

The Deakin Review of Children's Literature: a New Source for Reviews of Canadian Children's Literature

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What is the Deakin Review?

The Deakin Review of Children's Literature is an open access electronic quarterly review of contemporary English-language materials of interest to children and young adults.

The Review focuses primarily, but not exclusively, on Canadian English language children's books. Books reviewed may be electronic or print and range from picture books and non-fiction through to young adult fiction. Each issue contains 25 reviews and includes an editorial and news relevant to children's literacy.

Books are selected by the reviewers, so the scope of the content is as varied as the reviewers interests.

All books selected for review are added to the University of Alberta's Bruce Peel Special Collection as a non-circulating research collection.

History and Background



Dr Andrea Deakin

Dr Andrea Deakin has been a reviewer and critic of children's books since 1971 and is recognized as a developer and promoter of children's literature in Canada.

She began the Deakin Newsletter of Children's Literature in 1984 at Okanagan University College (later Okanagan College) in British Columbia. With her retirement in 2011, she published her last issue and handed the torch on to the University of Alberta Libraries.

In July, 2011, Vol.1, No.1 of the Deakin Review was published.

Reviewers

Deakin reviewers are primarily librarians and library staff working at the University of Alberta Libraries. Many are parents who share the review process with their children. All are people who love children's literature.



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<http://ejournals.library.ualberta.ca/index.php/deakinreview/index>



Recent Reviews of Northern Titles

Sample Review



Jordan-Fenton, Christy and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton, Illus. Liz Amni-Holmes. *A Stranger at Home: A True Story*. Toronto: Annick Press, 2011. Print.

This straightforward and powerful sequel to *Fatty Legs* begins with Margaret's return after her two year travail in residential school. Her eager anticipation quickly turns to bewilderment when she no longer feels part of her family or culture due to the changes she has been forced to undergo. English is now her first language of communication, her stomach cannot accept the once familiar foods, she is anxious about the possible damnation of her family members because of the lack of prayers in the family home.

Margaret's memories, thoughts and experiences, captured by her daughter-in-law, are presented in an accessible and believable manner. Margaret's father is the one stable anchor on her return to a home that has become almost as foreign to her as was the school she just left. Besides the changes in family dynamics, Margaret is also presented with concrete examples of fears of the unknown and unfamiliar in the wider community with the presence of the trapper the people call the Du-bil-ak (the devil). Margaret points out that his skin colour is similar to that of Lena Home, her father's favourite singer, but this does not lessen her fear of the man either.

Margaret's major solace during this difficult year of transformation and searching for her identity is reading and rereading. As she regains her sense of herself through her reading concrete experiences with the dog team and her family, she develops the strength she needs to fulfill her father's wishes to return to the deserted school with her younger sisters. Accompanied by colourful and expressive illustrations as well as relevant photographs, the setting and people of home are vivid and present for the reader. The footnotes supply readers with explanations of Inuit terms and cultural practices. A brief account of the practice of residential schools follows the narrative.

Highly recommended. 4 out of 4 stars
Reviewer: Gail de Vos

