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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


Joan Aiken is so entertaining a writer that readers may not fully appreciate the craft that is the basis for what seems an effortless, fluid style. Her words are deftly chosen and carefully honed, her humor is under control even when it seems most ebullient, her characters are memorable even when they are not quite believable. And she has that prime requisite of good fantasy writing, a logic-within-illogic that sits firmly on its realistic base. This collection of fantastic stories has variety, wit, momentum in varying degrees, and an appealing combination of the humorous and the eerie.


Jamie liked the new seventh grade English teacher, Ms. Schuyler, right away, but it took a longer time before she realized why the woman looked familiar: she looked like Jamie's mother. What could be nicer than bringing this wonderful teacher to the attention of her widowed father? That becomes Jamie's mission, and the story of her efforts to be a matchmaker, her resentment against the woman her father's dating, and her annoyance with Gavin, the next door neighbor who keeps popping in to chat with Agnes, the housekeeper, is brisk in pace and perceptive in its quasi-humorous, sympathetic development. Characters have depth and individuality, and the dialogue has an easy, natural flow.

D.V. Teacher-pupil relations


Arnold discusses, in a text arranged in rather brief sections, various aspects of the subject of pain and its treatment. She begins with descriptions of different kinds of pains and of the facts that pain thresholds vary and that pain is difficult to measure. The major part of the text focuses on the ways in which pain can be controlled, alleviated, or overcome—including such measures as biofeedback, hypnosis, and surgery or acupuncture in addition to medication. There's a clear explanation of how the nervous system works and a discussion of pain as a natural warning signal. Difficult words are italicized in the text and defined in a glossary.

C.U. Health and hygiene

Cranes play an important part in the magical lore of Japan, and although the setting appears modern here and the cast multi-cultural, there is a distinctly oriental dimension to the simplicity of shapes and flat perspectives in Bang's art work. There is also a thoughtful blend of story and illustration, with a focal image of paper: paper cut-out pictures accompany a tale about a paper crane that comes to life and dances as a reward for a poor restaurant owner's generosity to a weary old traveler. Earth tones appropriately dominate a warm story that ends happily with the restaurant a success once more and the stranger flying away on his crane. A mysteriously moving variant of the wandering saint/hospitality rewarded legends.

D.V. Kindness


A page of text faces a page of illustration (almost always in full color, almost always full page) with each double-page spread devoted to some famous dragon of myth or fiction. The paintings are splendid, rich in color and effective in composition. The text is often labored and derivative. The subject is one that appeals to many children, but this is primarily a book for art lovers and art students.

C.U. Art—study and teaching


One of the most dramatic and child-appealing stories from the Old Testament is recounted in a simple, one or two line per page text faced with spacious, light-filled paintings. Hutton's watercolors combine narrative strength with an intensely graceful setting. He has lessened his usual sun-shadow contrasts for a sense of the blazing white air of the Middle East, which lightens all colors except those of the watery depths where Moses is found. The figures are stylized without becoming stiff; even the ducks and geese have a slightly hieroglyphic stance. Hutton's usually sly slants of humor are here replaced with tenderness for the human aspects of a story with mythical dimensions, the child of destiny born, endangered, and saved.

C.U. Storytelling

D.V. Faith


This is not a storyteller's or a young readers' collection, but a resource for students of anthropology and folklore. It includes an introduction to the Maya culture and living conditions, twenty-two stories representing various characters and patterns of narrative, and a valuable bibliography for further study. The stories themselves are heavy on magic transformations, rescues, and punishments and often feature bizarre twists or quirky bits of humor. "The Charcoal Cruncher," for instance, is a gothic horror story about a man whose wife has no head at night; another tale begins, "When Jesus Christ was a prisoner, they thought he was smoking in jail," and goes on to detail his escape, betrayal, and recapture. A few of the rabbit tales will ring familiar in motif, and one or two, like "Toad and Hawk," are cohesive enough for telling; many others are rambling ("The Mole Catcher," for instance), or unfamiliar enough in cultural context to need
individual background notes, as in the relationship between the two characters in "The Bad Compadre." Where Bierhorst's other collections of Aztec, Peruvian, and native American literature have been used, this will find a place as well. To be illustrated with line-and-wash drawings by Robert Andrew Parker.

C.U. Anthropology


The relationships among three high school seniors are seen, with some overlap, in separate chapters written by one or the other. Matt and Jesse, best friends, are active in school affairs and are equally anxious to date Natalie. In different ways they face the same problems of insecurity, relationships with parents, jealousy, sex roles, and romantic love. Natalie and Jesse become a duo, break up, but still care for each other. The plot isn't highly original, but the author handles the pain and joy of adolescence with sympathy and insight. Characterization is consistent although not all characters are drawn in depth. The writing style is adequate, with both dialogue and narrative reflecting the sexual sophistication of today's youth.

D.V. Boy-girl relations; Friendship values; Sex roles


This gives adequate background information on the development of rhythm and blues, gospel, rock and roll, and popular music of the seventies and eighties. The biggest names and network of influences are here, with black-and-white photographs, selected discographies at the end of each chapter, a bibliography, and index. What the book lacks is style, the elusive sense of poetry that flavors the music. Any tone there is seems to emerge from frequent quotes out of *Rolling Stone* interviews and articles. The book does, however, offer a starting point for students doing reports or fans checking out their facts.

C.U. Music—American (Unit)


Byars is well-known for her ability to shed humorous light on serious situations, and this is no exception. Junior has fallen off the roof in his attempt to fly and been hauled off to the hospital with two broken legs. His sister and brother, after running into the woods to avoid an encounter with the police, are faced with the prospect of rescuing their grandfather, who they correctly assume is in jail (for disturbing the peace after reckless teenagers run their car over some cans he has collected for refund). Their mother is away on her rodeo circuit. Their dog is on the run, looking for Pap. The ins and outs of this plot are so well woven, and often spliced with cliff-hangers, that readers will (a) read fast to see what happens (b) laugh at the slapstick action (c) fall in love with this quirky family and (d) savor the happy ending. A good run for the money, by any account.

