QQQ 4.5 Allison Bitz

[00:00:00] **Sarah:** Welcome to Queries, Qualms, and Quirks, the twice a month podcast that asks published authors to share their successful query letter and discuss their journey from first spark to date of publication.

[00:00:10] **Sarah:** I am your host author, Sarah Nicolas and literary agent, Sarah N. Fisk. Allison L. Bitz hails from Lincoln, Nebraska, where she lives with her spouse, two kids and various rescue pets. When she's not writing a novel or a song, Dr. Bitz is helping clients in their private counseling practice, planning some form of political action or trying to track down a pastry to enjoy with her coffee.

[00:00:33] **Sarah:** If you can't find her at a party, check the floor. She's probably hanging out with the dogs. So please welcome Alison to the show. Hello.

[00:00:41] **Allison:** Hi, Sarah. Thank you for having me.

[00:00:43] **Sarah:** Yeah. Thanks for coming on. I just want to let listeners know you may hear like a little bit of noise. Um, and it's just, there's construction in Alison's office. Uh,

[00:00:53] **Allison:** sorry. Yes.

[00:00:55] **Sarah:** not bad. So that's, what's going on if you do hear it. All right, so we're going to start about your journey to publication and we're going to start by going all the way back to the beginning.

[00:01:03] **Sarah:** When did you first start getting interested in writing and then how long did it take before you started getting serious about pursuing publication?

[00:01:10] **Allison:** in my mind, I was always a writer, you know, I have journals full of, you know, mostly bad poetry and stories, but I didn't really start to sit down and think about being a novelist till probably 2015. I really put my nose to the grindstone and I was trying to like produce a book, you know, at that point.

[00:01:32] **Allison:** and even more serious in 2016, like started clearing time at my schedule, I was writing like a lot in the evenings just because I work a full time day job. yeAh, it was, so it was right in that 2015 2016 era that I was like,

okay, I'm going to try to write a novel, I'm going to try to get it published, we'll see what we can do.

[00:01:48] **Sarah:** And then how did you learn more about the publishing industry? You know, like how to query, how it works, how to do everything.

[00:01:56] **Allison:** Yeah, so that's, that was such a mystery, you know, like I feel for writers who haven't, you know, tried to delve into that yet because it's like this really gatekept thing I felt like. So I had actually just been googling like how to publish a novel and you know learning about agents and learning about editors and what the difference was and publishing houses and etc.

[00:02:18] **Allison:** And one website said Twitter is a really good place for writers you should be on there and I wasn't on Twitter at all at that time so I joined Twitter. And then, I think within like my first two months of being on Twitter, I found Pitch Wars. Um, and you, were you, Sarah, involved in, you were in the Pitch Wars stuff?

[00:02:37] **Allison:** Yeah?

[00:02:37] **Sarah:** Yeah. Yeah. I was a mentor from the beginning. And then I joined the committee in, um, 2018.

[00:02:44] **Allison:** Yeah. Okay, so that was the year I did it, was 2018. And, well, no, wait, it was 2017, it's now looking back, I'm really glad I did, but I'm kind of smiling because I'm like, wow, I didn't know anything. Like, I didn't even know if I'd really written, like, an adult or a YA novel, and it was kind of both, you know, like, Just had so much to learn.

[00:03:03] **Allison:** I was, chosen as like an alternate mentee in that year. So the, one of my mentors actually chose to, to work closely with somebody else and put them through to the agent round, uh, but gave me a critique letter to send me on my way as well. The best thing that happened in that process to me was that I met my critique partners, who I'll probably talk about a lot because like we're obsessed with each other.

[00:03:27] **Allison:** they were also like unofficial mentees. We, there were three of us, we happened to all find each other and started talking and it's just become this really special thing from there. So it was really pitch wars and talking with them and talking to other mentees in pitch wars where I learned about how to, you know, write a query that wasn't weird or followed, you know, cause there's like a format to follow.

[00:03:50] **Allison:** And I didn't know anything about that. you know, how, what a good query sounded like, um, something not to do in terms of etiquette, just in the world of publishing. So I credit pitch wars for kind of everything.

