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See next page for additional authors

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Individual Book Reviews

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Composition, depths of field, and photo selection are all extremely well handled. Even some of the regional colour differences show up. Egypt, for instance, has bluer skies than say Hong Kong.

The maps are poor. The editor has hired the best photographers and chimpanzees with margarine sticks to do the maps. The text is a hodge-podge and dated. Few Brazilians have seen centavos; inflation wiped those out years ago.

In the hands of a sensitive teacher who is not ethnocentric (like the text) this could be an extremely valuable tool in the classroom.--Thom Hinckley.

Book Reviews of Individual Books Alphabetized by Author


I can see my students throwing Beyond the Chocolate War by Robert Cormier on the desk saying, "I hate this book," just as they have his others. But they will have finished it. They will be disturbed. I'll ask them, "What is it you hate?" The cynicism, the horror of power, what we see in the perpetrator or wielder and in the victims are disturbing in this sequel to Chocolate War where Jerry Renault had the poster in his locker saying, "Do I dare disturb the universe?"

Trinity has not changed that much since fall. Brother Leon is now Headmaster. Brother Eugene died without coming back after the episode in room nineteen. Cool Archie and the Vigils are still making assignments like requiring Tubs to gain even more weight. Jerry Renault has not yet recuperated enough since the beating to return to Trinity. He shows Janza "you can get beat up and still not lose." Carter, the jock, and the Vigils' president betrays the Vigils' plans to embarrass the school in front of visitors. He doesn't realize Archie and Brother Leon work together when they have anything to gain. David Caroni wants revenge on Brother Leon for the whole chain of events that made him from an A to an F student. He makes an attempt on Brother Leon's life and ends up taking his own life. Ray Bannister, the new kid at school, wants to show off his magic talent and be more a part of the place. He trains Obie to help in his show.

Fair Day is the climax as Obie manipulates Archie to be the fool and makes an attempt on his life with the trick guillotine. It's here the powerful book makes a more universal impact and may become a little preachy as Obie keeps blaming Archie for what he has done to everyone, as he exclaims what a beautiful place Trinity could have been. Archie replies, "It's you, Obie."
Nobody forced you to do anything, buddy. Nobody made you join the Vigils. Nobody twisted your arm to make you secretary of the Vigils . . . . You could have said no anytime at all. But you didn't . . . . Oh, I'm an easy scapegoat, Obie . . . . But you had free choice, buddy . . . . Free choice, Obie, and you did the choosing . . . . I'll always be there, Obie. You'll always have me wherever you go and whatever you do . . . . I'm all the things you hide inside you."

All the students know themselves and others better but not well enough for me to feel good about their entrance into the world after high school. The picture of Trinity's world is bleak with no real change in Brother Leon. The Vigils are in the hands of Bunting and Janza for next year. They are absolutely rotten but probably not skilful enough with enough style to be as successful as Archie has been.

It's a frightening, suspenseful book--beautifully done.--Elizabeth Wahlquist.


Surprises is a collection of poems by well-known children's poets both old and new. These poems are organized under the following headings: Who to Pet; Creep, Crawl, Fly; At the Top of my Voice; Boats, Trains, and Planes; Rain, Sun, and Snow; and Good Night. There is a title and author index to make it easy to locate a specific poem.

The poems are funny, realistic, imaginative and thoughtful. It is a collection which should delight children.

The terms An I Can Read Book may be somewhat misleading. Young children from four to seven years of age will enjoy hearing the poems over and over. Because poetry is difficult to read and requires skills besides decoding it would be best to give the book to third or fourth graders for their personal reading.--Catherine Bowles.


This little book is the story of the first Stanley Avenue Christmas Eve Party: how it came to happen and what came of it. If Marguerite, who was pretty and bright, and had many friends in her old home in Oregon, had found any friends in Los Angeles, among the motley group of people who gradually moved in to fill the new block of houses on Stanley Avenue, things would have been different. If the Hanisians, the beautiful divorced mother who had been a concert pianist, and her two glamorous teen-age daughters, and the youngest, Francie--strange crippled little
Francie--had not moved in, the last of all--just across the street from Jeannie and Marguerite--but they did. They were different; Francie was most different, being a victim of cerebral palsy. Jeannie is intrigued and put-off by Francie; Marguerite is fascinated; and in her loneliness she reaches out to help a lonely little girl who responds so quickly and so lovingly that the whole neighborhood is touched by what comes of it.---Carol V. Oaks.


