

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Barbara Kingsolver returns this fall with “Partita”, a deeply moving, unforgettable novel about art, music, class, memory, and the life-altering power of love—a book she says she has been waiting her whole life to write (Harper; On-sale: October 6, 2026).

Livia Cable has made her peace with her marriage and modest livelihood in the farm country where she grew up, until a shocking phone call from an old lover shakes her to the core. Decades earlier, this man knew her as Livia Bohusz, a music conservatory student estranged from her home and family, uncertain of anything except her passion for music and her promise as an extraordinary pianist. His request, now, to see her again stirs up ghosts she has kept at bay for a lifetime.

Shifting between past and present, Livia’s decision to meet or reject the reunion means confronting, step by step, in memories framed as musical dances, the experiences of childhood loss, abandonment, self-immolating passion, and perilous attachment to a man who broke her belief in love and ruptured the course of her life.

With razor-sharp acuity, Kingsolver’s new novel reflects on class barriers, the risks of ambition, and the timeless, life-changing powers of art. Told in movements that mirror a Bach partita, the novel unfolds with the precision and emotional power of music itself: each section building on the last, each theme returning transformed.

Kingsolver reflects on the novel’s origins:

“All my life, I’ve loved both language and music in a hungry, passionate way that happily entwines them in my brain. A novel about a classical musician never occurred to me, though, because of the sorts of people I write about. In the rural place where I grew up, folk art traditions are strong, but so-called ‘high art’ seems to belong to fancier people, not us. I was the weird country kid who loved reading Tolstoy and playing Bach, but I kept those interests to myself. Finally, now, it strikes me as a worthy project to ask who made these rules, that small-town fiddlers and country music fans don’t feel welcome in a symphony hall, and vice versa? Why is our culture of arts divided this way, and what are the costs to all of us? I found it rich territory for fiction.”

On the evolution of the book, she says, “This novel started small. It would be about a young musician, I thought; a little love story. But it kept expanding as I wrote, opening and closing around itself like a set of nested boxes. “Partita” is a story of a brief, passionate, life-changing affair, contained inside a bigger love story, all wrapped up in what might be the greatest romance of all: our eternal human longing for art and beauty.”

In Livia, Kingsolver has created one of her most indelible heroines—a woman whose losses are immense and whose survival, wrested from those losses, is breathtaking. “Partita” also showcases Kingsolver’s singular ability to capture the textures of rural American life and the transformative power of art.

About Barbara Kingsolver

Barbara Kingsolver is the author of ten bestselling works of fiction, including the novels “Unsheltered,” “The Bean Trees,” and “The Poisonwood Bible,” as well as books of poetry, essays, creative nonfiction, and “Coyote’s Wild Home,” a children’s book co-authored with Lily Kingsolver. She also collaborated with family members on the influential “Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life.” Kingsolver’s work has been translated into more than thirty languages and has earned a devoted readership at home and abroad. She is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and has received numerous awards and honors including the 2023 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for her novel, “Demon Copperhead,” the National Humanities Medal, and most recently, the National Book Foundation’s Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters. She lives with her husband on a farm in southern Appalachia.