

In the 80s, while he was writing about education in [Marie Claire](#), Jean-Jacques Greif taught French and [physics](#) now and then in a small school. He wrote some articles about science in a magazine for children. His first published opus was a documentary book for children about computers (1986).

From 1988 to 1995, he wrote how-to books about the [Macintosh](#) computer and its software. After more than twenty books in French (two of which aimed specifically at children), he wrote seven in English under the name Adam Greif. Four books were published by a [London](#) publisher, then three by Peachpit Press in Berkeley.

Greif's first novel for teenagers was published in Paris in 1996. L'École des Loisirs, a leading French publisher of children's literature, has published sixteen of his books so far. Most of his books tell the story of one central character. Sometimes, it is a famous person: [Beethoven](#), [Mozart](#), [Einstein](#) (a book for teenagers and one for adults), [Joan of Arc](#) (a novel and a picture book), [Marilyn Monroe](#). Sometimes, a not so famous person: his father, his mother, other unknown heroes. His parents belonged to the [French Résistance](#) during [World War II](#). His mother "vanished" during six months as the [Gestapo](#) kept her in a secret jail. His father, a [ladies man](#), spent that time with another woman—who, later, denounced him to the [Germans](#). He was deported to the [Auschwitz concentration camp](#) but survived.

One of Jean-Jacques Greif's books, *Le Ring de la mort*, is often read in French high schools as part of Holocaust studies. It has received six awards for children's literature. It tells the story of Maurice, a very poor [Warsaw Jew](#) who emigrates to France and works hard making leather bags. Being a Jew and also a frail child, he learned to fight for his life in the streets of Warsaw. In Paris, he becomes an amateur [boxer](#). When the French lose the war and accept to "collaborate" with the Germans, they edict laws that restrict the freedom of Jews. Then they round up most foreign Jews and keep them in camps in France for more than one year before expelling them from the country. The Germans send them "East," which means Auschwitz. Maurice will spend three years in the camp. The [SS](#) guards look for boxers, as they love to stage a fight between a strong newcomer and a dying prisoner. But Maurice does not want to become a killer.

Jean-Jacques Greif's own translation of this book was published in the United States in 2006 by Bloomsbury as *The Fighter*.