

READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors



THIS MONTH:

MAGAZINE

Iyapo Yapa asks...

AND WHAT OF THE

CARGO

The Complete Chapters 2 thru 5

Page 5

Reflection:

Big B.

Page 43



Also:
**This Month's
Wordsearch:
THE BLACK
PANTHERS!**

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IN 2026 ACTION AND ADVENTURE GETS A NEW FACE!

News and Info about Completed and
Upcoming Projects and MORE Every Month!

READING and WRITING in the

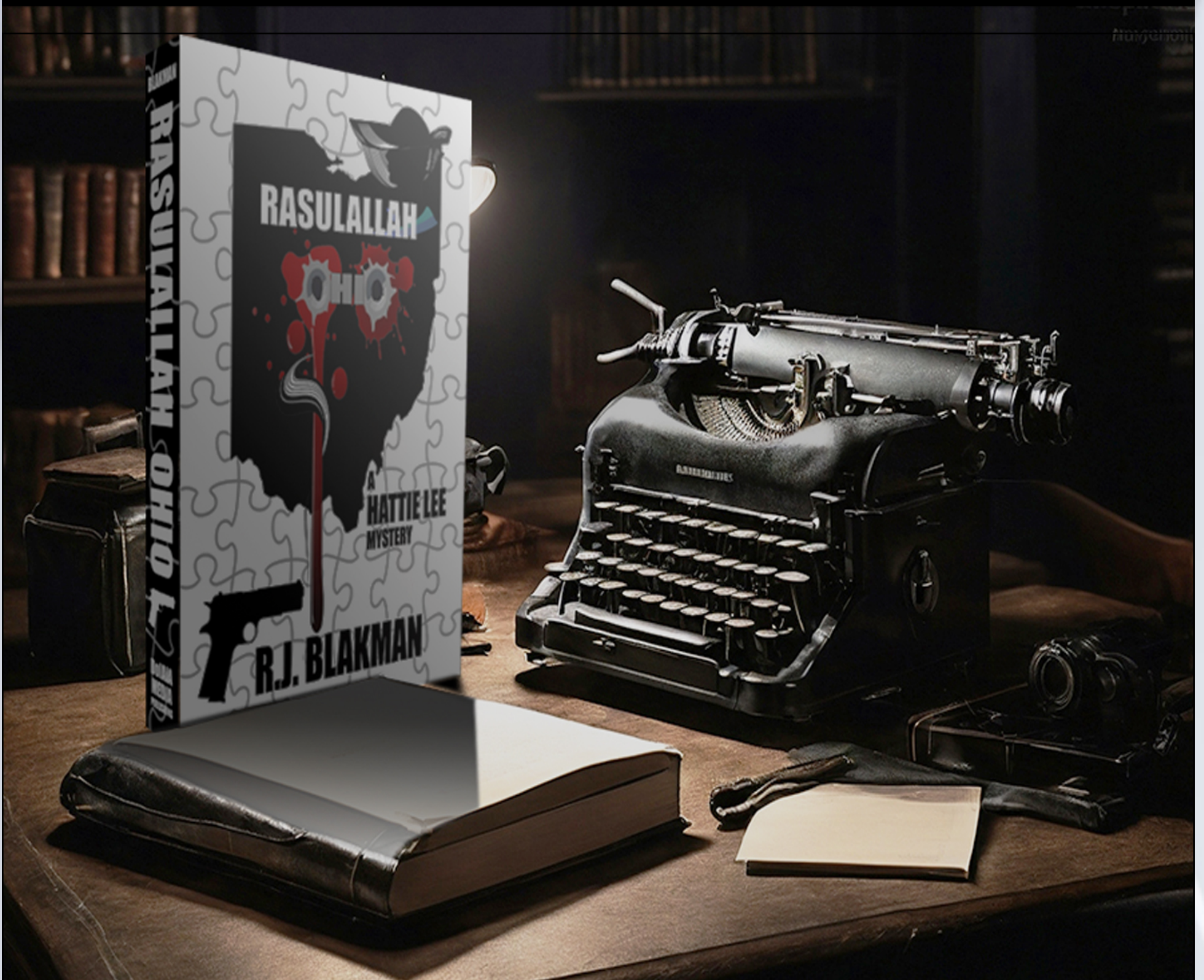
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1960s Ohio

Hattie Lee and her husband Benjamin were building a good life and preparing to start a family in a town that seemed like a dream come true. In a country unsafe for Black people sat Rasulallah, an oasis hidden in plain sight.

But one night.. within less than an hour... their dream became a nightmare!
And Hattie was determined to find out why!



From R.J. BLAKMAN, author of the highly anticipated urban fantasy *The Dragons of Harlem*, comes a mystery that will make you laugh, cry, get angry and keep you guessing until the very end!

RASULALLAH OHIO: A HATTIE LEE MYSTERY

Available at: <https://iyapoyapa.com/rusulallah-ohio.html>

or click the image above for the direct link.

(Also enjoy a sneak peek at the full second chapter exclusively on the website)



MAGAZINE

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WELCOME BACK!

LAST MONTH OF THE YEAR!

We're nearly through another year, and each one has been better than the one before it for me in terms of creativity.

This month I'm going to go back to earlier published works by giving you several chapters of my second novel (and STILL a crowd favorite) *And What of the CARGO?* *Cargo* was my follow up to *Melanin*, and I feel like I did a pretty good job. After reading the excerpted chapters, I hope you do too, and that it compels you to read or re-read, review recommend the entire book,!

I hope you enjoy the story and as you've come to expect, you'll find a puzzle, (this month it is a Word Search), and links to my work and the work of other Black authors! ENJOY!

Blessings to you and thank you for being a subscriber!

Iyapo

READING and WRITING in the DARK Magazine
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Iyapo Yapa
Writer/Layout/Editor-In-Chief

Angela Riley
Copy Editor

Iyapo Yapa
Layout/Design

Iyapo using Leonardo AI
Graphics for Cover and some
other additional graphics.

A Look Back and to the Future!

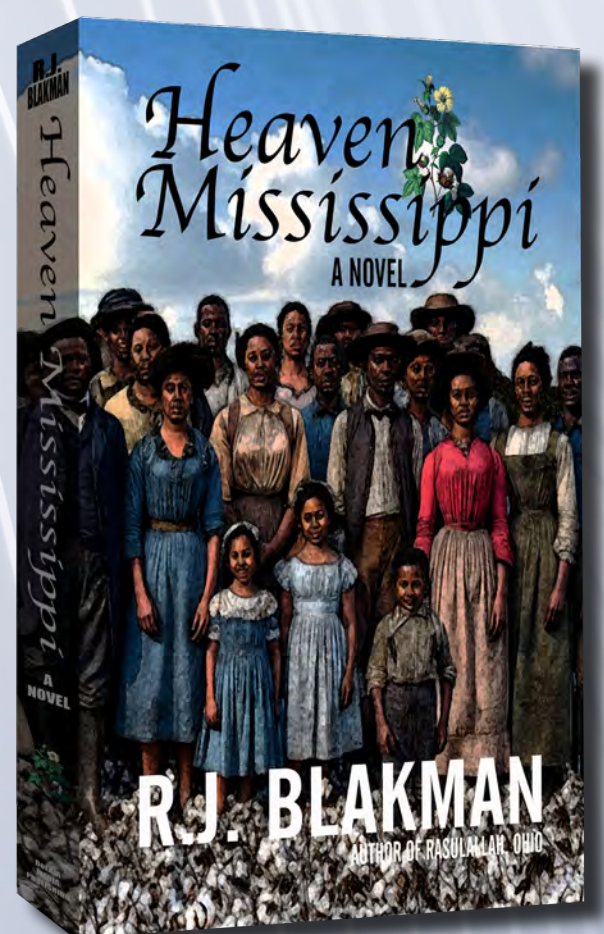
Ok, ok! Black people are sick and tired of reading and talking about our enslavement.

I get it!

So does R.J. Blakman.

There is no shortage of books and movies about the enslavement of Afrikans in America. The question becomes however, how quick should we be to dismiss a book because the main subject matter is chattel slavery as practiced in the United States? It is a tough subject that many of our people would like to just move on from and understandably so, but it is a fact of the history of our people in America. That said, *Heaven Mississippi* may not be what is considered a "traditional" book that takes place during enslavement. There are components of it that are unavoidable to highlight, else it could be argued that it would be a disservice to our ancestors who suffered, bled and died under that barbaric system.

That said, *Heaven Mississippi* is, as the reader will discover, a different kind of book. Blakman has nearly completed the novel and can't wait to get it into the hands of readers. He is promising something different with *Heaven Mississippi*, and from the way it looks thus far, R.J. Blakman is delivering! You can read a complete chapter from *Heaven Mississippi* in the July 2024 issue of the *Reading and Writing in the DARK Magazine*! So, check back here each month for regular *Heaven Mississippi* updates. To the right is the cover reveal! (A *RaWitDM* sneak peek.)



READING and WRITING in the

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A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

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!

Click the image below to enter a world of action, adventure, science and horror on Kindle



Top reviews from the United States

Amazon Customer

★★★★★ **Cornucopia of Action, Sci-fi, Mystery, Horror and Heart palpatng suspense.**

Reviewed in the United States on November 5, 2022

I love the pace of Iyapo's stories. He is a true master story weaver. This story is a cornucopia full of action, sci-fi, mystery, horror and heart palpatng suspense. The way he transitions between dramatic and comical situations are remarkable. After the daring trio's exhausting battle with vampires, out manoeuvring alans and harpes, they make it home to a well deserved rest within the sanctuary of Hevan only to be disrupted by the the Versquake. How much WORSE can it get living in a unmanageable and unpredictable dimension?

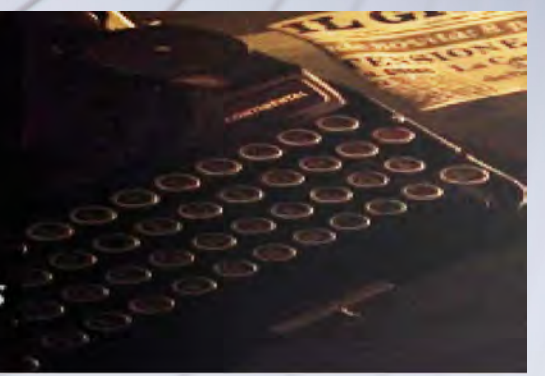
Amazon Customer

★★★★★ **Best Zombies Ever**

Reviewed in the United States on November 1, 2022

Amazon took down my review of Melanin, so I hope this stays. This is not your ordinary Zombie tale. I haven't read such inventive horror in years. Yapa really knows how to weave a story to pull you in. I had to laugh at how much fun I was having while reading it. I would recommend this author in a heart beat because all of his writings are so good.

BOOK I - COMING SOON!



AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5

CHAPTER 2

The cruise liner, “Angel of the Ocean” vanished at sea without a trace and was ultimately discovered floating as a derelict several days after the last transmission from the vessel.

The coast guard, navy, independent contractors, and private boaters were all hunting for the ship beginning with its last known location off the coast of Florida—before all contact with the luxury liner was lost. The ship was ultimately spotted far away from the location of the last transmission four days prior. The Angel was now some twenty-seven nautical miles from Cuba far out in open seas. The ship was well beyond the twelve-mile limit at which the territorial sea extends from a coastal state and over which a country exercises sovereignty and was thus well beyond the limits of both the United States and Cuba.

This was of an immediate concern for search and rescue teams and salvage crews alike. The appearance of the ship so far out to sea and floating dead

in the water immediately looked to be the consequence of having possibly been boarded and attacked by pirates or terrorists. It was the Cuban Revolutionary Navy that discovered the vessel, and upon boarding sought to locate and assist survivors, if any, and assess damages. The Navy crew members stepped into what could only be described as a bloodbath, and a floating house of horrors.

It is said that cruise ships are like small cities on the ocean. If that is the case, the members of the CRN could have only felt as if they were walking around within some apocalyptic landscape, where a town had either been the target of some form of nuclear attack, or possible exposure to a pathogen that caused all the people to turn on each other like savage animals in a frenzy—or perhaps even a zombie movie, where the wandering crew was waiting for some animated corpse to charge at them and attempt to eat their brains. These fantastic imaginings notwithstanding, one thing was for damn certain. There had





AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

been a massacre aboard this vessel.

As they walked cautiously around the silent motionless ship, weapons locked, loaded and drawn, the Navy crew members observed body after body with multiple stab wounds, throats that were slit nearly from ear to ear, varying degrees of blunt force trauma and other such methods of death. The bodies easily numbered into the hundreds and consisted of men and women as well as children. The corpses were strewn throughout the ship, littering every deck and populating nearly every room. The captain and crew were all dead, and all as bloody and mangled as the passengers and staff. There were a few dismembered body parts scattered about randomly, though thankfully, those sightings were the exception. The majority of the bodies looked to have been sliced or stabbed, with a few—as with the rarity of the dismemberments—displaying entrails on the deck or hanging down from other levels.

There was an unmistakable stench of death that even the open sea air could not cover or disperse. Several of the Navy members were able to make it to

the port or starboard sides of the ship in order to offer to the sea whatever they had for dinner that evening and breakfast that morning. Others were too far from either side and could only heave in place.

To the surprise of some, the entire ship seemed to be experiencing a massive infestation of flies—in various places on the ship, they seemed almost as thick as a swarm of locusts.

From where had they come?

It was entirely possible, even probable that flies and other insects likely stowed away on the

ship to hitch a ride while the vessel was in port as they awaited the many feasts soon to be made available to them. But this far out to sea? Where would SO many flies have come from and would not the ship's crew and passengers have noticed an infestation on this scale either before beginning its journey, or even after it was out to sea and said something about it or sent a transmission back to shore? Even if some flies were on board, could they have reproduced and swelled to these numbers this quickly?! On the deck was blood, everywhere blood.





AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

Only a few members of this group had ever seen actual combat, and therefore were unable to process the sheer amount of dried and drying red and in some cases, now nearly black blood. Many of them tried not to look at the lifeless bodies but had to because of the need to step over them. Likewise, the walls and some of the ceilings were awash in blood. In some places crew members found what looked like symbols on the walls, but they were unfamiliar and may or may not have been any kind of writing.



They went deck by deck, starting at the top and working their way to the lower decks and steerage area. The lower they went, the fewer bodies and blood they were witnessing, until finally, they reached a deck that seemed void of both. The soldiers continued clearing the area as if they were still surrounded by the countless bodies on each of the several decks above them. They knocked on doors to announce their presence then forced their way in (as most of the doors were locked from the inside, and that was the

procedure they followed from the beginning of the “sweep and clear”).

