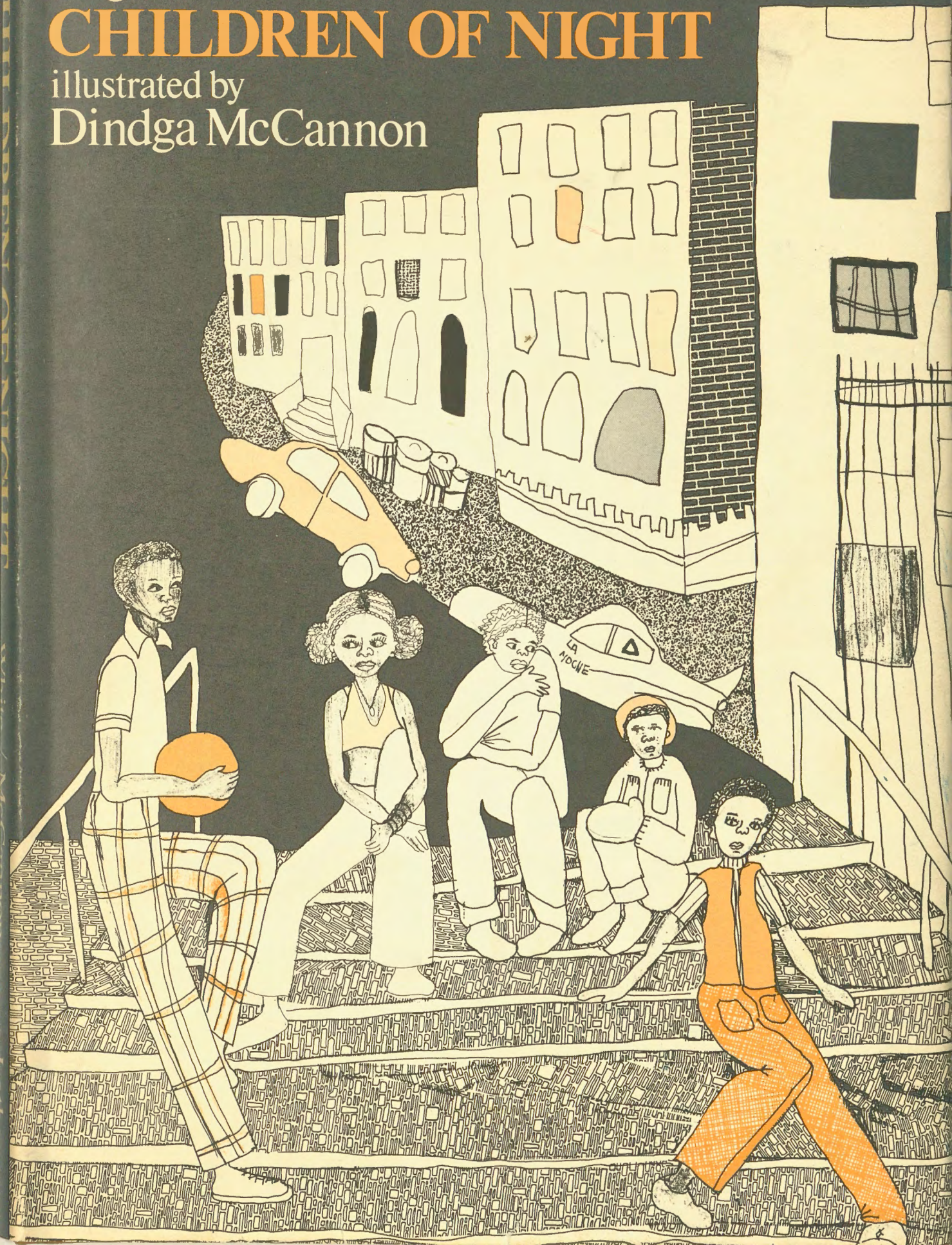


Edgar White

CHILDREN OF NIGHT

illustrated by

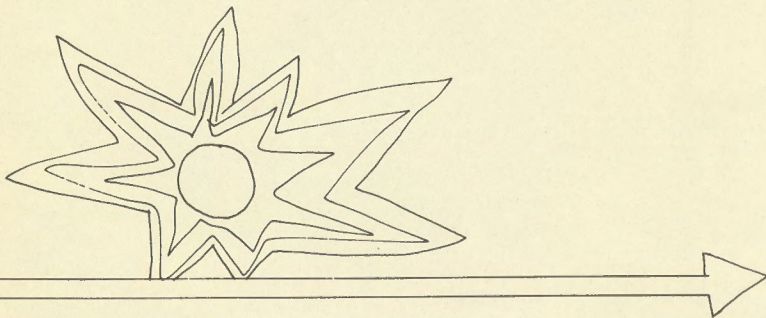
Dindga McCannon



Edgar White
**CHILDREN
OF
NIGHT**

illustrated by
Dindga McCannon

Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Co./ New York





Morning

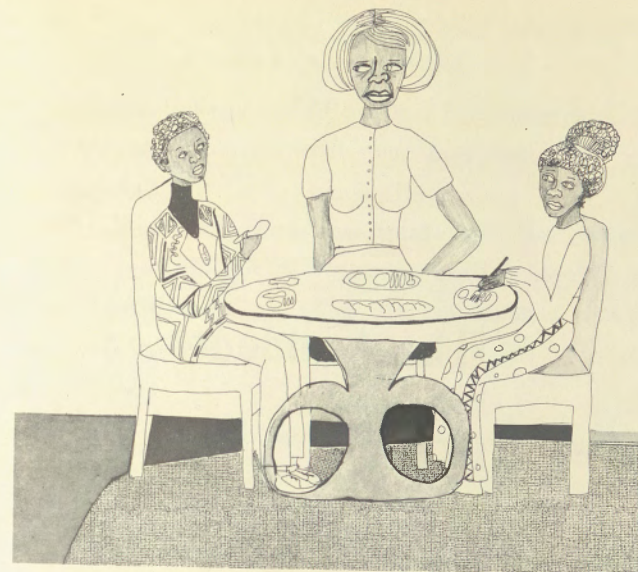
Sunlight made shadows so he awoke early. There were three beneath the covers. He was Chaka and twelve. Beside him was his brother Elijah who was nine and had big eyes. At their feet was Mark who always slept crossways to get more room. Together they made a pyramid. And this was the South Bronx of the dark city.

Morning had footsteps in it. Chaka and his brothers lived in the basement apartment. They always heard the workers grumbling through the streets following their shadows on the way to work.

Chaka came out of his dream, his favorite dream, someplace where there was always enough food. In last night's dream his mother stood before a banquet table. A table so long it stretched the length of the apartment. And in the center sat Mark laughing. Ribbons flowed everywhere. Candles dropped golden flames.

CHILDREN OF NIGHT

sometimes of the colors he'd seen in dreams. She didn't laugh at him. She had dreams too. Saw faces clearer than the walls before her. Saw Chaka run one day and said he was a prince. "I ain't no prince, girl.



You crazy," Chaka said. But it did no good to tell her, for every time Tina saw him she saw a prince.

Beneath her clothes Tina's body became twelve quietly and with no surprise. Up on the roof they would kiss and hold each other tight until the city went away.

When he went to Tina's house she always found him something to eat but he couldn't visit her that often. Tina's mother didn't like him. He was too thin and he never smiled. Only Tina could make Chaka smile. Tina and Indio.

