

Singing with the Top Down



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From Publishers Weekly Precocious 13-year-old Pauly Mahoney heads an ensemble cast of eccentric characters in this coming-of-age charmer. Pauly and her eight-year-old polio-survivor brother, Buddy, lose their parents after a roller-coaster accident at the Fabulous Fortuno Brothers Traveling Carnival in Tulsa, Okla., one hot July 1955 night. The only family member willing to take the pair in is perky Aunt Nora, a wannabe Hollywood actress who shows up with a fat wad of cash, a "cream-puff 1953 Buick Skylark convertible" and the promise of a new life in California. During the road trip to the Golden State, they pick up nursing-home runaway Tybolt Bisbee and Puppy, his smelly dog. The entourage ebbs and flows with the appearance of a misplaced Indian woman and her small son, the 500-year-old mummified remains of a child, and Joe, an ex-navy fighter pilot on his way to L.A.

and a new job flying for TWA. Graceful and witty, Pauly's courageous voice is this bighearted novel's greatest strength. (Sept.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Thirteen-year-old Pauly Mahoney and her polio-afflicted little brother, Buddy, are orphaned when their parents are killed in a freak roller-coaster accident at the Fabulous Fortuno Brothers Traveling Carnival. Their glamorous aunt Nora, who seems to make her living working as a movie extra, agrees to take them in. During their extended road trip from Oklahoma to California, they travel in style in a cream-puff Buick Skylark convertible, experience the joys of camping, take in a nursing-home runaway, and liberate a mummified Indian child from a desert museum of "amazing anomalies." Resilient and independent Pauly, often made to shoulder adult responsibilities, finds that her aunt is a good listener with a generous heart. Veteran romance novelist Williamson invests Pauly's narrative voice with an authentic charm, and although a few readers might balk at Pauly's rapid transformation from worrywart to Pollyanna, such quibbles would appear to be curmudgeonly in the face of this novel's infectiously sunny spirit. For those who like a quirky plot delivered with relentless good cheer. Joanne Wilkinson Copyright © 1999; American Library Association. All rights reserved See all Editorial Reviews

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