

MAY / JUNE 2026

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interview
with
Dhonielle
inside this
newsletter!



'YA's biggest
stars have
written the
collab of
the year!'

Featuring

DHONIELLE CLAYTON
TIFFANY D. JACKSON
NIC STONE
ANGIE THOMAS
ASHLEY WOODFOLK
NICOLA YOON



Q&A

WITH DHONIELLE CLAYTON

Trapped at a luxurious resort off the coast of Florida, a group of elite teens are about to have a spring break they will never forget... but not all of them are coming home. A star-studded team of authors (Dhonielle Clayton, Tiffany D. Jackson, Nic Stone, Angie Thomas, Ashley Woodfolk and Nicola Yoon) return with a thriller full of intrigue, betrayal, and heart-stopping romance.

PHOTOGRAPH © JESS ANDREE



Who came up with the idea for the book, and how did the co-authoring process work between the group?

After writing 'Blackout' and 'Whiteout', we wanted to do something different. I remember being in a hotel in Los Angeles talking with Ashley about what we should do next. She suggested we try something more genre-focused, maybe even spooky. I immediately thought of a murder mystery thriller, especially since Tiffany D. Jackson is so strong in that space. We started imagining something with a 'Knives Out' feel, and it was one of those moments where everything just clicked.

The co-authoring process worked well because we all leaned into our strengths. I focused on structure and the overall framework. Tiffany brought suspense and tension. Nic is great with dialogue and voice. Angie adds humor. Nicola focuses on romance and connection. Ashley brings emotional depth.

We began by outlining the structure, then built the characters together, including their secrets and motivations. From there, we mapped out the twists and how everything would unfold.



What did you enjoy most about writing 'Breakout', and what inspired you to write it?

I most enjoyed developing the secrets and figuring out how to reveal them over time. It was fun to explore who was lying to whom and how those lies would unravel. Brainstorming with the group about the characters' secrets and how they would try to hide them was a highlight.

We were inspired by a gap in the young adult mystery thriller space. Outside of Tiffany's work, there were not many stories centered on messy Black teens getting into complicated situations. We wanted to show that kind of story, with characters who are flawed, chaotic, and fully human.

I was also excited to write about a setting I know well. I grew up in the Washington, D.C. suburbs around families connected to the U.S. government. Many of those kids lived under constant scrutiny, with security, media attention, and limited freedom. Bringing that environment into the story felt both meaningful and fun.



If you were part of this friend group, which character would you be?

I would like to say River. She is put-together, smart, and always in control. Her mom handles crises, and that influence shows in how she moves through the world.

In reality, I am probably closer to Sydney or Noelle. Sydney has her own messiness, and Noelle feels things deeply and can be a bit chaotic. So while I aim to be like River, I am likely somewhere closer to the messier side of the group.



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Dear Reader,

Riddle me this: what do six author-friends who've cowritten two successful interconnected romance novels—one set in summer, the other in winter—decide to do for their third trip around the narrative block (pun very much intended)? A third collection of interconnected love stories, perhaps set during the sweetness of spring or the coziness of fall, would make the most sense, yes? Hello, #CuffingSeason!

Which is precisely why we made things incredibly hard on ourselves and went in a totally different direction. Gotta keep y'all on your toes or whatnot.

That's exactly what the book you're holding attempts to do. It's twisty and turny and head-spinny and murderly. The tea is hot and it gets spilled (alongside the blood ☹️). And while there's humor (shout-out to Angie), kissing (Hey, Nicola!), lush descriptions of food (looking at you, Dhonielle), betrayal galore (thanks, Tiffany!), prose so gorgeous it'll make you teary-eyed (an Ashley signature), more parenthetical asides than you'll know what to do with (gotta love that Nic), and romances blooming like roses through cracks in concrete—it wouldn't be an Out book without all of those things—you'll also be on the edge of your seat with every page turn.

Why? Well . . . why not?

FOLLOW THE AUTHORS

@ashwrites

@angiethomas

@nicolayoon

@writeinbk

@nicstone

@brownbookworm

At the heart of *Breakout* was our desire to do something we hadn't seen done before: to cocreate a novel full of kids none of us had ever seen on the page. Kids who are wealthy. Intellectually gifted. Well connected. Socially powerful. Full of confidence and bravado (and messiness). And most importantly: Black.

