

Basket of laundry magically gives a new perspective on housework

There's nothing like a little silliness to put fun into housework.

Tamara's grandpa in Pamela Wolfe's *A Cow, a Cake and a Red Canoe* (illustrated by Karen Lucas Bouma, The Women's Press, \$4.95) magically transforms a basket of laundry into one surprise after another.

Tamara stops grumbling about having to help her grandfather hang the laundry on the clothesline when she starts pulling out of the basket a skipping rope, a watermelon, a cow, a telephone.

She even rounds up neighbourhood friends so they can take a thrilling ride on the roller coaster which Tamara discovers in the bottom of the basket.

A grandmother takes a different sort of ride in *Grandma and the Pirates* by author/illustrator Phoebe Gilman (Scholastic, \$12.95). The grandmother's tasty noodle pudding proves her undoing when pirates offshore catch a whiff of the delicious aroma.

They kidnap Grandma and her granddaughter Melissa, making them their cook and cabin boy. In the end, Melissa outwits the pirates. At the oddest times now, my children start chanting the pirates' refrain: "We are rough! We are tough! We are gruff, gruff, gruff!"

The grandmother in Paulette Bourgeois's *Grandma's Secret* (illustrated by Maryann Kovalski, Kids Can Press, \$12.95) leads a more mundane existence. Except for the bear.

"Wouldn't open that if I were you," she says to her grandson, pointing to the basement door. "There's a

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bear down there."

The boy's curiosity and fear of the unknown propel him late one night to the dark corners of the forbidden cellar. And in the process, he grows up a little.

Mary and Sam also encounter monsters in Jill Creighton's *Maybe a Monster* (illustrated by Ruth Ohi, Annick Press, \$4.95 pb/\$12.95 hc).

One rainy day at Sam's, the two friends create a town with cushions, blocks and lit-

tle people.

Along come two cat monsters who tear through the town terrorizing its citizens. No sooner do the children recover from the cat chaos than Baby Monster gurgles and dribbles her path of destruction, but Mary and Sam come up with an imaginative solution: they line their cushion mountain barricades with cookies and fruit to waylay Baby Monster. I enjoyed the author's gentle and humorous look at the tyranny of younger siblings.

In *Michael's Saturday Surprise* by

author/illustrator Audrey Nelson (Firefly Books, \$5.95), Michael and his older brother, Bryan, head off on Saturdays to catch fish for their supper.

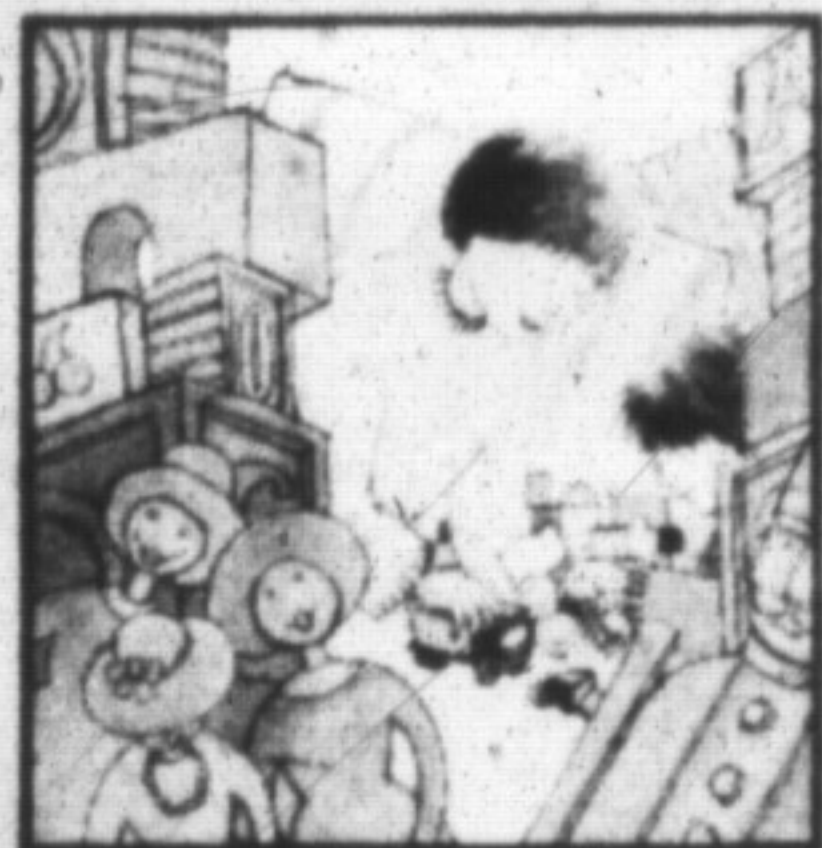
Michael gets discouraged because he never catches any fish. The truth is, he daydreams, but on Saturday, he copies his brother's technique for preparing his fishing line, and lo and behold, he lands a huge salmon.

