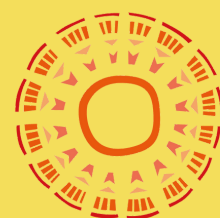
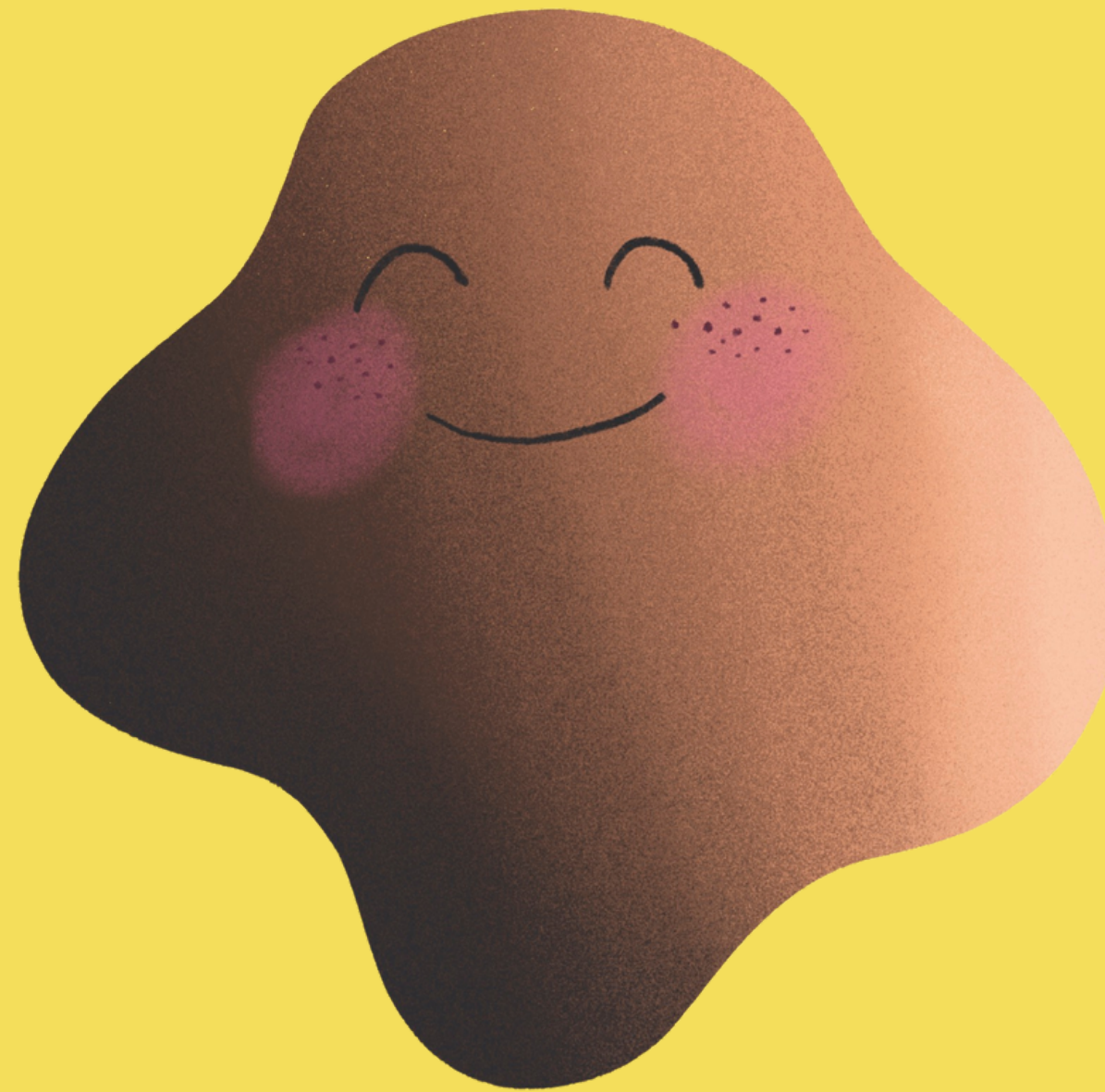


# CATALYST PRESS

SUMMER/FALL 2023



CATALYST  
PRESS



# CONTACT US

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**For questions about our South African operations/South African events: SarahBelle at [sarahbelle@catalystpress.org](mailto:sarahbelle@catalystpress.org)**

**For rights information: Jessica, at [jlpowers@catalystpress.org](mailto:jlpowers@catalystpress.org)**

**In North America, we are distributed through Consortium Book Sales and Distribution, a division of Ingram. This means our books are available to any bookstore or library in all the usual easily accessible places you order books through the usual discount you receive. Throughout South Africa, Namibia and Botswana, we are distributed through Protea Distribution.**

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When I was growing up on the U.S.- Mexico border—a bi-national, bi-cultural, bi-lingual, often marginalized spot in America—everyday life for me meant reaching outside of my own home culture. That felt difficult at times. As a young adult, however, I bumbled my way into understanding the beautiful gift I had been given: that, instead of the invisible privilege many white children of America are born into, I had grown up immersed in and nurtured by another culture. I witnessed the cycle of death and rebirth that accompanies the immigrant experience, the grace that is embodied in failure and the willingness not to let that crush you but to get up and try again, as well as—not to romanticize anything—the emotional and physical violence that accompanies the harsh reality of poverty.

Going to Africa to work with street kids in Kenya as a 19 year-old college student and, later, to learn Zulu and do research for my graduate degree in African history immersed me in the beauty of another part of the world and other cultures altogether. As a long-time writer (I write under the name J.L. Powers) and long time professional in the publishing industry, I realized ultimately that I wanted to bring the beauty of African art, culture, history, and landscape into the world through books. It is my privilege and my passion to do this work.

Thank you!

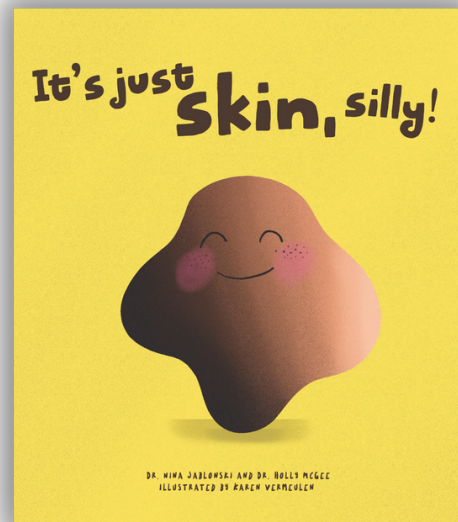
Jessica Powers, Catalyst Founder & Publisher



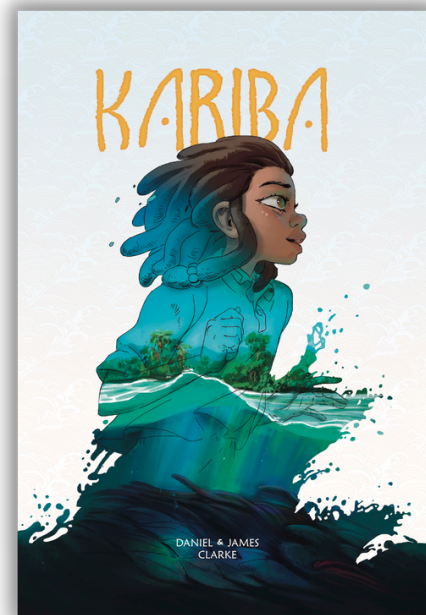


# FORTHCOMING TITLES

New titles for adults and kids, including new additions to Panel & Page, our graphic novel series, and a new collaboration with Short Story Day Africa.



