

READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

MAGAZINE

THIS MONTH:

We celebrate the **NEW YEAR**
by getting the first **THREE**
complete chapters of:

SURVIVING

the

WORST

Page 5

Introduction:

So What is

Surviving the

WORST anyway?!

Page 4

**This issue we
have a MAZE
for you!
(And it's a
TOUGH one!**

Page 53

The Action Adventure Story of the YEAR!

JANUARY 2025 - Volume 1 / Number 7



JANUARY 2025 - Volume 1 / Number 7



MAGAZINE



CONTENTS

WELCOME! A Look at the Future Page 2

So What is “Surviving the WORST” anyway? Page 4

Surviving the Worst (Complete 1st Chapter) Page 5

Surviving the Worst (Complete 2nd Chapter) Page 25

Surviving the Worst (Complete 3rd Chapter) Page 34

January 2025 Maze! Page 53

Alright, enough about ME! Page 67

WELCOME BACK!

HAPPY NEW YEAR! And WELCOME to the JANUARY 2025 edition of the *Reading and Writing in the DARK Magazine*! Since last year was an election year, the Magazine slanted more political (an interesting thing, being that I’m a political atheist), but so much was going on I couldn’t help but write about it (as we writers will do). Now the election is over, and things can get back to normal (whatever THAT is), and I can continue to present my work as well as that of friends and colleagues. This month we offer you a maze... and trust me when I say, this one is a very difficult one so it should be fun! Also, in honor of the coming year, the entire Magazine is dedicated to the sci-fi/fantasy/horror/romance: *Surviving the worst!* More about that later in the issue. So sit back and enjoy, and most of all THANK YOU for being a Reading and Writing in the DARK subscriber!

See you next month!

Iyapo



A Look Back and to the Future!

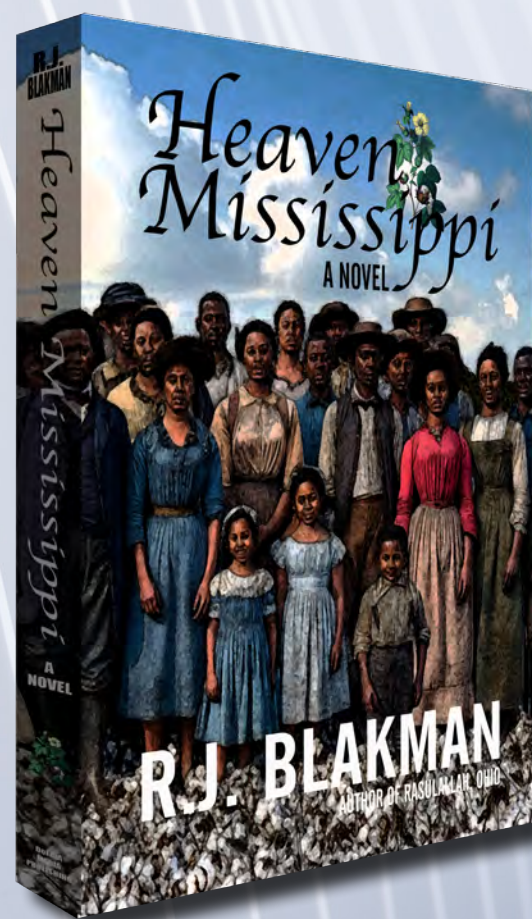
Ok, ok! Black people are sick and tired of reading and talking about our enslavement.

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

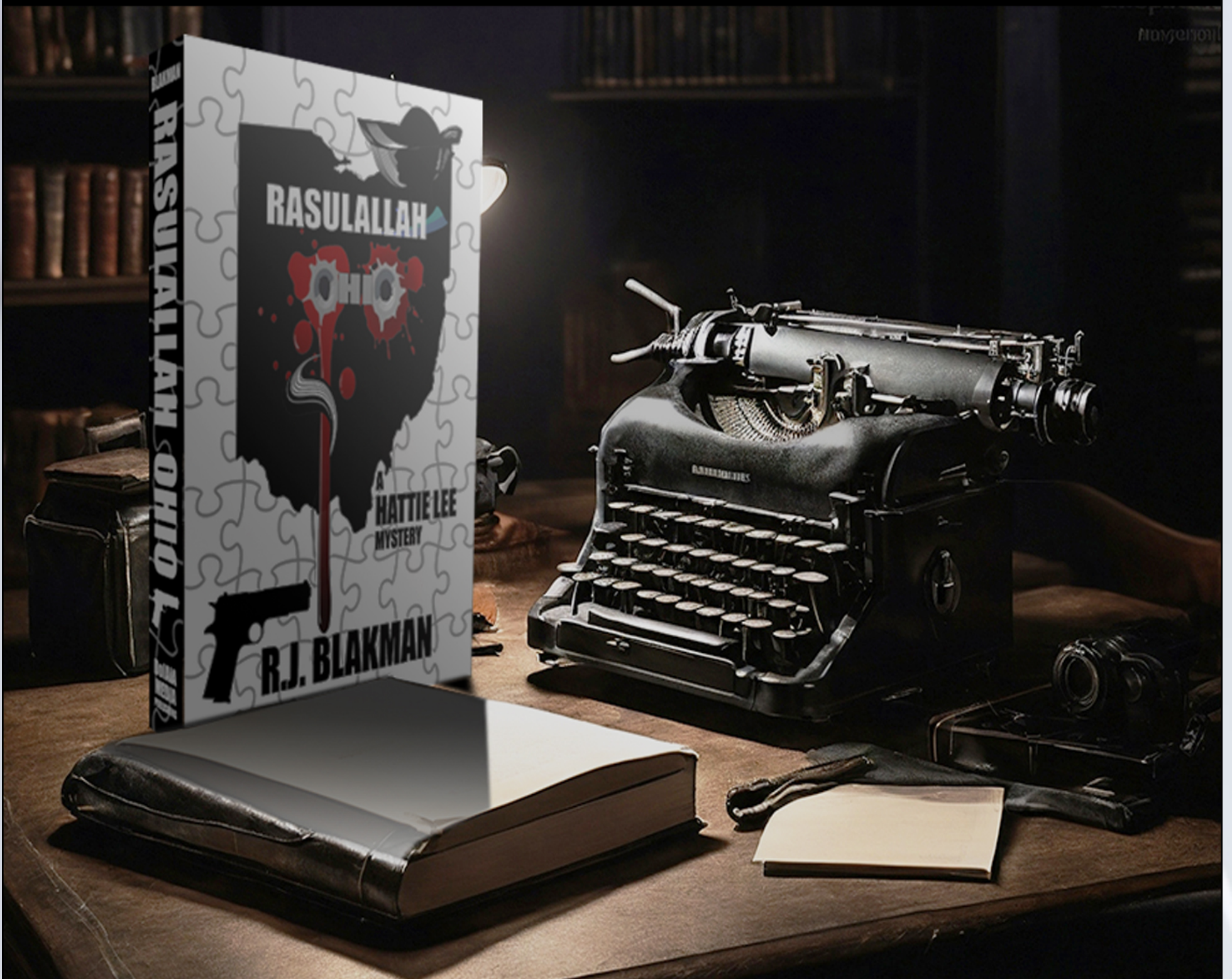
DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

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)



So, What IS Surviving the Worst anyway?!

Surviving the Worst is an action/adventure/sci-fi/fantasy/horror/romance that takes place in the world after what is called, “The Collapse”.

Five years after the cataclysm 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!

STW started life as a Kindle Vella series. For those who don’t know what Kindle Vella is (was), it was a platform by Amazon on which authors could publish episodic stories that the reader could digest in small bites—or binge. Much like people do with streaming series, except these would be read. Sadly (at least for me—and worse for those authors who were making a lot of money on the platform—unlike me—Kindle Vella is going the way of the Dodo.

The episodic content that is on there now, is being turned into novels and novellas by the writers and repackaged for sell on Amazon or other platforms. The same is true for Surviving the Worst. I never got to complete the story in that forum (mostly due to my own inconsistency with it), but now I’m only a few chapters away from being finished. So, I will be completing the novel version (Book I in a series), sometime this year and placing it for sale in book form on various platforms.

That said, for now, here are the first THREE chapters (the equivalent of the first SIX episodes on Vella), of Surviving the Worst for you to enjoy!



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!





SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: I

Carl Stouffer and LaTanya McGeeson had gone out earlier in the day looking for their friend Lester Lamont, who had disappeared from the “Haven” as the inhabitants called it. Lester had developed a tendency to wander off and explore things outside the considerable protections of the compound. The attitude of most within the safety of its walls and covering was that anyone stupid enough to leave the protection of the fortress, deserved whatever they got on the outside of it, and was not to be pitied or mourned—even if what they got turned out to be death.

Or worse.

Before “The Collapse”, wandering around aimlessly was a pleasant pastime.

Now, roaming around for any reason could cost a person their life.

The sun slowly made its trek below the horizon. Though the day had been bright and vibrant (for the most part), all that remained was an ominous glow from a light rain that came, lasted only a few minutes, and left,

once again revealing the last rays of the sun as it descended and made its final appearance before sinking out of sight, temporarily removing itself from the consciousness of the surroundings. The leaves and grass now shimmered in the approaching moonlight, a predecessor of the passing day, and accompaniment to the oncoming night.



There was no safety beyond the walls of the Haven. None. The things that once went bump in the night and instilled fear in the imagination, now bumped, lumbered and thundered in the daylight

and in many cases wear far more terrifying than anything the human mind could have before conceived.

One such terror stood some fifty yards in front of the couple who, hours later, had still not found their friend.

They lay on the damp grass, drops of the past rain occasionally falling on their faces courtesy of the foliage where they’d managed to find concealment. They were stuck in that spot not because of the—the—WHATEVER it was—in front of them in the darkness, but because



SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: I (Continued)

So let's just be quiet until I figure out some kind of plan to get us outta this mess." Carl went back to pressing his eyes against the binoculars. "Freakin' Lester." He muttered.

Wanting to say more, but knowing her friend was right, LaTanya forced herself quiet.

Carl stared at the figure, trying his best to make out what it was, a task that was made more difficult by the encroaching darkness. As it stood in the coming moonlight, the thing, whatever it was, remained motionless.

In his mind Carl swore and insisted desperately trying by telepathy, or force of will, to persuade the shadowy thing to make some kind of move so that he might at least guess what it was.

LaTanya looked up at the sky and saw the full moon that had just appeared from behind a group of clouds. She slowly, quietly leaned close to Carl. "Well, at least we know it's not a werewolf." She spoke softly almost directly in his ear.

Carl was agitated that LaTanya was still talking instead of focusing on the figure in front of them. "How do you know that?" he whispered.

LaTanya said nothing and with her eyes but a slight upward tilt of her head, motioned in the direction of the full moon.

"Full moon? That doesn't mean shit." Carl whispered; eyes still trained on the unmoving figure. "It could be an AW. An American werewolf. They can change at will. It's the European ones that change by the full

moon."

"That's right. I forgot."

"Yeah, well, please! We need to be quiet at least until I can figure out what that is out there."

Once again, both got quiet and stayed as still as possible.

"Hey! What are you two doing out here!?" came a booming voice from behind them. Jumping with a start, the couple on the ground in the wet





SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: I (Continued)

grass jerked around and looked up to see none other than Lester Lamont standing over them.

STANDING! The bottom half of his ankle length black coat flowing with the slight breeze like a cape.

In unison, Carl and LaTanya just as quickly jerked back around and saw the shadowy figure turn its head in their direction, then take a couple steps toward them as it growled.

“Shit! It’s a frickin’ zombie!” Carl yelled.

“American or U.K.?!” LaTanya shouted.

“Gimme a couple seconds! I need to see how it moves!”

After watching the creature take five or so, more steps in their direction before transitioning to a sprint, Carl knew what they were dealing with.

“S.K. strain! Run!” Carl yelled as he jumped up, grabbed Lester by his arm, spun him around and yanked him to get him going.

“SHIT!” LaTanya screamed as her feet cartoonishly made several revolutions in place on the moist grass before she got enough traction to start moving forward.

The viral strain that created South Korean zombies made them more agile and faster than their stiff, lumbering American counterparts, but nowhere close to as quick as the nearly unearthly speed of the zombies infected by the British strain. That being the case, the trio was able to keep an ample distance between themselves and their pursuer, even

as they made their way toward the compound in which they would once again find protection.

The problem—living human beings would eventually tire from running, while zombies of any strain, whether walking or running, could keep up the same pace indefinitely.

Or at least, as far as they knew.

The trio ran, LaTanya catching up and keeping up with the man she was with and the one they’d come to





SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: I (Continued)

retrieve. Their focus was on outrunning the creature and getting back to the protective walls of the Haven. Each of them was confident they could do it.

In this new world—this new normal—no one could afford to be out of shape, lethargic or sedentary.

Not if they wanted to live.

Everyone needed to be in the best physical condition they could achieve, and if possible, able to run no less than two miles, non-stop, at nearly a sprint. Not everyone was able to achieve that standard, but it was a constant goal for the majority of people now. Some, like Lester, went the extra mile and became proficient in close contact combat, the use of various weapons and several forms of martial arts, to include Knsha Kobo (a Martian form of martial arts).

Yes, martial arts may be one of the oldest forms of self-defense, but no form of self-defense was older than running!

No one in the trio looked behind them. They knew that South Korean Zombies (or people infected with that strain), tended not to run in straight lines, something to do with their inability to keep their balance for long distances. A living person in

good enough condition (as were the young woman and two young men with her), and with a far enough lead, could outrun them until they could get to some kind of weapon with which to dispatch them. Therefore, there was no real need to look behind. (That would only be necessary for European strain zombies.)

The three panted, arms pumping, legs moving, desperately working to put as much distance between them and the zombie as possible, when Lester suddenly stopped and spun around to face his charging pursuer.

Immediately seeing their friend had stopped LaTanya and Carl grudgingly halted also and turned around, looking first at Lester, then at the fast approaching zombie. “What the hell are you doin’?! Carl yelled.



SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: I (Continued)

“I’m gonna kill it!” Lester said as he reached into a compartment on the inside of his coat and produced a sharp silver stake that caught the light of the moon just as he raced full speed toward the zombie.

“Wait!” Carl yelled, “That’s a freakin’ STAKE! Whaddayah think you’re gonna do with THAT?! Come back here!”

Either not hearing his friend, or just ignoring his cries, Lester charged recklessly toward the creature! Letting loose a warrior yell as he confronted it and came to within just two paces of the undead thing, Lester pivoted, did a spin move, jabbed the stake into the chest of the zombie and used the wetness of the grass to help him slide underneath the reaching arms of the undead cannibal. He managed to turn around back in the direction of the zombie and slide to a superheroesque, crouching stop.

The beauty and fluidity of the move, along with Lester’s agility in pulling it off would have been impressive and effective—had this been a EV!

For a zombie—not so much.

The zombie paid no attention to the stake that was now lodged deep within its chest. It no longer ran but maneuvered around trying to get hold of the man who had just buried it there. The SKZ’s lacked the maneuverability of the UK zombies, but they were still very fast and somewhat limber.

“DAMN IT!” Carl spat out as he approached the two figures—the zombie, on the attack, his friend making moves to counter. LaTanya followed close behind.

They had no weapons to use. When they first went out, they’d had a couple shotguns, but they’d used up all the rounds earlier killing the griffin (one of only a handful of creatures that could be taken down with good ol’ fire power).

They didn’t know how they were going to help their friend who was now ducking and dodging the thing’s grasp. They’d just have to figure it out when they got there. Lester seemed to be holding his own, and even though there was plenty of blood and saliva



SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: I (Continued)

from the flesh eater landed on their friend's bare face. Even though the zombie's bodily fluids were landing in his mouth, there was no danger of Lester turning. Only European zombies, or those infected with that strain, could cause a person to turn through drops of bodily fluid. For the American and South Korean zombies, it took a deep gash with the nails, or a bite.

