



AUDIOBOOKS

Options and Insights – Why and How

Rita Boehm
Presentation to Writers League of The Villages

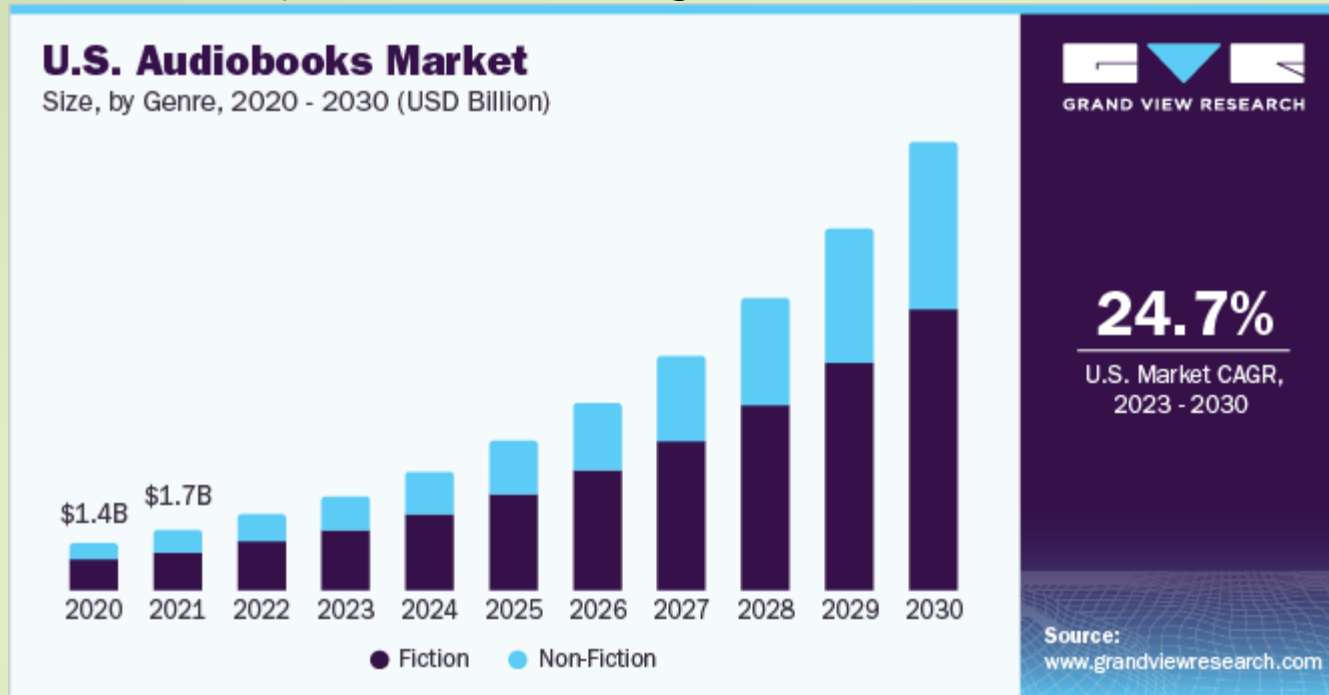
AUDIOBOOKS

Topics to Be Covered

- WHY MAKE AN AUDIOBOOK?
- HOW?
 - Recording your own
 - Pay for production
 - “Done for you”
- HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?
- PERSONAL EXPERIENCE
- INSIGHTS FROM PANEL

WHY?

- Why create an audiobook?
- Answer: It's where the customers are.
 - The global audiobook market size was valued at USD 5.3 billion in 2022 (Source: www.grandviewresearch.com)
 - Compound annual growth rate of 24.7% from 2023 - 2030



What kind of books make good audiobooks?

- Self-help/spirituality
- Memoirs and biography
- Fiction
- Poetry
- Health and fitness
- Business

Not recommended for audiobooks

- Reference books
- Image heavy books
 - Example: Home and garden or interior design books
- Any type of picture book
- Cookbooks
- Travel guides

HOW?

