

## Book of the Month September 2010

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### Sofi Oksanen: Puhdistus ("Purge")

Published first in Finland in 2008 by WSOY, in German (by Kiepenheuer & Witsch), French (Stock) and other languages in 2010.

"Purge" is about an old lady living all alone in a farmhouse in Estonia who in her garden finds what seems at first to be a bundle, but turns out to be a young woman, Zara, who tries to escape her pimps after being a victim of human trafficking and of rape.

The novel was first written as a play which had been staged at the Finnish National Theatre in Helsinki, and then turned into a book which became a bestseller in Finland.

Sofi Oksanen tells a story that had found much praise for how intimately it links biographies and critical topics of today with the Sowjet past in Finland and, even more so, in the Baltic state of Estonia, thereby, as one review had it, "deconstructing European history in the most virtuosic ways".

Sofi Oksanen, born in Jyväskylä in middle Finland in 1977, has published so far three novels. Her debut, "Stalinin lehmät" ("Stalin's Cow", 2003) already was about Estonia in Sowjet times. Her second novel, "Baby Jane" (2005) is about the role of violence in relationships between women.

Oksanen calls herself a feminist, and has studied literature and theatre at the universities of Jyväskylä and Helsinki. Her works are written in Finnish and have been translated also into Estonian and Swedish.

In spring 2010, she won the Nordic Council Literature Price.

In France, "Purge" has been nominated for both the Prix Femina and the Prix Médicis.

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