

La publication double de *Maïna* et de *Marie-Tempête* de Dominique Demers brouille les limites entre la littérature de jeunesse et la littérature générale et suscite cette question: y a-t-il une écriture spécifique qui justifie les collections pour adolescents? Tout roman qui prend comme protagoniste un(e) adolescent(e) n'est pas nécessairement destiné aux jeunes; les romans pour adultes sont peuplés de nombreux personnages adolescents (on n'a qu'à penser aux romans de Gide, Alain-Fournier, Colette, Ducharme, Blais). De plus, la récupération des romans pour adultes dans des collections pour jeunes est fréquente; le cas du *Catcher in the Rye* de J.D. Salinger, roman culte chez les adolescents, est un exemple célèbre. La récupération inverse des romans pour jeunes par un public adulte est également possible, comme dans le cas des deux romans de Demers, bien que moins fréquente. Dans son article, "Plaidoyer pour la littérature jeunesse" (*Québec Français*, no. 109), Demers explique sa déception de voir que la littérature de jeunesse reste toujours une littérature marginalisée: "La vaste majorité des professeurs de littérature dans les collèges et les universités n'ont aucune idée de ce qui se cache derrière les pages couvertures des meilleurs romans pour la jeunesse. Et on dit ensuite que la littérature de jeunesse a acquis ses lettres de noblesse!" (30). La publication de *Maïna* et de *Marie-Tempête* dans la collection générale de Québec/Amérique contribue, en fin de compte, à faire connaître les richesses de la littérature de jeunesse québécoise à un public qui n'oserait pas chercher ses lectures dans les rayons jeunesse des librairies et des bibliothèques. En France, les aventures de Marie-Lune ont paru uniquement dans le format adulte, les adultes ignorent donc complètement qu'ils achètent un roman pour la jeunesse.

Le roman pour adolescents se distingue du roman de l'adolescence "pour adultes" par des marges étroites, un fait souligné par Jacques Allard dans sa préface de *Marie-Tempête*: "Il s'agissait, en fait, d'un roman de l'adolescence, en trois parties. Un vrai roman. De ce type de l'âge difficile, si rare dans notre littérature, en fait souvent caché dans la case réservée des romans pour 'jeunes'" (9). Les limites entre les genres et les tranches d'âge s'émoussent et le succès de *Maïna* et de *Marie-Tempête* auprès du grand public prouve de nouveau qu'un bon livre pour la jeunesse, c'est un livre à la lecture duquel n'importe quel adulte peut prendre un grand plaisir.

Daniela Di Cecco est professeure de littérature de jeunesse à l'University of South Carolina.

Romp and Reflection: Two Fantasy Adventures

Jeremy and the Air Pirates. Felicity Finn. Illus. Sally J.K. Davies. Second Story, 1998. 220 pp. \$6.95 paper. ISBN 1-896764-02-9. *The Nose from Jupiter*. Richard Scrimger. Tundra, 1998. 160 pp. \$8.99 paper. ISBN 0-88776-428-2.

Take a young male protagonist living with his single, working, often preoccupied Mom. A mom who doesn't cook. And doesn't communicate. Dad is nowhere around.

Add a best friend who has something which stirs envy in the hero's heart, but is otherwise often less-than-satisfactory in the best-friend department. That is, likely to run out when the going gets tough. Introduce into this young man's life an unusual secret friend (or friends) with habits of behaviour which are apt to bring more excitement into a humdrum life than is necessarily desirable and well, what have you got? The foundation for a great fantasy-adventure with a toehold in the all-too-real contemporary world that nevertheless allows the story to reach heady heights of pure imagination.

So much for what is shared by two new books aimed at readers eight to thirteen. In other dimensions the stories are vastly different.

In her first book, *Jeremy and the Aunties*, Felicity Finn introduced eleven-year-old Jeremy and the aunties, three little-old-lady dolls. The three dolls share a secret with Jeremy: they can talk and use their hands. They can also scheme, and desire. But they can't walk and are dependent on Jeremy for transportation, crazy rides in his bicycle basket or wild towrope transportation assisted by rollerskates. And oh, the intrigue these three ghost-inhabited dolls can bring about, both by luck and intention.

