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### The Penderwicks: A Summer Tale of Four Sisters, Two Rabbits and a Very Interesting Boy

Patricia Castelli

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Jeanne Birdsall. *The Penderwicks: A Summer Tale of Four Sisters, Two Rabbits and a Very Interesting Boy*. Knopf, 2005. ISBN 0375831436. \$15.95. 262 p.

Reviewer: Patricia Castelli

Reading Level: Intermediate

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Contemporary realistic fiction; Adventure stories;

Subject: Single-parent families--Juvenile fiction; Siblings--Juvenile fiction; Vacations--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

The family Penderwick, comprising a widowed father, four daughters, and a dog, pack into the car for an August vacation in the Berkshire Mountains near their home in Cameron, Massachusetts. They finally find their rental cottage behind Arundel, an imposing mansion owned by Mrs. Tifton. Mrs. Tifton is more imposing than her house, but the four Penderwick sisters find her son, Jeffrey, very interesting. Soon they are fast friends intent on finding summer adventures. The oldest Penderwick girl is interested in the handsome caretaker, but the youngest Penderwick likes the caretaker's two rabbits.

The book has the feel of days gone by, though the setting is contemporary. The Penderwick family is loving, while Jeffrey is the unhappy son of an unhappy woman. The Penderwick girls help him find a way to tell his mother what he wants, promising him a brighter future. This book won the 2005 National Book Award for Young People.