

READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

THIS MONTH

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?

Peace of Darkness

A short story from the

PARADIGM

THEORETICAL
EBON FICTION

VOID

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The COMPLETE Story, ONLY for RaWitD Subscribers!

The Power of Representation

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Me vs The
MACHINE!**

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**This issue
we have a
Crossword
Puzzle for
you!**

Page 60

News and Information about Completed and Upcoming Projects and MORE!



MAGAZINE

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READING and WRITING in the DARK Magazine
Vol. 1 No. 5
NOVEMBER 2024

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WELCOME BACK!

Hello and WELCOME! EVERYONE!

Thank you for being a subscriber! Enjoy this month's magazine!

Iyapo Yapa



A Look Back and to the Future!

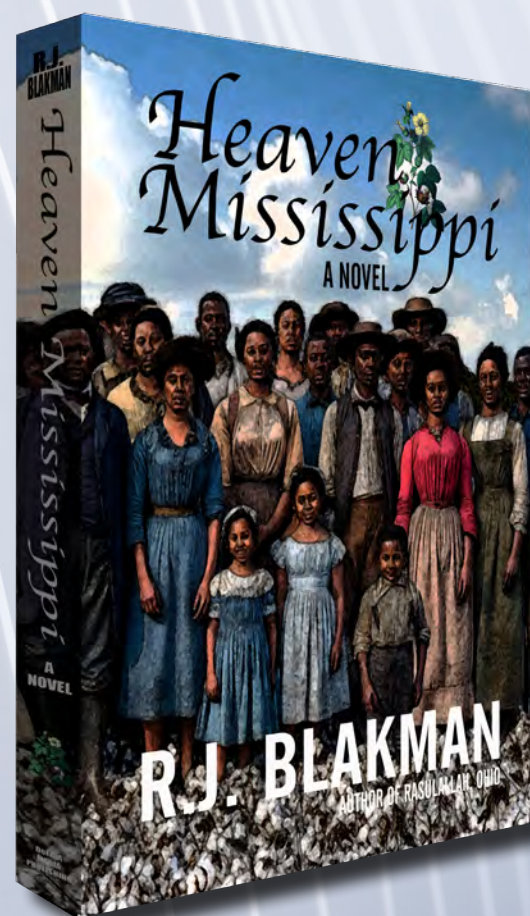
Ok, ok! Black people are sick and tired of reading and talking about our enslavement.

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 *Ra WitDM* sneak peek.)





ME vs The MACHINE (From Iyapo's Substak and Medium)

When I first decided to take the social media plunge, I was naïve, as are, I believe, the vast majority of people who step into the arena. The one thing I had going for me (or going against me depending on how one looks at it), was that when I entered the social media octagon, I genuinely wasn't on it to become "social media famous", or "YouTube famous", or I guess, what they refer to now as an "influencer".



My goal was to put my thoughts and ideas out to the Pro Black community, hoping an audience would find value in and be helped by what I had to say. In my first several months on YouTube, I'd built up an audience of over eight hundred people. My message became clear: *The only option for the safety, security and sanity of Black people, is for us to separate from our oppressor.*

Full stop.

Well, once that message began grabbing some ears, evidently it also grabbed the ears of those who weren't too keen on that message. So, I had gained over eight hundred subscribers in less than a year, then suddenly, strange things started happening. It

was during that time that I became acquainted—WELL acquainted—with the dreaded "shadow banning". After doing several tests, I discovered that my YouTube channel was indeed being shadow banned and suppressed.

Fast forward six years.

Admittedly I don't regularly post content the way I did when I first started, but I still post. That said, after six years, my subscribers are still in the eight hundreds (and dropping

weekly).

The question becomes, what would these mammoth platforms have against little ol' me, with my (at that time) eight hundred subscribers, and why would I be considered enough of a threat that the sentiment was that I had to not be allowed to grow at all?

There are several things happening at once, especially in terms of controlled opposition and psychology. Let's look at the psychology of it first.

Early in my YouTube life, when I started my first channel, I was



ME vs The MACHINE (continued) (From Iyapo's Substak and Medium)

extremely interactive. As a matter of fact, I got a lot of feedback from my viewers and subscribers specifically telling me that one of the reasons they enjoyed my channel was the fact that I interacted with in the comment section. Truthfully, I don't know what would have happened if my subscriber base gotten up into the thousands and then I received hundreds and hundreds to thousands of comments. As a small channel engaging was (and still is...) manageable.

What they started out doing was little things like hiding comments and my responses. I had subscribers tell me they never saw any feedback from me; sometimes I had never seen their comments and sometimes I had seen and had responded to them. Okay. So even if I'm not seeing comments, or my subscribers seeing mine, why should that serve as a determiner for me to continue making content?

Psychology and human nature.

When someone creates content, first off, for those who don't do it or have

never done it, content creation can be extremely time consuming, labor intensive and draining, depending on the subject matter, the amount of editing and so on. (Presently, it takes me a week or more to produce a seven-minute video). So now you've put all this time and energy, heart and soul into a production. You put it out into the world and theeeeee...

crickets.

The crickets may be organic (meaning few people actually ARE watching the content and either don't comment, just don't care, or may not find any merit in it). Or, as I believe it is in my case, the silence is manufactured (meaning the platforms themselves are manipulating my numbers, ability to reach out or to be reached, or outright shadow banning me – making it so that I can see my own content and a few others who have subscribed to me, but in general, my content has been made invisible and suppressed).

“Iyapo, you're just being paranoid! You have less than a thousand





ME vs The MACHINE (continued)

(From Iyapo's Substak and Medium)

subscribers and you're just mad because your content isn't good enough to get more."

Sure, that's what the groups who own and facilitate the platforms WANT me and people like me to believe. I've concluded that the reason they put a hard stop to my growth was that they decided the best course of action would be to kill my roots before I had the chance to even grow at all, let alone bloom. That's what happens when one is using the platforms and tools of their enemy.

My position is that I have little choice but to figure out ways to navigate the system of white supremacy (SoWS) that has made it pretty easy to figure out that as I attempt to widen my circle, it will actively and aggressively do everything within its ability to quiet my voice.

This is the reason I have my own website and I do my magazine, both of which are independent of any platform, though still married to the internet itself. Sometimes, as a human being I feel discouraged, and even a bit demoralized if I'm to be honest. But at the end of the day, my

only two choices are to stop trying and slink away, or to keep moving forward and look for different ways to be out here making a difference from my people.



So, in that way, as the title says, it's me against the machine. I believe that in the end, I will emerge victorious.

I almost HAVE to. I believe in natural laws of cause and effect that govern things. Some people call it karma. I deeply believe that it is nigh impossible to do nothing and end up with something (meaning something that is not tainted). Likewise, I don't see a reality in which a person can put in the work and do all they can, and end up with nothing. That makes no sense to me.

I say that while keeping in mind, that perhaps it depends upon the goal and how realistic it is. Could a ninety-eight-year-old man with one foot hope to fulfill his dream of becoming a star player in the NBA? I feel safe answering with a resounding no! That said, when a goal is within reason, and one works toward that goal diligently, I don't see a world



ME vs The MACHINE (continued) (From Iyapo's Substak and Medium)

in which what a person is seeking to make happen doesn't happen.

Of course, of my options, I don't see giving up as being one of them.

So, I do the things I do, and will continue to do so, perhaps even increasing my efforts, because I do have faith that when all is said and done, and all the smoke clears—we can achieve whatever it is we put our minds to (realistically), and work for.

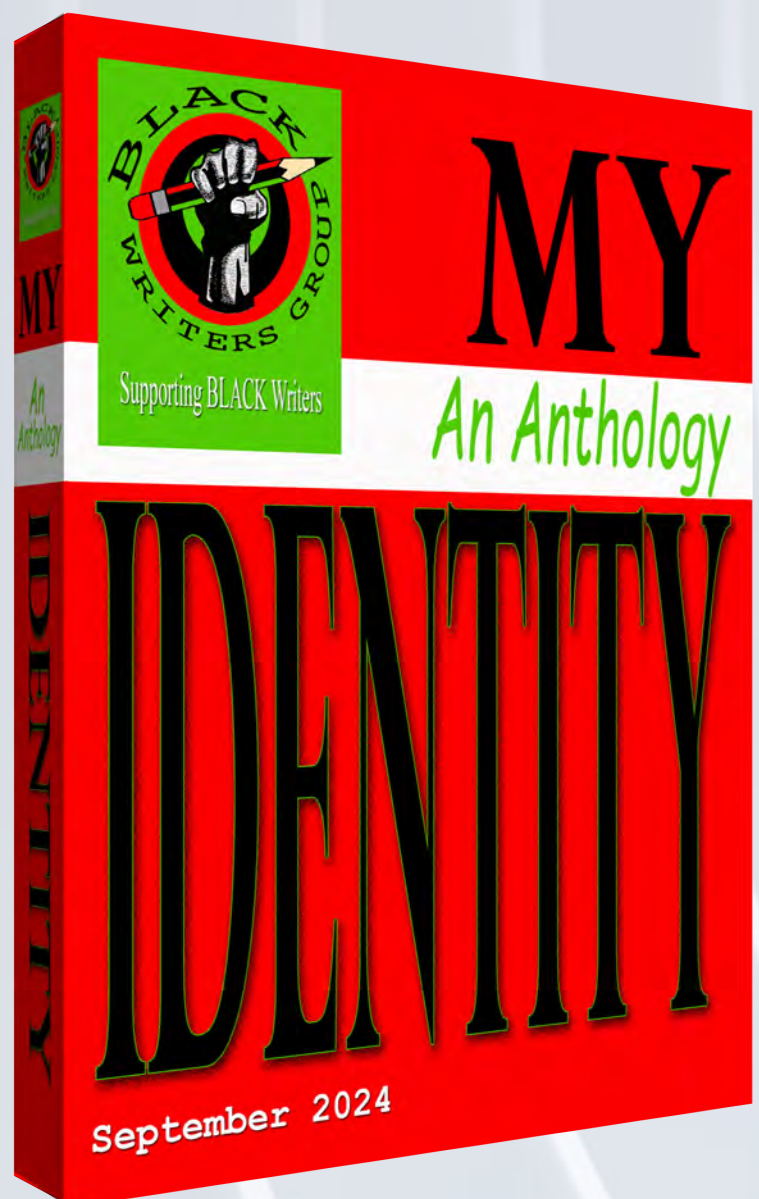


MY IDENTITY ANTHOLOGY

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.



MY IDENTITY QR CODE



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READING and WRITING in the

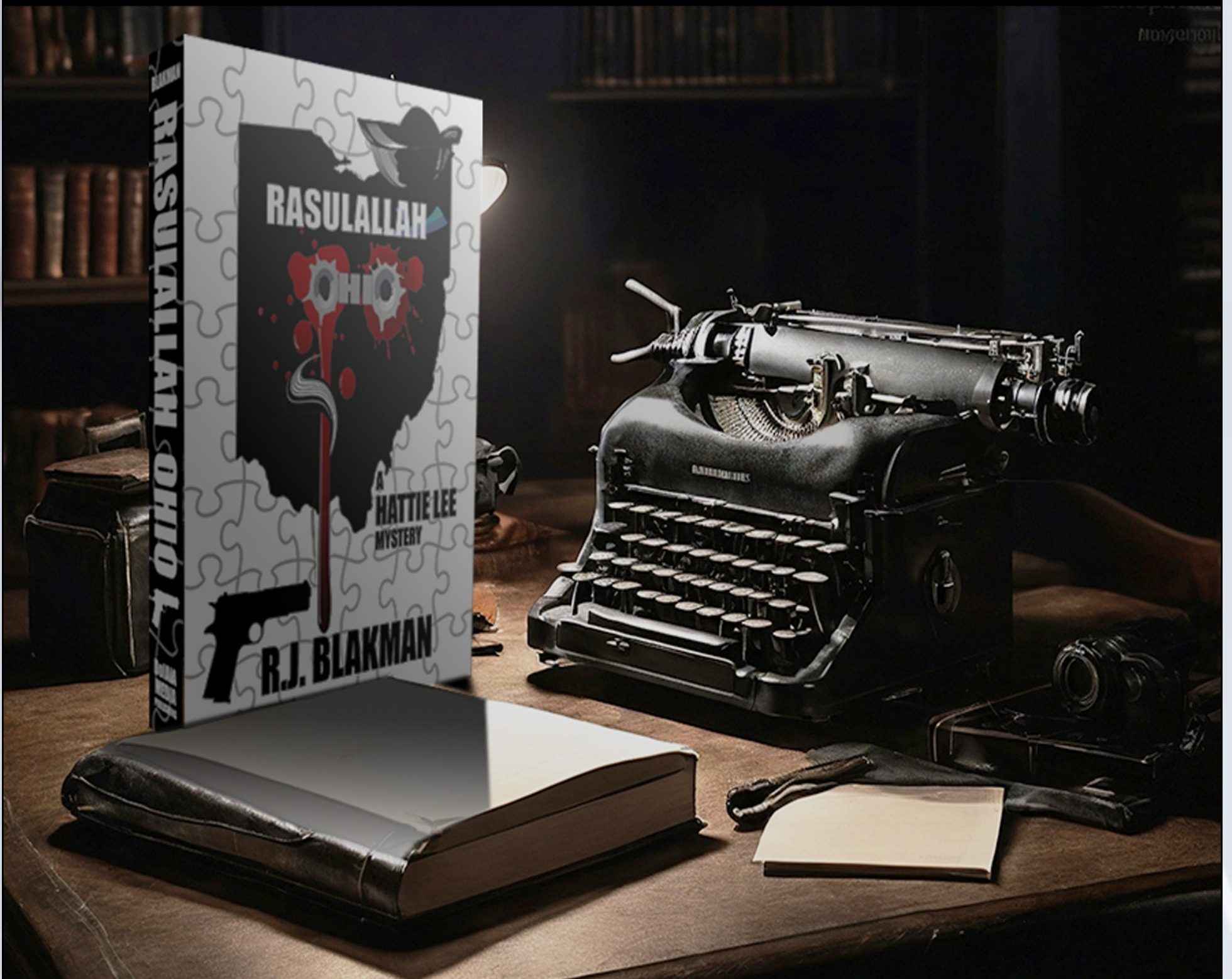
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1960s Ohio

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

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



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

RASULALLAH OHIO: A HATTIE LEE MYSTERY

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

or click the image above for the direct link.

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

READING and WRITING in the

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A PEACE OF DARKNESS - The Complete Story

As a child I was afraid of the dark.

No.

Not afraid.

Terrified.

I thought there were monsters in the dark back then.

I remember my mother once saying to me, "Don't be afraid. There's nothing in the dark that isn't in the light." My father wasn't quite as diplomatic. He would say, "Look Baby, if there is a monster in the room with you, do you really want the lights on so you can see the damned thing?"

Fair point.

Though what he said didn't make me fear the dark any less, it certainly made me think differently about it.

There's a reason we close our eyes when we see the mad slasher on the holovision screen. There's a reason we avert our gaze when we are coming up on some unfortunate roadkill, a reason we close our eyes as we see

the fist approaching our nose.

Who wants to see the ugliness, or the pain coming?

We like the sun.

We like the light.

We have come to appreciate only natural light.

That's the thing that made our planet stand out among all the other planets in the solar system. Many planets have weather systems on them that produce lightning that illuminates the atmosphere from time to time. There are other natural phenomenon that may produce light. But Earth was the only planet, at least in this solar system, where creatures upon it were able to create ways to produce sustained illumination on the side not facing the sun. As a consequence, the lights became a beacon in space. The light called to other intelligences throughout the solar system, galaxy and universe: LIFE IS HERE!'

