

'If we are not ready to shoot a saboteur and a White Guard, what sort of revolution is that? Nothing but

CHILDREN'S BOOKS: MEGHAN COX GURDON



ENCHANTED LION

Stories From Afar



ON A FRIGID night in 1940, after Poland had been cynically divided between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union, 10-year-old Kryisia Mihulka and her mother and little brother were forced at Russian gunpoint into a truck outside their home in Lvov. When the children's nanny tried to join them, a communist militiaman pushed her back. "You stupid woman!" he shouted. "Your life is just beginning. We are getting rid of the bourgeois rich."

As the truck rumbled off through streets that rang with the cries of other deportees, Kryisia felt "trapped, like an animal being driven to the slaughterhouse." She and her family were soon locked in a cattle car bound for a Soviet communal farm in remote Kazakhstan, where they survived for two years before making a heart-stopping escape to a refugee camp in Persia.

It's an affecting personal story, vividly told in "**Kryisia**" (**Chicago Review**, 166 pages, \$17.99), a memoir for 11- to 15-year-olds written in collaboration with Krystyna Poray Goddu. The inclusion of numerous happy, prewar family photos highlights the sense of loss and dislocation. No one was taking cheery snapshots of Polish prisoners on the Kazakh steppe.

smooth as our silk, but it was not as inviting as it looked," the boy tells us as the party circumnavigates a desert. "My camel's feet sunk deep into the sand, and the sun blazed down all day." When bandits and a sandstorm attack simultaneously, Wong Chung's instinctive act of compassion saves the day—and his father's goods. Tan Jun's delicate ink drawings on rough, fibrous paper give each scene a feeling of antiquity, as if the pages themselves were artifacts.

Awarded this year's Batchelder Award for outstanding English translation of a foreign children's book, the Danish picture book "**Cry, Heart, but Never Break**" (**Enchanted Lion**, 32 pages, \$16.95) casts the figure of Death in a way that feels both ancient and tenderly new.

A 10-year-old Polish girl and her family are woken at gunpoint then herded into the back of a truck.

As of old, the reaper wears a black shroud and carries a scythe—which he politely leaves outside when he comes to collect an ailing grandmother. Yet in Charlotte Pardi's touching mixed-media illustrations (see above), Death is more glum than grim; with his

FIVE BEST: A PERSONAL CHOICE

Helen Rappaport

on the 1917 revolution in Pe

The Dissolution of an Empire

By Meriel Buchanan (1932)

I AS THE DAUGHTER of the last British ambassador to Imperial Russia, Meriel Buchanan spent eight years watching a world she had grown to love crumble before her eyes. The shock to her entitled class, and with it the demise of old-world diplomacy, is epitomized in her portrayal of her weary father's repeated entreaties to Nicholas II to forestall the imminent "catastrophe" of revolution. In the run up, she captures the splendors of St. Petersburg (renamed Petrograd in 1914): opera and ballet at her beloved Mariinsky Theater, court receptions, hobnobbing with the smart set—a glittering, seductive world heading for the abyss. When the mobs invaded the Mariinsky "smoking evil-smelling cigarettes" and "spitting all over the place," she abhorred the triumph of the "unwashed," with their "contempt for beauty." She had been told that a revolution "was always picturesque," but for this archetypal English rose it brought with it a world of "dilapidation, of demoralization and decay." Buchanan depicts it all with a vivid sense of loss.

The Red Heart of Russia

By Bessie Beatty (1918)

2 BEATTY WAS one of a quartet of U.S. reporters whom she defined, in her dedication of "**The Red Heart of Russia**," as "Four Who Saw the Sunrise." The phrase sets the tone of an admiring, but not uncritical, brave-new-world account of the Russian Revolution, published in October 1918, pre-

empting that of her celebrated colleague, L.A.-based feminist exposés, Beatty arrived to greet a revolution "beautifully logical and courageous." But the euphoria she endured the herald of the "gray wolf" of the "bullet-ridden" sub-zero cold of winter. Holding fast to her new socialist order, a "lean, dark and Trotsky and travel Women's Death Battalion to the Eastern front of the army is sick, heal it," members of the Winter Palace who Bolsheviks. "I had a great moment," she knew that it was g

Donald Thompson

By Donald Thompson

3 A SMALL, V carried a pa waistband, straight from the armed with a Graf camera and determined biggest news story might be "no place boy from Kansas," chasing the story vivid account typified gung-ho reporters male—who covered 1917. Following the howling mob" down Prospekt, diving in to avoid the bullets a neck exploring red districts at night, dured, going where trouble to "get so His solution to Russia was simple: The Provisional Government should take Trotsky out and send by July he was tired and longed to get new being a media

