

Transcript

00:00 You're listening to the My Simplified Life Podcast, and this is episode number 202.

00:09 Welcome to the My Simplified Life podcast, a place where you will learn that your past and even your present don't define your future. Regardless of what stage of life you're in, I want you to feel inspired and encouraged to pursue your dreams, simplify your life, and start taking action today. I'm your host, Michelle Glogevac, and I'm excited to share my stories and life lessons with you while taking you on my own journey.

00:37 This is my simplified life.

00:41 Hey friends, welcome back to another episode. I'm your host, Michelle Glogovac. Before I kick off with today's episode, I wanna let you all know that tomorrow, Wednesday, November 1st, 2023, I will be revealing not only my book cover for how to get on podcasts, but also the links for presales. And with a presale order, you will also receive a companion

01:09 course for how to get on podcasts. So go check out my Instagram, my Facebook, it will be all over social media, tomorrow, Tuesday, November 1st, so you can get all of the details. And now let's talk about today's episode. I am so thrilled I got the opportunity to talk to my client who has now become a very dear friend, Lynn Gullodner. Lynn is a publisher, a author,

01:37 She's a mother, she is a former publicist, she works in marketing, she's a book coach, she has a ton of titles. And her novel Woman of Valor came out just last month, and it is incredible. It is the story of a woman who converts to becoming an Orthodox Jew, and what that life looks like.

02:01 It has a love story in it, or maybe two. It deals with marriage and friendship and motherhood. It has all kinds of topics. And what I thoroughly enjoyed was learning more about this religion and culture that I did not know about. It's very timely with everything that we see going on in the world today. And I feel that if we were to all take more time,

02:30 to understand and to see how others live and why they live that way, that we would build more empathy in the world. And reading a book like Woman of Valor is not only educational for each and every one of us, but entertaining at the same time. And that is why I absolutely love that Lynn is focusing on Jewish characters in her books. And it's a way for all of us who aren't Jewish to understand.

02:58 what that truly means. So I am so excited to introduce you to my dear friend, Lynn, and for you to get to hear our conversation about her journey to becoming a publisher, to writing a book a year, to what's next for her, and learning more about Woman of Valor. Hi, Lynn. Hi, Michelle. I'm so excited to get to talk to you. We email all the time, we chat all the time, but it's so nice to get to go face to face and.

03:27 Let the world in on our conversation. I know, I was so looking forward to this. Thank you for having me on. My pleasure. Before we dive in, can you take a moment and introduce yourself to everyone, please? Yes, I am Linda Ladner. I'm based in Detroit. I've always been an author and a writer. I'm now also a writing coach, a publisher, and a marketing entrepreneur. And so I do all of those things. Plus I am a mom of four young adults, so very busy. Just a little bit, you know?

03:55 many titles were in there. I couldn't even keep up. That was a lot. Yeah, my grandmother used to say, you do too much. And I'm like, Oh, grandma, but she was totally right. I get bored if I don't do too much. Like I always have to be busy. I'm one of those people where it's like, I can't even watch TV. I have to be knitting or doing something. Yes. Yeah. Like that's why we're, we're friends because we're saying totally. I love it. Let's talk for a minute about being a publisher because this is something relatively new.

04:24 Right. How long have you been a publisher? Not even a full year. I think I launched Scotiary books in February. And so, you know, we're now in October. So, yeah, it's really new. So how does one become a publisher? I'm totally fascinated because we all know the big five. We all, you know, that's really what I think everybody knows. How is it? Because I would love to be like, yeah, I'm a publisher. Give me your book. I'm going to go sell it for you and print it and, you know, do all the things. And it takes a lot to be a publisher.

04:53 How did that come about? It's a really interesting story, Michelle, because, you know, so Woman of Valor, my novel that just came out, is my ninth book. So I've had eight books published before now, and all by small presses, all where I went in search of a publisher who wanted to take on my work and put it in the world. I never really thought that I would be on the other side of things. And when I wrote this novel, it's not the first novel I've written, but it's the first one I think was good enough to go out into the world.

