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Book Reviews

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Carol V. Oaks
Janet Low

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Book Reviews

Authors
Vicky M. Turner, Janet Francis, Donna J. Jorgensen, Carol V. Oaks, Janet Low, Lovisa Lyman, Marilyn Bailey, Robbin Olsen Major, Lillian Heil, and Jan Staheli

This book review is available in Children's Book and Media Review: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol12/iss2/3

Effie is an ant, one in a long line of ants. But Effie is different; where all the other ants have tiny ant voices, Effie has a voice like thunder. Effie just wants someone to talk to, but every time she says something, her loud voice scares them off. The caterpillar, the butterfly, the spider, even the grasshopper will not stop to listen to Effie. But one day Effie’s loud voice comes in handy. A large shadow slowly descended threatening to crush Effie and all her friends. Effie took a deep breath and hollered "PLEASE WATCH YOUR STEP." An elephant, suddenly noticing the ants, because of Effie’s bellowing, sidesteps and misses them. Effie has at last found a friend who is big enough to handle her loud voice.

The interesting thing about this book is the clay art illustrations. Painstakingly sculpted on page after page are ants, insects, and finally, the elephant. Reid has won the Ezra Jack Keats Award for children’s book illustration for her plasticized art. This book would be an interesting lead-in for art projects dealing with sculpture. Children will love trying to imitate the 3-D pictures.

—Vicky M. Turner


Ryan, Mooch and Kevin have been best friends since kindergarten. It was always Kevin who thought up the best things to do, and Kevin who could do them the best. But after Kevin had a serious bicycle accident, it seemed like he couldn’t do anything anymore. At least, he didn’t think he could do anything, and his mother wouldn’t even let him try because she was so worried. Wanting his friend back, just the way he used to be, Ryan came up with a plan, with the help of Mooch and Kevin’s younger sister, to "kidnap" Kevin. They would take him to the woods to prove that Kevin could do the things he used to do.

Both Kevin and Ryan learn something important. Kevin realizes that there are many things he can still do well. And Ryan admits that Kevin will never be exactly the same again. They both learn that they are still friends, no matter what.
This is an interesting, enjoyable read about dealing with the changes brought on by a debilitating accident. The story is told in first person, from Ryan's point of view. Things are different, and everyone must learn how to cope—not only Kevin, but also his mother, his sister, and his friends. After reading Auch's first novel, Cry Uncle!, I was ready for more laughs and less preaching than I got with this book; but it is well-written, and fun, and carries a positive message. I would recommend it for readers from grades 3 through 7 or 8, especially boys.

—Jan Staheli

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**B**

Avi. *Windcatcher*

3-6


FI

124 pp.

Eleven-year-old Tony Souza convinces his parents he should spend his paper route earnings on a 12-foot sailboat, spend the summer with his grandmother on the Connecticut shore, and learn how to sail. Encouraged by his grandmother, he tries to solve the local mystery of a sunken treasure and finds the weather and some adult treasure hunters almost more than he can survive.

Treasure hunting and sailing are both exciting but they are also dangerous, and, if I were a parent, I wouldn't have felt comfortable letting an 11-year-old who has had 3 sailing lessons go out by himself with no restrictions on how far he could go. As I read, I was hampered by the nagging thought that parents wouldn't allow even good eleven-year-old sailors that much freedom, that no one I knew had learned to sail so effortlessly after three lessons, and that the troubles this boy caused himself proved that he had less than an average amount of good judgment. He went directly to the islands that the experienced sailor told him to stay away from, he was careless about tying his boat up, he tried to swim to another island when it was too foggy to even see the island, and he started to sail for home when it was both dark and foggy. All of these problems were too easily and neatly solved. The long swim allowed him to discover the treasure. The wind blew the loose sailboat to the island to which he swam, and the tiny 12 foot boat was seen by rescuers even though it was headed in the opposite direction to the bay he was trying to find. On the plus side, the story is fast moving and contains some good description of the feel of a skimming sailboat.

—Lillian Heil
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<th>Publisher</th>
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<td>3-6</td>
<td>Blume, Judy</td>
<td><em>Fudge-a-Mania.</em></td>
<td>Dutton Children's Books, 1990</td>
<td>0-525-44672</td>
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Peter Hatcher and his five-year-old brother, Fudge, are going on a family vacation to Maine for three weeks. Unfortunately, they will be sharing a house with Peter’s sworn enemy, Sheila (the Cootie Queen) Tubman and her family. When they all show up with various assorted friends, sisters, and grandparents, Peter decides it can’t get worse. But of course, it does. With Fudge around, anything can happen, and in the funniest way possible.

