



The Love-Artist: A Novel

By Jane Alison

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A darkly brilliant first novel that imagines a missing chapter in the life of Ovid. Why was Ovid, the most popular author of his day, banished to the edges of the Roman Empire? Why do only two lines survive of his play Medea, reputedly his most passionate work and perhaps his most Accomplished? Between the known details of the poet's life and these enigmas, Jane Alison has Interpolated a haunting drama of passion and psychological manipulation. On holiday at the Black Sea, on the fringes of the Empire, Ovid encounters an almost otherworldly woman who seems to embody the fictitious creations of his soon-to-be-published Metamorphoses. Part healer, part witch, she seems myth come to life. Enchanted and obsessed -- and, for the first time in a long while, flush with inspiration -- Ovid takes her back with him to Rome. But the inexorable pull of ambition leads him to make a Faustian bargain with fate that will betray his newfound muse. As the two of them become entangled in its snares, the reader is drawn deep into an ingeniously enacted meditation on love, art, and the desire for immortality.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Little is known about Ovid's life in exile in the first century A.D., and only two lines of his acclaimed *Medea* survive today. In this strong debut novel, Alison reimagines Ovid's sojourn on the east coast of the Black Sea, where Emperor Augustus, in the middle of a campaign to restore morality to his new empire, has banished the poet, displeased by the success of his *Loves* and *The Art of Love*. Here Ovid meets Xenia, a wild-eyed young woman who lives in isolation. The only literate person in her community, Xenia acts as town mystic, casting spells, healing the sick and telling futures. Ovid, who admits he believes in Amazons, with "their strong sweating thighs clutching galloping horses, wild howls coming from their parched, cracked mouths," is eager to be stunned by the "fishy, monstrous, unreal." He imagines the jealous, stormy Xenia to be his Galatea and sweeps her back to Rome, where she unwittingly becomes the muse for the lost *Medea*, his darkest work. From Alison's depiction of a trio of gossips at a patrician's dinner party, "dark eyes flying from one to the other like torches," to her description of an evening walk in Rome freighted with the knowledge that thousands of animals are "denuded beneath the city's streets until they were let out, half starved, to devour terrified criminals or be speared in the emperor's shows," she demonstrates familiarity and ease with her subject; and her historic detail is never pedantic. Even those unfamiliar with Ovid and Roman history will delight in this tale of romantic intrigue, rife with blood, jealous rage and the consciousness of human frailty.

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From Library Journal

Contemporary soap opera meets Ancient Rome in Alison's passionate first novel about the renowned poet Ovid's fall from imperial grace. At once inventive and historically accurate, the book chronicles Ovid's infatuation with Xenia, a young witch/healer he encounters while vacationing on the Black Sea. A steamy fling is followed by the pair's return to Rome, where Ovid intends to craft a masterwork inspired by his latest muse. Unfortunately, his desires are thwarted by a potent mix of greed, jealousy, narcissism, and the desire for immortality. Alison's feminist take on the outcome of the couple's conflicts is exhilarating. So, too, are her vivid descriptions of Rome, from narrow streets lined with bookstalls to sumptuous feasts served to the elite by slaves. Fascinating and clever, this is essential reading for anyone who has ever wondered what happened to Ovid's *Medea* or pondered his abrupt banishment to the edge of the Roman Empire. Highly recommended for all libraries. DEleanor J. Bader, Brooklyn, NY

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From [The New Yorker](#)

Part thriller, part fantasy, this richly imagined first novel offers an answer to an antique conundrum: why was Ovid banished from Rome to languish on the western edge of the Black Sea, and how is it that only fragments of his "*Medea*" survive? The disastrous love affair that Alison invents between Ovid and Xenia, an almost feral witch whom he first spies rising like Galatea from the waves, has the power of poetic truth, and the novel's depiction of the circumscribed lives of women in ancient Rome—from old Persilla, Ovid's housekeeper, to Julia, the maddened granddaughter of the Emperor Augustus—is especially fine.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Alicia Gentry:

What do you think of book? It is just for students because they're still students or that for all people in the world, what the best subject for that? Just you can be answered for that query above. Every person has distinct personality and hobby for each other. Don't to be pushed someone or something that they don't wish do that. You must know how great as well as important the book *The Love-Artist: A Novel*. All type of book would you see on many options. You can look for the internet resources or other social media.

Tara Thornton:

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Antonio Sisson:

What is your hobby? Have you heard which question when you got scholars? We believe that that query was given by teacher to the students. Many kinds of hobby, All people has different hobby. So you know that little person including reading or as examining become their hobby. You need to know that reading is very important and also book as to be the matter. Book is important thing to provide you knowledge, except your teacher or lecturer. You discover good news or update concerning something by book. Different categories of books that can you take to be your object. One of them is *The Love-Artist: A Novel*.

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