

FATHER'S DAY ISSUE  
JUNE 2018





Father's Day issue is the hardest one to pull off. That bothers me for a number of reasons. Most know my history, so I don't have to go into it here, but for so many in my circle of writers to shy away is painful. Someone has to tell the story of our wonderful men, amazing fathers, and outstanding role models. I am thankful for each and every writer who penned an article for this issue. For some, it was easy. Others had to dig deep. Each story tells of an experience that will touch your heart.

In this issue, I received a profound lesson. I wrote an article and then made the decision not to place it among all the amazing ones written by the featured authors here. Why? Because my truth in taking years to heal, did not match the uplifting vibration of all the other stories. To me, it was more important to have one issue that is totally dedicated to fathers--Black fathers in their truest glory.

Thank you for taking the time to absorb the experiences and relate to them in your own way. We strive that each issue has something that is thoughtful, inspirational, and gives a glimpse into the inner workings that drives the authors to write the books that they do.

As always, I thank you for the support of the magazine and hope you will spread the word to fellow book lovers and book clubs near and far.

Happy Father's Day to one and all who fill that void in a child's life.

Naleighna Kai  
Editor-in-Chief

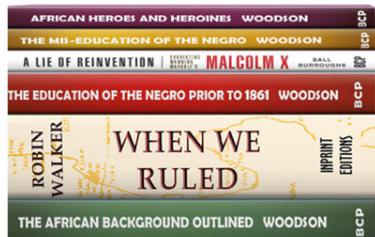
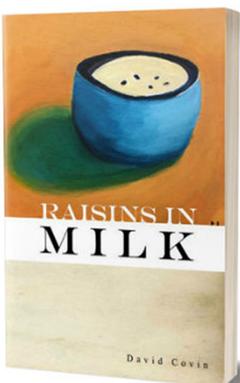
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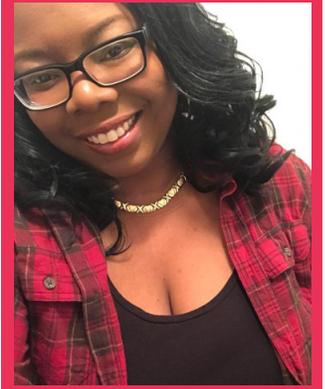
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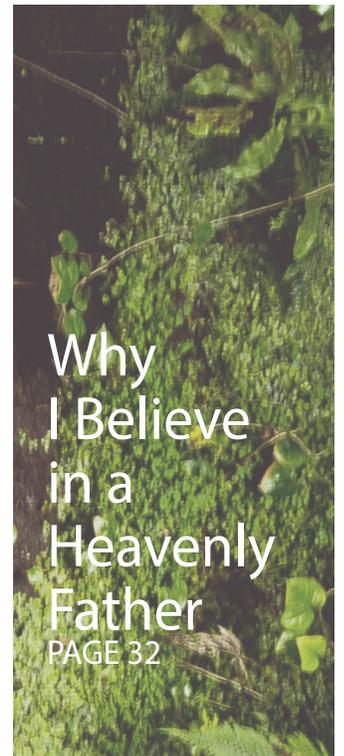


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# Our Fathers



I didn't grow up with my father. I knew who he was, but he wasn't part of my life. Unlike my sister and others I've known, I cannot recall yearning for him or feeling I missed anything. I was raised by women; strong Black women. Marrying a man devoted to me and his children was very important.

M was a hands-on father from the beginning. However, he was a full-time soldier and wasn't as available to my eldest as the youngest. He retired in 1999 when our youngest was just turning fourteen and told me he was going to take over the bulk of his rearing henceforth. I was not feeling that. I felt this kid was smart, loving and mine. My baby. And therein was the issue. He was mine. He loved his dad but was tied to me.

For several months I was bothered by it, they were going to professional and college games, here and there and I wasn't part of it. But two things happened, I started noticing something different. More confidence in my son and a solid tie to his father that at thirty-two, it is even stronger and he admires no man more.

As a result of my husband's actions, I suddenly had an amazing amount of time to be alone with me. Cool! There were joyous evenings filled with wine and books in bed, watching chick flicks or some such. My man's fathering had become a boon for everyone.

In 2017, I wrote a fictional account of that time, *Schooling His Son?* which became an Amazon bestseller and became gifts for men.

Now I'm watching my sons as amazing fathers to their girls. They are involved with every aspect of their lives, and before my eyes I see girls blooming because they were first loved, protected, and nurtured by their daddies. For me, the best work I've been a part of is grooming my sons to be good fathers, good men. I'm also grateful I was blessed to marry the perfect model and example for that. A confident man who proudly loves his woman, his children and now his grandchildren.

This tribute to the man I love so dearly is well earned, year after year.



*Angelia Vernon Menchan is an avid serial writer. Her goal is to engage readers in ongoing stories filled with people like them, who they can grow to know. Some will inspire love and devotion, others rage and ridicule, perhaps. They will all inspire feelings and generate conversation.*  
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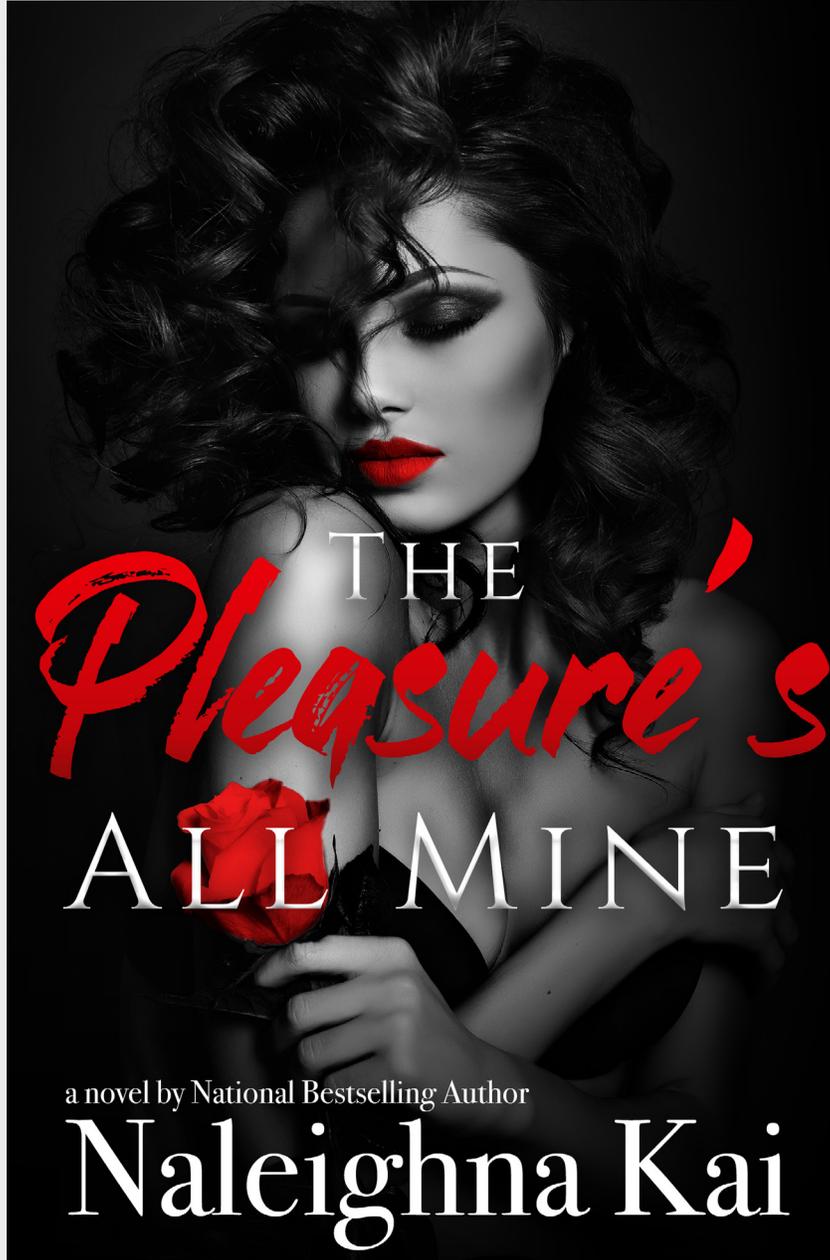
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Raven Armand's son and agent are hell-bent on finding the perfect man for her--even if she kills them. The two unlikely matchmakers' brilliant plan is to pair her up with Pierce Randall, a music industry mogul and the only man who's ever piqued her interest. Just when it looks as if their plan is working, Raven risks everything for a one-night rendezvous at the Castle to discover where her fantasies will take her. Unfortunately, it could turn out to be the costliest experience of her life.

Meanwhile, Pierce has his hands full putting out fires as fast as his shady business partner starts them. He hasn't been looking for love, but it finds him packaged in a voluptuous and fiery woman unlike any he's ever known. It doesn't bother him that Raven was tricked into meeting him, but when she lays down her relationship rules, then disappears on a mysterious trip she won't explain, Pierce realizes Ms. Right might be all wrong.

