

READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

Who is...

Adrien M. Lane

THIS MONTH:

It's time for some **ROMANCE**
with a **TWIST**, as we get

Lost in

Secret Arms

The Complete

Chapter I

Page 7

Reading and Writing in the DARK
Newsletter subscriber exclusive, a
FULL chapter of the upcoming novel!
It's GOOD to be a subscriber!

Also:

From Iyapo's Blog:

What Makes the Katt Williams
Interview Problematic.

Page 24

Feature:

**What does it mean to be
UNAPOLOGETIC
And who are we being
unapologetic to?!**

Page 3

This month's
Crossword Puzzle is all about

Black Writers!

Page 20

**News and Information about Completed
and Upcoming Projects and MORE!**



READING and WRITING in the DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

NEWSLETTER

CONTENTS

WELCOME BACK! / Who is Adrien M. Lane?! Page 2

Feature: **What does it mean to be UNAPOLOGETIC? TO whom am I being unapologetic?..**Page 3

Lost in Secret Arms (A Sneak Peek) The Complete Chapter I Page 7

Wakanda Forever?! Page 17

February Crossword Puzzle Page 20

From iyapo's Blog: What Makes the Katt Williams Interview Problematic Page 24

MELANIN: A Novel Now on KINDLE UNLIMITED! Page 29

Alright, Enough about ME! Works by authors I know Page 30



READING and WRITING in the DARK Newsletter
Vol. 3 No. 2
FEBRUARY 2024

Iyapo Yapa
Writer/Layout/Editor-In-Chief

Angela Riley
Copy Editor

Iyapo Yapa
Layout/Design

WELCOME BACK!

ONE MONTH DOWN... ELEVEN TO GO!

It's February and I'm still at it! I'm working on several projects at once (as I tend to do), and each project is more exciting than the next. I have short stories that are about to come out, not the least of which is the LONG AWAITED first installment of *Tales of the Monkey's Paw*! I'm still hard at work on the second Paradigm Void book, *Further Journeys into the Paradigm Void*. The first book is available to the public and I'm very proud to have published my third book! I will be following that up with *The Redemption of Maxine Allison: A Novella—presently in its first round of editing*. Also I'm still celebrating the completion of my first mystery novel, *Rasulallah, Ohio*! So far a couple people have read it in its rough form and have said they really enjoyed it! I can't wait to finish the editorial process and get it out into the world! As always, if you want to contact me, just drop an email to: Feedback@iyapoyapa.com it's ALWAYS open! SEE YOU NEXT MONTH and THANK YOU FOR SUBSCRIBING TO MY NEWSLETTER!

Iyapo Yapa



WHO IS ADRIEN M. LANE?!

Adrien M. Lane loves romance.

She also loves scifi, fantasy and unpredictable conclusions.

With her writing she is determined to merge the two into romance novels with a twist!

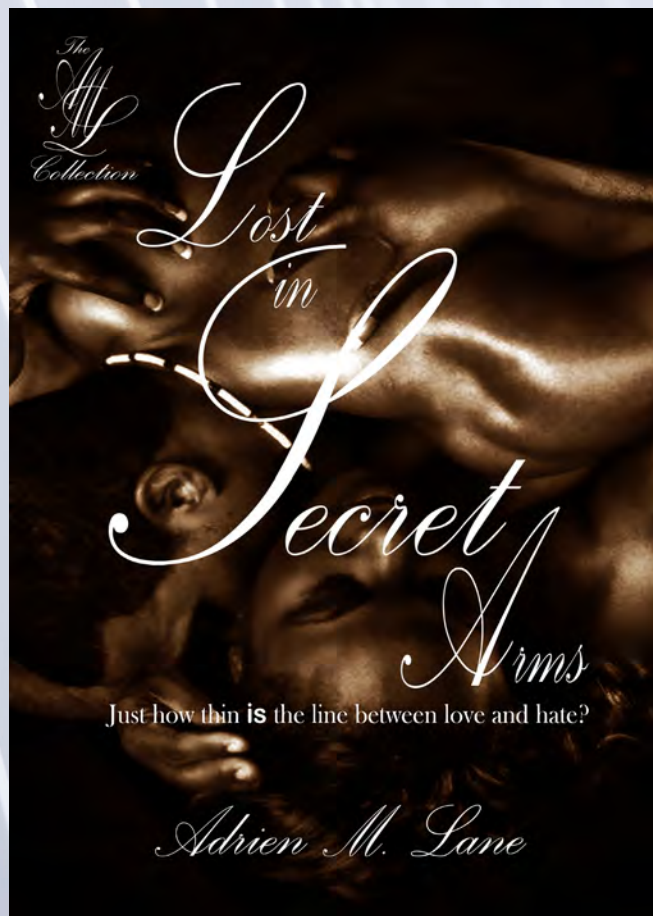
She has already began a series on the Kindle Vella platform called, *The Emancipatin of Teotta T. Adams*, and is currently working on her debut novel *Lost in Secret Arms*. She has several projects in the wings and is anxious to get them out into the world for lovers of romance and unpredictability to enjoy. Adrien has many tricks up her sleeve and strives to be original in every way she can from cover to cover of her work.

This month, *The Reading and Writing in the Dark Newsletter* is proud to introduce Adrien M. Lane, and the full first chapter *Lost in Secret Arms* as she examines the question, "Just how thin IS the line between love and hate?"

Adrien M. Lane, or "Ayddie" as those close to her affectionately call her, was born in Costa Rica into a large family and has eight siblings. She always enjoyed spinning stories for family and friends but never committed anything to paper, until her mentor and fellow writer R.J. Blakman said, "Baby, you have a head full of stories the world is just waiting to hear and you need to put them on paper so everyone can read them!" So, she took her mentor's advice, dug out an old laptop she hadn't touched in years and after typing the first few sentences, has never looked back!

Adrien lives in the tropics (because she hates the cold) with her pet gecko, (whatever one has wandered into her home for a given time), and is a member of a local Black writers group.

She enjoys looking at the lush colors of her surroundings, taking walks on the beach, and always, always thinking of new stories to write!



READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

What does it mean to be UNAPOLOGETIC? To whom am I being unapologetic?

These are both fair questions and I will answer them in terms of what it is to me—understanding that others may or may not hold the same viewpoint.

In terms of being unapologetic, there are several things that term means when I use it within the context of being ProBlack and/or PanAfrikan.

There is a famous story told, I think, by Chris Rock of a time when he was at Eddie Murphy's house with other Black men. As the group began to speak about white people, they all lowered their voices. Someone made the observation that they were in that Black man's mansion, surrounded by only Black men, and when they started talking about white people, they all instinctively lowered their voices.

That is how well trained we have become.

Quite different from the late 60s proclamation, "Say it loud, I'm Black and I'm proud!"

Being unapologetic means to be in and desire to be in Black spaces that are for BLACK PEOPLE ONLY where all feel empowered and would without hesitation—if someone white or a non-Black "person of color" were to enter that space—to assert, "This is for Black people... You have to leave."

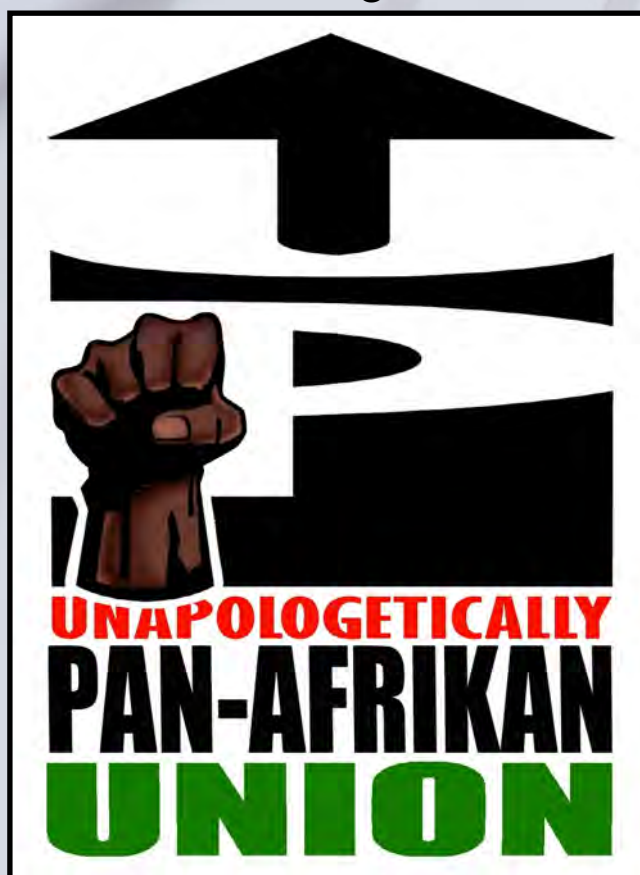
Unfortunately, there are Black people who will read the paragraph above and immediately be hostile to the above. They will usually interject something like, "See! That's no different than Jim Crow and the KKK when they had 'Whites Only' signs. So, you're just as bad and practicing reverse racism." Interestingly, the same people who make those types of arguments understand that not just any ol' body can walk up into certain

social or golf clubs, that nearly all battered women's shelters very strictly do not allow any men in them, that there are any number of clubs and organizations that have standards for who can and cannot enter. But somehow—some way—whenever it is Black people who desire to have some kind of controls or restrictions which guarantee them the atmosphere they would like to move within, that is a problem.

(Full disclosure for the sake of understanding my position and world view, I am absolutely NOT a "one dropper". I do not consider bi-racial or so-called non-Black people of color to be Black. Does that mean I think everyone should see it the way I do? Not at all. But that is how I see it and I govern my views and actions according to that.

More times than I care to count, I've seen Black people stand before a crowded room, be it a Ted Talk or some other event in which they are about to speak their minds about race and ethnicity and how it affects Black people. They then proceed to spend the first minute to three minutes apologizing for what they're about to say.

They assure the crowd that they aren't racist and only after thoroughly "pre-apologizing" and saying what they can to soften the blow to the audience of non-Afrikan people, only then will they go on with what they have to say. I have always taken special note of the fact that revolutionaries like Malcolm X (at least before he became El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz) and Khalid Abdul Muhammad, Kwame Ture (Stokely Carmichael) never (that I have ever heard), began one of their statements with "I'm sorry but—" or "Now, I don't mean ALL white people—" before making their statements. That is what it means to be unapologetic.



READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

What does it mean to be UNAPOLOGETIC? To whom am I being unapologetic?

(Continued)

Sidenote: By definition it is impossible for a Black person living in the United States to be racist. In order to be racist, you must be a member of the race in control where ever you are. In other words, if a white KKK member moved to Japan to live, they can NOT be a racist. Not there. Bigoted, yes. Prejudice, yes. Ignorant and with a white supremacist mindset, yes. But NOT racist. Not in Japan. ONLY Japanese people can be racist in Japan.

The second question—that of To whom are we being apologetic? is actually an easier question to answer.

There is a belief that only white people can be white supremacists, but nothing could be further from the truth. As a matter of fact, some of the most staunch and vocal white supremacists are Black people. (You may be familiar with US Senator Tim Scott, US commentator Candace Owens and host Jessie Lee Peterson among a few. I would hasten to add Thomas Sowell to that group.) What defines a white supremacist?

In simple terms, white supremacy is exactly what it sounds like—the belief that anything white is of greater value than anything else and that the closer one gets to blackness, the lesser the value. There are thieves, liars, murders, rapists and so on, within all demographics, however, when it comes to white people, when a member of that group commits one of those acts, they are considered a “lone wolf”, but when Black people do so it is looked upon as a reflection of the entire race.

Likewise, when Black people achieve

extraordinary things, they are singled out as some kind of exception to the rule, while if and when a white person does something noteworthy, it is just a given that they ALL are that way.

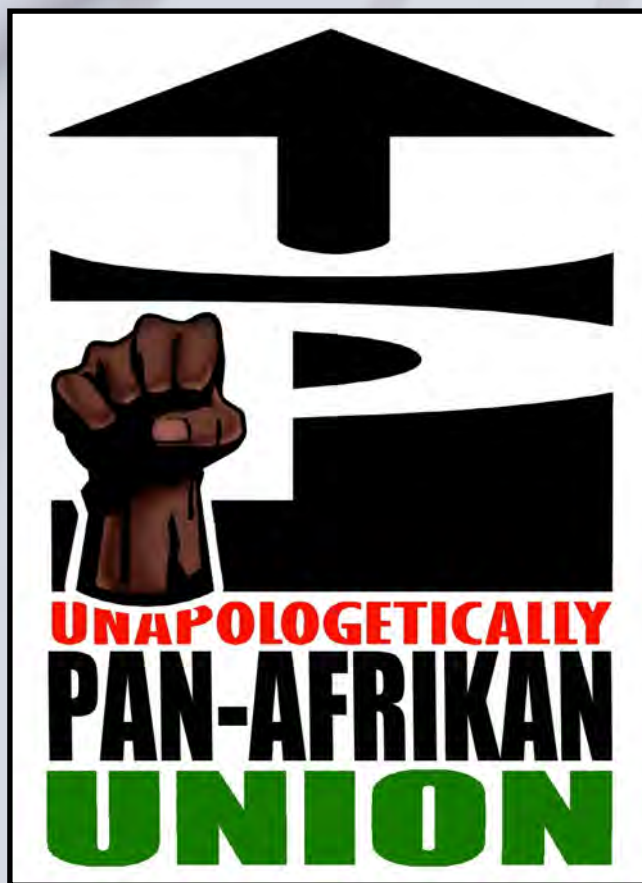
There is no end of critiques by Black white supremacist who love pointing to Black-on-Black crime (which is a myth), and the degradation of the Black family and Black community in a way that suggests that our actions have come about by our people being somehow inherently inferior or problematic.

A magnifying glass is aimed toward the 1 to 5 black faces who shot up a neighborhood, killing one or two people and possibly wounding a few others, while completely ignoring the white faces who are the heads of

countries and corporations who are responsible for literally hundreds of thousands of deaths globally each year. (Some can kill thousands DAILY.)

Ignored is the fact that no young (or old) Black person owns or operates ONE drug poppy field not ONE cigarette company, not ONE gun company and nor do most young Black people have the resources to travel around the globe, let alone out of their state or country. Somehow, though, all those things (cigarettes and other drugs & guns) seem to magically saturate Black communities and neighborhoods.

Who am I speaking to in terms of unapologetic? I'm speaking to OUR people and seeking to present another narrative—another paradigm in which we finally stop concentrating on the EFFECT and examine the CAUSE!



READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

What does it mean to be UNAPOLOGETIC? To whom am I being unapologetic?

(Continued)

Does that mean that I feel our people should look the other way when we see atrocities committed by our people?

Of course not. I'm saying that our people can be better served when we have a more complete picture of what it is our people are dealing with as we seek to navigate this system of white supremacy. So that we have at least understanding if not compassion for those of our people who are caught up in these things and don't know any other way because they have had little if any exposure to another way.

I can hear you out there right now. "A lot of our people just don't WANT to do what's right."

I used to be of that mindset too.

