

A boy at the Leafs' Camp, the final book, outlines the journey from adolescent high school hockey player to professional for Bill Spunska. Spunska, through his exposure to the world of pro hockey, learns that it is not just ability that makes a man a professional but a certain degree of responsibility and maturity also. Although Spunska is unsuccessful in his attempt to make the team he gains valuable insight into the game and himself.

Scott Young's three books teach the reader lessons in the merits of team, work and diligence. Using the sport of hockey as a background, the author proves the value of working together toward a common objective.

The plots of the books have been updated since original publication in the 1950s. Scott Young has effectively captured the speed and grace of hockey. For the young aspiring professional hockey player he provides very enjoyable and exciting reading.

John Montgomery grew up in a small Northern Ontario community just outside Sudbury and took an Honours Degree in Arts at Laurentian University. He is an avid sports participant, with interests in hockey, baseball, and football.

WHEN THE TRUTH IS GOOD ENOUGH

Flip the dolphin saves the day, Slip the otter finds a home, Olena Caisson. Illus. author. Greey de Pencier, 1984. Unpaginated. 24 pp., \$2.00 ISBN 0-919872-91-3, 0-919872-90-5; *The kids' cat book, The kids' dog book*, Laima Dingwall and Annabel Slaight. Greey de Pencier, 1984. 96 pp. paper \$6.95. ISBN 0-919872-88-3, 0-919872-89-1.

In 1984 OWL Magazine co-published several books with Western Publishing, famous for the little Gold Books sold on racks in the supermarket. Two of the first books, *Slip the otter finds a home* and *Flip the dolphin saves the day*, are attractive, entertaining little books. Unfortunately, they present scenes which have little to do with the real lives of otters and dolphins and could help to establish erroneous notions in the minds of readers.

Not every book with an animal protagonist has to be realistic. Few people would object to the cozy box home of Maryann Kovalski's Brenda and Edward or the wacky antics of Mark Thurman's alligator and elephant pals. Talking animals in clothes can be utterly delightful. It is in the twilight area approaching realism that an author must be true to the

nature of his animal subject. What the buyer and reader get, in the otter and dolphin books, is a contrived story which twists facts in order to bring about a tidy little lesson.

In the otter story, the young otter, Slip, is depressed when her family is forced, by an unexpectedly diminishing food supply, to seek a new territory. In reality, otters are traveling animals with a home range encompassing up to 100 kms. of shoreline or river, and seldom stay in one place more than a couple of days. It seems unlikely that a hungry young otter would be pining for her "favorite old spots" so much that she would fail to exhibit a youngster's usual joie de vivre.

The purpose of the story seems to be to comfort the child who has to move. A more suitable story situation might have involved a well-established beaver family forced by circumstances to leave its pond and lodge. Alternately, the young otter might have become attached to the nursery den where she spent the first few weeks of life before the family resumed its nomadic ways.

Flip the dolphin saves the day also attempts to deal with human problems in an animal context. Flip is an undersized dolphin who suffers the Rudolph syndrome. He is not welcome to join in dolphin games. When his small size allows him to lead a lost baby dolphin to safety, he is redeemed in the eyes of his fellow dolphins. This story implies social interaction of a sort which we cannot assume dolphins to have. It is the very fact that dolphins are thought to be highly intelligent which makes it so confusing to give their actions human-like motivation.

The bottle-nose dolphin, an animal of tropical and temperate seas, is portrayed as living in the polar regions. Flip seeks out friends in his loneliness and comes upon walruses and polar bears. Olena Kassian's beautiful pictures show submerged icebergs, and the story begins "Far away in the icy seas of the North, lived a group of dolphins." If there were reasons for a northern setting, a walrus or beluga might have served just as well.

These two books do show some interesting details of the lives of these animals, such as the otters using mud slides and feeding on fish and crustaceans. A number of works on otters call the mud slides convenient entry ports to the water rather than recreational devices, but this is surely a minor point. While the dolphins are shown to be playful air-breathing creatures, the interesting mammalian characteristics of the animal are not mentioned.

Nature books for children deserve as much care for accuracy as do those designed for adults. The world of nature supplies us with a multitude of exquisite stories which need no embellishment.

In *The kids' cat book* and *The kids' dog book*, OWL Magazine packs a marvelous abundance of information into a sparkling magazine format which kids will surely enjoy.

Breaking up information into bite-sized pieces arranged around a large illustration makes the Dog and Cat books less intimidating for young readers. Throughout the books, glossy colour photographs are alternated with the vastly differing styles of several artists to make each page a surprise.

Technical topics such as origins of modern dogs and cats and the physical attributes which characterize each are handled with precise drawings and explanations, but always with a light touch. Also included are informative Mighty Mite episodes, explanations of behaviour, and articles on wild members of the cat and dog families. How to choose a pet and care for it is a useful feature and there are hints for selecting a name, too. There is even a peak into the world of cat and dog shows, and dictionaries of who terminology.

Add to all of this the games, puzzles, jokes and a delightful illustrated table of contents, and you have irresistible books for a wide range of readers to enjoy.

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SCIENCE FROM THE HOUSE OF HAYES

The Hayes book of mysteries, Mary Kaizer Donev. Illus. Rick Rowden. Hayes Publishing, 1986. Hayes Adventure Series. 48 pp. paper \$5.95. ISBN 0-88625-094-3; **Flight**, Dan MacKie. Illus. Steve Shulist. Hayes Publishing, 1986. Hayes Technology Series. 32 pp. paper \$5.95. ISBN 0-88625-112-5; **Space tour**, Dan MacKie. Illus. Mark Hughes, Rich Rowden, & Charles E. Bastien. Hayes Publishing, 1986. Hayes Technology Series. 32 pp. paper \$5.95. ISBN 0-88615-103-6; **Planets and galaxies**, Dan MacKie. Illus. Richard Livingston & Charles Bastien. Hayes Publishing, 1986. 32 pp., paper \$5.95. ISBN 0-88625-102-8.

Science and technology supplied to young readers in readable books must be packaged in a glossy and attractive style. Influenced by *Star Wars* and *Star Trek*, youngsters read educational material for entertainment, expecting the same colourful dynamics of the movies and TV. Hayes has at-