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MEDIA CONTACT: Monica Fernandez, Media Director, media@redhen.org

P.O. Box 40820, Pasadena, CA 91114 / (626) 356-4760 / fax: (626) 356-9974 / redhen.org

Cursebreakers

A NOVEL BY

Madeleine Nakamura

Adrien Desfourneaux, professor of magic, must survive his own failing mental health and a tenuous partnership with a dangerous ally in order to save the city of Astrum from a spreading curse.

Adrien Desfourneaux, professor of magic and disgraced ex-physician, has discovered a conspiracy. Someone is inflicting magical comas on the inhabitants of the massive city of Astrum, and no one knows how or why. Caught between a faction of scheming magical academics and an explosive schism in the ranks of the Astrum's power-hungry military, Adrien is swallowed by the growing chaos. Alongside Gennady, an unruly, damaged young soldier, and Malise, a brilliant healer and Adrien's best friend, Adrien searches for a way to stop the spreading curse before the city implodes. He must survive his own bipolar disorder, his self-destructive tendencies, and his entanglement with the man who doesn't love him back.

ADVANCE PRAISE

“Adrien's narration was vivid, prickly, and compelling, and I loved the world she built around him, especially the beautiful names and terms, but also the institutional history of Pharmakeia and Curia (and Chirurgeonate), with the occasional, tantalizing glimpses of the wider world. And I admired the way she hung the plot together on the dual armatures of that institutional history and Adrien's deeply flawed character.”

—**Katherine Addison**, author of *The Goblin Emperor*

“An absorbing meditation on curses and blessings, martyrs and saints—and a rare fantasy that recognizes that the mind is more mysterious and more vital than any spell. It is writers like Madeleine Nakamura who are going to bring us all into the next age of the world.”

—**Brian Conn**, author of *The Fixed Stars: Thirty-Seven Emblems for the Perilous Season*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Madeleine Nakamura is a writer, editor, and lifelong fantasy devotee. She began writing her first novel the day she realized a computer science degree wasn't happening. She graduated from Mills College in Oakland with a degree in creative writing. She is based in Los Angeles, California.



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MEDIA CONTACT

Monica Fernandez

Media Director

626-406-1206

media@redhen.org

MARKETING CONTACT

Tobi Harper

Marketing Director

626-406-1209

marketing@redhen.org



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FROM CURSEBREAKERS

I had been holding it together so admirably, I thought. A laudable performance, a skillful facade. No more. My daimon yawned and opened its eyes. My headache vanished.

It's a wonderful feeling when the daimon cooperates with me. The sharpest joy in the cosmos, and a rage fit to kill.

Unbidden, I heard Gennady's voice, dripping with gleeful contempt: *You are so dramatic.*

I smiled, purely entertained by myself, and went up to stand at the lectern onstage. "Pay attention," I said to everyone, very loudly, cutting through their murmuring. Their heads turned. I knew the look on all their faces, collectively: *What does the daimoniac want?*

The lights began to flicker.

In the crowd, Casmir mouthed, *Don't*. I waved at him.

"I am going to have a breakdown now," I announced, "and you are all cordially invited."

Kirchoff pushed through the crowd to me, as I knew he would, taking the stage as well to stare me down. He didn't get too close.

You, I thought pleasantly. *You brought me here.*

He glanced up at the lights above. "Control yourself," he said severely. "Those fixtures are difficult to replace. They're very expensive. If you damage them—"

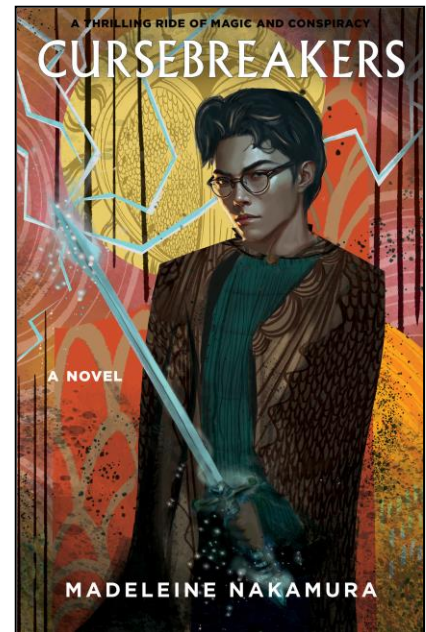
I turned to him, and the room tumbled into darkness with the sound of a dozen filaments bursting. The crowd gasped.

"What?" I asked, as the lightning came to my hands. I smoothed it into a crackling crown and put it on: if I was going to make a spectacle of myself, I was going to do it with style. "What will you do?"

The only light in the room came from me, just as it should always be. I spread my arms grandly for a moment, for the aesthetic benefit, dizzy with my various highs.

Kirchoff's eyes widened, shining in the lightning's glow.

I leaned toward him a bare inch. "You shouldn't have let me go."



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