ILLINOIS
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

PRODUCTION NOTE

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

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

Except for pre-school years, reading range is given for grade rather than for age of child.
CV Curricular Use.
DV Developmental Values.

* * *

BULLETIN OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS (ISSN 0008-9036) is published monthly except August by The University of Chicago Press for The University of Chicago, Graduate Library School. Mrs. Zena Sutherland, Editor. An advisory committee meets weekly to discuss books and reviews, which are written by the editor. The members are Yolanda Federici, Ellin Greene, Isabel McCaul, Hazel Rochman, and Robert Strang.

Subscription Rates: 1 year, $18.00; $14.40 per year for two or more subscriptions to the same address; $14.40, student rate; in countries other than the United States, add $2.00 per subscription for postage. Single copy rate: from vol. 25, $2.00; vols. 17 through 24, 50¢. Reprinted volumes 1–16 (1947–1963) available from Kraus Reprint Co., Route 100, Millwood, New York 10546. Volumes available in microfilm from University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106. Complete volumes available in microfiche from Johnson Associates, P.O. Box 1017, Greenwich, Conn. 06830. Checks should be made payable to The University of Chicago Press. All notices of change of address should provide both the old and the new address. Postmaster: Send address changes to BULLETIN OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S BOOKS, The University of Chicago Press, Journals Division, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

Subscription Correspondence. Address all inquiries about subscriptions to The University of Chicago Press, Journals Division, P.O. Box 37005, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

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

Second-class postage paid at Chicago, Illinois.

© 1983 by The University of Chicago. All rights reserved.

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


A simply told version of the struggle between a small band of Jewish soldiers and the army of Antiochus that culminated in a Jewish victory, a rebuilding of the desecrated temple, and the miracle of a day's supply of oil that burned for eight days, the Miracle of Light. The pictures are stylized and rather stiff, using earth colors and stippling. The style is restrained and direct; the book concludes with a few comments on the ways in which the holiday is celebrated today.

C.U. History—Jews; Holidays; Religious education


After a long gap, a sequel to Miss Nelson Is Missing, an amusing tale of a teacher who played a trick on her class; here Miss Nelson really is out of school for a minor operation, and the class dreads the return of the substitute, Miss Swamp (Miss Nelson in disguise) but finds that having the principal fill in is even worse than Miss Swamp. En masse, they play hookey; they are spotted by Miss Nelson as they pass her house, and that precipitates the return of "Miss Swamp." And, again, the return of Miss Nelson. The disguise is a bit less believable here, and the depiction of the principal, Mr. Blandsworth, is quite unconvincing, as he spends all the class time doing bird calls and card tricks or showing slides of his goldfish. Not as funny as the first book, but mildly amusing.

D.V. Teacher-pupil relations


Philo, who lives with his father in a trailer home and longs for a real house, loves dogs but can't have one for a pet. He combines his wishes when he and a friend take on custodial care of a group of wild dogs and keep them at the site Philo loves, an abandoned house. When some of the dogs sicken (and some die) of a communicable disease, including a neighbor's pet that Philo has "rescued" (stolen) because the animal has been mistreated, Philo learns that there are some problems that need adult help. He also learns that he will have to accept the fact that his father is interested in a woman, and that his mother had decamped rather than died, as he'd thought. This is adequately written and at times humorous, but structurally it's a pastiche, and the characterization is superficial.

D.V. Animals, kindness to; Father-son relations; Older-younger generations

An adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's "The Emperor's New Clothes" is illustrated by sprightly cartoon-style drawings. The adapter has simplified the telling but embellished the structure somewhat as she presents a King Panache who is vain and foppish and worried about what costume to wear for the Grand Ball. Adequate, but not as impressive as a picture book version as those by Virginia Lee Burton or by Jack and Irene Delano.


A photodocumentary shows, step by step, how the various parts of a grand piano are made and assembled, and the clearly written text explains the reasons for processes in addition to giving a description of each. While the numbered picture that explains key action might have been more useful at an earlier page (it concludes the book) the explanations of processes are adequate, and the book as a whole gives interesting information.


Nobody ever calls Monica Sue anything but Mouse, and she is indeed mousey in her own eyes. Mouse tells the story of some of the events of her year in seventh grade; she and her brother T.J. live with their grandparents, since their mother is dead and their father travels much of the time. Mouse worries about her complexion and her braces, daydreams of dazzling performances on the diamond, and clings to T.J. Gradually her self-esteem and self-confidence grow, even to the point where she can correct and criticize others. Even T.J. There is a good bit of insight here, and adequate if not profound characterization; the book ends with Mouse and T.J. ready to move to another town with their father, who has a new job; Mouse anticipates the move with more resilience and optimism than she could have had at the start of the story. Believable, but slight in plot and rather sedate in pace.


Preceded by a preachy note to parents, this is an etiquette book that may easily lose its readers at the start, when it states, "If any of this is familiar to you (parental comment) you're going to love this book." An illustrative balloon asks why. "Because this book is going to tell you exactly how to treat guests." The author invents a character called "Randy Rude" who does all the wrong things, then gives instructions for the right ways guests should be invited, greeted, and treated. There are other bits of advice: how to act if a visitor at the door (which you never open to a stranger) wants someone other than you, for example. Cartoon characters provide balloon dialogue, and on many pages there are irrelevant details like a dog musing, "I think I'll find some cats to scare."

From England, a shocker. Briggs tells a story in cartoon strips, using only two characters: an elderly husband and wife who don’t understand what is happening, and whose dialogue is full of baffled ignorance and malapropisms. They hear that an atomic bomb has been launched, try to follow the confusing directions for safety measures, fuss about inconvenience, remember the last war with nostalgia, emerge from their ineffectual shelter before they are supposed to, and find that the utilities don’t work and the garden is scorched. The book ends with their doleful prayers after they have begun to show symptoms of radiation sickness which they don’t recognize. Three times the pattern of the format is broken by a dark, foreboding double-page spread: a space missile is launched, a malevolent black shape looms in the ocean, and the shadows of bombers move across a cold gray sky. For all its sardonic humor, the book is tough and grim, focused on its message and effective in conveying that message despite the details that slow the pace but ramify the concept that many—if not most—of us are uninformed and unprepared in the event of nuclear war.


