

Le roman d'Agatha, où deux personnages rédigent des romans policiers, est un livre sur la création littéraire. Il ne faut donc pas s'étonner quand l'auteur oblige ses jeunes lecteurs à participer eux-mêmes à l'écriture du roman, en les invitant à choisir des images A, B et C celle qui convient le mieux à leur tempérament.

Les illustrations de Caroline Merola complètent agréablement le texte de cette histoire fantaisiste, qui enchantera tous les jeunes amateurs de romans policiers.

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THE TREASURE OF THE LONG SAULT: "OH BOTHER"

The treasure of the Long Sault. Monica Hughes. General Paperbacks, 1982 (rpt. 1990) 117 pp., \$5.95 paper. ISBN 0-7736-7277-X.

The treasure of the Long Sault is a fictional account of a young boy's obsessive pursuit of treasure. It is a fast-paced story. It also has plenty of dialogue. More attractive elements in a novel for young (especially male) readers would be difficult to find. However, what is more appealing is that *The treasure* is not an ordinary tale about the pursuit of riches. The plot, intriguing and complex, moves beyond its expected end, and its intensity, produced mainly by the protagonist's obsession, is unrelenting. The plot, consequently, may well be the novel's most successful element.

Unfortunately, with all that it has to make it appealing, *The treasure* runs the risk of being a considerable failure. An important element of the novel is the dialogue of and between the diverse brothers – the "imaginative" and "practical" Neil and Jamie Anderson. If the dialogue were real, or true to the language and tone of young Canadians, the novel would be good. But it is not real, and the story, as a result, is difficult to read with pleasure.

For example, the two main characters, Neil and Jamie Anderson, engage in the kind of playful, though exclusive behaviour often seen between brothers close in age. Brothers argue, fight, and often deride each other. All this occurs quite naturally in *The treasure*, but when words like "dread," "horrid," "splendid," and "wonderful," as in "a wonderful highway," become part of their language, and when evidence of sibling rivalry is portrayed in attacks such as, "you just pipe down, Jamie Anderson," or "Less of that, young Jamie," or, more violently, "Neil, you stinker," one is led to believe that Hughes has never in her life heard young Canadian boys speak. But it gets worse. When the two boys engage in a "pillow fight," the climax of the battle occurs at this protest: "Oh,

bother. The feathers are coming out." Neil heroically attempts the patchwork, but Jamie's "kibitzing," believe it or not, causes Neil to prick his finger.

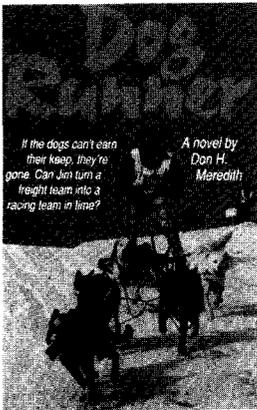
Oh bother, indeed.

Another complaint is that Hughes abandons an early and logical attempt to have the two brothers pursue the treasure together. If one is practical and the other imaginative, and if the two are companions, the possibilities for constant and entertaining tension are endless. However, for some reason, Jamie becomes less important as the plot develops, leaving the "imaginative" Neil, who is really more obsessive than anything else, to champion the cause alone. The fault, I believe, is that increasingly Jamie becomes characterized as a child, unable to understand the seriousness of this adventure. He is even referred to as "young Jamie" by a brother only a year older. Hughes' reason for this is never learned.

At the back of the book, the publisher writes, "[Hughes] is one of the most popular writers for young people on both sides of the Atlantic." It seems a pity that *The treasure of the Long Sault* does little to enhance this reputation.

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NORTHERN INHERITANCE



Dog runner. Don H. Meredith. Western Producer Prairie Books, 1989. 176 pp., \$12.95 paper. ISBN 0-88833-293-9; **Houses of snow, skin, and bones. Native dwellings: The North.** Bonnie Shemie. Tundra Books, 1989. 24 pp., \$12.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88776-240-9.

In *Dog runner*, an exciting and compelling novel for young adult readers, Jim Redcrow, a shy teenage boy of mixed white and Indian blood, unsure of himself and very sensitive about his Native ancestry, discovers strength in his Grandfather's teachings about Weesakaycha the Trickster, and Mahegun his guardian spirit, and about the uniqueness of his

heritage and the wisdom of his ancestors.

In order to keep his team of sled dogs, Jim must show his father that he is capable of contributing to their upkeep. After troubles and losses, the Redcrow family finally unite to help Jim prepare for the race of his life, The Trappers' Trek. The narrative pace is fast but there are moments of quiet intensity when Jim, looking into the eyes of his fierce and loyal huskies, senses his affinity