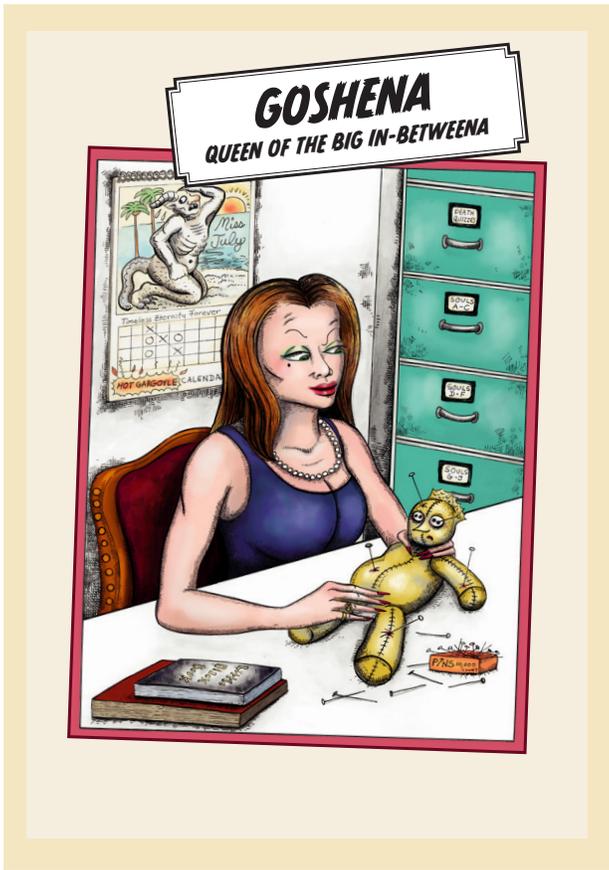


DR. CHUCKY PUBLICATIONS



GOSHENA

QUEEN OF THE BIG IN-BETWEENA

A GRAPHIC NOVEL BY CHUCK BRIGHT

ART BY MAUREEN BURDOCK

Goshena: Queen of the Big In-Betweena addresses questions of death and the afterlife with jest and satire, proposing alternative views on a subject that is often taboo. This surrealistic story features Goshena, hired to greet the newly deceased. Volatile and unpredictable, she has no qualms about throwing dissident arrivals to Jingles, her giant soul-eating frog.

Goshena's most recent assignment is to welcome Soul #24 (the number inscribed on his morgue drawer), a recalcitrant soul who refuses to accept that he has died and has reasons to return to the Living. But can he or must he go home with Goshena and Jingles? Or ... will he pass his death quiz and move toward the Light?

ISBN: 978-0-9907398-0-7

Price: \$19.00, 154 pages

Large-format quality paperback with French flaps

Dr. Chucky Publications

Fiction, Graphic Novel, Humor, Afterlife

Publication: September 2015

www.goshena.com

THIS IS THE BIG IN-BETWEENA, THE TURBULENT,
FOG-ENSHROUDED SPACE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH.



CHUCK BRIGHT MAY BE CONTACTED THROUGH EMAIL AT INFO@GOSHENA.COM

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chuck Bright, who holds a PhD in social work and has taught graduate courses in social work as well as undergraduate psychology courses, lives in a south suburb of Chicago with his husband, Andre Latia.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Maureen Burdock, an award-winning transnational feminist artist and graphic novelist is the author of the F Word Project: Feminist Fables for the Twenty-first Century (McFarland, 2015).

“An unforgettable character and a world that you’ll be sad to leave when you reach the last page.”

JENNIE WOOD, AUTHOR, FLUTTER AND A BOY LIKE ME

“If you end up loving Goshena, which you will, make sure you don’t bring her home to mother.”

TAREK SHAHIN, AUTHOR, RISE AND THE AL KHAN SERIES

“A vivid foray into the brash, vibrant world of a life-after-death self-appointed Queen Solomon of souls written with a singular voice and a thoroughly engaging point of view.”

DIANA OSSANA, SCREENWRITER/PRODUCER, BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN



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Graphic Novel Receives Coveted Gold Medal

The 2016 Independent Publisher (IPPY) Book Awards Gold Medal goes to *Goshena: Queen of the Big In-Betweena* for its fresh, original, and entertaining approach to death and the afterlife

GOSHENA Queen of the Big In-Betweena

Author
Chuck Bright
Illustrator
Maureen Burdock

Death and...humor?

