

Press release



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Every year for 38 years, the 120 *ELLE* readers comprising the *ELLE* Grand Prix Litteraire des Lectrices (*ELLE* Readers' Choice Awards) judging panel deliberate – with fire and passion – for eight months regarding works by both new and established authors.

And every year, the *ELLE* Grand Prix Litteraire des Lectrices celebrate the direct link between literary works and their audience thanks to a different kind of judging panel. Since 2002, *ELLE* readers have awarded prizes to a work of fiction, a non-fiction work and a detective novel.

For the 39th annual *ELLE* Grand Prix Litteraire des Lectrices, the magazine's readers selected a winner from eight shortlisted volumes in each of the three categories:

In the Novel category:
LA FEMME DE L'ALLEMAND
By Marie Sizun
Published by ARLEA

In the Non-Fiction category:
CELLE QUI PLANTE LES ARBRES
By Wangari Maathai
Published by EDITIONS HÉLOÏSE D'ORMESSON

In the Detective Novel category:
GARDEN OF LOVE
By Marcus Malte
Published by ZULMA

You will find the results of the 2008 Readers' Choice Awards in issue no. 3257 of *ELLE* (2 June 2008).

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ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE ELLE GRAND PRIX LITTÉRAIRE DES LECTRICES

Created in 1970, the *ELLE* Grand Prix Littéraire des Lectrices (*ELLE* Readers' Choice Awards) are awarded in a manner that is the opposite of other literary awards given out in France, where literary-world professionals award prizes to other such professionals.

For the *ELLE* awards, the public deliberates and makes the final decision.

The awards celebrate the direct link between author and reader.

The objectives of the *ELLE* Grand Prix Littéraire des Lectrices are to give a voice to women who like to read and to bring writers together with their female audience.

For the first seven years, awards were given for novels only.

Then, as of 1977, winners were selected in both Fiction and Non-Fiction categories. Then in 2002, the Detective Novel category was added.

Until 1992, eight regional reading committees designated a Book of the Month, and then a national panel took over to choose the two Grand Prize winners in the Fiction and Non-Fiction categories.

Today, a single judging panel chooses the three award winners.

SELECTION PROCEDURE

The final selection panel of 120 readers is comprised of eight monthly judging panels of 15 readers each. Each month from September through April, eight such judging panels take turns choosing from a shortlist of seven books (three works of fiction, two non-fiction works and two detective novels) submitted to them by *ELLE*'s editorial staff.

These readers read the seven books, comment on them and grade them on a scale of 0 to 20. The average of the grades thus obtained is used to designate the three Books of the Month, one each in the Fiction, Non-Fiction and Detective Novel categories. Throughout the year as the selection process proceeds, all 120 readers of this final selection panel then read, grade and comment upon the eight fiction, eight non-fiction and eight detective-novel volumes previously selected as Books of the Month.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE YEAR'S GRAND PRIZE-WINNING WORKS

The three winners of the *ELLE* Grand Prix Littéraire des Lectrices – one in each category – are selected in May from the shortlist comprising 24 Books of the Month. The final results are announced during a reception to which all the authors, publishers, journalists, reader-judges and, naturally, winners are invited.



GRAND PRIX DES LECTRICES AWARD-WINNERS SINCE 1992

YEAR	FICTION	NON-FICTION
1992	SONATE AU CLAIR DE LUNE By Nicolas Bréhal Publisher: Mercure de France	PROUST, <i>la cuisine retrouvée</i> By Anne Borrel, Alain Senderens and Jean-Bernard Naudin Publisher: Chêne
1993	LE JOUR DES FOURMIS By Bernard Werber Publisher: Albin Michel	LE RESPECT, <i>de l'estime à la déférence: une question de limite</i> Produced by Catherine Audard Publisher: Autrement
1994	LA GRANDE DRIVE DES ESPRITS By Gisèle Pineau Publisher: Le Serpent à Plumes	FANNY STEVENSON By Alexandre Lapierre Publisher: Robert Laffont
1995	L'ALCHIMISTE By Paulo Coelho Publisher: Anne Carrière	L'AVENTURE DES LANGUES EN OCCIDENT By Henriette Walter Publisher: Robert Laffont
1996	LE CHAMP DE PERSONNE By Daniel Picouly Publisher: Flammarion	UN JARDIN A TEHERAN By Shusha Guppy Publisher: Phébus
1997	UN PAYSAGE DE CENDRES By Elisabeth Gille Publisher: Seuil	FRANCOIS TRUFFAUT By Serge Toubiana and Antoine de Baecque Publisher: Gallimard
1998	SAGA By Tonino Benacquista Publisher: Gallimard	MADAME ZOLA By Evelyne Bloch-Dano Publisher: Grasset
1999	L'EMPREINTE DE L'ANGE By Nancy Huston Publisher: Actes Sud	LE PRINCE FOUROYÉ, <i>la vie de Nicolas de Staël</i> By Laurent Greilsamer Publisher: Fayard
2000	LE PROBLÈME AVEC JANE By Catherine Cusset Publisher: Gallimard	HISTOIRE DE L'ADULTÈRE, <i>la tentation extra-conjugale de l'Antiquité à nos jours</i> By Sabine Melchior-Bonnet and Aude de Tocqueville Publisher: Editions de la Martinière
2001	L'ÉVANGILE SELON PILATE By Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt Publisher: Albin Michel	LE PORTAIL By François Bizot Publisher: Table Ronde