Naleighna Kai once again brings you deep, heartfelt emotion, beautifully crafted prose, and a dose of belly-laughing humor that is not to be missed in *The Pleasure's All Mine!*"  
L.A. Banks, *New York Times* Bestselling author

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# Tapping the Water



Father's Day was coming. I also knew the call for articles would occur. I knew the person I wanted to base my article on, and I felt totally inadequate.

Now those who know me well, know that I feel inadequate about my height, my singing ability, but not my writing. Sometimes words are inadequate in describing a life. They are too one dimensional to fully breathe life into all the facets of one's being. And I, who love words, struggle with each one I'm placing on this page.

The truth is a few months ago, I couldn't fathom writing this article until I received a call on April 18, 2018.

My girlfriend called me at work to tell me that Willie died. I asked, "Willie who?" We only knew one—Willie C. Bobbitt, Jr.

It wasn't that I didn't hear her. Or didn't understand

what she said. It was that my mind couldn't fathom a world without him.

Willie was my friend Nicole's husband, and I've known them for more years than I'd ever admit in writing.

He was the quintessential baby brother though technically he was older. He drove you crazy while making you laugh. He was occasionally irritating and stubborn as hell. He also had a very distinct point of view and the intelligence to back it up. I can still imagine his eyes bright, lips smiling as he told a story. Or the emphatic way he gestured when driving home a point. But, if there was one thing that Willie was all the time, he was present.

How can a man that was always there for everyone be gone?

See, Willie stood at the center of a pool of people, constantly tapping the water, making soft waves that gently washed over everyone. I didn't talk to him every day or even every week. However, if I went too long without a conversation or a sighting, as sure as the sun rose, I would receive a text from him inquiring about what was going on in my life.

## *Tapping the water.*

Now, Willie didn't just do that for me. He did it for everyone. His wife. His children. His mother. His brother. His family. His in-laws. His friends. His former classmates. His co-workers. The students he impacted through the nonprofits for which he worked. The students he coached. The students he mentored.

## *Tapping the water.*

As news of his passing spread like a California wildfire after a ten-year drought, calls poured in. Everyone wanted to extend condolences. Zombie-like people rang the bell to enter the home, not knowing what to say or do besides show up and be present like Willie did so many times for each and every one of them. And bring chicken. Lots and lots of chicken.

So yes, my mind rejected the fact that Willie passed. And even now, I realize my grief ain't shit. His wife lost not only her life partner but a man whose heart beat in tandem with her own. Her children lost their father, the epicenter of their family. His job lost their Chief Financial Officer and Human Resources person.

In the realm of social media where relationships are widespread but shallow, we lost a man who understood what friendship means. I hope that's a lesson for all of us. Friendship is not a post on Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram. Friendship is not a like or a comment. Friendship is being present. It may not always be convenient or fit neatly into life. It's a decision.

At the end of every 24-hour cycle or each 7-day week, we'd all do well to find the friends slipping through the cracks and bringing them back up. Hear a voice. Text them. Send an email. Hell, write a letter. The United States Post Office will thank you.

As the packed pews in the church at his homegoing celebration can attest, the waves of support, generosity, and love—even when it was tough love—that Willie sent out impacted the lives of many. I didn't know 85% of the people there. But I do know that at any point in the future I could call any of them and say, "I'm Willie Bobbitt's friend," and whatever is in their power to give is mine.

In a selfie culture, where we are encouraged to focus inward, maybe it's time to change our point of view. Tap the water in the pool of our lives to share our blessings outward. Be the impact on someone's life instead of waiting for someone to impact us.

All we can hope for is a legacy that extends beyond our years on this earth. Willie accomplished that. Even the part of me that is crying like I'm watching a Hallmark movie on a Sunday afternoon can smile and say, "Well done, Mr. Bobbitt, and thank you."



*Sierra Kay has an M.A. in Writing from DePaul University, won a Nuyorican Poets Cafe Short Story Slam, participated in comedy fests as a member of the writing teams for Spankx and N20 Comedy. She also writes poetry and suspense novels. Obviously, she'll try anything at least once. Her two novels *From Behind the Curtain* and *In the Midst of Fire* are available online. Learn more at [sierrakay.com](http://sierrakay.com)*

# A great man, a great father



When my son became an expectant father, I wasn't ready and as much as he presented a prepared front, neither was he. As a twenty-year-old sophomore in college, he shouldn't have been. It was his first time living away from home, away from his support system and his foundation. Away from the watchful eye of mom and dad, he was living the life, like most co-eds and I knew a baby wasn't a part of that plan. Lawrence started his academic career as a freshman at Long Island University, majoring in journalism, with plans to become a sports writer. His first year started with a bang, with him getting a spot on the school paper before orientation was even done. He had the school part down-pat. But when you've also been schooled by your parents about the do's and don'ts of campus life and you use your free will to make contrary decisions, one must accept the consequences.

I have to give it to him; from the beginning, Lawrence sucked it up and accepted his responsibility. For as much as he doted on his high school sweetheart, before the baby, he kept it up throughout the pregnancy. Granted, the longer distance made it a challenge, but it hadn't stopped them from creating a baby, so it didn't stop their relationship. Despite my protests,

he came home almost every weekend. They took trips to amusement parks and beaches, posing in bathing suits, showing off her baby bump in bikinis. Pregnancy was all so cute and cuddly, played out in pictures and on social media. The resilience of youth was evident in every post.

Then the time came for my granddaughter to make her entrance and the situation got real, real fast. The weight of reality came down swift and hard. As soon as she was pushed out into the world, he walked straight into my arms and bawled as if he were the newborn baby. My heart broke for him because this would be something with which I couldn't help. Lawrence had been trying to show me he was his own man. He got tatted-up because he was old enough and didn't need my permission. He purchased a car, because he could afford it and didn't need my approval. He looked like a man. He had a man's possessions: his own money, and his own stuff. But that night in the delivery room, he gained his most valuable possession—the only thing that would require him to prove his manhood as never before. This crash course was a test he couldn't afford to fail.

Unfortunately, the relationship between my son and his daughter's mother could not withstand the weight of the lifestyle changes they would have to endure. It became a point of great contention between me and my son. As a mother, I almost took their break-up personally. How does one walk away from the woman who just gave you the most precious gift? It took me a long time to realize how much he still needed to grow himself. However, the one thing that never wavered or gave cause for doubt was Lawrence's love for his daughter.

I believe the first time he laid eyes on her, he realized he couldn't play around anymore, whether that was in a relationship with her mother, specifically, or with life, in general. I was blown away by my child's devotion to his child. He was assertive in meeting her needs, as well as the decision to spend as much time with her as her mother. This became another area where he and I bumped heads but again, I had

## Victoria Kennedy

to step back and let him be the man his father shaped. Even though our own relationship ended with divorce earlier than my son can remember, his father never shirked his responsibility to our son, and it was one thing I didn't mind him inheriting.

My granddaughter is seven years old now and she is the light of her father's life. In a show of responsibility, he transferred to college back home and continued his education, while never neglecting his duties as a parent. He continued his pursuit to be a writer, but his interest shifted from sports to popular culture. He became a music journalist and often included his daughter in articles he'd write for both local and national publications. When he graduated from college, his favorite girl was the first person running to him for a hug and kiss. Now, they ride along together in his car listening to playlists he creates for their enjoyment, and once he wrote about the experience for a weekly newspaper. He treats her like she is the most special girl in the world and her eyes light up when he enters a room, as if he's the only man alive.

Lawrence's work as a staff writer with a national publication made it necessary for him to move back to New York. One of the hardest decisions he had to make was based on the best choice for his daughter and the impact on her well-being down the road. They FaceTime each other every morning, no matter where he is in the world, and he visits her regularly, even coming in town for her ball games and dance recitals.

