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


Illustrations reminiscent in their style and technique of the work of Etienne Delessert are wonderfully gruesome but in rather muddied tones. They are extravagantly fanciful, matching the intricacy of the story; that intricacy is more contrived than exuberant, unfortunately, in a tale (first published in Great Britain) in which the vocabulary, length, and wandering complexity indicate a middle-grades audience although the book looks like a read-aloud picture book. In order to satisfy the demands of King Ragwort, father of the lovely Barley Mow he'd like to make his bride, Mouse George goes off on a quest that involves the help of elves, the bringing to life of an elf-made dragon, and a flight to visit the man in the moon.


The title is misleading here; this isn't about how we found out about robots, but is a history of the development of increasingly sophisticated machines and devices from such early machines as those of Babbage and Hollerith and the early animated figures (automatons) that were designed to amuse rather than perform a useful function. Much of the material here has been included in other books about robots and robotics; Asimov adds information about robots in fiction, he concludes with some interesting conjectures about robots in the future, and he writes with his usual clarity and animation. An index is appended.

C.U. Industry (unit)


Bright, clear colors are used in illustrations that tend to be overcrowded; like the text, they have exaggeration without humor. This is the story of a child who loved books, learned to read early, read constantly (even while jumping rope) and amassed a personal library so large that her parents couldn't get in or out of the house. Solution: she gave books away; soon the whole town was reading all the time, and there were so many books that the mayor offered some to the librarian in a nearby town, and soon all the towns in the environs were (sic) reading books. A worthy message, but the extravagance of the story is a bit heavy-handed, despite the simplicity of the style.

Chosen by a scout to be in a Michael Jackson video, Renee and Carrie (the protagonist) have been picked out of a jazz dancing class by the director. Carrie immediately meets and is reciprocally attracted to Joe, another extra. Renee makes, abortively, a big play for the star, who ignores her with exquisite politeness. (Jackson is presented as having the suave poise of a boulevardier and the wholesome integrity of an Eagle Scout.) Gist of the plot: Carrie thinks Joe has star potential and tries to make him deviate from his chosen path (medicine) so that they quarrel and make up only after Carrie has seen the light. So there's a didactic message, a love story, a dash of glamour, and a small sub-plot about Renee and the change in her attitude that's generated by Carrie's proffered friendship. This is formula romance, given some weight by the message about doing your own thing and letting others do theirs. Characterization and writing style are about average for the series romances of which this is a fairly typical example. There is some possibility, given the cover photograph, that Carrie is meant to be black, but the text does not state this.


The author has chosen ten episodes from previously published books about Paddington to commemorate the twenty-fifth year of publication since the first book in the series. The illustrator has painted in color some of her original line drawings. The humorous fantasy about a bear that lives with an English family is as amusing as ever, but there's nothing new here, nothing to distinguish the volume from those from which it emanates.


It is too bad that the print is small and the illustrations somber in this otherwise impressive anthology of traditional folk and literary tales from Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Iceland. A long and interesting introduction precedes the tales, but seems addressed to adults rather than to children. Within the material from each country, there are division of different kinds: Swedish tales are divided geographically, for example, Icelandic tales by subject, and Norwegian are not divided. There is no index by titles, unfortunately. Older readers who are studying folklore as a genre should find the book interesting.

C.U. Storytelling


The handsome young man who had helped Lois, the narrator, when she had a flat tire, had said he was the mayor of Lodi; later Lois discovered that he had, mysteriously, paid a visit to Mrs. Skinner, but Mrs. Skinner refused to talk about it. In a story set in a small Nebraska town during the Depression Era, Lois is home for the summer, hoping to go back to college and study geology rather than go back to teaching, since her one year of teaching had not excited her. She spends a large part of the summer staying at the Skinner house, where Mrs. Skinner has regressed to age nineteen and does not recognize her daughter Dev, Lois' best friend. Most of the story, adequately told but tediously prolonged, has to do with Dev's problems with her mother; at the end of the book the "mayor of Lodi" turns up again. He's attracted to Lois (and she to him) and he urges her to accept his mother's invitation
to live with her while attending Northwestern University. By coincidence, he's the son of the old college roommate whose appearance (arranged by Lois) brings Mrs. Skinner back to reality and to an acceptance of the daughter she'd denied. Characters tend to be type-cast, but the setting and period details are convincing.

D.V. Friendship values; Helpfulness


First published in Great Britain, this is one of a series, "Religions of the World", and its oversize pages are profusely illustrated by drawings, reproductions of religious art forms, and photographs, most of them in full color. The format: two inner columns on each page with wide outer margins that carry fairly lengthy captions in small print. The text has more breadth than depth, devoting double-page spreads (almost half the space given to illustration) to brief treatment of such topics as the early church, the Virgin Mary, Protestantism, the Pentecostal movement, the Christian calendar, Easter, etc. End matter includes, in addition to a bibliography and an index, a glossary, a list of places to visit, and a list of "helpful organizations." There's information here, but the writing style is variably undistinguished and the index indicates lacunae in the text.

C.U. Religious education


Board pages with tabs to push or pull are used in a concept book with pedestrian M illustrations and with considerable variety in the effectiveness of its paper engineering devices. Most of the time one tab changes a picture, so that a clown's face changes from "Sad" to "Happy" or an elephant's trunk lifts to show a mouse, contrasting "Big" and "Small." On some pages, however, the movement is inadequate, as when a fence is marked with "Over" above it and "Under" below, while the moving tab starts a boy and a dog in the right directions but doesn't get them far enough along to illustrate the opposite concepts.


