

DISCUSSION FORUM POSTINGS | REFLECTIONS AND MUSINGS

What writer am I?

I'll keep this one short.

Writing is a part of my identity that I didn't fully embrace until a few years ago. My background is in Science and Tech, so I'd only partake in the creative arts (theatre & writing) when I felt inspired to do so. I'm still not entirely sure what type of writer I am, but I do have a passion for creating short stories in the first-person voice. There's an attachment with a sample of my work from a previous block below. In the future, I aspire to publish adult fiction novels that feature gifted, quirky, and diverse characters who are marginalized and discriminated against due to their ethnicity, disability, and religious beliefs. It is my desire as well to explore the world of creative non-fiction and writing for children.

Oh, and with regards to class, I suggest we meet twice a week: Mondays and Thursdays.

Thought Experiment and Options

I will be focusing on the book proposal aspect of the module and for the purposes of this thought experiment, I'd like to brand myself as a creative writer, whose specialty is to create thought provoking fiction stories with marginalized characters for an adult audience. It is the aspiration that I posted previously under the 'What type of writer I am' forum. An extension of that idea would include working directly with underrepresented writers to cultivate their talents. I'm developing the plot for a book that's centred around the injustices displayed against the BAME community. The synopsis is currently under reconstruction otherwise it would have been posted. I went through this list of publishers for black authors [15 of the Best Publishers for Black Authors - Writing Tips Oasis](#) (link sent by Paul) and I have shortlisted a few of the publishers that are looking for the content that I'm working on. At the top of the list, there's Harper Collins followed by New Beacon Books. They have an impressive assortment of books by black authors that deal with the same theme as my book. Currently, I am comparing the two publishers and working through the [generic book proposal](#) form on Moodle.

Before finalizing my decision, I explored the NAWF site and Literature Wales with the profile for the thought experiment in mind. I considered applying for the position of a trustee with Ilkley Literature Festival (ILF) and I also came up with the idea for a project based in Ceredigion. For the job, the organization, ILF, is aimed at supporting emerging writers, cultivating their talents, and promoting diversity in their literary festival. A five-year growth plan was adopted with the objectives of extending the duration of the festival, hosting creative activities to open the mind and inspire curiosity. The main goal of the trustee was to ensure the successful navigation of ILF. Alternatively, I also considered running a 6-8-week project in Ceredigion dubbed 'The Call'. The target groups are university students and community members with an interest in writing professionally. The purpose of the project is to rebuild literacy within the county, create a writer's hub that offers workshops and mentorship, teach writers how to accurately portray race and the norms associated with different cultures, promote diversity in writing and assist writers with their own sense of self development and expression. The project will require other experienced writers to be on

board and a team of volunteers to facilitate workshops. Below are some examples that I came up with of workshops that could have been held under the project:

1. More than Just: helping writers see themselves as writers
2. The Place where Characters Live: teaching fiction writers how to create diverse characters
3. The Universe is Diverse: A discussion about race, its influence, and its impact upon literature
4. The Cloud: brainstorming session for creatives to come up with their next big idea and practice their skills using writing prompts.

Paul Wright – How will you meet the role expectations?

I've worked in a charity organization before coordinating sponsorships, liaising with team members, and managing a staff of volunteers. I also had experience in an entrepreneurial and business environment setting where I gained skills of administration, accounting, bookkeeping, and leading a brand towards their target goals. I also studied Law for two years or so years before coming to Wales, so I have an idea of the legalistic requirements of this role. I apologize for the late response on this. I really didn't feel comfortable sharing that much information on the forum.

Paul Wright – Can you identify a possible publisher for your adult fiction?

Yes, Harper Collins will be my publisher of choice.

Richard— Would you be looking for anthologies/contests, or trying for a collection of short stories? I too am interested in short stories - currently I'm thinking competitions seem to be the way forward since they can pay, and often offer publishing opportunities, but had no luck yet.

