Forest Of Reading Awards

Tamarac 2027 – Discussion Content & Themes

**Translated by DeepL Translator*

L'agente 00-discrète
Written by Mathieu Fortin
Illustrated by Kuizin Studio Inc.
Published by Bayard Canada Livres

Do you tend to put your foot in your mouth? Do you know the difference between hip-hop and jazz? Do you talk too much? You could become a secret agent! When Jeanne tries to prove that her school principal is stealing money, she has no idea she'll be recruited to become a spy. Her mission: infiltrate a dance competition to help arrest PÉRISCOPE, a dangerous international criminal group. Clumsy and chatty, Jeanne will have to prove she's a good recruit while learning to stay under the radar. That's no easy feat! After weeks of preparation, the mission finally begins… only to suddenly take a new turn. What if Jeanne's tendency to blab ends up being her greatest asset?

Content and topics for discussion:
Spy, Clumsiness, Crime, Contests and Competitions

Les colibris
Written by Takwa Souissi
Published by Éditions du Boréal

Today, at the L'Envol youth center, Charles-Antoine, the program leader, surprises everyone with an ambitious project. Working in teams of four, the kids have a little over a month to put together a project to improve life in the neighborhood. The catch? The teams are assigned. That's how Rosanie, Malik, Victoria, and Luis—who don't know each other very well—end up working together. They come very close to giving up, but the winning team will take home season passes to La Ronde. That's enough to convince even the most reluctant… even Luis! Agreeing on a project isn't easy. But one day, Malik overhears a conversation between two program leaders: L'Envol—the place the neighborhood kids visit every day and that's like a second home to them—is threatened with closure. The four friends are unanimous: this absolutely cannot happen. So they embark on a larger-than-life project: preventing the closure of their neighborhood youth center. Collecting bottles, selling baked goods, starting a petition, and creating a video tribute to plead their case to the city mayor… Any means necessary to save L'Envol! After all, they say that even though it's tiny, a hummingbird can put out a fire, one drop at a time…

Content and discussion topics:
Preteens, Projects, Friendship, Youth Center

Comment convaincre un fantôme de déménager

Written by Maude Ménard-Dunn
Illustrated by Sophie Bédard
Published by Éditions Québec Amérique

In the village where I, Dorothée Petit, live, I swear nothing ever happens. Well, that is, until the day my father discovers an old box hidden in the kitchen wall. Inside: a spine-chilling photo, a suspicious handkerchief, and a letter from a certain Doris, dated 1895. Same age as me, same room, same exhausting twin brothers. Unnerving, isn't it?
Ever since then, my window has been opening on its own, objects have been moving around at night… and I can't sleep anymore. Great.
Luckily, I have the support of the village historical society—an exclusive club of old-stuff enthusiasts—to help me figure out one simple question: how do you convince a ghost to move out?

Content and discussion topics:
Family, Memories, Ghosts, Haunted Places

Les jeux vidéo (Crois-le ou non)
Written by Gabrielle Anctil
Published by Saint-Jean Éditeur

Fascinating Questions: Do you know about Pong, the first real blockbuster video game? Did you know that researchers at a major university in Montreal have enlisted millions of gamers to participate in scientific studies?
Unusual Facts Surgeons who play video games make fewer mistakes and operate 27% faster than others • The creator of Pokémon was inspired by his passion... for insects • The character Rayman has no arms or legs because his designer didn't know how to draw them!
History and Traditions Did you know that the history of video games began in American universities as early as the 1950s? In 1983, many parents named their sons Mario because of the popularity of the Nintendo game Mario Bros.
A wealth of facts and information about video games, accompanied by funny illustrations and a fantastic layout tailored to the topics covered, making for truly exciting books designed entirely in Quebec. A collection that takes you to the next level!

