**Lisa Foiles**

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[00:00:13] **Bryan Smith:** Bryan Smith here and welcome to the Dreampath podcast, where I try to get inside the heads of talented creatives from all over the world.

[00:00:22] My goal is to demystify and humanize the creative process and make it accessible to everyone. Now let's jump in. Lisa Foiles is on the show. Lisa has been acting in Hollywood since she was 12 best known as a four-year series, regular on the Nickelodeon sketch comedy show "All That" her other TV appearances include an Emmy-winning episode of Fox', "Malcolm in the Middle" Disney's, 'Even Stevens" TNTs "Leverage" and Nickelodeon's "Game Shakers".

[00:00:51] Her film work includes the thriller "Shiver" and the comedy "Master of Disguise" with Dana Carvey. In 2020, Lisa was welcomed back to the reboot of "All That". Lisa is also a video game journalist, a voiceover actor, and the author of the five-star Amazon rated book "Ash Ridley and the Phoenix" about a 12-year-old, who meets a bird named Flynn who turns out to be a Phoenix and then finds herself enrolled in the Academy of Beasts and Magic.

[00:01:18] In February of this year, Lisa started the YouTube comedic web series "Stuff of Legends" created by Joshua Jovenshire. "Stuff of Legends" features Jovenshire, Foiles, and other cast members playing Dungeons and dragons as puppets act out the scenarios that unfold as they play. We cover a lot of ground in this chat, including why she left television in her late teens, why she got back into the business, how her love of gaming shaped her career over the last decade, what inspired her to write a book, the challenges of being a first-time fantasy novel writer with no connections in the literary world, and how motherhood changed her view of social media. So, without further ado, let's jump into my chat with the wildly charismatic and charming Lisa Foiles.

[00:02:03] Lisa Foiles. Welcome to dream path podcast.

[00:02:05] **Lisa Foiles:** Thank you so much for having me. I am honored.

[00:02:08] **Bryan Smith:** Well, I am honored and I'm so glad to talk to you about your book. I am about a third of the way through it. I tried, maybe I'm about halfway, but I tried my best to get through it. And I didn't realize, Lisa that when I was going to be reading a young adult novel, that this was a very expansive story that you wrote so well done.

[00:02:31] **Lisa Foiles:**  Well, thank you, I no judgment over here because I'm the slowest reader on the planet. So, it takes me sometimes six months to a year to finish a book. So, I never fault people for taking a long time to read it because I'm just so thrilled that anyone would want to read it. But thank you, yeah. I actually had the idea to write this story. When I was a kid, I would read nothing, but these type of middle grade novels, you know, I like to say that I'd go to the bookstore in any book I saw with the dragon on the front, I would buy that. And I just got so into these fantasy worlds that my own imagination was kind of sparked.

[00:03:07] And I began developing, you know, the world of Cascadia and all these creatures. And so it's definitely been a long time in the making, but I certainly had to go back and forth with my editor a lot on the whole world-building thing. Because it was the first time, I'd ever built my own universe.

[00:03:25] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah, that's an interesting term world-building. I hear that from filmmakers, and I haven't interviewed that many authors before, but that's so true, especially for authors you are literally building every single part of that narrative. You're building the characters and their backstories and the setting and the names, just the names alone.

[00:03:46] I was impressed with the cities and the school itself, you know, the Academy. All of the animal’s names, it must've taken a very long time to put all of this together before you even started typing.

[00:03:59] **Lisa Foiles:** You're absolutely right. I planned it for about a year and a half before I ever wrote the first word of the first chapter.

[00:04:06] I have two huge documents that basically lay out all of the rules of my universe, like what's okay. What's not okay. What can happen? Like what can magic do? What can't it do, which characters exist? How many years this land has been here, you know, just, and then I have another document, that's all character descriptions and almost every character has, you know, a paragraph or two of just their backstory and their age and their personality and what they like to wear, things that I didn't even write in the book, but just, I needed to see that in my mind, as I was creating the story. And that's probably my biggest piece of advice to anyone who wants to write a fantasy novel is please just take the time to build it in your head and in just scrap documents before you ever start writing, because it's, I mean, there were times when it got so complicated for me, I had to go back to my own documents and be like, "okay, wait, no, like how old is she? Like, when's her birthday? How it does make sense? When did she leave her father?" Like all this stuff. So it really, really helps to have that kind of, it's kind of like a show Bible, you know how like TV shows have show Bibles. It's, it's kind of like that. So yeah, it definitely helps me out.

[00:05:19] **Bryan Smith:** It's interesting. You brought up the word 'rules' and you know, what magic can do and what they can't do. That's important because the reader is going to be critical. If you are violating the rules that you created. And there has to be a lot of thought put into that aspect of the narrative, which is all right, what can these creatures do?

[00:05:39] Why is that? And once you establish those rules, that's it for the entire book, you have to follow those rules, otherwise it doesn't make sense.

[00:05:46] **Lisa Foiles:** Right. I forget that. I forget the phrase, I think it's, it applies to, you know, fantasy writing and also screenwriting. And just any time you create a universe, I believe it's, it doesn't have to be possible, it just has to be plausible. You know, it's like the Marvel cinematic universe is so big and there's so many rules for each character and yeah, we're totally invested in it, but I, for one am, really guilty of seeing something happen in one of the movies and being like, wait a minute, that would never happen, and I'm not saying that would never happen in real life. I'm saying that with the rules that they have set up in the MCU, I don't believe that would happen, but that's just me, you know, as a critical movie goer, because that's what makes it fun, right? You know, I'm not judging them. I'm not. You know, saying like screw this movie.

