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PRODUCTION NOTE

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

* Asterisks denote books of special distinction.
R Recommended.
Ad Additional book of acceptable quality for collections needing more material in the area.
M Marginal book that is so slight in content or has so many weaknesses in style or format that it should be given careful consideration before purchase.
NR Not recommended.
SpC Subject matter or treatment will tend to limit the book to specialized collections.
SpR A book that will have appeal for the unusual reader only. Recommended for the special few who will read it.

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

C.U. Curricular Use.
D.V. Developmental Values.

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New Titles for Children and Young People


From one of the best Australian picture book artists, this amusing story uses repetition in telling the tale of four animals who climb into a boat for a relaxing row, and capsize. Who caused the accident? Those in the read-aloud audience who notice that the boat is sinking lower and lower in the water will have the answer. A bright, brisk tale, simply told, is illustrated by cheerful, comical pictures.


Posthumously published, this historical novel is set in Russia in 1739, when the Princess Elizabeth, heir to the throne, had been sent into the countryside because the reigning Tsarina feared Elizabeth’s popularity with the people. Peter, a peasant boy of twelve, meets her in the woods and saves her from a marauding bear, earning her promise to help him if it is ever within her power. She fulfills her promise when she comes to the throne, granting the boy’s dearest wish: an education. Before this happens, there is a long period while Peter is in prison, sent there because he had had the temerity to write (or have someone write for him) a letter to the Tsarina, asking if he might be allowed to learn his letters. Almedingen uses the plight of the peasants in Peter’s village and his imprisonment to illustrate the harshness of the regime, and her historical material is both accurate and interesting; as a story, however, this is contrived and predictable in structure, although the competent writing style may hold the reader’s interest.

D.V. Education, valuing and seeking


Set in rural England in the years before World War I, this is a finely-crafted novel that testifies vividly to the rigidity of the class system, and to the acceptance by the poor of the unthinking snobbery of gentry. Arthur, the poacher’s son, detests school and cannot understand why his sister Alice loves to learn. Their father is a gamekeeper but has been accused of helping poachers; turned out of their home, Arthur’s family takes over a shanty and makes a bare living. After Pa dies, Arthur does become a poacher so that the family can have some food, and he’s caught and put in Reform School. Eventually he joins the army and learns to read and write from the regiment’s chaplain; the book ends with the family broken up; the war is over, Alice is in household service, her dreams of being a teacher forgotten, and Arthur’s future is uncertain. The book is forceful in its depiction of the viciousness and superficial piety of those who have power and status, and of the obstacles for those they disdain: poverty, illness, ignorance, illiteracy, and a meek acceptance of the fact...
that their place in life is menial and almost impossible to change. Anderson's characters come to life, the setting and the period details are maintained with consistency, and the writing style, serious and fluent, is appropriate in dialogue and attitudes for the period.

D.V. Economic differences, understanding


This is a romp from page one, and the author must have had as much fun as her readers will, savoring the blatant spoof of soap operas. Sue Sudley's story begins when her parents, each flying solo (in different directions) collide in midair while Sue descends in her designer parachute. She leaves her mansion to live with an aunt and uncle in a small town and becomes involved in the pseudo-dramatic, nonsensical, and highly enjoyable complexities of life—including the boy next door, a football hero confined to a wheelchair because he can never walk, who regains the use of his legs when he impulsively propels himself onto the gridiron during a homecoming game. This has everything the soaps have: the trite situations, the cardboard characters, the contrived dialogue, all presented in bland style with tongue firmly in cheek.


Although the book is clearly written and accurate, and the concepts are clearly framed, it is weakened by the fact that some matters are not fully explained. For example, there is a statement that in the United States there are three main parts of government, one of which makes the "rules," another that makes sure that rules are followed, and a third that decides exactly what the rules mean. There is an ensuing explanation of the roles of legislators and judges, but no mention of the Supreme Court or of the powers of the presidency. The last part of the text goes into such matters as taxes and defense, which seem subjects beyond the scope indicated by the title. The author fails, unfortunately, to distinguish between rules and laws. Still, the simplicity of the writing and the accuracy of the information make the book useful.

C.U. Social studies


With her mother's second marriage, Julie had to adjust not only to her stepfather but to a new home and a new school. She very much wanted to keep the stray cat she'd picked up and named Nuisance, but her stepfather was a bird-lover, and it was clear there was no possibility of that. By asking everyone she knew, Julie arranged for a home for Nuisance. And that is the plot of the story, although it's balanced by a change in the relationship between Julie and her stepfather, and by the acquiring of some friends. This is adequately written, has characterization that is believable if not profound, and touches realistically on many problems common to early adolescence; its weakness is in structure, which is more collage than continuum.

D.V. Stepparents, adjustment to


A revised edition, by an editor of SKI Magazine, of *America's Ski Book*, last
revised in 1973 by the editors of SKI Magazine. Portions of this book have appeared in books and magazines. Covering many aspects of the sport, this is a book for adults that should be useful to any ski buff old enough to read it: it gives sensible advice on techniques and equipment for beginners, and discusses competitive skiing for the experienced skier. Both groups should find the historical section interesting and the information on where to ski useful. Appended material includes a ski area guide, a glossary and bibliography, a list of ski organizations, and a relative index.

C.U. Recreation


Based on films, both this and its companion volume for boys, *Am I Normal?* are awkwardly illustrated with cut-out sections of stills inserted into line drawings. The book doesn’t have the spontaneity of the film; often the narration seems stilted. However, this gives a convincing picture of a young adolescent whose breasts are just beginning to develop, who has just started menstruating, and who has myriad questions. The major weaknesses of the story are the depiction of the diarist’s mother as wholly unable to answer the girl’s questions, and the scene in which a kindly salesperson flings open the curtains of three dressing rooms so that Janie and her friend can see women with breasts of different sizes.

