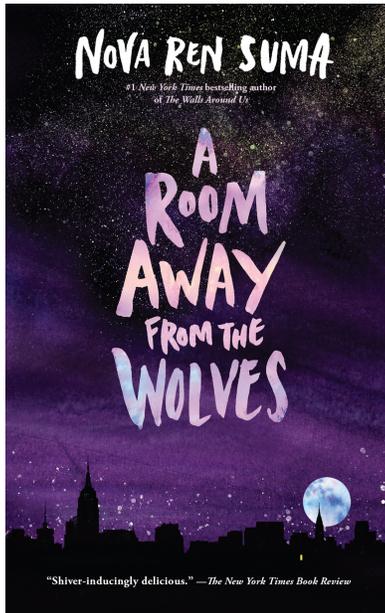


A Room Away from the Wolves

by **Nova Ren Suma**



YOUNG ADULT FICTION

Ages 14 and up, Grades 9 and up

336 pages, 8.25" x 5.5"

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Book Talk

Bina has never forgotten the time she and her mother ran away from home. Her mother promised they would hitchhike to the city to escape Bina's cruel father and start over. But before they could even leave town, Bina had a new stepfather and two new stepsisters, and a humming sense of betrayal pulling apart the bond with her mother—a bond Bina thought was unbreakable. Eight years later, after too many lies and with trouble on her heels, Bina finds herself on the side of the road again, the city of her dreams calling for her. She has an old suitcase, a fresh black eye, and a room waiting for her at Catherine House, a young women's residence in Greenwich Village with a tragic history, a vow of confidentiality, and dark, magical secrets. There, Bina is drawn to her enigmatic downstairs neighbor Monet, a girl who is equal parts intriguing and dangerous. As Bina's lease begins to run out, and nightmare and memory get tangled, she will be forced to face the terrible truth of why she's come to Catherine House and what it will cost for her to leave . . .

About the Author

Nova Ren Suma is the author of the #1 New York Times bestselling *The Walls Around Us*, which was an Edgar Award finalist. She also wrote *Imaginary Girls* and *17 & Gone* and is co-creator of *FORESHADOW: A Serial YA Anthology*. She has an MFA in fiction from Columbia University and teaches writing at Vermont College of Fine Arts and the University of Pennsylvania. Originally from the Hudson Valley, she spent most of her adult life in New York City and now lives in Philadelphia.



Praise for *A Room Away from the Wolves*

"Shiver-inducingly delicious."

—*The New York Times Book Review*

"[Suma's] narratives are subtle, quicksilver creatures, her language is elegant, and her characters keep more secrets than they reveal. If this book was a dessert, it wouldn't be a chocolate chip cookie or a vanilla birthday cake — it would be an earl grey lavender macaroon, or maybe balsamic fig ice cream."

— *NPR.com*

A Room Away from the Wolves

Discussion Questions

1. In *A Room Away from the Wolves* Nova Ren Suma plays with the borders between reality and illusion. As you read, did you find your thoughts and assumptions about the real and the unreal shifting? If so, when?
2. Suma has said of this novel: "It's a ghost story about the tangled bonds between mother and daughter, about complicated female friendship, and needing to find a place to belong." What's the source of the friction between Bina and her mother? Has Bina's mother let her down? Is she justified in asking Bina to go away?
3. How is female friendship presented as complicated? Why is Bina drawn to Monet? How does your impression of Monet change over time?
4. Bina is angry at her mother, yet runs away to the place her mother once lived. Why? Is Catherine House as Bina expected? As the novel unfolds, how does it transform, literally and symbolically?
5. Bina tells the reader early that her lies have caught up with her. Knowing this, how do you judge truth in the story Bina tells?
6. The most obvious suggestion of a ghostly presence comes from Catherine's portrait, with its moving eyes and shifting body. Are there other ghosts in the novel?
7. The author hints at people, objects, and events that link Bina's life back home to life in New York. What links did you notice? What do they suggest about Bina's experiences in both places?
8. What's the importance of the opal in *A Room Away from the Wolves*? It's said the best plots contain elements simultaneously surprising and inevitable. How does Suma build that effect with the opal?
9. *A Room Away from the Wolves* has been called a love letter to New York. What details show the author's love of the city? Does the story influence your ideas and feelings about the place?
10. Is there one clear conclusion to and explanation of the story, or multiple possibilities? Where does the story leave Bina? Where might she go next?