

# New Year, New Books: Diving into Graphic Audiobooks

Tamara: Welcome back to the podcast everyone. I'm your host, Tamara, and this is the first episode of 2024. We are glad to be back after a mini break, and today we are starting our new year with a graphic audiobook. We'll be sharing our experience and our thoughts on the graphic audiobook as well as the story it itself. If you'd like to see this in video format, please head over to Patreon. You get to watch us see our pretty faces without commercials. We also have an after show available for you following this episode where we give you a peek behind the scenes as we sort out our next book chat read. This is also now available on the Spreaker app. If you are listening on Spreaker and you'd like the audio only version of the aftershow, it's available for you if you sign up as a supporter. Again, this is audio only, so if you still prefer the videos of things like reading vlogs and other things where you have to see it, you should still head on over to Patreon. You can also join me and my two cohosts over on the book clubs app for even more book chats. Please subscribe and like the podcast wherever you're listening. If you'd like to reach out to me, you can find me everywhere at shelf addiction. Joining me today is feature co host Casey from Heartful of Ink. Welcome back, Casey.

Casey: Hello. Hello. I'm so excited to be here for new year new books.

Tamara: I'm glad you're here and bearing with me on this tongue stuttering situation I've got going on today.

Speaker C: It's okay.

Tamara: Oh my gosh, it feels like a Monday. It does, doesn't it? Tell everyone where

they can find you online.

Casey: You can find me on Facebook, at Heartfulofinc, on Instagram, m at ah, Casey. Heartfulofinc. Or on my website, heartfulofinc.com.

## **Today we are discussing clean sweep, written by Alona Andrews**

Tamara: All right, so before we begin, of course, we'd like to remind you, as always with book chats, we talk full spoilers. So you've been warned. Spoiler alert. All right, so let's jump into things, shall we? Here are the stats and the synopsis, and then we'll just jump right on in. Today we are discussing clean sweep, written by Alona Andrews, the first book in the Innkeepers Chronicle. The graphic audio was published January 7, 2022 by Graphicaudio.

Speaker C: Net.

Tamara: It should be noted that the source material was published over ten years ago in December 2013. The runtime is 6 hours. It features a huge cast, including the main character, narrator who is Nora Archerati as Dina DeMille. She is the director and also credited in the adaptation of the book. For graphic audio, the top narrators are also Ryan H. Reed as Sean Evans and Alex Hill Knight as Arland. Casey, would you kindly read the synopsis?

Casey: On the outside, Dina DeMille is the epitome of normal. She runs a quaint victorian bed and breakfast in a small Texas town, owns a shih tzu named Beast, and has a perfect neighbor whose biggest problem should be what to serve her guests for

breakfast. But Dina is different. Her broom is a deadly weapon. Her inn is magic and thinks for itself, meant to be a lodging for otherworldly visitors. The only permanent guest is a retired galactic aristocrat who can't leave the grounds because she's responsible for the deaths of millions and someone might shoot her on site. Under the circumstances, normal is a little bit of a stretch for Dina. And now something with wicked claws and deep water teeth has begun to hunt at night. Feeling responsible for her neighbors, Dina decides to get involved. Before long, she has to juggle dealing with the annoyingly attractive ex military new neighbor Sean Evans, an alpha strain werewolf, and the equally arresting cosmic vampire soldier Arland, while trying to keep her in and its guests safe. But the enemy she's facing is unlike anything she's ever encountered before. It's smart, vicious, and lethal, and putting herself between this creature and her neighbors might just cost her everything.

Tamara: okay, so let me just say, before we even go too far, if you don't know what a graphic audio is, it's essentially an audiobook that is in the format of an audio production drama. So imagine a movie for your ears with music, sound effects, many actors, et Cetera, versus an audiobook that usually has, like, one to three narrators. And sometimes they're voice actors, but they're reading the book without any extras.

Casey: Yes, this has all the extras, all.

Tamara: The toppings, all the things. And just like a movie with a director and a producer, they make choices on how they want to present the book, right?

Casey: Yes.

Tamara: So it is a piece of, I guess, art of someone's book.

## **Casey: I dived into this without reading the synopsis**

All right, so let's talk about why we picked this book just for a moment, Casey.

Casey: Because I love Alona Andrews, and I will give a little backstory on this book. So back in, I think it was like, 2012, actually. They started writing this book on their blog, and so they would just write a chapter and post it on their blog, and they were like, this is just for free. This is just for fun. This is what we're doing in between different books that we're contracted for and they never expected to do much with it. They were just like, we'll post it on the blog. People can read it if they want it.

Tamara: And you can tell you can. Fun. It reads like a fun. Yes, yes.

Casey: But I love them as authors. I really enjoy their world building. So I was like, let's do this. Let's stick with Alona Andrews for my first graphic novel.

