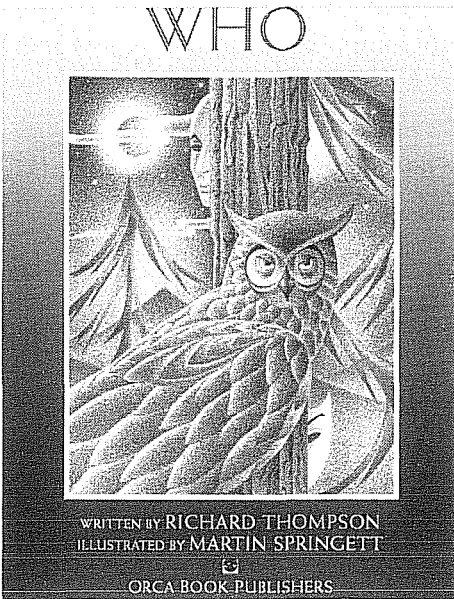


lecteurs/trices de tous âges qui y verront certainement un mélange, parfois paradoxal mais toujours stimulant, d'ancien et de moderne, de merveilleux et de quotidien.

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SUPERB PICTURE BOOK A COLLECTOR'S PIECE

Who. Richard Thompson. Illus. Martin Springett. Orca Book Publishers, 1993. 32 pp., \$14.95 cloth. ISBN 0-920501-98-2.



Children's writer Richard Thompson is well-known for the many picture books which he has authored. However, he has always been considered a light-weight writer, his story-lines entertaining but little more. *Who* is a departure from this kind of book. In it, Thompson creates a new myth about why owls do not have names. In true mythic style, the story is full of supernatural entities and the *hubris* which brings mortals down, even though the mortals involved are birds in this case, rather than humans. The story resonates with echoes from older mythologies and leaves a lasting impression on the mind as it causes the reader to question the place of mortals in the

grand scheme of things, and what happens when we step over the boundaries imposed upon us by the universe. However, thought-provoking as it may be for older readers, *Who* is also a thoroughly entertaining story for young children.

What perfects this brief but penetrating tale is the illustrations by Martin Springett. Springett has shown a real versatility in his other illustrations before now, rarely using the same medium or style twice. From his stylized, muted cover illustrations for Guy Gavriel Kay's *Fionavar Tapestry* to his brilliantly coloured and intricately detailed illustrations for Lydia Bailey's *Mei Ming and the Dragon's Daughter*, Springett's work is always beautifully executed, enhancing and rounding out the stories he illustrates. His illustrations for *Who* are no exception. Using pencil crayons on textured paper, Springett captures the essence of the story with his stylized pictures of the forest, the sometimes

unusual but effective colours he has chosen, and the mysteriousness of the supernatural figures and the owls for whom they are named. Yet despite the stylization of the background and the gods, the owls themselves are drawn with intricate detail. Without anthropomorphizing the owls in any way, Springett has conveyed their emotions and personalities through the subtle use of colour and expression, bringing them alive and making them uniquely individual.

Whowill introduce young readers to both good story telling and fine art splendidly. It is, however, an equally good book for adult readers because the story is mythic and thought-provoking, while the illustrations are superb. Few picture books written and illustrated by different people achieve such a harmony of story and picture. And among the many excellent picture books available from Canadian authors and illustrators, *Who* stands with the very best.

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A CREE GRANDMOTHER'S TALE

wanisinwak iskwehisak: awasisasinahikanis: Two Little Girls Lost in the Bush: A Cree Story for Children. Freda Ahenakew, ed. Nehiyaw/Glecia Bear, teller. Illus. Jerry Whitehead. Trans. H.C. Wolfart. Fifth House, 1991. 35 pp., \$14.95 cloth. ISBN 0-920079-77-6.

Memories of a "terrible time" in the mid 1920s in northern Saskatchewan are brought to readers of *Two Little Girls Lost in the Bush* through original Cree, translated English words and stark mood-evoking paintings. Social history and language lesson are combined with a delightful children's story where words and pictures interact.

In the tale, Nehiyaw (Glecia), aged eleven, and her little sister, Gigi, aged eight, watch over a cow at calving time, following it into the thick bush. When the cow gets stuck and the two little girls realize they are lost, Glecia takes charge, caring for her little sister, and proving herself level-headed, courageous and resourceful. The girls find that an owl is not the traditional bearer of bad news or cause for fear but a guide to rescue. All segments of the community take part in the two day search for the lost girls, the priest leading the prayers and the Hudson's Bay Company manager providing the gear—and, in the end, new clothes for the modest, needy girls.

The life of the time is revealed through narrative details about such things as flour-sack clothing, lanterns and wagons, the devout practice of Roman Catholicism, and the Cree social structure.

The book requires a flexible reader since the translator has maintained oral storytelling rhythms which may seem like awkward repetitions in written