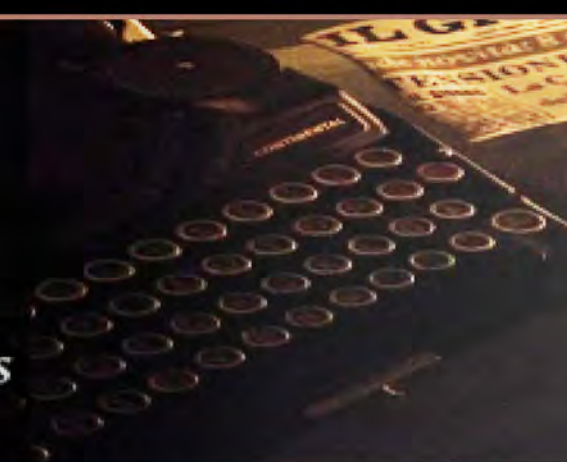


READING and WRITING in the

# DARK

*A space for avid Black readers and Black authors*



## THIS MONTH:

## MAGAZINE

We journey deep into one of the more unsettling regions in the Paradigm Void. No teasers - no excerpts - this month we present the ENTIRE STORY, and dare you to gaze into...

# THE EYES OF THE DYING

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A short story from the  
**PARADIGM**  
THEORETICAL  
EBON FICTION **Void**



## FEATURE:

### Escaping the Trick Bag!

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## CONFESSIONS of a POLITICAL ATHEIST

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

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



SEPTEMBER 2024 - Volume 1 / Number 3



**MAGAZINE**



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READING and WRITING in the DARK Magazine  
Vol. 1 No. 3  
SEPTEMBER 2024

Iyapo Yapa  
Writer/Layout/Editor-In-Chief

Angela Riley  
Copy Editor

Iyapo Yapa  
Layout/Design

**WELCOME BACK!**

Hello and WELCOME! EVERYONE!

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

Iyapo Yapa



**A Look Back and to the Future!**

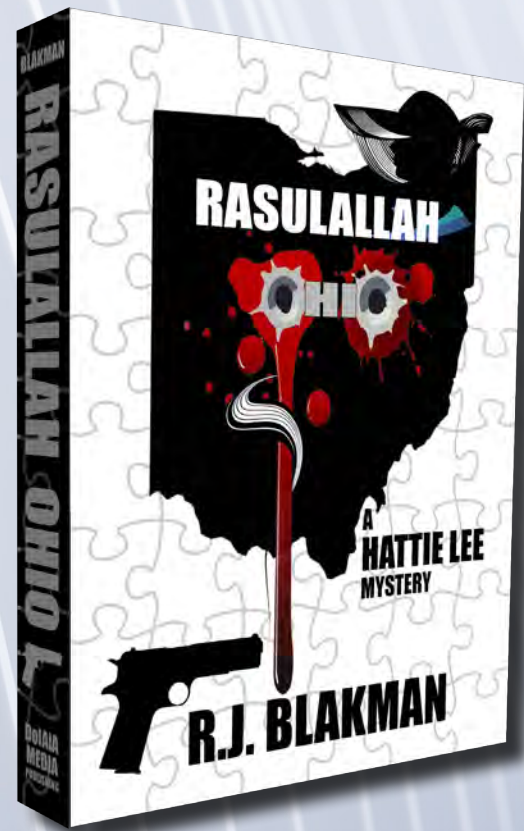
The road to Rasulallah, Ohio was a long one for me.

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

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

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

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





## Escaping the Trick Bag (From Iyapo's Substak and Medium)

Our people are in a trick bag. The story of Black people in America is a tale of abuse like no other. Every ethnic group, to greater or lesser degrees, talks about the issues they and their ancestors had to deal with, and there are some truly disturbing narratives. However, the torment of Black people in the United States... uh... States under chattel slavery is in a category all its own. It's one thing to think about being enslaved and suffering the typical physical abuse of one's captors, it is a whole other thing to have dealt with that, and to have your very identity stripped away to the point that you are an entire people who have little to no idea of who you really are, or ever were. It is a whole other thing when your identity has not only been stripped away, but in turn replaced with that of your captors and tormentors.

When Black people speak about the enslavement of our ancestors, and the continued enslavement of us by various means, and we talk about the brutality of it—the nightmare of it. Someone (usually white) will very quickly point out that “All races have

been enslaved at one time or another. They'll say things like, “The Irish were slaves.” and other such claptrap. Their goal is always drawing an equivalency to minimize what has happened (and continues) to happen to our people.

I use the example of someone who may have had melanoma on their nose and had to have it removed. Then when in conversation with them, someone brings up the fact that they or a loved one suffered from stage

II cancer and had extended hospital stays, were subject to treatments that seemed worse than the disease, lost their hair, etc., only to have the person who had the cancer removed from the tip of their nose say something like, “Yes, I can totally relate! I'm a cancer survivor also!”

Another comes to mind: when Maui burned to the ground, and President Joe Biden got up to make comments about the devastating tragedy. He tried to relate to the listeners by bringing up a minor grease fire that happened in his kitchen several decades back.

That is what they do.





## Escaping the Trick Bag (continued) (From Iyapo's Substak and Medium)

Taking something that happened to another on an unimaginable scale, and then referencing something that happened to them that wouldn't even scratch the surface, but saying full throated--with confidence and arrogance galore--that their relatively minor experience is on par with the other person's horror.

When they compare experiences, they are seeking a "twofer" as I like to call it.

First, they get the benefit of telling our people that what has happened to us is nothing out of the ordinary, or beyond the range of human experience. Second, they stand in their faux-superiority and imply that every other race of people (especially theirs), suffered the most horrendous kinds of torment, just like everyone else, but that our people (Black People)—unlike everyone else—have been able to rise above it and stop complaining about it.

When there are gatherings of Black

people attended by white "allies" and the discussion turns to, say, race relations, sooner or later some white person is going to ask if we

can "all just get along?"

It makes total sense for a Black person to ask that question. However, when it comes to a European asking "Can we all just get along?", the question is bonkers and leads to this query:

*When was this brief and shining moment in history when Black people WEREN'T trying*

*to get along with you?!*

What?

Is this to say that when Black people were trying to go to "white" schools or eat at white diners or use white facilities it was because we wanted to go all those places so that we could wage war?! So that we could get inside and as we ate our pancakes, sausage, and scrambled eggs, ignore a white person who might politely ask if they could share a table and seek to converse? Is this to say that my ancestors who were beaten





## Escaping the Trick Bag (continued)

(From Iyapo's Substak and Medium)

bloody, imprisoned, hosed, had police German Shepards attack them, and in some cases lynched—they were doing ALL that because—what?

They DIDN'T want to get along and live among white people in the so-called melting pot that is America?

I well understand that the main reason our people fought for civil and human rights was because we simply wanted to be treated as equal human beings and have our humanity recognized. I maintain that along with that—although not the main reason—Black people just wanted to “get along.”

What Black groups were formed for the express purpose of terrorizing and murdering white people, lynching them, and cutting off their genitals?

What Black systems were put in place to mass incarcerate white people and enslave them?

What Black violent protests and marches were there telling white people to go back to Europe, or

threatening life and limb if they attempted to attend their Black diners, churches, schools or to vote?

What Black towns had signs outside them cautioning white people not to be caught there after the sun went down?

What government program and documents are dedicated specifically to preventing the rise of a WHITE messiah?

By the way—all of what I just listed is of course what white people have historically done to my people, but let's not pretend that it is all from some distant past—these same events and mindsets continue today, overtly and covertly ways.

Furthermore, in the United States, I defy any one of my conservative brothers and sisters to find ONE piece of legislation, act or bill that was designed specifically to protect white people from Black people—meaning to force Black people to treat white people fairly and not discriminate against them or



## Escaping the Trick Bag (continued) (From Iyapo's Substak and Medium)

commit unprovoked violence against them.

ONE!

Let me save you some time. You won't find any.

There is plenty of legislation, acts or bills (ineffective dog and pony shows that they are) that were supposedly designed to protect Black people from white racist acts.

That being the case, again, the question becomes, just who wasn't trying to get along with whom, to the point that the government had to step in to attempt to force them to do it?!

So, yeah, white people can miss me (an outdated slang term I know, but I still use it), with that, "Can't we all just get along?" b.s. As if Black people weren't already ALWAYS trying to get along with them even in light of the absolute horrors committed against us. We literally stay willing to let bygones be bygones.

Sadder to me, is the fact our people in the United States (around the world), have bought into the propaganda that racism, for the most part, is a thing of the past and the reason Black people are in the sad state we're in is because we just can't get our act together. More times than I'd like to think about, I hear my own people talk about the miserable state of Black Americans and doing so with no context whatsoever.

As if the condition of our people is due to some inherent flaw in our character—or as Black conservatives would say—because of our "culture".

One of the questions is, what do you mean by, Black culture?

In my experience, when Black conservatives are talking about so called, "Black culture", they typically mean Hip Hop or "ghetto" culture—as if the majority of Black people fall under that umbrella. They talk about the way it is destroying families and contributing to the premature deaths of Black men and women.





## Escaping the Trick Bag (continued) (From Iyapo's Substak and Medium)

They jabber on about how men are making babies with multiple women with no intention of taking care of them—then those same women become “welfare mothers” whose husband is basically the state. Black conservatives will use “Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, (DEI) hire” when referring to Black people placed in positions of perceived power, status and/or authority who fumble the ball. They assert these DEI hires are where they are solely based upon the color of their skin and not their qualifications.

Black conservatives of course, don't even recognize the inherent contradictions or hypocrisy in that line of thinking. Their statements are contradictions because their entire thesis is based upon the fact that Black people can't get it together, but that if *they*--Black conservatives with seldom if ever use the term “we” or “us” in reference to Black people due to the psychological disconnect and/or wanting to emphasize that they are not one of THOSE Black people)--

just knuckle down, stop crying and whining about this fantastical racism we claim is holding us back, then we can move forward. As soon as one of us achieves however, we are relegated to the pit of D.E.I.



The hypocrisy is based upon the fact that these same Black people who will eviscerate another Black person who is a high achiever, but somehow makes mistakes (sometimes catastrophic) implying

that they were never competent and should have been in those positions in the first place. You will seldom, if ever, hear them hold white people to the same standard (as long as they are on the same conservative Republican team—it's a bit different when it comes to liberals and Democrats). The white man can fail time and time and time again, and there is almost no criticism, and even if there is, you will not ever hear them referred to as undeserving of the job in the first place.

There is an opposite to the conservative view of Black people when it comes

## Escaping the Trick Bag (continued)

(From Iyapo's Substak and Medium)

to Black liberals and liberal Democrats that is, in my opinion, every bit as destructive to our people. When we hold in high regard Black people who are obviously incompetent, hustlers, grifters, outright criminals and the like simply because they're Black (or have a hint of melanin). We attribute it to "keeping on code"—something white people have been doing since time and memorial when it comes to heinous acts committed on Black people: the murders of George Stinney, Medgar Evers, and Laura and L. D. Nelson, Emmett Till and the burning down of the Greenwood District—Black Wall Street—to name a few examples. White people and white juries that knew full well what the truth was, didn't hesitate to acquit their white peers, if they even had charges brought against them at all.

The problem is that not only is this coding inconsistent (as it is not with white people), but it is typically only applied to high profile, or prominent people who, ironically, are considered

to have "made it" within the SoWS (System of White Supremacy). Examples would be Black people who Black liberals ride or die for because they are holding high public offices, or are celebrities, but not taking into account that those very Black people are responsible in their capacity for the suffering of Black people who do not have money, power or resources. So, to that degree, such cherry-picked coding and imitation of the corrupt



SoWS is highly problematic.

