

PRESS KIT | 2026

Shawn Phillips

URBAN FANTASY | DEBUT NOVEL FORTHCOMING

*A neurodivergent linguist. An ancient vampire. A secret hidden in the languages of the African diaspora.
A love story about two people who had both stopped believing they were allowed to want one.*

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Author Shawn Phillips

Shawn Phillips

Shawn Phillips is an urban fantasy writer based in Oklahoma. Her debut novel is the book she needed to exist before she could write it — a story about a neurodivergent non-binary pansexual linguist who loses almost everything and discovers, on the other side of that loss, that she was right about things the world told her were impossible.

The novel lives at the intersection of linguistics, the African diaspora, sapphic romance, polyamory, and the supernatural. It draws on Vodou, Hoodoo, Haitian Creole, and West African oral tradition as systems of genuine knowledge, not atmosphere. At its center is a found family of vampires, witches, werewolves, and Vodou practitioners — and a love story between two people who had both stopped believing they were allowed to want something like this.

Shawn is a member of the Hardcore Literature Club and runs a 100-books-a-year reading goal. She came to this story through obsession — with language, with the origins of vampire mythology across cultures, and with the Haitian and West African traditions that mainstream fantasy has borrowed from without ever looking closely.

AT A GLANCE

Pronouns	She / They
Identity	Non-binary Pansexual Autigender / AUDHD
Location	Oklahoma, USA
Genre	Urban Fantasy Sapphic Romance Polyamory
Debut status	First draft in progress — completion expected July 2026
Newsletter	authorshawnphillips.com/newsletter

A high-resolution author photograph is available on request. Please contact contact@authorshawnphillips.com.

Debut Novel — Title Forthcoming

Title, cover, and release date will be announced to newsletter subscribers first.

SYNOPSIS

Dr. Ciara Malone is a non-binary neurodivergent linguist who has spent her career studying the origins of vampire mythology across linguistic traditions: Old Church Slavonic, West African oral histories, Haitian Creole ceremony texts, Vodou ritual language. When she submits a paper arguing the convergence points are too precise to be coincidence, she expects professional ridicule. What she does not expect is to lose her best friend, her autistic safe person, and the job that was the architecture of her identity.

Grieving and untethered, she is recruited by a private research institute that wants her expertise in Creole linguistics and the oral traditions of the African diaspora. She does not understand yet what she is actually being asked to translate, or why the woman who runs the institute — ancient, powerful, and carrying her own unimaginable losses — looks at her like she already knows the ending.

What unfolds takes Ciara from New Orleans to Haiti, through secret societies and supernatural politics, through grief she has not let herself feel, and into a found family of witches, werewolves, vampires, and Vodou practitioners. And into a love that is polyamorous, honest, and exactly what she never knew she was allowed to want. At the center of it all is a mystery about healing: what happens when the people who have survived the most choose, finally, to let someone in?

GENRE, THEMES & CONTENT

Primary genre	Urban Fantasy Sapphic Romance Polyamory
Representation	Neurodivergent Non-binary Pansexual Found Family
Key themes	Grief and loss Vodou and Hoodoo African Diaspora Linguistics Healing Complex love Secret society
Content notes	Suicidal ideation (handled with care) Complex trauma Grief and loss Polyamory On-page violence
Comparable titles	The Bone Season by Samantha Shannon Cemetery Boys by Aiden Thomas A Master of Djinn by P. Djeli Clark

CONTACT & MEDIA

Shawn Phillips is available for interviews, guest posts, podcast appearances, and panel discussions on topics including urban fantasy, neurodivergent and queer representation in fiction, the African diaspora and Vodou in literature, polyamory in fiction, writing debut novels, the linguistics of vampire mythology, and the intersection of academic expertise and genre fiction.

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Response time	Shawn works night shifts. Responses may take a few days. All enquiries are read.

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