***It's Just Skin, Silly!***



***Kariba***



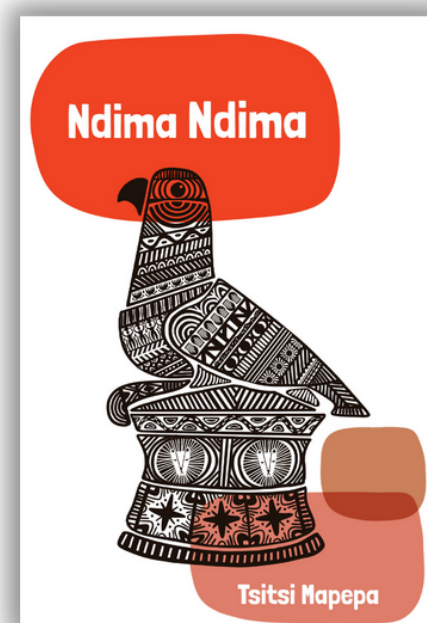
***Bait the Toad***



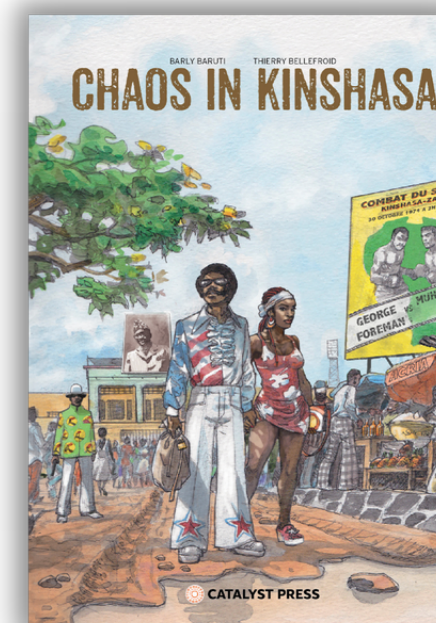
***The Quality of Mercy***



***Captive: New Short Fiction from Africa***



***Ndim Ndim***



***Chaos in Kinshasa***



# IT'S JUST SKIN, SILLY!

ISBN 9781733547413 | HARDCOVER | \$18.99 | JUL 2023



**My color doesn't make me fast, strong, smart, or scary. I just want to shout, "It's just skin, silly!"**

**An illustrated children's book on the evolution of skin color, based on a collective 40+ years of peer-reviewed research from expert anthropologist Dr. Nina Jablonski and historian Dr. Holly McGee**

**Meet Epi Dermis, your kid's quirky, clever guide to the origin of skin color! Using simple science and interactive activities, Epi takes readers on an adventure through human history to find out why skin is the hardest working organ in the body business. Whether it's how migration and climate changed our skin's need for melanin, to why sweat is your body's secret superpower, Epi's got all the facts—and uses them to challenge false narratives about race and give kids the information they need to do the same.**

**Foreword by Dr. Henry Louis Gates, Jr.**

## About the Creators

**Dr. Nina Jablonski** is an anthropologist and paleobiologist whose research on the evolution of skin color has been published in many scholarly journals including *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*, *Nature*, and *American Psychologist*. She is the author of several books, including *Living Color: The Biological and Social Meaning of Skin Color* and *Skin: A Natural History*. She has also been a featured TED Talk speaker, and has appeared as a guest on shows such as *The Colbert Report* and Bill Nye's *Science Rules!* podcast. Dr. Jablonski has extensive experience in the development of science-related youth curriculum from grades K-12.

**Dr. Holly McGee** is a historian at the University of Cincinnati. Dr. McGee's research, teaching, and publishing in the fields of African American History, comparative black politics, and South African history provide critical insight into historical narratives regarding the social creation of "race" and subsequent proliferation of racism in modern society. She is the author of *Racial Antipartheid Internationalism and Exile: The Life of Elizabeth Mafeking*, and founder of the nonprofit National Black Teachers Association.

**Karen Vermeulen** is an artist, illustrator and teacher living in Cape Town, South Africa. Her work is happy, uplifting and quirky. When she is not busy with some creative project, she is probably playing with her cat, Sir Henry.



## SPOTLIGHT ON: KAREN VERMEULEN

**We've been so very lucky to work with artist/writer Karen Vermeulen on a number of book covers, including *Love Interrupted*, *The Theory of Flight*, and *Unmaking Grace*, to name just a few. Karen's work has helped tell a piece of the story before the first page is even turned. We're so excited that readers will get to see more of her work as the illustrator of *It's Just Skin, Silly!***

### **Tell us a little bit about your background.**

I'm from Cape Town, South Africa. I live in a cozy little flat, snuggled up against Table Mountain with my cat Sir Henry. Growing up, I spent many happy hours drawing, reading and writing. I even used to line my books up along my bedroom walls, stamping pieces of paper for the stuffed animals lending books from my pretend library. As an adult, I may not play library-library anymore, but I still love books and drawing, so designing book covers is a dream job for me!

Apart from the book covers I design for Catalyst, I also work as an art-director in advertising on a freelance basis and I do design and illustration jobs, like children's' books, greeting cards or personal commissions. Anything creative that keeps me in rent and wine money.

### **How would you describe your style?**

My natural inclination is to draw in a quirky, humorous style, but I adapt it to suit the project I'm working on. Though when I'm doodling in my own time it is definitely funny, googly-eyed animals and odd-looking ladies all the way!

### **When it's time for you to work, what inspires you?**

I try to keep my eyes open to ideas and beauty in my day-to-day life and often I will type in ideas on my phone. Also often I will then look at those ideas later and have no idea what they were about!

Cape Town is a creative city, we have lots of galleries and beautiful, charming shops and restaurants as well as interesting people. It's a real melting pot here; we have loads of different cultures and on top of that lots of tourists. In my short drive to work I've seen a man in a turban and short-shorts, a guy in an Adidas tracksuit paired with an African head dress, women in head scarves, hipsters with big beards and skinny jeans, German tourists in hiking boots, just all kinds. There is no shortage of beautiful and amusing here. Having said all that, I also still love to travel!

But when it comes to sitting down to work, my go-to is Pinterest. It's handy that you can search for specific topics and create inspiration boards specific to your project.

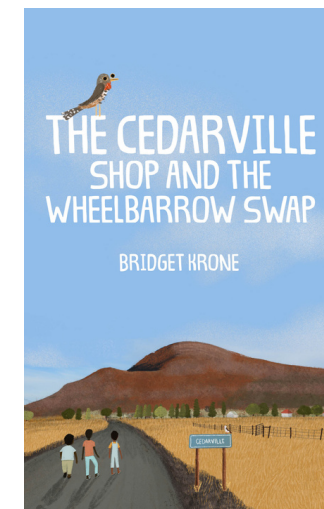
### **Who are some artists you admire?**

There are loads of illustrators and artists who inspire me. In terms of current artists, I love the work of children's book illustrators David Roberts, and Alex T Smith, both of them do great quirky, expressive characters. Also, the work of Renee French an artist who does amazing acrylic paintings of cute, weird animals. And when it comes bygone artists I love Matisse; his work still looks fresh and modern after all these years and he shares a name with my cat!