Line drawings, usually with color and in double page spreads, extend the concepts of the remarks in a series of vignettes that show the relationship between a small child and her grandfather. There's no story line here, which may be a negative factor for some of the audience. The other possible limitation in appeal, as it is in comprehension of conception, is the fact that the spreads sometimes require the reader or listener to supply the link that is missing between the remarks of the two characters or between picture and print.

D.V. Grandparent-child relations


Although the story this tells is slight and has a repetitive pattern, the book should enchant children because the fine lines of the spider's web, as it grows, are raised
just enough from the page so that they can be felt and because the collage illustrations are so bright in colors and perky in forms. A spider spins a web between fence posts, and a series of animals comes close, each addressing her, "'Neigh! Neigh! Want to go for a ride?' "'Moo! Moo! Want to eat some grass?'" Each time there is no response to the vapid question which seems to be inserted just so that something will be happening. Each time, the text reads, "The spider didn't answer. She was very busy spinning her web." Web done, the spider catches a fly. There's no mention of what happens to the fly but the book ends with the weary spider falling asleep.


No comment about the text of this classic need be made; the edition is notable because of the illustrations, full-color plates that display the virtuosity of an outstanding British illustrator; the book was first published in England. Todd's pictures are imaginative and highly textural in their detail, reflecting in their mood the grave fantasy of the story. Although some of the paintings seem overcrowded, most are so deft in the softness of line and color that they make this one of the more interesting editions in the long history of Carroll interpretations.


In a small, square book one of Canada's most distinguished book illustrators uses a combination of collage and paint in vivid colors on each recto page. The brightness and variety are in sharp and effective contrast to the white verso page, which has an upper and lower case letter and the words for those objects that appear on the facing page, which has a huge letter in color. Most of the words will be familiar to small children: alligator, apple, and ant; banana, beak, blue, button, and so on. There is no attempt to have objects in scale (a stalk of celery is longer than the legs of a cow; a paper-clip is the width of the pineapple next to it) but otherwise this is a functional alphabet book, and it's certainly an attractive one.


A child tries to coax her mother to go to the beach, but mother explains that there is no beach when the tide is high. Pushing her child in a swing, the mother likens the high/low sequence to the movement of the tide. They talk about all the shore creatures they'll see in tidal pools and on the sands—and by the time they've done this, low tide has come and they set out for the beach. An appended glossary gives information about the creatures that they have been discussing, grouping them by morphological differences. The author uses the light fictional framework deftly to give direction to what is basically an informational text that is nicely gauged for the interests and comprehension of young children, and is illustrated with pictures that are both handsome and useful.

C.U. Nature study; Science

First published in Great Britain in 1981, this is another zany adventure of the prodigy Arthur, Boy Expert at Everything, and an old favorite of American as well as British readers. This is a bit more slapdash, even within the bounds of deliberate exaggeration, than many of the earlier books, but it's still very funny. Watson is apoplectic and stupid, Sherlock Holmes is brilliant and intuitive, but it is young Arthur, with his keen deductive mind and intrepid nature, who solves the mystery of who has been painting the tops of London's monuments purple and how they got up there. Nonsense, but palatable nonsense.


This is not a full biography but a highly fictionalized account of the adolescence and young womanhood of Sarah Aaronsohn, who lived in Turkish-owned Palestine in the days before World War I, and who left her husband during the war to serve in the Jewish intelligence network that reported Turkish activities to the British military. Based on interviews and on original sources that include recently declassified documents, this is adequately written, a bit heavy in style, a bit inclined to ignore Aaronsohn's mistakes and focus on the courage and loyalty which she indeed displayed. For most readers, this will introduce an unfamiliar aspect of the first world war and a dedicated freedom fighter who killed herself rather than chance her own weakness under torture when she was caught.

C.U. History—Israel
D.V. Devotion to a cause


Written by two specialists in elementary education who are on the staff of the Fernbank Science Center in Atlanta, this is nicely gauged for the interests and comprehension level of the middle grades reader. The text, lavishly illustrated with photographs that show stages of exhibit preparation, describes the ways in which taxidermists and artists prepare forms or molds, use natural parts with preservatives or special treatment that help them keep gloss or shape or color, and employ a vast variety of substances and techniques to prepare an individual animal or an entire diorama for viewing. A glossary and an index add to the usefulness of an informative book that is written in an authoritative, straightforward style.


Dickinson is here, as he has been in earlier fantasy and adventure novels, superb at blending the realistic and the occult. His characters are distinct, drawn with depth, never one-dimensional, whether they tilt toward heroism or villainy. In this absorbing story, a child of ten is The Healer, the core of an institution in which there are elaborate procedures and ritual. The child (no glamourie here, she's pudgy and pale and named Pinkie Proudfoot) seems to be healing sick people: is her power genuine or is the whole operation a fraud? Barry, sixteen, who wants to rescue Pinkie, whom he'd known when she was six, manages to get a job at the institution.
and he does get Pinkie away to her grandfather—but there’s a dramatic reversal that is a powerful ending to a highly original story.


A small boy and his dog take provisions and a map and row to an island to dig for treasure, having problems en route because of a choppy sea, sighting a shark-like fin, the dog being washed overboard, etc. The next day, Fergus sights the island; in a rather abrupt ending, they find a small chest containing a gold ring that Fergus puts on Bridey’s tail. “Now we can go home,” he says. And they do.” The illustrations show a good sense of composition, control of line, and a humor that is lacking in the text, which falls somewhere between realism and tall tale but is neither, and is choppily written.


