

*Anne:* Hello listeners, and welcome back to the iWrite Podcast. I'm and I'm gonna be your host for today and I am interviewing my friend and fellow student, Morgan Lawson.

*Morgan:* Hello

*Anne:* Morgan and I write Victorian letters, fictional letters back and forth to each other. And I thought it would be fun to interview her about that, because I feel like a lot of the times when we think about writing, especially in academia, we think about papers and essays. And if we think about other types of writing, we don't think about letters or doing something for necessarily the joy of it, the fun of it, and I thought it'd be interesting getting someone's process on the fun of it. So Morgan, first of all, just tell us about yourself, who are you?

*Morgan:* Hi, I'm Morgan. I'm a sophomore. So Class of 2025 represent, I'm about to declare a classics major. And then soon, I'm going to do an interdisciplinary in archaeology and maybe even a minor in Greek. So got a lot under my belt. But we're having fun. We're having a good time.

*Anne:* I want to ask you, first of all, since we write letters back and forth to each other, we've been talking a lot about group writing in a class I've had and how that can maybe lead to a better collaborative process where you learn more or you grow as a writer. So what does writing with a partner do for you? Is there anything you stop yourself from doing because you're writing to me or with another person? Do you have to change how you think about writing because you're writing with someone else?

*Morgan:* Yeah, I started like doing this, like, I had this idea with my friend like two years ago, back when we first like, knew each other to like, get to know each other more. And it was fun. And we both thought it was weird, and a good time to just write fictional letters to each other. But it is harder to share a story with someone, which isn't to say that sharing a story with someone should be hard. But because it's more of a on the fly, and you're making the story as you go like you, you have an idea of what you want you and your characters to go through. But at the end of the day, you're only half of the story. And you have to kind of let it flow from the other person as well. So for me, who likes to plan everything, it's a good exercise, and just letting the creative juices take me. And if I think of something halfway through the process of writing a letter, and I have to restart it, because the idea struck me and it changes my story, then, you know, it's a good practice and scrapping what you have and starting over delete your art, as one might say.

*Anne:* That was something I did want to ask you about. Because I know for me, at least most of the things I've sent you, I don't plan too much about it. And I've changed the story several times on my end, and I was kind of interested in, you literally write on paper first. And that's your draft. And that's what you send me versus I type everything out on Google Doc, before I write it down. And I wanted to know, Is it weird to do that? Is it uncomfortable to know that this might be just the draft you send is right there, the first thing you write?

*Morgan:* I mean, it's uncomfortable for my bank account, because I go through a lot of stationery and I need to buy more stationery because all trash drafts and restart them. But for me, it's more natural to write stuff down on paper, because I'm scratching things out and I'm changing things. And obviously, even the

ones I give to you, I'm still scratching things out and changing things as I go. But at one point or another, you're just like, this is the one I'm sending. And also, they're not going to be perfect. The character is not going to be perfect with what they're writing. So why do I hold myself to that standard? You know? I don't write anything down unless it's like a specific line or a quote or something that I know I need to remember in the exact wording I have it in my head. But most of it is just ideas I have and especially right like right before I'm falling asleep, I'll speak them out loud to myself, when I'm walking to classes, I'm thinking about how I'm going to format it. But I've never planning out the draft before I do it because I don't think my characters would and for my process and who these people are, I think it's better to barf everything out on the page. And if it's so abhorrent that I just can't give it to you, then I'll do it again. Or if I get an idea, and I need to fix all of them, then I'll do it all again, unless it's truly terrible. I'm going to send it anyway. Because at the end of the day, this is for fun. It's an exercise in writing, not one that's ever going to be published. So at the end of the day, it's just practice and just going out and spewing my ideas onto the page and see what happens I think works best for me.

*Anne:* This reminds me of free writing, which is an activity I used to do in high school for my creative writing class. And also professor Autman here to DePauw had us free right before every class, it was a great way to get ideas flowing and to not put any pressure on yourself. And you can create some really good stuff when you just go for it. That's kind of the same way. We're in a more improvisational format with writing, like some of the stuff you write is still actually incredible. Amazing.

*Morgan:* Thank you.

*Anne:* Astounding pieces of work, and it comes from knowing where you're going, but not exactly knowing how you're gonna get there.

*Morgan:* Yeah, I mean, I know what I like, right? All of this is pulling from things that I like, I like cowboys, I like horror. I like religious imagery. And so I know what I like I know my references, so I don't know where it's gonna go but I can throw them down on the page and see what happens a monkey on a typewriter can write Shakespeare if given enough time. That's sort of my process.

*Anne:* On that note, because you use a lot of biblical references, and like I feel like some of them are intentional, There's a story going on between both of us about the whore of Babylon, and revelations. Did you know you're gonna go for revelations? And when you pull from other biblical things, do you actively think about it? Or is it just in your back pocket?

*Morgan:* A little bit of both normally, so my back pocket just because I know a lot about Biblical stuff, because I like the imagery of it. I'm a Renaissance art girly, I like looking at Renaissance art. So eventually, you just go down the rabbit hole of knowing all of the archangels and everything off the top of your head, I don't think I've ever gone into it. Knowing that I wanted to use an idea, I always heard about something or I always remembered something that I had, like already in my brain and then use it I never like researched something that I needed, just because for my purposes, I already knew everything I needed. Or if I didn't know enough about it, then I could look it up, I knew the base of the characters I was going to use and how they dealt with religion and its stories and stuff like that. But I wanted to creep

into it gradually. So eventually, it got bad, I got to pull little things out of my brain before I had to do some heavy lifting.

*Anne:* I just love that. So what is the style of writing mean to you? And has it helped you with anything else?

*Morgan:* That's a good question. I offered to do these things with people that I like. So do it that way you will

*Anne:* Thank you.

*Morgan:* My other friend that I do this with, it's more of a process of getting to know someone else and picking up on parts of their style and how they think and how they want to tell the story. And it's, you know, an exchange of ideas more than anything else. Like, it's always nice to have someone look at your work, especially if you're not wanting to do anything with it. And it's just someone else can see what you're doing and validate that you're doing something, especially something where it's just me indulging in things, I like having someone else who gets to sit there and look at a thing that I like for an extended period of time it feels validating. It also helps me become more comfortable writing a lot more. I used to read a lot in high school. I was in a lot of creative writing classes. I thought I wanted to be an English and writing or lit major, but I sort of fell off of it for a while. And just recently, you've been encouraging me you're like, go write that manuscript that you keep saying you're gonna write and never finish. So I want to read it. Yeah, so I've been doing that a lot. And I think that being able to write and just throw ideas on the page has made me be like, Okay, that's my warmup. And then I'll sit down on my computer for a couple hours and then check out a chapter or two and a different thing I'm working on. It's practice, you know? It's meaningful, because you're allowed to be messy. And I like that you're still telling a story. But it doesn't have to be perfect, because at the end of the day, both of our ideas I think have changed since what we started with to what where we're at now. I don't think either one of us has the expectation that this is going to be a perfect masterwork of literature.

*Anne:* But it is fun,

*Morgan:* But it is just it's fun. You know, nothing has to mean more than just being fun. It's valid enough that it's fun, and I'll die on that hill.

*Anne:* And I don't really think I could end up better that way. I really don't.

*Morgan:* Have fun.

*Anne:* Because I think writing is fun. And I think that's what you all should take away from this. So thank you, again, for joining me.

*Morgan:* Thank you for having me

*Anne:* Thank you for listening to the iWrite podcast