

## Media release

### Tanis Browning-Shelp releases *CRASH COURSE*, first in the Maryn O'Brien Young Adult Fiction series

April 1, 2017

Ottawa, ON—Author Tanis Browning-Shelp and new literary house Dog-Eared Books announce the publication of *Crash Course*, first in a new Young Adult fiction series.

*Crash Course* introduces Maryn O'Brien, a 15-year-old mountain bike racer who dreams of competing in the Olympics. She juggles the challenges of high school, friends, family and racing—always moving as fast as she can—until she realizes she's on the verge of an epic crash. Maryn's coach is suddenly suspended just days before the most-important race of the season after two young athletes make false allegations against him.

"I think readers will come away with a deeper understanding of how tough it is to be an elite athlete with serious goals—especially for a busy teenager trying to balance regular challenges like school, friendships, social life, social media, family responsibilities, and other extra-curricular activities—and that you can't do it alone," says the author. "I'm thrilled to be exploring these issues in print."

The second and third volumes in the series are expected to be released in summer and fall 2017, also by Dog-Eared Books. The new Ottawa-based publishing house was founded in 2016 by veteran author Larry McCloskey (*Murder at Summerhouse*, *Tom Thomson's Last Paddle*, and *Murder Fit for a King*, Dundurn Press), artist Jocelyn van Wynsberghe and Browning-Shelp.

*Crash Course* and McCloskey's latest book *Unspoken: Or the Unrefined Art of Communicating at the Top of Your Lungs and Through the Bottom of Your Feet* are the first releases from the new national capital-area publisher.

The founders came together with the objective of creating an independent Ottawa-based firm producing high quality books with good stories, strong characters and positive themes.

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

*Crash Course* is available at Kaleidoscope Kids' Books in Ottawa, and online at [amazon.ca](http://amazon.ca), [amazon.com](http://amazon.com) and [barnesandnoble.com](http://barnesandnoble.com).

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Please check out [www.browning-shelp.com](http://www.browning-shelp.com)

To interview Ms. Browning-Shelp or for more information, please contact:

the Author at [tanis@browning-shelp.com](mailto:tanis@browning-shelp.com)

and Publicist Alison Cunningham at [alisone\\_c@yahoo.ca](mailto:alisone_c@yahoo.ca)

## A Q&A with Tanis Browning-Shelp on her new release *Crash Course*

### Can you give us an overview of the story?

*Crash Course* is the first in a series of books about Maryn O'Brien, a teenage girl who is a competitive mountain bike racer who dreams about competing in the Olympics. The first book introduces readers to the character, her family and friends, and the world of competitive mountain biking. It also sees her facing one of her first real ethical dilemmas as a promising star athlete and young adult.

### What is the dilemma facing her?

Without giving too much away, she finds herself in a situation where she's keeping secrets; secrets that threaten her and her all-important cycling coach. Maryn is faced with the responsibility of choice: making a choice that might sacrifice her racing in order to save her coach, who is battling a career-threatening allegation of impropriety with two young athletes. The reader knows that Coach is innocent, and so does Maryn. But the allegation is investigated and things get tense for everyone involved.

### Is the story autobiographical?

No, it isn't. Maryn is truly a fictional character. But stories such as this, of allegations both false and proved, are not uncommon. As a parent of competitive athletes and as someone with a life-long involvement in sports, I thought the issues would be rich for exploration. It's a coming-of-age story and the implications of Maryn's decisions play out in the next volumes in the series.

### When will they be available?

No publishing date, yet! But soon! The books are being released by Dog-Eared Books of Ottawa, which is a new independent publishing house, and a collaboration with established Young Adult author Larry McCloskey and artist Jocelyn van Wynsberghe.

### What motivated you to take on the challenge of indie publishing with Dog-Eared Books?

It's an exciting, daunting and ultimately thrilling challenge that all of us are committed to making successful. Book publishing has evolved, is evolving, and we are joining forces to write and produce books, here in the nation's capital, with a positive but relatable message for young readers. So far, the feedback we've received from young readers has been encouraging. Young readers are hungry for books with characters whose lives, goals and challenges are relatable to them. So far, so good!

### Do you remember the first story you read on your own? Is that where your journey began?

Yes, my Mom tells me that they left picture books at the bottom of my crib, when I was one and two, along with a few stuffies and that I liked to flip through them when I first woke up. I remember reading two Dr. Seuss books—*The Cat in the Hat* and *How the Grinch Stole Christmas!*—at age two. But I think I had just memorized them from my Mom reading them to

me. By age seven, I was already dreaming of becoming an author. In grade two, our class produced a mimeographed book of stories. Most of the students wrote a sentence or two about what they wanted to be when they grew up. I submitted a several-pages-long mystery set in a spooky cemetery. I really hope *Crash Course* and even sharing my experience as a writer-publisher, motivates young people to pursue their dreams and give it all they can!

One last question; what do you think readers will take away from *Crash Course*?

Readers who are into competitive sports will be able to relate. But I'm also hearing from busy young people who aren't athletes but see themselves in Maryn as she tries to juggle life's many challenges. I think readers will see the full extent of the support system (friends, family, coaches, and teachers, for example) that is required for those who strive for excellence. Readers will also see the importance of communicating when things get tough, and that asking for help is a strength not a weakness.

### **About the Author of Crash Course: 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, whose first volume, *Crash Course*, has just been released.

The book is Browning-Shelp's first piece of YA fiction after a many-decades-long writing career in a variety of genres, including journalism, poetry, fiction, and communications. She began, in 1989, working for the federal government in communications and public relations. She graduated from the University of Western Ontario in 1993 with a Master of Arts Degree in Canadian Literature.

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 an accomplished 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 shortly after giving birth to her first child. She has also competed in many triathlons, including Ironman Competitions.

She has been married for more than 27 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.

Browning-Shelp has made volunteerism a mainstay of her life. She has donated countless hours to providing writing and public relations services to many Ottawa-based non-profit organizations.

As a writer, athlete, artist, mom, and wife, Tanis Browning-Shelp has pursued excellence and that's the spirit in which the Maryn O'Brien series was born.



*"Truly an incredible experience for readers, with a meaningful message. A really inspiring adventure for readers to go through with Maryn O'Brien, it teaches us that there are rough times in life; but you can always pull through it."*

- Athena, age 12, Ottawa, Ontario

***CRASH COURSE***: First in the

**Maryn O'Brien Series**

Author: Tanis Browning-Shelp

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## CRASH COURSE

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?

### 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.