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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


Another in the series of beginning-to-read mysteries featuring Jenny's dog, this has our heroine tracking down a friend's missing bicycle. The clues lead right to a surprise birthday party concocted in honor of Jenny herself. The vocabulary and sentence structure are simple enough for reading practice, the plot has basically pleasing if obvious ingredients for this audience, and the cartoon illustrations are spiked with bright colors. On the whole, this makes a cheerful exercise out of what can be a drab chore of decoding. BH

C.U. Reading, beginning
D.V. Detective powers


Ten tales inventively weave supernatural elements through key episodes in the lives of the young protagonists. In "The Sea Bride," for instance, Sam Muffat finds, on his first big antique-buying trip with his father, a splendid bargain in the form of an old ship's figurehead. However, it turns out to be haunted, nearly drowning their shop in sea water until Sam relents and returns it to Neptune's waiting waves. The most satisfying stories are those in which the characters outsmart the harassing ghosts. In "Qwertyuiop," a young secretary tricks an old secretary's ghost, who has jinxed her typewriter, into thinking that the deceased boss of the company needs her in heaven. In "The Whisperer," a girl lays a spirit to rest by playing with her where others had been too frightened to listen to the spirit's pleas. The writing is taut throughout the collection, and the plot devices rarely obvious. A satisfying read for the midnight hours, under the covers, by flashlight. BH


Paintings that are delicately detailed, rich but subdued in tone, and notable for their design and textural quality are more impressive than the text, congruous though they are. This is a tale in folk style, on the familiar theme of suitors assigned a difficult task in order to claim a lovely princess as a bride if the task is done. Many aspire to the hand of a Chinese Emperor's daughter; none can find the blue rose the Emperor demands, although substitutes (a carved sapphire, a dyed rose, a painted rose) are proffered. The ending is disappointing: it's not unusual for a princess to fall in love when she sees a young minstrel, but the device of having her insist the next day that his white rose is blue (just because she says it is) is flat. The writing style is intermittently pretentious, and
occasionally seems likely to confuse young readers; for example, "So the shopkeeper went to the apothecary and asked him for a dye, and the chemist gave him a bottle..." British children may know "chemist," but even they may wonder if chemist and apothecary are one person. ZS

C.U. Storytelling


Oversize pages, lavishly illustrated, provide a visual interpretation of the Biblical story of the plagues in Egypt that led to a pharaoh's reluctant permission for the departure of the Hebrew slaves and of their journey to the promised land. Chaikin has done a good job of adapting the story so that it is simplified and coherent yet preserves the flow of Biblical language. Mikelaycak's paintings, in his distinctively bold and flowing style, are carefully integrated with textual references; they extend the story and add excitement to its inherent drama. ZS

C.U. Religious education


An intriguing poem-portrait of an old man who offends the neighbors with his raggedy house and renegade ways. When Old Henry moves in, people expect him "to fix things up a bit. He did not think of it." Instead, he spreads his paraphernalia over the uncut grass, rejects offers of help shoveling snow, and finally moves out. Amazingly, he and the community come to miss each other. The moral is explicit: "Maybe, some other time, we'd get along/ not thinking that somebody has to be wrong."/ "And we don't have to make such a terrible fuss/ because everyone isn't exactly like us." The illustrations are rich with lines that, when closely worked, create color-textured planes in sharp contrast with the linear detail of grasses and objects that are closer in perspective. Gammell's art, in fact, lends the verse an asymmetry that keeps the rhymes from sounding too neat. An absorbing combination. BH

D.V. Individuality, expressing; Interpersonal understanding


More than anything, ten-year-old Bernie wants to be an astronaut, and his more immediate plans include getting to Cape Canaveral to see the next space shuttle launch. Bernie's ambitions are woven into an episodic story about a "nerd's" misadventures at school and home: trying out for the football team to please his dad, making friends with cool James James (who turns out to be no friend at all), learning that Candy McCoy, whom "everybody hates because she's so perfect," is a nice girl who could be a good friend. The flip narration is exactly that of a boy who's had to learn to fight back with his mouth, and the comedy (high and low, mostly low) just right and gross enough for middle-graders. The ending gets too sticky with heart-to-hearts among the characters, and Bernie's noble sacrifice of a trip to Florida with his dad so his sister can go instead is not really believable. For the Superfudge crowd, though, it's a fun read that may provide some insight into the kid who likes science, hates sports, and "was among the first in his class to get glasses." RS

D.V. Brother-sister relations

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Charlie (Chartreuse) Pippin is eleven, jealous of her older sister Sienna, baffled by her father's stern intransigence. She's black and bright; she's often in trouble at school (and that makes even more trouble at home) because she sets up businesses in school. Charlie wonders why her father is so angry, why he is irked by her school project, which entails a study of the Vietnam War in which he served. This is a story in which potential exceeds performance: although marred by awkward stylistic lapses, it has good pace and flow. It never quite loses a quality of fragmentation, and it is used by the author as a vehicle for statements about war in general, the Vietnam War in particular, and the threat of nuclear war. Charlie, despite her mercenary flouting of school rules (and several instances of lying) is a rather engaging and certainly lively character. A little more revision, a little less didacticism, and this could be an even better story about a black family than it is. ZS

D.V. Father-daughter relations; Pacific attitudes


Oversize pages show restraint in composition, with amusing watercolor pictures which, set off by ample white space, demonstrate the concept of opposites. As is often true of other such concept books, this is weakened by the failure to distinguish between concrete and abstract opposites; big and little are clearly different, as are fat and thin; less evident, however, are the distinctions between hot and cold or old and new. ZS


Gregory, drawing on the frosty-cold classroom window, is one of those kids whose fantasizing frequently keeps him slightly out of step with the rest of the class. Here, he creates an ant city instead of doing arithmetic, overextends recess with daydreams of dragons, and turns the "still life" art assignment from flowers into a rocket ship. Classmates, teacher, and principal harp at him, but a friend compliments his art and offers him a candy bar on the way home. Gregory, secure in himself, begins to draw on the frosted glass window of the bus. The art keeps this quiet story perking along in perfect harmony with its leading character, who will strike a note of sympathy with the klutz in every child. The animal characters both mirror and make fun of the average school-day scene; Cazet's colors are bright but selectively so, his lines and shadings subtle. Insightful and entertaining. BH