[00:06:31] 'Cause they did this one thing. I don't believe it. That's just the fun of going to movies. And I, I fully expect all of the writers of Marvel to have perfectly good explanations to anything that I, you know, a total noob, just an audience member would bring up. But I like to think I have the same. I like to think that I have readers out there that would see something happen in my book and be like, "wait a minute, would that happen?" And you know, hopefully I would have a good explanation for it, but that's the fun of fantasy is that, you know, you do make the rules as the creator of it. So yeah, I got to decide, you know, what the magical creatures could do and what they couldn't do. So it's just, it's playtime, you know, it's imagination time.

[00:07:10] **Bryan Smith:** Your audio book is a lot of fun, by the way. I love your voice. Yeah. How much time did you have to spend recording that? I know how many hours the audio book is, but I'm talking about takes, and it's obviously more than however many hours it took to read, start to finish. There's a lot that goes into the recording process and retakes and that type of thing.

[00:07:32] **Lisa Foiles:** Yes, this is actually a crazy story. And I love telling this story because it went from being, almost a tragedy to working out way better than I expected. So, from the very beginning, when I was working out the book deal, I knew I wanted to record the audio book because I'm a voiceover artist and it's my story, like what a dream come true to be able to narrate your own story, you know, for kids out there and, and try to make it more. You know, just try to do each voice, make it like they're listening to a movie as opposed to just, you know, somebody just, you know, "chapter one, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah" like, I really tried to come up with accents and voices for it.

[00:08:07] Like that was just my dream to be able to do that. And I was all scheduled to drive to LA. I live in Las Vegas. I was all scheduled to drive to LA and I had, I believe I had two days scheduled at a recording studio. To come do my book and it was scheduled for, I believe, middle of March 2020, so that was right when COVID was taking over the world.

[00:08:31] So my dream was about to come true. And then, I basically get the call. That's like, ah, this is not going to happen because everybody has to quarantine and we're all shutting down. "So, your audio book is probably not going to happen. And we're going to have just one of our readers do it from the comfort of their own home and, that'll be that". And I was like, "Ooh, like I can't have anyone else read my story, like I have to do this." And so I was super sad. But thankfully I am friends with an amazing audio engineer studio here in Las Vegas called Monster Sound and Picture. And they were like, "Hey, we can just lend you premium audio equipment for you to just set up in your house for a couple of days and read the story from there". And I'm like, "Oh yeah". So, they gave me these padded walls to. To set up this incredibly nice microphone, you know, the whole, the whole setup. And thank goodness that happened because I was able to take way more time with it than I would have at the studio. When I went to LA, I only had, I believe I only had two days, so I would have had to have been reading it from morning till night for two days straight, and my voice would've got tired, you know, I'm on a, I don't want to waste their time, so I wouldn't have taken very many breaks, but thankfully with my husband, Sean, he, he already has a past in, in audio recordings. So, he's already really knowledgeable about that. So, with him, you know, doing the technical part of it and me just sitting and reading and having fun, I was able to do some scenes, you know, three or four times if I wanted to, to like really get the accent down, and I think it turned out way better than it would've if I would've gone to LA to do it. So, Hey, you know, things can work out for the better sometimes.

[00:10:09] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah, and what was really fun about the audio book? And I've read the book also, it listened to it as well. And I like to do that just to see what I like better, but the audio book is fun because you actually sing songs that are in the book and there's really no way to get a picture or a sound of what that song sounds like when you're reading it, but when you hear you singing it, it really adds something special.

[00:10:37] **Lisa Foiles:** That's really funny. You say that because I, yeah, so Ash, my main character has this lullaby that she sings a couple of times in the books. And I remember when I was recording it, you know, I just went right from all the dialogue right into the song and then back to the dialogue.

[00:10:51] And I remember after we hit cut, I was like, "Hey Sean, can I go back and just do the song again?" Because you know, it wasn't my perfect vocal performance because you know, I am a singer and I, you know, it was hard to just talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, sing, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk. You know, I was like, just go back and just do the song part.

[00:11:06] And Sean was like, "no, I'm not going to let you do that because it sounded more real when you just did it while you were talking." He's like, "if you could go back and do it now, you're going to sing from your diaphragm. You're going to do it perfect." And it's going to sound like you're a recording artist and he's like, that's not the point.

[00:11:22] The point is that it's supposed to be this little girl with no singing experience to just. You know, it's more about the heart of the song than it is the performance. So, he's like, "I'm not going to let you go back and do it." So, I'm like, "ah, fine." But I'm kind of glad he said that because it's true. You know, it's kinda like when I, when I see actors in movies, I like actors that are flawed and that aren't perfect, and you know, maybe they have, you know, moles or like, you know, you know, just physical flaws too. I do not enjoy just watching perfect people walk around saying perfect dialogue. Like I love the flaws of actors. I think that's what, that's what separates them from models, you know, models they're supposed to be just perfect, but actors, I think it's important that they're not perfect. So, I'm glad that he just left it the way it was.

