

Contact: Octavia Reese  
Phone: (708) 503-9388  
Email: [octavia.reese@outlook.com](mailto:octavia.reese@outlook.com)  
Web: [www.octaviareese.com](http://www.octaviareese.com)

---



## **AUTHOR-CELLIST-MOM EMPOWERS GIRLS WITH BINGE-WORTHY SCI-FI SERIES**

*Independent author brings cello and children on the road, inspiring girls to study music and science, accompanying readings with book score performances*

**Chicago, December 11, 2017** – Local independent author, Octavia Reese, created a world where bold, brave, brilliant brown girls take the lead in a sci-fi epic adventure and fearlessly step into their own greatness. The teens, Taryn and Priya, are STEM fanatics and must use their math and science knowledge to solve clues as they embark on a life-or-death treasure hunt against the terrifying shape-shifting Hibouleans.

Octavia, also a musician, wrote The Hibouleans book score, too – the musical theme that accompanies her characters' adventures in the series. But that's not all, the author-musician-single-mom-of-three is making it a whole family adventure; Octavia is taking her books, along with her cello and children, on a musical-book-signing tour in 2018 to inspire adventurous young people everywhere, especially the ones that resemble her.

"I'm a big nerd," Octavia said. "I grew up admiring Stan Lee, Stephen King, Chris Van Allsburg, Tim Burton and Ed Gorey. But my favorite adventures always seemed to leave out characters that looked like me. I was tired of watching everyone else have all the fun. Taryn looks like me."

Octavia said she wrote the series for all the brown girls out there that love problem-solving, strength-building, lab experiments and dream of having super powers and being the hero in epic adventures.

"I wrote it for my inner child and to fill the color-gender void in my youth," Octavia said. "Now I want to share it with not only all the other little Octavias out there, but all people that crave epic adventures."

Octavia hopes The Hibouleans normalizes diverse character leads in magical, science-fiction and fantasy genres.

"I also wrote this for my own children. I want my boys to equate strength and bravery with boys *and* girls," Octavia said.

Octavia also admits to being intimidated by large books when she was growing up, so she made her series easy to digest. Each volume in The Hibouleans saga is about ten chapters and light enough to read in one day.

"I decided to release each volume as if it were one episode of a TV show," Octavia said. "Novels are more like one full season or a feature-length film, and I didn't want to publish a 90-thousand-word novel and scare away some kids, like I would have been 25 years ago."

Octavia hopes the smaller shorter novellas will be more intriguing and enticing, appealing to the binge-watchers of today's TV-streaming culture.

For more information, visit [www.octaviareese.com](http://www.octaviareese.com)

###

Contact: Octavia Reese  
Phone: (708) 503-9388  
Email: [octavia.reese@outlook.com](mailto:octavia.reese@outlook.com)  
Web: [www.octaviareese.com](http://www.octaviareese.com)

---

## **ABOUT THE SERIES**

*The Hibouleans, a novella series*

Fourteen-year-old Taryn doesn't have a social life to be slain in walled-off forgotten Detroit. Plagued with a strange rash and haunted by dreams of her late mother, Taryn avoids human contact as much as possible. But when her grandmother goes missing, Taryn finds herself in the middle of a cyclone of deception and she is suddenly racing against the clock to save the Hibouleans, terrifying shapeshifting relatives she never knew she had. Along with newfound purpose, confidence, her best friend and, awkwardly, her longtime crush, Taryn embarks on an adventure that transforms not only her inner narrative, but reshapes history for her people. Join Taryn as she learns to boldly embrace her purpose and fearlessly step into her own greatness.

## **ABOUT VOLUME I**

*Volume I: Bad Day*

All Hibouleans get Pellicularis, a hideous rash that would threaten to end any fourteen-year-old's social life. Luckily, Taryn's social status isn't at risk; it would have to exist first. Diagnosed with the rash, loneliness and a serious case of insecurity, Taryn is forced to dig deep and unearth not only ancient family secrets, but also her own courage, when she comes home from school and something is very wrong...

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

*Octavia Reese*

Author. Cellist. Artist. Linguist. Dancer. Educator. These are just a few of the words that summarize Octavia. After completing a bachelor's degree in French and Classics from Hope College and representing her home state of Michigan in the Miss America competition, Octavia became a mom. It was in the middle of her season as a full-time mom, specifically, in the middle of winter, and in the middle of nap time, that *The Hibouleans* were born. Octavia lives in Chicago with her three sons and an entire world full of imaginary friends.



Contact: Octavia Reese  
Phone: (708) 503-9388  
Email: [octavia.reese@outlook.com](mailto:octavia.reese@outlook.com)  
Web: [www.octaviareese.com](http://www.octaviareese.com)

---

## Sample Chapters from Volume I, *Bad Day*

### PROLOGUE

Taryn's lip trembled as she stared into Kale's eyes. Her chest swelled and recoiled with each deep breath. In. Out. The air entering and exiting her mouth were the only sounds in the otherwise silent cathedral. But in her ears, her heart became the execution drum, pounding a slow deadly rhythm.

