

READING and WRITING in the

# DARK

*A space for avid Black readers and Black authors*

**THIS MONTH:**

## NEWSLETTER

**MORE ROMANCE**

with a **TWIST**, as **Adrien M. Lane** takes us to look for...

**A Land of  
Lost Emotion**  
Complete Prologue

Page 7

Feature:

**The Sun  
and the  
Dime**

Page 3

Reading and Writing in the DARK Newsletter subscriber exclusive, a **FULL** chapter of the upcoming novel! It's **GOOD** to be a subscriber!

This month's  
puzzle:

**MAZE!**

Page 23

Also:

**From Iyapo's Blog:  
Well Placed Faith**

Page 27

**News and Information about Completed  
and Upcoming Projects and MORE!**



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## NEWSLETTER

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### WELCOME BACK!

#### IT'S APRIL!

I'm still at it! I'm working on several projects at once (as I tend to do), and each project is more exciting than the next. I have short stories that are about to come out, not the least of which is the LONG AWAITED first installment of *Tales of the Monkey's Paw*! I'm still hard at work on the second Paradigm Void book, *Further Journeys into the Paradigm Void*. The first book is available to the public and I'm very proud to have published my third book! I will be following that up with *The Redemption of Maxine Allison: A Novella—presently in its first round of editing*. Also I'm still celebrating the completion of my first mystery novel, *Rasulallah, Ohio*! So far a couple people have read it in its rough form and have said they really enjoyed it! I can't wait to finished with the editorial process and get it out into the world! As always, if you want to contact me, just drop an email to: [Feedback@iyapoyapa.com](mailto:Feedback@iyapoyapa.com) it's ALWAYS open! SEE YOU NEXT MONTH and THANK YOU FOR SUBSCRIBING TO MY NEWSLETTER!

Iyapo Yapa



### WHO IS ADRIEN M. LANE?!

Adrien M. Lane loves romance.

She also loves scifi, fantasy and unpredictable conclusions.

With her writing she is determined to merge the two into romance novels with a twist!

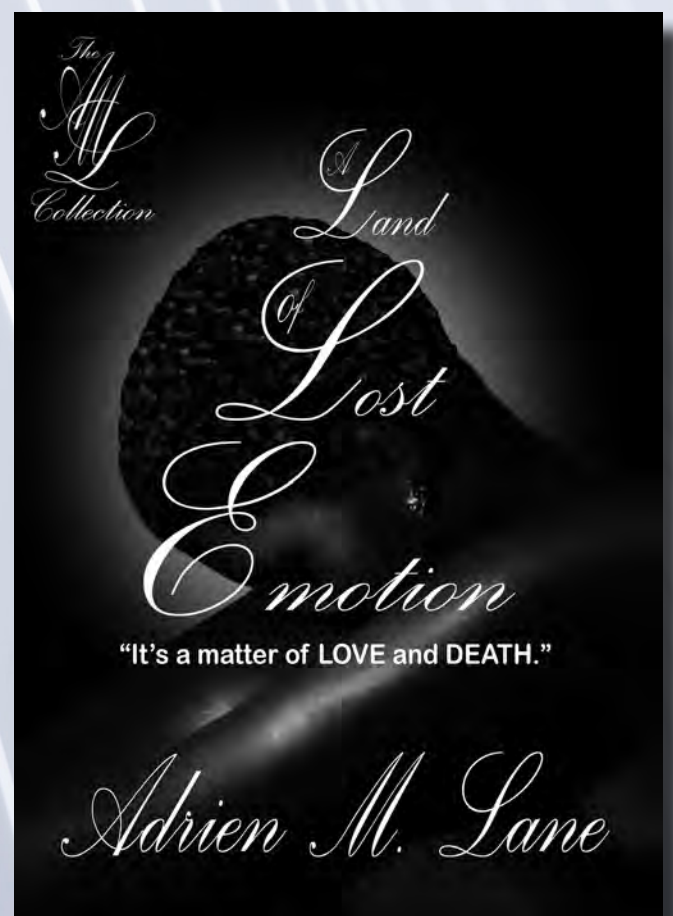
She has already began a series on the Kindle Vella platform called, *The Emancipatin of Teotta T. Adams*, and is currently working on her debut novel *Lost in Secret Arms*. She has several projects in the wings and is anxious to get them out into the world for lovers of romance and unpredictability to enjoy. Adrien has many tricks up her sleeve and strives to be original in every way she can from cover to cover of her work.

This month, *The Reading and Writing in the Dark Newsletter* is proud to introduce another Adrien M. Lane, story - the full complete prologue of *A Land of Lost Emotion*.

Adrien M. Lane, or "Ayddie" as those close to her affectionately call her, was born in Costa Rica into a large family and has eight siblings. She always enjoyed spinning stories for family and friends but never committed anything to paper, until her mentor and fellow writer R.J. Blakman said, "Baby, you have a head full of stories the world is just waiting to hear and you need to put them on paper so everyone can read them!" So, she took her mentor's advice, dug out an old laptop she hadn't touched in years and after typing the first few sentences, has never looked back!

Adrien lives in the tropics (because she hates the cold) with her pet gecko, (whatever one has wandered into her home for a given time), and is a member of a local Black writers group.

She enjoys looking at the lush colors of her surroundings, taking walks on the beach, and always, always thinking of new stories to write!



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## THE SUN AND THE DIME

This year, on April 8th, people in North America are going to be treated to what for many is a once in a lifetime event, a full solar eclipse.

The sun is 1,392,000 km in diameter (for people like me who aren't good with the metric system, that's 864,000 miles). Over a million earths could fit inside the sun. The sun weighs approximately  $1.9891 \times 10^{30}$  kg =  $4.384 \times 10^{30}$  lb =  $2.192 \times 10^{27}$  tons.

A dime is 19.05 mm or 0.75 in. in diameter and weighs 2.268 grams.

Yet, walk outside on a sunny day, and don't wait for the moon to block out the sun. Take a dime out of your pocket, close one eye and put the dime directly in front of the other as close as you are able and Voila!

Sun gone!

But not really.

Now you're standing outdoors, with a dime in front of your face, looking up at the sun, as people are staring at you trying to figure out just exactly what it is you're doing...

But you don't notice them, because all you can see is that DIME! You can't see the sun, you can't see the environment, you can't even see the people gawking at you... all you can see is the freakin' DIME!

Is the dime bigger than the sun?

Is it larger than the environment surrounding you?

Is it even approaching the size of one passersby?

Of course not!

There is a saying that has recently come into vogue--perception is reality.

But is it true? It begs the question: Does perception change facts?

Just because a person holding the dime up to their eye perceives it as being the largest thing

in their environment, does that make it so? Does it somehow negate the fact that the mass of the dime is nearly infinitesimal in relationship to the sun and everything else around it?

If the goal is to somehow control the person so they are unable to see attacks coming, then that kind of focus is a very useful and effective tool. That is

the reason our people have been and continue to be inundated and perpetually bombarded with images of ourselves and our people that are not representative of who we are. At the same time, we are relentlessly attacked with these negative images, both overt and covert, both consciously and subconsciously. We are conditioned to believe that our people are the most lowly and worthless on the planet, while simultaneously being taught to believe that the oppressor of the entire world are the ones to look up to.

The ones with all the answers.

The best and brightest.

The standard by which all others should be measured.

The result?

We ask permission from a Black judge to go and hug the white woman who murdered our brother, and after she is seated, she (the white woman), is comforted by both the Black judge and the Black bailiff. Because we have been taught to marginalize and devalue ourselves and to value those who have and continue to oppress us.

Maddness!

We are now living in an age where we are being taught that a person's truth is as valid as any fact, because for THEM, that truth (whatever "truth" that is) is valid because it—as they say—isn't MY truth, but it may be THEIR truth.



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## THE SUN AND THE DIME (Continued)

WHAT?!

So, if a person's truth is that they are a butterfly and I'm telling them they're a human being, there are some who would say, "Well, if they believe they're a butterfly, then that is THEIR truth, and it is as valid as any other truth."

Ok, let's go test their truth against my reality.

Let's go to the top of a fifty-story building and I'll watch them jump off, and see what happens. According to their perception they should just flutter away into the sky, seeking a flower to pollinate. Is that what's really going to happen? No, it won't go that way. What will happen is that within 2 hours there will be a chalk outline on the sidewalk, and the crowd will start to disperse after the morgue wagon pulls off.

Perception is NOT reality!

Negative and harmful images that hurt us as a people and our psyches come at us nonstop, and many agents are paid to pretend they are part of our people, but are only interested in their own bank accounts and have little to no problem with leading our people astray by keeping the DIME in our face and telling us it is bigger than the sun, the environment and anything else. Eventually their message will take hold as people little by little start to say, "You know what? They're RIGHT! All I see is this dime day in and day out. I can't see anything else, so this dime MUST be the biggest thing in the universe!"

Of course, that sounds silly on the face of it, but our actions as a people are showing that the strategy of putting things right in our people's face and KEEPING them there is a very effective way of conditioning us to hate ourselves and our people, while loving our oppressor and putting them on a pedestal!

Of everything that is being foisted upon our people...

I have ZERO doubt that the 1 and 10 percent who push all of this garbage don't believe ANY of it! They benefit by making others believe it as they convince the general population to do things,

take actions and live in ways that are either unhelpful or even detrimental to them, while they themselves will have nothing to do with what they know is obvious nonsense. Examples would be, like believing the people who develop artificial meats really consume it, or the fact that the social security and healthcare system the U.S. government pushes on people to have to take part in is for THEM, but they have their OWN retirement, and healthcare systems that are separate from the mess they force on everyone

else.

It is all about conditioning, control, and getting our people to focus on the DIME, and to cement it in our minds that the dime is the biggest thing in the entire universe.

We discuss celebrities, people we know, individuals who cause problems in our communities and we attack them for the things they do that we feel are beyond the pale. We look at the promotion for the upcoming animated Good Times "reboot", and many of us are repulsed by it (though I would venture to say, will secretly watch it, if for no other reason than curiosity). We get commentators like Judge Joe Brown who asks the Black community why we get so upset when looking at that portrayal—commenting that it is actually a reflection of our culture, saying that it is accurate and what our community glorifies.

The difficulty is that, though there are definitely problematic aspects of our (Black) community



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## THE SUN AND THE DIME (Continued)

and culture—when put into perspective, our shortcomings, if they are to be viewed as that, are minuscule and nearly completely inconsequential when compared to what is happening globally and driven by those who are NOT Black us.

Every day social and other media treat us to some new transgression committed by Black people. Everything from petty crimes to major infractions like rape, murder and so on.

However, seldom discussed are the crimes of and the perpetrators who are responsible for unimaginable devastation and loss of life globally. There are individual presidents who have been (and are presently), responsible for the murders of hundreds of thousands of people, and in some cases millions.

And that's just one of them.

What about entire governments of various countries that are waging war and turning the planet into a dystopian hellscape. Ecological collapse, the development of newer and more effective weapons of mass destruction and killing, GMO'd foods that are making people

ill, and the list could literally go on. The one glaring thing that each of those horrors have in common is that there are no Black faces (in any substantial number) behind any of it. But the system of white supremacy makes sure that these facts are ignored, and the focus remains squarely on a people who have ZERO power within their construct and who may cause problems or commit crimes within their oh so limited circle and power of influence.

It is like having an atomic bomb go off, but you are constantly being directed to pay full attention to the string of firecrackers that are going “pop pop pop” behind you.

It is imperative that our people separate in any ways we can and to the best of our abilities. It is time for us to remove the dime out from directly in front of our eye. We can still acknowledge the existence of it, but as we do, and look at the world around us, putting things into perspective, we'll begin to understand what is actually going on around us, the need to make some changes—and to start to develop strategies to rectify things.



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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:

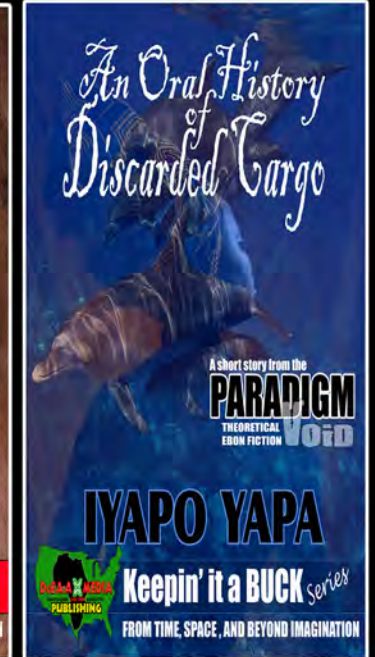
- What if somewhere in the universe numerous alien races observed earth and concluded that there is a faction on the planet that in no way should ever be allowed to reach out beyond the bounds of its own atmosphere?
- What if the universe itself started taking measures to correct and bring balance to 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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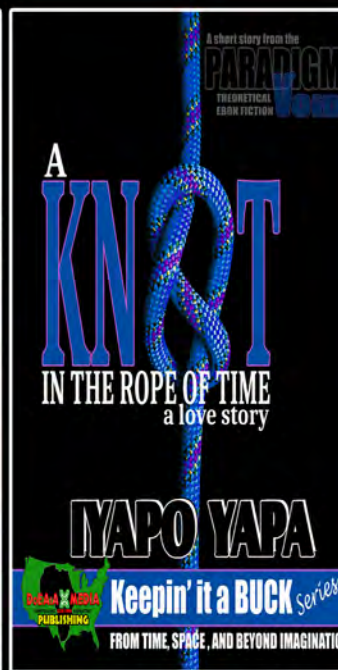


IT IS TIME TO JOURNEY INTO THE **PARADIGM VOID** ONE STEP AT A TIME.

