

1. Please introduce yourself and tell us your background and what made you decide to become an audiobook narrator – and how you came to narrate *The Disharmony of Silence*.

Briefly, I actually began my performing career in stand-up comedy, which I did for four years before falling in love with improvisation. I studied Improvisation at The Second City Hollywood and soaked up everything I could from my uber talented colleagues. I've done quite a few commercials as well as some film and television over the years, but have had a passion for voiceover since my childhood. It was the first thing I ever remember wanting to do. When I was five years old my parents asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up, and I said "Mickey Mouse!" I'm sure they thought I was adorable. I think they assumed I didn't understand an animated character wasn't real. Not only did I know it was a moving drawing, I also knew a real person was making the voice and it was amazing! I immediately wanted to *be* that voice and would practice imitating the voices I heard in cartoons growing up.

2. I'm very curious about the process. Did you read *The Disharmony of Silence* in full before you began narrating, or did you read it chapter by chapter narrating at the conclusion of each? Or any other way?

It was actually a combination of both. I read roughly half of the book before I began the narration. Once I felt like I'd met all the major characters and had a feel for the flavor and tone of the novel I began narrating it. Once I passed that point in the narration, I actually did a combination of reading a chapter, then recording it, and narrating it without reading it first. For instance, the chapter where Carolyn's mother passes away I narrated without reading it first because I wanted the unfiltered natural reaction to her last words to her mother to be genuine. The nice thing with audiobooks is, there's no fear of just trying something because if you don't like it, you can always go back and rerecord it, however I ended up loving that take.

3. Please give us an idea of what goes into making an audio tape of a novel, how long it takes and if you use a home studio or go to an outside recording studio.

Every genre of audiobook is a little different, but in general the pre-production process involves reading and finding the voice of the main characters. Answering any questions you have about the storyline, and deciding how you feel about each character and where they grow or fail to grow through the story. The recording is actually the quickest part of the process, perhaps 20 hours or so for a novel of your size. It is the post-production editing where the bulk of time is spent. Mastering each take, then editing them for breaths, pops, clicks, misspoken words or phrases, and any recording problems or ambient sounds that were picked up by the mic.

I built a voiceover studio in my home last December and did all the recording and editing myself. This was actually my very first assignment and it involved a huge learning curve with the software, so it ended up taking me several months to edit.

4. Now that you've been all the characters in the novel, who is your favorite?

I really loved Anita. She tells it like it is, but with love. She provides a Jiminy Cricket like consciousness mirror for Carolyn as she starts to become obsessed with her new-found family. I

also liked Teckla quite a bit. I felt so much for Lena as she had to endure Rebecca's hardness. Having Teckla there as a buffer and someone to be nice to her was like a respite in the darkness.

5. What is the most fun part of narrating a novel?

The most fun part is the boundless creativity you are allowed with essentially being in a dark closet by yourself for hours going on an imaginary journey. It is not unlike being on stage in many ways because you perform the novel in a similar way, it just happens to be for a party of one. It often reminds me of when I was a teenager reading books to my niece when she was a baby. At the time, I wondered if it was something I could do as a job because I enjoyed it so much, but audiobooks weren't really a thing yet. To have the joy of it now is really something special.

6. What is the most frustrating part of narrating a novel?

Honestly, it's taking out all of my unnecessary breaths. It never fails at some point in the process I exclaim "How can I possibly breath this much! Do I always do this??"

7. How did you deal with the Yiddish words in my novel? Did you know how to pronounce them?

Well, there are the obvious words that have become part of the common vernacular which I already knew, plus I have several Jewish friends so perhaps I know more than some people from attending Seder and Passover dinners, and Bar Mitzvahs, lol. The words and phrases I didn't know I tried to google, which ended up being so much less help than I thought, unfortunately. I mostly relied on my knowledge of German to guide me and my knack for accents and languages, as I thought I'd get notes back from the publisher if I'd made any pronunciation missteps. Little did I know that *isn't* the way it works. I sent him the files and next thing I knew it was up for sale! I was on pins and needles when it went out into the world wondering if the Yiddish was at least acceptable. I was overjoyed when you reached out and told me how happy you were with the pronunciation!

8. How would you handle regional accents if it came up in another novel?

Accents and dialects have always come fairly naturally for me. I very much enjoy the challenge of finding a new one. It's almost like trying a new food - when it sits somewhere new in your mouth, throat, or tongue it's like encountering new flavors. When you have a base of several you can do, then learning a new one becomes finding where it's close to others you can do well, then figuring out where it varies. The hardest part is not falling out of it into another one that is close.

9. Is it difficult to change your voice from female to male, young character to old?

I don't find it terribly difficult to do young and old characters. I have a wide range of ages I find easy to perform. Because I have a higher pitched female voice though, male characters have to come more from personality than pitch. Men tend to have both slower, and flatter vocal patterns which convey a sense of 'maleness' as much as having a deep voice does.

10. Is there one book that you wish you could narrate?

My current favorite novel is "Neverwhere" by Neil Gaiman. It would be an incredible honor to narrate any of Neil's work.

11. What's next for your narrating career?

I'm currently working on an autobiography titled "The Reluctant RV Wife." It was an enjoyable book to read and I've always been curious about RV life so I thoroughly soaked up her insider's perspective.

12. Tell us how readers/listeners can find you.

Sure, thanks for asking! They can find me on my website at www.laurenholiday.com or on YouTube at laurenholidayvoices, on Twitter @laurenholiday and Instagram @voicesincorporated or on IMDb.

Thank you so much for the interview! These were thoughtful and wonderful questions. I hope your fans enjoy it.