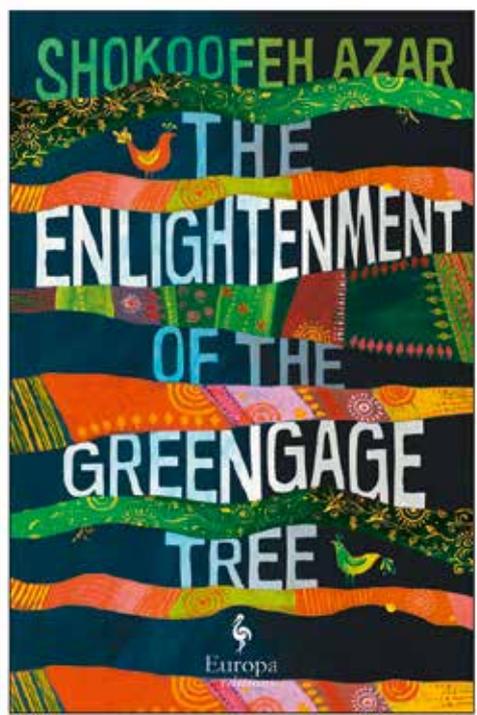


The
2020
International
Booker
Prize

Readers' Guide



The Enlightenment of The Greengage Tree

Shokoofeh Azar

Anonymous translator

Europa Editions

thebookerprizes.com

About the author

Shokoofeh Azar was born in Tehran, Iran, in November 1972. She moved to Australia as a political refugee in 2011. She is the author of essays, articles and children's books, and is the first Iranian woman to hitchhike the entire length of the Silk Road.

About the book

Set in Iran in the decade following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, this moving, richly imagined novel is narrated by the ghost of Bahar, a 13-year-old girl whose family is compelled to flee their home in Tehran for a new life in a small village, hoping in this way to preserve both their intellectual freedom and their lives. But they soon find themselves caught up in the post-revolutionary chaos that sweeps across the country, a madness that affects both living and dead, old and young.

What the judges thought

'A wild, humorous revisitation of Persian myths and fables, filled with brutal scenes of contemporary life. A ghostly portrait of a family caught in the abject violence of political unrest.'

Discussion points

The novel is set during the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, focussing on the story of one family. Does this help you to have a more personal understanding of this historical period?

What do you think magical realism adds to the narrative of a book steeped in political history?

The narrator of the novel is a thirteen-year-old ghost. What effect do you think this has on the way the story is told?

The translator of this novel has chosen to remain anonymous for safety reasons. Does this knowledge impact your reading of the novel?

Themed reading

Reading Lolita in Tehran by Azar Nafisi
My Father's Notebook by Kader Abdolah
The Cypress Tree by Kamin Mohammadi
One Hundred Years of Solitude
by Gabriel García Márquez

Useful links

<http://www.startribune.com/review-the-enlightenment-of-the-greengage-tree-by-shokoofeh-azar/566683511/>

<https://nbmagazine.co.uk/the-enlightenment-of-the-greengage-tree-by-shokoofeh-azar/>

<https://en.qantara.de/content/book-review-shokoofeh-azars-the-enlightenment-of-the-greengage-tree-straight-to-the-heart>

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