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You can send your thoughts to: [comments@iyapoyapa.com](mailto:comments@iyapoyapa.com)

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## Prologue - A Land of Lost Emotion

Are raindrops the tears of Gaia, or do they fall in empathy for those who are grieving, lonely or heartbroken as a way to make them feel not quite so alone in the world?

Alolé Scott casually sipped a glass of white wine as she sat naked on an overstuffed leather armchair in front of the thirty second-floor panoramic window overlooking the Cleveland skyline and onward to Lake Erie. This spot had always been one of her favorites for sitting, relaxing and gathering her thoughts, especially late at night. She appreciated the comfort of taking in, from the other side of the glass, the light speckled landscape that stretched out before her. The scenery was interesting to see in daylight, even artistic in its way—but within the embrace of the night, Alolé found it truly mesmerizing, and she was grateful she had her own secure perch from which to view it.

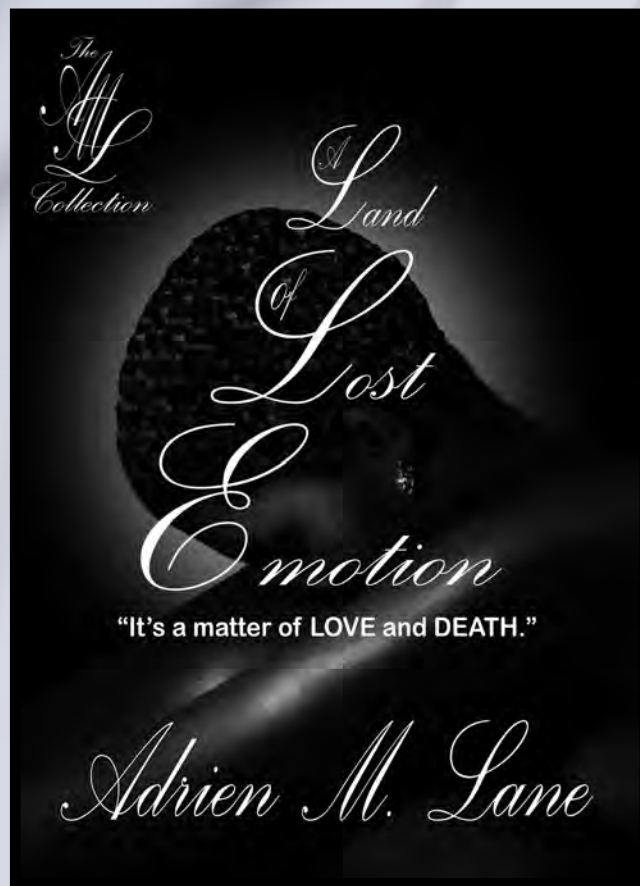
Her literal window on the world.

Alolé was always captivated by the lights of the city and those of the skyscrapers that populated it—lights that never seemed to go

dim—the ever-present glimmer of which reflected off the water of the lake and created its own form of light show just for her. Presently it was mid-June, and for as beautiful as the sights were right now, the lights during the Christmas season made what she was looking at in this moment sadly pale in comparison.

With each light she saw in the towering skyscrapers, she wondered if anyone was in any of those rooms... maybe a housekeeper

dusting to a high shine, the surface of some CEO's massive mahogany desk and the huge rubber plant that sat next to it... a janitor emptying the waste basket of some law partner, shaking his head while grudgingly replacing a plastic trash bag with only three sheets of wadded up paper inside that could have been easily picked up out of the can, but for the spillage from a discarded one third full cup of mocha that made complete replacement necessary. Maybe in the window above the janitor some businessperson was taking care of business—or even perhaps—behind the darkened window of an office two floors above the janitor some



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## Prologue - A Land of Lost Emotion (Continued)

businessperson was taking care of business—or even perhaps—behind the darkened window of an office two floors above the janitor and the workaholic was yet another businessperson using the office for a late-night tryst where, were their spouse to call, they could legitimately say they were at the office equally... ‘taking care of business.’

So many lights, so many things that could be happening in the darkness. The possibilities were endless. Is that why the floors of a building are called ‘stories? She would have to research that sometime.

Every now and then Alolé would look below, to ground level, or as much of ground level as she could see from her vantage point. The structures at the feet of the taller buildings were never as well lit, but they were still interesting to view and contemplate. This late at night, Alolé could know for a certainty that someone was sleeping.

Someone was crying.

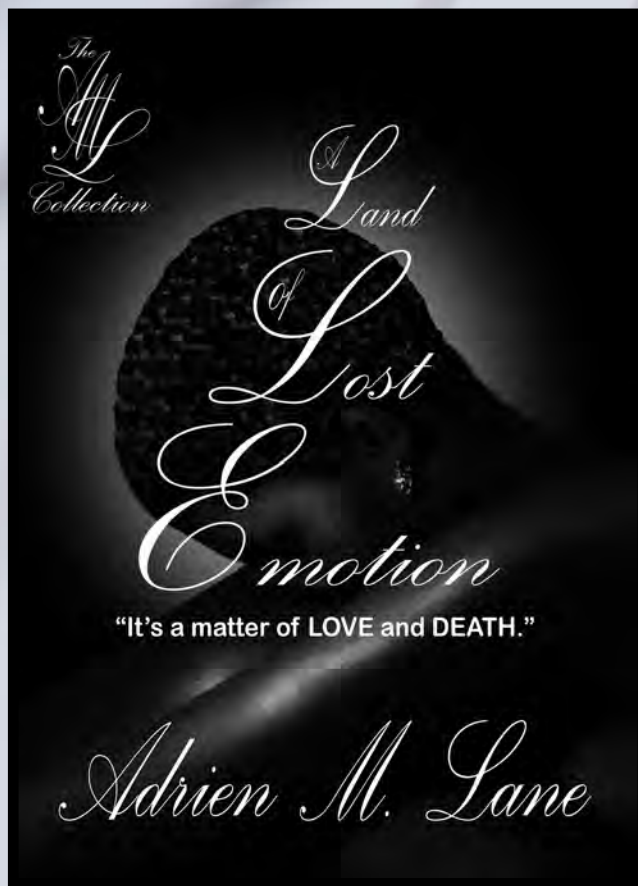
Someone was laughing.

Someone was staggering home, or worse—to their vehicle after a night of too much libations.

Someone was passing from this life to the next, whether by nature, by force, or even by choice.

She did not have to guess at this, nor did she need to be a prophet or clairvoyant to know it. The late-night goings on in the city of Cleveland, Ohio was

something she could predict merely by knowing the culture of the city and the patterns of things—anyone could who cared to. Cleveland was not dissimilar or unique from any other large city when it came to crime and other unsavory things that happened in the hidden parts... its “underbelly.” All cities are alike and to greater or lesser degrees share the same characteristics—both good and ill. That’s what makes them cities. There was little doubt in her mind that in the morning she could hear about those who had been caught and arrested in the commission of some overnight crime, or some unfortunate



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## Prologue - A Land of Lost Emotion (Continued)

soul having been robbed, raped, or murdered. She would need only turn on the news first thing in the morning—or open her police scanner app right now to hear that her imaginings would be confirmed.

Once again, she looked up toward the lights that had comforted her and the ever more distant lightning that so dazzled her. For now, she wanted her mind on less weighty things than the evil that men do and the pain and sorrow that are its inevitable aftermath--though presently, under the circumstances, she knew it was all a diversion, a way for her to avoid dealing with her present reality—an unavoidable reality.

Yes. This space was one of Alolé's favorites. Her only misgiving about it was that the small corner of solitude did not belong to her. She turned slightly in the chair and looked over her shoulder without straining and stared at the bed, pillows on the floor, along with various articles of clothing. The typically immaculate sheets and comforter that usually had a showcase look about them were now disheveled and upon them lay

the owner of the space... her fiancé of two years, Darren Murdock—one of the wealthiest men in the state of Ohio, one of Forbes Multi-Millionaire 40 under 40, and one of the kindest most generous people she had ever known.

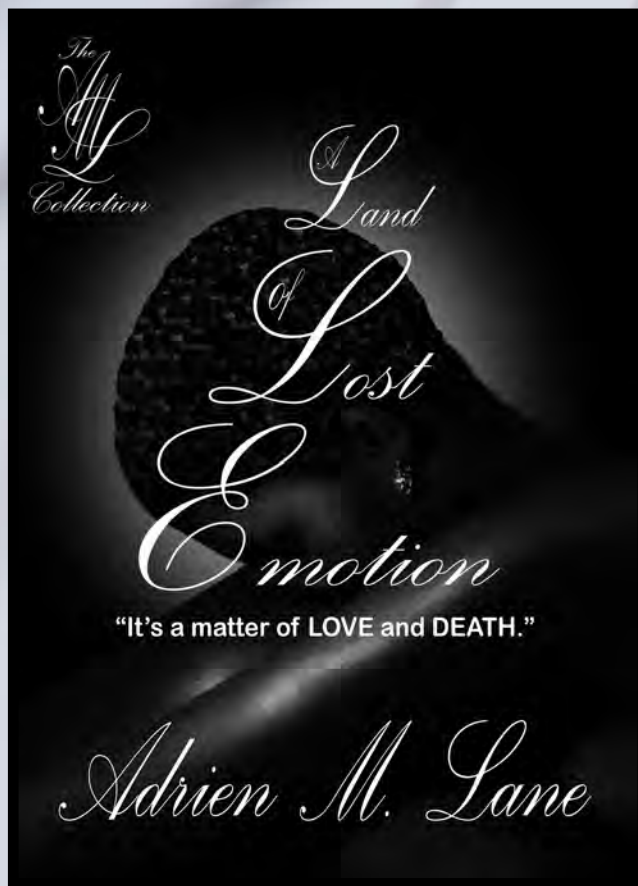
Male or female.

She met him at a toll booth of all places.

This crazy rich, self-made millionaire, this celebrated philanthropist was stuck at a toll booth

and would not be let through because he had forgotten his wallet and had no money on him or in his vehicle. As traffic backed up behind him, and the sound of car horns became an orchestra, Alolé who was several vehicles back from ground zero of the backup, got out of her car and walked all the way to the front to find out what was going on—because that was just her way. She remembered being taken aback for a moment by how good looking the man behind the wheel was—but she had seen handsome men before—hell—she dated a bunch of them.

The man behind the wheel of the factory fresh looking white Spyder,



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## Prologue - A Land of Lost Emotion (Continued)

looked at Alolé and smiled sheepishly for a long moment, as if suddenly so transfixed on her that he had forgotten the matter at hand altogether—then, having a close car horn snap him back to reality. The man’s face went from a disarmingly gorgeous, silly grin, to obvious embarrassment—something Alolé immediately found oddly endearing in its sincerity. The man in the car and the one in the toll booth explained their versions of the reason behind the holdup—both men were talking over each other in a way that Alolé couldn’t fully understand either of them but was able to get the gist of the problem.

Needing no further explanation, Alolé held up her right hand, signaling both men to please stop talking, then dug into her purse, grabbed a fifty-dollar bill and handed it to the man in the booth.

“Lady, what am I supposed to do with this pineapple?!” He said.

“Take it and let this man through so that everyone can get moving.”

“You expect me to break this?!”

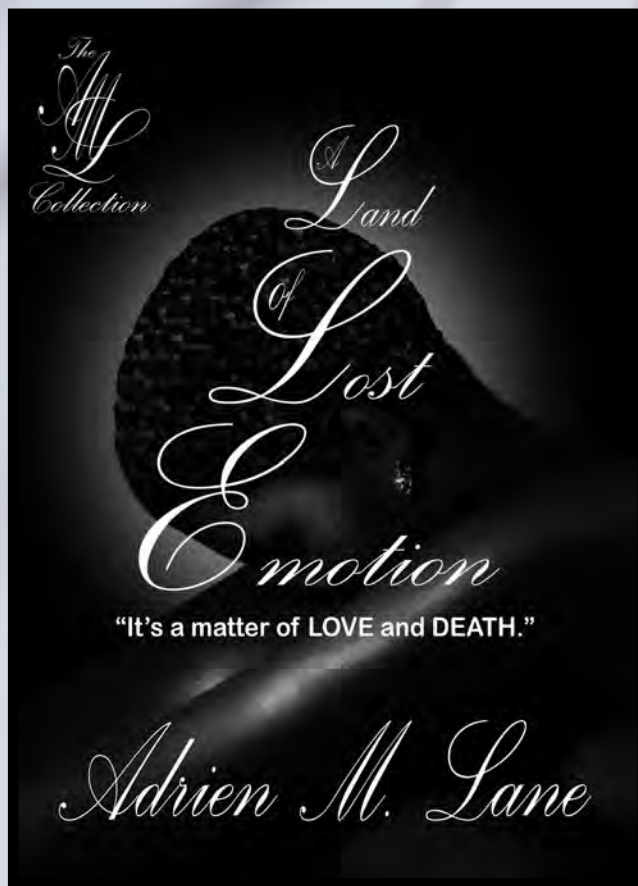
“It’s the smallest thing I have besides the money I have for my own toll.”

