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Native Virgin Islander Wins Award From Leading Book Recommendation Site For Children's Book 'James and the Fireburn'

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Angela Golden Bryan By. ANGELA GOLDEN BRYAN

Angela Golden Bryan, a Caribbean-American author, actress and speaker from St. Croix, has received yet another book award, this time for her new children's book titled "James and the Fireburn." [BookAuthority](#) — the world's leading site for book recommendations, which also collects and ranks the world's best books — has named Ms. Bryan's ebook the "Top 7 New Caribbean History Book" to read in 2020.

Ms. Bryan told the Consortium that her love for cultural preservation, writing, and acting prompted her to write her first book "Fireburn the Screenplay." The screenplay tells the reader

about the Labor Revolt of 1878 known as the Fireburn, which took place in the post-Emancipation Danish West Indies now known as the U.S Virgin Islands. "Fireburn the Screenplay" was well received and hit the #1 spot as an Amazon Bestseller in July of 2019.

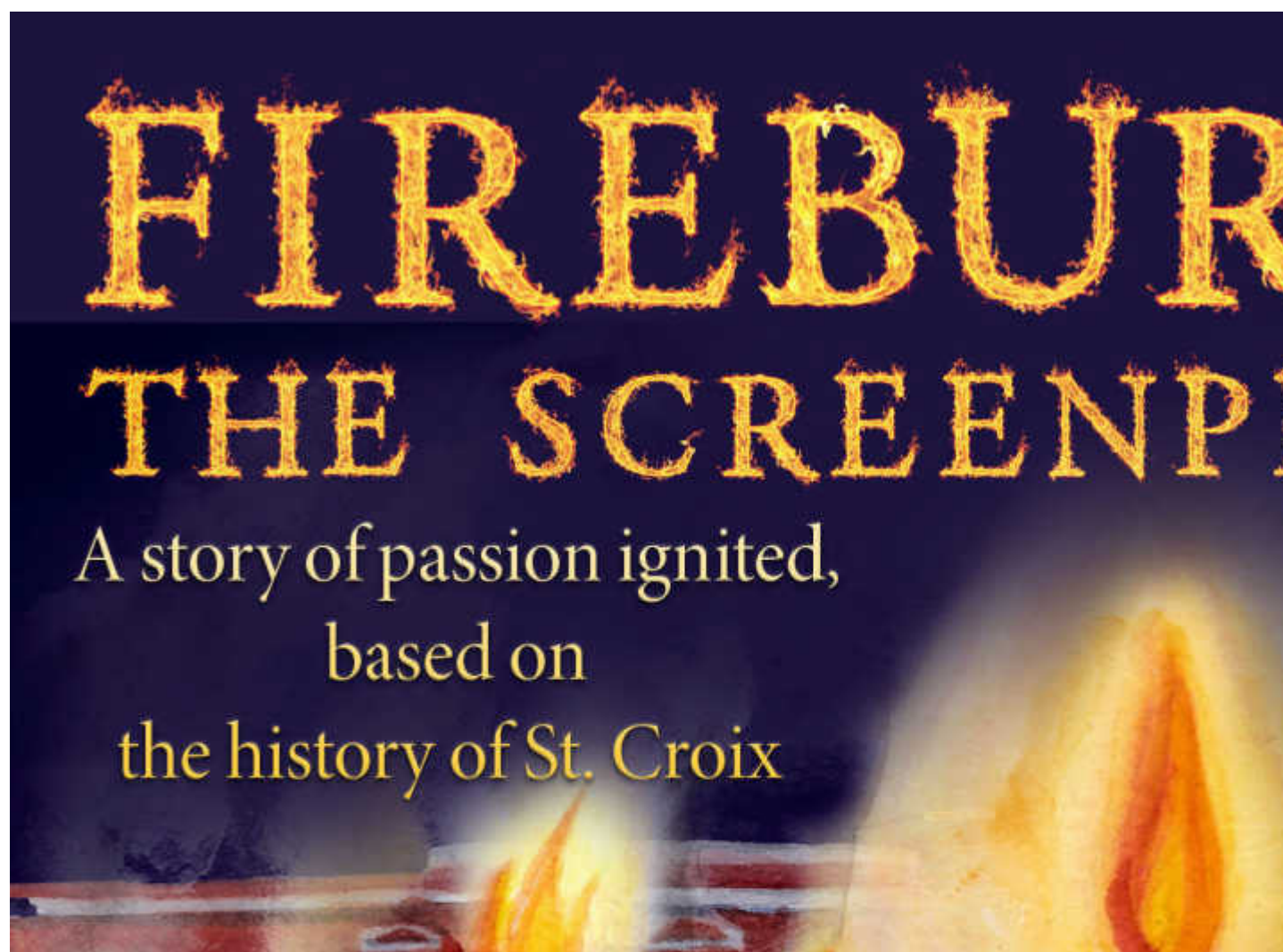
Soon after publishing "Fireburn the Screenplay," Ms. Bryan embarked on writing "James and the Fireburn."