YEAR	NOVEL	NON-FICTION	DETECTIVE NOVEL
2002	LA TABLE DES ENFANTS By Isabelle Hausser Publisher: Editions de Fallois	LE PIANISTE By Wladyslaw Szpilman Publisher: Robert Laffont	PARS VITE ET REVIENS TARD By Fred Vargas Publisher: Viviane Hamy
2003	A LIVRE OUVERT Les carnets intimes de Logan Mountstuart By William Boyd Publisher: Seuil	JOURS DE POUSSIÈRE Choses vues en Afghanistan By Jean-Pierre Perrin Publisher: Table Ronde	NE LE DIS À PERSONNE By Harlan Coben Publisher: Belfond

YEAR	NOVEL	DETECTIVE NOVEL
2004	LES AMES GRISES By Philippe Claudel Publisher: Stock	SHUTTER ISLAND By Dennis Lehane Publisher: Rivages
	NON-FICTION CO-WINNER	NON-FICTION CO-WINNER
	PASSAGERE DU SILENCE By Fabienne Verdier Publisher: Albin Michel	TCHETCHENIE, LE DESHONNEUR RUSSE By Anna Politkovskaïa Publisher: Buchet-Chastel

YEAR	NOVEL	NON-FICTION	DETECTIVE NOVEL
2005	UN SECRET By Philippe Grimbert Publisher: Grasset	LIRE LOLITA A TEHERAN By Azar Nafisi Publisher: Plon	PASSAGE DU DESIR By Dominique Sylvain Publisher: Viviane Hamy
2006	LES CERFS-VOLANTS DE KABOUL By Khaled Hosseini Publisher: Belfond	DICTIONNAIRE EGOISTE DE LA LITTÉRATURE FRANÇAISE By Charles Dantzig Publisher: Grasset	TOKYO By Mo Hayder Publisher: Presses de la Cité
2007	TERRE DES OUBLIS By Duong Thu Huong Publisher: Sabine Wespieser	CAMILLE ET PAUL, <i>La passion Claudel</i> By Dominique Bona Publisher: Grasset	LA FEMME EN VERT By Arnaldur Indridason Publisher: Métailié

IN 2008, GRAND PRIZES WERE AWARDED TO:

YEAR	NOVEL	NON-FICTION	DETECTIVE NOVEL
2008	LA FEMME DE L'ALLEMAND By Marie Sizun Publisher: Arléa	CELLE QUI PLANTE LES ARBRES By Wangari Maathai Publisher: Héloïse d'Ormesson	GARDEN OF LOVE By Marcus Malta Publisher: Zulma

MARIE SIZUN

Born in 1940, Marie Sizun grew up and was educated in Paris. She passed the high-level *agrégation* teacher's examination in classics in 1964 and taught literature in France before going abroad to teach French in various European schools, first in Germany for 17 years and then in Belgium. She returned to Paris in 2001.

Sizun has written brief works and short stories all her life, but it was only when she reached retirement age that she decided to devote herself full-time to writing. Due to her love of France's Brittany region, she chose the name of a Breton cape for a pseudonym in memory of the happy holidays she had spent in the region. Sizun published her first novel, *Le Père de la petite* (Arléa, 2005) at age 65, and *La Femme de l'Allemand* (Arléa, 2007) appeared 18 months later. The novel has the same sober, dignified style as her preceding work, and revolves around similar issues: history, familial descent and love. Before adopting 'Marie Sizun' as a pen name, she also used the pseudonym as a painter, occasionally exhibiting her canvasses at small summer exhibitions.

She is the mother of three children.