Smoothly translated from the original German, this collection of fifteen short mystery stories includes notations that indicate whether a story is easy, quite difficult, or difficult; presumably this refers to reading level rather than intricacy of plot, since almost every query that follows a story (“What was the slip Riley referred to? In other words, how did the false Dr. Grey give himself away?”) is easily answered. Most of the stories are marked in the middle range; all are brisk and have a good deal of action with a minimum of violence. Nicely told, carefully structured tales should hold readers and the brevity of the selections indicates possible use with reluctant readers.


Stark woodcut illustrations vary in effectiveness but not in their somber mood, embellishing but not extending a text that explains how Jews were persecuted in Germany during the Hitler regime, and how that tragedy, the Holocaust, has come to be observed. Holocaust Remembrance Day, established by the Israeli parliament in 1959, is a movable date in the Jewish calendar, usually occurring in April. It is appropriate that the tone of the text is serious; it is unfortunate that the writing style is, despite the awful drama of the subject, dull and pedantic.

C.U. History—Europe; History—Jews


Because eleven-year-old Michael is the narrator of this story about adaptability and adjustment, there are a directness and immediacy that may inspire quick empathy on the part of the reader. Michael is not only having a hard time accepting his parents’ divorce, he’s finding it equally difficult to accept the move to a less affluent neighborhood and a smaller house; he refers to the new place as “Grossville.” The ways in which Michael changes (making new friends, getting over his anger at his parents, accepting the new lifestyle) are logically and gradually developed in a
realistic story that has good pace and also has broader applications of acceptance of change than those that define Michael's problems.

D.V. Adaptibility; Divorce, adjustment to


Oversize pages afford Foreman an opportunity to display his control of perspective and light as he uses famous bits of Manhattan skyline as the dramatic setting for an adequate but not impressive fanciful tale. The story: a cat escorts his friend the canary up to the roof each day, as soon as their master has left for work. Because he's bird-friendly, the cat's roof is always crowded with birds. It is these appreciative birds who rescue the cat after he has a wild ride, clutching a kite-string, through the cold city sky. A bit contrived, but the lap audience should enjoy both the adventure and the fact that when the man comes home, he says, "What a lazy cat! I bet you haven't moved all day." *They'll* know better.


In three selections, this text is written in a brisk and informative style, its tone marred somewhat by a frequent note of adulation. It is profusely illustrated with photographs, all officially issued by NASA; it describes the launch and flight of the *Challenger*, gives brief biographies of Sally Ride and seven other women astronauts, and devotes several chapters to such subjects as clothing, flight simulation, and survival training. Despite the occasional gushing, this should be appealing to readers, in part because there is as yet so little available on the subject, and in part because the text gives interesting details about life aboard a shuttle. A brief bibliography and an index are appended.


Useful information in a dry, straightforward text that is augmented by clean, simple illustrations that give additional facts. Gibbons discusses the most popular breeds of dairy cows, their production of milk after they've calved once, the way the milk is taken from them (by hand or by milking machines) and the ways in which it is collected, tested, pasteurized, homogenized, packaged, and made available for sale to consumers. This is not arcane knowledge, but it's concisely presented here, accurate, and adequately illustrated.

C.U. Industries (unit)


This has most of the standard elements of the formula paperback romance: a girl on the verge of a career milepost (audition for a dance scholarship at Juilliard) and a tiff with a rock-steady boyfriend that makes a dashing newcomer seem even more enticing. A rival for the latter, in a sense, provides one unusual facet, for Kit is horrified when she stumbles on debonair Francisco kissing her mother. Kit has not capitulated to his wooing; although she has had a sexual relationship with Justin, the boy back home, it is because she loves him. It will probably surprise few readers that there is a rapturous reunion between Kit and Justin at the end of this trite story, not offensively written but pallid in conception and one-dimensional in characterization.

The title has not been chosen capriciously, for Grant compares the plants and animals she discusses to the fairytale characters, noting that study reveals in nature, as it does in fiction, the true qualities of the protagonists, whether the relationship is mutually beneficial or mutually hostile in coevolutionary patterns. A biologist, Grant writes with grace and animation, adding for readers the enjoyment of style and wit to the authoritative array of fascinating information about how plants and animals change and adapt in accommodation to the defensive and offensive behavior of each other. The bibliography is extensive and is divided by chapters; the index is equally extensive and is carefully compiled.

C.U. Biology; Science


An oversize book offers ample space for Heine's watercolor pictures of animals in the wild, and they have both delicacy and ebullience. The story, on the other hand, seems contrived and awkward, a tale of a dream of greed and competition from which a beaver wakes with relief. He throws back into the lake the pearl mussel he'd thought of as a bone of contention.


Illustrations, some in full color, are of pedestrian calibre, not of the quality to match the retellings of twenty tales from sources around the world. While Heslewood's retellings have occasional passages that are slow or heavy, they are for the most part strong in the narrative tradition and told with color and vitality. An annotated list of sources is appended.


This sequel to *Legend Days* (reviewed in the June, 1984 issue) continues the story of Amana, alienated from her people and isolated by bereavement as a young woman. Here she is befriended by half-breed Amalia, and it is to Amalia that she turns again when her white lover leaves her, unaware that she is pregnant. For many years Amana longs for her own people, the Blood, but she stays in the town where she has a job and where her child, Jemima, is brought up in Amalia's home, a brothel in which Amana and Jemima live apart. Amana longs for her child, then for her grandchildren to carry on the tradition of their people, but they are taken from her. Tradition lies in the legends of the life of this one old woman, whose youth was filled with vigor and promise, whose days of greatness are over, who seems to symbolize her people— their only hope, like hers, lying in those young people who may fight to preserve the dignity and beauty of another way of life. This is a powerful novel, written with controlled strength and emotion, clear in its vision.