Terribly sorry for the late response Richard. As you're aware, I've opted to pitch a novel.

Proposal

(WIP from the past week)

Book Proposal

Harper Collins is the publisher that I have selected for this book proposal. While they do not accept unsolicited manuscripts, I have decided to pretend that info does not exist (as per suggestion from Paul) and pitched my proposal to their HQ imprint. Harper Collins has an entire section of works written by Black authors (which is great), and the publishing house is committed towards diversity, equality, and inclusion in their workforce (I liked this).

I have adjusted the first section of the generic book proposal so that a detailed synopsis of this book could be provided. I have also added chapter summaries and a mini extract of the book to act as a replacement for the three chapters (Given the time constraints of this block that was not attainable). To ensure that I appear as qualified as possible, I *added* a few qualifications to enhance my credentials. I tailored the qualifications to include experience working with underrepresented groups.

Shannel Grant (2114642)

Changemakers: Building Your Brand For Sustainable Development
Portfolio

Brief note on publishers

Other publishers that I have considered

Sceptre: did not accept unsolicited manuscripts and required a literary agent.

Black Gold Publishing: required payment before publishing (red flag).

Penguin: did not accept unsolicited manuscripts and required a literary agent.

New Beacon Books: Excellent selection and variety of books from Black authors but had no clear information on how to submit a manuscript. New Beacon only accepts published books for resale.

Jacaranda Books: accepted unsolicited manuscripts in a wide variety of genres with strong female leads but I did not think that my book idea suited their collection.

Page Break

Book Proposals: A Template

Author/Editor

Name: Shannel Grant

Position: Author

Contact Address:
College Street, Lampeter
Wales
SA48 7ED

Telephone Number: + 44 7546 913633

Email Address: nelgrant@hotmail.com

Details and Outline

Proposed Title: The Stories We Tell

Brief Outline of the Project's Scope and Contents: (Include Section Headings where appropriate)

My book, *The Stories We Tell*, will be a modern contemporary fiction work which will be centred around the topics of racism, social issues, and politics.

This book follows the life of a 23-year-old ambitious female main character, Azariah Waldron, who aspires to be a tele journalist with William Murray Bentick (WMB) Media in London. Her CV is undeniably impressive, but for her boss, William, her skin is too dark. She is offered to work with the company as long as she agrees to go through an internship period where she'll be "trained" before she appears on live Television. In the meantime, her role will be confined to writing special feature articles for the media corporation. However, after she starts, Azariah realizes that her boss never intended to make her a part of the team.

Her colleagues are uncomfortable with her presence and the only thing she's able to write are the weekly advert columns. Azariah's special feature articles never seem to reach the editor and the star role is given to an underqualified woman named Annalise, who is just the right shade of black. After confronting William about this, she leaves in hopes of tracking down an independent story that would get her the recognition she desires.

She returns home to her family in Notting Hill, aspiring to write a feature story on the history of violent protest actions in the community and picks up a part time job assisting her neighbour and friend, Nadar, with running his supermarket. While in

Nothing Hill, an unarmed young black man is shot and killed by police. Her younger brother witnessed the entire thing, and the evidence is on his cell phone. The officer behind the gun is a white, middle-aged man. He's also her brother-in-law, David.

Determined to pass off the issue as a hate crime, a police squad raids the supermarket; they suspect the community to be a hub for instigating protest actions. They insist that Nadar is the ringleader for the protests and that he is withholding information from the police. He is brutally attacked before taken to custody. Azariah, who witnessed the entire thing is thrown in the midst of a race fuelled war that is threatening to drive her and her boyfriend apart.

On the frontlines of the protest actions, the case of her father's death is reopened. Patrick Constance was allegedly shot and killed by police. They claim that he was mistaken for a radical in the series of hate crimes that sparked the Notting Hill Fires. No one knows more than that, until now.

