

Elena Poniatowska

LILUS KIKUS



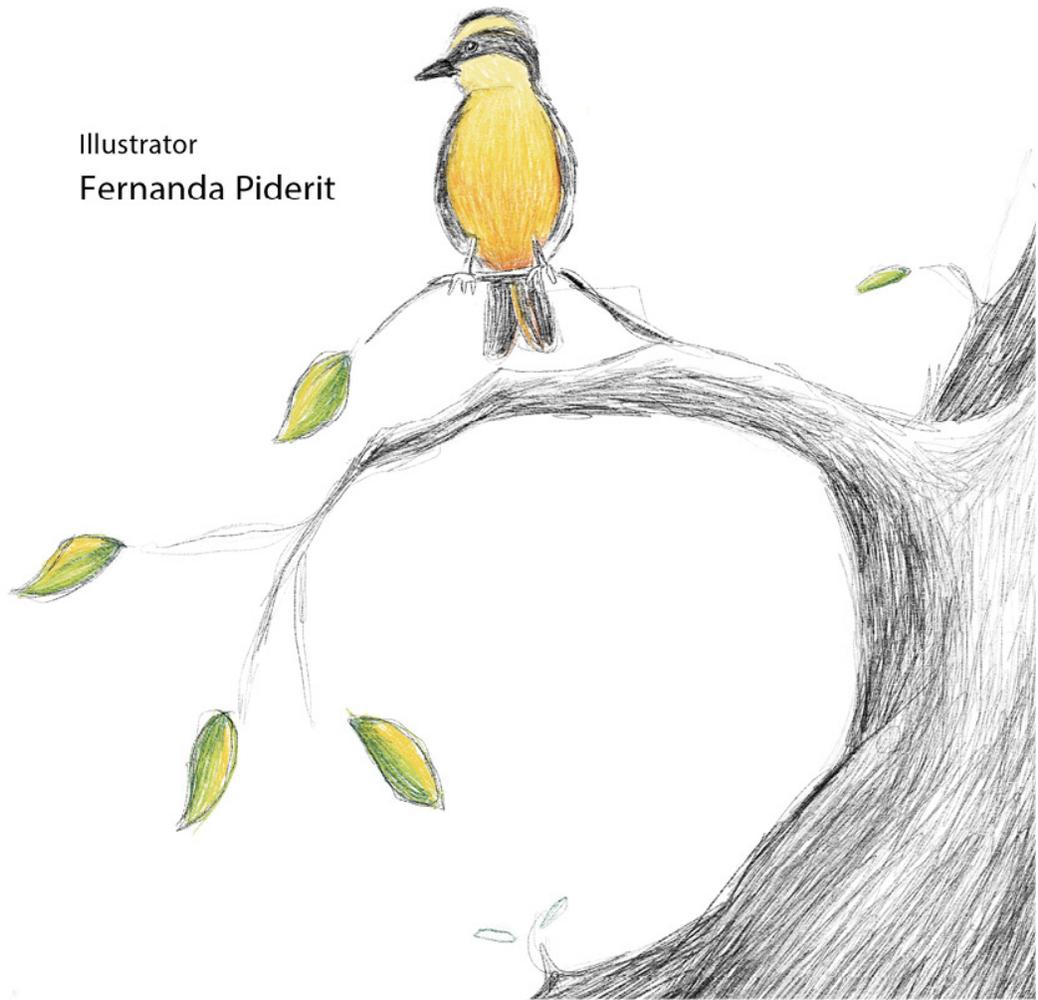
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Lilus' games

"Lilus Kikus... Lilus Kikus... Lilus Kikus I'm calling you!"

But Lilus Kikus, seated on the sidewalk is too absorbed doing surgery on a fly to hear her mother's call. Lilus never plays in her bedroom, a room spoiled by tidiness. Better to play on the street corner, under the tiny tree growing at the edge of the sidewalk. From there she can see cars and people go by, as if they are out to save the world...

Lilus believes in witches and, in her britches, she sews fine herbs, grasses, and rosemary, plus a hair off Napoleon's head, the ones you can buy for ten pesos at school. And a tooth, the first one she lost. All this she puts in a little pouch that hangs over her navel. Later the girls at school will wonder about the cause of that bump.

In a little box Lilus also keeps the black ribbon off a dead person, two hard grey pieces of nails from her father's feet, a three-leaf clover and dust from the feet of the Christ at the Our Lady of Mercy church.

Since going to her uncle's farm, Lilus has discovered her own toys. She has a nest there and spends hours and hours staring at it, looking at the fragile little eggs and the sticks and twigs that shape the nest. With great interest she closely follows the little bird's every move: "Now he sleeps, in a bit I'll bring it some food"... She has a centipede that she keeps in a sock and some enormous flies on which she