C.U. Social studies
D.V. Interracial understanding

Neat line drawings with no background distraction are tinted in yellow and blue, extending a text that is simply written and that emphasizes a child's pride in adding 2-5 yrs. night continence to her other acquired skills. Josie enjoys asking her mother how she had done things when she was a baby and comparing the answer with her present prowess. She doesn't achieve instant success, but when Josie insists that she wants to give up diapers at night, she soon learns to get up, turn on a light, and go to the bathroom by herself. The problem looms as an important one for small children, and it's nice to see it so well handled in a book that is written for them without being written down to them.

D.V. Growing up; Self-reliance


"Creepy-mouse" is the fingerplay that's used to amuse his sister Rosalie's baby, but to eleven-year-old Jeremy there's the same looming threat in his life. And it's real. Bullying, menacing even on the telephone, Rosalie's husband, just out of jail, is driving east to get her. Rosalie is terrified (so's Jeremy) but she doesn't know what to do, and their mother just brushes their worries aside. When Mack does arrive, swaggering and abusive, Jeremy and his friend Kelly take the offensive when they try to hide Rosalie and the baby in their playhouse. It's partly their concerted attack, partly Mack's fear of their pet snake that routs him—so the problem is solved, not very convincingly. Nor is it convincing that Rosalie doesn't try to get help when the police belittle her fears and her mother ignores them. However, the writing has pace and suspense, the characters and the dialogue have resilience, and Mack is one of the most effective depictions of an amoral lout in the literature.

D.V. Brother-sister relations; Courage


Ross, age five, was delighted that he was to help carry a banner in front of the high school band that was marching in the holiday parade, but his suggestion that he be allowed to have sparklers was rejected. Not until he was six, his parents said. Most of the text describes, with light humor, the agonies of heat, fatigue, and thirst Ross suffers as he marches. He keeps in mind what a six-year-old would do, however, and keeps marching; his persistence and responsibility are rewarded by a surprise: "Six sparklers, enough for a six-year-old boy." The scribbly line and light tinting of the illustrations are a good match for the light quality of the direct, humorous first-person text. Readers-aloud may applaud the protagonist's stamina and doggedness; listeners are more likely to applaud the sparklers whirling against the dark sky.

C.U. Holidays
D.V. Responsibility


In a story set in a rural community in 1933, the protagonist is particularly anxious to have a nice wardrobe, since she's about to start seventh grade and is convinced
5-6 that having the right clothes can help make her popular. Henrietta, who lives with her taciturn father (widower, farmer) and his grumpy sister, has little chance of getting her wish, and when a cyclone destroys her room and the clothes in it, poor Henrietta faces a life of hand-me-downs. That's why, when the pushy new girl at school, Vanessa, who offers to be a second-best friend, agrees to lend a dress for an important party, Henrietta agrees. The dress proves to have been stolen, Henrietta is accused but does not reveal Vanessa's name, and when the truth comes out two things happen: Henrietta gains instant popularity because she staunchly took the undeserved blame, and she is the first to be friendly when an embarrassed Vanessa comes back to school. While there's a cause-and-effect relationship between the cyclone (given such detailed coverage that it throws the story out of balance) and the dress incident, they seem barely-linked short stories. This is the chief weakness of the book: it never fuses into a smooth whole. Save for the teacher, everyone speaks sub-standard English, a device that becomes jarring. There is some change, some growth of understanding in Henrietta, but on the whole the story is torpid.

D.V. Ethical concepts; Friendship values


Tinted line drawings that have little polish but quite a bit of animation show Henry and his family (the usual picture book representation of mice as being clothed and having hands and feet, but tails and whiskers) attending and enjoying a picnic. Henry enjoys all the activities, particularly eating, winning third prize in a sack race, and staying up late to watch fireworks. Mama assures him, as she tucks him into bed, that they can go again next year. This is written in a simple, pleasant style, and the lack of plot is compensated for by the roster of activities.

C.U. Holidays


In a text designed to help readers acquire and maintain an objective and critical viewpoint in analyzing information, the Kleins point out the need for such critical thinking in a world in which hyperbole and statistics (as well as warped or incorrect statements) can color or obscure truth. They discuss the influence of preconception, the range of veracity from lie to truth, the skewing of statistics to serve a purpose, and the methods by which facts have been garnered. The text urges that methods and instruments of fact-finding must be looked at critically, and that individuals should warily ask questions about who is providing information, who or what group stands to gain, when the data were collected, how comprehensive the information package is. Not easy reading, but a valuable guide to the concept and practice of taking a long, careful look at what is presented as the truth. A relative index is appended.


The drawings tell the story quite clearly, in this comic wordless book, but it requires some familiarity with the concept of a magic flying carpet (the protagonist is reading *Arabian Fairy Tales* when the carpet's delivered) and the story ends a bit flatly. Children will enjoy the fact that the carpet's flight causes some disturbance.
when it floats around the house and some danger when it deposits its passenger on a steep roof; adults may blanch at the fact that the small girl goes to the door and opens it when the deliverman rings.


Tidy, bright, spacious framed pictures are nicely matched with a small boy's story of his valiant resistance to change (enlarging and redecorating his room to make space for a new baby) and his resentful apprehension about his belongings (babies can be destructive). By the time the baby is old enough to cause real damage, it's the parents who are protesting and the former protestor who is saying protectively "Don't touch my baby!" Gently humorous, perceptive in depicting dethronement/adjustment/acceptance, this should amuse anyone in the lap audience but strike a familiar note with children who share the narrator's problem.