[00:12:06] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah. So, do you think it was worth it? You put so much work into this book and it's really tough for authors of any book to get the word out there and sales and all of the metrics that. Book publishers pay attention to, I imagine it's just an uphill battle to sell books, especially where we're in a very visual, YouTube content type of world right now. But what are your thoughts about, you know, all of the work that you put into it versus what you got out of it? I'm not talking about money, but just the personal fulfillment part of it.

[00:12:38] **Lisa Foiles:** Absolutely. And it’s funny. I always knew I wanted to write a book when I was younger. It was a big dream of mine to be a published author. But the fact of the matter is that was not my career path. It's still not my career path. And, I have so many connections in the entertainment industry. But not the literary agency or the literary industry. So, I had, I had, I nowhere to start. I literally went online and Googled "how to write a book", "how to publish a book."

[00:13:06] And I went about it the way anybody would. I didn't have any kind of advantage, you know, connections to agents or nobody to give me advice. I didn't even know anyone who had published a book. So, I just went about it the best that I, that I could. And, I queried, agencies and publishing companies just like anybody else would. And I got told no 200 times the, just like anybody else, like, you know, like, I, I did not have a leg up just because I've been in the acting industry, my whole life. And yeah, my first publishing deal seemed like the most perfect deal. It was a dream come true. And then it all fell through, for reasons that were not controlled by me, the company that was going to publish my book was purchased by something else and they went in a totally different direction. So they dropped all the books that they had picked up to publish. So that was heartbreaking. And then I had to, you know, pick myself back up and do it again. And the whole, this whole process from day one saying I'm going to write a book to, till it was published was about six or seven years. I really need to go back and look at the exact dates, but it was a very, very long time. And, you know, thankfully this last deal came through and then I hit the bad luck of my book coming out during a pandemic, it came out in April of last year. So I had schools set up to like tour, go around schools in Vegas and book signing, set up, like I was going to do a whole big press circuit, you know, like a whole tour and it all got shut down. And now obviously I can't go to the schools, I can't speak to the kids, I can't do any of that. Like real in-person publicity that is so important to a launch of a book. So yeah, I hit some bad luck there and it really stinks that this was my one chance to like, you know, have a big book release and people were a little, a little preoccupied at that time.

[00:14:52] **Bryan Smith:**  No big deal, just a global pandemic.

[00:14:54] **Lisa Foiles:** But thankfully, you know, socially social media does exist, and I had a lot of people support me and yeah, it certainly didn't do as well as I'm sure it would have if I got to do all those, all that publicity, but it did do well. And I am more than happy with the sales. And even who cares about the sales, really, I did not do any of this for money, I do not care. All I wanted to do was for it to reach kids like me. When I was a little girl, if I would have picked up this book, it just would have added to that, you know, that spark of imagination, that creativity, that led me to become an actor in the first place, like I truly believe these type of books started my whole career. So I'm so thankful for this like genre and for authors that made books that I read. And I cannot tell you just the tears that I have cried from messages from parents and even kids themselves, you know, sending me notes on social media and to my email and to my agency, even of just how this book affected them and touched their lives, and, you know, their kids like pretending to be the characters at home. And, you know, one parent was even telling me that their kid was in a depression, slump, and then this book like helped bring them out of it. And I'm like, "Oh my gosh" like, that's why I did this. Like, that's the whole reason for all of it. You know, it's so cliche to say that if your piece of art touches just one life, then it's all worth it. Like that's so cliche, but you know what? It's so true. And this book really did touch lives and inspire kids the way books inspired me. And I'm just so thankful for the whole experience.

[00:16:31] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah, I'm thankful too. I'm glad that you are also taking your own inspirations from your childhood with, it was it "Dragon Song?" Is that the name of the book?

[00:16:39] **Lisa Foiles:**  Dragon song was a big one. Yeah, I'm sure I read that book 12 times, right? I read it so many times.

[00:16:45] **Bryan Smith:** It's not like you have made this up out of whole cloth without anything to back it up in terms of what you paid attention to as a child. And I think it really shows in a book when it comes from a place of love. Like this is, this is a world that you love, and it was inspired by books that you love and look where you're at now too, with the YouTube series you're on and the Dungeons and Dragons series and the gaming work that you've done in the gaming world world in terms of modeling and game reviews and the kind of that fantasy world. That's the world that you live in and that's the world that you created with this book. And I think that is an authenticity that readers appreciate.

[00:17:31] **Lisa Foiles:** Well, thank you, that's very sweet. And yeah, my, my whole life has just kind of, you know, pretend time, which I love, and yeah, the coolest thing about this book is that because I had been thinking about this plot and these characters since I was like 12 years old, I used to make doodles and sketches and I used to like to write down stuff.

[00:17:50] So, it was very important to me to. Like to keep the vision of my 12-year-old self alive in this story. So, you know, it was really me as a kid that came up with it. I just kind of refined it and expanded it. So hopefully, you know, the fact that it was sparked by the voice of a 12-year-old girl, like that will connect with other 12-year-old girls. You know, I'm not just.

[00:18:10] **Bryan Smith:**  Right.

