Booker Prize 2012

Monday, 15 October 2012

Every year I try to read all six Booker Prize final novels.

This year we're back to a normal Booker final list - I usually love one or two, enjoy one or two, don't like one of two. Last year for the first time ever I loved all 6. But many, far more intellectual critics than I, felt it was "too commercial".

Hilary Mantel; streets ahead of the rest with Bring Up The Bodies. Even better than Wolf Hall.

Will Self - Umbrella; unreadable. Literally; I gave up after 100 incomprehensible and pretentious pages. Last writer who did that to me was Salman Rushdie. Drugs, obscure words, "artistic" punctuation, use of "clever" italics - really annoying. Rihanna's version far better.

Jeet Thayil: Narcopolis; back to the "we must have one Indian sub continent finalist" - vastly inferior to The God of Small Things, White Tiger and my personal favourite Animal's People. Packed with hookers, poverty, drugs... all the obligatory suspects.

Deborah Levy's Swimming Home - I thoroughly enjoyed but possibly as it's set in the Nice/Cannes/Grasse area I know so well.

Alison Moore's The Lighthouse - dull.

Tan Twan Eng - The Garden of Evening Mists - very good, atmospheric.

Mantel deserves to win by a mile but since the list has reverted to form, the utterly ghastly Will Self book could be selected. If it is, I urge you NOT to read it.