D.V. Baby, adjustment to


In a text that covers physical, psychological, and sexual abuse of children and adolescents, Landau focuses on abuse by parents or "caretakers." This is, therefore, not comprehensive, but it does a good job of explaining in a candid if dry style some of the causes of the tragic results. Certainly one useful aspect of the book is the amount of information it gives about preventive and palliative measures, and about social services and legal resources that work with parents as well as those individual agencies and networks that help, protect, or defend the victims of child abuse. A bibliography and an index are provided.

C.U. Social studies


There are two narrators in this very funny technological farce: Bixby, a new student who proves to be an upsetting influence at Silicon Computer High School, and Max, a school administrator whose full name is Maximum Interated Systems III. Bixby, under the pretense of setting up a new dating system for the human and robotic student body, works on a project that he hopes will bring him fame and a trip to Europe. He doesn't count on a prying younger brother, a jealous girlfriend, and a love-smitten Max interfering with his plans. Leroe has created a not-so-brave new world, in which she pokes cheerful fun at everything. This isn't high fantasy but it's great fun, and the author keeps a firm hand on the joystick.


Jordan is handsome, popular, dynamic, and a shoo-in candidate for junior class president; Trish, who tells the story, doesn't think she has a chance to win as the opposition candidate, but she hopes the campaign will make Jordan notice her. Unfortunately, Jordan's campaign manager plays one vindictive trick after another; Trish is in despair about Jordan—but she is also jealous when her two best friends seem to be starting a romance. In some ways this is formulaic (Trish learns to appreciate the nice boy from the next farm) and it is weakened by a contrived and rather nebulous ending.
(Trish's dog wins the election on a write-in vote) and it has a few stock characters; on the other hand, it has a fairly lively writing style, good pace, and some warm parent-child relations.

D.V. Age-mate relations; Parent-child relations


Preceded by some background information and a map, and followed by a list of geographical and military notes, this is a picture book edition of an American classic. The neat, framed pictures—line and wash in quiet, chiefly pastel, colors—extend the story that is more vividly told by the poem about a major event in the colonial battle against the British.

C.U. History—U.S.


Often preoccupied with her work as an illustrator, Anastasia's mother is a careless housekeeper; she bemoans the fact that she forgets, almost every day, to thaw meat for dinner. Her husband and daughter set up a housekeeping schedule, but when Mom is called away on a business trip, it's Anastasia who's in charge of the housekeeping and her three-year-old brother. Hampered by little Sam's chicken pox (they don't tell Mom when she calls) Anastasia has to stay home from school (they don't tell Mom) and then is faced with making a gourmet dinner when Mr. Krupnik's old flame invites herself for a meal (they certainly don't tell Mom). This doesn't have a strong story line, but it is breezy and funny in the *Egg and I* tradition of housekeeping disaster literature.


Clean, bright pictures and an energetic storyline are combined in a picture book that has zest in the writing style and originality in conception. The duck of the title, Egbert, is a pull-toy that has a series of peripatetic adventures somewhat in the style of *Paddle-to-the-Sea*. While his owner mourns for Egbert, the duck is finally rescued along with a marooned Frenchman. All ends happily with Egbert restored to his owner and the Frenchman wed to the daughter of the president of France. Only one thing is lacking, and that's one of Egbert's front wheels; bitten off by a shark, the wheel has floated into the possession of a Portugese child who often wonders about it. This may, with adult help, extend children's concepts of space and distance, but it's appealing whether or not that happens.


This is a standard, formulaic biography of a popular performing star: some facts mixed with adulation and gushy exaggeration; for example, "When his hair caught fire from a spark while filming a television commercial... the whole world prayed
for him to get well." The large print and the simple vocabulary make the book appropriate for slow older readers; despite its mediocrity of style, the text will doubtless appeal to many readers because of the subject.


Anna, the narrator, has been running the family's modest prairie home since her mother died giving birth to Caleb; both of them are excited when their father says he has been corresponding with a woman in Maine who may become his bride. Sarah, who writes of herself as "plain and tall," comes west for a month's trial and the two children try in every way to make her love them as they instantly love her. So this is a love story, but a most unusual one, and it is told with distinction, in a style that is imbued with lyricism although it is simple prose. The structure is spare and strong, the characters firmly established.

D.V. Stepparent-child relations


When a "handle," or nickname, is a mark of acceptance, an outsider may long to have one conferred. That is true of Erica, who is bored while visiting relatives in a rural cottage and is enthralled when she's sent on an errand to a cycle repair shop, for Erica is a knowledgeable motorcycle buff. She likes the shop's owner, even persuades him to let her do some work, and absorbs some of his insouciance—thereby so offending her aunt that she is sent home. But Erica knows she's been accepted; she's earned a handle by then. Mark, winner of the Carnegie Award, draws her characters incisively: the shop's owner, Auntie Joan, and dense Cousin Robert are memorable characters. The dialogue is yeasty, the style animated and polished.

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


Soft, romantic paintings by a distinguished Canadian illustrator precede each of the twelve tales that, springing from diverse European roots, have been changed over the years to take on a distinctively Canadian flavor. Themes and motifs pop up agreeably in unexpected places ("Fee, fi, fo, fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman" is in "The Three Golden Hairs," and in "Beauty and the Beast" Beauty is a male) and the three Ti-Jean stories are a staple of national legendry. Martin, a librarian and storyteller, provides adaptations that are smooth in style and lively in pace.


