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 col-
lections.
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


Like most biographies of sports figures, this is a medley of boyhood interest in sports, experiences as a rookie player, the ups and downs of a professional career, and action sequences or establishment of records. This hasn't the hyperbole that weakens many books about sports heroes, although it has a fair share of admiration, both for Rose's ability as a baseball player and for the aggressiveness that won him the nickname of "Charlie Hustle." The text is continuous, with neither table of contents nor index to give access to facts; there are no statistical tables included, but the book ends with photographs and statistics for each of the fifteen players who have had three thousand hits.


What happens in the story is of less importance than the basic situation and the way in which the story's told, in a book in comic strip format. It begins in proper ghost story style, with a dark dark town, and a dark dark street and a dark dark house with a dark dark cellar . . . where a big skeleton and a little skeleton and a dog skeleton live. They go out for some midnight fun on a playground and the zoo, and since they can't find anyone else to frighten, they have a high old time frightening each other. The Ahlbergs have fun with words and with the concept of skeletons at play, and their communicable zest precludes any note of the macabre.


The overprotected daughter of a stern Victorian father, Elinor was well aware that she must keep her friendship with two of the children from the mill town a secret. Owner of the mills, Father wanted Elinor to be a proper young lady; Father wanted Elinor to stay quietly with her governess, whose teaching was inept and dull. It was the summer of 1914, and with the announcement of war Father became so furious that he had a fatal stroke; unexpectedly, Elinor's quiet mother became a firm and outspoken manager of the family's affairs, and Elinor's dearest wish came true: not only would she be allowed to go to school, but to the school in the town below. The difference in location is paralleled by the difference in social status, and the book—a competent but not stimulating period piece—is indicative of the changing status of women (feminine suffrage is one of the issues it explores, education for women another) and of the breakdown of the rigid class system. The writing style and characterization are adequate if not impressive; the story line is cohesive but sedate.

Although slow-moving through most of the book, the story of Anna, told at times from her viewpoint and at times from the viewpoint of her brother Rowan, is imaginative if not always wholly convincing. Anna discovers, in this tale set in the 1990s, that she is not really Rowan’s natural sister and that his parents are not really hers; their mother (a dedicated scientist) has been a vehicle for a clone. There are other Annas, not identical but similar, all having been cloned as part of an experiment. As Anna, who is twelve, begins to change, she is worried; angry about the secret of her birth, she is afraid that if the experiment fails, she will be destroyed. Nicely constructed, written with some grace, this is weakened by small, illogical developments but is intriguing in conception and concludes with a dramatic flourish as Rowan rescues Anna from the dire fate shared by her clone-sisters.


Every child who’s ever nervously wobbled through a first try at riding a bicycle can sympathize with Sylvie, who tries and tries and can’t make it, while her friends whizz past. She’s afraid of falling, and she’s embarrassed about being afraid. Then—as readers will know—she finds that she’s in control, and as she speeds past a nervous first-time rider she bawls out, as others have to her, “Can’t you ride?” Line and wash, the illustrations have good composition and texture but some are confusing: for example, one page, in which there are four overlapping Sylvies, is cut across the middle by a band of white space with two lines of print, so that eight feet but no wheels show. The text is light and amusing, but it may elicit some questions about why neither of Sylvie’s parents helps her.


Darrow’s brisk, comic line drawings add to the quiet humor of a story about a pigeon who’s sent off on his first race and never gets home. Not that Walter doesn’t intend to fly home, it’s just that he’s curious about other things, and often hungry, so he drops in here and there for a visit and some food. On his third visit to the home of a tender-hearted woman, she calls Walter’s owner (whose name is on a leg band) and comes back announcing that Walter is now hers. Not substantial, and a bit weak in the ending, this is still appealing because of the humor and the lightness and vitality of the writing style.


Berger uses several mammals, including human beings, to illustrate the ways in which geological and climatic changes, adaptation to the environment, and natural selection has led to the many related families and species of animals living today. The writing is clear, the level of complexity and vocabulary appropriate for the middle grades reader; the continuous text is logically arranged but not comprehensive (it includes humans, cats, bears, and camels) and is illustrated by rather scratchy line drawings of which only the few maps extend the text. An index is included.

In this third detective story told by eighteen-year-old Doris, she has come with her friend Carl Suzuki (once on the New York police force, now a lawyer) to the island resort of Santa Catarina, off the California coast. Friend is all Carl is, although Doris knows he's about to propose. (He does, at the end of the story; Doris says she loves him but is too young, Carl lovingly says he'll wait.) This time the mystery is the identity of the culprit doing malicious mischief at the island's Casino, mischief that has a potential for danger. This is written with the same light sophistication and humor as were the two earlier books, but is weakened by recurrent coy references to Doris's alter ego, Petunia, the voice of her formerly gluttonous self ("The aroma woke Petunia, who grunted ecstatically") and repeated musical references ("... she could play the 'Etude in E' by Chopin so beautifully..." or "As he did, he began to sing 'Vesti La Giubba' from *I Pagliacci*."). The more serious weakness of the story, which is nevertheless entertaining, is in the motivation and solution: while there are some late clues that can be said to prepare the reader, the eruption of a multiple personality and easy disposition of the case (therapy provided by a millionaire admirer, and the likelihood of an out-of-court settlement, again by the octogenarian millionaire) make for a sunny ending that is more convenient than credible.


Soft watercolor pictures (blue, black, and white) effectively illustrate a simply written text that, while it gives names to a pair of penguin parents, has no anthropomorphism. As the title indicates, the text describes the cycle of the penguin year; it focuses on mating, nesting, and caring for the young. While there are several good books on penguins for the primary and middle grades, including the Todd book reviewed below, none is quite so appropriate for the preschool child's introduction to the subject as this concise and handsomely illustrated book.