Gashes and bites Lester had been able to thus far avoid but wouldn't be able to do so forever.

“What'er we gonna do?!” LaTanya yelled to Carl. “We don't have any more ammo to blow the thing's fuckin' head off, and we don't even have an ax!”

“I dunno! We'll just have ta do what we can and try our best not to get scratched or bitten!”

The zombie had managed to get hold of Lester's coat and was trying to pull him to it. Lester fought valiantly as if his life depended on it—and of course—it did. He started moving in circles so that he could avoid the

creature, and as he did, the spin became faster and faster, until finally it broke the grip of the zombie, causing Lester to fly off into the clearing, slipping on the wet grass and bumping his head hard on the ground.

Lester lay motionless.

The zombie had turned to walk in the direction of the unmoving Lester as Carl reached and pulled his shotgun from behind him. Upon reaching the creature he tightly gripped the barrel with one hand and the stock with the other. With all his might Carl used his

forward momentum and a hard jab to hit the zombie on the back of the head with the butt of the weapon. The zombie staggered for a moment then dropped to its knees. There was no way Carl was going to fool himself into thinking that a single blow, even a hit as hard as he'd just delivered, would take out the creature, but he figured that repeated blows might crush the skull and do a good enough job to kill it—or more accurately, RE-kill it.

When Carl went to take his next swing





SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: I (Continued)

the zombie, moving much faster than any of them had anticipated it could, grabbed the stock of the weapon and pulled Carl close to him, catching him off balance. Not expecting this development, he went down hard to the wet ground. The zombie immediately jumped on top of Carl, straddled him and started swiping furiously with gnarled hands at the man beneath him, as the zombie tried to make a meal of him.

LaTanya squinted in the dark as she approached the figures and saw to her dismay, the zombie had Carl pinned!



The man struggled in vain to push the creature off, but he was unable to get any kind of leverage. LaTanya looked to the side and saw Lester rubbing the back of his head and attempting to get to his feet but staggering, still stunned. She was the only chance Carl had against the thing. “Fuck it.” She whispered and ran full speed at the zombie that was straddling her friend. When LaTanya was close enough, she leaned her shoulder in, tucked her body, and leapt as she did a flying tackle style move that knocked

the zombie off Carl and caused her to land awkwardly on Carl’s stomach.

He let out a loud, “OOFFFF!” as the attacking zombie was replaced by the full weight of the young woman as she landed heavily on his midsection. Carl lay on his back, gasping for the air that had been knocked out of him.

“I know Carl!” LaTanya said as she took her weight off, helped him sit up and hurriedly patted his back hoping to get him breathing close to normal again. “But we have to get moving before that thing gets up!”

Lester, who had finally managed to get his feet back under him stood in place. The zombie awkwardly stood and was once again focused on Lester who seemed to give no thought to the animated corpse that was now walking toward him. Lester was preoccupied with something that was approaching fast from the sky. In this time, LaTanya had already helped a still slightly gasping Carl to his feet. She called out to Lester, “Come on man! Snap out of it! That thing’s coming right at you!” Lester stood

SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: I (Continued)

still, as if LaTanya had said nothing, and continued to gaze skyward. LaTanya, unable to understand what could possibly be more pressing in the sky than the zombie that was on the ground moving toward her friend, followed his line of sight as best she could in the darkness.

She actually heard it before she saw it.

The deep sound of displaced air generated by the gargantuan wings couldn't be missed. Then she saw its massive shadow. "Shit! It's back!" she yelled. Carl, who was finally able to breathe and speak, called out to Lester. "Lester, damn it! Come on!"

As if snapping out of a trance, Lester finally started running, just barely doing a super bowl worthy fake out that caused the zombie who had started racing toward him and lunged at him to miss him entirely and stumble to the ground due to a quickly placed ankle from Lester.

The trio was once again on the run.

They dashed, pumping arms and legs

to get distance between them and the zombie behind them and from the massive shadow winged horror that was the embodiment of death from above. The zombie was back on its feet and this time running at an even faster pace than before. It almost seemed to have become aggravated – if those living corpses were even capable of such emotions. Carl and LaTanya were both far ahead of Lester, but they were certain he would have no trouble catching up. What they didn't know, since they had not looked back, was that Lester was far enough behind that the zombie was fast closing in on him, as was the gigantic flying terror!

Though looking back was not the standard thing to do when dealing with zombies infected by the South Korean strain, Lester could hear the zombie almost as if its grunts were nearly right in his ear. He turned his head just enough to look behind him and saw he was not too far from right. The zombie was less than an arm's length away from him, and the flying monster was nearly as close. Lester could make out that the giant flying



SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: I (Continued)

creature had spread its wings into its full wingspan, talons out in front of it, the position for grabbing prey and carrying it off. Doing the only thing he could think to do, Lester took several more steps then dove onto the wet grass and covered the back of his head with both hands. He could feel the zombie as its foot kicked him in the side, and he waited for the weight of the creature who had just tripped over him to land on him.

The sensation never came.

LaTanya looked up and caught the same sight. She looked behind her to make sure the shadow she saw in the birdlike thing's grasp was not Lester. Recognizing that it wasn't her friend, she slowed her pace, then stopped running altogether. Carl was some twenty feet ahead when he realized she and Lester were no longer with him. He stopped, and put his hands on his hips, breathing hard as he turned around and walked back toward the young woman who was hunched over, with her hands resting on her thighs and also working hard to catch her breath.

Lester, wet from the grass, and dirty from the fight, continued to look at the flying shadow as it became smaller in the sky. He ran his hands up and down the front of his black jacket to knock off some of the dirt and grass and walked slowly over to his two friends. "That went well." He said, again rubbing the back of his head to soothe the spot where he'd hit it.

"What in the hell are you talking about, Les! What were you thinkin'?! You almost got all three of us killed out here!"

"Yeah! And what was with the stake?! Even I know you can't kill a zombie of any kind with a steak through the heart!" LaTanya said.

"I didn't know! I thought it was an EV!"

"Dude! Even if it WAS a European Vampire, what made you think you could steak it with no element of surprise or anything?!" LaTanya said.

"I staked it didn't I?" Lester said.



SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: I (Continued)

“I staked it didn’t I?” Lester said.
“Just wasn’t an EV.”

“If it weren’t for that thing swooping down and snatching up that fuckin’ zombie, it would’ve gotten one of us for sure! And if it hadn’t eaten us, it would have turned us.” Carl said, looking at Lester peeved that he was the reason they were out there in the first place, and realized that he and LaTanya were in the early stages of a pile on. Yes, Lester had created a troublesome situation, but Carl couldn’t stay angry.



Lester’s propensity toward taking unannounced, unplanned excursions wasn’t his fault. In the early days, less than a year after The Collapse, Lester had been bitten by a hydashadamah. An alien mosquito that not only leaves a permanent scar as a sign of their attack but carries a virus that attacks the brain affecting the cognitive abilities of anyone stung. Lester still retained his long-practiced fighting skills and acrobatic agility, but the sting did cause a progressive mental condition resembling dementia in the victim, no matter their age. A condition

that, as of yet, was incurable. Lester was still in the early stages, but his slow, gradual cognitive decline was well apparent to his childhood friends LaTanya and Carl.

Carl decided to abandon the chastisement. He knew that LaTanya was upset too but didn’t have any desire to make Lester feel bad—if he could still even feel bad given his present condition. “Everybody alright? No bites or scratches?” Carl said finally.

“I’m good.” LaTanya said. “What was that

thing if it wasn’t the other griffin?” she panted.

“It was a Piasa Bird.” Lester said.

“No.” said Carl, his breathing beginning to get back to normal.

“You sure?!” LaTanya said.

“Yeah. I’ve seen one before. Piasas are way smaller, and what we saw had the head of a bird, not a human, and it had no antlers. I think it was some kind of dinosaur.”



SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: I (Continued)

“Pteranodon, maybe?!” Lester asked.

“Still too small, neck too short. I’m thinkin’ Quetzalcoatlus.”

“The hell’s THAT?!”

“I’ll tell ya later! Right now, we need to keep it movin’ and concentrate on getting’ back to the Haven!”

* * *

To their relief, the trio, walking for what they guessed was a couple hours, happily had the lights of The Haven in sight. They hadn’t encountered anything else that meant to eat them, rip them apart, fly off with them, or drag them away. There was a colony (with another fortress) closer to where they had been, but they didn’t dare stop. There would be no way to get in, and it would be a complete waste of time and energy to try. The one thing it seemed everyone was leerier of than assorted monsters and other creatures was strangers and outsiders of the human variety. Each community kept to themselves and hoarded resources for the most part; and ran their defenses in the ways they best felt

protected their groups.

Finally, from where they were, Carl, LaTanya and Lester were close to their own protective city.

They walked briskly onward, conversing quietly, having a laugh every now and then, and especially keeping their eyes peeled for any of a myriad of threats that always seemed to be lurking behind every other tree or rock.

Eventually they saw the Haven in front of them, and collectively breathed a sigh of relief, now that the nightmare was over, at least for today. As the warm inviting, subdued lights around and emanating from within the superstructure beckoned them to enter, they walked toward one of the several openings of the compound, where they could see, unobstructed, a few people walking around within its walls.

Carl abruptly stopped and raised his arms slightly to his sides, his hands spread out. “STOP! Wait a minute ... stop ... STOP!” Carl said in a harsh





SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: I (Continued)

whisper to the group.

His companions stopped in their tracks and got quiet as for a moment all that could be heard was the light rustling of a few nearby trees and the soft singing of a few crickets.

“What is it now?!” LaTanya whispered as she looked around.

Carl took a couple sniffs in the air. “You guys smell that?”

“I don’t smell any—wait a minute—SHIT! Something smells like decaying meat and rotten eggs!” LaTanya said as she cupped her hand over her nose and mouth.

Again, they heard the sound of wings displacing the air overhead, but it wasn’t even close to as loud as the dinosaur—if that’s what it was—that unintentionally rescued them from the zombie, nor did it seem to be the size and weight of the griffin from which Carl and LaTanya had escaped earlier.

It didn’t take long however for them to discover the source of the stench,

as a dark feathered figure, not quite bird, not quite human, but a grotesque amalgamation of both, landed between them and the entrance of the Haven. By the light of the moon, and the faint lights of the Haven, the trio could see that the talons that were the

creature’s feet, as well as the ones that made up its hands were soaked with blood. The feathers of the thing were equally covered in dried and drying, matted blood.

The face of the creature was neither human nor bird but had bizarre, contorted features of both, and after seeing the

feathers, talons, beak like nose and mouth, as well as the huge wings, there was little mistaking what the trio was now up against.

“What a STINK!” LaTanya couldn’t help but blurt out.

“Oh... now I insulted.” The thing said in a voice that was deep and guttural, as it looked at the trio.” Do I, you look, smelly like a woman?”

Lester looked over to Carl, “This thing speaks English. Bad. But it speaks





SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: I (Continued)

it.” He said.

“Unbelievable ... less than twenty feet away from the entrance and now we have to go through a damn HARPY to get home?!” LaTanya said, more out of frustration than fear.

“Worse.” Carl said as he looked slowly at his companions. “It’s an alan. A male harpy. Way faster, ten times stronger, and every bit as vicious and blood thirsty.”

The superstructure that housed the trio was named Haven Murzuk and stood as a tribute to the power and ingenuity of its builders. The construct was designed to keep out threats from creatures as small as a mosquito (like the hydashadamah) to malevolent spirits to colossal scale creatures (like the dinosaur) and everything in between. The huge structure was the size of a small city and housed 18,000 human beings from earth-zero, five Martian scientists from an alternate earth and several Atlanteans from the (not) fabled “lost” city.

The fortress was primarily

constructed of various alloys from different dimensions, which made it impervious to attacks from creatures even on the scale of the largest known Kaiju. There was a single way to get in and out of the Haven. Each and every inhabitant of the fortress

had been scanned and registered down to their genetic and sub-atomic structure as well as their quantum physical makeup and entered into a database within the defense grid. (The Martians’ contribution to the security apparatus.)

Exiting and entering was as simple as walking in through an opening that had no visible obstructions. However, any creature not satisfying all three markers of the DNA/SAS/QPM makeup and trying to come through the seemingly wide open door would be instantly vaporized. (EVs—European vampires—could be kept out by having the city elder—the de facto “head of the household”—refuse to welcome them in.) Afrikan spiritualists using several complex ancient rites were responsible for countermeasures that protected the inhabitants from malevolent spirits,





SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: I (Continued)

and other paranormal attacks and hexes and curses.

Because of this, there was no need for guards or watchmen. All inhabitants within Haven Murzuk rested easy at night, knowing they had what was likely one of the most advanced and impenetrable defense systems on their plane of existence.

All colonies (also known as Havens, followed by whatever name they thought appropriate) had their own forms of defense apparatus, many less sophisticated, some more. It all depended on the levels of expertise of the inhabitants, be they humans from Earth-Zero, or some alternate version of it, or another planet (or planets) altogether.

Besides the collection of humanoid inhabitants within the walls of Haven Murzuk were seventy unicorns, thirty Pegasus', and a single Beezzelcree who called himself Mr. Drappter.

The Haven provided a level of safety for all who were citizens within.

But at the moment Carl, LaTanya and Lester were just outside of it, in the middle of the night, with an alan standing between them and home.

“This just ain’t right!”



LaTanya said, weary from dealing with the griffin, zombie and flying dinosaur (if that's what it was), earlier that evening. “We've got no weapons out here.” Lester said. “Any suggestions?”

“Not-a-one.” LaTanya said.

“Well,” Carl said.

“Harpies aren't the most brilliant. Maybe we can outsmart it with a plan.”

“Screw that!” LaTanya said, “I'm tired as fuck, and I've had about enough of these damn creatures for one night! The only plan I have is to get home. NOW! I don't care who or what I have to go through to get there!” LaTanya bolted toward the alan, crying out with an obligatory warrior yell.

“No! Wait!” Carl yelled.

SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: I (Continued)

LaTanya was undeterred and running on adrenaline, anger and weariness. She leapt at the creature, attempting the flying tackle she'd used on the zombie earlier that evening. She forgot, or maybe not, that unlike the zombie—the alan could fly. The male harpy crouched slightly and then hopped just above the woman coming toward it, giving her a kick in the back as it slowly flapped its wings and hovered above her.

LaTanya, carried by both momentum and the added kick, went down hard on her stomach to the wet grass. “You smelly piece o’ shit!” she yelled at it as she quickly turned over so she was on her back, propped up on her elbows.

The alan laughed as it flew so that it was now in front of LaTanya again. “Men letting woman fight for you. You be women too. Yes? Yes?!”

Lester rushed toward the alan amid the yells from Carl to wait, but he paid no more attention than LaTanya did. He ran quickly past LaTanya, who was still getting back to her feet, and attempted—for whatever reason—

the same maneuver she'd just done.

Netting the same result.

This time the alan not only gave a push but used the sharp talons of its feet to make a row of four rips down the back of Lester's black coat. “HEY! My frickin' coat!” he yelled as he hurriedly got to his feet and felt behind him at the ripped material.

This time, the harpy flew overhead until it landed in front of Lester and LaTanya now beside him, both of them now several feet closer to

the entrance. Carl got an idea. He bolted past both LaTanya and Lester, producing the same warrior yell, and attempting the same tackle.

With the same result.

Carl didn't fall to the ground, however. He stood and waited for LaTanya and Lester to join him on his right side. Again, the alan landed in front of them, this time, all of them were far closer to the entrance than when the creature first appeared. Close enough to make a run for it.



SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: I (Continued)

“We’re right there.” Carl whispered from the side of his mouth. “If we come at it again, we know what it’s going to do right? This time, we act like we’re going to tackle him, but don’t go for the tackle ... just keep running.”

Lester slowly nodded, as did LaTanya, with a slight smirk on her lips.

“You all very so stupid.” The alan laughed. “I done playing to you. I rip out your hearts now and eat you. Ok?”

