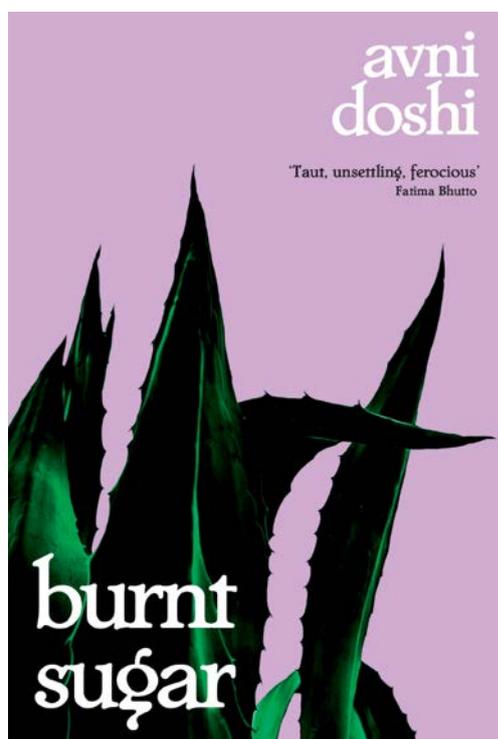




Readers' Guide



Burnt Sugar

Avni Doshi

Hamish Hamilton

[thebookerprizes.com](https://www.thebookerprizes.com)

About the author

Avni Doshi was born in New Jersey in 1982 and is currently based in Dubai. She won the Tibor Jones South Asia Prize in 2013 and a Charles Pick Fellowship at the University of East Anglia in 2014. Her debut novel is published in India by Fourth Estate under the title *Girl in White Cotton*.

About the book

In her youth, Tara was wild. She abandoned her loveless marriage to join an ashram, endured a brief stint as a beggar (mostly to spite her affluent parents), and spent years chasing after a dishevelled, homeless 'artist' - all with her young child in tow. Now she is forgetting things, mixing up her maid's wages and leaving the gas on all night, and her grown-up daughter is faced with the task of caring for a woman who never cared for her.

This is a love story and it is a story about betrayal. But not between lovers - between mother and daughter. Sharp as a blade and laced with caustic wit, Avni Doshi tests the limits of what we can know for certain about those we are closest to, and by extension, about ourselves.

What the judges thought

'This utterly compelling read examines a complex and unusual mother-daughter relationship with honest, unflinching realism - sometimes emotionally wrenching but also cathartic, written with poignancy and memorability.'

Discussion points

The Indian edition of *Burnt Sugar* is called *Girl in White Cotton*. Why do you think it has a different title in the UK?

How did you feel when reading about Tara's memory loss and how Antara copes with it?

How do you think that having a baby impacts Antara's relationship with her own mother?

Avni Doshi wrote about motherhood before becoming a mother herself. Do you think that a writer's personal experiences influence how they write their characters?

Themed reading

Saltwater by Jessica Andrews

Hot Milk by Deborah Levy

Motherhood by Sheila Heti

Weather by Jenny Offill

Useful links

<https://www.avnidoshi.com/>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/jul/28/avni-doshi-women-feared-my-ambivalence-towards-motherhood-booker-prize-interview-burnt-sugar>

<https://granta.com/in-conversation-doshi-mackintosh/>

<https://fivedials.com/interviews/we-have-an-expectation-that-loss-comes-all-at-once-avni-doshi-burnt-sugar-interview/>

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/books/what-to-read/burnt-sugar-avni-doshi-review-feverish-portrayal-corroded-love/>

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