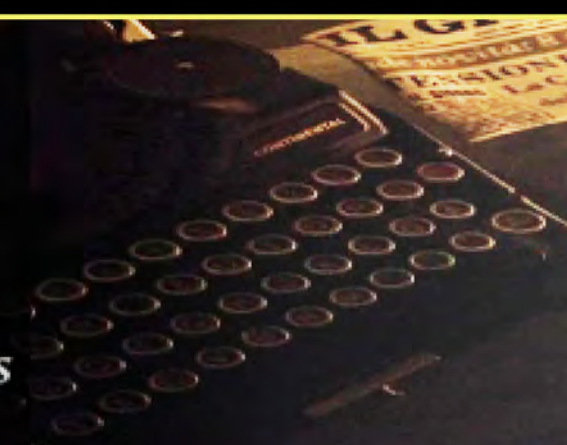


READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors



THIS MONTH:

**A Heart Pounding
Excerpt From The Book
That Started It ALL!**

IYAPO YAPA'S

MELANIN

A NOVEL

Page 4

**Feature:
What is this
"CHAT GPT"
thingy?!**

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**This month we
have a maze and
honor Malcolm X!**

Page 21

**News and Info about Completed and
Upcoming Projects and MORE Every Month!**

READING and WRITING in the

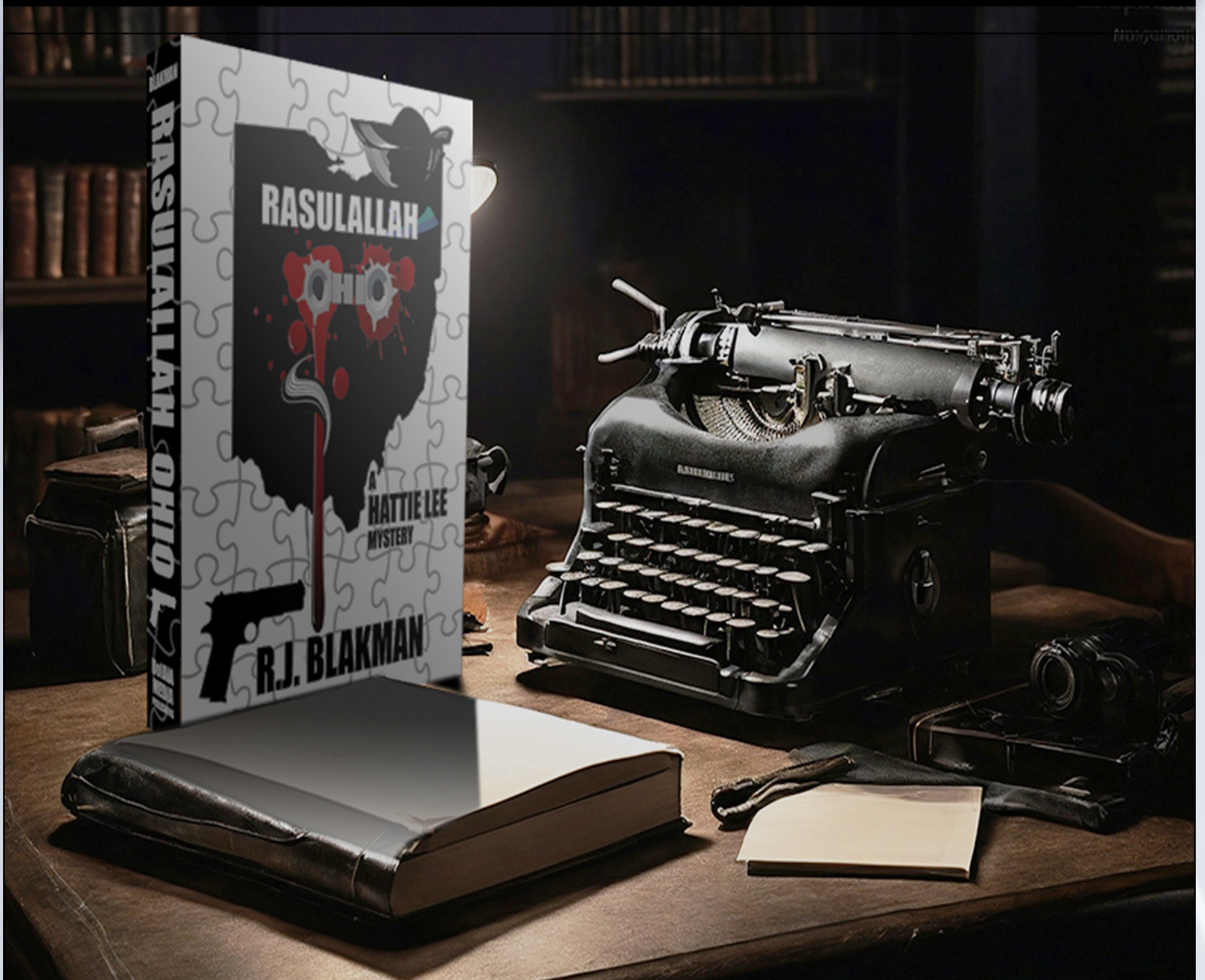
DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

1960s Ohio

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

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



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

RASULALLAH OHIO: A HATTIE LEE MYSTERY

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

or click the image above for the direct link.

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



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MAGAZINE



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WELCOME BACK!

WELCOME to the APRIL 2025 edition of the *Reading and Writing in the DARK Magazine*! *Heaven Mississippi* is being edited as well as the long awaited first published novella from our friend Adrien M. Lane, *The Redemption of Maxine Allison*! This month we have an excerpt from my debut novel -- the one that started it ALL -- *MELANIN: A Novel*! And I picked out quite an exciting scene even if I do say so myself! Sit back and enjoy, and most of all THANK YOU for being a *Reading and Writing in the DARK* subscriber!

See you next month!

Iyapo



A Look Back and to the Future!

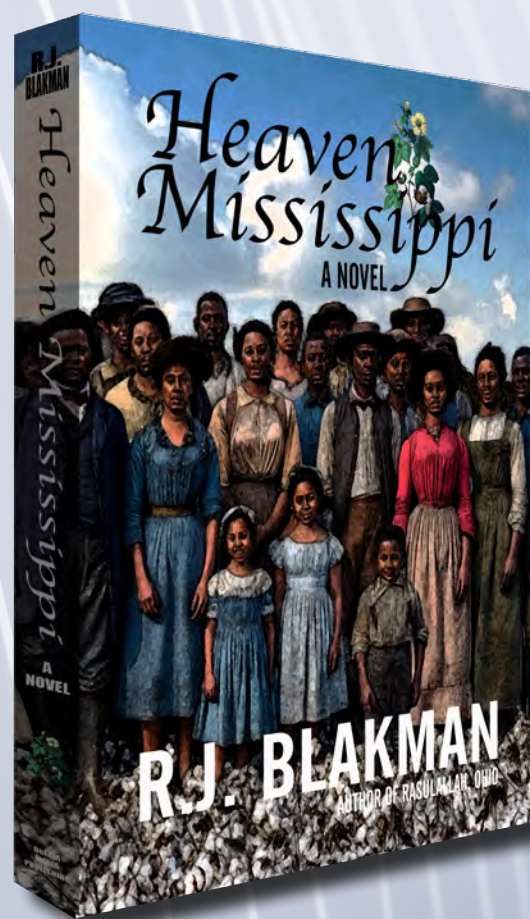
Ok, ok! Black people are sick and tired of reading and talking about our enslavement.

I get it!

So does R.J. Blakman.

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

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



READING and WRITING in the DARK Magazine
Vol. 1 No. 10
APRIL 2025

Iyapo Yapa
Writer/Layout/Editor-In-Chief

Angela Riley
Copy Editor

Iyapo Yapa
Layout/Design

Iyapo using Leonardo AI
Graphics for Cover



MELANIN: A NOVEL (Excerpt)

EXCERPT:

Though Colonel Lancaster and his crew had no way of knowing what had transpired when the first of the away group went back through the portal, what followed upon the return of the first ten members of the landing party was a testament to the power of “dumb luck.” In later years Ar-ARayins considered it Odin’s divine intervention that Colonel Lancaster had a habit of waiting fifteen extra seconds before sending a team through. A habit that spared several lives and possibly saved the entire program. It definitely served as confirmation of the purity and divine stamp upon their destiny.

Such were the thought processes of the race of Ar-ARayins.

Lisa Case and Roger Stephens had done hundreds of simulations in training for opening and closing portals for the safe travel of exploratory crews. Trent Edgerton, the third member of the staff, who was placed as the head technician in charge of watching over the safe comings and goings of away teams, also had no “real world” experience but was at the top of his training class. Edgerton

had been the only staff members to undergo six-month training with one hundred percent scores on every written, oral and simulated test.

As the portal started shimmering and producing waves that looked like those created by throwing a stone into the midst of still water, all seemed to be working normally. The readings on the control board were all fine, nothing running hot, cold, or abnormal, perfect readings. Everything was running according to the book, so Case and Stephens were not missing Edgerton – the man in charge – who had just taken a trip to the restroom, as they sat comfortably in their seats and waited for the first people from Lancaster’s team to appear.

As soon as the first ten members of the away team emerged from the portal and into the waiting chamber, ear-piercing alarms went off. These alarms had never sounded before in the history of the sidesteps. The two technicians in the control booth looked wide-eyed at each other. Stephens yelled over the siren, “What the hell is that?!” Case, looking at the control board and the large pulsating red lights, cried out, “Oh shit!” and with her left hand immediately lifted





MELANIN: A NOVEL (Excerpt) Continued

the plastic lid that protected the button, then forcefully smashed it down with her right. Upon pressing the “panic” button, the lights in the chamber below were immediately turned off for a moment, and then dimmer red lights illuminated in their place. Thick plexiglass shields locked down, immediately sealing in the ten now terrified men and women. In front of the plexiglass enclosures, smooth metal partitions slid down in front of each already protected section.

“What the hell?!” Stephens yelled again, sirens still ringing loudly. “Damn it, Roger, there’s some kind of an emergency, something’s gone wrong with the people who just came through!”

“Oh shit,” Roger whispered, covering his mouth with his trembling right hand, and leaning slowly back in his seat as he watched the frightened and confused people now trapped in a glowing red bowl below him.

As the commotion continued, Trent Edgerton emerged from the small restroom at the rear of the control room. He was hurriedly shoving his shirt into his pants and zipping his fly. “What’s going on out here?!” He yelled to be

heard above the still blaring sirens.

Stephens sat silently, so Case explained what had happened as best she could. “Something’s going on with the returnees! I pressed the button to seal off the room alre—”



“Exactly how long has it been since that alarm went off?!”

“I don’t know, Trent... twenty or thirty seconds?!”

Edgerton scanned the control board for the time elapsed since the team had arrived in the chamber. Thirty-two seconds.

“Did you contact the Colonel?!”

“I-I’m sorry? Contact the Colonel?”

“You didn’t conta—? FUCK!”

Quickly grabbing from the console what looked like an old-fashioned telephone receiver and pressing the button beside it that opened up a channel, he yelled into the device.

“Colonel Lancaster, Colonel Lancaster, Do you read?!” within two seconds, there was a reply. “This is



MELANIN: A NOVEL (Excerpt) Continued

Colonel Lancaster, I rea—”

“Abort! Abort! Abort! Abort NOW! Do not let anyone back through that portal! I repeat... do not let anyone or anything come through that portal! Do you read?!”

Edgerton received no direct response from the colonel, but he could hear in the background Lancaster’s voice yelling, “Freeze where you are! Abort! Abort! Don’t take another step!”

After receiving the report back from the Colonel that everyone was still on the other side and no one had made it into the portal, Edgerton plopped back into his leather seat at the control panel. He let out a tension releasing sigh, then looked over to Stephens, who was still looking like he was in shock and not knowing what to do, and shouted over the noise of the siren, “Roger would you go shut down that freaking alarm, please?!” Roger Stephens, still looking dazed but leaning slightly forward to search the board, said, “Alarm. I’m... uh... where do I do that?!”

“Stephens, you gotta be shittin’ me! The shutoff is on the wall back there! What the hell are they payin’ you for?!”

“Come on, Trent, cut him some slack. He’s shook up! I’ll go shut it down. I know where it is!” Lisa Case said as she walked quickly toward the back wall. She found the cut-off switch which consisted of a single breaker concealed behind the wall plate. Case moved the breaker from the “on” to “off” position.



The silence that followed was jarring. Edgerton leaned forward and reached a shaky hand to pick up the phone like receiver thinking, ‘Roger’s shook up? I guess we all are.’ He slowly raised it to his ear and said, “Colonel Lancaster, this is head technician Trent

Edgerton.”

* * *

Each member of Central Control “got their shit together” reasonably quickly, even Roger Stephens.

The three of them looked down at the terrified, confused faces of the men and women now trapped in the gateway bay. Edgerton spoke authoritatively and in a ‘by the numbers’ manner, “Alright, we have a contamination emergency on our hands. That’s what



MELANIN: A NOVEL (Excerpt) Continued

that particular alarm pattern meant. No one is coming back through that portal any time soon, and it'll likely close before anyone can figure out what the hell is going on, so we'll need to deploy rations and provisions via the auxiliary portal. The hazmat team should have heard the alarms and be well on their way, but just in case, we need to contact them asap to be absolutely certain. We'll also need to calm those people down, down there. If this thing shook us up the way it has, you could just imagine what they're going through."

