



This House is Not for Sale

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The award-winning author of *Voice of America* paints a vivid, fully imagined portrait of an extraordinary African family and the house that holds them together

A powerful tale of family and community, *This House Is Not for Sale* brings to life an African neighborhood and one remarkable house, seen through the eyes of a young member of the household. The house lies in a town seemingly lost in time, full of colorful, larger-than-life characters; at the narrative's heart are Grandpa, the family patriarch whose occasional cruelty is balanced by his willingness to open his doors to those in need, and the house itself, which becomes a character in its own right and takes on the scale of legend. From the decades-long rivalry between owners of two competing convenience stores to the man who convinces his neighbors to give up their earthly possessions to prepare for the end of the world, Osondu's story captures a place beyond the reach of the outside world, full of superstitions and myths that sustain its people.

Osondu's prose has the lightness and magic of fable, but his themes—poverty, disease, the arrival of civilization in an isolated community—are timeless and profound. At once full of joyful energy and quiet heartbreak, *This House Is Not for Sale* is an utterly original novel from a master storyteller.

This House is Not for Sale Details

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Author : E.C. Osondu

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From Reader Review This House is Not for Sale for online ebook

Constance says

This House Is Not For Sale is a tale of a Family House, its occupants and their experiences while overseen by a Patriarch - Grandpa. It is set in an African country which is no doubt Nigeria. A consistent unnamed narrator- his grandson who is of school age, takes us through each chapter, telling a story about a character. Each chapter poses as an individual story and begs one to ask if the book is a novel or a collection of different short stories.

The family house serves as a sanctuary to people in need, housing different personalities and so the stories address themes such as poverty, murder, corruption, adultery, religion etc with Grandpa's voice as overlord. The stories are laced with humor and easy to read without getting bored.

E.C Osondu's writing is beautiful and simple but he left me confused when in one chapter, he is bold and unapologetic and writes of akara as it is, then in another, writes of udara/Agbalumo as African star apple. I definitely enjoyed reading this and look forward to reading more from him.

Anne Goodwin says

The second book by Nigerian-born EC Osondo is a series of episodes from the lives of the inhabitants of "The Family House", ruled over by the patriarchal businessman Grandpa, over a couple of generations. While there are touches of humour, I found this quite pessimistic portrayal of a community dominated by superstition, misogyny and small cruelties.

Full review <http://annegoodwin.weebly.com/annecdo...>

Eleanor says

E.C. Osondu's second book is sold as a novel, but feels much more like a collection of short stories. vignettes concerning the inhabitants of the Family House in an unnamed city (though, given its topography, it's probably Lagos). The self-mythologising that surrounds the house, and the family that lives there, starts on page one, when we learn "How the House Came to Be" through a kind of Just So Stories parable: a man who gives a king the secret to long life is given the land as a reward, and eventually, the king builds him a handsome mansion there. But the gift is two-edged: sure, it's to say thank you, but it's also so that the king can keep an eye on the man. He's to be killed in the event that the king dies of anything other than simple old age. That dynamic—of debt and power, bestowing and withholding—defines the Family House from its inception.

Read the rest of the review here: <https://ellethinks.wordpress.com/2016...>

Leah Lucci says

Grabbed this on a whim at the library and simply ENJOYED it. It's a fairly short collection of short stories.

Each one is about a person who lives in a huge house and the weird things that happen to them. Some of the stories have magical realism; others are realistic -- but all have a VIBE about them that's a little bit otherworldly. Fun.

Dami Ajayi says

"His debut novel borrows its title from a popular phrase scrawled on the facade of many Lagos houses to deter con artists: "Beware of 419, this house is not for sale". Family House, the residence at the centre of the book, is owned by a patriarch known as Grandpa, an elderly man of contradictions. The novel is told through the eyes of his grandson, an unnamed boy of school age, with the language striving to convey the boy's vision. It is not a novel in the traditional sense of the word: Osondu uses the African oral tradition to string together the stories of the many inhabitants of the house, including gossipy commentaries from faceless characters"

Continue here, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015...>

Cassandra says

I really, really enjoyed reading this book. It is written by names of the characters instead of chapters. Each tale offers a lesson that we can use in life. I loved it so much that I purchased 3 more copies...2x as gifts and 1 just in case something happens to my original hardcover

Sarah-Hope says

While the title makes clear that This House Is Not for Sale is a novel, I felt it read more like a collection of short stories. Each chapter is focused on a different character (with the exception of one character who gets two chapters). The common threads that hold these stories together are Grandpa, the patriarch of the family, and the house itself.

This book is set in a neighborhood that is transitioning from tradition to modernity within an unnamed African country. The family who live here are extensive: a collection of blood relatives; any number of non-relatives who have achieved the status of "Auntie" or "Uncle"; a collection of children who work for Grandpa and serve as collateral on monies their parent have borrowed from him; and a constantly changing group of the homeless and those down on their luck.