Capably translated from the original German, this is a stunning novel about a child's divided allegiance between parents locked in a permanent cold war, about her efforts to understand her changing world, and about her compassion and courage. Saya is ten, the daughter of nonconformist Shinto priest and a rigid, narrow-minded woman who sees her husband as her enemy. The setting is Kyoto in 1945, when the people of Saya's neighborhood are stunned by their country's defeat and apprehensive about the advent of the American troops. Published originally as an adult book, this should be attractive to young adult readers as well, exploring as it does the com-
plexities of familial relationships, the ambivalencies that confront children, and the marvelous adaptability of the young. Matsubara writes with clarity and perception; her characters are drawn with depth and strength, and her setting, vividly established, is made an integral part of her story.

D.V. Adaptability; Parent-child relations


Annie, thirteen, is the narrator of a story about family life and problems during the Depression Era; the book is set in Baltimore in 1931. One of six girls in a Catholic family, Annie becomes increasingly worried when her father, after he loses his job, becomes depressed and turns to drink. She and her best friend, Tim, have always been mad about aviation, and her reaction when her father threatens suicide is to run away with Tim to go riding in his brother's newly-purchased airplane. The book ends with Annie recuperating (her arm broken when she parachutes from Tim's burning plane) and the family doing a bit better because they have applied for charitable help. This gives a fairly vivid picture of the stresses of a severe economic depression, but it's heavily laden with period details; the characterization and writing style are adequate but neither has distinction or depth.


Thirteen, Katie has been living in a small Oregon town with her grandparents since she was orphaned. She has two problems: one is that the town, soon to be flooded and rebuilt on higher ground (a new dam) does not offer accommodations her grandparents deem proper, and they plan to move to the city, and the other is that moving will not only mean losing old friends and classmates but giving up Whisper, Katie's beloved horse. After many discussions and several failed plans, Katie resigns herself to the fact that her grandparents mean more to her than Whisper does, and she rejects an offer from a friend's family to be their boarder. This is believable and adequate in characterization, but it's slow-paced and the information about the dam and the flooding are rather laboriously incorporated.

D.V. Grandparent-child relations


Melissa finds a white blob like a soft pillow but having nose, mouth, and eyes; it talks and it wonders what it is. So do Melissa's parents; so do the authorities at the several institutions to which Melissa's family brings the "nothing," which—or who—gets sadder and sadder at not being an identifiable something. Eventually the nothing becomes resigned to being a nameless family pet, and (in a lame conclusion) they give the nothing a birthday cake with one candle. Melissa says "We love you," and her mother adds, "And that makes you really something." The illustrations, line and wash, have animation and some humor and tend to be crowded. The writing style is adequate, but the concept and development of the story are weak.


No "how-to" book that involves large or complicated physical movements can ever take the place of seeing and imitating a performer, but given the popularity of
breakdancing, any instruction book will probably be welcomed by both spectators and would-be performers. This explains how breakdancing started, how dancers dress, how individual movements are performed. Color photographs illustrate the text; a one-page glossary is provided. The directions are not always perfectly clear.


Shelley, fifteen, is the narrator in a story about the ways in which learning the art of clowning helps her and her two best friends cope with some personality problems. Other factors are at work, too: the support of family members, the acquiring of a first (and for all three girls, admiring) boyfriend, the response of their first audiences. Shelley even learns how to make a friend out of a girl who's always been vocally hostile. This is realistic, competently written, and fairly brisk in pace; it is weakened by being so palpably used as a vehicle for information about the history and techniques of clowning.

D.V. Brothers-sisters; Friendship values; Shyness, overcoming


Oxenbury's illustrations are always delightful in their composition, use of color, and humor; here they may be marred for some readers because they present a stereotypical set of grandparents: both are slippered, Grandma knits while Grandpa reads the newspaper. However, the small girl who is the narrator reporting on her weekly visiting does capture the special relationship that exists when grandparents dote. They fall in with whatever she suggests (although they both doze off while pretending to be hospital patients the child is energetically bandaging) and the child is merely being factual when she says, "Grandma and Grandpa let me do anything to them."

D.V. Grandparent-child relations


Although the text is brief, it is most diverting, and the inherent humor is extended by the deft, uncluttered line and wash illustrations. A small boy describes the wayward behavior of the family pet, the trouble he and his mother have getting their dog clean after a roll-in-the-mud episode, and the decision that the only way to get the dog dry after its bath is to go out for another walk. Most of the preschool audience will immediately recognize the delightful possibility of a repeat performance.


Dinah tells the story of her two weeks at a girls' camp, and this is not a formula camp story in which a reluctant camper adjusts. Dinah, thirteen, really wants to go to Camp Miniwawa, and she especially wants to make a fresh start there, to create a new image and be popular. She hasn't anticipated the possibility that a frightened, uncouth girl who happened to get on the bus at the same time will cling to her like a starving leech. Fern is a dolt, and Dinah isn't the only one who thinks so. It's up to Dinah, however, to tell Fern that her cabinmates don't want her with them. Stalling, Dinah is finally driven to impulsive violence; she pushes Fern out of a canoe.
There's no sweetened ending: Fern is adamantly resentful and Dinah unhappily guilt-burdened. The story is painfully believable, although the characters (Fern and the cabin counselor, particularly) tend to be overdrawn, but they are well-suited to their roles; the writing style is capable, the only weakness of the story being that it seems overextended, like a short story that grew beyond control. But it's a rather trenchant short story.

D.V. Age-mate relations; Social behavior


Russel is fourteen, an Eskimo who is not happy with the snowmobile society, and he follows his father's suggestion and talks to the very old man of the tribe, Oogruk.

