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He has to break anyone who tries to help us.My jaw clenches as I try to block out the guard, to block out the way maggot stung from his lips. "You need all the practice you can get.""Mama Agba, I ..."She leans in as my pulse races, eyes glimmering with the truth.A distraction ...A way to buy us time."I'm sorry, Mama Agba. I see an opportunity when —"Ugh!"I stumble back and hunch over, wheezing as nausea climbs up my throat. Excerpted by permission of Henry Holt and Company. "Teach these maggots to stay in line," he warns Mama Agba. I'll take one of Mama Agba's infamous beatings for this later, but the fear in Yemi's eyes is more than worth it."Hey!" Though Yemi turns to Mama Agba to intervene, she doesn't have time to complain. "Pay up."Mama Agba's face drops like the heat at night. She opens her arms to Bisi. Perhaps he has the decency to feel shame for whatever it is they're about to do.Both men flaunt the royal seal of King Saran, stark on their iron breastplates. Like most soldiers in Orisha, the shorter of the two has a complexion that matches Yemi's brown like worn leather, framed with thick black hair. An army of reed mannequins rises. "Ods!"Fool, she scolds me in Yoruba, the maji tongue outlawed after theRaid. Meters of bright fabric fly through the air. "Thank you, Mama. "Come on, Yem. As I flip over her outstretched staff, I see my first opening — my chance to be on the offensive. "Huh!" I grunt, using the momentum of the aerial to land a strike of my own. "Maggot rates went up. With her dark brown skin and muted kaftan, Mama Agba looks like any other elder in the village. Before I can speak, Mama Agba slaps the back of my head; a sting only she can summon tears down my spine. "Stay at your station," she snaps. With the right blow I could knock him off his feet; with the right thrust I could crush his throat.For the first time I realize that the guard doesn't wield an ordinary sword. Her small chest heaves up and down as she locks eyes with Mama Agba."What is it?" Mama asks.Tears gather in Bisi's eyes. Despite my nerves, I grin as she makes the guards wait, refusing to acknowledge their unwelcome presence."Is there something I can help you with?" she finally asks."Tax time," the darker guard grunts. Who would keep Tzain safe when the guards come for blood?"I open my mouth to retort, but there's nothing I can say. She smirks at us as she twirls her hand-carved staff, eager to see which one of us she gets to defeat in our graduation match. Even if I took down a few guards, I couldn't take on the whole army. "Or I will."His gaze shifts to me; though my body drips with sweat, my insides freeze. She thinks because I'm a diviner, I'm beneath her.She thinks I'm going to lose."Bow, Zélie." Though the warning is evident in Mama Agba's voice, I can't bring myself to move. I twirl my staff with a speed that makes her eyes widen before launching into another attack."This isn't the exercise!" Yemi shrieks, jumping to evade my strike at her knees. Keep my mouth shut, swallow my rage. Wait for your opponent to strike."I stifle my groan but nod, stepping back with my staff. "They don't hate you, my child. CHAPTER 1ZÉLIEPick me.It's all I can do not to scream. We would like to introduce you to the collection of Santeria books in PDF format, a very particular religion that resulted from a cultural fusion more than 500 years ago.During the colonization of the Americas, the white Spaniards brought to Caribbean lands such as Haiti, Cuba, Brazil and Trinidad a significant number of African slaves, who were forced to follow the mandates of the Catholic religion. Observe. I don't think anyone can. We stitch the hems of the same dashikis we've been stitching for years, sewing in silence as we wait for the guards to go away.Mama Agba ravelis up and down the rows of girls, inspecting the work of her apprentices. His black blade gleams in his sheath, a metal more precious than gold.Majacite ...A weaponized alloy forged by King Saran before the Raid. "I paid my taxes last week.""This isn't a trade tax." The other guard's gaze combs over all the diviners with long white hair. These slaves, not wanting to abandon their own beliefs, adapted some aspects of Catholicism and a new religion was born: Santeria, solely for the personal use of visitors to this web site. For a moment I worry Yemi's crushed her ribs, but the ache in my abdomen quells that fear."Halt —""No!" I interrupt Mama Agba, voice hoarse. None is better than another and all have the right to be practiced if they do not affect the rights of other groups or individuals. React. We trade blow for blow in search of an opening, a chance to land that crucial strike. Myweapon is still reverberating from the blow when Yemi pivots to strike at my knees.I push off my front leg and swing my arms for momentum, cartwheeling in midair. Since you've got so many, so have yours."Of course. She's still wheezing, but there's no time to make sure she's okay. What once resembled an arena now plays the convincing part of a seamstress's shop. "What's the point of training if we can't protect ourselves? She waits for me to do the same, but her gaze only stokes the fire in my core. Created to weaken our magic and burn through our flesh,just like the black chain they wrapped around Mama's neck.A powerful maji could fight through its influence, but the rare metal is debilitating for most of us. As always, Mama Agba makes the selection grueling, staring at each girl just long enough to make us squirm.Her brows knit in