

assertive self-image, and in Maggie, the know-it-all image is softened to one of a still clever friend but one who is considerate and helpful. These developments are welcomed for they correct some bothersome aspects. First, Cyril's constant references to Maggie as the "genius" wear thin after awhile and serve to detract from her character. They elicit some negative reactions in the reader that are unsupported by her actions. As well, there is the nagging impression that Cyril is younger than Maggie. His hero worship of her and even the cover pictures point to some discrepancy in the ages. Yet they are in the same class. While these flaws are not major, they do exist.

Staunton has a winner with this series that should be popular with those in the junior level. Plenty of dialogue, action, and humour make for easy reading. In addition, the format and content lend themselves well to classroom reading. With a third title in the series, *Taking care of Crumley*, there are plenty of adventures to choose.

*Anna Chiota has been dealing with children's literature in her eight years as a librarian; she now works in the Grantham Branch Library, St. Catharines, Ontario.*

## CHILDREN CHOOSE THEIR FAVOURITES

**The best of children's choices**, Compiled by Lenore Nilson. Citizens' Committee on Children, 1988. 114 pp. \$9.95 paper. ISBN 0-9690205-5-4.

Although there are several available publications which recommend books for children, *The best of children's choices* is unique in that all of the selections have been reviewed by the children for whom they were written and all of the 600 entries are Canadian.

Over the past ten years, the children's reviews have been compiled into five volumes. *The best of children's choices* is an affordable handbook which lists only the young reviewers' favourite selections. It can be used in conjunction with the original five volumes or entirely on its own.

Within *The best of children's choices* the information related to each book is reduced to a minimum including title, author, illustrator, publisher, date of publication and number of pages. Also included are age categories from 3-14 years, easy readers, French versions, and a popularity range of three levels. All information is set up in an easy-to-read format and clear instructions about how to use the handbook are outlined. If further information is required, one could refer to the previous five volumes or to the original book itself.

It is very interesting to discover that some of the books an adult might pre-

fer are not selected or rated highly by children. On the other hand, some books are equally loved by both groups. *Sadie and the snowman* by Allen Morgan and *Thomas' snowsuit* by Robert Munsch are just two examples of shared favourites.

The original purpose of having children review new Canadian books was to assist parents during library visits with their youngsters and when making purchases. It is obvious however that this handbook can also be a useful resource for teachers and librarians. Since a one-sentence description accompanies each title, books can be selected to instill values, help with problem-solving, teach writing and illustrating techniques, enrich a theme study, further develop an interest, and, most importantly, to promote a love of literature through the use of choices made by children.

**Judy Willson** is a grade one teacher in Mississauga who has a strong interest in children's literature.

## QUAND LES ORIGNAUX DEVIENNENT CONTEURS. . .

**Mooz le petit original.** Denys Chabot. Illus. Danièle Gagné. Val d'Or, Éditions Meera, 1986. 21 pp. relié. ISBN 2-920828-05-3.

Après deux romans *L'Eldorado dans les glaces* (1978) et *La Province lunaire* (1981), dont le dernier mérite pour son auteur le Prix du Gouverneur-Général en 1982, Denys Chabot nous offre un livre pour enfants. La source d'inspiration de *Mooz le petit original* semble être la région de l'Abitibi, si aimée par l'auteur. Dans un paysage tout à fait abitibien: lac gelé, petite île, forêts de sapins, cabane de chasseur, troupeau d'orignaux, Denys Chabot situe une charmante histoire fantaisiste, qui est à la fois un conte de chasse, un conte de revenants et une histoire d'initiation.

Comme l'exige toute initiation, Mooz le petit original est séparé de sa famille, et cela dès la première page de l'histoire. Par un beau soleil printanier, le grand-père de Mooz, "qui a raconté des histoires de chasse et fumé la pipe pendant tout l'hiver", mène son troupeau sur le lac gelé; tout d'un coup la débâcle emporte tout le troupeau, laissant Mooz tout seul sur l'île. Le petit original, qui ne connaît les chasseurs qu'à travers les histoires racontées par son grand-père pendant les longues veillées d'hiver, voit arriver dans l'île, avec l'été, un chasseur au gros nez rouge et son chien blanc, Darius. Mooz l'échappe belle lorsque le chasseur lance son chien à l'assaut du petit original. Pour éviter les coups que lui mérite son manque d'enthousiasme pour la chasse, le petit chien, qui en fait est très gentil, s'enfuit dans la forêt, où il rencontre Mooz et