


A person is shown from the waist up, wearing a denim jacket over a t-shirt. They are holding two wooden drumsticks over a drum. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting a stage or concert setting. The title 'Keeping the Beat' is written in a large, white, cursive font across the top. Below the title, the text 'FAME. LOVE. FRIENDS. PICK ANY TWO.' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. At the bottom right, the authors' names 'MARIE POWELL & JEFF NORTON' are listed in a white, sans-serif font.

Keeping the Beat

FAME. LOVE. FRIENDS. PICK ANY TWO.

MARIE POWELL
& JEFF NORTON



Five girls who are practically strangers form a band, win a reality TV talent show and are whisked from London to LA for an epic summer they'll never forget.

*So far,
so fabulous.*

But when the rock 'n' roll dream spirals dangerously into nightmare territory, drummer Lucy must keep a steady beat or risk losing it all ...

Keeping
the Beat

Keeping the Beat

MARIE POWELL

AND

JEFF NORTON



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Written by Marie Powell and Jeff Norton

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To Janice, Nicola, Menaka, Jane,
Amber, Reece and Dana — for always helping me keep
the beat — M.P.

To Sidonie, who always believed — J.N.

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INTRO: Neon Halo

Lucy Gosling had imagined a lot of different ways that her friendship with Harper McKenzie might end. None of them had involved finding Harper's dead body in a swimming pool in LA.

But there she was, floating face down in the bright turquoise water. A cloud of blood wove itself around her, tangling with the chlorine and the orange rays of dawn sunlight to wrap her body in a halo of neon pink.

Harper would love that color.

Lucy marveled at the stray thought as it sank through her brain. What was wrong with her? It wasn't as though she'd spotted a nail polish she thought Harper would like.

It was blood.

There was so much blood.

"Is this Harper McKenzie?" asked Detective Hernandez, the LAPD officer in charge of the scene.

"Yes," Lucy said. She felt as though a thin layer of

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cotton wool was wrapping itself around her, filling in her ears and nose and mouth, making it difficult to breathe.

Harper was dead.

No, she wasn't just dead. She'd been shot.

What happened, Harper? Lucy raged silently at the girl she'd never get the chance to bicker with again. *What did you do? I was your best friend. Why didn't you talk to me?*

Lucy looked down at the single charm that dangled from her wrist. The little half heart read *BFF*. Best Friends Forever. She couldn't see it from where she stood, but Lucy knew that Harper still wore the other half.

The charms were silly. Kids' stuff. She had laughed at Harper when she'd insisted that Lucy dig out the tiny relic from their childhood, but it really had been lovely to wear it again. To feel like it was true again. And despite everything that had happened that summer, neither girl had taken the charm off.

Lucy felt the first tear slip down her cheek.

Detective Hernandez was asking questions, but Lucy couldn't hear him. She couldn't seem to focus on anything but the single sentence that was playing on repeat inside her head.

Harper McKenzie was dead.

**Eight Months
Earlier ...**

1. I Love You, I Hate You

Lucy settled into her usual, solitary table in the corner of the dining hall at St. Gabriel's Girls' School. First day back from the Christmas holidays and her brain was already sloshing with math and French and loads of other things she was sure no normal person could be expected to cram into her head all at the same time.

She popped in her earbuds, cranked up Electric's latest album, *Swing*, and dug into her fish fingers and chips with a sigh of contentment. A little quality time with Trent Eisner's midnight-blue voice was exactly what she needed. She must have listened to *Swing* twenty-five times in the three days since she'd downloaded it, but she still liked it as much as she had the first time.

She'd worked her way into a respectable musical wallow when Harper McKenzie dropped into the chair across from her, unplugged Lucy's earbuds and stole one of her fish fingers.

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“I hope you know a hot girl who plays bass, because we’ve got a guitar and drums ... and obviously a lead singer.” Harper gestured to herself with the half-eaten fish finger. “But a real rock band needs a bass.”