The material that precedes the recipes in a well-organized cookbook includes a discussion of American dietary habits, descriptions of some natural foods, definitions of culinary terms and utensils, and some general instructions on reading recipes, assembling materials, and taking safety precautions. Lists of ingredients are given clearly. A temperature conversion chart and index are appended.


Jeffrey had lived most of his fourteen years in India, where his nickname was Ganesh. When his father died, the boy came to his only relative, Aunt Betty; as unaccustomed to the climate as he is to the mores and interests of his peer group, Jeffrey has some adjustment problems, but he arouses the interest of classmates when he beats the school record for staying under water, a feat accomplished by the controlled breathing he's learned in studying Yoga. Then they become interested in Hinduism, and Jeffrey begins to make friends. The dramatic action culminates in a group of friends participating in a sit-down to prevent the state from taking over Aunt Betty's home for a highway, a sit-down that concludes with a hunger strike, that wins
the approbation of the community, and that is successful. An interesting story of cultural fusion and peer relationships has a quiet dignity that contrasts effectively with the colorful and unusual material about India and its cultural patterns.


Brow provides an intriguing setting for an adventure/suspense story: a bunker on the Maginot line that has been converted to a summer home. Adolescent Twyla is visiting here, with her mother and younger brother, when she becomes involved in trying to track down the mysterious, seedy old man who disappears after their one meeting. Bit by bit, a complicated story of the wartime underground and some of its heroes emerges, and Twyla succeeds, with the help of a French friend, in locating the old man, who proves to be the rightful owner of the Cross of Lorraine, a medal that had been given to his wife for her work in the resistance movement. The story has plenty of action, some interesting historical material, good pace, and adequate style and characterization, but the plot is only intermittently convincing.


The time is 1924, the setting a small Kansas town, the protagonist a quiet young woman of seventeen who had come to Ardensville to be the telephone operator—and to forget about the death of the man she loved. At the switchboard, Jessy is privy to all the news and gossip of her neighbors; she’s upset by some of the violence in town, and becomes aware that it’s caused by the Ku Klux Klan. Eventually the local KKK group is identified, and the leader (the town’s mayor) caught, but not before there has been a murder. There’s also a love story, with Jessy being wooed by a cowboy who calls her “his smart little girl.” The writing is pedestrian; Jessy’s switchboard comments tend to repeat questions in unnatural style: “What is playing at the ORPHEUM? Clara Bow, in *Down to the Sea in Ships,*” . . . “How is Grandpa Ellis this afternoon? Doctor says he is better,” and the dialogue throughout the book seems stiff and trite, often reflecting the stock figures who crowd the story.


Luther, the protagonist, had been one of the three football stars on his high school team; the other two were Dan and Griff, but only Luther and Griff were playing the waiting game—waiting to see if there would be an offer from Ohio State. Dan wasn’t waiting because Dan was deaf; he’d only been able to play because Luther tapped out signals for him. Griff makes it; Luther is turned down. At first he lies and says he has turned down an Ohio offer, and he is surprised to find that his family assumes it’s to stay with Dan at the local, free junior college. They all approve, but Dan is furious, wanting no gesture out of sympathy; not until Luther convinces him of the truth does Dan relax. This simply written story has an undeveloped potential for an exploration of friendship values; as it is written, it touches on the intricacy of rivalry and loyalty only superficially, with Dan a minor shadow figure until the end, and with Luther going through several shifts in attitude in one day, to create an abrupt and not very convincing ending. Because of the ages of the three boys, the simplicity of the writing style and the vocabulary, the large print, and the subject, this should be useful for slow readers in senior high school.

A joy. Simon is deeply smitten by Cybil, a fourth-grade classmate, and just as deeply angered by his once-closest friend Tony, a blithely inventive liar who persists in telling fibs to and about Cybil to strengthen his cause: Tony is also smitten by Cybil. The writing seems deceptively simple, but it has a polished fluency and spontaneity. The children, separately and together, are vividly characterized; the relationship between Simon and his mother has a particular warmth, and the story is permeated by an affectionate humor, especially in the dialogue.


Soft, almost fuzzy, and highly textured drawings of Hilda, called the Audubon cat because she’s such a devoted bird-watcher, and of the many birds she sees and tries to catch, are one of the stronger aspects of this picture book. Left alone for two days while her family is on a trip, Hilda is hungry because a rat and some chipmunks have taken all the cat food left out for her. Save for the heightened action of one encounter (Hilda is picked up, then dropped by an owl) this is basically a tepid account of Hilda’s spotting of some grouse, some chickadees, juncoes, redpoll finches, pine siskins, etc. References to such things as Hilda’s “life list” of birds will mean little to those not initiated into the practice of bird watching, the plot is slight, and the book is further weakened by attribution of human thought processes to the cat.


A fifth book about Ramona has all the warmth, spontaneity, and humor of its predecessors, in another realistic and engaging story about the redoubtable child and her small adventures at home and at school. The classroom scenes are hilarious, the family scenes touching, as Ramona battles her way through each challenging day, adjusting to a new school and a new teacher, to having Daddy back in college, and to putting up with a spoiled four-year-old each afternoon because only if Ramona stays with a sitter can Daddy go to school and Mother work. The style is bubbly and fluent; the characters and dialogue ring true.


Lively Lynn and her more sedate twin Victoria go to visit Uncle Steve and Aunt Camilla; Lynn becomes a paper girl, so she’s particularly interested in the fact that Uncle Steve, who runs a computer service out of his home, is setting up a circulation control program for the newspaper she’s working for. The program is stolen. Home alone, Lynn has been checking some figures after wondering who could have wanted to steal the program—and then she realizes who wanted to, and why. Apprehended by the thieves, she hastily calls the police and emerges a heroine. She’s trapped the two men who’d been falsifying records and cheating the newspaper out of large sums of money. While many readers will enjoy having a lively and astute protagonist, the appeal of Lynn’s prowess and the mild humor of some of the dialogue are balanced by an uneven writing style and a speciously easy success in detection that weaken the story.