Thus it is that Russel starts off on a long journey, by dogsled, to face the icy wilderness on his own, developing survival techniques and making a journey of self-discovery that is parallel to his trek. He achieves a feeling of unity not only with his dogs and with nature but with the old way of life, in which each individual had and was a song. Although more lyrical and introspective, this is reminiscent of James Houston's ability to capture the atmosphere of barren desolation. The sparely structured narrative is broken twice: once by Russel's encounter with a young, pregnant woman who has come into the wilderness to expiate her feelings of guilt, and several times by dream sequences in which an earlier, other Russel fights the woolly mammoth. Slow-moving, but effective in its starkness and intensity.

D.V. Courage; Self-confidence; Self-reliance


Cartoon style illustrations, lavender-washed, often busy and occasionally humorous, add little to the text of this biography. Neither written down nor palpably laudatory (two frequent flaws in biographies meant for children) this gives a brisk and fairly objective account of the life and work of the man who has been called the father of modern science fiction. There is a brief epilogue that states the importance of Verne as a writer and as an influence on future scientists. The author mentions, but does not expand upon, the fact that many of Verne's fictional devices were duplicated by scientific inventions after his time.


This is not in the usual format of books emanating from Oxford Scientific Films, but is oversize, has two columns per page (one wide, one narrow) and uses two sizes of type, one for descriptive captions. The photographs are of better calibre than the text, which lacks vitality although it gives many facts about fertilization, gestation, birth, and the parental care and feeding (or, occasionally, lack of them) of the young. The weakness of the book is that material about a species may be scattered through the text, since the approach is topical: six entries for spiders in the index, for example, and seven for tadpoles, ranging from page 16 to page 51.

C.U. Science

Peering over the fence at the new boy next door, Addie is frightened by the barking of his very large dog, which doesn't make her anxious to meet the boy. She's even less disposed to think of him as a potential friend when their bikes collide the next day, and she runs home to say, "Mother, he almost killed me," although the illustration indicates that it's she who's at fault. When the luncheon arranged by mother takes place, there's plenty of munching but little dialogue between Addie and the boy until he reveals he's lost a tooth in the Great Bicycle Clash, and they become friends as the tooth is buried in a formal ceremony. A realistic, mildly funny story is pleasant for reading aloud as well as for the beginning independent reader. The illustrations, line and wash, have vigor and humor.

C.U. Reading aloud; Reading, beginning
D.V. Boy-girl relations; Fear, overcoming


Pirates, space ships, lots of action, animal characters, and a counting (or, at least, a countdown) thread should probably make a strong book, but they fail to do so, probably because the author-illustrator has attempted too much and has not developed her text very successfully. The illustrations (colored markers and ink) have a comic-grotesque quality. The story describes the journey of a space pirate, Jupiter, and his moondog crew as they search for treasure. On each stop one member of the crew is lost (sometimes at the behest of Pirate Jupiter). Each time there's a refrain: "'Yo, Ho, Ho! Now there are only seven,'" and so on. Finally Jupiter is alone on Rainbow Planet—but one of the crew members appears with the rest, having picked them up in a space shuttle—so the mercenary leader has to share the treasure. Contrived enough structurally to weaken the book, this will—because of the aforementioned appeals—undoubtedly please some of the audience.


Precisely drawn trains set against verdant landscapes or busy railroad yards are softly colored and are nicely integrated with the informative, simply written text. Sattler discusses the fact that most train personnel today use diverse methods of communication and that train whistles, once used heavily, are used less today but are still used and still important. As she describes the journey of a freight train, the author explains the kind of whistle signal (number of toots and their length) that is a code for a different situation. This is the kind of book that could easily stimulate a search for further knowledge on the subject or on trains in general.


Anna, the narrator, has been a participant in the murder game she'd played with the other adolescents in her island community; she wasn't prepared for the game to turn into the real thing. One player was, she realized, and she found it hard to believe. Kirk, so handsome and gentle and sensitive—why would anyone stab him? In the course of her investigation (Anna is determined to exonerate her twin brother, the chief suspect) Anna discovers how different Kirk really was from the image she'd acquired in her few months on the island. Everyone seems to have detested him and for good reason. As others learn that she's snooping, it becomes inevitable that she should be in
danger, and indeed she is rescued in formula fashion just as the murderer lunges for her throat. This has the sort of danger and suspense that appeal to thriller fans, and it paints a devastating picture of the murder victim, but the plotting and the plethora of suspects are somewhat contrived, especially in the sudden appearance of Anna’s boyfriend Tony (whom she hasn’t seen since moving to the island) a character toward whom Anna feels ambivalent and whose behavior is contrivedly inconsistent.


The members of a very large household react in different ways when young Imogene appears one day with a pair of enormous antlers on her head, an overnight phenomenon. As the day passes, one of the servants finds the antlers useful for drying towels, and another uses them as a multiple feeding station for birds. Imogene’s mother faints periodically; Imogene’s doctor is baffled. Everyone is delighted, next day, when Imogene pokes her head around the dining room door, antler-free. They’re delighted, that is, until they see the rest of Imogene. This ebullient fantasy in the tall tale tradition is told with pace and flair, and it’s illustrated with pictures that are as deft as they are funny.


Set early in the seventeenth century in the just-named town of Stratford, Connecticut, this is the story of a child who grew up to be the second woman hanged in the colonies as a witch, half a century before the Salem witch trials. Major characters, a preface notes, are largely fictional, but some portions of the book are historically based. Always suspect because the woman who claimed to be her mother was so old, singled out because she had strayed from the settlement as a child and reappeared clad in a wolfskin, finally accused of poisoning her bridegroom, Ruth is laden with guilt about her own feelings (which include love for a trapper who later proves to have been her natural father) and her last comment to the minister is, “The Devil dies with me. Tell Stratford I confess.” This has variable quality in characterization, and adequate style marred by occasional careless use of words (“scandalous” rather than “scandalized” glances) or anachronisms in dialogue. The plot is intermittently attenuated, but it offers the author an opportunity of which he takes full advantage: The book is replete with details that not only establish the setting but that give a vivid sense of the frontier community, the attitudes of the colonists, and the relationship between settlers and their neighboring Indian tribes.

