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PRODUCTION NOTE

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EXPLANATION OF CODE SYMBOLS USED WITH ANNOTATIONS

* Asterisks denote books of special distinction.

R Recommended.

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

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

NR Not recommended.

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

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

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

C.U. Curricular Use.

D.V. Developmental Values.

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New Titles for Children and Young People


Action-shot photographs illustrate Aaseng's brief profiles of eight players who are known for their ability at rebounding, driving to the basket, and playing defense. The text gives a bit of personal information about the athletes but focuses on their particular strengths as players and on their records in professional basketball. Because of the subject, this may attract slow older readers; the writing style is simple, now and then a bit cute, often laudatory in tone.


Some of the characters of an earlier series, the Cam Jansen stories, decide to play detectives because they can't figure out why an elderly couple in their building won't let a visiting nephew play with them. Or why one of the couple goes off on daily mysterious errands. Diane and Donna, twin sisters, and Kevin and Gary, twin brothers, are the four sleuths. There's lots of padding, a running gag (Gary tells puerile jokes he's made up) and some semi-comic episodes, but there's little suspense and the story-line is thin. However, it's all good-humored, it's easy to read, it has a logical outcome, and readers will probably enjoy what suspense there is and perhaps laugh just because Gary's jokes are so awful.


The title is misleading, for the focus in this deftly crafted book is on some very real problems: ethical behavior, class snobbery, friendship values, and the relationship between filial trust and parental (in this case, paternal) obligation. Sounds heavy? Alcock uses these elements to create a fast-paced, intriguing mystery story in which Emily, suspicious of her father's odd behavior, secretly follows him and thereby becomes involved in an attempted art forgery, the bringing together of two adolescent boys who had lost touch, and the exposure of the "Sylvia game" the boys had played, a game based on a dramatic drowning a century before. Strong characters, strong plot.

D.V. Age-mate relations; ethical concepts

Cartoon-style drawings illustrate a pedantic text in which a blob-nosed girl learns, each time she makes a mistake, the correct way to do things. Sample: "Morning baths were uncomfortable for me (turn page) until I figured out my 'H' and 'C'," or "Sometimes I would put my dress on inside out (turn page) Then Mommy showed me which way the tags go." There is no story line, and there seems a discrepancy between the age of a child who would make such basic errors and the age of a child who is given the responsibility of bathing and dressing by herself. The two aspects of the book that may appeal to readers are the near-disaster type humor and the fact that the protagonist does eventually learn needed skills.

D.V. Self-reliance


Richie, the narrator, and his friend Matty have a time-travel adventure, going from 1976 to 1906, with a brief and unpleasant stop in 1912. They know that they can return only by passing through a gate to the future, but where is it and how do they get there? Taken under the wing of Houdini, the boys get jobs as assistants to the great magician's relative, Manfred, a not-so-great magician; however, his circuit takes the time travellers to San Francisco, where they think the gate is. In a dramatic climax, they find the gate after the famous earthquake, and then they learn what their futures will be after 1976. Matty will be the first black president of the U.S.A. and Richie a great historian. This has good pace, a brisk style, humor and some serious aspects, especially in the reaction of both Richie and Matty, but especially in the latter, to the way black people were treated in the beginning of the century. The presentation of Houdini isn't very convincing, despite the inclusion of several books about him in an appended bibliography that indicates authorial research, but the story does give interesting information about vaudeville in the period.

D.V. Friendship values


Adhering to the text of the King James Version of the Nativity story, this is a Christmas book with unusual illustrations that combine techniques. In part, the pictures are in rich color, gilt-framed and decorated with Christmas motifs in designs that are used at the beginning of the text on each page. Used with the painting are deft silhouettes that are a dramatic contrast but that lessen the dignity of the book because the figures often have a sprightly, almost comic look: the first outline of Mary, for example, shows a slender figure putting out sheets to dry on a laundry line, her slim, pert figure on tiptoe, her braids and apron strings flying.

C.U. Christmas


Adapted from portions of the King James Version of the Bible, this preserves with sensitivity the mood and the sonorous flow of the original. The artist has matched the adapter's discrimination with strong, dramatic paintings that have deep emotion but no sentimentality, that are effectively composed, and that use color with restraint, so that the predominating reds and browns are rich but subdued.

C.U. Easter

Children have always loved the familiar nursery tale of the chick who, hit on the head by an acorn, scurries off to tell the queen that the sky is falling. A procession accumulates, and *Chicken Licken* is the only animal that escapes the voracious Foxy Woxy. The re-telling is simple, with most of the space on oversize pages given to wonderfully effective paintings, bold in composition and subtle but strong in the use of colors. The pictures are imbued with vigor and humor, but they are even more impressive for their strong sense of design and their textural variety.


Susan is quiet, studious, and shy, and Chris is a popular, breezy non-achiever; they are identical twins who, with their parents' reluctant consent, agree to switch roles for a fortnight. They change clothes and coiffures, brief each other on people, activities, and events, and set out to win the bet (a banana split) on pulling it off. Each girl learns a bit about the other and something about herself, but the plot hinges primarily on each girl winning the boy she wants while using her twin's name and then having to confess. The boys, in the final scene, refer to the twins as "merry pranksters" and "two little devils" and that note of coy condescension is typical of the sexist attitude that pervades the book. The plot is contrived, the writing style (their mother had been "wiling away" an afternoon) pedestrian, with often-gushy dialogue.


Scratchy, lively ink and wash pictures illustrate a tale that smoothly combines a bland presentation with a preposterous situation. The story is told within the frame of a mother telling a family anecdote to her child, and it's a tale of devotion, friendship, and a show-biz career. It seems that after she became a young widow, Great-Aunt Gertrude Godkin found and took in a frog she spotted dancing on a lily pad. His talent was recognized and his fame spread; as his manager, Gertrude was so dedicated to the frog's career that she turned down an offer of marriage from Lord Belvedere. And, the story ends, she and the frog eventually retired to a house in the south of France, "with a water tank for George the frog." Nonsensical, amicable, nicely told and more-than-nicely illustrated.