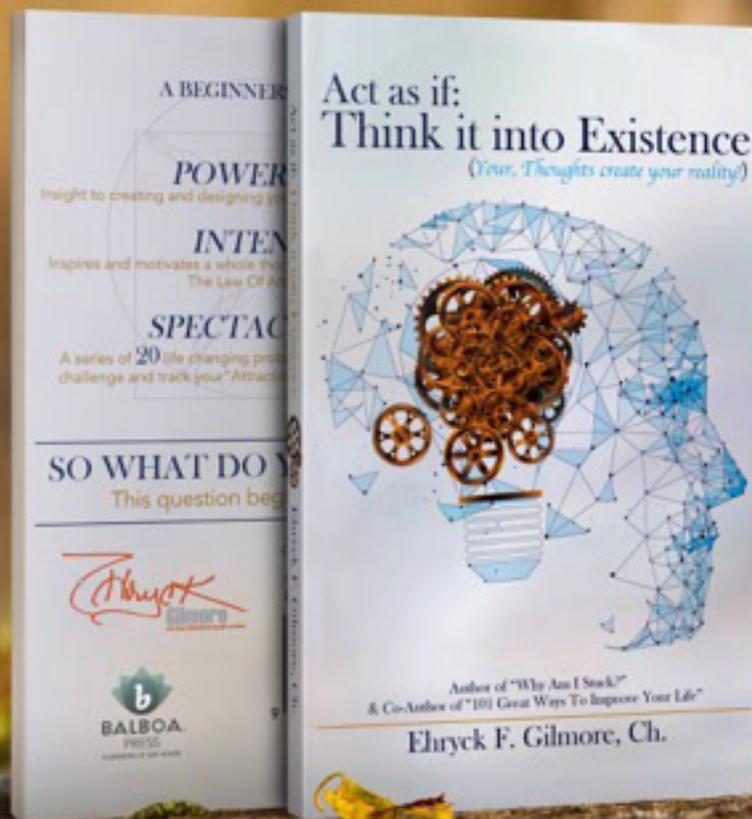
As a twenty-year-old, Lawrence wasn't ready to be a father, but he didn't run away. He didn't make excuses. He learned how to sacrifice, nurture, and plan, so he wouldn't have to get ready. Learning to be a father taught him how to be a man, so he could always be prepared to be what his daughter needs. I'm so proud of my son. He was determined to be a great father and became a great man, in the process.



*Victoria Kennedy writes fiction. She contributed to The Dating Game anthology and wrote a short story collection titled, Where Love Goes. She is also the founder of Zora's Den, an online writers' group. Her latest book is a novel, Sometimes Love, published by Brown Girls Books. [www.victoriaadamskennedy.com](http://www.victoriaadamskennedy.com)*



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Act As If: is to live a purposeful, passionate life.

Act As If: is to become confident and committed.

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Act As If: is to go beyond “What Is”, to take positive, decisive action in the Now!

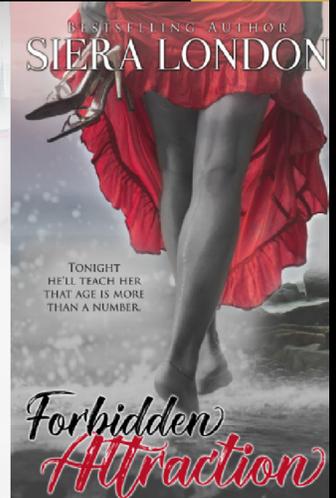
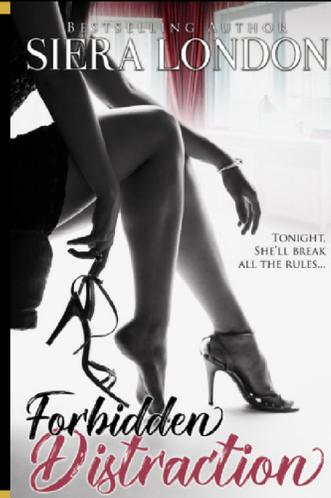
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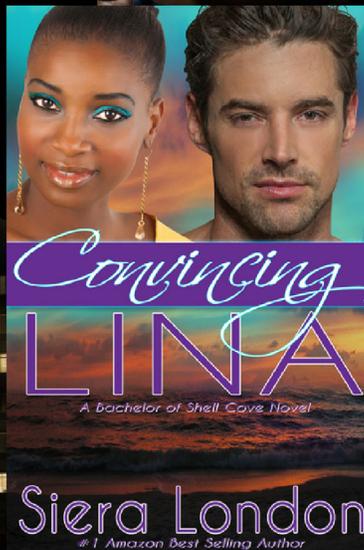
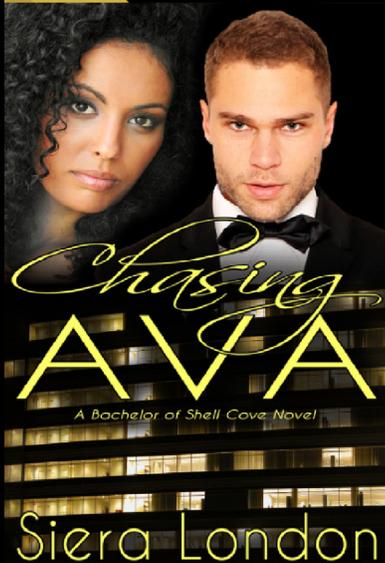
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# When fathers step up



*Happy Father's Day to my forever love, my hubby, Charles or Chuckie as I like to call him. The best family man I know.*

You are the epitome of what a father should be. You work hard for your family and make sure we're straight on all fronts. I appreciate everything you do for us. I can honestly say that I'm not alone in this. There are many married-single mothers out there, and I'm fortunate to say I'm not one of them. Your caring for the girls as much as I do does not go unnoticed: dental visits, late-night pick-ups/early morning drop-offs, sliding Sierra money on the side, and a referee when needed (thank goodness we haven't needed that in a while).

You make sure the boys are straight, even though they're in another state: late night phone calls helping Chad with Calculus, advice on how to fix the car, sending care packages of something they need or want.

Chuckie, you lead by example. You show our girls how a woman should be treated simply by the way you love on me. You teach our boys how to treat a lady in the way you talk to their mother and to me. They see firsthand what love, respect, and manhood is all about.

One of the things I love most about you is that you accepted and treated Sierra as your own from the very start. People who don't know us personally, have no idea she's your bonus daughter.

Your verbiage when you speak of her warms my heart. "This is my daughter," "I'm on my way to my daughter's basketball game," "my daughter's prom is such and such date...come through and see her off" "you know my daughter's about to graduate from high school," "I love you and I want what's best for you." You've never, not even in the early years of our marriage, addressed her or introduced her as your stepdaughter. There's such beauty in that.

# London St. Charles

You've always shown love through your actions and not lip service. That's one of the reasons I love you so much and our children are beyond blessed to have you as their father.

*Happy Father's Day, Brad.* There isn't a time limit on when you can get this fatherhood thing right. It hasn't always been what it should've been, but over the last thirteen years, it has been much better. And the last four of those thirteen you've really been present.

Now, I can trust your word and if something goes awry (money, conflict in your schedule, doing something for Sierra), you communicate that. It makes all the difference when explaining the circumstances to our daughter who loves you so much.

I remember stating that only you, and no one else, had the ability to make or break your relationship with Sierra. She's always been crazy about you and that bond is thick. I've seen it grow stronger over the years and I'm happy that you get to bask in the wonderful person she is.

It's always easy to be the fun parent. The one who swoops in hangs out and bring the child back with laughter in her heart and stars in her eyes. That's so awesome in that child's view. But during the trying time of the teenage years when I called on you to create a united front with us—my husband and I, you stepped up in a way I that I'll never forget. You learned to be the father she needed and took those hard hits (metaphorically) that I was accustomed to during that unpredictable phase. You sacrificed the pedestal she kept you on and became more than just the fun weekend guy. I appreciate your growth as a father and the love you show our daughter is priceless.

London St. Charles is a Chicago native who has always had a passion for the pen, paper, and books. She wrote and published her debut novel, *The Husband We Share* in 2017 and is currently working on her next novel. [www.londonstcharles.com](http://www.londonstcharles.com)



## My Two Cents

People who were around during my life lesson relationship, before I knew he was my life lesson, always say, "I can't believe you even talk to him."

But at the end of the day, we all grow. Hopefully, we learn that it's about what's in the best interest of the child. All of that old foolishness dissipates with time and maturity. Sometimes it takes one party longer to get there, but with God's grace, they eventually will. What I advise is that when that person finally "gets there," keep your heart open and nurture that father-daughter or father-son relationship. They equally need each other.



# PORTIA'S RANDOM THOUGHTS

1. Some things aren't meant for us to understand.
2. I'm not tryna die alone and I need an emergency contact person. So, to my single girlfriends, are we getting this Golden Girls house or nah? We've got three years to find somebody. Otherwise, I'm taking applications.
3. Do not apologize for loving yourself more.
4. Sometimes Satan goes by an alias.
5. The other day I saw a pic of dude I crushed hard on back in the day. He dissed me. Now he's on that stuff and looks a mess. Somebody oughtta join me in giving God some praise for that swerve he did on me!
6. I wish I had little animal friends that could clean my place for me like in Disney movies.
7. Be careful what you put into the universe.
8. Jesus, He will fix it...afterwhile.
9. Well, off to play with my characters.

