

Media release

Tanis Browning-Shelp releases CRUSHED, second in the Maryn O'Brien Young Adult Fiction series

October 26, 2017

Ottawa, ON—Author **Tanis Browning-Shelp** and Ottawa-based Dog-Eared Books announce the publication of *Crushed*, the second book in a new YA series.

The book will be released at a launch on Thursday, October 26, from 5 pm to 7 pm, at The Cyclery in Ottawa. The popular local cycle shop is known in Ottawa's cycling community for its advocacy and promotion of girls and women in cycling and sport.

The first book, *Crash Course*, released in late 2016, introduced readers to Maryn O'Brien, a 15-year-old mountain bike racer who dreams of competing in the Olympic Games. Readers got to know Maryn as she juggled the challenges of high school, family, and racing when she found herself facing a seemingly unbeatable dilemma: her coach was falsely accused of impropriety with two young athletes.

In this newest book, *Crushed*, Maryn is training for the provincial championship, with her eye on an invitation-only junior development program. Her carefully organized world gets thrown into turmoil when she experiences her first love. Managing her training schedule, emotions, and personal relationships leaves Maryn struggling to stay on track.

"*Crushed* stands alone as a story about a person's first love and the complex challenges that come along with that. But those who choose to read *Crash Course* first will be able to experience Maryn's personal growth from the very beginning. In each book she faces different obstacles on her path to the Olympics," says author Browning-Shelp.

The third volume in the series, *Critical*, is slated for release in fall 2018, also by Dog-Eared Books. The Ottawa-based publishing house was founded in 2016. In less than a year, the company has released five titles, including Browning-Shelp's Maryn O'Brien series. Dog-Eared publishes books for young and adult readers.

Books in the Maryn O'Brien Series are available for sale at Books on Beechwood (Ottawa), The Singing Pebble (Ottawa), and online at amazon.ca

At a Glance

What: Crushed - Book Launch

Where: The Cyclery, 1115 Bank Street, Old Ottawa South

When: 5 pm to 7 pm, (1700 to 1900 hrs), Thursday, October 26, 2017

Who: Author Tanis Browning-Shelp will be in attendance, and will read an excerpt at 5:45 pm

Browning-Shelp will be available for interviews. May be of interest to photo editors, arts reporters and sports reporters who cover cycling and female athletes.

For more information, please contact:

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Presented with the support of Vince Carcares and the team at The Cyclery, 1115 Bank Street, Ottawa

Q&A with Tanis Browning-Shelp on her new release *Crushed*

When author Tanis Browning-Shelp isn't teaching piano, managing a household with busy teenagers, running, or volunteering, she is writing the Maryn O'Brien series for young readers. The second book in the series *Crushed*, just released, follows the adventures of Maryn, the 15-year-old mountain bike racer with eyes on an Olympic prize.

Can you give readers an outline of what Maryn is up to in *Crushed*? Does the book chronologically follow events from the first book *Crash Course*?

Crash Course, the first book in the series, ends in late September of Maryn's grade 10 school year, right after her provincial championship race, at the height of her mountain bike racing season. *Crushed* begins a few months later at the start of the new year. Maryn is just finishing up her first semester in grade 10 and training in the off-season—a bitter January in Ontario, Canada. In this calmer, building phase of her cycling season, readers get to see her focusing more on the relationships in her life, including her most life-changing relationship ever—her first crush!

If readers haven't read the first book in the series, will they be able to pick the book up and follow along with Maryn on her adventure?

Absolutely! *Crushed* stands alone as a story about a person's first love and the complex challenges that come along with that. But those who choose to read *Crash Course* first will be able to experience Maryn's personal growth from the very beginning. In each book she faces different obstacles on her path to the Olympics. Readers of the whole series will be able to see even more clearly how far she has come.

The book combines elements of an adventure story and a tale of first romance. As you were writing, was it difficult to shift gears between the two?

Yes! I think I experienced a bit of what Maryn must have felt as she found herself having to shift gears between being in a romantic relationship for the very first time and being a serious bike racer. In this book, Maryn's softer side comes out, so, as an author, I had to change back and forth between writing this slightly bewildered, softer character and the strong, confident, competitive athlete she had always been.

What were the challenges of writing a first-love, coming of age story?

I actually think I was shy, at first, to write about Maryn's first-love experiences. Maybe I was worried about my own kids reading it. Maybe I thought I couldn't write about that authentically because I'm from another generation...In fact, my first drafts skipped right over the first kiss. But a wise editor, Jennifer Latham, made me go back and share these moments with my readers. Once I opened the door for Maryn, she took the lead.

The book also reveals Maryn dealing with the challenges of managing technology in a hyper-connected world. What was the inspiration for that theme in the book?

Smart phones and social media have significantly changed the way we live and work. These tools affect our relationships too. We are still learning how to live with these new technologies. I find that this transition continues to be a struggle for people of all ages—parents, teachers, kids...everyone is trying to figure this out. It is an ever-present issue in my own life and in my kids' lives, so it makes sense that it would show up in Maryn's story.

Maryn's fans often comment on her strength and competitive spirit. What feedback have you received from readers who have seen Maryn in a different light, dealing with her own vulnerability?

Although readers admire Maryn's strength, focus, and determination, some people find her a bit difficult to like at times. I wanted to show *what it takes* to become a serious athlete. It is really hard and often requires a singular focus, making the athlete seem less personable. Serious athletes also need lots of support. Maryn gets that from her close friends and family. So readers sometimes appreciate Maryn's supporters more than they do Maryn. However, as she falls in love in this second book, Maryn's softer side comes out. As she delves more deeply into all of her relationships, she discovers that she cannot control everything in her life. It is scary for Maryn to feel out of control and readers seem to like this more vulnerable Maryn even more.

