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# The Penderwicks

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Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

A nicely old-fashioned 'Summer Tale of Four Sisters, Two Rabbits, and a Very Interesting Boy?', The Penderwicks has already won the National Book Award in the USA. Creative Jane, strong-minded Skye and responsible Rosalind, 10 to 12, together with four-year-old Batty and Hound Penderwick, go on holiday to an estate in the Berkshires. Their widowed father is warm and liberal but Mrs Tifton, the owner of the estate, is an apparently cold-hearted woman who disapproves of the sisters' friendship with her son Jeffrey. Nothing happens more dramatic than exploring the attics and gardens, losing and catching the rabbits, escaping from a bull or climbing in and out Jeffrey's bedroom window via a handy tree, but the girls have the playful, exploratory kind of summer that every child should have. They also help to rescue Jeffrey from being sent to military school, although they can't stop his mother's impending marriage to the dreadful Dexter Dupree.

This warm-hearted book is clearly descended from the family adventures of E Nesbit and Edward Eager, a heritage to which Birdsall pays tribute. What make it so engaging are her light, humorous style and the varied, vivid characters. Good readers should easily find a sister with whom to identify - Rosalind, who develops a crush on the teenage gardener, Jane, who loves stories and soccer, or Skye, who excels at bossing the others about and putting her foot in things. Great fun and a cosy, comforting read for 8-14 year-olds. EMc

Running Order:

25

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