The story of Elsie, a newcomer to the fifth grade class, is told by Jennifer. Elsie's fat and unhappy, a compulsive eater who steals classmates' money for food because she has been put on a strict diet by her caustic, domineering mother. By degrees, Jennifer and her friends become less hostile as they understand Elsie’s problem; all of them, especially Jennifer, work (successfully) to help Elsie become more secure. The theme is not unusual, but it's competently handled; relationships and characterization (particularly of Elsie and her mother) are nicely tied to motivation and plot development in a good but not outstanding first novel by a school counselor.


Set in a small town at the time of the Vietnam War, eleven-year-old Nell’s story is often touching, sometimes funny, but not always believable. The fact that her parents’ quarrel leads to her mother’s abrupt departure is credible, as are Nell’s anger and despair; what is not credible is the behavior of Nell and her classmates, particularly in their defiant behavior toward their teacher, a stereotype of the sugar-coated vitriolic adult. Nell’s father retreats into apathy and alcohol; her older sister is preoccupied because she’s in love with a man who has just enlisted; Nell herself is torn between irritation and love for an older neighbor who has just been drafted, Gene. Gene’s letters, with their comments on the war, are the contrapuntal motif, emphasized by frequent news broadcasts, and the anti-involvement message of the story is strong enough to obtrude on the narrative.


The four children—Dan, Mickey, Liz, and Jeff—who, in this detective adventure series, have taken the name of the Baker Street Irregulars, are right on the scene when the first incident in a criminal plan takes place. It doesn’t take them long to deduce that someone who wants to buy the property has started a fire in the movie house they’re in, but which of the several people who’ve made the owner an offer is it? Although the children call the police and the latter are involved in the case, it is really (if not quite believably) the Irregulars who solve the crime. This has plenty of action, little characterization, a just-better-than-pedestrian writing style, and a mildly contrived plot, but the action and suspense will probably appeal to readers.


Tori (Victoria) is one of four ardent roller-skaters who are being coached by an older friend so that they can do some group routines in a local parade. She’s disconsolate because her father shows no interest in her activities but is a proud supporter of his older daughter’s bicycling, an interest he shares. Tori also becomes involved with a group of older citizens working in a community garden and wins their support in the skaters’ struggle to be allowed practice space. Her own struggle comes at the end of the story, when she has to decide whether to participate in the parade or do an emergency errand for one of her elderly friends—and the Sizzle Wheels skate without her. Although this has some good friendship values and some positive relationships between generations, it is otherwise weak: the writing style is mediocre, especially in dialogue, the story line is attenuated and the characterization uneven, and the one serious problem of the book, Tori’s relationship with her father, is never developed or resolved.

First retelling the story of the flight from Egypt, the event commemorated by the Jewish holiday of Passover, the author then describes each aspect of its observance, explaining the symbolic or ritual meaning of each preparatory act, each rite or prayer, each item of food. The text is reverent, lucid, and comprehensive; it explains the founding of such practices as opening the door for Elijah, and the meaning of the term “Pesach,” the Hebrew word for the holiday (*Hag-ha-Pesach*, Festival of the Paschal Lamb). Passover games, crafts, and recipes are included; appended are the formal blessings of the Passover meal, a glossary, a brief bibliography, and an index.


Terry, who has been an outstanding football player on his high school team, knows that his father, his coach, and his teammates will be disappointed, but he’s learned to love soccer during the summer and has decided to switch to the soccer team. The story focuses on Terry’s chagrin—since he had expected to be a star—when a new-comer who’s had years of experience joins the team and immediately becomes established as its best player. Terry’s accused of being jealous, of trying to get goals (and failing) rather than pass to a teammate; soon the other players begin keeping the ball from him. Not until he’s benched does he take stock of himself, and what he does is the first variation on what has been a patterned sports story: he asks to play sweeper, a position in which he can help the team but gain no personal glory. The structure is passably sturdy, the writing style adequate; soccer fans will undoubtedly enjoy the many action sequences.


Dramatic in a somber way, the blue-gray pictures, strong in line and composition, show the tumbled rocks of an ocean jetty and are particularly effective in the storm scenes, when the dark skies are slashed by the white of summer lightning. The boy who loves the jetty, Levi, runs home for safety at the height of the storm; when the air clears he returns to his favorite spot, the point of the jetty where he sits—a seaman in his rock cockpit—to watch the ocean and the ships. This is a mood piece, vividly evocative of place but with too little story for most young children, although what story there is is simply and adequately told.


Latest in a dependably good series of books about women and their work, this volume describes a geneticist, Dr. Sharon. As in other books in the series, this gives a considerable amount of information about the subject’s field; here, in addition to a simplified discussion of genetic heritage and the role of DNA (Sharon’s particular interest) there are facts about how scientists work, about some of the equipment used, and about scientific methods. There’s less here than in most of the preceding books about the subject’s personal life, and a bit less about her training. The text is lucid, simply written, and continuous; a glossary is included.
A picture book version of a favorite folktale is illustrated with paintings, framed in decorated borders, that are soft in techniques and tones, and simply composed. The simplified retelling omits some integral parts of the original, particularly the use of repeated rhymes; it softens some of the harshness of the original in such details as the fate of the stepsisters: in the original, their eyes are pecked out, one at a time, by birds, whereas in this version the sisters are struck blind. Many minor details are changed, some new details added; on the whole, however, the retelling adheres to the original, in story line if not in details of exposition and dialogue.

"Everyone’s bad in this house except my mother and my spider, Jennifer," Kate says, and it’s clear that the worst offender is big sister Emily. Both are misbehaving as they wait for father to come home and relieve the housekeeper. Mother’s in the hospital, and the news is that she’s just had a boy. Kate thinks the baby should be named for her, and plans that they will be allied against Emily. At bedtime, however, Emily reads Kate a story and kisses her goodnight. Not such a bad witch after all, Kate decides. A tale of sibling rivalry just hints of the defensive alignment against dethronement that often is the catalyst for a united front. The treatment is not substantial, but the story is written with a light, humorous touch, and the situation should have the appeal of the familiar for many young children; the illustrations are bright, uncluttered, and engaging in their depiction of slightly scruffy, chunky children.

