

READING and WRITING in the

# DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

## NEWSLETTER

### THIS MONTH:

An exclusive excerpt from the hit short story:

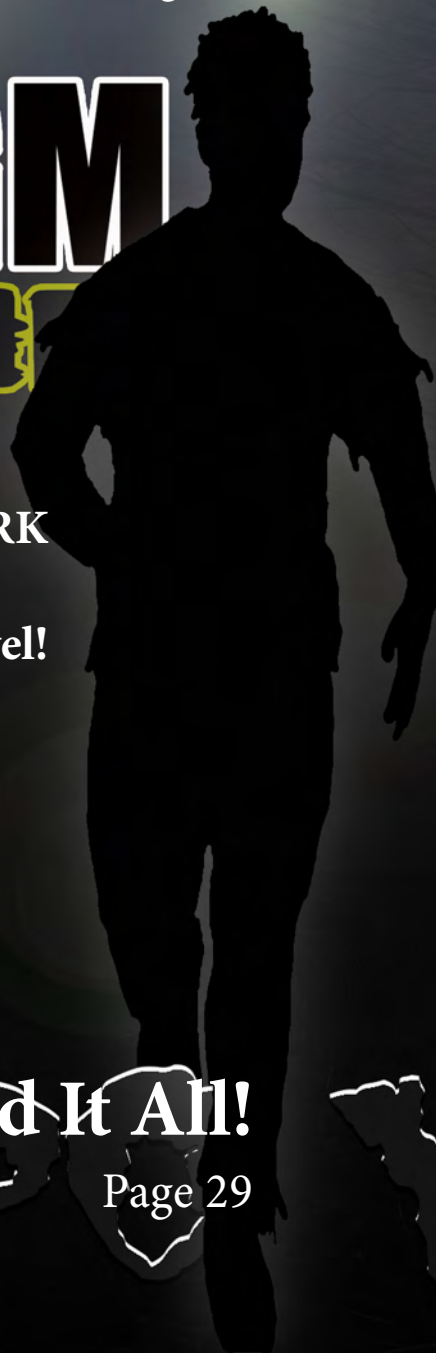


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A short story from the

# PARADIGM

THEORETICAL EBON FICTION



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:

The Letter That Started It All!

Page 29

Feature:

Guest Author:

Angela

Rasulallah

Riley



Essay: *SELF LOVE and LOVE for our people*

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This month's Crossword puzzle:

# Black Men Who Write!

Page 24

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



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## NEWSLETTER

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### WELCOME BACK!

Hello everyone and welcome back! And to those who have just subscribed WELCOME and THANK YOU for subscribing! In addition to all the exciting things that I give you in each issue, this edition features a first! This month, there is a guest writer for the feature article. She is none other than the incomparable Angela Rasulallah Riley! Her article is an essay she wrote for one of my upcoming books and I can't wait for everyone to get the chance to read it! I'm still working on the LONG AWAITED first installment of Tales of the Monkey's Paw as well as the second Paradigm Void book, Further Journeys into the Paradigm VOID. Volume I is available right now on Amazon and Barnes & Noble. Rasulallah, Ohio is presently being edited, and I can't WAIT to put it out into the world (being that it is my first attempt at writing a mystery)! 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



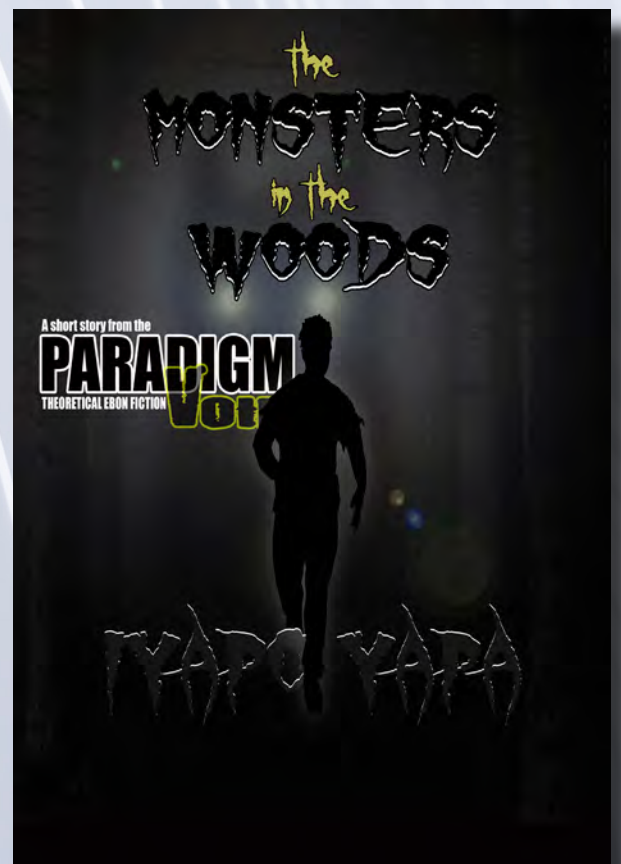
### This month's sneak peek is: THE MONSTERS in the WOODS A short Story From The Paradigm VOID

This month we get a peek at an excerpt from a short story from the book Paradigm VOID: Volume I. Paradigm VOID is a collection of short stories that explores genres and subjects like science fiction, time travel, horror, monsters and things that go bump in the night. There's even a love story (of a sort) titled "A Knot in the Rope of Time." All the stories that make up the complete collection can also be purchased individually for a dollar as the Keepin' it a BUCK Series. "The Monsters in the Woods" is a part of the collection, but it is not available as one of the Keepin' it a BUCK stand-alone stories.

This issue doesn't have the complete story, but it does have 13 glorious pages to whet your appetite for more (come on, I can't give you the whole story... that would mess up the "only available in Paradigm Void" thing! "The Monsters in the Woods" takes place on a plantation and has enslaved Black people, of course, suffering under oppression—but keep in mind, this IS a story from the Paradigm VOID, so you can expect the unexpected!

"The Monsters" has turned out to be a fan favorite, and I have to admit, I'm pretty fond of the story myself—and not just because I wrote the thing. If you haven't already read it, I'm looking forward to your reading it; if it does intrigue you, perhaps you'd like to purchase Paradigm VOID and see how it ends. After that, you can start going through the other offerings in this collection of Theoretical Ebon Fiction that takes you places in time, space and beyond imagination!

If you do decide to get (a copy of a gift copy or two of) Paradigm VOID, just click on the image for "The Monsters in the Woods" to take you to the purchase page. All reviews and ratings are much appreciated!



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**Feature: This month we welcome guest author, Angela Rasulallah Riley**

**With her essay: *SELF LOVE and LOVE for our people***

(Taken from the upcoming book: *Global Problems Caused By Pookie, Ray Ray and Laquita*)

My Black love wants little Black boys and little Black girls.

That's what my Black love wants. More Pookies and RayRays & LaQuitas.

I want a Black world for BlackUs.

I want to rub "stay Black" all over all of Blackus. Like slathering cocoa butter or shea butter or olive oil through our hair and all the way down to the soles of our feet. Keep us from being dry and looking ashy.

I want to whisper truth in the ears of sleeping Black children to shore up their love of self and confidence in self.

I want to hug and kiss us all over. Showering us with love, appreciation, and affection. Tickling us and loudly blowing love right into our belly, our core, with lips vibrating the truth into our centers where it radiates and vibrates and hums throughout us.

Me, with my dark skin and nappy hair, I love us all. All of BlackUs. We are what my Black love wants.

Little Black girls and little Black boys: LaKeisha. Dymon. Tyrone. RayRay. Shanequa. Myown. Iona. Pookie. Ebony. Nicodemus. Deja. DeShawn. Marquis. Xavier. Javonte. Alonzo. Sadie. Ivory. Margie. Pittman. Porche. Bertha Lee. Odessa. Cooney. Malik. Naima. Millard. Ibn. Alvetta. Kela. I love 'em all.

My Black love wants Black children. Proudly Black. Black without question. Clearly Black. Black without confusion. Happily Black.

Black without fear. Freely Black. Black without

apology. Joyfully Black.

Ashy legs and rusty butts. Nappy hair and big noses. Peanut heads held erect on little necks. Shining, luminous, glowing Ebony skin. Dark brown skin. Deep, dark, skin. Full lips and free edges. Eyes that see into and create, create, create. The future. Voices that will deepen and resonate evoking all things heavenly. Hips that will spread and undulate and twerk reflecting and amplifying the deep and subtle rhythm of the earth. Joy. The rhythm of life.

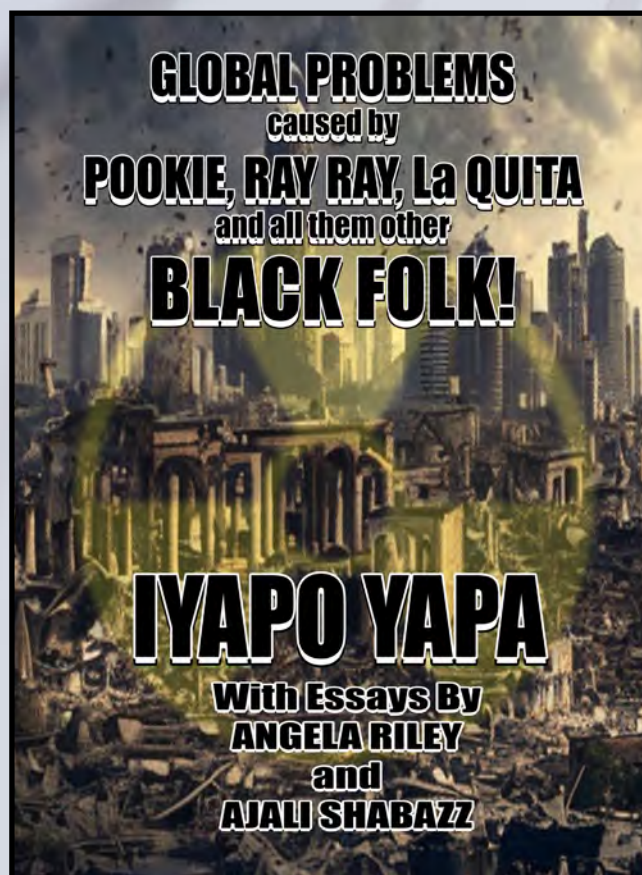
I want the Pookies and Shanequas, the ones who are like me—my sons, daughters, sisters, brothers, cousins, uncles, aunties, nieces, and nephews—to have what I didn't have. If they can't have

what I didn't have, I want them to find what I found. I didn't have self-love; I did discover it though. Love.

My love wants little black girls and little black boys to exist. To continue. To thrive. I want a Black world for BlackUs. That's what my Black love wants.

I reached within and back. I looked out and forward. I looked through the veil of less than-hate-problematic-ugly-worthless-invisible-ignorable-without value and learned the truth. Love. Love is the truth. To know BlackUs is to love us. To know us truly as we were, as we are, as we will be is to know love.

Past present and future united in love. I have it heard said that the ancestors live in our wombs. And they must live in our seed as well. Legacy, now, and progeny together. United in foreverness. This little Black girl knew from young that my nappy hair was a problem to a looooooootta folks.



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With her essay: *SELF LOVE and LOVE for our people* (Continued)**

Burnt little Black girl neck and ears testified to the efforts of granny to tame the beast that was my head of little Black girl hair. Uncooperative, resilient, resistant. “Just go lay down! Try not to mess up yo hair!”

Skinny, black, and ugly 10-year-old little Black girl me with my hair newly cut into a short fro. “You look beautiful.” Mom says and believes. I think she is the only one. “The men’s room is over there.” A strange adult says to the little Black girl that they mistake for a little Black boy.

Later scalp burns and scabs from seeming hours and hours of perm plastered atop my head. Trying hard to knock out the kinks—kill ‘em dead—and lay my little Black girl hair down. Down straight. Down my scalp. Down my neck. To little or no avail. Relaxers weren’t relaxing and perms were not nowhere near permanent.

My Black love wants Shaquita to love her hair. Strong, healthy, hair. Plain old Black girl hair. Free hair. Kinky, coily, nappy. Beautiful. My Black love wants us to be hair proud. And for RayRay and Pookie to see and know the beauty and power and elegance of everyday Black hair. Their own hair. To love and crave women and children with hair like BlackUs.

This little Black girl noticed early that the light skinned girls are the pretty girls. They get the “ooohs” and “ahhs”. The “awws” and the “heys”. They get noticed. They get complimented. They get picked out and called on. They are wanted. They are seen.

My Black love wants little Black boys and girls to love the cloak of Black skin. To glory in being

enrobed in deep, dark, highly melanated, deeply melanated Black skin. To be proud of who we are. And how we look. To enJOY the skin we are in.

This little Black girl heard the disparaging comments about big lips and big noses. Too big. Too wide. Too, too, too... Like I was too black and my hair was too nappy. I see the nose contouring. And the wearing of muted colors on big lips and black skin. “You too black to wear red lipstick.” “You too black to wear yellow.” And I understood the “You too black to be proud.” “You too black to be happy.” “You too black to celebrate and be celebrated.”

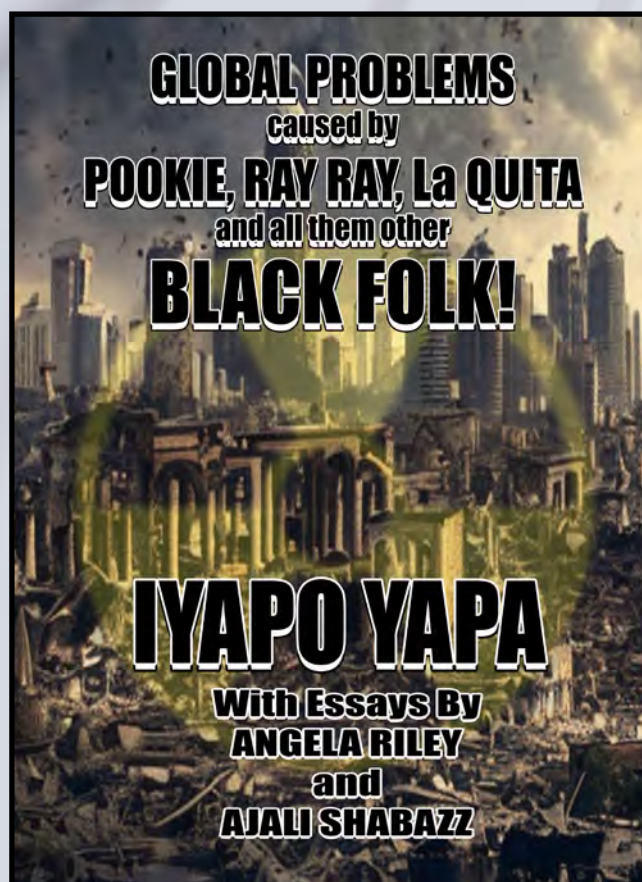
My Black love wants a Black world without perms, without skin bleaching. A world full of little Black children who look Black and love it. Phonetically Black. Big eyes. Wide noses. Thick lips. Dark skin. Nappy hair. All loved and valued and appreciated. Coveted.

