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The Ten Most Wanted Rejects

by Gus Clark

Recently, I went to a book sale at an elementary school. The books being sold had been discarded by the media director from the school's library. As a college instructor in Children's Literature, I felt a little guilty going, mainly because I know lots of titles and authors and know what is good. As a result, I waited until the third day of the sale so as not to take unfair advantage. Mind you, the books were only 25 cents each and when I left that third day of the sale, I felt as though I were walking on air. I actually bought about twenty books, but ten were exceptionally wonderful.

This new media director (and staff) were inexperienced and oblivious to the errors being made. How could this have happened? Maybe they hadn't been exposed to some of the older, quality children's literature; maybe they were never exposed to them in college; perhaps they haven't kept up on reviews or haven't read these older books themselves (many have not been!). I didn't exactly know their reasoning for eliminating the books, but I assumed it was to get additional shelf space for newer books coming in. Whatever the reason might have been, more careful scrutinizing should have taken place to determine the worth of these books, or a more legitimate excuse should have been found to rid them from the collection.

Books, whether old or new, need constant, ongoing evaluation as to their worth and contribution. Many old books are being republished and whether a book is old or looks extremely worn is not a reason to discard it from the stacks. It may mean it was once a favorite title and someone reviewed it well enough to encourage many to read it. Word of mouth always was the best way to sell an item and as for books, it still proves most successful.

Here, then, are ten of the most wanted rejects of the over-twenty that I found:


3. *Skinny* by Robert Burch. A book about the thirties and the depression as seen through the eyes of an orphan.

4. *Yellow Eyes* by Rutherford Montgomery. A book about the survival of a cougar and its struggle to remain free from men who make sport of killing such beasts.

5. *Otto of the Silver Hand* by Howard Pyle (1888). A beautiful historical, depicting the brutal medieval life of the German states. Reads beautifully and is now being republished.
6. *The Little Cow and the Turtle* by Meindert DeJong. A little cow and a turtle will win their way into your heart if you will give them an opportunity.

7. *The Wonderful Locomotive* by Cornelia Meigs will bring back the nostalgic atmosphere that the old steam engine brought to the American Continent.


9. *The Search for Delicious* by Natalie Babbitt. A humorous and wonderful adventure involving the writing of a dictionary during the dark ages and a wild adventure that truly teaches the meaning of delicious.