Tamara: For me.

Tamara: I dived into this without reading the synopsis. I didn't even bother because, you know, I too enjoy Alona Andrews work. Yes, we both enjoy them. We've read things by them and had a good time with it. So I was kind of like, okay, even though I was judging the book by the COVID I did not like the COVID art and I was kind of confused what I was going to be getting. But still, I did not read the synopsis. So it was a surprise to me.

Casey: Good surprise or a bad surprise?

Tamara: Not the best kind of surprise. I'm not going to lie.

Speaker C: Not the best.

Tamara: not the worst, but definitely not the best. Yeah. And so I really avoided even reaching out to you after I did once. But then I was like, I'm not going to keep doing this because I could have easily text you seven different times, like, WTF, man? But I didn't want to show my hand. Yeah, it's okay.

Casey: Tell me everything now.

Tamara: Tell me everything now and I will go for it.

## **When you finished the graphic audio, what did you think**

Okay, so before we dive into the guts of it, as we do high level, when you finished the graphic audio, what did you think?

Casey: I am interested. It's not the best story they've ever written. They have definitely evolved and grown over the years. And you can absolutely tell the graphic audio itself. I didn't hate it, but I don't love it. Okay, so I'm interested in the story, but the graphic audio, I'm kind of meh about.

Tamara: Okay, so two things. So first, when I ended it, I thought, okay, I'm happy that's we're done. So also, I also thought I should have picked it. I should have picked it and not let Casey pick it. Only because I am familiar with graphic audio and I could tell from the beginning I wouldn't like the way they presented the audio. And I've heard much better.

Speaker C: Okay.

Tamara: And I feel like this was a poor pick for your first time because just like I said earlier, just like movies, some movies are done really well.

Tamara: And some aren't, right?

Casey: Yeah. There are a few spots where I was like, I don't know what I'm listening to right now.

Tamara: I know, because you're not, by nature an audiobook listener to begin with.

Casey: Yeah.

Tamara: So I knew this would be a different experience for you, but I hoped that this wouldn't scare you off because this is not a good pick for a graphic audio, in my opinion.

Casey: You are the expert. I just picked it because it was Alona Andrews. I knew we had read them on the podcast in the past. I had high hopes for the story. It, did not meet expectations. But I'm not completely turned off.

Tamara: Okay, I will let you pick the next one. You're open to doing one more? Yes.

Casey: But you get to pick it this time.

Tamara: Okay. Because I'm like, lord have mercy on all of us. Because to me, and I know you all know me, you all know I am a hard raider. I am by nature, I am a critical

listener and reader. And so I had a lot of issues with this, and afterwards, I did some looking at other negative reviews, and the people who don't like it had some of the same problems that I did. So I didn't feel alone.

Tamara: And I felt that all the positive reviews, no shade if you liked it, but you're kind of fangirling. I'm pretty sure.

Casey: Yeah.

Tamara: because let's keep it real.

## **I did not like the main character, Dina's narrator**

Speaker C: Okay.

Tamara: So first, right off. Right off, I want to kind of split the audio m separate from the plot. Yes. Because I have issues with the plot and issues with the audio.

Speaker C: Yes.

Tamara: So right off, like, within the first 20 minutes, I'm like, what's with this random ass music in the background? Like, the music didn't feel like it fit the tone of what the characters were saying.

Casey: The music was always really weird and never fit.

Tamara: No. So I was very thrown by that, and it really messed with the pacing and it pulled me out of what was happening.

Casey: Yes.

Tamara: So that's one of my big issues with the audio itself is, like, the random music. It just didn't fit. It didn't work for me. And I did not like. I'm sorry. I did not like the main character, Dina's narrator. She was annoying like, her at I. Her southern twang was aggravating, and I could not tell if she was supposed to be, like, this Southern Belle type girl, but she's an alien. She's not like, it's weird.

Casey: Technically human, but yeah, no, it was really. She grew up in Georgia, so. Yes, the Georgia Southern accent is very different from the Texas Southern accent. And she had a very Texas southern accent, even though she's only been there.

Tamara: Like, a year or two.

Casey: So I'm like, why do you sound texan when you've been in Georgia, but also you've been around space?

Tamara: So I don't know. I feel like she should sound more worldly and less like someone from the country who's never been anywhere.

Casey: Yeah, that's exactly what she sounded like, and it did not make sense. And m. I did not like that either.

Tamara: No. So narrator choices weren't the best for Dina. The guys, I guess, were fine.



They were fine.

Casey: As I say, as my first graphic audio, I really appreciated the fact that there were actual male narrators, because I'm so used to every once in a while, I just listen, and it's one person doing every voice. And when the women try to do the men, it's weird. So I was like, all right. I can appreciate different people voicing different characters. I like that. So, again, that's why I'm going to trust you and do another one in the future.