C.U. Sex education
D.V. Sex roles


First published in Australia, this is one of a series of books, each a retelling of a story from the Bible, for beginning readers. This is illustrated adequately but with little distinction; the writing is simple, direct, and flat in tone. It begins with the appearance of the angel to Mary and ends abruptly, with the death of Herod: “Then it was safe for them to come back to their home in Nazareth, where Joseph worked as a carpenter.”

C.U. Reading, beginning; Religious education


Fifteen-year-old Nick’s parents are abusive and critical, blaming him for things he hasn’t done (including the death of his sister, unintentionally caused by an older brother who claimed Nick did it and was believed) and the uncle who lives with them is emotionally disturbed. Nick sees a counselor at school, but the combined influences of his home environment, a tough friend, his feelings of inadequacy, and hostility lead him to commit a crime, beating up an elderly couple that he and a friend are robbing—and his reaction to the publicity resulting from the arrest is, “I can’t believe they’re going to all this trouble for me! I’ll be famous!” The book is vivid in giving a picture of an unhappy delinquent, almost a case history, but it’s less successful as a novel, made choppy by flashbacks to past incidents (not in chronological order) in Nick’s life, and written in an uneven style, at times with staccato dialogue or monologue. Nick’s is a sordid life, and this has some impact in expressing his situation, but the book is more a collage than a picture that tells a story.

In a sequel to *Devil's Donkey*, three stories of a wish come true are told by the fourth person who has the power to make a similar wish, the storekeeper of a small village. He and the three young people had been the only ones who visited the strange little man who had set up a booth at the church social; each was dubious about the promised magic, but the three tried, and the results were not what they expected. Each learned that one had better be very, very careful how the wish was stated. The story is funny, the style is lively, the format offers variety.


Practicing magic tricks for the school's April Fool assembly, Arthur is chivvied by a large bully, Binky, who steals his pen. Already nervous about his performance, Arthur’s dismayed when his call for a volunteer brings Binky on stage at the assembly; however, he uses his wits, bests Binky, and later retrieves his pen. The illustrations, showing human bodies with animal heads, have vitality and humor if little polish; the story is simply structured and written, with a believable solution to Arthur’s problem, and with the twin appeals to readers of humor and of outwitting a bully.


Mrs. Bear sets her alarm for February 14, when she and Mr. Bear snuggle down for their winter sleep. On Valentine’s Day she awakes and prepares a feast of honey and crunchy dried beetles, brings out two valentines, and wakes Mr. Bear. He surprises her with a box of chocolate-covered ants, and they have a happy, loving time together. This has the appeals of an animal story and a holiday popular with children, but it’s slight in structure; the writing style is adequate if not impressive; the illustrations are a bit repetitive, but nicely textured and composed.


Kim, the narrator, is clever, pretty, and fat. Not just plump, but a blimp. Why does Gary, the handsome senior who’s just come to town, like her? Why is Gary’s mother so hostile? And why does Gary disappear from the scene periodically, not even coming to school? Gary’s big problem, it develops, is that he’s suicidal, his security destroyed by a mother who blames him for his brother’s accidental death and who has become an alcoholic since that tragedy. With all her fretting, Kim loses weight, but the plot really hinges less on the narrator than on Gary who, Kim suspects, has turned in one of her papers and accepted a good grade. Not until after his suicide attempt does Kim learn from Gary’s mother that it was she who had turned the paper in while Gary was ill. This has an easy narrative flow and well-defined characters; it is not strong in its structure or pace; the plot is not unbelievable but the fact that nobody—not even Kim—seems to suspect what Gary’s problems are (bandaged wrists after a school absence might have given her a hint) lessens the validity of the novel.

D.V. Boy-girl relations
An oversize book offers good scope for Ventura's impressively detailed and colorful examples of architectural landmarks and some examples of famous sites (rather than buildings) like the gardens at Versailles or typical architectural structures like the imperial hall of the episcopal palace at Würzburg. Ventura does not give the sort of diagrammed details that David Macaulay provides; his paintings have the combined design and sweep of Anno's architectural drawings, especially in their use of perspective. Each page, or double-page picture, has an accompanying text that provides background information as well as some facts about the structure that is illustrated. This should also appeal, visually, to readers for whom the text may be too difficult.


Chided by the rabbi for his inattentiveness (succumbing to his Evil Urge) Yossi determines that his Good Urge will prevail, he will change. At the Friday night service, he is moved to sing and dance; other men and boys in the segregated congregation join him, and the rabbi expresses approval, so Yossi feels his Good Urge has won. A note on the imprint page informs readers that the Chasidim, an orthodox Jewish sect, believe that these conflicting urges are in each person. A contemporary story set in Brooklyn, this is slight in structure and substance, the light story line filled out to some extent by the scenes of a devout and loving family.

D.V. Family relations; Self-control


There's an addition to the first-grade class that Cohen has described in earlier books for beginning independent readers as well as for the read-aloud audience. Like the other books, this has a simple, mildly humorous text that is tuned in to the language and behavior of young children and is appropriate in subject and concept for that group. Here Charles, a new boy who is blind, adjusts to a group of sighted children, and they to him, as they learn that there are many things Charles can do well, that he may have limitations of performance but none of imagination and intelligence, and that there are times when he can fend for himself as well as times he can use help.

