

READING and WRITING in the

# DARK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

**THIS MONTH:**

An extended excerpt of:

**MAGAZINE**

# SUNDOWN TOWN

*This month we visit a small town called Ebonton, where you absolutey don't want to be caught after the sun goes down... if you know what's good for you.*

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A short story from the

## PARADIGM

THEORETICAL  
EBON FICTION

## VOID

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### The DEI Myth!

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This issue has a **Crossword Puzzle** dedicated to the gone but not forgotten, past issues of the Reading and Writing in the **DARK** newsletter!

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From Iyapo's Blog:

**YES! Make a POINT of it!**

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



# MAGAZINE

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READING and WRITING in the DARK Magazine  
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### WELCOME BACK!

Hello and WELCOME! EVERYONE!

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

Iyapo Yapa



### A Look Back and to the Future!

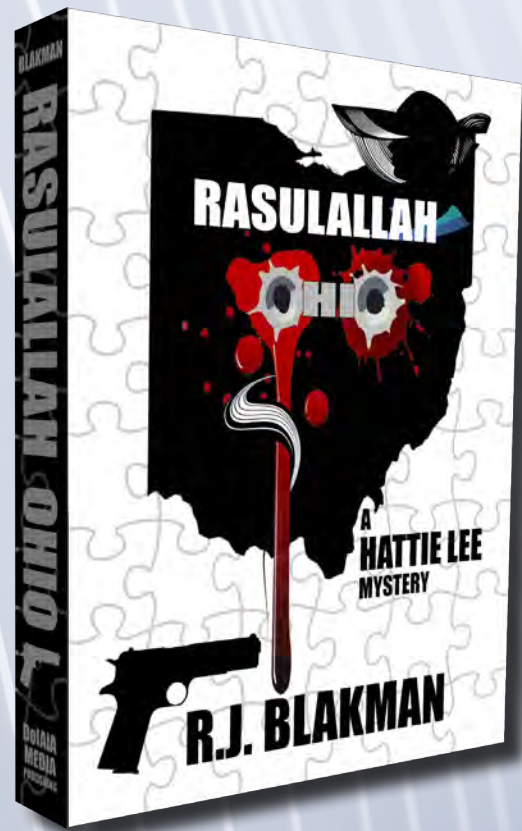
The road to Rasulallah, Ohio was a long one for me.

I originally envisioned a book that would take place in an alternate reality, where my mother became a detective instead of settling down and having a bunch of children. Her husband (and alternate version of my father) was to be pretty much everything my father was not. And my eight brothers and sisters would all have a part in the story. (I had my alter ego slated to be a slimy, dirtbag pawnshop owner.) I gave the prologue to my siblings to read, and they didn't like it, to put it mildly. (I've written about their reaction in past issues of the newsletter (now magazine).)

So, I put it away with intentions of it never seeing the light of day again. But with the encouragement of my loving wife and the talented ladies of the writers' group I belong to, I picked it up and not only completed it—I completed it BIG! My intention was for it to be about a 250-page mystery, but it ended being over twice that! (I discovered that I enjoy writing long books).

I wrote the book under my pen name R.J. Blakman because I feel that Blakman writes different kinds of books than I do. This is his (my) first mystery and it was a LOT of work. I'm expecting that just like the protagonist in the book Hattie Lee is learning her craft, at the same time I'm learning mine and eventually, fingers crossed, we'll BOTH wind up becoming pretty darn good at it!

So, it's here, Rasulallah, Ohio available on Amazon and Barnes & Noble in digital, soft cover and hard cover versions. Get yours today and ENJOY!



## The DEI (Diversity/Equity/Inclusion), Myth (From Iyapo's Substak and Medium)

White nationalists, supremacists and many of the rank and file (who say it out loud, or may not), hold fast to the premise that affirmative action and what it has morphed into, which is DEI are some of the greatest threats to the so-called republic in general, and the WASPS (White Anglo-Saxon Protestants) specifically and their way of life.

There is no shortage of Black white supremacists who will echo white nationalist talking points. There are high profile figures like, Clarence Thomas, Larry Elder, Jessie Lee Peterson, Tim Scott and not to be outdone by the men there are the likes of Harris Faulkner, Deneen Borelli, Star Parker and, the present reigning queen of them all, Candace Owens, to name a few.

They will argue that DEI now stands for Didn't Earn It. Any time a Black person is placed into a high position or one of prestige, they are considered by white racists and Black white supremacists as DEI hires, as if there is absolutely no way a Black person can be as, or more, qualified as a white person who applied for the same position.

So—how was affirmative action (and to a degree, DEI), supposed to ACTUALLY work anyway?

Imagine the workforce like a baseball game and Jackie Robinson is sitting on the bench. He knows he is one of the greatest players to be sitting in the dugout, but he has absolutely no way to capitalize on his talent because with each rotation he is passed by because he's Black. That isn't to say that there aren't many great players on the team, but the fact is that there are players that aren't even in Robinson's league in terms of athletic skills. However, Robinson sits and watches as players who are as good as him, as well as those not nearly as good, get a turn at bat.

The problem is that without some mechanism in place to FORCE the coach and manager to let Robinson have a turn at bat, it will never happen. He knows it and they know it.

Affirmative action forces the issue and compels the coach and manager to give Robinson a turn at bat.

Not give him a special bat.

Not give him five strikes instead of three.

Not give him anything more than any of the other players got.





## The DEI (Diversity/Equity/Inclusion), Myth (Continued) (From Iyapo's Substak and Medium)

Just simply, the OPPORTUNITY to take a swing. I suspect that the reason they don't want our people to have a turn at bat is because they believe that if we constantly had that opportunity, then more often than not, we'd knock the ball out the park.

Robinson gets his chance and becomes one of the greatest baseball players of all time.

In a perfect world, that is the thought process behind affirmative action and DEI.

Before affirmative action where the VERY BEST people being hired for positions?

On the whole, the answer would have to be an indisputable yes (when leaving out of the equation nepotism and who you know, hiring.) Businesses want to make money, and on the whole, even the government wants the best and brightest to be in positions, (the above caveat notwithstanding). No company that wants to make money is going to hire an unqualified or incompetent white person or keep them on the payroll for long.

Ok.

Then that is proof positive that companies were forced to hire people who were of a lower standard than those who were hired before affirmative action and DEI right?!

Well, let's hold on a minute.

Let us add Black people to the equation.

Now you have a pool of Black people who are every bit as qualified as their white counterparts (if not more so in some cases), and they are hired because of affirmative action and DEI. The myth (or narrative), that is perpetuated is that Black people who were hired during affirmative action were somehow less qualified than their white counterparts. The truth is that the reason that qualified whites were hired was because they were indeed

the most qualified—out of a group of white only applicants for consideration. That didn't mean, necessarily, that they were the most qualified in terms of ALL applicants.

Affirmative action didn't force companies, corporations, and government entities to hire less qualified people, or for colleges to admit underperforming students. It merely forced those entities to afford the opportunity to qualified Black people.

Whites and a host of Black conservatives stood four-square against affirmative action, even the likes of Clarence Thomas who admits himself to have benefited from it, now stands opposed as he unashamedly benefited from it; climbed the ladder, then turned around and worked to pull it up.

The real trick bag of it all is that the single



## The DEI (Diversity/Equity/Inclusion), Myth (Continued) (From Iyapo's Substak and Medium)

thing that is always missing from discussions about affirmative action and DEI, is the reason that it exists in the first place, and the fact that without it (or things like the fair housing commission, and even OSHA), whatever situation it was created to remedy would continue to happen unchecked.

Is there any reasonable person who really believes that were it not for things like OSHA and unions, that every workplace in America—and I mean EVERY workplace—wouldn't look like and Indonesian sweat shop, complete with minors being exploited along with the adults? We all know that were it not for laws and regulations, corporations wouldn't do a THING for the benefit or protection of workers. They only do so because they are FORCED to do it—full stop!

And even then, they attempt to skirt around the law and do the bare minimum—just enough to be in compliance, but not a single molecular particle more.

So, therein lies the rub.

White people want to complain about affirmative action and DEI, when I believe they know that without it, even the minuscule number of Black people who are able to benefit from it wouldn't even have that much of a chance. As far as Black people who are on the bandwagon for it. My belief is that our people are so

tired of the constant fighting and abuse, and the understanding that we are at the bottom of a caste system that, if it were a totem pole, we wouldn't be the head at the bottom—we'd be the dirt beneath that head.



Therefore, we long for a “post-racial America” so desperately that we are willing to declare it so, though there is scant evidence to support that conclusion—and on the contrary, a mountain of evidence that would prove otherwise. But in declaring that the United States is not a racist country, then somehow, the field is leveled, and our people are now living in something

akin to a meritocracy.

When even white people who are honest, know that America is no such thing, based upon even their own experiences of “playing by the rules” and “keeping their noses clean”, but continue to fall backward as they are ruled by a government that with its every action shows it doesn't give a rat's ass about them. Still, even as they rail against the machine, so to speak, the white and non-Black population still find the time to stand firmly against things that might seem to assist Black people or give Black people a much-needed leg up.

There will ALWAYS be time for that.

With all the opposition of whites toward affirmative action, one would think they were against it. However, history has

## The DEI (Diversity/Equity/Inclusion), Myth (Continued) (From Iyapo's Substak and Medium)

shown that they never have been, nor ever will be against affirmative action. They LOVE affirmative action. It is only when it benefits a group who is not them that they find it problematic.

I once saw a panel of Black men on a talk show—this was some forty years ago—and they were talking about affirmative action in front of a predominantly white audience. A white audience member stood and said, “Black people have the United Negro College Fund, you have the NAACP...”, and named a couple other organizations I can’t remember, but he went on to say, “You Black people have all these organizations to support you and help you! What organizations do white people have?!” One of the panelist’s answer was so epic and on point that I never forgot it. He said, “White people DO have an organization that supports them and helps them... it’s called the United States Government.”

Epic!

From the days of the overt enslavement of Black people in the United States until now, whites have enjoyed affirmative action. Pre-affirmative action (when it had no name, but was in force nevertheless), whites enjoyed the confidence of knowing that when they applied for jobs, when they sought assistance, when they interacted in society, pursued the purchase of homes and so on, that they were only in competition with each other. They not only knew that there was no danger of losing whatever they

were seeking to their Black counterparts, they had the assurance that the very existence of said Black people was of no consequence or threat.

A Black person could be an absolute authority at their given profession, and a white person who is mediocre at best could get the position if there were no more qualified whites above them. In the rare cases when a Black person was hired, typically, it would be as the workhorse—using his or her considerable talents to make the business/management/organization look good, while a mediocre white would be put in place as the “public

face” and garner all the credit. That period was actually the heyday of affirmative action for white people. However, unlike the accusations hurled at Black people who were contrarily label as less qualified or less skilled, when the truth was, they were absolutely qualified and skilled—they were simply given an opportunity that would not have been afforded them had the hiring entity not been forced to do so. Ironically, it is whites who have the history of having been given unearned positions for which they may not have been as qualified as their Black counterparts.

Here we talk about what was one of the most far-reaching affirmative action legislation government programs for white people to ever be enacted in the United States. That would be Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s National Industrial Recovery Act, passed in June 1933, better known as the New





## The DEI (Diversity/Equity/Inclusion), Myth (Continued) (From Iyapo's Substak and Medium)

Deal”, enacted between 1933 and 1938. The New Deal was a series of programs, public work projects and financial reforms put in place after the great depression to help American citizens to get back up on their feet and to start building wealth and having a real chance and a piece of the “American Dream”.

WHITE American citizens that is.

It is true that a handful of Black people benefited from the legislation, but as with just about everything done by the American government, when anything is passed (even things that are supposedly geared toward assisting Black people), not only does the population over all end up reaping the greatest benefits, but Black people are eventually all but shut out of it. So it was with the new deal, and even in time before it.

Here, Martin Luthor King Jr. put it far better than I could ever hope to.

“...Our government was giving away millions of acres of land [To white people]. Not only did they give the land they built land grant colleges with government money to teach them how to farm. Not only that. They provided county agents to further their expertise in farming. Not only that. They provided low interest rates in order to mechanize their farms. Not only that. Today, these people are receiving millions of dollars not to farm, and they are the very people telling the Black man that he needs to lift himself up by his own bootstraps... this is what we are faced with! This is the reality!”

When I write, I’m not writing to explain things to white people, or to seek for them to understand things, or see them differently. I’m convinced that they already know exactly what they’ve done, what they’re doing and what they plan to do. Us telling them anything is a waste of our time and as far as I’m concerned, their way of getting our people to do “busy work”. When I write, I’m writing to our people because as time goes by, I see some of even the most aware of us starting to fall for their okey-doke, wherein they just keep repeating a narrative to us ad-nauseum until we start to think about it and say, “Yeah, they do have a point when it comes to that.”

NO, every Black person we see hired into powerful positions (whether in the government, corporations or what have you), isn’t a DEI hire, even if they ultimately screw up in their position, as white people would want to have you believe. We see white people every day—typically answering questions before congress—who are corrupt or incompetent, or making bad decisions that run countries and companies into the ground, some of which cause the deaths of people, or some combination of those things. However, if they are a white man (and in some cases a white woman), you may hear white people castigate them, but you will never, ever hear them called a DEI hire (even though ironically, they are the ones who likely only got their position through connections and/or family ties, or some other avenue that didn’t consider whether they were best qualified).



READING and WRITING in the

# DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

## The DEI (Diversity/Equity/Inclusion), Myth (Continued) (From Iyapo's Substak and Medium)

It is a classic case of projection.

I have said for decades and will keep saying, that literally, every negative thing that white people say about Black people actually pertains to THEM, and I mean literally EVERY negative thing—I have yet to encounter an exception to this rule.

The way the term DEI is thrown around implies that ANY Black person, in ANY high position is there solely because of some form of affirmative action or DEI.

The implication of that framing is an even bigger way to spit in our collective face when taking into consideration that, historically Black people as a group are the ones who have been (and in many cases, continue to be), passed over and/or turned down for jobs that we were, and are, far

and away more qualified for than our white counterparts.

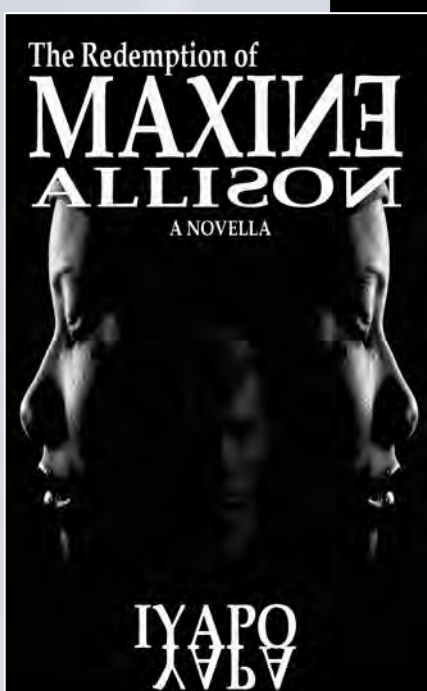
Now, each time I hear some white person (especially a conservative republican), use the term DEI hire, without knowing much of anything about the person except that the man or woman in question is Black—I immediately hear “nigger”. Also, I listen to the way the word is bandied about and the context in which it is used in many cases. I’ve concluded that referring to a Black person as a DEI hire is yet another way of them saying the word they really want to use, without saying it. And contrary to the tone of

this article, I’m no fan of affirmative action or DEI. It is just my sincere hope, that as time goes on, more of us will recognize that slight for what it is, and hear the same thing, and give zero weight to the claims.