My wife says (along with a lot of other folks), "If you know better, you do better". Presently many of us just don't know better in any effective way to change what we are doing. PanAfrikanism,

in my opinion is the key to it, and being unapologetic in loving and looking out for us as a people FIRST is a step in that direction.

Who am I talking to?

US! It's ALWAYS about our people. It is a waste of time working with anyone else at this point and explaining, or apologizing to a group of people who already very well know what is that they do and continue to do to our people. It is the decolonization of the Afrikan mind and that ONLY in which I'm interested.

When our people get to the point where we don't compare ourselves to any other people, and especially when we stop feeling like we need to ask or threaten or demand anything from anyone, we will be well on our way to being healed and self-reliant; for then, any thoughts we have as they pertain to our people and our freedom and guiding our own destiny will never even count white people as part of the equation.

**AVAILABLE
NOW!
CLICK THE LOGO TO GO
TO THE RETAILER**



If you're needing to get your **THEORETICAL EBON FICTION (TEF)** fix, **THIS** is the place to go!

PARADIGM VOID is a collection of short stories written by Iyapo Yapa, one of the new leaders in the field of Black Science Fiction and Speculative Fiction. Each story explores possibilities and concepts that were not long ago only within the domain of the standard Sci-Fi reader.

Now, with the insurgence of Black writers of TEF, Iyapo is adding his powerful voice to the chorus, and moving at full speed to work in our people taking control of our narrative!

In *PARADIGM VOID*, Iyapo explores things like:

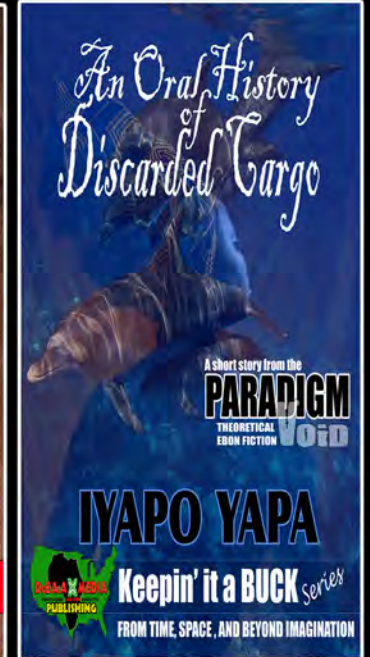
- What if somewhere in the universe numerous alien races observed earth and concluded that there is a faction on the planet that in no way should ever be allowed to reach out beyond the bounds of its own atmosphere?
- What if the universe itself started taking measures to correct and bring balance to itself in terms of justice?
- What if time slowed down nearly to a stop ... but only for YOU?

These possibilities and more are examined in "PARADIGM VOID" a collection of ten short stories in the genre of **THEORETICAL EBON FICTION**.

READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

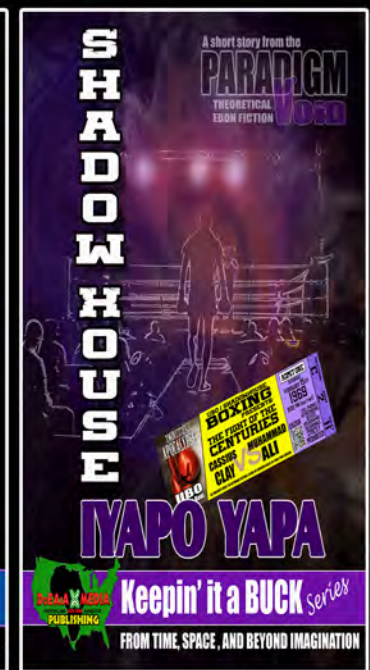
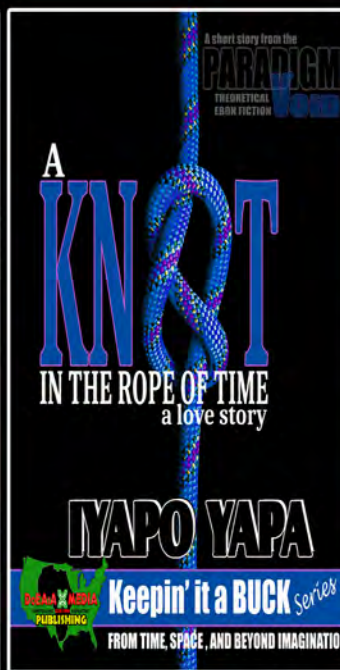


IT IS TIME TO JOURNEY INTO THE **PARADIGM VOID** ONE STEP AT A TIME.

EACH SHORT STORY IS DIFFERENT. EACH ONE THOUGHT PROVOKING & MIND BENDING.
EACH ONE ONLY **A DOLLAR!** AVAILABLE RIGHT NOW ON: **amazon**



Keepin' it a BUCK series



Also, Keepin' it a BUCK series TWO: Stories from Further Journeys into the Paradigm VOID is out NOW!



Also remember:

ORAL TRADITION talking books are also coming soon! Click the image to the right to hear a sample, of one of our talking books. Yes, it's still in its rough form, but the story is still fun as all get out! So give it a listen!

READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

Complete Chapter I - Lost in Secret Arms

Only a handful of people were on Lisa Jenkin's list of people she didn't necessarily care for and even fewer she flat out disliked. Lori Patterson, who worked in the art department of the Skollier Group advertising agency where she was once employed was not her cup of tea. Lori wasn't a bad person really, there was just something about her that rubbed Lisa the wrong way. The most distressing part for Lisa was that she could never, for the life of her quite put her finger on what got under her skin so much about the woman.

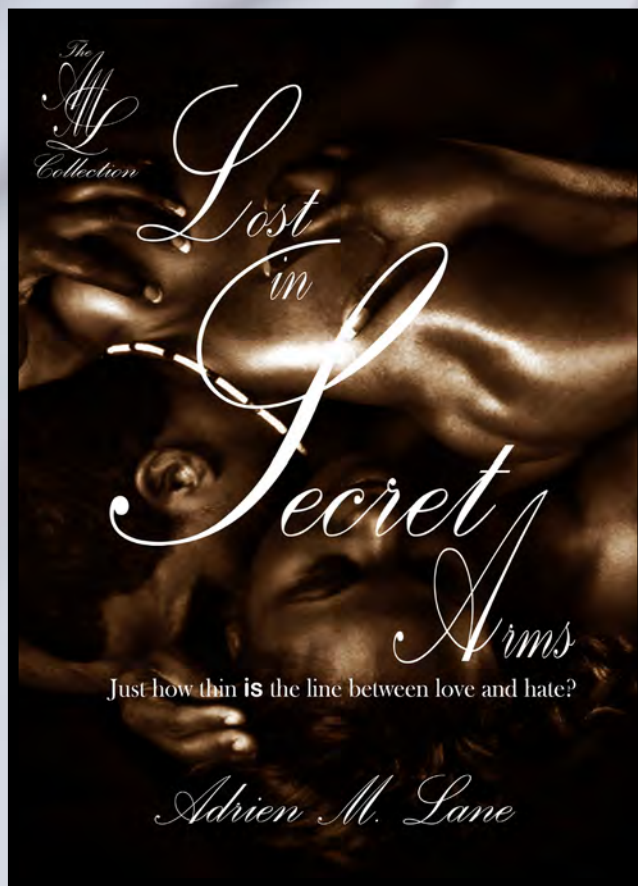
It wasn't that Lori was white, or that she was marginally self-absorbed—one of those people to whom EVERYTHING is a crisis—that she lacked a sense of self awareness that bordered on parody, or even that she was prone to micro aggressions when it came to Black people (whether knowingly or oblivious to it). Nah—it wasn't that. Truth to tell, Lori was no different than any other white woman in those respects. Lisa believed they were all like that to greater or lesser degrees. That said, she knew and worked with other white women who, some of them, fell into the 'greater' category, but she didn't have the same uneasy, 'something I just can't vibe with' feeling when it came to Lori.

Even with all that—she didn't dislike the woman. Lisa could tolerate her. She didn't dislike her.

Now, Anthony 'Tony' "The ladies call me 'Tone' 'cause they just love my high yellah tone skin and fine grade 'o hair", Hurston

was a completely different story.

Lisa Lansing did not like that man. He fell well outside the parameters of her 'not my cup of tea' zone', the place where Lori Patterson lived. He wasn't even in the neighborhood. Hell, he wasn't even on the same planet! "Tone" was one of that breed of Black men who could not comprehend any woman not falling at his feet upon seeing him, or not melting helplessly into putty when he spoke. He was one of those men who would deliver old pick up lines to women and say them with all the confidence in the world, as if he was the first one to say it, and she was the first one to hear it.



The conceit and pick up lines Lisa could deal with, but her major issue with him was that he would proposition her at least twice a week—knowing full well she was a happily married woman at the time—and that at least once a month, he would find some way to "accidentally" rub up against her—usually her butt. He was definitely slick and most definitely knew what he was doing because when she would go to H.R. about him, there was never any way to prove what the leech was doing, and he knew it. In time she grew a loathing for the man and several times called him out in front of God and everybody.

The next time he tried for one of his little planned 'accidental' feels. To which, Tony would, of course look around, innocent as a newborn, and insist he had no idea what Lisa was talking about.

READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

Complete Chapter I - Lost in Secret Arms (Continued)

The fact she was no longer at the ad agency was made so much sweeter by never having to ever deal with that P O S again.

Who DID she like?

George MacHenry.

George MacHenry was the mail carrier for her neighborhood and with the exception of dogs—who are genetically predisposed to hate cats and mail men—Lisa couldn't think of anyone who didn't like this older gentleman—her included. She genuinely enjoyed the man's company. When she first met him some five years ago, she found him comical, a little sad—in a little melancholy, and clumsily charming in his way. George always called Lisa "Lena". Whenever anyone heard George call her that, typically they assumed he was mispronouncing her name, or that he, for whatever reason either couldn't remember to call her Lisa or had some kind of speech impediment that prevented him from being able to properly pronounce it.

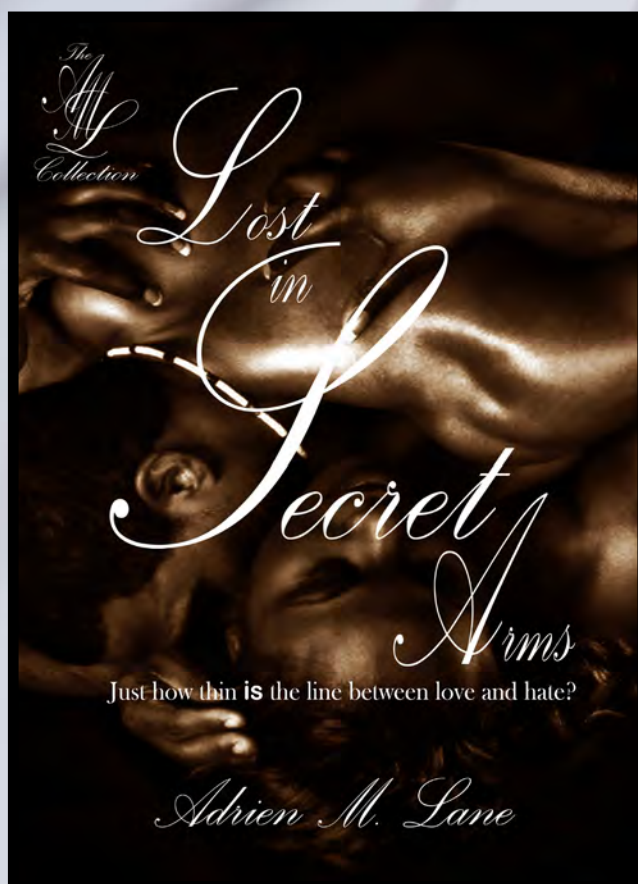
It was neither.

George was the only one who call Lisa, Lena, and was the only person she would allow to call her by the name because it was an inside joke to them.

Unable to bear living in the house in which she and her husband Jacob had planned to build

their future, Lisa sold that house, invested the money and took a substantial amount of the life insurance settlement and moved to another county, purchasing a modest duplex in a 'high end' neighborhood. She paid for the house outright in addition to setting back five years' worth of funds in escrow for property taxes. As it turned out, the life insurance paid far more than the two hundred fifty thousand she thought it was worth. Jersey had, unbeknown to her, put a rider on the policy that paid out over three million dollars if he, oddly enough, was ever murdered in a killing spree.

Every six months the couple did evaluations of their finances, to include any life insurance policies they had. It was routine, but as a CPA, it was the type of boring thing Jersey genuinely enjoyed doing. Every now and then, to see if she was paying attention, he would add riders to the policies like, a payoff of a million if he got killed during the 'running of the bulls', or four million if a 'meteorite landed on his head' and his all-time favorite 'two and a half million if he were abducted by aliens'. Lisa would usually catch them—sometimes she wouldn't, and he would have to tell her. To Jersey, he considered it a little joke, but Lisa never found it particularly funny. It was a month or so before Lisa had the chance to go over the policy with her husband and caught the rider about the aliens, and she likely would have had her husband remove the one about the mass shooting clause had he not been murdered first.



READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

Complete Chapter I - Lost in Secret Arms (Continued)

It looked like Jersey, in his offbeat attempt at humor, actually set Lisa up for life—again—so fitting for his character.

So much like him.

* * *

Lisa purchased a new duplex in a new town straight out, a little over a year after her husband was murdered. The weekend after she moved in, she realized she would need to stock her refrigerator and freezer. That's when Lisa met George for the first time on a Sunday afternoon, while shopping at the Big K Food Mart in the neighborhood of the new duplex she had just purchased. He walked up to her in the aisle, stared for a moment, seeming extremely concerned (and nervous at the same time if one can imagine that), and asked if she was hurt? When Lisa said, "No, why would I be hurt?" George replied, "Earth from heaven's a long drop, an' you look jus' like a fallen angel!"

Lisa stared at the man for a moment, then, face crinkling up as if she were about to cry, suddenly burst out laughing so loud she turned a few heads, and the man before her smiled, looking embarrassed and confused. Lisa, still laughing put her hand on the man's shoulder, as she couldn't seem to stop laughing. He stood, definitely looking embarrassed now, and even sweating a little.

"You ... you said I looked like a fallen angel!" She managed to say through her laughter.

George smiled at her, "You do ma'am! You're beautiful! You look like an angel that just fell outta heaven!"

When he said that, Lisa looked at him and laughed even harder, an older couple walking down the aisle, joining in the laughter.

"Ok, what's so funny?" George said.