In Margaret Wild's *The Very Best of Friends* (illustrated by Julie Vivas, Kids Can Press, \$11.95), a woman suddenly loses her husband, and she is left alone on an isolated farm with a cat she dislikes. The two go their separate ways.

The woman withdraws into herself while the cat becomes mean and scrawny.

Time passes and slowly and hesitantly the two become the very best of friends.

MAYBE A MONSTER



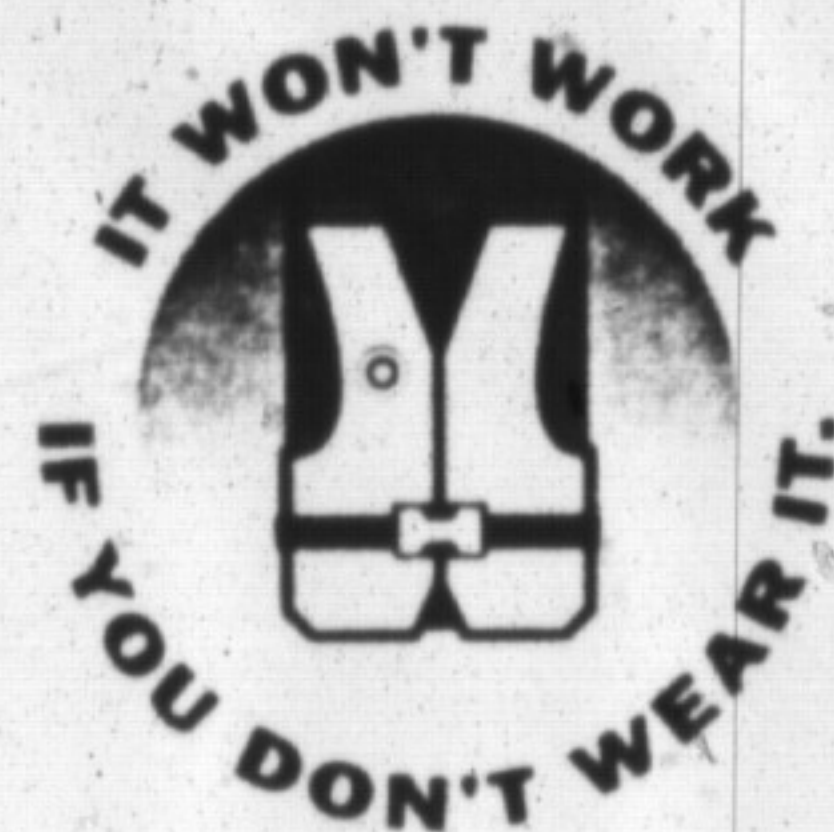
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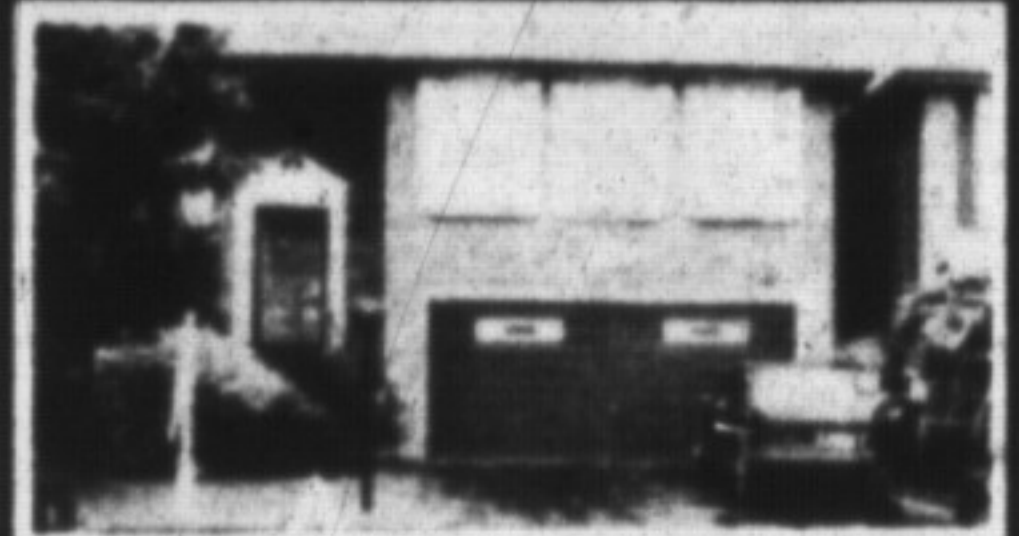
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