Fourteen-year-old Rowena glumly notes that she’s the only girl in her class who’s never had a date. On a magazine quiz that rates experience ("Every Woman’s Most Exciting Journey!") Rowena gets seven on a scale of forty. One day the note she’d written (planning to tear it up) to the handsome new teacher on whom she had a crush, was apparently seen by a friend. Self-conscious anguish was followed by Rowena’s delighted realization that boys were beginning to notice her—and it wasn’t until after she began dating that she learned that her unsigned letter had been attributed to another girl, that in fact it was her own attitude that had changed and brought her the attention she had been too shy to encourage. There isn’t anything deep here, or new or dramatic, but it’s a light, amusing story of self-perception, written with affectionate insight and a good ear for dialogue.

Illustrated with tidy drawings of a young farm couple, pictures in peasant style framed with borders ornamented in Pennsylvania Dutch style, this is a tale in the folk tradition. Onion eaters (onion stew, onion bread, onion soup, onion pie) the two are surrounded by tubs and pots of onions; the wife sniffs constantly, but believes that the onions keep evil spirits away. Irritated because his pancakes have onion in them, the husband throws all the onions away and departs. He comes back with a gift, one
onion, and they agree to have onion soup once a week. Rather stiffly told, the story has an air of contrivance and seems a heavy padding for a slight plot.


Clear photographs, carefully placed so that no captions are needed, illustrate a text printed on pages that have a clean, spacious appearance. As he has done in *One Day in the Life of a Veterinarian*, Jaspersohn gives as much information about techniques, career preparation, milieu, etc. as he does about his subject. The news reporter whose day is covered is Dan Rea, on the staff of WBZ-TV in Boston; the text not only describes Rea’s day but also the equipment used on location and in the studio, the work of the other members of the station, and the way in which a script is prepared and processed. The material should be of interest to readers, it’s given clearly, and the information is nicely spaced and paced in a continuous text.


Cluttered and pedestrian cartoon style pictures add little to a highly fictionalized partial biography of Sacagawea, the Shoshone woman who served as interpreter on the Lewis and Clark expedition. Not only are there many passages of invented dialogue, but early in the story Sacagawea is accosted by a talking turtle (depicted with a feathered headband) who becomes her friend and accompanies her all the way to the Pacific. This gives some facts about Sacagawea, but other and better books are available; one of a series of oversize books each intended to teach a value (curiosity, Columbus; fairness, Nelly Bly; love, Johnny Appleseed) this seems a travesty: the spurious dialogue, the too-cute pictures, the incorporation of a fantasy element, the mediocre writing style, and the coy ending (addressed to the reader) all indicate a prime example of writing down to children.


Ken is twelve, a great disappointment to his domineering father, who cannot understand that a boating accident when Ken was three has left the boy terrified by the idea of being in the water. Vacationing on a river front property, Ken’s parents are called away and he is left with a housekeeper; that’s when he meets Giles, another boy, who patiently, gently helps Ken get over his fear to the extent that he can enjoy boating and swimming. Just as Ken’s parents return, Giles is gone, his island home abandoned. The story is told with consummate craft, both the dialogue and the characters have a high degree of credibility and vitality; the evocation of long, still summer days is remarkable. What gives the book added strength is the recurrent hint that Giles is a ghost; while all his actions are natural, and Ken never questions his identity, the author carefully structures the story so that nobody else ever talks to Giles, even in scenes where the boys are on the river together, and just before the story ends someone tells Ken about a boy who died trying to rescue his drowning father and brothers. The only previous reference has been Giles’ comment, when Ken finds that Giles’ family is never home, that “father’s not here. He and James and Philip have gone on. I’ll join them later.” A fine story, set in England and universal in appeal.

Soft, realistically detailed drawings illustrate a mammalogist's comprehensive survey of the raccoon. MacClintock describes, after general material on classification and habitat, each aspect of the raccoon's life: seasonal patterns, diet, mating, raising cubs, even separate chapters on such behavior as sensory responses or individual variations on nocturnal activity. The text also includes a chapter on related animals and another on caring for raccoons; it concludes with an extensive bibliography and a carefully compiled index. The writing style is straightforward, brisk in tempo and serious but not dry in tone.


Leigh, an accomplished rider, is in Scotland for the summer to help her uncle run his pony-trekking business; Uncle Will had had a stroke and seemed to be making no effort to recover, while his wife was determinedly optimistic. Leigh is baffled by the hostility of an elderly farmhand, but drawn to his grandson, Rob. Rob agrees to help her in her plan to dress as a boy and take part in the initiation ceremony she's overheard the old man talking about, and she almost gets away with it but is unmasked at the last moment. The old man's hostility becomes so menacing that Rob runs away from home, and he accepts Leigh's help, at first reluctantly, in evading his malicious and abusive grandfather. The story has an evocative setting, good pace, and a vigorous but disciplined writing style; it is most noteworthy, however, for the smoothness with which McHargue blends the several plot threads so that they ramify and complement each other.


Sam Zimmer, the narrator, would like to be thinner when he goes to high school, but he doesn't feel so strongly about it that he wants to spend the summer at Camp Thinna-Yet. Like Robert Smith's *Jelly Belly*, reviewed below, this has a large component of moaning about the strict camp diet and about ways to get around it. Since Sam's is a co-ed camp, there's also a brief but happy establishment of a boy-girl relationship. While this has its share of anti-counselor and bunkmate ploys (usually but not always funny) and is written in a breezy, sometimes self-consciously cute style it breaks the camp story pattern at least by having Sam leave camp before the summer ends. No conversion here. Unfortunately, there is little structure or characterization either, just a series of standard camping incidents with a few variants on an old theme.


