

## Interview with Alexis Daria

[00:00:11] **Joce** Hello. I'm Joce. And this is Reading Women, a podcast inviting you to reclaim the bookshelf and read the world. Today, I'm talking to Alexis Daria about her latest book, A LOT LIKE ADIOS, which is out now from Avon Books. You can find a complete transcript of this episode on our website, [readingwomenpodcast.com](http://readingwomenpodcast.com). And don't forget to subscribe so you don't miss a single episode.

[00:00:34] **Joce** So this is a conversation that I have been wanting to have since 2017, which is when I most ardently, in the words of Mr. Darcy, fell in love with the Dance Off series by Alexis Daria, which is a romance series that takes place on the set of a TV show inspired by "Dancing With the Stars." I said to myself, "One day I will talk 'Dancing with the Stars' with Alexis." And I am happy to say that the day is here. Her newest book, A LOT LIKE ADIOS, was just released in September. And it is the second book and the Primas of Power series. A LOT LIKE ADIOS is about our heroine Michelle, who is Puerto Rican and Italian, and her love interest Gabe, who was her childhood best friend / perhaps something a little bit more. He unfortunately decided to leave New York—which is where they're from—for L.A. And despite her numerous attempts to reach out, their connection was severed. And they never spoke for years. That is until Gabe's gym, Agility, wants to hire Michelle to hop on board their new marketing campaign. They navigate getting acquainted with one another again, their tension and a really spicy chemistry. They navigate getting acquainted with one another again, their tension and chemistry and complicated family dynamics. There are also some extremely fun at fan fiction interstitials from when Gabe and Michelle were in high school and they wrote fanfic together.

[00:01:55] **Joce** But before we get into the interview, a little more about Alexis. So award-winning, best-selling author Alexis Daria is a lifelong New Yorker who writes stories celebrating the lives and loves of Latinx characters. Her 2020 release, YOU HAD ME AT HOLA, was the national bestseller New York Times Editor's Choice pick and featured on several "Best Of" lists for the year. Her newest book, A LOT LIKE ADIOS, was released on September 14th. And if you have not picked up the Primas of Power series, I highly recommend the first book, YOU HAD ME AT HOLA, as well. You can read them as standalones, but it is really nice to see the history and the interaction between the three primas or "cousins." Jasmine—who is the heroine in YOU HAD ME AT HOLA—Michelle, and Ava, who will be the heroine of the third book. However, A LOT LIKE ADIOS, I am biased—it is my personal favorite because it has so many of my favorite tropes. We have second-chance romance, friends-to-lovers, a little bit of a forced proximity. Truly, everything that I love. So without any further ado, here is my interview with Alexis Daria.

[00:03:04] **Joce** Hi, Alexis, welcome to the Reading Women podcast.

[00:03:07] **Alexis** Hi, Joce. Thanks for having me.

[00:03:09] **Joce** My gosh, of course. I've been wanting to do this interview for years and years of my life. So I'm just so happy that this day is here.

[00:03:15] **Alexis** Oh my gosh, that makes me so excited.

[00:03:18] **Joce** We're so excited to have you here today. And congratulations on the release of A LOT LIKE ADIOS.

[00:03:25] **Alexis** Thank you.

[00:03:25] **Joce** I was just wondering if you could give our listeners maybe a brief introduction to you and also a brief synopsis of your book.

[00:03:31] **Alexis** Sure. My name is Alexis Daria, and I am a romance author based in New York City. I was born and raised here. And like me, my characters in this book, A LOT LIKE ADIOS, are from the Bronx. And most of this book takes place in the Bronx in the neighborhood of Mars Park. It is a former-friends-to-lovers story where they kind of had a . . . like a hook up and a friend break up all at the same time. And now they are back in each other's lives. The last time they saw each other, they were eighteen. Now they are thirty-one. The characters are Gabe and Michelle. And they have to work on a project together. And Michelle is real pissed at Gabe, so she makes him stay with her while they're working together, you know, to visit. But then also, they have all of this baggage and emotions and tender feelings and all of that stuff that are just kind of crammed in that house with them in this very tight, forced-proximity situation. And there's also a lot of family . . . meddling family and then also some like family struggles that they have to overcome. So it's kind of all of that.

[00:04:45] **Joce** Gosh, these are some of my favorite tropes, they all have an incredible amount of pent-up angst, every single one that you used. I was wondering if you could maybe provide a quick overview of how these tropes maybe play out over the course of their relationship?