D.V. Intercultural understanding


Pictures that are capably drawn and that are adequately placed and labelled are crowded on some pages of this book of odd facts about animals: biggest reptiles, fastest animals, longest jumps, largest ears, etc. The index lists species, giving another kind of access to what is primarily a browsing book. It provides the sorts of out-of-the-way information that many children enjoy accumulating; some care has been taken on the aforementioned crowded pages to inform the reader if the combinations of animals shown do not actually live in the same environment.

Pale, almost misty pictures that have economy of line and a feeling of softness illustrate the account of the first part of a child's day. The text tells no story, but moves sedately from Anna's and her mother's waking through breakfast and a trip to the grocery store to a return home and an embrace from father who'd slept late. The pattern: "Mama puts on her clothes. Anna puts on Mama's shoes," faces one picture; the next picture faces a page that states "Mama drinks her coffee. Anna drinks her milk." This should have the appeal of everyday life experiences for very young children, but it's a static book.


In a cozy fantasy about a race of little people, three elves who are of the Furken species live in amity in the house of an elderly man, Noah. He talks to them, has built them a two-apartment home in the barrel, and offers love and protection. Danger comes when Noah goes off on a trip and does not return when he said he would; the house is let to a family that includes an inquisitive nine-year-old boy, and this is when the youngest Furken, Pudding, proves that he is daring and intrepid. The story, nicely conceived and developed, ends with tiny Pudding going off to find and rescue Noah. If a sequel is planned, this book should create an audience for it.


Christian Wolny gets a letter from his grandfather that informs him that alternative generations of males in the family have heard voices. Shortly thereafter, Christian hears the voice of God, states that he wishes the voice could be made visible, and sees "this scrawny-looking Puerto Rican kid, maybe about eight years old..." Some of the people in Christian's community accept the boy as God, some do not; God is both diplomatic and evasive in responding to questions. His presence in school generates some debating; here and elsewhere in the book the author uses the situation as a launching pad for her own pet causes (worthy they may be, they certainly skew the story as story). Eventually, after furnishing one miracle (a slum lot springs into profuse bloom overnight, right next door to the building in which the physically abused (now dead) child whose body God had used, lived. It is possible that this fantasy may offend readers in a broad theological spectrum; the book fails as a story, convincing neither as fantasy nor in its realistic facets.


Linoleum block prints in color show a scene for each month, the double page spreads recording, in large print, brief comments on the birds that visit near Ellie's house ("Canada geese and a robin in March...Robins and a warbler in April...A bluebird, a goldfinch, wrens, and baby robins in June."). The pictures also show the changes in foliage and weather, and the progression from Ellie's gravid mother to Mother and infant and then, in the last indoor scene (November) Ellie and her sibling at the kitchen table. The profusion and variety of bird life may seem exaggerated, but the book should appeal both to young readers and their read-aloud juniors. In some of the pictures identification may be difficult, either because of crowded details or because there are so many species on a page.

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Seventeen-year-old Julia and her siblings are always aware of their father's precarious emotional stability, know that he has refused help for several bouts of severe depression, and understand that their mother's role is that of protector and tranquilizer. They are shocked when their father attempts suicide, and almost as disturbed when their frantic mother goes off for a few days to gain peace through solitude. Julia, who is angry at her father and recognizes his selfishness, still loves him dearly and tries to help him, as she does the young man (who also had tried to kill himself) who is in the same ward as her father and becomes his friend. This is a serious story, acute in its depiction of the intricacies of familial relationships, sensitive in portraying the ambivalence of Julia, who is basically a shy and private person who must adjust to the demands made on her by others. In this novel from England, it is style, characterization, and nuance that will hold readers rather than plot development.

D.V. Family relations


Yabuuchi reverses the usual procedure used in books that teach the names of baby animals by starting with the baby: "This is a fawn. Whose baby is it?" Facing the query is a painting of a fawn, then a double-page spread that states "A fawn is a baby deer. It belongs to a mother and father deer, called a buck and a doe." The page show the three animals, and the only weakness in this otherwise useful and certainly handsome book is that the text doesn't say which is the buck and which is the doe. The pages are clean and spacious, the animal paintings impressive in their fidelity of details and their textural quality.


Pages that are handsomely laid out, clean and sharp, follow a question-and-answer format: one page asks, "Four toes and a pad—whose footprints are these?" and the prints (one set) are shown on the facing page. This is followed by a double-page spread across which a cat strides, and "They belong to a cat." The animals are all common ones (goat, horse, bear, duck, hippopotamus) that should be familiar to children, and the paintings are almost photographic in their realistic detail, although they have more depth than photographs.


In a sequel to *Dragon of the Lost Sea* (reviewed in the November, 1982 issue) Shimmer (a dragon, centuries-old, who is an exiled princess of her clan and has magical powers) continues her story. While this second volume has the grand scale and fluent style of the first, it is less coherent in the development of a story line. Shimmer and the boy Thorn, who was an alternate narrator of the first book, continue their quest for restoration of Shimmer's homeland, acquiring a new companion, Indigo, in their undersea battle against the evil High King who would deny Shimmer her heritage.
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