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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.

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New Titles for Children and Young People


Although the adaptations by Alfred Caldecott are simply written and the illustrations of Randolph Caldecott can be savored by children, the political and social overtones of the pictures and the scholarly quality of the lengthy introduction make the book most appropriate for an older audience, particularly those interested in literary or book art history. The Caldecott brothers present amusing instances of contemporary (Victorian) life in their interpretation; two pages are devoted to each fable, with a literal picture. For "The Wolf and the Lamb," for example, on the left a wolf drooling at a lamb, and a Victorian scene on the right (one man points out a "no fishing" sign to another, then contentedly sits down on the same spot as soon as his victim is out of sight, and begins to fish). The texts are bland, with no pointing of moral: the pictures are as deft and witty and vigorous as only Caldecott can make them—but most of them have a latent content that requires a sophistication few children have.


In an easy, often conversational style, Amon describes some of the many and varied species of the cuckoo family: the bustling roadrunner, the parasitic species that lay their eggs in other birds' nests, the vile-smelling hoatzin of South America, the inefficient but amicable groove-billed anis. There is no rigid pattern, but in the course of discussing the various species, the author gives facts about courting, mating, nest-building, brooding, and anatomical structure; she also discusses anatomical differences that have led to problems in classification. The illustrations are deft, often slightly comical, in black and white. A chart that gives classification and such characteristics as range, habits of nesting, and habitats is appended, as are a bibliography and a relative index.

Bacon, Martha. Moth Manor; A Gothic Tale; illus. by Gail Burroughs. Little, 1978. 78-59680. 147p. $6.95.

In a deft blend of realism and fantasy, the story of a dolls' house and its occupants is carried over three generations, passing from the happy days when two small sisters invent a lively world for their doll family, through years of being shut away, to the time when a grandchild of one of the sisters comes to stay with her great-aunt, the other sister. Prowling about the attic, the visitor, Monica, finds the old dolls and the house, and she can't understand why Aunt Mimi insists the dolls' house must be given away. There is a mystery that has to do with a lost jewel; an ominous note in the huge luna moth that appears periodically, wraith-like, at the window; the dis-
appearance of one doll who is about to be wed in romantic fashion. The solution is logical, a neat trick when the story has two components: one is the vigorous inner life of the doll family, the other the slightly acid realism of Monica's efforts to keep the dolls' house. Only in two ways does the fanciful obtrude on the real, as the luna moth lends an occult note and as a series of small disasters befalls each temporary owner of the house, ceasing when Monica finally retrieves it. Polished writing and, in both the real and the fanciful elements, sharp characterization.


Told as a tale-within-a-tale, this has an amusing concept but one that is over-extended. As a bedtime tall tale, Grandpa tells of the town in which all the food came from the sky, a situation that was pleasant until the thrice-daily showers of food and drink turned into storms and tornados of food, driving the residents away to search for a new place to build. The idea of skyborne food is amusing, and there are some nice illustrative expansions (a television weather chart showing meatball clouds with soup moving in from the west) but both pictures and text become repetitive before the tale shifts to bad weather and the resultant emigration.


A story of frontier life in the time of the Civil War begins in western Texas, where Lewallen and his baby sister Eula Bee are the only survivors of a Comanche raid. Lewallen's father and oldest brother have gone off to serve in the Confederate Army, and the boy had promised his mother he would look after Eula Bee if anything happened. Lewallen escapes from the Comanche village where he and his sister are slaves, and most of the story is about his efforts to rescue his sister, a mission that takes time to plan, time in which Lewallen has many adventures. When he does rescue Eula Bee, he finds she is perfectly happy with her Indian mother; he forces her to come with him and tries desperately to break through her hostility, her refusal to speak or understand English. In a rather sentimental ending, he sings a song she'd once loved, and feels "... a cool, small hand slip gently into his." And she says his name. Although there is discussion of white violence and treachery within the story, the cruelty of the Indians is stressed early on; the weakness of the story is in the long central portion in which Lewallen's efforts to organize his sister's rescue are diverted by various obstacles; it's believable, but it slows the pace of the story. The book gives a convincing picture of frontier life, however, and for readers who love adventure or danger it should provide satisfying reading.


Jim, her brother, had told Gail he was taking two weeks away from their campus to work with a group called the Model Schools Unit, but when he failed to return and their parents investigated, it developed that the group was really a religious organization called Light of the World. Assuming Jim had been brainwashed, her parents set up a rescue operation, but Gail investigated on her own, pretending to be a convert. Most of the story concerns Gail's encounters with the group and their leader, the evangelist Father Adam, and the flow of the story is halted by the ramifications of this section; the book ends with Gail's talk with Jim, who bitterly looks on his parents' efforts as "'kidnap' rather than 'rescue,'" and who promises to have a meeting with his family but says, "'I believe in Father (Adam) with all my heart.'" This is clearly designed as an expose of the superficiality and possible venality of some of the groups.

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that—in parental eyes—capture and brainwash young people, and the message at times overpowers the medium; the writing style is adequate, the characterization not well differentiated, but the subject has been given little coverage in books for young people and may therefore attract an audience.