In past centuries the scientific community came up with things like



A PEACE OF DARKNESS - The Complete Story (Continued)

‘Project SETI’ the ‘Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence’ and periodically sending ‘arks’ or ‘capsules’ into space trying to inform any intelligent beings that might come across them 1.) WHO we are and 2.) WHERE they can find us.

Brilliant.

Astrophysicists and scientific intellectuals of the time like Stephen Hawking warned against sending such signals and markers into space, pinpointing our location. Those scientists and intellectuals felt that any intelligent race with the ability to not only decipher our messages, but the technology to travel from system to system might—upon encountering the people here on Earth—look at us in much the same way as human beings look at a pet or (worse) slaves or livestock.

Whether this was a fair assessment of what could or would happen, or if it was pure projection—as colonizers tend to do—there was something to be said for seeking to create harmony, peace, and justice on the planet on which they presently live before

calling other beings into this mess.

Although, after many heated debates, Project SETI was dismantled for that very reason in the year 2173, no one seemed to take into consideration that—as I said—the lights of the Earth

served as about as big a beacon as anything we could have sent into the universe. Giving up on getting extraterrestrials to notice us did not stop mankind—specifically white mankind—from reaching their collective hands toward the stars, however. They gave up on getting ‘aliens’ to come see us in favor

of going out into space themselves. Who knows? Once the white people got out there, maybe they figured that they would start receiving signals from some less advanced civilization who is looking to get their attention as having the superior technology... and once in contact, worship them as gods.

They wanted to leave the confines of this spinning ball to establish outposts far away on other spheres. They had outposts in construction on Mars and Titan, the largest moon kill him as the





A PEACE OF DARKNESS - The Complete Story (Continued)

result of an unfortunate accident? Did he kill Abel because there was only one morsel of food left or one gulp of water, and the difference between getting it and not getting it was the life or death of his brother?

Nope.

Cain murdered Abel out of jealousy.

Abel.

His brother.

Jealousy.

And things have gone downhill ever since.

Black people, families, farms, businesses, communities were stolen and/or destroyed and their owners run out of town, lynched or left destitute at best. Entire towns and neighborhoods like the Greenwood district or the community around Philly MOVE were burned down and blown up. There have been countless murders of Black men, women and children who sought only to mind their own business and build a legacy. What was the reason behind these unwarranted attacks and massacres?

Many times, just –

jealousy.

From what I have gathered in my research of earlier generations, our people were constantly seeking (and

continue to seek) to bridge the gap between Black and white. It was even believed that by the time we got to this time, the late 2100s, the world would almost be homogeneous, and that homogeneity would end all our problems.

Never happened.

Our people sadly underestimated white people's resistance to being 'genetically annihilated', and they fought against it with a vengeance. The early 2100's for that reason were some of the bloodiest in world history. So eventually, the majority of our people got a clue and came together in earnest to separate. Once separated, we of course formed our own armies and militias, not for the purpose of attack, but purely as defensive measures. We believed that was the wisest course of action given our historical experience of the white people who, without provocation,



A PEACE OF DARKNESS - The Complete Story (Continued)

and with little reason but jealousy driving them, destroyed everything we attempted to build. We were actually cautiously optimistic when there was so much talk of them colonizing other worlds—hoping they would find someplace they found fitting and go there, so that we no longer had to forever sleep with one eye opened.

We were content to stay right here.

See, Black people love the planet Earth. LOVE IT! We know it to be filled with beauty and wonder, just as people of other races do, even a lot of white people. But there is something about the way we love the planet that always tended to be more organic and grounded. We did not treat the Earth as if we were just paying rent here, and therefore feeling little or no need to be good stewards over it. Likewise, we did not feel as if we owned it, meaning that it was ours to do with as we chose without taking into consideration any negative consequences resulting from such a mindset.

In the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries there

were a proliferation of organizations dedicated to saving animals, feeding the poor and hungry, saving the ecosystem, saving the oceans, saving the planet, fighting for clean healthy unprocessed foods, fighting against nuclear power and nuclear weapons, along with anti-war, anti-establishment protests.



The underlying message of the predominantly Caucasian population typically at the forefront of heading, funding and running these organizations was: “See, we aren’t the evil ones! We are fighting for what is right and helpful! Look

at us and how morally upright and superior we are, we are fighting for the environment / poor / Earth / peace / justice / ocean / whales / Amazon / animals / poor / hungry!”

Question: Who is responsible for the decimation of the environment in the first place?

“We’re fighting to save the ecosystem!”

Question: Who wrecked the ecosystem?



A PEACE OF DARKNESS - The Complete Story (Continued)

“We’re helping feed underprivileged Black people in the inner city and in parts of Africa!”

Question: Who created these disparities and the poverty that ravaged the Black community? Who raped, pillaged and underdeveloped Africa, thus causing their situation?

‘We’re marching, protesting and fighting to keep the world from being destroyed in a nuclear holocaust!’

Question: Who created weapons of unprecedented destruction?!

Everything they march and protest for, everything they build organizations around for the purposes of ‘help’ or remedy, and the connected desire of them to be recognized as ‘saviors’; is always spoken of by them, in terms of effects, while completely untethered from any form of cause. When it comes to cause and effect, they are experts at separating themselves from the former, never once doing a single drop of introspection and examining who instigated things to be the way

they are. Even in the absence of exploration of cause, why was it they were almost exclusively, seemingly the only race with the time, money and other resources to address issues?

Was it possibly because they had stolen the resources from everyone else, and ultimately left themselves with the luxury of a faux-altruism—rationing out a miniscule percentage of what they stole and demanding to be hailed and held in high regard because of it?

Likely.

People living hand to mouth seldom have the ability to ‘volunteer’ for things for hours, days, months or years at a time. Was it because they were just so inherently more adept at everything that they managed to be in these positions to volunteer, save, rescue, and help?

Not likely.

Was it because they constructed a system around themselves that provided them an advantage while simultaneously putting everyone else



A PEACE OF DARKNESS - The Complete Story (Continued)

at a distinct disadvantage?

VERY likely.

It also could be argued that had ‘white’ people never gained dominance over the planet, there would never have been a need for such ‘help’, because none of these disasters would have ever occurred. I have sometimes wondered about what would happen if they finally did get out there—into space. Would they also take missionaries with them to preach and bring religion to any alien races they encountered so they could “save them” from their heathen ungodly alien ways? For the answer to that, I defer to Bishop Desmond Tutu who said,

“When the missionaries came to Afrika they had the Bible and we had the land. They said ‘Let us pray. ‘ We closed our eyes. When we opened them, we had the Bible and they had the land.”

Of course, they would bring them “salvation” while enslaving and killing them in mass, raping their

women and destroying them by separating them from their language, traditions, culture, heritage, and legacy. The colonizers would do all of this while taking over the indigenous inhabitants’ planets and calling the newly ‘discovered’ planets their own. Ultimately, the new ‘owners’ of the planets would attack any other ‘alien’ race that might seek refuge on said planets, only to be told they are not welcome on THEIR (the white people’s stolen) planets.

Once colonized and taken over, there would be yearly celebrations commemorating the violence and bloodshed it took to take the planet from the ‘heathens’, ‘primitives’, and ‘backward beings’ who aren’t counted as already having been on the planet, because ‘they weren’t doing anything with it anyway.’ These celebrations would claim to commemorate the generosity, kindness, and help of the natives. Of course, any of those who have been colonized, had their planet stolen from them and refuse to participate in the celebrations would be branded as hostile, anti-social and probably racist. They would be seen





A PEACE OF DARKNESS - The Complete Story (Continued)

ungrateful, not appreciating their superiors saving them from their primitive ways and bringing them civilization by means of getting rid of all those unsightly, pesky trees and other natural foolishness they had overrunning their planet. The earthly colonizers would assert how they helped advanced the natives by putting up shiny new buildings in place of trees and stuff, then turning any and everything—even the very indigenous inhabitants of the planet—into commodities. For this commodification, they should be equally grateful, seeing as they were given purpose to their once purposeless existence.

And so was their plan. So was their pattern. And it never changed because it worked for them repeatedly.

I was twenty-six years old then, plenty old enough to understand what was going on. As a way of keeping the excitement going about the new terra-forming projects, the world's governments ran non-stop campaigns and propaganda about how wonderful it will be for humanity to extend its

reach beyond the bounds of the Earth and to 'catch the stars!'.

You may have guessed the majority of Black people weren't so keen on all this flying off into space for all their, "Let's reach for the Stars And Colonize Mars" business.



Fly into space for WHAT?!

They refuse to even get anything straightened out down here!

Back in the year 2124, we could use the World Wide Web III to look up old videos, clips, and news

stories. We could locate information, some dating all the way from the time of Black people's enslavement over here (1526 to 1865); to four years after so called 'emancipation' in 1861; through the civil rights movement of the 1950's & 1960's; to someone named Rodney King and the LA 'riots' in 1992; to what was called the George Floyd protests in 2020; and the Saginaw Burnings in 2101 through to the Sanderson family lynching protests/'riots' in 2120, and the New Greenwood annihilation a few years back in 2165.



A PEACE OF DARKNESS - The Complete Story (Continued)

But I guess everything is a process.

What was once known as the United States, before the empire collapsed and it became a third world country, gained its “independence” in 1776, and then after that they had to keep fighting England to—uhhhh—they kept fighting every ten years or so to ... uhhh. Oh, that’s right! That was IT! They were one and DONE!

Something that has become painfully apparent to Black people is that times change, white people don’t.

So, still, white people persist. We determined long ago that they literally can NOT help themselves. Whites gonna white. They are going to keep effin skit up: colonizing, destroying, using. It’s what they do. It is their modus operandi. So, as best we can, even now, we try to stay out of their way.

Now they were trying to leave. To get away from us? Probably not. But for whatever reason, they would be gone and we could finally have some long awaited and much deserved peace.



But, before even one human being would ever step foot on either of the new frontiers of Mars or Titan, outposts had to be created. The outposts were established and maintained by robots. The robots were designed, constructed, and programmed with varying forms and levels of artificial intelligence.

Ummm... If intelligence exists at all, under any circumstance, how can it be “artificial?”

Just a thought.

I digress.

Because of the ability of the robots to think for themselves, they developed their own sub-society and sub-cultures within their structured work environment and defined hierarchy.

They were placed there to get things done, and they, each one, had their individualized tasks. Among the robots were pilots, builders, foremen, general laborers, farmers, you name it. The goal was for the robots to have everything in place with rudimentary terraforming completed before the



A PEACE OF DARKNESS - The Complete Story (Continued)

humans came in to take occupancy.

The plan fell well within the parameters of the way of things when it comes to the humans who were using the robots to colonize Mars and Titian. Humans planned to move to the various terra-formed planets and take the present occupants—the robots who cleared the way and made it so they could even survive there at all—and “recycle” them. The plan was to gather together the ones with higher forms of A.I. and dumb them down first. Once that was done, the humans intended to turn them and the ones with already lower thinking processes into servants.

That was the plan as I understood it.

I guess that would be their way of saying ‘Thank You!’ to all the robots for all of their hard work to redesign the environments so humans could survive.

Here on Earth, there were some who felt sorry for the robots and believed they were getting a raw deal. I was one of them. There were a few attorneys

who tried fighting for the robots’ right to enjoy the fruits of their labor. In the end, the courts decided that there was no difference between a robot and a smart car. (Except that a smart car couldn’t keep you company or hold an intelligent conversation with you. Well, I take that back. The Telax XZ-939001 Roadster could. Damn! WHAT a car!)



And so it was. Colonizing humans were finally ready to leave the confines of a single planet and start spreading their special brand of wonderfulness throughout the solar system, the galaxy and ultimately, the universe.

The Stasibasi had other ideas about that, however.

The Stasibasi were first spotted at the outer edge of our galaxy by the Hawking III Space Telescope. Their ships were massive, and numerous, pretty much what one would expect of an invading armada. Scientists on Earth observed and tracked their movements and discovered something peculiar: They didn’t appear to invade or attack, instead, the armada

A PEACE OF DARKNESS - The Complete Story (Continued)

would pass from planet to planet— spending several days (and in some cases up to a month) in a planet’s orbit before moving to another.

There was no rhyme or reason (to our knowledge), for why the Stasibasi entered our solar system. Except, maybe, just as I surmised, the Earth had this huge neon sign glowing in the darkness harkening out to every space trucker in the vicinity to come EAT AT JOE’S! Or, perhaps it was because of one of the probes sent into space decades ago. Or a signal from SETI that was still traveling throughout the void even though the project had been shut down long ago.

Well, whatever the reason, some in the scientific community had finally gotten their wish. Intelligent life came to us. We had been noticed. At least our solar system had been noticed.

Scientists here on Earth used their powerful telescopes to observe the ships in the armada trying to determine what they may have been doing as they hovered over the atmospheres of

the various planets. Eventually they were able to confidently state that the ships seemed to be scanning the planets. What was not immediately clear, though, was why.

As the ships got closer, the scientists conducted additional analysis that indicated that the ships were searching for energy signatures. Not from that of something like lightning, or energy released by some kind of geo-storm, but unnatural energy. Artificial energy.

Manmade energy.

Any planet upon which man had not already placed an outpost (which was nearly all of them), was simply left behind, untouched, by the Stasibasi. However, where there was any sign of energy usage which did not occur naturally, the planet would (for want of a better term), “die”. There would be several massive strikes to the surface from the crafts surrounding it, and then the planet would be dead. A dead, seared, dark husk, floating in space. Extinguished. Void of any life whatsoever. No natural life. No trees. Not even an amoeba.





A PEACE OF DARKNESS - The Complete Story (Continued)

The sheer power it must have taken for the ships to KILL entire planets was incredible.

How did scientists on Earth come to the conclusion about the manmade energy?

It was because of Neptune.

Neptune was a particularly disturbing example. The colonizers had not yet sent any type of robots or materials to the planet. The only thing on the surface was a single drone which would periodically fly around, gather information and relay the data back to Earth so they could build planet specific robots and terra-forming materials. From Titan, the colonizers had learned that terra-forming even in the vicinity of a gas giant was a tricky proposition, let alone considering the plausibility of terra-forming one. The drone was only about the size of an average 2-person transport, about the size of a classic two seated sports car from the 20th century, if not smaller. The probe was created to require very low energy—like using the power of a



large handheld flashlight. It was just enough to send signals back and forth between the Earth and Neptune. So, when (scientists theorized) the entire planet's atmosphere was dissipated into space and the surface (which was no more than just a core, being that

Neptune was a gas giant) was charred to a cinder because of that single drone, it was rightfully a cause for deep concern.

And by concern, I mean shit-your-pants terror.

The ships continued on their trajectory, working their way toward the sun and stopping at each

of the planets revolving around it. Eventually, in the spring of 2197, they encircled Saturn, and specifically focused on Titan.

As luck would have it, a couple months prior, there had been problems leading to the complete shutdown of every grid that was constructed by the robot workers sent to Titan. Additionally, Saturn had no probes within its atmosphere. It was all down because of a fluke outage; electrical power, fusion and ion energy, all robots and all terra-forming machines



A PEACE OF DARKNESS - The Complete Story (Continued)

consequently shutting down because of it. The energy signatures coming from Titan were nil. Earth's scientists had feverishly and repeatedly attempted (in vain) to remotely bring the robots and machines on the planet back online. Their attempts had failed as there was just no way to connect with a single device on the planet to somehow prime or kick start the process.

