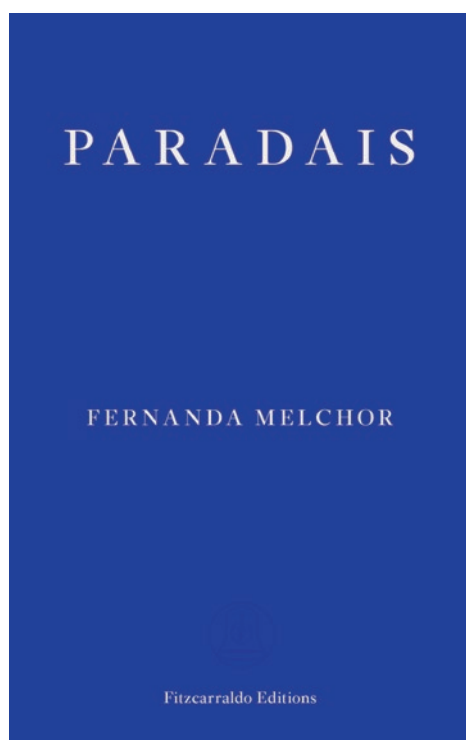




# Reading Guide



## Paradais

**Fernanda Melchor**

Translated by Sophie Hughes

Fitzcarraldo Editions

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

## What the judges said

'In *Paradais* Fernanda Melchor draws us into the brutish, profane world of two unlikely, hapless teenagers, Polo and Franco, in the gated community where they plot a crime that can only go horribly wrong. Sophie Hughes' endlessly inventive translation breathtakingly captures the book's caustic humour and exhilarating pace.'

## About the book

Inside a luxury housing complex, two misfit teenagers sneak around and get drunk. Franco Andrade, lonely, overweight, and addicted to porn, obsessively fantasizes about seducing his neighbour – an attractive married woman and mother – while Polo dreams about quitting his gruelling job as a gardener within the gated community and fleeing his overbearing mother and their narco-controlled village. Each facing the impossibility of getting what he thinks he deserves, Franco and Polo hatch a mindless and macabre scheme. Written in a chilling torrent of prose by one of our most thrilling new writers, *Paradais* explores the explosive fragility of Mexican society – with its racist, classist, hyperviolent tendencies – and how the myths, desires, and hardships of teenagers can tear life apart at the seams.

## About the author

Born in Veracruz, Mexico, in 1982, Fernanda Melchor is widely recognized as one of the most exciting new voices of Mexican literature. In 2018, she won the PEN Mexico Award for Literary and Journalistic Excellence and in 2019 the German Anna-Seghers-Preis and the International Literature Award for *Hurricane Season*. In 2020 she was shortlisted, along with Sophie Hughes, for the International Booker Prize.

## About the translator

Sophie Hughes was born in Chertsey, UK, in 1971 and lives in Trieste, Italy. She has translated novels by several contemporary Latin American and Spanish authors, including Laia Jufresa, Rodrigo Hasbún and Alia Trabucco Zerán. She was shortlisted for the International Booker Prize in 2019 and 2020, the latter with Fernanda Melchor for *Hurricane Season*.



## The author says...

'When I was finishing writing *Hurricane Season*, I found out that the residents of a real town in Veracruz called La Matosa (from which I took the name to create the fictional setting of my novel) were evicted from their lands so that a luxury gated community with a golf course could be built in their place. In *Hurricane Season* I had written, among other things, about misogynistic violence in marginalised areas, and this time around I wanted to explore the fact that violence is not something that's exclusively tied to misery or poverty, but something that could also be born in the heart of "paradise", this luxury compound for privileged people.'



## The translator says...

'Fernanda's meticulously-drawn characters, her screenwriter's ear for dialogue, and the seamless shifts in narrative voice and tense she performs are a dream to translate. Some of the content is graphic and upsetting, but I greatly value literature that reminds us of the banality of evil, its terrifyingly normal face.'

## Further reading

Fernanda Melchor *Hurricane Season*  
Agota Kristof *Yesterday*  
Thomas Bernhard *The Woodcutters*  
Sergio Pitlor *Married Life*  
Cormac McCarthy *Suttree*

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