

Someone had to make him pay. Someone had to take her down...

SOMEONE

HAD TO

DO IT

a novel



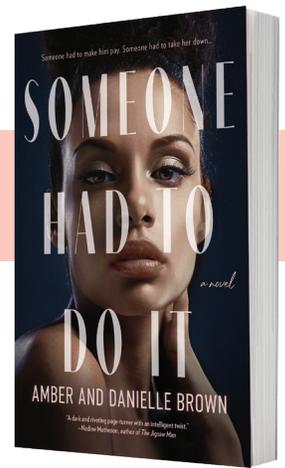
AMBER AND DANIELLE BROWN

"A dark and riveting page-turner with an intelligent twist."

—Nadine Matheson, author of *The Jigsaw Man*

The story behind

SOMEONE HAD TO DO IT



It's crazy that *SHTDI* ever came into existence since Amber once vowed we would never write a book together because she didn't want us to fight all day long. But one morning, she popped out of bed and said something like, "What if we wrote a story about this girl who wants to be in fashion, but ends up getting sucked into this crazy world and realizes it's not as glamorous as it seems?" The phrase "deceptively beautiful" was on repeat in our heads as we brainstormed a plot from this concept.

We literally sat on the couch for three hours—no breakfast, no shower—and threw out idea after idea, just building off each other until we both knew we had something solid. Something fresh. The more we realized we were telling a cat-and-mouse story, the more it felt right to tell it from two perspectives—one from Brandi, the outsider, because that's essentially who we were when we worked in fashion, and the other from her polar opposite, Taylor, the almost obnoxiously privileged heiress who, from the outside, is exactly where Brandi wants to be.

By the end of our session on the couch, we essentially had a beat sheet with all the major plot points we knew we wanted to hit. Also, tons of notes on characters and scenes we knew we wanted to explore. Tone was instant too. We knew right away that our goal was to write something fun, sexy and fast-paced that would resonate with our generation—millennials and upper Gen Z—because there aren't a lot of thrillers on the market that actually target our demographic. But it was also important that the book touched on certain themes like privilege and entitlement and the inequality of our justice system because that's the reality of the world we live in. The book is part escapist, but it's also grounded in very genuine critique of the corrosive effects of racism and extreme wealth.

Writing this book together completely from scratch was definitely harder than we anticipated, but also, extremely worth it. We both went into it a little naive; we assumed that because we generally have similar tastes and writing styles, writing this novel would be a breeze, but we found ourselves disagreeing on a lot of small things (that, of course, felt *gargantuan* in the moment). It doesn't help that we both have very strong opinions about everything and can both be incredibly obstinate when we feel we're right. It took us a few weeks of cursing each other out in a Google Doc before we learned how to communicate our concerns and disagreements in a respectful way and how to truly compromise. It'd be hard to point out any line and one of us to be able to say, "Yes, I wrote that," because that's how collaborative the process was. The voice of the book really came together so well because we both built off each other and, in the end, combining both of our viewpoints and sensibilities elevated the book tremendously.

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The Playlist

1. “Twenty One”

—Khalid

2. “Whole Lotta Money (Remix)”

—Bia featuring Nicki Minaj

3. “deja vu”

—Olivia Rodrigo

4. “Tumblr Girls”

—G-Eazy featuring Christoph Andersson

5. “Modern Loneliness”

—Lauv

6. “Super Rich Kids”

—Frank Ocean

7. “I’m a Mess”

—Bebe Rexha

8. “Rich White Girls”

—mansionz

9. “happier”

—Olivia Rodrigo

10. “lovely”

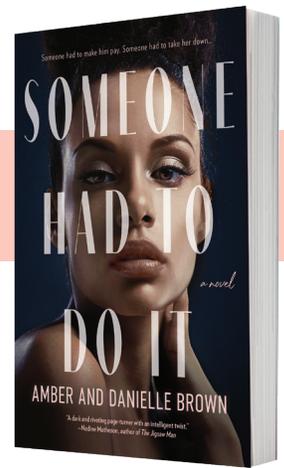
—Billie Eilish and Khalid

11. “New Normal”

—Khalid

Discussion Guide

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION



1. We find out very early on that Brandi is put on probation at her internship because she does not fit in with the “culture” at Van Doren. Discuss why this excuse is a microaggression and what her supervisor actually meant by this statement.
2. Nate is an interesting character in both Brandi’s and Taylor’s worlds because he is sort of the halfway mark between the two. He, like Taylor, has grown up rich and famous-adjacent, but his parents are from humble beginnings and have raised him with limited access to their wealth. How do his and Taylor’s different upbringings impact the decisions they each make throughout the story?
3. Taylor and her friends ultimately decide to frame Brandi for the murder of Simon, saying it’d be like “killing two birds with one stone.” Why do you think Brandi was the perfect person to take the “fall” in Taylor’s eyes? Do think race and/or class played a part in their decision? If so, in what ways?
4. Glover seems to be wary of Taylor from the start of the murder investigation, suspecting her as the perpetrator from the beginning. Why do you think she wasn’t initially able to convince Bierman to look into Taylor as a prime suspect or even a person of interest?
5. Who do you think was the true villain(s) of the story?
6. We finally learn that it was actually Izzy who laced Simon’s glasses with the poison. Were you surprised by this reveal? Did you think it was an interesting plot twist or were you expecting it?
7. What are your thoughts about the ending? Did you think Taylor would get away with her crimes? Do you think she’ll actually go to prison for the murder of Simon, or will she find a way to wield her privilege and work the system in her favor?
8. What did you think of Brandi and Nate’s relationship? Did you think it was a positive, tender and compassionate representation of black love?
9. Was there ever a point in the story where you felt like you were starting to understand Taylor’s motivations for wanting her father dead? Were you ever on her side, even briefly?
10. As a millennial or a Gen Zer, what were some of the themes addressed in the novel that specially resonated with you and why?