

00:00 You're listening to the My Simplified Life podcast and this is episode number 215.

00:08 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. This is my Simplified Life.

00:40 Hi friends. Welcome back to another episode. I'm your host, Michelle Gluckvac. Today I have a special friend who is a guest. Her name is Sagit Schwartz. I was introduced to Sagit through my good friend, Lee Stein. When I asked her, what should I be doing on TikTok when it comes to my book? And she said, you need to go follow Sagit. She has taken TikTok by storm with her book.

01:07 which is coming out next week called Since She's Been Gone. I was lucky enough to read an advanced copy and in all honesty, it was a suspenseful thriller. And at first I thought, that's really not my cup of tea because how am I gonna read a suspenseful thriller before going to bed? I'm definitely gonna have nightmares. But friends, no, I didn't have nightmares. It was so good. I could not put it down. It has twists and turns and I felt like I was there.

01:37 It is phenomenal. So I am excited to introduce you to Sagit and to hear all about her book, Since She's Been Gone, how she came to writing it, what her journey all along the way has looked like, and congratulations, Sagit, on your upcoming novel, Since She's Been Gone. Hello, Sagit, how are you? Good, lovely to be with you today. Oh, I am so excited, although...

02:05 We're not gonna have any voices left since we've already been talking for 45 minutes before we hit record. Can you introduce yourself to everyone, please? Sure, my name is Segeet. It's a tricky one for publishing purposes and I'm a licensed psychotherapist, formerly practicing and a debut author with a thriller to be released February 2nd titled, Since She's Been Gone. It is.

02:34 So stinking good too. I loved it and this is probably the third thriller this year that I've read because I'm not a quote unquote thriller reader. And now that I'm reading what are considered thrillers, I'm like, oh, these are good and I need to read them more. They're addictive. Because I feel like thriller is more like.

02:57 axe murders, like I think of thriller movies. And to me, reading a thriller book is very different than what you would think of as a thriller movie, which I wouldn't be into versus what you've written that I was totally into. The genre is vast. I mean, the spectrum is horror, mysteries, cozies, psychological thrillers. It's so vast and it's not just one lane. So I feel like there's something for everyone.

03:27 reader. People who don't like gruesome tales, you know, they can read cozies. People that just want edge of your seat suspense can read those types of books. People that want happy endings, there's those thrillers. So it really varies. It varies. I love the genre. It's my

preferred genre to read, to watch. And so that's why I write it. So how did you come up with the book, the idea for the book?

03:56 Let's talk about what goes on in the book. We won't give any spoilers away. Sure. The book is about a psychologist who's in recovery from an eating disorder that learns the mom she lost 25 years before might still be alive and keeping dangerous secrets. I'm not giving anything away by saying this because it literally happens in the first two pages, but she goes to work one day to meet a new patient, a supposedly new patient.

04:26 And it's actually a woman who has showed up to tell her that her mother who had died decades before is still alive and in danger and that she needs to find her. And that sets her off on a heart-pounding journey through the whole book to unravel the mystery of what really happened to her mom. There is also a mental health component because when she was a 15-year-old teenager and her mother supposedly passed in this hit and run,

04:56 She developed a life-threatening eating disorder for which she went to residential treatment center. And the book is dual timeline, alternating in the past when she was 15, fighting this disorder and the present when she's trying to find her mom. And the eating disorder kind of bubbles up again. It's amazing. And I know that I wrote to you in the middle of reading the book that I wish I had the education when I was younger about eating disorders, because I did have friends. I do have friends.

05:26 from childhood who went through eating disorders. We refer to it as ED, and I know I did get a comment. I got a comment on that one from a client who thought I was talking about something else. Yes, yes, Ed, Ed. Yes, and you really, you give insight as to what goes on in someone's brain that's suffering from Ed. And it was a complete.

05:53 education for me and eye opening of what someone is going through internally as they're suffering. I've received that feedback from several readers who have read early digital advanced reader copies and actually one of the most moving messages I got was from a mom whose daughter is slowly in recovery from an eating disorder who contacted me.

06:21 and said, thank you so much for writing this. I now have a better understanding of what my daughter is dealing with and what she's up against. So as a licensed clinician, I wrote it partially for educational purposes. I should also add.

