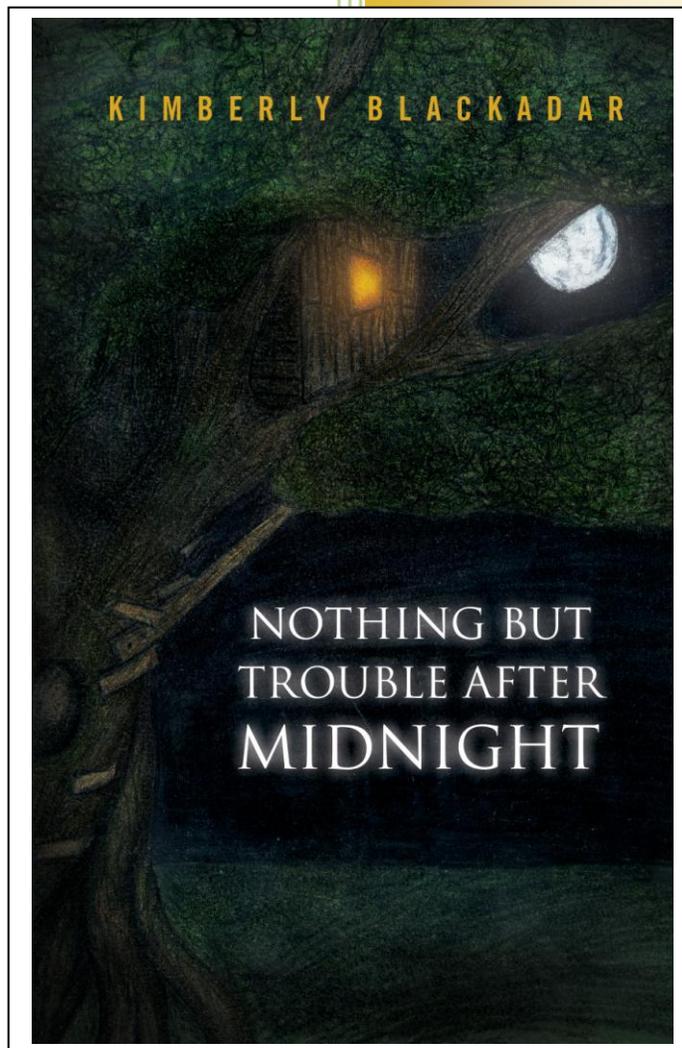


2011

Author Talk



~About the Author

- **Bio** Born in Massachusetts, but raised in Florida, Kimberly Blackadar graduated from Florida State University and then spent eight years in the classroom—as an English, social studies, and drama teacher. Now a homeschooling mom living in Minnesota, she draws from her teaching experiences to offer realistic fiction to her readers.
- **Website Links**
www.nothingbuttroubleaftermidnight.com
www.kimberlyblackadar.wordpress.com
- **Follow Kimberly Blackadar on Twitter and Facebook.**
- **Q & A**



~About the Book

- **Timeline for *Nothing but Trouble after Midnight***
July 2002. Wrote a novel sketch entitled “Secrets.”
August 2007. Found “Secrets” and began writing first manuscript.
September 2007. Borrowed lines from *Secrets* to write “Auburn Eyes.”
December 2007. Recorded a scratch demo of “Auburn Eyes.” Changed title to *Nothing but Trouble after Midnight* and began the novel over again.
April 2008. Wrote a timeline and began novel for the third time.
October 2008. Finished the now-published *NBTAM*.
January 2009. Sent *NBTAM* to a reading panel.
May 2009. Met with the publisher.
July 2009. Downloaded final copy of *NBTAM* to my publisher’s site.
November 2009. Publication date.
- **The Series** Entitled the **Seven C’s series**, *Nothing but Trouble after Midnight* (NBTAM) is the first of seven novels. Each book revolves around a different female protagonist and highlights a pertinent issue of adolescence: NBTAM centers around Chloe Preston.
- **Q & A**

~Reading / Writing Workshop

Key Players

I stood there in the middle of the parking lot with my hand stuck to the car door and my face smushed against the window, wondering how someone in their right mind could have possibly locked their keys in the car with the engine still running.

Maybe that was my problem. I wasn't in my right mind; I was in my left, busy analyzing the complexities of my relationship with my boyfriend, who, after the unfortunate incident, did exactly what I expected him to do. He made matters worse, much worse, by rallying the masses around my car like a ringleader at a freak show. "Hey!" he yelled, cupping his hands around his mouth and shouting in every direction. "You gotta' see this!"

