



# The Last Laugh of Edouard Bresson

*Amélie Antoine , Maren Baudet-Lackner (Translator)*

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His famous father is inviting him on more than just a journey into the past. It's a treasure hunt.

To his fans, Édouard Bresson is the greatest comic standing—charismatic, adored, unmatched, and aiming ever higher for the unpredictable. To his ex-wife, he fulfilled all expectations, except as a husband and a lover. To his brother, he's a hero. And to his estranged son, Arthur, he's always been a mystery. Never more so than now...

After the performance of a lifetime at the sold-out Stade de France, Édouard decides to vanish. Très drôle.

Arthur isn't laughing. Édouard has sent him a letter and instructions to a puzzle—a treasure hunt for the son he ignored and misses and loves. If Arthur is willing to find out everything there is to know about his father and to understand the choices he made, all he has to do is put the pieces together.

As the trail of clues winds its way through the past—reflected in the memories of both father and son—what unfolds is a surprising journey of forgiveness, family, and self-discovery.

## The Last Laugh of Edouard Bresson Details

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# From Reader Review The Last Laugh of Edouard Bresson for online ebook

**Diane Russell says**

**Great read. Kept me interested and looking forward to the end.**

I can an relate to this story because of my dad.it made me think about what he may have been feeling in the end of his life.

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**Kathy says**

This is a sad story about a famous comedian, Édouard Bresson, who, it seems, is there for everyone but his immediate family. He travels a lot and is regularly away from his family. Yet, when there with them, his wife Magda finds Edouard is never really “there”. He also pushes his young son Arthur to put the theater above working on his school grades, whether Arthur wants to or agrees that theater is the “end all” like his father does or not. Thus, Edouard is the most distant from the people he is meant to be closest to. Magda moves on with her life, as a consequence, divorcing him. In an attempt to get his son Arthur back, Edouard leaves him a letter with instructions to a puzzle and a treasure hunt, which Edouard hopes will do the trick of helping Arthur know him. Arthur is indifferent to all this, as he has accepted the fact that his father is as cold toward him as he has imagined as well as being indifferent. However, as Arthur works through these last gasps of hope from his father, he learns eye-opening things about the father he does not know. For example, Arthur learns his father’s life with a brute of a father was not always so easy or happy as Arthur thought. Arthur finally begins to know his father as his father truly is and that his father has always been there, just not in the way Arthur imagined.

This book is not as happy as many of the ones we find today. However, the stark reality of life shows through, plainly and clearly, as the book progresses. The characters are well-developed and interesting. The story is heart-felt and one not easily forgotten. I thoroughly enjoyed reading this insightful book—while learning that things are not always what they seem to be for ourselves and for anyone else but require further in-depth analysis to truly understand. I received this from NetGalley to read and review.

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**Lolly K Dandeneau says**

via my blog: <https://bookstalkerblog.wordpress.com/>

'He's going to vanish when people least expect it. He's going to disappear right under their noses.'

So many comedians use humor to cope with disastrous childhoods or difficult lives. There isn't any reason to assume those who make us laugh are always happy themselves. In The Last Laugh of Édouard Bresson, famed, unrivaled and beloved French comic Édouard Bresson decides to pull the biggest joke of all, to vanish, only no one will really be left laughing. Despite his popularity and love amongst fans, to his ex-wife and son he is a distant star, bright in brilliance but impossible to touch. He is a hero to his brother Jonathan,

the true reason for the birth of his gift of laughter to the world. It is the most heart-breaking and tender part of the novel, the accident that befalls the brothers and the last damage.

Once Édouard Bresson decides to stop showing houses and strive for his dream, his career takes off but Magda and young son Arthur are always left behind with the empty space a husband and father is meant to occupy. While he is on month-long tours, time seems to pass quickly, but not for his small family left waiting for when or if he will ever return. When he is around, he pushes his son to forget about grades and throw himself into theater, whether he has a gift or yearning for the arts or not. There is nothing but no shows and disappointments between father and son, leading to the present day estrangement. Wife Magda learned to get used to his absence, to no longer miss him. The people who were meant to be the closest, most beloved to Édouard have been made strangers, by his own doing, wrapped in his all consuming need for perfection in his career. Marriage ends, Magda moves on.

It is his belief that not everyone can go back, he certainly isn't one to naively believe in the much touted 'it's never too late to make things right'. His final act will shock the world, but it's his last letter, instructions to a puzzle and treasure hunt for the son he loved dearly, but could never show up for. Arthur doesn't have much enthusiasm for the quest. Despite yearning in his youth for his father's love and attention, time proved he was never going to get it. There is a numbness inside of Arthur about the tragic turn of events, a treasure hunt feels ridiculously childish. All his memories are cold, proving only his father was indifferent towards him. But with the hunt, he will meet people and find out his father was a completely different man than the one he imagined, far more humble about his life than someone hungry for fame. Édouard Bresson's childhood wasn't full of the joy he later gave the world, living with a father who was a brute, unkind about his son's flaw. There is so much more for him to learn and maybe it is a chance for him to forgive. But in the tenderness there is also bitterness. "My father has always had a gift for bringing out the worst, meanest version of me." It comes to light that his father may have been there all along, behind the scenes.

It is a sad story but far more realistic than happy endings we often get. Disappearing was the only way he could become real to his son, but there is nothing funny about it. Lovely.

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AmazonCrossing

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## **Hayley says**

I received this copy free in return for an honest review.