The year she was fifteen, Carol Ryrie and three of her friends spent a summer with her aunt on a homestead in the pine woods of northern Idaho. The account of that summer is based on letters written to a grandmother, and includes long quotations from those letters, faded photographs, and the author's sketches. There's a certain amount of humor in the recollection of the girls' mishaps and pranks, but the book, first produced for a local historical society, has a slightly dusty, antiquated quality and may be of more interest to readers who are Brink fans and curious about the author than to the general reader.


Neophyte reporter Alan Bishop learns that his half-brother, Lennie, has walked out of a mental institution and is suspected as a murderer—the victim being their half-sister's apartment mate. ("Mrs." Bishop was reputed to be a lady of light virtue whose progeny had assorted fathers.) Alan decides he's going to ask for time off to pursue the case himself, and his investigations lead him to the fact that Lennie is his full brother, and to the identity of their real mother. It also develops that it was Lennie, in their childhood, who had shut a gate—deliberately—on Alan's hand, crippling him for life. In the end, he finds his brother, who shoots at him, and the police arrest Lennie. The story ends, "The gate had closed." It also turns out that the whole family had conspired to hide a murder Lennie had committed when he was eleven. This hasn't the careful structure or the suspense of Brown's earlier books, but the author builds up a good picture of a psychotic personality (Lennie never appears on scene) and of the divided loyalties felt by members of his family.


Adapted from the film of the same name, this is the story of a first encounter between a native American and a horse, set in the year 1541, when Coronado came north from Mexico to seek the fabulous city of gold. One horse escapes from the train, and it is that animal that is encountered by Little Wolf, a young man who has gone on his vision quest, who has been told by the shaman that he will meet the sun-god face to face. Little Wolf is terrified by the strange creature, which he thinks of as a big dog, and tries to kill it; the horse is baffled by the strange behavior of the human being that runs from him, but he does not fear the arrow, for Little Wolf has shot it into the saddle, which he thinks is part of the strange beast. When, finally, the horse follows him, the young man decides his new name is "He Who Rides the Sun Dog." A brief postlude explains that other horses were garnered by native Americans and substantially changed their ways of life. While it is not wholly convincing to assume that Little Wolf would not be able to see the difference between flesh and an object made of metal and leather (thinking the saddle a hump on the horse), the story has a poetic quality, a dramatic encounter, and a real sense of excitement in the young man's joy when he first rides the horse and realizes how speedily he can travel: "... He could race the wind. He could race an eagle and leave it far behind." The black, white, and grey pictures reflect both the dramatic action and the lyric mood of the writing.

After a long absence, the three brothers of Tyler, Wilkin, and Skee are back; it is thirteen-year-old Wilkin who tells the story, set in rural Georgia in 1935. The "ghost" who frightens Wilkin when he's alone in the woods proves to be Alex Folsom, an older boy who has come back to the area although he left under suspicion of being a thief. Wilkin is convinced that Alex has changed, talks a storekeeper into giving him a job, and helps him find lodging. One of his bonds with Alex is their common dream of riding the railroad and seeing the world. Wilkin's family situation is depicted with warmth and affection, and Burch gives an excellent view—flavored by details of locale and period—of both the local community and the farm family. Wanderlust impels Wilkin, nevertheless, to agree to Alex's plans of running away—but just as they are about to go off, Wilkin discovers that his friend had indeed been a thief in the past and has, even more recently, done some shoplifting and has committed another theft and let another boy stand accused. And so the train goes off into the night and Wilkin sadly turns back. The plot is not a strongly dramatic one, despite the ending, but the writing style, setting, characterization, and dialogue more than compensate.


A revised edition of a 1947 title, Take A Call. Topsy! Topsy has become Teddi, dedicated to a career in ballet, constantly needing to persuade her parents that she must continue her lessons and that she is serious in her vocation. Teddi has to give up many other plans and activities to pursue her training; she finds that her boyfriend is bored by what is important to her, and he eventually starts dating her younger sister; she has a crush on a visiting teacher and is hurt when she learns he's married; but when she dances she forgets everything else. The writing style is mediocre, the plot weak; old version or new, it's patterned stuff, and its minimal appeal is to ballet buffs.

Christopher, Mathew F. The Fox Steals Home; illus. by Larry Johnson. Little, 1978. 78-17526. 178p. $6.95.

From a prolific writer of sports stories, another baseball tale. Bobby acquires the nickname of "Fox" because, coached by his father and grandfather, he has become so quick as a base stealer. Although there is a slight overlap, most of the story falls into distinct segments: game sequences, which are given play by play (possibly tedious for all but the most devoted baseball buffs), and Bobby's problems in adjusting to the fact that his recently divorced parents are in conflict, that they are dating other people, and finally that his father decides to go away for a year. Adequately written, but rather patterned, the story has only the slightest of characterizations and the two aspects of the story never fully mesh, but the audience for sports fiction will undoubtedly enjoy the book nevertheless.


