



RASULALLAH

HI

**A
HATTIE LEE
MYSTERY**



R.J. BLAKMAN

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Rasulallah Ohio:

A Hattie Lee Mystery

The Complete Chapter 2

R.J. Blakman

DoEAiA Media Publishing



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Website: <https://www.iyapoyapa.com>

Email: comments@iyapoyapa.com

Cover design by: Iyapo Yapa

Rasulallah, Ohio

R.J. Blakman

Edited by:
Ivy Thomas Riley
&
Angela Rasulallah Riley

RASUHLALLAH, OHIO

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The COMPLETE CHAPTER 2

By R.J. BLAKMAN

For my mother... my hero.

Chapter 2



The leaves were orange, a chocolaty brown, and golden yellow as they clung to the trees and waited for just the right time to let go, separate from their mother and dance gently on the breeze without a care, to the ground to kiss the waiting grass. It was a little cooler outside than the two women liked it, but it wasn't cold at all. And besides, they were dressed warmly in wool sweaters and jackets.

Spring was always Hattie's favorite time of year, a time of renewal and rebirth. She liked winter too with the snow and icicles – but only out a window – never when she had to go out into it. She definitely liked the heat of summer, and the lunches in the park and at the lake where Benjamin would take her to go fishing and even when they didn't catch anything, they had the greatest time sitting and talking.

Of all the seasons, when it came to sheer beauty in the great outdoors, for Hattie, nothing could compare to autumn and the beautiful changing of the leaves. And on a comfortable Indian Summer day like today, there was no better time to sit and look at it and take it all in.

Minnie sat beside Hattie on a bench at what the citizens of Rasulallah called Rasulallah Park. It was so named by residents

because it sat just on the outskirts of the town, but according to city surveyors and maps, there was actually a half-acre of it that sat on the area that the founders considered to be Rasulallah.

There were plenty of other parks in that general vicinity, both near and far, but Rasulallah Park was within walking distance of most resident's houses, and since it was part of the community, that was the place where the residents preferred to go.

Both women being from Georgia, Hattie and Minnie weren't fans of the cold. They had moved to Ohio for very different reasons, first Hattie, when she married Benjamin and a job opportunity presented itself that he just couldn't pass up. It was an all-negro accounting firm, that handled mostly colored clients, but also dealt with several white owned businesses.

After having worked there for nearly three years, and having gotten himself and his family firmly established, he and Hattie had saved money, and were in the market for a house. A co-worker named David Darby who had gotten to know Benjamin very well, and had learned to trust him over the years, told him about the town of Rasulallah – where he himself lived – and what it was all about. The place seemed too good to be true.

Darby let them know about a house that was on the market in Rasulallah, and offered to connect them with the realtor who was handling it.

They found the house and fell in love with it immediately.

Having been vetted, the couple purchased the home and then received a welcome packet that was delivered to them by Darby.

They received several visits from welcoming committees, church members from both churches in town, and of course, fried chicken and a dessert from Maybelle Jones, the self-appointed authority on culture and etiquette in Rasulallah.

A year later Benjamin started his own private accounting business, and his client base grew quickly. Eventually all his clients were exclusively from Rasulallah. A big part of Benjamin's brilliance was that he'd figured out ways to shelter the money of several prominent citizens so that their finances and taxes were always legal, but on paper they didn't look as if they were making a lot of money, thus creating congruency between their financial records, and living in what looked like the rundown town of Rasulallah.

Minnie moved to Rasulallah a year after Hattie. At the time Hattie and Benjamin moved to Ohio, Minnie was in a relationship with a young up and coming jazz musician named Wilson "Sparks" Robinson. He was tall and handsome, and considered to be the next big jazz guitarist on the music scene. At first, when Sparks was relatively unknown, he was kind, soft spoken, loving and attentive. The relationship seemed as if it was really going somewhere, but as time went on, Sparks became more distant. Eventually, it seemed as if he had a check list of every single cliché one could think of about musicians and did everything in his power to check off all the boxes.

Sparks hadn't even hit "the big time" yet and the attention and accolades he received went directly to his head. He became self-absorbed, arrogant, and demanding. He started abusing alcohol and cocaine. He got to the point where he didn't meet a skirt he didn't like. He became verbally abusive to Minnie and his band members. Minnie had seen this pattern before with other women and she knew that she was only a half of a step from the abuse becoming physical. Add to that, that the man had become paranoid and always had a gun on him or close by, and Minnie knew it was way past time to get as far away from Wilson Robinson as she could get.

