

WriterSpark's Podcast: Tips and Tricks for Fiction Writers

The Importance of Adding Diversity to Your Writing, a Chat with VM Burns

1

00:00:07,450 --> 00:00:11,590

Welcome to writer spark the podcast with tips and tricks about fiction writing.

2

00:00:11,600 --> 00:00:12,420

I'm your host,

3

00:00:12,420 --> 00:00:13,150

Melissa bourbon,

4

00:00:13,150 --> 00:00:14,380

national Bestselling author,

5

00:00:14,380 --> 00:00:21,380

developmental fiction editor writing coach and instructor and founder of writer spark academy wherever you are on your writing path.

6

00:00:21,390 --> 00:00:25,290

Writer spark has tips tricks and lessons for you.

7

00:00:25,300 --> 00:00:31,670

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8

00:00:31,680 --> 00:00:33,680

It helps others find our content.

9

00:00:33,690 --> 00:00:37,420

Thank you so much and thank you for joining me today.

10

00:00:37,420 --> 00:00:41,260

My guest is VM Burns also known as Valerie.

11

00:00:41,270 --> 00:00:48,130

She is the author of four different mystery series with 1/5 1 coming up that she's going to talk to us about,

12

00:00:48,140 --> 00:00:51,010
including the mystery bookshop,

13

00:00:51,180 --> 00:00:52,120
the dog club,

14

00:00:52,130 --> 00:00:52,410
the R.

15

00:00:52,410 --> 00:00:52,580
J.

16

00:00:52,580 --> 00:00:55,940
Franklin and the brand new baker street mysteries.

17

00:00:55,950 --> 00:00:57,400
She's so accomplished.

18

00:00:57,400 --> 00:01:10,485
She is also an adjunct professor at the popular fiction program at Seton Hill University in Pennsylvania and she has a day job like so many of us writers do get ready for Valerie Burn today.

19

00:01:10,485 --> 00:01:14,955
Our topic is writing diverse characters in fiction,

20

00:01:14,965 --> 00:01:17,335
which applies to any kind of fiction,

21

00:01:17,335 --> 00:01:23,335
not just mysteries and it's such an important conversation so settle in,

22

00:01:23,335 --> 00:01:29,045
grab something tasty and get ready to ignite your writer spark Valerie,

23

00:01:29,045 --> 00:01:32,625
thank you so much for being here with me today on my podcast.

24

00:01:32,635 --> 00:01:38,900
Thank you for having me and and so excited to talk about your books.

25

00:01:38,910 --> 00:01:43,580

Um I like to start with an author's origin story.

26

00:01:43,580 --> 00:01:51,680

I always think it's so interesting to hear how other people got into this crazy business that we've chosen to get into.

27

00:01:51,690 --> 00:01:55,690

So what was your path to publishing like?

28

00:01:56,300 --> 00:01:56,960

Well,

29

00:01:56,970 --> 00:01:57,850

um you know,

30

00:01:57,850 --> 00:02:05,320

I I have a lot of friends who they had dreamed of being a writer their whole life and you know,

31

00:02:05,320 --> 00:02:06,730

they wanted to,

32

00:02:06,740 --> 00:02:07,170

you know,

33

00:02:07,170 --> 00:02:09,020

they have stories they wrote as Children,

34

00:02:09,020 --> 00:02:10,260

that's not my story,

35

00:02:10,270 --> 00:02:19,010

I don't know that I ever necessarily dreamed of being a writer because I kind of thought writers don't make any money,

36

00:02:19,270 --> 00:02:23,290

like I know right,

37

00:02:23,300 --> 00:02:25,790

so I thought I want to do something else,

38

00:02:25,800 --> 00:02:27,120

I just want to read books.

39

00:02:27,130 --> 00:02:28,910

So I read a lot,

40

00:02:28,920 --> 00:02:32,370

I read a lot of um cozy mysteries,

41

00:02:32,380 --> 00:02:34,400

I fell in love with cozy's,

42

00:02:34,410 --> 00:02:35,890

I love agatha Christie,

43

00:02:35,890 --> 00:02:39,010

I'm a huge agatha Christie fan and you know,

44

00:02:39,010 --> 00:02:42,860

over the years as I was writing or reading books,

45

00:02:42,870 --> 00:02:46,630

I thought boy I wish somebody would write a book about,

46

00:02:47,030 --> 00:02:49,250

I wish someone would write a book about,

47

00:02:49,260 --> 00:02:49,710

you know,

48

00:02:49,710 --> 00:02:58,250

I'd love to read a book about and I just had this long list that just kept growing and growing and growing and no one was writing these books and you know,

49

00:02:58,250 --> 00:03:04,800

one day I thought well maybe I should try my hand at writing those books because if I want to read it,

50

00:03:04,800 --> 00:03:06,500

maybe somebody else does too.

51

00:03:07,290 --> 00:03:15,400

And um so I started writing a mystery because those are what I love and that's what I,

52

00:03:15,410 --> 00:03:16,180

you know,

53

00:03:16,190 --> 00:03:22,500

read the majority of the time and I realize it's a lot harder than it looks,

54

00:03:22,500 --> 00:03:22,830

you know,

55

00:03:22,830 --> 00:03:24,050

when you read a book and it,

56

00:03:24,060 --> 00:03:24,350

you know,

57

00:03:24,350 --> 00:03:27,710

you can finish it in a day or two days and you're like,

58

00:03:27,710 --> 00:03:29,260

boy that was fast or you know,

59

00:03:29,260 --> 00:03:31,060

especially when you read and you're like,

60

00:03:31,070 --> 00:03:34,020

well they should have done it like this or I don't know why they did that,

61

00:03:34,020 --> 00:03:35,300

that that's you know,

62

00:03:35,300 --> 00:03:35,760

whatever,

63

00:03:35,780 --> 00:03:37,070

but you know,

64

00:03:37,070 --> 00:03:44,840

when you actually have to sit down and put a beginning a middle and an end and you know get 70,000,

65

00:03:44,840 --> 00:03:45,470
you know,

66

00:03:45,470 --> 00:03:46,210
words,

67

00:03:46,220 --> 00:03:49,550
I um wrote my book and you know,

68

00:03:49,550 --> 00:03:50,050
actually,

69

00:03:50,050 --> 00:03:57,190
I I first started trying to write screenplays and I thought if I could just sell a screenplay,

70

00:03:57,190 --> 00:04:02,190
sell a script for to quit my job and then I can write and you know,

71

00:04:02,190 --> 00:04:03,500
that's if,

72

00:04:03,510 --> 00:04:07,970
if you ever are just waiting for the planets to perfectly align,

73

00:04:07,970 --> 00:04:11,540
waiting to hit the lotto so you can become a writer,

74

00:04:11,550 --> 00:04:12,010
you know,

75

00:04:12,010 --> 00:04:12,820
good luck to you,

76

00:04:12,830 --> 00:04:13,110
you know,

77

00:04:13,110 --> 00:04:16,740
that's generally not the way it works and that was not my path,

78

00:04:16,750 --> 00:04:17,500
right?

79

00:04:17,510 --> 00:04:19,920
I doubt that it's really anybody's path,

80

00:04:19,920 --> 00:04:23,010
maybe one or two lucky people.

81

00:04:23,020 --> 00:04:24,010
Exactly,

82

00:04:24,010 --> 00:04:25,290
it's about the same,

83

00:04:25,300 --> 00:04:25,990
you know,

84

00:04:26,500 --> 00:04:28,420
chances that you have of,

85

00:04:28,430 --> 00:04:28,950
I don't know,

86

00:04:28,950 --> 00:04:31,130
getting hit by lightning or something or,

87

00:04:31,140 --> 00:04:32,140
or you know,

88

00:04:32,140 --> 00:04:33,820
hitting the powerball is,

89

00:04:33,830 --> 00:04:34,290
you know,

90

00:04:34,300 --> 00:04:35,430
it's work,

91

00:04:35,440 --> 00:04:36,130
you have to,

92

00:04:36,140 --> 00:04:39,640
you know work at it and I realize that something's important,

93

00:04:39,650 --> 00:04:48,730
you take the time and you make time for it and you just do it not only making time for the craft itself or for whatever it is you're interested in,

94

00:04:48,730 --> 00:04:53,190
but to learn how to do it and to do it well and to continue to grow,

95

00:04:53,190 --> 00:04:55,840
especially in the field that we're in in writing,

96

00:04:55,850 --> 00:04:56,290
you know,

97

00:04:56,290 --> 00:05:01,780
we were never just complacent and saying okay I'm I'm a writer and this is as good as I'm ever going to get.

98

00:05:01,780 --> 00:05:09,070
I mean I think that most of us try to continue to grow and just become better at what we do exactly.

99

00:05:09,070 --> 00:05:12,290
I mean I have bookshelves and bookshelves full of you know,

100

00:05:12,290 --> 00:05:13,880
craft books on you know,

101

00:05:13,880 --> 00:05:15,100
writing how to write,

102

00:05:15,100 --> 00:05:16,390
how to write the first five pages,

103

00:05:16,390 --> 00:05:17,550
how to write the 1st 10 pages,

104

00:05:17,550 --> 00:05:18,310
how to write,

105

00:05:18,320 --> 00:05:19,000
you know,

106

00:05:19,010 --> 00:05:21,220
a damn good mystery,

107

00:05:21,220 --> 00:05:23,840
how to write you know fiction,

108

00:05:23,840 --> 00:05:24,670
how to write,

109

00:05:24,670 --> 00:05:25,190
you know,

110

00:05:25,200 --> 00:05:26,250
killer fiction,

111

00:05:26,250 --> 00:05:32,930
how to there's just how to write cozy mysteries and and you keep reading and reading and reading because you want to get better,

112

00:05:32,930 --> 00:05:36,660
you want to learn and develop and grow.

113

00:05:36,670 --> 00:05:38,380
So I read,

114

00:05:38,380 --> 00:05:44,280
I got a lot of books I went to workshops and I got so many rejection letters,

115

00:05:44,280 --> 00:05:46,370
I could wallpaper a room.

116

00:05:47,000 --> 00:06:25,610
So I decided I'm missing something and I decided to research writers that were successful that I admired to see what did they do and one of those writers was victoria Thompson a huge fan of her writing and so I look in the back of her book at her bio and I read that she's a professor

at Seton Hill University in Greensburg pennsylvania which you are too well now at the time I already had one master's degree,

117

00:06:25,610 --> 00:06:26,630

I didn't want another one.

118

00:06:26,630 --> 00:06:27,650

I didn't want to go back to school.

119

00:06:27,650 --> 00:06:48,620

I just wanted to maybe audit one of her class and learn and it really wasn't that far from where I was living at the time I lived in indiana and I couldn't audit so I ended up actually applying to the program and I got in and I got my masters in writing popular fiction an M.

120

00:06:48,620 --> 00:06:48,790

F.

121

00:06:48,790 --> 00:06:49,040

A.

122

00:06:49,040 --> 00:07:00,110

From Seton Hill and I got to um learn from people like victoria Thompson all the um people all the instructors are published authors.

123

00:07:00,120 --> 00:07:15,240

And so for me that helped me to understand even when I was getting rejection letters and for the few rejection letters that you get where they give you feedback.

124

00:07:17,120 --> 00:07:20,840

I did I realized I didn't know what they were talking about.

125

00:07:20,850 --> 00:07:26,010

I didn't understand you know I didn't understand things about deeper P.

126

00:07:26,010 --> 00:07:26,150

O.

127

00:07:26,150 --> 00:07:26,570

V.

128

00:07:26,570 --> 00:07:43,830

Or you know all of the concepts that agents and editors are looking for and I didn't know how to do what they wanted me to do for me going I don't think that every writer needs an M.

