



# The Last Summer of Reason

*By Tahar Djaout*

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This elegant, haunting novel takes us deep into the world of bookstore owner Boualem Yekker. He lives in a country being overtaken by the Vigilant Brothers, a radically conservative party that seeks to control every element of life according to the laws of their stringent moral theology: no work of beauty created by human hands should rival the wonders of their god. Once-treasured art and literature are now despised.

Silently holding his ground, Boualem withstands the new regime, using the shop and his personal history as weapons against puritanical forces. Readers are taken into the lush depths of the bookseller's dreams, the memories of his now-empty family life, his passion for literature, then yanked back into the terror and drudgery of his daily routine by the vandalism, assaults, and death warrants that afflict him.

From renowned Algerian author Tahar Djaout we inherit a brutal and startling story that reveals how far an ordinary human being will go to maintain hope.

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## **The Last Summer of Reason** By Tahar Djaout Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #847107 in Books
- Brand: Djaout, Tahar/ Jager, Marjolijn De (TRN)/ Soyinka, Wole (FRW)/ Toumi, Alek Baylee (INT)
- Published on: 2007-09-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.99" h x .38" w x 5.00" l, .40 pounds
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- 176 pages

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

A bookseller battles the bizarre restrictions of a totalitarian regime in this final novel by Djaout, an Algerian novelist, poet and journalist who wrote the book just before being assassinated by Islamic fundamentalists in 1993. Bousalem Yekker is the haunted, introverted protagonist, a 50-ish woodworker who also runs a bookstore in a culture being stripped of artistic expression by a conservative group known as the Vigilant Brothers, who believe that such expression should be subjugated to the worship of God. Djaout provides precious little elaboration on how the group took over, and even less on why the youthful supporters of the movement would buy into the drab, colorless world the party's vision endorses. Most of the book consists of chapters in which Yekker finds himself increasingly boxed in by government repression. Once he realizes he is basically powerless to fight their efforts, he begins to look back on the more romantic aspects of his own past with an odd mixture of bitterness and nostalgia. Djaout's writing displays an excellent flair for poetic description, but the threadbare plot doesn't provide much to differentiate this novel from other titles in which heroic protagonists battle repressive regimes. The concept of a culture in which art, beauty and expression are totally repressed is an interesting notion that allows this book to work to some extent as a cultural parable, but the underdevelopment of the plot prevents Djaout from getting beneath the surface of the compelling issues he tries to examine. (Oct.)Forecast: While this book will be easy to promote Djaout's tragic history should prompt review coverage it may be more difficult to sell, though a striking jacket photo of a book in flames and a foreword by Wole Soyinka should help distinguish it from similar efforts.

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From [Booklist](#)

Boualem Yekker is a bookseller who refuses to abandon his liberal political beliefs despite pressure from the totalitarian government. His wife and children abandon him and accept the political and religious rhetoric of the nation's new leaders. Yekker is left to his memories of the way of life he has lost and of the last summer of reason, the last season in which people tried to fight the oppression of the emerging government. Yekker is a truly literary hero, openly disagreeing with the treatment of women and intellectuals in his country and never abandoning his belief in the power of books to restore sanity to a nation driven mad with self-righteousness. His creator Djaout's own defiance was silenced when Islamic extremists in his country, Algeria, assassinated him in 1993. "His opinion of life was too high for him to make do with its shadow," Djaout writes of his protagonist. That is a fitting epitaph for a brave author who believed in the power of words to conquer the hate that grows out of fear. *John Green*

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## Review

"*The Last Summer of Reason* has acquired a new and haunting immediacy since the attacks of September 11. . . . Deftly translated from the French by Marjolijn de Jager, and with a foreword by Wole Soyinka, the novel provides an anguished dispatch from what nearly became Algeria's future. . . . An elegiac ode to literature and a furious protest against intolerance."—Adam Shatz, *New York Times*  
(Adam Shatz *New York Times*)

"One is reminded of how life-affirming and dangerous literature still can be."—*Minneapolis Star Tribune*  
(*Minneapolis Star Tribune*)

"*The Last Summer of Reason* provides a powerful and strangely beautiful reminder of the danger of letting violent ideological fundamentalism fester. We would do well to heed this reminder now, not later."—Jennifer Bryson, *Public Discourse*  
(Jennifer Bryson *Public Discourse* 2009-01-16)

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Cesar Benedetto:**

Here thing why this particular *The Last Summer of Reason* are different and reliable to be yours. First of all reading a book is good however it depends in the content than it which is the content is as yummy as food or not. *The Last Summer of Reason* giving you information deeper and different ways, you can find any reserve out there but there is no book that similar with *The Last Summer of Reason*. It gives you thrill reading journey, its open up your own eyes about the thing that happened in the world which is probably can be happened around you. You can bring everywhere like in recreation area, café, or even in your method home by train. In case you are having difficulties in bringing the printed book maybe the form of *The Last Summer of Reason* in e-book can be your choice.

#### **Robert Fox:**

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#### **Carlton Little:**

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#### **David Gilbert:**

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