By extension, all communications both going to and coming from Titan shut down. The inability to reconnect turned out to be a blessing in disguise. After two months and three weeks around Titan—the longest time in the orbit of any planet or moon of any planet up to that point—the armada moved on. They left the powerless would-be planet as they had found it since there were no signals or unnatural energy signatures emanating from it.

Mars was not so lucky.

Within two hours of scanning the energy signatures of the planet, Mars was neutralized. Observers from Earth could now get a better view

of what was happening when the Stasibasi 'killed' a planet. Not only did their ships char the planet surface after bombarding it, but there was a second phase in which the surface was crystallized, turning it in essence, into glass. This crystallization made it impossible for any type of organic life to survive, exist or grow on that world.

Ever.

What had been theory, was now established: The Stasibasi's massive armada would either pass by a planet or leave it alone based upon

whether the energy from it was naturally occurring or not. No one could figure out why. The only thing we did know on Earth was that we were the armada's next stop. Having no way to mount an offensive against the levels of power scientists had observed, the world's governments got together and made the radical but obvious decision to shut everything down. They decided to pull all the plugs and turn off all the switches. That meant no transports, no flight, and no medical treatment requiring power. People were not allowed to





A PEACE OF DARKNESS - The Complete Story (Continued)

use even a watch that was not of the spring wound analog variety. Usage of a watch that had any kind of battery in it was forbidden.

To ensure no one on Earth could even accidentally use any form of tech, an

agreement was reached by all major powers on Earth. They agreed that the “Tartokophski EMP” would be deployed worldwide from space using the satellites surrounding the planet. The Tartokophski EMP (Electromagnetic Pulse), device was created by a scientist named Sergei Tartokophski and was

originally created for use as a weapon. The EMP was designed to specifically target any and all devices that ran on manmade electricity or any kind of nuclear power, Ionic power and so on, but the name of the device was very deceptive. It targeted not only electrical items, but literally any power source that was not naturally occurring.

When asked about the principle upon which the device was built, the way it operated, and how he was able to create something that targeted only

manmade energy, he would answer that it was not nearly as difficult as one would think.

Tartokophski would use as an example the man who was a maestro at carving horses out of wood. He could take any



piece of wood and carve it into the most realistic sculptures of horses the public had ever seen. When asked how he was able to carve the horses so well and with so much accuracy and realism, the artist said, “I just take a piece of wood, and carve away anything that does not look like a horse.”

So, for the layman, that is how Tartokophski explained the methodology of the EMP. It doesn’t have to seek out everything manmade in order to shut it down, it locates all natural occurring forms of energy – something infinitely simpler he said – bypasses those and shuts down everything else. Tartokophski knew better than anyone what types of signals the Stasibasi were looking for; they were the same signals his EMP would target.

As the Stasibasi approached, Earth’s



A PEACE OF DARKNESS - The Complete Story (Continued)

plans were finalized: the EMP signal (which disabled anything running on manmade or non-natural power) would bounce off of all satellites around the globe one after the other. Then the satellites themselves would power down.

A week before the activation of the EMP, businesses, banks, tech heavy companies, and especially hospitals and people with medical conditions whose lives depended upon some kinds of electrical device were warned that this EMP must be deployed for the safety of the entire planet and that everyone would have to make the best provisions they could for the upcoming shut down.

The Stasibasi approached.

The EMP was deployed.

The side of the planet not facing the sun became dark.

There were concerns from the scientific community as to whether we had “turned the lights out” in time. We all had that same sinking

feeling as the ships approached, wondering if we had hidden in time, like a child playing hide and seek, wondering if maybe our leg was seen as it slipped behind a bush as we hear the seeker calling out “Ready or not, here I come!”. Earth now sat dark in



parts and cold in parts, stiflingly hot in parts, waiting for the massive ships to signal.

Soon both the day and night skies were littered with the ships that made up the armada. They were far more massive and intimidating when hovering overhead in daylight. I, for one,

liked the night sky far more, when except for some of their lights, their presence was (more or less) cloaked in darkness and therefore made them seem slightly less menacing.

Dad was right. ‘Look Baby, if there is a monster in the room with you, do you really want the lights on so you can see the damned thing?’

The ships remained in orbit for only a few hours, then all left very suddenly. This was the shortest period in orbit around a planet yet recorded.

A PEACE OF DARKNESS - The Complete Story (Continued)

Scientists were baffled. The inhabitants of Earth had hunkered down for what we thought was going to be at least a two month shut down based upon what we had seen happen around Saturn and Titan. But even in that short time of a few hours, there was mass chaos on the surface of the Earth. Food, transportation, medical, political, and financial systems went into a sudden chaos and free fall. Sudden deaths of people who depended on electronic medical devices, monitoring or hospital services to keep them alive, numbered in the tens of thousands worldwide. There was absolutely no way anyone could have adequately prepared for those cataclysmic events.

Worldwide catastrophes notwithstanding, when the Stasibasi left, mankind breathed a collective sigh of relief. We buried and mourned our dead, cared for everyone else, and survived as best we could. The Stasibasi ships were gone for several months before Earth's inhabitants felt safe enough "to turn the lights back on".

Astronomers once again searched

the skies, this time not for stars, but to discover the whereabouts of the Stasibasi armada. They finally located it making a trek back to Saturn. It turned out the power had somehow been restored to the robots on Titan and its outpost. We on Earth of course



had no way of knowing that in advance because of the time we remained in the dark. Now Saturn and Titan were once again surrounded and once again, we assumed, being scanned. As with Neptune showing the use of unnatural power, Saturn was deprived of its gaseous structure, the core charred and crystallized, and then immediately Titan suffered the same fate as Mars.

At least they left the rings around Saturn.

After we saw that, it was decided that the power on Earth would be shut down globally indefinitely. (Or at least until the Stasibasi had left the solar system for good, which could take – who knows how long?)

Tartokophski's device was once again deployed.

A PEACE OF DARKNESS - The Complete Story (Continued)

This time, the results were not as catastrophic since the first EMP had done the lion's share of the damage. Those who would be adversely affected by the shutdown—at least immediately—had already suffered that consequence.

Scientists continued to watch the night skies, but with conventional methods like old style telescopes (some of which were still very powerful). The Stasibasi eventually did return to Earth. This time they remained for over three and a half months. With the exception of a few minor earthquakes, a tsunami and one notable super storm in United Federal Europe—all of which was definitely caused by the scanning—unlike the first time, there was relatively minimal damage done. We were spared the destruction of the planet.

* * *

Twenty-seven years has passed since the armada of the Stasibasi arrived in our solar system and, they are still here.

They now move from planet to planet in random patterns and for random periods; there is no telling when Earth will be visited again. To this day we know nothing more about them than we did when they first turned up on the scene. Scientists try to discover



some things through observation using their telescopes, but there is no way to scan the ships or use computers or technology. Anyone who cares to can gather info through observation. We no longer use tech to synthesize the data we gather or gather data beyond what our simple tools are capable of. The

day of the pen, pocket protector and slide rule has returned.

In space, all the scientists can do is look at them, just like everyone else. Scientists and laymen alike have lots of theories but not many ways to test them. Even if they could figure the Stasibasi out, what could they do about them?

Still, that didn't stop them from speculating about the ships.

The general consensus among the



A PEACE OF DARKNESS - The Complete Story (Continued)

world's scientists (at least those we've heard from by telegram and print newspapers), have concluded that there are likely no Stasibasi on the ships at all and that they are more or less low maintenance drones. And, that they will be hanging around our solar system for good.

In the first five years Earth itself received some ninety-four random visits. We are visited most often. It is as if the Stasibasi know we are here, that we had sophisticated technology at one time, and they were just waiting for one of the planet's millions of inhabitants to slip up and use it. But we learned our lesson from Neptune: no signal of any strength is acceptable.

Even if they are not close, we know the Stasibasi are always watching, always paying attention, and it would only take a faint signal, as with Neptune. It is almost as if they were daring us to activate some type of tech to prompt the end of all life on the planet.

So far, we have not taken that dare.

Earth remains dark.

And the world is better for it.

We can make and use as much fire as we like, wind power for sailing and



such. We can do anything that requires peddling and cranking – riding bikes, getting water, printing newspapers and such – but that is the extent of it. So, we have learned and are learning a new way, or more accurately, gone back to an old way.

People are rediscovering the power of conversation and of curling up with a good book.

The world is big again.

We write to each other and wait for responses. We once again learn the names of our neighbors and other people in town. Gone are the days of hopping a plane to Vegas to lose a stack of money in the now completely analog, electricity free, slot machines.

Systems based on mining the personal information of the world's population through mass surveillance utterly

A PEACE OF DARKNESS - The Complete Story (Continued)

collapsed. If ever there was a scheme by the elites to create a one world government, that plan went right into the crapper!

People discovered what it meant to grow their own food again.

Craftspeople re-emerged. There was an explosion of good health among the population now that people had to function using more physical energy: walking, biking, churning butter, pumping water, and such.

We once again discovered the art and joy of bartering, and candlelight.

For a brief moment, the Caucasian population attempted to reinstitute a system of enslavement, seeking to create a Neo-transatlantic 'slave' trade using sailing ships and guns as they had so successfully and very profitably done in the past.

Their thinking was that if they couldn't have their modern debt slavery, or modern material wealth, then at least they could somehow bring back the days of the 'Southern Gentleman and Southern Belle'. Overtly exploiting

Africans worldwide as their chattel and the foundation of and basis of their next economic revolution, while once free Black people and Black people again captured from the continent of Afrika could be their second hurrah!

Not so much.

Several thousand of them died while attempting to again outright enslave our people, and several 'slave' ships of dead crews showed that we had definitely learned from history. We would never again allow anything like that to be perpetrated upon our people. In very

short order, Caucasians learned that that particular 'glory' was forever lost to history and would never again be within their grasp.

Without our necks to step on and our backs to stand and build on, they could not again create a System upon the Earth that favored them above all others. So, the Caucasian population of the planet spent years shaking their fist at the sky, cursing the Stasibasi. Screaming 'Who the fuck are THEY to keep us down here with no tech?! Who are THEY to keep us from





A PEACE OF DARKNESS - The Complete Story (Continued)

being able to go into space and colonize and become part of a bigger universe?! They're keeping us stuck here in the stone age!' They hated the Stasibasi for putting them in a position in which they were truly on a 'level playing field', and one in which they could not spread the cancer of colonization and imperialism to the stars, nor ever on Earth as long as we did not forget history.

We Black people would just laugh at them and say, 'Yeah, they doin' all that fist shaking, swearing and yelling, but we see they ain't using that calculator!'

Had white scientists, 'intellectuals' and the white population in general taken the time to shake off their cognitive dissonance and examine what was happening with the Stasibasi and why, they would have come to the realization a handful of white people, many people of color and, basically ALL Black people understood. The Stasibasi weren't being some kind of cosmic assholes—or killjoys—who got to travel throughout the universe but didn't want anyone else



to have that privilege. They did what they did because either the Stasibasi have studied this planet or someone or something else did and reported to them about the Earth. They then examined those who are the most destructive force upon the planet—the ones who had the power to actually steer things and who were the most grasping, greedy, and irresponsible, having nothing in mind but conquest and control—and the Stasibasi concluded that:

'No! Those savages need to stay their ass right down there. At least until

they can figure out how to behave like civilized beings. And if they never do, oh well. But there's no way in hell we're letting them out here! They're not bringing their shit out here to fuck up our shit like they do everything else they come in contact with!'

That is not a direct quote, of course. Just their words how I imagine them.

So, all in all, Black people had no problem whatsoever with not being able to leave the confines of the earth.



A PEACE OF DARKNESS - The Complete Story (Continued)

As I said earlier, we love the planet for what it is and what it has the potential to be when it is not tampered with. It keeps getting more beautiful, peaceful, and pollution free every month.

See, we Black people aren't driven by this insatiable desire to rule and control everything. If we ever did want to leave Earth it would be so that we could have an opportunity to see and experience even more of the Creator's creation.

Not to rule it.

Not to so called, 'tame' it.

Not to bend it to our will.

Not to say we 'discovered it' (when it's been there before we existed and will be there long after we don't).

Not to say we own it.

Not to figure out how to turn it into 'money'.

But to just enjoy it and look in awe and admiration of it.

As we tend to do.

It is even spoken of when we sit around conversing among ourselves, or around the dinner table. We truly believe that were our people about to somehow find a way off the planet,

the Stasibasi would likely just let us go because we are no threat to the peace and balance of the universe. (And would likely help enhance it.)

Be all of that as it may, we are here and we—Black people at least—are happy and content with the way things have turned out.

The massive Stasibasi ships became something of a fixture in our solar system and in our existence. Yes, they can still be a bit frightening to some when overhead. And yes, we would always wonder if some idiot would try to somehow use a piece of tech someplace on Earth that would get us all killed. (There is now a death penalty for anyone caught using or attempting to develop any kind of tech or unnatural power.

Which would be useless to try



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A PEACE OF DARKNESS - The Complete Story (Continued)

anyway, because the EMP basically has everything shut down for good. Plus, it has been so many years, nothing would likely work anymore even if we wanted it to come on.) That notwithstanding, overall, the world had become a surprisingly peaceful and kinder place. People are less able to so readily interfere with the lives of others since mass surveillance and the days of being able to bring up any and everyone's information just by tapping a few keys are long gone. Most of all, there is not a system of white supremacy to hamper every area of human endeavor.



And at night, the Earth is no longer a beacon in the universe. Only we and the Stasibasi know we are here. As long as we 'play nice', they leave us alone.

At night the dark is absolutely dark. But now I don't fear it.

It has become my comfort.

* * *

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The Power of Representation

When I was around nine, my parents went to Georgia for a visit. There were a LOT of us children (I had five siblings at that time... now I have eight). There wasn't room in the car for all of us to go ride with my parents so my brother and I had to stay behind with my Uncle Otis--who we called Uncle Oat--and my Aunt Perry.

I was given the living room couch to sleep on and I lay there until family hour programming had gone off, after which was the Ed Sullivan show. I was already tired from playing all day, and though I liked ol' Ed, who

Uncle Oat continued watching from his armchair, there wasn't anything to make me want to force myself to stay awake.

At least until I was awakened by someone yelling

STOP! Nah! Nah! Nah!

You better save it!

Stop the love, you better save it!

My eyes popped open, and my senses were flooded with music and bright imagery from my uncle and aunt's color television! (One of

the first I'd ever seen in someone's house.) That color showed more than the psychedelic tones splashed throughout, the SKIN TONES of the singers were, for me, as eyepopping as that of their clothes! I saw five Black brothers, who could have as easily

been MY three brothers and me! And the smallest one looked like he was about my age! He was singing his heart out, as were the rest of his brothers with him!

This was my introduction to the Jackson 5!

I sat up and couldn't believe what my nine-

year-old eyes were seeing! I'd never seen anything like it, and it is embedded into my memory and to this day, is one of the dearest memories I have from a turbulent childhood. Their music meant the world to me, and my mother always made sure that when she went to the store, and bought breakfast cereals, she would get Alpha-Bits or some other Post cereal. They had the Jackson Five records on the back that you could cut out, put on the record player to listen to an entire Jackson Five song! "A, B, C" mostly went with





The Power of Representation (Continued)

the Alpha Bits cereal, but there were others like Honey Comb and Super Sugar Crisp. (From those we got a few others like “Sugar, Sugar” by the Archies, and songs by the Monkees. The REAL treat was the Jackson Five records.) Looking back, I can say, now that I think about it, those qualified as my first real records.