05:21 and I just assumed that I'm going to query agents and publishers and see what happens. So I started that process and I got great responses. I had great responses from agents. I got an offer from a small publisher that was not a great contract, so I turned it down actually and I started to really think about how I wanted this book to go into the world. And I'm at a point in life where I don't necessarily want to play a game. I don't want to jump through hoops.

05:51 to make money for other people and that was really what it was feeling like. And also, you know, I started my career as a journalist and it was at a time when self-publishing was like when you had no other options. It was really looked down upon and that's not the case anymore. So I started to research what are all the different ways that I could put this book in the world and I realized that I could do it myself in a way that I loved and put out something that's quality and I have the marketing expertise.

06:18 with my marketing company to really promote it and get it out there. And then if I could do this for myself, I could do this for other people. So I sort of used myself as the guinea pig when I decided to create Scotiabroad Books and I could work out all the kinks on myself so I wasn't

making mistakes on any other authors. And I found that it was a really fun process. It was actually fairly easy and I love being in control of the whole process.

06:44 And so I created Scotiary Road Books as a way for other women at midlife with strong voices to find a collaboration and a team who can support them. But it really is a team effort. And that's why I decided to make it hybrid because everybody puts something in, but then everybody gets something out too. I love that. A total collaboration. Yes. And so Women of Valor, let's talk about this book. It fascinated me. I loved it.

07:14 I it's the voice of a Jewish woman, an Orthodox Jewish woman. And it was a total learning experience for me because I'm not familiar with what exactly is an Orthodox Jew. You know, how do they live? And you really went into detail. And we have to give away that like your personal experience went into this. And I did not know that going into reading the book, which is what fascinated me even more.

07:41 So I loved it. I was like, oh, now I really know, Lynn. But it is fiction. Right, right. But it shows how we bring our real life events and journeys into what we write. So can you share, let's talk about the book, share what it's about and how your personal experience is interwoven into it. Yeah, so I love to talk about this. I was Orthodox for 10 years. I left that community.

08:09 Although I did keep some observances and rituals from it that I really find special. But when I started writing this, I started writing it in 2011 and I wrote 60 pages and sort of stalled and put it aside. And when I came back to it in 2021, I liked the bones of the story, but I didn't like the direction it was going. So I totally overhauled it. The first incarnation was this young Orthodox woman who basically lamented her life and was whining about it. And I'm like, we've read that book, that is out there. And I don't need to add.

08:38 another book to the shelves of people who are dissatisfied with religion. And so that was a challenge for me because I left orthodoxy. It did not work for me even after a decade of living that way. And I wanted to write a book that showed it as a beautiful choice, something that was a deliberate identity, but with challenges because every community has challenges. And so how would this young woman, Sally,

09:06 navigate those challenges? Would she stay? Would she go? How would she make those decisions? Because it was a community that she chose because it welcomed her in, it gave her a sense of meaning, her friendships were there, she met the love of her life, her husband Barry. It was all working for her until it wasn't. And so what would be the solution? And it's just, it was a fun story to write. I still love it every time I read it. I think, wow, I wrote this, that's so cool. You know, like,

09:35 I think that they're strong characters. It's an interesting path of happenings and outcomes. And I'm really proud of it. I think it's a really strong story. You should be. And I love hearing that you love what you've written when you've read it. I'm going through that right now where I'm reading the edits. And I went, wow, this is really good. And then you realized that, oh, I wrote it. I love that. That's so great.

10:02 Thank you. Someone referred to it as like, it's an out of body experience, it sounds like. I'm like, it totally is. I don't remember putting these words on paper, and yet it came out that way. So I totally get that. Yeah, there are fiction writers that I have connected with who are like, oh, I'm at that point where I hate this story. I need to get away from it. I'm like, I haven't gotten there, which is great. I'm excited that I haven't gotten there. And with my next book, which is in revisions now.

