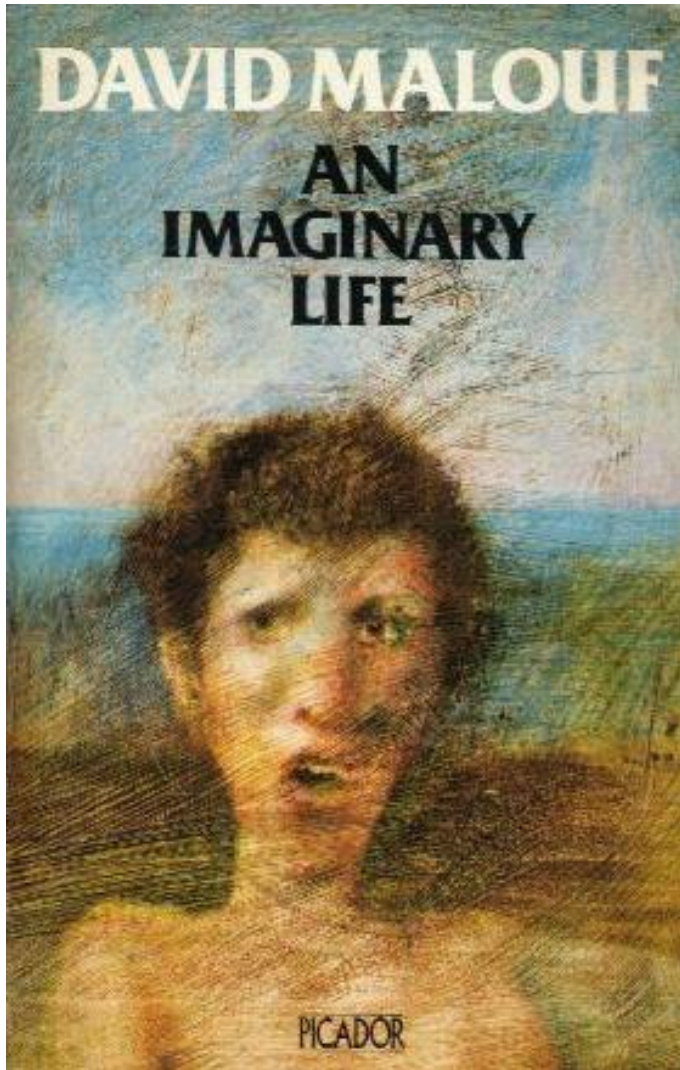


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**David Malouf**

**An Imaginary Life**



Title: An Imaginary Life

Author: David Malouf

Format:

Language:

Pages: 154

Publisher: , 0

ISBN: 0330270044

Format: PDF / Kindle / ePub

Size: 9.3 MB

Download: allowed

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## Description

In the first century A.D., Publius Ovidius Naso, the most urbane and irreverent poet of imperial Rome, was banished to a remote village on the edge of the Black Sea. From these sparse facts, Malouf has fashioned an audacious and supremely moving novel. Marooned on the edge of the known world, exiled from his native tongue, Ovid depends on the kindness of barbarians who impale their dead and converse with the spirit world. Then he becomes the guardian of a still more savage creature, a feral child who has grown up among deer. What ensues is a luminous encounter between civilization and nature, as enacted by a poet who once cataloged the treacheries of love and a boy who slowly learns how to give it.

"A work of unusual intelligence and imagination, full of surprising images and insights...One of those rare books you end up underlining and copying out into notebooks and reading out loud to friends."--*The New York Times Book Review*

## Insightful reviews

Elisabeth: Slow, thoughtful book -- more of a meditation on life and the way we are connected and disconnected by language (to people, to nature, to ourselves) than a genuine story. Malouf writes beautifully. The book's depiction of the emasculating power of the 'women's world' feels hostile. Malouf's articulation of the poet's final integration into the natural world makes the earth pulse with life, so I felt, through Ovid, the visceral connection to the living unity of the world. Pretty cool that Malouf is able to create that transformative (metamorphic) moment and kind of ironic that the moment Ovid is giving up language, when he is being enveloped in the world, is only able to be transmitted through the language he is relinquishing.

Jemma Gutierrez: ***What else is death than the refusal to any longer grow and suffer change?***

This fiction is more like the journey of Publius Ovidius Naso to his death. It may sound morbid but it is in fact an utterly fascinating view of life.

I remember reading this and thinking what an attractive mind David Malouf has. The philosophy and beliefs he wrote, though some I may not agree too or even try to entertain, makes you think. This is one of the most original and unique books I have ever read, or if there are other books like this out there, this is the first I have tried.

It tells the story of Naso, a Roman poet- who I didn't know existed until today- when he was sent to exile and torn from his frivolous and wealthy lifestyle and thrown in a life of barbarians and savages; where everything is simply done out of need, where they barely understand each other.

It tells his struggles, his belief, how he found himself in the midst of a stranger's land and the Child. It tells the story of a poet silenced- but not stilled.