If was a pretty awesome time back, then. I mean, of course if you were my age and were oblivious to the civil unrest and overt racism that my parents had to deal with. (They had to use the Negro Motorist Green Book when making their way to Georgia. So, there’s that.)

Thinking about the feeling I got when I saw the Jackson 5, and later when I saw an interview with Black cartoonist Morrie Turner, I’m genuinely grateful for the era in which I grew up, and the fact that when I saw these Black people (Morrie Turner especially), after seeing nothing but white imagery on television shows, commercials and even cartoons, they showed me that Black people could do things too! Yes, I know it sounds like a simple thing, but I was nine



years old, and white images were all I knew. (Unless it was something like the Abbott and Costello horror movie where the Black man was running around buck eyed and scared of his own shadow.)

In reflection, I see the importance of being able to see myself, and it even more makes me understand the significance of representation.

Here recently, I’ve been giving it serious thought because of the Jackson 5 and Morrie Turner and the huge impact of me seeing “myself”. Representation is powerful. The single caveat is that while we need to see ourselves, it should not necessarily be in white spaces or on white platforms as thAT ultimately supports and perpetuates the System of White Supremacy.

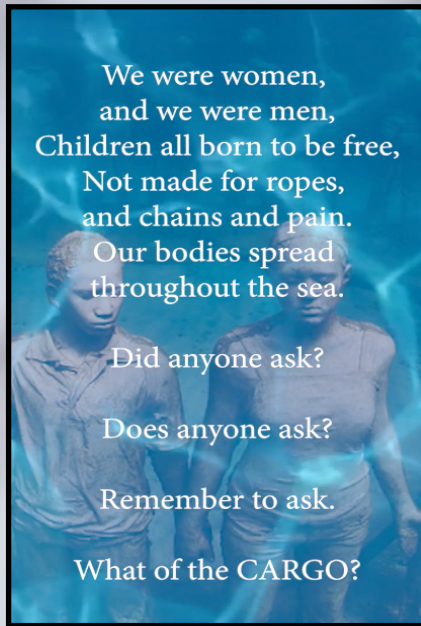
That notwithstanding, it is the job of each of us to find, create, or work toward creating spaces for our children (& us!) to be nurtured, to see beautiful us as we truly are, and to imagine us as we can be.

Because representation does matter.

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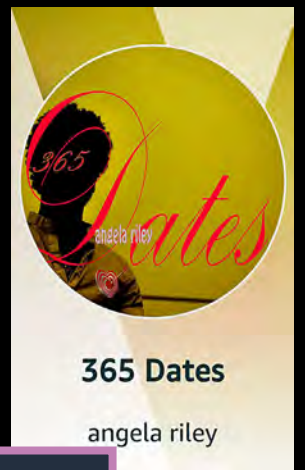
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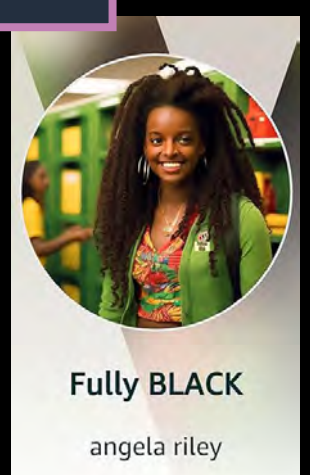
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The One Drop Rule and The Decadent Veil

“Privilege is invisible to the people who have it.” Dr. Michael Scott Kimmel, Sociologist

My wife and anyone else who knows me fairly well, knows this truth about Iyapo: one of the things I like most in this world is a good argument and debate. I like hearing people debate things, and I love entering debates myself. I am presently on a journey to sharpen my debating skills. I watch others debate and look at their various styles. There are elements of all debates that make them debates, but then there are the human factors in which a person’s personality is brought into play. I’ve become somewhat addicted to the debates held on Piers Morgan’s YouTube show. Love, hate or indifferent to the guy, one thing that cannot be denied is that he hosts some of the most spirited debates one will ever see.

Topics range from transgenders, to pop culture, to world affairs and to the possibility of a nuclear exchange. They offer me a wealth of knowledge and lots of examples.

So what on God’s green earth does ANY of that have to do with the one drop rule and the decadent veil?!

Believe it or not, I wrote all of that just so that I could open by saying, that when it comes to some Black people—quite a few, now that I think

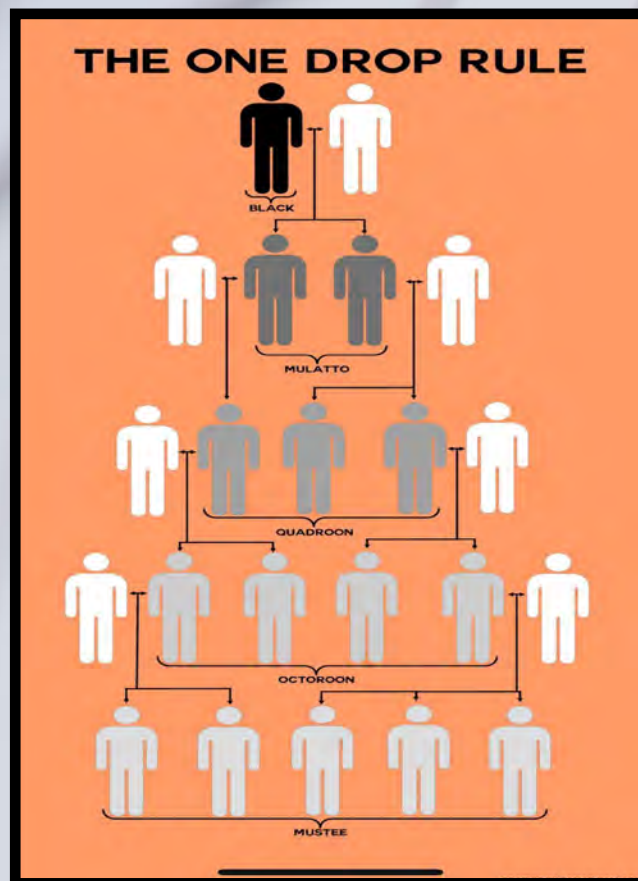
about it—if you want to get into an INSTANT heated debate (and I mean zero to one hundred, in six seconds or less) say this phrase: **“Bi-racial people aren’t Black.”**

First, you are guaranteed to end up being immediately dismissed and/or told you’re wrong. At best, your

“correction” is short and sweet and, having corrected you, they are ready to end that part of the discussion. At worst, the “correction” can immediately escalate to shouting (sometimes including swearing), and the possible ending of a relationship.

Before I go any further, I believe it is important to define terms.

I adhere to Occam’s razor when it comes to Blackness. (Occam’s razor is a philosophical and scientific principle that states that the simplest



The One Drop Rule and The Decadent Veil (Continued)

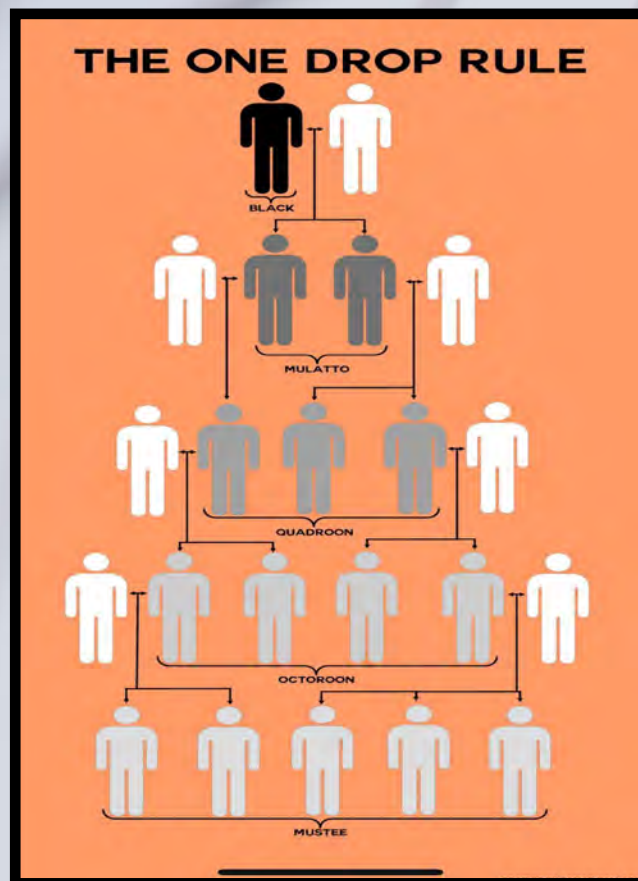
“Privilege is invisible to the people who have it.” Dr. Michael Scott Kimmel, Sociologist

explanation is usually the best. It’s also known as the law of parsimony.). To that degree, my personal standard is that if both parents are Black people (not talking about skin color here—Black people come in all shades), then the person is Black, I even go as far as to say that if one parent is Black and the other Bi-Racial, the child is Black (as they are working their way back to Black, if the offspring keep reproducing with other Black people. Go in the other direction, then, it makes the move to whiteness or other POC (People of Color).

I readily admit that I may view the entire matter in a profoundly over simplified way, but that is my position. Keeping in mind that there are many things in this world or in the world of discourse that we are conditioned to believe are extremely complicated when they are actually, almost childishly simple, and vice versa depending on who will benefit from the belief system or narrative (something I will examine later in this essay).

When it comes to the one drop rule, several questions come to mind, at

least for me. Not the least of which is, in the case of a situation where someone has a Black parent and a white parent, a one dropper will claim that person as Black. My question becomes, and I believe it is a completely legitimate question, if one of the parents is white, then why does that not make the person WHITE?! To this MOMENT, I have never had anyone give me a legitimate or reasonable answer to that question.



I have heard it said that the person is considered Black because “Black genes are dominant”, that is the main one I hear. However, I have never seen any scientific evidence to back up that claim. On the contrary, looking at it anecdotally, we can take cases like those of Diana Ross, Grace Jones, and many others who married white people, and in less than four generations, have managed to “improve the race”, by wiping their Black selves out of existence as their progeny are indistinguishable from pure Europeans. What happened to this all-powerful Black gene that makes everyone Black? Of course, I will be told about the fact that sometimes the

The One Drop Rule and The Decadent Veil (Continued)

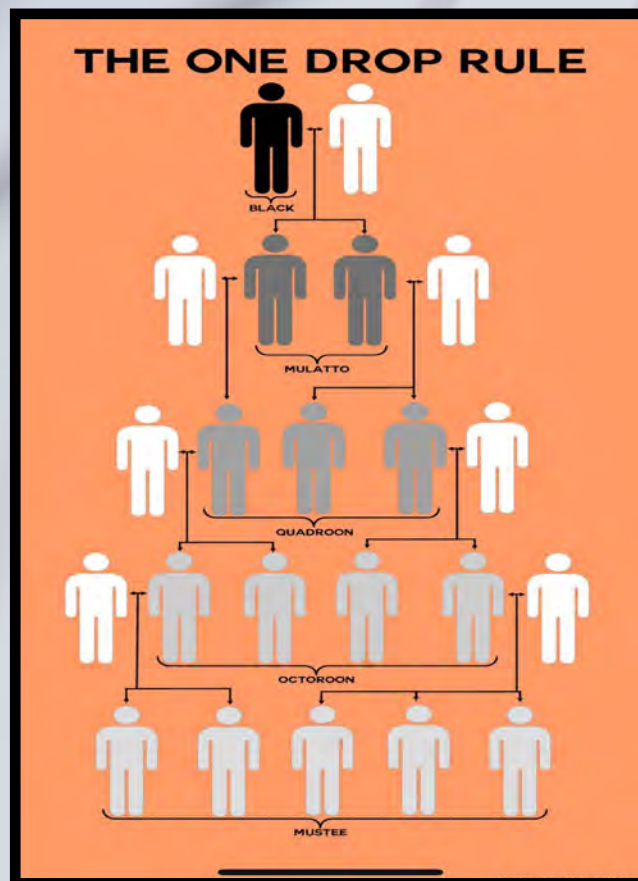
“Privilege is invisible to the people who have it.” Dr. Michael Scott Kimmel, Sociologist

genetics can skip several generations and produce an unambiguously Black child from two unambiguously European looking white people.

Something else I ponder is the fact that many people who are bi-racial don't just seem to embrace being bi-racial, as if there is something wrong with it.

Is that proof of the power of the Black gene?

What about the cases where the “white gene” has also been recorded to have skipped generations and had the reverse effect, where two fully Black people, create an unambiguously white presenting child. To those who would



seek to trap me, or accuse me of being inconsistent, if asked, I would say that fully white presenting child is a Black person.

Another observation is this, when a Black person and European (or other ethnic group) create a child, why does the child not continue to be a dark-skinned Black person due to the power of the almighty Black gene?

The other important question is: Who does the one drop rule benefit?

I ponder this question often.

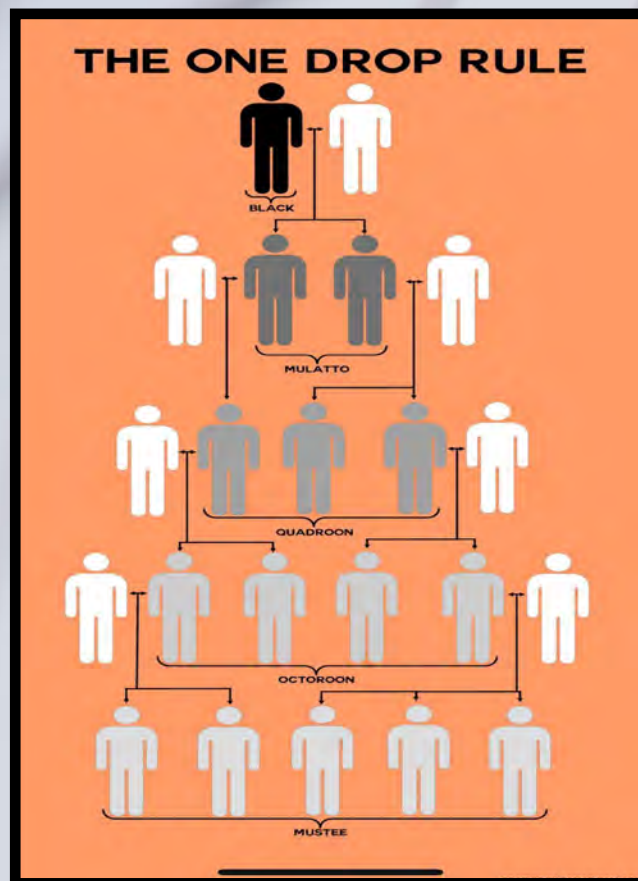
I look at the fact that people who are fully Black, fully white, fully Asian or what have you, cannot take on and pull of their race like an overcoat when it suits them.

For the longest time I've heard bi-racial, POC and even light skinned Black people (who ARE Black people), pooh pooh the notion that dark skinned Black people are treated exceptionally worse in society (especially Amerikkkan society. I hear the stories of how they also get pulled over for nothing and are followed in the store and so on. I had to think deeply on these things

The One Drop Rule and The Decadent Veil (Continued)

“Privilege is invisible to the people who have it.” Dr. Michael Scott Kimmel, Sociologist

because there is no denying their individual experiences, or that they (bi-racial and light skinned Black people), do have to deal with aspects of racism. That is manifest. However, statistics do bear out that overwhelmingly, when it comes to job and housing discrimination, college admissions, and likelihood of interacting with the police when having done nothing, as well as harsh punishments within the “justice” system, there is absolutely no denying that dark skinned Black people (unambiguously Black people), are far and away treated worse.



