

READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

THIS MONTH

MAGAZINE

What would it be like if time slowed to the point that the passing of an hour literally took years - and only YOU were experiencing it?!

Scott Stanford knows.

And so will you when you read this month's exclusive excerpt of:

Frozen Heartbeats

A short story from the

PARADIGM

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THEORETICAL
EBON FICTION

VOID

RETURN of the
SPACE TRADERS
(An Introduction)

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FEATURE:
Does
VOTING
Honor the
Ancestors?!

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This issue we
bring a maze!
But don't start
smiling yet, this
is a tough one!!

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News and Information about Completed
and Upcoming Projects and MORE!



OCTOBER 2024 - Volume 1 / Number 4



MAGAZINE



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WELCOME BACK!

Hello and WELCOME! EVERYONE!

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

Iyapo Yapa

READING and WRITING in the DARK Magazine Vol. 1 No. 4 OCTOBER 2024
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A Look Back and to the Future!

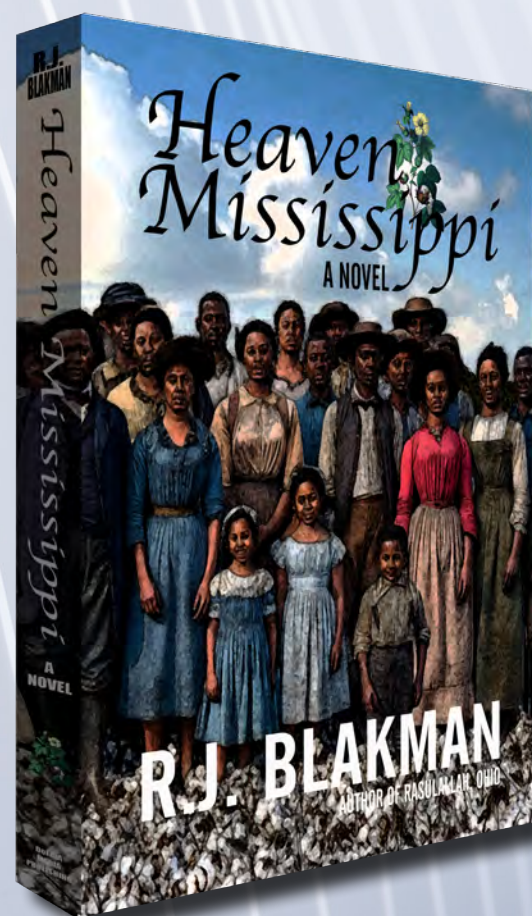
Ok, ok! Black people are sick and tired of reading and talking about our enslavement.

I get it!

So does R.J. Blakman.

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

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



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Does Voting Honor Our Ancestors?

(From Iyapo's Substak and Medium)

Next month millions of Americans will be running to the polls, shutting themselves into a little booth and casting what they believe is a vote for the next president of the United States.

I no longer vote.

Nor do I feel it is a slap in the face to our ancestors who fought, suffered, bled and in cases died, for our ability to do it.

I have a VERY different spin on honoring our ancestors. I feel I'm honoring them more by NOT voting.

Why?

When our ancestors went through what they went through, they had no idea the depth of the corruption with which they were dealing, or the fact that the entire thing was a farce.

In the words of Emma Goldman "... if voting actually changed anything, they'd have made it illegal by now."

Historically, with the exception of white people (who are the bulk of the population in the U.S.), Black people have ALWAYS been the biggest voting block per capita, and

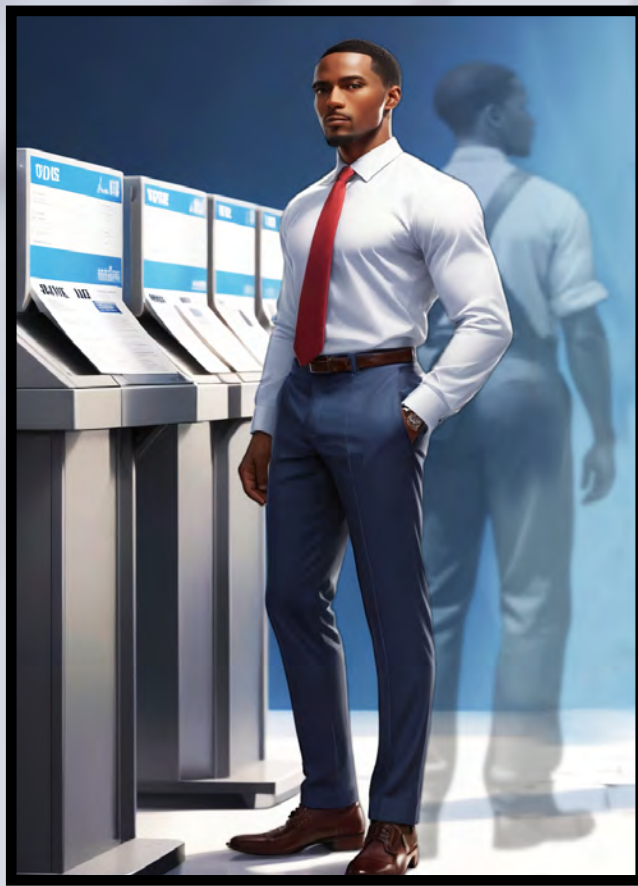
disproportionately for the Democratic party (the very name of it being a misnomer). Black people have been using the vote in attempts to get this and that, including things like reparations and hate crime legislation to name a couple.

With ALL our voting, we are NEVER able to see any real change (and it can be argued that things are becoming considerably worse for us). But there we are... faithfully voting, voting, voting.

But WHO got reparations, and WHO got hate crime legislation QUICKLY? Jewish people and Asians (specifically the Japanese when it comes to reparations), and Jews received reparations from the U.S. and the U.S. didn't even DO anything to them.

Well... it's probably because the Jewish community and Asian community showed up more at the polls, and out voted us.

Hmmmm. Let's look at some numbers, shall we?





Does Voting Honor Our Ancestors? (continued)

(From Iyapo's Substak and Medium)

2.4% of Americans are Jewish.

7.3% of Americans are Asian.

Of the two groups, only about half of that small percentage are of voting age.

If EVERY adult of voting age from those two groups voted, it still wouldn't TOUCH the number of Black people who vote. But somehow... THEY get things they ask for from the U.S. government without having to beg for it. And no matter HOW MUCH we beg, plead, demand, march, protest, boycott, vote...

We still get nothing.

Hmmmm. Interesting.

There is a Princeton study (<https://act.represent.us/sign/problempoll-fba>) that showed that there is a ZERO correlation between what the U.S. population wants and what the government DOES. The U.S. people want universal healthcare (Medicare for all) and free college (like MOST industrialized countries have). The government votes against it (or won't vote on it at all). The people want an

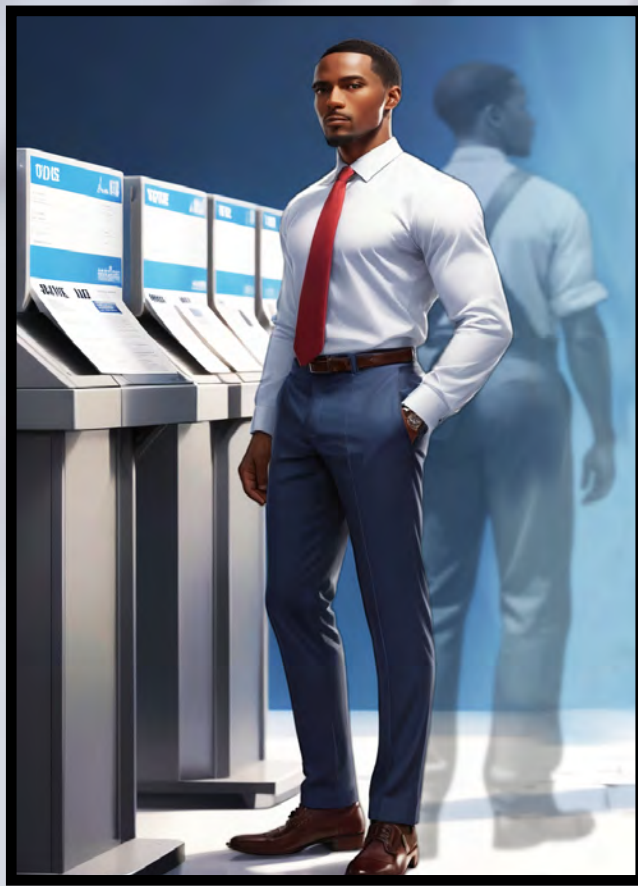
at least 15-dollar minimum wage. The government votes against it (or won't vote on it at all). The people want the endless wars and bloodshed to stop and to stop sending BILLIONS and BILLIONS of dollars overseas to support foreign wars while the U.S. is crashing and burning. They send it anyway. And the list goes on.

So, the American people are voting for WHAT, exactly????

Black people are voting for WHAT, exactly???

If I were one of the ancestors who fought for something, and then after my transition I discovered that all my fighting was for something that is a farce and actually detrimental to our people, I would, if I could, urge my ascendants NOT to waste their time and energies taking part in it.

And further, not giving energy TO it because that in turn makes one in part responsible (even if indirectly) if they do so consciously—ie knowing that they are voting for corruption,





Does Voting Honor Our Ancestors? (continued)

(From Iyapo's Substak and Medium)

that in their opinion might just be milder corruption.

I fully believe my ancestors are HONORED that I have taken the time to think this thing through. I have put an end to the legacy of pain caused to them by seeing me go and do something in their name that they now know is a complete sham.

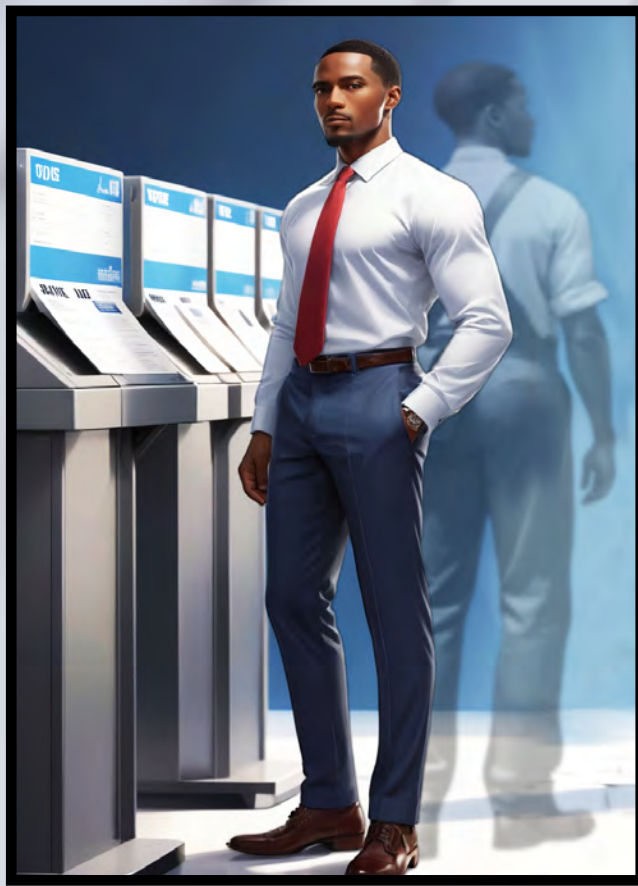
Just think of all the ex-military men and women who discovered what the U.S. and all its wars fought for corporations was actually about. Whose children wanted to follow in their footsteps and carry on the tradition, and they told their children, "NO! Don't do that! You'll honor me MORE by staying OUT of that mess!"

Let's imagine, as a parent, you treated yourself and family to a meal of, say "processed pork" (I just made that up because it sounds like crap), a couple times per year. And it became a tradition because Black people before you weren't allowed to have processed pork. So they fought and died in some cases to be able to get it. Then after our imaginary ancestors transitioned, they discovered that that processed

pork was directly responsible for their sickness, diminished quality of life, and subsequent early death.

What do you think they would say if they saw their assendants "honoring" them, buy twice a year eating the processed pork that the ancestors now know to be DEADLY? Would they be pleased? Or would they feel MORE honored by seeing their assendants turn away from what they KNEW was no good for them, and caused their ancestors suffering?

They (our ancestors), I believe, now SEE the entire system for what it is. A total scam, that was designed and built against Black people and that the vote not only means NOTHING but is harmful for our people because it takes our eye (even if only briefly), off of our own independence. Energy we could be using for our own self-sufficiency and self-reliance instead placed on a system, and people who have ZERO interest in our welfare and even LESS in our liberation, while simultaneously empowering, reinforcing, and validating THEIR system by our very participation IN it.