Her desire to write a feature story leads her to two life changing women: Nora Blackwell, a 68-year-old Black British retired nurse and Sue Chung, a 71-year-old Asian immigrant. These women teach her how to deal with racial tension, hate crimes, and social injustice. Armed with this information, she creates her own podcast, where she shares with her community the lessons the women taught her.

List of Contents: (Please provide a separate sheet)

About the Author
Title Page
Copyright
Dedication

Chapter 1: Sincerely, No

Azariah's ambitious life and an introduction to the MC; WMB interview where she's rejected for TV but given a lesser role.

Chapter 2: Girl, don't try me

Azariah doesn't fit into the aesthetic of the company; her colleague Jillian ridicules her; she relays her experiences to her boyfriend, Wyatt.

Chapter 3: The Star Lead

Analise the new light skinned black intern is given the role of hosting the company's #1 TV program 'Daystar'; her confrontation with William; Azariah's real motive for wanting to be on TV was for her late father to see her as a "star".

Chapter 4: I'm coming home

Azariah decides she wants to show them what she can do; her boyfriend encourages her to write about Notting Hill's history; Back home, Nadar, her neighbour asks for her help like old times; brief encounter with Wyatt's brother.

Chapter 5: Racism is everywhere

Azariah looks into the history of the town; News of a young black man shot sparks protest nationwide; she finds a lead for her story.

Chapter 6: What is my Story?

Azariah writes an article 'The ugliness of Racism', reminiscing upon her Father; Fast forward- Nadar is attacked in the supermarket.

Chapter 7: A new direction

She sees video of the murder; Her boyfriend finds out what his brother, David did; Tension ensues between the two; Azariah meets the women for her lead story: Nora and Sue Cheng; Her brother encourages her to take a stand.

Chapter 8: Lesson 1

Interview sessions with Nora and Sue; first life lesson given: Don't treat people how they treat you; war ensues in Nothing Hill; refuses Wyatt's calls.

Chapter 9: Lesson 2

Second interview sessions: You are not just your colour; Sue Cheng's past and Nora's assistance that forged an unlikely friendship; views on BAME are shared; Azariah's brother wants her to join the protest; She thinks about David and Wyatt.

Chapter 10: Lesson 3

Azariah joins the protest lines but leaves after it turns violent; She meets with Wyatt and tells him all about Nora; she reminds him of lesson 3: If you have a voice, you can raise it; Azariah goes to see David.

Chapter 11: Oh, my brother

Nadar's family on the protest line, cell phone video leaked with the murder; protest increase and become violent.

Chapter 12: Lesson 4

Azariah is disappointed that the video was leaked and confronts her brother; reluctantly to believe his story Azariah leaves in frustration; Wyatt calls and questions Azariah; She goes to see Nora but instead has a conversation with Sue Cheng; lesson: Learn to fight back in a new way.

Chapter 13: Lesson 5

Azariah learns that Sue Cheng's son was the centre of the rebellion in Notting Hill; she lost her husband and her son in one night; lesson: A violent man can never stop violence; Azariah now questions what happened to her father.

Chapter 14: Lesson 6

Azariah continues to write her feature story; she learns more of BAME issues and their indifference with police brutality; She returns to see Sue Cheng so she can learn what really happened the day her father was killed; she's unsuccessful but briefly speaks to Nora who shares another lesson: Who are you, Black woman?

Chapter 15: Lesson 7

Pensive and curious Azariah digs deeper into the town's history; Wyatt comes to see her; she takes him to see Nora and Sue who teach them a lesson on history.

Chapter 16: How dare you

WMB wants Azariah to come back to the company to save their reputation; Azariah realizes that she never wanted that dream and refuses. She reconciles with Wyatt and her brother.

Chapter 17: The trouble we don't seek

Her brother is arrested for instigating a rebellion; Azariah tries to bail him; Meanwhile Wyatt is attacked by an angry protester.

