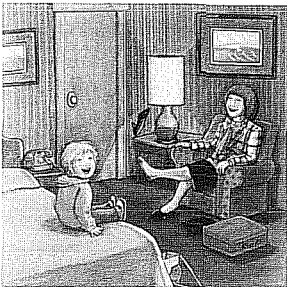


scolaire. Comme pour bien des jeunes aujourd'hui, l'école est pour eux un espace clos où la liberté de mouvement et d'expression est sujette à des entraves. C'est un monde perpétué, évidemment, dans les structures de la société adulte actuelle, et il fait contraste avec celui auquel l'apprentissage ludique, nourri par l'imagination enfantine, semblerait nous destiner. Et pourtant notre auteur révèle que devenus adultes, les habitants véritables de l'île Bizard sur lesquels ces personnages sont fondés ont continué à vivre leur vie d'aventures dans les forêts et à bord des cages. Selon l'auteur, le dernier cageux a disparu de l'île en 1899. La vie décrite dans ce livre, pour accessible qu'elle ait été pendant de longues décennies, s'achève donc avec le siècle.

Dennis Essar enseigne la littérature française au département des langues romanes de l'Université Brock à St. Catharines en Ontario.

ONE MISS, ONE HIT

And I'm never coming back, Jacqueline Dumas. Illus. Iris Paabo. Annick Press, 1986. 20 pp. \$12.95, \$4.95 cloth, paper. ISBN 0-920303-64-1, 0-920303-65-X; **Madam Piccolo and the craziest pickle party ever**, Kaila Kukla. Illus. Mary McLoughlin. Annick Press, 1986. 20 pp. \$12.95, \$4.95 cloth, paper. ISBN 0-920303-66-8, 0-920303-67-6.



Annick Press, which publishes both of these books, must be commended for attempting to address children's problems. However, good intentions do not always make good books. *And I'm never coming back* is one of these not-so-good books. The premise is fine but Dumas does not present a satisfactory or realistic solution to Louise's cry that she has had a bad day and wants to run away. How many moms can immediately drop everything, except the groceries, jump in the car, spend hours searching for a motel room in order to run away with one bored and frustrated little girl? This super-mom doesn't even take time to change her clothes. She also miraculously goes without food or water while Louise joyfully munches on a carrot, an apple and some raisins.

There is some believable dialogue when Louise first tells her mother she

is “fed up with everyone around here”. Louise effectively articulates just how she is feeling. However, her mother does not seem to have the same ability. It is at this point that Mother could talk to Louise about why she feels the way she does and how she might deal with her problem. Running away together is alright but there is no attempt on Mother’s part to teach Louise anything through the experience.

Once installed in the “wonderful” blue motel room, Mother reads a book and Louise colours pictures. Most children would find after fifteen minutes of colouring that it was more boring than fighting with their sisters. Mother does not spend any “real time” with Louise. Children on their occasional “escapes” need special, individual attention. Excursions to the library where mother and child could read to each other, or a trip to the park to feed pigeons and talk about what they have seen, or just a walk together, holding hands, sharing ice cream and secrets can have a deep bonding effect on both mother and child.

For my money this book does not make it in the problem-solving department. The solution is restricted to people with: 1) a car; 2) money for a motel room and gas; 3) someone to assume instant responsibility at home while the run-aways take off, just before supper.

The illustrations by Iris Paabo are flat and unimaginative. In the cover drawing Louise’s mother’s eyes slant strangely and the eyeballs nearly disappear. The figures appear very stiff and out of proportion. In one drawing of Louise and her mother in the motel room, shading gives Louise the appearance of having a five-o’clock shadow. The father figure in the book has a disquieting look, with glasses that hide his eyes. There isn’t any sense of fun in these drawings.

Madam Piccolo by Kaila Kukla, on the other hand, is a lovely, bright, nonsense book that delights children with its sheer sense of the absurd. The flamboyant, rotund Madam Piccolo of Dillyville has an insatiable passion for pickles and parties. Fortunately for her, she lives next to a deli. And fortunately for us, Mary McLoughlin has illustrated this book. The ridiculousness of the story would become overwhelming without wonderful, comical drawings. McLoughlin invokes pleasurable giggles from children (and, I might add, seasoned adults) with her illustrations of Madam Piccolo’s horizontal hair-do and chubby dimpled knees. In the story we have super-pickle, Nickle T. Pickle, trying to save the pickle population from one of Madam Piccolo’s parties by substituting “three hundred and forty-three thousand, seven hundred and forty-three jumping frogs” for the pickles. We then see one of McLoughlin’s most enjoyable drawings — a double page of party guests with frogs over-running everything. Children eagerly search the pages trying to locate some of the partly hidden frogs. The only disturbing thing about this book is the last page which shows a blissfully happy giant pickle dancing with the large and lumpy Madam Piccolo as

the sun rises on a pleasant looking morning. This, however, did not bother the numerous children to whom the book was read — it only bothered me. No matter how much I liked dill pickles, I could not dance with one, super-pickle or not. Besides, green is not one of my colours.

Sylvia Markle-Craigne is a mother of four and has three grandchildren. She writes short stories and poems and is a fulltime student at the University of Guelph.

UN SAPRISTI DE BON LIVRE

Les catastrophes de Rosalie, Ginette Anfousse. Illus. Marisol Sarrazin. Montréal, La courte échelle, 1987. 95 pp. 5,95\$ broché. ISBN 2-89021-065-0.



“Ma vie a commencé par une catastrophe, une sapristi de mocheté d’énorme catastrophe”, déclare Rosalie en masquant par son juronfétiche favori la détresse d’une fillette dont les parents ont disparu brutalement alors qu’elle n’était encore qu’un bébé. Le récit qui va suivre est celui d’une série de catastrophes ...heureusement de bien moindre gravité...déclenchées ou vécues par cette gamine délurée et fine mouche.

C’est Rosalie qui raconte son histoire...et des histoires sur cette grande famille au féminin où elle vit avec les sept soeurs de son père qui l’ont adoptée. D’abord Rosalie va nous présenter à ces sept femmes qui, en l’élevant, jouent globalement le rôle de la mère disparue. Si ses tantes respectent le côté boulevard, Rosalie préfère quant à elle les ruelles et les garages...chattes de salon et chat de gouttière, en quelque sorte. De 1 à 7, de A à G...voici que défilent devant nous Alice la sucrée, Béatrice “le céleri surveillant”, Colette l’actrice, Diane l’amoureuse, Elise la savante, Florence la mystique et Gudule le fantôme. Il y a là assez pour faire tourner en bourrique la plus maline des petites filles du Québec!

Il est clair pourtant que Rosalie est quelqu’un de très équilibré qui n’a pas sa langue dans sa poche, elle dit tout haut sa façon de penser, c’est une “verbale”, Rosalie...d’ailleurs elle le reconnaît elle même: elle aime mieux parler, c’est le plus sûr moyen de ne pas avoir à s’embarrasser des règles