D.V. Animals, kindness to


Giving good general information about sharks (habits, differences between species, distribution, reproduction, etc.) the text, which is adequately organized, is on a topic that many readers find fascinating if frightening. The book is weakened by careless writing ("The ampullae of Lorenzini is...") and by the inclusion of a considerable amount of material that has to do either with fallacies and legends or with how to avert danger in shark-infested waters. An index is provided.


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One of a series of "Early Bird" books first published in Great Britain, this is designed to reinforce a child's powers of observation and memory; other books in the hide-and-seek series (there are also series on early words and early math concepts) are The Circus, Fairyland, and Toyland. The text begins, "Everyone in the castle is playing hide-and-seek. Where are the mice hiding?" On a facing page, the mice (fairly easy to find) are shown scampering around, in unsanitary fashion, on the fruit in a bowl. On succeeding pages, there are cats (verso) and cats on the dinner table (recto) followed by a series (in paired pages) of people. With each set of pages the vista is wider and (since the details are cumulative) the pages are more crowded. This may have minimal use for the purpose of observation; it is flatly conceived, however, and is illustrated in pedestrian style.


Branley uses a question-and-answer format to provide information about outer space and man's accommodation to exploring it. Accurate and authoritative, the author has grouped his questions logically; the material is under such headings as Kinds of Space, Weightlessness and Zero Gravity, Uses of Space, and The End of Space-The End of Time (relax, worriers, there is no foreseeable end to either). A knowledgeable and interesting survey, illustrated by diagrams that are carefully placed and captioned. A few books are suggested for further reading; an index is appended.

C.U. Science


Chimpanzee characters are shown in pictures that have fine use of color and textural details and that should appeal to the lap audience because of their humor. Willy is small and scrawny and super-polite, even to saying "I'm sorry" when somebody bullies him. He tires of being called a wimp and embarks on a massive body-building program. In time (and possibly due to the passage of time) he gets tall and muscular. Not only is he no longer the prey of the bullies, but also he rescues an extremely appreciative girl chimpanzee. Basking in glory, Willy walks into a lamp-post and—just as he did before—says, "Oh, I'm sorry!" An appealing concept, nicely developed and nicely illustrated.

D.V. Self-reliance


Burningham's pictures always have movement and humor, controlled use of color, and restrained use of space. Unfortunately, in these two small books, the format of one word per page is followed; in the first book a child plays a series of musical instruments while the text reads "Boom, clash, scrape, blare, tinkle, strum..." and so on; in the second book the pictures are of a child in a car driven by a dog, and the text reads, "Go, zoom, honk, swerve, splash, splutter, slam..." etc. Quite slight, quite flat, each book is an extension of a single idea.

Soft, curving lines and judicious hatching produce wavering black and white shapes for the ghostly illustrations of a Halloween tale. Down South, Timmy Hawkins and his family are very short of food and they decide to brave the swamp even though it's said to be haunted. Catfish are delicious and they bite best at night, so Timmy and his father try. Three times they try and three times they are bested by the ghost of a pirate. On Halloween, Timmy decides he'll put his ghost costume on a scarecrow and frighten the real ghost. He does, the pirate flees, and Timmy and his father are able to get into the swamp and dig up the chest that contains (what else?) gold coins. Easy enough for independent readers, this is also nice for reading aloud or for storytelling; it's briskly told, and it has enough spookiness to titillate without really frightening a child.

C.U. Halloween; Reading aloud; Storytelling


A summer employee at Mr. Bunker's inn, Jeff agrees with his employer that it's dangerous for one of the guests to keep a valuable diamond necklace on hand. They suspect two other guests, Wolfe and Tuttle, of planning a theft. When they attend a nearby estate auction en masse, there are all sorts of misleading clues. Jeff persists in his suspicions of Tuttle, however, and makes off with the latter's briefcase. Grand finale: the diamonds are perfectly safe, but in the briefcase there is a Rembrandt etching stolen from the auction stock, an etching with a dramatic (and flatly concocted) history. Plenty of action, some suspense, some humor; easy, animated style, but weak in plot.


As he did in *The Chocolate War*, Cormier explores the motivations and the consequences, like a viscous ripple effect, of the combination of evil and power. Archie, leader of the Vigils, the secret society that dominates a Catholic high school for boys, is a senior now and has chosen his successor, a less subtle and more openly vindictive sophomore. Several of the Vigils rebel against Archie in this powerful sequel, but only Archie wins. This has diversity within the framework of Trinity High, with the despair and resentment of several students perceptively detailed and tied together by the inexorable momentum of events. Some readers may find the story depressingly somber; for others it may have the cathartic effect of Greek tragedy, evoking pity and fear.

D.V. Age-mate relations; Boy-girl relations; Fear, overcoming


As is usually true of National Geographic books for children, the color photography, to which a major part of the page space is devoted, is excellent. Here there are land and underwater pictures combined with a text that is brief, simply written,
accurate, but neither well organized nor broad in coverage. It describes the habits of
seals and whales, giving sparse information about kinds, anatomy, and distribution.

Crump, Donald J. *Exploring America's Valleys from the Shenandoah to the Rio Grande.*
$6.95.

