

son nouvel instituteur qui, selon Sophie, ne supporte pas la comparaison. Ces détails ne sont pas dénués d'importance et servent d'arrière-plan à cette histoire un peu longue et emberlificotée d'un sketch d'Halloween qui a mal tourné. En fait le roman d'Henriette Major parle surtout de la jalousie de Sophie à l'égard de Chantal et aussi indirectement, de son grand besoin d'attention et d'affection. Notre petite "sorcière" débutante s'embrouille dans ses mauvais sorts, s'empêtre dans ses sentiments, s'encombre d'une robe volée pour finalement, en une volte-face quelque peu abrupte, devenir de manière assez peu convaincante l'amie de sa pire ennemie du commencement de l'histoire.

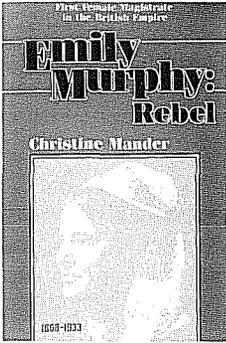
A cette réserve sur la logique interne de l'intrigue du roman, j'en ajouterai une seconde sur la qualité de son écriture. La langue des personnages d'Henriette Major est à l'évidence celle que parlent les enfants mais elle choque un peu lorsqu'on la trouve bien à plat sur les pages d'un livre qui leur est précisément destiné. Certains anglicismes passent avec difficulté: Chantal, par exemple, "reste sur la rue des Erables"! et Sophie "ferme la ligne"! La grammaire n'est sans doute pas le point fort de Sophie à l'école. Qu'on en juge: Sophie qui médite sur les avantages d'être chef conclut que l'on "dirait qu'on devient plus meilleur". . . C'est aller peut-être un peu trop loin dans le style parlé. Les illustrations de Garnotte sont de gentilles caricatures des moments forts de l'histoire. Elles soulignent la dimension humoristique de cette petite aventure d'Halloween qui amusera les jeunes lecteurs. Garçon manqué, cette sorcière aventureuse nous entraîne au rythme de son imagination débordante. Fille réussie, Sophie nous touche par la pudeur des ses émotions mal contenues. Alors, sketch manqué ou histoire réussie? Facile à lire et vite lu, *La sorcière et la princesse* séduira les petits par sa bonne humeur mais risque de réserver quelques déceptions aux lecteurs plus exigeants.

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FINDING ROLE-MODELS IN BIOGRAPHY

Emily Murphy: Rebel. Christine Mander. Simon & Pierre, 1985. 150 pp., \$24.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88924-173-2.

The Canadian literary scene seriously undervalues non-fiction writing. *Books in Canada* lavishes space on poetry and fiction in comparison to the attention accorded non-fiction in the *New York Review of Books* or other review supple-



ments in England and the United States. In truth, Canadian non-fiction almost never meets the literary standards attained by the country's novels, short stories, plays, and poetry. The lack of critical attention it receives helps to account for the low level of the art in the same way that inadequate critical scrutiny once contributed to the underdevelopment of other aspects of Canadian literature.

Biography is one of the few literary forms which bridges the gaps among intellectual disciplines and reaches a larger audience. The general public possesses an insatiable appetite for good reading about the lives of important people. Biography once concentrated on "great men," but Canada's heroes – even a war hero like Billy Bishop – have always appeared fatally flawed in some significant manner. Not so its women, perhaps because the role accorded them historically was so much more limited that fewer mistakes were possible. Recent research has served to modify even the traditional portrait of Susanna Moodie as an embittered ex-Brit who never acculturated to the social values of the Upper Canadian frontier.

Young women, no less than young men, search for role models in the recorded lives of others. Emily Murphy presents a fitting example, though she was hardly "the rebel" suggested in the title of this book by librarian Christine Mander. Born in a small Ontario town in 1868, Emily Murphy moved west with her family and was appointed the first woman police magistrate in the British Commonwealth. As she possessed the confidence imbued by her background, Emily Murphy was sometimes iconoclastic, especially in relation to advancing women in public life, but she was never extremist. Her family had assumed an illustrious position in the political annals of early Ontario. She attended Bishop Strachan School. Three brothers became lawyers and one a medical doctor. A Conservative in politics and a member of the Anglican Church, Emily Murphy was not a radical by background or social status. Best known for spearheading the movement that led in 1929 to the courts declaring women "persons" for appointment to the Senate, she might better have been remembered for championing Alberta's Dower Act which provided married women with a share of their husbands' estates.

This book provides a sprightly introduction to the life of Emily Murphy accessible to teenagers. As it relies heavily on Murphy's published works and the much longer biography that appeared in 1945, we seldom glimpse the personal trials and moral dilemmas that she faced in her married or public life. Unfortunately, the author occasionally offends contemporary canons of non-fiction writing by inventing dialogue. At times her prose falters in a manner that a good editor should have identified, but in a world where words are processed rather than savoured, that species appears to be going the way of

the dodo.

Emily Murphy's expressive and forthright personality shines through in this account. More attention is devoted to family life than to her acts a public individual. Emily Murphy's commitment to improving the status of women makes her a person worth knowing more intimately.

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BIKES AND BARRELS, BASEBALL AND BATS

It isn't easy being Ms. Teeny Wonderful. Martyn Godfrey. Scholastic-TAB, 1987. 160 pp., \$3.50 paper. ISBN 0-590-71674-3; **Baseball crazy.** Martyn Godfrey. James Lorimer, 1987. 160 pp., \$4.95 \$14.95 cloth, paper. ISBN 1-55028-023-6, 1-55028-021-X.

Some years ago I worked in a library where the novels were clearly labelled "Girls" or "Boys", according to the gender of the main character. Probably this was a common practice at the time, but fortunately today such sexist designations are discouraged. Faced with books like *It isn't easy being Ms. Teeny Wonderful* and *Baseball crazy*, librarians would be hard-pushed to decide whether these books should be marked "Girls" or "Boys," because Martyn Godfrey has so skillfully balanced the role of the protagonist between the male and female characters.

It isn't easy being Ms. Teeny Wonderful is the sequel to *Here she is, Ms. Teeny Wonderful*, in which Carol Weatherspoon won second place in a teen pageant, impressing the judges with her prowess in clearing six barrels on her BMX bike. Now Carol has been asked by the popular magazine, *Canada Woman*, to teach a prospective sponsor's son to jump his BMX bike over an equal number of barrels. Throughout the story, Carol's friend Wally Stutzgummer plays a very supportive role. He comes up with ideas, gives advice, and by his good-natured bantering and joke-making shows a maturity which Carol has yet to achieve.

Carol's commission to teach young E.Z. Putton proves to be a real challenge which culminates in a life-threatening situation for them both. Again, it is Wally who arrives on the scene in time to get help and supports Carol in the spate of publicity that ensues.

There is a similar boy/girl relationship in *Baseball crazy*, between Brent