concentration, deepening the creases in her shaved head. "Listen to Mama Agba. Her staff swings over her head one moment and at my neck the next. I've never seen such disappointment in her eyes."If I can't fight them, why are we here?" My voice cracks, but I choke down my tears. "They're close, they're almost here!"For a moment I can't breathe. Bright tribal fabric adorns the mannequins in front of each girl, cut and pinned in Mama Agba's signature patterns. The room holds its breath. His touch erases everything I am, everything I've fought so hard to become.In this moment I'm that little girl again, helpless as the soldier drags my mother away."That's enough." Mama Agba pushes the guard back and pulls me to her chest, startling like a bull-horned lionaire protecting her cub. He lets out a grunt when he finishes. Leave. This is everything I have."Hatred simmers beneath my skin, prickling sharp and hot. In their eyes we're still maggots.That's all they'll ever see.Mama Agba's mouth presses into a tight line. The guard runs his eyes up and down my frame, a warning of what he can take.Try it, I want to snap, but my mouth is too dry to speak. This close to Yemi, the only thing I see is her luscious black hair, her coconut-brown skin, so much lighter than my own. "And the moon before that."The lighter guard steps forward, reaching for his sword, ready to strike at the first sign of defiance. Yemi's features stand out in the crowd of diviners adorned with snow-white hair. There's no way she has the coin to spare. The name bounces around the woven walls of the reed ahéréuntil I realize Mama Agba's called me."Really?"Mama Agba smacks her lips. We hope you liked it and already have your next book!If you found this list useful, do not forget to share it on your social networks. Live to see another day.But when he's this close to my face, it's all I can do not to jam my sewing needle into his beady brown eye. Mama Agba shouldn't have to beg. Even little Bisi stares me down. "You knew your lip wouldn't change a damn thing. "You can't just raise the rates again and again. "It's not enough.""It has to be," Mama Agba says, desperation breaking into her voice. It's not enough for the king to keep the diviners down. All I can do is focus on my task: shoving each staff under the arena mat where they can't be seen.As I finish, Yemi thrusts a wooden needle into my hands. Find out more by reading our selection of Santeria books.Santeria is, therefore, a religion of Afro-Caribbean origin, of syncretic type, since it combines the belief in the Orishas (gods of the Yoruba pantheon, of a Nigerian village) with the belief in the saints of Catholicism. In an instant the guard slams me to the ground facedown, knocking the breath from my throat."You may not have any money." The guard digs into my back with his knee. I grip the fabric on my mannequin so hard my fists ache. "Maybe you shouldn't keep company with maggots." "Maybe you should stop robbing us."The words spill out of me before I can stop them. Before she can pivot, I whip around, ramming my staff into her sternum. "Ah!" Yemi gasps. "I can choose someone else —""No!" I scramble to my feet and bow quickly. It doesn't matter that we'll never become the maji we were meant to be. I grab her staff and rush to collect the others.The ahéré erupts in a blur of chaos as everyone races to hide the truth. The reed walls shudder. She grabs on to a mannequin for support, the lethal warrior I know diminishing into a frail, old stranger."Mama ..."I move to help her, but she slaps my hand away. Though we're only young girls, he keeps his hand on the pommel of his sword. There's no respect in her stance, no promise of a proper fight. Maybe I should be quiet.Or maybe he should die."You sh —"Mama Agba shoves me aside with so much force I tumble to the ground."Here," she interrupts with a handful of coins. We've got to cover the village by dusk."Though the darker guard keeps his voice light, his jaw sets in a tight line. Excerpts are provided by Dial-A-Book Inc. All rights reserved. "It is not your time to attack. Mama Agba goes rigid, dark eyes begging me to be quiet."Diviners aren't making more coin. Why do this if we can't protect you?" "For gods' sakes, think, Zélie. I haven't heard our language in so long, it takes me a few moments to remember what the word even means."What in the gods' names is wrong with you?"Once again, every eye in the ahéré is on me. Remember that "Sharing is Caring".Do you want books on Religion in PDF format? Now."The guard's anger boils at her audacity. "If you're going to lose, do it with pride."Muffled giggles break out among the girls, quickly silenced by a sharp wave of Mama Agba's hand. "Was that so hard?" Yemi bows again for good measure. Yemi's sneer disappears as her eyes narrow. How is this my fault when those crooked guards are the thieves?"I was trying to protect you." "Protect me?" Mama Agba repeats. I want to scream, to break every bone in his body, but with each second I wither. If you keep raising them, we can't pay!"The guard saunters over in a way that makes me itch for my staff. I force air into my lungs and use my staff to stand up straight. Yemi rears back to strike again as I struggle to find my footing."Zélie." Mama Agba warns, but I don't need her help. "But you sure have your fair share of maggots." He grips my thigh with a rough hand. Copyright © 2018 Tomi Adeyemi. There are many myths, legends and stories that explain the origin of certain rituals and ceremonies.The main Yoruba gods are Oya, Shango, Yemoja, Obatala, Oshun, as well as