

heroism of Tendulkar, the father of Ravindra, who is secretly organizing an underground escape system for those “who get into difficulties through no fault of their own” (134). The courage of such people makes them heroic and their moral values are to be admired.

Though the novel does not create a convincing fictional world of the future, it makes us face our concerns about current affairs. It would stimulate discussion of social and political issues.

**Hilary Thompson** is an Associate Professor at Acadia University. She has published a number of articles on children’s literature, as well as on Elizabeth Cleaver, Elizabeth Roberts MacDonald and John and Thomas Bewick, and edited *Children’s Voices in Atlantic Literature and Culture: Essays on Childhood* (CCP, 1995). Her work with Dorothy Heathcote informs her latest paper on kinesthesia and intuitive learning published in *Canadian National Tertiary Drama Educators: Perspectives on Practice* (ed. Juliana Saxton and Carole Miller, U of Victoria P, 1995).

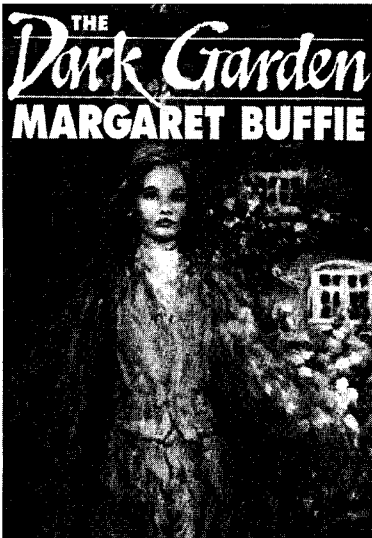
#### A GHOSTLY LOVE TRIANGLE

**The Dark Garden.** Margaret Buffie. Kids Can Press, 1995. 240 pp. \$16.95 cloth. ISBN 1-55074-288-4.

When sixteen-year-old Thea arrives home from the hospital with amnesia, she is more than a little confused. Not only does she remember her house as it looked two generations earlier, she sees people who don’t exist. She quickly becomes involved in the web of passion and violence which connects these apparitions.

In a spooky page-turner complete with an overgrown garden, a haunted churchyard, a kindly vicar and a next-door psychic, Margaret Buffie has once again written a book teenagers will love. Thea is an appealing protagonist, caught between resentment against her parents — who make her do all the housework while they focus on their careers — and a desire to take responsibility. The awfulness of her home-life makes Thea’s obsession with the past even more understandable. Adolescents will sympathize with her moody defiance right up to the last page.

The story moves along briskly, with plenty of scary scenes and fascinating encounters. At times there seem to be more plot threads than can be comfortably handled in one novel. We follow Thea’s recovery from amnesia, her adjustment to her difficult family, her connection



to the ghostly Susannah, an historical love triangle, the threat posed by Susannah's mentally-deranged father, Thea's budding romance with the psychic gardener next door, and a surprising climax with a plot twist.

The point of view shifts frequently from first person to third, and from Thea to the ghostly Susannah. These shifts build tension and reflect Thea's confusion over her own identity. They are also, occasionally, confusing.

At the climax of the story, a shocking crime leads to the revelation that one character has taken on the identity of another, and as the mystery is solved the ghosts are laid to rest. It requires an agile reader to keep up with the twists and turns of the plot. Thea's experiences are sometimes so subtly presented and so full of unanswered questions that the scenes become bewildering. However, a second reading of the book reveals that it has been masterfully plotted, with themes and scenes cleverly interwoven and perfectly timed. For example, Thea, who is a painter, frequently describes people in terms of colour. Her cat often appears when a ghostly encounter is imminent. References to gardening come back again and again. These details are carefully planned and are sustained throughout the story, giving it a sense of unity.

Readers will love Thea and will revel in her encounters with the supernatural. Fans of Buffie's previous books will not be disappointed in this one.

**Joanne Stanbridge** is the children's librarian at Westmount Public Library in Montreal. She has an MA in Creative Writing (Concordia), and her middle-grade novel was recently accepted for publication.

## GALLOWAY'S GRIM TALES

**Truly Grim Tales.** Priscilla Galloway. Lester Publishing, 1995. 132 pp. \$12.95 paper. ISBN 1-895555-67-1.

Because they are endlessly fascinating and endlessly interpretable, the fairy tale "mill" never quits. Currently, two popular manifestations of the tales are James Gardner's *Politically Correct Bedtime Tales* and Jon Scieszka's *The Stinky Cheese Man and other Fairly Stupid Tales*. In the first instance, Gardner, in his adult book, is correct to the ridiculous, while in the latter children's book, Scieszka manipulates the tales textually and visually so that neither content, forms nor feelings are spared from his absurd imagination. His retellings include "The Princess and the Bowling Ball" and "Little Red Running Shorts." Also feminist retellings — from Angela Carter's serious work *The Bloody Chamber* to Babette Cole's frivolous and funny *Prince Cinders* — give us the tales in new shapes and in contexts. Priscilla Galloway's *Truly Grim Tales* contributes to this enterprise. Her tales, like Robin MacKinley's *Beauty*, are geared to the young adult reader.

I was immediately struck by *Truly Grim Tales'* cover's similarity to *The Stinky Cheese Man* (cover designed by Patrice Sheridan). The earthy tones, the