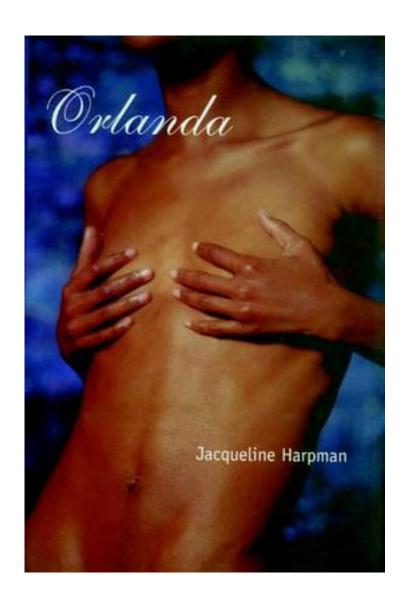
Orlanda



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著者:Harpman, Jacqueline

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One afternoon in a Paris train station, as 35-year-old literature professor Aline Berger struggles to re-read Virginia Woolf's Orlando, a novel she has never enjoyed, an odd feeling comes over her when a handsome but strange young man asks her for aspirin. Haunted by the harsh words of her domineering mother, who demanded that she suppress her tomboyish tendencies during her childhood, Aline has become a demure, passive, conventional woman. She fails to recognize the man standing before her, who the author names Orlanda. The body belongs to that of Lucien Lèfrene, a lithe 20-year-old rock journalist, but it is inhabited by her once silenced spirit, and possesses her knowledge, memories, and desires, including her love of men.

When the two meet again in Belgium, Aline subconsciously sheds her prim tendencies for more assertive behavior, as she begins to understand that the audacious and lively Orlanda was born from her psyche. The more time the two spend together, the less time they can stand to be apart.

Winner of the Prix Meacutedicis, this lyrical novel, which recalls the erudition and imagination of Michael Cunningham's The Hours, and Patricia Duncker's Hallucinating Foucault, is a stunning evocation of a woman who is forced to confront every part of her soul, and embrace herself whole.

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