The man in the booth, noticeably flustered from already having carried on an extended conversation with the Black man in the expensive car held the fifty dollar bill out the window to Alolé. “Miss... I can’t take this!”

Alolé said nothing and turned her head to look at the ever-growing line of cars that was now spilling into other lanes

and causing them to back up, then looked back at the attendant. The man in the claustrophobic desk fan cooled structure likewise followed the direction of her gaze and saw the trouble that had formed and the disaster that was to come if he didn’t do something PDQ.

“We’re not supposed to do this...” the toll booth attendant said, red faced as he lifted his hip so that he could reach into his back pocket for his wallet. He pulled out a twenty-dollar bill, two tens and two fives. He handed Alolé the whole fifty, then put her bill inside his wallet and replaced it to his back pocket. Alolé took one of the fives and paid the



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## Prologue - A Land of Lost Emotion (Continued)

toll, then along with the change she got back, handed it and the forty-five dollars to the man in the car. “Here, this is so hopefully you don’t get caught at anymore toll booths before you get home and hold anyone else up. And if there are no more booths, you can just use it to buy yourself some lunch or dinner on me.”

After giving him the money Alolé turned and made a bee line back to her own vehicle. “You might want to start carrying some extra change in that fancy car of yours!” she called over her shoulder amid the honking.

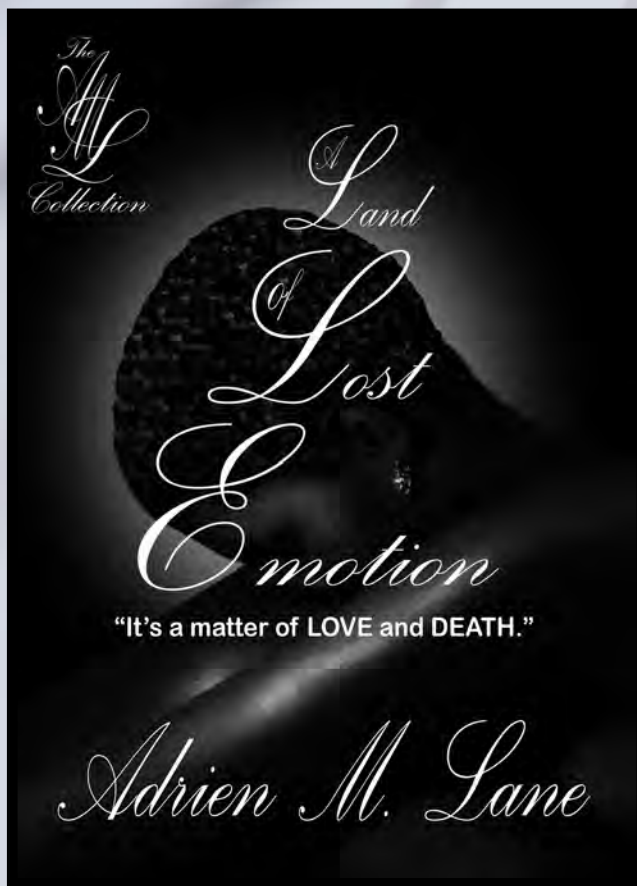
“Thank you! But hey wait a minute!” yelled the man in the car who she would later come to know as Darren Murdock. “What’s your name?! I need to pay you back!” he called after her. “Don’t worry about it!” the beautiful Samaritan yelled, voice becoming ever fainter as she walked away. “Hey wait a minute!” Darren flung open the door of the extravagant, still running car as much as he could in the tight space, banging it hard against the toll booth and not caring that he

did. “Hey! What the hell do ya think you’re doin’”, yelled the attendant. Darren, oblivious to the man in the box, angled himself sideways so he could slip from the driver’s seat and out into the environment. “Hey Buddy! You can’t do that! You’re holdin’ up the line! Don’t you leave that vehicle Mister!”

Continuing to ignore the man in the little box, Darren kept struggling to scoot free,

he called out to his benefactor, even as he was dealt some choice words from apoplectic drivers immediately behind him who saw him trying to leave his vehicle. After managing to break free, Darren took several brisk steps as the voice of the attendant that was fighting to be heard above the car horns and losing, became more and more faint behind him.

Nearly breaking into a trot so that he could get to the woman in front of him, Alolé wasn’t so far ahead that he had no hope of catching up to her, but eventually Darren became acutely aware of his surroundings and especially his self-centeredness



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## Prologue - A Land of Lost Emotion (Continued)

in this situation. He stopped walking but continued calling after the woman who was nearly to her own car and insisted that he pay her back even over her repeated protests of “No worries”, “It’s nothing.” “Pay it forward”, and so on that were now mixing with the noises in the background. Alolé was in no particular hurry to be anyplace that day, but she was aware that just because she wasn’t that didn’t mean that other victims of this man’s forgetfulness didn’t have pressing matters requiring their attention.

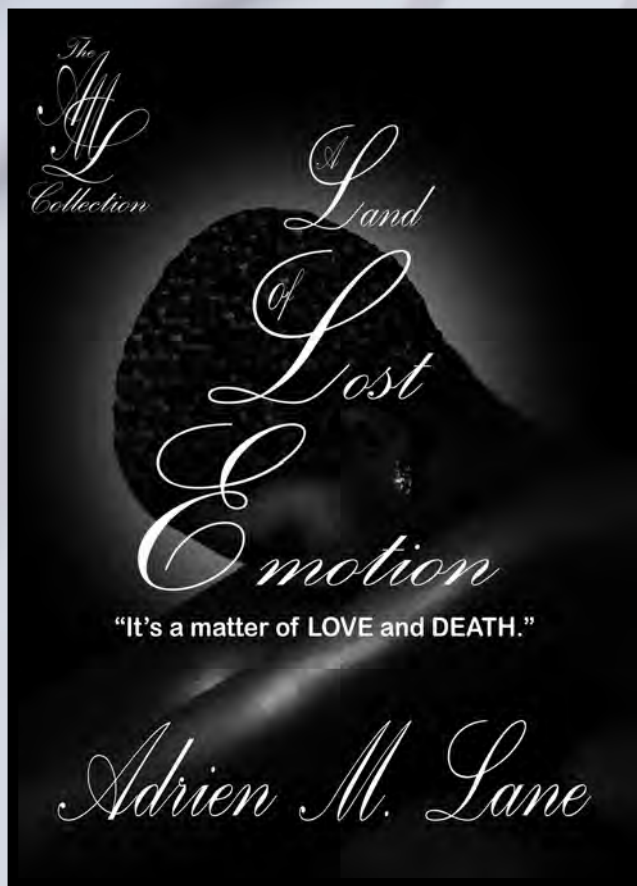
There was always the “If you clock in late one more time, you’re fired!” (Something she unfortunately, was well acquainted with from another life, when she wasn’t working for herself). There were planes and trains to catch, sick children at home and any number of reasons that people needed to be on their way, where literally every minute counted. So, she wasn’t too keen on further holding people up so that she could flirt with some guy no matter how dreamy of a smile he had, or how disarmingly

charming, or deliciously muscular, or devastatingly handsome he was.

Alolé had made it back to her car and had her hand on the handle of the door when she finally looked back toward the front of the line for the first time. At first, she was going to just get in, but there was something about how absolutely pitifully hapless he looked, as he called out to her, coupled with how this handsome

Black man called out, “Please let me repay your kindness.” That made her pause. “Can I please have your number?!” he yelled. Without taking even one step in his direction and a little apprehensive about what she was about to do, Alolé yelled over the ever intensifying blaring of car horns, her phone number to him, God and everybody.

She was certain he could not hear what she was saying over the sound of the incessant noise all around them and she could see he had nothing with which to write. He smiled widely and waved to her, and she



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## Prologue - A Land of Lost Emotion (Continued)

courteously waved back as she opened the car door, sat in the driver's seat, buckled up and waited for traffic to start moving again.

Darren walked back to his waiting vehicle that was still running, the driver's side door ajar, and began the task of once again angling himself, this time in order to enter his vehicle. As he did his dance, he looked at the attendant who, to his profound surprise was grinning widely at him. "I know she's pretty n' all, but damn man! Really?!" he said. Finally plopping down in the seat, and closing the door, Darren prepared to drive off as the gate before him slowly raised. "Didja at least get her phone number?" The toll booth man asked. Darren only looked over to him and smiled, then turned his attention to the road in front of him and drove forward.

Though for the rest of the day, Alolé did think about the handsome stranger from time to time that day, she had dismissed any thought of him ever reaching out to her.

So much for thinking.

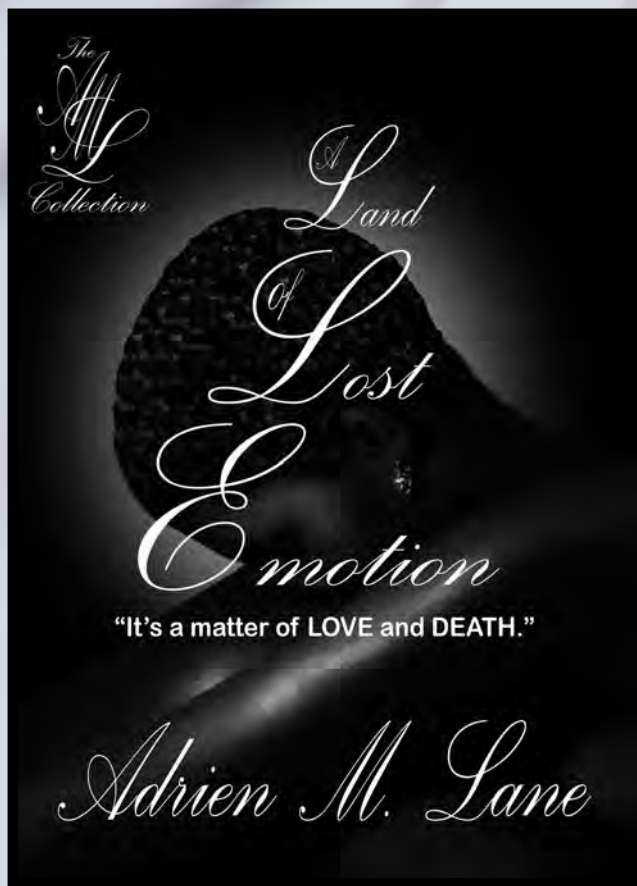
To her surprise, roses were delivered to her home the next day along with an envelope containing fifty dollars along with a thank you card and an invitation to dinner on a card that read:

"I promise I won't forget my wallet this time."

Alolé took the handsome stranger up on his offer, and as it turns out, as Darren

later recounted, he never did hear the phone number she called out of the blare of the impatient, angry vehicle horns. At some point he recognized her as the famous cartoonist Alolé Scott (that was the point at which he grinned widely and waved), and immediately upon getting to his office, Darren had his secretary contact Alolé's PR firm, and that was that.

She stared at him as he lay on the bed, as naked as she was. The light from outdoors, creating shadows against his muscular body that accentuated his physique in a way that made him



READING and WRITING in the

# DARK

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## Prologue - A Land of Lost Emotions (Continued)

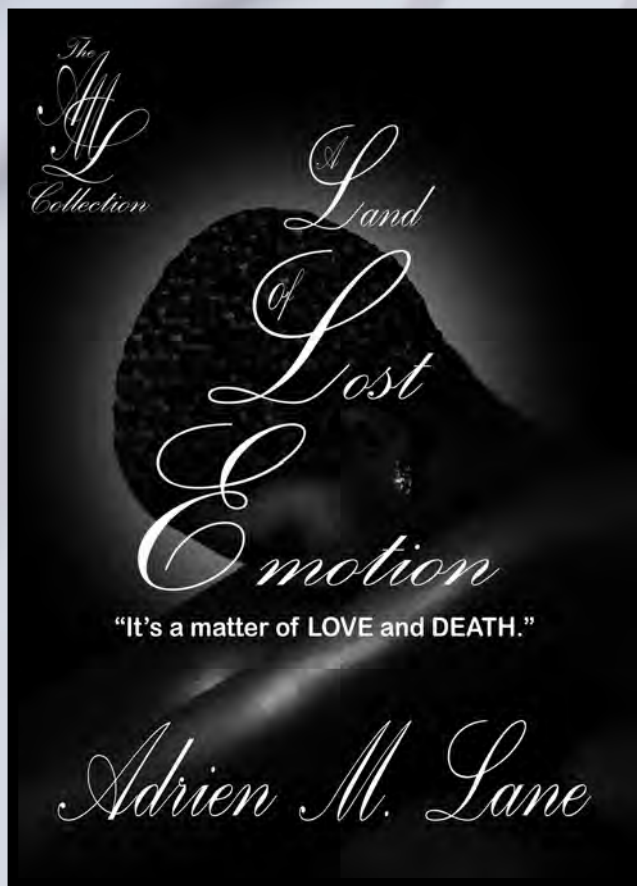
look almost like an artist's rendering. Darren was only the second man in Alolé's life, besides her stepfather, to ever declare his love for her and back up those words with actions.

