Dear Friends:

I am excited to share with you information regarding the launch of my first novel The Abyssinian.

The Abyssinian is my first attempt at writing a fantasy romance novel. A longtime fan of this genre, I would often read stories, and put them aside, declaring to myself "I can do that!"

I began taking an artist's workshop in early 2007 entitled The Artist's Way, so named after the book of the same title by author Julia Cameron. The workshop and the book are tools in a long journey, but not so long process towards releasing the artist within. As a writer, I have spent many years blocked, and the process of releasing Amara and Alem's story from the blank pages has been an invigorating and cathartic one.

Today, I would like to share with you the introduction to my book. If you would like to receive this introduction, please respond to this email with "The Abyssinian" in the subject field. Your questions and constructive feedback are welcome!

It is still a work in progress, but if I do nothing else, I WILL spark the imagination! And so…

Imagine…

… a young, modern, African-American female entrepreneur of the 21st century, on the cusp of opening her first museum of African antiquities…

Imagine…

… a handsome, 2000 year old prince of a long forgotten ancient empire, imprisoned in a portrait by a sorcerer's deception…

Imagine…

… that true love releases both of them from the powers that have them bound.

A story inspired by magic, romance, and history, The Abyssinian will bring myth into reality.

If you would like to read more of Amara and Alem's story, please contact me at (315) 281-6945 or at nia_books@yahoo.com.

Thank you, and happy reading!

Kenisha Groomes-Faulk aka Nia (Swahili for "purpose")

Nia Books
Stories of purpose and celebration of the African experience

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***Abyssinia**:*

The second-most populous African nation, Ethiopia is one of the oldest nations in the world, and the only African nation to have enjoyed continuous sovereignty throughout and beyond the scramble for Africa .

***Amara**:*

the Abyssinian legend of the hill Amara (cf. l. 41, where Coleridge's " Mount Abora " seems to stand for Purchas's Amara). Amara in Purchas's account is a hill in a great plain in Ethiopia, used as a prison for the sons of Abyssinian kings. Its level top, twenty leagues in circuit and surrounded by a high wall, is a garden of delight. "Heaven and Earth, Nature and Industrie, have all been corriuals to it, all presenting their best presents, to make it of this so louely presence, some taking this for the place of our Forefathers Paradise."

The sides of the hill are of overhanging rock, "bearing out like mushromes, so that it is impossible to ascend it" except by a passageway "cut out within the Rocke, not with staires, but ascending little by little," and closed above and below with gates guarded by soldiers.. "Toward the South" of the level top "is a rising hill ... yeelding ... a pleasant spring which passeth through all that Plaine ... and making a Lake, whence issueth a River, which having from these tops espied Nilus, never leaves seeking to find him, whom he cannot leave both to seeke and to finde..... There are no Cities on the top, but palaces, standing by themselves .... spacious, sumptuous, and beautifull, where the Princes of the Royall blood have their abode with their families."

Preface

He…

Was an African Prince of the Abyssinian Empire. Adored by birth, he was graced with strong, regal features: a strong jaw, high cut cheekbones, and a royal nose. His full lips held the promise of toe curling, passionate kisses. His thick, wavy hair that he wore braided to his scalp, bound by leather at the nape of his neck, fell to the middle of his strong back when loosened. His skin was a rich, copper brown, stretched tightly over his 7 ft. tall frame. His massive arms betrayed the gentleness within which he could cradle a babe, or enfold a woman. His fingers, adept at chess as well as expertly firing an arrow, or wielding a sword. His muscles were artistically defined, as if an artist's chisel had shaped him from the finest stone. His lean hips were punctuated by a strong, taut backside, with the promise of power.

He was Li'ol Assefa Alem Neh Mihret.

An expert leader in his father's army, a skilled marksman, a compassionate diplomat, he believed in reciprocity, and governed his father's affairs accordingly.. As justice was a double edged sword, he could be merciful or merciless, depending on the needs of his people. He had a heart of gold that was as guarded as the tightest fortress. With his powerful steed, he was the image of a glorious nation's past.

His flaw, if there could be one, was that he was so driven, so concerned for his people, that he sacrificed his own need for companionship. He would not lay with a woman unless she

was his wife. And he was just not ready for a wife. He was not ready to court.. This alone made him one of the most desired men on the three continents. His looks, his reputation were legendary.

His parents were not at all pleased that he had not chosen a suitable bride, but knew that their eldest son was as stubborn and determined as he was charming.

Until the day he was imprisoned in portrait by a vindictive sorcerer, sent by enemies of a neighboring kingdom. So great was his father's rage and his mother's grief, that thus began the ban on rendering the likeness of a human in art, which was believed to be a vessel to contain the soul.

So great was his thirst for vengeance, that the compassion and mercy that Alem had been known for was replaced by a fury that took on supernatural proportions. It is said that everywhere the portrait traveled, great disaster followed. Should one find pleasure in his torment? Should one receive peace in his anguish? He knew not what became of his beloved family, his kingdom, and his people. Trapped in a single pose, his eyes the only part of him that could move. He hungered, he thirsted. But he could not die.

It was a fate worse than death. It was eternal torture.

His torture would end the day she acquired the portrait.

The day she became the owner of his soul.