Rage burned within her. She felt her eyes glowing in the shadows. But she hadn't lost control like she thought she would. Instead, she was poised. Beautifully strong. Steady. Her arm extended behind her, knuckles sore from her tight grasp, she was ready to spear Kale through the skull. She could smell his fear. And some part of her liked it.

Earlier that day, a passing squall had poured rain through the splintered roof. Plump droplets sizzled as they fell upon the stone floor, scorching after weeks baking under a relentless sun. And now, because of the night's coolness, the evaporating rain lingered in the humidity, creating a low fog that rolled over Kale's disfigured body and roiled in tandem with Taryn's breathing. As she watched, Kale seemed to shrink there on the floor. He was like a tiny child, swaddled in a churning mist.

"This is for your brother," she said, her words barely escaping her tear-packed throat. She imagined the sharp end of her metal rod entering Kale's head. She imagined throwing it with such force that it would pierce the marble beneath him, sticking into the stone with a dense clang.

But instead of launching, her arms withered to her sides; the foggy floor swallowing her spear with a muffled thud. Kale stared at the gray mist, where the weapon that could have taken his life fell, paralyzed with images of his almost-death. Taryn wanted to cry, but her tears lodged in her neck. She wanted to scream, but her voice was gone. A gentle hand on her back lanced her numbness.

"C'mon, Tare," Dayne said. "Let's go tell Parliament it's over." Taryn curled into Dayne's shoulder, finally crumbling into a sob. She cried for Ellen. She cried for Gram. She even cried for Kale.

Contact: Octavia Reese  
Phone: (708) 503-9388  
Email: [octavia.reese@outlook.com](mailto:octavia.reese@outlook.com)  
Web: [www.octaviareese.com](http://www.octaviareese.com)

---

## CHAPTER I

Taryn strolled through the park. Towering elms formed an arc over the graveled walkway and the noon sun trickled through the boughs. It looked like it was raining diamonds. Taryn took a deep breath of fresh air and smiled to herself. She loved this park, its symmetry. The elms were perfectly planted in rows along the path; a mirror image on the other side. Every four trees, there was a park bench, and every four park benches was a kind-faced fellow park-lover feeding the birds.

As Taryn meandered down the trail, a warm breeze blew across her face and she closed her eyes to meditate on every sensation. Suddenly, a familiar face made Taryn's heart stop. Her mother sat on one of the park benches, reading a book with an old thick cover and feeding the birds. She looked up at her daughter and smiled gently. Taryn exhaled. Her eyes welled with tears. Feeling faint, she repositioned her feet to stabilize herself.

"Ma?" She could barely speak.

"Mommy?"

"Hi, my love," her mother hummed. She leaned forward on her seat, which was no longer a metal park bench but a large curving sofa with plush velour dark purple cushions; its wooden frame, painted white and trimmed with gold, imitated the waves on the ocean. She tossed a handful of something from a bag to the odd-looking park birds, never looking away from Taryn's eyes. She gently put the book aside, still without breaking the locked gaze with her daughter. Taryn could hardly believe it. Her eyes and throat burned, and she couldn't keep a thought in her mind. She just wanted to absorb the image of her mother sitting in front of her. Alive. Talking. Smiling.

Taryn approached her, but stopped mid-stride, taken aback by the weird birds surrounding her mom. Fear flooded her body, erasing the warmth she previously felt. Some were walking with an eerie grace, and others just stood still, watching her.

They weren't robins or pigeons or sparrows, or any other bird typically found at a park. They were owls. Owls of all shapes, sizes and colors. A look of confusion swept over Taryn's face. Her mother, still staring at her, took another handful of the bird food and tossed it to the owls. Horrified, Taryn realized the feed was far from bird seed or bread crumbs; her mother was tossing handfuls of squirming insect-size mice, and the owls raced to pounce on their snacks.

"Don't worry dear, they like it," her mother said. Taryn began to think everything was an illusion and was about to run away as fast as she could from her imposter mother. But before she could escape, her mother stood up and smiled at Taryn once more. Taryn was frozen again. She didn't want to leave her mother. Even if it was a terrible nightmare, she didn't want it to end. Just one more moment. One more glimpse. One more smile.

Her mother lowered herself to her hands and knees and began to tug at the underside of the unique sofa.

"What are you doing?" Taryn pushed out, unable to hide the tears in her throat. She wasn't sure she wanted to hear the answer. Love, fear, sadness and confusion strangled her.

Contact: Octavia Reese  
Phone: (708) 503-9388  
Email: [octavia.reese@outlook.com](mailto:octavia.reese@outlook.com)  
Web: [www.octaviareese.com](http://www.octaviareese.com)

---

Her mother pulled her head from under the sofa and looked lovingly over her shoulder at her daughter.

“Helping you, of course. I love you so much.” She smiled at her daughter, and the scene froze like a photo in Taryn’s mind.