Upon reaching a second door in the hallway on the lower deck, and kicking it in, the Navy man, expecting to see either no one, or corpses, instead

tracked movement, and recognized that there was a man and a woman with their backs against the wall—and very much alive. The man stood defiantly in front of the woman, looking as if he was determined to protect her at the cost of even his own life.

The haggard couple looked every moment of their four days of being holed up in the small cabin, probably without food, water, access to a way to clean themselves or likely, based on their appearance, a change of clothes. He waved a steak knife back and forth a couple times, then pointed it directly at the man who had just burst through the door, “Don’t you take another step, or I swear to God I’ll bury this knife in your fuckin’ chest!” he said, obviously not realizing in the face of the other man holding the weapon, that he had literally brought a knife to a gun fight.



AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

“¡Cálmate! ¡Estoy aquí para ayudarte!” the CRN Seaman yelled to the knife wielding man.

Realizing immediately that the language barrier might result in unnecessary harm to himself or the survivors he had just found, the navy man stepped backward out the door, weapon still trained on the couple, and yelled down the hallway, “¡He encontrado algunas personas vivas, pero necesito que venga alguien que pueda hablar inglés!”

He stepped back inside, confident his comrades had heard him, and both men stood silently, the other hunched over slightly, breathing hard and sweating as he feebly held the knife up with what little strength he had, and looking as if he was nearly about to faint—his companion seeming as if she would not have lasted as long as him.

Within a couple of moments another of the navy men stepped quickly through the doorway, weapon drawn and trained on the wobbly kneed man protecting the woman behind him.

“¿Dijiste que necesitas a alguien que

hable inglés?” the new man on the scene said to the other.

“Si. Creo que son americanos, pero no estoy seguro. Solo sé que no hablan español.”

“Ok intentaré hablar con ellos.”

Lowering his weapon and slinging it over his shoulder, then putting up open hands, the new man said. “My name is Jorge. Do you speak English? Are you Americans?”

The man in front of them, refreshing his grasp on the knife so that it was once again

more tightly in his grip, and still pointing it, studied them and said nothing. The woman whom he had been guarding all this time blurted out, “Yes... we are Americans!”

The Cuban tapped his partner on the shoulder and said, “Son estadounidenses y obviamente están asustados. Necesito que bajes tu arma para que vean que no somos una amenaza para ellos.”

Against his better judgment, the second man lowered and shouldered his weapon, then showed the couple his open hands.





AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

Jorge then turned his attention back to the frightened couple. “You have been out to sea for at least four days. We came across your ship by accident. We look around the other decks and see something very bad has happen here. We are here to help you now. Do you understand?”

The man in front of the woman still did not speak. The men in the doorway did not make any moves to touch their weapons, and simply stared at each other.

The knife wielding man seemed frozen in position with his knife. From behind him, gradually, the woman whom he was hellbent on defending—his wife Naomi, ran her hand down his arm and to the knife, gently removing and throwing it to the floor as far away from them as her strength allowed. “Derrick, I trust them. We have to.” She said. Naomi then looked at the man who had just spoken to them and said—voice trembling slightly, “We understand.”

Both sailors, knowing what she said, looked at them, nodded their heads and gave the couple a faint smile, which was returned by the man and woman.



From outside the door, down the corridor, voice after voice exclaimed, “¡Tenemos sobrevivientes aquí!” At that, both sailors’ subtle smiles widened considerably. The English speaking Cuban looked back at the couple saying, “There are more survivors!”

* * *

Alvin Walker spoke via video conference to John “Jack” Jacobson owner and operator of the “Celebration Cruise line” of which the Angel of the Ocean was his premiere cruise ship, and delivered the news as best he could, in the only way he could. He explained

in as much detail as possible, based on the information he had gathered (which wasn’t much), the situation with the vessel and its crew and passengers.

“So what is it this time?!” Jacobson said, “MRSA? Legionnaires? Another fuckin’ overblown Covid scare?!”

“If only it were that.” Walker said, “It looks like there was some kind of massacre aboard the ship.”

“Massacre?! What are you talking about Walker? Make sense!”



AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

“Right now, that’s what it looks like, but of course there is no way to know for sure what has happened until the ship is docked, investigators have gone over the vessel with a fine-tooth comb and survivors are interviewed, but as of right now our eyes on the ground are saying there are bodies and blood everywhere.”

“So there are survivors?!” Jacobson said, sounding only slightly relieved.

“It appears so, but as of right now all the info we are getting is fluid and sketchy.”

“Can you at least tell me this, were they boarded by pirates?! Terrorists?! What the fuck happened on my ship?!”

“We don’t have enough information to say right now.”

Jacobson, now thinking about the liability issues, ensuing lawsuits, damage to the company brand and the unavoidable PR nightmare he and his advisers were going to have to somehow handle, caused him to become progressively more irritated. “Who found the ship?! The navy? The Coast Guard?”

“It was the Navy. The Cuban Revolutionary Navy.”

“The Cuban Revolu—? SHIT! THEY did it!”

“I’m sorry Mr. Jacobson. They did what?”

“The damn Cubans are the ones who massacred those people! Obviously, some kind of retaliation against the United States!”

“Retaliation for what?”

“Sanctions, Bay of Pigs, the Missile Crisis, who the fuck knows with that country?!”

“Mr. Jacobson, the Bay of Pigs and Missile Crisis were under Kennedy over sixty years ago.”

“I fucking know that!” Jacobson said, sounding as if he felt he had been insulted.

“Sir, you aren’t being rational. The Cubans are the ones who made us aware of the location of the ship and were also responsible for towing it inland before we even knew where it was. They have so far freely given us information and have been nothing but helpful.”





AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

Jacobson sat back in his leather chair and took a deep breath. He knew Walker was right, and for all his “captain of industry” posturing, he was well known for not being one to put “saving face” above all else. When he was wrong, he was simply wrong and was not hesitant to acknowledge it. Walker watched him through the video feed and saw that Jacobson was calming himself and reconsidering his outburst, so he left the man alone for a moment to gather himself. After what he thought was a reasonable enough time, Walker said finally, “Are you alright sir?”

“Yes Walker. Thank you, I’m fine. I apologize. You’re right of course, there is no reason the Cubans would have done anything to that ship or its passengers, I just got carried away by the stress of the situation.”

“Understandable Mr. Jacobson.”

“Can you at least tell me where the ship is?”

“Yes sir, it is presently off the coast of Cuba, to my understanding they will be docking very shortly.”

“CUBA?! Why the hell did they take my ship to Cuba?! Why not Florida or New Orleans?!”

“According to some reports there are numerous deaths aboard the ship, possibly in the thousands—”

“What?! Thousands?! That’s not a massacre, that’s the entire ship, I thought you said there were survivors?!”

“Sir, you have to keep in mind that none of this has been confirmed yet by our people or the U.S. government. Be that as it may... there are also possibly as many survivors according to some reports. Because

of this, there are a massive number of people who need medical attention and access to various facilities, food and clean water. The ship was found much closer to Cuba than us... the United States was simply too far away.”

Jacobson once again calmed himself. “Yes... yes... that makes sense.”

Both men were silent for a moment as Jacobson saw Walker abruptly staring off to the side at something with which he seemed to have just become preoccupied.





AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

“What’s going on over their Walker? What are you looking at?”

“I suggest you brace yourself for what I’m about to recommend to you right now. You will want to turn on your television monitors if they aren’t on already and look at what’s happening at this moment.” Walker said.

Jack Jacobson, who had been focused on his conversation with Walker via the streaming video on his desk had not once looked up to any of the muted monitors on the wall across from him. Each of them displaying basically the same scene but from various angles from various news sources.

“What the shit?” Jacobson whispered as he looked at the muted screens.

“Are you seeing this? Evidently, they had already docked and are in the process of helping passengers disembark as we were speaking. As you can see many are walking on their own, others are on stretchers, it looks like there are men, women and children, and there are a lot of them.” Walker said.

“I’m looking at it, but I don’t know what the hell I’m seeing.”

“I’m pretty sure you do, it’s just a lot to take in. The ship has docked in Cuba and survivors are now being helped off the ship live on national television and worldwide all-over social media.”

Jacobson stared at the screen in disbelief. Part of him thinking about the propaganda points Cuba would be scoring for this nearly unprecedented, humanitarian gesture; another part unable to process the images filling his eyes. “But it looks like. No, this can’t be right!” Jacobson

said as he aimed his remote toward the monitors in order to turn up the volume so that he could hear the report.

“...were found and towed by the Cuban Revolutionary Navy to Cuba in order to provide aid, support, and medical attention. Here, some of the survivors can be seen disembarking. It is unknown how many of the 3000 passengers survived this massacre on the high sea, but unofficial estimates have the number at roughly 380 and about 800 of the 1300 members of





AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

CHAPTER 3

The final death toll onboard the Angel of the Ocean, now mockingly dubbed, the Demon of the Sea, was staggering. The surviving passengers and crew broke down to only 282 of the 2621 passengers, and 327 of the crew and staff of 1296 onboard. A total of 309 people—all Black—out of the 3917 surviving.

As could have been predicted by just about anyone who had even a modicum of insight, the tragedy on board the cruise ship was one of the most monumental, unwieldy public relations nightmares in the history of business. It made the Deepwater Horizon disaster look like a flawless textbook operation by comparison.

There were so many lawsuits flying around that if one walked into the offices of Jacobson Enterprises/Celebration Cruise Line, the ensuing slices from the papers would result in the “death of a thousand cuts.”

From the beginning, when first made aware of what had happened by Alvin Walker, his executive secretary, Jacobson recognized this for the

absolute nightmare it was going to be, but he severely underestimated how bad. In his defense, the information he was working with at the time was thin to nonexistent, but after receiving all the evidence and wrapping his head around the magnitude of what had happened, Jacobson knew only one thing, and it was the thing that kept him awake at night.

The loss of his entire cruise line empire might be unavoidable.

The worst part of the entire ordeal (besides several thousand people being slaughtered), was the fact that still, no one could come to any solid

conclusions about what had happened on board his ship. Ironically, this is the one major detail that held things up in court and kept nearly all the lawsuits at bay.

There was no way to prove definitively that Celebration Cruise Line was responsible for what had happened to the passengers, or that there was any negligence on the part of the crew or the staff. Therefore, any wrongful death lawsuits or suits claiming the company had been in some way negligent got completely jammed and bottlenecked in the courts, because





AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

it would be impossible to win such suits without that proof.

If the teams of investigators and law enforcement found that Jacobson's company was in no way responsible for what had happened to the passengers, then he was off the hook.

Or rather, Jacobson would be off that single particular hook at least.

Except for the world trade center and areas connected to that tragedy, the massacre on the Angel of the Ocean ranked directly beneath it as the largest crime scene in American history. Armies of investigators, local and federal law enforcement, and government agencies all worked around the clock to determine exactly what had happened on the ship.

Due to the sheer number of bodies, the fact the luxury vessel first docked in Cuba, and was primarily populated by U.S. citizens, the situation became immediately problematic, the disaster was a jurisdictional, logistical, and global nightmare.

Fortunately, Jacobson had not gone the route of many other U.S. based

cruise companies that registered their fleets outside the country in order to bypass labor laws, so American investigators, including the FBI were able to work the crime scene.

Authorities did blood spatter analysis, autopsies, and toxicology on all the deceased to determine whether they had been the victims of some kind of bioweapon that caused them to kill each other in a frenzy. They interviewed survivor after survivor, including the children—asking for eyewitness accounts of what had happened, and in their way, seeking to find out why all those who perished on the cruise were white or non-Black, and only the Black passengers and Black members of the staff had survived.

Originally everyone was highly suspicious of the survivors and sought to discover whether there was some kind of coordinated attack by the Black people on the non-Black people on the ship. This suspicion remained at the forefront of the investigations for several months (far longer than it should have for anyone who even slightly looked at the situation logically).





AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

After realizing the number of survivors in relationship to those killed was nearly ten to one, along with the fact that there was no motive what-so-ever, coupled with the improbability of any group consisting of over a thousand people who had no connections they could find, for them to execute such an operation was nearly impossible.

They also reasoned, finally, that even if there had been some kind of attack... at ten white passengers to every one Black passenger, it would be equally impossible for absolutely no Black person to have been killed or in some way physically wounded—neither of which was the case. Another factor that came into play was that several people were in interracial relationships, which also made it unlikely that this was some kind of planned attack by the Black passengers and Black members of the staff against the white people onboard.

As more autopsies were conducted, it was ultimately determined that not only were the non-Black passengers being attacked (as could be deduced by the presence of defensive wounds), but curiously, there also seemed to be

a significant number of them whose wounds were self-inflicted.

Apparent suicides.

This harkened back to some of the statements of the surviving Black partners of interracial couples, who were discovered in their cabins with the corpses of their spouses where the non-Black spouse used whatever weapon they could find, such as an iron or some sharp object, to killed themselves.

There were also reports of knives and even some sightings of machetes, literally floating in the air and slicing some of the passengers, however, those accounts were chocked up to probable drunkenness, bad perception in the night, hysterics and psychological trauma.

In most of the interviews, survivors explained as best they could, the absolute chaos on the main decks of the ship, in nearly every hallway, with screams coming from the rooms. In attempts to escape the turmoil, a number of Black people retreated to lower decks, where many of them were staying anyway. Some managed to find unoccupied rooms that had





AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

gone unsold for the cruise. Once inside, they all seemed to have the same ideas about barricading themselves in and hunkering down until the commotion was over, and someone came to rescue them. A lot of them already had enough provisions in their rooms to last them a day or two, including access to water. However, after a couple days, many had gone through what they had and were forced to spend the next days without food or water—something that was doable, but problematic for some.

Since the vessel was found within four days, there were no deaths among the Black passengers or staff, but nearly all suffered some form of dehydration, and to a lesser degree, slight malnutrition.

The images of carnage from the ship became the stuff of investigatory team's nightmares. It became so intense that teams were splitting duty and relieving each other on a bi-weekly basis. Investigation upon investigation drug on, and even after nearly a year, no one was any closer to solid answers about the deaths of the non-Black passengers on the Angel of the Ocean.



* * *

Even without most lawsuits moving forward, Jacobson Enterprises/Celebration Cruise Line was hemorrhaging money, and there was almost no way to recoup the losses.

