

SAMPLE

BLACK GOLD

By
Augustine Sam



AuthorSuite Books

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Part 1

A Bout of Romanticism

Chapter 1

A late winter sun rose over the western horizon, unveiling an exceptional dawn evocative of spring—vivid, serene, and beautiful. The panoramic wonder then unraveled, in fits and starts, like flower petals unfolding in the sun. It dispelled clouds that had tried all morning to outcast the sky. As it did so, a breathtaking image of the mountain range milieu whisked into view, at first with caution and then all at once, towering over the city in all its magnificence.

Jessica Rhodes, a young, cheery honeymooner, stood transfixed, her mouth agape, her eyes widened, her right hand clasped over her mouth. The electric atmosphere, so utterly unexpected, both surprised and thrilled her. The burgeoning crowd grew enthusiastic as sounds of voices and commotion swelled around her. Speechless, absorbed in the view, she propped her head on the arms of the tall man behind her and let out her breath in a long exhalation. Refusing to be distracted by the noise, she marveled at the city and its brazen opulence, which appeared to cut a wide swath through its aristocratic soul, assuming a life of its own.

It was an atypical morning in Monte Carlo, the dazzling capital of the Principality of Monaco, her first and only choice for a honeymoon destination. Here, as far as she could intuit, the air was charged with excitement, which at once confirmed her in her belief that she had made the right pick, a notion that brought a smile to her lips.

She was standing outside the salmon-colored walls of the 13th century Grimaldi Palace amid a swarm of eager tourists waiting in a flutter of anticipation for the ceremonial drum-and-bugle changing of the guards. As she stood there, gazing around her environment, trying to picture life in the palace centuries before, she realized the event, the people, and the atmosphere had captivated her more than she had envisaged. Until now, it had not crossed her mind that the high point of her trip might be a day outside the gates of this amazing fortress. And it delighted her, in particular, because Monte Carlo was witnessing a riveting revival of interest in its touristic offerings since the economic crisis in continental Europe left the tourist industry in dire straits for three years in a row. Now though the tide was changing. Things started looking up last year during the Grand Prix when the city's hotels hit on the brilliant idea of slashing prices to help fill the *Circuit de Monaco*. As a result, tourists returned in large numbers, restaurants thrived again, and nightlife went back to its pre-crisis boom.

An energized Jessica, delighted that many, like her, were taken with the city's allure, goggled at the spectacle in animated silence, the magic of nature capturing her imagination. As the minutes ticked by, the surrounding uproar tapered off. Soon the sight too, to her utmost disappointment, faded out in a slow, gradual process like a truncated scene in nature's theatrical repertoire.

"Ugh!" She whined, pouting. "What an anticlimax!"

The fascinating backdrop of the mountain range milieu and the colorful sunrise had seemed, for a moment, to presage an exciting day, the kind she had envisaged all week. But it was vanishing in the same hasty, unpredictable way it emerged. All she could see now were clouds mushrooming in the air, a sight which transformed her mood of buoyancy and optimism into an instant downer. Eyes narrowed, she thumbed her nose at the heavens, frowning at the fast-graying sky. No sooner had the sun dimmed than the wind gusted and eddied around her, lifting her hat, ripping the scarf from her shoulders, and threatening her resilience.

She gaped at the crowd and then turned her head. "You'd expect people to run, wouldn't you? But no one's leaving in spite of the looming storm. Isn't that a rather curious thing?"

"Uh-huh," a toneless voice said in her ear.

"Oh, come on," she grimaced. "Don't start grumbling now. If no one's leaving, neither should we, right?"

There was no response.

"Hey!" She rasped.

The muffled voice behind her sounded like suppressed laughter.

“Well, we are not leaving,” she said in an emphatic voice, lifting a threatening finger before he could protest and wagged it in a playful manner over her head.

He did not protest, which pleased her. She hunched her shoulders, zipped up her windcheater, and clung to the front row spot she had secured with great effort, unfazed by the storm clouds on the horizon. Her long dramatic blonde curls, full and bouncy, bopped around as she moved her head. Even the obtrusive gusts of the wind nudging the bright-colored bandanna around her neck failed to disconcert her.

Behind her, Femi stroked his goatee in silence, worrying about the dismal weather. Now and then he glanced at his wristwatch. “When is it going to start?”

“I told you 11.55, didn’t I?” Jessica chirped.