Tamara: Yeah, that's kind of, like, the best.

Casey: Part for me, just because it was new.

Tamara: And so definitely, I like that too. Yeah.

Casey: If that Dina woman had been doing every voice, I would have quit. I would have texted and been like.

Tamara: I'm sorry, I'm done. It's funny because somebody said that they actually preferred the regular audiobook with one woman reading everything. But I feel like her voice must have been different in the audiobook. You know what I'm saying? It was a different narrator.

Casey: I might listen to a sample of that just to see who she is and if she sounds so was. As somebody who's lived in the south my entire life, it was really fucking.

Tamara: Mm Yeah, it definitely was. So that really also pulled me out of it, and I honestly found myself really getting bored with it. I was so bored with it. So I'd start, I'm listening.

I'm like, So I turn it off. I'll come back later. I'll listen a little more. I'll just give myself a break until tomorrow.

Casey: Oh, no.

Tamara: The next day comes and goes. It's in the evening. I'm like, shit, I guess I should listen to this graphic audio some more. So I listen some more. At least I fall asleep kind of.

Casey: Short and only, like, 6 hours, especially if you speed it up.

Tamara: Yes, I did speed it up to 1.5, which helped.

Casey: Good.

Tamara: But to me, it was almost unbearable. If, God, I weren't doing this for the podcast after the first 30 minutes, I would have quit it. And I was kind of mad at myself that I bought this.

Casey: Oh, no.

Tamara: And the thing was, what made me mad was actually when I went on to scribd, which is where I have a subscription. If you don't know about scribd, shameless plug, you can get unlimited books and audiobooks, ebooks, and all of that for one monthly price. I looked later and it was on there. I'm like, mother. I could have just listened as a part of my subscription instead of paying for it. So I was really po'd, to say the least. I was really annoyed that I spent like, 15 or hours on this thing.

Casey: No, I was my library card.

Tamara: I swear to God, I was so pissed. But I'm like, okay. I just, like, threw \$15 down the toilet. It's fine. But anyone who's interested in, script, it's actually been, renamed. It's called everand. I think there's a link in the show notes. If you want to check it out, you can get 60 days free.

Speaker C: Anyway.

### **When it came to the graphic audio itself, I didn't really enjoy it**

Tamara: When it came to the graphic audio itself as a piece of work, I didn't really enjoy it that much.

Casey: They made some weird choices. And you mentioned the first 30 minutes around that time, friggin Sean Evans is running around peeing on everything because he's a werewolf. And they had water sounds while he was literally, I was like, did I leave my sink on? And I want to go turn off.

Tamara: My water sound like a faucet?

Speaker C: No, it's not me.

Casey: It's him peeing and this fucking.

Speaker C: What?

Tamara: Not cute. Not cute. Not cute.

Casey: Not interesting. Not a sound I wanted to hear.

Tamara: No. And honestly, Sean did not come across as, and I don't know if this has to do with the performance or with the character, but I'm like, all these dudes. I didn't feel like any kind of nothing about nothing about any of these guys, either one, the vampire or the werewolf.

Casey: I felt a little bad for Sean just because he is alien and his parents lied to him. And then he had had that phone call with them, and he's like, you lied to me. But, I'm a grown ass man.

Tamara: That phone call, it was like we were overhearing his private phone call.

Casey: Yeah, that was.

Tamara: And I did feel a little bit. I was like, damn. But I'm like, damn, Dana, just sit there, listen to this phone call. Oh, my God. I don't. Parts. There were some parts that were kind of more interesting, but there weren't enough to sustain me for the entirety of this no experience.

Casey: It definitely feels like an early draft of a project that somebody has started. They have a good idea. They kind of know what beats to hit for the beat sheet, but it's not really fleshed out. It's kind of coherent. But they really needed to just get a developmental editor and really flesh it out and really put a lot more into it.

Speaker C: And,

Casey: I think I heard typos, but I couldn't be sure if it was the audiobook or actual typos. And I'm kind of scared to go check. There are a few typos on the blurb, though, so maybe it didn't feel like this got any editing. It really feels like they just put it on the blog and then put it together. And, ten years later, it became an audiobook. And really, before it became an audiobook, they should have fleshed it out a little bit or done a little bit more to it.

Tamara: Yeah, because as a person, I feel like any good fiction, I should be able to just start reading it without reading the synopsis and be able to grasp what's going on.