With their octogenarian neighbor as top-floor lookout for their apartment, James and Milton (on rollerskates) watch to see who is painting signs on the walls of their apartment building. At first they suspect the new girl in the building, Erica, who’s irritated them because she uses their pet slang expression and skates as well as they do; then they get up early one morning to catch the suspect after they have a clue about a reversed letter in one of the graffiti. This is not Bunting at her best: the structure is slight, the suspense and the deduction minimal, and the writing style pedestrian. Illustrations are in cartoon style. Almost any mystery has some appeal for primary grades readers; this is believable but slight.


The supernova of ice hockey, Wayne Gretzky had broken more records by the time he was twenty-one than any player in the history of the game. While the highlights of his career should interest readers who are hockey fans, the book is not distinguished by its style; it deviates necessarily from the formula sports biography because Gretzky hasn’t had the usual fallow period of unrecognized ability, or the slump in performance that most players have. Coached intensively by his father, Gretzky was a child prodigy, scoring 378 goals in 68 games when he was ten. His ability as a skater and stick-handler was so impressive that he won the longest contract (21 years) in the game’s history when he was eighteen. The book concludes with a chart of Gretzky’s playing record.


Although Runt’s story (he’s the “me” of the title) is set in a boarding school for boys from broken homes, this is anything but a problem novel. Runt refers to the students as inmates, the faculty as live-in guards, and his room as his cell, but admits that he really likes living at Ludwell School. There are two major plot threads: one is the advent of Moose (a new student who is thirteen but well over six feet tall) who has to be coerced into playing football, the other is the advent of a cooing blonde who is
engaged to Runt’s father and who tries to use Runt to help her coerce his father into buying a mansion. This just verges on slapstick, a boys-and-ploys story that is deliberately exaggerated, lightweight but fun.


In a sequel to *I’ll Get By* (reviewed in the May, 1981 issue) Byrd is equally vivid in picturing Manhattan in the Depression Era and equally astute in portraying characters and their relationships. This time it is not Julie who’s the narrator and protagonist, but Kitty, the younger sister of Julie’s friend Marge. Kitty is sixteen, is in love with being in love, calculating about her social life (a weekend at West Point may be boring but one must go for reasons of status) and concerned about Julie and her career as an actress. This may be of special interest to readers of the first book but it stands alone sturdily as a good period story with firm characterization, good family relationships, and a light but polished style that has good pace and humor.

D.V. Family relations


At her mother’s insistence, Harriet (looking part bear, part dog) takes her little brother Walt with her to play in the snow. At first she’s irritated because Walt does such silly things, but after her friend George (rabbit) has repeatedly criticized her little brother, Harriet becomes defensive; on the way home she helps Walt do a better job of some of the things he’s tried before (making a snowman, making an “angel!”) and they have a very good time by themselves. The illustrations are awkwardly drawn, but the bright colors of the animals’ clothing against the snow is attractive; the story is not highly original, but it’s nicely told and has good length and structure for the lap audience.

D.V. Brothers, sisters


A small book with a brief text, neat little pictures tinted with pink and blue, and a subject that is appropriately familiar for the very young read-aloud audience is one of a series about a little elephant. Kate fusses when her bedtime surprise present proves to be a quilt instead of the doll she wanted. Imagining night terrors, she snuggles under the quilt, feels safe, and thanks her mother. The message seems to be that a quilt is a security blanket. Pleasant, but insubstantial.

D.V. Mother-daughter relations


Anna is more sympathetic to Grandpa’s reports of his sessions with a hypnotist than her mother is; Mom is a widowed police officer who is sure that the hypnotist, Mr. Smith-Burton, is a fraud. Grandpa reports on his previous incarnations and worries because he was responsible for his brother’s death when they lived in Tibet centuries before. Anna worries about Grandpa and about the hoaxter who has perpetrated several jokes on people in their building. It’s Anna who figures out who the hoaxter is, and her worries about Grandpa end when he decides to marry an older woman who’s a neighbor and when Smith-Burton (an Anglo-Indian) turns up to say
he will reimburse Grandpa for the three thousand dollars out of which he’s been bilked by Smith-Burton’s wife, who’s just run off with another man. The plot is top-heavy, the characters well-defined if not always drawn in depth or essential to the plot. At times amusing, not always quite believable, but written with a light touch and plenty of action.

D.V. Grandfather-child relations


Kathleen, fourteen, describes the events that led to her suggesting to her mother that as an intelligent woman interested and active in community affairs, she should run for mayor. There’s nothing surprising in the story of the campaign and the election, which Kathleen’s mother wins, but this is an appealing story because of the brisk pace and style, it gives a good picture of small-town politics and the roles family and friends can play, and it has warm, supportive familial relationships.

C.U. Social studies

D.V. Civic competence and responsibility; Community life; Family relations


Conner divides the paintings he has chosen into such groups as “Reading for pleasure,” “A cold shoulder,” “Musical fantasy,” and “The art of the game,” titles not always indicative of the subject. The reproductions are of excellent quality; the text accompanying each picture discusses subject, mood, and technique. The style is informal, and the one weakness of the book is that the author, a museum curator, talks down to his audience by making assumptive comments like “... the American seems to look at his newspaper only because he cannot think of anything better to do.” Still, the quality of the reproduction and the quality and range of the interior scenes are impressive.

