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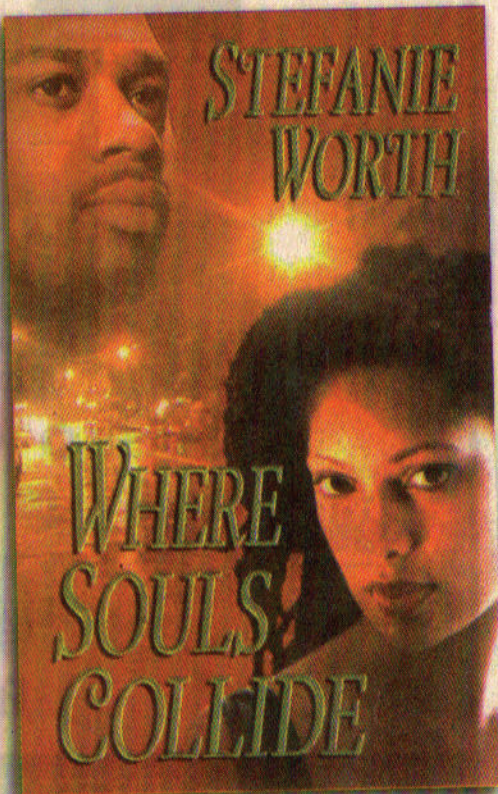
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Detroiter writes first novel



"I've always wanted to be a writer, which to me meant writing a book. If a poem comes to me, it's generally an emotional response to a recent experience. When I want to editorialize, I publish an essay on my blog. I satisfy my need to make a difference in the world through my day job as communications director at an area nonprofit. Fiction, for me, right now, is pure fantasy."

Stefanie Worth was making reference to her motivation for writing her just-published book, "Where Souls Collide" (A Leisure Book/Dorchester Publishing Co., Inc.), which is the story of a woman, a journalist, and her romantic relationships and professional aspirations.

"Pure fantasy" — so, if you know Worth, toss out of your head any thought that what goes on in the pages of this novel are extracted from her personal life. However, any journalist is aware of the fact that the most effective writing is based on what one knows.



Stefanie Worth

"For credibility, you should be able to ensure the accuracy of your subject matter, either through personal or close experience, or in-depth research," said Worth, a former Michigan Chronicle staff writer.

"Being a former journalist helped add to the realism of my heroine's profession. I placed her in the Black press because I tell people all the time that working at the Chronicle was my favorite job. I worked on some very special stories and learned a lot about Detroit, journalism and myself."

The story is set in Detroit.

The genesis of "Where Souls Collide" goes back to 1998 when Worth joined a critique group. However, circumstances were such that she didn't get moving on the project until 2004, after discovering that everyone in the critique group was now published.

It is no secret that bookstores such as Borders, Barnes & Noble and Waldenbooks, all of which carry "Where Souls Collide," are flooded, so to speak, with books by Black authors that are described in more than a few circles as "trashy."

Stefanie Worth is aware of that.

"Just as gangsta rap found its niche and adult contemporary R&B stations still abound, I think contemporary romance writers like

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Worth

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myself can share store space with those whose stories are hard-core or straight-up sex. In our marketing, my publisher and myself try to be straightforward about the type of book 'Where Souls Collide' is. I don't think people will be confused."

She knows, too, that romance novels are purchased almost exclusively by females. Not an issue.

When asked if her book was for entertainment purposes only as opposed to being "a book with a message," Worth

responded, "It's a contemporary romance in a supernatural setting meant for enjoyment, yes, but also written to make people think. Woven into the main psychic and relationship plot lines are sub-themes of personal and professional reinvention — second chances, really."

There are more books in the works for Stefanie Worth, and if one or more of them get made into a movie for the big screen or television, well, that would be okay, too. — Steve Holsey

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ENTERTAINMENT