D.V. Grandfather-child relations


There's a purpose behind Rusty's plan to run a summer job service and make a lot of profit: he wants to be able to build a basketball court so that he can win back his pal
Dan, whose time is now devoted to Tiffany, the new girl in seventh grade. The summer business prospers, with Rusty working hard and his assistant (self-elected) working just as hard, so that he appreciates her efforts as much as he dislikes her bossiness. The project itself, as it develops and grows, should hold the attention of readers, and Carris does a good job of knitting main plot with minor ones. The style is easy and casual, the dialogue reads naturally, and there is a nice balance between consistency in characterization and changes in characters.

D.V. Age-mate relations; Perseverance


In a fresh and varied anthology of fantasy fiction, the work of some major writers for young adults and children is included. There are tales by Joan Aiken, Robert Westall, Jill Paton Walsh, and Jan Mark. Almost all of these stories of the future are distinctive in style and effective in plot, and readers may find special enjoyment in the humor of Marks' "Captain Courage and the Rose Street Gang," in which a hologram designed as a macho hero has been given the voice of a sugary grandmother, or in the taut adventure of "In a Ship Called Darkness 3" by Christopher Leach.


Retellings of folktales about spiders are linked by brief discussions of superstitions and legends about them; few facts are included, despite the implication of the subtitle. Although an appended section, "Extras and Explanations," contains notes on many other things, such as additional folk material or definitions of terms, some facts about spiders are included. This is useful as a source for storytelling, but what information it contains is scattered through the book and not made accessible by an index. A bibliography of source materials is provided.

C.U. Storytelling


With a format similar to others in this series, the main body of information is packed into four dense introductory pages, followed by a beautifully reproduced sequence of captioned, full-color photographs. The writing is straightforward in explaining the silkworm's life cycle and the process by which manufacturers, primarily Oriental, process the cocoons to create fabric. A natural complement and interesting scientific contrast to the several excellent books available on cotton and wool.

C.U. Science—study and experiments


Conford has obviously had a good time inventing a tiny European country (Saxony Coburn) and its annual bash (the Gloxinia Festival) and the not-quite-sixteen-year-old Abby who is the narrator. Plucked from her Kansas home (yes there is a dog named Toto) with a story of switched infants and the information that she is the true Princess Florinda XIV of Saxony Coburn, Abby has to cope with homesickness, a jealous ex-Florinda, royal protocol and duties, and the awful fact that she has been betrothed since she was seven to Prince Casimir. Perhaps because she has just fallen in love with a handsome commoner, Geoffrey, she takes an instant dislike to sleek Casimir when they
meet. The whole thing is a romp, with a funny mix of stately dialogue and American slang (films are ubiquitous) and lots of action, and no possibility whatsoever that there won't be a happy ending.


Dolan offers clear perspective on patterns of anti-Semitism as it developed from ancient middle Eastern history through the Middle Ages into modern times. Necessarily sketchy because of its broad scope, this nevertheless does pick out the most important world movements of anti-Semitism, with enough specific examples to make the survey meaningful. Nevertheless, it lacks personality. The compensating factors are an objective tone, especially in dealing with sensitive issues such as Arab anti-Zionism and Black anti-Semitism in the U.S., and informational breadth. A serviceable introduction for reports, with bibliography, index, and occasional black-and-white photos.

C.U. History—World
D.V. Intergroup understanding


Presented by the publishers as "an illustrated vocabulary of classical ballet," this is a book for the ballet student rather than the general reader. There are some photographs, but the pages are filled primarily with pencil drawings (and very good ones) and secondarily with descriptions of the positions or steps or miming gestures that form the repertoire of the dancer. No book can substitute for seeing a class or rehearsal in action, but this gives a lot of information; most of the material is available in other books on ballet technique.

C.U. Dance—study and teaching


Elizabeth Stein, who tells the story, is seventeen, and she has come a long way by the end of the book, much of which is irregularly retrospective. Schizophrenic, she has a medical history that includes several stays in institutions, three suicide attempts, and a recovery that is based in part on mega-vitamin therapy. She goes over her family situation (loving and responsive mother, alcoholic and irresponsible father), her love life (at times in explicit detail), her illness and treatment, her worries about a friend who is also ill, and her epiphany that comes with recovery and the knowledge that she has a driving goal (to be a writer) after she meets a sensitive and sympathetic poet. There is much here that is touching, there is nothing that is not believable, and there is some vivid writing. The book is weakened, however, by such turgid overcrowding that small and unimportant details (not, perhaps, for the protagonist, but for the literary structure) at times obscure the important incidents and therefore the forward movement of the story.

D.V. Mother-daughter relations


There’s always room for one more, when a counting book fulfills almost every requirement as a teaching tool. Here a pair of adults and a group of children go on a picnic, play with dogs, get caught in a rainstorm; the tail begins with a single duck who watches all the activity and then as ten clouds appear watches the countdown scurry.
The colors in the framed pictures are a bit sugary, but young children should enjoy the situation, the constant action, and the cumulation while they correlate the digits with the countable objects in each double-page spread.


This history of black slavery in the southern U.S. strikes a good balance between individual stories and examination of the general picture of conditions and laws. The opener is a harrowing escape tale, and indeed, the book stresses throughout how determined were the efforts of blacks to gain their freedom, or failing that, to resist domination by "a contest of wills." Various aspects of the slave trade, the enforced work patterns, the systematic destruction of family units, runaways, revolts, the work of white abolitionists, and blacks' fighting in the Civil War get evenhanded treatment in a readable format punctuated by historical drawings and photographs.

C.U. History—U.S.


Like the first two volumes of Fadiman's anthology for younger children (reviewed in the December, 1984 issue), this is a heroic undertaking with a solid sampling of high-quality poetry, short stories, and excerpts. The contributors range from Arthur Ransome to Judy Blume, William Shakespeare to Shel Silverstein. Obviously, there is plenty of tonal variation, though one can't help but quibble at the omission of superb stylists such as Paula Fox and Virginia Hamilton when there is room for selections by less distinguished writers. Competent pencil illustrations punctuate the text without becoming intrusive, and Fadiman's long essay for adults at the end of the book eloquently defines his critical perceptions of children's literature. Indexed by title, author, and first line.