She…

Was a recent college graduate who'd just earned her MBA. An undergraduate degree in African Art, Literature, and Languages had prepared her for a career in teaching, lecturing, or curating. She then decided to pursue a business degree so that she could open her own museum of African antiquities. Never would a piece sit hidden and unappreciated in a basement, as was rumored to be the case in some of the world's oldest institutions. Never would the story that shaped these magnificent, ancient pieces of art be retold by those whose vested interest was in keeping Africa, and her many kingdoms, a dark secret, cloaked in the lie of incivility, unsophistication, ignorance, and poverty.

She knew the truth, and that truth would set her people free. Figuratively speaking, of course.

At 30 years of age, her future had never looked brighter. She faced each day with vigor and zest for the great mission before her.

Her name was Amara Alitash Nehanda Knight. Her parents had given her the name in honor of her great grandmother's homeland, and their own appreciation of African culture.

At 5 feet, 11 inches tall, she was an intimidating woman. Men didn't like a woman as tall as, or taller than them.. She was full figured, filling out her size 16 jeans in all the right places, and some places she didn't think so right, but with the life she'd led for the sake of her

education, she wouldn't get hung up on it. Her caramel complexion and hazel eyes added to the exotic quality that surrounded her, given her name and the fact that people did not think she was American. Her shoulder length golden brown hair was locked and adorned with the occasional cowry shell and gold bead. She didn't wear much make-up, but wouldn't be caught dead without a dash of mascara and lip gloss. Her full bosom filled out her muscle t-shirt , supported by a full, strong waist. Her belly, though not flat and taut, curved in the right places, with a noticeable pouch just beneath her belly button.

A little belly is good, she'd tell herself. Belly dancers have a little belly. Real women have bellies.

Now that she was finished with school, she could put the finishing touches on her gallery. When she learned of an opportunity to purchase "Le Picture de Le Fuorilegge" or "The Portrait of the Outlaw", she could hardly believe her good fortune. What a way to start the collection! It was a mesmerizing portrait with a fascinating legend: A handsome Abyssinian outlaw, escaping justice in Nubia and Egypt , spreading terror in his wake, is finally subdued by his own vanity. An artist offers to paint his portrait, and while he does, the camp is surrounded; he is taken without a fight, and executed. As his eyes were the last feature to be painted, some say the rage that can be detected comes from the moment he realized his betrayal. Legend further states that his spirit was so vexed at being tricked with such a simple ploy that he brought bad luck to whomever owned the portrait.

So vain was he that even in death, he could not stand being the immortal fool.

Amara unwrapped her latest possession, laid it against the wall, and stepped back.

Fascinating.

This was a gorgeous man.. The way a man should look.

He looked ready, for what exactly? Her mind would love to guess.

If the story held any truth, then one could argue that the rigidity of the man's pose could attest to his moment of realization that he'd been betrayed, and readied himself for an attack he could never deliver. His brow was slightly furrowed, his lips tantalizingly parted. The intensity in his eyes seemed impossible to capture with a paintbrush. It truly was as if this man's soul was within the portrait.

"Wow", she breathed. "Too bad they don't make brothers like you anymore".

Silence.

She walked closer to the portrait, tracing the outline of his full lips, his strong jaw line, his finely chiseled cheekbones.

"You are fine, papi".

Blank stare.

She laughed. "Get a grip girl, you are macking on a picture! This is worse than looking at a smut mag, you're lusting over an ancient work of art!"

The eyes just stared back at her.

She sighed, turned and walked over to the telephone. As she chatted with her accountant about her latest acquisition, she glanced up at the painting. Those eyes, they were so enchanting.

She glanced at her watch, finished up her call, and walked over to move a few more boxes. As she did, she again glanced over at the portrait.

The eyes were staring back.

She moved again.

The eyes seemed to move with her.

"Oh boy", she thought. "What if the legend is true?"

She laughed at the thought. "Of course it's not true stupid; everyone thinks pictures are looking at them. What do they call it?"

"Don't look at me like that, papi. I'm not crazy".

Nothing.

"Although that, right there, was kinda crazy. Ah well, who will you tell?"

She finished working around her office, looking up periodically to meet the eyes of the handsome villain encased in a lovely amber frame. Funny, but she just could not get those eyes out of her mind. They did seem to follow her everywhere she went.

She turned at the door, before locking up for the night. "Good night, papi. Watch over things while I'm gone, okay? You are my meal ticket to a very lucrative future. I believe this is the start of a beautiful relationship."

Silence.

"Yeah, not the first time I've been ignored by a man. Alright! Adeus!"

Inside the office, articles on her desk began to rattle. Papers rustled as the wind suddenly rushed in from an unseen window.

Inside the portrait, the man's pupils dilated. Inside his mind, he screamed the rage of a thousand lifetimes. His fury echoed within his frozen body, but no sound could he make from his mouth.

But within his scream, there was hope. There was something about this woman, he knew it.

For when she touched his picture, when she stroked his lips, his cheek, his jaw, something happened that had never happened before. Something that told him that perhaps there was a chance he could be released from this unearthly prison.

When she touched his picture, she touched him.

He felt her skin. He felt her fingers. He felt her hand. He smelled the sweet scent of her being.

Life. He felt life.

And it would only be a matter of time before he would be alive again.

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