

## Transcript

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You're listening to the My Simplified Life podcast and this is episode number 213.

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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 Glogovac, and I'm excited to share my stories and life lessons with you while taking you on my own journey.

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This is my simplified life.

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Hey friends, welcome back to another episode. I'm your host, Michelle Glogovac. Today, you are in for a treat because you get to meet my online friend who I get to meet in real life this week, Jessica Saunders. Jessica is basically, she's like my twin. She is a debut author. Her book comes out today called Love Me and she is also an attorney.

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That is her full-time job. And I just love we are both very type A, organized, even have the same kind of writing rituals. So we hit it off thanks to Lee Stein who introduced us. And we got to have such a fun conversation about not just how Jessica became an author with a big publishing deal, but how she's also juggling motherhood, being an attorney.

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still full time. And I asked her a question that I've wanted to ask an author that I've never done before. So you have to listen for that part in the interview because it made me giggle and blush

and it was a great answer. So enjoy listening to my conversation with Jessica. Love Me is out today. Hi, Jess.

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Hi, how are you? I'm so excited to talk to you. So I am good because we've gotten to text, we've gotten to email, we've gotten to DM, we've exchanged books, but yet this is the first time we've gotten to actually talk to each other. So I am so excited. Can you introduce yourself to everybody, please? Sure, I'm Jessica Saunders and my debut novel, Love Me is publishing on January 16th, 2024.

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which is today because when this is released, it will be today. So let me be the first to congratulate you on your pub day. Oh my God. Thank you. That's great. It makes me feel really big. I'm like, we don't realize that. Like it's going to happen and it is going to happen right around the corner. So let's talk about you though, first, because it is your debut novel, but what's your day job? Let's talk about what you actually do. Sure. I am an attorney.

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for a personal care products company managing litigation for them. I worked at a law firm for a really long time as a litigator. So now I'm what is known as in-house counsel for this company. And did you always want to write a novel? Yeah, it's funny. I always love to write. I always love to read. For me as a child, you know, I was one of those kids with

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you know, book in her hand at all times and under the covers and during sleepovers, reading and in action. It's kind of nice because I have, um, I have two daughters and my 11 year old has completely mimic my behavior as a child. And she also, so the two of us are just constantly reading together, which is really nice. But so I always love to read. And as I got older, I started to write a bit and I, you know, I worked for the

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school newspaper and then in college, I took some creative writing classes, but I also wrote a column for my college paper. And so in the back of my mind, it was always, always a dream, but it was not something that I pursued until more recently. I think as a lawyer, you have to be a good writer and like writing. I didn't go to law school, but I have two degrees in law. So I know that there's a lot of writing involved.

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with being an attorney. So it kind of fits that you could do it, but the writing styles are so different. You say one is dull and your book is far from dull. It is really, really good. Thank you. So, you know, it's interesting when you are a litigator, I think people think about going to court, arguing in front of a judge, trying cases. But in my practice, I was...

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really known as the brief writer. So I used my writing skills. Obviously they are different skills, but I always loved that process. So, you know, as a lawyer, you do a ton of research. I would use Westlaw and I would find cases and I would get really creative and come up with arguments. And I just could fill my days with writing briefs. And I think...

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In some ways, that's what put off this idea of writing a novel for so long, because I was sort of scratching that itch of wanting to write in my day job, and I was writing all the time. How long did it take you to write the novel, since you're still working full time? You were doing it, what, mornings and nights? Yeah. So I had a unique experience because I always had ideas sort of floating in my head, and then when I...

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I had, unfortunately, I lost a very close friend and I sort of looked at that time of, okay, this is a dream that I've had forever. And it was a real wake up call that we don't have all the time in the world. At that point, I had lists of ideas. I'm an ideas girl, but I hadn't put anything really to paper. And so, I had in the notes app on my phone, I just had lots and lots of ideas.

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When I lost my friend, I said, okay, this is the time. And it was spring of 2021. So I decided to sign up for a class. So I took a class through Gotham Writers Workshop, which was fantastic. And it was a weekly Zoom live class. And I had, and it was called a first draft class. So all you needed to do was come in with an idea and a commitment to write every week.