06:40 that eating disorders, although they affect 10% of the population, they've been largely left out of adult contemporary fiction. And this book was not an easy sell. My editor had to go to bat for me in the publishing house. And she even had people there who were reluctant to read it. I don't know if it's because historically it's been glamorized in the media or just not handled well. And I really set out to write an unvarnished portrayal of what

07:10 it is because it's not glamorous, it's life threatening. And it really impacts every aspect of a person's life. So I did also write it for psychoeducational purposes. And then of course, because I love thrillers so much and mysteries, I wanted to make it a page turner. And I've had

07:35 Many readers contact me said they couldn't put it down. They read it in one sitting. They had to know what happened. And so both of those compliments are wonderful because that means I succeeded in the mystery capacity and in the psycho educational capacity. How did you make that change from being a licensed clinician to I'm gonna write this thriller novel because it's quite different. Well, there I actually also was working

08:05 You know, I worked as a therapist for a long time and then wanted to start writing professionally and worked in Hollywood for a while. And then the pandemic happened and my family left LA. We moved about an hour South and I decided to work on a book instead where you have more control. And now with everything that's going on in Hollywood, it's very unstable.

08:33 So I just have more control over what I'm writing as a novelist. But I mean, I still write scripts. I just actually adapted a short story that I wrote. It's like a thrillerish horror short story that I wrote on the Reddit No Sleep forum. I don't know if you're familiar with it. No. It's got close to 20 million subscribers. It's free. And it's for, you know.

09:00 horror lovers and I wrote a short story that went viral on TikTok after an influencer with six million followers who puts on makeup as she narrates these horror stories contacted me and asked if she could narrate it. So then it went viral and then a producer that I worked with in the past was like, this would make a really good movie. So I actually adapted it for film. The script is written and he's ready to go out with it, but there are strikes going on right now. So hopefully that will happen after.

09:30 That is so amazing. I love this. I don't know if you link things to your interviews, but we do. Yeah, it'll be on the show notes. No sleep short story. The script is much more, it's 90 pages. The short story is like 2000 words. This is awesome. I absolutely love this. And you mentioned TikTok. Yeah, that was my entry point to TikTok. That's a really big entry point to TikTok. Yeah, it was shocking to me.

09:58 This is a woman in her 20s that narrates these short stories, and she's got six million followers, and she tagged me. I started a TikTok account because I was like, I need to be on TikTok if this is happening. And she tagged me, and then all these people started coming to my page, and she has a very young, her following is very young. And I could...

10:25 I was flabbergasted at the power of the platform. There's so many eyeballs on it. And when I got my book deal, I decided, I had to make a choice because I didn't really have a social media following. And I said, where am I gonna put my energy? And I decided TikTok because I had heard it was a growth platform, and Instagram's more of a nurture platform for like, if you have an existing following. And I was like, well, I don't.

10:54 I need to grow. So I went on TikTok and I love it because it's, this is going to sound strange but I'm old and nobody I know really is on there. And so they don't, they don't know what I'm doing and I make a fool of myself and I'm not going to get like a text from my uncle saying, what are you doing? First of all, you're not old. But I was thinking the same thing last night.

11:24 I just want to tweet this out. And then I went, Oh no, I can't tweet it because then this person will see it. And I can't put this on Instagram. Oh, and I can't put it here because I know somebody and I need alias or some platform where nobody knows me. Stick talk. It's stick talk, but that could change though, because the, the, the V you know, the viewership and the subscribers and the people on tech talk, the file, like everyone's getting on there now. So I'm like, Oh, but still for the most part, I think, you know,

11:53 our generation tends to not love it. But it's changing though. People are going on it more and more. So when I found and talking to Lee Stein about this too, because I'm like, you know, when I get an idea in my head and I want to just do a TikTok video, I look in the mirror and I'm like, wow, you should not like document this moment. And yet when I do, I still get 800 views and she goes, Oh yeah, people love it when you just show up as yourself.

12:21 Like, then you are in luck world. No, you really is right. It's all about like authenticity and just, I mean, you want good lightings, like some, but not like glamor or whatever. You could just be you. So I wish I came up with the idea of like, let me narrate thriller stories while I put on my makeup, but that would mean that I need to put makeup on. Honestly, she is so talented.

