



**MAY 2018**

**MOTHER'S DAY ISS**



"Grandma's Hands", a song a heard growing up, spoke of and the many things that she did to make the lives of those around her a better experience. A good majority of the articles in this Mother's Day issue centers around wisdom and lessons learned from mothers, grandmothers, aunties and other women who have had a major impact on our featured writers. The image on the magazine cover, designed by my son, was his depiction of what Motherhood means to him—a woman who is a vessel for bringing life and a soul experience to the world.

A year ago when I first had the idea for this magazine, I didn't realize how much it would bless me, and the authors who write their truth, personally. Some have said it has been a healing journey, others have shared things that they swore they wouldn't tell a soul. One thing the authors have in common with me, is that we all want to give you a glimpse into who we are; a taste of what drives us and makes us want to put pen to paper.

At the end of the magazine, I welcome you to enjoy the thirteen excerpts of new books coming out this year that are penned by a group that is aptly named, NK Promo Partners. They are committed to bringing you the best in fiction.

Happy Mother's Day to one and all. We celebrate those who have given birth, those who have been surrogates in some fashion, and others who have stepped in to fill that maternal void in a child's life when it is sorely needed.

***Naleighna Kai***

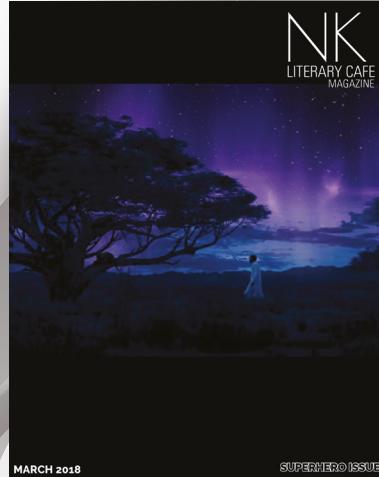
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## News, Reviews, Intimate Author Interviews

# Naleighna Kai's Literary Cafe Magazine

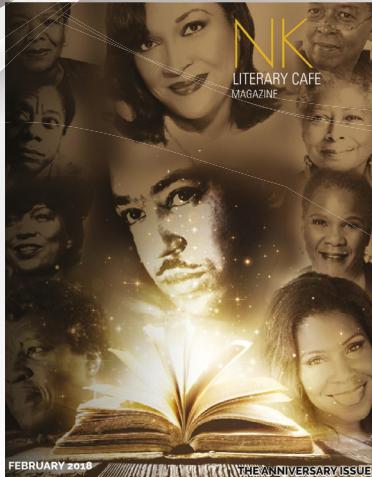
APR 2018



MARCH 2018

SUPERHERO ISSUE

FEB 2018



FEBRUARY 2018

JAN 2018



New Year  
New You

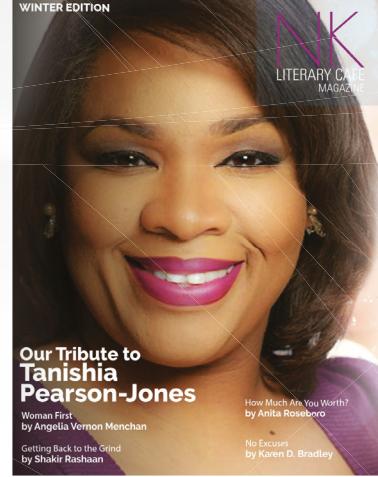
Confessions of a Peacekeeper  
by Marze Scott

You Gotta Suffer to be Beautiful  
by Naleighna Kai

Mending Fences  
by Christine Pauls

Wounds in the Way  
by Karen D. Bradley

WINTER 2017



Our Tribute to  
Tanisha Pearson-Jones

Woman First  
by Angela Vernon Menchan

Getting Back to the Grind  
by Shakir Rashaan

How Much Are You Worth?  
by Anita Roseboro

No Excuses  
by Karen D. Bradley

NOV 2017



THE CAVALCADE EDITION

Authors are Out of This World:  
Spotlight on Cavalcade Authors

The Real Inner  
Beauty Treatment

by: Janine Ingram

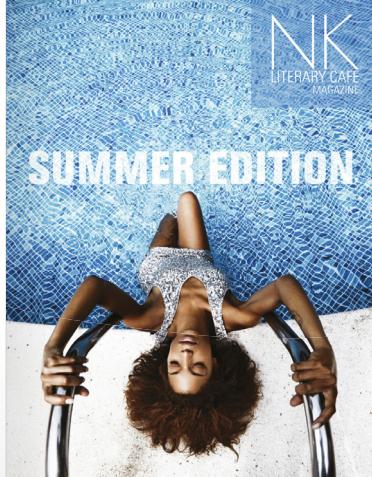
It Takes a Village...and a Network

by: Shakir Rashaan

Some Bitter, Some Sweet

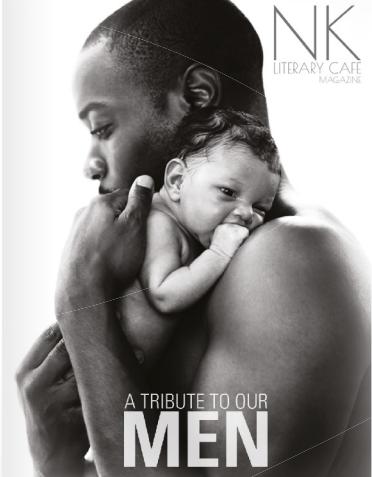
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Summer 2017



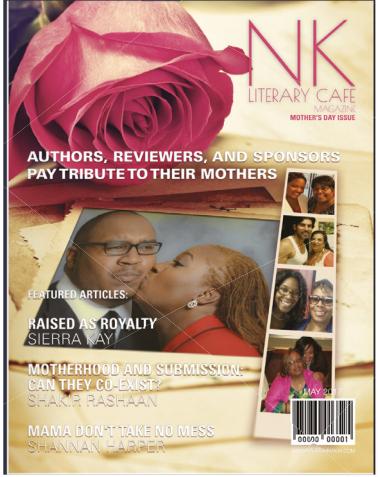
SUMMER EDITION

JUN 2017



A TRIBUTE TO OUR  
MEN

MAY 2017



AUTHORS, REVIEWERS, AND SPONSORS  
PAY TRIBUTE TO THEIR MOTHERS

FEATURED ARTICLES:

RAISED AS ROYALTY  
SIERRA KAY

MOTHERHOOD AND SUBMISSION:  
CAN THEY CO-EXIST?  
SHAKIR RASHAAN

MAMA DON'T TAKE NO MESS  
SHANNON HARPER

CAL 2017



APR 2017



SPOTLIGHT ON:  
CHRISTIAN FICTION AND  
INSPIRATIONAL AUTHORS

INTIMATE CHATS WITH:  
J.D. MASON  
CERECE RENNIE MURPHY  
E.N. JOY  
PAT O'ERGE WALKER

FEATURES:  
ALL FOR LOVE  
READING IN  
BLACK & WHITE

POWERFUL  
TRANSFORMATION  
by JANINE INGRAM

TALES FROM  
THE WILD SIDE

THE PLEASURE ZONE  
with SHAKIR RASHAAN

MAR 2017



INSIDER  
WM PAUL YOUNG  
THE SHACK

SPOTLIGHT ON:  
S. L. JENNINGS

EXCLUSIVE  
INTIMATE CHAT  
WITH DONNA HILL  
& TANANARIVE DUE

WE REMEMBER  
Francis Ray

ALL ABOARD  
WAL\*MART  
SOUL EXPRESSIONS  
TOUR

SEXUAL ABUSE  
FROM THE PULPIT  
TELLING THE  
HARD TRUTH  
LENA SLEDGE

MARCH 2017  
PORTIA'S RANDOM THOUGHTS...

FEB 2017



SPOTLIGHT ON:  
CERECE  
RENNIE  
MURPHY

EXCLUSIVE  
INTIMATE CHAT  
WITH LOLITA FILES

WE REMEMBER  
L.A. Banks

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MY Sun

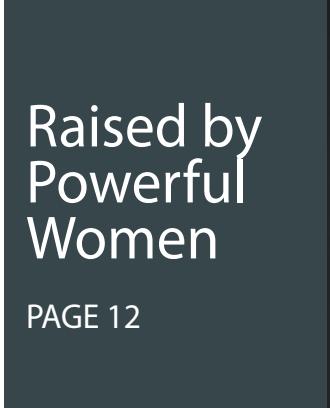
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The Gift of  
Motherhood

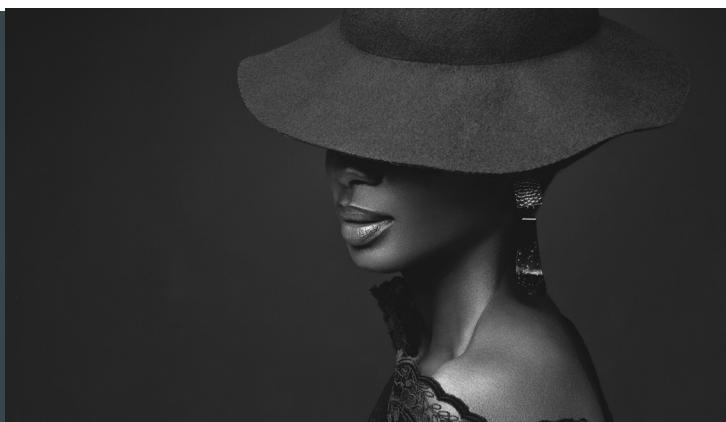
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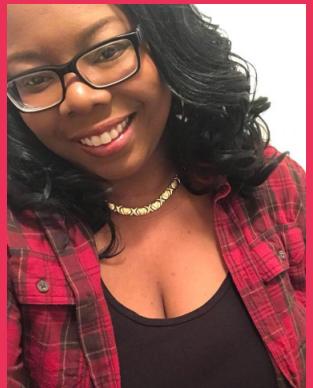
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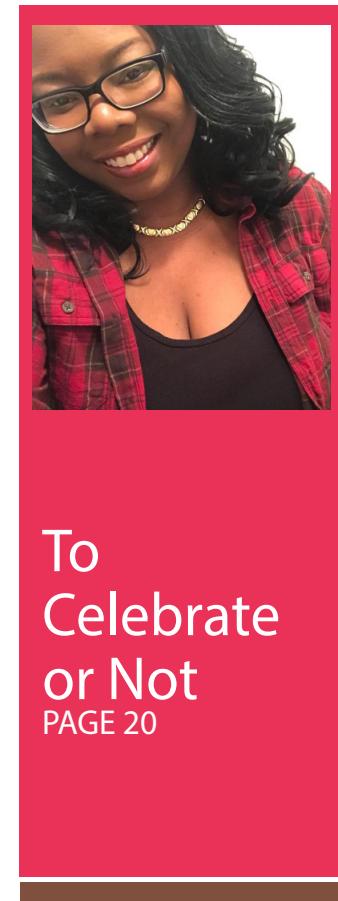
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*My Sun*



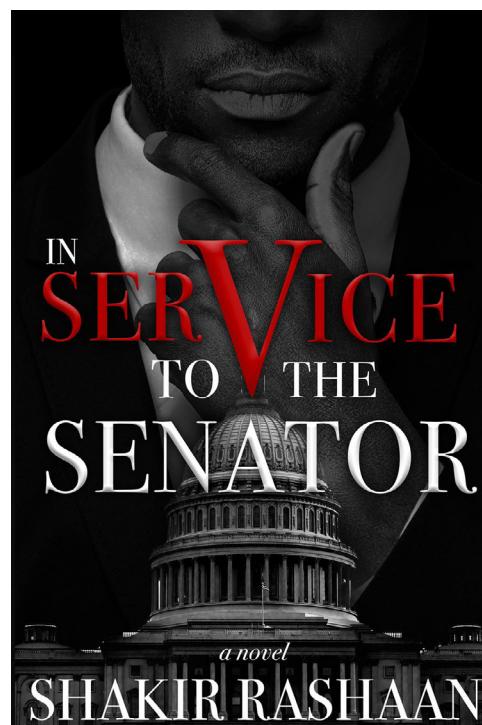
Anyone who has ever been around me or followed me on social media has probably heard me speak about the women in my life. My Beloved, my Beauty, my sister, and my daughter have all been mentioned at one point or another. They are the individual planets that rotate in my solar system. But there's one woman who is the sun in that same solar system. The one who I will move heaven and earth to make proud. The other planets in my solar system revere her as much as I do, which is why they all understand, without hesitation, when she needs me for anything, it's going to get handled. That woman, that sun, is my mother.