### **M: Overall, I thought it was an interesting take**

So if I want to, let's. I kind of want to switch gears to talk about the book itself and the plot and stuff. Like the first maybe 45 minutes, I'm like, what the fuck is going on? And then different things. I'm like, wait, is this Sci-Fi? I'm like, is this about space? I'm like, what is happening? I'm like, is this fantasy or Sci-Fi? And then it's like, at first I couldn't exactly. And I'm like, well, it's both, but I didn't figure that out at first. And she's talking about, like, spaceships and then her crazy ass dog with four rows of teeth. And I'm like, okay. I mean, I really was confused with what was happening. And I'm like, what is this? What is she? What is the innkeeper? And then suddenly we get the info dump for Sean because he knew nothing. M so the authors gave all the information we need in the world as teaching Sean because he doesn't know anything. But that took too long. I was flailing around for a bit, like, what is this?

Tamara: And I'm like, at first I couldn't even tell. I'm like, what year is this supposed to be? In a minute I felt like it was supposed. Again, that was me making assumption from the COVID art. I'm like, I thought it was supposed to be, like, old fashioned or something. And I'm like, wait, it's very futuristic. I'm like, wait, no, it's not really, but I was just all over the place and I didn't like that feeling.

Casey: Yeah, they needed a good editor on this. And again, it feels like a first draft and I'm interested enough in the story. Overall, I thought it was an interesting take.

Speaker C: Right?

Casey: Like when they were explaining vampires and how these vampires on the different planet, I thought that was really interesting and fascinating because vampires are so overdone and everybody's doing vampires and it's always so standard, but they're like, no, we can't kill you if you're in prayer, because then we have to do all this other stuff. So that's why your cross works. It's not really. Anyway, I thought it was interesting, but it definitely needed to be fleshed out a lot more.

Tamara: Yeah, it definitely reads like, dare I say, like fan fiction. Like someone who knows something that they like and they're just tossing shit together from other things and the quality of fan fiction, because most fan fiction writers aren't professional writers. They just write what they like.

Casey: Fan fiction authors out there, I need.

Tamara: To defend them first. Okay. Note this. I'm not saying all fan fiction, but a lot of fan fiction. Just seems like Joe Schmo picked up a pen and wanted to write their

favorite story. And that's what this sounds like.

Casey: Yes. No, they have definitely grown as authors, and we definitely have seen that when we read, the Nevada series, which.

Tamara: I really love, miles and Miles and.

Casey: Miles beyond this, because they have an editor and they go through rounds of revisions, and that's just a shameless plug for me. But anyway, I'm interested enough. Like, it's Alona Andrews. So I am definitely giving them a lot of leeway. Whereas if this was a new author, to me, I'd be, eh, no, I'm done.

Tamara: Yeah, I'm not giving them that leeway. I feel like I like that. And I'm the kind of person where I like what I like and I don't. What I don't, and I don't care if it happens to be the same author. Yeah, I really love.

Casey: Good quality to have.

Tamara: Yeah, I love the Nevada series. I liked all those books pretty much. There might have been one or two that didn't hit just right, but I liked them all in general. But, this, I didn't. I didn't really like much about it at all. and I won't be continuing. So there's know. I don't know. I just say it plainly. Honestly, I couldn't even pretend like I gave them extra points because I was just so. Again, the only word that comes to mind is bored. I was bored even when some of this stuff was supposed to be comical. Like, some things were kind of funny also, that's another thing I don't really necessarily like a lot of comedy.

Tamara: With my dark was supposed to feel like dark, something dark and scary. But it's comedy. I don't really go for that. But for example, I feel like maybe the beats were off for me or something. Because when I think of Mercy Thompson, there are comical beats in there.

Tamara: But it doesn't hit in an awkward way like this one did. I'm like, okay. And again, maybe it was also the music and the sound effects making it awkward. Even more awkward than it would.

Casey: No, that was definitely awkward.

### **Even the scene where Dina is in the Costco of all places was funny**

Tamara: Even the scene where Dina is in the Costco of all places, this Costco trip was like some, okay, so she's in Costco. One of the little scary things pops up and she's like, she and this random customer.

Tamara: Beat it down. And then when the customer goes away to get help, she's like, I got to bury this thing. And I could just in my mind how the sounds were going. I can just imagine Dina sitting there shaking. Oh. Trying to get the building to swallow it. I mean, to me, I was laughing. I was laughing. I'm like, I'm sure this is not supposed to be funny, but she's like, nah, I just have to close. Like, oh, God. I'm like, this is ridiculous, honestly.

Casey: Okay, so that scene kind of reminded me of the Mercy Thompson scene where she fights the little Faye otter in a freaking Walmart. I was like, yeah, no, I see a correlation between the two.



Tamara: Oh my God. So funny.

Casey: It was weird. It was wild. I was like, this is, why is nobody walking over? Like, I know you turned the cameras off with your magic or whatever, but it's Costco. People walk around with their carts loading up on shit like you're not hiding in the back.

Tamara: I don't know what Costco they've been at, but at the crack of dawn, when they open at 930 or whatever it is, that place is off the chain.

Tamara: It's not a few random people in there.