Chapter 18: Look within

Azariah remembers what she learned from the two women and applies their lessons; she manages to secure bail for her brother; Wyatt tells her how he truly feels about the entire incident and his brother's crime; He spills about the Nothing Hill fires.

Chapter 19: Murder and Mayhem

Wyatt ignores Azariah; Azariah goes to see David again; Azariah learns that David was there the night her father died; Angry, she goes to see Sue who tells her what happened that night; Shocked, she leaves.

Chapter 20: Lesson 8

Azariah ignores everyone; She remembers lesson 8 (A note on grief). Unsure of her next steps with her feature article, she takes a walk through her town and feels inspired; she decides to start a podcast. Meanwhile, protest actions are less violent as new policies implemented.

Chapter 21: Girl, chin up

Azariah starts putting the stories from the ladies together; she forgives her brother and tries reaching Wyatt; meanwhile she shares her goodbyes with the ladies who will soon be leaving Nothing Hill; David is convicted of murder.

Chapter 22: These are their stories

Azariah shares her podcast with a local company who agrees to publish it; She also publishes the feature article that she initially wrote in the papers; Nadar reopens the supermarket and Wyatt finally calls to talk; Azariah continues to share her stories and eventually starts her own media company.

Acknowledgements

About the Publisher

Rationale

Why should your book be published?

This book offers a fresh perspective on the concept of racism, social issues, politics, and police brutality in an easy flowing and relatable manner. It is filled with racially diverse characters and issues that reflect modern reality. With a rise in society for more diverse characters of colour, accurate representation, and equality, I think that this book is timely and will suit the current state of affairs that we are living in. In addition to that, I've noted that Harper Collins is committed to equality, curbing underrepresentation, and diversity in publishing. Given that, I believe that *The Stories We Tell* reflects the purpose of Harper Collins.

What is its likely audience?

The audiences for this book are persons with an interest in racial issues, advocates for equality, social justice groups, BAME members, BLM movement, followers of the hashtags #blackgirlmagic, #alllivesmatter, and women & men of colour influencers. The readership can expand to those who are looking for relatable, diverse, and strong lead characters that are passionate about equality, creating a better world, and unity. Additionally, persons with an interest in books where wisdom from one generation is passed down to another will find an interest in this book.

What are your particular credentials for developing a project of this sort?

I started taking myself seriously as a writer about a few years ago. Previously, I'd only write when I felt inspired to do so and that would generally be off and on. Now, I am pursuing a joint Bachelor of Arts Degree in English with History. I've always had an interest in telling stories about characters from a first-person perspective, but I've longed to do more than that.

I've done extensive background research into the lifestyle, racial tension and social disorder between the community, legal systems, and persons of colour. I've also looked at countless interviews with various members of the BAME groups in the UK that feel marginalized and victimized by the lack of support from other members within the group, police brutality and the few non BAME faces that seem to be concerned with their issues.

Over the last three years, I have worked on a social media campaign dubbed #RaiseYourVoice, which was geared towards inspiring persons of colour to speak up about their issues, document their thoughts and feelings about the racial tensions in their respective communities and provide helpful solutions to those issues. In March of last year, I was invited to speak at TEDx Talk, where I gave a presentation entitled, '*The real reason they don't see us*', and since then I have received countless correspondences via e-mail and letters with persons sharing their experiences and suggesting that I publish a book on my thoughts about race, politics, and conflict. In June of last year, I successfully launched Project Reset, a mentorship program for young victims of racial violence and their families in order to help them overcome

their fears and stabilize their lives. The project was successfully and sparked an inspiration for me to write something that is relatable, tackles the issues that I've seen and the strategies that are proven to work. While a non-fiction story could have been suited, I realized that a modern contemporary fiction work will be more relatable, impactful and that the stories we share with each other are the reason why people find hope, courage, and strength in times of trials.

What other books cover a similar area of interest? How does your book differ from these?

