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# Little Mouse Grandma; Tricky Tricky Twins

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News & Choice:

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It is interesting to find two such different books within a series for 'building confidence' in new readers. Each has black and white line drawings. Each has four self contained chapters. Each has a controlled vocabulary. But **Little Mouse Grandma** is a fantasy that takes place within the fences (if not the walls) of a British suburban house, and whose hero is a pre-schooler; while **Tricky Tricky Twins** is about the escapades of two junior school age Jamaican country boys.

It is possible that many British children will be less amazed by a grandmother who changes into a mouse than by a world where the church is the centre of social life, moths circle kerosene lamps not light bulbs, and the punishment for mischief may be a beating with a tamarind switch.

Jarman makes simple but exciting adventures out of Matthew's grandma's peculiar compulsion. Little Mouse Grandma retrieves his favourite car from under the floor boards and pilots a toy boat around the bath: all within a young child's flights of fancy. The stories could well be read to pre-school children. It may be that someone old enough to read them for herself may already be a little too old for them.

Ernest's **Tricky Tricky Twins** is certainly for older children. The interest is less with the antics of the boys, which, with tin-can walkie-talkies and catapults, do seem old fashioned and innocent. The fascination is with a way of life and a group of supporting characters that Ernest depicts briefly and cleverly, giving a flavour of Jamaican speech as much by word usage and rhythm as dialect.

There is so much less happening in **Little Mouse Grandma** than **Tricky Tricky Twins** that Alex de Wolf has the easier job as illustrator. With marginal sketches, he provides a light commentary on events in the text. David Mitchell, with more space and more to explain, is tempted into trying to squeeze in dramatic scenes, which repeat the text without adding anything and, unfortunately, give the book a school reader quality.

Running Order:

75

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