D.V. Handicaps, overcoming; Helpfulness


Willy is thirteen when she begins her story, which takes place during the last two years of the Revolutionary War; her father, a free man, has been killed fighting against the British, her mother has disappeared. Willy makes her danger-fraught way to Fraunces Tavern in New York, her uncle, Jack Arabus, having told her that Mr. Fraunces may be able to help her. She works at the tavern until the war is over, goes to the Arabus home to find her mother dying, and participates in the trial (historically accurate save for the fictional addition of Willy) in which her uncle sues for his freedom and wins, testing the law that stipulated that a black man had to be set free if
he joined the military. An author's note explains that the language Willy uses and the ideas she expresses are those that seem proper for her time and station, but the poor grammar in dialogue and the use of terms that may seem offensive to contemporary readers are obtrusive; the historical details are interesting, the pace variable.

C.U. Social studies


At first, when the teachers in his high school went on strike to protest the censorious campaign by the town's Committee for a Balanced Curriculum, which involved removing books (and even one attempt to burn books) Barry was sympathetic but uninvolved. He doted on one pretty teacher who was an activist, and he also tended to react negatively to the conservatism of his bullying father. However, participation forced him to think seriously about the issues, and soon Barry found that he felt strongly about the right to read. The story builds to a logical climax, and Barry is deeply pleased when both of his parents rally to join the cause in which he has come to believe. This has a message, but it's not a book in which the message gets in the way of the story, for Corcoran so carefully integrates her characters and their beliefs with their actions and reactions that the plot flows naturally. A thoughtful approach to a current problem blends smoothly with a perceptive study of an adolescent and his problems.

D.V. Father-son relations; Teacher-pupil relations


A story of the Depression Era is set in a small town in Australia, where fourteen-year-old Valda's mother is grimly running the household in her husband's absence. Valda idolizes her father, and she's not surprised when Dadda comes home with plenty of money and no hesitation about spending it. However, Dadda proves (once again) to be feckless and unreliable, although Valda refuses to see this, and the story ends with Dadda turning down a chance for a job in town, and leaving again. The other plot thread is Valda's obsessive love for her horse, Sabrina ("For a moment she imagined something worse than Dadda never coming home again. She imagined it was Sabrina she would never see again."), and her fear that Sabrina would be sold. The story ends with Valda's decision to try getting a job in the city. This gives a convincing picture of a family's struggles in a depressed period, but it's thinly concocted as a narrative, uneven in characterization, and adequate but not impressive in writing style.

D.V. Father-daughter relations


Twenty-six folktales, each from a different country, are included in a book illustrated with distinctive line and wash drawings. The stories are retold in an animated and casual style that makes them effective to read aloud or to use for storytelling, as well as for independent reading. While there are a few tales that have been frequently anthologized, most are less familiar; among them are some fascinating variants on familiar tales, such as "Piglet and the Cow," a fairly sunny version of the Cinderella story from Korea, and "Prince of Nettles," a Hungarian tale in which a fox plays the same role as Puss in Boots. No sources are cited.

C.U. Reading aloud; Storytelling

First published in Japan, the text is based on Kushino's translation of Motofuji's original text, and is continuous, clear, and explicit. The fine color photographs (from the original publication) are carefully placed in relation to textual references; they and the diagrams are adequately labelled. The book describes the anatomy, habits, and life cycle of the swallowtail, focusing particularly on the four stages of that cycle: egg, larva (or caterpillar), pupa, and adult butterfly.

C.U. Nature study; Science


Using a popular format, D'Ignazio presents a series of puzzlers for which solutions are provided at the back of the book. Each story has Chip and his friends solving problems by using their brains to use the computer. Unfortunately, appealing as the orientation of the book may be, it has two weaknesses: one is that the solution to each problem is not necessarily in the story but may be in the "answer," which is at times a continuation of the story; the second is in the writing style, which is often cute and often unconvincing in details of exposition or dialogue.


Paintings with harsh orange and blue tones show a tousle-headed girl and a slightly scruffy older brother in both real and imaginary scenes as the small narrator invents delightful vengeance against the mean brother she hates. This has humor, and many children may empathize with Harry's sister, but it's more a series of corroborative incidents than a structured story: Harry does mean things, but he also does some nice ones, and the narrator concludes that she does hate Harry—most of the time.

D.V. Brothers-sisters


In a promising first novel, Eige uses a young adolescent, Willy, as the narrator; Willy describes his sympathy for the elderly man, Mr. Huey, whose grandson wants to put him into a retirement home. Since Willy's being sent off to camp while his parents go on a trip, he proposes that he and Mr. Huey go off on their own, telling nobody, instead. They take off for Wisconsin so that Mr. Huey can see his boyhood haunts. They are befriended by Holly and her parents, who've also come to the country to gain peace and perspective, but are badgered by a gang of hoodlums. When their ploy is disclosed, Willy gains a new rapport with his father, who had thought him soft and feckless, and Mr. Huey—with the help of Willy and his father—is kept out of the Happy House Boarding Home. The book has an economical structure, the appeal of the friendship between the boy and the old man, and some sharply defined characters. It is occasionally weakened by ill-defined motivation and by uneven pace.

D.V. Friendship values; Older-younger generations; Self-confidence

Three very small paperbound books, cased, each covering two topics, are more toy books than science books. One book is about "The Chicken," and, when the book is turned upside down, is about "The Chameleon." The other pairs are "The Hare" and "The Frog," and "The Butterfly" and "The Dandelion." One topic is covered on the verso pages, the other on the recto. In each case there are a few pages with a few facts about the creature, and the rest of the pages are designed to be flipped to show growth and changes. Attractive, ingenious, fragile, and minimally informative, these are most appropriate as a gift for a child or use by an individual child within a group, preferably under adult supervision.


Clear black and white photographs illustrate a crisp, informative text, showing examples of each species discussed. Freedman describes over thirty of the world's deadliest snakes, discussing their habits and habitats, why and how they kill; often he compares the danger of one snake's bite to another. This is concise enough in detail and broad enough in coverage to have minor reference use. An index gives access to the material in the text.