C.U. Literature


First published in Canada in 1984, this U.S. edition contains updated and revised facts and statistics that pertain to all of North America. Although the first chapter seems to imply, erroneously, that all cancer patients who have chemotherapy suffer "terrible side effects," the book is informative in a way that is both specific and comprehensive, describing the various forms of cancer (carcinomas, lymphomas, etc.) and discussing cancers of specific parts of the body, citing symptoms and treatment. Background information about cell structure and about how cancerous cells develop and spread is provided, and the author is forthright in describing mutation, metastasis, diagnosis, prognosis, treatment, and survival statistics. A bibliography is provided.


A round tale of adventure and humor, this follows the fortunes of Prince Roland (better known as Prince Brat) and his whipping boy, Jemmy, who has received all the hard knocks for the prince's mischief. When Roland decides to run away from boring palace life, he also decides that he requires Jemmy's assistance in carrying his lunch basket. The two are shortly apprehended by scoundrels, who kidnap them and place Jemmy in a tight spot between their greedy demands of the king and the king's assump-
tion that Jemmy is the kidnapper. To make a short story shorter, Jemmy's knowledge of the city sewers comes in handy, and Roland's change of heart is highly satisfying. There's not a moment's lag in pace, and the stock characters, from Hold-Your-Nose Billy to Betsy's dancing bear Petunia, have enough inventive twists to project a lively air to it all. A top-notch read-aloud.

D.V. Friendship values


A poor little rich girl takes comfort in her cat Miranda when her mother and latest stepfather plan yet another trip, leaving Miranda to the capable care of various servants. This time the child's loneliness turns to panic, however, when she hears her stepfather persuade her mother to send her away to boarding school. In a convincing fantasy transition, Arabella wishes herself into becoming a cat, which solves the boarding school problem but causes unexpected havoc in the household over the child's disappearance. Realizing at last her parents' real affection for her, Arabella is stuck with her cat-form through a series of misadventures, including a scary night in the woods when she runs away from a policeman's family to whom she's been given. All ends well when Miranda tracks her down and Arabella manages to regain her old self with a new outlook. The details here are rich, especially descriptions of the mansion, the rich food, and Arabella's physical experience of being a cat. The story takes a turn for the didactic in its second half, however, and the final transformation and parental change of heart seem more contrived than true. Ultimately, this is saved by the fine feline insights.

D.V. Foster parents, adjustment to


In addition to the standard adolescent problems of defining her own identity and friendships, Val is suddenly dealt a blow when her mother leaves home for what both Val and her father assume to be an affair. Val copes with her twin brothers and stricken father but finds her usually average school work slipping and even her champion swimming potential scotched by preoccupation with the situation at home. All ends well when Val's mother returns from what seems to have been a 1960s era attempt to find herself as a sculptress; even Val's wayward older sister, a runaway to the punk-rock scene, makes a last minute appearance. Although this gets off to a slow start, the protagonist is likeable and she finds a nice boyfriend. The problematic aspect of the book is its break in tone from a depressing set of problems to a pat happy ending.

D.V. Family relations; Self-confidence


In the absence of Andrea's parents, Aunt Bets takes her to an "optometrist" who turns out to be a maniacal parapsychologist. The glasses Andrea acquires have the power to change people at her command, but the results are beyond her control, as she discovers when she uses them: Aunt Bets develops a sudden dislike for an adored cat, Andrea's brother insists on her involvement in his basketball activities, and the school principal begins acting like a brat. The plot seems a more obvious setup than did the author's *Mail Order Wings*, and it unwinds more mechanically, with the villain turning pathetic in the end. Still, the intended audience will enjoy the magical gadget and
attendant situations, especially those set in school. As for characterization, the cat is the highlight.

D.V. Imaginative powers


Another Gail Gibbons production, with footage this time on movie making, from the selection of the story and producers' role through financing, pre-production, filming, and distribution. As in her other nonfiction for a young audience, there's a good balance of summary and selected detail, with brightly colored, cartoon-strip illustrations following each step of explanation. Formulaic, but clear and on a subject dear to the hearts of the nonprint generation.

C.U. Science


Since she's always adored her older sister Mattie and has had a crush on Mattie's devoted Will, it's been a double loss to adolescent Kate, the narrator, that Mattie has run away with another man and Will gone off to New York. After three years, Mattie writes. Aunt Georgia, with whom orphaned Kate and her brother Jay live, is bitter and doesn't want Kate to go; Jay also resents Mattie's desertion of the family. But Kate goes, has an adventure and falls in love en route, and eventually comes home, bringing Mattie and her infant, to reunite the family. This is a book with some strong qualities and a potential for effectiveness that is obscured by over-plotting; there is, for example, a visit by Kate and Jay to New York to see Will that is so fully described that it assumes an importance that is out of balance with the flow of the narrative. The style, however, has vitality, and the characterization has a firm consistency.

D.V. Family relations; Sisters


The French mouse Maurice, of *The Great Picture Robbery* fame, leaves the Louvre for a visit to America, where he naturally takes up residence in Neiman-Marcus, the "palace" of America. There he explores, romps about, and befriends the store's chairman, Richard, who has him testing chocolates and toys. The action proper begins with Maurice's discovery of some jewel thieves and his attempt to tell—and then evade—the Chief Security Officer in Richard's absence. All ends happily, with Maurice nibbling Camembert and offering, for young listener consumption, his department store song. The illustrations feature an interesting contrast of black-and-white, fine-line pen drawings and distinctive areas of watercolor fill. The only flaws here are an awkward style and an abrupt beginning that doesn't quite serve as a proper introduction for those unacquainted with Maurice's past adventures.


Each chapter in this collection is a separate entity, although there are some instances of reiteration. Each tells of some mild summer adventure: a watermelon contest, a camping story, a near-accident at the beach, et cetera. There are some new characters, but many indestructible Haywood protagonists are here: Betsy, Eddie, and Annie Pat,
for example. This is all in Haywood's usual style, identifiable but not distinctive in its simplicity and blandness; the tone is low-keyed, the activities are ones most children share, and the appeal lies primarily in that familiarity and the direct, easy-to-read writing.