D.V. Imaginative powers


A seventeen-year-old American student's account of living with a Moroccan family in Israel has the advantage of some honest inside observations and the disadvantage of some naive, occasionally unsteady writing. Clayton-Felt's envious account of close family life and friendships in a Herzelia housing development near Haifa points up real differences between Israeli and American lifestyles. He remarks on the lack of drug addiction and alcohol use among adolescents, along with the respect and mutual enjoyment that usually bind parents, children, and siblings. He also discusses the school and army experiences, mostly in positive terms. Young people interested in Israel will forgive the amateur photography and odd self-conscious line ("Some readers may think
when I said it takes five or six hours to cross Israel, I meant traveling by camel, starving in the desert, dying for water") for the first-hand viewpoint. BH

D.V. International understanding


Picture book entertainment in the old storytelling tradition, this spins the yarn of Fearless Bones Kelly, a greedy river pirate who goes down with his treasure chest and sets out to drown anyone who tries to bring it up. However, Red River Renata—mayor, sheriff, fire marshal, postmaster, and patent agent of Amarillo City Hall—proves more than a match for him when she enlists Whizbrain Wallerbee's help to lure the ghost into a newly patented Ice Box Car, freezes Fearless stiff, swaps the gold for sand, and lives a wealthy woman with Whizbrain by her side. This has foolproof child appeal, not the least of which is the list of underwear, coats, rubbers, mittens and rain hats Renata and Whizbrain put on for their venture. The double-spread watercolor illustrations are breezy and expressive, a fine match for the text except that the ghost looks like he's scattering raindrops instead of "a walking flood." Still, no complaints when so many picture books these days are handsome art with no beginning, middle, or end to the text. BH

D.V. Sex roles


The fourteen-year-old narrator, Fergy, is tired of moving around the country, tired of getting no education, and confused because he's always looked up to his father, a glib con man who claims to be a religious leader. Now Fergy has doubts. Does the world really owe them whatever they can steal? Fergy's sister Ooma, age eight, is a compulsive thief, a dirty child who swears and bites and has never been reprimanded for such behavior. When his father steals the mobile home of an elderly couple who have befriended Fergy, the boy decides to run away; he takes Ooma with him and goes off to find the wealthy Boston grandparents he's never met. Taken in, Fergy revels in the genteel life, in learning from the tutors who are provided. Ooma is pleased, at first, by pretty clothes and ample meals, but she misses her mother and she resents being tutored. There is a confrontation when the children's parents track them down, the issue being settled by Gussie, the children's mother, who decides she'll stay with her parents and children pro tem; her husband, threatening and blustering, departs. This has some acid portraits of the bullying father and his confederates, and it's a convincing story up to the point where rags acquire riches, when the development of the story line loses momentum and becomes contrived. ZS

D.V. Education, valuing and seeking; Ethical concepts; Parent-child relations


Any child will sympathize with the plight of William Beauregard, who has missed the first week of school in his new city and is about to miss the second. He is sick, bored, and friendless. Naturally, it is raining. In desperation he tapes a sign to his window: "Sick of This," and the next morning finds paints and paper on his desk. Then, as he watches the gray day, a strange mailman appears, waddling from mailbox to mailbox. After William paints the duck, he receives a package with an egg in it. There follows each day a different animal distributing the mail...and appropriate packages for William. By Saturday, he has quite an assortment, including a cocoon left by Friday's...
caterpillar; he has the doctor's okay to start school; and he has a feeling that the gifts will stop with the return of the regular mailman, who has been ill for a week! It's hard to tell whether this is fantasy or fever dreams, but the ambiguity actually contributes to the guessing-game quality of the story. One page gives a descriptive clue to the animal and the next reveals it in a double-page illustration. DePaola has given himself plenty of clean white space, working with spare watercolor compositions that contribute to the text in both design and tone. There's an element of surprise about the whole package that makes this a sure pick for the sick. BH

D.V. Imaginative Powers


16-year-old Willie Weaver becomes a "minor legend" after pitching a brilliant game against the Crazy Horse Electric team, but glory turns to despair when he becomes brain-damaged in a water-skiing accident, leaving him with slow, slurred speech and an awkward coordination and gait. No longer the champ, Willie, after seeing his relationships with family and friends fall apart, lights out for San Francisco where he is taken in by a black pimp with a heart of gold. Lacey sends him to One More Last Chance High, a school for troubled teens, which proves to be Willie's physical and emotional salvation. Crutcher's special brand of tough but tender machismo (used to good effect in *Running Loose*) is on an uneasy ground of sentimentality here, and the thematic concerns are too obvious. Still, his voice is as clear and energetic as ever, and while the plotting is unlikely, it does have momentum. RS

C.U. Physical education (unit)

D.V. Handicaps, overcoming


Drawing from lore of various California Indian tribes, Curry arranges 22 stories into a cycle of creation myths featuring Coyote, the trickster who contrived that "the animal people had sunshine by day and the moon at night, fire to warm them and to cook with, and salmon and pine nuts in season." His last venture, making a man, begins the period of Aftertime, when, as Old Man Above warns, "no longer will your folk be both animals and people, with the powers of both. No longer will any among you be shape-shifters and workers of magic. You will be animals only, and only Man will have the powers of speech and spirit." These stories of Beforetime, meanwhile, are alive with the mischief, malice, and magic that allowed the clever to survive. Coyote is, as often as not, defeated by his own wiles, as when he tries to fool Badger out of a deer and ends up eating acorns for dinner. Yet by hook or crook, he does manage to win his way, as in his recruiting the animals to steal pine nuts from the Mountain Bluebirds. Like Moses' Israelites, the animal people complain and sometimes despise Coyote, but he is indomitable even to the day of his last tricks on Dog. Curry's words are well-turned, the stories brief and often humorous; this is a cohesive, readable collection for introducing young readers to Native American mythology. BH

C.U. Storytelling


"There ain't no place I can't drill." Gib Martin was an oil drilling superman. He could fix anything, build anything, and could even smell the oil underground. With his
twenty-two yard horse Torpedo (who had three forward speeds and could run in reverse),

Gib could get from Pennsylvania to Kansas to Louisiana and back in time for dinner—
"It sure beat taking the train." When Gib built a rig so high he needed hinges to let the
moon pass, he thoughtfully added bunkhouses on the way up—it took a man fourteen
days to climb. Tales don’t come much taller than these, and Dewey’s colorful, naive
paintings take all the nonsense literally. Even non-readers will gape at Gib’s fifty-foot
square pancake griddle, greased by boys on bacon skates, flapjacks flipped by girls with
snow shovels. RS

Estes, Eleanor. The Curious Adventures of Jimmy McGee; illus. by John O’Brien. Harcourt,

Although this fantasy has an appealing concept, the appeal may be vitiated by the
repetitive (and at times heavy-handed) writing and the lethargic pace of the story devel-
opment. Amy and Clarissa, both seven (and often sounding older) enjoy, all summer, a
fantasy character named Jimmy McGee. The viewpoint shifts from them to Jimmy,
who is a tiny man with limited magical powers, a small-scale mythic hero and plumber
who rescues a lost doll which, in rather tiresome fashion, “bebops” as she comes to life
and “zoomie-zoomies” about. This is readable but has little of the intaglio sharpness of
earlier books by Estes. ZS

Reviewed from galleys.

