



RONA AHDOUT // HEARST OWNED

Celebs & Entertainment

Every Fandom Has Its Favorite

Six girls. Six worlds. One epic crossover. *Seventeen* cover stars Kylie Cantrall, Nadine Bhabha, Priah Ferguson, Katie Douglas, Nikki Rodriguez, and Carlacia Grant talk fan theories, TikTok edits, and being the reason you keep watching.

BY ROSEMARY WOJTKOWSKI, PHOTOGRAPHED BY RONA LIANA AHDOUT PUBLISHED: JUN 16, 2026



You know the characters on your most-binged shows who hit a little too close to home? The ones who bolster the leads with real talk or unwavering support, keeping the fictional friend group together

while dropping Easter eggs and adding depth to the story? The ones who secretly or overtly prop up the entire vibe? Yeah, you do. Because while these characters, and the people who play them, may not always drive the plot, they absolutely help drive the pop culture discourse.

For *Seventeen*'s first-ever fandom cover project, we brought together six such actors from our favorite worlds of *Heated Rivalry*, *Outer Banks*, *Stranger Things*, *My Life With the Walter Boys*, *Ginny & Georgia*, and *Descendants* and paired them within the tropes of character types we endlessly stan: the Best Friend, the New Girl, and the Voice of Reason.

Katie Douglas from *Ginny & Georgia* and Nikki Rodriguez from *My Life With the Walter Boys* are our Best Friends, the girls who hold their worlds together while navigating their own personal growth. Returning in season 4 later this year, Katie plays Abby Littman, a core member of *Ginny & Georgia*'s

iconic MANG (an acronym for the Max, Abby, Norah, and Ginny friend group). Also back on our screens this year will be Nikki, who plays *My Life With the Walter Boys*' Jackie Howard, a disciplined New York City outsider caught in a country-coded love triangle between brothers Cole Walter (Noah LaLonde) and Alex Walter (Ashby Gentry).



On Nadine: Dress **Ferragamo**, necklace **Presley Oldham x Zankov**. On Carlacia: Dress **Laura Andraschko**, shoes **Manolo Blahnik**. On Katie: Top **Tory Burch**, skirt **Ermanno Scervino**, necklace **Alyssa Norton**. On Nikki: Tops **Dana Foley** and (underneath) **Ami Paris**, skirt **Bode**. On Priah: Cardigan **Blumarine**, skirt **Diesel**, socks **Maria La Rosa**, sandals **Jimmy Choo**, hairpin **Jennifer Behr**. On Kylie: All clothing **Vaquera**, shoes **Stella McCartney**.

Then comes our New Girls: Carlacia Grant from *Outer Banks* and Kylie Cantrall from *Descendants: The Rise of Red*. Carlacia's fearless and quick-witted Cleo debuted on *Outer Banks* well after the show's fandom was already established and became one of its most beloved additions (she'll return for the highly anticipated final season this summer). Kylie stepped into the *Descendants* universe in 2024 as Red and instantly carved out her own space in the popular franchise, and she'll soon solidify her breakout status by starring in the upcoming *Descendants: Wicked Wonderland*.

Finally, we have our Voices of Reason: Priah Ferguson from *Stranger Things* and Nadine Bhabha from *Heated Rivalry*, two scene-stealers loved for their always logical wit, charm, and unwavering loyalty. After wrapping up her time in *Stranger Things*' Hawkins as Erica Sinclair, Priah will appear in the

upcoming Jean-Michel Basquiat biopic *Samo Lives*. Meanwhile, Nadine will star in the upcoming Crave comedy series *Slo Pitch*.

For the fandom crossover you didn't know you needed, we gathered the six rising stars earlier this year to chat with us and each other about what they've learned from their characters, what they think of their fandoms, and what's next for each of them.

THE BEST FRIENDS

Katie Douglas (Abby Littman in *Ginny & Georgia*)



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Jacket **Dolce & Gabbana**.

Describe your character, Abby, in three words.

Mischievous, devoted, and unpredictable. She's reliably fun, and while her friends are the most important thing in her life, there is so much turbulence going on under the surface.

What's one thing you want fans to know about her?

Abby doesn't claim perfection; she will always be the imperfect storm. She's the reliably unreliable narrator of her own story. It's kind of terrifying, and I love it. I think Abby acts as somewhat of a mirror for the audience—she's there to remind you of the chaos and nuance that comes along with being a human.

What relationships in Ginny & Georgia's friend group, MANG, do you hope continue in season 4?

I can't speak to what direction the group is headed, but I'm always rooting for them. I love the childhood bond that Abby has with her friends, and I'd want her to continue to hold onto what's good. Her relationship with Max is consistently complicated due to their opposite personalities, but I think those differences make for some of the most important relationships of our lives.