12:52 What she does is so beyond my pay grade. It's really hard what she does. I'm like, how does she memorize these stories and do all this intricate- Oh, she memorized them? She doesn't read them? No, no, she memorizes them and recites them as she's doing unbelievably elaborate makeup. But sometimes it's not just glamor makeup. It's actual transformative into different people and-

13:20 creatures and animals and all kinds of things. So it really, she's supremely talented. It's wild. It's amazing. Yeah. How long did it take you to write since she's been gone? We haven't even mentioned the title of the book. You do know that, right? We're four minutes in, we haven't mentioned it. I mentioned it at the beginning. Did you? Okay, cause I don't remember. Yeah, I could say it. I don't remember us mentioning it. How long did it take you to write it? About a year, about a year. And...

13:50 It started out one way and then I, because it's a dual timeline thriller, as I mentioned earlier, when I first started it, it was not a dual timeline thriller. It was only in the present tense. And then about like, I don't know, eight or 10 chapters in, I kept, I was meant, like half of my chapters were about the past. Oh, yeah. And I was like, this isn't really working to just spend half a chapter talking about the past.

14:18 I'm going to try writing this as a dual timeline thriller. So then I separated the two storylines out and I wrote one storyline all the way through from the past and then one story all the way through in the present. And then alternated the chapters and have to finesse things, but yeah. Did you know to do this? What is your writing experience or knowledge, education?

14:46 this is all fresh and new for me because there's a part of me that's like, oh, you just sit down, you write the book and then you're done. That will thrill because I consume so many thrillers and read so many mysteries. A lot of them are dual timeline. And in fact, my publisher is

crooked lane and they are distributed by Penguin Random House. And when they did the presentation for spring 2024 titles of which mine is included,

15:15 They were really excited about the dual timeline because apparently, and I did not know this when I wrote it, that was not in my head, they are dual timeline thrillers are selling very well now. And I've also had several readers, actually influencers on TikTok say, that's what made the story for them. The backstory combined with the present. And it's ironic because that's what made it a hard sell, but it's also, you know, the whole.

15:43 Eating disorders, the past, what happened to her when she was 15, but readers are really gravitating towards it. And that's why it's like, there's a saying in Hollywood, nobody knows anything. That's not just Hollywood. Yeah, maybe that's for life. But it's like, you know, if my editor hadn't gone to bat for me and said, no, like, you know, there are certain mental health representation.

16:09 when it comes to depression, anxiety, addiction that we've done really well on, but eating disorders have not really been a topic covered well in adult contemporary fiction. If she hadn't gone to bed for me and fought for it, it might not have ever been traditionally published. And readers are responding to that. So it's really interesting. You just have to write the story you want to write because if you are trying to play to the marketplace or try to, it's not...

16:39 The most visceral parts of anything you write are going to be what you want to write. That's what will jump off the page for the reader. Not the, is this gonna work well when I submit it to a publisher? Is this, you know? Do you feel that being a therapist in your career helped not just in the way you spoke about eating disorders and the other parts of the book that I wanna talk about too.

17:08 But do you think that helped in selling it, that there was research and knowledge and your formal education to back up what you said within the book to make the facts? I think that that probably would have helped more if it was nonfiction, you know, because you wanna be an expert on the topic. Right. With fiction, it's more really about the story, but I don't think I could have written those parts as well if I didn't have a clinical back.

17:38 Yeah, because I mean, I could, I could go out and write it, but yet I don't, I wouldn't have all of the terminology. I wouldn't know all of these things unless I went and I did my research, but this is literally like your life, your career. Right. Right. So I feel like that had to have been a leg up in selling it too of like, no, you don't have to go research these and fact check me, you know, right? Yes. It's really what it is. Yeah. And a big part of it too is the opioid crisis. Yeah.

18:07 which was totally fascinating. I don't know, how did you come up with this research and including this as well? Well, that was just, you know, that's been so much in the culture these last years. These families, the Sackler family and like what's happened, Sackler, I don't know if I'm pronouncing the name correctly, but I mean, those stories have been hard to miss and just, it's been

18:36 I mean, how many people have lost loved ones? And so I also thought it would be an interesting parallel in my book. I don't wanna give it away, but there was like kind of a parallel between one person dealing with that and then another person dealing with an ed that I think worked well for the book and the mystery of it, the mystery too. I loved it. I was totally hooked and...

