. There is an occasional note of writing down, absent in most of Selsam's work, as when the text asks, "Can you see any difference between them?" on a double-page spread that shows large pictures of three markedly different worms.


The first American edition of a publication originally printed in Switzerland, this is a slight book with only six pages carrying text and pictures. The rhyme describes the seven monsters ("One goes up / Two goes down / Three comes creeping into town . . .") and concludes with "seven Monsters in a row, making trouble. There they go!" The pen and crayon pictures have Sendak's verve but not his usual attention to detail.


Once upon a time, all big folks were wee and the wee folks were big, so it posed a real problem for the wee, wee mannie when he tried to get his large, recalcitrant cow to stand still so that she could be milked. He went back home to ask his mother's advice four times—but each time the contrary animal kicked up her heels and mooed, tossed her head and lowered her horns. Then mother came up with the answer: tell the cow to kick and bellow. And, sure enough, the perverse creature stood quietly and let the wee mannie milk her. The incongruity of tiny man and huge cow should appeal to children, and the story (despite the brashness of "Hoot," "Mither," or "Coo" passing as Scottish speech cadence) should appeal to children because of its pattern and denouement. The illustrations are vigorous with slightly dulled reds and pinks contrasting with black, white and greys in formally framed pictures out of which, at times, burst the limbs of the exuberant cow.


Fourteen-year-old Vonnie, who tells the story, has her horizons expanded and her understanding of adult attitudes and relationships deepened as the result of a severe summer storm. Living in a small Kentucky town in 1939, Vonnie's family takes in members of two other households when their homes are destroyed: from vulgar, cheerful Mrs. Budd, Vonnie learns resiliency and from her daughter she learns to be perceptive and astute. From elderly Mrs. Fingerle she learns to be sympathetic toward the plight of German-Americans who are being discriminated against. Resis-
tant to male charms, Vonnie realizes that Roman Budd, her sister’s rejected suitor, is just the kind of man she could care for . . . later. The writing style is smooth, with believable characters and natural dialogue, but the story, while it has good period details, is not cohesive.


A collection of poems about proper behavior in school is illustrated by carton style pictures in a style reminiscent of, but more exaggerated than, Susan Perl’s work. The poems are minatory but humorous, not quite enough the latter to compensate for the former. Examples: “Don’t Sign Here,” “Some silly students love to scrawl / Initials / on the washroom wall / They print their names on desk and chair / And tabletops, and everywhere / They really needn’t go so far / To advertise how dumb they are.” or, “Cut That Out,” “Don’t file your nails or comb your hair / In public places anywhere / In classroom, library, or hall / Or cafeteria, least of all / It’s really not your hourly duty / To concentrate upon your beauty / Not even if you’re sure you are / As splendid as a movie star.”


In the third and last of the Green-sky books (*Below the Root*, and *And All Between*), the leaders of the tree-people, the Kindar, and the Erdlings who had been banished to live below ground are planning a great celebration of their reunion. There is a dissident faction within each group, and their machinations disturb those who have worked for peace and unity. The two children whose joint supernatural powers have made them idols, Pomma and Teera, disappear, and through this tragedy the forces of good and evil confront each other; Pomma’s brother sacrifices his life to end the conflict. The many names and terms in Snyder’s beautifully conceived other-world may be a barrier for readers unfamiliar with the first books, but this has, no less than the first two books, the thoughtful view of society’s problems and the imaginative development of the world of Green-sky that should appeal strongly to lovers of fantasy.


Cozy drawings, in soft buff and blue, illustrate the small-scale adventure of a rabbit child. Bunny nags his mother until she loses her temper, but she won’t give him a lollipop; he takes money from his bank and goes to the store. But Bunny is little, and the store is busy. His request for service isn’t heard, and he wearies and nods off; it’s late when he wakes and cries, dark when he scurries home. Mom kisses and scolds, relenting after dinner to give Bunny his lollipop. The story, nicely geared to the interests and pursuits of the very young child, is modest but satisfying. It is slight, but it’s given substance by the simple but cadenced writing style: “ . . . when he saw the lollipops he asked for one but no one heard, and he asked and asked but no one heard, and he asked and asked and still no one heard, and finally he sat down and he fell asleep . . .”


A collection of short plays that should be useful for schoolroom production or for any group working with children’s theater, adapted by a professional in the field. The plays are grouped according to source, are competently adapted from excellent and
diverse material, and are preceded by notes that give some background. Some of the plays begin with introductions by storytellers, most of the selections are humorous, and all of them have enough action to quickly catch and hold audience attention. All are one-act plays, royalty-free; they are easy to stage and are provided with production notes.


Simply written, with folk sayings and rhymes about weather printed in a contrasting color, a book about natural signs that can help in weather prediction may be used for nature study as well as for the specific information it gives. The illustrations are deft and nicely placed in relation to the text, which is divided into sections on such topics as clouds, plants, wind, or animal forms. Clear instructions for making a wind vane are included.


Teddy Hecht, who tells the story, has never adjusted to her parents' divorce and her father's new wife, Shelley. Her younger sister is fond of Shelley, but Teddy resists every gift, every overture from her stepmother. She does feel that Mother ought to be more careful about her looks (like Shelley) and get thinner (like Shelley) and, in secret readings of her father's old love letters, wonders how one can fall out of love. She sympathizes with a friend whose parents are overprotective, has doubts about her own worth, grieves about the divorce. What Teddy learns (and her change and acceptance are wholly credible) is that beauty is in the eye of the loving beholder, that people recover from a ruptured relationship, and that one can love people—and they you—even when they disappoint you and no matter what they look like. The book is not unusual either in the situations it covers or in the depiction of a period in which a young adolescent gains maturity; it is perceptive, however, the characters are believable, and the writing style and dialogue have vitality.


First published in Australia, a picture book that makes clear the fact that play space in urban neighborhoods is a universal need, especially in crowded lower-economic areas. Here a group of children is chased away time and again when they try playing in the streets; the children are delighted when they find a site that serves as a demolition dump. A bathtub to climb into, old tires to use for swings, and plenty to break, with nobody to say “no!” When the children learn that a “nice tidy park” is being planned, they beg to have their own kind of playground; the mayor, appealed to, agrees, and there is a compromise: swings and trees are added, but the bathtub and other dear relics remain for climbers. The plot’s a bit pat, but the subject of play and the appeal of a wish granted should interest the read-aloud audience. The pictures are spacious in composition, a little on the magazine-illustration side in style, but full of bright color and action.
READING FOR PARENTS

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


Criscuolo, Nicholas P. “Successful Community Based Reading Programs.” *Language Arts*, February, 1977.


Reading Is Fundamental. *If America Is To Grow Up Thinking, Reading Is Fundamental*. Describes programs to help motivate children to want to read, how to develop community projects to make paperback books available to children. Single copies are free. No postage necessary. From Reading Is Fundamental, Inc. L’Enfant 2500, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560.


CHILDREN’S BOOK AWARDS

