

this message, Joanne Findon works some magic on time that goes beyond the journeys of her central character. The story is set in Britain, both modern day and Iron Age (about 600 BCE) in and around Stonehenge. But, as the author's own historical note acknowledges, the dates and events she suggests ignore archeological conclusions that Stonehenge was not in use ceremonially after 1100 BCE. Findon alters time in this way in order to bring together the invading Celts and local people in a conflict only the *maregi* can resolve. The *maregi*, anticipated as a great warrior, is instead Holly, a thirteen-year-old Canadian girl, caught in personal battles and conflicts of her own.

Fate and choice are central questions in this book. Holly is still young enough to find her choices limited by the adults in her life, old enough to resent and struggle against this. As the *maregi*, she finds herself manipulated by the magic of another time, but chosen loyalties and values allow her to find her own ways of winning. The mystery of her British born mother's past, the pain of an impending divorce between her parents, the antagonism she feels for a sullen cousin — these form the contemporary backdrop to her involuntary journeying between the times. Peace is sometimes hard won not just between peoples but in individual hearts as well.

Findon's story is appealing in the way of all time travel fantasies, bringing the dry facts of history to life. But this novel is not without difficulties. The portents and symbols are often heavy-handed: a librarian named Mrs. Witcher; the Raven's Nest cafe with its meaningful paintings and pottery; and a repeated reliance on the veiled messages of dreams. As well, the confusion of Holly's experiences is conveyed through a great deal of "lurching" by all concerned and too many episodes of spinning heads.

In the end the story is anticlimactic. Does a peaceful resolution have to be so lacking in punch and reliant on lecture? "'You have to make peace not war,' she told them. 'Your two peoples have to become one. You have to share this land, not fight over it.'" Findon offers intriguing possibilities in Holly's nickname, Piper, as in the Pied Piper, and in the universal call of music and tangled threads of fate, but lets the story wind down with sermons and a denouement that goes on too long.

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Time-Travel into Mennonite Culture

The Tramp Room. Nancy-Lou Patterson. Wilfrid Laurier UP, 1999. \$14.95 paper. ISBN 0-88920-329-6.

Imagine yourself in a museum. You pick up some artifact of life 150 years ago — a tool, say, or some item of clothing — and muse about the person who used it, and likely made it too. If musing gives way to fantasy, you may project yourself to that past scene, imagining a life lived to a different rhythm, yet with a common human-

ity to draw you in.

Such is the premise of Nancy-Lou Patterson's *The Tramp Room*. The narrator is a girl who works as a junior interpreter at a historic house. Dressed in period costume, she falls asleep in the house one night and wakes up in the past, when the Mennonite family who built the house still lived there. This transition from present to past is swiftly accomplished, as is the transition back at the end, and Patterson is not really interested in making the shifts problematic or interesting in any way. The narrator's sudden presence in the past seems to pose no problems for the host family, and the girl's experience as an interpreter enables her to fit into the routines of the past culture smoothly.

Once there, the plot interest is sustained by the presence of another recent arrival in the house, a tramp boy with a mystery in his past. Taciturn and secretive, the boy is nevertheless hard-working and blessed with many skills. Getting to know this boy and helping uncover the mystery that surrounds him becomes the narrator's project, while the host family is a solid and constant presence in the background.

Despite what this plot summary may suggest, the careful unfolding of this background is in fact the main source of interest in the book. Patterson has written an affectionate tribute to a mid-nineteenth century Mennonite family: their work, their folkways, and their culture. The book is crowded with absorbing period detail, and Patterson is very patient in giving space to describing it. The book's style fits its subject, as the reader learns to fit into the slower rhythms of a life before wiring, a life lived by the rhythms of the land.

Young readers will emerge from this book with a better understanding of how people lived five generations ago: how candles and sausages were made, how resourceful one needed to be to write a letter, and how firmly-gendered work was (we see comparatively little of the men's work). The book is carefully situated in history, in geography, even in some aspects of contemporary law. There is much to be learned here. A reader whose notion of narrative pacing has been formed by *Star Wars* will find it slow, but a reader who enjoys museums, or who is just curious about the past, will find much to read for in this well-written novel.

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Two-thirds Success for Trilogy

Goldstone. Julie Lawson. Stoddart, 1997. 170 pp. \$8.95 paper. ISBN 0-7737-5891-7.
Turns on a Dime. Julie Lawson. Stoddart, 1998. 176 pp. \$8.95 paper. ISBN 0-7737-59425.
The Ghost of Avalanche Mountain. Julie Lawson. Stoddart, 2000. 232 pp. \$9.95 paper. ISBN 0-7737-6091-1.

The middle part of a trilogy always seems to get short shrift. Just ask Han Solo, left encased in something or other at the end of *The Empire Strikes Back*. Too often that