

Between The Covers at the Covered Treasures Bookstore

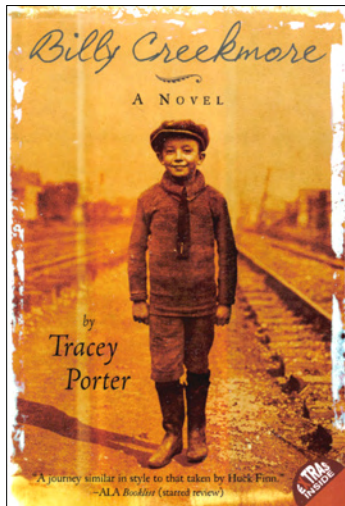
Enticing battle books

By the staff at Covered Treasures

If you're looking for a good book to capture the interest of your middle reader, why not try one of the "Battle Books"? Selected by librarians and teachers for their literary value and popularity among students, these books are used in the annual "Battle of the Books" competition.

Billy Creekmore
By Tracey Porter (Joanna Cotler Books) \$6.99

He is a motherless child, a coal miner, a circus star, a con artist, a seer, a hero, and a survivor. This is the tale of a young boy with mystifying powers and the gift of storytelling. But his life in the Guardian Angels Orphanage is cruel and bleak, and when a stranger comes to claim Billy, he sets off on an extraordinary journey. From the coal mines of West Virginia to the world of a traveling circus, he searches for the secrets of his past, his future, and his own true self. *Billy Creekmore* is new to the Battle list this year.



Hana's Suitcase
By Karen Levine (Albert Whitman & Co.) \$9.99

Also new to the reading list, *Hana's Suitcase* is a true story that takes place on three continents. In March 2000, a suitcase arrived at a children's Holocaust education center in Tokyo. In white paint on the outside were the words: "Hana Brady" and the German word for "orphan." Questions by children who saw the suitcase on display started the center's curator on a suspenseful journey, searching for clues across Europe and North America. The mystery of the suitcase takes her back through 70 years, to a young Hana and her family, whose happy family life in a small Czech town was turned upside down by the invasion of the Nazis.

Bridge to Terabithia
By Katherine Paterson (Harper Trophy) \$6.99

Jess Aarons' greatest ambition is to be the fastest runner in the fifth grade. But on the first day of school, a new girl boldly crosses over to the boys' side of the playground and outruns everyone. That's not a very promising beginning for a friendship, but Jess and Leslie become inseparable. Together, they create Terabithia, a magical kingdom in

the woods where the two of them reign as king and queen. Then one morning, a terrible tragedy occurs. (The story line of this excellent book takes a shocking turn, and we recommend that an adult read it at about the same time.)

The Castle in the Attic
By Elizabeth Winthrop (A Yearling Book) \$6.99

William has just received the best present of his life, an old, real-looking stone and wooden model of a castle, with a drawbridge, a moat, and a finger-high knight to guard the gates. William is certain there's something magical about this castle, and sure enough, when he picks up the tiny silver knight, it comes alive in his hand! Suddenly, William is off on a fantastic quest to another land and another time—where a fiery dragon and an evil wizard are waiting to do battle.

The BFG
By Roald Dahl (Puffin Books) \$6.99

When Sophie is snatched from her bed by a giant in the middle of the night and whisked away to an enormous cavern in the side of a mountain, she is convinced she will be eaten for breakfast. "I is hungry!" the Giant booms, grinning to show his very large and very white teeth, which sat in his mouth like huge slices of white bread. Lucky for her, he tells her in his own uniquely jumbled way that he is not one of those big mean giants "who like to guzzle and swallow nice little chiddlers. I is THE BIG FRIENDLY GIANT! I is the BFG." This is a great read aloud book ... if the reader can stop laughing long enough to get the words out!

The City of Ember: the first Book of Ember
By Jeanne DuPrau (Random House) \$6.99

Citizens of Ember are assigned work at age 12, and Lina desperately wants to be a messenger. Instead, she draws the dreaded job of Pipeworks laborer, which means working in damp tunnels deep underground. Doon draws the job of messenger—and asks Lina to trade! Doon wants to be underground. That's where the generator is, and Doon has ideas about how to fix it. As long as anyone can remember, the great lights of Ember have kept the endless darkness at bay, but now the lights are beginning to flicker.

Reluctant readers and avid bookworms alike will be glued to these award-winning classics. Whether your child chooses to join the fifth-grade "Battle" team or not, these titles will provide hours of enjoyment. And we recommend that you read some of them yourself. They're good literature and will open many opportunities for discussion with your young reader.

Until next month, happy reading.
The staff at Covered Treasures Bookstore can be reached at books@ocn.me.

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Bird Watch on the Palmer Divide

Eared grebe: *Podiceps nigricollis*

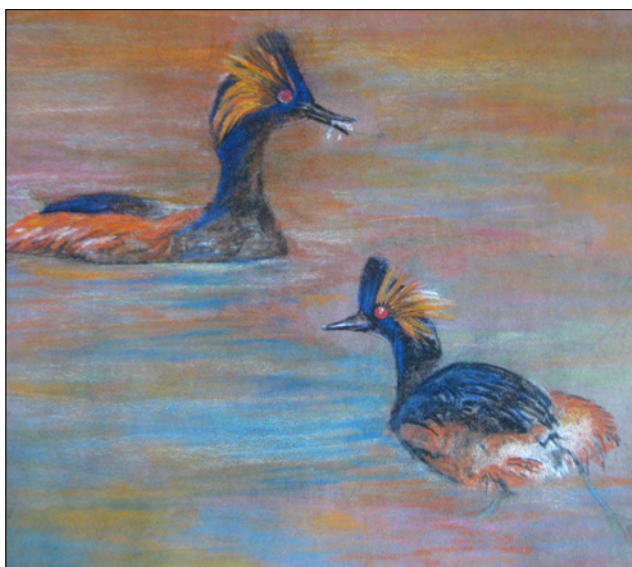


By Elizabeth Hacker

In September, birds have left their nesting areas and are headed south for the winter, closer to the equator where it is warmer. Migration is complex and comprises a broad continuum of seasonal movements ranging from sporadic mass movements over relatively short distances to epic journeys that span a hemisphere.

Many species of birds have strong migration instincts and annually fly the same corridors landing in the same location. Injured sandhill cranes kept in captivity become restless during migration and face the direction they would fly if they were able to. Yet, there is a small population of sandhill crane in Mississippi that does not migrate. How can the same species of bird be so different?

The eared grebe is small water bird that nests in shallow marshes in many areas of Colorado. Every spring it flies here nonstop from its winter home, arriving in early June. In the fall, millions of eared grebes converge on large alkaline lakes including the Great Salt Lake and Mono Lake, where they gorge on brine shrimp in preparation for fall migration. Why these birds converge during fall migration but not in the spring is a question that continues to be studied.



Above: Drawing by Elizabeth Hacker of Eared Grebes. A color version is posted at www.ocn.me/v12n9bird.htm.

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