Content and topics for discussion:
Video games, Trivia

De l'or dans les fissures
Written and illustrated by Katerine Martin
Published by Éditions de l'Isatis

The signs of depression were becoming more and more apparent; a shadow followed her. And one morning, for no apparent reason, the tears began to flow and wouldn't stop. There were a mother's hands to stroke the hair she no longer had the courage to wash, a brother who found the right words to ease her pain, and a psychologist to help her dispel the clouds. And despite all the distress, there remained the hope that joy would return. But first, she had to heal, to put

herself back together. Much like kintsugi, that ancient Japanese tradition of repairing broken objects with gold. It takes time and patience to piece back together the broken parts of oneself. A delicate picture book that captures what depression—and then healing—looks like in everyday life.

Content and topics for discussion:
Depression in adolescents, Compassion, Resilience, Helping relationships, Therapeutic relationships

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Énigme au collège 01: La quête des quatre
Written by Véronique Villaggi
Published by Éditions de Mortagne

My name is Xavier, and I lead a perfectly normal life. Well, that is, if you ignore the fact that: my dad quotes old movies all day long; my mom spends all her free time scaring me; my little sister has a voice that could trigger a tsunami; and my dog thinks used tissues are a delicacy.
But now I've learned that a century-old mystery at my middle school has never been solved. Together with Zachary, Florence, and Éléonore, we decide to try to unravel its secret.
Embarking on this adventure won't be easy: we'll have to investigate, work together, and think carefully to successfully decode the clues left by the school's founder.
Amid bursts of laughter, brainstorming sessions, and a few (mild) moments of discouragement, one thing is certain: solving a mystery is great… but doing it with four people is even better!

Content and discussion topics:
Community, Mutual Aid, Support

Fuir le feu
Written by Micheline Marchand
Published by Éditions David

Fuir le feu is a story of courage in the face of a terrifying ordeal. Katya Séguin, a young, visually impaired teenager, lives on the banks of the Rivière des Français in Noëlville. During a hot, dry summer, two events will shape her life and that of her family: the arrival of Onyx, a guide dog, and a violent wildfire raging not far from her home.
Katya and her new companion will have to overcome significant challenges to stay safe. Will they manage to come through unscathed? These turbulent summer events push the young girl to draw on her inner strength to take charge of her life and discover what truly matters to her.

Content and discussion topics:
People with visual impairments, Guide dogs, Wildfires, Mutual aid, Northern Ontario

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Ma couronne
Written and illustrated by Lidia-Ntombo Lulendo
Published by Bayard Canada Livres

To see my favorite band perform live, I'm willing to do anything—even face the world with my afro, my little crown. But being a Black teenager with natural hair isn't that simple.
The comments, remarks, and stares weigh heavily on me. Luckily, there's music. And at the concert, among the crowd singing and dancing, I'm not alone.

A graphic novel celebrating diversity and the pride of being yourself, through a love of music.

Content and topics for discussion:
Diversity, Hairstyles, Self-confidence, Concert

Un roi sans couronne
Written by Uashteskun
Published by Héritage jeunesse

Uashteskun, a young Innu, describes himself at the beginning of the story as the king of his kingdom—the Indigenous community over which he symbolically reigns from the Kukum gallery. Surrounded by his cousins, he observes and judges the world around him, expressing a strong and emotional sense of belonging to his territory. But everything changes when his mother decides to leave the community for the city. This marks the beginning of a slow drift away from his identity: the loss of contact with his cousins, physical changes, and the shifting of his connection to cultural landmarks. Uashteskun doubts his identity without his community—is he still Innu?

Content and topics for discussion:
Innu teenagers, Belonging, Identity, Indigenous community, Poetry

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Une vie tricotée d'avance
Written by Maryse Labbé
Published by Héritage jeunesse

This morning, my seams are struggling not to give way. The threads on my spool snap at the slightest provocation. I pretend to be Cinderella. I slip into my school uniform, which isn't a gift from my fairy godmother. It's more like my social-class camouflage. My cover from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., my invisibility cloak in a world without magic. My family consists of seven people crammed into a poorly insulated 5½-room apartment in a neighborhood best avoided. What could possibly lie behind the fog of my childhood?

Content and topics for discussion:
Poverty, Social Classes, Self-Assertion, School, Poetry