

Savage North Chronicles Fun Facts

1. *The Darkest Winter* originally included The Longest Night, Sophie and Alex's story, but the book was too long with too many POVs, so I broke it up into two stories, one the prequel novella.
2. I'm big into romance novels, it's what I read as a bookworm—anything and everything (mostly) that has a love story in it. So, writing *The Darkest Winter* was a bit difficult for me in that I had to write a story that was more realistic, given the character's circumstances, and the romance wasn't really a part of it. Though, I do like to think Elle and Jackson had their fair amount of slow burn throughout the story.
3. I'd always wanted to feature a wolf on the covers, but it never worked out for one reason or another. It all worked out in the end, though. The wolf is front and center on the box set cover, which sets the perfect tone for the series as whole.
4. While many of the locations in this novel are real, Whitely is a made up town based on the picturesque and infamous Whittier. While researching locations for this novel, Whittier was ripe for story setting, though so remote there was much about it I struggled to discover. The Begich towers (unnamed in the book) is almost a character of its own, and while I tried to find building plans
5. Thea's character is based on my sister - her love for honey and I'm probably more like Beau while she's more like Thea. However, I am the one with a love for horses.
6. I knew the instant I determined what Thea's Ability was what her journey would be through the series--that she would be haunted by the wake of death throughout her childhood. I also knew that Beau's book and journey would center around having to find himself, which is why I wrote his character so gloomy throughout the series. I feel like my plotting and planning paid off, and I'm happy with their individual books.
7. I didn't know Kat and Ross would get together—that there was even going to be a *Fading Shadows*—until I wrote Ross and Kat together in *Midnight Sun* and felt their palpable hate for one another. ☺ Then I decided these enemies have *got* to get together. It felt wrong otherwise.
8. I struggled with which Abilities I wanted to feature in this series, wanting to make it different and explore new possibilities than what we touched on in The Ending Series. Turns out, Ross's Ability was extremely helpful in this story, despite how horrific his Ability would be to have. His Ability brought an entirely new layer to the scenes in these story by experiencing death through his eyes, and death through others' eyes in watching him (and the relief he brought people in what he could do).

9. I hadn't expected Hunter to become a main character until the end of *Untamed* when I realized there was more to him I wanted to learn about that we didn't see through Beau. That's when I realized he and Thea would have to meet, and then soooo many possibilities and layers unfolded and I was a giddy school girl writing those two crazy kids together.
10. I love nature—as in, it feeds my soul, grounds me, and makes me happy. I think that's why Beau's book, *Untamed*, was the most fun for me to write. I was able to immerse myself in it, and I loved getting to travel through his eyes. I get this love of nature from my mother, hence why the book is dedicated to her wandering spirit and loving soul.
11. Honey Bear's name was originally Koda, but I changed it due to possible copyright infringement with Disney. A friend pointed out that *Brother Bear* is a similar story about a bear embarking on an adventure in Alaska (or Canada, I can't remember) and his name was Koda. So, Honey Bear it became.
12. I enjoy writing male characters more than I enjoy writing female characters. That being said, Hunter and Jackson were my favorite characters to write. They both had so much dimension and yet were strong and caring.
13. While I enjoyed writing all of the characters, Kat is my soul sister in so many ways. Her foul-mouth and sarcasm is totally me and she was so much fun to write and dive into. I'm SO happy I decided to write her more into the final installment. It wouldn't be the same without her. Or as fun. And Kat and Ross together—LOVE them. Gruff and grumpy meet sassy and sarcastic.
14. The epilogue in *Unbroken* leaves room for a spin-off series, and I plan on writing something that addresses the hybrids (so to speak) that follows the lives in the Ending world of the new generation.
15. Elle has a love of raspberries and photography, as do I. Sophie loves to sketch in notebooks, and Thea loves horses, as do I. Wren is spiritual and loves animals like me, and Kat, well, she curses, jokes, and gets sassy when needed, like me. I think it's safe to say there's a little bit of me in all of the female characters.
16. Cal was originally going to be the main love interest in Thea's story, but when I met Hunter in *Untamed*, I knew he needed a backstory and to be with feisty Miss Thea. So, he became the boyfriend-turned-friend. It worked out perfectly that Marica rejects Beau in his story because she's sort of seeing Cal, which I was able to weave into Thea's relationship with him.
17. I ugly cried writing the Jenny dying scene and the Luna crying scene. I was sitting outside both times I was writing them, and I'm pretty sure my neighbors thought I was temporarily insane, sitting in my backyard alone sobbing. I knew from the beginning that

Jenny would die in *Midnight Sun*. Though, it wasn't until I realized how old Luna would be by the time Beau got his own book that I realized I needed her to pass away in *Untamed*.

18. Thea's playlist in *Unbroken* is based off my own faves and playlists I listen to at home—Linkin Park is my all-time favorite band, I love Phil Collins, Journey, grew up on Pat Benatar...the list goes on.
19. Alex's character was important for me to write. I wanted to see the world through someone's eyes who hasn't lost everything, but gained it instead. Having no family, Alex had little to lose and everything to gain during and after the Virus. That's part of his struggle throughout *Midnight Sun*, coming to terms with the fact that he's worthy and allowed to be happy, knowing what it feels like to find family after a lifetime of heartache.
20. *The Darkest Winter* changed SOOO much from its original inception. Jackson's wife was originally dead when the story starts, not due to a home invasion, and Jackson was more of a playboy who lived next door to Elle's house, or rather her mother's house she must return to after she passes away. They then got stuck together during the virus with an elderly neighbor woman. Beau and Thea were originally twins, one of them evil. Then I changed it up drastically (I can't remember why), and it became what it is now.
21. I wanted to give my characters layers and depth as every real person would have, hence Jackson's struggle with alcoholism, Elle's past with sexual abuse, the pressure Sophie has to face to be what her parents want, and Alex who grew up in a broken home with all sorts of abuse and resentment.
22. Ross was originally going to be a "bad guy". He was always Jackson's friend, but he was going to turn into a crazy, which I leave an air of question about when Jackson and Elle first meet up with him at the lodge, near the end of *The Darkest Winter*. They think there is something wrong with him, and in my rough draft, there actually was. I'm really glad I changed that, though. I love Ross's character and how protective of everyone he becomes.
23. I've never been to Alaska or Canada, though I was supposed to go in 2020 for my 4-year/first Leap Year anniversary, but then Covid happened and plans changed. Everything I wrote about in the series—regarding the weather and terrain and native survival methods—was learned through extensive research, reaching, and watching A LOT of documentaries. I'm cold just thinking about living in the wildlands in the dead of winter. ADDITIONAL FUN FACT: I loathe being cold. It's THE WORST.
24. For me, *Savage North Chronicles* was ALL about exploring what we didn't touch on in *The Ending Series*, hence my introduction of the Ranskins and Wren's village who were never exposed, a new location, and difference aged characters from their POV. I also

knew I wanted the series to span over a decade to see what life became since The Ending Series takes place within a single year.

25. Only some of the characters had a celebrity look-alike inspiration. The rest just lived in my mind and I see them as their own creations. Here is some character inspiration for the following:

- a. Jackson – Jason Momoa
- b. Sophie – Sophie Turner
- c. Alex – J.D. Pardo
- d. Woody – Woody Harrelson
- e. Hunter – Martin Sensmeier