I enjoyed this new Fudge book very much, although Blume’s previous two books about Peter and Fudge are still so funny and vital in my memory that this one perhaps did not live up to my expectations. However, it is most enjoyable, and Fudge is as "creative" and irrepressible as ever. I would recommend it for a fun read from grades 3 to 6, or a wonderful read-aloud to even younger children.

—Jan Staheli

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<td><em>Everywhere.</em></td>
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A ten-year-old boy’s grandfather suffers a heart attack. Dooley, who is eleven, comes along with his Aunt Lucy, the neighborhood nurse. "I’m supposed to take your mind off your troubles," he tells the grieving boy, "while my aunt soothes the dead upstairs." How Dooley chooses to occupy the boy is to involve him in a life-saving ritual he calls the soul switch.

Brooks has written yet another evocative story, as different from his last books as those books are from each other. Dooley is a bright, well-drawn character with a timely sense of humor, while the grief and anxiety of the boy who waits for word of his grandfather is almost palatable. This is a fine, tender book which may have difficulty in finding its audience—although Dooley is the kind of boy who, once met, will not be forgotten.

—Robbin Olsen Major

***
B

Byars, Betsy. *Bingo Brown, Gypsy Lover.*


From the moment the doctor delivered him and yelled, "Bingo!," Bingo Brown has had things to worry about. These worries have carried him successfully through two previous books, and this third book continues to detail his always worrisome (often painful) and humorous process of growing up. He has the prospect of a new baby brother to deal with this time, as well as his on-going, long-distance romance with Melissa. And then there’s the new girl, Boots, who is determined to get his attention any way she can.

Byars has written another light-weight, enjoyable book, and one that has appeal for both boys and girls.

—Robbin Olsen Major

A


*Stonewords: A Ghost Story* begins when Zoe, at age four, is brought to her grandparents’ house to be cared for by them. A ghost, Zoe Louise, is a very real part of young Zoe’s life there from the very beginning. When Zoe gets a little older, however, she takes a turn as the ghost when she finds herself back in Zoe Louise’s time of 1870, and discovers that it is up to her to prevent her friend’s death—if she can.

Conrad has written a good, scary story. The capricious Zoe Louise is a character by turns irritating and pathetic, while the present-day Zoe is alternately loyal and frustrated. The mystery behind Zoe Louise’s death is revealed bit by increasingly tense bit until the dramatic, satisfying conclusion.

—Robbin Olsen Major

A-

Cooney, Caroline B. *The Party’s Over.*


Hallie’s life is high school; she loves being prom queen, head cheerleader, yearbook editor, and half of the perfect couple—Hallie and Jaz. But, unlike all her other friends, Hallie decides she’s had it with school, and doesn’t want to go on to college. When all her friends talk about going off to live in the dorms, and finally do start to leave, Hallie is left wondering if she made the right choice. Her parents pressure her into finding a job, but she refuses to work in the food industry, or clerk...
in a store, and even quits a job (that her brother got for her) on her first day at work in the traffic light factory. Finally, just before all hope is lost, Hallie finds a job where she can use all her organizational skills as an office manager at the marina, and really feels needed.

At first I thought this was going to be a you-have-to-go-to-college book, but it didn’t turn out to be that at all. Hallie never really did consider going to college. This book was about the gulf that’s created between those who go to college and those who don’t—the author called it the "college canyon." When Hallie throws a party at Thanksgiving for all her friends everyone comes, but she can see that they have all forgotten about high school, while she is still trying to hang on to the memories. She finally realizes that she has to give up the life she left behind and start over with new friends, ones she would never have thought of associating with before, but who are now willing to accept her. Hallie has probably grown up more than her college friends have, in that she has faced the outside world and won, while her friends are still in the protective world of college. This book left me with a lot of interesting things to think about.

—Marilyn Bailey

B Cross, Gilbert B. *A Witch Across Time.*

Hannah Kincaid, a troubled teenager, is sent, against her will, to the Massachusetts estate of her frosty great-aunt. Once there, she is haunted, not only by her own problems, but also by those of a long-dead Puritan girl who is pleading from the past for justice.