[00:18:10] **Lisa Foiles:**  You know, a woman in her thirties trying to write a book for little kids that they'll like, like I'm really trying to embody like the spirit of younger self, which is so funny. But yes, I am so blessed to have such a fun life. In fact, I'm going to LA this upcoming week to do a TV show role and play a villain and I'm super excited, you know, to be able to book something during this craziness where nobody's really booking anything right now.

[00:18:35] **Bryan Smith:**  Oh, that's awesome.

[00:18:37] **Lisa Foiles:** Yeah, it's going to be so much fun. And yeah, every aspect of my career has been just fine, you know, from, from hosting and interviewing people, which is all like ad-libbed to, you know, movies and TV shows and, you know, taking a script and making it your own.

[00:18:52] You know, and, and this, this improv, Dungeons and dragon’s series that I'm doing right now called "Stuff of Legends". It's on episode four and there's six episodes total. I'm doing it with Jovenshire who formerly with Smosh games. And basically, if you guys haven't seen it, you have check it out.

[00:19:06] It's revolutionary. It's so funny. We play a modified simplified version of Dungeons and Dragons, which it was kind of my first time playing. I kinda dabbled a couple other times with friends, but this was really my first time playing in all of our, we were all newbs to Dungeons and Dragons, and I think that's what made it fun.

[00:19:24] We'd sit around the table, play Dungeons and dragons, make a whole bunch of decisions that seasoned players would never make because we're so inexperienced with the D. And then Jovenshire had all of our characters made into actual puppets and that the puppets in front of a green screen, act out all of the fight scenes and all, you know, like the little adventuring scenes. It's so cute and I'm so pleased with how it turned out.

[00:19:51] **Bryan Smith:** I'm going to put links to this in the show notes on your episode, because it is a lot of fun, I've seen it. I've seen it on YouTube and it's very, well-produced highly produced well lit. I mean, this is like studio television that you're watching basically, plus funny, and you hear the word puppets and Oh, it's for kids now. This is not for kids. I mean, kids can watch it, but it's definitely for adults in terms of, there's some adult themes and adult humor and it's really unique. And I think what it's doing is it's catering to this nostalgia that people have for the 1980s and nineties when people were playing DnD in even the seventies.

[00:20:29] But I, I was a child of the seventies and eighties, and when my friends were playing DnD it was the 1980s. And that was a really fun time where we were connected to each other in a way different way than we are today, where everybody has headsets on and they're playing remotely through their game sets.

[00:20:47] But that DnD experience where you're sitting around a table and you're rolling dice. There is some nostalgia to that. And I think you guys are tapping into that.

[00:20:54] **Lisa Foiles:** That is so sweet of you to say, yeah, this is actually Josh Jovenshire, the creator. It's his directorial debut. And to watch him, you know, be on set and run, basically everything, you know, he's directing, he's being the dungeon master, he created it, he's producing, he's doing everything. And just to sit here and watch him be so amazing. It was such a thrill and yeah, you're right. You know, it's, it's so funny how technology has just overtaken our lives. And even this morning, I was watching, I've been waiting all week for the latest "Wandavision" episode and it's all I've been wanting to watch, and I'm, I even found myself sitting there grabbing my phone, like every 10 minutes to like, check, like, "why am I grabbing my phone?" Like, all I've wanted all week is to just sit and give my full attention to the latest "Wandavision" episode. But yet here I am. Instinctively just like grabbing my phone, like text, text, Twitter. So, the fact that when we were filming "Stuff of Legends", like, you know, we didn't have our phones on set. Like we just sat there while the cameras were rolling and just had fun with each other and just pretended and ad-libbed and came up with ridiculous things. It was, I would not trade it. It was, Oh man, it was so much fun. And I think that our fun comes through when you watch it.

[00:22:12] **Bryan Smith:** I think you're right, it's genuine. Everybody in that room likes each other. They like spending time together. They probably just like the whole comedic exercise more than anything, but the game DnD as the foundation of the whole show, plus the concept of the puppets too really makes it unique. And he's kind of like almost 500,000 subscribers on that channel.

[00:22:34] **Lisa Foiles:** He's a big deal. He's a big deal.

[00:22:36] **Bryan Smith:** Yeah.

[00:22:36] **Lisa Foiles:** Yeah. It's so funny. I've known him for so long back when I was doing more in the video game industry and he was with smash games, which smash was like the, like the biggest YouTube channel, you know, before, when like gaming was. I mean, gamey is still really big, but now it's all about Twitch, you know, everybody's streams. Back then it was all about produced shows and, you know, every channel talking about game news and stuff like that. So in that era, the era that I was really heavily involved in gaming Smosh was like the biggest channel.

[00:23:02] So I've known him for so long. So it was just cool that after all these years, like he brought me on to his first project that he's directing. So, you know, he's such a great guy and you're right. It totally deserves to be on television. Like this should be on SciFi network or something.

[00:23:15] **Bryan Smith:** It should be . Maybe it will.

[00:23:17] **Lisa Foiles:** I hope so. You know, we need to get the word out there, but , I had so much fun playing this playing D and D and then research, or recently I got to do another online tabletop game called "Blackbirds RPG" and yeah, same thing. It's just, you know, you just get to pretend and be silly and there's no judgment because you're all being equally nerdy while playing this game. So it's very, there's something very freeing about it.

