

Jayne Entwistle

▶ Before Jayne Entwistle became an improvisational actress and voice-over artist, she earned a graduate degree in counseling. It has helped her understand motivation, and, she says, it proved invaluable when she played the crazy mother of a serial killer. “I used a clinical diagnosis to build that character.”

Nothing so scientific was needed for *First Impressions*, Charlie Lovett’s recent mystery about a missing manuscript, although Entwistle had to voice modern and eighteenth-century characters, including Jane Austen. When reading the Austen scenes, Entwistle says, “I imagined that she walked ramrod straight, which helped me shape how she sounds.” The protagonist in the contemporary sections is more relaxed, so Entwistle smiled more, changing the sound. The result earned her an Earphones Award, which delighted her as much as the book had. “I love books. The book is about loving books. So narrating was just a big loving-of-books-fest.”

Speaking of bibliophile passion, for the last seven years Entwistle has narrated Alan Bradley’s series about 11-year-old scientist-sleuth Flavia de Luce. “Each year I can’t wait to get back to the characters. I feel that we’re all living together in some alternate universe. The challenge is that I want to do the absolute best job and be true to the voices that I created to begin with.”

When a new Flavia book or any other audio assignment arrives (on her iPad now, instead of in a “lovely thick envelope”), she reads it through, highlighting words whose pronunciation she needs to look up. Using a different color, she highlights a character’s first appearance and records it—for example, “Clarence Mundy, page 12”—in her notebook. In a third color, she underlines such phrases as “he whispered in a fierce voice” so that she’ll remember to whisper fiercely. And finally, she types in characters’ names just before they appear so that she’s prepared for changes in voice.

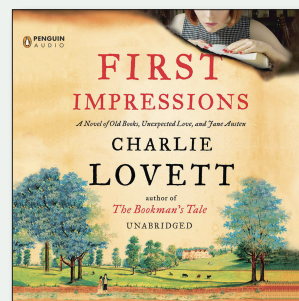
Once in the recording booth with water and hot tea, she tries not to cry during sad scenes. “Sometimes I have to dig my fingers into my leg to make myself stop!” She remembers the lessons of her first audiobook director, Janet Stark, who showed her “when to know that it’s time to give the listener a rest and how a tiny bit of air [a pause] can let an image sink in.

“Narrating has taught me a lot about pace, modulating my voice, how to shape the action. If someone is creeping down a hallway, you want the reader to feel what it’s like to hide in the shadows. Learning how to do that has helped my acting.”




And vice versa. Recently, author Alan Bradley emailed her to say that “not a day goes by without someone raving to him about the audiobooks.” She sighs happily. “Now isn’t that nice?”—*Aurelia C. Scott*



FIRST IMPRESSIONS:
A Novel of Old Books,
Unexpected Love,
and Jane Austen
Charlie Lovett
Read by Jayne Entwistle



Jayne Entwistle narrates with a perfect combination of engaged enthusiasm and subtlety as bibliophile Sophie Collingwood is led into a scandalous mystery: Did her favorite author, Jane Austen, plagiarize *Pride and Prejudice*? The chapters alternate between Sophie’s story in the present day and Austen’s story in the late 1700s. Entwistle delivers both delightfully with her sublime English accent and ability to completely disappear from the narration. She allows both stories to unfold at a leisurely pace as Lovett’s beautiful writing shines through. Even Entwistle’s American accent is excellent, just enough for listeners to get the idea without being distracted. There’s mystery, danger, and romance as Sophie sets out to prove Austen’s innocence. Book lovers, Austen lovers, and cozy mystery lovers will find this an enchanting listen. *M.M.G.*

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