

Writing for Children Intensive: “Writing is Rewriting”

Dhonielle Clayton, *Instructor*

Monday, July 10 – Friday, July 14, 2023

Hollins University, Roanoke, VA

Finished a first draft? Or have a solid chunk of a novel? Now what? The best writers are really revisers. Join this intensive to find the right ingredients to transform your rough pages into a compelling book for young people. Writing demands complex characters, high stakes, a layered world, and research.

In this workshop, the emphasis will be on the building blocks of craft: the one-line pitch, voice and character, worldbuilding, plot and pace, and revision.

The core of the intensive is an 18-hour intermediate to advanced writing tutorial. Limited to eight to 12 participants on a first-registered, first-served basis, the participants will exchange up to 50-75 pages of work with the instructor and other writers in the class.

In addition to the morning sessions, there will be two optional afternoon sessions about behind-the-scenes deep dives on: publishing, including query letters, editorial letters, and the phases of a manuscript from draft to published, etc. on Wednesday, July 12 and Thursday, July 13.

Dhonielle Clayton, *Instructor*



Dhonielle Clayton is a New York Times bestselling author of The Marvellerverse series, The Belles series, *Shattered Midnight*, co-author of *Blackout*, *Whiteout*, *The Rumor Game*, and of the Tiny Pretty Things duology, a Netflix original series. She hails from the Washington, D.C. suburbs on the Maryland side. She taught secondary school for several years and is a former elementary and middle school librarian. She is COO of the non-profit We Need Diverse Books. She is the President and founder of Cake Creative and Electric Postcard Entertainment, IP story companies creating diverse books for all ages. She's an avid traveler, and always on the hunt for magic and mischief. She runs

the science fiction and fantasy book club Black Girls with Magic & Books. She is an avid traveler, and always on the hunt for magic and mischief.

Her short stories have been included in the following anthologies: *The Radical Element* edited by Jessica Spotswood, *Unbroken* edited by Marieke Nijkamp, *Meet Cute: Some People Are Destined to Meet*, *Black Enough: Stories of Being Young and Black in America* edited by Ibi Zoboi, and *Vampires Never Get Old* edited by Zoraida Cordova and Natalie C. Parker. A few Cake Creative titles she's responsible for: *The Gauntlet* series by Karuna Riazi, *Love Sugar Magic* series by Anna Meriano, *The Trouble with Shooting Stars* by Meg Cannistra, *A Match Made in Mehendi* by Nandini Bajpai, the Tristan Strong series by Kwame Mbalia, *Futureland* by H.D. Hunter, *Promise Boys* by Nick Brooks, *Love Radio* by Ebony LaDelle, and more.

Find her on the web at <http://www.cakecreativekitchen.com>, <http://www.themarvellerseries.com>, and <http://www.dhonielleclayton.com>. Also, on social media: @brownbookworm.

[Updated 1/9/23] Beginning May 22, 2023, COVID-19 vaccinations, while strongly encouraged, are no longer required to participate in activities and events on campus. We encourage and support the use of KN95 and surgical masks as well as other precautions for those who choose to do so. Those who have any symptoms affiliated with a cold, the flu, RSV, or COVID-19, should wear a mask.

Writing for Children Intensive: “Writing is Rewriting” Daily Schedule

Day One: *First Lines, First Chapters, and the Big Idea*

Agents, editors, and even readers give writers one page to hook them. Why? There’s a recipe for a good first line and a good first chapter. It communicates the promise of the pitch of the novel and is one’s first bite into the writer’s world. Learn how to distill your novel’s idea down to a one-line pitch, create a solid hook of a first line, and make sure your first chapter has all the ingredients needed to make readers want to turn the page. Participants will workshop the first chapters of their projects and make plans for revising them.

Day Two: *Finding the Voice and Finding the Core of Character*

It’s all about the voice. It’s all about character. Why? Readers must want to follow this protagonist *and* see them triumph over an antagonist. Learn all aspects of voice – narrative voice, character voice, and the overall voice of the story – and how to give your characters the right kind of stakes. Participants will use exercises to assess their characters’ voices, bruises, and strengths, and workshop the second and third chapters in their projects.

Day Three: *What Makes the World go Round?*

Every story needs to live within a consistent and complex world regardless of whether it’s fantasy or reality-based, a chapter book series, a middle grade or a young adult novel. The internal and external worldbuilding must reveal the rules of the magic and complicate the stakes for our characters. Participants will explore the physical, psychological, and emotional contexts of their stories, as well as try out methods for constructing believable and complex settings and inner worlds. Participants will workshop the fourth and fifth chapters in their projects.

Day Three: *Behind the Scenes Look at The Publishing Industry* – Afternoon session

Day Four: *Hot Water, and all the Things that Have to Happen!*

Popular writing advice is to kill your darlings ... but you should drown your darlings along the way as well. Some writers are plotters, constructing elaborate outlines, and others are pantsers, flying by the seat of their pants. Either way, a story needs a shape, and learn how to apply a three-act or four-act structure. Participants will practice using plot maps for their work, building out conflict and climaxes, and experience the technique of nine-boxing. Participants will workshop the sixth and seventh chapters in their projects.

Day Four: *Behind the Scenes Look at The Publishing Industry* – Afternoon session

Day Five: *Now Fix It – Writing is Rewriting*

The best writing advice – writing is rewriting – is the cornerstone of how to create something publishable that will stand the test of time. Participants will be given a wide array of revision techniques and tools and will make plans to look at the rest of their novels and map out a plan. Participants will take inventory of the feedback they’ve been given over the course of the workshop, plus a written letter from the instructor, and learn how to break down revision notes into tangible action items. Instructor will also nine-box all participants’ books.