- There's no easy, 'one-size-fits-all' answer to the question "How do I turn my book into an audiobook?"
- Three major options:
 - Record your own
 - Pay for production
 - Use a "Done For You" Audiobook Publishing Company
- Things to consider:
 - How tech savvy are you?
 - How much money do you want to invest?
 - How much time do you have?

Recording your own audiobook

- Must haves include:
 - Quality equipment
 - Excellent microphone
 - Suitable QUIET space as a recording studio
 - A competent narrator's voice (can you evoke emotion, create appropriate voices for your characters, etc). Audience expects professional quality.
 - AI Option – see next slide
 - Familiarity with the recording specifications that ACX (Audiobook Creation Exchange) requires
 - (Note: ACX is the website platform operated and controlled by Audible – owned by Amazon)
 - TIME! (75,000 word book = approx. 8 hours FPH (Finished Production Hours)
 - Each finished hour may take up to 6 or more hours for a newbie to get right
 - Good editing software or an audio engineer (can hire from sites like Fiverr)

Recording your own audiobook – AI Option

- Variety of AI platforms, including a FREE option
 - Google Play books = 50+ voices, 9 languages
 - Import your manuscript
 - Select the AI narrators (not the synthesized, robotic voices of the past)
 - Provide direction regarding pitch, speed, volume, pronunciation, as needed throughout the manuscript reading.
 - Sounds great, right? A lot of work, but FREE!! narration
 - Downside (you knew there'd be a downside, right?)
 - AMAZON will not let you upload an AI generated manuscript
 - You can sell on other platforms like: Google Play, Apple books –
 - BUT! For most of us, marketing to these other platforms may not be worthwhile.

OPTION 2 – PAY FOR PRODUCTION

- A variety of pay for production choices:
 - Find a narrator
 - Many sources - some of the most popular:
 - ACX
 - Findaway Voices (has relationship with Chirp/BookBub's audiobook seller)
 - Fiverr.com (an online marketplace that brings buyers and sellers together for a vast array of services, including book narration)
 - Upload a short script (should be something that forces the narrator to show their range of voices and emotion as needed for your book)
 - Narrators submit audition recordings
 - Negotiate a (FPH)Fixed Production Hour rate directly with the narrator (or in some cases, negotiate a fixed total price).

How much does it cost?

- Narrators charge “PFH” per (Production Finished Hour)
 - Each finished hour typically takes 3+ hours of work to achieve
 - 40,000 word book = approx. 4.5 PFH
 - 80,000 word book = approx. 9 PFH
 - 100,000 word book = approx. 11 PFH
- The price a narrator charges is based on their experience. Some are experienced SAG/AFTRA actors, others are just starting out.
 - Expect to pay from \$100 - \$400 PFH (average is between 200 – 300)
 - Options:
 - Full payment or Royal Split

How much does it cost?

Sample without royalty split

WORDS in MS	# of PFH	PFH RATE: \$100.	PFH RATE \$200	PFH RATE \$300
40,000	4.5	\$450	\$900	\$1350
80,000	9	\$900	\$1800	\$2700
100,000	11	\$1100	\$2200	\$3300

PFH = Per
finished hour

Experienced
narrators:
expect in the
\$200 – \$400
range

If your narrator
has a following
– people may
buy the book
to hear them.

How much does it cost?