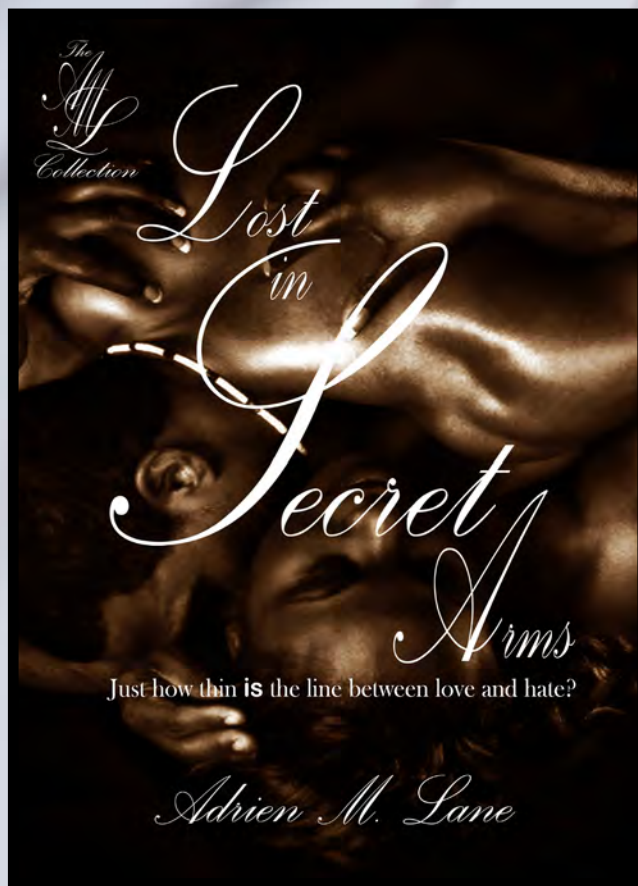
The woman from the older husband and wife couple shook their heads laughing and as they passed by, the wife tapped George on the shoulder and said, "Georgie—" this man and woman obviously knew him. "You need to read your

Bible more."

"Huh?"

"George, a fallen angel is a demon!" the husband said, chuckling and trying not to laugh too hard at his friend. "Damn man, if you're gonna use pick up lines, at least SAY 'em right!"

As soon as the other man explained George's faux pa to him, Lisa nearly doubled over her shopping cart, tears now flowing uncontrollably from her eyes, and George stood there for a moment, then burst out laughing himself. "Sorry Miss, I'm real rusty at this. It's just, you're so pretty, an' well, I wanted ta talk to you, and didn't know how ta' start a conversation. I'm gonna be on my way now, I'm glad I gave you a good laugh though. Looks like I accidently traded your halo for a couple horns."



READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

Complete Chapter I - Lost in Secret Arms (Continued)

“You’re fine.” Lisa said through her laughter as she magnanimously waved the man away. “And thank you—I really needed that!”

When she met him the following Tuesday as her mail carrier, he saw her, surprised, and said, “Why hello, Horns!” From there, the name stuck for a while and for about a month, George called Lisa, “Horns”. Eventually he began saying things like, “Well, well, well if it isn’t Lisa Horns?” or “How you doin’ this fine day Lisa Horns?” Lisa became ‘Lena’, a reference the young woman didn’t get at first. The first time George called her Lena Horns, Lisa said, “Who’s Lena?” George, eyes wide, stopping in the middle of shuffling mail to prepare for his next delivery, said, “Who’s LENA?! Girl you ain’t never heard o’ Lena Horne?!”

“No Mr. MacHenry, I haven’t.”

“Come on, Horns! Stormy weather? Cabin in the Sky? Come on Horns—The WIZ?!”

“I’m sorry, I never heard of her.” she said hunching her shoulders, arms raised in the universal, ‘I don’t know’ position.

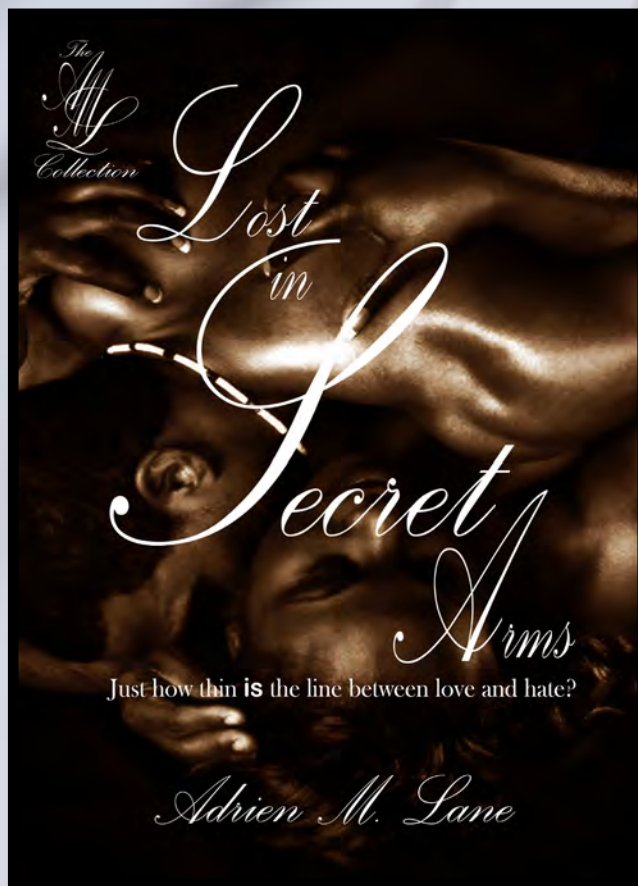
“You ever watch Sanford and Son?!”

“Yeah, I used to watch reruns with my Dad a long time ago before he passed.”

“Ok! The woman Fred was obsessed with? Tall ... lightskinned—“

“Oh yeah! I remember that ... and one time she came over to his house for something and ended up kissing him!”

“Right! Right across the lips!”



“I remember! Oh, ok. THAT’S Lena Horne.” she said, smiling widely and laughing a little at the memory of both the show and Fred Sanford’s catch phrase George delivered. George returned the smile.

“Ok, so now you got the reference.” George said with his wide adorable grin that revealed a couple missing molars it was obvious he was a little self-conscious about whenever he would smile widely. Lisa didn’t mind them or focus on them, she just considered it part of the overall character that was George MacHenry—as a matter of fact, whenever she thought about it, she didn’t feel he would even look right if he had perfect teeth.

George handed Lisa her mail and she started sifting through it.

“Stack o’ Valentines?” George asked.

“Hardly. Speaking of which—do you have any plans for tonight? It is Valentine’s Day you know.”

“Nah, no plans, ‘septin maybe sittin’ at home and listenin’ ta some John Coltrane tonight. How ‘bout you? Got a hot date lined up?”

READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

Complete Chapter I - Lost in Secret Arms (Continued)

“I dunno. Maybe. Would you like to come over and have a Valentine’s dinner tonight?”

“Aw come on Horns, you know you don’t have to have a pity dinner for me.”

“I’m not. It’s not like we’ve never gone over to each other’s houses for dinner before. We seem to like each other’s company, and there’s no reason either of us should just be sitting home alone tonight.”

“Nah Horns. You don’t have to do th—”

“Fried chicken, mac and cheese ... baked ... collard greens ... apple pie and—”

“I’ll be here! I’LL BE HERE! What time?!”

“Around 7:30ish.” Lisa laughed.

“I’ll be here with the bells on. You need me to bring anything?”

“Nope, I’ve got it. Just bring your lone adorable self.”

“Well, I’d better get back ta my route Horns before the neighbors start ta talk.”

“Ah let ‘em talk.” Lisa said as they both laughed. “I’ll see you around 7:30.”

George turned to walk back toward the street.

“See you then.”

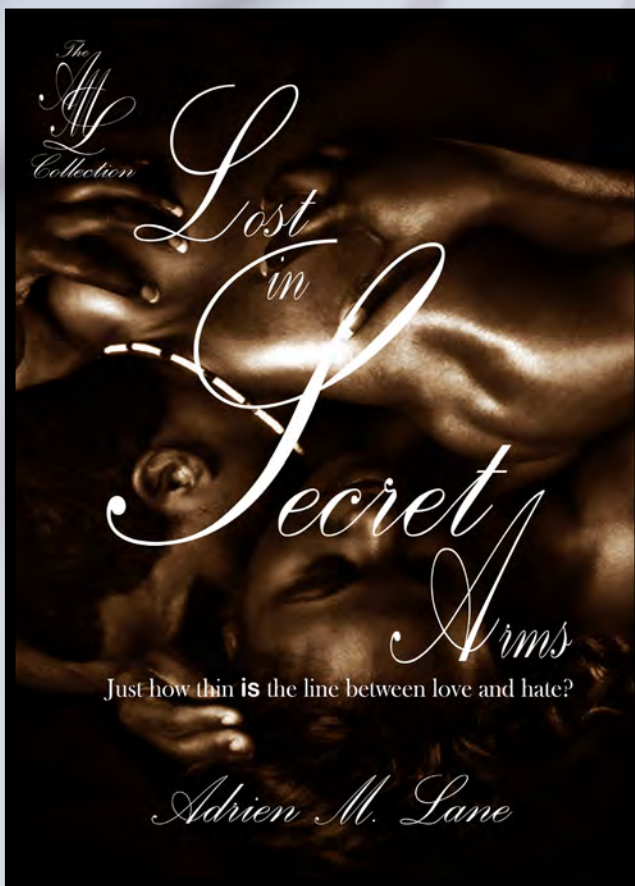
Fluffy, Lisa’s Doberman was a very fast dog. Lisa had raised him from a puppy, and he was now what would be considered in a human lifespan, a teenager; and like a teenager, Fluffy was full of energy, more or less unpredictable, and FAST!

Lisa was expecting an extremely important letter and was so preoccupied with flipping through her mail while still in the act of closing the door, that she didn’t notice Fluffy bolting from the den to the living room and making a beeline for the front door. By the time she heard his panting and the

sound of his paws on the sound dampening carpet, Fluffy had gotten past her and out the door!

“George, LOOK OUT!” Lisa yelled way too late for the hapless mail carrier to even have time to turn around. Before he could even react, Fluffy had reached George and jumped up on his back, nearly knocking him down, along with almost causing him to lose several bits of mail he was shifting.

George managed to turn around, the Doberman jumping all over him, Lisa running toward them so she could grab her dog by the collar. George yelled, “Git down! Down girl!” And then hastily shoving the letters in his hands back into his pouch (as best he could with the sizable animal jumping up and down, and clawing at him), George produced what he knew would end the onslaught.



READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

Complete Chapter I - Lost in Secret Arms (Continued)

“HERE!” George said, putting the dog biscuit in Fluffy’s mouth, as Fluffy stood on her hind legs, front paws on George’s chest, and wagging her clipped tail. “Dang girl don’t get so excited, it’s just a milk bone. It ain’t like I didn’t just give you one yesterday. Lisa finally reached the man and dog, apologizing to her friend.

“Aw, it’s no problem.” George said, smiling.

“I swear I can’t get over it George. Fluffy doesn’t like ANYBODY ... except me and you! And sometimes I’m not so sure about ME.!” Lisa laughed.

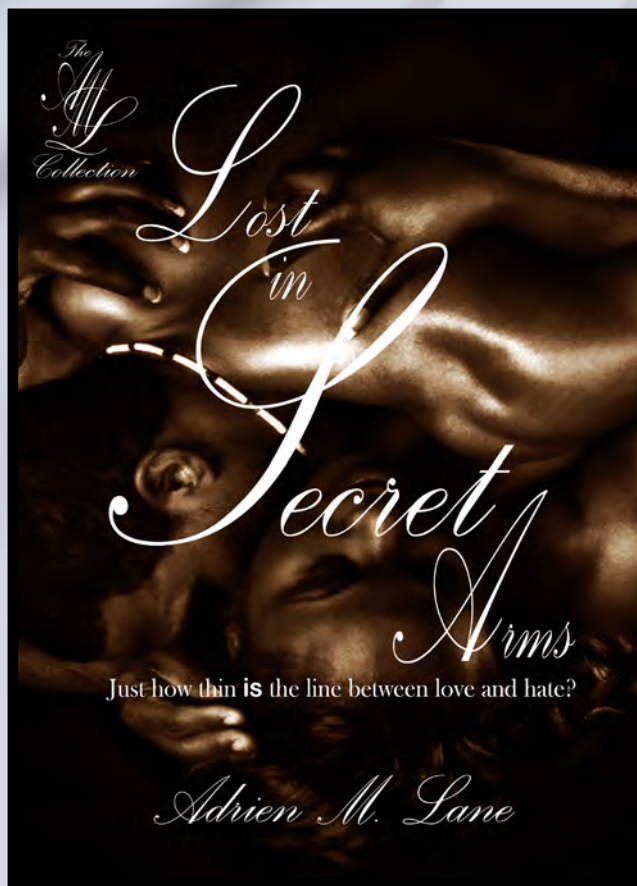
“Us dogs gotta stick together, ain’t that right Fluff?!” he said as he grabbed her cheeks and gently shook her head, as Fluffy growled playfully back at her buddy.

* * *

Dinner was better than George imagined it would be and the fact he sat across the table from a woman as beautiful, intelligent and charming as Lisa Jenkins, talking and laughing in the candle lit room made it all the more delightful for him. The couple deeply enjoyed each other’s company and the stories they’d tell each other. The twenty some year age difference didn’t even seem to matter when they were together. Though not bound romantically with each other, their relationship was definitely something beyond friendship ... but just short of a

romance. It was something in between and something neither could define.

But both were comfortable and relaxed with it.



After dinner they retired to Lisa’s Livingroom and drank wine as they listened to a John Coltrane album George brought over. As they both swayed gently to the music, both seemingly lost in their own thoughts, George said softly—unexpectedly—

“I know I’ve never talked about this, but, my wife’s name was Marylyn. She

was dark chocolate, had a smile that would melt a brick and a laugh that could make every trouble you had just float away. A lot like yours. A sweeter woman never walked the earth. Wanna see a picture of ‘er?”

“Sure George, if you want to show it to me.”

“I’ll be happy to.” George reached into his jacket pocket, it wasn’t lost on Lisa that he had the photo close to his heart—and handed it to Lisa.

The photo was in color, but it was chroma color and a tiny bit faded and discolored, obviously taken several decades ago judging by the clothes, but the woman in the photo was clearly defined, and she was every bit as beautiful as the forlorn man beside her had said.

READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

Complete Chapter I - Lost in Secret Arms (Continued)

Marylyn was beautiful alright, and perhaps Lisa thinking so was a bit self-serving, because she and the woman in the photo bore a striking resemblance.

“Why?”

“He blames me for his mother leavin’. Never forgave me.”

No wonder George dug up the nerve to approach me. Lisa thought. I remind him of a woman he’s still in love with. Upon realizing that, Lisa felt all the worse for George who was looking at her, looking at the photo.

“Ain’t she somethin’ ta look at?” George said solemnly.

“Yes George, she’s very beautiful.” Lisa said as she handed the man the photo.