Handsome color photographs illustrate a book that, in sections by five authors,
describes some of the valley cultures in five regions of North America: the “eastern
highlands, the great plains, the western uplands, the southern realm, and the Pacific
reaches.” The title of the book may not make it clear that the emphasis here is on
the peoples, past and present, who live or lived in each area, on their history, liveli-
hoods, traditions, and ways of life, rather than on the physical or topographical
attributes of the valleys or their flora and fauna, although these are mentioned.
Because the material is selective rather than comprehensive, this has little reference
use. There is some variation in the five writers' styles, but they all tend to write in
the travel-brochure vein. Pleasant to look at, mildly informative, this seems a good
candidate for casual browsing. There is an index in very small print and a divided
bibliography in print even smaller.

C.U. Social studies

33p. $14.95.

Elf-like creatures (bodies like insects, limbs and heads like human beings) with
such names as Hortet Corbet, Micket Wee Cricket, and Willo Mancifoot, a dragon-
fly, are the denizens of Willobee Land, festooned with verdant plants and mushroom
houses in the Victorian tradition. Opposite each full-color page, with illustrations
that show some technical proficiency but that are cloying in their cuteness, is a page
of verse and some decorative drawings. The verse tells a long story about the conflict
between the good creatures of Willobee Land and the dour Mugga Killa Whomps, a
struggle that ends in the victory of the Light/truth/harmony/love/peace and the
conversion of one Whomper. The verse is of jingle calibre, usually adequate in scan-
sion, often inadequate in its rhyme scheme. A sample: “Only a tunnel through the
plants was there / Too small for the dragon / "I can't," he declared / "See a way we
can do it! / We can not fit through it! / Then they wept by the Bottomless Deep / In
despair / Tears of pain / Tears of loss / So much the same / All hope seemed lost."

Davies, Hunter. *Flossie Teacake's Fur Coat;* illus. by Laurence Hutchins. Bodley Head/

Flossie (Flora MacDonald MacDougal Macsporran Teacake) is nine, and it's her
older sister's coat that she's trying on when she wishes she were eighteen—and the
wish is granted. So she joins her sister's crowd for an evening in a pub. When she
goes home and takes the fur coat off, she shrinks back to nine-year-old size. Sub-
sequent and equally tepid adventures occur each time Flossie puts on the coat and
makes a wish. Also in this series are such sequels as *Flossie Teacake—Again!* and
*Flossie Teacake Strikes Back!* and they share in the slightly frenetic tone, flat charac-
terization, and contrived humor of the first of these books from England. Occa-
sionally there are phrases that may baffle American children, such as the mention of
a tea-time dessert, “It was chocolate cake for pudding.”
This is a true story, written by Jamie (who has a learning disability and dictated the text) when he was twelve. It describes the events of his eleventh year, when his stepfather was injured in an accident involving farm machinery; Jamie's quick action in shutting off the power saved his stepfather's life by preventing even more damage. For a year, with some help from the neighbors, Jamie did most of the work on a sixty-four acre dairy farm. His style is rather staccato and there is a hazy pastel aura to the illustrations that look more like spring than the stated autumn setting, but it's an impressive story of achievement and it's modestly told. Unfortunately, although Jamie says, "I'm more aware of farm safety now," the book ends with an illustration of Jamie riding without a helmet as he says, "Butch bought me a motorbike. I love it."

D.V. Responsibility; Self-reliance; Stepparent-child relations

An oversize book is divided into six sections, devoted to the topics of baseball, basketball, football, soccer, other sports (eight) and "Fantastic Facts: The Big Winners and Losers," a compendium of championship teams. The text is in a broad column on the right of the page, with questions clearly set off in a narrower columnar space to the left. Using the question and answer format, Dolan gives facts about the origins of games, the field, the positions, the play patterns, the rules, the niceties of play and strategy. This doesn't answer every question a reader might have, but it does a good job, and a fairly comprehensive index gives access to the text, written in a direct, informal style.

In this new edition of a prize-winning Canadian children's book, the illustrations have the same kind of variety and vitality as the first book, and indeed some of the pictures are the same. This is true also of the poems: there have been some deletions and some additions, but many of the selections from the original (1968) publication, The Wind Has Wings, are included. This is still (or again) a fine anthology of Canadian poetry, and an index of the poets is provided.

C.U. Reading aloud

Tommy, the narrator, lives in a heterogeneous neighborhood in Ottawa, where Angel Square is the scene every weekday of enthusiastic fighting amongst three groups of schoolchildren: the Irish Catholics, the Jews, and the French Canadians. Addicted to the radio show "The Shadow," Tommy is determined to do a little shadowing of his own and find out who beat up the father of Sammy, "my best Jew friend." There are a few other plot threads, and they're adequately knit, but the book is weakened by the tediously repetitive accounts of fights and, despite the clear
message that Tommy wishes there were peace and brotherhood in Angel Square, the recurring evidence of bias is violently expressed.

D.V. Friendship values; Interreligious understanding


On oppressively solid pages, Finney presents an adequate discussion of the topic in the sense that she covers relevant aspects, but the book is weakened by some repetitious writing and by a poor arrangement of material that may be, in part, its cause. The text describes the way human beings hear, the differences in individual toleration of noise, the problems of noise in our industrial society, the physical and emotional danger to human beings of prolonged or excessive noise, and what official action has been taken by public authorities to ban or lessen noise pollution. There's a concluding section on "What You Can Do About Noise," a divided bibliography, and an index. The writing style is acceptable but dull.

C.U. Social studies


At first it was only Tanya who was interested in helping Grandma make a new quilt, but soon Mama took part and, after Grandma became ill, Tanya's brother helped. They all enjoyed seeing familiar bits of material in the quilt, but Tanya loved it best; when the quilt was done and Grandma was well again, it was possible to add the finishing touch: stitched in a corner was "For Tanya from your Mama and Grandma." A quiet story, gently expressive of family love and continuity, this has soft, realistic illustrations of an attractive, comfortably middle-class black family.