**COMING SOON!**

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



**Is it BEST to DIVEST?**

Maxine Allison thought so.

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

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

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

**or is there?**

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

READING and WRITING in the

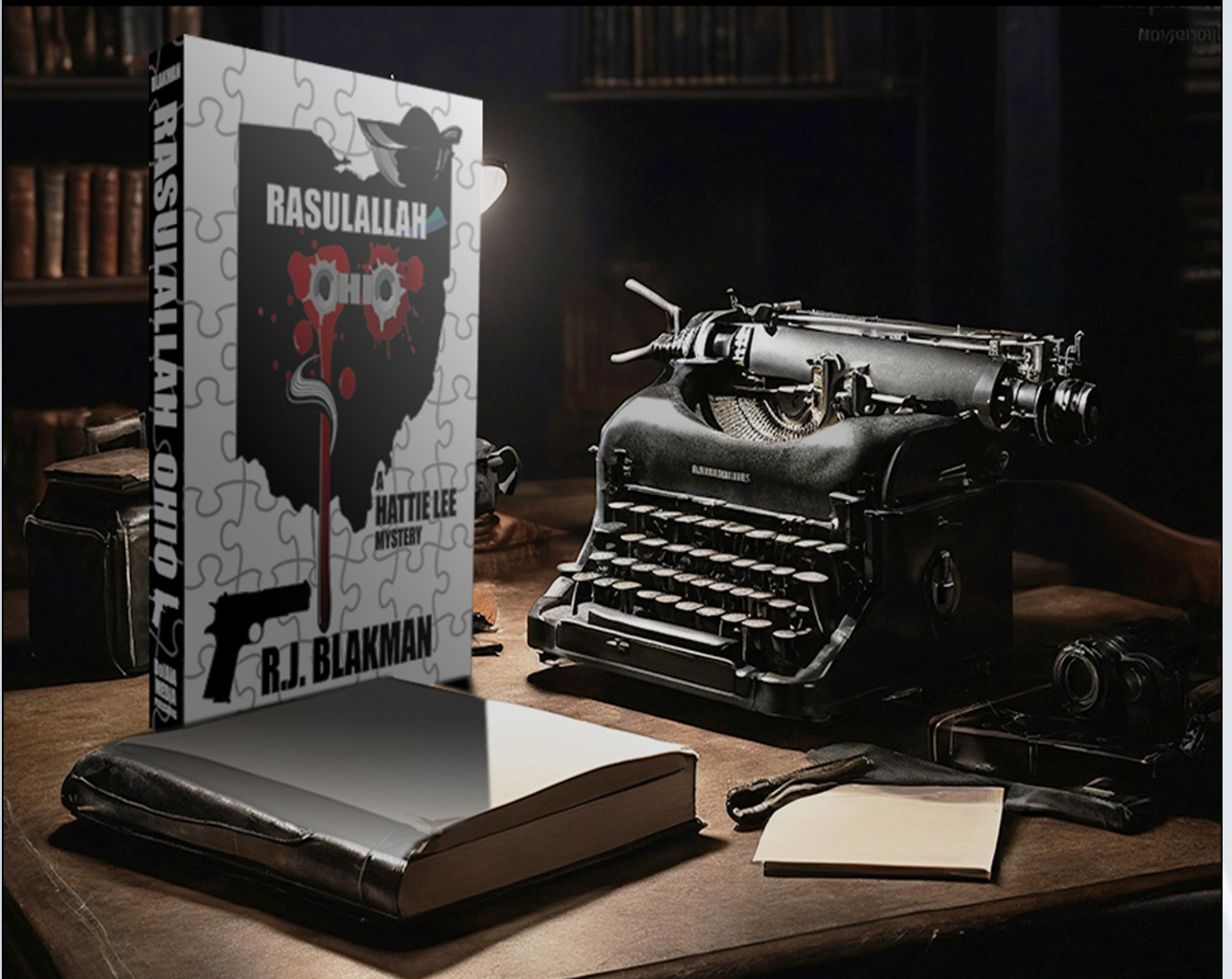
# DARIK

*A space for avid Black readers and Black authors*

## 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)



## SUNDOWN TOWN Excerpt

Caleb Moss loved his position with the bank almost as much as he loved his family. As one of the founding members of the Ebonton City Bank and Loan he felt proud every morning as he prepared for work.

Unless it was raining or snowing hard, he would walk the several blocks from the front door of his home to the front door of the bank, and look at the town he, his colleagues, a number of wealthy philanthropists and the people of Ebonton built together.

As he walked, he would appreciate the town. He liked to admire the space created collaboratively by him, his colleagues, a number of wealthy philanthropists, and the people/citizens of Ebonton.

Ebonton was established on a small peninsula that had a huge lake to the east north and south and the city of Loganville to the west. Before Black people acquired the land for Ebonton, there were extensive meetings and debates as to the wisdom of establishing a town in such a location. The Tulsa race massacre was only a little more than a decade in the past, and to many Black people still a fresh wound and concern. The horror of the fate of the Greenwood district—or “Black Wall Street” (though one of the better known race massacres with its loss of innocent lives, decimation of a community and theft of property) was in no way an isolated event.

Many in Tulsa and other Black communities were often able to flee to wooded areas when the mobs came to set their communities ablaze. What would the people of Ebonton do if the same thing happened to them, but their rear flank was made up of water? An argument was

made, and prevailed, that having a town with its back to the water was an ideal situation. The people of Ebonton needn't let the white man know everything they had or the nature of their plans. No one but the residents needed to know what kind of defensive measures and evacuation plans they had in place. The various committees and think tanks reasoned that they could create places of business near the harbor

that concealed weapons, escape boats and life rafts that could be readily taken to the water. Then, Ebonton's citizens could escape a mob and reach safety on the far side of the lake where there were woods in which they could flee without the mob being able to follow. Another feature of the contingency plan was a militia of nearly two hundred men and women who – primarily consisted of the city VIPs – who would stay behind to defend the town and prevent as much wanton violence and property damage as they could.

Ebonton had two churches, the Onxy Street AME church and the Emmanuel Tabernacle Baptist church on the other side of town. When he did go to church, Caleb Moss usually attended Emmanuel. His wife joked that he spent more of his Sundays at either Bedside Baptist or St. Mattress. Caleb enjoyed walking the town, seeing the elementary school and the high school. He was proud that Ebonton boasted a movie theater, a rarity, which showed great first run films like *Stormy Weather* and *Cabin in the Sky*. The main stage of the theater also served as a venue for acts like Cab Callaway, Louie Armstrong and Billie Holliday. Ebonton was a place where Billie Holliday knew a closing performance of *Strange Fruit* would be welcomed and met with enthusiastic applause.





## SUNDOWN TOWN Excerpt (Continued)

He always took in the sight of streets lined with his neighbors' well run, bustling, and profitable family businesses up and down the street, and was happy with the fact that, all of them seemed to be successful and profitable propositions for their owners.

Every citizen of Ebonton was treated with dignity, honor and respect even though there were individuals who were considered VIPs (even though those prominent members did not see themselves as such). Even the VIPs were an unassuming and down to earth lot who loved the community and the people in it.

One of the most prominent of the VIPs was Julius Kemp; devastatingly handsome, painfully charming and wealthy with old money, and generous truly to a fault. He was one of the more engaged founders of Ebonton. When meetings about forming the town first started, he managed to pull together close to two hundred wealthy Black investors from around the country, and a few from overseas, to back the construction and founding of the town. It was done in a way that those investors did not own the town, nor had a controlling interest in it. The acquisition of the land, and subsequent construction of the properties was structured, with the help of Caleb Moss and his business partners, in a way that everyone in Ebonton had a hand in creating the Black oasis it had become, and all had nearly an equal stake in the success of the town. One of the things everyone found so impressive about the VIPs was the fact they insisted they like, regular folk, they lived in town but unlike most folk, they were willing to kill (and if necessary, die) for the defense of Ebonton.

This kind of dedication and heroism ran counter to everything anyone in the town had ever heard about wealthy people, and those who, because of their money and status were most prone to seek safety and protection. There were several meetings among the towns people where many of the men objected to rowing away to safety while others, to include a few of the women folk, would be allowed to stay behind. The men who were not part of the VIPs argued that they had just as much stake in the town as anyone, and that they should also be allowed the honor to fight.

The rebuttal of the VIPs was that the majority of the men in town who were not of their group were either young men and or married. None of the VIPs were married (something, strangely no one had really taken notice of until it was pointed out). Another point

was that almost half of them were survivors of race massacres and knew how they tend to evolve and strategically how such mobs could be beaten. Finally, they presented to the town, the secret of their success and wealth. These men and women had known each other for a very long time, many of them having served in the military together and knew the art of war and other secrets they shared with the people of Ebonton.

In the face of all the new information, the men – some of them grudgingly – agreed that this militia would be best if left to those nearly two hundred people of experience.

So, plans in place, everyone pulling in the same direction, the town of Ebonton was established.

Harambee! Harambee! Harambeeeeeee!!!





## SUNDOWN TOWN Excerpt (Continued)

It was the wealthy VIPs, who mostly bankrolled and designed the community evacuation plan including the waterfront structures and lake escape route. They used their experience of the US pattern of behavior among the whites, that included not only Tulsa but also:

Colfax, Louisiana, Massacre (1873)

Wilmington, North Carolina, Massacre (1898)

Atlanta Massacre (1906)

Elaine, Arkansas, Massacre (1919)

or the,

Rosewood, Florida, Massacre (1923)

These, almost two hundred philanthropists saw no reason that the fine people of Ebonton should be unprotected because of finances. With their considerable combined wealth, they purchased weapons and ammunition, as well as escape boats along with buildings in which to house them. They did it from their dedication to the people of Ebonton and a love of the idea of the town they were creating. They didn't expect any credit or special treatment in town, although they got it anyway when eating at one of the diners, stopping for haircuts, picking up supplies and so on. In a community full of mutual love and respect, they inspired a special kind of warmth and affection from the other citizens of the town.

The town had gone up as planned, as did the businesses near the edge of the water which housed boats, weapons and ammunition, as well as the implementation of the evacuation

and protection plan. All done with only the awareness of the Black folks of Ebonton.

Once a month, on random nights, the pastors of the AME and Baptist churches would ring the church bells. They would typically sound between 5:30 and 8 pm at the latest. To anyone not of Ebonton who might hear the bells, they seemed no different than any other goin' ta

meetin' clarion call. But every man woman and child in town knew that if they heard the bells from both churches at once... at ANY time, they were to leave their homes and move in an orderly fashion to the harbor where boats would be waiting. The town was about as wide as it was long, which meant roughly a ten-minute walk from the outermost residence in any direction.

The women, and children would load in first and then the menfolk would get in and a

couple would grab oars and start paddling out to the far side of the lake. The boats themselves would already contain enough weapons and ammunition for the adults on boats to take up arms if the men left behind could not hold the line and members of the mob went after those who had escaped by water.

Ebonton had been in existence for over a decade and every month without fail—rain, sleet, clear skies or snow—the drills were executed, and in time the evacuations ran like a well-oiled machine. The people of the town were determined to not be caught by surprise and end up like so many of their tribe who did (or did not) suspect that such measures were even necessary in a supposedly “free” country.



PURCHASE AT ANY TIME BY CLICKING THIS IMAGE

## SUNDOWN TOWN Excerpt (Continued)

Saturday afternoons came to be great times to be a member of the Ebonton community. There was something always going on—shopping, concerts, visiting, movies, classes, recitals, fairs, rehearsals, meetings, cook-outs, dances, contests, plays, sporting events—something. Caleb, his family and a group of his friends and their families often gathered together and hung around his back yard and socialized, the men mostly crowding around the grill, paper plates in hand, watching Moss work his magic with pork ribs, burgers, and hot dogs.

Caleb and his best friend Vern had a long-standing competition as to who was the greatest “grill master” in town. It seemed no matter what group happened to be gathered, there was never a clear consensus crowning one of them as the victor. (After a while, Caleb and Vern started to suspect it was a ploy by their neighbors to make sure one or the other of them would always have barbecue duty.) Julius Kemp walked around eyeballing the single ladies present (and one or two of those who were married), trying to decide who he was going to talk to. He spotted in the corner at the swing set, Angela Savannah, gently pushing the Moss’s daughter Violet. Julius had noticed Angela several times before at various gatherings and dinners, but never felt it was quite the right time to approach. He determined that this would be the day.

Taking a couple steps away from the grill and toward the object of his desire, Caleb called over to him, “Hey Julius! I’m done with your burger; I know you like ‘em pretty rare... if I leave it on here any longer it’ll

cook through too much!” Julius turned and quickly stretched his awaiting paper plate toward the chef. Caleb took his spatula and slid the seasoned barely cooked meat onto the bun. “Thanks Caleb! You’re the best. I’ll see you gentlemen in a minute... I want to go talk to someone.” Julius turned with his now slightly heavier paper plate and made a bee line toward Angela.



The men left standing around the grill watched Julius with envy, knowing that Kemp’s reputation as a ‘ladies man’ was legendary. None of them could think of one woman he ever went after who turned him down for at least one date... or more. Kemp was far too much of a gentleman to ever kiss and tell, but the men hanging around watching this operator operate didn’t mind letting their imaginations run wild.

Add to that the fact he was approaching Angela Savannah and that was the whole ball game. She was the whole package: young, single, smart as a whip, great sense of humor, a thriving hair care and makeup business, and one of the most beautiful women in Ebonton. Five foot ten, skin as dark as a moonless night sky in October, and a smile that could make a man’s knees so weak he had best not be crossing a busy street when he saw it.

They watched him as he sauntered over to Angela who was still swinging Violet, and started talking to her, casually watching the child gliding back and forth as he spoke.

Smooooooth.

Curiously, the women (both single and

## SUNDOWN TOWN Excerpt (Continued)

married) were equally interested in what was going on at the swings. They talked among themselves, giggling like schoolgirls every now and then. A couple of them talking about their run ins with Mr. Julius Kemp. To the surprise of some, none of them had a bad or harsh word to say about him, other than the fact he was a known wolf. But he wore it well, he was always very respectful and considerate. It was just accepted that this fine hunka' man liked the ladies, and that was all there was to it.

After a while the men turned their attention away from Julius and Angela, and focused in on their wives and for some, potential spouses or Mrs. "Right Nows". They all stood, looking, laughing and shaking their heads. "Look at those ladies over there! They look like they want to sop that man up with a biscuit!" Nate Jenkins laughed.

Bobby Sanson laughed and took a bite of the hotdog he had just put mustard and relish on as he commented on the goo goo eyes his wife was making at the striking Black man by the swing, "I know! Damn, look at Lorraine over there! She damn sure don't look at me like that!"

