

MINI-REVIEWS

What do the fairies do with all those teeth? Michel Luppens. Trans. Jane Brierley. Illus. Philippe Béha. North Winds Press, 1991. Unpag., \$13.95, \$4.95 cloth, paper. ISBN 0-590-74050-4, 0-590-74075-X.

This book won the 1990 Mr. Christie Award for best illustrated Canadian children's book. So it's not surprising that the vibrant colours and imaginative characters of its illustrations are the book's main attraction. Unfortunately, the story itself is insubstantial and leads nowhere. One of the book's downfalls is that it doesn't answer the question it asks. Children may be disappointed by the abrupt and inconclusive ending. And while at the beginning, the fairies look gleeful, if somewhat mischievous, as the pages turn, their motives become questionable and perhaps sinister.

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Brothers and strangers. Marilyn Halvorson. Stoddart, 1991. 181 pp. \$9.95 paper. ISBN 0-7737-5369-9.

Brothers and strangers offers teenage readers much more than car-chases and violence: the texture of farm life, first-hand detail of horse-training and barrel-racing, a thrilling climax and believable dialogue by convincing characters, save for the moronic Donovan (the brutal and incompetent horse-trainer at the ranch where Beau, the narrator, works) and the unfortunately-named Romero (cf. martyred archbishop), a drug dealer. The book's real strengths lie in the deep and real feeling that re-grows between the long-separated brothers, Steve and Beau, and in Steve's love-hate relationship with the usually cool-headed Raine, Beau's girlfriend. Its theme might be described as young adults learning or re-learning how to take responsibility in disaster.

Lionel Adey, Emeritus Professor of English, University of Victoria, taught Children's Literature and Literature on Childhood and Adolescence and has reviewed many novels for CCL.