Sparks had become so unstable that Minnie felt she didn't dare tell him that she was leaving him until she had a proper plan in place—and that's just what she did. One evening, during a session Minnie went to the studio at the time she knew Sparks would usually be taking a break, and she walked in to find him deeply kissing and griding on one of the many women who now seemed to appear out of nowhere. She could have been one of his backup singers, a groupie or someone he'd met earlier that day at Krystal. Minnie didn't know, and she didn't care. She wasn't fazed by the scene at all because she'd checked out of the relationship long ago. Tonight, she just needed to make it official. She calmly told him the relationship was over and left. Sparks chased her out to her car to beg her not to leave and that he would change his ways, but Minnie wasn't hearing any of it.

She was done.

She got into her car and left him standing on the sidewalk crying and screaming that he was never going to let her go.

Later, at around two o'clock that morning, Minnie called Hattie and told her everything she'd been keeping secret about her relationship with Sparks. She'd told her things in the abstract—in broad strokes, but now she was giving her friend the whole truth—

Or as much of it as she felt she could tell.

Minnie said she'd been packed to leave Atlanta for over a month and that she had only stayed to tie up loose ends—but she wanted to have a life in this magical place where her best friend and her best friend's husband lived called Rasulallah, Ohio. Minnie did have money saved up, a lot of money in fact. She may have been perceived by some as being carefree and frivolous, but when it came to her finances, Minnie was highly disciplined and frugal. She asked Hattie if it might be alright with her and Benjamin if she stayed with them for a short time while she found a nursing job, got her feet under her, and looked for a house.

Hattie said she'd have to talk to Benjamin, who woke out of a sound sleep while they were on the phone. Benjamin said yes without hesitation. Minnie was his wife's best friend, but he also had always liked Minnie Maubry and thought of her as a good soul and free spirit.

Minnie left Atlanta before noon of that same day.

On her drive to Columbus, she thought about all that had transpired, and her only regret was that she went to the studio to tell the man she was leaving him, when she should have said

nothing and just disappeared. She also didn't like the fact that she sprang the idea of her moving to Columbus and staying with Hattie and her husband on them at the last minute. Minnie felt that was the only way however, because if she'd said anything ahead of time, she was concerned that Hattie would want to ask her a lot of questions she didn't want to answer about why she was leaving the jazz musician she was head over heels in love with and who worshiped the ground she walked on.

Hattie and Minnie shattered the old wife's tale that two grown women couldn't live under the same roof without arguing all the time. Minnie's stay with the Lees was like one long sleepover. The only snag they would hit was when Hattie would put on her country music and have it blasting throughout the house. Even then, their arguments over their tastes in music were all in fun. Hattie and Minnie were like sisters.

The closest of sisters!

Within three short months of arriving in Ohio, and Rasulallah specifically, (more than enough time for the two to have not grown tired of each other), Minnie had a nursing job at a local hospital, her money deposited into a local bank and had purchased a very nice, very large house in Rasulallah.

About two weeks later Hattie and Minnie started hearing reports out of Atlanta about the jazz guitarist Wilson "Sparks" Robinson who was on the cusp of becoming the next big thing on the jazz scene having gone missing. He had several gigs

from the prior week that he never showed up for, and a meeting with a major record label that he was likewise absent from.

Hattie knew that Minnie had deep feelings for the man, at least at one time, so she asked her if she was alright, or if she wanted to talk about it, or what she thought might have happened to him.

Minnie seemed very distraught over the news and didn't want to talk about it. Hattie believed that the pain of what Minnie had gone through with Sparks was deeply painful and the wounds were too fresh, so Hattie didn't press her. Hattie and Minnie women had been through so much in their young lives and now, they were at another hurdle.

All the packing was done at the house, and double checked. Everything that needed to be done was done, and Minnie already had a set of keys to the house so that she could take care of it until the couple came back.

Benjamin went and said goodbye to friends—the few he still had. Hattie had already spent the morning with Mrs. Stanley, an elder and friend, and the rest of the evening she would be spending with Minnie in the park, enjoying the Indian Summer and the beautiful changing of the leaves in Rasulallah Park.

They sat on the bench silently for the most part. Every now and then laughing at something one or the other of them did in the past that was outlandish.

And they cried a little.

A couple women walked past Hattie and Minnie and made it their absolute business to make sure Hattie could see that they were turning up their noses, making an audible *HUMPH!* As they got just past Hattie and Minnie, one of the women said, without shouting or whispering, "Murderer." The women on the bench were friends since childhood and they knew each other like a book as they say. Before Minnie could put even a quarter of an inch between her butt and the wood of the park bench, Hattie had already grabbed her by the arm. "No Dove, don't." Hattie said, "It's not worth it. Do you wanna get kicked out of Rasulallah too?"