C.U. Art—study and teaching


As in all the books in this series, pictures are often paired or grouped, with useful information about each artist and commentary on each painting, one of which is a poster in this volume. The choice is discriminating, and the sources varied, representing artists of many countries over five centuries. As do the other books in the series, this provides notes on the artists and an index. See also the Waterfield title reviewed below.

C.U. Art—study and teaching


Adapted from a story in Edmund Geldart’s *Folklore of Modern Greece*, this is illustrated by pictures that are weak in draughtsmanship but strong in design and composition, painted in bright, flat colors. Dorin is the youngest of three princes; he so offends his father when he discloses a dream in which the king does menial tasks
that the latter banishes Dorin from his kingdom forever. This doesn’t end with a triumphant return or a fond reunion, but is dropped, and the tale is therefore not typical of folk material. The story could easily begin with Dorin’s sallying forth to meet his fate. He runs into a blind dragon, uses his wit and magic to regain the dragon’s eyes, taken by some evil dryads. The happy dragon immediately puts the dryads to death by dragon-fire, gives Dorin a flying tour of the country, "... and then they set out to see the world," bringing the story to a rather abrupt halt.


"The most important thing in life is not to put yourself in a box," Carol Johnston says at the close of a book about her prowess as a gymnast, "Kids should not be pushed into something they don’t want to do. But they should be allowed to try what they want." Her parents believed that, and so Carol was encouraged to be a skater and gymnast although she was born with only one arm. Canadian, she came to a California college and practiced zealously, coming in second in the U.S. competition in 1978. The book is simply written, and the twin appeals of the overcoming of a handicap and the popular subject should draw older slow readers as well as the middle grades audience.

D.V. Handicaps, overcoming


Oversize pages are crowded with poems and pictures; most of the selections are old favorites, from such writers as Milne and Fyleman and Farjeon and Stevenson. There are a few poems that are banal, but this is on the whole an anthology that is well-suited for reading aloud to young children, although there are few selections that haven’t been heavily anthologized. The illustrations are pastel-pretty, plump greeting-card children who look very much alike. The book begins with morning poems and ends with night poems, but the arrangement throughout seems haphazard. An index of first lines is included, but no title index or table of contents.

C.U. Reading aloud


A how-to book gives adequate instruction for making many kinds of tribal masks; although there are no step-by-step instructions, the material is so organized that the omission is not detrimental. The author provides general information about techniques (mold method, papier-mâché, gauze maché, etc.) and, for each section, information about the decorative methods and styles of the masks of each tribe or group of tribes. The projects include Eastern Iroquois false faces, Southwest kachina masks, Northwest coast Indian masks, Alaskan Eskimo masks, and others.


Red, white, blue, and grey are used in small-scale pictures with a minimum of clutter; some of the pictures are in cartoon-strip style. The simply written text makes
a brief reference to the fact that people have sent messages and packages to each other since early times, and the illustrations expand on this. Most of the book, however, traces the ways in which mail is gathered from boxes or taken in at post offices, sorted, shipped, and delivered. Useful information, succinctly conveyed, this is a book that can also be used for reading aloud to younger children. The use of parallel lines to indicate dark skin is a bit disturbing; since the features are much the same for all the people depicted, there is no indication of an effort to show true racial diversity.

C.U. Reading aloud; Reading, beginning


Matter-of-fact in tone, sensible in approach, full in coverage, and written in a crisp, informal style, this is a useful and perceptive introduction to the therapeutic process. It is addressed particularly to adolescents and their needs and problems. Gilbert describes various therapeutic methods, discusses the practitioners and their qualifications and differences, and uses several cases as examples of a range of problems that are treated by a range of techniques. The book discusses costs, suggests ways in which individuals can judge and select therapists, lists danger signals, reminds readers to have a physician check on physical symptoms, and discusses candidly the pitfalls and satisfactions of the client-therapist relationship. A glossary, an index, and a useful series of lists of sources of information (advice on legal rights, advice on therapists' credentials, advice on mental health treatment, fiction and nonfiction bibliographies) is included.


A hen and her three chicks have a bad dream; they run to a stream, where an obliging duck and her three ducklings ferry them across, leaving the bad dream on the other side of the stream. This has some fallacies: the shared dream and also the "leaving" it as though it had a physical entity, but it's a story with a simple problem/solution structure, it's told in simple rhyme, and the large-scale pictures, colorful and cheerful, have the appeal of the animals, all of which make it a good picture book for reading aloud and showing, especially to a group.


In a text that is adequately written but that gives little more information than most encyclopedia articles, Gleasner describes the inventions of gunpowder and nitroglycerin that were used before Alfred Nobel's experiments that produced dynamite. Most of the book is devoted to a description of the years of Nobel's efforts to find a safe and consistent form for the explosive. The book concludes with a discussion of Nobel's dismay at being called a "merchant of death," since he had hoped his invention would be used only for peaceful purposes, and of his establishment of the Nobel Peace Prize and other prizes awarded for achievements that benefit humanity.

C.U. Industries

An Edwardian family of seven goes exploring on the grounds of a stately mansion; one by one, each member of the family disappears, until only little Neville is left, and his comment ends the verses: "But then, I expect it was all for the best." Gorey’s drawings are macabre and elegant, as always, and the sophisticated verses provide black humor. What’s wasted is the elaborate pop-up structure of the pictures, which, with the verses, appear on the book’s covers as well as its inner pages: there are stand-up sections, wheels to turn, and pull-tabs, and most of them don’t affect a change of scene or affect the course of the story a whit.