“RUSH HIM!” Carl yelled, and the three bolted toward the creature, acting as if they were attempting to somehow get it and take it to the ground, but instead, waited for it to do the same hop, hover and attempted kick, while they continued to run for the entrance.

“What you do?!” the alan yelled, “You no get away from me, come back! You need me to kill and eat you!” It furiously flapped its wings. The alan came after the three, and was gaining on them when, only a few steps from the entrance, Carl yelled, “DIVE FOR IT!”

All three of them dove at the same time for the entrance and landed hard on the ground on the other side, within the safety of the haven. Behind them they heard a loud shriek, and a louder crackling and an even louder POP! Though they weren’t facing the opening, they could see the flash of light behind them as they knew the alan had been disintegrated within the entrance.

Lester stood up first, followed by Carl who offered a hand to LaTanya, who just waved it off and stood up on her own. Carl tapped his forehead

with his index finger and winked at the two, grinned, then said: “Harpies ain’t so bright.”

“Home sweet home.” Lester proclaimed as they staggered their way deeper into the haven. The blood and feathers from the alan had instantly vaporized from their clothing as the motley trio leapt in through the entrance. The grass, dirt and moisture remained, as did the stench of the alan. It was very late and most of the citizens of the Haven had retreated to their domiciles and



SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: I (Continued)

and were either in bed or preparing to go there. For the few who were still walking around, which typically consisted of insomniacs, philosophers and lovers, they merely looked in the direction of the slight commotion, looked at the three who had just walked in, took notice of their disheveled clothes, came to swift conclusions about why they looked that way, shook disapproving heads, and then went back to minding their own business.

“Well, we made it back. ALL of us.” LaTanya said as they collectively let down their guards and made their way to the center of town.

“Yeah. I didn’t want to tell you back there LaTanya, but when that second griffin showed up, I thought we’d had it.” Carl said.

“I’m glad you didn’t.”

Carl turned his attention to Lester. “Les. I’ve got to know. You were out there most of the day. How did you survive that long? I mean ... you didn’t come across any creatures all day, any except that freakin’ zombie I mean?”

Lester shrugged his shoulders as he evaluated the now ruined coat he’d just taken off.

“Babies and fools.” LaTanya said. “Look guys. I’d love to stand out here all night and shoot the breeze, but almost getting my ass eaten alive FOUR TIMES in one night makes me really tired. I’m gonna head home, wash this funk off me, and get some rest. I’ll see you guys in the morning. LATE in the morning.” LaTanya walked off to the left of the two men, and shouted over her shoulder, “Like TWO O’CLOCK in the AFTERNOON, late in the morning!”

“You know what? I think she has the right idea.” Carl said as an unexpected yawn invaded his sentence. “I’ll see you two later today.”

“Later.” Lester said as the men parted ways.

“And Les ... bruh ... PLEASE don’t go wandering off.”

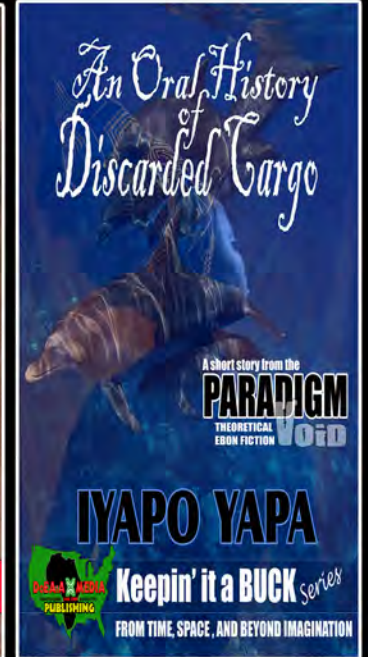
Lester smiled, said nothing and kept walking.



READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

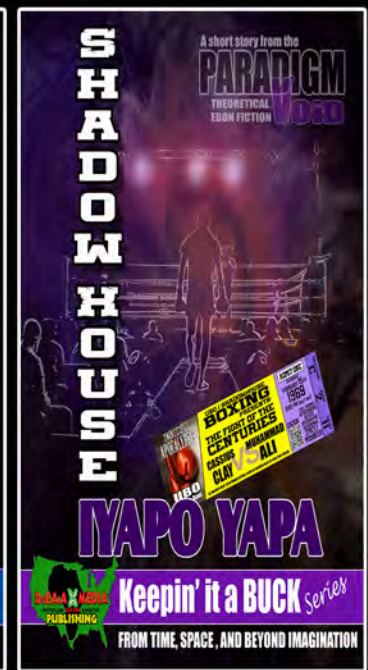
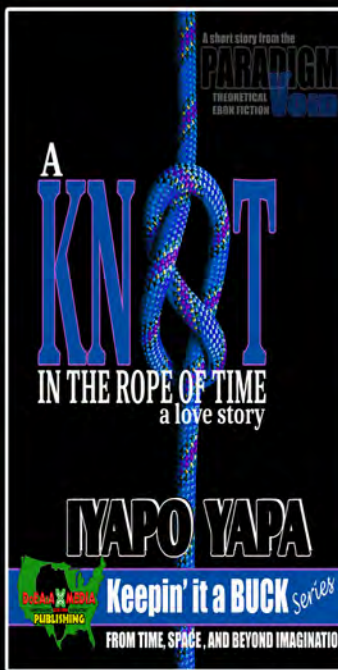


IT IS TIME TO JOURNEY INTO THE **PARADIGM VOID** ONE STEP AT A TIME.

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



Keepin' it a BUCK series



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



Also remember:

ORAL TRADITION talking books are also coming soon! Click the image to the right to hear a sample, of one of our talking books. Yes, it's still in its 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

SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: II

Carl had no trouble getting to sleep, and for as hard a sleeper as he was ... the shaking of his bed and the room around him jarred him to immediate consciousness.

“SHIT! VERSEQUAKE!” He

yelled, jumping from his bed and made his way to the door as best he could—stumbling back and forth as if he were in a carnival room that rocks from side to side, and the floor constantly shifts underneath. Carl had just enough time to look at his clock before rushing out.

3:33 am.

Once outside, Carl sprinted awkwardly to the middle of the square clad only in his boxers and into the crowd of people who were also in varying degrees of dress and undress—or wearing nothing at all. (Not that anyone was paying attention to that.) He managed to find LaTanya—still wearing only the panties and bra she’d gone to bed in, “You, okay?!” He said, grabbing her gently by one arm. “Fuckin’ versequakes!” He said as the tremors subsided. “Have you

seen Les?!”

LaTanya stood, eyes fixed on the sky, and speaking to Carl as if she hadn’t heard a word he’d said. “L-Look.” She said, pointing skyward.



Before turning his eyes to the sky, Carl looked around, finally noticing everyone in the massive square was looking up in the direction of the translucent protective dome above them, and to the moon and star clustered sky. Carl looked up to see what everyone else was gawking at, eyes growing wide he joined

the crowd in open mouth wonderment and dread.

Beyond the moon, filling nearly a third of the sky, was a beige colored planet, some several hundred times larger than the moon it dwarfed. Things being as they were now, there was little that could shock or even unnerve most people. (Human beings adjust astonishingly quickly to even some of the most bizarre conditions.)

This was something new.



SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: II (Continued)

The inhabitants of the Haven looked on in horror at the surreal looking astral body that had just appeared in their solar system. There were gasps, moans and even a few screams from those looking at the atmospheric spectacle. This was a spectacle that would make even the most confirmed egotist or narcissist feel, small, powerless, and insignificant.

Carl and LaTanya stared in horror, like everyone else around them, wanting to close their eyes or look away, but unable to. All but a few of them were so transfixed on the apparition in the night sky that they remained unaware that they were becoming weightless.

Though she considered herself to be the least observant of the three members of their tightknit group, LaTanya, still looking up at the massive sphere behind the moon whispered to Carl, “Hey, do you feel that?”

“Feel what?” Carl said, finally able to tear his eyes away from the sky and look at LaTanya.

“I don’t know. I’m not sure how to describe it. I, I feel, I dunno. Light.”

Carl glanced around at the mob for a moment, then looked at his own body as if examining it. “Yes... Yes ... I feel it too!”



They looked around and saw people in the crowd who were beginning to float slowly skyward, even as they themselves succumbed ever more to the weightlessness. LaTanya’s feet left the ground first. She was only a few inches up, but started pumping her arms and legs, looking almost

as if she were swimming in place until she began shifting sideways. “W-what’s happening!” she yelled over the ever-intensifying chorus of screams, yells, prayers and swearing around them.

“That planet or whatever it is, must be screwing with the gravity!” Carl yelled back. “Find something to grab hold of!”

But there was nothing within arm’s reach except other people who were already inches, feet or yards off the



SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: II (Continued)

ground.

“Whatter we gonna do?!” LaTanya screamed; eyes wide, justifiably panicked.

Carl, who was seldom at a loss for answers or strategies, equally wide eyed, fell backward, and without hitting the ground, and with his arms violently flailing, he slowly rose.

LaTanya, who was now several feet up in the air, and climbing, screamed and called out for help from Carl or anyone within earshot who could save her, though practically everyone was in the same predicament. Those who had found ways to anchor themselves down dared not let go of whatever was holding them in place. The majority of people, already at varying levels of altitude, continued to gradually float upward, doing what in some cases looked like a macabre kind of dance in midair.

Suddenly the ground, buildings and the superstructure itself started to vibrate furiously! In the sky what looked like the moon, stars and the

newly appeared massive celestial body, began to shudder as well!

It was another versequake!

Those who'd managed to grab something and remain on (or close to) the ground, fought—and lost in many cases—to stay on their feet, or keep hold of whatever was preventing them from rising into the sky and ultimately to the top of the dome. Several Pegasus, that had been liberated from their stalls by the shaking, flew around in the air, ecstatic to be free and able to

soar the way they always wanted, but so seldom got the opportunity. The winged horses played in the sky, seemingly oblivious to the horror of what was happening to the humanoid population that was rising up to meet them.

So intense were the vibrations that even the terrified beings suspended in the air and slowly rising, were glad they weren't connected to the earth so as not to be experiencing the full brunt of the tremors.





SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: II (Continued)

Carl was not one to ever give up. Not under any circumstances, but he saw no way out of what was happening. There wasn't anything in any of his books or research about this! At nearly fifteen feet off the ground, Carl thought about what it was going to be like when everyone reached the top of the dome, some hundred twenty feet above them.

He angled himself and looked at the ground that was moving farther away from him. There was not even a tree around that he might have grabbed hold to one of the upper limbs. "I guess this is how it ends." He thought.

As suddenly as it began, the versequake stopped, and when it did, everyone who was suspended in the air, dropped back to the ground like so many sacks of potatoes.

Once back on the ground, no longer subject to the gravitational interference of the massive heavenly body, there was more than enough pain to go around. Injuries ran the gamut from mild bruises, to broken bones to cracked skulls. It all depended upon

the age and health of the person, how far off the ground they were when the gravity went back to normal, and of course, whether they landed on grass, concrete, or in the water.

LaTanya, not too worse for wear, more shook up from floating helplessly skyward, than by the sight of the mammoth sphere, stood, nursing the elbow she'd hit when she landed, and said to Carl, as she looked up. "It's gone."

"What? The moon?" Carl said as he dragged himself to his feet, bruised, but not broken.

"No, the moon's still there. That big ass planet is gone."

Carl looked up as he stood, the moon once again shining bright in the night sky, alone, with the exception of the stars which had kept it company for millennia. "Yeah. I guess it is." He said, still in as much shock as everyone else around him. "I have to admit, of everything I've seen thus far, that was the scariest shit I've ever seen or experienced!"





SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: II (Continued)

“Oh yeah.” LaTanya said, as she stood, arms folded over her chest, visibly shaken. Carl walked over to her and put his arm around her. Then they both faced the direction of the town square.

The couple looked around and scanned the crowd. Some people seemed to be returning to their homes. Some people were tending to the collection of injuries suffered from suddenly slamming into the ground. Others, just stood, hugging and rocking each other.



As they looked on, not really knowing what to say, out of the sea of humans came Lester, wrapped in a powder blue bed sheet, and unhurriedly walked up to his friends. Being one to like sleeping in the buff, he had the presence of mind to at least grab something and wrap himself up as he ran out into the street.

“Versequakes.” He said unemotionally.

“Yeah. We know.” LaTanya said, sounding frustrated. “These last two seemed like the most intense

yet, and this is the first time two of them happened this close together. LaTanya looked at Carl, still with his arm around her, their faces close together. Carl was to the recognition and categorization of things in this new reality, what Lester was to combat

and survival tactics. Carl always seemed to have the answers. LaTanya, face so close to Carl’s that they could have kissed had they wanted to, said “I don’t suppose that was Jupiter we saw up there, was it?”

“I don’t think so ... or if it was, it wasn’t ours. I don’t know. As I looked

at it, I did see what looked like the storm on it.” Carl said.

“That circle, or oval? Is that what you’re talking about?” Lester chimed in.

“Yes. Jupiter is known for having a storm that’s been raging across its surface non-stop for almost four hundred years.”

“Yeah, I know.” Lester said. “That wasn’t Jupiter, I can guarantee that.”



SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: II (Continued)

“It probably wasn’t Les. But how can you be so sure?” Carl said.

“When everyone became weightless and started floating around, I was able to grab hold of the pole of a streetlight. There was a lot of chaos going on, and people panicking, floating away and screaming.”

“Yeah.” LaTanya said. “I was one of ‘em!”

“Everyone wasn’t screaming because they were floating off. Some of us were still staring at that thing behind the moon.”

“That planet.” Carl said.”

“That circle ... that storm you said you saw on the surface?”

“Yeah?”

“LaTanya ... Carl. It was an eye.”

“The eye of a storm?” Carl said.

“An EYE, eye!” Lester said as he poked his index and middle fingers, three stooges’ style in the direction

of his two friends. “It was a brown, frickin’ EYE!”

“No way Les, you were just seeing things! That was all in your imagi—”

“It blinked.” Lester interrupted.

“Come again?” LaTanya said, suddenly feeling more ill than she already was.

“It blinked ... TWICE!” Lester said.

The two stood stunned. Not wanting to believe what they’d just heard.

“Look around you, guys! All the people still laying on the ground out here ... a lot of them saw what I saw and fainted!”

A woman who was standing within earshot of the conversation looked over at the three and simply said. “He’s right. It was an eye. It blinked. I saw it too.” She then walked, still in shock and in a daze, off into the night.

The three stood in silence for a moment looking at the sky, looking





SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: II (Continued)

looking at those around them, looking back for good?”
at each other.

LaTanya sighed and turned her gaze to the moon. “Well, thank God it’s gone now. Whatever it is can’t get us ... at least not today, the way it looks like things were going. And at least we aren’t stuck to the top of the dome!”

“Yeah, for now. But what if it happens again, and it comes



“I don’t even want to think about it.” Carl said, “But the one thing that’s for sure is, even though that whatever it was, is gone—whenever there’s a versequake, that means something else has likely come through to this plane ... and stayed. Later I’ll have to find Mr. Drapter and find out what.”



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**.