“A.m. or p.m.?”

“Stupid,” she laughed. “We are right in front, that’s what counts. And we have the best view of all, how cool is that?”

Amused, Femi pressed his lips together, stifling a smile. “Now I understand why you insisted on waking early, but hey, we’ve been standing here for about twenty-five minutes...”

“It’ll be worth the wait, you’ll see,” she kept her gaze on the main door of the palace, taking in the view with undisguised pleasure. “I think it’ll be the most exciting thing we’ll do today.”

“Really?” Femi chuckled. “I thought visiting the Oceanographic Museum was the most exciting thing we’d do today. You still remember it, right? The monumental jewel that rises from the sea to 85 meters high...”

Jessica gritted her teeth in bogus frustration at the irony of hearing her own words lobbed back at her in apparent mockery. “Yeah! A jewel perched on the side of the cliffs of the Rock of Monaco, what’s your point? The change of guards will be fun to watch, you’ll see.”

“Hmm,” Femi grunted. “I’m not sure but I’ll give it a chance,” he grinned, giving up without an argument, a move as usual as the moment itself. Often they argued about trivialities until events overtook them as if their relationship thrived on those frivolous, almost seductive altercations.

Jessica blinked. After a moment of silence, she turned her head again and fixed him with a smiling stare. “It’s a lousy honeymoon, isn’t it? Just three days. Ugh!”

“Yeah, it’s lousy,” he moaned. “I wish we had more time.”

“And more money,” she added a regretful tone of voice. “It’s so damn expensive here.”

Femi winced. A crushing sensation of shame overwhelmed him at Jessica’s casual mention of money. Their honeymoon, as far as he was concerned, wasn’t lousy because Monaco was expensive though he wouldn’t say it out aloud. He knew it was lousy because they were short on cash and in no position to embark on elaborate celebrations. And the fault lay squarely on his shoulders. Poor as a church mouse, he was but a fresh graduate and a jobless one at that. Thinking about his life now, it seemed a little silly that he had not learned the mechanics of eking out a living before embarking on that lofty adventure he called marriage. It’s been, in fact, a week since he graduated from the Ca’ Foscari University in Venice with a First Class degree in Chemistry, and for a man who had attained that goal without piling up debts, this miserly three-day honeymoon was all he could afford. It might have been sensible, he pondered, if they had waited until they both had proper jobs before exchanging vows and rings and tears of joy.

Easier said than done, he sniggered, amused by the crazy logic sweeping through his mind like a hurricane. They’d have lost the element of adventure and spontaneity if they’d tried to think things through first, wouldn’t they? He reflected. They’d have rubbished the idealistic power of romance if they had allowed reason to govern them.

He inhaled, casting a quick, sideways glance at the crowd, his mind busy. They were young and carefree and impulsive, he conceded, and thinking things through was not part of their nature. Last month, when they realized the impossible was about to happen, that they were a step away from actualizing their long-shot plan to graduate together, a silly bout of romanticism had seized

them. And true to character, they had decided their graduation should coincide with their marriage. And it did.

“Damn!” He muttered under his breath, stifling a smile. *We did it, didn’t we?* He mused.

Stirred by the recollection, he gazed at Jessica in thoughtful silence. He was a tall, slender, man with an impressive goatee, and in a standing position, could easily see the top of his wife’s head, an inane fact that often fascinated him but somewhat scandalized her.

Grabbing her hair, he dragged her head toward him with a gentle pull, and then bent forward and kissed her. “I’ll make it up to you as soon as I get a job, I promise.”

“I know, silly. Don’t worry about it now, okay?”

Blue-eyed, a little short in stature, Jessica was an extroverted American student who came to the Ca’ Foscari University in Venice on an exchange program but chose not to return to San Diego State University after she met him. Theirs was a chance encounter, she remembered. It was at the *Ca’ Foscari Zattere*, which the university called CFZ or Cultural Flow Zone, an open, multifunctional space dedicated to encounter and exchange between students. She knew he was right for her within an hour of their meeting, and it was the first time she was ever convinced about anything.

As this memory dropped into her mind like coffee cream on the tongue, a broad smile crossed her face and she reached for his hand. “It’ll be all right,” she breathed. “I can feel it.”

“It hurts me though the way things are...” he mumbled in a pessimistic tone of voice.

“Don’t be silly,” she leaned against him. “Two job offers within a week of graduation is hardly a nightmare situation. I wish I studied Chemistry too. Why isn’t Economics that hot?”

