

Ep 235

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You're listening to the mind simplified life podcast and this is episode number 235. Welcome to the My simplify 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. I'm your host, Michelle Glogovac, author of How to get on podcasts, the podcast matchmaker and CEO and founder of the MLG collective. I'm excited to share my stories and life lessons with you while taking you on my own journey. This is my simplified life. Hey friends. Welcome back to another episode. I'm your host, Michelle Glogovac. As always, please remember to go leave a review for how to get on podcasts on Amazon, you do not need to purchase the book on Amazon to leave a five star review. And I greatly appreciate you on to today's episode. This is a first this one was recorded live in my home, I have yet to do that. And I had the pleasure of having Alyssa Jarrett come to town. She was in San Jose for a conference. So I asked her to stop by and in true how to get on podcast form. We had snacks and food drinks. And then we had this amazing conversation getting to know each other. She came with gifts in her hands with an autographed copy of her book and all of the fun things that go along with it. So she was the perfect guest whether it was a dinner party or a podcast interview, she showed up the right way. Alisa is a romance author, with her debut coming out called Love app. Truly, it is based here in Silicon Valley. And it is book one of four in a series that she's written. She's also a tech marketer. So I love that we have these common themes of being from the bay. And she's writing all about love stories that are fictional, and yet, there's a little bit of truth to them. You'll find out when you give this one a listen.



02:18

Hi, Alyssa. I'm Michelle. How's it going? Oh, this is so fun. It's so good. I know. Alyssa is in my kitchen, y'all. Yep, we are doing a live podcast interview. And it's really the first like intentional live because the original live was in a bookstore at a book signing. But this one, we've got one mic between the two of us so it's gonna be awkward. Uncomfortable. Exciting. Yeah. thrilling. Yes. Can you introduce yourself to everyone, please? Yeah. Hi, everyone. I'm Alyssa Jarrett. I am a romance author and a tech marketer. And this is an interesting conversation, because I'm talking to about my debut novel coming out very soon. Yeah, when he heard I was just gonna say May 21. So I think by the time this airs, it will have just come out perfect. So congratulations, you Happy belated pump day.



03:10

It's been a long time coming. Yeah. So how did you do this pivot of content marketing tech world to romance novel. Yeah, I've been writing for as long as I can remember, it's always been a big passion of mine, I started really investing my time and resources into the series that I'm working on. Now. It was a NaNoWriMo project in about 2014. And for anyone who's unfamiliar, NaNoWriMo is National Novel Writing Month. It's a writing,



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you know, program that happens every November. And although I never actually won, by writing 50,000 words, I never had that kind of stamina. It really kind of kicked off, like the journey for what is going to be this, you know, the series that I'm working on right now.



04:00

And then I was climbing the corporate ladder in tech, on the marketing front. For the last decade or so, about a couple of years ago, I was in a marketing leadership position. And, you know, working very long hours very burnt out, obviously, coming out of the pandemic, it was just something I think everyone had a reset of, you know, what am I doing with my life? What are you know, what, uh, what do I want to be doing in the future? And I really needed to make more time for my mental health and, and my creativity. So I, you know, with the love and support of my husband and mental health professionals, you know, I thought, I'm just going to take a sabbatical, and I did that at the start of 2022. And that just sort of escalated into self employment. I finished the series of rom coms that I had been working on



05:00

and moved into freelancing for marketing. And it's been a really great transition just to have a lot more freedom and flexibility to balance those parts of my life. So you're already have the rest of the books in the series done. They're drafted. They're all very.



05:18

Thank you.



05:19

Yeah, it's like, yeah, I've got a series coming out. But I have the here's the first but I haven't started on the second or, you know, you've sent submitted your first Yeah, I so I had queried three of the four manuscripts actually. So I in 2020, I think I and everyone else in the world decided I'm going to really hunker down and I'm going to finish this book, start a podcast, cast Exactly. And so I hired an independent editor, Kristen Tate, at the Blue Garrett. Hi, if you're listening, love you to bits. And so we've been working together on this on this series of of rom

coms. And I've, you know, I was on in the query trenches, on the hunt for a literary agent got a lot of really great feedback, and then, you know, ultimately decided that it was a better long term fit for this series to independently Publish. And so you know, one thing that's really great about romance is that the readers are, you know, very accepting of all types of publication paths. And they're just voracious readers, right. They just want all the content all the time. And so with my marketing background, I felt pretty confident that this is something that not only did I had the financial means to do it, but I was also, you know, I had the skill set to do it as well. So it's been a roller coaster ride, but I'm learning a ton. And it's really nice to be, you know, in a place where I feel I can just soak up knowledge, like a sponge and just be like, a total novice again, and really, like, just learn everything there is to know about publishing. And we haven't even talked about what the title of the book is. Oh, love it. That's true. Haven't even thrown that out there. Yes. Love Actually, because I love me a good pun.



