



ÉDITIONS COURTES ET LONGUES FICTION



**Age:** 9 and up

**Dimensions:** 15 x 22 cm

**Paperback**

**Pages:** 144

**Retail price:** € 16.90

## KEY WORDS

Love, humour, friendship, magic, adventure, fantasy, rescue, absurd



# OPEN HEART

**Authors:** Marie-France Zerolo and Élisabeth Benoit-Morelli

## THE STORY

Boris is in love with his neighbor but is terribly shy and doesn't know how to tell her how he feels! That is when a talking crow, Odilon, comes to his rescue. But Odilon is not motivated by the goodness of his heart; he is looking for a heart full of love to capture and bring back to his friend Asia, who will die if she doesn't get a new heart soon. Will Odilon be able to fool Boris?

## THE BOOK

*Open Heart* is a tale told from four points of view – that of an old man in love, a talking bird, a curious daring little boy and a young girl on the lookout for a new heart. Written by two authors, **it is a moving novel of many voices, one that transports the reader into a poetic realm** where hearts can be given, stolen or lost.

A funny, suspenseful novel exploring the notions of friendship, Marie-France Chevron and Élisabeth Benoit-Morelli's *Open Heart* delivers a series of unexpected turns through to the very end.

## THE AUTHORS

**Marie-France Zerolo** has worked as a psychomotor therapist for the last fifteen years; she also holds theater workshops for children. She is a consummate master of the art form of storytelling, and her delightful, spirited fables are full of humour and humanity. She is the author of *Fadoli* (2015), *Gypsy* (2014) and *The Heron and the Snail* (2013) at Éditions courtes et longues.

**Élisabeth Benoit-Morelli** trained as a linguist before becoming a preschool teacher in northern France. Her works buzz with creativity, humour and fantasy, and she has a particular gift for moving her readers and making them laugh. She is the author of *Christmas Couscous* (Magnard Jeunesse, 2019).

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## EXCERPT

Boris

I turn around and there's a crow perched on the balcony. I go outside and move closer to it. It doesn't budge. I shoo it away but it still doesn't move. I don't like the malicious look in its eyes. I feel like it's smiling at me. Poor Boris, you're losing it. That's when I hear its voice. Yeah, its voice, deep and metallic! Its beak barely moves but it's talking to me.

"Your message made me laugh!" it cries. "It's been a long time since pigeons carried mail. . . A pigeon! What were you thinking? Pigeons are idiots. Everyone knows that. I'm not kidding. They're really dumb. How about trying to send some smoke signals, while you're at it?"

I'm not imagining things. A crow is making fun of me. Given the way it's cawing, I swear it's howling with laughter. The piece of paper slips from my fingers. The crow grabs it and studies it as if reading what I had written.

"No way! 'Would you tell me your name?' Is that really how you think you're going to entice the little lady who lives across the street? I would cry if I knew how."

And it even knows how to read! It's impossible. . . I lean against the wall, my eyes shut. But what's happening to you, Boris? Are you going crazy? That would be the last straw!

But the crow keeps talking, as if nothing were the matter: "Do you want to get to know her? Really? Then let me be your messenger. I don't need breadcrumbs or even your pieces of paper, for that matter."

I don't have time to answer the miserable creature or to put it in its place because it's already started flying towards the balcony across the street. What is it doing? Oh no!

"Hey! Psst! No! Come back! What are you going to say to her?! Hey. . . Hey! You stinking crow!"



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## KEY WORDS

Teenager, friendship, love, Belgium, stepfather, half-brother, divorce, school, childhood, summer, stepfamily, feminism, grandmother, growing up, boarding school, best friend, lies, Paris, beach, back-to-school, rebellion, betrayal, vacation



# DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT!

**Author:** Élisabeth Brami

## THE STORY

It is August 31, 2002 and twelve-year-old Marieke won't be making any more sand castles on the Ostend beach with her favorite cousin. She feels like her childhood is coming to an end and is filled with regret. Ever since life as she knew it was destroyed at the same time as the twin towers on September 11, 2001, her existence has been a series of disappointments, from her parents' divorce, to the terrible lies told by her beloved grandmother, the revolting presence of her mother's boyfriend and her best friend Zelda's obsession with men.

Upon returning to Paris the day before school starts, she isn't expecting her father to announce that he is moving in with his young girlfriend and her four-year-old son. Marieke feels like her world is falling apart. It's too much. She can't bear it any longer! This time, everything has to change. Whatever it takes.