Does Voting Honor Our Ancestors? (continued) (From Iyapo's Substak and Medium)

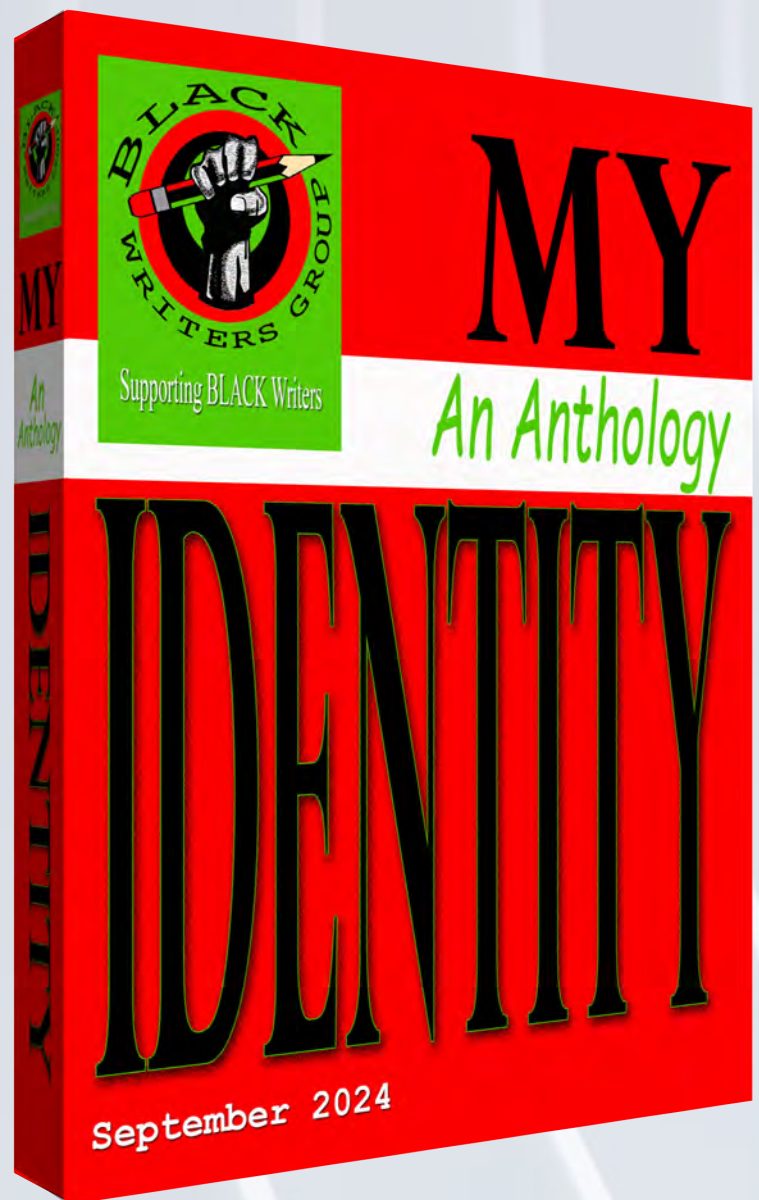
I will NEVER say the ancestors were wrong for what they did. They could only govern themselves according to what they knew at the time, and they believed all the lies of the so-called Declaration of Independence, and the so-called Bill of Rights and so on. There was pretty much no way for them to know any different. They gave their all for what they thought was right.

But now, we have ways to know better so we can do better.



MY IDENTITY ANTHOLOGY SERIES

Nine talented Black writers give you their insights in the this Black Writers Group debut publication: the *My Identity* 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

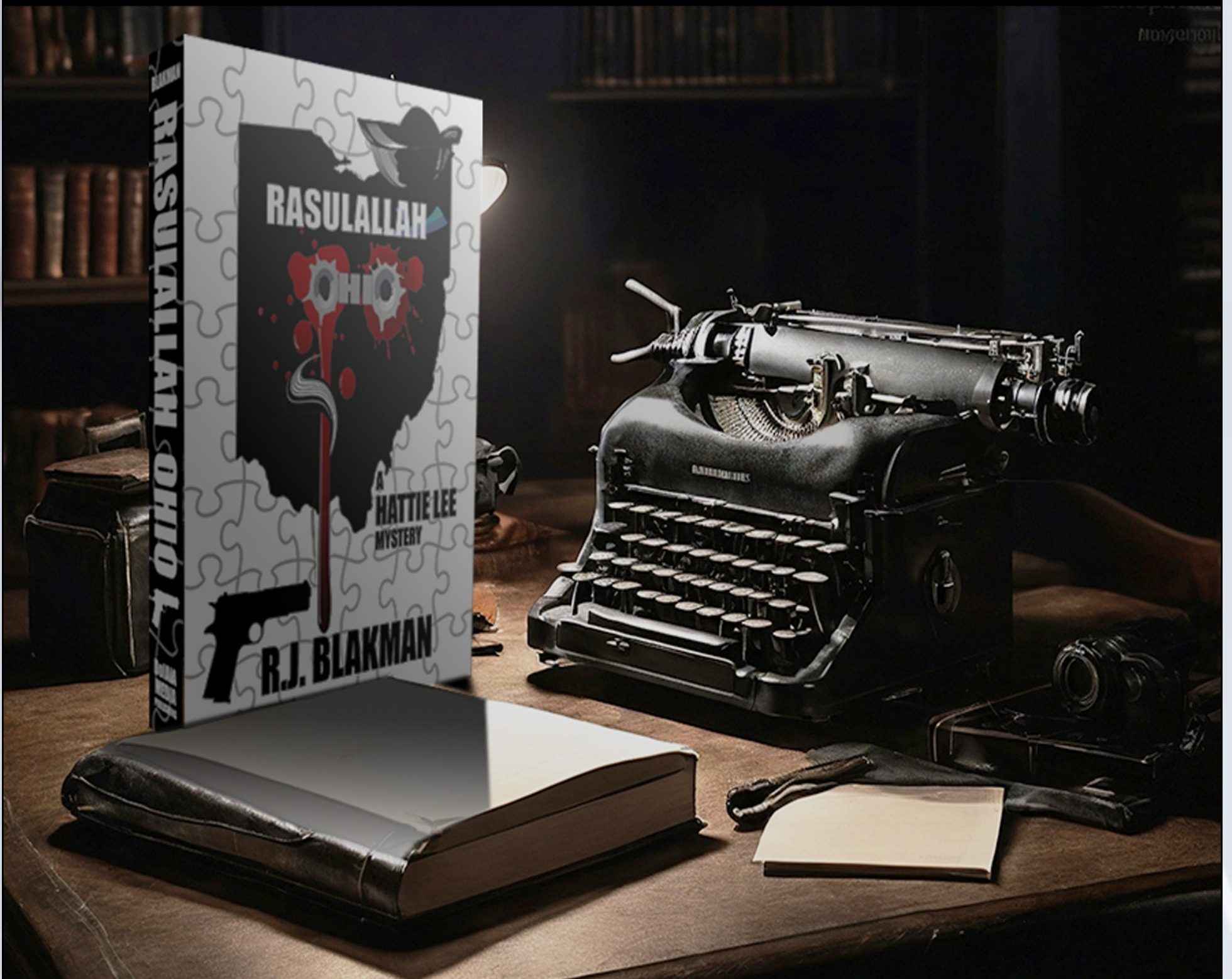
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1960s Ohio

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)



FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt

Tommy was only six years old... one of the little kids.

He felt that way most of the time, unless he was hanging around with his older brother Scott. Scott was eleven, and he was everything that Tommy figured he would be when he got older. Tommy's big brother was his best friend and even though Scott would shoo him away sometimes, Tommy always knew inside that his older sibling loved him.

They were buds.

Early Saturday morning Scott would take an excursion over Fear Bridge (only Scott called it that). Fear Bridge wasn't a bridge for people. It was a train track that was suspended some one hundred feet from the ground below. The bridge was specifically constructed for trains. The big deal about Fear Bridge was that when looking across from either side, it seemed like the 'bridge' was a solid walkway; in actuality each of the logs that sat on the two parallel girders that composed the tracks were about two feet apart. The wood comprising those logs was weather beaten and termite ridden.



And underneath each gap of about 2 feet was a drop of up to one hundred feet of air from Fear Bridge to the rail yard below. Surviving the journey over the bridge intact was the sport of the weekly ritual: crossing over Fear Bridge one courageous step at a time.

The first few steps weren't so bad. From the bridge, there was only about a five-foot drop down to good ol' terra firma.

It was after getting to the ninth track that the real challenge began. The drop from there was no less than fifteen feet but there was still ample time

to turn around and run back if a train came.

The twenty eighth log was the mid-point, and as far as Scott was concerned, the most dangerous part of Fear Bridge. If a train came for you at the twenty-eighth log there was no alternative but to put your head between your legs and kiss your ass goodbye.

Crossing Fear Bridge was something that Scott's mother had no idea her oldest son was doing once a week during the summer. This was simply



FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt (Continued)

one of the few stolen pleasures of Scott's boyhood.

The air was crisp, the morning was cool but not chilly. A perfect morning to walk across Fear Bridge. If he started at 8:30 in the morning, he would be across by 8:45 or 8:50, get back to the other side and be back home before breakfast. That's about what it was, 15 to 20 minutes of terror to make Scott feel exhilarated and alive. 15 to 20 minutes, although it seemed way longer when he was approaching the mid-point.

Scott stood by the side of the road and took in the length of the bridge. He looked around him at the trees and down at the rail yard that lay at the bottom of the canyon over which the bridge spanned. He saw a couple of the trains below and noticed the way the tracks crisscrossed each other. He had seen it many times, but this was the first time he ever really studied it. He would have to draw it sometime, he thought. Scott liked to look at everything; to take in every little detail of his surroundings. It added something to the experience

of walking the bridge.

Without ceremony Scott walked across the first five tracks. Nothing scary about that.

Five more steps.

Scott could feel his heartbeat starting to pick up.

Twenty four more steps would take him past the center of Fear Bridge.

Six more steps took Scott beyond the hill and now he was staring down at about a thirty foot drop. It

was a long drop, but it was still close enough to the side of the road that if he decided to turn around, it would take him less than half a minute to get to safety.

Seventeen more steps would take him to the center of Fear Bridge.

Seventeen steps that he took.

Scott looked down and felt as if he were standing suspended in the air on top of the Earth. And in a way he was. This point in his journey was





FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt (Continued)

always the most frightening and the most exhilarating for him. At this time, he would let out a cry akin to the one that he had heard on the Saturday morning Tarzan movies. Scott took a deep breath, cocked his head back and prepared to echo his triumph to the sky, but before he could let loose his cry, he heard a small voice behind him. The last voice that he had expected to hear and a voice that he would actually dread hearing at the center of the bridge.

“Hey Scott!” Came the matter-of-fact voice of his little brother, Tommy.



“What are you doing here?!” Scott yelled more out of surprise and fear than anger.

“I wanted to see what you were doing on the Saturday mornings when you left the house so early and didn’t come back until it was time to eat breakfast.” Tommy said innocently.

“You shouldn’t be up here Tom... you could get hurt!”

“I j-just wanted to see.” the younger brother insisted.

Scott was keenly aware that his younger brother seemed to be altogether oblivious to, or just plain unafraid of how high up they were.

“Well now you’ve seen!” Scott said now becoming cross. “So, you can just turn your little black butt around and get back home! As a matter of fact, I’d better take you back to the other side!”

Tommy stood there, a familiar look coming over his face—the look little children get before they burst into tears—as his eyes began to water.

“I-I’m sorry Scott. I j-j-just wanted to see w-w-w-where you went s-s-so that w-w-we c-c-c-could maybe haaaaang t-t-together t-today.”

Tommy was stuttering a lot now; he always stuttered when he got upset. All at once, Scott felt very small for the way that he had spoken to his little brother. Yeah, the kid could be a pest, but he was a really good little guy, and Scott’s best friend.

“Hey look,” Scott, said, softer now. “I’m sorry about yelling at you.



FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt (Continued)

It's just that it's really, REALLY dangerous up here and I don't want anything to happen to you."

"C-cause we're best f-f-f--friends?" Tommy said, now starting to lighten.

"The best!" Scott said, "That, and Momma would tear my butt up with a switch if I let something happen to you."

Out the corner of his eye Scott could see Tommy starting to smile a little bit. Tommy could tell that Scott was smiling too.

"Okay you little snot head..." Scott said turning fully around to face his brother and taking him by the hand, "We're going to go on back and get off the tracks and then you and me can go eat breakfast and then spend the whole rest of the day together."

"Forreal?!"

"Forreal, right now we need to head back. I sure ain't gonna take you all the way to the other side and then have to walk all the way back with

you too."

Scott and Tommy started walking back in the direction Tommy came from. Scott had taken this walk a million times before, but never with anyone else. He held his little brother's hand

and he let Tommy step on the track in front of him. Scott felt that the wood itself was iffy, but the tracks would definitely be able to support their combined weight, but he didn't want to take any chances. Every now and then Scott would look up at the trees and admire the way that the sun bounced off of them

as the lazy breeze made them sway as if they were dancing. He listened to the birds chirping mingling with the sound of little Tommy singing Ol' McDonald—Gee, this little boy definitely had no fear of heights! The older brother kept a close eye on each track to make sure his brother was taking solid steps. They walked very slowly... only having gone back about two tracks.

And Tommy sang,

Ol' McDonald had a farm, e i e i o,





FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt (Continued)

toot toot

*An' on this farm he had a cow, e i e i
o*

toot toot

With a moo moo here,

toot

And a moo moo there

toot toot

here a moo,

toot!

there a moo,

toot!

everywhere a...

TOOOOOOT!

The singing stopped.

“Scott!”

What was happening? Scott jerked his head up from looking at the rails. He had been so focused on their steps that he hadn't processed the train's

horn.

There was terror in the voice of his little brother. Scott's worst fears had become a reality. He noticed the tracks vibrating beneath his feet as he looked up and saw the specter of a train—a train that was growing larger with every passing moment!



For a split second he thought about every story he'd ever heard about someone being hit by a train and wondering how anyone could get caught by surprise by anything so massive and loud.

Now he knew.

Quickly taking survey of everything around him Scott held the hand of his little brother as tightly as he could while still trying to take steps toward safety on the rotting wood. There where steel beams to either side of the tracks. He might have been able to jump and hold on to one of the beams, but because of Tommy, Scott dismissed the possibility. Scott turned back around, thinking he should have tried to lift his little brother and stand him on the rail in front of him



FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt (Continued)

in the direction they were going to try to make a run for it—but it was too late for any of that now. They were ninety to a hundred feet off the ground and below was a rail yard of old trains, spikes, twisted, rusted steel and large rocks. The odds of surviving a fall onto that was non-existent.

Scott laid down on the tracks facing his little brother.

“We can’t outrun the train!” he yelled as he grabbed Tommy by the arms, “We’re gonna have ta lay here and let the train go over us!”

“Em’ s-s-s-scared!” Tommy yelled and started crying again.

“I’m scared too!” Scott yelled back.

“W-We g-g-g-gonna d-die?!” Tommy screamed to his big brother.

“We’re not gonna die! We just gotta lay here! Train’s gonna be loud and gonna shake us real bad, but it’ll go over us if we lay flat! Keep your head down!”

“We gonna d-die an’ w-w-we n-not gonna see mommy no more!”

“We ain’t gonna die!” Scott hollered now trying to be heard over the sound of the approaching locomotive.



Quickly Scott helped his brother lay across the rotting wood of the tracks, and then lay down facing him.

