

tends to find him considerably less likeable than Gully does. Empathy wanes.

Ben's improvement as a person and rehabilitation as a character start when his terror of a thunderstorm propels him under his bed to find Gully quivering there too. From the moment when the little boy extends a shaky hand to the big dog, the reader's sympathies flow back to him. The process is completed by his exchanges with Hana, the girl from next door, who ridicules his fears but turns out to have dragons of her own with which Ben can help her.

"Reassuring" is a word frequently applied to Jean Little's books. And they are reassuring. Adults, at least the adults with any control over the protagonists, are usually wise, kind, and strong. Handicaps can be lived with, even partially alleviated. Problems are soluble. But life is often emotionally fraught for her child characters all the same. Her youngsters can be realistically angry, frustrated, envious, vengeful, as well as affectionate, hopeful, and capable of great generosity. They experience painful wars with internal dragons. The luckiest ones have potent, patient, uncritical canine allies. As Jean Little portrays dogs, St. George should have had one.

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MINI-REVIEWS

Who hides in the park, Warabé Aska. Illus. author. Tundra Books, 1986. Unpaginated \$14.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88776-182-8.

Who hides in the park is a beautiful, mysterious book about Vancouver's Stanley Park. The short trilingual text — English, French and Japanese —



tells of the Salish Indian spirits whose secrets live on among the animals and children in the park. The author's full-page paintings convey the same enchanted feeling and are full of hidden creatures, often being transformed into another element of nature.

The variety of scenes and activities is wonderfully caught in this har-

mony of ancient, modern, natural and human. The book also contains a map and explanations of each illustration. Every child should have a chance to experience this work of art.

Grandfather Heron finds a friend, Dayle Gaetz. Illus. Anna Mah. Press Porcépic, 1986. 36 pp. \$4.95 paper. ISBN 0-88878-260-8.

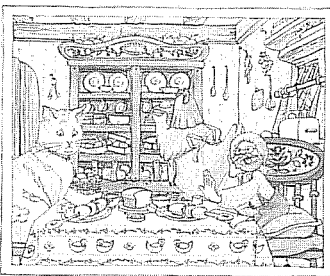


Grandfather Heron finds a friend presents the problems of growing old through the character of Grandfather Heron who is cold, hungry and lonely. The elderly's needs are sensitively handled but some sensitivity on the part of the reader (or some adult input) may be needed to see through Grandfather Heron's bad humour.

This and the facts about herons at the end of the book make it a good choice for a primary classroom. The text and black and white illustrations give personalities to otherwise realistic herons and do so in a way that is appropriate for the suggested four to eight age range.

Little Blue Ben, Phoebe Gilman. Illus. author. North Winds Press, 1986. 40 pp. \$9.95 cloth. ISBN 0-590-71692-1.

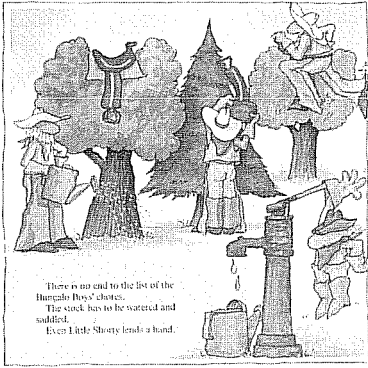
Little Blue Ben is a delightful book for four- to six-year-olds. The pleasantly rhyming text tells about Little Blue Ben, a leprechaun-like creature, playing hide-and-seek with his brother, Blue Cat, in order to avoid eating the blue eggs their mother, Blue Hen, has prepared for supper. Blue Ben "disappears in the book."



The readers (and Blue Cat) try to find him in the author's detailed colour illustrations of country scenes. Children will love to find and refind Blue Ben but since he is very tiny, this book would be better for reading to one or two children rather than a large group.

The Bungalo boys: last of the tree ranchers, John Bianchi. Illus. author. Firefly Books, 1986. Series: Bungalo Books.