Lucy stared at Harper. The tall, blonde American girl had been her friend once. Her best friend, in fact. But they hadn’t said a word to each other in nearly two years. Lucy wasn’t sure Harper had actually acknowledged her presence on planet Earth in that time. Now she was sitting at Lucy’s lunch table, eating Lucy’s lunch.

“We might need something else, too. Not a violin, that’s too 1994, and not in a good way. We need something cutting-edge but, like, classic. I want Crush to be more what you’d get if Katy Perry had a baby with The Clash and then let Madonna circa 1989 raise it. You know?” Harper asked in her Californian twang.

“I mean, I’m totally right. Right?” Harper tried again.

“Crush?” Lucy said, still trying to figure out what Harper was on about.

“Our band. Crush. We’re going to rock *Project Next*’s world.”

“We?”

“You, me, Robyn Miller — she plays the guitar — and our TBA bass player. We’ve got two months before the deadline to turn our demo in to *Project Next*, but we really need to get practicing, like, yesterday. Do any of the girls in orchestra play bass, too? I guess we can audition —”

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“Harper,” Lucy cut in. “You do realize you haven’t spoken to me in ages, right?”

“So?” Harper said, dipping a chip into the ketchup on Lucy’s plate and taking another bite. “That was your parents’ idea, not ours. That doesn’t mean we’re not friends anymore, does it?”

How was Lucy meant to answer that question?

Her first impulse was to say, “You got drunk at my fifteenth birthday party and smashed my mum’s car — with me in it — into a tree. Then you completely abandoned me to being grounded for six months, on crutches with three pins in my leg, while you were busy becoming the most popular girl in school because Rafe bloody Jackson thinks being a daredevil makes you sexy. So yes, that’s absolutely what it means,” which would only make her sound like a stuck-up, grudge-holding cow. Even if it was true.

Lucy settled on, “Um, I don’t know.”

Harper shot her a brilliant grin. “Well I do. We are friends. We always have been and we always will be. And Crush is going to be brilliant!”

As Harper chattered on, Lucy contemplated reminding her that she’d never agreed to be in a band, or to try out for a reality show like *Project Next*. Not to mention the fact that Lucy’s parents were unlikely to allow it, even if the whole thing hadn’t been Harper’s idea.

That was the kiss of death, though. The “Harper’s idea” bit. Because the Gosling Parental Ban on Harper McKenzie had most definitely not expired. But the longer Lucy let

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Harper chatter on about costumes and lyrical themes, the less she wanted to put an end to her friend's delusion. Harper had been the reason Lucy had learned to play the drums in the first place, after all. If she hadn't forced Lucy to actually go into the music shop and try out the drum kit she'd been ogling through the window, Lucy might never have picked up a drumstick. It only seemed fair to hear her out.

Besides, if she was being honest, Lucy knew she didn't want to say no.

She wanted to say yes.

"Toni and I sat next to each other in chemistry last year," Lucy explained to Harper later that afternoon as they pushed through the heavy glass doors of Bella, the elegant Italian restaurant that Toni Clarke's grandparents owned in Greenwich.

"Her granddad was a jazz musician when he was young. I guess he was quite famous. Her mum was a pretty well-known model before she died, on the cover of *Vogue* and whatever. Toni's always been keen to be famous as well. She used to play with Josie Hartcourt's band, Spitfire, but they broke up last year. I'm sure she'll be interested."

It was freezing outside and pouring rain, but Harper looked like she had just been made-up to shoot a romantic rain scene in a Hollywood film. Lucy, on the other hand, was quite sure she looked like a drowned porcupine. But then that was the difference between being

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Lucy Gosling and being Harper McKenzie, Lucy supposed.

“Of course she’ll want to join Crush,” Harper said, pushing a twist of wet blonde hair from her eyes. “The question is do we want *her*? I mean, sure, she’s pretty. And Spitfire wasn’t tragic, so I guess she can probably play. But she was on the field hockey team with me last season and she was such a stuck-up brat that I almost had to kill her then. I can’t imagine having to rehearse with her every day.”