the warriors Elegua, Ogun, Oshosi and Oshun. Though the girls behind me gasp, I don't miss a beat.Yemi may be fast, but I can be faster.When her staff nears, I arch as far as my back will bend, dodging her attack. Where do you expect these new taxes to come from?" I ask. Likewise, white magic is practiced, although it is speculated that they also use black magic, something that the Santeros deny.It is believed that if one worships the saints and divinities, obeys them with total submission and performs rituals in their name, the person is rewarded with extraordinary powers and protection for good health, prosperity and general well-being, as well as the ability to predict the future.Access to more than 5 Santeria books in PDF format to better study this religion that is practiced in several countries around the world.Here we present our complete selection of Santeria books:Here ends our selection of free Santeria books in PDF format. The world is full of many different religions and beliefs. Fear paralyzes every inch of our beings.Then the will to survive takes over."Quickly," Mama Agba hisses. In one smooth motion, I roll to my feet and thrust my shaft upward, blocking Yemi's next blow.Our staffs collide with a loud crack. "I'm okay."I'm not done yet."Zélie —" Mama starts, but Yemi doesn't wait for her to finish. I'm ready."The sea of brown faces parts as I move through the crowd. A mistake. Just wait your tur —"That's right. Zél." Yemi's voice dips so low only I can hear it. Sooner or later they would find me.Sooner or later they would break the people I love."Mama Agba?" Bisi's voice shrinks, small like a mouse. She clings to Yemi's draped pants as tears well in her eyes. "Just take it."Mama, don't —"She whips around with a glare that turns my body to stone. Eventually he unhands his sword, cutting instead with his glare. As she cries, Mama Agba surveys the room, seeing all the tears the other girls hold back. No part of this excerpt may be reproduced or reprinted without permission in writing from the publisher. Every eye in the ahéré turns to me. "We don't have much time!" I pull Yemi to her feet. I should. She doesn't know how it feels.Before she can recover, I spin and thrust my staff into her stomach. I shut my mouth and crawl to my feet, shrinking into the patterned cloth of my mannequin.Coins jingle as the guard counts the bronze pieces placed into his palm. I shoot them a glare before focusing on my opponent.We'll see who's giggling when I win."Take position."We back up to the edge of the mat and kick our staffs up from the ground. Be a good little maggot."And there it is,That word.That miserable, degrading slur.Whispered with no regard. "Why do they hate us?" A weariness settles on Mama's frame. If you're going to lose, do it with pride!"Rage flashes in Yemi's eyes like a bull-horned lionaire ready to pounce. Come on —Yemi's staff smacks against mine, stopping my attack before it even starts."Patience, Zélie," Mama Agba calls out. Forgive me. "Just get back to your station." I bite back a smile and bow my head in apology, sweeping low enough to survey the guards who entered. I've been practicing and I'm ready.I know I can win."Zélie."Mama Agba's weathered voice breaks through the silence. Maybe in our faces he sees a mother or sister, a reminder of someone he'd want to protect.The other soldier is still for a moment, so still I don't know what he'll do. You would never guess a woman her age could be so lethal."Ahem." Yemi clears her throat at the front of the ahéré, a not-so-subtle reminder that she's already passed this test. They hate what you were meant to become."Bisi buries herself inside the fabric of Mama's kaftan, muffling her sobs. "You have my coin and that's all you're getting. "I'm sorry," she whimpers. "I fell asleep, I — I wasn't —""Spit it out, child!" "They're coming!" Bisi finally exclaims. (Continues...)Excerpted from "Children of Blood and Bone" by . Some noble who banished his bastard daughter to our village in shame.I push my shoulders back and thrust my chest forward, straightening though I need to bend. Her face contorts in pain and shock as she reels backward from my blow. "You already raised the diviner tax last moon," she argues. She's right. We stand in silence until the guards exit and the stomping of their metal-soled boots fades away.Mama Agba's strength disappears like a candle blown out by the wind. "This is it. She speeds toward me hot with fury, her staff only a finger's breadth from my head. Before I can turn away or mask my disgust, he grabs me by the hair."Ah!" I cry out as pain lances through my skull. Though I have no magic to suppress, the proximity of the majacite blade still pricks at my skin as the guard boxes me in."You would do well to keep your mouth shut, little girl."And he's right. This religion has divinatory elements on which the believers rely to have a deeper access to the knowledge of the world. You'll have your chance, I coach myself. Her complexion carries the soft brown of Orishans who've never spent a day laboring in the sun, a privileged life funded by hush coin from a father she never met. With so much happening at once, there's no way of knowing whether we'll hide everything in time. Most girls cower at the prospect of facing Yemi, but today I crave it. As she rears back to attack, I spin out of her range. I'm about to deliver the final blow when the russet sheets covering the ahéré's entrance fly open.Bisi runs through the doorway, her white hair flying behind her.



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