His entire fleet was restricted by Federal order not to leave any ports (another logistical nightmare), until there was some resolution to the fate of the close to four thousand passengers and crew who were slaughtered onboard his luxury liner Angel of the Ocean.

Jack Jacobson could not remember the last time he had experienced an actual peaceful night's sleep, but tonight he had finally managed to capture that elusive slumber. The last thing he noted was the clock on the wall across from the foot of his bed.

2:37 am.

He lay in a sleep that was sound, aided by tranquilizers and alcohol. He had finally managed a deep sleep when he heard, seemingly in a dream, the ringing of a phone. He turned over a couple times, still not quite awake, as



AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

the sound became louder, transitioning from the world of dreams into reality. Red faced, he sluggishly looked again at the clock:

2:47 am.

“Dammit!” Jacobson said as he slowly reached for the phone beside his bed that had rang one final time before he lifted it from the receiver.

Dial tone.

He replaced the receiver back in the cradle, feeling that if it were important, whoever was calling him would just call back. He flopped over onto his back and spread out his arms on the king size mattress, half chuckling in his drowsy state knowing that if anyone was trying to reach him at two or three in the morning, of course it’s something important. He could feel himself wanting to drift off and fighting it because he knew whoever had called him would likely be calling back immediately. He could have easily looked at the caller ID to see the caller’s identity, but he was just too tired now.

Fortunately, he didn’t have long to wait.

The phone rang once again, and Jacobson again lifted his head to look at the clock.

2:49 am.

For some reason it felt to him like it had been longer than two minutes. Jacobson turned on his left side and once again removed the phone from its cradle. Raising the receiver to his ear, he said an exhausted, dry mouthed, “Hello. This is Jacobson.” The voice on the other end belonged to his executive secretary and assistant throughout this entire ordeal, Alvin Walker.



Sounding curiously wide eyed and energetic for this time of morning, Walker said, “Mr. Jacobson, I’m genuinely sorry to wake you.”

“It’s alright Walker, if you’re calling me at this hour, it must be important. What’s going on now?”

“Sir, you are aware that about three days ago another cruise ship went missing?”

“Of course, the Pacific Perfection. Not one of my fleet, smaller liner, but



AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

I've been following the story. There has been very little information about it, except for what search and rescue teams are doing. What about it? Has it been found?"

"Yes sir."

"And what is the status of the passengers and crew?"

"Like last time sir, with the Angel, sketchy and fluid. However, it appears that the ship has been towed back to U.S. shores, New Orleans to be specific, and they are attending to the survivors."



Jacobson sat up in his bed, still feeling the effects of the drugs that were now wrestling with his system trying to escort him back into slumber. "Survivors?! Are you trying to tell me there are dead passengers on the Perfection?!"

"According to first reports I've received from some of my moles on the inside, the scene onboard the Pacific Perfection is a near exact repeat of what happened on the Angel—a massacre."

"And the survivors? Are any of them white or non-Black?"

"According to the information I have right now... negative."

"What the hell is going on?" Jacobson said.

"Sir... I wish I knew. I thought that this might be able to wait until morning, but then, I thought about the way all of this has been weighing on your mind for the past nearly a year."

"What do you mean? Is hearing about another cruise ship massacre supposed to make me feel happy?"

"No sir, not happy. But consider this...

if the fate of the passengers of the Perfection did die under the same circumstances, then it is highly unlikely that culpability can be laid at the foot of the crew and staff or that ship, nor the parent company itself... considering what happened to the Angel. This also works in our favor for the same reason."

Jacobson thought for a moment through his haze and realized that his advisor was right. "Thank you, Walker, you may be right. I'll be giving this some more thought. Unless you have something else, I really must get



AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

to sleep now.”

“Nothing else sir. I will meet with you tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow.”

“Good night, sir. Rest well.”

“Good night, Walker... you do the same.” Jacobson lazily hung up the phone and lay back under the covers.

The owner of the Angel of the Ocean finally would allow himself to succumb to the effects of the pill/cocktail mix that had been trying to render him unconscious. He felt a faint seemingly involuntary smile of cautious optimism form upon his lips at the thought that more than likely what happened onboard the Pacific Perfection would lead to findings that neither company was responsible through negligence or anything else done by them specifically, for the deaths of those onboard both the Perfection and the Angel of the Ocean.

He drifted off, almost giddy that this latest development may be the thing he needed to get him and his

company off the hook. Still the deaths of hundreds, or possibly thousands of innocent people may have just solved his individual problem, so he felt slightly ashamed to be so pleased about it.

But only slightly.

CHAPTER 4

Professor Tiffany “Tiffy” Van Beuren - Jefferson sat up in bed beside her husband who lay quietly, back turned. She had a modest stack of books to the left on the nightstand, as well as a few on the floor, all of them pertaining to African languages and their alphabets from ancient times to present day.

She wasn't certain exactly what she was looking for. She highly suspected that what she was seeing in the photos were letters, but the blurs made it too difficult to make out with any degree of accuracy. So, she began searching her books to see if she could find something that resembled what she had seen. She knew it was a long shot, and again, she didn't even know quite what she was looking for, but as with many things for which people search, she was convinced she would know it when she found it.





AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

Tonight, she poured over book after book, reading glasses perched near the tip of her nose, soft light from the fixture on the wall above her side of the bed that matched another on her husband's side, but was presently off, covering him with a degree of darkness.

The bulk of the subdued light shined only on Tiffany as she sat, knees up, holding smaller books near her face and resting the larger ones upon her angled thighs. She sat flipping through pages as quietly as she could in order to keep from waking her spouse at whom she would periodically glimpse at and smile because he was sleeping so peacefully.

Along with her glances toward her husband, Tiffany would every now and then take a quick look at the digital alarm clock that sat on the chest of drawers across from the bed. It was nearly three o'clock in the morning, and even though the next day was Saturday, and she would not be teaching, she would rather not stay up all night and end up a dazed zombie for most of the day—especially, being one of her days off. However, the images she saw from

the Angel of the Ocean almost a year ago had never stopped haunting her. There was something about the blood on the walls that she thought was unusual and found vaguely familiar.

Initially she went to the internet and attempted to find some clear, and possibly high-definition photos of the blood-soaked walls. Her efforts led her down an unexpected rabbit hole of death and gore websites and blogs, along with a few S&M and fetish sites—a development she definitely had not even remotely anticipated.

With the revulsion she felt as she became aware of and hesitantly acquainted with some of these dark corners of the internet, Tiffany made up in her mind that she would power through the filth and degradation (along with constant virus infestations and malware attacks), no matter what, so that she could locate some clear images and confirm or dismiss the uneasiness she felt about whether what she was seeing was actual writing, or if it were some trick of the eye and happenstance.

When Tiffany, along with the rest of the world, saw the initial images of





AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

what had happened onboard the Angel of the Ocean—she experienced immediate feelings of shock and sympathy for the slain passengers and crew, especially the children; and, just as with the rest of the world, she questioned why, and frankly how, the only survivors of the ordeal were Black people.

A short time later after more closely examining some of the photos of the blood on the walls in some of the corridors, she had seen what she felt looked to be some form of script, or possibly some type of symbols or writing. Of course, as with most news outlets, the images of the dead passengers and the bloody environment were blurred, but even through the blurs, some of what she saw of a few places on the bloody walls looked suspiciously organized and purposefully formed in their way.

This set-in motion the obsession, of which she was newly aware she had become drawn into, with discovering the mystery behind the blood splattered walls. There were several times she felt as if she should just give up her quest and get back to her life with her chemical engineer husband, and her own position teaching college

level African studies.

However, the disappearance, subsequent rescue of, and equally disturbing images from the ocean liner, Pacific Perfection, brought her seemingly weaning momentum back to a fever pitch. As she viewed photos of the carnage on the ship, Tiffany once again studied the blurred images that the news and multimedia outlets provided to the public.

They had obviously decided that the general population was too delicate and squeamish to view the pictures in their full horrific glory. As she scanned through

as best, she could, Tiffany recognized the same strange patterns, in blood on the walls. Upon seeing these new images, from a completely different ocean liner, she knew she had to get to the bottom of this—if in fact, there was a bottom.

Tiffany read book after book, studying page after page then, taking a slight break, would give an obligatory look at her husband, Ricardo. But this time when she turned her head in the direction of the love of her life, her gaze was met by two big brown, fully awake eyes! She jumped a little and





AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

slightly caught her breath. Placing a hand over her now quickly beating heart she said, “Rick, how long have you been laying there staring at me?”

Ricardo smiled widely and said, “Oh, I dunno... a few minutes.”

“Well don’t DO that!” she giggled, removing her hand from over her heart so she could use it to slap her husband on the leg.

Laughing a little, Ricardo glanced at the book on his wife’s lap and then the ones on the nightstand. He then looked over to the chest of drawers at the clock. He craned his head back and forth a couple times trying to bring the illuminated blue numbers into focus—an exercise both he and his wife knew was futile without his glasses, which sat on his own nightstand, but for which he wasn’t about to go through the trouble of reaching for.

“It’s 3:18.” Tiffany said as she used the middle finger of her right hand to push her glasses a little higher on her nose.”

“3:18 and you’re still up and at it?”

“Still up and at it.” She said, sounding

tired and now feeling a little bit like she had genuinely become obsessed with these strange blood patterns.

“I think those investigators need to put you on the payroll. I’ll bet you spend more time researching this stuff than any of them do. Well maybe the Angel of the Ocean. The thing with the Pacific Perfection is fairly recent.”

“I’m just trying to get to the bottom of this for myself. I can’t shake the feeling that those photos are showing something written in blood on those walls. Everyone keeps blurring the damned things though, so I can’t figure it out...

at least not yet.”

Ricardo sat up against the headboard and finally picked up his glasses from the nightstand and put them on. He crossed his arms, looked at Tiffany and said, “I know we’ve talked about this before, and you say you’re doing this for the sake of your own curiosity. So, I just want to be clear. Do you think that perhaps the investigators who have access to the actual crime scenes have figured out that these are symbols, or letters or whatever, and that they’ve likely brought someone in to decipher them?”





AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

“Yes... that’s pretty much what I think.”

“If that’s the case, then why haven’t they made it public?”

“Who knows? Legal issues, liability issues, organizational procedures, or maybe because there are now two ongoing investigations.”

You have to remember, they did admit that as of right now, they know almost nothing about what happened on either ship or are even more dumfounded by the fact that only Black people survived in both cases. All of that said Rick... they ARE professionals and experts.”

“You’re way more generous than I am Tiffy. You far and away give these so called ‘experts and professionals’ more credit than I do.

Remember... I work with a lot of these types. Most of them couldn’t find their ass in broad daylight if they had their hands tied behind their backs.

I’ve found that a lot of the time—hell—MOST of the time, people who are pouring themselves into a thing

come to a point where they’ve been with it so long, they literally lose the ability to recognize the obvious.”

“Perhaps.”

“Tiffy, Baby... that may go for you too. Look, why don’t you just contact the FBI or whoever is handling the situation and tell them you’re a professor of African studies, and you’ve seen something on the photos that may assist them with their investigation if you can have access to some clear images of them? You’d think it would be hard, but it won’t be hard.”

Tiffany thought for a moment, and as she did, Ricardo removed his glasses, placed them back on the nightstand and sank back under the covers so that he could resume his calm, restful sleep.

“I’ll do it.” Tiffany said softly to her now drifting off to sleep husband, “I’ll contact the investigative team tomorrow. The worst they could do is tell me to go to hell... right?”

“Or invite you into it.” Ricardo said as he closed his eyes and snuggled into his pillow.





AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

CHAPTER 5

The space was unknown to Miya, but familiar.

It was dark and dank.

She attempted to look around her but saw nothing but blackness. A panic overtook her at the thought that her eyelids were wide open, and she must somehow have become blind as she slept. The sudden anxiety subsided as her eyes adjusted to the darkness of her surroundings and she was able to begin making out hints of light and shadow.

She took in a deep breath through her nose and was immediately sorry she did.

The first of the smells to assault her nose was the sickening stink hanging in the warm, oppressive, non-circulating air of rotting, water saturated wood—the odor of the wood being the most pleasant of the scents around her. She also detected the stench of sweat, urine, vomit, excrement, and several others she did not recognize, nor wanted committed to her memory.



She felt sick to her stomach not only from the smells that unmercifully attacked her senses, but she could feel motion, like a kind of rollercoaster ride that never slowed down to allow the riders to gain a sense of bearing before taking them through the next uncompromising, gravity defying drop and rise.

She lay hot, and profusely sweating.

Her back hurt.

It was sore from laying upon something that was obviously hard and unforgiving. Because of the odors around her she guessed she was on some kind of slab—a wooden slab. With each rise and fall, with each subtle movement she felt pain that traveled from one part of her back to another, and try as she might, there seemed no way in which to position herself so that she could if not be comfortable, at the very least no longer experience the incessant soreness.

As she lay, surely becoming blistered and splinter laden by the wood on which her body was stretched out, she felt nothing, not even the slightest hint of a cushion or cloth between her and the stiff wood, because of this,



AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

Miya sat up screaming “No! No! Get off me!”, as she flailed her arms and kicked wildly in no particular direction. Her struggle against her intangible assailant nearly causing her to fall off her bed and onto the hardwood floor of her bedroom. She was shaking uncontrollably, sweating, and gasping for air.

Malcolm, Miya’s husband, burst into the bedroom and turned on the lights. Seeing his wife’s state, he strode quickly over to her and held her, her body and pink nightshirt as well as the spot where she lay, the sheets that had once covered her and her pillow were all drenched in sweat.

“It’s alright Baby... it was another nightmare. You’re awake now.” He said softly as he gently rubbed Miya’s back. Miya started to calm down and looked at the digital clock that sat on a table across the room.

9:17 pm.

It was still relatively early.

Miya had only gotten into bed around 9:00 as Malcolm decided to stay up a little while longer watching one of

the superhero movies he enjoyed so much. All of this terror in probably less than fifteen minutes, she thought.

Somewhere in her subconscious, after having dealt with this particular nightmare over and over, Miya knew in her logical mind that she was asleep and having a horrific dream—sort of. But that was of little comfort when she was in the midst of the terrifying environment and experiencing every gut wrenching part of it.

Miya was also concerned that if, due to the stench and horror, she did lose her dinner and vomit while she was asleep, she might choke on it if unable to wake up soon enough. There were times she would dream she had vomited, but never had it happened in the real world.

But there is a first time for everything, and for Miya, the first time could be the last. Nightmare or no, she considered that a real threat.