## THE AUTHOR

Élisabeth Brami has published more than one hundred books, including **award-winning titles** that have been translated into foreign languages by various publishers. She worked as a psychologist in a day hospital for over thirty years, providing treatment for teenagers and organizing writing, reading and photography workshops to help them heal. As an author, she seeks to create characters who give readers of all ages the strength they need to fundamentally change the way they live. She has taken an active role in associations that promote reading and creativity among children.

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## THE BOOK

Élisabeth Brami describes the **collapse of the certainties** of childhood and the bittersweet feelings of regret and bizarre sensations that often accompany one's early teen years. Indeed, girls often find themselves both wanting and dreading **inevitable changes** as they metamorphose into young women.

For Marieke, life is an uninterrupted series of disappointments, with the adults around her continually failing her. As summer comes to an end and she realizes that nothing will ever be the same again, she comes to understand that if she wants to be free, it is up to her to take charge of her own life.

## EXCERPT

That morning, Marieke was awoken by the kitchen radio playing a most appropriate song. The voice singing was innocent, almost childlike:

We packed away our summer vacation  
In cardboard suitcases  
How sad it is. . .

The rest of the song had been drowned out by the hum of the dishwasher. But it was sad indeed, and Marieke knew just how sad! She also knew that things couldn't continue this way any longer. She felt like she was trapped in a tight cage. Her head was filled with cries of "Never again!" and "No way!"



**Age:** 9 and up  
**Dimensions:** 15 x 22 cm  
**Paperback**  
**Pages:** 224  
**Retail price:** € 16.90

### KEY WORDS

Chase, parallel universes, history, adventure, fantasy, enchantment, ghost, soul, coming-of-age

### AWARD AND SELECTION

Selected for the 2020 Prix Litterado (distinction created by librarians specialized in children's literature and awarded by a jury of children).



# WELCOME TO OSWALD!

**Author:** Célia Garino

## THE STORY

Chiméri's parents are teachers, and they have once again dragged her along on a cultural excursion. But Chiméri dawdles so much that she ends up getting lost! That's when **she falls into another realm**, a parallel universe in which she becomes Public Enemy Number One, where the oppressed are her only friends. Magnificent and repulsive, Oswald sets the scene for a **crazy chase** that has Chiméri looking to escape her pursuers and return to the human world, much to the dismay of her new companions, especially one little girl who looks astonishingly like her.

## THE BOOK

Célia Garino's novel is filled with fantastic adventures that draw on myriad myths and tales for inspiration, including those of Homer, Lewis Carroll and Hayao Miyazaki.

This carefully crafted, suspense-filled tale immerses children in a realm that is both endearing and deeply disturbing.

## THE AUTHOR

Célia Garino's universe brims with imagination and gentle poesy; it is truly a safe haven for children. The young author enjoys creating realms that allow her readers to escape their daily lives in favor of **dreamy explorations**.

*Welcome to Oswald!* is her first novel.

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## EXCERPT

Haruka stood up, dusted off her kimono and handed me a bag. "Here. There are clothes in the bag. You should put them on. People will notice you less if you're not wearing the same outfit as in all those wanted posters. All right, I'll see you in a little bit. Whatever you do, stay here."

She was gone and I was alone. Right. I got up slowly. Inside the bag was the same kimono that Haruka was wearing except that it was royal blue. I slipped it on quickly and pulled my hair into a high ponytail using a ribbon I found on the ground. The kimono was soft and silky. It felt very comfortable. I sat down in a corner of the tree. Right. I needed to think. I wasn't doing so poorly, after all. I thought about it. I had found two people who were going to help me. I wasn't alone anymore. That was something. Lulu rubbed up against my nose. No, I wasn't alone anymore.

I had no idea where I was. I knew I was being hunted; yet strangely enough, I felt pretty peaceful at the same time. Maybe it was because Haruka was so nice. She didn't have a shred of meanness in her. I could see it in those big brown eyes of hers. I went back over what had happened: Haruka, Lulu, Circe, the lady at the window and the spider . . . The spider was really strange. How did it get big like that, all of a sudden? And how did it come alive? It was just an ordinary stuffed animal. Lulu started rubbing up against my face again.

"I'm just imagining things, right, Lulu? Maybe everything comes to life here. After all, everything seems magical."

Lulu hopped up and down as if to agree. But suddenly, out of the blue, it started vibrating, blinking dark red and making a strange noise. "What? What? What is it, Lulu?"