It is the Puritan flashbacks and the letters from Hannah’s equally troubled (though much more interesting) friend, Melanie, that make this book readable. Hannah herself does not have much spark, which is unfortunate as the majority of the story is her’s. The sprinkles of romance and the supernatural will draw junior high girls in, and while *A Witch Across Time* is not a bad book, neither is it a great one.

—Robbin Olsen Major


The celebration of Guy Fawkes’ Night (an English conspirator celebrated because he was the leader of the 1605 gunpowder plot) provides the background for gang rivalry in England. The Nelson
Square gang, twin brothers and tomboy Mitch, is against 5 children from the Wellington Street Gang. One twin, David, is changed after he’s almost caught in a fireworks explosion. His arm mysteriously becomes a firecracker, sausages, a snake, paper, and finally, balloons. It’s an active but not immediately convincing adventure.

The problem of two rival gangs was presented in the first three pages, but it happened so quickly that the reader didn’t really feel much identification with the Nelson Square kids. Also, children in England probably don’t need an explanation of Guy Fawkes’ Day, but most American children would. The tension between the twins, David and Ben, which became crucial to the plot, needs to be introduced more clearly right at the beginning. Because of these problems the story got off to a slow start. When the twins’ rivalry becomes apparent, the story tension develops, funny situations arise, and the story is rather exciting and quite funny. It’s a dependable, but not an excellent book.

—Lillian Heil

Danziger, Paula. *Make Like a Tree and Leave.*


Matthew Martin, sixth-grader, terrible speller, and fountain of creative (if sometimes problematic) ideas who last appeared in Danziger’s *Everyone Else’s Parents Said Yes,* is not chairman of the Mummy Committee. He is still squabbling with his sister and exchanging insults with classmate Vanessa Singer, and is determined to save his elderly friend’s land from being turned into a shopping center.

There is humor here. There is a relevant issue here. There is mummy mayhem and granola-pushing here. And, in spite of Danziger’s choice to write in the present tense (which I find irksome) and the fact that the aforementioned relevant issue is resolved with amazing ease, this book is a fun (if fluffy) read for middle-grade boys and girls.

—Robbin Olsen Major


$5.95 ea. 10 pp., 12 pp.

Baby books with Passover and Easter themes would probably appeal to many parents, but even for infants, these two are superficial. The Passover book does little more than introduce the traditional symbols—matzoth, the Seder plate, and the Haggadah. No attempt is
made to explain the meanings. Parents who understand the symbols might use the pictures as a point of departure for providing explanations. At least the religious symbols are named. No so in the Easter book. The symbols there are new clothes, colored eggs, flowers, baby animals, and Easter baskets. It is more a book about spring than about Easter.

Delightful de Paola illustrations are reproduced on durable cardboard stock in both books.

—Lovisa Lyman

***

Grindley, Sally. *I Don't Want To!* Illustrated by Carol Thompson
Illustrated by Carol Thompson

Jim doesn’t want to go to school, and does everything to thwart his parents’ efforts to get him there. His answer to everything his parents say is, "I don’t want to!" But once at school, it is hard not to paint and play with the other kids. When his mom arrives and says it is time to go home, Jim again answers, "I don’t want to!" This time his mom smiles.

The playful illustrations are pen drawings with watercolors. The simply drawn faces beautifully portray the rapidly changing emotions. The pairing and placement of the illustrations and text add to the timing of the story. Another great picture book about a common childhood (and parenthood) experience.

—Janet Low

***

Grove, Vicki. *The Fastest Friend in the West.*

Lori had not been invited to join any of the popular groups in her seventh grade class—she had not expected to be. Lori was overweight and spent her time trying not to be noticed and living in her fantasy world as a graceful mermaid. She was not prepared for Vern, a new girl with greasy hair and crusty knees, to suddenly announce there was time for her to make only one friend, and Lori was it.

Both girls live as misfits in a culture that demands sameness in order to have that all-important acceptance by peers. Fatness is hard to hide or get rid of. Vern’s problem could easily be solved with regular showers and some new outfits. Then Lori discovers that the solution to Vern’s problem is more difficult than her own.
Not an action-packed thriller, but a well-told story dealing with basic emotional needs which will capture the attention of its readers. Realistic enough to stop far short of a "Cinderella" ending, the story instills hope and calls for self-direction. A good recommendation for pre-teen and early teen readers.