07:13

Love Actually is a Silicon Valley rom com, based on my experiences working in tech, and it's about a



07:22

bit of a casually dressed tech founder and CEO has got a bit of a hippie personality. And his company really needs him to step it up and and really take his his appearance to the next level. And so a company hires a celebrity stylist



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with that much not exactly his permission. And so he's getting a makeover, whether he likes it or not.



07:48

Love it? Yeah. And we have so many of those casual co techie guys. Yeah, I've worked with quite a few of them. So I just saw Mark Zuckerberg there was a photo I forget which it might have been like, TMZ, where he's got a new look. He has his curls are growing out. And he's wearing a chain. Yep. Because he's designing his own necklace.



08:11

Well, it's so it's so funny, too, because, and I talked about this in the book, like I always noticed working in tech, there was this this double standard where, you know, men could roll up in their, you know, standard uniform, it was a t shirt and jeans, or was cargo shorts and flip flops, or in some cases, I worked with people who were literally coming to work in their pajamas and slippers, but they were all men, doing, you know, having the leeway to do this. And so as a woman, I never felt like in a corporate setting. You could ever do anything, right? You know, I was either too casually dressed or too formally dressed. You know, if I was wearing high heels, I

was too dolled up if I was wearing sandals, I you know, I was I had feedback that that wasn't professional. I'm naturally curly haired, gray haired. And so I felt like I was constantly getting unsolicited feedback from men in my industry, about how a woman was supposed to present and I just never really ever saw that feedback, you know, thrown back at them. And yet, they're in their pajamas. Yeah. I'm glad you didn't take their advice.

 09:24

I think I would have had HR kick me out because they were told them where to go. Yeah, exactly. Yeah, but I know the people you're talking about because I roll up at school. And I'm like, Did you literally just get out of bed and bring your kid to school? Because it's obvious you did. And they're going to work like that, too. Yeah. And it's one thing to you know, be in the school drop off or pickup line. But it's another thing to go to a venture capital meeting, an investor meeting, you know, meeting executives at Fortune 500 companies that are you know, prospects or customers and so, I remember I don't know if you remember there was I believe it was like

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The 2018 global citizens Festival, and there's a photo of Beyonce next to Ed Sheeran. And Beyonce is looking like the Goddess. She is season of formal gown. She's looking stellar. And Ed Sheeran is in like a T shirt and jeans. And I referenced that in the book because at the time I saw it, and I just thought it was just so disrespectful and I love and sharing don't get me wrong, like this is not about him as a person. But just the fact that you could have those two people side by side. And like that was the level of expectation that they were to deliver on stage. Yeah. And then it's okay. Like, this is his style. So that just makes it automatically okay. Yeah, that doesn't matter if it's black tie. Yeah, your T shirt and jeans kind of guy. So. Yeah, exactly. Yeah. So it was a great way for me to talk about, you know, gender dynamics and power dynamics. by also having it being like a super fun campy rom com like lots of high jinks ensue lots of just things that sound too outrageous to, you know, to believe. But, you know, based on things that actually happened in my life, I love that because we're just having this conversation of what I'm working on. I'm like, yeah, all of this nutty stuff is real life. And it's just so far fetched that it feels like it has to be fiction. So we're going to fictionalize it. And so what you shared with me that some of the people you've worked with have read it? And what's that feedback been? Like? I mean, it is a little bit wild. I feel like I've had so much support from colleagues of mine. The dedication of my book is to the work friends who become real friends. And that's really the kicker for me. I mean, I have co workers that have become, you know, so close to me that they were, you know, they were invited to my wedding. i We hang out all the time, right. Like, they're, they're an integral part of my life. And so it was, it's nice to like, go back and revisit those times. Because regardless of the politics, or the bureaucracy, or the, you know, the corporate, you know, environment that you're in, like, we're all real people having just like real struggles, and there's a lot of bonding that happens at these companies. So So yeah, I think they're all very interested to see how, you know how the book is gonna go. And

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I just, I just tell them, you know, you're just gonna have to read it to find out. You have to see if you're in there. I've had people ask me, oh, my, in your book, I'm like, well, it's about podcasts.