D.V. Family relationships


Using some bits of paper money from a bank shredder, Mattie and her friend Scott grow bills of many denominations from a papier-mâché limb they've made from the shredded money and grafted on a tree. They keep giving it away and fulfill a prophecy made by the bag lady who is their first beneficiary. Eventually they reap ten thousand dollars, and a woman appears who says she is there to take the money for various good causes. She also gives a little homily about how lucky Scott and Mattie are, having all the things (health, happiness, friends) that money can't buy. While pedantic, the anti-materialist message is worthy; while the plot is contrived, the easy flow of the writing and the humor are strong plus factors.

D.V. Kindness to others


The illustrations, lively and funny, are nicely filled without being crowded, in a story about a young pig who balks when it's his turn to set the table. Roger
R grumbles so much about his chore and about how much easier it is in other families
that his uncle suggests he visit the neighbors and see. And that's how Roger finds
out that there's no place like home, and no cooking like his mother's. Having been
offered mud pancakes, fishmeal soup, and milky mush in three of the apartments,
Roger races home to eat corn and his favorite dessert, worm pie. He also volunteers
to take his turn at setting the table the next time around. Not substantial, but there's
plenty of action, some humor, and a message that's not too sharply pointed.

D.V. Helpfulness; Social behavior

Gretz, Susanna. *Teddy Bears Cure a Cold*; written by Susanna Gretz and Alison Sage; illus.
$11.95.

Any child who has been ill or feigned illness should find the pattern of this
engaging story a familiar one, as will parents. William, one of a household of six
teddy bears, isn't believed at first, but when the others become convinced he's ill,
they cosset him. With improved health comes William's enjoyment of special foods
and extra attention, and he tries to prolong the situation—but the awareness of the
other teddy bears, plus William's curiosity, end the pretense. William happily joins
the others in outdoor play. The story is amusing, cheerful, simply told and attrac-
tively illustrated in line drawings washed with clear, bright colors and nice pore-over
details.

Gyulnazaryan, Hadjak. *Little Arthur's Sun*; illus. by Albert Yaralyan. Raduga/Imported

Preceded by a Chamber-of-Commerce-type puff about Armenia ("Under the
Soviet government, many factories have been built..." and "The kindly, industrious
people of Armenia love their sunlit land...") are two Armenian tales. In the title
story, little Arthur first tries to shoot the clouds with a pop-gun, because the damp
weather affects his grandmother's arthritis, then he draws a picture of a sun, which
Grannie claims cures her. In "All's Well When All's Well," Arthur has a series
of small disappointments while he's playing with friends, but things improve as the day
goes on. The writing style (possibly due to translation) is flat; there is some focus
and development in the first story, but the second rambles tediously on. The illustra-
tions, blatantly bright in color, stylized, usually overcrowded, often provide a
background so bright and busy that it is difficult to read the words of the text or the
captions for some pictures that don't relate to the text directly.


This is Lynn Hall at her best, in a story that is poignant and potent, a story of
love that is wise and altruistic. Mary is not interested in the boys she knows, finding
them callow; she is convinced that her feeling for her teacher, middle-aged Mr.
Flicker, is more than a crush. He, too, feels affection but is aware that it would ruin
Mary's life and might well end his career. He does love her, and he treats her love
with respect and dignity, gently telling her that she must find someone her age. In a
brief epilogue after Mary is married years later, she sees Mr. Flicker at a homecom-
ing dance and thanks him. Other facets of Mary's life (particularly her familial
relationships) give balance to a story written with insight and craft.

D.V. Teacher-pupil relations
In Grandfather Jackabo's lilting Caribbean speech, the title means that his grandson is far away. The gentle old man, often confused, misses the son and grandson he has left in the States to return to the small and beautiful island of his youth. For most of the book the chapters alternate, written from Grandfather's viewpoint or from that of Junius. Each has his own concerns (the boy with a budding love affair, the man with the mysterious disappearance of a white man who is a distant relative and has been both companion and enemy). As Grandfather's letters sound increasingly confused, Junius decides he wants to go with his father to see what is wrong and to bring the old man home with them. The story gives adequate preparation for the dramatic conclusion (contraband, an arms cache, mercenaries, arrest) of events on the island and for the reunion of the three loving men of the family. Hamilton will never hurry her writing; because her tales unfold at their own pace and in her laminated style, her books are seldom easy to read. That is true here; although the writing is clear, it is deliberate in pace and nuance; it is also richly rewarding for its color, warmth, subtlety, and memorable characters.

D.V. Grandparent-child relations

A miscellany of facts about plants and animals, a "magic, hidden realm" the jacket copy states, about which a number of "top biologists, botanists, zoologists, and ecologists" (names not cited) have written. Much of the information is interesting, although some of the material will be familiar to many readers. First published in England, the book gives accurate information and has many good color photographs (most of which have adequate captions) but the oversize pages are so cluttered with various kinds of type/illustration arrangement, so crowded with woefully small print, that the sight is enough to intimidate readers. An index is appended.

C.U. Science

Unsurpassed for her use of color photography in concept books, Hoban here presents a series of pictures in which there are sets of large and small objects that show contrasting size. Most of the photographs show items so clearly (a large and small goldfish in an aquarium; big beads and small ones) that the pair is immediately identifiable; occasionally (a child holding a rabbit) children may wonder what the big-small comparison is (ears, in this case) but it's always there, and the moment of searching may add a bit of game element.

Hughes begins with a premise familiar to science fiction readers: the world has brought about its own ruin, and all knowledge is being preserved in a small, isolated community. Here the community is the domecity of ArcOne and its inhabitants are divided strictly by caste (echoes of Huxley's Brave New World) with the elite
receiving stored knowledge via "info paks" plugged into the surgically implanted sockets on the backs of their necks. Tomi, son of ArcOne's Overlord, gets out of the Dome during an abortive slave rebellion and finds himself in a secret community of escaped slaves (savages, to him) who live off the land, enjoying their freedom and, to Tomi's embarrassment, openly showing their affection for each other. Few readers will be surprised that Tomi becomes a convert to the simple, healthful way of life; they may, however, be surprised at the twist at the end of the story, both in Tomi's course of action and in its effects. Hughes convincingly creates the society and mores; she develops changes smoothly, and she creates characters that are believable although few are drawn with depth.