—Janet Low

John Hackwell journeys to Antarctica, a desert of ice where no trees or flowering plants live, where there are no rivers and no beaches; where no civilization has yet been established; an area that holds 80 percent of the world’s ice. Mr. Hackwell is an Australian archaeologist who records his day-to-day activities and sketches the scenes that he encounters. He is part of a cooperative scientific research expedition that includes the efforts of twelve countries.

The sketches are in pastel colors and there are many throughout the book. There is also an index to help the reader locate specific information.

—Vicky M. Turner

Virginia Hamilton, born in Yellow Springs, Ohio, had her first children’s book published in 1967. She received the 1975 Newberry Award for M. C. Higgins the Great; and has published a number of outstanding stores which won other awards.

With Cousins, we have another delightful and dramatic story about five unusual relatives of strong spirit and loving connections to each other, living in a rough and difficult terrain. They have great strength and wonderful humor—and the courage to do almost any crazy thing they need to do to help each other in difficult times.

In my opinion, this book is a precious one to add to all of Hamilton’s stories—awards or not!

—Carol V. Oaks

KT Putnam's prospects for the 6th grade look dim when she is chosen for the gifted program and her best friends are not. Their adjustment is rocky, but successful.

Patricia Hermes writes well and obviously understands the plight of those children who are "singled out" at school. The book will appeal especially to the gifted and offers them insight into ways to handle the problem, but it may have limited appeal to others.

—Donna J. Jorgensen


Hood wrote this verse during the first half of the nineteenth century. Today, children hearing the story will find it as true as it was 150 years ago. Sleep is still evasive on warm summer evenings when they have been put to bed while the sun is still shining. Too hot to sleep, too keyed up from the activities of the day to relax, their imaginations soar until the bed softens and eyelids close.

The illustrations are similar to Graeme Base's *Animalia.* The colors are vivid with a different background hue on each page signalling a changing imagination. The fanciful animals are drawn to make believable their very unbelievable human actions. An enjoyable book with a rhythm that will ensure its success as a bedtime story.

—Janet Low


Farmer Tubbs' pig, Ace of Clubs, is the great-grandson of Dick King-Smith's "Sheep-Pig." Like his famous ancestor, Ace is exceptionally intelligent. He even understands the language of humans and manages to teach Farmer Tubbs to understand three simple "pig expressions." Ace is allowed to visit with the other animals and eventually is let into the farmer's heart and home.
King-Smith’s dependable wit and careful attention to the vernacular and detail weaves a delightful fantasy which seems perfectly consistent with the animal world.

—Donna J. Jorgensen

Beginning with 30,000-year-old cave paintings in Southern France, and ending with the modern neighborhood library, *Books and Libraries* gives enough information to satisfy its purpose while stimulating interest to know more. The history of books is traced from clay tablets to papyrus to parchment to paper. The making, storage, and eventual printing of manuscripts is also covered. On the library side, we learn that the first known libraries were in Sumaria. Subsequent ancient cultures also treasured large collections. If ancient collections were organized in a logical way, we have no record; but Dewey’s system was a grand step in that direction. The book gives a short description of the Dewey decimal system and illustrates it with cunning drawings on the inside covers. This is a fine addition for school and public libraries.

—Lovisa Lyman

It is the fall of 1849, and Mary McLean and her family have just arrived from Ireland. Because they are poor, they settle in a cold, dark, one-room apartment in New York City. Mary finds that she enjoys listening to the stories about people in her new neighborhood, especially those about Mr. Finnegan the grocer. Each year he enters his grand horse cart in the St. Patrick’s Day’s Parade, and Mary’s fondest wish is to be able to ride on it and wave to all those watching from the sides of the streets. Mr. Finnegan finally agrees to let Mary ride in the cart if she can find a perfect shamrock.

The illustrations in this book are soft, warm glimpses into the past. Mr. Dooling’s illustrations bring to the book the tender style of old *Ideal Magazine* illustrations and are entirely appropriate for the time covered in the book.

—Vicky M. Turner

Owen Tudor, his wife Gwen, and their two children, David and Myfanwy, keep a grassy farm in Wales—a farm that has been with his family since before there were English men in England and which holds his heart and the secret of his content. Then one day there are men walking in the fields with notebooks. And finally, there are notices for everyone. It seems the city of Birmingham is short of water and must have a dam to gather it in Owen Tudor’s valley. Everything is legal and everything is arranged, and one by one the valley folk accept their fair purchase money and leave—but not Owen Tudor. Owen is building something in the meadow.