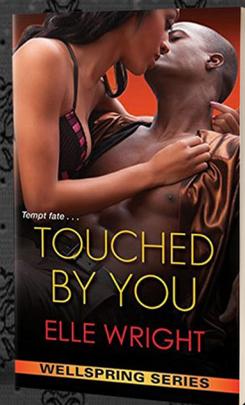
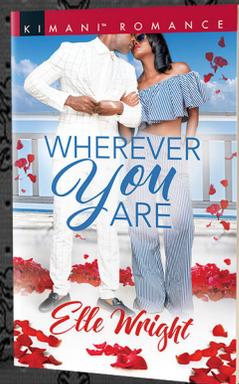
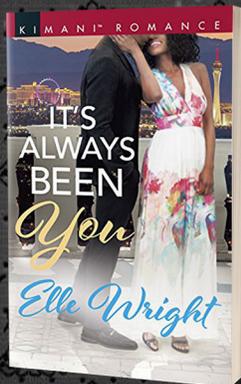
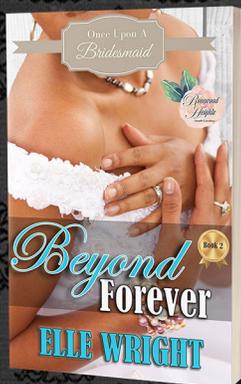
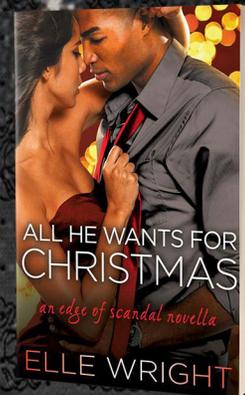
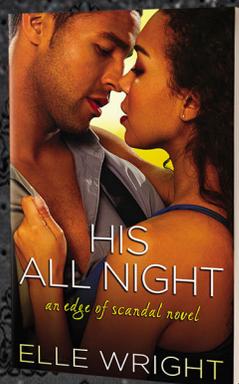
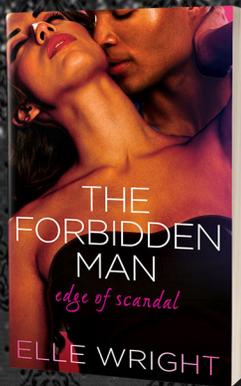


*Portia A. Cosby is the author of four novels, including *The Disgruntled Wives Club* and *It's Complicated*. The Indianapolis native lives in the metro Atlanta area and holds a spot on Terry McMillan's Writers Worth Reading list. Her new novella, *F.I.R.E. Reignited* is available now. [www.portiacosby.com](http://www.portiacosby.com)*

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ROMANCE, DRAMA... HAPPILY EVER AFTER

# REAL LOVE

Christine Pauls



What I lacked growing up, in Wilmington, Delaware, were strong male figures that I could look up to. My biological father was around off and on, briefly in the early years of my childhood, but became completely absent before I was ten. He died when I was in my early twenties. In all those years, living in the same city, we didn't have any interaction. He never reached out to me and I didn't reach out to him. There was no grieving on my part. Instead, I felt a lot of anger, bitterness and had a mountain of unanswered questions. But that's not what this piece is about. I want to honor and pay tribute to a man who in eight short years filled what I yearned for. My uncle and foster father, Walter Wilson Black was married to my mother's sister, Margaret, the woman who raised

me. He would become the only father I'd ever know and the only man in my life that I hold the fondest of memories.

My uncle had no biological children. The only child born to Pearl Black in Mt. Pleasant, Delaware on July 29th, 1915, served in WWII. In civilian life, he was a meat packer at Brown and Scott Meat Packing Plant in Wilmington, Delaware. He suffered from mental illness, having bouts of severe depression to fits of rage, which I am told was an effect from his war experience. Still, he was a father to me and three of my older siblings, until he passed on August 21st, 1969, at the age of 54, from lung cancer.

One distinct memory I have was a time my uncle had

been closed up in his bedroom for a few days. He was in a depressed state, and I was ordered not to disturb him. Telling that to a five-year-old child goes in one ear and out the other because children have the most inquisitive minds. One day, curiosity won. I wanted to see him. I went upstairs and stood outside of that closed bedroom door. I entered and there he was, sitting on the edge of the bed, staring out the window, his expression blank. I sat next to him, took his hand and started imitating a voice of sternness and authoritativeness like I would hear my aunt speak to him sometimes. He never acknowledged what I was doing. Actually, a hint of a smile formed on his face and that was our moment of the love we had for each other.

Needless to say, my aunt was searching for me. She knew I disobeyed her and came upstairs. Seeing the door open, she stepped in and saw me sitting next to my uncle, our hands intertwined. As calmly as she could, she called my name, ordering me to come to her. I told her, 'I want to stay with my daddy.' She beckoned me again, this time with more force, and my uncle told me not to disobey and to do as I was told. I went to her, grudgingly and she told me, "Go downstairs." But before I made it to the door, my uncle looked at her and said, "Margaret, you think I would hurt my little girl?" She ignored his question but gave me a look that I knew meant a spanking was on the horizon.

Fast forward. A hot summer day, I was sitting on the front step, waiting for my uncle to come home from work. I would always know when he was approaching because of the distinct sound his shoes made. Every pair had a set of silver cleats on

the bottom. I was sulking because the day before, my aunt took me to get a pair of shoes for school. I wanted red Buster Brown's with black trim and soles, but my aunt said we couldn't afford them at that time and I had to pick out something else. Since I was pouting about it, she selected a pair of black patent leathers and called it a day. Suddenly, I heard the sound, lifted my head, and saw my uncle, walking down the block, holding a bag by its handles. When he reached the house, he handed me the bag. "Got you something," he said. We went inside. I ran to the kitchen, where my aunt was preparing dinner, waving the bag. My uncle entered and my aunt glanced in his direction with a 'No, you didn't' expression on her face. We all sat at the table. I removed the box and opened it. My eyes grew wide, as my dream came true. The Buster Brown shoes! The exact ones I wanted. I was so excited. I put them on and they fit perfectly, because, yes, he knew my size. I hugged him so tight; I didn't want to let him go. Let me tell you how I wanted to wear those shoes every day. I didn't care if they didn't match my outfits, but my aunt wasn't having it. I had to alternate between the black patent leathers during the school week. I will never forget that day. I was the happiest little girl in the world.

My uncle, Walter, was a man of few words and loved Western movies. He worked hard when he was well and never complained. Even in his last days, when we would visit him at the Veterans Hospital, in Elsmere, Delaware, my aunt would have the nurse push his bed to the window, so he could see me outside since I wasn't allowed on the floor. He'd watch me play and I'd entertain him by doing cartwheels. We would wave to each other, and he'd blow kisses my way. He was my father and my hero.



Christine Pauls a native of Wilmington, Delaware is the author of *To Begin Again*, *Belinda's Song* and *One Good Thing*, her newest release. She penned her first novel in 2012. The mother of two and grandmother of three is an accountant by day in the banking industry.

# A Triangle of Love

*Father, I want you to know this: also buried with you so that you won't be cold during your sleep, will be my blanket of undying, unspoken love and respect. I can give that to you because I have managed to find and keep a real love, a love that is boundless and unconditional.*



# Pat G'Orge-Walker

This is for those men, young and old, who are fathers. Whether you are the natural or stepfather, if you are in the paternal position this is for you. You are as necessary to the children as the air they breathe ... so make sure you step up to the plate.

I share with you my reader's a portion of a letter. This is the unedited letter I had buried with my own father. May these words be a forewarning to some, the comfort of like-mindedness to others and a celebration if you have no reason to expect this from a child you reared.

Dear Dad,

*Over the years whenever the internal need for your paternal covers arose, there were none to cover me; no fitted sheet of fatherly love, no flat sheet of warmth and no blanket of protection and respect.*

*I was left to lie naked on this worldly bed to instead be covered with a fitted sheet of secondhand love, often bought on sale and overpriced. I needed it, so I paid.*

*I had to settle for the seldom honest flat sheets of warmth. It, too, often came with a price far beyond my means. I struggled and mentally worked through the muck and mire of my everyday existence to pay. I fought with every fiber I had to keep it, though I knew its fabric consisted of never-meant-to-be-kept promises and erratic threads of moral heat.*

*Knowing I had no blanket of protection and respect of my own, when the harsh cold winters of truth came, I needed and accepted "as is" discounted protection and respect. It's warranties often expired before the dawn came.*

*They tell me that around the same time I felt an urgency to find my only photo of you and me, eight hundred miles away after preaching a fiery sermon you suffered a massive heart attack and died. I wondered were you thinking of me? Did you somehow suddenly realize how totally uncovered I was? Was there a reason you never held me, told me you loved me? Unfortunately, I cannot find the photo so I may never know.*

*This Saturday, February 15th just three days before my birthday you will be buried. Along with the dirt used to cover you will also be covered any chance we might have had to complete and connect the sides.*

*However, Father, I want you to know this: also buried with you so that you won't be cold during your sleep, will be my blanket of undying, unspoken love and respect. I can give that to you because I have managed to find and keep a real love, a love that is boundless and unconditional. Love that exceeds and encompasses any and everything that a love should. This was a love that helped to raise three children and blessed me with grandchildren. Such a love helped me to go on to become a wife, an actress, singer, writer, author and Christian comedian; you see, Dad, I can laugh now. This beautiful love, it loved me enough to give me someone to love and to stand beside me, no matter what. That love is the love of God. "For He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son so that whomsoever shall believe in Him shall have eternal life."*

*I am told that I look exactly like you and that you will never die until I do. I don't know how true that is, but one thing I do believe...I believe one day, when I cross over to the other side and you and I can meet again, face-to-face, we will complete this triangle of love.*

# Shifting the ATMOSPHERE

Frederica Peterson

What is “Shifting the Atmosphere?” It is all about transitioning from where you are to where you want to be. Atmosphere (according to Webster’s) is the pervading tone or mood of a place or situation... Moving from one place, or season to the next. Transition is the process or a period of changing from one state or condition to another.