It was fun to be back with Nutty and his friends William, Bilbo and Orlando in Dean Hughes' Nutty and the Case of the Mastermind Thief. William Bilks managed Freddie Nutsell's election to president of the student council in Nutty for President. William is now at a private school rather than at the lab school with the others, but he comes to his friends when they need his help.

Nutty isn't all a president of the student council should be. He hasn't taken new menus to the principal for approval. Even his good friends give him a bad time about how terrible the food in the cafeteria is in spite of his campaign promise. The money collected for the Christmas fund that he didn't turn into the teacher before she left the night before is short four $20.00 bills after a day in Nutty's locker. He doesn't dare tell anyone but his best friends what has happened. He must find the culprit and get the money back before everyone finds out. There was also a note left in the locker and strange marks on his locker door.

With William's direction, he, Nutty, Bilbo and Orlando stake out the locker from the restroom and custodian Skinner's closet, just barely get away from Skinner, face the police at Nutty's home, get called into the principal's office.

I, like William, maybe too soon, figured out it wasn't their enemies Hobble and Fowler whom they suspected who had taken the money, but that a friend was at least somehow involved in teaching Nutty a lesson. It has some suspense and humor. I wondered at the end whether this candidate William has pushed (like other presidential candidates) is really presidential material as Nutty says, "I gotta start being a real president."

It is good entertainment and has something to say about responsibly doing the job you committed yourself to do. It may stretch what it has to say out a little too much though.---Elizabeth Wahlquist.

Diana Wynne Jones is rapidly assuming the cloak of a palatable James Joyce for young adult readers. Her books are uniformly creative and original, her plots never repeated and the convolutions of her imagination fascinating to peruse. More obviously than previous works, *Fire and Hemlock* is constructed on the building block of an old ballad, the romantic tale of Tam Lin, while each new direction of the story is defined by section headings of music adjectives, tying in another aspect of the modern legend.

As the story begins, Polly is remembering—or not quite remembering—the years of her adolescence as she prepares to move away to college. A photo on her wall triggers memories of an old friend (who was too close to be forgotten), a make-believe game that ceased being make-believe as it was played and fuzzy anxieties concerning an undone task. The remainder of the book thunders through the events in Polly's past—a kind of story within a story—brought increasingly clearly to mind as she connects memories to events that she knows happened (but can't quite picture); events like the peripatetic love life of her Mother, the house by Granny's with unusually regular funerals, and Granny, for that matter, brisk and sensible... and matter-of-fact about a faerie kingdom.

This is not a book to read for escape, quickly, between summer tasks. It requires attention memory, even repetition—but the kernel is well worth the cracking. For those who don't believe in young adult books.—Janet Francis.


MacKellar's book about a boy called Davie, his Uncle Cluny and a dog Davie named Porridge seems to hover on the edge of a fantasy but never quite go all the way. The result is a mystical undercurrent that helps to recreate the spirit of bearded Highland seannachie's and their old folk stories—to convince the reader that perhaps magic works for those who believe in it. And all the Scottish characters in MacKellar's book are half convinced that the peculiar looking mixed-breed dog named Porridge has uncanny wisdom and a bit of magic associated with his doggy person. Among other things he appears from the sea (but no one knows how he got there); he listens to conversations intelligently; he has unusual yellow eyes; he knocks the one painting in front of Mrs. Abercrombie that she would buy and, of course he managed to win the sheep herding contest for Uncle Cluny in a most unorthodox manner.
Readers will empathize with Davie as he defends his flamboyant uncle, enjoy eccentric Mrs. Abercrombie, and of course fall in love with Porridge who seems more human than dog. At the conclusion Porridge foresees the death of Davie's uncle who finally proves to the village of Kilcardie that he is more than empty talk and show.

A Dog Called Porridge is a well told story that will make the reader feel that his feet are walking with Davie on the fields of Scotland with a dog who can make everything come out right.--Lillian Heil.


Laura is a 'sensitive'--meaning, in this case, that she is buffeted by warnings and unacknowledged discomforts predicting psychic trouble. Kate, her mother, is a struggling single parent blessed with Laura and a loving three year old, Jacko, a rewarding but not lucrative job in a bookshop and a recalcitrant car. She has a more understanding attitude toward Laura's 'feelings' than might be expected under the circumstances! Even so, she finds the going rough when Laura insists that Jacko has been victimized by an unpleasant old man in an antique shop. Somehow, he is coming to irreparable harm through an ink stamp on the back of his hand. Laura is desolate when Kate finds a young man she likes very much, Jacko becomes unexplainably ill and the world seems to hold no place for her. Meanwhile, the subject of other warnings to Laura, Sorry Carlisle, suddenly assumes new virtues (and dangers?) when Laura seeks his help to save Jacko.

