

READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

MAGAZINE

THIS MONTH:

An excerpt that asks what happens when there is a:

KNOT IN THE ROPE OF TIME

A love story that can only exist in the

PARADIGM
VOID

Page 4

Feature:

Perhaps the problem isn't your faith... maybe it's just misplaced.

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Article:

How to Make Things Make SENSE!

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This issue's crossword puzzle that recognizes BLACK HISTORY MONTH!

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

READING and WRITING in the

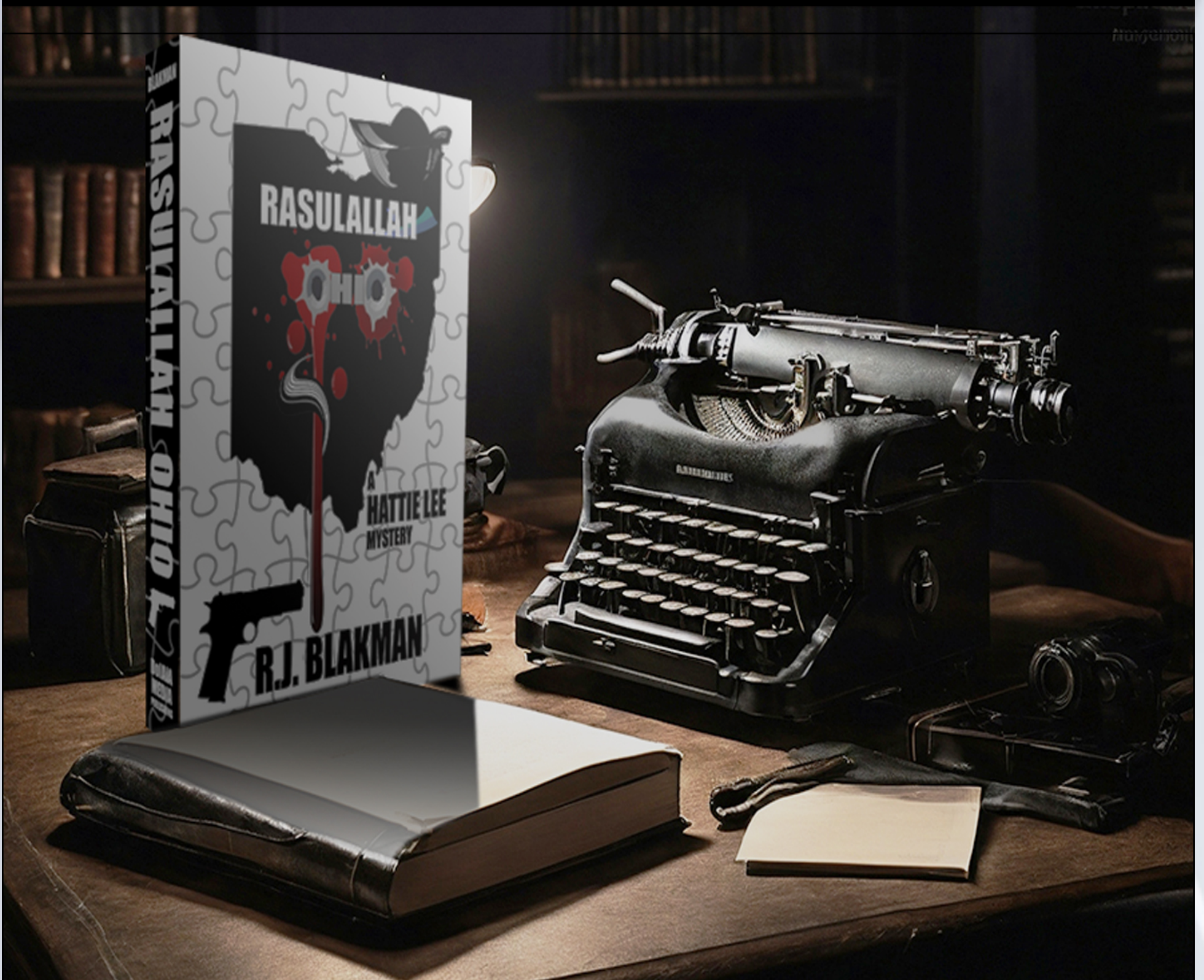
DARIK

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1960s Ohio

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

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



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

RASULALLAH OHIO: A HATTIE LEE MYSTERY

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

or click the image above for the direct link.

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



READING and WRITING in the DARK

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MAGAZINE



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WELCOME BACK!

WELCOME to the FEBRUARY 2025 edition of the *Reading and Writing in the DARK Magazine*! This year is off to a GREAT start! *Heaven Mississippi* is being edited as well as the long awaited first published novella from our friend Adrien M. Lane, *The Redemption of Maxine Allison*! This month we have an excerpt from a love story about time travel (or is it a time travel story about love?), *A Knot in the Rope of Time*. This excerpt and the short story it came from is love and time travel as can only come from the deepest parts of the Paradigm Void. The crossword puzzle for this month recognizes Black History Month, I'm sure you'll like it. So, sit back and enjoy, and most of all THANK YOU for being a *Reading and Writing in the DARK* subscriber!

See you next month!

Iyapo

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Iyapo Yapa
Writer/Layout/Editor-In-Chief

Angela Riley
Copy Editor

Iyapo Yapa
Layout/Design

Iyapo using Leonardo AI
Graphics for Articles on Pages:
4,39 and Cover



A Look Back and to the Future!

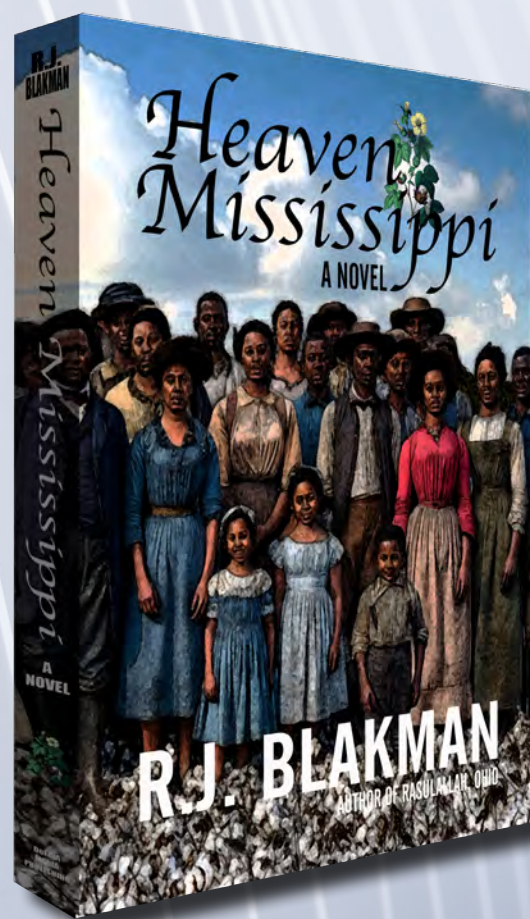
Ok, ok! Black people are sick and tired of reading and talking about our enslavement.

I get it!

So does R.J. Blakman.

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

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





A Knot In The Rope of Time - Excerpt

Alyson stood near the center of the foyer, jumping occasionally when she heard one of the claps of thunder which were increasing in number and intensity. The sound of rain pummeling the sidewalk in front of the open door was drowned out only by the noise of the assault of the cloud burst upon the roof. She gave a quick glance to the old clock hanging over the door of the foyer and sighed lightly.

She had often stared at the plain black rim and fading white face of the clock. She wasn't sure if the white face of it that was becoming gray with age or if the greying was because of the wear on its plastic covering. Bold black numbers, two thin black arms, always in motion but never seeming to move; and the red arm, rolling perpetually, gave the device a kind of life. It stood stark against the wood grain wall of the doorway. Indeed, this could have been the same clock at which she had gazed, glassy eyed over horn rimmed spectacles, throughout her childhood and teen years while sitting in school waiting for the bell to ring and sing to her it's sweet song of freedom.

Three minutes 'til nine.

Alyson's glance became a stare; now closely watching the second hand as if by staring long and hard enough she could, by force of will, make the device stop—or at the very least, slow its rotation. The arms of the clock became a sudden jerking blur—and Alyson's ears rang as her heart attempted to escape her body through her ribcage.

Another boom of thunder, the loudest yet.

She placed her hand upon her chest and rubbed slowly trying to coax her pounding heart back to it's natural rhythm.

One minute forty five seconds until nine according to the ever moving second hand.

Beneath the clock and in front of the foyer's door stood a group of sixty to seventy people of various backgrounds, ages, sexes, races, and beliefs. A paradoxical amalgamation of humanity. A nondescript group, but at once, some of the most interesting individuals Alyson had ever met. Each with a story, each one intriguing in its way. But with the people huddled together as they were, they may well





A Knot In The Rope of Time - Excerpt Continued

they may well have been one person. Different stories, different starts, but all the same finish: the West Side Mercy Center, one of the oldest homeless shelters in the city of Sacramento.

Several years earlier, Alyson had taken over as director of the shelter from her mother, Greta, who had taken over for her mother in the 30's during the great depression. Alyson often wondered if her own daughter, Brandy, would be taking up the mantle one day. Brandy was having her first child, so Alyson couldn't see her taking charge any time soon. That and Brandy living on the East Coast, having financial struggles and a husband who was M.I.A.

No, it would take Brandy a while to become the director, if ever.

Nine o'clock.

No one made a fuss, there were no murmurs or complaints. One by one limping men, tired women and jovial children (oblivious to the fact they were in dire straits, whose main

focus of concern was to go out and start playing in the downpour), began filing out in a polite and silent parade. All the adults knew that had there been any way possible, the director would not have been sending them out into those hostile conditions, and to that degree, felt a kind of sorrow for her.

Alyson watched them as they left.

As they disappeared into the rain, Alyson felt a wave of anger rising within her. Because of some stupid law the "residents" of the shelter were not allowed to stay during the day, had to

always be out sharply at 9:00 each morning and could not come back until 5:00 in the evening. If the policy was not strictly followed and the state found out, the shelter would not only lose its license and funding (which was never enough to keep it running anyway without outside donations), but it would be shut down altogether.

Every time Alyson thought about it, she became angry, especially on mornings like this when it was storming outside, or during unseasonably cold, or hot and humid summer mornings.





A Knot In The Rope of Time - Excerpt Continued

Alyson continued to watch and listen, hoping against hope, silently praying the rain would let up.

In answer to the short but heartfelt plea, the rain suddenly became a very light shower.

She could still see lightning from the door, but at far longer intervals—and the thunder became a distant rumble. “Thank you, Lord.” She whispered. Almost everyone was outside the shelter and into the waterlogged city except Matthew. He had been at the back of the group and was walking toward the door. He was hunched slightly, though his natural posture was more or less upright, far more upright than one would expect for a man of his advanced years. Sometimes (as seldom as those instances may have been), he walked hunched over as if there were some pressing invisible weight upon his back. Alyson had asked Matthew how old he was once, to which he only replied, “Very.”

His mannerisms were strangely out of place in the shelter. Alyson had met many people in her time as the director. She saw ‘em come and she

saw ‘em go, as they say. She had dealt with once famous, formerly wealthy and well-educated men and women who had fallen on hard times for one reason or another but, Mathew was something different.

He was not simply educated.

He was highly educated.

Exceptionally educated.

And he didn’t fit.

Matthew was the kind of man who didn’t seem as if he would end up in a

shelter no matter how bad things got. Ironically, he had become a fixture. He was at the shelter before Alyson was born and he’d stayed there so long he actually had his own room—a room Alyson’s mother Greta had given him after a year and a half of Matthew constantly living in and helping out around the shelter. In some ways it seemed as if he preferred being there and no place else.

An old man now, Matthew showed up at the shelter out of nowhere in the spring of 1937, right on the tail end of the Great Depression and a





A Knot In The Rope of Time - Excerpt Continued

couple years before the start of the war. He walked with a limp, and his clothes were a bit worn and wrinkled, but clean, and he carried an ammo box, the kind soldiers used in the army. “I assumed he was a veteran.” Greta would recount. “But he seemed kind of young. He was a young man then. Full of energy and ideas, but with a heaviness and sadness of soul that made him seem much older than his twenty something years let on.” That was when Greta was running the shelter. Alyson could still remember her mother, coming home and talking about the strange man, Matthew, from the shelter. The man who lived there but seemed as if he didn’t belong. (This was also during a time the residents of the shelter did not have to leave each day.)

Matthew would often sketch as he spoke with Greta. He would speak on things she, for the life of her, could not understand but found interesting none-the-less. Perhaps it was just the way he spoke, the passion, the confidence. Greta always got the sense that Matt was a man of great depth. Even with the unshakable love and unrivaled respect she felt for Clark, her husband, this man—this

Matthew—no last name, was possibly the most intriguing person she had ever met. She often found herself talking with Clark about Matthew. Clark, to his credit, felt no jealousy, he recognized her preoccupation for what it was, genuine interest and curiosity.



After finally meeting the “famous” Matthew, Clark immediately understood why. He found the man “Absolutely Fascinating.” (His words).

