

BOOK REVIEWS

Zork 1. — The Forces of Krill. S. Eric Meretzky. Penguin. ISBN 014 03 1755 4.

The latest trend in junior fiction is called a Choose your own adventure book. My book is one of these types. It is called *The Forces of Krill* and is written by S. Eric Meretzky.

This book is the first of two others about Zork. The other two are called *The Malifestro Quest* and *The Cavern of Doom*. This book is good for ages 8–15. It is featured in a strange magical land called Zork. It is a world where wizards, lizard warriors, knights, trolls and magical creatures live and as the book is a Choose your own adventure book you decide the outcome of the story. You in the book are thrown into Zork in the form of Bivotar and Juranda. Bivotar is a tall boy and Juranda is his sister. At the end of each of your adventures you are given points out of ten for how good an adventurer you are and don't cheat as Eric has plans for cheaters.

Your adventure begins when you discover the peaceful land of Zork has been invaded by the powerful warlock Krill and his menacing troops at a time of unusual weakness. The three legendary palantirs of Zork or three spheres of power have disappeared and Zork's only hope is to find them. Can you find the three spheres of power? Or can you help defend Zork? Or will you get killed and the evil forces of Krill takeover the kingdom of Zork. As anything can happen it makes the book very interesting, exciting and thrilling. And anyone who likes books about magic lands will love this book. I thoroughly enjoyed it and I'm sure you would too. To make things more interesting it has been illustrated by Phil Parks. Now just remember you choose what happens in the story.

Andrew Bolderman (aged 11)
Waverley College

A Mouses Tale. Wayne Anderson. Jonathan Cape. \$12.95. ISBN 0 224 01857 4.

George was very much in love with Barley Mow but could not marry her because Barley Mow's father said George had to go to the moon to see if it was made of cheese. They both knew it was impossible.

George saw an elf on a rose petal and the elf said he couldn't help overhearing their conversation and he took him to his king. The king suggested that George go to see a magician he knew. The magician told him the way to the moon and all funny things happened.

George met the man in the moon and they talked about their problems. George returned from the moon and thanked the elf. George and Barley Mow got married and lived very happily.

My thoughts:

Writing Style — I think the style is very well done. The paper it's written on is top quality.

Illustrations — The illustrations are wonderful. I love the characters faces and again the paper its on.

Words and Grade — The words are not exactly easy so I would recommend good 4th or 5th grades.

Joanne Courtney
Hurstville South Primary School

Molly Moves Out. Hippo Books 1983. Scholastic Book Services. ISBN 0 590 70240 8.

Life for Molly was far from dull because of her large family. She tried so many different ways to overcome her frustrations, but eventually she moved out to live her life in peace. Living alone for a little rabbit was quite different — at first!!

I thoroughly enjoyed reading this story. Having three brothers I know how Molly felt.

Helen Bevern (aged 9)
Peakhurst Public School

Diamond Jack. Josephine Poole. Methuen & Co. 1983. ISBN 0 416 45120 0.

Harriet Shearing was given a horse to ride by her father. Carol, her sister, was to train him for show jumping and ring events.

Carol and Stuart, her boyfriend, become indirectly involved with stolen diamonds. One day Harriet overhears Carol and Stuart discussing the selling of Jacky, her horse, in France. She kidnaps him just in time.

This is the beginning of a short but very eventful week.

This book is a very interesting adventure story that contains both good people and bad people.

I liked this book because it had horses in it and it was adventure packed. Harriet meets up with Tony along the road and throughout their 'long' friendship they both show great courage and are always together. They are the type of characters I like to read and write about.

The book *Diamond Jack* showed me things that I thought not many people had the will to do.

Tony had a fake leg but this didn't stop him from running, climbing, riding and swimming. He puts Harriet to shame by clambering on to Jacky's back and jumping him. Harriet never really got a chance to ride horses but she loved them just the same. Seeing Tony on Jacky made her more determined to jump Jacky in a show.

