

Books and Films

Prey

by Kenneth Goddard (Tom Doherty Associates, New York, NY), 1992, 335 pages, \$21.95.

A thriller in the James Bond tradition, this novel by the Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Forensics Laboratory, Ken Goddard, takes the reader into the heart of undercover investigations by the Service's Special Agents.

Illegal hunts, featuring such equipment as guns that cost \$100,000 and \$17 million helicopters, are guided by a murderous trio of brothers from the Louisiana bayous for fat cats whose hearts are set on making Boone and Crockett record trophy kills regardless of how many federal and state laws are broken to guarantee their gruesome successes.

But what makes this novel most frightening is the fierce confrontation between the undercover team of Special Agents and "Guys who don't think the laws apply to them. Guys who don't like to lose." Specifically, "Senators, congressmen, high-level bureaucrats, federal judges, CEO's, lawyers, cops. The kind of guys who can make an agent's life downright miserable."

Although Goddard assures us in "A Cautionary Note" at the beginning of the book that, to his knowledge, there has never been an "Operation Counter Wrench" within the US Department of the Interior, the organization he describes crystallizes in fictional form events and attitudes well known to everyone who has been trying to defend animals and the environment.

To use the words ascribed to the organizer of the anti-environmentalist project, the enemy is Greenpeace, Earth First "and any of the other environmental activists. No--" he paused, holding up one hand in a theatrical gesture "--let's use a more accurate word for these people. Call them what they really are. *Terrorists*."

Without giving away the intriguing twists and turns of the plot, the light it throws on some of the otherwise incomprehensible failures of the Fish and Wildlife Service's Law Enforcement Division are worthy of note. For example, the solution suggested by the leading female villain of the piece to getting rid of inveterate poachers who must be silenced to protect her own misdeeds, is "relocation out of the country. As a matter of fact, South Africa strikes me as the perfect solution. A place where they could hunt and guide to their heart's content."

The sadistic "rush of adrenalin" which motivates more than one of the characters is accompanied by a solid monetary foundation: "Commitments for at least five billion from the private sector," according to the dark, alluring beauty whose political instincts were honed in the Bronx.

The novel is a fast-moving guide to the illicit hunting that has gone out of control, something dedicated wildlife protectors will want to read. It could have done with Mrs. Samuel Clemens' salutary influence over the bad language she persuaded Mark Twain not to use to heighten the realism of some of his characters' speech. But it excels in bringing the seriousness of organized wildlife crime to a wide audience. The ending is particularly impressive.

Christine Stevens

Since Silent Spring: Our debt to Albert Schweitzer and Rachel Carson

by Ann Cottrell Free (Flying Fox Press, Washington DC), 1992, 17 pages, \$3.50.

Ann Free's speech at the 1992 International Albert Schweitzer Symposium focuses on Schweitzer's and Rachel Carson's deep concern regarding the perils of the scientific advances that threatened and continue to threaten the planet, earth. She firmly, yet delicately delineates the paths their individual consciences dictated and shows the incredible impact of a distinguished celebrity, almost an icon, and an obscure government writer/researcher who has become one of the most famous women of our time.

To those too young to know the story, to those still laboring to improve conditions on earth, and, especially, to all who may have lost heart in the face of relentless exploitation that has permeated the philosophies of so many countries, this is a book to read. We can take courage from the fact that two individuals, facing antagonism, apathy, and anger could still be inspiring us after more than three decades. Copies of the book are available from AWI.

John Gleiber

"Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey"

Walt Disney Pictures, 1993.

Sheila Bumford's classic story, *The Incredible Journey*, is the basis for this animal film drama in which the audience hears the feelings and thoughts of two dogs and a cat as they struggle against nearly insurmountable odds to get home again. Don Ameche's deep, impressive voice emanates from the old dog, Shadow, who movingly expresses the devotion to human beings for which dogs are rightly famous. But the half-grown stray dog, Chance, who has suffered on the streets and in the pound before he was adopted, is portrayed as having a justifiably cynical view of people. Michael J. Fox gets the most out of his role as Chance's voice.

Children will love this film, as will adults who have not completely forgotten their childhood. The magnificent immensity of the mountains through which the animals bound adds to the aesthetic impact, and the three children, each desperately longing for the return of their particular animal friend, are convincingly portrayed.

The numerous recorded instances of individual dogs and cats returning to their homes over long distances and periods of time make "Homeward Bound" readily understandable, if not precisely scientific. It carries a strong message to all animal owners not to give up the search but to continue calling and advertising if a pet is lost. The duplicated reward notice sent out by the hundred played a key role in the film's final happy reunion.

Correction: The Pardubice steeple chase described in the last issue of *The Animal Welfare Institute Quarterly*, Fall 1992, Volume 41 Number 4, takes place in Czechoslovakia, not in Austria as stated.