



Berenice and Bajazet (Main)

By Alan Hollinghurst, Jean Racine

Faber & Faber. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Berenice and Bajazet (Main), Alan Hollinghurst, Jean Racine, The critical event in Berenice, the death of Titus's father, the Emperor Vespasian, happens a week before the play opens. Thereafter Titus knows that his separation from Berenice is inevitable. Thereafter Titus knows that his separation from Berenice is inevitable. The breaking off of a great love affair involves too the hopes of Antiochus, himself long in love with Berenice. The play pushes all three of its principals to the brink, not of revenge but of self-murder, before in her sublime last speech Berenice redeems and directs them all in an act of collective abnegation. Many tears are shed, but not a drop of blood. The effect is unconventional, and profound: the pained acceptance of the irreconcilable in human affairs, and the surrender, by each of the main characters, of the person they most love. Bajazet is Racine's most violent drama; it ends, like Phedre, with a female character's on-stage suicide, here the culmination of a vividly described sequence of off-stage murders. The setting, in a claustrophobic space within the harem at Constantinople, menaced from both without and within, seems to license a violence of...

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