Speaker C: It's packed.

Tamara: 1000 people in there. Yeah, Costco is packed constantly.

Casey: 24/7 open to Costco.

Tamara: Even like, right. If you walk in right when they open, 20 other people are walking in with you.

Tamara: So there is no way you would have been in an aisle with one person.

Speaker C: And if you know Costco, you can.

Tamara: See through the racks. So if a fight is happening, I'll look like, what the hell going on over there? They're not quiet.

Casey: You can hear the screaming and the grunting and the throwing shit.

Tamara: The only thing that could have made that scene better, and I think if it were written last year, they could have added it.

Tamara: But had they been in the correct aisle to grab, a folding chair and knock the folding chair over the creature in that would have been like the best. I would have laughed really hard at that one. But yeah, I don't know.

Casey: I'm sorry I started off on the wrong foot this year.

Tamara: No, but guess what?

Casey: I was like, it's alone to Andrews. It's going to be good. I want this.

Tamara: I feel like that means we can only go up from.

Casey: Yes, yes, that is true.

Tamara: And I also feel like I have learned a hard lesson, like the last couple of years with taking authors works that I currently like and trying to read older works.

Casey: Yes.

Tamara: It doesn't necessarily work.

Casey: They have grown a lot, and I can appreciate their newer books a lot more after

reading this. And even though I'm giving them leeway, I'm like, yeah, you were baby authors. You were baby authors when you wrote this.

Tamara: Yes.

## **Today's episode is brought to you by the shelf addiction merch store**

Okay, let's take a quick break. I feel like I have shit on this for the first 30 minutes, so we could take a break. Yeah. Okay, guys, check out these commercials. By listening to those, you are supporting the podcast. And don't forget to pick out the book review journal available right now on Amazon. I know you want to pick one up to kick off your 2024 properly by journaling all of your books. Yes. Stay with us. We'll be right back.

Speaker C: M.

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## **I would have loved to dig more into Sean's werewolf situation**

All right, welcome back, guys. We shall continue our conversation on what's the name of this book again? M. Clean sweep. Also that title, trash.

Casey: Yeah.

Tamara: I get it. Because. Okay, so I get it.

Casey: She has the broom. Broom.

Tamara: I get it. Meh. Trash. She's also trying to make the broom a character, like the walking stick. The walking stick is a character, but the walking stick is much cooler than the broom. Yes.

Speaker C: Yeah.

Casey: I don't know. It's a weird book. It's interesting and it's creative, but it's weird.

Tamara: It's a hodgepodge of things.

Speaker C: Yeah.

Casey: It's like, it wants to be urban fantasy, but it also wants to be Sci-Fi with space and there's portal travel. Like, I don't even know what to call it. You're walking through doors into different parts of the universe.

Tamara: so that was interesting.

Casey: But then you're fighting aliens in Costco at the same.

Speaker C: Whole.

Tamara: Okay, so I feel like we needed. Yeah, we got the lay of the land, pretty much, but I would have loved to dig more into the werewolf situation. And, yeah, Sean got this biotech thing that seeped into his body. Okay. I kind of want some more on that. That would have been more interesting than him. Just kind of. Again, the grunting and groaning as M this thing enters his body. He's like, I almost skipped that.

Casey: Part because I was like, what? Nobody can walk in right now because you don't know what is happening.

Tamara: You think one thing's happening, but it's not.

Casey: Can I just say that was a lot more sexual than when they kissed. When they kissed, I wanted to throw up. That was disgusting. They had this weird 70s porn music going on, and they were like, slurping.

Tamara: And I was like, this is disgusting, this slurping. I was like, first off, anybody who kisses with that kind of slurping is nasty.

Casey: saliva everywhere.

Tamara: Too much slurping for I sort of got. If someone kissed me and it was a slurp, I'd be like, okay, stop. no, stop right now.

Casey: You lose everything.

Tamara: And it was both of them.

Casey: Like, both of the actors were making that noise, and I was like, are you actually kissing each other right now? Are you just pretending to kiss the microphone? Because either way, it's disgusting.

Tamara: It sound like a bunch of teenagers trying to figure out how to kiss. I'm like, what is that?

Casey: It was gross. It was so gross.

Tamara: Yeah, it was not good. So, I mean, between, I'm telling you, all the different times of the grunts and the kissing, slurping. Oh, my God. Just too many awful choices.

Casey: No, I would have rather had the grunting at the kiss part, but, like, oh, no, I can't.

Tamara: But, Yeah, I felt like there was an opportunity to learn more about Sean. I felt like we got, like I said, the authors gave us what we needed to know, but I would have rather.

Speaker C: I don't know.

Tamara: Again, here I go, trying to rewrite someone's book. I don't know. I just would have rather had more of that.