Are BlackUs mocked for not speaking proper Portuguese, Spanish, French,... I know how we look down on those who don’t speak “proper” English. Those who say ax instead of ask or have be’s buzzing around too much and in the wrong places. How we are encouraged to fit it.

To blend in. To not be too much.

To not be too Black. To hide our Blackness. To be ashamed of our Blackness.

Blending into whiteness. Wanting to look white. Wanting to speak white. To be accepted by white and as white. To vacation white. To decorate our homes white. And walk white. And think right. (White is right.) With white values.



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**Feature: This month we welcome guest author, Angela Rasulallah Riley  
With her essay: *SELF LOVE and LOVE for our people* (Continued)**

My love wants little Black boys and little Black girls to reproduce themselves, their parents, and grandparents, and great-grandparents. Let BlackUs recreate BlackUs. My love wants little Black girls and little Black boys to learn their ancestors and know our ancestors through the lives and light of loving their own little Black boys and little Black girls. Lookin' and actin' like great-great-grand-pa Ed and Uncle Ike and Sylvia Jeanne.

Little Black boys and little Black girls who know their Black selves. And love their Black selves. Little Black girls and little Black boys who celebrate their Blackness and are proud of who and whose they are. That's what my Black love wants.

My Black love wants little Black boys and little Black boys who grown into Black men and Black women who want to look like Black folks. Want to speak like Black folks. Have tongues that know BlackUs. My Black love wants Black women and men who accept ourselves as Black. And love ourselves as Black. And love the Blackness of Shanequas and Pookies, and our sons, daughters, sisters, brothers, cousins, uncles, aunts, nieces, and nephews.

My Black love wants Black men and women who love Black women and men and love creating little Black children.

My Black love wants Pookie, RayRay AND LaQuita.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Writes about and imagines us winning, happy, loved, loving, and free. Born and raised in the US in a magical place called Detroit. Has wandered (aimlessly?) through life and throughout the world with one assignment: Supporting YOU in being freely, fully, and fabulously YOU. Connect with angela - [www.forblackus.com](http://www.forblackus.com) - for one-on-one coaching, (small and large group) workshops, & retreats all focused--one way or another--on Black Love!

FIND AFFIRMING SELF LOVE AT:

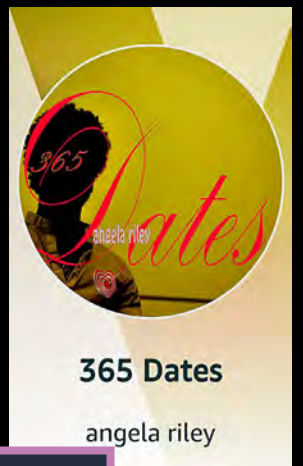


CAN LOVE SET US FREE?

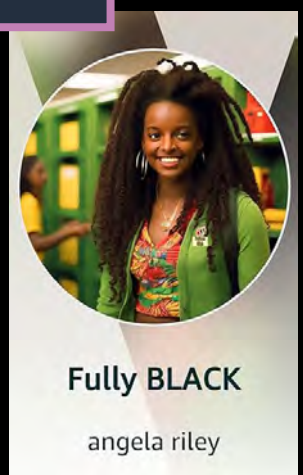


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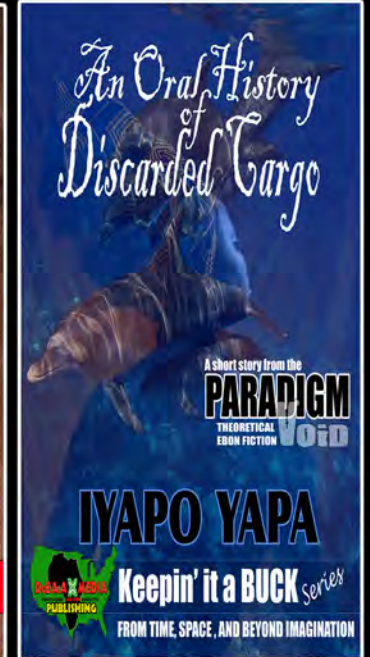


Fully BLACK  
angela riley

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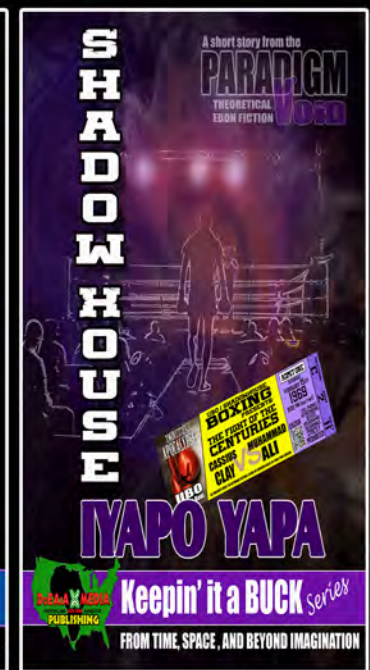
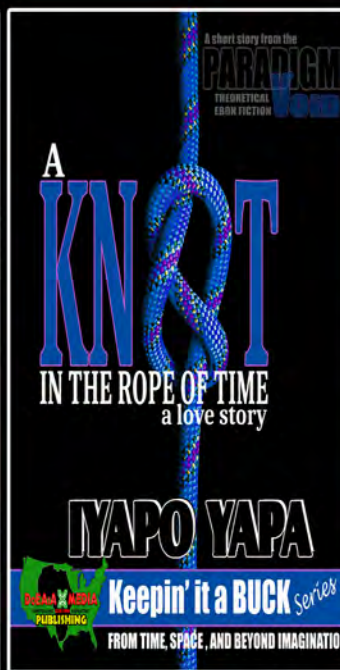


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## Keepin' it a BUCK series



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 VERY rough form as we experiment with getting it right, but the story is still fun as all get out! So give it a listen and let us know what you think!

You can send your thoughts to: [comments@iyapoyapa.com](mailto:comments@iyapoyapa.com)

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## Excerpt - The Monsters in the Woods

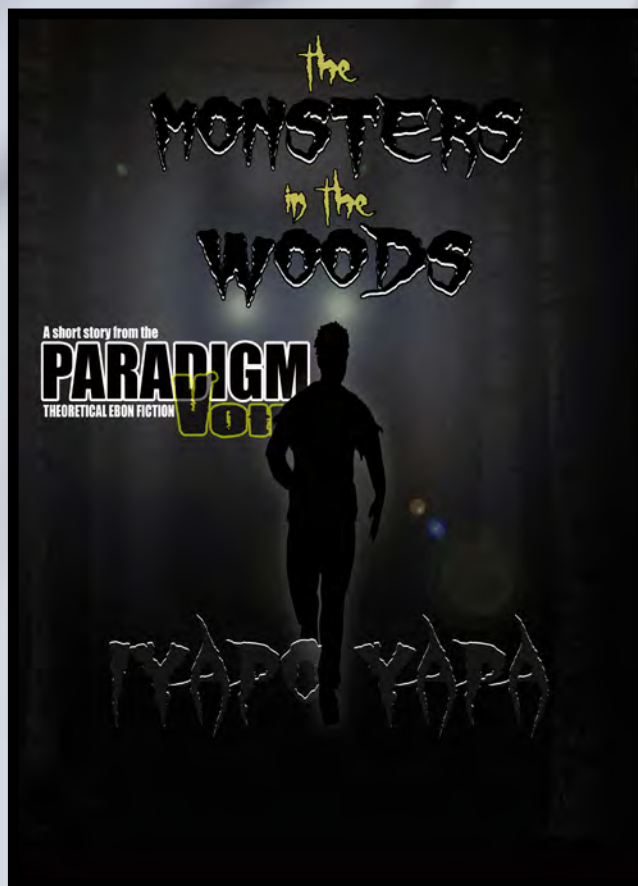
Scroggins looked up at the sky at the stars just as he had done for the past several nights. He scanned first to find the big dipper, which was easiest for him. From the time he was young his father had taught him how to spot the constellation. He knew to look up from the end of the handle to find the little dipper and the bright stationary star Polaris – which was actually a cluster of three stars. He knew nothing about the name or science of it though and didn't particularly care about it. All Scroggins did care about was using that beacon to keep him moving north, in the right direction, to freedom, at least according to the elders and oral historians in his group.

He hid and slept by day and ran at night, which made the trek easier he believed, but not without its own unique challenges. From the time he was a child, Scroggins was told about the monsters in the woods. They were described as massive creatures, who, despite their enormous size were able to move with unearthly speed. The Sotua had huge glowing eyes and enormous shining silvery

teeth with which to tear into the flesh and eat their victims and drink their blood. They were creatures that let out deafening roars before they would tear you apart limb from limb. He was told by his masters that the creatures were called "Sotua" and that legend had it that his people were cursed and that the Sotua were put in place as a punishment to Black people and an aid to white people who were favored by God. The only way they could avoid the consequences of the

curse and find peace in the next life was to work for white men and be good servants. Those who were not would be doomed to suffer eternal pain and anguish in the world to come. Also, a component of the curse was that they would have to live and die on the property of their masters, for if they ventured away without permission, or sought to run away, they would be confronted by the Sotua and be killed.

Now in young adulthood, Scroggins was convinced that the stories of the North Star and freedom may have been true, but that the tales of the Sotua had no basis in reality. He had



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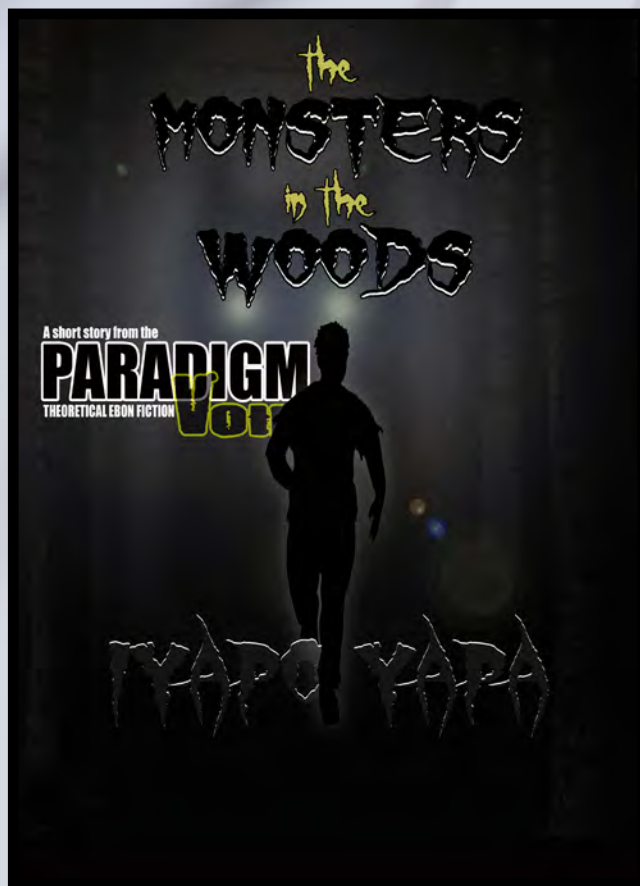
## Excerpt - The Monsters in the Woods (Continued)

never heard of one of his people ever coming into contact with or even seeing the so-called Sotua – but there was the little matter of the part of the stories about them that said no slave had ever seen one and lived to tell about it. Still, Scroggins concluded that no such creatures existed and that it was a story made up by the massahs to keep their slaves from running, which in its way reinforced his belief that there was indeed a path to freedom if he had the courage and endurance to pursue it.

Based upon the day and night cycle he knew he had been on the run for some five days and six nights thus far of having hidden himself well from the sunlight, and then following the North Star in the cool of the ebon landscape, which thankfully, at least for now, had not been obscured by any cloud cover. In those days and nights, he had not seen or heard the sound of horses, the voices of white men, or the barking and howling of their hounds. He figured that since he left at nightfall Saturday night,

and they were given a day of rest on Sundays, where there was no accounting of who was present to work the fields and who wasn't, he was well ahead of them and had at the very least a day and a half head start. Even at that far ahead, Scroggins was sure to keep moving swiftly because his lead could evaporate very quickly given that any hunting party would be on horseback, and thus capable of easily closing the gap. But Scroggins considered himself smarter than most. He had been planning this escape for almost a year.

He had learned how to live off the land before fleeing. He knew how to build traps that would almost certainly catch a rabbit, quail or wild turkey. He kept several pieces of flint in his pocket so he could make a fire if he needed to cook, or if the night became too cold and he might need to stop running and warm himself. Once on the run, he never tried to capture any animals, and the flint in his pocket had remained as unused as the day he took off.



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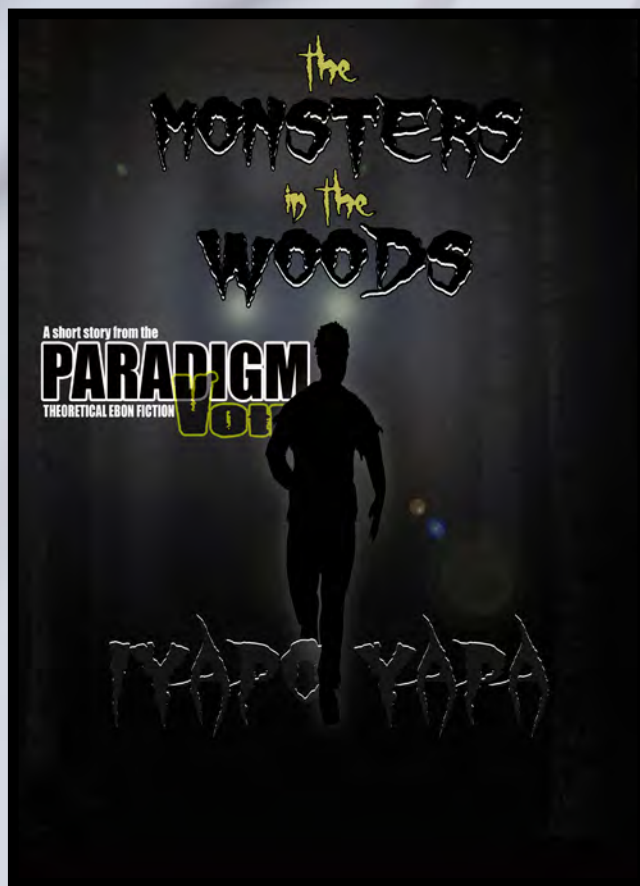
## Excerpt - The Monsters in the Woods (Continued)

Considering and planning to be on the run was one thing, but in practice, the thought of a fire – even in the daytime – was a risk he didn't want to take, because if the blaze did not draw his pursuers to his position, the billowing smoke almost certainly would. Instead, Scroggins opted for nuts and berries, leaves and plants he had taught himself through instruction by elders about foraging, were safe to eat, and when consumed enough, could be quite filling if not satisfying; and thankfully the nights had been mild and one of them cold, but not so much that he felt the need for warmth.