Then he turned toward me, flashing a grin. "You know, for someone so freaking smart, you can be really dumb sometimes." Sure, he could be a jerk, but not completely erroneous with his taunts. According to the standardized testing instruments used by the Florida public school system, I was relatively smart, which led me to believe that my intelligence came with a serious drawback: a lack of common sense.

Meanwhile, a sizeable crowd had formed in the back corner of the student parking lot, insuring a campus cop would arrive quickly on the scene. Well, ours took a while since he walked with a noticeable limp. He was shot in the line of duty and decided to finish off his law enforcement career at the high school campus, but he underestimated the students at Riverside High. Here, cops dealt with fights, more drugs than on the streets, and periodic pranks, which were mostly ingenuous stunts like pants up the flag pole, desks assembled on the football field, or frilly unmentionables draped on the larger-than-life statue of Richard Waterhouse, the school's first principal.

As the campus cop neared us, he smiled at me. He probably expected to find two guys pummeling each other's faces into the hot asphalt, and very slowly, he headed over to my idling car. He peered into the window and pulled on the door handle. "Hmm," he started. "I've seen this happen before." I hung onto those words, feeling relief in knowing that some other student had done the same stupid thing as me. "Yeah, it was on one of those TV sitcoms. Real funny show. I just can't remember the name of it."

I sought television for the answer. “So, how did it end?”

“Hmm, can’t remember that either.” He put a hand on my shoulder. “Listen, young lady, you can either call a locksmith or open it with a spare key. Now, does anyone have a key to your car?”

“No...but...” I turned toward school because someone had a spare key to my house, and as I rushed toward the English wing, I concocted a please-may-I-borrow-your-keys speech. But I didn’t have to give it because when I entered Advanced Placement English, Rob was swirling his car keys on his forefinger. I approached his desk slowly, and he smiled up at me, his dimples sinking deep into his cheeks. “Are you looking for these, Chlo?”

“Yeah.” I bit down on my lip.

“You’ll owe me.”

“I know...anything, Rob.”

“Anything?”

“No,” I chided back.

“Yeah, I didn’t think so.”

* * *

Back at the parking lot, I climbed into Rob’s bright yellow Jeep and clicked off the sports radio. Within a few minutes, I reached the gatehouse of my neighborhood. The guard looked at me quizzically. He recognized the Jeep; he recognized me; but he wasn’t used to seeing me in the driver’s seat. Rather than letting me pass through the gate, he held up his hand.

“Listen, it’s a long story, Clyde,” I said.

He tucked the newspaper under his arm and moved closer to me. “Well, I got nothing but time, Miss Preston.”

I smiled politely, but before I could formulate a response, he began, “I remember when you were about this tall.” He bent over, making me the size of a miniature poodle, and then he shook his head like he

was inside a memory. At that moment, I realized I was his captive audience. I had no other choice but to sit there and listen to him, since Clyde controlled the arm of the gatehouse and Rob would be pretty amiss if I plowed through it with his Jeep.

Clyde continued on despite my repertoire of facial expressions. “Each morning you’d arrive at the bus stop, and that Callahan boy would have something for you—a flower, a note, a bag of candy.” His eyes drifted toward the street corner where the newest batch of elementary school kids congregated at the bus stop, and we watched the little boys chase the squealing girls as their mothers sipped their coffees and shouted their last disciplinary decrees for the morning.

Then Clyde’s eyes fell on me again. “Oh, you couldn’t have been much more than six or seven at the time, and I thought that boy would give you just about anything.” He stepped forward and rested a hand on the side of the Jeep. “And I guess, even after all these years, he still would.”

“Yup, that’s what friends are for,” I returned and drove on, taking a quick right onto my street. Rob and I lived in a pretty nice subdivision: typical Florida style with pastel-colored stucco homes. Each house had a large front portico, a terracotta-tiled roof, and high-arched windows, but my house was not like the others. It had a shake-shingled roof and floor-to-ceiling windows, making it the lone contemporary atop a heavily treed hill; and even though it was an architectural anomaly in the neighborhood, all of its individuality was lost behind a forest of wide-armed oaks and sky-reaching pines.

I zipped up the long driveway and entered my house with Rob’s key. My father gave him a house key when my mother started back to work full-time. I have always had issues with keys, and at first, my parents tried the inconspicuous rock by the front door. But each time I entered the house with the spare key, I forgot to put it back. So the next time I got locked out...

Anyway, Rob was more reliable.