Despite the small type and closely printed pages, this fairly sophisticated novel should hold readers through its creation of suspense and the surprising twist of plot at the close of the story. Characterization is adequate, and the pace is well-sustained. Two children in an English family living in France, Carrie and Maxwell, try a desperate ploy to reunite their parents after their father goes off with a student with whom he's become infatuated. Their decision to run away, in order to bring a worried father home, seems likely to fail; when a crafty man takes advantage of their isolation and kidnaps them, there really is something to worry about.
What Grandma and Maggie are getting away from is Aunt Ruby, who wants Maggie to live with her and learn to be more ladylike; Ruby also thinks Grandma should go to an old people's home. So Grandma rents an old car, taking not only Maggie but several other children who live in their ancient building and are unhappy. (There's no parental conflict.) It's planned as a vacation, but turns into a permanent arrangement, as the whole cast gathers at the home of a relative in upstate New York, planning to save her from losing her house: they'll all live there and share the work of restoring the house: Grandma gets a job, and even sour Aunt Ruby agrees that it's best all around. The group helps people en route, and find they have cast their bread upon the waters. There's a bit too much coincidence to be convincing, but the characters are diverse and lively, the escapade should appeal to readers, and the story is replete with such qualities as friendship values, high ethical concepts, the work ethic and cooperative attitudes.

Like the other historical novels by the Collier brothers, this is fiction skilfully based on fact, and an appended note makes clear which is which. The story is based on Shays' Rebellion, and Daniel Shays is an important figure in fourteen-year-old Justin's account of his participation in that campaign. As is true of the earlier books, the story has a dramatic plot and good style, historical information nicely integrated into the plot and the dialogue, and that final element that marks the best in historical fiction: it gives the reader an understanding of the personal conflicts, the practical needs, the ideological principles, and the background that contributed to an event. The political oppression and financial burdens suffered by Massachusetts citizens in 1787, seen through Justin's eyes, are as vivid as his descriptions of confrontations between farmers and government troops.

Convincingly told by thirteen-year-old Melanie, this is the story of her first summer at camp. An only child who's never been away from her parents, Mel is homesick, but not for long: she is smitten by romance, she learns to ride and is elated to find she's good at it, she struggles to learn swimming (at which she remains terrible) and she makes friends—including the small brother of her darling Steve. And she learns that the advice she's given little Dougie applies to her: nobody else can fight your battles for you if you want to be self-reliant. Nothing unusual happens in the story, but it all rings true, it's told at lively pace and in an easy, natural style, and it has unforced humor.

Brisk, humorous illustrations show the antics of a small girl who has a loose tooth that she hopes will fall out: she tries brushing with her father's electric toothbrush, chewing gum and candy, and all sorts of rough exercise. Playing baseball, she forgets about her tooth and concentrates on scoring a run; out at home plate, she's disappointed—until her friends tell her the tooth is out. Then she grins. A bit forced and not very substantial, this is adequately written and has the appeal of the familiar.
A pared-down description of the cars included in a small freight train also serves to identify black and the primary and complimentary colors. There's a track with a red caboose at the back, next an orange tank car, a yellow hopper car, a green cattle car, a blue gondola car, a purple box car, and the black tender and engine. They are almost-solid blocks of color, with just enough detail to make them look real; they are in frieze form, running along the track that is at the foot of all pages; the train gathers speed, moves in and out of a tunnel, passes cities and crosses trestles . . . and then it's gone. Very simple, very attractive, it's a fine first train book.

An Appalachian story centers on the inhabitants' struggle against the encroachment of strip mining operations, although it also has a sad love affair between the offspring of feuding families. In Old Mule Hollow, the feud between the Collins clan and the McFarrs has been passed from generation to generation. All the Collins children have been named for the ballads they preserve in family songfests, and Fair Annie well knows the pattern of a lover's death in song. She meets it in life when Dan'el McFarr is killed by a rockslide caused by mining operations. And so Fair Annie decides that she will—somehow—follow Dan'el's path and become a lawyer so she can come home and fight for the mountain folk. The ending seems unrealistically hopeful in view of the fact Annie has neither academic nor financial resources, but Crook presents a strong case against strip mining and incorporates it fairly smoothly into a story that gives a good picture of hill folk and their way of life. The writing is a bit heavy with dialect and local idiom, but it's convincing.

Posthumously published, this slight monologue is illustrated by scribbly line drawings, comic but repetitive. The text is minimal, with a sentence on every page or two. "When I want a hug, I am very nice so I'll get it." "Sometimes I want to kick everybody." "One time I ate too much." "At times I refuse to be moved," and so on. Mildly amusing, perhaps, for those children who can recognize themselves on some pages, but not substantial.

Ralph is a large, bright red cat whose mistress tells him to behave while she's away. Lolling in a hammock, he is challenged by a tough alley cat; to prove he's macho, Ralph first joins the other alley cats in their mischief, then leads them into more malicious ploys of his own devising—like terrorizing the dogs in Pierre's Poodle Parlor, throwing pies about in a bakery, and making a mess at home. When Ralph's owner arrives, she chases away the bad cats, assuming they have terrorized her darling. Ralph enjoys it all. There's some appeal to young children in the unmitigated naughtiness of the cats, but the story doesn't go anywhere, and the awkward drawings are cluttered with flat colors and busy details.

The green of Jennifer, as she tells it, is the period of her childhood and adolescence, and she tells it in flashbacks with periodic returns to the present, as she rides a
train en route to Charleston and her date with Chris. The flashback material is adequately written, giving highlights of Jennifer's early years and her relationships with family members and friends, but the format is fragmented and the ending diffuse: is she simply there on a date that will clarify her relationship with charming, mendacious Chris or is she looking over the college he's been attending for a year with a view to going there herself? Some nice characterization is included, but the book never coalesces to reach a solid whole.