The time is the 1970’s, when Greece was ruled by a tyrannical junta; the setting is the
small village where Carla Lewis, 12, has come for a long stay with her great-aunt and
great-uncle, Tiggie (Antigone) and Theo, who had raised her orphaned mother. Adjust-
ing to her mother’s recent death, Carla emotionally embraces all the things her mother
had told her about. This would stand up as a story about family relationships and
adaptability, but Fenton gives the reader far more. Incorporated into the picture of vil-
lage life are subtle (and some deliberately less subtle) comments on the political situation
and the dangers to those who work against it. Boldly, but believably, Carla helps save a
poet who is a national hero from the military. Another dimension is added by the linking
of many of the characters to figures in the Greek Pantheon. It’s been a long time
between Fenton books, and this is worth the waiting. ZS

Fertig, Dennis. Take Me Out to the Ball Game; photographs by William Franklin McMahon.

Black-and-white photographs of adequate quality illustrate the oversize pages of a
book that describes (in first person) a young boy’s first attendance at a major league
baseball game. Ryan and his father go to Wrigley Field to see the Chicago Cubs play—
and lose to—the Atlanta Braves. The writing is simple and direct, not stylistically
impressive but believable as the monologue of child, and certainly geared to what a
child’s previous knowledge, interest, and attention span would probably be. ZS

Fisher, Leonard Everett. Look Around! A Book About Shapes; written and illus. by Leonard
galleys.

Although the final pages show other, perhaps less familiar shapes, most of Fisher’s
text and illustration focus on four shapes: square, circle, triangle, and rectangle.
As does any good concept book, this reinforces by repeating an idea in more than one
way. First showing the circle, for example, the book next uses other examples (balloons),
then asks "Can you find these shapes on the next page?" and then, on the next page where the round orange and the smaller round apple are repeated in a bowl of fruit, "Which shape is not a circle?" A simple way of suggesting observation and comparison is effective in a book with bold, clean design and use of color. ZS


These six biographical essays on Red Cloud, Satanta, Quanah Parker, Washakie, Joseph, and Sitting Bull form a gripping historical portrayal of Native American resistance to whites' taking their western lands. The story is a tragic one, and this is a moving account. Yet it also shows glimpses of the humor with which the Indians sometimes lightened their own load. The Nez Perce, for instance, while fleeing from the army in 1877, "paced themselves to stay two days ahead of Howard. They began to call him 'General Day-After-Tomorrow.'" Freedman has selected leaders who showed superlative courage and wisdom in the face of a doom that most of them foresaw as inevitable. Without becoming repetitive, he gives a sense of the trail of broken treaties, encroachments, and reprisals that ended an ancient way of life. The perspective in the first and last chapters, framed by Sitting Bull's inauguration as Sioux chief in the 1860s and his murder two weeks before the Wounded Knee Massacre in 1890, gives readers a general context from which the individual stories will emerge to make an unforgettable impression. The writing, selection of historical photographs, bookmaking, and subject combine to make this an exceptional piece of nonfiction. A bibliography, index, and list of photographic sources conclude the book. BH

C.U. History—U.S.—Frontier and pioneer life
D.V. Intercultural understanding


An impressive figure in American judicial history, Brandeis is, if not killed with kindness here, diminished by repeated kudos. Gross doesn't show readers so that they may judge; he tells them, beginning with the first sentence of the preface: "Although many people have heard of Louis D. Brandeis, few people know how great a man he really was." Gross gives adequate information about the subject's family life, his distinguished legal career, and his devotion to the cause of Zionism. Unfortunately, the text is repetitive, occasionally goes on a tangent, cites no sources for information or for most of the quoted remarks, and frequently lapses into poor writing style. An index will be included in the bound copy. ZS

D.V. Devotion to a cause; Ethical concepts


As eight-year-old Claire Marie anticipates her First Communion, she explains the significance and meaning of the sacrament, and how it stems from both love of God and love of community. Haas' attempt to capture a childlike voice and perspective results in some choppy writing, and there's not enough solid detail to make this informative for non-Catholic readers. While dogma is sketchy (Communion means "that Jesus is truly with us in the bread and wine at Mass") the specialness of the occasion is evoked, particularly in Claire's family's preparation for the celebration of the day. Illustrated with adequate, although too gray, black-and-white photographs. RS

C.U. Religious education (unit)

This "conclusion of the Dies Drear Chronicle" relies heavily on the cast developed in the first book, *The House of Dies Drear*, except for the two new characters introduced here. The plot, too, is an extension that may confuse readers unacquainted with the story of the Small family's discovery of a nineteenth-century abolitionist's Underground Railroad station for runaway slaves. Once past the summary re-establishment of the situation, however ("There was a stupendous treasure hidden for a hundred years in a secret cavern within the hillside"), Hamilton swings into high gear with a vivid evocation of secret passageways, a psychotic neighbor who relives the fate of an Indian woman caring for runaway black orphans, and the dynamics of absorbing a beloved greatgrandmother into permanent residence with the Small family. This also resolves the fate of the villainous Darrows and of the treasure-keeper, old Mr. Pluto. Mr. Small makes sure that the former gets a handsome reward for "discovering" the treasure and suggests (without consulting Mrs. Small, who somewhat angelically agrees anyway) that the latter live with the Smalls in the house of Dies Drear. Despite the fact that its prequel is a hard act to follow, this does lend fictional suspense to an unusual historical scenario.