So chances are maybe not. But the next one, you don't you don't want to be in the book. If you can recognize yourself, that's probably not a good.

 12:42

Yeah, so it'll, it'll be interesting. I've had I've given some of my friends a heads up, they're a little bit more obvious. And so some of them, you know, they're saying, hey, look, it's a little close to home. I'm not sure if I'm gonna finish it. But you know, I'm really happy for

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just by the book, at least, finish it or read it, just buy it. Exactly. And the next few two, yeah, yeah. Just tell your friends, how have you taken your marketing background and applied it to marketing the book? Yeah, I mean, I think at the fundamental level, you know, marketing principles are going to apply, regardless of what product you're selling. So obviously, I have a background selling like enterprise software, which isn't like sexy, or even consumer facing, right. No one's gonna drop hundreds of 1000s of dollars on a book.

 13:29

Yeah, you know, big five publishers hit me up. Um, but I think just the, the, all of the things that have to do with finding your audience, right, you're competing against not just, you know, other books in your genre, but you're competing against the music, they're listening to the shows that they're watching the chores, they've got to do you know, the things on their to do list, anything that's going to take their time and attention away from possibly enjoying your story. And so you have to give them a compelling reason to put down whatever they're putting, you know, that what they what they picked up and try something out that you've done.

 14:11

And so it's finding people who are going to really resonate with your work and, and find a reason to say, Yeah, you know, what this sounds like, so compelling, I can't help but but pick it up and try it out. And so I really focus a lot on building a community.

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You know, being on social to drive conversations that I think are important, especially in the romance genre.

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You know, what is it that we're talking about? What What are what's trending and why and how can we sort of, you know, pick apart those dynamics. I love email marketing, and I love building a community there. I'm on substack and so get to have some more like long form

conversations.



15:00

You know, I have a master's in journalism, very print focused. And so just long form, storytelling has always appealed to me. So anytime I can really dive deep into a topic and, you know, share my potentially unpopular opinion about something like I know, that's going to get people interested. And even if we don't necessarily agree, you'll, you know, you'll be intrigued to know, perhaps maybe something that might be related to my book or, you know, related to the genre and, you know, sparks conversation. So let's go back to the journalism and let go rewind. How did journalism come about? And you did some PR, right, as well? Well, as part of my marketing, you know, gigs, I've always had some sort of element of comms related to it. So, so I graduated college, I had a undergrad degree in English Lit. And then at that time, you know, the the 2008 crash had happened. And I thought maybe I should stick it out and get another degree while this economy recovers. But then I majored in journalism, already dying industry. So but I, I really enjoyed it, because it was a way for me to understand Mass Communication Theory and understand, you know, how, you know, how audiences are built, we studied a lot of, you know, earlier social media.



16:27

And that when I started entering the workforce, I started to realize that a lot of journalists were making the pivot into marketing and PR. There's just not as many opportunities and news and media, certainly not ones that were well paying. And so I've always wanted to live in the Bay Area. But I also wanted to pay rent and eat at the same time.



16:50

So I was always fascinated by Tech, I had those rose colored glasses on in the early days, I just thought this is where smart people are, this is where important people are doing important things. And love it that too. Yeah. I mean, to some extent, I understand that that's not necessarily the case. But I was always fascinated by the industry. So I moved up here started working in tech, taking on a lot of the responsibilities of Product Marketing, and content marketing.



17:24

And eventually sort of built out this like function of what I'd call like content, creative and communications. So managing the writers, the designers, and you know, essentially like the the publicists, whether they're they're at the agencies or they're in house, how can we build great content, make it look great, and then also get it out into the world and get eyeballs on it? And isn't that funny, it takes all three of those things. And yet, a lot of people forget one of those components or two of those components, and just focus on one. Yeah, and it is translate, it does translate to books, because you know, we think about the things that you really want to invest in right, number one, a great editor. So that's the content like it, you have to write a good book, like that's ultimately, you know, when you're publishing, it's no longer about the art,

it is about the business, and you have to deliver a product that is worth people paying for it. So investing in editor is crucial. The second is your cover, right? If you can't have a cover that looks shoddy. So investing in great creative isn't important. And I'm fortunate enough that my brother is a professional Brit, brand designer, I love your cover. I love the Golden Gate Bridge.