To say our people, suffer from a form of Stockholm Syndrome is to put it far too lightly. What other people on the planet worship those who took their ancestors captive, subjected them to unimaginable suffering, stole everything from them (including their identity) and continue to perpetuate terror upon them.

One of the more disingenuous and self-serving things that's said to our people is that we spend too much time complaining.



## Escaping the Trick Bag (continued) (From Iyapo's Substak and Medium)

I couldn't care less what white people have to say about us in that wise, however, when I hear my own people parroting that drivel, I immediately come to our defense. I don't deny that our people spend a great deal of time complaining and voicing our anger, outrage, and discontent. The problem is—and I'm speaking to those who say that's all we do, and we need to "stop and just pull ourselves up by our bootstraps"—that like everything else, we must look at context.

The harsh critique of our people being outraged and complaining would be totally valid if we were not still living within a SoWS, no longer being oppressed and tormented, and were several decades removed from it. The fact is that little to nothing has improved for our people, and we are every bit as tormented as our ancestors—albeit in different ways. So the situation becomes (at least in my mind), something akin to being on the ground, being kicked and stabbed repeatedly, while having someone standing to the side telling you, that

you need to just get up and heal your body—WHILE YOU'RE STILL BEING KICKED AND STABBED. And then arranging it in their mind, that it is somehow the victim's fault that their bones are cracking and they're bleeding all over the place.



It's true that our people must find our way out of the maze of terror that we were thrown into the middle of. The one and only solution for our people is to separate from our tormentors. (Even thinking about separation is often challenging due to the devastatingly effective menticide we are experiencing.)

The reason I write and do the things I do is because I believe that if I, who was a Black, Blame Black First—Conservative Republican, could awaken from that brainwashed, mind-controlled stupor, then anyone can. It is not an easy thing, as a matter of fact it seems to be dismayingly insurmountable at times—but our people can be reached and come to our senses, I'm living proof of it.

READING and WRITING in the

# DARIK

A space for avid Black readers and Black authors



## Escaping the Trick Bag (continued) (From Iyapo's Substak and Medium)

One of my firm beliefs is that one of the most important things I can do as a writer and creator is to keep producing content that presents our people as we are — diverse, brilliant, talented and peace loving; and as our people read and discover that there is more to us than narratives handed to us and the world that were crafted by a people who hate us and desire to see us under their full control if not wiped out altogether. Of course my work is hidden and suppressed, but that won't

stop me from producing it, because I fully believe, that like me, as I was waking up from the nightmare that was my association with the SoWS which is one hundred percent, anti-ME, I was aided by works that those before me put produced and left as guidepost to help direct me out of the my malaise.

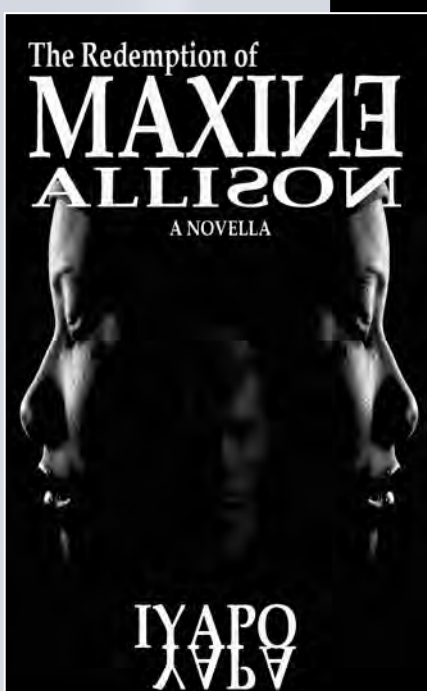
And so it is with this work.

A guidepost for our people to help us escape the trick bag.



**COMING SOON!**

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



**Is it BEST to DIVEST?**

Maxine Allison thought so.

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

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

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

**or is there?**

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

READING and WRITING in the

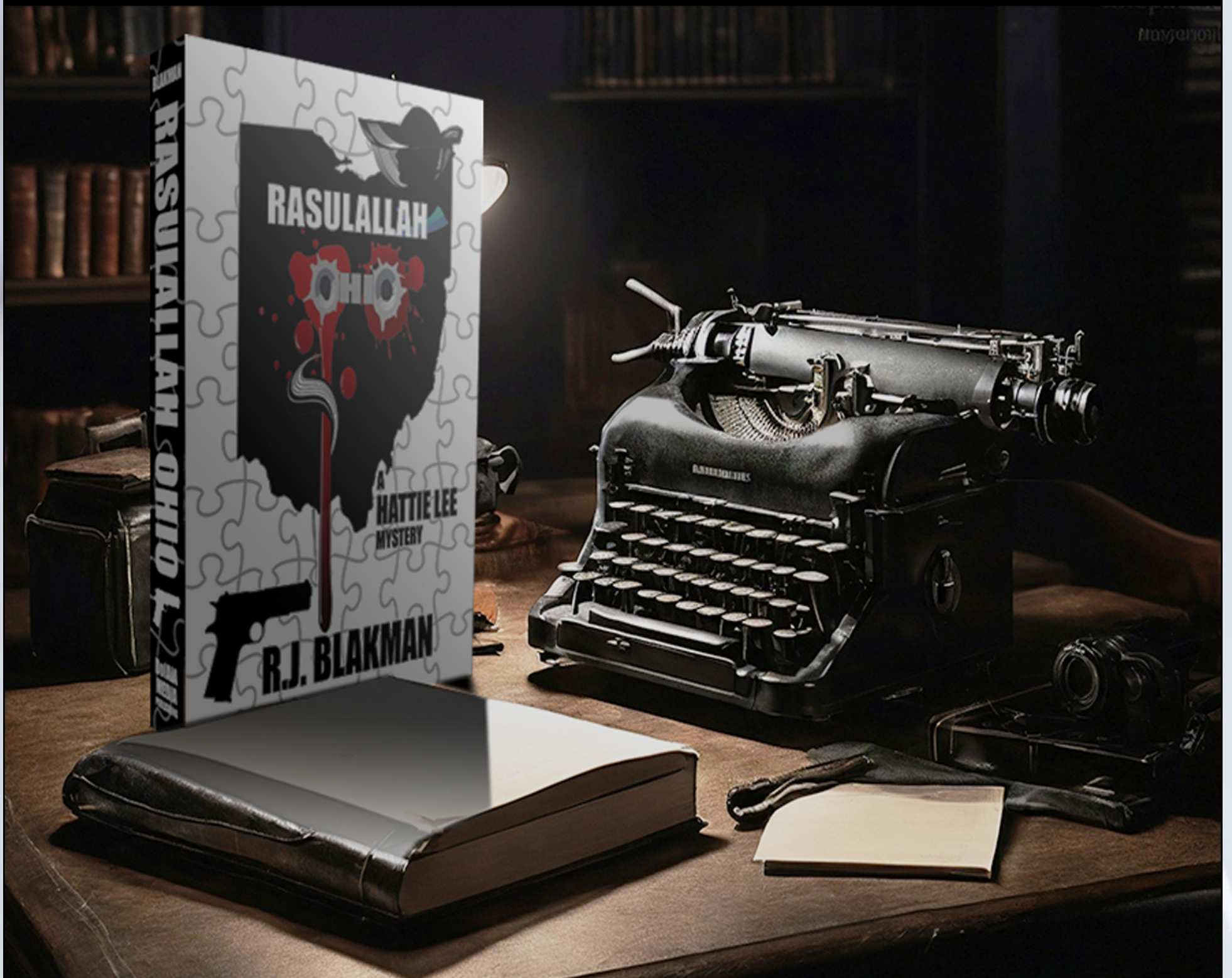
# DARIK

*A space for avid Black readers and Black authors*

## 1960s Ohio

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

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



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

## **RASULALLAH OHIO: A HATTIE LEE MYSTERY**

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

or click the image above for the direct link.

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



## The EYES of the DYING - Complete Story

As I lay here and think about all of it now, I must admit that before the occurrence I never really thought about such things. But then, why would I have? And what does it all matter now?

Relatively speaking the moon isn't full that often. Not often at all. But on the occasions when it was full (far between they may have been—though sadly, never far enough between), it was those nights that made my life a living hell. It is believed that those who are stricken with my malady don't have any remembrance of what we did the night before.

Ah... If only that were true. Perhaps I wouldn't suffer as I do. But that isn't the case. I can remember extraordinarily clearly the places I go; the things I do; the people I stalk; the people I kill.

Their faces.

Their screams.

Their eyes.

Most of all I remember their eyes.

There is a particular look that people get in their eyes when they know that they are about to die. That's one of the things that amazes me about people. A man can believe to the core of his being that he is about to die but his

eyes won't show it at all. But somehow the body—or the spirit—really truly knows when a man is about to die, and then, it becomes very clear in their eyes.

Some wonder if we feel remorse for the things that we do, the murders I mean. I cannot speak for the others, but I'm very sure that there are

probably those who derive some morbid pleasure from the act of taking a life. I however don't feel that way in the least. There is nothing more distasteful to me than the taking of a life. Each day I am haunted by the specters of the many people who have died because I ripped them apart. I didn't want to do it, I truly didn't. It's the sickness. When it came upon me, I couldn't control what I was doing although I was fully conscious of my actions. There was a blood lust that came upon me, and I had to stalk and kill. I'm not this way when I am myself.





## The EYES of the DYING - Complete Story (Continued)

Maybe you would understand better if you knew how this curse fell upon me.

More years ago than I care to remember, I was the gentlest of beings. I would never purposely bring harm to any other living creature. I was consumed with love for a girl named Kathryn. I met her through her family: the Edwards. I would often sit with them around the fireplace as they spoke about the history of their family. The Edwards were third generation British citizens. Vernon Edwards was the head of the family.

His grandfather was originally from the area now-called Nigeria and had been enslaved. Thus, having had the surname “Edwards” forced upon him, he settled in London after discharge from the military where he fought in the Napoleonic Wars. He still faced many prejudices, obstacles and hurdles, being Black and living in the empire. After slavery was abolished in Britain in 1833, Vernon’s grandfather, Winston Edwards worked hard, taking any jobs (big or small) he could find, from anyone who would

hire him. His sole purpose was saving money to purchase land he could work himself to become independent for the benefit of his family. Once he managed to save enough, Winston purchased land and turned it into one of the most productive small farms in East London, several miles from Whitechapel.

After Winston’s death, Vernon inherited the farm. He, his wife Tessa and daughter Kathryn continued to live on the land and work it in relative peace.

Later they took me in when I was discovered

wandering the countryside on a rainy day, cold and hungry. They were kind to me beyond words and gave me a place to stay. In return I would help around the farm as needed and in any way I could.

Kathryn was the last family member I met, but the one who I most profoundly remember.

Kathryn was kind gentle, sweet and, caring. She was a kindred spirit. The moment that I met her I was hopelessly in love with and devoted to her. I remember the way that





## The EYES of the DYING - Complete Story (Continued)

we used to run all over the English countryside. Those were some of the happiest days of my life. We developed a love that went beyond the mere physical desires with which human beings seem to become preoccupied and which ultimately destroy their relationships and themselves. We were as happy a couple as ever there was.

Our happiness was soon and suddenly shattered.

One night while the rest of the house slept, I lay awake by the great room fireplace contemplating the types of things that can only be figured out in the quiet of the night. It was then that I heard it. The sound of something stumbling around outside. I became very still so that I could listen more closely to see if I was only imagining. The next time that I heard the sound, it came so suddenly and so loudly that I jerked where I sat. My first instinct was to run over to the closest window and see if it were some kind of an animal or possibly a prowler at the window. Before I could get to a window, I heard the noise of what could only be described as glass and wood breaking

in one of the bedrooms. I rushed into Vernon and Tessa's room, and I saw it.

