scuba diving attire, the tale resembles nothing so much as a Pink Panther film.

As an entertainment — for it is little more — the book shows a high degree of expertise but a want of restraint. The opening, in particular, is calculated to put off any sensitive reader by its stagey dialogue between ESP-obsessed teenagers, and by its oversupply of abnormality: a ship afire later revealed as a local boy's impossible hoax, icy fingers round Tom's neck in bed, a wedding cake mannor house with mysterious knocks inducing premonitions of death, and so on *ad nauseam.* When the plot does get going, its author skillfully intersperses false clues with true ones (observed only on a second reading), and then adds ghostly effects. The raven rising at the collapse of the assaulted Professor is gothic convention. The author breaches this convention when the victim scrawls EVEL[yn] in the sand to identify his assailant as a twin brother whose existence neither hero nor reader could reasonably suspect and who could not conceivably agree to assault and swindle his twin. Psychologically, several episodes — Tom and Liz persisting in detection without informing the police or their hosts, a motel owner accepting them without question — crumble at a touch, but in the matters that would concern a film director, the author shows great skill. In the finale, above all, he expertly interweaves natural and contrived incident. After Tom's low-key recognition "It's you!" ends one chapter, the next opens on the doomed ship with the villain's disclosure. A giant wave and an engine failure expose his weak points; the plan to use rocks and high tide as his executioners, while he holds his revolver in reserve, shows his guile and resource.

Beyond those cinematic qualities, including a gift for conjuring up incident from the Nova Scotia seen by tourists, rather than the life of its people, the book has little to offer. Any school librarians who can afford to stock it should find themselves stamping it often enough, and children receiving it as a present will learn from their single rapid reading something of the coastal environment and folklore more pleasurably than from a tourist brochure.

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USEFUL SOCIAL LESSONS

Jenny Greenteeth, Mary Alice Downie. Illus. by Anne Powell. Rhino Books, 1981. 27 pp. $3.25 paper. ISBN 0-920978-02-9. ***Those words,*** Frank Etherington. Illus. by Gina Calleja. Annick Press Ltd., 1982. 24pp. $10.95 hardcover, $4.95 paper. IBSN 0-920236-42-1; 0-920236-40-5. ***Down the honeysuckle,*** Wendy Scott. Illus. by Kathryn De Vos Miller. Three Trees Press, 1981. 48 pp. $10.95 hardcover, $4.95 paper. ISBN 0-88823-032-X; 0-88823-039-7.

What do you do when children develop irritating behavioral patterns — like forgetting to brush their teeth, saying "bad" words in public, or acting childish to get attention? One effective comeback is to read them a book that humorously debunks the behavior. Just as a little sugar helps the medicine go down, humor and fantasy can be good coating for gentle lessons about deportment. The three books under review all use this approach successfully.

Imagine the meanest ugliest witch whose favourite pasttime is pushing the children of Denim town into the river. That's Jenny Greenteeth. Ms. Downie's description of her is enough to tingle your spine. "She had blood-red eyes, long jagged fingernails and slimy green teeth." This hag is feared by all in the town. When the mayor goes on a siege for this woman, not the policeman, nor the soldiers, nor the police dog will help. Young David Smith uses the ultimate weapon, a toothbrush. He transforms the terrible wench into an amiable candy store-keeper who coaches the local swimming team to victory. This story is clearly valuable to anyone advocating the use of a toothbrush for young children. The lesson taught is that candy eating is okay when it is followed by tooth brushing. Although the story is of limited scope it will certainly persuade a child not to turn into a "greentooth."

The illustrations and text are skillfully intertwined. The modest sketches leave enough to the imagination, but provide adequate detail.

How does one write a story about swearing without using the words themselves? Author Frank Etherington ingeniously disguises "those words" as rhyming words and illustrator Gina Calleja paints them as a purple cloud. In addition, the way that other characters react to Jeopy's swear words clue us in: when Jeopy's father hears "those words" he begins to spray his neighbor instead of watering the garden. His brother's teacher, Mrs. Kowalski, drops her books upon hearing "those words."

The problem of swearing is all too common: Mr. Etherington has taken a sensitive topic and approached it directly. Although both his parents have discussed swearing with Jeopy, he appears not to heed their advice. Like most children, Jeopy has little idea what the words mean, but he knows that they cause a lot of attention, something that he likes.

Although Jeopy's parents don't want their son to swear, they too are fallible: when Jeopy's dad spills the milk, he says a word that sounds like "pit." The family laughs. The story never gets so serious that the reader is offended by the topic, and Jeopy's language problem is eventually resolved.

The use of ethnic names such as "Mrs. Kowalski" add character to the story. Gina Calleja reproduces a variety of racial backgrounds in the neighbourhood scenes, reflective of a Canadian society. This story is beneficial either as a lesson for wayward children or merely for its anecdotal enjoyment.

The third book deals with the Peter Pan syndrome — the child who doesn't want to grow up. Getting older includes a lot of responsibility such as going to school and leaving behind childlike activities. "School kids are too big to

fit behind the couch in the sunporch and that's my best place," says Trita, a five-year-old whose sixth birthday is approaching. She tells her cat, Justhomas, how she wants to remain five. Suddenly, the aroma of honeysuckle lifts her into the air and floats her to the feet of the cat. She has become the size of a mouse. The cat transports her to Honeysuckle Grotto where she becomes acquainted with the King and Queen. Once she gets into the Grotto and realizes how unfamiliar the surroundings are, she longs for her own bed. The irony of the story is that although she initially wants to stay five years old, as soon as she is given the opportunity to do so, she makes plans to escape and to have her sixth birthday. In fact Trita discovers that along with responsibilities come other adventures and excitement.

The story has an interesting twist at the end. When she first entered the Honeysuckle Grotto she was astonished by the extradorinarily large plants, and learned that she was required to plant honeysuckle seeds with the other children. Upon returning to her home surroundings, she sees some weeds in the corner of the yard, and to her surprise, learns that they are honeysuckle sprouts.

Down the honeysuckle reminds one of *Alice in Wonderland* and *Peter Pan.* The land is a fantasy one and characters have magical powers that transform people to animals or change the size of the heroine. The story will be interesting to young children; junior grade students will also enjoy reading the tale

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LE CHEVAL DU NORD

Alexis le Trotteur, l'homme qui courait comme un cheval (1979); ***Alexis le Trotteur, au trot et au galop*** (1979); ***Alexis le Trotteur contre baba*** (1981); ***Alexis le Trotteur, le pony express*** (1981). Scénario par Blaise (Blasetti), dessins par Bos (Boselli). Montréal, Editions Pauline. 38pp., 4,95$ le volume broché. ISBN 1-89039-676-2; 1-28939-678-9; 1-89039-9; 2-89039-844-7.

Depuis une génération la bande dessinée connaît dans le monde francophone un essor extraordinaire, surtout dans le format album (15 millions d'exemplaires vendus en 1981, soit deux fois plus qu'en 1975). Chaque nouveau Lucky Luke, Astérix ou Gaston La Gaffe vend un million d'exemplaires, et ceci à une époque où un auteur de romans canadien croit avoir écrit un véritable bestseller s'il vend plus de trois mille exemplaires. Il n'est que justice qu'un Canadien prenne place parmi les héros d'un genre qui, chez les jeunes et même chez les moins jeunes, résiste jusqu'à présent aux séductions des vidéo-cassettes et des salles de jeux électroniques.

Cette bande a paru pour la première fois en 1974 dans le mensuel *Vidéopresse.* Elle est présentée ici sous forme d'album, le même format qui a rendu