Caleb flipped a couple burgers onto a pile of waiting cooked burger patties. Then he looked at Bobby as if sizing him up, "Why would she? Shit man... lookatcha."

"Man, shut the hell up!" Bobby snickered, joining in with the laughter of the other men.

Caleb's tone became a bit more serious but remained light as he placed fresh patties on the grill and seasoned them, he once again spoke to his friend. "Hey Bobby?"

"Yeah?"

"Do you know how long it will be until the windows come in? Nicodemus Wakins asked me about it a couple days ago and I told him I'd talk to you when I saw you at the barbecue today. He's not upset or anything, he knows it's a huge order, so it's going to take some time."

Bobby picked up a bottle of beer and a can opener from the table near the grill. He opened the brew, put the opener back and said, before taking a swig, "I spoke with my supplier, and they said the windows should start getting here by Tuesday.

With daily deliveries my shop should have the last of 'em by next Wednesday. Now keep in mind, once I get 'em, I still have to send 'em over there to Marshall's shop to get treated before he sends 'em back to me to have my guys install 'em."

Marshall Nicholson, owner of of "Nicholson & Sons Smoke and Tinting" who was standing just within earshot, walked closer to the two men. "Soon as those windows get in, I have all the treatments ready. This town went up pretty fast and everyone else's houses are done. Wakins and his group pumped so much money into the town that I feel like it's kinda' unfair that their houses should be some of the last in town to be completed just because they're waiting for windas."



## SUNDOWN TOWN Excerpt (Continued)

“You and a lot of people... but they insisted they don’t want any special treatment. They just really care about this town.”

“Well, all I can say is once those windows start comin’ in I’m gonna make sure we do a real fine job for those VIPs! REAL fine!” Nicholson said.

“You and me both!” Bobby added before taking another gulp of his cold beer.

Eventually, all the food that could be barbecued was cooked, and everyone was walking around with a plate who wanted to eat, and the men and women were sitting and standing in the yard together discussing the future of Ebonton and in what ways they could help build and progress the community. They talked about how the commerce that was opening up between their town and Loganville to the west, was injecting more money into their efforts. They had no problem reciprocating with the neighboring town, but only after the money had circulated within Ebonton at least five times.

They discussed businesses in town that were doing alright but could possibly use some help and ways in which to accomplish the goal of having everyone from bankers to business owners, from seamstresses to students ALL be successful in whatever their endeavors. They knew that they, the Black people of Ebonton, were their own rescue. They even discussed plans for how to reproduce the success of Ebonton throughout the United States and the world once their town was firmly, unshakably

up and running.

As the day went into the cool of the evening, they talked about business, they talked about fashion, they talked about sports, they talked about vacations—

they talked about Julius and Angela and the fact that somewhere, in the midst of all their discussions, the couple had somehow slipped away and disappeared.

Just another Saturday in Ebonton.

\* \* \*

Several hours earlier, and one town over, to the west of Loganville, in the town of Heron Oaks, John Clayton—who everyone called “Jack”—stood at his barbecue grill. Jack was casually flipping several wieners and burger patties his

wife had seasoned and shaped, while paying particular attention to the porterhouse steak that was going to be the center piece of the feast. The Anderson, Cambridge and Billson families were there with their assorted children ranging from eight months to seventeen years. Clayton’s supervisor Chuck Louisville was also in attendance.

Some of the children played and ran around in the Clayton’s huge back yard. Several of the children, shirtless boys wearing swim trunks and girls in colorful swimsuits, repeatedly entered or exited the huge in ground pool. Meanwhile other rambunctious children played tag and horse near the edge of the pool, much to the alarm of a couple of the mother’s present.



## SUNDOWN TOWN Excerpt (Continued)

They shouted warnings to their children and threatened to turn them over to their fathers' wrath if they did not 'mind'. Every now and then—as is inevitable when hosting any event with at least one child present—there was the hurt arm or scraped knee accompanied by the inevitable sound of loud, unrestrained crying. The kind of shrieks that would make the howling of the inhabitants of the ninth circle of Dante's Inferno sound like the angelic voice of a church choir by comparison.

The men, gathered round the cook and drinking beers, hardly noticed the plight of their children, confident the women would see to whatever bumps or bruises occurred. They had far more important things to discuss, like the money they made last year, the money they were making now, and the money they were going to make in the future. The men would every now and then comment on something pertaining to football, or sex, as well as which women in the secretarial pool were "winners" and which were "dogs".

As they stood in the midst of what to them was the "American Dream". Norman Rockwell could have told them to "freeze" for a moment so that he could immortalize that particular backyard barbecue for one of his paintings. They grilled, laughed, and smoked as they literally stood in a yard enclosed by white picket fences while surrounded by others that were also enclosed by white picket fences. They had good, well-paying jobs, money in the bank and access to everything the government and society had to offer. They had beautiful

homes, wives who loved them (or at least tolerated them), children who respected them (or knew that they'd better act like they did if they didn't want the belt), and most had dogs.

They had some minor complaints about their government and elected officials, but overall, they knew they existed under a government and within a system that was tailor made to cater to them as white men (and to a lesser degree white women).

So, in the midst of this bliss, with their fists firmly grasping the world's genitals and everything going their way, it was inevitable that their conversations would reflect their charmed lives by always eventually ending up focused on the most defining area of their lives, the one that truly affected the fate of them and their families:

niggers.

"I wonder what they're doin' right now?" Brent Cambridge said taking a bite of his hot dog.

"Who? The niggers?" Jack said.

"Who else? They're over in that town they threw together plannin' God knows what for regular folk like us." Cambridge spat out, along with some of the hotdog that still filled his mouth.

"Shit, I dunno Brent." Chuck Louisville said, standing relaxed as he looked at the grill deciding whether he wanted a burger or a dog.



## SUNDOWN TOWN Excerpt (Continued)

“I don’t think they have the ability to think like that. Sure, they’re wild animals and all, but far as planning goes? I don’t see it.”

Phil Anderson had just come back from the main buffet table with a paper plate heavy with a pile of potato salad with raisins sprinkled in, potato chips, and an open bun (already adorned with ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, pickles, lettuce, and onions) just waiting for some meat. He held his plate toward Jack who had just finished flipping a hot fresh patty. “Yeah, besides, the Negroes are all the way on the other side of Loganville. I don’t see them coming over this way. Long as they stay put and stay in their place, that’s good enough for me.”

“Well it ain’t good enough fer me!” Cambridge said. “Them colored’s are like roaches. Once they get in one area, they start spreadin’ all over th’ place lessin’ you do somethin’ ta stop ‘em.”

Jack smiled and put the meat he’d just prepared onto Phil’s waiting bun. “You worry too much Brent. No, I don’t feel comfortable having those darkies living so close, but like Phil said over there, they’re all the way the hell on the other side of Loganville.”

“I worry too much? Maybe you fellas don’t worry enough! You know about what happened in Tulsa... that nigger wall street! That kinda things happenin’ all over the place, I’m tellin’ you, we gotta keep an eye on these niggers e’ry second!” Cambridge said.

“You really hate you some niggers don’t

you?” Danny Billson—who up to this point had just stood listening and drinking beer—chimed in.

“You’re damn straight! An’ I don’t trust ‘em. There’s not a ONE of ‘em worth a plugged nickel!”

“Seems like I remember a few years back you were pulling pretty hard for Joe Louis to kick Schmeling’s ass in that second match up.” Jack said looking over to Billson and concealing a wink.

“Yeah...” Cambridge said, “well, that was different. Far as I’m concerned, they needed a brute nigger ta take down a Nazi. He was fightin’ for America against that Krout. So yeah, I cheered for ‘em, and I cheered when he knocked that Nazi on his ass in the first

round!”

“Uh-huh, So I remember. You think you would invite Louis to your barbecue when you host the next one?” Jack said, once again winking at Billson and trying not to laugh outright.

“Are you fuckin’ kidding?! Hell no!” Cambridge said, then pausing for a moment to think said. “On second thought, maybe I would.”

“What? Really?” Billson said.

“Sure, look around... Jack’s havin’ ta do e’vr thing his self over here. Me... I could use someone to pass the tray around and serve drinks.”



## SUNDOWN TOWN Excerpt (Continued)

The tight group of white men laughed.

“Seriously though.” Cambridge said, once again becoming stern, “I think we’d better go take a look at what’s goin’ on in that town. Make sure those spear-chuckers aren’t plannin’ anything. Look over there... we have wives and daughters. An’ you know those big black brutes can’t keep their hands offa our women.”

“That is a fact.” Phil Anderson said as he raised a fork full of potato salad to his mouth.

Jack, still paying close attention to his duties at the grill, looked thoughtfully at what he was doing and said, “I must admit I think about what happened in Tulsa from time to time.”

“Right!” Cambridge yelled out. “After that nigger went after that white woman, good white folks burned that fuckin’ town to the ground! They even bombed their black asses from the air! Now they had the right idea about how to deal with niggers... they did the right thing and protected white purity.”

“Niggers.” Billson said as he shook his head and took another swig of beer.

Seventeen-year-old Randy Billson came wandering over to where the men were talking. He’d had enough of hanging around with the little children around the pool, and the women had nothing to speak about that he could relate to. He would be eighteen years old and graduating next year. He stood six foot two, had brown hair blue eyes and a few freckles that were remnants of his adolescence, but were fading quickly. (But

nowhere near quickly enough as far as Randy was concerned.)

He was a jock through and through; he excelled at baseball, basketball, and track & field. But the sport for which he gained the most local fame and offers of full ride scholarships from several colleges that were

courting him, was football. He stood among the men, larger and more imposing than all of them except Phil Anderson. Anderson had himself once been a football player in high school and college and was roughly the same size and build as the young man, albeit a little softer around the middle. Randy hoped he might be able to find more common ground with the men crowded around the grill, drinking beer and smoking. He walked up casually and stood beside his father Danny.

“There he is!” Phil Anderson said, excited that the young man had stepped into their circle. “I like the way you handled that football last night son! Reminds me of myself when I was playing for Heron High! Dan you’ve got a helluva football player in that boy there! The way he scored that winning touchdown last night! Yep... reminds me of myself!”

Danny Billson, obviously peacock proud opened the cooler that was to his right, dug down into the ice and grabbed a ‘cold one’. He then popped the lid and offered it to his son. With a slightly concealed glance over his shoulder to see if his mother was watching, Randy timidly took the bottle and took a swig of the ice-cold brew. “Yep! The apple doesn’t fall far from the tree!” Dan said patting his





## SUNDOWN TOWN Excerpt (Continued)

son hard on the back, causing Randy's head to bob slightly up and down.

"S-So what are we talking about?" Randy said, wanting to get into the flow of the conversation and trying very hard to speak in a way that he might be considered a peer.

"We were discussin' the Ebonton problem." Cambridge said, still feeling the intensity of the conversation he felt the group had not yet finished.

Swallowing his gulp of beer, a little harder than he had intended and hoping no one would notice, Randy said, "Ebonton problem? Is there a problem with the colored people over there?"

"Hell yeah there's a problem! They're over there is the problem!" Cambridge exploded.

"I thought Ebonton was an all-negro town? I don't think I've ever even seen anyone from there here in Heron Oaks." Randy said, putting his left hand in his pocket and swirling the beer around in the bottle attempting to look somehow more like one of the guys.

"Yeah, and we need ta keep it that way! We don't like havin' 'em so close ta us. Let 'em go somewhere to another state or somethin' but they need to get the hell out from around here."

"They need ta take their black asses back ta Africa." Phil Anderson chimed in.

"See son, we just don't want them coming over

here like some kinda' plague and infecting our good white communities." Danny Billson said as his addition to the conversation.

"Well, I dunno Pop. Ebonton's a town over. They would actually have to come through Loganville to even get here, and just going down Loganville's main street takes a while."

"And just how would you know that? The young jock's father asked.

Randy immediately got on his guard, paying close attention to his choice of words and tone of voice, so as not to alert his father or the other men to the fact he had indeed spend some of his spare time in Loganville.

"Sometimes students from Loganville come to our school for meets. We talk sometimes.

They don't seem to have much of a problem with the people of Ebonton. As a matter of fact, when you ask about it, they don't really talk about Ebonton a lot, 'scept that the people from over there sometimes go back and forth to do business and vice versa."

"Whatcho talkin' 'bout boy?!" Cambridge said, "You gonna stand there and tell me the white people in Loganville actually let them darkies come over and conduct business?!"

"Yes sir, that's what they've told me. And Loganville residents go over into Ebonton and conduct business too. Seems like it works pretty well for all concerned."

Danny Billson, whose face was turning a dark pink, had become noticeably uncomfortable by his son's flippant statements about the





## SUNDOWN TOWN Excerpt (Continued)

people in the two towns to the east of them. He decided that he had better stop him from talking altogether before he did any more damage to his or his family’s reputation. “Randy, go on back over there and watch your sister.” Dan said as calmly as he could manage.

“But Mom’s watc—”

“I said git!”

Dan snatched the remainder of the beer from his son’s hand. Randy turned and, looking a bit awkward being a person of his size and physical stature, walked head down and tail tucked like a just-kicked puppy, back toward the “little kids” and the women. Randy knew that he’d blown his chance to stand around and converse in the space of the men and regretted ever having mentioned what was going on in Loganville.

After the younger Billson had removed himself from the group, the men looked at their friend making no effort whatsoever to conceal their disapproval. “What you been teachin’ that boy Dan? He sounds like he’s just this side of a nigger lover.” Cambridge blurted out.

Dan stood and took a swig of what was left of the beer he had just snatched from his son. He then used it to point toward Cambridge as if it were an extended finger, “Randy ain’t no goddamn nigger lover!” He took the last gulp of beer, “He’s just a little mixed up is all.”

“Well, I think you need to straighten that boy out toot sweet!” Anderson interjected.

“Oh, don’t worry, I will.” Dan said, shooting a glance over to his son as he took a place by the pool as a self-designated lifeguard.

Cambridge didn’t let any of the conversation languish. “Yeah, well... in the meantime I think we might need ta take a look inta what’s goin’ over there in Loganville and Ebonton.

Cause if them white folks are startin’ ta get as cozy with them coloreds as your boy says, then it’s only a matter o’ time ‘for one of our sons or daughters is bringin’ onenah them jigaboos home fer dinner. If that’s what’s goin’ on there, then we need to nip that shit in the bud right now!”

The men stood around the grill and looked at each other.

“I’m gonna take my pickup and go look around at that town tomorra’... do some reconnaissance. Whose ridin’ with me?”

“I’ll go take a look with you.” Anderson said.

“Yeah, me too.” Said Billson, more out of seeking an ounce of redemption in the eyes of his peers than any real desire to see what was happening in the two towns.

“Alright... it’s settled then, I’ll pick you guys up round two o’clock. That’ll give us time to get home from church and get changed.

\* \* \*

Randy Billson’s family lived close enough to the outskirts of Loganville that by bicycle it was only a fifteen- or twenty-minute ride from his own town of Heron Oaks.