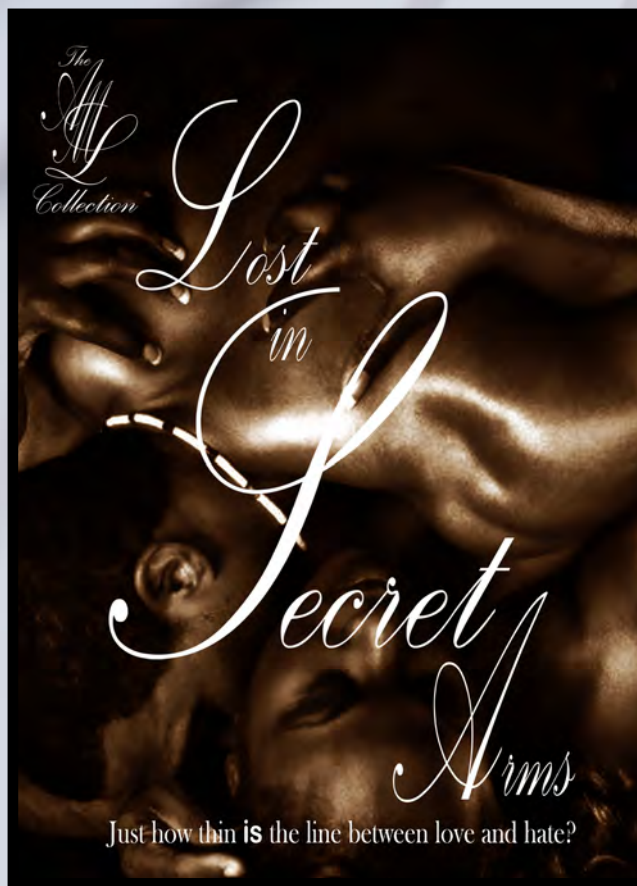
“Yeah ... guess that’s why I went and talked to you and made a fool of myself that day. It was almost like seein’ Marylyn again. I don’t mean any harm by it though Lisa. I swear I don’t. I’m just an old man, whose still in love with a memory.”

“What happened between you two, if you don’t mind me asking? If it’s too painful, you don’t have to talk about it.”

“Nah, I don’t mind talkin’ ‘bout it. We were married for almost thirty years, had a son.”

“You have a son George? You never told me that.”

“Nah, I don’t talk about it too much. Me and him’s kinda on the outs.”



“George ... truth now. DID you do something to make her leave? Were you abusive to her or your son?”

George looked at Lisa with a look on his face that she couldn’t figure out ... she only knew that she can’t remember ever seeing that kind of pain and confusion on the face of another human being in her life, and she had sat in close quarters of entire families of people

whose loved ones had been senselessly and brutally murdered.

George was old school, he wasn’t going to sit in front of this woman and cry, but the pain on his face said everything. “Lisa,” he said finally, “I’d have sooner killed myself that ever even think about laying a finger on that woman or my son. My world turned around those two. All I ever wanted was to make a good home for us. So I worked a lot, sometimes two jobs, but I always tried to make time for Marylyn and Michael. That’s my son’s name ... Michael. Last I heard, he graduated with honors from some high class college. He’s either a chemical or electrical engineer now. ‘Sposed to have gotten married and had a couple o’ kids. My grandchildren. I never seen ‘em or talked to ‘em though.”

READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

Complete Chapter I - Lost in Secret Arms (Continued)

George wasn't going to cry, but Lisa was on the verge of doing it for him.

"Anyways, I thought we were doin' fine. I was happy at least and I thought I was making her happy, but I guess not."

"What happened?"

"Actually, she left me for another guy. Another mailman if you can believe that—that cliché enough for ya? I guess she had a thing for men in uniform." George said, wanting to drop tears, but resisting as his eyes glistened by the candlelight. He looked up and gave the woman beside him an ironic—self debasing smile and chuckled a little.

Lisa returned to George a soft, melancholy smile—not saying it out loud, but somewhere inside feeling a bit of dislike for this Marylyn person—or anyone who could hurt this sweet, gentle, loving man so deeply.

"We never quite got 'round ta gettin' legally divorced, but she run off and lived with the guy 'til she passed on." George looked down at the floor. Lisa could see the pain in his eyes even though he wasn't looking at her. These were the eyes of a man who had fallen in love, remained in love for decades, and even with all that had transpired, he never fell out of love. "She died from ovarian cancer 'bout four years ago. I don't even know if I'm actually a

widower." He said. "I feel like I'm one. I guess technically I am. I dunno." George looked down at the coffee table, staring at the bottle of sparkling grape juice, the two nearly empty glasses, and the Valentines the couple had exchanged, and sighed.

"Remember the day we met, and you tried to pick me up with that pickup line?" Lisa said.

"I try to forget it every day." George said burying his face in one hand and shaking his head back and forth.

The two laughed.

"That was the first time in over three years that I laughed like that ... maybe that I laughed at all."

"Why? What were you so sad about Horns?"

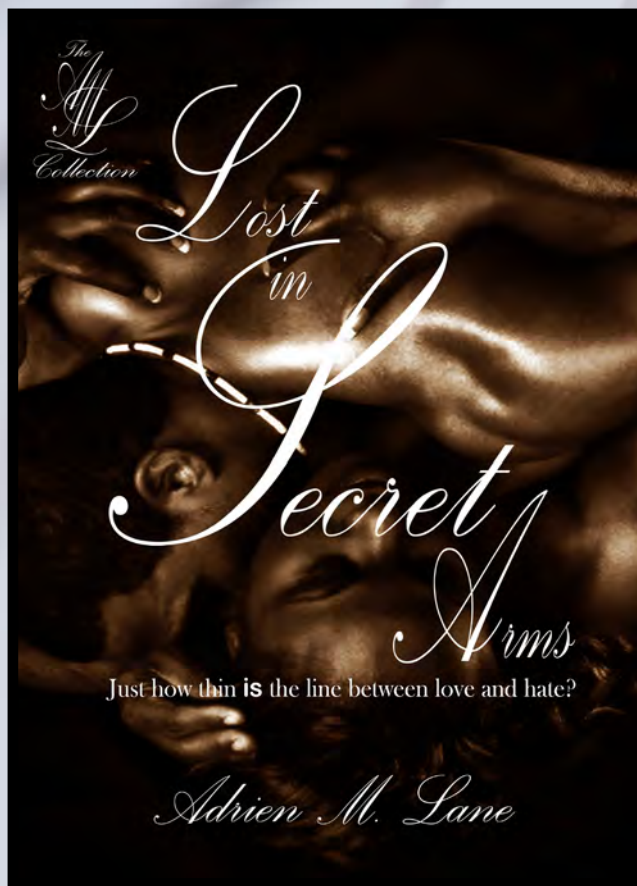
"My husband."

"What happened? Did he leave you for another woman? No ... I can't imagine that, he'd have to be half out his mind."

"He was murdered."

"Murdered?! By who? What happened?"

Do you remember back a few years ago, this guy ... this scumbag ... Robert Seacroft murdered his girlfriend and her children and a cop, and then went on a killing spree?"



READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

Complete Chapter I - Lost in Secret Arms (Continued)

“I’ll never forget it! They say he killed like twelve people.”

“My husband was one of them.”

“Oh God! Oh, my god! Your husband was in that? Lisa. I – I’m sorry. I don’t even know what to say. I’m so sorry!”

“Thank you, George, ... it’s ok. I took the insurance money, bought this house and moved here. The day we met was the first weekend here and I was feeling so low. I didn’t know if I would ever laugh again, or really even smile for that matter. But here you came.”

“Yeah, here I came telling you, you looked like a demon.”

They both laughed again.

“I thought about that for the rest of the day.” Lisa said, and every time I thought about it I broke out laughing, a couple times I laughed until I cried. I knew it wasn’t because what you said was all that funny ... it was all that hurt, pain and tension

coming out of me. Thank you, George.” They both sat silent and looked at each other. Lisa stared hard at George for a few minutes and said, “George, you know I love you, don’t you?”

George smiled, meeting Lisa’s gaze, and he said, “Without a doubt.”

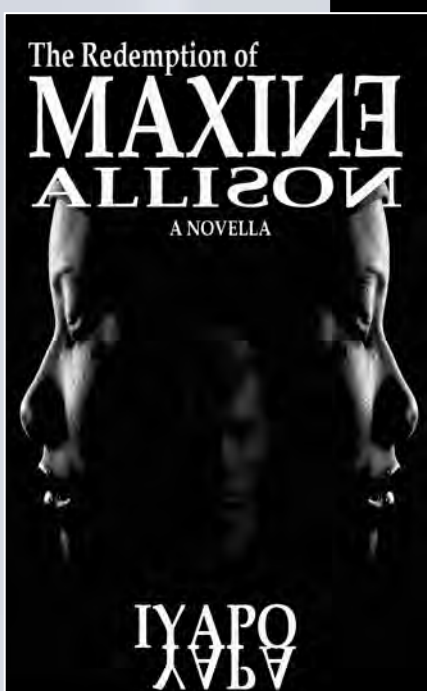
George then tinkered around with his sparkling grape juice, acting like he was about to take a sip, but sitting it back down on the table before he did. “You know I \seriousness she could muster and said, “How could you not?”

They both stared at each other and laughed, leaned in and hugged each other, rocking back and forth, and kissed each other on the cheek. “You know Lena, you’re ‘bout the best friend I ever had.” George said. “Me too.” Lisa said. Then backed away to see Georges full face, put her hands to his cheeks, gently closed her eyes and slowly, with something that was slightly less than passion, but more than friendship—

gave George ‘one across the lips’.

COMING SOON!

PRESENTLY IN THE EDITOR’S HANDS! (So don’t look a ME!)



Is it BEST to DIVEST?

Maxine Allison thought so.

She’d had enough of dealing with Black men who were abusive, lackadaisical when it came to work, and just overall “losers” in her opinion. So she determined she would find herself a “white prince”.

Did she find her **PRINCE** and lose her mind? Is he **PRINCE CHARMING** or is he the **Prince of PERSIA**?!

Has she made a monumental mistake or is a trauma she sustained from a car wreck causing her mind to play tricks on her? If she has made a mistake can Maxine ever undo her disastrous decision ... right or wrong, it seems there is no way for her to find redemption...

or is there?

Love, hate, secrets and deception abound in what is sure to be one of Iyapo Yapa’s most mind bending and controversial books to date. Read *The Redemption of Maxine Allison* and find out why!

READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

R.J. BLAKMAN



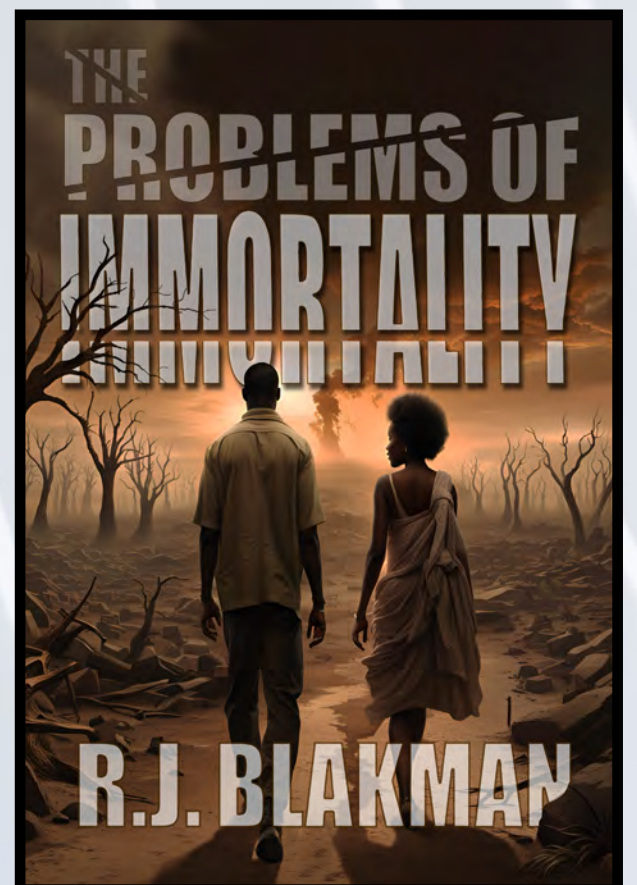
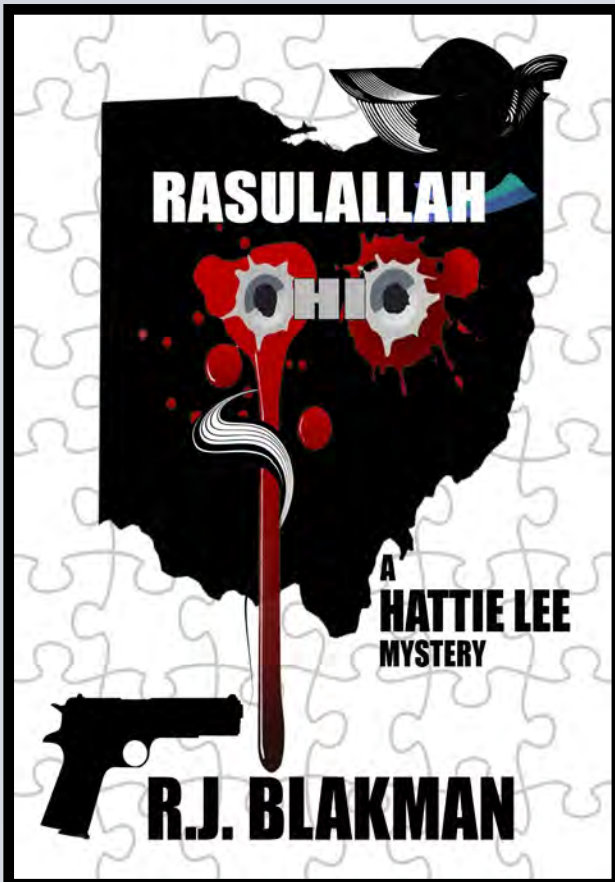
R. J. Blakman is a mystery writer, a writer of non-fiction and an all-around truth seeker. Blackman tries to look at things on a deeper level and whatever he finds, he tends to write about it with no sugar coating.

As a practice, Blakman seeks out truth and goes wherever that truth leads him, even if uncomfortable.

He tends to like working on more than one project at a time, so while he's hard at work on *RASULALLAH, OHIO* he is also working feverishly on his unique take on eternal life: *The Problems of Immortality*.

R.J. Blakman was born in Central America and had one sister. He currently lives in the place of his birth with his beautiful wife Maria. R.J. Blakman can be reached by email at: rjb@iyapoyapa.com

UPCOMING BOOKS BY R.J. BLAKMAN



ENTERTAINING,
ENGROSSING,
THOUGHT PROVOKING!

READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

Wakanda Forever?!

I do not use the term “Wakanda Forever”, nor associate anything about being progressively Pan-Afrikan in those terms for the same reason I don’t use the term “Afrofuturism” to speak about Black people and our place in the future in terms of Sci-Fi, Fantasy, Sword and Soul and so on.

The term Afrofuturism was coined by a white man named Mark Dery. I reject anything that is supposed to pertain to our people but is created by white people. For far too long, they have had control of our narrative, molded it and shaped it.

The character of T’Challa aka “Black Panther” was created by a couple white men named Stan Lee and Jack Kirby for Marvel comics. Likewise, the fictional Wakanda was created by those same two white men. I reject any serious references to the character or surrounding story as it pertains to Black liberation and ascension. When I watch it, it is purely for entertainment purposes although I can see the blatant WS propaganda baked into it. The hero portrayed as the villain and vice versa, along with a white savior and at the very end, a weak leader who decides to share Wakandan technology with a world that still keeps its secrets from Wakanda. ANY entertainment that is created by white people is to serve one purpose and one purpose ONLY, to help perpetuate our subjugation within their system.

