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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Obviously an aficionado of fishing, the author combines information, personal anecdote, lyrical description, and attractive, carefully captioned diagrams and drawings into this handbook. Although the transitions among these various modes are not always smooth, for the most part the text is both integrated and well-organized; five chapters concentrate on the kinds of insects fish eat, on choosing and using fly fishing equipment, on walking and wading advice, on hints about watching for fish, and on casting with different types of flies. Arnosky's enthusiasm is contagious ("The sight of one of these rises in the water can curl your toes inside your waders"), and his detailed observations are clear. Kids who love to fish will love to browse through this book; novices will learn all they need to get started, and more experienced practitioners of the sport can clarify and extend what they know.

C.U.  Sports


Because children are so fascinated both by prehistoric animals and paper engineering, they will be drawn to this pop-up book as a display or discussion item. After a brief introduction to the Age of Mammals, the text (which is difficult for a pop-up book audience) assumes a catalog approach, describing various species, their fossil sites, characteristics, and descendants. There's nothing intrinsically informational about the third-dimensional aspects of the book except in one case, where a tab pulls back and forth to demonstrate the feeding mechanism of an Amebelodon. The skeleton cutouts are striking, however, and will make this a drawing card where its companion volume, *Dinosaurs: A Lost World*, has proved popular.


A most useful book, this has material that is logically arranged; it is clearly written and gives sensible advice; it has broad coverage that includes descriptions of advantages and disadvantages of alternate choices, leaving decisions to the reader. There is advice on planning trips, transportation, travel behavior, the obligations of a guest, ways to save money (on all sorts of things), tips on packing, the range of places to stay. The text is directed specifically to young adults (youth passes, youth hostels, etc.) although much of the material would be useful to any traveler. Sources of further information and lists of publications are appended.

Along the lines of David Macaulay's architectural history series but with a style more similar to Jan Adkins', Boyer follows the construction of the imaginary Pocosink Canal during the nineteenth century. The opening explains patterns of North American settlement along the fall line of various waterways, describes the formation of a private navigation company, and notes its procedures to begin work on the canal. The actual surveying, construction of dams and locks, and building of aqueducts and a portage railroad are followed by a typical voyage through the finished canal. A conclusion documents the replacement of canals with locomotive transportation and suggests locations where remains of early canals can be seen east of the Mississippi. The text at times gets quite technical, but detailed drawings and diagrams help clear up any confusion. Readers who like to tinker with mechanical gadgets will get hooked on pictures like the cut-away view of an engine house. The landscapes and aerial perspectives are extremely well-drafted and handsome.

C.U. History—U.S.—Pictorial presentation


This is one of those lilting chants that parent and child will find themselves saying with or without the book, although the illustrations certainly offer plenty to pore over in lap-sitting sessions. Little Jessie starts out sensibly enough with a "shirt of red/pulled over my head" but proceeds to "pants that dance," "a rose in my toes," "sun on the run," and "sand on my hand in the morning." Each time of day offers him more opportunities for silly apparel ("juice from a pear/and rice in my hair") until finally he wears bear hugs and kisses to bed, along with some dreams in his head. The big, cheerful watercolor paintings show the baby bear in loving relation to his family and world. Without crossing the line into sentimentality, this offers a happy, humorous soundfest that will associate reading aloud with a sense of play.

C.U. Reading aloud


For the first time since Grandma’s death, Grandpa comes to visit. Benny loves to listen to Grandpa and to imitate what he does, like singing Jewish songs, but he becomes perturbed when Grandpa cries. Mommy explains that sometimes grown-ups are sad, that she misses Grandma and is sad herself. Benny and Grandpa have a cozy chat, then go together to the cemetery, plant flowers and have a picnic "tea with Grandma." Benny waters the flowers, Grandpa says a blessing, and they go home. Palatable but not very interesting because of the static quality of the text. The illustrations, pastel drawings on recto pages, face a text that has a different border on each verso page.

D.V. Death, adjustment to; Grandparents-child relations


The easy-to-read genre abounds with animal friends, but this pair manages to offer a funny twist to each of the situations developed here into five short, short stories. In the first, Penrod Porcupine wants a second pair of pants but can’t find exactly the same kind his grandmother sent him (which he loved), even though he and Griswald Bear
shop till they drop. Finally, they locate the right kind of pants, but the pockets are empty—unlike the pair Grandmother sent with a five-dollar bill in the pocket! The best two tales are "The Tea Party," in which Griswald vainly tries to teach Penrod the etiquette of denying himself the last cookie, and "The Scary Night," in which the two friends follow each other home till morning because neither is willing to walk alone in the dark. Precise, expressive watercolors of nicely varied size and design will lure young readers on.

C.U. Reading, beginning
D.V. Friendship values


In a sequel to Fireball and New Found Land, in which British Simon and his American cousin Brad had a series of fantasy adventures after they found themselves in a parallel world, the action moves from the New World to China when the boys and their Indian captors are in turn captured by the crew of a Chinese ship. At the court of the Emperor, they claim to be ambassadors from the Roman people (in this parallel world, Rome rules Britain) and are caught in a power struggle for domination of the boy ruler. Sent to a sort of Shangri-la, they are impressed by the beauty and serenity of the mountain colony—until they discover how much is based on illusion. There's a surprise at the close of the book, when an august priest proves to be a famous figure from their own world, and in a conclusion that invites a sequel (despite the fact that this is the third volume in an announced trilogy) Simon decides not to use the fireball to return to his own time but to go adventuring in yet another parallel world with Brad. This lacks the humor that appears occasionally in the first two books, but it has just as much action and suspense; it is written with smooth, fast-paced narrative flow, and it is an adroit fusion of the real and the fanciful.


Coerr's light-weight historical fiction follows a young girl and her family from their preparations to go west through the actual wagon train journey to California. Six brief episodes center on Faith's attachment to her old pet hen, Josefina, and her determination to keep the chicken with them despite its proclivity for trouble. In one episode Josefina's ruckus stampedes the stock and in another almost gets Faith's brother drowned, but she saves herself by suddenly starting to produce eggs again; and just before she dies, she warns the family of robbers on the trail. The style is choppy and several of the scenes are contrived; yet the suffering of a pioneering child does come through, and the theme of her quilting a patchwork story of the trip is touching. As an easy-to-read pioneer story, this would make an interesting complement to Barbara Brenner's Wagon Wheels.