**The book felt really young to me. Like, how old is Dina supposed to be**

And even the vampire. That was interesting how these vampires are almost like

security. I don't know, I don't know how to describe them.

Speaker C: It's strange.

Tamara: Like very nobility feeling and houses and, promises and rules and. I don't know, it's very strange.

Casey: Very much like we rule this world and this is what we're going to do. It's like somebody watched an episode of Star Trek and said, I want to mix this with Twilight. Then somehow this came out of it.

Tamara: It does seem like that, doesn't it? That's actually really good, comparison because it felt really young. Like, how old is Dina supposed to be?

Casey: They didn't give a specific age, but she said Sean Evans is 28 and she was like three or four years younger than him.

Tamara: Okay, so let's just say 25. So even if she's 25, I don't know, just something about her red really young to me.

Casey: She was really young.

Speaker C: But she was.

Casey: Also trying to be older at the same time because she was like, I went off to college, then my parents disappeared. And then I went around the universe for years, and then I came back here, and now I'm in Texas for a few years, so I'm like old and I

know what I'm doing.

Tamara: But also, yeah, there was another part.

Casey: Where she was like, I'm only a few years older than that girl in high school, but I've done so much it would turn her hair white.

Tamara: And I was like, but have you? You don't sound like it, ma'am.

Casey: sound like it? Yeah. Her character was not fleshed out well enough.

Tamara: No, not to make me care about her or feel sympathy for her or nothing. I mean, I felt like, oh, yeah, that sucks. Your parents disappeared. We got a little blurb about her brother not wanting to be an innkeeper, but it's like.

Casey: And then her sister is married and gone on a different planet. Like, who cares?

Tamara: She's gone.

Casey: Do you talk to her? Do you send messages? Is she okay? Why? Does she not want to come home?

Tamara: We need it more. We needed a lot more.

Speaker C: Yeah.

Tamara: And I know, again, like you said, this was like a fun little side project for them,



so maybe they didn't feel the need to get into the nitty gritty like they would in a normal book. But for that case, I feel like we should have known or given some warning that this is like, if you're not a hardcore fan, you wouldn't have known this was on their website and written in this way, and that hurts them, I think, because a lot of people, like, if you go onto goodreads and Amazon and look at the one in two stars, people didn't like it.

Speaker C: They didn't like it. I don't know.

Tamara: They should have presented this as, like, a mini something. I don't know how you could present this in a way that people will know that this is not a full fledged book. It's not, all the things that we normally do in a book. This is like a mini book or a. I don't know, some passion project.

Casey: A fun, creative project. In between Kate Daniels and everything else, they're was. It was good, but it needed so much more. And I feel like if they had the right editor, if they had really worked on this more than just like, let me post something on the blog for a Friday, if they had actually done more to it, it would have been so good. And even if they published this ten years ago, put it together, and then the graphic audio approached them and was like, hey, we're interested in this. They should have gone, okay, now's our chance to redo this. Now is our chance to flesh it out and fix it and make it better instead of leaving it as is.

Casey: Because as is not good.

Tamara: No. Honestly, I guess it's so lucky that I was pulled toward that hidden legacy series. Because first.

Tamara: Because if this had been my first taste of Alona Andrews, I'd have been like hell to the nose. This is not for me. It would have been very hard to get me to read something else if this was my first interaction.

Speaker C: Yeah.

Tamara: So for those of you that this is your first interaction, erase, it.

Speaker C: Erase it completely.

Tamara: Just don't even think about it. And then give the hidden legacy book a bit better than the Kate Daniels. Because I tried the Kate Daniels, and there was nothing wrong with the first book. I just wasn't engaged enough to keep going.

Casey: The first book was the first book they ever wrote together, the first Kate Daniels book. That was book number one of all time. And they have grown a lot since then. And if you talk to them about their Kate Daniels series, they're like, thank you for sticking with us as we learned how to write the first three books. So they are the first people to admit that the early Kate Daniels books are not their best work because they were still so new to writing.

Tamara: And that's fair.

Speaker C: And it is fair. That's fair.

Tamara: But I have no desire to get through books two and three, to get to the good.

## **Casey recommends starting with hidden legacy to kick off the new year**

Okay, so I recommend start with hidden legacy. That's my personal two cent. I gravitated toward Nevada, and I just loved it. I'm like, it's such a good. It was wild.

Casey: It was so good. I think that's one of my favorite books of all time. Burn for me like that.

Tamara: Yeah. It was so wild because I am here for it. Even what's his face when he kidnapped her, I'm like.

Casey: And then he can't break her.

Tamara: Oh, my God, the hilarity of the two of them. I mean, I love it. It's so good.

Casey: It's so.

Tamara: So,

Tamara: Yeah, if you hear us and you're like, dang, they hate her. They don't.