She sometimes wondered, when she would allow herself that morbid query, if she were to in fact transition during one of these episodes if everything would go black and then she would





AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

find herself in the land of her ancestors, or if the nightmare would take hold and become permanent, leaving her in eternal torment? This was something she pushed out of her mind, feeling that the nightmares themselves were already nearly more than she could endure, and quickly becoming unbearable.

So, the thought of the dreams and lying in bed choking on her own vomit was something best left out of the equation for now, because each morning, or evening or whenever she managed to catch some sleep only to enter the hellish dreamscape, she did wake up and managed to keep all her food inside her body where it belonged. The single constant was that when she awoke, screaming and shaking, she was always atop a now sweat soaked set of sheets and pillow.

Of late, these nightmares had become a new normal.

Miya had not been sleeping well, finding herself startled awake most nights by the strange dreams. She suspected that she had become susceptible to nightmares and night terrors. There was no explaining why

she was suddenly experiencing these frightening visions that seemed to have come out of nowhere. Every now and then she might watch the occasional horror or slasher movie, or even read a book in the genre, but

Miya had a tendency to make sure she did so well before bedtime when she had a chance to enter some other stimuli into her consciousness, like a romantic comedy, or straight out comedy, or perhaps listening to Jazz or some R&B music, Nina Simone and Lauryn Hill being her go-to vocalists, so she didn't think what she was inputting into her brain before heading

off to slumberland was the issue.

The dreams she was having were just, strange. Unexplainable. She encountered people she had never known and saw vividly places she could not have possibly visited, and of which she had absolutely no point of reference.

The dreams were never pleasant, always horrific, and with a quality that was unlike anything she experienced in any of her other nighttime adventures. There was something about them that seemed as real as





AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

Eventually, Malcolm saw the pattern of Miya's distress and told her that if she didn't want to talk to him about it, then she needed to talk to someone.

Someone professional.

Someone who might be able to get to the bottom of what was going on and possibly find a way to make it stop through therapy, or as a last resort, medication.

Miya knew herself well enough to know she was not a "therapist" type of person, but she also believed Malcolm was right, there was no way she wanted to continue being tormented by these horrific images in her mind at night to the point where she no longer looked forward to going to bed and going to sleep.

Surprisingly to Miya, and more disturbing, was not the instances of sleep paralysis, unable to move or cry out as she would experience the sensation of weight on top of her, and the inescapable feeling that were she unable to come to full consciousness in time her body would be intimately, physically violated. No, what disturbed her more were the visions of a woman.

A strange—sad—suffering—furious, Black woman.

Miya was able only to fully make out the woman's eyes and that she always held out what looked to be her left hand. But as far as the woman's face and

features, they all seemed a blur—much like those of the white men (at least, she supposed they were white men), but she could remember something she said—something the apparition repeated each time she was present in Miya's fevered consciousness:

"Ban dimbal ñun fekk jeem."

And then Miya would jump awake, just as she would when being "attacked" by the men belonging to the white faces.

She had no idea what the words meant and spent hours on the internet search engines trying to translate or decipher them. As it were, she understood that though in her dreams she clearly heard the phrase phonetically, there was always the chance she was completely misspelling it to the degree that even advanced search engines were unable to give even possible alternate suggestions.





AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

Though the thought of seeing a ‘professional’ was the last thing Miya wanted to do, she knew she couldn’t go much longer dealing with the nightmares, and that it looked like they were not going to just go away as she had hoped, but this most recent nightmare was the most terrible and the most vivid yet.

And worse—

She had no idea what to do, so she did what she always did. Tried to pretend it didn’t happen and go about her daily business as she wrapped herself within an ever flimsier, unraveling cocoon of denial.

* * *

Miya sat meditating. She had already prayed to Yah, as she was prone to do several times a day. She also made it a point to recognize and give honor to her ancestors. Those who came before her who through unthinkable pain, humiliation, torture, and sorrow, fought, rebelled and in some cases allowed themselves to be humiliated in order to survive and ultimately produce her, who would one day, pick up the mantle and avenge their humiliation.



This was something Miya gave deep thought to constantly.

One of her ancestors was a Black entertainer named Benjamin Stallwell. He was unknown to most people except those immersed in online environments, what she would consider “Black Social Media”. The Black people in those sectors of the internet who knew of him in the present day had written him off as a “butter biscuit eatin’ coon”. For Black people to use the term coon was something Miya found curious, seeing as it was typically spouted by Caucasians as an epithet relating to her people.

She had the same trouble reconciling the use of that term almost as much as she did the use of the word nigger by Black people.

The depth of the contradiction thing was beyond her ability to grasp.

Her great, great grandfather on her father’s side, Benjamin Stallwell was a vaudeville performer who would, in the most stereotypical, degrading to Black people, way possible perform songs, dance and comedy routines before white audiences. Even his stage name (reportedly given to him by his



AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

white manager), was “Jacko Blacko”, a further insult to her people. Miya’s ancestor was basically “Stepin Fetchit” before there was a Stepin Fetchit¹. According to information on the internet, Benjamin Stallwell met his untimely end at the hands of a lynch mob, who strung him up after it was found he impregnated the white wife of one of the city’s big wigs. The two were carrying on a tawdry, forbidden affair, but when she turned up pregnant—unsurprisingly she cried “rape” and that was the end of ol’ Ben.

He should have known better.

For years Miya felt ashamed that she was part of his lineage and his blood flowed through her veins. At one point when she was in her early twenties, Miya had even seriously considered changing her last name so she could further distance herself from Benjamin Stallwell’s memory or anything having to do with him. As time passed, the desire weaned, but it never quite left her. Eventually her marriage to Malcolm Jones ended up doing it for her, providing Miya a new, albeit absurdly common last name.

¹ Stepin Fetchit was the stage name of Black comedian/actor Lincoln Theodore Monroe Andrew Born: May 30, 1902, Died: November 19, 1985.

In the end Miya concluded that she needed to forgive Benjamin—something she recognized as being strange in itself. Forgive him for what? After all, what had he ever done to her except be part of the line that was responsible for her existing at all? That

notwithstanding, in line with some Afrikan spiritual beliefs, it was possible to, at times seek guidance from one’s ancestors, and equally possible to assist in the growth and development of one’s ancestors—and to that degree she did work that would be of benefit to her great—great—grandfather.

The man whom she could not find the ability to forgive however, was Mannford Stallwell.

Her father.

She couldn’t really say she hated him because she didn’t know him well enough. If she wanted to, she sometimes thought, she guessed she could put him into a category in her mind that would be for general hate, some universal hate that wasn’t really attached to anything. The kind of hatred some people reserve for sports teams they—well—hate. She felt abandoned and was angry it





AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

seemed for both herself and her mother. Phillis, her mother didn't seem nearly as distraught about the fact her husband left her as Miya was. Perhaps over the years, by the time she was able to understand and come to grips with it, Phillis had been able to make peace with it. Phillis never married again, and each time Miya would ask some question about the divorce, her mother would always find a way to change the subject. Miya took that as a sign that she just never wanted to talk about it, ever.

Perhaps it was too painful.

According to her mother, Mannford Stallwell left his family when she was two, leaving Phillis to raise Miya as a single mother. It was true that he regularly sent them money that in truth was far and away, more than the courts would have dictated he pay in child support. But that was all she got from him.

No visits.

No cards or gifts on holidays (any more than extra money—but never anything that could have been considered remotely personal).

Miya remembered speaking with Mannford on the phone one time—the day she graduated college. She vaguely recalled him saying some bullshit (as far as she was concerned), about how proud he was of her, and what a fantastic job her mother had done raising her. All Miya remembered clearly was that in the middle of the call—in the middle of one of his sentences—she whispered, “Go to hell, Mannford.” and hung up the phone. After that, she never heard a word from Mannford Stallwell—her estranged father again.

Years later Miya told her mother about the phone call and was told by Phillis that she ought not have done that. Miya remembered looking at her mother very strangely when she said that. In her mind, Phillis had become so sad, or weak minded that she didn't even know how she should feel.

The man abandoned her with a two year old daughter, and all he did was send money, nothing else. He didn't deserve any kind of sympathy or forgiveness as far as Miya was concerned, and she had serious reservations about anyone who





AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

wanted to grant him lenience.

So yes, ol' Grandpa Ben might be able to find forgiveness with her, but never, EVER Mannford Stallwell.

Indirectly, the reconciling of what she should think about Benjamin Stallwell assisted her with another issue with which she had struggled, that of how she should have thought about ancestors in general.

Being a product of the 21st century, Miya was deeply acquainted with the internet and social media, specifically, Black social media. Because of this, she was

exposed to a mishmash of varying viewpoints about subjects pertaining to Black people exclusively. Some of what was argued back and forth was nothing more than petty content creators seeking to make names for themselves.

There were sectors of what came to be known as the "Black Manosphere, and Black Woman-sphere, both of which existed solely for the purpose of bashing, degrading, and maligning their own Black men and women. It wasn't difficult to see immediately that the content creators who pushed these

narratives were either hurt, angry, broken in some way, or just seeking attention, a small fleeting bit of fame and possible financial rewards.

The sector with which she became entangled was a bit more political in nature and had Black people with very strong opinions talking about the "problems with Black people" and seeing it as their mission to "call out" those members of the community whom they felt were either a detriment to Black people, or who had not done, nor were doing, anything that would advance the race.



Benjamin Stallwell was placed fully inside a box along with others who had been branded as "agents, traitors, or coons" as determined by the self-appointed, self-proclaimed Black social media authorities, who, each one of them boasted having all the answers, and only their conclusions were correct or mattered. Their outreach and power multiplied by, in some cases, legions of rabid followers, who were willing to defend their social media guru to the death, whether the guru was right, or demonstratively wrong.



AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

Quickly, Miya found herself drawn in nearly completely by the narrative and had become one of the most vocal members of the “amen corner”. When the discussion was about Black people not working hard enough, not trying hard enough, and/or committing any number of self-destructive or self-defeating acts, she was always the first one there commenting on how right the speaker was, and how she believed the solution for our people would be to just “get some self-esteem.”

This went on for several years for her. While her husband was at work doing construction, she would clean house, figure out what she was going to prepare for dinner that evening and organize it, take care of any business she might need to do for the household, and then, off to the computer she went, looking up favorite social media personalities and entering the echo chambers that were their channels, blogs or websites.

Finally, her best friend Gela Johnson, who had already seen the changes in her friend Miya, decided it was time to, as diplomatically as possible, say something to her about it. Miya always remembered that the day

Gela came over it rained almost all day. They sat for hours talking and laughing as the rain outside alternated between a light drizzle and torrential downpours. Gela talking about what was going on in her life, how things were with her husband and with her small business—a nice little side hustle she discovered.

Miya talked about her husband, what was happening with her (which wasn't a lot), and of course the things she had been seeing on Black social media. As she spoke about the different subjects put forth by the multimedia talking heads, she went into long

monologues about the “problem with Black people”, and how, “we need to just _____ (fill in the blank). As Gela listened to her friend, she realized that what she had fallen into was just what she suspected.

Worse than she expected.

As Gela listened to Miya drone on, she thought about the Miya of a little less than a year ago. The open-minded Miya, the wide smiling friendly Miya... the Miya who existed before she had become indoctrinated.





AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

. The two women had been best friends for over fifteen years, and Gela knew for the most part how Miya felt about different things, and how Miya spoke. What was pouring out of her now was not her friend. Miya's opinions (if that is what they could be called), smacked of the regurgitation of someone else's words.

It was then that Gela gently talked her friend back to reality, something for which Miya would be eternally grateful. After breaking the Black social media spell and her head began to clear Miya actually started gaining some forward momentum.

In time it became part of Miya's daily routine to give deep thought to some difficult questions, the main ones being:

How can one make a real choice within a closed system?

Gela also posed the question that completely shifted Miya's perspective about the ancestors. Gela discussed the situations their ancestors had to face, and the conundrum.

"In present day," Gela asked, "...if you had a child and someone put a gun to

your child's head, then told you that if you didn't have sex with them, they would pull the trigger. What would you do?" She went on to put it in the context of the same situation but going to an extreme. "Miya, what if they gave you a plate of excrement, and told you to, smear it all over your face and then eat some of it... what would you do with your child's life hanging in the balance?"

Miya, nose turned up, said, "Girl, we just ate a little while ago, what are you trying to do? Make me throw up?"

"No. I'm just using an extreme example to try to show you something."

Through the revulsion Miya said, "Of course I would do what they wanted, I wouldn't hesitate to do either thing if it meant saving the life of my child."

"Given those extreme examples, what can be said of people who were (and are), held captive and threats are being made to not only them but their families? What if the enslavers threatened the lives of their children, or husbands or wives? What if they were threatening to divide families? Or torture loved ones? It is true that there would be no guarantee the





AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

.enslaver would keep their word, which made it more insidious, just as with the two scenarios given you, there is no guarantee that after you did what was asked of you, the demon would not pull the trigger anyway. But the fact remained that you would have to at least try.”

“I think I see what you’re getting at.” Miya said.

“These are the choices our ancestors were having to make daily for their survival and the survival of our people. There is something else to consider Miya, that I’m sure you may have never thought about.”

“What’s that?”

“Just as we are here because of our ancestors who chose to live, we have ancestors who were caught up in these impossible situations, and the only way for them to survive was to so-called, “coon”. But behind the back of their enslavers, most of them schemed against those who were oppressing, thought of ways to escape and to be free. Within that dynamic, I’m sure, were many who saw their position of helplessness and near hopelessness at the bottom but knew in their hearts that what was happening was wrong.”



“I’ve thought about that.”

“Maybe so... but not this part. We’ve all seen movies where a character might sacrifice his life and with their dying breath, tell the person they saved to avenge them. For our people who were visionaries, for those who believed that the state of things was not permanent because of the mere unsustainable nature of it... they may have done whatever it was they needed to do, so that in later generations they... and their dignity... could be avenged.”

Miya had never looked at things in that way. She had become too

caught up in the judgmental rantings of nameless, faceless people on social media who, if given a word for word transcript of what they said during an average broadcast and reading it with no other context, one would think it was something written by a white supremacist. enslaver would keep their word, which made it more insidious, just as with the two scenarios given you, there is no guarantee that after you did what was asked of you, the demon would not pull the trigger anyway. But the fact remained that you would have to at least try.”

READING and WRITING in the

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A space for avid Black readers and Black authors



AND WHAT of the CARGO?: Complete Chapters 2 - 5 (Cont.)

