

1. What was your first fandom you ever joined (if you were into a fandom). Did you read fic for it? Have you ever written fic?

Brittana! I wasn't heavily into Tumblr at the time but I did become a very, very avid reader of fic. I know that Glee was absolutely off the rails, but seeing two friends, one of whom very much struggled with her sexuality, meant a lot to me at the time.

I feel like I do a lot of things in life out of order, so I was a published author before I ever started writing fic. But I got into Juliantina, a ship from a Mexican telenovela *Amar A Muerte*, in 2018 and I just had to write about them. I have a 70k fic and then a short one shot that someone requested. This was the first time I got fully and totally swept up in fandom. The show was in Spanish, so there was lots of ongoing translation, sharing the scenes since they weren't available on US television/streaming, and to especially wreck me, the show was on five nights a week for four months.

2. In *Back in Your Arms, Then and Now, Back to the Start* (to name A FEW), you use the secondhand romance trope. Explain what it is that you so clearly love about this trope?

The hurt! The angst! The feelings simmering just below the surface! God, it's just like a powder keg waiting to explode. There's no time I feel more like myself as a writer when I'm holding that match, wanting to drop it and ignite everything.

3. What have you learned about yourself through writing?

That I should have gotten into therapy years ago. But seriously, thematically, my books change as my perspective on life changes, and I put a lot of the things I'm working through into my characters' assessments of the world.

4. What is your favorite book that you've ever written and why?

*Then & Now* if I *really* had to pick one. I studied abroad in London, so (with the exception of the love story, sadly) all the places they visited and their experience in London very much mirrored my own experience and was heavily inspired by my life at the time. So in that way, it was fun to revisit those memories years later.

Plus, I basically got to tell two love stories in the book which... for the record, I was not originally intending to do. But I just wanted so much to explore them both, so I did. Perks of being the boss and all that :)

5. Conversely, what is your favorite idea that you haven't yet written?

Some people (cough, cough... Haley Cass) have a mind full of incredibly fleshed out stories just waiting to be written. I CANNOT operate like that. I am a serial monogamist, even in writing. I give one book my entire focus and energy, and anything else will drive me utterly insane.

So, my current WIP, which is a second chance celebrity romance about two teenagers who worked on a very popular Nickelodeon-esque show and reunite 11 years later, is the one I'm most excited about.

6. What is your favorite meal ~~of the day~~?

Anything with potatoes. So if that meal has potatoes, it's my favorite one.

7. If you could have dinner with one writer, dead or alive, who would it be?

Aldous Huxley. *Brave New World* is probably my favorite non-romance book. He is a master of dystopian fiction which does not inspire the warm and fuzzies and yet, he has this quote: "It's a little embarrassing that after 45 years of research & study, the best advice I can give people is to be a little kinder to each other."

8. In *The Flaw in Our Design*, Olivia and Val are both on the younger side for a romance novel, settling into a new adult age range. I, personally, usually have a harder time believing in the HEA for younger characters. Do you imagine them making it work in the long haul? What does their future look like?

I am fine with readers imagining that I'm writing HFN (Happy for Now) instead of HEA (Happily Ever After) but there aren't any characters who I already have planned for any type of breakup in my mind.

So yes... I do see Val and Olivia making it!

All that aside, I think there are a couple of conditions that facilitate a healthier relationship dynamic, even if the characters are on the younger side. Both Val and Olivia had to decide what they wanted out of their personal lives during the book, which was important to me. Neither of them gave up agency or autonomy for the sake of getting to stay with the other person. They're truly fulfilling their own life dreams while also getting to be together. They supported one another through those decisions, and they also dealt with loss and grief together. I felt like it was really important to understand how people (especially younger ones) deal with those situations.

So, their future is Val and Olivia living near the lake, which they both love. Spending time with Olivia's family. Val forging a better relationship with her family. Frequent trips to New York. Olivia is a best-selling author (obviously).

