particulièrement si le verbe est immédiatement précédé du pronom "me." Il est dommage que l'éditeur n'ait pas fait corriger ces peccadilles.

En dépit de ces quelques réserves sur les préjugés à l'égard des femmes et des paysans, et sur la correction de la langue, j'estime que *La montagne des disparus* intéressera les adolescents; à la condition d'être intelligemment présentée, elle les fera même réfléchir sur certains problèmes de notre société.

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ANIMAL STORIES A MARI USQUE AD MARE

Fun and pheasants (stories for children), Olive Mound. Illus. Ted Clark. Vesta Publications, 1979. 40 pp. $3.00 paper. ISBN 0-919806-56-2; ***Squirrel in my tea cup!,*** E. Cade-Edwards. Borealis Press, 1981. 38 pp. $5.95 paper. ISBN 0-88887-037-X; ***Make way for Mischief,*** Betty Stevens. Illus Ineke Standish. Borealis Press, 1981. 28 pp. $5.95 paper. ISBN 0-88887-087-6; ***The wilds of Whip-poor-will Farm,*** Janet Foster. Illus. Olena Kassian. Grey de Pencier Books, 1982. 112 pp. $7.95 paper. ISBN 0-919872-79-4; ***Indy, son of Cloud,*** Edna J. Goltz. Borealis Press, 1981. 50 pp. $6.95 paper. ISBN 0-88887-031-0; ***Cariboo pony,*** Eleanor Bjornson. Oolichan Books, 1981. 112 pp. $6.95 paper. ISBN 0-88982-026-0; ***Jockie: a story of Prince Edward Island,*** Lilla Stirling. Illus. Bob Meyers. Formac Publishing, 1979. 202 pp. $4.95 paper. ISBN 0-88780-038-6.

At some time or another, most children want a pet. Over the years our three sons have made their rooms into homes for a cat of mixed lineage, three dogs of varying size and appetite, a gerbil, a rabbit and a worm-eating snake. Parents' motivations in providing animals for their children vary. Some likely want to teach their sons and daughters lessons about responsibility. Many children first experience the event of death via a beloved pet. Even though animals cannot talk back, frequently pets get to listen to their young owners' problems when the children think no one else cares to hear about their concerns. And most children, whether they own a pet or not, enjoy reading about animals, both wild and domesticated. This ready audience tempts many authors and would-be authors for children.

The settings of the animal stories under review stretch across Canada from the Pacific to the Atlantic with inland stops in Alberta and Ontario. But regrettably the books are not examples of the realistic animal story which Sheila Egoff describes in *The republic of childhood* (O.U.P., 2nd ed., 1975) as "animal biography in fiction form" for that form of writing Egoff found to be "far

generally superior to that of most Canadian writing for children." Instead these seven titles are primarily children's adventures wherein animals, though important, function in secondary roles. And the quality, with two exceptions, is generally not superior.

Mound's *Fun and pheasants (stories for children)* came about because "Nanna decided to write stories about her |five| kids and their pets and their life on the |Ontario| Game |bird| Farm" which could be shared with her grandchildren and the wider world of children. In the two to three pages of text given to each of the eight episodes, grade three and four readers neither come to know the author's children, nor their pets. The alliterative title misrepresents the book's contents as only one of the stories is truly about pheasants, and the subject matter of some incidents could hardly be described as fun. "The Albino Pheasants," for example, describes how normal pheasant chicks peck albino chicks to death. When the Mound children see this happen, they intervene and place the albino chicks in a separate brooder; however, as the white pheasants reach maturity, hunters at the game bird farm reject them because of their chicken-like appearance. Additionally "small groups of birds entailed more work. It was decided to dis-continue |sic| the separate pen for the albinos. From then on the albinos had to fight for survival." Not much fun for pheasants!

Several aspects of the book also suggest a lack of firm editorial direction: there are spelling errors, run-on sentences, incorrectly used commas. An editor also needed to guide Mound's approach to her animals. Sometimes she treats them in an anthropomorphic manner: Bambi, the fawn, has gained weight, and "his feelings must have been hurt when the children called him fatty. He ran off into the cedar bush and stayed there for almost a week." Mound resorts to a euphemism to describe the end of Dash, the English Setter, "put to sleep by the local veterinarian." Some of the stories go nowhere. In one episode, a weasel gets into the pheasant pens and wantonly kills birds. "Drastic measures had to be taken right away; the pens were watched night and day until the weasel returned. It had to be captured or shot!" But after establishing this potentially dramatic confrontation between wild animal and man, Mound drops the situation completely.