I know this well, after leaving a thirty -year successful career in Corporate America to pursue my calling and my passions. My transition began about ten years before I actually left Corporate America. I was feeling unfilled in the work I was doing and was experiencing an inward discontent that lodged within me and wouldn’t go away. At the time, I didn’t know what it was or what to do about it.

This is my journey of how I began to “Shift the Atmosphere.” For many years I had been working on my goal of writing my first book. I started many times, writing on various topics but I couldn’t seem to get focused enough to complete even one. So, in my closet you will find at least four book outlines along with several complete and incomplete chapters of work that are yet to be finished. It was going to be my Gift to the world ... dream deferred.

I also attempted to start a business many years ago in the field of Image Consulting. I even went and completed an Image Consulting program at FIT, while working a very demanding job during the day in NJ and commuting into the city after work to attend evening classes. Not only did I finish the program in eight months (major

accomplishment), but I discovered it was something that came very naturally to me. Just a few months after completing the program, and starting up my business, my Aunt, who resided in Florida, became terminally ill. I had to drop everything to go there and oversee her care and manage her affairs for a few weeks. Needless to say, this caused an upheaval in my personal and professional life. As much as I tried to resume my activities with the Image Consulting business, I honestly didn't have the energy, time, or focus when I returned to continue my efforts to grow and cultivate the business ... dream deferred.

I knew I had a calling, but I had no idea how I was going to get there. As I got older and assumed greater responsibility, not only at work but with my volunteer activities, the "calling" became an even greater burden in my heart. The pull and tug of my responsibilities wore me down and eventually led to a complete shut down because I had allowed the challenges of life to exhaust my true passion. I won't say this was all due to the demands of the job, but it did come to a head at the loss of my father and a few months later a dear friend and co-worker.

Putting together the services for my father was an eye-opening experience. My father was 92 when he passed and my friend, just 33 years old. Despite the differences in their ages, their memorials had many things in common. The many family, friends, acquaintances and community leaders who came together to honor the lives of these two great people who made such a powerful impact on their lives.



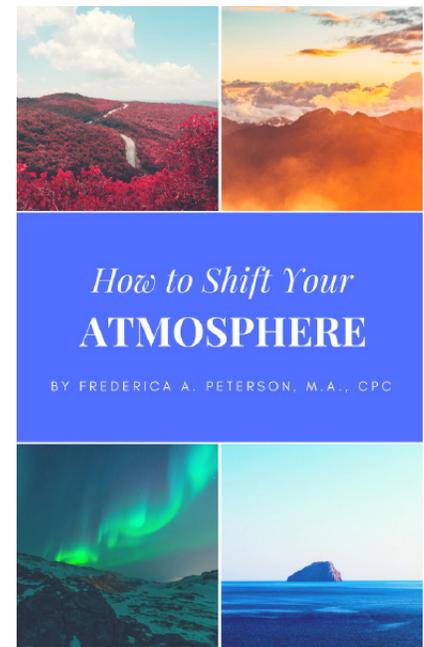
Frederica A. Peterson, M.A.,CPC, ELI - MP  
Coach | Speaker | Author of *How to Shift Your Atmosphere*  
[www.fredericapeterson.com](http://www.fredericapeterson.com)  
2015 NJ Assembly Resolution Honoree - International Coaching Week

Obviously, they both lived and operated in their calling.

Sometimes, it doesn't matter what you do in your day-to-day, it's how you do it. I'm sure you've heard the saying, attend someone's funeral and you'll see what kind of life they lived. When you're dealing with the "dash" of people's lives, it really makes you look at your own. It led me to ask myself the questions; what kind of legacy am I creating? What am I doing to make an impact and make the world better? I knew I had unique gifts and talents but they didn't fit into the confines of Corporate America, and I couldn't see myself operating outside of that realm. I had lost my true identity chasing after "the dream" but whose dream was it?

Though it hurt me to my core to lose them, it also inspired me to live better; to not keep putting off things I have been aching to do. There is no right time or right situation to begin to fulfill the call on your life.

In the next issue, I'll share the steps that I took to complete the shift in my own atmosphere.



# Black Fathers Matter

Shakir Rashaan

## *Being a father isn't easy.*

Before you begin to bring out the pitchforks, hear me out.

Here's what I mean when I say what I'm saying. You're expected to be the cornerstone, the example of manhood that your son establishes himself by, the standard by which your daughter measures any man that tries to come into her life. Sometimes you get it right, sometimes you fall short. When your children finally reach adulthood, and they begin to reach those pinnacles of success that you envisioned for them long ago, the two words that come out of their mouths when the acceptance speech begins are "Thanks, mom."

Now that I've gotten my moment of levity out of the way, the crux of my sentiment is clear. When you're doing what you're supposed to be doing, sometimes you don't get the recognition, and a lot of the times, that's the way it's supposed to be. Which is why I say that being a father isn't easy.

### *Being a Black father? Man, listen.*

So, what I'm going to do with this moment in time is recognize those men around me who I set my standards by growing up, and the men who I'm proud to say have been, and continue to be, what it takes to be the type of father that are celebrated on television shows throughout the generations.

**My grandfather** was the one who turned me on to writing when I was five years old. He taught me how to handle a car, how to maintain it properly and what it was to do your best to maintain your decorum and professionalism regardless of how

off-key the other person in the situation may be. Even though he's passed on, his voice rings in my ears, balancing me when I feel like I'm off the beaten path.

**My father**, whose namesake I share, was the one whose mannerisms I mimicked when I was a teenager. Everything from the voice inflections to his signature, he was the one who showed me what swagger was all about. He was gregarious, never met a stranger, and would talk your ear off if you give him the chance. He was the one who, through his actions with my mother, showed me how to treat my Beloved when she finally came into my life.

**My uncle**, who taught me the value of putting your mind to work in a variety of ways. Though we don't share similar views with regard to faith and spirituality, his strength of faith is one that I admire and have mimicked in my own manner. He has influenced on me in ways that I've reminded him over the years, and he continues to do so to this day, especially when I became a stepfather. I leaned on his advice and he was there every step of the way until my son enlisted into the Army.

My chosen brethren, who have left as much of a mark on me as I have on each of them. In total, there are eight, each of them showing me in their own ways how a father should look. There's a cliché that states, "If you're the smartest person in the room, you're in the wrong room." I am happy to say that each one of them has the ability to teach and learn on any given day, and



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NK RECOMMENDS



the group conversations that we have with regard to relationships, fatherhood, brotherhood, and life in general are those I look forward to whenever we have the chance to do so.

So, to use their alter-ego monikers to protect the innocent and not-so-innocent: to Mr. Blue, Mr. Seykou, the Blacksmith, Ryuuza Tatsujin, Mason deRou, Grey Wolfe, Sir Guy, and Mr. Obsidian, I count myself blessed to have such esteemed gentlemen in my

circle. You have done, and continue to do, the work needed as Black men and Black fathers, whether the spotlight is on or not.

I salute you all. Consider this my attempt to shine the spotlight on you in my own unique way.

**Fathers matter. Black fathers matter, too.**

*Shakir Rashaan is the author of In Service to the Senator and the national bestselling Nubian Underworld and Kink, P.I. Series. He is also developing projects under the pen name PK Rashaan. You can find out more about Rashaan at [www.ShakirRashaan.com](http://www.ShakirRashaan.com).*

## PROFESSIONAL COOL

Throughout my twelve years in the literary industry, I have been blessed. My initial role was an author, but after learning the publishing business, I switched gears and discovered a passion for reviewing, consulting, and promoting great works of fiction and nonfiction.

Unfortunately, I have witnessed many author's frustrations, from claims that their publisher did not pay them, an author who is upset at a promoter, an event planner who has robbed them of vending fees and more.

Please research! Google is your friend and a tool that should be utilized as much as possible. It is so disheartening to hear these horror stories, but more irritating when you ask did they research and/or check references and they proudly say, "no" in some cases. I also want to add "trust your gut" when it comes to people and their practices of "so-called" professionalism.

When making initial contact with a literary professional, first, introduce yourself, and that does not mean post an Amazon link in their inbox telling them to check it out. Second, know precisely who you are reaching out to. Meaning, if they are a book promoter that does not mean they will promote your book around seeking a publishing deal for you, that is what a literary agent does, so educate yourself on the different roles within the industry. Third, respect people's time and do not assume someone is "hatin" on you because they won't stop what

they are doing to talk with you via an inbox exchange all day about your book, especially when you do not want to pay for the consult you so desperately need.