***Here is the life you have tried to throw away. here is your second chance. Here is the destiny***

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***you have tried to shake off by inventing a hundred false roles, a hundred false identities for yourself. It will look at first like a disaster but is really good fortune in disguise, since fate too knows how to follow your evasion through a hundred forms of its own. Now you will become at last the one you intended to be.***

This is the kind of book you keep in your shelves, with bookmarks and underlines, the kind of books you should read at least once in your life. I like to think of this as a kind of intriguing and definitely life changing- even in the smallest, simplest way possible- philosophical book.

K.D. Absolutely: For me, it is sad that sometimes the sequence in our reading affects our appreciation of some books. For example, this *beautiful* book, ***An Imaginary Life*** first published in 1978, has a wonderful poetic prose and it is about the last Roman poet, **Ovid**. However, my reading of this was “eclipsed” by Henry Miller’s *Tropic of Cancer* and Ian McEwan’s *The Cement Garden* that both use straight, brutal storytelling that keeps you leafing from one page to the next. I mean, I had a hard time appreciating what David Malouf (born 1934), an acclaimed Australian writer, was trying to send as a message, as in this book, he tries to fill in the blank about the unknown part of Ovid’s life: his exile in Tomis. This is in the same fashion as how Anne Rice imagined how the child Jesus lived in Nazareth prior to his baptism in Jordan River in her books, *Christ the Lord: Out of Egypt* and *Christ the Lord: The Road to Cana*. Well, the other problem is that I don’t know anything about Ovid so I had to consult Wiki. I saw *Metamorphoses* and I thought it was written by Franz Kafka about the big bug. Oh well, my pardon my *untrained* literary brain. While writing this review, I have 5 Wiki screens already open so I do not create a mistake. *The Metamorphosis* (1951) is a novella by Franz Fafka about a monstrous insect and Vladimir Nabokov has a lecture on this that can be downloaded while *Metamorphoses* is a Latin narrative poem in 15 books by the Roman poet Ovid describing the history of the world from creation to deification of Julius Caesar. Maybe, I have to read both of this book and they seem to be both interesting.

Back to *Imaginary*, this also reminded me of a recent read, Bernard Malamud’s (1914-1986) *God’s Grace*, the narrator, *Calvin* also tries to teach a monkey on how to communicate using English. In *Imaginary*, Ovid is teaching a Tarzan-like child, i.e., born and reared by wolves, on how to speak Latin. The comparison stops there though. Malouf goes a step further, The Child also tries to teach Ovid of his “language” and their roles were reversed in the end as The Child becomes Ovid’s protector. How, Malouf tries to show how powerful language can be if you are suddenly thrown into a place where no one can understand you.

Don’t be misled by my 2-star rating. This is a beautiful book that just came to me at a wrong time. After all, this won a national award in Australia in 1958 and it is said to have a deeper meaning: about *Australia White Policy* and the treatment of the indigenous people in that country. Strong positive message. I hope I will have another a chance to re-read this book someday. Maybe when I am reading an equally poetic book similar to Anne Michael’s *Fugitive Pieces*.

Leo Boudib: Like a play in 5 parts, this brief tale has brilliant shape and sweetness in its craftsmanship. The transformation of the poet narrator in his pursuit of that means in existence

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and reference to nature is powerful, drawing upon the romantic tradition. Exiled from his existence in Rome the place he seeks good looks within the aesthetic and superficial demanding situations to the ruling powers, he's challenged to discover a spot in a adversarial environment, and at last locate shelter and which means within the strength of individuals to beat hostile stipulations and adapt to and thrive in adversarial environment. Malouf offers a guy who in displays the disconnection we will be able to think in developed environments, harbouring guilt for now not valuing the traditions of tradition and expectancies of society to stick to its values. The protagonists' banishment forces him to hunt what's over the horizon and past the borders of humanity and to dwell with purpose, in spite of the fact that futile or brief that existence is.

Catherine McNamara: A lyrical metaphorical paintings concerning the emptying of the self and the hunt for the crowning glory of a life. The feted frivolous Roman poet Ovid displeases his Emperor Augustus and is published to us in exile, a guy with no language or kin. with no phrases or society he steadily unearths a less complicated extra visceral intending to lifestyles in the course of the tongue of his captors. He chooses to tame a toddler produced by means of the harsh landscape, and is so distrusted through the superstitious villagers who think that this younger boy embodies the spirits of the wild. Ovid's flight into the big empty panorama brings him to a brand new reference to all components of nature, to which he prepares his return.

Nancy: I've been dealing with books learn years in the past with the purpose of holding a couple of and taking the remainder to our neighborhood used publication store. So far, it's been a wasting battle—I preserve discovering ones i would like to learn back like this booklet the place the writer areas the poet Ovid in a adverse land after he's exiled from Rome by means of the emperor Augustus and unearths a feral baby dwelling there one of the deer.

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