tact as well the naïvete and carefree recklessness of youth who regard themselves as immortal, invincible, and all too certain of the rightness of their actions. This novel about a youthful Bussy D'Ambois would be a good gift for children whose parents want them to recognize the dangers of their carefree actions and of drugs but who are reluctant to get on their kids' case for fear of alienating them. And as an added bonus, it is also a well-written story.

Douglas H. Parker *is Associate Professor of English at Laurentian University and the Dean of the Université canadienne en France programme, Ville franche-sur-mer.*

YOUNG ADULTS AND FAMILY STRESS

I'll tell you Tuesday if I live that long. Cherylyn Stacey. Tree Frog Press, 1989. 160 pp., $6.95 paper. ISBN 0-88967-064-1; **Thirteen never changes**. Budge Wilson. Scholastic-TAB, 1989. $3.95 paper. ISBN 0-590-73134-3.

Canadian novelists are exploring the Young Adult novel with some success. At its best, the typical YA story relates a coming-of-age theme with sensitivity and insight, using humour, light dialogue and provocative situations to hold the young reader. The genre, unfortunately, may often be riddled with angst, genuine but unpalatable, trendiness and terminal cuteness, and the poorest language.

I'll tell you Tuesday if I live that long, by Cherylyn Stacey, and *Thirteen never changes*, by Budge Wilson, both focus on adolescents approaching womanhood. The titles reflect the catchiness needed to grasp the fleeing attention of a volatile audience. Both books describe very loving families but only one family is intact and traditional. Both books ignore the multicultural nature of modern Canada.

I'll tell you Tuesday if I live that long is a first book by a single mother of two daughters who attempts, in a determined but awkward way, to deal with the hard realities of growing up. The opening sentence, "Mom's boyfriends were the pits," sets the tone of the book, a crude rather charmless patter that is meant to reflect the mores of today. Fourteen-year-old Vicky is confused, angry, and out-spoken. Her mother is remarrying a kind man, but Vicky, while aware of her own father's shallowness, still loves and misses him. After the wedding, Vicky travels with her own dad to Disney World and then must rejoin her new family on a teen beach in California – a minor version of hell. Vicky is incredibly alone in this very crowded place and woefully insecure. Totally self-absorbed, she is afraid to eat outside, afraid to be seen as a loser and absolutely terrified that she won't present the right image. As a book stressing the importance of "image" at the moment of moving into a new family

situation, *I'll tell you Tuesday* could be compared to another recent book in the same genre, Mary Blakeslee's *Say cheese* (see review, *CCL*, 59).

Heedlessly and stupidly, Vicky falls into the clutches of Blake, a determined and shallow predator out for kicks. In realistic chapters about "Giving in and putting out," "How to look cool when you're scared stiff," we read about a young, inexperienced girl, confused and overwhelmed by her own sexuality, and dealing with adult situations. In vivid and gross detail, Vicky describes her nausea and drunkenness, her abandonment by Blake, and her subsequent adventures with a new boyfriend Chris: stealing money from Blake in order to get home from a nude beach, and being terrorized by a psychopathic truck driver. This one-night crisis overload is choppy and curiously unthrilling. The author can not draw well enough to create scenes that are gritty and not just tawdry and unappealing.

There are interesting vignettes but not a coherent whole. The wedding scene is lively and funny, and Disneyland appears through Vicky's eyes as a perfect metaphor for California. A tighter, more carefully crafted novel with some refinement of style would focus our attention more effectively on the real problems of divided families, drugs, and drink. The moral questions of stealing, of deception, of going to a nude beach with strangers at age fourteen are not even asked, even though the author obviously wants to focus seriously on teenage concerns.

Thirteen never changes is a fine novel about growing up and discovering roots. Lorinda, a sensitive and introspective thirteen-year-old, is part of a warm, loving family in Nova Scotia. She inherits a diary that chronicles the life of her grandmother, Laura, when she was thirteen. The diary adds strong voices and themes to enhance Lorinda's own story. Wartime Halifax springs to life. An English child is coming to stay with Laura's family. Dreaming of the perfect friend, pretty and grateful, Laura is horrified by Hilary, who talks in an adult manner and *doesn't* even like peanut butter. "I very much doubt I shall," she says: "But I shall try. Mummy said I was to try everything and be cheerful at all times." The children learn much from one another as does the absorbed reader. Hilary succinctly explains the British class system and the hard realities of war, of Hitler, of bombs. Hilary and Laura are strong personalities who interact in a believable way as they cope with change and master the balance necessary for difficult times. The book provides insight into feelings of isolation that adjustment to a new way of life entails. Indeed, there are many youngsters today who are coping with these very problems. The reader is encouraged to think further, to ponder the nature of bravery and of change itself. When the evacuees return, they will have grown away in part from their British customs. (This book could be dovetailed with Kit Pearson's *The sky is falling* for a look at the same era from another perspective.) Lorinda now thinks about when her friend, Sarah Cohen, mentioned that her father and aunt came to Canada from Holland at the end of the war: "They came alone,

because that was all that was left of the family." Lorinda had just thought that the rest had gone somewhere else. No, she now knows the story is deeper and sadder than that.

Thirteen never changes closes with Laura turning fourteen and with Lorinda tying together the strands of the diary with the people of today. Lorinda now realizes for instance the deep and sad family story of her own friend Sarah Cohen. There is a wonderful sense of continuity and of family, as Lorinda decides to write her diary for her own grandchildren.

Serious issues about belonging and about our history are sensitively addressed in this very fine novel. As we approach the fiftieth anniversary of World War II, it is good for students to have a solid framework of knowledge and understanding.

Esta Pomotov, *a research psychometrist and librarian, is selections librarian for the Toronto Board of Education.*

UNE LEÇON D'AMITIÉ

Un duel, un duo. Lorraine Pilon. Illus. Guy Claverie. Montréal, Pierre Tisseyre, 1989. 103 pp., broché. ISBN 2-89051-367-X.

Il suffit d'un coup d'oeil jeté à l'illustration de la couverture de ce livre représentant deux jolies fillettes aux yeux verts, l'une blonde, l'autre rousse, pour s'assurer du public auquel le volume est destiné. Nul doute non plus qu'il plaira aux filles d'une dizaine d'années qui s'identifieront sans peine à l'héroïne et revivront avec elle des situations quotidiennes bien connues, ainsi que les émotions et les préoccupations de leur âge.

L'école, la famille et les ami(e)s constituent comme il se doit tout l'univers de Frédérique, jeune Montréalaise de douze ans, et les lectrices y reconnaîtront aussi le leur. D'autant plus que le récit se présente sous la forme d'une tranche du journal intime que tient la fillette pendant une quinzaine de jours. On participe à son triomphe lorsqu'elle gagne le concours oratoire de sa classe. On revit avec elle le plaisir de se faire servir le petit déjeuner au lit, le jour de son anniversaire, et de déballer avec une impatience fébrile les cadeaux offerts par ses amies. On ressent la honte qui la fait rougir quand, après lui avoir volé son journal, son ennemie jurée, "la" Zoé, proclame dans la cour de récréation son amour pour le beau Nicolas. Les deux fils conducteurs de la narration, parfois entremêlés,