9. You've, to date, written fourteen books. Which is, to someone like me, INSANE and awesome.

- a. Which couple stands out as your favorite to write or revisit (if any)?
  - i. What an unfair question! I've spent months with all of them, so it's impossible for me to pick a favorite. (But probably Lily and Bennett from *Then & Now*)

b. If a reader were to decide to jump into your back catalogue, is there a specific reading order you'd recommend?

i. They're all standalone novels, though *Sweat Equity* and *Vesting Period* are books one and two in a three book series. Other than that, they can be read in any order, and some characters do pop up in other books, especially in my more recent works. So, I'd probably stick with the safe answer and say, 'read them in the order they're written,' but nothing bad will happen if you don't.

#### 10. What book got you into reading?

Behavior wise, I was kept on a short leash as a kid (Metaphorically. Don't worry, I was not actually a leash kid). But the one area where my mother was completely hands-off was reading. I was allowed to read what I wanted, as often as I wanted. So... I did.

The popular dystopian series of the early aughts (*The Uglies*, *Hunger Games*, *Divergent*, etc) all kicked off my love for books in adulthood like *Brave New World*, *Fahrenheit 451*, *1984*, and *The Handmaid's Tale*.

The Sloppy Firsts series by Megan McCafferty was the first series as a teenager where I read the type of writing and style I'd want to mirror or draw on. Jessica Darling was a sort of grumpy, sarcastic, over-achiever and when I tell you I FELT THAT IN MY BONES.

When I was sixteen, my Aunt Phyllis (one of those family things – no idea how she's related to me. I think she's my grandma's brother's wife?) gave my mom a bunch of credits to this used book store that I didn't know existed. And thus, my complete and total fall into romance commenced. I'd go there for hours and hours and take a printing paper box to fill with stacks of books. When I was done, I'd return the books to sell back and get a whole new box to tear through.

I actually blame romance novels with me taking so long to figure out I was a lesbian because I LOVED f/m romance novels. I just love love, and I didn't even realize that they could be EVEN better.

#### 11. What book got you into reading sapphic romance?

My first sapphic romance novel was *Waiting in the Wings* by Melissa Brayden. I was just... shocked? That people were out there writing true f/f romance. That there was a whole market for it! I bought it on Apple books, and I don't think I'd ever bought an e-book before that.

12. You have the LadyLuck series (*Vesting Period* and *Sweat Equity* - tragically still waiting on Brennan's book!), and *Cuffing Season* ties into *Back in Your Arms*. Are all of your books set in the same universe?

The first rule of being my friend, Haley, is that we don't talk about Brennan's book!

But generally, yes, all my books are set in the same world. Characters from *Then & Now* briefly pop up in *Back in Your Arms*. The hardest thing to get right if I do that is the timing continuity for where the characters are in their lives, especially if the book includes an epilogue at the end. So

usually, they'll appear in another book a few years later, post when the original book's epilogue would be.

### 13. What is your favorite Taylor Swift song and/or lyric?

First, I *know* that this is a weird take for a writer, but I don't often listen to lyrics. Sometimes, I'll have heard a song hundreds of times and suddenly what it's actually saying will smack me over the head. Obviously Taylor Swift has made me listen more closely, but I like a lot of music for how it makes me feel because of the beat, not what it's actually saying.

But with that being said, I still absolutely cannot pick one so...

"And if my wishes came true, it would have been you." - *The 1*

"And the voices that implore, 'You should be doing more'  
To you, I can admit that I'm just too soft for all of it" - *Sweet Nothing*

"She would have made such a lovely bride, what a shame she'd fucked in the head," she said" - *Champagne Problems*

"There'll be happiness after you  
But there was happiness because of you  
Both of these things can be true" - *Happiness*

"And when I was shipwrecked (can't think of all the cost)  
I thought of you (all the things that will be lost now)  
In the cracks of light (can we just get a pause?)  
I dreamed of you (to be certain we'll be tall again)  
(If you think of all the costs)  
It was real enough (whether weather be the frost)  
To get me through (or the violence of the dog days)" - *Evermore*

"All the king's horses, all the king's men  
Couldn't put me together again  
'Cause all of my enemies started out friends  
Help me hold on to you" - *The Archer*

"Barefoot in the kitchen  
Sacred new beginnings  
That became my religion, listen" - *Cornelia Street*

### 14. Have you ever read a book – or fanfic – that is *criminally* underrated? Now is your chance to advertise it:

[Absolution](#), which is a Carmilla fanfic. This is my full disclaimer that I do not condone cheating but goddamn is it goooooood.

