

NEW BOOKS FOR YOUNG READERS
AGES 4 to 12

By Norine Odland

Aylesworth, Jim. Hush Up. illus. by Glen Rounds. Holt, 1980. unpag. \$6.95

Funny cumulative tale perfectly complemented by the pictures. Exaggeration, surprise, and justice sparkle in fast moving action. Demands to be read aloud. Even though they are smaller than full page, the drawings will project for a group of listeners who will want to look at the pictures after they hear the story.

Brenner, Barbara. Have You Ever Head of a Kangaroo Bird? illus. by Irene Brady. Coward, 1980. 47 pp. \$7.95

The integrity of both writer and artist can usually be trusted and this is no exception. The information about twelve unusual birds is told in clear prose. Drawings accentuate unique features and also present surrounding details realistically. Has strong appeal for readers of non-fiction, not just as a reference or source of specific information. 9 up

Bryan, Ashley. Beat the Story Drum, Pum-Pum. illus. by author. Atheneum, 1980. 70 pp. \$10.95

Five African folk tales retold with language that is vibrant, rhythmic and smooth. Woodcuts, some four color and some two color, lend an air of authenticity to the stories which have universal meanings. Sources of the folklore are given for those who want to pursue earlier printed versions. For most, the book will be a source of pleasure for listening and reading. 7 up

de Paola, Tomie. The Lady of Guadalupe. illus. by author. Holiday House, 1980. unpag. \$10.95

Both pictures and text portray a tone of reverence expressed by characters who relate the legend of the Lady of Guadalupe. Authenticity of setting and costumes add to the credibility. The retelling maintains elegance and smoothness of finest storytelling tradition; the Spanish language edition has been done by

an expert, one who truly appreciates the story. 7 and up

de Paola, Tomie. The Prince of the Dolomites. illus. by author. Harcourt, 1980. unpag. \$8.95

From a contemporary setting, storyteller and children transport listeners or readers to a long-ago mountain setting in Italy and the story of the power of love that made the mountains white. Stately, majestically colored drawings illustrate the pages in the style of old illuminated text. Children of all ages respond to the dramatic beauty of the book. 6-12

Gates, Doris. A Morgan for Melinda. Viking, 1980. \$9.95

Melinda, ten years old, tells the story of her Morgan horse, the animal she has because she knows her father wants her to want it. The reciprocal bond between young and old is enunciated on the character of Missy whose influence extends, beyond horsemanship, to Melinda's writing and to her family. As the story progresses, Missy assumes the role of main character. Words flow with a smooth and steady gait; information about horses is handled with a tone of expertise. 10 up

Gauch, Patricia. Kate Alone. Putnam, 1980. 107 pp. \$7.95

The tone of the story is hectic, with rasping voices often talking to hear themselves talk. At the end, the family of Kate does rally round to give her genuine comfort when her dog must be put away because he has bitten two people. Vivid, honest depiction of characters, each with a range of traits, some likable and others not. Anyone who has had a similar experience will be able to judge the credibility. 11 up

Gerson, Corrine. Son for a Day. illus. by Velma Ilsey. Atheneum, 1980. 140 pp. \$8.95

The reader can get carried away with the joyful hoax Danny creates for himself at the Bronx Zoo. He offers to be guide and companion to single parent and child touring the zoo, a way for him to enjoy good company and good food. His MO is discovered by a zoo mommie who happens to be a tv personality. Light,

funny, improbable in its entirety but each incident could happen. Some clumsy expressions in the first person narration interrupt ease of reading; some of the zoo daddies use profanity but it fits their personalities. 9-12

George, Jean Craighead. The City of the Crow. Harper, 1980. 149 pp. \$7.95

The crow, a young girl's pet, is the center of conflict in a story set in Florida. The nature and habits of crows are clearly and accurately portrayed. Brothers and father are sure crows are bad. With crisp, uncluttered prose the writer stirs the reader to deep allegiances with the characters including the crow. Only good writing can draw the lines so sharply and young readers can judge the realism of the resolution. 10 up

Hall, Malcolm. And Then the Mouse. illus. by Stephen Gammell. Four Winds, 1980. 61 pp. \$7.95