As far as where to go and how to survive out in the environment, he'd hobbled together information given to him by enslaved men and women from other plantations when they would come with their owners to visit his massah, Massah Edmonds. He also made a habit of stealthily just happening to be around when massah Edmonds was discussing leaving for a few days on business. The intel did not give him any idea of in what direction to run, but he was able to glean information about the

landscape and some of the dangers he might face in the woods and need to avoid, like bears, poisonous snakes, wild boars and such – all of which he had seen from time to time as he and his people picked cotton. There was always an overseer with a rifle to take care of any wild animal that might show up however, so there had never been any casualties from attacks – at least none Scroggins had ever seen firsthand or heard about. Unsurprisingly he never overheard the massahs speak about the Sotua, but then, those monstrous entities were only a threat to runaway slaves – not their masters.

Tonight, was another perfect time to make up some ground and widen the distance between himself and the slave catchers who Scroggins had absolutely no doubt were pursuing him. The moon was bright, but not so much that it defeated his attempts at concealment. The ground was not dry, but solid enough that he could run without leaving footprints – and he was careful not to leave broken branches and disturbed foliage in his wake and not to provide easy



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## Excerpt - The Monsters in the Woods (Continued)

tracking. It would be difficult enough to stay ahead of the bloodhounds that doubtless were by now well acquainted with his scent and determined to bring together his physical form with it.

As he ran, breathing hard—but not too hard—pacing himself and following the beacon overhead, Scroggins kept his sight well ahead of him, every now and then turning his gaze right or left, not looking for those who were hunting him, but for any wild animals that may have spotted him in the night and pegged him as an easy meal.

He ran as quietly as he could, every now and then catching the sound of a group of crickets that would immediately fall silent when he stepped near their space. He also heard the occasional great horned or screech owls, something he was well acquainted with. After being on the move in the cool of the night, a new noise met Scroggins's ears that was definitely alien to him. The sound was coming from in front of him, and was not necessarily loud, but it did fill the air. He slowed his pace and walked cautiously in the direction of

the noise. Squinting in the darkness he made out what looked like a clearing. There was no more shrubbery that he could see immediately beyond the wood line, but on the other side of it were a few trees and some sparse foliage and more of what looked like the ground, but it was moving.

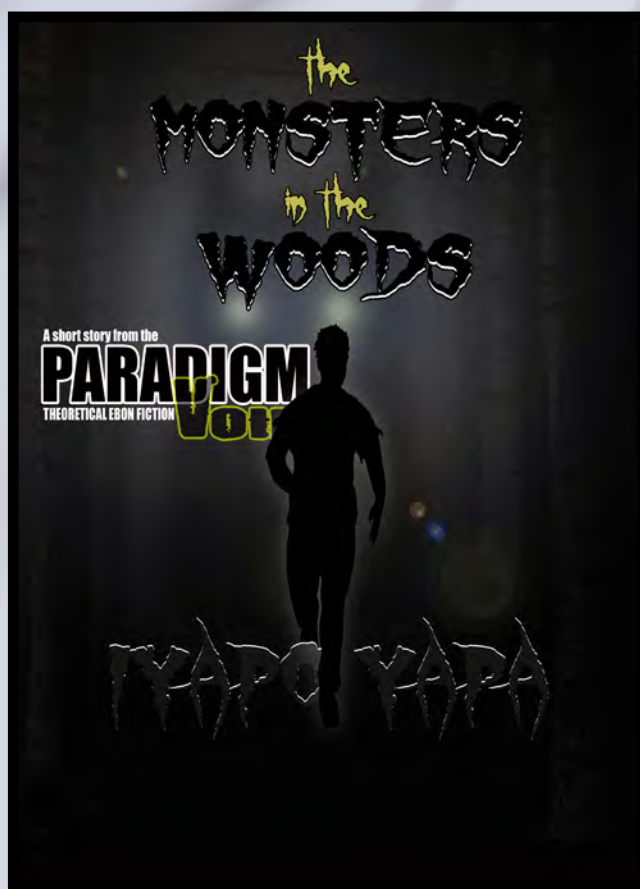
The light of the moon was reflecting off of it.

It didn't take long before he realized what he saw was flowing water—a stream, brook

or river.

Intuitively he knew that if he could make it to that body of water and cross it, he could likely throw the hounds off his scent and buy himself even more time, if it didn't secure his escape altogether.

He ran toward the clearing, and after emerging from the wood line, the ground felt stark to him. The sensation was unlike anything he'd ever before felt beneath his bare feet. He was happy though that it seemed to give him more traction with which to run, and so he did, the sight of the moving water filling his eyes and giving him hope and for the moment



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## Excerpt - The Monsters in the Woods (Continued)

a single purpose.

Get to the water.

Scroggins took a couple steps in the direction of his focus.

He heard them before he saw them.

They were coming toward him through the clearing! The roar made him jump and he felt lightheaded having never heard anything that loud in his life! He quickly turned in the darkness and he saw not one, but several sets of bright glowing eyes, belonging to massive, shadowy creatures far larger than any bear he had ever witnessed, with obscenely large teeth that gleamed from both the moonlight and their huge glowing eyes!

It was the SOTUA!

They were REAL!

He ran yelling into the night, “Oh God hep me! Forgive me! I’ll be good from here on out! Jus’ let me git back ta Massah Edmonds, an’ I’ll do everthin’ he say, an’ never try ta’

run again!!”

Scroggins tried not to scream, but his fear overtook him far too quickly for that! He covered his ears to shut out the angry shrieks of the monsters approaching him and let out a yell as he ran – the roaring of the Sotua nearly drowning his cries! He ran back into the forest, stubbing his toes on large rocks, and utterly falling over downed tree trunks, praying

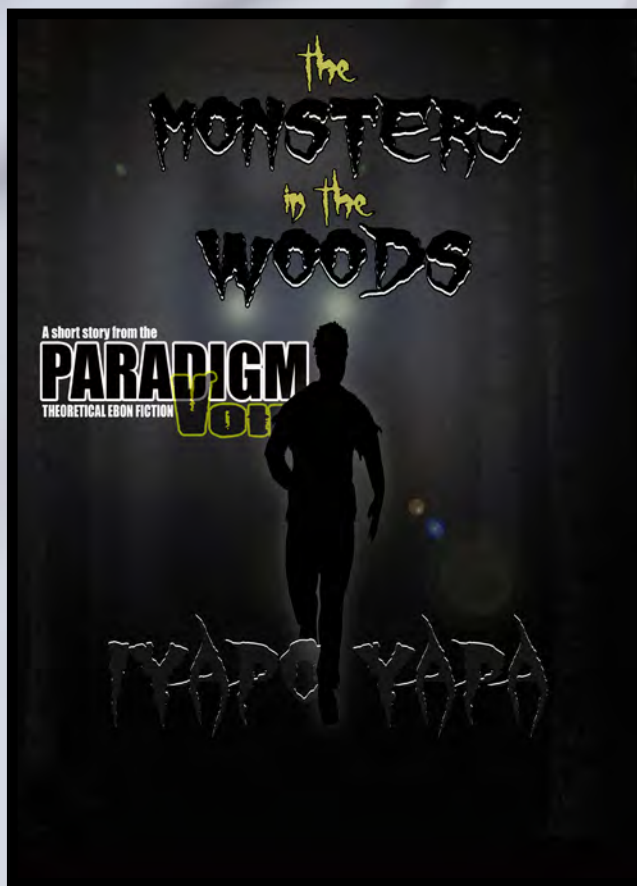
and hoping against hope that the enormous, freakishly swift monsters had not seen him! As he ran, the noise of the monsters was still ever present behind him, chilling him to the bone, but in front of him, between the roars of the Sotua, he sensed another noise in the distance, this one more familiar.

Dogs.

Bloodhounds.

Scroggins had been found.

By the distant sound of the dogs, he felt he may have had a chance to



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## Excerpt - The Monsters at the Woods (Continued)

continue running if he could only have made it to and across the water, but the Sotua were blocking the way. Now a decision had to be made, that wasn't much of a choice at all, for he knew the whipping and punishment that awaited him when he returned, but his choices were either the creatures of his childhood nightmares, or the creatures of his nightmarish adult waking life.

\* \* \*

By now Jacob had well learned to pick cotton finishing the long day without bloody hands. He and his compatriots had been gathering the cash crop since their childhood as did generation upon generation before them. Youth to elder, picking, picking, picking.

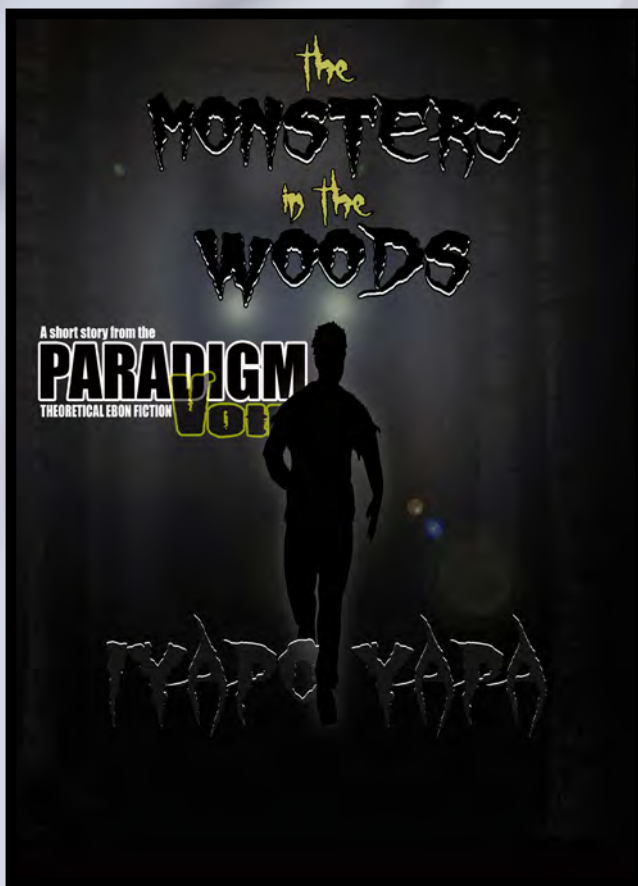
The sun was high in the noon sky, with only the occasional passing cloud to obscure it and grant some momentary relief from the blazing ball of fire overhead that assaulted the backs of the men, women and children working the fields. Every now and then he'd look up from his

bag to see the white overseers on horseback, whips in one hand, open umbrellas in the other when they weren't in the shade, rifles to the side of their saddles, always at the ready. One of the overseers, Calvin Edmonds, was the son of their master Bartholomew "Bart" Edmonds. Jacob had no idea of the actual date of his birth, but he guessed that he and Jacob were roughly the same age since they'd basically grown up

together.

When he and Calvin were children they would play, sometimes all day in the fields. The boys would talk often about how they would always be friends, and sometimes at dinner Jacob would tell his parents about his day and how much fun he had with massah Edmond's son, and how they were best friends.

Jacob's Father, Tobias, would sternly admonish him saying, "Don't be doin' that crazy talk and crazy thinkin'! Cain't no white man and no nigger be friends. No way! You'd jus' best get that foolishness out yo head



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## Excerpt - The Monsters in the Woods (Continued)

right now!”

Jacob heard the words, but he had never let it sink in—not until a couple years later.

When the boys were about eleven or twelve, they would play a game Calvin made up called, “Massah”. Whenever they played the game sometimes Calvin would take on the part of massah, sometimes Jacob, either way, they would act out their roles, becoming unfiltered, caricatures of the adults they imitated. Though Calvin’s mother never approved of the game – especially when her Calvin took on the part of the slave, Calvin’s father found it harmless and amusing in its way to watch, so he allowed it. But one day, the boys were going to play Massah, and Calvin decided that he would no longer be the slave. He would always play the part of the massah from here on out.

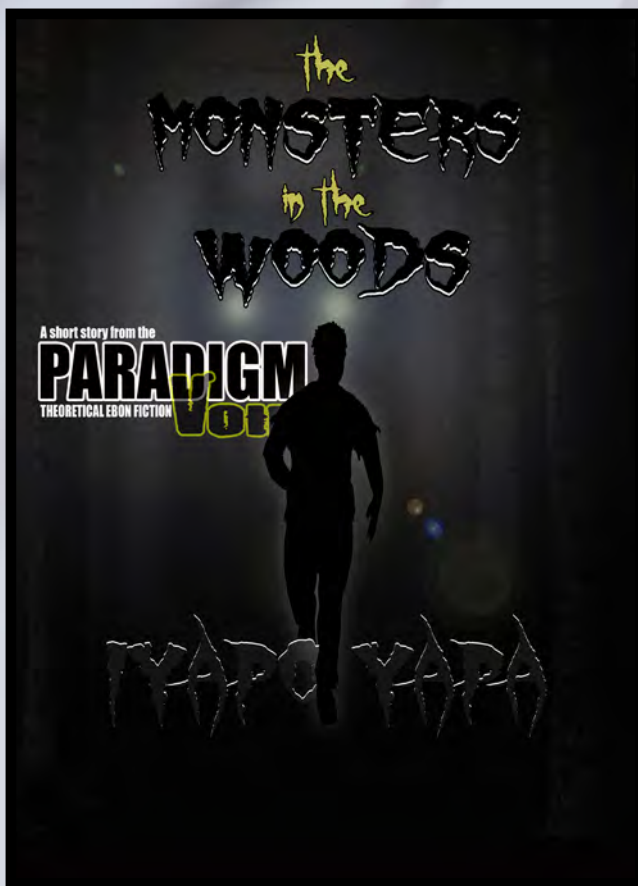
Jacob didn’t like the new arrangement.

An argument ensued.

In the middle of the verbal back and forth, red faced, stomping and screaming, Calvin punched Jacob in the stomach, then delivered a swift kick between the legs of his playmate. As Jacob stood, knees wobbling, in tears, hands between his legs, grasping his still developing manhood, he could hear through the stabbing pain, the echoes of Calvin standing in front of him, laughing. It took Jacob a minute to recover from the pain, but there was no such subsiding of his anger.

Jacob did not remember balling his fists, nor the roundhouse punch that sent Calvin reeling to the ground on his back, then running home to the main house, back dirty, nose bloodied by a punch Jacob delivered not knowing his own strength.

Emily Edmonds saw her son, and immediately ran to the kitchen cabinet and got a white dish rag that had a blue flower design and promptly pushed it against Calvin’s nostrils and had him tilt his head back to stop the bleeding.



