



Lila Says: A Novel

By none) Chimo



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In a Parisian ghetto, Lila, a sixteen-year-old Catholic girl, stops to talk to Chimo, a nineteen-year-old Arab boy, and puts into motion a sequence of events that is shockingly raw, sensual, and devastating. Lila's angelic demeanor barely contains the vitality and powerful eroticism that are destined to destroy her. No matter how hard he tries, Chimo is unable to resist the pull of this tragic girl.

Lila Says is Chimo's journal of his encounters with Lila. Each time they meet, she tells him increasingly troubling tales of her supposed exploits and violations, inspiring in the uneducated Chimo a previously untapped poetry. With grace and a streetwise wit, he records her story. His narrative builds relentlessly, breathlessly, until it becomes clear that Lila is perilously close to the edge, where the brutality of the world they inhabit threatens to consume her.

Lila Says, a touching, wrenching tale of innocent love sprung from wanton degradation, convinces us that even in the bleakest, most bitter settings, beauty and romance are possible.

The most sensational foreign novel in recent memory, *Lila Says* became an instant bestseller in France. In the tradition of Marguerite Duras's *The Lover* and Pauline Reage's *Story of O*, *Lila Says* is a magnificent debut.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The tragedy of chronic unemployment and hopelessness among North African youth in contemporary France explodes in this anonymous first novel that has garnered front-page attention in Europe. Purportedly, the author—"Chimo," the 19-year-old narrator of the doomed blue-collar love story—wrote this account in two school notebooks delivered to the publisher by a lawyer. In a note, the publisher confesses that opinion in the house was divided between those who thought the author was a poorly educated but talented young person or an experienced writer perpetrating a hoax. Fatherless, poor and, like most of his friends in the Old Oak Housing Project near Paris, without a job or prospects, Chimo finds that writing about Lila, a 16-year-old girl who befriends him, transports him from the bleakness of his life. Chimo is an unremarkable, shy and sensitive boy; Lila's angelic looks are in stunning contrast to the precocious fantasies about sex that she shares with him. An enigma in the projects because of her blonde hair, blue eyes, Christian faith and elusiveness, as well as the crazy, devil-fearing aunt with whom she lives, Lila confides only in Chimo. Is she a hustler working for rich men in the city or just a confused kid whose fantasies serve as her own method of escape, much as Chimo's secret nocturnal writing acts as his? Prurience aside—and there is plenty of it—Chimo's simple narrative aches with the writer's yearning for self-expression, and frustration at being "excluded" from the language: "You always feel you're sailing right by a green island you can't get close to... an island stuffed with wonderful fruits, words that people pick for themselves and feast on... but not you, never you." Revelation or hoax, its melodramatic ending a shocking surprise, the work of this writer resonates powerfully. (Jan.) FYI: His identity still unknown, Chimo has published a second novel in France. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal

This was a best seller in France, but will it go over here? Since it's described as a "raw, voyeuristic tale of sexual discovery in a Parisian ghetto," it might well have a chance. The identity of the author, who wrote pseudonymously, sparked some lively conversations in France. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From [Booklist](#)

This very provocative French novel has an interesting publishing history. According to the French publisher, the manuscript was delivered to its offices anonymously, handwritten in two school copybooks, purportedly by an inexperienced writer: a boy of 19. Who cares if that is really the situation behind its appearance in print? It's a bold, clear distillation of ghetto life--and, larger, teenage life--in contemporary Paris. Chimo, the main character in his own novel, meets a 16-year-old girl in the projects in which they both live. Lila talks about sex; she and Chimo have sex, but Chimo wonders why that is all she talks about, to which she answers, "What else is there?" Some readers may ask a similar question about this novel. What else is there in it but sex? And those readers will probably find its graphic language offensive. Other readers, more used to European fiction, will see something more: a stark but sincere and quite moving scenario of obsession, loneliness, alienation--and hormones. *Brad Hooper*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jenny Dill:

What do you consider book? It is just for students since they're still students or this for all people in the world, the actual best subject for that? Simply you can be answered for that problem above. Every person has several personality and hobby for each and every other. Don't be pushed someone or something that they don't wish do that. You must know how great and important the book Lila Says: A Novel. All type of book would you see on many resources. You can look for the internet solutions or other social media.

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