Lisa spoke next. "I've contacted the hazmat response team; they were already aware of the alarm and the situation. They have given an ETA of twelve minutes. I've implemented the decontamination protocol. It should begin within the next three minutes, so I think we had better hurry up and let them know what's happening down there and what they need to do, they look pretty scared, and I don't blame 'em."

"Thank you, Lisa."

"Preparing provisions, rations, and auxiliary portal," Stephens said, now sounding far more confident and in control of himself and the situation

as he pushed several buttons on the console, looking almost as if he were playing an instrument. "They will deploy within the next five minutes."

"Thank you, Roger. Right. I guess it's on me now." said Edgerton as he pressed a button on the control board that opened a channel to the chamber below. He took a breath before speaking and said, "My name is Trent Edgerton; I'm the head technician here. As you can see, the chamber has been sealed off, and I'm sure you all heard the alarms. This alarm and protocol were put in place in the event of biological contamination."



The ten people below predictably frightened shouted questions up at the echoing voice of the gods looking down upon them from the control booth.

When Edgerton said his next words, he spoke deliberately and quickly, "I'm very sorry, I don't presently have any answers for you beyond why this lock down has occurred. Anything more than that will need to be answered by the doctors and specialists coming to assess the situation. They are part of a special hazmat team that will be here within the next..." Edgerton



MELANIN: A NOVEL (Excerpt) Continued

paused and looked at his watch, “roughly eight and a half minutes. In the meantime, there is no time for questions and answers; you will need to follow my instructions.

“First, I’m going to have to ask you all to remove all of your clothing, and yes, ladies and gentlemen... that means all, after which you will need to place everything, including all of your gear, test samples ... EVERY—THING ... into the receptacle located under the panel that is raising up from the floor as I speak. The group started removing their gear and clothing as a large square panel rose in a hinged fashion from the floor. Immediately the group dropped their utility belts, satchels, and sample cases to the floor then started kicking off their shoes. Next, they – some more hesitantly than others – started removing every stitch of clothing they were wearing.

When everyone was naked as the day they were born, Edgerton’s voice came once again through the speaker. Thank you... I see that a few of you are wearing glasses. I’m very sorry, the glasses must go also, and anyone who might have any kind of watches, bracelets, rings, hair bands,

even bobby-pins, if it is something that is not part of your physical body, please drop it in the receptacle.”

The group walked over to the receptacle with armloads of clothing and gear and threw them in. Most

wearing glasses waited until they got to the large hole in the floor before pulling them off and throwing them in. Then, everyone stood at the opening doing a last check of their hair and body to ensure no foreign objects were on their person before walking away. Once the last of them had stepped back from the opening in the floor, the hydraulic powered lid

slowly shut. After closing, everyone in the room could hear what sounded like rushing air from it, and those who were studying it closely saw that with the sound, the lid sank further down until it was flush with the floor.

“Thank you, everything you have placed inside the receptacle is now sealed within an air-tight chamber.” Edgerton’s voice said.

The men and women stood back in their original spots, three of the four women covering their breasts and female parts, and a couple of the men covering their manhood.





MELANIN: A NOVEL (Excerpt) Continued

“Next, we will be spraying you with a decontaminate. I will ask you to each stand at arm’s length from each other on both sides of you as well as in front and in back of you. Please form two rows of five. Now raise your arms to the right and lightly push the person to your right until they are at arm’s length, then those in the rear raise your right arms to move the person in front of you forward until they are at arm’s length.”

Once they had made that military move, Edgerton prepared them for the administration of the decontaminate. “Ok, we will be spraying you in about thirty seconds; I will let you know when it is coming. I will need for you to keep your eyes open and raise your arms out to your sides. The spray will last about thirty seconds, which I suspect will feel like a lot longer, but we have to do this. While you are being sprayed, hold your breath... do not breathe in the decontaminate. If you feel you must breathe, cover your nose and mouth and force yourself not to breathe. If you cannot keep your eyes open, please use your fingers to force them to stay open. I apologize in advance for this because we will be spraying you with some chemicals that will be extremely cold, and for some of you,



it may irritate your skin and will likely make your eyes burn. Once the spray stops, you may once again breathe freely after ten seconds, but do not ... I repeat ... do not rub your body, eyes, or shake off the spray even if it is causing you to itch or experience other irritation. If one or several of you blacks out, only render assistance by covering their nose and mouth for ten seconds while the vapors clear the bay, if you are able. It will be due to the shock to the system of the decontaminate, it will not harm them if they don’t breathe it in or ingest any of it. The hazmat crew can tend to them once they arrive. Please

stay in place until the hazmat crew arrives, which should be in roughly,” Edgerton looked once again to his watch, “Two minutes, fifteen seconds. Alright, everyone ... arms raised to your sides, airplane style please.”

Everyone below raised their arms and braced themselves as best they could for what was coming next. Edgerton looked over to Lisa and told her to prepare to press the decontaminate button – a yellow button with a ‘biological hazard’ symbol on it, which she did without saying a word. Edgerton, seeing that Lisa was ready,



MELANIN: A NOVEL (Excerpt) Continued

leaned forward and once again cautioned the group. “Ok, here it comes. Remember, keep your eyes open and do not breathe it in. This will last about thirty seconds. You will be able to see a timer below the window of this control center. Begin holding your breath ... now.” Edgerton looked once again over to Lisa and then simply nodded.

Lisa solidly pressed the yellow button. A cold chemical mixture immediately sprayed hard on the hapless people below, practically all of them grunting loudly while forcing themselves to hold their collective breath.



tubes roughly the size of an average refrigerator if laid in its side. There would be twelve of these coming through. They would be pushed from compartments onto conveyor belts, where they would then go through a part of the portal that could best be described as a ‘corner’ of the main portal. Stephens waited the mandatory thirty seconds before sending the next one through as each load of provisions went through. Thus, sending all the provisions through would take approximately fifteen minutes to complete. Roger kept a constant eye on his time on the control panel. There was plenty of time.

While the group was dealing with the discomfort of being decontaminated, Stephens was busy seeing that the people who were temporarily stranded on the other side had means of survival until the portal could be opened again in three days.

From a side wall, separate from the main chamber, emerged several compartments, each containing prepackaged food rations, provisions, tents, blankets, weapons and ammunition, and other survival necessities. Each set of provisions was packaged within large metal

In a few minutes, there was a light blinking on the right wall and another siren. This one was not as harsh and loud as the first. “The hazmat team is about to enter the chamber.” Edgerton said to the people below, “Please move to the other side of the chamber as far as possible.” The ten naked people did as they were instructed. Presently a substantial vertical slit appeared on the wall under the flashing light, as gradually a rounded room slowly appeared. It pushed through the wall the way a newborn’s head pushes through the birth canal and out into the world. The module squeezed



MELANIN: A NOVEL (Excerpt) Continued

through slowly, and from a window in the front of it, the people in the chamber could see it was carrying the five hazmat team members: Twoave, Milo, Everett, Linden, and North, all dressed appropriately. The module contained testing devices and equipment for immediately sending sample data to waiting staff located in other parts of the facility.

Once entirely inside the chamber the wall opening through which it had come closed back and sealed leaving the wall behind it looking as if there had never been an opening. Now completely inside the chamber, the hazmat module took up nearly a third of the space in the huge room. The members of the team came out one by one, each carrying two mats and testing devices. The doctors approached the unclothed men and women, handed them a hospital gown and a mat, and then asked them to put the mats down with adequate space between them to lie on. Each man and woman hurriedly covered their nakedness and found places on the floor on which to stake some space.

For several hours the hazmat team took vitals, blood, and urine samples from the quarantined group. After

which the hazmat team member would step into the outer chamber of the module where they would pause for thirty to forty-five seconds for decontamination. Then they would proceed into the central part of the module. Because of the testing they

were doing, only two of them could fit inside at the same time once they had opened tables from the wall units and brought out various lab supplies, computers, and so on. As they completed each sample, they sent the data back digitally to waiting science crews located in another section of the facility as they completed each sample.

Data was also shared

with the science teams situated in the N.U.S.1 The hazmat team also sent videos and photographs of the returned crew that showed the appearance of skin lesions developing quickly on the members of the away team.

It was some twelve hours before the contamination team had completed their tasks and were prepared to leave. They had already sent the data to the outside groups and left the sterile environment within the colossal chamber. They once again entered the sterile opening inside the module, which ran a final decontamination





MELANIN: A NOVEL (Excerpt) Continued

protocol on the hazmat team. Then the sterile room moved toward the second inner chamber that would lead to another decontamination chamber and finally to an outer section where they would leave their hazmat suits before ultimately going outside and into the heart of the facility.

As the decon-room moved toward the opening, it sat flush against the wall, and suction was again created between it and the subsequent space that would envelop them in the reverse way it pushed them into the chamber. Similarly, the sound of air being sucked out of the room containing the hazmat team, who could breathe via fresh air provided by their hazmat suits within the module now void of air. One of the team put his access badge against the digital pad. The door was supposed to open and start pulling them back in, but the door remained closed and read “Exit Denied” above the pad. He tried it again with the same result. “What’s going on over there?” Dr. Twoave asked.

“My access card isn’t opening the door.” Professor Everett said over his shoulder. “Keeps saying ‘Exit Denied.’”

“Here, let me try,” said Twoave as she made her way to the door.

She tried her card and received the same message. Becoming distressed, one by one, each of the five members of the team tried in vain to get the door to open. Finally, Dr. Linden opened a channel to the control room. “Hey up there, this goddamn door won’t open! If you don’t mind, we’d love to get outta here!”



Edgerton, Case, and Stephens checked and double-checked the control panel. The system had locked the module in and was not authorizing it to leave

the chamber. “Doctors,” Edgerton said, “The system says you are not allowed to leave the chamber.”

“What?! Well, you just do whatever bit of tech bullshit you have to do to override it!”

“I’m not certain I should do that, sir. If the system is saying....”

“Look! We’ve been in here for twelve hours, and we need to get out of here so that we can assist in collating this data. This pad is obviously malfunctioning...



MELANIN: A NOVEL (Excerpt) Continued

so override the fucking thing!

“Stand by,” Edgerton said.

A manual override of the system required all three technicians to press buttons on the far sides of the console.

Stephen’s button to the far left, Case’s button to the far right, and Edgerton’s in the middle. The man and woman to the left and right of Edgerton stepped over to the far side of the control board and hovered their hands over the green manual override buttons, which required being pressed simultaneously. When they were in position, Edgerton, looking back and forth between them, said,

“Ok now, on three!” Edgerton said to his team, “One ... two ... THREE!”

Down all of their thumbs went onto the override buttons...

And on screamed the sirens!

The sirens sounded in the same pattern they had when the away team members first entered the chamber. Once again, the lights went red within the chamber. However, there was no need for anything further this time since the

protection shields were already down, and the portal had long since closed.

“Not again!” some of the crew still trapped inside the chamber yelled as they stood up from their mats.

Edgerton yelled, “Dammit!” and ran to the back wall to open the compartment and switch off the alarm. As he walked quickly back over to the control board, he could see Lisa pressing the communication button, assuring the second hazmat team that no one had come through the portal. “Hazmat team,” Edgerton interjected, “this is Trent

Edgerton. No one has come through the portal. The portal has been closed for several hours. The alarm was the result of a manual override attempt.”

“Why did you attempt a manual override?” said a man’s voice through the console from the Hazmat section.

“Five members of your hazmat team are in the module and waiting to get out. Unfortunately, none of their access cards are allowing them to leave. We were asked to attempt a manual override in case there was some kind of malfunction from inside the module.”





MELANIN: A NOVEL (Excerpt) Continued

“Alright. Thank you. We will establish contact with the module and assess the situation and get back to you directly.”

“Copy that,” Edgerton said, then walking back to his seat, with Case not far behind, also sitting down wearily. Stephens, who completed some resets on the system, plopped down, drained, on his seat to the left of his supervisor. “And here I thought this job was gonna be boring,” he said.

“You and me both,” said Edgerton.

Case leaned a little forward and looked at the people below them, some milling around, some lying on their mats. “God, I feel sorry for them.” She said, “This has got to be hard on them. We’re out here and don’t know what’s going on. Just imagine what they’re thinking and feeling.”

“I couldn’t if I wanted to.” said Edgerton, “All they know is that there has been some kind of a contamination problem. Hell, that could be anything, some sort of super flu, some type of cancer, a flesh-eating virus ... anything! And they’re stuck in there, trapped like rats.”

The conversation between hazmat

control remotely and the five members of the medical monitoring team who were now trapped within a trap was held on a separate channel than Central Control.

“I’m sorry to tell you this, but we’ve done a deep scan of all of you through your hazmat suits, and... well... you are all infected.” said the voice of Adam Shellen, the chief medical officer in charge of the entire hazmat squad.

“What the bloody hell are you talking about?” Milo said from within the module, “None of us has removed any part of our suits. None of us has

gotten even so much as a pinhole in them!”