Femi giggled. “I’m not even going to respond to that.”

“Anyway, I think you should stop worrying, we’ll not poor for too long, you’ll see.”

“Where did that come from? I mean, I know you are always...”

“Now shut up, look!”

Surprised by the excited tone of her voice, he looked up, his thoughts silenced right away, first by the sound of heavy boots tramping on the cobblestones, followed by a rich cadence of fussy drumbeats, and then by the sight of the drum and bugle corps.

A small band of incoming guards in spotless uniforms, preceded by the corps, marched up to the palace in a colorful display of men and boots. Sudden excitement swept through the throng of onlookers at their advent. Photo cameras and fancy telephones whisked into view and Jessica’s eyes lit up. As she snapped away, a group of on-duty guards emerged from the palace and matched forward to join the new troops in a medieval pageant that was both curious and absorbing.

“Jeez!” Femi exclaimed as the beauty of the ceremonial march unfolded.

The crowd, excited and spellbound, stood in silence, gawking at the guards the way gourmets would gawk at the dessert menu even before the main course.

Then the drumming ceased and a brief quietude foreshadowed the accompanying scenarios in the flawless spectacle. Heads turned toward a booming voice at the rear of the drum and bugle corps. The voice belonged to a tall, broad-shouldered officer who was standing upright with an assertive—chin up, chest out, shoulders back, stomach in—military posture. All eyes were now on him as he uttered a series of high-pitched commands in response to which the guards lifted, swung, and lowered their rifles in rapid succession, a coordinated movement that held the crowd’s attention.

The two groups—of incoming and outgoing guards—stood in dramatic silence for a few seconds facing one another before the drums sounded again and the march, led by the drum and bugle corps, resumed. At last, a posse of fresh-faced guards took over the reins from a still vigilant band of outgoing sentinels, who now marched out of the palace gates, images of the lush, imposing fortress providing a perfect backdrop for the colorful display.

“I told you it’d be worth the wait,” Jessica enthused.

“Can’t argue with that,” Femi beamed, reaching for her hand. “I think we should leave now.”

“Right,” she grinned and stepped away from the prized spot she had clung to all morning.

Enlivened, ogling each other and stifling a smile, they sauntered down the cobblestoned *Place du Palais*, admiring the spotless streets.

The sights silenced their thoughts as they walked forward, hand-in-hand, their imaginations running wild. After a long time, Jessica pressed her lips together and stared sideways at him, unsure how he'd feel if he knew about the fantasies that had informed her choice of Monte Carlo as their honeymoon destination.

"What were your fantasies about this city before we arrived?" She said, giggling.

"Fantasies? None. What were yours?"

"Where do I begin? Okay, imagine a flight from Venice to Nice."

He laughed. *A dream flight*, he thought, *Italy to France, how lovely!*

"Imagine a helicopter ride from Nice to where we are now..."

"Really?" Femi turned his head, images of the cheap train rides flashing in his mind like a bad dream, poking fun at his life of privation and inability to indulge her in her desire.

"That was my fantasy," she made a face at him. "And, hey, it was just a fantasy, okay?"

"Okay," he gulped.

She lifted her shoulders in an elaborate shrug. "A girl can have her fantasies, can't she?" She grinned but did not tell him those fantasies included landing at the heliport and being ferried from there straight to Nikki Beach, where privileged clients were pampered with cocktails and salads by the pool.

Femi smiled. "Let's get rich and do it."

Jessica turned her head and as their gazes met, she burst out laughing, amused, feeling a little silly because the fantasies, unknown to him, were triggered by magazine images of one particular deluxe hotel she was determined to see before leaving Monte Carlo. Maybe if she told him about it, he'd accompany her to see it, she thought. But somehow, she couldn't tell him even as the fantasy clung to her like a leech. And she couldn't stop wondering either what it'd be like to spend even a single night in such an exclusive place so delicately perched on a seaside cliff with nautical-themed rooms that offered spectacular views of the sea.

She exhaled as the thought rocked her but she labored under no illusion that such a dream could be realized on this trip. Still, with only three days at her disposition and no money to spend, the harsh reality of her honeymoon staggered her.

"Is this really Europe's smallest state?" She stared at him, eager for a distraction.