[00:04:03] **Sarah:** All right. So then, uh, what happened? Can you break down for us, your journey from then to signing your first book contract?

[00:04:11] **Allison:** Yeah, so it's kind of long, listeners. I am sorry. I am going to try not to gloss over any of the gritty, gory details, because it was gory. And I actually, Sarah, I can, Sarah and I are on video, so we're looking at each other. But, like, I had to write it out, so I didn't, because it got really long. Confusing. okay.

[00:04:29] **Allison:** So like I mentioned in 2017, I entered Pitch Wars. That was an alternate. And, like waiting for Pitch Wars, like waiting for the announcement, I started drafting something else. And I wrote it pretty quickly. I think I started it in like August or September and I finished it and it was ready enough to query by January.

[00:04:50] **Allison:** So after I finished out that I wasn't chosen as a official mentee, I decided I wanted to query this other book instead, this other manuscript. So I entered a different pitch competition called Sun vs. Snow, and I was chosen for the final round or whatever of that, and so got some Agent like inquiries from that.

[00:05:11] **Allison:** And then at the same time that was happening, I had submitted my first round of like 10, queries just in the, in the slush to agent boxes. And, um, it went readers. I want you to know this is, or listeners, it was like a, this is like a unicorn moment. This isn't normal, but what happened to me is I got a slew of requests and within a week of submitting my first query, I had an offer, and then I got two more offers So it was like this whirlwind moment of like, oh my gosh, this, this is happening, you know, and I, so I chose one of the, agents and we went on sub with that book, I think in, I think it was April, probably 2018 and that book remained on sub until early 2019 and we decided it had died, I think it was on sub about a year, got some good feedback, but it never was acquired.

[00:06:10] **Allison:** in that time, I had finished another manuscript and, and gave it to my agent and she didn't like it. So it went in the drawer and then I wrote another manuscript and then we went on sub with that one in 2019. And so that one was on sub from fall 2019 through early 2020 and also decided it had died. And then at that point I parted ways with that agent. So in early 2020 I

Did not have an agent anymore. And then I started, I had written another manuscript cause like, that's I do when I'm like stressed and waiting for something, I'd like just keep writing. I queried most of 2020, which, uh, as all of, you know, it was not a great year, like in so many ways.

[00:07:00] **Allison:** So I started querying like literally like two weeks before everything went just kaput in society. So it would have been March. And did not, I got a lot of full requests with that particular manuscript, but never did get an offer. So I queried from like March to, I think in January, 2021, I just, I declared that, query dead for myself. So like at this point, I'm not feeling super great about life or about writing and thinking like, this might be it, you know, I maybe have come to the end of the road, but I had that manuscript in the drawer that, uh, my agent didn't like back in 20. 18, so, or 19 something. And so I decided I would get it out and see what could happen.

[00:07:44] **Allison:** And my critique partners really liked that manuscript. I liked it too. So it felt good to get that one out. I queried it. Within a few weeks, I had an offer, which I accepted with an, with an agent who's my current agent, Natascha Morris at Tobias. And, um, we went on sub with it in May. And in September of 2021, I got an R and R from a house.

[00:08:07] **Allison:** So I started working on the R& R, which is revise and resubmit. She, this editor, had thoughts on what she would want to see done with it, and I think wanted to see if I could do it, and so I took that on. Um, had just finished the R& R and sent that off when I got an offer from another house. So then there was like this kind of long waiting period where I had the offer from one house, but I wanted to see what was going to happen with the R& R house because I actually really liked that editor's vision and I liked the editor, I met her and we spent a lot of time talking.

[00:08:40] **Allison:** So then we had to wait for the, that house's acquisitions meeting, then they decided to acquire, and then those two houses that had made an offer bid against each other. in December of 2021 until I, there was an offer that stuck out to me as better, the one I wanted, which was with the R& R house, which is HarperCollins.