129

00:07:43,830 --> 00:07:44,070

F.

130

00:07:44,070 --> 00:07:44,320

A.

131

00:07:44,320 --> 00:07:46,240

To be published author.

132

00:07:46,240 --> 00:07:51,210

I do not I think that um for me that's what worked.

133

00:07:51,210 --> 00:08:00,490

So my path after I had written a book and been and been not successful with getting it traditionally published,

134

00:08:01,330 --> 00:08:06,620

I decided to pursue additional education and I went and got my M.

135

00:08:06,620 --> 00:08:06,820

F.

136

00:08:06,820 --> 00:08:07,160

A.

137

00:08:07,170 --> 00:08:11,160

And that really unlocked because it made sense.

138

00:08:11,170 --> 00:08:11,800

Then,

139

00:08:11,810 --> 00:08:12,670

you know,

140

00:08:12,670 --> 00:08:21,060

the things that they're saying it made sense and I was able to um write my thesis and you know,

141

00:08:21,060 --> 00:08:23,670
actually my thesis novel is not the first book I sold.

142
00:08:23,680 --> 00:08:32,160
I wrote another book after I graduated because I had two ideas of books that I wanted to write and the second one was the plot is murder,

143
00:08:32,170 --> 00:08:34,080
which was the first book that I got.

144
00:08:34,290 --> 00:08:38,040
And that was the book that I got nominated for the agatha work as you write,

145
00:08:38,050 --> 00:08:39,170
you learn.

146
00:08:39,390 --> 00:08:44,590
I think my current books are better than my first books and yeah,

147
00:08:45,210 --> 00:08:46,950
I think you probably have the same thing.

148
00:08:46,950 --> 00:08:47,390
Right?

149
00:08:47,400 --> 00:08:48,020
Yes,

150
00:08:48,020 --> 00:08:49,070
absolutely.

151
00:08:49,080 --> 00:08:49,660
In fact,

152
00:08:49,660 --> 00:08:51,370
I uh you know,

153
00:08:51,370 --> 00:09:00,570
I'm getting the rights back to my very first series and I'm thinking I need to go back and really revise them because I'm a better writer now.

154

00:09:00,580 --> 00:09:03,440
29 books under my belt and you know,

155
00:09:03,440 --> 00:09:08,190
so I would say the last half are probably a lot stronger than those first five,

156
00:09:08,190 --> 00:09:08,570
you know?

157
00:09:08,570 --> 00:09:09,370
So yeah,

158
00:09:09,370 --> 00:09:13,130
I think that we are always growing and you know,

159
00:09:13,130 --> 00:09:14,100
as a teacher,

160
00:09:14,100 --> 00:09:21,720
I taught middle school and high school and now I run right spark academy and I have online courses and as a teacher,

161
00:09:21,730 --> 00:09:36,050
you're always learning too and that's one of the things that I love actually about teaching is that it forces me to be more critical to think more critically about the writing process or whatever it is I'm teaching,

162
00:09:36,050 --> 00:09:37,430
but now I'm just teaching writing.

163
00:09:37,430 --> 00:09:42,170
So to think more critically about the writing process and how to teach it.

164
00:09:42,170 --> 00:09:46,170
And I have to really understand it in order to be able to teach it.

165
00:09:46,180 --> 00:09:47,320
And so that's,

166
00:09:47,330 --> 00:09:48,080
to me,

167

00:09:48,080 --> 00:09:54,220

that's a real perk because it's another way that I get to continually keep learning and I think growing in my craft.

168

00:09:54,770 --> 00:09:55,190

Yeah,

169

00:09:55,190 --> 00:09:58,890

I I have since you mentioned that I I'm in the,

170

00:09:58,890 --> 00:10:03,230

I'm a instructor now in the writing popular fiction program at Seton Hill,

171

00:10:03,230 --> 00:10:10,190

which I am and I find that and and it's a low residency program,

172

00:10:10,190 --> 00:10:12,970

so we're only on campus twice a year for,

173

00:10:12,980 --> 00:10:13,320

you know,

174

00:10:13,320 --> 00:10:14,440

one week twice a year.

175

00:10:14,450 --> 00:10:29,860

And I I'm inspired by um the students who are writing new things and they're wanting to get published and they have all these ideas and some of them are so far fetched and I'm like,

176

00:10:29,860 --> 00:10:30,190

wow,

177

00:10:30,190 --> 00:10:30,850

how creative!

178

00:10:30,860 --> 00:10:31,690

That's awesome.

179

00:10:31,700 --> 00:10:36,730

But every time I go to residency or I read um stories,

180
00:10:36,730 --> 00:10:36,990
I'm like,

181
00:10:36,990 --> 00:10:39,550
that's so creative and different and that's,

182
00:10:39,560 --> 00:10:40,330
you know,

183
00:10:40,330 --> 00:10:45,510
it just inspires me to want to be more creative and um,

184
00:10:45,510 --> 00:10:46,610
to push the limits,

185
00:10:46,610 --> 00:10:47,080
I guess,

186
00:10:47,090 --> 00:10:50,630
of not only the genre,

187
00:10:50,640 --> 00:10:56,920
but also my own uh writing and what I do and and how I do it,

188
00:10:56,930 --> 00:10:57,440
you know,

189
00:10:57,440 --> 00:11:02,100
sometimes it's not just um about,

190
00:11:02,110 --> 00:11:04,830
you know making it more complicated,

191
00:11:04,840 --> 00:11:06,860
but um you know,

192
00:11:06,860 --> 00:11:08,490
with the plot is murder.

193
00:11:09,860 --> 00:11:16,220

That was um for me it was a way that I was stretching myself.

194

00:11:16,230 --> 00:11:27,150

So prior to that book I'd always written in first person and it's easier in first person because you're in one person's head and you don't have to think about,

195

00:11:27,160 --> 00:11:27,420

you know,

196

00:11:27,420 --> 00:11:27,940

the others.

197

00:11:27,940 --> 00:11:31,600

And I wanted to try writing in third.

198

00:11:31,610 --> 00:11:34,270

And so in that book,

199

00:11:34,280 --> 00:11:36,350

there's a story within a story.

200

00:11:36,370 --> 00:11:37,540

Yes.

201

00:11:37,550 --> 00:11:39,250

So complicated.

202

00:11:39,250 --> 00:11:40,880

And I don't know how you did that.

203

00:11:40,890 --> 00:11:42,040

Yeah,

204

00:11:42,250 --> 00:11:43,540

well,

205

00:11:43,550 --> 00:11:44,380

it was,

206

00:11:44,390 --> 00:11:44,980

you know,

207

00:11:44,990 --> 00:11:45,890

it was great,

208

00:11:45,890 --> 00:11:46,120

you know,

209

00:11:46,120 --> 00:11:48,220

I thought this is the kind of book I'd want to read.

210

00:11:48,230 --> 00:11:52,080

So I didn't think about at the time how hard it would be to write it,

211

00:11:52,080 --> 00:11:53,760

wanted to read something like that.

212

00:11:53,760 --> 00:11:54,150

So,

213

00:11:54,160 --> 00:11:58,060

I thought the the story that Samantha Washington,

214

00:11:58,060 --> 00:12:00,340

my main character isn't first,

215

00:12:00,350 --> 00:12:02,270

but the story she's writing is in third.

216

00:12:02,280 --> 00:12:11,750

I could stretch myself a little bit and try something new without having to write an entire full book and not only that,

217

00:12:11,750 --> 00:12:13,120

but its historical,

218

00:12:13,120 --> 00:12:15,280

what she's writing is historical.

219

00:12:15,290 --> 00:12:19,170

So the whole added complexity of writing.

220
00:12:19,170 --> 00:12:19,370
Okay,

221
00:12:19,370 --> 00:12:21,600
first person contemporary,

222
00:12:21,610 --> 00:12:25,980
and then third person historical and I know from talking to you,

223
00:12:25,990 --> 00:12:32,640
we know each other that that you're a big what do you call it fan of England,

224
00:12:32,650 --> 00:12:34,910
what is the anglophile,

225
00:12:34,910 --> 00:12:35,520
I guess.

226
00:12:35,720 --> 00:12:36,520
Yeah,

227
00:12:36,520 --> 00:12:36,900
I don't know,

228
00:12:36,910 --> 00:12:38,610
but I do,

229
00:12:38,610 --> 00:12:40,940
I I love british history,

230
00:12:40,940 --> 00:12:44,040
I love um I love the research,

231
00:12:44,050 --> 00:12:45,110
I can get lost,

232
00:12:45,110 --> 00:12:50,590
I can go down a rabbit hole and spend hours looking up what kind of,

233
00:12:50,600 --> 00:12:51,250

uh,

234

00:12:51,260 --> 00:12:51,860
you know,

235

00:12:51,870 --> 00:12:52,250
I don't know,

236

00:12:52,250 --> 00:12:55,890
radio programs were popular in 1939.

237

00:12:55,890 --> 00:12:56,620
Great Britain,

238

00:12:56,630 --> 00:12:58,400
because they may not be the same one,

239

00:12:58,410 --> 00:13:02,560
I can't even tell you how much time I spent trying to understand cricket.

240

00:13:02,570 --> 00:13:04,330
You know,

241

00:13:04,340 --> 00:13:07,910
I made a reference to somebody playing cricket and I thought,

242

00:13:07,920 --> 00:13:08,240
oh,

243

00:13:08,240 --> 00:13:14,120
I can put some details about cricket in there must have spent weeks,

244

00:13:14,130 --> 00:13:25,900
I actually like researched and watched cricket on tv and then I interviewed someone that I know who actually plays cricket and I still don't understand cricket,

245

00:13:25,910 --> 00:13:29,480
so all of that time for probably one line.

246

00:13:29,490 --> 00:13:30,100
Right?

247

00:13:30,110 --> 00:13:30,730

Exactly,

248

00:13:30,730 --> 00:13:33,400

It's not integral to the plot at all.

249

00:13:33,410 --> 00:13:36,030

And I eventually just changed it to,

250

00:13:36,040 --> 00:13:36,560

you know,

251

00:13:36,560 --> 00:13:41,160

and he plays cricket and I kept going because it didn't matter,

252

00:13:41,170 --> 00:13:42,620

I can get lost in it,

253

00:13:42,620 --> 00:13:49,330

but it is an opportunity to grow and to stretch myself and to learn and develop.

254

00:13:49,330 --> 00:13:53,530

And so your point about continuing to grow and develop as a writer,

255

00:13:53,540 --> 00:13:54,890

it's a continual process.

256

00:13:54,890 --> 00:13:56,450

Learning is not a one time event.