Alolé turned her attention to the city sprawled out before her as she listened to the hypnotic sound of the light rain that deceptively veiled the ferocity of the powerful thunderstorms that had just passed through the city less than an hour prior and was now making its way east; no doubt to awaken with a start some other hapless dreamers from their slumber by way of intense flashes of lightning followed by explosive bursts of thunder.

The now calm and light rain mirrored the past hours of Alolé's existence. It was during the height of the storm, not long ago, that the intensity of the thunder, the power of the lightning, the relentlessness of the down pour mirrored the love making between her and Darren.

Did the storm mirror them or did they embody the storm... or both?

And now was the calm... or what should have been.



As Alolé watched the storm move slowly into the distance, her mind drifted back to life as a young girl in Georgia. During thundershowers or storms of any magnitude, her mother would have her quickly move away from any windows lest a bolt of

lightning come through and strike her as surely as if she had been standing outdoors in a field under a tree. She long since learned that the danger of watching lightning from a window was not in the strike coming through, but the lightning hitting the glass and causing it to explode, thus resulting in injury to the watcher by projecting toward them sharp shards of superheated glass.

Tonight, Alolé had no such worries, nor did she particularly care about the consequences of lightning strikes on glass or anything else.

Typically, after making love,

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## Prologue - A Land of Lost Emotion (Continued)

especially when with a lover like Darren, Alolé would fall into a deep, long, peaceful sleep.

Not tonight.

She looked to the left at the large wall clock that was as much a piece of art as a functional timekeeper.

3:37 am.

She had been sitting nearly half an hour and was wide awake with her thoughts. Her eyes and cheeks were by now dried from the initial tears that occupied them a short time earlier. She simply sat in silence now. Looking out the window and thinking. She lifted her forearm to her nose and inhaled deeply. She smelled the fragrance of her perfume, mixed with that of Darren's cologne, combined with that of the light perspiration that activates them both, and is a consequence of passionate lovemaking—if one is doing it right.

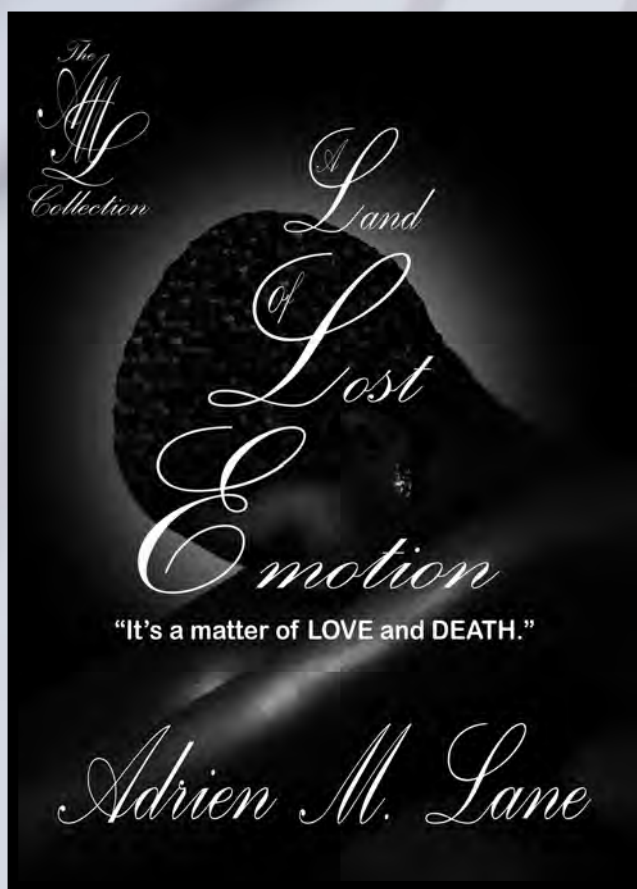
In her mind she could still hear his whispers and feel his warm breath lightly glide over her ear just enough

to make her faintly convulse beneath him, strengthening the stiffness—were such a thing possible--of his body inside hers. As she recalled the sensations, Alolé slowly wrapped her arms around herself and with gentle hands tenderly caressed her shoulders and upper arms. She could still feel the weight of him on top of her, making it hard to breathe, causing her to feel weak and unable to escape his passion, and

as she worked for every breath, head getting light and swirling at times—her ecstasy heightened.

As she gently ran her hands up and down her body her mind opened and accessed the pathways that opened back to the flourish of orgasms she had experienced oh so recently. The sensation of the trembling of her diaphragm that moved lower, still lower and inward throughout her form—the essence of her femininity.

The sensations that solidified in her spirit and soul the fact that she was a woman and at this moment ecstatic to be so to exclusion of all else.



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## Prologue - A Land of Lost Emotion (Continued)

Alolé experienced orgasms of the kind that raised the legs, bent the knees and curled the toes without her even realizing she was doing it, the kind that made her clutch her lover's back with her left hand, and with the other, the perpetually shifting alternately relaxed, and flexed, muscular ass cheek of the man atop her—embracing him and desperately pulling him to her as if were she to let go he might float away and disappear.

The kind that turns into a sort of undulating struggle for escape—not because of displeasure, but the exact, profound opposite. The kind of struggle that made her lover squeeze her more tightly as if trying with all his might to prevent her from getting away from him as his manhood became more solid within her to the point Alolé contemplated on a subconscious level, how any part of the human anatomy that was not an actual bone, could become so unimaginably rigid—and whether that part of him might somehow

literally explode inside of her.

They were both caught up in the passion of it.

The heat of it.

The sweat of it.

The cool of it.

The scent of it.

The chaos of it.

The overwhelming order of it all.

And the knowledge that in the end, and very soon, a part of this man would be left inside her.

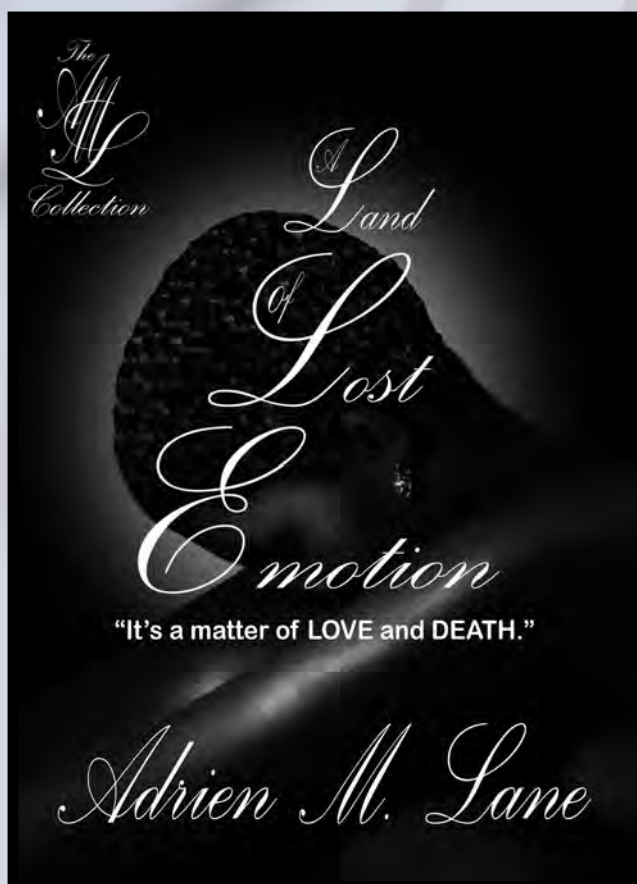
That night.

The following day.

She would carry part of Darren's physical body with her—knowledge and secret shared by only the two of them.

And a part of his spirit well beyond that.

The dance upon the Egyptian cotton bedsheets in the darkness produced strange shadows on the walls, and



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## Prologue - A Land of Lost Emotion (Continued)

sounds both recognizable, but yet somehow unfamiliar as their most primal motivations—motivations of which neither of them were not even aware dwelled within them—took over their bodies until finally, with groans that sounded more like agony than pleasure, Alolé felt the warmth of Darren filling her in powerful, unrelenting waves that seemed as if they would never end—and with each wave she let out soft cries in the darkness that she did not realize she was making, but caused Darren to squeeze her more tightly as if he was determined that every fiber of his being, both physical and spiritual must enter into her.

Simultaneously, Alolé grasped tightly the sensation of her own final climax. It was an orgasm that caught her by surprise, one of the rare orgasms that coincide with that of the lover. The sort of orgasm that is impossible to describe—the kind that in seeking to quantify or put into words would be more difficult than attempting to describe the color blue to someone who was born blind—or

catching a breeze with a net.

When it came upon her, coupled with Darren's body flooding hers, Alolé was at once everywhere and nowhere.

For a split second she heard nothing—and she heard everything.

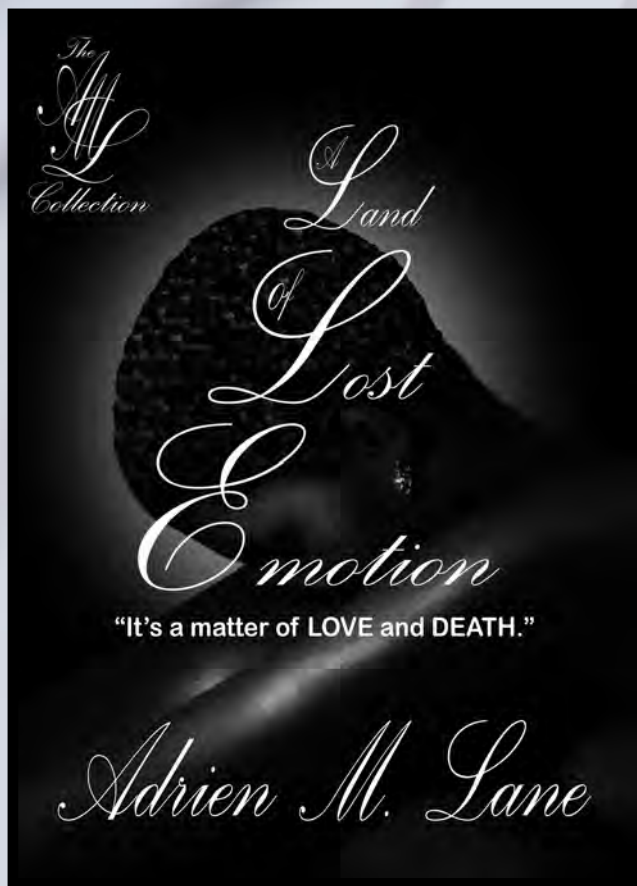
Uncreated in that moment.

And then recreated.

Flashes of lightning continued to glow in

the night sky as they became ever more distant on the horizon, but still demanding attention, catching Alolé's eyes, pulling her from the show in her mind, to the one on the other side of the window. The storm was still unapologetically displaying the braggadocio of their power by illuminating the city and lake beneath it. With the flashes of light, the glass shined, intensifying her reflection upon it.

Against the glass, Alolé caught glimpses of her own nude form, deep dark skin and auburn eyes. Alolé knew she was attractive. There was a time early in her life when she felt



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## Prologue - A Land of Lost Emotion (Continued)

the need to have that fact affirmed to her by others—to validate her, but in time, after learning how to truly see herself and her people... after learning not to judge herself for her appearance by European standards, Alolé discovered a profound love and acceptance of herself and who she was as a person.

All of that notwithstanding, Alolé Arlene Scott was strikingly beautiful by any standard.

Her physical beauty unfortunately was as off putting to some men as was her profession. Alolé was the creator, writer and illustrator of “The Miss-Adventures of Nora” a highly successful daily comic strip that garnered her worldwide acclaim and was said by many to be second in edgy urban humor only to Aaron McGruder’s “The Boondocks”.

In some circles, she was considered to be first.