I tried to trap the luminor in my hands but it got away and started flying all around the room, blinking like the flashing lights on a police car. "Wait, are we in danger? Is that what you're trying to say?"

Lulu suddenly stopped darting about and oscillated up and down as if to say yes.



**Age:** 13 and up  
**Dimensions:** 15 x 22 cm  
**Paperback**  
**Pages:** 224  
**Retail price:** € 16.90

### KEY WORDS

Science, star, time, Jules Verne, machine, extraordinary, trip, Siberia, philanthrop

### AWARD AND SELECTION

Selected for the 2020 Prix Cendres (annual distinction recognizing outstanding young adult fiction).  
Selected for the 2020 Prix Vendredi (international award that recognizes dynamic, creative approaches to young adult fiction).



# THE STARS ARE DYING IN THE SKY

**Author:** Benjamin Lesage

## THE STORY

Jack is passionate about the stars. As a child, he saw one disappear from the night skies and understood that, like everything in the universe, stars age with the passing of time and ultimately die. During his studies, he begins searching for a way to stop time. He undertakes an incredible project in the heartland of Russia, financed by a philanthropic billionaire and designed by Tom, a brilliant but disillusioned engineer. Despite the skepticism of the scientific community, which deems the project impossible and useless, the general public is passionate about following its progress. But no one had anticipated the fierce opposition of militant ecologists, who will stop at nothing in their efforts to halt development.

## THE BOOK

Like a 21st-century Jules Verne, Benjamin Lesage shapes a **singular scientific universe** full of **poetry and humour**. Driven by an urge to understand the incomprehensible, his characters seek to make the impossible possible as the author explores questions of **ecology, scientific discovery and ethics** that resonate deeply given the current state of the world.

## THE AUTHOR

**Benjamin Lesage** is an adventurer. He wrote *Broke* (2015) after traveling from the Netherlands to Mexico via northern Africa without any money. His second book, *Eotopia*, was published in 2019 and recounts his experiences in an ecovillage. *The Stars Are Dying in the Sky*; is his first novel.

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## EXCERPT

At that exact moment, as the night was beginning here and coming to an end elsewhere, billions of living creatures found themselves either in love or in hate, hunted or hunting, or fast asleep or fluttering their eyes open, trying to rise, trying to exist.

At the heart of all this craziness, a little boy was staring into the universe.

And in the sky, a star died.

Little Jack, as he was called, was lying in the grass behind the cabin belonging to Old Man Marcel. The air was filled with the scents of freshly cut hay and gentian blossoms. . . Only rarely was the tranquil evening disturbed by any sounds: faraway cars honking, dishes clinking or voices exclaiming, like sighs of humanity that were quickly drowned out by the immensity of the night.

That morning, a man wearing a very dark suit had knocked curtly on the door three times. His grandmother had gone shopping and his grandfather was out ploughing the garden. Little Jack was playing on the tile floor of the kitchen. He went to answer the door.

“I’m here for the census,” the man said. . .

“What’s a census, Mister?”

The stranger sighed a long “Ahhh,” and offered an explanation that was a bit too complicated for Little Jack’s unpracticed ears. He sounded like one of those men on TV who talk too much. Little Jack only understood one thing, that people thought it was absolutely necessary to know how many people were living on Earth. That night, inspired by his discovery, he took on a most crucial mission, that of counting the number of stars in the universe. . . So there he was, with his body resting on a bed of dry grass and his gaze looking up at a sky brimming with stars, pulsating in the infinite universe. A small group of ants crawled on his arm, but Little Jack didn’t have time to wonder what they were looking for. He had a census to carry out.



**Age:** 13 and up  
**Dimensions:** 15 x 22 cm  
**Paperback**  
**Pages:** 320  
**Retail price:** € 16.90

## KEY WORDS

American dream, exclusion, immigration, identity

## AWARD AND SELECTIONS

Selected for the 2020 First Novel Award, Société des Gens de Lettres (a prize awarded by a jury of authors to encourage new literary talent).



# AMERICAN DREAMER

**Author:** Antoine Vigne

## THE STORY

Living in Texas with his sister at his side, **Juan is a young undocumented immigrant from Mexico** desperately seeking to build a future for himself in a country in the throes of an identity crisis.

Juan's passion for astronomy puts him on track for a university education until the reality of his illegal status catches up with him. He flees to Arizona, where he feels terribly uprooted despite the company of his new girlfriend, Jade. One day, an unexpected encounter upsets Juan's very existence and leads him back to Mexico to retrace the footsteps of his ancestors, all in the hopes of regaining control of his own destiny.

