

Two books: tribute to a father, and a violent comment on society

by Shirley Whittington
Two new Canadian books form the Book-worm's diet this week - one warm, the other acid. You may enjoy one or both, depending on your frame of mind.

Paul Kligman is a well known Canadian actor who has done his stuff onstage and before microphones and TV cameras. It All Ends Up In A Shopping Bag proves that he writes as capably

as he acts. The book is a memoir, delivered in reminiscent flashbacks as Paul and his wife fly home to Winnipeg to attend the funeral of Moishe Kay, Paul's father.

Moishe and his wife Riva escaped from Russia in the early thirties, and started a grocery business. From the very beginning Moishe's motto was "Satisfaction", and he

and the family devoted their total energies to building the business. The store went bankrupt in the uncertain thirties and for two years, the only job Moishe could find was driving a milk wagon - a job which began at three in the morning and ended about four in the afternoon.

After two exhausting years, Moishe opened another store. The success of the little business was the focal point of the Kays' life, and both parents were shaken and dismayed when Paul announced his decision to wear an RCAF uniform, rather than a grocer's apron.

Even after Kligman had established a solid career in the theatre, his parents were still puzzled and hurt that he'd turned his back on the business they had worked so hard to build.

A wonderful warmth and affection shines through Kligman's book. He loved his father, but like most of us, he seldom got around to telling him so. The closest they ever got was when they took a vacation together. Yet when the old man returned to Winnipeg, he scolded Paul (in a letter) for taking him away from his business, which had suffered in his absence.

Moishe died of a heart attack and left little in the way of material wealth. It all ended up in a shopping bag at the coroner's office - \$131, some clothes, his glasses and a miniature bottle opener - a souvenir of a bottle with the Crystal Cola company, which Moishe won.

At his father's graveside, Paul wonders what satisfaction his Moishe gained from his lonely life of hard work. Kligman himself may take great satisfaction from the publication of It All Ends Up In A Shopping Bag. It is a fine and loving tribute.

Toronto writer Sylvia Fraser's second novel, The Candy Factory, is a disturbing, brilliantly written book. The writing is almost too rich and Fraser's dark humour may leave an unpleasant taste.

There are eleven characters - and they are characters, not people - in The Candy Factory and each of them is covered with an exterior gloss, just like chocolates nested in a box.

Fraser's mercilessly melts the coating away from each one, and reveals their centres - hard or soft.

Mary Moon, with "the sort of unmarked face that slips in and out of everyone's mind like the moon through clouds" has a violent and horrifying encounter with the parasitic necrophilic Tramp and her presence floats behind every ensuing chapter.

Layered with the dissection of each of her characters are biting asides on contemporary mores, like the company picnic "with the Gold Star Club in scarves and sweaters, the politicians in loose orbit around the boss...and Sam Ryan dressed in a clown suit from Display Ads trying to whip up enthusiasm for pass-the-orange and a shoe scramble."

She comments on the naming of children: "Hyphenated children in tap-dance shoes, carrying around their extra name like loaded teddy bear, stuffed full of Mummy and Daddy's love"

The perfect executive wife is grateful for her wonderful years at Bishop Strachan, the vacations in Muskoka, the wonderful year in Neuchatel, the summer in Rome...

Her husband "works his ass off to move Celeste around from one velvet cushion to another."

The Candy Factory is a violent and often ugly comment on society, and it seems to me to be told without hope or joy. Indulgence in The Candy Factory requires a strong stomach.



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Olga Knows

This week's Horoscope

Aries (March 21-April 19): Unspoken dialogue begins between you and loved one. This could open up whole new chapter in relationship, Ari. Keep antennae in tiptop shape, my friend, so you won't miss any signals. Week ends on note of anticipation.

Taurus (April 20-May 20): Memories of the past come stealing back to haunt you, Taurus. Don't flog yourself with guilt. The past is over, finished, KAPUT! Concentrate on today. Member of another generation needs your attention. Give it freely and willingly, as wildflowers give of their perfume.

Gemini (May 21-June 20): Moments of delight apt to be followed by vague feeling of depression. Don't hoist the white flag yet, Gem, for situation is only temporary. You have many a fling still to be flung, dear heart. Week springs to a close.

Cancer (June 21-July 22): Affection which is offered is genuine, Moonbaby. It is not a decoy. Celebrate. Count your blessings. When you run out of fingers, use your toes.

Leo (July 23-August 22): Confidence grows as old bugaboos fade away. Others find your company exhilarating. As usual, you are center of attention. Kick off your sandals, Leo, relax and enjoy. You deserve all the goodies you can get.

Virgo (August 23-September 22): Yours is an earth sign, Virgo, which means your heart is where your home is. This week, your homework involves member of another generation. Emotional bridge can be strengthened by honest show of affection. You needn't be mushy, you understand, just be sincere.

Libra (September 23-October 22): Be especially tender with loved one this week, Lib, and old wound will begin to heal. Before week is over, you should receive message which will make you blush - with pleasure, however, rather than shame.

Scorpio (October 23-November 21): Don't expect to get through this week on automatic pilot, Scorp. No way. Many decisions are to be made concerning your immediate future. Person in control tower has panoramic view and will help with direction. But, Scorp, to get this help, you must ask for it.

Sagittarius (November 22-December 21): Basic responsibilities take top priority this week, Saj. Tend to your knitting. Don't waste time needling associate who hassles you. You are being observed, so no messing around. You must be like Caesar's wife ... above suspicion.

Capricorn (December 22-January 19): You are ready to head down a new road, Cap. The signposts may be confusing, so keep a compass in your pocket. You may get tired and lonely, but go it alone. No hitchhiking allowed. Now, put on your orthopedic shoes, my sweet, and start travelling.

Aquarius (January 20-February 18): You make headway this week, Aquari, in your struggle for the truth. A long-closed door opens. Others question and wonder at your high spirits. Share your joy, and it doubles.

Pisces (February 19-March 20): Your heart questions, but you do not come upon easy answers. There is no such thing as instant insight, Pisces, my love. Before last day, friendship is offered. Wrap yourself in the warmth of its wonder.



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