*Top **Tory Burch**, skirt **Ermanno Scervino**, headband **Blondita**, necklace **Alyssa Norton**.*



What are you most excited for fans to see next?

They're going to see another side of Abby. I can't wait to see all of their reactions.

If you could swap characters with anyone else on the show for a day, who would it be and why?

I'd be crazy not to say Maxine Baker—she's basically the yin to Abby's yang. The energy that Sara Waisglass brings to that character is intoxicating and frankly delightful, and I just wanna live there.

Nikki Rodriguez (Jackie Howard in *My Life With the Walter Boys*)



Dress **Loewe**, brooch **Boy Kloves**, earrings **Presley Oldham**.

You and your costars Ashby Gentry and Noah LaLonde have said you're genuine best friends offscreen. How has that shaped your onscreen chemistry?

It's everything. Three seasons later and nothing has changed. It makes it incredibly easy to go to work every day and have so much fun filming.

What part of fame surprised you the most: what people expect from you or what they project onto you?

Definitely what people project onto you. It's almost like there's a version of you that exists out in the world and then the real version of you. Sometimes those two versions can feel very different. I'm learning to be okay with that and not take everything so seriously.



*Tops **Dana Foley** and (underneath) **Ami Paris**, skirt **Bode**, shoes **Repetto**.*



What's the wildest fan theory you've seen about Jackie and the Walter boys?

It's not a fan theory, but there's a TikTok that really makes me laugh. It's a clip of after Alex tells Jackie he loves her, and it's like, "The worst she can say is no," then cuts to Jackie speed packing up and getting on a plane. That's so funny to me.

If your character could give you advice about your real life, what do you think she'd say?

That I could probably be working way harder. I mean she literally gets up to go running to start the day. I've never done that in my life.

Have fans ever predicted a plot twist that actually came true?

I've seen a few that I can't confirm or deny.

THE NEW GIRLS

Carlacia Grant (Cleo Anderson in *Outer Banks*)

seventeen

SINCE 1944



*Dress **MSGM**, earrings **Isabel Marant**.*

Was the original *Outer Banks* cast welcoming to you?

I remember sneaking onto set—this was during COVID—to watch them work and see how playful they were and how much fun they were having. That's when I knew this was going to be a fun ride. We ended up exchanging numbers and hanging out that same day.

Did joining the show later give you a different point of view?

For sure. I got to step into something that was already loved, which is amazing. But yeah, there's definitely pressure that comes with that.

What surprised you most about fan reactions to your character, Cleo?

Probably how quickly they accepted her. Seeing people connect with her and support her meant a lot.



*Dress **Laura Andraschko.***



What's one fan comment that genuinely made you smile?

I've had people—especially dark-skinned women—tell me they feel seen because of Cleo, and that means everything. I also love seeing all the edits fans make; they're so creative. And it still makes me smile when people yell, "Cheese on bread," at me in the street.

What do you hope fans take away from season 5?

I hope they see Cleo's growth but also her strength. She risks everything for the people she loves, and this is her most important fight. I want people to see that no matter what you go through, it's important to never give up hope and stay true to yourself.

Kylie Cantrall (Red in *Descendants: The Rise of Red*)



Dress **Diesel**.

What was the most intimidating part of stepping into such a huge fandom?

Honestly, I read the script before auditioning, so I already knew fans would connect with it. I was the perfect age when the first movie came out—I was 8, and I completely fell in love with the idea that we'd be bringing it back for a new generation, but along with that, I definitely understood the responsibility I'd have to take on pushing forward such a beloved franchise.

Were you reading fan comments before the movie came out?

Of course—it's so hard not to. My friends and family were even sending me links like, "Kylie Jenner in her PJs singing 'Red' with Stormi!" and I was like... okay, yeah, super casual. I was freaking out.



*On Kylie: Dress **Diesel**, shoes **Gianvito Rossi**, pendant **Swarovski**. On Nikki: Dress **Loewe**, shoes **Gianvito Rossi**. On Carlacia: Dress **Laura Andraschko**, shoes **Manolo Blahnik**.*



Do you feel like you've fully "claimed" your place in the *Descendants* world now?

Yeah, for sure. I think Red has definitely snuck into people's hearts. But then again, why wouldn't she? She's a princess *and* a rebel, which is the perfectly imperfect combo. Like, we know she's gonna break the rules, but she has a lot of heart.

What do you hope OG fans feel when they watch your version of *Descendants*?

I think the nostalgia comes from the world that was created in the first three films, and our version stays true to that. You still have the bright, bigger-than-life costumes, high-energy musical numbers, heroes versus villains, and wigs so long, they deserve their own trailer.

What's something about your character fans misunderstand but you love?

Disney actually brought me in for a secret meeting to explain who Red's father is, and it completely blew my mind. I promised I'd never reveal it, but let's just say...it ties into the franchise in a really unexpected way. Tea.