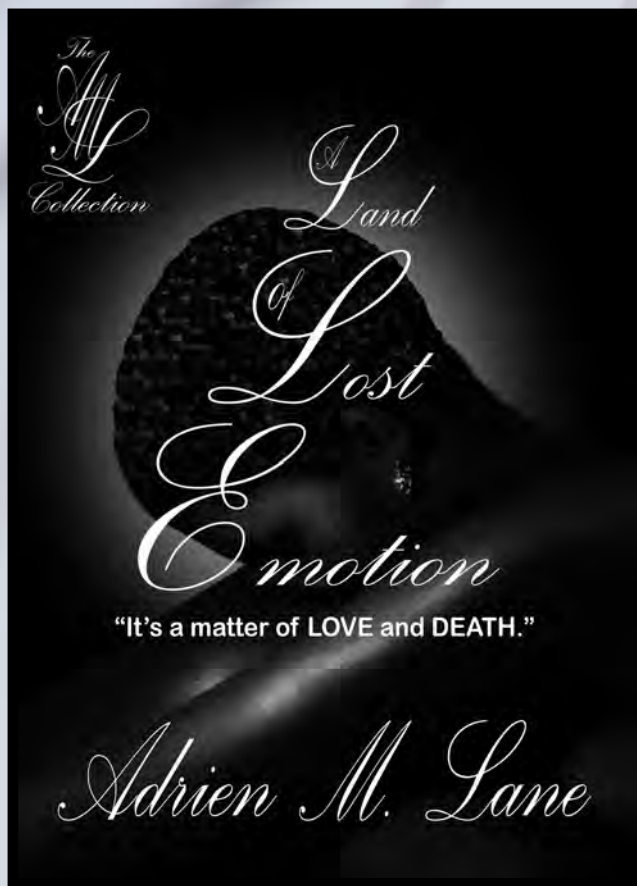
She sat silently and continued listening to the distant thunder and

watching the lighting of the skies which preceded it. The thunder now sounded subdued and harmless to her—while Alolé sat knowing that whoever was now in the vicinity of the strike was likely startled awake from a peaceful sleep and was pressing a calming hand over their hard thumping heart.

She had always been fascinated by perspective and the thought of here and there. Even to the

degree that as she looked at the stars on a cloudless night, she would often wonder if someone, somewhere was at that very moment staring back at the small light that held the planet in its orbit on which she stood and wondering the same thing.

Alolé lifted the wine glass to her lips to take another sip and found it empty. She closed her eyes and sighed as she gently sat the glass on the round table beside the armchair, and reluctantly picked up the cell phone she had been making every effort to ignore from the moment she sat it down close to an hour ago,



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## Prologue - A Land of Lost Emotion (Continued)

in favor of nursing the glass of Chablis.

to assist you?”

With the index finger of her left hand, she brought up the numeric keypad that represented the telephone feature, and with her right thumb of the hand cradling the phone slowly tapped the illuminated screen.

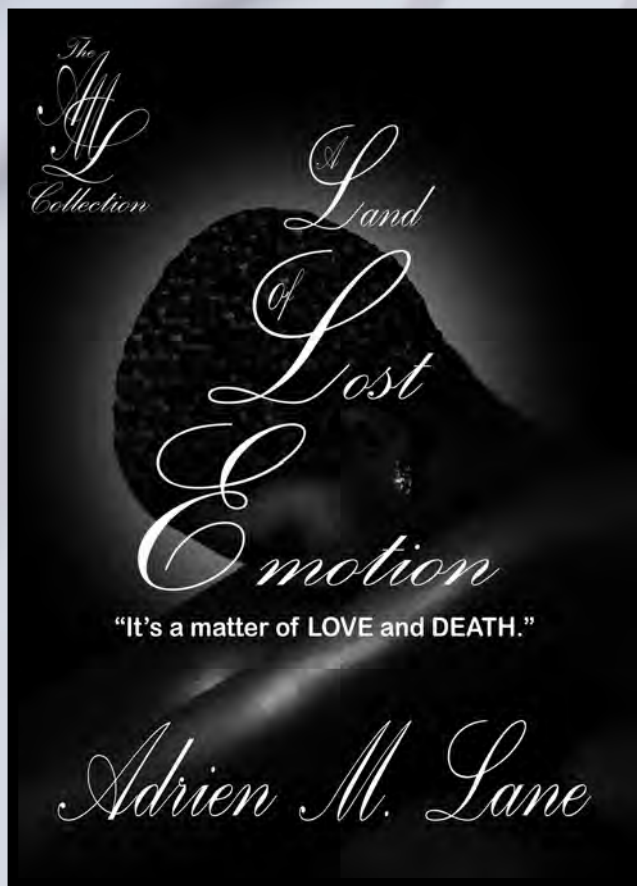
A woman’s voice came from the speaker after two rings. “9-1-1—what is your emergency?” she asked.

“My name is Alolé Scott. I am at The Lumen at Playhouse Square in the 32nd floor penthouse. I need for you to send someone out.”

“I’ll send someone immediately Alolé, but first I need to know the nature of your emergency please so that I can dispatch to your location those who are best equipped

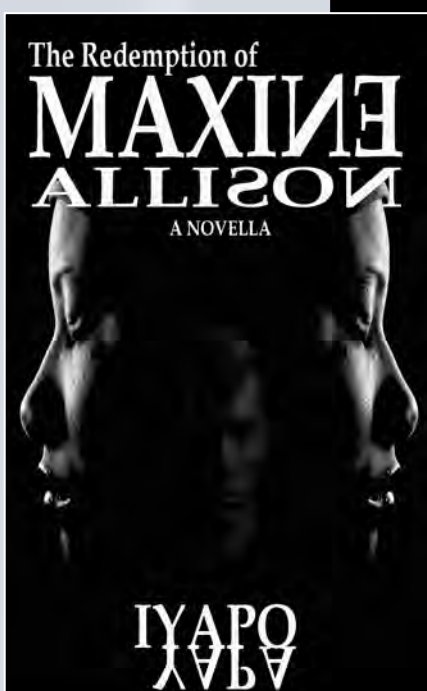
Alolé once again turned her attention to the panorama before her. Being so high up and far removed from the dangers of the harsh streets below had created for her a false sense of security—a feeling of invulnerability, or even superiority to those who existed in such spaces. Tonight—this morning, Alolé would be taking an express elevator to the ground floor. “Ma’am are you still there?” came the voice that shook the beautiful Black cartoonist from her daze. “Yes.” She said softly and slowly with a bit of a drawl, “Technically there is no emergency. I am here with Darren Murdock of Murdock Imports Limited.

“Darren Murdock is dead.”



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**Is it BEST to DIVEST?**

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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...

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## R.J. BLAKMAN



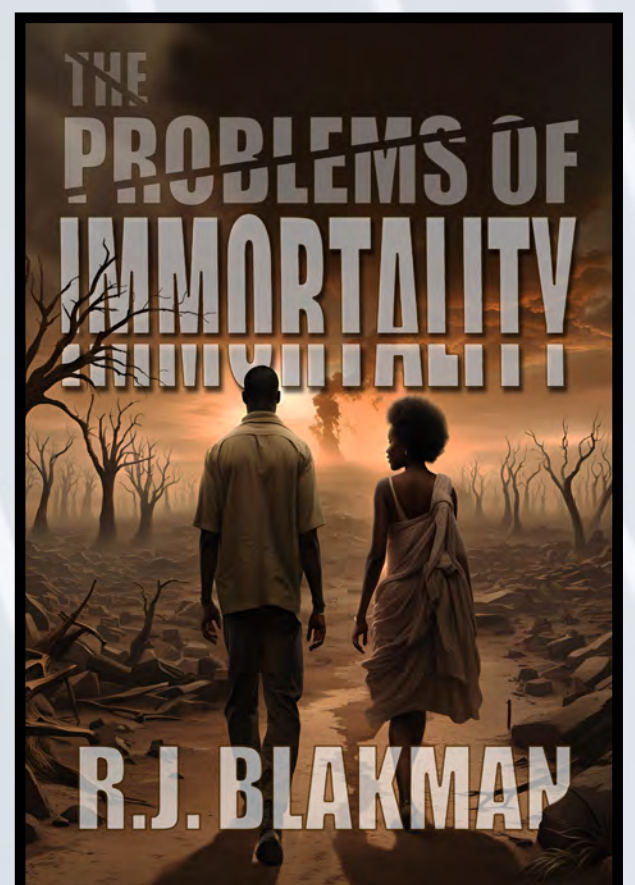
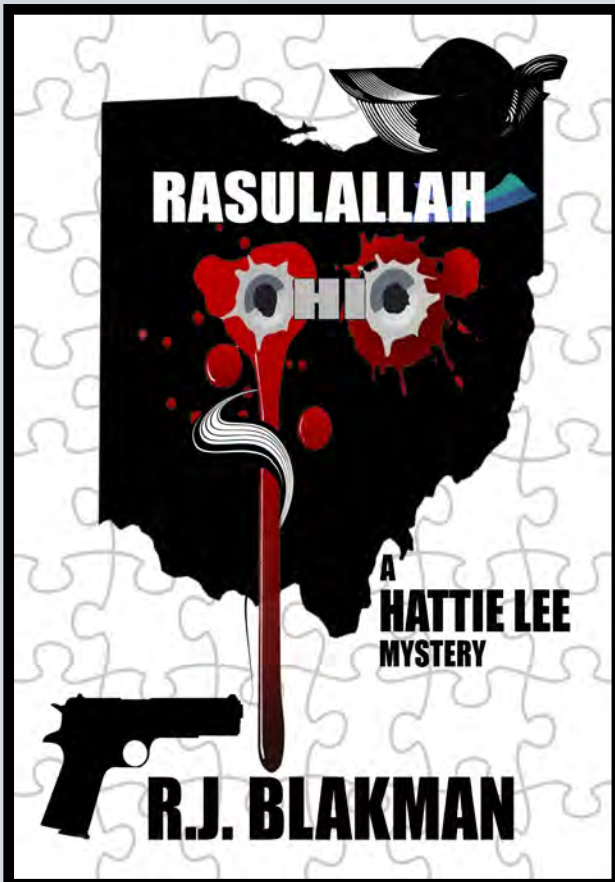
R. J. Blakman is a mystery writer, a writer of non-fiction and an all-around truth seeker. Blakman tries to look at things on a deeper level and whatever he finds, he tends to write about it with no sugar coating.

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](mailto:rjb@iyapoyapa.com)

## UPCOMING BOOKS BY R.J. BLAKMAN



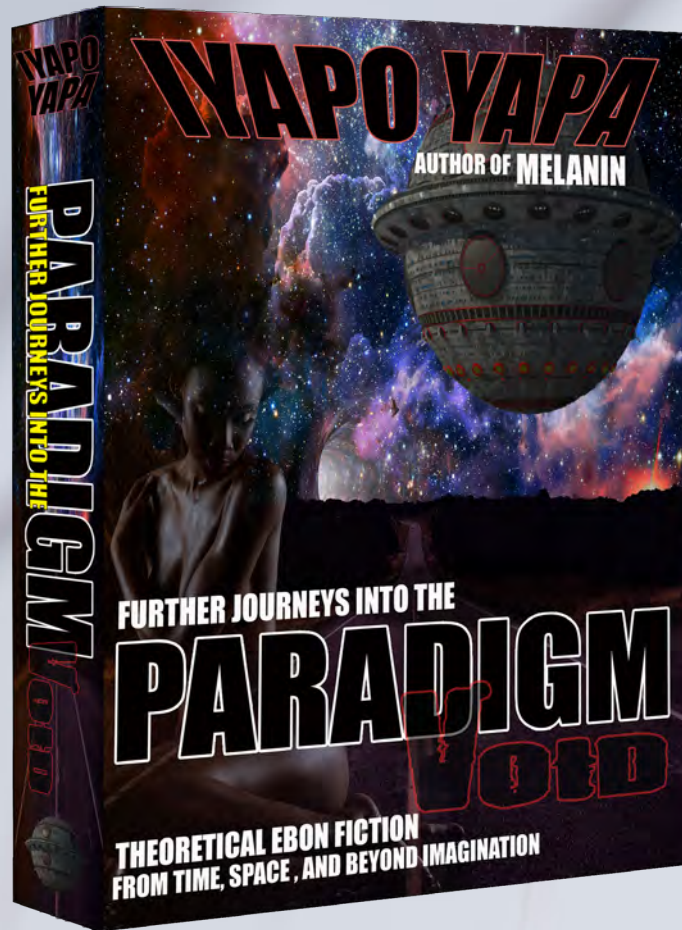
ENTERTAINING,  
ENGROSSING,  
THOUGHT PROVOKING!

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ARE YOU PREPARED TO JOURNEY BACK INTO THE VOID?!

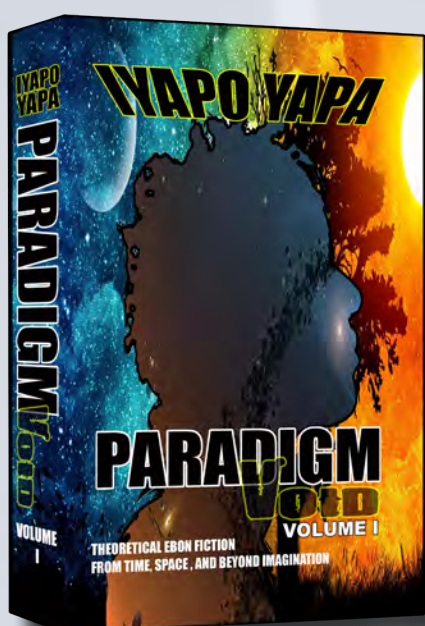


## COMING SOON

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!