[00:23:42] **Bryan Smith:** As you may have noticed, there are great resources and advice mentioned in all our episodes and for many of them, we actually collect all of these resources for you in one easy place. Our newsletter. You can go to dreampathpod.com/newsletter to join.

[00:23:58] It's not fancy. Just an email about each week's episode, featured artists and resources to help you on your journey. Now back to the interview. That's funny that you bring up the word "nerd" because you appeared on a calendar, a calendar that I think had the word "geek" in it.

[00:24:15] **Lisa Foiles:**  Oh yeah.

[00:24:17]**Bryan Smith:**  And for, it was for a charity for cancer charity. And I'm wondering how you feel about your transition from acting on Nickelodeon on "All That" into this world, the sort of nerdy, geeky world of video games and how that came to be and your comfort zone in that space.

[00:24:36] Yeah. I'll tell you exactly how it happened. It was just from my desperate need to be on camera. That is just instilled in me from a very young age. Maybe it's a little bit of narcissism. So, basically, I was working in the television industry from a very young age, I moved to LA about when I was about 12 or 13 and got "All That". So, I was working very frequently on television, just always on a show, doing something. And then I left LA to go do college. So, I moved to the Pacific Northwest where I'm from where all of my family's from. And I started. Going to college, you know, because schools are so important. My parents really wanted me to do that, but it was hard to go from being just right in the center of the Hollywood industry to just like nowhere. You know, it was in Idaho, you know, it was like, there's nothing here.

[00:25:26] And even, you know, the theater class I was taking, I was like, "this just isn't the same" you know, it's "I don't want to learn how to act I already know how to act, why am I in these classes?" And I ended up moving to Portland, Oregon, and doing school online. And originally, I was going to school for musical theater and acting, and I realized I didn't want to do that.

[00:25:44] Cause I already kinda knew what I was doing. So, I'm like, I'm going to do all writing. So, all of my online college that I did in Portland, Oregon was all, it was all writing, like every aspect of writing, like screenwriting and fiction, writing, nonfiction, writing, technical writing, like any type of writing, like poetry, like all of it.

[00:26:01] **Lisa Foiles:** And I loved it. But at the same time, I had to scratch the itch. I'm an actor. That's what I do. I have to be on camera. I have to be being becoming a character. Like that's what I do. And at the same time, I was doing a lot of gaming. It was right in the era of the debut of the Xbox 360, the Wii the PS3. So, this was a huge time in gaming where technology just skyrocketed, you know, going the jump from the PS4 to the PS4, but you know, it's not as big now, but back then, like going from the Xbox to Xbox 360, it's like, "Oh my gosh, like these visuals are insane."

[00:26:38] **Bryan Smith:** And what timeframe are we talking about here?

[00:26:40] **Lisa Foiles:** Oh, my gosh. Um, Hmm like.

[00:26:43] **Bryan Smith:**  Like mid 2000s?

[00:26:45] **Lisa Foiles:** To the, I have to look at when those came out, I just say like 2010-ish, like around that area.

[00:26:52] **Bryan Smith:** Okay. That makes sense.

[00:26:54] **Lisa Foiles:** Yeah. Google, when the 360 came out and then I would know, but I was doing a lot of gaming. And I just was like, "why don't I just talk about what I'm doing?" You know, it's like, I, there's not really an acting industry up here in Oregon for me to book TV shows and movies, but I have a video camera and I have the internet. Like I could just video myself talking about video games and then put it on the internet and that'll be fun. That'll be something fun to do in the meantime, before I go back to LA. And that just kind of blew up for me. I had, a channel called "The Escapist" pick up a show called "Top Five with Lisa Foiles" that I wrote and produced every single week. It's kind of like "Wayne's World" just shenanigans happening all the time for no rhyme or reason and ridiculous outfits and weird topics, but it was, it was entertainment. I thought it was funny. And so hopefully other people did too. And then from that, I just got more and more hosting jobs to just host shows about video games, because at the time there were not a lot of females there wasn't a visible presence of females in the gaming industry.

[00:27:55] Yes, there were female gamers all over the world. There's there always have been, but just. They weren't represented in media very well. Now it's almost like half and half, right? There's like half female gamers and half guy gamers, and that's great. But I like to think I was one of the first kind of, I don't like to say journalists because I wasn't really doing journalism, but like one of the first female gaming personalities online, I was writing for Kotaku and the Game station and GameSpot and IGN, like all of these big gaming outlets, I had a presence on almost all of them. So, yeah, that's just kinda how it happened. I just needed to be on camera. I was already playing video games. Why not talk about them? So, so yeah, that's how it happened.

[00:28:35] That's awesome.

[00:28:36] **Bryan Smith:** I love how organic that is. It's not like you are sitting around thinking, "how do I make my way back onto camera? What's the easiest or best way to do that?" and then you think of something that's artificial. You were actually coming from a place of true authenticity in terms of where you like to spend your time playing games and writing. And you're taking that discipline of writing that you learn in college and also your love of games, and its sort of infused into this career that is totally unique to you. If you researched Lisa Foiles online and look at your YouTube channel, there's nobody else like you out there.