## SUNDOWN TOWN Excerpt (Continued)

For several months Randy peddled back and forth to see Marie Marlowe, daughter of the town mayor. He already had his driver's license but was in no rush to attempt getting his own car because, if he had understood correctly while he eavesdropped, his parents already had money set aside to get him one for a graduation present in a few months.

Randy met Marie at a football game between his school team the Heron Hawks and the opposing team, the Loganville Lions. Running near the sideline Randy hyper extended trying to catch a long pass, and though he missed the pass by a mile, he absolutely did not miss the trio of cheerleaders who were not fast enough to get out of his way. Marie wasn't one of the three Randy managed to knock to the ground, but she was the one who, after her squad mates were picked up, dusted off and found to be undamaged, walked over and offered a hand to the stunned running back who was still trying to get his bearings.

And the rest, as they say, is history.

Randy would bicycle over to Loganville a few times a week to meet the young lady with whom he had become so smitten. He managed to keep the relationship from his parents because he knew his father had no great love or admiration for people from Loganville. His mother, who tried to put on that she was more liberal, was actually in her way worse than his father when it came to Black white matters and people who didn't quite see things the way she did.

Randy and Marie would speak constantly about the goings on in Loganville and what she knew of Ebonton. Randy wouldn't say much about his hometown having started feeling embarrassed about it.

When Marie, who was three months from seventeen, and every bit the mayor's daughter in terms of verbalizing rhetoric, would talk about the Black and white of the situation between Loganville and Ebonton, she was able to put it in a way that made perfect sense to Randy. She explained that the reason everything works so well for them is that they have never tried to integrate with each other. They do business. They are kind and considerate to each other. They even come to each other's aid from town to town when needed. But all of them are seen as equal. They stay separated, but that isn't

a bad thing. The separation is not born of a dislike or hatred of the other, but a genuine desire to build their individual destinies as a people. She would talk at length about these things, and mention that there were other factors that came into play that she had heard some of the older people talking about that she wouldn't dare repeat, but that all of it worked to create a very happy and harmonious relationship between the two towns and their people. Because of this, they could freely interact with each other, buy, sell, trade, even form friendships. The concept had its rough edges, but overall, Randy was able to see how something like that could work.

The teenage couple rode their bicycles farther into Loganville than Randy had ever gone, as Marie showed him the sights.



## SUNDOWN TOWN Excerpt (Continued)

Randy looked around and was amazed as he saw Black people walking in and out of various stores, and other places of business like print shops, repair stores and the like.

“Is it like this all the time?” Randy said. He was all but flabbergasted, the first time he saw the streets filled with Black and white folks taking care of their business.

“Like what all the time?”

“Coloreds just coming and going into town and doing business?”

“Of course... and like I told you, we go over to Ebonton and do the same.”

“Yeah, you did tell me. I guess it’s just a whole lot different actually seeing it! Now that I think about it, I think this is the first time I’ve actually seen any Black people before.”

Marie looked at Randy and giggled. “My father’s the mayor of this town, but he got a loan for his business through that Ebonton Town Bank and Loan over there. According to him he got a better rate than the banks were offering here. So far, he says they’re dealing real square with him. He wants to move our money over there. He’s still checking into it, but I kinda think he’s gonna do it.”

“Wow.”

The teen couple rode their bicycles into the town park and stopped under a huge weeping willow that sat nearly dead center. They sat beside each other, balancing on their bikes and leaning the weight of their outstretched

arms on their handlebars.

“What?” Marie said, thinking about Randy’s surprise at everything he was seeing. “No one from your town ever goes into Ebonton to do any kind of business? Never?”

“Ever. Besides, we pretty much have everything we need in Heron Oaks, and of the little bit we can’t get hold of we go further west to Tanancha.”

“I guess you’re the only one in your whole town who travels east.” Marie said, smiling and blushing a little knowing what she was implying.

“I suppose I’m the only one who really has a good reason to come this way.”

The teenagers looked at each other, leaned their faces closer, tilting their bicycles in the direction of their lean, and kissed. It was a first kiss for them both. Their first time kissing each other and their first time kissing anyone.

\* \* \*

Cambridge, Billson and Anderson took their reconnaissance mission very seriously. As they drove slowly through Loganville and took in what looked like a normal day in the town, they saw Black people entering and exiting places of business.

Cambridge’s face was so twisted in disgust that he actually felt the physical pain of his overly tightened facial muscles. He watched Black people roaming the streets, imagining whites from Loganville doing the same in





## SUNDOWN TOWN Excerpt (Continued)

Ebonton. “Of all the nigger lovin’— , I just cannot believe this bullshit ‘em seein’.” He snarled while shaking his head.

Storekeepers were helping Black people with their purchases. Through the windows of a couple diners, they made out Black people actually being served at front counters, with a smile. And the men in the car guessed – and guessed correctly - without having their food spat on.

It was almost more than any of them could have dreamed in their worst nightmares.

Loganville, like Ebonton was not a large town... but Loganville was a long town. Their main street... aptly named ‘Main Street’, stretched the length of the town and continued into and through Ebonton. Driving at the normal speed limit of thirty-five miles per hour, it took the three of them close to half an hour to reach the entrance to Ebonton. Once there, the sight that greeted their eyes left two of the trio in the pickup in stunned silence but had the opposite effect on Cambridge.

Cambridge abruptly hit the brakes when he saw it. “Wait a minute!” he yelled, as his truck

screached to a halt, sliding to a full stop at the border of Ebonton. The sudden deceleration caused the passengers inside to quickly grab the dashboard just to keep from flying into it. “What is this?! What the FUCK is this?!” he yelled.

Billson and Anderson looked at the sign in silent disbelief.



It was not the sign designating the city limit of the town that gave them pause. It was the smaller one beneath it admonishing visitors: “DON’T LET THE SUN SET ON YOU HERE!”

“What the fuck?!” Anderson finally managed to blurt out, “Are those coons over there lookin to threaten white folk?! Trying to tell us where we can and can’t go and when?! Oh, these uppity niggers need to be taught their place!”

“Damn right!” Cambridge bellowed. “I’ve seen enough of this bullshit! We need to go back, get people together and come back here and teach these darkies a lesson!”

\* \* \*

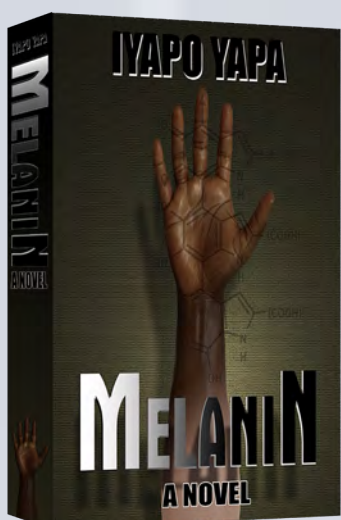


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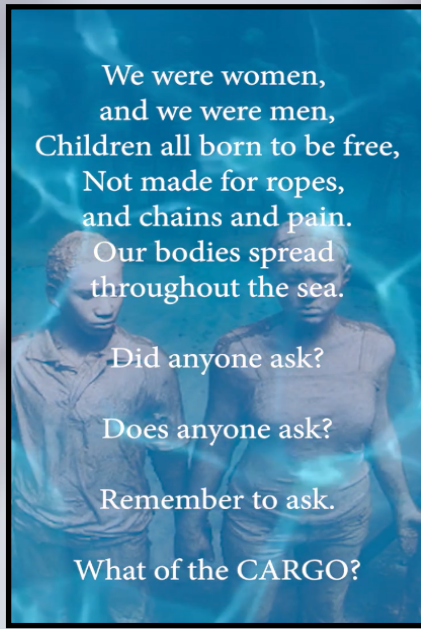


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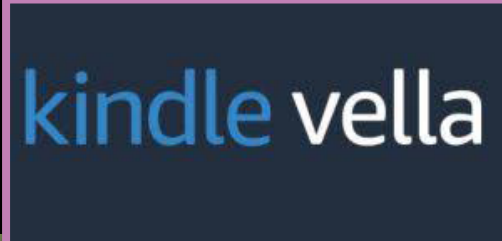
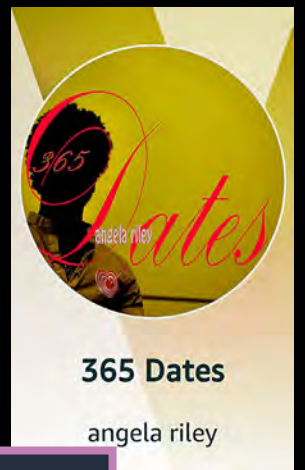
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## Here is your August 2024 Crossword Puzzle!

Have you been rockin' with Reading and Writing in the DARK from the very beginning, when it was a newsletter? Now that it's a magazine, we can look back a couple years. All the questions for this month's crossword puzzle pertain to the first issue through, and including, the last (July 2024). It should be a breeze. For those just joining, thank you, and never fear, you have access to all the back issues so you can solve the puzzle! As always, the solution to last month's puzzle is at the back of the magazine. HAVE FUN!

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





# AUGUST 2024 CROSSWORD PUZZLE

## Across

## Down

3) In July 2024, the Reading and Writing in the DARK newsletter became a \_\_\_\_\_.

7) In the November 2022 issue, this was first introduced. \_\_\_\_\_ puzzles.

8) April 2024 edition feature: The Sun and the \_\_\_\_\_.

9) May 2024 edition: From Iyapo's Blog: The \_\_\_\_\_ That Started It All!

10) December 2023 edition feature: Adventures in Writing: My \_\_\_\_\_ Journey.

15) May 2023 edition book review. Storm Over South \_\_\_\_\_.

19) August 2022 feature story: Why We Should Call It: \_\_\_\_\_ Ebon Fiction and not Afrofuturism?

22) February 2023 edition book review: Still \_\_\_\_\_.

23) June 2024 edition excerpt: \_\_\_\_\_

24) November 2023 edition Spotlight Author. Angela \_\_\_\_\_ Riley.

25) September 2023 edition excerpt: The Problems of \_\_\_\_\_.

1) June 2023 edition book review: My Husband was a Mass \_\_\_\_\_.

2) February 2024 edition feature: What does it mean to be \_\_\_\_\_?

4) October 2023 edition feature story: The Necessity of Understanding Controlled \_\_\_\_\_.

5) October 2022 feature story. \_\_\_\_\_ the Worst.

6) March 2024 edition feature: The \_\_\_\_\_ of a True Believer.

11) March 2023 edition feature story. I Married a \_\_\_\_\_.

12) The book featured in issue the first issue of the newsletter.

13) January 2024 edition. This new feature was introduced. \_\_\_\_\_

14) August 2023 edition article: \_\_\_\_\_? How far is TOO far?!

16) December 2022 edition feature: Wait, WHAT?! Iyapo kin \_\_\_\_\_?!

17) Feature for the January 2023 edition. \_\_\_\_\_ Keepers, Who Needs 'em?

18) July 2023 edition feature story: Will AI Make Writers \_\_\_\_\_.

20) Feature from April 2023 edition. Pookie, Ray Ray, \_\_\_\_\_ and the End of Days.

21) September 2022 feature story. Breaking out of the \_\_\_\_\_!





## What's so bad about TRUMP?!

Honestly, I don't get all this fear of and hatred for Donald Trump.

If he's a billionaire, then he's a scumbag. You can't become a billionaire without being a dirtbag. Period. So, there's that.

My thing is, I can't see why so many people paint him as this unique evil. I've heard it said, "When the devil goes out trick or treating, he wears a Trump costume." Speaking of which, Robert DeNiro famously said on an interview on one of the late night talk shows that he could never play the role of Trump in a movie. Why? "Because there's just no good in him." Say WHAT?! In the movie *Angel Heart*, Robert, you played the LITERAL DEVIL, Satan, Mephistopheles, Old Scratch—whatever you want to call him. You could play freakin' LUCIFER, but you wouldn't play TRUMP because, as you say, "You can't see any good in him."?

Ooooookay.

First off, I am NO Trump supporter. I'm a political atheist. I think ALL politicians are scum, and when I say all, I mean ALL. No exceptions. Period. End of story. Full stop. Because of that, I can look at these self-serving pieces of garbage with an equally disdainful lens. I don't see any one of them as worse than the other. What I do find disconcerting, when it comes to the rank and file, is TDR (Trump Derangement Syndrome), which works both ways by the way. Where one side sees Trump as an absolute demon with no

redeeming value and zero goodness within him nor the capacity for it. (I know someone who believes Trump is literally the anti-Christ—yes, they TRULY believe it.) On the other side are the Trump worshipers who see him as the second coming. He can do no wrong and all that is within him is love, peace and justice. (Yes. As crazy as that sounds, there are people who believe that also.)



There are many on the "Trump is the devil" side who believe that the assassination attempt was set up by him. Which made zero sense considering that he was leading in the poles against a demented person who didn't even know where he was half the time. (That was before the heavyweights came in and, contrary to the nobly stepping aside for love of the country narrative, Biden

was forced to step down by the democrat machine by obviously making him an offer he couldn't refuse.)

For anyone who is not Trump deranged—and I reiterate, I feel I can look at this dispassionately because, I think you are, as I've said and as Gunnery Sgt. Hartman said in *Full Metal Jacket*, "EQUALLY WORTHLESS!"—it should be obvious what is happening.

That said, those who think that Trump somehow orchestrated this himself are not taking a few commonsense things into account, not the least of which is what I just named above, but also, does anyone really think that someone who loves and reveres himself as much as Donald Trump would



## What's so bad about TRUMP?! (Continued)

allow someone to take a shot at his head and trust them to just nick his ear? That sounds beyond crazy to me for anyone to believe that. I'm guessing the same people who think Trump set up that whole thing are the same people who think that Jeffrey Epstein committed suicide.

When it comes to what is happening with Trump, it is obvious to anyone who really cares to break it down that Trump has been politically persecuted and been the victim of "lawfare". (Yes, it made me wince a little to refer to Donald Trump in any way as a victim. But as I said to my brother as we discussed it, just because a woman is a prostitute doesn't mean she can't be raped. Just because a person is paranoid doesn't mean they don't have real enemies. Just because a person is a serial killer doesn't mean they're guilty of stealing that loaf of bread they were accused of stealing. And just because Donald Trump is a jerk doesn't mean that the weight of the government can't be brought down on him.) He was warned by Chuck Schumer—not because Schumer to be helpful, but because he wanted to tell Trump he'd better play ball and play nice with the deep state—when he said the quiet part out loud, letting Trump know that the CIA (and I add the government machine in general), can find ways to screw him seven ways to Sunday.

When it comes to those who insist that he refused to acknowledge his loss (something Hillary Clinton did grudgingly, then spent the next for years calling now President Trump, "illegitimate" any time a microphone was within earshot), people are saying that him calling around wanting a count and wanting people to "find votes" meant he was trying to somehow steal the election. When the truth is

(based on my analysis of Trump's calls to his people), he wasn't telling anyone to create votes out of the ether, he was saying that he felt some chicanery was going on and they needed to find what wasn't being counted, or what was hidden. Just as with his "bloodbath" statement that was blown completely out of context, so it is with that. Interestingly, under the US constitution, Trump had EVERY RIGHT to demand that the count be scrutinized. He wasn't trying to overthrow an election, he was basically saying "Whoa... wait a minute, not so fast, I want this thing to not only be counted again, but I also want us to take a close look at who voted for whom, where and when to make sure there wasn't something shifty going on."