Although Hoffmann died before he had prepared the finished art for this version of an old tale, his brush drawings and preliminary color sketches have tremendous vitality and grace; the version used is that of the Grimm brothers. A soldier makes a bargain with the devil: for seven years he must not wash or cut his hair, he must always wear the skin of the bear he has just killed, and he must not pray. The devil's coat is his—and it has a pocket that provides an endless supply of gold. When the soldier, now called "Bearskinner," does a kind deed for an old man, the man offers one of his daughters in marriage. In traditional form, the youngest of the three daughters agrees to marry the bearish, uncouth stranger after his seven years of bondage are up. When he then appears, shaved and handsome, beautifully dressed, the youngest sister happily embraces him, the older sisters rush off in a jealous rage, and all the amenities of the folk tradition have been observed: reward for kindness, reward for filial devotion, penalty for haughtiness, and faithfulness to a vow.


Kenny, a high school student, is pulled two ways. He and Phil had been best friends since fourth grade, and now Phil was jeering at Kenny for his devotion to the football team and for his interest in Harold, the retarded adolescent who had just come from years in an institution. As Harold's neighbor, Kenny saw him often, especially after Kenny's girl, Rachel, became interested in helping Harold. And they did help him: Harold became more adept socially and was devoted to his new friends. "Mental Lover," Phil jeered, and went on teasing Harold whenever they met, calling him "retard." When Kenny and Rachel broke up, Phil showed up again; he convinced Kenny to try grass, and under its influence Kenny went to a dance where he saw Rachel and Harold dancing, and turned on his retarded friend viciously. It was too late to be sorry when Kenny learned that Harold had run away, had then been beaten up by a gang, and was hospitalized. Like the adolescents in Zindel's *The Pigman*, Kenny has learned that one lives with the consequences of one's actions. The author, a former teacher of retarded adolescents, draws a touching picture of Harold, loving and responsive, although her comments on institutionalizing the retarded are a bit obtrusive. Save for Phil, who seems overdrawn, the characterization is good; the dialogue flows naturally, and the book has a balanced structure.


All things change, and in this fourth book about the small chimp Arthur and his little sister Violet, Arthur must reluctantly accept the fact that Violet has learned to read. A light but amusing fictional framework (little Violet is more discerning than her brother in spotting the prize in a contest) shows how quickly the beginning independent reader can move from "easy" to "hard" words, as Arthur challenges Violet's ability. An amiable little story provides good practice for the beginning reader and has enough humor and action to hold the attention of the lap audience as well.

An adaptation of a Russian folktale is nicely simplified for the beginning independent reader and is illustrated in rather busy drawings that are vigorous and comic. A farmer and his wife exit via the chimney when they are snowed in; they follow a tunnel to an empty house in which delectable food is sitting on the table. Five bears come home and are frightened off when the farmer, hiding in the fireplace, sneezes and blows soot into the room. The bears return with their king, who assures them that there really is no dragon, as they’ve claimed. By another accident, the farmer’s wife frightens the king bear; shrieking “The dragon!” the king and the other bears race back to the palace, never to return; the old couple happily ensconce themselves forever in the bears’ house. Although simplified, this is smoothly enough written to be used for reading aloud, and it can also be used for storytelling.


No superficial revision, this. New material has been added, material from the 1973 edition has been revised, the index is more extensive, even the section on questions and answers about venereal disease has been brought up to date. The contrast between the statistics cited in the two editions makes the book potentially more useful; in 1973 the estimate was that 7,000 more people would be infected each day; in 1978, that figure had risen to 27,000. Forthright and comprehensive, the text does not dramatize, moralize, or threaten; Johnson simply describes the most common venereal diseases; gives the facts about prevalence, prevention, and treatment; discusses the volunteer group that maintains a hot line, Operation Venus, and gives information about the ease and anonymity with which an individual may get help.


Glory, Second Starcaster of Solstice Tower and teller of the story, lives in a future time that follows a scientifically sophisticated civilization. In this familiar science fiction setting, Glory’s pacific community is threatened by a breach in the wall they have built to keep out the “barbarians” who live just beyond its perimeter. Glory and her friend Honor, Third Geomancer, who has psychic powers, go with the expedition that is to repair the breach in the wall; their forecasts for timing and placement of the work is ignored, and the resultant tragic conflict with the barbarians brings Glory to a realization that it is not only the stars that influence events, but also the actions and decisions of human beings. Jones has created a believable society and interesting characters in a story that has pace and action, but that may be limited in its appeal to readers because of occasional passages of florid writing, exemplified by Glory’s final thought at the end of the book, “Ah. Even now the moving moon cast the light of her smile on the Love Star.”


In a sequel to *Confessions of an Only Child* (reviewed in the June, 1974 issue) Toe (Antonia) is ten and resentful of the fact that her friend Libby says Toe can’t join the Tomboy Club, that she isn’t enough of a tomboy. But what’s a tomboy? To Libby, it’s a girl who likes sports and wears jeans instead of slacks. Who doesn’t keep her dolls around. Who doesn’t like boys. Poor Toe, she does still have dolls around, and she does like Jimmy, another friend. There’s candid discussion between the girls when Libby develops breasts and Toe first menstruates; neither girl likes these signs of growing up, but they’re resigned to the inevitable. This is less structured than the
first book, more an exploration of a stage of childhood than a development of a conflict situation, although Toe does gain some perspectives on one’s sex role. Still, it’s realistic and candid, reflecting many typical concerns and interests of the ten-year-old, and it has humor, especially in the dialogue. Unfortunately, the typeface and leading make it a bit hard on the eyes.