BH


As she did in *My Prairie View* (reviewed in the December 1986 issue), Harvey uses a child's voice to give simplicity and immediacy to an account of a place and time in America's past. Ten-year-old Becky is the speaker here. Nine members of her family, immigrants who have come from Russia to escape the anti-Jewish pogroms, live in three rooms over her parent's grocery store on the lower east side. The text may be limited in appeal because it tells no story, but it gives a good picture of the family's way of life and of the tenement neighborhood. Some historical details (the struggle for better working conditions in the garment industry, for example) are incorporated; a glossary gives the meaning and pronunciation for Jewish words used in the text; the soft-edged, black-and-white drawings convey mood and extend the text effectively and at times dramatically. ZS

D.V. Family relations


The casual, unpretentious warmth of the story is echoed by watercolor illustrations that show a family's love for a very old dog, Rosalie. The speaker is one of the two children in the family, and she describes the ways in which the dog is cared for and the ways Rosalie placidly copes with her physical limitations. This has an aura of poignancy but not of sadness; it should have appeal for all animal-lovers and pet owners in the read-aloud audience, although that appeal may be limited by the lack of a story line in the quiet text. ZS

D.V. Pets, care of


A prologue locates this photodocumentary in Fort Collins, Colorado, but points out that the flock of geese shown here is typical of those in many North American and European cities. The text describes the daily activities of the birds, as well as habits con-
nected with the nesting season, autumn flights, and summer and winter seasons. Although the style is occasionally wordy, there's a lot of interesting information here, including "adoption" patterns by which some families "grow to include as many as twenty or more goslings"; or the way a goose will circle back around a slain mate in spite of continued gunfire. The color photographs are striking in their variety and composition, with close-ups of individuals and distant shots of flight patterns. Classes involved in nature study will find this an inspiring companion to observation of local flocks or annual migrations. BH

C.U. Nature study


While for slightly older readers than Happy Hollister fans, this has the same kind of formulaic mystery, stock characters, and comfortable appeal. When 13-year-old Laurie, her best friend Jenny, and Laurie's family arrive for a week's vacation in a rustic state cabin, Laurie discovers a ghostly note: "'Don't stay here! This cabin is haunted—by me! Eleanor.'" While languid Jenny wants only to lie around in the sun and meet boys, Laurie hurls herself into the mystery, wading through a mess of red herring and more mysterious notes, and solves the mystery of Eleanor, killed the year before. Not much suspense here, but there is some humor, and Eleanor's friendship with a disabled boy adds a bit of a romantic interest. RS


The Hooblers have kept their balance in combining biographical information on South Africa's most famous black political activist, Nelson Mandela, with facts on the complex social background against which he has protested. Winnie Mandela is more sketchily presented, coming to the forefront of the book only after her husband's imprisonment, much as she did in real life. Their story is an affecting one of courage and dignity within the oppression of a police state; it makes a thought-provoking study for young American readers. The text is occasionally repetitive but generally clear, and the illustrations, though not always well reproduced, are telling. The annotated bibliography of adult and juvenile books is useful, and the source notes for quotations are an important addition. Indexed. BH

D.V. International understanding


In this brief novel set vaguely in the past, little Edith goes to live with her oldest sister Alena when their mother dies (no mention is made of a father). While Edith loves Alena and the farm, she is frightened by Alena's husband John, a stern Christian school master, and his bitter, sour-smelling mother. When John brutally kills a nest of mice Edith has found, she has her first "fit," an epileptic seizure. While Howard does a commendable job of exploring the shame and ignorance surrounding epilepsy in the past, she inadvertently perpetuates the myth that seizures are brought on only by emotional stress. Edith begins to feel a "blackness" in her head when her mother dies, and two of her seizures occur at times of great pain and excitement (we aren't told the circumstances leading to the third). Despite this problem, Howard again shows the same quiet strengths she demonstrated in Gillyflower: complex characterizations (it is stern John who insists that Edith be allowed to attend school despite her affliction), lyrical prose, and the infusion of great drama into the quietest scenes. RS

D.V. Handicaps, adjustment to

An old man, Isaac Campion, recalls the spring of 1901, when his elder brother Dan is killed in a bizarre accident and he must take over as helper to his bitter, hard-handed father. Old Samuel Campion is a horse dealer, but the dominant passion in his life is hatred for a neighbor whose son makes the dare that cost Dan Campion's life. This is partly the story of that destructive feud, partly a view of a place and period when most aspects of country living were unrelentingly difficult and often cruel. It is also the portrait of a child who finally frees himself from his father's abuse. The writing is dense, the dialect difficult, but the fictional crafting will reward readers who can appreciate the careful development of character and scene that has typified Howker's other award-winning work, *Badger on the Barge* reviewed in the June, 1985 issue) and *The Nature of the Beast* (reviewed in the November, 1985 issue). BH

D.V. Father-son relations


An old plot takes a new turn after the wolf, determined to fatten a chicken for his stew, bakes goodies for her every day only to find them consumed by a horde of baby chicks who shame "Uncle Wolf" with their adoring gratitude. The humor in the wash drawings saves the ending from sentimentality. The best part of the story is the wolf's mischievous air as he trails the prim chicken in the beginning and then delivers stacks of pancakes, donuts, and a hundred-pound cake to her door. It's a naive tale with spacious design, a good wolf variant for young listeners with low tolerance for the fate of the three little pigs. BH


A picture-book photodocumentary profiles five-year-old Henri, whose mother has moved her children from South Carolina to New York and been unable to find a job. Henri lives with his brother Orlando and their mother in a hotel, because their old apartment burned with all their possessions in it and they are still waiting for relocation. The room is crowded, there's no place to play and no friends in the neighborhood. Henri does like school ("I wish I could stay in school till ten o'clock at night!") and the occasional treats—like a trip to the zoo—that his mother can afford. But there is an air of sadness about the book, of transience that's hardly alleviated by the new home into which they carry their boxes of belongings (via subway) at the end. Henri is an appealing narrator and his sense of hope unquenchable ("Monday I start my new school, and I'm going to make new friends all over again"). The black-and-white photographs are often full of motion. Children will probably identify with Henri's natural exuberance even if the picture is essentially a bleak one. BH

D.V. Adaptability


Phoebe and Daphne are sisters, each of whom has a story told from her own viewpoint, with two more books for the remaining siblings (Cassie and Lydia) projected in the series. Each of the characters is clearly delineated, sometimes overstated, and the plots are thematic treatments of a typical problem: Phoebe must accept, on entering...
sixth grade, the changes in her friends, family, and self; Daphne must learn, on entering junior high, to make her own decisions instead of letting her two older sisters define her activities (a resolution that will be obvious to readers long before it is to Daphne). The situation in *Phoebe* mirrors some of the censorship cases that have developed around Judy Blume's books. The style in both books is popularly accessible but occasionally repetitive. This family has a nice feel to it, though a dash more subtlety is in order for the sequels. BH