## THE BOOK

*American Dreamer* is an intense, suspense-filled epic tale, an exploration of what it means to be **uprooted**, the difficulties of living without family or friends nearby, the path to self-discovery and **self-acceptance**, the beauty of America and its lands and the nature of love and its underlying ambiguities.

Told in a **rich, penetrating, poetic language**, this magnificent narrative recounts the lives of different characters who find themselves thrust off their original life path by the forces of recent events. **Antoine Vigne** invites readers on a breathtaking journey from Texas to California and through Mexico.

## THE AUTHOR

**Antoine Vigne** is a French author who has lived in New York for the past twenty years. A specialist of contemporary art, architecture and urban planning, he is also an inveterate traveler and a passionate witness and observer of cultural, political and social events in the U.S.

At Éditions courtes et longues, he is the author of the documentary work *Errors in Architecture* and *The Book of Space: The Art and Literature of the Infinite*.

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## EXCERPT

It was hard for Juan to leave Buenaventura and bid farewell to his grandfather. When the time finally came, he held the old man tightly for as long as he could. Then he started walking towards the bus stop, turning back one last time to contemplate the old man's face where he was standing on the threshold with Jacinda. He wanted to go back, to take his grandfather in his arms and hold him close, to make up for all the years he had missed and the months that would follow, the months that his grandfather had left. He knew it wouldn't be long. But he kept going, he continued on towards the bus stop, waving one last time, forcing himself onward so no one would see that he had just glimpsed the shadow of death.

He had to change busses at Ciudad Cuauhtémoc. The name of the city reminded him of what he had read about the last emperor of the Aztecs and the western rule that had followed his execution, a regime born of bloodshed that exploited all the peoples of the continent as it spread throughout. Then came the long hours before he reached Hermosillo on the other side of the desert, in the state of Sonora. For more than sixty miles, the road took them through the Tutuaca national reserve, with its steep valleys, rocky peaks and conifer forests like a verdant Eden in the middle of the desert. And then once again appeared the plain, with its dry shrubbery and low mountains in the distance.

The next morning, after spending the night at the bus terminal, Juan finally boarded the bus that would take him to Guaymas, and as soon as they left the city, their surroundings changed. It was something in the air, in the way the wind was blowing, in the way the trees were swaying, in the way the clouds were moving; they felt fuller, lighter. He felt his heart beat faster. Only two hours were left before he would reach the port city, before he would be reunited with his mother, his father and his brothers, and he had no idea how it would go.



**Age:** 13 and up  
**Dimensions:** 15 x 22 cm  
**Paperback**  
**Pages:** 384  
**Retail price:** € 16.90

## KEY WORDS

Forest, wolf, struggle, survival, love, courage, friendship, adventure, hospital, environmental protection, violence, boarding school, adoption, family, Canada, hope, liberty, nature, run away

# OLD SOUL

**Author:** Nancy Guilbert

**RELEASE DATE :** MARCH 2021

## THE STORY

**Fern** is a teenager. After her father dies, her mother falls in love with another man and takes Fern and her blind younger brother, Tim, to live with him in Canada. Constantly mocked and beaten by her new stepfather, Fern tries to survive for her brother but also for herself.

**Will** works as a nurse in a newborn ward. When six-day-old Nikki ends up at the hospital, abandoned by her parents and all alone, she turns Will's life upside-down.

**Emma** is a zoologist. She lives a solitary life, mostly keeping to herself and ferreting away painful memories. Despite her efforts, however, the past comes back to haunt her and prevent her from moving on.

**Mahikan** is seventeen years old and a member of the First Nations. He lives in a village in Mauricie surrounded by nature. To avoid being sent to boarding school, he runs away, taking refuge in the forest.

Fern, Will, Emma and Mahikan have never met and yet their fates are intertwined. How and why will their paths cross?

## THE BOOK

*Old Soul* is a **remarkably crafted** novel in which everything seems to flow naturally. As the stories of Fern, Will, Emma and Mahikan unfold, *Old Soul* explores questions of parenting, family, violence, nature, respect and friendship in striking ways. Its exploration of a wide variety of issues from many different angles is indeed **exceptional**, and the struggles of its four protagonists to regain control of their destinies are an ode to courage, love and liberty.

