

fourth volume Shemie has created an unnamed but individualized boy who takes part in many aspects of the building process, beginning with the gathering of necessary materials.

There's a lot of information here, but it is presented in such a way as to involve the enquiring reader. Text is always linked to line drawings, and pages of black-and-white text and drawing are interspersed with double-page coloured illustrations with appropriately brief descriptive notes. These softly-coloured pencil illustrations (also done by Shemie) are carefully arranged to reveal both interior and exterior views of the houses, and in each case include several people engaged in a range of typical activities.

Each component of these books—text, drawings, and coloured illustrations—is beautifully integrated with the others. The result is a successful combination of the twin aims of all good books, to teach and at the same time to delight.

Stan Atherton is a professor of English at St. Thomas University in Fredericton. His most recent book is *Martha Ostenso, a study of the Norwegian-Canadian novelist* (ECW Press, Toronto).

TESTED BY A GHOST OF THE PLAINS

The ghost and Lone Warrior: An Arapaho legend. C.J. Taylor. Illus. author. Tundra Books, 1991. Unpag., \$13.95 cloth. ISBN 0-88776-264-6.

C.J. (Carrie) Taylor, a Mohawk artist living near the Kahnawake Reserve in Quebec, author-illustrator of *How Two-Feather was saved from loneliness*, and Tundra Books bring us *The ghost and Lone Warrior*, a tale about life on the western plains before the age of the horse. This Arapaho legend shows the courage, endurance and spiritual values of those who hunted the buffalo on foot.

The text is spare and simple and the story moving and well-told. Lone Warrior is tested for courage and perseverance before he becomes chief. When leading a hunting party, he injures his ankle and is forced to remain behind. He overcomes pain, hunger, despair, cold and fear. Despite being crippled, he manages to kill a buffalo, and gives thanks to the animal he must kill to survive. The ghost of his ancestor chief, portrayed as a skeleton in a red cloak, reveals that he has subjected Lone Warrior to a series of tests which qualify him as a leader for his people and a hero for readers.

The story embodies traditional Native-American values while expressing a truth: it is often adversity that allows us to discover our strength and find meaning in life. There is incidental knowledge to be gained about the way of life of the time in this legend, such as surviving in a lean-to, hunting on foot. At the end of the book, there is factual information about the Arapaho, great buffalo hunters of the Plains.

The vibrant, evocative paintings are striking, using natural browns and

yellows highlighted with a dramatic red. The pictures give immediacy to a time when the people had a greater respect and appreciation for nature.

This story is a retelling of the legend “The lame warrior and the skeleton” from *Tipi tales of the American Indian* by D. Brown, and is available in French as *Guerrier solitaire et le fantôme*.

Elsbeth Ross is a librarian and researcher, graduate in Northern and Native Studies from Carleton University, who gives workshops on “Children’s books without bias.” She is adoptive parent of Cree and Saulteaux children.

WAYS OF FREEDOM: TWO VIEWS

Lena and the whale. Deirdre Kessler. Illus. P. John Burden. Ragweed Press, 1991. Unpag., \$5.95 paper. ISBN 0-921556-13-6; **Amelia’s celebration.** Jirina Marton. Illus. author. Annick Press, 1992. Unpag., \$15.94 cloth. ISBN 1-55037-221-1.

Lena and the whale and *Amelia’s celebration* have in common not just main characters who are spirited little girls, but the important theme of freedom; Lena rescues, then liberates wild creatures, while Amelia searches for a more personal kind of independence.

Lena is a caring girl who knows exactly what to do for an injured baby crow and an orphaned skunk. When they can fend for themselves, she frees them, and with their help, is instrumental in also releasing a whale calf beached on the shore. She achieves a short-lived autonomy of her own when, in a favourite daydream, she pretends to be a whale. This spirit of freedom is also well captured in an illustration showing Lena as a tiny figure diving deeper than whales and dolphins swimming above her.

Amelia’s encounter with a kind of freedom stems from her desire to join her parents’ party after her protests of being “big now” go unheeded by them. Sent to bed and unable to sleep, she deliberately sets out on her own, feeling at first lonely in her wanderings, then watching the party from behind the bushes, delighting in her surroundings and joyful at seeing her parents dancing together. Although she is not actually part of the party, she freely expresses her delight by dancing by herself in the moonlight. A two-page illustration in shades of turquoise radiates a dreamy contentment, giving the impression that she is off in another world.

The illustrations in this book subtly blend light and dark colours, and allow imaginations to roam within the shadowy corners of each picture where other stories wait to be told. The clearly-defined, multicoloured pictures interspersed between passages of text in *Lena and the whale* draw story and illustrations together in a coherent fashion. They do not offer quite the elusive quality of those in *Amelia’s celebration*, yet they clearly display the joy of freedom the creatures enjoy.