



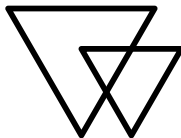


JAH SKAKESPEAR

# Rasta Revelation

Spiritual novel

WILLEMS UITGEVERS





Cover design: Tina Suredo-Castello

Photo: David Verhaeghe

Layout: Willems Uitgevers

Translation: Philip Mertens

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*The creation of the 'image' of our highest ideals is the real 'magic', namely the power that acts, forms and transforms. An ideal, therefore, can only act if it is invented by a symbol – not merely a conventional sign or a mere allegory, but a valid, living symbol that can be visualized, experienced, felt, and realized by our whole being.*

*(LAMA ANAGARIKA GOVINDA, THE WAY OF THE WHITE CLOUDS,  
HUTCHINSON OF LONDON 1966)*

*Listen to the songs while reading. Please note that the Spotify playlist doesn't have all the tunes or right versions.*

*For a complete listening experience, check Mixcloud.*

*Soundtrack: <https://www.mixcloud.com/karelmichiels9/>*



*[https://open.spotify.com/  
playlist/5ejQky2uwpP3CNuZeh06P0?si=60e576c2a04b4539](https://open.spotify.com/playlist/5ejQky2uwpP3CNuZeh06P0?si=60e576c2a04b4539)*





‘This is the book that has begged to be written for decades now. Rasta Revelation brings the Bible up to date in this thrilling story of life in the jungles and high rises of a contemporary Jamaica, a tale rich in well-drawn characters and insider information, mingling myth and mystery in masterful prose.’

(ROGER STEFFENS, author *So Much Things to Say: The Oral History of Bob Marley*)

‘If you’re familiar with reggae music and Rastafari the book turns out to be a page-turner, otherwise the information that has been inserted in the story might make your head whirl. It’s obvious Jah Shakespear has great knowledge about Rastafari, the history of Jamaican music, reggae artists, Jamaica and Ethiopia, and it’s praiseworthy he wants to share it in order to educate, get more understanding and promote the music he has embraced since the 1970s. Long-time reggae fans will surely appreciate the references to classic reggae tunes, which can be found throughout the entire book.

(MR. T, [reggae-vibes.com](http://reggae-vibes.com))

‘A mystical journey to the heart of the Rastafari movement. Makes you want to leave for Jamaica and Ethiopia immediately.’

(MICHEL THIJS)

# PART 1

# ZION





# SUPER STAR (LINVAL THOMPSON)

*Kingston, 23rd July 2007*

Nobody noticed that Ras Fire was dead, let alone murdered. After all these hours, the drummers only had an eye for their bongos. The horns-men, trumpet, saxophone, trombone, stood with their backs towards him. An old Rasta cleaned ganja, seeds and twigs, ready for ritual smoking. On the narrow terrace, three young men with dreadlocks were discussing a text that someone had written in large print on a wooden panel, cut in the stylised contours of the African continent. *I & I salute black history. Battle of Adwa 1896-1966.*

Downstairs, down the rough concrete stairs to the street side, Brother Marcus handed out mangoes and oranges to the children of Rockfort. They had been wholly engrossed in his teachings earlier. Next to Brother Marcus, on the lowest step of the stairs, sat a beautiful young woman.

‘Ras Fire in deh?’ a boy asked, black as the night, a far too long, worn basketball shirt around his shoulders. Brother Marcus nodded and let the boy pass. He was only too aware of Ras Fire’s status in Rockfort in recent years and throughout the country in recent days. The Jamaicans recognised in him a pedigree Rasta man.

First, they were confronted with the massive dreadlock draped over his frail body, a real knotty lock, a big, knotted bunch of hair. In Jamaica they say natty. Ras Fire was a real natty dread, in body and limbs.

But he also possessed the knowledge. Ras Fire knew everything there was to know about Rastafari, much more than your average rasta in Jamaica. As a white, biblical European, he had read books and studied history. He could defend his faith with quotations and arguments, and now for the first time, he had the opportunity to do so publicly, on Jamaican radio and television no less. The first time, on TVJ -the public broadcaster- a storm of indignation had erupted on the island. A real disgrace, the viewers complained, showing off with that poor man. The second time, on CVM TV, the commercial channel, people listened to the story of Ras Fire, and some remembered the words of their father or their grandfather, who were the first Rastas. The third time, on Irie FM, the reggae radio, Ras Fire urged the youths to stay true to their roots and the spirit of Haile Selassie I. The next day, on a dance with Stone Love, Jamaica's number one sound system, the DJs had proclaimed him as a prophet. Even Ce'cile and Elephant Man, the slackest of all dancehall artists, acknowledged in Ras Fire a messenger sent by Jah who could rally the people and point them in the right direction.