Royalty split option

- In lieu of a fixed PFH rate, ACX narrators may agree to a royalty split or a mix of the two. Findaway Voices and others have similar deals.
- Depends on:
 - Marketing expectations for book
 - Name recognition of author
 - Unknown author without any name recognition may have difficulty getting an experienced narrator to agree to a split.
- Example: ACX Royalty split
 - Normally author gets 40%* royalty under an exclusive ACX agreement
 - If split with narrator, author gets 20%/ narrator gets 20% + a reduced PFH
 - Example: narrator who usually charges \$250 PFH may decide to accept \$125 PFH and a 20% royalty share on each audiobook sold

Option 3 “Done for you”

- There’s one final option for creating your audiobook.
- A number of companies offer “Done for You” services.
- Some are legitimate – some are scams. Be wary.
- High pressure sales staff = red flag
 - Amazon Publishing Hub (AMZ) – An Amazon company? Nope! (Amazon companies are Audible/ACX)
 - For \$3100 **up front**, they’ll create your audiobook – regardless of the length of the book. A definite red flag!
 - For \$5500 they’ll create your audiobook and provide expanded distribution
 - Online reviews: limited number, ranging from “this is a scam” to “loved them”

Audiobook sales: How much does the Author make?

Answer: An author's monetary return is completely dependent on where the audiobook is sold.

- Amazon is the largest platform. Amazon = Audible (2022: Audible had 63.4% audiobook market share)
- Audible/Amazon set the price – roughly based on # of listening hours
- Author royalty: Exclusive to Audible (Amazon, Audible and iTunes) = 40%*

Non exclusive = 25%

*Note: Actual royalty is significantly less.

Sales earnings are **not** calculated on sales price.

If an Audible Listener/Subscriber listens to the book for their \$14.95 monthly credit, or via other deals through Audible, the royalty is adjusted accordingly.

Some estimate that 40% royalty is closer to 21%.

How much does the author make (cont'd)

- BUT –
 - Author can maximize returns with
 - ACX Bounty: \$75 payment to the author if someone signs up for an Audible Listener membership AND your audiobook is one of their first purchases.
 - Marketing:
 - 7 – 10 days after the audiobook is live on Amazon and iTunes, you'll receive an email from ACX with 25 free promotional codes.
 - Use these strategically to get reviews and help promote your book.
 - Build your email list
 - Offer them on sites like Goodreads Audiobook Group, Facebook Group for Audiobook Giveaways, Facebook Group for Audiobook Promos
 - Other less significant sales platforms: Findaway Voices, Google Play etc – royalty structure is significantly different, but sales numbers will also be much lower.

