

As a young girl, Isis Asare never shied away from making reading recommendations to her younger sister or neighborhood friends through a self-started book club. Her passion for sharing literature continues today through [Sistah Scifi](#). The online bookstore is self-described as a “cauldron of all things afro-futurism casting spells to uplift literature written by Black women.”

Asare remembers stacks of books throughout her childhood home and trips to bookstores and festivals with book vendors. Reading was not just for entertainment or escape; it also raised cultural and political awareness. When Asare read her first sci-fi book as a young adult, Octavia Butler’s *Fledgling*, she fell in love with the genre.

“I think being Black, a woman, a child of immigrants, naturally very shy and introverted, it’s tough to navigate all those things,” Asare reflects. “Science fiction gives you the space to think you can be a superhero. You can save the universe. There are no limits in the genre, and that’s powerful when it’s so easy to feel overwhelmed and powerless in everyday life.”

Beginning of Sistah Scifi

After graduating high school, Asare earned a degree in psychology from Stanford University. She then lived in Ghana, where her parents are from, as part of the Peace Corps. Her subsequent life chapters were filled with graduate degrees from Columbia Business School and Harvard University, a career in tech at companies such as Microsoft, Shutterfly, and Brightroll, and starting a film entertainment site for queer women of color named Sistah Sinema. Yet, in the back of her mind, a deep desire existed to run a bookstore one day. Could she marry the dream and the work experience? A chance encounter on social media answered the question.

“I had just finished reading *Lilith’s Brood* (also by Octavia Butler), loved it, and asked on Facebook if anyone was interested in discussing it with me,” Asare remembers. “A good friend agreed to talk about it, and then we started talking about other authors in afro-futurism. Authors I’d never heard of, which completely caught me off guard. All I could think was I’d taken African-American literature in college and yet still missed a memo. And so, I wanted to read ALL the books and connect with people to discuss the stories. So Sistah Scifi began as a book club and then emerged as an online bookstore. The journey just unfolded, and I chose to follow the path.”

Make, Create, Have Fun

Regarding the benefits of entrepreneurship, Asare is grateful for being part of strong, supportive communities. In her experience, she's seen women are often drawn to helping each other. Additionally, Asare appreciates the room to make, create, and have fun with her business, which are opportunities that can be harder to find in more traditional work settings. Most importantly, Asare now feels she's 100 percent herself every day at work.

"In my corporate career, I often felt like I had to leave several parts of myself at home when I swiped my badge on weekdays," she remembers. "At Sistah Scifi, I can be fully me. There is no scaling authenticity. We know our target demographic, the community we serve. A lot of our audience has been reading comic books and sci-fi all their lives. They know these backstories and alternative universes and are just as passionate about all of it as I am."