



The Opposite House

By Helen Oyeyemi

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Lyrical and intensely moving, *The Opposite House* explores the thin wall between myth and reality through the alternating tales of two young women. Growing up in London, Maja, a singer, always struggled to negotiate her Afro-Cuban background with her physical home. Yemaya is a Santeria emissary who lives in a mysterious somewherehouse with two doors: one opening to London, the other to Lagos. She is troubled by the ease with which her fellow emissaries have disguised themselves behind the personas of saints and by her inability to recognize them. Interweaving these two tales. Helen Oyeyemi, acclaimed author of *The Icarus Girl*, spins a dazzling tale about faith, identity, and self-discovery.

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The Opposite House By Helen Oyeyemi Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Oyeyemi (*Icarus Girl*) returns to the realms of myth and magic in her second novel, the rewarding and challenging narrative of Maja, a 24-year-old black Cuban woman whose family fled Castro's revolution for London when she was seven. Maja has recently moved in with her boyfriend, Aaron, and discovers she is pregnant with the child she's wanted since she was five years old. And though adjusted to life in London, she begins to wonder about the country her family left behind. Coloring her search for a sense of belonging are the gods and goddesses of Santeria, a fusion of Catholicism and West African Yoruba beliefs. Flashbacks flesh out Maja's relationships with her Santeria-practicing Mami, her professor Papi (who is not a Santeria practitioner) and her bully-bait younger brother, Tomás. Maja's gay best friend, Amy Eleni, provides Maja with sharp insight that helps her come into her own. Interwoven is the story of Aya, a goddess of Santeria who lives in the "somewherehouse," which has one door that opens onto Lagos and one onto London. Though the prose can tend toward the imprecise ("she felt a pull and a fuzzy, bite-sized happiness"), the novel's lyrical and stylistic experimentation speaks to Oyeyemi's depth of talent. (*June*)

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Review

"Complex, challenging, utterly thrilling." —*The Miami Herald* "A startling literary prodigy. . . . [Oyeyemi] has the ability to shift between realism and expressionism without surrendering to self-indulgence. . . .

Recalls the visionary worlds of Emily Dickinson, Neruda and even Rimbaud." —*The Washington Post Book World* "Beautiful, meandering. . . . [A novel] about the difficulties of knowing who you are, especially if you are born of several incompatible cultures." —*The Times* (London) "Again displays [Oyeyemi's] amazing sure-handedness that is far beyond her years." —*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

About the Author

Helen Oyeyemi was born in Nigeria in 1984 and has lived in London since the age of four. She completed her first novel *The Icarus Girl* before her nineteenth birthday. She graduated from Cambridge University in June 2006 and lives in London. *The Opposite House* is her second novel.

Users Review

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Gabriel Reyes:

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