Each chapter begins with a question (anonymously put in a box in the classroom) addressed to the school psychologist, whose ineptness seems so overdrawn as to be the one weak point of an otherwise strong young adult novel. The story is told by quiet, shy Anne, who's a misfit and knows it; how can she be like the others when her tyrannical, overprotective father forbids her even dressing like her peers. (No pants for his pure young daughter, and no tee shirts. Certainly no dating.) Driven to rebellion, Anne buys some clothes and makeup, keeping them at a classmate's house; later she is caught in an unpleasant situation (pushed out of a motel room by a girl who is then found in bed with her lover) and this brings to a head all the familial tensions that have affected both Anne's relationship with her father and the strained relationship between her parents, problems which are dealt with by family counseling. The book shows the painful path of the adolescent who is forced to remain apart from the peer group, the ramifications of problems within a family, and the realistically encouraging solution that group discussion and professional help can bring. A taut and effective first novel.

D.V. Age-mate relations; Father-daughter relations; Independence


Given Hutchins' light touch and humor, the appeal of the subject, and the combining of two sure-fire ideas (sibling dethronement and the worst-is-the-best) this could hardly fail to be amusing and popular. Bright, imaginative pictures, featuring monsters with strong family resemblances illustrate the sprightly text in which Hazel is jealous of a new-born baby brother. Everybody coos at him, gloating over how bad he is, how loudly he growls, how strong his fangs are. Hazel mutters to herself that she's bad, too, and growls even louder. Alas for her ego, little Billy wins a baby contest title by trying to eat the judge: "Worst Monster Baby in the World." Hazel tries to lose Billy, frighten him, and give him away. Nothing works. Her parents, horrified, say "You gave your own baby brother away! You must be the Worst Monster in the World!" "I told you I was," Hazel points out, and confesses that the family who had taken Billy had given him back. Yeasty fun.

D.V. Baby, adjustment to

Abbreviated and simplified (to the detriment of style and humor) this adaptation of one of Irving's best known tales is a good example of how to make a classic turn into a mediocre story. All of the richness of the original prose is gone, as is the establishment of atmosphere and period; what's left is the bare bones of the story. Since the author was a fine storyteller, the bones of the story still have structure and some narrative pattern. The illustrations here are a bit garish, with none of the humor or technique of Arthur Rackham's pictures in the Harrap edition. Washington Irving's name, incidentally, is on neither the cover of the book nor the title page.


Realistic paintings, softly colored, show a series of familiar activities and have a simple text that very young children can easily repeat, remember, and associate with sounds. Examples: "I hear a bird. Chirp, chirp." or "I hear the clock. Tick tock."

Each comment is printed in large type in one corner of a spaciously-composed double-page spread. The companion book is *I See.*

D.V. Environmental concepts


This is, in brief, the story of a girl who turns into a doll (and back again) and a doll that turns into a man, and the eventful voyage they take in search of gold, facing mutiny and pirate pursuit. Kennedy does a fairly good job of spinning this out to several hundred pages, but he slows his own story by long digressions (a page and a half about figureheads, for example, when the figurehead of the ship is mentioned) and some vocabulary that seems to put a burden on the readers who will be the primary audience. Left at an orphanage by her sailor father, Amy is thrilled when the sailor doll left with her comes to life and becomes a ship's captain; unfortunately she spends most of the exciting voyage as a doll. The crew consists of animals that were once toys and that have been brought to life by the captain, who considers Amy his sister. There's an evil woman on board, a frog who is in love with her, a mutinous duck, and a Golden Man who comes out of the sea (Amy's long-lost father) and conflict with the yo-ho-ho pirate Goldnose, and a treasure, et cetera and occasionally it seems ad infinitum. The title reference is to the fact that Amy, while a doll, is sentient and can see but not talk or move; unfortunately her eyes are cut out, and they go overboard and are swallowed by a fish, where they continue observing...
while in the fish and after they are eaten by an albatross and saved by a black healer called Mama Dah-Dah and eventually returned to Amy, who is now a girl again. This has some engaging concepts, a great deal of droll and often sophisticated humor, and passages of fine writing, but it is long, complex, and occasionally precious, which may mean that die-hard fantasy lovers who are also proficient readers will be the most appreciative audience.


Line and wash drawings that have a nice combination of bold animation in the figures and delicate details in settings and clothing illustrate a slightly patterned K-2 story that has a good flow of action. Mom comes home on Mother's Day to find a series of good deeds (a room cleaned, curtains mended, a bathroom repainted) as well as gifts, as her six children and her husband lead her from one surprise to another. This love feast culminates in the dining room, where dinner is ready, an elaborately decorated cake waits, and professions of appreciative love are exchanged. Perceptive listeners will note that most of the gifts are home-made or contribute to the orderliness of the household; no expensive store-bought presents. Not outstanding in execution, but a nice idea and a pleasant book.

C.U. Mother's Day
D.V. Family relations


In anticipation of the coming of Halley's Comet in 1986, this is a discussion of comets in general and Halley's Comet in particular; since it is written by the director of Griffith Observatory, it is expectedly accurate and informative. However, the book is weakened by an intermittent note of being written down to the level of kiddies, and by the stylized cutenesses of the black and white illustrations (bulging-eyed planets, a grinning comet's head) which are really quite adequate on those pages where they are not embellished.