”Be that as it may... these readings are accurate. Somehow the infection has gotten through all of your hazmat suits, and now you have whatever it is that they have. We cannot let you through.”

“This is horseshit!” Said Linden, “You’ve got to let us out of here!”

“I’m sorry, no can do Dr. Linden. Not until we know what is going on. You’re going to have to sit tight until we know more. We will give you





MELANIN: A NOVEL (Excerpt) Continued

an update as soon as we do.” flawless changeover.

“Wait a minute!” Twoave said, “You can’t just leave us in here like this, Shellen. Shellen? SHELLEN!”

The communications had gone dead. Shellen was no longer talking to the group inside the module. However, he had now, as promised, gotten back with Edgerton.

“Mr. Edgerton, there is no malfunction; the hazmat team is also infected.”

“How did they manage that?!”

“Unknown. We’re going to have to figure that out over here. Until further notice, all fifteen individuals are going to have to remain inside. We will update you when we have more information.”

The group of three, looked at each other, thinking about those in the chamber, within the module within the room, stranded on the other side. The Adison/Cartaan incident had been the worst sidestep in history.

This one made that one look like a

* * *

When Charles Bandonson and the other members of the cabal received news of what had happened to Colonel

Lancaster’s team in addition to the fate of the members of the hazmat crew, they were beside themselves. They had seen the dimensional portal as their way out of the train wreck that was now the environment of the present planet earth – Terra-Alpha.

Bandonson contacted Gayle and the rest of the members connected to the gateway project for an emergency meeting. From his office, he faced five screens, each one with an Ar-ARayin CEO or high-ranking government official who was part of the “Exodus Strategy.”

Charles sat behind his desk and waited for each screen to become active as Gayle found her seat at an adjacent desk. The desk was considerably smaller than that of her father’s but adequate for keeping the meeting minutes and taking notes, something





MELANIN: A NOVEL (Excerpt) Continued

considered an ancient and obsolete practice in the face of present technologies. Gayle had been in charge of keeping minutes from the time she was sixteen years old and felt that it was yet another tool that helped her gain a better working knowledge of the business world in general and BandCorp specifically.

“Thank you all for meeting with me on such short notice.” Charles began, “It appears we have a situation of some magnitude.”

“What kind of situation?” Jason McCoy of McCoy MicroTek asked.

“We have an issue with the gateway portal that may have some devastating consequences on our timeline,” Bandonson said.

Vincent Mickelson, partner with Charles Bandonson, in Mickelson/BandCorp, sat beside his son Arthur. The latter was charismatic, handsome, self-assured, and positioned to take over operations at his father’s request or passing. Arthur Mickelson was the only man who could command

Gayle’s attention and make her feel when she was in his presence like a schoolgirl with a crush when in his presence. The Mickelsons both already knew why the hasty meeting had been called. “Is this about the pathogen?” the elder Mickelson said.



“Yes,” Charles said to his partner specifically before turning his attention to the rest of the group. “As Mr. Mickelson here knows, but I’m certain the rest of you are unaware, we sent a first away team to the new earth, Terra-Beta, and they made it to the other side successfully and without incident.”

The members on screen were glad to hear this step had been taken, and the gateway was now functional. However, except for the Mickelsons, they knew that more was coming, and they likely were not going to like it. Knowing full well that emergency meetings were only called for bad news, they were happy to hear the good news but waiting to hear the specifics of the bad news. Gayle sat typing and note-taking from the beginning. She also prepared herself,



MELANIN: A NOVEL (Excerpt) Continued

having no had the opportunity to speak with her father before the meeting.

“As you may, or some of you may not know, the opening and closing of the gateways are based on dimensional alignments which occur roughly every three cycles, or seventy-two hours. Thus, we have perfected the ability to predict to the millisecond when the gateway can create a portal that serves as a bridge to another earth. Our people have been doing this for millennia, and it has allowed us to move from Earth to Earth and manage them as was ordained by Obin.”

“We all know this Charles, why the history lesson?” said Faith Foster of “Leap of Faith Technologies.”

“I’m trying to explain this situation with some context, Faith,” Bandonson said, slightly annoyed. “Though we can predict the opening of the portals, we cannot manipulate how long they stay open or closed. There have been several sidesteps in our recorded history. Our oracles say there have been dozens before that. Well. In all



of our history, our people have had to deal with learning to adapt to a new environment with each sidestep. We have had to deal with adverse environmental issues, learning what we can eat and drink and what we had to stay away from, dealing with various forms of wildlife—it would always run the gamut. It was always a challenge, but ultimately, because we are ordained to do so, we have always persevered and subjugated each new Earth, becoming its managers. We have been on this Earth, Terra-Alpha, longer than any lineage of generations

has ever stayed on a single version of Earth. We see the present state of the planet, our inability to continue to live on it for any sustained amount of time, and the imminent total collapse of its ecosystem – all the signs that let our ancestors know that we had completed our tasks of using the planet for all it had to offer. Now it is time to move on.”

Faith Foster, who prided herself on being one who preferred to receive bad news quickly without any fluff or preparations to “brace” her, sat



MELANIN: A NOVEL (Excerpt) Continued

fumbling and becoming increasingly impatient when she spoke again, “More history. Would you get to the point, please?”

“We may not be able to leave Terra-Alpha as scheduled ... if at all.”

“What are you saying, Bandonson?!” Said the usually reticent Simon Blankenship.

“On this last expedition, the away team indeed made it safely to the other side, but upon the return of the first ten members of their team, which is the standard procedure, some kind of alien microbe came back with them. This microbe on Terra-Beta appears to be absolutely benign to the indigenous life – just a part of the nature of that Earth. However, once introduced into the atmosphere of this Earth, it becomes a highly contagious, deadly pathogen.”

“How contagious?! How deadly?!” Foster said.

“The ten members of the exploratory team were dead within seventy-two hours, and the five members

of the hazmat response team that went into the chamber with them succumbed shortly after.”

“The members of the hazmat team?! What? Did they remove their gear for some reason?!” Foster said, now full of questions.

“According to the response teams at the facility, they were fully clothed in their hazmat suits the entire time, but they were still infected within forty-five seconds of coming into contact with the away team.”

“What is the status of the rest of the team on Terra-Beta?”

“Presently, they are fine having remained on Terra-Beta.”

“And where are the bodies of the deceased?” McCoy said with genuine compassion in his voice.

“The ten members of Lancaster’s crew, the five hazmat specialists, the sterile module, all the clothing, and gear... everything, is still in the chamber,” Mickelson said, finally chiming in.



MELANIN: A NOVEL (Excerpt) Continued

“Ok. So, what are we going to do with them? We certainly can’t open that chamber.” Foster said.

“That’s part of the issue.” Charles said, “No, we can’t open that chamber, but if we send them back through, there’s nothing that says the pathogen won’t have mutated from being on this earth and then upon sending it back through, ravage the other side and make it uninhabitable.”

The weight and implications of what Bandonson said hit everyone present like a sledgehammer.

“If we were to let the pathogen somehow get out and onto Terra-Alpha, it would kill every human on the planet, if we send it back and it somehow has the same effect, we will be stranded on Terra-Alpha. Due to the nature of the gateway portal technology, as our people have moved from Earth to Earth, we could only do so in what has been termed as “sidesteps,” meaning that we can move sideways from dimension to dimension, but there is no way to “leapfrog” from one Earth to

another by bypassing one. So if the pathogen takes over Terra-Beta ... well ... we are all stranded here.”

“Unacceptable!” Foster yelled out, “We’ll end up, up to our armpits in raven-wings and hybrids who are dying out! Not to mention the fact that we can no longer live outside even with sunscreen, or that we’d be dying with them because of the pathogen! And if by some miracle we did manage to survive the pathogen, we’d be saddled with an ecological system that is on the verge of collapse with no possible way to fix it! No...

there must be some solution to this!”

Speaking as if he had not even heard Foster’s outburst, Charles Bandonson asked of anyone present who might know. “Who is in charge of all operations pertaining to the gateway and exploration?”

“Damion Fitzpatrick.” said Arthur Mickelson.

Charles looked over to Gayle, who was still furiously typing, “Gayle, get Fitzpatrick and the lead members





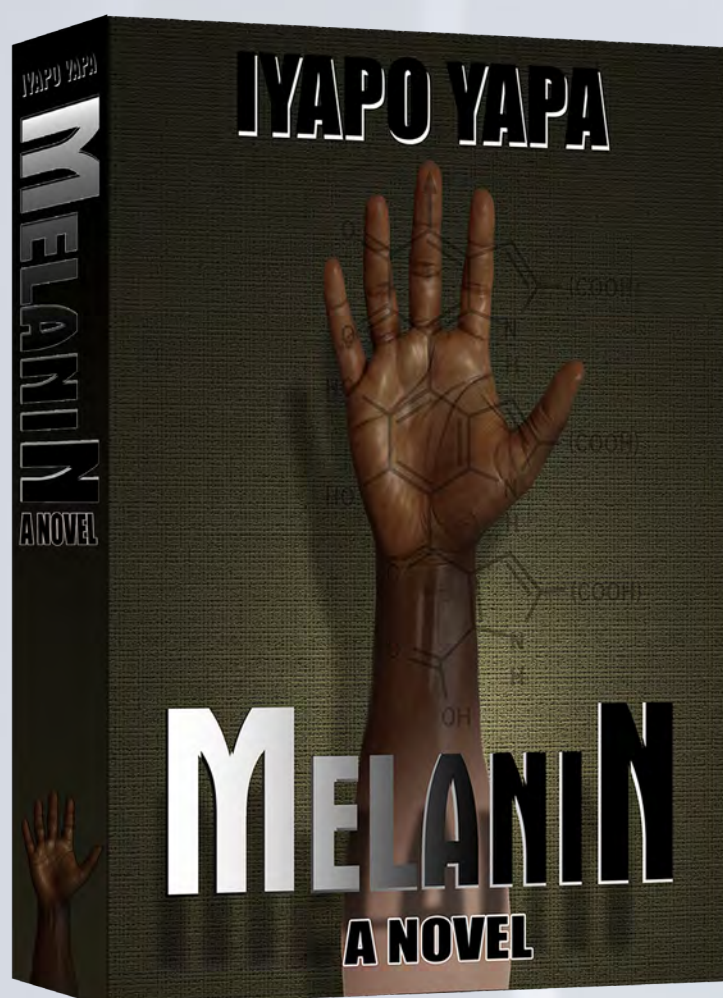
MELANIN: A NOVEL (Excerpt) Continued

of the medical, biological, and tech teams up on the view screens, please. We're going to need all of their input on this."

"Everyone can be reached at N.U.S. based facilities except one person."

GaylesaidassheselectedFitzpatrick's information, "Fitzpatrick's in Budapest right now. It's 10:14 pm here. That puts him at around 3:15 in the morning. He's probably asleep."

"Wake him up." her father said dryly.



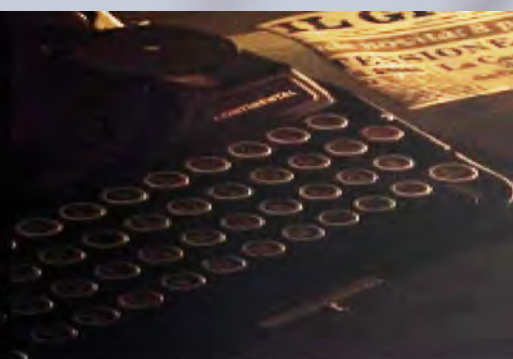
After two years, *MELANIN: A Novel* finally has a trailer! (And it's an exciting one too!) You can check it out now by clicking the image above!

Click the image on the left to purchase the novel!

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Here is your APRIL 2025 Maze!

This month, we recognize Malcolm X, one of the great leaders and thinkers among our people.

As always, the solution to last month's puzzle is at the back of the magazine. ENJOY!

CLICK ON THE IMAGE BELOW TO DOWNLOAD A PRINTABLE COPY OF THE PUZZLE!

APRIL 2025 MAZE



MALCOLM X

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Could YOU survive?!

Five years ago, a cataclysm now known as THE COLLAPSE occurred. Dimensions merged with horrific results. It is now common to see creatures of myth, legend, and nightmare along with once long extinct animals populating the landscape. Carl, LaTanya and Lester, embark on a quest to find a lost book that can't change the madness of the new normal but may assist them and others in the now nearly impossible task of:

SURVIVING the WORST!

Click the image below to enter a world of action, adventure, science and horror on Kindle



Top reviews from the United States

Amazon Customer

★★★★★ **Cornucopia of Action, Sci-fi, Mystery, Horror and Heart palpatng suspense.**

Reviewed in the United States on November 5, 2022

I love the pace of Iyapo's stories. He is a true master story weaver. This story is a cornucopia full of action, sci-fi, mystery, horror and heart palpatng suspense. The way he transitions between dramatic and comical situations are remarkable. After the daring trio's exhausting battle with vampires, out manoeuvring alans and harpes, they make it home to a well deserved rest within the sanctuary of Hevan only to be disrupted by the the Versquake. How much WORSE can it get living in a unmanageable and unpredictable dimension?