READING and WRITING in the

# DARK

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## Excerpt - The Monsters in the Woods (Continued)

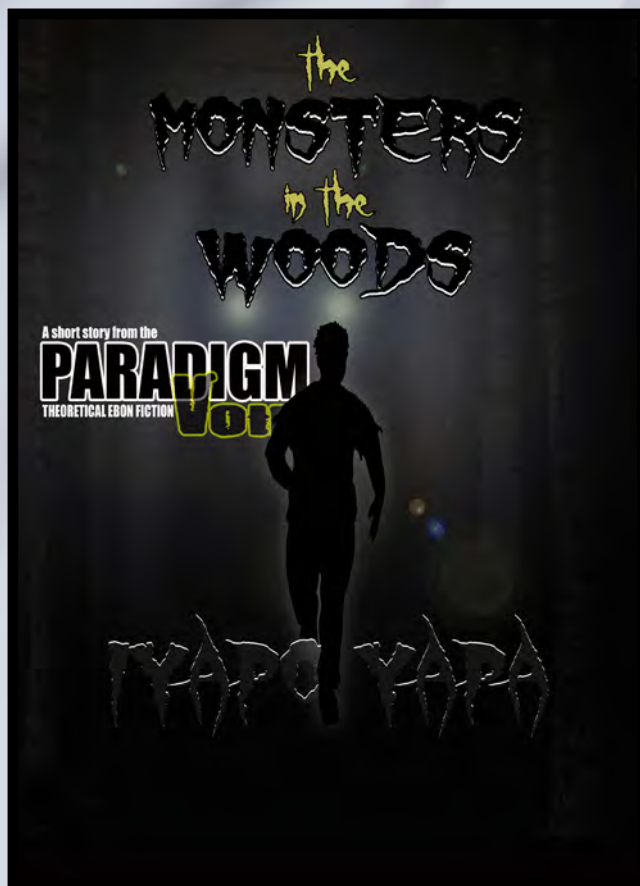
She asked him what happened and heard his side of the story (the only side she cared to hear), and promptly took the matter to her husband, who was sitting at his desk, glasses resting on the tip of his nose and with a quill pen writing in a ledger. She demanded that the boy who had committed this outrage be stripped naked, whipped and then hung in front of their slaves and made an example.

Bart had no intention of carrying out his wife's wishes no matter how vehemently she insisted. He had already lost too much potentially profitable stock by placating his wife.

Emily Edmonds was the epitome of a typical Southern Belle, or at least that's the way she perceived herself. She always wore long flowing dresses that gave her the appearance of being overdressed no matter where she was or what she was doing, the uniform of a woman whose main job was leisure and the delegation of responsibilities to house servants. She spent much of her time waving

a handheld fan that seemed more of a prop than for any kind of real utility. She was a petite woman, pale skinned, just this side of lilly white, with a head that seemed oddly a bit too large for her slight frame when she wasn't wearing her long blonde hair pulled back in the usual severe bun she seemed to prefer. Mistress Edmonds wasn't an unattractive woman, but her features always seemed somehow pinched. Perhaps it was her steely blue eyes that seemed to seldom blink, coupled with her diminutive, but pointy nose and the thin lips she always kept moist, but never quite overcoming the appearance of a mouth that was simply a straight line above her slightly cleft chin.

Emily Edmonds was no lover of Black children. Black children and infants had a funny habit of winding up dead whenever left in the home or in her proximity; and that was bad for business and the building of the family's wealth. So, Bart had learned some time ago that been murdered



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## Excerpt - The Monsters in the Woods (Continued)

at the hands of the woman.

Jacob was a strong little boy, and he was definitely going to grow up to be a strapping man, a good worker and likely a good breeder. There was no way Bart Edmonds was going to waste this asset. Sure, his wife would be angry for a couple weeks, maybe a few, and she'd be withholding sex for a while, which was of little consequence when he had his pick of several enslaved women to have relations with at his whim; and with whom, frankly, he preferred, being that he could do anything to them that popped into his head, without restraint. But he also knew this affront could not go unpunished, and he figured this was as good a time as any for both his son and Jacob to learn the way of the world and order of things.

He looked at his wounded son, head tilted back and applying direct pressure to his bleeding nose as his mother stood beside him with a hand on his shoulder. She stared unblinking, at her husband, her eyes

silently demanding retribution.

Bart removed his glasses and put his quill down on the desktop, stood slowly and said. "It'll be taken care of."

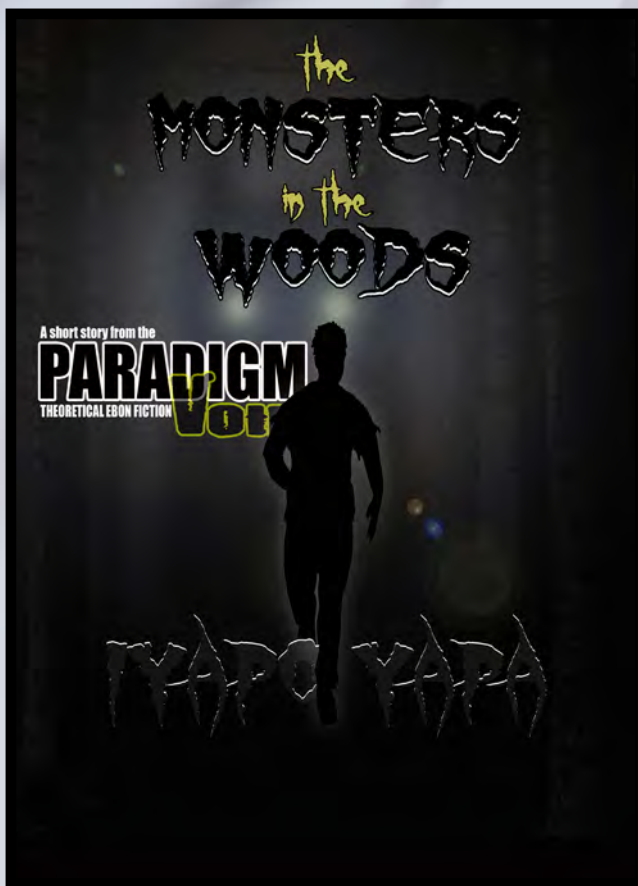
\* \* \*

When Calvin and his mother walked outside and he saw the bare back of his best friend, arms spread, strung up on the wooden scaffold, he knew that a whipping was about to take place.

The enslaved Black people had been brought in from the field and were being forced to watch the proceedings, hopefully to add another layer of terror onto their already traumatized psyches.

Bart walked out to the middle of the yard, whip in hand and with four of his overseers standing with rifles, prepared to act if necessary. He announced to the watching crowd, the infraction of the condemned slave.

Jacob had struck a white man.



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## Excerpt - The Monsters in the Woods (Continued)

Never was any nigger to lay hands on a white in anger or for any other reason than to serve them, or they would be dealt the punishment that Jacob was about to receive, or worse, be taken out into the woods and left to the Sotua!

“The punishment! Twenty lashes!” Edmonds decreed to the crowd.

Emily Edmonds was standing several feet back, holding her son’s hand and listening to the sentence. Upon hearing the penalty, though not going nearly as far as she had wanted it to, a joyless smile still made its way across her thin lips.

Jamina, Jacob’s mother broke from the group and ran toward Edmonds, one of the armed overseers raised his weapon, but Edmonds quickly put up a hand and gestured for his employee to hold his fire. Jamina dropped to the ground before Bart Edmonds and wrapped her arms around his right leg as she sobbed and begged for mercy for her son.

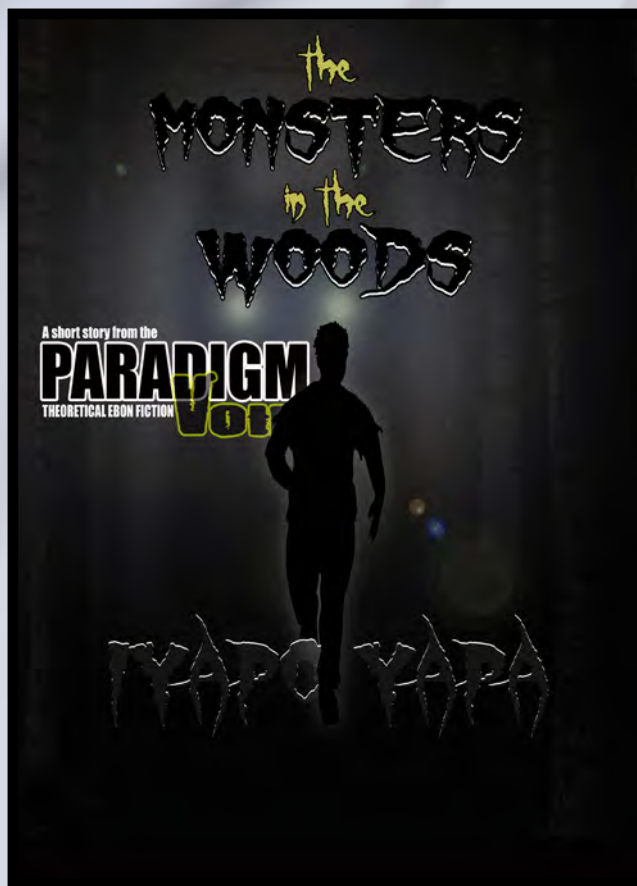
Bart looked down to the woman at his

feet with a callousness that bordered on disgust and yelled in the direction of the crowd. “Tobias! You need to come over here and retrieve your woman, else the both of you are gonna get what your boy’s about to get!”

Tobias ran over and grabbed his inconsolable, pleading wife by the shoulders and forced her away from the white man’s leg. He jerked her loose more roughly than he

wanted to and awkwardly pulled her to her feet. He held her close as she buried her face in his chest crying. Tobias looked at Edmonds, for a split second, straight in the eyes, and then realizing what he was doing immediately lowered his gaze. He then made a plea for both his son and his wife.

“Massah Edmonds suh, I know our Jacob done done a wrong thang! REAL wrong! But he’s jus’ a chile suh. Please suh, I knows he deserves ta be punished, but Massah Edmonds ... twenny lashes?! You gon’ kill ‘em sho!”



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## Excerpt - The Monsters in the Woods (Continued)

Jamina's cries became louder and more intense.

"He struck a white. Twenty lashes!"

"Please Suh, kin I takes his place?! He's jus' a baby."

"He was old enough to raise his hand to a white. The penalty stands, and that boy WILL deal with the consequences of his actions. Now get back over there with those other slaves."

"Kin I lease take my wife to our quarters so she don't have ta watch?"

"She needs to see this." Edmonds said coldly. "ALL you niggers need to see this!" he then said to everyone who was forced to observe. "Now no more of your back talk, less you want this whip across all three of your backs! Get on back over there!"

Supporting his wife, doing all he could to keep her from collapsing to the ground, Tobias escorted Jamina back to the group, where several women began consoling her as best they could.

"Come over here son!" Bart called out turning his attention to Emily and Calvin.

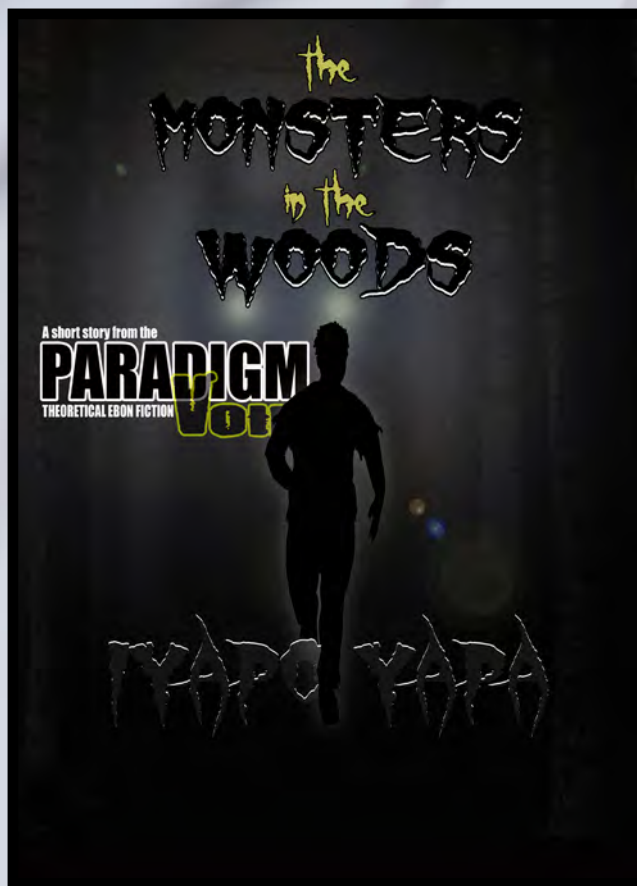
Emily gently pushed her 'baby' and prompted him to walk over to his father. "Go on Calvin ... Daddy's about to teach you what it means to be white in a white man's world." She said.

Calvin walked hesitantly, eyes beginning to water as he shifted his view

alternately between his father and the exposed back of his friend. Stepping up slowly beside Bart, Calvin looked up, tears now streaming down his cheeks. "Daddy ... I'm alright now. S – see! My nose isn't bleeding any more. Jacob didn't mean it."

"No." Edmonds said tersely. "It doesn't matter whether he meant to or not. That boy done hit a white man, and that absolutely cannot be tolerated. Now stop all that damned crying. You're white!"

"But I'm sure he's sorry Daddy!" Calvin said, "You're REAL sorry



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## Excerpt - The Monsters in the Woods (Continued)

ain't you Jake?!" he yelled to Jacob. "S – Sir?"

Jacob strained to look over his right shoulder, yelled back as best he could, voice cracking and sounding like the child he was. "Yes suh! I's powerful sorry!"

"We all know that Jacob!" Bart yelled, "But you gotta be punished for what you did, and nothing on this earth is gonna change that!"

"Daddy, Please! He said he's sorry! He won't do it again. He's my friend."

"He's not your friend son. He's a nigger."

"Jacob isn't a nigger. He isn't like the rest of—"

"He IS a nigger... just like his mammy and pappy and all the rest of 'em over there! And today's the day you both learn that!"

"Please don't whip him, Daddy."

"I'm not going to whip him son. YOU are."

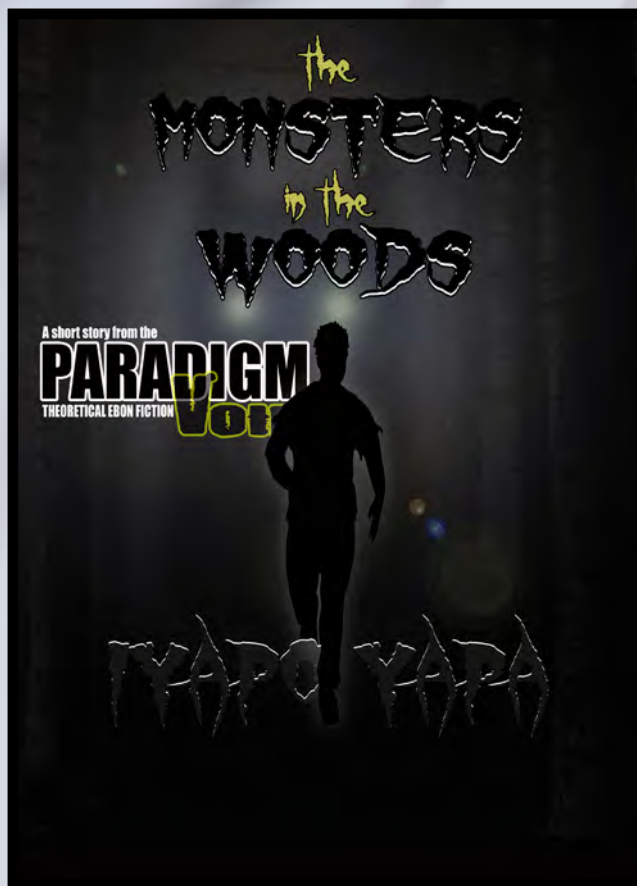
Slowly Bart passed the coiled whip to his son, placing it in his shaking hand. "You're going to do it. Now, whip that nigger."

