



PRESENTED BY BLACK ODYSSEY MEDIA
INTERVIEWED BY CHARDAI POWELL

Chardai: Hi, Lana! So excited to have you for Next Chapter. I want to start off by asking my favorite question: What is your earliest memory of falling in love with reading?

Lana: My earliest memory of reading was in middle school—the Selection series. Ate it up! I just submerged myself into it, and I was like, "Oh, this is an option. I can just ignore everything else and dive into this."

Chardai: That takes me back to the Scholastic Book Fair! So, when you're reading, where would you say you feel the safest?

Lana: I'd have to say at home. It's where my nervous system feels the calmest. I'm definitely a couch reader with a smooth jazz playlist in the background.

Chardai: Love a smooth jazz playlist! I want to take it back a little. If you could go back and tell your younger self something, what would Alana *now* say to Alana *then*?

Lana: Ohhh... don't be afraid. Just post. I have a very analytical mind, but I also have to remind myself I'm doing this because I love doing this. I can come up with a million and five ideas, but it's about executing.



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Chardai: You and I both—execution is the word of the year! If you had to choose, what would you say you've learned about yourself through your podcast, *She Well Read*, and as a podcaster?

Lana: This year the show marks seven years. We started fresh out of college. The whole premise of our show was that we were both trying to get back into reading for fun. Samra had the idea of starting a book club, and I was thinking, "Oh, this would be a really dope podcast." From then to now, I went from reading maybe seven books a year, and now I'm reading book 30 of the year. I've really fallen in love with the art of reading again.

Chardai: Falling in love with the art of reading—yes, girl, the art itself! Is there an interview that, when you look back on it, has really stood out to you on *She Well Read*?

Lana: I'll have to say my top two moments from this year. I sat down with Liara Tamani, who is the author of *This Ain't Our First Rodeo*. She, as a person, is such light and energy and fun. The things she was saying in the interview, I was like, both young people need to hear this and adults need to hear this. And another one is Danielle Allen. The fact that she's a life coach—I don't think a lot of people clock that—and that was another really transformative conversation.

Chardai: Yes! I didn't know Danielle was a life coach until BRBF, and I love her! Well, while we're giving flowers, is there a creator you'd like to give your flowers to?

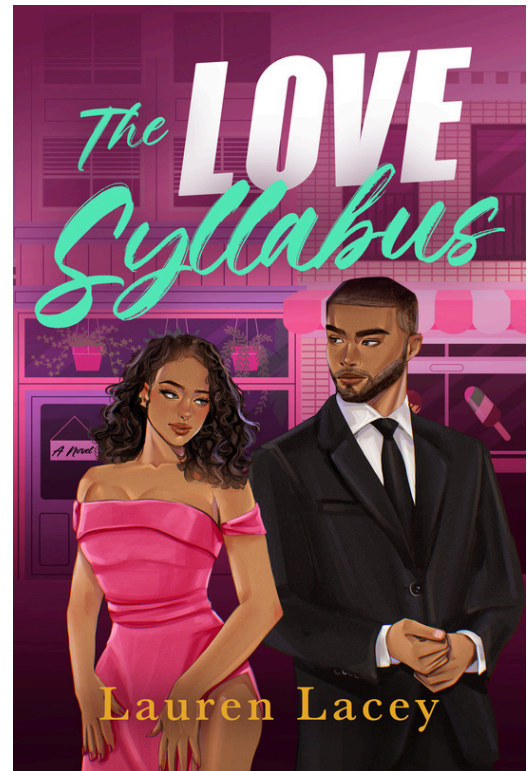
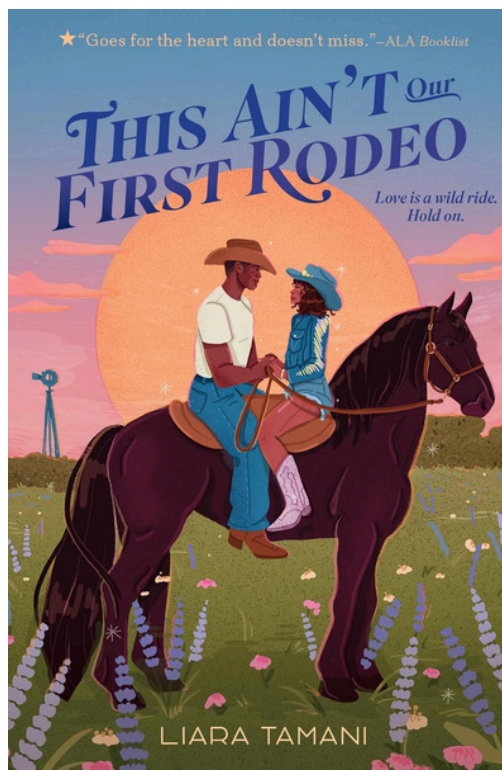
Lana: I have two. I love Simone (@thesimplysimone). What's funny is I was a viewer of hers, and then I met her at BRBF, and she knew who I was. I was like, "Girl, what? You don't understand—I'm a fan!" From then on, we connected over being media girllies. The second person I want to shout out is Niccara, @thebookishhottie. The way she's building her community—she has so many different events that she does. She's doing all these amazing things and bringing people together.

Chardai: Love both of those two. Bouquets to them! What book would you say has become a part of your story that you've read this year?

Lana: Ohhh, that's good. I think *If I Ruled the World* by Amy DuBois Barnett. Just seeing how she grew from the beginning of the book until the end. We're navigating with her through her 20s, and I'm 29, so there were a lot of moments where I was like, "Oh, this is why I do this," and "This is why I do that."

Chardai: Lana, you're literally giving me a reading list! I'm not surprised because it's you, but I just feel so refreshed. Ending us on this chapter... Where do you see yourself in these next few years? Like, what's on your Pinterest board for the book world?

Lana: I would say being more confident and going to more events by myself. Not just conferences, but even more intimate events, like going to dinner with book friends. Being more interconnected, feeling more solidified, and just feeling more confident.



Chardai: Those are great ones. The book girlies are great, but it's not always easy, so I know you'll do great with those goals. What are you hoping people remember about Lana when they think of the book space?

Lana: Oh my gosh... now I understand what authors feel like when they're like, "Why would you ask me that?"

[Both laughing.]

Lana: Just being present in the moment. Knowing what I stand for and what I don't stand for. I feel like the thing that centers us all is wanting to represent us as a community as a whole. Being someone who's doing that—not even just in the romance genre, but for Black creators in general. Easygoing, fun, personable... lifelong yapper.

Chardai: I love it. I'll listen to you yap, Lana girl! I love talking to you. Is there a book from the Black Odyssey Media catalog that's on your TBR?

Lana: Oh, I would have to say *The Love Syllabus* by Lauren Lacey.

Chardai: Thank you, thank you, thank you, Lana! I can't wait to see what you do on your own and on She Well Read podcast! Please connect with Lana at [@livinlikelana_](https://www.instagram.com/livinlikelana_)





Chardai Powell is a writer and digital storyteller who believes in the power of Black stories told with care. She is the Social Media Manager at Black Odyssey Media and a former lead bookseller known for uplifting Black indie authors and creating meaningful literary events. She is the founder of Dear Black Love, a community-driven event brand celebrating Black love and creativity, and is committed to using media as a tool for connection, visibility, and joy.



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