There was times Clark would even try to help her unravel the mystery behind this man. The queries always ended the same way: no conclusions and more questions. The man had no family, no work history to speak of, no birth certificate, and no other identification anyone could find. It was as if he didn’t exist, and he didn’t, at least on paper. They did their best to check him out, as least as much as was possible in those days, and always came up empty handed. The man was a complete mystery and indeed seemed to have no past, but then, that was true for many of the people who passed through the shelter (some of whom where women who were escaping from abusive

A Knot In The Rope of Time - Excerpt Continued

husbands and did not want to be found). Their job at the shelter, as they saw it, was to provide safe shelter and food for the men, women, and children who needed it—not to pry unnecessarily into their personal business. He'd said he lost everything in an accident and all he had were the clothes on his back and the contents of an ammo box he seemed to never let out of his sight. He also appeared to have some form of amnesia (or perhaps it was selective memory).

A couple times Alyson had looked over Matt's shoulder as he sat at a table, not knowing anyone was around, and watched him sketching. His artistic talent was readily seen, beautiful landscapes and sketches of the people and things around him. But she could remember how Greta mentioned the subjects of his art when he first started putting pencil to paper. Then, he had a mind for other subjects to draw, subjects Greta found far more intriguing.

No landscapes.

No portraits.

Not even still life art of fruit or the inside of the building.

Greta said the things Matthew would draw could only, for want of a better word, be called, contraptions. He would never look around while drawing his contraptions. Matthew would just sit for hours drawing them out of somewhere in his mind. Sometimes he would draw them on grid paper, sometimes on an artist's pad, sometimes he would put measurements and numbers with them as if he were drawing something he planned to build. For hours on end, he would sit and draw them.

Contraptions which were familiar and at the same time, somehow, alien,

Alien. No.

Not a good description.

Out of place.

Yes.





A Knot In The Rope of Time - Excerpt Continued

Out of place.

Like Matthew.

Alyson could remember when Matthew sat around sketching things, as she and her mother would go about the task of running the shelter. He actually taught Alyson and her son Christopher a few things about drawing and sketching. He would even give daughter Brandy a pointer or two every now and then, though he always seemed have far less contact with her. Possibly because she didn't seem to have as deep a desire to follow art as her brother did. Alyson never thought to ask Matt why he stopped drawing the contraptions and started drawing people and other more conventional subjects.

Alyson was happy to help around the center while her husband Jeff was at work, but eventually an opportunity came up that Jeff had been waiting on for years. The company was in the midwest. Greta and Clark encouraged their daughter and son-in-law to take full advantage of the situation. Yes, they would be missed, along with the grandchildren who were both still

under twelve. But, relocating seemed like it was the best move for Alyson's family. So, they moved to Ohio and that was where their children grew up. Christopher eventually leaving for art school armed with his training from Matthew giving him a strong foundation; Brandy eventually graduated college and married a young engineer named Carson Harris.



Everyone was seemingly doing well when Alyson got the call that her husband, Jeff had died in an industrial accident.

After over a year of Alyson grieving and living alone, Greta asked her daughter if she would be open to moving back to California to take over the center, since Greta had now gotten up in years and was getting tired. Alyson, feeling she could be more useful at the center than as the "mother-in-law" who would do occasional busy work in order to make her feel useful, took her mother up on her request and flew back to California to live. Alyson remembered being surprised that Matthew was still at the center. He was a bit older, but no less sharp. Alyson had figured Matthew would have found something and moved on

A Knot In The Rope of Time - Excerpt Continued

by now, but that wasn't the case.

Those thoughts and more filled Alyson's mind as a sudden clap of thunder awakened her from her daydream. She hadn't even noticed the foyer was now empty and quiet.

The space which had been occupied only several minutes prior was so deserted it was hard to imagine anyone had ever been there.

One of the assistants had already closed and locked the door. Alyson took one more look at the clock—9:13 am—and turned slowly to go to her office. As she walked wearily, she noticed by the increasing rattling on the roof that the hard rain had picked back up in intensity. Harsh rumbles of thunder could now be heard outside again, along with the unrelenting rain. Except for the sound, there was no way to know what type of weather was happening beyond the walls, for there were no windows in the structure to speak of.

The shelter was an old warehouse before it was donated. The foreman's office had been converted to the office Greta occupied for decades and was now Alyson's sanctuary.

It was complete with pictures of her smiling late husband Jeff and their two children, 17-year-old son Christian (a year before leaving for art school), and 26 year old daughter Brandy. Crayola colored pictures on wide ruled paper adorned the wall to the right of her desk.



One read “To the graytest mommee in the world.” Each letter had been written with care in different colors, by Brandy, (who had an aptitude for art but never the desire to pursue it). When Brandy drew the picture, she was 6 years old, and she had made absolutely sure that of

her 100 pack of crayons, not a single color was used more than once.

To the right of Brandy's tribute, another drawing was displayed. This one scotch taped in several places and noticeably wrinkled. The picture was drawn completely in black crayon, in stark contrast to Brandy's drawing. The piece was clearly an attempt at a picture of a woman, with the words, “mi pritee momme” at the bottom. Every time she looked at the picture, Alyson remembered how she had picked the balled up paper out of the waste basket in Christian's room.



A Knot In The Rope of Time - Excerpt Continued

She had taken it to a table, and as best she could, flattened the torn and wrinkled pieces and puzzled them together. She had asked Christian why he had destroyed and thrown away his work. “I got mad” the then seven year old told her.

Through the tears welling in her eyes, she looked at her wonderful son, and said, “Ya know what? I think this is very pretty, and it looks just like me. We’re gonna go get some tape and put it back together, then I’m going to frame it and hang it in my office.”

“Mad? Did you get angry with Mommy for something?”

“Oh, no ma’am.”

Alyson had never forgotten the sad look on the child’s face, something between sorrow and embarrassment. She recalled rubbing him gently on his back.

“Come on Chris ... why? Why’d you tear up your drawing and throw it away?”

“I was trying to draw you...” he had said in the way only innocent children can, “and I just couldn’t make it pretty enough. I’ll never be able to draw you pretty enough.

“So, I got mad and threw it away.”



“You really like it Mommy?”

“This picture is one of the most beautiful things I’ve ever seen.” She replied.

She remembered the care with which they reconstructed the picture with the help of some transparent tape. And as promised, Alyson framed the work, which was drawn by the heart of her son, and hung it in her office, where it still hangs. Transparent tape, no longer quite so transparent, having become a bit tan, along with the fading lines of the crayon. Still, to Alyson, a thing of a most unspeakable beauty.

With the passing of time and the slight peeling and separating of the tape from paper, the wrinkled and fading drawing became all the more precious to her. On a couple occasions she had considered having the work sealed to



A Knot In The Rope of Time - Excerpt Continued

stop the decay, but no. She wanted it to age even as her children aged.

Naturally.

Aging, but ageless.

Like her babies.

There was another picture to the right of that picture. Also, black, and white, also of a woman, but drawn entirely in pencil. In this picture, the details of every strand of intricately braided hair seemed to be well defined. The shadow of the dimpled cheeks, along with just the hint of a cleft in the chin. A drawing so precise, that even without color, the beauty and warmth of her dark brown eyes and deep brown skin were unmistakable. It was Alyson of course, drawn in such photo-realistic and meticulous detail that from only a couple steps back it was impossible to distinguish whether the picture was a drawing or a photograph. The only give away of the connection with the drawing next to it was the name of the piece, written by hand, small, in the right hand corner, “Mi Pritee Momme.” She recalled what Christian said when he

gave her the hyper-realistic drawing as a gift. “Mom, I’ll still never be able to draw you pretty enough.”

Beside the picture was a shelf which held the trophy Christian won for the piece in a national art competition.

The work was part of the portfolio which got him accepted to the Art Institute of Cape Town in South Afrika. She, husband Jeff and, sister Brandy were so proud as he walked across the stage and accepted his degree. After the ceremony Christian treated his family to a tour of the city, and a dinner of bobotie at one

of the fine restaurants. During dinner he dazzled them with his knowledge of the country and its people, as well as his fluency in, what many native speakers considered, flawless Xhosa, spoken with the proper accent.

Christian had told his mother how after he had torn up the picture those many years ago, he had fully intended to never try to draw anything again.

He’d also told her, that seeing how proudly she had framed and displayed the picture, he decided he would learn to draw because of his mother’s





A Knot In The Rope of Time - Excerpt Continued

belief in him. Alyson too learned something that day. She had always been an empath of sorts—kind and caring by nature, but in that moment, she gained a more profound understanding of the power of a kind word, a loving act—a caring touch. She learned that some acts which may seem like nothing much, and just natural, can in some cases direct the course of a life, just ask Alyson’s son, Christian Mathison, the multi-award-winning head art director at 10.25 Studios—he could tell you.

To the right of Christian’s picture was yet another decorative work, also drawn from the heart. It was a picture of a little girl on a sidewalk, squatting and stirring a small puddle with a piece of branch. The picture, drawn in pencil was done by a person with obvious skill. It did not have the detail or deliberate lines of the work to its right but was still an elegantly understated work.

It was signed, at the bottom right corner, simply, *Matthew*.

A gift from a longtime friend of her mother, Greta, the picture of Alyson had been drawn by Matthew when

Alyson was only 6 years old.

This man had also become a friend to Alyson, and this gift was yet another of Alyson’s life’s treasures.



She was always grateful for the interest Matthew had shown in Christian’s artistic abilities. Immediately upon learning that Chris wanted to become a better artist, Mathew started teaching Christian and working with him. Even after they had moved away, Christian continued working and practicing, gradually absorbing lessons.

Eventually, the student outpaced his first teacher. Something about which Matthew was unashamedly proud.

As much joy as Alyson would get when she sat inside her office and looked at the smiling faces and priceless pictures, it took only a half turn toward the large foreman’s window or down at her desk to change her mood. A look down in front of her revealed the bills, now piling up, which far exceeded the income of the shelter. Each one screaming for payment. The city had cut the funding; donations were down, and



A Knot In The Rope of Time - Excerpt Continued

neither Greta or Alyson had enough of their own personal funds to bail the center out anymore. Alyson had spent the last year robbing Peter to pay Paul and then finding Mark also needed to be compensated. She knew Christian had money, but she did not want to impose upon him any more than she already had. Christian never lent money to anyone; It was against his principles. But he would freely give money to anyone who needed it, especially his mother. However, just because she knew he would never say “No” to her, she did not want to take advantage of her son and definitely did not want to risk putting him in a financial bind. She would have to think this one out.



But what to do?

What to do?

There was a time when Greta was in charge of the center, at times Alyson wondered why her mother couldn't make more time for her. Now that she was solely in charge, she saw exactly why. Running the center and keeping it going smoothly was a 25/8 job and because of limited funds and staffing,

there was no way to hire more people she trusted enough to tend to it. But when Alyson heard about Carson leaving, and knowing her daughter was soon to give birth, she broke down and asked her son for money to hire extra staff and pay one of her senior staff members as a temporary manager while she and her mother went to visit Alyson.

Of course, without hesitations Christian transferred the money, and soon they were all on their way to Ohio to support their daughter and sister. It had been several years since Alyson had seen her daughter. Only married for three years, still very much in love with her husband, Carson, and seven months away from having his baby. She commiserated with Brandy, going between talking about memories of Jeff who had passed ten years prior, and the heartache of Brandy's husband leaving her when she needed his love and support the very most. Brandy confided to her mother that she hadn't even realized there was a problem.

She thought they were happy.

But as it turned out, she speculated,



A Knot In The Rope of Time - Excerpt Continued

she was, he wasn't.

Maybe the financial pressure had become too much for him. His work at the lab paid the bills, barely, but he wanted more for his family it seemed. Things had gotten really tight for the couple and were getting progressively worse. They were barely able to keep their heads above water and that is something Carson absolutely did not want for his family. They were no gamblers, but Carson actually talked Brandy into purchasing a Mega-Powerstar ticket. In a time where bread was running eight dollars a loaf, fifty dollars was a lot of money to spend on a long shot like the Mega-Powerstar.



Brandy could see how disillusioned and beaten down her husband had become and whenever he would talk about the Mega-Powerstar, he would perk up. He enjoyed talking about how much he could help with the money and the family wouldn't have any more money worries. Brandy knew they would never hit it, but just so Carson could have a few days of hope she agreed to play. Brandy

picked five numbers and Carson picked four numbers along with the tenth number—the one that would be the Mega-Powerstar number.

2-27-34-35-57-67-73-88-91 and the Mega-Powerstar: 16

The Mega-Powerstar, an international lottery had only been won by three people since it began five years prior in 2016 as a kind of trial. The newly formed, World Lottery Commission (WLC) was testing the waters to see if anyone would be interested in playing such a game of chance. It cost 50 US dollars per ticket to play and regularly had the biggest jackpots in the history of any lottery worldwide.

The chances of winning were almost incalculably low. All ten numbers including the specific number of the Mega-Powerstar had to match. Unlike other lotteries, even if a player matched as many as nine numbers, if ALL ten did not match and the Mega-Powerstar didn't match, the player received nothing. At the time, even the WLC thought that stipulation alone might deter people from playing,

A Knot In The Rope of Time - Excerpt Continued

but it didn't. In the first year of its existence there were two winners, both becoming instant billionaires, scoring a hefty nine and eleven billion US dollars respectively. It wasn't until some four years later that there was a third winner, who just happened to be a multi-millionaire broker already. That player was catapulted into the billionaire class with an unheard of sixteen-billion-dollar jackpot (adding to his already considerable wealth another, roughly, nine billion dollars after taxes).