"At this point I don't give a damn Scottie." Minnie said as she sat back down.

"Yes you do. Don't let anyone make you do anything you'll be sorry for. It'll be alright, and we'll be back before you know it. Five years isn't so long."

"Yes, it is! Hattie, you're twenty-six... do you realize you'll be thirty-one when you move back here?"

"Well, when you put it like that! Yes, it is, kinda long. But you know Benny and me have a plan. It's gonna be tight, tight, tight when it comes ta money, but we should be able ta keep up the payments on the house, and property taxes while we're renting a place in Columbus. It's tiny, but it's not like it's permanent."

"Five years is a long time ta be payin' for a house you ain't even livin' in. Most folk around here thought you'd be sellin' and usin' the money ta move on."

"Yeah. Especially Maybelle Jones."

"Oh, that's right! She came over while we was on the phone the other day. What'd she want... 'sept ta give you some o' her flavorless fried chicken?"

"Now Minnie, be nice. She was tryin' to get me to call her brother-in-law Jessie out in California."

"Her brother-in-law? For what?"

"Seems he's a realtor. He lives in California. Has a real estate company out there, but he's licensed here in Ohio too."

"Get out! Damn... she didn't wait long. What's she get outta it? Some kinda' commission or somethin'?"

"I dunno. Sounds like she was just tryin' ta do a favor for family."

"Uh huh." Minnie hummed in suspicion, "She ain't even wait for the fireplace ta get cool. I'd be willin' ta bet you five dollars she's getting' somethin' out of it. You gonna call 'em?"

"What for? We're not sellin', even though you're the only one who knows that right now. I did tell Benny about it, but only because I promised Maybelle I would."

"What'd Benny think?"

Before Hattie could answer, a blue rubber ball with yellow stripes rolled up to Hattie and lightly bounced against her left

ankle. Hattie looked down and leaned over to pick up the ball and she tossed it back to a little Black child who was coming toward her to get it. When he got closer Hattie recognized him as Anthony Applewhite, one of the neighborhood children she would sometimes share her famous cornbread with. When he caught it in both arms, the ball looked like it was about half his size. "Thank you, Miss Randy." The little boy said with a big smile that sported what looked like all his bright white teeth, minus the two in the front.

Before Hattie could respond and say, your welcome, the voice of another child, one that looked like the other one, only a little taller... his big brother broke the silent moment.

"Don't say nuthin' ta' Miss Randy Tony! She might call the white police and get you took away so they can put ya in jail and kill ya!"

"Didn't your parents teach you no manners!" Hattie yelled.

The boys started running back to the kickball game from which the ball had come, but Tony stopped, turned around and looked at Hattie. "I don't believe it Miss Randy!" he yelled, "Anybody makes cornbread like you couldn't do nothin' like that!" He then smiled and waved, almost dropping the ball, turned back around and started running again to catch up with his brother, "Hey Jimmy! Wait up!"

"See. Not everyone's against me." Hattie said with a melancholy smile. She was noticeably hurt as she let out a light sigh and looked down at the grass. "I Don't pay them children no mind Minnie. They're just kids."

"That makes it worse." Minnie said. "Anyway... like I was askin' before we were so rudely interrupted... what'd Benny say?"

"Nothin'. He just laughed."

"I don't blame 'em. Shoot..." Minnie said as she shook her head, "Maybelle Jones. That woman's somethin' else."

"Yeah, but she does wear some of the nicest earrings I've ever seen!"

"No Hattie! No! Do not start talkin' about no damn earrings!"

Hattie laughed for a minute, then quickly got serious as her mind went back to something she'd meant to ask Minnie but had forgotten."

"What?" Minnie asked, seeing that her friend was obviously trying to recall something.

"There was something I was meanin' to ask you, and this talk about Maybelle's brother in law has me tryin' ta remember what it wa – KATHRINE WAYFIELD!"

Minnie looked at Hattie trying to figure out what the woman whose name she blurted out had to do with anything they were talking about.

"Kathrine Wayfield? What about her? What's she got ta do with anything?"

"Who is she?" Hattie asked.

"If it's the Kathrine Wayfield I'm thinkin' about, she's the woman who's engaged to Vincent O'Connor."

Hattie snapped her finger. "That's it! **Vincent O'Connor!**" she said, throwing up her arms as if her body seemed to release a ball of pent-up tension all at once. "I just can't keep up with all these names."

