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BOOKS for CHILDREN - DON'T BUG ME LET ME READ!

Story books, gripping drama, fierce, fizzing language....Here are great present ideas for anyone who'd rather eat a rabbit than read about one in a dress.

JAGUAR by Helen Cowcher Scholastic £11.99

A new foe is devouring the herds. On the barren plains near the River Orinoco, the hunter becomes the hunted. Man tracks the lithe jaguar deep into the forest, bent on exacting revenge, until a mystical experience causes him to change his course. Vivid paintings capture the exoticism of South America. The information section at the back illuminates the message of the book, adding a useful educational slant. 6 +

Education World 1998 - US

Helen Cowcher has made a name for herself by publishing books about the struggle of humankind versus nature. Her award-winning TIGRESS (Parents choice award) and ANTARCTICA (NCSS-CBC Notable Children's Trade Books in the Field of Social Studies and NSTA-CBC Outstanding Science Trade Books for Children).

In her latest book, **JAGUAR** (Scholastic Press), we meet a hunter who has just discovered the tracks of a mighty jaguar. The hunter, fearing for his herd of cattle, sets off in search of the threatening predator. As the hunter stalks the jaguar, the jaguar-itself a skilful hunter- stalks its prey, a howler monkey. Finally the dramatic moment arrives, when man and beast meet. The hunter picks up his gun and aims but he cannot shoot.

"Once he recalls, the forests and vast plains used to hide many big cats and now there are few. Against our dogs and guns, they stood no chance...(the hunter) feels no regret...the land belongs to the jaguar as much as to him".

A sense of mysticism surrounds the hunter's transformation from killer to "coexister". That feeling might be difficult for young readers to grasp; Cowcher has included a page of notes to explain feelings the hunter might hold for JAGUAR.

Cowcher's illustrations are striking, practically hypnotizing. Most striking of all is the book's cover painting. Open the spread of the cover to reveal a full image of JAGUAR, stalking YOU from behind the leaves of a tree! A picture index of creatures seen in Cowcher's illustrations is also included.

@ Gary Hopkins editor in chief Education World

MORE background about JAGUAR



“ That same evening on the plain a rider making his way home, sees marks left in the dust.”

JAGUAR is set in the Venezuelan llanos, which lies north of the great river Orinoco in South America. In the rainy season much of it becomes floodplain. In JAGUAR it is the dry season. In 1992 Helen was selected as one of the British and Venezuelan artists invited to paint the richly diverse habitats of Venezuela. The resulting LIVING EARTH exhibition in Caracas raised funds for environmental education and helped found 'Tierra Viva' which works with local communities on sustainability and conservation.

Helen worked on paintings for the exhibition at a huge wildlife & cattle ranch HATO PINERO well known amongst bird watchers because of the number of species that are there including scarlet macaws, yellow-knobbed curassows and jabiru storks. After the exhibition in Caracas, she returned many times to Venezuela staying alongside scientists in the Biological Station at the ranch. And eventually she couldn't resist making jaguar the central character for her next

picture book. Listening and talking to the people there, the jaguar's whereabouts are a constant presence in their lives.

1997 - JAGUAR picture book published SCHOLASTIC PRESS UK / US

1998 - JAGUAR multi media performance. A musical & light show collaboration with Resonance Theatre Company premiere 16 April South Bank Arts Centre London

1999 - Resonance , toured England sponsored by ARTS COUNCIL.
(see [KIDS WEBSITE EVENTS archive](#))

2000 - PICTURE THIS Millennium Picture Book Exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge. Picture book artists who were selected as major influences in picture book art at the end of the 20th century.

Alongside artwork were a few display cabinets in which Helen placed bird feathers, a plaster cast of a jaguar's paw print and a caiman skull. All these items were given to her when she was researching JAGUAR.

www.HelenCowcher.com | Helen@helencowcher.com