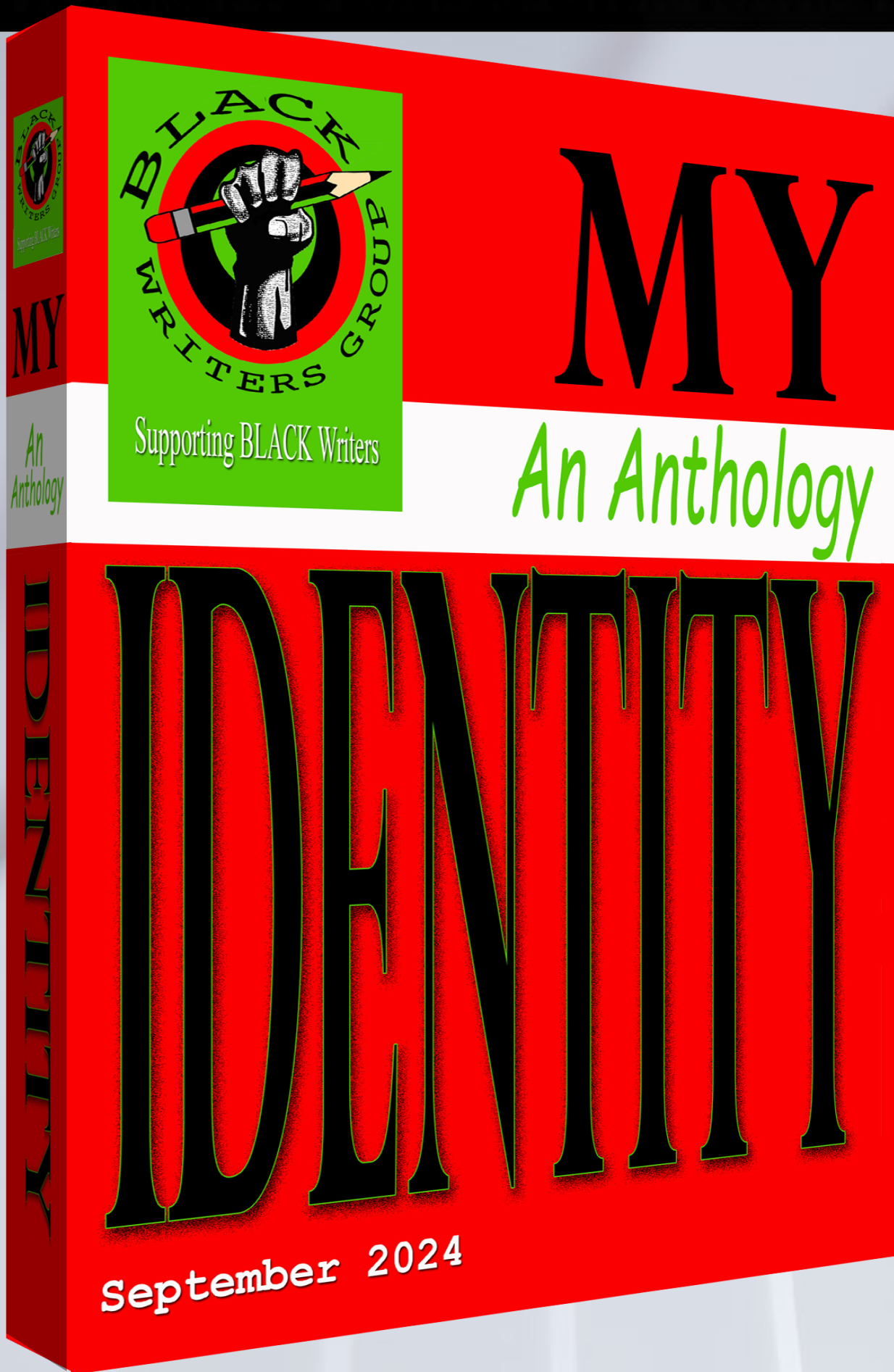


AVAILABLE NOW! [CLICK THE LOGO TO GO TO THE RETAILER](#)

READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors



MY IDENTITY QR CODE

Click the image to
go the book.

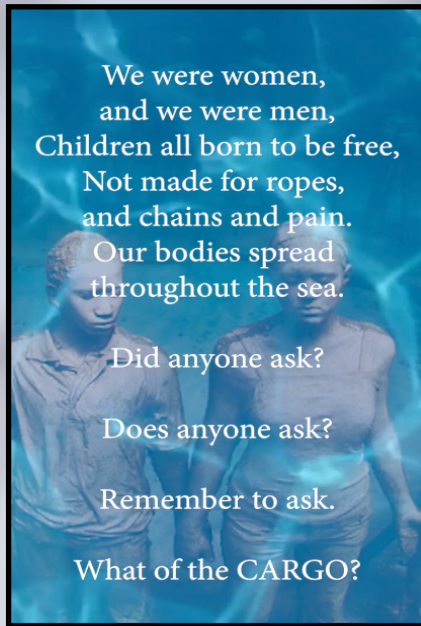
MY IDENTITY ANTHOLOGY

Nine talented Black writers give you their insights in the this Black Writers Group debut publication, *My Identity: An Anthology*. The subjects, writing style and personal observations are as varied as the writers themselves. From essays to poems to affirmations they are surprising, inspirational, & even possibly unsettling. One thing is certain: after reading this forty-eight-page volume, you will come away with food for thought as it pertains to Black identity, what it is, and what it means.

READING and WRITING in the
DARIK
A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

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

Original Trailer



Full Extended Trailer



Music Video Trailer

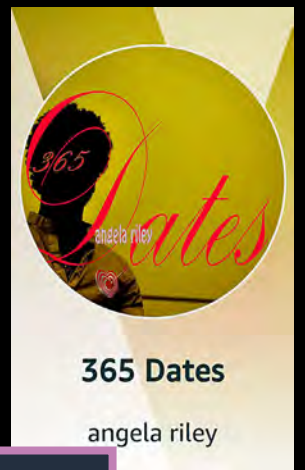
I'd like to say a big THANK YOU! To everyone who helped all three of my books to spend some time at number ONE on Amazon's BEST SELLERS list!



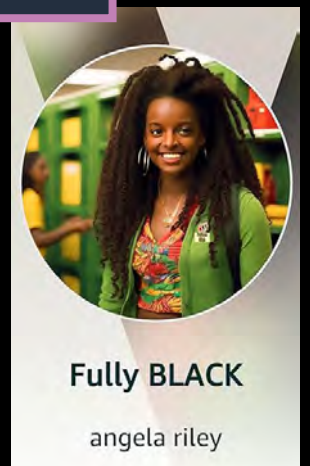
FIND AFFIRMING SELF LOVE AT:



ALSO READ ON:



kindle vella





SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: III

LaTanya and Lester sat on a small bench outside the “Burrito Barn”, and each had their versions of one of BB’s World-Famous Burritos. It was nearing noon, but since the Burrito Barn served breakfast burritos all day, they each opted for one of those. They chomped on them, LaTanya occasionally looking over her shoulder to the fast food joint’s entrance, waiting for Carl to emerge. “BB’s may have been world famous at one time,” Lester said out of nowhere as he continued chewing his tomato, egg, and cheese burrito. “But now, the world’s gotten a lot bigger, so how can they even know that? They may have a more famous one in Haven Valhalla.”

“Yep.” LaTanya said, mouth equally full of sausage, egg, and cheese burrito. “But OUR world is the Haven now, and the Burrito Barn is the only thing of its kind here. So, I guess they ain’t lyin’. And besides, if Haven Valhalla had a world-famous burrito, logic dictates that we’d have heard of it.”

“Good point.”

LaTanya turned around again and looked for Carl. “Where’d he go? Are they makin’ the burrito or growin’ the ingredients?!”

“You sure pay Carl a lot of attention lately T. Somethin’ goin’ on in your head?”

“Like what?”

“I dunno ... maybe somethin’s goin’ on in your heart, yes? Every time I walk up to one of you, the other one’s standin’ there. I’m just sayin’”

“Man, are you crazy?! We’ve been friends since we were kids! You guys are like my brothers!”

“I know I’M like your brother.”

“Yeah, and so is CARL!”

“Uh huh.” Lester grunted low, and unconvincingly as he took another bite of his burrito.

“Les, screw you, if I weren’t so tired, I’d go in on you.” LaTanya said, giving Lester the stink eye.





SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: III (Continued)

“I’m just sayin’!” Lester mumbled as he chewed his food and shrugged his shoulders.

Carl walked up behind his friends while digging into the paper bag that held his king size beef burrito and started working with the wrapper so he could take his first bite. “Well, I guess that took long enough.” He said as he unwrapped his burrito.

“Yeah, what’s up with that?” LaTanya said, “I was about to send a search party in there after you and tell them to take pictures for proof of life if they saw you. Carl and LaTanya laughed a little too hard and a little too long.

Lester sat chewing slowly on the last of his burrito and staring intensely at LaTanya. LaTanya kept laughing with Carl for a moment, then caught Lester’s gaze, which immediately made her stop. She looked at Lester for a moment as a slight grin worked its way onto his closed, still moving lips. “Ummm hummm.” He uttered in a low mumble.

“Dude screw you!” LaTanya said.

Carl looked at his friends, puzzled. “What’s going on? What’d I miss?!”

“Nothing.” LaTanya said. “This fool’s just talking cra—”



Mr. Drappter walked up to the group saluting them jovially. “Greetings Murzukians!” The Beezzelcree said cheerily.

“Hey.” Lester said unemotionally as he balled up his empty burrito wrapper, shoved it in the white paper bag it had come from, and

tossed it in the trash can next to the bench he sat on.

LaTanya, now also finished with her burrito, and likewise preparing it for the trash can looked at the Beezzelcree and attempted to say something, but only yawned and waved unenthusiastically.

“What’s the matter Lattie?” Mr. Drappter was the only one who called her that. “You look tired, didn’t you get any sleep?”



SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: III (Continued)

That woke LaTanya up, and she became very animated. “Are you freakin’ kidding?! After almost becoming a satellite and seeing some planet, or EYE or whatever the hell that thing was, I don’t think I’m gonna sleep for a fuckin’ YEAR!”

“Damn, Tanya! Do you have to swear so much?” Lester said.

“Yes! Yes, I DO! How can you NOT in this fu—JACKED UP, situation?! Several years ago I was working my ass off to earn my degree in zoology, which is now worthless since there are creatures running around out here I never would’ve imagined! I’m standin’ here in what amounts to an open air prison, runnin’ from some monster or other every two minutes, and having a conversation with a giant talking SQUIRREL wearing a BOW TIE!”

“Squirrel? I think I’m insulted.” Mr. Drappter said.

Lester sat staring hard at Mr. Drappter but saying nothing. “Why are you staring at me Lester?” The

Beezzelcree asked.

“I never really noticed, but now that she said it, you do look kinda like a squirrel dude.”

“Humph.” Mr. Drappter puffed.



Beezzelcree were a proper lot. They tended to be extremely formal with each other, referring to one another as mister or madame, but they seemed to only reserve that formality for each other. When addressing anyone else, they were oddly familiar—likely because they had so few

visitors to their dimension, and for such short stints. One would have thought it would be the other way around.

Mr. Drappter was the last of his kind as far as he knew, though he hoped it wasn’t the case; but it would be virtually impossible for another Beezzelcree to be on the present plane, and not know the other was there. They existed in a dimension that was uniquely inhabited by only their species. One of the odd properties of the Beezzelcree dimension was that

SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: III (Continued)

anything entering it that was not a Beezzelcree would be essentially ‘unstuck’ in that dimension, meaning that whatever creature or entity entered it, the subject would relatively quickly pass through to another dimension in which it did remain anchored.

That notwithstanding, the Beezzelcree had the distinctive ability to sense and identify other creatures from other dimensions that may have entered and passed through theirs, whether those creatures were very far away or in close proximity.

“I do NOT look like a squirrel.” Mr. Drappter said.

“Yes, you do. You even have a bushy ass tail.” LaTanya insisted.

Ignoring both LaTanya and Lester, Mr. Drappter turned his attention to Carl, who was just about to start eating his burrito having been sidetracked by the conversation. “I got your message this morning Carl.” He said. “What can I do for you?”

“Well,” he said, wanting to take a bite of his food but fighting off the urge.

“Like I said in my message, as you know, there were two versequakes that were pretty close together, and you saw that thing up in the sky behind the moon that looked like a planet. Lester says it wasn’t a planet. He and some lady told us it had an eye. I wanted to know if you could tell us what it was.”

“It did have an eye.” Mr. Drappter said with his eyes glued to Carl’s burrito. “It wasn’t a planet. Hey, would you mind if I have some of that? I haven’t eaten anything since yesterday.”

Carl, hungry, reluctantly broke off a third of his burrito and tossed it over to the Beezzelcree. Mr. Drappter caught the snack and shoved all of it in his mouth with both hands. As he chewed furiously, his cheeks puffed out.

LaTanya and Lester looked at each other. “Squirrel.” They said together.

“What was that thing if it wasn’t a planet?” Carl asked. Mr. Drappter finished the portion of burrito that was in his mouth and cheeks, swallowed





SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: III (Continued)

it and said, “I don’t know what it was, I only know what it wasn’t, and it wasn’t a planet, and the versequake shifted it before I could get a sense of it. All I can say for certain is that it was definitely a living organism ... not in the way this world here is living, in terms of its ecosystem, but living in the way you and I are.”

LaTonya, who wasn’t really in the mood to hear about any more creatures or new creatures said. “Yeah. Well, at least it’s gone.”

“For now.” Lester said.

The collapse had happened only a few short years ago, and LaTonya became less and less tolerant of all the creatures randomly running around, and the near day to day possible threats that could arise at any given moment—like two back-to-back versequakes, an incomprehensibly sized creature, and a loss of gravity that would have, for nearly everyone in the haven, ended with their deaths. Oh, the haven was secure enough—it was a spectacular feat of engineering in terms of the build itself along with the physical, scientific and

metaphysical protections. Still, even for its size and safety, many of its inhabitants, including LaTonya, saw it as nothing more than a massive, well stocked and maintained, jail cell.

“Something else did come through during the last versequake, and it stayed.” Drappter said casually.

“What was it?!”

“A heard of Aoyin. They look like what you would have commonly known before the collapse as, oxen – just a lot bigger. They have four horns and

long white hair, and they like to—”

“Wait! Lemme guess.” LaTonya interrupted. “They like to kill humans.”

“And eat them.” Drappter added.

Lester rolled his eyes slightly and raised his arms, then let them flop to his sides, “Of course they do.” he said. “Are they close around here?”

Mr. Drappter looked at Carl, and because of the structure of his face



SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: III (Continued)

it was difficult to tell, but the Beezzelcree was definitely a little annoyed by the question. “I’ve told you several times that I can’t tell anything about proximity. I can only sense presence.”

“Sorry, I forgot.”

“Come on Mr. Drappter. Run Les some slack.” Carl said, making subtle signals with his face to remind him of the effects the bite of the hydashadamah had on his friend.

“Oh ... that’s right.” The beezzelcree whispered.

“Uh, no Carl. I can only sense presence.”

“Those Aoyin things like killing and eating people. WONDERFUL! Ya know, for creatures that have never had contact with human beings, they sure as hell like killing us or eating us!” LaTanya said.

“Who said they never came into contact before?” Mr. Drappter said.

The woman and the two men looked at each other, predictably about to

question Mr. Drappter about what he meant and how that could be, but before they could, the Beezzelcree came with a question of its own.

“Do you mind if I ask you something?” Mr. Drappter said.

“Feel free.” Carl said.

“What do you think about all these different creatures that are roaming around?”

“Are you serious?!” LaTanya blurted out. “I mean, is that supposed to be a real question?! Damn Drappter ... it

SUCKS! Why couldn’t they stay in their own damn dimensions?!”

“MISTER Drappter.” The Beezzelcree said calmly. He then looked toward the ground and slowly shook his head from side to side as he chuckled quietly to himself.

“Whatter you snickering about? Did I say somethin’ funny?” LaTanya said.

“Not intentionally, no. You humans. Every one of you I’ve ever met seems to think everything revolves around



SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: III (Continued)

you, your dimension, and your world. Who says THEY'RE coming onto YOUR plane?! How do you know YOU haven't been versequaked into one of THEIRS?"

"What? I never even considered that!" Carl said, "Is that what's happened? Have we shifted over to another dimension? Is our dimension still intact out there somewhere?!"

"I honestly don't know." Mr. Drappter said. "It's just something I've been pondering. I only know this isn't my home dimension because everything that comes here seems to stay for the most part. Speaking of which ... you asked me about the last versequake... that's when the Aoyin came through."

"Yeah?" Lester said.