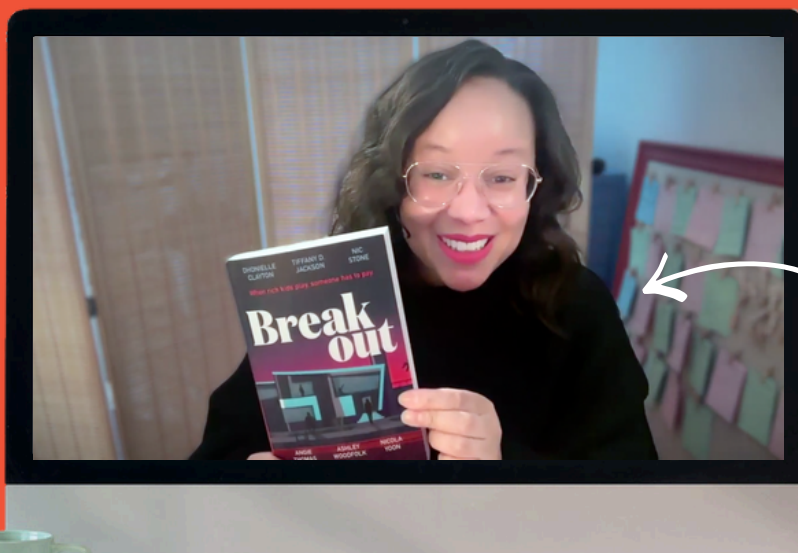
We wanted to tell a story that hasn't been told. To create a world that's vastly different from the ones Black kids are typically permitted to inhabit in books. To craft a tale where the enemy isn't racism or oppression but one's own secrets and the pressure to keep up appearances.

We wanted to give you something new.
Hope you survive it.

With love (always!),
Dhonielle, Tiffany, Nic,
Angie, Ashley, and Nicola



Click
here to
watch
Dhonielle
introduce
the book

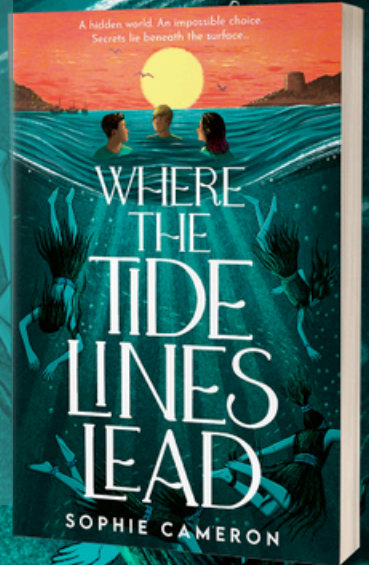


A hidden world. An impossible choice. Secrets lie beneath the surface...

For
ages
10+

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Elio's family owns a successful holiday resort on the Spanish coast, but when multiple teenagers go missing in suspicious circumstances, bookings across the town dry up. Then Elio witnesses something strange - the sea parting for a teenage girl, before carefully enveloping her. A few days later, Sam, a British tourist, comes to find him. Her older sister Jess is one of the missing teens. As they investigate, they too are pulled into the water and discover an underwater city ruled by selkie-like creatures. The beings are in desperate need of Elio and Sam's help, but why have they been taking teenagers, and can they really be trusted?



**MEET THE
AUTHOR**

 @sophiecameronbooks

For
ages
10+

Dare you step into the shadows once again?

Tom and his new friends from Beaufort's School for Deceptive Arts are taken on a treasure-hunting trip to a private island in the Mediterranean once owned by the great villain himself, the Duke of Nimes. The Duke is said to have hidden a spectacular treasure in the warrens, tunnels and caves that pepper the island – as well as a terrifying weapon. Will Tom's street-smarts keep him and his friends alive as they chase down the treasure? And who are the deadly double agents that are sabotaging everything?

Trust no one. This is not a game.

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**MEET THE
AUTHOR**

 @peterburnsauthor



Book 1

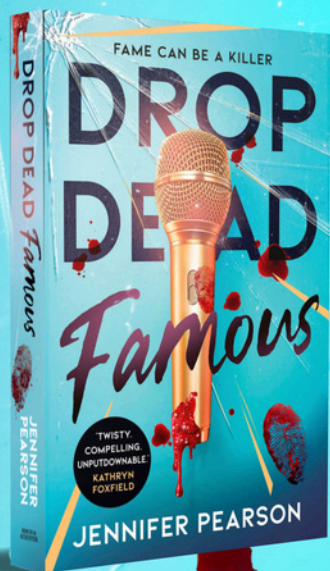
Book 2



DROP DEAD *Famous*

For
ages
14+

Global superstar Blair Baker rises high above the stage for the opening number of her hometown show. The crowd erupts in applause. Then come the screams. For her sister, Stevie, Blair's murder is more than a headline. And she will stop at nothing to uncover the truth.



Fame is a killer!

