

1. Why did you start narrating books?

Well, as an avid listener of audio books and an avid actor, the idea of being on the other side of things, the one presenting the story to other listeners has always been intriguing.

One of the unintended effects of COVID and being quarantined was that the intrigue finally shifted into determination. When the pandemic settled in and working and staying at home became safer in general, I stopped hesitating, bought some gear and started the process of narrating books. (It was a lot more involved than that of course but, broad strokes here...)

2. How do you prepare for a book narration?

Before anything, I read the entire manuscript. As tempting as it is to just jump in. I do 'fully voiced' narration so treating it like any other script works best for me. I get to know the tone, pacing, environment. The characters, of course. I assign each character a different highlighter color and highlight all of their dialogue accordingly. (very meditative)

Some authors are less descriptive than others. In Cinderella's Jilted Billionaire, for example, Lucy paints a very vivid picture of the environment and the people in it. This not only makes the writing richer but it helps me find each character's voice. Literally and figuratively. (She's very accommodating.)

When it's time to actually record I do physical and vocal warm-ups, stay hydrated and always do a quick read through the sections I plan to record.

3. Do you have a favorite genre to narrate?

Well I can't imagine wanting to do much outside of Fiction but I guess that's more of a category. Romance of course is one of my favorites to do. My voice seems to be well suited for it.

Fantasy is another one of my favorite genres to read and listen to but I haven't really done any proper epic fantasy yet. I like the idea of fleshing out a broad spectrum of characters that may be open to unique or extreme voice interpretations. Hah.

4. Do you use your acting skills for work outside of book narration?

As a theatrically trained actor, when I am not narrating a book I make excellent use of my skills. For instance, on more than one occasion I have convinced the passengers in my car that I knew exactly where we were and I certainly wasn't lost. They've been fantastic performances and I've always gotten home eventually.

Really though, over the years I think my skills were more focused on booking a job than doing a job. The joy of doing a job with your whole heart and with your senses open for an adventure is a gift i've learned not to take for granted. I've realized, though, that for me those opportunities were more easily found by creating my own projects. Writing characters I'd like to play or a narrative that resonates with me. With other people or on my own. Without expectations. That and doing improv has always been one of my favorite ways to keep my skills sharp.

Interestingly enough, I actually find that narrating books gives me that same sense of creative freedom.

5. Was there anything different about narrating Cinderella's Jilted Billionaire to other books?

One thing I found interesting were the different locations throughout the book, which is less common than you'd think. U.S., Croatia, Sicily. It's a little thing but it provides the reader/LISTENER with another level of escapism. You may feel more tan by the end.

6. What was your favorite part of the story to narrate?

There were several different parts of the story I enjoyed but instead of calling out spoiler alerts, I will say one aspect of the book that I loved about the main character was how effortlessly capable she seems from the beginning. But as the story moves along we realize how much more remarkable that actually is when we see the length of strides she's taken and what she's overcome to get there. And she makes the choices she makes because she wants to. She's no shrinking violet. I loved it. It adds another dimension to who she is, not to mention more nuance for me to work with.

. 7. What was hardest for you to narrate?

As an actor who is prone to exhibit actor type cliches, I unsurprisingly, love doing accents. To the annoyance of even my self sometimes. I just can't shut up.

It's even better, however, when I am actually able to do them. I don't know that this was one of those times.

*The Sicilian elements in CJB were quaint and lovely but it was also the preferred language of the male protags parents. They weren't in every chapter or even close but they had a definite presence. I didn't actually attempt an authentic Sicilian dialect. That would have been absurd. I went for an ~~easy~~, general Italian-ish sound. Then tried for something just a bit broader, very subtle. Then did something else. I want to argue that there absolutely **is** a country hidden somewhere between Italy and Greece or Malta maybe, where the native language is some kind of romantic mediterranean mix. And when they speak English it sounds exactly like the accent of the sweet parent's of 'Carlo' and voiced by... a real talent. I'm not sure what was happening during those moments in the recording booth but I hope it doesn't cause Lucy Monroe to lose sales. (sorry Lucy ;) I still loved doing it!*