An oversize book is illustrated with watercolor pictures, representational and spacious, that show some of the foods and the ritual in a family celebration of the Jewish holiday of Passover. The narrative uses, as in the ceremony, the device of a recurrent comment that ordinarily one does thus-and-so, but that this night is different, on this night we do ritual things in a special way. The ceremonial blessings are included, in Hebrew and English, and the story ends with a recapitulation of all the things that are done that make the night special and different. Given the inclusion of the Hebrew and the fact that the authors use the Hebrew "Pesach" rather than "Passover," this...
seems most suitable for a religious education collection, more directed toward a narrow than a broad audience. The writing style is adequate, simple, but static.


Spotted by an agency scout in Manhattan, ten-year-old Larry, who tells the story, is asked to do an audition for a TV commercial. He's dubious about missing school baseball games, but relieved by the fact that the sponsor makes sports clothes; the relief ends when he learns that they also make underwear and that underwear is what the first commercial will feature. Larry is teased by his classmates, but pleased when they begin calling him Champ (the sponsor is ChampWin Knitting Mills) after he hits a homer. This isn’t in any way remarkable, but it’s a nicely told story that is cheerful, has some information about behind-the-scenes television, and is balanced by the brisk and affectionate family relationships and friendship values.


Luisa’s family has come from Cuba, and she is embarrassed and often ashamed of being Cuban and of being poor; she wishes that she didn’t go to a Catholic girls’ school. All of these feelings come to a head when she gets a violent crush on Travis, who is blond and wealthy and WASP, all the things Luisa would like to be. She can’t understand why her brother is so relaxed about being Cuban; she uses her brother, his best friend Tom, and several of her friends to help her get away from the house for dates with Travis, since she’s ashamed to let him meet her family, and since her strict father doesn’t want her out late on dates. Eventually, Luisa realizes that her great love was just a crush, that she really loves Tom, who is poor, Italian-American, and Catholic. Basically this is, then, the standard adolescent triangle love story; it is the milieu of the Cuban family that makes it different. The family is loving, concerned, and well-characterized; although Luisa gets over her feelings of inferiority, they seem exaggerated. As with many first novels, the book is marred by having too many strong characters and sub-plots, particularly one about a relative who gambles. The writing style is adequate.


This is not a biography, although the preface and text together give information about the famous clown’s personal life and his career. It seems to serve as a showcase for Patricia Neville’s paintings, which are beautifully detailed, vernal, romantic without being sentimental, and imaginative; they are notable for their composition and use of color. The text, however, while it may appeal to those particularly interested in Grimaldi, the theater, or the London scene at the beginning of the nineteenth century, is uneven. The incidents are told in a rather fulsome style and concern such events as Grimaldi’s interest in butterfly collecting, a court case in which he was falsely accused and exonerated, the visits from a young actress who came to help when Grimaldi was ill and became his wife, the foiling of burglars, and Grimaldi’s friendship with Lord Byron. Most of the material has been adapted from Grimaldi’s memoirs, although the author confesses in a postscript that he has allowed himself “a certain amount of freedom . . . in order to complement my mother’s paintings.”

Imported from England, a delightful book that meets a long-felt need for books for the infant bibliophile. The concepts are familiar, the heavy board pages (nontoxic and easy to wipe clean) are sturdy and easy for a small child to handle, and the pictures are simply, skillfully drawn against a spacious white background. The pictures are paired: a shirt, labelled "Undershirt," is faced by a baby in diaper and undershirt; a picture of a sock, labelled, faces the baby looking with admiration at the bright sock after it's on. From diaper to hat, each stage of dressing is recorded—and—that's it: a record of familiar things.


This has all the usefulness, the simplicity, and the appeal of *Dressing* and is in the same format, as are three additional books in the set: *Friends, Playing*, and *Working*, the latter clearly based on the idea that playing, eating, and learning control of bodily functions are a baby's work. In *Family*, the illustrations are paired by showing a mother, then a baby with the mother; a father, then the same round-faced baby with the father, and so on (sister, brother, grandmother, grandfather) and another round-faced baby as companion to the first, who looks slightly baffled at having a companion who is a peer.


With two exceptions, pages are split horizontally in a book in which the text is on one page, the pictures of farm animals on facing pages. The arrangement of pages is random, so that the verso page may read "This agile beast will eat almost anything and" on the bottom half, "it lives down holes in the ground and has large families." Since the recto pages carry the name of the animal in very large letters vertically, the names are also split, so that the recto page has the top half of a goat and the bottom half of a rabbit, and the caption reads, "gobit." With adult help, this can of course be used for learning animals, but it's confusing at first and may discourage some children rather than encourage them.


Although there are minor inaccuracies in the cartoon style drawings, they have a cheerful air that fits nicely with the restrained enthusiasm of the writing. The use of second person draws the audience into a participatory attitude, as the authors describe everything but everything, from boarding to reunion (with what appears to be grandparents) at the end of the journey. Two children travel alone here, and they learn all about the details of a flight.


Although the first chapter gives some background about the original migrants to Hawaii and about the exploration by Captain Cook, this interesting book provides no historical or political material, but focuses on geological and geographical facts.
Explaining the theory of plate tectonics, Rublowsky describes the way in which volcanic islands rise from the sea and, dying over the centuries, have in the Pacific eroded to atolls. He also describes climatic variations, topography, the ways in which flora and fauna become established and endemic, and the ways in which some of the flora and fauna brought in by people have endangered the ecological balance on some of the islands. Occasionally the text is repetitive, but on the whole the material is well-arranged, and the writing style is competent if a bit heavy. An index and a bibliography are included.


