

when he puts her in his knapsack and trots off to school. Suddenly, the little girl starts to cry and the teacher opens the bag. To her horror, out pops a screaming baby. Efforts to console the child, using horrendous but hilarious methods, prove unsuccessful until she is back in her mother's arms.

The parent, teacher or adult reader must get past the total incompetence of each grown-up in the story—from the mother who isn't around to see her son off to school, to the doctor who is portrayed as a needle-happy, pill-dropping lunatic—to enjoy the author's sense of humour. Munsch's strength is his ability to use language kids appreciate. When the baby cries, she wails, "WAAA, WAAA, WAAA, WAAA, WAAA." Such exaggeration and repetition invariably generates an energetic response from his young listening audience, and holds their attention effortlessly. His technique also encourages (not to say forces) the reader to narrate with enthusiasm.

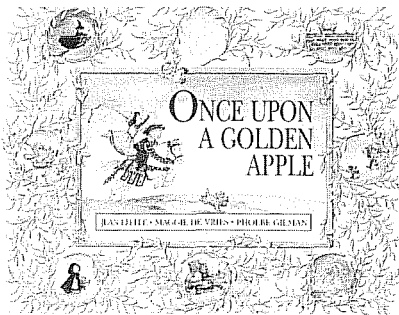
Martchenko's illustrations speak as loud as the words. They flow brilliantly with the text, barring one inconsistency. The crazy doctor pulls a very large needle from her black bag of surprises. When the baby sees the enormous object she is described as yelling as loud as she can. The corresponding picture fails to express what the onlooker expects. For the most part, his colourful artistic impressions reflect the ludicrousness of the situation.

Show and tell is set in large print and the watercolour pictures are bold enough for group use were the story to be read aloud.

Lynda McLennan is a member of the Laurentian University Review Project.

REDEFINING TRADITIONS: FRACTURING FAERIE TALES

Once upon a golden apple. Jean Little and Maggie de Vries. Illus. Phoebe Gilman. Viking, 1991. Unpag., \$16.95, cloth. ISBN 0-670-82963-3.



Richly layered in both text and illustrations, *Once upon a golden apple* is a fresh approach to the well-worn nursery rhymes, faerie tales, and nonsense verses that children have been weaned upon for centuries. The tale unfolds as two children listen to their father read them a book underneath an apple tree, a tree that magically seems to grow into a part of the story itself. A careful

look at the first illustration indicates that the father is reading the children the very book in which they themselves are painted, thus creating a *mise en abyme* effect, and adding to the credibility of the book as one which involves the

reader's participation. As the story begins with the father's erroneous "Once upon a golden apple..." his children and the reader are drawn into the magic of a fractured faerie tale in which children and the characters of the tale are the authority figures on what will eventually become a "true" faerie tale.

While the father tries to convince the children that Snow White lived with the three pigs and that the princess kissed Humpty Dumpty instead of a frog, a second, non-verbal story evolves through Phoebe Gilman's expressive illustrations as the family dog succeeds in ravishing the family's picnic basket. The illustrations not only complement the text, but also they add depth and continuity to it. Intricate patterns of apples and leaves and flowery royal vines alternate every two pages to border the story, while the family members themselves become participants in the various fractured faerie tales and nursery rhymes. The facial expressions and body language of the characters show the comical frustration felt by the two children when their father does not read the story correctly and their ecstatic joy when he does.

The many purposely incorrect allusions to well-known faerie tales and nursery rhymes rely for their humour on the fact that most children will be very familiar with them. By proposing so many incorrect pieces of children's lore, Jean Little and Maggie de Vries actually create their own faerie tale, one that by breaking the clichéd responses of the known faerie tales manages to eventually become one of those very same tales, but in such a refreshing, amusing manner that the anticipated "They all lived happily ever after" ending is joyously received by both the father and his two children. Children and adults alike should enjoy this new approach to an old theme in which they themselves can become participants.

Lynn Cecil is an elementary school teacher in London, Ontario.

MINI-REVIEWS

Lollypop's playtime; Lollypop's animals. Hélène Desputeaux. Illus. author. Trans. Annette Goldsmith. Editions Chouette, 1991. Unpag., plastic. ISBN 2-921198-41-X, 2-921198-40-1.

I would recommend these little books to anyone with children who are one month or older. They are designed for rough use: being chewed, handled in the bath, slept with and stuffed into diaper bags. The four pages are padded plastic—an inner foam construction makes them soft and floatable. They are rather like small, soft, hinged exercise mats (fifteen centimeters) on which bright, bold pictures are printed. There is minimal text.