Amazon Customer

★★★★★ **Best Zombies Ever**

Reviewed in the United States on November 1, 2022

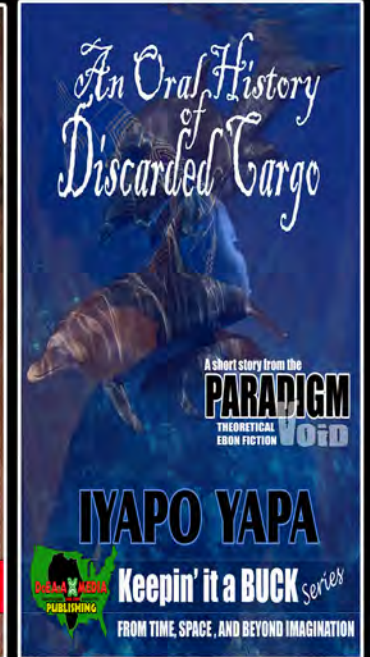
Amazon took down my review of Melanin, so I hope this stays. This is not your ordinary Zombie tale. I haven't read such inventive horror in years. Yapa really knows how to weave a story to pull you in. I had to laugh at how much fun I was having while reading it. I would recommend this author in a heart beat because all of his writings are so good.

BOOK I - COMING SOON!

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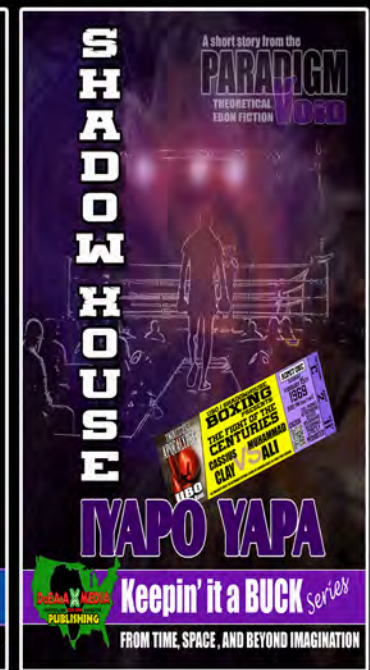
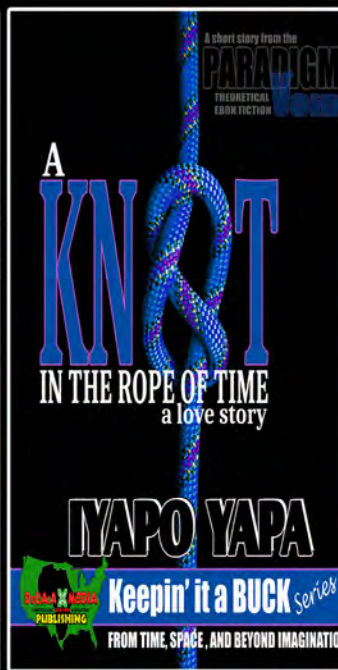
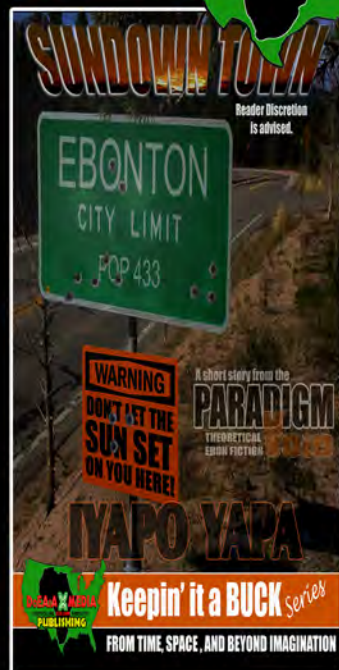


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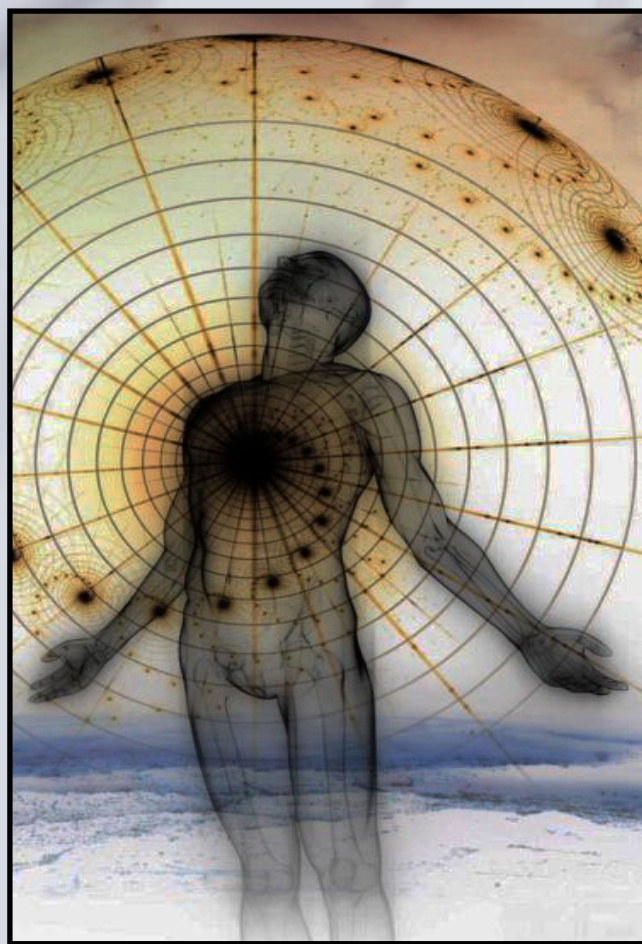


SCIENCE and SPIRITUALITY

*“We’ve got to divorce ourselves from the idea that science means there is no Creator. There’s science **BECAUSE** there’s a Creator.”*

-Ajali Shabazz-

This is something I have attempted to get atheists to understand and some others. Two (and in some cases, more) things can be true at once. The understanding of science and the way the natural world operates in no way negates the existence of the Creator or vice versa. I deeply follow the sciences, and study them (quantum mechanics in particular because I find it the most fascinating).



Over the years I have come to the conclusion that MANY advances in science hit dead ends and/or become boxed in because of the scientists’ or researchers’ rejection of spirituality and spiritual laws.

Let’s suppose that a thousand years ago scientists stumbled upon an internal combustion engine (let’s say it was sent back from the future and just landed there). Let us further suppose that the scientists of that day were able to reverse engineer it until they were 99% sure how it worked.

But they could not get it to work.

Why?

Because there is this thing called “gasoline” that a few “fanatics” talk about. The fanatics can’t necessarily prove unequivocally that this strange liquid exists... but they, through THEIR research are convinced that it does and that this “gasoline” will make the engine run.

The scientists reject the “fanatics” and will not accept that this “gasoline” thing exists.

They ridicule and dismiss it with a stubborn unwillingness to even entertain the thought that this so called “gasoline” exists... HAS ever existed or WILL ever exist. That is their stance, and they will not budge from it. And guess what?

That engine will NEVER run.

I hope this analogy is helpful and that it made sense.

In many areas of science (especially in the previously mentioned quantum mechanics), I STRONGLY

SCIENCE and SPIRITUALITY (Continued)

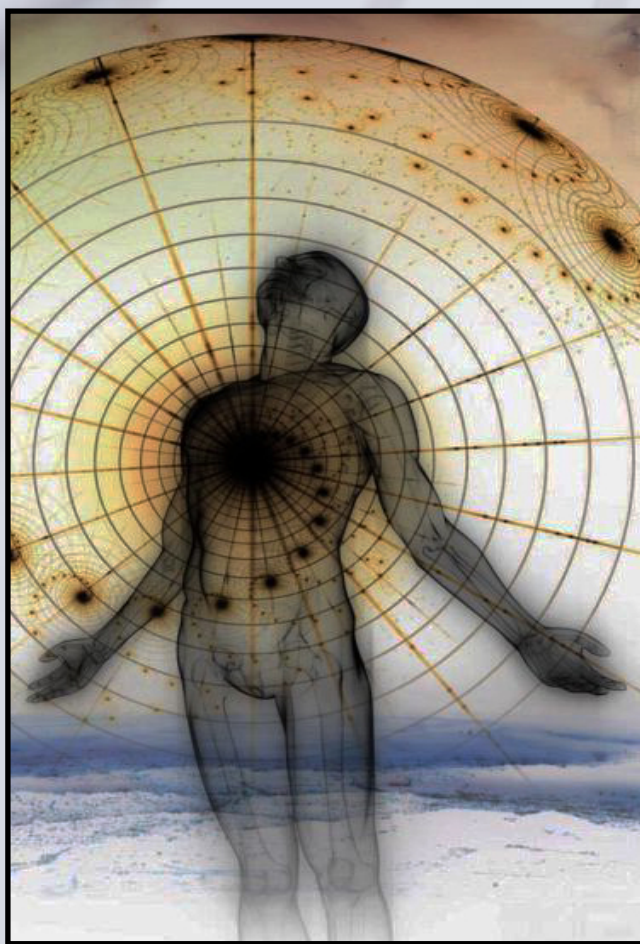
believe that there are (or at least MAY be) spiritual components that are not taken into account and therefore, like the engine that will never get any gas, the scientists can figure out the MECHANICS or even the CONSTRUCTION of a thing all they want, but they will NEVER get it to run without that component and they end up “stumped” or left with theories, theories, theories that can never be proven.

All because they refuse to look at the answer that is staring them right in the face—the designs of the Creator—the spiritual aspect of the thing (whatever IT may be), they are seeking to understand or “make go” as it were.

There is also the possibility that there may be scientific endeavors that have as that final ingredient, a spiritual component, but even if the scientists KNEW what that spiritual component was... it could very well be something that is off limits to humankind on THIS side in which case, any attempts to usurp the will of the Creator would be an exercise in futility, because that would be a

door that is impossible to open.

With that kind of knowledge there may be OTHER fields of study or endeavor to investigate as opposed to wasting time, energy and money trying to get something to work that COULD work within the permissive will of the Creator, but absolutely cannot outside of that.



When it comes to crispr tech, where they are working to clone and create life; the large Hadron Collider where they are seeking the so called “god particle” (when, in my opinion, what they are **really**

doing is trying to punch a hole through dimensions); the control of weather through HAARP, or facial recognition and biometric tech in attempts to become “omniscient;” I used to say they wanted to be Yah. I no longer say that when it comes to white people, because nothing could be further from the truth.

If a person or people wanted to be Yah, that would mean they wanted to be **fair, just, benevolent, loving, kind, merciful, altruistic** etc. none of which they want. No... they don't

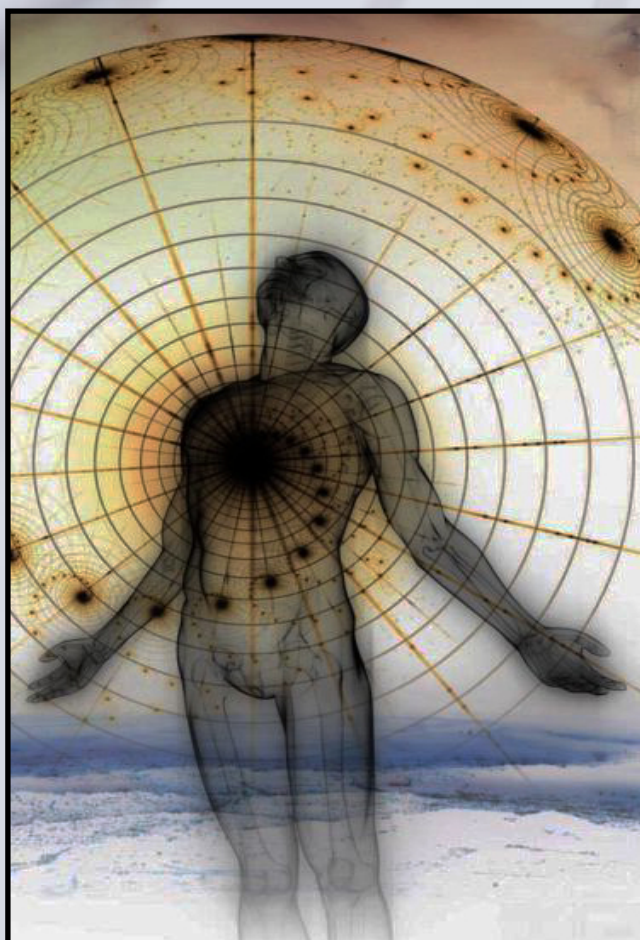


SCIENCE and SPIRITUALITY (Continued)

want to be Yah, they want what they want with everything—the power, but none of the responsibility or accountability for that power. They want the worship but want to exhibit nothing that is worthy of worship or adoration. Therefore, there is no way they could actually want to be Yah.

Science is the study of Yah's creation.

The deniers of Yah will say they believe in science, the physical aspect of it—only that which can be experienced with the five senses or proven unequivocally.



It would be like rounding up a hundred scientists and taking them blindfolded into a hanger in which there was a massive state-of-the-art jumbo jet liner. Upon removing the blindfolds, they are told they can study the aircraft to their hearts content.

In time, they can tell nearly all there is to know about the plane, about the parts, the parts of the parts, the parts that make up the parts that make up the parts that make up those parts and so on.