In *Jeremy and the Air Pirates*, the adventures continue. The plot is thickened this time when the aunties apparently find a mode of locomotion which is not Jeremy-dependent. The same bumbling convicts and suspicious police officers that supported the action in the first book make appearances in this story. And Jeremy's "rich" friend Rick is back. The plot centres on auntie-induced problems, the search for solutions and numerous complications along the way. Rick runs out on Jeremy for a trip to Calgary just when things get interesting and doesn't reappear until he's, um, needed for a final wrap-up. Jeremy's Mom still doesn't cook, "I'll just nuke some dogs and we can flop in front of the tube" (45), and they still don't communicate.

'Hi, Jeremy,' my mom said. 'How was your day?'

'Pretty good.'

'What did you do?'

'Oh, nothing much.' This is a typical conversation between me and my mom.

'How was yours?' (44)

But Jeremy survives. He creates his own bizarre snacks, which form a kind of subplot to the book.

'Jell-O sandwiches are my favorite ... spread margarine on four or five slices of bread — I prefer white ... sprinkle Jell-O powder onto the margarine and put another slice of bread on top, and so on, in alternating colors. It looks great and tastes better.' (144)

And he discovers a little about life beyond TV, literally. But all in all, the book is a romp. There is never any mention of Jeremy's father, Jeremy doesn't seem to suffer over the lack of connection with his mother and, except for one scene when he longs for a real meal, he isn't in search of something different than he has. My

nine-year-old loved the book. And I'm sure this would be true of the younger set in the age range the publishers describe. It's a page-turner and it's lots of fun. But reflection is not a big factor here, not even when the aunts take on such big subjects as the problem of TV in our society and what to do with criminals.

The thirteen-year-old protagonist of Richard Scrimger's *The Nose From Jupiter* is introspective, and so is this warmly written, often funny book. Alan's parents are divorced, his father lives in another city and, given the amount of communication that takes place between Alan and his Mom, mom might as well live somewhere else too. "She asked you how your day went. Then she said, 'That's fine.' And then she put the frozen pizza in the oven" (33). That's Norbert talking. Norbert is the pint-sized alien from Jupiter who has taken up residence in Alan's nose and whose spunky attitude and outspoken ways change Alan's life forever.

Alan has a best buddy too: Victor, who has a mom who cooks and a dad who drives him to school. Victor, who abandons Alan with a mumbled apology when the bullies descend.

There's adventure in Scrimger's story: the age-old problems of the average kid against determined bullies. But much of the tale centres on relationships; on Alan's attempts to understand himself and those around him. The story is about growing up and some of it hurts. While a soccer game against the bully team and a confused school assembly offer action segments that are similar to those in the Jeremy books, the events are less important in this story than are the feelings of the characters. It's about "... what you've got inside you" (29), as Norbert says, pun fully intended. It's about accepting what you can't change, and about liking yourself. The plot moves too slowly for the younger set, but twelve and thirteen-year olds, beset by identity issues and teenage angst will love this tale of Alan's cry for help and Norbert, who "nose" just what is needed.

Bonnie Ryan-Fisher is a freelance writer/editor and a philosophy tutor for Athabasca University. She is also currently studying learning disabilities and volunteering in a special needs classroom.

One Good Pal Deserves Another

Franklin's Secret Club. Paulette Bourgeois. Illus. Brenda Clark. Kids Can, 1998. Unpag. \$12.95, \$4.95 cloth, paper. ISBN 1-55074-474-7, 1-55074-476-3. *Elliot's Emergency.* Andrea Beck. Illus. author. Kids Can, 1998. Unpag. \$12.95 cloth. ISBN 1-55074-441-0.

I first came across Franklin the turtle in his French incarnation as Benjamin and was bemused by the eagerness with which my then primary-grade child added titles to her collection. I have since grown fond of the little green fellow as he struggles cheerfully to contend with such everyday situations as wanting a pet, starting school, and having a sleepover. Indeed, it's the very ordinariness of the events