

Wilson's trademark is his use of authentic Canadian settings for his fiction. He thoroughly researches an environment and then bases his work in that locale. A student exchange program takes the book's characters from Winnipeg to the Arctic village of Gjoa Haven on King William Island. This venue allows Wilson to introduce his reader to everyday Inuit culture, language and traditions. Cultural differences between the Inuit and "kabloonas" (whites) are clearly illustrated and explained to the reader. The ignorant behaviour of an overtly racist reporter is challenged by the students. His violent temper contrasts the peaceful manner of the Inuk Mountie and his family. The Inuit belief in peaceful coexistence is the rationale explained to the Manitoba youth who question the Inuit's passive reaction to this vile character. Wilson's characters refuse to accept racism as they embrace and celebrate Inuit culture. Their occasional hesitation to experience new things, like eating Ptarmigan heart, is credible, as is their enthusiasm to overnight in igloos on the outskirts of town. Wilson's hero, Tom, and his friends are entirely believable teens.

Intertwined throughout *The Inuk Mountie Adventure* are history lessons about the Franklin expedition and early arctic exploration. Throughout the book, Wilson stresses the need for inter-cultural co-operation; he explains the demise of many early explorers, including Sir James Franklin, who refused to take advice from the Inuit. Canadian politics also feature prominently; Wilson's hero foils a corrupt Prime Minister and prevents his attempts to merge Canada with USA. The book's characters also stop this political egomaniac from stripping Canada of its natural resources. Canadian institutions such as the RCMP and CSIS are also introduced to the reader, increasing young people's knowledge of Canadian governmental institutions.

Wilson crafts his fiction with suspense and intrigue and his works engage readers and listeners of all ages. His efforts to educate readers about Canada — our history, geography, politics, our many cultures and traditions — must be commended. *The Inuk Mountie Adventure* is a highly entertaining and most informative read for people of all ages.

### Bruno and Boots meet "The Phantom"

*Something Fishy at Macdonald Hall*. Gordon Korman. Scholastic, 1995. 198 pp. \$17.99 cloth. ISBN 0-590-25521-5.

Gordon Korman's latest book involving characters Bruno Walton and Boots O'Neal is an uproariously funny tale which finds the mischievous youths being blamed for a series of practical jokes for which they, for once, are not responsible. The seventh book in the Macdonald Hall series, *Something Fishy at Macdonald Hall* reveals Korman's impressive talent for characterization. He creates a cast of characters and continues to develop each individual throughout the novel. While his adolescents are mischievous, they are not delinquents. They engage in innocent antics; for instance, the girls from Miss Scrimmage's sneak out at night as regularly as the boys and thus become suspects in the search to identify "The Phantom." New to Macdonald Hall this time is Edward O'Neal, Boots'

younger brother, who proves to be just as entertaining as his older brother. Korman's figures illustrate how youth learn to be active in achieving their goals. For example, Elmer Drimsdale, a typical Science geek, falls in love with fellow Summer Science Fair contestant Marylou Beakman, a student at Miss Scrimmage's School. A passive Elmer declares his love to Marylou by sending her rare and valuable gifts — a rodent skull and the droppings of the Tasmanian Mountain Sparrow — anonymously. Contrary to Elmer's intentions, such offerings send Marylou into a tizzy and prompt Miss Scrimmage to increase security around her campus. A despondent Elmer becomes inspired to act by the more dynamic Bruno and Boots, and sets out to woo his love in person, braving the dangers of Tyrannosaurus Rex and the Banshee II alarm siren.

Korman's adult figures prove that it is possible to be "old" and still seem young at heart. The students of both schools genuinely admire and respect "The Fish" and Miss Scrimmage. More importantly, the ongoing feud between the two adds tremendous humour to the novel.

Korman skilfully weaves many tales together to create *Something Fishy at Macdonald Hall*. The mystery of "The Phantom" is not solved until tale's end and the various subplots end happily for all characters involved. Seldom do readers encounter such a complete cast of lively, round characters who become entangled in so many truly hilarious events. Here's hoping that Mr. Korman brings the entire cast to life again soon.

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### The Pleasures of the Text — Of Suspense and Boredom

*Anywhere but Here*. Adele Dueck. Red Deer College P, 1996 (Northern Lights Young Novels). 111 pp. \$9.95 paper. ISBN 0-88995-147-0.

For eleven-year-old Marjorie, the prospect of a long summer on her family's drought-stricken Saskatchewan farm is dismal. Her best friend has just moved away in the most recent tide of émigrés fleeing an impossibly straitened farm existence, and Marjorie finds herself saddled with endless household chores and baby-sitting while her mother sews to augment the family's income. As she explains to her new friend, Craig: "farmers don't have any money. Dad gets up at six almost every day of his life. He works 'till dark or later almost every night. When I need something, he tells me we can't afford it because the price of wheat is dropping and the price of fuel is going up."

But Marjorie, "living in the middle of nowhere doing nothing," is also a veteran reader of Nancy Drew mysteries, and it is precisely this experience that gives her a predilection for the mystery of the chemical thefts that rapidly unfolds into her boredom. Adele Dueck provides Marjorie and her young