

The English Patient wins public poll of best Man Booker in 50 years

Notes & Cues:	Article: <p>Twenty six years ago, the panel of judges were so unsure who should win the Man Booker in 1992 that they ended up with a tie: Michael Ondaatje and Barry Unsworth. But on Sunday evening Ondaatje edged ahead, with his bestselling novel <i>The English Patient</i> being named the best winner of the Booker prize of the last 50 years, in a public vote.</p> <p>The <i>English Patient</i> was novelist Kamila Shamsie's selection from the 1990s. The story moves between a nurse tending a horribly burned man in an Italian villa at the end of the second world war and a tragic love affair from his past.</p> <p>"Few novels really deserve the praise: transformative. This one does," said Shamsie. "It moves seamlessly between the epic and the intimate – one moment you're in looking at the vast sweep of the desert, and the next moment watching a nurse place a piece of plum in a patient's mouth ... It's intricately and rewardingly structured, beautifully written, with great humanity written into every page."</p> <p>Reading the Booker winners of the 1990s, Shamsie said she had been struck by the fact that there were six years in which just one or no women were on the award's shortlists. But she said that <i>The English Patient</i> stood out, due to the Sri Lankan-born Canadian author's treatment of his female characters.</p> <p>"A lot of books by male writers are only interested in the lives of men – they may be wonderful books, but the women figure quite peripherally," she said. "Hana to me is the centre of the novel, and is done with such love, care and understanding and complexity."</p>
Summary:	