Taryn opened her eyes. She could almost see the chill in her room. She pulled a pen and journal out from under her pillow. In the dark, Taryn drew a hash mark next to the other twelve. This was the thirteenth time she had the same dream.

When Taryn rolled over, her heart stopped as her eyes landed on the glowing red numbers on her bedside clock. Also for the thirteenth time, it was 4:44am.

## CHAPTER II

Taryn swatted her alarm clock. It wouldn’t stop screeching. She picked it up and gave it a solid thud on the side. She groaned. The ancient piece of technology went silent. The old clock seemed so primitive, but she liked using things that had belonged to her mother. Taryn watched the red glowing numbers change from 7:05 to 7:06. Her eyes burned a little, hypersensitive to the sunlight spilling through her large bedroom windows. The inconvenient—and increasingly familiar—sensation was a symptom of Pellicularis. That’s what Gram said, anyway.

Taryn groggily made her way to the wide mirror that sat on an antique dresser. She surveyed her tawny arms, speckled with marks. Taryn sighed. The hideous rash broke out over her whole body a few weeks ago. Even her face and hands were affected. At first, she assumed it was another humiliating symptom of adolescence, but no acne treatment made any visible difference. That’s when Gram told her to stop trying.

“Pellicularis is when you develop your secondskin. You just have to wait it out, my owlet,” Gram had said one afternoon.

Taryn questioned the origins of that pet name “owlet” Gram always used. But odd as it was, Taryn grew to depend on it. It felt like home.

“You should be excited,” Gram had told her.

Excited was the last feeling on Taryn’s mind. Not only was this phase mottling her skin, but Gram also said Taryn would start to notice a change in her vision and hearing as well. Gram couldn’t predict how long it would last, and she didn’t offer any remedies.

Taryn’s eyes followed her blemished limbs up to her face and her heart skipped a beat as her eyes met their reflection.

Blinking several times, she leaned in closer to the mirror. For a moment, she thought her eyes had looked entirely black—as if her dilated pupils had taken over her entire eyeball. She shivered. The Pellicularis bumps prickled. She pulled down her lower lids and rolled her eyes around, revealing normal hazel Taryn eyes.

Contact: Octavia Reese  
Phone: (708) 503-9388  
Email: [octavia.reese@outlook.com](mailto:octavia.reese@outlook.com)  
Web: [www.octaviareese.com](http://www.octaviareese.com)

---

"I must be tired," she said to herself, blaming her nightmare-interrupted sleep pattern for her imagination overpowering her vision.

There was nothing in Taryn's reflection that soothed the discomfort of Pellicularis. Her wild brown curls were suspended around her head as if she were conducting an electric current. She sighed again. She didn't know which obstacle to tackle first. Perplexed by her own image, she tugged on the brass owl pendant around her neck. Another memento of her mother, Taryn never took it off.

"Good morning, my little owlet."

Gram's wispy graying strands of hair danced like feathers as she poked her sweetly smiling head into Taryn's room. Taryn relaxed for a minute and smiled. Gram's balmy voice was warm like a thick comforter on a cool autumn night. Taryn always found it musical, too—somewhere between the goosiness of a clarinet and the sparrowness of a flute. It was her piercing eyes that most people noticed first; intense but not convicting, and they always twinkled when she smiled.

"Morning, Gram."

Gram made a sympathetic pout, seeing Taryn standing hopelessly in front of the mirror. She came in and gave Taryn a tight squeeze.

"We're Hibouleans—no one like us in the world," Gram said. "And you, my owlet, are beautiful. I know it doesn't seem like it now, but this will pass, I promise. Pellicularis is temporary."

Taryn offered a weak smile. She didn't know any words that fit. Gram did enough talking for both of them, anyway. It was entertaining.

"Think of it as a rope. All those tiny threads woven together are impossible to break in one swipe. But with the right tool, you can cut through each strand, one at a time. So don't look at your woes all at once. Just deal with one at a time." Gram swiped an endearing finger across the tip of Taryn's nose.

Taryn nodded.

"Guard your heart," Gram said twirling out of the room and leaving Taryn to her own devices. "You can't trust everyone," Gram sang from the hall. "And sometimes, not even family. Breakfast's on the table."

Taryn thought that last part was strange, considering Gram was the only family Taryn had since her parents were killed. She knew she could trust Gram; she was an eccentric old lady and usually spoke in strange cadences—sometimes Taryn didn't know what she was really talking about. When she was younger, she used to ask for clarification, but Gram's explanations carried on for so long, Taryn eventually stopped asking. For the sake of her attention span, she learned to just smile and nod. Perhaps it was Gram's old age. Taryn smiled listening to Gram hum her way down the stairs and into the kitchen.

Taryn turned to the clothes she laid on a chair the night before. It was already scorching hot for mid-September and she would have to survive the day in a long-sleeved top and denim pants. Anything to protect herself from her classmates' judgmental eyes.

###