"The Republic has no need for scientists," the judge had said, and so Antoine Lavoisier, the "father of chemistry," the man who had improved prisons and hospitals, clarified the country’s mathematical system, shown farmers how to improve their crop yields, and redesigned the Paris street-light system was killed. Guillotined, like so many others, as an enemy of the French Revolution. While this gives some biographical information, and enough historical data to be useful in a study of French history, it focuses on Lavoisier’s work as a scientist. One of his major contributions to the body of scientific knowledge was his insistence that scientific research must be based on precise measurement rather than observation by the naked eye, so that chemistry could become an exact science. With three other French scientists, he devised a system of nomenclature, so that chemists of all countries could speak a common scientific language. It was in the year that this study was published, 1789, that the new National Assembly was formed that led to the "Tennis Court Oath" and the downfall of Louis XVI. Five years later Lavoisier was beheaded. In this capably written biography, the emphasis is not on Lavoisier’s personality but on his achievements as a scientist, and the book gives a vivid picture of the flux in the scientific circles of the eighteenth century that shows how much such events are related to the temper and events and knowledge of their times. A relative bibliography gives good access to the book’s contents.

C.U. History—France; Science


Written in first person, a continuous verse takes a child through a winter day. The busy, happy note that pervades the text should appeal to children, but the faulty rhyming (laugh and path, tracks and back, shine and time) weakens the book. The children have pancakes for breakfast, play in the snow or indoors, help bake a cake (recipe included) and so on. The book ends with Mama’s winter lullaby. The bright, small-scale pictures have considerable vitality and familiar, homey details; they are more impressive than the writing.


In a series of cases for which the reader is asked to spot the clue that leads to the detective’s solution, answers are provided with a turn of the page. This format has already proved popular in other, similar books. Here the added appeal is the flippant,
funny writing: each case is prefaced by an introduction that is a spoof of the tough detective genre, and the cases the mosquito detective solves are replete with silly characters (in a case involving the theft of the new styles by fashion designers, the latter are Glorious Vanderbug and Vidal Cocoon) and yeasty, if nonsensical, dialogue.


Heather is eleven; she lives alone with her widowed mother, who works, and they have a companionable and loving relationship in which they share chores, joys, and problems. One thing Mom doesn’t understand is Heather’s friendship with an elderly recluse, reputedly eccentric, Mr. Duffy. It is he who encourages Heather to develop her own garden, and it is through their reactions to old Mr. Duffy that Heather finally comes to see that her friend Lisa is self-centered and snobbish while other friends are sympathetic, especially when Mr. Duffy becomes ill. Even Mom, when she comes to know him, admits that Mr. Duffy is not at all the surly person he’s reputed to be. This has a fairly good balance in handling the protagonist’s relationships with her mother, Mr. Duffy, and her boy and girl friends; it has a competent writing style and has enough change and development in Heather to give the story substance, although the pace occasionally lags and the story line is not strong.

D.V. Friendship values; Mother-daughter relations; Older-younger generations; Responsibility


Kate, twelve, is the narrator of a story set in Manhattan and focused on two changes in her life; an orphan, she and her sister live with their grandmother in a Riverside Drive apartment. Kate adjusts first to the fact that Nana invites an elderly, lonely friend, Mr. Schumacher, to move into their apartment, and then to the fact that the two decide to get married. The other change is Kate’s painful decision not to audition for a summer course at the National Ballet School; although her dear friend Peter urges her to try out with him, Kate feels she isn’t quite ready. Maybe next year. The story has fluent style, strong characterization and dialogue, a believable development and change in relationships, and a good balance of interests.

D.V. Boy-girl relations; Grandmother-child relations; Step-grandparent-child relations


An absorbing historical novel is well-researched and smoothly written; set in ancient Greece, it covers two years, 492 B.C. to 490 B.C. The protagonist, Alexis, is a young adolescent who burns to avenge his family’s honor against the king of a neighboring city, especially after the king’s son, Glaukon, defeats Alexis’ brother in a boxing match at the Olympic games. Glaukon becomes an ally, if not a friend, when he and Alexis are captured by pirates and sold as slaves in Athens. Both are given their freedom in exchange for military service at Marathon, the great battle with which the story ends and during which Alexis saves Glaukon’s life. What Alexis has found as he matures is that there are better ways than combat and vengeance to heal a breach. The story moves at a good pace, with a strong plot as well as historical interest; Hodges is meticulous but unobtrusive in providing background details.

C.U. History, ancient
D.V. Pacific attitudes

One of a series of books about very young zoo animals, this exemplifies the appeal of the photographs and the subjects as well as the weakness of the texts. The text is in first person, the speakers are Wilbur and Orville. They describe how they were cared for in the zoo nursery, bottle-fed and taught to swim by nursery staff, and switched to a diet of solid food at the age of three months, when they were put into the big enclosure where the other zoo otters live. A page of other facts about otters, in smaller print, is appended, as is a token index. The coverage is slight, the tone of writing obtrusively naive ("We weren't being raised by our mother. Who was going to teach us to swim?"). Other books in the series are about a cheetah, a gorilla, a koala, a polar bear, and a zebra.


Brisk comic drawings, sometimes crowded but always vigorous, are nicely coordinated with an action-packed story in an oversize book. Once a circus bear, Albert so entertains the crowds at the zoo that they overfeed him. Put on a diet, Albert manages to get out of his cage, finds some garbage, is picked up by the garbage truck, and escapes from it. By now he's dressed in a jogging outfit he's found on the truck, so when he joins a group of runners, nobody knows—until he wins and is congratulated by the mayor—that Albert is a bear. Exhausted by his adventures, Albert is relieved when he is spotted by a zoo keeper. Now, the story ends, they have built a track for him at the zoo, and every day Albert puts on his sweat suit and runs. A bit overdone but amusing, and the authors' style is cheery and palatable if not polished.


The dog next door looks ferocious and barks loudly and is named Pirate; Jonathan regularly crosses the street or climbs a tree when Pirate's about. One day Pirate approaches so quietly Jonathan doesn't hear him; frightened, Jonathan throws his ball at the dog. Pirate brings it back. Jonathan throws it again; again, Pirate retrieves it. Thus, in one easy lesson, Jonathan learns that Pirate isn't to be feared. Fearful children may find this encouraging, although some of them may know that barking dogs do sometimes bite. Well meant, effectively told if not completely credible in the way a child so quickly overcomes a long-established fear, and illustrated with prim, uncluttered paintings of chunky little people.

