



2002

Signs for Sale

Donna Cardon

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Slawson, Michelle Benoit. *Signs for Sale*. Illustrated by Bagram Ibatoulline. Penguin Putnam Books for Young People, 2002. ISBN 0670035688. \$16.99. 40 pp.

Reviewer: Donna Cardon

Reading level: Primary

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Historical fiction; Picture book

Subject: Fathers and daughters--juvenile fiction; Selling--juvenile fiction; Signs and signboards--Juvenile fiction; Books—reviews;

As a child Slawson spent a summer helping her traveling salesman father sell neon signs. This book, inspired by her experiences, charmingly captures the feel of small town America in the 1950's. It also shows a warm relationship between a daughter and her father. The main character, a girl about 10 years old, discusses customers with her dad as they drive along country roads in a convertible. They check on previous customers and make sure their signs are installed correctly. Finally they tackle the toughest customer of all, Mr. Hanson. Even he cannot resist the father's good deal and the daughter's charm.

This pleasant story is brought vividly alive by the masterful full-page artwork of the Russian born Ibatoulline. The detail is exquisite, from the camera on the armrest of the blue convertible to the apron on the cook at the diner. Teachers of any grade can use this book to introduce the decade of the 50's. Grandparents will love sharing this idealized picture of the past with their grandchildren. Anyone who reads the book will be hoping for more from both Slawson and Ibatoulline.