Disney, a company known very well for its racist movies and tropes (Song of the South anyone?), has made well over a billion dollars worldwide on the first Black Panther movie. Our people flocked to the theaters in droves to see at long last, positive portrayals of our people on the big

screen. But once again, we... as a demographic... being so emotionally wounded by being born into and raised within a system of WS that we are made easy targets for the predatory system that

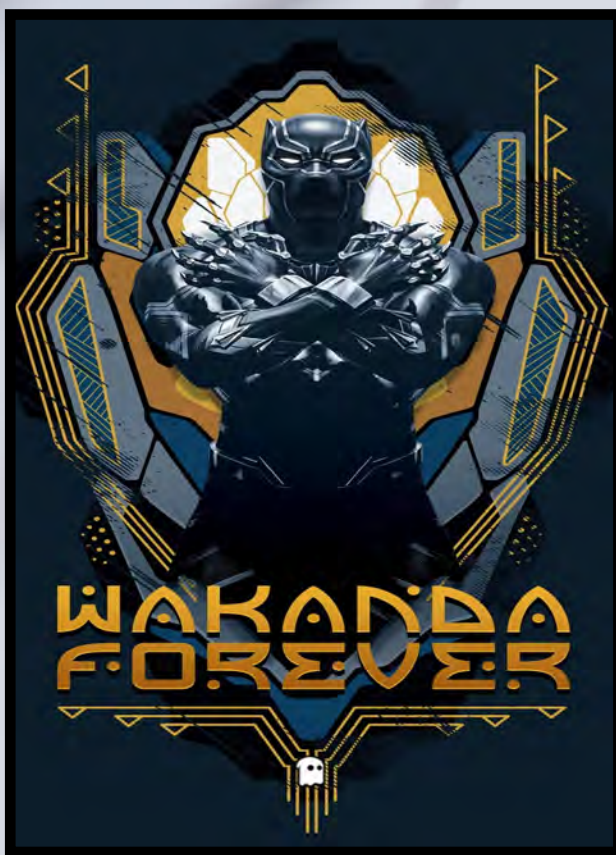
is perpetually seeking ways in which to exploit us. Like the dark teenage Black girl who has been told all her life how ugly and/or worthless and undesirable she is, all it takes is one smooth talking man to fill her head with compliments and ultimately, she finds herself pregnant, having her finances destroyed or harmed in any number of ways. So are we as Black people, so desperate to see ourselves positively (and if we are being honest, to be seen in a positive light by our oppressor), that all a media company has to do is tell us we aren’t garbage,

and we’ll flock to support it.

There is too much that is REAL about our people to be going around crossing our arms before us and yelling a slogan that is attached to something given to us by white people.

It is time to start looking deeper and beyond the vail of the superficial complements and flattery we have become so accustomed to accepting. (Government officials kneeling in kente cloth, and other such nonsensical, worthless, useless symbolic gestures), that we far too often accept, when we should be rightly offended, then ignoring and walking away from them.

We are creative people and need absolutely no help from anyone outside of us in order to construct our own narrative and show an accurate picture of our people TO our people! That is why there is a crop of writers and other creatives like myself who are seeking to take control of our narrative, and it is my hope that our ranks continue to grow.

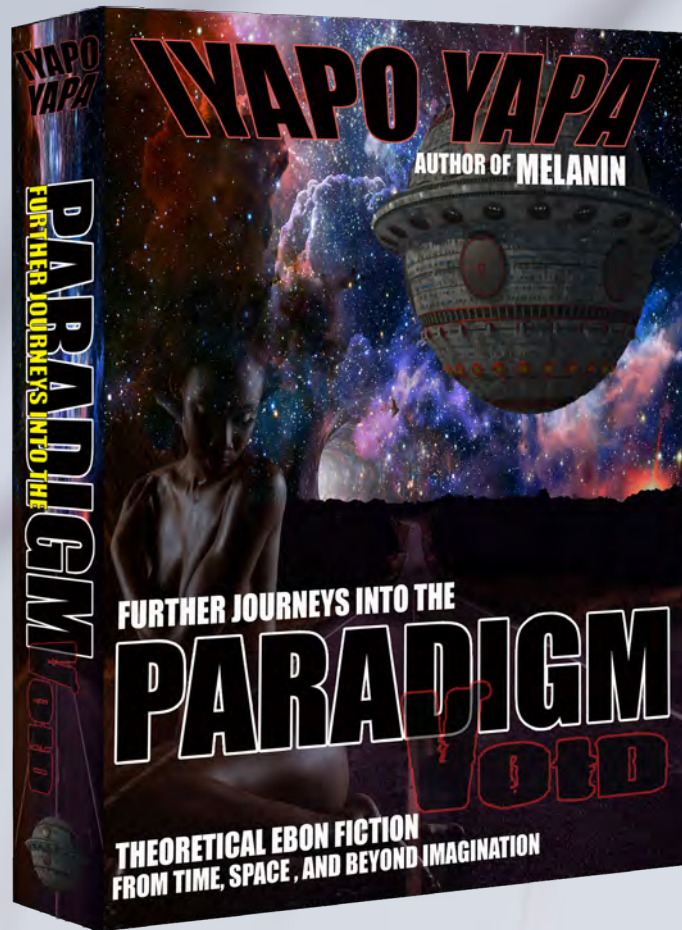


READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

ARE YOU PREPARED TO JOURNEY BACK INTO THE VOID?!

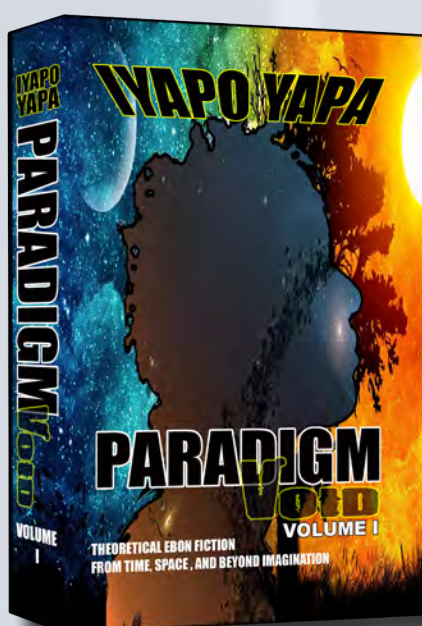


COMING SOON

The *Keepin' it a BUCK* series introduced readers to the *PARADIGM VOID*, a series of short stories in the genre of TEF: Theoretical Ebon Fiction, when everything is possible and anything can and does happen! Now it's time to journey back, and go even farther into the realm of the amazing, the unbelievable and the fantastic!

- What is life like for a person who is “unstuck” in time? One man gives his confessions.
- What if the universe, in an effort to balance itself started removing EVERYTHING that was of no use or value - to include some PEOPLE?!
 - Luxury isn't always what it seems, or is cracked up to be, as one newlywed couple learns first hand.
 - A comet is on a collision course with earth and there is no stopping it. One family decides to have one final family dinner together. And that's when the family secrets start coming out!

All this and MORE is coming to the new addition to the *Keepin' it a BUCK* series with, *Further Journey's into the PARADIGM VOID!*



RIGHT NOW!

Stories from Time, Space and Beyond Imagination,
Paradigm VOID Volume I is available.



READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

Black Writers
Retreat



& cultural Exploration

Take a "Kwanzaa Pause" in...

caribbean COSTA RICA !!!

Tuesday, December 26, 2024 ~ Monday, January 1, 2025

REGISTER NOW!
www.forblackus.com

QUESTIONS?

Contact Retreat Facilitator, angela

email: travel@forblackus.com

or

WhatsApp or Telegram

at:



WhatsApp

601.329.9449



Telegram

CLICK ANYWHERE ON THE IMAGE ABOVE TO GO TO THE WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION.

READING and WRITING in the

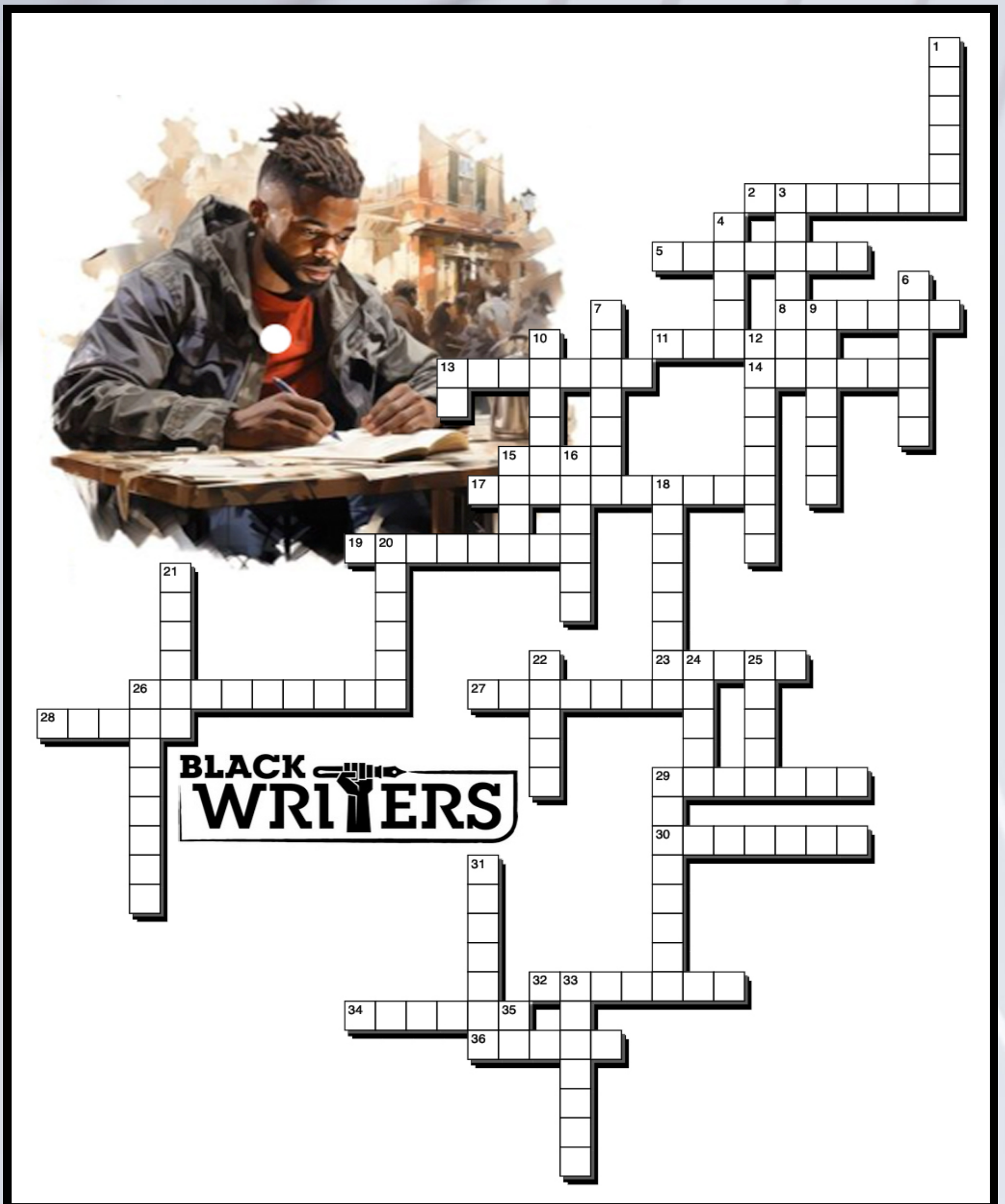
DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

NEW! February 2024 Crossword Puzzle!

This month's crossword puzzle is all about the Black writers! How many do you know off the top of your head? What writer have you never heard of, but after looking him or her up, you are interested in reading their work? As always, the answers to last month's puzzle are at the back of this issue and the answers to this month's crossword puzzle will appear next month. HAVE FUN!

[CLICK ON THE IMAGE BELOW TO DOWNLOAD A PRINTABLE COPY OF THE PUZZLE!](#)



READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

FEBRUARY 2024 CROSSWORD PUZZLE QUESTIONS - BLACKWRITERS

Across

- 2) Author of Parable of the Sower. _____ E. Butler
5) Author of The Last Days of Louisiana Red. _____
Reed
8) Author of Frenzied. Brandon _____
11) Author of The Underground Railroad. _____
Whitehead
13) Author of The God Maps. Yvette _____
14) Author of Affirming Self Love. _____ Riley
15) Author of Do You Dream of Terra-Two? _____
Oh
17) Author of My Soul to Keep. _____ Due
19) Author of Still Waters. Jenna _____
23) Author of The Queen of Bexley. _____ Deon
26) Author of Goliath. Tochi _____
27) Author of The Cost of Knowing. _____ Morris
28) Author of The Director. YS _____
29) Author of Beneath the Shining Jewel. _____
Ojetade
30) Author of Gingerbread. Helen _____
32) Author of The Fifth Season. N.K. _____
34) Author of Native Son. Richard _____
36) Author of This Black Nation. _____ Shabazz

Down

- 1) Author of Things Fall Apart. _____ Achebe
3) Author of Relay. Charles L. _____

- 4) Author of Everfair. Nisi _____
6) Author of A Rose is Still a Rose. _____ L. Friday
7) Author of The Fire Next Time. James _____
9) Author of I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings. Maya

10) Author of The Emancipation of Teotta T. Adams on
Kindle Vella. _____ M. Lane
12) Author of The Trail of Bohu. Charles R. _____
13) Author of Longing for the Night. MS _____
15) Author of Rosewater. _____ Thompson
16) Author of Black Leopard, Red Wolf. _____
James
18) Author of A Song of Wraiths and Ruin. _____
A. Brown
20) Author of Children of Blood and Bone. Tomi

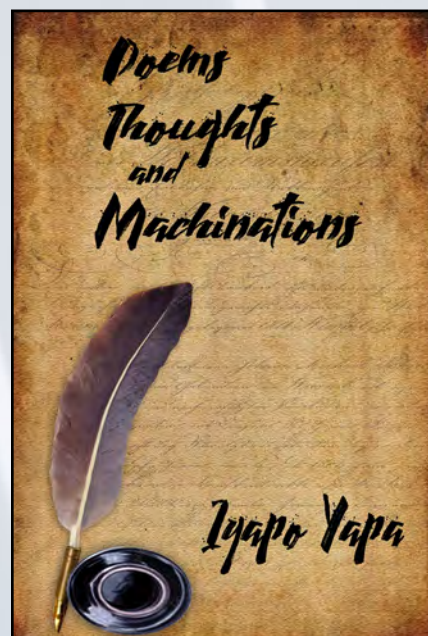
21) Author of Sisters of the Wild Sage. Nicole _____
Kurtz
22) Author of The OverSeer on Kindle Vella. J.C.

