

NEXT CHAPTER

Spotlight

RESE

PRESENTED BY BLACK ODYSSEY MEDIA
INTERVIEWED BY CHARDAI POWELL



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Chardai: What's the first book you remember reading, or the one that first made you feel something?

Rese: Ooo girl, it was back in junior high. It was a Carl Weber book. Either *Baby Mama Drama* or *Big Girls Don't Cry*. I remember reading it and being like, "Oooo, this is so messy. I like it." If I went back and read it now with fresh adult eyes, I'd be like, "This stuff is crazy. I wouldn't put up with all of this." But that book really made me fall in love with reading. Outside of that, I was always asking my mama to take me to Walmart or the library.

Chardai: Do you remember trips to the library?

Rese: Yeah. [Laughs.] I would go in and ask, "Do you have any Carl Weber books?"

Chardai: What book do you hope readers are still talking about ten years from now?

Rese: *Reel* by Kennedy Ryan. That's one of my favorite books by her. I feel like that story needs to be passed down generation to generation, from the lupus representation to the love story. Canon loved her the way she needed to be loved, regardless of everything she had going on. That's one book I need people to still be talking about.

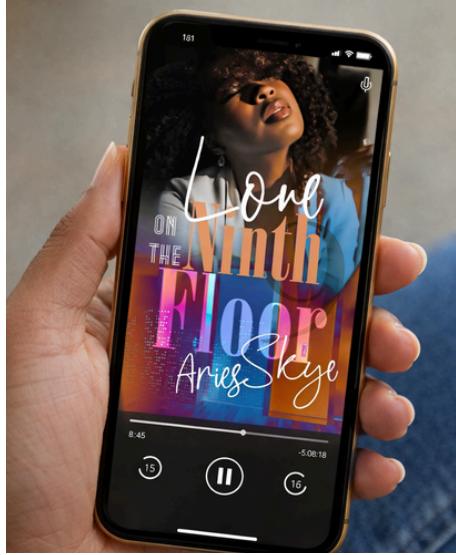


Photograph provided by Rese

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**BLACK PEOPLE
ARE OUT HERE
WRITING
AMAZING
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THEM.**

Chardai: Did you do the audio?

Rese: I did—and with music. It was so beautiful. Oh my gosh. Another one is *Love on the Ninth Floor* by Aries Skye, published by Black Odyssey Media. I loved how the characters met. It was such a creative way to get a woman's attention.



Chardai: How do you normally prefer to read—listening, e-reading, or the physical book? And what makes that format special for you?

Rese: Audiobooks and my Kindle in my hand. I'm a huge immersive-reading girlie. Those two combined will always be my jam.

Chardai: I will say, I got into my immersive reading bag this year, and as a physical-annotation girlie, it's helped me get through books easier. What's a book that changed your brain chemistry, or shifted how you see the world?

Rese: *Razorblade Tears* by S. A. Cosby. I already knew this world, but seeing two fathers from completely different backgrounds whose sons were in love have their murders swept under the rug by police... that made me side-eye a lot of things. It changed how I read books. Now I reread to make sure I didn't miss any nuggets. That book definitely changed my chemistry and the way I see the world.

Chardai: What inspired you to start discussing books online, and what keeps you going?

Rese: I wanted to talk about a book that got me back into reading, and I didn't have anyone to talk to... so I picked up the camera. What keeps me going is my community. My people. My Black people. If we don't support each other, no one will. I love looking at my bookshelf and seeing all Black authors. Sometimes it makes me emotional because we didn't have this in the early 2000s. There was such a small selection at Walmart or Barnes & Noble. Seeing what it is now motivates me. Creating my own table. Seeing people enjoy my reviews and events. That lights a flame in me. And clearly, it's working.

Chardai: And it is. What's something from your early reading life, or the old book community, you'd love to bring back?

Rese: Just enjoying books for what they are. If you didn't like a book, I don't think you need to go online and bash the author... especially Black authors. My favorite quote is, "Get back to making the main thing the main thing." And for this, it's reading. When the B.J.'s, Carl Webers, and Zanes were coming up, there wasn't social media picking books apart. It was book club conversations. Let's get back to enjoying the book.



Chardai Powell with Rese at the Black Romance Book Festival 2025



Chardai: How has BookTok—especially Black BookTok—changed the way you read and review books?

Rese: It opened my eyes to a whole new world. It showed me I can be loved softly and correctly. It's also exposed me to so many indie authors I might not have found otherwise. Black people are out here writing amazing stories, and I want to get lost in all of them. If it wasn't for Black BookTok, I probably wouldn't even know about Black Odyssey Media.

Chardai: It absolutely matters! So, where do you feel most at peace while reading?

Rese: In my house. In my little reading chair.

Chardai: Where do you see yourself in the literary space in the next five to ten years?

Rese: Wow... continuing to read, support, and amplify Black stories. Continuing to support and amplify Black people in this space. And third, somewhere with my feet propped up reading a book published by Black Odyssey Media.

Chardai: Is there anyone you want to give your flowers to while they're still here to smell them?

Rese: Everybody. Honestly—everybody!

Chardai: Rese, thank you so much for joining us on this *Next Chapter Spotlight*. For those looking to connect, please be sure to follow Rese on Threads, TikTok, and Instagram at @resealisareads.



Chardai Powell is a writer and digital storyteller who believes in the power of Black stories told with care. She is the Social Media Manager at Black Odyssey Media and a former lead bookseller known for uplifting Black indie authors and creating meaningful literary events. She is the founder of Dear Black Love, a community-driven event brand celebrating Black love and creativity, and is committed to using media as a tool for connection, visibility, and joy.



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