

SEPTEMBER 2013

The Fiery Alphabet

A novel by Diane Lefer

It's dangerous for a girl to be a mathematical prodigy in eighteenth-century Rome.

Daniela Messo and her father withdraw themselves from the world until Giuseppe Balsamo, occultist and charlatan, finds them, convinced Daniela has inherited the secrets of a long-dead Jewish mystic. In Balsamo's company, Daniela sets off across Europe en route to Jerusalem, as they play the role of wonder-working pilgrims, swindling people even as they seek salvation.

Daniela's astonishing story was lost to history until intrepid explorer Diane Lefer unearthed a trove of documents and translated them so that this sensitive, shocking, often subversive material can now be made public.

Across the centuries, Daniela speaks to us of love and betrayal, fraud and faith, the ongoing conflict between science and religion and carries us to the streets of Rome, Polish forests, fields, and villages, the Sultan's harem in Constantinople, and beyond.

Her struggle to find a woman's place in the world for her body, mind, and soul tells us how far society has come and how far we still must go.

Advance Praise for *The Fiery Alphabet*

"Enchanting and wondrous... In a voice as unique and thrilling as any I've encountered in literature, Daniela Messo seeks the secrets not only of her past, but of life itself."

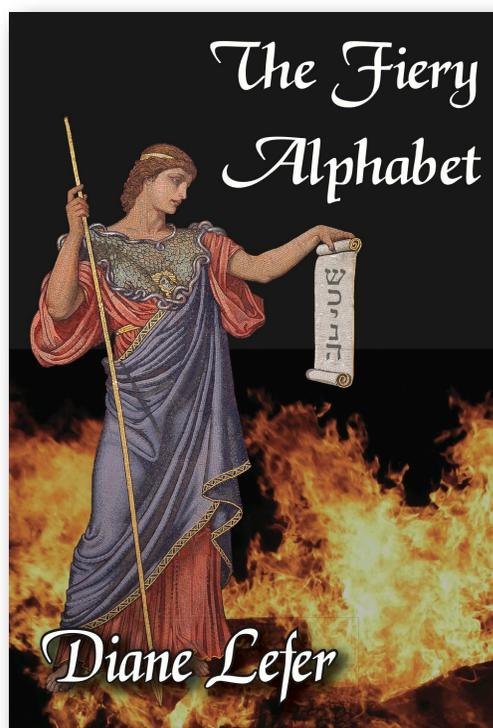
—Robin Oliveira, author of *My Name Is Mary Sutter*

"*The Fiery Alphabet* is a stunning and ambitious novel—philosophical and deeply sensual all at once. Diane Lefer writes with fire on every single page, taking the reader straight to the molten core of life."

—Gayle Brandeis, author of *The Book of Dead Birds*

About the Author

Diane Lefer's fiction, including the story collections *The Circles I Move In* (Zoland Books), *Very Much Like Desire* (Carnegie Mellon University Press), and *California Transit* (Sarabande Books) have all been published by small presses and her work supported with literary fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, New York Foundation for the Arts, and the City of Los Angeles. Her nonfiction book, *The Blessing Next to the Wound: A story of art, activism, and transformation* (Lantern Books) was co-authored with Hector Aristizábal and selected by Amnesty International as Recommended Reading during Banned Books Week. Their play, *Nightwind*, has toured the US and been performed in 39 countries around the world. She lives in Los Angeles.



EDITIONS

Soft cover, 6x9, 322 pages
ISBN 978-1-6243-2004-0
\$18.95 US

eBook
ISBN 978-1-6243-2005-7
\$7.99 US

DISTRIBUTION

Ingram
Baker & Taylor

MARKETING

Author appearances
Review copies
Direct mailings

APPEALS TO

Readers of
literary fiction and
historical fiction



Loose Leaves Publishing

Tucson, Arizona • LooseLeavesPublishing.com • jkknauss@looseleavespublishing.com