Femi kept his gaze on the charming displays in the souvenir shops. "Well, it's a 0.78 sq.mi outcrop of rock overlooking the Mediterranean so I'd say yes." He softened his face. "Want to hear something interesting?"

"Yep."

"It has a population of only 5,000 citizens and about 30,000 residents."

"That's the size of two neighborhoods in San Diego," Jessica giggled, hankering for gossip. "I hear it's a gambling enclave and a tax haven too."

"Shh!" Femi clasped his hand over her mouth, stifling a smile.

Amused, Jessica burst out laughing. "Don't shush me, I read it somewhere."

"Where, in the brochure you picked up at the hotel?"

"Silly," she laughed louder.

"Listen," Femi said in a low, serious voice. "Monaco may be geographically small, but it has a very impressive balance sheet."

"Ha! Ha! Ha!"

He gaped at her. "I wasn't making a joke."

"Right," Jessica sniggered. "How impressive can the balance sheet of 5,000 citizens be?"

Femi paused in mid-stride. Casting a furtive glance over his shoulders, he edged closer to her and lowered his voice. "If you really want to know the facts then listen, this small state boasts a \$30 billion banking sector with an annual turnover of \$7 billion. That, by any stretch of the imagination, is astounding for a country of only 5,000 citizens."

Jessica's jaw dropped. "Say it again?"

It was Femi's turn to snigger. "Now, how about that for a shocker?" He smiled. "See? This is a small state but not a poor one. And it's not just the banking sector, you know. It also gets about \$1.4 billion worth of business from at least 3.5 million visitors attracted to its tourist infrastructure."

"Gee, and we are here on honeymoon, bringing in business too."

"Yeah, that too," Femi laughed. "I was thinking about something else."

"What?"

"The growing industrial sector for instance, which specializes in pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, plastics, and high-tech."

Wide-eyed, Jessica paused in the middle of the cobblestoned *Place du Palais*, her long hair swaying in the breeze. To her utter delight, the looming cloudburst seemed to have retreated, and it didn't rain after all. She turned her dilating blue eyes towards him. "I didn't know about all these," she whispered. "I thought it was just a tax haven and nothing else."

"It's more than that."

"Aha!" She cooed. "What do you mean by it's more than that?" She fluffed her hair. "So, I'm right, it's a tax haven after all?"

"It is, in a way," Femi agreed, pouting and shrugging. "I suppose its banking secrecy and the extraordinary tax advantages its patrons enjoy makes it a fiscal paradise."

Moving her head from side to side, Jessica murmured something that Femi didn't quite hear.

He pursed his lips, stroked his goatee, and then swung his arm around her. They walked in silence, marveling at Monaco, a gambling story spanning over 700 years. He had read somewhere, though he didn't tell his wife, that it had all begun in 1297, on a dark, frosty night, when a certain impostor named François Grimaldi disguised himself as a monk and tricked the guards of the Monaco fortress into granting him shelter. Then later that night, when all was quiet, he, assisted by his band of warriors, slit the throat of the unsuspecting guards, seized the castle, and started a family dynasty that survived to this day.

The splendid country-style bistro named *Replay Café* was located on Rue Grimaldi in the heart of Monte Carlo. It was a chic spot for high rollers and charming tourists, and its best-selling drink was the champagne-based *l'apéritif Stephanie*, a compulsive choice for the glamorous people who patronized it.

This evening—the last day of Femi and Jessica's short-lived honeymoon—the bistro was packed, as usual, with many of its patrons waiting in line for a chance to enter. Notwithstanding the long queue, Femi and Jessica secured a small table at the rear of the café beside a group of young, extravagant tourists, who were guzzling the expensive, sought-after drink and chattering away in French.

The couple exchanged gloomy glances as the waiter approached. "Should we stay?"

Jessica's gaze dropped to the fancy tablecloth. Teeth gritted, she sat still, unsure what to do.

Femi watched her in trepidation, embarrassment oozing from every pore of his skin the way sweat seeps through a runner's shirt. Short on cash, he knew he could not afford two glasses of the drink but was eager to treat her to it, anyway.

The waiter reached their table. "Hi," she smiled.

Jessica lifted her face up. "*L'apéritif Stephanie*," she said in a steady voice. "One glass."

The waiter glanced sideways at Femi, nodded and turned without speaking.

"We can afford one glass, right?" Jessica mumbled, averting her gaze. "Better than walking out in embarrassment, don't you agree?"

