

*Michael Morpurgo, the award-winning children's writer, was announced as the third Children's Laureate by Baroness Blackstone, Minister for the Arts, United Kingdom on 14 May 2003. This is his introduction to Elizabeth Laird's book *A Little Piece of Ground*: "No one but Elizabeth Laird could have written this book. She has lived in the Middle East. She knows it, feels it, loves it, grieves for it and hopes for it. Read *A Little Piece of Ground*, and we know what it is to feel oppressed, to feel fear every day. And we should know it, for this is how much of the world lives. We are apt to see events in Palestine and Israel as television drama; violent and repetitive. But in this book we are taken into Ramallah, we live there, no longer mere observers, but involved as we should be. ...*A fine book, and a daring book.*"*

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*Phyllis Simon, co-owner of Kidsbooks, in her campaign to suppress publication of *A Little Piece of Ground*, posted the following statement on a Web site called Hasafran, a forum of the Association of Jewish Libraries: "I am left with a profound sense of shock and disgust at the irresponsible decision to publish what I feel is a racist, inflammatory and totally one-sided piece of propaganda at a time when efforts are being made to resolve this conflict."*

Elizabeth Laird, in response to Simon's silencing campaign, is quoted in Toronto Star (August 28) saying: "If anybody would like to write a book about the effects of suicide bombing on Israeli children, or what it's like for an Israeli child, I would very much welcome that. I think that would be an excellent thing to do. Because I think that all aspects of this truth should be understood."



Elizabeth Laird, winner of the Children's Book Award, has just published her latest story, *A Little Piece Of Ground*. It has a warm introduction by England's Children's Laureate. You won't find it at Kidsbooks, though it has been displayed in the window of Duthie Books. Kidsbooks doesn't want you or your friends to hear anything about *A Little Piece of Ground*, to see it or talk about it. They even tried to stop the publisher, the reputable MacMillan Children's Books in England, from distributing this book in the first place.

Hands over eyes, ears and mouth everyone. Kidsbooks are trying to make a monkey of us on this one. Why? Other stories by Elizabeth Laird have been stocked and sold at Kidsbooks. Those ones also deal with children's experiences, including conflict and war ... but in places other than Palestine.

A Little Piece of Ground is path-breaking in that it treats Palestinian children just like other children. It relays the everyday story, experiences and emotions of a young Palestinian child who wants "a little piece of ground" to play soccer on, and how that is thwarted living under Israeli military occupation on the West Bank.

Phyllis Simon, one of the owners of Kidsbooks, doesn't think you can be trusted to make your own judgment on this particular topic. So she has decided to impose her own political loyalties to the actions of the Israeli state.

We're here to counter that imposition and we've brought a couple of copies of the book for you to peruse if you wish. MacMillan publishers refused to bow to Simon's silencing campaign. We hope you will too.

Show your opposition by asking Kidsbooks to stock and display Elizabeth Laird's *A Little Piece of Ground*. Ask them to order you a copy. Or tell them you are going down the street to Duthie Books, or to People's Co-op Books, both of whom have stocked it since it was printed.

For more information on the campaign to silence the voices of Palestinian experience, children and adults, check our website:

www.canpalnet.ca

and click on

activities :

A Little Piece of Ground