After having played massah so often, and carrying out mock whippings, both children knew how to use a whip and pull back just enough that it would make loud noises but do no actual harm, and so that's what

Calvin attempted to do, for the first five or six strikes across the back of the little boy bound to the wooden scaffold.

Bart easily saw what was happening and as his son drew back for the next lash his father firmly caught his son's wrist. "Boy, I know what you're doing. If I don't start seeing some whelps and blood on that nigger boy's back, I'm going to use this whip on you!"

Calvin reluctantly unraveled the whip and shook it back and forth in his grasp. The part of the whip that was on the ground took upon it the



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## Excerpt - The Monsters in the Woods (Continued)

Kah-RAK!!!

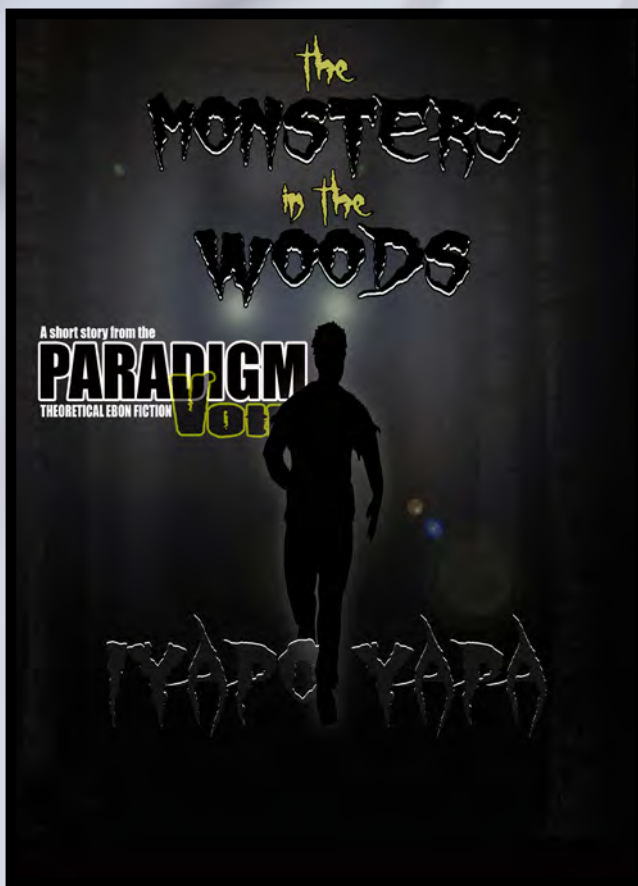
After striking him with true force, Jacob let out a scream that made even Bart Edmonds wince along with everyone else gathered.

Everyone except Emily, who slowly nodded her head as she continued to smirk.

“I’m sorry!” Calvin yelled to his sobbing, now bleeding friend.

The slap across the back of Calvin’s head, that sent him reeling to the dirt came so suddenly that the little white boy didn’t even realize for a moment that

he was on the ground. “Don’t you EVER apologize ta a nigger! Never for any reason! You got that boy?!” his father yelled.



Emily ran over to her son and helped him back to his feet. She dusted him off a little and then grabbed him by his shoulders, shaking him slightly. “This is the way of things!” she said. “If you ever let these darkies take one inch, they’ll never stop. We have to teach them why almighty God made us the masters and made them slaves!” She then took from a pocket in her dress, the bloody rag she had used to wipe her son’s bloody nose.

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ALLISON**  
A NOVELLA



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## R.J. BLAKMAN



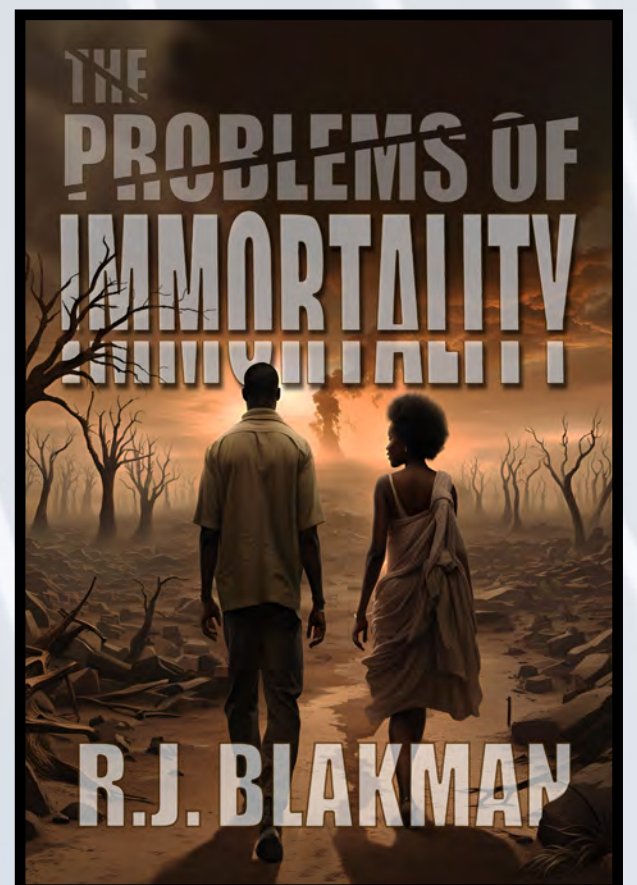
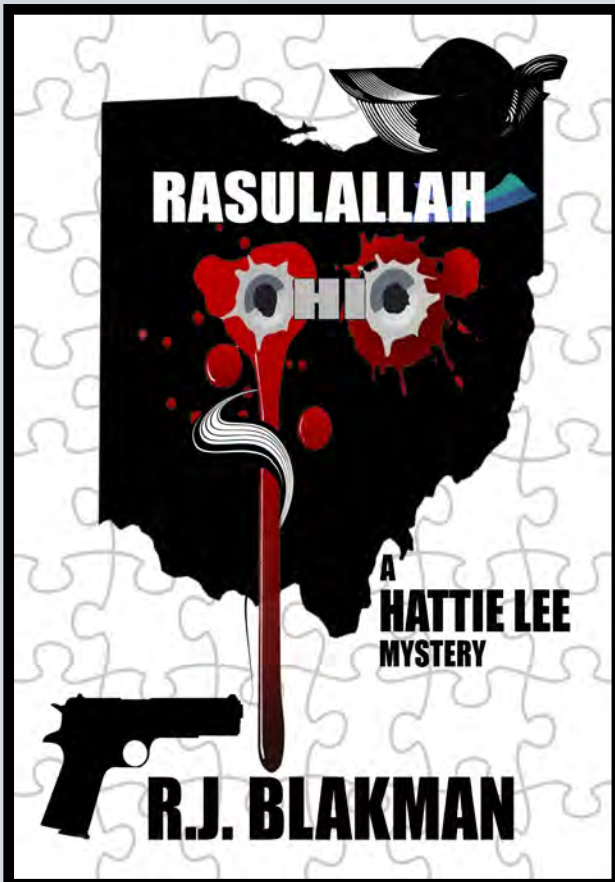
R. J. Blakman is a mystery writer, a writer of non-fiction and an all-around truth seeker. Blackman tries to look at things on a deeper level and whatever he finds, he tends to write about it with no sugar coating.

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](mailto:rjb@iyapoyapa.com)

## UPCOMING BOOKS BY R.J. BLAKMAN



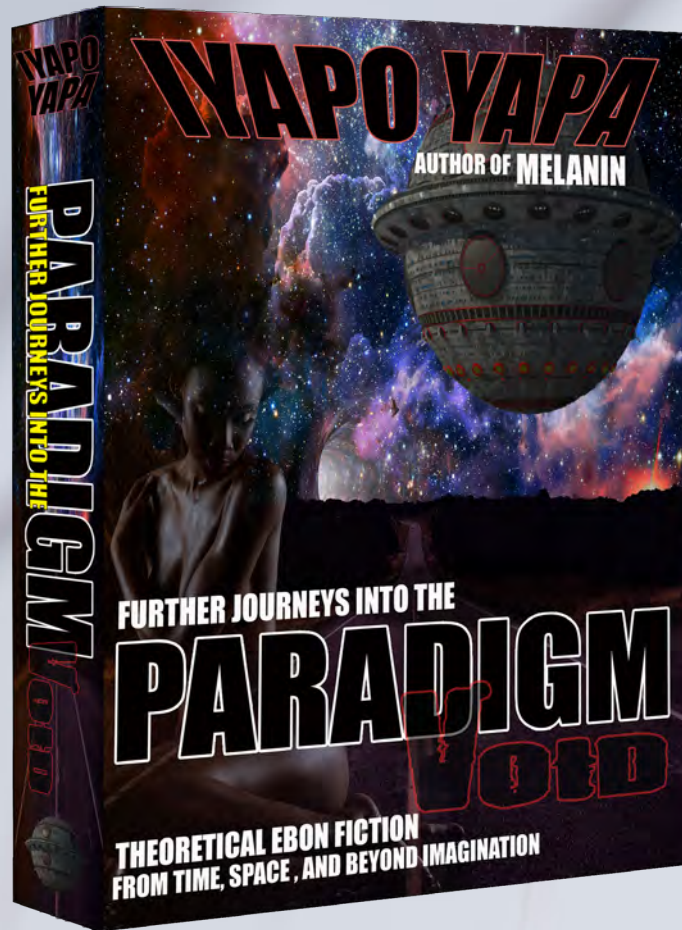
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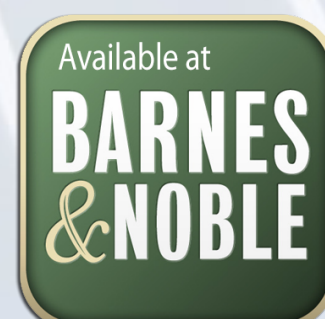
- What is life like for a person who is “unstuck” in time? One man gives his confessions.
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  - Luxury isn't always what it seems, or is cracked up to be, as one newlywed couple learns first hand.
  - A comet is on a collision course with earth and there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

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## BOOK REVIEW

### **LOVE AT SECOND SIGHT By Ayoka B.**

Ayoka B. has a way with words.

And characterization,

And story telling,

And style.

In a world of the insulting animated reboot of *Good Times*, and non-stop offerings of the over-the-top opulence of “Real” *Housewives of Whatever*—Ayoka B.’s *Love At Second Sight* is a welcome respite from the chaos!

Growing up and into my adult hood, my taste in books always leaned in the direction of science fiction and fantasy. A couple of notable exceptions would be Erica Jong’s erotic blockbuster *Fear of Flying* (which I read in my early teens), and books like *The Chocolate War* by Robert Cormier. For a time, I was deep into Christian fiction, reading the likes of C.S. Lewis with *The Screwtape Letters*, *This Present Darkness* and *Piercing The Darkness* by Frank E. Peretti, and my all-time favorite allegorical study, *The Book of the Dun Cow* by Walter Wangerin Jr. (The first novel I ever read that I literally could not stop reading until I’d finished it—though I think I went to sleep in between, then picked it right back up upon waking).

That said, I have read and/or listened to books in many genres, but in all my years (decades), I never read or even listened to a romance novel. Not one. So, Ayoka B.’s *Love At Second Sight* was a first for me. I didn’t really know what to expect. My wife has talked to me about a slew of romance novels she’s read, romance being one of her favorite genres, but for me, I never even considered the possibility of reading a romance. *Love At Second Sight* served as a pleasant surprise for me!

When it comes to character, story and plot development, the novel fires on all cylinders. According to my wife, romance novels follow a certain arch and have specific tropes. Just the knowledge of that lead me to believe that romance novels had to be formulaic and possibly, at different plot points, get in its own way because of having to “check boxes” as it were. However, as I continued reading *Love At Second Sight*, I found, happily, that the thing I feared most—predictability—was all but absent from the story. The characters are well fleshed out, and by the end of the book, you feel as if you have just finished reading about people you know. A consequence of that being

that you genuinely care about their individual journeys, and outcomes.

The situations are relatable as are the characters. Without giving anything away, Ayoka B. has a talent for being able to write situations which one may or may not have ever experienced, and may never experience, but still put it and the characters in terms that the reader can, completely place themselves into.

Speaking of characters, Ayoka, with her powerful writing style and flair for description creates spaces (whether indoor or outdoor), that have personality, thus making the environment itself into a separate character, which is no small feat.

The plot of the story is straight forward and not too complex, but intriguing and immersive just the same—like old Motown songs. They are simple in their structure, but have powerful melodies, harmonies, hooks and flows that make them unforgettable. There is plenty of love and loss to go around, along with a generous dose of joy and hope.

In technical terms, the writing style is whimsical but at the same time maintaining an undercurrent of seriousness that keeps the whole of it steady and grounded. The prose is tight and snappy. Ayoka B. definitely has a knack for saying a lot by saying a little and I personally find it fascinating when I come across writers who have mastered that art.

As a man, reading this romance novel, whenever I read books by women, I’m very attuned to the male characters in the stories. Many times, I feel that women who write male characters are giving their impression of what they think a man is, how we think and what motivates us. (The same is true when it comes to men writing female characters by the way). Some authors can nail it, some can’t. Ayoka is in the first group. The men in her novel read to me as men and not a woman’s idea of a man. Because of that, all the characters in the book rang true for me.

*Love At Second Sight* will make you laugh, it will make you mad, it will make you sad, and at some points, it may even cause you to become a little glassy eyed. And some parts may arouse you if you’re not careful! So, this being the first romance novel I’ve ever read, I was not disappointed. I would suggest this book to any woman (or man) and I’m definitely looking forward to more from this author!



#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

I am a poet and author of short stories. I began writing poetry as a way of expressing my feelings when they were too heavy to manage. As I grew as a poet, happiness and joy also became themes: love, motherhood, friendship. My writing is known for its honesty and vulnerability. Most of my work is nonfiction, but I recently challenged myself to try my hand at fiction. My upcoming novel, *Love At Second Sight*, is a love story. My journey to publication is just beginning and I’m chronicling the ride on Instagram @loveatsecondsight\_novel Join me.