Imagine someone dying under mysterious circumstances and the person in charge of the body was in an all fired up hurry to have the body cremated. Then

you say... "Hey! Let's hold our horses and do an autopsy first just to make sure there was no foul play!" Then YOU get accused of being an enemy of the deceased (and possibly the murderer), because you are not allowing the person's body to be laid to rest quickly and without question. THAT was the ACTUAL situation.

Like I said, I'm a political atheist. I don't have a horse in this race (I think that actually helps me see these situations more clearly than most). I don't hate Trump or love him. I'm just looking at the facts. Even Chris Hedges (who has been a war correspondent who was present during REAL coups and insurrections and is DEFINITELY... NO QUESTION... ANTI-Trump), said that what happened in Washington was not an insurrection nor an attempted coup.



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## What's so bad about TRUMP?! (Continued)

No weapons.

No plan.

No apparatus to replace the government.

No nothing... just a bunch of angry, hyped-up people. A mob. (Many of whom, once inside, basically just took a tour of the place and took selfies with law enforcement.)

I constantly ask people who hate Trump or have TDS (Trump Derangement Syndrome), “What did Trump ever DO that you feel makes him a unique evil among other people? Not what did he SAY—what has he ever actually DONE that makes him uniquely evil?” (That isn't to say he hasn't done MUCH jacked up stuff—of COURSE he has... but my question is more in the nature of, “What makes him UNIQUE?! What has he done that hasn't been done by ANY OTHER crooked businessman and/or politician that makes HIM so different?”

No one looks at the fact that the things the fearmongers try to scare people into believing about Trump,

Setting Black people back.

Starting wars.

Repealing habeas corpus (the protection that

made it so the government couldn't just pull you out of your house in the middle of the night and imprison you someplace INDEFINITELY without charging you with anything or giving you a trial) I ACTUALLY heard a pundit assert that as being one of the big threats that Trump posed. Does he not know that Obama ALREADY repealed habeas corpus during HIS tenure?!



<https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/obama-and-indefinite-detention-us-citizens/>

This is just one example. There are many, MANY more of the things people are concerned Trump will do—Although he had already been in the office for four years and did none of them. (Not saying everything he did was on the up and up or right, just that, in relationship to other presidents, he didn't do anything more terrible)—that the past administrations have already actually DONE.

I'm a political atheist, and yes, I know I keep repeating that. I'm just making ABSOLUTELY CLEAR that I am NOT a Trump supporter! I don't believe in ANY of this “democracy” bs.

What I REALLY hate and fear is not Trump. It is people non-stop trying to manipulate me and mold my thinking with half-truths and full lies. happening that aren't happening, while being told as much.

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## Music to my ears: Did AI finally win me over?!

I'm not super old, but I'm old enough.

I'm not super old, but I'm old enough.

I'm old enough to remember when MIDI stood for "Musical Instrument Digital Interface". My first professional keyboard was a Casio CZ5000 synthesizer. I also had a Casio CZ1, a Suzuki keyboard (I can't remember the model of), a Korg drum computer (something in the TR series, but that's all I can remember), and a Casio SK\_01 for sampling. Though the SK\_01 was more of a toy, I was able to do some very interesting things with it.

That said, I watched digital and electronic music develop firsthand. Those were some very exciting times. I wrote my first songs using those keyboards, sampler, drum computer and a professional mixing board. It was a Tascam, but I can't remember the model. I was in Germany in the military during that time and was in a band called Force of Habit. We made some pretty good music and we each did solo stuff. When it was time to leave, my things were packed away by the military and shipped back to the U.S. Long story short, ALL my instruments and studio equipment ,I

painstakingly (monetarily) sacrificed to get, were stolen. Likely none of it even made it out the country.

I kept doing music as a hobby, but at some point, I stopped keeping up with the trends and the tech. So, imagine my surprise when I found out that you could take your lyrics, put them into an online app, and it would turn your lyrics into a song in the style you wanted, sung by your choice of a woman or man. I was very skeptical when I first tried it, but after I put in that first set of lyrics and heard the results, I was HOOKED! This particular AI platform is something I wasn't expecting at all. I typically push back against too much AI, though I have come around to seeing it as just another tool if used correctly. But this was absolutely MIND BLOWING! The knowledge that now I can dig out some of my old lyrics that I struggled with putting to music and having sung (because I can't sing!), is awesome to me.

Again. I'm not a big fan of AI, but I'm definitely a big fan of THIS. I write all the lyrics, NO assistance from AI and the AI sings EXACTLY what I write. A few times I had to go back and correct typos because as I said, the AI

sings EXACTLY what I write. To that end, I don't feel like I'm cheating like I would if I were using it to make art. (I NEVER claim AI art as something I "created", and I never EVER use AI to help me write. I don't know if I ever could. That would take all the joy out of it for me.)

But this?

To me it is tantamount to handing a composer and singer my lyrics and saying to them, "Can you write some music for this and sing it?" So, I take full credit for the lyrics. The AI gets the rest.

If you would like to hear some of my songs you can find them on TikTok and Instagram. There is, "Force Of Habit" and "No Matter Who I'm With," also a video for *And What of the CARGO?* that features "Kylah's Theme", with my words and lyrics.



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

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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?

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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## 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.

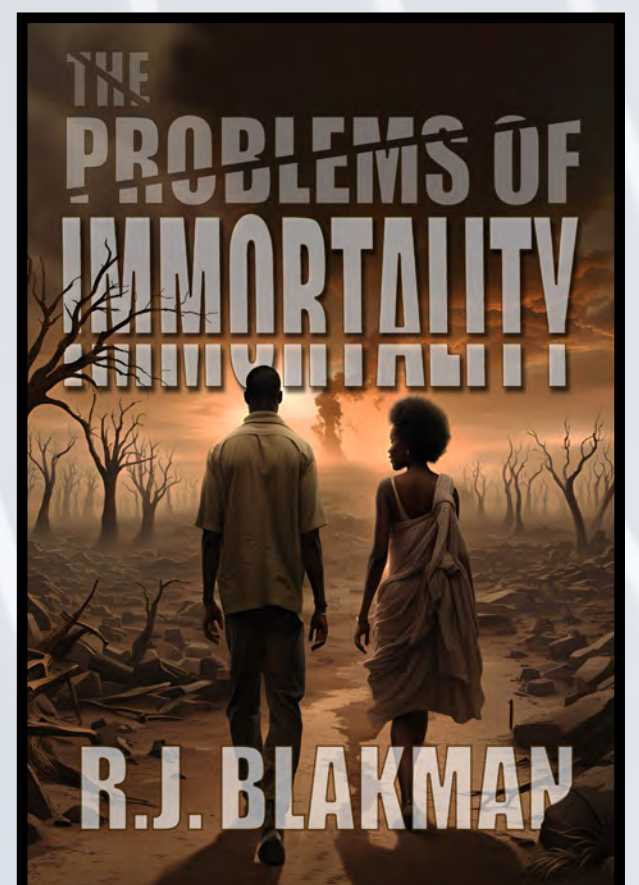
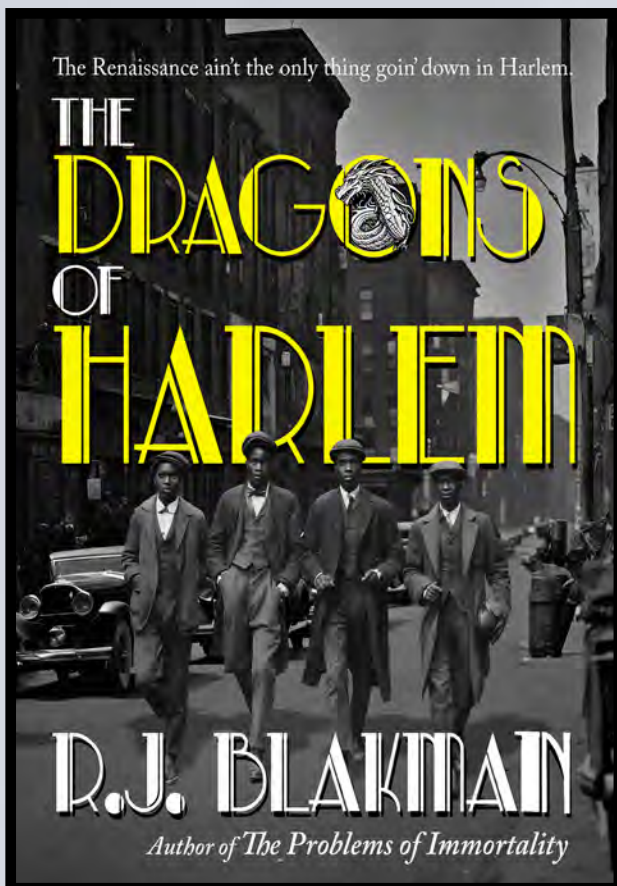
As a practice, Blakman seeks out truth and goes wherever that truth leads him, even if uncomfortable.

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](mailto:rjb@iyapoyapa.com)



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And What of the CARGO?

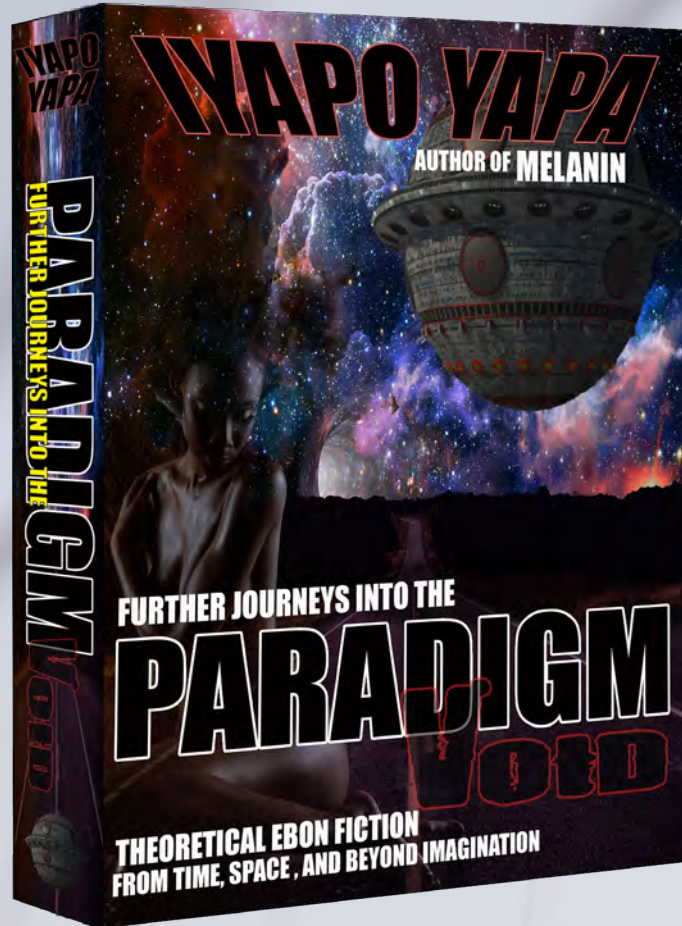
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ARE YOU PREPARED TO JOURNEY BACK INTO THE VOID?!

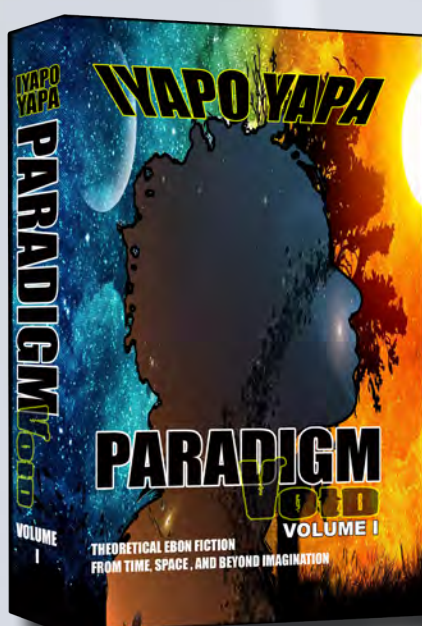


## COMING SOON

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

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

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



## RIGHT NOW!

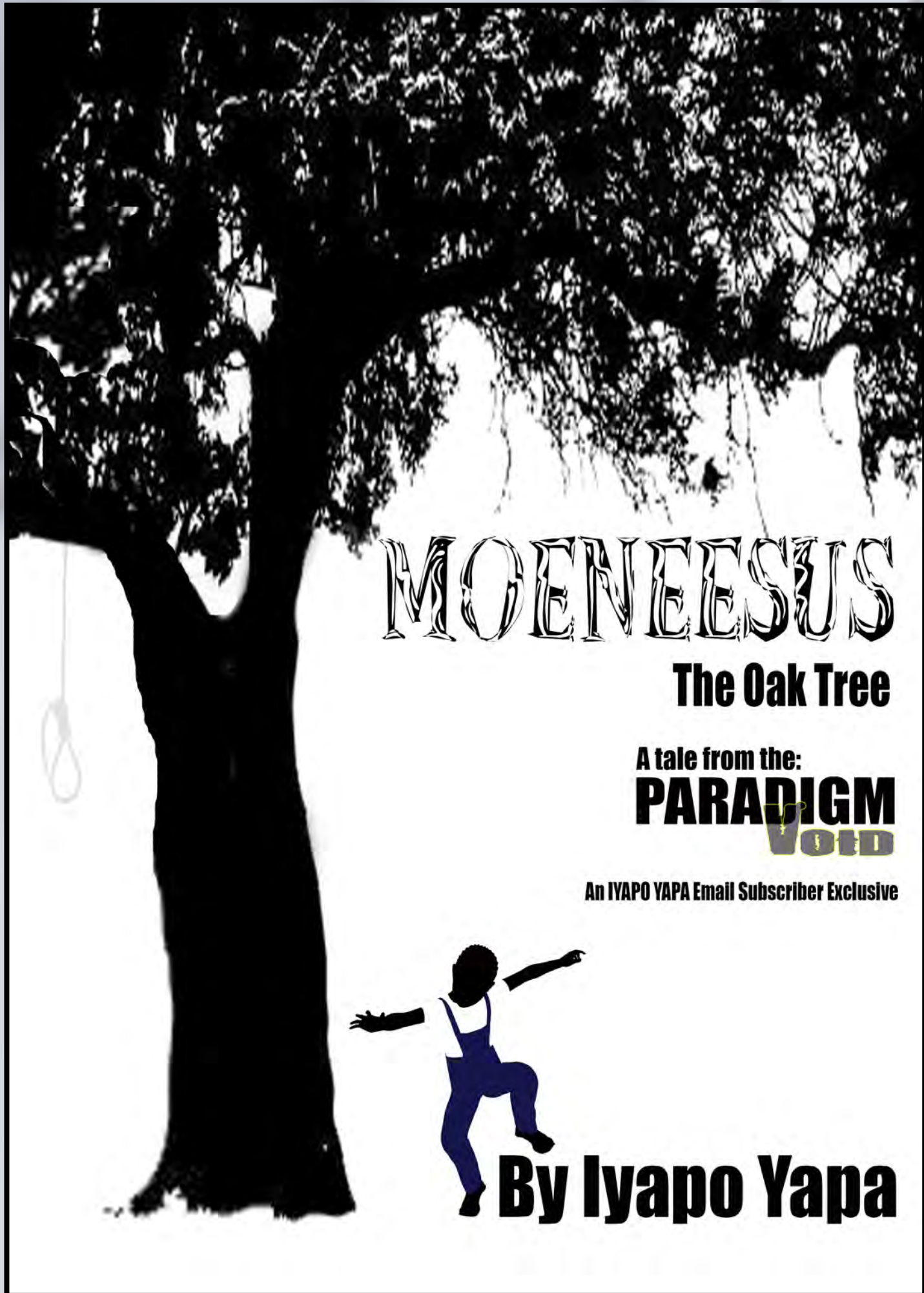
Stories from Time, Space and Beyond Imagination,  
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If you are a **READING AND WRITING IN THE DARK** subscriber and haven't read your free copy of **MOENEESUS THE OAK TREE**, what are you waiting for?! Relax and take some time to read a great story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

READING and WRITING in the

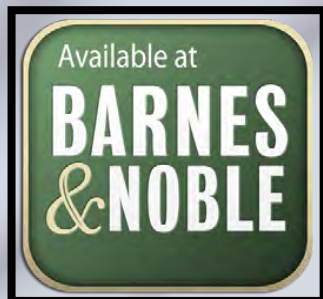
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And What of the CARGO?



