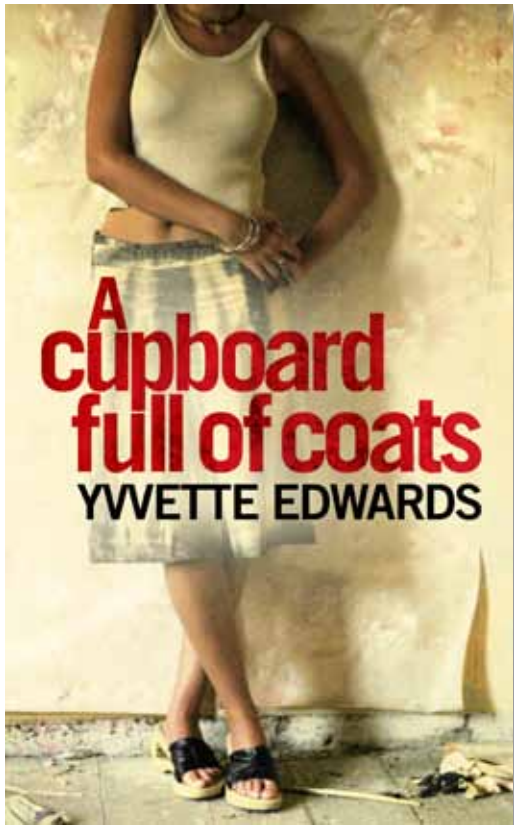




Reader's Guide



A Cupboard Full of Coats
is Yvette Edwards' first novel

A Cupboard Full of Coats

Yvette Edwards

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www.themanbookerprize.com

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About the author

Yvvette Edwards has lived in London all her life. She grew up in Hackney and is of Monserratian-British origin. Yvvette continues to live in the East End, and is married with three children. *A Cupboard Full of Coats* is her first novel.

A Cupboard Full of Coats

'He just knocked, that was all, knocked at the front door and waited, like the fourteen years since I'd killed my mother hadn't happened...' So begins Yvvette Edwards's uncompromising debut, set against the backdrop of London in the 70s over one single weekend. Blending true East End grit with a heady Caribbean spice, Edwards has produced a novel of breathtaking elegance. Jinx has spent her life ravaged by guilt. Emotionally paralysed by the part she played in her mother's death, she has severed ties with her loved ones and is unable to face, understand or move on from the past. Then a familiar face appears. Lemon is an old friend of her mother's. He is looking to revisit the events of that terrible night, and Jinx is forced headfirst into the horrifying whirlpool of childhood memories which has haunted her for so long. She sees a glimmer of hope and thinks finally, redemption may be within her grasp. As the passion-fuelled tension escalates, dark secrets are uncovered and Jinx feels her life shattering all over again. Masterfully crafted and pulling no punches, Yvvette Edwards's characters evoke repulsion, pity and anger. This is a fierce new talent in British fiction.

Discussion points

How does Yvvette Edwards help the reader to get inside Jinx's mind and understand the crisis she's going through?

A Cupboard Full of Coats has been praised for its empathetically drawn characters. What has Yvvette Edwards done to achieve this, and which character do you sympathise with most? The lifestyles, cuisines and dialect of Caribbean immigrants form a major part of the book. Are they essential to the story Yvvette Edwards is telling? How different would the book be without them?

In a recent interview article Yvvette Edwards talks about her life as a daughter of a single parent and as a single parent herself "It (my life) has given me the capacity to write from the perspectives of both parent and child with realism and emotional truth". Has she achieved this in *A Cupboard Full of Coats*?

Did you feel that there was a sense of peace and resolution at the end of the story?

Themed reading

Zadie Smith *White Teeth*
Monica Ali *Brick Lane*
Linda Grant *The Clothes on Their Backs*

Useful links

Publisher's website

<http://www.oneworld-publications.com>

Feature on Yvvette Edwards

<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/a-matter-of-black-and-white-2268840.html>

BBC interview with Yvvette Edwards

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-14362415>

Article by Yvvette Edwards

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/home/you/article-1378122/First-person-Single-mother-triple-strength.html>

Interview with Yvvette Edwards

<http://www.comelime.com/interviews/august2011/yvvette-edwards.html>