

draws us into Sal's journey through time, where she meets her young grandmother, Sarah, and learns the importance of the past and its significance in the present. The narrative's only problem appears in some confusion about the mechanics of time travel: while in the past, Sal becomes convinced that she must toss the olden days coat into the back of Sarah's cutter for her "plan" to work — yet nothing in the text elaborates on this plan. Her sense of urgency is unconvincing, and Laurence never clarifies why Sal cannot simply wait for Sarah to drive away before taking off the coat. This small flaw does not ruin the story; instead, it leaves the reader pondering the mysteries of time travel and waking dreams.

Wood's new illustrations are more colourful, detailed — particularly in terms of facial expressions — and aesthetically appealing than her old ones. Certainly they complement the text better in placement and content by highlighting the action, such as where Sal's admiration of Sarah's Christmas box is accompanied by a facing full-page spread of the two girls and a close-up beneath the text of the box. Conversely, the picture of this scene in the first edition precedes the text and lacks detail. While many of the pictures in both versions share similar composition, the new ones contain more depth, and the use of gouache and pencil complement the story better than the original watercolours. The only weakness appears in Wood's uneven characterization: while Sal and Sarah are convincing, neither edition depicts Gran matching her textual description.

Gran's phrase "the past is in my mind" echoes the book's themes of time and change. While looking through the old photo album, Sal imagines having a granddaughter who finds Sal's jeans and T-shirt as amusing as Gran's striped stockings and high buttoned boots. Later, Sal realizes that while many things in life change, those that are meaningful — love, family, traditions, even language — stay the same. This is the heart of Laurence's message: the important things last and are cherished always.

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### The Taste of Summer

*The Fishing Summer.* Teddy Jam. Illus. Ange Zhang. Groundwood/Douglas and McIntyre, 1997. 32 pp. \$15.95. ISBN 0-88899-285-8.

*The Fishing Summer* is a first-person account of an eight-year-old boy's quest for independence. One summer, while visiting his uncles on the Atlantic coast, he sneaks aboard the uncles' fishing boat against his mother's wishes. Even though he ends up falling into the ocean, he has a glorious day learning to fish and wants to return the next day.

Little boys reading this story will relate to the boy's defiance of his mother. She has already lost her father and her uncle to drowning, and she wants her son to

be safe. However, the boy wants to go fishing with his uncles. He is compelled to go to the boat and falls asleep there. The next morning, he awakes to the sounds of his uncles' fishing out at sea. As I mother, I was relieved when the uncles say that the boy's mother knows where he is. When they return home and the mother finds out that her son fell overboard, she is very angry and upset. She insists that he will not go out on the boat again because "He is my baby and you're lucky you didn't drown him." This impasse is resolved by having the mother join in as part of the fishing crew with her brothers and son. I liked the fact that the boy is allowed to grow up with the mother included as part of the fun.

The uncles are presented as strong, brave, hard-working fishermen. They are believable and likable characters with big smiles and distinctive looks. The illustrator captures the tender affection between the family members with soft textures and shapes, almost impressionist in style. However, this style did cause a problem with the way the faces are painted. On many pages, the faces have the eyes obscured or shown as slits, which I found disconcerting.

On the last page, the story is quickly wrapped up in two short paragraphs about a shortage of fish which results in the fish factory closing and changes in the lives of the uncles. This leaves an important question unanswered: "Where did all the fish go?" It also moves the focus away from the boy growing up. The story would have been stronger to end on the previous page at the end-of-summer party. The boy's uncles and his mother toast him on how he'd become a real fisherman. He also gets a taste of coffee for the first time and he says "It was bitter and it was raw and it was sweet. It was the taste of that summer and I never lost it." These words are far more powerful and poignant than the afterthoughts on the final page.

Children ages six to eight, particularly boys, will understand and relate to the intense feelings of the boy who wants to grow up and doesn't want to be treated like a baby any more. This aspect of the story makes it one that can be reread many times.

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### More Munsch

*Munschworks 2: The Second Munsch Treasury.* Robert Munsch. Illus. Michael Martchenko and Hélène Desputeaux. Annick, 1999. 133 pp. \$24.95. *We Share Everything!* Robert Munsch. Illus. Michael Martchenko. Scholastic, 1999. 32 pp. \$6.99. *Mmm, Cookies!* Robert Munsch. Illus. Michael Martchenko. Scholastic, 2000. 30 pp. \$6.99.

Robert Munsch's books often flash exclamation marks in their titles, and even when they do not, they might just as well do so because Munsch is nothing if not