

Yeseni and the Daughter of Peace

Solange Burrell

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The global slave trade backgrounds Solange Burrell's fantastical coming-of-age novel *Yeseni and the Daughter of Peace*, about what it truly means to act in favor of the greater good.

In eighteenth-century West Africa, sixteen-year-old Elewa, the Daughter of Peace, carries the weight of her world. She must do whatever it takes to help keep the Oleba and Okena tribes from disregarding their tenuous truce. She pledges to marry Ojuro, the firstborn son of the king of the Okena tribe. British traders create additional issues by offering weapons in exchange for captives.

The gift of *Yeseni* allows Elewa to travel through time and influence those who inhabit either the past or the future. Visions of the horrors that unfold aboard the transatlantic slave ships present her with a difficult decision: She can go back in time to derail the slave trade, eliminating its threat over her and her loved ones, but this would mean abandoning her community during one of its most precarious periods.

Vibrant and multifaceted, the narrative includes tribal history and customs and the presence of the supernatural. Elewa is a curious, adventurous soul whose detailed descriptions of the world around her reflect a childlike sense of wonder and enthusiasm: "Soon the smudged canvas of my mind was replaced with a beautiful precise, sharp pattern, the colours deep and meaningful," she notes in a trance. The rest of the distinctive characters balance her perspective out with realism and a touch of mysticism, enlightening Elewa as she discovers her role in the very fabric of time.

Yeseni and the Daughter of Peace is a magical, mesmerizing novel in which a gifted girl seeks the wisdom to discern the right path and the courage to take it—wherever it may lead.

KATELYNN WATKINS (March / April 2025)

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