Really enjoyed this book, as well as the author's last book. The characters are interesting and well developed and the chapters are structured interestingly and well.

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## **Lady Alexandrine says**

It was a true delight to spend a few hours reading "The Last Laugh of Édouard Bresson" by Amélie Antoine. It is a truly magical, heart-warming tale about childhood memories and love that stays with us always even if the people we love are not there for us anymore. This novel is full of emotion and it reminded me of a movie

“Amélie” with Audrey Tautou. It has the same warm, magical atmosphere. Reading this novel is a little like returning to childhood.

The book tells a story of the best comic standing, world-famous Édouard Bresson. He has just finished his tour with the last performance on 31st March 2017 and is on the peak of success. His performance, that took place in Stade de France was live on TV, all tickets were sold out, his fans loved it, they waited outside to get his autograph, calling his name. He is the number one comic, he achieved everything he could in his career. He followed his passion for making people laugh and made it his mission in life.

But is he happy? And how did he come to be a comic in the first place?

It is only the beginning of a beautifully written story that reveals the past of Édouard Bresson and a childhood tragedy that shaped him and made him who he was. Then, we meet his son and get to know the details of a troubled relationship he had with his father. During the years father and son lost touch and drifted away. Is it still possible for them to reconcile after all this time? I recommend this book for all people that feel nostalgic about their childhood.

I received "The Last Laugh of Édouard Bresson" from the publisher via NetGalley. I would like to thank the author and the publisher for providing me with the advance reader copy of the book.

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## **Joy says**

Received this book on GoodReads giveaway.

Although I don't know how to describe it any better, the book description was misleading to me. It's not a crazy, zany walk through a comedian's life but it is a story about life and relationships, aspirations and goals, love and loss. Life. The life the rest of us don't see.

The book is in two parts: Part 1 Édouard's life and Part 2 Arthur's perception of his father as he goes through his father's puzzle.

In the first part the author alternated chapters between Édouard's present life with flashbacks to earlier times. I liked that she linked present and past with a clever method of repeating the last phrase of one chapter with the first phrase of the next:

Chapter 1: He breathes in as slowly as possible and suddenly thinks of his father, who, before slamming the door on his way to work at the refinery every evening, would offer up the very philosophical “When it’s time, it’s time.”

Chapter 2: “When it’s time, it’s time,” grumbles Lucien Bresson as he quickly slips into his khaki cargo jacket.

The second half of the book abandons repetition between chapters. But she does something else. Where the chapters in the first half are only numbered, chapters in the second half have titles. I wonder if there is a message there - but then maybe I was searching with Arthur. (I found one whether the author intended it or not.)

I like that the translator kept the French flair of Édouard's and other characters names. I think she translated in a very readable form.

There were times that the book felt flat to me, but this could be me. I seem to be that way with books lately. Having said that, this book is staying with me & that's a sign of a good book.

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## **Kim says**

This book is a dichotomy

### **Part 1**

Winter, 1979

This is the the story of Edouard Bresson's youth. First born, loved second best, Edouard is a normal boy except for the terrible stutter which leaves him open to being bullied unmercifully. He has a younger brother, Jonathan, who dreams of one day having the top bunk bed. Their father is a mean tempered factory worker who "works, eats, sleeps and rages". But Edouard knows there is more to life, there has to be. For Edouard his sole desire is "to make his loved ones laugh".

As all things must happen Edouard accepts a dare, Jonathan takes a fall, and life is changed forever.

March 31, 2017

Edouard becomes the politest, the humblest, "the most unpredictable stand-up comic". He is getting ready for the biggest show of his life, fifty thousand people in the Stade de France. He is anxious, he always is before performing. He is afraid, he is nauseous. "The stage is the only place he can beat his anxiety, the only place he really feels like he's the person he's supposed to be." His brother Jonathan is in the front row, as he is for all Edouard's performances. A huge success, fifty thousand people screaming his name, begging for an encore, a celebratory cast party and then April Fool's day.

### **Part 2**

April 1, 2017

The writing in this part seems as if it is a different book. Related by Edouard's son Arthur who professes if not hate, great dislike for his father. They haven't spoken in a very long time and he is fairly sure it is merely an extension of a very unhappy father-son relationship. But Edouard has left Arthur packages and clues to draw him into a treasure hunt for the real Edouard Bresson. Arthur is crazy angry. Will he accept the challenge and come to know his father? I almost didn't care. The tone of this part of the books was off-putting, annoying, antagonistic. This could have been a much stronger part of the story if the anger had been kept to a manageable level.

Thank you NetGalley and AmazonCrossing for an ARC

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## **Mandy says**

This is a book quite literally of two halves. The first half is excellent. It tells the story of Edouard Bresson, an adored and widely acclaimed comedian, an enormous success and with millions of fans. But a fatal flaw doesn't allow him to feel he merits this success and he is driven to ruthlessly pursue his career at any cost, even if that means neglecting his wife and son Arthur. His own childhood was an unhappy one but that doesn't seem to stop him inflicting an equally unhappy one on Arthur. It's a wonderfully convincing portrait

of a deeply troubled man, a man whose ambition completely takes over his life.

Then we come to the second half and in my opinion it's a complete failure. It concentrates on Arthur and we see things from his point of view. Unfortunately it's a trite and unconvincing narrative that stretches the reader's credibility. The book as a whole has a great premise, is relatable and often moving. But the sentimental nature of Arthurs' story lets the book down. Such a shame as I very much enjoyed the beginning.

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