Let me add one more thing regarding the promotion side since this is a lane I work in and see many mishaps. If you are seeking social media promotion, research the promoter and ask for references. Stop just going by a few people saying "yeah, you should use them". If they are advertising exposure, check and see who their audience is; how do they plan to promote your book? Please know what promotion means; it is not spamming a book purchase link in multiple Facebook groups all day. Think about it, do you see Eric Jerome Dickey or a Mary Monroe book links in any of those groups? I rest my case.

On another note, I also want to address authors who sign contracts with a small publishing house. Please, and I repeat please read the contract. And if you don't understand any of the verbiage used, consult an attorney or even a paralegal to assist you before you sign your book rights away for the sake of a pretty book cover and the promise of becoming an Amazon Best Seller. Ask them how long have they- the publisher been in business? Do they require your book to have the copyright process completed already before publishing? Can you Google the publisher's company? Timeline? Editing? What's their online reputation? Are there any online rip off reports about them, have they been listed with Author's Guild Predators and Editors?

Lastly, let us discuss literary events. New ones pop up all of the time that are not legit and will cost you time, energy and money. Ask yourself some questions that will ultimately save the headaches. Who is the person having a literary event? What is their history of pulling off a successful event? Do their events have the traffic to make it worth your while? Have contracts been sent and signed? Lastly, what are their business ethics practice? Google their name along with a few key words, fraud, arrest, complaint and you can conduct your own investigation before monies exchange hands.

These are all things you need to research before signing any contract. With bad business practices, it makes it very hard for professionals like myself because we then have to prove our worth to make up for someone else's failed processes. Stop being fooled by the smoke and mirrors. The internet makes it very easy for nobodies to become instant somebodies overnight so beware. They come cleverly disguised as Publishers, Publicists, Event Planners, Book Store Owners and more. At the end of the day, you have to research, because you owe it to yourself, please keep in mind books are a business. Some people are not in the business of being fair. Protect yourself and your brand.



- Author Spotlights
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- Electronic Press Kits (EPK)
- Proofreading
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## *Literary Services*



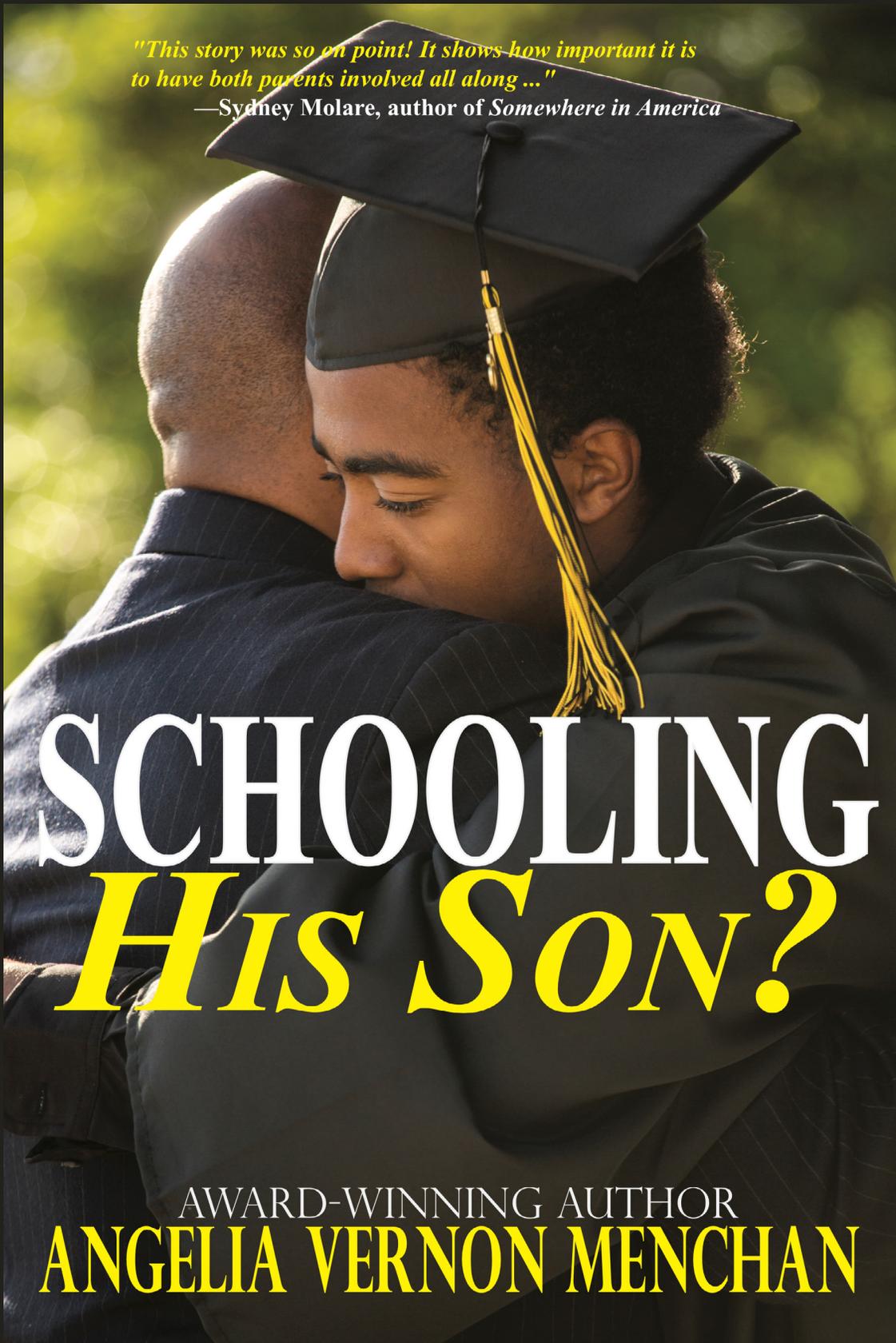
Kisha Green is a literary consultant, promoter, blogger and social media enthusiast who loves everything about literary. This mother of four resides in New Jersey who enjoys fine champagne and sushi in between reading and writing.

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**EXCERPT**

*"This story was so on point! It shows how important it is to have both parents involved all along ..."*

—Sydney Molare, author of *Somewhere in America*



# SCHOOLING *HIS SON?*

AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR  
**ANGELIA VERNON MENCHAN**

Kent Markham glanced at his wife as they sped along the highway, then in the rearview mirror at his sleeping thirteen-year-old son. They were on their way to a new destination and he had taken a new job that would allow him more involvement in raising his son, their son. His life had been devoted to working, earning money and getting them established but after twenty years of a great career, he was, actually, they were venturing out on their own to build their own business and the plan was for Kente to be part of that.

Cina was an amazing mother and always had his back but the thing was she was too soft with Kente and far too indulgent and that wasn't her fault it was theirs. The other day, when he told Kente to do something, he looked to Cina and he knew it was time to father and daddy at the same time. Feeling Cina's eyes on him, Kent focused on her, smiling into her eyes. At forty-five she was even more beautiful to him than when they married when she was twenty-five.

"What are you thinking Kent?" Cina asked. Tickled, he smiled because she had always been able to sense when he went deep.

"I was actually thinking about Kente. He's thirteen and I can see how tied he is to you. That's not a bad thing..."

"But..." Cina said with some umbrage.

"But, he needs a firmer hand and to spend more time with me, doing..."

"Manly things, Kent?"

"Well, yes, if you want to put that title on it. You are an amazing mom, but you overindulge him. That boy has on about three hundred dollars in clothes and shoes right now and when I feel like sending him to his room, I know it's better to send him to ours, considering all the stuff he has in his. So yea."

Kent watched Cina's face tighten at his words because he knew he touched a soft spot.

Cina felt because he was a great student and close to his family that was all that was necessary but the truth was he had been remiss and it was time to step up. What was going to occur over the next five years was as much for Kent as Kente.

Reaching for her hand, he squeezed it.

"Cina, I need your support on this. This will also give you an opportunity to do the things you want to. You had thirteen years, let me have the next five. Can you do that for your man, your baby's father?" Kent asked. Cina didn't turn to look at him but she relaxed, a bit.

"Don't I always support you?"

"Always..."

Kent turned up the music, paying attention the traffic. Kente, who wasn't really sleeping, frowned, wondering what that meant.

# Why I believe in a Heavenly Father



It had taken me years to understand the difference between “religion” and “spirituality.” One is something you’ve been taught and the other you’ve experienced. I’d lived the latter of the two, spirituality.

Before this literary journey, I was broke, survived sexual abuse, and raised three children alone. Despondent and in a lot of pain, I threw my hands up and felt my only option was to take my life. Instead of praying for hope, I’d prayed for death. The moment I asked for that ominous request, the phone rang. Thinking my grandmother was to answer the call, it kept ringing and ringing until I got up from my

comfortable gloom to answer the landline phone. And of all people, it was my mother. Now, let me add, I had my cell phone sitting beside me and she always called that number. Rarely she would call me on my grandmother’s line.

