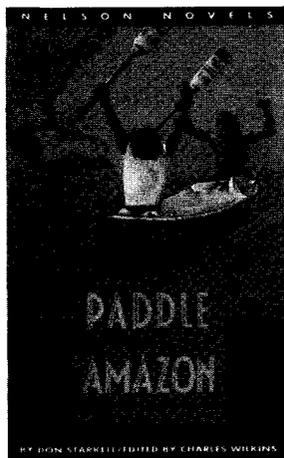


should be parents, not preschoolers; children will follow their parents' example. It is really the book's three-page appendix that may prove useful, with its clear presentations of the medical information and public health issues. Less sensible is the author's suggested explanation, for small children, that AIDS can be contracted by "having sexual intercourse with someone who is infected.... You can explain what sexual intercourse is and that it is for grownups, not children." I trust I'm not the only parent who prefers a less tinged introduction to the idea of sexual intercourse for my youngsters.

Heather Collins's brightly-coloured illustrations capture well the facial expressions of children and the charming details of a nursery-school setting, although her colour mix leaves an impression of disharmony.

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TWO COMPELLING TRAVEL BOOKS



Paddle to the Amazon: The amazing canoe adventure. Don Starkell. Ed., Charles Wilkins. Nelson Canada, 1990. 159 pp., \$4.50 paper. ISBN 0-17-603059-X; **Safari: Journey to the end.** Dave Taylor. Boston Mills Press, 1990. 120 pp., \$19.95 paper. ISBN 1-55046-016-1.

Paddle to the Amazon is the stuff of pure adventure – a two year, 12,000 mile canoe voyage which earned two Canadians a citation in the *Guinness book of world records*. On June 1st, 1980, Don Starkell and his two teenaged sons (one of whom abandoned the project midway) launched the Orellana, a 21-foot fibreglass canoe, in the Red River at Winnipeg. Their destination was the mouth of the

Amazon River.

Starkell's journal of the voyage is compulsive reading. The danger, the excitement, the fear, and the disenchantment are all recorded in unromanticized terms. Moments of high drama, from near starvation to arrest at gunpoint by Nicaraguan soldiers, contrast with more tranquil interludes, such as an encounter with a group of playful dolphins. The relationship between father and son provides an interesting counterpoint to the story. Although punctuated by disagreement, the relationship between Don and Dana develops into one of mutual respect and understanding.

There is an immediacy and directness to Starkell's language which make

the story highly accessible to a young adult readership. The short, episodic nature of the journal entries and the rapid-fire sequence of events enhance the book's appeal, especially for reluctant readers. Although this edition substantially abridges the original, the story still maintains a smooth flow. Disappointing, though, is the omission of the large map which shows at a glance the entire span of the journey.

Safari also transports readers to exotic locales, this time to the wilds of Africa. A photographic survey of the wildlife of Kenya, this book had its origins in an intensive two-week safari undertaken by Dave Taylor, a writer and photographer with a special interest in natural history. *Safari* is a spectacular photographic record of that trip, supplemented by a brief written commentary.

Although *Safari* lacks the personal drama of *Paddle to the Amazon*, readers with an interest in the natural world will find themselves spellbound. The book's particular appeal to children lies in its remarkable illustrations. Colourful, sharply-defined, and composed with care, the photographs document vividly the fabulous array of Kenyan wildlife. There is, however, the odd disappointment. The unusual physiognomy of the mousebird, for example, is not discernible in the tiny photograph.

Children will find the text less accessible than the illustrations. While Taylor is an admirably impartial observer, refusing to lapse into diatribe in discussions of such controversial issues as the environment, his vocabulary and sentence structure are more suited to an adult readership. Still, as a book for young browsers, *Safari* is a visual delight.

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SECOND BIOGRAPHY BEST USED AS APPENDIX TO FIRST

From the land of the shadows: The making of Grey Owl. Donald B. Smith. Western Producer Prairie Books, 1990. 218 pp., \$24.95. ISBN 0-88833-309-9.

Donald Smith's *From the land of the shadows* is the second full biography of that fine writer, extraordinary conservationist and ingenious impersonator, Archibald Stansfeld Belaney (1888-1938), alias Grey Owl. Surprisingly, Smith's biography does not supplant the first full biography of Grey Owl, Lovat Dickson's *Wilderness man*, published in 1973. On the contrary, the second is best used as an appendix to the first.

The differences in the authors' backgrounds only partly explain the differences in the biographies. Dickson was Belaney's publisher and promoter.