

For Immediate Release

Tanis Browning-Shelp's CRITICAL, Third in the Maryn O'Brien Young Adult Fiction series, takes readers on a high-stakes journey

Ottawa, ON—*Critical*, the latest in the Maryn O'Brien Series for Young Adults, takes its main character—and readers—on her most-dramatic ride yet.

In *Critical*, the third book from author Tanis Browning-Shelp, rising star mountain bike racer Maryn, 16, is planning her critical path to the Olympics when she's knocked sideways by devastating news. A close family member receives a frightening diagnosis and suddenly everything is different.

As the O'Briens rally to deal with the life-changing situation, Maryn's Olympic goals are threatened like never before. Her relationships take a hit, too, as she tries to stay true to the O'Brien pledge to keep things a secret. Maryn wonders if her life-long dreams are dashed for good...and if it even matters.

At a time when so many YA books are set in dystopian, fantasy-based worlds, Browning-Shelp has crafted a contemporary, realistic series set in today's world—in Ontario—featuring a strong and inspiring teenager facing the types of challenges that young adults confront and overcome every day.

"The plots deal with important issues," Resource Links wrote of the Maryn O'Brien books.

The series, from Ottawa-based publishing house Dog-Eared Books, is timely, positive, and attracting a growing fan-base of teen readers. Its themes are mature: investigating what it takes—and means—to compete and win, how to manage loving relationships without sacrificing one's own goals, and even exploring the meaning of love and the finite nature of life.

"I feel that over the course of the series, Maryn's peripheral vision is widened. She keeps her Olympic goal throughout the series as she deals with the situations life presents. Along with her experience comes balance," says reader **Clarke Phillips**, 16.

Clarke entered CBC Ottawa's teen book debate series, *Off the Shelf*, in 2018, which asked teens to name a book that all their peers should read. She successfully made a case for *Crushed*, second in the Maryn O'Brien Series.

Critical, and other books in Browning-Shelp's Maryn O'Brien series (*Crushed*, *Crash Course*), are sold at: Books on Beechwood (Ottawa), Singing Pebble Books (Ottawa), Octopus Books (Ottawa), Perfect Books (Ottawa), Mill Street Books (Almonte), and online at Amazon and at www.barnesandnoble.com.

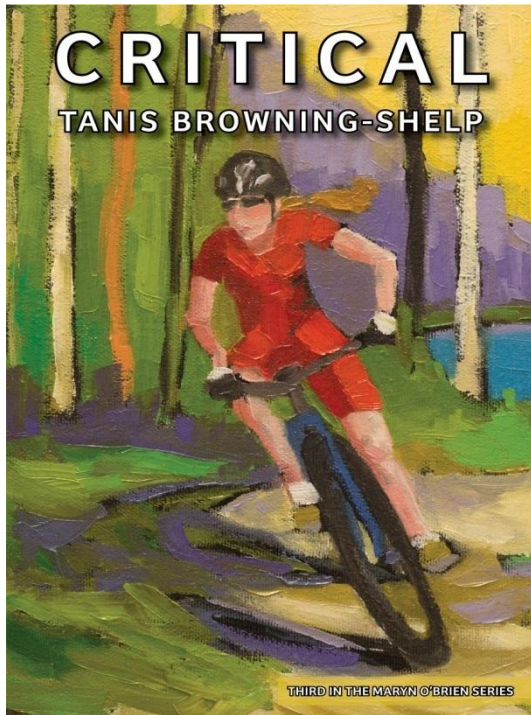
Digital copies (ePubs) of the Maryn O'Brien series can also be ordered directly from the publisher at Dog-Eared Books.

Publicity and Author Appearances: Tanis Browning-Shelp in the Classroom

For publicity requests, including review copies, author interviews, school, library or book store appearances, please contact:

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“Although there is teen romance in this book, the romance is only a part of it, and it is not a pining kind of love. Maryn is a serious athlete doing serious training. She and her boyfriend don’t conform to teen couple stuff. They respect each other’s goals and choices. I like that Maryn doesn’t waver from her Olympic goal because of her relationship with her boyfriend.”

Avery, age 16, Ottawa

CRITICAL, THIRD in the MARYN O'BRIEN SERIES

Author: Tanis Browning-Shelp

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Contact: www.dog-earedbooks.com

CRITICAL

Now with Canada Cup racing experience under her belt, rising star mountain biker Maryn O'Brien plots how to pedal her way to the top, even mapping out her critical path to the Olympics! The teenager believes she's got it all figured out—that is, until she doesn't.

Maryn is knocked sideways when a close family member receives a frightening diagnosis. As the O'Briens rally to deal with the life-changing situation, Maryn's Olympic dreams are threatened like never before as she tries to stay true to the O'Brien pledge to keep things a secret.

Will this mean the end of her life-long Olympic dream? Does it even matter anymore?

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.

Q & A with Author Tanis Browning-Shelp

Q. *Critical* is the third book in the Maryn O'Brien series, so will readers need to have read the first two books in the series to follow along? (Or is it a stand-alone?)