As Scott held tightly to his brother’s arms it came. The sound of the engine was deafening. The vibrations caused by the train were worse. Both of the boys were screaming

but nothing could be heard over the sound of the locomotive. Scott could see little Tommy’s mouth moving but drowned out by the sound, it was a terrifying pantomime.

Thankfully after the main engines had passed over the two boys the rest of the train wasn’t so bad... relatively. The noise and the vibrations were still present, but they were nowhere near the intensity they had been when the train first started passing over them.

In the midst of this horrible



FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt (Continued)

predicament, Scott felt a wave of sorrow flood him. Sorrow for his baby brother who was in this situation only because he wanted to spend some time with his older brother.

His best friend.

His hero.

As long as they kept their heads down, Scott thought, they would be all right. He tilted his head again, still touching the wood of the track and checked on Tommy. Scott could see the top of his brother's head, his cheek touching the wood of the track. "Good!" Scott yelled, "Just keep your head down buddy, everything's gonna be okay!" He wasn't sure if Tommy could hear him over the sound of the boxcars and the seven year old's own screaming, but he felt that he had to say something to try to calm Tommy down.

The train cars rolled over the boys for what seemed to be a lifetime. Scott had seen some fairly long trains in his short life. He was hoping that this wasn't one of them. Even if it were... it seemed the hard part was

over. The rail cars continued to roll and although it was loud and shaky Scott instinctively knew that there would be no surprises, and that the train would eventually go over them and be on its way to wherever it was going.



Tommy didn't move or raise his head. His actions were more out of fear than anything to do with his brother's warnings. The vibrations from the massive machine shook the boys but they were still able to hold on. The shaking became less, the noise got less intense, and finally... finally... the

train had gone over. The darkness that the locomotive had caused was now only a memory as the sunlight shined once again down upon the two brothers.

They lay there for a moment, still close to the track. Lying there as if the train were still on top of them. They lay there stunned, not quite able to believe that they made it through the entire ordeal with a case of ringing ears, the shakes, and thankfully, only a few scratches, a couple bruises, and one or two splinters that would need



FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt (Continued)

tending too with the help of a safety pin with a match burned tip.

“You okay?” Scott finally asked Tommy.

No answer.

“Are you alright?” Scott asked, more insistent this time.

“Y-yea... I’m ok-k-kay.” Tommy stuttered in a voice so low that Scott almost couldn’t catch it.

“We need to get outta here.”

“I started prayin’ Scott. I started p-prayin’ real hard just like Mommy t-t-taught us. I think that’s what saved us. God, I mean.”

“I believe that Buddy, now come on we gotta go.”

“I won’t t-tell Mommy about this. She would g-give us a woopin. It’ll b-be our secret.” Tommy said as he started to position himself to get up.

“Our secret.” Scott grinned still shaking.

“Know why?” Tommy said grinning back but with tear tracks still noticeable on his face.

“Cause we’re best friends.”

“Yeah!”



As Tommy started to get up Scott could hear the slight groan of the wood beneath him. He continued to hold Tommy’s hand but Scott felt in his bones that something wasn’t right.

“Don’t try to get up so fast Tomm...” The dry rotted wood gave way

beneath Tommy.

It happened so fast that Scott immediately lost hold of his brother’s hand. Tommy let out a yell as he felt his young body becoming weightless. Scott gasped in horror as he saw his little brother falling through the rails. He did the only thing he could do in the moment. With all of his energy Scott lunged forward, landing flat across three of the tracks that could have given way themselves, but Scott had no time to think about that. His one and only concern was for the life



FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt (Continued)

of his younger brother. Scott reached downward between the tracks that he lay on and the one that had just broken, he stretched as much as he could, but it was not enough.

At this point things seemed to slow down, and then stop. Scott had heard about people who would get into situations and would say how even though the actual event only took a second or two when they were in it, time just seemed to stand still.

Is that what was happening now?

Scott looked at Tommy.

Young Tommy was frozen... suspended in midair.

Scott also could not help but see the terror etched on his brother's face. He looked at Tommy's hand and then his own, only about an inch or so apart. He studied the landscape, everything. No. This was no mere feeling that time had stopped. Time had stopped actually. Time had stopped and for whatever reason, Scott's mental processes were still operating at

normal speed. It was then that Scott realized that if Tommy were frozen in midair like this, then perhaps there would be a chance to save him.

Scott tried to reach to bridge the inch or so gap.

His body would not react.

“Oh no!” Scott thought to himself, “I can't move!”

Just as suddenly as Scott formed his thought, he suddenly found himself able to move again, but now everything else was moving in real time as well—including his

brother. The last thing that Scott heard was the echo of his name as Tommy called out with the final scream of a hero worshiping, six-year-old boy.

* * * “...

She continued to take care of me, feed me, clothe me. She even continued helping me with my homework. But I knew... There was nothing overt or blatant about it, but I could tell. My mother never forgave me for what happened to Tommy—and I can't say as I blame her.”





FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt (Continued)

Sabrina Caldwell lifted her head from her fiancé’s chest and met her man’s dark brown eyes with her own, “You were just a child Scott. It wasn’t your fault.” She then, once again, placed her head softly on his chest.

“I know Sabie. Intellectually I know it. But in my heart—” Scott’s voice trailed off and he became silent for a moment and rubbed Sabrina’s shoulder. “She called me Tommy.” He said, just above a whisper. Again, Sabrina lifted her head slightly to look directly into the face of the man she loved.



“What? Who called you Tommy?”

“Mom. When she was on her deathbed. The doctor, my uncle Rich (her older brother), and me were in the room. She spoke to Uncle Rich and asked him to take care of ‘Tommy’ for her. Me. Admittedly she was in the midst of cognitive decline, but she knew enough to know who her brother was. Even the doctor. But she didn’t acknowledge me, any more than to make sure I was taken care of, because she thought I was Tommy.”

This was the first Sabrina had ever

heard pertaining to this particular detail of his mother’s passing. It was something Scott thought about often, but never allowed himself to say out loud.

Sabrina didn’t know what to say. She offered the inadequate: “I’m sure your mother still loved you very much. In her mental state before she transitioned, she probably was still dealing with the heart ache of losing her youngest child. That being said, a mother’s love is seldom zero sum. Just because she experienced that pain did not mean that she no longer loved you, Scott.”

Scott knew what his fiancé said was likely the case. He wondered if the truth was that he was the one who could never forgive himself and projected that onto his mother. He pondered it for a moment, then shook his head slowly. It was as if he had resigned himself to the fact that he would never be able to let go the guilt which had plagued him since the day he watched his little brother die.



FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt (Continued)

Scott walked onto the campus and the science facilities early, looking to work a bit on research before he had to teach his afternoon class. He did research in the areas of astrophysics and quantum theory. When he was young, he was no math whiz. As a matter of fact, when he was a child, the furthest thing from the mind of Doctor Scott Stranford was dealing with heavenly bodies, probability and outcome, temporal displacement, temporal paradoxes, and such. Scott was a fairly talented artist in his childhood and had originally had his mind set on becoming a cartoonist.



All that flew out the window when his baby brother fell to his death—but not without first, literally hanging, unmoving in the air for several seconds.

Scott Stranford was by no means a “natural” mathematician or scientist. Everything he learned was fought for tooth and nail, even though he graduated at the top of his undergraduate class and had no problem getting admitted to several

Ph.D. programs. Each new idea, each new concept, each new theorem was more difficult to grasp than the one preceding it. But he managed to earn his doctoral degree because of an ‘ace in the hole’ he would rather not have had. Though his education had given him a firm grasp on much more than the rudiments of what he wanted to know, he was determined to get to some next level thinking necessary to crack the secrets of what he needed to know.

Scott’s original theories were either pooh poohed or dismissed altogether by the majority of his peers, but the quality of his work was respected and useful. Fortunately for Scott a brilliant astrophysicist, Dr. Akumbe Swatha, became aware of Scott’s work from reading a few papers on which Scott was the author. In each one Scott referenced his own original theories regarding “walls and waves” of stasis or ‘frozen’ time in some way. Professor Swatha saw something deeper in Scott’s ideas. With a few clicks on the web, Swatha discovered a Black man, like himself, who was existing and operating within a field that was far from immune to



FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt (Continued)

the same prejudices and roadblocks that a system of white supremacy creates for people of their kind at every socio-economic status and level of education.

Swatha also recognized obsession when he saw it.

The seasoned astrophysicist reached out to Scott and in time became a mentor.

The older academic soon discovered that Dr. Stranford was brilliant in his way. And that he seemed to possess a wisdom far beyond his years, or even that of his own mentor. The hindrance Swatha saw when it came to Scott—if it could even be called that—was that his mind was extremely visual and abstract. This was due to the fact Scott was in his heart, if not in practice, still an artist. Swatha was a scientist who saw and celebrated the natural relationship of art and science where some saw conflict. So Swatha had a special way of opening Stranford's mind to new possibilities by framing and reframing ideas, theories, and concepts in the visual and abstract ways Scott could

more readily grasp, understand, and relate to. Thus became the mission of Professor Swatha, a mission that met with spectacular success.

It wasn't until after two years of their acquaintance Scott explained



the truth to his mentor as to why he had chosen a course in life that would leave him grasping and fighting for every inch in terms of understanding his fields of science, when he could have likely glided along as a cartoonist or illustrator.

Every time Scott thought back to the incident on

the train tracks, his mind played and replayed the way Tommy hung in the air and he, with outstretched hands was still unable to reach out, grab him, and change his brother's fate. For years Scott thought for sure that it had only seemed, in the moment, as if Tommy were hanging in the air, and that he should have been able to reach out and catch his arm. Much the way people will sometimes describe seeing a broom handle leaning, then slowly falling in the direction of fine crystal, or an irreplaceable vase sitting on a three-legged table next



FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt (Continued)

to the falling broom. They all swear they should have just been able to reach out and grab the broom, because in their perception, it was all happening in slow motion.

About three or so years after the disaster on the train tracks, Scott sat in his bedroom at his desk, facing the open bedroom window. Math, Science, English and Social Studies books were pushed to his extreme right; drawing pad, pencils, erasers and markers were directly in front of him, as he drew cartoon characters. He looked up from his work and looked out the window for a moment, and then realized after he did that he was frozen in place.

Just as he had been during the accident.

He saw a bird, mid wing flap, in the air, and an airplane in the distance. The bird's wings were up but the bird hung in the air—motionless, without any kind of forward momentum. The same was true for the airplane. It hung suspended in the air like it was part of some weird stringless mobile.

Just as when his brother died, Scott tried to move, but could not. He was absolutely as frozen as everything in the environment around him. This time however, the paralysis did not last for mere moments. Scott did not know how long it was, but in his mind, it felt like it had to have been a few days.

It was one of the most horrific experiences of his life, rivaled only by the death of his brother.

As he stared out the window, Scott eventually noticed that the wings of the bird were in a downward instead of

upward position. The bird itself looked like it had traveled a couple feet. He knew that the bird had been moving in front of him, but in the way the hands of a clock move when watched and your attention isn't focused. Likewise, the plane was also in another position, noticeably further from where it was when the paralysis began. He noticed that his own mouth was open, and something was coming from his throat that sounded like a series of loud, ticking noises. The entire thing was beyond terrifying for the fourteen year old.





FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt (Continued)

As suddenly as it started, the bird darted past Scott's window and out of his field of vision, the plane continued on its trajectory, and Scott was finally able to properly scream. He screamed and yelled for help. His mother quickly bursting into his room, "Scott what's happening?! Are you alright Baby?! I could hear you screaming all the way downstairs!"

In tears Scott explained to his mother what had happened, how the whole world stopped for a few days. "Baby, nothing like that happened. You just came up here a little while ago to do your homework." She looked at the desk and the books shoved to the side, and the cartoons in the middle of the desk. Smiling, she said, "I was just about to start cooking dinner. You remember that, Scottie? I haven't even had the chance to get started yet. You haven't lost any days. You probably just put your head down for a minute, went to sleep at this desk and had some kind of nightmare."

Scott wanted to insist that what happened was real. But, it was obvious

his mother hadn't experienced it the way he had, and that the time he perceived to have passed, couldn't have passed if he hadn't even been sitting long enough for his mother to have started their dinner. He didn't know what to think, but he felt it better to just drop it for now.



Over the years, Scott would periodically experience the "time freezes". Scott realized that—evidently—he was the only one within his circle and possibly the world to notice it was happening. The length between the time freezes

was unpredictable but each one was longer than the one before it. Scott prepared as best he could for the events, but once in them, especially the first one he had that felt like years of being frozen, it was all he could do to maintain his sanity.

He came to discover a benefit; the time freezes turned out to be a huge help in his studies. He had literal years and then decades to concentrate on homework and problems he, at first, struggled with. After years of contemplation, ideas, problems, and



FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt (Continued)

connections became crystal clear. To those around him he grasped concepts with ease, but only he knew the truth. All things being equal, he would rather have not been forced to deal with his studies in such a way.

When he explained the entire thing to his mentor, Dr. Swatha, his story and the details of his many experiences with his frozen heartbeats, the professor, not known for being the most demonstrative of men, believed the younger man wholeheartedly, and embraced him in tears. “That must be absolute torment for you.” Swatha said. “It would be tantamount to being paraplegic but having full function of your mental faculties—something I have often thought about and imagined to be a horror. But it is far worse for you. Unlike someone like a Stephen Hawking, where time continues to move forward and, albeit through assistance, he was able to find new forms of stimuli. So, Hawking could attain daily input. In your case, all you have is what you’ve already acquired, and you must hold on to that and in some way let that be your



full range of experience—thinking upon it, pondering it, ripping it apart and reassembling it in your mind—until the wave passes.”

Finally, Scott had found someone who may not have been consciously experiencing the time freezes, but at least had some kind of understanding of it. Together over the course of a couple hundred years (from Scott’s vantage point), his mentor helped him develop, explore and maximize coping and preparation strategies for when the waves hit.

And to develop a plan for what to do when the final wave came, which could possibly last for thousands of years.

* * *

“Well. I, for one, find your research very intriguing Doctor I’m glad we’ll get to work together more closely. I’m hoping we’ll be able to collaborate. I’ve read all of your papers and have spent time in your lab. But I’m still unclear on the full mechanics of it. Do you think it might have some



FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt (Continued)

applications for time travel?”