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## And What of the CARGO?

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“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

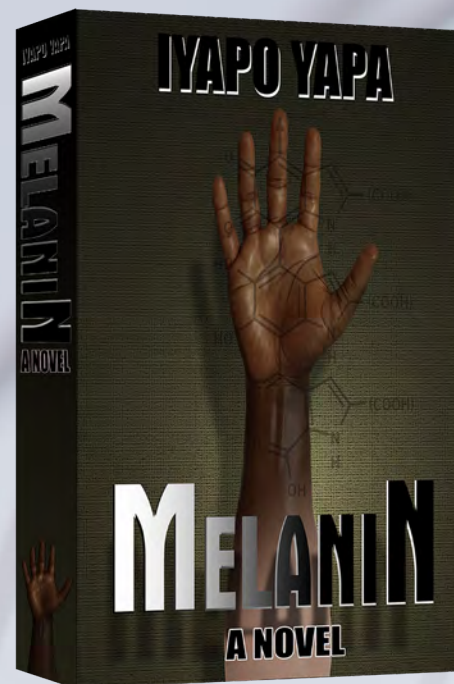
“Yapa weaves another story this time interwoven with historical references. I was on my seat with every chapter. I don't want to give it away but....revenge is sweet when served dead. And I can't get over how different each of his offerings are. Read his Vella's and you'll see what I mean. Another great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

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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.

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**RANT TIME: Bye Bye BOYS!(SPOILERS! SPOILERS! SPOILERS AHEAD!)**

As Black people, we put up with a lot of shit and we settle for a lot, for the sake of being entertained. (Some of us, more grudgingly than others.) From the time we know what's going on, those of us who come to some degree of consciousness realize that our people are the victims of a narrative that is force fed not just to us but to the world. Sadly—unfortunately—most of the time, we accept and internalize it. Eventually, as we consume various forms of media, we make a kind of peace with the fact that if we see something coming out of Hollywood, or production companies that are Hollywood adjacent, and we see Black faces, we know and have accepted that we are in some way going to be insulted. And that's just how it is.

At that point, it becomes something akin to the suspension of disbelief that allows us to watch, say, a superhero movie and be able to enjoy it though we know no such thing is possible in the real world. We just say, “Yeah, ok. I'll go there with you for the sake of the story so I can enjoy it.”

Our people (who are conscious and aware of it), know from the jump that if we are watching something created by those who have oppressed us, at some point we're going to see,

- A) A gay Black man or men.
- B) A Black man in a solid relationship with a white woman.
- C) A Black woman in a solid relationship with a white man.
- D) A Black man who is on the downlow.



E) A Black woman—usually dark skinned—who is a lesbian.

F) An angry aggressive dark skinned Black woman.

G) A dark skinned Black couple whose relationship is profoundly dysfunctional.

H) Thuggish Black men.

I) An over sexed Black woman (usually a dark skinned Black woman).

J) A masculine acting dark skinned Black woman.

K) A single Black mother whose baby daddy is nowhere to be seen. (OR if he is in the picture, he's a deadbeat and uninterested in a relationship with his child.)

L) Some combination of two or more of those things.

There are more offensive images of Black folks, like the standard, violent, murderers, rapists (of white women), thieves, drug dealers, drug addicts, alcoholics, overall criminals, and such. But you get the idea.

My issue has never been with the presence of such characters in media (they do exist in real life). However, it is the obvious disproportionate, overrepresentation of them that is the problem. Were an alien from another planet basing their perception of Black people solely on what they saw in this colonizer-controlled media ecosystem, they would think that most, if not ALL of our people adhered to one, or several of those traits.

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## RANT TIME! Bye Bye BOYS!(SPOILERS! SPOILERS! SPOILERS AHEAD!) Continued

Some of us get tired of it and just scream, “NO MORE!” (Like my wife and fellow writer, who now, almost exclusively watches K-Dramas or other Asian movies and series. No, they don’t feature our people, but at least she doesn’t have to concern herself with watching us be perpetually and predictably insulted and misrepresented.)

I haven’t quite reached that line yet, but I can see myself fast approaching it.

I’m tired of our people not having control of our narrative.

Candace Owens comes to mind as I listened briefly to her take of what happened in the Sonya Massey tragedy. She fell squarely on the correct side of the discussion and called it out for the murder it was. But, then she hastened to add that the situation would be used by “liberals” to “stir up Black people” and basically continue turning them from the police. (As if we needed any more reasons.) She explained how the media will take these isolated instances of lone wolf cops (my words, not hers, but it is the gist of what she was saying) and amplify them to make it SEEM like they are all rogues and out of control. She then implored Black people “not to take the bait!” I would advise to Candace Owens, that the next time she’s being spoon-fed non-stop negative imagery of Black people, that she applies that same standard and make the same type of plea to “not take the anti-Black bait” with as much energy.

I digress.

I have been a fan of the Amazon series *The Boys* from the very beginning. It is over the top, ultra-violent and very raunchy—SUPER

raunchy—and yes, even I thought it all was getting a bit gratuitous, but I could deal with it. However, at the end of the season four finale/cliff hanger, I basically hung up my cape.

Season four was already problematic for me, as I was feeling a way by the end of season three. In season three, one of the main characters, Marvin T. “Mother’s” Milk, is divorced from

his Black wife with whom he has a Black daughter. The wife, Monique, was paired up with a dumpy white guy in season three who is killed off in season four. The problem for me is that she was put with that nerd at all. Their relationship was portrayed as being functional, and the white man’s relationship to the Black daughter was good and she seemed very accepting of him. He was depicted as a good partner (I don’t think he and Monique were married), good father figure and a good provider. He did have the flaw

of being a superhero fanatic, and particularly a fan of Homelander, the worst of them all (a hero worship that got him killed BY Homelander by the way). However, his hero worship did not interfere with the relationship between him and Monique or Monique and Mother’s Milk’s daughter.

I’m just now discovering that Marvin was given the nickname “Milk” because of his need to breast feed due to the traces of compound V in his system. In the television show, it is the white supervillan Homelander, who has that issue. Mother’s Milk may share the issue with Homelander, but it has never been addressed or alluded to in the show. To me, it’s still problematic that in the comic book the show is based on, it is a Black man who has that unusual problem. More about Mother’s Milk in a moment.



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## RANT TIME: Bye Bye BOYS!(SPOILERS! SPOILERS! SPOILERS AHEAD!) Continued

There's A-Train. Black guy. A speedster like The Flash, who is very dysfunctional and conflicted, but the one thing he WASN'T conflicted about was his solid, very loving relationship with his white girlfriend. She was killed off early in the series, and he hasn't been in another relationship since.

There is also a Black woman, Sister Sage.

Her superpower is that she's the smartest PERSON on the planet. Throughout season four she is consistently having sex with a white man (The Deep—whose live in girlfriend was an octopus, until he killed her, insisting that Sister Sage loved and respected him in a way she—the octopus—either didn't or couldn't). As it turns out, Sister Sage (who had to have The Deep lobotomize her by sticking a long pin into her eye and into her brain—each time before they knocked boots), only wanted The Deep for sex

and was also bumpin' uglies with Black Noir, a Black supe whose voice we seldom heard and whose face we saw even less. The implication is that she didn't really give a damn about either of them. So, at the end of the day, the smartest person on the planet turns out to be indeed a genius, but also, basically just another stereotypical hyper sexual dark skinned Black woman.

Imagine that.

(Side note: There is also a spinoff of the Boys titled V Academy about a school for supes. In it we have the young Black man who is so in love with the white girl he's banging that his mind is totally messed up over her—to the point that when he finds out she's a villain, he basically has a mental breakdown behind this white girl he's so hopelessly in love with. The main

character, a young Black woman who accidentally killed her parents—not a big problem, a lot of the supes have back stories as bad or worse). Who is HER love interest? An Asian man, who can also become a woman at will. Though a little freaked out about it at first, eventually, she (the Black woman) has ZERO issue with the fact the person can make themselves fully another gender at any given time, and they end

up having a pretty solid, caring boyfriend/girlfriend/girlfriend/girlfriend relationship. She has sex with both incarnations, making the Black woman bisexual. She's dark skinned of course; so whatever you DO, DON'T put her and the young Black man together and give THEM a solid relationship and have him head over heels in love with HER!)

In the final show of the season, Homelander feels he's screwed everything up in terms of his quest for world domination and

is on the floor crying. In walks Sister Sage (who earlier, Homelander fired and threatened to kill), and informs him that everything went according to her plan, and he now was positioned to get everything he wanted.

Why did she do this? Why this brilliant Black woman basically hand the world over to a white maniac who can't be stopped thereby putting untold innocent lives in danger?

According to her, "Just to see if she could."

A callus Dark skinned Black woman.

Imagine that.

There was also the obligatory gay Black man, having sex with one of the white characters. That whole arc could have been COMPLETELY



READING and WRITING in the

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## RANT TIME! Bye Bye BOYS!(SPOILERS! SPOILERS! SPOILERS AHEAD!) Continued

removed from the show without making one iota of difference to the story line. They just needed the introduction of a gay Black man. (The white man eventually ended up with the Asian woman by the way while the Black man just carried on with his gay life—never to be seen or heard from again—PROVING that entire story line wasn't even necessary.)

So, this callus, sex crazed Black woman helps the white villain to achieve his goals—ok—I'm considering getting up and heading for the door, but the season finale was REALLY good! I guess I'll stick arou—

Wait a minute!

Mother's Milk is in the men's room at the airport, washing his face and seeking to join his wife and daughter who he helped escape to another country (the couple having reconciled). He is tapped on the shoulder and when he turns around, he gets knocked around and knocked out, left lying on the men's room floor for the bad guys to collect him and take him to whatever

tortures they have planned.



Who tapped him on the shoulder?

Who knocked him out?

Not who. WHAT?!

A PENIS!

A WHITE BOY'S GIANT DICK tapped Mother's Milk on the shoulder, beat him up and knocked him out.

Ok, I'm outta here.

And THAT'S why I write!

DoEAI Media: Controlling OUR OWN Narrative!

Oh, and by the way, there's Hughie. White guy. Messed up because his white girlfriend, to whom he had JUST proposed (and she accepted), was accidentally killed by A-Train, but never fear, he has found love again with a white supe called Starlight. So, see: loving relationships CAN happen. For the white people on the show.

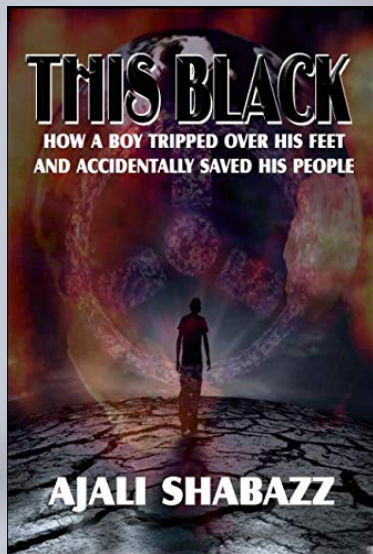
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Books by:

## 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!

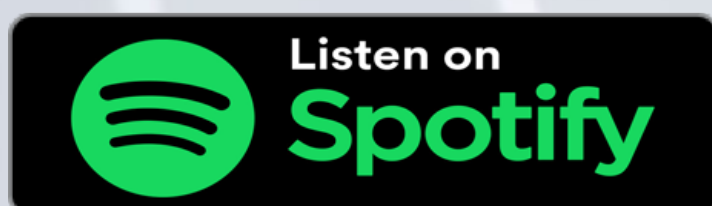
Listen to the interview on  by clicking the link below:

<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  
READING and WRITING in the  
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A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

**podcast!**

listen on  LISTEN ON 

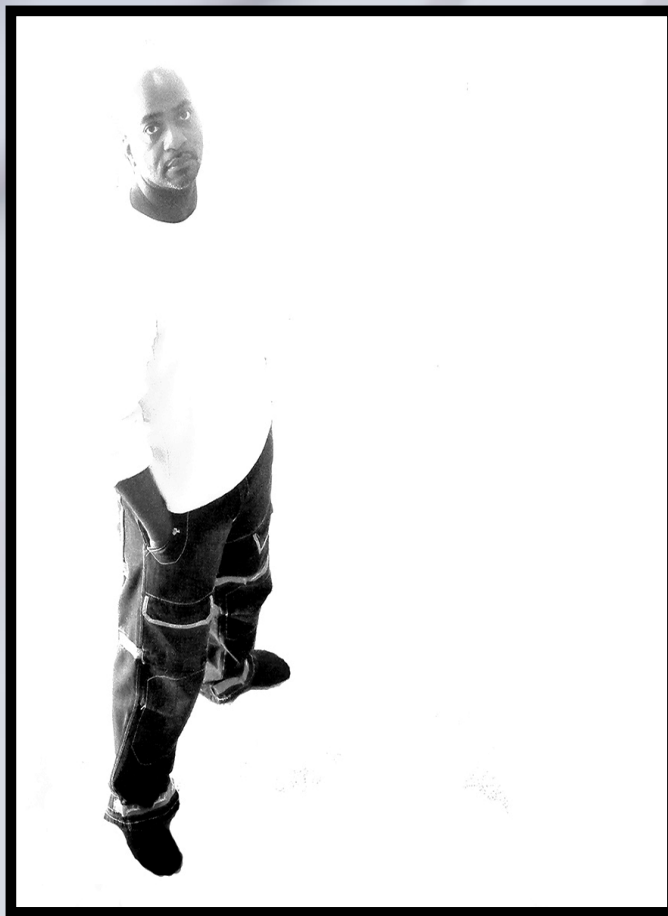
 Listen on Spotify



## YES! MAKE A POINT OF IT!

From IYAPO'S BLOG Friday August 02, 2024

I innocently tried to watch a movie trailer for Iyanu a Nigerian action/animated movie written and produced by a Nigerian man. Then I saw a comment from a fan (who was obviously Black, based on what they wrote). The commentor spoke briefly about himself and his nephew who were glad to see such work and were encouraged to move forward with their dreams of becoming Black cartoonists.