Ted Clark's seven full page and five smaller sepia colored illustrations of animals are simply decorative and, with one exception, do not obviously relate to any particular aspect of a story. The book's design could have been improved immensely had the illustrations, especially those smaller than a full page, been placed in a vertical rather than a horizontal format.

The conflict between emotion and reason initiates twelve-year-old Russ Edwards' problem in Eileen Code-Edwards' *Squirrel in my tea cup!* The fact that the four boys in the story have the same names as those of the author's children identified in the dedication (which also notes that the boys "have known and loved a squirrel") suggests a factual basis. Just before summer holidays, Russ buys a baby black squirrel for fifty cents from the local mean kid. When

the squirrel, named Forest by Russell, refuses all forms of nourishment, from milk in a doll's bottle to chocolate cookies, Russell and his brothers despair, but Forest discovers his own favorite food — Mother's tea laced generously with milk and sugar.

Almost from the book's beginning, Russ reluctantly acknowledges that Forest must be returned to the wild; "secretly, I wished he could be part of our family forever, though at heart I knew this wouldn't be best for him." Russ teaches Forest the skills he needs, including how to climb trees. Forest travels everywhere in Russ's pockets, sometimes with disastrous results. A number of attempts to release Forest have unfavorable endings. Forest spurns a home built for him outside the family dwelling while a grey squirrel has already claimed the family yard as its territory. With his father's help, Russ takes Forest to a park five miles away, drops treats into a hole in a tree and, when Forest follows after them, runs off. A few days later, Russ' affection for the squirrel overwhelms him, and brings a most willing Forest home again. Russ' aunt and uncle live on a farm outside Thunder Bay, and it is there during a family holiday visit that Forest breaks the bond between boy and wild animal. Initially Forest is just slow in returning from the woods, but one day after hearing the mating calls of a female squirrel, "off he went." For Russ, there remain memories. The appeal of owning a wild animal as a pet, especially something as cute as a baby squirrel, may lead some grade three to four students to *Squirrel in my tea cup!* but the book's brevity will not permit readers to feel that they have shared fully in the delight on co-owning Forest.

The path from pest to heroine within a day is Mischief's story in Steven's *Make way for Mischief.* Eight-year-old Tommy Jensen has a pet de-scented skunk, Mischief. The Jensen family's move from the farm to the city brings Mischief into conflict with the neighbors, especially the Frosts. Mischief chews some of Mr. Frost's dahlias which had been flower show bound and devours three dozen eggs just delivered to Mrs. Frost's door. Tommy is punished for Mischief's actions and is warned that further misbehavior on Mischief's part could lead to her being given away.

To fill in the pages before Mischief can acquire her mantle as heroine, Stevens has Mischief, Tommy and new friend Peter wander about town. They almost cause an automobile accident when a driver is surprised at seeing a skunk in the city; later, through Mischief's presence they put two young bullies to flight. Inserted among these incidents is information about Mischief which is needed for the climax, such as the fact that the skunk has been taught to open doors.

When evening comes and the Jensen family retires, Mischief, a nocturnal creature, becomes lively. She wanders over to the Frosts, lets herself in, and unknowingly scares off a burglar. All is forgiven; Mr. Frost has more flowers, and Mrs. Frost acknowledges her earlier grouchiness was due to a burned apple pie. Such a "happy-ever-after" ending, while momentarily satisfying, is unrealistic for Mischief remains a skunk whose natural behaviors will inevitably

bring her into further conflict with neighbors who lack burglars. And the bullies, when they learn that Mischief has been surgically disarmed, will likely escalate their torment of Tommy and Peter. Perhaps the best role for *Make way for Mischief* is as a stimulus for grade three and four readers to create their own "Further Mischief Misadventures." Ineke Standish's full page pen and ink drawings take up eleven of the book's twenty-eight pages. Drawing skunks does not appear to be Standish's forte. As well, a number of the drawings are placed so that they give away plot twists well before the text describes them.