While my grandfather may have launched the storm that you know as Shakir Rashaan many moons ago, my mother was the one who set the foundation for that launching pad. All the books we read when I was younger, the short stories I wrote for my high school English classes; she was there for all of that. Not only for me, but for my sister, Rae Lamar, as well. How many mothers can say they have two published authors as their children?

To this day, "Dear Mama" by Tupac Shakur sounds off, letting me know it's her calling without having to pick up the phone. She has been, and continues to be, the brightest star in my cosmos.

Since she has the propensity to kill me and the other women in my life for buying her any flowers or such for the holiday that celebrates moms everywhere (even though we do it anyway, LOL), I will consider this article my one Mother's Day gift that she can appreciate this year, and for many years to come.

I love you, Mom. In the immortal words of Tupac Shakur, "There's no way I can pay you back, but my plan is to show you that I understand. You are appreciated."



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*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).*

# Zora's Den

Victoria Kennedy



My mother is the fourth of eight daughters. Upon my birth, she gave me two very valuable gifts—her unconditional love and at least six surrogate mothers. Their love for me was also generous and unselfish. Everything I learned about womanhood came from all eight of them.

I learned the importance of family and how much we should lean on each other through celebrations and through trials. I learned the beauty of carrying babies together and the importance of discovery, as we went along the path of becoming mothers and friends.

They taught me how to be a good friend, when to keep secrets, when to keep my lips closed and my ears open, and to be emotionally available. They taught me how to be outspoken without being offensive, but also the art of saying what I mean and meaning what I say. They showed me how to stand up for myself and to protect those I love.

By watching them, I learned how to be a good example for my children, while encouraging their own identities. They taught me how to be loyal and how to love – after the fights, the arguments,

# The Gift of Motherhood



and the competition. I learned the power of my own voice and its relevance in asking for what I want in every aspect of my life.

They taught me how to cook, when to bake from scratch, and when to order carry-out. And how to present everything so that it was irresistible. They taught me when to take shortcuts, so I'd have time to do what mattered on any given day.

From them, I learned how to appreciate other cultures, how to be flirtatious without being crass,

how to be sexy without being obvious, and how to laugh without being self-conscious. They taught me how a good song and a dance could help me work out any number of issues.

They taught me when and how to pray, when to cuss, and when to seek forgiveness. They taught me how to apologize, even when it hurt like hell. How to let bygones be bygones because life is too short to hold on to dumb stuff.

I learned how to make my mark, so I'd be missed when I'm gone; how to make peace and when to wage war; how to be comfortable in my own skin, to wear the perfume that compliments my body chemistry, to use shopping as retail therapy, and to indulge without apology.

I learned everything about being a woman from eight mothers and I don't tell the ones who remain often enough, how they have impacted my life.

The best way to honor them is to do, live, embrace, celebrate, and be everything they imparted about womanhood. Especially my mother who gave me the greatest gift of all.

She shared her sisters with me.



*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)*

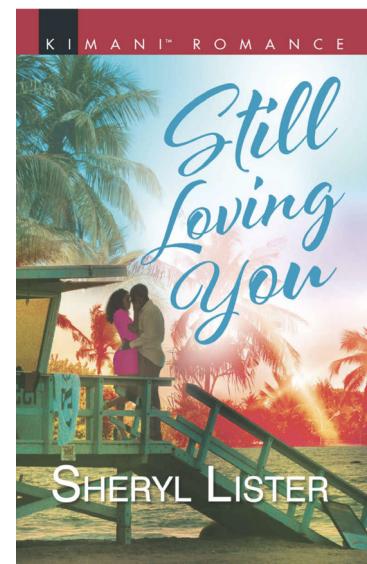
# Tribute to an Extraordinary Woman

There are so many ways in which my mother impacted my life, but I'll share the two most important ones. She taught me, first, the importance of having a relationship with God, and to trust Him in all things, even when life looks a mess. I'd like to say that I've mastered this, but that wouldn't be the truth. Yet, I remember how she always used to do it, seemingly with ease, and it reminds me to snuggle a little closer in the Father's arms. *Whatever decisions you make, don't compromise your faith.* These words have been ingrained in my heart, and by applying them to every area of my life, they have helped me to make better choices and avoid a whole lot of pitfalls.

The second most important life lesson she taught me was the power of *love* and *forgiveness*. Tough, I know. Mom not only said the words, but she also lived them in some of the most difficult situations. I didn't understand how she could do it and she was more than happy to explain. Remember that first lesson? Well, in order to truly do this, you have to do number one. Are you kidding me? (Insert teenage eye-roll here.) Now, as an adult, I've had the "aha" moment. And you know what? She was absolutely right. Again.

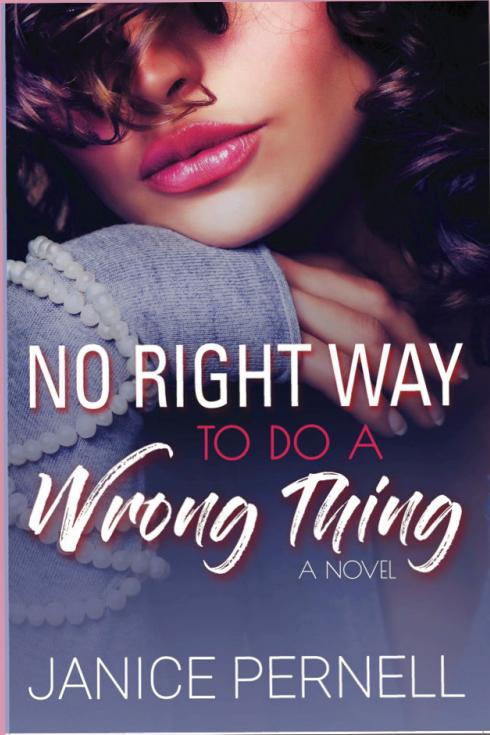
These are the core values that have shaped the woman I am today. It's been said that a mother's heart is the child's classroom. I thank God for blessing me to sit at the feet of Mary Phillips and learn from her. Her constant words of encouragement still sustain me, even though she is no longer here to speak them. She was a portrait of a godly woman, my prayer warrior, confidante, counselor, best friend, and I couldn't be prouder to be her daughter.

*Sheryl Lister has enjoyed reading and writing for as long as she can remember. She writes contemporary and inspirational romance and romantic suspense. She has been nominated for an Emma Award, RT Reviewer's Choice Award and named BRAB's 2015 Best New Author. When she's not reading, writing or playing chauffeur, Sheryl can be found on a date with her husband or in the kitchen creating appetizers and bite-sized desserts. Sheryl resides in California and is a wife, mother of three daughters and a son-in-love, and grandmother to two very special little boys.*



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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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# Raised by Powerful Women



## I was raised by women ... Powerful women in their own right.

I was born in **MY MOTHER'S** thirtieth year. Mama was the perennial party girl. She was known for her looks, her stylish way of dressing and how men adored her. To me, she was just Mama or Mama Lee and I adored her. Rumor had it that whenever she left the house, I would stand by the door and cry; often until I fell asleep. And mom went out often. She was a free spirit. From age eighteen to thirty, she had only been responsible for herself. Becoming my mother slowed her life, but really didn't change it by much.

My aunts, who lived with my grandmother, often had the responsibility of caring for me, which meant that I was left with grandma by default if they had to run errands. There's a horrible story of when I was about a year old, my aunts sent me with one of my cousins to embarrass my mom and make a point. My mom would

often recall that day of sitting in a downtown nightclub with a gentleman and being dressed beautifully. My cousin walked in with me on her hip, wet and dirty-faced, along with a dirty diaper. This experience pained my mom for years. I can't recall that memory, but I could vividly see it from the way she described it. Hearing that story always made me sad.

Mama was mercurial and would do anything for anyone, but if she felt wronged—and she often did—she was brutal in her verbal attacks. I can recall many times as she held my hand, and I was dressed in frills and patent leather shoes, and she was in the equivalent of designer clothes, all while cussing out whoever had crossed her. Mama was also sometimes playful in her antics and made me laugh until I cried.

She had her own way of doing things. No one could sway her if her mind was made up. Even with all her "changeability", I adored her and lived for her "up" moments. She was also very invested in my doing well academically and being involved in every activity.

# Angelia Vernon Menchan

Mama always found the funds for me to attend field trips, camps, and anything that would help me grow and make sure I was the best-dressed kid and the most well-rounded. I'm sure that's why the incident that day in the nightclub haunted her. My well being and appearance was so important to her.

More than anything, I think she taught me fearlessness. One night we were walking home from somewhere, I think I was eight or nine. It was late, and as we passed the cemetery, I moved to the other side.

"What's wrong with you?" Mama asked.

"I'm scared."

Grabbing my hand, she turned to the cemetery and walked me through. Her point was to show me that dead people couldn't harm me. Because I was with her, I felt brave, but once our tour was over, I felt fearless. That was a turning point for me.

In her later years, and I returned home after more than twenty years away, we became extremely close. She shared her life story with me and listened as I spoke. She also became my biggest advocate and the way she said, "My daughter ..." filled me with joy. When she died, the one thing I knew for sure was how much she loved her Angel.

The woman who loved me most, other than my mother, was **MY GODMOTHER**. She was a *doula* or *midwife assistant* and was there with mom and me from birth. She also became my *safe place*. I often stayed with her weekends when mom was away and during the summer. She taught me practical, common sense things. We read books and newspapers and often went to the movies. She took the time to listen to me.

During my teens, my home life was tumultuous. My mom had married a man who didn't care for me at all. The feeling was mutual. In my mind, he was a big, dumb handsome oaf who stole my mom's free spirit and I resented him. He resented my smart mouth and the fact I wouldn't accept his largesse as my younger sister had.



*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.*

My godmother was where I went for peace. I started working at thirteen and work, school, and her home was my sanctuary. Once, she asked if my mother's husband ever tried to 'mess' with me. I know she meant sex. He was a mean man, but that wasn't in him. Thank God.

For most of my high school years, I was with her. When I turned sixteen, she asked me if I were sexual. "No, ma'am. I'm a Virgin." She quickly told me about birth control, hygiene, and pleasure. She warned me not to fool with young boys and only end up with a wet behind. She told me my pleasure was as important as his. A few years later I took her advice. *Thank you, godma.*

She remained a part of my life even when I lived abroad and in other states. When I moved to Jacksonville in 1999, she resided there with her only daughter. She lived until 2004 at age 102 and is still part of my daily thanksgiving. She was a non-blood mother.

