

old Warner not to forget this or that during the course of a school trip to the zoo. For children, *Warner, don't forget* has the appeal of a detective story: who are all the strange people who warn Warner? And why do they do so? Every picture provides clues, and a two-page picture portrays Warner's solution to the mystery. Children will enjoy the overall comic structure by which Warner turns the tables on his anxious mother; adults might note the aptness of his name – the "warn-èd" throughout the story, becomes in the end the "warn-er".

Whereas *Sarah* romanticizes animal life in the rainforests, *Warner, don't forget* makes it clear that parental anxiety is not altogether a laughing matter. The boy's dreams are troubled by his mother's excessive concern. His involvement in the school trip and his spontaneous laughter are cut short by her interventions. And when she swims up to the front of the dolphin tank with a warning sign, "WARNER, DON'T FORGET TO KEEP YOUR NOSE OFF THE GLASS!" she makes him the odd boy out, the object of quizzical concern on the part of teachers and friends. In short, this perceptive story portrays both the pressures such solicitude puts on children and the irrationality that it produces in adults.

Lynn Seligman and Geraldine Mabin, co-directors of an alternative school in downtown Toronto, undoubtedly have first-hand experience of such anxious parents – and genuine concern for them too. The humour that characterizes *Warner, don't forget* as a whole and in the final picture in particular – one of Warner's mother, exhausted – encourages understanding that could lead to beneficial personal change. Because Jo Ellen Bogart's months in Peru also inform *Sarah*, the political insensitivity of the book is the more surprising. The problem is in the naming: instead of Juan or Domaso or Evita or Esmeralda, the animals are dubbed Maggie and Charlie, Morton and Horton, Sherman and Clyde – as if the Peruvian rainforest were an Anglo-Saxon habitat. In addition to appreciating the humour, subtlety, beauty, and perceptiveness of *Warner, don't forget* and *Sarah saw a blue macaw*, resisting this kind of linguistic colonialism is a good reason why these books ought to be read, and discussed, by adults and children together.

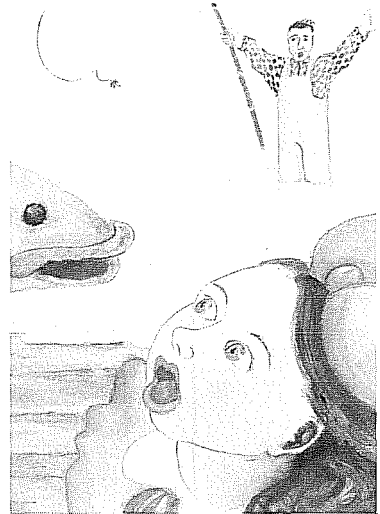
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MUDDY WATERS

Rosette and the muddy river. Diane Carmel Léger. Illus. Pamela Cambi-azo. Orca Book Publishers, 1991. Unpag., \$8.95, paper. ISBN 0-920501-56-6.

Diane Carmel Léger's third storybook is successful as a tale told on two levels. It can be read as the adventures of a young girl uncovering the wonders of her

Maritime surroundings while on her first fishing trip with her father. But more importantly, it is the exploration of what happens when a child with a strong definition of self finds these concepts challenged or spattered with mud, as is more appropriate in the case of the pink and frilly Rosette. Rosette takes great pride in being the neatest child in the village, and will not abandon her princess attire for more common garb. She expects to stay clean even while fishing on the banks of the muddy Petitcodiac. Rosette's clean and tidy view of things is soiled when she is knocked into the sludge by the tommy-cod her father is landing. Her pride is further damaged when her father, despite himself, laughs at her.



How does the child deal with such deep injuries? Rosette responds by running away. But from the onset of the story, the reader suspects that Rosette has the inner resources that will help her find a way to come to terms with such a situation. Léger has created a supportive frame-work around Rosette. She is part of a village community and belongs to a caring family that approaches life in a joyous fashion. Rosette is secure enough in her environment that she is able to cope with the blow to her self-confidence. Soon little Miss Pink is sloshing around happily. A scrape or two later, and with a little help from her father, Rosette finds herself back in the bosom of her family sharing her new-found treasures.



Léger describes the muck with such appealing food symbols that a young audience will be tempted to join Rosette in discovering what e.e. cummings called the "mud-luscious" world. Unfortunately, the story slogs along in places due to repetition of images and descriptive words. Sometimes the

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Pamela Cambiazo's artwork provides the characters with personality and zeros in on their emotions. The Acadian atmosphere that Léger creates through words and language patterns, Cambiazo stresses through vivid colour

and crazy details. Through quieter tones, the artist captures some of the open beauty of New Brunswick, a lingering part of Rosette's world.

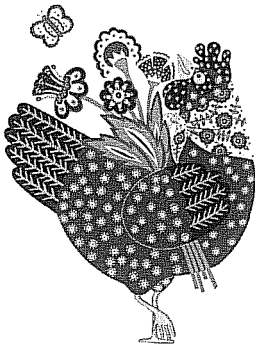
Leeanne Goodall has taught in France and Ontario and published articles on educational themes.

EXQUISITE EGGS

Nina's treasures. Stefan Czernecki and Timothy Rhodes. Illus. Stefan Czernecki. Sterling/Hyperion, 1990. 56 pp. \$19.95 cloth. ISBN 0-920534-65-1.

NINA'S TREASURES

Story by Stefan Czernecki and Timothy Rhodes



Illustrations by Stefan Czernecki

An appealing tale inspired by the Ukrainian folk art of *pisanka* or egg painting, *Nina's treasures* derives much of its emotional depth from the profound connection between food, self-sacrifice and love. Katerina, "a little grandmother," lives in a cottage surrounded by her beloved flowers. The poppies are especially important for she uses their seeds "to decorate her festive breads and cakes."

More a surrogate child than a farm animal, Katerina's hen, Nina of the insatiable appetite, regularly lays eggs. Like a child who raids the cupboard, Nina hurries into the garden every morning before Katerina awakes "to eat her fill of the precious black seeds."

Like the loving mother figure she is, Katerina forgives despite the inconvenience. Katerina is also known in the village for her cakes and braided breads which she sells or gives to her poor neighbours who endure poverty and a superabundance of children.

A particularly severe winter strikes. Katerina "had little food for herself and none for Nina" who stops laying eggs during this season of deprivation. To keep the chicken alive, Katerina sacrifices her flower seeds. When spring finally arrives, there are no seeds to plant in the garden, no money, no flour, and no food.

One of the attractive features of Czernecki's and Rhodes' story is the convincingly portrayed bond between the two main characters. Nina wonders what she can do to help. Here, the authors ask us to forgive a lapse in narrative control. When "it was time to celebrate the Spring Festival" to which Katerina cannot go "for she had nothing to take," Nina miraculously begins to lay eggs once again.

The shift from sterility and hardship to fecundity and plenty is abrupt, re-