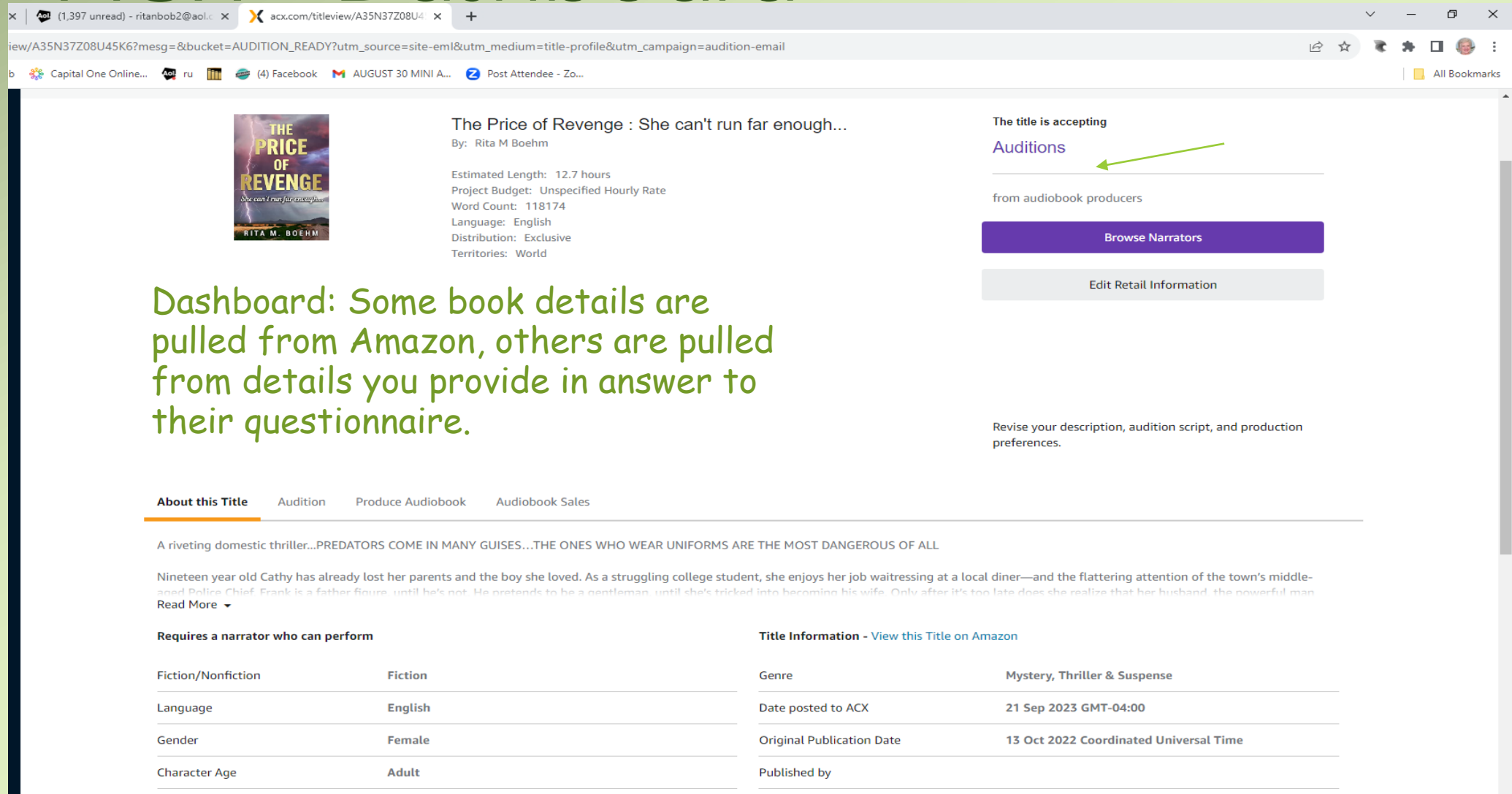
My Personal Experience

- I Chose ACX to create my audiobook–
 - Why?
 - ACX holds the greatest market share – by far
 - Other options:
 - Findaway voices – owned by Spotify - is the leading non-ACX audiobook distributor and is another good option.
 - ListenUp Audiobooks, Author's Republic, and others

Note: I initially reached out to a successful Fiverr narrator. Her PFH rate was over \$400. Total quote: \$5500. Fiverr will not always be the most cost-effective option.

INFO: Majority of posted PFH rates on ACX: \$200 - \$400 PFH (New narrators constantly signing up. A beginner may charge less than \$200 and be willing to do a royalty split.)

Personal experience: ACX ACX – Dashboard



The Price of Revenge : She can't run far enough...

By: Rita M Boehm

Estimated Length: 12.7 hours
Project Budget: Unspecified Hourly Rate
Word Count: 118174
Language: English
Distribution: Exclusive
Territories: World

The title is accepting
Auditions ←
from audiobook producers

[Browse Narrators](#)

[Edit Retail Information](#)

Revise your description, audition script, and production preferences.

About this Title | Audition | Produce Audiobook | Audiobook Sales

A riveting domestic thriller...PREDATORS COME IN MANY GUISES...THE ONES WHO WEAR UNIFORMS ARE THE MOST DANGEROUS OF ALL

Nineteen year old Cathy has already lost her parents and the boy she loved. As a struggling college student, she enjoys her job waitressing at a local diner—and the flattering attention of the town's middle-aged Police Chief. Frank is a father figure, until he's not. He pretends to be a gentleman, until she's tricked into becoming his wife. Only after it's too late does she realize that her husband, the powerful man

[Read More](#)

Requires a narrator who can perform

Fiction/Nonfiction	Fiction
Language	English
Gender	Female
Character Age	Adult

Title Information - [View this Title on Amazon](#)

Genre	Mystery, Thriller & Suspense
Date posted to ACX	21 Sep 2023 GMT-04:00
Original Publication Date	13 Oct 2022 Coordinated Universal Time
Published by	

Dashboard: Some book details are pulled from Amazon, others are pulled from details you provide in answer to their questionnaire.

