

A story to tell

[Woodford, Jamie](#)
Lethbridge Herald

Hearing herself being called Alberta's youngest author is a little weird for Intissar **Louah**.

"It feels strange," said the 15-year-old after her book reading at Lethbridge's inaugural Word on the Street Festival. "Although I know I am the youngest writer, when people say it, it feels like I'm in a dream. My brain still cannot absorb it."

Her novel is about a young girl named Laila who immigrates with her family from Morocco to Canada - a transition **Louah** knows all too well. The young French author immigrated to Edmonton from Morocco a few years ago. It was an experience that she was able to infuse into her character's life.

"(Laila) experiences the differences between the two countries, makes new friends, and there's a little bit of a mystery as well to the story," **Louah** explained. "The part of where she experience's the differences, a lot of it is based on what I experienced when I came here from Morocco."

The tri-lingual teen (she speaks Arabic, French and English) was first introduced to literature by her mother.

"She would always read to me and show me different literature styles," **Louah** said. "I started to like it and I started to write on my own, poems, short stories when I was in Grade 1. Then one day my dad said, 'If you like writing so much why don't you try to write a book, a novel.' "

So she did.

"But I don't think it turned out so well. I pretty much threw away the first copy," she said." Then I thought, 'You know what? I'm going to write another book, a novel that's going to be published, and I did, and it got accepted by a publisher.'"

The power of positive thinking led **Louah** to self-publish "Le Chant de la Colombe," which has since been picked up by publishing house Les Editions de la Paix.

The second edition of the book will be released in October, with an English version available soon.

The novel has even become a study book for Grade 9 French classes, Grade 8 in Francophone schools.

Getting published at a young age is a good feeling for **Louah**, "I'm really happy and proud," she said. But she has no immediate plans to write another book because she wants to focus on school with a goal to study medicine in university.

Her advice for other young aspiring authors: "just do it," she said enthusiastically.

"If you like to write, if you like literature, just do it," she said. "Don't think about what you're writing, just write what's inside of you, and don't be afraid. I don't think about what other people think."

She added that young writers shouldn't stop there.

"If you want to publish them all too, do it. That would be amazing," she said.

When she's not touring with her book and maintaining straight A's in school, **Louah** works part-time at a public library in Edmonton.

© 2011 *The Lethbridge Herald*. All rights reserved.

Document number: news-20110926-LH-0Albertasyougestauthorx2txt