A. *Critical* stands alone as a story about a teenaged mountain bike racer who is so serious about her sport that she maps out her critical path to the Olympics only to find her world turned upside down when a loved one (and one of her biggest supporters) faces a health crisis. A reader new to Maryn O'Brien and her family will be brought up to speed swiftly. However, there is definitely something to be said for starting at the beginning of the series with *Crash Course* and reading your way through to *Critical*. I am told that it is fun and rewarding to ride along with Maryn on her journey.

Q. How much time has passed since the last book—*Crushed*? What age is Maryn now?

A. Maryn is 16 when *Crushed* ends and it is the August long weekend. *Critical* begins about a month later on the Labour Day weekend in September, just before the start of Maryn's grade 11 school year.

Q. The book jacket refers to a 'frightening diagnosis' in Maryn's family; it sounds like the stakes are really high. Is the character facing her greatest challenge yet?

A. I would say so, yes. Maryn has faced some serious challenges before, but this one touches many different aspects of her life, not just her training and racing. We see her grapple with the resulting life changes over several months.

Q. What does Maryn learn in this book? And what will the book's readers learn as they travel with her on this journey?

A. Maryn learns a great deal from this challenging, frightening, and stressful situation. She learns how to create a detailed plan for reaching an important goal; however, she quickly learns that priorities and plans can change. Eventually, she learns to be more flexible and to support others. She learns more about friendship and family dynamics. She also learns about loss. Readers can take the same lessons away from *Critical* by experiencing them through the main character.

Q. Where did the idea for the book come from?

A. My family faced that situation. So, I decided to make the O'Brien family face it too. I also gave them our key coping strategy and then began writing to see how things would unfold for them. The O'Brien family is not the Shelp family, so some things turned out very differently indeed. It was fascinating, as the book's author, to see what these characters would feel and do. They often surprised me.

Q. Did you originally plan to write a series?

A. I didn't. When I wrote *Crash Course*, I was focused on that book and that book only. But I think I became interested in seeing what Maryn would do next as I watched my own children and their friends experiencing life and all of its ups and downs.

Q. The book ends with our heroine competing at a very special sporting event. What's next for Maryn O'Brien?

A. Just like with my own kids, there are so many possibilities ahead for Maryn O'Brien. And Maryn does feel like one of my own children, so I better sit down with her and find out what she has in mind! For example, she has always been such a goal setter...will she ever be able to operate without having such concrete direction? Is it possible that she might go in a completely different direction for a time? Will she ever experience burn-out? I am excited for Maryn and can't wait to find out myself.



About the Author: 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 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*, *Crushed*, and the newest—*Critical*.

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 writes a regular column, *Art Beat*, profiling artists of all types for the local Ottawa newspaper *The Mainstreeter*. Her feature articles have been published in *The Ottawa Citizen* and *The Owen Sound Sun Times*.

Tanis 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*.

Music has been a mainstay of Tanis's life; she is a pianist who has taught piano for more than 35 years. Sports and athletic achievement have also been vital to the writer. She is a runner who has competed in many marathons, including running the Boston Marathon; and in many triathlons, including Ironman competitions.

She has been married for almost 30 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-artist 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.

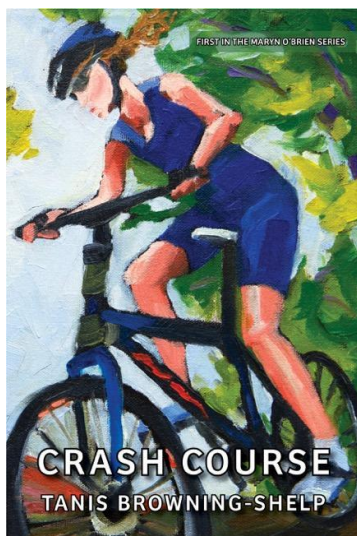


THE BOOKS

The Maryn O'Brien Series, published by Ottawa's Dog-Eared Books, is timely, positive, and has a loyal and growing fan-based of teen readers.

Its themes are mature: investigating what it takes—and means—to compete and win, how to manage loving relationships with friends and family without sacrificing one's own goals, and even exploring the meaning of love and the finite nature of life.

Here's a look at the first two titles in the series:



ISBN: 978-0-9953360-1-8

CRASH COURSE, FIRST in the MARYN O'BRIEN SERIES

Mud-splattered, sweat-stained and perpetually on the brink of a crash, 15-year-old mountain bike racer Maryn O'Brien's dream is to make it to the Olympics. She trains hard and races harder, all while juggling school and her many other responsibilities. It's not easy, but it's doable—until her racing coach suddenly gets suspended just days before the most important race of the season.

Now Maryn faces a serious decision. She has two secrets: one that could save Coach's career, another that could ruin her racing dreams...and she can't share one without telling the other. As Maryn races for the first time without her beloved coach's support, she battles not just her competition, but her conscience, too. Will she find the strength to win against both and redeem herself?

CRUSHED, SECOND in the MARYN O'BRIEN SERIES

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?

ISBN: 978-0-9953360-3-2