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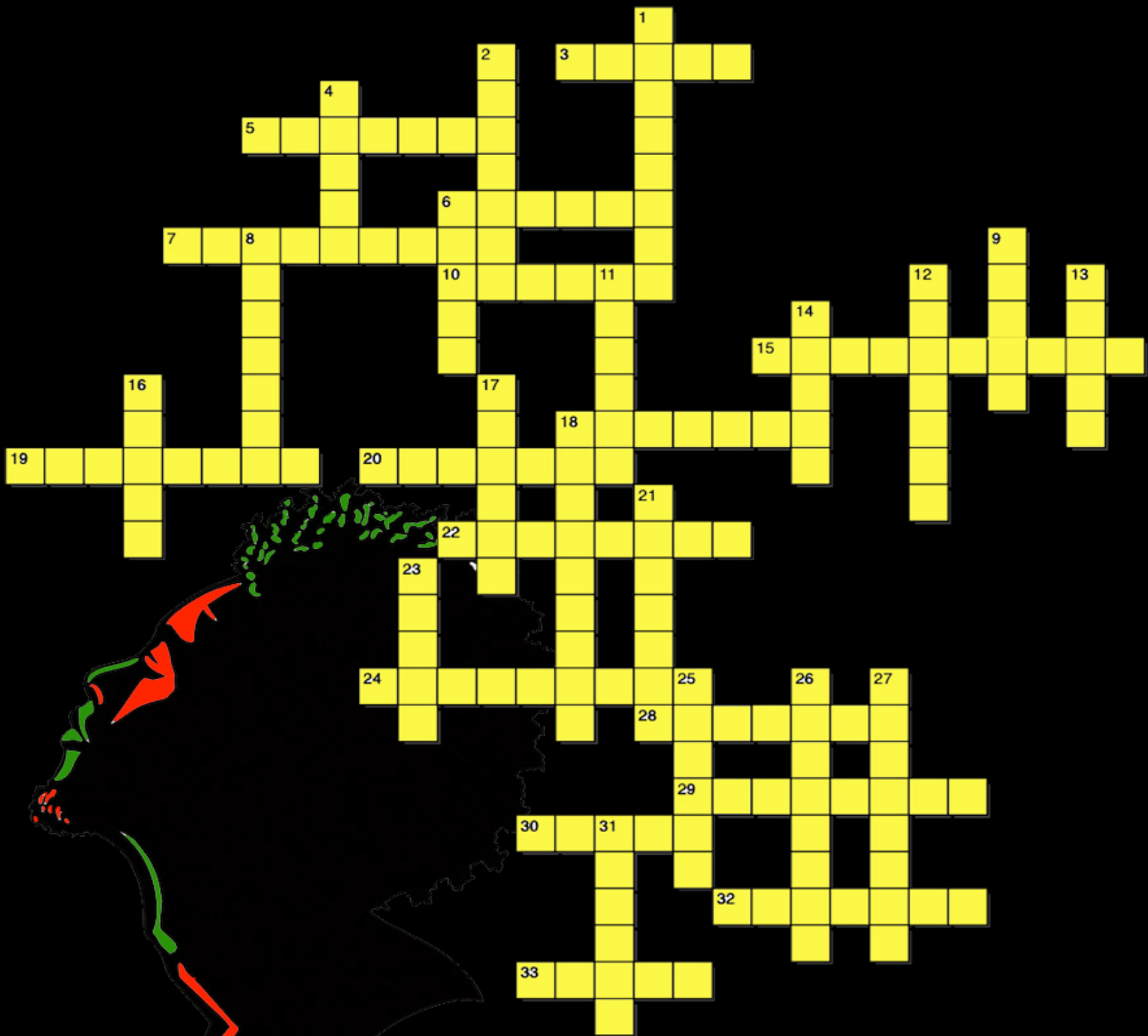
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## NEW! May 2024 Crossword Puzzle!

This month we've decided to change gears and give you a REAL challenge! Black authors are hard to find, but Black MALE authors are almost unicorns out here. That said, here are the titles of thirty three Male Black authors for you to check out! You'll probably have to look up a bunch of them, but hey... ALL the puzzles can't be easy! 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!](#)

# BLACK MEN WHO WRITE!



## May 2024 CROSSWORD

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## MAY CROSSWORD PUZZLE FEATURING: BLACK MEN WHO WRITE!

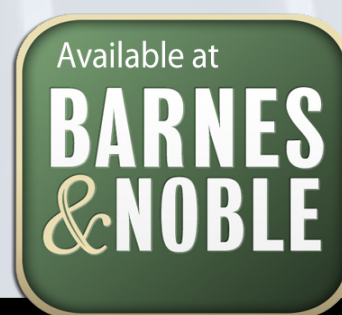
### Across

- 3) Author of Walking Through Mirrors. Brian \_\_\_\_\_ Jackson
- 5) Author of The Violin Conspiracy. Brendan \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Author of Meji. \_\_\_\_\_ Davis
- 7) Author of Harlem Shuffle. Colson \_\_\_\_\_
- 10) Author of Slave Play. \_\_\_\_\_ O. Harris
- 15) Author of Neon Vernacular: New and Selected Poems. Yusef \_\_\_\_\_
- 18) Author of When Night Falls. Gerald L. \_\_\_\_\_
- 19) Author of The Lesson. Cadwell \_\_\_\_\_
- 20) Author of Strange Tales of Science Fiction. Charles L. \_\_\_\_\_
- 22) Author of The Imaro Series. Charles R. \_\_\_\_\_
- 24) Author of Riot Baby. Tochi \_\_\_\_\_
- 28) Author of Beneath the Shining Jewel. Balogun \_\_\_\_\_
- 29) Author of He Sleeps. Reginald \_\_\_\_\_
- 30) Author of Team Seven. Marcus \_\_\_\_\_
- 32) Author of Last Seen in Lapaz. Kwei \_\_\_\_\_
- 33) Author of Songs of the Sunya: Tales From The Sands of Time. Mansa \_\_\_\_\_

### Down

- 1) Author of High Cotton. Darryl \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Author of The Color of Water. James \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Author of The Colored Museum. George C. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Author of Roll Deep. \_\_\_\_\_ Jackson
- 8) Author of Yellow Back Radio Broke-Down. \_\_\_\_\_ Reed.
- 9) Author of The Ground. \_\_\_\_\_ Ricardo Philips
- 11) Author of Black Leopard Red Wolf. \_\_\_\_\_ James
- 12) Author of In West Mills. De'Shawn Charles \_\_\_\_\_
- 13) Author of And What of the Cargo? \_\_\_\_\_ Yapa
- 14) Author of Blue Laws. Kevin \_\_\_\_\_
- 16) Author of Don't Call Us Dead. \_\_\_\_\_ Smith
- 17) Author of Nat Turner in Jerusalem. \_\_\_\_\_ Alan Davis
- 18) Author of The War Against the Obvious. \_\_\_\_\_ Eady
- 21) Author of The Tradition. \_\_\_\_\_ Brown
- 23) Author of The Gilded Auction Block. \_\_\_\_\_ McCrae
- 25) Author of The Most Spectacularly Lamentable Trial of Miz Martha Washington. James \_\_\_\_\_
- 26) Author of Delicious Foods. James \_\_\_\_\_
- 27) Author of The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears. Dinaw \_\_\_\_\_
- 31) Author of Rails Under My Back. Jeffery \_\_\_\_\_ Allen

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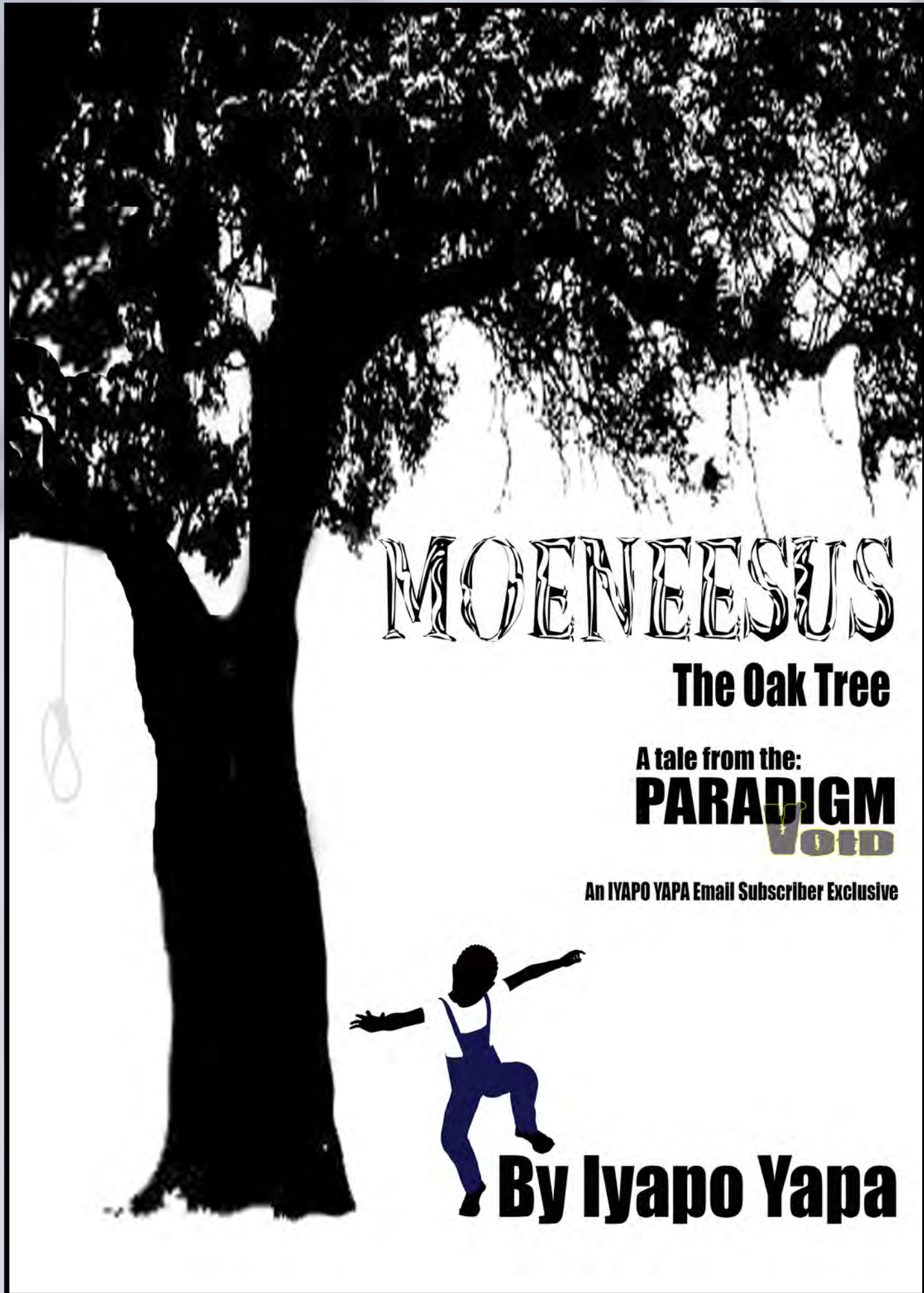
- What if somewhere in the universe numerous alien races observed earth and concluded that there is a faction on the planet that in no way should ever be allowed to reach out beyond the bounds of its own atmosphere?
- What if the universe itself started taking measures to correct and bring balance to itself in terms of justice?
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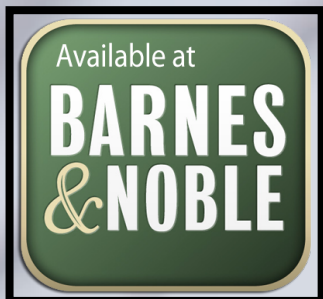
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And What of the CARGO?



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

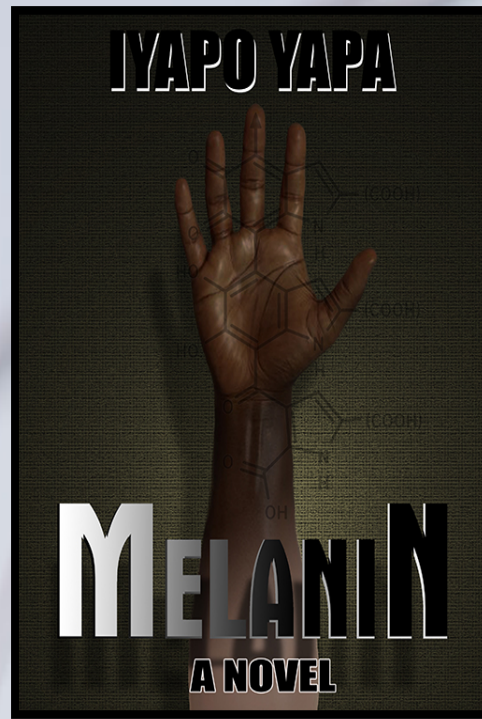
“Yapa weaves another story this time interwoven with historical references. I was on my seat with every chapter. I don't want to give it away but....revenge is sweet when served dead. And I can't get over how different each of his offerings are. Read his Vella's and you'll see what I mean. Another great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

MELANIN: A Novel



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!

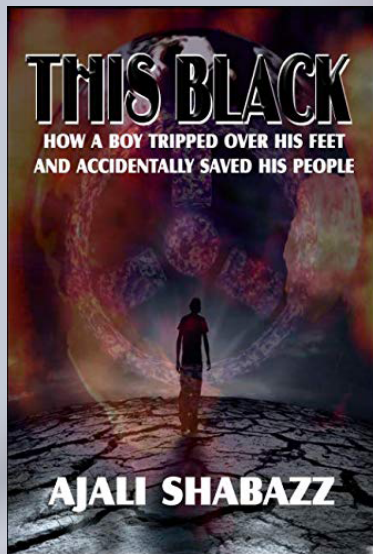
READING and WRITING in the

# 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!

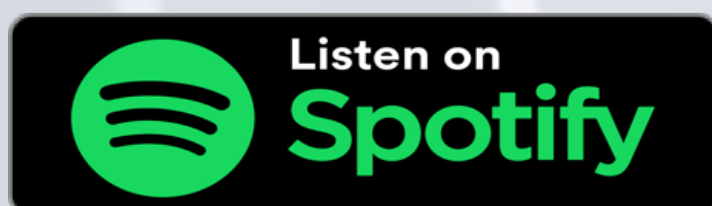
Listen to the interview on  by clicking the link below:

<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!**

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READING and WRITING in the

# DARIK

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## The Letter That Started It All

From IYAPO'S BLOG Tuesday May 30, 2024

The idea for *The Pookie*, Ray Ray and Laquita book came from an ongoing feud between author Ajali Shabazz and me. The reason for the feud? We just can't seem to come to a consensus on is—toilet paper. Specifically, the way in which toilet paper should be hung, under, or over (the way that ALL people of breeding, good taste, culture, and common sense hangs it).

Guess which side of the debate I'm on.

One day a couple years ago, we once again locked horns, and so I'd had enough. I immediately went to history and spelled out to her exactly when and why toilet paper started being hung over, and the dire consequences of hanging it any other way. The result is my reply to her.

(The entire thing is parody of course, but after reading it again recently I realized that hey, I'll bet I can do that with Black history and why the world is in the condition it's in now).

And there you have it. So, enjoy reading the letter that started it all. Enjoy!

### THE HISTORY OF HANGING TOILET PAPER

As I said, I know already what study you are referring to, and it has been thoroughly debunked by the scientific community at large as well as exposing as a fraud and charlatan its author, Toshie Nehuruamho.

Nehuruamho, the author of the so called "study" was proven to have falsified much of his data and actually paid several of his sources (in addition to taking payoff's himself). The disgraced Nehuruamho was ostracized from the scientific community and before he could be brought before the G.S.T. (the Global Scientific Tribunal) and charged with crimes against nature and humanity, Nehuruamho fled into voluntary exile.

That was sometime in 1983.