I had three aunts who were also instrumental in my growth. **THE ELDEST** was a gentle spirit who gave me homemade fudge, introduced me to magazines, and always gave me money when I visited. We didn't talk much, but read together and that was a beautiful thing.

**THE MIDDLE AUNT** was stern but taught me to save, handle my business, and to *want* a man and not *need* one. She also loved movies and we often went on Sunday drives and for meals in her later years. Before she died at 86, she thanked me for valuing her and the elders.

Finally, my **YOUNGEST AUNTIE** was my friend. She was a homebody and everyone thought she was helpless. Ironically, at 85, she's a thirty-year cancer survivor and has proven to be elegant and resilient. I visit her at least twice a month to take her to appointments, shop for her, and just be there for her to talk to. We are both benefiting from the experience.

I was raised by women. **POWERFUL WOMEN** who taught me the meaning of beauty, life, love, self-care, self-awareness, and to know how to **#JustLOVE**

# Herein Lies the Lesson



When I was young, my mother had us memorize a poem by Walter D. Wintle. It starts, “If you think you’re beaten, you are. If you think you dare not, you don’t.”

Now I don’t remember all of the prose, but it ends, “Sooner or later, the man that wins is the one who thinks he can.”

The funny thing about this is, I can’t remember a poem I wrote yesterday. But all these years later, pieces of that particular poem are still ingrained in my mind. One reason might be because my current memory banks are the size of a pea. Or it could be because I refuse to accept limits for my life. I’d like to think it’s the latter.

As people try to imprint their belief or their vision of my limitations on me, all I have is the notion that if I believe I can do something, who are they to say I can’t?

Now to be fair, I’m not an expert on every single topic known to man. Some of the people claiming expertise aren’t either. One of my graduate school professors told a story the first day of class. When the school hired him, his lesson plans were a week ahead of the class. He ended up leading the department and didn’t let inexperience stop him. He believed.

When I applied to graduate school, DePaul University rejected my application. Now, here’s the thing. You can tell me a lot about myself. You

can't tell me that I'm not intelligent. So I set up a meeting with the same department chair.

He told me that I needed an undergrad in English to be successful. We made a deal. I would take two classes over the summer and if I survived, then I would be allowed into the program. Bet.

Now, in a way, he was right. Having an English major would have helped considerably. I didn't know half of those books referenced in class. One thing I did know was that I had never failed academically. And I believed in my mind.

I raised my hand whether my answer was right or wrong. I stayed engaged. I'd show up at teacher's office hours. Oh, they knew me.

My "moment" occurred when one professor in a theory class read my assignment and said, "You can write." I still remember his awe in my ability. Writing theory wasn't my strong suit at the time, but I could, every now and again, turn one hell of a phrase.

See, even his belief of my limitations, based on his review of my background, didn't transfer to me. I never blinked. Never doubted. Damn, I was audacious. I put in the work to match the belief.

I graduated with my master's and never failed a single class. And you know what? Several students with the right "credentials" didn't manage to do the same.

This has been a recurring theme in my life. Sometimes it's frustrating when others automatically get the benefit of the doubt and I need to prove my capabilities over and over again.

"If you dare not, you don't." And if nothing else, I dare. I dare to look a department head in the eye and say, "I belong here, whether or not you believe I do". I've looked at CEO's head on and dared. That's not always politically prudent in the corporate environment, but my momma raised warriors, not whiners..

I know sooner or later, the seeds I've sown and continue to sow will blossom into something beautiful and transcendent. No need to stop my efforts because some random person doesn't believe in my dreams. As my momma and Walter Wintle said, "Sooner or later the man (or woman) who wins, is the one who thinks he(she) can.

.



*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)*

# THE MOTHERHOOD EXPERIENCE

I had both of my grandmothers in my life, three of my great grandmothers, and even a great great grandmother. I learned something different from each of them. My great great grandmother was only like two generations out of slavery and her opportunities had, of course, been very limited. She told me the importance of education and to take advantage of the opportunities that she had been denied. I didn't really understand it because I was so young, but as I got older it stuck with me.

So, there was a lot riding on me to go to college. I had each of them tell me something they always wanted to do and I've tried to do those things to honor them while still living my own life. Like one grandmother always wanted to travel to places she read about. Growing up in the segregated South, she had fears of going certain places. But I didn't, so I visited those places. I am a living testament to the dreams and desires of these wonderful women.

**NaKecia Bowers**

My grandmother would always talk in code. She would tell me things, but then say, "When you get grown, you will understand." She'd say things like, "You don't have to be like your father and mother", or "everything good don't mean it comes

from God." Now that statement really bothered me. But you know, she was right. Now that I am grown, I do understand. She's been gone for 42 years, and I still miss her.

**Sirrethea McIntyre**

There was so much I learned from my grandmother. She was my best friend. She taught me to cook, garden, to always be prepared, to keep moving and even if you get knocked down, get back up. She was the oldest of eight and I was her 7th grandchild—the oldest of her only daughter. She lost her mom to violence—one of her boarders had a psychotic break and murdered her.

My grandmother took in her two youngest siblings and raised them along with her own children. I learned perseverance from watching her deal with and overcome challenges. My grandmother was hilarious, but she took no sh\*t from anyone. She passed that trait along to me. She sneezed, and also belched really loud. I always felt she was expelling some pain each and every time she did either one.

She loved the Lord and I know she prayed over and for me constantly. My grandmother was 5 feet 5 inches of pure power and I am who I am because she was here.

**Tylonda L Sanders**



# PORTIA'S RANDOM THOUGHTS

1. There are few cuter things cuter than your young child patting or rubbing your back when you hug each other.
2. Every child should come with an instruction manual.
3. You haven't lived unless your mom has picked you up or dropped you off at school with one of the following: rollers in her hair, a scarf on her head, or a housecoat on. Bonus points if she showed up with all three.
4. It takes a special mother to raise a child with special needs.
5. Confession: I finalized my daughter's name based on how her first and middle names sounded together in case I have to chastise her in public.
6. Back-to-school lists should include liquor options for parents. Because: homework time.
7. "Because I said so" is the classic drop-the-mic phrase.
8. I knew I was on my way to being a good mother the moment I was able to chastise my daughter with a simple look.
9. Guidance. Sacrifice. Unconditional love. What good mothers are made of.
10. Cherish your mother while she's still here. Cherish the memories of your mother if she is not.

*What I'm listening to:*

*Invasion of Privacy – Cardi B*

*(AND she actually shares a birthday with my mom!)*



*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*

# *Aunties--the other Angels*

We lived in hiding for a few years to protect a woman from a husband who had threatened to kill her. He had almost made good on an attempt once or twice, but as she lay in bed recovering from his last attack because she tried to leave, she formulated a plan. That plan included my mother changing jobs, changing homes, me changing schools, and us living quietly in the suburbs instead of the city of Chicago that I'd known all my life.

This woman, my Aunt Vee, would be someone who taught me some amazing things. One of them was how to be strong. Though in the first days that she came to stay with us, I saw the fear, and the times that she wouldn't leave the house, I saw what it was like to be broken. I didn't know that is what it was called at the time. I was about ten, eleven maybe. I did know what sadness looked like and watching her I learned what it felt like, too.

I witnessed as my aunt tried to come to terms with her new life. Some of it was looking over her shoulder because she just knew he was coming for her. She had been his life. She had been his eyes and his voice. He did not believe he could function without her. He wanted her dead instead of free to live her life. We, my mother and I, helped to change that.

The experience carried over into my book *The Things I Could Tell You*. I wrote it when I was fifteen and it came because of a classroom assignment. The teacher challenged us to write a horror story. Most of my classmates wrote the Friday the 13th, Jason, and other type of scary film scenarios. That didn't frighten me as much as what I put on paper—having to kill one parent to protect another. The story, about seven pages or so, was written in first person. It frightened the teacher so badly that she called for my mother to come to school. The principal and school counselor were also in the room. All for them to find out that it was fiction. But the emotions I felt when it came to my Aunt Vee were all up in that story. I hurt because she hurt. I was afraid at times because her fear was real. But I remember the first time she came out of her safety zone—and it was to protect me. I was late getting home from school and after a while she left the house to search for me. She was afraid that something had happened to me. The tears on her face and the fact that she hugged me so hard touched me in a way that I will never forget.

I'm writing this article as a tribute to Aunt Vee, who is now living on her own terms; and to all of the Aunties of the world. The women who are angelic mothers that stand with the biological ones that God gives us.

God bless every single one of you.



# J. L. Woodson

*The Things I Could Tell You!* the award-winning novel by J. L. Woodson, is the story of Cameron Spears, a Chicago teenager growing up in a house filled with secrets and domestic violence. After changing identities and moving to Memphis, the past comes back to haunt Cameron—forcing him to make a deadly choice that changes his life forever.

*"This bright young author has written a story that hooks you in the prologue, which cleverly describes the intense ending of the story. The story is a pretty accurate portrayal of the effects abuse can have on a family and the extreme results that can occur. We thoroughly enjoyed this story. A Big 'Write On' to J. L. Woodson!"*

—Darcina Garrett, The Literary Diversions Book Club

*"I strongly encourage parents/adults to read this book because it shows what we, as women, tolerate sometimes for too long."*

—R. Hopes

*"A definite page turner! J. L. Woodson is absolutely inspiring. Word for word, he compels the reader to sit up and take notice."*

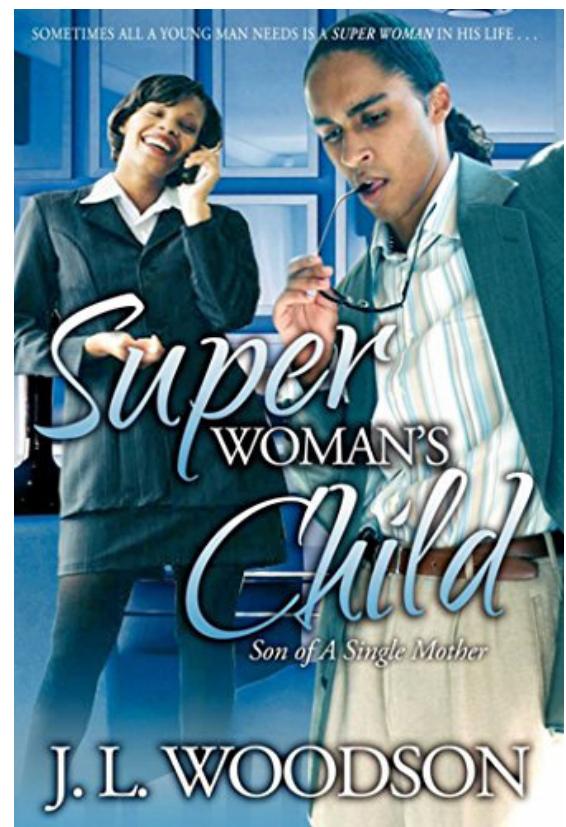
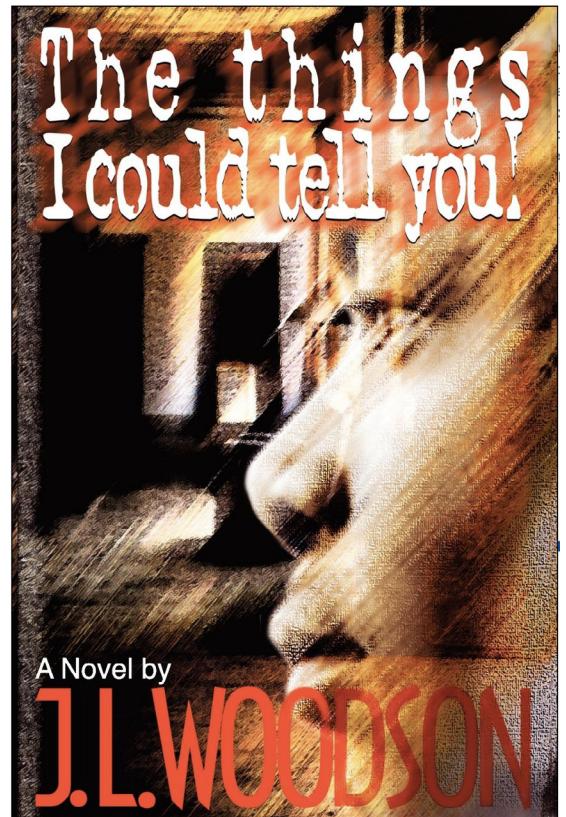
—Mary B. Morrison, New York Times Bestselling author