The twelve stories in *The wilds of Whip-poor-will Farm* stand as superb examples of how man and wild animal can live in harmony. The experiences of the Fosters, author Janet and husband John, show clearly that humankind's entry into natural areas need not mean the automatic dislocation of the indigenous animal population. The Fosters, whose wildlife films have appeared on the C.B.C. television series *Wild Canada,* recount through Janet's prose the continuing contacts they had with a variety of creatures who shared the couple's first year on an old farm in southern Ontario.

The introduction begins with the invocation, "May they always be wild," and in numerous ways the Fosters illustrate their profound respect for the natural rights of animals. A deermouse invades the log cabin the couple built, and instead of killing it as many people might do, Janet catches it in a peanut baited paper bag and releases it unharmed in the woods. When Whiskers, as the deermouse comes to be called, reappears in the basement along with numerous fellow deermice, the Fosters simply share their cabin with the rodents. At one point, the Fosters consider demolishing an old, dilapidated barn on their property, but when they discover it serves as the wintering home to a skunk, porcupine and raccoon, they choose to rebuild the barn instead and to tolerate Porky's chewing on the tractor tires. Returning from a winter holiday, the Fosters discover a severely dehydrated and almost starved flying squirrel on their cabin floor. Rather than making a pet of this adorable creature which had fallen down the chimney, Janet and John keep it only long enough to ascertain it will live and then turn it loose.

Though the Fosters attempt to remain only observers of the animals' behavior, their slight bias in favour of predators' victims emerges. An ermine which discovers the deermouse-filled basement is quickly live-trapped and released, and Mrs. Rufus, a groundhog dozing in the warm spring sun, receives Janet's shout of warning that a fox is stalking her.

The incidents in *The wilds of Whip-poor-will Farm* are not high drama. Instead each captures the casual contacts that many of us, even city dwellers, could have with the animals that live among us if we would simply take the time to look. Readers in the eight to twelve-year-old range should enjoy these vignettes, and their enjoyment will be enhanced by the fine pen and ink illustrations of Olena Kassian, a frequent illustrator for *Owl.* Given the excellent quality of the three dozen examples of Kassian's work, it is regrettable that the

publisher chose to introduce each story with an illustration which is then repeated in the story rather than having Kassian create separate title illustrations.

As subjects for animal stories, none seem to be more favored by children than dogs and horses. While the collection of books under review here lacked canines, it did have three stories in which horses played a part.

In Goltz's *Indy, son of Cloud,* girl gets horse, loses horse, regains horse, loses horse again, and regains horse once more, hopefully for the final time, all within one year and fifty pages, while still managing to sandwich in getting lost in a blizzard, being a passenger in an airplane which has an unconscious pilot, and winning a rodeo barrel race. Trish Duncan, who is fourteen but behaves more like the nine-year-olds for whom the book is intended, aspires to be a veterinarian and wants to own an Indian pony like Flying Cloud that Chief Running Bear rode in the movie "Ambush at Painted Rocks." When Mr. Duncan brings an abandoned and deathly ill Indian pony to the ranch, Junior vet Trish nurses it back to health. Later the horse, named Indy by Trish, fittingly saves Trish's life by carrying her to safety during a surprise Alberta October blizzard.

Relatives of the horse's "owner" lay claim to Indy but drop their demands when their son wants another horse. Then at a rodeo, Trish's ownership of Indy is again disputed when an old cowboy charges that Indy is really Son of Cloud and belongs to someone called MacAllister. When Trish visits chief Running Bear on the reservation, Indy's identity and ownership are suddenly cleared up. The Chief, it appears, is really Luke MacAllister, and he generously supplies a happy Trish with a "bill of sale for one paint pony, Son of Cloud. It was Marked 'Paid in Full' . . ."

In passing, we may note that as the offspring of a white father and an Indian mother, Chief Running Bear a.k.a. MacAllister could not hold treaty status and, therefore, could not be the reservation's chief. But the galloping plot, unrelieved by illustrations, is filled with coincidences too numerous and too complicated to explain or believe.

The old saw about never judging a book by its cover is true of Bjornson's *Cariboo pony.* The enticing full color photo cover shows the head of a brown and white horse nuzzled against the shoulder of a pretty, blue-eyed blonde girl who looks about eight. The background is a mass of green fir trees. The girl's smiling face, her hand resting against the horse's muzzle, and the horse's closed eye all suggest a very special relationship between child and animal. Readers in fourth to sixth grade whose enthusiasm for the book's contents has been stimulated by the cover will likely find it quickly dampened by the text.

