Mountain Born (Newbery Honor Roll)

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There were boulders at the top and he picked his way carefully among them. Suddenly he stopped still, gripping a rock and flattening himself against it. Not ten paces from him was a gray wolf, and around her four well-grown cubs were playing--prettily, if anything that spelt such horror could be pretty. His hands felt like ice on the rock. Wolves, weather, a black lamb, a trusty dog--all are part of Peter's life on a mountain farm. His best friend is Benj, a wise old shepherd, and Benj teaches him to care for the sprightly lamb that becomes his own special pet, his cosset. As Biddy grows into her place as leader of the flock, Peter grows too, learning the skills and joys of the shepherd's life.

For Elizabeth Yates, the story of Peter and his little black cosset began long before she ever wrote it. In her early years the life on her father's large farm gave her a feeling for the land, for animals, and for the people who have both in their care. Many of her experiences found their way into the story, including the joy she felt when she could bury her nose in her own sweater, made of wool spun as it came from the sheep's back. Miss Yates drew inspiration from her hours spent with a New Hampshire shepherd, and, she observes, sheep shepherds, and their ways have not much changed from the days when David cared for his flock on a hillside in Judea. Her story could have taken place in any mountain pasture, in any alpine meadow around the world.

Other Books

The Serpent's Children, When villagers call Cassia and her brother, Foxfire, "the serpent's children," they mean it as an insult. But to Cassia it is an honor, for legend says that once a serpent sets her mind on something, she never gives up. And in a time when famine, drought, and violence mark her family's life, Cassia has nothing less than survival to fight for. Their father is a revolutionary, determined to free China from invaders. Foxfire, certain he'll find a mountain of gold, flees to a faraway land. Cassia will need all of her strength and wisdom to keep her family together, and to prove that she is truly the serpent's child.

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