10:32 I'm not there either. I really do like this story and I feel like I'm only just getting to know them. And so that's really fun. So you're writing a book a year. That's the plan. How are you doing this? Because I have talked to so many authors who are like, it took me 10 years to write this. I'm going, oh my gosh. Well, I mean, for me, it's I love to write. And so the act of writing the book is the best part.

10:58 And it is super exciting to put it out and to hear from people and to get it in people's hands. But my true love is the act of writing. And so that's what I'd like to be spending most of my time doing. And it is interesting because this book launch has been bigger than any of my other book launches and it took all my energy. So I really wasn't writing in the month of the book launch because I was so focused on the marketing. And then the week of the book launch, I was like, oh, so now I have to take my own advice.

11:26 And this is where the marketing begins, once the book is in the world. So I was like, I have to do more of the business of the book, but I just want to get back to writing. And that is the fun part of it. But I also am aware that the way that you build an author career and the way you make money as an author is to write book after book after book. And you have to know that going in. You can't put all of your sites on one book because it can only do so much for you. And so that was when I said, well, I love to write.

11:56 and it's a challenge and it's something I can always do, no matter my ability, my age, whatever. And so why not aim for the stars? And I do write quickly, the revisions take a lot longer and I'm a very impatient person. So it is frustrating that it's not perfect in the first round or second round or third round, but I now know that. And so I think it's giving me something that keeps me going, motivates me. And

12:24 I have a list of other books that I can't wait to start. So we'll have to see. So how are you fitting this in? What is your writing kind of ritual on top of publishing, on top of being a writing coach, on top of marketing? How are you doing all of these things with just 24 hours in a day? My grandma's voice is like ringing in my head right now. In a normal time, which is not now because I just had hand surgery and it just came off the book launch.

12:51 Maybe a few weeks from now I'll get back to normal, but it's, I write every morning, Monday through Friday for three to four hours. And I don't write at all on Saturday usually. And Sunday is when I work on the business of writing. And this can include a book I'm working on or creative nonfiction essays, which I do a lot as well and work on publishing them out in the world. And then in the afternoons is when I meet with clients or I teach classes or any of those things. And I'm pretty...

13:20 tight with my scheduling. You know, like I don't want to work in the evenings and I try not to work on the weekends if I can avoid it. So I really try to have a very tight schedule and be realistic in what I can do and how many clients I can take on at once. That's smart. I just had somebody ask me like, can you work with me when you have a book coming out? Like, yeah, no problem. Like, we'll figure it out. Yes. Yes. Yeah. I also I want to talk about the characters in

13:48 Woman of Valor and then going forward all of your future books, you're focusing on the voices of Jewish people. Yes. Let's talk about that. Yeah. That was deliberate when I was figuring out my author brand, which I help a lot of writers figure out their author brand and build an author career to really guide their marketing. It's very important to me and in all of my writing, there is a component of Jewish identity because it's very important to me.

14:18 So that's a strong part of me. I say that I'm just Jewish. I belong to a conservative synagogue, but I don't know that I'm a conservative Jew. I think I take from each denomination and I also reject equally from each denomination. But being Jewish is so central to my identity and my ancestry. And I thought that that would be, I think I'm already doing it. And I wanted to deliberately

14:45 focus my author career around creating compelling Jewish characters. And this book happens to be a book about an Orthodox Jewish community. So it's very steeped in religion. That's not my intention going forward. I mean, that may happen again, but like the next book takes place partially in Michigan, partially in Scotland, and they're pretty secular characters. They're not even all Jewish.

15:09 but there is one who has a history growing up Orthodox but having left it because he is gay. And so there's LGBTQ issues, there's issues of antisemitism in the UK in the 19th century. So there are issues surrounding Jewish identity, but it's not such a core focus as it is in Woman of Valor. I don't know what other books will have. I might go back to the Orthodox world, I may not.