While the book ends with a variety of recipes for vegetarian dishes, it is primarily a discussion of the reasons people become vegetarians, nutritional needs, and those non-meat foods that satisfy such needs. The tone is moderate, the coverage broad, the information explicit, the writing style direct and clear.


When he sleeps past Easter, the Easter Bunny tries, on a succession of holidays throughout the year, to distribute his basket of eggs. He is scolded on Mother's Day, evicted from a Fourth of July parade, jeered at on Halloween, and so on. Santa Claus gives him a present: an alarm clock. And the next Easter morning, the Easter Bunny is up and on the job and, the story ends, "He was never late delivering his Easter eggs again." The story, first published in 1957, is a bit tedious, but it can be used as an all-holiday reminder. The new illustrations are handsome: soft paintings, beautifully detailed and spaciously composed, with clear, bright colors.


A gentle introduction to gestation and birth begins with the infant in embryo, and describes the period of gestation from the child's viewpoint, informing the audience that an unborn child can, once it has reached a certain size, hear and feel. And, as pregnant mothers know, kick and hiccup. "And then—you felt a squeeze like a hug ... One hug after another, bigger and bigger." The text and the soft pictures and diagrams, some in color, are mutually extensive in showing the love and joy of mother and father, both before and after birth.

The strong sense of design, the restrained and effective use of color, and the stylized use of Native American motifs in bold composition contribute to the distinctive work that won Goble the Caldecott Medal. Here they are used, with the addition on many pages of a running frieze of large dots, based on Blackfeet tipi designs, to illustrate a gravely-told version of a Blackfeet Indian legend. The scarred grandchild of the Sun, to win his bride, goes to the Sky World to plead with his Grandfather, who grants his wish and removes the scar and who tells Star Boy that if the people build a lodge in his honor each summer he will restore their sick people to health. And that is why, each summer, the people build a Sun Dance lodge, round as the earth and sky, and there they dance and pray to their Creator.


Amy, eleven, tells all about the time their widowed father went off on a business trip and left eighteen-year-old Phoebe in charge of the household. Phoebe is determined to redecorate their home, and she’s determined to be hospitable to footloose Uncle Mark, who shows up with some friends from an Indian reservation. Since Phoebe (depicted as a pretentious ninny) insists that she can detect money by smell, Uncle Mark borrows a large sum from the crusty local mortgage-mogul so that he and Phoebe can go to Boston and earn a fortune. They fail, and Phoebe’s admirer (son of the mogul but nothing like him) mortgages his future to save his beloved. Then everybody turns to and saves the swain from his mercenary father. This has some humor, some good period details (the story is set in a small New England town in 1926) and plenty of action; the characters are stock figures, however; the humor is overdone, and the plot is cluttered and superficial.

D.V. Responsibility; Uncle-niece relations


Schuyler lives in a small Maine town where everyone knows everyone else and few of them trust “outastaters,” i.e., people not born and bred in Maine. Her friends don’t like the brash new outstater, Nell, but Sky feels she ought to be nice to Nell. It isn’t easy. Nell brags, steals, lies, and says insulting things, but Sky puts up with it because Nell is colorful and different—at least, she puts up with it until she learns how callous Nell is. The story is built around this uneasy friendship and around Sky’s concern about her parents, who are divorced but living at opposite ends of the same house, with the children in the middle. Will Mom marry the man on whom she seems to have a crush? Or will Dad fall for Pamela, who keeps hanging around? What Greene does is end her story with unanswered questions about Mom and Dad, while the saga of Nell ends abruptly: she and her feckless family take off leaving the rent unpaid and taking the money that all the girls have garnered at a long-planned yard sale. Without filling in all the details, the author draws a trenchant, incisive picture of Nell and her carping, shiftless mother, and hints that the relationship between Mom and Dad may be improving. This has the same empathetic insight as Greene’s urban stories, the same firm characterization and fluent style, and it also gives a good picture of the network of relationships in a small community.

D.V. Age-mate relations; Ethical concepts

The oversize pages of this picture book version of a traditional tale give the artist the opportunity for pictures that are soft in texture and tone, the brilliant red of the devil's cloak a vibrant note against the surrounding soft pastel hues. The distinctive marbling of the endpapers is a small bonus, in this direct retelling of the story of the peasant boy who pitted his wits against the machinations of a greedy king, outwitted the devil, and won a princess and a kingdom.

C.U. Reading aloud; Storytelling


In a sequel to *The Disappearance* (reviewed in the April, 1980 issue) Imamu is back in his Harlem tenement, trying to get a job, planning to paint the apartment before his mother gets back from the hospital where she’s being treated for alcoholism. Resentful because the police suspect him of burglary and violence, Imamu asks his new friend Olivette to help him play detective. Olivette helps with the painting, too; an educated and articulate adolescent, he seeks perfection and sees good even in the vicious Iggy. Iggy is suspected of savagely beating one of the girls on the block; it is Imamu rather than the police who finds the solution to that crime as well as the burglaries. Guy creates strong characters and a vivid picture of the disadvantaged adults and children who are overwhelmed by their environment and by prejudice. Her writing style is colorful and fluent but is marred by verbosity.

D.V. Age-mate relations; Intercultural understanding


Kerish and Forollkin, the two princes of the Godborn of Galkis, whose adventures began in *Prince of the Godborn* (reviewed in the March 1983 issue) continue their quest for the keys that will enable them to rescue from his prison the one person who can restore order and stability to their land. Here they begin with a third companion, the ugly and sardonic Gidjabolgo, and finish with a fourth, the cousin of Kerish who risks her life to free the others from her father, ruler of the people who are called Children of the Wind. Their escape comes after a series of dangerous adventures in which they acquire a key that is one of seven needed to fulfill the mission. Like the first book, this is ornate within its ordered structure, fast-paced yet stately in its style, and imaginatively conceived.