257

00:13:56,450 --> 00:13:58,200

You don't publish a book and say,

258

00:13:58,200 --> 00:13:58,870

okay,

259

00:13:58,870 --> 00:14:01,510

now I know it all because you don't,

260

00:14:01,520 --> 00:14:02,270
yeah,

261
00:14:02,270 --> 00:14:02,560
you know,

262
00:14:02,560 --> 00:14:05,580
that used to just kill me as a teacher,

263
00:14:05,580 --> 00:14:06,420
Middle school teacher,

264
00:14:06,420 --> 00:14:07,460
high school teacher and then,

265
00:14:07,460 --> 00:14:07,710
you know,

266
00:14:07,710 --> 00:14:17,530
having had kids in elementary school and all the way through writing was taught the years it was tested and the years it wasn't tested,

267
00:14:17,540 --> 00:14:22,940
it wasn't taught and that killed me because I kept trying to get people to understand in my school,

268
00:14:23,190 --> 00:14:26,380
you can't learn writing in a year,

269
00:14:26,390 --> 00:14:29,180
it's a process that you build upon,

270
00:14:29,190 --> 00:14:29,570
you know,

271
00:14:29,570 --> 00:14:34,820
and you're continually developing it and you start with these skills and then you add and add and add,

272
00:14:34,820 --> 00:14:37,620
so when it's the same idea with us as writers,

273

00:14:37,620 --> 00:14:37,820
we,

274

00:14:37,830 --> 00:14:38,250
you know,

275

00:14:38,260 --> 00:14:40,820
write this fabulous first book,

276

00:14:41,310 --> 00:14:41,720
you know,

277

00:14:41,720 --> 00:14:43,930
and our second book is going to be even better,

278

00:14:43,930 --> 00:14:44,700
hopefully ideally,

279

00:14:44,700 --> 00:14:47,130
because we're continuing to,

280

00:14:47,130 --> 00:14:47,410
you know,

281

00:14:47,410 --> 00:14:49,470
to go to workshops and to talk to,

282

00:14:49,470 --> 00:14:49,860
you know,

283

00:14:49,870 --> 00:14:52,250
I think that the writing community,

284

00:14:52,250 --> 00:14:53,110
but in particular,

285

00:14:53,110 --> 00:14:55,170
the cozy mystery community,

286

00:14:55,180 --> 00:14:59,440

the cozy mystery community is wonderfully accepting and nurturing of one another.

287

00:14:59,440 --> 00:14:59,880

You know,

288

00:14:59,890 --> 00:15:02,910

the people that I've met along the way,

289

00:15:02,910 --> 00:15:03,080

you know,

290

00:15:03,080 --> 00:15:08,535

my first book came out in 20 in 2008 and I didn't know so much,

291

00:15:08,535 --> 00:15:14,305

and all of the people that I met were so generous with their time and with their knowledge and,

292

00:15:14,305 --> 00:15:14,555

you know,

293

00:15:14,555 --> 00:15:16,825

I think that's that's just invaluable.

294

00:15:16,835 --> 00:15:17,875

I agree.

295

00:15:17,885 --> 00:15:36,350

I have met so many people within the cozy mystery community who really try to support and help and that's it was such a big difference from screenwriting when I went to workshops and seminars on screen writing it was very close,

296

00:15:36,360 --> 00:15:37,840

like you go to the,

297

00:15:37,850 --> 00:15:38,120

you know,

298

00:15:38,120 --> 00:15:47,300

you spend a week or a day or however long at this workshop and and you're sitting next to people in line or you're talking to people and you know,

299

00:15:47,300 --> 00:15:47,640
it's like,

300
00:15:47,640 --> 00:15:48,570
so what are you writing?

301
00:15:48,570 --> 00:15:54,120
And they won't tell you because they're afraid you're gonna steal their idea and then they lose out.

302
00:15:54,130 --> 00:15:55,500
And I,

303
00:15:55,510 --> 00:15:55,830
you know,

304
00:15:55,830 --> 00:16:03,360
my very first um opportunity where I went to a workshop that was both books and screenwriting,

305
00:16:03,900 --> 00:16:10,940
it was just night and day difference because the book people were so open and you know,

306
00:16:10,940 --> 00:16:11,180
hey,

307
00:16:11,180 --> 00:16:11,830
what are you writing?

308
00:16:11,830 --> 00:16:13,610
I'm writing this book about,

309
00:16:13,620 --> 00:16:14,350
you know,

310
00:16:14,360 --> 00:16:16,250
president Lincoln and he's gonna,

311
00:16:16,260 --> 00:16:16,540
you know,

312

00:16:16,540 --> 00:16:19,400
slay vampires or whatever it is and they're like,

313
00:16:19,400 --> 00:16:20,140
so what are you doing?

314
00:16:20,140 --> 00:16:21,210
And I was just so shocked,

315
00:16:21,210 --> 00:16:25,010
like they're actually telling me what they're writing and you know,

316
00:16:25,010 --> 00:16:26,770
cozy mystery community,

317
00:16:26,770 --> 00:16:30,085
it takes it even a step further because you know,

318
00:16:30,085 --> 00:16:36,415
they're volunteering to do blurbs for your book or they're offering you help or you know,

319
00:16:36,415 --> 00:16:38,235
you can mention something like,

320
00:16:38,235 --> 00:16:38,835
hey,

321
00:16:38,835 --> 00:16:44,750
I need a poison that can kill somebody by the time they get to the first floor in an elevator and they're like,

322
00:16:44,750 --> 00:16:45,020
hey,

323
00:16:45,020 --> 00:16:45,600
you know what,

324
00:16:45,600 --> 00:16:51,470
I got one for you or I know somebody who works with poisons who can help you,

325
00:16:51,480 --> 00:16:52,090

you know,

326

00:16:52,090 --> 00:16:57,120

and you can't say things like that to just anybody you can't,

327

00:16:57,930 --> 00:17:00,680

but the cozy mystery community and they are,

328

00:17:00,690 --> 00:17:01,020

you know,

329

00:17:01,020 --> 00:17:04,680

inviting you to participate in their facebook groups and their,

330

00:17:04,690 --> 00:17:05,080

you know,

331

00:17:05,080 --> 00:17:06,330

blogs and you know,

332

00:17:06,330 --> 00:17:06,610

hey,

333

00:17:06,610 --> 00:17:07,260

I got this,

334

00:17:07,270 --> 00:17:07,610

you know,

335

00:17:07,610 --> 00:17:09,720

group book warriors,

336

00:17:09,720 --> 00:17:10,100

you know,

337

00:17:10,100 --> 00:17:12,570

that is going to um,

338

00:17:12,580 --> 00:17:12,910

you know,

339

00:17:12,910 --> 00:17:13,540
read and,

340

00:17:13,540 --> 00:17:17,110
and we'd like to talk about your book or whatever it is.

341

00:17:17,120 --> 00:17:24,050
I have found that the cozy ministry community is just really supportive and that's been great.

342

00:17:24,050 --> 00:17:28,780
And I think part of that is I think you need to,

343

00:17:28,790 --> 00:17:35,060
if you want to be a writer connect with people and you know,

344

00:17:35,070 --> 00:17:41,800
networking and I know most writers I know are introverts myself included and so it's a little hard.

345

00:17:41,810 --> 00:17:48,750
But if you get involved with either like sisters in crime or mystery writers of America or um,

346

00:17:48,760 --> 00:17:52,010
some other association,

347

00:17:52,020 --> 00:17:55,710
there's usually groups where you can ask questions.

348

00:17:55,720 --> 00:17:56,410
Um,

349

00:17:56,420 --> 00:17:57,920
you can um,

350

00:17:57,920 --> 00:17:58,690
people are saying,

351

00:17:58,690 --> 00:17:59,020
hey,

352

00:17:59,020 --> 00:18:00,090

I have a,

353

00:18:00,100 --> 00:18:00,980

um,

354

00:18:01,710 --> 00:18:06,630

I have a website and I feature different authors every month.

355

00:18:06,640 --> 00:18:11,070

Anyone want to take july or I'm on,

356

00:18:11,070 --> 00:18:15,960

I'm on a blog with mystery lovers Kitchen and you know,

357

00:18:15,960 --> 00:18:19,990

they have guests every and you just did one not too long.

358

00:18:20,630 --> 00:18:22,500

But um,

359

00:18:22,510 --> 00:18:22,930

you know,

360

00:18:22,930 --> 00:18:29,030

it's very inviting and open and that's been wonderful.

361

00:18:29,030 --> 00:18:30,530

I think it's been so helpful.

362

00:18:31,070 --> 00:18:31,720

Yeah.

363

00:18:31,730 --> 00:18:32,080

Yeah.

364

00:18:32,080 --> 00:18:37,130

I think it's an amazing community and I'm really happy to be part of it and you know,

365

00:18:37,680 --> 00:18:40,140

I'm an introvert also and like you said,

366

00:18:40,140 --> 00:18:45,990

so many of us are and so it's nice to be part of a community of like minded people,

367

00:18:46,000 --> 00:18:48,880

but but people who we can talk about our craft,

368

00:18:48,890 --> 00:18:52,840

we can talk about writing till the cows come home because that's what we're passionate about.

369

00:18:52,840 --> 00:18:53,960

Right?

370

00:18:55,330 --> 00:18:55,760

All right,

371

00:18:55,760 --> 00:18:59,600

so let's jump into um the topic today.

372

00:18:59,600 --> 00:19:01,860

Well one of the topics because we're covering a lot of things,

373

00:19:01,860 --> 00:19:11,730

but I'd love to talk about creating diversity in our books and this topic is really important to me.

374

00:19:11,740 --> 00:19:14,420

My husband is first generation mexican american.

375

00:19:14,430 --> 00:19:17,010

My Children are mixed therefore,

376

00:19:17,580 --> 00:19:20,040

and when I first started writing,

377

00:19:20,050 --> 00:19:34,490

my first character is named Lola Cruz and I wrote her and her family very much modeled after my husband's family and I wanted her to be somebody that my daughter in particular,

378

00:19:34,490 --> 00:19:36,980

I've 11 daughter and four boys,

379

00:19:36,990 --> 00:19:40,340

but I wanted something that my daughter could really relate to.

380

00:19:40,350 --> 00:19:40,690

You know,

381

00:19:40,690 --> 00:19:43,150

somebody who really embraced her culture,

382

00:19:43,150 --> 00:19:44,310

but also you know,

383

00:19:44,310 --> 00:19:46,740

lives in american life because that's what we do.

384

00:19:47,080 --> 00:19:50,200

And um she doesn't read these books now,

385

00:19:50,200 --> 00:19:55,110

she's 22 because she doesn't like the little bits of romance and sex that mom.

386

00:19:55,110 --> 00:19:57,220

Er there's I mean they're mysteries,

387

00:19:57,220 --> 00:19:57,680

their P I.

388

00:19:57,680 --> 00:19:58,190

Capers.

389

00:19:58,190 --> 00:19:58,890

But you know,

390

00:19:58,900 --> 00:19:59,590

anyway,

391

00:19:59,600 --> 00:20:16,170

um I had a Latina editor actually who bought this series and the greatest compliment I think I've ever received is from her and she said that the way I wrote these characters was more authentic than most of what she's read.

392

00:20:16,170 --> 00:20:21,550

And I think that that's because I worked so hard not to use stereotypes,

393

00:20:21,560 --> 00:20:22,010

right?

394

00:20:22,010 --> 00:20:27,740

I used I worked so hard to just make well rounded characters of you know,

395

00:20:27,740 --> 00:20:36,040

different cultures and races and I've continued to to add characters that are representative of the communities.

396

00:20:36,040 --> 00:20:36,200

You know,

397

00:20:36,200 --> 00:20:42,540

I grew up and born and raised in California and one of my series is set in central coastal California,

398

00:20:42,550 --> 00:20:44,660

California is incredibly diverse,

399

00:20:44,670 --> 00:20:45,040

you know?

400

00:20:45,040 --> 00:20:53,900

And so I brought in characters to sort of mirror the diversity that is truly exists there,

401

00:20:53,900 --> 00:20:54,250

right?

402

00:20:54,260 --> 00:20:56,110

And um you know,

403

00:20:56,110 --> 00:21:02,740

but it but it's it's tricky because you don't want to create stereotypes and you don't want to,

404

00:21:02,960 --> 00:21:03,540

you know,

405

00:21:03,540 --> 00:21:08,190

you have to be careful not to offend in any way and especially you know,

406

00:21:08,190 --> 00:21:09,900

I'm just here,

407

00:21:09,910 --> 00:21:10,840

white girl,

408

00:21:10,840 --> 00:21:11,330

you know,

409

00:21:11,330 --> 00:21:14,110

and do I don't want you know,

410

00:21:14,110 --> 00:21:16,110

cultural appropriation and all of that,

411

00:21:16,110 --> 00:21:20,020

which I think is a bigger factor now with my lola cruz series.