Bibliography:

La femme de l'Allemand, Arléa, 2007
Le Père de la petite, Arléa, 2005

MARCUS MALTE

“I was born in 1967 and have always lived in Seyne-sur-Mer, facing the sea. I studied filmmaking, but that didn’t work out. As a musician, I tried my hand at rock, jazz and popular music – that didn’t work either. Now I’m trying to write stories... We’ll see.”

Marcus Malte

For more than 10 years, Marcus Malte has explored all facets of the written word: poetry, songs, sketches, screenplays... and thrillers. His first book, *Le Doigt d’Horace*, appeared in 1996. It was followed by *Le Lac des singes* and then by *Carnage, constellation* and *Le vrai con maltais*. In September 2001, publishing house Zulma released *Et tous les autres crèveront*. While continuing to work at various odd jobs (projectionist, warehouseman and so on), he published the rest of his literary output through Zulma (with a few exceptions). Among his highly eclectic literary influences, he cites Jean Giono, Cormac McCarthy, Céline, Steinbeck and San Antonio, among others. Malte is also known for his works for both young children and adolescents. His children's books *Scarrels* and *Le chat machin* were recently released by publishing house Syros.

As a novelist, short-story writer, children’s author and, unquestionably, poet, Marcus Malte – whose work has been compared to that of Jim Thompson, David Goodis and Harry Crews – fascinates his readers with the violence and tenderness of his novels, and the charm, in the strict meaning of the term, that the power of words lends to dreams.

Bibliography

Novels:

- *Garden of Love*, Zulma, 2007
- *Plage des Sablottes, souvenirs d’épaves*, Autrement, 2005
- *La Part des chiens*, Zulma, 2003 (Polar dans la Ville prize, awarded by the town of Saint-Quentin)
 - *Mon frère est parti ce matin...*, Zulma, 2003
 - *Et tous les autres crèveront*, Zulma, 2001
 - *Le vrai con maltais*, Baleine/Le Poulpe, 1999
 - *Carnage, constellation*, Fleuve Noir, 1998
 - *Le Lac des singes*, Fleuve Noir, 1997
 - *Le Doigt d’Horace*, Fleuve Noir, 1996

Short stories:

- *La petite fille aux allumettes* / “Bloody Birthday,” collective work, La Branche, 2007
- *Nina au pays des merveilles* / “Petites agonies urbaines,” collective work, Le bec en l’air, 2006
- *Intérieur nord/Anthology*, Zulma, 2005 (Nanterre Short Story prize; Paris Rotary Club prize)

WANGARI MAATHAI

Born in 1940 in Nyeri, Northern Kenya, Wangari Muta Maathai was the daughter of a Kikuyu farmer and one of the rare children at the time to receive a formal education. A brilliant student who was encouraged by her teachers, she obtained a Kennedy Scholarship to study in Atchison, Kansas (USA), where she was the first woman from East Africa to obtain a bachelor's degree in biology (1964). After further studies at the University of Munich, she taught veterinary medicine at the University of Nairobi, where she was appointed head of the veterinary anatomy department; once again, she was the first woman from Central or Eastern Africa to hold such a position. Very active in the National Council of Women of Kenya, in 1977 she founded Africa's largest reforestation project, the Green Belt Movement. With the help of many Kenyan women throughout the country, Maathai was responsible for the planting of more than 30 million trees. Her strength resides in her talent for combining ecology and politics: her project to fight deforestation and soil erosion, which are sources of drought and poverty, helped women gain access to work and thus increase their autonomy. Nicknamed "The Tree Woman," her struggle transcended national borders, and the Green Belt Movement was successfully developed in Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Lesotho as well.

A strong opponent of President Daniel Arap Moi's regime, she was imprisoned several times for denouncing its excesses. In 2002, following the victory of Mwai Kibaki in the presidential elections, she was elected to the first democratic Kenyan Parliament as an environmentalist. In 2003, she was named Assistant Minister of the Environment. In 2004, Maathai became the first black African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, for "her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace." Two years later, French President Jacques Chirac made her a Chevalier of the Legion of Honour.

A divorced mother, militant environmentalist and fierce defender of democracy, Wangari Maathai compels great respect. Her autobiography, *Unbowed: One Woman's Story*, published in French as *Celle qui plante les arbres* by Editions Héloïse d'Ormesson, recounts her remarkable career, which is far from finished: we can undoubtedly expect much more from this impassioned planter of trees.

Bibliography:

Celle qui plante les arbres, EHO, 2007
Pour l'Amour des arbres, L'Archipel, 2005