A sequel to *Ready, Set, Robot!* (reviewed in the June, 1982 issue) in which Sol-1 is a tubby little robot who uses his “brains,” this is a story in which Sol-1, ordered by his mother to do his chores, helps his robot friends and is in turn helped by them. This has rather more substance than the first book, and primary grades readers will probably delight in the technological references. This is a good story to read aloud to younger children, too.

[ 150 ]
A selection of nine stories, each with a fantasy element (ghosts, or creatures that change from human to animal, or a monstrous human that has lived for centuries) save for one sad (but far from gripping) realistic tale, "The Ski-Lift," by Diana Buttenshaw. One story, Robert Arthur's "The Haunted Trailer," is a humorous ghost story. Several of the stories have elements of suspense or eeriness but are written in pedestrian style. Stylistically, the best of the lot is John Wyndham's "More Spinned Against," which is both comic and witty but has a surprising macabre ending. In sum, variable.

The sixth grade social studies project seemed to be working well for everybody but June; assigned to visit a retirement home, each student had been paired with a foster grandparent, and June had drawn surly, uncommunicative Franklin Cooper as her "grandfather." After a series of uncomfortable weekly visits, June was just beginning to feel that she and Franklin were friends when her mother announced that, due to hospital bills for her recent illness, they would have to move to another city and stay with an aunt. June convinces her mother and Franklin that it would be a better plan if they moved, all three, into Franklin's vacant house—just like a real family. The story is weakened by its slow pace and by the mild contrivance of the ending, but it's adequately written, and the characters and their relationships are believable.

Because the American system of justice is oriented toward the rights of the accused, government has traditionally taken little recognition of the welfare of the victim, and little responsibility for victims. Statistics from the Bureau of Justice show that murder occurs in our country at the rate of one every 24 minutes; rape, one every 7 minutes; home burglary every 10 seconds, etc. There are, therefore, thousands of victims; the processes of litigation and imprisonment cost taxpayers millions. Who helps the victim? Can those victimized help themselves? Is there anything one can do to avert victimization? Hyde discusses the historical relationship of the criminal to victims, gives some answers to the questions posed here, and describes some of the growing number of programs that have been instituted on behalf of victims of crimes. The crisp and informative text should be useful because of the facts it gives about what help is available and what precautions one can take in specific circumstances. A bibliography, a glossary, and an index are included, as well as lists of state offices that deal with redress for crime victims and of sources of further information.
of the word in black, adequately distinguished from, but blending with the soft, soft illustrations that are highly textured, often stippled, dramatic in composition.


Jaunty, flyaway line drawings, with touches of red to give variety, show the affection between the busy conductor-cellist, Mstislav Rostropovich, and the tiny dog Pooks, his constant companion. Pooks should delight children: she's always there, strapped into her own airplane seat (with the Maestro in the middle and his cello on its own seat), dozing next to the podium, or winding her leash about her master's legs. The ending is the only nonsensical note, as Pooks dashes onstage where a singer is receiving applause, bangs on the piano keys, and is given a rose by the soloist. A bright, brisk little story.


Bright pictures with no background clutter are combined with a minimal text (primarily descriptive captions) in an English book designed as one of a series of 4-6 pre-readers. This will probably be of less interest to American children, for whom some of the references may have little meaning ("Up there is Lord Nelson.") than to children in England. It is, however, simply written, and it has some pictures that have universal appeal: monkeys in a zoo, a boat on the river, guards in their bright uniforms.


Simply written, printed in large type, this covers a broad range of subjects (how television cameras and sets work, how television began, what goes into producing a television program) and tends to oversimplify them. The writing is choppy, with errata scattered throughout (a chapter headed "The First Televisions," errors of syntax) and although the vocabulary level is appropriate for a primary-grades audience, the book is weakened by the style and by the fact that coverage is inadequate: there is no mention, for example, of the pioneer work done in other countries before 1929.


This is not a fantasy; "Timewarp" is the name of the film that Scott hopes to finish by the end of the summer; there's a second meaning, in the "time is out of joint" sense, for Scott falls in love and has an affair with an older woman, Laura. Scott's getting over a stormy love affair, Laura's getting over a divorce; the sweet girl who lives next door to Scott and has helped him with the film and is in love with him is stunned to learn of the affair. When it is all in the open, Laura leaves town and Scott,anguished, abruptly recovers enough to suddenly appreciate the girl next door, and rushes over to heal the breach. The story is told in short segments, as though for a film script, a device that adds nothing to the narrative flow but punctuation; the characters are believable through iteration rather than depth.

D.V. Boy-girl relations; Jealousy, overcoming

Black and white drawings, dramatic and effective, are used to illustrate a trip from a small town to the city and—turning the book upside down so that the pictures are reversed—back again. The text consists of one descriptive line on each page of a double-page spread; whichever way the book is held, the single line is on the verso page. Occasionally some of the details that will form part of the reversed picture are obvious (the upside-down words that will form part of a sign, the black rectangles that will be chimneys) but the treat-to-come is never wholly identifiable before it's seen right-side-up. Ingenious and attractive, this should encourage children to enjoy being observant.

D.V. Environmental concepts; Spatial orientation; Urban-rural contrasts


In a fantasy from England, a small village school is threatened with closing; while a few people feel it's wise, most of the villagers and especially the school staff and pupils are despondent. They love their school, think it gives a good education, and begin looking for ways to increase enrollment and prevent the closing. All sorts of schemes are tried; they are successful, and there's a happy ending. There's abundant humor in the story, but some of it may be lost on an American audience (how many American children will understand the cricket term "silly mid-off") and some of it is contrived, particularly that dealing with an imaginary creature called a wotsit that adds little to the story. This has some merry moments, but it's not a convincing blend of fantasy and realism, and the writing often verges on heavy-handed cuteness.