When her cousin Kate came for a long visit, everything in Joni's life changed. Beautiful, sophisticated, and flirtatious, Kate charmed Joni's boyfriend Jason and alienated all the girls whose boyfriends also succumbed to Kate's charms. Even Joni's mother doted on Kate. Eventually, there was a confrontation between the girls, and a better understanding, but Joni had to accept the fact that some of the changes in her life were irreversible—like losing Jason—and she had gained enough perspective to see that this kind of change was part of life, that it would happen again. Hopper has good control of the pace and flow of her narrative style; the characters are firmly defined, and the book's consideration of several of the problems common to adolescence should make it appealing to readers.

D.V. Age-mate relations; Jealousy, overcoming


Nancy is a tidy child, her baby brother Jack is messy and careless, and this is the story of a birthday party (hers) that is almost ruined by Jack's behavior. At the end, Nancy concludes, "The trouble with Jack is that he's my brother. I've got to put up with him whatever he's like." This prissy miss is always tidy, quiet, and obliging, while Jack is adventuresome and lively. This was published in England in 1970, which shows how stereotypical depiction of sex roles was lingering and how far Hughes has come as an author in the intervening years, for the stiff writing is nothing like the easy and humorous flow of the author's current Alfie stories. The realistic and deft line-and-wash pictures, on the other hand, show that she had already reached her potential as an artist.

D.V. Brothers-sisters


A biography that originated in England, this has poor writing style and is illustrated by pedestrian paintings, and by photographs, few of which are of Dr. King. However, the book does serve as an adequate introduction to a national hero who received international recognition, and as a quick survey of the civil rights movement. It does not give many facts about the subject's personal life, focusing on his role in the struggle for black equality—and occasionally discussing other aspects of that movement. In addition to a chronology and an index, a brief glossary and a four-title reading list are appended.


Watercolors that are busy but not overcrowded, bright but not brash, and repetitive but not boring, illustrate a story that has good structure, problem/solution, and a light style. It also sneaks in some basic mathematical precepts, as more and more children are invited in to share a dozen cookies. Each time the bell rings, the individual portion diminishes; each time the anticipatory praise is countered with "No one makes cookies like Grandma," and it is Grandma herself who appears at the end, bearing so
many cookies that the children are heartened. Then, in a typical Hutchins twist, the
doorbell rings again....

Hyde, Margaret Oldroyd. Missing Children; written by Margaret Oldroyd Hyde and Lawrence E.

A dry but highly organized report on the "national epidemic" of missing children
does not simplify smoothly.
Barton's art work, on the other hand, combines bright graphic effects with well-

$11.75.

The game aspect of the carefully controlled watercolor art work is the drawing card
here. A young girl walks to school imagining she's negotiating a dangerous jungle; it's
up to the reader to find and identify all the animals she sees lurking on a lawn, along a
fence, in a grove of trees, or popping out of a fruit stand. The last two pages picture and
identify all the creatures camouflaged in the illustrations, and many a viewer will be
forced to flip back for further investigation of a hiding place. Thin, but playful and cer-
tainly handsome. Who could've imagined a hippo emerging from five watermelons?

Kamen, Gloria. Kipling: Storyteller of East and West; written and illus. by Gloria Kamen.

There is a pleasant storytelling style to this biography, which gives flavorful perspec-
tive on Kipling's early years in India, his unhappy childhood with a cold caretaker in
England, his development as a writer, and his family life. Unfortunately, there's some
confusion in the beginning, which omits the date of his birth but mentions that
"Europeans were called 'sahibs' in the 1900s," leading the reader to think Kipling was
born in the twentieth century. The tying together of personal background with themes
in Kipling's work is credible, however, and will satisfy children who know his stories.
Sepia pen-and-wash illustrations are bordered with Indian motifs. A glossary and
bibliography conclude the text, which has no index.


Although this will be very useful because of a need for the subject treatment at a pri-
mary level, the text is not as impressive as the attractive and informative illustrative
format. The content is well selected, but the writing varies from simple and awkward
("Elevation means how high") to complex and awkward ("An explosion of discovery
and exploration was soon underway now that all were convinced that the earth was
round"). In organizing information on the history, reading, and making of various
types of maps, Knowlton handles detail well, but he does not simplify smoothly.
Barton's art work, on the other hand, combines bright graphic effects with well-
designed incorporation of captions, labels, and diagrams.
C.U. Physical geography; Map drawing


Whether she is writing a realistic or a fanciful story, Konigsburg always provides fresh ideas, tart wit and humor, and memorable characters. As for style, she is a natural and gifted storyteller. Here she gives a firmly matter-of-fact matrix for a fantasy about two children, Malcolm and Jeanmarie (each an assertive and articulate character) who find that Jericho Tel, their secret place, is a doorway to another world—and to an imposed but fascinating quest. And who is the imposer? Children may not recognize the loving spoof of Tallulah Bankhead, but they'll enjoy this salty character, drawn as a chain-smoking ghost named Tallulah who sends the children on missions that bring them into theatrical circles. This is a lively, clever, and very funny book. When reproached for smoking, Tallulah says, "When I want health advice, darling, I'll haunt the Mayo Clinic." She also says, "The difference between going to school and getting an education is the difference between picking an apple and eating it."


Although the author apologizes for the necessarily sketchy quality of some of the information on incest, there seems to be no excuse for the amount of repetition in the text. After a background statement on the definition and general patterns of sexual abuse within families, Kosof presents example situations from interviews with several victims, offenders (usually male), and "bystanders" (usually mothers). She then discusses the necessity of children telling their painful secrets to someone they can trust, with a warning that the initial consequences are usually difficult but not as disastrous as the child may have fantasized. Perhaps the most helpful part of the book is the long list of "incest programs" and child sexual abuse treatment centers, organized by state.