They may not go together as readily as love and marriage, but author Chuck Bright’s irreverent take on the afterlife in *Goshena: Queen of the Big In-Betweena* has garnered him one of independent publishing’s most coveted prizes – the 2016 IPPY Gold Medal from the Independent Publisher Book Awards, now in its twentieth year of highlighting the best books published by independent authors and publishers around the world.

Illustrated by well-known transnational feminist artist Maureen Burdock, this award-winning graphic novel is humorous, satirical, sarcastic, and even campy at times, but Bright notes that it’s neither preachy nor teachy, nor does it contain zombies, vampires, werewolves and the like.

Dr. Chucky Publications

Category
Fiction
Graphic Novel
Humor/Afterlife

Soft Cover
978-0990739807
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Amazon.com
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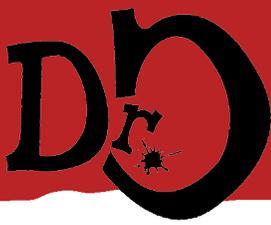
Instead, this debut book in Bright’s new series chronicles the experiences of the newly deceased in the Big In-Betweena, a vast, turbulent, yet finite space between life and death where the dearly departed go. There, the impatient Goshena, the self-proclaimed boss of the Big In-Betweena, administers the notorious death quiz everyone takes in hopes of moving on towards the Light.

This first book in the Goshena series also received the 2016 Great Midwest Book Contest Honorable Mention in the category of Graphic Novel.

Bright comments, “Though I’ve had a significant number of paranormal experiences, I wrote this series primarily to entertain, not to provide some deep understanding of the afterlife. I feel like Death herself tapped me on the shoulder and asked me to tell her story, but with humor.”

“Goshena: Queen of the Big In-Betweena is graphic novelist Chuck Bright’s vivid foray into the brash, vibrant world of Goshena New Paris, a life-after-death self-appointed Queen Solomon of souls. With a singular voice and a thoroughly engaging point of view, Chuck has created a surreal universe where heaven, hell, and purgatory collide.” **Diana Ossana, Screenwriter/Producer, *Brokeback Mountain***

AUTHOR: Chuck Bright, who holds a Ph.D. in social work, is a retired clinical social worker. He has taught graduate courses in social work at the University of Illinois, Jane Addams College of Social Work in Chicago, and Indiana University – Northwest in Gary, Indiana. He has also taught undergraduate psychology courses at Calumet College of St. Joseph’s in Whiting, Indiana. He lives and works in Flossmoor, Illinois, a south suburb of Chicago, with his husband, Andre Latia. *Goshena* is his first work of fiction.



ENDORSEMENTS

“Goshena: Queen of the Big In-Between is graphic novelist Chuck Bright’s vivid foray into the brash, vibrant world of Goshena New Paris, a life-after-death self-appointed Queen Solomon of souls. With a singular voice and a thoroughly engaging point of view, Chuck has created a surreal universe where heaven, hell, and purgatory collide.”

DIANA OSSANA, SCREENWRITER/PRODUCER, BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN

“Chuck Bright gives new meaning to deadpan humor in this most surreal of not-so-life journeys. If you end up loving Goshena, which you will, make sure you don’t bring her home to mother.”

TAREK SHAHIN, AUTHOR, RISE AND THE AL KHAN SERIES

“Goshena hooked me from the very first page. This woman has attitude, and you’ll absolutely love her. Highly recommended.”

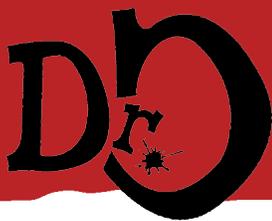
ALAN A. LARSON, AUTHOR, THE LAST GYPSY PRINCESS

“I’m very impressed by the style and quality of the graphics.”

SHERI DAVENPORT, SCREENWRITER OF LUCKY CHRISTMAS AND COAUTHOR OF ON THE WAY TO WOODSTOCK

“Author Chuck Bright gives us an unforgettable character in Goshena, whom you will be thinking about and giggling over long after you’re done reading. Maureen Burdock’s illustrations perfectly capture the world Bright has created, a world that, like the book’s protagonist, you’ll be sad to leave when you reach the last page.”

