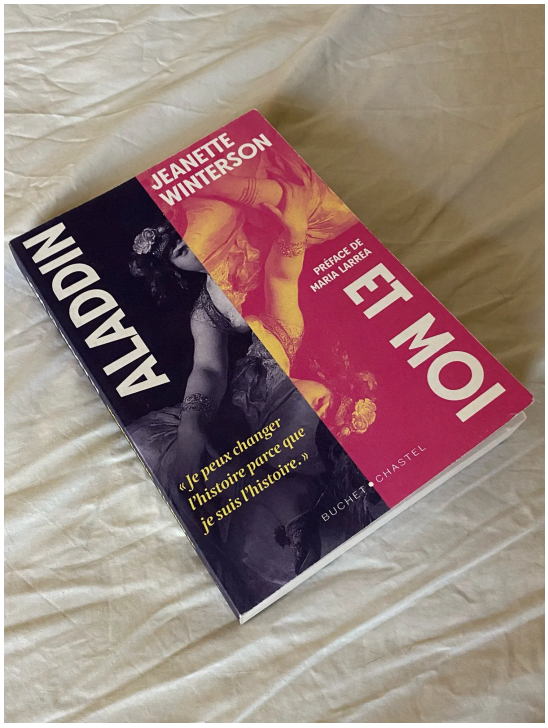
REVIEW

Aladdin et moi, by Jeanette Winterson

by Estelle Normand

September 16, 2026 · On *Aladdin et moi (Buchet-Chastel)*

Somewhere between memoir, essay, and the tales of the Thousand and One Nights, Jeanette Winterson has written a dense, gripping book on the liberating power of literature.



Aladdin et moi (2026), Jeanette Winterson, Éditions Buchet-Chastel, 272 pages

> *"WORDS ARE THE PART OF SILENCE THAT CAN BE SPOKEN"*

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Starting from her own experience, she widens her reflection to all women, beginning with the divine Scheherazade, the only one able, through her words, to stop Shahryar from carrying on his mass femicide.

We know the story. Each night the tale resumes. Scheherazade unfolds her tongue and muzzles her husband, who hangs on her every word. Each night gives birth to images, characters, encounters, desires. She shows the world, the most beautiful and most terrible it has to offer. The passions of those who live in it. Word by word, Scheherazade cuts away at her listener's obscurantism, planting seeds in the hope of sparing her own life and the lives of others for good.

Like this inspiring woman who lulled our childhood, the author weaves narratives together and leaves them hanging at random. Like Shahryar, the reader gets caught up in the game and wants more. And it is precisely this principle that gave me pause, not to say troubled me.

So here we are, in the position of the one who represents a danger and, above all, in the shoes of the person to be educated, who must receive words full of wisdom and lessons. This somewhat top-down aspect is, in my view, a problem in literature. That may not have been the author's intention; it is only my perception, the way I received the more personal passages, the part closer to the essay. The author presents a certain vision of the contemporary world without sources or opposing perspectives, particularly on questions relating to artificial intelligence.

A title I had high expectations for, too high, no doubt.

— Estelle Normand

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