“I like her,” Lucy said, “and she’s really very good on bass. Who said we were rehearsing every day?”

“Maybe she’s awesome,” Harper replied, ignoring the question, “but if the two of us end up murdering each other we’ll be short a bassist *and* a lead singer — and then where will Crush be?”

Lucy giggled and craned her neck, looking for Toni. “We’ll have to see if she’s interested before you decide whether or not you’ll have to kill her. Where is she?”

Toni Clarke ducked into the break room, tossing her apron into the laundry and grabbing her oversized shoulder bag on her way to the kitchen.

“Elaina,” Toni called to the short, sour-faced waitress who was waiting for a round of orders. “Granddad wants you to cover for me this afternoon. It’s a slow day, so he thinks you can handle the floor alone.”

“I bet he does,” Elaina snapped. “All his idea as well, was it?”

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Toni grabbed table nine's cappuccino and returned the older waitress's dagger-sharp glare with a bright grin.

"Thankyousomuch," she sing-songed as she pushed into the dining room.

Toni didn't know why Elaina always had to be so snippy about it when Toni ducked out early. She made tons of extra tips when she didn't have to split the shift's takings. Besides, Toni wasn't even a proper waitress. She only worked at Bella because her grandparents wanted her to know the family business from the ground up. Not that Toni ever intended to run Bella. There were a lot of things Toni planned to be famous for but pasta wasn't one of them.

She skimmed to a stop at table nine, tossed her curtain of brown hair over her shoulder and flashed a charming smile down at the perfectly gorgeous specimen who was sitting there, thumbing through his iPhone.

"My shift's finished," she said, "but I wanted to make sure that you got this."

"Aren't you sweet?" Perfectly Gorgeous drawled, looking up from the iPhone with a slow smile.

"Occasionally," she chirruped back.

"Why don't you —"

"Hey, Toni!"

What had surely been an invitation to sit down was cut off by a bright feminine voice from across the room. Two girls in St. Gabriel's uniforms were sitting at table twelve. One of them was waving madly.

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Toni shot the interrupters a death glare and returned her attentions to Perfectly Gorgeous.

“You were saying?” she said encouragingly.

“Toni! Over here!”

Someone was going to die. Painfully.

“Hold that thought,” Toni told Perfectly Gorgeous, covering her irritation with a sparkly smile. Then she spun on her heel and stalked toward table twelve.

She was on the verge of shredding the pair of them when she recognized the smaller girl’s wild curls.

“Lucy Gosling?” she said. “I haven’t seen you in ages. What are you doing here?”

“Luckily, she’s not here to eat,” said the blonde sitting across from Lucy. “We’ve been sitting here for fifteen minutes and we don’t even have a menu.”

She looked awfully familiar. But why ... A flash of memory flooded Toni’s brain. Skidding across a patch of rough mud in a field hockey skirt while that set of perfect blonde waves beat her to the goal. Then she knew.

“Harper McKenzie,” Toni said, eyes narrowed. “Since when do you eat carbs?”

“I don’t,” Harper shot back. “I told you, we’re not here to eat. We’re here to talk to you.”

“I’m just leaving, actually.”

“We’ll be quick,” Lucy said, ignoring Harper’s eye roll. “Promise. We’re putting a band together and we need a bass.”

“Band?”

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“A rock band,” Lucy said. “We need a bass player. We’re calling ourselves Crush.”

“Great. Good for you. I don’t have time to mess about in someone’s basement, pretending we’re going to be The Beatles. I have an actual job.” Toni waved toward the restaurant behind her for emphasis and caught sight of Evil Elaina handing Perfectly Gorgeous his bill. “And a life. Which, at the moment, you are ruining.”

“Oh, please,” Harper said. “You’re not talking about that guy you were batting your eyelashes at, I hope. He’s ancient. And wearing a ring, by the way. As in married. If that’s what you call having a life, we may have to find another bass player.”

Toni shrugged. “Some of us have more sophisticated tastes than others. Now, if you’ll excuse me ...”