As her followers already know, Krementz is an excellent photographer, and, in following the format of the texts of *A Very Young Dancer* and *A Very Young Rider*, she has again achieved the casual intimacy of a child’s conversation. It is ten-year-old Torrance York who is the narrator, describing her training, explaining the execution and judging of gymnastic performances. She’s an attractive child, wholly dedicated to gymnastic training, taking ballet lessons, working out at a summer gymnastics camp, travelling to Germany to compete in a meet, taking diving lessons, and apparently filling every spare moment with participation in any gymnastic event she can get to. The author spent a year with Torrance, so the coverage is full; an appended author’s note includes the information that Torrance qualified for the A.A.U. Junior Olympics just as the book was going to press, and the quality of the book is such that many readers will feel a sense of gratification that someone they know has made it.


A novel that dramatizes the activities of Amnesty International, the organization that helps those who are imprisoned for political or religious reasons, or because of ethnic discrimination, this has a great deal of drama and speaks to a worthy cause but is weakened by its purposiveness. It traces the efforts of a group of people in a German town to give comfort, financial aid, and freedom to specific cases: a black American unjustly accused of selling drugs, a Moroccan adolescent accused of distributing inflammatory literature, a Spanish worker who became involved in a strike, and so on. The text, written with considerable competence and sense of drama, moves back and forth from short passages about the prisoners to those members of the group who have “adopted” them, a format that is a bit fragmented but on the whole effective. The translation is infrequently awkward (“Here I have my first letter written in French, and it is very important that it does not contain too many errors,” says one of the AI group) but not obtrusively so. An epilogue describes the goals, founding, operation, and membership procedures for AI, and gives addresses of national and regional offices in the United States and Canada.


Following a lucid description of volcanic action and geothermal eruptions, Lauber discusses the ways in which geothermal sources are being, or can be, used to provide heat and electricity for people. Examples of use, such as the heating of buildings in Iceland, or the conversion of geothermal energy to electrical energy in Italy are cited, and the book closes with a chapter envisioning the tapping of sources of geothermal energy in the future. Some suggestions for home experiments and an index are included; maps and diagrams are adequately placed and labelled; the book’s one weakness is in the print, which is large and clear but with so much space between words that the pages have a fractured appearance.

In a series of short, cheerful stories that are simply written, an itinerant grasshopper meets a series of other small creatures. There are three butterflies who are friendly until they find out that Grasshopper doesn't share every one of their likes and dislikes, and a mosquito who is so insistent that the only way to get across a puddle is in his tiny boat that our hero carries the mosquito, boat and all, across the puddle rather than argue. Each brief tale has a bit of provocative lampooning in it, but can be enjoyed even if the reader doesn't get this message. The illustrations are soft, natural colors and have a gently humorous quality.


The *Golden Dragon* is a fictitious ship, and her voyage from New York to San Francisco a fictitious voyage; Loeper has used the impressions and experiences of a boy of ten to give added interest to a book that serves primarily to describe the clipper ships of the mid-nineteenth century. Details about shipboard life, weather, parts of the ship, typical meals, etc. contribute to the more substantial part of the text, while young Jeremy's small adventures embellish it. The writing has errors ("...the sound of sea chanty's mixed with the music...") but the book is informative and the fictional framework capably integrated with information. Several appendices (sail plan, food stores) are appended, as are a list of books suggested for additional reading and an index.


Soft, realistic pencil drawings with good textural effects illustrate a slight but gentle and mildly humorous story about a mouse who doesn't want anyone to know that it's her birthday. A mouse mother has told her six offspring that they are to keep her birthday a secret, but—although nobody tells—the secret comes out. Mouse number six goes off, knapsack on his back, to hunt for presents; word gets around that he must be running away, and various animals bring consolation gifts to his mother. Before they can speak, she says, "How nice of you to come. But I TOLD Six not to tell anyone that this is my birthday." Quick on the uptake, the animals announce their gifts as birthday presents: Six comes home with his gifts, and a celebratory feast takes place.


Almost eighteen, Kim struggles constantly to convince her parents that her devotion to riding is not a phase; she also struggles to get money to keep her horse Foxy and to pay for lessons; her goal is acceptance for the U.S. Equestrian Team. Despite some careless writing (her parents would "split half the entry fees with her" when the text makes it clear that they are splitting the full fee; referring to Kim as "nauseous" rather than "nauseated") and a heavy burden of information about riding that is presented, usually, as part of the dialogue, this has some substance in its presentation of an adolescent striving for independence, and some appeal in the behind-the-scenes information. Kim is disillusioned about the U.S.E.T. and its methods by the end of the story, but anxious to keep riding and working with horses. This should be of interest primarily to those devoted to horse stories.

Munzer, Martha E. *Full Circle; Rounding Out a Life*. Knopf, 1978. 78-3277. 84p. $5.95.