As Miya pondered what was said, long into the night and the next day, her thoughts and attitudes toward Benjamin Stallwell started to change. No, there wasn't any way she could know if the man actually was a "coon" or if he was doing what he had to in order to survive so that someone in a later generation could bring dignity to his name, but the point was that there was no way, one way or the other for her to know.

Because of the many conversations she and Gela had prior, she had become solidly "Blame Black Last". Meaning that in any given situation, Miya would now always give her own people the benefit of the doubt and reserve her harsh judgments until she knew all the facts. And even then, she never left out of the equation that Black people have

been targeted globally and, virtually the entire world was taught and conditioned to be suspicious, fearful of, and dismissive of her people, INCLUDING her own people.



Therefore, since Black people (with some exceptions), are no longer bound with physical chains, they still find themselves mentally chained, which in the opinion of most is far worse, and significantly more difficult to break.

* * *

The book is: *LOST IN SECRET ARMS* by Adrien M. Lane. It's a love story like none you've ever read before, and when Adrien says "Nothing is as it seems." She MEANS it!

COMING SOON!

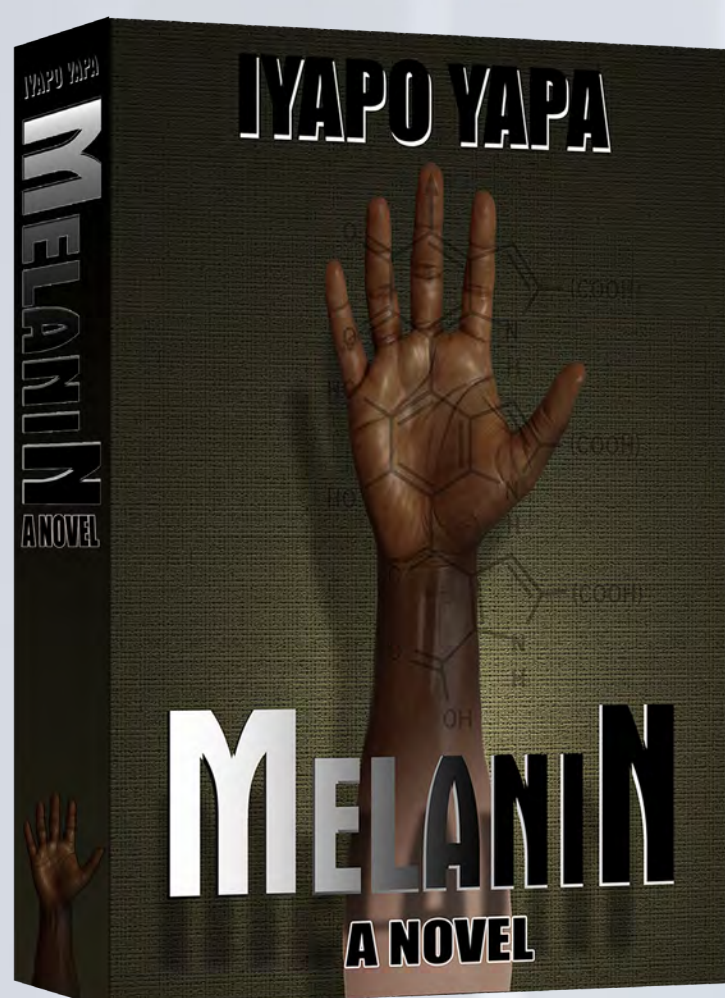
[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)



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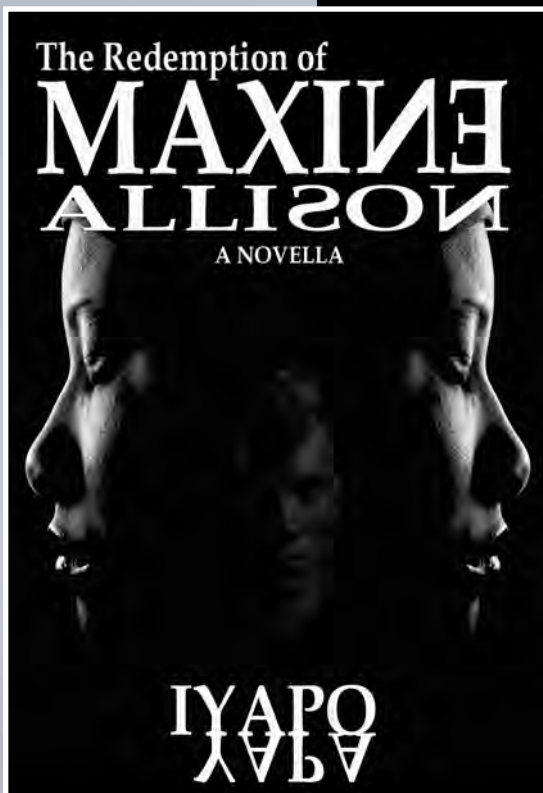
After two years,
MELANIN: A Novel finally
has a trailer!
(And it's an exciting one too!)
You can check it out now by
clicking
the image above!

Click the image on the left to
purchase the novel!

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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 a hit, as Adrien M. Lane brings you her mind bending and controversial debut novella. Read *The Redemption of Maxine Allison* and find out why!

THE WAIT IS ALMOST OVER! (In editing right now!)



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**.

AVAILABLE NOW!
CLICK THE LOGO TO GO TO THE RETAILER



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DECEMBER 2025 WORD SEARCH PUZZLE!

This month's word search puzzle is based on some of the original members of the BLACK PANTHERS!

Enjoy! Word Searches are always a wonderful way to pass the time!

The solution to last month's puzzle, is at the back of the magazine as usual.

So, there it is! HAVE FUN!

CLICK ON THE IMAGE BELOW TO DOWNLOAD A PRINTABLE COPY OF THE PUZZLE!

NOVEMBER 2025 CROSSWORD PUZZLE THE BLACK PANTHERS

V	C	A	N	G	E	L	A	E	H	B	H	A	P	C	R	M	F	N	G
U	G	O	Y	X	T	M	V	A	I	A	R	I	R	P	P	Y	I	E	T
T	E	E	L	B	E	R	T	Q	L	R	Z	I	B	J	K	V	K	W	R
C	R	U	S	H	Q	Y	Q	E	L	B	K	A	E	R	K	O	B	T	R
Y	O	M	U	U	G	Q	H	W	I	A	K	A	H	K	U	Q	U	O	F
J	N	N	N	M	W	H	T	O	A	R	H	A	T	E	Q	G	N	N	J
A	I	K	W	A	M	E	U	E	R	A	V	H	O	H	A	B	C	Z	T
C	M	X	A	E	O	D	L	G	D	B	E	T	T	D	L	X	H	L	I
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S	U	W	G	W	X	N	L	J	H	I	F	O	C	C	I	R	E	Y	O
O	V	J	S	Q	W	D	A	I	R	D	N	K	L	I	V	F	S	N	I
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A	N	S	M	Y	K	K	E	A	E	P	T	U	K	E	K	E	R	G	U
S	S	F	T	S	H	A	K	U	R	J	R	I	P	A	J	A	W	H	T
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A	B	D	U	L	L	A	H	T	Y	W	T	S	A	E	W	H	N	U	O
T	H	A	M	P	T	O	N	W	R	T	H	L	L	O	I	T	N	U	N
A	D	E	L	D	R	I	D	G	E	E	M	O	R	Y	R	M	Q	F	D
V	M	J	O	U	N	H	I	C	P	J	V	K	O	Z	Y	X	D	Y	E



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Wordsearch Clues

SHERWIN

ELAINE

HUGGINS

ABDULLAH

RUSH

KATHLEEN

ASSATA

EMORY

SEALE

ELBERT

HAMPTON

HUTTON

BUNCHY

SHAKUR

GERONIMO

JACKSON

KWAME

ELDRIDGE

HILLIARD

CLARK

ANGELA

FORTE

NEWTON

BARBARA



ACTION and ADVENTURE has a NEW FACE!

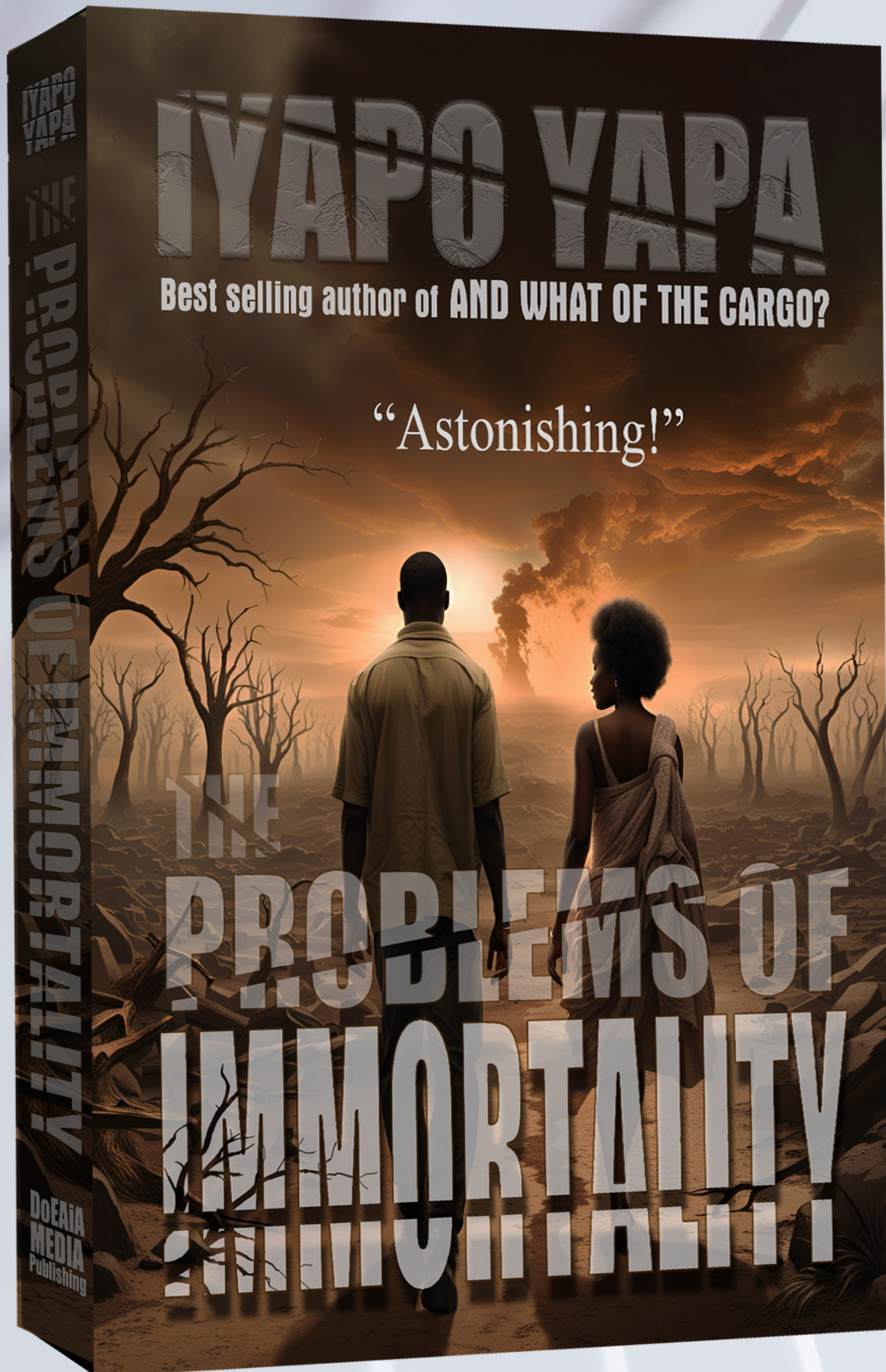


COMING 2026!

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IYAPO YAPA invites you to a world like nothing you’ve ever seen before, in a WAY it has never been seen before !

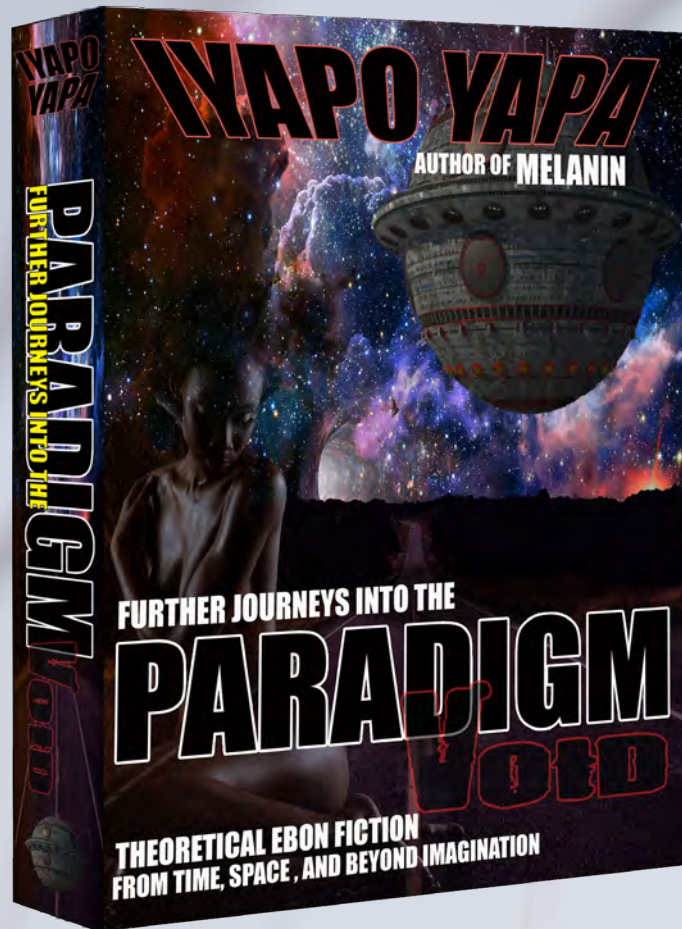
COMING SOON!

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ARE YOU PREPARED TO JOURNEY BACK INTO THE VOID?!