15:35 And when you, I want to point out because we talk about how Orthodox Judaism is, you know, a central point of this character's life. But at the same time, I don't feel like it's a religious book per se. I, there's, you're, you're reading about someone's life and what she's going through and she just so happens to be an Orthodox Jew. I feel like that, that's part of it too. Like, and, and at the same time, that's where the education for me came from was.

16:05 I was intrigued. I was like, oh, I didn't know that they wore wigs. Oh, you know, I didn't know. Like, then I got the mental picture of she's jogging and yet she's like in a dress, fully clothed, and how is one going to do that? Yes, yep. Yeah, it's, I'm so glad to hear that because, you know, even though it's a very Jewish book, a lot of my friends who are not Jewish really enjoyed it and were intrigued by it. And that to me is the mark of good writing. So I am thrilled.

16:35 books about other cultures and be fascinated and feel like I've learned something and I want to go into that world even though it's not my world. So I'm so thrilled to hear that from you. Even though I was Orthodox for 10 years, I wasn't Orthodox like Sally was. And so I had to do

my research. And so I have a friend who grew up Orthodox, who wore a wig for a bunch of years and she's no longer, but she's a runner. And so I met with her when I was planning the book.

17:04 I knew Sally was going to be a runner. I am so not a runner, have no interest in running. And so I asked my friend, you know, can you tell me like, how do I do this research because I want it to be authentic. And she told me to follow these two women on social media who are Orthodox and competitive runners. One actually runs for the Olympics for Israel, which is interesting. And the other one lives in Chicago, which is where this book is set. And so that was really helpful too.

17:30 and she competes in marathons, she's a mother of nine, she wears wigs and everything. And I mean, look, the book is done, it's out in the world. I'm still following both of them because I'm so fascinated. It's like, I feel like I know their kids and it's so interesting. So I had to do research about this too because even when I was Orthodox, if I exercised, I didn't do it in a skirt. I wore exercise clothes, I was more modern Orthodox is what it was called. So I had to step into that world and see what it would feel like.

18:00 build believable characters. Something that I'm thinking about right now, especially in the state of the world that we're in, that I appreciate from your book is the fact that I do feel like I got an education on it. And I think that if we are able to read books that aren't like school books of this is what a culture is like, this is what a religion is like, but we're reading a story and it just so happens to give us that insight.

18:28 that we otherwise wouldn't have. That's really how the world, we're going to become educated, we'll become more accepting and the world then becomes a better place. It can all start with a novel, truly. It's so simple, really when you think about it. Thank you for that. Oh, well, thank you for saying that. I've been thinking over the past week that maybe a future book needs to be a love story between an Israeli and a Palestinian.

18:57 That's going to be a lot of research for me, but it's not beyond my reach. And it happens all the time. And those are not the stories we're hearing. And so, you know, because at the end of the day, people are people. And so when we're hearing, you know, politics and governments and things like that, those are big ideas, but they're not, you know, human to human. And so when you, when you sit across the table from someone and you get to know them, regardless of your origins, you realize you have so much in common that we're just.

19:26 We're all the same at the core. We all want the same things. I think stories need to show that humanity. I love that. So everybody go buy this book because we all need this education, this connectedness to better understand each other. I think it's so important that if you don't know Orthodox Judaism, which I didn't, now I have an inside glimpse into what life is like.

19:56 in a community where it's, I didn't realize like it's so closed off, you know, it reminded me of kind of like the Amish, you know, where it's just this certain part of town and it's totally different. Yeah, it's true. You don't know that because when you have a really great wig, you

don't look like you're any different from anybody else. You know, I mean, some Orthodox women are as chic as they can be. And it's like, you don't think that they're any different, you know. Can you share with people why?

