

braves unburied the treasure and bore it back triumphantly to their people, by then established on the Bay of Quinte. Thus the silver is an emblem of their loyalty to the British crown and of their Christian faith.

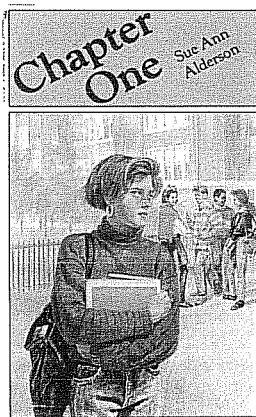
The villain of the story is an antique dealer who perfectly represents the corruption arising from the modern trend to value historical treasure only in material terms. The silver is worth a lot of money, but the author is careful to make clear the distinction between the two value systems by revealing that it is fully insured and that this knowledge brings no comfort to the bereft clan.

As Jon and his new Indian friend, Rick, follow clues and bravely confront the enemy to restore the clan's relic, they re-enact the courage of their ancestors, and Jon begins to recover the buried treasure of his neglected heritage. He takes home a token of that heritage – a replica of the wolf's head carved over the door of the reserve chapel, a treasure he will undoubtedly show with pride to his Chinese, Greek, East Indian and Jamaican friends in Toronto.

Sandra Odegard teaches Canadian, American and British literature at the University of Guelph.

READ IT ANYWAY

Chapter one. Sue Ann Alderson. General Paperbacks, 1990. 160 pp., \$4.95 paper. ISBN 0-7736-7283-4.



In its attempt to depict the emergence of a young girl from her self-centered world, *Chapter one* adeptly reveals the insecurities and complications that accompany life as a young teenager. It is entertaining, yet it becomes interestingly so when we consider the number of problems the story must shoulder. For example, the teens of *Chapter one* are hardly representative; one struggles to find a good person among them. And Beth, the young protagonist, does not emerge from her self-centered world as much as she is forced from it, mistakingly perceived as a "goody-goody" – this of a girl who is devastated over having to spare time for her sick grandmother. It doesn't end here. The language and behaviour of Alderson's teens, far from being real, border on parody or caricature.

For instance, the same grade-eight teen who exclaims, "drat," and "double-drat," is also capable of referring cleverly to the "surreal relationship between art and reality." Another teen is serious when he refers to a battered girl as a "mega-wimp," and to a senile, old woman as a "nerd." A third teen, not to bel-

about the point, is her most ridiculous, however. His general commitment to interaction is annoyingly limited to telling people to "turn blue."

Nevertheless, the remarkable thing is that we're compelled to overlook these problems. Our attention is much more securely placed on the quandaries of Beth; she is the one we want to succeed in the end, the one we like the most, because nearly everyone else in the novel is more selfish, more superficial, and more insecure.

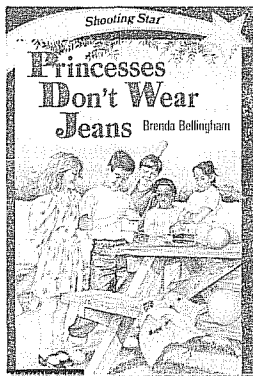
Beth gains our sympathies primarily because she is mistreated by her "tall and good-looking" boyfriend. Beth may be a follower among her friends, but he is cruel and insensitive, and he hurts her repeatedly. He even dumps her, unaware that she has been trying desperately to be like him. We feel sorry for Beth because we know that she needs this relationship most to compensate for her insecurity, but when she overcomes the separation bravely, she becomes the admirable character we've longed to emerge from the very beginning. Moreover, when Beth separates from her group only to appear more confident by the separation, we are even pleased with the story as a whole. We shouldn't be, but we are.

B. Evangelista is a free-lance writer in Hamilton, Ontario.

FOR "NEWLY-INDEPENDENT READERS"

Princesses don't wear jeans. Brenda Bellingham. Scholastic, 1991. 64 pp., \$3.50 paper. ISBN 0-590-73765-1; **Project disaster.** Sylvia McNicoll. Scholastic, 1990. 88 pp., \$3.50 paper. ISBN 0-590-73742-2.

Scholastic's Shooting Star series of chapter books is aimed at newly-independent readers. These books combine the picture book's full-page illustrations and the well-plotted action story.



Brenda Bellingham's *Princesses don't wear jeans* is the most enjoyable of the Shooting Star books that I have read. The "princess" of the title, Tilly, is imaginative and individualistic. The narrator, Jeff, is afraid to be different from everyone else in his class at school. When the new girl Tilly arrives, unafraid of public opinion in her wrinkled tights, holey sweaters and uncombed hair, Jeff is intrigued. Initially thrilled by her outlandish stories of wild animals, Jeff eventually gains enough confidence to claim the unusual Tilly as his friend.

Tilly's charm derives from the strength of her imagination. She writes long, elaborate stories about