“I don’t know if time travel is achievable or not.” Scott said to his new colleague, Byron O’Donnal, who was some twenty-five years his senior, but looked far older because of his white hair, white beard and slightly loose, extremely pale, pinkish skin. Scott was reticent, as always to talk about his passion. But, Scott pushed forward, nursing a small bit of hope. “What I do know is that time is localized. You cannot separate it from space just like Einstein surmised... they are one and the same. Imagine time travel was possible and you somehow went, say, twenty years into the past. What effect would that have upon the universe? We’ve all read and seen science fiction movies about people traveling through time, and it seems like not only their immediate surroundings, but the entire universe has changed. But just how much of an impact would little ol’ you have on a body in space, like the Andromeda galaxy for instance?”



“I think I’m following... but...”

“Ok... let’s say you stop the JFK assassination, or you kill Hitler or better yet, Leopold. Those ripples in time would change things and some might say alternate timelines and universes would be created from that. But would they? When it comes to ripples in time, how much of an impact does it have upon the universe itself? How far out would a ripple in time expand from ground zero? From the way I look at it and calculate it, such actions might have widespread and far reaching consequences here on Earth... but what would it mean to anything beyond our own solar system, or anything past the Kuiper Belt? My guess is it would have about as much impact as the effect you would have upon all the oceans of the world as if you threw a rock into the ocean from a beach in California.”

“Ok... fair. But what does that have to do with this research? You aren’t working on time travel anyway.”

“No. Not anymore. The point is that I discovered that time is localized.



FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt (Continued)

Ever since I was young, I have seen time stop. I would tell people around me about it and they couldn't see it. At first, I thought I was losing my mind, but then I decided to understand the math and science of what was going on around me so that I might figure out what was happening."

Scott typed into his computer keyboard and showed Byron some star charts as well as other live satellite feeds from space.

"In time I was able to plot these waves." Scott said gesturing toward the live feeds. "When I look at these charts and feeds, I can see them clear as day. They look like walls. Walls that spread the width of the galaxy or wider, and they are moving through our galaxy and solar system. I can see the walls that have passed, and I can see the ones that are coming. They are in different intervals and of different thicknesses. Look at these last two. They are the VERY last of them before they leave our galaxy altogether and continue moving through the universe.

"They will be here shortly. I have

learned to measure them... this first one will slow things down to where ten or fifteen minutes will be the equivalent of eight or nine hundred years. And then there's this last one... I can barely see the back of it... but it DOES have an end. This

one will cause the same effect, but it will last for centuries... and possibly for thousands of years, I have no way to calculate it though."

"Wait... slow down fella! I don't see it."

"Come again?"

"Scottie... I don't see it!

You keep pointing to these 'walls' of time we're passing through in space, or that are passing through us... or whatever they're doing, and I don't see them."

Scott slammed his hand onto the hard metal table next to him. Frustrated at yet another dead end. "Damn it! No one else in the scientific community can see these things! It was a slim chance, but I was hoping that someone—ANYONE—who understood the science would be able to see them. Especially because of





FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt (Continued)

the overlap in our work, I was sure you could see in the feeds. But even the live feeds don't make a difference! You can't see them. Professor Swatha, as helpful as he'd been, said he was unable to see them! He did say that perhaps my condition was the reason I could see them and no one else. Eventually I ended up confirming that." Scott calmed himself and brought up some more of his notes and research. "Ok Byron. Look at these other models I worked up!"

Byron studied Scott's work. He could grasp the quantum nature of it, as well the fact that even though it was purely theoretical—to him—the math definitely worked out.

"See Byron? What I'm telling you is that this thing has been happening in waves, and each time I'm getting better at predicting when they will hit, and the duration, which have become progressively longer. It has been happening for a long time and is still happening."

"Just so I'm clear. You're saying that there are instances in which time has

actually stopped?"

"Maybe not stopped altogether per se' but slowed to a rate where for all practical purposes it could be considered stopped. Because of what happened to me, I started trying to

find as much information as I could about this phenomenon. Even in the Bible there is an account in the book of Joshua that some biblical scholars claim indicates that time stopped. The Bible says:

'Then Joshua spoke to the Lord on the day when the Lord delivered the Amorites before the children of Israel; and he said in the sight of Israel: 'Sun, stand still [dom] upon Gibeon; and you, Moon, in the valley of Ayalon.'

"That is in Joshua 10:12. The scholars interpret that to mean that time stood still."

"It could be describing an eclipse too."

"True ... but knowing what I know, I believe that is the only ancient written account of time freezing.





FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt (Continued)

There have been more recent accounts in the writings of ancient explorers, travelers, and others from all around the world. I've never told anyone what I'm about to tell you... but the last wave that hit? It lasted over ninety years by my estimation."

"No way! If something like that were happening, someone on Earth would have noticed it besides you. Even if you do say most people do not experience it."

"Who says others haven't experienced it? I have actually spoken with several people from around the world who have had my same experiences. Remember when I said the sighting of the waves confirmed what my mentor said? Well, when I showed images to those non-scientists, they all saw each wave very clearly. When I came across these people, all of them were in one form of psych-ward, therapy, or another. I spoke with them about their experiences, and I leveled with them about what I concluded was happening, and that unfortunately it was going to keep happening... through to the final wave which will

be anywhere from several centuries to several thousand years... I can't be certain."

"Well, how did they react to that?"

"They have put together a support group for people who are experiencing it that includes family, friends and loved ones who believe them. Unfortunately, several of them have committed suicide. Of the survivors, we stay in constant communication with each other. Through Professor Swatha, I learned to store knowledge and then spend time during freezes reflecting upon it. Now we teach each other to find our passions and to store up knowledge in those areas, be they academic, artistic, spiritual or what have you. Then we all can do the same thing I was taught to do during the events and when they are in the midst of the waves."

"That sounds like it's very positive Scott, though I'm sorry to hear that some felt such despair that they took their own lives. Surely, even for as horrible as that all sounds... it can't





FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt (Continued)

be so bad that one should desire to end their own life.”

“You wouldn’t say that if you ever experienced it.”

“Maybe not. But I have to admit I’m still not totally convinced that what you are saying is actually happening. Everything slowing down to the point where it would take a drop of rain hundreds or thousands of years to hit the ground from the sky... and the present physics of it still working as if it were in what we know as real time right now? It’s beyond belief.”

“It’s happening Byron. It is time... a different movement of time. A time that maintains all the characteristics of the time in which we are presently moving. The physical laws of motion, inertia... everything... just at a much slower rate. Very few of the population notice, but for the people like me, everything stops and moves slowly, the sights, the sounds, everything.”

“When was the last event?”

“About three months ago.”

“Three months ago?! And how long did you say it lasted again?”

“By my calculations, a little over ninety years.”



“So, you’re telling me that these waves are hitting and the last one lasted over ninety years?! What were you doing all that time?”

“I’ve been able to calculate with a fairly high degree of accuracy when they will hit and for how long... all except for the length of this last one that is on the way. As for the event that just occurred, I soundproofed my bedroom ahead of time, closed the drapes. Then I just laid on my bed at home with my hands on my stomach and my eyes closed and let it happen. Not like I had any choice in the matter. Then for the ninety some odd years I meditated, considered the meaning of life, thought about the physics of what was happening and why only a handful of people were able to recognize it. And before you even say it, seeing as you don’t



FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt (Continued)

even think something like this could or should make someone suicidal... yes, there were times I thought I was going to lose my mind. But thanks to my mentor and his training I was able to reasonably deal with it.”

“Why would you soundproof your room and close the drapes?”

“You have to understand ... the physics of everything remains exactly the same as in what we know right now as ‘real time’. Throw a baseball through a glass window, it still shatters exactly the same way as it would in what we perceive now as “real time”. It might just take several decades, or a few centuries for the ball and the shards of glass to hit the floor, bounce, spin, slide. That’s why I try to so carefully to isolate, finding places both in this country and abroad with peaceful surroundings and as little unnatural sensory input as possible. Say a fire engine goes by during the wave. To you, whose body and mind are both in sync with the time wave, you would experience it as any other fire truck zooming past to get to a fire. For me, depending upon the



characteristics of the particular wave, to my ear, and my mind the sound of that fire truck could last decades or more at the same intensity. Same thing for nighttime and the possibility of some car headlights, or the sun rising, or setting being caught in my eye. I got caught like that once before, I don’t ever want that to happen again. It was horrifying.”

“That sounds like a nightmare Scott.” Byron then looked over at something on Scott’s desk resembling a motorcycle helmet, but with circuitry and obvious tech built into it.” Hey, this is my

first time noticing that. What is that thing? Some kind of VR setup?”

Scott walked over to the desk on which the helmet sat, picked it up, walked back over to his colleague and handed it to him. “No ... not virtual reality. I’m hoping this might work as a cure.”

Byron turned the helmet over, hefted it in his hands and, looked at it inside and out searching for some tech that looked familiar to him. “A cure? A cure for what?” he said.



FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt (Continued)

“A cure for the problem we’ve been talking about. I’m trying to develop something that will change the brainwaves of the few of us on Earth who are experiencing these time freezes so that we are in sync with the flow of time as it happens during the events just like everyone else in the world.”

“So, you have to make one of these or each of you?”

“No, it doesn’t work that way. I, and the others afflicted with this problem, would only need to put it on once. The helmet will basically adjust the alpha waves within our brains, and that would put us in synchronization. Look Byron, there are two more of these waves coming. Two final waves. Based on my calculations, they’ll be hitting at around 8:38 and 9:56 eastern standard time respectively next Tuesday evening. The first one is going to last, for those of us afflicted, for close to eight hundred, twenty some odd years. The one after that—which will be the last one ever—may last several hundred years or several thousand, I have no way of knowing.



But by the width of it, I’m guessing thousands. But however long they last, if those who experience it the way I do can make it through those two, it will finally be over. Though we and everything around us will not have aged much physically, those of

us afflicted, depending upon knowledge we have already accumulated, and our abilities to form new thoughts and theories... our minds will be hundreds or thousands of years older. We have the potential to be far more advanced, and with our newly gained insights and knowledge we may really be able to do some

things that will make this a better world. That’s the upside to it if we want to force one... but it is actually the worst case scenario. Best case: the helmets work, and I can get everyone synchronized.”

“Anything I can do to help?” Byron asked.

“Maybe just double check some of my data and conclusions. And pray.”

* * *



FROZEN HEARTBEATS - Excerpt (Continued)

The following morning Scott walked long frozen existence. Jiggling the key in the keyhole of the cabinet, Scott finally got the lock to turn. He flung the doors open and gasped when he saw the empty shelf upon which had once sat his and a small group's slim hope of salvation.

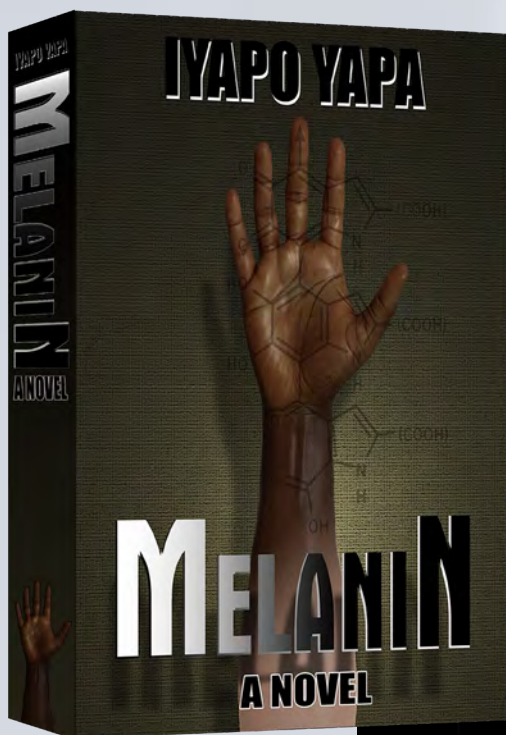
His journals, discs and laptops were all gone. In a panic he ran to the cabinet where he kept the helmet; the helmet he had spent years working on; the one that he'd hoped would prevent himself and a few others on the planet from experiencing the horror of a centuries and millennia-



key in the keyhole of the cabinet, Scott finally got the lock to turn. He flung the doors open and gasped when he saw the empty shelf upon which had once sat his and a small group's slim hope of salvation.

If you're enjoying this tale of time and tragedy, you can find the entire story on Amazon by

clicking the image on any page of this excerpt!