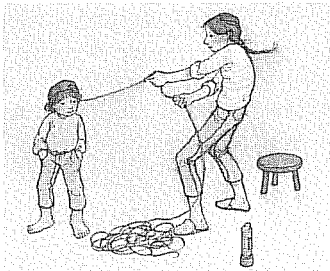
Unpaginated \$12.95, \$4.95 cloth, paper.
ISBN 0-921285-027, 0-921285-00-0.



The first in the *Bungalo boys* series, *Last of the tree ranchers* is an amusing account of a day in the life of four crazy cowboys and their herd of trees. Children will enjoy Little Shorty's numerous blunders and the boys' pursuit of the sneaky rustlers, the Beaver Gang. The use of puns and cowboy clichés may be more fully appreciated by adults but this is a fun book for all ages.

Pardon me, Mom, Gail Chislett. Illus. Joanne Fitzgerald. Annick Press, 1986. Unpaginated \$12.95, \$4.95 cloth, paper. ISBN 0-920303-69-2, 0-920303-68-4.

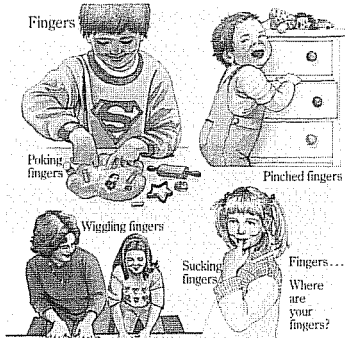
Pardon me, Mom is the classic story of a little boy hearing only what he wants to hear. Discovering this problem takes the reader through amusing misunderstandings and the removal of various obstacles, mostly from Michael's ears.



More and more piled up on the floor. Finally the ear was empty.

Easy enough for preschoolers, *Pardon me, Mom* will also be enjoyed (especially for Michael's responses and his collection of valuables) by school-age children. The colour illustrations are simple but give a familiar and attractive feeling to the book.

The bare naked book, Kathy Stinson. Illus. Heather Collins. Annick Press, 1986. Unpaginated \$12.95, \$4.95 cloth, paper. ISBN 0-920303-52-8, 0-920303-53-6.



The bare naked book is a fun book for pre-schoolers that encourages awareness of and ease with one's body. Eighteen body parts are presented with four realistic and varied examples of each including "Cold ears," "Hunched shoulders," "Tickly belly buttons" and "Pinched fingers." The colour illustrations show people, mostly children, in everyday situa-

tions with a comfortable clutter of objects that invite close inspection. Young children will identify with this book and may find it inspires guessing or chanting games about the body. Incidentally, the book includes bums, penises and vaginas but, considering the title, relatively few bare bodies. Adults shouldn't blush too much.

The short hockey career of amazing Jany, Robert Priest. Illus. Ross MacDonald. Aya Press, 1986. Unpaginated \$8.00 paper. ISBN 0-920544-46-0.

A short hockey career of amazing Jany is a tall tale about a little girl from Nipigon, Ontario who plays NHL hockey at the age of four and a half. Jany Singh, the tiny Canadian hero encourages confidence in children through the determination she shows in everything she does. The book contains numerous Canadian and Ontario references: the CBC, "The National" and the OHA are mentioned without explanation. This may create a familiar flavour for the initiated but seems to limit the possible readership. The



full pages of text probably make the book too long for some of the three- to seven-year-old target group. The black-and-white illustrations are a rather disappointing accompaniment for this would-be legend.

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MINI-COMPTES RENDUS

Une musique que tu peux voir et entendre, Peter Magadini. Montréal, Ville-Marie, 1985. 79 pp. 10,95\$ broché. ISBN 2-89194-147-0.

Peter Magadini a pu rassembler, à partir d'expériences dans la salle de classe, un attrayant petit manuel de musique pour les enfants. Le livre comprend plusieurs suggestions pour des jeux à réaliser à l'école comme à la maison. Tout cela est accompagné de dessins et de photos qui ajoutent à la lisibilité et à la clarté. Une seule réserve: le manuel aurait dû comprendre une discographie adaptée au contexte francophone. La traduction, c'est souvent plus que la traduction.