

# BOOKS



60 SECONDS WITH...

## Shakirah Bourne

The award-winning Barbadian author and screenplay writer discusses her creative journey



»» **What led you on a path to writing?**

I'm a writer because I was a reader. I always thought of writing as a hobby, so I never pursued formal training. My background is in management. When I was 21, I did

a Masterclass in Writing conducted by George Lamming, and it was life-changing. I took writing courses online, then a screenwriting adult education programme at Barbados Community College and the University of Edinburgh. Now I'm a full-time freelance writer. Crazy, right?

»» **You have blogged about acquiring an**

**agent. Briefly, what was your experience?**

I got my agent via the slush pile. I did extensive research online and selected agents whose profile or hashtags suggested they would be a good fit for my diverse manuscripts, using sites such as Manuscript WishList and Query Tracker. I wrote cold query letters, sent sample pages and hoped for the best. It was

exciting when several agents responded favourably to my work and requested to read the full manuscript. The process took about four months before I signed with my current agent.

»» **Your work has been recognised internationally. What was one of the most meaningful experiences?**

In 2019 I was a selected author at the Edinburgh International Book Festival. When I studied Arts Management in Edinburgh, I wanted to do my placement at that festival but it was very competitive. To be invited back as an author

nine years later felt surreal, especially when I saw my name and photo in the programme and my book in the bookstore next to so many authors I admire. It was like being backstage at the literary Oscars, and so inspiring to be surrounded by like-minded individuals in a creative space.

\* [WWW.SHAKIRAHBOURNE.COM](http://WWW.SHAKIRAHBOURNE.COM)

### SEEKING SHAKIRAH

**THREE GREATS TO TRY...**

**My Fishy Stepmom (2019)**

A charming children's tale

**In Time of Need (2013)**

A fascinating collection of short stories

**A Caribbean Dream (2017)**

Movie adaptation of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* set in Barbados

## 3 GREAT READS

Try these diverse and diverting new Caribbean titles



**US AGAINST ALZHEIMER'S: STORIES OF FAMILY, LOVE, AND FAITH**

(ARCADE) EDITED BY **MARITA GOLDEN**

This groundbreaking multicultural anthology shares moving personal stories, both nonfiction and fiction, about the impacts of Alzheimer's and dementia, each showing how witnessing the disease can be both utterly devastating and powerfully transformative. The book features several Caribbean authors including Edwidge Danticat, Elizabeth Nunez, Katia D Ulysse and Lauren Francis-Sharma.



**WHEN THE SKY FELL (APOLLO) BY MICHAEL DEIBERT**

A searing dissection of what happened in Puerto Rico in the wake of Hurricane Maria, from the acclaimed investigative reporter Michael Deibert. This book shines a light on why the island was so poorly prepared, and why a US territory was not adequately assisted in its recovery by the federal government despite the scale of the disaster.



**BOONOOONOUS HAIR!**

(TRADEWINDS)

BY **OLIVE SENIOR**

Commonwealth Prize-winning Jamaican-Canadian author Olive Senior and acclaimed artist Laura James – the team who created *Anna Carries Water* – have paired up again to produce this vibrant and exquisitely illustrated picture book. It tells the tale of a young girl who learns to love her difficult-to-manage, voluminous and 'boonoonoonous' hair – a wonderful Jamaican patois word meaning wonderful.

PAGE BY **CAROL MITCHELL**, FOUNDER OF CARIBBEANREADS PUBLISHING AND AUTHOR OF THE CARIBBEAN ADVENTURE SERIES, AMONG OTHER CHILDREN'S BOOKS. VISIT [WWW.CARIBBEANREADS.COM](http://WWW.CARIBBEANREADS.COM)