Will there be a third book? Can you offer a hint of what Maryn will take on next?

Yes, there is a third book—*Critical*—scheduled for release in the fall of 2018. This book will see Maryn facing her biggest challenge yet. Just when she gets her path to Olympic glory all mapped out, life throws her a frightening curve ball.

And what is next for you, the author?

I hope to be able to continue talking about the first two books and their many themes with young readers. Many teens have told me they can truly relate to Maryn's struggles juggling the different aspects of her busy life. Talking about the struggles can help you cope with your own challenges. Even as an adult, I still struggle with some of the same things in my own life! But I also need to hunker down in the new year to work on finalizing the third book in the series. I have a first draft written, but it needs loads of attention. Winter in Ottawa is a very good time to write.

About the Author of Crushed: Tanis Browning-Shelp

Some people are born-writers. Others are born-musicians; still others can claim to be born-athletes. Tanis Browning-Shelp embodies all three.

The *Crash Course* author's writing career may have begun—literally—in her childhood crib. When she was just a babe-in-arms, her mother placed books in her bed to keep the young Tanis entertained. By the time she was in second grade, a small class assignment turned into her first novel-writing effort. She has been a reader and writer ever since.

Born in 1964, in Kenora, Ontario, the now Ottawa-based author is the heart, soul and pen behind the Maryn O'Brien Young Adult fiction series, with published volumes *Crash Course* and *Crushed*.

The series is Browning-Shelp's first foray into fiction after a many-decades-long writing career in a variety of genres, including journalism and communications. She graduated from the University of Western Ontario in 1993 with a Master of Arts Degree in Canadian Literature.

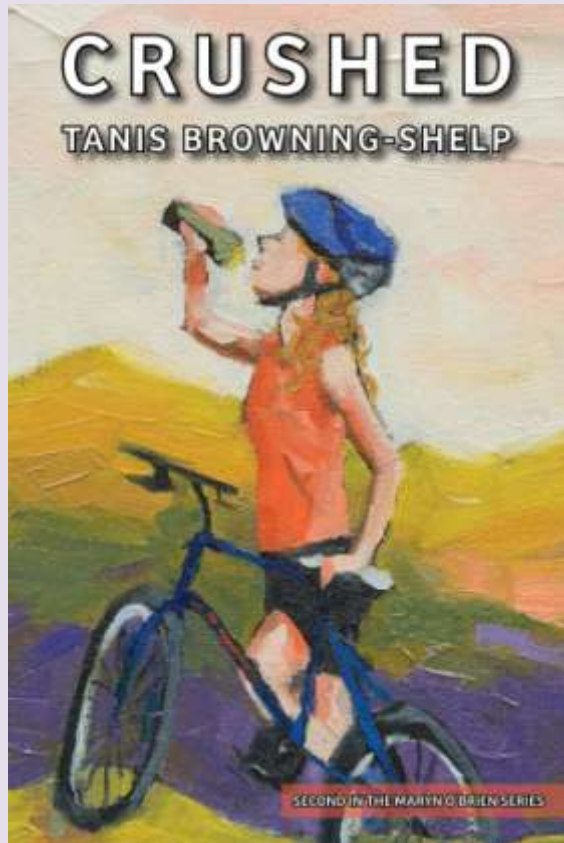
Her career includes working for the federal government in communications and public relations. At Statistics Canada, Browning-Shelp oversaw many projects, such as the publication of *Canada Year Book* and *Canada: A Portrait*.

Her feature articles have been published in *The Ottawa Citizen* and *The Owen Sound Sun Times*, and for many years she wrote a regular arts column for the local newspaper *The Mainstreeter*. Profiling artists of all types came naturally to Browning-Shelp, who is a pianist who has taught piano for more than 35 years.

Sports and athletic achievement have also been vital aspects of Browning-Shelp's life. A life-long runner, she has competed in many marathons, including running the Boston Marathon. She has also competed in many triathlons, including Ironman Competitions.

She has been married for 28 years to Andy, a fellow athlete, who competes in triathlon and life-saving competitions. Together they are the parents of two teenagers; one is a competitive swimmer, and the other is an accomplished dancer and soccer player.

As a writer, athlete, artist, mom, and wife, Tanis Browning-Shelp has pursued excellence and that's the spirit that fills Maryn O'Brien and her world.



“Crushed is a great novel...It deals with topics and issues that many kids can relate to. As well, it teaches valuable lessons about relationships, prioritizing and competition, all while being a lighthearted and enjoyable read.”

Ella, age 14, Ottawa, Ontario

CRUSHED SECOND IN THE

MARYN O'BRIEN SERIES

Author: Tanis Browning-Shelp

Format: Paperback

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Contact: www.dog-earedbooks.com

CRUSHED

Teen mountain biking sensation Maryn O'Brien is going all out as she closes in on her goal of racing in the Olympics. More focused and driven than ever, she has her eye on an invitation-only Canadian junior development program, is hungry for a win at the provincial championship, and can't wait to finally show her mettle on the Canada Cup circuit.

But then love enters Maryn's life, and she finds herself at a crossroads. Will she be able to keep her plans on track, or will she throw everything away—including her best friend?

AUTHOR TANIS BROWNING-SHELP



Tanis lives in Ottawa, Ontario, with her husband Andy, and their teen-aged son and daughter.

A spirited, active family, they support one another in achieving their individual goals.

That's how Maryn O'Brien came to life.