With that, Toni marched straight past Perfectly Gorgeous toward the front doors, ignoring his hopeful expression. Married? And flirting with her? Only in his dreams.

Toni was almost to the door when Harper called after her. “We’re going to be on *Project Next*. And we’re going to win.”

Toni stopped. She’d heard of *Project Next*. It wasn’t going to be like any of the other tired talent competitions on TV. Bands on *Project Next* would actually play gigs and record an album in America. Then the winner would go on an international tour. They would be truly, properly famous. If Lucy and Harper had a band good enough to win *Project Next* ...

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No. Harper was too annoying to live. Not even starring in *Project Next* was worth that.

Famous.

Toni found herself turning back.

She dropped into the seat beside Lucy. “How can you be so sure you’re going to win?” she asked Harper.

“Because I don’t lose.”

The next afternoon, Robyn Miller sucked in her stomach and turned sideways, examining herself in the warped full-length mirrors of St. Gabriel’s music practice room where she was waiting for Harper and the new additions to Crush. Even when she sucked it in so hard that she couldn’t breathe, she was too enormous for words.

No wonder Ryan had found another girl. A prettier, thinner university girl who probably knew every move in the entire *Kama Sutra*. In French. How could a deathly pale high school virgin who was roughly the size of a whale compete?

It wasn’t fair. Somehow Harper had turned being ditched by Ryan’s best friend, Rafe Jackson, into an occasion for losing weight, writing an LP’s worth of perfect breakup rock and starting a band that might just be good enough to win the *Project Next* competition.

Robyn, on the other hand, had used being ditched at the exact same time as a golden opportunity to get bigger. And blotchier.

At least Harper had let Robyn compose the music

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for the Crush songs, even if it was only because Harper needed someone who knew how to harmonize a melody. Robyn had always liked making up little tunes on her guitar, and composing to Harper's lyrics had been simply brilliant. Robyn had loved every second of it. She desperately wanted to hear her music played by a full band.

Of course, she was also positively rigid with terror that the others would hate the music she'd written. What if Robyn was completely delusional about her musical abilities? What if she was actually a crap composer who should never be allowed to scribble a single note ever again?

Robyn twisted to check that her butt hadn't grown since the stack of chocolate cookies she'd inhaled at lunch because she was so depressed over Ryan George and his bony university girl. That was the last time she'd let Ryan make her fatter. She swore it was. She was better than that, wasn't she?

"You *are* better than that," she told the mirror, then she looked around her, suddenly sure Harper and the others were just outside, watching her and laughing.

They weren't, but she definitely wasn't alone in the music center. A soft, winding melody was beginning to find its way through the thin walls. Someone was next door, playing Chopin — and playing Chopin rather brilliantly.

The music swelled into thunderous, driving arpeggios filled with so much emotion that they nearly made Robyn's hair stand on end. Whoever was playing was pissed off —

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the way they were bashing out the notes was quite rock and roll, despite it being a classical piece. A sudden image of Chopin with a battered leather jacket and black-polished nails shot into Robyn's brain, making her giggle.

Robyn slipped out of the practice room and silently padded down the hall to peek into the room next door. When she peered through the observation window, her jaw dropped.

Izabella Mazurczak sat on the piano stool, completely absorbed in her music. Izabella was possibly the shyest, quietest girl in their year. Yet here she was, creating a wave of violent emotion with the piano keys.

"Sorry, Robs, I know we're late," Harper called as she hurried past Robyn to the Crush practice room. With her was Lucy Gosling and a tall brunette who Robyn recognized as Toni Clarke, their year's resident wannabe supermodel, in her wake.

Lucy stopped beside Robyn at the practice room window.

"Bloody brilliant, isn't she?" Robyn whispered.

"Better than brilliant," Lucy said, beckoning Harper and Toni back to join them. "Come here."

"What?" Harper asked.

"Shush and come here," Lucy said. "We've found her."

"Found who?"

"Our fifth member."

"No," Toni said when she caught sight of Izabella. "Absolutely not. We're not making Izabella Mazurczak

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part of Crush. We'll have a four o'clock curfew."

