

or facial twitches. Lefèvre informs his class, “We act with our bodies and eventually with voice, we do not act with our brains.” Spontaneity, sensitive coaching and masterful demonstrations are testaments to his proclamation. The students acknowledge his gifts for acting and teaching through a commentary of their personal experiences in the class. Lefèvre closes the video with an eloquent summary of a credible character development process — simple and truthful choices, trust, and belief.

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### Little Toby's Big Bad Hair Day

*Little Toby and the Big Hair.* Kim and Eugenie Fernandes. Doubleday Canada, 1997. 32 pp. \$16.95 cloth. ISBN 0-385-25633-7.

Rapunzel, Medusa, Samson — they all had it; most young girls long for it; little Toby wishes for it, and her wish comes true in spades! Gorgeous thick auburn curls “down to *There!*”! But how to manage such a mane? There’s the challenge. In Kim and Eugenie Fernandes’s delightful story, *Little Toby and the Big Hair*, the renowned Canadian mother and daughter author/illustrators team up to tell the tale of the tangling — and taming — of Toby’s hair.

One day, little Toby decides she is going to let her short hair grow. Down to her knees in no time, “it was curly, and twisty, and bouncy, and BIG.” Soon her lavish tresses become a haven for puppies, fodder for baby goats, nesting material for robins, and a magnet for wayward lollipops! Some children tease her. Some adults look askance at her burgeoning bouffant. Despite these minor provocations, Toby still likes having long hair. However, as her hair thickens, so does the plot. Blinded by her unruly bangs, Toby tumbles headfirst into the duck pond and emerges decked out with lily pads and crawdads. “You look like a mermaid,” her mother declares. Mrs. Otto’s twins sadistically tug on her locks with “twenty little baby fingers,” and will only relinquish their newfound toy when plied with cookies. When a well-intentioned barber offers to lighten her load, Toby allows her fancy free rein. She envisions a fantastic besti-hairy [sic], dedicated solely to carrying her hair. When her mother urges her to opt for a cool summer cut, Toby argues that long hair will keep her warm enough in the winter to toboggan in her bathing suit. “And flowers will bloom all around me in the snow,” she imagines.

Catastrophe strikes when Toby’s long-suffering mother finds her daughter’s hair cascading into her apple pie makings as she prepares for a family picnic. Add one spooked cat to the recipe and chaos ensues. Mistaking a flour-covered Toby for a wild beast, a terrified neighbour rushes to call the dogcatcher. A *deus ex machina* with a gentle O’Henry twist, Toby’s grandfather appears just in time to

offer sympathy, kinship, and an extra pair of hands to mollify the offending locks. "I know all about hair," the totally bald man reassures his incredulous granddaughter. "I used to have hair. It was long and curly, just like yours." He produces an old photograph of himself as a young man, sporting a shaggy mane to rival Toby's own crowning glory. Clearly she comes by it honestly. Hirsute or hairless, the young girl and the older man concur: "I love you any way at all." Together, they concoct an orderly headful of auburn plaits, much admired by all at the picnic. After the party, Toby and her mother free her hair from its silken fetters. They stroll happily under the darkening sky, only to find starlight caught amongst those legendary curls.

*Little Toby and the Big Hair* is a feast for the eyes and the ears. Kim Fernandes's beautiful "fimo clay" illustrations are the perfect complement to her mother's witty and well-measured text. Eugenie's prose combines lifelike dialogue with a poetic flair for colourful imagery and musical cadence. There is an enticing rhythm in the rise and fall of each paragraph, which invites reading aloud. Kim's luminous three-dimensional "drawings" vibrate life, with their beautifully proportioned figures, vivid colours, and intricate detail. Each page rewards the reader with an abundance of pattern and texture. The versatility of this medium is amazing: flesh, wood-grain, lacy curtains, flora and fauna, and of course Toby's ravishing red ringlets, are all elegantly rendered. Further exploration produces charming minutiae: a twist of apple peel, a smudgy barbershop window, silver barber's shears, cracks in a sidewalk, a tiny snail. Quirky typescript with a whimsical squiggly rendition of "hair" embellishes each gorgeous two-page tableau.

If the delightful dust-jacket photos of Kim and Eugenie Fernandes are a clue, we can surmise that art in *Little Toby* certainly imitates life. Mother and daughter together have created a play-filled book with a gentle message of unconditional love, for readers of all ages. *Little Toby and the Big Hair* is clearly a labour of love.

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### Hazardous Occupations

*Catching Fire: The Story of Firefighting*. Gena K. Gorrell. Tundra, 1999. 160 pp. \$18.99 paper. ISBN 0-88776-430-4. *Mining*. Jane Drake with Ann Love. Illus. Pat Cupples. Kids Can, 1997. 32 pp. \$14.99 cloth. ISBN 1-55074-337-6.

Gena Gorrell's *Catching Fire* is likely to become a well-thumbed volume to which