Behind The Scenes in Novel City

TYRELL

Tyrell Williams leans back, elbows resting on his knees, quiet the way he gets when he's thinking more than he's talking. He gives you that familiar half-smile—not forced, not for show.

"Crazy, isn't it?" he says. "All this time… and we're still here."

He glances at you, steady. No defensiveness. No secrets. Just honesty.

"You didn't write me to be loud. You wrote me to survive. And sometimes I wonder if you knew how heavy that would get."

A beat.

"People see me as calm. Easygoing. 'Boy next door.' But you and I both know that calm came from learning when to keep my mouth shut and when to walk away before something broke me."

He exhales, slow.

"I've loved. I've been confused. I've disappointed people without meaning to. And I've carried guilt for things that weren't mine to carry—but I held them anyway."

Then he looks at you, really looks at you.

"So tell me… when you were shaping my journey—were you trying to protect me?
Or were you teaching me how to stand on my own without losing who I am?"

Your move.

AUTHOR DEON JENKINS

Before I answer that, let's go back for a moment.
I met you a few years ago when you were a high school senior trying to figure out what your next step would be. Neither of us knew then where this road would lead or how far we'd travel together.

When I decided to seriously pursue this authorship journey, you were the first character who showed up with a story that needed to be told. You came fully formed—with heart, questions, and honesty.

I shaped your journey with two intentions at the same time: to protect you, and to make sure you could stand on your own without losing who you are. I also wanted your story to encourage people to live authentically—to understand that truth isn't always neat, but it's always necessary.

Knowing that, how does it feel to realize your story is impacting people who see themselves in you?

TYRELL

Tyrell doesn't answer right away. He rubs his palms together once, like he's grounding himself, then nods—slow, thoughtful.

"It's humbling," he says finally. "And a little scary, if I'm being real."

He lets out a small breath, the kind that carries weight.

"I didn't set out to change anybody. I was just trying to make it through my own mess without lying to myself. Half the time, I didn't even know if I was doing that right."

He looks off for a second, like he's seeing that high school version of himself you mentioned—the kid standing at a crossroads, pretending not to be overwhelmed.

"But knowing that someone out there sees themselves in me? That my confusion gave them clarity… that my mistakes gave them courage?"
He shakes his head softly. "That's bigger than me."

Then his eyes come back to you, steady again.

"I think what gets me the most is this: people don't connect to me because I'm perfect. They connect because I didn't run from the truth—even when it hurt, even when it made things complicated."

A pause. Honest. Unpolished.

"If my story gives someone permission to stop hiding… to choose themselves without shame… then yeah, that makes every uncomfortable moment worth it."

He offers a faint smile—grateful, grounded.

"But let me ask you something now, since we're being honest like friends."

He tilts his head.

"When readers walk away from *Finding Tyrell*… what do you hope they understand about me that goes deeper than love triangles, labels, or choices?"

He's listening.

AUTHOR DEON JENKINS

I believe it's better to have loved and lost than to never have loved at all. My own experiences with love—every version of it—have shaped me into a better person. None of it was wasted, and none of it was a mistake.

I don't regret loving anyone I've loved, even when it didn't last the way I hoped it would.

When people look at your story, they may focus on the surface—labels, timing, choices. But I hope they're willing to look deeper, past the still waters, and notice the undercurrents moving beneath.

You were never meant to be perfect. You were meant to be real.

When you look at the unconditional love you had with Kima, the deep bond you share with Greg, and the evolving connection with Khali, how do you feel those different kinds of love have shaped who you are today?

TYRELL

Tyrell goes quiet again—but this time it's different. Not guarded. Not heavy. Just real.

He nods once, slow, like each name you said landed exactly where it was supposed to.

"Kima taught me how to give," he says first. No hesitation. No rewriting history.
"I loved her clean. No conditions. No exits planned. I learned what it meant to show up every day, even when it was hard, even when I didn't have the words."

His jaw tightens just a little—not regret, but respect.

"She shaped my heart. And even though that love didn't last the way people think it should, it wasn't a mistake. It taught me loyalty. It taught me responsibility. It taught me that love isn't just how you feel—it's what you do."

Then he exhales and softens.

"Greg…"
He shakes his head, almost smiling now. "Greg taught me safety. Being seen without having to explain myself. That bond—we didn't build it fast, and we didn't build it loud. It grew in the quiet moments. In consistency."

He looks at you, eyes steady.

"With him, I learned that love doesn't always ask for more. Sometimes it just holds space. Sometimes it waits. Sometimes it's about knowing someone knows you—even when everything else feels uncertain."

A pause. This one longer.

"And Khali," he says carefully—not guarded, just honest.
"Khali woke parts of me up."

He shrugs lightly, like he's owning something instead of defending it.