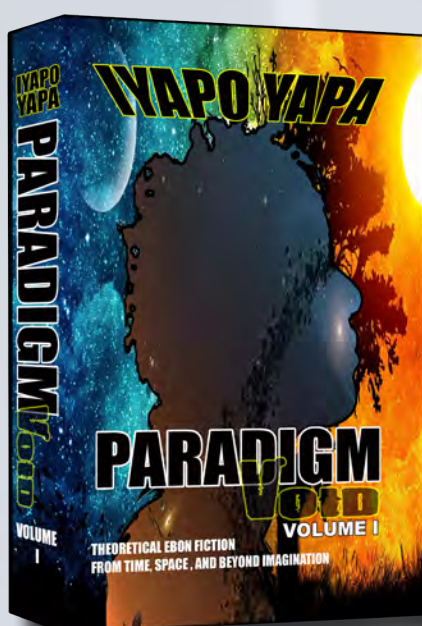


COMING SOON

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!

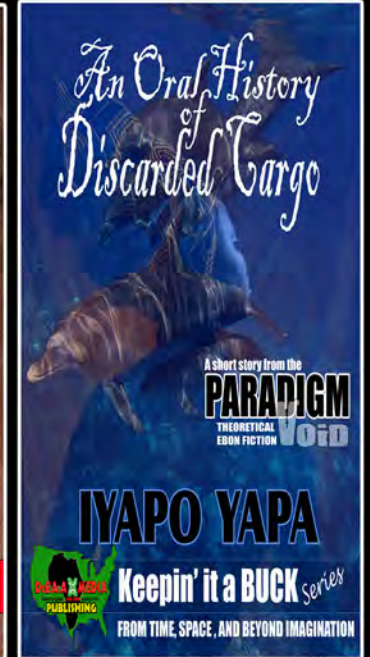
Stories from Time, Space and Beyond Imagination,
Paradigm VOID Volume I is available.



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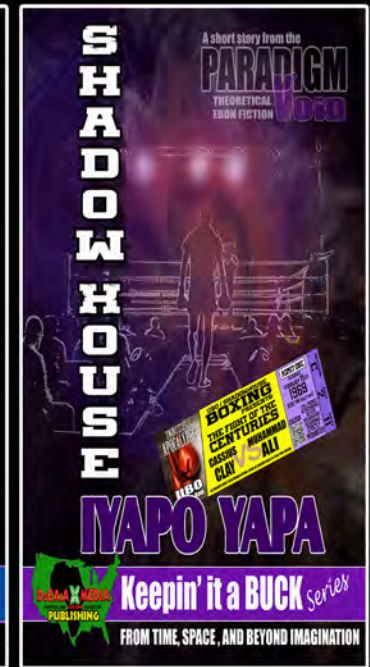
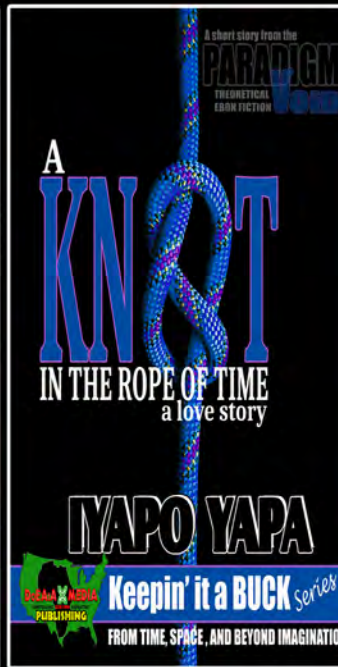


IT IS TIME TO JOURNEY INTO THE **PARADIGM VOID** ONE STEP AT A TIME.

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 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

Reflection: Big B.

When I was told, I was sitting alone.

That didn't matter though.

Had I been inside a stadium during the Superbowl, right after one or the other team scored, to the deafening cheers and jeers.

I would have been sitting alone in that moment, hearing nothing but my own thoughts and the echoes of the last words said to me.

I was told that I wouldn't be seeing my beloved sister again.

Not able to touch her, hold her, talk to her, laugh with her...

Not ever again.

Not on this plane.

She was somewhere else.

She IS somewhere else now.

I imagine, reunited with our mother and father.

But she isn't here.

I do at least have that comfort.

What of those who received the same news. Those they love haven't been taken away.

In my belief system, my sister is no longer mentally handicapped and unlike in this life, she is now able to walk. Who knows? Perhaps she can

even fly now... or just think herself in a place.

In a paradise.

At least I have that.

Unlike my ancestors, who never got that comfort. Never knew if the

person they loved died on a ship and was unceremoniously thrown overboard or chose to jump rather than remain and submit themselves to unknown tortures. They could only wonder if their people were suffering under a whip, or casually, callously, and brutally raped and tormented. Or that the extension of their bloodlines

was subjected to marginalization, terror and wonten murder, even as they continued to thrive... being of a more substantial stock than that of their captors.

To them, and to the minds of those tormented... how does one heal?

Is such a thing possible?

Just on the scale of my personal loss... I don't know.

I simply don't know.



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DoEAIa MEDIA PUBLISHING is on the MOVE and taking control in 2026 with even more of the spectacular Pro-Black content our people have been longing for!

Check out the catalogue for 2026!



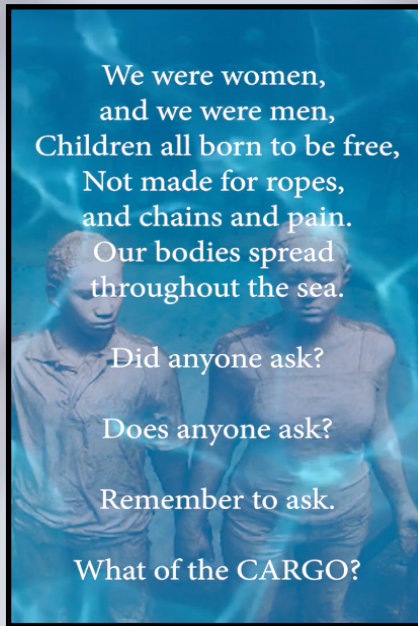
Scan the QR Code or click the image to the left to view the catalogue.

CONTROLLING OUR NARRATIVE!



There are now **THREE** And What of the **CARGO?** Trailers for you to watch!
 Just click on the image to view.

Original Trailer



Music Video Trailer

Full Extended Trailer



I'd like to say a big **THANK YOU!** To everyone who helped all three of my books to spend some time at number **ONE** on Amazon's **BEST SELLERS** list!

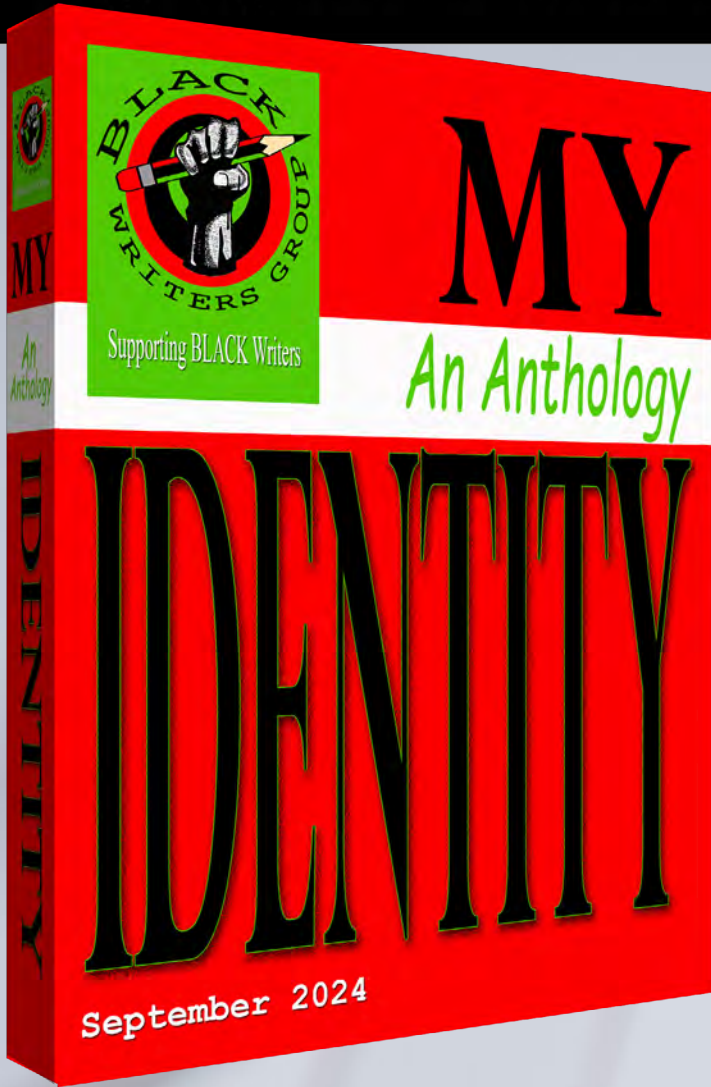


FIND AFFIRMING SELF LOVE AT:

365 Dates
angela riley

COMING SOON!:

Fully BLACK
angela riley



MY IDENTITY QR CODE
OR
Click the image
to the left for
the book.



Black LOVE QR CODE
OR
Click the image
to the right for
the book.



MY IDENTITY & BLACK LOVE ANTHOLOGY

Talented Black writers give you their insights in these Black Writers Group publications, *My Identity: An Anthology* and *Black Love Anthology*. The subjects, writing style and personal observations are as varied as the writers themselves. From essays to poems to affirmations to videos, they are surprising, inspirational, & even possibly unsettling. One thing is certain: after reading and experiencing these volumes, you will come away with food for thought as it pertains to Black love and identity, what they are, and what they mean.

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So, who knew I was a cartoonist before I became a writer?

Take a minute to check out some of my work online at:

<https://iyapoyapa.com/cartoonist-illustrator.html>

or just click the image below and it will take you straight there!



Everybody needs a hobby!

Mine is playing and composing **MUSIC!**

For me, playing and composing is one of the most relaxing and fullfilling things I do with my spare time (when I HAVE

some spare time). You're welcome to check out some of

my songs at: <https://iyapoyapa.com/music.html> or

you know the deal... just click the link below. **ENJOY!**



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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.

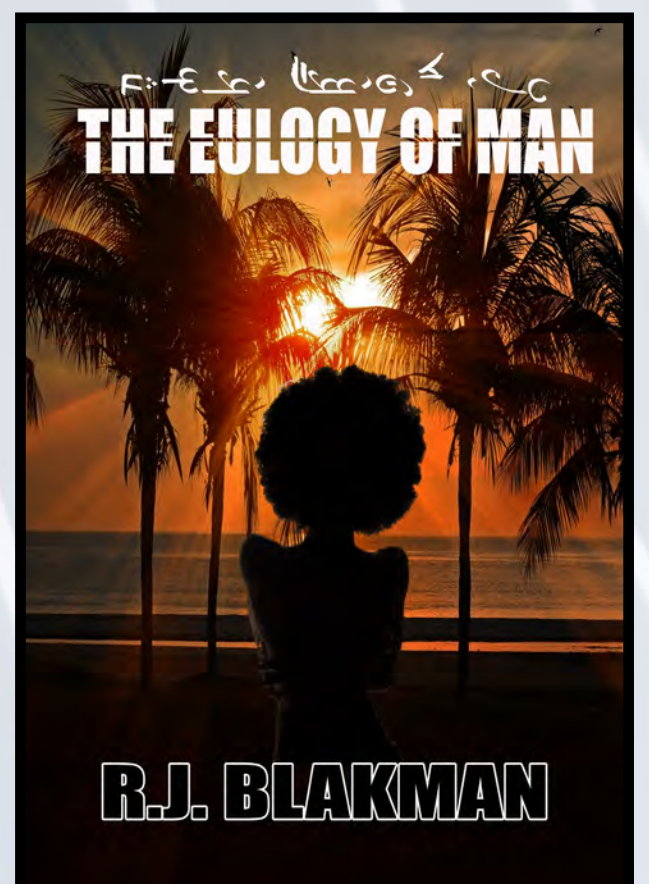
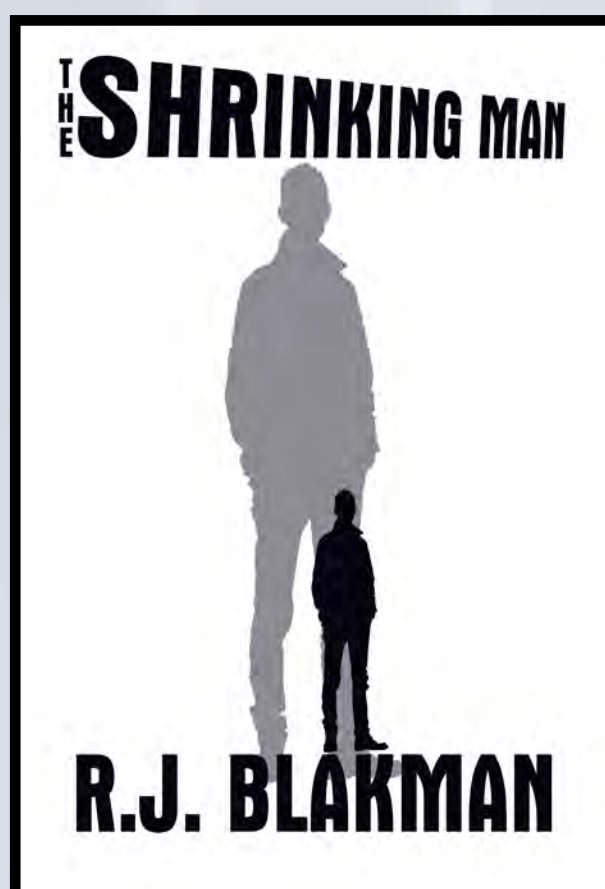
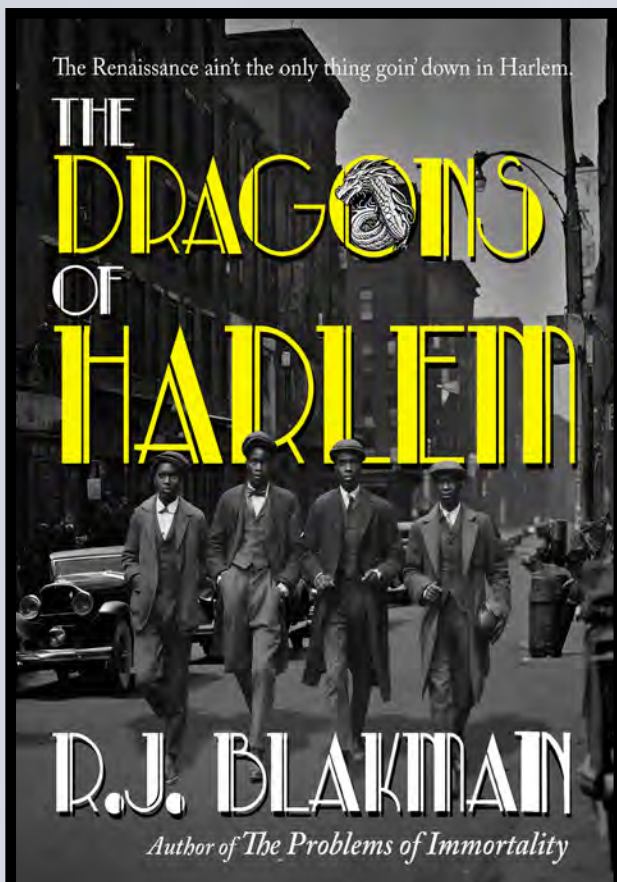
As a practice, Blakman seeks out truth and goes wherever that truth leads him, even if uncomfortable.

