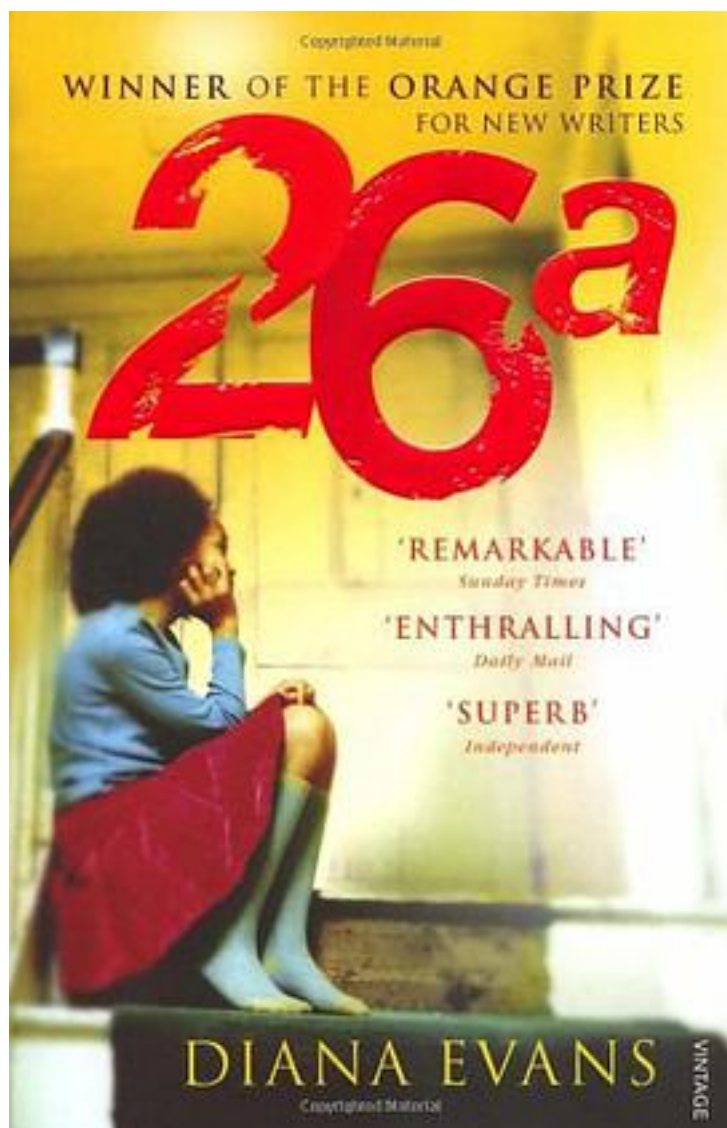


26a. Diana Evans



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著者:Evans, Diana

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Identical twins, Georgia and Bessi, live in the loft of 26 Waifer Avenue. It is a place of beanbags, nectarines and secrets, and visitors must always knock before entering. Down below there is not such harmony. Their Nigerian mother puts cayenne pepper on her Yorkshire pudding and has mysterious ways of dealing with homesickness; their father angrily roams the streets of Neasden, prey to the demons of his Derbyshire upbringing. Forced to create their own identities, the Hunter children build a separate universe. Older sister Bel discovers sex, high heels and organic hairdressing, the twins prepare for a flapjack empire, while baby sister Kemy learns to moonwalk for Michael Jackson. It is when the reality comes knocking that the fantasies of childhood start to give way. How will Georgia and Bessi cope in a world of separateness and solitude, and which of them will be stronger? Wickedly funny and devastatingly moving, "26A" is an extraordinary first novel. Part fairytale, part nightmare, it moves from the mundane to the magical, the particular to the universal with exceptional flair and imagination. It is for anyone who has had a childhood, and anyone who knows what it is to lose one. It is a winner of the 2005 Orange New Writers Prize. Diana Evans won the 2006 British Books Awards Writer of the Year.

作者介绍:

By Diana Evans

Diana Evans' s first novel opens in what seems like familiar territory: North London in the 1980s, a loveably eccentric mixed-race family, even a pair of identical twins. The parallels between this and Zadie Smith' s debut are hard to ignore; nor do her publishers seem shy of pointing them out. Fortunately, the author' s voice is strong enough to withstand the comparison.

The twins, in this instance, are Georgia and Bessi, growing up in Neasden with their beautiful Nigerian mother Ida, their irascible Derbyshire-born father Aubrey, and a brace of siblings. The bonds of twinship are strengthened by the girls' awareness that the family may at any point be pulled apart by a combination of Aubrey' s drunken outbursts and Ida' s strangeness.

The likelihood or otherwise of their parents divorcing is one of the things that the sisters discuss in the sanctum of "26a" — the attic bedroom they share, which is for them a kind of "extra dimension . . . where the world multiplied and exploded because it was the sum of two people" .

This self-protective closeness is undermined when, on an extended visit to Nigeria, Georgia is the victim of a sexual assault, and, rather than confide in Bessi, chooses to keep her shameful secret to herself. This is the start of a gradual breakdown of the relationship, and the start of a growing instability in Georgia.

On the surface, the sisters' lives are conventional enough. Bullies are faced down at school, boyfriends acquired, new fashions experimented with. Much of this is conveyed in a comic, even knockabout, style, which mingles street slang with a whimsical lyricism. But underlying it all is a darker strain — and it is that which gives the novel its piquancy.

The perceptiveness and humour with which Evans describes the pains of growing up is one of the best things about this book; another is the inventiveness of the language.

Egged on by bolder schoolfriends on a shoplifting spree, the twins “bit scaredy-cat lips with chicken teeth. They touched eyes. Shrinking.” Georgia in an electric-blue fish-tail skirt resembles “a flashy mermaid” .

Unlike White Teeth, this novel attempts no overview of contemporary society through its portrayal of family life, but it doesn’ t overreach itself, either. This is a satisfying book, full of energy and charm.

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