

**SNOWED IN WITH GRANDMOTHER SILK  
BY CAROL FENNER**

**Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award Nominee 2006  
Grades 3-5**

Submitted by Maranda G. Howell, Graduate Student  
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**Title: Snowed in with Grandmother Silk**

**Author: Carol Fenner**

**Illustrator: Amanda Harvey**

**Publisher: Dial, 2003**

**Pages: 80**

**Summary**

This early chapter book, which has large print, attractive illustrations, straightforward text and an uncomplicated plot, will be enjoyed by reluctant readers.

When Ruddy's parents decide to go on a cruise, he finds out he will have to stay with his Grandmother Silk for ten days. He can't imagine anything more boring! Grandmother Silk never lets him run around and make noise; she insists on calling him Rudford; she always wears high heels – even her hair is designer! To make matters worse, he will miss trick or treating on Halloween with his friends! His grandmother promises to take him to the zoo for a Halloween party, but the night before Halloween, a terrible snowstorm comes leaving Ruddy and his grandmother with no electricity or water for days. Ruddy wears his gorilla costume and one of his grandmother's fur coats to keep warm. His grandmother gradually gives up her high heels and strict ways as she adjusts to the demands of survival. They carry water from the lake, build a fire in the fireplace and learn to play chess. Forced to rely on the creativity of their own "survival" skills, each begins to see a different side of the other, discovering that spending time together really isn't so bad! By the time the men come to repair the electricity, Ruddy and his grandmother have grown comfortable with each other.

**Reviews**

"A small treat for fans of Carol Fenner." Joan Kindig, Ph.D. (Children's Literature)

"The story is gentle and funny, a posthumous gift from the Newbery Honor author of *Yolanda's Genius*." (Kirkus Reviews, September 15, 2003, Vol. 71, No. 18)

"Harvey's pencil-and-watercolor artwork extends the warmth and gentle humor in this chapter book, which will be a good choice for beginning readers as well as for reading aloud." Gillian Engbert (Booklist, December 15, 2003, Vol. 100, No. 8)

“This would make a snug little readaloud as well as an enjoyable readalone that’ll make youngsters yearn for a chance to rough it for a few days with a special grownup. Harvey’s line-and-watercolor inserts evince a quiet and personable benignity well matched to the story’s tone.” Deborah Stevenson (Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books, November 2003, Vol. 57, No. 3)

### **Awards/Recognition**

Gryphon Award

Bulletin Blue Ribbons, 2002; Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books

Capitol Choices, 2004; The Capitol Choices Committee

Notable Children’s Books, 2004; ALA-ALSC

### **Author’s Biography**

Carol Fenner was born in 1929. She began writing at a very early age. Her children’s books have earned many honors, including the Christopher Award and the Newbery Honor. She also wrote short stories for the magazines *Cricket* and *Kalamazoo Collective*. Professional memberships included the Authors Guild, Authors League of America, and the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators. Until her death from cancer in 2002, she resided in Battlecreek, Michigan with her husband of thirty-seven years, Jiles B. Williams. (Source: Contemporary Authors Online, Gale, 2004.)

### **Other Titles by Carol Fenner**

*Christmas Tree on the Mountain*

*Gorilla, Gorilla* (Christopher Medal, 1974)

*The King of Dragons*

*Lagalag, the Wanderer*

*Randall’s Wall*

*Saving Amelia Earhart*

*The Skates of Uncle Richard* (Coretta Scott King Freedom Award Runner-up, 1979)

*A Summer of Horses*

*Tigers in the Cellar*

*Yolonda’s Genius* (Newbery Honor, 1996)

### **Illustrator’s Biography**

Amanda Harvey is the illustrator of more than thirty-five books. She has illustrated the works of authors Charlotte Zolotow, Dick King Smith, and Joan Aitken, as well as Carol Fenner. She also authored and illustrated her own series of stories – *Dog Eared*, *Dog Gone*, and *Dog Days*. She resides in Kent, England with her family.

## Related Titles

*Granny Torrelli Makes Soup* by Sharon Creech. (LYRC 2006)

*The Long Winter* by Laura Ingalls Wilder

*Snowflake Bentley* by Jacqueline Briggs Martin

*Snow Amazing: Cool Facts and Warm Tales* by Jane Drake and Ann Love

*Will You, Won't You?* by Jesse Haas

## Classroom Connections

- Ask students to recall a time when they did not have electricity (due to a storm or perhaps because they were camping). Ask them to describe things they did and used to “survive,” and what they did for fun.
- Get students thinking about their own extended family relationships. Have students examine their relationships with a grandparent (or an aunt/uncle). List traits or behaviors they share in common with that person and ways they are different. Have them share something that makes that person unique and/or something they admire about that person. (Be sure that they include the role that individual plays in their life.)
- Compare and contrast with the other title about a grandmother that is on the ballot this year: *Granny Torrelli Makes Soup*.