With solid Welsh characters (few words and strong minds) Mayne tells this story of our world where the best for all may not be the best for one, and where that one, if he is fearless, law-abiding, and determined, may at last find himself high and dry once more.

Mayne writes with lifelong knowledge and a certain craft of these meadows that "have never been bought." The picture of one man setting his farm afloat to keep it is not easily dismissed. The book also says something to the growing urge to vandalize that comes from frustration and helpless rage. It remarks there may be other ways.

—Janet Francis

B+ Naylor, Phyllis Reynolds. *Send No Blessings.*  

Beth, the oldest of eight children crowded into a trailer in a small West Virginia town, is fifteen and yearning for love and escape. Denied her father's approval and mother's support, she is excited when she attracts the interest of an older boy who is already out of high school and ready to settle down. But there are other forces at work beyond romance. There are choices Beth wants to make and chances she’d like to take. Does she want to risk being showered with "blessings" (children) like her mother has, and end up tired and ill? Does she want to leave West Virginia for more prosperous places and opportunities? Or is there a middle ground somewhere that she can choose?
This is an interesting book, and an optimistic one. Naylor's message is that we each have choices and challenges and talents, and that blessings can come in unexpected ways.

—Robbin Olsen Major

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*The Railway Children*, first published in 1906, is now dressed up with delicate and delightful drawings by Pamela Kay. Some of the drawings are in color while others are black and white sketches. All of the illustrations not only show details from the stories, but also retain the feelings of England at the turn of the century. Bringing out a new edition of *The Railway Children* is most welcome to those who love the book. Its story should be told again and again, and because of this great new edition it can be. In many libraries, the old edition must have become so well-worn that no one is able to read it. That would be too bad because E. Nesbit's stories are all well-worth careful preservation. If the earlier edition has not been preserved, readers should welcomed this new edition.

—Carol V. Oaks

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Wendell is a brown and orange tomcat who can see what his family cannot—the host of little creatures wreaking havoc in the house. They are responsible for the missing forks, the fuzzy T. V. reception, and the flickering lights. But when Wendell tries to chase them away, he gets blamed for all the problems. Poor Wendell! He spends the night outside while the gremlins have a party inside.

Mr. Nones' story is both succinct and complete; however, the focal point of this book is the art work. Mr. Nones has created a world where the cat is more real than the people. Wendell not only has a name, he also has sharper outlines—is more clearly delineated. Most distinct are the gremlins, who cannot be seen at all by the humans in the house, even though they are really causing damage and frustration. This creates a nice switch and provides the book with a fantasy edge that will tickle young children. I recommend this as a snuggle-and-look book for young readers or listeners.

—Jan Staheli
Ray, Jane, Illustrator. *Noah's Ark.*

Jane Ray has beautifully illustrated the words from the Book of Genesis (King James Version of the Bible) recounting the traditional tale of Noah and the flood. Her style draws from primitive and folk art, and lavishes individuality and personality on all creatures. Her illustrations make quiet comments on the state of the earth, both then and now, and carry a subtle warning to those who foolishly use the earth's best resources.

Excellent art is always a recommendation for a picture book. This one carefully matches style and color to text, and invites repeated perusal and thoughtful contemplation about the implications for today's world.

—Donna J. Jorgensen

Rinaldi, Ann. *Wolf by the Ears.*

Harriet Hemings was born in 1772 at Monticello, Thomas Jefferson's home. Her mother was Sally Hemings, a "nigra" and no one ever said who her father was. It was rumored that Thomas Jefferson, himself, was her father, but no one actually said, least of all her mother or Mr. Jefferson. Harriet didn't have to work nearly as hard as the other slaves, and Mr. Jefferson had promised her mother that she could have her freedom when she reached twenty-one years of age. Harriet's problem, however, was that she really didn't want to leave Monticello. She loved her mother, Mr. Jefferson, and all her friends too much to leave them forever. Little by little, she realizes that freedom will be more important than staying with her loved ones, especially since she will be able to pass for white. However, she will have to change her name and totally disavow any mention of her past.

Ann Rinaldi has done an excellent job researching this novel, as she has done with all her others. It was interesting to conjecture what would have happened if Jefferson had accepted Harriet as his daughter, and to realize that it would have been social suicide for him to do so. No wonder Jefferson called slavery "having a wolf by the ears." I thought Rinaldi handled the attempted rape scene with dignity and taste; it was a necessary part of the story. This was a sad, but true part of our heritage and deserves to be recorded.

