

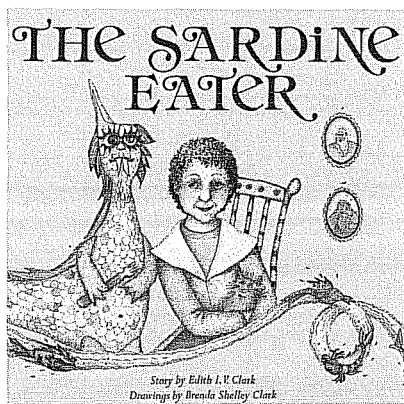
futuristes présentes dans la méga-succès cinématographique de 1991, *Total Recall*. On y retrouve la même idée d'implantation de souvenirs, de l'ambiguïté entre le rêve et la réalité, de l'union des deux dans la recherche d'une solution, etc. Même la quête de Finn ne se limite qu'à une recherche peu originale (dans son exploitation) des origines du monde. Ce mur imaginaire se retrouve également dans les comportements stéréotypés et franchement désagréables que l'auteur fait des cosmonautes soviétiques, les décrivant comme des êtres incompetents, imbus d'eux-mêmes, maladroitement téméraires et que l'on doit aider en leur laissant croire qu'ils sont les seuls responsables de leur sauvetage (chapitre 1).

La nomenclature de l'univers d'Argus se limite également à une variation du lexique, mais non de notre réalité contemporaine; on boit du "brandiac", on "vidéophone", on se promène en "grozar" (version sans cervelle du cheval), on lutte contre les "dragouris" et des "sauterelles-scorpions" et, sur "Ters", les années sont divisées en "mours". L'exploitation de ce monde étrange et prometteur s'arrête ainsi à la décevante création de néologismes.

Sernine possède certes un talent supérieur à ce qu'il nous montre dans ce roman; ce critique aurait sans doute préféré louer le récit plutôt que de ne le commenter de façon aussi sévère. L'on y sent malheureusement beaucoup trop la formule et la rapidité d'exécution. Je souhaite ardemment pouvoir vanter le numéro 26.

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#### A MODERN FAIRY TALE



**The sardine eater.** Edith I.V. Clark. Illus. Brenda Shelley Clark. Moonstone Press, 1992. 32 pp., \$7.95 ISBN 0-920259-40-5.

*The sardine eater* has fairy tale elements which children will recognize: the hero, Pietro, confronts his dragon, the Sardine eater; there are three attempts to conquer the foe; the instrument for defeating the dragon is given to Pietro by a helpmate, his Aunt Rosa; the setting is a familiar yet

nameless landscape; and a quality of timelessness is evoked.

The ambiguity of time past and time present is achieved by the contrast of the line drawings with the text. The detailed drawings and the remarkable references to art refer to time past. The language, style, and the plot details, such as the

Sardine eater's casual command of contemporary conveniences, refer to time present. While the illustrations and prose move in opposite directions, they combine to contribute to the movable time/place aspect of the story, and the story is not without anchors.

Brenda Shelley Clark's illustrations pin the setting to Italy. The red and green two-colour illustrations use the white of the page to produce the colours of the Italian flag. Dry red islands rise out of the flat sea reminiscent of the Mediterranean seascape. Clark also generously and cleverly employs sea shells, sea urchins, snails, and fish to give a visual link with the sea from which the Sardine eater has come. Most convincingly, the illustrations refer to past grandeur in Italian art. When the Sardine eater installs himself on a chaise longue, Pietro stands in the right middle ground. The scene whimsically parodies Titian's *Venus of Urbino* which Manet parodied with his *Olympia*. Adults will see the reference immediately and children will appreciate the sentiment: the Sardine eater stares at the reader with as much challenge to life's restrictions as Manet's *Olympia* expressed contempt. There is also a charming *Madonna and Child* cum *Mona Lisa* scene.

In another aspect the text and illustrations move in opposite directions: the text implies Pietro is more dynamic than the illustrations portray. Visually, Pietro is depicted as hesitant and reticent which enhances the struggle between him and the Sardine eater because the effort of engaging in conflict seems a challenge for Pietro.

The book will function best as a read-aloud for the five- to eight-year-old age group because some of the sentences are long and extend over two pages, but I also recommend it as a primary reader.

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#### MAGNIFICENT BUT MUDDLED: *THE WEAVER'S HORSE*

**The weaver's horse.** Jill Creighton. Illus. Robert Creighton. Annick Press, 1991. Unpag., \$15.95, no price, cloth, paper. ISBN 1-55037-181-9, 1-55037-178-9.

At first glance, one is drawn to *The weaver's horse* because of its magnificent cover featuring a delicately-framed drawing of the weaver leading his splendid, black horse. And this drawing is just a hint of all of the other glorious, coloured illustrations found within which, in their charm and detail, reflect the events of the story perfectly.

Unfortunately, Jill Creighton's story is not as fascinating as Robert Creighton's illustrations. Written in the fairy tale genre, the story follows a rich man named