It wasn't an animal, but definitely not a man. It was one of the most horrid sights that I had ever seen in my life. It stood breathing hard and standing in a pool of blood. It must have been incredibly fast because Vernon was already dead, and Tessa was already in its grasp. Because of the massive size of the creature, I knew that there was no hope of me ever fighting it. And Tessa, poor Tessa, was already as good as dead. That was the first time that I had ever seen that look in the eyes and I have never forgotten it. Neither she or her husband deserved the fate they met that night. They were both fair, hardworking and kind people.

My mind went immediately to Kathryn. My love. I had to awaken her (if she wasn't already awake) and get her out of that house.

I rushed into the room and saw her sitting up in bed. Before I could grab her to yank her to safety, Kathryn let





## The EYES of the DYING - Complete Story (Continued)

out a scream. It was unlike anything I had heard before nor have I heard anything like that since. I have never been able to wipe from my memory. I turned around and the creature was in the doorway which was the only exit except for the window which was too far away to run to. I had no choice then. I had to fight, not for myself but for the life of my beloved Kathryn. I leaped at the monster in hopes that he would be caught off guard by the fact that it had been attacked.

Before I could really do anything that would have even remotely harmed the thing, I felt it's horrible hand around my neck and then I felt a sudden weightlessness after which came the sound of breaking glass in my ears and the feel of my skin being cut as though with a hundred knives and then suddenly a sharp pain in my back and side that replaced the weightless feeling. Dazed, I looked up at the window that I had just been thrown out of. There were no candles lit in the house so I couldn't see what was going on, but I could hear the blood chilling screams from my poor Kathryn and the merciless roars of the creature. I composed myself and

dragged myself back through the window as quickly as I could. I no longer heard Kathryn and knew in my heart that she was already dead. I forced myself not to look around the room because although I figured that I was the final victim for the creature, I didn't want my last thought of my beloved to be her mangled body. I looked at the creature with eyes that I knew betrayed my hatred, and then it looked at me. I saw its eyes for the first time.

They were the eyes of a man.

But even more than that there was something about the look that was in them. There was a sadness in them that was almost indescribable. This creature killed and killed viciously... but he derived no pleasure from it. He couldn't help himself.

He was a prisoner and could never be free. Perhaps I can only say these things in hindsight knowing now firsthand what the life of hell it is for those who are thus afflicted.

Be that as it may, I wanted to avenge Kathryn, Vernon and Tessa – my





## The EYES of the DYING - Complete Story (Continued)

family. I pounced at the creature, fully expecting to die but not before inflicting some kind of pain upon it. I was wrong. Again, I felt the hand around my neck and then I felt it's fangs as it bit deeply into my flesh, and once again weightlessness and then the far wall. The last thing that I saw was the creature's eyes. They seemed to be asking my forgiveness. I tried to get up, but my body wouldn't respond. As I lay there, I somehow knew that the thing had no intention of killing me, for whatever reason.

All became darkness.

Sunlight shined in through the broken window and filled the room. Again, I forced myself not to look around. I didn't want to see Kathryn lying dead. Everyone in the house was dead and I had been spared. I left through the window and took nothing with me. I wanted nothing from that house and nothing material to remind me of the house. For a long time, I just wandered alone letting my wounds heal, and pondering my life... or what was left of it. I even thought about ending my life a few times. When I

tried, I found that it wasn't possible. I really didn't feel much different, but I knew that there was something that changed about me, and I knew that it was due to the bite of the creature.

After wandering for days, I was taken in by a family of farmers named Brexton. I worked for them and in return they gave me food and a warm place to stay, as had the Edwards. After a time, I learned to interact with them and to genuinely care for them also. I thought that perhaps I had found a place to stay where I could put some of those horrible memories behind me.

One night while everyone was asleep, I awoke with a start. I looked out the window up to the sky and saw that the moon was full. As quickly as I saw it, I felt a dizziness come upon me and then my body started to burn as if it were on fire. I could feel my body tingling through the burning and then the change started. I could feel my form starting to metamorphosis.

The pain was indescribable. It hurt so much that I couldn't even cry out.





## The EYES of the DYING - Complete Story (Continued)

I knew immediately what was happening to me and I wanted to leave the house, but I could not. In the midst of the pain, I must have blacked out. The next thing I knew, I was coming to. I looked down at my hands and understood that my body was totally changed. Even more confusing and unsettling were the changes to my mind... to my thoughts. My usually docile, passive, and compassionate thoughts were replaced with those of fury, murder and blood lust. I remember walking around the house. First into the kitchen, and then through the living room and finally into the bedrooms. The Brexton family consisted of husband and father David, wife and mother Sonia, and their two sons Tom and Jannis. I remember clearly how I ripped them apart one by one. Sonia managed to put up a valiant fight. Perhaps it was the force of her maternal instincts, knowing her sons would be practically defenseless without her protection. David did not have that opportunity. I killed him first.

I murdered him in his sleep. The

memories of that horrible night are ever part of my immortal existence. The screams. The blood. The killing of an innocent people who trusted me and took me in. I killed them all and I can still remember very distinctly a feeling of remorse and self-hatred even while I was committing the horrors.



That was when I fully understood the look in the eyes of the monster that did this to me. I was compelled to murder them. I couldn't stop myself. It was as if I was watching the entire episode occur from outside my body and was

powerless to do anything about it.

That was the last night of my being connected to any family or anyone who would dare show me hospitality. I tried many times to take my own life but found that it was useless. I suspected the folklore was true, this nightmare could only be ended by a silver bullet administered by someone who truly loved me.

That could never happen now because the family that loved me and held me dear was dead. After what I did to the



## The EYES of the DYING - Complete Story (Continued)

Brexton family, I knew that I dared never get close to anyone else ever again. I most definitely had no love for myself. I meandered the streets or lived in abandoned houses or barns until I was discovered and then I would move quickly on.

Though I would need to at times dwell in the streets of different towns where I was always able to acquire food and something to drink; if I realized that there would be a full moon in a few days I would go to places that were so remote that I knew that it was at least a two or three day journey before I would see a human being. To my surprise that ploy worked amazingly well as I became more adept at knowing when the event would occur. Even a creature like me can't cover three days' worth of territory in one night. At those times I remember roaming around and looking for someone to kill. When I was not finding a human being, the blood lust would howl in anger, but my mind would cheer! And in the morning when I would awaken, I would be back in my true form and the blood lust would be gone as if it

had never been there. Those are the few times of peace that I had.

Sometimes I would try the distance ploy but miscalculate the night of the full moon and not be far enough away soon enough and find myself stalking the inhabitants of some unsuspecting town.



It's been almost forty years since I killed my first victim, Vernon Edwards. There have been many since then. I don't know all of their names, but I do remember all of their faces. And their eyes. The weight of my crimes hangs like a

millstone around my neck. There are often times when

I wonder why this thing fell upon me. One who detested violence, held a reverence for life, and wished only to be gentle, like Kathryn. I tried to live the rest of my life (the normal part) that way, but the knowledge of what was inside me hunted me. Being the worst kind of hypocrite overshadowed everything.

The kindness I would show never gave me any consolation knowing I



## The EYES of the DYING - Complete Story (Continued)

was a monster at my core.

There was a town that I lived in for about three weeks and I heard about someone that was sadistically torturing and killing women at night. I knew that I of course had nothing to do with that. Not to say that I have never killed a woman. I have already told you that I have and still do I am sorry to say. Furthermore, I remember everyone that I ever killed. I was not responsible for these deaths. I do know that whenever I heard about the monster who was torturing these women, contempt welled up most violently inside of me. This person, I knew, wasn't like me in that I had absolutely no choice in what I did. In my opinion, he knew full well what he did or who and how he killed. He did these things because he wanted to.

The full moon came.

I wandered the streets.

I killed a few prostitutes.

I heard screams in the distance, coming from a house.

I walked slowly toward it. The scream was loud once and then it was muffled after that. I walked around to where there was a small hole in the wall, and peeked in. I could see a man. He was naked and laughing, with a crazed joy in his eyes, as he was stood over a bed on which laid another naked figure. This one of a young woman. She looked to be about eighteen or nineteen years old by my guess. She was tied to the bed, blindfolded, and gagged.

She was bleeding profusely. The man had an object in his hand that dripped blood. He tossed it to the floor and smiled as he prepared to mount the woman. That is when I broke in through the window. I remember, as if it were yesterday, the way that I ripped at his body and then took his heart out. Even after he was dead, I continued to tear at him. Out of the hundreds of people that I had killed, this was the only time I can remember that I actually took pleasure in killing someone. It was at that time that I knew that I must never lose control





## The EYES of the DYING - Complete Story (Continued)

of myself like that again. I liked killing this man; I enjoyed it too much. When I had satisfied myself that I had given this piece of human garbage a proper send off to hell I turned my attention to the young woman on the bed.

She was already dead.

I was glad for I knew that had she not already been dead I'd have killed her.

You must understand. When I am like this, I cannot fight the compulsion to kill, even if it is an innocent young woman.

Again, I felt pity for the one who made me into this.

Wandering but never finding rest became my life.

One day I chanced to wander near a stream where I saw an old woman sitting under an oak tree. At first, I was going to walk past her and then I saw that she was eating something. I had not eaten for many days so I could not resist going and hoping that she would be kind. I walked slowly up

and stopped a few yards short of her. She turned toward me and although noticeably startled by my presence, she looked me over for a moment, then said in the kindest voice that I had ever heard, "Are you hungry? If you are, you may join me." There was

something so familiar about her that I forgot my hunger and simply ran away. Her way reminded me of Kathryn and I dared not grow an attachment to her for fear I one night should kill her.

In spite of that I found myself watching her house and following her around town. She

reminded me so much of my dear Kathryn in her mannerisms. I wasn't too worried about doing anything to this woman. I was sure of when the next full moon was, and I planned to leave before the time came to change my form, so that no harm would come to her. But I had made a fatal mistake.

One day while I was wandering around on the old woman's property, I noticed too late that there were loose boards covering an extremely deep hole.





## The EYES of the DYING - Complete Story (Continued)

I only knew when I stepped on them, that the boards could not support my weight. By the time that I tried to get off, it was too late.

Weightlessness.

Sudden pain.

Darkness.

I felt a hand upon my cheek and when I came to consciousness, I could see the figure of the old woman standing over me.”

You’ve been unconscious for days.” She said to me. “I didn’t know if you were ever going to wake up. Mr. Davis up the road helped me to get you out of that dried up well.”

I looked around... I didn’t know what day it was or exactly how long I’d been out. All that I knew was that it was nighttime. The old woman said that she would be back and then left the room. I tried to get up, but I was feeling too weak... at least for a while. My body started to tingle. It was then that I found the strength to get away from the bed. I staggered toward the

window and peered out.

The moon was full.

I fell to the floor writhing in pain. I could feel the change coming and through my pain all that I could think about was the kind old lady who took me in and would soon be dead. When the change was complete, I stood up. The old woman walked into the room. I took a step toward her and then stopped in my tracks when I saw that there was no fear in her eyes.

None whatsoever.

I stepped toward her again.

“No, Jack.” she said.

Once again, I stopped. She knew my name. I hadn’t been called that name in nearly seventy years. She knew who I was. I seldom spoke when I was in this form, but I forced myself. “Kathryn?” I managed to say.

The old woman sat down in a rocking chair that was in the corner of the room and started to rock slowly back





## The EYES of the DYING - Complete Story (Continued)

“When the creature came into the house and killed mother and father you tried to protect me. After it threw you out of the window it approached me, and I started screaming. And I guess that was when I fainted. The next morning when I woke up, I saw you jumping out the window and I was still too dazed to say anything. I don’t know to this day why it didn’t kill me. Perhaps the one shred of humanity it had left allowed room for mercy... or pity.

“It had the eyes of a man you know.