Three funny stories each about a mouse. Animals are personified and their conversation is sophisticated. Adult human characters learn from the mouse. Black and white drawings suit the tone and subtle humor of the text even to what appears to be self-portraits of the artist on pages 55 and 56. 8-12

Harris, Christie. The Trouble With Princesses. illus. by Douglas Tait. Atheneum, 1980. 170 pp. \$8.95

Fascinating, well-developed series of short stories about the adventures of selected Indian princesses. Includes introductions that relate the stories to other tales of princesses from the Old World. Format works well with decoration of strong pen and ink drawings throughout. 11 up

Lobel, Arnold. Fables. illus. by author. Harper, 1980. 40 pp. \$8.95

Twenty short stories each with a full color, full page drawing. Follows a fable style which uses animals to teach lessons. Conversations, in contemporary style, tell the action. The morals, in italics, are tongue-in-cheek, some more so than others.

Subtle sophisticated humor in text and illustrations. 8 up

Lomask, Milton. The Spirit of 1787: The Making of Our Constitution. Farrar, 1980. 213 pp. \$9.95

The long and troubled process of forming and approving the Constitution is described with a balance of recorded fact and lively elements of human interest. Timely and excellent either as a reference or as engrossing non-fiction to read from beginning to end. 10 up

Mearian, Judy Frank. Someone Slightly Different. Dial, 1980. 197 pp. \$8.95

Grandmother Flossie is the character who makes the story Marty tells. Conversations reveal the tensions between Mother, a devout Baptist, and Marty who sees good in Flossie even though she likes the horse races and a sip or two of bourbon. Instead of preaching, there are situations which show choices being made by Marty and her friends. Serious but not somber. 10 up

Mitchell, Barbara. Cornstalks and Cannonballs. illus. by Karen Ritz. Carolrhoda, 1980. \$5.95

The story is based on an episode which occurred during the War of 1812 when a group of farmers fooled the intruders and saved their farms. Well paced and told in direct style even though it is an easy-to-read text. Pictures depict both the feeling of the times and the details of the action. 7-10

Schlein, Miriam. Lucky Porcupine! illus. by Martha Weston. Four Winds, 1980. 42 pp. \$7.95

Porcupine is, literally, a pig with thorns. That explanation is an example of information in a straight-forward, lively scientific text. Black and white drawings are sketchy; animals are better than people. Format of picture book but text presents far than the pictures depict. 9-12

Quackenbush, Robert. Detective Mole and the Circus Mystery. illus. by author. Lothrop, 1980. 64 pp. \$6.95

The story is worth the time in spite of fuzzy pictures arranged

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in monotonous fashion of one page of picture, one page of story, for sixty-three pages. The clue to solve the mystery is fairly obvious, but not blatantly so, and children enjoy recognizing the solution. Personified animals; real humor. 6-8

Rounds, Glen. Mr. Yowder, The Peripatetic Sign Painter. illus. by author. Holiday House, 1980. 126 pp. \$7.95

Three tall tales, originally published in separate books, are combined in a format which appeals to older readers who will appreciate the subtle humor and historical significance of the tales of the itinerant sign painter. Expertly told and illustrated. Listeners and readers chuckle and want to hear and read more and more. 10 up

Waber, Bernard. You're a Little Kid With a Big Heart. illus. by author. Houghton Mifflin, 1980. unpagged. \$9.95

Modern make-believe works well in a picture story of Octavia Blisswink whose wish to be a grown-up is granted by the magic kite. Consequences are woeful but magic prevails and she is herself again. Satire in the foolishness of trying to make children be adults; comedy is exaggerated in the drawings. 6-9

Watson, Pauline. The Walking Coat. illus. by Tomie dePaola. Walker, 1980. unpagged. \$6.95

Understated picture story, the kind that brings contemplative and satisfied smiles from children. The tinge of mystery is made real and funny with the pictures. Excellent for reading orally to small groups of children. 4-7

Yolen, Jane. Mice on Ice. illus. by Lawrence Di Fiori. Dutton, 1980. 80 pp. \$7.95

Suspense is real in a fast moving funny mouse story. The humor in words and actions created for the story rings true. The villains are punished; good prevails. Story is better than the pictures which have a garish quality. Minnesota children listen to this one and create pictures with more verve and humor than those in the book. 7-10

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