24) Author of Since I Seen't You on Kindle Vella.
_____ B.
25) Author of Melanin: A Novel. _____ Yapa
26) Author of Binti. Nnedi _____
29) Author of Sweep of Stars. Maurice _____
31) Author of Nowhere To Land. _____ G. Houston
33) Author of The Invisible Man. Ralph _____
35) Author of The Path to Brightness. _____ Riley



Flash fiction is a genre of fiction, defined as a very short story. While there is no set word count that separates flash fiction from more traditional short stories, flash fiction stories can be as short as a few words (while short stories typically run for several pages). Flash fiction is also known as sudden fiction, short-short stories, micro-fiction, or micro-stories.

Got a few minutes or a good story? That's all you'll need.



The title says it all.

Sometimes I think all people wax poetic whether they write it down or not. For the most part I think everyone has times of reflection and seeking deeper meaning in things.

Here is where I write it down in verse and many times without traditional structure.

Always seeking.

READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors



AVAILABLE NOW!

And What of the CARGO?

Buy it now on Amazon

“Kylah Mbaye of the Zahnoka people, lay as silently and still as she could, halfheartedly petitioning the ancestors that at least for one night she would not be spirited away and taken above deck to endure yet another in a procession of endless rapes. Another woman would have long ago given in to despair--but Kylah--in the face of such crushing odds against her and her people within the bowels of this floating nightmare, knew that eventually, this voyage would not end well... for her captors.” And so it began. *AND WHAT OF THE CARGO?* is a tale of love and hate, tears and triumph, suspense and horror that leads to an unimaginable conclusion.

“The Atlantic crossing, or “Middle Passage,” as it was called by European slavers, was notorious for the number of deaths incurred, averaging in the vicinity of 15-20%”

— Walter Rodney. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*

Much is rightly said and written about the enslavement and fates of Afrikans who were kidnapped from their homeland and transported to the Americas and other lands along the Middle Passage. Absent however is an expanded examination of the fate of those who did not make it through the journey. Whether victims of an inability to survive the unimaginable environment in which they were forced to occupy, or due to murders while attempting to revolt, or by simply jumping overboard, choosing death as a better alternative to chattel enslavement.

What of those ancestors in the depths of the oceans, and what of their souls and spirits. Or to put it bluntly—what of the CARGO?

What are readers saying about And What of the CARGO?

“This story is an exceptional horror tale of what happens when displaced restless souls whose spirits sought to exact restitution from those who prospered from their demise are ignored. The reunion and collaboration between the historical and modern families to bring about justice for their stolen legacy was gripping.”

- Amazon Review

“Mr. Yapa is one of the most imaginative writers out there. He handles controversial subject matter with grace and maturity. He offers powerful insight on one of the most important topics of our era: the Atlantic slave trade and modern-day racism. In this story there is retribution for evils - past and present. There is blood, dismemberment, horror, anger, rage, justice, hate, love, passion, politics, wealth, and finally reconciliation and peace. What a journey. I Loved it. And yes, it did scare me - It scared me a lot!”

- Gwen

“Yapa weaves another story this time interwoven with historical references. I was on my seat with every chapter. I don't want to give it away but....revenge is sweet when served dead. And I can't get over how different each of his offerings are. Read his Vella's and you'll see what I mean. Another great book by Iyapo Yapa. A must read!”

- Amazon review

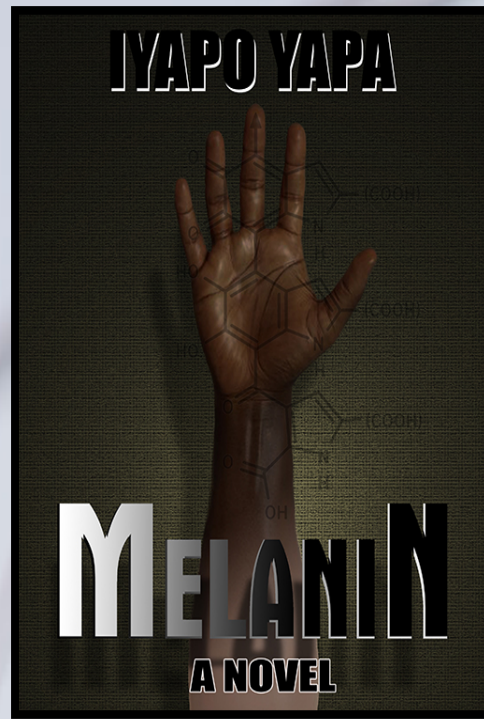
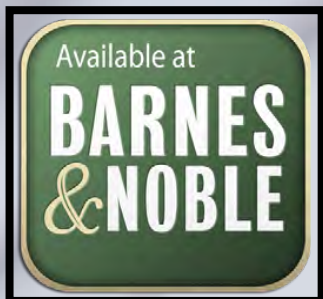
You can also read it for FREE if you have

Kindle Unlimited!

You don't need a Kindle to read it, you can download the free Kindle app from your Android Store or from the Apple Store and read Kindle content on your favorite devices!

Click Below For:

And What of the CARGO?



AVAILABLE NOW!

MELANIN: A NOVEL

Buy it now on Amazon

Due to a series of man-made radiological catastrophes, the non-Black population of the planet becomes susceptible to a highly virulent form of melanoma and has to choose between becoming Black (phenotypically and genetically), or almost certain death.

MELANIN: A NOVEL examines a world where Black people are realizing they are once again truly free. What does it mean for Black people to be back in their rightful place, after centuries of subjugation, marginalization and terror? What does it mean for Black people to no longer be under the boot of a system put (and kept) in place to use and keep using them?

Conversely, what happens to those who have only known control and dominance for centuries as the tide is turning? How do they react to the knowledge that they are powerless to stop the turning tide as the field becomes genuinely level, and the system of white supremacy utterly collapses around them?

On top of that, is a threat to the world at large that is so horrifying no one could have imagined it!

goodreads

What are readers saying about MELANIN: A NOVEL?

“Melanin is an uncompromising and timely tale of speculative fiction, brimming with thought-provoking ideas and imaginative twists.”

- Brandon Massey, award-winning author of *The Quiet Ones* and *Dark Corner*

“Iyapo Yapa has earned a place among the great science fiction writers with *Melanin*. The plot twists will keep you reading long after midnight. As well the imagery is captivating. Replicating the Black experience, you are drawn into the story as if you are there.”

- T.J. Riley, author of *The Path to Brightness*

“The whole world needs to read this book!”

- M.A.D.M. Precious, author of *Michelle's Story* and *Loving Betrayal*

“Every Black person needs to read this book!”

- Gwen B

“It was exciting! I stayed up a few nights wanting to see what was coming!”

- Ayoka B.

You can also read it for FREE if you have

Kindle Unlimited!

You don't need a Kindle to read it, you can download the free Kindle app from your Android Store or from the Apple Store and read Kindle content on your favorite devices!

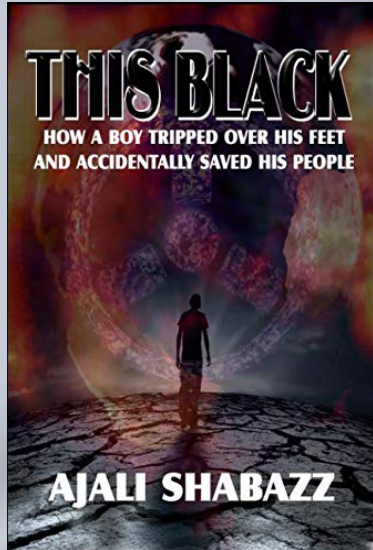
READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

Books by:

AJALI SHABAZZ



Author of: *This Black - This Black NATION* and *Furnace of Affliction!*
The Reading and Writing in the DARK Podcast Interview!

You don't want to miss this discussion with this new POWERFUL voice in
PRO BLACK FICTION in the genre of Theoretical Ebon Fiction, and Non Fiction!

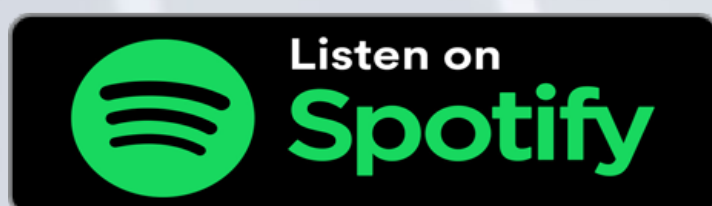
Listen to the interview on  by clicking the link below:

<https://www.spreaker.com/show/a-conversation-with-author-ajali-shabazz>



Did you know there is also a READING and WRITING in the DARK PODCAST?! Well there IS and you can tune in to it and listen just by clicking the block to the right.

You can also hear the READING and WRITING in the DARK podcast on:



CLICK THIS BLOCK TO LISTEN TO THE
READING and WRITING in the
DARK
A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

podcast!

listen on  LISTEN ON 

 Listen on Spotify

READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

What Makes the Katt Williams Interview Problematic

From IYAPO'S BLOG Wednesday, 31 January 2024

Kat Williams Interview on Club Shay Shay on YouTube exceeds 50 million views.

What makes the Katt Williams interview problematic?

As a people, celebrity worship, a seemingly insatiable desire for gossip, along with attention to things that, at the end of the day, mean absolutely NOTHING to our liberation and separation from those who mean us only harm, is going to be our downfall.

The planet is ravaged by radiation, poisons, war, poverty, sickness, and a host of other things that we as a people are the victims of and are dealing with, although we don't have a hand in the creation or perpetuation of any of them. And all of these things are escalating.

As the number of views grew on the YouTube video, I found myself scouring news sources (both mainstream—which I absolutely DO NOT TRUST, but they can sometimes POINT you to what you may need do be researching—an my trusted independent outlets), because, as I said to my wife, “Ok... let me go find out what's REALLY going on out here while they have everybody looking over THERE.”

Now... full disclosure: I DID watch almost all of the interview. And yes, partly because of curiosity, but mostly because I wanted to see if there would be anything truly useful. I have to say that for ME, not much of it was useful. There was nothing he said that I didn't already either suspect or know when it came to the



entertainment industry. People like Neely Fuller, Jr. and even our ancestor Dr. Amos Wilson and others have already been warning us of such, so there was nothing new there and I prefer to go to those sources. ESPECIALLY because I find Katt Williams “people are people” stance HIGHLY problematic.

I digress.

Why do I see this entire interview and the fervor around it challenging?

The planet is LITERALLY falling apart around us.

But what are WE (Black people in general), rushing to hear?

Possible celebrity' dirt.

Who is the “King, Queen of _____ (fill in the blank with rap/hip hop/pop/and so on.)”?

Who created hip hop?

Who is the GOAT—the greatest of all time—when it comes to _____ (fill in the blank with entertainment or sports)?

Let's say for the sake of argument that we are finally able to nail down who the “King” and “Queen” of _____ (fill in the blank) is. We ALSO prove beyond ANY shadow of a doubt that Black people created Hip Hop, and that so and so IS the “GOAT” when it comes to _____ (fill in the blank).

We have nailed ALL that down.

READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

What Makes the Katt Williams Interview Problematic (Continued)

From IYAPO'S BLOG Wednesday, 31 January 2024

Now what?!

What does ANY of it mean when you're enslaved, subjugated, and exploited within a system that is designed to destroy your mind, body and spirit? What victory have you won when you finally achieve getting the biggest, most opulent, luxurious state room...

on the TITANIC...

WHILE it's sinking?

Here is what we MUST consider when seeking "truth" on the internet, and even above that, what is either helpful, hurtful to Black people, or of consequence gets demonetized and deplatformed. What did the platforms of substance ALL have in common? They spoke against the status quo. They spoke truth to power in a way that was empowering people and specifically in terms of Black people. They were saying something to encourage Black people to SEPARATE from this SoWS.

There have been several events as recent as a couple years ago that were causing people of ALL stripes to be banned outright or shadow banned. What they have in common is that ANYTHING they were saying that could be construed as a GENUINE threat to the establishment and/or the establishment's narrative, were taken down.

Both Alex Jones and Donald Trump were effectively silenced on social media. (DO NOT take this as some kind of endorsement of either of them, because it absolutely IS NOT). My point is that both of them are rich white men, and they were silenced because they were viewed by the

establishment as threats.

Let's be clear, the silencing of Alex Jones was not because he was such a threat to the establishment in his particular case, but he was offered up more in the form of a sacrificial lamb. They (the establishment) knew that many would CHEER when he was taken down. Just as they did when Trump was deplatformed. Donald Trump being a little different of a case, NOT because he was speaking out against the establishment, but because the man has NO FILTER and was CONSTANTLY saying the "quiet part out loud".

THAT'S why they had to (and are continuing to), quiet his voice and seek to get rid of him. Not because he's some great man, or great truth teller... it's because he doesn't know how to SHUT UP. They knew a LOT of Black people would CHEER when notorious Black man hater, Cynthia G was deplatformed.

I wasn't one of them.

I don't cheer when ANYONE is silenced, because when THEY are... that means a voice of REAL truth is NEXT. We must fight for EVERYONE to have a voice, because the answer to a flawed argument is NOT to silence the view you disagree with, but to present the BETTER argument, and let the LISTENER decide.

The YouTube channels of The Radical Sister (anti-Nuker and advocate for Black people) were taken down. All FIVE of them, painstakingly built over many years, one with over 22 THOUSAND



READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

What Makes the Katt Williams Interview Problematic (Continued)

From IYAPO'S BLOG Wednesday, 31 January 2024

subscribers. She was taken down with little to no explanation. The reason was that she speaks uncompromising truth when it comes to Black people and our need to separate from white people, and ESPECIALLY because she is revealing the truth that the planet is now irradiated with man-made radiation, the dangers of it and solutions for it.

No sensationalism.

No hate speech.

No misinformation or information that one couldn't go and research for themselves if they only took the time.

However. She was removed.

Why?

Because her message was true, and it was effective, was a benefit to Black people throughout the diaspora, and most of all, it went diametrically AGAINST the establishment narrative they want our people to buy into.

Some may no doubt say "Well Cyn G's channel was taken down and she wasn't for Black men (or arguably Black WOMEN if you really want to go there)." That doesn't disprove anything. Like ALL Black people who bend the knee to the SoWS and serve it, they have a shelf life. Platforms like YouTube have a direction in which it is wanting to move, and it is getting rid of various voices and replacing them with others. (Don't think for a moment they got rid of her before having a back up in place who may be more subtle and a bit more palatable and not in your face, but still promoting the same rhetoric.)

Side note: There are Black people who say they don't call themselves Pro-Black anymore because of all the so called Pro-Black people who are talking Black and sleeping white, or doing things that are definitely NOT Pro-Black. So, they say, "I'm not going to call myself Pro-Black."



That is the same rationale for people who say "I'm not going to become a _____ (fill in the religious denomination), because of all the hypocrites and people who claim to be _____ (fill in the blank), but don't even live by it."

Well... a person can CLAIM to be ANYTHING.

A claim doesn't make a person that thing.

