

Two books from the editors of *Owl Magazine* attempt to reach this ideal. Less successful is *What's it?*, which, like the magazine feature, presents full-colour close-up photographs of common objects along with verbal clues to their identity. Despite the immense popularity of this type of visual puzzle, it could be argued that this book might be thumbed through once and put aside, although two pages of facts and puzzling questions about the photographed objects considerably extend its usefulness. Much more successful is *Kitchen fun*, which, like its predecessors *Summer fun* and *Winter fun*, contains a wealth of activities such as art and craft projects, magic tricks including how to make a volcano, games, treats, and science-based "challenges", all using ordinary kitchen supplies. Lively photographs and line drawings supplement the clear instructions, which always advise children to ask an adult whenever a stove or sharp utensils are required.

Dino dots puts a new face on that old rainy-day favourite, the join-the-dots activity book. With its eighteen dinosaurs pictures of up to 300 closely-spaced dots, full-colour stickers, and detailed cumulative quizzes on dinosaur habits and habitats, this glossy book is sure to please serious dinosaur fans from Grade 4 up.

Armed with *Free stuff for kids*, children can beat those rainy-day blahs for months by keeping their mailboxes stuffed with posters, buttons, booklets, toys, games, and many more free or inexpensive items from various museums, organizations, government agencies, and private retailers. Although many of these items cost only the price of an envelope and stamp, the more appealing ones often require cash payments and paid return postage, for a total cost of about \$2.25. Nevertheless, children as young as six and up will use this book repeatedly and enjoy it thoroughly.

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COPING WITH PERSONAL TENSIONS

Scoop Jones. Katie Gillmor Ellis. Prentice-Hall, 1989. 135 pp., \$9.95 paper. ISBN 0-13-7968140; **S.P. likes A.D.**. Catherine Brett. The Women's Press, 1989. 119 pp., \$6.95 paper. ISBN 0-88961-142-4.

Scoop Jones is a lighthearted first person narrative describing a month in the life of a seventh grade Toronto girl. T.J., a transplanted American, is having a hard time fitting in at her progressive, alternate school. By winning the contest

at the Toronto Courier and becoming Junior Columnist, she hopes to gain recognition from her peers. Becoming "somebody" is important to T.J. Her best friend, Abby, has won entrance to a prestigious school. Maggie, on the other hand, the nerdy red-haired brain, is definitely uncool. Unfortunately, it's Maggie, not Abby, who comes through for T.J. time after time.

In this novel, Ellis captures the complications and emotional turmoil of the transitional period in adolescence when friends, goals and self-image are reassessed and often exchanged. The characters in *Scoop Jones* speak with the intense, often crude argot of youth, demonstrating the earnest, undeveloped opinions, obsessions with banalities, extreme self-consciousness and awkward honesty which makes young adulthood both awful and wonderful. Indeed, the role of language in ordering reality is an important theme in the novel. T.J. gains influence and respect as she communicates in writing but she also discovers the pitfalls of committing words to paper when her column in the school newspaper has unexpected consequences.

While *Scoop Jones* has its flaws – including inadequate characterization of adults and somewhat improbable situations – it is interesting enough to keep pages turning among readers who are in or approaching the first year of junior high.

S.P. likes A.D. is a novel dealing with young adult homosexuality. Stephanie, a ninth grade girl, finds herself attracted to Anne Delaney. What is she to do with these socially unacceptable feelings? The delicate process of finding out what homosexuality is and whether or not one is homosexual, while having to conceal this interest, is skilfully depicted. The nature of the attraction however is never well articulated. Although the novel is told in the third person, the reader is limited to Stephanie's own perceptions of reality. The reader shares Stephanie's frustration as she seeks words to express, even to herself, the experience she is going through. For her, as with most teens, body has outpaced mind. However, the additional burden that secrecy and lack of communication with other homosexuals may place on teens in Stephanie's situation is made abundantly clear.

The young adult reader may become bored by the bare, prosaic prose of this novel. It could easily be read by the average fifth grader, making few demands in terms of vocabulary or sentence structure.

S.P. likes A.D. presents a lesbian character in a contemporary situation and in a sympathetic light. Sexual orientation is shown as an undeniable aspect of personality but other aspects are portrayed as equally important. The completion of a dinosaur project at school proves to be just as much of a milestone as the acceptance of sexual feelings.

Homosexuality is a legitimate theme for a young adult novel. However, in *S.P. likes A.D.*, the theme seems expected to justify the telling of a tale which is just too good to be true. When Stephanie needs help in designing a dinosaur sculpture, she is introduced to a lesbian couple, one a paleontologist, one an

artist, who take the time to help her with both concerns. The unrequited attraction she feels for Anne ends when she realizes how materialistic (and thus incompatible) Anne is. Stephanie's best friend is not shocked when she learns Stephanie's secret and there is no constraint in their relationship – it turns out that the friend's brother is gay. The author seems to feel the need to reassure the reader that, apart from a few minor snags, all will go well for Stephanie so long as she is true to herself. The real world – for homosexual or heterosexual – was never like this. The novel's depiction of growth as an individual process is its best feature however, and makes it a worthy addition to the young adult library.

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D'UNE ATTACHANTE SIMPLICITÉ

Le héros de Rosalie. Ginette Anfousse. Montréal, La courte échelle, 1988. 96 pp., 6,95\$ broché. ISBN 2-89021-075-8.

Il ya a un prologue à ce petit roman. Il commence ainsi: "Ca va mal! Il y a des jours où tout va mal! D'abord, j'ai le nez trop petit, trop pointu. Le pire, j'ai comme un énorme bouton qui pousse dessus." En voilà assez pour que bien des jeunes se sentent tout de suite attachés au personnage de Rosalie, si cela n'est déjà fait avec la première aventure de Rosalie, publiée en 1987. (*Les catastrophes de Rosalie*. La courte échelle, 1987.) En voilà assez, également, pour donner le ton général de ce léger roman, qui s'adresse aux jeunes de neuf à douze ans.

Rosalie Dansereau est en cinquième année. Elle nous raconte elle-même ses aventures, ses pensées et ses humeurs. Chacun des neufs chapitres présente une scène de son quotidien: la cour d'école, la récréation, la maison, etc. Rosalie est à l'âge des premiers boutons et des premiers coups de coeur. L'âge où les vêtements ne tombent jamais aussi bien sur nous que sur les autres, où nos cheveux ne sont jamais coiffés à notre goût et où les adultes semblent manquer totalement de compréhension. Heureusement, c'est aussi l'âge où les malheurs ne durent pas et où les humeurs se transforment avec une étonnante rapidité. Ce petit roman permet donc de vivre en montagne russe les émotions et les humeurs de Rosalie Dansereau. Un simple mot de la part de "son héros" et toute la vie reprend tout à coup son charme, effaçant les boutons et les incertitudes. Même ses tantes redeviennent de bonnes amies et de bonnes complices quand le calme revient sur les humeurs de Rosalie.