C.U. Science


In this anthology of ten horse stories, there are some reprinted short stories, some elderly material, (a tale from the *Arabian Nights*, an excerpt from *Black Beauty*, an abridgement of a Poe tale) but most of the selections are excerpts from books published in the last half-century. The quality is somewhat variable but the compilation on the whole is fairly good in style and structure. For readers who are addicted to horse stories, of course, this will have strong appeal.


Wren and her brothers have just moved to Maine, where—in their father's absence—they are cared for by great-aunt Tebbie, who detests being in the country. Wren loves it, but she's repeatedly baffled by the ghost-like white horse she sees about the place. Not until she has become friendly with Alex, the elderly recluse who lives nearby, does Wren realize that the white horse is indeed a ghost, a former horse that Alex had loved. Part of the story has to do with the reclamation of Alex, part with the problems of a boy who is a friend and has an alcoholic mother, part to do
with the rebuilding of a wagon that is a project of the friend and Wren's brothers. In fact, there are too many parts for the story to be focused and cohesive, and the fantasy element never blends with the realistic, occasionally grim, setting. What give the book value are the capable writing style and the strong characterization.

D.V. Older-younger generations


Again, as they did in A Circle of Seasons and Sky Songs, poet and painter join their considerable talents to produce an oversize volume that has pictures notable for their color, composition, and dramatic impact and poems that have polished technique, affective evocation of images and emotions, and a controlled humor. The poems celebrate holidays, both the most familiar ones and such newer holidays as Martin Luther King Day—and the latter is the catalyst for a particularly moving poem.


With a power breakdown and no air-conditioning (or ice or television) Pig and Duck are sweltering in discomfort on the hottest day of the summer. They decide to ask their friend Moose if they may visit him at his house in the country; what follows is a long series of dire warnings about each mode of transportation the sufferers suggest. For example, when they think of the bus, so big and fast and cool, Moose tells them to bring hip boots because they may have to push the bus up the hill in the country mud. By the time the air-conditioner starts to hum, Pig and Duck are delighted by the thought of avoiding a weekend of rural life. The cartoon drawings, color-washed, have humor, character, and vitality; the story is deftly structured and amusingly told.


Browne's marvelously inventive paintings (some elegantly realistic, some amusingly surrealistic) are more impressive than the story, in a book that was first published in England, but both the writing style and the plot structure are adequate. Katy, who lives alone with her divorced father, enjoys the patterned familiarity of their life and is upset when Dad's friend Mary and her son, Sean, move into the house. Mary is cheerful but messy, Sean is a nuisance who plays practical jokes, and Mary wishes she had Dad to herself. When she tells him that, the visitors depart; after a time, Katy sees that Dad is unhappy and she decides that she misses the bustle of life with Mary and Sean, and she not only agrees to visit them but even buys a trick camera so she can play a joke on Sean.

D.V. Father-daughter relations


Having the story of experiencing night-diving told by a fictional girl of twelve gives this exciting book an appealing informality and immediacy; the subject may draw an even broader audience than that indicated. Beautiful color photographs show some of the creatures visible at night in the warm Caribbean waters; the narrator, who has had scuba lessons and whose mother, a marine biologist, is one of the diving party, is candid about her fears, ebullient when she gets over them, and sensible about safety precautions. McGovern uses no more fictionalization than is necessary to make the framework of the text convincing.

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Describing the two kinds of war games (figure games and board games) and their two variants, the author discusses how to set up games and make rules; the book becomes, at this point, a how-to-do-it text. Sources for obtaining figurines are cited, and suggestions given for how to paint and organize figurines and miniatures. The book gives advice on setting up rules and the strategy of competitive play. Photographs are of poor quality. An index is provided.

Large print, a clear type-face, and plenty of white space make this appropriate for primary grades readers, whether they are reading at grade level or, like the protagonist, experiencing a learning disability. Mike's in second grade and has no trouble with arithmetic but is in the bottom group in reading. Already self-conscious about it, Mike feels even worse when he's sent to a special class in remedial reading. However, the individualized attention and another technique than that used in his regular classroom do the trick. Mike makes progress; he even helps a better reader solve a problem (identifying the word on a box that's fallen off a truck: "Explosives"). The ending is a bit concocted, but the problem is real, the solution believable, the book encouraging to the child who shares Mike's problem, and the facts (a child can be slow although intelligent; children acquire different skills at different rates) illuminating enough to help other children understand. The photographs are of excellent quality and seldom seem as though the subjects had posed.

Misty, almost faded pastel drawings echo the soft mood of a tender but rather static story that is a summer lyric about the special love between a grandmother and Kim, the small girl who is the narrator. Small wild creatures make inroads on Grandma's crops of summer fruit, and when the plums ripen, and the squirrels get them all, Grandma ends the summer by planting new trees for her grandchild. Next summer, Grandma says, there will be two plum trees for the squirrels, and two just for themselves. Little happens during the long summer's happy days, although the read-aloud audience will probably be pleased by the idea of celebrating, in a local cafe, both Kim's and Grandma's "half-birthdays," since neither of their birthdays falls in the summer months.

There are perennial appeals to this old favorite: rhyme, rhythm, and cumulation. Stevens adds to the attractions of the verses with ebullient pictures that have comical details, lampooned characters, exaggeration, and action. The scale of the bright, red-and-yellow pictures is large enough to make this appropriate for group use as well as for reading aloud to an individual child.

Rebecca, the narrator, is an only child whose mother is a doctor, whose father
Ad lives on the opposite side of the country, whose current enemy is Mrs. Galloway, the babysitter. Rebecca’s complaints: Mrs. G. is unkind to the family cat, she scolds when creative play results in a messy room, and—worst of all—she won’t let Rebecca crawl under the bed to watch the cat having her kittens. What changes Rebecca’s mind is the discovery that Mrs. G. is protecting the cat (Mom agrees that the animal is best left alone) and that she really is understanding, just not as infinitely tolerant as a child would prefer her to be. This is a nice vignette exploring a change in relationships, but it’s slight as a book; the light humor and controlled writing make pleasant reading, but the plot and its development may leave readers feeling unsatisfied.

