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Refinding Fame with the Lost Booker Prize

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More than three decades after Iris Murdoch won Britain's top literary award, and a decade after her death, she has a chance to win again.

The author is up against 21 other writers who published novels in English in 1970 for the 'lost' Booker Prize.

The books were never considered for the prize at the time. The reason? The Booker was originally awarded for any book published in the previous year. But in 1971, it became a prize for the best novel published that year. That meant that a raft of books published in 1970 were left out in the cold, and the Lost Man Booker Prize is an attempt to remedy the oversight. "Our longlist demonstrates that 1970 was a remarkable year for fiction written in English," Ion Trewin, the prizes' literary director, said. "Recognition for these novels and the eventual winner is long overdue." Murdoch's *A Fairly Honourable Defeat* is up against 21 other works, including *The Fire Dwellers* by Margaret Laurence, Len Deighton's *Bomber*, *A Guilty Thing Surprised*, by Ruth Rendell, and *A Clubbable Woman*, by Reginald Hill. All the books on the list are still in print and available today. Murdoch won her Booker in 1978 for *The Sea, The Sea*.

A shortlist for the prize will be announced in March. The eventual winner is to be decided by a public vote on the Man Booker Prize Web site and will be announced in May. The Lost Man Booker Prize is the third special prize to be created by the organisation. To mark the prize's 25th anniversary, a 'Booker of Bookers' was created and in 2008, the 40th anniversary, there was a 'Best of the Booker' award. Salman Rushdie won both prizes with his novel, *Midnight's Children*. The prize was first handed out in 1969, and is open to writers from Britain, Ireland and the Commonwealth. It was long known simply as the Booker Prize, but was renamed when Man Group PLC, a financial services conglomerate, began sponsoring it several years ago. — AP

Classics not for Texas prisoners

Works by authors John Grisham and Joyce Carol Oates are not read and enjoyed by a certain section of Texas's population — to be more precise, the ones who are put behind bars. According to *Statesman*, books by National Book Award winners Pete Dexter, Joyce Carol Oates, Annie Proulx and William T Vollmann are banned in prison, too. In addition to the list, books by reputed authors like Katherine Dunn, Barry Hannah and Pulitzer Prize winners Alice Walker, Robert Penn Warren and John Updike are barred from reaching the hands of prisoners.

Books of paintings by great artists like da Vinci, Picasso, Botticelli and Michelangelo are also kept out of the reach of inmates. The report explains that critics feel that the inmates' reading habits are a cause for concern. According to Marc Levin, a criminal justice analyst for the Texas Public Policy Foundation, inmates who don't read, for example, have a harder time finding jobs. "Literacy, or lack of it, is one of the biggest problems we have with respect to re-entry," he said, while speaking to the newspaper. But the Texas prison officials, on the other hand, feel that the restrictions are for the benefit of both guards and inmates. Reasons sited for the ban range from racy content, security concerns, descriptions of criminal schemes, drugs or weapons manufacturing, for being racially insensitive, for potentially aiding escape, amongst others.

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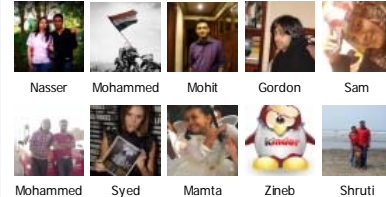
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