"I agree," Femi's gaze remained on her face. "One day..." he said.

"We'll share it," she interjected, reaching for his hand on the table. "I understand, okay? Now, don't give me that look."

His gaze moved from her face to their clasped hands. He grimaced. "Okay."

They lapsed into silence until the drink arrived. The surrounding noise increased. Gleeful laughter filled the bistro. Several couples, including new arrivals, chatted, laughed, and kissed. In silence, the duo sipped the drink through two straws, listening to the loud chattering at the nearby table with increasing discomfort.

“It’s the eve of our D-day...” Femi whispered, watching Jessica over his straw.

“Don’t say that,” she rebuked him in a mild voice. “It’s just the beginning. We have two offers on the table; we only have to decide which one to accept.”

Femi exhaled. “We know nothing about this VenChemical Group except that it is based in New York and its chairman is Italian,” he paused and regarded her. “If we accept their offer, we don’t quite know where they’ll send us.”

“New York,” Jessica said without hesitation.

“I doubt it. I was interviewed for their Africa Operations Unit, I’m not sure that’s based in New York.”

Jessica sipped the champagne-based drink and gazed thoughtfully at him. “Well, we’ll be in New York in the first week of your employment, isn’t that what they said? The orientation...”

“Yes, yes,” he nodded. “The orientation program comes first and then the moment of truth.”

“You aren’t considering the NNPC offer first, are you?”

Femi puffed his cheeks in thought.

“I mean, they gave you until the end of the month to respond...”

“I know,” he averted his gaze, pondering the job offer from the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation—NNPC—a seemingly simple decision that was somehow enmeshed in the complexity of his craving for foreign currency.

Jessica regarded him. “If you choose the NNPC, I’ll understand,” she hesitated for a fraction of a second. “It’ll be like a homecoming for you, right?” She breathed. “You know I’ll live with you anywhere but if you think about it, the VenChemical Group is offering you a better condition of service and they’ll be paying you in dollars.”

Femi did not respond.

“Listen, seeing as we have until the end of the month to respond to the NNPC, why don’t we play all the cards?”

He looked up. “You mean, going to New York tomorrow to assess the VenChemical offer?”

“Right,” Jessica beamed. “After all it’s an all-expenses-paid trip. If it works out, we stay, if not we go to Lagos and take up the NNPC job.”

Their eyes locked.

She softened her face when he smiled. “Would you have acted differently if I were the one with two job offers on the table?”

“Nope,” he shook his head and a broad smile crossed his face.

End of sample



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Augustine Sam is a journalist by profession, a novelist by choice, and a poet by chance. A bilingual writer and an award-winning poet, he is a member of the U.K. Chartered Institute of Journalists. He was formerly a Special Desk editor at *THISDAY* newspapers, an influential *Third World* daily first published with the *Financial Times of London*. He later became a correspondent for Central Europe.

He was the winner of the **Editors' Choice Award** in the *North America Open Poetry Contest*, sponsored by the National Library of Poetry, USA and was invited to be inducted into the International Society of Poets. He won the Merit Award from this society as well as having his poems published in two international anthologies: *Measures of the Heart & Sounds of Silence*.

Augustine's complete collection of poems, *Flashes of Emotion*, listed on **BookAwards.com**, was the 2015 Finalist in the International Book Award Contest. His debut novel, *Take Back the Memory*, a thought-provoking women's fiction, and his mystery/thriller, *The Conspiracy of Silence*, were both awarded the prestigious **Readers' Favorite** 5-star seals.

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PREVIEWS

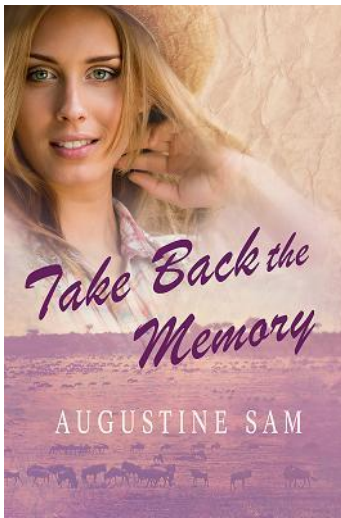
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Thank you, [Augustine Sam](#).