JENNIE WOOD, AUTHOR, FLUTTER AND A BOY LIKE ME



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ANNOUNCING THE RELEASE OF GOSHENA: QUEEN OF THE BIG IN-BETWEENNA

PREMIER GRAPHIC NOVEL BY CHUCK BRIGHT, ILLUSTRATIONS BY MAUREEN BURDOCK

Chicago, Illinois (September 2015). The anniversary of the first published color cartoon back in 1895 is celebrated in early May of each year. Today, cartoons are more than just comic relief. Comics and Graphic Novels are an independent arm of publishing and have a huge impact on culture. Author Chuck Bright recognized their importance when developing *Goshena: Queen of the Big In-Betweenna*, his first graphic novel. Bright understood that the sassy protagonist Goshena, newly deceased Soul #24, and the other colorful characters inhabiting this space between life and death required this format of sequential art to fully tell their story—and just in the nick of time to celebrate the ghoulish underpinnings of Halloween.

Soul #24—aptly named after the number on his morgue drawer—is not entirely convinced he’s dead, and he keeps getting “advice” on how to “move on” from questionable sources. Some encourage #24 to go toward the Light, while one in particular keeps pushing him toward the dark. That’s Goshena, processor of souls and companion to Jingles, a soul-eating frog. Goshena secretly plots to keep #24 too confused to move toward the Light, hoping he will instead become a delicious soul to someday serve to Jingles.

Goshena's primary directive in the Big In-Betweena is to lure as many newly deceased souls toward the Dark as possible. She tries to get to them early on, before they have a chance to be guided toward the Light. Accepting death can free them from her grip, but moving toward the Light requires something more—the ability to pass a death quiz designed to test their honesty, integrity, and knowledge of their previous life.

As much a story of #24's struggle to find understanding and meaning after death, *Goshena: Queen of the Big In-Betweena* is also the story of his impact on the volatile and unpredictable ruler of this fog-filled terrain, who is rapidly losing interest in her job. Bright does not claim to be an authority on death and the afterlife; he merely wishes to offer, through jest and satire, an allegory capable of inspiring reflection on these verboten subjects.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chuck Bright holds a PhD in social work from the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois, Chicago. He resides in Flossmoor, Illinois, with his husband, Andre Latia.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Maureen Burdock is an award-winning transnational feminist artist, graphic novelist, and scholar. She is the author of *The F Word Project: Feminist Fables for the Twenty-first Century*, a series of comic books that address forms of gender-based violence in various cultures.

Title: Goshena: Queen of the Big In-Betweena

Publisher: Dr. Chucky Publications

Category: Fiction, Graphic Novel, Humor, Afterlife

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EXTENDED BIO: CHUCK BRIGHT

Social work professional Chuck Bright hadn't planned on a writing career centered on death and the afterlife, but death turned out to be his wake-up call. Following the loss of several family members, friends, and coworkers, as well as two client suicides, between 2000 and 2001, Bright's social work career suddenly seemed meaningless. His greatest desire was to write.

He therefore pursued his doctoral studies in social work with a plan in mind: if he had not written anything substantial by the time he received his PhD, he would return to social work full-time. But the cosmos had other plans in mind. Two and a half years into his doctoral studies, with not a word set to paper, Bright sat down one evening at the lake house he shared with his husband Andre, and, quite unexpectedly, words began to flow. An angry, impatient character named Goshena presented herself to him as ruler of a vast, turbulent space where life ends and death begins. By the time he finished his doctoral studies in 2007, Bright had completed not only his doctoral dissertation but nine of the books he would write in the twelve-

volume Goshena series. He subsequently converted book 1, *Goshena: Queen of the Big In-Betweena*, into a graphic novel and adapted it into a three-act play.

By the start of 2015, Bright had created a second series, called Dr. Chucky, an irreverent jab at psychotherapy in which a social worker named Dr. Chucky provides counseling to the dead. A book called *Little Dorcas: The Executioner's Son*, also adapted into a three-act play, soon followed. Bright has also written two additional plays: *It's My Party and I'll Fly If I Want to* and *Trill-O-Gee!*

Chuck Bright holds a BA in sociology from Purdue University; an MSW from Loyola University, Chicago's School of Social Work; and a PhD in social work from the Jane Addams College of Social Work at the University of Illinois, Chicago. He has also taught courses in social work and psychology at various universities. Bright currently resides in Flossmoor, Illinois, a suburb of south Chicago, with his husband, Andre Latia. *Goshena: Queen of the Big In-Betweena* is his first work of fiction.



Q&A: CHUCK BRIGHT

PREMIER GRAPHIC NOVEL BY CHUCK BRIGHT, **ILLUSTRATIONS** BY MAUREEN BURDOCK

1. How did you begin your career as a writer? Was it something you did alongside your other work?

I wrote my first story when I was ten years old and never stopped writing after that. I never thought of making a career out of writing. It's just something I always did, even during my years as a social worker.

