



Chiquitita

Original title: Chiquitita

Publisher: Kolon forlag, 2023

Genre: Novel

Pages: 186 pages

English sample

Foreign rights

Dutch: Uitgeverij Oevers

Hungary: Polar Egyesület

Brazilian-Portuguese: Nós Editora

Serbian: Blum Izdavstvo

Awards

Riksmåls Society's Literature Prize
2023

Nominated for Norwegian Critics
Prize for Literature 2024

NORLA Selected Title Autumn 2023



Pedro Carmona-Alvarez

Chiquitita

Marisol is a middle-aged woman who is looking back on her life, at the young woman she once was, the woman who once broke down in front of a painting of a small dog in a big city museum.

Marisol is a young woman on holiday with her boyfriend, her first love. They are in a museum in a big city and looking at a painting of a dog. Her boyfriend wants her to tell him about her life, her childhood, and the refugee child she once was. But she breaks down.

Marisol is a child living with her mother and father in a city by the ocean. The parents are young, stylish, and living lives at the heart of the zeitgeist. The child often stays in her grandmother's home, where she lives for long periods of time during her childhood, surrounded by aunts and uncles. Then the country collapses. She is picked up in the middle of the night and the small family must flee over the mountains into the bordering country. But they aren't permitted to remain there, and while they wait for another country to admit them, they must live in a refugee camp full of shadows and ruptured stories.

Then they come to Norway.

Chiquitita is a melancholy, poetic story about fleeing for one's life, about the passage of time, and about the things in life that don't disappear and come back to haunt us. A novel about impossible stories, trauma and violence, but also about hope and light and love.

Carmona-Alvarez masterfully depicts a story about escape, longing, and fear – seen through a child's eyes and later re-experienced from an adult's perspective. The novel is a linguistic delight despite all the devilry rumbling below the surface. It's impossible to come away from Chiquitita without being deeply moved by the literary experience it offers.

Dagbladet, 6/6 stars

Pedro Carmona-Alvarez presents a harrowing and linguistically powerful exploration of the escape from Chile's military dictatorship. Through his meticulous and inventive use of language, Carmona-Alvarez has crafted a profoundly thought-provoking piece of literary art, deepening the reader's comprehension of the enduring impact of displacement on the human psyche.

Dagens Næringsliv

Chiquitita is outstanding both linguistically and stylistically, and unlike most of what the jury has read. Pedro Carmona-Alvarez's depiction of trauma of borders is hypnotic and is, unfortunately, extremely relevant. A painful and powerful tale about how refugee

children are marked for life. It's impossible not to be moved by Marisol's story and all of the terrible things she's been subjected to.

Riksmal Society's Literature Prize

Carmona-Alvarez intimately delves into the question of time, exploring how the perception of time can shift when faced with challenging or even extreme circumstances (...) Chiquitita stands apart from anything else, radiating brilliance and beauty in its intimacy and sagacity, yet also imbued with an unsettling aspect.

NRK

A unique literary project. This novel gives voice to all children who have been compelled to flee, forming yet another intricate facet within a unique literary undertaking – evocative of the shifting patterns seen through a kaleidoscope.

Bergens Tidende, 6/6 stars

Pedro Carmona-Alvarez

Pedro Carmona-Alvarez was born in La Serena, Chile in 1972. At the age of ten, he and his family fled to Argentina, and the family later moved to Norway. He made his debut with a collection of poetry in 1997, and has since published several award-winning books. *The Weather Changed, Summer Came and So On* was longlisted for the Dublin Literary Award in 2017.