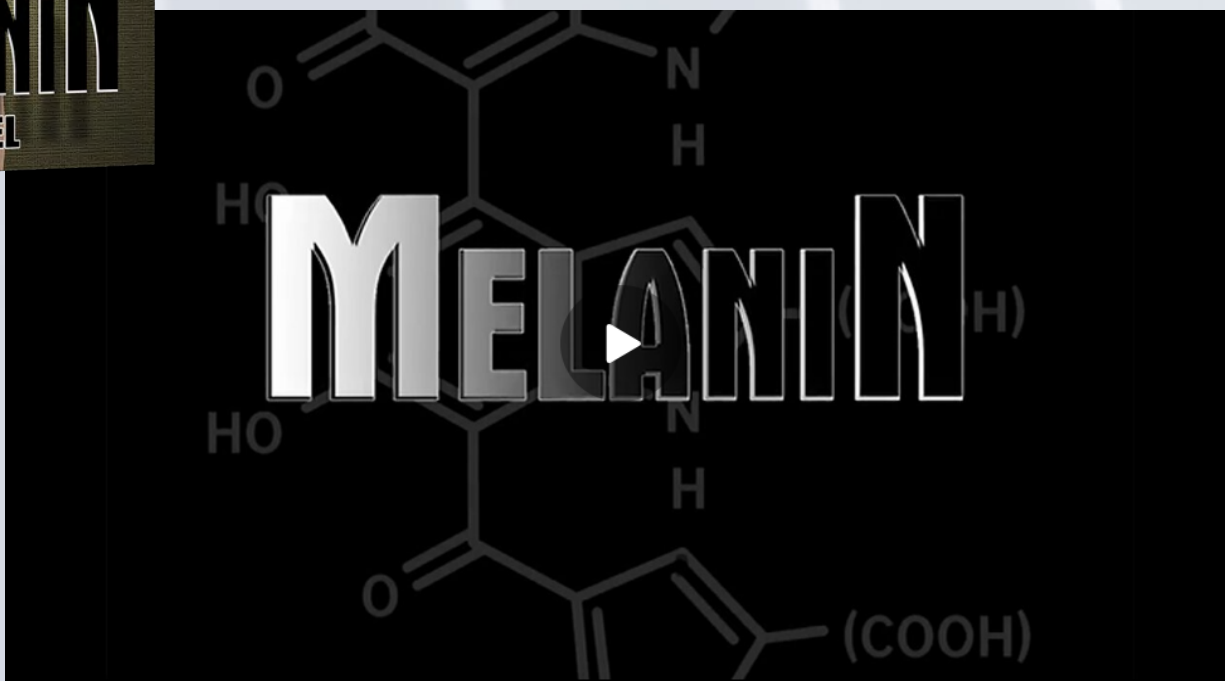


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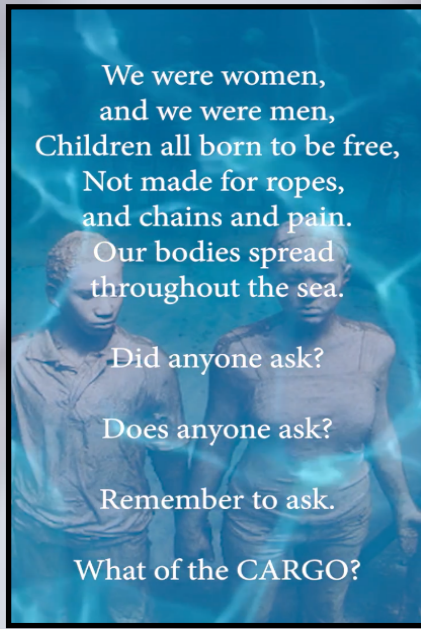


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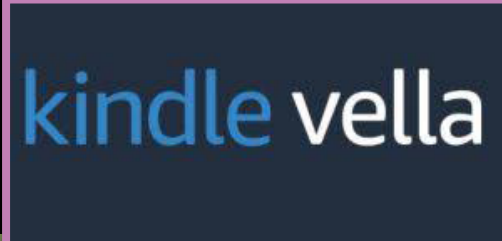
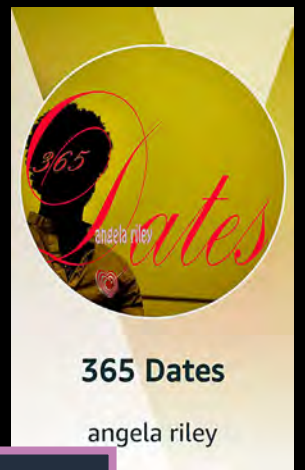
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RETURN of the SPACE TRADERS: An Introduction

(Based on the short story *The Space Traders* by Prof. Derrick Bell)

In 1995 HBO produced an anthology series in the vein of others like *The Twilight Zone* and *The Outer Limits* which preceded it. The name of the series was *Cosmic Slop* and was a BIPOC answer to the kinds of shows that came before it. The series was hosted by the producer, musician George Clinton of the musical funk group Parliament Funkadelic fame.

The series only ran one season, but one of the offerings made viewers of all races stand up and take notice, a gem titled “The Space Traders”. The first contact story revolved around aliens who were only known as Space Traders, coming to Earth and making a deal with the United States, specifically, to solve its problems like the deficit, the national debt, energy shortages and more. For what were they asking in return?

Black people.

ALL the Black people in the United States.

However, it wasn’t just any Black

people they wanted. The aliens made it very clear that there was a specific kind of Black person they required.



The Black people the aliens sought in trade were required to have at least 2500 mg of melanin in their skin per square cm (in other words any Black person who would be too dark to pass the infamous “paper bag test”).

Without spoiling the film for those who haven’t seen or heard of it, I can say that it was entertaining, thought provoking and a bit disturbing to watch. It wasn’t until after I’d seen the short movie for the first time in 2021 that I got curious about whether the story I’d just watched was based on a written work.

A quick Google search revealed that “The Space Traders” was in fact based upon a short story by the same name. It took me a little time to track down the written work, but I finally found it in an anthology book of speculative fiction titled *Dark Matters*, that was compiled and edited by Sheree B. Thomas. The short story written by



RETURN of the SPACE TRADERS: An Introduction (Continued)

(Based on the short story *The Space Traders* by Prof. Derrick Bell)

the late attorney and professor Derrick Bell, was every bit as entertaining, thought provoking and disturbing as the film that was derived from that work.

The show adhered very closely to the source material, with a few minor changes that I could understand as it was made for a television audience. The most striking change, however, was the end of the story, which interestingly both followed closely the source material, while simultaneously deviating from it.

Since the publication of “*The Space Traders*”, the film and text have been used as the subject matter for college civics, philosophy, and sociology courses, and even today delivers a gut punch to those who watch the film, and even more so read the short story.

The story ruffled a few feathers. It seems there were a bunch of people who were none too pleased with the story and what it alluded to. Especially the implication that the Jewish community fought to prevent Black people from being handed over to the

space traders, not because of some humanitarian or altruistic motivation, but because they knew that if all the Black people were gone from the planet, they would be the new group at the bottom of the totem pole.



When I saw the short feature for the first time I remember repeating to myself over and over, “This is like something I would write!” After reading the short story, my reaction was the same if not more so. I commented to my wife

that I was extremely satisfied with it, (she wasn’t), and that, for me, it was not only the right way for the story to have ended, but, arguably, the only way it should have ended. That said, the story left for both of us, a lot of unanswered questions—questions I would love to have answered, and a continuation that I feel the story deserves, if not demands.

When I decided to write a continuation of “*The Space Traders*,” I talked to my wife about getting the rights to it, or how best to navigate writing the story, but not getting it tied up in legalities.

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RETURN of the SPACE TRADERS: An Introduction (Continued)

(Based on the short story *The Space Traders* by Prof. Derrick Bell)

She suggested that I write it as a piece of “fan fiction”. When she suggested it, the snob in me immediately came out and I told her I wasn’t interested in writing fan fiction. I tended to look down my nose at people who wrote it—just as many people who are published through traditional means, look down on authors who self-publish our work—of whom, I’m one.



My original goal was to publish it in my upcoming anthology series, *Further Journeys into the Paradigm VOID: Volume Two*. However, the more we discussed it, the more publishing the work as a piece of fan fiction appealed to me. She researched and found that as a standard work, I would not be able to profit from it or put it up for sale, which automatically made inclusion in my next anthology a no-go.

What I could do, she suggested, would be to make the story a free giveaway when people signed up for my free magazine *Reading and Writing in the DARK*. The original giveaway was my hit short story “Moeneesus The Oak Tree”—which is now part of

the *Paradigm Void* anthology book series.

As I stated earlier, “The Space Traders” short story and “The Space Traders” short movie are relatively the same, though they do have a few parts where they deviate.

I have decided that as I approach this story, I will be using elements from both works where they fit and make the most sense to me, and

of course service the narrative in the best way in my opinion.

So, if you haven’t read “The Space Traders” or watched it, I would suggest you do so first, because you will need at least a cursory introduction to the story in order to understand my “Return Of The Space Traders,” which picks up where the others end. The short movie can be viewed free on YouTube and the short story appears in the anthology book *Dark Matters*.

A reading of the short story can also be found on Linetta Alexander Islam’s YouTube channel.

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RETURN of the SPACE TRADERS: An Introduction (Continued)

(Based on the short story The Space Traders by Prof. Derrick Bell)

Though “Return of the Space Traders” will be offered as the thank you gift for new subscribers-

never fear. As a loyal subscriber to the *Reading and Writing in the DARK Magazine*, you are already entitled to “The Return of the Space Traders” and any other new thank you story that will take the place of a prior gift. Be on the lookout for an email informing you of its release and to how to

download the PDF!



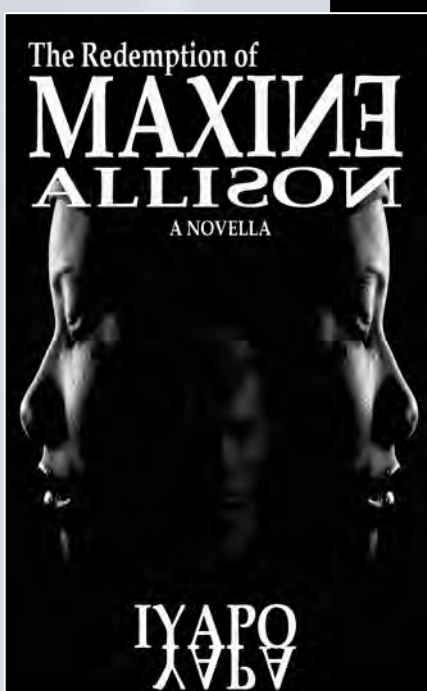
So sit back and enjoy the show(s), and then get ready to read on and find out about how the chaos heightens as the Space Traders return in my story!

(Pro Tip: Since you have read this article, you can skip the opening introduction to the story and go directly to to the story itself.)



COMING SOON!

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



Is it BEST to DIVEST?

Maxine Allison thought so.

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

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

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

or is there?

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

READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors



Here is your August 2024 Crossword Puzzle!

This month we have a maze for you. But like it says on the cover, don't smile so quickly. This is a pretty difficult maze. But hey, the FUN is in the CHALLENGE is it not? Puzzles are a great way to pass time and to also keep the mind sharp, so this one will have you thinking, and that's a good thing! Put on some Maze as you figure it out as this month's puzzle is dedicated to the late, great Frankie Beverly! As always, the solution to last month's puzzle is at the back of the magazine. HAVE FUN!

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

**OCTOBER PUZZLE
MAZE!**

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

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



Everybody needs a hobby!
Mine is playing and composing MUSIC!
For me, playing and composing is one of the most relaxing
and fulfilling 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!



**AVAILABLE
NOW!**
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TO THE RETAILER



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

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

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

In *PARADIGM VOID*, Iyapo explores things like:

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

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

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Black Writers & cultural Exploration Retreat



Take a "Kwanzaa Pause" in...

caribbean COSTA RICA !!!

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

REGISTER NOW!
www.forblackus.com

QUESTIONS?

Contact Retreat Facilitator, angela

email: travel@forblackus.com

or

WhatsApp or Telegram

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



Praise for Obama and Harris?!

I start this by saying I'm not a Republican, nor Democrat, nor Independent nor do I adhere to ANY U.S. political party or ideology. I'm a political atheist.

That said.

Every time I hear one of our people praise Obama or put him on a pedestal, I throw up in my mouth a little bit. The System of White Supremacy (SoWS) used his "Black face in a high place" to push through white supremacist and globalist agendas that no white person (ESPECIALLY



a conservative Republican) would have been able to push through because our people would have stood against them. Caveat: since Clinton was a so-called liberal Democrat who TALKED a good "I feel your pain" game to Black people... Black people sat quietly as Clinton signed his own "Clinton Crime Bill" in 1994. Clinton's initiative went even FURTHER than Biden's crime bill from 1993 (which included 3 strikes etc.) in order to prove that even though he was a democrat, he could be tougher on crime than any

republican. (Translation: He could be tougher on BLACK PEOPLE than any republican). Those combined bills were responsible for putting THOUSANDS of our people in cages for minor offenses (if there was an offense at ALL).

By the way... it was TRUMP who signed the FIRST STEP ACT in the second year of his presidency. That was the legislation that started getting our people RELEASED who were locked up and had the keys thrown away because of the crime bills of Biden and Clinton. The

First Step Act helped people (mostly Black), who were in cages and got them released. (Something Obama wouldn't do.) But shhhhhh. Don't tell anybody. Trust and believe... the media won't. And don't get it twisted... I'm NO Trump supporter. I'm just stating some facts.

In 2012 Obama suspended habeas corpus (You know. That pesky little law that is supposed to protect Americans from someone in the government pulling them out of bed in the middle of the night and then



Praise for Obama and Harris?! (continued)

detaining them indefinitely in cages without having to level ANY charges or give them due process.) Yes... OBAMA signed that. (The last president to do that was Lincoln after the Civil War... and that was temporary. And even THEN it was deemed unconstitutional and got pushback.)

It is over a decade later and that American protection is STILL gone and will probably never return. But since it was Mr. “smile at my people, dance for them on Ellen, and offer them NOTHING by way of policies specific to help Black people in any significant way” it was alright.

We either didn't pay attention or didn't care that at the behest of Hillary Clinton, he was responsible for the most successful country on the continent of Afrika at that time (Libya that had free education, free health care, free wi-fi, literacy rate rising etc. with a goal of a United Afrika that was on the gold standard), having its leader, Muammar Gaddafi, assassinated. Thus, turning it into what is now a failed state with open slave markets and severe poverty.



But let's look at the upside... Obama DID bail Wall Street out of a financial housing collapse that THEY directly (and criminally) caused. (No one went to prison or was punished behind that by the way.) Thousands and thousands of regular people lost their homes and ended up on the street though, and he basically said to them “Gee... it sucks to be you.”

I guess you can't have everything.

And don't get me started about the fact that under his administration so many bombs were dropped on Black and Brown people by way of drone strikes that they LITERALLY ran out of bombs. But hey, what would one expect from a Nobel Peace Prize winner who said, “I'm really good at killing people.”

But dang... he was a pretty good dancer, wasn't he?!

I did NOT “cherry pick” these references. PLEASE by all means go research for yourself what I've just written and check different sources. You'll find that all this information is on point.



Praise for Obama and Harris?! (continued)

Also, this isn't to say Obama was any better or worse than any other president. I'm saying there is NO DIFFERENCE, they are ALL equally corrupt. EQUALLY! (That is except, I suspect, JFK, who I believe was the only American president who was worth a nickel. Why do I believe that? Because the American government, the CIA, had him assassinated. That pretty



much tells me everything I need to know).

I digress.

What makes someone like an Obama or Harris more dangerous to our people is that they serve as Trojan Horses.