C.U. History—U.S.—Frontier and Pioneer life
D.V. Loyalty; Pets, care of


There is a surprising amount of information packed into this text, which is organized into descriptions of anatomical structure, location, feeding habits, reproduction, protection, and variety in the annelid group. Color photographs illustrate the point made and show the startling diversity in appearance, especially of sea and fresh water worms. A concluding section gives instructions for making a terrarium and taking care
Andrew had never planned to leave Yorkshire, but he was afraid if he didn't go along, he might never again see his betrothed, Rebecca, and Rebecca was sailing for the New World with her father. This is the colorfully detailed story of their voyage to Plymouth, which had been founded a dozen years earlier, and their assimilation into the arduous life of the “Saints,” the colonists who had come to New England to follow the stern religion of the Pilgrims. Dillon gives a balanced picture of the terrible problems and the less frequent pleasures of these pioneers, of their relations with the Indians nearby and their divided feelings about staying in New England or returning to the old. For Andrew and Rebecca, the decision is to return because of their love for Andrew's family, but others—including Rebecca's father—stay. This is strong historical fiction: the setting is firmly established, details of period and place are convincing, and the well-drawn characters affect and are affected by events.

C.U. History—U.S.


Dunrea traces a stone village in the Orkney Islands to its earliest construction by migrating Neolithic families in 3500 B.C., through various stages of building, to later inhabitants' abandonment of the site because of a catastrophic storm around 2400 B.C. He then outlines the uncovering of the ruins in 1850, with subsequent archeological investigations through 1972. The author's double-spread drawings include panoramic seascapes, architectural diagrams, site plans and layouts, artifacts, and scenes of the villagers' probable activities. Outside of an abrupt beginning that places a young reader in a context that may be unfamiliar and may need more explanation, the text is well-written and organized; the graceful illustrations elaborate significantly on an inherently interesting subject. A refreshing change of pace from the usual cave/hunter focus in curricular treatments of prehistoric peoples.

C.U. History—Prehistoric


An ambitious explanation of basic changes in global weather patterns considers the various effects of volcanic activity, deforestation, atmospheric factors, solar rhythms, and manmade conditions such as the greenhouse effect and nuclear explosions. The authors stress the interconnectedness of every factor and briefly summarize current...
theories of the earth as "one self-regulated organism" termed Gaia. The simple language of the text actually deals with scientific complexities that will challenge students to think hard about a vast amount of information. There is solid substantiation for the points made, often in the form of interviews with scientists or of factual data. A valuable, up-to-date resource for science projects and reports or for curious browsers. A glossary and extensive, current bibliography are appended. To be illustrated with photographs and diagrams.

C.U. Science


In a book that gives quite a bit of information about structure, policies, procedure, and protocol in the foreign service, Ferrell writes without conveying any sense of authority or personal experience. She has done an adequate job of collating facts, describing them in a flat style that is better in coverage than organization. The book closes with "A Gallery of Diplomats," a series of brief notes about diplomats who seem to have been chosen at random, a glossary, and an index.

C.U. Social studies


Some of the chapters are about B.J. and Cliff, who are in the same army platoon, getting basic training under the brutal, spiteful Sergeant Bradshaw, some about Melanie and Nina, two high school girls who have problems with school or boyfriends. And some chapters are about various combinations of the four characters, and their encounters with each other or with other people. Cliff is discharged from the army, B.J. and Melanie have a blitzkrieg love affair and break up, Nina rejects her long-time steady to be free for Cliff. In sum, four dissatisfied adolescents learn to accept changes and adjust to them, in a superficial story with unconvincing characterization; some typical teenage problems (gaining independence, making a career choice, standing up for one's convictions) give interest to a story that is awkwardly structured and written in a style typified by "Melanie was about to throw up her hands at her friend."


A canny politician, a successful military leader, an articulate and loquacious extrovert, Sam Houston was devoted, in his public life, to fair treatment for Indians, to the founding and preservation of Texas, and to preventing civil war in the United States. Fritz never fails to give him credit for achievements that contributed to improving any of those causes, but she never makes him a likable man, perhaps intentionally. Her research is always dependable, and is evidenced here by the notes and list of sources that precede the index. There are infrequent lapses in style ("At the time Americans argued if there should even be a war . . .") but on the whole the writing is expectably competent if a bit heavy, and the pace and structure of the biography are good.

C.U. History—U.S.


Georgia O’Keeffe is one of this country’s great painters, and this is an adequate description of her life and her work. It is marred stylistically by an adulatory tone and by occasional incorporation of awkward phrases. Gherman describes at length
O'Keeffe's childhood, her years of studying and teaching, her independent spirit and her life with Alfred Stieglitz; throughout the book there is discussion of the artist's painting style as it evolved and changed. Reviewed in galley, this is to be illustrated with black-and-white reproductions of O'Keeffe's work; it will have notes on sources, a bibliography, and an index.

C.U. Art—study and teaching


Both this book and the one reviewed below are worth purchasing wherever there is a well-used collection of fairy tales. Crossley-Holland's eleven selections will suit a younger age group, since most of the animal tales are brief and action-packed. These are also smoothly translated, with a filip of humor in the choice of words ("You shabby-whisker-licker, you spotted idiot, you poor scrounger and mouse-hunter, have you gone out of your mind?"). The watercolor paintings, some full-page and others smaller oval insets that relieve the text, are full of vitality and fine-line wit. The picture of a horse dragging a lion along by its back legs, which are firmly tied by the horse's tail, is typically lively. Children will enjoy reading this as well as hearing it read aloud.

C.U. Reading aloud


The fourteen stories here are longer and more sophisticated than those in the Grimm collection reviewed above, but they represent an appealing mix of old favorites like "Cinderella" and less common ones, such as "The Nixie of the Mill Pond." These have been slightly adapted, but not seriously tampered with. "Cinderella" alters the rhymes, for instance, but with full respect for literal meanings. Most extraordinary are Postma's haunting illustrations, which range from impressionistic to precise in style without seeming to break continuity. Most often, the muted colors and eerie compositions are meant to suggest rather than define, a provocative quality that is well-matched with the imaginative depth of the tales.