“When I started hearing the stories about people being ripped apart... somehow, I knew that it was you. I cried so many nights for you... for how I know that you must have suffered. I waited for you and prayed that one day we’d find each other again and I could help you the way that you helped me those many years ago. When you came to me by the stream, I thought it was you, but I wasn’t sure... It has been a long time you know. You didn’t really recognize me either. But now I know... because you have changed into this form. I

know it’s you Jack.”

With that she stood up and raised the gun that she had been concealing in the pocket of her apron.

“These are silver bullets. I always have and always will love you, Jack. Your—both of our—pain can end now.” she whispered as a tear made a path down her cheek.

I heard two loud bangs and then felt myself falling to the ground. Which brings me to this point.

I turn my head to the side and look into the mirror on the near wall that goes from the floor almost to the ceiling. I look into my own eyes and know that finally the nightmare is about to end. The old woman walks over to me and kneels down. “I do love you so.” She whispers as she rubs my cheek.

It is then that I take the remainder of my life and energy to speak and say what my beloved Kathryn had always known but I was never able to say. “You are the only one that I have ever truly loved in this life Kathryn, and





## The EYES of the DYING - Complete Story (Continued)

Thank you for loving me enough to save me. I love you so... my darling Kathryn.” Were my last words as the years of horror melted away as all became darkness and peace for me. The last breath would be sweet...

\* \* \*

The lifeless form of the man lay naked on the floor and Kathryn decided that she would wait until morning to bury Jack. She covered him with a blanket and closed the door when she left the room.

The following morning, she took Jack out to the stream where they had seen each other for the first time since they were separated.

The grave was already prepared. She slowly lowered the wolf hound into the hole and then covered it with Earth. Kathryn then said quietly, tears welling in her eyes, “This field has always reminded me of the one that we used to play in when I was a little girl. You were always my best

friend Jack and I know how gentle you are. I know that you didn’t mean all of those things that you did when you would change.” She laid some flowers at the headstone and wiped it off with her hand. “I wrote the poem that is on your headstone many years ago and I had it engraved for you.”

The stone read:

“When man walks as a wolf,  
By the full moon’s light,  
We know that it’s tragic,  
Though we all scream with fright,  
And just as sad too,  
Though we don’t understand,  
When a gentle, sweet dog,  
Takes the form of a man.”

Rest in peace my loyal, brave Jack. “I named you Jack when you were a puppy and that’s the way that I’ll always remember you, as simply Jack.” Kathryn said as she turned to walk away. “It was the newspapers writers who named you the ‘Ripper.’”

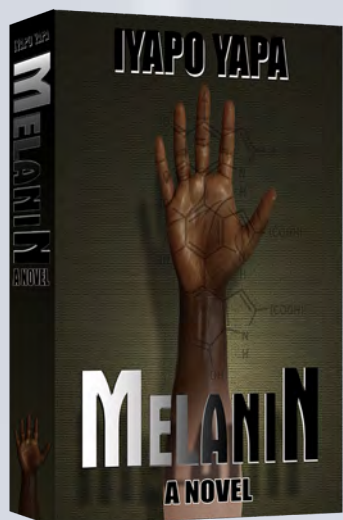


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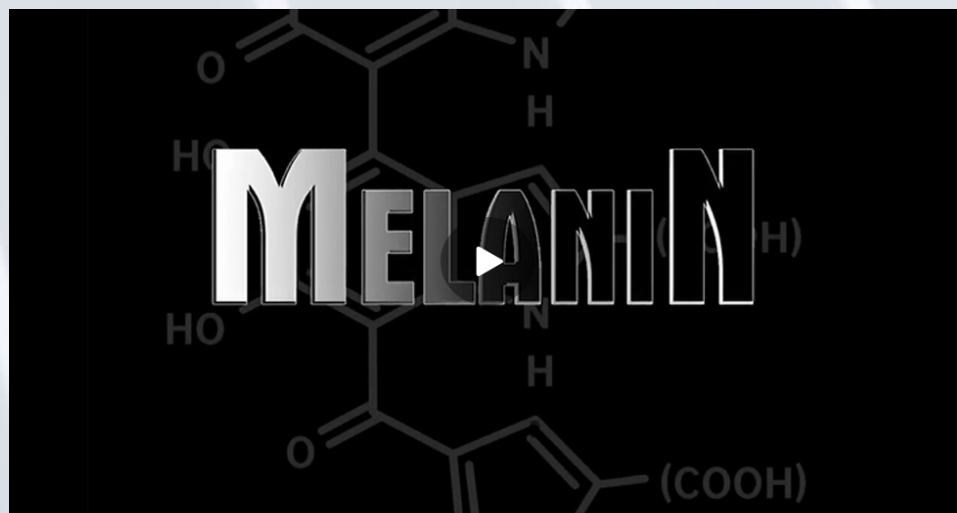
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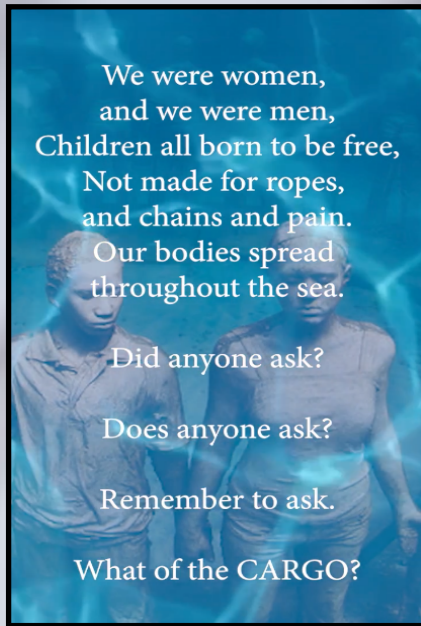
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## Here is your August 2024 Crossword Puzzle!

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

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

**SEPTEMBER WORD SEARCH**

U C B O W H F Z E Y E F U F C V P Q O M J I P V Y V O F Z P U E N W U D B N V A  
 Q D T S U R V I V I N G D J H W H R Z P B T S E M B H T X H T L E K Y K Q Q C G  
 U F I Q P C C S Z S R O I U G T L X N H P M B P K E V Y T G B H P J V R K A O C  
 U N I Y Y D M X M N V S V V L R P J H U E O E H A G G G U O R S L U W U Q N K E  
 C M A P V M O L B N Z O K A E R A U H W H R S D L E C L N G H D T G D U G T O N  
 F U Z N K V T X E W T V D Q A T P T C T N U K I A E U B A R M E H S G F Y Z V T  
 M B Y W O T E F C J A M K F H T I K U I Z T L B T A A Z P I E B K K Z I R I N R  
 F B D R P W I C M X K G L T X U I F O I H J L L H I N S O P Y J S R T W A L W A  
 A K D I P Q R O E M C Z V H V D S K Z T T Q F S E W O A L K N P I T X M S N Y L  
 M X Z T T U K I V T R T L K A Q Z H L I N O W Q D Q R N O Z R S B A H N U D W C  
 U J M E N I S U M Y K I B A L Y A Y S P F L U K Y R Z M G A G M R G B F L Z R E  
 R D F R K E V H D O P S K J H M B I O M Q B Z S W I J O E B U K Q A Y A A T Y V  
 D C M W M N V D V X S A P A B W B X M A G A Z I N E K C T T J D A X Q P L F J A  
 E T L H I S A H U W C R B X A K N O T Z O N B Q I E A P I D I Q B S G D L X E K  
 R D M Z H X G E X Y L G L D Q B R L D U G S Z B O R J N C I U P A I P L A N D N  
 E C O J H Z K G Q D H G A S B G E T L H O R T P O V I E G M D W N C W P H X Z G  
 R L B C H S A U D K G K R S L R R T P M H I B O Y F R K E E O A Q J Q H F X H B  
 B B F I G D K R U J T M Y X X B A M Q N K G K L B F D I T E M L R B A K S N L V  
 I K T Q A Z T G H C H R Z Z D Y W N O F K U Q I V N K G G F Z J F A U S U Z Y X  
 M I Q L A I E M F I I Y P T L E A O M U T Y R D E B X B J X X O P K W Y Q K T S  
 M L O O W G W A B W E O D V Y R K R U P M M M G R M E V L G Z G C Y G I X L Z F  
 O X P B W R L R C K B P U H Q E E P L N A Q X T R U X D F E M L N G T W U V R G  
 R R T X S T F P B B N P L Y Y F N W L C Z J J V J S D U K O A F Z Y H W P Z J S  
 T H N K O O L Z W E A G K G E H I L R O E E W T G S X K C T D H P S M N S J U P  
 A X T Z F Z L K E A Y V D C I D N G F I S J I L Q W W Q F G C P F X A Q T Z O Y  
 L X N B B B Y E Q R N Z N R Y T G Q U V O O P W Q O X M F Z Q D Q H Z X R Q X B  
 I C D P F E S Z T J V J V O A T J B P P I E B H J G P Q T Z E I K P R S Y X I I  
 T I F O H Z I I E E W K B B R W Y B B Y O C O N O Y O S G B L O C K N H U W E D  
 Y W L E C N N C X B O N P P P P J E H M D S D C F D W E H L B W J U H A Q P G Z  
 W X A Z I G E D M M B X J V K X P H X E J I G Y G D M S N I K B R O Y D J L V W  
 P C Q N S T X I A U F Y R Y D N K O U L A D K W F X Y R W Q B D I Z D O T Z R G  
 H L U Z E D S T Y Y B Y G G P N B K G A Z W C K T E I M R Y U U T F F W J J R O  
 A V I T H E O R E T I C A L A M U V A N S L S K W M J A U V H D G A A H H S P K  
 V K T E B W T G E P Z B J B J H B P M I U M C R O S S W O R D F R A D O A Z B E  
 K V A Z U Z G H K H N N S Z I X Y W K N J E F V Q C D T Z N I P J H K U M P V E  
 T M O F A K X P D V P K H K M T K N X Y O I T B J G E N R M L R A D T S R L Y P  
 E K B C H P N Q D C M Z K U A F N I F B J F A Y F E B M Q W A Z X Z Z E I E G E  
 T J W X M H I I U G G T Z Q Y Y O W Q C M L T C S T I S U S H T P U A M A G Y R  
 G W K Y D Z F E B W D E O F E W P L P U W M E O T L E T T E R R F M M F E J A S  
 K P O W V Y Y Y Q A Y U N E K W A T E R S B I D X J I R P D E P G U D G Y A E X

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## SEPTEMBER 2024 WORD SEARCH WORDS

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MAGAZINE  
MELANIN

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## CONFESSIONS of a POLITICAL ATHEIST

I am not now, nor have I ever been a member of the Democratic Party (the very name it being a misnomer).

Nor am I any longer a registered Republican. I haven't been for several decades now.

Nor am I an Independent or a Libertarian. I don't belong to the Green Party, The People's Party, The Rent is too Damn High Party, or what have you. (Though if pressed, I might be persuaded to join the Rent is to Damn High Party).

I am a political atheist.

What does it mean to be a political atheist?

For my purposes, being a political atheist is exactly what it sounds like. The equivalent would be, to be a spiritual atheist. An atheist is a person who does not believe in God, or even a higher power. If a person says they are an atheist, but they believe that there is some universal higher power or intelligence or whatever, they are not an atheist. They are agnostic at best. For one to say they are an atheist but believe there is something out there somewhere, is like a person

saying they are a vegan, but believing in having a steak every now and then.

Spiritual atheists do not believe. Therefore, any proposition by any religion is folly to them. In terms of movies about the supernatural, atheists may find them entertaining, even engrossing, but they are not unsettled by them in the way a person who espouses such belief systems would find them to be frightening. So, by that standard, I do not believe in any political party and even less the individuals at the levers of them. I will talk at

length about politics with friends and family (when they dare to have the conversations), I will watch the political talking head commentaries on both mainstream media and well as social media, and I will even tune in to watch their conventions and debates. For me it is all entertainment.

