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## FORMER MISS MICHIGAN RETURNS TO DETROIT TO INSPIRE GIRLS WITH BINGE-WORTHY SCI-FI SERIES AT DETROIT BOOK FEST

*Independent author and former pageant queen aims to redefine how young women of color set expectations for themselves*

**Detroit, July 10, 2018** – Detroit-raised author, Octavia Reese, created a world where bold, brave, brilliant brown girls fearlessly step into their own greatness as stars in the sci-fi epic adventure series, *The Hibouleans*. The leading 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 terrifying shape-shifting Hibouleans.

Octavia, who represented the state of Michigan in the 2006 Miss America pageant is also a cellist and composer, and wrote *The Hibouleans* book score, too – the musical theme that accompanies her characters’ adventures in the series. As Octavia travels, reading excerpts from her series and performing on her cello, she hopes to send one major message: it’s time for the world to envision women of color in more leading roles, especially in science fiction.

“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. My main character, 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 I saw in my youth,” Octavia said. “Now I want to share it with all people that crave epic adventures – representation not only changes our narrative but changes how others view us as well.” 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 three sons to equate strength and bravery with boys *and* girls,” Octavia said.

In June 2018, the Miss America Scholarship Organization officially announced the elimination of the historic swimsuit competition from the annual pageant, sending shockwaves across the country. Octavia supports the decision and says it aligns with her own vision of *The Hibouleans*.

“It’s time for women of all shapes, sizes and colors to take back our own narratives and tell the world how we want to be received. While the Miss America competition has evolved into being so much more than the swimsuit portion, that’s still the only thing most viewers remember. Now they’ll start to see us for who we really are – gifted and educated forces of change.”

Find Octavia, her cello and *The Hibouleans* this **Sunday, July 15 at Detroit Book Fest**. For more information, visit [www.octaviareese.com](http://www.octaviareese.com)

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