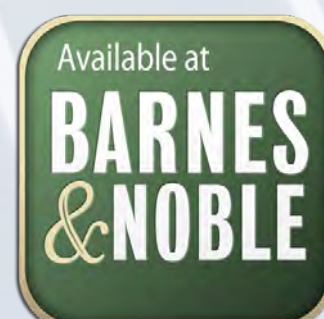
- What is life like for a person who is “unstuck” in time? One man gives his confessions.
- What if the universe, in an effort to balance itself started removing EVERYTHING that was of no use or value - to include some PEOPLE?!
  - Luxury isn't always what it seems, or is cracked up to be, as one newlywed 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!*



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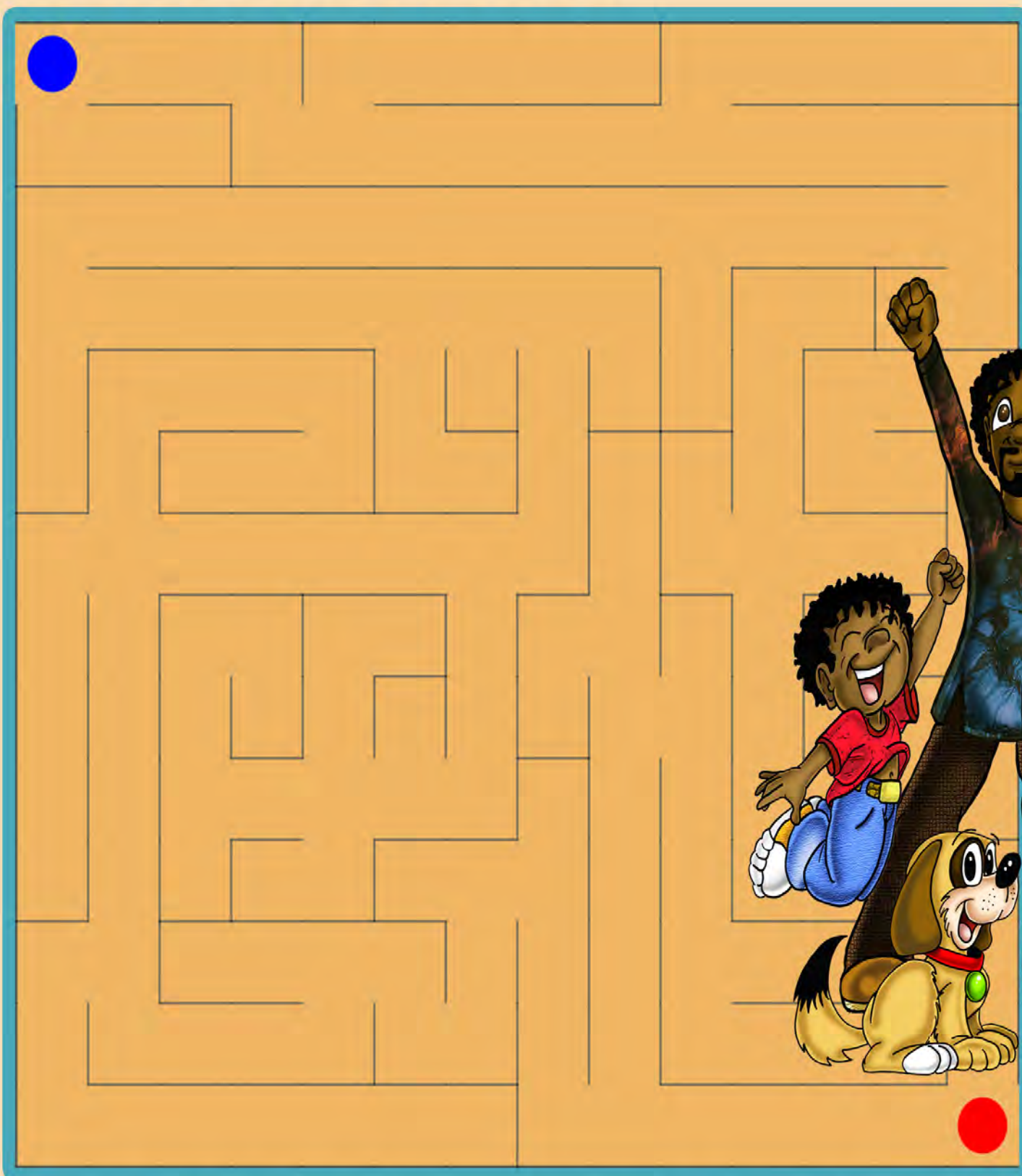
## NEW! April 2024 Maze!

This month we don't have a crossword puzzle to have you racking your brain, or a word search that will have you crossing your eyes and hunting endlessly. What we do have, once again, is a simple maze for you to find your way through. It presents a little bit of a challenge without being too difficult!

As always, the answers to last month's puzzle are at the back of this issue and the answers to this month's crossword puzzle will appear next month. HAVE FUN!

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

## APRIL 2024 MAZE

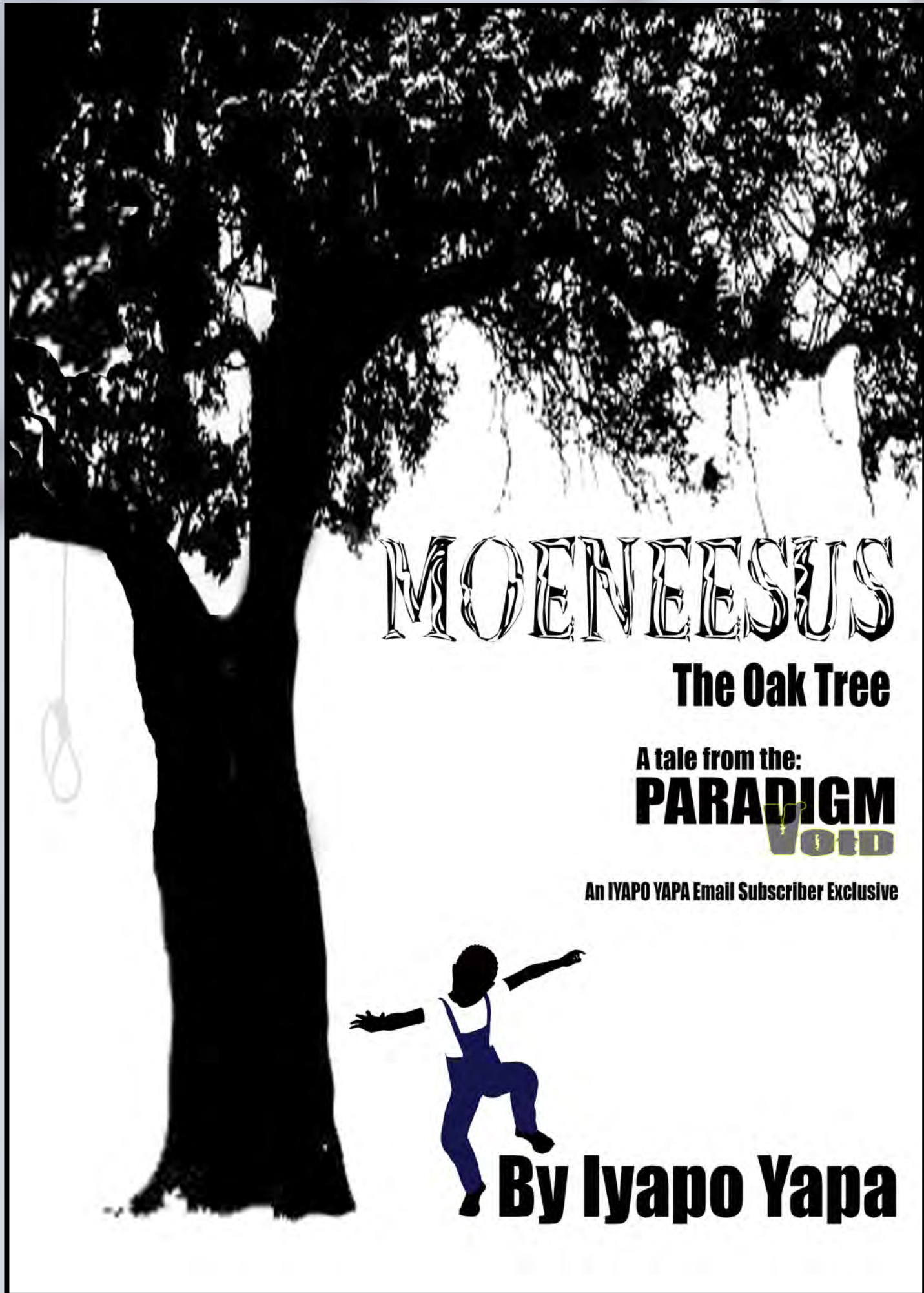


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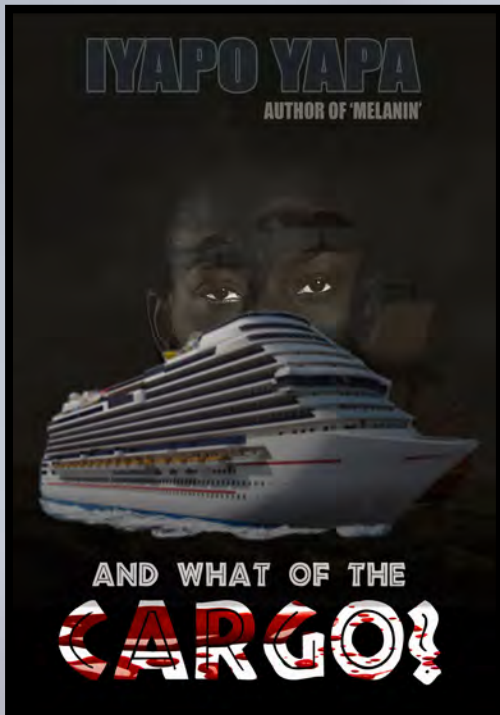


If you are a **READING AND WRITING IN THE DARK** subscriber and haven't read your free copy of **MOENEESUS THE OAK TREE**, what are you waiting for?! Relax and take some time to read a great story from the the **Paradigm VOID**! It may make you smile, it may make you cry, but either way, you are going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

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AVAILABLE NOW!

## And What of the CARGO?

Buy it now on Amazon

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

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

— Walter Rodney. How Europe Underdeveloped Africa

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

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

## What are readers saying about And What of the CARGO?

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

- Amazon Review

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

- Gwen

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

- Amazon review

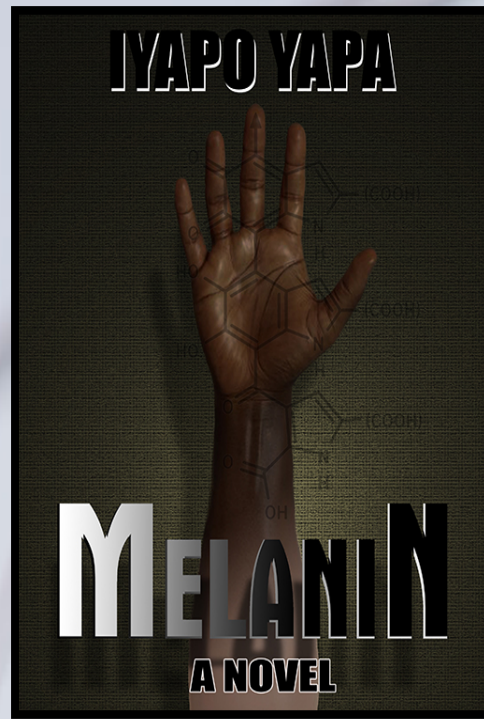
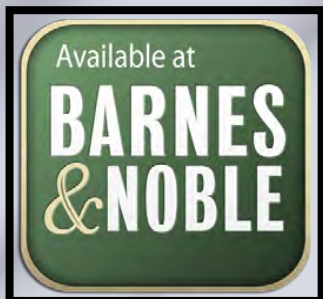
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## MELANIN: A NOVEL

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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!

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## 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

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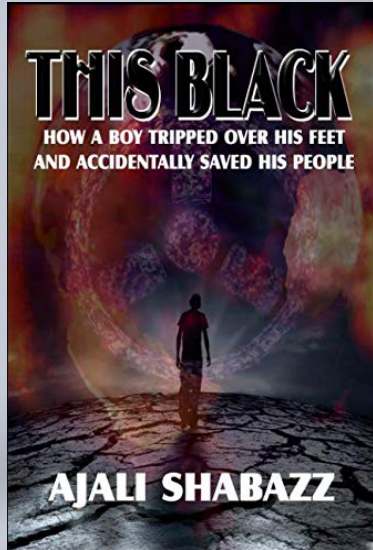
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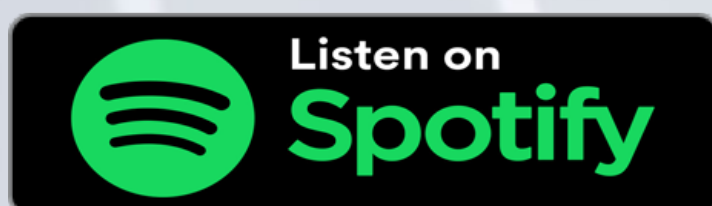
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## Well Placed Faith

From IYAPO'S BLOG Sunday Marh 31, 2024

Before anyone says not to put your faith and trust in any human being, but put ALL in the The Most High, I write this from the standpoint of that already being a given. When I speak about faith and trust when it comes to people, I'm talking in terms of faith and trust as far as can be expected from flawed humans.

