

**SHORT READS FOR
PEOPLE WITH NO TIME**

**WALKING AWAKE
BY
N.K. JEMISIN**

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WALKING AWAKE

"**Walking Awake**" finds a technician in the grip of a moral crisis as she continues to feed children to alien masters that harvest their bodies and minds, and must decide if she will step up and stop them." - Martin Cahill, *Community, Revolution, and Power: How Long 'til Black Future Month?* by N. K. Jemisin

Read or listen to "Walking Awake" online.

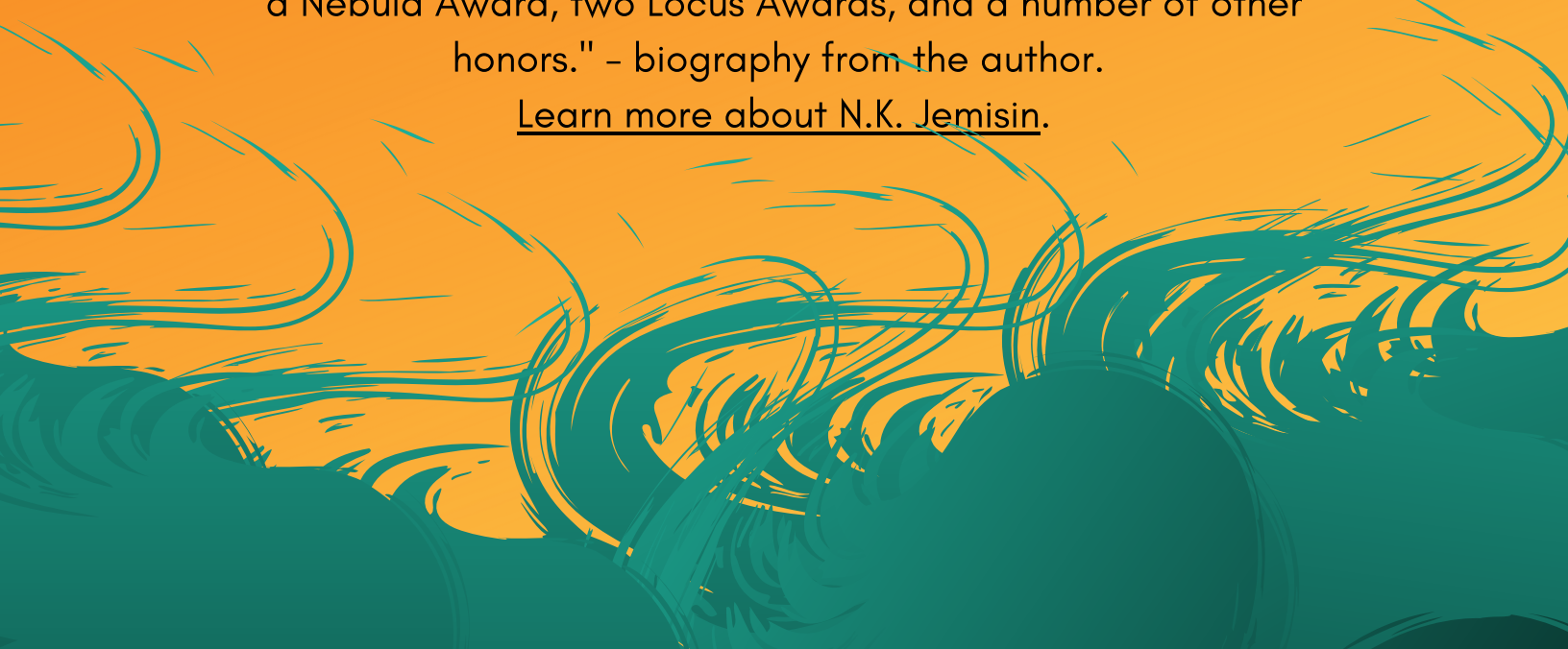
After reading "Walking Awake", read this brief interview with NK Jemisin about the story.

"Walking Awake" is also available in NK Jemisin's collection of short stories, *How Long 'til Black Future Month?*

[Click here to request a copy.](#)

"**N(ora). K. Jemisin** is a New York Times–bestselling author of speculative fiction short stories and novels, who lives and writes in Brooklyn, NY. In 2018, she became the first author to win three Best Novel Hugos in a row for her Broken Earth trilogy. She has also won a Nebula Award, two Locus Awards, and a number of other honors." - biography from the author.

[Learn more about N.K. Jemisin.](#)





WRITE IT DOWN!

QUESTIONS

What is important about names and language in this world? Why are certain words (i.e. caregiver), and certain names (i.e. Ten-36) used?

Why do you think Sadie is diagnosed with a mental illness when she starts to have vivid dreams as a child? What would it mean for this world if dreams were not an illness or a problem?

Why does the initial way humans fought the Masters fail? Do you think Enri and Sadie's way of fighting is different? If so, how? Why did NK Jemisin choose to write the story in this way -- with the first battle failing?

Why does Olivia seem to feel comfortable doing what she does, and offering up Ten-36?

What is the significance in the story of learning that Masters were created by humans?

What do you notice about who is alone and who is together in this story? How does this relate/conflict to the story Sadie tells students about humans being lonely before the Masters?

NK Jemisin says, "it's certainly possible" that there are people who have avoided the Masters rule. Imagine what their lives are like. How might they consider the Masters? More importantly, how might they consider the humans that serve the Masters?

What makes it possible for Sadie to make such a big sacrifice in the end?

WRITE IT DOWN!

PROMPTS

Write a short short story (less than 50 words) based off this excerpt:

"All the monsters were right here. No need to go looking for more in space."

Expand on Jemisin's world by writing an extra scene to this story. It can take place either in the past, present, or future. Examples include, what the rest of the world looks like, how humans exactly created the Masters, or how humans had initially fought against the Masters.

Hillary Pearlman illustrated the accompanying artwork for "Walking Awake". Pearlman also created [this work of art](#). Write your own story based purely off this illustration.



For visual artists

Recreate a scene from this story. Consider Sadie's dreams, the Masters' City, the laboratory, the transfer center, or the transfer process.

Photographers and photo editors, shoot or design an image that captures the transfer process or what a human host looks like after a Master has taken control of their body.

If you would like to share your writing samples, artwork, or thoughts about this story, please email: ssfyouth@plsinfo.org

MORE READS

NK JEMISIN AND OTHER AUTHORS

This list is intended for high school students.

Please read any content advisories.

Short Stories

"The Ones Who Stay and Fight"

by NK Jemisin

"Valedictorian" by NK Jemisin

Read aloud by Levar Burton

"The City Born Great"

by NK Jemisin

"Dune Song"

by Suyi Davies Okungbowa

"Growing Resistance"

by Juliet Kemp

"In the Land of the Spill"

by Aliette de Bodard

"Staying Behind"

by Ken Liu

Novels

Kindred

by Octavia Butler

Binti

by Nnedi Okorafor

Borne

by Jeff Vandermeer





**HAVE COMMENTS OR
WANT TO SUGGEST
A SHORT STORY?**

EMAIL US!

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