C.U. Reading aloud


A beginning reader that will amuse its target audience, give them some painless practice, and have them hooking their classmates with sample riddles. Unlike the jokes in Kessler's book reviewed below, these won't confuse the insecure reader with skewered spellings and puns, depending rather on inventive twists of meaning: "Why is it hard for a ladybug to hide? Because she's always spotted.... Why don't flies fly through screens? They don't want to strain themselves." The format is spacious, the watercolor paintings on every page are vivid and funny.

C.U. Reading, beginning


Watercolor illustrations, clean in composition and large scale, show the very attractive members of a black family. Jamaica, the younger child, has turned in a hat she
found while at a playground, but she's kept her other find, a dilapidated but huggable toy dog. Conscience prevails, and the next morning Jamaica turns in the toy. Virtue is rewarded (a bit conveniently) when she makes an instant friend of the child (white) who's come looking for her lost toy. The moral isn't punched too hard, the situation is one with which most children are familiar. The writing style is a bit choppy, and the ending a bit contrived.

D.V. Ethical concepts


Soft drawings, grays on cream paper, with some black lines, are neatly framed and face pages on which the type is set off by ample space. The story of a small boy's summer spent with a beloved grandfather on a farm (where Grandpa seems to live alone but have all his time free) is low-keyed and gentle. This won't have the appeal of action or humor, but it's a pleasant book about a relationship and a situation, and the read-aloud audience should enjoy the way Grandpa names flora and fauna, and the way he and Bo celebrate Christmas on a summer night to make up for being apart on the holiday.

C.U. Farm life (unit)

D.V. Grandparent-child relations


A traditional—and immanently tellable—fools tale gets fresh visual treatment by the artist who gave Noah's voyage such a hilarious interpretation in *Two By Two: The Untold Story* (reviewed in the December, 1984 issue). The characters here are porcine, which lends their foolish actions an even more ridiculous air. When the farmer's daughter goes to the cellar to draw cider for the gentleman courting her and spies an ax stuck in the rafters and weeps for their future children should the ax fall on their heads, she's joined by her portly parents and eventually by the suitor, who swears to journey till he finds three creatures sillier than they are. Of course, he finds them, and in the process, makes a bit of a fool of himself in one of Hewitt's sly graphic jokes (the suitor leans against some wet paint and returns to marry his sweetheart with streaks of yellow all down his back). The smooth, earth-toned watercolors in variously bordered miniature scenes or designs are filled with amusing details of the sights observed by the pseudo-sophisticated pig on his travels; children and adults alike will smile along the way.


Two biologists, a writer and a photographer, show and tell the differences between horns and antlers, along with the ways animals use them to threaten, defend, uncover food, cool their systems, and so on. The life cycles of several species come clear through the explanation of their special headgear features, a focus both well-defined and revealing. The abundant color photographs of elk, deer, moose, bison, bighorn sheep, mountain goats, and pronghorns are outstanding in clarity and composition.

C.U. Nature study


This is what a book on a subject so fraught with emotion as is AIDS should be: calm,
Candid, and comprehensive. While there are some facts that are reiterated, the text never becomes repetitive, and the tone is objective. The authors cite such research as is validated, always careful to distinguish between facts and opinions, which differ even among doctors. AIDS is a topic about which there is apprehension and misinformation, and this book can alleviate irrational fear and help readers understand what has been happening in what seems to be an epidemic. Hyde and Forsyth discuss the possible origins, the symptoms, the progress of AIDS, and the fact that not all of those who carry evidence of the virus show symptoms. They have included a full transcription of an appeal made by an AIDS sufferer to a congressional delegation; they conclude with a chapter entitled "Battling the Spread of AIDS." A glossary and a list of sources of further information and support groups are appended.

C.U. Health and hygiene


The first section of this addition to the publisher's "Families Around the World" series is devoted to information about Beijing (with some sightseeing side trips) and the journey from there to Guangzhou. Finally the Chen family is introduced (grandmother, parents, one child) and their history, lifestyle, and comments (by each in turn) are concisely recorded. Over half the page space is given to color photographs, which tend to seem repetitive by the end of the book. The writing style is stilted, the information about life in contemporary China useful but available elsewhere. Single pages at the end of the book provide a glossary, an index, and a list of "Facts About China."


Fourteen-year-old James has an incredibly restrictive mother who insists he follow the letter of the law as defined by the Catholic Church. To reinforce her home supervision, she has selected a rigid high school, Our Lady, Queen of Angels, where James runs up against an autocratic, even sadistic principal. His father is sympathetic but not strong, his best friend not always supportive; it is a wandering artist who ultimately shows James that he must choose to live his own life, regardless of others' opinions. The first-person narrative has a quality of forthright vulnerability that saves it from some technical flaws: several one-dimensional characters, a bridge-crossing incident that's climactic but not well-integrated with the rest of the book, and some flat writing. At the same time, the conflicts between institutional and personal codes of ethics are well and specifically addressed, as in James' questioning his own dishonesty in light of his rage at hypocritical behavior on the part of one of the brothers. His interest in baseball is a constant theme that never seems to develop any depth, but his discomfort with compromise is sharply drawn and resolved with a rather graceful ambiguity at the end.

D.V. Individuality, expressing; Religious understanding


"Wait a minute! I'm not ready. I need my bag," begins a slight book in which the child lists, one by one, each item in a toy box. The verso page shows the box, the facing page shows the bag, so that there's a double-page spread for each transfer, with "my doll" or "my truck" as the brief text. Bag filled, "Now we can go!" the book ends. Simple, not very substantial, this has the appeal of the familiar and it's illustrated with clean, bright, uncluttered pictures.

The titles of this new fantasy series are indicative (yet to come are *Max on Fire* and *Max Flips Out*) of the fact that despite the heroine's being an extraterrestrial almost-human, the books are fairly formulaic romantic fiction. Max is found, alone in the stands watching cheerleaders practice, and is taken home by one of them, Randi. Randi tells only two other people that Max is an alien (one of them is Gramma, who placidly accepts the feeding and clothing of a stranger) and this is the situation that is then expanded. Who will find out that Max doesn't really have amnesia—Randi's cover story? There is some dialogue about Max's origins and her reasons for being on Earth, and some conjecture on Randi's part, but this is basically about adolescent girls and how they feel about clothes, boys, dating, other girls (the head cheerleader is blond, beautiful, selfish man-hunter Desiree Dupont) and falling in love. Kaye is a better writer than most of the creators of paperback romances; this has refreshing humor and, although it lacks depth, should appeal to adolescent readers.