The soft lines and quiet colors of Shimin's drawings are perfectly attuned to the gentle, poetic quality of a book that tells a story that is almost a prose poem. A grandmother explains to a curious little boy what night is, and what some people or plants or animals do at night; then the child dreams of being deep in the sea with a diver. In the morning, he tells his grandmother, who describes dreams as stories we tell ourselves. "More night," begs Jacob, and his grandmother says there will always be more night, more dreams. The dream episode is not particularly pertinent to the theme of night, and the mixture of realistic concepts and dreams may be confusing to some small children, but the writing, like the illustrations, is soothing and flowing, and the book seems eminently appropriate for one-to-one use.


There are seven sequential episodes in a story for beginning independent readers; they are illustrated by tidy drawings in crayon and line, cleanly composed and echoing the quiet, sedate quality of the text. The story is told by a child who comments on the gray day; she wakens early, and while her parents sleep, she looks out the window and then puts on bright clothing to contrast with the weather. She plays contentedly, eats breakfast, reads the comics with her father when he wakes, goes for a walk with her mother and picks a flower, comes home to enjoy the popcorn her father's made, and goes to bed after hearing a forecast of a sunny day to come. There's little action here, and no humor, with only the slightest of story lines and the appeal of familiar activities to appeal to readers; the large print and simple vocabulary, however, should provide an encouraging reading experience.


In an intriguing novel set in a future England, the whole society is organized on the principle that it is dangerous to the individual and to the society to remember the past. Each person has a memory machine that gives only enough information each day to enable one to function; all memories, even recognizing other people, are gone after three days. Paul is a maverick, starting a fire at one time, vandalizing property at another, but failing to recall what he has done or to understand the motivation for his rebellion. At the close of this memorable and deftly developed story, winner of the 1980 Guardian Award, he has found a friend who also is a misfit, a girl who remembers the past and therefore is an outcast, and there is an encouraging note as Paul and Sharon escape from the penal camps to which they have been sent.

A pleasant, if not outstanding variant on a familiar theme, this picture story book by two German artists living in Holland is illustrated by deftly modulated crayon drawings. Peggy, after her father has looked under her bed and refuted her claim that there's a crocodile there, finds that the animal has moved to another spot. They have a happy bathtime romp, make a paper crocodile, and become friends; the crocodile tells Peggy the long story of how he was ordered to befriend a thousand children to compensate for the malicious mischief he'd done in his own country. Next morning, he's gone; Peggy's father sees the paper crocodile and says, "So there was a crocodile under your bed after all." Adequately told, save for an occasional sentence that seems a bit heavy for the read-aloud audience, such as, "Finally, you have exchanged eggs and have caused great grief to the parents: the ostriches who saw their brood take to the water, and the crocodiles who saw their young run on long legs."


Many familiar folklore devices are used in this tale of three brothers who go out into the world to seek their fortunes: kindness rewarded, people turned to stone, bewitched princesses, and a three-part obstacle. To win the three beautiful princesses, the brothers must find three crowns, three pearls, and then guess which belongs to which enchanted flower; each time the youngest brother is helped to the solution by a creature to whom he had shown kindness. Of course, there's a triple wedding, with all the stone people brought back to life and rejoicing. Competently translated and told, the story is illustrated by full-page or double-page paintings, delicate in line and effective in composition, with dramatic use of color and with folk motifs in architectural and costume details.


The authors describe, in brief, separate chapters, some of the paternal patterns of the animal world; in each case they give general information about the species before going on to details about caring for the young during the gestation period or during infancy. The species discussed are Darwin's frog, the common rhea, marmosets, the American sea horse, and Adélie penguin. It's interesting material, and the text is adequately organized and written; a final section, on human fathers, seems extraneous. A glossary and a brief relative index are included.


In a sequel to the touching story *The Alfred Summer* (reviewed in the September, 1980 issue) the gentle, retarded Alfred is in an institution and his friend Lester, an adolescent victim of cerebral palsy, is determined to get him out. Lester is convinced that Alfie would be better off if he were home with Lester; in fact, he tries to sneak Alfie out of the hospital and is caught. Lester, who tells the story, decides he'll get a job so that he can legally be responsible for Alfie. With the aid of some friends, Lester sets up a concert to raise money, and he's given permission to bring Alfie to the concert; Alfie becomes ill and dies of a ruptured appendix. Lester's despair and guilt are alleviated by a talk with the hospital director, a wise and compassionate woman who helps Lester understand that although he had some self-interest in making plans.
that involved Alfie, he was not in the wrong. "You can use and need and love at the same time," she says. This has the same wry wit, warmth, and sensitivity as the first book; it has depth and perception in the depiction of characters and relationships; it has a flowing style; and it is particularly adept in portraying Lester as an adolescent who has the same needs and problems as those peers who are not handicapped.


Lloyd, fat and lonely, was the butt of his sixth grade classmates' jeering, the one who was always chosen last in class ball games. He just stood there; never, never would he let them know how well he hit when he played with Mama's softball team. This poignant, trenchant story of an insecure, overprotected child moves briskly and is shaped by perception toward a positive ending as Lloyd begins to gain independence from his doting mother, to make new friends, and to learn new skills. He learns to ride a bicycle (Mama had been afraid he'd get hurt), he walks to the park alone (Mama had always insisted on driving him), and he cuts down on his compulsive eating (Mama had always loved seeing him eat a lot). The characterization and relationships (both those between Lloyd and his classmates, and those between him and the adults in the story) are solid and skillfully portrayed.


In a pleasant but not very substantial picture book from England, a small boy thinks he has swallowed a plum pit and asks his mother what will happen. He'll grow a tree inside him, his mother says. Then Guy imagines what it would be like to be a tree; he imagines flowers, the small creatures around his roots, and the smaller insects that fly about him. All the members of his family stimulate his imaginative ideas (one of the strongest aspects of the story) as he lists the individual species (one of the weakest aspects of the story). Then he finds the missing plum pit, but he agrees with his mother that it's more fun to be a boy than a tree. The illustrations, ink-lined watercolor, are very attractive, with some of the flair of Ardizzone in the scrawly line and some of the ebullience of Burlingame in the vernal profusion of the Guy-tree and its creatures.