D.V. Sisters

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There are a few minor facets to the life of Shooter Carroll (the narrator), such as home, family, school, and friends—but the focus of this story is the informal baseball team on which he and his pals play, the McCarthy Roaders. Everything revolves around whether a strapping newcomer to McCarthy Road will ever get over his fears (he'd once hit a batter with his fastball), and whether the team, with or without the potential star, will ever beat their jeering rivals, the Hemlock Street Poisons. This has some very funny moments, but page after page of unrelenting slapstick makes for tedium; the characterization is adequate but shallow, the dialogue often too cute. However, the outlook is sunny, and the game sequences will satisfy baseball fans. ZS

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

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Harry, when he heard that a great-uncle in America had left him a prize possession, did a lot of fantasizing about what it could be. He never expected a parrot, nor was he pleased with his inheritance. That is, he wasn't pleased until he learned that Madison, the parrot, could talk—not "Pretty Polly," but talk as humans did. The removal of Madison by a frustrated burglar and the complex mishaps that ensue before the reunion of Harry and his Mad are lively, funny, fast-paced, and adroitly told. King-Smith is a master of word-play, and his deft comic writing is multilevel. ZS

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As was true in *Don't Touch My Room* (reviewed in the May 1985 issue) a small boy complains about his baby brother but shows protective love in the end. There may be temporary confusion on the part of the listening audience at the start of the story, for the heading "I'm Going to Be Three" is followed by "This is the number eight. It's how old I am," with the narrator, Aaron, shown holding a piece of paper with a large digit 8. Aaron subsequently explains that since his three-year-old brother gets more attention and special privileges (in Aaron's eyes) he is going to revert to age three also. This proves unsatisfactory. Then comes the surprise his parents have promised; it proves to be a new bed and new decorations for the boys' bedroom. The story ends with Aaron frightening little Benji and then offering solace and the comfort of sleeping together. This has the same life-slice appeal as the first book and the same pleasantly tidy illustrations; it is adequately told, but it is angular in structure rather than moving in a smooth line. ZS

D.V. Brothers; Jealousy, overcoming

"Summer after summer the Mermaid chugged across the bay, across the bay to an island, an island where bayberries grow." The visitors like the island so much they begin sleeping over in tiny tents, which grow more elaborate, framed and decorated, until yrs. "People didn't want to leave the island at all." Eventually it becomes the little town of Bayberry Bluff. Lent's full-color illustrations from cardboard cuts (a process explained in a note) contrast the rolling, organic shapes of ocean and island with the jaunty lines of the steamboat, tents, and houses; the visitors, while posed in a naive style, have both humor and dignity. The simple, direct text will appeal to very young children, who will also enjoy the sense of the miniature conveyed in the child-sized island and dwellings. RS


Botanical illustrator Carol Lerner has compiled a catalogue of seasonal characteristics typical of Eastern U.S. deciduous forest creatures. Each page focuses on mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, insects, or plants as changes occur in their habitat during the annual cycle. After an initial paragraph generally describing mammals in winter, for instance, there are several sentences devoted to woodchucks, shrews, white-footed mice, and deer, with the text faced by a full-page watercolor illustration of their activities in a snowy scene. The writing is competent and the art attractive (though more static than the artist's black-and-white work) as well as informative, but the explanatory text is somewhat fragmented; the details have a scientific framework but no direction or dominant principle to give the book momentum. BH


Both doctors who serve on the faculty of the Medical Centre at the University of Toronto, Levine and Wilcox together write a newspaper column that gives advice to teenagers. This is a compilation of material from that column (both questions and answers), and it gives advice that is candid, commonsense, and sympathetic. Its usefulness is strengthened by the fact that the authors are never condescending or coy in dealing with subjects such as sex roles, relationships with others, or overcoming fears. An index gives access to the contents, which is grouped by subjects or problems. Although some of the letters reiterate issues raised by others, this very iteration may make readers feel that their own concerns are widespread and normal. ZS


A period piece about a Brooklyn Jewish family of three children, the youngest of whom, Jennie, relates episodes of everyday life with their lively mother, who typically leads them out into the rain for a cooling romp. Papa is loving but more remote: when Jennie asks her mother why the two boys don't go to the neighborhood school she will be attending, Mama replies simply, "Papa's boys go to yeshiva." The tone is low-key, with the most dramatic episode centering around Jennie's older brother getting a crippling disease from which he recovers, slowly, with the help of a physical therapist.

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There's no plot direction here, but the sense of childhood is real and appealing enough to hold young readers who enjoy traditional family stories. BH

D.V. Brothers—sisters


Seventeen poems capture memories of a rural childhood during the last year of World War I. Common sounds such as those of a woodsaw, uncommon sights such as that of farmers throwing snakes into a fire to make the grass safe for children to play, thoughts about death when an old neighbor no longer walks to his store every morning, reflections on a Christmas tree—all find a place in this patchwork quilt of poetry. The writing itself is not especially lyrical, and much of the effect depends on an impressionistic narrative quality, as when "Not in a Hundred Years" catches the drama of a backward student's first reading aloud. Partly this is a glimpse into times past, partly a picture of close family/community ties that supercede time and place. Although it is low key and limited in its appeal to children, it could inspire them to discussion and writing about their own lives. BH


Gently humorous, soft in line and color, McPhail's watercolor pictures augment a text that is brief, simple, and engaging if not substantial. Emma and her parents (bears) have a few problems (getting lost en route, arriving in the rain) at the start of their holiday, then frenziedly see the sights. Emma suggests that they stay at the cabin, and they have a wonderful time playing and relaxing in the wilderness. The read-aloud audience should enjoy the parental participation (father climbing a tree, mother trying to catch a fish by paw) and identify happily with the sagacity of the cub. ZS


Fans of the first book, *Jed's Junior Space Patrol* (reviewed in the May, 1982 issue), will enjoy this continuation of Jed's adventures in space, although newcomers may find the explanation of "cogs" (part cat and part dog) introduced a little too late to avoid confusion. Jed and his parents rescue a young girl, Molly, left on her spaceship when bandits kidnapped her parents for a disappearing formula that has given Molly the capacity to become invisible. Together, they track her parents to Planet X32 and effect a rescue. This has lots of action, but the plot is more a series of gimmicks than a cohesive story line. Nevertheless, the popularity factors and handsome, stipple-textured illustrations will promote it among beginning readers who can't find enough science fiction at their level. BH