Come on... we know the deal: "All skin folk, ain't KIN folk."



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

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

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



READING and WRITING in the

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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.

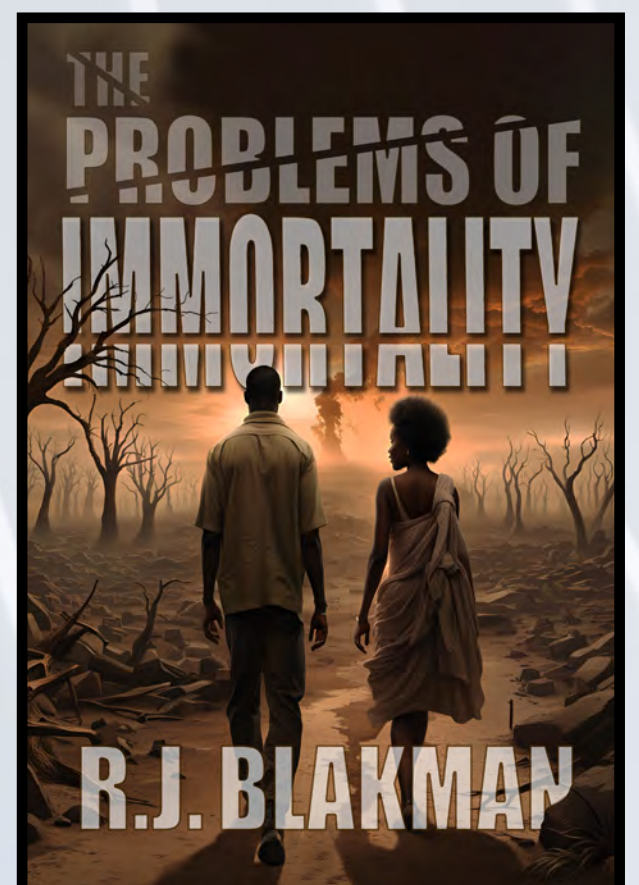
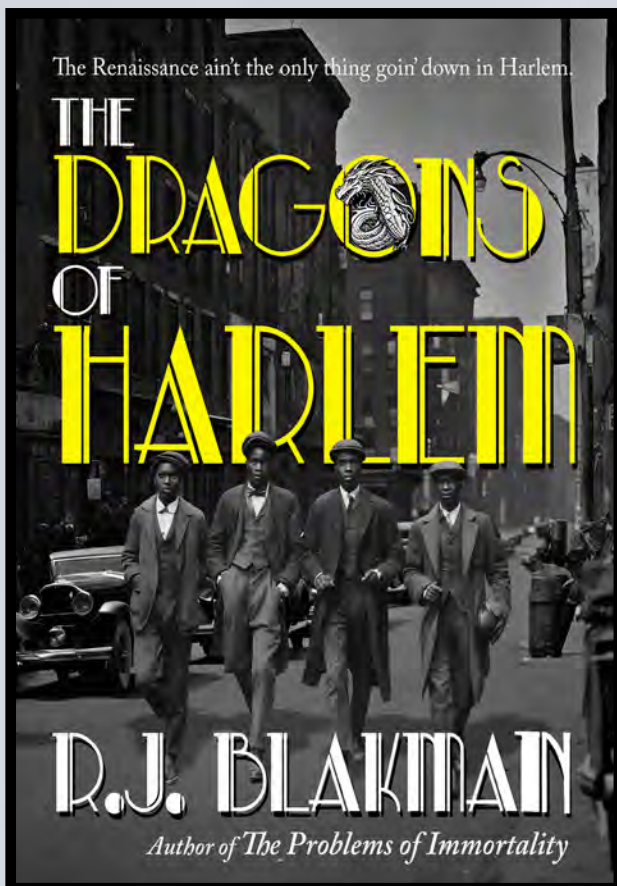
As a practice, Blakman seeks out truth and goes wherever that truth leads him, even if uncomfortable.

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

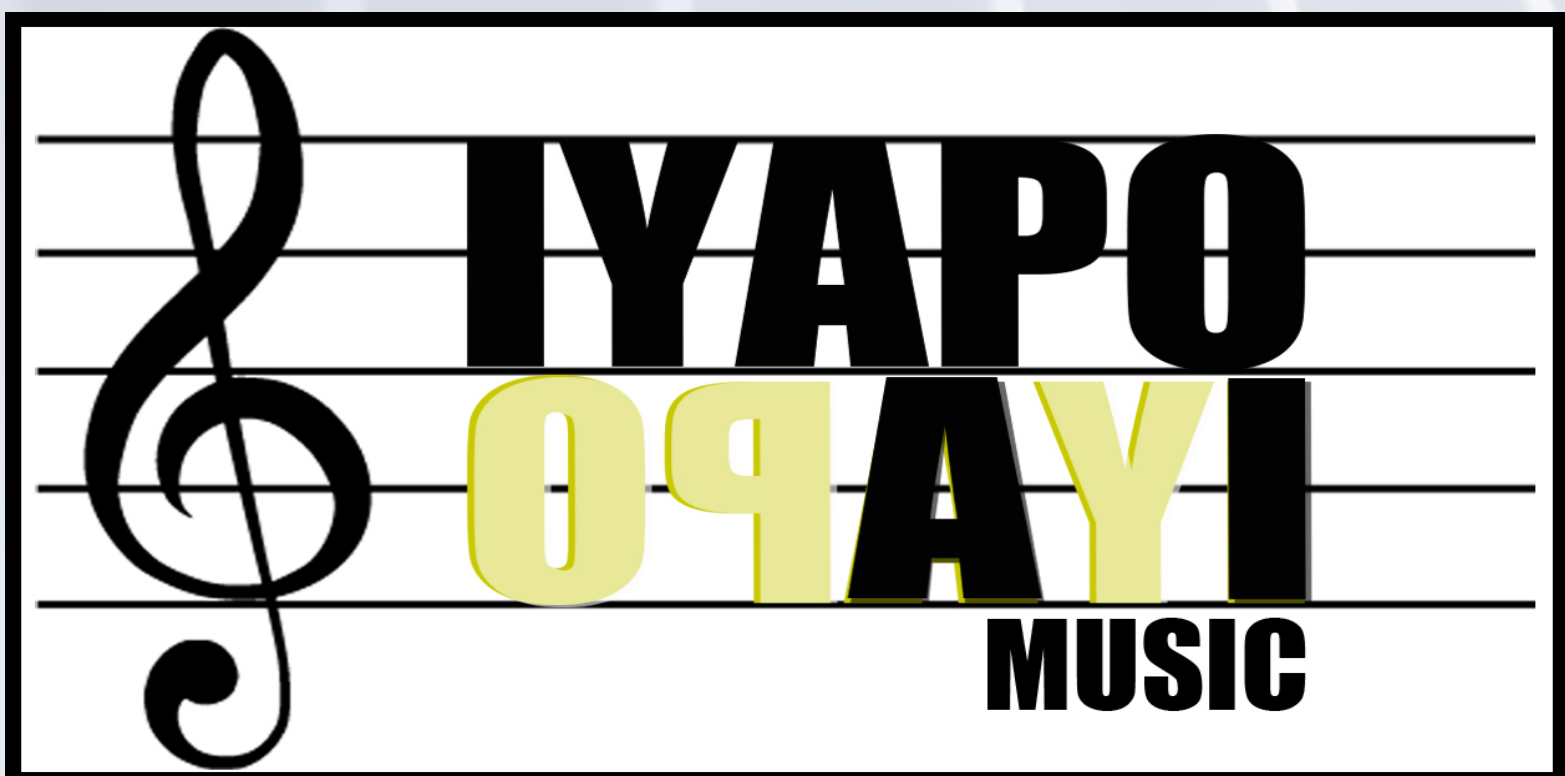
would take all the joy out of it for me.) But this?



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!

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

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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.



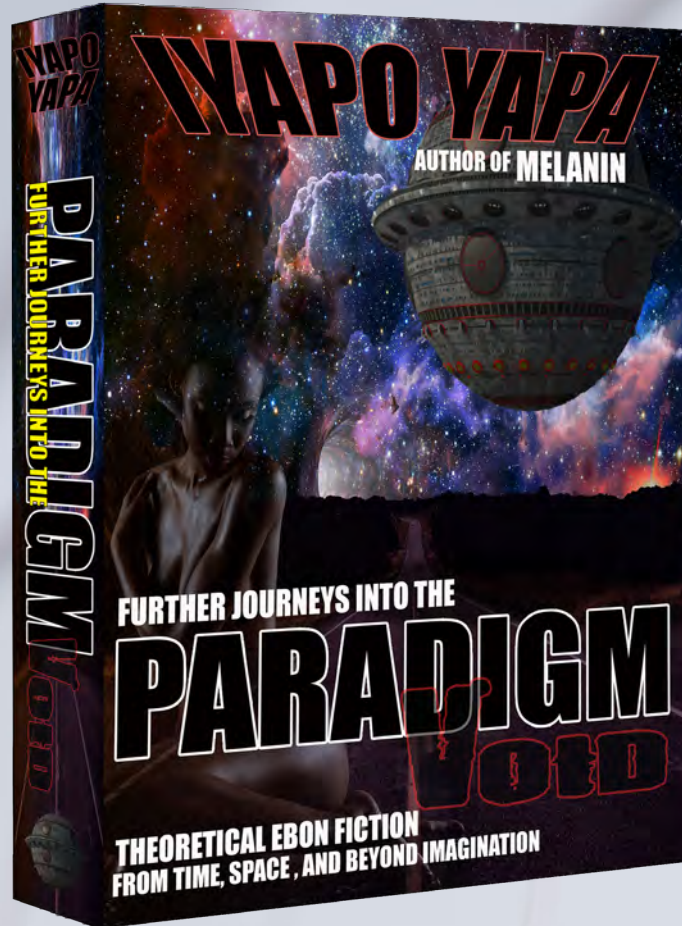
STED INTO THE VOINI **PARADIGM**

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ARE YOU PREPARED TO JOURNEY BACK INTO THE VOID?!

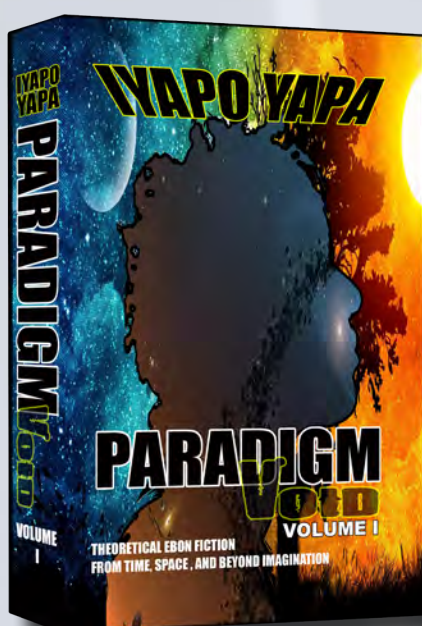


COMING SOON

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!

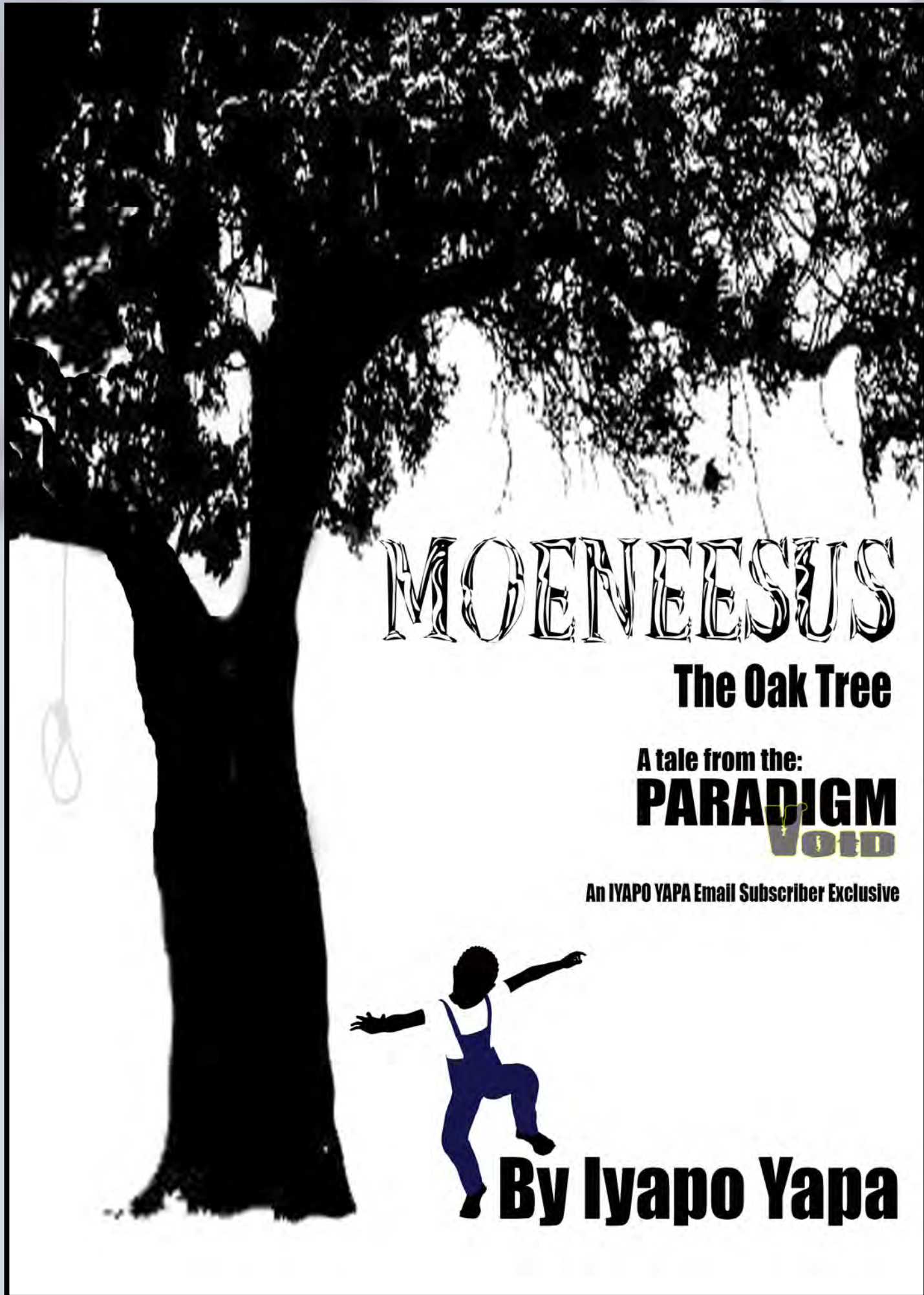
Stories from Time, Space and Beyond Imagination,
Paradigm VOID Volume I is available.