After those three wins no one could seem to hit the number and the jackpot began its steady outrageous rise. There had been talks about ending the game because the chances of winning were so slim, but surprisingly the number of players continued to increase. This showed that players were not deterred from paying fifty dollars for an opportunity to win billions. The revenue was such a boon to the participating countries that it was agreed the lottery would be allowed to continue until people were no longer were willing to play.



Play, the people did however, with no sign of becoming discouraged. The winner of the present Mega-Powerstar would receive a hefty fifty-three billion dollars. Which after taxes for a cash payout came to roughly twenty-two and a quarter billion.

The lottery became so popular, and so many people were demanding expanded ways of playing, that the global lottery commission made the unprecedented move of allowing tickets to be purchased up to an unprecedented one year in advance of any drawing on a specific day.

Ticket sales exploded!

Everyone was playing now, from people who had hunches, to dreams, to readings they'd gotten from spiritualists and EVERYWHERE! Some were even counting on their lottery winnings to be their retirement money. It was all pandemonium, and all foolishness! Foolishness notwithstanding, the lottery increased in popularity. Even people who didn't gamble were playing. The feeling among players was the jackpots



A Knot In The Rope of Time - Excerpt Continued

were so phenomenally high that no matter when a person might hit them, it would be a massive payday!

It was the secret hope of the WLC that individuals would purchase tickets and either forget about them, lose them, or even die before the draw. No matter how it went, it was excellent revenue for the countries participating and the bi-monthly drawing was a huge event worldwide.

Carson had purchased what he kept referring to as “the winning ticket” two days earlier to having learned that waiting until a few days before a drawing was the sweet spot for avoiding crowds.

The evening of the drawing he had worked late at the facility, so he did not get to share the excitement with Brandy, but he did stop by a charging station to get a printout of the winning numbers so they could read those beautiful matching numbers up against their ticket at home. He folded up the printout and slipped it into a compartment of his wallet without bothering to look at the numbers. He wanted to read them with Brandy.

Brandy could still remember the look of disappointment on Carson’s face when he walked in the door, and she announced they hadn’t won. It was kind of silly when she thought about it. Millions upon millions of people all over the world were playing the



Mega-Powerstar, but no one ever seemed to win the thing. Why would either of them think they had a chance of winning? She remembered how Carson had said, they would win because they needed it so much and that they could not only stop suffering by their paycheck to paycheck lifestyle but more

importantly, they would be able to help others.

All those hopes were dashed when the balls were drawn, and Brandy had written down the numbers. She couldn’t wait until her husband got home—she wanted to be able to greet him at the door with the unbelievable news. Instead, they sat at the coffee table going over the numbers Brandy had written down from the holovision broadcast.

10-18-25-41-49-55-56-179-93-399



A Knot In The Rope of Time - Excerpt Continued

Mega-Powerstar 62

10-18-25-41-49-55-56-179-93-399

Mega-Powerstar 62.

Not one number was right. Not one.

Yes, they were all the right numbers.

“Are you sure these are the right numbers?” Carson asked.

Yes, they were all the wrong numbers.

His wife tapped her finger on the crumbled piece of paper on which she’d written the numbers and said, “I wrote these numbers down as they were being drawn.”

Carson refused to accept it. “Wait a minute, you might have written them down wrong, you know the speakers on the holovision get staticky sometimes. I stopped and grabbed a printout of the numbers at the charging station earlier.” He said as he angled himself to remove his wallet from his back pocket so he could check the numbers from something official.

Before he could even get to his wallet, Brandy had turned on the holovision and replayed the earlier drawing and reading of the winning numbers.

Carson’s spirits fell further as he listened to and watched his defeat.



Brandy had to remind her husband that they had not lost 34 billion dollars, they had lost 50 dollars. That tidbit of common sense meant nothing to Carson, however. He was concerned for the livelihood of his two, soon to be three member family.

A the morning after the drawing Brandy saw on the omninet where one winning ticket had been sold in the United States on the west coast—the only winning ticket in the entire world in three straight years—but no one had come forward yet to claim it. She remembers snickering as she read the huge headline and shaking her head wondering how anyone could win that amount of money and not run straight to the WLC office in their area. She turned off the headline quickly so her husband would not see it and become more depressed. She did the expectant mother waddle to



A Knot In The Rope of Time - Excerpt Continued

the bedroom, where she saw Carson packing his briefcase for work. He had hurriedly tried to shove something in and close it before she could see but was not fast enough. He had packed, along with his papers and files for work, the Sony Holocam X-Z8700.

Sony's best to date. A professional grade holocam for serious holos. That camera was Carson's pride and joy. He would talk about nothing else after the unit came out on the market. She knew Carson was never one to throw hints, he was very direct that way. She wound up getting the holocam for him for Christmas, more to shut him up than to make him happy. At least that's the comment she would always jokingly make to her friends when they saw him with it. He was always doing research about it and would often lie in bed telling Brandy what great movies he would make with it along with his editing equipment. Carson was better than his word in that respect. He made several short films, two of which actually won first prize at local film festivals. He was a renaissance man to be sure. A writer, musician, artist,

and soon to be full-fledged scientist.

He was finishing up his doctoral work and being mentored at the facility in which he was a low paid assistant. At first, he and Brandy didn't mind because they knew when he was finally finished with his dissertation and earned his Ph.D., his paycheck would rise substantially. It was just the waiting that made things so hard.



So now he was leaving home with one of his favorite (and most expensive) possessions. Instinctively she knew he was taking it with him

to pawn. Brandy said nothing to him, and slowly slipped backward out the door and finished preparing her husband's breakfast struggling to see through tear-filled eyes.

That breakfast was the last time she saw her husband. Now she was alone, pregnant and her financial resources were running out fast.

What happened?! Why did Carson disappear without a word?! You can find out by reading the rest of the story by clicking on the image on any of the pages. You can read it as a stand alone story or purchase the complete Paradigm Void! Where you will find other exciting stories!

READING and WRITING in the

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Here is your February 2025 Crossword Puzzle!

This month, we recognize Black History Month with a brand new crossword puzzle! Test your knowledge of Black history, Black historical figures, and Black icons, hopefully I'll stump you on a few, we'll SEE! As always, the solution to last month's puzzle is at the back of the magazine. ENJOY!

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

FEBRUARY 2025

**CROSSWORD
PUZZLE!**

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2025



February 2025 Crossword Puzzle Clues!

Across

6) Who was the first Black woman elected to Congress? Shirley _____.

8) What is the name of the first rap song to win a Grammy? "Parents Just Don't _____" by DJ Jazzy Jeff & The Fresh Prince.

12) Who invented the traffic light? _____ Morgan.

16) What was the name of the law that ended slavery in the United States? The 13th _____.

18) Who is often called the greatest boxer of all time? _____ Ali.

19) What is the name of the Black holiday celebrated from December 26 to January 1? _____.

20) Who is the NBA's all-time leading scorer? _____ Abdul-Jabbar.

21) Who was the first Black woman to travel in space? Dr. Mae _____.

23) Who was the first Black person to host a national television show? Nat King _____.

25) Who was the first Black woman to win a Grammy Award? Ella _____.

27) Who was the first Black man to play Major League Baseball? Jackie _____.

29) What was the name of the 54-mile march led by Martin Luther King Jr. in 1965? The Selma to _____ March.

Down

1) Who was the first Black woman to win an Olympic gold medal? Alice _____ (1948, high jump)

2) In 1849 Harriet _____ escaped slavery and begin her work on the Underground Railroad?

3) Who is known as the "King of Pop"? _____ Jackson.

4) Who was the first Black man to win an Academy Award for Best Actor? Sidney _____ (1963).

5) Who invented the Super Soaker water gun? Lonnie _____.

7) Who is known as the "Mother of the Civil Rights Movement? Rosa _____.

9) Who was the first Black woman to win Wimbledon? _____ Gibson.

10) What was the name of the speech delivered by Martin Luther King Jr. in 1963? I Have a _____.

11) What is the name of Maya Angelou's famous autobiography?

I Know Why the _____ Bird Sings.

13) Who is considered the "_____ of Soul"? James Brown.

14) Who founded the Black Panther Party? Huey P. Newton and Bobby _____.

15) What was the name of the network that helped enslaved African Americans escape to freedom? The _____ Railroad.

17) What was the name of the Black regiment that fought in the Civil War? The 54th _____ Infantry Regiment.

18) What was the name of the 1921 massacre in Tulsa, Oklahoma, that destroyed a thriving Black community? The Tulsa Race _____.

22) Who invented the ironing board and improved the sewing machine? Sarah Boone and Ellen _____.

24) What was passed in 1964? _____ Rights Act.

26) What was the name of the landmark Supreme Court case that declared segregation in schools unconstitutional? _____ v Board of Education (1954).

28) Who wrote the novel "Beloved"? Toni _____.

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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 palpating suspense.**

Reviewed in the United States on November 5, 2022

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

Amazon Customer

★★★★★ **Best Zombies Ever**

Reviewed in the United States on November 1, 2022

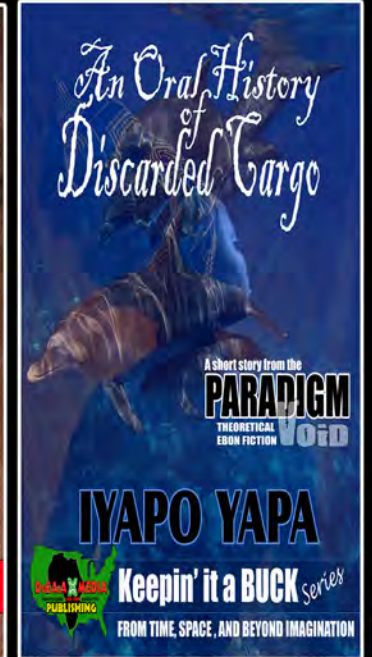
Amazon took down my review of Melanin, so I hope this stays. This is not your ordinary Zombie tale. I haven't read such inventive horror in years. Yapa really knows how to weave a story to pull you in. I had to laugh at how much fun I was having while reading it. I would recommend this author in a heart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

BOOK I - COMING SOON!

READING and WRITING in the

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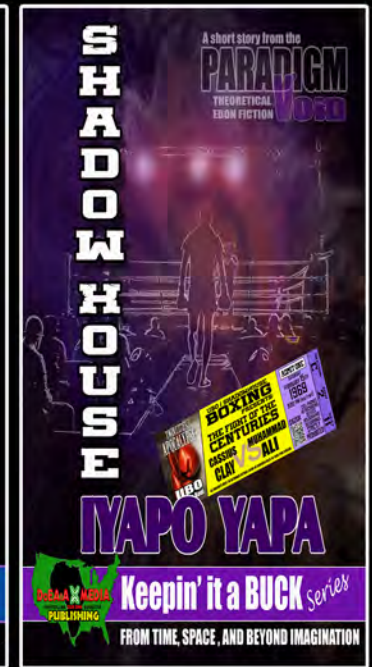
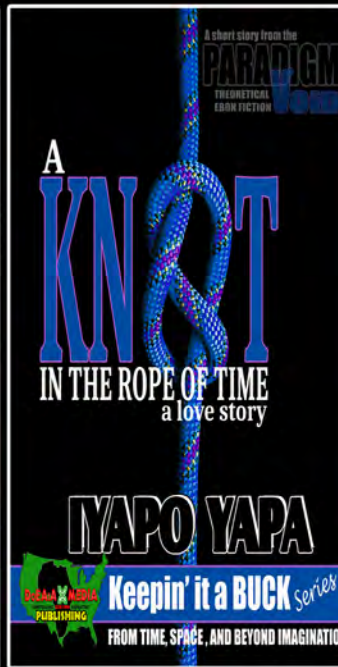


IT IS TIME TO JOURNEY INTO THE **PARADIGM VOID** ONE STEP AT A TIME.

EACH SHORT STORY IS DIFFERENT. EACH ONE THOUGHT PROVOKING & MIND BENDING.
EACH ONE ONLY **A DOLLAR!** AVAILABLE RIGHT NOW ON: **amazon**



Keepin' it a BUCK series



Also, Keepin' it a BUCK series TWO: Stories from Further Journeys into the Paradigm VOID is out NOW!



Also remember:

ORAL TRADITION talking books are also coming soon! Click the image to the right to hear a sample, of one of our talking books. Yes, it's still in its VERY rough form as we experiment with getting it right, but the story is still fun as all get out! So give it a listen and let us know what you think!

You can send your thoughts to: comments@iyapoyapa.com



MISPLACED FAITH

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

Regardless of belief system, these words are apropos.

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

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

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

people like this:

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



What if the ice is only about the thickness of a sheet of paper and you have all the faith in the UNIVERSE!?! The size of your faith in physical terms could be likened to the mass of a THOUSAND suns! What will happen when you step out onto that ice?

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

Film at 11.