Anyway, the first thing she asked as soon as I answered the phone was, am I okay? She added, “I had this strange feeling I needed to call you?” At this point, I could end this story and say, this is why I believe in God. Yet, my experience had been more than my mom saving me from myself. Or deciding to finish a manuscript that stayed on my hard drive for years on that same night. Or managing to feed my kids with barely anything in

my account. My experience is living and breathing and surviving my personal Hell to know God is real, and I believe in Him immensely.

But when I knew everything a person goes through is not a coincidence was a year and a few months after making that murky request. Instead of taking me, God took my mother to paradise.

I had a spiritual awakening on that day. If I hadn't sat down and prayed for God to "take me," I would not be here on this Kindle typing this story. In fact, I wouldn't be an author at all.

**--Imani Wisdom**

I believe because I was miraculously healed! I had a choice to be rich or have a testimony about the God I serve. Being an intellect, I had a medical problem that required surgery so prior to it I had a nurse who went against policy and showed and explained tests to me before getting my test results which caused me to agree to it when the actual results came back. And while I had been praying for healing, it didn't happen the way I thought it would come! I was actually cut open but when the surgeon (the head gynecology doctor by the way) went in, everything was gone! The cysts and other things she went in to remove was gone! She was totally dumbfounded! She told my husband, my mom and my pastor how I was miraculously healed first and when I was coherent, she started talking to me about her previous relationship with God. How she used to believe but now she knows He is real.

Now at that time, I was financially struggling and people told me how I could sue her and get paid! I told them what kind of testimony would that be if I sued and deny God when I knew for myself what the nurse showed and explained me. Not to mention that was my third surgery and this time I didn't need any pain meds! So because of that and a personal encounter with angels I know God is real. So much so, that I have now been a pastor of Life Redeeming Ministries for thirteen years and

I don't receive a salary. Naleighna, you see me on the train from time to time and I will tell the whole story in one of my books!

That's why I do what I do with the passion and zeal that I do it in! And while I don't get caught up in things, I was just given a four thousand square foot building rent-free for five years by a man that did not know me. He was supposed to come play for me at the church and ended up telling me God told him to give me that building! I could go on and on! And yes, I have had many disappointments in this journey, but I know too much about him to doubt Him or His existence.

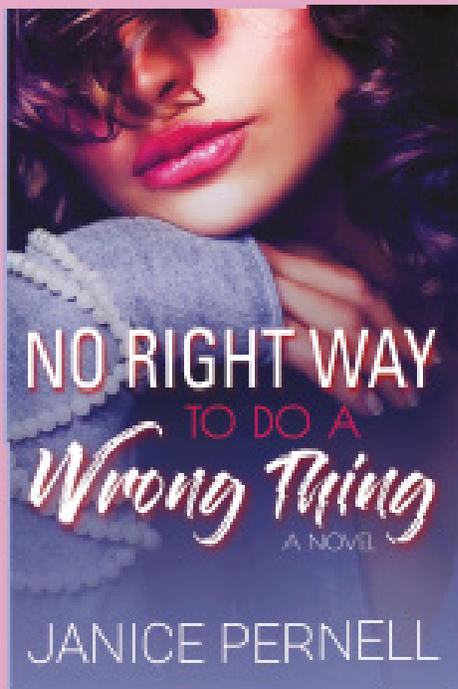
**--Pastor Teena Arrington**

My testimony happened in 2014, but started in 2010! It was discovered in 2010 that I had a multinodular goiter on my left side, which after having it biopsied was found to be benign. An ultrasound was performed yearly with no changes. In March of 2014, my mom asked if my goiter was getting bigger, I didn't think it was but still told my doctor what she said. Another ultrasound was performed and it was discovered that it had indeed grown. It was decided that they would remove the left side of my thyroid.

Well, the surgeon that they sent me to was insistent that he should remove the entire thyroid (which would have me taking meds for the rest of my life), I said "no," Dr. Peter Angelos then said, "Do you believe in prayer?" I immediately said "Yes!" He then asked me to pray about it, and then call him with my decision. I talked to my mom who said, "When a doctor brings God into a conversation, take heed!" Well, I had the entire thyroid removed and at the post-op appointment I found out that there was an incidental finding of cancer on the right side, a side that never showed anything on the ultrasound! It was too small (0.03 centimeters) for the ultrasound to see, but God!

**--Ronda Renee Thompson**

*When you move heaven and earth  
to get what you want,  
be prepared for all  
hell to break loose.*



available online and  
wherever books are sold

Val Timmons lost one knight in shining armor and thought she'd found another. But after she married Kurt, she found that she'd landed a rusty tin man instead. She'd given up all hopes of ever finding happily ever after, especially when he kept postponing her dream of having a child. When his pregnant mistress showed up at the door, Val soon learned that Kurt was set to have the family she'd always wanted—just not with her.

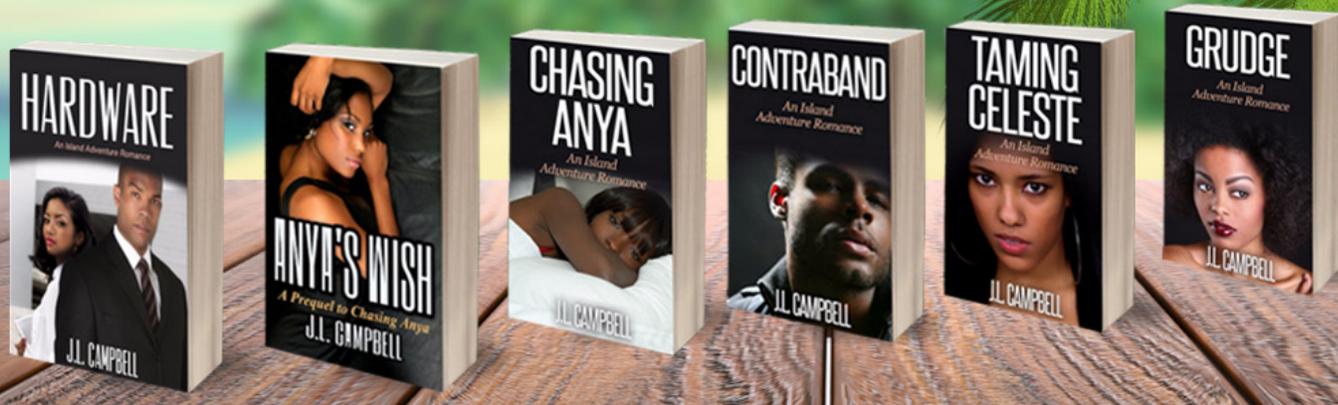
Making things more complicated, Val found a way—without her husband's cooperation—to conceive the baby she felt she deserved. All that took place while Kurt was buying himself time to right some wrongs before they came to light and caused him to lose his wife altogether. Pointing the finger at his mistakes is not a luxury Val can afford. She also has something to hide, and they will both learn one valuable lesson: there's no right way to do a wrong thing.

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*IABookReviews.com*

*Review of From Behind the Curtain*

*"The plot was thick and enticing, and the dialogue was great."*

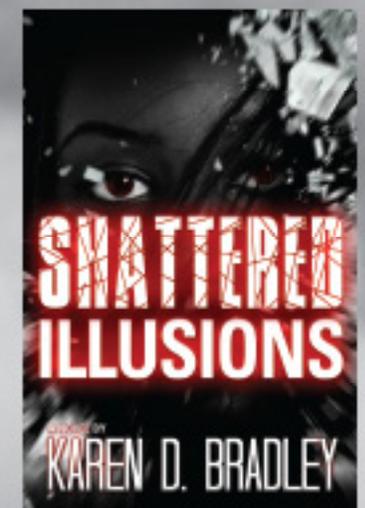
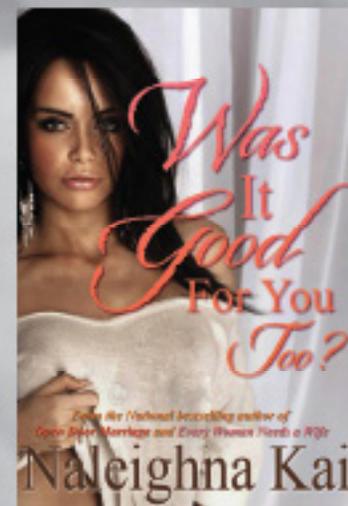
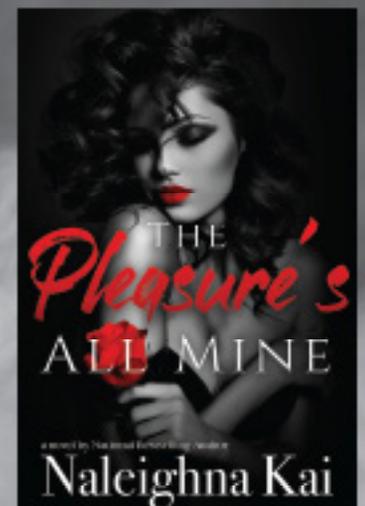
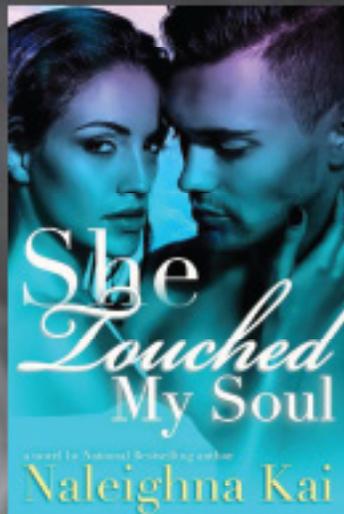
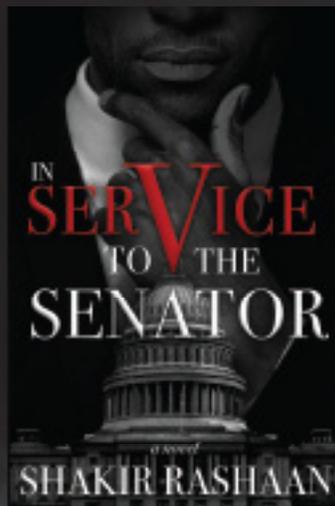
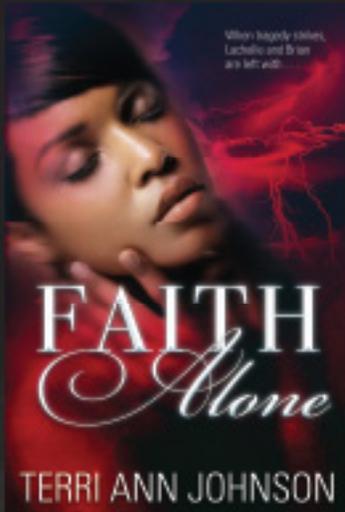