Casey: We love Alona Andrews. We did the whole trilogy on the podcast a few years ago, which is why I was like, yes, Alona Andrews, graphic novel.

Tamara: Let's do it. Yes. Actually, I'll link those older episodes in the show notes so you guys can go back and listen to those if you want, because we had a great time with.

And so this was utter disappointment to me in a horrible way. To kick off. I'm so sorry I started this, like, literally, I think it was, like, January 1 or something. And I'm like.

Casey: You should have been more vocal and been like, Casey, no, we're not doing this.

Tamara: But, look, I didn't want to start the new year with, like, Casey, look here. Yeah, no, it's okay.

Casey: At this know, we've been doing this podcast for, what, seven years now? You can say, Casey.

Speaker C: No.

Tamara: I'm like, maybe it's just me.

Casey: Maybe.

Tamara: And then I kept listening. I'm like, no, it's not just me.

Casey: The choices they made were just, weird.

Tamara: Yeah, it was just, weird. It was weird.

**The vampire always wins in these three way things. The whole who gets the girl three way love thing**

And I don't know the ending. So the ending, one little quirky thing that I think, the vampire. What's, his name again? Arland.

Casey: Yeah.

Tamara: He kind of was, like, walking away with Sean and Dina's, kind of watching them on her camera, and they're saying to themselves, so what's your intention? Like, what's going on? Do you like her or what?

Casey: Basically.

Tamara: And the vampire was, you know, after doing some research, you know, the vampire always wins in these three way things. The vampire always gets the girl, and he like, m to go their separate ways. So I'm like, okay, so this is a real lay it out version of The whole who gets the girl three way love thing. But I'm like, yeah.

## **Cynthia St. Auburn does the best love triangles**

Casey: So there's only one author who has ever done love triangles in a way that I both love, respect, and hate her all at the same time. And that's Cynthia St. Auburn. She does the best love triangles. I cannot stand love triangles anywhere else. But when she does it, I'm like, I both love you, I hate you, and I respect you because you're doing it right.

Tamara: okay, so what's so unique about her way of doing them?

Casey: So she does it in a way where the character truly loves both men individually for who they are and is genuinely torn between both men. It's not like, oh, my God, he's tall, dark, and handsome. And here's the blonde guy, which should I choose? It's, here's this man who does XYZ. This is why I like him. This is why I respect him. We have this chemistry. This is our solid relationship. But over here, here's a different man who's totally opposite, and we have chemistry, too, and it's different, but I kind of think about him at the same time. But you consume me at the same time. It's very fleshed out, and each man feels like an active choice, and like, she could go either way.

Speaker C: Wow.

Casey: And so, yes, Cynthia St. Augen, when she does it, you're like, damn. Whereas, like, know Sean Evans kisses her, and she's like, oh, my God, I'm so into this. Am I into this?

Tamara: I don't know.

Casey: But then the vampire, is like, can I court you? And she's like, ew, no, I don't like vampires. And you're like, this is not a love triangle. He's just interested, and he smiles good, or whatever. Oh, God, this doesn't feel like a real love triangle. This is, she wants the werewolf, the vampire wants end.

Tamara: And I hate to do another comparison to the mercy Thompson series, but this is how I felt about the whole.

Casey: Thing.

Tamara: you're not really a choice. You don't really have a shot, sir. Yeah, you're cool. She likes you as a friend. You don't really have a choice. Yes, not a real chance. It's just you being delusional. You wish it were, but you really don't have one. And I feel like that's kind of what's happening here as well.

Casey: Oh, yeah, absolutely. Which is why I'm like, ugh, love triangles. It's not going to work.

Tamara: It's not going to be good again.

Casey: Cynthia. Cynthia does it. And I'm like, God damn this woman.

Tamara: m. Okay, well, that's good to know because the love triangle thing is so overrated. And I've said before, I like it when we can have two characters that maybe struggle to get together and have a lot of external things keeping them apart, or even internal things. But it doesn't have to be a third person. I feel like the third person is always like, it never really sits right. And you have an exception there, but I've not really seen one where I just really believed it. And what makes this chick so great? Why does everybody and their mother love her? That's another trope that I kind of hate when it seems like this person is perfect and everyone just wants them, but you can't really figure out why everyone wants great. About Dina, I don't know.

Casey: Yeah, she doesn't really have a strong personality. She's just very determined. And determination is not a personality trait. I mean, it can be, but it's not really.

Tamara: She's not a reason to love someone, or to chase someone.

Casey: Yeah.

Speaker C: No. I don't know.

Casey: Maybe they're just attracted to a competent woman because she owns her own business and is competent and they don't know. See, women, I don't know. It needed to be fleshed out. We needed at least another 100 pages of just story building and world building and fleshing out characters.