Most of the stories/chapters have smallish arcs. A cousin newly arrived from another area impresses the other children with his worldly knowledge, most of which is inaccurate at best. A peddler of cloth and women's clothes move up the economic ladder and back down again.

This is a book to read when one feels settled enough to enjoy its slow pace and to appreciate the process of getting to know the characters.

Andrea says

In a big old house in Nigeria, a large extended family plus an assortment of neighbors and passersby make up the environment of the "family house." Watching over it all, punishing, rewarding, judging everything that goes on, Grandpa presides. Somehow, as common, market women, psychics and thieves meander through the life of the family and the house, Grandpa manages to turn every circumstance to his own material advantage while providing a place of secure, if not exactly comfortable, refuge for anyone who truly needs it. The spirit of family and community weighs in against the pain of poverty and social collapse in this freewheeling novel that is reminiscent of folklore in its somewhat chaotic but familiar style. Fun to read.

Monika says

Osondu's writing is lovely, but after a few chapters I started to feel disinterested. That feeling persisted through to the end of the novel. All the elements that make me want to read more, that propel the novel forward in some way, seemed to be missing here, maybe scattered. More of my thoughts on this title can be found on my blog at [A Lovely Bookshelf on the Wall](#).

Shelleyrae at Book'd Out says

This slim volume from E.C. Osondu is less a novel and more a collection of short stories, similar to the author's first work, *Voice of America*.

Set in Nigeria, centered around the 'Family House', the home owned by the unnamed narrator's grandpa, each chapter tells a story linked to one of the many characters that reside there, from a thieving servant, to dissolute 'uncles', to orphaned children, and desperate widows.

The stories are mostly grim with themes such as adultery, murder, poverty, exploitation and rape, though there are flashes of dark humour. Some have a near myth-like edge but essentially reflect contemporary life in rural Nigeria. The stories are also said to reflect Nigeria's political state, rife with corruption, injustice and poverty.

I have to admit that while I found it somewhat interesting, I didn't particularly enjoy *This House is Not For Sale*.

Richard says

I enjoyed this book which is a "novel" in the sense that its numerous stories are structured around a large place, Grandpa's "Family House," which apparently has numerous rooms in which many of the characters find themselves while contributing to Grandpa's financial well-being. The neighbors make up a speculative chorus of observers, not always but often gossips, frequently sources of a humor which shifts the weight of

the narration from the very difficult situations of many of the characters. I am reminded of a much darker set of life stories in Gloria Naylor's anti-Chaucerian, anti-Christian BAILEY'S CAFE.

The desire for allegory really overwhelms me in reading this, overlaying Nigerian mythology with Christian, ancestor worship and the role of the elders with an omnipresent and wise God. Grandpa intervenes frequently, chastising and correcting bad behavior, offering succor, but always exacting some work from those he aids. Some of the stories verge on disaster, but in almost every case it is avoided. "Uncle Aya" tells of its eponymous hero, a prophet who was, according to Grandpa, the house eccentric, and who joined "The End of the World Ministries" led by the West Indian Pastor Jonah. Needless to say, the followers were disappointed by an unending world, having sold or given away their earthly goods, and who, until Grandpa appeared with a shotgun, intended to burn down the Family House out of anger and frustration. Humorous situations turn sour and serious, people are hurt, and Grandpa settles the matter.

Occasionally a character will reappear in a later story or aspects of one character's story will develop in another, but there is nothing Balzacian about it as tightness and overwhelming realistic detail would smother the warmth and humor with which the Family House's is treated. Osondu's narrative point of view, that of a young lad brought up in the house, the style, characters, and their situations allow the reader the sense of the difficulty and tenuousness of life without sacrificing the humor that makes it bearable.

Mary says

<http://www.maryokekereviews.blogspot....>

Yewande Akeredolu says

I really enjoyed reading this book

Iawour says

Excellent read.

Morninglight Mama says

I found this to be a neat hybrid of a collection of short stories and a novel. Though each chapter reads as its own individual story focused on one particular resident of the house at the core of the entire book, the narrator remains consistent for them all, uniting the stories into one cohesive perspective on a large number of people who have lived at the house at one time or another. In an unspecified African country, a family/community comes to life in the The Family House, with Grandfather in the respected, and also at times feared, position of leader. The neighborhood surrounding The Family House is vibrant and ever-present, with many, many voices weighing in during the narrative, presented in bullet-point fashion in print that reads like overheard voices in a crowd. The first half or so of the book read quite comically at times, with even the misfortunes of some residents presented in a way that brought a chuckle, but then there was a sudden shift, and the stories (and fates) of the residents, some blood relatives of Grandfather, others simply

people who sought out his assistance and shelter in his house, became much darker. The undercurrent of many conversations about the house and the people who called it their home was similar-- "It is always from that house that all things both good and bad emerge."