"What's goin' on Hattie? What about Vincent O'Connor and Kathrine Wayfield? What do they have ta do with what we were talkin' about?"

"The card Maybelle gave me had her brother in law's name on it, with a Columbus number, but on the back, she wrote a different phone number she told me ta use for him. A California phone number. And under that number she wrote Kathrine Wayfield and said I could talk to her if I couldn't get hold of Jessie."

"What? What's Kathrine got to do with it?"

"Maybelle said she's his business partner."

"I dunno." Minnie said as she pieced things together in her head, "Vincent O'Connor **does** live in California, and he's engaged to a woman named Kathrine Wayfield."

"And it's a colored real estate company." Hattie added.

"Yeah. I wonder if she's the same Kathrine Wayfield?"

"That ain't a very common name. You ever seen her? Like in any of them entertainment magazines you read?"

"Nah..." Minnie said, "I've read about it, but they never show any pictures o' that heifer."

"Why you callin' that woman a heifer and you don't even know 'er?!"

"Cause she stole my man! I was the one supposed ta be marrien' Vincent O'Connor! I'm tired' of these women stealin' men from me!"

"What other man have you had stolen from you?"

"Benjamin Lewis Lee was his name! That's who! Some loose woman from the neighborhood went around battin' her eyes, and swingin' her hips an' took 'em right outta my hands. I think he name was Bratty, or Fatty or somethin'."

"Dove, you need help!" Hattie laughed as Minnie joined in the laughter with her. "So if it is the same woman, I wonder what a rich, famous musician's doin' datin' her? I though them celebrities only married other celebrities."

"Can't help who you fall in love with I guess." Minnie said. Then she thought for a moment. "As I think about it... it don't surprise me. Vincent O'Connor's just about one o' the finest lookin' colored men I ever seen, and he's talented as all get out. Any colored woman would be glad to be on his arm. If it's the

same Kathrine Wayfield who's engaged ta Vincent O'Connor, then she's probably one o' these high class-colored career women who has her own. You know what I mean?"

"Yeah, I think I do."

"Oh yeah, lots of us is startin' ta get into stuff like real estate."

I wonder how she got connected with Jessie's real estate agency?"

"Who knows?" Minnie quickly looked mischievous, "She probably found her a colored real estate company in the yellow pages and went and seen that man cause he's already successful in the business out there. She probably walked right into his office, leaned over his desk—" Minnie leaned in close to Hattie, "...let her two soft chocolatey brown girls hang down like they wanted ta jump out her blouse—" Minnie was wearing a turtleneck sweater beneath her jacket, but pulled the top part of her jacket open, mimicking presenting her cleavage, as she continued getting closer to Hattie "... then she batted them big pretty brown eyes and said, 'Hey, big boy, I sho' would like workin' witchu.'"

"Woman, get off me!" Hattie said as she playfully shoved Minnie back. They both burst into laughter. Eventually the laughter subsided, and they sat silent.

Hattie looked around the park and at the children playing. The sun was starting to go down, and she and her husband were going to be leaving in a couple days. She took a deep breath and

released it, then focused on a weeping willow tree in the distance.

"I'm gonna miss Rasulallah." Hattie whispered. "And I'm gonna miss you Dove."

"I'm gonna miss you too Scottie. I know I can visit and call you. But shoot girl. I'm gonna miss you so bad."

The women said little else for the rest of their visit and sat on the bench as they watched the sun set behind the trees.

About The Author



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.

R.J. Blakman was born in Central America and has 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

Other Works By RJ Blakman

Other Works By R.J. Blakman FICTION (COMING SOON)

The Dragons of Harlem

“The Renaissance ain’t the ONLY thing goin’ down in Harlem” A spectacular new, addition to the Urban Fantasy genre.

The Problems of Immortality

What if you could live forever on this plane of existence? Would you even want to? What if you made a decision that left you with nearly no other choice?

The Eulogy of Man

A collection of short stories in the genre of Theoretical Ebon Fiction that examines mankind and why it never got beyond the solar system.

The End of All War

You don’t kill a snake by cutting its tail off. At least that’s what astrophysicist Jermaine Stalkheart believes—it is the head that must die. And he sets out to do precisely that.

NON-FICTION

SEXXX: The Black and White of it

Sexuality is always going to be a touchy subject, but R.J. Blakman takes on the subject head on and looks at a less examined aspect of the subject. He examines the cultural differences between how sex is approached specifically in terms of pornography and the way in which it differs between ethnic groups, particularly Black and white people.