 18:39

Got married in San Francisco. So seeing the bridge, I was like, Oh, you love this? Yeah, it was great to work with him on it. We've always been kind of a tag team. So it was really great to collaborate with him. And then the comms part, you know, it's really about the marketing strategy, right? How are you going to build out that audience? How are you going to find your ears because, and a lot of people are afraid of critical feedback. But that's all part of the process of finding your your target reader, and it's not going to be everybody's cup of tea. But you won't know that until you start getting it out into the world and seeing how it lands with folks. And then what are some of those, you know, similarities between those audiences that liked it, and then maybe didn't and then now all of a sudden, you can segment a very large swath of the population into Okay, these are going to be the diehard fans that are going to want to read everything that I write. Or at least that's the hope, right? Yeah. I love that. You said you're not gonna be everyone's cup of tea. I saw a meme today that Rosie Lee the author shared, and it said, you don't you're not going to be everybody's cup of tea and you don't see tea apologizing for not being coffee. So yes,

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loves tea and is not a fan of coffee like that. That definitely.

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I loved I'm like, Oh, I gotta use this. I gotta share it somewhere. So yeah, shout out to you, Rosie.

 20:00

because I know she listens.

 20:02

Yeah, exactly. And so, you know, and a lot of people talk about being mood readers. And so even the person that you might be your target reader may not be your target reader right this second, right? Maybe they're burnt out on rom coms. And they need to, you know, read something more serious or, or vice versa. And so it's to me, it's like, how can we get marketing, this is a massive cliché, but the right message to the right person at the right time, right? You know, and you're not going to be able to do that unless you spend just as much time thinking about market research and marketing and advertising as you do writing the book. And fortunately, I think that's one of my strengths. I, I know that there's a type of writer that would

love to be a hermit in a in a cave, and only right and magically be discovered and make a billion dollars, right? We all would, we all, we all would, but like I you know, for better or worse, I also appreciate pounding the pavement and, you know, earning the audience and I think a lot of people maybe don't recognize that that is something that needs to be earned. It's true. I yeah, I love that. And I am thinking of all the benefits of self publishing, since I've done the traditional route. And like, you know, how many books you've sold, you will always know how many books you sold, I have no idea.

 21:28

The data, we have more visibility, for sure. But it's also as a very different ecosystem to so my book is exclusive. The eBook is exclusive to Amazon as part of the Kindle Unlimited program. And the business model is different. So people pay a monthly subscription. And authors receive royalties based on the pages read rather than the unit sold. Oh, and so you have to finish it.

 21:57

I said earlier, buy it, but don't fit it, you have to finish it if you get it on Kindle. And from I haven't seen it on the back end from but from what I understand, you know, you won't necessarily know whether one person read 15 pages or 15 people read one page. But you will be able to sort of glean, you know, how, how well is this book being received. And,

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you know, I feel like, as much as I love traditional publishing, and all of the things that can that a publisher can deliver in terms of distribution and reach, there is something to be said about just the granular data that a lot of indie authors have been able to get. And so I think hybrid is usually what I propose is like the future of publishing, I think there are going to be projects that are meant to be Trad especially if you're in genres like children's books, or you know, certain things that they rely on schools and libraries, young adult, for example.

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And then there's going to be a lot of projects that are meant to be indie publish, and a lot of spicy romance in particular, starts off in Kindle Unlimited, and then perhaps goes viral. And then that's when the agents and the editors come running. Because you've created a marketable product. And it's it's there in black and white, that it's selling very, very well. And I've seen that happen time and time again. I wonder if I'd have a problem with that. If I was queering Sony agents was like getting all the rejections and then go do it yourself. So it goes viral. And then everybody comes back going, Oh, we actually do and she

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thanks for making it go viral. Now we'll help you out. I mean, there there can be a little bit of side eye with that I do try to remind myself that, you know, the the agents are getting 1000s of queries a month. I mean, they are in a del. Louis females. And so it's very hard to stand out in

queries a month, I mean, they are in a de Lucia females. And so it's very hard to stand out in that kind of demand. And frankly, it's the supply and demand issue is very much real, there are not enough publishers, and there are not enough publishing professionals to serve all of the people in the world that want to write book, right?