An acceptable combination of fantasy and teen-age life is difficult to manage but Mahy's forthright style and command of picture-making language carry it off and if the reader doesn't know any kids next door like Laura and Sorry, he may wish he did.--Janet Francis.


The publisher's blurb about An End to Perfect speaks of the 'magic kingdom' of Haverlee, a small southern town, where Arden feels happiness begins and ends. Then her forever friend, DorJo has serious trouble at home and spends a few days with Arden's family; Hill, her adored brother leaves home for another school, and Arden's world begins to dismantle. Newton's characters are consistently clearly drawn, but most clear is Arden's progress from contented childhood into the maelstrom of adolescence and a world that cannot be counted on.
Although the facility with which DorJo and her older sister are able to live alone in a small town without social service interference and the relatively rapid rehabilitation of their mother, who has the habits of an alley cat and the temper of a larger species, seems suspect, these are not the focal points of the story and the ending only suggests, does not guarantee happy-ever-after.--Janet Francis.


Marty Mickelson receives a small Greek icon and a telegram from her father Bart on her 18th birthday. The telegram is signed "love you, need you, two Bart." "Two Bart" has been Marty and her father's special distress code for many years. A Portuguese nurse unwittingly wrote "need you, two Bart" instead of "need you too. Bart" on the telegram form and this sends Marty to her father who is in hospital in Portugal. When she gets there, she finds he has already left the hospital, and no one knows where he has gone.

Marty is plunged into a race against time--can she find her father and rescue him before the desperate men who have kidnapped him decide that death is the only answer to The Mystery of the Greek Icon?

The plot is fast-paced, moving quickly from the U.S. to Portugal to Switzerland and finally to Greece, carrying the reader along in its wake. It is well written--the dialogue escaping the predictable lines abounding in most formula fiction. Marty is a believable 18-year-old struggling against the odds of adult intrigue, international travel and different cultures. Although not in the tradition of Agatha Christie or Earle Stanley Gardner, this light mystery would be a good start for the reluctant reader.--Jan Addy.


There may be as many misconceptions about the moose as there are about snakes. The former look ungraceful, but their long legs and huge heart and lungs allow them to trot at 35 miles per hour (that's less than a 2 minute mile) and gallop as fast as 45 mph. When they're in a panic, they may go crashing through the woods, but the huge creatures are also capable of slipping soundlessly through the forest without so much as a twig crackling. The author, a former ranger, wilderness canoe guide and gamekeeper has tried unsuccessfully to overtake swimming moose in a two man canoe--the moose can swim at about 15 miles an hour.
The physical characteristics, growth patterns, where they're now found, eating habits, life span, problems in winter, their enemies and the effect of people on their existence are knowledgeably described. Excellent photographs taken by Leonard Rue illustrate descriptions of the moose's physical characteristics.

This reader was particularly interested in the use of the moose's long legs to feed in fairly deep water or to avoid getting bogged down in deep snow and their radar-like independently mobile ears that can be stuck just above water listening for warning sounds while they feed on underwater plants. But there are many other interesting facts about how moose grow and stay alive. It was impressive to find out how adaptable this large animal is to his environment and to learn in such detail about the moose's living habits.

Part of the appeal of this book is the feeling of being right there looking at a moose with the authors. Their experience in first hand observation of these huge animals is a strong plus in recommending that all readers "Meet the Moose" with Leonard Lee Rue III and William Owen.--Lillian Heil.


Sight and Seeing--immediately popped into my mind a book about the eye and how it works. Well, it is, but mostly it is much more. The book begins by discussing light, what it is and how it functions. Then the reader is led along the evolutionary path from mosaic eyes as found in many insects, to "camera-type" eyes common to all vertebrates. Finally the author concludes by looking at three peculiar properties of eyes. She studies the preciseness of vision as seen in the eagle's eye, underwater perspectives of fish and some amphibians, and color perception in various species.

Although the book is packed with factual information on vision, it is written in a dull-didactic manner. It is not meant for light, pleasureable reading. Illustrations could help support this content, but those used in this book tended to be flat and lacked reality. They consisted of drawings which seemed pencil-drawn. The color-coding of the diagrams such as the human eye confused rather than clarified the intended concept. For instance, the sclera, the white covering of the human eye, was portrayed in orange.

Categorized as juvenile literature, I found it difficult to imagine any but an older teen wading through the book, and then only because he or she must do a term paper on vision.--Kathy Simpkins.