Turn the page for more books from Augustine Sam

Also from Augustine Sam

TAKE BACK THE MEMORY



Paige Lyman, an accomplished psychiatrist, feels dislocated when her husband suddenly dies in a helicopter crash and she discovers the startling truth about who he really was. The revelation destroys all her certainties and transforms her from psychiatrist to patient. She tells us about her life in long flashbacks, starting from her atypical childhood in East Africa with Bill, the young Irish boy who stole her heart and then abandoned her for priesthood. As a heartbroken teenager, she seeks her proverbial pound of flesh in the beds of various priests to get even with priesthood for robbing her of the only man she ever loved.

Everything changes when she meets Stern W., a medical researcher who sweeps into her life like a hurricane and marries her. Now, as ugly skeletons, long forgotten in the closet, rear their heads, Paige is seared by a damning awareness that she, in fact, had had the one thing she yearned for all her life without realizing it, but it's too late to retract the heart-wrenching things she did for a reason that no longer existed.

Acclaim for Take Back the Memory

“An emotional look into a broken mind; Augustine Sam has a great deal of talent in building up a suspenseful story before an excellent resolution.”

- **Katelyn Hensel** | *Readers' Favorite*

“What makes this erotically charged tale an outstanding debut... is the ease, fluidity, the economy, and tight structure, as well as the precision of Sam's prose, which has a deft accuracy in its tone and execution. I would surmise that his outstanding poetic skills had a great deal to do with his ability to effortlessly spin quite a yarn.”

- **Norm Goldman** | *The Montreal Examiner*

“Sam reaches moments of greatness - mixing a fine writing style with exciting plot points. The greatest strength of the book is its author's writing. Sam's penmanship is downright gorgeous. It's

not hard for the reader to guess that he has a poetic background. His story has occasions where the reader yearns to flip the pages and find out what happens next.”

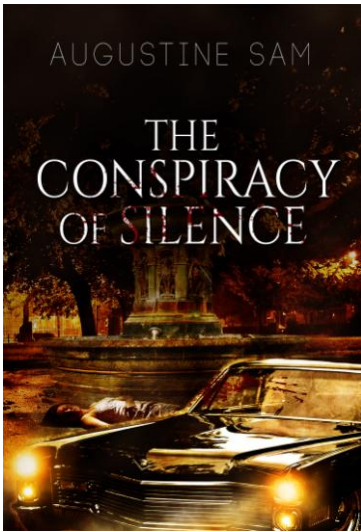
- **Meehan_Connor** | *Online Book Club*

“Poet and storyteller blend seamlessly in a drama that explores the human psyche and that thin line between living and experiencing life. Highly recommended.”

- **Grady Harp** | *Hall of Fame* | *Vine Voice*

Also from Augustine Sam

THE CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE



A “hypnotic” political thriller with an epic courtroom showdown...

The conscience of a town steeped in sexism, vanity, and hypocrisy is pricked by the brutal murder of a mysterious woman in a park in Los Angeles. The shock is transformed into a steamy, seductive scandal when the body turns out to be that of **Susan Whitaker**, the flamboyant wife of the governor of California.

Soon, a dazzlingly intricate shuffle of volatile links leads the police to the delicate theory of secret *lover/blackmailer*, and to the indictment of **Benjamin Carlton**, Hollywood's most influential black celebrity. Then curious things begin to happen when Carlton’s ambitious girlfriend, **Rita Spencer**, suddenly unearths the shocking secret that Susan Whitaker did not, in fact, exist.

Little does anyone realize that this colossal fraud is a mere curtain raiser to a chilling world of ugly skeletons dating back to the assassination of a U.S. senator in a Washington hotel sauna, skeletons connected to riveting sex scandals in high places, skeletons the FBI and political kingmakers will kill for...

Acclaim for The Conspiracy of Silence

“A real ‘wow’ factor. Augustine Sam has a way with words, he writes in a realistic and vivid way. The characters and the plot came to life before me. What’s really scary about this story is that it is probably the kind of thing that is happening right now and we don’t know a thing about it. Fantastic story.”

- **Anne-Marie Reynolds** | *Readers' Favorite*

“With exquisite and impeccable writing skills, Augustine Sam offers readers a scandalous tale just as extravagant as the O. J. Simpson case.”

- **Lashaan Balasingam** - *Blogger | Book Reviewer*

“This firecracker-female—Rita Spencer—is a force of nature who can drive her powerful enemies to their knees. She’s smart, she’s brave. She’s sexy as hell. Sam’s tale of the mob’s tenacious grip on American politics is bared in some of the best courtroom scenes ever written.”