"You remember there were two versequakes ... something came through both times and stayed. When the first versequake happened, that thing behind the moon showed up, and something else came with it. The second one brought the Aoyin and

got rid of the thing in space, but the thing that came with it stayed."

"Great." LaTanya said.

"What was it?" Carl asked.



Before he could answer all four of them heard a commotion in the distance, they looked around and then finally down the center of the road and toward the middle of the town square. The sound and bunch of figures were fast approaching.

"Now what?!" LaTanya said.

They were running!

No one ever ran within the protective walls of Haven Murzuk! There was never a need to!

In the distance, in the middle of the square, the group could see something coming, but couldn't quite make out what it was. Even within the confines of the Haven, Carl tended to carry his binoculars with him in a satchel in which he also always had water and



SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: III (Continued)

some kind of snacks. He pulled them out and pressed the lenses against his eyes. It took a moment for him to focus the device. When he did, he could clearly see the form of something that looked like a lion. The feline looking creature was some two to three times the size of any lion he'd ever seen in any of the zoos that used to exist, also the colors were off. This creature was jet black, had a snow white mane and blood red eyes. The creature was beautiful in its way.

The last of the people who were running ran past, most screaming. Eventually, there was no longer a need for binoculars and Carl dropped them and squinted a little as he watched it come up the way. LaTanya and Lester too could clearly see the animal even though it was a substantial distance away. The people had run, but the lion like creature walked with a slow, purposeful, confident, steady stride.

“Drappter! What is that?!” LaTanya said.

“MISTER Drappter.”

“Damn man! What the fuck is that thing?!” she yelled.

“That’s what came through with the first versequake. It’s called a ‘wieggodah’” Mr. Drappter said dryly. “It’s a breed of what your people would call a ‘Nemean Lion’”.

“Nemean Lion?!” LaTanya said. “And, what’s THAT?!”

“A Nemean Lion is of the breed Hercules killed as one of his twelve labors.” Carl whispered.

“H-how did it get in here?! I thought nothing could get past our defenses!” Lester interrupted.

“Never mind that for now, it doesn’t matter at this point!” Carl said. “Mr. Drappter are they dangerous?! Should we be scared?!”

Mr. Drappter looked casually at the wide-eyed Carl and said. “As our lovely companion Lattie would put it ... ‘Shitless.’”

Lester and LaTanya stood up from the bench and, along with Carl, started



SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: III (Continued)

slowly walking backward, the wieggodah's white mane gleamed in the sunlight and was a stark contrast against its jet black skin. It walked toward them, getting ever closer. It continued to walk, no more slowly or quickly, in the direction of the group.

Mr. Drappter closed his eyes and began to slowly levitate to what he felt was a safe height.

The small group watched as he floated skyward, knowing the only reason he would be doing that was because he knew there was a clear and present threat.

LaTanya looked, eyes wide, at the thing walking up the road and said to Carl without taking her eyes off of it. "You said Hercules killed one of those things right?! How'd he do it?! What kind of weapon did he use?!"

"According to the story, there was no forged weapon that could kill a Nemean Lion! Nothing could even pierce its skin! Hercules ended up having to kill it with his bare hands!"

"What?" Lester exclaimed. "Man,

I'm good ... but I ain't THAT good! I can't see me or anyone else taking on that thing hand to hand. There has to be some other way to kill it. Drappter! You got any suggestions?!"

"MISTER Drappter. There's a reason those things seldom run. They havenoneed. Where they come from, they're the Apex predator, and nothing, as far as forged weapons can harm them, so they do as they please, at their leisure."

Even as the trio stepped back from the advancing wieggodah, they could hear sounds of someone

approaching from behind. Lester looked over his shoulder and then back to his friends. "People are coming with weapons!" he said, sounding slightly relieved. Several men and women ran past Carl, LaTanya and Lester, a couple of them grunting a hurried "Move out the way!" They formed two lines, twelve in front on one knee, the other twelve behind them, all taking aim with their various weapons of choice. LaTanya and her friends continued moving slowly backward.



SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: III (Continued)

From the air Mr. Drappter saw what the small militia was planning to do. “You don’t want to do that.” He called down loudly, but with the relative calm with which he spoke nearly all the time.

“Who asked you?!” one of the men looked up and yelled back.

“No one, but that is a wieggodah. If you fire anything at it, you’re only going to, as you say, ‘piss it off’.

“YOU piss off! I don’t take orders from no squirrels!” the man yelled back and then repositioned his head to focus on the animal.

“I’m not a squirrel.”

A woman on the back row and to the far right, who obviously was the lead person in the militia yelled out, “EVERYONE TAKE AIM AND FIRE AT WILL!”

With that, a hail of bullets and laser fire assaulted the skin of the creature. There were several minutes of ear splitting noise, mixed with screams

and a few utterances of “Die you piece o’ shit!” or exclamations to that effect. The smoke that surrounded the area was thick and blue, like a fog.

Mr. Drappter, who had taken a moment to float down from his place in the

air drifted over to the three humans he’d been speaking with. “Carl, Lattie, Lester ... I would highly suggest you run.” He said. “The science complex is probably the most secure place right now. I saw a large group running toward it.

Without hesitation or argument none of the

members of the trio waited to see whether the barrage of fire unleashed upon the creature had taken it down, they all turned around and ran at full speed to put as much distance between them and the commotion. As they ran, they could hear someone in the militia yell, “We got it! We kil—” they never completed their sentence as the end of it was cut off and replaced by the sound of a massive roar, that was deep, and at the same time contained a kind of high pitch that sounded nearly like a human voice. After the initial noise of the roar there was a





SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: III (Continued)

mixture of screams, roars, and the firing of weapons.

“SHIT!” LaTanya yelled, as she suddenly veered off from her two friends. Her two companions were in a sprint and heading toward the

science complex, the most fortified place within the Haven. Neither had turned around to see if LaTanya was still with them because she was always known to be able to keep up, and in some cases outpace them. Eventually Lester looked behind them and realized their friend was no longer with them. “Where’d

Tanya go?!” he called over to his still running friend. “What are you talking about?!” Carl answered back before looking over his shoulders from side to side and seeing LaTanya was nowhere to be found. Both men stopped, turned around and started calling out for their friend. They then looked up at the Beezzelcree who was fairly high above them. “Mr. Drappter! What happened to Tanya?!”

“Yes... I saw her split off. It looked like she ran toward the stables.”

“The stables?! There isn’t any real protection in there! Why would she go th—?”

Lester was looking down the road and tapped Carl on the shoulder. “Shit.” He said.



“What?” Carl said, immediately looking away from Mr. Drappter and in the direction in which Lester’s gaze was fixed.

The slaughter was unspeakable. From what they could see, there were weapons laying all around in addition to

human remains and severed limbs, heads severed from their bodies, and blood, blood, and more blood. Both men had seen before, the remains of people who were unfortunate enough to be unable to escape one of the host of creatures that now populated the new environment, but there was nothing to compare to this. In the center of it all was the wieggodah, growling and licking the blood from its black paws. It then looked at Carl and Lester, lowered its head, arched its shoulders, and started growling.

SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: III (Continued)

“I think we’re in trouble.” Lester said through the shock of seeing so much carnage. “If that thing comes after us, there’s no way we’re gonna make it to the facility, I don’t think we could even make it to the stable to find Tanya.”

“All we can do is try!” Carl said, and they both turned to run. Lester had made a few strides when Carl, having turned too quickly and not properly positioning his legs, in effect fell over his own feet. Lester stopped and looked at Carl who was trying to get up as the now charging jet black lion fast approached him. Lester ran back in the direction of his friend. If the creature was going to be fought, Carl would not be fighting it alone!

As the ‘lion’ drew closer, Carl could see the ferocity of it in the blood red eyes and knew this may be his last battle!

Out of nowhere, LaTanya came riding a horse at full speed! The horse was powder blue, with a dark blue mane. The dark blue hair of the lion-like tipped tail waved furiously as the

animal cut through the air. From the horse’s head protruded a single long snow-white horn.

A unicorn!

The wieggodah only had a second to look at the approaching threat—not enough time to stop the single horn from piercing it in the side. The unicorn impaled the other creature, nearly up to where the horn grew out of the unicorn’s forehead. The massive feline-like animal let out a deafening roar, and then after struggling for a couple moments to free itself from the horn on which it had been gouged, went limp, its hind leg kicking a few times as the final vestiges of life left it.

When the wieggodah lay surely dead, the unicorn, LaTanya still on its back, slowly pulled its horn from the carcass and took a few paces backward and stood, digging one foot in the dirt and letting out a triumphant whinny. LaTanya jumped down and stepped over to Carl and Lester as the unicorn walked beside her. “You guys alright?” she asked.



SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: III (Continued)

“Yeah, thanks to you and Kianira.” Carl said as he dusted himself off.

“Yeah. Thanks to both of you, but Tanya, how’d you know a unicorn could kill that thing?” Lester said.

“I didn’t know for sure.” LaTanya said. “I took a guess.” She looked at Carl. “You said Hercules had to kill the Nemean Lion with his bare hands because no forged weapon could kill it. I guessed that if those wieggodah were a breed of the same species of animal, then they could likewise have that same vulnerability.”

“What vulnerability? I don’t follow.” Carl said.

“Mystic energy. None of us could likely have done anything to even hurt that thing, but I thought about the fact that according to legend, supposedly Hercules was a demi-god. That was the reason he was able to kill it with his bare hands, when no forged weapons had an effect on it.”

“Yes?” Mr. Drappter, who had by

now floated down from what he considered minimum safe distance, said, genuinely interested himself—which was no small thing.

“As a demi-god.” LaTanya continued. “Hercules likely possessed mystical

and/or metaphysical energies—something the Martians here have been able to prove exists, even if they can’t yet quantify it. In their testing, they discovered that the unicorns here measure as having that kind of energy. They’re the only ones in the Haven who do. Not even the Pegasus have it. So, I ran over to

Kianira’s stall, and we rode in to the rescue”

“And you figured all that out that fast?” Lester said, sounding a little more amazed than he meant to.

“Sure, but like I said ... it was my best guess. I’m just glad it worked.” She patted the unicorn softly, but solidly on the neck and then gently stroked her flowing blue hair. “Kianira, you’re definitely getting extra sugar cubes and as many carrots as you can eat.”

“Right after I get you all cleaned up



SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: III (Continued)

and get that blood off your horn.” She continued to pat the unicorn on the neck and then looked at the crowd around the bloody remains of friends, loved ones and fellow inhabitants of the Haven. LaTanya looked down at the ground. “This is so fucked up.” She whispered. Her friends said nothing, but they both agreed.

A group was already forming around the mauled remains of their fellow Haven inhabitants. The scene was a near replay of what had happened earlier in the morning with the second versequake, but this time, there were no wounded—only the dead to be tended to.

A crowd likewise began reluctantly gathering around the corpse of the huge beast that lay within what they once considered the impenetrable confines of their protected city. They stared at it and mumbled among themselves. Some of the gawkers were thinking about the creature itself, others saw it as a symbol of the end of their peace of mind. The dead creature and the incidents of the last versequake left no doubt that they

were not as secure as they’d fooled themselves into believing. “Nowhere is safe in this damn place!” Some woman cried out from the crowd encircling the shredded humans, echoing the prevailing thoughts of the growing mob, that no one else dared utter out loud.



All four looked in the direction of the voice but were not able to attach it to anyone in particular, but LaTanya gently, almost imperceptibly, nodded in agreement. “Well.” She said, turning her full attention back to her friends. “Even the unicorns, with their

mystical qualities, and the Pegasus share much of the same actual physiology as what we know as horses on our plane, I’m guessing this Nemean Lion, or wieggodah may be the same as the lions and felines we’ve always had around. I can’t know that for certain though until I do an autopsy on it.”

“An autopsy?”

“Yeah.” I’ll wait for the Martians to get it to the science facility so we, and some of our other scientists here



SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: III (Continued)

can study it. That way, I can help determine it's make up, and see if there may be some commonalities between the species we've always known and the new arrivals ... maybe ... and the Martians and our scientists might be able to figure out how the hell it got in here in the first place and hopefully create some kind of counter measure against another one getting in."

"Girl, when you stop cussin' an' start thinkin' you can actually sound kinda brilliant." Lester said.

"Screw you." LaTanya said, giving her friend a half smile. "Seriously though. The Martians should be here in a little bit to transport that thing to the facility. In the meantime, I've GOT to get this beautiful life saving unicorn cleaned up. Ain't that right girl?"

"Ok." Lester said as LaTanya turned to go back to the stable with the unicorn. "I just wanna tell you again that that was some quick thinkin'. This out here is a mess ... but you just saved a LOT of lives, don't forget that."

"Thanks Les. Com'mon Kianira." LaTanya said as she headed toward the stables.

Lester turned his attention to Carl and Mr. Drappter. "How'd that thing even get in here?!"



"I dunno." Carl said. "But someone'd better figure it out pretty damn quick. This is getting to be too much."

"GETTING?!"

"Right. The situation is obviously out of hand, but I haven't a clue what to do about it." Carl said,

frustrated.

"Where do you think all these beings come from?" Mr. Drappter asked, seemingly out of nowhere, as he tended to do.

"I'm guessing that they all came from the human imagination, and somehow, something happened that made them start taking form."

Mr. Drappter laughed. "You humans don't even know how arrogant you are. Carl, you have no imagination."



SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: III (Continued)

“No need to be insulting. Human beings are very creative and have plenty of imagination! We have libraries, and all forms of media that prove it.”

“I didn’t mean that as a slight.” Mr. Drappter said matter of factly. “I meant it literally. Humans have no imagination. None of us do.”

“What are you talking about?”

You have a book called ‘Dracula’ by a writer named Bram Stoker do you not?

“Yes. A work of fiction he created using his imagination.” Carl insisted, feeling like he’d just delivered a ‘gottcha’ to the Beezzelcree.

“Partly. The story itself came from his mind, but so called vampires as your people refer to them, are quite real, as you have discovered.”

“I don’t understand.”

“What’s been happening since the collapse is that the creatures you have

written about in your literature and in your media as you call it, actually exist somewhere, on other planes, and some among your species were able to tap into that. What I’m saying is that, in terms of various forms of beings ... there is no such thing as imagination.



There are ‘creators’ on other planes who wrote about your existence, the humans and lifeforms on your planet earth before the collapse. You were written about as creatures of myth and legend. More than a few of these beings from other planes were absolutely horrified when they found that you actually exist. Human

beings are the only creatures of “myth”, who enslave their own kind. Who marginalize and oppress them.”

“And you’re going to stand there and tell me no one else does that?” Carl said.

“Not to their own SPECIES, no. Across many alter-verses, when someone would write about you, their work was typically “panned” as you would call it or dismissed as being too farfetched. No one could believe the things you’ve done. Especially



SURVIVING the WORST - Chapters One thru Three: III (Continued)

the groups who enslaved people like yourself.”

“And NOBODY else does that?!”

“No, and there is one, that is even worse than the ones who enslaved your people, and even THEY don’t enslave their own.”

“Who are they?”

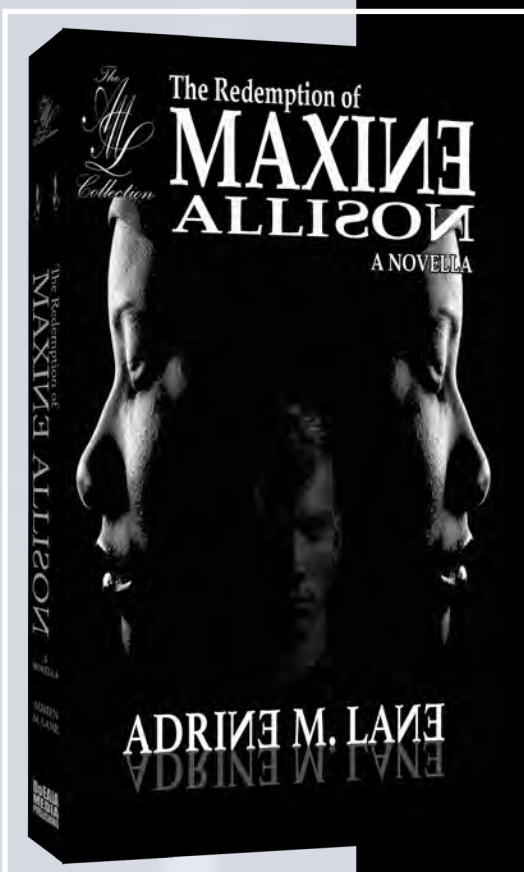
“They’re called ‘Kletctue’. They crave power and control. They are

merciless and their malevolence is only surpassed by their bloodlust, and nothing that has ever come in contact with them has ever known peace ever again.”