Kemp sets the tone with the very first sentence, long and funny, and just on the verge of slapstick. This broad humor is used deftly to pull together, throughout the book, the realistic and fanciful elements that are at first separate and then merge as tough Jason, the despair of timid teachers, becomes cowed by, and finally cooperates with, a medieval ghost. Kemp tells the story of Mathilda de Chetwynde in her real life, tells the story of Jason and the ghost that only he sees (many centuries after Mathilda's death), and brings the two together in a final romping finish to a book in which the author uses exaggeration and repetition in exposition to good effect. There's quite a bit of idiom and vocabulary that are distinctly British, but both are usually made clear by the context in which they're used.


"Pete says night kites are different, they don't think about the dark." Seventeen-year-old Erick remembers his older brother's illuminated kite, flying in the darkness, when he meets Nikki, Seaville's local bad girl, who is also his best friend Jack's new girlfriend. Nikki's definitely night kite material; in a school filled with preppies, she dresses like Madonna, is into "dark, flawed, passions," and calmly lures Erick away from his more conventional girlfriend Dill. Having alienated all his friends, Erick has only Nikki when Pete comes home and reveals he has AIDS. While the two stories are essentially separate (necessarily because Erick has been forbidden to tell anyone about his brother), they combine in escalating thematic force to the end, when Nikki dumps Erick, who learns the truth of his father's favorite chestnut: "Family is first." Kerr has insight, but no easy sympathies for her characters: Nikki is a heartless poseuse; Erick, rather a pushover; Pete is promiscuous, unable to fall in love. The most sympathetic portraits are of Erick's parents, as they each take a different, fumbling way of handling Pete's homosexuality and disease. The celebrated Kerr wit is subdued here, and is in fact missed in some of the slower, aimless passages of the book. But the overall tone of melancholy—from the title image to Erick watching Nikki with a new boyfriend—seems absolutely right for what is most likely the saddest book Kerr has written.

D.V. Boy-girl relations; Family relations

Framed in the somewhat artificial structure of an old turtle's dialogue with various animals who contribute to his joke book, this is divided into sections about rabbits, dogs, cats, frogs, and assorted birds. The format is a bit cluttered, with conversation, riddle, framed cartoon-illustrated answer (upside down), and two birds commenting on each riddle throughout. Some of the humor depends on trick spellings, too, but readers skilled enough to catch the word play will enjoy these, nevertheless. "What kind of duck rides on a train? A conductktor."

C.U. Reading, beginning


A straightforward, systematic summary of the issues involved in conflicts between the media and the judiciary describes landmark cases such as the 1925 Scopes trial, the 1935 Hauptmann case, and Estes v. Texas in 1962. Later rulings that opened the courts to press coverage focus on Florida's Chandler case, Rhode Island's von Bulow trial, and a Massachusetts rape trial, the latter especially demonstrating the pros and cons of publicity in its effects on the issues, personalities, and outcome of the case. Although the writing is dry, the balance between general points and specific examples is well-maintained and the summary arguments are extremely objective. This will offer history and debate students a starting point toward more complex discussions, a few of which are suggested in the brief bibliography.

C.U. History—U.S.


A photodocumentary essay focuses on eight-year-old Jaime Osborn and her family, who belong to Little People of America because Jaime is a dwarf. "Think Big" is the organization's motto. The writing is straightforward, the tone matter-of-fact and candid; the book explains how dwarfs differ from midgets and how Jaime copes with clothes that are too big, chairs that are too high, stairs that are too steep. She's a lively child who faces problems with cheerful honesty, and the account shows how important the support of a loving family is. An epilogue explains the genetic cause and discusses Jaime's physical problems in the past and the future, and possible social problems she may have during the teen years, as most adolescent dwarfs do. This does a good job of providing information simply; it should help readers understand that having a disability doesn't make another child different in any but a physical sense.

D.V. Handicaps, adjustment to


More mystical than spectral, this is the story of three friends, two of whom died in a typhus epidemic that struck their Jewish village in Poland, and the other of whom immigrates to America and sets up a newsstand. There, he's visited by his friends as ghostly street singers who inhabit the bodies of mannequins and finally spirit Jacob away after he dies one night in the cold. It's an odd story, oddly told. The narrators are an old man talking to his grandson, Paul, and the old man's friend reminiscing on a park bench outside their nursing home. What's vivid is the sense of continuity between past, present, and future as connections among family and friends bind life and
death into one cycle. What's confusing is the weaving in and out of too many characters whose roles are obscure and a splicing of events that will lose the average reader; a protest parade at the end of the book seems to come out of nowhere and go nowhere. There are, however, many levels to the book, and for the special or gifted reader interested in extrasensory experiences, this has an uncommon aura.

D.V. Friendship values; Grandfather-child relations


Line drawings of mediocre quality and one rather attractive painting designed to look like stained glass illustrate the story of a child's pet rooster. Neighbors complained about Randy's crowing, so his owner had to give the pet (who followed her everywhere) away; whenever Christy came to visit the farm, Randy would fly to her for a cuddle. The idea should intrigue the read-aloud audience despite the unimpressive drawings and the pedestrian writing style.

D.V. Pets, care of


This interesting anthology comprises eight plays by young people between 10 and 18; the selections were made from the seventeen plays accepted for the 1983 and 1984 Young Playwrights Festival. The introduction gives information about the contest and the productions; each play is followed by a brief autobiographical note and the playwright's comments on the play. The title play, by Juan Nunez, has only two characters (adolescent boys) and has good dialogue but seems structurally tedious; several of the plays are impressive for their proficiency in structure, dialogue, and conception: Charlie Shulman's "The Birthday Present" is a script about genetic tampering that has suspense and humor; Patricia Durkin's "Fixed Up," a play about a blind date, has the bittersweet quality of a Mike Nichols/Elaine May skit.