412

00:21:20,020 --> 00:21:20,450

You know,

413

00:21:20,450 --> 00:21:22,900

it wasn't so much than I did think about it now.

414

00:21:22,900 --> 00:21:23,780

I think about it a lot,

415

00:21:23,780 --> 00:21:23,940

you know,

416

00:21:23,940 --> 00:21:26,070

I don't want anybody to think I'm you know,

417

00:21:26,080 --> 00:21:27,880

capitalizing on their culture kind of thing.

418

00:21:27,890 --> 00:21:28,550

So anyway,

419

00:21:28,560 --> 00:21:41,530

I'd love to just have this discussion on how do you how do you treat it with respect and how important is it to create culturally diverse cast of characters in our books and in any books,

420

00:21:41,540 --> 00:21:42,580

you know,

421

00:21:42,580 --> 00:21:51,740

I think that um I think what you said about um the fact that you um we're in California,

422

00:21:51,740 --> 00:21:54,170

which is a very diverse community and you know,

423

00:21:54,170 --> 00:22:08,300

I have a nephew who lives in new york in Brooklyn and it's really diverse community and I think that um books and television should reflect the real world,

424

00:22:08,310 --> 00:22:10,000

it should reflect the community.

425

00:22:10,010 --> 00:22:13,490

So there are people of color,

426

00:22:13,500 --> 00:22:17,900

there are people with different religious beliefs than,

427

00:22:17,910 --> 00:22:18,940

you know,

428

00:22:18,950 --> 00:22:21,710

I don't know unless you live on a commune somewhere,

429

00:22:21,720 --> 00:22:24,470

you're going to encounter people who are a little bit different.

430

00:22:24,470 --> 00:22:37,400

And I think that those differences will enhance the writing if you don't want all of your characters to sound the same or look the same or be the same because it's pretty boring.

431

00:22:37,410 --> 00:22:48,160

You want the diversity that exists in the world because of the diversity helps people to see things from a different perspective.

432

00:22:48,190 --> 00:22:51,930

And I think that that is important.

433

00:22:51,940 --> 00:23:02,430

I think that it's also important to recognize that um there's not one size fits all.

434

00:23:02,440 --> 00:23:03,960

So,

435

00:23:03,960 --> 00:23:04,730

you know,

436

00:23:04,740 --> 00:23:10,150

the character in my um new series,

437

00:23:10,150 --> 00:23:11,520

my baker street missed the series,

438

00:23:11,520 --> 00:23:12,510

Maddie Montgomery,

439

00:23:12,520 --> 00:23:13,370

you know,

440

00:23:14,010 --> 00:23:16,680

she doesn't represent all black women everywhere.

441

00:23:16,690 --> 00:23:17,130

You know,

442

00:23:17,130 --> 00:23:17,850

there are going,

443

00:23:17,850 --> 00:23:21,260

there's a vast difference of,

444

00:23:21,270 --> 00:23:21,980
you know,

445
00:23:22,510 --> 00:23:24,560
african american culture.

446
00:23:24,570 --> 00:23:27,280
There's a difference in latino culture,

447
00:23:27,280 --> 00:23:33,180
there's a difference in asian culture and you want to be respectful,

448
00:23:33,190 --> 00:23:35,440
you don't want to create stereotypes?

449
00:23:35,440 --> 00:23:39,810
I think that's where you run into problems is if you're going,

450
00:23:39,810 --> 00:23:40,250
I mean,

451
00:23:40,260 --> 00:23:42,560
my first people ask me sometimes,

452
00:23:42,560 --> 00:23:43,080
you know,

453
00:23:43,090 --> 00:23:47,560
um do you feel that people who are not black and write black characters,

454
00:23:47,570 --> 00:23:48,070
like,

455
00:23:48,080 --> 00:23:48,440
you know,

456
00:23:48,440 --> 00:23:49,180
this is a free country,

457
00:23:49,180 --> 00:23:50,400
you can write whatever you want to write,

458
00:23:50,640 --> 00:23:56,250
but just be prepared that you need to get it right?

459
00:23:56,260 --> 00:23:58,870
So if you don't get it right,

460
00:23:58,880 --> 00:24:00,620
if you write stereotypes,

461
00:24:00,630 --> 00:24:04,220
you're going to get some backlash,

462
00:24:04,980 --> 00:24:06,660
just be prepared for it.

463
00:24:06,670 --> 00:24:13,360
And it's really hard if you're not a part of that culture because that culture is very diverse.

464
00:24:13,360 --> 00:24:14,260
So you can,

465
00:24:14,270 --> 00:24:14,720
you know,

466
00:24:14,730 --> 00:24:16,270
right about one person,

467
00:24:16,270 --> 00:24:16,970
you know,

468
00:24:16,980 --> 00:24:18,080
or you know,

469
00:24:18,090 --> 00:24:18,340
oh,

470
00:24:18,340 --> 00:24:23,750
I have a friend who's black who who read it and that they weren't offended by this word that I use,

471

00:24:23,760 --> 00:24:27,160

Well they don't represent all black people everywhere,

472

00:24:27,170 --> 00:24:27,570

Right?

473

00:24:27,570 --> 00:24:29,780

So it can be really,

474

00:24:29,780 --> 00:24:31,050

really tricky.

475

00:24:31,680 --> 00:24:42,310

And it's definitely something that I recommend um definitely incorporating diversity.

476

00:24:42,320 --> 00:24:43,340

I think though,

477

00:24:43,340 --> 00:24:49,820

that there are some stories that are best told by the culture that owns that story.

478

00:24:49,830 --> 00:24:56,070

So if it's a story about um I don't know Harriet tubman,

479

00:24:56,080 --> 00:24:56,760

right,

480

00:24:56,770 --> 00:25:01,150

I would hope that someone who shares that culture,

481

00:25:02,550 --> 00:25:16,420

I can tell it as opposed to someone who is not a part of that culture and doesn't necessarily have those same um fears and beliefs and um just history experiences.

482

00:25:16,430 --> 00:25:17,660

Yeah,

483

00:25:18,700 --> 00:25:20,100

ideas about it,

484

00:25:20,110 --> 00:25:20,470
right?

485
00:25:20,480 --> 00:25:23,580
Because it's it's they're part of their history,

486
00:25:23,580 --> 00:25:27,730
their culture and it really frames a lot of,

487
00:25:27,740 --> 00:25:29,520
of the mindset and the thinking.

488
00:25:29,530 --> 00:25:32,670
So I would just say be careful,

489
00:25:32,680 --> 00:25:41,170
um be inclusive and do your research because if you get it wrong,

490
00:25:41,170 --> 00:25:44,770
that's where the problems are gonna come and um,

491
00:25:45,470 --> 00:25:46,130
I think,

492
00:25:46,130 --> 00:25:46,690
you know,

493
00:25:46,700 --> 00:25:48,020
it's very easy to say,

494
00:25:48,020 --> 00:25:50,680
oh well I know someone who talks this way,

495
00:25:50,680 --> 00:25:56,750
so I'm going to incorporate them but recognize that do they talk that way all the time?

496
00:25:56,760 --> 00:25:57,990
Did you talk to them?

497
00:25:58,000 --> 00:26:07,570
Maybe you just got a snapshot of an event and they were maybe mocking an accent or,

498

00:26:07,570 --> 00:26:07,940
you know,

499

00:26:07,940 --> 00:26:08,900
using,

500

00:26:08,910 --> 00:26:09,520
you know,

501

00:26:09,520 --> 00:26:11,370
certain phrases and you know,

502

00:26:11,370 --> 00:26:12,400
the other thing is,

503

00:26:12,410 --> 00:26:12,790
you know,

504

00:26:12,790 --> 00:26:14,280
even even as a black woman,

505

00:26:14,290 --> 00:26:22,700
I'm amazed at how different black culture can be in different parts of the United States and like,

506

00:26:22,700 --> 00:26:27,360
and and I grew up in a medium sized town in the midwest.

507

00:26:27,370 --> 00:26:39,040
So my experiences and I grew up with basically a um a Middle Class Black family,

508

00:26:39,050 --> 00:26:41,740
a nuclear family.

509

00:26:41,750 --> 00:26:43,820
My parents were married for 52 years.

510

00:26:43,830 --> 00:26:45,550
And so,

511

00:26:45,550 --> 00:26:46,030
you know,

512
00:26:46,040 --> 00:26:47,160
I don't have,

513
00:26:47,960 --> 00:26:51,370
I don't necessarily write books about,

514
00:26:51,380 --> 00:26:52,210
you know,

515
00:26:52,220 --> 00:26:55,340
um black culture where you have,

516
00:26:55,350 --> 00:26:56,290
you know,

517
00:26:56,300 --> 00:26:58,530
prostitutes or drug,

518
00:26:58,540 --> 00:26:59,210
you know,

519
00:26:59,220 --> 00:27:01,510
deals and gangs,

520
00:27:01,520 --> 00:27:02,930
that wasn't my reality.

521
00:27:02,940 --> 00:27:17,900
So it's like certain there are people who experienced that and so that's part of their story or their culture and could I do enough research to maybe get it right,

522
00:27:17,910 --> 00:27:22,140
probably if I wrote it and I got it right,

523
00:27:22,150 --> 00:27:24,020
would I probably get away with it.

524
00:27:24,020 --> 00:27:24,770

Yeah.

525

00:27:24,780 --> 00:27:37,480

But if I am so totally different from that then people are gonna question my um I guess ability to write it or whether I should write it.

526

00:27:37,480 --> 00:27:40,840

So just because you can't write it doesn't mean you should.

527

00:27:40,850 --> 00:27:41,320

Yeah.

528

00:27:41,330 --> 00:27:42,290

The authenticity.

529

00:27:42,290 --> 00:27:48,780

I know that was one of the big controversies with American Dirt when it came out for that very reason.

530

00:27:48,780 --> 00:27:49,660

And I don't know.

531

00:27:49,660 --> 00:27:59,230

I mean I kind of have mixed views on whether or not she should have written that book and I'm we talked about it with my husband's family and you know,

532

00:27:59,230 --> 00:28:00,180

and my husband and he's like,

533

00:28:00,180 --> 00:28:00,440

yeah,

534

00:28:00,440 --> 00:28:03,160

I mean if he he thought it was absolutely fine.

535

00:28:03,160 --> 00:28:05,410

She captured it authentically in his opinion.

536

00:28:05,410 --> 00:28:07,310

It's a story that's worth telling,

537

00:28:07,320 --> 00:28:08,000
you know?

538
00:28:08,000 --> 00:28:11,280
But then there were certainly other people that did not feel that way,

539
00:28:11,290 --> 00:28:12,380
you know?

540
00:28:13,170 --> 00:28:13,620
Yes.

541
00:28:13,620 --> 00:28:19,740
I I feel like I have to be super careful when I re release my Little accrues series for that reason.

542
00:28:19,750 --> 00:28:20,230
Well,

543
00:28:20,230 --> 00:28:21,000
you know,

544
00:28:21,010 --> 00:28:25,010
I think though that you have the you know,

545
00:28:25,010 --> 00:28:26,850
you definitely have the experience,

546
00:28:26,850 --> 00:28:27,100
you know,

547
00:28:27,100 --> 00:28:34,300
you have the people in your life that you can write it and I don't think too many people would question any.