19:02 If I had time to read it in one sitting, I would have finished it in one sitting, but I read it quite quickly. Thank you. Oh, and I will add, because you asked me like, why did I specifically want to write that book? We not, I sadly lost my mom when I was young and she was 47 years old. And when I turned 47, I really wanted to write a book that would

19:28 somehow immortalize her and pay tribute to her and be inspired by her. And so she is deeply woven into this book. The letters she wrote me when I was a child are included in the book. The eulogy in the book was like 75% her eulogy. The name of the mom in the book is Irene. That was my mom's middle name. She's very much in the book. And then...

19:56 I sold the book when I turned 48 and that is a year and a milestone that she never made. And so I, and now I am 48 and I really feel like I'm living this year for both of us. Oh, I love that. You're gonna make me cry. Yeah. And I'm honoring her and you know, I'm not going to give away what happens in the book, but people have written me, told me that, and you did too, that it's moved them to tears. But

20:25 It's a very lived in story because in many ways it's my story. Yeah. Oh, I love it. And now you remind, I told you before we recorded that it's been a little while since I read the book and, but as you talk, I'm remembering, I just got the end in my head and I'm like, Oh, I'm going to cry because the end was just so good. Oh my gosh. Tearing up. The video's not released.

20:54 Well, it's, you know, it is a moving story. And I'm also proud that I wrote like a thriller that has that level of depth. Don't get me wrong, I love that the candy thrillers, you know, and my next thriller is going to probably be very, very light and different than this one. And just like a fun twisty story, like my Reddit no sleep short story. But this thriller has a lot of depth. It's not

21:21 It's not just a piece of candy to consume and then you forget about it the next day. It's a story that will stay with you. Yeah. It has many layers to it. It feels like it's a road and we're going down so many different paths when we're going backwards and forwards and present. Yeah, it's incredible. A total fan girl here. Oh, thanks, Michelle. Thank you. What are you writing next? You already writing another thriller?

21:51 Well, I've written a couple of chapters and I may, it's not for certain, I may adapt this short story that went viral on TikTok into a book. Because it's already now, okay, this short story exists, it went viral on TikTok and there's three parts to it in the TikTok narration. The film has been written.

22:20 And now this would be like complete the whole thing. But I have a feeling, I don't know if it would be a full book or more like a novella. So I'm still trying to figure it out. But that's kind of where my head is in terms of, and I've written the first couple chapters if it were a book. Do you

get sick of people asking you? Because I feel like once you've written a book and people know it's coming out, they're like, what are you writing next?

22:48 It's just like when you get engaged and they're like, when's the wedding and you get married and they're like, when are the babies? And you're like, oh, let me just calm it down everybody. Or you're like, yeah, let me go. No, it's funny because like in my day to day life, like nobody writes. Like I have a lot of writer friends and this, but in my family and in my like day to day existence, it's such a like.

23:16 strange and, you know, that amazing feat to just have one book that it's more like, oh my god, the cover. Oh my god. It's just, I don't even think people would think to ask of the next because they're just like, it's, you know, so bizarre that I even wrote one book.

23:44 For real. So in that sense, the pressure is off. I mean, perhaps if I was surrounded by a bunch of, you know, book lovers and this, but like, it's just like, wow, that's like my neighbors. They're like, oh my God, how did you do that? Like, you know, it's just so foreign.

24:08 I guess that's what I said. My neighbors are the same way. We're like the youngest couple on the entire court. When I post it on Facebook, like, oh, I got a book deal or, oh, this happened. There's the cutest little retired couple. They're in their 80s.

24:23 We have a celebrity on the court. We didn't know Your next book no because they don't even know what we do at home They're like you two don't even work. Do you you just sit at home? You're just you bring the kids to school and you sit at home both of you all day. I'm like, yes We just sit at home all day long So I haven't felt that pressure You know yet I mean it's coming probably because

24:53 my book's going to be out in less than five months. And then, you know, my publisher has right, a first refusal for the next book. There's contractually. So like things have to happen, but in terms of my day-to-day life, and it's just not, you know, the deal. And I live with a teenager and you know, she's in her own world. Like I had to, I had my makeup done when I went to go get my.