According to historian, Dr. Jameson S. Silvestri, in his seminal work: *Confessions of a Paper Tiger: The Rise, Lies and Fall of Toshie Nehuruamho*, an unauthorized biography, he quotes Nehuruamho as having said:

"My once peers believed I did what I did in some misguided attempt to gain wealth, or to have my name exalted. It was neither. I did not seek money or fame. My goal was to turn the thinking of the world to hanging the toilet paper in this new way. Though I knew in my heart it was an abomination against the natural world, I felt that if only I could convince the population, I could in turn possibly nudge mankind toward our next step in the

evolution of our species. I knew how dangerous this abhorrent idea was, but in my youth, I was an idealist, and anything seemed possible in those days... even changing the way the world functioned through the switching of how we hung our toilet paper. All of that said. To this very moment I believe I was right in what I thought and perhaps one day my progeny shall prove it so." (p. 337)

Nehuruamho surfaced once near Siberia in 2001 and has not been seen again since. According to Dr. Silvestri, he married, but eventually was abandoned by his wife a few short years later, (unable to deal with the shame of being married to the person who is known throughout the world as the man who attempted to collapse civilization), but not before they had 2 children a son and a daughter. It is widely believed (but not yet confirmed), that Nehuruamho transitioned in 2014 and was buried in an unmarked grave someplace in Siberia (having been denied burial in any sacred or consecrated ground).



READING and WRITING in the

# DARK

*A space for avid Black readers and Black authors*

## The Letter That Started It All (Continued)

From IYAPO'S BLOG Tuesday May 30, 2024

It is said his daughter continues her father's work and has sought to vindicate his name within not only the scientific community, but in the world at large, but still has not been able to prove any of her father's theories. His son eventually changed his name, unable to deal with the shame of being the son of the man who fraudulently attempted to plunge the world into chaos. Eventually Nehuruamho's son retreated to Tibet, became a monk and is believed to be presently living a life of religious fulfillment.



### References:

Brooks, F. R. (2018). *Toilet Paper: An Exhaustive History* (2nd ed.). Full Truth Publishing.

Candell, J. R., & Winston, M. J. (2021). *Toilet Paper: The Proven Method*. *The World Global Toilet Paper Compendium*, 107(9), 14–18.

Peabody, P. L. (2020). *Toilet Paper the Scientific Method, Practices and History* (4th ed., Vol. 12, Ser. TP History). The Ministry of Sciences Cooperative.

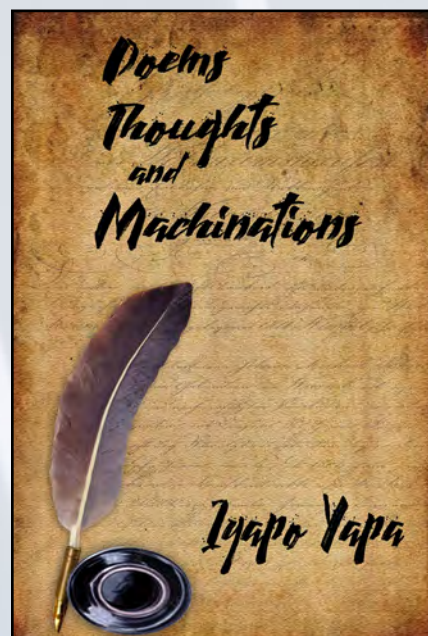
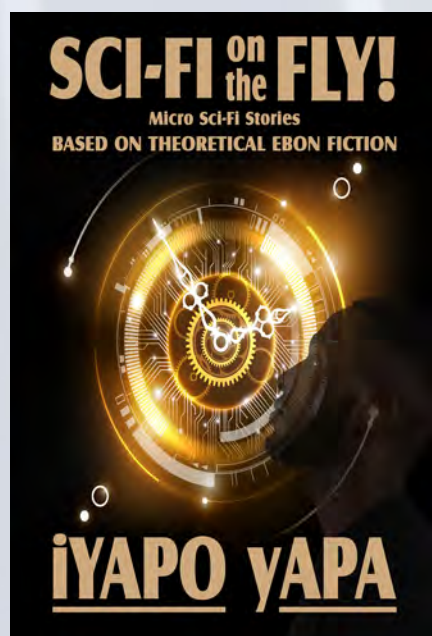
Silvestri, J. S. (1998). *Confessions of a Paper Tiger: The Rise, Lies and Fall of Toshie Nehuruamho, an unauthorized biography* (2nd ed., Vol. 1). Betterman Press.



[CLICK THE LOGO ABOVE TO VISIT MY BLOG](#)

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

## My NaNoWriMo Ended Up Being A NoNoWriMo!

Camp NaNoWriMo has come and gone, and guess what?!

I didn't participate.

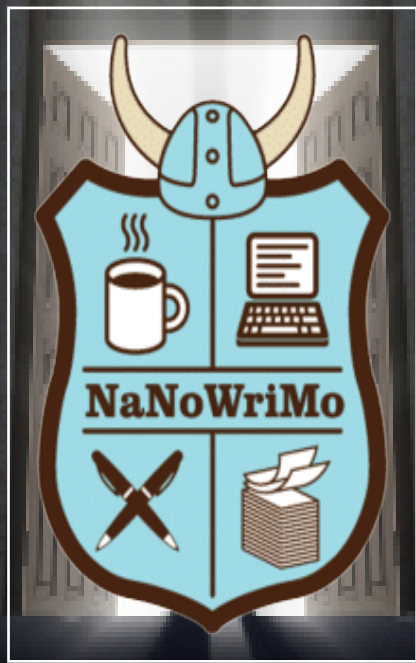
I wrote an entire blurb about it in the last issue, and I was raring to go at the time.

My goal was to write twenty thousand words in thirty days, specifically on my upcoming R.J. Blakman book *The Dragons of Harlem*. Well, it didn't quite turn out that way. *The Dragons of Harlem* is already at three hundred seventy pages, I'm not certain how much more there will be, but from my review, I still have a long way to go.

I had every intention of completing *Dragons* in April via the Camp Nanowrimo (which my wife completed and earned her badge-- CONGRATULATIONS ANGELA!), but I got bogged down in other

projects, in addition to not knowing exactly where to jump back in when it came to *The Dragons*. I realize now that I will need to do a thorough reading of what I have presently so that I can remember the direction I was taking with it.

That said—at first, I was kicking myself because of having “failed” so miserably at the challenge when I'd done so well with my initial NaNoWriMo venture.

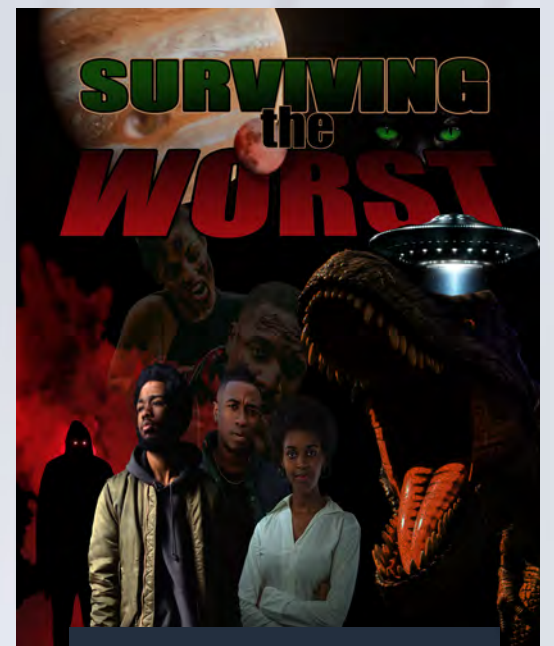


However, my wife pointed out that this was a self-imposed deadline, and that there was no need to stress over it. There are plenty of other stresses in life without imposing them on oneself. And besides—it is MY work, and I will complete it in due time, when it's meant to be finished. It will all work out in the end, so I'm just going to just relax, and enjoy the ride. Thanks for coming along with me!

## 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

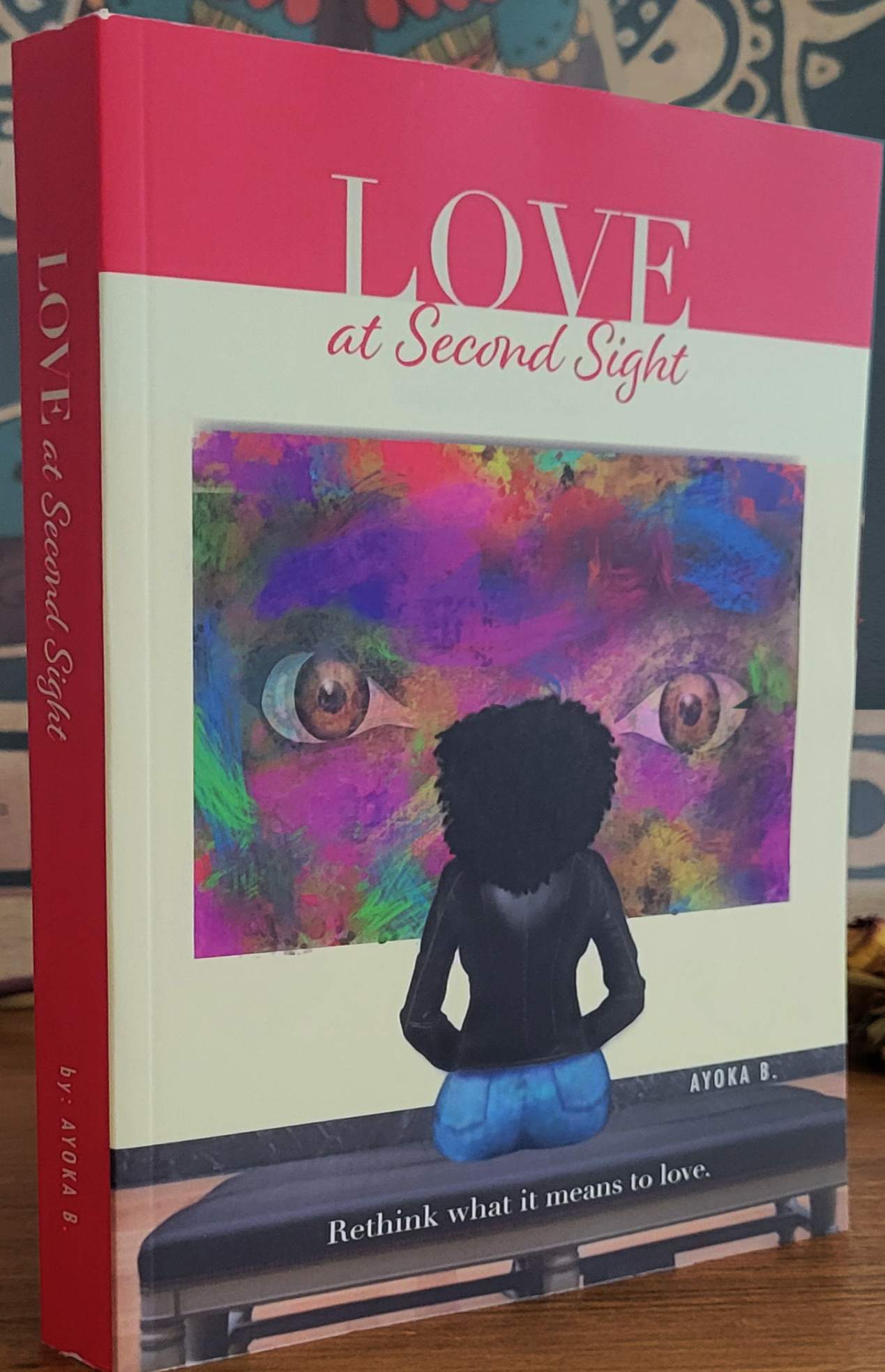
# DARK

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## LOVE AT SECOND SIGHT IS AVAILABLE NOW!

Shane's life is full... of poetry, motherhood, and friends. She is a Single Mom who is pensive, passionate, and generous and loves her family. Ambitious and hard-working, Shane is trying to carve her path. Enter Mike. He is talented, complicated, and guarded. Their undeniable connection changes their hearts and lives. A beautiful and layered story of artistry and love, this novel spans generations. Love At Second Sight will make you laugh, cry, and cheer and inspire you to rethink what it means to love.

This unputdownable book showcases descriptive prose that makes you reflect on your own relationships.



**CLICK ON THE BOOK ABOVE TO VISIT AYOKA'S LINKTREE!**

READING and WRITING in the

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## 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

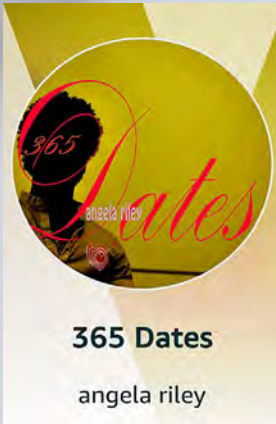
DeClaire and Tyrone meet and sparks fly. They fall in love with each other quick, fast, and in a hurry. It seems too good to be true. But is it? Is it safe to love? Are there any “good” rules when it comes to love? Do we have to fight for love? Are there always games being played when it comes to love?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



### The Love X TamuTamu Agency

Angela Riley

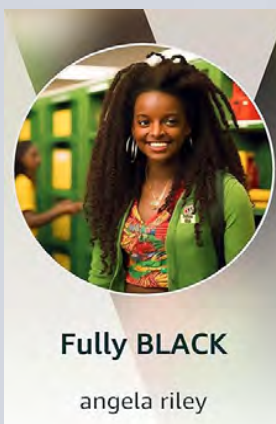
Love is natural but it ain't always easy. And Mama Tamu should know! She is a 91 year old match maker who has run “The Love X TamuTamu Agency” for FIFTY years. She has personally experienced and been a witness to all kinds of love. And, as she says, “Love is more than a notion!” Follow along as she stands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



### 365 Dates

Angela Riley

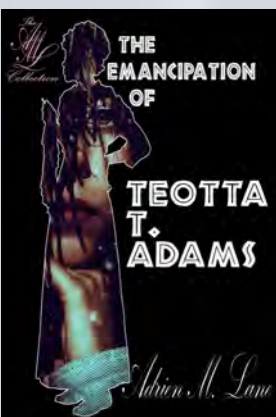
Single again, after my first divorce, one day I had a new thought: I WANT TO DATE. And... NOTHING. No one came knocking on my door to woo me. No one approached me when I was out wanting to court me. Nobody asked friends/family to be set up with me. Just crickets! So, thinking that maybe my goal was to 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

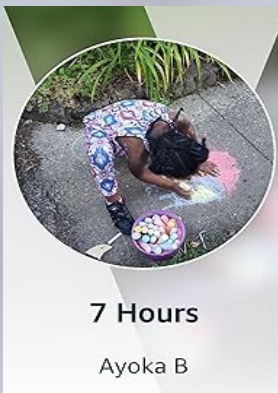
*A space for avid Black readers and Black authors*



## 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

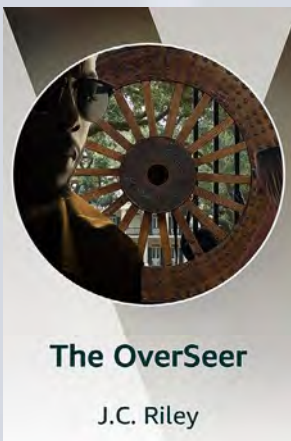
From Book 1: Sex addiction is a real thing; When Quincey finds out his wife is caught up in some things, can they save their marriage.



