

Interview with Author Johnie Jay

By: Michelle Cuttino

"I'm a very complex and diverse person, but Johnie Jay is a specific part of me. He is the passionate, sexual and loving part of me," says Johnie when asked to share some of him with us. *"I feel comfortable writing when those things are involved and I feel I can deliver when writing as Johnie Jay."*

Black Literature Magazine got up close and personal with the man behind the writing and delved deeper into the success of his debut novel, *Inevitable*.

Michelle: I'm always intrigued when I come across an African American male who writes romance. What made you write in this genre as opposed to all others?

Johnie: I've always loved love and romance, but the first novels that I started reading just happened to be those like Eric Jerome Dickey's *Milk in My Coffee* and *Friends and Lovers* and Omar Tyree's *Sweet St. Louis* and I instantly fell in love. Those books made me want to create. They made me want to write. But I'm naturally a passionate person so writing in this genre was a natural and easy fit.

Michelle: Your debut novel is titled *Inevitable*. Tell us what the book is about.

Johnie: *Inevitable* is the journey between two seemingly different people in two seemingly different places and paths and watching how both of their worlds become intertwined and magnetically brought together. *Inevitable* is the story of two soul mates that I wrote from both the male and the female perspectives so you can get the entire panoramic view of both characters' thoughts, feelings and actions at the same time and places.

Michelle: Do you think that your writing is catered towards men, but women may also enjoy the book, or vice versa?

Johnie: I would say it's catered towards women, but the way I wrote it from both perspectives men will also enjoy. I wanted to include real life things not only that women go through and think, but men as well and coming from a man I didn't sugarcoat it at all. Any guy reading this book will definitely be able to relate.

Michelle: How did your characters form? Are they combinations of people you know, or just images from your own imagination?

Johnie: I'm an artist. I used to draw and paint all the time to get these magnificent pictures out of my mind and onto the canvas. Now that I write it's the same. I have to

form the pictures first, bring them into focus and I do that by experiencing life. Whether it's going for a walk, going out on the town or conversing, it all gets used for my creative process and then I exit those pictures in my imagination out in the form of words. Some of the characters are combinations of multiple people. I may have liked the hair of a certain woman, the personality and sex appeal of another and combined all that into one and a lot of my personality is injected in *Inevitable* as well.

Michelle: *Inevitable* has an "Act I" subtitle. Does that mean we have more to look forward to from the storyline, the characters or both?

Johnie: Yes this is Act I of II and Act II is already completed. II will pick up right where I left off. It is the direct continuation.

Michelle: How has being reared in Inkster, Michigan shaped you as a writer?

Johnie: Inkster is a very small city. A lot of times it gets overlooked unless there is something dramatic or crime related going on. Everyone knows each other or either knows of someone that knows you. It has a real family feel to it. Sometimes a dysfunctional family but still a family nonetheless. I think the small time city feel gave me time to be comfortable with myself, grow and experience life at a more slowed down pace instead of staying somewhere like New York. It let me be more attentive to my surroundings and appreciate the good and bad things that would shape my imagination in the future.

Michelle: *Inevitable* is being published under Delphine Publications, the imprint of phenom Tamika Newhouse. How did you become an author on their roster?

Johnie: At first I was going to self-publish my novel. I was thinking maybe it wasn't good enough to submit to a publisher. Everyone who I sent sample chapters too or let read some of it thought otherwise. They kept on me about how they enjoyed it and that I should at least submit just so I could know for myself. I mean the worse they can do is reject you and they also might tell you why, which will allow you to perfect your craft. I gave in and submitted. The first two were rejections and Tamika Newhouse was the third who believed enough in *Inevitable* to give it a chance. That feeling of acceptance was unbelievable!

Michelle: Since its official release date of December 3rd, what has been the overall response to *Inevitable*?

Johnie: Two days after the eBook was released, it reached #16 on Amazon and the soft cover the second day after being released not only outsold *Fifty Shades of Grey*, but reached #27 in Romance. Imagine my excitement for a first time author. I mean if *Inevitable* was #1000, I would've thought that was huge. I owe it all to my readers their

support for me even before the release have been nothing short of amazing. On the day of release, I had so many people take pictures holding their Kindles or in front of the computer or actually holding the book. Every day since, someone will message me or I'll get a 5-star review and It's like I'm in dreamland. This is definitely a dream come true.

Michelle: Do you have any upcoming events or book tours where fans can meet the man behind the "romantica"?

Johnie: *Inevitable* was released in December, so because of the holidays I didn't plan anything. Next year, I definitely want to get out and talk to the readers.

Michelle: I know the term "romantica" refers to novels that combine romance and erotica. How did you find the balance between the two for *Inevitable*?

Johnie: That was easy for me. The romance in *Inevitable* had nothing to do with the sex but all to do with the heart, feeling and connection. I didn't want this book to be just about sex. But I did want to show that when there is a connection the erotica part is even more intense. For example, in the novel some of Angel's best scenes were in her imagination just because of the connection that she had with someone. Sex is great, but combine love and connection to sex and you have explosive!

Michelle: When it comes to your writing, what do you want to be known and/or remembered for?

Johnie: I don't want anyone to think anything was handed to me. I want readers to know that I work hard. That's how my parents raised me and that's all I know. Whether it be on research for a character or rewriting a scene 100 times before I get it right, I will work hard for it. I will always work hard to improve and give my readers the best novel possible.

Michelle: Please let us know where readers and fans can follow and/or connect with you.

Johnie: Facebook: Author Johnie Jay, Twitter: @johniejaysworld. Instagram: @johniejay.

About The Author:

If there was one word to describe Author Johnie Jay, it would be passionate. He has always been verbally passionate but it wasn't until his first creative writing class, in 9th grade, when he found that his passion, mixed with his vast and lucid imagination could create temporary getaways. That's all a book is really, a getaway from the world, an

escape. "I want every word of every sentence to be evocative. If I can't make you feel, taste or smell every scene that I create then what's the point?" Romance and passion goes hand in hand but when you add to it detailed and vivid sex scenes you're left with an explosive concoction. He has blended all three harmoniously in his first romantic novel, Inevitable Act I (of II) set to release December 3. He looks forward to sharing his imagination with the world!