The Bible says in Mathew the 17th chapter and verse 20 that, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you."

Now regardless of beliefs system, these words are apropos.

Typically, when this verse is quoted, the focus is on the FAITH aspect of it... and though important, when recognizing that it was Jesus who said it, something became very clear to me. Is the scripture about faith? Of course, it is, but more importantly, Jesus was implying WHY it would activate and work.

A mustard seed is small. Tiny. But that's all the faith you need to move mountains. Well, how does that work?! Because it isn't about faith for faith's sake—it is about faith in Jesus.

Again, whether you believe it or not, or are even an atheist, doesn't matter. The principle holds true. I have told people like this...

Imagine there is a large lake, and the lake is frozen over and you'd like to walk across it as a short cut.

If the ice is only about the thickness of a sheet of paper and you have all the faith in the UNIVERSE!

The size of your faith in physical terms could be likened to the mass of a THOUSAND suns! What will happen when you step out onto that ice?

As soon as you put your weight on it you would go right through, end up in the ice-cold water, and even if you could swim, likely go into shock within moments, drown and then have the emergency squad come and fish your lifeless body out. Film at 11.

But what if the ice is five feet thick, and you have JUST ENOUGH faith to step out onto it? I mean... JUST enough, if your faith could be measured physically, it would be like cutting a grain of rice in half and then keep cutting it

in half until you need a microscope to see it. But that microscopic bit of faith is ALL you need to step out onto the ice. What will happen?

The ice will hold you up and you will walk safely across to the other side.

Why with all the faith in the world would you fall through, and with a minuscule amount you are upheld? It doesn't have as much to do with your FAITH as it does upon what you are PLACING your faith!

In terms of human beings in general, people will fall short and will let you down—that's a given. However, if you MUST trust someone—sometime—as in trusting and putting your faith in a people, will you put it in those who have historically PROVEN their hatred and contempt for you?

Will you place it in a people who have made no secret of the fact they want you dead or at best



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## Well Placed Faith (Continued)

From IYAPO'S BLOG Sunday 31 March 2024

subjugated underneath them? Or will you place your faith in your own people who may yes, be VERY problematic (BECAUSE of the people who hate and despise us), but at least they are your family and your people.

The takeaway I'd like the reader to get from this is that the most important thing about faith, is where that faith is placed. Sometimes knowing (or deciding) can be a daunting proposition. At times it can be downright frightening (depending upon the magnitude of the consequence of having chosen wrongly). In my opinion, for as problematic as my people may be (through little to no fault of our own I might add), I maintain now, and likely shall always, that on a human level—when it comes to people—it is those of my family, the Black family, with whom I will go the distance. I say this with full knowledge of the fact that “all skin folk ain't kin folk.” Given the alternative

however, I'll vet as best I can, and give my people a chance (on an individual basis) as much as possible and believe in them until given a reason not to. As far as we as a collective, I'm team Black all the way! No question!



We need work and we need help, and along with The Most High, that work and help must come from Black us who have a love of being Black, along with an honor and respect for our people that we are not given by people of other persuasions. There was a time when I looked for validation from people outside my people, and looked for praise, applause and accolades from them, but

now, I pull what I need from within. That said, when it comes to being recognized, it is now the case that the ONLY group I'm concerned with in terms of their opinion of my work is my people!

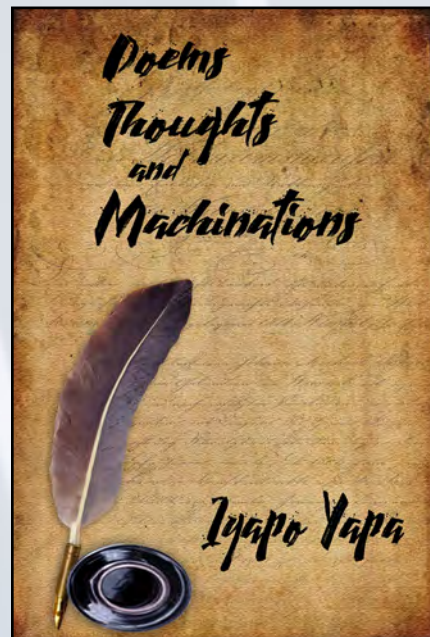
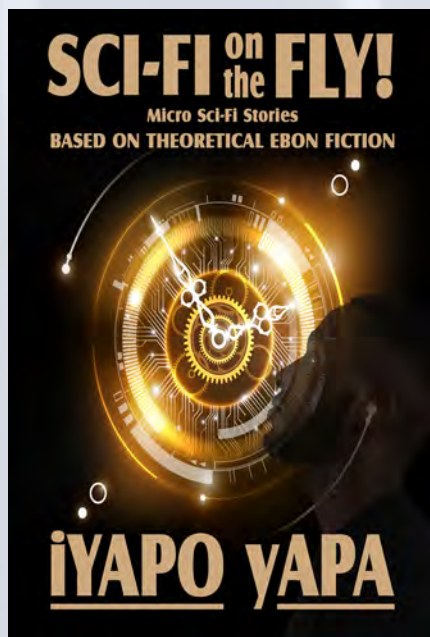
I do believe that when it comes to human beings that my trust and faith in Black us is well placed.



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

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

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



The title says it all.

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

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

Always seeking.

# READING and WRITING in the DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

## A NEW NANOWRIMO CHALLENGE FOR APRIL!

It's Nanowrimo time again and I'm anxious to get this party started!

I participated in the previous Nanowrimo challenge in November and exceeded the goal! (The target for National Novel Writing Month—Nanowrimo—is to write 50,000 words within the month of November. I reached the 50,000 mark somewhere near mid-November, so I finished up with a total of 84,000 words. Not bad huh?)

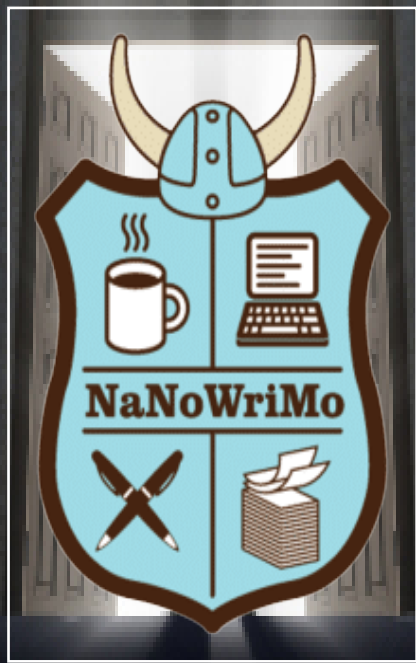
The problem for me is that I completed the set challenge and more, but I missed out on finishing my own personal challenge, which was to finish a whole novel within that 30 day period. What I wrote was novel length, but frankly, for this particular work, I'm still a ways off. So, what I'm going to do for Nanowrimo for April--

which they are calling a camp & where there is no generalized goal--is to set as my April mission as the completing my novel, *The Dragons of Harlem* - which I'm writing under the pen name R.J. Blackman!

*The Dragons of Harlem* will be the second R.J. Blackman book I've completed, the first being *Rasulallah, Ohio*, which I completed in December of 2023 on New Year's Eve!

I have a goal of releasing at least two novels this year (more if I'm able). Right now, it looks like *Rasulallah, Ohio* is definitely one of them, and when I complete this Nanowrimo challenge I'll have my second that's ready to go! (At least after all the editing and formatting is completed).

So, keep an eye out, and keep me in your thoughts as I move forward!



## 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! Enter a world of action, adventure, science and horror on Kindle vella!

Click on the Kindle vella link below!



kindle vella



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

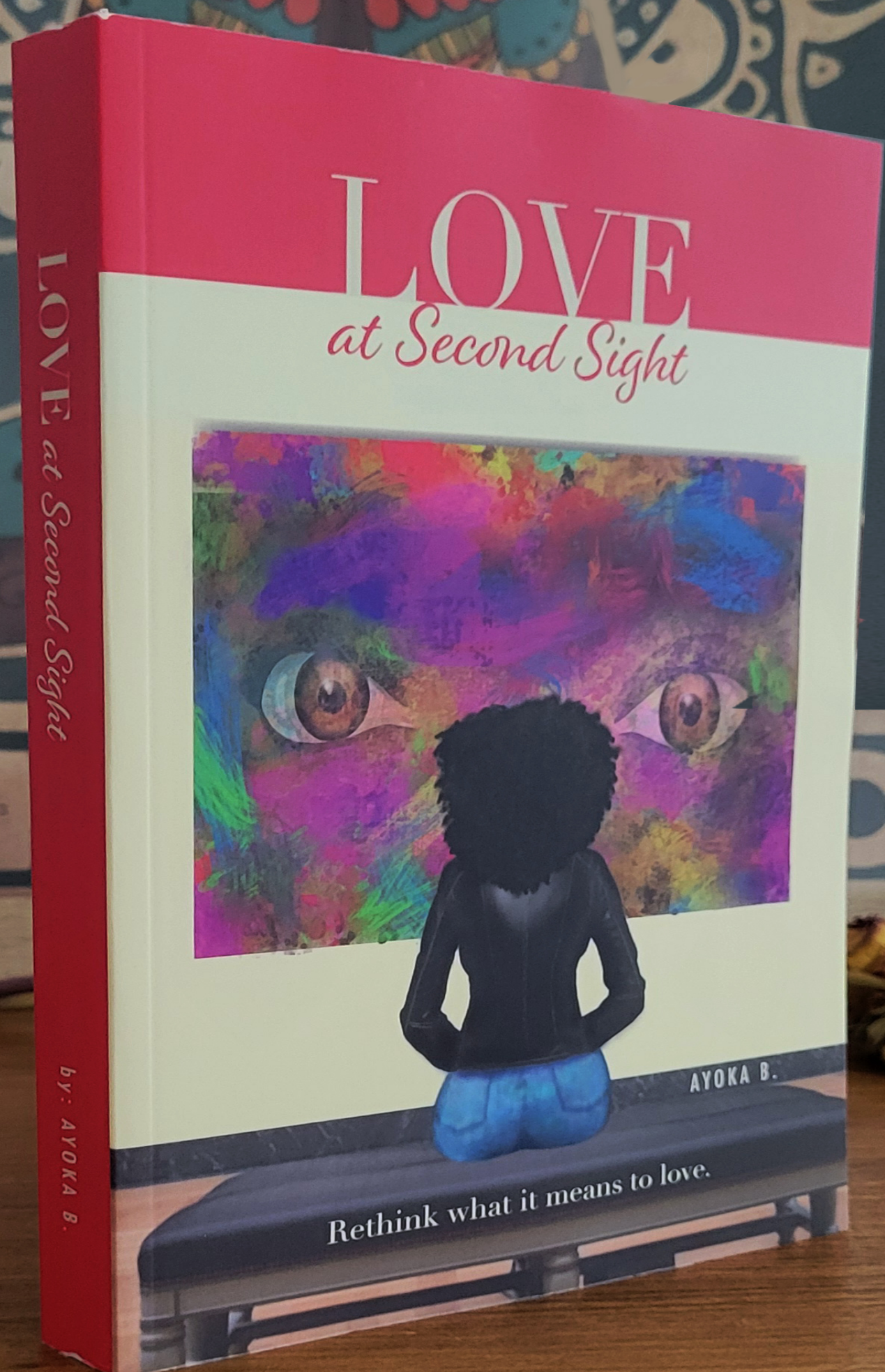
# DARIK

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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!**

READING and WRITING in the

# DARK

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## 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

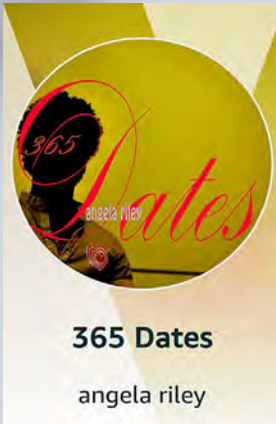
DeClaire and Tyrone meet and sparks fly. They fall in love with each other quick, fast, and in a hurry. It seems too good to be true. But is it? Is it safe to love? Are there any “good” rules when it comes to love? Do we have to fight for love? Are there always games being played when it comes to love? 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

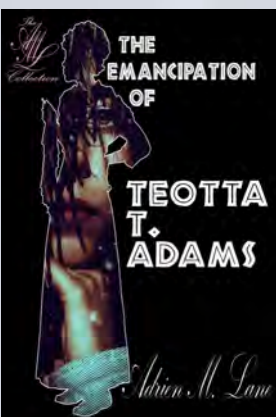
Single again, after my first divorce, one day I had a new thought: I WANT TO DATE. And... NOTHING. No one came knocking on my door to woo me. No one approached me when I was out wanting to court me. Nobody asked friends/family to be set up with me. Just crickets! So, thinking that maybe my goal was to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

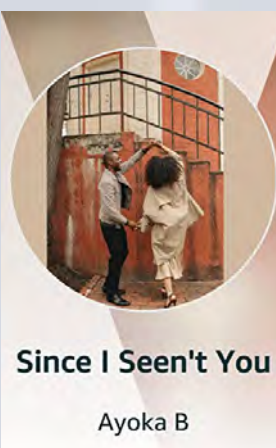
Because she is IN LOVE, talented dancer and homeschooled student Makena enrolls in the elite Fullson High to be closer to Marshall.



