

Sharon Dooley's summer reading list (Remember those dreaded summer reading lists your high school English teachers gave you? 😊) I suppose I should be reading Donna's recommended *White Fragility*, or Ibram Kendi's *How to be an Antiracist* or even Bolton's *The Room where it Happened*. But it's hot, and I am old and cranky so I have returned to one of my earliest loves – fantasy. I am reading the 2nd (and eagerly awaiting the 3rd) volume of *The Legacy of Orisha*. This series is by Tomi Adeyemi, one of the rare Black science fiction and fantasy authors. In her acknowledgements at the end of volume one, she writes “[This book] was written during a time when I kept turning on the news and seeing stories of unarmed Black men, women and children being shot by the police. ... I told myself that if just one person could read it and have their hearts or minds changed, then I would have done something meaningful against a problem that seems so much bigger than myself.” The Orisha series doesn't deal directly with this; rather it deals with a large group of people, both men and women, who are excluded because they can do magic.

Other Black science fiction and fantasy writers include the late Octavia Butler, whose EarthSeed series includes *Parable of the Sower* and *Parable of the Talents*, is probably the best known of the Black authors. I read this long ago, but just downloaded it to my ereader so that I can reread it. Recently, another author, N. K. Jemisin has gained prominence. I was particularly taken with her book of short stories titled *How long 'til Black Future Month?* So that's it for the Black authors – three, count them, three.

Is this discrimination? It's hard to say. Perhaps it just represents a lack of interest in these genres. Or perhaps it's a side effect of early experiences – I was reading Robert Heinlein's children's science fiction stories about the time I left the Bobbsey twins behind. Maybe potential Black authors didn't have that kind of childhood exposure. I don't have an answer to that. All I know is that these three authors are well worth reading!