

*don* est un *bon* roman, tout simplement. De ceux qui se lisent pour le plaisir, rapidement et dont le récit est si fort qu'il marque le mémoire.

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## EVOCATIVE HISTORICAL FICTION

**Rachel's revolution.** Dorothy Perkins. Lancelot Press, 1988. 160 pp., \$7.95 paper. ISBN 0-88999-408-0.

By 1776, supporters of George Washington and the cause of American independence have left Boston while the British loyalists remain amid rumours of an imminent flight to England. Caught in the conflict are orphaned siblings, Rachel and Matthew. Rachel remains in Boston while Matthew, an apprentice, has left with his master.

As the novel opens, Matthew sneaks back to check on his sister. The intrigue is set in motion when Rachel sees and is seen by a stranger peering into the window of a Major's house. This stranger, a rebel spy, threatens Rachel lest she report him. But this incident is soon forgotten when the British decide to evacuate and Rachel must prepare to leave with the others aboard transport ships bound for Halifax.

But Gipson, the rebel spy, reappears on the voyage disguised as a sailor. Once in Halifax, he impersonates a soldier in order to uncover British plans for a renewed attack on the colonies. Rachel recognizes him and with her friend, Joshua, sets out to foil his plans. The climax comes when Gipson insinuates himself with the officers and has Joshua imprisoned. Rachel must free him and warn Major Peters of the presence of a spy within his ranks. A solitary overnight journey, a robbery and assault, and a frantic search of the coastline for the spy's hiding place follow.

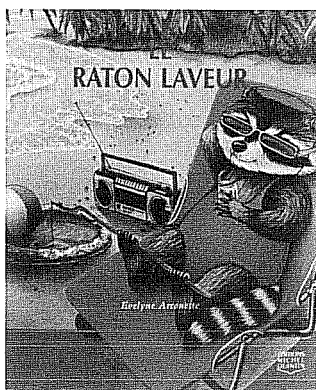
The author evokes the atmosphere of the varying circumstances, be it the tension and confusion of the evacuation, the despair and boredom of the voyage, or the isolation and hard work of a new start in a strange land. The characters are well developed despite being viewed through Rachel's eyes. Never mere stereotypes, the supporting characters have unique personalities. The development of the German couple, Marthe and Jakob, is especially poignant. But the military figures are not as well drawn. They appear one-dimensional and lack the appropriate decisiveness expected. At times, the young protagonist seem to lead the military to an extent that the latter appears inept. As well, the characterization of Rachel has some conflicting elements. Al-

though 14 years of age, her thoughts sometimes portray one younger. The reading level is more appropriate to older children but they may have problems identifying with the heroine.

Despite these flaws the story is quite successful as an adventure and as historical fiction. It is interesting and suspenseful. In the right hands, it should provide satisfying reading. The general theme of the plight of the Loyalists gives the book broader than regional appeal and it could provide curriculum support.

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## L'IMAGE EN LIBERTÉ... PAS TOUJOURS SURVEILLÉE



**Le raton laveur.** Michel Quintin. Illus. Evelyn Arcouette. Waterloo, Michel Quintin, 1988. 24 pp., 6,95\$ broché. ISBN 2-920438-17-4.

Faire connaître aux jeunes lecteurs, essentiellement par l'image, et donc avec un minimum de texte, les caractéristiques d'un animal de la faune canadienne, tel est l'objectif que semble poursuivre la collection Ciné-faune des éditions Michel Quintin.

Le dernier-né de la collection, *Le Raton-laveur*, se coule parfaitement dans ce moule.

Chaque image occupe une double page et le texte qui lui sert d'amorce se présente sous la forme de distiques et de tercets rythmés et terminés par une assonance à la manière des comptines. Si ce parti pris stylistique donne lieu à quelques réussites intéressantes, le plus souvent quand les versets sont courts (pp. 14 et 17), par exemple), d'autres trouvailles sont moins heureuses: alourdissement du rythme (pp. 9 et 11), présence de cheville maladroite (p. 3). Il faut bien reconnaître que vouloir transmettre une information claire et exacte sous forme d'une comptine vive et rythmée, comme l'exige le genre, est un projet on ne peut plus ambitieux. Michel Quintin, qui est l'auteur du texte, réussit pleinement à faire connaître les caractéristiques du raton-laveur, mais il ne relève pas tout à fait le défi du point de vue de la qualité littéraire du texte, qui aurait tout de même pu être quelque peu améliorée.

Le texte joue ici un rôle d'ancrage: il guide l'interprétation de l'image, en