

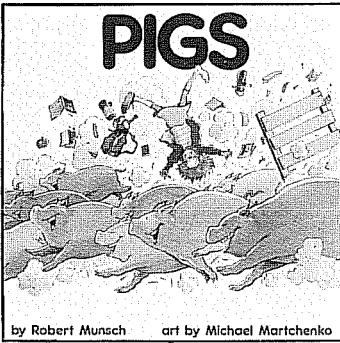
MINI-REVIEWS



Temper Temper, Nicola Morgan. Illus. author. Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1988. Unpag. \$17.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88902-559-2.

This is the third children's book by Nicola Morgan, an author-illustrator who lives in British Columbia. Her earlier book, *A pride of lions*, was awarded the Children's Literature Prize in the 4th Annual British Columbia Book Awards. Many parents will be attracted by the theme of this book – temper tantrums. The illustrations are bright and expressive, but the slight story is not very imaginative: Mabel is a happy baby who develops a bad temper by the time she begins school and this

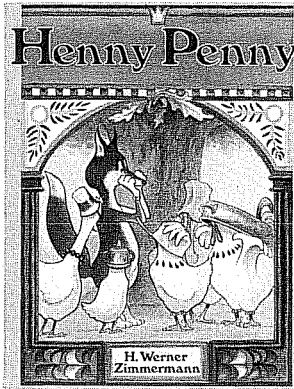
"temper temper monster" starts to drive her friends away. She learns that laughing can neutralize the temper monster's presence, and she gains self-control again. The book is attractive, but not distinguished. My class of 50 children's literature students gave it 50% approval as a hypothetical "potential purchase" among a range of similar picture books.



Pigs, Robert Munsch. Illus. Michael Martchenko. Annick Press, 1989. \$12.95, \$4.95 cloth, paper. ISBN 1-55037-039-1, 1-55037-038-3.

The story is typical Munsch: a child creates a mess, but later restores order through her own remedial actions. In this case, Megan's father asks her to feed the pigs on the way to school, but cautions her not to open the gate. When her common sense tells her that pigs are too dumb to escape, she opens the gate to see.... Munsch's inventiveness is

amplified by Martchenko's imaginative and comic pictures: the pigs are soon everywhere – in the house, school, school bus – and the adults are predictably upset. The story has a moral buried in it – parents know best – but the tone is not didactic or patronizing, and Megan copes with mayhem and restores order by herself. The rhythms of oral storytelling which pace Munsch's tales make them great fun to read to children, and this one provides much range for "hamming" it up. Kids love it.

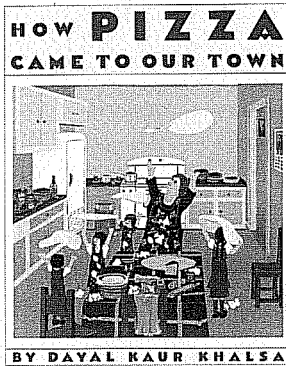


Henny Penny, H. Werner Zimmermann. Illus. author. North Winds Press, 1989. \$14.95, cloth. Also available in French (paper) and in Big Book format.

A newcomer to the children's book trade, Werner Zimmermann was born in Austria, and came to Canada when he was one year old; he now lives in Guelph, Ontario. In this book he both retells the classic cumulative tale about Henny Penny and illustrates it. His imaginative illustrations do more than illustrate the basic story: he introduces humorous embellishments and subtle innuendoes to the written text through his artwork. For instance, in the centre of the first page, Zimmerman illustrates the central text in bold, lavish colours, but on the fringe of the page are subtle background washes which, when examined carefully, present an ancillary pictorial commentary which supplements the main verbal text. The child watching the pictures will see, for instance, that the acorn falls because a mischievous squirrel flings it down, presumably egged on by a watching buddy; then in the next few pages the two squirrels race down the tree, catch the acorn in a squirrel-sized baseball glove as it bounces off Henny's head, and then race off again, presumably to perpetrate more mischief; meanwhile, Zimmerman's text and centre illustration keep the focus on Henny's further adventures. Careful observation of subsequent pages usually reveals other cleverly concealed animal watchers hiding on the fringes, being quizzical, amused, or horrified at Henny Penny. There is a great deal of humour in these pictures, both in the depiction of the main action (Henny Penny's going to tell the King that the sky is falling) and in the sidetexts (the other animals' involvement in her progressive foolishness). The book is well worth its purchase price – children will quickly learn the text by heart, and they will find much amusement in the subtle illustrations. It takes quite a lot of looking to see all the detail.

How PIZZA came to our town, Dayal Kaur Khalsa. Illus. author. Tundra Books, 1989. \$14.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88776-231-X.

Khalsa's book tells how children in May's town are introduced to pizza when Mrs. Pelligrino comes to visit from Italy. Mrs. Pelligrino intrigues the children, especially when she seems unhappy and keeps saying "No pizza" in a mournful way. Researching this word at the library, they learn what a pizza is and present her with the ingredients to make one. As the pizza takes shape, joy comes to her face. Large, vivid illustrations fill each page and Khalsa man-



ages to give the flavour of May's entire community: we see long shots, close shots, mood shots, action shots, and everything looks like a lot of fun, especially eating the pizza. The book encourages cross-cultural and cross-generational understanding, and it calls children's attention to the fact that the library is a place for the solving of mysteries. This book, published in February 1989, was Khalsa's third book about May and her adventures. Khalsa's first book, *Tales of a gambling grandma*, won scores of awards in Canada and in the USA; her second, *I want a dog*, also won many awards here and abroad.

Sleepers and *My family vacation* were also successful. At least one more book by her will be published posthumously. Like the late Elizabeth Cleaver, Khalsa was a multi-talented author-illustrator whose life was cut short by cancer while she was in her prime. With Khalsa's death earlier this year, Canada has suffered another sad loss.

Mary Rubio is the co-editor, with Elizabeth Waterston, of *The selected journals of L. M. Montgomery, Volumes 1 and 2* (Oxford University Press, Canada).