



Leela's Book: A Novel

Alice Albinia

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“Steeped in the tradition of the Indian epic, yet modern and vastly entertaining.”—*The Times* (London)

In her fiction debut, Alice Albinia weaves a multithreaded epic tale that encompasses divine saga and familial discord and introduces an unforgettable heroine. Leela—alluring, taciturn, haunted—is moving from New York back to Delhi. Worldly and accomplished, she has been in self-imposed exile from India and her family for decades; twenty-two years earlier, her sister was seduced by the egotistical Vyasa, and the fallout from their relationship drove Leela away. Now an eminent Sanskrit scholar, Vyasa is preparing for his son’s marriage. But when Leela arrives for the wedding, she disrupts the careful choreography of the weekend, with its myriad attendees and their conflicting desires.

Gleefully presiding over the drama is Ganesh—divine, elephant-headed scribe of the Mahabharata, India’s great epic. The family may think they have arranged the wedding for their own selfish ends, but according to Ganesh it is he who is directing events—in a bid to save Leela, his beloved heroine, from Vyasa. As the weekend progresses, secret online personas, maternal identities, and poetic authorships are all revealed; boundaries both religious and continental are crossed; and families are ripped apart and brought back together in this vibrant and brilliant celebration of family, love, and storytelling.

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