And so, in just a few days, Ras Fire had become a real superstar. Jamaica tends to produce a new superstar every year - a few number one singles, and the island is at your feet. But this man impressed his audience, and not only the youths. Also, at the meetings and grounations of the various Rasta movements, everyone talked about Ras Fire. The Nazareens spontaneously created a chant, a conjuring song about Ras Fire and the Book of the Seven Seals. Probably Bob Marley was the last Rasta man to grip the nation in this profound manner.

And yet, nobody realized that Ras Fire had passed away that night in Rockfort. It had been a revolving door of folks all day at the Count Ossie Center, all looking for the positive vibrations of the music. When Mystical Roots came to jam on Sundays, everyone wanted to be there. Especially now that Brother Marcus had brought Ras Fire into

the Centre, known from radio and TV. Other superstars had passed by, habitually surrounded by their agents and bodyguards. Rockfort was known as Kingston's top murder district. Not everyone dared to rely on Brother Marcus' natural authority and delicate appearance to stave off trouble, no matter how much people admired and respected him.

Ras Fire had judged that he did not need protection, even in this impoverished neighbourhood, a confusing network of walls and houses, poorly built, rebuilt and rebuilt again, mostly with cast-off bricks, stones, and other recyclables. Being a frightened white visitor, one could imagine a gangster lurking behind every fence.

In this oppressive community, the Count Ossie Center stood as an oasis of peace and inspiration wrapped inside an abundance of flora around the house and a little further up into the Wareika Hills. Nowhere else in Jamaica grew Rastafari so close to the hearts of people as here on Glaspole Avenue, a far too expensive name for such a modest street.

'Im dead!' the little boy shouted with a shrill voice.

Ras Fire had always known that he would die in Jamaica. The only alternative was Ethiopia, but he never managed to make it all the way there. So it goes with "promised lands." It could have been a bit less violent, he thought in his last moments. He also regretted not being able to talk some sense into the killer. But the very final thought of Ras Fire was one of great gratitude. Who would have dared to expect that he would live such a long and beautiful life?

## 2

# FROM CREATION (BARRY BROWN)

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was in Ethiopia.*

*When Jah gave things a name, they became a reality. When I tell my story, I create a world. My world, the extraordinary confluence of circumstances that have made me what I am, the original Rasta man.*

*In that world, paradise lies Ethiopia. The Ark of the Covenant is kept there. It is the home of the chosen people. Jesus Christ revealed himself there as Ras Tafari.*

*I don't tell you anything new. The Bible confirms my story.*



*San Pere, 17 August 2007*

‘What should this lead to if I may ask?’

‘You wanted to know who Ras Fire is, didn’t you? He wrote these texts himself.’

Johan gulped nervously. Still grief-stricken over his friend’s death, Ras Fire made a difficult topic to contemplate and discuss.

‘And his biography starts in paradise? You asked us to help solve a murder at the onset of the 21st century. I hope this won’t turn into a Da Vinci Code?’

Good that Patrick was here, thought Johan. Nobody would debunk the nonsense in this story quicker and more ruthlessly than he. Patrick

was a pure scientist, educated in biology and pharmacology, with an abject aversion to religion and even more so to esotericism, the lenses of his postmodern spectacle frame, pre-war contour, design hinges, framing his steely piercing eyes with a touch of arrogance. Luckily, Johan had nothing to hide, and he could take a punch, verbal or other. Patrick was his own devil's advocate, a perfect counterbalance to the – as he realised all too well – pretentious principles and musings that he so often enjoyed debating.

'I actually find it quite interesting. I mean just that: Johan had to put up with our company for years. Let us finally give him his moment of glory.'

'Thanks Ruud, but I'm not that frustrated. Casting pearls before swine, is what I think when you guys mock me every time and again.'

'Oh, how sad he is,' Patrick said with a high voice.

'Oh, you know what I mean. You need to know the whole story before you can accept certain things.'

'Such as the fact that Christ appeared in Ethiopia?'

'I think everyone should decide for themselves who...'

'Oh, give it a rest, man. Do you still take those Rastas seriously, considering all your adventures with them? Do you remember last year, your gainless drive to Amsterdam? He was going to meet the figurehead of the new Rastas! Ruud, what did he explicitly tell us then?'

'Err... he said it was the very last time he ever wanted to speak with a Rasta again. If my memory serves... But you also showed me the door once, yet now here we are, sitting together again at the table.'

Hence fell an awkward silence. Some woman had urged Patrick some ten years ago to break off contact with Ruud. She wanted him strictly for herself, even during his regular billiard evenings or his aikido practice sessions, and at the table, in the car, or the pub. Providing Patrick could have sex with her in all those places, the nympho that she was, he didn't miss his friends. Only when the intoxication of