"But listen to that," said Lucy. "Nobody's going to confuse us with a Disney Channel act if we've got a baby grand on stage."

"Maybe," Robyn said, mulling over the possibilities. She could already hear how she'd weave Izabella's piano into the melodies she'd written. Delicately sometimes, and pounding like a drum in others. It was so spectacularly perfect that she had to stop herself running back to their practice room for her pad of music paper and pencil.

"I mean, adding piano variations for the songs would be brilliant, actually," Robyn said, containing her excitement so that she didn't look insane in front of the others. "But Toni's right; we wanted Iza to accompany the musical last year but she's literally not allowed out of the house after dark. How would we even rehearse, let alone deal with being on TV or going to LA for the whole summer if we win?"

"When," Harper said, a smile spreading across her face as she listened to the percussive passion of the piano ringing through the walls of the music center. "*When* we win."

Izabella Mazurczak had never been so wildly, incredibly, disastrously embarrassed. Ever.

She still couldn't believe that Miss Littleton, the headmistress, had actually called her mother in for a conference to discuss Iza's social life — or rather lack

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thereof. Listening to them talk about her “challenged interpersonal skills” being a “serious obstacle at the Cambridge interview” would have been bad enough, but her mum’s English was so useless that Iza had needed to translate the entire humiliating conversation into Polish for her.

Iza had wanted to scream. Really, really loudly. She wished she’d done it, too, or at least tried to stand up for herself, but Iza had always found that the angrier she was, the harder it was to get the words in her head out of her mouth. And Iza had been very, very angry.

When it was over, Iza had practically run from the office to the practice room. She hadn’t wanted anyone to see her crying; it would just make things worse. Though she didn’t know how things *could* get worse than her mother and the headmistress spending three-quarters of an hour discussing what a pathetic, friendless loser she was.

In here, wrapped in the music, she didn’t have to think about it. She didn’t have to feel lonely or wonder if Miss Littleton was right and the fact that she hadn’t made any friends since the Mazurczaks had come to London five years ago meant that something was wrong with her.

Things had been so much easier in Warsaw when she was small. Or even in Cambridge, where Papa had been on a teaching fellowship before he’d been offered the Classics chair at University College London. She’d had friends there. Not a lot of friends, but enough. So what had changed? Had she got uglier? More awkward?

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Had she spent so much time playing the piano that she'd forgotten how to talk properly?

Knock. Knock. Knock.

Iza nearly jumped out of her skin. She looked up to find Harper McKenzie and Lucy Gosling waving at her through the observation window.

Lucy pushed the door open. "Mind if we come in, Izabella? It is Izabella Mazurczak, right?"

Great. They had two subjects together this term, but Lucy could hardly remember Iza's name. Iza really must be a social disaster. Or possibly invisible. Perhaps that was it. Perhaps she was actually acquiring superpowers and it just seemed like she was "under-socialized" and "troublingly introverted."

"Oh no, have I pronounced your name wrong?" Lucy said.

Suddenly Iza realized she hadn't actually responded to the other girl's greeting.

"I'm so sorry, I'm always mangling things," Lucy continued, growing flustered. "My mum says I sound as though I learned to speak from wolves, which makes no sense now that I think of it. But she's right, I'm rubbish with new words."

"No," Iza finally managed. "I'm sorry, I was just surprised. You pronounced it right. Most people just call me Iza, though," she added.

"Ah. Iza. Right. That's lovely," Lucy said. But then she didn't seem to know what to say next. Neither did Iza.

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“Stop hovering in the doorway, Luce!” Harper pushed past her friend into the room. “Hi, Iza! You’re in my advanced math class, right? Mr. G is a nightmare, isn’t he?” Harper flashed her a warm grin that made Iza feel as though they were the best of friends, and that they always had been.

Iza felt herself smiling back; it was impossible to do anything else. “Yeah, I guess so,” she replied.

“Rather you than me,” Lucy jumped in. “I hate math. I’m just glad I dropped it after last year. I don’t know how you two manage.”