They can break the paint used on

the aircraft down to its molecular construction. They can tell you nearly EVERYTHING about it.

However, when asked where the craft came from, they can only hypothesize that it appeared out of nowhere.

Or that some great cosmic event created it, or that the plane started off as something else and evolved into what is before them now. The mere suggestion that someone (or someones), had to have created such a complex machine is either pooh poohed, or met with outright hostility.

They will deny to their last breath the existence of an intelligent creator of the aircraft and ridicule anyone who suggests that such a being exists.

I say only that in the interest of intellectual honesty, there is no way that I can unequivocally prove the existence of Yah. I can take what I have learned, experienced and know for myself to say that I am confident in my belief—but again—for the sake of intellectual honesty I am forced to say I cannot prove it.

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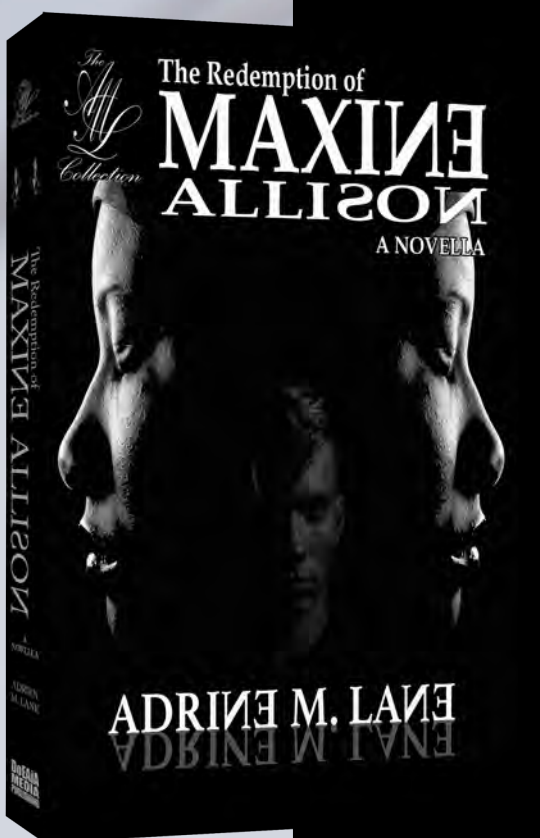
SCIENCE and SPIRITUALITY (Continued)

In my experience, those who deny the existence of Yah aren't quite so pragmatic. They will deny the existence of Yah as if they can actually PROVE it somehow, which is impossible being that you can't prove a negative. I've always found it interesting that in a world where I speak to people who will readily admit that there are things they

don't know about the sciences or other subjects—they can be so absolutely, unequivocally certain that Yah does not exist.

I just find that interesting.

The fact of the matter is that one day we will ALL know the truth one way or the other.



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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?

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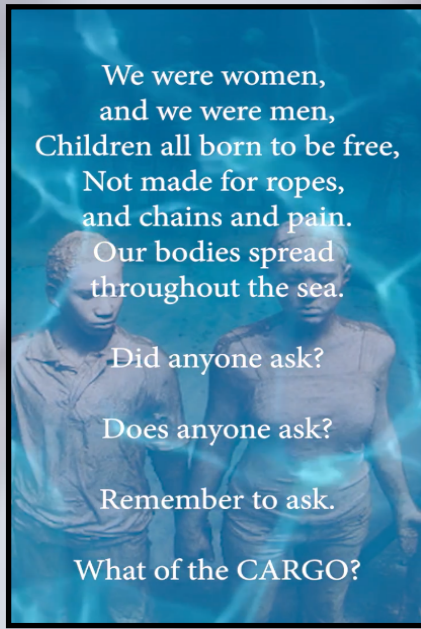
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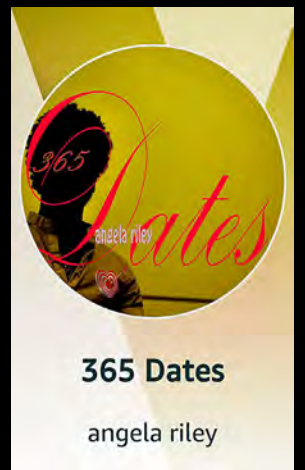
I'd like to say a big **THANK YOU!** To everyone who helped all three of my books to spend some time at number **ONE** on Amazon's **BEST SELLERS** list!



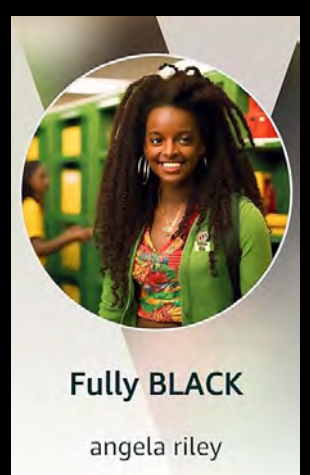
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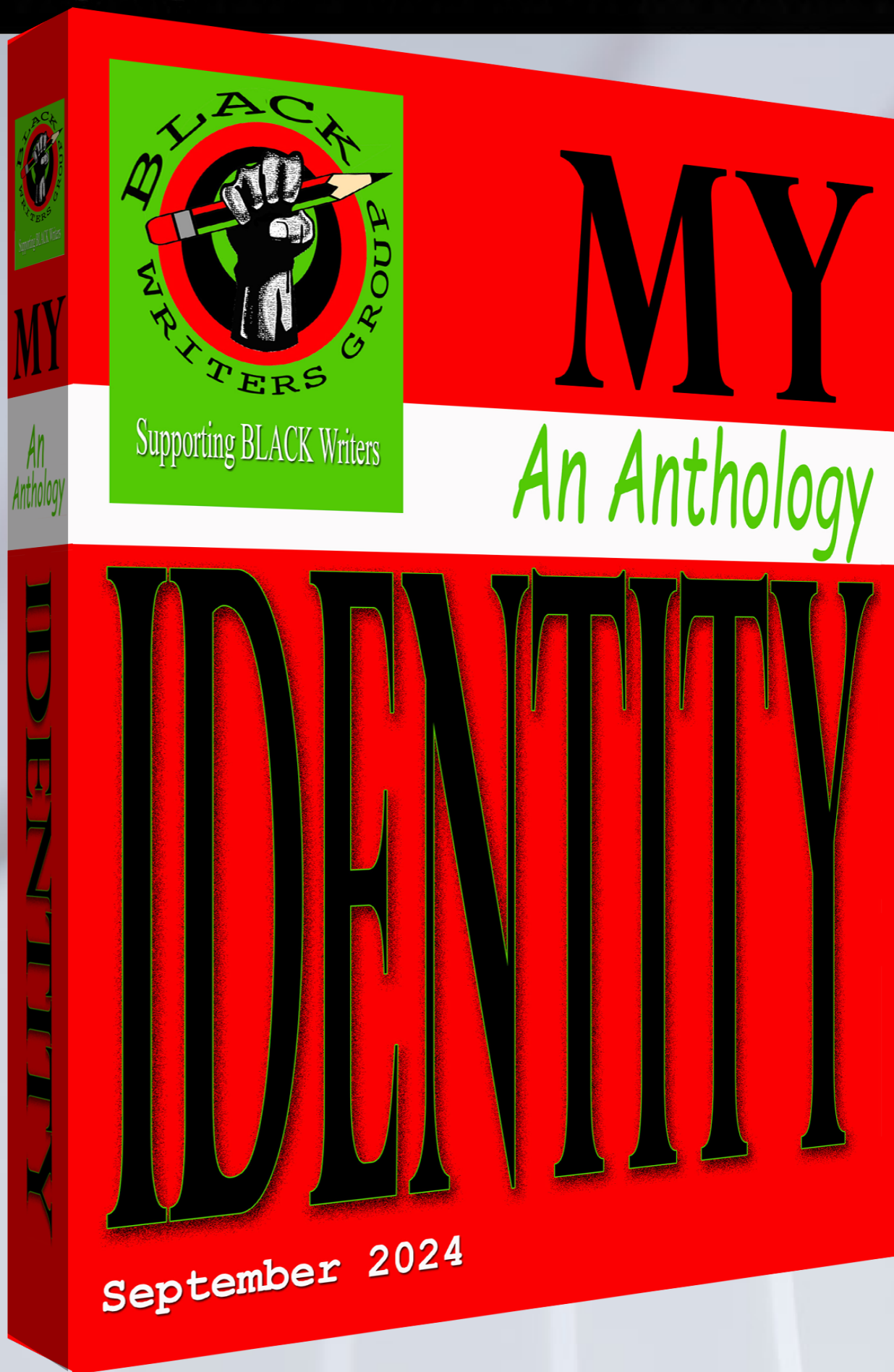
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So, who knew I was a cartoonist before I became a writer?

Take a minute to check out some of my work online at:

<https://iyapoyapa.com/cartoonist-illustrator.html>

or just click the image below and it will take you straight there!



Everybody needs a hobby!

Mine is playing and composing **MUSIC!**

For me, playing and composing is one of the most relaxing and fullfilling things I do with my spare time (when I HAVE

some spare time). You're welcome to check out some of

my songs at: <https://iyapoyapa.com/music.html> or

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R.J. BLAKMAN



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

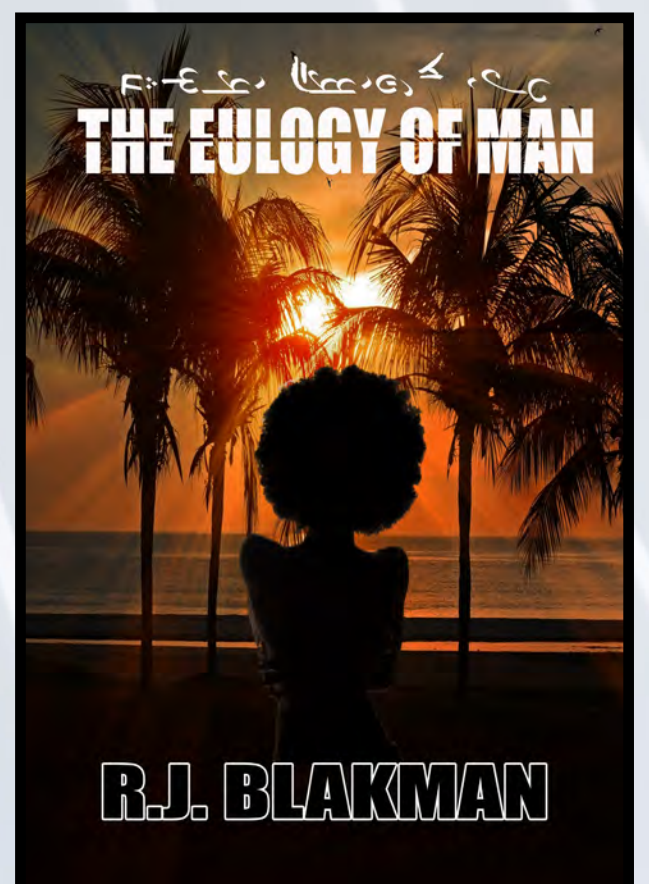
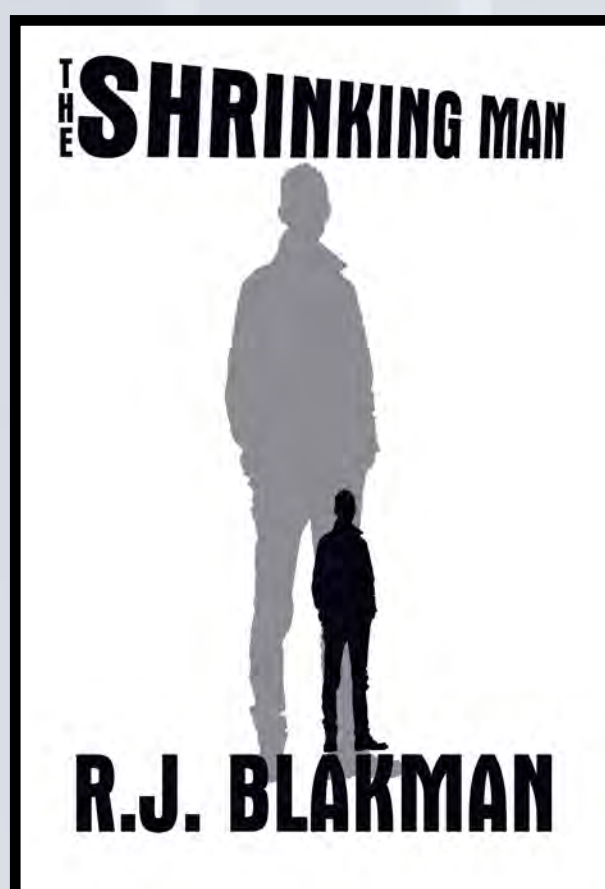
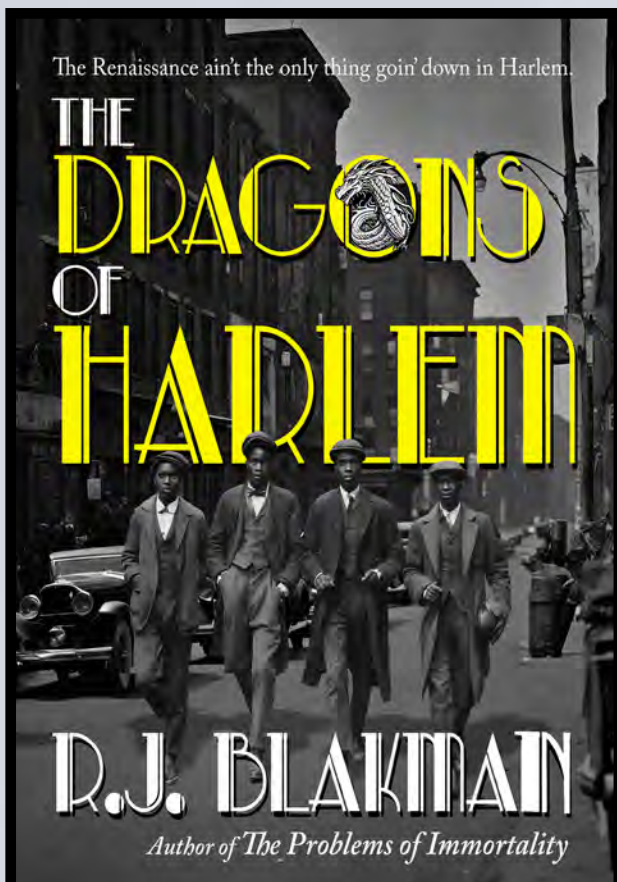
As a practice, Blakman seeks out truth and goes wherever that truth leads him, even if uncomfortable.