Even though Tony was disabled he tried his best at everything even when he lost his leg cream.

Throughout the book we are given vivid descriptions of the English countryside and the characters. This helped me to build an image in my mind and I could relate to the characters. I liked *Diamond Jack*.

Jayne Gitsham (aged 16)
Clayfield College

This is a selection of the book reviews received: if space permits some more will appear in the next issue of Incite



The Long Night Watch. Ivan Southall. Methuen & Co. 1983. ISBN 0 416 44610 8.

This is a war story with a difference. It is about a religious group called SWORD, which means Society for World Order Under Divine Rule.

Their leader, Brigadier Palmer, believes as many of them do that God and his hosts will come if they pray long enough and hard enough.

The story starts off very vague, but it gradually gives us the facts until we are almost sick of the thoughts of these people when they come.

Not the hosts of God as they thought, but the feared Japanese who thought it was a military base but were surprised when they met no retaliation at all.

The end of the book deals with what happened to the five teenagers who survived which is somewhat close to what you would expect.

This is not a book I would recommend to anybody who came along but is more for those who are interested in war or religion or other people's thoughts.

Ivan Southall keeps on the brink of utter boredom for as long as he can and gives a vagueness to the facts he does give you, and is sometimes utterly confusing.

I was about to give up on this book when suddenly after pages and pages of life going somewhat normally the Japanese come.

It is a well written book but for a while it barely sustains interest by showing what actually would happen rather than what we would prefer to happen.

Samantha Airs (aged 15)
Clayfield College

Survive the Storm. Wolf Klaussner. Originally published by Verlag Sauerlander Aarau in Frankfurt am Main, 1979. Abridged version published in Great Britain, 1984. ISBN 0416 250203.

Survive the Storm is a book set in Nazi Germany during the Second World War. A half-caste family consisting of Jews and Protestants, strive to survive. When war came to Germany, the Rosts had to hide their Jewish ancestry to remain alive.

Wilhelm Rost (nicknamed Yippa) even before the war knew his family were despised, and he hadn't known why. Only after Wilhelm was beaten up by a Nazi Officer, his father consented to tell him. Through his dead mother, he had inherited some Jewish blood. The war was lingering on like a continuous spool of ribbon and defeat was inevitable. All the party members responded by increased threats and brutality.

Yippa meets a gypsy boy, Psomi. Gypsies were as badly treated as Jews by the Nazis, and so Yippa decides to help Psomi. Germany's defeat is near and this is dangerous. Yippa and his family show great courage from deep down.

Wolf Klaussner shows he understands the problems the teenagers faced, and this grew from his own wartime experiences and using other people's diaries and stories, writes a thoroughly enjoyable book.

The author uses many simplified clauses of poetry such as metaphors, similes and per-

sonification. This helps to give flair and variation to the story. The adventure feeling and the suspense throughout the story fascinates the reader.

I feel, after reading the book that it should be directed to students in Year 7 and 8 as the vocabulary is limited to simple words, but they are descriptive. Overall, this book is very enjoyable.

Pasquale Guerrera (aged 15)
Waverley College

Five Times Dizzy by Nadia Wheatley. OUP 1983. ISBN 0 19 5544838.

Five Times Dizzy is a story about a Greek girl called Mareka who lives in Newtown where her father owns a corner shop. Her grandmother has recently arrived from Greece and doesn't like Australia because it is so different from her island. Mareka has a plan which she hopes will help her grandmother stop missing her goat Poppy that she left in Greece.

I am a Greek girl, my parents have a corner store and my grandmother misses Greece too. I enjoyed this interesting story and recommend this book to boys and girls in upper primary school.

Mia Dentes. (aged 11)
Undercliffe Public School

This story tells how Mareka tries to make her yaya happy. There are a lot of Greek words in the story but I enjoyed the story very much and learnt some Greek words too. It was so good I could not put it down.