“Are these Kletctue, here?!” Lester asked.

“No, thank the Creator. After each versequake the Kletctue are the first thing I scan for. I can only say pray they never slip onto this plane, because

if they do ... the suffering for every living thing here, will be endless.”



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!

COMING SOON!

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

READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

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!

READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

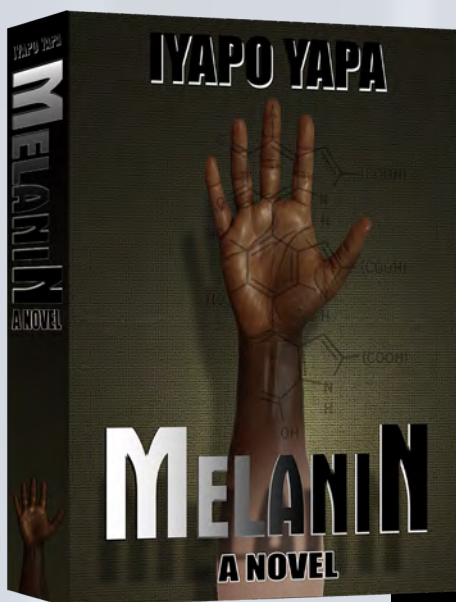
So, who knew I was a cartoonist before I became a writer?
Take a minue to check out some of my work online at:
<https://iyapoyapa.com/cartoonist-illustrator.html>
or just click the image below and it will take you straight there!



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!



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 below!
Click the image on the left to purchase the novel!



READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

Here is your January 2025 Maze!

This month, in honor of the characters in *Surviving the WORST* who are seeking to find a way out of their predicament, we have a MAZE! This should be a difficult and fun one but aren't they ALL?! As always, the solution to last month's puzzle is at the back of the magazine. ENJOY!

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

JANUARY MAZE 2025

START

FINISH

THIS MONTH'S MAZE IS ABOUT...

SURVIVING
the
WORST

READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors



R.J. BLAKMAN

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

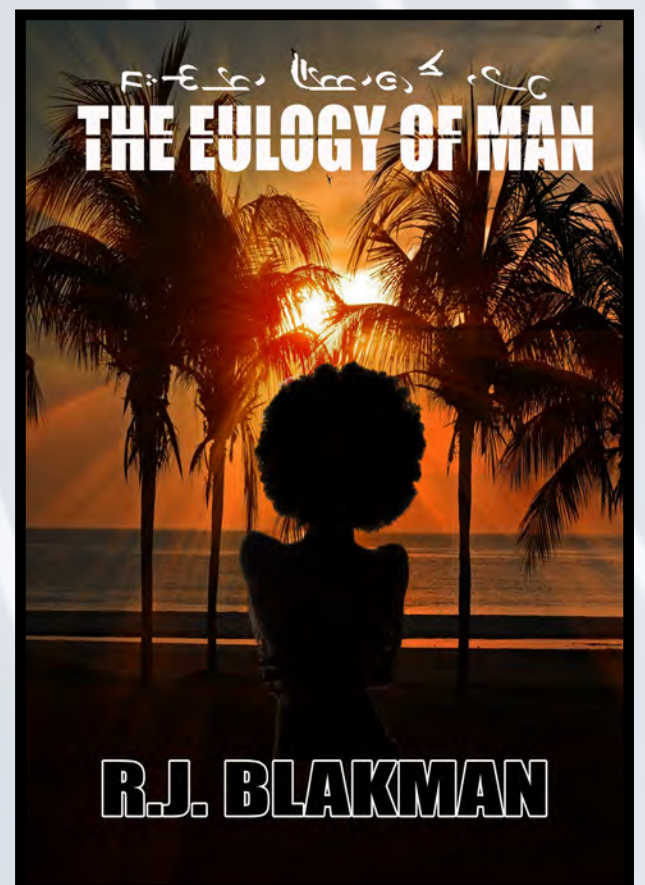
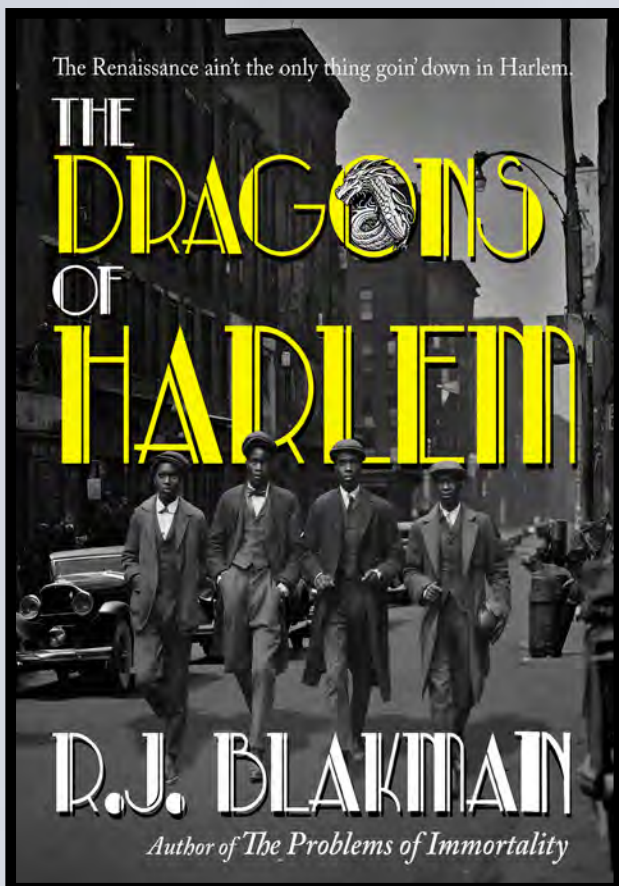
As a practice, Blakman seeks out truth and goes wherever that truth leads him, even if uncomfortable.

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

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

UPCOMING BOOKS BY

R.J. BLAKMAN



ENTERTAINING,
ENGROSSING,
THOUGHT PROVOKING!



Music to my ears: Did AI finally win me over?!

I'm not super old, but I'm old enough.

I'm not super old, but I'm old enough.

I'm old enough to remember when

MIDI stood for "Musical Instrument Digital Interface".

My first professional keyboard was a Casio CZ5000 synthesizer. I also had a Casio CZ1, a Suzuki keyboard (I can't remember the model of), a Korg drum computer (something in the TR series, but that's all I can remember), and a Casio SK_01 for sampling. Though the SK_01 was more

of a toy, I was able to do some very interesting things with it.

That said, I watched digital and electronic music develop firsthand. Those were some very exciting times. I wrote my first songs using those keyboards, sampler, drum computer and a professional mixing board. It was a Tascam, but I can't remember the model. I was in Germany in the military during that time and was in a band called Force of Habit. We

made some pretty good music and we each did solo stuff. When it was time to leave, my things were packed away by the military and shipped back to the U.S. Long story short,

ALL my instruments and studio equipment, I painstakingly (monetarily) sacrificed to get, were stolen. Likely none of it even made it out the country.

I kept doing music as a hobby, but at some point, I stopped keeping up with the trends and the tech. So, imagine my surprise when I found out that you could take your

lyrics, put them into an online app, and it would turn your lyrics into a song in the style you wanted, sung by your choice of a woman or man. I was very skeptical when I first tried it, but after I put in that first set of lyrics and heard the results, I was HOOKED! This particular AI platform is something I wasn't expecting at all. I typically push back against too much AI, though I have come around to seeing it as just another tool if used correctly. MIND BLOWING!





Music to my ears: Did AI finally win me over?! (continued)

The knowledge that now I can dig out some of my old lyrics that I struggled with putting to music and having sung (because I can't sing!), is awesome to me.

Again. I'm not a big fan of AI, but I'm definitely a big fan of THIS. I write all the lyrics, NO assistance from AI and the AI sings EXACTLY what I write. A few times I had to go back and correct typos because as I said, the AI sings EXACTLY what I write. To that end, I don't feel like I'm cheating like I would if

I were using it to make art. (I NEVER claim AI art as something I "created", and I never EVER use AI to help me write. I don't know if I ever could. That

But this?



To me it is tantamount to handing a composer and singer my lyrics and saying to them, "Can you write some music for this and sing it?" So, I take full credit for the lyrics. The AI gets the rest.

If you would like to hear some of my songs you can find them on TikTok and Instagram. There is, "Force Of Habit" and "No Matter Who I'm

With," also a video for *And What of the CARGO?* that features "Kylah's Theme", with my words and lyrics.



READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

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!

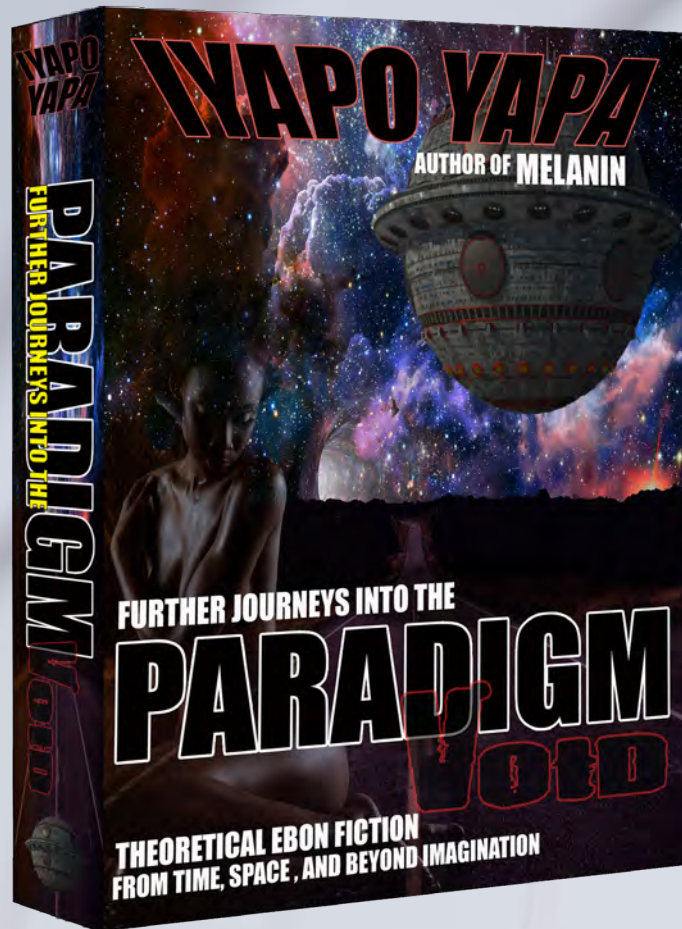
The image is a screenshot of an Instagram profile for @iyapo. The profile header includes a blue background with a white circle containing three dots, a circular profile picture of a person sitting on a red surfboard, and a white 'Subscribe' button with a bell icon. The bio reads '@iyapo' and 'Cartoonist, Illustrator, Graphic artist, Author'. Below the bio is a section titled 'Books and Writing by Iyapo Yapa'. There are four post thumbnails visible, each with a white border. The first post features a cartoon character with blue hair and a pencil, with text: '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'. The second post is for the novel 'MELANIN' with a quote from Brandon Massey: 'Melanin is an uncompromising and timely tale of speculative fiction, brimming with thought-provoking ideas and imaginative twists.' The third post is for 'AND WHAT OF THE CARGO?' with the text: '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.' The fourth post is for 'PARADIGM' with the text: 'An anthology of short stories in the realm of Theoretical Ehon Fiction from time, space and suspense beyond imagination.'

READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

ARE YOU PREPARED TO JOURNEY BACK INTO THE VOID?!

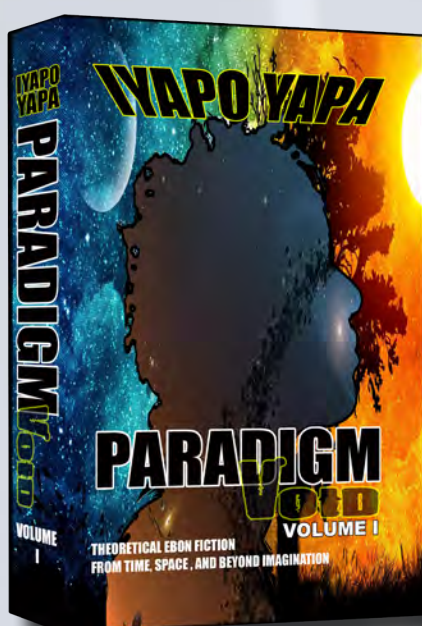


COMING SOON

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

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

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



RIGHT NOW!

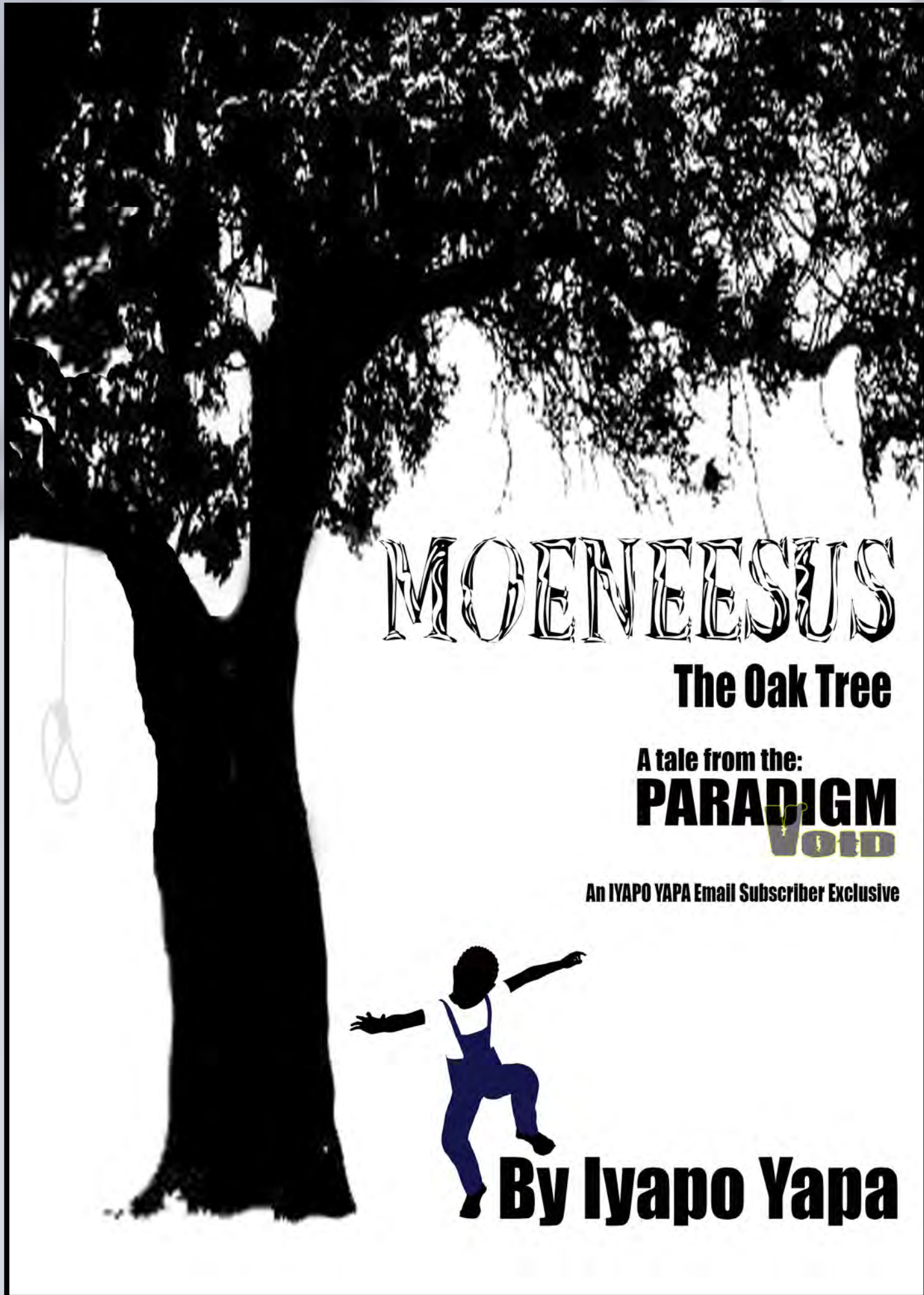
Stories from Time, Space and Beyond Imagination,
Paradigm VOID Volume I is available.



READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors



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

READING and WRITING in the

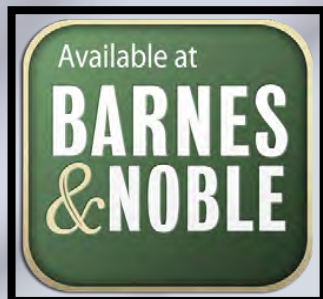
DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors



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

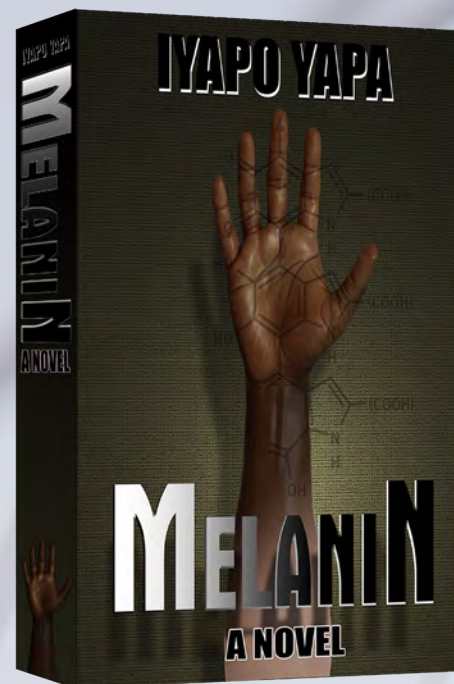
“Yapa weaves another story this time interwoven with historical references. I was on my seat with every chapter. I don't want to give it away but....revenge is sweet when served dead. And I can't get over how different each of his offerings are. Read his Vella's and you'll see what I mean. Another great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



AVAILABLE NOW!

MELANIN: A NOVEL

Buy it now on Amazon

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

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

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

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

goodreads

What are readers saying about MELANIN: A NOVEL?

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

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

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

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

“The whole world needs to read this book!”

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

“Every Black person needs to read this book!”

- Gwen B

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

- Ayoka B.

You can also read it for FREE if you have

Kindle Unlimited!

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

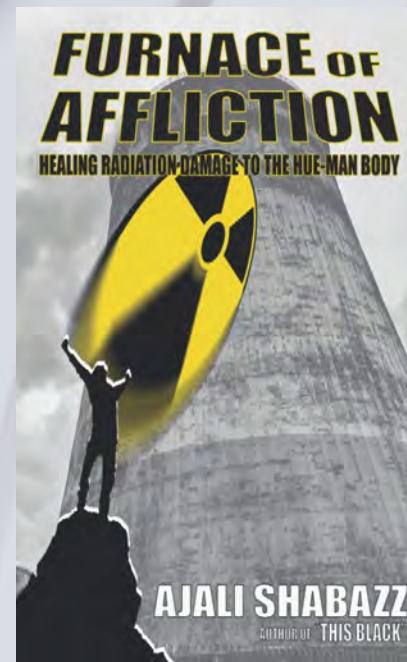
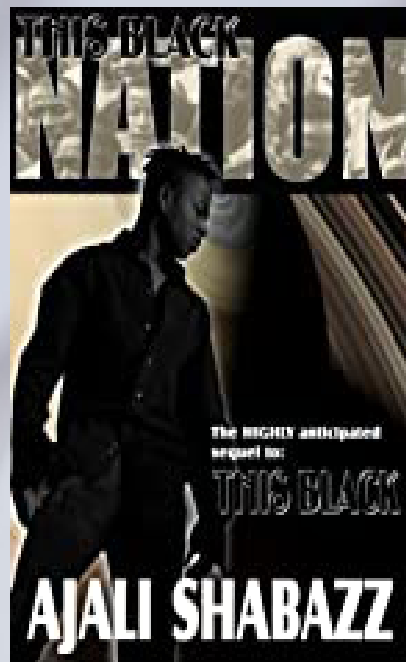
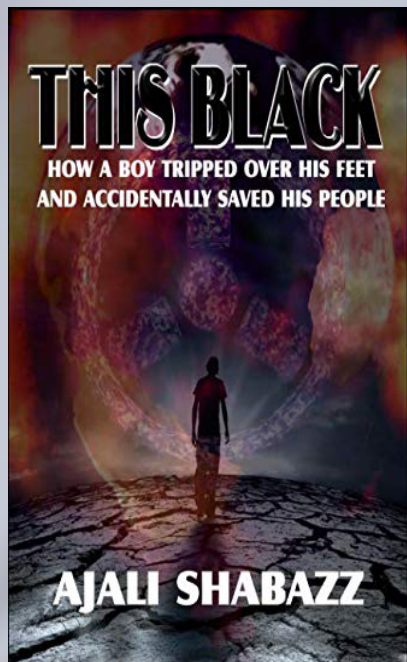
READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

Books by:

AJALI SHABAZZ



Author of: *This Black - This Black NATION* and *Furnace of Affliction!*

The Reading and Writing in the DARK Podcast Interview!

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

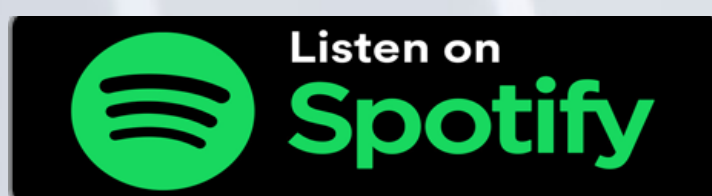
Listen to the interview on  by clicking the link below:

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



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

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



CLICK THIS BLOCK TO LISTEN TO THE

READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

podcast!







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.

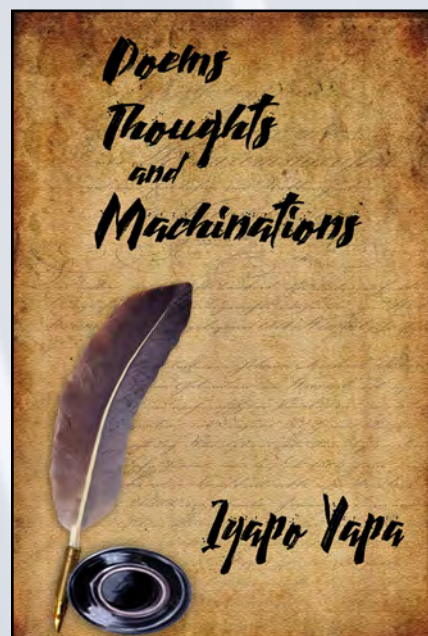
My blog is the place where I talk about what's on my mind and don't worry too much about the formatting or typos - it is, pretty much, my raw perceptions and analysis of what is going on around me.



[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.

ANIMATION & RELAXATION

Throughout my life I've learned to do a lot of things. Most of them have to do with something "artsy", like drawing, writing, playing music (including piano, guitar and my favorite, the harmonica). I also taught myself to build computers as well as use

various kinds of software. I taught myself to juggle and to do tricks on a skateboard. (Skateboarding is one of the things I miss being able

to do now that I'm older. My mind is willing, but body has a different plan.) I'm not bragging, personally, I don't feel that I do anything more than ANY other Black person can do, because that's just the way we are. And I mean that with all my heart.

What I AM saying is that I can't stand being bored, and typically all those things kept me from becoming bored. Now, as I do the things I do, I still find them very rewarding, but I don't necessarily find them relaxing. One day I was working on my writing and wanted to take a break. (A "break" meaning,

perhaps a day or two away from it.) I didn't necessarily want to write or play any music, but I realized there was something I hadn't done in decades and would serve as a perfect distraction and means of relaxation.



ANIMATING!

Animating a cartoon (the old-fashioned way, by sitting down and DRAWING the darn thing),

is tedious and time consuming—but for someone who likes to draw, it can be very relaxing if it is done just for the love of doing it. Some people knit and end up with a garment, I'm going to draw and end up with a cartoon. I'm very excited by the prospect and am looking forward to working on it little by little until I'm done. I'll keep you posted on the progress. In the meantime, you can click the image to see the opening reel. (Lil' Man is more of a place holder for timing. I'm not sure if the result is going to be a Lil' Man cartoon) but whatever it turns out to be, I anticipate the fun and relaxation of producing it!

READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

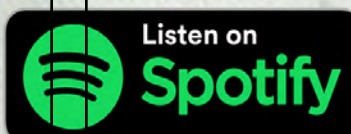
A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

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

READING and WRITING in the

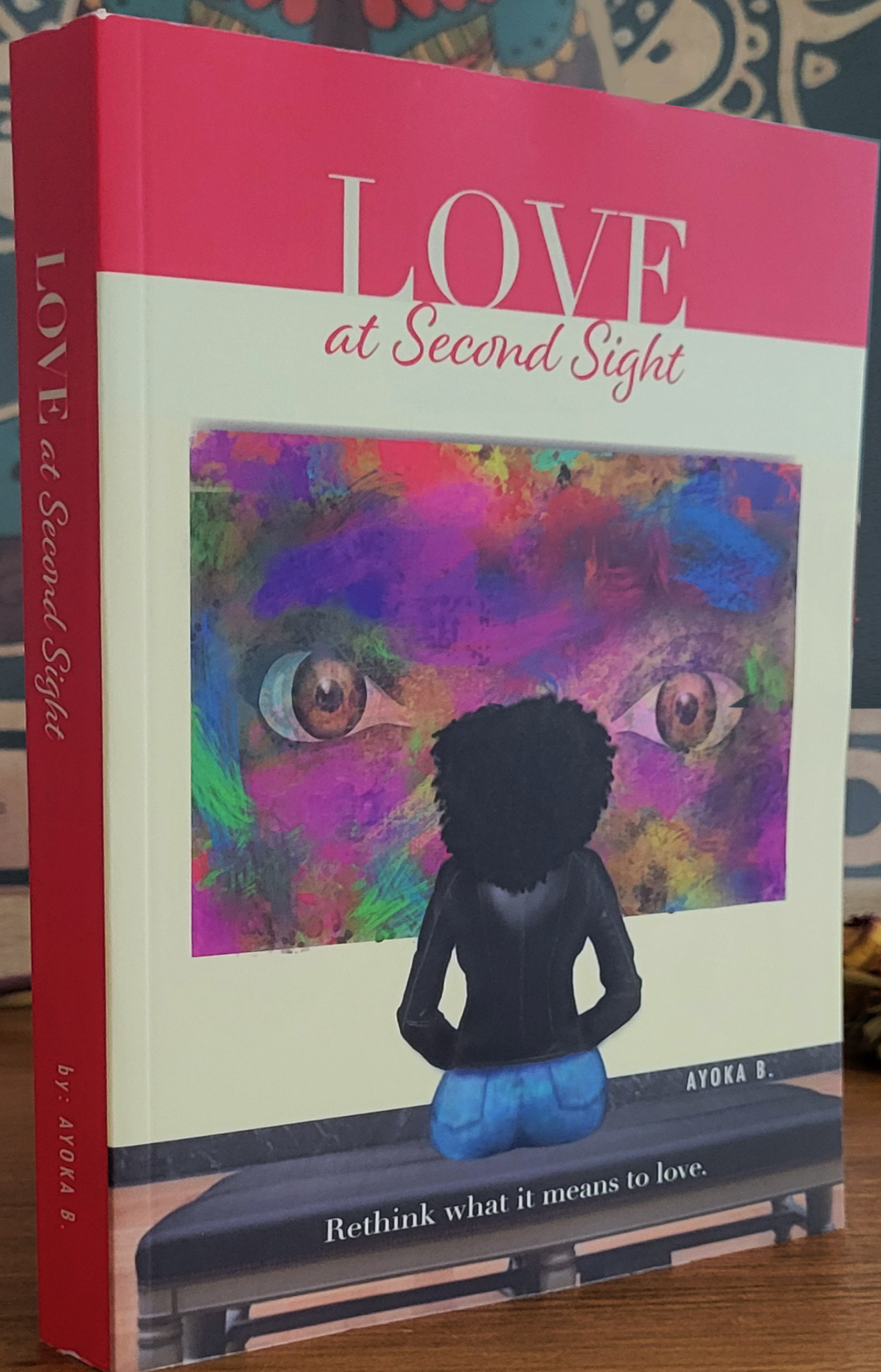
DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

LOVE AT SECOND SIGHT IS AVAILABLE NOW!

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

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



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



Alright, enough about ME!

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

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

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



I DeClaire Love

Angela Riley

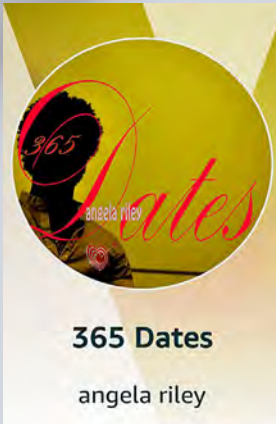
DeClaire and Tyrone meet and sparks fly. They fall in love with each other quick, fast, and in a hurry. It seems too good to be true. But is it? Is it safe to love? Are there any “good” rules when it comes to love? Do we have to fight for love? Are there always games being played when it comes to love?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



The Love X TamuTamu Agency

Angela Riley

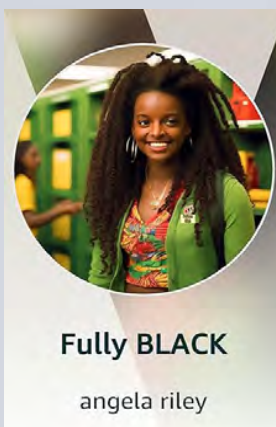
Love is natural but it ain't always easy. And Mama Tamu should know! She is a 91 year old match maker who has run “The Love X TamuTamu Agency” for FIFTY years. She has personally experienced and been a witness to all kinds of love. And, as she says, “Love is more than a notion!” Follow along as she stands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



365 Dates

Angela Riley

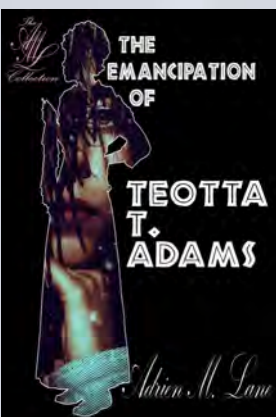
Single again, after my first divorce, one day I had a new thought: I WANT TO DATE. And... NOTHING. No one came knocking on my door to woo me. No one approached me when I was out wanting to court me. Nobody asked friends/family to be set up with me. Just crickets! So, thinking that maybe my goal was to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



Fully BLACK

Angela Riley

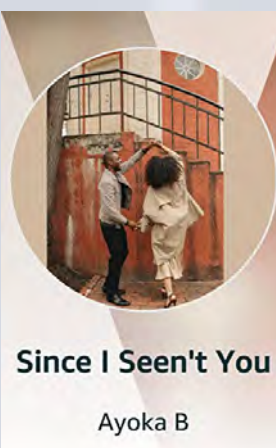
Because she is IN LOVE, talented dancer and homeschooled student Makena enrolls in the elite Fullson High to be closer to Marshall.