[00:09:02] **Allison:** or in HarperTeen specifically, and that's who my debut book, has been published by. And it just came out, um, in May of this year. So, and it was a two book contract. So I have another book coming out, later this year in 2024. It's been not very straightforward and there's been a lot of disappointment along the way.

[00:09:24] **Allison:** but here I am. So I guess it was, I guess it was all worth it.

[00:09:28] **Sarah:** It is time for the first Q of the podcast. Can you read your successful query letter for us?

[00:09:35] **Allison:** Yes, I can. I'm gonna read the one I actually sent to Natascha. Dear Natascha, greetings from snowy Nebraska. I'm reaching out to you with a new project as you had interest in a previous manuscript of mine. My current project features a pansexual plus size bombshell of a main character, and I'm rather fond of her.

[00:09:56] **Allison:** I'm hopeful you may also be. I was previously represented by an agent at Fancy Agency, and we have amicably parted ways. 16 year old musical theater ingenue Bridget Venus Bloom is sure of one thing. She is unstoppable. With a voice like hers, she's destined for fame, and she sure as hell getting out of her rural hometown of Lynch, Nebraska, where she sticks out like an emerald in a sea of shale.

[00:10:21] **Allison:** When she's admitted to the Chicago Young Musicians Conservatory, CYMC, a sought after college prep music program for Broadway hopefuls, and the school that viral YouTube pop sensation Duke Erikson happens to attend, She sees her dreams unfolding just as she planned. She'll launch her career, she'll get the guy, and they'll take on Broadway together.

[00:10:43] **Allison:** She'll leave Lynch behind once and for all, and show all the haters what she's made of. However, there's one huge catch. Due to her poor music theory test scores, Bridget's admission to CYMC is conditional. The condition? She's not allowed to participate in music performances for her first year, a definite hindrance to her Broadway plans.

[00:11:03] **Allison:** When obstacles loom-- a theory retake examination, the difficulty of catching Duke's eye without using her singing voice, a roommate who hates her, and a dean of students who seems determined for her to fail-- the unstoppable Bridget is halted cold. She's faced with the biggest challenge of her life, find a new way to shine, or be dismissed from the school of her dreams.

[00:11:25] **Allison:** which would mean a return to Lynch, the town that never saw her for who she was. In the Key of B is a YA contemporary with rom com elements in the vein of glee plus Legally Blonde, complete at 85, 000 words, appeals to fans of Julie Murphy and explores themes of pride versus authenticity, infatuation versus love, and of the young adult journey from egocentricity to considering others needs.

[00:11:51] **Allison:** It is also a hashtag own voices work as Bridget is pansexual like me and an unapologetically plus size teen as I was in my youth. I'm a practicing licensed psychologist with a Ph. D. in counseling psychology. I work with many teen clients in my private practice which gives me a unique insight into the life and experiences of youth. Submitted with gratitude, Allison Bitz.

[00:12:14] **Sarah:** Nice. Thanks for sharing.

[00:12:16] **Allison:** Thank you, yeah. Kind of fun to get back into that after like, not looking at it for three years.

[00:12:21] **Sarah:** Yeah. So how do you feel like your experience has been since signing that first contract? Especially let us know if there are any sort of surprises along the way.

[00:12:32] **Allison:** I guess one of the big surprises, which shouldn't have been a surprise, is it's really stressful to debut. And it's something that literally every debut will say to you, I guess I just got cocky about it. Um, like I feel like, like, honestly, I feel like I have good stress management skills and like, I teach stress management skills.

[00:12:49] **Allison:** So I was like, I got this and I did not got it. there were, uh, multiple times I was like texting with Nat, Natascha, my agent about some thing that had happened and she just picked up the phone and called me and she would say, Alison, you're spiraling. And I would be like, what do you mean? And she's like, no, you're spiraling.

[00:13:08] **Allison:** And I'd be sitting there, like having my second espresso, like losing my mind. She's right. She was right. So, it stressed me out way more than I anticipated it would. Um, I mostly just thought I would be so happy because I worked so hard and waited so long to get here. And I am happy. It was just hard. I think that, um, I've been a little frustrated and surprised about how slowly I write new stuff now, too, because when you're under contract, like when you're under contract and deadline to get stuff done, it has to take priority.

