

*Break To You*, Review by Leah DEC 2024

*Break To You* is a young adult romance book written by Shusterman Knowlden and published recently in 2024. The book has a total of 411 pages, which is split up into 5 different sections. The book begins in the perspective of 16 year old Adrianna, who has just been let into Caine prison, a jail that has a twist to it. Adrianna is only staying for around 6 months, and she only has one goal: to survive.

On the first day of her jail time, a guard takes her on a tour. First, they go to the basics; classrooms, bathrooms, off limit rooms. Then, the guard takes Adrianna to the cafeteria, where lunch has just begun. The guard motions for Adrianna to take a seat with her food, and she does. All eyes are on her as she sits down. Finally, a girl next to her, obviously the leader, says her name is Bianca. All the other girls go around in turn, and one girl, who appears to be Bianca's personal "bodyguard" introduces herself as Mononessa. Adrianna immediately gets bad vibes.

After lunch, all the girls go back to their common room area called "the pod". There are multiple pods for different groups of girls. Adrianna's pod contains Bianca, Mononessa, and some other girls. Adrianna's eyes immediately set on a sickly, small looking girl named Pip. Bianca tells Adrianna that Pip is useful. Adrianna has no idea what that means, but stores it in her memory.

When Adrianna entered the prison, the front desk lady took all her belongings, but Adrianna asked if she could keep her journal. Hesitantly, the front desk lady agreed. Now, Adrianna exits the pod and goes to her individual room to take some time to process everything and write down her personal thoughts. Coincidentally, as soon as Adrianna's done writing, an alarm goes off, telling Adrianna that it is time to go to work in the library.

Everyone has to work a job two hours a day, and Adrianna has been assigned to the library. She carefully puts her journal in her waistband and meets the librarian, Ms. Miller. Adrianna works quickly, shelving books and doing what she is told. She does not want to get in any more trouble.

Finally, work hour is over, and Adrianna heads back to the pod only to discover her journal is missing. Her anxiety rising, Adrianna hopes the journal gets in the clutches of anyone else, especially Monessa, as it has all of her deep dark secrets.

The next day, Adrianna heads back to the library to do work. She pretends to be focused on shelving books, but secretly she looks around desperately for where her journal could be. As she shelves in the fantasy book section, she notices one of the book's spine is facing the wrong way, and as she reaches out to change it, she realizes it is her journal. Relieved, Adrianna stuffs the journal into her waistband once again and finishes her work.

However, when Adrianna returns to her room to write in the journal, she notices that a new entry has been added... and it is not in her handwriting. The entry is signed with the initials A.J., which means that the entry has been written from the boys side of the jail. Surprised, Adrianna reads the letter, which is quite poetic, and decides to write back.

As Adrianna and the mysterious A.J. write entries back and forth in the journal, they risk their chance more and more of getting caught each time. But Adrianna feels a strange connection to A.J., and hopes that one day she will be able to meet him, even though they are separated by security upon security.

This book was very engaging, and it kept me hooked as I kept on wondering what would happen next. The ending was what I expected, but I wish the book had not stopped so shortly. I would have loved to know what happened next.

I would recommend this book for 14+, as there are some scenes with difficult context. This book was recently written, so I do not know if there will be a part two to Adrianna and A.J.'s story, although I hope there is. Overall, *Break To You* was a great book!