are undoubtedly meant to complement each other. However, the dual protagonists only compound the narrative's unwieldiness, given that several subplots—a venerable boatman, etc.—add to its prolixity. *Flight* needs editing. Brummel Crook seems reluctant to sacrifice material for the sake of brevity; ironically, her admiration for her subject becomes in some ways her greatest shortcoming.

Characters like the saintly mother, Polly, are unconvincing, and attempts to humanize famous figures don't come off: "Sir Guy Carleton looked at [his] appointment sheet ... Then he sneezed" (260). Brummel Crook does not fully exploit her strengths, one being description. She succumbs instead to "over-historicizing" (providing more dates than needed) and to quoting scripture; both tendencies augment the novel's didactic, sentimental thrust.

Originally published by Oxford in 1971, *Honor Bound*'s story of a Loyalist family and their 1780s journey from Philadelphia to Canada remains fresh and engaging. Wesley W. Bates' woodcuts enhance an already-strong text. The novel's rather sombre cover is misleading; the Downies have a distinct flare for humour and playfulness with language (the double-entendre of "Honor" exemplifies one such clever twist). Evident throughout *Honor Bound* is an appreciation for the period's language: "a firkin of butter" (35) ... "rigadoons and paspies, Spanish fandangoes" (36) ... "what a fribble I was..." (89)! Indian legend, Celtic lore and texts like *Gulliver's Travels* and *Goody Two-Shoes* are deftly applied motifs. In less capable hands, stock characters like the urchin and the Rousseauesque nature-boy might have become clichéd, but the Downies usually manage to avoid predictability.

Jeanette Lynes *teaches Canadian literature and children's literature at Lakehead University. She has recently completed, with S.R. MacGillivray, an article on historical fiction for young readers.*
S.R. MacGillivray'*s teaching interests are the nineteenth century British novel, Canadian literature and children's literature.*

AN ELEPHANT IN NEW BRUNSWICK

Mogul and Me. Peter Cumming. Illus. P. John Burden. Ragweed Press, 1989. 164 pages. ISBN 0-920304-82-6.

Set in 1836, *Mogul and Me*, a novel by award-winning children's author Peter Cumming, imaginatively recreates a historical tragedy in which a steamship bound for Maine from Saint John, New Brunswick caught fire and sank. Thirty-two passengers died by fire or drowning after many crew members abandoned ship in one of the only two lifeboats, the other boats having been removed to make room for the travelling circus and its chief attraction, Mogul the elephant.

The story is broken into roughly two halves. A narrator recounts first his youth in rural New Brunswick and the realization of every boy's dream when he is asked to care for Mogul on the voyage because he has "a way with animals."

His dream explodes into the nightmare of the fire and his desperate but ultimately successful attempt to save Mogul, who is chained to the ship's deck.

While the first half of the novel includes many convincing scenes—especially effective are the descriptions of the circus and its performances, and such moments as the boy's comical bewilderment upon seeing a group of wax figures he first believes to be real people—the second half succumbs to melodrama and its attendant one-dimensional characters. The cowardly villain—whose "flaming red hair and ... big stiff flaming red moustache" (62) are none too subtle reminders of his role in causing the ship's fire—is a relation to those black moustached villains in old silent pictures. And a scene where Mogul chases him across a field but cannot seem to catch him would challenge the credulity of most readers. The boy is as much enamoured by Selena, the circus performer, as he is with Mogul. But this "princess," whom the boy idealizes as an exotic version of his dead mother, remains simply that: a fairy tale princess.

The novel is cleverly structured around the recurring image of fire and has some finely taut scenes, but the generally flat language and characterization deflate its theme of loyalty and love. Early in the novel a perhaps minor but nonetheless irritating confusion over usage occurs a number of times as the narrator speaks of "my father and I" at one moment and "I and my father" in the next breath, the latter expression presumably meant to add historical authenticity to the boy's speech. When at the novel's conclusion the narrator affirms, "Yes, love was real, I knew, as real as the best dream you could dream," what should be a convincing paradox is clouded by the melodrama that intrudes upon the novel's essential realism.

Kerry Vincent *teaches English at Saint Mary's University and the Nova Scotia Teachers College. While living in Zimbabwe, he and his family had a close call with an angry elephant.*

QUESTING FOR FATHERS: AN OLD FORM WITH A MODERN THEME

Guardian of the Dark. Bev Spencer. Scholastic, 1993. 170 pp., $4.95 paper. ISBN 0-590-74583-2. **The Dragon's Tapestry**. Martine Bates. Red Deer College Press, 1992. 183 pp., $9.95 paper. ISBN 0-88995-080-6. **Nobody's Son**. Sean Stewart. Maxwell Macmillan, 1993. 233 pp., $15.95 cloth, $10.95 paper. ISBN 0-02-954160-3, ISBN 0-02-954181-6.

Three recent novels explore the theme of youth's quest for self-realization within the context of the fantasy story. Although taking different approaches to resolution of the protagonist's inner conflict, stemming in each case from an absent father, all employ conventions of the genre: a conflict between forces of good and evil; a hero/ine singled out by a uniqueness of characterwhich itself springs from adversity; skills/knowledge the hero must use appropriately in order to prevail; a period of trial, usually during a journey, which refines the hero; and an object of power, essential to victory in the final conflict. (Atypi-