Playing with the themes of *Chocolate War* in a summer setting, this follows confident high school junior Ted Jenner's experience in a riding camp, where one of the boys, Jack Dunn, manipulates everyone, including the adults, into accepting the cruel tormenting of those he labels outcasts. Indeed, Jack seems invincible until Ted finally makes the decision to stand up to him and is, at the very last moment, saved by a follower of Jack's who realizes the insanity of the dangerous games. This character's sudden turnaround and Jack's total collapse weaken the ending, making Ted's triumph too easy. In general, primary characters are clearly portrayed but cast into stock roles, while secondary characters are sometimes overdrawn. Yet there is quite a bit of suspense built up here, and some of the "testing" scenes are vivid. The camp ambiance, the macho brand of behavior in question, and the dynamics among various groups of boys also strengthen the book.


Densely packed with explanations, examples, and illustrations, this describes volcanic eruptions in terms of crustal plates and pressures along a fault. The compact geological summary then gives way to the drama of several famous explosions, including Vesuvius,

Although fictionalized, this biography contains copious information on one of the most daring inventors and entrepreneurs in U.S. history. The first chapter summarizes his life from 1785 to 1814, and the remainder of the book focuses on his four greatest contributions: supplying Andrew Jackson's New Orleans-based troops during the War of 1812, inventing a new type of steamboat with enough power to run against river currents fully loaded, breaking the monopoly that had tied up Mississippi River trade for years, and opening up the Red River with a new snag boat, which loosened centuries of accumulated logs and debris. The energy of the subject himself compensates for a less than dynamic writing style here, and the technical detail of the steam engines will hook a certain kind of history buff. It's too bad there's so much informational conversation in what could have been perfectly straightforward, interesting reportage. A chronology, essay on suggested follow-up historical visits, and index are appended. Illustrated with old prints, drawings, and maps.

C.U. History—U.S.
D.V. Perseverence


Just before her graduation from high school, Angela May acts on her burning desire to find and confront her father, whom her mother describes as having been the love affair of her life but a married man with family, and therefore inaccessible. What Angela discovers is a hard, cold man who never cared for either her mother or herself except in the stories her mother has fabricated to make her feel wanted. What Angela also finds in the course of her search, however, is deepening friendship with a warm, intelligent classmate, Tycho, whose plain looks are just the opposite of her father's elegance. Despite the title, this abandons the fantasy mode of Mahy's previous work, but not the sensual currents of romance. Angela's relationship with her mother and Tycho's complex family dynamics are sensitively developed. The plot, though lacking the desperate urgency of *The Changeover,* is immediate and well-paced, with an auto accident forming a dramatic climax and with a satisfying resolution in the main characters' affections matured.

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


Of several recent picture books about war, this has the strongest story and clearest child's perspective. It follows a refugee family from the first bombing of their village through a long march, seven moves, and their last camp, where the narrator and her older sister and mother wait hopefully for Father's return. The years are telescoped into several moving incidents: the loss of a neighbor's baby, the death of Grandma, the rounding up of Father and other male civilians to replace soldiers shot down in the road, the children's endless search for food, shelter, and coal. The narrator recalls moments of beauty—a pattern of frost crystals, the song of a cuckoo—as well as the toll
her experiences take on her childhood. Characterizations are adeptly suggested through brief scenes, as when the narrator’s sister angrily smashes a chubby plaster baby in its creche and the narrator replaces it with her one-armed doll. The father’s return is a triumph of family warmth. Vivid pen-and-wash illustrations surround the text, giving it a sensitive immediacy; artist Lacis manages to express the family’s circle of strength and sense of play amidst the devastation around them. Without diluting the truth, her pastel colors and delicate hatching soften it to the tone of a manageable memory. Although basically a story for elementary-grade readers, this could also be shared aloud with second graders or younger children with one-on-one discussion.

C.U. History—World War II—1939-1945
D.V. Courage; Meeting difficult situations


This adaptation extends the story with detail, dialogue, and lavishly colored full-page paintings. The basic elements remain intact, although Aladdin is more consistently heroic (in most versions, he’s portrayed as a ne’er-do-well at first), and there’s a novelist’s attention to consistency and motivation: Aladdin is chosen for his ancestry rather than at random, for instance; and the sorcerer himself, rather than his younger brother, appears for revenge at the end. Descriptions are graceful and the romance delicate. The illustrations, bordered with middle eastern motifs, combine stylized shapes with some realistic detail against stipple-textured backgrounds. Warmer in artistic and narrative tone than Leonard Lubin’s Aladdin (1982), this is a well-patterned version, both textually and graphically, that will appeal especially to children versed in fairy tales.


Like the younger sisters in Guest’s Over the Moon and Baby Sister by Sachs, also reviewed in this issue, young Karen Freed is passionately in love with an older sister’s boyfriend. Unlike the others, Karen—despite her love for her sister—tries to do something about, even to breaking into Scott’s apartment, telling him of her love, fantasizing about him on the basis of a kiss. In the end, after her sister has found out and is stonily angry, the important relationship proves to be the bond of sisterhood. Mazer depicts the intricacies of sibling love and envy and anger and loyalty among these two and a third sister with depth and insight. The characterization is rounded and consistent, although Karen’s obtuseness in imagining that a kiss means that Scott has suddenly come to love her instead of her sister isn’t quite convincing.

D.V. Jealousy, overcoming; Sisters


While this is acceptable and even exciting high-interest survival fiction, it is a far cry from Moeri’s other tightly constructed, tautly written novels. The two main characters, Victoria and Trevor, are well portrayed as they set out to rescue Victoria’s failing grandfather, who is finally pursuing his dream of finding a lost treasure he saw some bandits hide when he was a boy. There is calculated excitement in the deprivations of a desert trail, the appearance of a rogue bear, a landslide, and a cave-in just as the treasure is uncovered. The problem is awkward, explanatory breaks in style that are usually repetitive of scene development (“She was in a terrible state of indecision”), along with frequent grammatical lapses (drug for dragged, laying for lying, etc.). Still Trevor’s disability of an artificial leg is well handled, as is Victoria’s family situation, and the pace
never lags. The stilted cover is a poor match for descriptions of the children's ragged condition.

