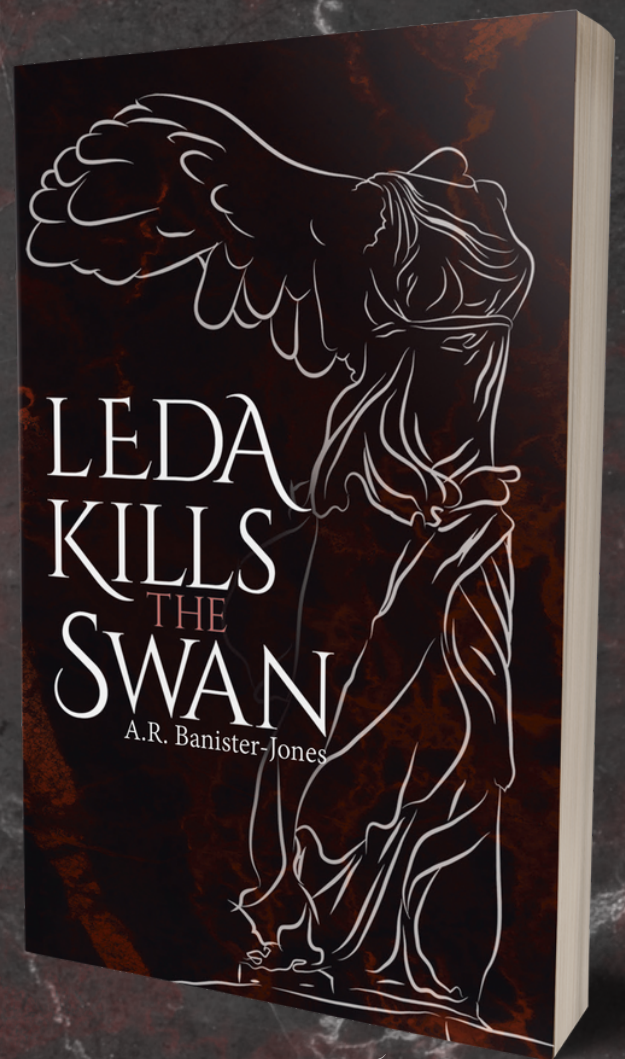


# LEDA KILLS THE SWAN

A.R. BANISTER-JONES

Ancient Greek gods aren't exactly known for their strong sense of morality. For centuries Zeus has abused his position as king of the gods, kidnapping, transforming, and attacking mortal women—sometimes in the shape of a huge swan. But now he smells mutiny brewing, and paranoia is setting in. He's compiling a list of all the enemies he's made, including all the bastard sons he has neglected. He'll never suspect it's their mothers who are his greatest threat.

Leda is one such mother, out for revenge against her assailant—but there's one small problem: she's dead.



tellwell

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**A.R. Banister-Jones** is an Australian playwright and performer, specialising in feminist narratives, comedy, and reinterpreting texts of antiquity for the modern audience. She is a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Theatre Making, and was consul (president) of the University of Melbourne Classics and Archeology Society.

*Leda Kills the Swan* is her first novel.



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# A LOOK INSIDE

Like the Titanomachy, the Trojan War was ten long years of gruesome, bloody, carnage. The Greeks, although they were the victors, felt their losses in every corner of every allied kingdom. And all those widows, and orphans would curse Leda's daughters. Helen, for having the face that resulted in a thousand ships sailing forth to bring her back, and Clytemnestra, for slaying the returning war hero Agamemnon. Although Leda never blamed her daughters for the tragedies that men crafted with their weapons, she felt the heaviness of the thousands of dead bodies on the beaches, the fields, in the ground. It weighed on her stiff joints and fragile bones. Leda's body may have been fading, but her mind was sharp as ever. Thoughts raced through it, right until the end. Why had Zeus taken her as he had? Why did the children come from eggs? The crushing blows of fate hit her as they always seemed to do. Leda's heart sank with the understanding that Zeus knew things she would never know.

And it wasn't fair. And she knew that life wasn't fair, but she couldn't ignore it. Was all this pain by his orchestration? He couldn't be allowed to get away with it. She wanted so badly to do something, but she was running out of energy in this life. All that resolve, all that tenacity, in a deteriorating body. But the afterlife awaited. She did not intend to rest peacefully if she could help it.

When Leda's soul rolled out of her still and silent body, the swift and cunning Hermes scooped it up with his spare hand, for at the time, he was busy couriering some packages for the gods.

"What are you?" Leda's soul questioned as she faintly felt herself being carried away.

"I'm busy, that's what I am," was the god's vague reply. Leda battled to make sense of the whirlwind in which she found herself, but she vaguely perceived the frantic flapping of tiny wings on the feet of her carrier.

"Hermes?" she asked.

"Yes?"

"Where are we going?"

"Where do you think?"

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## AUTHOR Q&A WITH A.R. BANISTER-JONES

### WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO WRITE LEDA KILLS THE SWAN?

I've always found great inspiration in exploring the modern world through how we view stories of antiquity. While we may condemn the misogyny found in ancient mythology, and indeed all throughout history, it still prevails in our modern power-structures. In Greek myth, the new generation is constantly taking over from the old, but I think somewhere along the line they got stuck. I wrote Leda to unstick them. The cosmos deserves a better ruler than the likes of Zeus, and so do we.

### WHAT DO YOU HOPE READERS WILL GET FROM LEDA KILLS THE SWAN?

Readers will experience a thrilling journey through the realms of Greek mythology, in a way that is accessible regardless of their familiarity with the subject. There are plenty of moments of drama and levity. Of course, the themes can be quite heavy, but ultimately, readers will be left with hope for a better future, and a drive to make it happen. I hope for readers to feel affirmed in their dissatisfaction with the injustices of the world.

### HAVE YOU STARTED YOUR NEXT PROJECT? IF SO, CAN YOU SHARE A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR BOOK?

I have! My next book is about Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth. She is a fascinating character, and I'm having loads of fun researching the mythology of her life and world. My book will dive into her connection with the supernatural, and how the shades of her life guide and affect the passage of history.