“It’s not so hard,” Iza said. Then she wished she could take it back. She sounded like such a geek.

Harper broke the awkward pause, taking control of the conversation. “We’re totally sorry to interrupt, but we were in the practice room next door and we heard you playing.”

“Was I too loud?” Iza asked. Of course. They’d come to complain. Why else would they bother to talk to her? “I’m so sorry.”

“Oh no!” Lucy said. “You were amazing. That’s why we’re here. We need your help.”

“My help?”

“We’ve just started a band,” Harper said, “and we were hoping we could convince you to join us.”

“A band? Like, a rock band?” Iza said, confused.

“Absolutely,” Harper replied. “It’s called Crush. It’s going to be awesome, but it’ll be even better if you decide to

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join us. We've written some really killer songs and adding a piano to the mix will make us totally stand out on the show. We're going to try out for *Project Next*, you know — the new reality show? After we get through to the final, we'll get to go to LA for the summer and record an album and do gigs and everything.”

“And even if we lose, it'll be a blast to try,” Lucy said.

“We're not going to lose, Lucy.” Harper shoved the smaller girl playfully. “Stop being such a downer.”

“I am not a downer,” Lucy shot back. “I'm just realistic, that's all. But that doesn't mean Crush won't be fun. And totally worth —”

“I'll do it,” Iza said, before she had the chance to talk herself out of it.

“You will?” Lucy looked surprised.

“Yes. I will. Definitely,” Iza repeated. “Absolutely. No question.”

If Mum and that awful Miss Littleton wanted Iza to be social, then she'd be social. And if her mum didn't like the fact that she'd chosen to do that by joining a rock band that would suck up hours of study time with practice and might take her five thousand miles away for the summer, then that was just too bad.

“I'm in.”

Lucy still wasn't quite sure how Harper had talked the Mazurczaks, who had to be the most overprotective parents in London, into allowing their daughter to join

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a rock band — and Lucy had been there when she'd done it. Somehow, with a little smooth talking, Harper had managed to convince them that Crush would be a “wonderful educational experience” for their precious daughter and that being on a hit television program would “look great on university applications.”

Too bad Lucy's mum and dad thought Harper was the devil in teenage form. She could have used Harper's help in convincing them that Crush wasn't going to completely wreck Lucy's life.

Lucy had mentioned the vague possibility of joining a band at dinner the night before and her mum had forbidden it straight off. “You need to focus on your studies now. You can join a band once you're at Oxford.”

Mum talked of nothing but Oxford these days. She was obsessed. That was John's fault, of course. Since Lucy's big brother had gone there, her mum wasn't about to settle for anything less for the rest of the Gosling brood. It didn't matter that Lucy didn't particularly want to go to Oxford or that she hadn't got the grades or brains to get in. Mum would still ground Lucy for the rest of the year if she found out Lucy had joined a band instead of cramming for hours every day in a futile attempt to match John's achievement.

Lucy sighed and looked up at the poster above her bed. It was a blowup of Electric's first album cover, with the band rocking out, their backs to the camera.

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A drummer's eye view, Lucy thought. A view she'd give anything to have. A view she'd never see if she didn't get moving. They were rehearsing at Harper's house today and Harper would murder Lucy if she was late.

Her mum would find out eventually of course. Lucy knew that. Nina Gosling's children never managed to put one over on her for long. But Lucy had already survived being grounded for six months after her fifteenth birthday party fiasco. She wasn't about to let the prospect of a little more time in solitary confinement keep her away from something that had already changed her life for the better in just a few days.

It wasn't just the music. Crush was more than that. Today, when first Toni, then Robyn, and then Harper — dragging Iza along from their shared fourth-period math lesson — had elbowed their way into her lunchtime bubble, Lucy had felt something she hadn't experienced in a long time. She'd felt like she belonged.

Studying at the library, back by six thirty, she scribbled and stuck the dishonest little note to the fridge with her mum's *Yellow Submarine* album cover magnet. Then she yanked her drumsticks from her backpack and fled out the front door to Harper's house.