As I started reading comments, as I will tend to do, it was the responses to that comment that gave me pause.

IMMEDIATLEY, the white boys showed up and started telling him he didn't need to point out that he's Black or asking him what the purpose of pointing it out was. One even wrote that the reason the commentor pointed out his race was so that he could use his "Black Privilege." Obviously, the white guy (I'm assuming he's white and a he), was being snarky.

Number 1: What's it TO you that the person identifies themselves as a

Black cartoonist?!

Number 2: What the F\*\*K is it TO you that the person identifies themselves as a Black cartoonist?!

Number 3: Who are any of YOU that ANYONE needs to answer to you or give weight to your ridiculous, ignorant, stupid, unsolicited comments?!

GO AWAY!

I'm reminded of the episode of All In The Family. In the episode, a repair man's assistant (played by Ron Glass of Barney Miller fame), was called "boy" by Archie. The Ron Glass character became very serious and said, "I'm not a boy... I'm a man." Which made Archie draw back a nub and say, "Alright, I'm a man too, but I don't go around making a point of it." To which the Ron Glass character replied...

"You never HAD to make a point of it."

I would love to see our people become steadfastly unapologetic about our Blackness and ignore the ignorant

READING and WRITING in the

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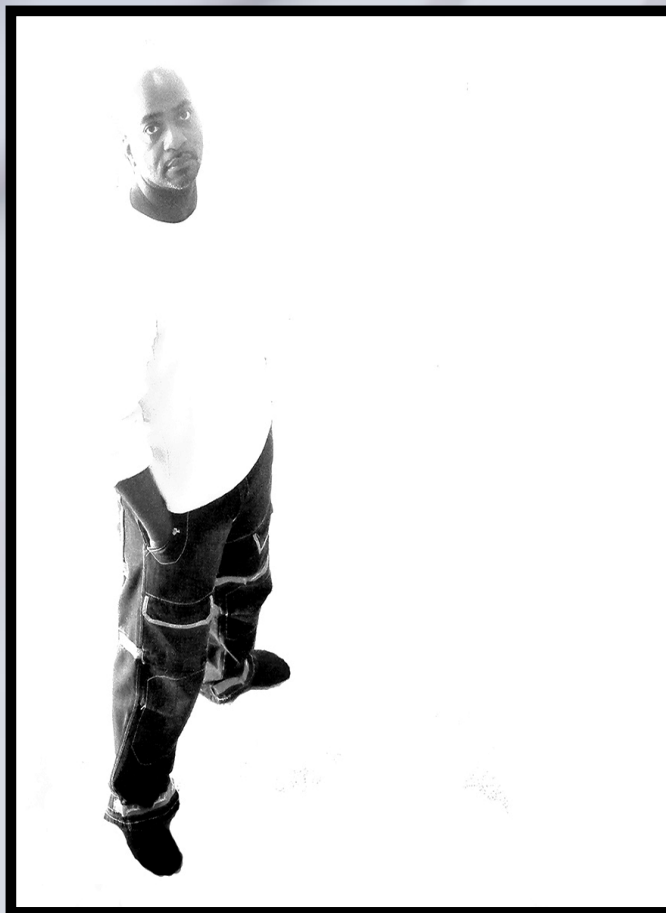


## YES! MAKE A POINT OF IT!

From IYAPO'S BLOG Friday August 02, 2024

musings of people who have absolutely no idea what they're talking about, nor have a point of reference. To our people who are in danger of falling into the trap of thinking that we are somehow wrong for pointing out our race within a global system of white supremacy, here is my suggestion.

Go online and bring up an AI image creator called "Leonardo ai", once there, type in woman, or beautiful woman, or something similar that pertains to human beings. Guaranteed you will only receive images of white people, and/or Asians (I know because I use the tool sometimes). If you want a Black person, you **MUST SPECIFICALLY** tell it you want a Black person, or Afrikan person or African American. Go into a store that isn't a specialty store and go to the beauty or makeup section. Now with a friend's assistance, close your eyes and at random grab five or ten products off the shelf. Who will they be for? I think you already know. Go to a bookstore or a library, and then to the fiction section (not a specialized Black section), and at



random, with your eyes closed, pick up five books from various places on the shelf. Your chances are slim and none that you will grab a book that is by a Black author and is from beginning to end, centered on and about Black people. However, you will have zero trouble finding a book that is squarely centered on white people by white authors (and no one would think anything of it—nor should they).

My ultimate point isn't about any equity or equality BS.

I'm pointing out that indeed, our people DO have to and need to make a point out of the fact that we're Black. Here's the caveat though; we don't need to be making a point out of it to white people. That is a waste of time. It is US—OUR people who we need to make a point of it too, and in a way that lifts us up and affirms us to each other. In a way that says that not only do we know who we are, but that we are proud of who we are and have a deep and abiding love for ourselves.

In a way that acknowledges that we exist within a system that wasn't built



**YES! MAKE A POINT OF IT!**

From IYAPO'S BLOG Friday August 02, 2024

by us and is in no way for us. On the contrary, it is designed to use, exploit, and oppress us from before the cradle to after the grave. Therefore, when we are pointing out who we are (as Black people), we are acknowledging that we are something that may be floating around within this jacked up system, but that we are simultaneously disconnected from anything that would directly, truly benefit us.



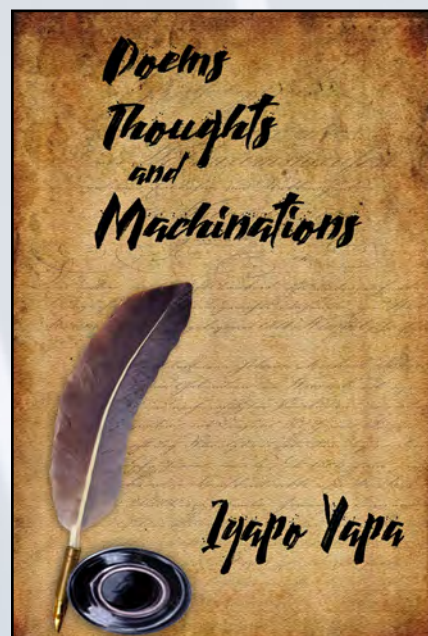
Whether we are aware of it or not.



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

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

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



The title says it all.

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

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

Always seeking.

READING and WRITING in the

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## Could YOU survive?!

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

**SURVIVING the WORST!**

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



### Top reviews from the United States

Amazon Customer

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

Reviewed in the United States on November 5, 2022

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

Amazon Customer

★★★★★ **Best Zombies Ever**

Reviewed in the United States on November 1, 2022

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

kindle vella

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## ANIMATION & RELAXATION

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

(Skateboarding is one of the things I PROFOUNDLY miss being able to do now that I'm older. My mind is willing, but body has a different plan.) I'm not bragging, personally, I don't feel that I do anything more than ANY other Black person can do, because that's just the way we are. And I mean that with all my heart.



or play any music, but I realized there was something I hadn't done in decades and would serve as a perfect distraction and means of relaxation.

ANIMATING!

Animating a cartoon (the old-fashioned way, by sitting down and DRAWING the darn thing), is tedious and time consuming—but for someone who likes to draw, it can be very relaxing if it is done just for the love of doing it. Some people knit and end up with a garment, I'm going to draw and end up with a cartoon. I'm very excited

What I AM saying is that I can't stand being bored, and typically all those things kept me from becoming bored. Now, as I do the things I do, I still find them very rewarding, but I don't necessarily find them relaxing. One day I was working on my writing and wanted to take a break. (A "break" meaning, perhaps a day or two away from it.) I didn't necessarily want to write

by the prospect and am looking forward to working on it little by little until I'm done. I'll keep you posted on the progress. In the meantime, you can click the image to see the opening reel. (Lil' Man is more of a place holder for timing. I'm not sure if the result is going to be a Lil' Man cartoon) but whatever it turns out to be, I anticipate the fun and relaxation of producing it!



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



**Everybody needs a hobby!**  
**Mine is playing and composing MUSIC!**  
For me, playing and composing is one of the most relaxing  
and fulfilling things I do with my spare time (when I HAVE  
some spare time). You're welcome to check out some of  
my songs at: <https://iyapoyapa.com/music.html> or  
you know the deal... just click the link below. ENJOY!



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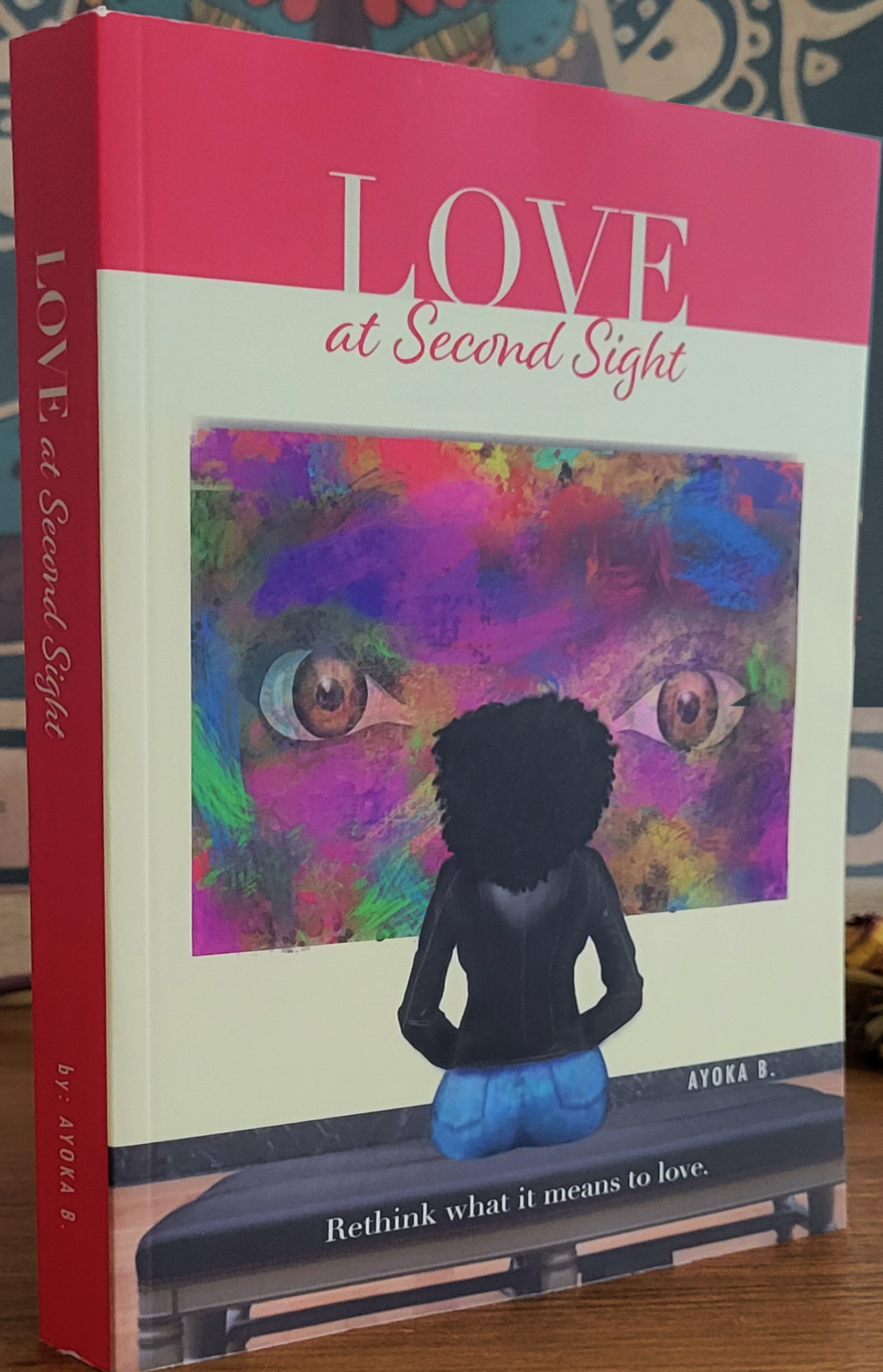
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## LOVE AT SECOND SIGHT IS AVAILABLE NOW!

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

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



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



## Alright, enough about ME!

Below are AWESOME stories on the KINDLE VELLA platform by some authors I know!

Just click the cover art to be transported to their stories!

And remember, the first THREE episodes are FREE to read!



### I DeClaire Love

Angela Riley

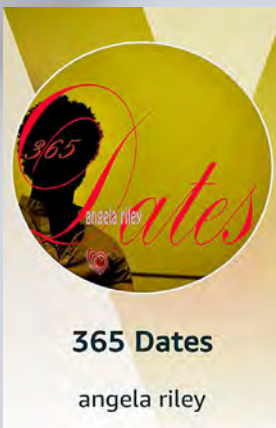
DeClaire and Tyrone meet and sparks fly. They fall in love with each other quick, fast, and in a hurry. It seems to good to be true. But is it? Is it safe to love? Are there any “good” rules when it comes to love? Do we have to fight for love? Are there always games being played when it comes to love?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



### The Love X TamuTamu Agency

Angela Riley

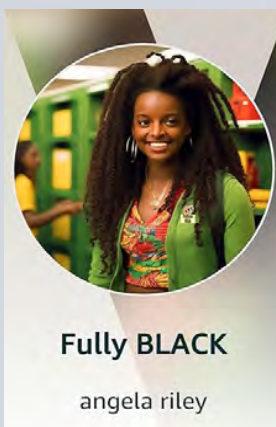
Love is natural but it ain't always easy. And Mama Tamu should know! She is a 91 year old match maker who has run “The Love X TamuTamu Agency” for FIFTY years. She has personally experienced and been a witness to all kinds of love. And, as she says, “Love is more than a notion!” Follow along as she stands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



### 365 Dates

Angela Riley

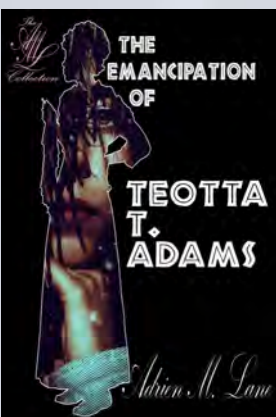
Single again, after my first divorce, one day I had a new thought: I WANT TO DATE. And... NOTHING. No one came knocking on my door to woo me. No one approached me when I was out wanting to court me. Nobody asked friends/family to be set up with me. Just crickets! So, thinking that maybe my goal was to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

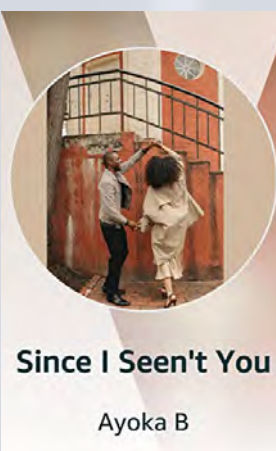
Because she is IN LOVE, talented dancer and homeschooled student Makena enrolls in the elite Fullson High to be closer to Marshall.