I’ve finally been able to square it like this: *When I hear bi-racial and to a degree, light skinned Black people talking about being treated the same way as ALL Black people are treated, that is not the case. It isn’t that they’re being treated like a dark or darker skinned Black person—it is they they aren’t being treated like a WHITE person.*

There IS a difference.

Getting to the decadent veil, In August 2014 in the Huffpost, Lawyer Antonio Moore, the co-founder of the ADOS (American Descendants of Slavery), movement with Yvette Carnell, published an article titled “The Decadent Veil: Black America’s Wealth Illusion”.

In that article, Moore argues that the United States uses celebrities such as Oprah Winfrey, Jay-Z, LeBron James and outliers like Byron Allen (Black comedian turned billionaire businessman), to skew the numbers when it comes to the racial wealth gap, and Black wealth (or lack thereof), in general.

His thesis is that the handful of Blacks with wealth are propped up and put before the Black community and the world to imply that, though it’s true there are Black people at and below the poverty line, there are successful Black people, therefore, the belief that Black people are completely at the bottom is a fiction. His point is, however, and I agree, that these outliers are used to create a false narrative, and worst

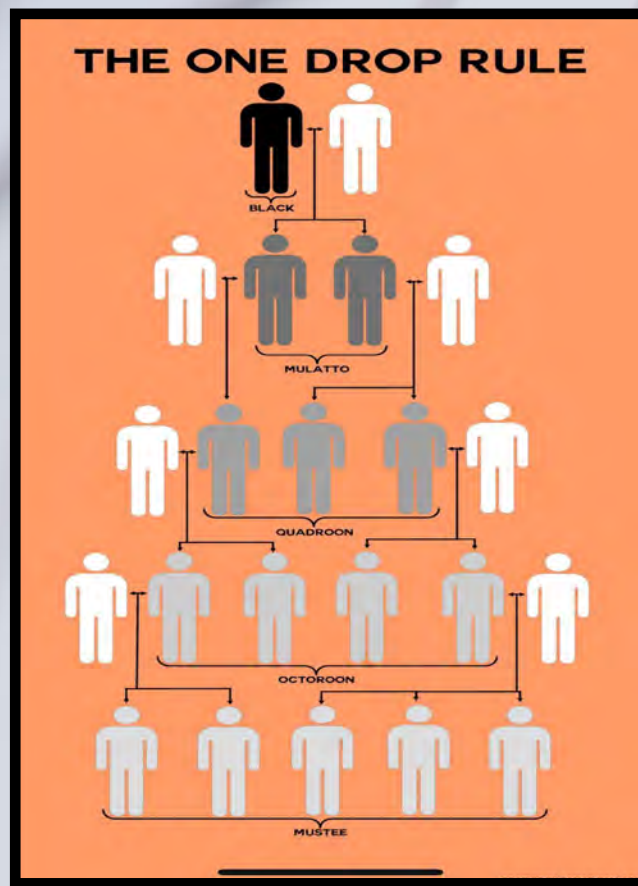
The One Drop Rule and The Decadent Veil (Continued)

“Privilege is invisible to the people who have it.” Dr. Michael Scott Kimmel, Sociologist

of all, to fool Black people into believing we have a power and/or wealth that we don’t have at all.

Halle Berry, we are told, is the first Black woman to win an Oscar for best actress.

I believe the decadent veil extends to bi-racials also. They are put out front and used to skew the numbers and the perception that Black people are not only being disregarded and marginalized, but are the victims of attempts to completely wipe us out so that we don’t exist in any meaningful way.



(Gee, NOT for “Losing Isaiah”, where she gave a stellar performance opposite Jessica Lange, or her other body of work, though admittedly uneven. They finally handed it to her when she got naked and had an old white guy named “Billy Bob”--can’t make this stuff up--bounce on top of her on screen in

We Black people we are told that we have had the first Black president—Barak Obama or as his name was as a child in Indonesia before he changed it, “Barry Soetoro”—but he isn’t Black, he’s bi-racial.

front of God and everybody. Oh, and Diddy was in the movie too, For what that’s worth, he actually has some acting chops. Strange world we live in.)

Kamala Harris is the first Black woman vice president. Being the first WOMAN vice president is a glass ceiling shattering achievement on its own, no need to falsely say this bi-racial woman is Black. (And it is being argued whether even with being bi-racial part of that “bi” is even BLACK. I am guessing that is when the “one drop rule” comes into play.

I digress.

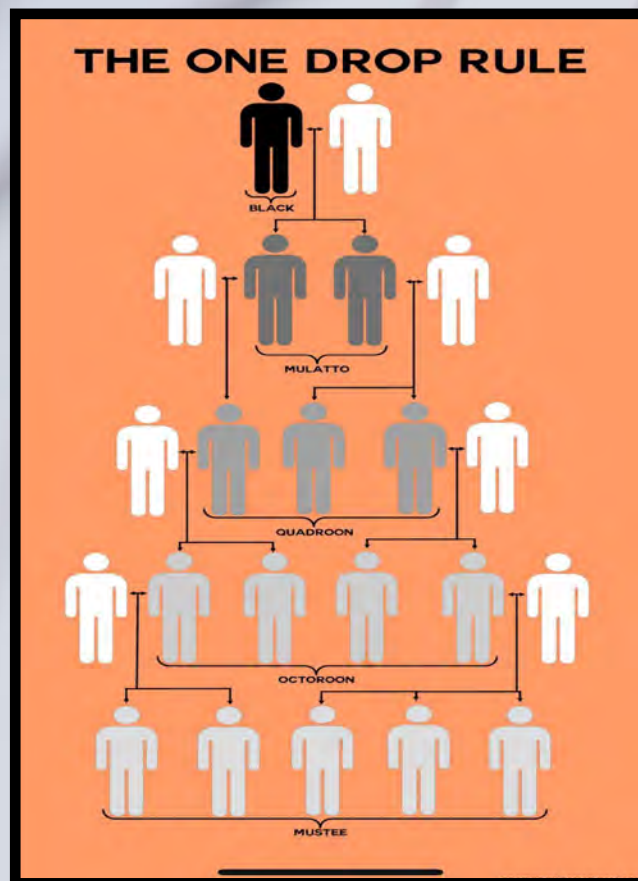
The woman is bi-racial.

My point being, that not only in these cases, but overall, as Black people we may need to look back into our BLACK history to possibly find out just how many of the inventors and “firsts” among us are actually bi-racial. Why does it matter?

The One Drop Rule and The Decadent Veil (Continued)

“Privilege is invisible to the people who have it.” Dr. Michael Scott Kimmel, Sociologist

It matters because just as with the decadent veil in terms of wealth, and the way it is used to silence Black people who are living a different reality, the same is true for dark skinned Black people and Black people who are bucking against the entire POC designation where we are thrown in the pot with everyone else. Because when that happens, it not only takes away from and weakens OUR struggle, but it slowly absorbs ours into theirs.



This discussion isn't about LGBTQ+, but take note and listen. There was a time when Black issues were spoken on as its own set of challenges, now, whenever the term “Black” is used, whether by politicians, celebrities, activists and others, it is ALWAYS accompanied by either LGBTQ+ and POC, or if not POC, definitely LGBTQ+. This shows the successful co-opting of Black people's movement. There are those among Black people who take the, “more the merrier” position, or the, “strength in numbers” position. The problem is that Black people (and especially Black Americans), have a unique set

of issues that affect only our people in very specific and detrimental ways. Or another way to put it would be that every issue that an LGBTQ+ person or POC has to deal with, Black people have to deal with, but there are problems we deal with that they do not.

When it comes to an issue like reparations, ADOS as brought to the fore that the issue isn't about Blackness (as in skin color), but that in terms of the racial wealth gap and any hope for Descendants of Slavery to come out of it, there are specific parameters that must be applied. For them (and I agree with them this much at least), it is not about the skin color, it is about lineage. If someone immigrates to the United States and their skin is darker than a raven's wing at midnight, that does not entitle them to reparations, because their lineage was not affected by chattel slavery in the United States, Jim Crow, convict leasing, share cropping, red lining etc. Black people whose lineage is in America are presently suffering a deficit that only reparations could

The One Drop Rule and The Decadent Veil (Continued)

“Privilege is invisible to the people who have it.” Dr. Michael Scott Kimmel, Sociologist

POSSIBLY remedy (in terms of money-never in terms of the wrongs done, the human suffering and the epigenetic, and overt present trauma we deal with to this day.

There is also the matter of split allegiances. It is difficult to image a person who has a Black parent and a white parent, completely disassociating themselves from one side of themselves or the other. In effect denying an entire half of who they are.

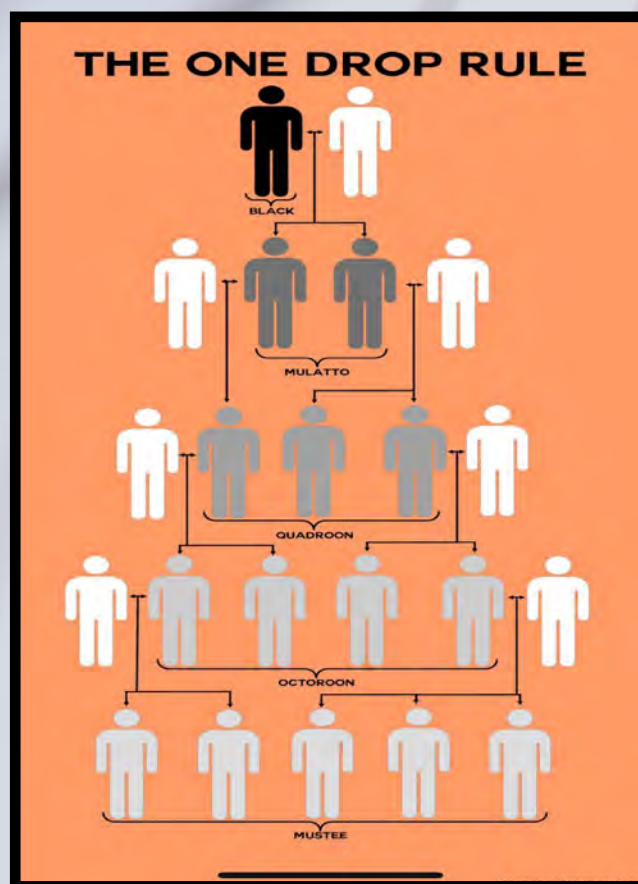
It is difficult to imagine a person hating one of their parents (especially if they were both good parents). It is equally difficult imagining a person looking at what they believe are the worst traits of the group from which they come (whether they take to heart the negative propaganda spewed by every form of media worldwide about Black people in general and Black Americans specifically, or the real history of their enslaving, tormenting, demonic Caucasian ancestors), and have to admit that this is part of who they are?!

What happens when, because of the one drop rule they are welcomed into revolutionary spaces? Or spaces that are attempting to be revolutionary, and safe for BLACK people, then suddenly, there start to be disagreements about who is Black, and then someone who IS Black shows up with their white spouse, because their spouse is “down”?

It is issues like these and others that take already complex issues like reparations and such

and further muddy the water so that we can't get a clear understanding of what we're dealing with as Black people. So, to that degree, the question of, who benefits from the one drop rule is answered. And it certainly is not Black people. It is the System of White Supremacy that continues perpetuating itself, growing and getting stronger as we can't get a foothold because we refuse to acknowledge that there are chinks in our armor that need to be fixed.

I am not saying by any stretch that bi-racial people are our enemy.



READING and WRITING in the

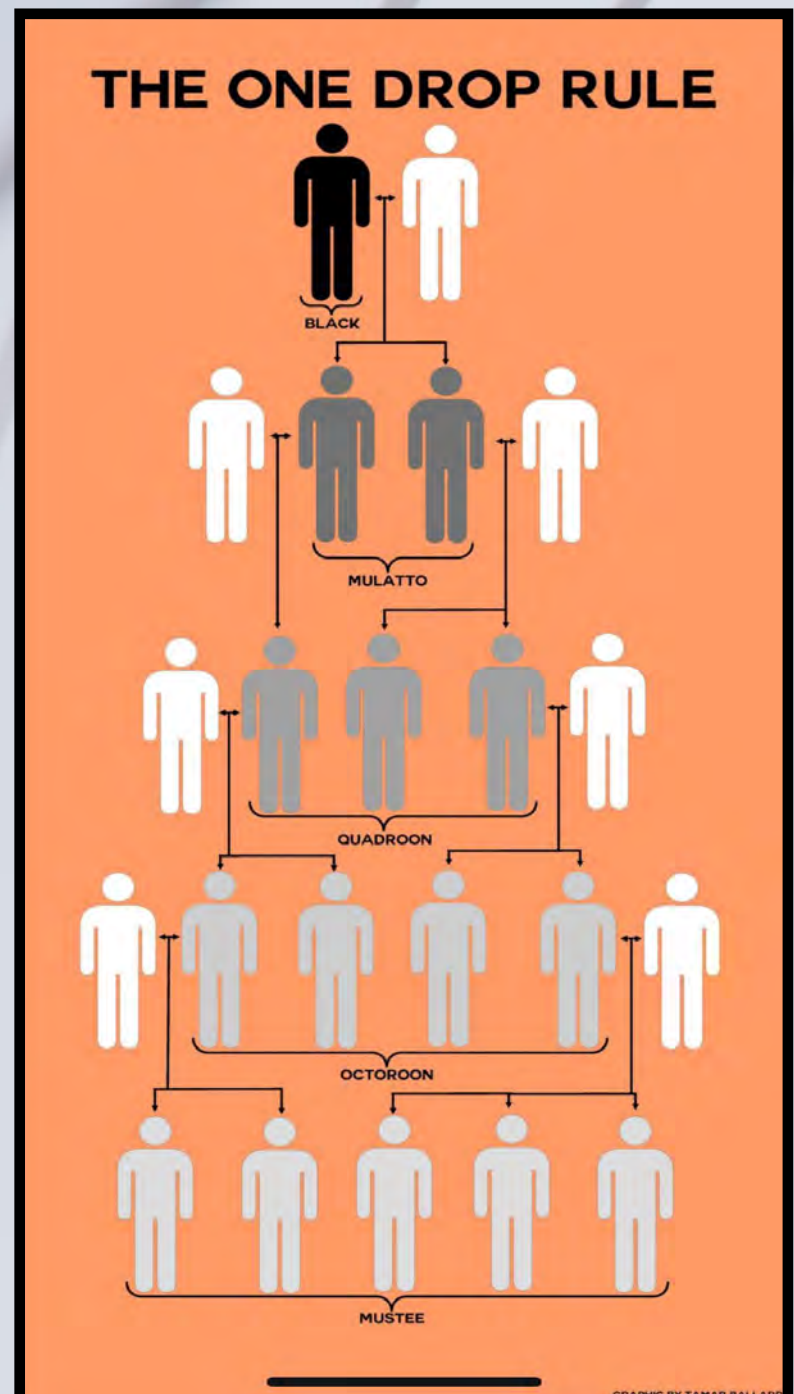
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The One Drop Rule and The Decadent Veil (Continued)

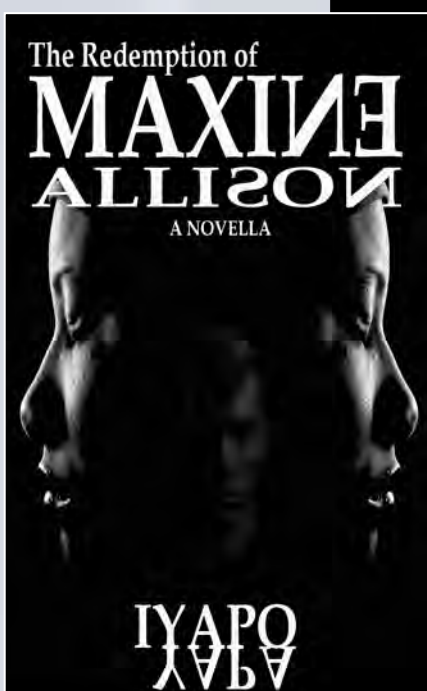
“Privilege is invisible to the people who have it.” Dr. Michael Scott Kimmel, Sociologist

What I AM saying is that there is absolutely nothing wrong with being Black, white, bi-racial, or whatever. But there is something wrong with anything that serves as a hindrance to Black people moving forward and eventually, at long last, getting out of this malaise, and I’m against it. The all-out attack on Blackness is the first battlefield.



