

Episode 149:

Especially the Lies: Building Unreliable Worlds (ft. Marina J. Lostetter)

Transcribed by:

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[0:00]

N: You're listening to Worldbuilding for Masochists.

M: And we're wondering why we do this to ourselves.

ML: Because have you seen the news, lately? [Laughs] I'd *much* rather be in a fantasy world. I'm Marina Lostetter.

M: I'm Marshall Ryan Maresca.

N: I'm Natania Barron.

C: I'm Cass Morris, and this is Episode 149: Especially the Lies: Building Unreliable Worlds.

[intro music plays]

C: Welcome, Marina. You've been [with us before](#), but it's been a hot minute. So, remind our listeners who you are and tell them what you are up to now, what your recent works are!

ML: Thank you for having me again. So, I am a scifi *and* fantasy author. I do both. My seventh book just came out, which completes a dark epic fantasy trilogy. That's called [*The Teeth of Dawn*](#), the trilogy is [*The Five Penalties*](#) series. I love to play in, like I said, both scifi and fantasy, they're my bread and butter. I am from the Pacific Northwest originally. I live in Arkansas now, with my spouse, a foundling dog, and two loveable-slash-terrible cats.

C: Ideal. Ideal.

M: Seven books, that's incredible!

ML: Seven.

M: I believe, if I remember the statistics correctly, that puts you in, like, the top five percent of all authors ever. Because—

ML: Whoah! [Laughs]

M: So.

N: Really? Is it—

M: Yeah, that's amazing—

ML: Yay!

N: I think, isn't the median so low, because so many people just publish one book?

ML: They do, yeah. It's [uncertain]

M: A lot of them are just, they wrote their book, and y'know, which... I mean, I remember—what was that show? I think it was *The Affair*. I really didn't care for it, because the main character is an author who wrote one book. Like, he finds it in the library and he gets pissy that, like, nobody checked it out. But I'm like, "it's in the library!"

[Marshall and Marina laugh]

N: And let me guess, he's infinitely wealthy.

M [speaking simultaneously]: And like his father in law is like this Stephen King type. And his father in law is like, "anybody can write *one* book, not many people can write a second book." And it's like, asshole.

[Marshall and Marina laugh]

N: That's rude.

M: Can they? It's very rude. "*One* book? Anybody." [laughs]

C: This goes back to a thing, I can't remember if we talked about this on air or not. Just, I know Marshall, you and I have had this conversation about how people who write film and TV have absolutely *no idea* how the publishing world works.

M: No clue.

N: No idea.

M: No clue.

C: Like, I think they feel it's all the same, 'cuz it's all writing. But we live in vastly different ecosystems.

ML: Right.

N: Mm hm.

C: They suck in different ways. Like, they're both challenging. But—they have no idea.

M: I had a [mini rant about this on BlueSky](#), 'cuz I was watching an episode of [Scrubs](#) where—not Scrubs. [Suits](#).

{Marina laughs}

N: Slightly different.

ML: Some “attire” show. [Laughs]

M [laughs]: It's an “attire” show where they were dealing with a lawsuit where some girl who had worked as an assistant in the publishing house, like, pitched an idea to the editor who then farmed this idea out to some, y'know, ghostwritery-type person. As if they just, like, have writers in their stable who are like, “give me an idea and I will write the novel that is a bestselling novel. [Laughs] And then—

ML: Ta da!

M: And this girl is suing 'cause even though she signed away her rights, she's like, “but I pitched the idea, so I should get credit.” And I'm like—that is sort of how things work in movie studios, but it's not how it works at all [in the publishing industry]. Like, I can see how you got there, if you didn't know how it works in publishing? [Whispers] But that's not how it works.

ML [laughs]: The most egregious one I ever saw was—this was a TV show, I don't remember what it was called. There were three episodes and then it was cancelled. But the woman was flying out to NY to discuss a possible idea for her next picture book. Like, making a trip to go see her editor to discuss a *picture book* premise. [Laughs] Like it wasn't even the whole script of the picture book, not a manuscript, no, it was “what if I fly across the country to discuss this in person, so that we can nail down...”

C: This is why people think we're all very wealthy.

ML: Yes! I was like, what is happening here?

C: This is why friends in other states will be like, “Ooh, the book tour send you here?” And I’m like, “that’s a funny joke you just told.”

[Cass, Marina, and Marshall laugh]

C: Like, nah, they’re not sending me to *Wisconsin*. Are you kidding me?

[Marina laughs]

N: Yeaah. I think my favorite, too, is like, the houses that writers live in, in movies. They have, like, one book and they live in the Hamptons, and they have a boat and stuff. [Laughs] Like, no. It’s usually an apartment and no shade there, but that’s just kind of the “starter pack.” Or sometimes, y’know, basements or whatnot. I mean, I know I felt this way when I used to work at Barnes & Noble. I remember thinking, “if I can just sell one book, I’ll be made.” Like, that’s all that I have to do! I really did, like I’d be shelving books and I...

ML: Oh sure.

N: Yeah, I’ll just sell one of these and I’ll be set forever.

ML: Yeah.

N: That’s not how it works.

ML: The shininess.

[05:43]

[Pre-outro music begins]

M: Hi, you. Thanks for listening to this episode of *Worldbuilding for Masochists* and letting us help you overcomplicate your writing life. If you want to know more about your hosts and all the fantastical books we write, including the new editions of my [Maradaine](#) novels and [Velocity of Revolution](#), Natania’s [Queen of None](#) and [Netherford Hall](#), and Cass’ [Aven Cycle](#), links to all that information is on our website at worldbuildingformasochists.podbean.com. We also have an archive of all of our episodes and links to more information on the guests of this and every episode.

Also our anthology, [Traveling Light](#), is out. Filled with short stories set in the world we have been building on the show. We have stories from all of us, as well as Marie Brennan, Mike Chen, J.C. Pillard, Victor Manibo, Kate Elliott, Lindsey Carmichael, Valerie Valdes, and Mike Underwood.

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[Outro music plays]

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