

# *Dykin': A Real Black Lesbian Novel*

For Immediate Release

Lion-Hearted Press Presents: **Dykin' - A Novel by Neledi Tafari**  
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**Washington, DC**— Author Neledi Tafari's groundbreaking debut novel *Dykin'* shows Black lesbian culture from an urban perspective. Set in Washington, DC in the late nineties, *Dykin'* is an intimate portrayal of women bound by the complexities of the inner city.

Never before has a lesbian novel reached into the depths of urban life. Defined as ***a derogatory term that describes or implies lesbian relations***, *Dykin'* is a stark contrast to mainstream so-called "lesbian" novels featuring suburban, corporate fantasies. *Dykin'* exposes real lesbian drama with characters for women from all walks of life and *keeps it real* with experiences that young lesbians can relate to.

The protagonist Neo Jackson fights pressure from the community to shut her night club down. She wants to pass the business on to her play son, Jules, but Jules is too busy chasing women.

*"I put that sweet potion called passion in everything that I do. . ."* Jules says. *"When you love everything that you do it's contagious."*

Neo's worries escalate after her ex-lover's daughters, The Twins, are implicated in a club fight. As The Twins run amuck and battle peer pressure while trying to graduate from high school, Neo looked to a group of lesbian business owners for support, while fending off the church, the law, and her arch enemy.

**For Information about author appearances, sales, or to request Advance Review Copies, contact Lion-Hearted Press at [LHPress@hotmail.com](mailto:LHPress@hotmail.com)**

## **ABOUT LION-HEARTED PRESS**

Lion-Hearted Press is an independent, Black, woman, owned publishing company founded in 2006. *Dykin'* - The first title under LH Press - debuted in 2007 and the final version is scheduled for re-release.

# Themes, Motifs & Symbols

## MAJOR THEMES

**Colors** – Colors are used to represent a wide range of emotions and the multicultural society.

**Infidelity** – Many characters in *Dykin'* were involved in affairs. Some like Keyah unknowingly violated, while others like Diva were infamous mistresses.

**Business & Community Organization** – *Dykin'* projects self employment and community organization as a means of empowerment from Neo's ownership of the Prism; Jules' ownership of her house the Placenta; and The Walkers' Cafe; to Keyah's beauty salon. The Rainbow Tribe and Black Business Owner's Group represent community organization.

**Religion/Extremism** – *Dykin'* explores how religion and moral judgment can be used to manipulate and ostracize groups of people.

**Labels/Names/Roles** – *Dykin'* the word itself, along with other terms such as *dom*, *fem* and *boo*, are terms used to identify and generalize people. All names in the novel have symbolic meanings, and roles were over emphasized.

**Numerology** – All numbers used in *Dykin'* are historically significant.

**Games** - In attempt to illustrate the role games play in development, the author shows games from different perspectives including within the terms of relationship, in sports, and through Black childhood cheers and rituals such as tag. Games are also displayed in business interactions.

## MOTIFS

**'Guys That Stood On The Corners At Night'** – Tafari attempted to humanize drug dealers who are often looked upon more negatively than white-collar workers.

**'The Home of the Braves'** – An allusion to the author's high school and a neighborhood in Southeast, Washington, DC named for Native Americans. The term is also a pun from a verse of the Star Spangled Banner.

## SYMBOLS

**The Rainbow** – Tafari explores the rainbow of the gay pride flag and the religious symbol.

**Phallus symbols** – The cross image of the monument as a stripper pole on the book cover and the white dildo represent the effects of patriarchy.

# *Author Neledi Tafari*



Neledi was born and raised in Washington, D.C. Her experience growing up in the inner-city was instrumental in the writing of the novel, *Dykin'*, which takes an intimate look at Black lesbian culture in the District.

A spirited entrepreneur and advocate of self empowerment, Tafari is a graduate of Delaware State University.

For Tafari, a milestone was actually defining the term "Dykin'." A major goal was to dispel the derogatory connotation that this word holds in the Black community and to shape a meaning that was more grounded in truth.

Through *Dykin'*, the author aims to start a dialogue within her community that is based on honesty and openness. Pronounced Nah-lay-dee Ta-far-ee, the author currently resides in Washington, DC.

# LGBT FACT SHEET

(2007)

Almost 600,000 households (or 1.2 million people) identified themselves as same-sex partners in 2000, roughly half in male couples and half in female couples. They represented about 0.6 percent of the total adult population and almost 1 percent of people between the ages of 30 and 50. *2000 US Census*

## Equality

A 2000 Newsweek poll shows that 83% of all Americans believe that gay people should have access to equal rights in terms of employment and public accommodations. This is up from just 56% in 1977.

[Same Sex] couples cannot be recognized as legally married, so a surviving partner loses financial ground. Survivors are denied the Social Security benefits that married couples get, face heavy taxes on any retirement plan, and get charged an estate tax if they inherit a home, even if it was jointly owned.

## Economics

GLBT Household Income 41% of women earn 30 and 70 K. GLBT Education 69% have post-secondary education.

The gay market segment is the fastest growing segment in the US. 1999 ad revenues topped \$100 million for the third consecutive year. There are 103 local newspapers and 9 national gay-focused magazines in the US today, not to mention innumerable Web sites and portals. Less than 5 years ago, there were only 20 or so newspapers and 2 magazines. *Diversity central.com*

## Abuse

30% of LGBT couples experience domestic violence.

Each year, between 50,000 and 100,000 Lesbian women are battered. *Valparaiso University Law Review*

Emotional abuse for someone who is gay, lesbian, or bisexual may be to out them at work or to family or friends. [New England Law Review](#)

20% of lesbians report having experienced verbal harassment and/or physical violence as a result of their sexual orientation during high school. *National Gay and Lesbian Task Force*

“The tools of homophobia are unique weapons. . . Even if they were ‘out,’ their abusive partners could start questioning their sexuality — you know, “You’re not really a lesbian.” *Janice Ristock*

97 % of students in public high schools report regularly hearing homophobic remarks from their peers. *Massachusetts Governor’s Commission on Gay and Lesbian Youth*

83% of adolescent lesbians use alcohol, 56% use other drugs, and 11% use crack and/or cocaine.

80% of prospective teachers report negative attitudes toward gay and lesbian people. *Sears, James. “Educators, Homosexuality, and Homosexual Students: Are Personal Feelings related to Professional Beliefs?”, in Harbeck, Karen, Harrington Park Press, 1992.*

## Top Gay Cities

Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Washington D.C., Miami, Dallas, Boston, Phoenix, Chicago, and Seattle.