C.U. Reading, beginning


Faintly reminiscent of Andersen's *Ugly Duckling*, Mayne's bird Corbie has a similar problem: he's a white crow born into a black community. This is less an animal tale, with its anthropomorphic sentiments and dialogue, than a social fable. There are statements with a ring of proverb ("All crows are strangers to their parents when they are grown"), of satire ("Just like him to try something too large, the brave, stupid thing," says Mrs. Starling of her deceased husband), and of prophecy ("The cat will get him," predicts the oldest crow constantly). Kindhearted Corbie is mistreated by the crows in his tree but fails in his resolve to see the world because he stops to help raise a brood of fatherless starlings. When spring comes, he sheds his feathers, like all the other crows,
and the new ones grow in black without his realizing it. Immediately, a young female named Corbelle sidles up to him; the two are married and live happily ever after. The writing has some of Mayne's magnetic quality, but the tale itself is puzzling in its picture book format. Young listeners are less likely to feel kinship with Corbie's plight than to be preoccupied with questions of why he's white in the first place, what makes him change, and ultimately (if they think existentially), why happiness depends on looking like everyone else. As satire, this is a little beyond the intended age group; as story, it's a bit obscure. The illustrations have a realistic clarity of line and color, occasionally elaborated with shadowy, trick-photo effects. BH

D.V. Individuality, expressing


Adolescent Rachel has always been a little afraid of Grandpa Izzy, her mother's father; sharp-tongued and irritable, the old man seems to have no kindness or softness in his nature. After the family learns that he has terminal cancer (which Izzy isn't told), Rachel begins to visit him and walk with him daily, and by the time he is near the end and hospitalized, she has come to love him. This is a story all the more moving because Mazer preserves Grandpa's dignity as a character, so that both during his life and after his death, as Rachel adjusts to loss, her grandfather is consistently taciturn and graceless—and the book speaks convincingly to the power of family love that is strong enough to accept this. Some of the text is exposition, some consists of entries in Rachel's journal, and the whole is smoothly fused, balanced in mood by some comic moments and in structure by Rachel's relationships with her peers, her parents, and a much older brother to whom she writes long, revealing letters that are never answered. ZS

D.V. Death, adjustment to; Family relations; Grandparent-child relations


A useful book on a powerful figure in history, this nevertheless stays closer to the surface than Meltzer's biographies usually do. He opens the book with anecdotes about Mary Bethune's childhood, when she questions why many black children can't read and later, when her father speeds her away from a lynch mob triggered by a drunk white man. The author traces the influences of her grandmother, the efforts of her parents (both ex-slaves) to support their 17 children on a cotton farm, and the achievements that won her attention from patrons who sent her through school. Bethune's social, educational, and political work are the focus here; there's only the occasional sentence about her personal life or even personality, outside of brief references to a domineering determination that usually won her way but sometimes distanced friends. Although it's a basically smooth text, there are some jarring points: the name of the Bethune-Cookman campus is introduced earlier than it is explained (one looks back several pages to find out who Cookman was but discovers the answer eight pages later). There are also shortcuts that raise questions: how did Bethune "make" a hospital put black physicians on its staff for the first time? What does it mean that a member of the Black Cabinet died on the job? In spite of these quibbles, the book offers a well-researched, non-fictionalized account that's not hard to read and offers an introduction to more multi-dimensional coverage. BH

D.V. Pride in background and heritage


There are three voices in this sobering story, and they speak in irregular turn as the plot line develops: Alex, the protagonist; Shannon, the girl he loves; and Christy, Alex's
Younger sister. Their concerns are the usual ones of high school students: school, friends, love, extracurricular activities, college applications. Then Alex, who seems debilitated after two bouts of flu, sees a doctor and learns that he has been exposed to AIDS virus (transfusions after an accident that occurred before the donor-testing program) and may develop the disease. As the news gets around and Alex suffers ostracism, discrimination, and the disruption of normal life (no more swim team, no more job, and no more sex), he learns the bitterness of isolation and the comfort of what support he gets from his family and from some of his friends. This neither overdramatizes nor understates the shock and fear of the AIDS victim and those close to him or her. It is, if at times slow-moving, both realistic in detail and candid in reflecting the ambivalent feelings of others. ZS

D.V. Courage; Family relations


Carole, the narrator, is sixteen and is bitterly unhappy about her parents' divorce. Her chief comfort is her best friend Marty, who is bright, lively, and amusing. But Marty has her own problems with parents (and with herself) and she proposes the solution: suicide. The ending is set in a cave, the scene of the opening chapter in which the girls cut their palms to become blood sisters. There are some moments of crisis in the story (a fight between Carole and her mother that ends with Carole running away to her father), but for the most part it's a repetitive account of flawed relationships, and most of the story is dull; characterization is not convincing, the story line lacks momentum, and the writing style is heavy. ZS

D.V. Divorce, adjustment to; Friendship values


Black and beautiful, sixteen-year-old Crystal had been spotted during a commercial made at her church, and now she is launched on a career as a model. Her mother is anxious to have Crystal succeed and advises her daughter to expect and accept some disadvantages; her father wants to protect his child's innocence and integrity. It is Crystal herself, however, who decides (partly because of a producer's sexual overtures, partly because of another young model's tragic end, partly because she knows she's missing a social life that's normal in adolescence) to stop modeling. The milieu is convincingly detailed, the characterization and storyline equally believable. Myers writes with an easy narrative flow that smoothly blends plot and nuances in relationships. ZS


Despite (or, more likely, because of) his father's insistence upon an Ivy League education, George doesn't want to go to college—not until he knows better what he wants to do. "I mean, if you don't know where you're going, you won't know if you're halfway to the place you're supposed to be, if you get what I mean." So, after intentionally botching up his applications, George stays home to work as a "go-fer," first at a garden nursery, then as a bicycling messenger. While George's narration—of the changes in his family relations, escapades with friends, his first sexual experience—is appealingly ingenuous, it gets bogged down with superficial insights tacked on to each event, insights readers could easily spot for themselves. George and his buddies are well-drawn in effective (if not complex) characterizations; his "achievement-oriented" parents seem two-dimensional, evolving only in service to the overstated theme. RS