The Emancipation of Teotta T. Adams

Adrien M. Lane

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



Since I Seen't You

Ayoka B.

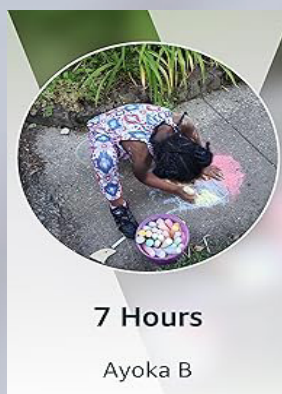
She and David met when they were 18. After a rough start, they build a friendship that would span decades: marriages, children, love and heartache. When they lose touch, she thought that she would never see him again, but she was wrong. Can men and women truly be just friends? Can their friendship withstand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



The Match

Ayoka B.

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



7 Hours

Ayoka B.

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



The Skin I'm In

Ayoka B.

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



A'DICK'tion The Back Story

MADM Precious

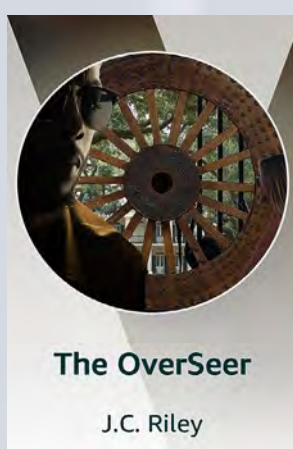
From Book 1: Sex addiction is a real thing; When Quincey finds out his wife is caught up in some things, can they save their marriage.



The Godchild Chronicles

J.C. Riley

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



The OverSeer

J.C. Riley

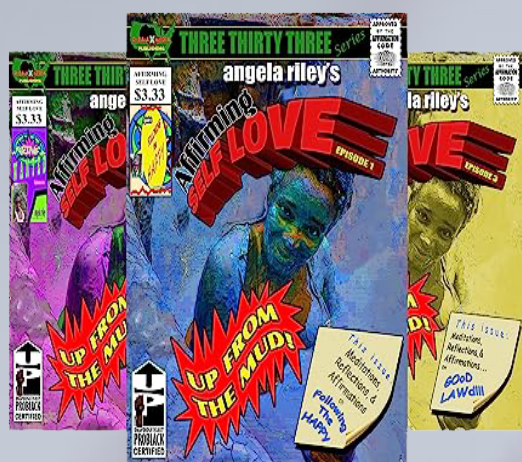
It's nice to be up high and seeing over things, right? Welcome to the world of THE OVERSEER. Strap yourself in because it's one heck of a ride!

ALSO AVAILABLE on AMAZON and OTHER PLATFORMS!

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

READING and WRITING in the **DARIK**

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

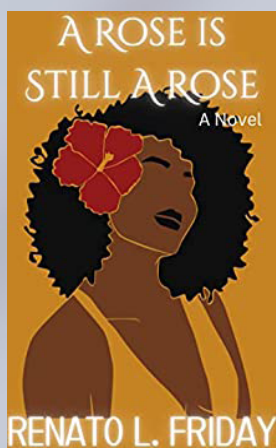


Affirming Self Love (Graphic Non-Fiction SERIES)

angela riley

SelfLOVE Meditation, Reflections, & AFFIRMATIONS Series...

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



A Rose is Still a Rose

Renato L. Friday

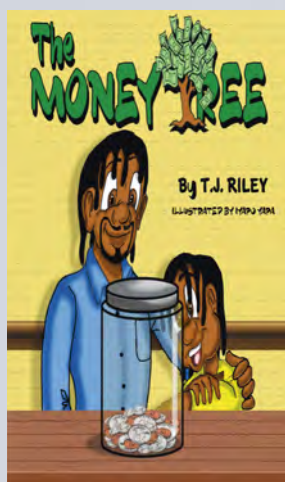
Rose thought life was going great: she was engaged, had a beautiful set of twin girls, a recent trade school graduate, and a new job right around the corner. Unfortunately, her fiancé, David, turned out to not be what she needed, and she chose to break things off. In the midst of her failing relationship,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



Longing for the Night

Ms. KJ

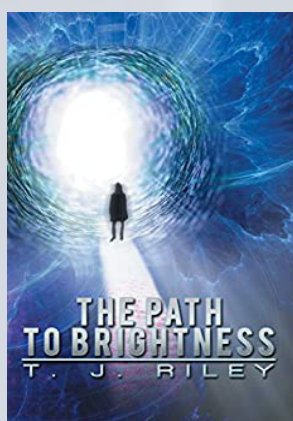
Inspired by the poem Goblin Market by Christina Rossetti, two young sisters face the trials and tribulations of the hood in this coming-of-age story about the harshness of living in South Central Los Angeles.



The Money Tree

T.J. Riley / Illustrated by Iyapo Yapa

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



THE PATH to BRIGHTNESS

T.J. Riley

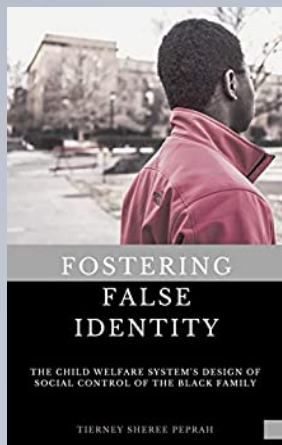
Fatima, a young woman, has a near-death experience. When she awakes from a coma and recovers, she has mystical powers. She begins to see auras and experiences life with her new abilities. For the clever character, Fatima, life is about to dramatically change. Follow Fatima’s journey as she tries to convince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



LOVING BETRAYAL

MADM Precious

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



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.



READING and WRITING in the
DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors



YSBOOKS



Unlock All My
AudioBooks
For the low price of a cup of coffee



READING and WRITING in the

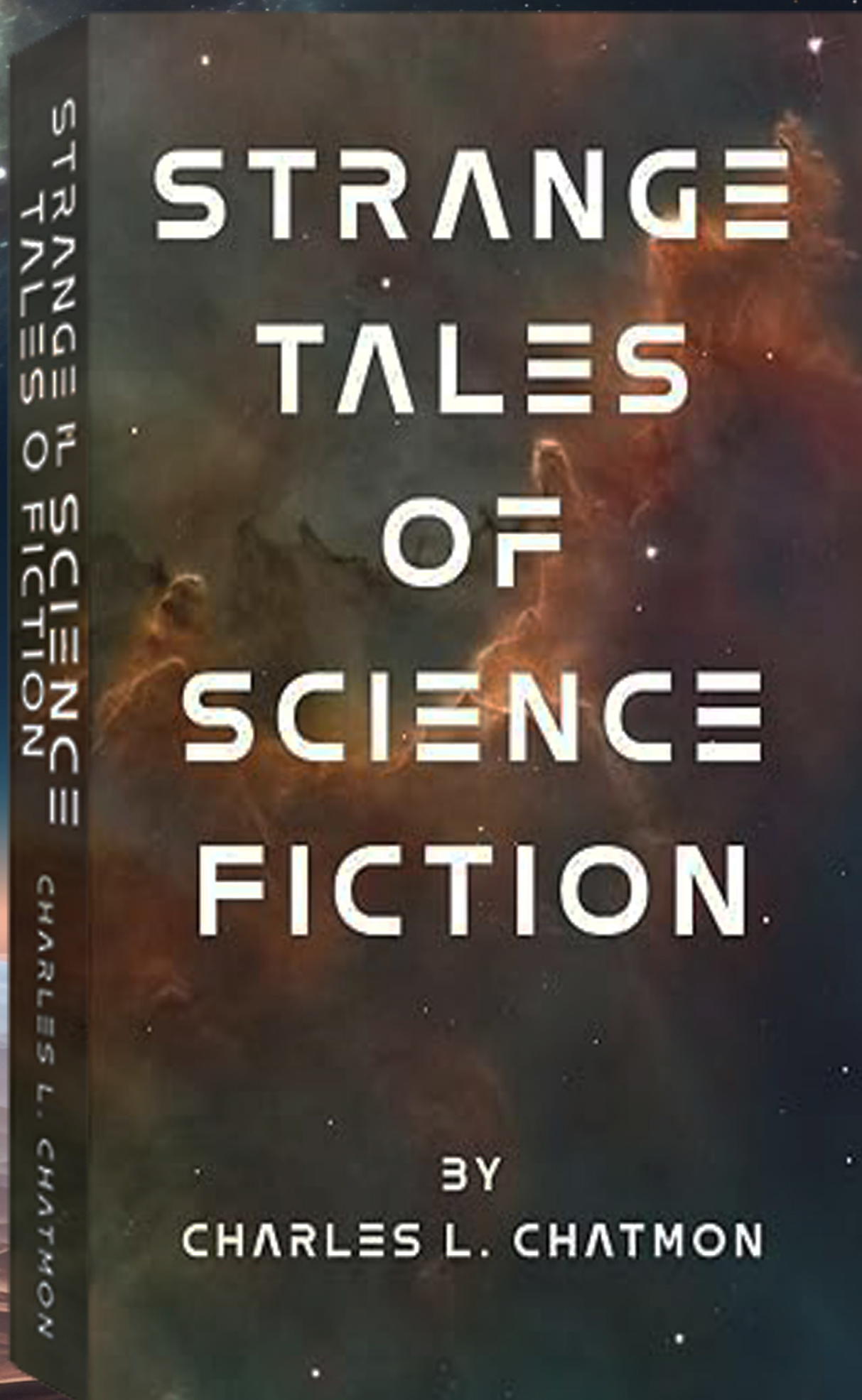
DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

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?

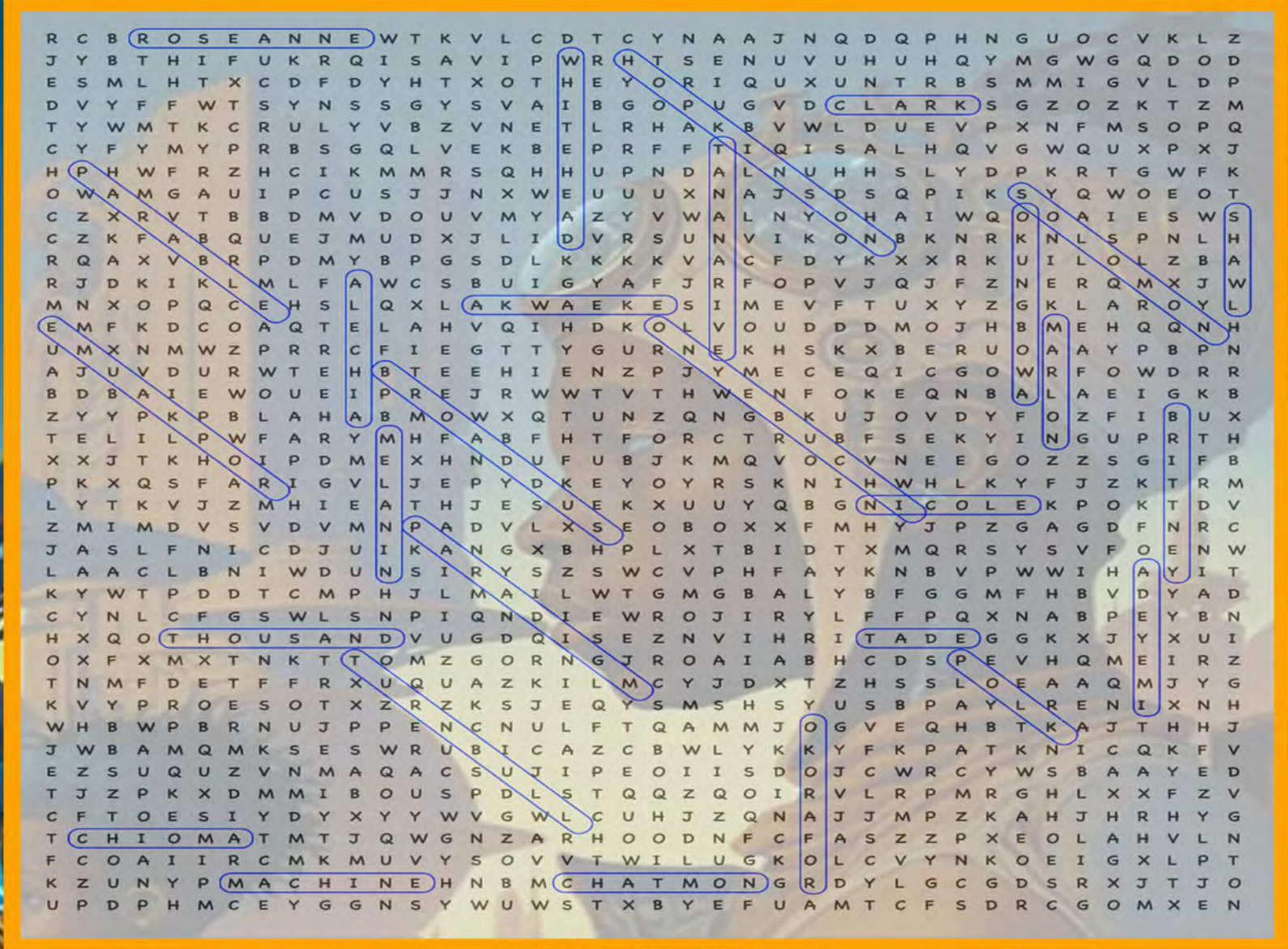


CLICK ON THE BOOK ABOVE TO PURCHASE ON AMAZON!

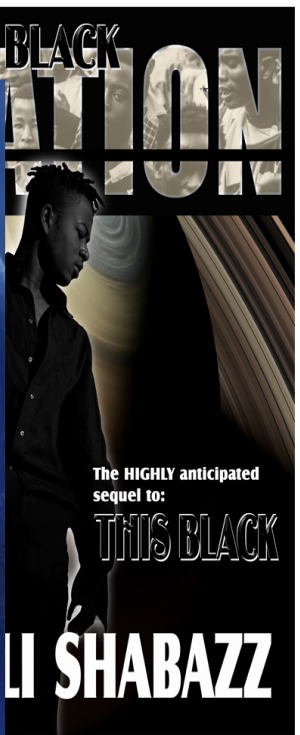
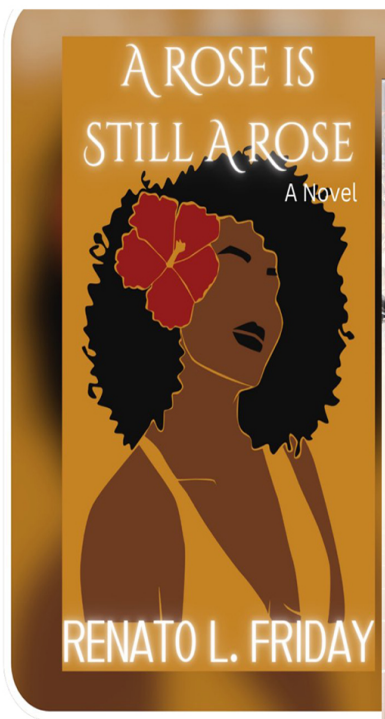
READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors



**WE ARE THE PAST
 WE ARE THE PRESENT
 WE ARE THE FUTURE
 THIS MONTH WE CELEBRATE
 BLACK SCIFI / FANTASY AUTHORS**



READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

Tales of the MONKEY'S PAW



NOT EVERY WISH GRANTED MAKES DREAMS COME TRUE

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR!



Keepin' it a BUCK *Series*

SHORT STORIES of HORROR and SUSPENSE



BE SURE TO VISIT IYAPO YAPA ON THESE OTHER PLATFORMS!

Heaven Mississippi

A NOVEL



Coming Soon!