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



UPCOMING BOOKS BY R.J. BLAKMAN



ENTERTAINING,
ENGROSSING,
THOUGHT PROVOKING!

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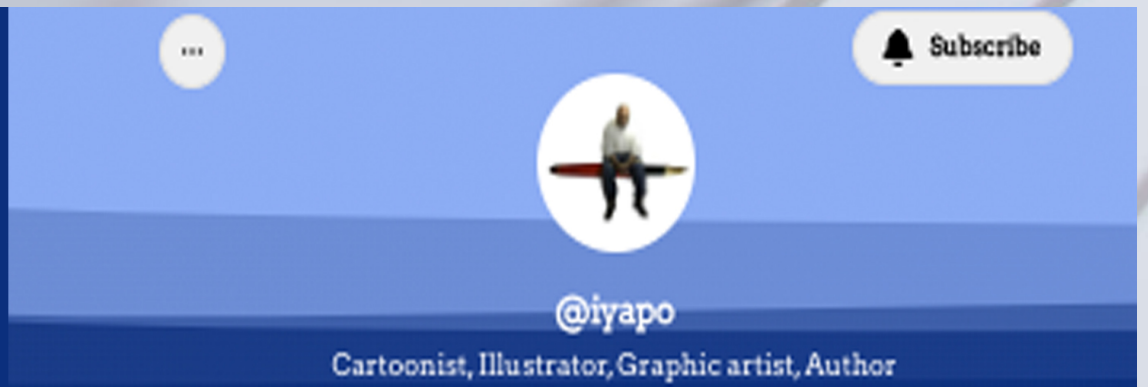
Find Iyapo at:
Linktree*

At any given time I am producing some form of ProBlack centered content.

After releasing my work to the public, sometimes, locating it can be a challenge.

But now with LINKTREE, there are direct links to my books, art and my social media presence. Linktree is your one stop (1 CLICK) shop for all things IYAPO!

Just click the image to the right and it will take you directly to Linktree and all that I have to offer!



Books and Writing by Iyapo Yapa

Enter the world of
IYAPO YAPA
where you can find my
books, art, and music!

The FULL website is best
viewed on a computer or
tablet. The site is ROBUST,
so be prepared and ENJOY!

IYAPO'S WEBSITE



What if becoming genetically and phenotypically Black was the only thing that could save your life?

"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 Coater

MELANIN: A Novel



It began during the transatlantic slave trade... but it ends NOW!

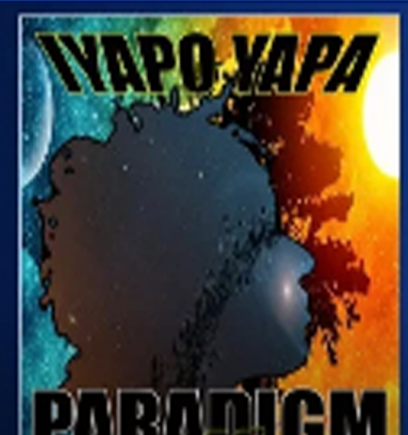
AND WHAT OF THE CARGO?
is a tale of love and hate,
tears and triumph, suspense
and horror that leads to an
unimaginable conclusion.

And What of the CARGO?



An anthology of short stories in the realm of Theoretical Ehon Fiction from time, space and suspense beyond imagination.

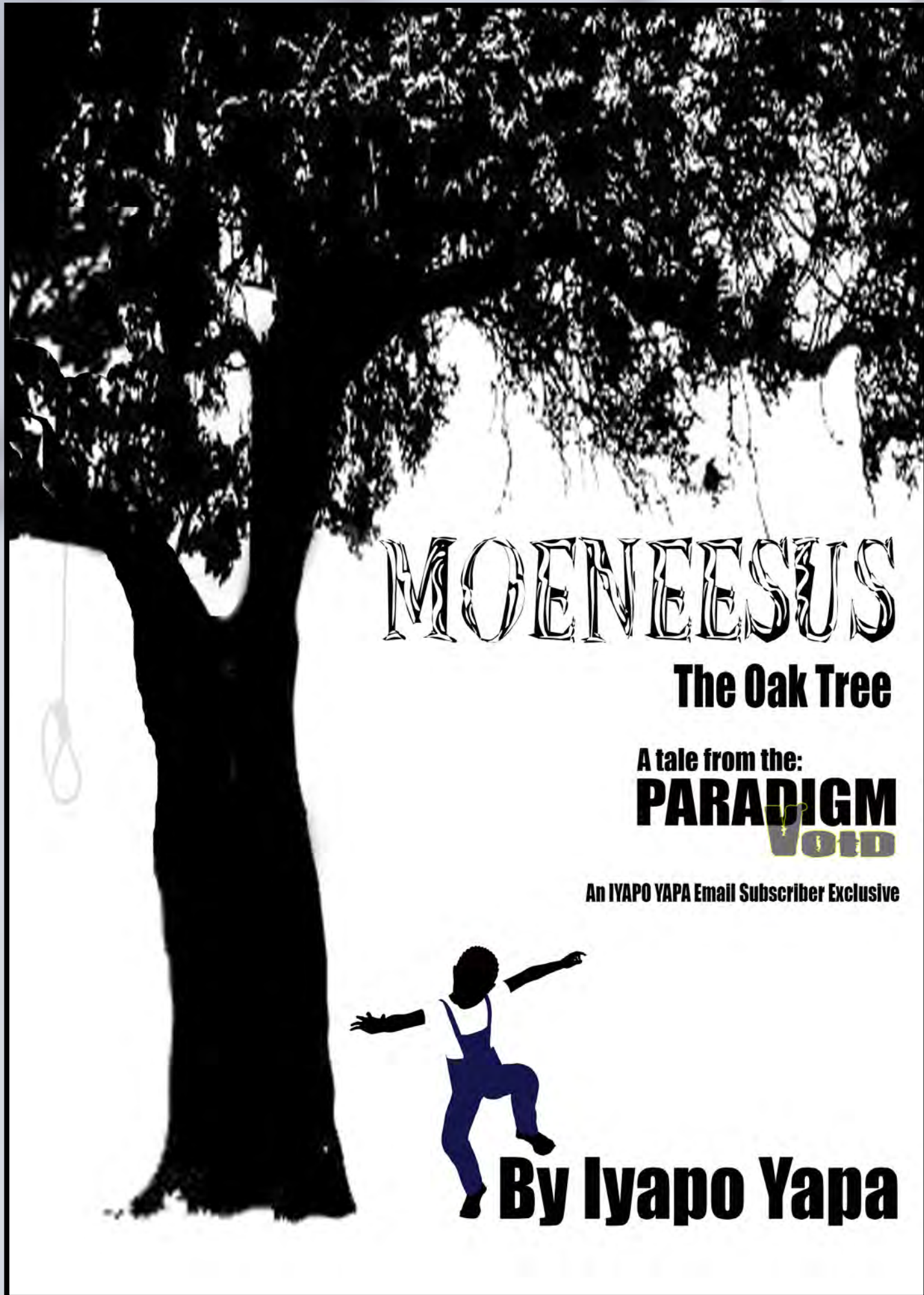
STEP INTO THE VOID!



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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.

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Click Below For:

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

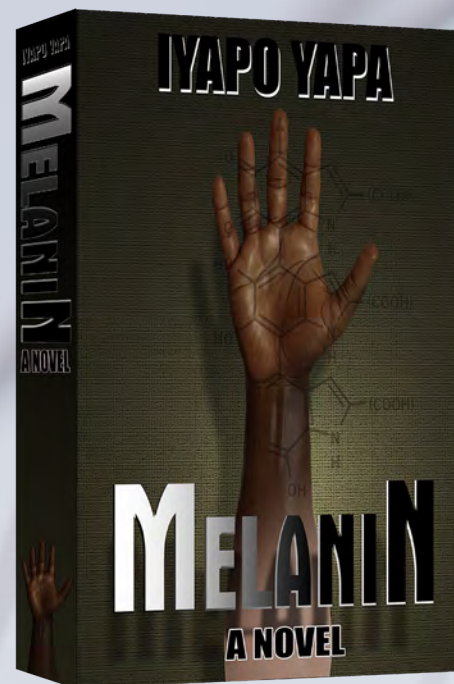
“Yapa weaves another story this time interwoven with historical references. I was on my seat with every chapter. I don't want to give it away but....revenge is sweet when served dead. And I can't get over how different each of his offerings are. Read his Vella's and you'll see what I mean. Another great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



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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!

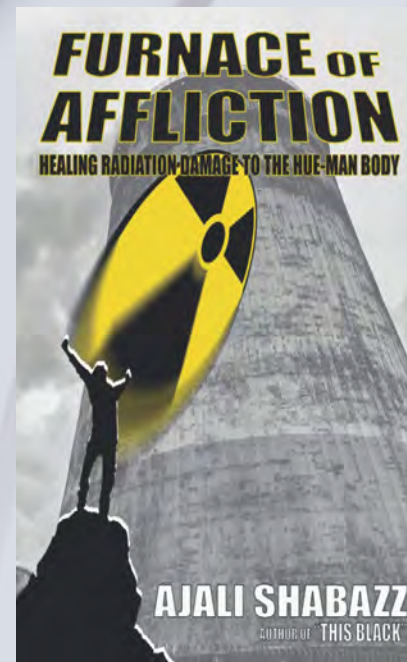
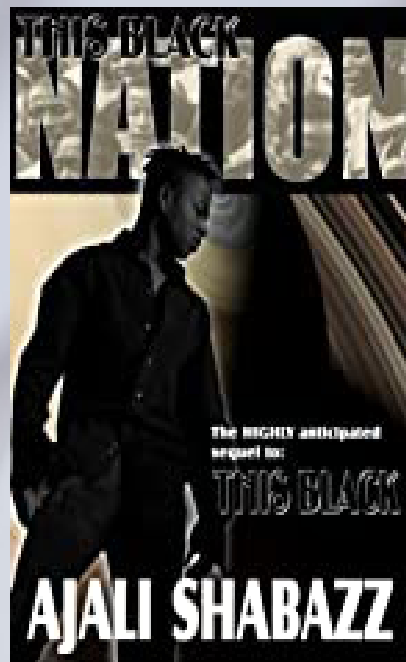
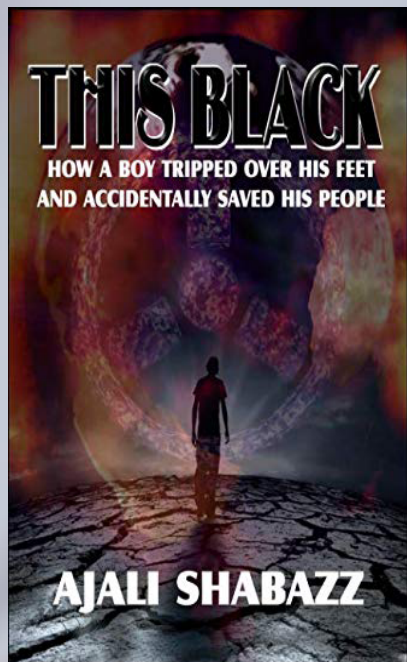
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Books by:

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!

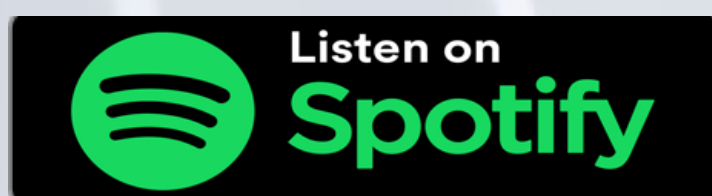
Listen to the interview on  by clicking the link below:

<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

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podcast!







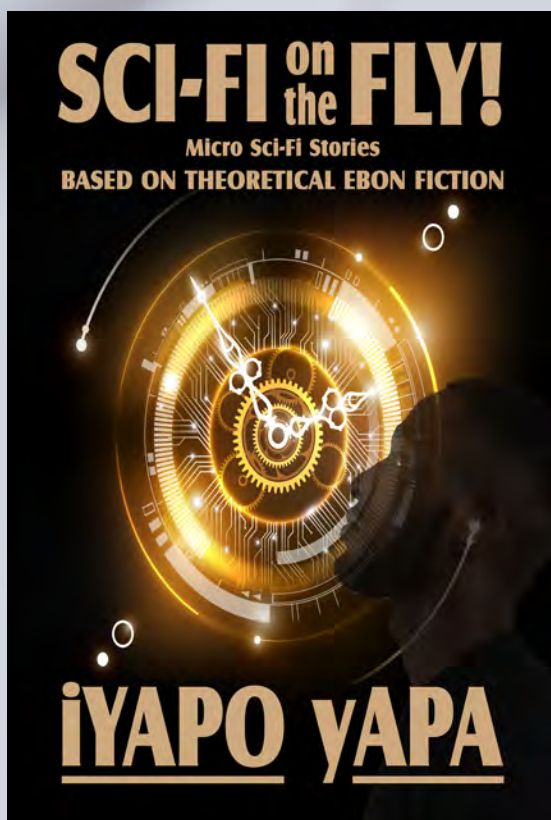
Have You Checked Out My Blog Yet?

Catch up and keep up with what I'm pondering and seeking to figure out when it comes to this interesting experience we're all having here.

My blog is the place where I talk about what's on my mind and don't worry too much about the formatting or typos - it is, pretty much, my raw perceptions and analysis of what is going on around me.



[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.

