

is maligned and objectivity is judiciously given to all sides of the logging dispute (except an impetuous Brazilian executive). There are no bad guys as Dylan's dad explains, "They're just ordinary folks making a living. They just do their job and cut the trees the government says they can cut. And that brings money that the government needs as well as making them a profit. But it doesn't take the environment into account or the fact they are cutting trees faster than they are replanting them."

A reader's imagination is forced to take the environment into account. Everything about the book and the story is directed to teaching young readers to appreciate the complex issues surrounding logging and its effect on the environment. *Ring of Tall Trees'* deliberate posture competes, at times, with the imaginative elements of the story. Even when ten-year-old Dylan is participating in his version of a ceremonial dance, expediency is not far away:

Dylan's mind soared, and suddenly he was aloft, wing tip to wing tip with his friends, feathers rippling in the cool night breezes high above the forest. He looked down at the fire burning brightly in the clearing, its column of smoke rising through the old trees. To the west he spotted the line where the forest ended and the mangled remains of the clear-cut shone like bones in the starlight.

*Ring of Tall Trees* will appeal to ten- or eleven-year-old boys and will be appreciated by those trying to teach and instill environmental values into a young audience.

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## NEW READ-ALLOUD TALES

**Stories to Tell.** Bob Barton. Pembroke Publishers Ltd., 1992. 66 pp., \$9.95 paper. ISBN 0-921217-80-3; **Tell Me One Good Thing: Bedtime Stories.** Richard Thompson. Illus. Eugenie Fernandes. Toronto: Annick Press, 1992. 48 pp., \$15.95, \$7.95 cloth, paper. ISBN 1-55037-215-7; ISBN 1-55037-212-2.

Ten- and eleven-year-olds today readily admit they do not want to listen to a fairy tale—so acknowledges Bob Barton in his introduction to his new book, *Stories to Tell*, a follow-up to his first storytelling guide, *Tell Me Another*, published by Pembroke. In *Stories to Tell*, Barton brings together twelve of his favourite read-aloud tales and succeeds wonderfully in trying to convince the rest of us, parents and teachers, that we too can tell a story and even enjoy doing it.

His second "how-to" book comes loaded with new ideas, suggestions and hints on how to build a rapport with the audience, even before telling the story, and how to, as Barton says, "lift the stories off the page, breathe life into them and transmit them to the students." Each of the stories is prefaced by Barton's comments providing background information on the story itself as well as helpful hints in its retelling—ages best targeted, approximate telling time, a

selection of complementary tales or variations of the same tale and even a wide margin on each page for your own scribbles and notes.

Some of the tales are collected from classical folklore, some adaptations of popular legends, others written by contemporary authors such as Richard Hughes and Susan Price and still others by Bob Barton himself. There is one memorable, rhythmic piece of African folklore, retold by Jamaican poet James Berry, entitled "Anancy Runs into Tiger's Trouble." All the stories reflect Bob Barton's view that "through exposure to stories of different cultures, students can come to know that people the world over have had and continue to have a deep need to understand the events of their lives and to know their place in them." The challenge for all storytellers is to recreate these wonderful tales from our collected past and personalize them to our listeners so that they can participate in the recreation of that story. Taking this suggestion to heart, I substituted my three children's names for the names of the three main characters in "Cat Anna," a recreation of a Russian folktale by Susan Price, and the experience was memorable. By evoking popular culture, like the supermarket setting in "Cat Anna," Barton provides stories that today's eight-to-twelve-year-olds can appreciate as folktale and yet personalize to their own situation.

For a teacher who likes to tell stories as a way of entertaining and enlightening, Barton's new book is a welcome classroom companion. It provides a general introduction and individual forewords to each of the twelve stories.

*Tell Me One Good Thing: Bedtime Stories* is another delightful book combining the writing talent of Richard Thompson and the art work of Eugenie Fernandes. This warmhearted and whimsical collection of six poems and six stories (perfect for the three-to-six age group), is published by Annick Press with the support of the Canada Council and the Ontario Arts Council. Each of the poems has a lovely lilting, tuck-me-in-tight quality about it and the accompanying illustrations of Eugenie Fernandes match up beautifully to complete the cosy ambience.

The short fiction piece, "Snow Bear," captures the spirit of the independent yet precocious young girl not yet ready for bed who falls asleep dreaming she is a little bear cub nestled against Mama Bear's belly. "Chilliwack" stands out as a lively and well-paced story about a young boy galloping to a friend's house on the back of a shiny, golden horse set in motion by dropping two quarters in the slot at the shopping mall. What fun!

One flaw in the book, however, is the inclusion of "Way Below Above Her Head," a confusing chronicle of a young girl walking upside down on the sky after being tossed up in the air by her dad. It interferes with the natural flow of the book and seems totally out of sync with the dreamlike, cosy comfort offered by the rest of the stories. With this one exception, the book is a delight.

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