D.V. Self-reliance

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The humor and vigor of Hoban's paintings, especially in the contrast of imagined magnificence and rumpled little boasters, extend a text that speaks warmly of a father-child relationship but that doesn't tell much of a story. When Alex boasts about his father, a firefighter, Buddy feels it incumbent on him to tell a few lies to make his Dad sound even more important: Mondays he's a lion tamer and Tuesdays he's a cowboy, etc. When Dad comes by in suit and tie, Buddy admits he's lied—but then he talks about how they spend happy Saturdays together. "And you know what? My dad is the most magnificent dad in the whole world. And that's the truth," the text ends. The book makes a happy statement but tells no story. ZS

D.V. Father-son relations; Imaginative powers


Technically intriguing but sometimes marred by patronizing questions and exclamations, this summarizes the history and engineering of a seemingly impossible task: bridging the turbulent waters of San Francisco Bay's Golden Gate. The persistence of Joseph Strauss in effecting his vision and the technological ingenuity of the 1930s construction teams that carried it off make an impressive story. Some of the details in the text could have been more clearly served with diagrams, especially descriptions of riveting the sixty-five-ton steel cells that form the two towers. Still, the principles of stress and balance are well explained in context of the specific building stages, and readers interested in construction will find this a useful companion to Judith St. George's *The Brooklyn Bridge* and similar titles. BH


The author/artist of *Wallaby Creek* (reviewed in the January, 1986 issue), invites listeners on a wildlife journey through the five different habitats of Tasmania. After two introductory maps locating and detailing the island state, her double-page watercolor paintings spread above or below a continuous text to depict the startling contrasts of highlands and jungle with their unusual flora and fauna. The text is basically a descriptive catalogue without much ecological direction, but it is well-written, and the illustrations furnish drama. There's a hint of suspense in references to a Tasmanian wolf, a species not seen for many years and now possibly extinct. An "evolutionary tree" diagram, note on plant life, and glossary are appended. Students looking for material on Australia or on marsupials specifically will find this an artistic close-up of a unique natural environment. BH

C.U. Nature study


What an opening: "her name was Sally Lockhart; and within fifteen minutes, she was going to kill a man." Sixteen-year-old Sally doesn't kill him with the pistol in her handbag; he dies of shock when Sally mentions the other legacy from her recently, mysteriously dead father—a cryptic note with the words "The Seven Blessings." And so begins a non-stop Victorian thriller, complete with an ancient curse, a fabled gem, betrayal in the Sepoy Wars and on the China Sea, the thrill of an opium dream, and, in the person of the malevolent Mrs. Holland, a villainess to rival *Sweeney Todd's* Mrs. Lovett. While the
pastiche is word-perfect, it's never played for laughs. Pullman shows us an 1870s London of squalor and darkness, and the final confrontation between Sally and Mrs. Holland on deserted London Bridge is bleak, revealing ever more terrifying secrets. RS


Watercolors and black-and-white drawings illustrate a selection of twelve traditional Cornish legends, based on tales from Robert Hunt's *Popular Romances of the West of England* and William Bottrell's *Traditions and Hearthside of West Cornwall*. Adapted by Quayle, the book was first published in Great Britain under the title *The Magic Ointment and Other Cornish Legends*. Witches and ghosts, piskies and spriggans abound; several of the tales will be familiar to readers of the genre: the Cornish variant of "Rumbelstiltskin," "Duffy and the Devil," a variant of the story of Jack the giant-killer, and the story of a mermaid who assumes human form, "The Mermaid of Zennor." It is unfortunate that the title here sounds condescending and that the phrase "little people" may also seem to imply a preschool (or at the most, primary) audience. The first sentence in this mini-anthology makes the audience level clear and demonstrates the intermittent complexity of the adapter's style: "Zennora Nankervis lived all alone in a cottage on the moors near Pendeen, supporting herself by selling or bartering her knitting, for which she was justly famous for many miles around." ZS


Paralyzed from the waist down by spina bifida, Margaret (heroine of an earlier picture book, *The Balancing Girl*) dreams of swapping her heavy wheelchair for a sports model that she can maneuver fast and easily. Her parents, however, cannot afford the thousand dollars it would cost and insist instead on buying a waterbed to relieve her pressure sores. Still, she receives encouragement from a confidante, an old man in the park who tells her to work toward her goal. Her parents, too, though conservative in their reactions, have taught her not to feel sorry for herself, so she goes about getting a job at a local store and ultimately wins her family's respect for the wheelchair project. This is singleminded fiction, sometimes strained, but the family dynamics—especially Margaret's relationship with her two younger brothers—are authentic enough to relieve the focus on Margaret's disability. There is also child appeal in the youngsters' everyday activities and in the happy ending. BH


Randolph has done a creditable job of capturing the charisma of a nonconformist who defied traditional female roles for the adventure of pioneering in aviation. The text is well balanced between factual background and personal detail. After a description of Earhart's record-breaking 1932 solo flight across the Atlantic, for instance, she makes an emergency landing in an Irish cow pasture, declaring to the farmer, "Hil I’ve come from America." "Have you now," says the farmer with nationally characteristic stoicism. Earhart's complex relationship with husband (and opportunist) George Putnam, her uncontrollable energy combined with a careful reserve against onslaughts of publicity, and her mysterious disappearance over the Pacific in a round-the-world flight will tempt readers to delve further into the intriguing life and times of a singularly independent woman. BH

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Maxine, eleven, is the narrator; she's a self-centered and irresponsible child whose attitude toward adults is seldom other than hostile at worst, calculating at best. Riskind tries hard to make the story funny, but succeeds only minimally, since there is little divergence from disaster humor. Maxine, who so dislikes another girl that she wants to secede from the scout troop to which they belong, is horrified when her mother becomes a troop leader. Mom not only refuses to let Maxine drop out, but she insists that her daughter go on a trip to Camp Wocka Wocka. Characterization is exaggerated, the plot is contrived, and the style overwrought. ZS

D.V. Mother-daughter relations


Kit, age twelve, has come with her brother and sister to spend vacation time with Grandma Edna, who runs a summer theater on Plymouth Island. Her big disappointment is discovering that her best "summer friend," Phoebe, has become boy-crazy, and the boy is Kit's other friend, Pink. In an effort to expose Phoebe as a two-timer, Kit pays her older brother to date Phoebe (who lies to Pink and breaks a date). Phoebe is indeed exposed, but so is Kit. Most readers can empathize with the abrasion of a changing friendship, and this is—if drawn out—believably developed. Characterization is adequate but not strong; the style is fairly smooth but is marred by such occasional awkwardness in phrasing as “Hot red flashes were breaking out on her face....” ZS