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

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



UPCOMING BOOKS BY R.J. BLAKMAN



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AI Op-Ed: What is this “CHAT GPT” thingy?!

For several months I have kept publishing my op-ed about how I came to embrace AI because I considered it to be ever green. This month I’m going to start using this section to give

my new observations about AI (both the pros and the cons of it), as I move forward using AI as a new tool in my creative tool kit. So, for this first “AI Op-Ed” article, I guess I’ll begin at the beginning:

The Black writer’s group to which I belong, sat at the beach side discussing our work and upcoming projects, just as we do every week.

On this particular day we met a young Black man who was piloting a drone and eventually walked over to where we were. Introductions followed and we informed him that we were a writer’s group. His face lit up and he exclaimed that he happened to be a writer, so we invited him to sit in.

We continued to talk about our work, our processes and such, and then our visitor brought up something called

ChatGPT.

We all looked at him much the way a puppy might look at something it had never encountered and was trying to grasp the concept of. Once we got a rudimentary understanding of what the thing was, the unanimous consensus was that it might have some practical applications in terms of editing, but as far as replacing actual writers, or being something, creative writers should use to do the “grunt work” for them, this new ChatGPT got a resounding thumbs down from the group.

Fast forward a couple years.

Creators, we all ooooooh’ed and ahhhhh’ed the first time we saw *Jurassic Park* and *The Matrix*, but now that tech is old hat. Like it or not, AI looks like it’s here to stay, and it seems to only be gaining traction as the technology continues to improve by leaps and bounds. We are seeing disturbing advances in AI. But nothing the soul of a creator.





AI Op-Ed: What is this “CHAT GPT” thingy?!

My advice to young people is learn of an eye, but mathematicians—to play an instrument. Learn to write TRUE mathematicians, see the beauty stories all from your own mind. Learn of the equations, the art of it and to do from your own non-computer the connection to creation, some of assisted gifts and talents because AI them, by their own admission, to the can do just so much!

We’ve all heard someone who can sing and never hit a sour note, they can run up and down scales flawlessly... but there is just something missing... that soul is missing.

Another singer can step up not sing anywhere close to the technical expertise of the other singer, but when that second singer sings... you feel an uncontrollable desire to dance, or you sit quietly as silent tears wash over your cheeks. It is that soul that touches you and to which you can relate.

So yes, AI can create it quick, fast and in a hurry.

Yes, AI can present virtually flawless works or music, visual art, and so on. Even in something like mathematics, AI can do the calculations in the blink



point they have gone from being atheists to having to admit that there MUST be an intelligent designer of it all.

To the young people especially, as I wrote at the outset... learn to DO and to do so without the assistance of a computer. And once you know that—then the computer becomes a tool to help you efficiently realize

your vision, but you MUST have the FOUNDATION first... the BASICS, and later high levels of expertise.

Mark my words, things come in waves and human beings are a fickle and jaded lot.

Today there is a groundswell of people who have grown tired of the CGI animations coming from Pixar, Disney and other production companies. They are saying they want a return to the 2D animation that so amazed them as

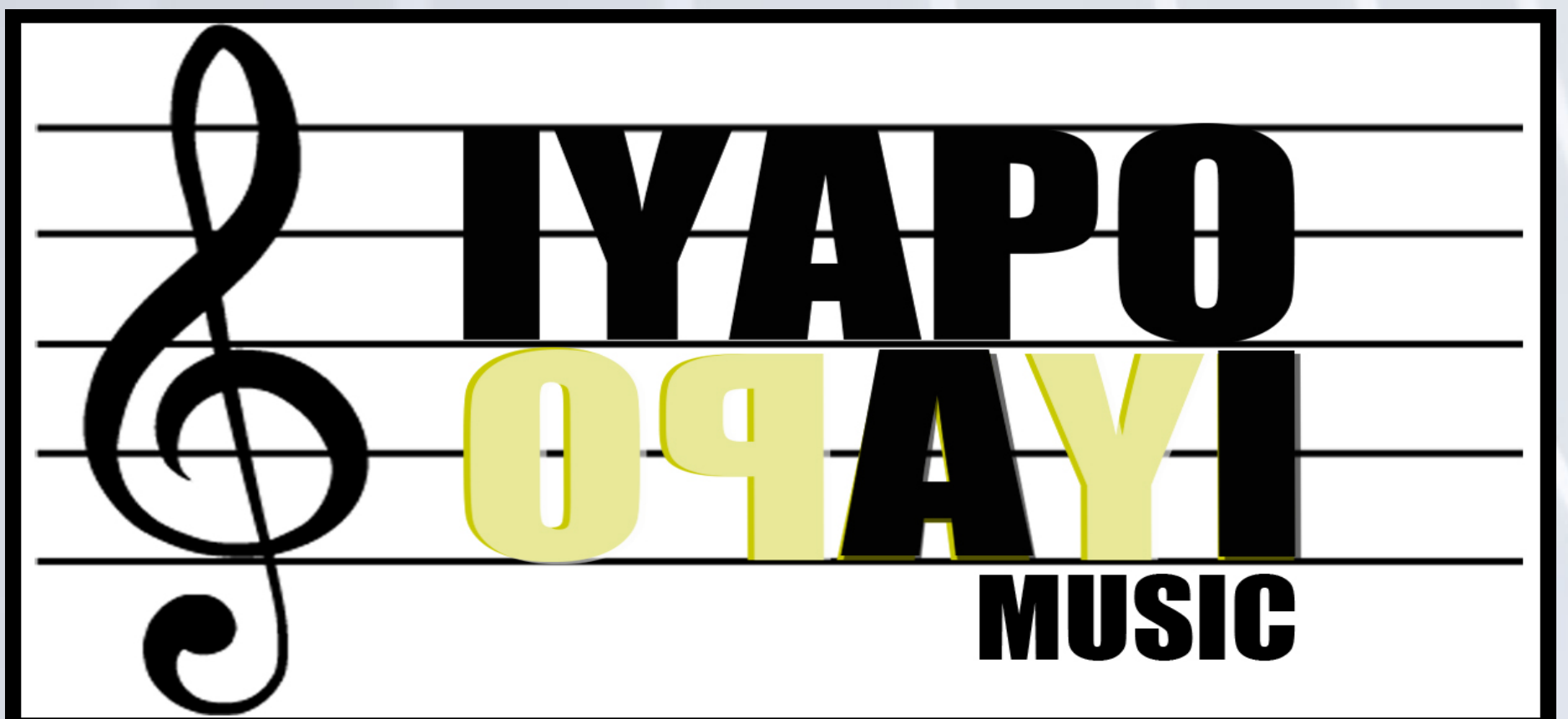


AI Op-Ed: What is this “CHAT GPT” thingy?!

they watched before—understanding the complexities of it and the craftsmanship that went into them. People are wanting less autotune and prefer the sometimes of pitch or off-key voice of an actual human being when they hear music.

As stated earlier, AI can be a fantastic tool as long as it is always used as just that—a TOOL—and not something to replace actual creatives as soulless schlock is created by person after person who thinks of it as a way to make a quick buck without having the necessary talent to create works of art.

AI is now, and should always be considered, only a tool for the creative.



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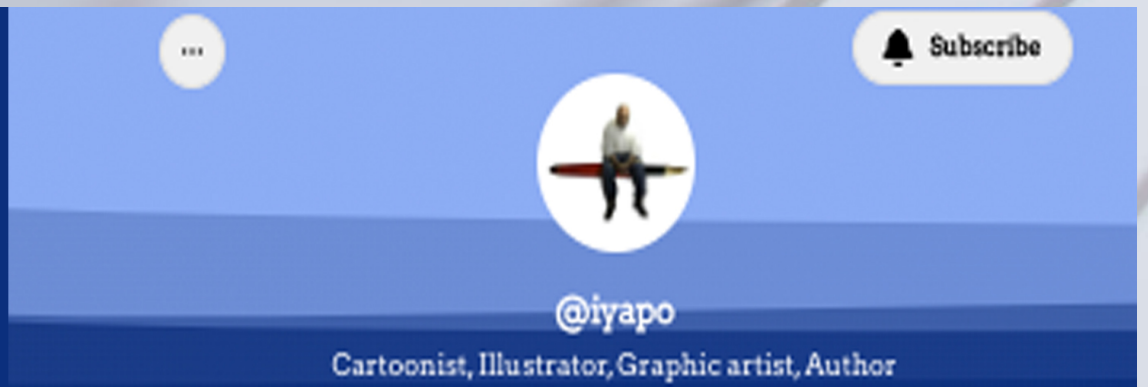
Find Iyapo at:
Linktree*

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

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

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

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And What of the CARGO?



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

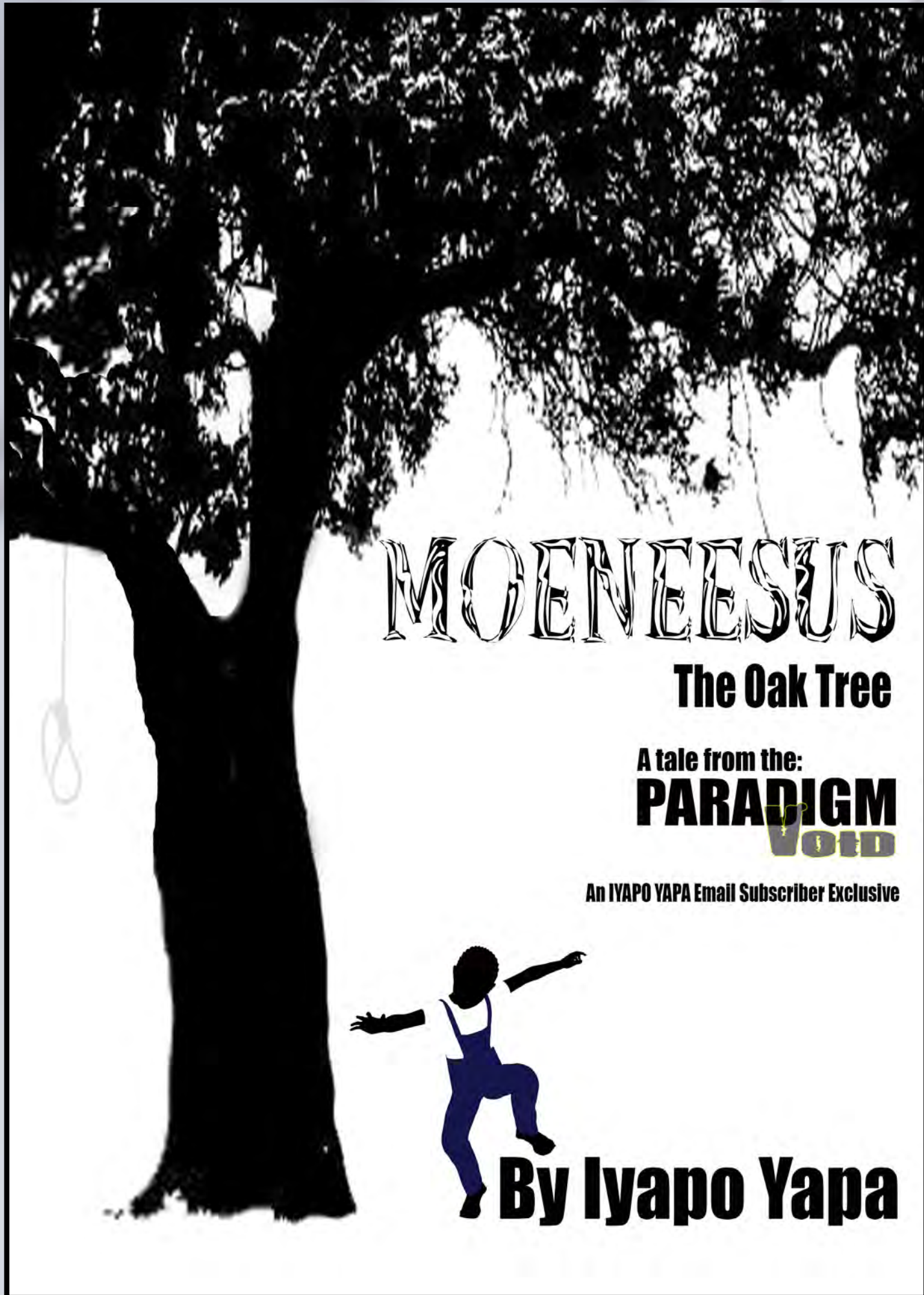
STEP INTO THE VOID!