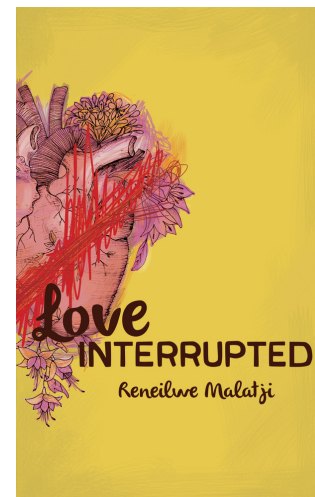
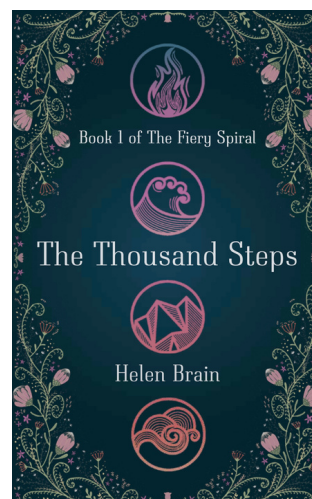




# ARTWORK BY KAREN VERMEULEN



From *The Cedarville Shop & the Wheelbarrow Swap* by Bridget Krone, interior artwork and cover



Book Covers

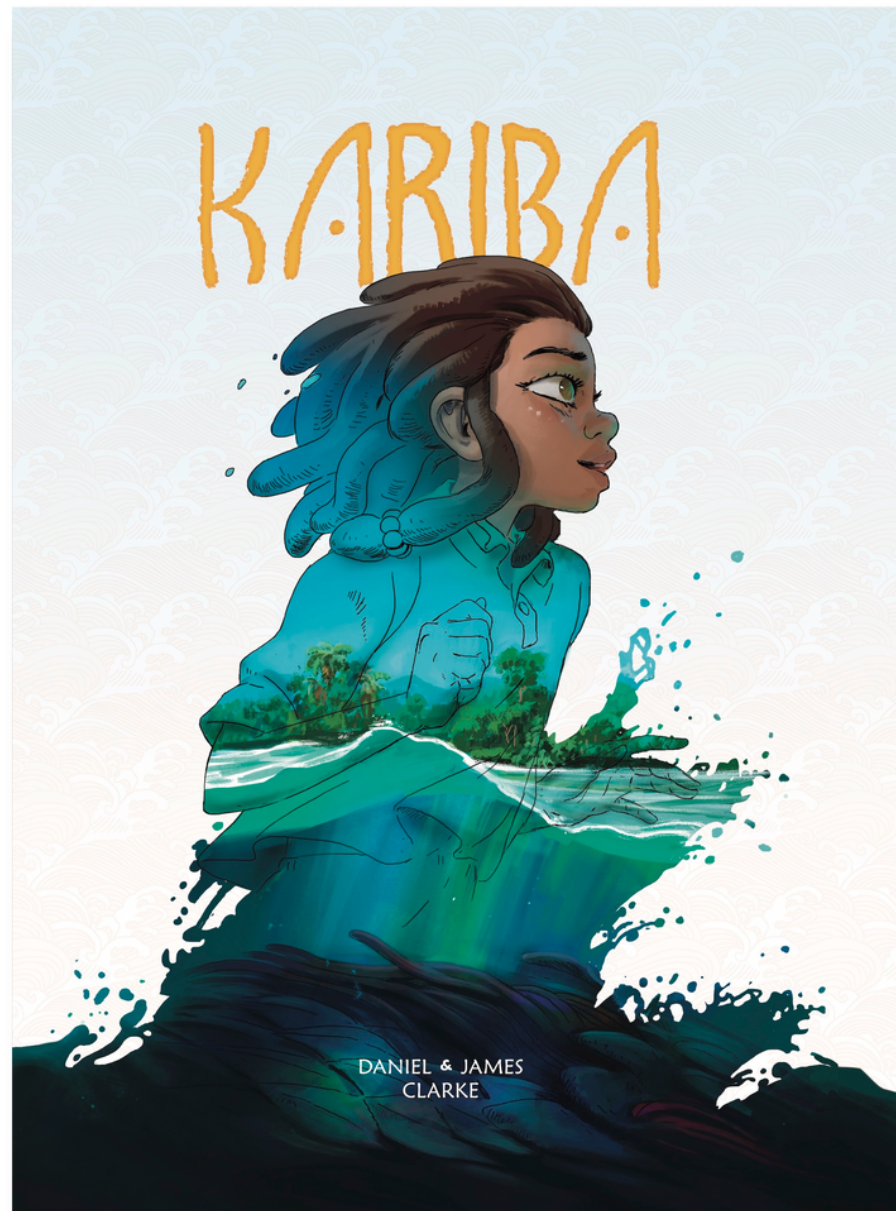


From *It's Just Skin, Silly!*



# KARIBA

ISBN 9781946395825 | PAPERBACK | \$19.99 | JUNE 2023



*"Take your time with it, savour every panel of every page. It is indeed a visual feast." – Setor Fiadzigbey, artist, Marvel Legends' Black Panther*

Siku has always called the Zambezi River her home. She understands the water – and strangely enough, it seems to understand her, too, bending to her will and coming to her aid in times of need. But things are changing on the river – a great dam is being built, displacing thousands of Shonga people – and things are changing in Siku, too, as her ability to manipulate water grows out of control, and visions of a great serpent pull her further from reality and her loving father, Tongai.

When Tongai ventures to the Kariba Dam to find a cure for Siku and never returns, she sets off to find him with the help of Amedeo, the young son of Kariba's chief engineer. Together, they traverse elephant graveyards, rugged jungles, and ancient ruins, outrunning pirates, bootleggers, and shape-shifting prophets ready to use Siku to their own advantage. But she soon discovers that her father has been shielding a terrible secret: Siku is actually the daughter of Nyaminyami, the Great River Spirit, and the only way to bring about the necessary rumuko – a ritual which has brought balance to the Zambezi for centuries – is for Siku to give up the only life she's ever known.

## About the Creators

**Daniel Clarke** is a Cape Town based artist. At Triggerfish Animation Studios, he acted as Production Designer and Art director on projects such as the feature film Khumba, BBC's Stick Man and Snail and the Whale. As an illustrator and designer he has worked with Netflix, Animal Logic, The Line, National Geographic Kids, Nike, Adidas, Penguin Random House, amongst others. Daniel worked as an illustrator and art director for Chronicle (2012); The Giver (2014); and Chappie (2015).

**James Clarke** studied history and literature at University of Cape Town, completing his Masters in Creative Writing as a Harry Crossley Fellow. In 2016, he was the South Africa finalist in fiction for the PEN International New Young Voices Award.

**Daniel Snaddon** is an artist, illustrator, and film director. Daniel served as animation supervisor on the Academy Award nominated "Roald Dahl's Revolting Rhymes", co-director on the BAFTA nominated "Stick Man", and as director on both the Annie award winning "The Snail and the Whale" and the International Emmy winning "Zog". Currently Daniel is directing his fourth Magic Light Pictures Christmas special, "The Smeds and the Smoos", based on the book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler (authors of The Gruffalo). Daniel was the founding director of CTIAF, South Africa's premiere animation festival, for 4 years.