- **Tracy Edingfield Dunn**

[Attorney] & Author of The Law Firm of Psycho & Satan

“Gutsy and gritty... there's really little not to like about this novel. It starts on a pretty high note, and screams its way to a most satisfying climax.”

- **Charles A. Ray** - *Writer / Artist / Photographer*

“First, I must say for the record that I was blown away by the talent displayed in this book...”

- **Kristin Hinkle** | *The After Dark Reading Nook*

“What lengths would you go to save the man you love? That’s what Augustine Sam shows us in *The Conspiracy of Silence*. I like to read a good mystery novel every now and then, and this one did not disappoint.”

- **T. L. Coulter** | *Author of The Arcadian Series*

“Augustine Sam has crafted a phenomenal piece of work in *The Conspiracy of Silence*.”

- **Bradley Knox** | *Hogwash Blog*

“An engaging and exciting cliffhanger...”

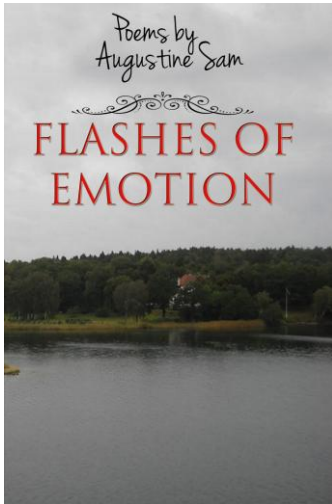
- **Rakhi Jayashankar** | *Author of Waves in the Sky*

“This is definitely one wild ride from start to finish...”

- **TFLReader** | *Top 500 Reviewer*

Also from Augustine Sam

[Flashes of Emotion](#)



From the Back cover

AN ELECTRIFYING POETRY COLLECTION WITH A RAW EDGE

“Journalists can be a pretty soul-less bunch at times, and while they are great at communicating hard facts they are generally less adept at expressing their feelings and their sensitivities. That’s not true of all journalists, of course, and it certainly isn’t true of Augustine Sam who has somehow managed to combine a career in mainstream journalism with an equally successful career as a creative writer and poet extraordinaire, picking up awards and accolades left, right and center for his amazing poems. This anthology allows us to tap into Augustine’s insights on a wide variety of topics from life and love to death and drudgery - a collection that showcases this journo-poet’s lively, refreshing, and innovative style.”

- **Andy Smith** FRGS FCIJ

Editor, The Journal of the Chartered Institute of Journalists, U.K.

“*Flashes of Emotion* by Augustine Sam has a classical edge, yet feels current in its raw energy. Poetry, simply put, is not like this anymore, which makes it altogether unique and refreshing. I enjoyed the deep description and rhythm as they are quite different from my own writing. You won’t find words or thoughts like these at slams, or online, therefore it is well worth your time.”

- **Ben Ditmars** | *Author of Night Poems & Haiku in the Night*

“*Fifty-two poems, intellectual and emotional* – Sam’s vocabulary is large, as is his geography. You will find imagery, as in ‘*Italian Cemetery*.’ You will find relationship galore here, for example in ‘*Gestures & Allusions*.’ If you are looking for a sad love poem, turn to ‘*The Greatest Gift*.’ Sam’s style may take a bit of getting used to, but that voice produced several favorites in my notes. Five stars it is, and extremely recommended.”

- **Jim Bennett** | *The Kindle Book Review*

“*Masculine, Effective & Pristine* - In Augustine Sam’s *Flashes of Emotion*, the use of language and allusions to cultural norms is masterful, while his tone plays the chasing dawn of a morning sun we’re unwilling to wait and see. This collection affected me... those poems Augustine Sam rocked were outstanding. I recommend *Flashes of Emotion* to every poetry lover who wants love songs and outside angles from a tender, masculine perspective.”

- **Melissa Ratel** | *Vraeyda Media – Canada*

“Gems in an elegant setting.”

- **John Zimmerman** | *Poet*

“Augustine Sam's Flashes of Emotion is romantic poetry that looks into a vast array of subjects: love, pain, death and other life matters that evoke our sentiments. He knows how to put across emotions and thoughts, and they resonate from every poem. The depth of sentiment and reflection explored in each poem is more than enough for anyone to contemplate in a long time.”

- **Lit Amri** | *Readers Favorite*



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