D.V. Fear, overcoming


A poetry anthology is divided into four sections: "What Do Poems Do?," "What's Inside a Poem?," "Special Kinds of Poetry," and "Do It Yourself." Each is subdivided; in the first section, for example, the headings include Make You Laugh, Tell Stories, and Send Messages—and in this arrangement is one of the weaknesses of the book, since—for example—there are some poems under the "Tell Stories" rubric
that seem inappropriately placed. The material is well-chosen, with good variety; most of the selections are brief, many are in a light vein. Interspersed through the poems are bits of commentary by the compiler, some rather heavily cute. The fourth section is brief; it is followed by an afterword intended for adults working with groups of children. Author, title, and first line indexes are included; illustrations are adequate black and white line drawings.


Nineteen children, ranging in age from eight to sixteen, discuss, in separate interviews, their feelings about being adopted; the book is illustrated by fine photographs of the children and their families and the text is preceded by a thoughtful introduction. The monologues are candid and direct, describing the ways each of the adopted children feels about his or her natural parents, whether it makes a difference to have other adopted children in the family, how and when they were told they were adopted, whether or not they want to meet (or have met) their birthparents. Touching and trenchant, this gives a strong picture of the closeness of family relationships between children and their adoptive families, and a clear indication of the wisdom of candor between adoptive parents and their children.


Lavine describes the habits, habitat, and appearance of the five species of rhinoceroses that exist today; his text is illustrated with many photographs, some of which are of poor quality. One chapter is devoted to a discussion of the myths and legends related to rhinos; the final chapter is a plea for preservation of the rhino, especially of those species that are most in danger of extinction. The book is adequately written, although some of the material seems scattered: there is a chapter on "Ways of the Rhinoceros," for example, but some of the animal's habits also appear in "Family Traits," a chapter dealing primarily with physical appearance. An index is appended.


When his sailor uncle tells Ernie that one of his three favorite leisure time occupations is knitting, Ernie—who is in the bored state of convalescence after a bout with chicken pox—decides that he will not only learn to knit but get into the record books for knitting the longest muffler ever. He brings his project to school and is teased by the other boys; briefly discomforted, Ernie soon rallies. He talks about his uncle and his project, stimulates the class into wool-gathering (literally) and gives knitting lessons. He finally decides he's spending too much time knitting, that his muffler is impressive enough (314 feet long) and he goes back to a more diverse existence than he could have when he was knitting all the time. Ink and wash illustrations are a quiet and amusing foil for the story, which is written in an easy, direct style, is restrainedly non-sexist, and sturdily structured.


Unlike most children's books about computers, this neither gives a history of how today's computers evolved nor explains how a computer functions. In clear language
supplemented by carefully-placed diagrams and examples, it shows the reader the way in which—using BASIC—a computer is programmed. Next to hands-on demonstrations, this is probably as helpful as a lesson can be. It’s sequentially arranged, uses technical terminology only when necessary, and is written in a light but lucid style. A glossary and an index are included.

C.U. Computer programming


In an anthology of poems about the supernatural, Livingston has grouped the selections under such headings as “Devils, Fiends, Giants, Ogres and Wizards” and “Metamorphoses, Transformations and Disguises.” There are excerpts from Shakespearian drama, narrative poems, lyric poems and some that are humorous. The poems have been chosen from many languages and several centuries, a pleasantly shivery and varied collection. Author, translator, title, and first line indexes are provided.

C.U. Reading aloud


Profusely illustrated with good photographs, this is both a record of the first year of life for an infant raccoon that was raised as a pet but trained to fend for herself when she was old enough, and a description of the habits of raccoons in the wild. Ruffian, found when she was a week old, is bottle-fed, playful, and curious; as she grows she is given more and more freedom and encouraged to forage on her own. The book ends with Ruffian living with her cubs in a den in the trunk of a tall tree. As Ruffian grows into each stage and develops new abilities, the text explains how raccoons are adapted to their nocturnal life, how their habits change with the seasons, how they eat, swim, etc. The writing is authoritative, direct, straightforward, and casual. An index is included.

C.U. Science

D.V. Pets, care of


How often has a book started with a young woman coming out to a colonial outpost after being orphaned, with a promise of uniforms and romance looming? Harry (a nickname she prefers) is kindly taken in by the Resident, Sir Charles, as arranged by her soldier-brother; she promises herself that she’ll be a proper young lady. This seems to be a formulaic romance, but McKinley rises far above this, for Harry is kidnapped by a local ruler, not for love but because his keler, or psychic power, tells him he must. And indeed it is Harry, after intensive training, who saves his kingdom by going into battle with the fabled blue sword and her own psychic power. There is a love story, but it is a subordinate theme in a rich tapestry of fantasy and adventure, as the author creates a realm and a people with vivid clarity. Strong in structure and style, the book has characters who are depicted with depth and acuity, good pace, and a high sense of drama. This is the first book in a projected trilogy.

This gets off nicely with a realistic start, moves uncertainly into fantasy, and goes off on a tangent. Bernard is a natural jumper; when he’s four his mother makes him a jumping suit, and he’s so good at jumping that he opens a school. One of his best pupils is Jerome (drawn as a humanoid beast, or perhaps it’s a beast-like human) who enters a competition against Gerald the Conceited Kangaroo. Jerome so far outjumps Gerald that he flies off into the sky, and the story ends with Bernard bereft. But still jumping. A frail ending further weakens a story that is poorly structured, and that has a plot that seems too young for the audience that can easily understand such writing as, "Bernard, of course, made no promises, nor gave any guarantees, but his enthusiasm and his concerned attention inspired Bertha and his other pupils to lofty achievements." The bright illustrations and small black and white sketches that alternate with the color pictures have an exaggeration and comic ebullience that should appeal to young children.