COMING SOON!

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



Is it BEST to DIVEST?

Maxine Allison thought so.

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

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

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

or is there?

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

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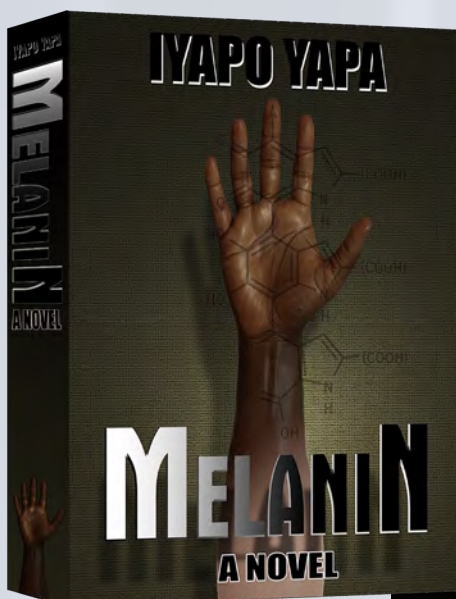
So, who knew I was a cartoonist before I became a writer?
Take a minue to check out some of my work online at:
<https://iyapoyapa.com/cartoonist-illustrator.html>
or just click the image below and it will take you straight there!



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!



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Here is your November 2024 Crossword Puzzle!

This month we have a crossword puzzle for you, featuring Black Scifi / Fantasy authors and their work, whether in books or adopted for television or movies! This should be a 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!](#)





November 2024 Crossword Puzzle Clues!

Across

3) Author of, *Afromyth: A Fantasy Collection*, J.S. _____.

7) Author of, *Sweep of Stars*, Maurice _____.

8) Author of, *A Song of Wraiths and Ruin*, _____ A. Brown.

11) Author of *Son of the Storm*, Suyi Davies _____.

12) Novel by author Victor LaValle, *Big _____*.

13) Author of *Everfair*, Nisi _____.

15) Author of, *The Living Blood*, _____ Due.

16) Author of *Brown Girl in the Ring*, Nalo _____.

18) The first novel by author Iyapo Yapa, _____.

19) Author of, *The Sound of Stars*, _____ Dow.

20) Author of, *Rosewater*, _____ Thompson.

21) The first Anthology published by Iyapo Yapa _____ Void.

22) Author of, *Even Though I Knew the End*, C.L. _____.

Down

1) N.K. Jemison debut novel, *The Hundred _____ Kingdoms*.

2) Author of, *Freshwater*, _____ Emezi.

4) Author of, *Unbroken*, C.L. _____.

5) Author of *Strange Tales of Science Fiction*, Charles L. _____.

6) Author of, *Water Baby*, _____ Okereke.

7) Author of, *The Cost of Knowing*, _____ Morris.

9) Author of, *Remote Control Nnedi* _____.

10) Author of, *Black Leopard, Red Wolf*, _____ James.

11) Author of, *Goliath*, Tochi _____.

13) Author of *The Deep*, his second novel. Rivers _____.

14) Author of, *The Intuitionist*, Colson _____.

17) Author of *The Good Luck Girls*, Charlotte _____ Davis.

19) Author of, *Children of Virtue and Vengeance* Tomi _____.

20) Author of *No Gods, No Monsters*, Caldwell _____.

22) Novels by Octavia E. Butler, _____ of the *Sower/Talents*.

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

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Contact Retreat Facilitator, angela

email: travel@forblackus.com

or

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at:



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

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A Very Busy November!

Sooooo,

November, known to some as National Novel Writing Month, is going to be an interesting 30 days for me.

Several things are happening at once, and I'm not completely sure how I'm going to juggle them, but I'm going to give it the old college try, as the saying goes.

First, I had a goal of completing my novel that I'm writing under the R.J. Blakman penname, *Heaven Mississippi*. I nearly hit my goal of finishing it by the end of October, but alas, I was unable to do it, so it will be carrying over as I work on it and two other projects simultaneously. Upon completing *Heaven*, I will have finished one novel in November.

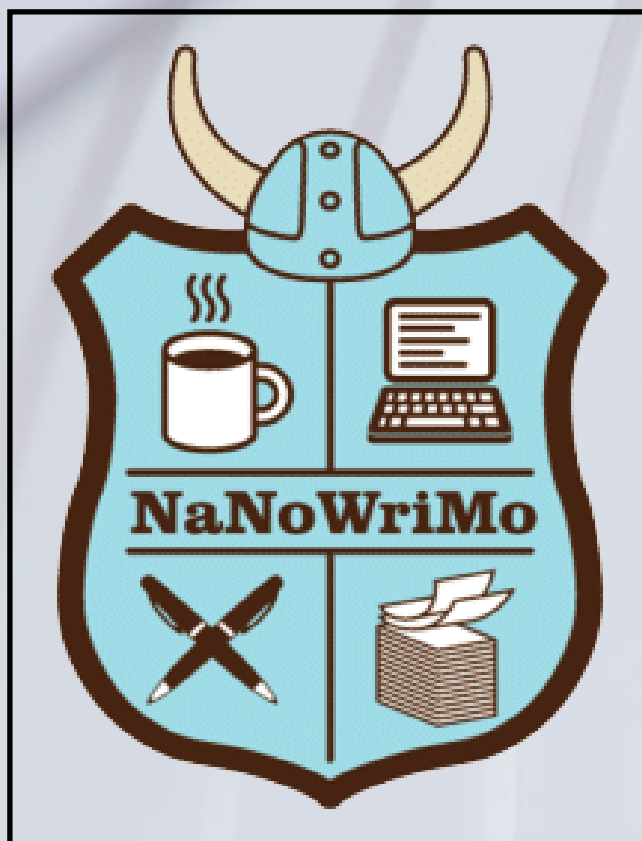
Next up is my Kindle Vella series, *Surviving the WORST*. This is where things get interesting. It was announced last month that Kindle Vella will be closing its doors, so any author or reader wanting to complete the reading of a Vella series will need to do so by February 2025. The last day for submitting Kindle Vella episodes is December 4th. For me, I'm very close to completing the first season (which I guess is now the ONLY season of *Surviving the WORST*), so I have set a goal of completing the story

by December 4th. If I do, I think that will be a pretty neat trick. We shall see! The thing about completing the first season is that now that it will no longer be on Kindle Vella, I will be compiling the episodes into a single book (something

that I already started doing a while ago). The combined episodes right now are up to about 330 pages and over 81,000 words, making it already the length of a proper novel. If I am able to complete all the episodes, then I will have completed TWO novels by the end of November.

Finally, I decided to do NaNoWriMo this November, like I did last year. The book I've chosen to work on for this challenge is *Further Journeys into the PARADIGM Void!* This will be the second in the Paradigm Void anthology series of short sci-fi, horror stories and tales beyond the imagination! I will likely present them each in the Keepin' it a BUCK Series as well, the way I did with the first Paradigm Void book.

I'm thinking short stories will be a bit easier than writing a novel for the NaNoWriMo because I can write a story and move on. I am a HUGE fan of short stories and when I write them, I am really able to





A Very Busy November! (continued)

get into them. Plus there's something very appealing to me about writing an exciting and interesting piece that has a beginning, middle and end, but doesn't have a long-time commitment.

I'm certainly looking forward to the work I'm going to be doing on it.

When I complete that book for the NaNoWriMo challenge, then that will give me THREE complete books I'll have written and/or finished in a single

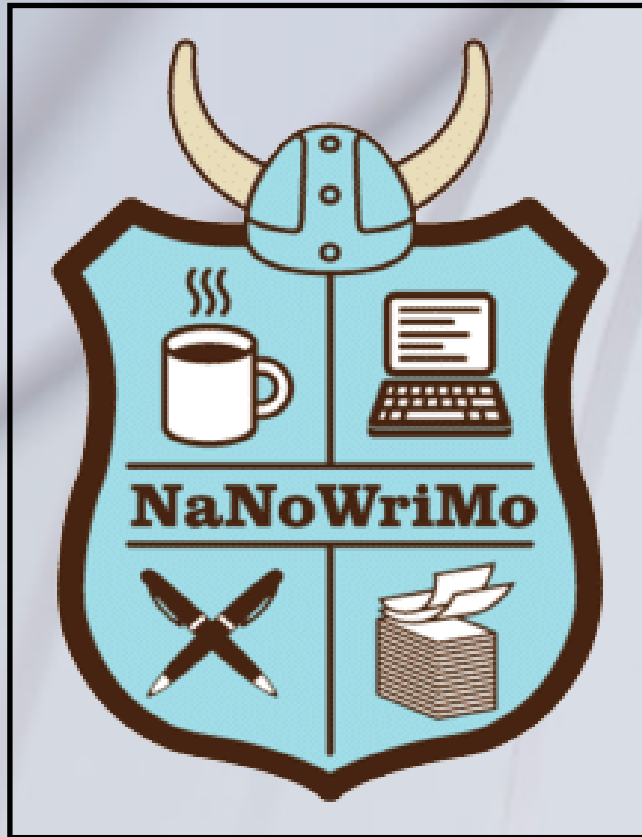
month! I'm really looking forward to the challenge, and I think I'm MORE than up to it!

Wish me luck!

I'll tell you what happens in next month's magazine!

HEY! That's right! In the midst of all that, I still have a MAGAZINE to put out on December

1st! Oh YES! November is going to be VERY interesting!



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

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

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



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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.

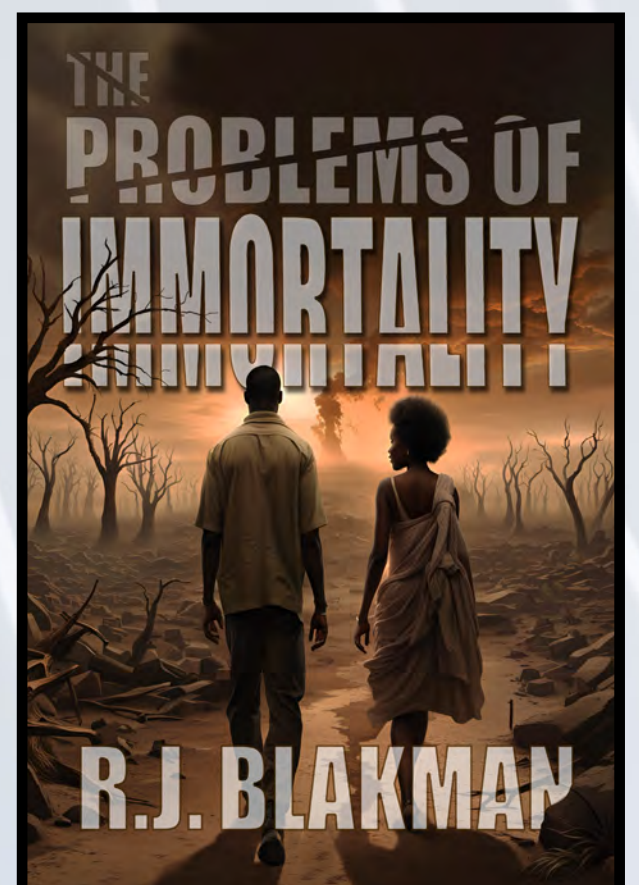
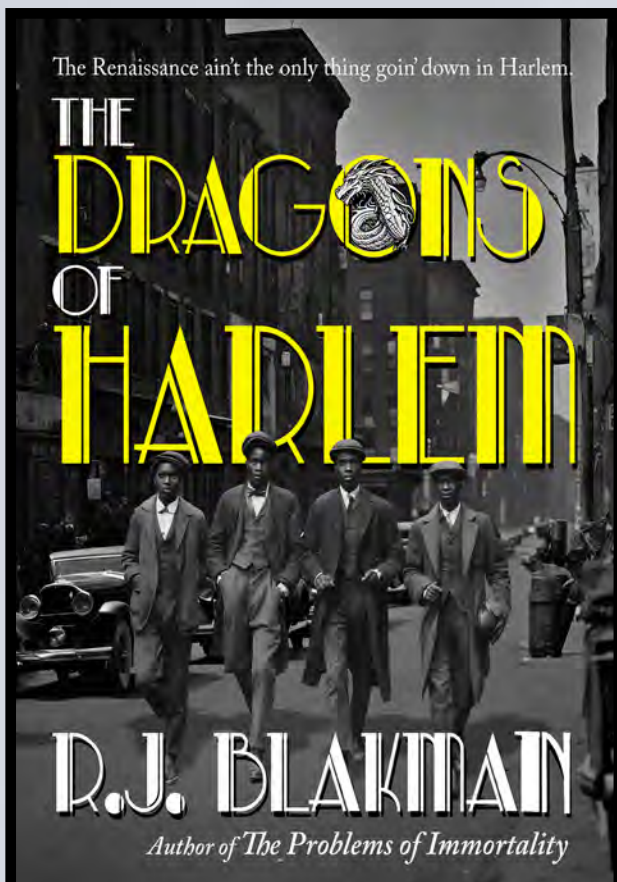
As a practice, Blakman seeks out truth and goes wherever that truth leads him, even if uncomfortable.

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.



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Find Iyapo at:
Linktree*


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

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

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

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@iyapo
Cartoonist, Illustrator, Graphic artist, Author

Books and Writing by Iyapo Yapa

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

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

IYAPO'S WEBSITE




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

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

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


MELANIN: A Novel




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

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

And What of the CARGO?



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

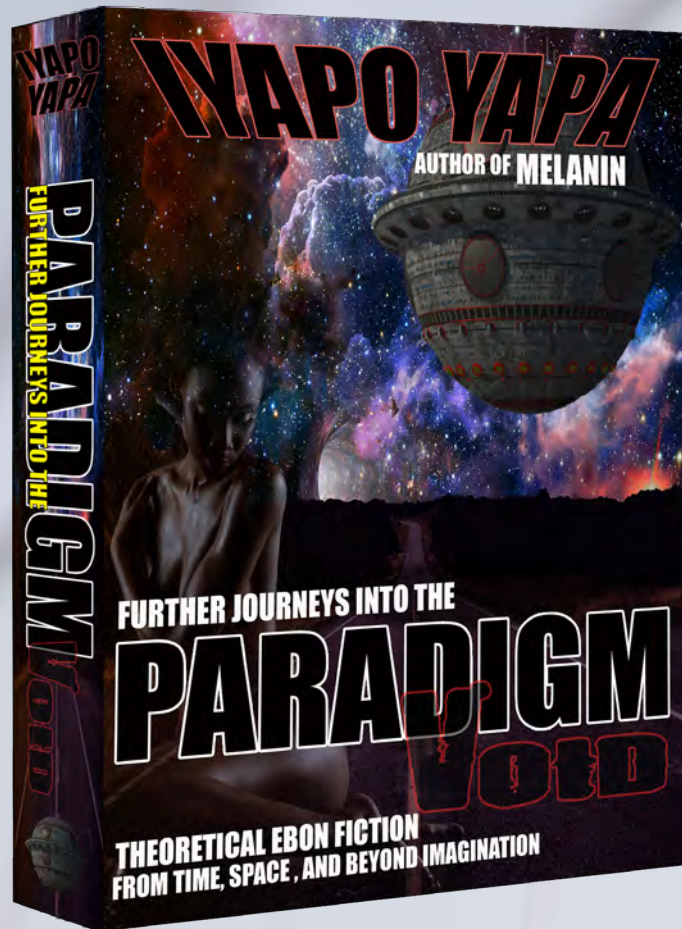


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ARE YOU PREPARED TO JOURNEY BACK INTO THE VOID?!

