

Avec ces créations bien campées dans leur drôlerie, Eliess Nut le sujet principal proposé par le titre nous apparaît bien naïf, très vertueux sinon un peu fade, car il ne devient en fait que le faire-valoir des autres actants. Face à ces aventures hautes en péripéties, alors que trois bandes rivales se livrent une lutte féroce et sans merci dont l'enjeu est la mainmise sur Chicago, on ne peut s'empêcher d'attendre avec impatience la suite de cet épisode mouvementé de "l'homme au regard d'acier et à la mâchoire de fer". Heureusement, deux autres albums sont déjà en préparation: *Saltracaz* et *Al Pacone*. L'intérêt de cette série est d'autant plus grand, qu'un jour nos illustres héros du Chicago de la Prohibition quitteront la ville du banditisme pour oser venir s'aventurer . . . au QUEBEC, comme l'a laissé entendre le tandem Perron/Viau.

La venue d'Humphrey Beauregard parmi nous récompense enfin un public qui méritait mieux que tout ce qui avait été produit antérieurement. Enfin une série compétitive en comparaison de ce qui nous vient d'Europe ou des Etats-Unis. Une réalisation qui sort des sentiers battus avec une thématique UNIVERSELLE et un traitement du sujet mêlé d'humour et de douce fantaisie.

Souhaitons nous payer encore longtemps la tête de tous ces héros qui nous rappellent dans la joie ces folles années de nos pères . . .

Richard Langlois, spécialiste en bande dessinée enseigne au Collège de Sherbrooke au Québec.

MORE THINGS IN HEAVEN AND EARTH

Witchery Hill, Welwyn Wilton Katz. A Groundwood Book, Douglas & McIntyre, 1984. 244 pp \$7.95 paper. ISBN 0-88899-031-6.

"Two kids that was all they were; two kids against a coven. No one ever believed kids, not when an adult denied their accusations." Such are the thoughts of the perplexed Mike Lewis, the fourteen-year-old protagonist of this crisply written and exciting tale of black magic, murder, and witchcraft set on the channel island of Guernsey. Mike and his father Robert, a journalist, arrive on Guernsey so that Mike's father can work on a book in relative peace and tranquillity. They stay with Tony St. George, an old friend of Mike's father, and his beautiful young wife Janine and Tony's daughter Lisa. Quite soon, a rivalry develops between Mike and the young, cantankerous Lisa who turns out to detest her step-mother.

As the novel unfolds, it becomes clear that all is not as it should be in the house called Saupierre or in the surrounding area. For overlooking the house is a mountain and on the mountain a mysterious tomb which Mike explores in Lisa's company soon after his arrival. Along with Lisa, he also witnesses

what he takes to be witches who meet around this tomb in the dead of night and carry out mysterious and nefarious rituals one of which involves the senseless slaughter of a puppy. One series of mysterious happenings leads to others: a neighbour is poisoned, Lisa's father becomes suddenly and inexplicably ill, pentagrams appear in the house, Saupierre is burgled, a ceiling collapses. Gradually the two children are drawn closer together because of their belief — in the face of parental opposition — in the existence of a coven of witches led by Lisa's own beautiful step-mother Janine. As the parents abandon the children — Mike's father accepts an invitation to take a trip on a friend's sail boat, and Lisa's father, Tony, is too ill to be effective — Mike and Lisa find themselves forced to draw upon their own resources to solve the mystery and finally destroy the coven.

The adult world in this novel is either totally ineffectual, evil or perniciously sceptical. The police will not believe Mike's fantastic claims; Mike's father refuses to believe his son's stories and explains away the mysterious events "logically" and with the use of "common sense". Lisa's hatred of and accusation against her step-mother are written off as the expected reactions of a young daughter who sees her new mother as a rival for the affection of her father. But as is so often the case in children's stories (which seem to borrow a good deal from traditional comic structure) the younger generation with its more vital imaginative powers wins out over the forces of logic and social convention. Finally, totally on his own, Mike works out a solution to the witchcraft problem and, in the process, saves Lisa's life.

A brief summary of the plot does not do justice to the intricacies and drama of this fine novel. Welwyn Wilton Katz is a good story teller who writes in a way that will appeal to teenagers and adults alike. *Witchery Hill* is a skillful and highly exciting rites-of-passage novel which demonstrates both the weaknesses of the adult world's reliance on logic and reason and the value of a vibrant and child-like imagination.

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A FAMILY OF OWLS

Granny's gang: life with a most unusual family of owls, Katherine McKeever. Illus. Olena Kassian. An OWL Magazine Book, 1984. 96 pp. \$8.95 paper. ISBN 0-919872-96-4.

Katherine McKeever and her husband are founders of the Owl Research and Rehabilitation Foundation in Vineland, Ontario. Owls are both their first love and their life's work. For the past twenty years, the McKeeveres have cared