There are people who claim to be vegan but say they still have chicken or steak or whatever every now and then. (THEN THEY'RE NOT A FREAKIN' VEAGAN!)

There is an exception for a situation in which there is NO OTHER food source, and one MUST eat meat to survive. To that degree, you can STILL be a vegan or vegetarian but be FORCED for a time to consume meat. However, when SURROUNDED by foods of different kinds and you CHOOSE to eat meat, you are neither a vegan or vegetarian. So, as a vegetarian, I'm not going to say, "I'm going to stop calling myself that because all these vegetarians are out here eating meat and it makes ME look bad." No. They are NOT vegetarian or vegan. Though they CALL themselves that.

READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

What Makes the Katt Williams Interview Problematic (Continued)

From IYAPO'S BLOG Wednesday, 31 January 2024

This abdication leads to bigger issues as the world (or the United States) anyway, is being conditioned into this mindset of “I SAY I’m this... therefore, I AM what I say, and I have the right to determine what I am and everyone else must respect and acknowledge that.”

These concessions are what have led to men and women who are now 100% by X or Y-chromosome, saying they are the opposite gender and demanding to be recognized as such. Yes, there are some things that have grey areas, but there are some things that are absolute, immutable truths. The goal of those who control and destroy is to blur EVERY line and get us to believe that EVERYTHING is up for personal interpretation and that there is no such thing as definitive, immutable truth when it comes to ANYTHING.

Once that mindset has been adopted, it is impossible to become established or planted and rooted as it were. I would argue that a person who is rooted and grounded in a false believe system is actually in better shape than a person who is rooted in nothing.

Why?

Because rooting and grounding occurs over time and shows the person at least believes that there ARE some absolutes. Many times, if you can present to them a more compelling argument they will consider it, check into it and uproot themselves (which is a longer process that requires more study and investigation on their part), and eventually RE-root themselves in the BETTER argument, and if a BETTER one comes

along, the process begins again. As opposed to those who are rootless and are, as the Bible puts it in the book of Ephesians 14, “carried about with every wind of doctrine”.



I’m becoming of the mind that the goal of the “ruling class” isn’t to make people think a certain way as much as it is crippling our ability to think AT ALL.

Back to Katt Williams.

I hear a LOT of our people talking about “throwing out the bones”, when it comes to listening to people who are problematic. To a DEGREE I agree with that because I do it myself depending on the subject and/or who is presenting it. However, when eating chicken, how does one get salmonella—food poisoning, when they have not eaten the bones?

They get it from the MICROSCOPIC bacteria that you cannot detect when eating undercooked meat, and it will make you sick just the same. There was a LOT of salmonella in the interview. For as many ‘truth bombs’ as Williams may have dropped, honestly... reading the comment section of the video, I didn’t see ONE COMMENT saying, “Gee, I didn’t know Steve Harvey was a piece of s_ _t.” or “Wow! I had NO IDEA all that wickedness and perversion went on in Hollywood!” No one’s saying that because we all pretty much already know that.

There was nothing new there. But... there WAS the salmonella: praise for DL Hugley, saying basically that he personally wouldn’t date white women, but that there wasn’t really anything.

READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

What Makes the Katt Williams Interview Problematic (Continued)

From IYAPO'S BLOG Wednesday, 31 January 2024

But... there WAS the salmonella: praise for DL Hugley, saying basically that he personally wouldn't date white women, but that there wasn't really anything wrong with it; mentioning his white friends; and most of all, the fact that he made a point of saying that he learned to entertain Black audiences and white alike, and that now he can entertain ANYONE.

Let's dissect that very quickly.

I read where someone wrote, "The day white people are praising me, you will know I have betrayed you."

Am I saying that we should be purposely antagonize white people? Of course not!

What I'm saying is that by the nature of our position within their system, their history and what they do presently, if you present them with the truth about their people, no matter how matter of factly, pleasantly, or eloquently (think Malcolm X before his trip), then they are not only going to hate you, but likely want you dead, or at BEST be offended.

And that is if you ONLY give them facts.

No jokes.

No insults.

No lies.

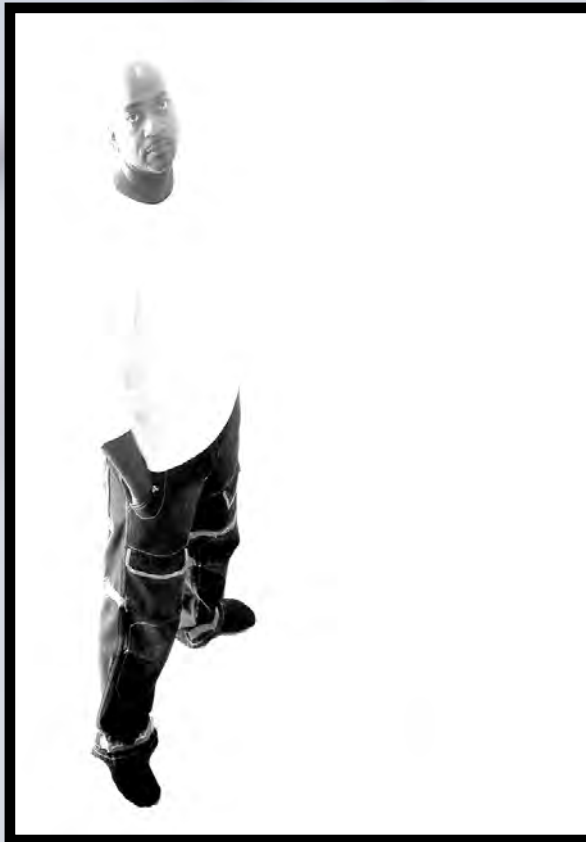
No antagonism.

Just facts about their history and what they continue to do.

So... if you can speak to audiences of white people and they have zero issues with you, then you may need to examine your message, because if, as a Black person (or any person really), you speak any amount of truth as it pertains to white people and their treatment of Black people globally. If you speak about their history of

subjugation, colonization, and genocide, and you do it in the most clinical, non-combative, non-confrontational, milk toast way possible, white people will still rear up and be ready to castigate you on the spot at best.

If white people are on board with you, and in many cases, awarding you for your stands, then you are either a traitor, sellout, lacking in self-awareness or are ineffective with delivering your messages.



IYAPO
IYAPO YAPPA
BLOG

READING and WRITING in the DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

MELANIN: A Novel NOW ON KINDLE UNLIMITED!

I know that my first novel has brought joy to those who have read it and been kind enough to take time to rate it and write reviews. AND *MELANIN* has been a ceaseless source of pride and joy for me. From the time I released *MELANIN: A Novel* it has only been available as soft cover, hard back and Kindle edition. It is my only work published through Amazon, that is not available on Kindle Unlimited.

UNTIL NOW!

To celebrate the One Year Anniversary of the publication of my debut novel, *MELANIN: A Novel* is now available on Kindle Unlimited! This means that if you have a Kindle (or any tablet or mobile device) you can (download and) open the free Kindle App and read about what hap-

pens in a world were becoming genetically and phenotypically Black is the difference between life and death.

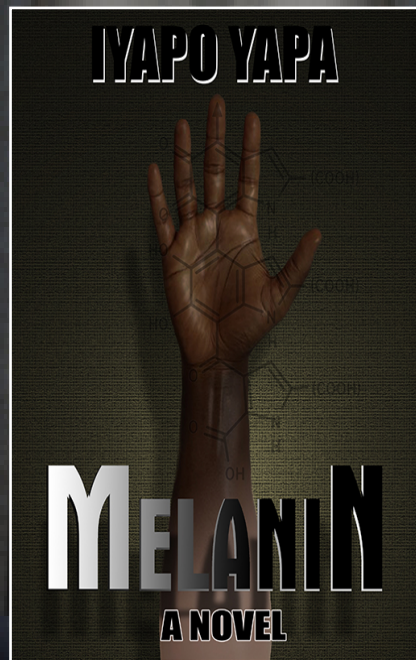
So, tell your family and tell your friends! Tell your neighbors and your colleagues! Tell your book clubs and your reading groups!

And remember you can still also get your copy of *MELANIN: A Novel*

as a soft cover or hard cover edition as well as purchasing it to add to your Kindle digital library!

I want to thank everyone for your support, well wishes and purchases! It means a lot to me to know my work is being read and appreciated! It is my goal to keep

bringing you the very best work I can produce!



Could YOU survive?!

Five years ago, a cataclysm now known as THE COLLAPSE occurred. Dimensions merged with horrific results. It is now common to see creatures of myth, legend, and nightmare along with once long extinct animals populating the landscape. Carl, LaTanya and Lester, embark on a quest to find a lost book that can't change the madness of the new normal but may assist them and others in the now nearly impossible task of: SURVIVING the WORST! Enter a world of action, adventure, science and horror on Kindle vella!

Click on the Kindle vella link below!



kindle vella



Be sure to take some time to visit my website at:

<https://www.iyapoyapa.com> - or just click the image to the right!

There are a LOT of things to see and interact with! There are also a couple special surprises hidden in the site. They aren't marked, but if you take a little time to search for them, you'll defiantly be pleasantly surprised!



READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

Alright, enough about ME!

Below are AWESOME stories on the KINDLE VELLA platform by some authors I know!

Just click the cover art to be transported to their stories!

And remember, the first THREE episodes are FREE to read!



I DeClaire Love

Angela Riley

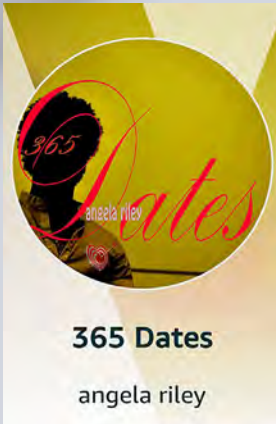
DeClaire and Tyrone meet and sparks fly. They fall in love with each other quick, fast, and in a hurry. It seems too good to be true. But is it? Is it safe to love? Are there any “good” rules when it comes to love? Do we have to fight for love? Are there always games being played when it comes to love? Is simple, sane, “old-fashioned” love out of style? CAN LOVE SET US FREE? *** New Episodes Weekly!



The Love X TamuTamu Agency

Angela Riley

Love is natural but it ain't always easy. And Mama Tamu should know! She is a 91 year old match maker who has run “The Love X TamuTamu Agency” for FIFTY years. She has personally experienced and been a witness to all kinds of love. And, as she says, “Love is more than a notion!” Follow along as she stands up for and works to support and encourage the natural flow of Black Love.



365 Dates

Angela Riley

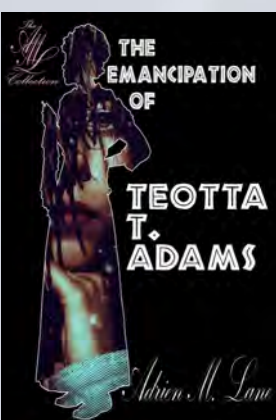
Single again, after my first divorce, one day I had a new thought: I WANT TO DATE. And... NOTHING. No one came knocking on my door to woo me. No one approached me when I was out wanting to court me. Nobody asked friends/family to be set up with me. Just crickets! So, thinking that maybe my goal was to vague--I want to date.--to make anything happen, I decided to pursue a HUGE goal of going on 365 dates. Not 3, 5, or 6 dates but three HUNDRED and SIXTY-FIVE dates. So...LET'S GO!



Fully BLACK

Angela Riley

Because she is IN LOVE, talented dancer and homeschooled student Makena enrolls in the elite Fullson High to be closer to Marshall.



The Emancipation of Teotta T. Adams

Adrien M. Lane

Teotta T. Adams has it all, big house, nice car, fine clothes, and a private chef, one of the best in the world, and a successful husband. Yes, Teotta has everything. Everything except her FREEDOM! She spends her days in the lap of luxury, but inside she knows something's wrong. Her ‘husband’ is just this side of a stranger, and worse, Teotta knows even less about herself. When she finally discovers why, and the incredible truth behind it, she will long for the bliss of her lost ignorance.



Since I Seen't You

Ayoka B.

She and David met when they were 18. After a rough start, they build a friendship that would span decades: marriages, children, love and heartache. When they lose touch, she thought that she would never see him again, but she was wrong. Can men and women truly be just friends? Can their friendship withstand what life has in store?

READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

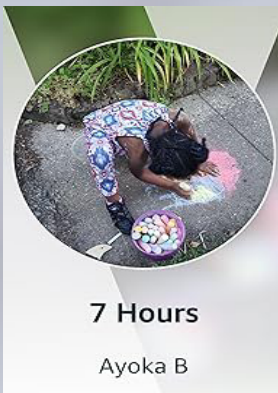
A space for avid Black readers and Black authors



The Match

Ayoka B.

Have you ever changed someone's life? I mean in a life and death sort of way. I opened a letter that I almost threw out, thinking it was junk mail; it said that I was a possible bone marrow match for someone! I couldn't even remember being tested. The letter asked me to contact them if I was still a willing donor... what would you do?



7 Hours

Ayoka B.

Time is precious so honor it. This is a peek at how our family was indelibly changed in the span of seven hours.



The Skin I'm In

Ayoka B.

As a child, the world outside of my safe life chipped away at my confidence and self-image. I was 18 before I liked what I saw in the mirror. Or at least I could actually look at my reflection and smile. Self-love and identity are frequently intertwined; they definitely were for me.



A'DICK'tion The Back Story

MADM Precious

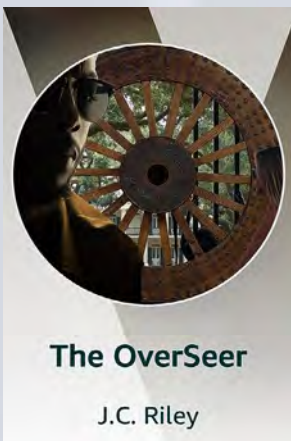
From Book 1: Sex addiction is a real thing; When Quincey finds out his wife is caught up in some things, can they save their marriage.



The Godchild Chronicles

J.C. Riley

War rocks the Planet Raosis! Ptahlon Anuku is drafted onto the Anti-Terror Detail & is under constant attack. With ties to both sides of the conflict, Ptahlon must choose a side in order to get him & his wife (fellow CDO Officer Raseem) safely off of Raosis. What will it take for Ptahlon & Raseem to escape in one piece? Who will they rely on to help bring their ambitions to a reality? And more importantly, what kind of sacrifice are they willing to make to achieve their ultimate goal?



The OverSeer

J.C. Riley

It's nice to be up high and seeing over things, right? Welcome to the world of THE OVERSEER. Strap yourself in because it's one heck of a ride!

ALSO AVAILABLE on AMAZON and OTHER PLATFORMS!

Below are stories and books by some authors I know! Just click the cover art to purchase their book.

READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

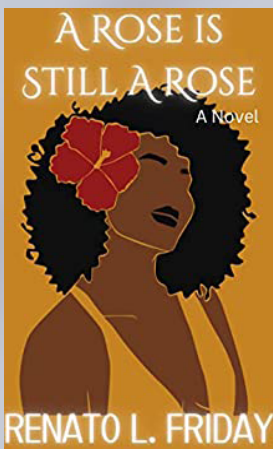


Affirming Self Love (Graphic Non-Fiction SERIES)

angela riley

SelfLOVE Meditation, Reflections, & AFFIRMATIONS Series...

