

## 'Listen for the Singing'

# Written for youngsters, book's spirit appeals to readers of all ages

by Shirley Whittington  
Reading Listen for the Singing, Jean Little's newest book for children, was a double pleasure for me. The background - Toronto in the forties - is a familiar one to me. Further, I've met Jean Little, and have been impressed with her warm and beautiful spirit - a

spirit that shines through all her writing. Although Listen for the Singing was written for youngsters, it's the kind of story that readers of any age will respond to. The title is a reference to a line from In Flanders' Fields. "The lark, still bravely singing, fly..."

The principal of Anna Solden's school tells her, "Faith is when you hear for the singing."

Anna, the heroine of the story, is facing a

challenges. She is about to enter high school - a big step for any youngster, but Anna is almost blind. Reading is only possible if she holds her book inches from her face. Blackboards, even from the front of the classroom, are impossible for her. She cannot read typed examinations. She cannot thread a needle, and the challenges posed by classes in Phy Ed are almost insurmountable.

"The trouble is," Anna explains to a friend, "that sometimes I don't know when I need help because I don't see what I'm not seeing, so I don't know I'm not seeing it."

Anna is fortunate in finding friends during the first few days of school, who give her the help she needs.

But something even more momentous happens to the family during that September in 1939. War is declared, and for Anna's family, recently emigrated from Ger-

many, this is a personal tragedy. Her father weeps. And her beloved Aunt Tania is in Hamburg, where she keeps house for a liberal Jewish newspaper editor. Her fate is predictable.

Anna's older brother joins the navy, and temporarily retreats into a sorrowing shell of self pity.

Through all the troubles Anna realizes that "sitting alone and sorrowing would not help...the only way to hold onto her sanity and help her family through this dark time was to behave as normally as possible."

By behaving as normally as possible, Anna brings her mother out of her solitary grief, and leads her brother out of his self-protective shell. Together, they listen for the singing.

Jean Little herself has a

severe visual handicap, and she says of her own childhood: "I was treated by my parents as a child first...and a handicapped child only when it became necessary."

This is exactly how Little treats her Anna, in Listen For The Singing.

Anna suffers the doubts and insecurities common to all young adolescents. She has her braids cut, submits to a "Perm" and is horrified at the frizzy results. She tries desperately to find an excuse not to take Phys Ed classes. Algebra is a

mystery to her. She cheats, by copying a friend's homework. Only when she is found out does she come to terms with the subject.

Throughout, she suffers under the handicap of having been preceded at the high school by brilliant brothers and sisters.

Jean Little has said about her writing, "In my books the children

struggle with some kind of conflict...their particular disability necessarily being a part of their life, but not the whole story ever."

Listen To the Singing, a quietly beautiful book, Youngsters will find it absorbing and interesting. And after they have gone to bed, parents, may well pick the book up and find great pleasure in it also.

## Book review

the bird singing before the egg is hatched...listen

terrifying personal challenge when the story

# Counselling specialist to present one day seminar in Barrie on death and dying

"Dying has to do with living," according to Dr. Mwalimu Imara of Boston who, by popular demand, will pay a return visit to the Georgian Bay area in September.

"How we are living is how we are dying," the specialist in counselling the dying and bereaved told an audience of almost 700 in Barrie last fall. Death touches all and, like birth, is a natural and universal experience, he said. Yet, we live in a death-defying society. Most people die alone, and death has become the 20th Century pornography.

Dr. Imara will present a one-day seminar on Death and Dying on September 22nd at Georgian College in Owen Sound and a two-day workshop on Counselling the Dying and Grieving, September 23-24, at Blue Mountain Resorts near Collingwood. Both events are being presented by the Health Sciences Division of Georgian College.

Registration is limited and pre-registration with the accompanying fee is required by September 8. The fee for the Owen Sound seminar, which includes lunch and coffee, is \$18. Fee for the Blue Mountain workshop (including meals) is \$55. Package rates for the latter, including double or single accommodation, are also available.

For registration forms and further information,

contact Mrs. Margaret Watson, Health Sciences Division, Georgian College, 43 Colborne St. W., Orillia, Ontario L3V 2Y5 - Phone (705) 325-2705. In Grey-Bruce, contact Mrs. Carole Morrison, Health Sciences Division, Georgian College, 1198 Sixth Ave. W., Owen

Sound - Phone (519) 376-0682.

Dr. Imara has been associated with Dr. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross since 1967 and will discuss in detail during the seminar Dr. Ross' theory of the five stages terminal patients go through after learning of their plight - denial, anger,

bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Dr. Ross is a world-renowned authority on death and dying and the author of such well-known books as "On Death and Dying."

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Mme Stella McMurrain  
Bureau des programmes scolaires  
Collège universitaire Glendon  
2275, avenue Bayview  
Toronto, Ontario M4N 3M6

### FIRST AID TIP



### MOUTH-TO-MOUTH RESPIRATION

Check for obstructions in the mouth. Loosen clothing. Lift the neck with one hand and tilt the head back with the other so that the chin points almost vertically upwards. Pinch the casualty's nostrils tight to prevent air from escaping. Take a breath, place your open mouth over the casualty's mouth making a tight seal. Quickly blow a full breath into the casualty's lungs and look for the chest to rise. Raise your mouth from his face to allow him to exhale. Repeat this procedure every 5 seconds. Failure of the chest to rise indicates that 1) there is a flaw in your procedure or 2) there is an obstruction in the casualty's air passage.

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