Desdemona is the narrator of a story that does have a plot thread (will the landlord evict Dez, her father, three scruffy dogs, and five-year-old twins?) but is primarily a series of almost slapstick episodes. The characters are exaggerated but colorful and funny, as is the dialogue, but the events are barely credible; the style is lively, but the intensity of the ceaseless action makes it wear a bit thin.

D.V. Father-daughter relations


Kiefer, a science writer with a degree in chemistry, takes a long, hard, and objective look at nuclear energy, discussing the problems, the potential, the alternatives, and the record to date. She gives a lucid explanation of how a nuclear generator works and spells out the dangers of radiation, including the dangers in nuclear waste disposal. There are descriptions of what happened at Three Mile Island and, more briefly, other plants; Kiefer says of waste disposal, "It may be the Achilles' heel that will determine the future of nuclear power." Arguments pro and con are cited, leaving it to readers to make their own judgments; the book suggests only that decisions should be based on the opinions of Americans of all ages, that "The people must lead the leaders." This timely and informative book is well organized and well written; a glossary and a relative index make the text more comprehensible and accessible.

C.U. Science; Social studies
Sensible advice about a broad range of subjects is given in a book that should be especially useful to readers who have responsibilities in homes with working parents, but that provides suggestions that should interest all readers. Kyte discusses the ways in which one can organize chores and jobs for equitable sharing or best timing, precautionary and other safety measures, crime prevention, and medical emergencies, and she includes some facts about planning and making meals, and about caring for clothes. This doesn't cover every situation or contingency, but it has a broad range; it's written in a crisp, informal and occasionally witty style. A useful book.

D.V. Responsibility

Tinted pencil drawings with a scribbly line and a comic, vigorous quality illustrate a read-aloud tale that has better style than structure. Mona, irritated by the demands of family life, goes off to find a niche elsewhere. Her first visit is to a handsome knight she's instantly ready to adopt, but he says, “Holdest thou your horses, prithee,” and refuses her offer, although he does take her along on an abortive dragon-slaying mission. She then tries a cowboy and a rock star; both refuse her offer. ‘Go work some other gig, Babe. Don't bust my chops,” says the self-proclaimed King of the Rock. Then Mona meets a bee who tells her to go home to her folks who love her, and Mona does, and they do. A bit sophisticated for some young children in its lampooning, this light fantasy is still good fun.

Providing biographical information in the introduction, Livingston uses quotations from Lear for each group of poems; for example, his phrase “One of the Singers” heads a section of poems and limericks about performers and instruments, and poems about travel are gathered under the heading, “The Days of His Pilgrimage.” Each section begins with a note by the compiler, and notes on sources, as well as a combined title/first line index are appended. While the poetry is easily available elsewhere, it is useful to have the combination of poetry by Lear and information about him, each reinforcing the other.

Describing eight species of pitcher plant, all indigenous to North America, Lerner discusses the ways in which they trap insects, providing the plant with food and at times with fertilization. She describes the victims and those creatures that prey on the plant; one insect, the Exyra moth, has established a relationship in which its whole life cycle is adjusted to the pitcher leaf as harmless host. The text is direct, authoritative, and logically organized; the illustrations, especially those in color, are both accurate and handsome. In addition to the glossary and index, the book concludes with a list of places where carnivorous plants, including pitcher plants, are on public view.

C.U. Nature study; Science

First published in France, a picture book about a child's dream-time adventure is illustrated with simply designed pictures that are spacious and uncluttered, with lots of hatching and parallel lines to give texture and contrast. The figures, however, are stiff and the mood static. The story is modest: Alex and his toy bear fly through the night to visit the bear's family at the North Pole and to see Santa Claus.


Although the title page refers to the story as a fable, this does not follow traditional fabular structure. The collage pictures are used to full advantage on the oversize pages, somewhat repetitive, but distinctive in their color and composition. The story is slight: Cornelius is an alligator who walks upright from the time of his birth, learns to stand on his head and swing by his tail with the help of a friendly monkey, and shows off to the other crocodiles, who say "So what?" but try to do the same as soon as Cornelius has turned his back. That's the end of the story—mildly amusing, visually effective, with no moral for the "Fable."


While their parents are away at a conference, Emma and her older brother Zachary are being taken care of by Uncle Elliot and Aunt Evelyn, who know absolutely nothing about children. They are fast learners, however, and affectionate people, and by the time it's their last day, Emma is so upset at their imminent departure that she feigns illness—which they don't fall for, because Elliot and Evelyn have learned a lot in a short time: like giving seven kisses as a morning greeting, and how to take care of an infant (Emma kindly teaches her pregnant aunt) and how to bend a rule. Funny, deft, and touching, a blandly written story about an engaging child of seven.

D.V. Adaptability; Family relations


Shy and lonely, Nina finds college life overwhelming compared to her small town; just as lonely, Mitch is a college drop-out because—although he had no academic problems—he had felt out of place. They fall ecstatically in love and decide to live together; Nina hates lying to her mother, but she wants to be with Mitch all the time. When the relationship begins to fray, both are restless, both afraid to lose the security of their mutual commitment. Each is unfaithful, they quarrel repeatedly, and it is Nina who finally decides to break it off. Written with perception and sympathy, this speaks eloquently of the young adult's conflicting needs and emotions as he or she strives for security and stability and independence; Mazer sees keenly the ambivalence of older adolescents as they grope painfully toward maturity.


As he has so effectively done in earlier books, Meltzer uses primary source materials to record the attitudes and reactions of a people in a new land. Vivid and varied, the letters, diaries, and speeches give a colorful picture of Jewish life in the United
States over three centuries. The author's helpful notes precede each selection; a carefully compiled index gives good access to the contents.