Tamara: And, yeah, we needed to buy into know, I guess, this three way love situation. We needed the triangle. We needed more scenes with her and Arland. We needed some connection between them, that we didn't really get at all. I mean, at least with, like, he did rescue her when she was, like, thought she was dying in the parking lot.

Speaker C: Yeah.

Tamara: but other than that, I guess. Whatever.

**Andrew: I give the audiobook itself three stars. It was good. There were some weird choices**

All right. I'm ready to rate it if you are.

Casey: I think I'm ready.

Tamara: Would you like me to go first, or do you want to go first?



Casey: You go first.

Tamara: Okay. So when I first finished it, I really was torn on which way to go. It was either going to be a one or a two.

Tamara: And at first I wanted to give it a two because it's Alona. Andrew. So I kind of wanted to just say, okay, it wasn't that bad, but it was that bad to me. It was so. I'm sorry. Out the gate. First rating of 2024 is a one star.

Speaker C: Oh, no.

Casey: I'm so sorry.

Tamara: I haven't given a one star in years.

Casey: I know.

Tamara: You wouldn't even give nora one star. One star. There was nothing like, even though I had a couple of chuckles, a lot of it I was cringing, like, oh, God. Like, the moans and the groans and the slurping and the water and everything else, and then this, like, I don't know, something. I just did not connect with Dina at all, and I felt like I needed to connect with her to make everything else passable, and I didn't connect with her at all. Yeah, the cutest thing was the shih tzu. Yeah, so sorry. One star out of five.

Speaker C: Your turn.

Casey: I'm a lot nicer than you.

Casey: I give the audiobook itself three stars. There were some weird choices, but again, as my first graphic audiobook, I'm intrigued by all the different voices and some of the background noises. Like, every once in a while they would have bugs or insects in the background. I was like, oh, that's like an interesting. Because it's nighttime and she's out walking the streets.

Speaker C: Like, interesting.

Casey: Definitely not the best, but, I'm ready to take the leap review and find a better one. The story itself, I was going to give three and a half, but since we don't give half stars, I'm going to round down to three. It was good. It's Alona Andrews, and so it's definitely like Alona Andrews buffering three stars. Not the best. But I am intrigued enough to read the next book just to see if it gets any better.

Speaker C: I'm done.

Casey: That's fair.

Tamara: And actually, it's funny that you said you were surprised I rated lower than Nora Roberts. I, too, am surprised. But I think I had such dread when starting that book. that, yeah, I'm like, oh, God.

Speaker C: I have to finish this.

Tamara: Help me, somebody, please. That's how I felt. And I hate that. I hate it for myself. And I'm, sorry. Not sorry. I'm just being honest.

Casey: You're always honest on the podcast, and we can appreciate that.

Tamara: And in real life, too. I'm honest all the time, to be fair.

Casey: We love that about you. It's okay.

Tamara: I guess we'll come back again sometime this year with another graphic audio. You get to pick. We'll give it a rest for a while, and we'll come back with something I pick and we'll see how it goes.

Casey: Yes.

Tamara: Hopefully I can pick a winner. I feel like I'm going to do some research. I'm going to do some deep dives. I might even listen to some of it. You listen to the sample?

Tamara: Because I want a winner. It's part of my goal this year is to have lot more wins than losses. And I'm not talking, like, last year. We talked about this in our year wrap up, I had so many mineral of the road books in general, I had a ton of threes. Like, my average for the year was like, three point something.

Casey: Oh, damn.

Tamara: Across all my reading, three point something and not a high. It was like 3.2 or something like that. So I haven't had a really solid, good stride of really enjoyable books in a long time. So my goal is to work a little harder, to take less chances and find things that I know I'll actually like. And in turn, hopefully, you'll actually like them too.

Casey: Fingers crossed.

Tamara: Yeah, less chances this year. I want more dependability, more win.

Speaker C: Okay, we got this.

Tamara: So that's what my goal.

Casey: Well, we'll do it.

Tamara: Yeah, we'll see what can be done.

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all right, I guess we're done here. What do you think, Casey?

Casey: I think we're done.

Tamara: All right.

Casey: Yeah.

Tamara: It's been a blast. Way to start off a new year. I know, y'all. So if you've read or listened to the audiobook or graphic audio of clean sweep and you'd like to share your \$0.02 with us and let me know. Hey, Tamara, you're, on some bullshit. I don't know why you didn't like, you know. Hey, I agree with, you know, Casey, you got some good points.

Whatever you want to share with us, we're open to it, so please reach out. We'll be back next year. We'll be back next month with another book chat. And actually, we're going to decide in the after show what that book chat will consist of. So if you're curious to see how we come up with that, it's available right now on the Spreaker app audio only, or on Patreon with video. Until next time, we'll see you later. Happy reading. Bye, guys.

Casey: Bye, everybody.

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