C.U. Drama—Study and teaching


Pudgy Parker gets a lot of attention. Everyone oohs and ahs over him ("What a little dumpling!") but nobody ever listens to him. At last Parker is forced to give up acting scrumptious and start acting monstrous, which so alarms his family that they begin indulging his requests. Then it's Parker's turn to go too far ("A little touch of monster certainly went a long way!"); the chocolate he demands as his sole diet palls somewhat after the first round of chocolate chicken legs, chocolate carrot sticks, chocolate bread and chocolate butter, chocolate milk, and guess what for dessert? A truce is struck for the cause of reasonable behavior all around, only occasionally violated, the last wordless picture implies, by a bit of monstrous behavior on cherubic Parker's part. The story has great appeal for children, and the pictures inject wit, especially in scenes where Parker's sisters, his mother's guests, or salesladies at large take advantage of his good nature. Victoria Chess is in her element satirizing it all in shades of bright pink and purple and patterns jogging each other for attention on the page. Fun for family or preschool read-alouds.


Chimpanzee Danny is sick of the language lab experiments he has to repeat day after day. He decides to change his diet—"My name is Danny and I'm a chocolate chocoholic!"—and asks to be moved out of the lab to a tropical island. There he must learn to survive as a wild chimp...
day, so he feigns ignorance, undoes his scientists’ theories, and is shipped out to an
island with three other chimps whose developmental linguistic training is no longer being
funded because of Danny’s deception. Landsman develops these chimps’ personalities
as if they were totally human. They carry out elaborate conceptual discussion in sign
language, and the dynamics between them as they adjust to desertion and the hardships
of fending in the wild are complex. The brightest one, Roger, conceives and executes a
plot that almost gets him off the island and the others killed, but his trickery acci-
dently goes awry. This does not have the wit and parable quality of Donovan’s
*Family*, and it doesn’t always succeed in a convincing blend of fantasy and realism. Its
strength lies in a careful detailing of a situation and a set of characters that do hold the
reader’s attention, in spite of some obvious ploys, and that will make readers think
about the relationship of animals and humans.

D.V. Environmental resourcefulness

$9.40.

Unlike some presentations on South Africa, this does not beat around the bush but
comes right to the point of apartheid in the first paragraph and stresses it as a central
issue in the country’s development from the beginning. Although persistently and
objectively stated, however, the problem remains oddly factual; there are no human
portraits here to make readers really sense the pain and hopeless frustration generated
by racial policies that uproot families and systematically threaten individuals with vio-
ence. Still, the history is clear and well-organized, with a balance of political and eco-
nomic information and frequent black-and-white photographs. Although there are a
few factual errors and a better, more detailed map would have been useful in tracing
references from the text, the concise, up-to-date overview, with glossary, bibliography,
and index, will be very useful for researching background on current events.

C.U. History—Modern


Interviews with ten children whose parents both work offer a real cross-section of
lifestyles, ethnic backgrounds, and child-care arrangements. Most of them also give a
sense of how frenetic many households can be in the mornings and evenings; almost
everybody looks forward to Saturday, except for Pax, who must get up at 2 a.m. to
accompany his parents to the market where they sell their farm produce. Some of the
black-and-white photos are dark, but most are unposed and natural, as the text is
informal and well-edited: “While I’m stuck in school...my dad interviews people and
writes stories about them.” There’s also a strong sense that each of these children is
aware of pitching into the family work load with his or her share of the routine chores
and responsibilities, something that young readers who must bear the brunt of heavy
schedules might identify with and point to with pride in their own share of the work
load. A good choice for family or classroom discussion.

C.U. Family life (unit)
D.V. Sex roles

from galleys.

John is the narrator. He’s a high school student, member of the football team, friend
of Jerry and boyfriend of Karen, and he hates his father, who is a nag and a bully, sneers
at John, and makes it clear that he finds him inadequate. John thinks of his father as an
ant. In fact John often thinks of himself as an animal, and eventually he comes to believe that at times he becomes an animal. His parents institute therapy (Dad is furious) and when his classmates discover John’s conviction, they taunt and persecute him. The question is: does John slip into animal behavior (i.e. does the book have a fantasy element?) or are these episodes, like John’s final flight, flights of imagination? The story is structured and written with control and polish, the deliberate pace appropriate for the slow, painful evolution of John’s belief. For it seems, in the end, as the family circle closes protectively around John, that the animal state could be delusory or real—like the Cassowary, a bird that can run fast but cannot fly. An oddly compelling book.

D.V. Father-son relations


Author of the famous lines engraved on the Statue of Liberty, “Give me your tired, your poor,/your huddled masses yearning to breathe free...,”* Emma Lazarus spent many years of her life learning second-hand the distress of poor immigrants. She herself was part of a wealthy, cultured Jewish family and was inclined toward romantic, melodramatic verse until, through studious application and association with leading intellectuals of the day, she strengthened her poetry and heightened her social awareness, especially of Jewish suffering. The style of the biography suffers from too much exclamation (“What strength of character and substance of theme she had used! What economy and vitality of language! What a difference from her early verse!”), and the parallel story of Auguste Bartholdi’s obsession with the Statue of Liberty seems more intrusive than well-blended. However, Lazarus is an intriguing representative of her times, if not a great writer, and her development, protective family, and circle of influences offer some unusual historical perspective.

C.U. History—U.S.


When Ingrid (Inky) Stevenson accidentally finds her father’s flight bag full of love letters from the women with whom he’s had affairs over his years as a pilot, she’s depressed to the point of desperation. Her anger drives her to ride into the desert, where she meets and falls in love with a young balloonist, Gus, who has family shadows in his own past. After failures in her school work and a futile attempt to change the situation by telling her apathetic mother about her father’s infidelities, Inky resolves the crisis internally through coming to terms with her own failures and strengths and through new trust and honesty with Gus and his perceptive mother. The family dynamics among Inky, her sister, grandmother, mother, and father are subtly delineated, as is the friendship between Inky and an old schoolmate. The relationship with Gus suffers from shallower development, which lessons the effects of the conclusion, but the book nevertheless gives a moving picture of an adolescent’s coming to terms with the fallen image of idealized parents.