20:24 women wear wigs because this was all new to me. I was like, wait, what? So one of my other books, one of my nonfiction books is called Hide and Seek Jewish Women in Hair Covering. And I wrote that in 2002 because I was newly married and covering my hair, but I wanted to study it. I'm like, well, why do Orthodox women cover their hair once they're married? And there was nothing. There were no books out there. There are tons of books on keeping kosher and keeping the Sabbath and all these things.

20:52 but there was nothing about hair covering. And I have curly hair. It used to be a lot bigger and thicker. And I was like, you want me to cover that? Like everybody knew me for my hair. And it was a pretty traumatic change. And so I wanted to understand where it came from and there was nothing. So I said, well, I'll put a book out there and do the research. And so I learned a lot and it basically comes from Leviticus and it's the section with the Sota, the adulteress and one of the ways that the priest in the temple

21:21 tries to determine if she committed adultery, is he puts her through all these tests that are understood to be humiliating, and I guess her innocence or her guilt will come out in doing so. One of the tests is that he uncovers her hair in public. And so the rabbis teach that married women are supposed to have their hair covered in public. And actually the real language in Hebrew is letting loose. So hair...

21:48 like being tied back and then just like letting it loose around your shoulders. So technically if you go by the letter of the law, it's simply letting your hair down. But the way it's been interpreted is covering. And so now the explanation is that once a woman gets married, her essence, her sensuality comes through her at the top of her head and it's really only reserved for her husband. And so she covers her hair, her head when she's around anybody else.

22:16 And isn't that interesting when you think about like a movie or something where the hair is all up and she pulls out the clip or whatever and she throws her head around and then, oh, all of her locks come down and it's like, oh, that was it. The music slows down and you really, I mean, it makes sense when you think about it that way. Yeah, yeah, it does. And there's a lot of different interpretations and every community has its own way of observing this. So wigs are...

22:45 an opinion that some rabbis allow because you technically are covering but you're not feeling ugly or horrible or whatever and so they allow it. But there are a lot of communities that do not allow wigs. They think it's not in the spirit of the law and so women will use scarves or hats or whatever to cover their hair. But it can be really transformational when you all of a sudden don't show your hair and it changes your hair, it changes your self image.

23:14 And so there's a lot that goes into it, for sure. What was that like leaving Orthodox Judaism? Well, you know, I became Orthodox before I married my first husband. I was pretty idealistic about what I thought it would be like. And I really did like the rhythm of the community

and the rituals. But listen, I say all the time, don't confuse Jews with Judaism. So there could be beautiful observances in Judaism, but people are people.

23:44 And so there's corruption and there's hypocrisy in every community. And I just started to feel like I was really penned in with all of these requirements on me, but I wasn't seeing as much of the beauty. When I started to see some of the, I guess I would say the hypocrisy, you know, that exists in some parts of the community. But when I was married to my first husband, I didn't really think it was fair to him to stop being observant because he married me when I was.

24:13 And that was, he's always been, and I just felt like it wasn't his fault. So when we got divorced, I did stop covering my hair after four years of marriage and he didn't really care, he didn't care either way. And I never wore a wig, just so you know, I always wear hats, but I wear scarves. But when we divorced, I thought, okay, now I wanna be intellectually honest. And even though it might be confusing for my kids, because we have three kids together, I just felt like I couldn't.

24:43 be untruthful to myself and I didn't want to live that way. And so I'm still very Jewish. I do a lot of the observances, but I make up my own mind on how I'm going to observe. So I will say when I left orthodoxy, some of the people I thought were my friends dropped me like a hot potato, but that also happened when I got divorced. I think they felt like divorce was like a disease and I suddenly, you know, could they could catch it or something.

25:10 or that I'd go after their husbands, which I was not planning to do. So, you know, it was sad, but I felt liberated and it was the right decision for me, for sure. And you bring up in the book the hypocrisy with the teacher who is abusing one of Sally's kids and how hush-hush it's been, and then it turns out he wasn't the only one. Yes.