### 15. You took a year off writing before coming out with your newest release (out now!!!) *A Life Worth Living*. Where did the inspiration strike for Nora and Gray?

It feels so good to be back! I knew I wanted to get back into writing, but in September, I took a trip to Bermuda where we realized a hurricane was on its way. In real life, we got out before the hurricane hit by leaving early, but obviously, I wasn't going to make Nora and Gray that lucky. So I knew how I felt about it (I am the Nora in the real life situation), and I wondered what it would be like if two people who weren't really friends and didn't have the best relationship got stuck going through something like that.

All the descriptions of Bermuda are exactly as I experienced them in the book, which made it a lot easier to write as opposed to inventing a whole reality for them. I think as I was easing back into writing after such a long break, it was really helpful to have that inspiration cushion to get me going.

16. What would you title your auto-biography?

*I just have a lot of feelings.*

17. Finally – where would you put these characters on this seating chart?

Quinn McKinley (*Back in Your Arms* by you), Brooke Watson (*In the Long Run* by me), Neve Blackthorne (*A Whisper of Solace* by Milena McKay), Lacey Matthews (*Casting Lacey* by Elle Spencer), Elle Jones (*Written in the Stars* by Alexandra Bellefleur), Maggie Goodman (*The Goodmans* by Clare Ashton), Jules Moretti (*Truth and Measure* by Roslyn Sinclair), Celeste Thorne (*Alone* by EJ Noyes)

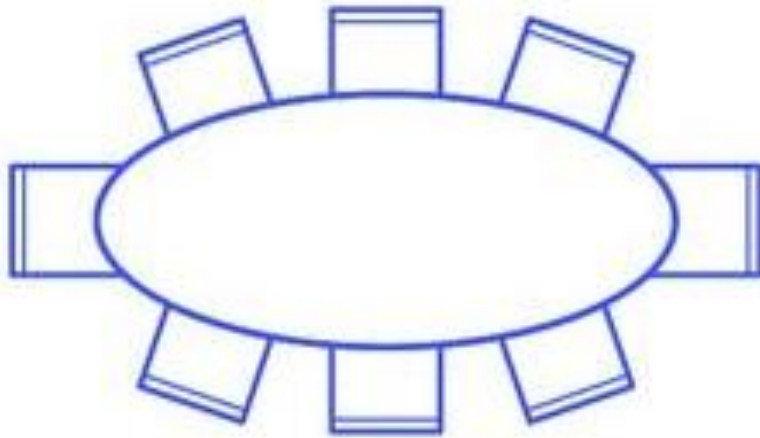
What strange bedfellows! You're making me realize that I love books with VERY different protagonists.

Maggie next to Celeste, because I think her motherly instincts would take over and she'd make sure that Celeste was comfortable and welcomed in the group. Also, Maggie will just be wildly curious about this whole self-imposed isolation thing. A world without other people!? She can't even comprehend it!

Brooke and Neve next to one another. I think that Brooke would be the only person not intimidated and that they could have a great conversation about efficiency and planning in their areas of expertise. Plus, they both know what it feels like to fall in love with a traveler, and the constant fear of them running off to the far corners of the world.

Jules and Elle, though both very different people, love their very strong-willed women, so I think they could talk about that, along with working in new businesses that are a lot of trial by error as they go.

Lacey and Quinn, both as former New Yorkers, can relive the glory days of the city they both used to call home while also secretly thrilled they only go back to visit. And Lacey's wife is also named Quinn, which I just get a kick out of.



Explain your reasoning :)