## SPOTLIGHT ON: PANEL & PAGE

**The "Panel & Page graphic novel series [is] a fantastic home to vivid colours, catchy thrills, riveting words and exquisite themes." *World Kid Lit Blog***

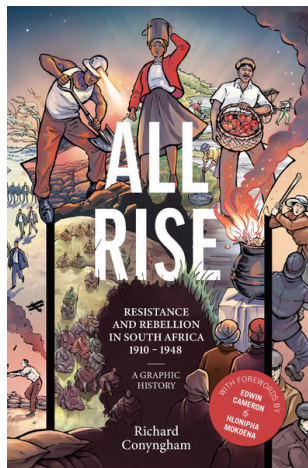
We love the written word here, but from the very start, we've recognized the distinct power that images have to transform stories. Whether they are the whimsical black and white drawings found in books by Niki Daly or Bridget Krone, or the explosion of color in *Shaka Rising* by Luke W. Molver—our first graphic novel— words and images together have also been a vital part of the stories we want to share. With *Shaka Rising* and its sequel *King Shaka*, we introduced the world to the African Graphic Novel Series, a collaboration with Jive Media Africa through our joint imprint Story Press Africa. The Series gave us a way to tell rich, African histories through the pens and paintbrushes of African creators. We're proud to add Panel & Page to our story. But don't worry; the African Graphic Novel Series isn't going anywhere. We hope that in the future we'll be able to present more of those stories under that umbrella. Panel & Page isn't a replacement for the African Graphic Novel Series—think of it more as a companion.

Going forward, most of our graphic novels and illustrated narratives will be published under the Panel & Page banner. It will continue our work of bringing graphic novels with nuanced illustrated narratives featuring everything from fantasy and history to science and adventure, and many points in between— all with an eye on rich storytelling found all around the globe.

The first title under this new series name was *Pearl of the Sea*, a middle-grade graphic novel released in January 2023 centered on Pearl, a feisty girl who needs to summon all of her courage to save a new-found friend. Future releases include *Kariba*, an adventure comic based on Zambian folklore, and *Chaos in Kinshasa*, a crime story set during the famous 1974 "Rumble in the Jungle" between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman.

We hope that when you're looking for a graphic novel that's full of gorgeous illustrations and gripping storytelling, you'll think about Panel & Page.

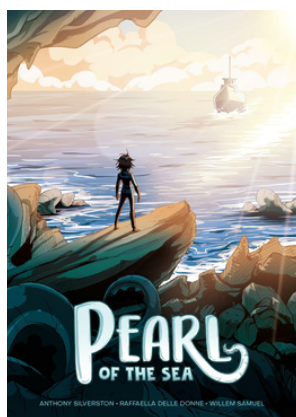
# RECENT & FORTHCOMING PANEL & PAGE RELEASES



## All Rise

Best Teen & YA Graphic Literature of 2022, *Kirkus Reviews*  
Children's Africana Book Award, Honorable Mention

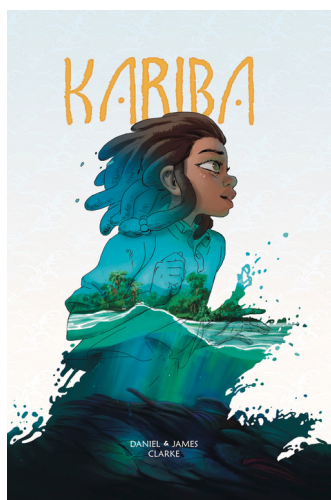
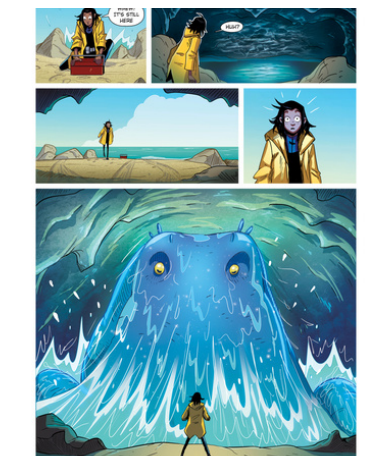
"The illustrators' rich, evocative artwork in a variety of styles and color palettes adds layers of texture and context to the primary source documents, bringing life to the people and places in a reverential way. The text breathes life into stories of courage that need to be heard. A robust examination of South Africa's complex, storied history highlighting faces of radical justice." — *Kirkus*, starred review



## Pearl of the Sea

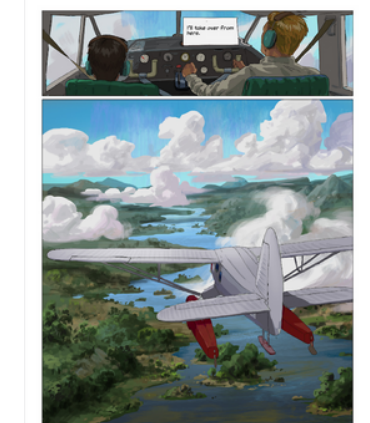
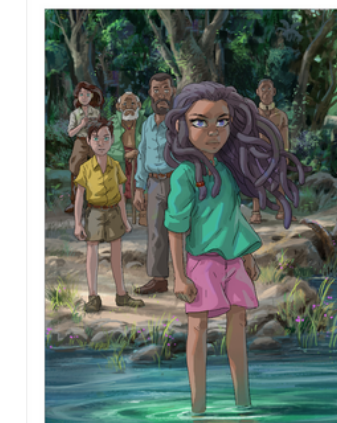
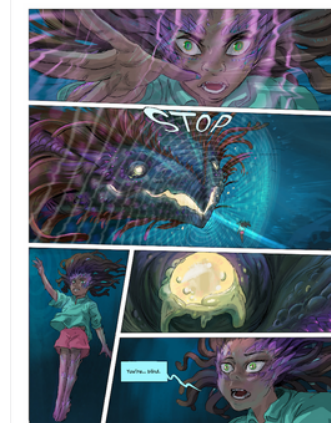
"Silverston, Samuel, and Delle Donne are undoubtedly master storytellers, while Samuel's intricate artistry brings magic to every page." — *Booklist* (starred review)

"Full-color illustrations by Samuel depict ethereal ocean depths in deep navy and electric blue hues. Pearl's struggles with loneliness and feelings of being an outsider are rendered via Silverston and Delle Donne's empathetic and humorous dialogue, making for a winning story of friendship, nature, and trust." — *Publishers Weekly*



## KARIBA

"KARIBA is a wonderful story of self-discovery, with stunning visuals fit for animation. Take your time with it, savour every panel of every page. It is indeed a visual feast." — Setor Fiadzigbey, artist, Marvel Legends' Black Panther





# BAIT THE TOAD

ISBN 9781733547451 | HARDCOVER | \$12.99 | SEP 2023



Bait the toad loves the camera, and the camera certainly loves him! From TikTok star to up-and-coming hat model, Bait has come a long way from his roots on the Rio Grande at the Texas-Mexico border. Nothing will stop him from becoming the world's next top supermodel... certainly not the fact that he's an amphibian. (Bait would like to stress that frogs and toads are entirely different—and while frogs must be kissed to become princes, toads are plenty royal on their own, thank you very much.)

In his modeling portfolio, Bait is ready to prove that toads have what it takes to make it big. Whether it's sporting sassy homemade hats, striking confident poses in the garden, or hanging out with his furry friends, this tiny toad has a lot to teach us all about being comfortable in our own skin. Brighten up your day or make a loved one laugh with Bait and his pals, a perfect gift for any age.

From our Powers Squared imprint

## About the Author

**Kendra Powers** is thirteen years old. She lives in Colorado with her two sisters and two brothers. Bait is her pet toad, which she caught in the Rio Grande while visiting her grandparents and aunt, who is one of the publishers of this book. An artist, she knits, crochets, makes hats for her toad, and takes photos.