## ABOUT SUPERWOMAN'S CHILD

*"What a wonderful tribute to single mothers! You are a true son of Fisk [University]."*— Nikki Giovanni, author and poet

*"Superwoman's Child is a heart-warming tribute to all women and a wonderful account of the challenges single mothers face every day."*

—Mary B. Morrison, New York Times Bestselling Author



# To Celebrate ... or Not

Kisha Green

I canceled the holiday known as Mother's Day twelve years ago when my mother died. End of story. Well, sort of.

I was a mother of four, but after she left, there was no longer a need to celebrate a day that made me remember that I no longer had one. Friends and family told me that wasn't fair to myself or my kids as they wanted to celebrate me for being a great mother. I understood their point, but I just wasn't into it.

Before my mom's passing, that special day always began with mother making a dinner that had all the fixings, which preceded a family gathering with drinks, talking crap to one another, and exchanging gifts. These were the best times, and I looked forward to them. Until she died.

So, for the next six years after she passed, that special day started with buying roses and taking them down to the lake where my mom once went fishing. Then I would sit on the bank dropping petal by petal into the water before returning, empty-handed to my home where I'd lay in bed and cry off and on. Sounds like fun right? Well, that routine became something I didn't look forward to, so I put my energy into penning a book about my feelings. Simple, right? Not really because I was afraid to show that side to my readers—the melancholy side, the side that did not match up with the strong, courageous, and adventurous woman I have

become. I battled with myself for five long years on whether to let the world in on my experiences. I can be my own worst enemy when it comes to the writing side of life, but I finally stopped hosting that pity party and sending out invites for others to join in.

To date, the book is complete but still unpublished. This time, I challenged myself and set a date. So, it's coming in 2019, along with my fiction novel that I mentioned in last month's issue.

Now, I do celebrate Mother's Day—and I do mean celebrate. This year, I'll be on the sunny shores of South Beach, sipping a drink with an umbrella straw, all while knowing that my mom is very proud of me and my achievements. I find ways where I no longer dread the day but embrace it and everything that it stands for—a recognition of women who have played a major role in a child's life.

I will say this though, I still get a little emotional when I pass people as they're buying Mother's Day cards. Our routine, when she was on this side of life, was to exchange beautifully written cards as part of an understanding—she was my mother, and I was now someone's mother. There's a beauty in the continuation of life.

I hold to the fact that I will see her again, but for now, she lives on through me. With that thought in mind, in the words of Heavy D, everything's copasetic.



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.

[www.kishagreen.com](http://www.kishagreen.com) and <http://www.myliteraryjewels.com>



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*Literary Services*

# Breaking the Cycle

*Ka'Lu Carter Underwood*



While I spent some time—the occasional weekends—with my paternal grandmother, I can't say that I truly knew her. *The* experience of my maternal grandmother that impacted my life is that she was killed by her husband, my grandfather. I was two years old at the time, so I have no memory of her.

Unfortunately, my mom felt some strange connection and thought she was destined to repeat her mother's life. Because of that, in addition to other factors, she was in a number of abusive relationships. She was surprised to live past 46 years old—my grandma's age—and considered the years following a bonus.

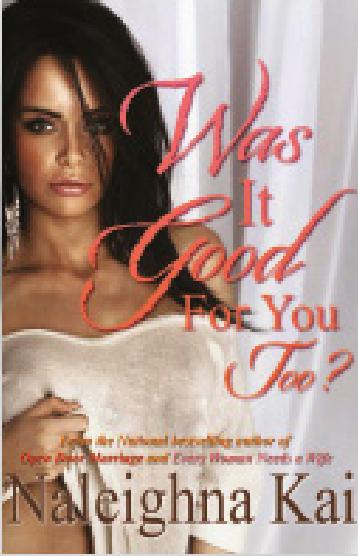
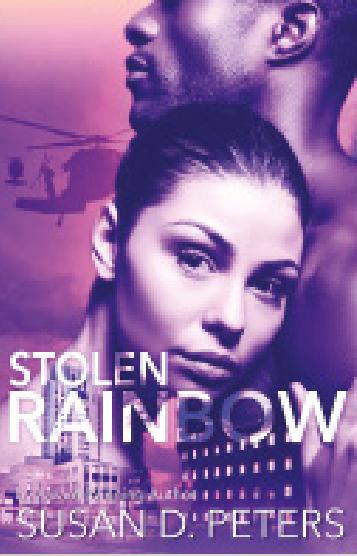
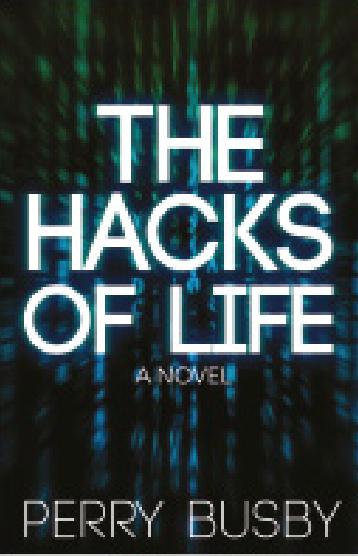
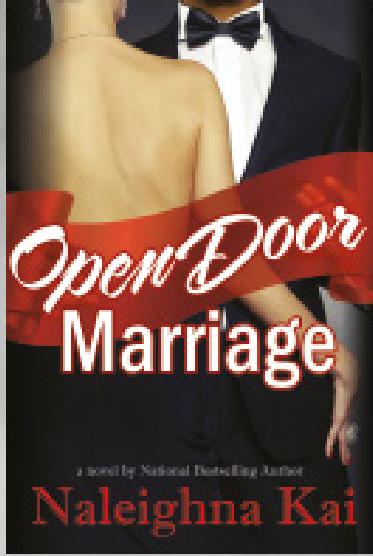
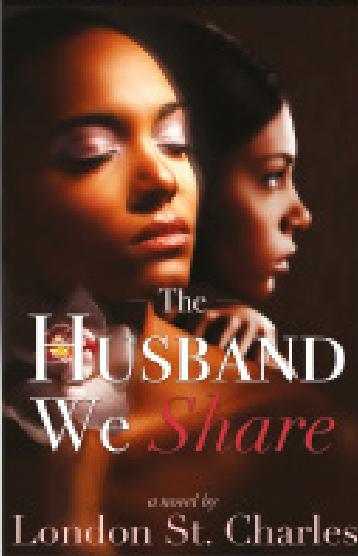
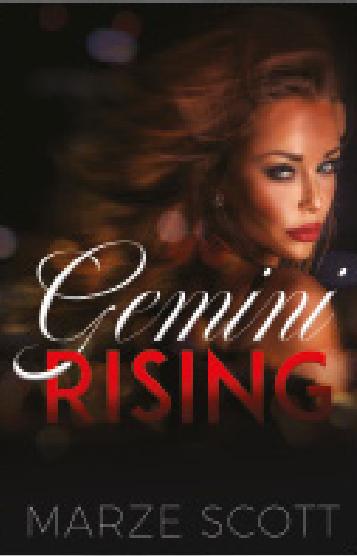
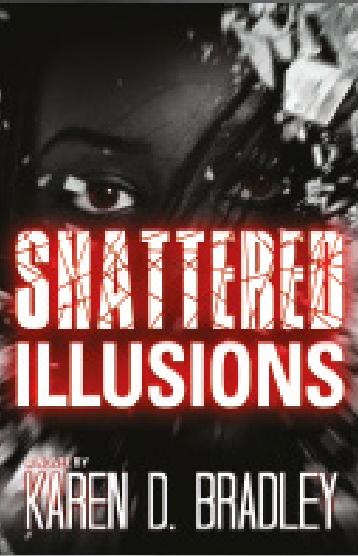
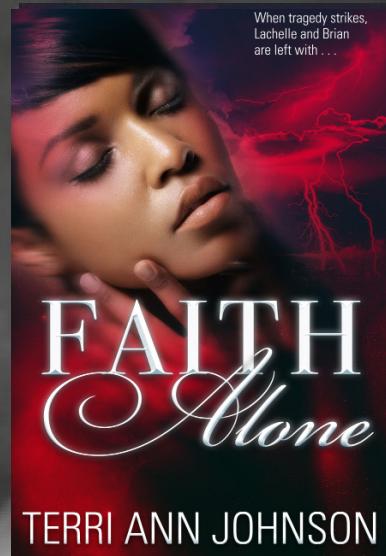
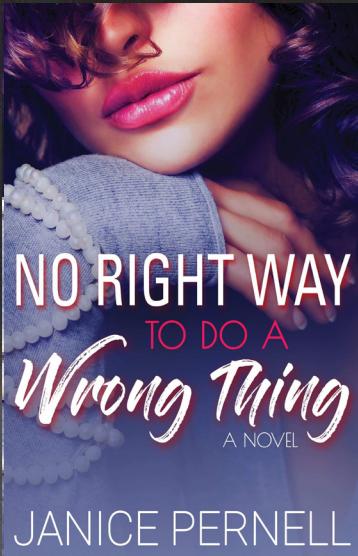
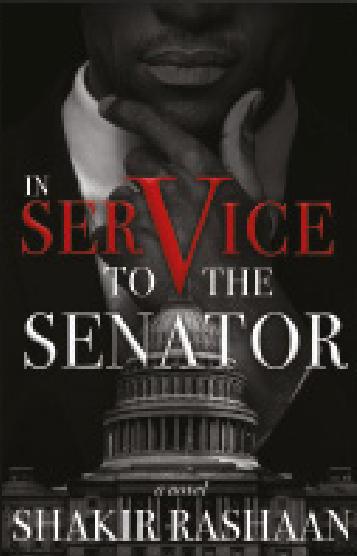
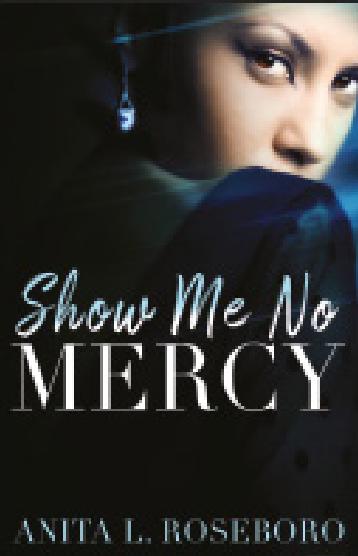
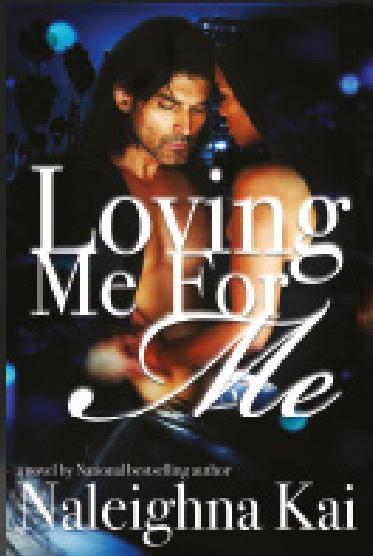
Unfortunately, she died of natural causes at 52. I believe her mind and body were just tired.