The musings of an almost-octogenarian about her life and thoughts may not appeal to every reader, but there may be many mature adolescents who can enjoy the
warmth and candor of this book. A child of wealthy, proper, and indulgent parents, Munzer moved (with her mother’s conversion) from the Ethical Culture society to Christian Science, later leaving that church as well. She was one of the few women studying at M.I.T., obtaining a degree in electrochemical engineering, taught high school chemistry, raised a family, took joy in a lover, became fascinated by ecology and conservation. She ponders her relationships and motivation, and writes with courage about death and continuity.


Softly shaded pencil drawings, realistic and tender, illustrate a slight but rather touching story told by a small black girl whose father is out of work. They’re getting along fine: Mama has a job, and Daddy has become a good cook. It’s nice to have him at home when she comes back from school. Discouraged, Daddy considers going elsewhere to look for work, but his wife and daughter love him too much to bear the thought of separation and they solace and cheer him by their love. He decides that they are right: something will turn up, and meanwhile he’s going to make the best vegetable soup there ever was for dinner. And that’s how the story ends—with dinner. Fragmentary, but conveying family warmth, this can help children understand the difficulty of the unemployed adult and the importance of the supportive family.


Trig (Elizabeth Trigman) is the active spirit in her gang, which consists of herself and two boys. The various incidents of the story are concerned with the firing of an elderly traffic policeman and the substitution of a hanging traffic light at Clodsburg’s one busy intersection. It’s all slapstick comedy that depends on people getting into fights, falling down, jeering at each other, and making stupid errors—to say nothing of talking like naive ignoramuses. Trig and her pals make much of being Junior G-Men and hovering about, cheering each small disaster and hoping Pop the Cop will be reinstated. The disaster humor may appeal to some readers, but the overblown and unrelieved farce eventually erodes even the humor.


In *The Team*, Peyton introduced an adolescent girl, Ruth, who later became the wife of Pennington, protagonist of *The Beethoven Medal* and *Pennington’s Heir*. Here there is another link between Peyton’s fictional characters as Jonathan Meredith, one of the people Ruth rode with in *The Team*, becomes the central character. Son of wealthy parents, Jonathan is kidnapped and held for ransom. The ransom is paid and Jonathan released, but he can’t quite get over the fears he’d had while a captive nor the guilt he felt about those fears, the feeling that he should have been cool and heroic. When, by chance, he recognizes the voice of one of his captors, Jonathan trails the man and confronts him alone, expiating his own sense of inadequacy. As is true of other Peyton books, this has a smooth writing style, perceptive characterization, and particularly deft handling of dialogue: as is not always true of earlier books, this has a most dramatic (yet believable) plot.


Following a general discussion of the profitable pleasures of gathering wild plants for food, recognizing them, identifying them, and collecting them, or their parts,
Pringle gives approximately twenty examples. For each, he describes ways to find, recognize, harvest, and prepare the plant, occasionally giving more than one recipe, and often giving warnings (with illustrations) of harmful look-alikes. A photograph (not adequate for identification) and a drawing (adequate for identification but not in color) are provided for each plant. The writing style is smooth and conversational, the recipes are clearly presented and enticing. A final chapter describes ways of preserving wild foods for winter use; a glossary, a bibliography, and an index are appended.


Adam and Eva, twins, had been orphaned when they were very young; each had lived with an uncle, and now they faced a dubious future, because Uncle Windy and Uncle Burl (the brothers who had taken the twins) had been killed in an accident. They wanted to live with their step-grandmother, G-Mama, and she wanted them but the law was firm. G-Mama was single, and G-Mama was old, although she was tough and capable. Adam felt it was his duty to make sure his twin, timid and insecure, had a home, so he repeatedly took the initiative: he lied so that they could get sent back from an orphanage, he lied to Sheriff Erica so that they could stay with G-Mama when they got back home; after the sheriff had moved them all to her house (G-Mama had injured her hip) Adam tried to get the sheriff married off so she could legally adopt Eva. With characters so determined, it's not surprising that the story ends with adoption by the sheriff, who—with the children's help—finds a way around the ruling that a single woman can't be an adoptive mother. The characterization and dialogue are colorful, the setting less effective in its period details than its rural locale, and the story well constructed; readers may enjoy the picture of an extended family and the sense of community in the story.


Photographs amplify a text that describes the several kinds of Australian marsupials and some of the distinctive species of each. The author discusses anatomy, feeding habits, predators, conservation of species, and special traits but focuses on the birth, pouch life, feeding, and care of marsupial young. The material is interesting, and the book gives some facts, fairly recently established by scientists, that are not cited in other books for children on this subject, but it is weakened by frequent repetitions (explanations of the word "marsupial," a definition of the difference between a kangaroo and a wallaby), giving the effect of a text written from notes by one who is not an authority on the subject. A bibliography and an index are appended.