[00:13:41] **Allison:** And so as soon as I hop into something new, I end up having to go back to my contracted stuff or something promotional or et cetera. And then there's this divided attention. And before signing contract, I had just been able to devote all my attention to one thing at a time. And so that's very different and challenging. but on the plus side of things, it hasn't all been bad surprises. Like I've, I've really, really liked working with Harperteen and particularly my editor, Erika DiPasquale. She's amazing. She really seems to get

me like as a person and a writer. And, um, she's really treated me like a partner in the process.

[00:14:17] **Allison:** I've gotten a lot of choice in terms of like my covers and, or, you know, what audio book, um, narrators I would prefer, or, just, they gave me a lot of choice and I didn't anticipate getting that much and that has felt really, really good. So yeah, that part's been good.

[00:14:34] **Sarah:** Nice.

[00:14:35] **Allison:** Yeah.

[00:14:36] **Sarah:** It is time for the quick round. I call it author DNA.

[00:14:40] **Sarah:** Are you a pantser or a plotter?

[00:14:43] **Allison:** Plotter.

[00:14:43] **Sarah:** Do you tend to be an overwriter or an underwriter?

[00:14:47] **Allison:** I'm a complete overwriter.

[00:14:49] **Sarah:** Do you prefer to write in the morning or at night?

[00:14:51] **Allison:** Used to be night and now morning.

[00:14:53] **Sarah:** When you start with a new project, do you typically start with a character or plot or concept or something else first?

[00:14:59] **Allison:** I have conceived of books that started in any of those places.

[00:15:03] **Sarah:** Do you prefer coffee or tea?

[00:15:05] **Allison:** Coffee.

[00:15:06] **Sarah:** Whenever you're writing, do you prefer silence or some kind of sound?

[00:15:09] **Allison:** No music, but background chatter.

[00:15:12] **Sarah:** When it comes to the first draft, are you a more of a get it down kind of person or a get it right kind of person?

[00:15:18] **Allison:** I prefer to get it right, although it's never quite right in the first draft.

[00:15:23] **Sarah:** What tools or software do you use to draft?

[00:15:26] **Allison:** Scrivener for drafting.

[00:15:27] **Sarah:** Do you prefer drafting or revising more?

[00:15:30] **Allison:** 100 percent drafting.

[00:15:32] **Sarah:** Do you write in sequential order or do you hop around?

[00:15:34] **Allison:** I write in sequential order.

[00:15:36] **Sarah:** And final quick round question, are you an extrovert or an introvert?

[00:15:40] **Allison:** I happen to be an ambivert. I am somewhere in the middle.

[00:15:44] **Sarah:** All right, we're going to talk about the second Q. Now, what were some of the qualms or worries that you had on your journey? And do you feel like they were realized or you overcame them or how did they shake out?

[00:15:54] **Allison:** Well, it's like, I think the, the new fear develops at every different phase, you know, like the first fear I remember before even entering Pitch Wars I was like, am I a total joke? You know, like, what business do I have? I don't have any formal writing training in terms of creative writing. that was overcome.

[00:16:12] **Allison:** I feel like when I was a alternate mentee, I was like, okay, I'm, you know, like, I'm, there's something there. I can keep pursuing this. That really was a boost for me. even though I wasn't picked for the agent round, it felt like what I needed to continue to do this thing. and then there's the next set of worries, you know, like, will I get an agent?

[00:16:30] **Allison:** And that fortunately for me happened really quickly. it doesn't have to happen quickly for anybody listening to this. It does not have to

happen quickly to be successful. It just happened to in my case. And then, you know, I went that whole year after I parted ways without an agent before I got a second agent. I think then, of course, the fear becomes, will I sell? Cause I, you know, I'd been on sub twice and both of those books had died. and so when I went on the third time, I was very cautious. I was very reserved. I was like, well, you know, we'll give it a try. But you know, I, I didn't even really like, I was having a hard time even feeling like hopeful.