### 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?

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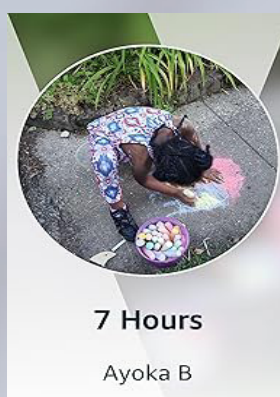
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## The Match

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

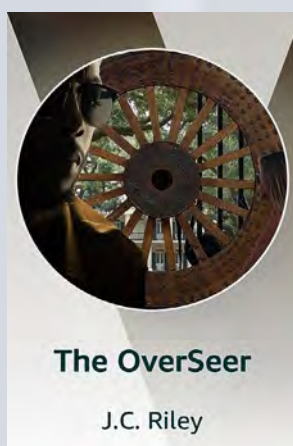
From Book 1: Sex addiction is a real thing; When Quincey finds out his wife is caught up in some things, can they save their marriage.



## 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.

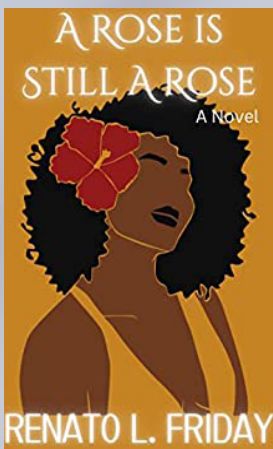


**Affirming Self Love (Graphic Non-Fiction SERIES)**

angela riley

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

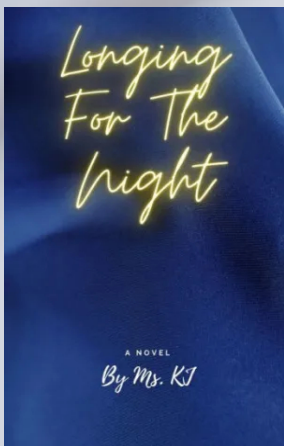
With a new book released each month, this “Graphic Nonfiction” series is filled with love for BlackUs. Each episode opens with a short essay exploring a theme such as “Following the Happy” or “Plan & Reflect” and culminates with a dynamic collection of affirmation. You’ll have a beautiful time meditating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



**A Rose is Still a Rose**

Renato L. Friday

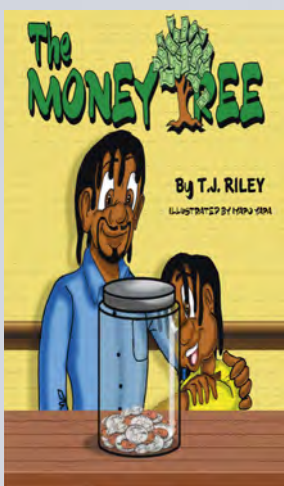
Rose thought life was going great: she was engaged, had a beautiful set of twin girls, a recent trade school graduate, and a new job right around the corner. Unfortunately, her fiancé, David, turned out to not be what she needed, and she chose to break things off. In the midst of her failing relationship,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



**Longing for the Night**

Ms. KJ

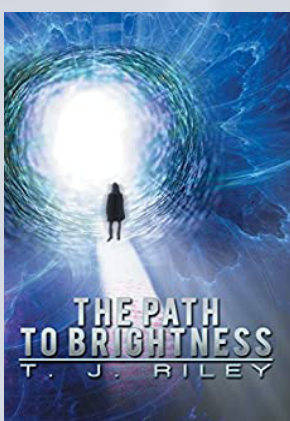
Inspired by the poem Goblin Market by Christina Rossetti, two young sisters face the trials and tribulations of the hood in this coming-of-age story about the harshness of living in South Central Los Angeles.



**The Money Tree**

T.J. Riley / Illustrated by Iyapo Yapa

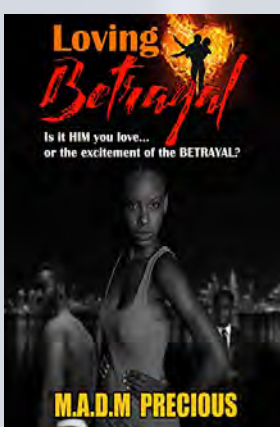
Every child wants money to buy something, right? Our hero does too. But, his father has a surprise, a Money Tree. Join the fun journey to find out how to grow your own money tree.



**THE PATH to BRIGHTNESS**

T.J. Riley

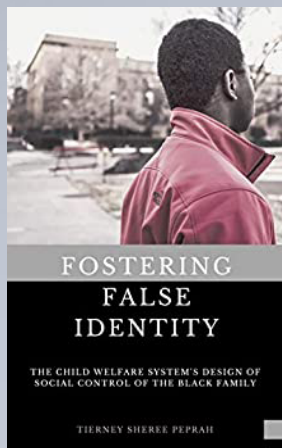
Fatima, a young woman, has a near-death experience. When she awakes from a coma and recovers, she has mystical powers. She begins to see auras and experiences life with her new abilities. For the clever character, Fatima, life is about to dramatically change. Follow Fatima’s journey as she tries to convince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



**LOVING BETRAYAL**

MADM Precious

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



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

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



**Storm Over South Central**  
Charles L. Chatmon

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

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

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



**RELAY**  
Charles L. Chatmon

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

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



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

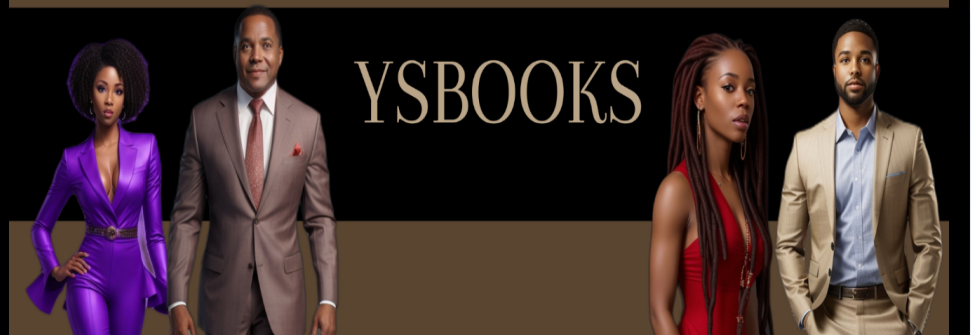
\* \* \*

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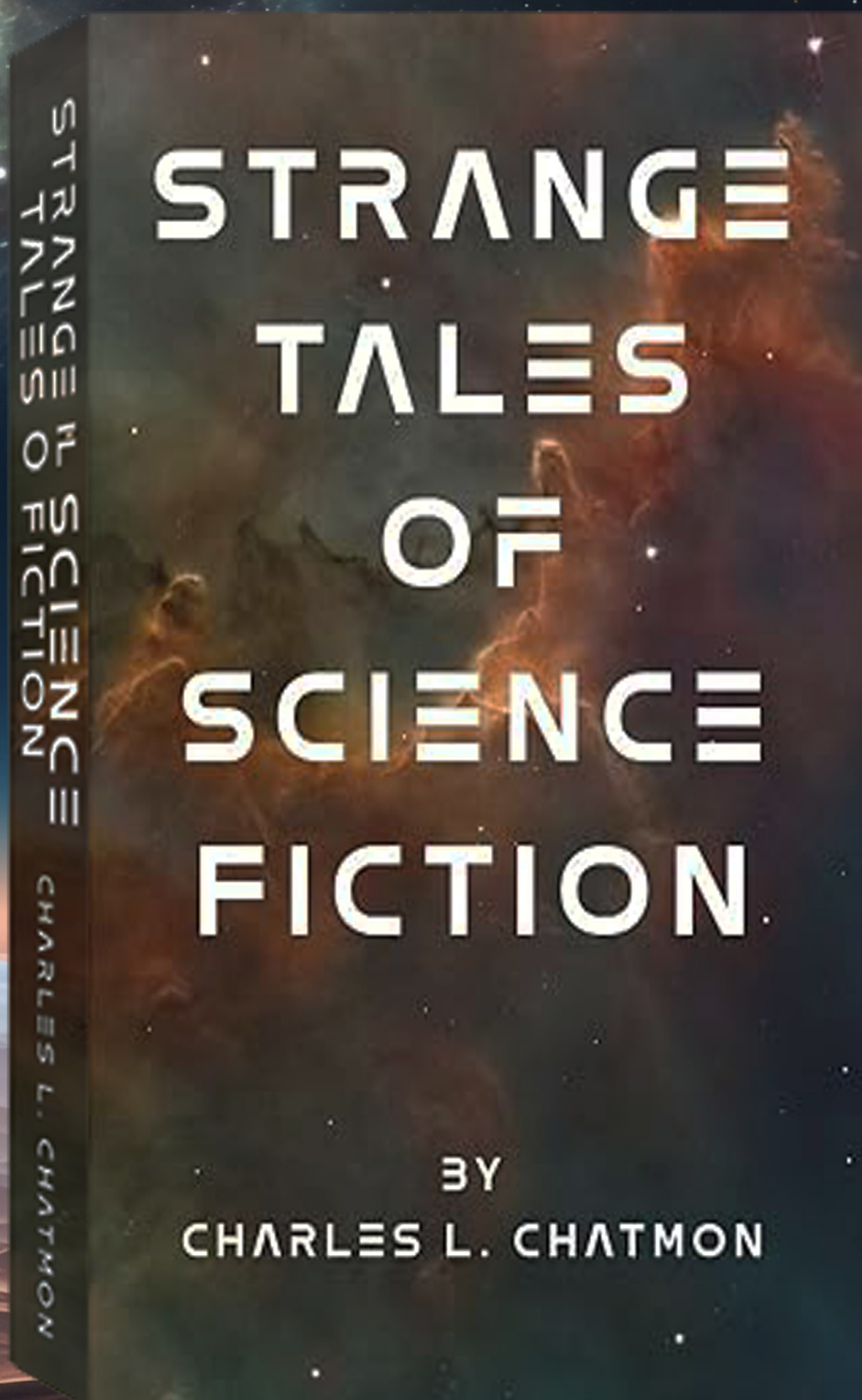
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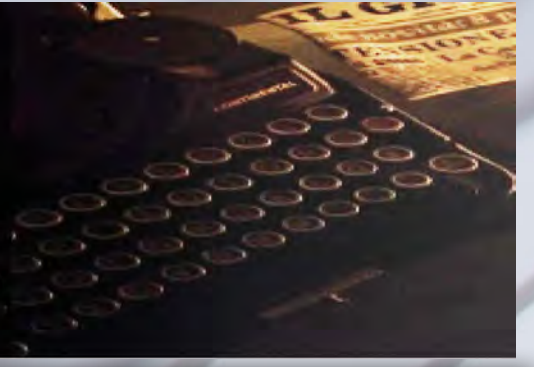


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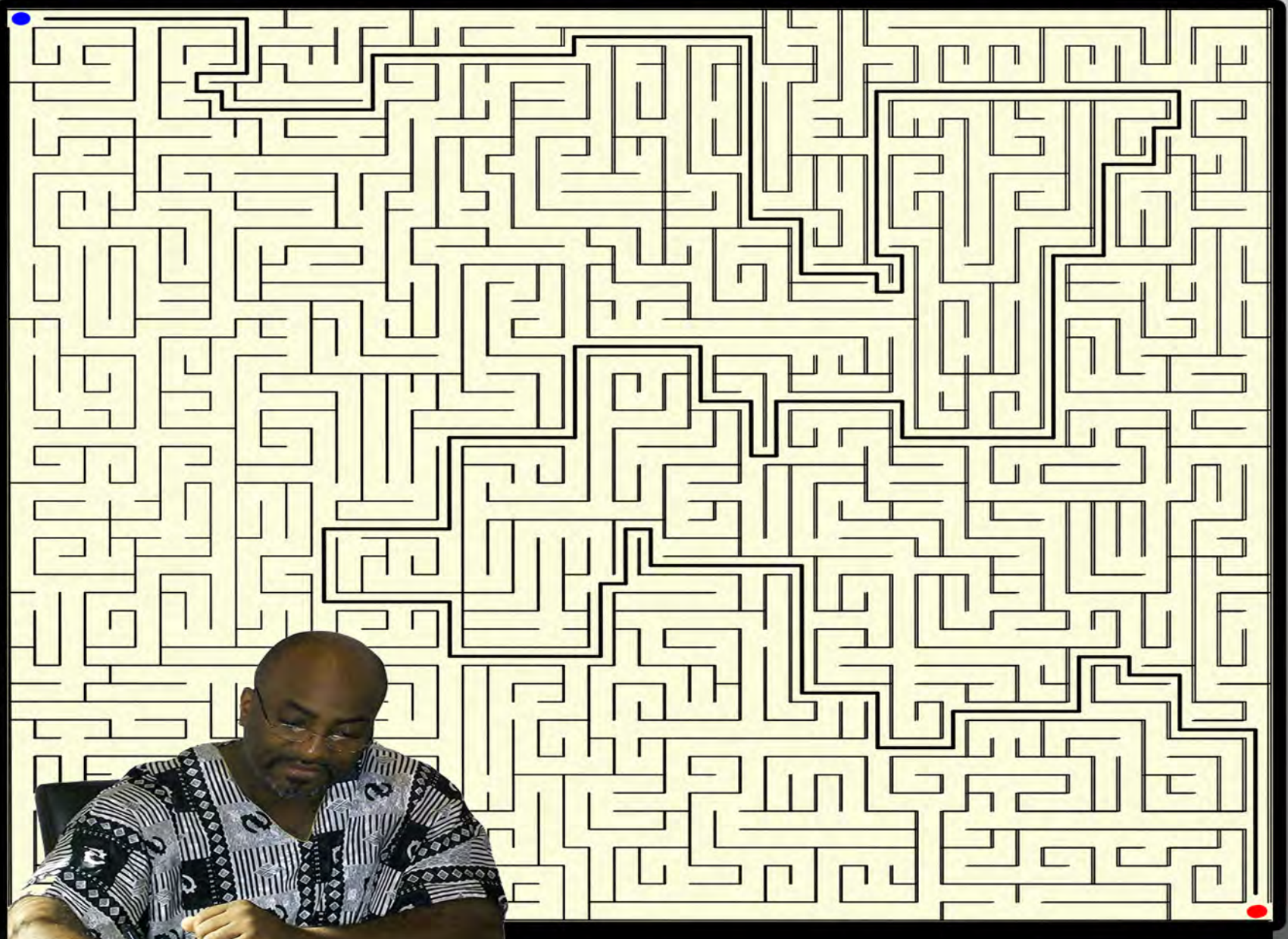
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