548
00:28:34,300 --> 00:28:35,740
They were they're always gonna be,

549
00:28:35,750 --> 00:28:36,240
you know,

550
00:28:36,520 --> 00:28:37,230

haters,

551

00:28:37,240 --> 00:28:38,240
they're always gonna be haters.

552

00:28:38,240 --> 00:28:42,080
So right.

553

00:28:42,090 --> 00:28:43,410
But I think,

554

00:28:43,420 --> 00:28:44,500
you know,

555

00:28:44,510 --> 00:28:51,510
they're gonna recognize too that you are being fair and you're not putting everyone in a
stereotypical,

556

00:28:51,520 --> 00:28:51,910
you know,

557

00:28:51,910 --> 00:28:53,520
box and I think,

558

00:28:53,530 --> 00:28:53,750
I mean,

559

00:28:53,750 --> 00:28:54,530
I'm thinking,

560

00:28:54,540 --> 00:28:54,870
you know,

561

00:28:54,870 --> 00:29:02,350
you brought up the american dirt and I'm thinking about the whole kind of blow up with the
romance writers of America,

562

00:29:02,360 --> 00:29:07,980
that's that kind of just sort of sunk the whole whole organization.

563

00:29:07,990 --> 00:29:09,850

That was that was pretty amazing.

564

00:29:09,850 --> 00:29:10,740

So I guess it's,

565

00:29:10,750 --> 00:29:11,050

you know,

566

00:29:11,050 --> 00:29:13,220

it is very tricky,

567

00:29:13,230 --> 00:29:15,810

but it's certainly something worth doing.

568

00:29:15,810 --> 00:29:16,360

I mean,

569

00:29:16,370 --> 00:29:17,460

one thing that's interesting,

570

00:29:17,460 --> 00:29:25,090

I just submitted a book for a new series and um I I included a character who's part of the L.

571

00:29:25,090 --> 00:29:25,220

G.

572

00:29:25,220 --> 00:29:25,330

B.

573

00:29:25,330 --> 00:29:25,500

T.

574

00:29:25,500 --> 00:29:28,250

Q community and I hadn't done that.

575

00:29:28,250 --> 00:29:28,620

I mean,

576

00:29:28,620 --> 00:29:30,210

not being a part of the community,

577

00:29:30,210 --> 00:29:31,680
I'm sort of like,

578

00:29:31,690 --> 00:29:32,510
I don't know,

579

00:29:32,510 --> 00:29:33,620
I don't wanna get anything wrong,

580

00:29:33,620 --> 00:29:34,270
I don't wanna,

581

00:29:34,280 --> 00:29:34,540
you know,

582

00:29:34,540 --> 00:29:35,630
upset anyone.

583

00:29:35,640 --> 00:29:37,610
And I thought,

584

00:29:38,340 --> 00:29:38,780
you know,

585

00:29:38,780 --> 00:29:42,280
but in the in the interest of diversity,

586

00:29:42,420 --> 00:29:43,300
I mean,

587

00:29:43,860 --> 00:29:45,340
that's so interesting.

588

00:29:45,340 --> 00:29:45,520
Yeah,

589

00:29:45,520 --> 00:29:52,730
because I have a character in um the last book in my book Magic series,

590

00:29:52,730 --> 00:29:53,970

the Pit Lane Hawthorne series,

591

00:29:53,980 --> 00:29:57,270

and she's part of that community and you know,

592

00:29:57,270 --> 00:30:02,680

I think we have to be careful not to just throw these characters in gratuitously,

593

00:30:02,680 --> 00:30:03,120

you know,

594

00:30:03,120 --> 00:30:03,730

just so we can say,

595

00:30:03,740 --> 00:30:03,990

oh,

596

00:30:03,990 --> 00:30:05,250

I have represented this,

597

00:30:05,260 --> 00:30:05,990

you know,

598

00:30:05,990 --> 00:30:09,790

this subgroup or whatever in my um in my books,

599

00:30:09,790 --> 00:30:10,990

but to do it,

600

00:30:11,000 --> 00:30:11,410

you know,

601

00:30:11,410 --> 00:30:13,940

with intention and respectfully and,

602

00:30:13,950 --> 00:30:14,190

you know,

603

00:30:14,190 --> 00:30:16,870

I think that from our personal experiences,

604

00:30:18,430 --> 00:30:18,770
you know,

605

00:30:18,770 --> 00:30:31,730
we we maybe have that respect a little bit ingrained in us and I I have a nephew who's transgender and you know what I have learned from him and from his mom and their,

606

00:30:31,740 --> 00:30:32,010
you know,

607

00:30:32,010 --> 00:30:38,020
their entire experience changed the way I didn't change the way,

608

00:30:38,020 --> 00:30:40,760
but rather um just enlightened me,

609

00:30:40,760 --> 00:30:41,120
you know,

610

00:30:41,120 --> 00:30:46,220
it like peeled back the layers of so much that you know,

611

00:30:46,220 --> 00:30:50,300
somebody that's transgender has to go through and then the parent,

612

00:30:50,300 --> 00:30:50,660
you know,

613

00:30:50,670 --> 00:30:57,550
so I just feel like we have to be really respectful and careful and not just you know,

614

00:30:57,550 --> 00:31:00,880
throw in these characters just to say we have a diverse cast,

615

00:31:00,880 --> 00:31:01,820
but to you know,

616

00:31:01,820 --> 00:31:05,560
to recognize the and and you know,

617

00:31:05,560 --> 00:31:11,180
if we have a diverse cast bring that culture in in some way,

618
00:31:11,180 --> 00:31:11,540
you know,

619
00:31:11,540 --> 00:31:12,870
and honor it.

620
00:31:12,880 --> 00:31:18,590
Which is what I've tried to do in my bread shop book because I have some diverse characters
in there,

621
00:31:18,590 --> 00:31:18,860
you know,

622
00:31:18,860 --> 00:31:23,960
from different cultures and countries and and it's always about,

623
00:31:23,970 --> 00:31:24,220
you know,

624
00:31:24,230 --> 00:31:27,620
honoring whatever it is they bring to the table.

625
00:31:27,630 --> 00:31:29,220
Exactly yeah.

626
00:31:29,220 --> 00:31:38,840
I think it's it can also be um education without feeding people up over the head.

627
00:31:38,840 --> 00:31:39,330
You know,

628
00:31:39,340 --> 00:31:40,650
cozy mysteries.

629
00:31:40,660 --> 00:31:44,250
We can um they tend to be lighter,

630
00:31:44,260 --> 00:31:54,300

more humorous yet we will include subjects that are important and heavier.

631

00:31:54,790 --> 00:31:59,180

It's but we're also mindful of what we're doing.

632

00:31:59,190 --> 00:32:03,030

So ultimately we are writing mysteries.

633

00:32:03,040 --> 00:32:07,110

We are writing cozy mysteries and that has to be the focus.

634

00:32:07,120 --> 00:32:09,200

There are other things that we may incorporate.

635

00:32:09,200 --> 00:32:10,510

I can tell you that,

636

00:32:10,520 --> 00:32:10,890

you know,

637

00:32:10,890 --> 00:32:15,960

with my mystery bookshop series where I have the story,

638

00:32:15,960 --> 00:32:16,450

the british,

639

00:32:16,450 --> 00:32:20,450

historic cozy mystery that my main character is writing,

640

00:32:20,460 --> 00:32:23,690

it takes place at the start of World War Two.

641

00:32:23,700 --> 00:32:36,880

And so there are elements of um what happened and I want to always be respectful of that,

642

00:32:36,890 --> 00:32:45,040

of that whole experience and I did not want in any way to make it seem that I am taking it lightly,

643

00:32:45,050 --> 00:32:47,980

but I'm also writing a cozy mystery.

644

00:32:47,980 --> 00:33:09,620

So that balance is something that you need to make sure that you incorporate and you never forget that the first and foremost you're writing a mystery or you're writing a romance or whatever it is that you're writing and then be respectful of any diverse characters,

645

00:33:09,630 --> 00:33:12,890

any um other elements I have.

646

00:33:12,900 --> 00:33:22,910

Um I wrote um there's a character that I love in in my book that I actually took from a real person.

647

00:33:22,920 --> 00:33:23,310

Right?

648

00:33:23,310 --> 00:33:26,710

So in that book I have a spy,

649

00:33:26,720 --> 00:33:32,300

there's a spy um that really existed.

650

00:33:32,310 --> 00:33:36,420

I read this story and I just fell in love with this with this character.

651

00:33:36,430 --> 00:33:40,960

She was a um an american who had,

652

00:33:40,970 --> 00:33:45,010

she had um her grandparents I think were french.

653

00:33:45,020 --> 00:33:49,100

And so at the start of World War Two and um everything that happened,

654

00:33:49,100 --> 00:33:58,290

she goes to France and she becomes a spy to help the allies and she had one leg,

655

00:33:58,300 --> 00:34:01,720

she was in an accident and she lost her leg.

656

00:34:01,730 --> 00:34:10,950

And you know to me she seemed like she would be someone who was fun because she had a wooden leg and she called it Cuthbert.

657

00:34:11,740 --> 00:34:15,410

And so I felt good,

658

00:34:15,420 --> 00:34:18,430

good sense of humor and well adjusted,

659

00:34:18,440 --> 00:34:27,300

but she was so good at what she did that at one point the nazis had to put a price on her head,

660

00:34:27,310 --> 00:34:34,080

wanted dead or alive and she had to flee France and in order to get out of the country,

661

00:34:34,080 --> 00:34:41,380

she had to walk like she had to get off all the trains because they were looking for her and she was looking for the woman with the wooden leg.

662

00:34:41,390 --> 00:34:42,510

Exactly.

663

00:34:42,520 --> 00:34:46,220

And so they're not expecting her to climb over a mountain,

664

00:34:46,220 --> 00:34:47,730

right like you know,

665

00:34:47,740 --> 00:34:48,940

sound of music.

666

00:34:48,940 --> 00:34:49,200

You know,

667

00:34:49,200 --> 00:34:57,390

we're gonna climb every mountain she did and she got out of the country and came back and then continued to work.

668

00:34:57,390 --> 00:34:58,640

And um you know,

669

00:34:58,650 --> 00:35:00,870
she wasn't caught or killed by the,

670
00:35:00,880 --> 00:35:01,170
you know,

671
00:35:01,170 --> 00:35:01,940
by the nazis.

672
00:35:01,950 --> 00:35:03,710
But I,

673
00:35:03,720 --> 00:35:04,320
you know,

674
00:35:04,320 --> 00:35:06,850
I worried about,

675
00:35:06,860 --> 00:35:07,480
you know,

676
00:35:07,480 --> 00:35:11,130
I don't want anybody to think I'm being insensitive about a woman with one leg.

677
00:35:11,140 --> 00:35:13,310
But she's the one who called it Cuthbert.

678
00:35:13,320 --> 00:35:17,430
I'm not that was I just took that from from the,

679
00:35:17,440 --> 00:35:23,770
you know her story And that's when you write a little forward in your book explaining all of that,

680
00:35:23,770 --> 00:35:24,100
you know,

681
00:35:24,100 --> 00:35:25,500
and the liberties that you've taken.

682
00:35:25,510 --> 00:35:25,890
Yeah,

683

00:35:25,900 --> 00:35:30,860

my new series that I'm working on that my age is going to be pitching soon is based,

684

00:35:30,870 --> 00:35:40,610

the entire concept is based on a woman named Betty early who was the last woman tried for Witchcraft in Ireland in the mid 1800s.