Bringing this full circle, because of their experiences, I could put up with a lot, but swore I'd never allow a man to put his hands on me. The one time a teen boyfriend tried, I stabbed him in the leg with a pair of scissors. We were both lucky it was his leg. Once I got him out of the house, I never saw him again. Even then, I knew I was willing to kill or be killed before I allowed myself to be physically abused.

That cycle, the one that plagued my mother and grandmother, ended with me. I now have an abundance of love that surrounds me, and I haven't been in any experiences that put me to the test.

Yes, some curses might be generational, but they are also meant to be broken.

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# *She taught me how to live She taught me how to die*



Dearest. We called her Dearest because she became that and more. I was raised by two women who were together for over thirty years. Dearest was my “other mother’s” mother. The first line of her Will was “If you’re reading this then, it’s Happy Trails to you ...” Right. Humor. Even in death. I get it honestly.

She left her books to me, but she also left me a little package to let me know that life did not end just because a woman reaches a certain age. I have a pair of ceramic frogs on the window sill of my kitchen. They look innocent enough, until you turn them over. Both are anatomically correct (if they

were humans). Boobs and a delta for the female, the rod and the um ... “pinwheels” for the male. Every time I lay eyes on them, I laugh. I won’t tell you the rest of what was in that little package, but suffice it to say that it was evidence that in the right opportunity and a ... hmmmm ... the perfect position, she often had a way to keep a smile on her face and love in her heart. Amen to that.

Unlike when some family members make their transition, no family squabbles or smash and grabs took place. She had everything detailed, the Will, Trust, Power of Attorney, cremation prepaid—everything in place so there was no mistaking who she meant to have this or that. She left here so smoothly that to this day, it doesn’t feel like she’s gone.

# Naleighna Kai

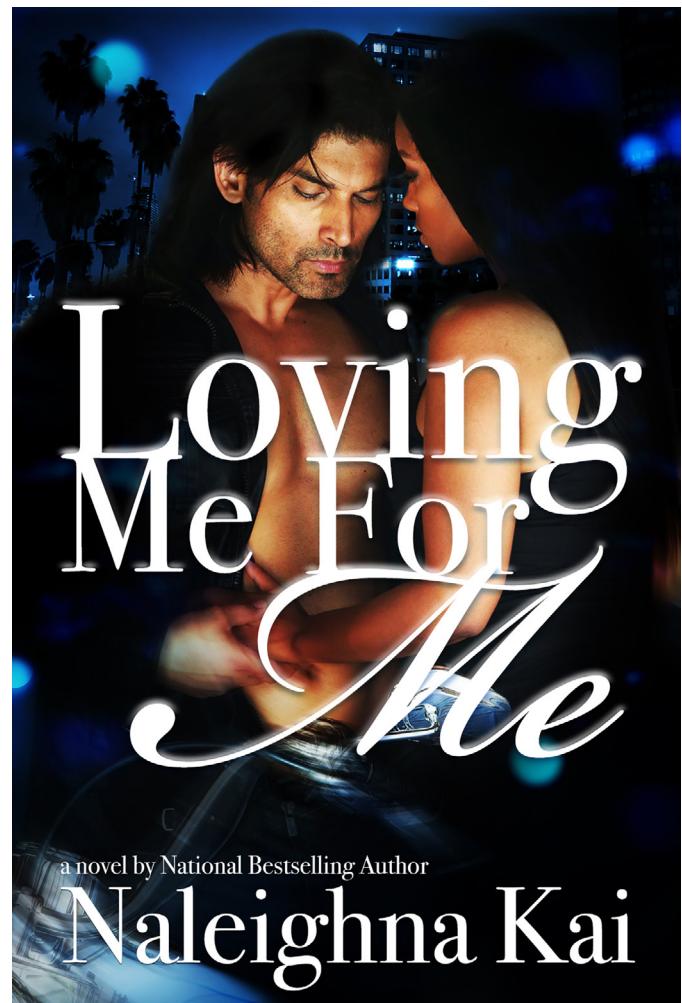
Almost as if I'm waiting for her to come home from one of her fabulous trips, I have her passport, unwilling to let it go because the photo is one of her best. She traveled. Lord, did she travel. What's more, she had a polish and a standard way of doing things that has spilled into my life. The best dishes are always used for myself and not just for guests. Having a housekeeper is not a sign of failure, it is almost a necessity for working women.

No matter what I was going through in my life, she provided wisdom and non-judgmental support. That was priceless. I've done a many great and splendid things in my time, but there are also several experiences that I'm not telling nobody but God. From the point of owning homes, cars, establishing good credit (messing it up some, and then recovering again), there's one thing that I did that made me feel like a grown-up. The moment I sat across from a lawyer and drafted my Will, Trust, Power of Attorney for Healthcare, Power of Attorney for Property, and my Deed in Trust.

That's some grown folks stuff right there. Because so many people leave others to pick up the pieces of their lives when they die. That's when grief and guilt override common sense and people lose their natural minds. I never wanted that for my son, or any of my family members. This is the one thing I learned that differed from what I experienced when my mother passed away. Then, there was so much chaos that we almost didn't get her buried (read my novel *The Pleasure's All Mine* to see how that all turned out).

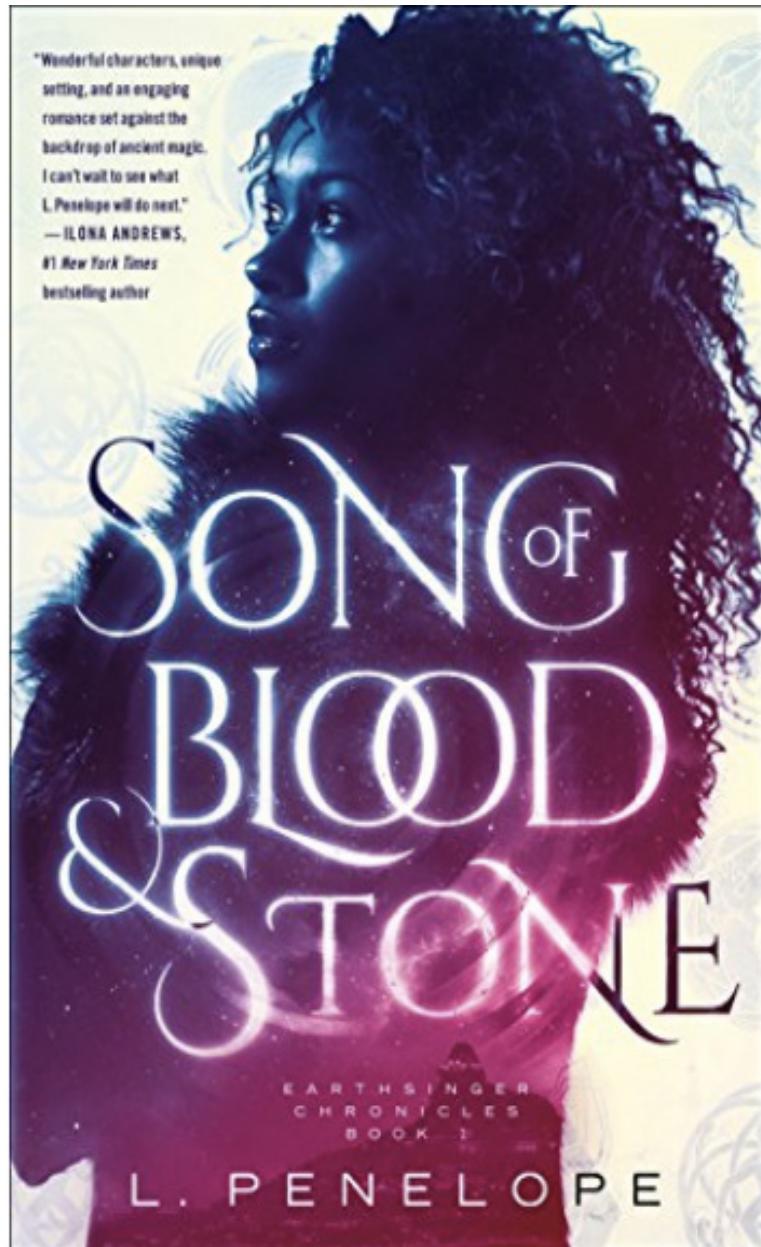
Dearest knew how to handle her business on all levels. That, and her desire to travel, have new experiences, and be a non-wavering support for her family are the best legacies she could leave. I want to be just like her now that I'm a grown up.

Can this May-December romance survive her tragic past, his traditional family, and a world that would rather see them dead than in love?



Review by Naleighna Kai

## REVIEW

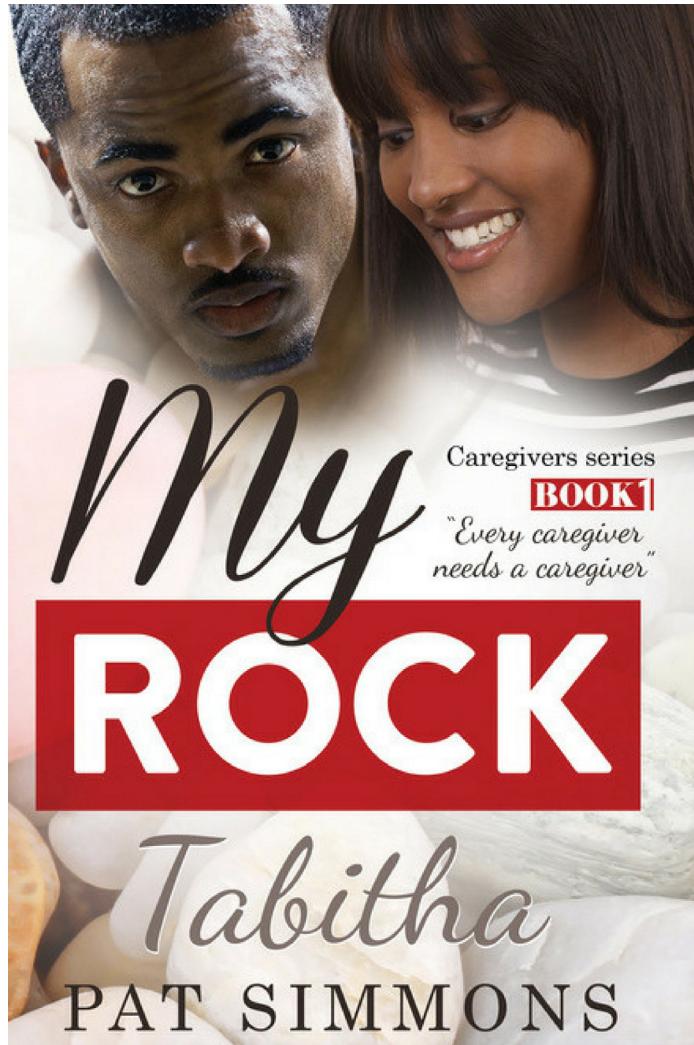


L. Penelope writes with the soul of Octavia Butler, the heart of Tananarive Due, and the mind of Cerece Rennie Murphy. Combined, this skillfully crafted science fiction debut novel has all the elements that a seasoned reader comes to expect from a classic. *A Song of Blood and Stone's* world-building and societal dynamics mirror today's issues so well, that it is a not-so-subtle reach at showing how dark and deep life experiences will become if some harsh realities aren't analyzed and resolved.