Jodie Wells (aged 12)
Peakhurst Public School

Nightmare Store. Hilary Milton. Magnet Children's Books Limited. ISBN 0416 45860 2.

Nightmare Store was an enjoyable book about a boy who visits his aunt and uncle. In the morning he goes to a new large department store, bigger than any he has ever seen. While he is exploring, he gets tired. He goes to the TV section, and falls asleep in a chair in front of the TVs. When he wakes up, the store is closed and he is trapped inside for the night. He goes into an elevator and is attacked by a giant spider, however, he escaped. As the story progresses, there is more and more excitement and adventure. Although if you get killed, you go back to square one and start from the beginning.

The part I enjoyed the most was when the three mannequins attacked me and I had to fight one of them. Another part I liked was where I made my own decisions and decide where I wanted to go. My criticism of the book is that it wasn't long enough and it was too easy to come to the end of an adventure.

I thought the book was interesting but it didn't take long to read one adventure, although it took me almost a week to take every different path. Each page was more exciting than the one before. There were more pages where I died than when I safely arrived home or when I woke up from a dream. The book was fun and I would recommend it to any interested reader who enjoys that type of choose-your-own adventure, make-your-own decision book. At the small price of three dollars ninety five, it is

an interesting, exciting and affordable book that always ends with 'will you live or die?' it is all up to you!

Michael Stark (aged 11)
Waverley College

The book I am reviewing is called *Nightmare Store* by Hilary Milton. This tale is set in a large, expensive department store in a small city. This is a most unusual setting for a kids' story but a wonderfully, hazardous, exciting adventure awaits the reader.

The main character in the story is the reader — in this case, me. In this book, some of the creatures you will find are crocodiles, snakes, skeletons, robots, spiders, etc. The plot of this tale begins when you have fallen asleep in the department store and how you try to get out.

If you like stories about fairies or family problems or school, this isn't the book for you. In fact, at times, this is a little gruesome. This book doesn't have any deep meanings, but it does promise high adventure for the reader. *Nightmare Store* is a book from the Plot-Your-Own Horror series. Overall, this is an excellent book which compares very well with similar types of Choose-Your-Own Adventure books.

Robert Murray (aged 12)
Waverley College

The Australian Ha Ha Book OUP, 1983, ISBN 019 5544412.

In this book which consists of eighteen exciting, imaginative and different stories, poems and jokes, written by different authors, I found two favourite stories and poems.

The first one was The Story of Horace Martin James O'Toole (a great poem), which was about a boy who hated school so much that one morning he threw a fit and his father had to drag him by the ear to school. When Horace arrived at school, he entered and ate everything, teachers, children and the principal. Then he felt sick, so he went to the doctor. The doctor examined him with an X-ray machine and noticed that inside Horace's stomach was a school. Then he realized that he must surgically remove them before half-past three, which was when school broke up, and if he did not remove them before this time, Horace's stomach would explode.

The book was easy to read and it had interesting, funny and cartoonlike illustrations.

The second story was The Crow. This is about a crow who knits himself a colourful scarf to protect his lovely singing voice and throat. But alas, a young boy named Justin wanted the scarf for himself and one night he went to the crow's tree and pulled one end of the scarf while the crow was asleep.

The crow woke with a start and started pulling the other end of the scarf but had forgotten that it was tied to his neck, with sad results.

The *All Australian Ha Ha Book* is a book which I thoroughly enjoyed. The book is, in my opinion, ideal reading for children between the ages of 7 to 10 years.

The printing in this book is nice and large and a pleasure to read. The poems are very well written and fun to read. I rate this book eight out of ten.

Andre R. Zahra (aged 10)
Waverley College

Jess and the River Kids. Judith O'Neill. Hamish Hamilton. 1984. ISBN 0 241 11183 8.