D.V. Pets, care of


Sixteen-year-old Sheila, the narrator of this first novel by a Canadian author, is upset by her mother’s carping bitterness, the breach between her parents, and her ambivalence about her boyfriend, Nels. Finally her own sexual desire propels her into consummation. This results in her mother, furious, forbidding Nels to see her; it also results in pregnancy. Sheila graduates, goes to Vancouver to take a job and save money for nursing school. She learns that her father is married and that he and her mother had never been wed; Dad helps her find a way to abort (pills) and she does so alone in the woods. Mom comes through with the balance of the money needed for school. And much more; this has many of the weaknesses frequently found in an author’s first book: too many peripheral characters, too much anguish, lack of definition, in sum an overcrowded and rather depressing canvas. The strength of the book, and an indication of the author’s potential for improvement, is that the characters are drawn with some bite and the problems of adolescence are convincingly drawn: the generation gap, the desire for independence, the confusion about sexual behavior, the concern about a career and an adult role.

D.V. Independence; Mother-daughter relations; Sex roles


In an oversize book with most of the page space devoted to color photographs, Rinard describes, in direct and simple prose, the ways in which animals live and are cared for at zoos and zoo parks. This is not intended to be comprehensive; it serves well as an introduction to the subject of zoo life, and the large print is appropriate for the page size and easy to read.


After some introductory, slightly poetic, remarks about music ("All of these sounds are part of Nature’s music," referring to wind, rain, and birdsong) the author gets down to business, describing the roles of conductor and composer, the makeup of the orchestra, and the several instruments in each “family” of musical instruments. There’s a brief reference to a rehearsal, and then the theretofore rather scruffy-looking musicians appear, resplendent, in a final double-page spread, in performance. Both audience and performers are multi-ethnic in lively line and wash drawings, which have comic touches but are scrupulously realistic in the depiction of orchestral instruments.

C.U. Music—study and teaching

Tinted line drawings, awkwardly drawn but humorous in details, illustrate a three-episode story about two sisters. Dolores imitates her sister and thus irritates her, but Faye (the elder of the two) quickly forgives Dolores. Dolores concocts a revolting sandwich and announces, to her sister's visible dismay, that it's a gift; Dolores, after a conversation in which she and Faye talk about all the things that used to frighten her when she was very small, gives evidence of a lingering night fear and is comforted by Faye. This is commendable as an effort to show that there's a solid base of sibling support beneath any surface friction, but it's weakened as a story by being a series of overextended comedy situations.

D.V. Sisters


One of a series of books about early math concepts, this deals with the concept of opposites rather than, as the title may lead one to think, variations in size. First published in Great Britain, the book is small, illustrated with pictures that are bright and a bit garish, filled but not crowded. Facing pages show the paired words; a cheerful monster wears a shirt that is tight, or a shirt that is loose, pants that are long or short; he sits on a chair that's hard or a mattress that is soft. Unfortunately, the artist also attempts to show “fast” and “slow” by showing two boats. The pictures are pedestrian, the test minimal. Other books in the series are *Counting, Odd One Out*, and *Shapes*. These may be useful, but they are not as effective (or attractive) as many others in print.


Although Scott's text is continuous, it is so carefully organized that the material seems always sequential and comprehensible. The photographs are interesting but rather more repetitive than most of Sweet's work, and very occasionally not clear. The book describes the species, giving facts about habits, habitat, reproduction, appearance, and qualities that have made the alligator survive since the Mesozoic Era. Scott also discusses the successful efforts to build up the alligator population and the laws that protect this durable reptile. An index is provided.

C.U. Science


If there has been editorial adaptation here, it's been done wisely, for the text by Samantha sounds convincingly ingenuous and bubbly. Most readers will remember the girl who, when she was ten years old, wrote to the newly elected Soviet president and was invited to visit his country. Here, in oversize format and illustrated profusely by handsome photographs—many in color—is Samantha's record of that brief but crowded fortnight. She had expressed concern, in her letter, about nuclear war and Soviet goals. She was reassured by the welcome she received and the opinions she heard; even if one makes allowances for the fact that Samantha and her parents received special, limelight treatment the fact is that there is a note of encouragement, that acquaintance can further understanding; the message is in Samantha's conclu-
sion: “I hope that someday soon we will find the way to world peace. Maybe someone will show us the way.”

C.U. Social studies
D.V. International understanding; Pacific attitudes


A small boy describes the way his mother prepared him for being home alone when she took a needed job: there were safety instructions, emergency telephone numbers, and a spare key for the friendly neighbor next door. It's a bit lonely, and there are times when Mom is sorely missed, but the days fall into a familiar pattern; there are chores to do and programs to watch, and homework and telephone calls to fill the time. As the book ends, Josh meets a new girl in class (this is a year later) who admits she has trepidations because she's going to have to be home alone after school. Josh gives her the worry-stone his mother had given him. “Keep it as long as you want,” he says, “I don't need it any more.” The tone is positive, the information useful, the message and the fictional vehicle nicely combined.


Raymond, the narrator, begins his story with a description of a sixth-grade project, for which the group leader is “the bossiest, most stuck-up kid in the whole school,” Verna. This is the device used to get the protagonist into the town's desolate swamp (where they film a comic monster movie) and into a confrontation with a mysterious fisherman after they see the “swamp monster.” From there the plot leads into the tediously-developed story of missing bank funds, an innocent man accused, and a hunt by Raymond, Verna, and their brainy friend Huntley for the real criminal. This has two positive aspects: plenty of action and suspense, and the absence of stereotypical sex roles (Verna's mother is the bank president) but there is some stereotyping of characters, the writing style is on the cute side, and the plot development, particularly the involvement of the three children, is not credible.