ACX –narrator auditions

16 auditions received - wide range of expertise

5 were "Added to favorites" for multiple listenings

#1 - very accomplished actor - \$365 PFH

#2 - another accomplished actor - \$265 PFH

#3 - willing to accept \$250 or \$125 = Royalty Split

Hired an accomplished, professional for \$200 PFH

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying an ACX audition page. The page has a navigation bar with 'About this Title', 'Audition', 'Produce Audiobook', and 'Audiobook Sales'. Below the navigation bar are two tabs: 'RECEIVED (9)' and 'FAVORITE (5)'. The main content area lists five audition entries, each with a name, a play button, a progress bar, a timestamp, a volume icon, and a set of action buttons (Make Offer, Send Message, Download Audition). The entries are:

- Laura Hatch**: 23 Sep 2023, 11:13 GMT-04:00. Action buttons: Add to Favorites, Make Offer, Send Message, Download Audition.
- Melissa Kay Benson**: 22 Sep 2023, 18:56 GMT-04:00. Action buttons: Remove from Favorites, Make Offer, Send Message, Download Audition.
- Susanna Burney**: 22 Sep 2023, 16:11 GMT-04:00. Action buttons: Remove from Favorites, Make Offer, Send Message, Download Audition.
- Kathy Handrock**: 22 Sep 2023, 13:40 GMT-04:00. Action buttons: Add to Favorites, Make Offer, Send Message, Download Audition.
- Sherri Slater**: 22 Sep 2023, 13:18 GMT-04:00. Action buttons: Add to Favorites, Make Offer, Send Message, Download Audition.

Each entry includes a 'Message:' field with a 'Read More' dropdown arrow. The messages are partially visible, showing gratitude and references to 'The Price of Revenge'.

This is the offer to produce the audiobook

The Price of Revenge : She can't run far enough...

by Rita M Boehm

ML De Blasi will produce an audiobook based on the book listed above on behalf of Rita Mary Boehm, on the terms set forth below. Rita Mary Boehm and ML De Blasi understand that the ACX Audiobook Production Standard Terms apply to the terms of their agreement. Rita Mary Boehm and ML De Blasi agree to be bound by, and comply with, the [ACX Audiobook Production Standard Terms](#).

This offer expires on **28 Sep 2023, 16:28 GMT-04:00**

Revise

Send Offer

By clicking 'Send Offer', I understand and agree that I will be delivering a signed contract for ML De Blasi to review. I also agree to be bound by and comply with the ACX Production Standard Terms. [Show all terms](#).

I'm interested, but I'd like to [send a message](#) to the producer.

ACX Audiobook Production Standard Terms

Last revised January 1, 2021

Version 2.2

These ACX Audiobook Production Standard Terms ("[Terms](#)") apply to the creation of an audiobook on the audiobook production service and rights marketplace available at www.acx.com ("[ACX](#)"). These Terms form part of each ACX audiobook production agreement between a Rights Holder and a Producer where the applicable deal confirmation page generated by ACX ("[Deal Confirmation Page](#)") references this specific Version 2.2 of the Terms (the "[Agreement](#)").

1. Engagement to Produce.

Rights Holder engages Producer to make an audio recording (the "[Audiobook](#)") of the book set forth in the Deal Confirmation Page ("[Book](#)") in the language(s) set forth in the Deal Confirmation Page ("[Language\(s\)](#)"). The Audiobook will be distributed in the territory or territories indicated in the ACX title profile for the Book (the "[Territory](#)"). Rights Holder will provide to Producer the final recordable manuscript for the Audiobook within 3 business days after acceptance of the offer. Producer shall keep the manuscript confidential and use it solely to produce the Audiobook and no other purpose.