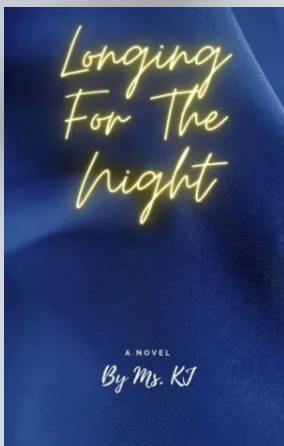
With a new book released each month, this “Graphic Nonfiction” series is filled with love for BlackUs. Each episode opens with a short essay exploring a theme such as “Following the Happy” or “Plan & Reflect” and culminates with a dynamic collection of affirmation. You’ll have a beautiful time meditating and reflecting on the monthly theme as you AFFIRM Self Love.



A Rose is Still a Rose

Renato L. Friday

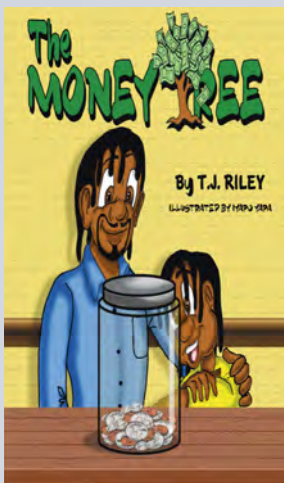
Rose thought life was going great: she was engaged, had a beautiful set of twin girls, a recent trade school graduate, and a new job right around the corner. Unfortunately, her fiancé, David, turned out to not be what she needed, and she chose to break things off. In the midst of her failing relationship, she met a man named Falcon, who ironically turns out to be her new boss. They quickly go from acquaintances to lovers, which opens up a fire pit of drama. Then comes Landon, a self-made millionaire, who is very humble about his accomplishments. He shows her all the things she was lacking while with David, and ultimately proposes. Naturally, Rose is scared to fall for Landon and accept his proposal due to David’s lies and Falcon’s toxic choices, but she takes a chance and allows Landon to love her the way she needs. Will her love for him forsake the feelings she’s still harboring for Falcon, or will she give into temptation?



Longing for the Night

Ms. KJ

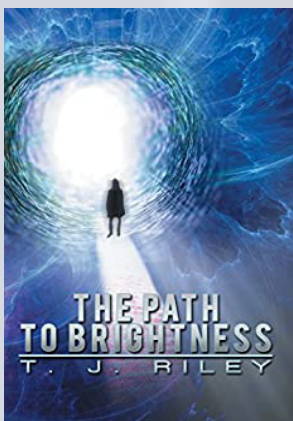
Inspired by the poem Goblin Market by Christina Rossetti, two young sisters face the trials and tribulations of the hood in this coming-of-age story about the harshness of living in South Central Los Angeles.



The Money Tree

T.J. Riley / Illustrated by Iyapo Yapa

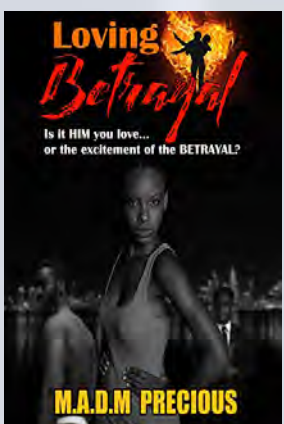
Every child wants money to buy something, right? Our hero does too. But, his father has a surprise, a Money Tree. Join the fun journey to find out how to grow your own money tree.



THE PATH to BRIGHTNESS

T.J. Riley

Fatima, a young woman, has a near-death experience. When she awakes from a coma and recovers, she has mystical powers. She begins to see auras and experiences life with her new abilities. For the clever character, Fatima, life is about to dramatically change. Follow Fatima’s journey as she tries to convince others of the astounding esoteric knowledge she has brought back from beyond the veil. However, there are some that wish to stop her from sharing an ancient secret. A secret that will change life on earth, forever.



LOVING BETRAYAL

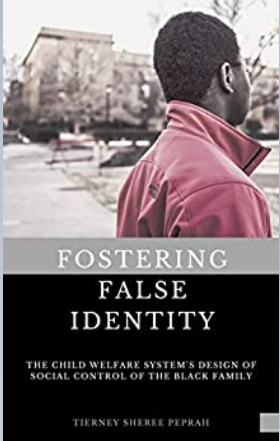
MADM Precious

When Michelle met Michael, she thought that she found the love of her life. She was young and coming out of a bad marriage. A single parent of two children, she was scared, broke and had no self esteem. Michael seemed perfect, except for one little problem...

READING and WRITING in the

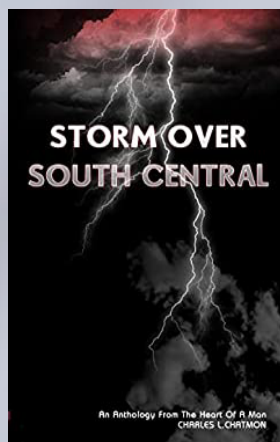
DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors



Fostering False Identity: The Child Welfare System's Design of Social Control of the Black Family Tierney Peprah

THE ORGANISM OF RACISM IN THE UNITED STATES CRAFTS VARIOUS SYSTEMS MEANT TO ACHIEVE ONE OVERARCHING PURPOSE, that is to ensure that peoples and groups designated for an inferior existence pose little to no threat to the social structure of wealth and privilege that is propped up on their backs. These systems are allowed to exist, oftentimes unchallenged, by propagating dishonest descriptions of why these systems exist. Many people are without the proper means to challenge these systems, camouflaged as being charitable or in the public interest, for their unjust outcomes. In *Fostering False Identity*, the American child welfare system is explored as such a system. While the child welfare system is portrayed as a moral arbitrator in the abuse and neglect of children, in actuality this system was formulated for the specific purpose of regulating disenfranchised populations by removing children from those communities to assimilate them into White society. Thus assimilated, they are believed to pose minimal threat to the social order. *Fostering False Identity* will explore this phenomenon through a lens of Black liberation and self-determination of African families who are consistently victimized by this system.



Storm Over South Central

Charles L. Chatmon

The Storm has been unleashed, which means it's time to share what's inside the much anticipated anthology by author Charles L. Chatmon.

Chatmon, a refreshing voice in the world of modern poetry and author of *The Depths of My Soul* & *The Voices of South Central* returns with engaging short stories and thought provoking poems.

Read *Storm over South Central* and discover the thoughts he writes about in this volume filled with verses and tales of despair, stories of hope. It will also reveal a lot about American society – its strengths, its flaws and its people. This is a literary journey you will enjoy taking.

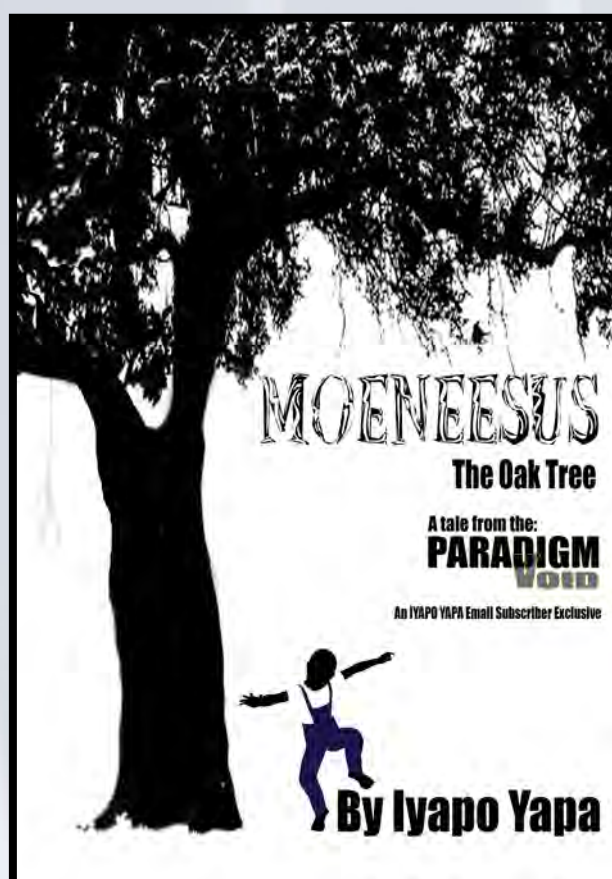


RELAY

Charles L. Chatmon

A high school track relay team is in the hunt for their ultimate goal. When tragedy strikes, the team bands together to capture a dream they've had since childhood. Totally within their grasp, they must come together as one to achieve the final victory. Along the way, they face personal challenges that threatens to derail their dreams - and their lives.

Explore the saga of the Appleton High School varsity track team as they compete to win a championship they have worked hard for - with difficulties along the way.



If you are a READING AND WRITING IN THE DARK subscriber and haven't read your free copy of MOENEESUS THE OAK TREE, what are you waiting for?! Relax and take some time to read a great story from the the Paradigm VOID! It may make you smile, it may make you cry, but either way, you are going to enjoy it.

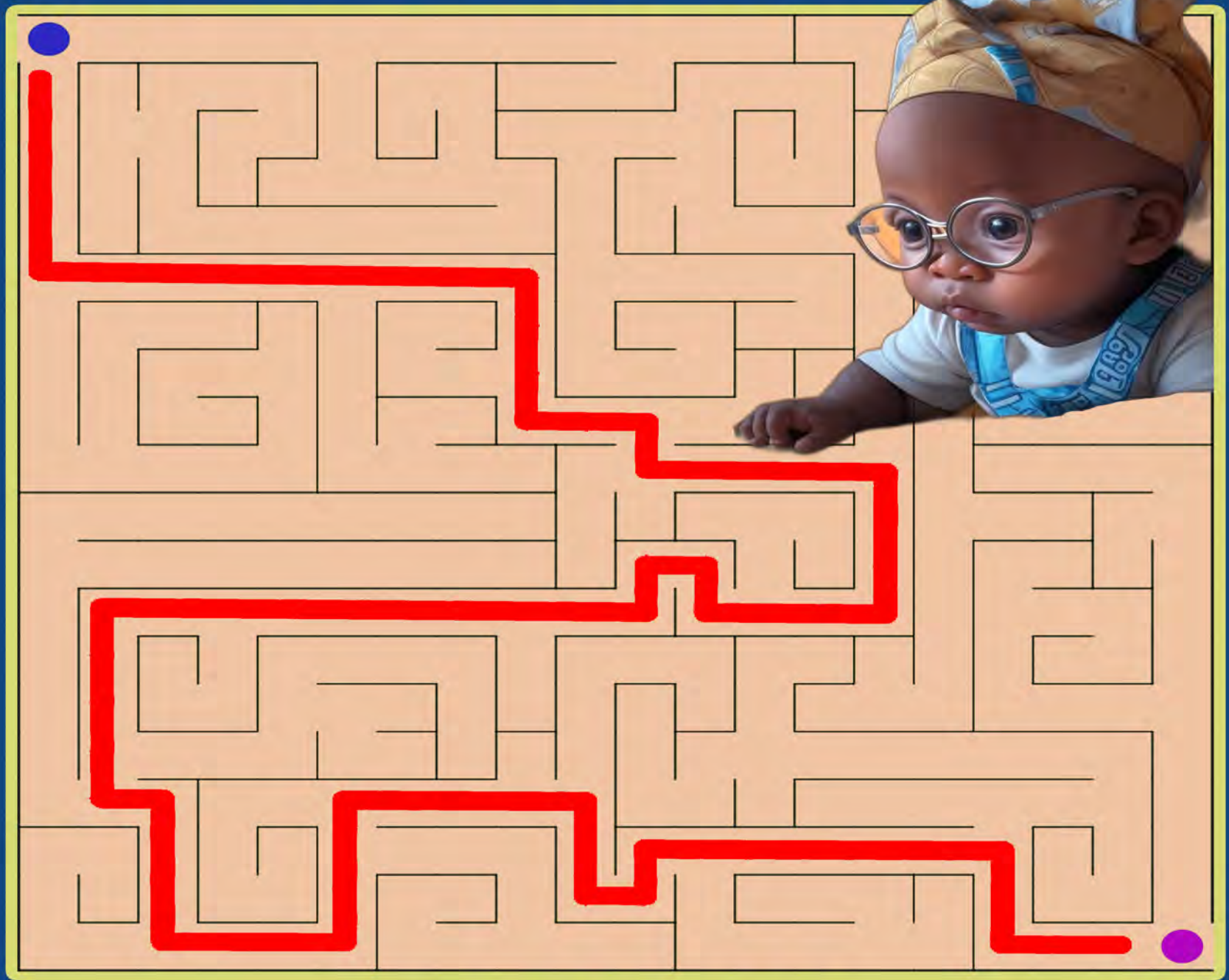
READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

HERE IS THE SOLUTION TO LAST MONTH'S PUZZLE!

JANUARY 2024 MAZE!



SOLUTION



Benita, a desperate and out-of-work actress, had been selling her blood to stay afloat. Times were hard and getting worse until she agreed to star in a film by an unknown director named Danny West. He'd been producing mystery and horror flicks for years. Yet, no one knew it was just a front for his secret agenda.

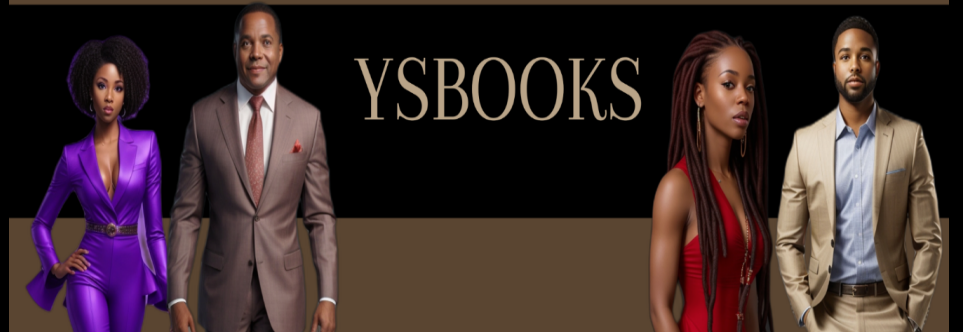
* * *

For even MORE fantastic FREE Audio Dramas by this author just click the image below! Buy her a cup of coffee while you're there!

CLICK THE IMAGE ABOVE TO LISTEN TO

THE DIRECTOR

READ FOR FREE OR
LISTEN TO THE AUDIO DRAMA!



READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

IYAPO YAPA

Tales of the
MONKEY'S PAW

NOT EVERY WISH GRANTED MAKES DREAMS COME TRUE

BE CAREFUL WHAT
YOU WISH FOR!



Keepin' it a BUCK *series*

SHORT STORIES of HORROR and SUSPENSE



BE SURE TO VISIT IYAPO YAPA ON THESE OTHER PLATFORMS!

MADUR MARU MARE



COMING 2024