[00:29:13] **Lisa Foiles:**  Oh, well, thank you. Okay. I blushed while you were talking about so sweet. But yeah, you know, it's so true, you know, it's, I always get confused when, and I'm not knocking people, but I, it does confuse me when I hear someone just, like later in life or just all of a sudden say, "I'm going to give acting a try. Like, if I think I'm just going to become an actor," you know, like if somebody like has a successful YouTube channel with it, you know, they've just been doing stuff with a webcam and then they're like, ah, I'm going to become an actor. And just like do that. It always confuses me because. It was never a choice for me. I was completely born that way. Acting is just something I can't not do. Is that right? I can't, I have, I have to, it's something that I think about it every day of my life. It's not something I could, I just decided one day, it's just, I've known since I was a little kid, that acting is what I want to do, and entertainment's what I have to do. So, you know, good luck. So people who just kind of decide to be an actor and enter the industry, because you have to really love it to survive it. Especially Hollywood where you're getting told no constantly. And there's so much rejection. I recently read that your brain processes rejection like physical pain.

[00:30:25] So, imagine what it's like to be an actor you're just constantly getting rejected. And if I didn't love it as much as I do, I would have. Easily been like, "Oh, screw this." Like, I'm not doing this. I'm gonna go find a real job. Like, I'm going to go do something where I'm not told that I'm ugly by people, you know? So, so yeah, like it's, it's, it's honestly just it's it's in me. It's part of my DNA. I have to do it and I'm pretty sure I'm going to do it till the day I die because I can't do anything else.

[00:30:56] **Bryan Smith:** Well, you can tell that it's in you when you look at old clips of "All That". And, you see how charismatic you are on camera, how natural it is for you to be on camera and to be doing sketch comedy. I think that's just your world and that's your calling, and I'm glad you found it. I don't know if you've thought about this before, but you made it out unscathed from what I can tell in terms of the child acting world where others did not fare so well and folks they, you even worked with on the show.

[00:31:27] **Lisa Foiles:** Yeah, 100% it's because I left. Yeah. It's because I left, I left at the perfect time. I think I was around 18 or 19 or so I think 18, 17, 17, or 18. And, all that had just ended. I was heavily auditioning, and I had three opportunities that I booked and then were taken away from me and given to somebody more famous, and it absolutely crushed me. Because these were, these were productions that were then on every billboard and they were everywhere and kids wore them on t-shirts and everywhere you look, you see that. And that was supposed to be me. I was looking at these characters like, "no, that was my role." And they took it away from me and they gave it to somebody.

[00:32:12] Who they deemed more famous so that they could get more money at the box office and when you're 18 and you're already going through that period of time in your life where you're trying to figure out who you are, you know, I had, I was always homeschooled, so I didn't, you know, I didn't have a very, I didn't have a huge social life, but you know, the kids on "All That" where like my fellow classmates, basically it was, I lived a very odd childhood. So that amplified the fact that when I was 18, I was a little mixed up in the head. And I was, so, I was overly passionate about acting. They say that when you walk out of an audition, you're supposed to just forget it ever happened.

[00:32:52] Like, don't get invested in it. It's just an audition. You don't have control over where, whether you book that role or not, they're going to look at you and be like, "Oh, she's perfect, except she has red hair. So like, we're not going to hire her" you know? So I didn't follow that advice. I got invested in every single one and I wanted each role so bad that my parents were like, "Oh, this is really unhealthy."

[00:33:12] The biggest one that I lost out on, I went into this, like I spiraled into this depression where like, I didn't talk to anybody for four days and I locked myself in my room. Like, that's how bad it was that like, I wanted this so bad and to book it and then have it taken away from me, just. It crushed me and I was only 18, like I just, I didn't know how to handle it. And that's when my, my parents thank goodness, they were, they always kept me really level-headed, and they were such grounded people. They never let me mess around with anything, you know, the bad stuff in Hollywood. Like, no.

[00:33:46] **Bryan Smith:** Nothing destructive.

[00:33:47] **Lisa Foiles:** Yeah, exactly, nothing destructive. I didn't go to the parties. I didn't drink alcohol. I didn't do drugs. Like none of that, like, I, was very strongly. You know, against that, which was great. But I was, I was spiraling in a different direction. I was spiraling with the fact that I wanted these roles so bad. I couldn't have them. And my parents were like, "okay, you got to get out of here." Like, you need to leave Hollywood for a few years, go to school, go make friends who don't care about acting and then come back when you want to. And I'm like, "okay." So, I did it. And thank goodness I did it because the group of friends that I made in Portland, Oregon. They did not care about my career in the best possible way. So, when you're in LA, like that's all anybody talks about, you know, you know, you meet somebody in the first thing they say is like, "Oh, what do you do?" Like, that's what they care about in, in LA, just LA people. It's how they're wired.

[00:34:37] But, you know, I was. I was driving around with my Portland friends and seeing these movies on billboards that were supposed to be me. And like, they didn't care. There was like, "Oh yeah, that" was, Oh, "I didn't even know that movie existed." You know, like, you know what I mean? And their lack of caring just reset me, completely reset me.

[00:34:55] I'm like, Oh, there's a bigger world out there. And people care about things other than booking a role in a movie.

[00:35:03] **Bryan Smith:** Oh, that's nice.

[00:35:04] **Lisa Foiles:** And, yeah, and it, it just, it shaped me as a person in those very formative years. And I think that's the reason that I have stayed sane since, since then, you know? So I, now I don't worry about it, now I do walk out of an audition and just forget about it. And yeah, I'm still very passionate, but I've learned how to harness that passion and not let it carry me away.

