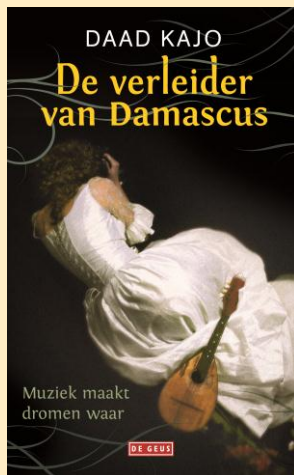




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Daad Kajo

The Tempter of Damascus

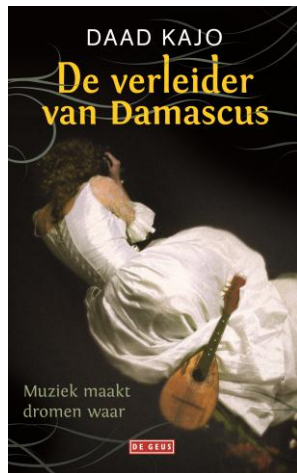
Original title: *De verleider van Damascus*

NOVEL

A humorous novel about the fleeting nature of fame, the pain caused by emigration and the consequences of repressive sexual morality.

About the author

Daad Kajo (Syria, 1973) grew up as a member of the Christian Assyrian minority in a village in Syria. She studied sport and then taught physical education and dance until she came to the Netherlands in 1999.



About the book

Even as a child, the main character in *The Tempter of Damascus* feels there is more to the world than being chaste and live according to the rules of religion. He continually pushes the boundaries of morality. However, because he is the only boy in his family, he gets away with it. When his musical talent is discovered at the village school, his uncle gives him some of his savings. The boy buys an *oed* and turns out to be a gifted player, who rapidly understands that his enchanting playing and singing opens doors and leaves women far from unmoved. His quickly acquired fame, playing his versions of traditional songs, leaves him overly self-assured. Even though all the taxi drivers play his cassettes, his success is short lived. Modern music becomes popular. He decides to try his luck in Europe.

Daad Kajo, *De verleider van Damascus*
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Hardcover, 256 pages
Publication May 2012

Excerpt from the book

On my sixth birthday I was given my own fishing rod. We left home with a few metres of nylon thread, a fish hook and a lead weight. On that occasion, we stopped by the reeds. Uncle took out his pocketknife and, with one swipe, cut off a reed stem.

Near the willow trees, my uncle made my first hook while he sang. To this very day I have never caught one fish. But I have learned hundreds of songs.

Evening fell. The men shuffled home, with or without a catch. We let the silence take possession of the river. Now it was the turn of master Joseph's *oed*, the sound that was not to let me go for the rest of my life.

With his songs, my uncle kept my intestines in balance. Thanks to his singing, I was healthy. I was the instrument he played his lost talent on. I loved the warmth in his voice, the tenseness of the muscles in his hands when he tapped his fingers on the table, his footsteps and every sound he made.

My own father did everything possible to make a schoolmaster of me. He had learned to read and write at the age of twenty from the strange schoolmasters that visited our village once education became compulsory for children. He did not know about uncle's talent, neither did he know about mine. Music was peripheral as far as he was concerned. Pleasantly peripheral. You did not have to suppress it, but neither did you have to develop it.

Translated by Christine Davies
Last updated 5-Oct-11