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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

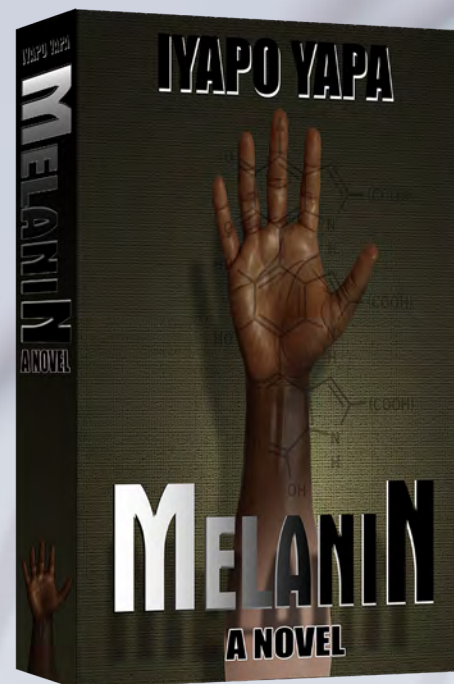
“Yapa weaves another story this time interwoven with historical references. I was on my seat with every chapter. I don't want to give it away but....revenge is sweet when served dead. And I can't get over how different each of his offerings are. Read his Vella's and you'll see what I mean. Another great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

- Amazon review

You can also read it for FREE if you have

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MELANIN: A Novel



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MELANIN: A NOVEL

Buy it now on Amazon

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

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

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

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

goodreads

What are readers saying about MELANIN: A NOVEL?

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

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

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

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

“The whole world needs to read this book!”

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

“Every Black person needs to read this book!”

- Gwen B

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

- Ayoka B.

You can also read it for FREE if you have

Kindle Unlimited!

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

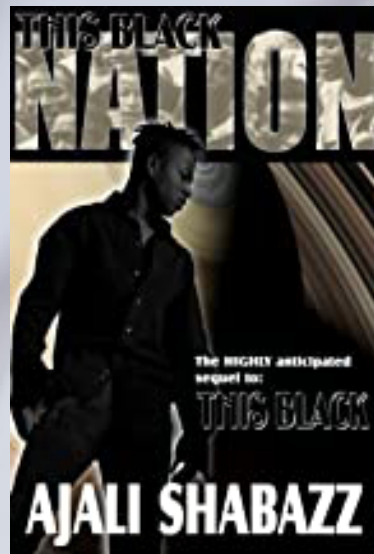
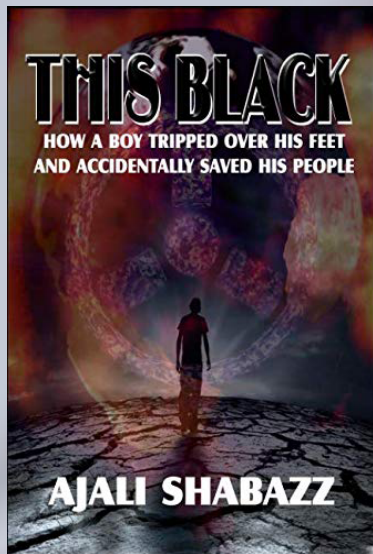
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Books by:

AJALI SHABAZZ



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

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

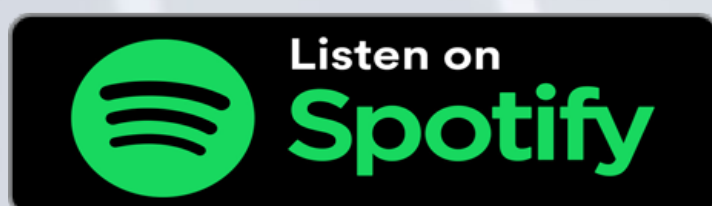
Listen to the interview on  by clicking the link below:

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



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

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



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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.

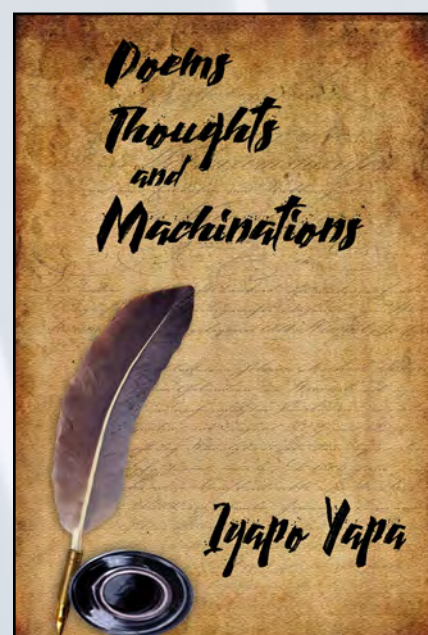
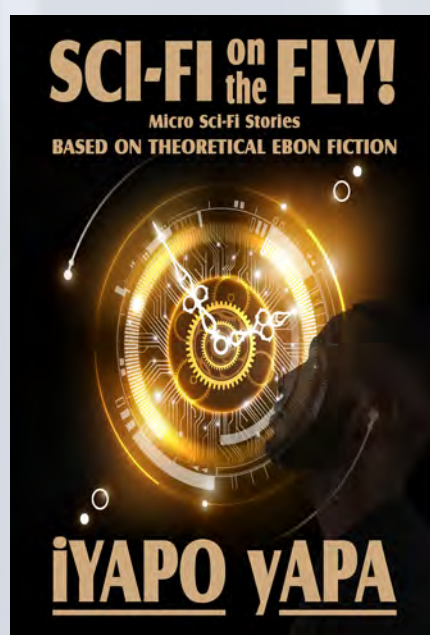
My blog is the place where I talk about what's on my mind and don't worry too much about the formatting or typos - it is, pretty much, my raw perceptions and analysis of what is going on around me.



[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

DARIK

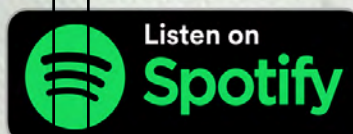
A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

Two writers
Two Mics
&
Plenty of Banter!



While Black

THE **PODCAST**



ANGELA R. RILEY

Author of *AFFIRMING SelfLOVE*

AYOKA B.

Author of *LOVE at SECOND SIGHT*

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

READING and WRITING in the

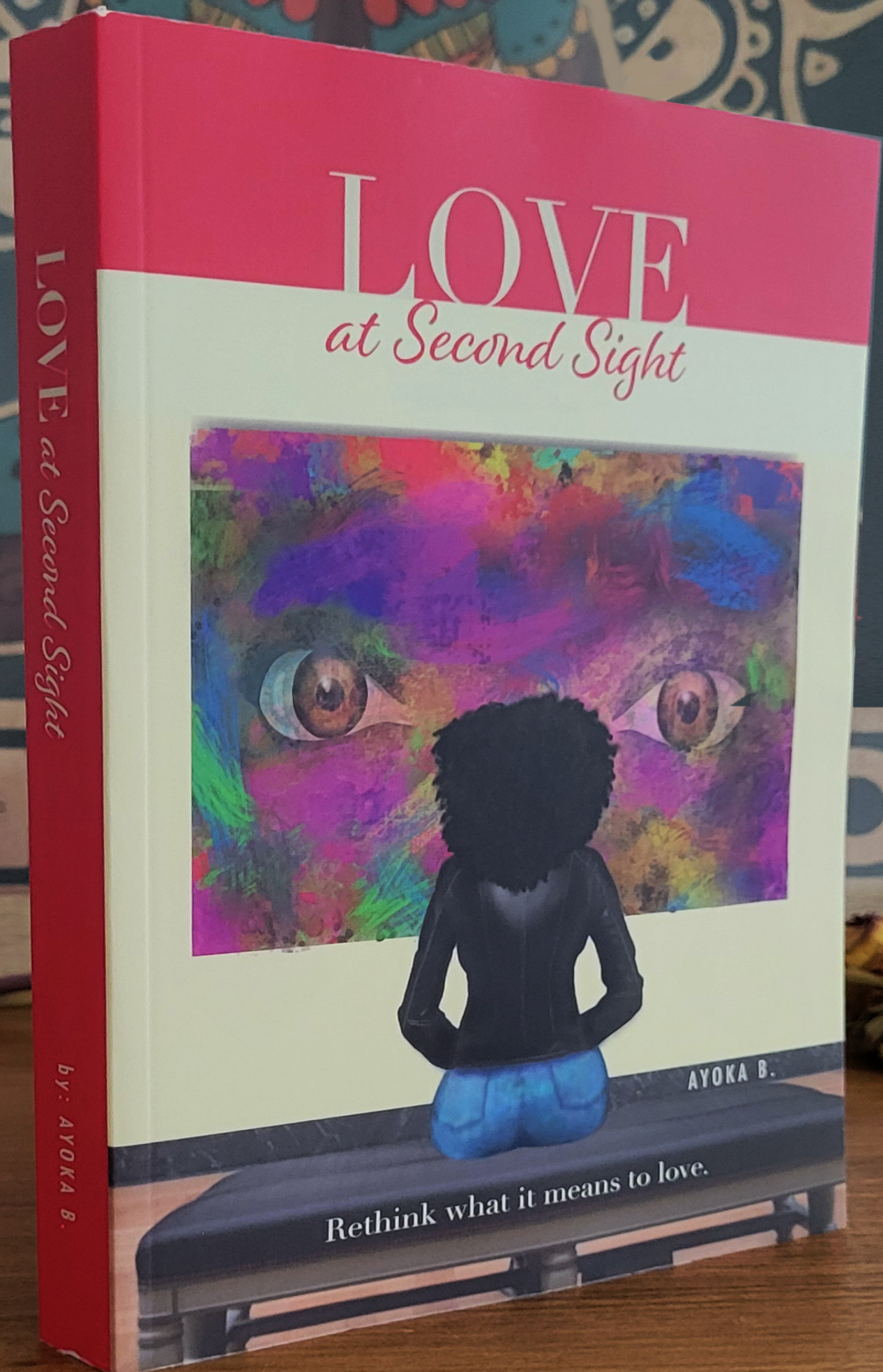
DARIK

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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

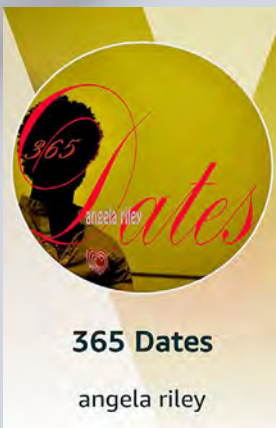
DeClaire and Tyrone meet and sparks fly. They fall in love with each other quick, fast, and in a hurry. It seems too good to be true. But is it? Is it safe to love? Are there any “good” rules when it comes to love? Do we have to fight for love? Are there always games being played when it comes to love?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



The Love X TamuTamu Agency

Angela Riley

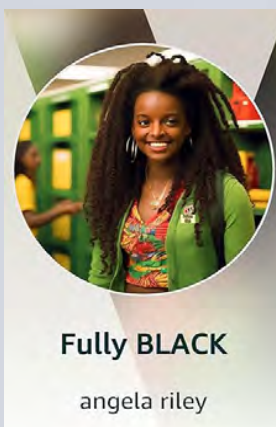
Love is natural but it ain't always easy. And Mama Tamu should know! She is a 91 year old match maker who has run “The Love X TamuTamu Agency” for FIFTY years. She has personally experienced and been a witness to all kinds of love. And, as she says, “Love is more than a notion!” Follow along as she stands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



365 Dates

Angela Riley

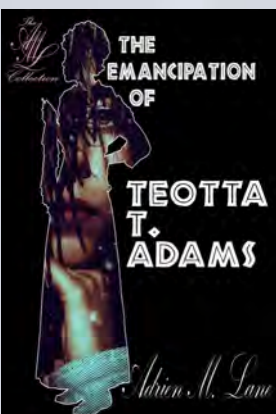
Single again, after my first divorce, one day I had a new thought: I WANT TO DATE. And... NOTHING. No one came knocking on my door to woo me. No one approached me when I was out wanting to court me. Nobody asked friends/family to be set up with me. Just crickets! So, thinking that maybe my goal was to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

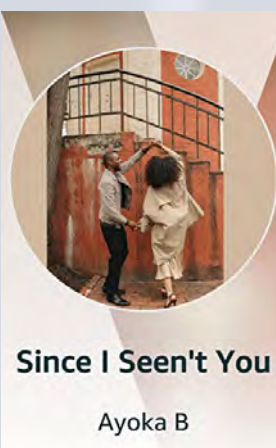
Because she is IN LOVE, talented dancer and homeschooled student Makena enrolls in the elite Fullson High to be closer to Marshall.



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.

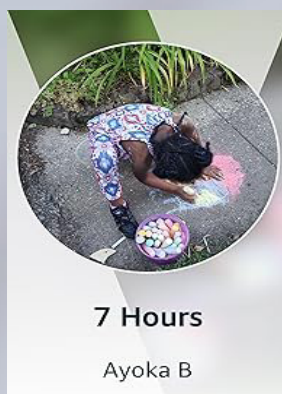
She and David met when they were 18. After a rough start, they build a friendship that would span decades: marriages, children, love and heartache. When they lose touch, she thought that she would never see him again, but she was wrong. Can men and women truly be just friends? Can their friendship withstand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

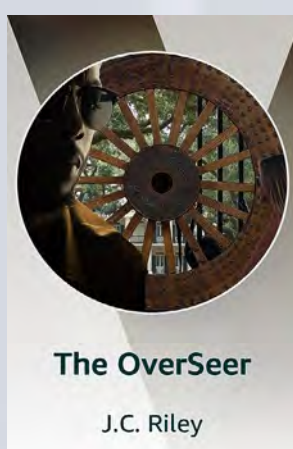
From Book 1: Sex addiction is a real thing; When Quincey finds out his wife is caught up in some things, can they save their marriage.