An hour later, Lucy decided she didn't have to worry about how her parents would react to Crush after all.

Crush would never actually make it to *Project Next*. At this rate they wouldn't survive their first full practice ...

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Toni had been fifteen minutes late. Then Iza's keyboard stand fell apart halfway through their first attempt to actually play. Even after they'd finally reassembled the stand, they could barely finish a song without Harper stopping to snipe at Toni for missing a chord or Toni stopping to suggest an alternative harmony — or, after a while, stopping just to point out that Harper was off-key. All the bickering had Iza so nervous she could barely play.

Robyn leaned back to Lucy. “Do something. We'll never get anywhere like this.”

“Do what?” Lucy asked. “Harper doesn't listen to anyone and neither does Toni. And Iza looks like she's about to faint.”

“I dunno, lady. You're the drummer,” Robyn said.

What did that have to do with anything? Lucy doubted that hitting Harper or Toni over the head with a cymbal would be productive, even if it sounded like a bloody good idea.

She looked longingly at the marked-up copies of their songs clipped to the stand in front of her. The downbeat was right there. If only they could get playing.

Suddenly, she realized what Robyn meant. Lucy was the drummer. She called the beat, or at least she was meant to. If anyone could get this medley of disaster moving, it was the drummer. The others probably wouldn't pay any attention ... but it was worth a shot.

Lucy raised her sticks and beat them together.

“One ... Two ...”

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With a glare at Toni, Harper stepped back to her microphone. Toni glared right back as she shifted the strap of her bass on her shoulders.

“Three ...”

Iza set her hands to the keys.

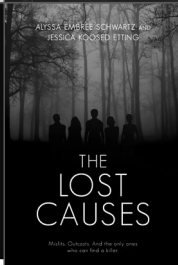
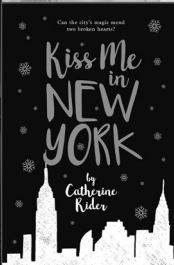
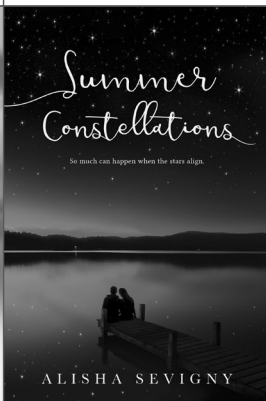
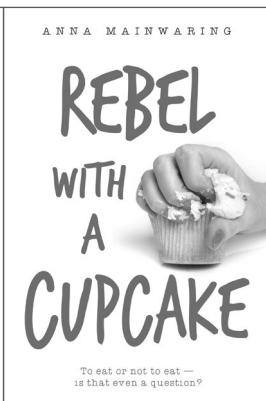
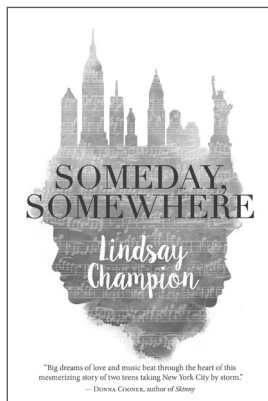
Robyn shot Lucy a grin as she gripped the fretboard of her guitar.

“Four.”

And then, as one, they started to play.



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Marie Powell is a pen name for an entertainment veteran who has spent over a decade working in the film and television business. Marie studied in New York and London before moving to Los Angeles to pursue her entertainment career. She is currently a film and television writer. *Keeping the Beat* was inspired by her time in London and Los Angeles and the amazing friendships she found in those two incredibly unique cities. This is her first novel.

Jeff Norton is the author of several novels, including the award-winning thriller series *MetaWars*. While co-writing *Keeping the Beat*, Jeff channeled into his days as an intern in Hollywood, his favorite novel (*The Great Gatsby*) and his yet-unfulfilled dream of playing to a sellout crowd at the Hollywood Bowl. Originally from Burlington, Ontario, Jeff now lives in London, UK, with his wife and two sons.

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