



THE WALLS

AROUND US

NOVA REN SUMA

WARNING :

Many of the characters in this book have been convicted of crimes of sometimes shocking violence.

Some of the characters in this book are guilty. And some swear they're innocent.

It might be impossible to tell the difference.

AMBER SMITH
(Inmate #91188-38)

Crime: Manslaughter

Amber has been locked up in the Aurora Hills Secure Juvenile Detention Center since she was fourteen years old. Her favorite place is the prisoners' library, where she organizes the books on the shelves and reads every one, often twice. She once kept a diary in which she wrote down what she most wanted in the world, but someone found it. Now she doesn't write anything down. Not a word. Instead she remembers. She's the only one who does.

VIOLET "Vee" DUMONT

Crime: n/a

Vee has never been in trouble. She's not locked up in any girls' prison, forced to wear an orange jumpsuit and sleep behind bars. She's free. She's flexing her pointe shoes and performing onstage before an admiring crowd, soaking in the standing ovation. Nothing could keep her from her dazzling future as a ballerina except the guilt she carries over the girl she once called her best friend. The girl who was convicted of murder. Vee was a witness at the trial and hasn't seen Orianna Speerling since.

ORIANNA "Ori" SPEERLING
(Inmate #47709-01)

Crime: Double murder

Before that day behind the community theater, Ori was known as the most talented ballerina at the studio. She was better than her best friend, Vee. She was extraordinary. But after, Ori wasn't acclaimed anymore, and she wasn't beloved. She was abandoned and left to rot. She was sent away to Aurora Hills, and there isn't anyone in her life who believes she might be innocent . . . until she arrives at last and meets her cellmate, Amber Smith, the first person in a long time who actually asks, and listens.

MILES DREXEL


Crime: n/a

Miles used to meet Ori outside under the window in Vee's backyard, calling to Ori so she'd sneak down in the night to see him. Back when he was Ori's boyfriend (not that they ever put a name to it), he had her, and she had him. Now Miles has nobody. Now all Miles has is a grudge. Because, if you asked him, there is only one person who carries the blame for Ori's terrible fate inside the walls of Aurora Hills: the girl he loathes more than anyone alive. Violet.

D'AMOUR WYATT
(Inmate #98307-25)

Crime: Smuggling of a controlled substance

D'amour goes running the first chance she gets. She's not thinking about what will happen when she hits the electric fence. Afterward, in the infirmary, where she's recovering from second-degree burns, corrections officers question her about the escape attempt, but no one can make sense of what she's saying. She's babbling about the summer repeating itself and a bad end. Somehow, D'amour knows what's coming. But is anyone listening?



When this story opens, there are forty-one girls locked away in the Aurora Hills Secure Juvenile Detention Center in the far northern reaches of New York State.

*By the end,
there will be forty-two.*