685

00:35:40,780 --> 00:35:41,740

And you know,

686

00:35:41,740 --> 00:35:47,320

so I'm I'm her the whole family that I've created are her descendants,

687

00:35:47,330 --> 00:35:47,800

you know,

688

00:35:47,800 --> 00:35:51,520

and so same idea that you just want to,

689

00:35:52,350 --> 00:35:52,920

you know,

690

00:35:52,930 --> 00:35:53,930

honor,

691

00:35:53,930 --> 00:35:58,130

respect the lives of the real people that you're representing.

692

00:35:58,130 --> 00:35:58,470

You know,

693

00:35:58,470 --> 00:36:03,190

I've talked with Heather Redmond who writes the Charles Dickens mystery series and you know,

694

00:36:03,190 --> 00:36:04,560

same same idea.

695

00:36:04,560 --> 00:36:04,780

You know,

696

00:36:04,780 --> 00:36:09,450

she's using this real person and and has to be authentic historically,

697

00:36:09,460 --> 00:36:12,170

but then also to who he was,

698

00:36:12,180 --> 00:36:12,420

you know,

699

00:36:12,420 --> 00:36:13,580

to the best of her ability.

700

00:36:13,580 --> 00:36:17,950

So there are so many balls that we juggle as authors depending on,

701

00:36:17,960 --> 00:36:18,190

you know,

702

00:36:18,190 --> 00:36:20,800

what type of thing we're writing Exactly.

703

00:36:20,800 --> 00:36:21,870

And I think that,

704

00:36:21,870 --> 00:36:22,200

you know,

705

00:36:22,210 --> 00:36:24,030

it's it's very easy to,

706

00:36:24,040 --> 00:36:24,590

you know,

707

00:36:24,590 --> 00:36:28,290

look at a book with a dog or a cat on the cover and think,

708

00:36:28,300 --> 00:36:28,740

oh,

709

00:36:28,750 --> 00:36:31,180
well this is likely this author didn't do any work.

710
00:36:31,190 --> 00:36:31,680
No,

711
00:36:31,690 --> 00:36:34,480
you have to do your research.

712
00:36:34,480 --> 00:36:41,800
You have to do your work because readers will email you and they will tell you everything that you get wrong.

713
00:36:42,310 --> 00:36:48,930
I got an email from someone I think in one of my um Dog Club mystery series and the guy said,

714
00:36:49,140 --> 00:36:49,710
you know,

715
00:36:49,710 --> 00:36:50,250
you know,

716
00:36:50,250 --> 00:36:51,280
dogs and you know,

717
00:36:51,280 --> 00:36:51,880
mystery,

718
00:36:51,880 --> 00:36:59,320
but you don't know a thing about cars because I had gotten the name of the car,

719
00:36:59,330 --> 00:37:01,030
you know the make wrong.

720
00:37:01,050 --> 00:37:04,470
So I was like yeah that happened to me too.

721
00:37:04,470 --> 00:37:10,530
I had a Volvo something or rather I don't remember in um in my bread shop series,

722
00:37:10,540 --> 00:37:15,100

you know talk about it very briefly and it was the color I had gotten the color wrong,

723

00:37:15,100 --> 00:37:18,280

that color wasn't around in that year.

724

00:37:18,290 --> 00:37:22,130

And and a reader emailed me you know to make sure that I knew.

725

00:37:22,860 --> 00:37:23,780

Yeah,

726

00:37:23,790 --> 00:37:28,420

so when you reprint that book you're gonna change the color of the car.

727

00:37:28,430 --> 00:37:38,240

And I'm thinking you know it's it's amazing to me to how many things you know get past,

728

00:37:38,250 --> 00:37:57,120

you know as many times as we as authors review our books and read it and reread it and reread it and then you give it to someone else to read and reread and they didn't catch it and then you know especially with like my um the plot is murder because it was the first book.

729

00:37:57,130 --> 00:38:18,970

I reviewed that like five times and then I sent it to a friend who edited it and she reviewed it and then I sent it to my agent who edited it and then I sent it to my editor who edited it and then it went to a copy editor and then it goes to your you know production editor for galleys and we all missed.

730

00:38:18,980 --> 00:38:21,120

We missed it.

731

00:38:21,510 --> 00:38:22,040

Yeah.

732

00:38:22,050 --> 00:38:22,330

Yeah.

733

00:38:22,330 --> 00:38:29,120

I just talked recently with nancy and it's so funny because she has a new series,

734

00:38:29,130 --> 00:38:31,990

I think it's the new series she was talking about that.

735

00:38:31,990 --> 00:38:34,880

She said in a Virginia town I guess.

736

00:38:34,880 --> 00:38:36,750

And it was you know,

737

00:38:36,750 --> 00:38:37,350

same thing.

738

00:38:37,350 --> 00:38:38,840

All of these people read it.

739

00:38:38,850 --> 00:38:51,070

All of these people edited and it was the copy editor who said did you know that that's the same town that all the friday the 13th take place and they're like oh my gosh,

740

00:38:51,070 --> 00:38:52,500

we cannot have a light.

741

00:38:52,510 --> 00:38:53,070

You know,

742

00:38:53,080 --> 00:39:01,920

romance kind of a series taking place in the friday the 13th until that one reader.

743

00:39:01,930 --> 00:39:02,580

Yeah.

744

00:39:02,590 --> 00:39:08,840

You know I have my the dogs that are on the cover of my mystery bookshop series.

745

00:39:08,840 --> 00:39:10,130

Those were my dogs.

746

00:39:10,140 --> 00:39:12,030

Um they're both passed now.

747

00:39:12,030 --> 00:39:16,510

But um Coco and Cash were their names in the book.

748

00:39:16,510 --> 00:39:23,170

There Snickers and oreo and oreo is that was the male um Cash.

749

00:39:23,180 --> 00:39:36,530

And I was reviewing umm edits on the book and I realized um when we got to like the galleys and I'm reading this through for like the very last time that you can make any changes.

750

00:39:36,540 --> 00:39:43,180

And I realized that at some point I stopped calling that dog oreo and I called him Cash.

751

00:39:44,410 --> 00:39:48,040

And I think I think that my editor,

752

00:39:48,040 --> 00:39:54,520

he knows they were my dogs and he knows what my dog's names were and I he missed it.

753

00:39:54,530 --> 00:39:55,840

We all missed it.

754

00:39:55,840 --> 00:40:01,950

But thankfully I caught it right then then I go back and do a search and replace and make sure.

755

00:40:01,960 --> 00:40:02,980

But yeah,

756

00:40:02,990 --> 00:40:12,010

it's just it's amazing how and I also turned in a uh draft and my editors,

757

00:40:12,010 --> 00:40:18,400

like you realize that this character is the name of a real author that we have at kensington,

758

00:40:18,410 --> 00:40:20,100

you're gonna need to change that.

759

00:40:20,100 --> 00:40:21,040

I'm like,

760

00:40:21,050 --> 00:40:22,780

I had no idea.

761

00:40:22,790 --> 00:40:23,380
Well,

762
00:40:23,380 --> 00:40:24,580
you can't know everything.

763
00:40:24,580 --> 00:40:24,890
I mean,

764
00:40:24,890 --> 00:40:25,550
come on,

765
00:40:27,220 --> 00:40:29,940
that's but that goes to show you that uh you know,

766
00:40:29,940 --> 00:40:35,840
we are just so close to our own writing in so many ways that it's very hard to spot those things.

767
00:40:35,850 --> 00:40:37,530
That's why you need an editor,

768
00:40:37,540 --> 00:40:39,320
that's why you need copy editors,

769
00:40:39,320 --> 00:40:40,510
you need these other people,

770
00:40:40,520 --> 00:40:43,200
because hopefully at some point somebody will,

771
00:40:43,210 --> 00:40:44,130
you know,

772
00:40:44,140 --> 00:40:46,570
discovery or realize whatever it is.

773
00:40:48,080 --> 00:40:49,280
Yeah,

774
00:40:49,290 --> 00:40:50,320
exactly.

775

00:40:51,010 --> 00:40:51,880

Um okay,

776

00:40:51,880 --> 00:41:02,510

so if we had to kind of sum up our conversation about uh creating diversity in our books or writing diverse characters,

777

00:41:02,510 --> 00:41:03,210

do you have?

778

00:41:03,220 --> 00:41:06,210

Just so let me back up a second.

779

00:41:06,220 --> 00:41:11,100

So you write four different series with black protagonists?

780

00:41:11,110 --> 00:41:11,820

Yes.

781

00:41:11,830 --> 00:41:12,330

Yes.

782

00:41:12,340 --> 00:41:19,110

So you're kind of part of a small ish group in the cozy mystery genre,

783

00:41:19,110 --> 00:41:19,720

would you say?

784

00:41:19,720 --> 00:41:21,040

And even in,

785

00:41:21,300 --> 00:41:21,730

you know,

786

00:41:21,730 --> 00:41:23,100

even in publishing,

787

00:41:23,110 --> 00:41:23,680

I would say.

788
00:41:23,680 --> 00:41:24,750
And even in,

789
00:41:24,760 --> 00:41:25,090
I mean,

790
00:41:25,090 --> 00:41:26,920
you're part of the crime,

791
00:41:26,930 --> 00:41:28,290
what's the name of the organization?

792
00:41:28,850 --> 00:41:29,250
Color?

793
00:41:29,260 --> 00:41:29,990
Color,

794
00:41:30,000 --> 00:41:30,720
You know?

795
00:41:30,720 --> 00:41:31,080
So,

796
00:41:31,090 --> 00:41:31,760
so it's,

797
00:41:31,760 --> 00:41:31,980
you know,

798
00:41:31,980 --> 00:41:33,240
it's a small group.

799
00:41:33,240 --> 00:41:33,810
So,

800
00:41:33,820 --> 00:41:34,400
you know,

801
00:41:34,400 --> 00:41:35,150

you started by saying,

802

00:41:35,150 --> 00:41:38,940

you're not necessarily an expert and yet you,

803

00:41:38,950 --> 00:41:41,130

you know you what you write,

804

00:41:41,140 --> 00:41:44,250

it's breaking down doors for people,

805

00:41:44,250 --> 00:41:44,610

right?

806

00:41:44,610 --> 00:41:50,320

It's it's helping to diversify not only our genre,

807

00:41:50,320 --> 00:41:51,050

but you know,

808

00:41:51,050 --> 00:41:52,090

publishing in general.

809

00:41:52,090 --> 00:41:55,230

So so coming from that sort of perspective,

810

00:41:55,230 --> 00:41:58,550

could you kind of sum up a couple of tips for people,

811

00:41:58,560 --> 00:41:58,900

you know,

812

00:41:58,900 --> 00:41:59,780

who want to,

813

00:41:59,790 --> 00:42:01,080

you know,

814

00:42:01,090 --> 00:42:03,540

continue that good work basically,

815

00:42:03,540 --> 00:42:04,020
you know?

816

00:42:04,030 --> 00:42:04,600
Yeah,

817

00:42:04,600 --> 00:42:09,420
I guess I would say make sure that you do your research,

818

00:42:09,430 --> 00:42:17,310
make sure that you are respectful of the culture in the community and make sure you try to try to gain understanding.

819

00:42:17,600 --> 00:42:35,520
So um so that you I I think we all come at things from our own lens and sometimes you may think that people do things a certain way because of your background or your history or or whatever,

820

00:42:35,520 --> 00:42:37,960
but you might want to just check and make sure.

821

00:42:37,970 --> 00:42:38,690
And you know,

822

00:42:38,690 --> 00:42:46,410
I'll I'll share that recently my sister and I were having a conversation with my niece and you know,

823

00:42:46,420 --> 00:42:58,530
and there's something that in the um in one of my books I wrote that older black women um it's a sign of respect that you call them by their last name.