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And so I went about doing that and I actually, and so it was a 10 week class I'd say, and it started, I remember it started in the beginning of July. And I wrote and wrote and wrote, and it was the first time I'd ever attempted this, but I just loved it so much. And as I mentioned, I'm a reader, I kind of put reading to the back burner. So in the time that I would usually spend it at night, reading, you know,

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for bed and even watching TV. My husband was alone watching TV for all those months and I just made it a priority. So I would say I actually finished a first draft within three months just from being a real competitor. That's incredible. Thank you. I think it's because I'm a lawyer. You're focused, you have deadlines, you're focused. And I just.

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I was used to deadlines, I was used to structure, and I just, I kind of went full steam ahead. And the other thing I would share from this great class that I took is that they really discourage you from going back and editing along the way. So for me, it was really freeing. I just sat down at my computer and I wasn't allowed really to go back and get caught up in prior things I'd written. So I just.

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full steam ahead, I really got to the end of it. And that's when obviously the editing process happened, but I wasn't bogged down in things that I needed to change. I think we're very similar. I think this is why we get along so well is because I'm the same way. Mine took me a year, but I also spent like a week in the hospital and there were like things that came up in between. So, minor details, but.

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I was very much like, here's the deadline, I'm going to get this done. And I had everything outlined and then I'd tackle a chapter, move on to the next, do the next one. And it wasn't until I was completely done. And even along the way I go, oh, you know what, I missed this. Well, I'm just going to write it down that chapter five needs this added. And I wouldn't go back to add it until everything was done. So my process was very similar to yours.

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this current process that I'm in right now, I feel like I'm kind of all over the place because for me, I'm like, okay, we're going to write about this. Oh, but I should probably include this. So should I create a new chapter document on this? So I cover this or should it's a hot mess right now, but it'll be good and it'll be fine along the way. I'm sure it will be. I mean, one of mine is, and one thing I, I'm by no means, you know, an expert in this, in this area at all, but I

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felt like I could just write and then I could write more. And if I had sort of a something that went off outline or wasn't within the anticipated structure, I could write that too, because you can edit it in later and figure out where it belongs. So, I mean, that's how I did it then. I don't know how I'll do it now, but for you, as you start thinking about different things, I feel like that's, I just found it really freeing, knowing that I could think.

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fitted in somewhere later. When did you realize that it was a book that you could and would want to sell? It never occurred to me, and I think this might be because I am so, the publishing industry is so far into me and I knew nothing, it never occurred to me that I wouldn't write the book and then try to sell it. I was like, I'm writing a book to sell the book. And so, I wrote the book.

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finished the draft and I was like, okay, it's time for me to go find an agent. I just didn't appreciate the challenges that that could mean. And so, which I think is great because it was a lot less stressful. Again, very similar because I was like, I'm going to write a book and it's going to be traditionally published. End of story. The only way I was going to self publish was if after a year of

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queries and pitches, I got nothing, then I would consider self-publishing. But I was like, no, I'm not going to do it. It was just my mindset of it has to be out there. The end. Yeah. No, I feel similarly. And actually, I had said, okay, if... And I did get an agent actually fairly quickly, which was fantastic. But the submission process was a bit longer and just finding an editor or a publisher rather to buy the book. But...

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You know, I thought about this idea of self-publishing, which I think is a great option for people. But for me, I felt that if this didn't work, well, I still had my day job. And that also took off the pressure. I didn't feel this. I wanted so badly to have my book published. And for me, I was hoping for it to be traditionally published, which thankfully, from my perspective, that is how it worked out. But there was less of an urgency, I think.

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because it wasn't at the time and even today, not my whole career. So let's talk about the book, Love Me. Give us the plot so that I don't give anything away. I loved it, I devoured it very quickly. And I know that I love a good book when I'm like, read, read, read, don't interrupt me, I have to keep reading. And then boom, it's done in like two or three days. For me, that's quick because life. But yes, I...

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Loved it. So tell us what it's about. Thank you, Michelle. Love Me is about Rachel Miller. She is an attorney and a married mom of two elementary school aged children. And essentially she's quite satisfied in her life until her world is turned upside down when letters and photos of her and her high school boyfriend, who is now this big

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famous movie star who she's no longer in touch with when the letters that he had written her and photos of them are published in a tabloid. So Rachel, this normal woman is suddenly thrust into the spotlight and all hell breaks loose for her. It's so good. Like, it's so good. Now I have some questions and I forewarned you about this because I really haven't had authors on...