Judith O'Neill has written this book very well. Her descriptions put a clear picture in my mind, for instance

'Once outside of town, the smooth road turned into a dusty track patterned with the intertwining marks of bicycle tyres and ridged with hard corrugations. Jess's bike rattled and shook its way along. On both sides of her now lay the long green blocks. Jess's mother still liked to call them vineyards but no-one ever knew what she was talking about. Blocks was their proper name and Blockies were the men who owned and farmed them. The rows and rows of grapevines held up by an orderly network of posts and wires were heavy now with grapes, green and purple, waiting for the pickers to descend. Beside each block stood the drying racks. Gaunt and empty till the picking began. Behind the racks was the Blockie's shady homestead with its wide verandah. And far beyond the furthest row of vines ran the broad irrigation channel, brimming with water from the river, bringing life to the dry red earth'.

Pictures and descriptions such as this bring to life the Children's Session and the Argonauts, church services in your best clothes and country schools at the time of war that Mum often talks about. I gave this book to Mum to read and she said that it was very well written and it made her feel all nostalgic.

The theme of this story is very lovely and the characters are very well thought up. The exciting part of the story makes you feel involved and your stomach is scared that something will go terribly wrong.

But everything turns out all right and it isn't mushy in that everything is really good. The thing that I really liked about this book is that it finished off every loose end and answers all your questions.

I would recommend this book to boys and girls of 8 and over.

Vikki Kettmiss (aged 13)
Clayfield College

Bernice Knows Best. Max Dam. Oxford University Press. 1983. ISBN 0 19 5544 145.

The story is about a boy called Hugh. Ever since he was born he has been a menace, and accident prone. After a while his parents learn to wear helmets and padded suits. Then Hugh meets Bernice. Bernice tries lots of ideas to make Hugh normal. None work. So his parents take Hugh and Bernice to the country. There a bike race is on. A man asks Hugh to hold his bike. Hugh's pants get caught in the chain. By this time Hugh was really stuck and the race was on. Hugh pedalled to get his pants free. The bike rolled down the hill. Hugh sped past the other racers. Hugh surprised everyone. Even his parents.

I liked the book. It is quite funny. The pictures are dull but when you look they are very detailed. Both boys and girls would enjoy this story.

Andrew Kablo
Hurstville South Primary School

The Gravy Train. Hilarie Lindsay. Illustrated by Gaivan Ryan. Ansay. ISBN 0 909 245 371.

This book is a very interesting story about how the food we eat passes through the body using only certain parts of the food and getting rid of the parts that are of no use to the body, and are therefore turned into waste products and excreted.

'Stoking Up The Boiler'. The first chapter was very interesting as it had many new words and I found it fun looking up the meaning of them in my dictionary. The author described the function of our bodies quite clearly and I found it easy to understand.

Finding out about how some of their young feed by instinct and, quite mind boggling how spiders lay their eggs in the insects they have caught to eat, made the title 'Cannibal Babies' a great choice for chapter two.

Throughout the following chapters the author continued to be most informative about the stories, of how and where the food we eat comes from, especially the chapter of the origin of tea, chapter 17.

It was interesting to find out that as long ago as the Stone Age, people were making a type of bread from grain and that Alexander the Great's sailors introduced honey (which had been made from a reed plant, without the help of bees) when he invaded India in 327 BC.

I thought that the best illustration was drowning the potato.

Chapter 24 was very important to me because it explained how roughage in our food is most important as it helps our system to get rid of waste products. It seems that if our daily diet does not contain enough roughage our bowels can become constipated and this can cause pain and you may get an infection in your appendix and have to go to hospital to get better. I know this is true because it happens to lots of children I know.

Eating correct food is essential to our bodies as we get vitamins that help to keep us well and give us lots of energy. This is explained in chapter 26.

If you wish to read a very interesting and informative story about your own body and some great stories about the origins of the food we eat and drink then don't miss reading *The Gravy Train*.

