

# Readers' Guide



## Little Eyes

### Samanta Schweblin

Translated by Megan McDowell

Oneworld

Other novels by Samanta Schweblin

*Fever Dream* (2017)

*Mouthful of Birds* (2019)

## About the author

Samanta Schweblin was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in October 1978. She is the author of three story collections that have won numerous awards, including the prestigious Juan Rulfo Story Prize, and most recently, a Man Booker International Prize longlisting for *Mouthful of Birds* (Oneworld, 2019). Her debut novel *Fever Dream* was shortlisted for the Man Booker International Prize in 2017. Originally from Buenos Aires, she lives in Berlin.

## About the translator

Megan McDowell was born in Mississippi, USA, in June 1963. She has translated books by many contemporary South American and Spanish authors, and her translations have been published in *The New Yorker*, *Harper's* and *The Paris Review*. She lives in Chile.

## About the book

They've infiltrated homes in Hong Kong, shops in Vancouver, the streets of Sierra Leone, town squares of Oaxaca, schools in Tel Aviv, bedrooms in Indiana.

They're not pets, nor ghosts, nor robots. They're real people, but how can a person living in Berlin walk freely through the living room of someone in Sydney? How can someone in Bangkok have breakfast with your children in Buenos Aires, without you knowing? Especially when these people are completely anonymous, unknown, untraceable.

The characters in Samanta Schweblin's wildly imaginative new novel, *Little Eyes*, reveal the beauty of connection between far-flung souls - but they also expose the ugly truth of our increasingly linked world. Trusting strangers can lead to unexpected love, playful encounters and marvellous adventures, but what if it can also pave the way for unimaginable terror? Schweblin has created a dark and complex world that is both familiar but also strangely unsettling, because it's our present and we're living it - we just don't know it yet.

## What the judges thought

'A deft dystopia set within touching distance of the present that lays bare our contemporary obsession with watching and being watched. Savagely funny and disarmingly frank about our predilection for self-surveillance, it is a novel that captures an increasingly interconnected and unhinged moment.'

## Discussion points

Do you think this is ultimately a story of horror or humanity?

How close to reality do you feel the obsession for kentukis is in the novel, or do you feel it is a vision of a dystopian craze, separate from our own reality?

Do you feel the author is making a statement on the connections between humans, and an increasing inability to have direct interaction?

Would you be a 'keeper' or a 'dweller' - is one given preferential treatment in the novel? How intertwined would your relationship with a kentuki be?

## Themed reading

*Do Android Dream of Electric Sheep* by Philip K Dick  
*The Stepford Wives* by Ira Levin  
*The Circle* by Dave Eggers  
*Oryx and Crake* by Margaret Atwood

## Useful links

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