But what if the ice is five feet thick, and you have JUST ENOUGH faith to step out onto it? I mean... JUST enough, if your faith could be



MISPLACED FAITH (Continued)

measured physically, it would be like cutting a grain of rice in half and then keep cutting it in half until you need a microscope to see it. But that microscopic bit of faith is ALL you need to step out onto the ice.

What will happen?

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

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

In terms of human beings, humans in general will tend to fall short and let you down, that's a given. However, if you MUST trust someone, as in trusting and putting your faith in a people, will you put it in those who have historically PROVEN their hatred and contempt for you and make no secret of the fact they want you dead, or subjugated under their boot at best? Or will you place it in your own people who may yes, be

VERY problematic (BECAUSE of the aforementioned people who hate and despise us), but at least they are your family and your people?

Consider the last analogy in terms of people.



What if you are dealing with a person or a people who mean you absolutely no good. They know it, but you don't—though in your deepest heart, when you are laying still in your bed in the quiet of the night, you grudgingly admit to yourself that you don't totally trust them before shaking it off and

dismissing the thought.

To the devil with their history! Just ignore it.

So, you place your faith in them.

How's that workin' out for ya?

In fairness, I must admit that for some if not many of our people it works out pretty well, or at least serviceably well. We have our jobs, our homes, our cars, food in the refrigerator, and a comfortable couch or armchair to



MISPLACED FAITH (Continued)

sit in while watching our huge screen HD television.

So, their system is working well for us.

All we had to give up was our language, culture, traditions, spiritual practices, and identity.

That's a fair trade for the ability to run to McDonalds whenever we want—for some.

We deal with a government which has proven itself not only to be thoroughly, irredeemably, cartoonishly corrupt, but has become an authoritarian, totalitarian, austerity laden, war loving, dystopic nightmare, that now has no qualms with showing its contempt for the very population that supposedly put it in the position of power and for which it is supposed to serve.

But our people seek remedy from it through much deserved reparations. Not once considering that those from whom we seek it, purposely maneuvered our people into the position in which we are now. We

don't seem to take into account the fact that what we are asking (or demanding, as most would hasten to correct), is basically demanding that people who have advantage and privilege give up that advantage and privilege.



For what?

Because it's right?

Because it's fair?

Or else?

Or else—WHAT?!

How can a people who have literally zero power within a system, make demands upon those who control that system and expect anything but well-deserved ridicule?

It boils down to faith—or more accurately, where we place our faith. I wince each and every time I hear a Black “American” talk about “the law” or “the constitution” or the “bill of rights” and so on. All were concepts (within a global SoWS--System of White Supremacy) that were absolutely NOT created for our people. On the contrary, when the foundations of the country were laid



MISPLACED FAITH (Continued)

and these documents created as part of that foundation, our people were in chains—and efforts to remove them from us (visibly), were fought tooth and nail.

In school we are taught the fiction that northerners fought for the freedom of enslaved Afrikans, when the truth is that for the vast majority of them, their fight was that of preserving the Union. Even Abraham Lincoln—the supposed “freer of the slaves” said that if he could preserve the union while our people remained slaves, then he would have done it. Therefore, our “freedom” wasn’t the reason for the war, it was just a reluctant consequence of it.

Southerners will try to rec-con history and say the war between the states was all about states’ rights.

Oh REALLY?!

And what, pray tell, was the one and ONLY “right” the south lost that was of any real consequence due to their loss of the war?

Right! The so called “right” to own slaves!

Even after the Emancipation Proclamation and into reconstruction, the people of the south (and many up north), showed what this was really about with marauders, lynchings, share cropping, convict leasing, red lining, disenfranchisement and the list goes on. All the aforementioned devices were various ways to not only continue to keep Black people enslaved, but to maintain white dominance. So regardless of what either side said



their idealistic goals were—their actions toward people of Afrikan descent spoke far more clearly in terms of what their actual agendas were (and are).

The south was saturated with enslaved Afrikans, but what many of our people don’t know (or choose to conveniently forget), was that there were slave owning states up NORTH as well (and to a lesser degree out west). Harriett Tubman was enslaved in Maryland, which is just north of Virginia. That’s pretty north!



MISPLACED FAITH (Continued)

There were other pockets of enslaved Afrikans in Ohio, Michigan, New York and so on. The point is that America was never meant for Afrikans or people of Afrikan descent.

Each and every day our people are given, in one way or another, what has come to be known as a “nigger wakeup call”. The

problem is, that the vast majority of our people unfortunately choose to hit the snooze button when that call rings out. I have ZERO faith in this system—the one designed to perpetuate the



SoWS. I have a great deal of faith in Yah and my people. I know us to be a people of peace, compassion, love, ingenuity, grit, resilience, and brilliance, and together we can accomplish great things. It is time to stop putting our faith in the thin ice that is the present system in which we live, and to start placing it on the solid, thick ice that is each other, with love, with understanding and with respect.

When we do that—we will finally, at long last, again move forward!



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

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

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

In *PARADIGM VOID*, Iyapo explores things like:

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

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

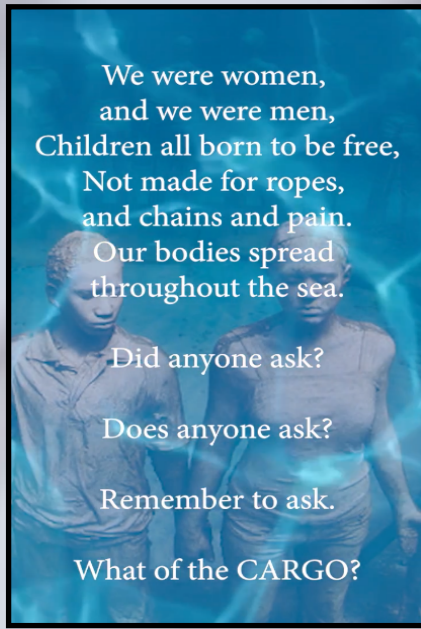


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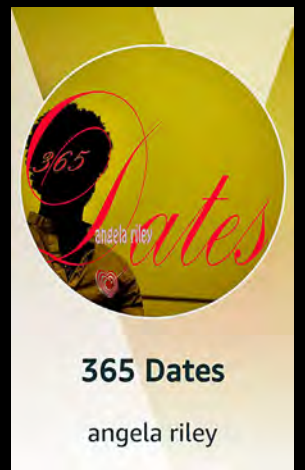
I'd like to say a big **THANK YOU!** To everyone who helped all three of my books to spend some time at number **ONE** on Amazon's **BEST SELLERS** list!



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HOW TO MAKE THINGS MAKE SENSE

What do you do when nothing makes sense?

You look at the system of government that you're in and those who wield the levers of power within it, and their actions don't line up with any expectations that we have. We look at the police and as they terrorize harass and murder our people, we're perplexed by what they do because, after all, they are here to "protect and serve" aren't they?

I often refer back to the words of Neely Fuller Jr.

when he said, "If you don't understand racism white supremacy, what it does and how it works, everything you do understand will only confuse you." I want to admit that, that statement is not only true for understanding the system in which you've been thrown but it also goes for the subsystems within the overall system of white supremacy.

An election cycle is come and gone, and we watched as both Republicans and Democrats did absolutely nothing to relieve the nationwide pain of

regular people—especially Black us. They watched and did nothing as the people were and are losing businesses jobs livelihoods homes marriages and even their lives. How could they sit back and do nothing?



Don't they realize that there will be some kind of backlash? Are they **trying** to lose their positions and seats? Do they not care that the people are angry and looking at them with contempt and that they have the power to turn it around and relieve the suffering?

Again, **if you don't understand racism white supremacy, what it is and how it works, everything you do understand will only confuse you.** The point where white people are destroying the lives of other white people, ultimately isn't the system of white supremacy per se but it's about the perceptions we hold as they pertain to the people in power. We all have seen or been in situations where a person is behaving in ways that for the life of us, we can't figure out why they're acting or reacting the way they are. Whatever they're



HOW TO MAKE THINGS MAKE SENSE (Continued)

doing doesn't make any sense.

I'm about to give you a key to understanding the actions of any person or any system.

I'll start by giving you a thought process and then a situation. The thought process: the police are here to protect and serve. The situation: our people are being gunned down with impunity, targeted, terrorized and even when it is us who makes the phone calls summoning the police, we are likely to end up being the one



face down, either in cuffs or dead. Their brutality and violence toward us just doesn't add up! It doesn't make any sense! How can that be when the police are here to protect us and serve us? You can never make that make sense unless you shift your paradigm. Instead of holding in your mind that they're here to "protect and serve" as has been drilled into us non-stop since we were children, and that when there is an incidence is because of some "bad apple"; replace it with this:

"The police are here to terrorize

citizens especially Black people to harm us in any way possible and to kill us with little or no provocation and suffer no consequences for it. Furthermore, they are an occupying force in inner cities and are actually there to protect the lives and property of the wealthy while missing no opportunity to hurt and destroy the lives of Black people, and place as many as possible into the prison industrial complex where they and their families can further suffer. They also enjoy the added benefit of enriching the system and those who run and own it."

Now replace protect and serve with THAT!

If you adopt that viewpoint and let it sink in deep into your consciousness, then suddenly all the lights will come on and, BOOM! everything they do—every act of violence--every act of terror—every act of murder—every act of harassment from stop and frisk, to unnecessary traffic stops, to the planting of evidence, will suddenly make perfect sense to you. But as long as you even remotely hold to

HOW TO MAKE THINGS MAKE SENSE (Continued)

protect and serve you will continue to be confounded by their actions.

Same thing for the government.

If you believe we live in a democracy or a representative Republic or representative democracy and that elected officials are “civil servants” who are supposed to represent the people, then nothing they do will ever even begin to make any kind of sense to you!

But, if you determine that those at the highest levels of government and power, and I don't care who they are, are completely bought and paid for to the point that they literally could not do the right thing for the people if they wanted to, then like magic, everything they say and do will instantly make sense.

Again—they are so bought and paid for by banks, corporations, big pharma and special interest groups and lobbyists, that they couldn't do the “will of the people” if they truly wanted too! Which they don't if you accept that there are a bunch of bought and paid for elitists who do

the bidding of their corporate masters and that whatever they do is 100% based upon their own self-interest and that they have no regard for the people or the country.

If you accept that, then suddenly everything they do will automatically make perfect sense to you. If you want to believe that these entities actually have a soul and give a damn about the people who aren't wealthy, then once again you will remain totally flummoxed by everything they do.

I am never perplexed, nor surprised by anything these individuals do. I will admit I reach deeper levels of disgust consistently, but never ever surprise or confusion because I have already determined what they are and what motivates them.

As an aside, those who are familiar with me know that I believe that most if not all pimp preachers are likely atheists. My reasoning is that if they or anyone actually believes in Yah and what is contained in the Bible, there is no way that they would do the things they do because their actions





HOW TO MAKE THINGS MAKE SENSE (Continued)

run absolutely counter to scripture.

By that same measure I've come to this conclusion that many elected officials in the high levels of the government, ironically, have no allegiance whatsoever to America.

Using the same rationale I use with pimp preachers—if today's politicians really cared about the constitution, freedom, liberty and all the other BS they claim this country stands for, and if they really wanted the United States to be a strong world power, they would be doing the exact opposite of the things that they're doing in Washington right now.

That also goes for corporations, banks and so on that are headquartered in America.

These oligarchs have no allegiance to any country and consider themselves “global citizens” and therefore the United States is just another source of resources and revenue to use until it's exhausted and then they'll move on. I mean that for both the public and private sector and the government,

ALL parties, and add to that the fact that they actually have contempt for the people of this country.

And don't think that they don't because they believe that we're idiots. If they didn't think we were



idiots Barack Obama wouldn't have acted like he was drinking Flint tap water and Nancy Pelosi wouldn't have been kneeling in kente cloth, and so on with these symbolic gestures that mean nothing but show how stupid and shallow they think the people (especially Black people), are.

We must learn to recognize when we are being insulted. When we internalize that then the decisions made in Washington that only benefit the wealthy and keep perpetual wars going, and sending BILLIONS of taxpayer dollars to foreign countries, while completely ignoring regular citizens as the country deals with natural disaster after natural disaster and literally falls apart, it will make perfect sense to you. You won't like it but you will not be confused or stunned by it.



HOW TO MAKE THINGS MAKE SENSE (Continued)

These understandings will open up your minds to new ways of thinking and moving in the world in general and within this corrupt system specifically. Imagine you are someone who was counting on another stimulus check to help you get through the hard times the average Americans are now suffering through every day.

You listen to several YouTubers do reports on the status of the stimulus and whether you'll be getting another check or unemployment or rent relief or whatever and day after day week after week month after month nothing comes.

Nothing.

When elected officials do talk about doing something, it's so small it won't really help the average person—it'll only help the wealthy. You say to yourself over and over they have to do something! They see us out here falling over a cliff! They see the entire country crashing and burning around them! They have to do something even if it's just for their own purposes, like getting votes or staying in office!



The only thing you'd be right about is that they see the country crashing and burning down around them. Where you would be wrong is that you think they give a damn that the country's crashing and burning. As I said their goals are purely based on self-interest—they're just fine as long as they and theirs are alright.