"James and the Fireburn was inspired by my son being bullied and how horrific that was for our entire family," she revealed. The book tells the story of a young boy with Asperger's Syndrome named James, who learns about the 1878 Fireburn rebellion on St. Croix in his history class. The book presents a strong anti-bullying message in an age-appropriate manner and explores what happens when silence prevails.

It also takes a challenging topic like bullying and simplifies it into a fun rhyme that encourages children to stand up for what is right. And it makes it easier for young readers to comprehend the story and remember the lessons.

Valrica Bryson, former director of Cultural Education at the Department of Education, commented on the book's review section on Amazon.com. "Bryan's book is a fun-to-read rhyming verse and an age-appropriate introduction to this pivotal event in history," she said. "The story encourages young readers to have cultural pride, as well as to make wise choices. I highly recommend every adult share this book with young ones ..."

When Ms. Bryan was questioned on how she came up with "James" as the name of the main character in the book, she said she initially wanted to use an Afro-Centric name, but she decided to use a popular, generic name so that the book would resonate with more people. "I wanted the book to go beyond our territory, so I thought about how I could embrace other people," said Ms. Bryan.



Ms. Bryan said she didn't want readers to think the book was just for people in the islands. "I wanted this book to be inclusive because the issue of bullying is not just about one group of people being bullied."

Though it was not a difficult undertaking to write the book, Ms. Bryan said she at times would doubt her ability to pull it off. "I was always told that I was a great writer, but I never embraced the title of an author or writer. I kept telling myself I don't know what I'm doing, and I don't know how to write. For me, it was a stumbling block I created in my mind," she said.

"I'm also a person that likes to do a lot of stuff; I would constantly find in my home things to distract me. It's difficult to get quality work done with continual interruptions. Therefore, the mental component of feeling like I didn't know how to write, and being focused on it was the most challenging thing for me," Ms. Bryan admitted.

Asked how she felt about receiving the ebook award from Book Authority, Ms. Bryan stated that the award was validation that she was not wasting her time, which she has come to value more as she ages.

"When you didn't apply or ask for an award, and someone who doesn't know you gives their unbiased opinion and say they love your work — so much that it's worthy of an award — that is such a confirmation that what I did was important, significant, and it helped someone," said Ms. Bryan. "It is a blessing for me to have my book be an award-winning book... I love it."

Ms. Bryan said that on October 1st, Contract Day in the USVI — which is the celebration of the Fireburn — "James and the Fireburn" will be available for free as a download.

To get in on the deal, visit her website [here](#), click on the products tab, scroll down until you see the book and click purchase. After clicking purchase, you will be taken to Amazon.com. Once there, click on the ebook option and the book will be offered for free. Ms. Bryan said, "I say the book is free, but I'm asking for one favor: after readers have read the book, I ask that they please leave a five-star review."

Along with all of the fantastic accomplishments Ms. Bryan has seen thus far, she is also the executive producer of "Fireburn the Documentary", which explores the inhumane conditions that led to the revolt and takes a look at the women who were called "Queens" due to their leadership in the event.

The documentary features many local historians, artists, and cultural ambassadors, who share their knowledge of the bloody labor revolt.