824

00:42:59,500 --> 00:43:00,920
Um I asked,

825

00:43:00,920 --> 00:43:08,820
I actually asked my my niece um and she has um she's my niece obviously is black,

826

00:43:08,830 --> 00:43:15,030
her husband is not and I asked her what does he call my sister,

827

00:43:15,040 --> 00:43:15,610
right?

828
00:43:15,620 --> 00:43:20,630
My sister's husband called my parents mr and mrs Burns,

829
00:43:21,720 --> 00:43:29,110
they were married for 27 years before he died and the whole life it was mr and mrs Burns and I
said you know just out of curiosity,

830
00:43:29,110 --> 00:43:30,860
I don't remember hearing,

831
00:43:30,870 --> 00:43:31,780
you know,

832
00:43:31,790 --> 00:43:33,700
Drew mentioned you know,

833
00:43:33,710 --> 00:43:35,090
call my sister by name,

834
00:43:35,100 --> 00:43:36,100
so what does he call her?

835
00:43:36,100 --> 00:43:36,610
And she's like,

836
00:43:36,620 --> 00:43:40,910
well he really doesn't and you know,

837
00:43:40,910 --> 00:43:53,450
we talked about you know how it's we were raised that for um anyone who was older than us
for older black people when she was sharing that at the school that she works in.

838
00:43:53,460 --> 00:43:59,100
Um there was an older man and she called him mister you know smith or you know,

839
00:43:59,110 --> 00:44:02,180
Mrs jones because they were older and they were like oh no,

840

00:44:02,180 --> 00:44:08,010

just call me you know nancy or mary or or john and that's not what we were raised to do.

841

00:44:08,020 --> 00:44:09,220

You know if someone was older,

842

00:44:09,220 --> 00:44:24,360

you called them and it was really considered a sign of disrespect to call an older person by their first name And I don't think that's specifically a cultural thing because I was raised the same way and my you know,

843

00:44:24,360 --> 00:44:32,090

I'm 56 now and my aunt is you know in her late 70's and I still call her aunt judy,

844

00:44:32,090 --> 00:44:33,980

I can't not call her aunt judy,

845

00:44:33,980 --> 00:44:37,510

you know maybe to my mom when we're just talking about it,

846

00:44:37,510 --> 00:44:42,320

but even then you know I have an uncle chuck and it's always uncle chuck and it always will be uncle chuck,

847

00:44:42,330 --> 00:44:44,530

you know and my kids with their aunts and uncles,

848

00:44:44,530 --> 00:44:48,290

it's theo you go it's do able it's Gloria it's a tree.

849

00:44:48,290 --> 00:44:48,810

So it's all,

850

00:44:48,810 --> 00:44:49,080

you know,

851

00:44:49,080 --> 00:44:50,290

they're always,

852

00:44:50,300 --> 00:44:52,140

it's just part of,

853

00:44:52,140 --> 00:44:52,970
it's their name,

854

00:44:52,980 --> 00:44:53,190
you know,

855

00:44:53,190 --> 00:44:55,420
it's just who they are and it is that,

856

00:44:56,190 --> 00:44:56,640
you know,

857

00:44:56,640 --> 00:44:58,270
that generational respect.

858

00:44:58,280 --> 00:44:58,680
Yeah.

859

00:44:58,690 --> 00:45:00,090
So I think it's generational.

860

00:45:00,090 --> 00:45:02,650
I think some of it may be culture and and you know,

861

00:45:02,650 --> 00:45:04,770
my sister and I come at it from the standpoint of,

862

00:45:04,770 --> 00:45:05,330
you know,

863

00:45:05,340 --> 00:45:06,310
um you know,

864

00:45:06,310 --> 00:45:07,190
when you think about,

865

00:45:07,190 --> 00:45:12,470
you know slavery in the United States and how black women were treated and and whatever.

866

00:45:12,470 --> 00:45:16,610

But I think also I noticed difference from,

867

00:45:17,160 --> 00:45:19,400

I grew up in the midwest,

868

00:45:19,410 --> 00:45:21,950

I now live in the south in Georgia.

869

00:45:21,960 --> 00:45:37,490

And I also noticed those difference regionally within the country that there are things that I have people who are younger than me at work who call me Miss Valerie and you know,

870

00:45:37,490 --> 00:45:44,970

and I recognized that it was the way they were raised that they refer to um you know,

871

00:45:44,970 --> 00:45:47,600

an older person by their,

872

00:45:47,610 --> 00:45:50,990

you know with a with a title and you know,

873

00:45:50,990 --> 00:45:52,250

even if it's not,

874

00:45:52,260 --> 00:46:05,140

you know Miss Burns then it's Miss Valerie and and so I think it's just a matter of making sure you do your research and understand that it can come from different perspectives.

875

00:46:05,140 --> 00:46:20,000

So don't assume check around and do plenty of research and talk to people and and gain insight and don't be too um close minded,

876

00:46:20,010 --> 00:46:20,320

right?

877

00:46:20,320 --> 00:46:21,620

You want to be open minded.

878

00:46:21,620 --> 00:46:23,950

So that if someone tells you something,

879

00:46:23,960 --> 00:46:24,550
oh no,

880
00:46:24,550 --> 00:46:25,720
that's not possible.

881
00:46:25,720 --> 00:46:26,040
You know,

882
00:46:26,040 --> 00:46:26,780
that's not it.

883
00:46:26,780 --> 00:46:27,840
Because I talked to,

884
00:46:27,850 --> 00:46:28,610
you know,

885
00:46:28,620 --> 00:46:31,170
mary and she said it was perfectly okay to say it.

886
00:46:31,170 --> 00:46:31,320
Well,

887
00:46:31,320 --> 00:46:32,680
it might have been okay for mary,

888
00:46:32,690 --> 00:46:35,810
it might have been okay for mary living in the midwest.

889
00:46:36,840 --> 00:46:39,020
But if people could be offended,

890
00:46:39,030 --> 00:46:40,660
you don't want to go there.

891
00:46:40,670 --> 00:46:41,340
Right,

892
00:46:41,350 --> 00:46:41,720
Right.

893

00:46:41,730 --> 00:46:50,880

And then I think also it's recognizing that you have a culture but within that or a race,

894

00:46:50,880 --> 00:46:59,210

but within that race or that culture there is so many people come from so many different places where I grew up on the west coast,

895

00:46:59,210 --> 00:47:01,180

everybody was mexican or you know,

896

00:47:01,180 --> 00:47:04,270

coming from south America here in north Carolina.

897

00:47:04,270 --> 00:47:05,530

It's Puerto Rican,

898

00:47:05,530 --> 00:47:07,500

it's Dominican republic.

899

00:47:07,500 --> 00:47:09,460

It's um ecuadorian,

900

00:47:09,460 --> 00:47:09,780

you know,

901

00:47:09,780 --> 00:47:10,590

one of my good,

902

00:47:10,590 --> 00:47:12,640

good friends here is Puerto Rican ecuadorian.

903

00:47:12,650 --> 00:47:14,630

So culturally,

904

00:47:14,630 --> 00:47:16,580

I mean like regionally right?

905

00:47:16,580 --> 00:47:19,840

Those those are differences.

906

00:47:19,850 --> 00:47:20,380

You can't,

907

00:47:20,380 --> 00:47:21,550

you can't just group everything.

908

00:47:21,550 --> 00:47:27,980

My son uh dated for a long time and they were engaged and sadly that ended.

909

00:47:27,990 --> 00:47:32,670

But a black girl who whose family is Jamaican,

910

00:47:32,670 --> 00:47:36,640

her parents are Jamaican and so she was like,

911

00:47:36,650 --> 00:47:37,820

I'm not african american,

912

00:47:37,820 --> 00:47:38,530

don't call me,

913

00:47:38,540 --> 00:47:39,100

you know,

914

00:47:39,110 --> 00:47:40,340

not not saying that to us,

915

00:47:40,340 --> 00:47:41,070

but she's like,

916

00:47:41,080 --> 00:47:41,520

you know,

917

00:47:41,530 --> 00:47:43,340

just in general like that is not,

918

00:47:43,340 --> 00:47:44,750

that's not my experience,

919

00:47:44,750 --> 00:47:45,160

right?

920

00:47:45,170 --> 00:47:48,560

I am from the caribbean that that is my family's experience.

921

00:47:48,560 --> 00:47:52,710

So you can't just assume that because a person looks a certain way or,

922

00:47:52,720 --> 00:47:53,860

or you know,

923

00:47:53,860 --> 00:47:58,370

whatever that they have all have the same shared experience,

924

00:47:58,520 --> 00:47:59,680

shared history.

925

00:47:59,690 --> 00:48:00,820

Exactly.

926

00:48:00,830 --> 00:48:03,250

You know that you hit the nail right on the head.

927

00:48:03,260 --> 00:48:06,240

I saw an interview that um,

928

00:48:06,250 --> 00:48:06,980

um,

929

00:48:06,990 --> 00:48:11,760

lin manual did and he talked about the um,

930

00:48:11,770 --> 00:48:13,780

how hard it is.

931

00:48:13,790 --> 00:48:14,410

You know,

932

00:48:14,410 --> 00:48:17,160

you try to classify,

933

00:48:17,360 --> 00:48:17,890
um,

934

00:48:17,900 --> 00:48:23,160
so many different groups of people with one label.

935

00:48:23,170 --> 00:48:24,510
And you know,

936

00:48:24,510 --> 00:48:24,980
he's like,

937

00:48:24,980 --> 00:48:28,180
it doesn't offend me to have the latino X,

938

00:48:28,190 --> 00:48:29,140
you know,

939

00:48:29,150 --> 00:48:30,160
category,

940

00:48:30,170 --> 00:48:40,810
but that's like 30 or 60 countries or whatever involved in that one word that you're trying to
group so many different people.

941

00:48:40,810 --> 00:48:42,320
So you can't assume that,

942

00:48:42,330 --> 00:48:42,780
you know,

943

00:48:42,780 --> 00:48:46,420
the Mexican experience is the same as the Mexican American experience,

944

00:48:46,420 --> 00:48:47,780
which is the same as the,

945

00:48:47,790 --> 00:48:48,440
you know,

946

00:48:48,440 --> 00:48:53,310
Puerto Rican experience or Yeah.

947
00:48:53,320 --> 00:48:53,880
Yeah.

948
00:48:53,880 --> 00:48:56,030
I mean that's so funny because my husband,

949
00:48:56,030 --> 00:48:57,590
first generation mexican american,

950
00:48:57,590 --> 00:48:59,040
his parents immigrated here.

951
00:48:59,050 --> 00:49:01,350
His dad was part of the bracero program.

952
00:49:01,350 --> 00:49:04,630
So he's a migrant worker and uh,

953
00:49:04,640 --> 00:49:04,870
you know,

954
00:49:04,870 --> 00:49:08,520
my husband spanish was his first language until for all,

955
00:49:08,520 --> 00:49:09,240
he's one of seven,

956
00:49:09,240 --> 00:49:14,620
all of them until they entered school and that's when they started to learn english And um,

957
00:49:15,290 --> 00:49:15,730
you know,

958
00:49:15,730 --> 00:49:17,920
he's fairer skinned,

959
00:49:17,920 --> 00:49:18,140
you know,

960

00:49:18,140 --> 00:49:19,910

there's kind of a range in his family,

961

00:49:19,910 --> 00:49:21,260

but he's um,

962

00:49:22,000 --> 00:49:24,520

you know on the fair skin side of things I guess.

963

00:49:24,530 --> 00:49:33,210

But also like his parents had a different perspective about education and so he has cousins that he grew up with that were more like the cholos,

964

00:49:33,220 --> 00:49:33,710

you know,

965

00:49:33,710 --> 00:49:34,380

with the,

966

00:49:34,390 --> 00:49:37,680

with the flannels and the bandanas and that whole thing and,

967

00:49:37,690 --> 00:49:40,310

and my husband is trying to figure out his identity.