D.V. Grandfather-child relations; Perseverence


In a detective story set in London in the 1890s, one of a series, two young people help Inspector Wyatt of Scotland Yard unravel a mystery about a series of murders of actresses. The young people, Sara and Andrew, are part of a theatrical household (Andrew's mother is a star of the British stage) and Wyatt is engaged to Andrew's mother, so the characters are personally involved. This has a brisk style, sound structure, and good period details. It is given added color by the use of street slang of the period and by behind-the-scenes theatrical details.


After a long hiatus, here's another story about the very large, very rich boy from Palm Beach who is called "Ox" and whose relationships with his parents are fleeting and shallow—not because of Ox, who is a sterling character, but because they are flighty jet-setters. It is, however, Ox's father who insists that Ox use the family Ferrari (one of their nine cars) to help another adolescent (the prime-time kid, Mark, who is on drugs and who plays a sequence of roles) contact the mother he hasn't seen in years. They then ride here and there in Florida, tracking down and finding Mark's mother, Anne. Mark, a very mixed-up kid, can't cope with the reunion and the guilt feelings that the confrontation evokes. It is too bad that the plot is so tortuous in development, because Ney's style is strong, his story almost as often funny as sad, and his characters impressive if at times shading into being overdrawn: Ox is not quite believably patient with Mark, his father is not believably motivated, and Mark's mother is uncomfortably close to being the Perfect Woman.

D.V. Mother-son relations


Translated from the German, this fantasy is soberly told by twelve-year-old Wolfi (Wolfgang) in a smooth style and at a good, if occasionally uneven, pace. He describes the tyrannical little creature who looks like a cucumber, has come out of the family cellar, and announces that he is the deposed and mistreated king of the Kumi-Oris. Everyone in the family detests the Cucumber King except little Nik, not old enough to see through the petulance, and Dad, who (unconvincingly) is greedy and believes that the King can get him a promotion and a raise. And that's the weakness of the book: the motivation for the fantasy and the gullibility that precipitates conflict and action seem superimposed; it is not the fantasy that fails to merge with reality, but the contrivance of the situation that is at fault.


Created specifically for browsing ("Do NOT read this book from the beginning to the end in one sitting"), this collection of one-page descriptive reports is like a mini-encyclopedia of U.N. history and activities. The author has not confined herself to one entry per alphabetical letter (U has 23), but has tried to incorporate a broad range of
information within well-marked and illustrated sections. Flags, maps, lists of members, and organizational diagrams extend the tongue-in-cheek cartoon drawing on every page. Random fact finders who delight in curiosities will enjoy the FAO food testing projects that include Breaded and Fried Peruvian Guinea Pigs and Roasted Nigerian Giant Rat a la Safari (these rodents offer several advantages: “They eat scraps, multiply at astonishing rates, and need no refrigeration as they are one-meal size”). An unusual approach for the young researcher.

C.U. United Nations (Unit)
D.V. International understanding


Young equestrians will appreciate Patent’s clear focus and crisp style, along with the black-and-white photographs of quarter horses in action. The text covers the development of this uniquely American horse, the breeding into ranch, racing, and rodeo stock, and the physical characteristics that lend themselves to cutting cattle, straight-track running, and competitions. There are lists of places to write for more information, publications of interest, a glossary, and an index.

D.V. Pets, care of


This is a bilingual alphabet book, but it is much more than an ABC device; it’s a nice way to introduce or induce an interest in a second language, it’s a love letter to Montreal, and it’s a representational delight to the eye. The clearly blocked masses and sharp colors of the compositions are evocative and inventively detailed. On the inside margin of each page, next to the painting, are upper and lower case letters and the French and English words: “antiquaire, antique dealer; balcon, balcony; calèche, carriage.” Occasionally the word is the same in both languages, a fact that can serve as a springboard for discussion of how words travel. Notes about Montreal are appended.

C.U. French—study and teaching


A sensitively written and designed book, this introduces the patterns and functions of play in canines, felines, primates, a few other representative mammals and birds, and humans. Various types of play (object, social, locomotor) and playful moves or signals (the bow, rush, leap-leap, and open-mouth expression of dogs, for instance) become clear both through descriptions and black-and-white photographs well placed to illustrate them. Many examples will bring young readers to a sudden understanding of their own pets’ familiar moves, allowing a vivid glimpse into more general habits of the animal world. Technical terms are discretely italicized, and a list of books and articles for further reading is appended, along with an index. Readable and immediate.

C.U. Biology


Samantha can’t understand why her brother and sister so calmly accept the prospect of their widowed mother’s marriage to Jim, the man she’s been dating. Especially because it would mean they would soon move to Ohio when he goes there. Sam tries to pair her mother and a favorite male teacher; it doesn’t work, but in the process Sam
prepares an excellent science project; the help and encouragement she gets from Jim make her realize what a nice man he is, so the story has a happy ending. The characters in this first novel are believable but lack depth, and the writing style is often forced; for example, there's a neighbor who tells a riddle every time she meets Sam.

D.V. Stepparents, adjustment to


A dozen short stories focus on the effect an animal or bird has had on a troubled human, either child or adult. In the first tale, "Slower than the Rest," a turtle named Charlie and a learning impaired boy named Leo strike up a friendship that brings Leo his first success in school. In another story, a sixth-grader finds refuge in a barn full of cows when his mother's discussion of nuclear warfare becomes overwhelming. A few of the stories have a studied effect, but most are spontaneous and manageably brief—6 to 10 pages—for the target audience. Rylant's style is simple and graceful; her subject has sure appeal.

D.V. Pets, care of


Penny, the narrator, is a high school sophomore; her sister Cass is a senior, a flamboyant and self-confident girl who is sought after by boys, given a scholarship by Harvard, and doted on by her parents. Penny, in contrast, is prim, conforming, has no ambition, few friends, and poor grades. Penny adores the handsome Gary, who adores Cass. When Cass goes to college, Penny—who loves Cass and lives vicariously through her—must find a new way of life, a new relationship with Cass and Gary, an establishment of herself as more than just "Baby Sister," as Gary calls her. The use of first person achieves intimacy and immediacy, and there are variant viewpoints through Cass's letter and diary entries as well as through dialogue. The story has good pace and flow, the characterization has depth, and the concept of a protagonist who has limitations and accepts them (Penny makes a career of sewing) should appeal to readers.