C.U. Social studies

D.V. Intercultural understanding


Although he had been cleared of the charge of killing his little sister and had been taken in by Ryder (the police officer in charge of the case) and his wife, Matt was always aware that the people he met at his new school might recognize the name, might be prejudiced. To orphaned Matt, the Ryders were his family, and their children a beloved brother and sister. Most people don't know, and some don't care, like the Schuyler children who become close friends. Matt's only problem is the track coach, who is openly hostile and makes participation a hardship; Matt is determined to run, however, as he had in the past. When a crisis situation arises, Matt almost runs away—but one of the Schuylers talks to Mrs. Ryder, and the love that she and her husband have for their foster son is so explicitly expressed that Matt knows he really has a family and the security of their love. Well-defined characters and strong familial and friendship values give conviction and warmth; while the book lacks a strong story line, it gives, in good writing style, a believable picture of adolescents (Matt, Meg Schuyler, and the slow, kind orphan Don) who respond with courage and resilience to stress situations.

D.V. Friendship values


Because this has no story line, but is a soliloquy by a girl (age seven or eight, from the clues in her rambling discourse) and because it is so intense in its imaginative play, the book may not appeal to all readers. The girl (not named) is a horse, enjoying the freedom and peace of her lonely running, of being blown by the wind. She cannot tell her parents or classmates; they wouldn't understand. There are, in the soliloquy, poignant clues to her loneliness: the bothersome baby brother who makes a mess in her room, a mother who is often deep in a book and pays little attention (the child feels) to her daughter, the girls at school who exclude her from their games. These are tender, subtle things and perhaps best appreciated by an adult reader. Parker's paintings, full of color nuances, thoughtful in mood and imaginative in conception, are handsome.

D.V. Imaginative powers


Twelve-year-old Dana is as surprised as anyone else when she risks her life to save a small child who's in the path of a car; Dana, who tells the story, is timid, fearful about many things. Delighted by her achievement, she becomes a bore and her best friend tells her so. To prove her courage, she goes to a graveyard at night; on the way home she sees a classmate spray-painting graffiti on the school wall and signing the initials of the class bully who's been persecuting him. The dilemma for Dana, who dislikes the bully, is whether to report what she knows. Again, Dana shows courage, and this time she's supported by her friend and her older sister Jean. And Jean's very large boy friend. The book explores a situation and experience many children share, and does so with insight and humor; the writing style is lively, with excellent di-
ologue, and the depth and warmth of family relationships buttress a good story of peer relations and attitudes.

D.V. Courage; Family relations; Fear, overcoming; Friendship values


Maps and photographs of variable quality illustrate a description of the years of research by David Mech, the wolfman of the title, in the Minnesota wilderness. Mech, a biologist who is an expert in the subject, has spent twenty-five years studying wolves, learning a great deal about how they live and behave, and about how their behavior affects other creatures, particularly deer. The subject is fascinating, and Pringle's account also shows the patience, methodology, and objectivity of the scientist, in a smoothly written text. A bibliography and an index are included.

C.U. Science


At first, Nick's only summer job was walking old Mr. Haggard's dog; then other people living in the same building as Mr. Haggard asked Nick to care for their pets. Save for one uncooperative cat, all went well; what bothered Nick was not the pets but something odd about the building. Lights went out just after being replaced; a can of gas disappeared; one dog barked at something or someone; there was a mysterious trash fire that Nick and his friend Sam extinguished. The clues lead logically to a solution, with Sam and the pets triumphing over the two men who have been hired to burn down the building, in a dramatic confrontation that is just a bit contrived. This is not as firmly structured as other books by Roberts, but it has suspense despite the erratic pace; although most of the characters are not fully developed, they are believable, and the writing style is smooth.


In a photodocumentary about a child with multiple handicaps, the text is narrated by Leslie's best friend and kindergarten classmate Karin. Leslie is legally blind, has some hearing loss, a cleft palate, muscular disability, and ptosis of the eyelids. She's needed surgery several times, and she's a merry, friendly child whose classmates help her when help is needed, accept her as she is, and enjoy her company. The book should help children appreciate the fact that the differences between those who are handicapped and those who are not are superficial, and it's a testament to mainstreaming. Told in a direct, simple style that is convincing as the voice of a kindergartner, this has a good balance of information and casual prattle.

D.V. Friendship values; Handicaps, adjustment to


Twelve-year-old Norman, the narrator, is worried because he's dull, because Lisa (a classmate on whom he has a crush) doesn't respond, because his father is away on a mountain-climbing tour and Norman's afraid he's left the family forever, and now because it's been announced that their school, Fortuna, will close. While the P.T.A. and the students try in vain to sway the school board, it's Norman who comes up
with the solution: he and a favorite teacher camp on the school roof with appropriate banners, and the ensuing publicity turns the trick. This has good relationships, especially those between Norman and his mother and between him and his teacher, and it has a believable plot; it is weakened to an extent by the writing style, which has pace and humor but is often heavily cute.

D.V. Teacher-pupil relations


Soft, ghostlike illustrations in pale gray and white echo the subtlety if not the vigor and acidity of the stories, a few of which are fanciful, while most are realistic and witty. These are superb examples of the short story form, polished in style and structure, but they are really adult fare despite the fact that most of the characters are children. A sample sentence: "Only once had she put the doctrine of non-interference into practice, when one of its most eloquent exponents had been besieged for nearly three hours in a small and extremely uncomfortable may-tree by an angry boar-pig, while Lady Carlotta, on the other side of the fence, had proceeded with the watercolour sketch she was engaged on, and refused to interfere between the boar and his prisoner."