Literal political theater.

I haven't the slightest belief or trust in what is being said or done as





## CONFESSIONS of a POLITICAL ATHEIST (continued)

a spiritual atheist does when they see movies about the supernatural or entertain such conversations.

A person can pray and have that prayer answered. However, to the atheist there is no real connection.

The prayer and result of same is chalked up to being a coincidence at best.

Same with me when it comes to votes, marches, demands etc. as they are made to politicians. If voters, by some miracle get something they asked for, I draw absolutely NO connection between the actions of those who took the streets and yelled and screamed and the outcome. There is a Princeton study that proved that there is virtually NO correlation between what the public wants or demands and what the government does. When dealing with politicians and a system that is bought and paid for by oligarchs and big money donors, there is little mystery as to why that is the case.

When it comes to the so-called, “justice system,” whether a person is convicted and spends the rest of their

life in a cage has little to nothing to do with guilt or innocence, especially if that person happens to be Black. It is all about money and who has the best attorneys, and who the defendant is up against. If there were truly a just justice system, non-violent drug

offenders who are in some cases STILL rotting in prison would be out in the world living their lives and the parade of war criminals who lead the country would be in the cages.

But no. That is not how the system was designed or works.



Is it any wonder I don't believe?

My political and social identity was not always as I have just said. As a matter of fact, I became a conservative in my teens (due in no small part to my having become a Christian), and then a republican when I finally started voting.

I remained a republican into my forties. I can still remember the day I told my mother I was a Republican. The way she reacted, one would have thought I just told her I was on crack.



## CONFESSIONS of a POLITICAL ATHEIST (continued)

Now in hindsight, I think she might have taken it less hard if I had told her that instead. Either way, looking back, I even ask myself if maybe I was on something.

Being a black republican is like being in a relationship with an abusive partner. You go into the relationship because of the things you find attractive, and totally disregard or ignore the glaring red flags that say, this person may not be totally right in the head. Once in, things seem good for a while, then you start to notice that the words of true love they give you are never backed up or followed through on, and that they ring hollow. But you stay with it—because “Things will get better.”

Slowly as you start showing up in public with a bruise here, a knot there, and constantly wearing sunglasses, you find yourself making excuses for the one you are with. Not even realizing how obvious it is to people looking on that you are being abused.

In the middle of the night, you tell

yourself things will get better and keep reminding yourself of the reasons you are there in the first place.

Still don't believe that I was about that life?



Ok... I once regarded Ronald Reagan as one of the greatest presidents of modern times. I considered Colonel Oliver North to be a true patriot that took the bullet and allowed himself to be thrown under the bus for his country. Voted for George W. Bush... TWICE. Listened non-stop to Rush Limbaugh,

Laura Ingram, Sean Hannity, Marlin Maddox (I still have recordings of his radio show “Point of View” on some of my Minidisks - YES... MINIDISCS, that's how long ago that was).

I used to think Michelle Malkin (who was the Asian version of Candace Owens, before Candace Owens became Candace Owens), was spot on in all her analysis. I would watch “The McLaughlin Group” on PBS, and listen to the likes of Pat Buchanan, Eleanor Clift (who was the



## CONFESSIONS of a POLITICAL ATHEIST (continued)

liberal on the panel), Clarence Page, Morton Kondracke, Fred Barnes, Jack Germond and Mort Zuckerman. I would boo and hiss Eleanor as she'd come across with some far left leaning, liberal tripe (in my opinion at that time), and I would sit up and cheer Pat Buchanan as he would present the view from the right—the “conservative” view—the AMERICAN view. Most if not all the names and shows I just mentioned may be unfamiliar to you, but I cited them to show that I was all in back in the day and truth to tell, my conservatism and being a Republican was joined at the hip with my religious convictions (which is the present state of the so-called Christian Right).

In the midst of all my clapping and whistling, I was cheering these paragons of conservatism on so loudly that I was all but oblivious to the fact that the people they were speaking against were me and mine.

The trick that has been played on the religious right (and I dare say, the religious WHITE) is that they

somehow feel more kinship with these millionaire and billionaire politicians than they do with the common people by whom they are surrounded and with whom many of them work every day.



It works the other way too. *Black broke conservative Republican:*

*Do you think you're going to see Condoleezza Rice at the laundry mat?*

*Or Armstrong Williams at Goodwill?*

*Or Michelle Maikin in the Wal-Mart you frequent?*

*Or Candace Owens now that she has stepped aboard the “Racism and a System of White Supremacy has a*

*negligible to zero effect on the status of Black people in the United States” gravy train?*

*Never gonna happen.*

*Yet these are the people with whom you identify (in addition to millionaire and billionaire white conservatives who, if they had it their way, would have you out in a field someplace picking their crops) rather than the Black people in your neighborhood, apartment buildings or grocery stores.*



## CONFESSIONS of a POLITICAL ATHEIST (continued)

Economist, Professor Richard Wolf would argue that every ill suffered by society economically is the result of class warfare. I agree with him up to a point. The problem is that as I have listened to some of his lectures and his many interviews, it has become obvious, to me at least, that he believes EVERY societal ill is caused by class and that race plays little to no part in it. My belief is that race has everything to do with everything (within a System of White Supremacy – SoWS). Literally, everything done within such a system is for the maintenance and perpetuation of the system.

For decades I espoused the belief that MONEY was this arbitrary line that would not be crossed. I was always told that when it came to money, people didn't see black or white, they only saw green. I have abandoned this illusion. Now I can see that when it comes to the wealthy (or the rank-and-file white people if we look at things like covenant laws to prevent the sale of homes to Black and non-white people), it is seldom about

money. There is case after case of Black people who had the money or resources to purchase things that would assist in them gaining a modicum of power or planting a seed that could grow into generational wealth only to be turned down flat. The only obvious reason being their color and the desire on the part of the seller not to allow a Black person to purchase something that would appreciate.

White people will allow us to purchase, clothes, shoes, trinkets and bobbles all day long, as well as cars that begin depreciating the moment, they are driven off the lot. This consumerism is in fact encouraged and unrelentingly thrust upon us through advertising and various forms of peer pressure and the imagined “keeping up with the Joneses.”

But when it comes to anything that would result in forward or upward mobility and the opportunity for true independence, the resources are blocked and even discouraged. (You don't want to invest in that, it's too complicated and risky. No, you don't





## CONFESSIONS of a POLITICAL ATHEIST (continued)

need that, just the maintenance of it would be more of a headache than you would want to deal with, etc.)

Even the food industry is built upon this demonic model. We are encouraged to consume items which, in another day and time (and even in some present-day countries), are not considered to actually be food. The purpose is to negatively impact our health and well-being and ultimately line the pockets of those who will be “caring” for the damaged bodies. While healthy alternatives that would result in a longer life, better quality of same, and the possible dividend of young people seeing this and following by example, are overpriced and discouraged (except in small conscious circles). Healthy eating and lifestyle choices are not given the advertising and airtime that processed poison is.

I digress.

As I watched each night of both the Republican and Democratic conventions, I was dismayed by

the number of people who stood cheering for politicians and other speakers who regarded them as bugs. As they did, I realized just how deep this illusion and delusion goes of the system in general, and politicians specifically. Anyone

who pays real attention to politics and what is happening globally as well as domestically, can clearly hear the lies and gaslighting of those up before them speaking. There were cases of people who were saying why they should be voted for and not the other side. The problem was, they would be describing what

the SPEAKER’S party was doing. And the crowds went WILD!

No one can nor should try to tell another person what to do. I can only speak for myself and say that I was once a true believer, but due to decades of having the politicians and the government they represent showing and telling me exactly who and what they are, I have at long last—

chosen to believe them.



READING and WRITING in the

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A space for avid Black readers and Black authors



## R.J. BLAKMAN



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

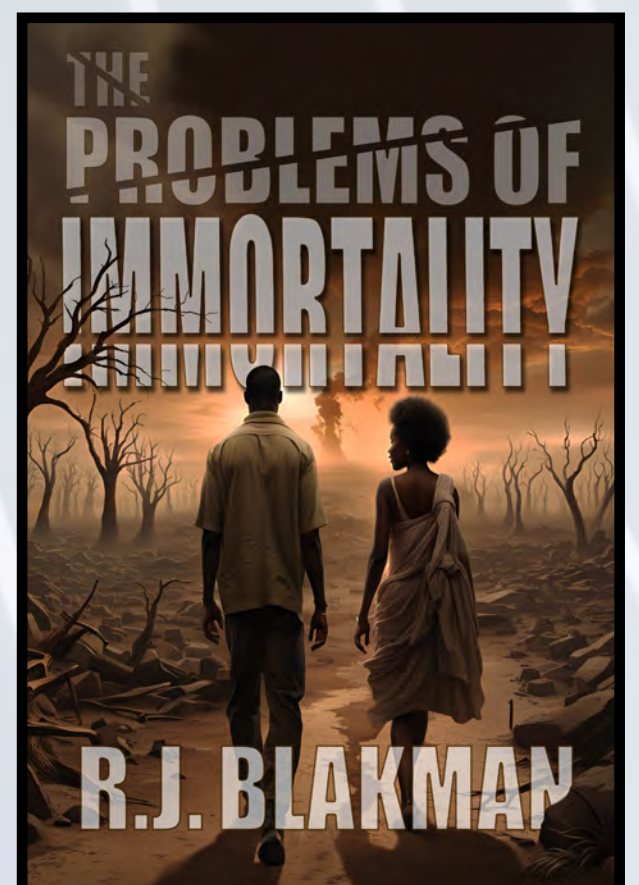
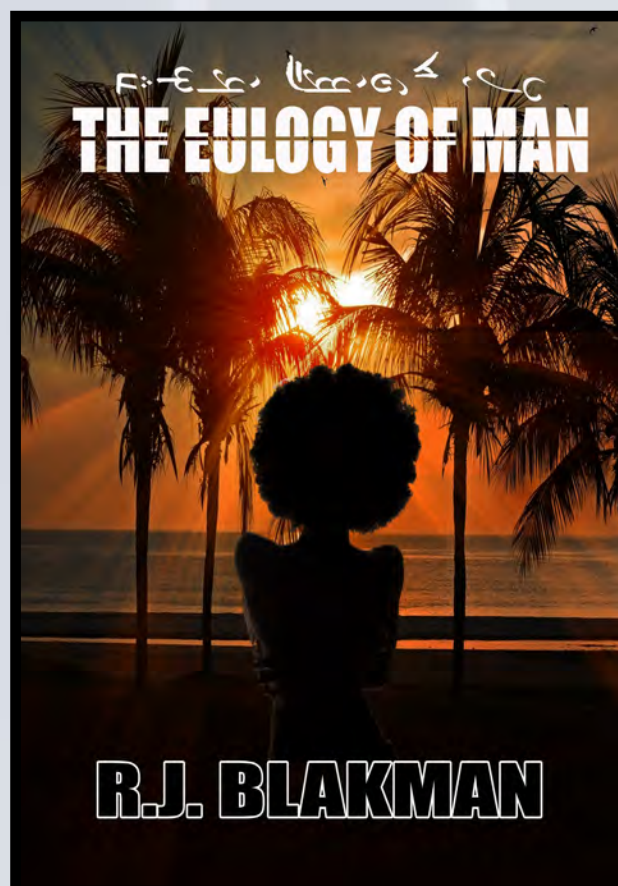
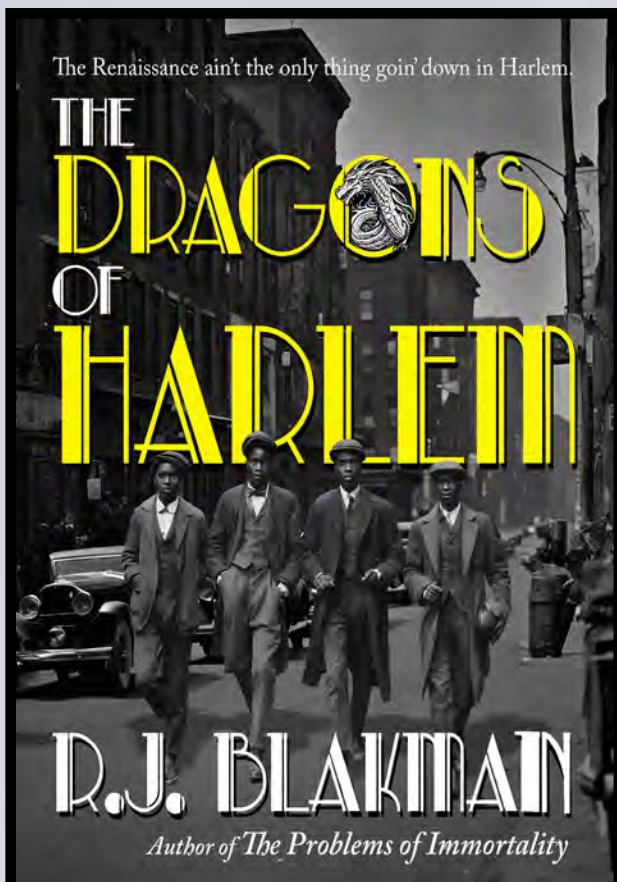
As a practice, Blakman seeks out truth and goes wherever that truth leads him, even if uncomfortable.