D.V. Sisters


Twenty-two elaborate pranks from the annals of history get exposed here, with background notes, sources, and a bibliography to boot. "For even a simple trick to work, a trickster must be cool," counsels Schwartz, and his own retellings of these "baldheaded whizzers," as people called practical jokes in the American West, are deadpan. The funniest is ad man Alan Abel's stunt crusade to clothe animals ("A Nude Horse is a Rude Horse"), which drew floods of positive public response and two appearances on the NBC Today show. The problem with the collection is its somewhat motley nature: not quite stories, not quite folklore, not quite history, but a partially successful approach to all three. Read out loud to a class or by one browser to another, these will inevitably produce nudges, grins, and interest; let's hope the tricks are not too inspiring.


Based on the story "The Ebony Horse," in the translation by Sir Richard Burton of *The Arabian Nights,* this has been adapted (adequately) and retold by Scott, whose richly colored paintings are in the style of Persian miniatures. Some of the paintings

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have details that are atypical in their bulk and solidity, but these do not detract sub-
stantively from the jewel-toned effect. The story is about the artificial horse that flies at
the turn of a peg, and about how it serves first to bring together and then to separate a
pair of royal lovers. In traditional style, boy does get girl in the end.
C.U. Storytelling


On a cold Saturday in 1797, Sam and his Grandpa Campbell sail their small boat
from Long Island to Fire Island to explore and gather holly for Christmas. A snow
forces them to stay overnight, and they are disturbed by some lights along the shore,
which they suspect belong to pirates. Sure enough, they find footprints the next
morning, a cutlass thrust into the snow, and a buried treasure. A concluding chapter
tells how Sam's descendents discovered the story to be true, through some old ledger
entries and a gold coin. This is history well told in an easy format, with handsome black-
and-white drawings and sure appeal.
C.U. History—U.S.
D.V. Grandfather-child relations


After a rapturously eulogistic chapter on Retton, the author discusses some of the
other gymnasts, male and female, who are in competition today. Save for a few facts
about technical developments, there is little here that is not in other books about
gymnasts. Silverstein describes the 1984 men's team, who represented the United States
in the Olympics, gives a bit of Olympic history, introduces some of the rising stars, and
gives a brief overview of entering competition and how competitive meets are conducted
and scored. The coverage in this last section is superficial, the index is inadequate in
giving access to the contents, and the thrill-a-minute writing style is laced with florid
phrases: Retton has "saucer-sized brown eyes," has (despite being small) a "king-size
portion of power and strength," and would never have stuck out if she had been at bat
in Mudville instead of Casey.
C.U. Physical education


This is perhaps the least credible of a series of adventure stories set in the West. Tonia
and Tiger are show-biz siblings who, with their parents, are rehearsing for a spectacular
production. There's a wise old Native American who is their friend and comes to their
rescue when they become embroiled in a dangerous adventure with Ernesto, a fiery
South American who wants to make a political statement by blowing up a part of
Hoover Dam. How? By getting Tiger, who is twelve, to swim underwater and plant a
time bomb. The theatrical setting, which serves to provide a sugary ending, and the
story of the dam plot are overdone, the fact that nobody goes to the police until the very
end is ridiculous, or at least reprehensible, and the writing style is marred by such pas-
sages as "...her wrinkles connected into a mask of smiles that seemed to say, 'I have
lived long. Life is pretty good, for the most part. But to dance! To dance is
everything!'" What's left? Action, setting, and a modicum of suspense.

Much as she loves her grandmother, thirteen-year-old Berry is unhappy, knowing that she's been sent away from home because her parents are separating. An imaginative and sensitive child, Berry becomes concerned about her neighbors, adults whose lives are interwoven in a pattern that Berry comprehends only slowly. Among the things she sees that help her accept the change in her own life are the love between a young man and an older woman and the tenacity of that young man's love for the unhappy father whose guilt (he had been at the wheel when a car crash killed his wife) made him unable to accept a chance to live with his son. As always, Slepian has created a strong and convincing cast of characters; her protagonist changes in a logical way in response to perceptions and perspectives gained from new experiences and relationships.

D.V.  Adaptability; Divorce, adjustment to; Grandparent-child relations


In a mother-daughter bedtime exchange, a little girl describes her fantasy of flying, with each suggested scene developed graphically in fine-line pastel illustrations of a winged child in pajamas hovering over landscapes or peeking into windows. At one point the little girl suggests, "I could catch all the lost balloons and give them back to children," to which Mama responds, "What a pretty idea!" That's really all the book is, a pretty idea, but it is one that many children indulge in, and for that reason they will enjoy both the views and the last page, with a feather suggesting the narrator's flight out the open window into her dream.

D.V.  Imaginative powers


A little girl who's afraid of the night gets an encouraging visit from the moon, who persuades her to venture outside with her dog Sunshine (!) and behold the flowers, birds, and persons active after dark. This proves so unthreatening that by morning she has changed her nightgown, which was patterned with lightbulbs, to a shirt covered with stellar designs, and sits with sunglasses waiting for evening to return. Aside from the rather funny final scene, and an unexpected twist of her witnessing a writer staring out his window to create a story about a little girl afraid of the night, the story has little that's unpredictable or that serves to sustain tension. Poet Strand has resisted self-conscious lyricism to the point of projecting a prosaic tone. The illustrations, too, are low-key and less sharply humorous than usual for Du Bois, though they are solid in composition, color, and design. For those who need reassurance—and there are many—the overall impact here is comforting, even if it never really confronts the wild things that haunt children in defiance of rational observations about an appealing life after dark.

