

Calaya Michelle Stallworth

Biography

Since 2007, Calaya Michelle Stallworth has published eleven contemporary African American novels under the pen name Grace Octavia with Kensington and Harlequin Books. Her witty, insightful stories filled with wicked humor and spunk have been loved by readers and critics alike.

Calaya's work in the publishing industry began in editorial. Upon graduating from New York University with a degree in English (Creative Writing minor), she interned at Henry Holt and Company and later worked as an editorial assistant at Pocketbooks, both under industry juggernaut Tracy Sherrod. She also worked briefly as an associate editor at America Online's now defunct social portal, DigitalCity, an appointment that required a lot of writing. Now setting her sights on becoming a writer, Calaya left publishing and New York behind to pursue graduate degrees in English, Creative Writing/Fiction at the University of Georgia (MA) and Georgia State University (PhD), where she worked as a graduate teaching fellow. During that time, she also spent ten years working as an online editor for rollingout.com. In her free time, she began publishing novels and articles and writing screenplays to adapt her novels for the big screen. Soon, screenwriting became a creative outlet for Calaya as she worked to strengthen her talent for writing revealing dialogue and comedy. After completing her studies, she began her fifth collegiate teaching appointment at Spelman College, teaching fiction, nonfiction, journalism, screenwriting, composition, and argument. In 2018, Calaya left the classroom and moved to Hollywood to write for film and television. She was a staff writer on Netflix's apocalyptic teen dramedy "Daybreak" and story editor on Hulu's George R.R. Martin project "Wild Cards." She is currently a co-producer on AMC's "Fear the Walking Dead."

When she's not writing, Calaya enjoys watching smart comedies and dramas featuring complex woman and girl characters. She lives in South Central, Los Angeles where she spends her time mentoring Black and Latino boys through her service sorority and organizing a monthly book club for women of color.