D.V. Friendship values; Jealousy, overcoming


Mary Frances, the narrator, is thirteen, and her account of a trying period in her life is ruefully amusing, credible but rather superficial. Among her problems are her best friend's crush on a boy, the same friend's insistence on linking Mary Frances with another boy, and the awfulness of being referred to as a boy in a newspaper article about a fundraising event she's initiated. The protagonist's adventures are on a modest scale; monologue, dialogue, and characterization are adequate. Readers should enjoy the warm familial relationships, however, as well as some quiet humor, and the easy style compensates for a rather placid plot. Not great, but a better-than-average first novel. ZS

D.V. Age-mate relations; Family relations


A haunted community theater? It's an old tradition, but, as 13-year-old Sidonie ("Sid") points out to fellow ghost-hunter Joel, "there's a difference between having a reputedly haunted theater and a confirmed one." Sid sees the first ghost while cleaning up after a performance of *The Crucible*; others follow thick and fast, and all seem to have something to do with the company's handsome, enigmatic leading man, Byron Vincenti. While this is not a new story (even Sid keeps bemoaning the fact that things like this are only supposed to happen to Nancy Drew), the author has a great deal of fun with the cliches, nicely weaving in the requisite research through dusty tomes, a misty graveyard scene, and the onstage exorcism of a tortured soul. And speaking of exorcism, if only someone had done just that with the scene where a librarian blithely tells Sid the name of the patron who checked out the books she's looking for. RS

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Fiction with a fairy tale quality, this is the story of Erich the foundling's friendship with an old clockmaker, Ula, in the Black Forest "once upon a time." Taken in as a baby by a hypocritical do-gooder who resented his presence but used him endlessly for chores, Erich had never experienced companionship until Ula introduced him to the joys of drinking hot chocolate, caring for the aging dog Brangi, and crafting clocks together. It was on the strength of Ula's gifts of tools, a violin, and love that Erich was able to run away, after the old man's death, to seek his fortune as an artist. Stolz' writing is characteristically careful and clean, with the fantasy elements—a wooden cuckoo's coming to life and Ula's ascension to heaven—skillfully built into the reality of the story. The book design and fine-textured pencil drawings are equally strong, creating the total effect of an old-fashioned scene in cameo. BH

D.V. Older-younger generations


The text here is minimal but nevertheless lyrical and dramatic enough to serve as a story base for a stunning series of oversized woodcuts. Both words and graphics focus on a natural setting, a lake where a father owl is flying out into the evening to hunt for his family. "He keeps his owl eyes open for signs of silver fish. But the lake is silent." The owl waits. Then the centerfold of the book features a heart-stopping spread in which he swooshes down to catch a fish, his wings, the fish, the splash lines, and the frame of the picture forming the point of an arrow. "The Owl Family eats breakfast under the glowing moon. Next, it will be Mother Owl's turn to hunt." The golds, blues, and blacks of the night scenes, the graceful patterns of linework, and the dignity of the subject and its treatment make this an absorbing work of art as well as a durable picture book to share with children. BH


Still funny but a little less spontaneous than its predecessors, *The Great Skinner Strike* and *The Great Skinner Enterprise* (reviewed in the May, 1983 and October, 1986 issues), this relates the wacky adventures of a large family aboard a small mobile home during their summer vacation. As usual, the Skinners burn their bridges behind them, renting their house and setting out with a large dog, two cats, and no experience trailing. From the first attempt at packing to the last broken axle, this details the hazards of camp sites, hiking trips, and four kids congested with two disorganized parents. A bit repetitive in comic episode, the story is nevertheless smoothly written and entertaining. The characters are sufficiently developed to stand independent of the prequels. BH


A strong problem novel, subtle and sophisticated, is written with Townsend's usual tight structure, smooth narrative flow, and sympathetic perception. It is in the voice of adolescent Alan, so that the abrasion of his parents' bickering, his own crush on a beautiful tutor, and his rage when he discovers that the tutor, Vivien, and his father are lovers, are all seen from his viewpoint. There is no sugared ending, but an honest treatment of the irrevocable damage done to the father-son relationship and to the shaky marriage. ZS

D.V. Father-son relations

In a sequel to *See You Thursday* (reviewed in the December 1983 issue), Marianne is now 17, still deeply in love with Abe Shonfeld. Abe is a talented pianist, blind and handsome; he loves Marianne but chafes a bit at her possessiveness and protectiveness. This is primarily a love story in which Marianne's trust is tested when Abe goes off for three weeks to be the accompanist for a singer who is young, lovely, and a childhood friend. Love story, yes; standard romance, no. Ure has controlled style and writes with good pace and flow; her characters have depth and nuance, and the fluctuations in their relationships are those with which any reader can identify. ZS

D.V. Handicaps, overcoming


A colloquial account of a little old woman whose shoes dance at night till she's exhausted enough to seek help from the Willy Nilly Man. He's a "scairy" hermit with rolling eyes, a filthy beard, and one long crooked black tooth. She promises him jam in exchange for magic to quell the shoes, but he tricks her; so she spikes the jam with lye soap, rocks, spiderwebs, ink, paste, a cat's tooth, etc. The Willy Nilly Man, however, appreciates tit for tat, fixing her shoes and offering her his friendship. This is a colorful retelling derived from Oklahoma/Arkansas folklore. Glen Rounds' full-color, down-home drawings—clean-lined, spacious, and wickedly funny—complete an effective story-hour selection for anyone comfortable with the dialect, which occasionally seems stagy in a printed text. BH

C.U. Storytelling


Written by a member of the staff of the Boston Children's Museum, this is an exemplary how-to-do-it book. First, most of the required materials (listed at the beginning of each project) are easily obtainable and are either available in most homes or relatively inexpensive to buy. Second, the instructions are clear and explicit. Third, the diagrams are carefully drawn and labelled and are nicely placed in relation to textual references. As Zubrowski describes types of wheels (pulleys, gears, etc.), he makes their functions clear, and he follows each project with one section called "Experiments to Try" and another called "What's Happening," in which the principles of the project are clarified. ZS

C.U. Science
Nothing in young teenager Lincoln's New England past quite prepares him for the whaling camp on the Arctic waters off Barrow. Here, where even the ice is a living presence, he meets young Eskimos—among them the beautiful Ukpik—whose identification with their culture leads Lincoln to question his own identity. But it is here that he begins to draw strength from the realization of Vincent Ologak's vision of him and his connection with Nukik, the whale that ultimately gives itself to Lincoln and to the people of Barrow.

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