 24:06

And so, okay, what can we do, to make sure that we're representing ourselves and not just as a artist, but as a business. And so, you know, unfortunately, capitalism is going to capitalism. And if you don't have a business and a mindset, you're gonna get really frustrated really quickly and feel like you're smacking your head against the wall for fun. And it's, it's gonna drive you nuts. But I just think of it as you know, if I were to partner with a literary agent one day it'll be because I have I respect them as a business partner, not necessarily as the the gatekeeper that's going to grant me the external validation that I was looking for, you know, now that I'm I'm going indie I don't necessarily need to rely on that. And now I can treat anyone in publishing as like a peer. We're in this together and and that's been the greatest part.

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about the journey, I love that you sound so mature as you say. I don't mean like old mature, like you get this, there's been a lot of therapy.

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I love therapy, I love it have to had to include my therapist and my acknowledgement major. Shout out, Daisy, we couldn't do this without you.

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I love that. Yeah, for my own art.

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I don't know what it is about publishing that the most highly anxious.

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And I say this with love, sometimes neurotic people are attracted to these fields, because it is some of the most brutal rejection that you're going to experience. But if you're if you're, you know, it never ends to it's like you'll get rejected from, from agents from editors. But even as indie, you'll get rejected by readers, you know, I've got my first one star review a week after offering advanced reader copies. And so we rip that band aid off, and I have a lot of love and

gratitude for that reader. Because, you know, Hey, can't win them. All right. And, you know, they say authors shouldn't be reading their reviews. And I'm certainly not going to insert myself into reader spaces.

 26:14

But, you know, I like to quote Lord of the Rings like, but today is not that day. Today is not that day where I can completely remove myself, as a debut author, like this is all very new to me. And I honestly, I'm just morbidly curious about any kind of feedback positive or negative. Well, I'm always curious, why do you feel the need to leave one star? Like, why leave one at all? What if you didn't like it that badly? Then why waste more of your time by leaving a bad review? Well, I understand like with arcs, it's that exchange of, you know, hey, we're asking for your honest feedback, and I get it. And if anything, it makes that you know, the rest of the reviews feel more credible, because nothing says bought and paid for like a perfect score. So you know, I feel like those one stars are exactly what I need to make the the four and five stars, you know, that much sweeter? See, you aren't mature? Look.

 27:10

When does the next book come out? Um, well, we don't have an official release date. I'm hoping for sometime in the fall. Oh, so you're gonna do a quick. I mean, it's not necessarily what we call rapid release. I couldn't do things that that clip there are authors in the romance space who can pump out a book, you know, every month or so? I don't have that kind of stamina. I don't have that kind of time that I wish that was all I did. That would be awesome. But here you are in my kitchen. Yeah. You see me do homework. If you've seen you're gonna see the door project for the teacher appreciation. There is no time to do one rom com a month? Yeah, no, no, no. But with the four book series, I think like probably every six months for the next couple of years, will give me enough time to you know, craft the next series and see, you know how that's going to shape up. But yeah, I'm excited. It's, you know, it's all interconnected. standalones in the same universe, so it's a series but you don't necessarily need to read all of them in order, because it follows a different couples love story. But she gets to see the cameos from from characters in each book. I love it. I can't wait. I am so excited. Yeah. Where can everyone find you? Where can they follow you? And where can they get love? Actually, if you get it on Kindle Unlimited, you have to read the whole book.

 28:30

Yeah, so I'm Alyssa jarrett.com is my website. You can also find me Alyssa jared.substack.com. If you'd like to sign up for my newsletter, I have a lot of hot takes about the romance genre and just publishing in general. And we have talked a lot about books that I'm loving and shows that I'm watching all my recommendations. And then on social I'm at author Alyssa Jarrett. I'm on Instagram threads and very lightweight tic tock, thank you so much. Hello, I'm really glad I was able to join thanks for inviting me.

 29:07

Thank you so much to Alyssa for coming to my home and doing this little experiment with me

Thank you so much to Alyssa for coming to my home and doing this little experiment with me having my daughter recording us the entire time in the kitchen. It was an absolute blast. And best of all, I feel like I made a new friend with Alyssa. I am so excited to share her book with all of you and to see how she does this journey of publishing her romance series and bringing some of Silicon Valley to all of you. It is so much fun to share with all of you parts of the Bay Area and to be able to connect with other authors that are literally here in my backyard. So a big thank you to Alyssa for coming over. And thank you to all of you. I hope that this inspires you to take some of the time



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And bits that are going on in your life and to write about them because it makes life more fun. And you get to share the secrets but just call it fiction