# THE QUALITY OF MERCY

ISBN 9781733547451 | PAPERBACK | \$12.99 | SEP 2023



**The final book in Sipiwe Gloria Ndlovu's critically-acclaimed City of Kings Trilogy**

Everyone saw Emil Coetzee drive into the bush the day the ceasefire was announced. Beatrice, busy consoling her friend Kuki over the loss of her son and marriage. Dikeledi, the postwoman who refuses to lean. Tom, the drunk who makes his living impersonating Emil in backroads bars. Vida de Villiers, stuck in a coin-toss choice. Saskia, the feisty reporter determined to ruin Emil's name. Marion, the enigmatic lover he left behind. Mrs. Louisa Alcott, the lonely farm wife reading Mills & Boon romances in her best dress, waiting for her life to begin. But nobody saw him drive out of it.

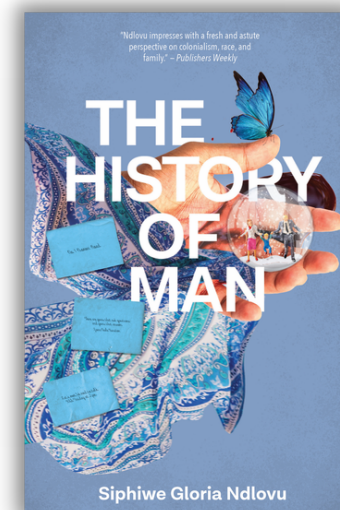
So begins the investigation of Spokes Moloji, the first black chief inspector in the City of Kings, who on the eve of his retirement is handed one final crime: the possible murder of Mr. Coetzee, the notorious head of the Organization of Domestic Affairs, who disappeared on the same day the country's independence beckoned.

In investigating Emil's disappearance, Spokes' path collides with a soirée of witnesses with the best and worst of intentions—including a pair of corrupt investigators with an eye towards framing the terrorist Golide Gumede for Emil's murder, and the insatiable public, infatuated with Emil and unable to come to terms with the fact that the future they had so long anticipated had, at last, arrived.

With a nation in flux and his beloved wife Loveness forever present in his mind, Spokes' investigation leads him back to the very beginning— and gives him one last chance to solve the twenty-year-old murder case that determined both the path of his life and destiny of his country.

## About the Author

Sipiwe Gloria Ndlovu is a writer, filmmaker and academic who holds a PhD in Modern Thought and Literature from Stanford University, as well as master's degrees in African Studies and Film. She has published research on Saartjie Baartman and she wrote, directed and edited the award-winning short film Graffiti. Born in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, she worked as a teacher in Johannesburg before returning to Bulawayo. Her first novel, *The Theory of Flight* won the Barry Ronge Fiction Prize in South Africa. In 2022, Sipiwe was awarded a Windham-Campbell Prize for Fiction.



## OTHER BOOKS IN THE SERIES





## SPOTLIGHT ON: SIPHIWE GLORIA NDLOVU

As the North American publisher for Sphiwe Gloria Ndlovu, we have been in awe of her rise over the past few years. Starting with her debut, *The Theory of Flight*, award season seems to be a year-round event for this talented writer. Beginning with South Africa's Barry Ronge Fiction Prize for her first novel, peppered with a nomination for the Sunday Times/CNA Literary Award for her second novel, *The History of Man*, and ending with the prestigious Windham-Campbell Award, she has been an unstoppable force in the literary world. And that's not even mentioning the numerous starred reviews, appearances on best-of lists, and critical praise she's gotten along the way.

With the release of *The Quality of Mercy* in September 2023, Sphiwe will have completed her critically-acclaimed City of Kings Trilogy. Beginning with *The Theory of Flight*, these interconnected novels examine the African history— through colonization, decolonization, and postcolonization— as seen through the lens of an unnamed African country, though closely mirroring the history of her native Zimbabwe.

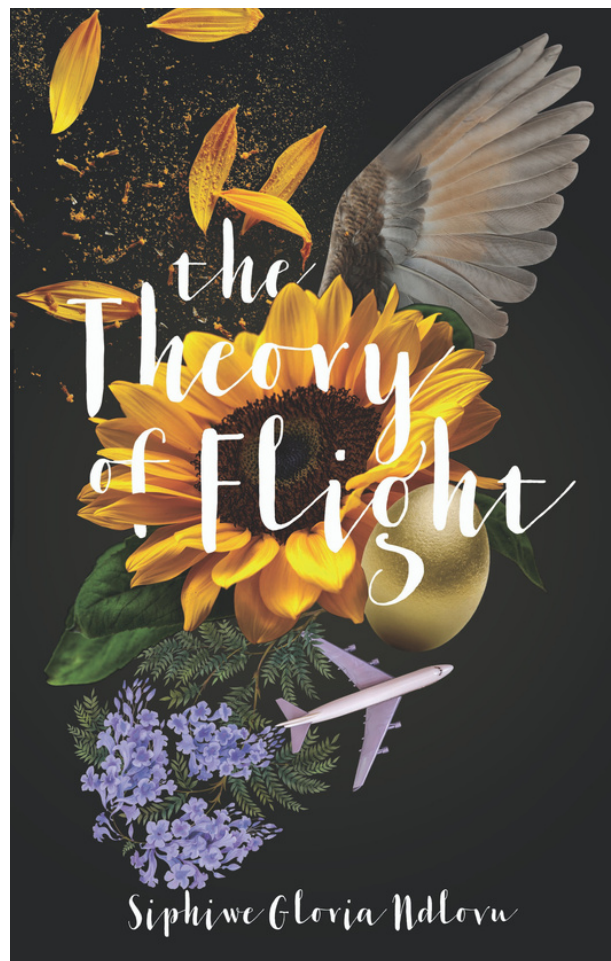
### Sphiwe on:

**Creating the interconnected novels of The City of Kings trilogy:** "This is definitely one of those happy accidents that sometimes happen in life. I started writing a story that I put aside in order to write *The Theory of Flight* first so as I was writing Theory I knew that there was this other story coming. [...] Initially, these connections were not as pronounced or clear, but in the process of writing *The Theory of Flight* I became so invested in the characters and their stories that I wanted to see where they went to after or where they had been before the moment captured in *Theory*."

**Using a historical lens to tell complex narratives:** "I find history, or rather, History, to be a highly contested entity between the state and the people that it governs. I think the state always wants to have the definitive narrative about what happened in the past because that is the best way to control the present and influence the future. Usually what we receive as history in this way is uncomplicated and self-serving (often merely making sense of how the state came to rule the way that it does) and this narrative of the past is very, very dangerous because it is also very limiting and limited. Therefore, I strongly believe that there should always be alternatives to national and statist histories – academic historians provide such alternatives as do writers of fiction, historical or otherwise. It is important that people have different entry points to their pasts because this empowers them to imagine and determine their futures. Fictional characters, because of the access we as readers have to their interiority, can help us maneuver the often rocky and complicated terrains of the past and present with a sense of immediacy and urgency."