2. Do you feel that your experiences as a social worker impacted your writing?

My work in mental health in general lasted over twenty years. I've never used clients or coworkers as characters since that would be unethical. However, everyone has certain unusual, fun, interesting, even aggravating nuances to their personalities, so I may have borrowed a few of these along the way. In addition, social work gave me a keen ability to look deeply into human motivation, behavior, thought processes, and relationships. It really helps with character creation and development.

3. You've said that a series of deaths in your life is what got you writing. Can you elaborate?

My first experience with death came at age three, when my grandmother—a medium—died. Decades later, the years 2000 and 2001 were laden with death; during that time eight people very close to me died. Also, I'd also always had an interest in writing and a curiosity about what happens after we die. I never consciously thought I would write about death; it's more like death found me and melded with my writing.

4. The Goshena series conveys an irreverent view of death. Readers will find themselves laughing over a subject that is usually serious or even frightening. What was your intention in writing about death in this way?

There are many dark, serious, even violent books about death and the afterlife. We all take ourselves very seriously, and I am among the guiltiest of them. I wanted to present death in a way that says, “I don’t think it’s anything we have to worry about.” Yes, death is an extremely painful loss to those left behind. I’ve felt that. But I don’t want it to rule my life.

Since we must go on after our losses, why can’t we laugh? One of my all-time favorite authors, the late Erma Bombeck, once commented: “When humor goes, there goes civilization.” I write from that perspective. I live from that perspective. These are horribly troubled times, and I wanted to give people a break from all that. Goshena is pure escape so readers can have fun.

5. How do your characters come to you? Are they based on people you know, experiences you’ve had? Are any of them based on you, or parts of you?

My characters show up at all times of the day and night; even while I’m sleeping they wake me up and say, “Hey! Time to write the next scene!” I usually hear their voice first, then I feel their emotions, then I get an image of what they look like, and last of all I get to choose their names, which I do by searching road atlases. Flannery O’Connor said it best: “Our characters tell us where we need to go.” None of my characters is based on anyone I know—they’d see right through that—although some of my characters certainly have me in them.

6. What has your experience with Goshena been like while writing the entire series? Is it different now from when you began?

I’ve rewritten the first six books three times each and am presently rewriting Book 7 for the third time. Chopin rewrote everything he composed at least five times, while Mendelsohn was so compulsive he never finished some of his work because he kept rewriting it. Tennessee Williams was rewriting his plays even after they had become smash hits on Broadway and turned into Academy Award-winning films. I think it’s the nature of the beast. Writers are never satisfied with their work, so it always changes.

7. Goshena is a fairly complex person who is limited in her ability to trust and love, and hangs out between life and death. What do you feel she symbolizes for each of us?

First, I really like to let the readers themselves interpret my characters' behaviors and respond spontaneously. But if I had to pin down Goshena's situation, I would say that trust and love are difficult areas for her, as they are for most people. We don't always know what love is—and even when we think we do, others tell us we're wrong because it's different from what they think it should be—should being the operative word here. Trust is just plain difficult for everyone.

As for Goshena, she's stuck in a place that forbids love and trust. Imagine a world where love and trust are forbidden; now think about how you would feel under those circumstances. Goshena is the ultimate oppressor, bound to the circumstances, choices, and beliefs of her own oppressors. She is not allowed to challenge the authorities who lord over her, so she rules the In-Betweena with an iron fist. Anyone who disagrees with Goshena is in for big trouble, with a capital G!

8. Soul #24 also is a complex character, not playing by the rules or even accepting death. How do you envision his role in this story?

If Goshena represents the ultimate oppressor, #24 is her opposite. He has the freedom to choose and to love and think about, if not obsess and ruminate over his circumstances. Goshena is only allowed negative options: hate, violence, oppression, coercion, power and control. She appears to be very powerful, but she's constrained in many ways. #24 represents everything Goshena is not allowed to be. He challenges her, sometimes naively, sometimes knowingly, ultimately wisely, yet he remains true to himself throughout. The question arises: Who is playing with whom—is Goshena toying with #24 or is he toying with her? Or are they in a love-hate relationship with each other?

9. What inspired you to turn the story into a graphic novel? And what has it been like visually defining your characters after writing about them?