THE VOICES OF REASON

Priah Ferguson (Erica Sinclair in *Stranger Things*)



Dress **Rabanne**, hairpin **Jennifer Behr**, earrings **Pandora**.

Do you feel a responsibility knowing that younger fans look up to your character?

When I was younger, yes, I was more sensitive about how she was perceived. Now that I'm evolving, I don't feel that weight or responsibility as much. I'm telling human stories, and humans are complex. Some of us inspire; some are flawed; many are both. My only hope is that any character I choose to play leaves a meaningful impact.

What's something about your character that fans completely misunderstand but you secretly love?

Her unfiltered wit is often labeled as bratty, disrespectful, or annoying. She's only offering common-sense logic, but the humor lands because it's rooted in honesty. That's where her agency lies. She only claps back at anyone who's intentionally disrespectful to her or dismisses her ideas, and I love that for her.

If your character could give you advice about your real life, what do you think she'd say?

I'm not dating anyone, but she'd definitely tell me to cut off anyone or any person who doesn't serve me well, and she'd remind me of my standards.



*On Priah: Hoodie **Gap**, dress and belt **Rabanne**, earphones **Apple**. On Nadine: Sweatshirt **Los Angeles Apparel**, dress **Ferragamo**.*



Are there any fan theories that you secretly agree with?

I think fan theories are really for the fans to explore the many ways a story could fulfill their expectations. There's this one idea that I find to be compelling and low-key agree with...but it won't be a secret if I share it.

If your character could have a spin-off or mini-episode, what story would you want to explore?

The YA journey of a young woman who attends a prestigious college studying law, tech, or science. Maybe she patents a profitable idea while exploring love, mystery, and a little mayhem.

Nadine Bhabha (Elena Rygg in *Heated Rivalry*)



Dress **Stella McCartney**, earrings **Alyssa Norton**.

When did you first realize *Heated Rivalry* had crossed into “rabid fandom” territory?

At the Toronto premiere, which was four days before the show aired in Canada, the U.S., and Australia. There were fans of the books at the venue; that was unusual. Then after the first two episodes dropped, I’ve never seen that much press for a show with no previous buzz. It was insane. Of course, after episode 3 dropped, everything changed. I was like, *Oh, we’ve really done something here*. Usually people find a show much later. Jacob [Tierney] said, “I’ve never been watched in real time by real people. What is happening?”

Can you spill one secret from season 1?

I was the first person cast. I’ll never forget the day Jacob called and asked if I’d come to this new show of his. I immediately said yes, and it was so cool to watch them build this world.



Dress **Ferragamo**, necklace **Presley Oldham x Zankov**, bag **Coach**.



Is there a fan theory about Elena's role that you think could be true?

None come to mind, but I'm seeing a lot of open wishes for the girls to get together. I agree—Elena, Svetlana, Rose, and heck, why not Yuna and Maria, too! Petition for a girls' night-style episode.

What aspect of queer storytelling do you think fans are most hungry for more of?

Easy: gargantuan love. So much queer storytelling is wracked with strife. Of course, that reflects a reality many people live with, but aspirational queer TV is necessary, too. If straight people get *The Notebook*, we need the queer version.

What's one habit or trait you've accidentally picked up from your character?

Wearing long red dresses.

(Lead image) On Kylie: Dress **Diesel**. On Nadine: Dress **Stella McCartney**, earrings **Alyssa Norton**. On Priah: Dress and belt **Rabanne**, hairpin **Jennifer Behr**, earrings **Pandora**. On Katie: Jacket **Dolce & Gabbana**, top **Mila Sullivan**, jeans **R13**. On Nikki: Dress **Loewe**, brooch **Boy Kloves**, earrings **Presley Oldham**. On Carlacia: Dress **MSGM**, skirt **Bode**, earrings **Isabel Marant**.

Styled by **Kaia Carioli**. Hair by **Amber Duarte** and **Chloe Target** (Carlacia's). Makeup by **Samuel Paul**. Manicure by **Natalie Minerva**.

(Videos) Director: **Rona Liana Ahdout**. Senior producers: **Lucy Dolan-Zalaznick** and **Rae Medina**. Supervising producer: **Ali Farooqui**. Producer: **Ali Buchalter**. Associate producer: **Jordan Abt**. Director of photography: **Darren Kho**. Cinematographer: **Jake L. Mitchell**. Sound mixer: **Griffy James**. Directors of video: **Amanda Kabbabe** and **Kathryn Rice**. Video graphics: **Gigi Pena** and Kelsey Fink.



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Rosemary is an Associate Social Media Editor for Cosmopolitan and Seventeen, where she fangirls over all things celebrity news, music, TV, movies, and more across the brands' social platforms. ➡📱

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