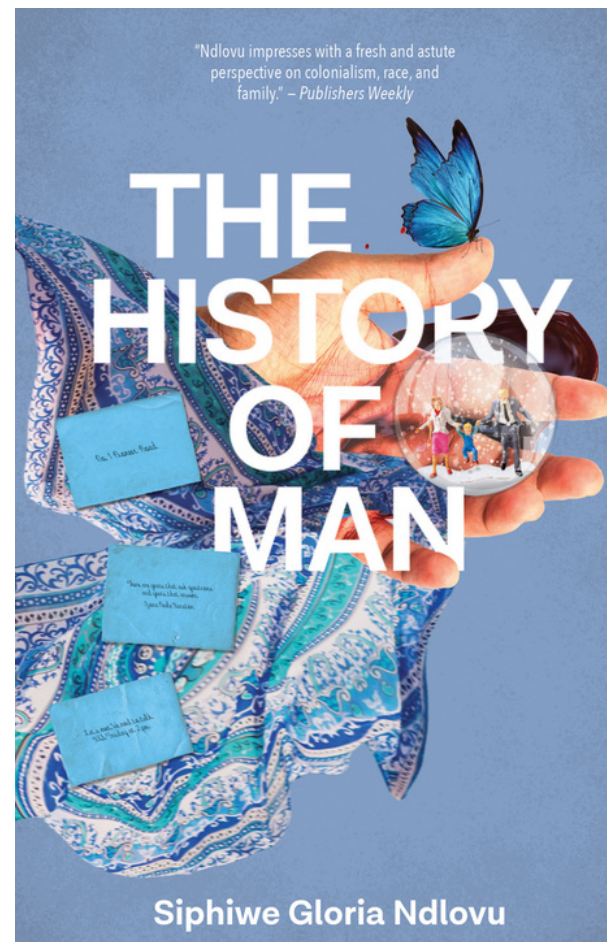
**Why the country in the novel stays unnamed:** "I think the colonial and postcolonial names of the country have a lot of weight and baggage attached to them that I don't really want readers to bring to the text. I want us all to start thinking beyond our received perceptions when it comes to this southern African country. Moreover, not naming the country allows the story to travel and transport itself so that while it is very much a story about a particular place, it is also, at the same time, a story that can take place anywhere, which, I hope, helps us focus more on what the story is about and not so much where it is set. The things that happen within the story – war, violence, pandemics, love, loss etc., – are things that are held in common by all nations of the world so, for me, the where is not as important as the how, when and why."

# THE CITY OF KINGS TRILOGY



## The Theory of Flight

"Ndlovu's deeply moving and complex novel is astonishing for the amount of hope it evokes despite the darkness that's so pervasive in Genie's world, where she creates her own reality in order to survive. This transcendent and powerful testament to the indomitable human spirit is not to be missed." — *Publishers Weekly* (starred review)



## The History of Man

"The Best Books to Read in January" — *BuzzFeed*  
"63 Anticipated African Books of 2022" — *Brittle Paper*

[*The History of Man*] braids the social and the personal. Her style is deceptively simple as she describes the great mysteries of how we come to be who we are. Through the figure of Emil, a white man on the wrong side of Zimbabwean liberation history, she paints a fine-grained portrait of lost forms of Rhodesian city life." — *The New York Times*



## The Quality of Mercy

"In a crowded field of superb reads, *The Quality of Mercy* by Sphiwe Gloria Ndlovu is our Book of the Year. It's the final novel in her award-winning City of Kings trilogy, weaving together elements of social comedy and cosy crime while examining the history of a country transitioning from a colonial to a postcolonial state." — *Daily Maverick* (South Africa)



# CAPTIVE: NEW SHORT FICTION FROM AFRICA

ISBN 9781946395948 | PAPERBACK | \$19.99 | PUBLICATION DATE SEP 2023



*Introducing Captive, the newest collaboration between Catalyst Press and Short Story Day Africa, the publishing team behind Disruption: New Short Fiction from Africa, which features the Caine Prize winning story, “Five Years Next Sunday” by Idza Luhumyo. In Captive, twelve new and emerging writers from Africa and the African Diaspora explore the identities that connect us, the obsessions that bewitch us, and the self-delusions that tear us apart.*

Passion and mania, creation and destruction, honesty and deception: the blurred lines between these powerful forces are fundamental to the human condition. In three parts—**Claustrophobia & Inescapable Obsessions; Metamorphosis, Cycles & Identity; and Self-awareness, Illusion, Delusion & Deception**—the writers of *Captive* investigate these liminal spaces and rail against the boxes in which others seek to confine them, as writers, as Africans, and as humans.

Journey from the fantastical Heaven’s Mouth where time stagnates to a London bus where a neurodiverse woman steals love to the beats of Tom Jones... Flip the page to Ghana to examine a neglected fertility fetish or a post-apocalyptic Lesotho where sentient AI uses our emotions against us... Slip into the small town life of a Ladybrand store clerk healing a broken heart in the arms of a man who cannot love him... *Captive* is a riot of imagination, a collision of worlds, and a testament to the prismatic nature of the human soul.

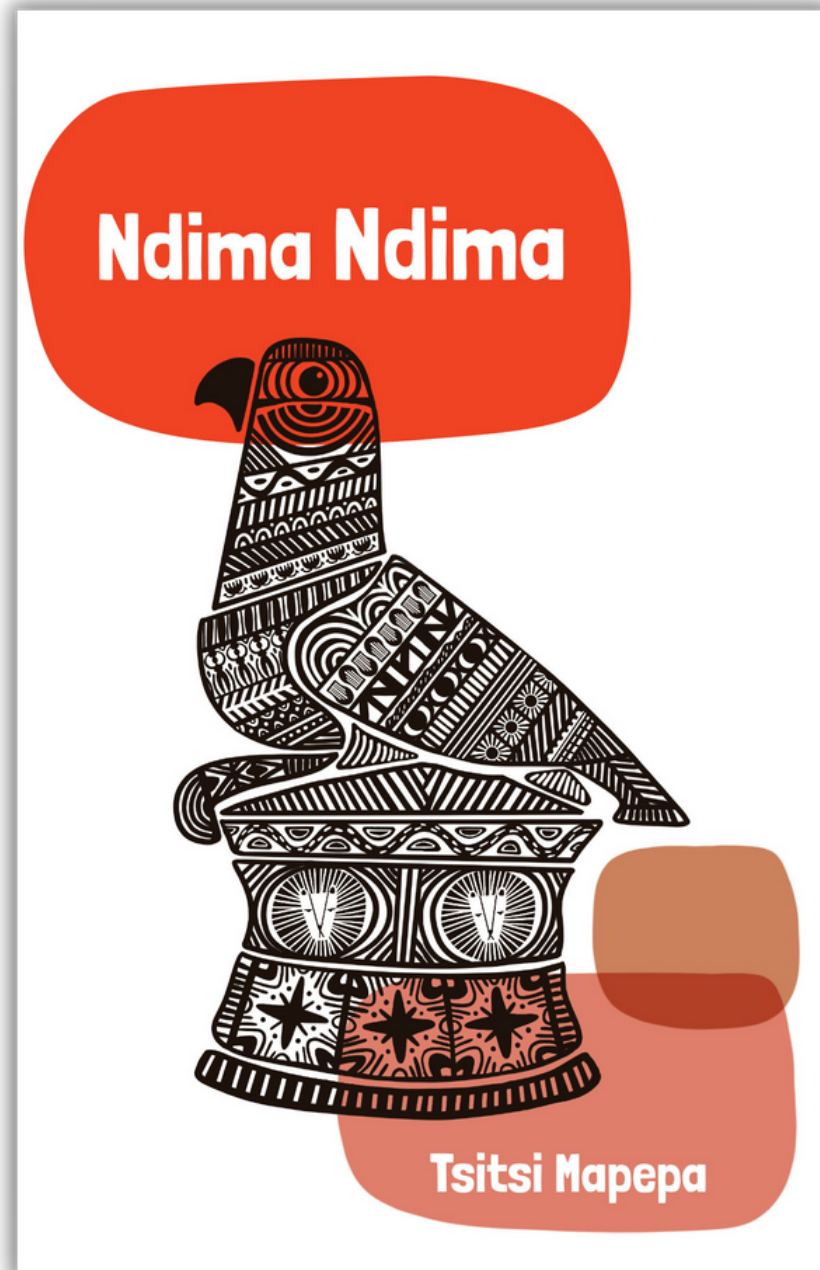
Featuring work by: Sola Njoku, Moso Sematlane, Aba Amisah Asibon, Kabubu Mutua, Doreen Anyango, Salma Abdulatif Yusuf, Zanta Nkumane, Emily Pensulo, N. A. Dawn, Khumbo Mhone, Josephine Sokan, and Yovanka Paquete Perdigão