968

00:49:40,320 --> 00:49:45,990

So you tried kind of that on for size and he wasn't mexican enough for that,

969

00:49:46,000 --> 00:49:46,550

you know,

970

00:49:46,550 --> 00:49:48,410

anybody wasn't white enough to be white.

971

00:49:48,410 --> 00:49:48,700

So it's,

972

00:49:48,710 --> 00:49:49,150

it's,

973

00:49:49,410 --> 00:49:59,490

I think my daughter is going through this right now actually to a great degree and so her field actually that she's getting her degree in is um,

974

00:49:59,500 --> 00:50:00,250

it's kind of,

975

00:50:00,260 --> 00:50:01,430

she's creating it herself,

976

00:50:01,430 --> 00:50:02,890

but it's essentially it's equity,

977

00:50:02,890 --> 00:50:05,180

it's racial studies and equity and,

978

00:50:05,180 --> 00:50:05,380

you know,

979

00:50:05,380 --> 00:50:07,930

she's searching for her identity.

980

00:50:07,930 --> 00:50:09,960

So you have to recognize that,

981

00:50:10,330 --> 00:50:11,950

that to that,

982

00:50:12,630 --> 00:50:13,410

you know,

983

00:50:13,420 --> 00:50:21,480

that every person's experience is different and they don't fit into their own boxes,

984

00:50:21,480 --> 00:50:22,050

you know,

985

00:50:22,060 --> 00:50:22,900

So,

986

00:50:22,900 --> 00:50:23,170
I mean,

987
00:50:23,170 --> 00:50:34,480
there's so many layers and I just think that I think it's wonderful to try and make sure that we are doing service to that in our books,

988
00:50:34,490 --> 00:50:35,070
you know,

989
00:50:35,070 --> 00:50:36,330
and um,

990
00:50:36,340 --> 00:50:36,900
you know,

991
00:50:36,900 --> 00:50:37,160
that,

992
00:50:37,170 --> 00:50:38,380
that do it well,

993
00:50:38,390 --> 00:50:39,460
you know,

994
00:50:39,470 --> 00:50:40,100
each other.

995
00:50:40,110 --> 00:50:44,190
So I appreciate the conversation because I think it's so important.

996
00:50:44,200 --> 00:50:44,620
Yeah,

997
00:50:44,630 --> 00:50:44,880
no,

998
00:50:44,880 --> 00:50:45,690
I agree.

999
00:50:45,690 --> 00:50:48,280

I think it's it's just very hard.

1000

00:50:48,290 --> 00:50:54,190

It really is because it is so fast and there's no one right answer.

1001

00:50:54,840 --> 00:50:55,530

Right?

1002

00:50:55,540 --> 00:50:56,170

Yes.

1003

00:50:56,180 --> 00:50:56,630

Right.

1004

00:50:56,630 --> 00:50:57,220

So,

1005

00:50:57,230 --> 00:50:58,110

yeah,

1006

00:50:58,120 --> 00:51:14,870

well your tips are excellent and I think the bottom line is do your research and try to understand you know you try to understand on as many levels as you can to be authentic and move away from stereotypes you know because those are always wrong and they're going to get you in trouble.

1007

00:51:14,880 --> 00:51:15,940

Yes.

1008

00:51:15,940 --> 00:51:19,900

Yeah well so tell me what do you have coming up next?

1009

00:51:19,900 --> 00:51:22,540

So you've got your brand new series coming out?

1010

00:51:22,550 --> 00:51:33,120

Yes it came out in august the first book um and um the eighth book in my mystery bookshop series comes out in just a few weeks.

1011

00:51:33,130 --> 00:51:42,700

Um And I actually am doing a third series with um Berkeley.

1012

00:51:42,710 --> 00:51:48,270

So it's it's a new series and it will feature a bloodhound.

1013

00:51:48,280 --> 00:51:50,200

So my thing is dogs,

1014

00:51:50,200 --> 00:51:50,970

I love dogs,

1015

00:51:50,970 --> 00:52:05,810

so there's always going to be a dog somewhere in my books and so in the baker street mystery series I had a english massive and in my new series um a bailey,

1016

00:52:05,810 --> 00:52:10,230

the bloodhound mystery I think is what the series is going to be called.

1017

00:52:10,240 --> 00:52:17,350

So if um yeah I I think that will release sometime next year.

1018

00:52:17,360 --> 00:52:20,680

So um those will be the three series.

1019

00:52:20,680 --> 00:52:22,550

I'm gonna maintain three series.

1020

00:52:22,550 --> 00:52:28,050

I actually will have five altogether but I've ended one,

1021

00:52:28,050 --> 00:52:29,480

I have one more book in my R.

1022

00:52:29,480 --> 00:52:29,660

J.

1023

00:52:29,660 --> 00:52:37,980

Franklin series and that will probably release sometime next year also and then I'll just have my baker street mystery,

1024

00:52:37,980 --> 00:52:43,160

my mystery bookshop series and my new bailey the bloodhound mystery series.

1025

00:52:43,160 --> 00:52:45,310

So just going to have those,

1026

00:52:45,320 --> 00:52:47,460

just the three series.

1027

00:52:47,470 --> 00:52:54,040

That's quite a lot to juggle your job.

1028

00:52:54,050 --> 00:52:58,000

Oh yeah and I got a full time job because we need insurance.

1029

00:52:58,000 --> 00:53:10,020

So it's um you know it's I stay busy but I think my other tip I guess for writers is no you and know what works for you.

1030

00:53:10,020 --> 00:53:15,640

There is no one um no ones that no one should think fits all.

1031

00:53:15,640 --> 00:53:21,570

You know one size does not fit all what works for one person doesn't always work for others.

1032

00:53:22,610 --> 00:53:32,100

I know me and I know if I don't write every day I won't write for months and that can be a problem.

1033

00:53:33,430 --> 00:53:36,700

I can find five million other things to do.

1034

00:53:36,700 --> 00:53:37,810

I will watch tv,

1035

00:53:37,810 --> 00:53:49,950

I will play Word Ally will play every computer game I can I will play with the poodles will find something to do or just you know get lost on the internet.

1036

00:53:49,960 --> 00:53:56,720

But if I write every day I get in the habit of writing and that's what works for me.

1037

00:53:56,720 --> 00:53:58,380

So I have to keep going.

1038

00:53:58,390 --> 00:54:04,640

But after about 3 to 4 months I'm really sick of these characters in my head.

1039

00:54:04,650 --> 00:54:07,400

So I need to move on.

1040

00:54:07,410 --> 00:54:15,420

So I have to and and I also know if I gave myself a year to finish one book,

1041

00:54:15,910 --> 00:54:20,130

I would spend a year working on like the first chapter,

1042

00:54:20,130 --> 00:54:29,910

I would write that chapter and rewrite that chapter and rewrite that chapter over and over and over again and I would never let it go.

1043

00:54:29,910 --> 00:54:35,720

And so having a deadline forces me to let it go,

1044

00:54:35,980 --> 00:54:46,060

it's good enough for now and then I can move on to something else without getting it out of the habit of writing.

1045

00:54:46,070 --> 00:54:47,280

Now,

1046

00:54:47,280 --> 00:54:49,510

if you're that person that you need to,

1047

00:54:49,520 --> 00:54:50,460

you know,

1048

00:54:50,470 --> 00:54:53,850

write and rewrite a sentence then do you?

1049

00:54:55,080 --> 00:54:56,930

This is what works for me,

1050

00:54:56,940 --> 00:54:59,000

but it doesn't work for everybody.

1051

00:54:59,000 --> 00:54:59,730

I have a friend,

1052

00:54:59,730 --> 00:54:59,990

kelly,

1053

00:54:59,990 --> 00:55:00,530

Garrett,

1054

00:55:00,540 --> 00:55:02,140

she is,

1055

00:55:02,150 --> 00:55:06,620

she is meticulous and she plots everything out every beat,

1056

00:55:06,630 --> 00:55:07,340

every,

1057

00:55:07,350 --> 00:55:08,390

you know,

1058

00:55:08,400 --> 00:55:18,480

just everything and she takes a year maybe longer to write a book and I would be so sick of that book and you know,

1059

00:55:18,480 --> 00:55:20,760

if I had to spend that much time in it,

1060

00:55:20,900 --> 00:55:24,180

but it's what works for her and she's been very successful at it.

1061

00:55:24,180 --> 00:55:30,050

So I think the key is figuring out what works for you and doing that.

1062

00:55:31,170 --> 00:55:31,600

Yeah,

1063

00:55:31,600 --> 00:55:32,110

I agree.

1064

00:55:32,110 --> 00:55:36,930

That's a theme that has come up quite a bit on this podcast in varying subjects,

1065

00:55:36,930 --> 00:55:37,200

you know,

1066

00:55:37,200 --> 00:55:39,810

whether it's plotting or pantsing or you know,

1067

00:55:39,810 --> 00:55:41,020

whatever it is,

1068

00:55:41,020 --> 00:55:42,740

that there is not just,

1069

00:55:42,740 --> 00:55:49,090

there's not a right way and there's not only one way and and don't force yourself to try and do it somebody else's way,

1070

00:55:49,100 --> 00:55:55,070

I've done that and it it never works right and I feel frustrated and I'm beating myself up because I'm like,

1071

00:55:55,070 --> 00:55:55,860

I couldn't,

1072

00:55:55,870 --> 00:55:56,690

I couldn't plot,

1073

00:55:56,700 --> 00:55:58,610

you know the way that such and such plots,

1074

00:55:58,610 --> 00:55:59,040

but you know,

1075

00:55:59,040 --> 00:56:05,480

it's just not my way and you just have to accept that and that's right.

1076

00:56:05,490 --> 00:56:06,470

That's okay.

1077

00:56:07,420 --> 00:56:07,800

Well,

1078

00:56:07,800 --> 00:56:08,480

thank you.

1079

00:56:08,480 --> 00:56:10,170

Thank you again so much for being here.

1080

00:56:10,170 --> 00:56:12,160

This is a wonderful conversation.

1081

00:56:12,170 --> 00:56:13,600

I enjoyed myself.

1082

00:56:13,600 --> 00:56:17,950

Thank you so much for having me and chatting with me.

1083

00:56:17,950 --> 00:56:19,750

I always enjoy our conversation.

1084

00:56:19,750 --> 00:56:20,430

So thank you.

1085

00:56:20,430 --> 00:56:21,310

I do too.

1086

00:56:21,320 --> 00:56:22,620

I do too.

1087

00:56:26,010 --> 00:56:28,490

Y'all I hope you enjoyed today's podcast.

1088

00:56:28,500 --> 00:56:29,820

If you're like me and like,

1089

00:56:29,820 --> 00:56:30,760

bookish things,

1090

00:56:30,760 --> 00:56:33,530

check out the writer sparked public store.

1091

00:56:33,540 --> 00:56:38,200

Please remember to like and subscribe to this podcast and if you like Youtube,

1092

00:56:38,200 --> 00:56:41,100

you can check us out there as well and subscribe.

1093

00:56:41,110 --> 00:56:50,550

Come back for more tips and tricks about fiction writing and learn more about our online courses at [www dot writer spark academy dot com](http://www.dotwritersparkacademy.com).

1094

00:56:50,560 --> 00:56:51,620

I'm melissa bourbon.

1095

00:56:51,630 --> 00:56:53,300

Thank you so much for listening.

1096

00:56:53,300 --> 00:56:54,400

And until next time.

1097

00:56:54,410 --> 00:56:55,400

Happy writing