

sion et de la reconnaissance.

*Un blouson dans le peau* est un bon texte qui se lit bien. Le récit est bien structuré et a le mérite de retenir l'attention du lecteur dès la première page. Pour cette dernière raison surtout, et grâce au langage approprié, c'est un bon premier roman. Il est aussi le genre d'histoire qui pourrait être lue à haute voix à des plus jeunes. N'oubliez pas de prendre quelques minutes pour apprécier les illustrations qui apportent beaucoup à la compréhension des émotions ressenties par l'héroïne.

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#### A FEAST OF MYSTERIES

**The ghost of Ramshaw Castle.** Robert Sutherland. Scholastic-TAB, 1989. 171 pp., \$4.50 paper. ISBN 0-590-73286-2; **The muffled man.** Max Braithwaite. Nelson Canada, 1989. 127 pp., paper. ISBN 0-17-602593-6; **Where in the world is Jenny Parker?** Mary Woodbury. Stoneberry Books, 1989. 141 pp., \$6.95 paper. ISBN 0-88894-813-1; **Curse of the silver box.** Brenda Bellingham. Scholastic-TAB, 1989. 129 pp., \$3.95 paper. ISBN 0-590-73296-X.

Young readers with an appetite for mysteries will find at least one of these four novels suited to their taste. Setting is especially important in *The ghost of Ramshaw Castle*, *Where in the world is Jenny Parker?* and *The muffled man*. The two most action-packed are *The ghost of Ramshaw Castle* and *The muffled man*, with lots of excitement in the form of escaped convicts, murders and high-speed chases. In *Where in the world is Jenny Parker?*, character development is blended equally with a strong setting and lots of action. And finally, *The curse of the silver box* is a slower moving novel which focuses primarily on the growth of the story's narrator.

In *The ghost of Ramshaw Castle*, Robert Sutherland mixes action with a

rich historical background and local colour. The story unfolds in and around a haunted castle in the Scottish highlands. Canadian David McCrimmon and his Scottish friend Sandy McLeod join forces to discover the true identity of the castle's ghost and track down a murderer in the process. When the castle's old piper is found dead in the castle's ruins, Sandy and David are suspicious. Their suspicions are confirmed when news comes that the former owner of the castle has just escaped from prison (where David and Sandy had helped to put him in an earlier novel, *The mystery of Black Rock Island*.) Clues subtly placed keep the reader guessing until the end. When Sandy and David's snooping turns up the stolen diamonds which provide the motive for the murder, their own danger becomes clear to them. The murderer is not far behind and the ensuing high-speed chase around hairpin curves up into the mountains rivets the reader's attention until the satisfying ending.

In *The muffled man*, Max Braithwaite takes us to Northern Ontario where we join a trio of teenagers for what starts out to be an ice-fishing trip. Things begin to go wrong: they are engulfed in a snowstorm and before they know it they are lost. They have one companion in the frozen wilderness but he is not a friend. A strange man, muffled in bandages and a long scarf is on his own quest in the bush. Only he's not looking for fish but hidden bounty from a bank robbery he helped pull off ten years earlier. The cold northern wilderness is very much a part of this story. The snowstorm, the frozen lake and the silent forest are realistically depicted. Because the action moves very quickly and the writing is clear and easy to read, this book will appeal to slightly younger readers.

In *Where in the world is Jenny Parker?*, eleven-year-old Jenny must adjust to the unfamiliar ways of people in a new country when her family moves to Rome for her father's new job. At first, she is angry and miserable at leaving her life and friends in Edmonton. She particularly resents not being free to come and go as she pleases because the streets aren't safe for children. She underestimates their danger, however, and she and her new Italian friend Tony plot a day of freedom together. The resulting adventure is not quite as they had planned: the two are kidnapped and the story moves rapidly to its end.

Mary Woodbury captures the sights and sounds – and particularly the smells – of Rome. Her writing is simple and yet eloquent. "A lone blackbird cawed in the eaves. I tiptoed to the little window and leaned out. It was cold and clear. The goldfish circled in the pond in the centre of the courtyard. The smells of coffee and bread rose from the monastery kitchen" (105).

In *The curse of the silver box*, Katy is fascinated by the mysterious curse on the antique silver box. But she is equally fascinated by what makes people tick – herself included. "People are very hard to know," say Katy early in the story. "They're like icebergs. Only the tip shows. Most of them is below the water line where you can't see what's going on....there are even parts of yourself that

can surprise you" (11). Brenda Bellingham's experience as a social worker probably contributed to this novel's focus on character development rather than on fast action and colourful settings.

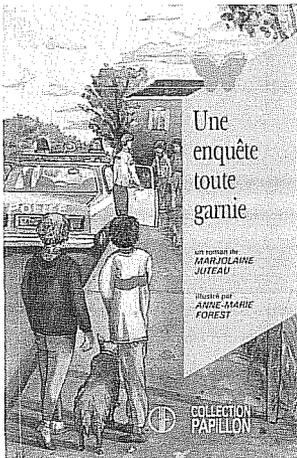
A series of misfortunes befalls Katy's family after her stepmother buys an antique silver box at an auction. Unlike the rest of her family, Katy is willing to acknowledge that the legendary curse on the box may be the reason for their bad luck. Katy herself is not immune: a bad fall during ballet practice loses her the leading role in her school's ballet.

On crutches, she sets out to decipher the curse. Running parallel to her efforts is her developing insight into the people in her family. She begins to understand how her parents can still love each other and yet be divorced. During her quest, Katy has eerie feelings which lead her to further respect her own unique capabilities. "Underneath the tip of my iceberg – the modern, scientific part – I discovered a part that still believes in magic...I don't decide that things are impossible, just because they aren't very likely."

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## JOUONS AU DÉTECTIVE!

**Une enquête toute garnie.** Marjolaine Juteau. Illus. Anne-Marie Forest. Montréal: Pierre Tisseyre, 1989. 101 pp. broché. ISBN 2-89051-357-2.



Il faut féliciter Marjolaine Juteau d'avoir bien réussi son premier roman, *Une enquête toute garnie*, et également Anne-Marie Forest de l'avoir aidée avec ses illustrations engageantes. Tout est dit et bien dit quand au dos du livre on compare les méandres des surprises dans les aventures de l'enquête menée par les principaux personnages, Mélissa et Alexandre, et les hauts et les bas dans un jeu d'échelles et de serpents.

Préférant dépasser la préparation traditionnelle de la scène narrative, l'auteur nous lance directement dans le "jeu" et le mystère. A la sortie des cours, les potins de la journée tout frais, Alexandre raconte à Mélissa les détails incomplets du vol de l'ordinateur et de l'imprimante de l'école. Tout comme Mélissa, nous sommes saisis par la fièvre de courir immédiatement sur la piste du voleur.