Their plans are to let it burn but to grab as much as they can before it burns down to the ground, and then move on and just leave everyone else to sift through the rubble and to fight over the scraps and bones left on the ground.

The takeaway: when the actions of a people or system are confusing, you, at some point may want to consider changing your viewpoint and taking a look at it from a side that you might not have considered. It may seem to be unthinkable, or too harsh, or too ugly, but that is where the truth will be sometimes. We just don't want to view things in certain ways because we're fighting with all our might not to give in to cynicism. But I ask you this; what if cynicism is the key that can open you up to the reality of some



HOW TO MAKE THINGS MAKE SENSE (Continued)

things? No one needs to be cynical about everything, but sometimes cynicism can not only lead you to the reality of a person or a situation, but put an end to the confusion that keeps turning a thing over and over in your mind without conclusion, unable to reconcile what you believe and what is actually happening.

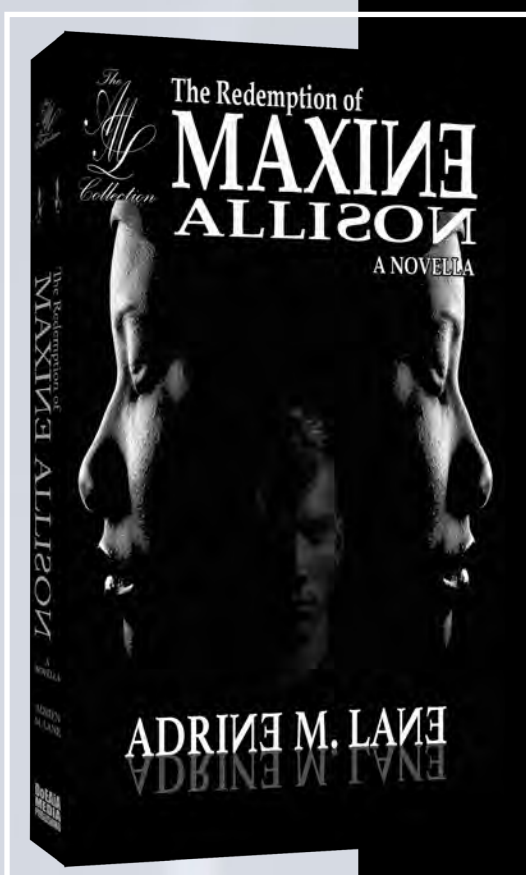
For me, coming to these conclusions was liberating and has given me a direction and clarity of purpose that I lacked before, as well as a great hope for a positive future.

Before you can deal with a situation you have to know what you're truly dealing with. I'll put it to you like this, what happens if you're going to a doctor and you want the doctor to help you and the doctor asks you different questions about what you're eating what you're drinking how you're sleeping and so on? You don't give the doctor truth-

ful or accurate information. Then the doctor may prescribe something or may give advice based on false information and therefore it likely won't help and could potentially be harmful. If the doctor knows exactly what's REALLY going on based on facts and truth, then they can give you a prescription or advice that can work for you.

The same thing here if we're thinking about the government, the police, or different organizations—whatever the thoughts, if they don't match up with what is being done, it can affect our perceptions, mental health, and the way we move in the world.

I believe that with some shifts in perception, or belief systems, it can cause the lights to come on and lead toward the goal of safety security and sanity as individuals, in our relationships, and for our people.



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 a hit, as Adrienne M. Lane brings you her mind bending and controversial debut novella. Read *The Redemption of Maxine Allison* and find out why!

THE WAIT IS ALMOST OVER!

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

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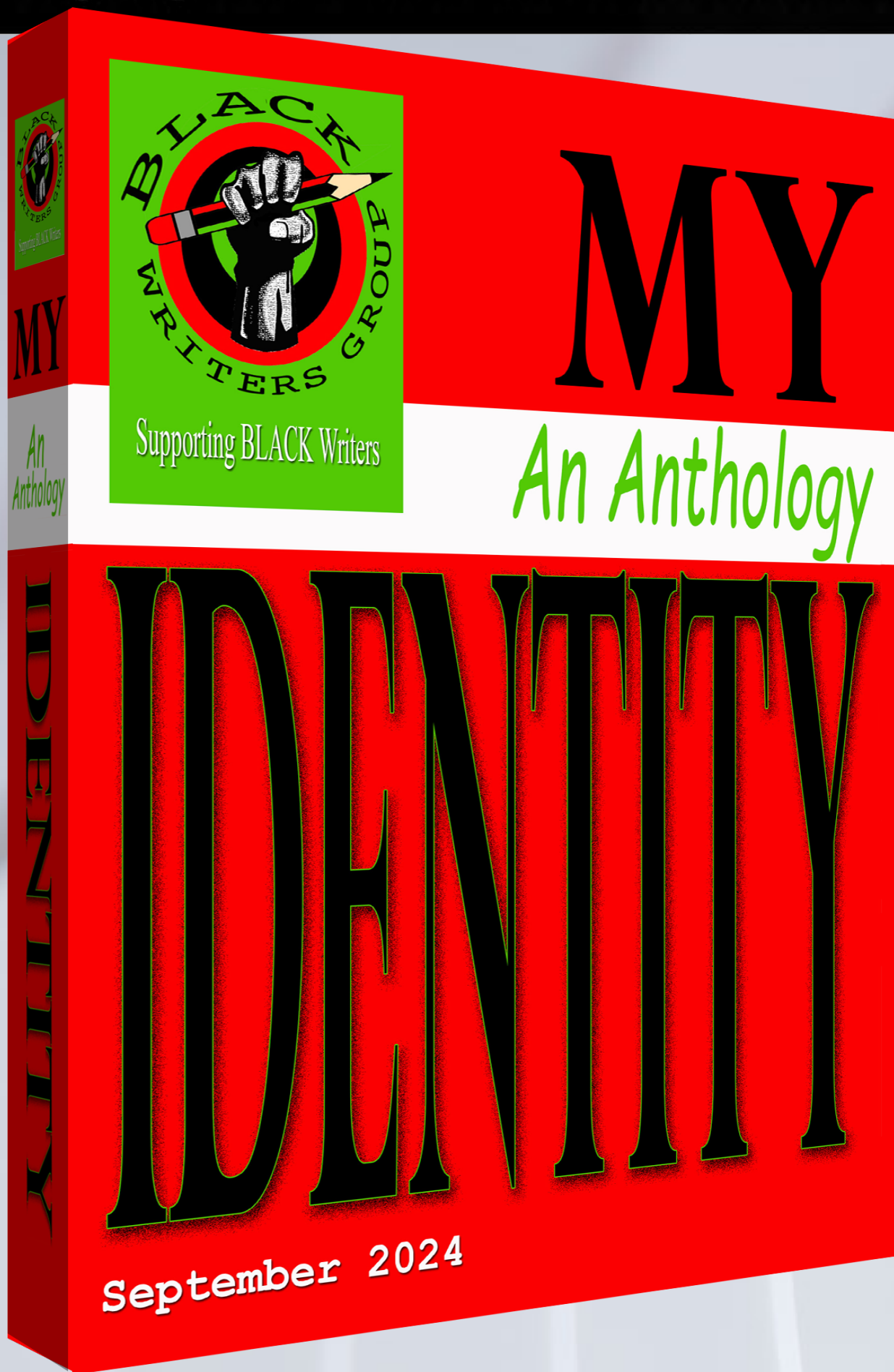
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Also Coming Soon!

MY IDENTITY ANTHOLOGY

Nine talented Black writers give you their insights in the this Black Writers Group debut publication, *My Identity: An Anthology*. The subjects, writing style and personal observations are as varied as the writers themselves. From essays to poems to affirmations they are surprising, inspirational, & even possibly unsettling. One thing is certain: after reading this forty-eight-page volume, you will come away with food for thought as it pertains to Black identity, what it is, and what it means.

READING and WRITING in the

DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors

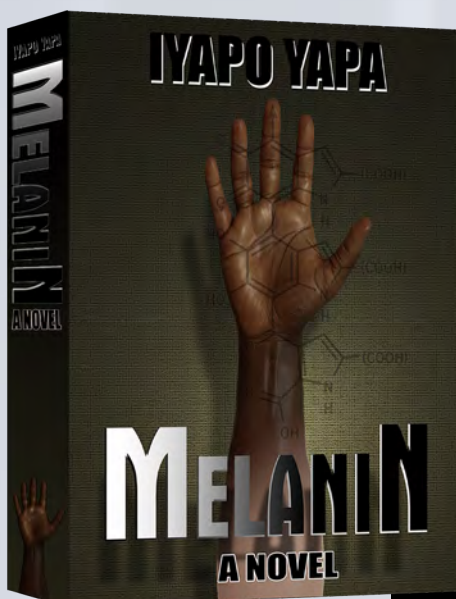
So, who knew I was a cartoonist before I became a writer?
Take a minue to check out some of my work online at:
<https://iyapoyapa.com/cartoonist-illustrator.html>
or just click the image below and it will take you straight there!



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



After two years,
MELANIN: A Novel finally has a trailer!
(And it's an exciting one too!)
You can check it out now by clicking
the image below!
Click the image on the left to purchase the novel!



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R.J. BLAKMAN

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

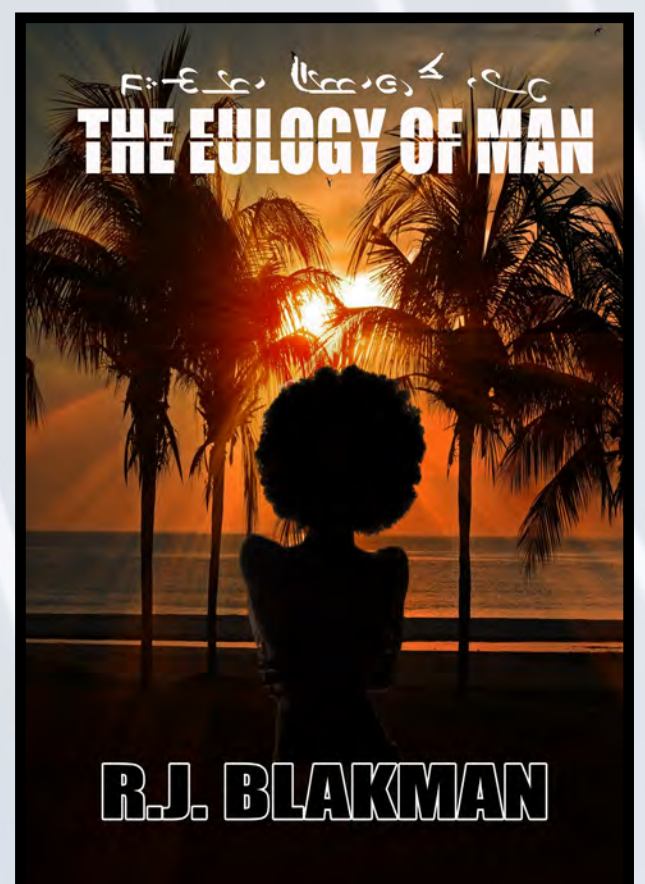
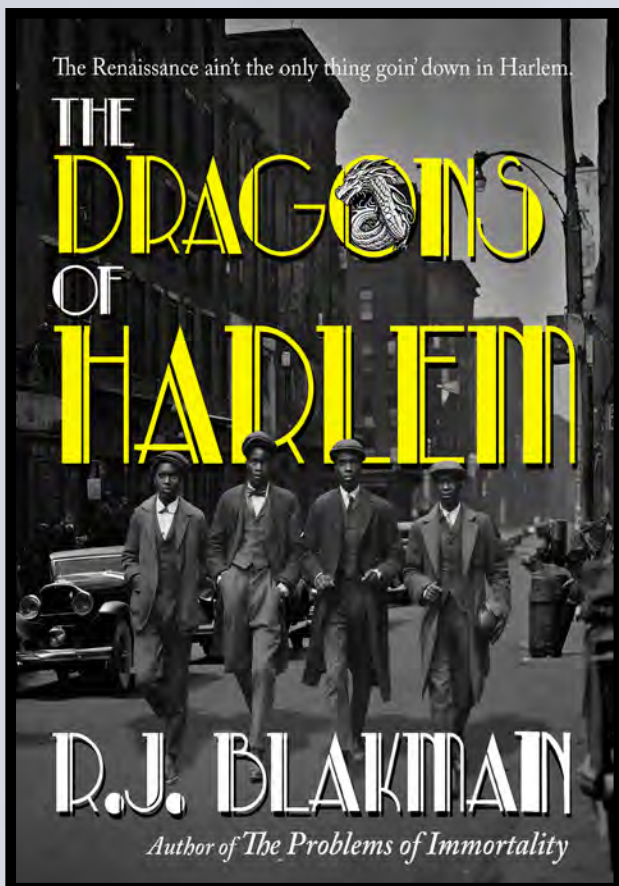
As a practice, Blakman seeks out truth and goes wherever that truth leads him, even if uncomfortable.

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

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

UPCOMING BOOKS BY

R.J. BLAKMAN



ENTERTAINING,
ENGROSSING,
THOUGHT PROVOKING!



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

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

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

I'm old enough to remember when

MIDI stood for "Musical Instrument Digital Interface".