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that I could ask these questions to. First of all, has your husband read the book? Yes, my husband has read the book. And he and I joke that he's not my target audience. So for a long time, yeah. I mean, he is, I think that there are, I have had men read it. Actually, his best friend read the book and loved it, but I was very surprised.

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I didn't anticipate that because I think the book is for women. It's about a woman's journey and self-discovery, like figuring out where her life is going and thinking about how she got to the place that she's at right now and what does she want for the future. So I hope that women will find Rachel's story relatable.

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You know, my husband, given that, is not really who I was aiming for. So I gave him the novel in draft form pretty early on. And he's not as fast a reader as I am. And I saw him with the printed PDF with a red pen and he was starting to make notes and change. And he's an attorney too. And he, oh my God, he was starting to change the grammar. And I was like, hold up.

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I just don't do that. I don't want that. So I basically told him to stop after a while. And then when the book, when I had done the first pass review of the book, which for authors, it's really essentially the last chance after the book has been copy edited and line edited and you wanna just, you know, it's really the authors, one of their last chances to make sure they're comfortable with it. And there are no, you know, glaring errors.

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That's when I handed it to him and I said, you read this and if you have anything to say, now is your chance. So he read it and he really enjoyed it. He saw the beauty in it. So that was really exciting for me. So one of the reasons I asked is because in the book, and we will not say who this pertains to, but there is a sex scene.

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I'm completely fascinated with because my husband hasn't read my book yet. I just read to him the dedication and acknowledgments as the galleys came and my husband and two kids were like, we're in the book. I'm like, duh, yes, you're in the book. But I wouldn't let them see it. So my question is around the scene. And was he like, oh,

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this is when we did this or how did you come up with this? Is this what you were hoping is going to happen? Like take me through that part please because I'm just wondering as I'm writing, I don't I don't foresee these kinds of scenes but you never know. So I want to know what kind of reaction an author gets when their spouse reads their book. I love that. And there's a scene. It's a great question. So first of all, now that I am an

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author. I have been reading more books in the genre that I am publishing in. So I've been reading more romance books than I ever did before. And I think if you were to, you know, some people have like these spice, like pepper scales of how hot and spicy their books are. And I would say my book isn't that spicy. I think, you know, there's like one and a half sex scenes.

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So I'm always thinking, so I relate to you and I don't often think about what is their spouse thinking? I often think like, what are their parents thinking? Or what is their, what are you know? Yeah, that too, I guess. It's right. So for me, you know, I did not think about it or worry about it. I felt like he would, he would, he would.

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think it was just part of the book and he would probably find it interesting. But no, but not. I didn't anticipate any kind of concern from him and he didn't express any. So that is definitely good. But I will say to you, I took a galley. So I mentioned earlier, my daughter is like a really big reader. So I took one of the galleys and I...

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put, I like basically blocked out certain pages and then I handed her the book to read. So she did not get to read the embarrassing spicy sex scenes. And then I took that copy of the book when she was done and I handed it to my dad and I said, okay, here, you can read my book now. So that was kind of, kind of cool. I don't want him to read it. That's hilarious. Because my seven-year-old, she's always like,

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what are you reading? What book? Because she's very similar to your daughter. And she saw this and she's like, tell me about what it is. And I gave her the synopsis and well, what's going on? And then she starts thumbing through and I'm like, oh, let's not get to certain pages. But you know, you can you can read it. It's fine. There's just a little bit that maybe we shouldn't, you know, look at. But it's hilarious because the same thing. Yeah. She was like, let me thumb through. Oh, what's going to happen now? Tell me what happened with that girl.

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It's hilarious because she knows who you are. So we all get very excited in this house when mom gets to talk to an author and we have the book here in the house and it's a big deal. That is so cool. I can imagine that. And you know, I read somewhere about the author of Fifty Shades that she and her husband actually practiced all of the scenes. No.

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before she wrote, yes, before she wrote it, as she wrote it, and like she would make him redo some of the scenes to make sure that she could write it correctly. Wow. So I feel like mine was nowhere near the acrobatics. So yeah, your husband might be going, um, can, can we come back to that? I love it. See there, that's the reason why there was a question behind, you know, the, the reasoning behind the question of, hmm.

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What really goes on in an author's house? I'm curious. I will say, I actually distinctly remember writing the scene that you're talking about. And we were on vacation that week with friends. And I went into our room. We were in a house. We'd rented a house. And I brought a giant glass of wine. And that's when I wrote. I'm like, I can't be completely sober to write.

