



Tita, Marie Houzelle, Paperback: 312 pages, (to be published September 15, 2014), Language: English, ISBN-13: 978-1940333014 Suggested retail price: \$14.99

Tita is seven, and she wonders what's wrong with her. She has perfect parents. She puts on plays with her friends, spies on adults, challenges her teacher, even manages to read forbidden books. She should be happy. But she dreams of a time without meals, and keeps worrying about her mother's whereabouts, spoiling her own life for no reason at all. Is she a freak?

As her beloved small town vibrates to age-old Latin rituals on the verge of slipping away, Tita finds refuge - and a liberation - in books.

ADVANCE PRAISE FOR TITA

Like opening the door to a secret garden, TITA transports the reader straight into life in a small town in the south of France during the 1950s, as seen through the eyes of a precocious seven-year-old heroine not soon to be forgotten. Houzelle's prose is unfailingly deft and refreshing. This book is a delight!

- **Anne Korkeakivi**, author of *An Unexpected Guest*

Marie Houzelle is a master of the first-person narrative. In Tita she has created a strange, utterly original child whose deadpan certainties are a beguiling invitation to readers of all ages. Like Louise Fitzhugh's classic Harriet the Spy, the story is powered by a precocious and independent loner whose observations and reports are both charming and moving. Tita is a remarkable debut.

.- **Katharine Weber**, author of *Triangle and True Confections*

The best book I read this year. Witty, wry, and clever, Tita's young voice captivated me from the first page. Tita poignantly portrays small-town life as well as the end of the Catholic church's grip on France, revealing cracks in society that a decade later become the riots of 1968. A rare novel written in English that gives a real taste of French culture. I cannot recommend it enough!

- **Janet Skeslien Charles**, author of *Moonlight in Odessa*

This book has a charm so unique and powerful, it pulls you in simply, effortlessly, like following a tree lined path on a summery day. The language is utterly original and quietly moving and very very funny and it makes you want to follow Tita onward past the last pages and into the years beyond. I loved it.

.- **Nicola Keegan**, author of *Swimming*

Marie Houzelle opens a charmed magic casement on a French childhood.

- **Sheila Kohler**, author of *Dreaming for Freud*

Seven-year-old Tita can tell you the correct rule for whether to put an “e” on tout in every grammatical situation, but she does not recognize the tensions and estrangements that haunt her parents’ marriage...She’s got just enough self-understanding to recognize that her teacher objects to her insolence, but not enough worldliness to realize that the last place for a questioner of authority is a nunnery.

We’re laughing, but we’re also intrigued by this child whose understanding can be razor sharp or dense as a thicket. Where will this odd combination take her?

... There’s nothing simplistic about this novel. Tita is not an exercise in blind nostalgia for a lost past. It is a rich and warm, yet open-eyed portrait of a place and time just beyond our current reach. It’s a book worth savoring.

– **Judith Starkson** – *New York Journal of Books*

In Houzelle's first novel, Tita is a seven-year-old girl growing up in the south of France in the 1950s whose life seems to be defined by obstacles: the many foods that disgust her, the school that fails to challenge her, and parents who struggle to understand her. Tita is precocious and clever, but in some ways painfully inept. She is thoughtful but frail—obsessed with rules and rituals, and determined to understand the nuances. Through Houzelle's sharp, straightforward prose (which captures Tita's perspective), the story of how Tita grows takes center stage. She learns the alternatives to those things that have held her back or held her down. She challenges social strictures that she feels are meaningless. She battles her mother to get what she wants, and when sometimes that turns out to be the wrong decision, she acknowledges it. At the novel's end, Tita is still a little girl, but her brilliance, potential, and unusual way of looking at the world will have won readers over.

– **Publishers Weekly**

Like Roald Dahl’s Matilda, Tita, a precocious seven-year-old, finds refuge in books from an often baffling world. Guided by Marie Houzelle’s sharp eye and confident hand, we experience humour, astonishment and delight as we discover life in 1950s provincial France from the viewpoint of a singular child. A triumph of a first novel.

– **Yuriko Tamaki**, columnist, the *Yomiuri Shimbun*.

About the author: Marie Houzelle grew up in the south of France. Her work has appeared in *Narrative Magazine*, *Pharos*, *Orbis*, *Serre-Feuilles*, *Van Gogh's Ear*, the chapbook *No Sex Last Noon*, and in *Best Paris Stories*. "Hortense on Tuesday Night" was chosen by *Narrative Magazine* as one of the five top stories of 2011.

CATEGORIES: France – literary fiction – coming of age – travel – YA – Catholic - 1950s



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