25:36 Yeah, I mean, it's really disturbing when you read it and you're like, yeah, as a mother, how could you allow this to stay silent? And then you're called out for being the bad person when you're actually the good one. You know, I'll tell you, in a lot of religious communities, we've seen this throughout the years. Abuse happens and it's swept under the rug. You know, think about the Catholic Church. Think about...

26:00 I do, I'm Catholic. There you go. There's so many. I mean, the Orthodox world, it's happened there. It's happened in a lot of, it happens in all communities, unfortunately. And when you are a more isolated community and you do feel like the outside world is sort of against you, why would you want to give them fodder to think worse about you? So I do understand the logic in not wanting to make this a public story, but I can't ever sanction abuse against children.

26:29 period. It's not okay. You know, when I was in the Orthodox world, I remember hearing stories about daycares that were in people's homes and they weren't licensed. There was no oversight whatsoever. And these were homes that weren't created with safety measures or old homes or whatever. And kids would get hurt. And I was so concerned about it. And I remember my ex saying things like,

26:54 Well, it's really not our place. And I'm like, well, then whose place is it? You know, and so the idea was like, go to a rabbi and let the rabbi take care of it. And I'm like, no, you go to the police because children are in danger. And I even once called Child Protective Services when I had evidence about a daycare that was harmful for children. And I was so nervous. Like I didn't know if my friends would find out it was me or I'd be ostracized or whatever. I mean, I was up for nights worrying about it. It never blew back on me.

27:24 hope that it was investigated. I just don't know. And I just feel like we each have a responsibility to stand up for right. And we can't take that lightly. I completely agree. You know, I agree on that one. I will shout it from the rooftops. That's why we're friends. That's what I said. Yes, I love it. I love it. So you've, you've started the next book. You're already in revisions. When can we expect to see that? No, no pressure.

27:51 No pressure, right? My intention was to have it out in the fall of 2024. But I've learned that I should never do a book launch in the same month that I lead a writer's retreat or go to a conference or any of that. And I am leading retreats in September and October of 2024. So maybe November and maybe January of 2025. Or maybe August. Maybe August. Yes, we'll have to chat. Michelle, you'll guide me. You'll let me know what you think.

28:18 I think it could be ready as early as August. I just don't, I want to think about the best time to launch a book. You know, do I want it in summer or do I want to wait? You know, I don't know. So yeah, I also don't want to cannibalize on the interest in Woman of Valor. And so, you know, like I plan to do the Jewish Book Council for Woman of Valor in 2024. And so I want to give the next book that opportunity as well. So it might be wiser.

28:45 to do January of 2025, and then I'll have the next book in the process anyway. So you never know. I love it. Oh, I can't wait to read it. I honestly, I can't. I'm not blowing smoke or steam. It was so good. So I can't wait. Where can everyone find you? Where can they find Scotiary Road Press? All of the good things. Yeah. So LynnGladner.com is my website. It's where you can find all the things. Scotiaryroadbooks.com is where our press is.

29:11 And we are open to submissions. So if you are a woman over 40 with a strong voice and you write in our genres of fiction and nonfiction, we would love to hear from you. And I'm on everywhere, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, not Twitter that much, but I'm there. So follow me and I'll follow you back and let's have the conversation. Thank you so much, Lynn. Thank you for sharing your voice and your experiences with all of us.

29:34 Okay friends, now go out and purchase Woman of Valor so that you can not only have an entertaining read, but one that is going to teach you something more. Most likely something that many of you don't know about because I didn't know about what goes into being an Orthodox Jew. I love that Lynne took her real life moments and experience and incorporated it into this book and to hear the research that she did to ensure its accuracy.

30:03 It is so much fun to learn from an author and hear what they put into in order for all of us to be entertained in the books we read. As a reminder, tomorrow my book, How to Get on

Podcasts, the cover will be revealed and the presale links will be posted, so be sure to go grab your copy. It comes out February 27th. As always, remember to listen to the stories of others.

30:32 You never know what you will learn, and you never know how big your empathy can grow for others.