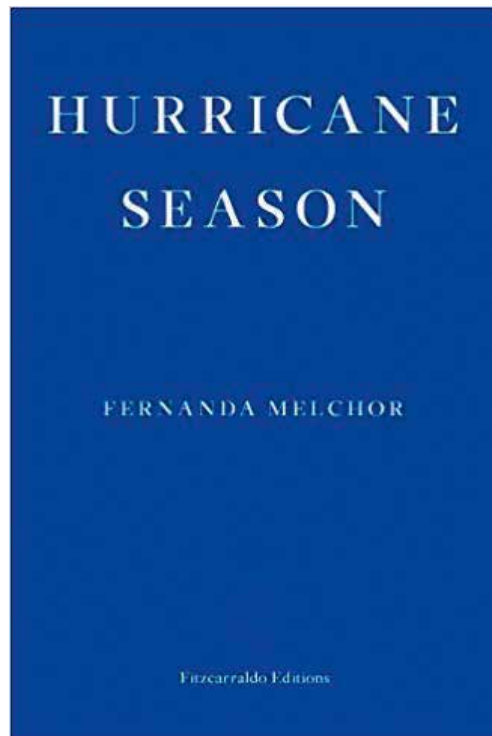


The
2020
International
Booker
Prize

Readers' Guide



Hurricane Season

Fernanda Melchor

Translated by Sophie Hughes

Fitzcarraldo Editions

thebookerprizes.com

About the author

Fernanda Melchor was born in Veracruz, Mexico, in 1982 and is a writer and journalist who lives and works in Puebla. In 2013 she published a collection of short stories and a novel: *Aquí no es Miami* and *Falsa liebre* (both with Almadia), followed by *Hurricane Season* in 2017.

About the translator

Sophie Hughes was born in Chertsey, UK, in June 1986. She is a literary translator from Spanish to English, known for her translations of writers such as Laia Jufresa, Rodrigo Hasbún, and José Revueltas. In 2019 she was shortlisted for the Man Booker International Prize for her translation of Alia Trabucco Zerán's *The Remainder*. She has also been longlisted for the Best Translated Book Award (2017; 2018), the ALTA National Translation Award in Prose (2018) and the PEN Translation Prize (2018). In 2017 she received a PEN/Heim Translation Grant and in 2018 she was named one of the Arts Foundation "25" for her contribution to the field of literary translation. Sophie is the co-editor of the anthology *Europa28: Visions for the Future* in association with Womarts and Hay Festival and published by Comma Press, and she is currently working with the Stephen Spender Trust taking creative translation to UK classrooms to promote language learning in schools. She lives in Birmingham.

About the book

Hurricane Season opens with the macabre discovery of a decomposing body in a small waterway on the outskirts of La Matosa, a village in rural Mexico. It soon becomes apparent that the body is that of the local witch, who is both feared by the men and relied upon by the women, helping them with love charms and illegal abortions.

Mirroring the structure of Gabriel García Márquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, the novel goes back in time, recounting the events which led to La Matosa's witch's murder from several perspectives. *Hurricane Season* quickly transcends its detective story constraints: the culprits are named early on in

the narrative, shifting the question to why rather than who. Through the stories of Luismi, Norma, Brando and Munra, Fernanda Melchor paints a portrait of lives governed by poverty and violence, machismo and misogyny, superstition and prejudice. Written with a brutal lyricism that is as affecting as it is enthralling, *Hurricane Season*, Melchor's first novel to appear in English, is a formidable portrait of Mexico and its demons.

What the judges said

'In a propulsive translation, the eight paragraphs of this novel spiral down through layers of violence, corruption and desire. A novel of hellacious force.'

Discussion points

What challenges do you think the translator may have faced when working on this novel?

What role does the Witch play within the community?

Fernanda Melchor is a journalist. Do you think this experience has impacted her writing?

Discuss the machismo and misogyny that run throughout the novel.

Themed reading

An Orphan World by Giuseppe Caputo
Feebleminded by Ariana Harwicz
In Cold Blood by Truman Capote

Useful links

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/feb/25/hurricane-season-fernanda-melchor-review>

<https://www.ft.com/content/e3678b3a-49a5-11ea-ae2-9ddbdc86190d>

<https://granta.com/in-conversation-hughes-melchor/>

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