—Marilyn Bailey

Part of the Great Journey Series, this title begins with an account of the historical background of ancient Carthage and the reasons for its strained relations with Rome. The reader is then given substantial insight into Hannibal’s character as he and his troops make their arduous journey overland to Italy. Maps, photographs of artifacts, and art work illustrate each page. The text is easy to follow and holds the reader’s interest. A good addition to a public or elementary school library.

—Lovisa Lyman


*Agnes the Sheep* seems an unlikely title for a slapstick comedy, but William Taylor’s story is filled with non-stop action and a breezy disregard for dignity or anything resembling a staid existence. Belinda (from a "good" family) and Joe (a potential, if youthful, thief) fulfill a school assignment by interviewing eccentric old Mrs. Carpenter. They become her friends and agree to care for huge, tough Agnes, the sheep, when Mrs. Carpenter dies. She does (die) and the misadventures of the two children as they try to carry out their promise, upset the whole town.

Taylor’s lighthearted exaggeration of plot and characters makes the story into such a farce that the reader simply enjoys the slapstick comedy situations. Even the "bad guys" are so farfetched that they border on the fantastic. As a result, the reader would find it difficult to figure out what the morals of these crazy characters are, let alone judge them. Sit back and enjoy the chase.

—Lillian Heil


Marvin Terban is an English teacher who is determined to make learning the English language fun. His series of books (Clarion Word Play Books) cover everything from "tricky nouns" to palindromes. The line drawings are humorous, and the organization and examples are fun,
but the books are meant to be used. Definitions are clear and include
a source when appropriate. An index is included. Children will learn
what adults mean when they say, "he's pulling up stakes," or "she's
slinging hash." Perhaps Terban should write a book adults could enjoy
that would explain the language children use.

—Janet Low

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A- Schami, Rafik. *A Hand Full of Stars*. Translated from the German by
6+ Rika Lesser.

Rafik Schami writes a story of his native Damascus in which a
teenage boy chronicles three years of his life in a city torn by coups and
corruption. The story describes the life of common people in a troubled
city, and in particular, teenagers who want to do something about a
corrupt government which makes life so hard for ordinary people. They
start an anti-government newspaper which is so successful it worries the
government. At the end of the book, the adult member of their venture
is arrested and the teenagers decide to produce the paper on their own
to show the government that the movement for freedom has not stopped.

Told in the diary format of one of the budding journalists, the story
is convincing because it sounds like a teenager who wants to make a
difference in his world. Because of the protagonist's interest in skin
flicks, and in his girl friend, Nadia, it is not a story that would have
high interest for most elementary school age boys. His interest centers
on their physical sexual encounters which progress from hand holding
to kissing to petting. Adults will want to skim the book before deciding
whether or not to recommend it to young people. However, the turmoil
and problems of the people living in Damascus come through as real
and convincing and the courage of the idealistic young people who
advocate freedom is an example of how one person can make a
difference.

—Lillian Heil

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Albie Jensen is almost 16 and has long legs, overextended elbows
and knees, and a burning desire to be an actor. The high school drama
teacher organizes a summer acting company, limited in membership and
very difficult to get into. Albie manages to make the final cut, however, with an impersonation of a salamander. During the six weeks of intense training, Albie gets to know the other actors well, and becomes involved in the entanglements that close relationships often bring in the theatre. By the end of rehearsals, Albie has learned a great deal about method acting, and even more about himself.

This book is pretty well-written, though Mr. Walker leaves the reader wondering, more than once, just where the plot is headed. The theme—the difference between acting life and living it—is well conceived and interesting, but the flow of the writing is occasionally interrupted and lumpy. There is a careful peripheral treatment of homosexuality. I would recommend this book to mature readers who are interested in drama. It will surely have a greater specific appeal than a broad attraction.

—Jan Staheli


There seems to always be interest enough for one more private detective series on television so there should be an audience for this biography about the detective whose name is synonymous with securities systems. Pinkerton began life in poverty in Glasgow, Scotland. He immigrated to the United States, as a young man, to seek his fortune. He found it by protecting Presidents, solving train robberies, and hunting down notorious outlaws. The portrait Wormser paints, with words and photographs, is not an idealization; Pinkerton is shown—"warts and all." The final message is that if people work hard, they can be successful and can have jobs they enjoy. Wormser knows how to tell an interesting story and young readers will enjoy it.

—Lovisa Lyman