At times action-packed and others, introspective, the current story of a woman riding the line of two cultures, a caste system, and the past that has driven a wedge between people who have existed since time began in such a way that no one can seem to bridge the gap. This is a perfect first effort from L. Penelope and she ends the story with grace while still setting the stage for more, without leaving the reader feeling lost. That, in itself, is an awesome feat.

# Book Review by Shannan Harper Harpers Court Blog

REVIEW



Being A caregiver is not easy. Just ask Tabitha Knicley. She, along with her sisters, have agreed to become caregivers to their aging Aunt Tweet, who was found across state lines and diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Tabitha soon learns that she, and her sisters, might have bitten off more than they can chew.

While living with Tabitha, who has the first six months, Aunt Tweet has been wandering off and ends up on the porch of Marcus Whittingham, a business owner of a cleaning service that offers jobs to ex cons. Guilty of accusing Tabitha of elder Abuse, Marcus soon realizes that caregivers need someone to take care of them as well. While he's taking care of Tabitha with God's help, will romance develop?

There were several things that I enjoyed about the story. Tabitha and her sisters doing research to understand everything about their aunt's condition; Aunt Tweet prompting Tabitha and Marcus to start going to church and even professing salvation. Especially loved the still small voice of God speaking and assuring the three of them that He is always there. There were times I had to hold back tears, and times I couldn't stop laughing, which is something I experience often when reading a novel by Pat Simmons. I am expectantly waiting the next book in the series.

# Shining Star



# London St. Charles

Marva is her first name, but I've had the pleasure of calling her mom my entire life. There's a warmth that flows through me when I think of my mother. She's my ultimate BFF, the keeper of my secrets, the protector of my spirit. There isn't anything that I wouldn't do for that woman. Pride and dignity ooze from me when I introduce my mother to anyone. Love rolls over my tongue when I speak of her or anything she's done. She's part of my inner being.

Mom is wise, funny, trustworthy, compassionate, understanding, and unbothered. Man ... she's so unbothered. I love it. And she's team "me," no matter what—even when I'm wrong. Don't get it twisted; mom lets me know what she thinks and how she feels I should've handled something differently. I totally respect that.

We're the ultimate conversationalists and both of us have strong personalities and don't always agree, but we don't argue. The mutual respect is admirable.

I remember being told, "You're turning into your mother" or, "You sound like mom."

Thanks for the compliment. I couldn't think of a more upstanding person to be compared to.

I thank her all the time for being the person she is because that kind, well-rounded, loving person shaped me into the woman I am today. The overwhelming gratitude I have for her is stronger than any superpower and needs no explanation. It just is. And I know I'm blessed to have her as my mother.

My mom is known for her quotes. The ones that stood out the most was, "Always be a leader, never a follower", " If you're going to be a fool, then be the ringleader on your own accord. Don't let someone else make a fool out of you."

As a kid, I hated that. It sounded like blah, blah, blah. But as an adult, with life experience and children of my own--let me tell you, that phrase has stuck like Spandex on the wrong side of being on all night. It helped me see things more clearly.

I've learned to do what I knew was right, even when everyone else was doing wrong. I beat to my own drum and could care less about what someone else thinks of me. I think I've mastered the art of being unbothered. Mic drop. And I'm teaching my children the same.

Thanks, mom.



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)



# I Choose Joy

*Not knowing her future forces us to live and find Joy in the present*



# Susan D. Peters

My mother's name is Sarah and she turned 93 in January. Her majestic face is strengthened by high, chiseled cheekbones and deeply set eyes that bestow upon her an enviable, timeless beauty. My mom, my role model, my spiritual guide, is losing her memory and the ability to process some kinds of information. It's the "A" word.

Watching her memory decline while helping her maintain her dignity and as much independence as possible has been difficult. I have transitioned through several phases including disbelief and denial, but I recently I have decided to support my mother in a joyous way. So many of my friends have lost their mothers, I am grateful. Mother's memory loss is forcing me, the family project manager and perpetual list maker, who often lives in and for the future, to cherish the precious moments we share in the present.

As if losing her memory were not enough, mom is experiencing cataracts that have claimed much of her eyesight. For several months now she sees mostly light, shadows and shapes. Her life has shrunk as the former hospice volunteer requires assistance to navigate the world outside of her home. Now her life revolves around doctor's appointments, televised church services, hanging out once a week with their bowling group and running errands that I could either automate or do for them.

Independence is as necessary as oxygen to my mother, and yet she has accepted her health challenges with a grace summoned from decades of spiritual discipline. Hard core positive thinker that she is, when asked how she feels, she confidently affirms "I am excellent!" In other words, "The Devil IS a Liar!"

My sister Yvonne lives in St. Louis and we spend hours strategizing about ways to help mom and her equally independent husband remain in their own home. Sometimes the sheer effort required in these conversations is overwhelming yet we approach each day with love and a prayer for the grace to deal from our hearts and to find Joy in every opportunity to enhance mom's life. Each time I leave mom as she closes the door behind me she chants ...

The light of God surrounds you; the love of God enfolds you; the power of God protects you; The presence of God watches over you; wherever you are, God is! How can that not bring me Joy?



Susan D. Peters authored *Sweet Liberia, Lessons from the Coal Pot*, her award winning memoir. *Broken Dolls* is the first of the Detective Joi Sommers mystery series and her most recent book, *Stolen Rainbow* centers on a beautiful marine captain's recovery after a devastating combat injury. Susan is a monthly contributor for Garden Spices online magazine and is currently working on her next novel. [www.susandpeters.com](http://www.susandpeters.com)

# *The Grandmother Experience*

*Sara Lunsford*

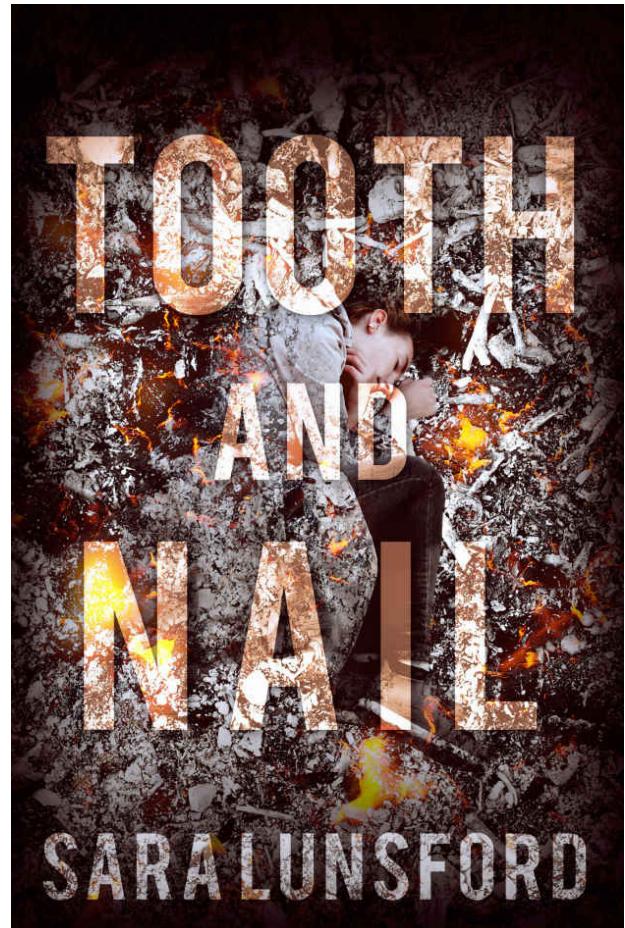
My paternal grandmother dropped out of school after 8th grade to help care for her family. By the age of 60, she was legally blind from macular degeneration. She taught herself braille, got her GED at 82, and became a literacy advocate. She volunteered in all the local schools as a “room grandmother” and helped kids learn to read. She provided a safe place for them and gave them the grandparent experience that I’ve known from her all my life.

She had twenty grandchildren and nearly thirty great grandchildren. I was the youngest grandchild. For Christmas and birthdays, she tried to give us all the same thing. So we received \$5. And considering how many of us there were ... that was pure magic.

If we went to visit, she’d let us have the money from recycling the cans. Always loving. Always fair.

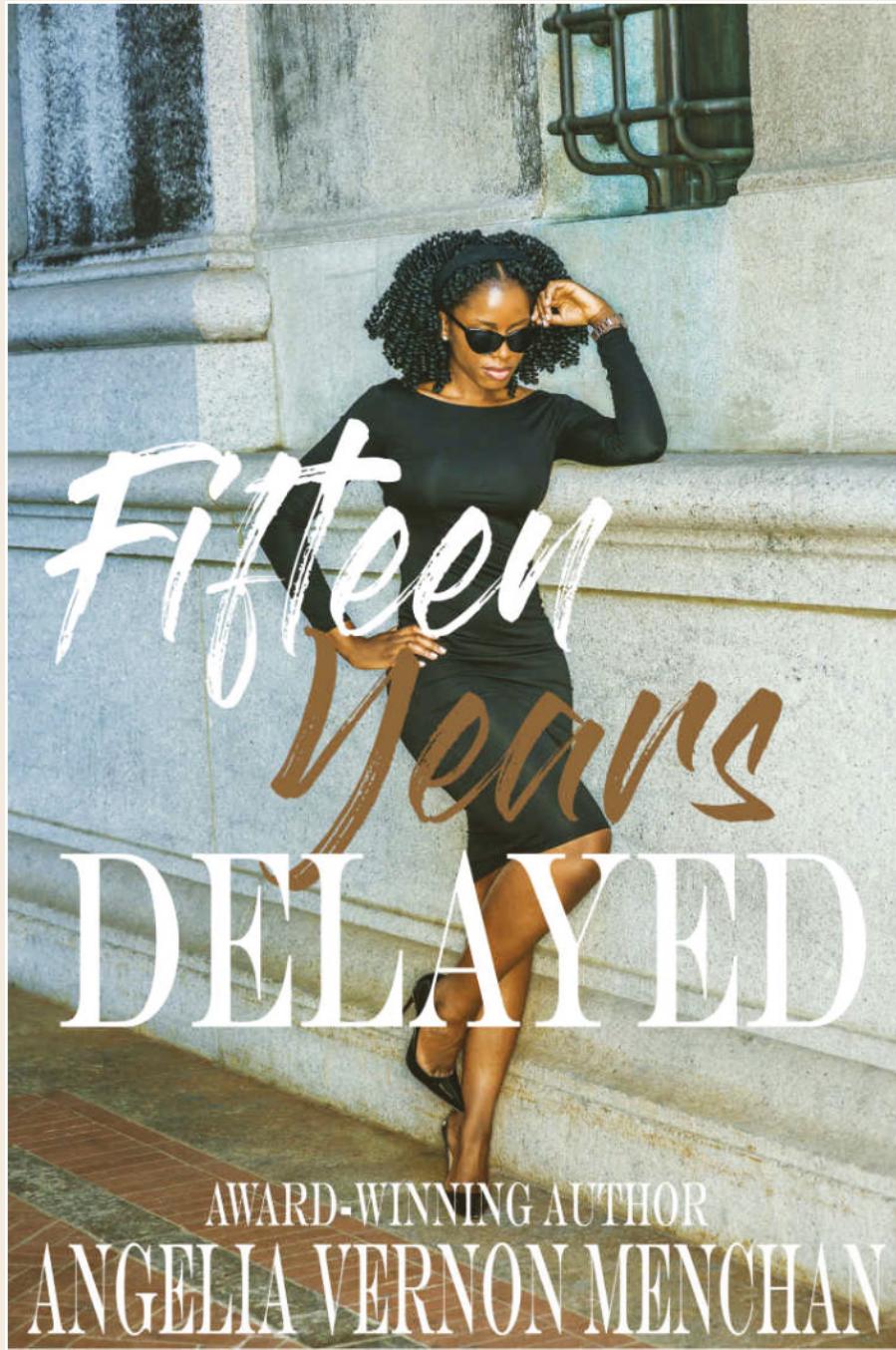
When she heard I wanted to be a writer, she bought my first typewriter. At that time, they were pretty expensive. I didn’t understand how that gift would impact me until I was an adult. Not really. Or what it meant that she saved her pennies to buy it for me.

