

The 2021 Booker Prize for fiction – longlist announced today

The longlist for the 2021 Booker Prize was announced on Tuesday.

If you feel you need some inspiration for summertime reading then look no further. Last year's winning novel, Shuggie Bain, was for me a wonderful read and a great way to get back into books.

The 13 books on this year's longlist were chosen by the 2021 judging panel: historian Maya Jasanoff (chair); writer and editor Horatia Harrod; actor Natascha McElhone; twice Booker-shortlisted novelist and professor Chigozie Obioma; and writer and former Archbishop Rowan Williams.

The list was chosen from 158 novels published in the UK or Ireland between 1 October 2020 and 30 September 2021. The Booker Prize for Fiction is open to works by writers of any nationality, written in English and published in the UK or Ireland.

The 2021 longlist – “The Booker Dozen” of 13 novels, is:

Author (Nationality)	<i>Title (imprint)</i>
Anuk Arudpragasam (Sri Lankan)	<i>A Passage North</i> (Granta Books, Granta Publications)
Rachel Cusk (British/Canadian)	<i>Second Place</i> (Faber)
Damon Galgut (South African)	<i>The Promise</i> (Chatto & Windus, Vintage, PRH)

Nathan Harris (American)	<i>The Sweetness of Water</i> (Tinder Press, Headline, Hachette Book Group)
Kazuo Ishiguro (British)	<i>Klara and the Sun</i> (Faber)
Karen Jennings (South African)	<i>An Island</i> (Holland House Books)
Mary Lawson (Canadian)	<i>A Town Called Solace</i> (Chatto & Windus, Vintage, PRH)
Patricia Lockwood (American)	<i>No One is Talking About This</i> (Bloomsbury Circus, Bloomsbury Publishing)
Nadifa Mohamed (British/Somali)	<i>The Fortune Men</i> (Viking, Penguin General, PRH)
Richard Powers (American)	<i>Bewilderment</i> (William Heinemann, PRH)
Sunjeev Sahota (British)	<i>China Room</i> (Harvill Secker, Vintage, PRH)
Maggie Shipstead (American)	<i>Great Circle</i> (Doubleday, Transworld Publishers, PRH)
Francis Spufford (British)	<i>Light Perpetual</i> (Faber)

Maya Jasanoff, chair of the 2021 judges, said: “One thing that unites these books is their power to absorb the reader in an unusual story, and to do so in an artful, distinctive voice. Many of them consider how people grapple with the past – whether personal experiences of grief or dislocation or the historical legacies of enslavement, apartheid, and civil war. Many examine intimate relationships placed under stress, and through them meditate on ideas of freedom and obligation, or on what makes us human. It’s particularly resonant during the pandemic to note that all of these books have important things to say about the nature of community, from the tiny and secluded to the unmeasurable expanse of cyberspace.”

“Reading in lockdown fostered a powerful sense of connection

with the books, and of shared enterprise among the judges. Though we didn't always respond in the same way to an author's choices, every book on this list sparked long discussions amongst ourselves that led in unexpected and enlightening directions. We are excited to share a list that will appeal to many tastes, and, we hope, generate many more conversations as readers dig in.'

Gaby Wood, Director of the Booker Prize Foundation, added: "In recent years Booker Prize longlists have drawn attention to various elements of novelty in the novel: experimentalism of form, work in unprecedented genres, debut authors. This year's list is more notable for the engrossing stories within it, for the geographical range of its points of view and for its recognition of writers who have been working at an exceptionally high standard for many years. Some have already been rewarded with prizes (a Nobel here, a Pulitzer there). Two are debut novelists. Many have fallen within the Booker's orbit before. To see them brought together, and to hear from them in these books, is to know that literature is in the most capable and creative of hands."

Five novelists have been recognised by the prize before: Damon Galgut (shortlisted twice in 2006 for *The Good Doctor* and in 2010 for *In a Strange Room*); Kazuo Ishiguro (won in 1989 for *The Remains of the Day*; shortlisted in 2005 for *Never Let Me Go*, in 2000 for *When we were Orphans* and in 1986 for *An Artist of the Floating World*); Mary Lawson (longlisted in 2006 for *The Other Side of the Bridge*); Richard Powers (shortlisted in 2018 for *The Overstory* and longlisted in 2014 for *Orfeo*); and Sunjeev Sahota (shortlisted in 2015 for *The Year of the Runaways*).

Six of the longlisted books come from independent publishers: Bloomsbury, Granta, Faber, and Holland House Books. Faber has won the prize seven times before – the second highest number of wins for any publisher, just behind PRH imprint Jonathan Cape which has won eight times.

In a collaboration with technology specialist Jellybooks, the longlisted titles are available to explore via a dedicated online 2021 Booker Prize Magazine. Powered by Jellybooks' new interactive online platform, the magazine enables readers to learn more about each book and read a sample. The 2021 Booker Prize Magazine will be accessible here: jbks.co/the-2021-longlist

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