C.U. Boy-girl relations; Father-daughter relations


“Anastasia Krupnik, 13, aspiring journalist,” despairs of ever mastering rope-climbing, a worry compounded by her crush on glamorous gym teacher Ms. Willoughby. Her continued attempts and setbacks (even her mother can climb a rope, for pete’s sake) provide a casual but suspenseful narrative line which still allows plenty of room
for other antics. There's matchmaking for next-door neighbor Gertrude Stein (and Ms. Willoughby, and friend Daphne's mother—all with the same man, her recently widowed Uncle George). There are problems with her English teacher—"The test on Johnny Tremain was grim." Anastasia hates Johnny Tremain, why can't they study Gone With the Wind? Sam is again an embarrassment, as he insists on playing funeral for Uncle George: 'He laid the G.I. Joe on the kitchen floor, covered it with a paper napkin, and smoothed it with his hand. 'Goodbye, dead Aunt Rose,' Sam said.' While some books in this series suffer from occasional desultory plotting and too-broad humor (although they are always entertaining), this one recaptures the freshness and heart of the earliest volumes, and Sam is rapidly assuming the position of the most off-the-wall scene-stealer since Ramona.

D.V. Family relations; Perseverance


Because twelve-year-old Liza is the narrator, this has, in Martin's capable hands, no tinge of case history—but it is a fine example of an almost classic case of guilt-by-bereavement. The story begins with the family's discovery that Dad has an incurable and swiftly degenerating heart ailment. The family agrees with Dad that the last, precious months be as happy as possible. After his death they move to a smaller house and adjust to their deep loss, their new need to be frugal, and their acceptance of change. Liza is angry at the others because they seem able to have fun, while she rejects social opportunities because she feels she has no right to be happy. She refuses to visit the cemetery where Dad's ashes have been buried. She refuses to have anything to do with Christmas celebration, although she is eventually drawn into family activities. And, eventually, she faces the fact that the others are grieving in their own way and that they have simply come to see before she has that being happy is not betraying Dad. This is sensitive but not somber, convincing as the commentary of a young adolescent, and competent in characterization, pace, and structure. The dominant theme is balanced by small sub-plots involving boy and girl friends in a book that tells a family story as well as a story of adjustment to loss.

D.V. Death, adjustment to; Family relations


Win is fourteen and he and his divorced mother have just moved to Santa Fe. Because there's no father in the home, Win's mother has arranged for a father-substitute with an agency that brings volunteers and boys together. That is how Win meets Elliott, who is a gentle man, a gourmet cook, an intellectual snob. At first Win is disgusted: no TV, no junk food, a visit to the opera instead of to a ball park. Another boy suggests that Elliott is gay, and Win worries about this—but it is Elliott who helps Win when he is smitten by grief and dismay after a girl he likes is gang-raped and he cannot prevent it. What Win learns is that it is not important to find out if his friend is a homosexual, or even important if he is; what matters is the sort of human being he is. This is a precept about all human relationships that Win learns in a logically developed story of personal growth and maturity. The author effects the change gradually, so that Win begins with small shifts in taste and behavior until it becomes clear that he has found a role model. Other relationships in Win's life balance the story so that it doesn't have too heavy a focus. Minor as well as major characters are portrayed with depth.

D.V. Friendship values; Sex roles

A charming sequel to the author's *Felita* (reviewed in the December, 1979 issue). Now 11, Felita is ecstatic over her upcoming trip to Puerto Rico, as well as her first boyfriend, shy Vinnie from Colombia. While the upbeat tone never really darkens, there are conflicts: Mami's new strictness with Felita, her bossy brother Tito, the jealousies of other girls. When Felita gets to Puerto Rico she discovers homesickness and meets discrimination from some of the other kids, who call her "Nuyorican" and "Gringita." But justice is dealt, and Felita is surprised to find that she will miss the island and her new friends when she returns to New York. Felita's narration is colloquial and exuberant, and Mohr has a particularly sharp eye for the friendships (as well as the downright meanness) of pre-teen girls. And that Vinnie's a charmer.

D.V. Intercultural understanding


Worried about their baby sister who is very ill, Naledi and Tiro decide they will walk to Johannesburg and somehow find their mother, who will surely take little Dineo to the hospital. The dangers of travelling without a pass and without money are strong, but their need and love are stronger. They do find Mama, she does come home, and hospitalization saves Dineo's life. Naidoo's writing style is adequate, and all her characters are believable; most powerful in the book are those things that happen to the children or what they learn about the cruelty of apartheid, through experiences and information supplied in chilling detail. Powerful as expose, yes, but overwhelming the story so that the narrative is dwarfed by the horrors suffered by black South Africans and is thereby weakened.

C.U. Social studies


The one thing Becky worried about, when she thought of getting out of sixth grade and going to junior high next year, was her teeth. She knew she needed braces; she knew her parents could ill afford them. She didn't like Dr. Rolfman, the dentist who was her father's cousin, but he had offered to do the work at cost. And that was the start of Becky's nightmare, for every Wednesday when the orthodontia was done, Dr. Rolfman silently, urgently would rub against her, caress her, terrify her. And every week he became more importunate. This is a first book and a very impressive one; the author, a pediatrician, has balanced the theme of sexual abuse with other aspects of Becky's life, and has made her fear, guilt, and embarrassment vividly real. This has the validity of a case history (especially the treatment of the incredulous parents, and of Becky's shamed silence) but none of the bare-bones purposiveness; it's smoothly written and the characterization has depth and consistency.

D.V. Parent-child relations; Teacher-pupil relations


During his last year of junior high school, Nick watches his father leave two jobs, become gripped by paranoid delusions, and turn on both Nick and his mother as members of an imagined conspiracy. Although a school counselor and a priest are sympathetic, no one can do anything to get Nick's father committed without proof of insanity, and it is Nick who finally must force his father into a situation that reveals the
man's dementia to authorities. The focus on the problem is unrelenting, but the story is
grippingly detailed, with characters emerging full-dimensioned rather than being cast
into roles of typical reaction (the exception to this is a girl who breaks her date with
Nick after his father's hospitalization). Nick's stages of realization, anger, and pain are
subtly developed, as are his mother's realistic mixture of strength and limitation and
two school friends' genuine affection for Nick.

D.V. Family relations

Young Joe. ISBN 0-688-04210-4. 19p. All books are written and illus. by Jan Ormerod; Lothrop, 1986; $4.95.

