



**Conception by Kalisha Buckhanon**

St. Martin's Press, St. Martin's Publishing Group, 2008

ISBN: 9780312545147 (trade paperback)

**BOOK SYNOPSIS**

In the same vein as her critically acclaimed debut novel, *Upstate*, Kalisha Buckhanon again shares an emotionally beautiful story about today's youth that magnifies the unforgettable power of hope and the human spirit.

Buckhanon takes us to Chicago, 1992, and into the life of fifteen-year-old Shivana Golding, who believes most Black women wind up the same: single and raising children alone, like her mother. Until the sudden visit of her charismatic and free-spirited Aunt Jewel, Shivana spends her days desperately struggling to understand life and confront the challenges she faces growing up in a tough environment. When she accidentally becomes pregnant by an older man and must decide what to do, she begins a journey toward adulthood with only a mysterious voice inside to guide her. Then, when she falls in love with Rasul, a teenager with problems of his own, together they fight to rise above their circumstances and move toward a more positive future.

Through a narrative that sweeps from slavery onward, Buckhanon unveils Shivana's connection to a past filled with tragedy, courage, and wisdom.

**REVIEWS AND PRAISE**

"Buckhanon's second novel firmly establishes her as a timeless voice for a new generation. An authenticity of language and action permeates the novel. The realities of poor Chicago life and Shivana's desperation to escape lead to a sad, seemingly predestined conclusion, yet do not detract from the underlying foundations of love and hope. Teens who like Toni Morrison's work, Buckhanon's *Upstate* (St. Martin's, 2005), and other realistic novels will enjoy this one." —*School Library Journal*

"The work of a gifted young novelist." —*Washington Post*

"Readers...are richly rewarded." —*Chicago Sun Times*

"A poignant, heart-wrenching novel." —[Kirkus Reviews](#)

"...heartfelt and affecting." —*Booklist*

"Much like her acclaimed debut novel, *Upstate*, Buckhanon is again at her best..." —*Mosaic Literary Magazine*

**Updated 4.11.2025**

St. Martin's Publishing Group

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## AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

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- [Friends of American Writers Award for \*Conception\*](#)
- [One of School Library Journal's Best Adult Books for High School Students](#)
- [Terry McMillan Young Author Award](#)

## MEDIA AND RESOURCES

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- [Author interview with \*Mosaic Literary Magazine\*](#)
- [BK Reader article/interview](#)
- [Fresh Fiction review](#)
- [School Library Lady review](#)
- [Author's website](#)
- [The Gramblinite review](#)

## RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

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*Add responses to challenges whenever possible, including links if available. Relevant information includes official responses from a board of education, library statements of support, or other statements of support from relevant organizations like PEN America or the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund.*

## AUTHOR STATEMENT (OPTIONAL)

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*Offer the author an opportunity to provide a statement about the potential impact of banning their book or a link to an existing author statement.*

## \*A NOTE ON AGE RANGES

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A publisher-suggested age range covers the gamut of readers that publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.

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