Cariboo pony, which is set in the 100 Mile House district of B.C.'s Cariboo country, fails principally because Bjornson chose to tell the story from the horse's point of view and in an anthropomorphic fashion. Horse and girl are real beings whose actual existence is kept before the reader by some twenty-two black and white photos. This juxtaposition of fantasy in the form of animals

talking to each other and reality via photographs just does not work.

Stormy Star, an eight-year-old Welsh pinto pony, has already had two child owners who grow up literally while he does not. Consequently every few years he acquires a new little girl. Stormy stoically accepts this situation for "a pony's job is to teach children to be good horsemen. We are stern and tough with them and send cry-babies back to their mammas." Though the chronology if difficult to follow, four years elapse (according to a cover blurb) between Stormy's losing his second owner and gaining a fourth. This span of time is filled by owner number three, cover girl Janet.

Stormy's behavior is always interpreted in terms of human motivation. When he escapes from his corral, he does so because "Janet barely took time to say good morning and give Stormy his love pat." He decides that "Janet can't just go away like that. We haven't had our morning talk yet. I'll just teach her a lesson!" On a trail ride, "Oh boy! Stormy's heart skipped a beat" when he sees Teena, "the most beautiful little gray filly Stormy had ever seen." Jealousy strikes little Stormy when a new Arabian stallion is put in the special stud pen. " 'You big fancy sissy,' Stormy yelled across the driveway. 'You keep away from my mares and my little girl!' " Bjornson later reveals in passing that poor envious Stormy is a gelding.

The book's happenings revolve around a seemingly endless parade of rodeos and horse shows and the preparations for these events. Instead of capturing the possible excitement and drama of the competitions, Bjornson's writing is flat. The emphasis on rodeos and horse shows is also reflected in the photographs. More than three-quarters of them focus on these events. The contrast in numerous photos is poor, and some of the pictures could use better labelling.

Cover art also plays a misleading role in Stirling's *Jockie* (misspelled Jockey on the spine) for it is unrepresentative of both the book's contents and its illustrations. A rope spells out "Jockie" while below it, in a circle of orange, a black bull attacks a frightened looking, sepia colored, almost cartoon like horse upon whose back clings a young boy, his hat flying off from the horse's bucking. Admittedly, the cover does illustrate an incident from the book but a minor one, and the horse the lad is riding is not the horse central to the story. If, on the basis of the cover, upper elementary level readers assume that the book will be about cowboys and ranches, they are bound for disappointment; however, if they accept what Stirling offers, a better than average story awaits them.

The subtitle, "A Story of Prince Edward Island," is most important, for the setting, from the Island's red soil to its surrounding blue waters, is an omnipresent but pleasing characteristic of the book. As in James Houston's writings about the North, Stirling's deep feelings for this part of Canada and its people, present and past, pervade the book and are especially well expressed through the character of Granny as she hooks a mat with a scene of "her Island in blossom." When reading the book aloud to today's pseudo-sophisticated youngsters, expect a few guffaws as Granny, in response to compliments about

her handiwork, innocently replies, "There are lots of good hookers on the Island." Stirling's writing is rich in the colors, odors, sounds and textures of Prince Edward Island. She draws upon the Island environment for her imagery as in "The long hill spread before them with the smooth flowing softness of a gull's white breast!" And while the action takes less than a year, cross sections from winter through fall present Prince Edward Island in its various seasonal trappings. Stirling also reproduces the Islanders' speech patterns so that characters use such sentence constructions as "I'd like fine to go" or "She'd be after slipping." The people of the book are farmer fishermen who harvest both land and sea and who work cooperatively rather than competitively. The Islanders appear to depend a lot upon horses for such tasks as ploughing and hauling, and because Stirling never attaches a specific date to the book's action, readers from other parts of Canada could be left with the false impression that Prince Edward Island's agricultural methods are primitive.

