

Alexander Graham Bell: An Inventive Life

Elizabeth MacLeod

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"The inventor is a man who looks around upon the world and is not contented with things as they are," Alexander Graham Bell once said. MacLeod was not "contented" with an ordinary biography of this famous inventor for ages eight through twelve. The reader catches Bell's vitality and shares this extraordinary man's life as he travels the thought processes for his many ideas and inventions.

Bell appears throughout the book in a lively, but faithful drawing from a black and white photo, making wry asides to the reader. Well-researched details, photographs, portions of original documents and special type make each double page a montage to convey a single thought, such as the importance of Bell's summer home on Cape Breton Island or his work with Helen Keller. Bell's interest in visible speech for the deaf, the Mohawk people who lived near him in Canada, flight and devices to locate icebergs and bullets keep the reader hungry for information until the very end.

MacLeod also shows a human and involved side. Mabel Hubbard, one of Bell's hearing impaired students who later became his wife, shared his love of inventing and supported his work with her own money, saying "Nothing is done without him; no detail relating to our enjoyment, comfort or safety escapes him. He is forever on the go..." An exceptional offering from MacLeod, a children's editor whose inventive books are always full of surprises.

SHIRLEY MURRAY (March / April 1999)

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