Entering my house was like crossing the time portal into the Victorian era, and even though our contemporary home needed sleek-lined furniture and abstract art, it was decorated with antiques and vibrant oils. Pictures of flowers and fruit bowls covered the creamy walls while dainty benches and fainting sofas rested on tiled floors.

My bedroom was at the top of the stairs and furnished in a similar fashion; with an antique sleigh bed, ornate writer's desk, and a triple dresser, it looked more like the guest accommodations of a New England bed and breakfast than a teenager's retreat. My favorite part of my room was the seat in the bay window, which jutted out into the rear of the home and overlooked the pool and the woods. On either side of the window seat, the built-in shelves housed my books, knick-knacks, and photos.

I grabbed my spare set of keys off the top shelf of my bookcase and hurried back to school; and once there, I turned off my car and headed into the main doors of Riverside. It was well into first hour, and the school resembled a ghost town. The only sound was me, jingling like a janitor with three sets of keys in my hand.

For a moment, I paused in the front lobby of my high school. On my right, the administrative offices sprawled endlessly down the hall, but on my left, the glass display cases extended the length of the opposite wall, proudly displaying all the trophies, plaques, and awards from the last forty years.

But it was the massive state championship football trophy that always caught my eye. Shiny and impressive, surrounded by smaller symbols of lesser football seasons, the trophy could have been presented to one player rather than to our entire team. Our star running back single-handedly won it for the school. He knew it. Everyone knew it. And all that knowing promoted my boyfriend to god status at Riverside High.

Writing Workshop: Dialogue

Materials:

- ✓ Class set of “Chapter 1” from *Nothing but Trouble after Midnight (NBTAM)*. (Another chapter may be substituted for this exercise.)
- ✓ Copy of “Conversational Cards” (Copy on cardstock and cut into cards.)
- ✓ Copies of “Dialogue Handout”
- ✓ Class set of “Dialogue Rules”

Objective:

Students will use “Chapter 1” of *NBTAM* as a model for creating dialogue for their own short story.

Activities:

1. Briefly introduce the novel and the author.
2. Go over the definition of dialogue: Dialogue is the conversation between characters.
3. Read and discuss “Chapter 1” of *NBTAM*.
4. Divide students into pairs and distribute one conversational card to each pair.
5. Allow students to discuss the topic for one minute. Then they will record the conversation on the handout.
6. The students will use the conversation in their short story, but they have to place the conversation in one of the following settings:
 - deserted island
 - pirate ship
 - waiting in line at an amusement park
 - the mall
 - an expensive restaurant
 - a playground
 - during a rock concert
 - a wedding reception
 - a birthday party

Assessment:

Depending on the grade level, assign a length for the short story.

-CONVERSATIONAL CARDS-

Are you a morning or night person?	What is your favorite holiday?	What do you want to be when you grow up?
What's the best costume you have ever worn?	What's your favorite breakfast food?	Are you afraid of heights?
If you could have a super power, what would it be?	What's your favorite season?	What did you have for lunch yesterday?
What's your favorite book—or genre of fiction?	If you could live in any home on a television series, what would it be?	What is your favorite school supply?
If you had to be named after one of the 50 states, what name would you choose?	What color do you feel like today?	What's the longest you ever waited in line?
What's the sickest you've ever been?	What's your favorite TV commercial?	Which talent would you prefer—singing, dancing, or drawing?
What's your favorite breakfast food?	When was the last time you traveled out of state? (If never, then where do you want to go?)	What's your favorite subject in school?

Names: _____

Dialogue Handout

Speaker #1:

Speaker #2:

Dialogue Rules

Dialogue is the conversation between characters, and those spoken words go inside the quotation marks.

Rule #1: Place a comma between the dialogue and the words used to identify the speaker. (The words used to identify the speaker are called the tag line.)

“No,” I chided back.

“Listen, it’s a long story, Clyde,” I said.

Rule #2: When a tag line interrupts the sentence, it should be set off by commas.

“So, are you,” I paused before I repeated his word, “flattered?”

Rule #3: Periods and commas go inside the quotation marks. Other marks of punctuation—exclamation point, question mark, dashes, semicolons—go inside the quotation marks if they pertain to the dialogue.

“Hey!” he yelled, cupping his hands around his mouth and shouting in every direction.

“So, how did it end?”

“But—” I tried.

Rule #4: For interior monologues (thoughts inside the narrator’s head), you don’t use quotation marks but italics.

Yeah, I thought, At least I dated him once.