### 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?

READING and WRITING in the

# DARIK

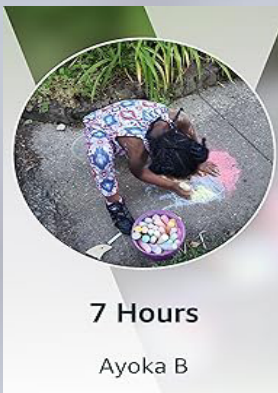
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## The Match

Ayoka B.

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



## 7 Hours

Ayoka B.

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



## The Skin I'm In

Ayoka B.

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



## A'DICK'tion The Back Story

MADM Precious

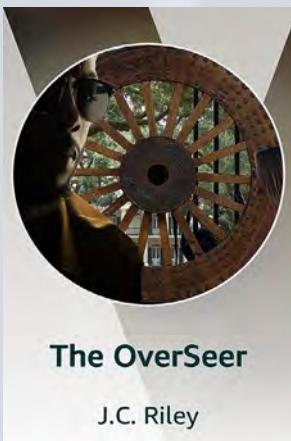
From Book 1: Sex addiction is a real thing; When Quincey finds out his wife is caught up in some things, can they save their marriage.



## The Godchild Chronicles

J.C. Riley

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



## The OverSeer

J.C. Riley

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

**ALSO AVAILABLE on AMAZON and OTHER PLATFORMS!**

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

READING and WRITING in the

# DARK

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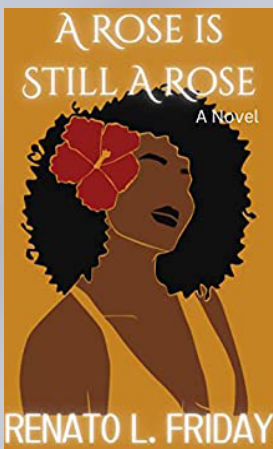


## Affirming Self Love (Graphic Non-Fiction SERIES)

angela riley

### SelfLOVE Meditation, Reflections, & AFFIRMATIONS Series...

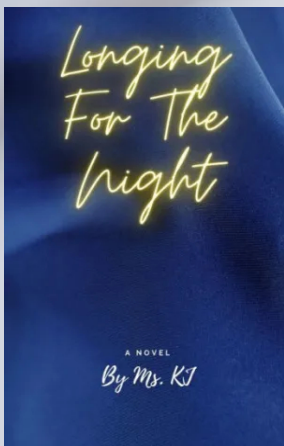
With a new book released each month, this “Graphic Nonfiction” series is filled with love for BlackUs. Each episode opens with a short essay exploring a theme such as “Following the Happy” or “Plan & Reflect” and culminates with a dynamic collection of affirmation. You’ll have a beautiful time meditating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



## A Rose is Still a Rose

Renato L. Friday

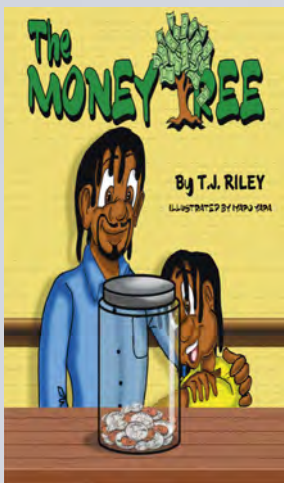
Rose thought life was going great: she was engaged, had a beautiful set of twin girls, a recent trade school graduate, and a new job right around the corner. Unfortunately, her fiancé, David, turned out to not be what she needed, and she chose to break things off. In the midst of her failing relationship,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



## Longing for the Night

Ms. KJ

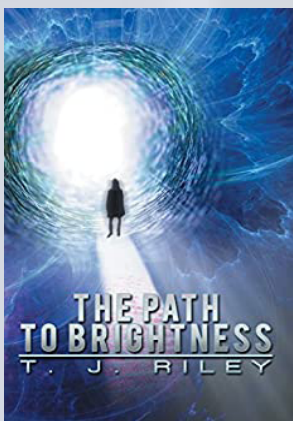
Inspired by the poem Goblin Market by Christina Rossetti, two young sisters face the trials and tribulations of the hood in this coming-of-age story about the harshness of living in South Central Los Angeles.



## The Money Tree

T.J. Riley / Illustrated by Iyapo Yapa

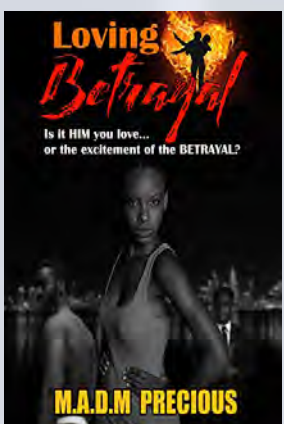
Every child wants money to buy something, right? Our hero does too. But, his father has a surprise, a Money Tree. Join the fun journey to find out how to grow your own money tree.



## THE PATH to BRIGHTNESS

T.J. Riley

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



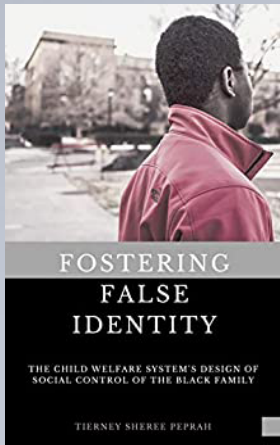
## LOVING BETRAYAL

MADM Precious

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

# READING and WRITING in the **DARK**

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## **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.



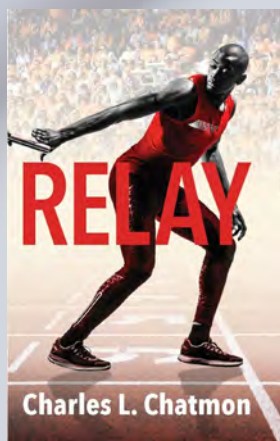
## **Storm Over South Central**

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.



Benita, a desperate and out-of-work actress, had been selling her blood to stay afloat. Times were hard and getting worse until she agreed to star in a film by an unknown director named Danny West. He'd been producing mystery and horror flicks for years. Yet, no one knew it was just a front for his secret agenda.

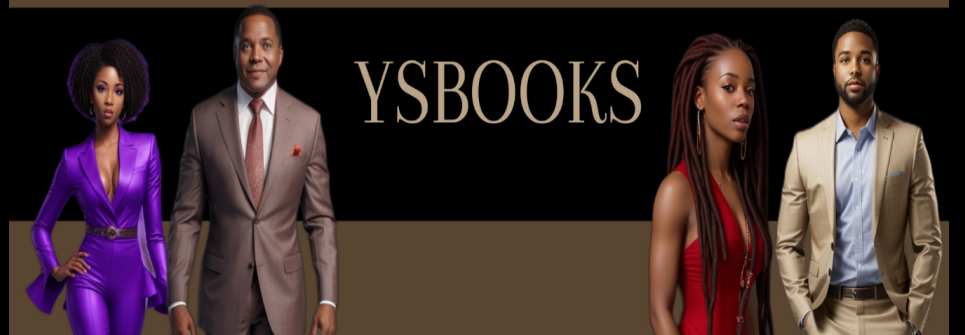
\* \* \*

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!

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# THE DIRECTOR

READ FOR FREE OR  
LISTEN TO THE AUDIO DRAMA!



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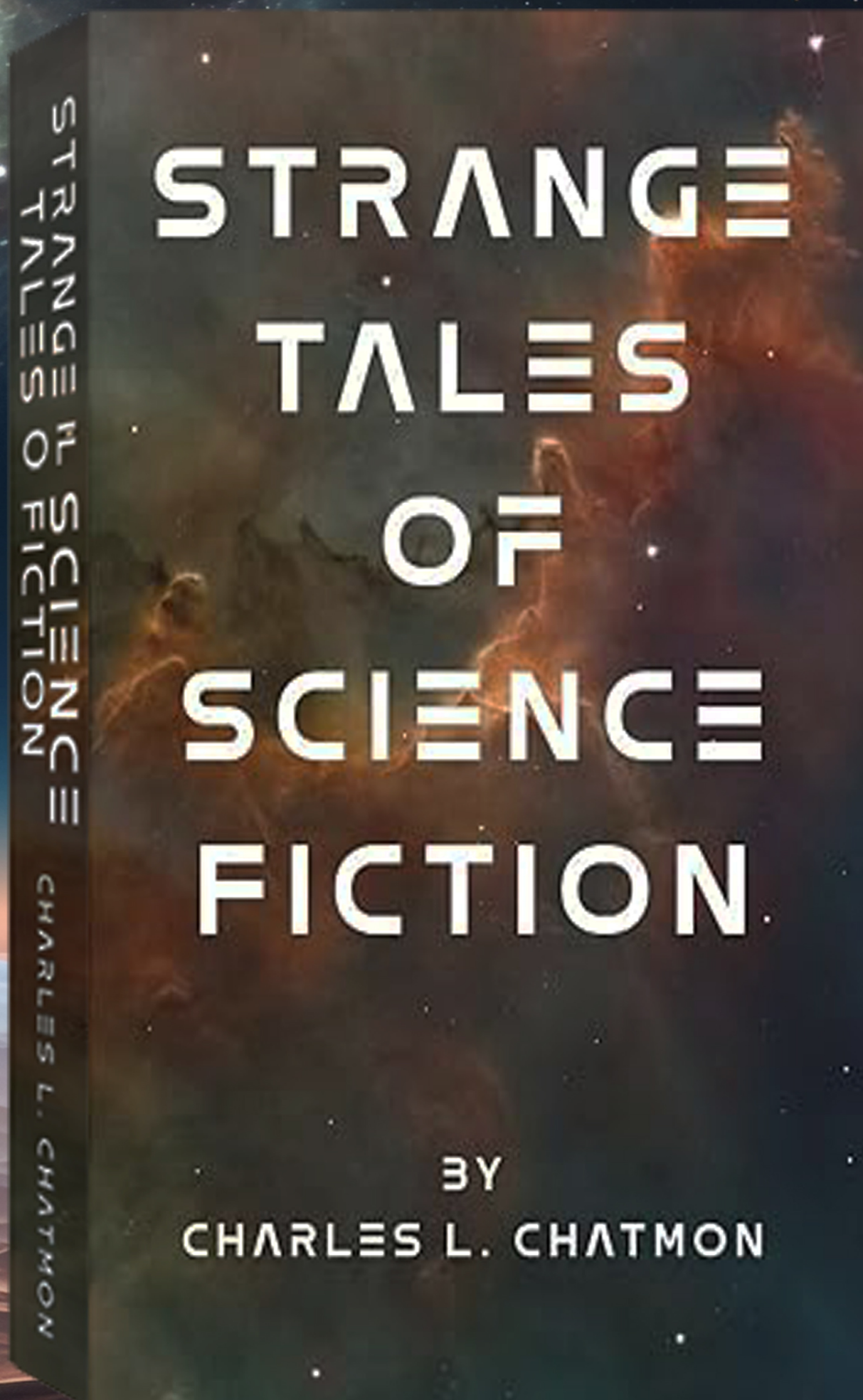
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**STRANGE TALES OF SCIENCE FICTION IS AVAILABLE NOW!**

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

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



**CLICK ON THE BOOK ABOVE TO PURCHASE ON AMAZON!**

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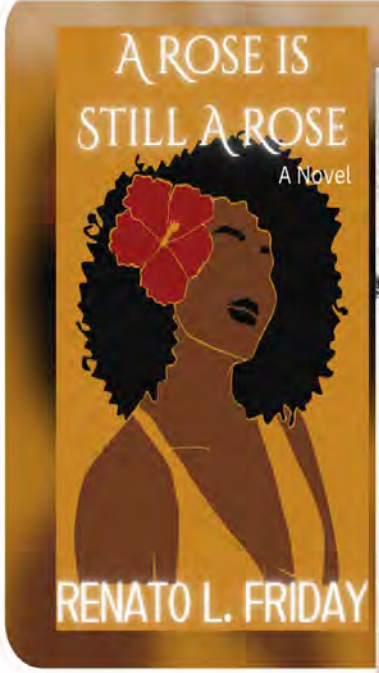
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HERE IS THE SOLUTION TO LAST MONTH'S PUZZLE!



## SOLUTION!

**BLACK WRITERS**  
WORD SEARCH



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!

# MAJOR MARU MASS



2024