While each of these toddler books is bright, cleanly designed, and attractive, they are
somewhat muddled conceptually. In Just Like Me, a little girl wonders why her grand-
mother says the new baby is just like her, for the baby is bald as an egg, has ears pink as
a rabbit—each spread pictures the baby and the simile. But "toothless as a toad"? "And he goes about on all-fours, like a puppy" does not really convey the difference
between crawling and walking. Silly Goose is a similar idea; a little girl "swings like a
gibbon" and "parades like a peacock." But the difference between "hop like a flea" and "jump like a kangaroo" is not clear. "Paddle like a duck" shows the girl and a
duck, each placidly standing, ankle-deep. Young Joe is an adequate counting book; Joe
counts one fish, two frogs, all the way up to "ten playful piglets" (a glorious picture,
this one; the others are overly schematized). Then come ten puppies, "and one puppy
chooses Joe for its very own." Figure that one out. Concept books for the very young
need simplicity, a bold punch that does not allow for fuzziness. For a better example of
this, see the author's Our Ollie, reviewed below.

C.U. Counting books; Language arts

18p. $4.95.

Simpler and stronger than the other books in this series, reviewed above. "Our Ollie
sleeps like a cat," "yawns like a hippopotamus," "has hair like a hedgehog's," etc.
Each spread shows baby Ollie (sleeping, yawning, etc.) opposite the animal (sleeping,
yawning, etc.) used in the simile. The paintings of the animals vary in tone and style, but
all are clear and attractive, particularly a moody silhouette of a crowing cockerel. While
young children may not be familiar with some of the animals' names (hedgehog,
cockerel), the similes are always readily apparent. A last picture of all the animals
climbing on one another is a real bonus.

C.U. Language arts


In The Sheep Book (reviewed in the October, 1985 issue), Patent refers to several
kinds of dogs that protect sheep, including the Hungarian Kuvasz, and goes on to dis-
tinguish them from other breeds that are trained to herd. Here she selects a particular
guard dog, a Kuvasz named Maggie, and generates a text about the kinds of training it
gets and work it does with the sheep. Black-and-white photographs on almost every page
illustrate the simple routines and prove the most lively focus of appeal. The text is dis-
organized and repetitive. Another problem is the very limited nature of the presentation;
even a picture book at this level could have been much more interesting with the inclusion
of other breeds or better yet, of the more varied role of the sheepherding dog, which is not
even mentioned for those who don’t know the difference between guard dogs and herders.

D.V. Pets, care of

Nine stories, originally written for radio and published as part of the BBC Listening and Reading series, concentrate on the small backwaters of humble perception: a dim-witted horse who finally finds a friend in his own image; a little boy who tames the nightmare on his grandfather's stairs; a girl who finds adventure in the corridors behind a tearoom. Pearce's delicacy of detail leaves one with the impression that she has lifted the rug off children's lives and peeked under to see how they really think and feel. There's neither swashbuckling action nor self-occupied introversion here, but some acute observations of young characters' typical blending of imagination and reality.

D.V. Imaginative powers


In a Revolutionary War story set in Trenton, New Jersey, fifteen-year-old Jemima is the protagonist; Jem's a lively, willful girl who loves the brother who's serving in the Patriot Army, is proud of her mother, who writes newspaper articles under a pseudonym, and detests her handsome tutor because he's a Tory. Jem is also singularly obtuse, since it will be evident to most readers, early on, that John Reid is an American spy posing as a Tory, and that he is in love with Jem, who, in formula style, eventually realizes that she is in love with him. This has historical interest, action but little suspense, an adequate writing style, and rather typecast characters.

C.U. History—U.S.


As in his two preceding books, *Going to Day Care* and *The New Baby*, Fred Rogers addresses, in simple, direct language, the everyday experiences that can loom so large and frightening to young children. In ... *Doctor*, he explains why children have to wait to get check-ups, describes the waiting room and common examination procedures, and concludes with suggestions to talk about fears or anxieties. In ... *Potty*, he discusses the transition from baby to toddler in terms of general activities and then moves on to what toilet training involves, with reassuring notes that everybody has accidents and that toilets "flush away only things we don't need." Both books offer a good basis for family discussion. The full-page color photographs are clear, attractive, and carefully observant of a Black and White racial mix.

D.V. Fear, overcoming


Cary has just come to Winslow, a prestigious boarding school, and has found he's been assigned a room with two other newcomers: Bobby is from a wealthy family and feels overshadowed by the brother who had made such a brilliant record at Winslow; Joe is a scholarship student with a chip on his shoulder. Cary tries to avoid taking sides, but it's hard to escape the unrelenting acrimony between his two roommates. Since Cary is the narrator, his dilemma and the ways in which his behavior and academic career are affected are vividly described. There are no arch villains here, but a group of normally imperfect human beings, several of whom—including Cary—suffer because of proximity to vengeful hostility; what Roos has captured is the interaction of group dynamics and the individual's conscience.

D.V. Age-mate relations; Ethical concepts

"That Olive" is a cat that enjoys hiding from Andy, who can "make wonderful round squiggles with crayons, but he needs help with buttons and zippers and shoe-laces." And, apparently, with finding Olive. He looks in the living room, the bedroom, the bathroom, but "Andy cannot find Olive anywhere. Can you?" And so the reader joins in, spying Olive behind the potted plant, in the laundry basket, etc. Although the text is written in a rather halting style, children will enjoy being one up on Andy. The warmly colored paintings are engagingly cluttered, and one wordless spread where Andy walks down to the spooky cellar to find the cat is particularly attractive.

D.V. Perceptual acuteness


This is a science information book that gives quite a bit of information but that repeatedly posits a poor scientific attitude by referring to forms of animal life as "strange." The author gives facts about sea creatures that are born in the ocean, in rivers, or on ocean beaches; there are chapters about sea nurseries, the nurturing roles of the fathers of some species, and "Strange Egg Cases," a chapter that has photographic illustration—but not of egg cases. The writing is rather choppy, the arrangement of material adequate, the occasional attribution of human qualities (fish don't really go "merrily" on their way) a weakness. A glossary, an index, and a bibliography are appended, as is a list of scientific names for creatures mentioned in the text.


A revised edition of a 1979 publication gives newly available facts (primarily about the uses and effects of cannabis as established by current research) and cites recent publications in the bibliography. The book has broad coverage, including information about the plant itself; processing, traffic, use and abuse; legal and medical facets of the manufacture, sale, and use of marijuana; history of its use; and continuing debate about legalization of this drug. The writing style is flawed by some repetition, conjecture, and oversimplification, but the book is undoubtedly useful as a source of information: a glossary, a list of organizations to consult, a reading list, and an index (all brief) are provided.