"He challenged me to feel out loud. To want without apologizing. To sit in discomfort instead of smoothing it over. He showed me that vulnerability isn't weakness—it's exposure. And exposure takes courage."

Then Tyrell leans forward, elbows on his knees again, grounding himself in the moment.

"All three loves didn't pull me apart," he says. "They built me."

His voice firms—not loud, but sure.

“They taught me balance. How to give without disappearing. How to care without betraying myself. How to honor the past without being trapped in it.”

He looks at you now, gratitude plain on his face.

“So yeah… I’m imperfect. But I’m not broken. And I don’t regret loving the way I did.”

A beat.

“And if readers can see that—if they understand that love doesn’t have to be reduced to labels or choices—then they’ll understand me.”

He sits back, quieter now.

“Because the truth is… every version of love I touched left something good behind.”

He waits.

AUTHOR DEON JENKINS

As we sit here on Christmas Eve, I find myself thinking about how seasons like this invite reflection—on love, on growth, and on the people who walk beside us.

What does this time of year mean to you, and how do you navigate it with Khali, Mason, Greg, and James?

TYRELL

Tyrell smiles at that—soft, genuine. Christmas does that to him. It lowers the noise.

“Christmas Eve slows me down,” he says. “It makes me take inventory… not of what I have, but of who’s still standing with me.”

He looks up, like the lights are strung somewhere just out of sight.

“With Khali, it’s warmth,” he says carefully. “He feels the season deeply. He feels *everything* deeply. So I try to meet him there—present, patient, not rushing him through his emotions or mine. I’ve learned that love during the holidays isn’t about grand gestures. It’s about reassurance. Letting someone know they’re not alone when memories get loud.”

Then a quiet chuckle.

“Mason pretends this time of year doesn’t affect him,” Tyrell says. “Acts like it’s just another day. But I see it. He checks in more. Shows up without being asked. With him, Christmas is about loyalty. Brotherhood. Making sure nobody feels forgotten—even if we don’t say it out loud.”

His expression shifts when he says Greg’s name—not dramatic, just tender.

“Greg brings stillness to the season,” he admits. “He reminds me to breathe. To sit in gratitude instead of overthinking what comes next. With him, Christmas feels familiar. Safe. Like tradition—even when we’re creating new ones.”

Then there’s James.

“James carries a lot,” Tyrell says plainly. “So Christmas with him is about respect. About not pushing, not prying. Just being solid. Sometimes love looks like laughter. Sometimes it looks like silence that doesn’t feel awkward.”

Tyrell folds his hands together, thoughtful.

“For me, this season isn’t about perfection. It’s about presence. About forgiving myself for what didn’t work out, and being thankful for what did—even if it didn’t last.”

He looks at you, eyes warm.

“Christmas Eve reminds me that love shows up in different forms. And if I’m doing it right, I’m not clinging to any of it. I’m just grateful I get to experience it.”

A pause.

“And honestly?” he adds. “Sitting here like this—being able to reflect instead of regret—that’s the real gift.”

He nods once, settled.

“Merry Christmas, my friend.”

AUTHOR DEON JENKINS

Before we close this conversation, I want to give you space to speak directly to the readers—the ones who've walked with you through *Finding Tyrell* and connected with your journey.

Is there anything you'd like to say to them?

TYRELL

Tyrell straightens a little—not like he's putting on a show, but like he understands the moment matters. His voice stays calm, grounded, unmistakably *him*.

"To everyone who walked with me through *Finding Tyrell*…"

He pauses. Lets that land.

"Thank you for not rushing to judge me. For sitting in the quiet moments. For seeing that growth doesn't always look clean or convenient."

He nods once, sincere.

"If my story felt familiar, it's because you've probably stood where I stood—loving deeply, choosing honesty even when it complicated things, trying to be whole in a world that loves to reduce people to labels."

His gaze sharpens just a touch—not harsh, just real.

"I hope you know this: you don't have to be perfect to be worthy of love. You don't have to have it all figured out to deserve peace. And you're not weak for feeling deeply—you're human."

A softer smile now.

"As you move through your own seasons—holidays, heartbreaks, new beginnings—be gentle with yourself. Let your story unfold at its own pace."

Then, quietly but firmly:

"I'm still learning. Still growing. And if you choose to keep walking with me, just know—everything you've seen so far has been honest."

He inclines his head, grateful.

"Merry Christmas. And thank you for seeing me."

AUTHOR DEON JENKINS

Tyrell's journey doesn't end here.

As we step into 2026, ***Heartbeats and Bloodlines*** will continue to explore the lives, loves, and legacies unfolding in Novel City—including where Tyrell goes from here.

I'll be back on New Year's Eve with a special look ahead at what's coming. Until then, I hope you spend this season surrounded by the people who see you, just as you are.

Merry Christmas, Novel City family. Thank you for being here. 💙