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Juvenile Fiction

Speechless in New York: Going To Series
Ellen Dreyer
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Lost luggage in New York. the Summer Olympics in Sydney. An eccentric Washington, D.C. landlady with a flying car. a mysterious pen pal in London. With four titles, the new "Going To" series offers readers aged nine to thirteen travel, mystery, adventure and hints of romance.

A plane ride from Edina, Minnesota, to Manhattan takes seventh grader Jessie Witt to a new and exciting world. Jessie views the weeklong trip to New York with the Prairie Youth Chorale as such an opportunity that she is determined not to let either lost luggage or a lost singing voice dampen her enthusiasm. At times Jessie wonders if she can keep her promise when a nagging cough that develops into a painful sore throat and friction with other chorale members combine to make her feel miserable.

By using Jessie's sightseeing forays, Dreyer skillfully weaves the sights of New York into the story without becoming didactic. Jessie's visits with her New York relatives provide another view of life in the city thus giving both Jessie and the reader a different perspective on the area. With the chorale, Jessie enjoys the tourist attractions for which the city is well known while contending with the social interactions and distractions typical of a group of young teens. By the time the chorale is scheduled to perform, Jessie has found both her luggage and her voice, some understanding for the chorale's talented, but annoying lead soprano and the promise of a special friendship.

Each book in the "Going To" series concludes with maps of the city and the characters' descriptions of the sights whose locations are numbered on the maps. Web sites at which the reader can access additional information are also provided. Other books in the series introduce Great Britain via a family trip described in *The Bridges in London* by Michele Sobel Spirn. *Eliza Down Under* by Virginia Bernard takes Eliza, her widowed mother and the reader to the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia. *Me, Minerva, and the Flying Car* by E.R. Emmer is set in Washington, D.C., where miserable Talia is forced to move when her parents open a natural

foods store in the city. Although the protagonist in each book is female, a secondary male character is actively involved in events. The publisher plans to add more books to the series each season with two additional titles scheduled for release in August.

Dreyer departs from the genre of her previous titles with this work as she travels into youth fiction with a fast-paced adventure and credible characters that will be right in tune with today's youth.

Janis Ansell