She taught me so much. But these are the things I remember most. I’m a published writer now, and I don’t think I would be without her or my mother.



Sara Lunsford wrote her first short story after watching *The Exorcist* at her 8th birthday party. She’s gone on to write over fifty titles under various pen names. Her domestic thriller titled *Tooth and Nail* is on sale for .99 until June 1. Check it out here: [www.books2read.com/ToothandNail](http://www.books2read.com/ToothandNail) Website: [www.saralunsfordbooks.com](http://www.saralunsfordbooks.com).

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*I love the characters Angelia Vernon Menchan creates. She blends intriguing parts culture, social class, love, and real life to make these endearing people with relatable challenges who hook us from the first description. They could be as close as the man next door to the woman one thinks is unapproachable. In Fifteen Years Delayed, she does it again, maybe even better than ever! This tale of love and redemption teaches, as well as entertains with hot doses of sexiness woven throughout. Great job!*

--Victoria Writes

[www.angeliavernonmenchan.com](http://www.angeliavernonmenchan.com)

# CREATIVE MASTERFEAST



DONALD GLOVER

# Sierra Kay

On Friday, May 4, 2018, I wrote a sketch for an upcoming showcase. On Sunday, May 6, 2018, I watched Childish Gambino's, "This is America." I cursed, booted up my computer and went back to work.

See, my sketch, while funny, read basic. To be completely honest, it read basic and a bit blue. Michelle Obama warned me about going low, but I just didn't listen.

Then, my eyes feasted on the "This is America" video and honestly, I found myself inspired. The depth of thought and historical context that appeared caught me off guard. It was so smart. And I hadn't managed to do it. *Aargh.*

You won't see deeply insightful commentary from me about the video. Let's be real. I would need to read five more books and maybe a few associated Cliff Notes to even make an attempt. My "A" in high school history was useless in this case.

If you need commentary, plop that title in a search engine. People have picked that video apart like vultures on a chicken bone. And it's hearty enough to provide fodder for many different points of view. That's what makes it so good. Intelligent art is a beautiful thing.

Plus, it makes me question my own work. "Can I do better?"

As a country, we are becoming increasingly tired of whitewashing over real issues that need to be addressed. Art reflects life. Yes, our lives have bits of senseless fun. Everyone's life should.

However, often, our lives have layers. Yet, just as often, our media only feeds us cotton candy that looks robust until it touches the tongue. At that point, issues that they deem worthy to cover dissipates into nothing.

Society is starving. So when we get a masterfeast like, "This is America," we consume it until the platter is empty; we've sopped up the gravy with a biscuit, and we need to unbuckle our pants just to breathe or make room for more. Which explains why people have watched, "This is America" multiple times.

As a writer, this serves a reminder that audiences can't survive on sugar alone. When I need to up my game I'm going to watch, "This is America" again, twice. Watch once for the foreground. Watch once for the background. Curse, delete whatever random, basic prose I typed, and then get to work on my true artistic meal.

# Lessons Learned



This will probably be the hardest article I've ever written in my life. Raw, uncensored, and uncut truths about my relationship with my mom. This is not a plea for sympathy or a need for attention, but truly a chance to release all the things I've held inside.

My mom loved dancing in her later years. Any music that would come on, she would get up and twist around like she was on the dance floor. Even though she had dementia, she always had a knack for inserting a comment at the most appropriate time. Early stages of dementia, she enjoyed chasing my uncles around and telling them she was going to bop them upside the head. In her later stages of dementia, my boys would go to the store and buy her orange push-ups because it would calm her down. Until the last year of her life, she still remembered the words to her favorite song, I Learned How to Lean and Depend on Jesus.

My mom was the oldest of eight kids, born to my young grandmother, and married to a man twenty years her senior. She helped to raise all of her siblings except my aunt, who was the youngest. What I learned about my mother during her illness was that she shouldered a lot of the responsibilities because she was the oldest. Cooking, cleaning, chores, and raising siblings made her the hard, sharp-tongued, self-reliant woman I knew.

Then at eighteen, she married her first love only to be beaten by him in a drunken rage. Crying out for help and no one heard her. Until his mother told her to hit him and he'll stop. During their next fight, my mom hit my dad upside the head with a cast iron skillet, requiring ten stitches. My paternal grandmother's response to this was 'I said hit him, not kill him.' Sending him to the hospital would become a changing point in their relationship. My dad stopped drinking and gave his life to Christ. They were married fifty-three years at her death.

My mom was a great cook, seamstress, and a hard worker who worked three-to-four jobs most times. Those work experiences ranged from cleaning offices, houses, medical office assistant, church secretary, factory worker, caregiver, and parent. Every Thanksgiving and Christmas she baked cakes for the elderly in the church at no cost to them; others she

# Anita L. Roseboro

sold to her coworkers. Her favorites were a Brownstone (Chocolate Pound) Cake, Red Velvet, Lemon Pound Cake, and a 5-Day Coconut Cake. She sold them for close to fifty dollars. This five-layer cake, with freshly grated coconut, sour cream, and cool whip blend was worth every dime. She was the ultimate host of numerous dinner parties for her friends and family. That all changed after a back surgery and subsequent slip into a mental abyss.

As her illness progressed, I learned more about her. She was prideful and hated not being able to articulate her need to use the bathroom or to manage her own daily hygiene. Ironically, it was her battle with dementia that helped me learn to love and appreciate the woman she was and understand the woman she became. These times, I saw where my fierce independence streak came from and also my need to take care of everyone. I was able to witness firsthand the commonalities that we shared, ones I'd never noticed because of the distance in our relationship. She was very critical of everything that I did, and this caused me to draw away. No teenager wants that kind of censure.

Gradually, with the disease, she forgot a lot of people that she knew as she became trapped inside her own world. She forgot many others that I presumed important to her but in spite of our relationship, she never forgot me. The smile I'd receive when I came to visit, bathe her and watch movies, was worth it all. Every ounce of pain I felt as a child, disappeared with that smile. We bonded for the first time over Steel Magnolias and Andy Griffith, Bonanza reruns, sippy cups, and Depends. The last year of her life was the worst and best year of my life. Worst, because I finally had to admit her into a facility. Best, because I was able to learn and love her before she transitioned from this life. I submit to you, dear reader, if your mother is still alive, spend time with her, get to know her. There are no differences that can't be resolved because once they are gone, it's too late.



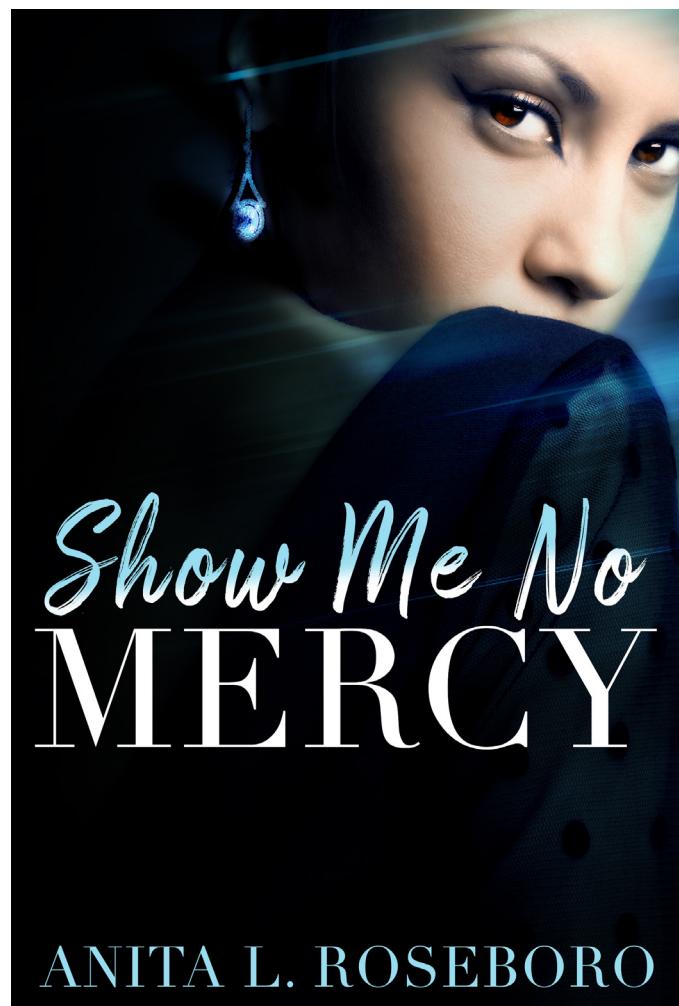
*Anita L. Roseboro, a native of North Carolina has a BS in Management Information Systems and a Master's Degree in Business Administration. She is a passionate advocate for children and the cultivation of their minds in that they become productive members of society. Currently, she is pursuing her life-long dream of writing.*

Coming October 12, 2018

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On a night that should have been cause for celebration, a personal violation ripped a hole in a marriage that was already fraying at the edges.

Now, this couple must navigate the shadows of the criminal justice system, find peace and a common ground when their definition of right and wrong are polar opposites.



# PENNIES FROM HEAVEN



# Christine Pauls

Clara Jane Pauls, formerly Anderson, was born June 10, 1899. She was a petite woman but exuded black pride, strength, and courage when it came to keeping her family together. Her grandchildren were plentiful; however, she managed to spread her love to all of us.

Every other Saturday, she'd go to a hairdresser two blocks from where we lived. My aunt would send me down to meet her so we could walk back to the house. She'd visit with us before she made her way back home. When I came into the small establishment, she'd say, "This here's my baby granddaughter. Ain't she pretty? I bet y'all don't know how many grandchildren I have?" The conversation would start, and my grandmother would brag about all her babies, outtalking the other ladies.