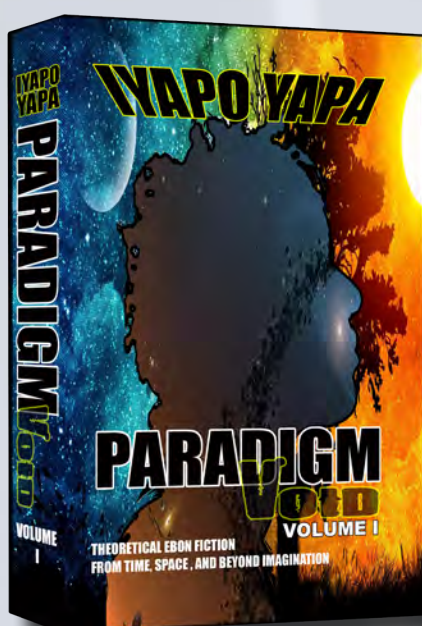


COMING SOON

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

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

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



RIGHT NOW!

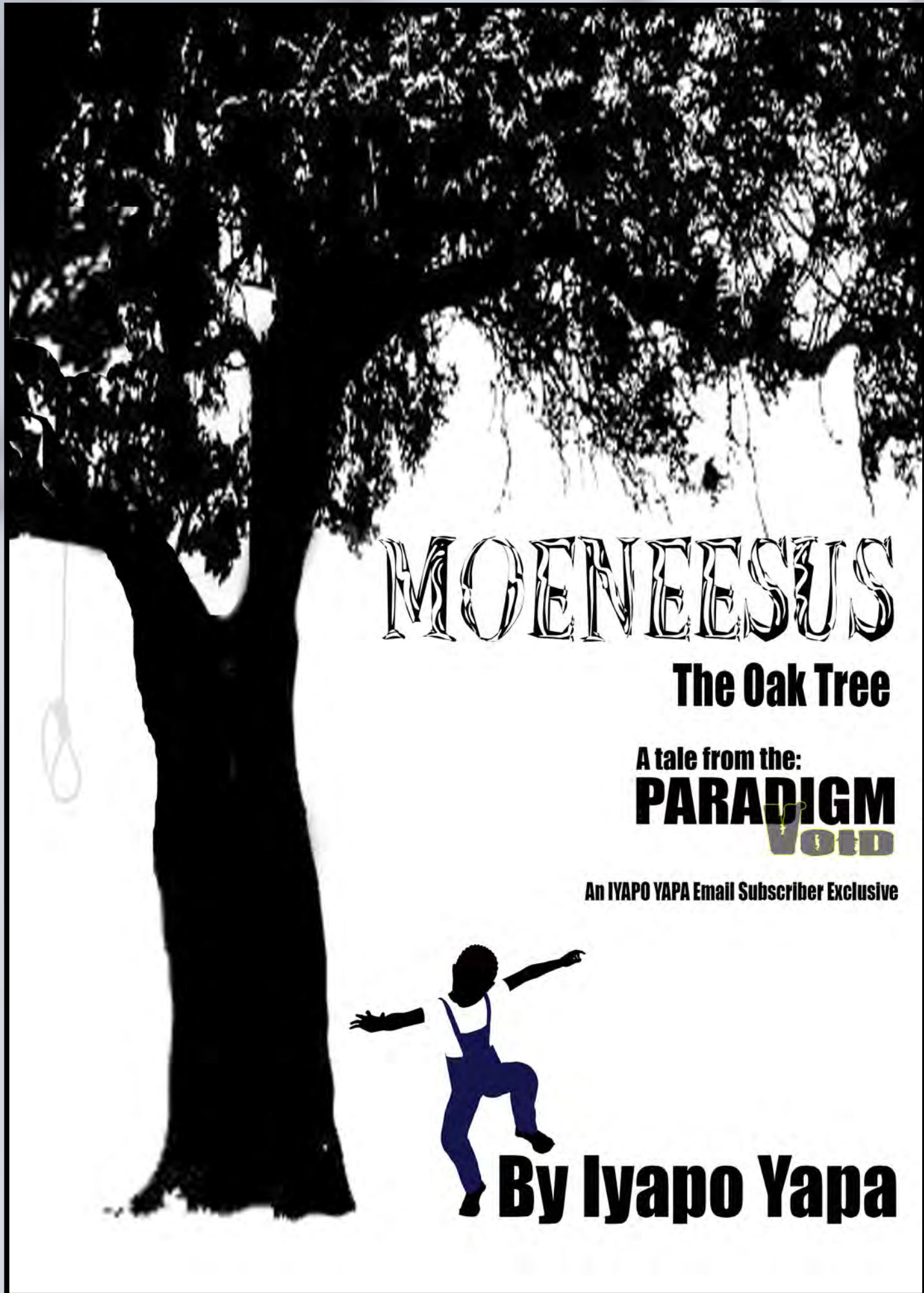
Stories from Time, Space and Beyond Imagination,
Paradigm VOID Volume I is available.



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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

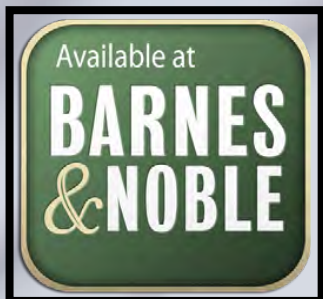
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Click Below For:

And What of the CARGO?



AVAILABLE NOW!

And What of the CARGO?

Buy it now on Amazon

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

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

— Walter Rodney. How Europe Underdeveloped Africa

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

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

What are readers saying about And What of the CARGO?

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

- Amazon Review

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

- Gwen

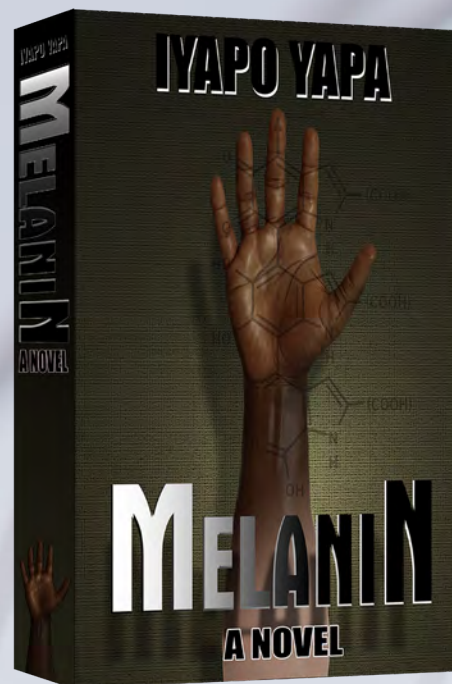
“Yapa weaves another story this time interwoven with historical references. I was on my seat with every chapter. I don't want to give it away but....revenge is sweet when served dead. And I can't get over how different each of his offerings are. Read his Vella's and you'll see what I mean. Another great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

- Amazon review

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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!

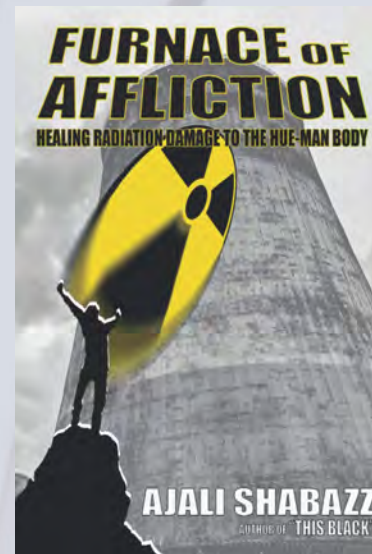
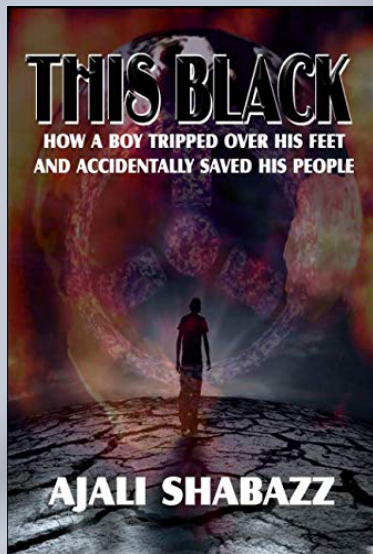
READING and WRITING in the

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!

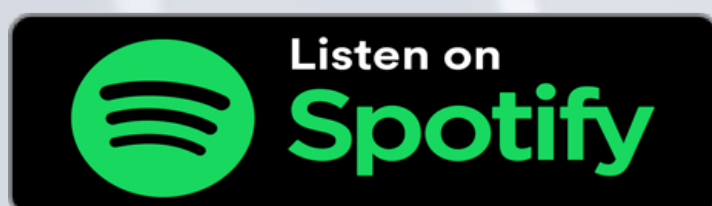
Listen to the interview on  by clicking the link below:

<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!

listen on  LISTEN ON 

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Have You Checked Out My Blog Yet?

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

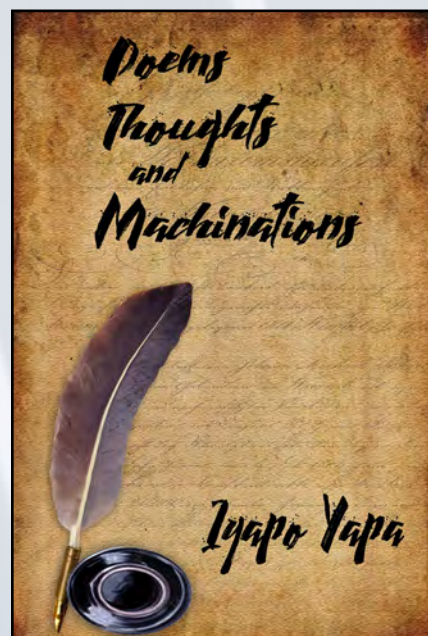
My blog is the place where I talk about what's on my mind and don't worry too much about the formatting or typos - it is, pretty much, my raw perceptions and analysis of what is going on around me.



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

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

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



The title says it all.

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

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

Always seeking.

READING and WRITING in the

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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.

kindle vella

ANIMATION & RELAXATION

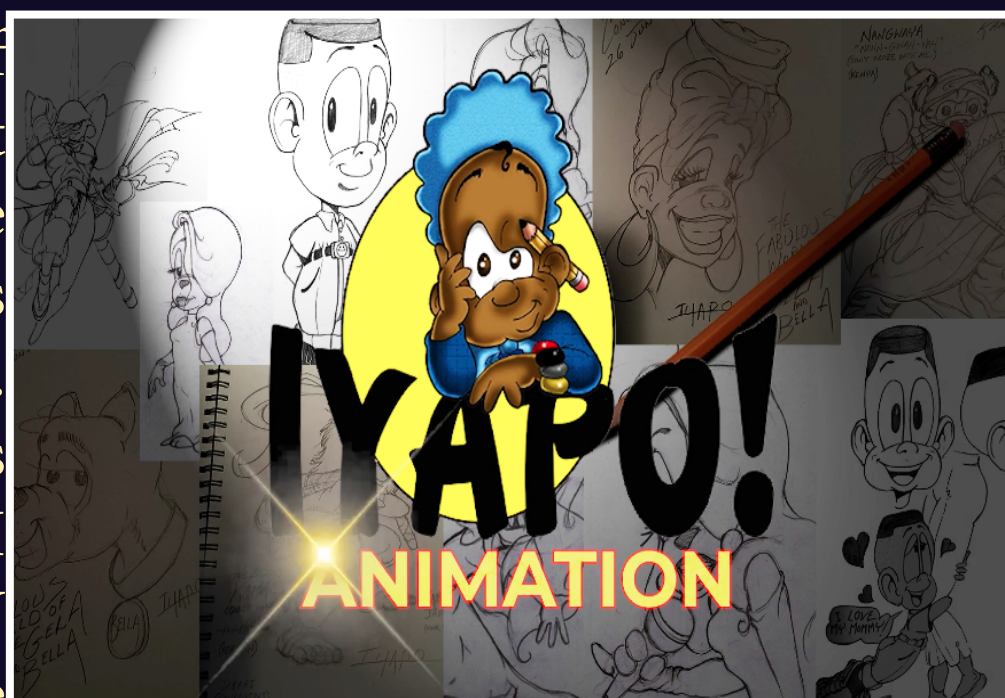
Throughout my life I've learned to do a lot of things. Most of them have to do with something "artsy", like drawing, writing, playing music (including piano, guitar and my favorite, the harmonica). I also taught myself to build computers as well as use

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

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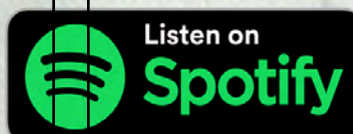
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Two writers
Two Mics
&
Plenty of Banter!



While Black

THE **PODCAST**



ANGELA R. RILEY

Author of *AFFIRMING SelfLOVE*

AYOKA B.

