



These Broken Roads

Scammed and Vindicated: One Woman's Story

In this gripping and honest memoir, Jamaican immigrant Donna Marie Hayes recounts how at the peak of her American success in New York City, she is scammed and robbed of her life's savings by the "love of her life" met on an online dating site and how she vindicates herself to overcome a lifetime of bad choices.

Donna Hayes had fortitude and smarts. She'd already survived so much. At the top of her game, thriving in New York City no less, her career was soaring on Wall Street and she was starring in her own one woman show off Broadway. To be scammed by a man she had met on a dating app, someone she thought she would marry, shocked and shamed her. This wasn't the way it was supposed to be.

In Jamaica as a child, death had come for Hayes three times. Each time she survived it and her beloved grandma reminded her that God had her back, that she was destined for greatness. Yet, in the poverty and loneliness of her childhood, it was hard to believe. Every day she dreamed of going to America and joining her birth family, never understanding why she had been left behind. When she was 14, her mother finally sent for her. Donna's elation was soon offset by the challenges of her new life. From her mother's strict church to an early marriage, single motherhood, and a second disastrous and abusive marriage, when Donna finally escaped, she vowed to never again subject herself to relationships and people who harmed her. And for the next eight years, she kept that vow.

Then Hayes met the man of her dreams, Javier De Leon, on a dating website and they became inseparable. Before long, their love undeniable, he proposed and tattooed her initials in large bold letters across his chest. But 18 months and \$177,000 later, it all fell apart. Hayes learned that she had been a target from the beginning, the victim of a romance/real estate scam perpetrated by a career criminal and ex-con from The Bronx. Suddenly, her financial independence was at risk and so was her ability to trust herself.

This is the story of how that woman rose yet again to find her power, making the scam and her choice of De Leon the last run along the broken roads of her past.

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BY DONNA MARIE HAYES

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ISBN: 978-1-7367954-4-6

Tradepaper, \$17.00

5½ x 8½, 200 pages

Pub Date: 10/03/2023

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

New York City resident and performer **Donna Marie Hayes** can be found on a stage or in front of a camera, and is an AG-AFTRA actress and cabaret singer. She has been featured on the Dr. Oz Show (Defy Your Age), Orange Is The New Black (Netflix), Black Girls Rock (BET), Celebrity Ghost Stories (Biography Channel) as well as in several other New York City Off-Broadway and TV productions. Most recently, she was cast in her first regular role in a TV series Miss Education which is expected to debut in 2023. Her corporate life includes serving as a senior human resources professional in the financial services industry. She is an ICF-certified coach and owner of a coaching practice company. Hayes immigrated to the United States from Jamaica at age 14.



"These Broken Roads is Hayes's Cinderella story beginning in the Jamaican countryside and ending in an Uptown Penthouse. It is a journey from betrayal to self-discovery. It is a coming of age that is at once human and hopeful. Hayes's life, though complicated by duplicity is consistently buoyed by a strength and competence that is in moments, breathtaking. Pick up this book. You will not be able to put it down."

—Joselin Linder, Author of *The Family Gene*



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AN IMPRINT OF ALL THINGS BOOK, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES | DISTRIBUTED TO THE TRADE BY PUBLISHERS GROUP WEST

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