My first professional keyboard was a Casio CZ5000 synthesizer. I also had a Casio CZ1, a Suzuki keyboard (I can't remember the model of), a Korg drum computer (something in the TR series, but that's all I can remember), and a Casio SK_01 for sampling. Though the SK_01 was more

of a toy, I was able to do some very interesting things with it.

That said, I watched digital and electronic music develop firsthand. Those were some very exciting times. I wrote my first songs using those keyboards, sampler, drum computer and a professional mixing board. It was a Tascam, but I can't remember the model. I was in Germany in the military during that time and was in a band called Force of Habit. We

made some pretty good music and we each did solo stuff. When it was time to leave, my things were packed away by the military and shipped back to the U.S. Long story short,

ALL my instruments and studio equipment, I painstakingly (monetarily) sacrificed to get, were stolen. Likely none of it even made it out the country.

I kept doing music as a hobby, but at some point, I stopped keeping up with the trends and the tech. So, imagine my surprise when I found out that you could take your

lyrics, put them into an online app, and it would turn your lyrics into a song in the style you wanted, sung by your choice of a woman or man. I was very skeptical when I first tried it, but after I put in that first set of lyrics and heard the results, I was HOOKED! This particular AI platform is something I wasn't expecting at all. I typically push back against too much AI, though I have come around to seeing it as just another tool if used correctly. MIND BLOWING!





Music to my ears: Did AI finally win me over?! (continued)

The knowledge that now I can dig out some of my old lyrics that I struggled with putting to music and having sung (because I can't sing!), is awesome to me. (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



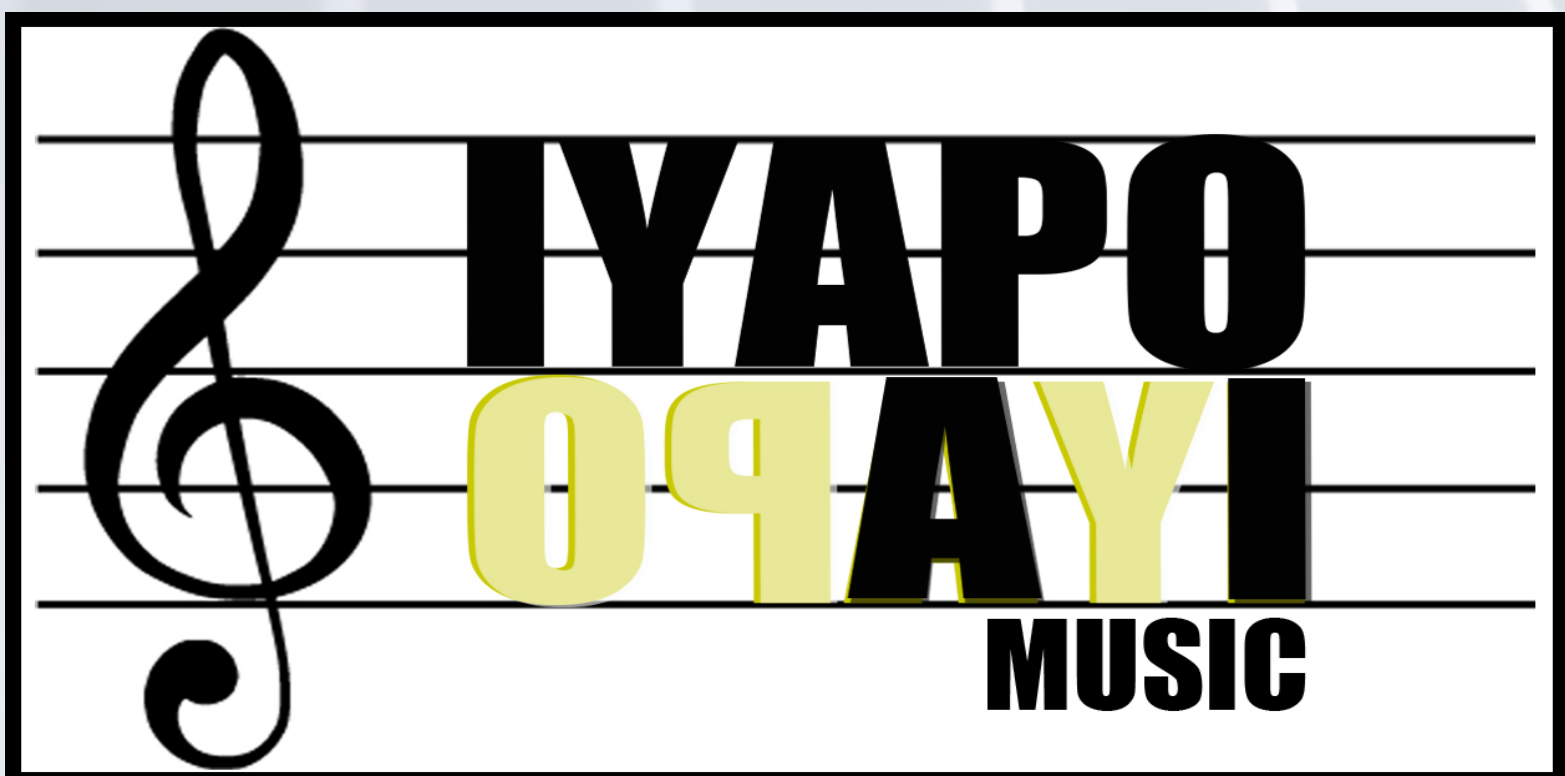
I were using it to make art. (I NEVER claim AI art as something I "created", and I never EVER use AI to help me write. I don't know if I ever could. That

But this?

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

If you would like to hear some of my songs you can find them on TikTok and Instagram. There is, "Force Of Habit" and "No Matter Who I'm

With," also a video for *And What of the CARGO?* that features "Kylah's Theme", with my words and lyrics.



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Find Iyapo at:
Linktree*

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

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

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

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

The image shows a screenshot of an Instagram profile for @iyapo, a cartoonist, illustrator, graphic artist, and author. The profile bio reads "Cartoonist, Illustrator, Graphic artist, Author". Below the bio, there is a section titled "Books and Writing by Iyapo Yapa" which contains a grid of promotional cards for his works. The cards are:

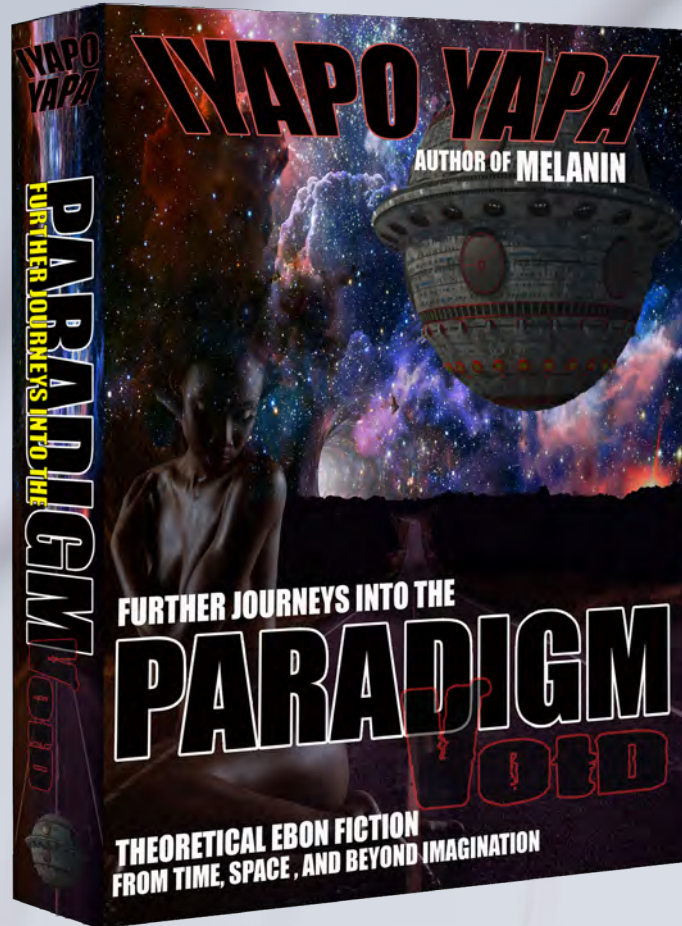
- IYAPO'S WEBSITE:** A card with a cartoon character and text: "Enter the world of IYAPO YAPA where you can find my books, art, and music! The FULL website is best viewed on a computer or tablet. The site is ROBUST, so be prepared and ENJOY! IYAPO'S WEBSITE".
- MELANIN: A NOVEL:** A card with a quote: "What if becoming genetically and phenotypically Black was the only thing that could save your life?" and a quote from Brandon Massey: "Melanin is an uncompromising and timely tale of speculative fiction, brimming with thought-provoking ideas and imaginative twists." - Brandon Massey, award-winning author of The Quiet Ones and Dark Coater. The card also features the book cover for MELANIN: A NOVEL.
- AND WHAT OF THE CARGO?:** A card with text: "It began during the transatlantic slave trade... but it ends NOW! AND WHAT OF THE CARGO? is a tale of love and hate, tears and triumph, suspense and horror that leads to an unimaginable conclusion." and the book cover for AND WHAT OF THE CARGO? A NOVEL.
- PARADIGM:** A card with text: "An anthology of short stories in the realm of Theoretical Ehon Fiction from time, space and suspense beyond imagination." and the book cover for PARADIGM.

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ARE YOU PREPARED TO JOURNEY BACK INTO THE VOID?!



COMING SOON

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

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

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



RIGHT NOW!

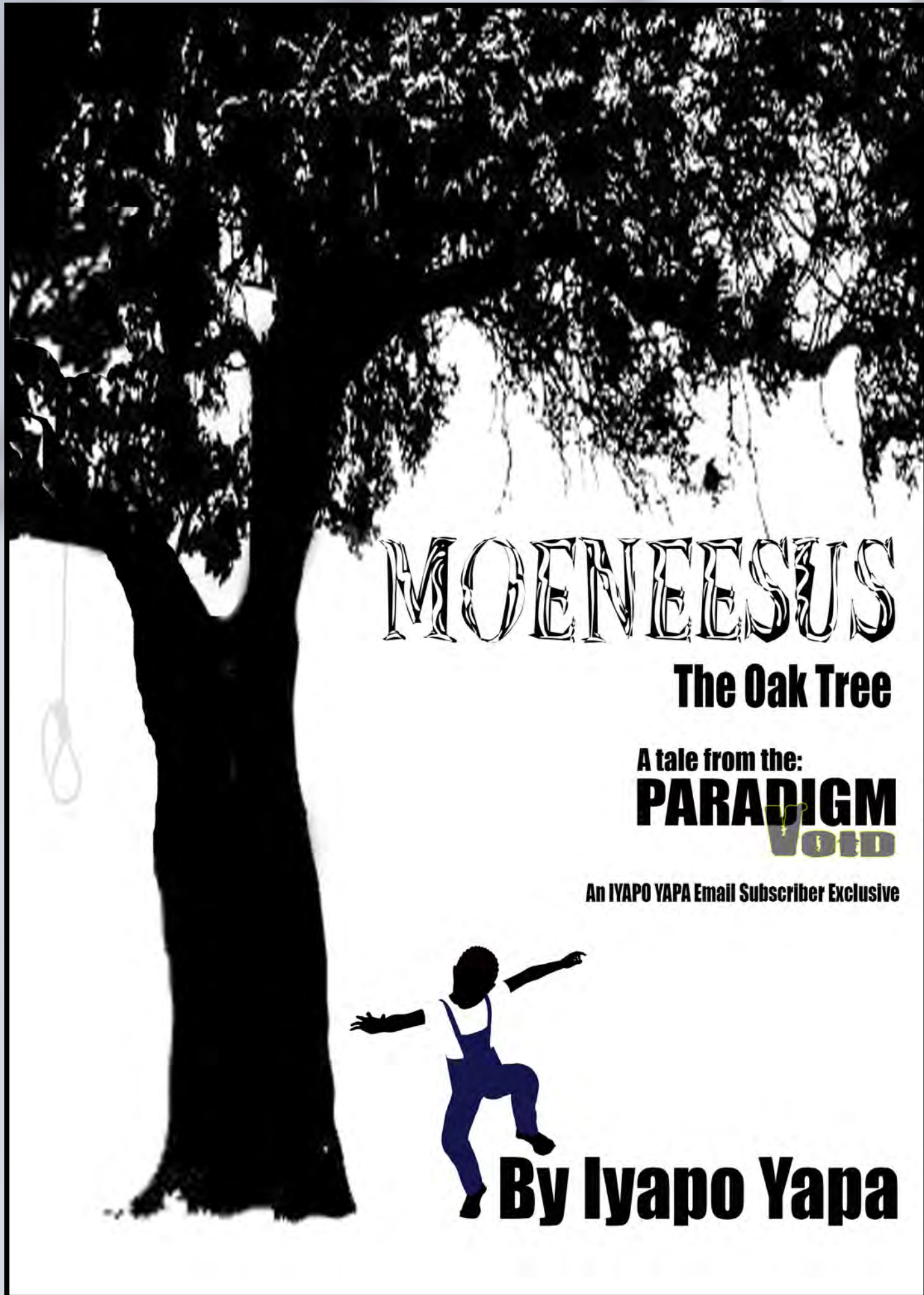
Stories from Time, Space and Beyond Imagination,
Paradigm VOID Volume I is available.