Handsome and popular, Dylan Donaldson regards the girl he meets at his father’s hospital bedside as a challenge; Barbra Feingold has just moved to California from New York City, and he falls in love with her. The romance flourishes despite the fact that Dylan’s father is dying of cancer, and Dylan finds that he’s also still interested in hang-gliding despite his grief about the father he so deeply loves. It is really the father who is the crux of the story, for Al Donaldson is determined to end his life with dignity, setting a date for suicide by sleeping pills and trying to make that decision easier for his wife and son. Dylan’s grief, when his father has died, is compounded when Barbra tells him she has fallen in love with someone else. Dylan tries a suicidal flight, and when he lives through it realizes that he still wants to live. There the story ends—rather abruptly—and while it has almost a documentary quality as a book about adjustment to death, it is patchy as a narrative, the love story and the gliding episodes not quite blending with the story of Al Donaldson. The writing style is adequate save for the use of some heavy language in exposition and an uneven quality in the dialogue.

D.V. Death, adjustment to; Father-son relations


A slight but merry tale with bright, vigorous illustrations that have some of the dash of Galdone’s work, this shows an odd combination of flora and fauna (wheat and a squirrel, a camel and a palm tree) in the pictures. A small orange squirrel appreciates the efforts of all the creatures who respond to his request for tickling, but feels his best chance for a really GREAT tickle lies in climbing the tree with a feathery top. He gets there by standing on a goat who is standing on a horse who is standing on a camel; he laughs so hard that other animals laugh too, then—exhausted—they all snuggle up for a good sleep. Adequately told, minimally amusing.


For over a century, the Ku Klux Klan has been perpetrating acts of violence and terrorism, primarily against Blacks, Catholics, and Jews, in its program of making the
United States a country ruled by—and preferably restricted to—a white, Protestant, Nordic society. Begun as a social group after the Civil War, the Klan was used to maintain white supremacy in the South and spread into other regions, often condoned or even joined by ministers who were approached by Kleagles (recruiters) for support. KKK power ebbed in the late 1920’s; in the last quarter century there has been a resurgence of Klan violence; although the KKK today is a smaller group, it is active, persecuting other minority groups as well as the three who have so long been targets for their hate. Meltzer, in his usual style of careful documentation and serious analysis, has written a sobering report that concludes with an itemized listing of KKK attacks and atrocities in the last few years; he concludes with two chapters that discuss what sorts of people join the organization and why, and the intensive recruiting amongst young people, and a final chapter: “What To Do?” The bibliography and index have been carefully compiled.

C.U. Social studies


There are many stories about the legendary Meg, and although it is accepted by many scholars that she did indeed live, there is no verification of the reality of the deeds for which she was famous. Here Minard spins a brisk tale of Long Meg’s heroism when she posed as a man to join the army of Henry VIII when he invaded France. Sixteen, tall and strong, Meg was wounded in the battle for Boulogne; she led the laundresses of that city in an ingenious plan to save it from the besieging French army, and won the honor of a visit from the king. Lots of action here, in a story that has little characterization in depth but has historical use and is written in a direct, simple style.

C.U. History—England


First published in Germany in 1972 under the title Ein Mann für Mama, this has neither the fluent style nor the perspicacity of Nostlinger’s later books. It’s light and amusing, however, and if the characters are exaggerated they are also vivid: Sue’s tyrannical grandmother and her slightly batty great-aunt Alice. Twelve-year-old Sue and her older sister have come to live with the two elderly women after Sue’s parents’ bickering have accelerated into heated hostility. Sue decides that a household of women is a bad idea and she looks around for a stepfather; none of her plans works, the last ploy being a particular disaster, and the story ends with Father, hastily summoned by Sue’s sister, appearing to cheer his despondent wife in a reunion that is anything but saccharine.

D.V. Boy-girl relations; Parent-child relations


Norman, the sixth-grade son of a former football player, tells the story of his struggle to please his father by joining the Junior League Football Team even though he detests playing. Norman’s passion is junk sales, and it is at a sale that he meets some new neighbors, Carrie Koski and her grandfather. Carrie’s so pleasant and
relaxed that Norman conquers his shyness and takes her on a date; Mr. Koski is so warm and understanding that Norman gains courage enough to tell his father he’s quitting the team and even to feel comfortable about doing his own thing. No great events here, but the story’s lightly humorous and the style is convincing as that of a child; relationships are perceptively drawn, and if the characterization isn’t deep, it is believable and warm.

D.V. Boy-girl relations; Father-son relations; Older-younger generations


Olshan, a psychologist, begins with a general and fairly extensive discussion of what depression is, how severe or prolonged depression differs from the transitory if painful sadness individuals feel as a reaction to disruption in their lives, and how the diagnosis and treatment of depression have changed. He describes at length the most common causes of depression, the physical manifestations it can precipitate, the use of depression to get attention, and types of depression. Also discussed are suicide, symptoms and treatment, and the ways in which families and friends can help the depressed person. The writing style is rather dry, the type face making the pages look more difficult than they are to read; the material is adequately organized, the tone authoritative, the information useful. A glossary, a bibliography, an index, and a list of sources from which help or information may be procured are provided.

