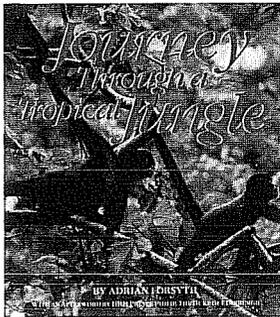


quatrième page de couverture le classe parmi les ouvrages "moins facile[s]" de la collection "Libellule"). C'est pourtant dans le cadre d'une étude thématique sur l'écologie et l'environnement que sa lecture s'avérera particulièrement utile. Le parent ou l'enseignant averti démontrera, en citant l'exemple de l'histoire d'Ali-Boulouf, que les façons habituelles d'éliminer les déchets industriels, mesures dont nos jeunes ne connaissent que trop bien les effets funestes, sont extrêmement coûteuses, et en fin de compte inefficaces. L'on ne manquera surtout pas de signaler que dans le monde réel, il vaut mieux ne pas compter sur un prodigieux recyclage *in extremis* pour rendre inoffensifs les polluants. Ali-Boulouf aurait mieux fait de vivre en bon citoyen, et de veiller à l'état de ses sandales.

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A STRIKING STUDY OF TROPICAL RESOURCES



Journey through a tropical jungle. Adrian Forsyth. Illus. Julie Wootten, Wycliffe Smith, and Tony Delitala. Greer de Pencier Books, 1988. 80 pp., \$12.95 paper. ISBN 0-920775-26-8.

This is a modest, informed, very well written and beautifully illustrated account of the abundance, variety and fragility of life in a tropical rain forest, one of the most rapidly disappearing of our planet's resources: in the last century over half of such forests have been destroyed for lumber, and to supply beef to the fast-food market in North America.

The author gives a personal account of his trip through such a forest in Costa Rica. He walks through wet jungles, investigates the night-life of creeping and crawling jungle inhabitants, scrambles around dangerous slopes, rides in a crowded and smelly bus; his accounts give a personal and immediate feel to the descriptions of the creatures he meets on the way.

A professional biologist (at Queen's University and the Royal Ontario Museum), Forsyth writes better than most, in a lively, non-technical style. Thus: "Mature ctenosaurs (a kind of large lizard) are vegetarians. They are the cows of the lizard world. They begin life as small, lively green lizards that race through the grass and eat insects . . . When they are middle-aged, about three years old, they can still catch the odd mouse or frog. But at full size,

when they have turned blue-gray, they have become too slow to catch much more than leaves and flowers,"

The book is rich in beautiful photographs of lizards, birds, toads, snakes, insects, a touching mother sloth with its child, several intelligent monkeys, a large mother scorpion, its back loaded with its young, and a few sympathetic humans. There are striking illustrations of ways in which animals and insects use camouflage to catch prey or avoid becoming prey.

"Because everything is connected in the forest," the author writes, "life and death are never wasted." The strangler fig tree grows around and kills other trees, but also provides home and food for insects, bats and other creatures. Other examples also illustrate recycling of matter in the biological world, the death of one part leading to the life of another.

As the book points out, the tropical rain forests are an irreplaceable biological treasure house: they make up only 6% of the earth's surface but contain two-thirds of its species of plants and animals. Curiously, in urging their preservation, the author does not mention their role in controlling the carbon dioxide levels in our atmosphere by photosynthesis: without this, carbon dioxide will increase yet more, with an accompanying "greenhouse effect" and likely a disastrous rise in the temperature of our environment. The author must know this. Perhaps he feels that the life of the lovely creatures in the forests is still more important than human comfort. He may well be right.

This book can be strongly recommended for reading and rereading by children and adults.

Donn Kushner, a Professor of Microbiology at the University of Toronto, has also published a book of short stories and three children's books, most recently "A book dragon" Macmillan, 1987.

AN ARCTIC ADVENTURE

Mystery in the frozen lands. Martyn Godfrey. James Lorimer, 1988. 132 pp., \$19.95 \$9.95 cloth, paper. ISBN 1-55028-144-5, 1-55028-137-2.

A common complaint heard among intermediate and junior high-school students is that studying Canadian history is so boring! Contrary to this view, Martyn Godfrey's historical novel for teenagers, *Mystery in the frozen lands*, is a compelling page-turner from the first paragraph: "George Brand, our engineer, is dead. Four days ago he placed a musket under his chin and pulled the trigger." Set in the mid-nineteenth century, Godfrey's book provides the young reader with an exciting adventure story while introducing him to an in-