

Irenosen Okojie

An experimental writer



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Irenosen was born in Benin in Nigeria and came to England to go to boarding school in 1988. Her passion for reading started with the stories her Nigerian grandmother told. They were fantastical, magical stories with a moral lesson at the heart. Irenosen thinks these stories planted the seeds for her style of writing: magic realism. As a child, she read her first books written by Roald Dahl at boarding school in England and loved them.

As a teenager, Irenosen attended St Angela's school for girls in Newham. Newham was an interesting borough with a great mix of people and cultures. She made many memories at school that shaped her life as a woman. The libraries in Newham were spaces of discovery and learning for Irenosen. She borrowed seven to eight books regularly.

As well as reading British authors, Irenosen read American authors such as Maya Angelou and Toni Morrison as well as Nigerian authors such as Chinua Achebe and Buchi Emecheta. Those books showed her what was possible in life, captured her imagination and sparked her creativity.

Irenosen is an experimental and investigative writer. Before becoming a published author she used writing to express herself, keeping diaries and writing for her school newspaper. She wants her readers to have empathy with her characters, who are often people not normally seen in stories.

Her writing is a form of activism. Irenosen is fearless in claiming her space as a black woman writer. She would like her books to encourage young black girls to feel that they can write about anything.