[00:35:26] **Bryan Smith:** Do you look back on the, the shows like maybe "The Amanda Show" and think that maybe a dodged a bullet because of all the pressure that spotlight creates on people and it really can be destructive as we saw with Amanda.

[00:35:43] **Lisa Foiles:** Yeah, it's hard. It's, it's more complicated than just dodging a bullet. I think that it was. I had such a support system that set me up to succeed as opposed to setting me up to fail. And that's a big thing that I see with child actors is that they didn't have the support system. Like, Amanda's home life was not as supportive as, as mine and that's not Amanda's fault. And it breaks my heart. I mean, Amanda was my biggest inspiration. I was a huge "Carol Burnett Show" fan when I was younger. And Amanda was just my generation's version of that. And it's not, it's not really necessarily the actor. It's not the kid actor, it's everything that's around them. It's the enablers that are giving that are pushing things on them. It's the, the, you know, even as small as like the hair and makeup people, just, just making comments about their appearance, you know? "Oh, you have, Oh, you, Oh, you have a zit on your forehead today. Okay, let's cover that up." You know what I mean? Like a regular kid here, doesn't hear that. And thank goodness that I was on "All That" before social media came along. Oh my gosh. Can you imagine, you know, the, the, the depression that I went through with, you know, wanting those roles so bad, mixed in with reading internet comments about myself, like, Oh my gosh, I'm so glad that that did not exist when I was on the show.

[00:37:01] So, it's just all about a support system. If you're going to put your kid in acting, you just got to make sure they're so grounded and that they have perspective perspective is so important. That's what I gained by leaving Hollywood was perspective.

[00:37:15] **Bryan Smith:** Let's talk about social media a little bit here. You have a really popular channel on Instagram, it's not a channel. We have a popular account on Instagram. You have a very popular YouTube channel, and you have great content. But you're a mother of two you're married and you have other things going on in your life. I'm sure. Besides trying to curate your social media feed, how do you balance that? How do you find the time to do it?

[00:37:40] **Lisa Foiles:** It's pretty funny. You can look at my YouTube channel and pretty much pinpoint the month that I had my kid. That's when all the videos stop, right? Because, "Oh, I don't have time to do that anymore." There were a couple of months that I tried to still make videos while the baby was sleeping. And it was just too frustrating because I'd get full hair and makeup, get everything set up, the kid was supposed to sleep for an hour and then 15 minutes you hear screams and you're like, "Oh cool." I just spent all this time getting rid of the video. And now I can't. Because I need to go be a mother, you know, it's more important to be a good mother than it is to be a YouTube star. You know, like who cares about YouTube when you have this little growing life that needs your influence and support and love. So yeah, my YouTube channel definitely took a back seat to that and I'm totally fine with it. Every once in a while, I'll throw up a video when I can. But, yeah, you know, I got pretty obsessed with social media for a small amount of time, and then I just kinda got over it, thank goodness. Like there was a time when I was really trying to build my accounts and build my following and do all the things that you're supposed to do is say all the right things, like, you know, "be sure to subscribe," you know, you smash that subscribe button, hit the notifications and be like, Aw, The things you're supposed to do and like, Oh, post on Instagram twice a day at this time, in this time and use these hashtags and do this algorithm, blah, blah, blah, blah, like I got really into that. And then I'm like, "you know what? I don't really like any of this." None of this is enhancing my acting career in any way and it doesn't make me feel better about myself. So why am I so obsessed with it? And then I just kind of did it for fun and now I do it for fun and yeah, I never really wanted to become a YouTuber.

[00:39:18] It was always just a creative outlet. In fact, I don't monetize a lot of my videos because I just don't care. Like it's not a source of income for me. I just, it's just some fun to do. You'd entertain people because again, that's how I'm wired. So yeah, I mean, I love chatting with fans on, on Twitter and posting fun pictures on, on Instagram and be occasional silly video on YouTube, but I really just do it for fun. And I did have one viral video, so I did at least get to experience what it's like to have a viral video.

[00:39:50] **Bryan Smith:** Well, it sounds like you have a pretty healthy approach to social media and that's great.

[00:39:54] **Lisa Foiles:** I like to think I do. Yeah. I did doesn't rule my life, so.

[00:39:59] **Bryan Smith:** So, what are you focusing on in the future? I know you have a TV show next week in Los Angeles and you're playing a villain. Can you share with us any more about that or any other projects that are coming up?

[00:40:08] **Lisa Foiles:** Yeah, I will share more on my social media when I'm allowed to just like, so, I'm like scared to ever release details about the shows that I'm on until they give me the go-ahead like, "okay, you can post about it." so, I'm sure I'll post some pictures from like my trailer and stuff, but yeah, I'll reveal what the show is at a later date, but yeah, I'm still auditioning whenever I can. I mean, everything's just put yourself on tape these days for auditioning. They're very few and far between just because a lot of production yeah.

[00:40:33] Or not up and running, like they used to be. I am doing a lot of writing. I'm actually doing more screenwriting at this point, which I might love even more than fiction writing than fantasy writing, which is hard to believe because I loved writing my book, but there's something about that. A hundred-page screenwriting format that I think I have a real gift for, you know, you have to, you have to tell your story in this amount of pages, it has to have these acts and this climax, you know what I mean? Like the story, the screenwriting format is I really enjoy it. It's kind of like a puzzle and a challenge for me. So, I'm doing more of that.