C.U. Health and hygiene


When a social worker comes to tell Johnny Stands that he is missing too much school and that the grandfather with whom he lives alone needs more care than he is getting, Johnny and his grandfather are alarmed. Afraid that they will be parted and Johnny sent to live with his aunt in Denver, they leave their reservation shack and take refuge in an abandoned church, where they are held hostage by a group (also Indian) who have burned the trading post. They escape, get to the city, and find other Lakota Sioux in the slums; Johnny is jailed for releasing a caged eagle but released by a compassionate judge. They go home, find a summons from the social service agency; Johnny goes on a Vision Quest and decides he is now a man and can accept being sent to Denver. Although the book gives insight into some of the problems that Native Americans have in adjusting to a white culture and especially to an urban environment, it has many weaknesses as a story: the characters seem more representative than individual, the incidents (especially the melodramatic episode at the church) seem superimposed, the writing style is often turgid, and the climax, Johnny’s decision to accept separation from his grandfather, is only tenuously based on preceding events.

D.V. Grandfather-child relations; Intercultural understanding


Juan Berna, thirteen and in fifth grade, tells the story of his previous summer and introduces it by describing his family, Mexican-Americans, and the struggle they have had since his father’s accidental death. Much of the story is devoted to explanations of the trucking business, farm workers, unions, et cetera, and the device of having conversation carry such information is overdone. The widower next door,
Pete, takes Juan along as an apprentice and Juan saves Pete's life when the truck catches fire. The book is sympathetic to the problems of truckers and migrant workers, and it shows the neighborliness of the barrio residents, but it's heavy-handed as a story.

D.V. Death, adjustment to


One of the major contemporary anthologists of poetry for children, Helen Plotz can be depended upon for a discriminating choice of selections and for a broad representation of old and new poets. Here the material is divided into four sections: poems about rural work, about women's work, about industrial work (including child labor) and unemployment, and about workers and working generally. Author, title, and first line indexes are provided.


Beautifully illustrated by the richly colorful and handsomely composed Ambrus paintings, this oversize book (from a British publisher originally) is impressive to look at and eminently readable. Riordan does a good job of balancing a straightforward and fluent narrative style with enough of the cadence of the traditional hero tale to flavor the tales of Arthur and his knights.


Six tales of the Chuang, Han, T'ung, and Yao tribes are retold in a smooth, flowing style and are handsomely illustrated with beautifully detailed pencil drawings, serenely composed. Several of the tales are long and incorporate several themes (filial piety, kindness to others, magical objects, greed punished, etc.) and some will surely be familiar to lovers of the genre, since they have appeared in picture book versions. Nice to read aloud or alone, and a good source for storytelling.

C.U. Reading aloud; Storytelling


Bobby, the narrator, is eleven; Billy, his friend and neighbor, is eighteen; Shadow and Gunner are their names for each other. Some of the story has flashback scenes, but most of it is set while Gunner is home on leave, back from England where his crew flies on bombing missions. Shadow is delighted to have Gunner home but disgusted when his friend and his sister fall in love. The story ends in a predictable turn when news comes that Gunner has been killed, and there's a tearjerker last scene in which Shadow pins Gunner's silver wings (his parting gift to Shadow) on his sister's coat at the graveside, then races home to get his bugle and plays "Taps." The writing style is pedestrian, the story crowded with details intended to give a feeling for the period (radio programs of World War II, saddle shoes, rationing, Sinatra, Victory Gardens, etc.) and the plot overextended, so that what might have been an adequate if sentimental short story becomes a rather dreary novel.

D.V. Death, adjustment to; Friendship values

Profusely illustrated by photographs of excellent quality, this description of a wildlife haven, the Suncoast Seabird Sanctuary, is divided into sections that correspond to the organization's four purposes: rescue, repair, recuperation, and release. Some of the many varieties of birds (and an occasional snake or turtle) have been hurt by natural causes, some (often unintentionally) by people. The sanctuary's dedicated staff and successful program are described in a text that is lively, sympathetic, and informative, its message loud and clear.

D.V. Animals, kindness to


Bold, stylized, effective in color and composition, the author-artist's block prints (and the story she tells) are based on the carvings of totem poles of the Northwest Coast Indians. Thunderbird is one of the animal folk heroes of Native American folklore, and in this simply told story Thunderbird punishes Whale because he is chasing salmon in the river, and elicits a promise the Whale will stay in the sea. The totem pole that shows the characters is shown at the end of this "why" story, and a page that describes the carver's tools and the ways in which colors for the painting of a totem pole were provided is appended.

C.U. Storytelling


One of a series that has included some excellent books that can be used for career orientation, this comprises five long chapters about women (an FBI undercover narcotics agent, a correctional superintendent, a member of the mounted police, an FBI forensic scientist, and a member of the Florida Marine Patrol) and one round-up section that briefly covers the work of five more women. All the women discuss their training, their satisfaction in their work, and those problems they encountered as women in positions usually held by men. The material is interesting in itself; the text has a good balance of cited comments and exposition, and is well-written; and the appended material includes a glossary, a lengthy list of institutions at which one may receive training or appropriate academic courses, and sources of information on federal jobs within the criminal justice system.

C.U. Vocational guidance

D.V. Occupational orientation


Third in a trilogy of retellings of Arthurian legends (*The Light Beyond the Forest, The Sword and the Circle*) this focuses on the love between Sir Lancelot, King Arthur's dearest friend and noblest knight, and Guenever, Arthur's Queen, and on the scheming Mordred, the king's illegitimate son, who uses that love to bring tragedy to all three at the end of their lives. Sutcliff is, as always, superb in the fluency with which she recreates a period; her characters come alive in bittersweet characterization, and her style is intense and flowing in this grave and poignant conclusion.

A dedicated and knowledgeable dance buff, Switzer writes with an easy flow and in an informal style, so the mass of material with which she so expertly deals is eminently readable. Her text begins with a brief background, chiefly of ballet, and proceeds to a history of dance in the United States. Chapters are devoted to such subjects as the training and life style of dancers, dance companies and their choreographers, some rising stars, some established stars, and dance in films and on Broadway. The book gives a cohesive and comprehensive picture, it has good photographs, and the index is preceded by a useful bibliography.