Under the HQ imprint, the following books are of a similar interest:

We Are Not Like Them by Christine Pride and Jo Piazza (7th July 2022 - £8.99)

All That's Left Unsaid by Tracy Lien (15th September 2022- £14.99)

Other publications from Harper Collins that cover similar interests include:

You Truly Assumed by Laila Sabreen (17th February 2022 - £12.99)

Those People Next Door by Kia Abdullah (19th January 2023 - £14.99)

The titles that I listed above cover the themes of political turmoil, social issues, sense of self and place, racism, and death. Unlike, *The Stories We Tell*, they offer no external wisdom from older characters that have an interest in resolving the issues plaguing modern society.

The Stories We Tell does not shy away from the realities of racism, conflict, and violence. It openly deals with the questions of self-love, the prevalence of hate crimes and the segregation that exist among Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic groups. While Christine and Jo's book deals with the ugly side of racism, it does not delve into the racist mindset that can often occupy members of the same ethnic group.

What is your projected word count?

The projected word count for this novel is 91, 000 words. Each chapter roughly approximates to 4000 words and there are 22 chapters. The printed novel will have approximately 364 pages.

Would you want to include illustrations or any other diagrams?

No, as this work is largely fictional, it does not need to contain any illustration or diagrams.

Author Biography

Shannel Grant is a twenty-six-year-old aspiring black author hailing from the island of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Her passion for writing started when she was just a young girl, but it was not until she was an adult that she fully delved into her love for writing. Now pursuing a joint bachelor's degree in English with History at the University of Wales Trinity St. David, she desires to publish complex, diverse, and quirky contemporary fiction books. In her spare time, Shannel actively works with the Project Reset, the team at #RaiseYourVoice and with other groups dedicated to promoting equality, diversity, and self-expression. In the future, Shannel would love to collaborate with the authors in the UK to host a diverse literature fair for all underrepresented groups.

Shannel Grant (2114642)

Changemakers: Building Your Brand For Sustainable Development
Portfolio

THE STORIES WE TELL

By Shannel Grant

This sample contains an extract of chapter 1

Chapter 1: Sincerely, No.

Azariah sat with her hand curled in her lap watching her prospective boss, William, scan through the document she had posted a few weeks prior. Her eyes lingered on the grey-haired man, fully attired in a three-piece suit, with one hand perched on the silver chair handle. She watched as his eyebrows shot up in amazement at something he read, and Azariah released a breath she didn't know she was holding. Her palms felt sweaty and briefly she looked down at her handbag desperate to reach for the napkin she had tucked inside. William, glanced over at her, his eyes scanning her before glancing back at the paper in his hands. She smiled in response. She knew what he was thinking. At least she thought she knew.

"You have an impressive record, young lady," he stated.

She nodded, but something in his eyes made her aware that his compliment was not made with good intentions. She had worked hard during her years at Cambridge and built a portfolio that anyone would be proud of. In reality, she knew that she had only accomplished it because she forced herself into her work. It was the only way she could stop mourning over her father.

"Listen," William started, drawing Azariah out of her own thoughts, "We're a large firm and we have a lot of stakeholders breathing down our necks. It can be quite a lot of pressure." He tried to laugh but stopped when it was met with silence.

Azariah's brows furrowed, and she cocked her head slightly as she looked at William. He was now tense, and a patch of sweat appeared across his forehead. She wondered what he saw when he looked at her. She was not timid. After all, she did work hard to get into an Ivy League university. *She* was the one who managed her entire household after her father died *and* have a full-time job. She knew that she was capable. She had to be. She just needed William to see that.

"Well, no job is easy," she paused before continuing, "But I do think that I have the skills, mindset, and the capacity to handle a little pressure. After all, that's how diamonds are made".

William kept his face blank, but his eyes darted from her to the door. He dragged a long breath of air in then looked hard at her. She felt queasy under his stare, as if he was scrutinizing her, but determined to prove her worth, she maintained eye contact.

*