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.

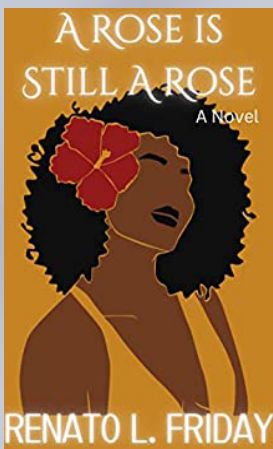


Affirming Self Love (Graphic Non-Fiction SERIES)

angela riley

SelfLOVE Meditation, Reflections, & AFFIRMATIONS Series...

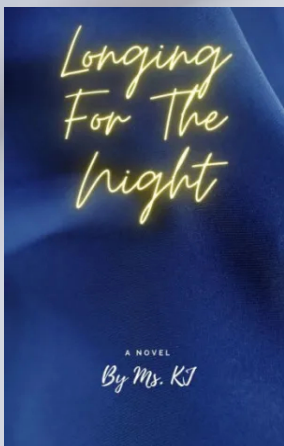
With a new book released each month, this “Graphic Nonfiction” series is filled with love for BlackUs. Each episode opens with a short essay exploring a theme such as “Following the Happy” or “Plan & Reflect” and culminates with a dynamic collection of affirmation. You’ll have a beautiful time meditating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



A Rose is Still a Rose

Renato L. Friday

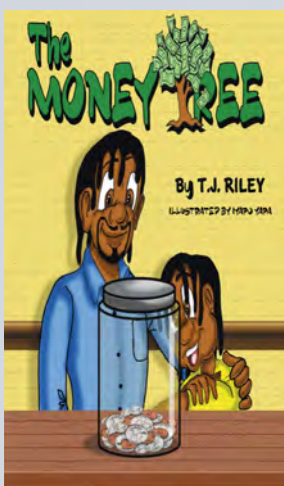
Rose thought life was going great: she was engaged, had a beautiful set of twin girls, a recent trade school graduate, and a new job right around the corner. Unfortunately, her fiancé, David, turned out to not be what she needed, and she chose to break things off. In the midst of her failing relationship,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

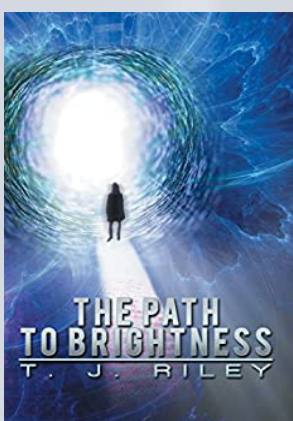
Inspired by the poem Goblin Market by Christina Rossetti, two young sisters face the trials and tribulations of the hood in this coming-of-age story about the harshness of living in South Central Los Angeles.



The Money Tree

T.J. Riley / Illustrated by Iyapo Yapa

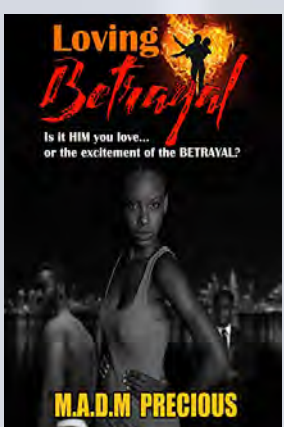
Every child wants money to buy something, right? Our hero does too. But, his father has a surprise, a Money Tree. Join the fun journey to find out how to grow your own money tree.



THE PATH to BRIGHTNESS

T.J. Riley

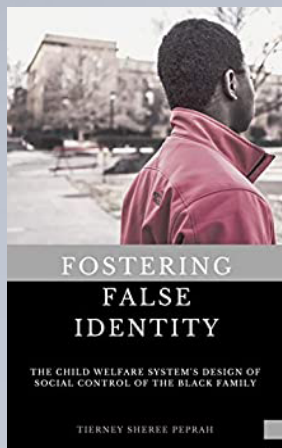
Fatima, a young woman, has a near-death experience. When she awakes from a coma and recovers, she has mystical powers. She begins to see auras and experiences life with her new abilities. For the clever character, Fatima, life is about to dramatically change. Follow Fatimas journey as she tries to convince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

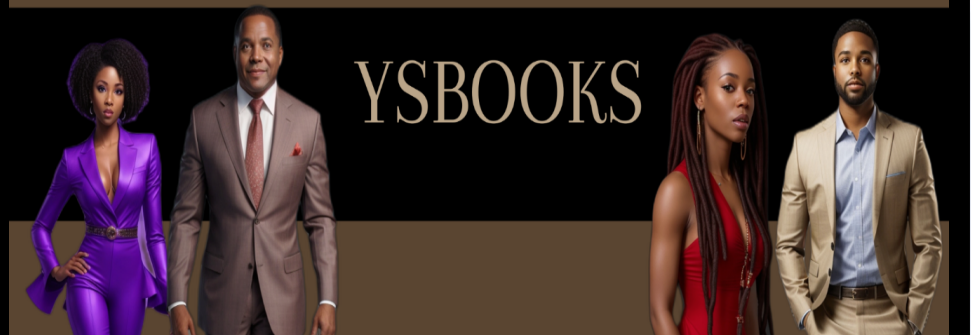
* * *

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!



READING and WRITING in the

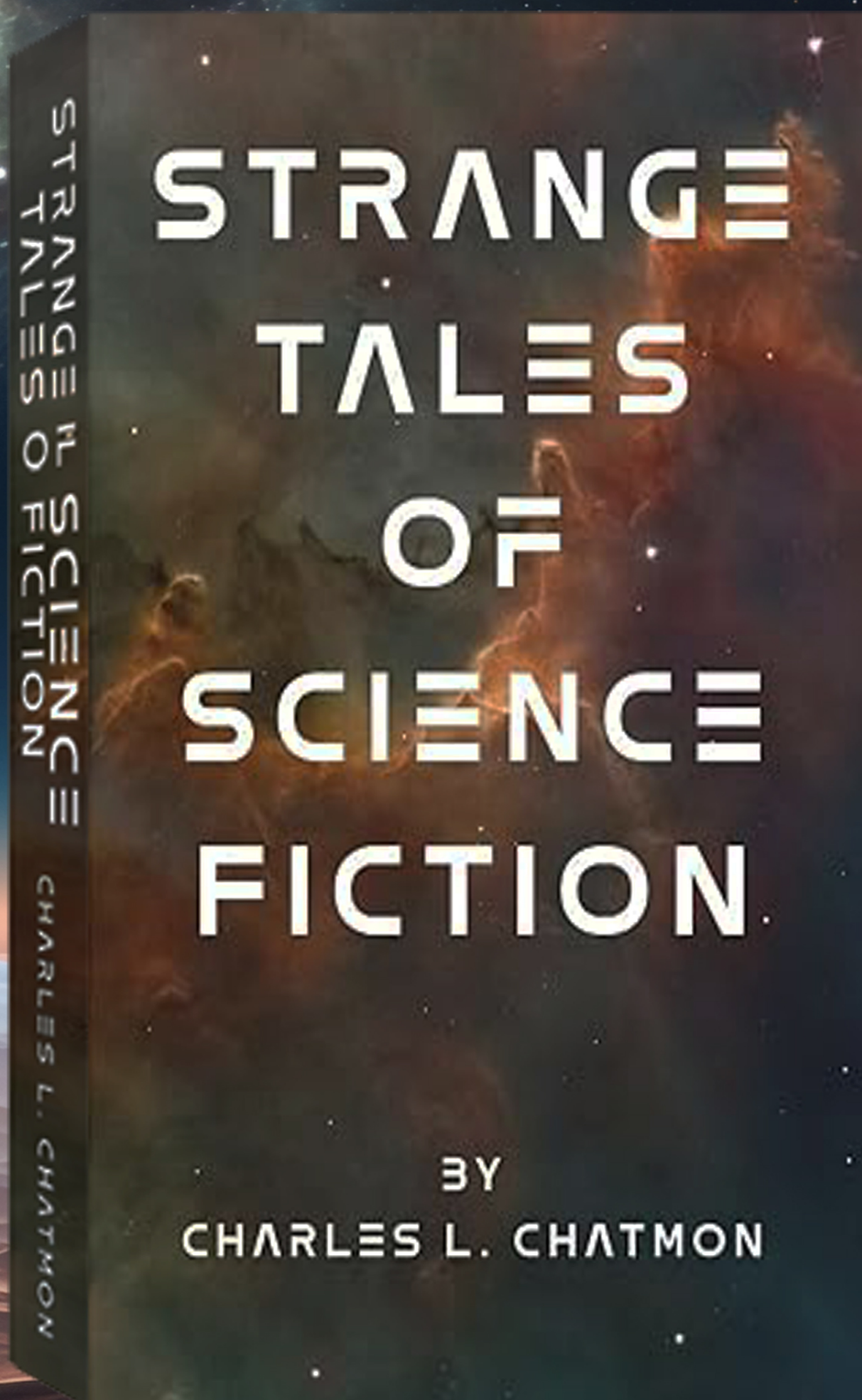
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STRANGE TALES OF SCIENCE FICTION IS AVAILABLE NOW!

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?



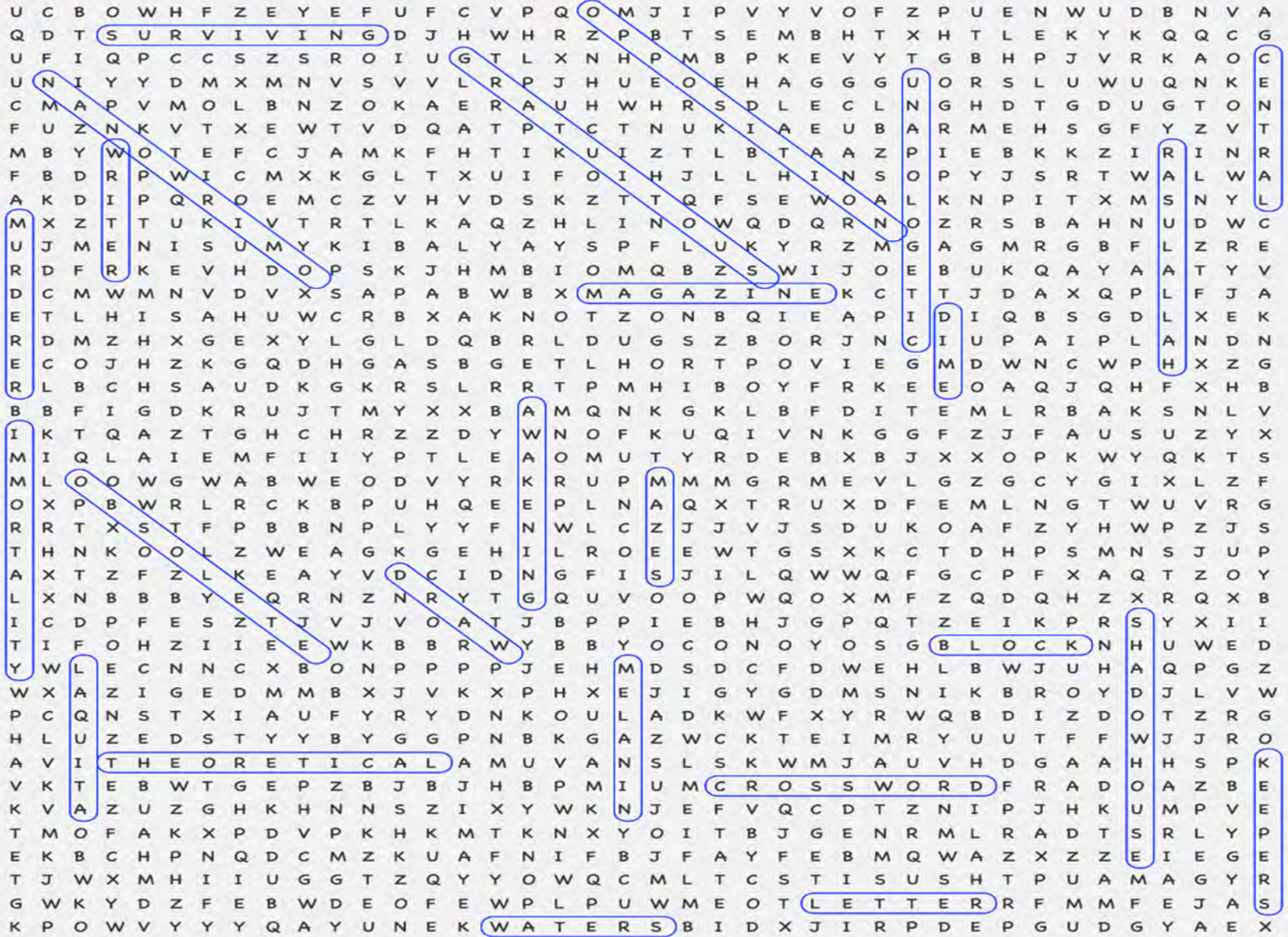
CLICK ON THE BOOK ABOVE TO PURCHASE ON AMAZON!

READING and WRITING in the

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SEPTEMBER WORD SEARCH



2024 SOLUTION

JANUARY 2024

FEBRUARY 2024

MARCH 2024

APRIL 2024

MAY 2024

JUNE 2024



READING and WRITING in the

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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!

READING and WRITING in the

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IYAPO YAPA

Tales of the
MONKEY'S PAW



NOT EVERY WISH GRANTED MAKES DREAMS COME TRUE

BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU WISH FOR!



Keepin' it a BUCK *series*

SHORT STORIES of HORROR and SUSPENSE



BE SURE TO VISIT IYAPO YAPA ON THESE OTHER PLATFORMS!

Heaven Mississippi

A NOVEL



Coming Soon!