

— replaces *pretention* with its cognate, although it is of *presumptuousness* that Jeanne is complaining. Having fallen ill while observing Jeanne operate on a crushed leg, Simon explains, “But seeing you sewing with your white thread in *all that massacre* turned my stomach” (p. 142; emphasis added), an awkward rendering of “dans toute cette boucherie” (*Jeanne, fille du roy*, pp. 172-173).

Proofreading errors abound. I counted sixteen, mostly in spelling and punctuation (“Some people’s devotion is more useful that other’s,” p. 33; “it was not adverse to choking or crowding out its neighbours,” p. 107).

Many uncritical young readers, especially girls, will probably enjoy *The king’s daughter*, as they do other teenage romances. But it is not a work of literature. It is unfortunate that the dramatic potential of an inherently interesting historical situation was not better exploited for adolescent readers.

NOTES

¹ Sheila Egoff, *The republic of childhood: a critical guide to Canadian children’s literature in English*, 2nd. ed. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 98.

² Suzanne Martel, *Jeanne, fille du roy*. Collection du Goéland. (Montreal: Les Editions Fides, 1974).

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MARITIME GOTHIC

The ghost of Lunenburg Manor, Eric Wilson. Clarke, Irwin, 1981. 117 pp. \$10.95 paper. ISBN 0-7720-1323-3.

The first reaction of this hardened adult to these gothic adventures was to dismiss the book as unreviewable. A second reading revealed a considerable skill in plotting and a strong use of pastiche in the characterization. The author, a teacher from Nelson, B.C., who in earlier mysteries has taken the adventure-prone Tom Austen and his more cautious sister Liz from the Pacific to Toronto (skipping over their native Winnipeg), now sets the action in a stretch of Nova Scotia coastline rich in legends of pirates, shipwrecks, storms and apparitions. Many of these he weaves into his plot, either as spoof or as false clue. He uses Stevenson’s “Black Dog” as a misleading nickname for the “good guy” wrongly suspected of murdering Professor Zinck, descendant of an old Lunenburg family. Significantly, another suspect turns out to be a film director attempting to rent the Lunenburg Manor for shooting on location. With its genre-allusions, caricatures, tourist-film localities, and its obsequious dark-haired servant metamorphosed into a blond killer who explains his scheme in gangsterese to his boat load of victims bound for shipwreck but rescued by Black Dog in

scuba diving attire, the tale resembles nothing so much as a Pink Panther film.

As an entertainment — for it is little more — the book shows a high degree of expertise but a want of restraint. The opening, in particular, is calculated to put off any sensitive reader by its stagey dialogue between ESP-obsessed teenagers, and by its oversupply of abnormality: a ship afire later revealed as a local boy's impossible hoax, icy fingers round Tom's neck in bed, a wedding cake manor house with mysterious knocks inducing premonitions of death, and so on *ad nauseam*. When the plot does get going, its author skillfully intersperses false clues with true ones (observed only on a second reading), and then adds ghostly effects. The raven rising at the collapse of the assaulted Professor is gothic convention. The author breaches this convention when the victim scrawls EVEL[yn] in the sand to identify his assailant as a twin brother whose existence neither hero nor reader could reasonably suspect and who could not conceivably agree to assault and swindle his twin. Psychologically, several episodes — Tom and Liz persisting in detection without informing the police or their hosts, a motel owner accepting them without question — crumble at a touch, but in the matters that would concern a film director, the author shows great skill. In the finale, above all, he expertly interweaves natural and contrived incident. After Tom's low-key recognition "It's you!" ends one chapter, the next opens on the doomed ship with the villain's disclosure. A giant wave and an engine failure expose his weak points; the plan to use rocks and high tide as his executioners, while he holds his revolver in reserve, shows his guile and resource.

Beyond those cinematic qualities, including a gift for conjuring up incident from the Nova Scotia seen by tourists, rather than the life of its people, the book has little to offer. Any school librarians who can afford to stock it should find themselves stamping it often enough, and children receiving it as a present will learn from their single rapid reading something of the coastal environment and folklore more pleasurably than from a tourist brochure.

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USEFUL SOCIAL LESSONS

Jenny Greenteeth, Mary Alice Downie. Illus. by Anne Powell. Rhino Books, 1981. 27 pp. \$3.25 paper. ISBN 0-920978-02-9. **Those words**, Frank Etherington. Illus. by Gina Calleja. Annick Press Ltd., 1982. 24pp. \$10.95 hardcover, \$4.95 paper. ISBN 0-920236-42-1; 0-920236-40-5. **Down the honeysuckle**, Wendy Scott. Illus. by Kathryn De Vos Miller. Three Trees Press, 1981. 48 pp. \$10.95 hardcover, \$4.95 paper. ISBN 0-88823-032-X; 0-88823-039-7.