W: SIERRAKAY.COM F : AUTHORSIERRAKAY  
T: @SIERRAKAY1 I: AUTHORSIERRAKAY

*Sierra Kay has an M.A. in Writing from DePaul University, won a Nuyorican Poets Cafe Short Story Slam, participated in comedy fests as a member of the writing teams for Spankx and N20 Comedy. She also writes poetry and suspense novels. Obviously, she'll try anything at least once. Her two novels From Behind the Curtain and In the Midst of Fire are available online. Learn more at [sierrakay.com](http://sierrakay.com)*



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**Saturday, June 23, 2018**

Conference Center at the

Maritime Museum

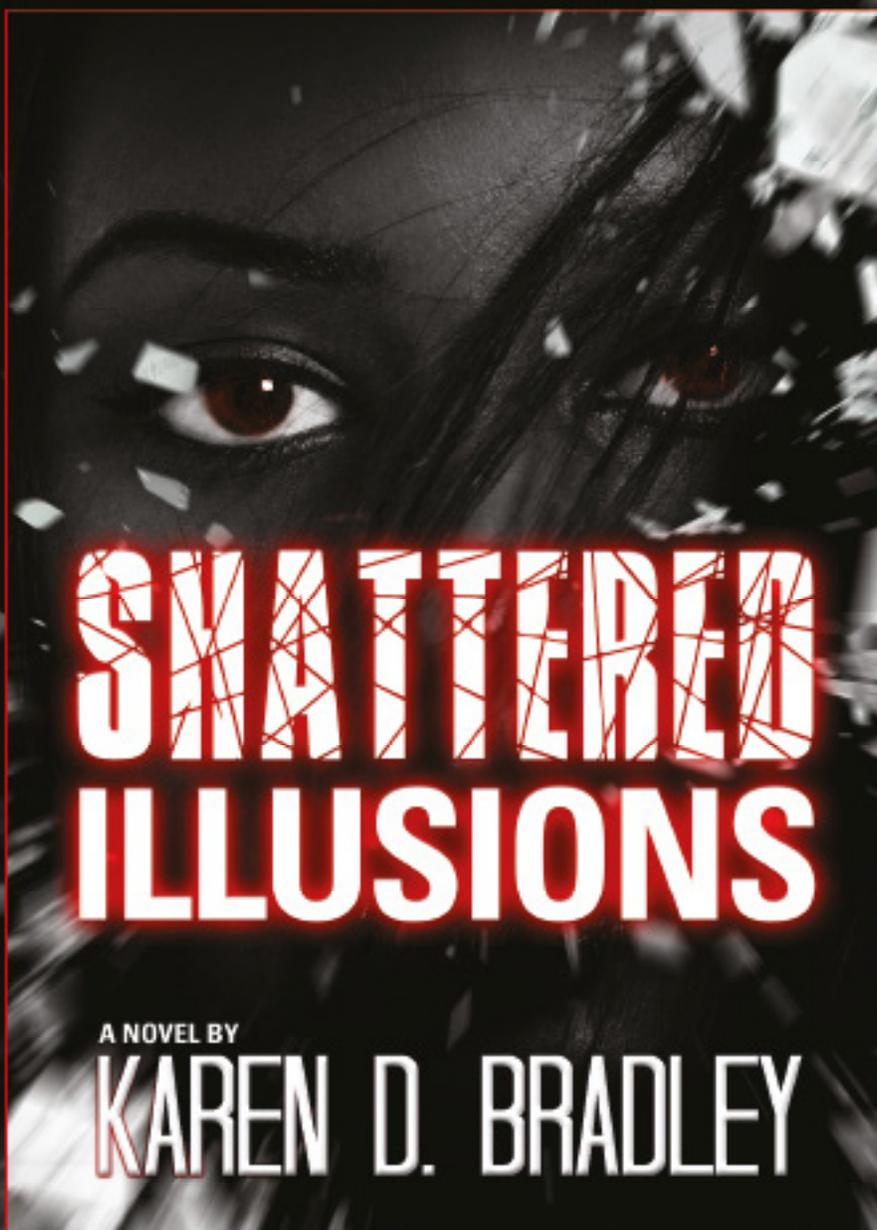
692 Maritime Blvd.

12-4pm

**Sponsored by  
Cilla's Book Maniacs**

# IGNORANCE ISN'T ALWAYS BLISS

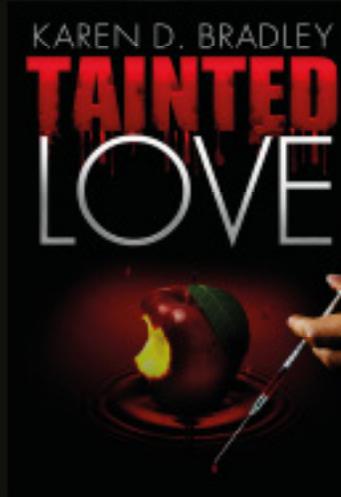
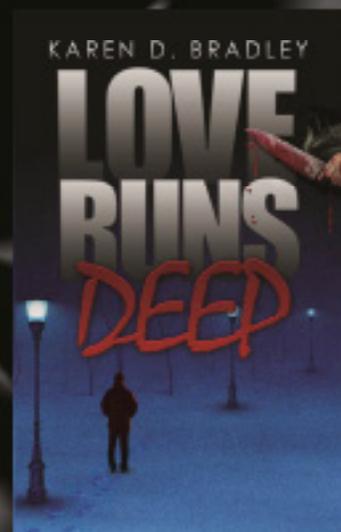
WHAT SHE DOESN'T KNOW JUST MIGHT GET HER KILLED.



**Danya Holmes** relives her worst nightmare when the man who destroyed her life gets out of prison. The truth as she knows it begins to unravel before her eyes. Every illusion she had about her past and her life will be shattered. She finds herself once again in a fight to save her life. But will she be the one that lives to tell the story?

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OTHER BOOKS BY  
KAREN D. BRADLEY



# RESOURCES

## **Graphic Design:**

J. L. Woodson  
Woodson Creative Studio  
jlwoodson@woodsonstudio.com

## **Editors**

Lissa Woodson/Naleighna Kai  
Developmental Editor  
lissawoodson@aol.com

Rhonda M. Lawson  
Content/Line Editor  
info@mtwimagesolutions.com

Chandra Sparks Splond  
Copy and Line Editor  
cssplond@gmail.com

## **Publishing Consultant/Editor**

Joylynn M. Ross  
Path To Publishing  
www.squareup.com/market/writings-by-joy

## **Marketing & Promotion**

Ella D. Curry  
www.edc-creations.com

Pam Williams  
www.pageturner.net

Troy Williams  
www.aalbc.com

LaShaunda Hoffman  
www.sormag.com

## **Interior Design**

Naleighna Kai  
www.naleighnakai.com

J. L. Woodson  
Woodson Creative Studio  
jlwoodson@woodsonstudio.com

Agent Double-O Soul Presents:

# ***The Soul Power (Half) Hour!***

***A deep dive into the rich tradition of  
rhythm & blues music focusing on the  
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**Found only at <https://soundcloud.com/eric-patt-8353580>**

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