



Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

At Harlequin, we are committed to publishing diverse and inclusive voices so that readers see themselves reflected in the books we publish. We work to foster a culture of respect, openness, support and belonging where our employees, authors and publishing partners feel welcome to express and reflect the voices, experiences and thoughts of a diverse society.

As a publisher and as an employer, we embrace a broad definition of diversity and we aim to include people of all ethnicities, races, genders, sexual orientations, ages, classes, religions, national origins and disabilities. As an employer partner of the Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion and Pride at Work Canada, Harlequin employees have access to resources and training to further support being an open, accepting and welcoming place to work and to publish.

We are proud to publish talented and bestselling authors representing many backgrounds, communities and cultures. Harlequin offers a broad range of content – including romance fiction across subgenres, psychological thrillers, crime novels and speculative fiction, young adult novels, commercial literary fiction and narrative nonfiction – enabling authors with diverse perspectives to share their stories. We publish inclusive romance stories with LGBTQ+ characters in imprints across our publishing program, including Carina Press, Carina Adores, several Harlequin Series imprints, and Inkyard Press to name a few.

We welcome all authors to the Harlequin community and are actively working to further broaden diversity and representation in our publishing programs. We reach out to authors by calling for submissions for Harlequin's [Romance Includes You Mentorship](#). We organize #RomanceIncludesYou pitch events and participate in external pitch events that connect editors with writers in marginalized communities. We accept unagented romance story submissions and encourage authors in underrepresented communities to include #RomanceIncludesYou with their story submission to quickly bring these submissions to our editors' attention. We have established a [scholarship program](#) through four writing programs in Canada and the United States to foster diverse voices and emerging talent.

We further extend our outreach through involvement with writer's conferences, events and festivals that promote diversity in publishing, including:

- The Festival of Literary Diversity
- Romance Slam Jam
- Black Writers Weekend
- One Love Reader and Author Reunion
- Building Relationships Around Books
- Christian Book Lovers Retreat
- Toronto Romance Writers

- Black Ink Charleston
- DVCon and #dvpit
- Chicago-North Romance Writers Spring Fling
- Black Pens Writing Retreat
- Black Readers Conference

We act on promotional opportunities to amplify diverse voices and stories, and work to ensure that book promotions are inclusive so that readers see themselves reflected in the books we publish.

As we work to publish more stories by authors in underrepresented communities, we recognize the importance of the Black Lives Matter movement and the need for greater representation in publishing by Black authors. We are working to acquire and further promote stories by Black authors in several ways:

- We welcomed proposals directly from unagented Black authors in 2020 for certain Harlequin fiction and YA imprints. We requested more than 50 manuscripts and are publishing eight of these titles, including two notable debuts that became major book club picks. (Normally our fiction imprints accept agented submissions only.)
- We welcome story submissions by Black romance writers and invite them to submit unagented manuscripts for Harlequin’s romance lines through [Harlequin.Submittable.com](https://www.harlequin.com/submittable) anytime.
- Editors participate in online pitch events showcasing the work of Black authors, such as #PitBLK, #dvpit and other events supporting marginalized and underrepresented voices.
- We feature romance stories with Black characters on Harlequin.com and support this promotion with online advertising campaigns.
- We have hosted events with Black-owned and Latin-owned bookstores to raise awareness of stories by authors in underrepresented communities, and we plan to do more.

With input from employees, initiatives have been developed to remove barriers and better attract and retain a diverse workforce, including offering paid internship positions for new graduates interested in working in publishing. Anti-racism training and education is provided to employees to raise awareness and further build an open and inclusive culture for our staff, authors and partners.