2. Production Schedule and Guidelines.

Producer will deliver the first 15 minutes of the Audiobook to Rights Holder for Rights Holder's approval by the date set forth in the Deal Confirmation Page. Producer will deliver the Completed Audiobook by the completion date set forth in the Deal Confirmation Page, as extended pursuant to Section 3(c) below, if applicable ("[Completion Date](#)"). Producer will produce the Audiobook in accordance with the ACX Audio Submission Requirements posted on the ACX website as of the date of the Deal Confirmation Page. Producer and Rights Holder are both subject to the ACX Dispute Resolution Procedures set forth in the Account Holder Agreement as of the date of the Deal Confirmation Page. Producer may hire third parties to assist in the performance of services in the production of the Audiobook, including to perform services such as narrator, editor, or studio engineer. If Producer hires third parties in connection with the production of the Audiobook, Producer will engage the third parties using the appropriate ACX Form Independent Contractor

Additional Contract Details

Language	English
Word Count	118,174 Words
Territory	World
Distribution	Exclusive

Payment Terms

Payment: Pay for Production, \$200.00 per finished hour

Approximately \$2,542.00 based on Rita Mary Boehm's estimated word count above and an estimate of 9,300 words per finished hour

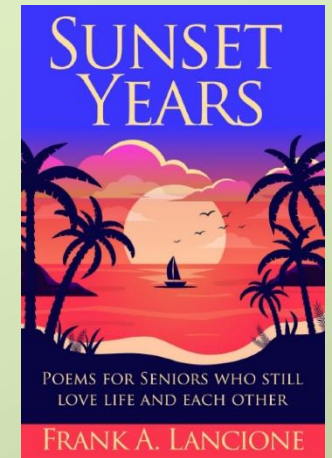
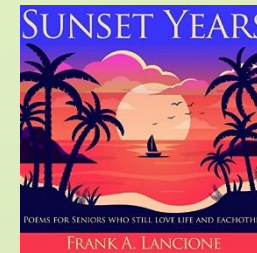
Project Schedule

15 Minute Checkpoint Due	06 Oct 2023 GMT-04:00
Complete Audiobook due	28 Oct 2023 GMT-04:00

ACX Offer form. Note: You negotiate terms directly with narrator/producer. Initial delivery terms were not acceptable. Project schedule extended to 11/30 with potential for slip to 12/31.

Finishing touches: Create Cover & Upload Audiobook

- Audiobook Cover
 - Audiobooks require a different cover format
 - Square vs rectangle
 - Note: narrator's name is often included - especially if narrator has a following



- Whether you do your own recording, or hire a narrator from ACX, Fiverr, Findaway Voices or others, the ACX format is used.
- Narrator/producer usually submits the book to ACX for retail upload.

RESOURCE FOR AUDIOBOOK INFO.

- My guru for everything about Indie publishing, from Amazon ads to audiobooks: Dave Chesson of Kindlepreneur.
 - Chesson's excellent presentations on creating Audiobooks and on comparing ACX and Findaway Voices can be found by googling his name or using this link:
 - <https://kindlepreneur.com/how-to-make-an-audiobook/>

Panel's personal experiences

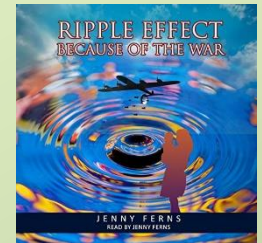
- Bona Hayes, had a professional studio session, purchased equipment, set up home studio – decided not to continue...
- Jenny Ferns, narrated the audiobook for her WWII historical fiction book: RIPPLE EFFECT, Because of the War

Major comment: Required TIME!!

- Frank Lancione, chose a Fiverr narrator

\$439 total for 4 hour book = approx. \$110 PFH

- Anyone else want to share their audiobook experience?



QUESTIONS?

- Presentation will be posted on our website: www.writersleagueofthevillages.com
- Any questions?
- Enjoy your audiobook journey!