[00:17:08] **Allison:** I was so kind of like numb to hope, honestly, at that point. and then it sold, you know, and so I, I guess that qualm was, was overcome. And now I worry about sales and now I worry about, is this it, you know, like, will I ever sell? Anything again, because at current I have my two book contract, but that's it.

[00:17:32] **Allison:** And, um, I, I, I am working internally on overcoming that because I haven't even pitched anything else for contract or tried to sell anything else. So I can't, you know, I can't test it practically yet. and I do want to access gratitude for even, even if I never sell anything else again, I'm really, really glad I did this.

[00:17:53] **Allison:** And I have, I'll have two books in the world that I'm quite proud of. And I've met some of my closest friends along the way in this whole process. So there's lots to still be grateful for, even if I never sell again.

[00:18:06] **Sarah:** Yeah. It is time for the third Q. Do you have any writing quirks? Is there anything about your writing process that you think is kind of different or interesting or unique?

[00:18:15] **Allison:** So I have this spreadsheet that I actually use when I'm trying to create a plot. And I created it myself. It draws from the, uh, book Story Genius by Lisa Cron which I think is a really, really good craft book for anybody looking for one. and it helps me to organize like my scenes in sequential order and figure out what needs to happen in the external plot but then also what needs to be happening with my client.

[00:18:43] **Allison:** My, my, I'm a therapist, uh, with my character. Um, uh, uh, we can leave that or we can strike it. That

[00:18:55] **Sarah:** I think psychology might have something to say about that little slip up. Yeah.

[00:19:01] **Allison:** that's, that's, I mean, I'll get into it. That's actually another quirk of mine, but, uh, so to come back to the original quirk, I do, I do use the spreadsheet and it helps me to get into the external journey going on and the internal journey going on with my character so I make sure that kind of I'm moving everything along not neglecting the arc. , the other quirk is that when I'm thinking about my characters, I often think about them as if they are my clients, because I am I'm a licensed psychologist and I've worked with a lot of people and, you know, I've had the privilege of, uh, people telling me what's happening for them in terms of their internal process and what motivates them and what scares them.

[00:19:44] **Allison:** And so often I imagine kind of sitting across the room from my character and what they would say and it helps me, I think, craft them and figure out how I want to grow them.

[00:19:53] **Sarah:** Awesome.

[00:19:54] **Sarah:** When you were in the lowest parts of your journey, whatever that was for you, what kept you going and why did you stick to it?

[00:20:01] **Allison:** So, 2020 was the low, that was the point where I was unagented, and I wasn't getting offers on the book that was on sub, and I'd had two books, or the book that was on query, and I didn't get any offers twice on sub. it was, it was pretty low, and it was also 2020, and like, I couldn't go anywhere. I happened to be immune compromised.

[00:20:22] **Allison:** So I was very scared. Um, we didn't know a lot about COVID yet. And I was literally every day, like, could I die, you know, like if I want to go to the grocery store? and so I have to, I have to be super duper honest with anybody listening, what kept me going was like, kind of like desperation. Like I, I love writing and it was kind of like a life raft for me at a time where I couldn't really do anything else.

[00:20:49] **Allison:** And I will say that the book, one of the books I wrote, because I was writing pretty fast in 2020, was a very sad, like, a very sad manuscript that I think matches my emotional state at the time. And that little manuscript is in the drawer right now. I don't know if she will ever go anywhere, but it definitely kind of buoyed me through.

[00:21:11] **Allison:** So I think it was kind of desperation, My critique partner's unending belief that I could do this thing. Um, and then just sheer like love of

writing. I just really, really like to write and it's really hard for me to not write. And so I would say those three things were what propelled me forward.

[00:21:33] **Sarah:** Nice. Do you feel like you made any mistakes along the way that you either wish you could go back and fix or tell future writers about so they don't make the same ones?