## THE AUTHOR

**Nancy Guilbert** lives in northern France. A former teacher, she has received **many awards** for her novel *Two Seconds Less*. At Éditions courtes et longues, she is the author of *Arboretum*, *The Snowflowers' Secret*, *Lyrebird* and *Night*.

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## EXCERPTS

### Fern

Matthew is so unpredictable. He scares me. He's like a hurricane that you don't see coming. You don't know which way it's going to blow before it slams you into the ground.

### Will

The sun's rays were streaming into my loft, and in the comfort of my apartment, I thought about Nikki again, about how I could barely hear her breathe and how her life seemed to hang from a thread that might break at any moment. She had survived a rough time and made it through the night.

### Emma

As I turned the computer off, a host of memories resurfaced, bursting like tiny, fragile bubbles. Early that afternoon, I had seen my adorable nieces Jade and Louison on WhatsApp. They were two and five and lived in France. Using their chubby little hands, they kept blowing me kisses.

### Mahikan

My heart was pounding rapidly, in tempo with the woodpecker's beak tapping on the tree trunk. My vision became blurry, as if thick smoke was blowing through the trees and into my throat. My legs were trembling so much that I had to sit down in the middle of the path, and the dew-soaked moss seeped right through my *arakapecakan*. I was scared. I knew they were going to say I had disobeyed them because I wasn't at the rendezvous.



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**Dimensions:** 15 x 22 cm  
**Paperback**  
**Pages:** 208  
**Retail price:** € 16.90

## KEY WORDS

Migration, immigration, clandestine, boat, coconut, Colombia, Paris, dreams, crossing, container, police, detention center, runaway, money, hope, port, truck, Cartagena, journey, migrant, growing up

# CORENTINO

**Author:** Benjamin Lesage

**RELEASE DATE :** APRIL 2021

## THE STORY

Corentino harvests coconuts for a living. Every day, he climbs to the top of the coconut trees on the Milcoco estate to harvest their fruit. He is not unhappy in Colombia but he yearns to discover his grandfather's native country, France. So one day, he hides in a container and makes his way to France. When his ship pulls into port, he is stopped by the French police and taken to a detention center for minors. Corentino doesn't speak a word of French and he finds himself faced with a reality that he never would have imagined possible.

## THE BOOK

Benjamin Lesage transports readers to Colombia in the footsteps of the novel's main character, a young man hoping to start a new life. **Inspired by real events**, the captivating story and the manner in which it is told ring achingly true, and Corentino's emotions and struggles resonate deeply.

It is with great **realism** that the author intertwines two different sides of a single story, that of a young boy who is hungry for adventure and that of a young man who finds himself stuck in the limbo of French immigration.

## THE AUTHOR

Benjamin Lesage is an adventurer. He wrote *Broke* (2015) after traveling from the Netherlands to Mexico via northern Africa without any money. His second book, *Eotopia*, was published in 2019 and recounts his experiences in an ecovillage. His first novel, *The Stars Are Dying in the Sky*, was published at Éditions courtes et longues in 2020 and selected for two awards.

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## EXCERPT

Time crawled by. Every year, the coconut trees grew a meter or more. Corentino had been growing too, more slowly than the trees, but just as surely. School was over and his future was set. He would sell coconuts for a living. Maybe he would take over his father's business when his father was no longer able to drive. Sometimes, he went with him to Cartagena. His father introduced him to buyers, showed him the port, related his different schemes and pointed out who he should be wary of. The village girls got married and moved away to Santa Maria or Cartagena after celebrating their weddings in the village's newly renovated central hut. His two older sisters were no exception; they had been married off by their father to merchants in Cartagena. Two of his sisters still lived at home. The youngest was seven years old and her sister twice her age. As for Corentino, he had just turned seventeen, and now more than ever, he was yearning for a different life.

At dawn, he was awakened by the rooster's crow. His mother lit a fire and prepared *arepas*. His father groaned; he had a toothache. His sisters slept on, lying still in their hammocks. The sun wasn't up yet. It was Tuesday, and his father would be going to Cartagena, alone this time. Corentino had to take his sisters to school and then pick coconuts. He would need to be ready to pay a reasonable bride-price if he wanted to get married. His father brought it up almost every evening. The day before had been no exception:

"I've got a friend in Cartagena. You know, the guy who sells trucks. He has a daughter your age. Do you remember her? You saw her once. She's a good girl. It might work out. It's a nice opportunity. What do you say?"

But Corentino was far away and didn't respond. He simply stared at the horizon, looking for light, lost in his dreams.



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