[00:41:09] **Bryan Smith:** Me too. I've been tinkering with screenwriting for years now, and I do enjoy the contained rules of the format.

[00:41:17] **Lisa Foiles:**  Yeah, the limitations help, actually. I think they force you to be more creative.

[00:41:21] **Bryan Smith:** I agree. Yeah. And you have to move things along. I mean, you can't have exposition, you can't waste time with, you know, pros, you just have to have what's happening next and then what happens.

[00:41:31] **Lisa Foiles:** Yeah, exactly. I like to think that as an actor, I have a good grasp of writing dialogue as well, because I know, I know how I would say something and I'm really trying to write stories sort of through, through my own eyes. I mean, you know, you're supposed to write what you know, so I've definitely been writing what I know in the couple screenplays that I have, and I'm using my own acting experience and my own emotions and, you know, ups and downs in life, to be able to have a clear perspective on these challenges for my characters and yeah, just the dialogue alone. I mean, there are a lot of times when I'll receive a script and I'll be like, "I know what they want my character to say, but this isn't how I would say it." you know, I wouldn't use these words. I wouldn't use, I wouldn't add an "uh" or a "like" in there just. So that's how I talk. So I like to think that I kind of have a grasp on dialogue in that sense that I've been acting for so many years. So, we'll see, it's a new endeavor. I'm really enjoying it. We'll see if I can make anything happen.

[00:42:24] **Bryan Smith:** So what's next for "Ash Ridley and the Phoenix"? Do you have plans once society opens up after the pandemic to maybe hit those schools and start promoting it like you intended?

[00:42:33] **Lisa Foiles:** I know, like what is the etiquette on having a rerelease am I allowed to do? I think I should be able to with this crazy world. Yeah, give me a pass and be like, all right, like we get it. Like you weren't able to do all of that with your first release. Let's just pretend that didn't happen. Well, you can do a relaunch. I want to relaunch. So maybe.

[00:42:53] **Bryan Smith:** It was very cinematic books. So you could just adapt it for a screenplay, right?

[00:42:58] **Lisa Foiles:**  I could, the screenplays I'm writing now are very low budget because I feel like I'll have a better shot of them getting made if they're over budget, I feel like, yeah, right off the bat, starting with my own cinematic universe might be a little like, "okay, it's your first screenplay. We're probably not going to give you a $50 billion budget." So I've certainly thought about it. But, yeah, I had plans. Rice. I have plans for a sequel, like I have it all mapped out. There is a cliff hanger at the end of this book. I won't spoil it, but I do have plans. I have a, I have a second book roughly outlined. The problem is I just wrote this first book before I had kids, I was able to sit at home and just. Right for hours and hours, I'm one of those people that can just sit down and just write for like seven hours and then be like, "Oh, okay. I guess I'll force myself to be done now." Writing is not a problem. Like I do not get writer's block. I do not have a problem. I can just do that. That's just a weird thing. Yeah. So, yeah, like, but now I don't think I can't because I have too many other responsibilities.

[00:44:01] I would literally have to like take it. I have to be like, "okay, family, I'm going to Canada. If we're going to go live in the mountains, like a Hobbit for, you know, a couple of months to write the next book, don't bother me. And I will come back with a finished with a finish."

[00:44:19] **Bryan Smith:** I wish I could tell you it gets better as they get older, but I have a 19 year old living with me and, it’s the same, it's the same amount of energy they take from no time to write, but you know, it has its benefits, parenthood does so.

[00:44:34] **Lisa Foiles:** I agree. And you know, what's cool is that I started writing this book for the intended audience of young girls before I ever got pregnant, before any of that. And the fact that I had a little girl is so cool because now I get to, I get to share that with her she's too young to reach is learning to read.

[00:44:50] Now she's four. But she does have a little stuffed Phoenix in her room that she plays with. And then she hangs out with, and I try to tell her like what the Phoenix is and like what it does, and she doesn't quite get it yet. She still thinks it's a parrot, but, , but it's just cool that like, when she gets old enough to read it, like she gets to read it, like, I, that's so cool. Like I wrote a book for little girls and then I had a little girl and she gets to read it and hopefully she will enjoy it and not point out all of the inaccuracies that she will find because she's my daughter. She's like "mom about page 37." Just read it. Okay. Just suspend your reality,

[00:45:27] **Bryan Smith:** Lisa Foiles. Thank you for joining us. I'm going to point listeners to your social media here. You're on Instagram @Lisafoiles. F O I L E S and a same handle for Twitter and YouTube. And I really encourage everyone to go out and check out the book, check out our YouTube channel, check out the new Dungeons and dragons series that she's on, it's really entertaining. And Lisa, thank you for joining us.

[00:45:52] **Lisa Foiles:**  I really appreciate you having me on thank you so much.

[00:45:56] **Bryan Smith:** Hey, thank you for listening and I hope you enjoy today's episode. If so, I have a favorite ask. Can you go to wherever you listen to podcasts and leave me a review? Your feedback is what keeps this podcast going. You can also check us out on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook with the handle @dreampathpod, and as always go find your dream path. .