

Chilean flamingo that had escaped from a bird refuge in the United States and was finally captured in Ottawa. This is one instance where anthropomorphism doesn't work very well. There is no doubt that the bird made an incredible journey, but the anthropomorphism does not make the creature heroic, or even likeable. Instead, it depicts her as an ornery misfit who doesn't like anyone. The book does teach a little about what some Canadian birds eat, but the flamingo keeps refusing to eat what they do, yet contradictorily eats something unspecified anyway, so it is confusing and the bird comes across as obnoxiously picky instead of merely foreign. If the objective of the book was to evoke admiration for the bird, the anthropomorphism made it backfire, as she is more stupid and stubborn than brave. The book is targeted at eight- to eleven-year-olds, and although the information is suitable for that age group, the story line is for younger children.

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Two Novels of World War II

Wish Me Luck. James Heneghan. Laurel Leaf Books/Bantam Doubleday Dell, 1997. 198 pp. \$5.99 paper. ISBN 0-440-22764-X. *Make or Break Spring.* Janet McNaughton. Tuckamore, 1998. 188 pp. \$11.95 paper. ISBN 1-895387-93-0.

If one cannot judge a book by its cover, it is at least partially true that a book will stand or fall on its cover. In the Chapters/Indigo/Megabookworld society in which we live, it's all about shelf appeal — if you can't grab them with the cover, you've lost the battle. Granted, such decisions are with designers and publishers more than authors. Nevertheless, it is the authors who either gain or lose by those decisions. Sometimes, like with *Wish Me Luck*, they go well; other times, like with *Make or Break Spring*, they go badly. Both are fine books, but only one is well served by its cover.

Wish Me Luck, which concerns the experiences of a young boy from Liverpool who is sent to Canada during the Second World War to be safely out of reach of German bombers, is decorated with a charming illustration of a passenger liner leaving the dock. It has the feel of a 1930s travel poster, and establishes from the outset the contemporaneity of the book; it roots the action firmly in time, so that everything that follows is utterly convincing. That Heneghan is himself a Liverpudlian certainly helps, for his descriptions of Jamie's working-class neighbourhood and school have such authenticity that one wonders how much of the narrative is autobiographical. There are some wonderful vignettes here: Jamie's awkward relationship with the new kid in the school, a young tough from an abusive family; a scene where neighbours cluster together in an air-raid shelter listening to the bombs wreck their city; and the clumsy goodbyes exchanged between Jamie and his father, a gruff man determined to hide his emotions as he puts his son aboard the

liner City of Benares. The pace of the book quickens appreciably when the ship is torpedoed by a German submarine, but Heneghan never loses his grip on the narrative. With such skilful control, we can forgive an ending that is perhaps a little too happy to be credible.

Janet McNaughton is an equally skilled writer, and this sequel to *Catch Me Once, Catch Me Twice* continues the story of Evelyn McCallum, a schoolgirl in St. John's, who must deal with a succession of trials that were all too common during wartime. Her father is posted as missing in action, but she nurses the hope that he will one day return. That her mother is the object of the attentions of a local doctor complicates things, especially when most of her friends encourage her to let go of the past and move on with her life. Eventually, she becomes convinced that she is the only person who cares about cherishing the memory of her father, a terrible burden for any teenager to bear. Evelyn should be an immensely sympathetic character, for McNaughton too places her in some delightfully-rendered situations. She perfectly captures the awkwardness of the maturing Evelyn, whether it be in her relations with her old friend Peter, her new friend Stan, or Dr. Thorne, the almost-too-good-to-be-true bachelor who has taken an interest in her mother. Yet despite these very engaging character sketches, I was unable to overcome the impression of Evelyn created by the cover illustration, which shows a mawkish and sullen teenager (with a decidedly 1990s aura about her) sulking in front of a school. As a result, the Evelyn of the text came across as churlish, unreasonable, and spoiled; I lost patience with her when I should have sympathized with her dilemmas and growing pains.

The impression is unfair, and certainly does not reflect upon McNaughton's ability as a storyteller. Nevertheless, it is powerful. I opened *Wish Me Luck* with a warm feeling of nostalgia for a simpler time; by the time I got to the first page of *Make or Break Spring*, I already had a vague dislike for the main character. It is a big obstacle for even the most capable writer to overcome.

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New Wine from Old Wineskins

The Hunchback of Notre Dame. Tim Wynne-Jones. Illus. Bill Slavin. Key Porter, 1996. Unpag. \$16.95 cloth. ISBN 1-55013-773-5. *Dracula.* Tim Wynne-Jones. Illus. Laszlo Gal. Key Porter, 1997. Unpag. \$16.95 cloth. ISBN 1-55013-900-2.

Adapting literary works in order to attract to them a young readership is a venerable tradition dating back to at least 1807 when Charles and Mary Lamb published *Tales from Shakespear*. More recently, the Classics Illustrated series of the 1950s and 1960s offered children an (albeit lurid) introduction to a wide range of works. In their current Classic Horror Series, Key Porter aims somewhere between these,