D.V.  Fear, overcoming


Callie, eleven, wears an apartment key on a chain around her neck, picks up her little brother Rex after school every day, and comes home to an empty apartment—but the real grief in her life is that her father is in a state of severe depression, and that this has affected all the other members of the family. Callie is angry at being confined to the apartment, angry at her parents, angry because her efforts to do chores and watch over Rex seem unappreciated. Two things help. One is that she makes a new friend, Nora,
whose Chinese family gives loving support to the latchkey children; the other is that
there's some frank, vented anger within the family that clears the air and promises some
believable improvement. The story has depth and good pace; characters and dialogue
are handled with practiced competence. The one weakness of the book is that there are
some scenes that are sharply jarring when they prove to be Callie's imaginings, rather
than real events.

D.V. Brothers-sisters; Friendship values; Responsibility; Self-reliance


Sixth-grader Molly copes pretty well with the hard work and loneliness of living with
her father on an isolated ranch, but she deeply misses her mother, killed in an auto acci-
dent when Molly was five. When the wild white stallion named "Ghost" appears, Molly
associates it with her mother, and she sympathizes with the untameable animal when it's
cought after stealing her father's finest mare. There is no easy ending here. Molly's
father dashes one of her fantasies of his courting her school teacher when he explains
that he never wants to marry again. Although Ghost gets used to Molly's presence, he
breaks out of the corral and jumps over a cliff to avoid being recaptured. Yet there's
hope: perhaps the horse emerged from the rapids alive; and Molly realizes that the
memories she carries of him and of her mother will never die. The plot is simple but well
sustained with fast action, vivid setting, and excellent character sketches. Brief but
moving, this would make a first-class readaloud and might also rope in reluctant readers
as well as assuredly attracting horse lovers.

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

Thomson, Peggy. *Auks, Rocks and the Odd Dinosaur: Inside Stories from the Smithsonian's
$13.95.

A potpourri of brief pieces about collectors or staff members, the objects in exhibits,
and the preparation, classification, and mounting of exhibits. While there are
occasional phrases that are awkwardly written, and while the text lacks a note of
authority, the book has a light and readable style, variety in topics covered, and an
index that gives adequate access to those topics. The book's primary appeal, however,
will be that it takes readers behind the scenes.

Titherington, Jeanne. *Pumpkin Pumpkin*; written and illus. by Jeanne Titherington. Green-
Library ed. $11.88; Trade ed. $11.75.

Tailored for Halloween and gardening activities with nursery school children, this
faces a text of one or two lines per page with soft, full-page illustrations; these show a
little boy planting his pumpkin seed and watching it grow, flower, and produce a ripe
pumpkin, which he turns into a jack-o-lantern with seeds left over to plant in the spring.
A reproduction cycle at its simplest gains impact from the finely shaded, subtly colored
drawings. Spacious in concept and execution.

C.U. Halloween; Nature study

from galleys.

Like other novels by Tolan, this deals with serious issues in a narrative seldom punctuated
by humor, but written with a narrative sense so subtle that the story never grows
heavy or tedious. Aspects of family life, of relationships with friends, and of finding
that a newly-made adult friend has suffered another kind of grief (over the murder of
her husband) give contrast to the grief and fear of the protagonist, Whitney. Thirteen,
she has just read a book about nuclear war that terrifies her. Whitney has nightmares
when she sleeps, and she weeps and worries much of the time she's awake. She and the
other characters are strongly drawn, and there is a consistently logical relationship
between them and the development of the plot. The title refers to a line from a Blake
poem; the gist of the book's message is "...every day I don't join those people working
against nuclear war is a day I side with war," and while the message is clear it does not
overwhelm the story.

D.V. Pacific attitudes; Social responsibility

Trade ed. $12.95. Reviewed from galleys.

Smitten theatrical aspirants should find this compilation of brief accounts about a
dozen young performers appealing despite the occasionally adulatory tone of the writ-
ing and such awkward phrasing as "In addition to vocal, movement, and emotional
skills..." These are all success stories, so they offer encouragement and some infor-
mation; in addition to the latter, a glossary is appended, as are lists of unions, service
organizations, and schools.
C.U. Drama—study and teaching
D.V. Occupational orientation

0-8225-1579-2. 64p. illus. with photographs. $9.95.

After an introductory scientific explanation of comets, the text concentrates on the
history of Halley's Comet sightings, the stories and superstitions that used to sur-
round it, and the emergence of our current knowledge about it. The book has some
future-tense references to the Vega 1 and 2 spacecraft probes, which will probably be
past by the time young readers get hold of this, but the diagrammatic guide to the
comet's path over the northern hemisphere, the 1985-86 comet calendar, and the listing
of appearances will all serve students who have become interested or must do reports.
Liberally illustrated with black-and-white photos and reproductions of historical prints
and drawings.
C.U. Astronomy
Winner of the 1986 Newbery Medal
for the most distinguished contribution to literature for children
published in the United States during 1985

1986 Scott O’Dell Award
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AWARDS

The Newbery Medal was awarded to Patricia MacLachlan for *Sarah, Plain and Tall* (Harper & Row). Newbery Honor books were *Commodore Perry in the Land of the Shogun* by Rhoda Blumberg (Lothrop) and *Dogsong* by Gary Paulsen (Bradbury).

The Caldecott Medal was won by Chris van Allsburg for his illustrations of *The Polar Express* (Houghton). Honor Books were *The Relatives Came*, illustrated by Stephen Gammell, written by Cynthia Rylant (Bradbury) and *King Bidgood's in the Bathtub*, illustrated by Don Wood, written by Audrey Wood (Harcourt).

The Laura Ingalls Wilder Medal was won by Jean Fritz.

The recipient of the Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction was Patricia MacLachlan for *Sarah, Plain and Tall* (Harper).

The Regina Medal, awarded by the Catholic Library Association, went to Lloyd Alexander.

The American publisher receiving the Batchelder Award for the most outstanding book originally published in a foreign language is Creative Education of Mankato, Minnesota for *Rose Blanche* by Christophe Gallaz and Roberto Innocenti, illustrated by Roberto Innocenti, and translated from the Italian by Martha Coventry and Richard Graglia.

The Coretta Scott King Award will be presented by the Social Responsibilities Round Table to Virginia Hamilton, author of *The People Could Fly: American Black Folktales* (Knopf) and Jerry Pinkney, illustrator of *Patchwork Quilt* by Valerie Flournoy (Dial).