



2003

Mercedes and the Chocolate Pilot : A True Story of the Berlin Airlift and the Candy that Dropped from the Sky

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Turner, Vicky M. (2003) "Mercedes and the Chocolate Pilot : A True Story of the Berlin Airlift and the Candy that Dropped from the Sky," *Children's Book and Media Review*. Vol. 24 : Iss. 1 , Article 6.
Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol24/iss1/6>

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Raven, Margot Theis. *Mercedes and the Chocolate Pilot : A True Story of the Berlin Airlift and the Candy that Dropped from the Sky*. Illustrated by Gijsbert van Frankenbuyzen. Sleeping Bear Press, 2002. ISBN 01585360694. \$17.95. 48 pp.

Reviewer: Vicky M. Turner

Reading Level: Preschool; Primary; Intermediate;

Rating: Outstanding;

Genre: Historical Fiction;

Subject: Air pilots, Military--United States--Biography--Juvenile literature; Girls--Germany--Berlin--Biography--Juvenile literature; Berlin (Germany)--History--Blockade, 1948-1949--Juvenile literature;

Young Mercedes lives in war-torn Berlin after World War II. The city is devastated, her four white chickens are refusing to lay eggs and her mother is threatening to make chicken stew. The noise of the planes overhead is what is scaring the chickens, but the planes are necessary because Berlin is a city under blockade. No one comes, no one goes, no food comes, no water comes, no fuel is available--the people need help. It comes in the form of airplanes flying into Berlin every three minutes from outside the country. Lt. Gail Halvorsen, one of the men flying the planes, realizes that the children of Berlin have needs as well as the adults, and begins to drop them candy. Just before dropping it, he wiggles his wings to let the children know it's him, and becomes known as "Uncle Wiggly Wing". This is the story of how Mercedes survives the war and becomes friends with the man who brings so much joy into the hearts of Berlin's children.

This book contains a wonderful forward that sets up the historical information concerning the story. It also has an epilogue that tells what happened after Colonel Gail Halverson left the airlift program, along with a one page biography and painting of the Colonel.