

lectrice une agréable sensation de supériorité intellectuelle.) Pourquoi Philippe, admirateur des Nazis qui croit que "les femmes sont en train de s'écarter du rôle que la nature leur demande de jouer", fait-il entraîner des filles à l'égal des garçons dans sa milice? (Réponse: ben oui, pourquoi?)

A part Philippe de Boissières et son domestique M'ling, les autres personnages manquent d'intérêt et de profondeur. On peut s'étonner, par exemple, que Georges, entraîneur de la petite armée, ayant sans doute subi lui-même un lavage du cerveau, se convertisse si facilement aux idées d'Isabelle. (C'était nécessaire pour l'intrigue.)

Mais l'auteur pose des questions pertinentes: quelle attitude adopter envers l'expérimentation pour produire de meilleurs spécimens physiques? Quelle obligation a-t-on envers ceux qui n'atteignent pas le niveau, c'est-à-dire, que faire des échecs? La solution est loin d'être facile. L'auteur met aussi en garde contre l'usage des drogues afin d'obtenir un meilleur rendement sportif. Autre avertissement particulièrement utile aux jeunes qui sont tentés de quitter le foyer: se méfier des inconnus trop accueillants.

Terminus cauchemar est écrit par un auteur habile, et à condition de ne pas exiger une cohérence parfaite, beaucoup de jeunes seront vivement intéressés en le lisant.

Nancy Senior enseigne la littérature française à l'Université de la Saskatchewan.

GOOD READS FOR THE RELUCTANT

We both have scars. Paul Kropp. Collier Macmillan, 1990. 96 pp., \$5.50 paper. ISBN 0-02-953546-8; **The big story.** John Ibbitson. Collier Macmillan, 1990. 94 pp., \$5.50 paper. ISBN 0-02-953983-8.

The books in Collier Macmillan Canada's *Series 2000* are aimed at the "reluctant reader," children at the high school level who have not yet discovered there is more between the covers of a book than a bunch of words. Paul Kropp's *We both have scars* and John Ibbitson's *The big story* two recent titles in the series, both quickly prove themselves to be more than just words. Kropp's work, however, is the more memorable effort.

We both have scars is the story of a teenage boy who, having recently immigrated to Canada from Cambodia, is the object of racist fellow students. He finds himself a member of the school's "breakfast club," a group of students whose social transgressions land them in morning detention. There, he is paired with his greatest enemy. The rest of the book traces the steps towards the mutual understanding the two boys ultimately achieve. What makes the book memorable is its communication of the pain of its main character, for, as

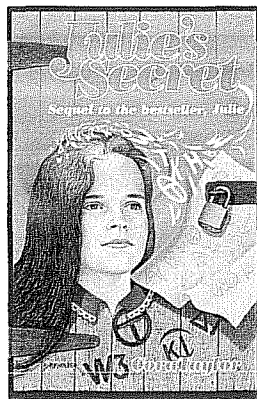
Dinh says, "I have seen death and horror and betrayal. I am not a child...." Yet he is in a child's body, in a child's environment, and is the victim of childish taunts and pranks. The book juxtaposes Dinh's situation with that of Dinh's enemy, who is also a victim, but the victim of over-ambitious and uncaring parents; Dinh learns that even rich white boys have personal sufferings. Hence both boys have scars.

Ibbitson's *The big story* is cast in a lighter vein than Kropp's as it depicts a rather happy-go-lucky seventeen-year-old with the ambition to be a newspaper reporter. Andy is hired by the local rag as part-time copy person, and gets himself into trouble with both the newspaper, the town's major employer, and his father when he tries to scoop a big story on the source of the pollution of the local river. In this fast-paced story Andy tries to unravel the truth and cope with the attitudes that develop around him when jobs and a way of life are threatened. In the end his idealism becomes infused with practicality, but his optimism and enthusiasm remain undiminished.

Both books are good reads. Using first-person narration, each deals with individual problems and large issues; neither moralizes or patronizes the reader. In attempting to resolve the controversy inherent to the story neither book forsakes the believable for the realm of fantasy: the happy endings are prosaic. Dinh is still poor, but he is able to give as good as he gets. Andy gets his job back, but he is not the town hero, nor does he win the girl. Both books are in the typical *Series 2000* format with excellent black and white drawings. The bold type and double spacing make them an easy read – even for reluctant readers.

Celeste A. van Vloten has an M.A. in English from the University of Guelph.

AS REAL AS PRAIRIE GUMBO



Julie's secret. Cora Taylor. Western Producer Prairie Books, 1991. 117 pp., \$9.95 paper. ISBN 0-88833-343-9.

One of the things that sets me apart from child readers is that I don't usually like sequels. Whereas the kids I know want sequels to every book they've read and liked, I have been too often disappointed by book number two. *Julie's secret* is certainly one of the exceptions. It is quite different from Taylor's 1985 award-winning novel *Julie*, but just as satisfying.

We learned in the first book of young Julie's unusual and, to her, disturbing psychic abilities. That book ended with a dramatic scene in which Julie res-