C.U. Health and hygiene


Susan Carlisle begins her story in 1851, when she's thirteen, newly orphaned, and trying to save her property from the skinflint saloon owner who claims her father had owed him $15,000. That's when Susan craftily arranges to go west with a drover (to whom she lies) without telling her guardian (to whom she lies) so that she can make a profit from selling sheep and get money from a West Coast uncle she doesn't know. This is humorous period fiction, set in the 1850's, in the Patricia Beatty mold, with a feisty, determined heroine who loses her property but gets her man (Bashful Cowboy type) in a long, rollicking novel in which everything that can happen does happen as the wagon "Walking Up a Rainbow," takes Susan's party on an arduous journey to the seamiest parts of San Francisco. Susan writes the first and third parts, the middle section being by the handsome cowboy. All the familiar natural dangers of the trail are here, as well as some incidents (rescue of Susan from a drunken quartet attempting rape, Susan's friendship with a heart-of-gold prostitute) that make this more sophisticated than the Beatty books. The story has lively characters, some of whom seem deli-
berately typecast to achieve a comic note, and it has variety, pace, and first-person styles that are both convincing and that are in effective contrast.


A capsule report bolstered with strong facts and figures gives the general background and causes of hunger in Africa, zeroing in on natural, environmental, social, and political causes. Diagrams, maps, and color photographs clarify the problem and give it the immediacy of human faces suffering hunger. Although this is simplified, it is never condescending; the straightforward tone avoids sensational detail but manages to communicate the urgency of the situation along with some measure of hope derived from areas of the world that have countered famine with agricultural planning. A summary resource for current events.

C.U. History—World


From the first sentence (“Isobel? I’m afraid we’re going to have to take it off”) to the last (“The little Izzy balanced there briefly and then took a hesitant step forward—ready to fall, ready not to fall”), this is a single-minded analysis of a girl’s adjustment to amputation of part of her leg after an automobile accident. There is occasional relief, as in Voigt’s perceptive description of family interaction at Thanksgiving, but almost immediately she returns to repetition of the problem: “He couldn’t know how it felt to be a fifteen-year-old girl with part of a leg amputated and my whole life changed.” Parts of the first-person narrative work vividly as scenes; other parts are over-explained and expository. Izzy’s former friends all desert her, which isn’t quite convincing; a class misfit comes through for her in an excellent, well-rounded characterization. Izzy’s family is a mixture of individuals and stock figures. Overall, this could have been cut to good effect, but readers will probably pursue it from interest in Izzy’s disability and the parts of the narrative that show instead of tell.

D.V. Misfortunes, accepting


A little boy dreams: “And I took the night train to the country where nothing lasts.” At the “night market” where “nothing is given for keeps,” he gets some cheese, but the cheese is eaten by a “dream mouse,” so he keeps the mouse, which is eaten by a “dream cat . . . .” Like a dream, Willard’s poem has its own tenuous charm and logic. However, these same qualities burden the narrative—there’s logic, but it’s built on a slight, arbitrary premise; and the charm becomes overly whimsical: “a dream-horse stole his heart, so I jumped on behind, and it carried us both toward the watchtowers of morning.” The pictures, though, are something else. Each is a tableau, freezing and intensifying dramatic movement—a hunter aiming at a wolf, the train cutting through a valley—with hallucinatory clarity. Done with colored pencil, sharp outlines and intense areas of color are blended with formal shading that creates an effect both precise and foggy—like a dream. The whole presentation is elegant, but the text is overwhelmed.

D.V. Imaginative powers


As she did in her first novel, *The Bigger Book of Lydia*, Willey here uses a pair of girls

[ 179 ]
to explore a special preoccupation of adolescence, in this case, romantic fantasizing. Thirteen, Arly has become irritable and solitary, pushing her mother away: "My goal in life was to avoid her." On one of her long aimless walks, she spies a handsome, older boy named David Dolores, and without speaking to him, falls in love. Not with him, exactly, but with the romance of him. "Oh, God, I whispered, drifting back to the edges of my own neighborhood. At last I've found someone." The darker side of fantasies is shown in Arly's friend Regina. Obsessively hating her mother ("It's like having a secret every single day of your life."). Regina comforts herself with a cloak of glamorous, self-conscious alienation, and believes she finds a soulmate in David's bohemian mother. "She makes it seem like life is so interesting and there's so much to look forward to. Isn't she absolutely inspiring, Arly?" The two girls—one growing up, the other becoming more and more disturbed—mirror and collide with each other, constantly refining and adjusting the reader's perspective. Likewise, the characterizations of the three mothers resonate off each other, showing them to be both more and less ideal than the girls perceive. While all is resolved in a too tidy scene of Arly-as-therapist, the multiple tensions between characters are remarkably well-played in a deceptively simple and compelling story.

D.V. Family relations


Like Kellogg’s book reviewed above, this focuses on two children who are best friends—but one of them doesn’t know it. Lizzie continuously yearns for a best friend, often out loud to her neighbor Harold, who volunteers for the job. The mythical creature Lizzie fantasizes is a girl exactly her own age, and Lizzie goes after her with a vengeance. None of Harold’s persistent gestures work until, when he finally tries and fails to desert the obtuse Lizzie, she begins to value him. Lizzie’s picky obstinacy is very real, Harold’s honesty very appealing, and the full-color illustrations roomy enough for some expressive scenes.

D.V. Friendship values


In a friendly I-thou address to the reader, a narrator points out all the contradictions that unbelievers use to shed doubt on the Easter Bunny (rabbits don’t lay eggs, carry baskets, etc.). Nevertheless, there’s more to the world than logic, and the Easter Bunny finds it easy to open any lock with the tips of his ears. If you get up early enough, and if you believe, you’ll see him scurrying away after hiding eggs and presents for you. The art work, a neat, white-framed watercolor scene facing each page of text and a smaller detail above the text, is precisely delicate in coloration, texture, and design. Yet the tone of both text and pictures has a contrived, precious quality. This will nevertheless be useful in discussing the fears many children have of a strange creature, however flop-eared and furry, sneaking into their house Easter-eve night.
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