Oh, the hair! She'd get what was called a *blue rinse*. When that press and curl was finished, the electric blue illuminated through her silver hair like the sun. Come Sunday, she was ready, adorned in her white uniform, standing at her usher post inside the sanctuary of Eighth Street Baptist Church.

One of her quirks was pennies. She saved them in jars all the time. When I visited; my assignment was to count and coin wrap the mounds based on how many wrappers she had at the time. I never thought much about why she saved them back then. It didn't matter because I'd reap the benefits of my labor when she bestowed one hundred of those copper coins upon me.



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.

Although my aunt monitored my spending of, like giving me five coins over the weekends, I could go to the corner store and buy heaps of sweet treats to share with my two best friends, Glenda and Margo. We'd skip on down to Boobie's (yes, that was the name of the corner store) with our pennies, discussing who'd buy what. When we entered, Mr. Boobie, a towering dark-skinned old man, frowned, standing behind the counter, impatiently waiting for us to make our selections. He'd finally scare us by yelling, "What y'all want, now?!" We'd quickly make our purchases, leave and head straight to the park across the street to trade what we bought with each other, so we'd all have the same kind of treats.

I was carrying my second daughter, Stephanie and my grandmother told me that she didn't believe she'd be around to see this great-grandchild born. How could she know that? But she was right. My daughter made her entry into this world June 9th, 1980; one day before my grandmother's eighty-first birthday and three months after her death.

I miss her warmth and kindness. I miss her voice which was soft and sweet. I save pennies, too! I throw them into a large plastic cup that I keep in my bedroom. Every time I throw the coins in and wrap them when it gets full, I think of my grandmother. I know now why she saved them. I've had many occasions in my lifetime when they came in handy.

Happy Mother's Day Grandmother Clara! My love for you is eternal.

# SIERRA KAY

## AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR AND POET

***IABookReviews.com***

***Review of From Behind the Curtain***

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

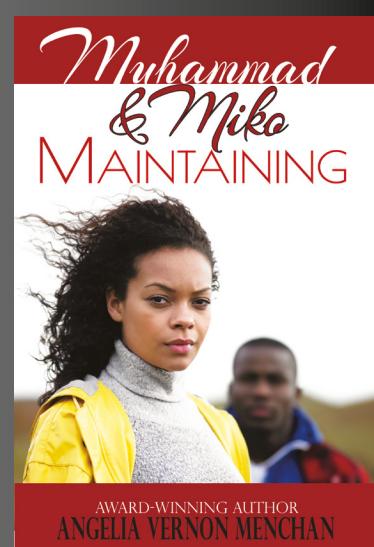
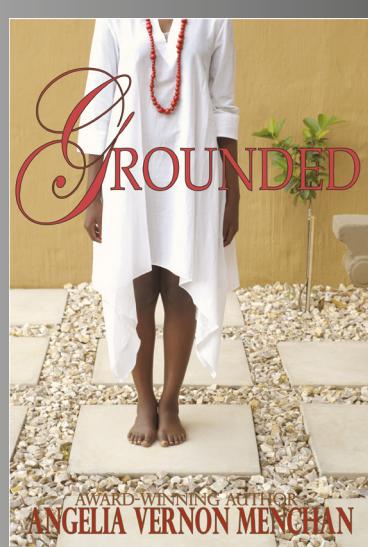
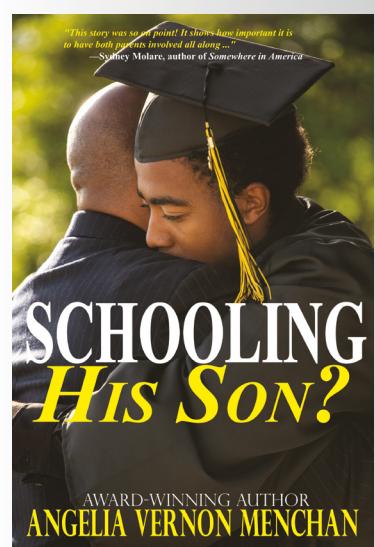
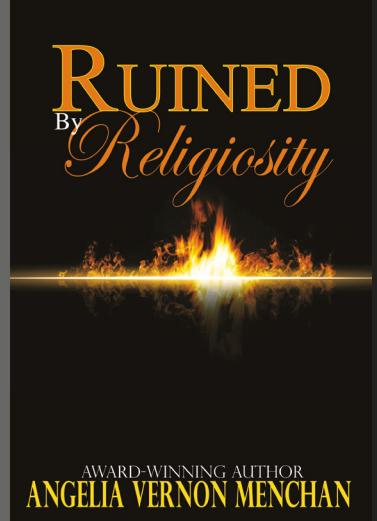
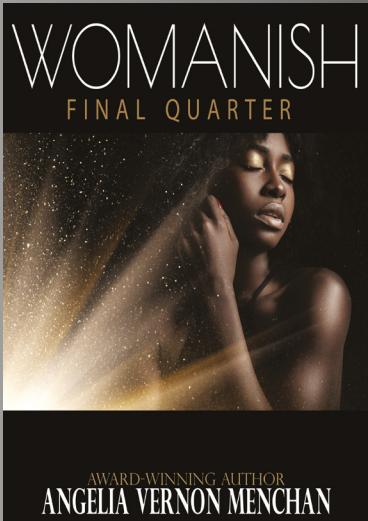
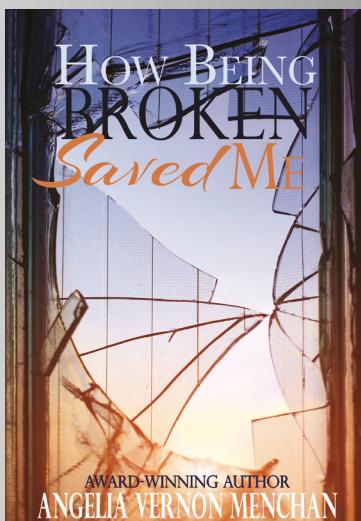
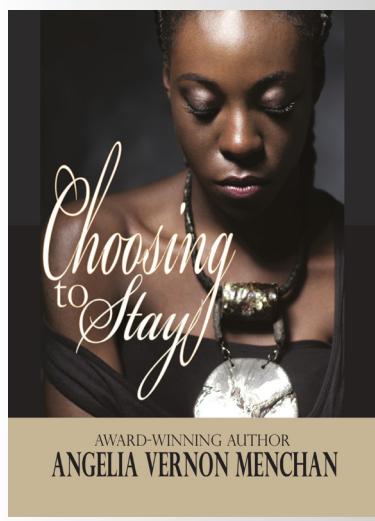
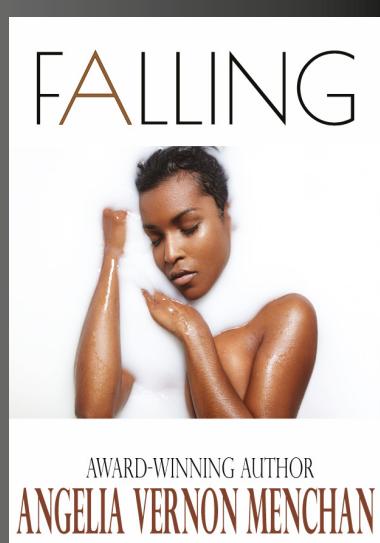
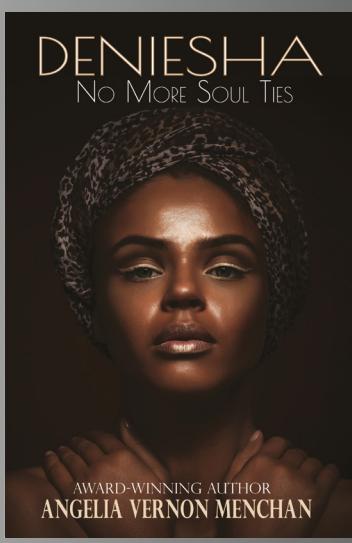
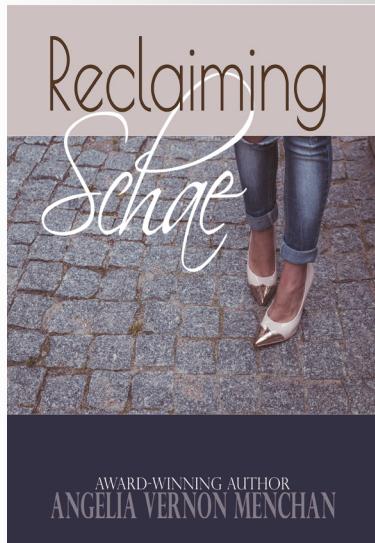


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Sierra Kay has an M.A. in Writing from DePaul University, won a Nuyorican Poets Cafe Short Story Slam, participated in comedy fests as a member of the writing teams for Spankx and N20 Comedy. She also writes poetry and suspense novels. Obviously, she'll 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)



# Angelia Vernon Menchan



[www.angeliavernonmenchan.com](http://www.angeliavernonmenchan.com)

# IGNORANCE ISN'T ALWAYS BLISS

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

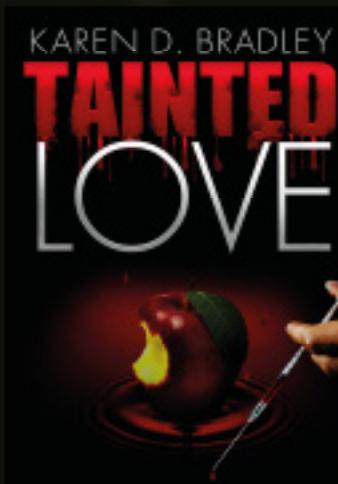
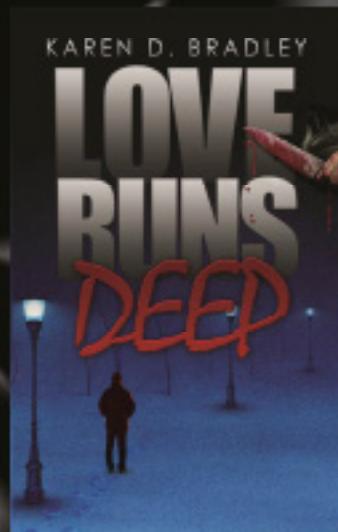
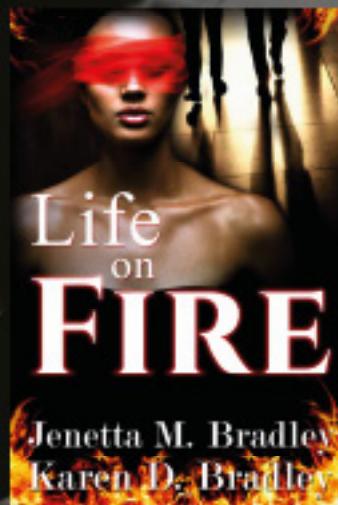
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After almost ten years apart, Paris, Shai, KiKi, and Reign come together to decide whether F.I.R.E. should remain extinguished or be reignited one last time for their fans. Secrets, lies, addiction, and egos tore them apart. Can their love for music bring them back together?

PORTIA A. COSBY



A dramatic promotional image featuring four Black women. In the foreground, a woman with curly hair and a leopard-print top is shown from the back, her head turned over her shoulder. Next to her, another woman with dark hair and a patterned top is also seen from the back, looking over her shoulder. Behind them, two more women are shown in profile, looking towards the camera. The background is a dark, smoky environment with a bright, glowing orange and yellow light source, creating a fiery and intense atmosphere.

# F.I.R.E.

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