[00:21:42] **Allison:** There are definitely things that I like dwell on sometimes. you know, I got multiple agent offers in 2018 and there have been times I've wondered if I went the right way. and I don't know that I can consider what I did a mistake because I kind of like where I've ended up at the end of all of that really hard stuff.

[00:22:04] **Allison:** But like I've, I've done a fair amount of thinking about, well, what if I had done, gone a different way? I think for anybody listening to this, I can't tell you how to pick the right agent because I don't think there is a right agent and we can only use the information we have available to us at the time to make any given decision.

[00:22:22] **Allison:** So I think what I'm actually encouraging people is like a little self compassion, you know, in these situations for when we think we could have gone a different way. Well, we didn't, you know, and so sometimes we have to make peace. I would say in terms of just the writing piece and mistake. Or a, a rut that I see myself getting into sometimes is like, the more you learn about writing and about the market, you know, I'm using big air quotes right now, the market, the harder, at least for me, it has been to kind of detach myself from trying to think, well, what does, what does the world want to hear from me?

[00:22:57] **Allison:** You know, what will the market buy from me? And there's a part of me that knows that's a fool's errand because the market is mercurial and you never know what it's going to do. And one moment it wants werewolves and then werewolves are out. And one moment it wants dystopia and then dystopia is out. And so if I write to chase the market, I'm always going to be behind.

[00:23:15] **Allison:** So you can't do it, but it's hard to not think, well, what could I, what's going to sell? Um, I'm trying to really challenge myself to, as I'm trying to select a project, or trying to figure out where I'm going to go next in terms of what I'm going to try to write or pitch, like not what's going to sell, but like, what do I want to write?

[00:23:34] **Allison:** You know, like, what's going to bring me joy? What am I going to want to spend the next many, many months of my life working on? And if they do taught me anything, it is that because you're going to work on that book and talk about that book for like the rest of your life. So, or I assume people will eventually stop, but like for the last year, it's been like, tell me about your book.

[00:23:54] **Allison:** What's your book about? What's your book? So like, it's a good thing I like Bridget or else I would be so like, uh, you know, like, and I still kind of am like, well, so in some it's like, I got to write. Makes me happy and fulfills me and not what I think will be a sale.

[00:24:09] **Sarah:** Yeah. Can you share with listeners one of the most important lessons that you learned on your journey to publication?

[00:24:15] **Allison:** I think that the biggest thing has been when, when we think about writing, it feels very solitary and it is, you know, it is, you are essentially sitting and putting words on the page. So a big part of it is solitary, but, um, I feel like I've done much better work when working at least in parts of that in community.

[00:24:35] **Allison:** And thankfully for me, I discovered that right away, and discovered how much more I could grow when I was exchanging my work, chapter by chapter, or sometimes whole work by whole work, with people. and, you know, at first I worked with a few different people, and then I fell in with my really tight critique group that has three people.

[00:24:54] **Allison:** It's myself, and Laura Taylor Namey and Joan F. Smith, who are both also published young adult authors now. I can't stress how much they have grown me and I think we have grown each other and how lonely this process would have been if I wouldn't have had people to be with me when I was happy and sad.

[00:25:14] **Allison:** So, it's definitely, I am so grateful that I learned it early because it's been such an important part of my whole process.

[00:25:22] **Sarah:** All right. I call this the acknowledgements portion of the podcast. this is not a business that most of us succeed in completely on our own, who are some of the people who helped you along the way and how.

[00:25:35] **Allison:** So I'll say it again. I already did, but like, definitely Laura and Joan and my critique partners have been probably the most pivotal people

for me in this, in this journey, because it's been literally we've talked, I think, every day since fall of 2017. And like, that's a pretty big commitment as human beings to each other.

[00:25:52] **Allison:** And, you know, they're my critique partners, but now they're also just my, like, best friends. So, they're so important to me and I'm so glad that I have them. I think also huge, um, gratitude for Natascha Morris, my agent, when she offered to me, you know, in the winter, spring of 2021, I was just so like, can I do this?