- Think: 'A Good Girl's Guide to Murder' for Swifties
- Unputdownable, page turning and suspenseful, welcome to your new crime thriller obsession!
- Featuring a small-town setting, a dynamite teen detective duo and twists you won't see coming
- Perfect for fans of The Disappearance of Rachel Price and Five Survive by Holly Jackson,

MEET THE AUTHOR



 @j_c_pearson

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MEET THE AUTHOR @britneybrouwer

A PUNCHY romance!

For
ages
14+

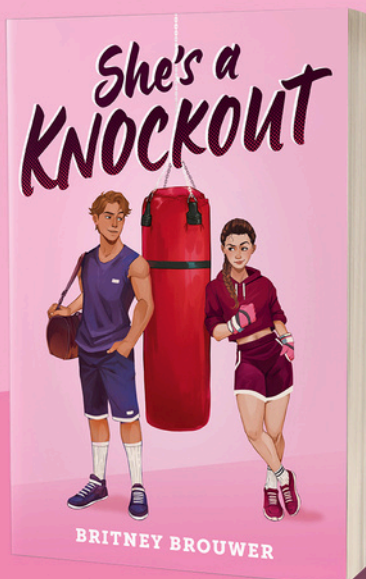
Annie Armani's life changed with one knockout punch. She's not a scrappy nobody any longer - she's the Junior MMA Champion, the star of a new documentary.

Secretly though, Annie's terrified. The punch was a fluke and she's still reeling from her brother Marc's recent death. Now Annie has to contend with nosy producers, adoring fans and (worst of all) her feelings for her hot new sparring partner, Jake Duff. With her future and her heart on the line, can Annie prove she's got what it takes to be a knockout sports star?

WHAT TO EXPECT:

- Enemies to lovers
- MMA Fighter x Sparring Partner
- Female athlete
- Reality TV star
- Found family

[CLICK HERE TO READ AN EXTRACT](#)



For
ages
14+

**How much would you sacrifice for love?
What would you trade for power?
How far would you go for family?**

The Winter family are worth billions. But only they know their success is built upon a sinister deal with the devil – each Winter possesses a unique supernatural gift to ensure their power and influence, but in exchange for their souls...

Nineteen-year-old black sheep of the family Cicely's gift is for uncovering secrets, which doesn't make her very popular. But, when her family are threatened, and her uncle is found dead, they need her for the first time. When the clues point to Soren, a boy the family banished years ago, Cicely must choose between loyalty to her family and her growing feelings for the person who is trying to destroy them.

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'Darkly hilarious'

'Utterly thrilling'

MEET THE AUTHOR



@kathrynfoxfield



@kathrynfoxfield



For
ages
12+

A dazzlingly inventive sci-fi fantasy romance

Margo and Moon were on two different trains, in two different worlds.

They never should have met – but they did.

And now they are running out of time.

Margo is on a train when she slips into another dimension, passing from the height of Irish summer into the chill of an alien winter, from a 24-hour day to one that begins and ends in just six hours. From a stranger on the train – a travelling salesman by the name of Moon – she learns that New Davia is part of a world scarred by uprisings, travel bans and world sealings. Power is determined by time – who has it, who doesn't, and who has the freedom to travel between time zones.

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'Wildly inventive'

'Shockingly smart'



@czaronline



@czaronline

MEET THE AUTHOR



The VICTORS

A funny, moving enemies-to-friends graphic novel

For ages 14+

The prophecy foretold they would be enemies... it didn't mention they'd be flatmates.

Four years ago, Dirk Earnest might have defeated the Demon Overlord and his horde. Now he's just a normal university student. (Or trying to be.) Dirk has many adoring fans who follow his every move in person and online, but he's also crushingly lonely. Cue his new flatmate, Medusa de la Tempête: art student, former evil minion, war criminal... and Dirk's nemesis.



- For readers who love:
- Forced proximity
- Enemies to friends
- Found family
- Platonic soulmates
- University AUs (and quippy banter)

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MEET THE AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR

 @wrenjameswriter / @bf_illustrates

For ages 14+

A swoony South Asian romantasy story of warring kingdoms, forbidden love and a long-lost magical saviour

Sparks fly when Prince Zayd, fresh from defending the borders of Dakaria meets Princess Layla of Sawan, determined to run away from her cruel, power-hungry mother.

When Layla discovers she has latent powers, ones she doesn't understand and begins to fear, and Zayd begins to negotiate with the mages, who have been in hiding for a hundred years, the young royals' paths become intertwined.

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 @radiyahafiza_

Expect:

- Divided kingdoms
- Forbidden love
- A centuries-old prophecy
- Magic, war and royals



MEET THE AUTHOR

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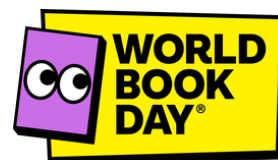
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