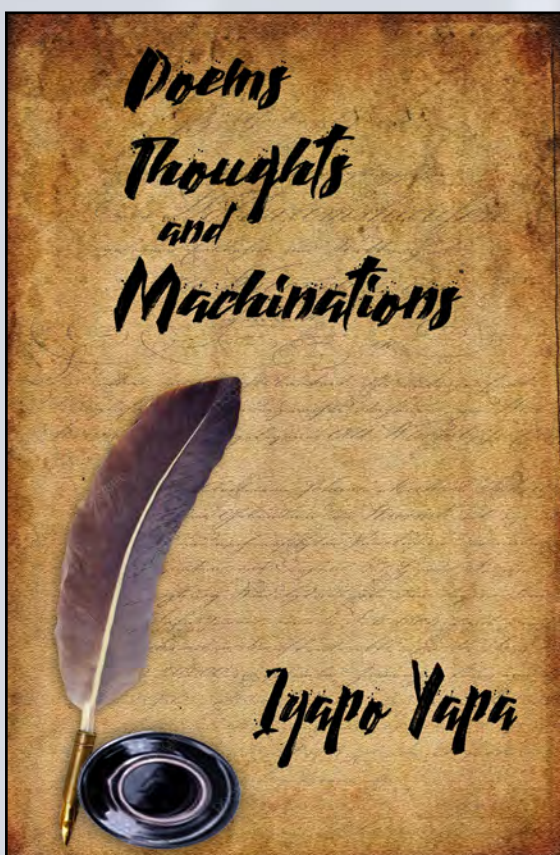


The title says it all.

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

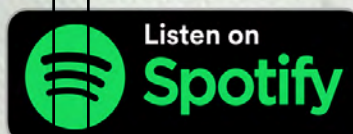
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Two writers
Two Mics
&
Plenty of Banter!



While Black

THE **PODCAST**



ANGELA R. RILEY

Author of *AFFIRMING SelfLOVE*

AYOKA B.

Author of *LOVE at SECOND SIGHT*

Click ANGELA to Watch or Listen on YouTube
Click AYOKA to Listen on Spotify

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Alright, enough about ME!

ENJOY READING & SHARING, for the first time or all over again,
THESE OTHER AUTHORS & THEIR WORK.

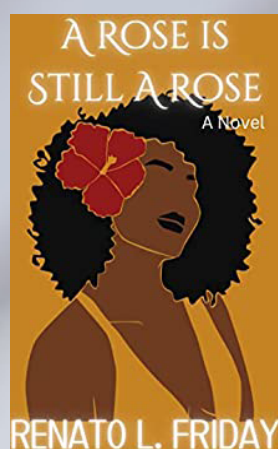


Affirming Self Love (Graphic Non-Fiction SERIES)

angela riley

SelfLOVE Meditation, Reflections, & AFFIRMATIONS Series...

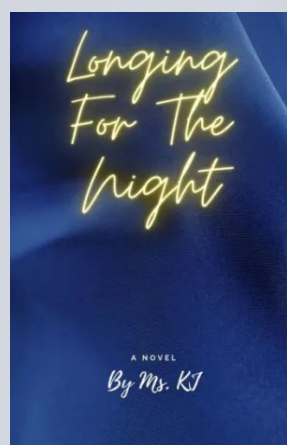
With a new book released each month, this “Graphic Nonfiction” series is filled with love for BlackUs. Each episode opens with a short essay exploring a theme such as “Following the Happy” or “Plan & Reflect” and culminates with a dynamic collection of affirmation. You’ll have a beautiful time meditating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



A Rose is Still a Rose

Renato L. Friday

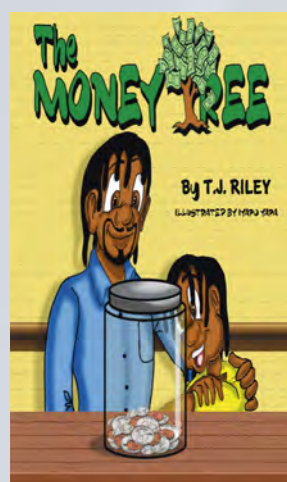
Rose thought life was going great: she was engaged, had a beautiful set of twin girls, a recent trade school graduate, and a new job right around the corner. Unfortunately, her fiancé, David, turned out to not be what she needed, and she chose to break things off. In the midst of her failing relationship,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

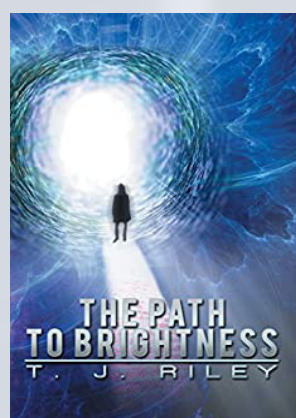
Inspired by the poem Goblin Market by Christina Rossetti, two young sisters face the trials and tribulations of the hood in this coming-of-age story about the harshness of living in South Central Los Angeles.



The Money Tree

T.J. Riley / Illustrated by Iyapo Yapa

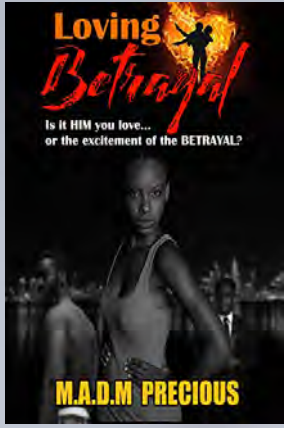
Every child wants money to buy something, right? Our hero does too. But, his father has a surprise, a Money Tree. Join the fun journey to find out how to grow your own money tree.



THE PATH to BRIGHTNESS

T.J. Riley

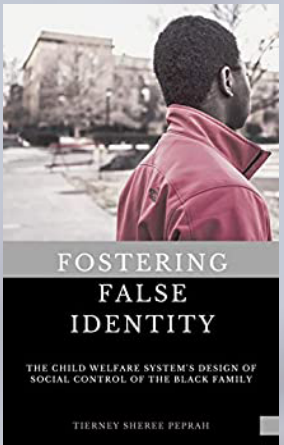
Fatima, a young woman, has a near-death experience. When she awakes from a coma and recovers, she has mystical powers. She begins to see auras and experiences life with her new abilities. For the clever character, Fatima, life is about to dramatically change. Follow Fatima's journey as she tries to convince 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

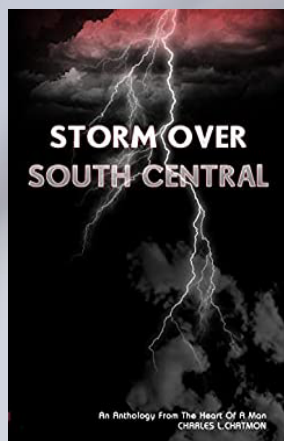
When Michelle met Michael, she thought that she found the love of her life. She was young and coming out of a bad marriage. A single parent of two children, she was scared, broke and had no self esteem. Michael seemed perfect, except for one little problem...



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.



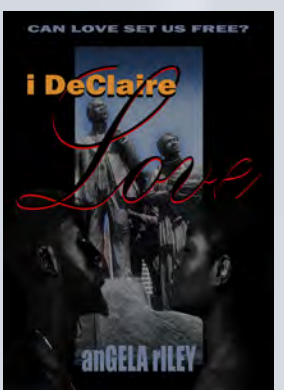
RELAY

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.

ALSO KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THESE AUTHORS/STORIES -formally on KindleVella-IN OTHER PLACES!



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 to 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!



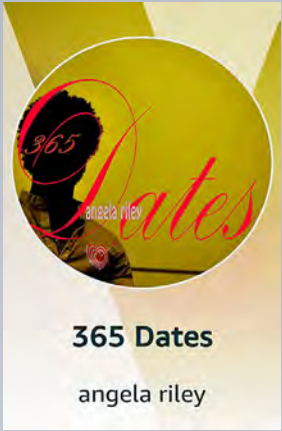
The Love X TamuTamu Agency

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.

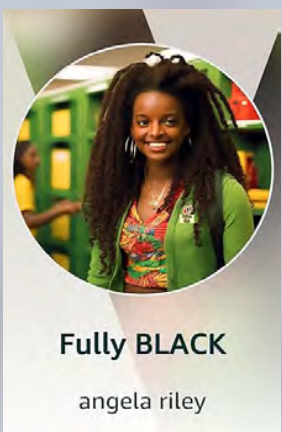
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365 Dates
Angela Riley

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.

[BACK TO CONTENTS](#)



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!



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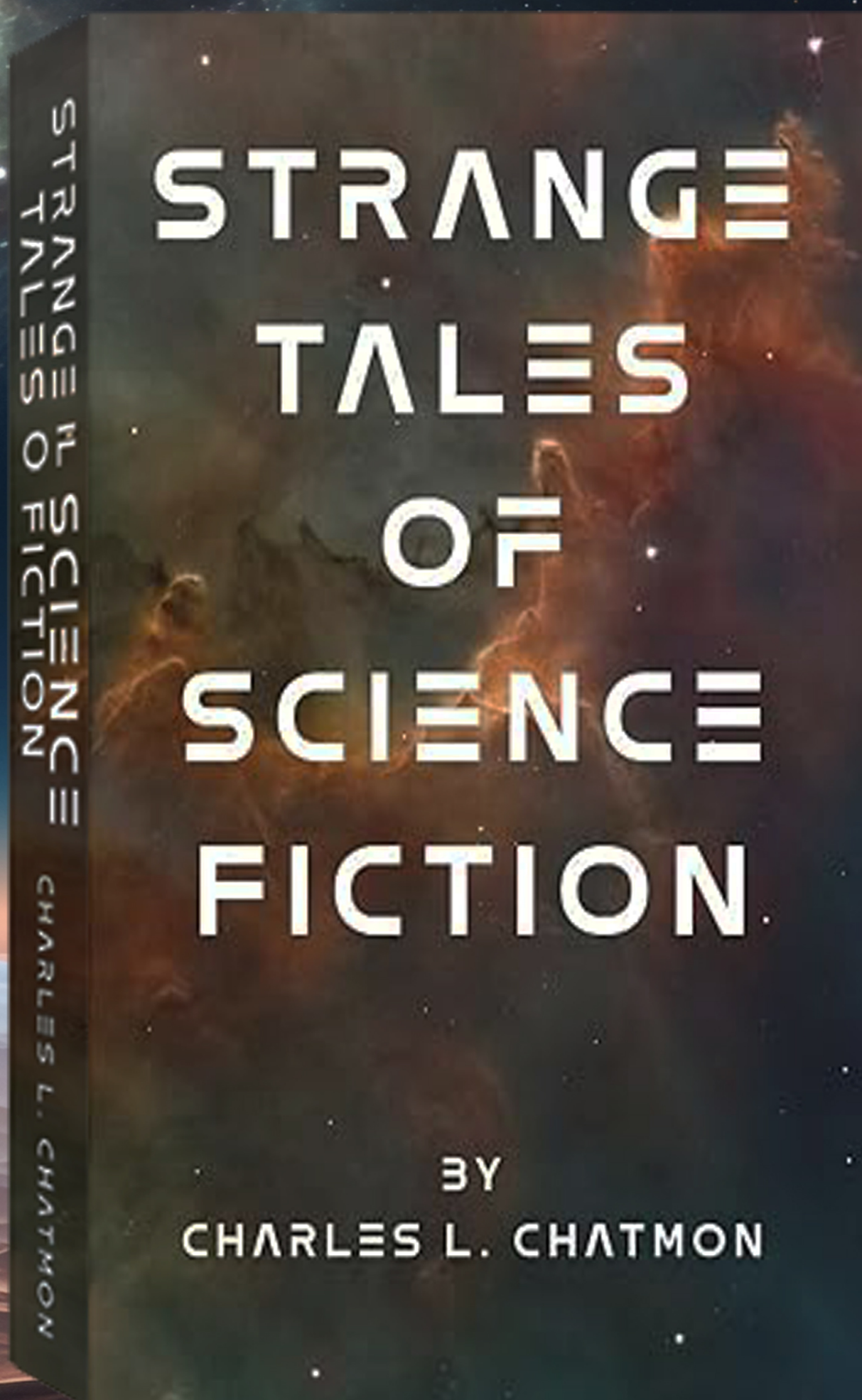
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STRANGE TALES OF SCIENCE FICTION IS AVAILABLE NOW!

In this anthology of weird tales of sci-fi, you will discover:

Who would have thought an alien species of warriors would have the fight of their lives against an army from earth? What's going on behind the walls of a movie studio that looks suspicious? Why are two highway patrol officers chasing after a stranger escorted by a couple up the California coast? What is up with a man who suddenly turns invisible and how it changes his world - plus, who are the men from a corporation chasing after him?



CLICK ON THE BOOK ABOVE TO PURCHASE ON AMAZON!

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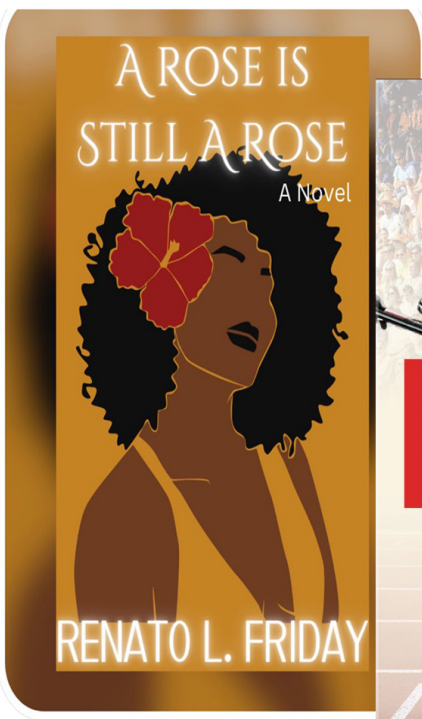


NOVEMBER 2025 CROSSWORD PUZZLE

THE BLACK PANTHERS

A crossword puzzle grid with the following words filled in:

- 1A: S S
- 2C: C L A R K
- 3A: T
- 4F: O R E
- 5J: J A C K S O N
- 6N: N
- 7K: A
- 8E: E L D R I D
- 9G: G E
- 10R: R
- 11E: L B E R T
- 12H: U T T O N
- 13B: B
- 14A: A R A R A
- 15R: R U N N
- 16S: S H
- 17I: I L L I A R D
- 18L: L A I N E
- 19A: A M P T O N
- 20W: W A M E
- 21H: H U G G I N
- 22H: H E
- 23S: S H A K U R W I N



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IYAPO YAPA

Tales of the
MONKEY'S PAW



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YOU WISH FOR!



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BE SURE TO VISIT IYAPO YAPA ON THESE OTHER PLATFORMS!

Heaven Mississippi

A NOVEL



Coming Soon!