## About Short Story Day Africa

**Short Story Day Africa** is a non-profit organization established to develop and share the diversity of Africa’s voices through publishing and writing workshops. The stories featured in *Captive* were the result of Inkubator, an intensive, three-month, online seminar designed by Short Story Day Africa and Laxfield Literary Associates. Through this program, writers develop, grow and hone their fiction writing and self-editing skills.

# NDIMA NDIMA

ISBN 9781946395962 | PAPERBACK | \$14.99 | NOV 2023



*From debut Zimbabwean writer Tsitsi Mapepa comes the saga of the four Taha sisters, and the indomitable matriarch who carried her daughters—and her community—through times of drought and violence in their Harare neighborhood.*

From the red soil of her garden in Southgate 1, a crowded suburb of Harare, Nyeredzi watches the world. She knows not to venture beyond the grasses that fence them off from the bush, where the city's violent criminals and young women claim the night. But on this red soil, she is sovereign. It is here where she learns how to kill snakes, how to fight off a man, and how to take what she is due. It is here where Nyeredzi and her three older sisters are raised, and where they will each find a different destiny.

Decades prior, a young woman abandons a position of great power to seek justice in the second Chimurenga War, only to return to find her world in shambles.

So Zuva Mutongi sets off to build a world of her own, raising four daughters—Nyeredzi, Hannah, Abigail, and Ruth—and defending them from the evils beyond their small Harare home. But when a letter from her long-estranged brother calls her back to a past life, Zuva must reconcile with her duty and heal the broken community she left behind.

Tsitsi Mapepa's vibrant debut is the history of a new Zimbabwe, with resilient women and men who raised a nation from its ashes. It is the chronicle of an L-shaped house, long awaited and much beloved, and the guests, welcome and unwelcome, who cross its threshold. It is the coming-of-age of four sisters, who will discover the secrets of womanhood on the volatile streets of Harare. But above all, it is a love song to one woman—a soldier, healer, chief, and mother—whose fierce devotion to her people is a testament to the bonds of blood that bind us all.

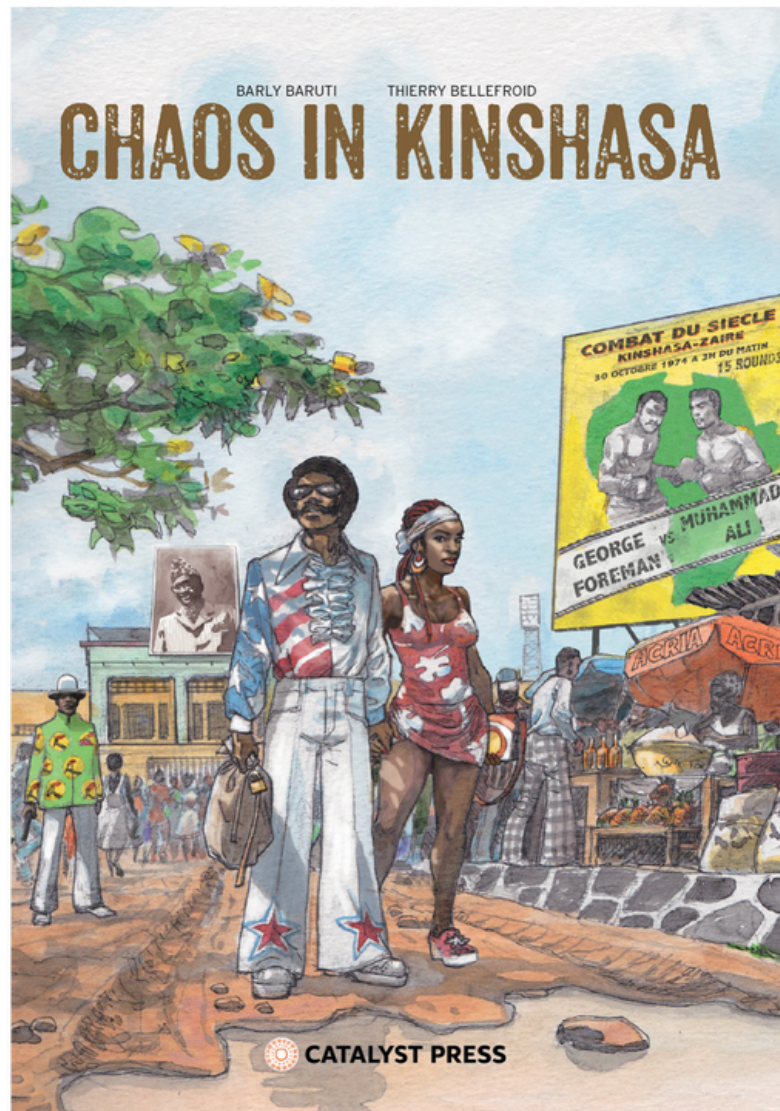
## About the Author

**Tsitsi Mapepa** was born in Zimbabwe and in 2007 moved to New Zealand, where she lives with her husband and three children. She has a Master's in Creative Writing from Auckland University. *Ndima Ndima* is her debut novel.



# CHAOS IN KINSHASA

ISBN 9781946395986 | PAPERBACK | \$19.99 | FEB 2024



From beloved Congolese comics creator Barly Baruti and Belgian comics critic Thierry Bellefroid, translated from the original French by Batchelder Award-winning translator Ivanka Hahnenberger

A Harlem gangster's trip to Central Africa to attend the legendary 1974 Ali-Foreman "Rumble in the Jungle" boxing match becomes a one-way ticket to the seedy underground of Zaire—complete with espionage, murder, and a communist plot to overthrow Zaire's infamous President Mobutu.

When Ernest, a low-level gangster from Harlem, wins tickets to travel to Zaire to attend the "Rumble in the Jungle," the now-legendary bout between Muhammad Ali and George Foreman, he's eager to reconnect with his African roots and escape the ruthless gang leaders he's indebted to back home.

But in Zaire, Ernest becomes entangled in an Angolan coup against the country's embattled president Mobutu Sese Seko—inspired by Che Guevara himself—and soon realizes that Zaire may hold even more dangers for him than Harlem ever could.

A Cold-War-era thriller set against the backdrop of a landmark moment in sports history, *Chaos in Kinshasa* features Barly Baruti's characteristic art and Thierry Bellefroid's punchy dialogue woven in with the elements of a great gangster story—sex, spies, bribes, and murder. A thrill ride through a pivotal moment in Cold War, African, and sports history.