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

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



## 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!



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## 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!

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**@iyapo**  
Cartoonist, Illustrator, Graphic artist, Author

Books and Writing by Iyapo Yapa

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

**What if becoming genetically and phenotypically Black was the only thing that could save your life?**  
"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  
MELANIN: A Novel

**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 What of the CARGO?

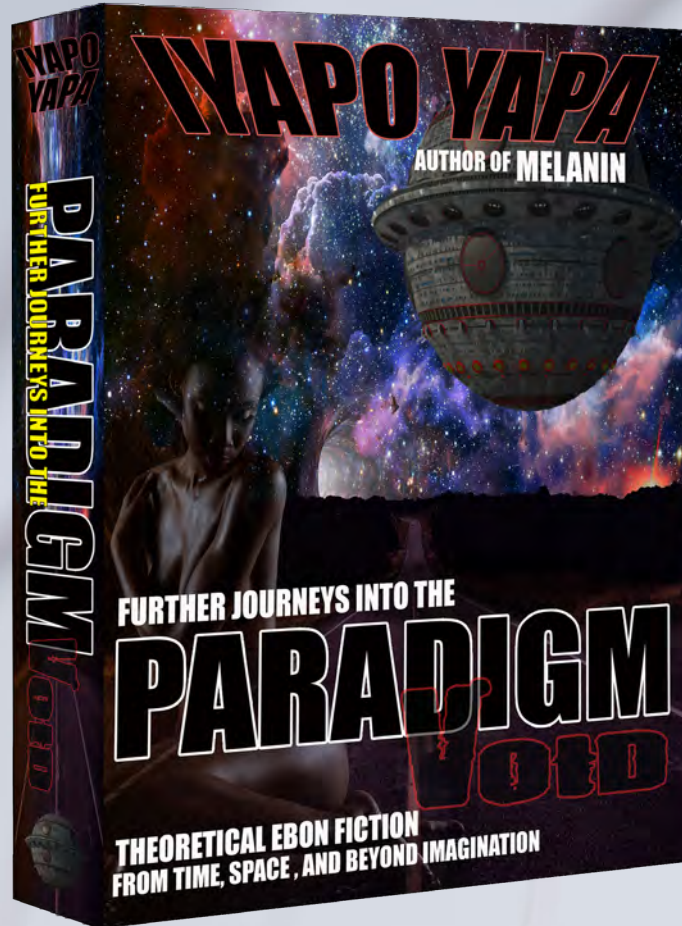
**An anthology of short stories in the realm of Theoretical Ehon Fiction from time, space and suspense beyond imagination.**  
STEP INTO THE MIND  
PARADIGM

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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!

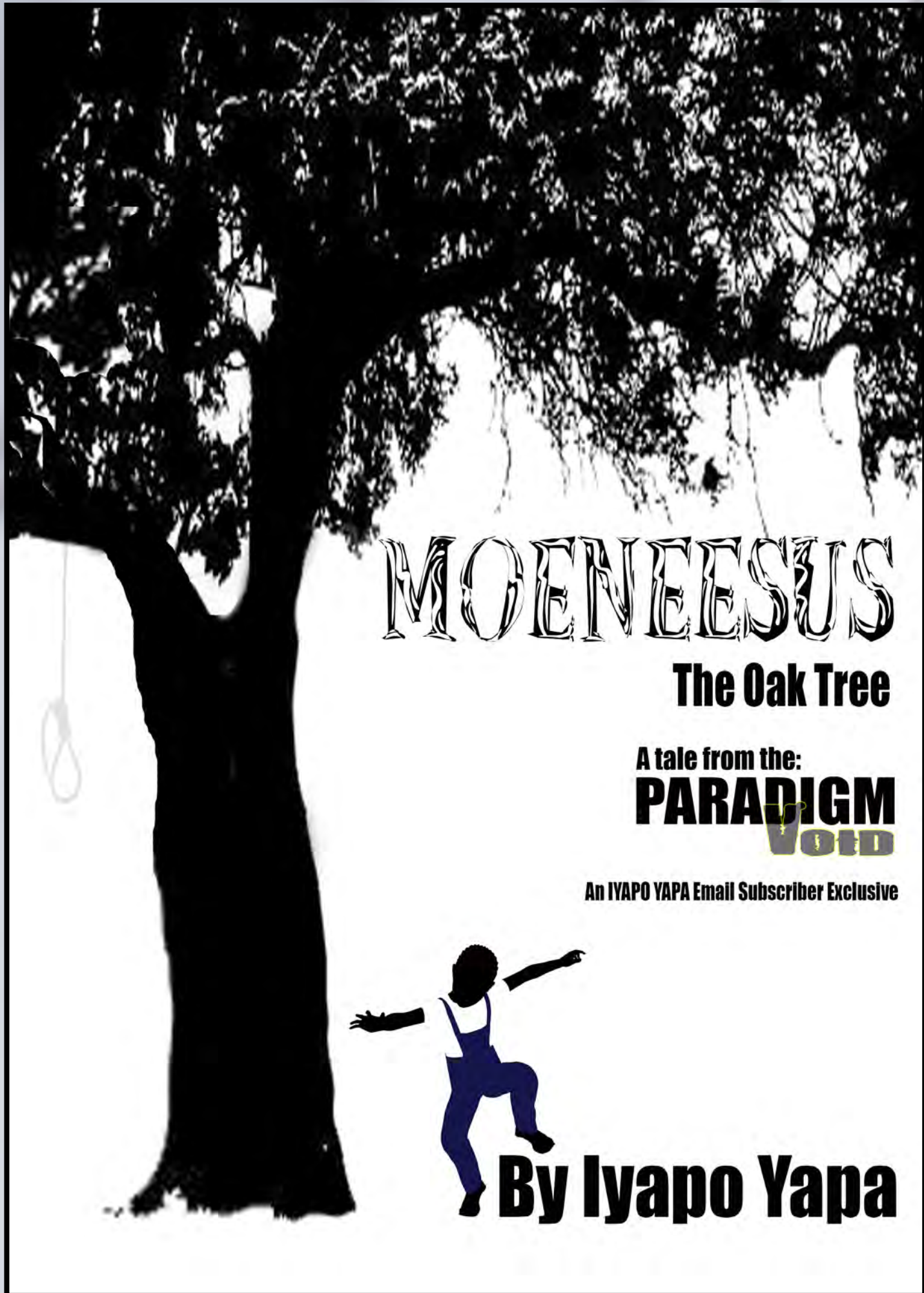
Stories from Time, Space and Beyond Imagination,  
**Paradigm VOID Volume I** is available.



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

READING and WRITING in the

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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

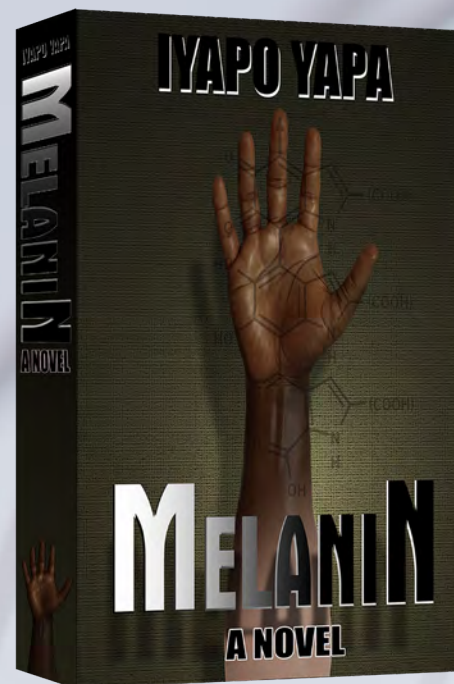
“Yapa weaves another story this time interwoven with historical references. I was on my seat with every chapter. I don't want to give it away but....revenge is sweet when served dead. And I can't get over how different each of his offerings are. Read his Vella's and you'll see what I mean. Another great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

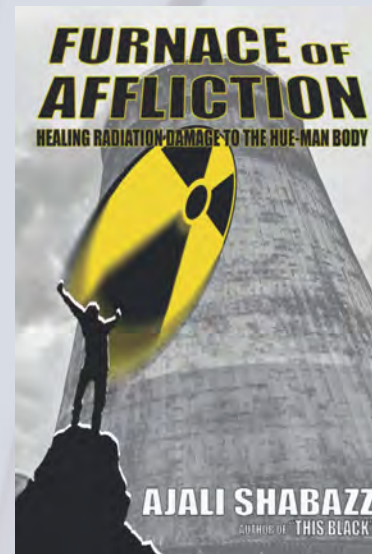
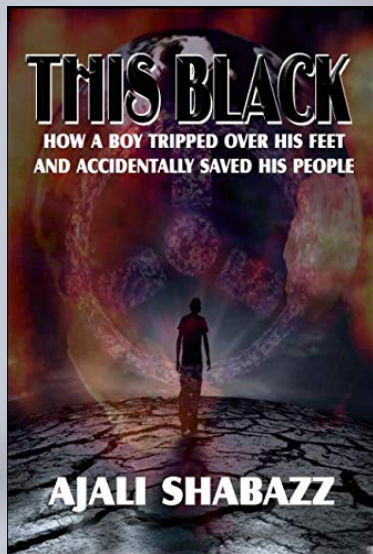
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Books by:

## 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!

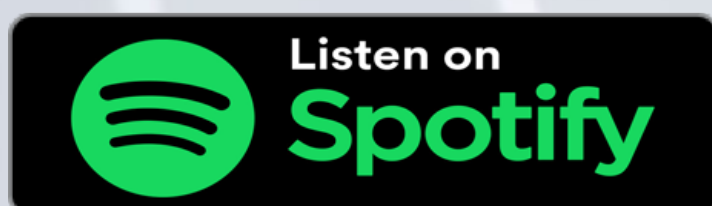
Listen to the interview on  by clicking the link below:

<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:



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**podcast!**

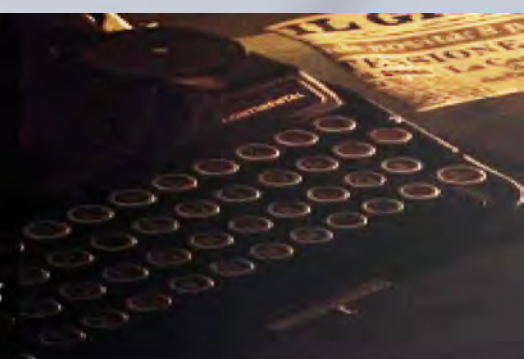
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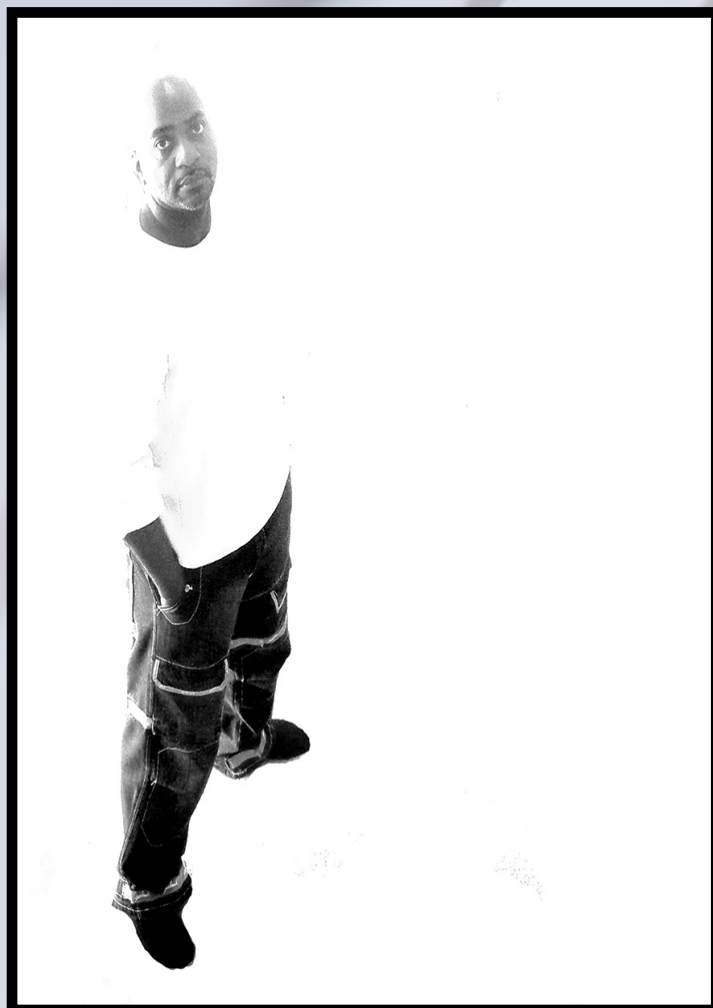
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## Have You Checked Out My Blog Yet?

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.

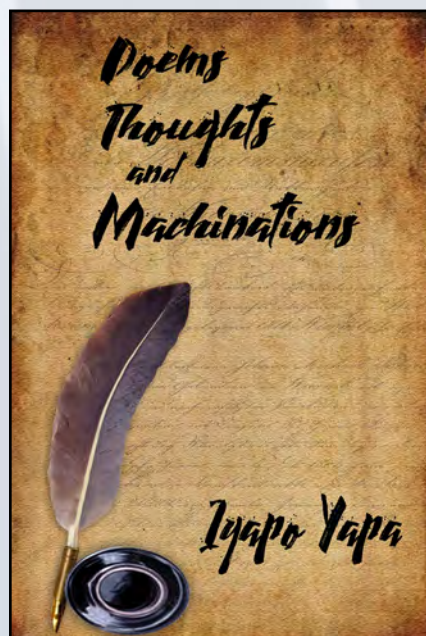
My blog is the place where I talk about what's on my mind and don't worry too much about the formatting or typos - it is, pretty much, my raw perceptions and analysis of what is going on around me.



[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.

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## Could YOU survive?!

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

**SURVIVING the WORST!**

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



### Top reviews from the United States

Amazon Customer

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

Reviewed in the United States on November 5, 2022

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

Amazon Customer

★★★★★ **Best Zombies Ever**

Reviewed in the United States on November 1, 2022

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

kindle vella

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**ANIMATION & RELAXATION**

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

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



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

**ANIMATING!**

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

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

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



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

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

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



READING and WRITING in the

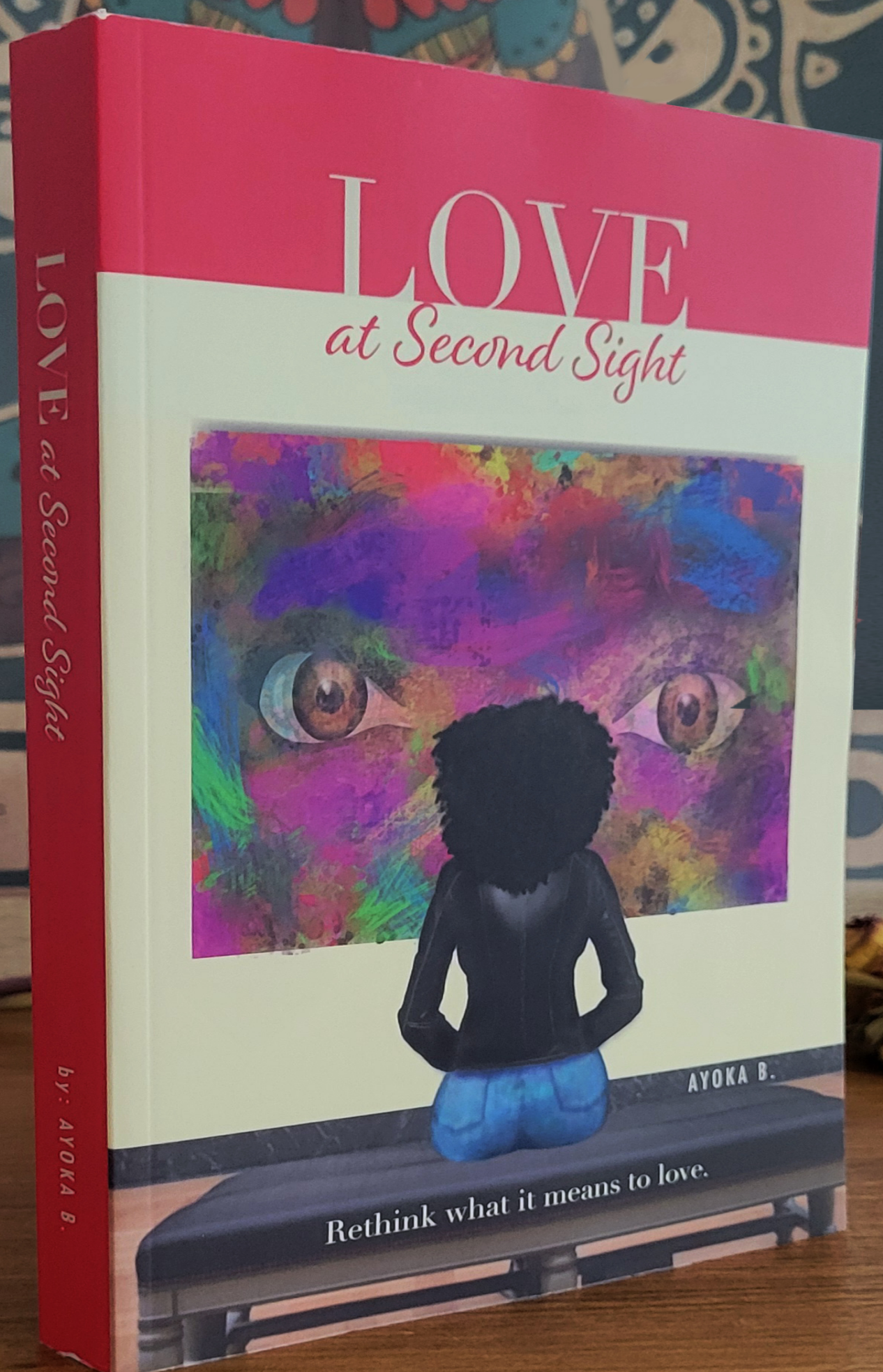
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## LOVE AT SECOND SIGHT IS AVAILABLE NOW!

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

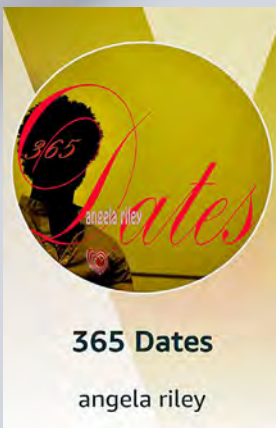
DeClaire and Tyrone meet and sparks fly. They fall in love with each other quick, fast, and in a hurry. It seems too good to be true. But is it? Is it safe to love? Are there any “good” rules when it comes to love? Do we have to fight for love? Are there always games being played when it comes to love?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



### The Love X TamuTamu Agency

Angela Riley

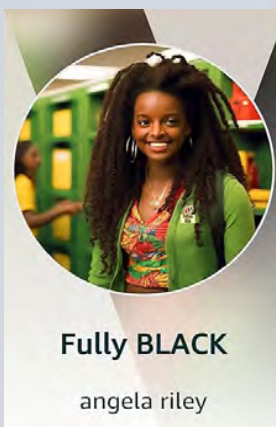
Love is natural but it ain't always easy. And Mama Tamu should know! She is a 91 year old match maker who has run “The Love X TamuTamu Agency” for FIFTY years. She has personally experienced and been a witness to all kinds of love. And, as she says, “Love is more than a notion!” Follow along as she stands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



### 365 Dates

Angela Riley

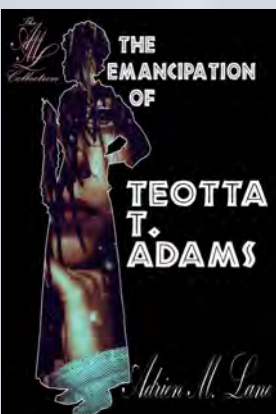
Single again, after my first divorce, one day I had a new thought: I WANT TO DATE. And... NOTHING. No one came knocking on my door to woo me. No one approached me when I was out wanting to court me. Nobody asked friends/family to be set up with me. Just crickets! So, thinking that maybe my goal was to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

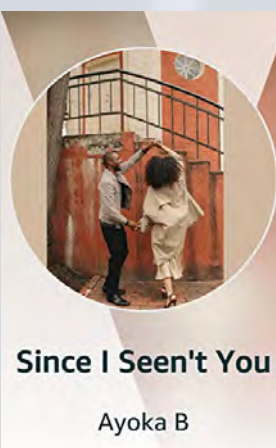
Because she is IN LOVE, talented dancer and homeschooled student Makena enrolls in the elite Fullson High to be closer to Marshall.



### 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?

READING and WRITING in the

# DARIK

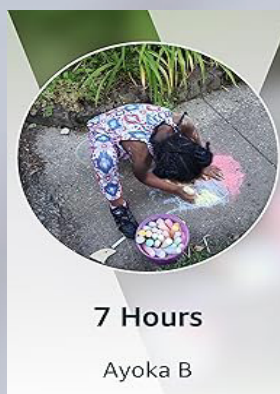
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## The Match

Ayoka B.

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



## 7 Hours

Ayoka B.

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



## The Skin I'm In

Ayoka B.

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



## A'DICK'tion The Back Story

MADM Precious

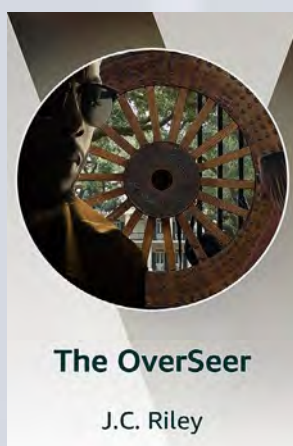
From Book 1: Sex addiction is a real thing; When Quincey finds out his wife is caught up in some things, can they save their marriage.