Fresh, funny, lively, and pithy—what more could the lap audience ask? Stevenson's lightly colored cartoon style drawings are just right for this fantasy spoof of credit cards, fairy godmothers, the computer society, and meaningless catch phrases. When Charlie gets a charge card from International Wish he doesn't expect his dog to talk or his younger brother to disappear; storming the headquarters of I.W. he finds serried banks of computers as obstacles to finding little Billy and getting back home, but an amicable giant cockroach and a cleaning woman (a retired fairy godmother) help achieve both goals. Replete with action, wit, and humor.


In *Go and Catch a Flying Fish* (reviewed in the July, 1979 issue) a story set on the Gulf Coast of Florida, Taylor's mother had walked out. Now Taylor feels...
that her father is even more unhappy than she and her brothers, and it is little relief when her grandmother arrives and seems determined to curtail Taylor's freedom and to improve her dress and manners. Grandmother is critical; when Taylor's mother suddenly appears, Grandmother is caustic, and it's a relief to both Taylor and her grandmother when the latter departs. The story is balanced by other facets in Taylor's life; it has some dramatic moments, but plot is less important than the skilled, perceptive, and compassionate depiction of the intricate fluctuations and conflicting loyalties of interpersonal relationships and adjustments.


Each chapter is a separate episode in this English story, although the stories are linked; the print is large albeit rather solid on the pages, and the illustrations are almost macabre line drawings. In each chapter eight-year-old Tom tries to find an animal to bring home as a pet, until the close of the story when he makes a friend and they establish a "camp," a small clearing under the trees. The writing style is adequate, and primary grades readers will probably enjoy Tom's troubles as he tries to lure a dog home and ends with an invasion by every dog in the neighborhood, or brings home a donkey that ruins the garden, or hides a penguin in a bag and brings it home from the zoo. One of the linking devices is Tom's squabbles with an older sister, a running gag that gets a bit tedious; another weakness of the book is Tom's not-quite credible naivety.


Another absorbing historical novel by one of the best writers in this genre is set in Britain in the fourth century. Alexios, a young Centurion, is punished for his poor judgment by being sent to take charge of a frontier outpost manned by the Frontier Wolves, a band of native Britons who are dubious about the ability of their new leader. In a deftly structured and smoothly written tale, Sutcliff incorporates unobtrusively a great deal of information about the events and mores of the period, and she also writes a cracking good adventure story.


The weirdos are the family of Cindy, who tells her plaintive story. She's embarrassed by the antics of her mother, who wears red sneakers every day of the year and gargles with orange juice; by her sister, who collects labels from food cans, and by her father, who sings opera as he rides a bicycle that has an umbrella attached. The plot is predictable: Cindy tries to change her family's behavior, but learns that her peers think the family is wonderful, and relaxes about the whole thing. This has a lot of humor, but the excesses of eccentricity make the book less funny and not quite believable. Examples: "... my father planted dandelion seeds," "We have a grand piano in our kitchen," "My mother doesn't have a bathing suit, so she was wearing a pink ballerina tutu" (at the beach), and so on.


Six-year-old Angie, who lives with her mother and enjoys visiting her father and his new family, comments on the family situations of other children—and those of a few animals as well. The black and white drawings, lively in the use of line, and
texturally varied, echo the ingenuous humor of the text. What Angie tells readers is that there is enormous variation in families but that love is the core, whether it's a two-parent, single-parent, multi-generation, childless, or adoptive family. Simple, casual in tone, and very effective in delivering its message.


Like Isadora's *Jesse and Abe*, this has a backstage setting and is told by a child who is at a performance; in this case it is a son rather than a grandson whose pride and love are evident. The speaker, whose name is not given, is impressed by the way his father's horn playing moves listeners, and he dreams of being a virtuoso horn player too. The plot is nebulous: the boy listens and waits, goes sleepily home with his father, and is tucked into bed by his parents. This has less evocation of atmosphere than the Isadora book, with more focus on the family relationships; there is less structure in the story line. Although pictures and text together show the affection in a black family, the pictures—wash and line—are weak in their drawings of the human figure; the proportions are awkward and the faces border on the grotesque.


Profusely illustrated by color photographs, adequately captioned, this is a broad and detailed survey of the seventeen different penguin species; in addition to descriptive material, the text provides information about habits, habitats, breeding patterns, and disposition. The writing style is casually conversational through most of the book, with an occasional personal comment. Coverage is excellent. The book concludes with chapters on breeding penguins in captivity (only recently successful) and on the dangers to the future penguin population because of pollution or of overfishing the ocean and lowering the supply of krill (a major source of penguin diet) or leaving smaller marine creatures exposed to predators. An index is provided.


In five short stories, illustrated with cozy, affectionate little framed pictures in peach and green, Oliver and the members of his family have some mild, everyday-life experiences that have the double appeals of familiarity and of warm familial relationships. There's a gentle humor in the simple, fluent writing style as Oliver proudly dines on the squash he's carefully tended from seed, goes through the stalling-at-bedtime routine, learns that mothers need time to be alone but love you just as much when they need solitude, adjusts to the small differences between Mother's ways and Grandmother's, and has a wintry excursion with his father.


In a second sequel to *Hawkins*, in which Harvey won the services of an urbane and omniscient English butler, it is again the imperturbable Hawkins who comes to the rescue; Harvey and his friends are in despair when they lose the sponsor of their soccer team. Hawkins becomes the team's new coach, and although the team loses the big game, they play their best, and they are also encouraged by the fact (again, the
work of Hawkins) that their new sponsor gets a lucrative contract and they are asked to pose for a team picture that will get national exposure. It's lightweight, and the characters are exaggerated rather than defined, but it's all good natured, fast, and funny.