"Who are you, Tina? And how come we live here and why do you smell like baby oil when I kiss you? And sometimes on my fingers I smell fish."

CHILDREN OF NIGHT

that too went away. And then the sound of shoes clacking. The click-clacking shoes of young girls coming home from a party. Girls thin and fine. Shoes silver from the light of streetlamps. And then the



The Rising Mount Zion
Baptist Church
Rev T.A. Jones, Pastor



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About the Author

Edgar White was born in the British West Indies and came to the United States when he was five. A playwright of considerable talent, he has had several of his plays published in two collections by William Morrow and Co., *Underground: Four Plays* and *Crucificado: Plays*. They have been performed at various theatres. Two of his other plays, *La Gente* and *Lament for Rastafari*, have been produced by the New York Shakespeare Festival Public Theatre. Another play, produced independently, is *Ode to Charlie Parker*. Mr. White is the author of two other Lothrop books, *Sati the Rastifarian* and *Omar at Christmas*.

About the Artist

Dindga McCannon was born in Harlem, New York, and studied at the Art Students' League and the City University of New York. She has exhibited in many galleries and shows, including the PAX Gallery, Genesis II, the Harlem Outdoor Show, and Black Expo 1972. She has had a one-woman show of her paintings and prints at Acts of Art, and two of her murals are on display in Harlem. A co-founder of a Black women's art collective known as Where We At, Ms. McCannon has been a jewelry and dress designer and has taught printmaking. She illustrated Edgar White's *Sati the Rastifarian* and *Omar at Christmas*.