A newcomer to the ninth grade, Sandi—who tells the story—is anxious to join the small clique led by Toni; some of the other girls are friendly, but Toni's cool toward her. She allows Toni to pressure her into shoplifting, she accepts cutting remarks, but she rebels when Toni acts spiteful toward a quiet girl, dull but pleasant, who's irritated her. Sandi leaves the party where this incident takes place, and finds that three other people are her friends. Not badly written, but awkwardly constructed, the book is illustrated by photographs that are patently posed and that do not help in identifying characters. The best use for the book is to encourage reading by slow or reluctant readers, since it is designed for that purpose, with a 2.5 reading level.
Soft wash and pencil drawings in black and white illustrate a story about a Japanese child and echo its gentle quality. Yukio's father is one of the whale fishers in their small village; he can not answer the question, "Why do you kill the whales?" to his son's satisfaction. He says it is all he knows. When Yukio finds a whale stranded on the beach, he frantically empties pail after pail of sea water on the creature so that it can live until the incoming tide washes it back to sea. Yukio stumbles in exhaustion, and all the people of the village, even his father, join in to keep the whale wet and alive. Presumably the message is that even hunters have compassion, but the distinction between saving one whale and killing another may not be clear to a read-aloud audience; the book would also be strengthened if the obvious were stated: the whale fishers hunt and kill to earn money to stay alive themselves. Well meant and not badly told, but murky.


Thirteen-year-old Ella Jane is the youngest of the Thatcher family, bound for Oregon in 1845, and she begins her story of the arduous journey by worrying about the fact that her father insists on following a Mr. Meek (a real person) in taking a short cut, leaving other members of the family: a married sister, a grandmother. Their other passenger is Yvette, a withdrawn French-Chinook girl just Ella Jane's age, and as one misfortune follows another, Ella Jane becomes increasingly suspicious that Yvette is the source of some of their bad luck. Yvette nevertheless saves Ella Jane's life and helps cure her mother, who is ill. Only after Yvette has left to join the Chinooks and they meet again, briefly, does Ella Jane understand her friend's ambivalence: Yvette liked the Thatchers, but her first allegiance was to her tribe. As she tells Ella Jane what the westward trek means to native Americans, the white girl realizes that they are indeed the halo wind, the death wind, to the native tribes and their peaceful way of life. The author gives a clear and convincing picture of the hardships of the trail, the narrative has impetus and adequate writing style, and it is clear that the intent of the book is to show and evoke sympathy for both sides in the cultural conflict—but most of the story is seen from the white viewpoint, and Yvette's explanation comes so late in the story that readers may have already seen her as a malfeasant by the time she discloses her motivation.


A series of photographs of good quality is accompanied by a minimal amount of print and plenty of white space; the pictures show women in a wide variety of jobs: astronaut, artist, lawyer, mother, butcher, legislator, carpenter, athlete, coal miner, and so on. There is divergence in the amount and kind of information given about each career, sometimes as little as "What must these women know to do their jobs well?" to "Sometimes the name of the job tells us whether a worker is a man or a woman. The fire department hires 'firemen' and 'firewomen' but now calls them both 'firefighters' since both do the same work." Like other books of this kind, this can extend readers' awareness of the feminine role in our society, but the paucity of information and the occasional questions, like "Have you thought about the work you want to do when you are older?" or "What work do you do now?" strike a note that seems patronizing; both weaken the book.

Although a great deal has been learned about the feeding, mating, and nesting habits of the cattle egret since it first appeared in South and North America, the great mystery is why it did appear. An African native, the bird has no pattern of migration and there does not seem to be any reason why (avian population pressure, dwindling food sources) it made the long flight to another continent. Primarily an insect eater, the cattle egret follows animals that stir up the grasses, devouring the insects that fly up as the cattle walk. Scott compares the egret to other members of the heron family to which it belongs, describes its various behavior patterns, and discusses the reasons for its remarkable biological success. Sweet’s pictures are excellent, consistently of a quality that matches that of the text.

Seuss, Dr. *I Can Read with My Eyes Shut!* written and illus. by Dr. Seuss. Random House, 1978. 78-7193. 34p. (Beginner Books) Trade ed. $3.50; Library ed. $4.39 net.

An old cat in a hat tells a young cat in a hat, as both of them romp around the pages with real and invented creatures and objects, how much fun it is to read, how much you can learn, how far you can go—and how inadvisable it is to keep one’s eyes shut and not read. It’s a message, book, all right, but few beginning independent readers will resent the didacticism, wrapped as it is in bouncy verse, nonsense, and ebullient drawings. It may even encourage pre-readers to whom it is read aloud.


Older readers will remember a popular song about "... just a perfect friendship and that’s Margo and Mitchell. Bored by his old house, Mitchell tells his chum and neighbor, Margo, that he’s going two weeks away. Margo protests: she threatens to tape or tie Mitchell to his house; she pours; she declares her affection. No go. Mitchell, a spotted blue dinosaur (Margo is a dinosaur too, peach with white spots) packs a bag with mud and slime, just in case there aren’t any where he’s going, and plods off. Two weeks away, he builds and enjoys a new house but misses Margo; she comes to visit and builds a house next door. Silly. this misses inanity because of the exaggeration of the dialogue and the sprightliness of the style: the illustrations extend and complement the story, and the whole is a light-hearted addition to books for beginning independent readers.


The life cycle of a fox is presented in narrative framework, but without anthropomorphism, in a book illustrated by full-color paintings of adequate quality. The story includes facts about a vixen’s ways of finding food and shelter, her mating and producing a litter of cubs, and her care of the cubs until they are independent enough to go off on their own. The facts are accurate, but the combination of a pedestrian writing style and some inadequate explanations ("She could tell from the scent whether they were vixens or dog-foxes, and even how old they were," or "As she went she marked certain tree stumps and clumps of grass with her scent.") weakens the book. Two pages of facts, headed "More about Foxes," are provided at the back of the book.

