

About the Author and Idioms

Barbara Gregorich first thought about idioms at the age of thirteen, when taking Beginning French. “I translated *il a jeté un coup d’oeil hors de la fenêtre* as *he threw his eye out the window*,” she says. “The laughter that greeted my translation made me realize that I had erred in a big way: the teacher explained that *jeté un coup d’oeil* was an idiom and thus did not mean exactly what it said (threw the eye), but meant something else: glanced.”

The second time that she thought about idioms was a few years later, while visiting with friends who had a young son. The author recalls that “one of the adults present said, ‘I can’t do that, I’m all tied up,’ and without missing a beat, the four-year-old retorted, ‘I don’t see any ropes.’ It was at this point,” says Gregorich, “that I realized I wanted to write about the humor of taking idioms literally. My desire to write such stories — to introduce children to idiomatic expressions, and perhaps even to amuse adults — came to fruition with the creation of Waltur and his friends Matilda and Darwin.”