25:20 author photos, it was the first time in my life I had to get my makeup done. She's like, I want to get my makeup done. Like, okay, go sell a book. You know, there isn't like this huge curiosity there about all of this. Larry is

25:43 What did your day-to-day life look like when you were writing the book? Did you have like scheduled set time, goals? What was that like? I was going really to the same cafe as much as I could, you know, apart from appointments, this, that, every day and writing there. I pinned actually to my Instagram page, there was a picture of one of the workers dressed in a squid game Halloween costume. That was during the period where I was writing it.

26:12 And from that, and so that really was my ritual going there. And I thought about it, I'm like, for the next book, I don't know that I can go there anymore. It's like I need to change the location. I can go there occasionally, but I don't think I will write my whole next thing there

because it's so, I so associate it with the experience I had of writing my book. And my book is very heartfelt

26:42 I remember bringing my mom's letters in a bag that I hadn't looked at in 25 years and like reading them there and crying and being moved. It's just too much of an association with the other books. I'm going to have to change it up. Did they know you were writing a book at the time? Yes. Yes, they did. And now, yeah, and then now they asked me, they're like, wait, so when's it coming out? And because I mean, I don't go there now to write. I sometimes just go to.

27:12 get a coffee or whatever and leave. So you need to have a party there. Yeah, yeah. It's a tiny little like, I mean, it's, it's a postage stamp. Like in a strip mall, it's tiny. Yeah. I love that though. Mine was right here at the desk. It was, that was it. I find it hard. I was just talking to a friend to write at home unless I need two screens, like my monitor with my computer.

27:41 a lot of writing is that. But when, if I don't, I find it hard to write at home, there's always like distractions. There's always a call to make and the dog and then you hear, you know, outside leaf blowers and it's just, I find it more challenging. So it's easier for me to get out and get things done. I replayed Harry Styles and Jeremy Renner on repeat. So I know every song by heart.

28:11 And that way it wasn't a distraction of like, here's a new song, wait, what are they saying? I'm like, nope, I can sing it and write at the same time. And I can't listen to music while I write. I don't have that ability. My husband and daughter both can, they listen to music when they're working. I can't do it. My brain, the processing, I'm not able to. Yeah, so funny.

28:34 Everyone's different. Yeah. That's why I love asking that question. It's been everything from like, oh, I lit a candle and I went downstairs and I did this or I was in the garden. I'm like, no, right here. Buckle down. Right. Can you share with everyone where they can find you, find your book, all the good stuff? So on TikTok, my handle is at segitrider, S-A-G-I-T.

29:03 writer on Instagram. It's at Sagich Schwartz, S-A-G-I-T-S-C-H-W-A-R-T-Z. And you might be wondering why it's different. It wasn't different. It started, they both started out at Sagich Schwartz, but the problem was I was popping up on my teenage daughter's friend's TikTok feeds with the last name Schwartz. And that is not something a teenager wants to deal with.

29:32 So I changed it to Segeet Rider. And now I'm not in that space anymore with those, yeah. So that's- But doesn't she know how cool you are? Like you're on TikTok. No, TikTok is not a cool thing for a teenager in any way, shape or form. No, okay. My website is segeetschwartz.com and my book, Since She's Been Gone is available for pre-order everywhere.

30:01 Amazon, Target, Walmart, you name it. If you type in, since she's been gone book, you can buy it wherever you want, pre-order it, which is fantastic. And the book is fantastic. Thank you. Thank you so much for coming on. Well, you definitely need to go out and purchase since she's been gone. So that way next week you can start reading it and fall in love with this book as I did. Sagit is just...

30:30 such a sweet, sweet, kind person and her writing is phenomenal. I can't gush more over this book. I enjoyed it so much. And to me it just goes to show that the writing community is so incredible. The people who are writing books are cheering each other on. They're just amazing. And to be able to call her friend

30:54 It really touches me. We've exchanged text messages, so we are officially friend friends. We're not like DM friends. We've upgraded. I want you to think that if suspense, thriller is not your normal genre that you pick up, like myself, be open to it because you never know what is going to be between the front cover and the back cover that is going to keep your attention.

31:19 and make you fall in love with a genre that you really had no idea was even possible. So be open to it and go read this incredible book. As a reminder, we are just a month away from How to Get on Podcasts coming out, so please make sure you pre-order your book today and you will get access to the companion course How to Get on Podcasts by emailing me your receipt. As always friends,

31:49 read a book, share that book, and get to know the author because they're human beings like you and I, and they have a story themselves to share, one that goes above and beyond the book that you're reading.