READING and WRITING in the

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

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Click Below For:

And What of the CARGO?



AVAILABLE NOW!

And What of the CARGO?

Buy it now on Amazon

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

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

— Walter Rodney. How Europe Underdeveloped Africa

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

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

What are readers saying about And What of the CARGO?

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

- Amazon Review

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

- Gwen

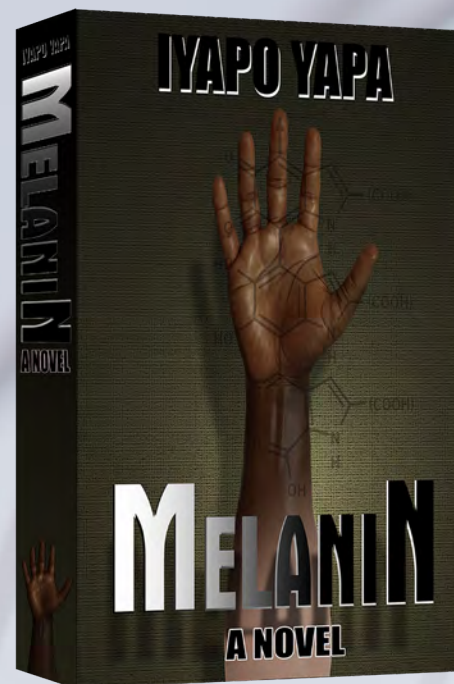
“Yapa weaves another story this time interwoven with historical references. I was on my seat with every chapter. I don't want to give it away but....revenge is sweet when served dead. And I can't get over how different each of his offerings are. Read his Vella's and you'll see what I mean. Another great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

- Amazon review

You can also read it for FREE if you have

Kindle Unlimited!

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



Click Below For:

MELANIN: A Novel



AVAILABLE NOW!

MELANIN: A NOVEL

Buy it now on Amazon

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

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

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

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

goodreads

What are readers saying about MELANIN: A NOVEL?

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

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

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

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

“The whole world needs to read this book!”

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

“Every Black person needs to read this book!”

- Gwen B

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

- Ayoka B.

You can also read it for FREE if you have

Kindle Unlimited!

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

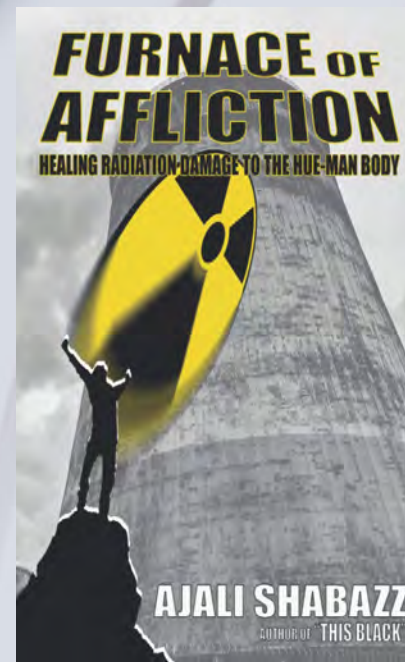
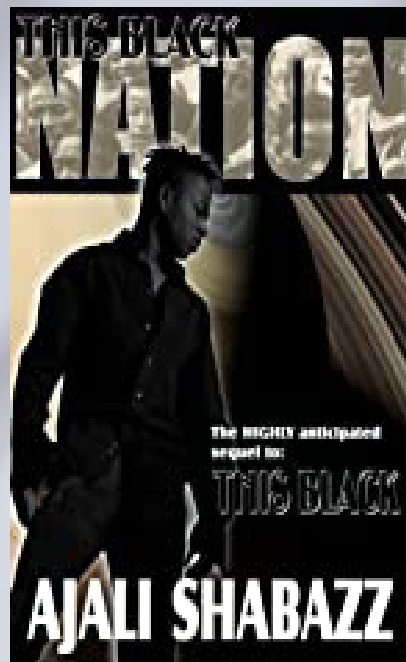
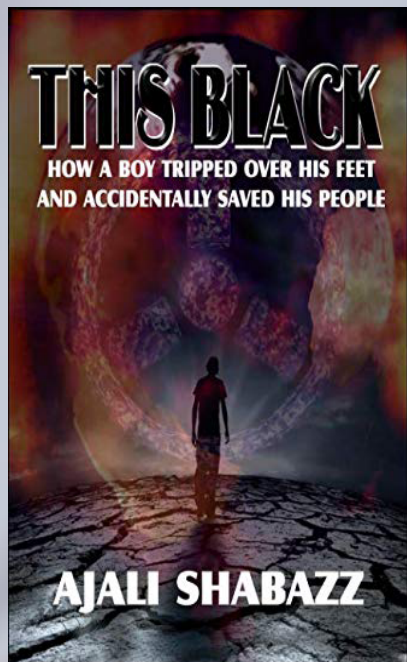
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Books by:

AJALI SHABAZZ



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

The Reading and Writing in the DARK Podcast Interview!

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

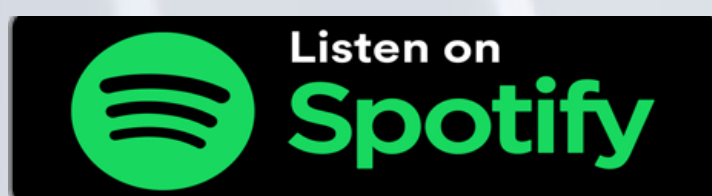
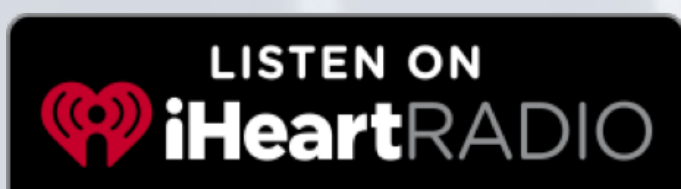
Listen to the interview on  by clicking the link below:

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



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

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



CLICK THIS BLOCK TO LISTEN TO THE

READING and WRITING in the

DARK

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podcast!





READING and WRITING in the

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Have You Checked Out My Blog Yet?

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

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

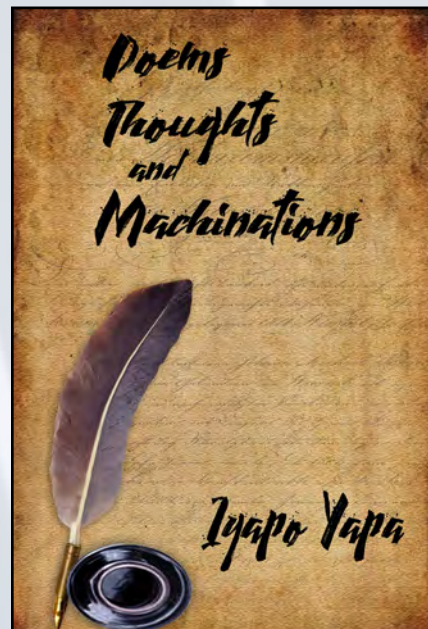


CLICK THE LOGO ABOVE TO VISIT MY BLOG



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

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



The title says it all.

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

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

Always seeking.

ANIMATION & RELAXATION

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

various kinds of software. I taught myself to juggle and to do tricks on a skateboard. (Skateboarding is one of the things I miss being able

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

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

perhaps a day or two away from it.) I didn't necessarily want to write or play any music, but I realized there was something I hadn't done in decades and would serve as a perfect distraction and means of relaxation.



ANIMATING!

Animating a cartoon (the old-fashioned way, by sitting down and DRAWING the darn thing),

is tedious and time consuming—but for someone who likes to draw, it can be very relaxing if it is done just for the love of doing it. Some people knit and end up with a garment, I'm going to draw and end up with a cartoon. I'm very excited by the prospect and am looking forward to working on it little by little until I'm done. I'll keep you posted on the progress. In the meantime, you can click the image to see the opening reel. (Lil' Man is more of a place holder for timing. I'm not sure if the result is going to be a Lil' Man cartoon) but whatever it turns out to be, I anticipate the fun and relaxation of producing it!

READING and WRITING in the

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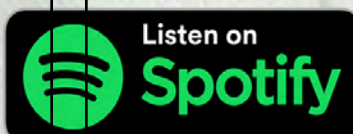
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Two writers
Two Mics
&
Plenty of Banter!



While Black

THE **PODCAST**



ANGELA R. RILEY

Author of *AFFIRMING SelfLOVE*

AYOKA B.

Author of *LOVE at SECOND SIGHT*

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

READING and WRITING in the

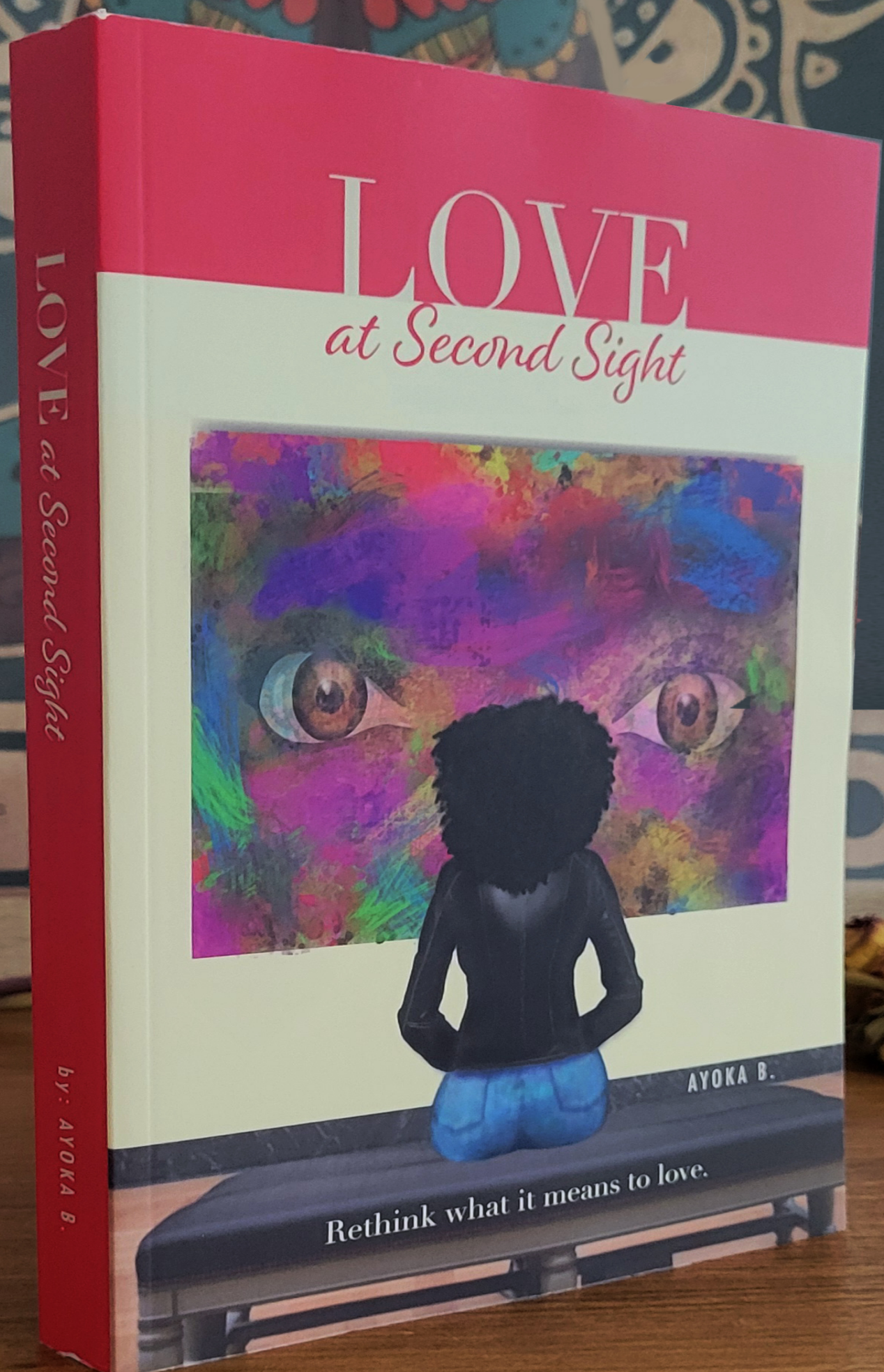
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LOVE AT SECOND SIGHT IS AVAILABLE NOW!

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

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



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



Alright, enough about ME!