Among the unfortunate adaptations of versions of classics published by Raintree, this stands out in contrast, primarily because (probably due to its brevity) it has been left intact. The illustrations are a bit fussy with detail, but they have vigor and humor, matching the narrative quality of a poem that is a baseball classic. This can be read aloud to younger children as well as enjoyed by independent readers.


Grotesquely disproportionate figures in overly busy but exuberant drawings illustrate a rather neat little plot that bogs down in credibility only once. Miranda, a capable young pianist who has been giving family and teachers the kind of classical and conventional music they like, loses their approval when she turns to boogie-woogie. Told that this annoys her family, Miranda refuses to play at all. Home and school are sunk in gloom (an exaggeration too gross to be funny) and eventually Miranda offers to play both Bach and boogie, so everyone's satisfied. Moderation is the message, or maybe it's “Chacun a son gout” but it's delivered with brio. Tempo: allegro.

Bullet Tillerman is on the school track team, but he doesn’t care about the team; he runs for himself; when he’s cut from the team—despite being their best performer—he doesn’t care, he runs in solitude. He’s cut from the team because he refuses the coach’s request to help train a black runner, Tamer. Why? He doesn’t mix with “colored,” he says. However, he does eventually work with, and come to respect, Tamer; he also learns that Patrice, the man he works for and one of the few people he likes, has one black ancestor, and he accepts this. What Voigt is showing is some change, some maturation on the part of a biased adolescent of an earlier generation. Bullet, it develops, is the uncle of Dicey and her siblings (Homecoming and its sequels) although this affects the story hardly at all. His mother (Dicey's grandmother) is a potentially strong but almost silent character, totally dominated by Bullet's father, with whom he is in bitter, taciturn conflict. Bullet has no friends, no girl, no ambition. He works for Patrice, he runs, and as soon as he turns eighteen, he drops out of school and joins the Army. In an epilogue, his mother learns he has been killed in action. This has some strong characters and some taut, dramatic situation, but it lacks the cohesion and direction that would make this a powerful novel rather than an interesting but rather puzzling one.

D.V. Mother-son relations; Interracial understanding


Although slow-moving, this novel from England has a combination of candor and compassion that gives it depth as it explores the problems of an adolescent Sikh, Rupinder Singh. “Ruby,” his classmates call him, and he has to adjust to two kinds of prejudice: one comes from those Britons who despise foreigners, the other from the Hindu parents of Tara, with whom he is having a budding and quite circumspect romance. What Webster gives readers is a sympathetic picture of cultural conflict, as not only Ruby, but the other members of the Indian community strive to maintain dignity and tradition in the face of prejudice. The prejudice here is specific; its applications are universal.

D.V. Interracial understanding; Interreligious understanding


Wells does it again; like the first four books about Max (a very young rabbit) this is realistic, funny, beguiling, and as deft in its minimal text as in its simple and expressive pictures. Older sister Ruby, a long-suffering character, tries repeatedly to get Max clean. Since he is apt to take purple grape juice or orange sherbet into the bath, Max usually comes out as stained as when he went in. Finally Ruby puts Max in the shower; he emerges in white and fluffy state but pointing gleefully at Ruby (who’s collected some of his stains) and says balefully “Dirty.” His bedtime, his birthday, and his breakfast are the subject of three other new books about Max. They’re equally delectable, and they should be as useful for very young children as they are appealing.


Magnified photographs, some in color and some in black and white, are of admirable quality, and are carefully placed and captioned. They accompany a straightforward text on the life cycle of fern plants; although the writing doesn’t have the easy flow that marks the work of a specialist in the field, it is clearly compiled
on the basis of careful research and an understanding of the interests and limitations of the intended audience.

C.U. Nature study; Science


In describing the history of the long battle for women's rights, Whitney shows how the current struggle was preceded by decades of reform and protest movements in the United States. This is both a history of the movement, including a discussion of the legal battle that came to defeat in 1982, and a reasoned argument for the cause it describes. The text is specific in citing partisan groups and individuals on both sides of the issue. Reintroduced into Congress in 1983, the Equal Rights Amendment failed by six votes to achieve the needed two-thirds majority. The material is well-organized, the coverage broad, the writing style direct and unpretentious. A list of suggested readings and an index are appended.

C.U. Social studies


There are many books about baby farm animals for young children, and this one, like most of the others, gives a minimal amount of information. This gives, in addition to facts about the animals, some facts about farm life and the care of animal young. Perhaps its greatest appeal will be the color photographs that take up most of the space on the oversize pages, for they make a marvelous showcase for the fuzzy, round-eyed or sleepy-looking ducklings, kids, chicks, lambs, and other beguiling babies.


As he has in earlier photodocumentary books, Wolf combines good photography and a conversational but controlled writing style. His text does not romanticize the cowboy and his work, but it does explain what aspects of the cowboy's life make him prefer it. It's hard work, and the book describes that work very crisply, as it focuses on Wally McRae and his family as they operate their cattle ranch, cooperate with neighbors, fight against the strip mining that depletes their water supply and the power plants that pollute the atmosphere in that part of Montana, and enjoy participating in rodeos and other social events. Good photojournalism.


Mediocre drawings that are fairly spacious in layout, and large print for the very short sentences indicate that this provides appropriately easy reading practice for very young children. It is, however, a story that is flat and contrived. The dog protagonist is accompanied by a kitten that appears to be the dog's pet. The dog drinks out of a glass while the kitten laps from a bowl, which may confuse children. There are three chapters. The third begins, "Tick, tick, tick, tick. The clock shouts ring, ring, ring. Wake up! Turn off the moon. Turn off the clock."

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