C.U. Dancing—study and teaching


A small boy describes going out to play on a cold, snowy day with his father: they see a snowplow and build a snowman; the child, who is the narrator, feels cold and they go home to have a warm drink and a little rest. The illustrations are evocative, cool blues and grey and white. The text is minimal, direct and simple: “Cold crisp air stings my nose. It’s quiet and deep and gives the houses eyelids.” While the text gives an impression, too, of the cold and silence, it may be limited in appeal because of its brevity and its lack of story line.

D.V. Environmental concepts


In a story set in England in the fourteenth century, Anne is one of the villagers who detest their cruel overlord; Anne especially hates him because he had sent Hugh, her one friend, into exile in the forest for taking one of his birds. When the Black Plague hits Anne’s village, she is already threatened by Lord Thomas’ anger, and is sent off by her family to hide in the distant marsh. There she survives flood, cold, and hunger, coping with the elements—and her own fears and loneliness—and escapes a family that has captured her to serve as wife and worker, and makes her way home. The book ends rather abruptly as Anne, now living in her own village to which she has come home to find no survivors, sees her old friend Hugh coming down the road. Despite this abruptness, and despite the fact that there is a break between the first part of the story (sturdy historical fiction, and well done) and the second (almost a Crusoe situation, and also well done) the book holds up nicely: vivid details in the setting, good dialogue and adequate characterization, a focused development, and a strong sense of narrative.

C.U. History—England

D.V. Self-reliance


Small for a third-grader, often a victim of the class bully, Alex, and his friends, Benjy decides he’s going to build himself up by consuming Zingies, a breakfast cereal. His dream is to beat Alex in a fight, but he never achieves that goal; he is
happy, however, when he convinces a friend to punch Alex in the nose in exchange for an ice cream. This has no great drama or serious problem; it's a light-hearted, free-flowing story of third-grade power politics that's often funny and is balanced by warm and equally funny family scenes.


Line drawings, black and white or washed with pastel colors, illustrate a first-person account by a small girl about her feelings about a baby stepsister. "I don't know why Daddy had to have a new baby. He has me," is the gist of her wistful complaint; her feelings change after she's averted a possible accident (the baby's stroller rolls down a path toward a lake) and been congratulated by bystanders on saving her little sister, and after she's made the crying baby laugh (a more familiar device in books about dethronement). Handled with a light but firm touch, believably expressed from the child's viewpoint, this should be most useful for reading aloud to those children who have the special problem of adjusting to the advent of step-siblings.

D.V. Baby, adjustment to


The first story in this sequence of humorous realistic stories was *Claudia* (reviewed in the April, 1970 issue) and this is the third; the second book is reviewed below. It may be a bit confusing, since Claudia is in sixth grade in this book, as in the first one, while in *Hello, Claudia!* she's in fourth grade; it may further be confusing because in the latter her best friend moves away, but in this book she reappears as a character. However, this—like the other books—is brisk, bouncy, warm in family relationships and often very funny.

D.V. Boy-girl relations; Family relations; Friendship values


In this, chronologically the first of the three books about Claudia, she loses her very very best friend when her "twin," Janice, moves from the Washington area to Boston. Desolate, she is lukewarm in her response to the friendly overtures of the new boy next door, Duffy; after all, he's two years younger than she, even if he is precocious for his age. She finds, in the end, that friendship needn't be based on age, and she and Duffy become fast friends. All of the books have a good balance of interests (home, friends, school) as well as warm familial relationships; all are discerning in their characterizations and have good dialogue.

D.V. Boy-girl relations; Family relations; Friendship values


In the same series as the Conner books reviewed above, this is the most impressive of the three; it has the same discrimination in choice of material, the same broad range of painting styles, and gives the same sort of background information about the pictures (and, in this volume, masks) and analyzes technique in a direct, informal

[119]
Perhaps because Waterfield is a teacher as well as a museum curator, his approach to the reader is more polished than that of the writer of the other two books in the series.

C.U. Art—study and teaching


There’s very little text in this picture book, so that the combination of no description of action and an emphasis on clouds in a changing sky may provide too static an experience to appeal to some children. In very large type, the pages (mostly of the sky) show three small figures, at times truncated, while a sentence or two per page reads, “Look, a mouse!” “And a cat.” “My nose is cold.” “I see a dog.” “My hands are cold.” It grows dark, the children go indoors; next morning they create a snow-sculpture. The paintings are evocative of a cold autumn day and the gathering darkness, but not much happens.

D.V. Imaginative concepts


Scribbly pen drawings, pink-tinted, in cartoon style illustrate a melange of creation tales and pourquoi tales. Several creatures try to get the fire from a lightning-struck tree that’s smouldering and fail; the white raven tries and is turned black; the hoot owl tries and comes back with white-rimmed eyes and a fear of the light. Finally a spider makes a tiny bowl that she fastens on her back, swims over to the island where she lets down a thread and gets a glowing coal for her bowl; she swims back and puts it in a hollow in the ground. And that’s how animals, in the days before people came, kept themselves warm at night. A potpourri of folklore is adequately told and illustrated.


In five long stories, Westall explores the frontier between rational normality and the fantastic or occult. In one tale, told in first person, a young man meets a sort of bionic woman, perfectly beautiful and beautifully perfect, who frightens him; in another, a World War II airplane seems to have a life of its own, and in a third a prank turns into ghostly persecution; the young minister in “St. Austin Friars” cannot believe that a man who looks fifty and says he’s almost two hundred can calmly arrange his own funeral, and in the final story a policeman hunts doggedly for an explanation for objects that disappear. The stories have variety of style and concept, but they are alike in having sharply etched characters, good dialogue, and strong plots. Westall is at his best here, a craftsman who writes with polish and a strong narrative sense that gives body to five deftly structured tales.
READING FOR TEACHERS

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.


