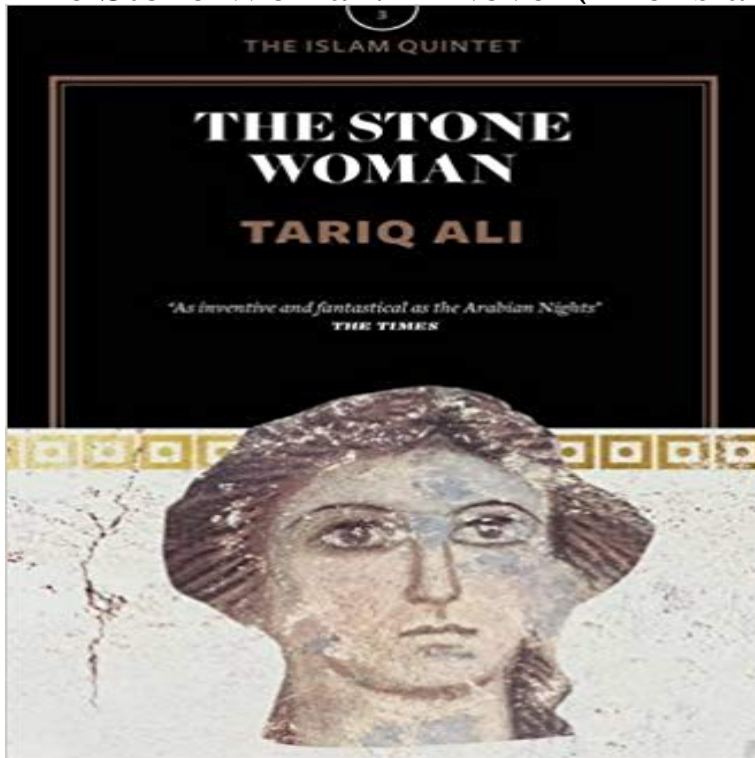


The Stone Woman: A Novel (The Islam Quintet)



Each year, when the weather in Istanbul becomes unbearable, the family of Iskender Pasha, a retired Ottoman notable, retires to its summer palace overlooking the Sea of Marmara. It is 1899 and the last great Islamic empire is in serious trouble. A former tutor poses a question which the family has been refusing to confront for almost a century: Your Ottoman Empire is like a drunken prostitute, neither knowing nor caring who will take her next. Do I exaggerate, Memed? The history of Iskender Pasha's family mirrors the growing degeneration of the Empire they have served for the last five hundred years. This passionate story of masters and servants, school-teachers and painters, is marked by jealousies, vendettas and, with the decay of the Empire, a new generation which is deeply hostile to the half-truths and myths of the golden days. The Stone Woman is the third novel of Tariq Ali's Islam Quartet. Like its predecessors *Shadows of the Pomegranate Tree* and *The Book of Saladin*, its power lies both in the story-telling and the challenge it poses to stereotyped images of life under Islam.

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