



The Wild Book

Juan Villoro

Lawrence Schimel, Translator

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This is a beautifully written ode to the inherent magic of books and reading.

Books are portals to other worlds. In *The Wild Book*, a young boy learns about the power of stories when he explores his uncle's enchanted library of shape-shifting books. This is a beautifully written ode to the inherent magic of books and reading.

Juan's summer is probably going to be boring. His parents have sent him to stay with his strange uncle, Tito. Exploring Tito's house, however, Juan discovers that there's more to the library than he thought. The books are talking to him. Their stories appear in his dreams. They seem to follow him everywhere. Juan turns out to be a Princeps reader, a book-tamer with unique powers.

With the help of the beautiful girl who lives across the street and his little sister, Juan sets off to hunt The Wild Book. This book is elusive and maybe even dangerous. Tito tells Juan that it's never been read. As Juan follows the book's trail, he also explores famous works by Western writers, like *Alice In Wonderland* and *The Metamorphosis*. Juan wonders, "In a certain way the library was a forest: the pages of the books came from trees. How would my heroes have gotten out of a written forest?"

Translated by award-winning Lawrence Schimel, Juan Villoro's prose is lovely and clear. Villoro, "Mexico's Updike," is his nation's most prolific, prize-winning writer. *The Wild Book* is no exception within his canon. Each of the twenty-one chapters is accompanied by Eko's stunning woodcut-style illustrations, depicting books with teeth and pages flying.

Deserving a place beside classics like *The Phantom Tollbooth* and *Half-Magic*, *The Wild Book* is a timeless celebration of reading.

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