## About the Creators

**Baruti Kandolo Lilela**, better known by his pen name **Barly Baruti**, is a renowned Congolese cartoonist. He was born in 1959 in Kisangani into a family of painters. After studying pedagogy, Baruti worked at French cultural centers in Kisangani and Kinshasa, where he produced his first comic work, an environmental comic titled *Le temps d'agir*. He has been described by the BBC as "the Congolese author best known outside his country." Baruti is the co-founder of the Atelier de Création et de l'Initiation à l'Art Creative Workshop for an Initiation to Art) to encourage talented youth in Kinshasa, and he is responsible for organizing the first Afro BD show in Kinshasa in the effort to promote African comics. He has lived in France and Belgium, where he apprenticed with several renowned comic artists. He currently lives in Kinshasa.

**Thierry Bellefroid** works for the Belgian television company, RTB, where he presents every week *Sous Couverture*, the RTBF literary magazine which he created after setting up, directing and presenting *Mille-Feuilles* from 2004 to June 2011, then *Livrés à Domicile* from 2011 to 2019. He has been the anchor of RTBF's *Le Journal 13H00* for six years. Since September 2009 he has focused solely on book and comic book news. From 2007 to 2020, Thierry Bellefroid was also a guest lecturer at the School of Journalism of Louvain at UCLouvain, where he taught television journalism there in Master 1, mentoring journalism students in comics reporting. He has published three novels, a collection of short stories and a digital novel.

**Ivanka Hahnenberger** has translated over 60 comics and graphic novels, including several highly acclaimed titles such as *Climate Changed*, *Blue is the Warmest Color*, *Madame Livingstone* (a 2021 New York Times Globetrotting title) and *Catherine's War*, which won her the Silver 2021 Batchelder Award. Born in Berkeley California, she spent part of her childhood in Geneva, Switzerland and lived in a multilingual, multicultural household. She has lived in Europe since 1983, primarily in France and Germany but with several short stays in other European nations, and presently lives in London. She has translated and transposed film and TV pitches, business plans and power points for decades, starting when she worked as a TV and film producer and consultant. She translates from both French and German into American English.



## SPOTLIGHT ON: BARLY BARUTI

Barly Baruti is a treasure. Not too many authors will don a kilt and make an incredible video to share the news of their new release. But Barly does. He's the benchmark we use when we point to how authors can do a great job self-promoting. But in addition to being a video star, Barly is an exquisite artist. He has been using his talents as both a creator and mentor as the co-founder of the Atelier de Création et de l'Initiation à l'Art in Kinshasa, and has created a number of graphic novels throughout his career. We are the North American and English language publisher for his graphic novel, *Madame Livingstone*, co-created with writer Christophe Cassiau-Haurie and translated from the French by Ivanka Hahnenberger. We're pleased to be publishing Barly's work again with the 2024 release of *Chaos in Kinshasa*, illustrated by Barly, written by Thierry Bellefroid, and with translation, once again, courtesy of Ivanka.

### How did you come to illustrating?

This is THE question where I have felt uncomfortable for some time. But since every question needs an answer, I will try to answer it. It is atypical, my journey. Unlike most cartoonists, I did not attend the Academy of Fine Arts. And when I am asked if I am self-taught, I always answer "no, I had a teacher: My Father."

Indeed, my father – painter artist, musician, photographer – was the one who encouraged me when I indulged in the game of scribbling small paper beings. He never told me it was wrong, but he never said it was art either! His little smile was enough and said a lot. You understand, I was born into a family of artists. My passion ultimately came from there. Later, I became an avid reader of comics, the love of telling stories in pictures took over. It is true that it was after the internship at Studios Hergé in Brussels, under the direction of Bob de Moor, that my professional career began with the production of my first book "La Voiture, c'est l'Aventure" (1987) published by Afrique in Kinshasa.

### Why do you love comics?

I believe that my natural family environment has something to do with it. I learned lots of things outside of school instruction thanks to comics. Even at a young age, I also found through this medium a way to express myself by showing off my talents. At least, what I thought were talents...

**Your essay included in *Madame Livingstone*, "Reasons to Investigate an Identity," gives a hint of a personal connection to this story. Did working on this book help connect you with your history even more? Did it raise any questions about who gets to tell which histories?**

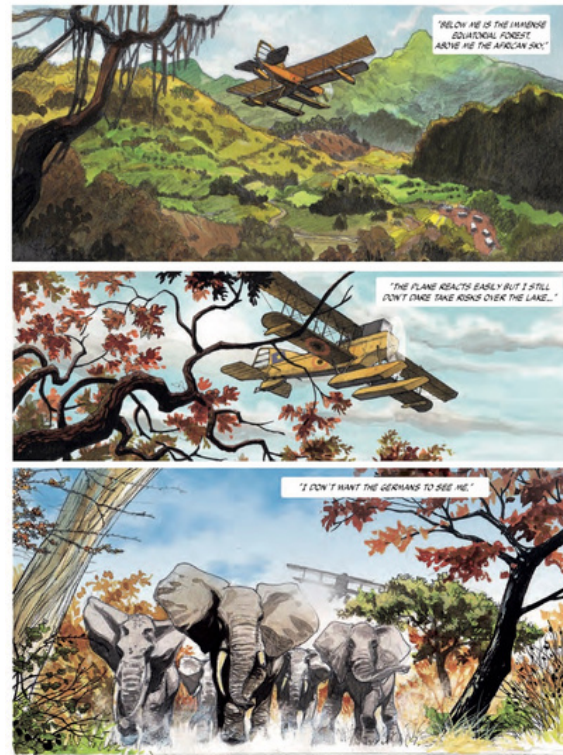
This allowed me to ask new questions about our common history. The one always told by the "winners" with sometimes a touch of triumphalism, even paternalism. I am one of those who think that comics should help break the dogmatic spirit of presenting History. By its playful and sometimes humorous side, comics can help shift mentalities towards parallel versions and to liven the debates.

### Do you have any advice for those hoping to become comic creators?

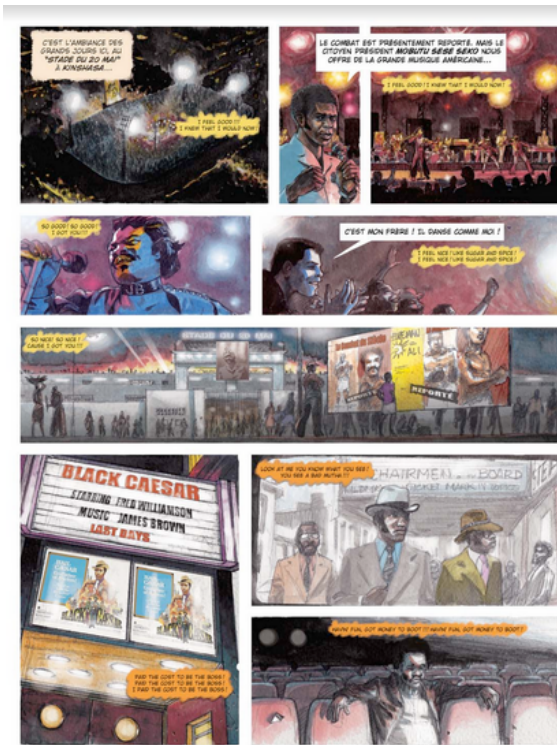
To always put a little of you in your stories. A little extra soul.



# ARTWORK BY BARLY BARUTI



Interiors from *Madame Livingstone*



Interiors from *Chaos in Kinshasa*



