

Social Sciences

Anbar, Ada. *The Secret of Natural Readers: How Preschool Children Learn to Read.* Dec. 2004. 172p. index. Praeger, \$34.95 (0-275-98424-9). 372.4.

Child psychologist Anbar offers the tantalizing prospect of teaching preschoolers to read with no formal instruction. On the basis of an early-literacy study, Anbar details how six children from various backgrounds learned to read before the age of four. She begins with a short cultural and social history and some background research on literacy development, then plunges into the profiles of the early readers—three girls and three boys, ranging from two to four years old. The common element for all of the children was involved parents who loved to read and a home environment filled with books and literacy-related toys and materials, with parents using anything available from television programs, newspapers, and product packages to encourage their children's natural interest in words. The final section examines the common elements of the case studies and offers advice to parents, including those from low-income or non-English-speaking households, to stimulate children's interest in reading and words. Anbar mixes research and detailed real-life situations to give parents practical suggestions on developing natural readers at an early age. —*Vanessa Bush*

Bailey, Anne C. *African Voices of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Beyond the Silence and the Shame.* Feb. 2005. 304p. illus. index. Beacon, \$26 (0-8070-5512-3). 306.3.

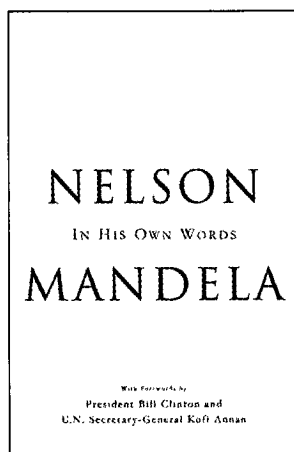
Historian Bailey focuses on the slave trade from the African perspective. As there are few written African records, in contrast to those found in Europe and the Americas, on this topic, she centers her study on the oral tradition, what she refers to as "African human libraries." She primarily focuses on a region in Ghana around one particular oral remembrance told from various perspectives. At the center of this story was an instance when the dominant clan, who had participated in the slave trade by capturing people from the interior for sale, had some of their own members tricked onto a slave ship never to return. One version records the chief as a victim; others record him as a collaborator. In both versions, this story reflected a turning point in this society, where all become vulnerable to the slave trade. Bailey explores the silence surrounding the slave trade and practices including domestic slavery, a legacy that continues today even where these slaves have been married into their masters' families. A fascinating perspective on slavery from the African continent. —*Vernon Ford*

Cherkashin, Victor and Feifer, Gregory. *Spy Handler: Memoir of a KGB Officer: The True Story of the Man Who Recruited Robert Hanssen & Aldrich Ames.* Jan. 2005. 352p. illus. index. Basic, \$26 (0-465-00968-9). 327.1247.

Cherkashin, a retired senior KGB officer,

★ **Mandela, Nelson.** *In His Own Words.* Dec. 2004. 600p. index. Little, Brown, \$28.95 (0-316-11019-1). 324.268.

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"A transforming leader . . . like Gandhi or King." "The single most admired, most respected international figure in the entire world." Beyond the images of saintly icon, this collection of Mandela's speeches shows why he remains a universal hero. In addition to the speeches, the volume includes sharp, insightful commentary by political leaders, South African and international, who discuss Mandela's amazing capacity for forgiveness; his commitment to reconciliation but also to justice; and his pride in his African identity. His stirring words also mark the landmarks in his country's history over 50 years, from his court address before being imprisoned for life, to his speech on his release 27 years later, his address on being elected prime minister, and his acceptance of the Nobel Peace Prize. Then there are his eloquent tributes to his fellow freedom fighters, such as Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and his memorials to those who died in the struggle, including Steve Biko, Ruth First, and many more, who were tortured and assassinated by the apartheid regime. Still an activist engaged with crucial issues, he calls on today's leaders to deal with poverty, education, AIDS, and other health issues ("kick polio out of Africa"). A much-needed companion to Mandela's autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom* (1994), this volume will be in great demand for the personal drama, the history, and, yes, for the inspiring moral values.

—*Hazel Rochman*

YA/L: Older YAs will want this for research and personal reading. HR.

working with Feifer, a former Moscow correspondent for Radio Free Europe, gives readers an insider's view of the spy business from just after World War II through the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. This is at once fascinating and chilling. Cherkashin emphasizes the painstaking, plodding nature of spy work, but he also spikes his account with the stuff of a le Carré thriller: secret meetings, paranoia over others' reactions, and tales of blackmail and seduction in the service of turning selected targets into KGB agents. Although the focus is on Soviet spycraft, Cherkashin's story—especially the recruitment and handling of Americans Aldrich Ames and Robert Hanssen—is interlaced with details about U.S. spying and counter-spying. Cherkashin's perspective on Ames' and Hanssen's psyches and on what led to their downfalls is especially riveting. Read this not just as a spy exposé but also as a social history of an especially volatile period in Russia. —*Connie Fletcher*

Ermey, R. Lee. *Mail Call.* Jan. 2005. 256p. illus. Hyperion, paper, \$17.95 (1-4013-0779-5). 355.009.

Ermey may be best known for playing a marine D.I. (drill instructor) in *Full Metal Jacket*, but he actually was one once. Nowadays he answers viewers' questions about military history on the History Channel show that gives its name to this book. He tackles more than a hundred subjects, "in the air, on land, and sea," as "The Marines' Hymn" puts it, complementing that variety of subjects with a large, excellent set of illustrations of things including rations, weapons, vehicles, and himself. The book is also noteworthy for concocting language with the salty flavor of a D.I. without exceeding PG rating standards. Since younger

readers stand to make up much of the potential audience, though, the PG was a must (adults completely new to the modern military will learn from it, too). The book is stronger on World War II and after than on earlier periods, and on land warfare than on naval and air engagements, but always eminently readable and accurate. —*Roland Green*

YA: Ideal for teens, especially those contemplating military careers. IC.

Huber, Peter and Mills, Mark. *The Bottomless Well: The Twilight of Fuel, the Virtue of Waste, and Why We Will Never Run Out of Energy.* Feb. 2005. 256p. Basic, \$26 (0-465-03116-1). 333.8.

The authors point out that America consumes 25 percent of the world's natural gas, 23 percent of its hard coal, 25 percent of its crude petroleum, 43 percent of its motor gasoline, and 26 percent of its electricity. They reveal that our main use of energy isn't lighting, locomotion, or cooling; what we use energy for, mainly, is to extract, refine, process, and purify energy itself. Huber and Mills list what they call the seven energy heresies: the cost of energy as we use it has less and less to do with the cost of fuel; "waste" is virtuous; the more efficient our technology, the more energy we consume; the competitive advantage in manufacturing is now swinging decisively back toward the U.S.; human demand for energy is insatiable; the raw fuels are not running out; and America's relentless pursuit of high-grade energy does not add chaos to the global environment but rather restores its order. Readers with prior knowledge of this complicated subject will appreciate their conclusions the most. —*George Cohen*