Gymnastic equipment presents a series of obstacles for the engaging little bear of *How Do I Put It On?* For the small child, always mastering new skills, these books have a quick appeal; Bear struggles; but he does manage to walk the balance beam (although he falls) and vault the horse (well, almost) and crawl under the net (slowed by getting tangled) and he emerges with "Over the finish line! Hurrah! Did I win?" The drawings are clean, bright, and simple against an uncluttered background. Another nicely gauged, funny, and appropriate book for the read-aloud audience.


Timothy and the other bouncy little animals are as engaging because of their wonderfully expressive faces in brisk, bright illustrations as because of their universally childlike qualities, in a brief story that is both touching and funny. Timothy's first few days at school are marred by the obnoxious and critical Claude; each day Timothy hopes some disaster will befall Claude, but to no avail. Then another classmate, Violet, complains about Grace. "I can't stand it anymore. She sings. She dances. She counts up to a thousand and she sits next to me!" Well, what greater bond is there than the pangs of frustrated envy? Timothy and Violet immediately form a bond, and the story ends with "Will you come home and have cookies with me after school?" It's clear that school is going to be a joy thenceforward.


Julie is in the sixth grade, the narrator of a story that concerns the magic of show biz, for she has been chosen for the title role of the class play and Alan, the boy she likes, is to play opposite her. Unfortunately she gets chicken pox, followed by pneumonia, and misses the play. What's worse is that her part is given to the prettiest girl in class, who works hard at getting Alan as well. Second plot thread: Julie's jealousy of her infant sister. Third thread, the bickering between her parents. This variety rounds out the story but sometimes the plot threads don't mesh; the story ends with Julie and her mother attending a guidance clinic (up-tight Daddy refuses to go) and with a new, advanced rapport with Alan. The story is believable and is competently written, but the several parts (there's also a grandmother, a good character, but not really one who is necessary for furtherance of the story line) don't quite mesh. Characterization is adequate; the dialogue is good, especially in the classroom scenes, and there are good pupil-teacher relationships.


Excellent photographs, some magnified, illustrate a direct, clear text that explains how the Venus's Fly Trap digests the insects it traps, how it distinguishes between appropriate and inappropriate food, and how it reproduces. Cutaway shots show
stages in digestion; familiar objects (a coin, a pin, a finger) placed in juxtaposition serve to indicate comparative size. The book concludes with instructions for growing the plant.


Willcox describes the wide range of recreational activities available to children and young people in China, the obligation of performers to go out into rural areas to demonstrate their skills, and the many programs set up in Children's Palaces that foster cultural and artistic training as well as entertainment or hobbies. The book is profusely illustrated with photographs, almost all of which have the carefully posed look of official promotion; indeed, much of the text has the same air, the aura of the official handout. Since the writing style is rather flat, the combination is not impressive. However, the book gives a great many facts about a great many kinds of activities. A glossary does not give the usual definitions but shows the old and new (1979) spellings of words and place names; an index is included.


In an oversize book, large photographs of a doll (Edith) and two toy bears (Mr. Bear and Little Bear) show the three in pictures in which they are posed with a real duckling. The narrative framework follows a familiar pattern: they love their baby duck, but when it grows old enough, it must fly south and leave Edith and Little Bear. Most of the book consists of incidents in which Mr. Bear grumbles about the duckling being a nuisance, while Edith and Little Bear, who consider themselves a sort of joint mother, try to protect and teach their pet. The text is adequately written; the pictures are stiff—save for the engaging duckling—and contrived.


Most of the entries in a book in diary form are based on the real diary kept by Elizabeth Yates from 1917, when she was twelve, until 1925, when she left home to settle in New York to become a published writer; the entries here are selected, and they are supplemented by material from notebooks. Winner of the Newbery Medal, Yates has put her material into a smooth, readable account that is interesting not only because of her tenacious conviction that she would become an author but also because of the evocation of the atmosphere of a well-to-do, conservative family in which the parents only reluctantly agreed to Elizabeth’s plan to have a career. They preferred that she become a debutante, just as they had persuaded her older sister, who had been offered a faculty position upon her graduation from Smith College. After all, all she’d do was get married anyway.


In a book that is lucid, explicit, informative, and exciting, Zerman describes the way the jury system began in the fourth Century B.C. (in Greece) and how it evolved into its present form and function. He uses some actual cases to illustrate both the drama of the trial courtroom and the unpredictability of juries, and he discusses every aspect of the system that a prospective juror might find useful, from the way a jury is
chosen to the pronouncement of sentence and the aftermath of a trial. In a final 
chapter, "Twelve People of Average Ignorance," some of the weaknesses of the jury 
system are considered: possible racial imbalance, possible inadequate representation 
of segments of the community, the delaying effect of challenging prospective jurors, 
the cost to the public of sequestering jurors, and other debatable aspects. A bibliog-
raphy is included; an index gives access to the provocative and comprehensive text.

Zheleznova, Irina. Alyonushka; Russian Folk Tales; illus. by Igor Yershov. Progress, 1981. 
ISBN 0-8285-1858-0. 77p. $5.00.

This edition (as well as a Spanish edition) is one of the few Russian children's 
books being distributed in the United States. Oversize, the book is profusely illus-
trated by romantic paintings in dark, bright colors, ornately stylized in folk art style; 
some are full-page pictures with ornamental frames, and others are broad frames or 
borders for the text. The stories are highly traditional, some of them available in 
other translations, and all incorporating familiar folklore devices and patterns. The 
translation is adequate, marred slightly by the inclusion of rhyming phrases (always 
italicized) within the text: for example, "They rode down a hillside in sleds and threw 
snowballs at one another, many games they played and much noise they made, and 
then . . . " or "And such was the firing and shooting, so thick the smoke, that the field 
of battle was hid from sight as if bright day had turned into night."
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