## 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

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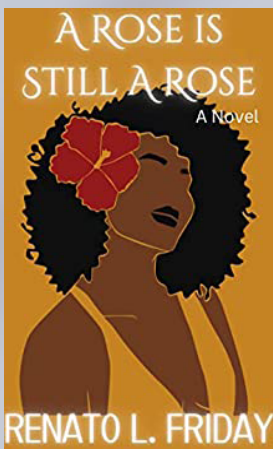


## Affirming Self Love (Graphic Non-Fiction SERIES)

angela riley

### SelfLOVE Meditation, Reflections, & AFFIRMATIONS Series...

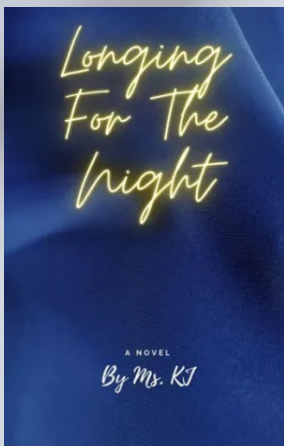
With a new book released each month, this “Graphic Nonfiction” series is filled with love for BlackUs. Each episode opens with a short essay exploring a theme such as “Following the Happy” or “Plan & Reflect” and culminates with a dynamic collection of affirmation. You’ll have a beautiful time meditating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



## A Rose is Still a Rose

Renato L. Friday

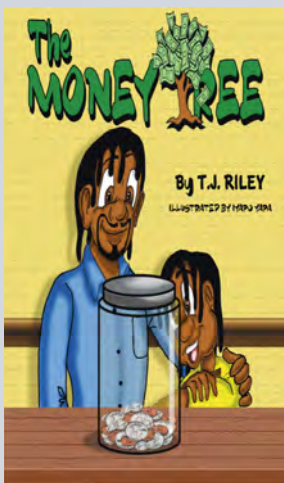
Rose thought life was going great: she was engaged, had a beautiful set of twin girls, a recent trade school graduate, and a new job right around the corner. Unfortunately, her fiancé, David, turned out to not be what she needed, and she chose to break things off. In the midst of her failing relationship, 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

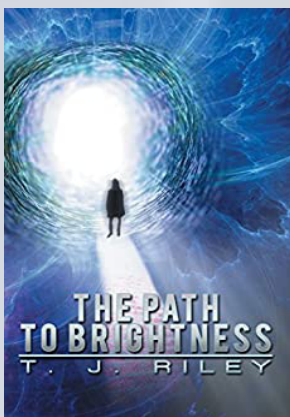
Inspired by the poem Goblin Market by Christina Rossetti, two young sisters face the trials and tribulations of the hood in this coming-of-age story about the harshness of living in South Central Los Angeles.



## The Money Tree

T.J. Riley / Illustrated by Iyapo Yapa

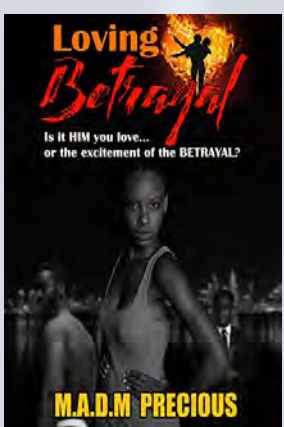
Every child wants money to buy something, right? Our hero does too. But, his father has a surprise, a Money Tree. Join the fun journey to find out how to grow your own money tree.



## 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.



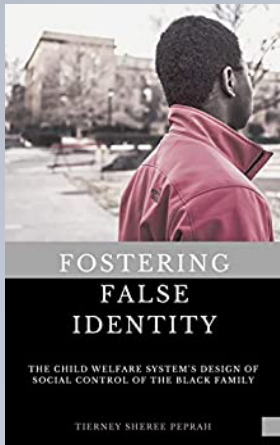
## LOVING BETRAYAL

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.



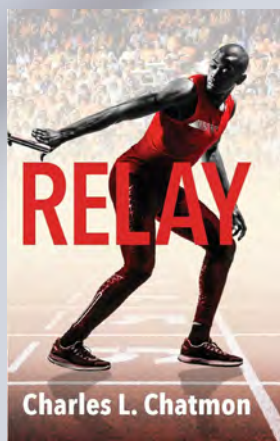
## **Storm Over South Central**

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.



## **The Director**

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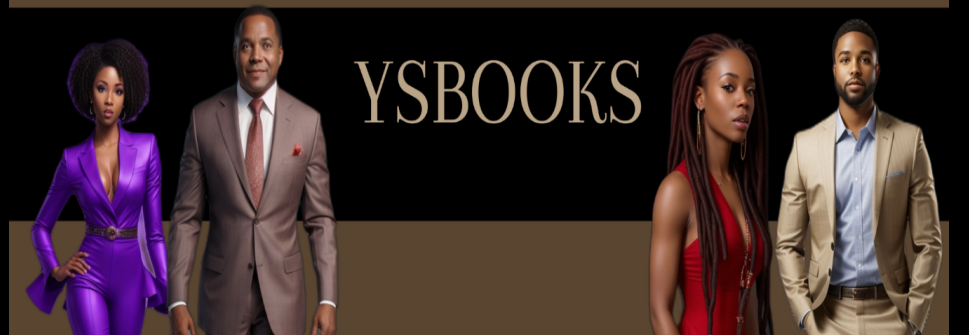
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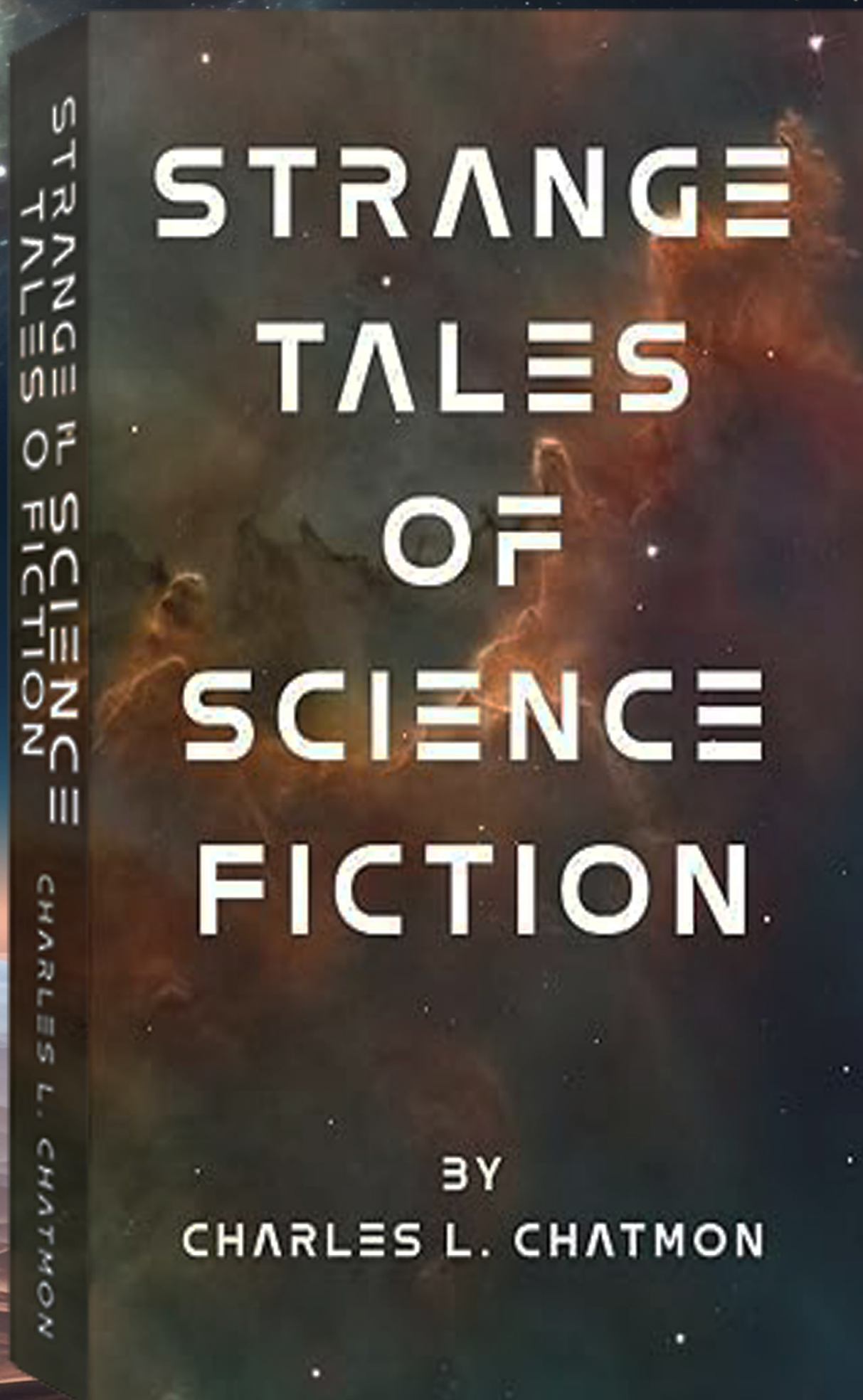
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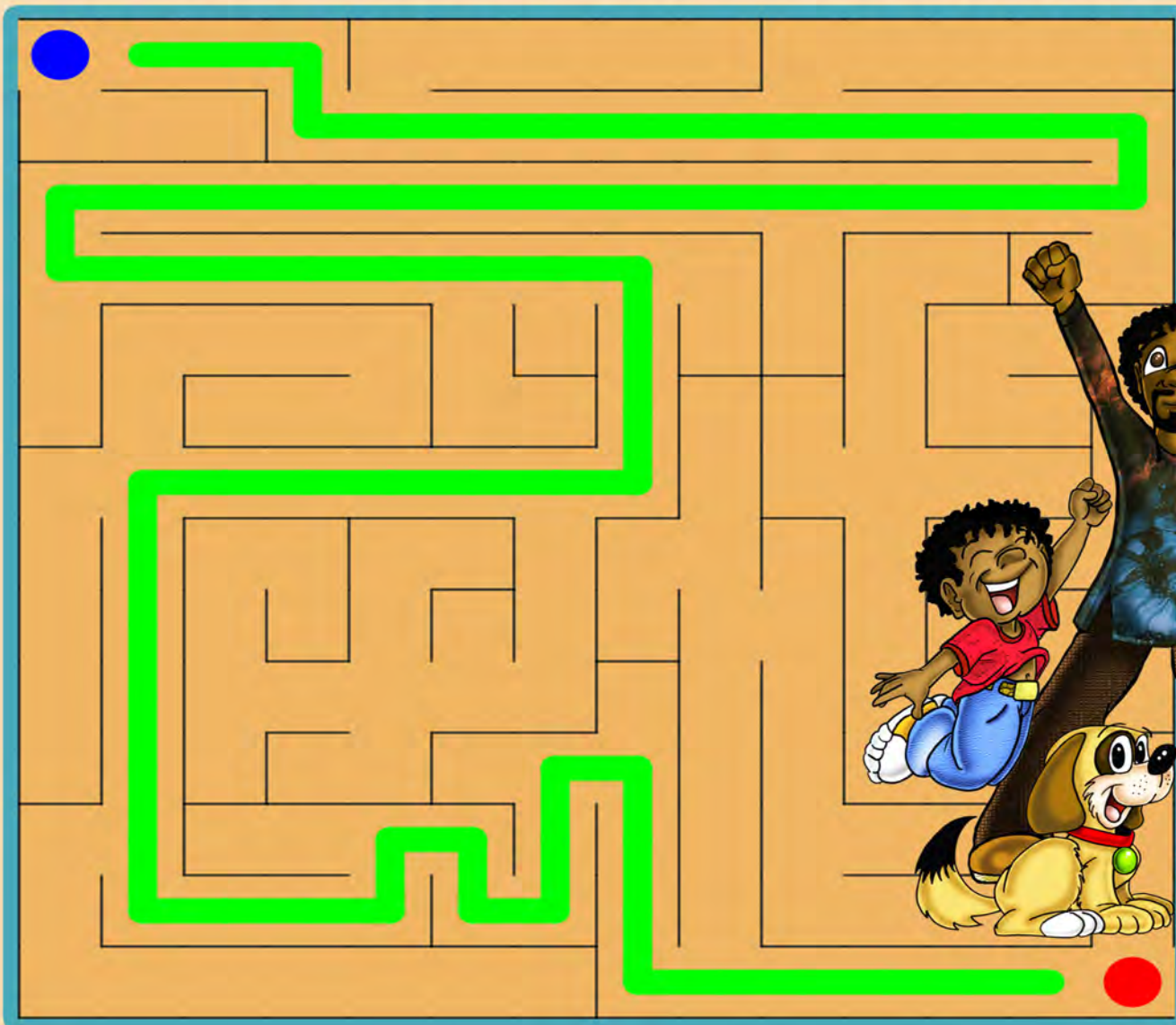
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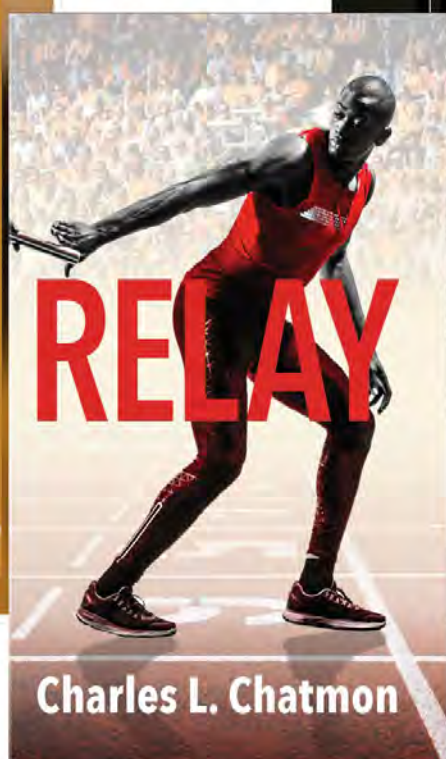
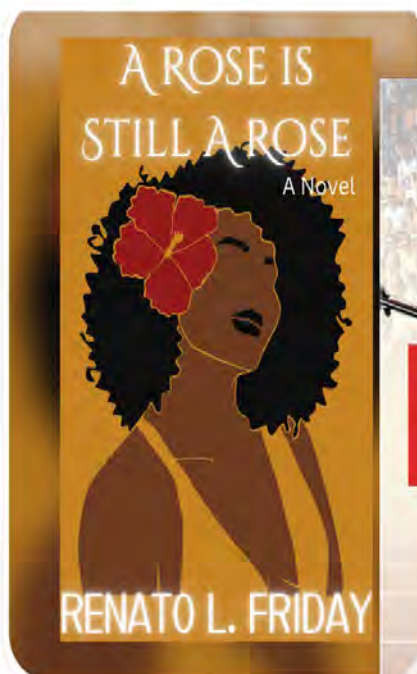
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