Profusely illustrated with black and white drawings, line and wash, this is a detailed description of life in an English village as it was in the year 1328, Irnham Village. At that time it was called Gerneham and was owned by Sir Geoffrey Luttrell; the book is based in large part on drawings made at the time and included in the Luttrell Psalter, a rare volume in the British Library. The text and pictures together give a comprehensive picture of the arduous life of the villagers, of the panoply of Sir Geoffrey’s procession when he came to visit his village, of the seasonal tasks and the division of labor. There is a glossary but no index, which limits but does not preclude reference use; the book should appeal especially to readers who are interested in the historical period and to students who are investigating the feudal system.

C.U. History—England; Social studies


Good size print, plenty of white space on the pages, short sentences, and logical arrangement of material make this clearly written introductory text, one of a good science series, appropriate for the beginning independent reader. The authors use facts about similarities and differences between spiders and other creatures as well as between species of spiders to instill concepts of classification, incorporating definitions of terms and using a modicum of repetition as they describe the anatomy, the structure of various kinds of nests and webs, and the ways in which spiders capture their prey.

C.U. Nature study; Science


In a sequel to *Last Was Lloyd* (reviewed in the July—August, 1981 issue) Smith
writes from the viewpoint of Ancil, Lloyd’s one friend in Hanover, their small Georgia town. Ancil zealously nurses her dislike of the new stepfather, Harvey, who has brought the family to Hanover; she resents the fact that her sisters love him, is puzzled by the fact that even her paternal grandparents have accepted him, insists that her real father (missing in action ten years) is still alive, and particularly resents the fact that her mother and Harvey have insisted she take swimming lessons. It’s a slow, painful, and reluctant process that brings a change in Ancil, and it’s helped by learning that Lloyd, who had had two stepfathers and an overprotective mother, has had years of hard times, while this is her first. Smith is astute in her understanding and depiction of the intricacies of familial relationships and realistic in depicting the changes in Ancil. The characters are drawn with depth and conviction, and the style is fluent, marked by good pace and natural dialogue.

D.V.  Boy-girl relations; Fear, overcoming; Stepparents, adjustment to


A first novel from England is based on the experiences of the author’s young Asian friend and is a vivid account of the ambivalent feelings of a child transplanted to an alien culture. Sent out of Uganda by Amin, many Asians went to England, as did Sumitra Patel’s family, so that their children might receive a good education. Sumitra, oldest of four daughters of an Indian family, is baffled by the prejudice she encounters and is torn between loyalty to, and love for, the traditional ways of her family and a desire to share the freedom and independence given to most of her English classmates. When she leaves school, Sumitra must choose: if she leaves home to work and live independently, she will be ostracized by her family; if she stays, she must accept an arranged marriage and a subservient role as an Indian wife and mother. Through her protagonist, the author strives for objectivity and understanding, in a story that is candid and thought-provoking.

D.V. Independence; Intercultural understanding


Set in the Maine wilderness in the eighteenth century, this tightly constructed story begins with eleven-year-old Matt left alone in the cabin he and his father have built. Pa has gone back to Massachusetts to bring Ma and little Sarah, and expects to be back in six or seven weeks, but it’s many months before he returns, and in that time Matt has come to know and respect his Indian neighbors, to understand their feelings about the land and the white intruders, to feel honored that his Indian friend Attean bids him farewell as “white brother” and even offers to take Matt with him when his people break camp to go north on a hunting trip. The story has flow and pace, good style, and that careful but unobtrusive research that marks the best historical fiction.

C.U. History—U.S.

D.V. Friendship values; Intercultural understanding; Self-reliance


A modest and quiet mountain dog, Hector becomes famous after he leaves school because of his pointing ability; he then wins eleven medals in pointing events in the Olympic games and becomes famous and wealthy. Then he has an accident, and his peerless nose gets crumpled; however, it plays music by itself (at least there are no paws used in the illustrations) and Hector rises again from obscurity to fame, this
time as a concert artist. He and a lovely opera singer (starring next door in “Die Zaubernüsse”) fall in love at first sight. This time, instead of frittering away his wealth on bistros and discos, Hector takes his bride back to the mountains. The concept is engagingly silly, the story is adequately told, save for the abrupt ending; the illustrations, line and wash, are comic if not polished; all of the characters are animals, and only occasionally does Stadler introduce a feature (the opera singer’s ample bosom) that is not animal-like, although the activities are usually those of people.


Illustrated with line drawings in black, red, and white, this is a lightly fictionalized story, simply told, about the instrument Franklin invented after he’d heard a concert played on glasses of water. His glass armonica had a series of bowls, arranged on a spindle that went through the hole in the bottom of each bowl. The instrument became popular, briefly; Franklin wrote music for it, as did Mozart; it fell into disrepute because it affected performers adversely. In 1956 a glass armonica was built to honor Franklin’s 250th birthday; today glass armonica music is played on electronic instruments. An interesting addition to the better-known facts about Franklin’s ingenuity.


Like so many children’s books, this begins with a child in bed and dreaming, tells the story of the dream, and ends with the child waking in the morning. In Luke’s dream, he flies to a planet where he sees lost dogs, cats, clothes, letters, etc. as well as the air that’s been let out of tires and the mists that have risen from rivers in the early morning. He meets the Unknown Soldier and a woman who says she’s a missing person, and they help Luke find his way back to the spaceship in which he came. This is a nice concept but a weak story, since—save for the flight—nothing happens on the Planet of Lost Things. The paintings are as humorously detailed, gloriously colored, and artfully composed, as might be expected of William Pène du Bois.


New illustrations for a book first published in 1967 add a soft appeal in delicately shaded crayon drawings. This was, and is, an excellent first book on seasons, evoking with simple text the sorts of qualities that children best remember: bare feet in summer, and lemonade and whirring lawnmowers; snow and sleds and the scraping noise of snow shovels and the early dark of winter.
READING FOR PARENTS

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