Warran S. Matthews (aged 11)
Waverley College

The Journalist. Robyn Wallace. Sugar and Snails Work Series. Women's Movement Children's Literature Co-operative Ltd. 1982. ISBN 0 9598465 8 1.

At first I wasn't quite sure if I was going to enjoy this book but after reading it I found it fairly interesting.

The book is about three journalists. Miles is a TV journalist, Ruth is a cadet reporter on a suburban newspaper and Mary works on a magazine for children. She is an editor as well as a writer. The book explains about one to four days of each of their jobs.

I think most children will enjoy this book.

Julie Chandler (aged 10)
Peakhurst Public School

Our Snowman Had Olive Eyes by Charlotte Herman. Scholastic Book Services 1977. ISBN 0 590 30253 1.

This book is about a young girl called Sheila. Her grandmother is living with their family because she is too old to live on her own. In the beginning Sheila does not want her grandmother to stay because she has to share her bedroom with her but after a while she changes her mind. She has lots of fun with Bubbie (her grandmother) and learns lots of things from her. A serious episode in the book was when Bubbie invites a friend over for dinner one evening but she doesn't show up. The next day Bubbie goes to see why and she comes home crying. I like this book because it is serious and realistic.

Jenny Young (aged 11)
Undercliffe Public School

Junk Castle by Robin Klein. OUP 1983. ISBN 0 19 554420.

Mandy, Irene, Con and Splinter built a castle in Beatrice Binker Reserve, because there is nowhere else to play. To them it is a dream come true but Mr Drake thinks otherwise. He tries to get the castle torn down with the help of the Council. I thoroughly enjoyed the book. The characters seemed true to life and really appealed to me. I recommend this book to children of all ages especially to those who liked Robin Klein's other book, *Thing*.

Charlotte Wilkinson (aged 12)
Peakhurst Primary School

READING TIME

The journal of the Children's Book Council of Australia.

An informative and critical view of children's literature in Australia. Provides stimulating articles and reviews with an emphasis on Australian content.

The July issue (published to coincide with Book Week) includes the full text of the Judges' Report for the Book and Picture Book of the Year Awards and articles by the winners.

Published quarterly, January, April, July & October. Annual subscription is \$12.00, for overseas postage add \$4.00 and \$13.00 for airmail. ISSN0155-218X

ALSO AVAILABLE

The Imagineers: writing and illustrating children's books. A compilation of papers presented in Canberra at the Annual Seminars, 1981 & 1982, sponsored by the ACT Branch of the Children's Book Council of Australia with assistance from the Literature Board of the Australia Council.

Authors and illustrators Cliff Green, Hazel Edwards, Bruce Treloar, Mary White, Pamela Allen, Max Fatchen, Simon French & Elizabeth Honey talk about their work. Editor Kay Ronai talks about publishing children's books. Belle Alderman and Dianna Page discuss judging and entries for the Book and Picture book of the Year awards.

\$8.00 includes postage and handling. ISBN 0959438513

Please address orders to:

The Editor
Reading Time
P.O. Box 159
Curtin ACT 2605

Nicking Off. Judith Crabtree. Sugar and Snails Press. 1975. \$1.00.

This is the story of Terry Ho, who is about to run away with some of his friends when he bumps into his arch enemy, David Conway. He finally succeeded in getting away only to find himself at the city dump.

Terry looked around, and saw all sorts of things, rusty tins, old boxes, a baby's wet slipper. . . Terry ran over to investigate and stood rigid, staring, because in an old grocery box was a wildly crying baby.

David, when he caught up, was also amazed. Then David (much to Terry's horror) took all Terry's gear out of his bag and put the baby inside.

When it started to pour with rain, Terry had to face the fact that he must forget about his appointment with his friends and help David with the baby.

After only half a day of washing nappies and feeding the baby on ice cream, Terry was getting fed up, THEN someone started throwing stones, and David, who was getting angry, went to 'get the rotten punk that threw that stone!'

