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# High as a Hawk

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Barron, T. A.. *High as a Hawk*. Illustrated by Ted Lewin. Philomel Books, 2004. ISBN 0399237046. \$16.99. 32 pp.

Reviewer: Sandra L. Tidwell

Reading Level: Primary

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Historical Fiction;

Subject: Longs Peak (Colo.)--Juvenile fiction; Mountaineering--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Harriett and her father are set to climb Long's Peak in Colorado aided by Mr. Enos Mills, a famous mountain guide. Climbing this 14,255 foot mountain had been Harriett's mother's dream, and they had planned to have her accompany them, but, as Harriett explained, "She just didn't tell me she was going to die first." After Harriett's father finds the thin air too much for him, Harriett and Mr. Mills encounter the peak's surprises together: steep trails, a thundering elk herd, fantastic views, mountain streams, howling winds, blisters, rock slides, and a snowstorm. Finally, just as Harriett was ready to give up, they reach the snowy summit. Here, after Harriett sees a hawk fly by, she feels, "As High as a Hawk."

Although Barron explains at the end of the book that he made up the details of Harriett's life and the reason behind her climb, Harriett Peter's is a real eight year-old, from Little Rock, Arkansas. Harriett climbed Long's Peak with Enos Mills in 1905. Except for one word of profanity, this was a very enjoyable read-aloud experience. A sweet triumphant feeling comes over the reader as Harriett finally reaches the summit. The story would not have the total effect that it does without the realistic watercolor illustrations by Lewin. Close-ups of Harriett's determined face, Mr. Mills' and Harriett's anxiety as they see the challenges ahead, and Harriett's stance with outstretched arms at the summit are just a few of the emotion-filled illustrations which lead the reader through this amazingly triumphant climb.