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

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

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



I DeClaire Love

Angela Riley

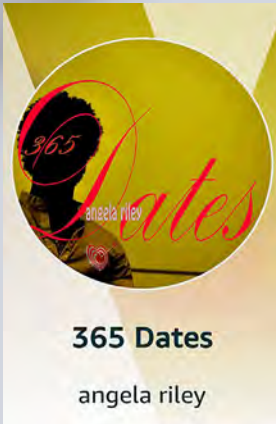
DeClaire and Tyrone meet and sparks fly. They fall in love with each other quick, fast, and in a hurry. It seems too good to be true. But is it? Is it safe to love? Are there any “good” rules when it comes to love? Do we have to fight for love? Are there always games being played when it comes to love?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



The Love X TamuTamu Agency

Angela Riley

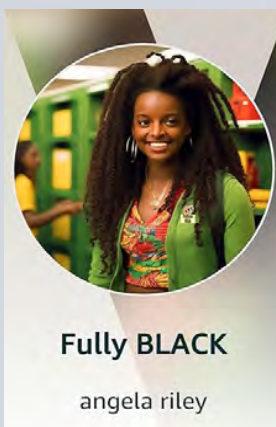
Love is natural but it ain't always easy. And Mama Tamu should know! She is a 91 year old match maker who has run “The Love X TamuTamu Agency” for FIFTY years. She has personally experienced and been a witness to all kinds of love. And, as she says, “Love is more than a notion!” Follow along as she stands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



365 Dates

Angela Riley

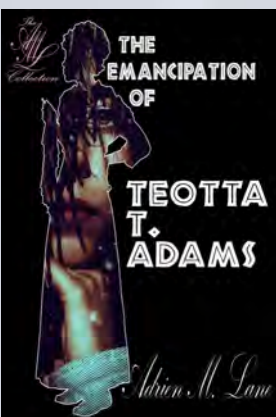
Single again, after my first divorce, one day I had a new thought: I WANT TO DATE. And... NOTHING. No one came knocking on my door to woo me. No one approached me when I was out wanting to court me. Nobody asked friends/family to be set up with me. Just crickets! So, thinking that maybe my goal was to vague--I want to date.--to make anything happen, I decided to pursue a HUGE goal of going on 365 dates. Not 3, 5, or 6 dates but three HUNDRED and SIXTY-FIVE dates. So...LET'S GO!



Fully BLACK

Angela Riley

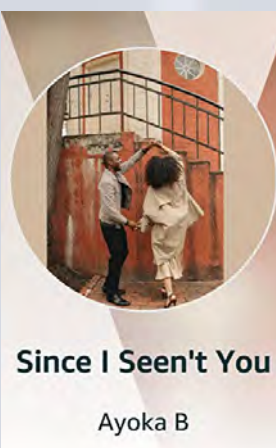
Because she is IN LOVE, talented dancer and homeschooled student Makena enrolls in the elite Fullson High to be closer to Marshall.



The Emancipation of Teotta T. Adams

Adrien M. Lane

Teotta T. Adams has it all, big house, nice car, fine clothes, and a private chef, one of the best in the world, and a successful husband. Yes, Teotta has everything. Everything except her FREEDOM! She spends her days in the lap of luxury, but inside she knows something's wrong. Her ‘husband’ is just this side of a stranger, and worse, Teotta knows even less about herself. When she finally discovers why, and the incredible truth behind it, she will long for the bliss of her lost ignorance.



Since I Seen't You

Ayoka B.

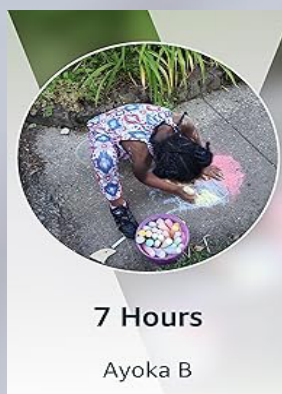
She and David met when they were 18. After a rough start, they build a friendship that would span decades: marriages, children, love and heartache. When they lose touch, she thought that she would never see him again, but she was wrong. Can men and women truly be just friends? Can their friendship withstand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



The Match

Ayoka B.

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



7 Hours

Ayoka B.

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



The Skin I'm In

Ayoka B.

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



A'DICK'tion The Back Story

MADM Precious

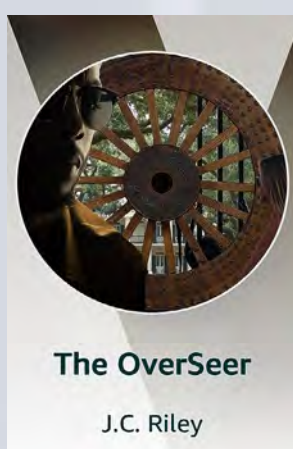
From Book 1: Sex addiction is a real thing; When Quincey finds out his wife is caught up in some things, can they save their marriage.



The Godchild Chronicles

J.C. Riley

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



The OverSeer

J.C. Riley

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

ALSO AVAILABLE on AMAZON and OTHER PLATFORMS!

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

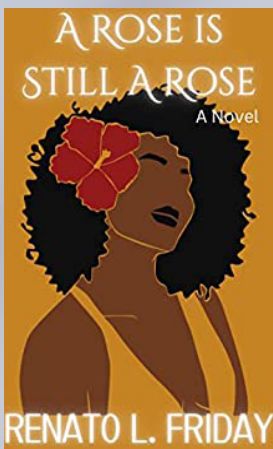


Affirming Self Love (Graphic Non-Fiction SERIES)

angela riley

SelfLOVE Meditation, Reflections, & AFFIRMATIONS Series...

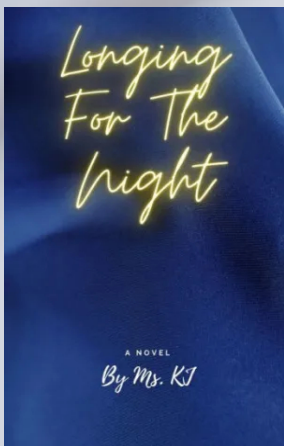
With a new book released each month, this “Graphic Nonfiction” series is filled with love for BlackUs. Each episode opens with a short essay exploring a theme such as “Following the Happy” or “Plan & Reflect” and culminates with a dynamic collection of affirmation. You’ll have a beautiful time meditating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



A Rose is Still a Rose

Renato L. Friday

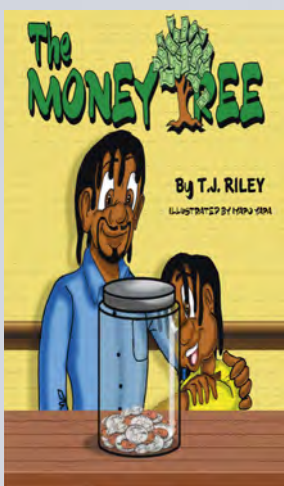
Rose thought life was going great: she was engaged, had a beautiful set of twin girls, a recent trade school graduate, and a new job right around the corner. Unfortunately, her fiancé, David, turned out to not be what she needed, and she chose to break things off. In the midst of her failing relationship,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



Longing for the Night

Ms. KJ

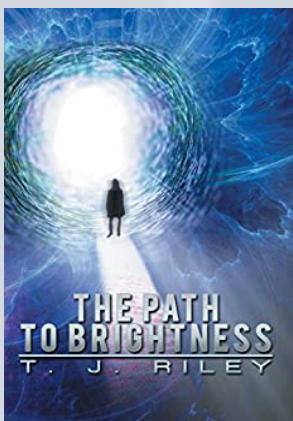
Inspired by the poem Goblin Market by Christina Rossetti, two young sisters face the trials and tribulations of the hood in this coming-of-age story about the harshness of living in South Central Los Angeles.



The Money Tree

T.J. Riley / Illustrated by Iyapo Yapa

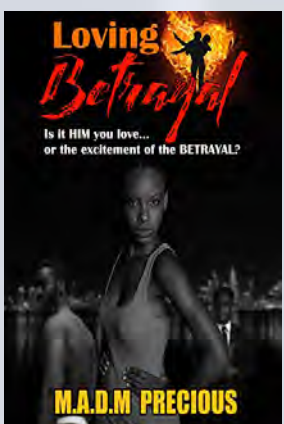
Every child wants money to buy something, right? Our hero does too. But, his father has a surprise, a Money Tree. Join the fun journey to find out how to grow your own money tree.



THE PATH to BRIGHTNESS

T.J. Riley

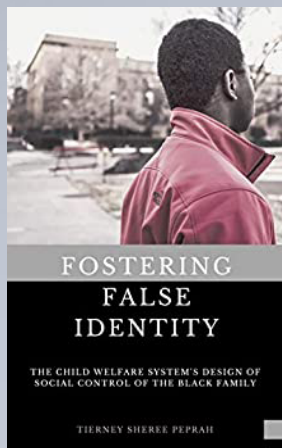
Fatima, a young woman, has a near-death experience. When she awakes from a coma and recovers, she has mystical powers. She begins to see auras and experiences life with her new abilities. For the clever character, Fatima, life is about to dramatically change. Follow Fatima’s journey as she tries to convince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



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

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

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



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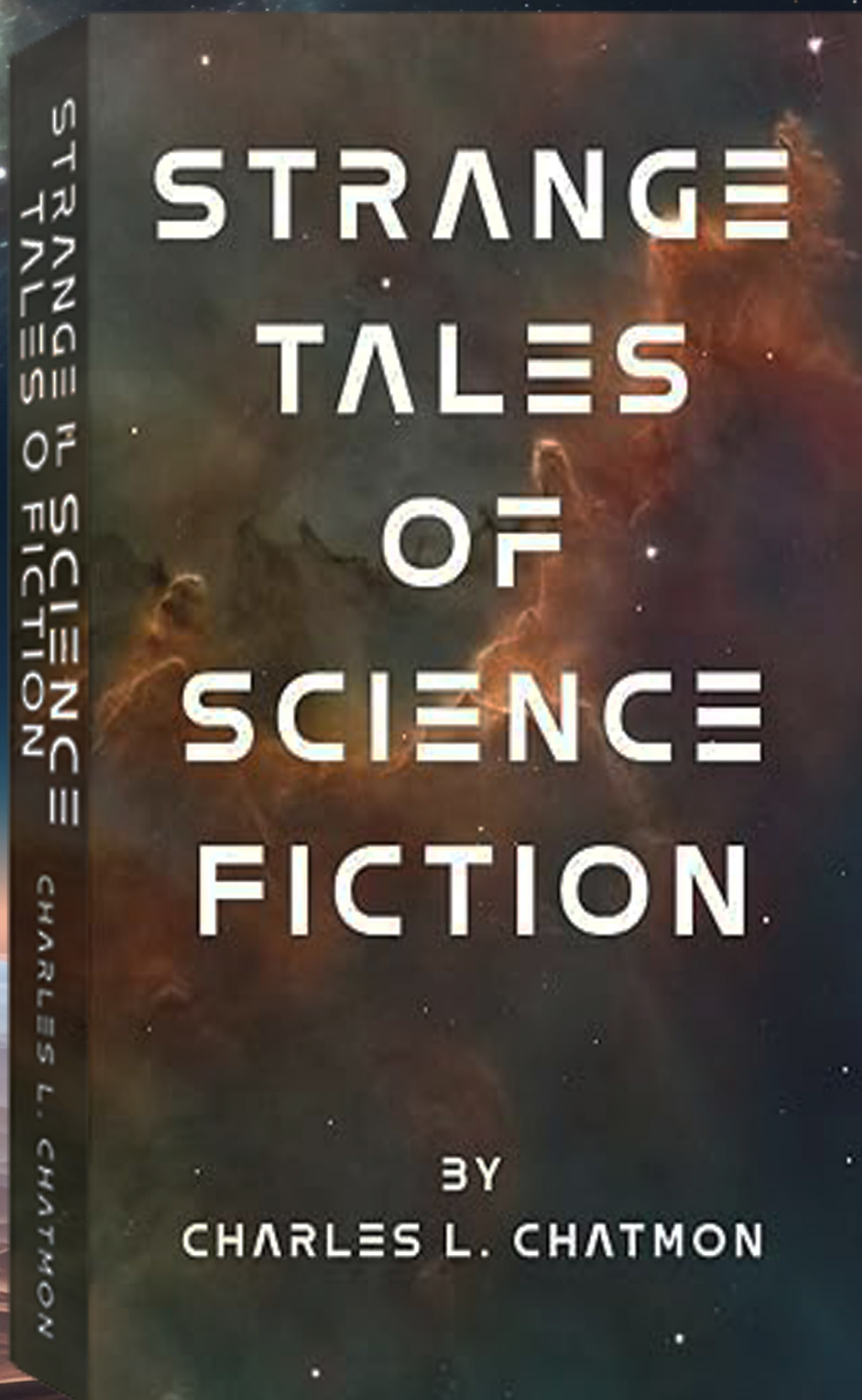
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STRANGE TALES OF SCIENCE FICTION IS AVAILABLE NOW!

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

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

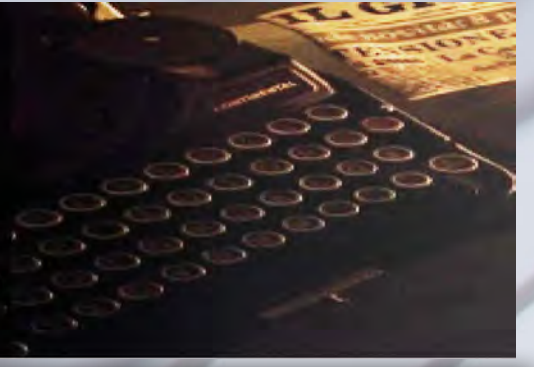


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Tales of the MONKEY'S PAW



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