

pawed, pie-faced pudding-brains," and her prospective husband appears as a "pear-shaped, pinhead — sporting a plaid pyjama top and a pair of preposterous plum-coloured polka dotted pants." Perhaps the plethora of P's might perturb parental panderers of pre-slumber patter, but as Atwood's and countless other parents' experience attests, children revel in such extravagances.

Maryann Kovalski's splendid colour illustrations offer more than a mere balance to Atwood's text. They are a masterful amplification of the tale, both reflecting the literal progression of plot and capturing the subtler dimensions of Atwood's parody. Prunella's metamorphosis from a prideful twit to a more humble, gentler soul is superbly reinforced through the illustrations. Each page of text has a complementary illustration, and the harmonious interplay between the two is a critical, delightful feature, even extending to the illustrations supporting the "P" preoccupation (the opening scene depicts the royal courtyard, and in the background a servant performs her duties as a royal "Pooper-scooper"; in the final illustration, Prunella entertains her portly prince, while Pug piddles on a garden flower pot).

Princess Prunella is a cleverly crafted fractured fairy tale. It offers up a moral on the perils of pride, but it is not moralistic. The text is poetically succinct, even while it is lavishly alliterative. The illustrations are impeccably detailed, and never abandon the tone of the text. In a nutshell, Atwood's playful romp on pride and redemption should be in every child's library.

Jim Gellert is Dean of Arts and Science and Professor of English at Lakeland University.

A Lighthearted Look at Family Life

Mortimer Mooner Makes Lunch. Frank B. Edwards. Illus. John Bianchi. Bungalo Books, 1995. Distributed by Firefly Books. 24 pp. \$14.95 cloth, \$4.95 paper. ISBN 0-921285-37-X, 0-921285-36-1. ***Best and Dearest Chick of All.*** Bob Barton. Illus. Coral Nault. Northern Lights Books for Children, Red Deer College P, 1994. 24 pp. \$8.95 paper. ISBN 0-88995-117-9. ***Little Kiwi at the Beach.*** May Rousseau. Illus. author. Trans. Anne Fotheringham. Editions Chouette, 1991 (The Concertina Collection). 24 pp. \$9.95 cloth. ISBN 2-921198-29-0.

These three picture books take a lighthearted look at family life through the eyes of pigs, chickens and bears. In *Mortimer Mooner Makes Lunch*, readers get a glimpse into another day in the life of the Mooner family of pigs. "You have TEN minutes to catch your bus," cries Mortimer as his father jumps in the shower and Mortimer dashes into the kitchen to pack his dad's lunch. And what a wondrous lunch it is! As the countdown progresses, the usual parent/child roles are reversed. Mortimer is the one making lunch and yelling "Are you dressed yet?" to his parent who is frantically racing the clock to catch his bus on time. The text and the illustrations shift between Father Mooner and Mortimer. As Father Mooner "pulled on his socks and hopped to his closet," Mortimer "added some pickles" to the peanut

butter and cheese in a gigantic sandwich. John Bianchi's illustrations are wonderfully matched to the lively rhythm of the text and feature comical expressions and lots of exaggerated action, complete with clouds of dust and beads of sweat. It all comes to a crashing conclusion with an unexpected twist. This is a fast-paced and funny book, definitely *not* recommended for quiet bedtime reading.

A more subtle form of humour is apparent in *Best and Dearest Chick of All*. A sweet-tempered chick named Cheep Cheep is displaced in his family with the arrival of a younger half-brother with the formidable (and ridiculous) name of Little Yellow Fluffy Ball, Best and Dearest Chick of All, Not Another on the Farm, Boasts Such Beauty, Wit and Charm. Not surprisingly, "Best and Dearest" is spoiled by his doting parents and Cheep Cheep ends up doing all the chores. The book is richly decorated and the cast of barnyard characters are beautifully depicted by Coral Nault. The playful mice who inhabit the borders of each page create a minor story of their own and will capture the attention of young readers. Despite its humorous approach, the story cautions against selfishness and its surprise ending will leave children smiling and perhaps a little wiser.

Little Kiwi at the Beach will appeal to very young children. It is a quieter, more subdued story about a young bear cub's first encounter with the "watery giant" known to grownups as the ocean. This is a translation of *Petit Kiwi à la mer*. The book is attractive, with clean and simple illustrations by May Rousseau who also wrote the text. Her soft, earthy colours blend well with the glowing mauve endpapers and bright fuchsia cover. The story is told from the cub's point of view and his first impressions of the beach and ocean are captured imaginatively and in a simple way that will captivate young children. The book is marred, however, by the fact that in several places the rhyming text just doesn't rhyme and this disrupts the story's gentle flow.

Jennifer Charles has a journalism degree from Carleton University and is a scientific editor at the Environmental Technology Centre in Ottawa.

Music, Sound and Colour for Young Children

Pussywillow. Elizabeth Ferber. Illus. author. Boardwalk, 1995. Unpag. \$6.99 paper. ISBN 1-895681-07-3. *One Grey Mouse*. Katherine Burton. Illus. Kim Fernandes. Kids Can P, 1995. Unpag. \$12.95 cloth. ISBN 1-55074-225-6. *Simon Makes Music*. Gilles Tibo. Illus. author. Tundra, 1995. Unpag. \$10.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88776-359-6.

Ferber and Burton have produced attractive books, with minimalist texts and strong visual content, ideal for young children. Ferber's book, with its loving portrait of her cat Pussywillow, makes engaging use of idiosyncratic images — Pussywillow as a kitten curled round a toaster, overturning a Christmas tree, eating a fly — done in bold colours. Attention to visual detail, a crucial element in attracting and sustaining a child's interest, is handled with aplomb. Ferber's empathic presentation of Pussywillow's traits walks with assurance the narrow