READING and WRITING in the

DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors



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

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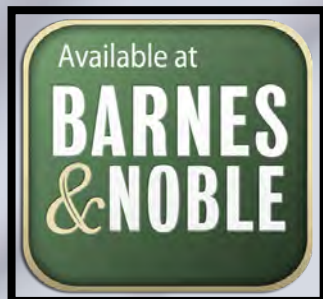
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Click Below For:

And What of the CARGO?



AVAILABLE NOW!

And What of the CARGO?

Buy it now on Amazon

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

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

— Walter Rodney. How Europe Underdeveloped Africa

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

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

What are readers saying about And What of the CARGO?

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

- Amazon Review

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

- Gwen

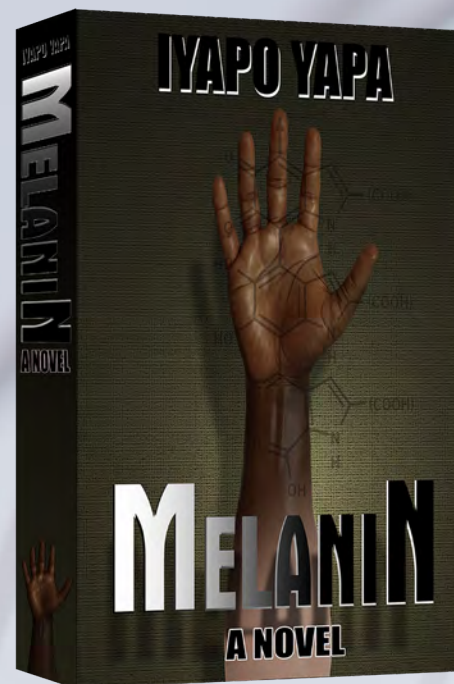
“Yapa weaves another story this time interwoven with historical references. I was on my seat with every chapter. I don't want to give it away but....revenge is sweet when served dead. And I can't get over how different each of his offerings are. Read his Vella's and you'll see what I mean. Another great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

- Amazon review

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Click Below For:

MELANIN: A Novel



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MELANIN: A NOVEL

Buy it now on Amazon

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

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

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

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

goodreads

What are readers saying about MELANIN: A NOVEL?

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

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

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

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

“The whole world needs to read this book!”

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

“Every Black person needs to read this book!”

- Gwen B

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

- Ayoka B.

You can also read it for FREE if you have

Kindle Unlimited!

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

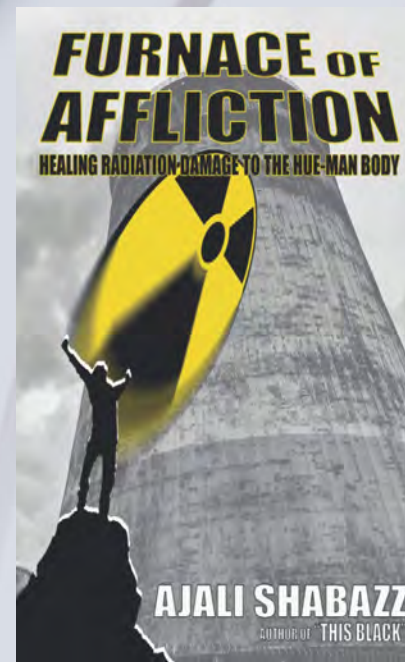
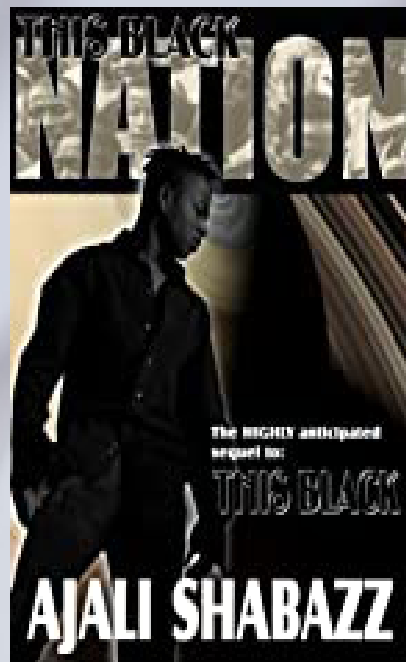
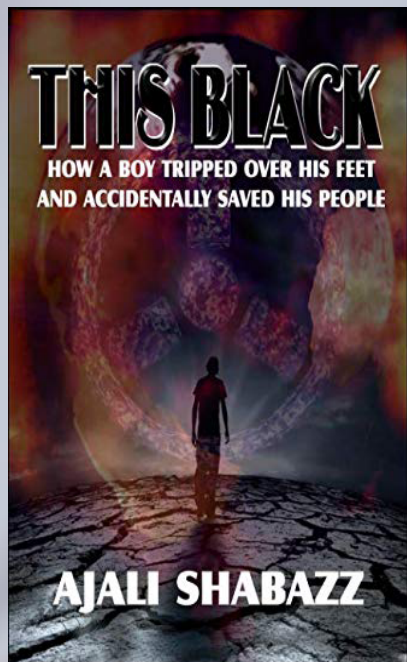
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Books by:

AJALI SHABAZZ



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

The Reading and Writing in the DARK Podcast Interview!

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

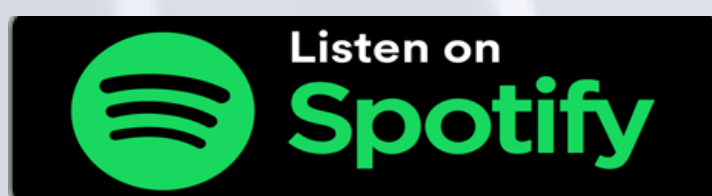
Listen to the interview on  by clicking the link below:

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



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

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



CLICK THIS BLOCK TO LISTEN TO THE

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podcast!





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Have You Checked Out My Blog Yet?

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

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

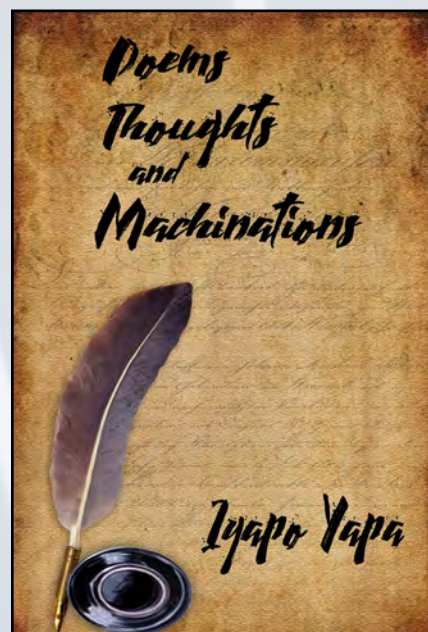


CLICK THE LOGO ABOVE TO VISIT MY BLOG



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

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



The title says it all.

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

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

Always seeking.

READING and WRITING in the

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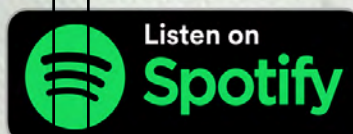
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Two writers
Two Mics
&
Plenty of Banter!



While Black

THE **PODCAST**



ANGELA R. RILEY

Author of *AFFIRMING SelfLOVE*

AYOKA B.

Author of *LOVE at SECOND SIGHT*

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

READING and WRITING in the **DARIK**

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Alright, enough about ME!

ENJOY READING & SHARING, for the first time or all over again,
THESE OTHER AUTHORS & THEIR WORK.

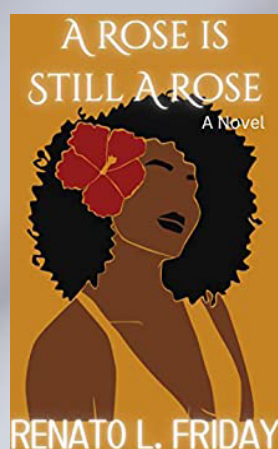


Affirming Self Love (Graphic Non-Fiction SERIES)

angela riley

SelfLOVE Meditation, Reflections, & AFFIRMATIONS Series...

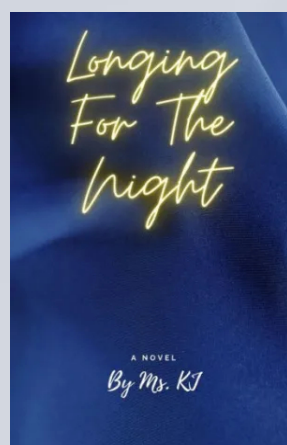
With a new book released each month, this “Graphic Nonfiction” series is filled with love for BlackUs. Each episode opens with a short essay exploring a theme such as “Following the Happy” or “Plan & Reflect” and culminates with a dynamic collection of affirmation. You’ll have a beautiful time meditating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



A Rose is Still a Rose

Renato L. Friday

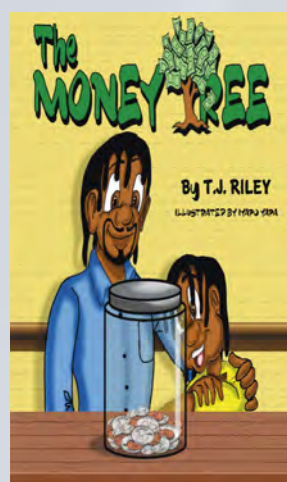
Rose thought life was going great: she was engaged, had a beautiful set of twin girls, a recent trade school graduate, and a new job right around the corner. Unfortunately, her fiancé, David, turned out to not be what she needed, and she chose to break things off. In the midst of her failing relationship,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



Longing for the Night

Ms. KJ

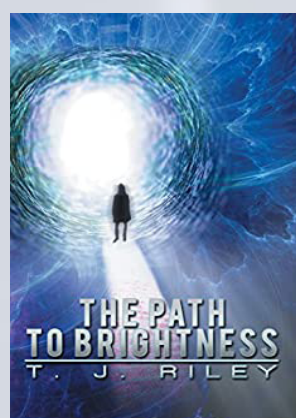
Inspired by the poem Goblin Market by Christina Rossetti, two young sisters face the trials and tribulations of the hood in this coming-of-age story about the harshness of living in South Central Los Angeles.



The Money Tree

T.J. Riley / Illustrated by Iyapo Yapa

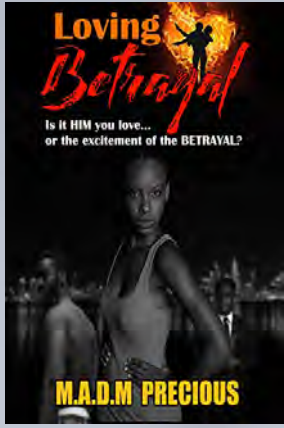
Every child wants money to buy something, right? Our hero does too. But, his father has a surprise, a Money Tree. Join the fun journey to find out how to grow your own money tree.



THE PATH to BRIGHTNESS

T.J. Riley

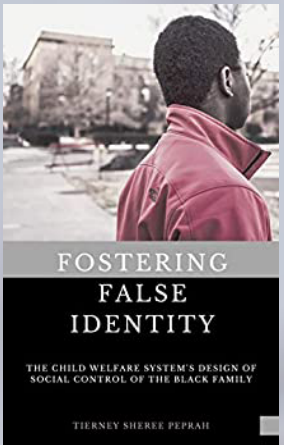
Fatima, a young woman, has a near-death experience. When she awakes from a coma and recovers, she has mystical powers. She begins to see auras and experiences life with her new abilities. For the clever character, Fatima, life is about to dramatically change. Follow Fatima's journey as she tries to convince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



LOVING BETRAYAL

MADM Precious

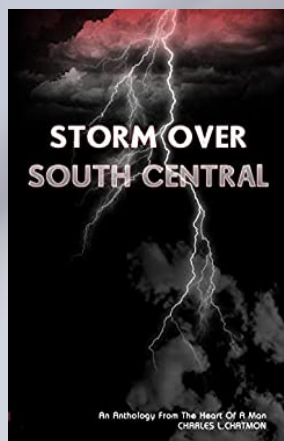
When Michelle met Michael, she thought that she found the love of her life. She was young and coming out of a bad marriage. A single parent of two children, she was scared, broke and had no self esteem. Michael seemed perfect, except for one little problem...