Unlike the Rabinowich book reviewed above, this gives no extended treatment to any species but briefly describes many of the minor marsupials as well as the better-known kangaroo, koala, and opossum. The meticulously detailed pencil drawings are almost photographic in quality, save for the depth and texture of shading. Few of the drawings show the animals’ pouches; each picture—usually in a double-page spread—accompanies a short paragraph that describes some distinctive aspect of pouch life or behavior of such creatures as the tuan, the spotted cuscus, the boodie, the wombat, the bandicoot, or the wuhl-wuhl. The writing is simple and direct; the book introduces, but does not give a great deal of information about, an interesting group of animals; an index is included.


Not as comprehensive as the Scheele or Silverberg titles on the subject, this serves adequately as an introduction. Steele describes four native American cultures of the past that incorporated mound burial: Adena, Shell Mound, Bone House (also called Harmon’s Creek), and Hopewell Indians. After the chapters that discuss each of these prehistoric peoples, there are chapters in which the author imagines what a ceremonial observance would have been like. Dramatic black and white drawings that depend on cross-hatch and line for their effectiveness illustrate the text but seldom amplify it. The writing style is a bit choppy, and the chapters that begin with such comments as, “This may be how an Adena burial mound was begun . . .”, do not invite total credulity, but on the whole the book gives accurate information about archaeologists, their theories, and their finds. A bibliography, a chronological chart, and an index are included.


Sullivan gives a brief history of women’s basketball in the United States, makes some suggestions for getting in condition and choosing sneakers, and launches into a skill-by-skill explanation of techniques and skills (various passes, various shots, screening, getting free, etc.) and concludes with several chapters on team defense and defensive play. Rules of the game and a glossary are appended. The advice is clear, the photographs and diagrams helpful, the material carefully organized.


In another story about the impish Quaker boy of Nantucket, Obadiah finds that girls can be as determined and active as boys. He and his small sister Rachel know that a friend has received a silver coin for being the first to let a captain’s wife know his ship was sailing into port. They both want the coin, and they race to see who’ll have the chance to tell the news when another ship is sighted. In hare-and-tortoise fashion, Obadiah is diverted (a patch of ripe berries) and Rachel wins the race. The grateful recipient of the news gives Rachel two coins, and the story ends with a hint that the second one will go to Obadiah. Turkle’s softly shaded, realistic paintings give authentic architectural and costume details of the sailing days, and the story is nicely told; the historical setting, the use of Quaker forms of address, and the latent content about sailing indicate an independent reading audience rather than the preschool group, but the story can also be used for reading aloud.

The wider-than-tall pages of this silly but engaging book are used nicely to show a snake that carries over for pages and pages, its rippling green body moving over an assortment of running friezes at the foot of each double-page spread. There are a string of telephone poles and wires (with conversation), a blurred photograph of night traffic, a pattern of road signs, one of flowers, one of snowflakes, etc. The text is simple: the snake travels for days and nights and months; it's the longest trip ever undertaken by a snake and it wonders if it will ever reach its destination. Wiggling with joy, it sees the end ahead. Alas, the snake discovers it is right back where it started. Not much there? Yes, there is: the concepts of time and distance, the appeals of exaggeration and humor, and the visual variety of the pages.


Three vignettes of a sibling relationship are illustrated with pictures of an animal (vaguely hamsterish) family; the pictures add touches of sly humor to the text, complementing and extending it. The three episodes consist primarily of dialogue, and Wells has a marvelous ear for speech patterns as well as an appreciation of the wiles of the young. Stanley, the elder child, copes in each case with his fractious younger sister: he helps Rhoda clean her room and does most of the work; he sees through Rhoda's simulated agony when she overdramatizes a reported bee sting; and he instructs a babysitter who is baffled by Rhoda's obstinacy, an episode that ends with a nice twist. An entertaining story that invites children to laugh at their own foibles, this is one of those unusual books that can also beguile adult readers-aloud.


A story of the building of the first transcontinental railroad is told by a fictional young Chinese, Lim Yan-sung; it comprises both informational details about the race between the two railroads (with accompanying facts about danger, statistics, methods, etc.) and about the protagonist's problems in trying to save money for a passage home, his love for a girl in San Francisco, his friendship with one American, and varied relationships with other Chinese in his work crew. The author makes some strong points about the persecution suffered by Chinese in San Francisco and as railroad workers, but the story line and the information are mutually obtrusive, and the dialogue uses stereotypical phraseology despite the author's obvious sympathy for the Chinese victims of prejudice.


Penny is a penguin, the captain is a walrus, and there are five short stories about them in a book illustrated with soft pencil and brush drawings that have intriguing details but are often rather busy and crowded. The writing style is bland and ingenuous, the appeal of the book lying primarily in the mild humor of the situation and the combination of cozy friendship and brisk little adventures. In the first tale the captain prevents a homesick Penny's departure by giving her an iceberg for her bath, so that she will feel at home; in the second, there's a visit from Penny's Aunt Adeline, who has left Antarctica to enjoy sunnier climes: they drink rum, practice yoga, go deep-sea fishing, etc. Story three, the captain finds he's lonely when Penny and the crew go ashore for a night; story four, a card game; story five, the two friends have a happy time indoors when a storm rages outside.
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