Author of *LOVE at SECOND SIGHT*

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

READING and WRITING in the

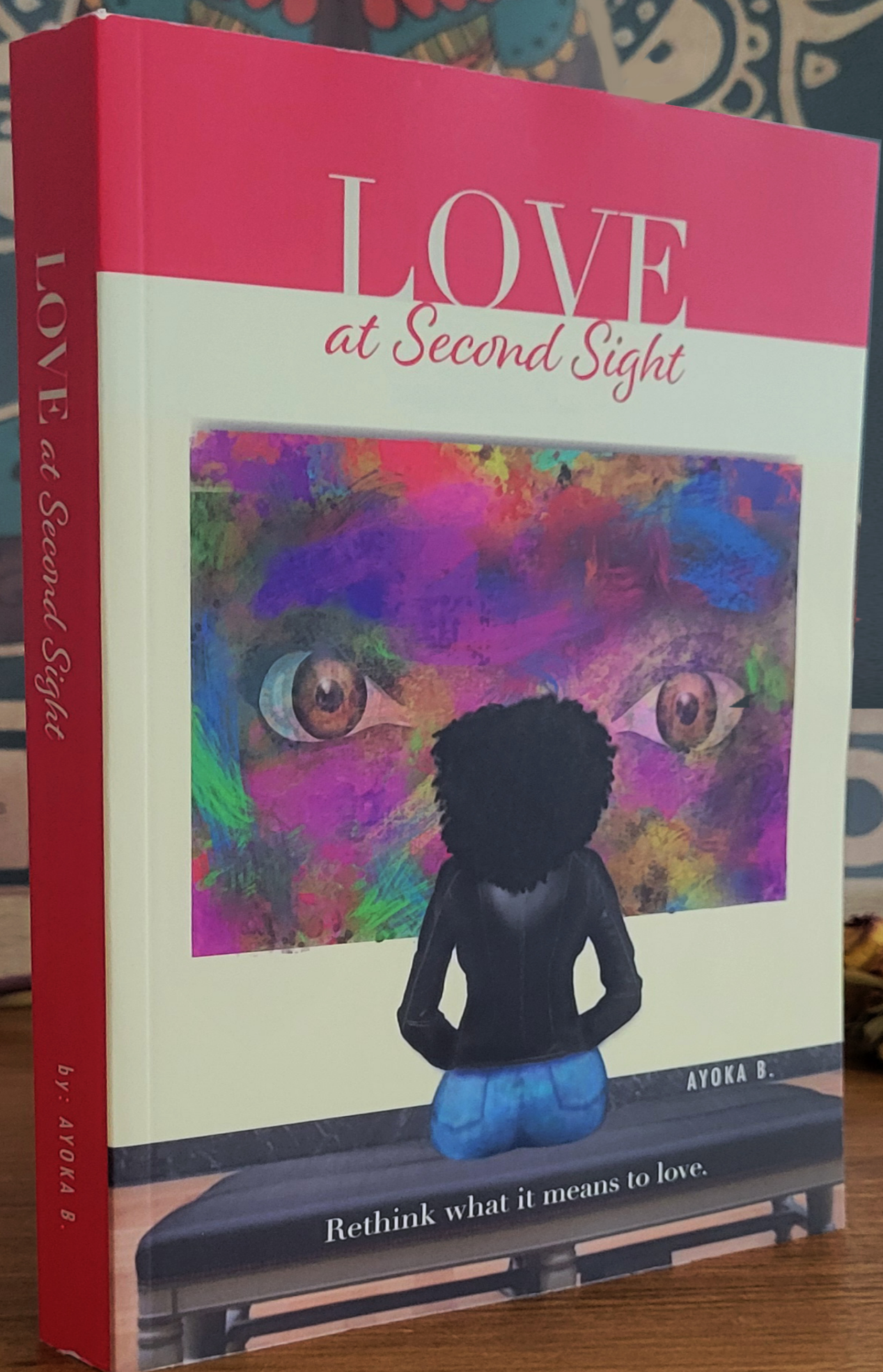
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LOVE AT SECOND SIGHT IS AVAILABLE NOW!

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

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



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



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

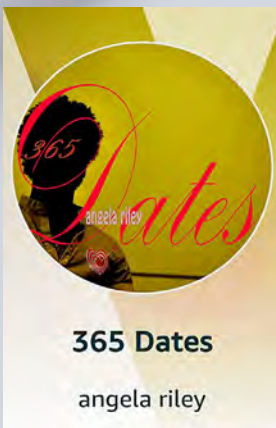
DeClaire and Tyrone meet and sparks fly. They fall in love with each other quick, fast, and in a hurry. It seems too good to be true. But is it? Is it safe to love? Are there any “good” rules when it comes to love? Do we have to fight for love? Are there always games being played when it comes to love?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



The Love X TamuTamu Agency

Angela Riley

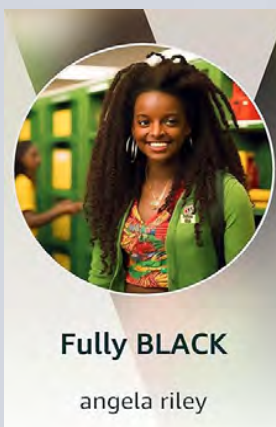
Love is natural but it ain't always easy. And Mama Tamu should know! She is a 91 year old match maker who has run “The Love X TamuTamu Agency” for FIFTY years. She has personally experienced and been a witness to all kinds of love. And, as she says, “Love is more than a notion!” Follow along as she stands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



365 Dates

Angela Riley

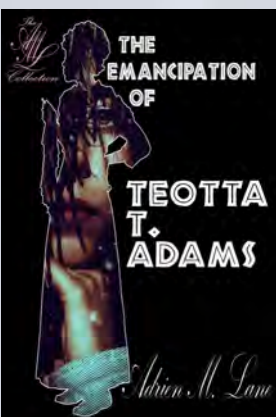
Single again, after my first divorce, one day I had a new thought: I WANT TO DATE. And... NOTHING. No one came knocking on my door to woo me. No one approached me when I was out wanting to court me. Nobody asked friends/family to be set up with me. Just crickets! So, thinking that maybe my goal was to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

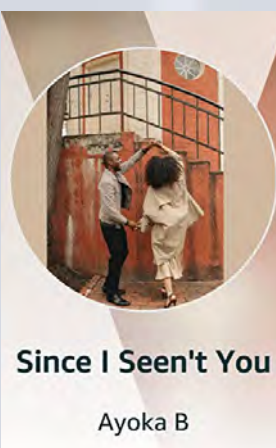
Because she is IN LOVE, talented dancer and homeschooled student Makena enrolls in the elite Fullson High to be closer to Marshall.



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.

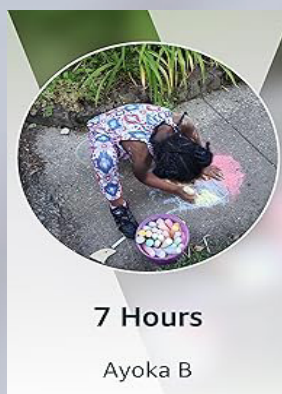
She and David met when they were 18. After a rough start, they build a friendship that would span decades: marriages, children, love and heartache. When they lose touch, she thought that she would never see him again, but she was wrong. Can men and women truly be just friends? Can their friendship withstand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

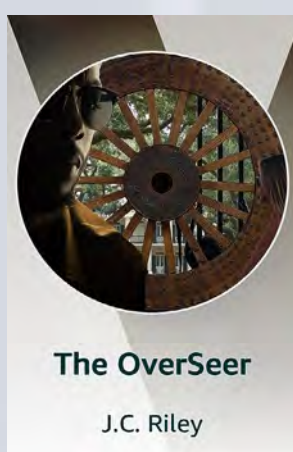
From Book 1: Sex addiction is a real thing; When Quincey finds out his wife is caught up in some things, can they save their marriage.



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**

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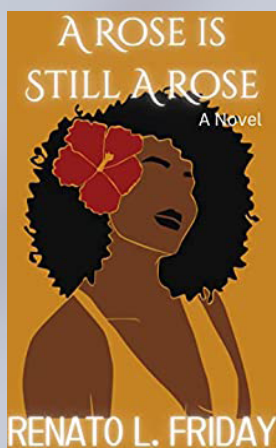


Affirming Self Love (Graphic Non-Fiction SERIES)

angela riley

SelfLOVE Meditation, Reflections, & AFFIRMATIONS Series...

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



A Rose is Still a Rose

Renato L. Friday

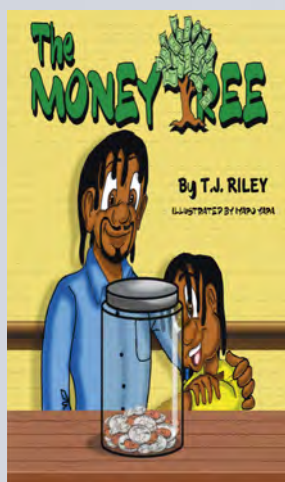
Rose thought life was going great: she was engaged, had a beautiful set of twin girls, a recent trade school graduate, and a new job right around the corner. Unfortunately, her fiancé, David, turned out to not be what she needed, and she chose to break things off. In the midst of her failing relationship,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



Longing for the Night

Ms. KJ

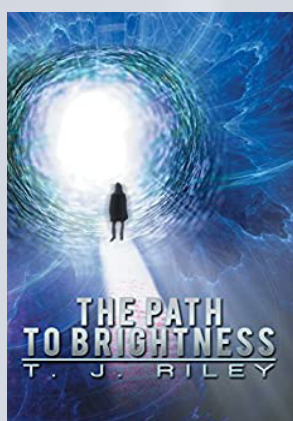
Inspired by the poem Goblin Market by Christina Rossetti, two young sisters face the trials and tribulations of the hood in this coming-of-age story about the harshness of living in South Central Los Angeles.



The Money Tree

T.J. Riley / Illustrated by Iyapo Yapa

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



THE PATH to BRIGHTNESS

T.J. Riley

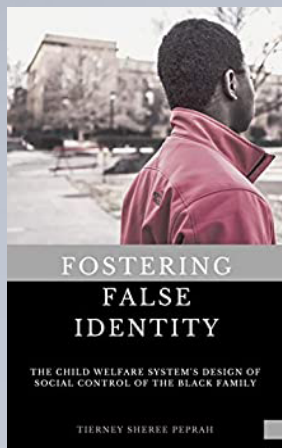
Fatima, a young woman, has a near-death experience. When she awakes from a coma and recovers, she has mystical powers. She begins to see auras and experiences life with her new abilities. For the clever character, Fatima, life is about to dramatically change. Follow Fatima’s journey as she tries to convince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



LOVING BETRAYAL

MADM Precious

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



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.



Here's a new stories for the newsletter - *Altamaha Beast* - Clive Sharp, an overworked steel mill employee with failing health is at the end of his tether, but there's an opportunity for him to cheat death. The adventure to save his life is filled with secrets and mysterious consequences. Yet, the price might just be too high.

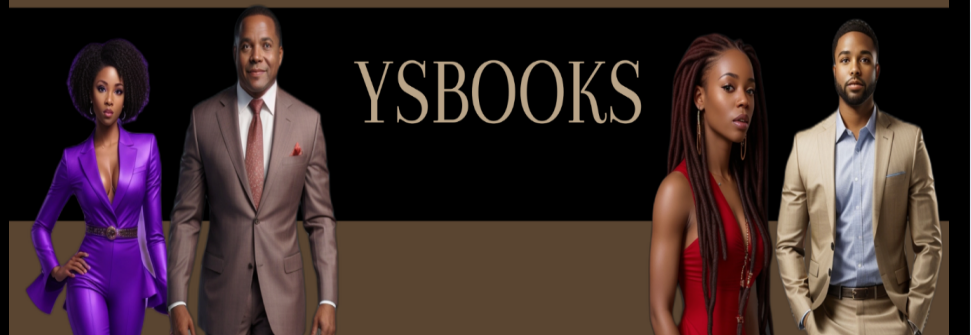
* * *

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

CLICK THE IMAGE ABOVE TO LISTEN TO

Altamaha Beast

READ FOR FREE OR LISTEN TO THE AUDIO DRAMA!



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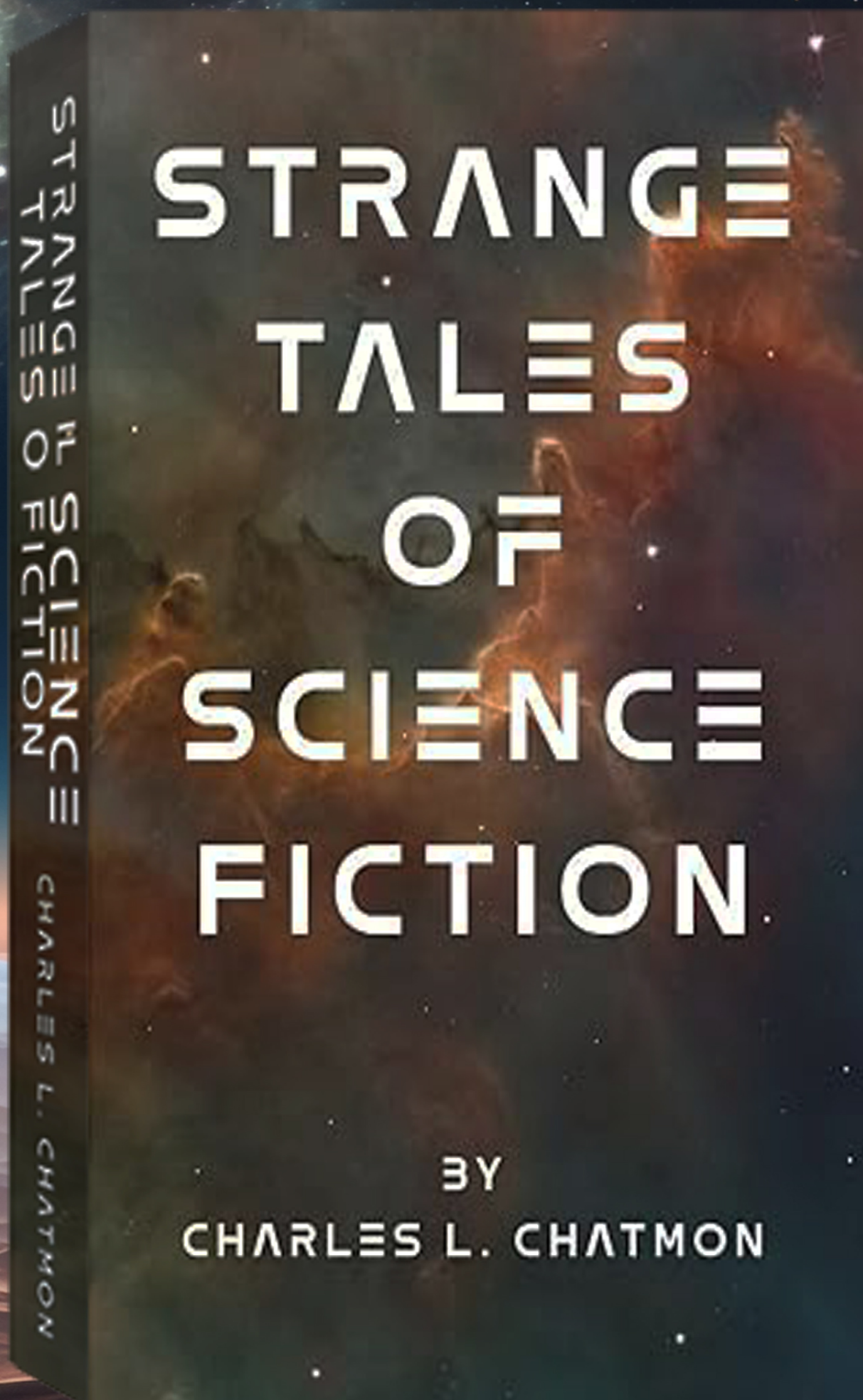
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STRANGE TALES OF SCIENCE FICTION IS AVAILABLE NOW!

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

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

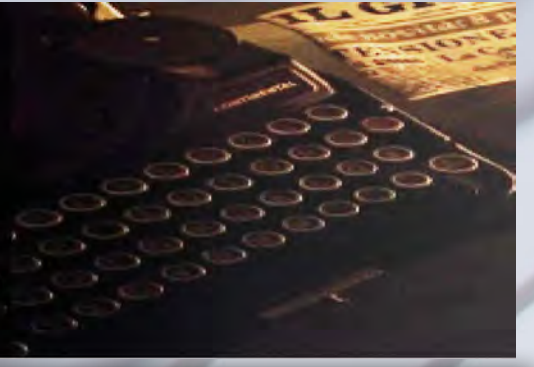


CLICK ON THE BOOK ABOVE TO PURCHASE ON AMAZON!

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OCTOBER PUZZLE MAZE!



SOLUTION

**Rest In Power
Frankie Beverly
1946 - 2024**



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The question isn't "WHO is Maliah Worthington?"
It is "WHERE IN TIME is Maliah Worthington?!"



In 2025 *Adrien M. Lane* invites you to find out!

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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!