[00:26:14] **Allison:** Should I be doing this? You know, like, is there any hope for me? And she was, she was so excited about my manuscript and so complimentary. And she was like, Oh yeah, we can absolutely sell this. I love this book. I want to work on this with you. I think you're a great writer. And I was like, what you do, really?

[00:26:32] **Allison:** And so it was so, uh, it was so great to hear that after so much failure and, or what feels like failure. And, she always, she always felt very confident. She, she has said to me many times, you're. You're an, uh, you're a when, not an if, and that was extremely meaningful. as I mentioned her already before, but Erika DiPasquale, my editor, like really, really gets me the one I've worked with on these two books.

[00:26:58] **Allison:** And so I, I think that these books are much, much, much better for her vision. I'm really, really glad she chose these. You know, she chose me and the work that I did. I'm grateful. honestly, like it's so freaking cliche. Uh, but I, I just, I, if my partner, my marital partner wouldn't be supportive, none of this would be possible because I would feel compelled to never schedule time for something that I'm never sure is going to pay me.

[00:27:31] **Sarah:** Mm.

[00:27:32] **Allison:** you know, it's a leap of faith when I schedule time away to, to, to write instead of, you know, doing other kinds of work in which There's definite like production and income and, uh, but there's never been any kind of criticism or, encouraging me to not do it. Just believe like, yeah, you should do this.

[00:27:51] **Allison:** You love it. And you're good at it. Go do it. And so I, I want to make sure I express a lot of gratitude for him because I do the, you know, I set, I set the tone, I schedule my hours. I show up and I do it, but he creates the system by which it can work.

[00:28:06] **Sarah:** Mm.

[00:28:07] **Allison:** So I'm grateful.

[00:28:09] **Sarah:** Yeah. All right. So we heard about Bridget Bloom from your query, but do you want to tell us about the book you have coming out this year?

[00:28:15] **Allison:** I would love to. I think I'm finally in a place where I've kind of healed up from debut stress and kind of like getting excited again. so that my fall 2024 book, which will be October 1st debut date, it's titled Three Things About Emmy Crawford. And, it is set in Washington, D. C. With Emmy, who's an 18 year old high school senior, and she is a hell of a debater.

[00:28:41] **Allison:** She's really, really good. Uh, she wants to make nationals this year and it's her last chance cause she's a senior and she just doesn't want anything to get in her way and nothing seems to be. She's, she's poised to beat everybody. There's one debater in town. Who's probably as good as she is. He's been off the scene for a year and people didn't know where he went, but he's back this year.

[00:29:03] **Allison:** And she happens to have romantic history with him. And problematically, her sister also falls for him. So there's a little bit of conflict going on there. Emmy's mom is a favorite for running, um, for president for the upcoming election. And so Emmy's family is really high profile and there's lots of paparazzi involvement.

[00:29:25] **Allison:** And another thing to know about Emmy is that she has Crohn's disease, and I have Crohn's disease. So, she's this very, very ambitious, uh, young woman, and learning things about herself, and having to learn it all in the context of also managing a chronic illness that can be, um, kind of difficult sometimes.

[00:29:42] **Allison:** So,

[00:29:43] **Sarah:** All right.

[00:29:44] **Allison:** yeah.

[00:29:44] **Sarah:** Thank you so much for coming on the show, Allison, and sharing your story with everyone.

[00:29:49] **Allison:** Yeah, I'm happy to have done it. It was super fun.

[00:29:52] **Sarah:** Thank you so much for listening to this episode of Queries, Qualms, and Quirks. You can find the text of Allison's query in the show notes along with links to find out more about her and her books. If you enjoyed the show, I'd really appreciate if you'd help me find new listeners by leaving a review, telling your friends, or sharing this episode on social media.

[00:30:10] **Sarah:** If you're interested in supporting the show, go to patreon.com/sarahnicolas. That's Sarah with an H and Nicolas with no H. And if you're a published author interested in being guests on the show, please click on the home base link in the description or go to sarahnicolas.Com and click on the podcast logo in the sidebar.

[00:30:27] **Sarah:** Thank you so much for listening and we'll see you next time.