## The Godchild Chronicles

J.C. Riley

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



## The OverSeer

J.C. Riley

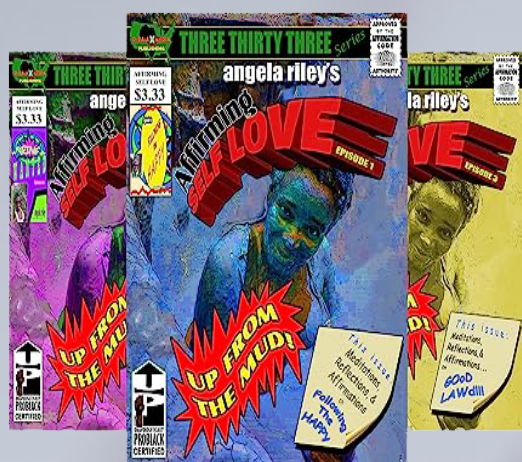
It's nice to be up high and seeing over things, right? Welcome to the world of THE OVERSEER. Strap yourself in because it's one heck of a ride!

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

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

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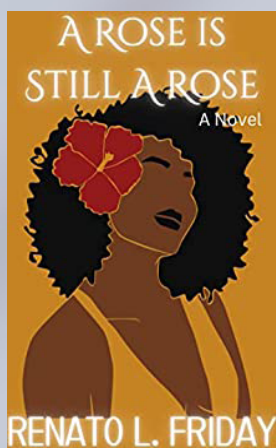


## **Affirming Self Love (Graphic Non-Fiction SERIES)**

angela riley

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

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



## **A Rose is Still a Rose**

Renato L. Friday

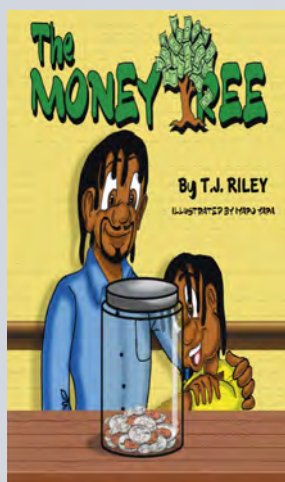
Rose thought life was going great: she was engaged, had a beautiful set of twin girls, a recent trade school graduate, and a new job right around the corner. Unfortunately, her fiancé, David, turned out to not be what she needed, and she chose to break things off. In the midst of her failing relationship,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



## **Longing for the Night**

Ms. KJ

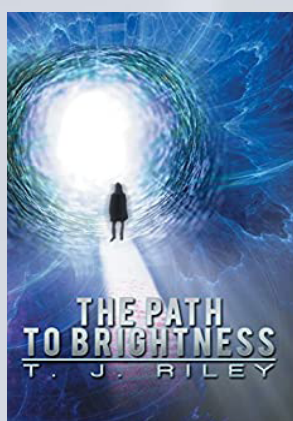
Inspired by the poem Goblin Market by Christina Rossetti, two young sisters face the trials and tribulations of the hood in this coming-of-age story about the harshness of living in South Central Los Angeles.



## **The Money Tree**

T.J. Riley / Illustrated by Iyapo Yapa

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



## **THE PATH to BRIGHTNESS**

T.J. Riley

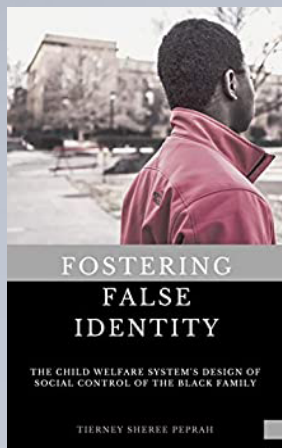
Fatima, a young woman, has a near-death experience. When she awakes from a coma and recovers, she has mystical powers. She begins to see auras and experiences life with her new abilities. For the clever character, Fatima, life is about to dramatically change. Follow Fatima’s journey as she tries to convince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



## **LOVING BETRAYAL**

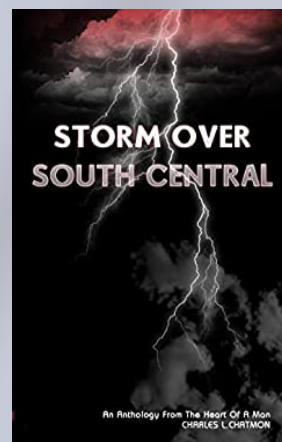
MADM Precious

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



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

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



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

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

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

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



### **RELAY** Charles L. Chatmon

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

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



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

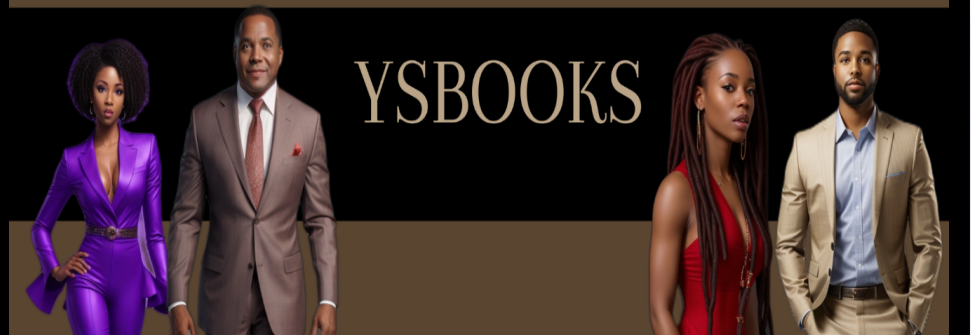
\* \* \*

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## **Altamaha Beast**

**READ FOR FREE OR LISTEN TO THE AUDIO DRAMA!**



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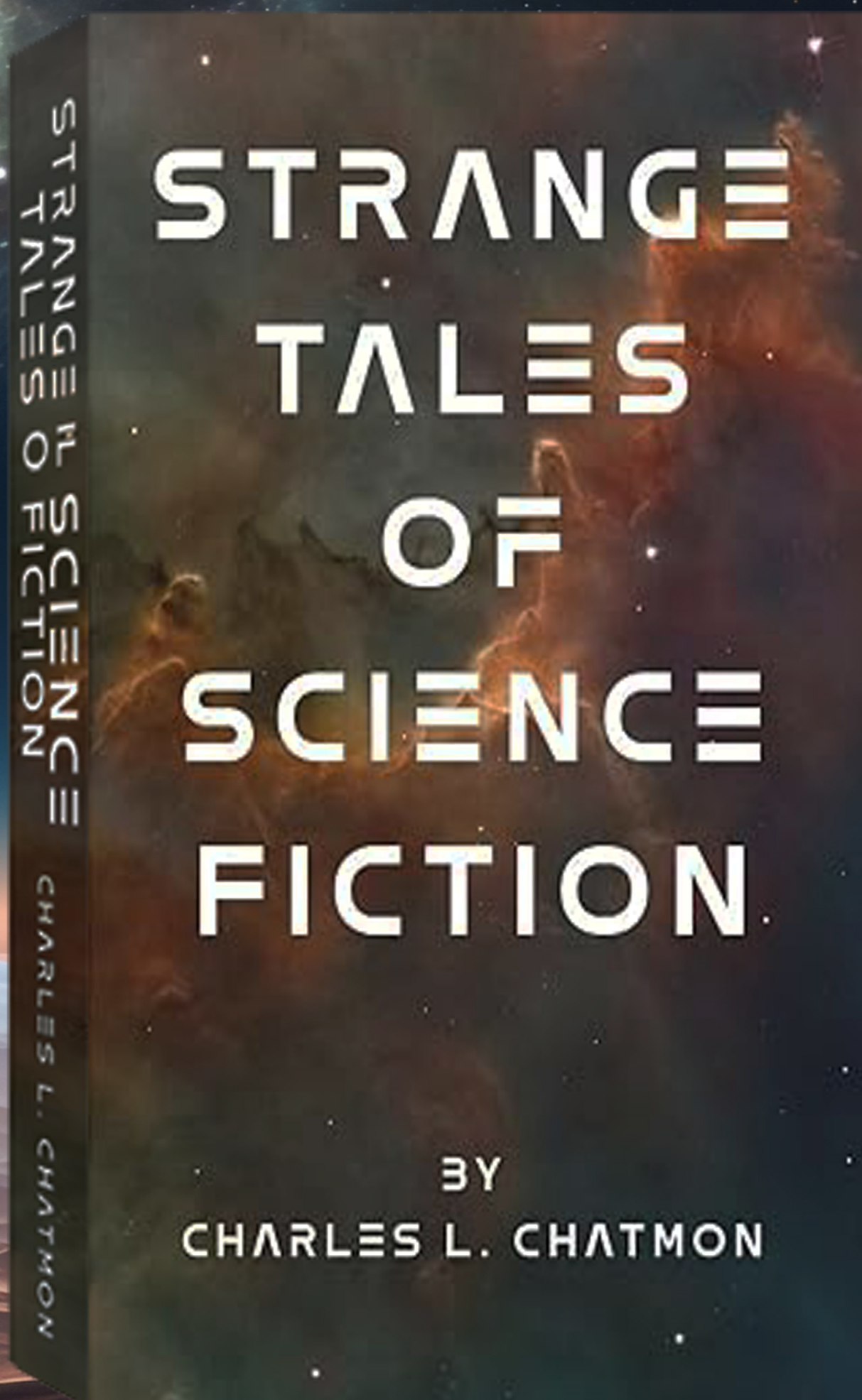
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**STRANGE TALES OF SCIENCE FICTION IS AVAILABLE NOW!**

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

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



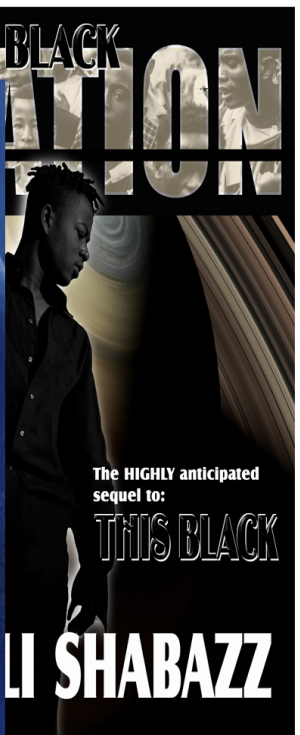
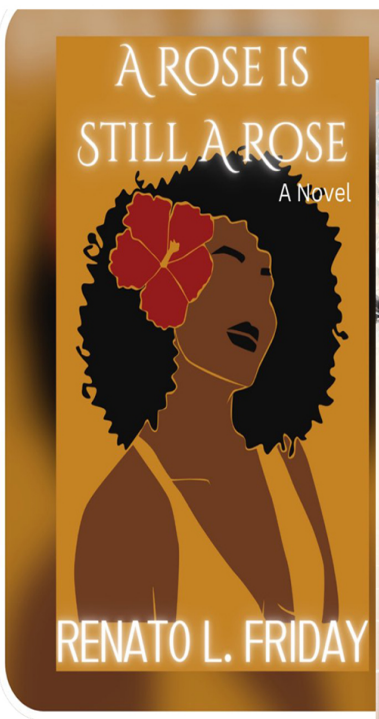
**CLICK ON THE BOOK ABOVE TO PURCHASE ON AMAZON!**

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**AUGUST 2024 CROSSWORD SOLUTION**



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# IYAPO YAPA

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MONKEY'S PAW

NOT EVERY WISH GRANTED MAKES DREAMS COME TRUE

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MAVIA MARU MARS



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