Fostering False Identity: The Child Welfare System's Design of Social Control of the Black Family

Tierney Peprah

THE ORGANISM OF RACISM IN THE UNITED STATES CRAFTS VARIOUS SYSTEMS MEANT TO ACHIEVE ONE OVERARCHING PURPOSE, that is to ensure that peoples and groups designated for an inferior existence pose little to no threat to the social structure of wealth and privilege that is propped up on their backs. These systems are allowed to exist, oftentimes unchallenged, by propagating dishonest descriptions of why these systems exist. Many people are without the proper means to challenge these systems, camouflaged as being charitable or in the public interest, for their unjust outcomes. In Fostering False Identity, the American child welfare system is explored as such a system. While the child welfare system is portrayed as a moral arbitrator in the abuse and neglect of children, in actuality this system was formulated for the specific purpose of regulating disenfranchised populations by removing children from those communities to assimilate them into White society. Thus assimilated, they are believed to pose minimal threat to the social order. Fostering False Identity will explore this phenomenon through a lens of Black liberation and self-determination of African families who are consistently victimized by this system.



Storm Over South Central

Charles L. Chatmon

The Storm has been unleashed, which means it's time to share what's inside the much anticipated anthology by author Charles L. Chatmon.

Chatmon, a refreshing voice in the world of modern poetry and author of The Depths of My Soul & The Voices of South Central returns with engaging short stories and thought provoking poems.

Read Storm over South Central and discover the thoughts he writes about in this volume filled with verses and tales of despair, stories of hope. It will also reveal a lot about American society – its strengths, its flaws and its people. This is a literary journey you will enjoy taking.



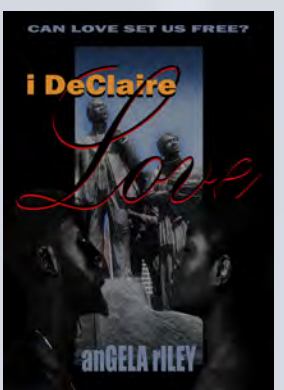
RELAY

Charles L. Chatmon

A high school track relay team is in the hunt for their ultimate goal. When tragedy strikes, the team bands together to capture a dream they've had since childhood. Totally within their grasp, they must come together as one to achieve the final victory. Along the way, they face personal challenges that threatens to derail their dreams - and their lives.

Explore the saga of the Appleton High School varsity track team as they compete to win a championship they have worked hard for - with difficulties along the way.

ALSO KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THESE AUTHORS/STORIES -formally on KindleVella-IN OTHER PLACES!



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 to 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!



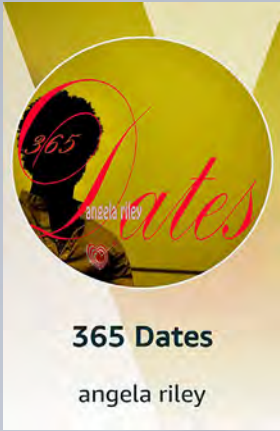
The Love X TamuTamu Agency

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.

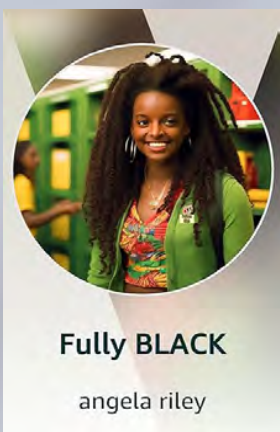
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365 Dates
Angela Riley

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.



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

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

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

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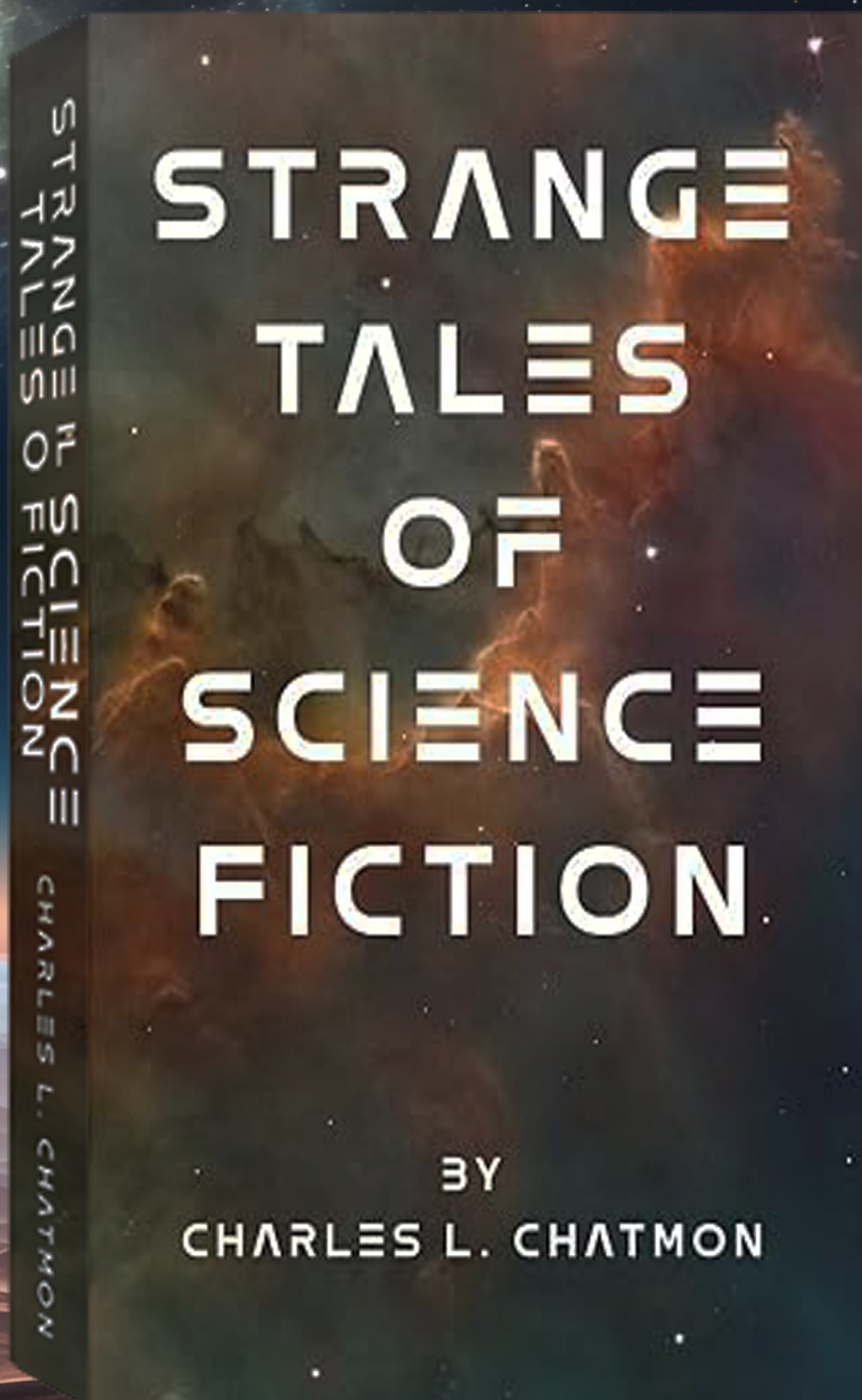
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STRANGE TALES OF SCIENCE FICTION IS AVAILABLE NOW!

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!

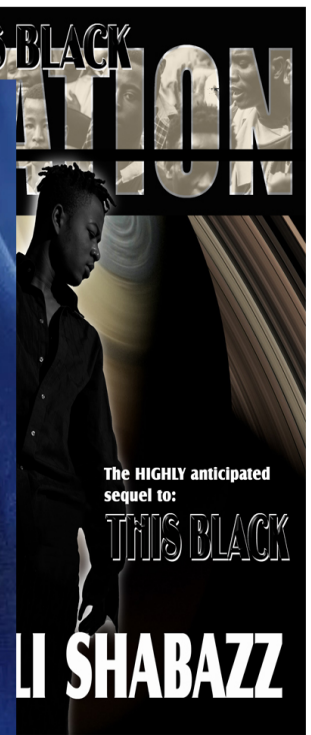
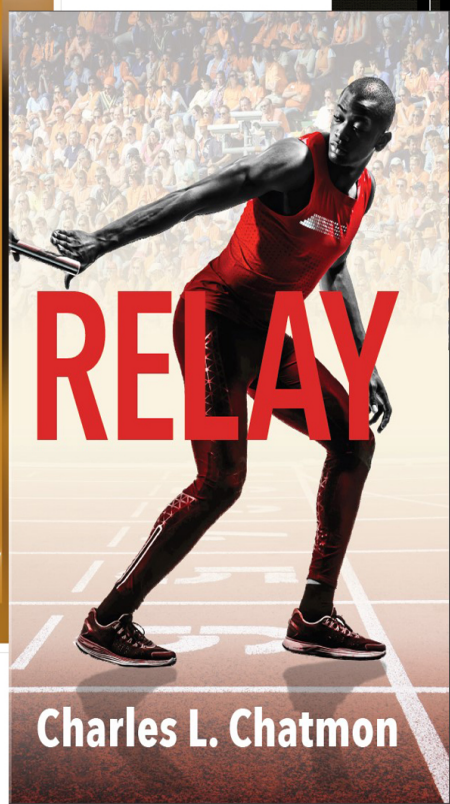
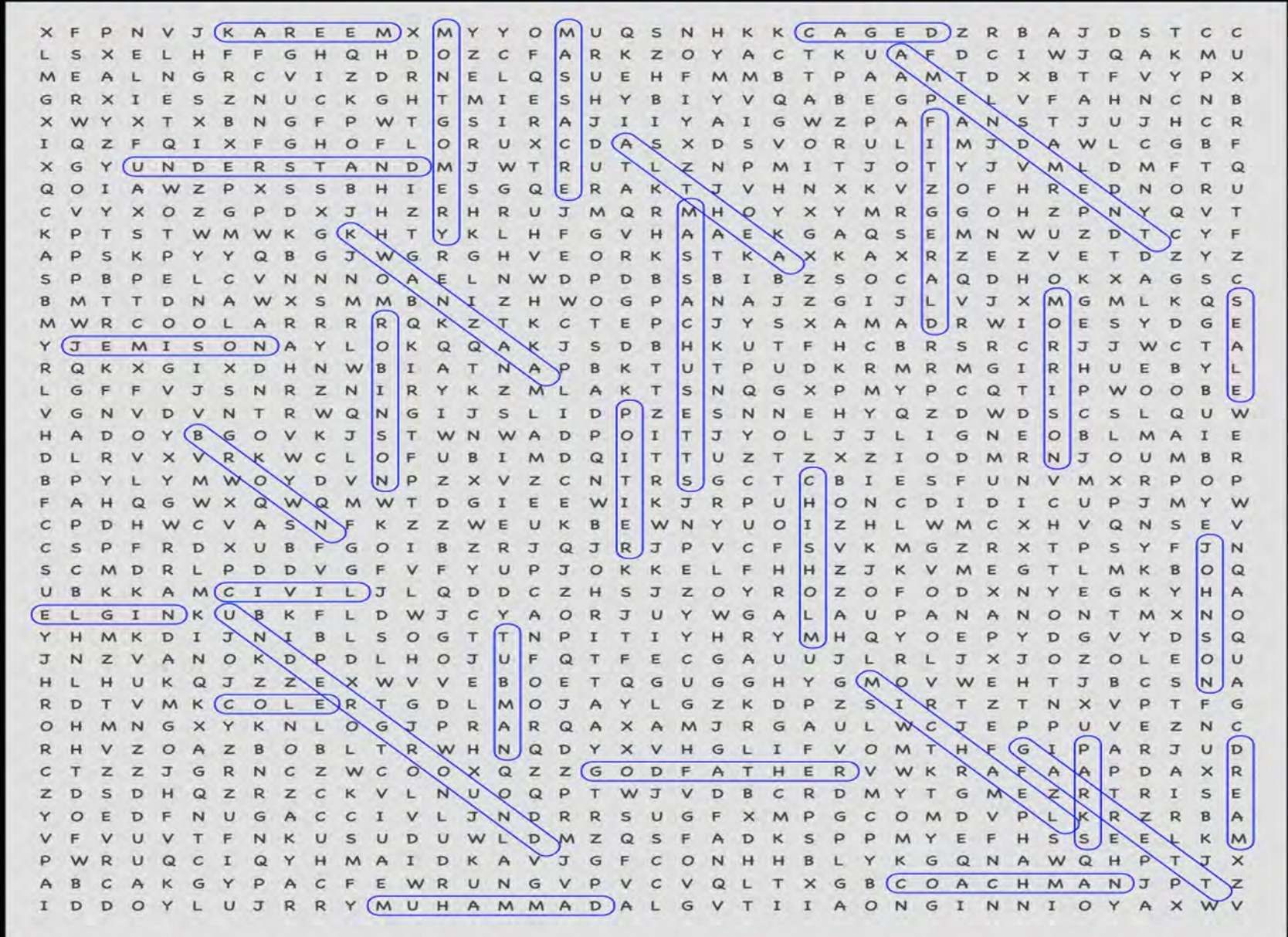
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MARCH 2025 WORD SEARCH SOLUTION!



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Tales of the MONKEY'S PAW



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BE SURE TO VISIT IYAPO YAPA ON THESE OTHER PLATFORMS!

Heaven Mississippi

A NOVEL



Coming Soon!