When David had left another stone fell right at Terry's feet. He looked towards where the stone had come from, he saw Mark (one of the friends he was supposed to be running away with), beckoning to him. Terry didn't know whether to stay with the baby and David, or the baby and Mark, or, leave the baby and just go with Mark. In the end he took the baby and went over to Mark. Mark didn't like the idea of Terry bringing the baby along, and they got into a fight. Luckily for Terry a grown-up standing on a nearby bridge must have heard Terry's sobbing because he called Mark off from the fight.

Terry ran over to get the baby and found it thrown out of the bag and lying on its back. It wasn't even crying.

After a very big and tiring wild goose Terry, the baby still in the bag, turned up at the Police Station to hand the baby over to the Police, and saw that David was already there, frantically trying to get two policemen to believe that everything he had told them of the first part of the adventure was true.

When Terry showed them the contents of his bag: one baby wrapped in a blanket, they took them both to see the sergeant.

The story ends with the sergeant finishing his report and treating David and Terry to a biscuit each while they watched the baby quietly sleeping.

This is a very good book and you can easily follow the plot. You find yourself, in every fight or argument either Terry or David get into, hoping that they both win.

Anon

Hurstville South Primary School.

Adrift by Allan Baillie. Thomas Nelson 1984. ISBN 0 17 006368 2.

This is a story about Sally, Nebu the cat and Flynn finding a raft and floating out to sea. While they are out at sea Flynn starts day dreaming about the past which we gradually learn all about. One night a storm blows up and eventually the raft is rammed ashore. I enjoyed the book as it was different to any other book I've read. I recommend *Adrift* to all children from 8 to 11 years old.

Donna Roberts (aged 11)
Peakhurst Public School

Ice Creams for Rosie. Rhonda and David Armitage. Ashton Scholastic 1981. \$2.95. ISBN 0 590 70160 6.

There were three main characters plus some minor ones. The main ones were Rosie Dossie Hubble, Pistachio the cat and a grumpy seafarer. Altogether they made the story exciting.

There were pictures on every page. They were detailed and the illustrators used a good mixture of colours.

The story was interesting and exciting. The authors used a strange but common topic.

I would recommend this book for 8 to 10 year olds because of the words used.

I enjoyed the story because there was a bit of excitement and the pictures were quite good.

Andrew Gifford
Hurstville South Primary School

Who? by Marcia Kay Pearson. Ashton Scholastic 1984. ISBN 0 968 96272 4.

Comments from Year 1 — Undercliffe Public School:

'I wish the photos were in colour' — Zoe, aged 6.

'It was very mysterious' — Regina, aged 6.

'I liked learning about the different Australian animals' — John, aged 6.

'The answers to the questions told us a lot about the animals' — Karen, aged 6.

'Some of the animals looked funny when we only saw a little part of them'. Robert, aged 6.

Jonah and the Manly Ferry by Peter Gouldthorpe. Methuen Australia 1983. ISBN 0 454 005741 1.

Comments by Year 1 — Undercliffe Public School

'It was good fun picking all the places we know from the pictures. I have been to Manly and the Opera House' — Nicholas, aged 6.

'I was glad the story ended happily for Jonah' — John, aged 6.

'Jonah was lucky to steer the ferry after the people had been saved' — Nickolas I, aged 6.

'I though they might throw Jonah overboard too but was glad that they didn't' — Shelley, aged 6.

Mr Poppleberry and Fred the White Cockatoo. Hilarie Lindsay. Ansay Pty. Ltd. — 1983. ISBN 0 909245 52 5.

Comments from Class N — Peakhurst Primary School.

'If I ever get a cocky I will know the right things to feed it' — Paul, aged 12.

'I liked the funny pictures' — Sean, aged 10.

'It was very funny when Mr. Poppleberry used the hose — Sammy, aged 10.

'My grandma's cocky would like some sunflower seeds from the garden' — David, aged 9.