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Definitely putting yourself out of your comfort zone for sure. Oh, my God, I love that. Now I have a huge this is the best. Like normally I'll ask, so what's your writing ritual? And you get, you know, I go in the basement, I go outside and you're like, I had this huge glass of wine and I was not sober. That is the best.

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I will not use that in a quote graphic, I promise, but that would be hilarious. Oh my goodness. It's advice. It's good advice. If you need something to relax you, it's definitely useful during writing those scenes for sure. Oh my goodness. So what are you doing now? You've got the book launching, you're going to go launch it, you're going to go do signings, and then what's next? Because it's the question that I say I hate.

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being asked and yet I'm like, let me ask it. What's next? Yeah. What's next for you, Michelle? No. So I have my job still with no current plans to step back, but part of it is I wrote the book while working. I want to kind of see if I can do that again. And so I have an idea I'm working on, but as you know,

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building up to the launch. You're doing a lot of self promotion and marketing and interacting with authors and other potential readers. So that's definitely been a focus for me. And being a mom and balancing career, it's definitely gotten in the way of my ability to write. But my hope is certainly that, now I'll be able to refocus on that because I really loved it so much. I-

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I surprised myself by how much I enjoyed it when I was in a rhythm and writing. So I'm definitely hoping to put out another novel soon. I can't wait. You're going to and it's gonna be so much fun. And then we're gonna go on tour together. Yeah, I hope so. I do. I love that. What advice would you give to other future authors out there who are wondering, can I do it?

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How do I do it? How do I juggle the job and put out a novel at the same time? Yeah, I mean, I think it's easy to make excuses and not make excuses. I mean, we all have so much going on in our lives. Anybody who is a parent or who has a job, it's just, it's really difficult to find the time. And so I guess what worked for me was

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making the choice that when I had free time, any little free time I had, I devoted it to my writing, but I did it because I wanted to. So I think that's the question. How much do you really want to do it? And if you really want to do it, and that means you really want to sit down at your computer for hours or wake up early or go to bed late, which I did, or on the weekends.

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My husband would take the girls and I would work. I mean, that's we would go on a car trip and I would sit in the car, you know, for however long that car trip was with my laptop. And I think that was the choice I was making. So you know, for anybody who's thinking about doing this, you really, you really have to put yourself into the situation where you can get it done. So that is, I think, my my recommendation.

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hard. And unfortunately, which you and I know now on the flip side, you know, on the other side of having written a book, it doesn't end there. So you write a book and then there's just so much extra parts to getting a book out into the universe. So I think just selling a book is another job. It's another component to being an author. And that actually was if I was prepared, you know, I was really not anticipating or even or just considering that.

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And now, you know, that's where so much of my focus is. And so this week you're going to be in New York because while we're recording, we're pretending it's this week. Um, where can people find you this week? Where can people find the book? And when I say you, maybe us cause I will pop into one of your signings this week. Yeah. So tonight, January 16th, I will be at Athena Books in Greenwich, Connecticut.

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in conversation with Annabel Monahan, which I am so excited about. Her books are phenomenal. Nora goes off script, same time next summer. And then Wednesday, I will be at the Upper East Side Barnes and Noble. And then on Thursday, I'm going to Long Island, which is where I'm from, to the Karl Place Barnes and Noble. And I have a few other events in the works. So...

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I will be out and about. I'm gonna be in Florida in February as well. So I'll post all that on social media and I'm hopeful that I will see lots of people there. Yes, and Love Me is out today everywhere you buy books. Congratulations, my friend. It is so good. I'm so proud of you. Thank you so much, Michelle. I'm proud of you too.

26:00

You have a book out now too. Tomorrow. Yes, tomorrow. So we're going through this together, which is really quite exciting. So thank you so much. Yes. Thanks for having me on. Thank you. Okay, friends, if you need to start your new year with a romantic comedy, great women's fiction book, Love Me is it. I devoured it. I adore Jessica. I can't wait to see what she writes next.

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because I know it's going to be another epic novel. And I just want you all to remember that you can do this too. If you have something on your mind that you want to do, do it. Don't make excuses for it. Simply make the time for it. Don't forget that tomorrow is my pub day. How to Get On podcasts launches everywhere. It's January 17th. Thank you for all of the pre-orders and I can't wait to celebrate with all of you.