





WORLD TOWER, WORLD TOUR

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« La Rose des vents", the wind rose, is a large district of several high-rise blocks of council housing built in 1973 in the suburbs north of Paris. The "Allée des Bourdonnais" is one of the main thoroughfares, with two high-rise blocks on either side and no green space in between. Anyway who comes here for the first time would consider it gloomy, dirty and even sinister. They would stare in horror at the broken shop windows and shutters, the paint peeling off the walls, rubbish piled up outside the buildings. The place resembles a no man's land. "I have been working here for many years and when I return today to the "Wind rose", I don't see all that. I see the baker's wife filling in the tax return form of the elderly Sri Lankan at her shop counter. I see four youngsters getting up from where they sit in order to help Alima take her shopping up the stairs. Or Jean, who's been sitting on his bench and telling the children funny stories each Wednesday for the past twenty years. Or Father Xavier from St. John's Chapel who sits in the café talking to friends who smoke a chicha..."There are as many satellite dishes attached to the building here as there are different nationalities living in them: over 80, for 15 000 inhabitants. "There is a great variety of smells and sounds in the street!" The "Allée de la Bourdonnais" is a tour around the world in itself. This is a chronicle of life in this particular area, a voyage into the very heart of its rich cultural diversity. Floor by floor, via the staircase, we are introduced to the customs and cultural traditions of several families - an encounter that leads us from Sri Lanka to Mali via Turkey and the Congo...without even leaving the building.

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