It never occurred to me to write a graphic novel until I was finished with Book 9. I'd had many people read what I had written, and because I write lots of dialogue, I was asked: "Is this really a play?" "Is this a film script?" "It doesn't really seem like a book." Aware that it did not really seem like a book, I wanted at one point to call it a "povel," an invented fusion of a play and a novel. But then I enrolled in Diana Ossana's

screenwriting class at the University of Iowa's wonderful Summer Writing Festival in Iowa City, and she knew immediately what to do with me, saying, "Chuck, I think you've written a graphic novel and you don't even know it." I'd always loved graphic novels but never connected the genre with my own work because I can't draw. Diana advised, "Then you'll need to hire someone who can." So I did, and seeing my characters visually was like having my imagination walk right out of my head, sit down in front of me, and say hello.

10. Can you say something about the collaborative nature of working with award-winning illustrator Maureen Burdock?

I'd like to be Maureen's biographer. Since I write mostly dialogue, I would just record what she and I talk about, and that would be the book. Maureen is a gem. We hit it off within five minutes of meeting. We met in Santa Fe to look over each other's work—my writing, her art. She looked at me and said, after reading page 1: "I have to draw this." And I loved her artwork. Maureen is a free spirit, and although I am much less of one I try to let myself go free now and then. I think what worked so well is that when engaged in a creative process you can't set boundaries or constraints on your collaborator or yourself. You can't micro-edit. My only instructions to Maureen were: "I'm not going to say anything about how I want this to be drawn. Just let it flow 100 percent," which she did and nailed it within the first three pages she sent me. Maureen also has a crazy sense of humor like I do, so getting silly was part of the process.

11. What will your readers gain from reading Goshena?

I want my readers first and foremost to laugh. If I make readers laugh, I've done my job. The social worker in me needs to say that laughter is extremely healthy. I'm not trying for deep, significant meaning, though I really do believe we continue on after we die. Death isn't the end, and there is no living human being who can really know what it is. Since Goshena is a work of fiction, if anyone is offended by that idea they are offended by make-believe.

12. Is there any advice you would like to share with aspiring graphic novelists who, like yourself, don't draw?

There are purists out there who are offended by the fact that I call myself a graphic novelist but don't do my own artwork. I say that's nonsense. A good collaboration with a brilliant artist can result in the creation of beautiful books. So my advice would be: if you're artistically challenged like me, don't let that hold you back. You're still an artist through your words. And words are as powerful as pictures.



WHY I WROTE THE GOSHENA SERIES

I never set out to be a flawless literary beauty. I wrote the Goshena series primarily to entertain. I write what I hear and see, meaning I listen to and observe my characters as they speak, think, act, behave, misbehave, interact with each other, and direct and criticize me. I diligently record their actions as they occur, which explains why the stories are written in the present tense.

I didn't write the Goshena series because I am deeply committed to providing readers with an understanding of death and an afterlife, because I do not claim to be an authority on death and an afterlife. But I am committed to challenging a reader's thinking so that while being entertained they are also being coaxed to think independently. I am convinced that a lack of independent thought can be a form of death.

My interest in writing about death and an afterlife was strongly influenced by some unexpected experiences with the dead. I've seen objects float through

the air. I was visited three times by the spirit of the man who built the house my husband and I once owned. And I nearly collided with the glowing spirit of my deceased mother standing in the hallway of our home just hours before her funeral. She dropped by to give me a message designed to help me cope with her death, and being her inimitable self she showed up at the exact time of my birth. Who but a recently departed mother would do that?

Having one grandmother who was a medium and another who was part Native American greatly shapes my understanding of spirit guides. I believe we each receive at least one spirit guide at birth and that these guides are with us until we die. I also believe our guides are assigned to us for specific reasons. Mine, for example, guide me to write and participated in the creation of the Goshena series, which could not have sprung on its own out of one writer's imagination, no matter how vivid and relentless that imagination may be.

Although I could have ignored the strong, intuitive thoughts and feelings I was experiencing, I chose to follow them. My overwhelming awareness of their presence, coupled with an equally strong belief that we continue on after we die, made it seem as if Death herself had tapped me on the shoulder and offered me Goshena. Receptivity to my spirit guides may also explain why cemeteries are among my favorite

hangouts. I have received some of my best writing assistance in cemeteries.

The entire Goshena series was, in essence, an assignment. I knew I wanted to write, but I didn't know what I wanted to write. So when Death dropped by and offered me Goshena, what could I say? I knew I'd meet her again one day, and I wanted to stay on good terms.