The animal story told by Stirling differs from most others in that the main animal, a horse called Diana, remains off stage for the majority of the book's length although her continuing significance to the action is kept before readers. Jockie's parents have gone on a scientific expedition to South America, leaving Jockie with his grandparents, and Granddad, recognizing Jockie's loneliness, has given him a colt, "shining black except for her four white feet." As the book's action begins, Diana has just placed second in a race she accidentally joined, and everyone is touting her potential as a race horse. With some reluctance, Jockie, whose age is never given, but who from the illustrations looks to be under twelve, agrees to allow Diana to be taken to Charlottetown for training as a harness racer.

In the interval between Diana's going to Charlottetown and her ultimate success as a racer, Jockie is kept busy. He acquires a crane chick that has a broken leg. During a severe storm when Jockie and two men are in danger of losing their lives on the ocean, Harry the crane, in a credibility-stretching incident, turns into a "homing" crane. Jockie also goes lobstering with Granddad and in a scene reminiscent of Tom Sawyer's fence painting scam learns from a neighbor how to plow with horses. Stirling never turns Jockie into a superchild. While Jockie uses his new ploughing skills in a competition to surprise Granddad, Jockie does not win though his effort wins his grandfather's approval. Stirling establishes a truly warm picture of the relationship between grandchild and grandparents cum surrogate parents. Granddad nourishes Jockie's emotional self, but Granny sustains the physical Jockie. No matter what situation presents itself, Granny's response is to prepare food. When Granddad goes out to rescue Jockie stranded at sea, Granny does her culinary bit. "I'll make some scones with lots of currants and hot scalloped potatoes with ham ready for them when they get back."

Bob Meyers contributed fifteen pen and ink illustrations to the story of Jockie and Diana. While some are simply small, decorative fillers, those which are

full pages or double page spreads capture the excitement of Stirling's text. ing's text.

With the exception of two titles, all serve as examples of unfulfilled promise. Though the Peanuts gang may have concluded that "happiness is a warm puppy," a good animal story requires more than the mere presence of cute, loveable animals. Excluding Stirling's *Jockie,* the authors of the fictional animal stories tended to deal inadequately with such important elements as plot and character development, substituting instead a series of tenuously connected episodes populated by stick figures. Foster's *Wilds of Whip-poor-will Farm* demonstrates that nonfiction about animals can be highly entertaining when authors deal in sufficient detail with animals so that the creatures come alive to readers and do not simply appear to be the products of a skillful taxidermist. ***Dave Jenkinson*** *teaches courses in children's and adolescent literature at the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba.*

DES MOTS ET DES IMAGES EN LIBERTÉ

Clins d'oeil & pieds de nez, Raymond Plante. Illustré par Johanne Pépin. Montréal, La courte échelle, 1982. non paginé 5,95$ broché ISBN 2-89021-035-9; ***La vache et d'autres animaux,*** Ginette Anfousse et autres. Illustré par Marie-Josée Côté et autres. Montréal, La courte échelle, 1982. non paginé. 4,95$, broché. ISBN 2-89021-031-6.

L'enfant d'aujourd'hui aime le jeu et le texte court, changeant, illustré. Il affectionne l'humour, le rythme, les éclats, la peur. Il apprécie l'exagération; il la recherche. La littérature y répond par la poésie enfantine d'ici.

Bertrand Gauthier, des éditions La Courte Echelle, a su exploiter ces besoins et développer deux ouvrages remarquables de chansons et de poésies qui inciteront l'enfant à la lecture.

Dans *Clins d'oeil & pieds de nez* de Raymond Plante pour le texte, et de Johanne Pépin pour l'illustration, ainsi que dans *La Vache et d'autres animaux* créé par Michel Rivard, Marcel Sabourin, Ginette Anfousse, Cécile Gagnon, Robert Soulières, Bertrand Gauthier, Christiane Duchesne, Marie Décary, Marie-Claire Blais, Yves Beauchemin, pour les mots, et, Gité, Marie Lafrance, Marie-Josée Côté, Darcia Labrosse, Tibo, Roger Paré, Marie-Louise Gay, Aldo del Bono, J.-P. Girerd, Michèle Lemieux pour l'image, le lecteur retrouvera les rythmes et les jeux de langage, les thèmes des animaux et du quotidien qui atteignent l'enfant dans toute sa sensibilité. Ces albums, imprimés et oraux à la fois servent de première lecture. La richesse du vocabulaire, des idées et des illustrations maintient l'intérêt du jeune lecteur apprenti et plus lent qui