[00:05:01] **Alexis** Sure. So I always knew that I want this . . . I wanted this story to be former friends to lovers. And it was really just figuring out how that played out. And I kind of wanted them both to be a little angry at the beginning and then have whatever the opposite of a slow burn is. You know, where they really just kind of get into it really quickly because they have a lot of chemistry, and they're kind of picking up where they left off. But at the same time, they are in this—like I said—the forced proximity where they are actually staying at Michelle's parents' house. Her parents are not there, but the house is right next door to where Gabe's parents live. And he hasn't talked to them in over a decade. So there's actually a lot of humor, but also emotion tied up in all of those scenes. And then we've also got a only-one-bed moment and some fake dating, you know, just for extra fun thrown in. And her family gets very involved. So it's a good time.

[00:06:05] **Joce** It is most definitely a good time. I feel like a lot of the relationships that you write, including like Jasmine and Ashton, the relationships in the Dance Off series, they all kind of navigate like a workplace-type romance. And obviously, with Michelle and Gabe, there is kind of a workplace situation there too. I was wondering how you navigated that aspect in A LOT LIKE ADIOS.

[00:06:27] **Alexis** I love . . . I love workplace romances because for me, I think they are, you know, they're kind of a forced proximity, right? It's a reason why they have to still be there, being around each other. And they can't just decide, you know, I don't need to be around this person anymore. I'm going to go somewhere else. So with A LOT LIKE ADIOS, I was really looking for a way to put the two of them together. And I kind of wanted it to be like a coincidence. Just like, "oh, isn't this a small world" kind of moment because I find that I'm still always running into people that I went to high school with or that I've known from other parts of my life. And in this case, it's that Gabe owns a gym, and he finds out that his business partner has reached out to Michelle because she ran a marketing campaign for another gym that they really admired. So he found out that she had been in charge of that campaign. He reached out to her. And then Gabe is like, "Oh no, that's my

ex-best friend. The last time I saw her, we were totally making out. And then I never talked to her again." So that's all in the first chapter of the book. So from there it gets a lot . . . a lot more tense and also a lot hotter.

[00:07:45] **Joce** Gosh, yes, absolutely. Definitely a lot hotter. There was like a huge break. And then I feel like they like picked up right where they left off. Like you said, the opposite of a slow burn.

[00:07:56] **Alexis** Yes.

[00:07:58] **Joce** Like you said, I feel like there were particular settings in the book that created a lot of tension. So for example, there's the plot line with staying at Michelle's apartment versus kind of then staying at her parent's house and then also Gabe being basically forced to open this New York location of Agility, versus L.A. So I was wondering, do you enjoy writing setting? How did the stuff come about in the context of the plotline?

[00:08:24] **Alexis** So I actually hate writing setting.

[00:08:25] **Joce** Oh no.

[00:08:26] **Alexis** I feel like I'm terrible at it. It's the kind of thing that I will leave myself notes for, like "add setting details." And that note will usually make it sometimes all the way to copy edits. And I'm like, Oh, I shouldn't have to describe this room or, you know, wherever they are. But I think it's partly because I also want to put a lot of thought into how I include those elements into the book. And I am often writing my drafts so quickly that I don't have as much time to just stop and think, How do I describe this? What's the best way? You know, I also look at a lot of Pinterest boards for things like Michelle's apartment. And I was like, What's her apartment going to look like? But then other things like her parents house, I didn't have to look anything up. I just was going off of kind of my own memories of my homes, homes of friends that I had been to in that neighborhood. Things like that just to, you know. . . . So I went to elementary school in that neighborhood where this book is set. And it kind of helped, I think, because it meant that I could infuse Gabe with some of those like childhood nostalgia feelings. But I'd also hoped to be able to go there while I was writing the book to just like walk around, figure out where things were going to happen. And because of the pandemic and lockdown last year, I didn't get to do that. So I kind of just had to rely on memory and also Google.

[00:09:58] **Joce** I feel like this research process just kind of, I don't know, situating yourself in the setting is so interesting. I have to ask you, what were you looking for on Pinterest when you were researching Michelle's apartment? And what did that board look like for you?

[00:10:12] **Alexis** Oh, for her, it was like an apartment that was all done up in red and black, kind of like small, like very small one-bedroom or studio apartments. And I'd seen a picture with a room that was like a very small bedroom. And then I used that as the inspiration for Michelle's room, where it's like very small and kind of dark, but uses like lots of like natural tones to kind of brighten it up. And then on the wall, there's like this wallpaper of a misty, atmospheric forest with just like the skinny little trees, and it's all black and white. And I was like, okay, I'll put that in her room too. And then that became like a big part of one of the sex scenes where they're just like cracking jokes the whole time. But also it's like a very emotional and heartfelt.

[00:11:03] **Joce** My gosh, I was like, I know that forest. I know what you're talking about.

[00:11:08] **Alexis** Thanks, Pinterest.

[00:11:10] **Joce** Thanks, Pinterest. Thanks for it. Oh my gosh. I'm also curious. What details from places like in your childhood or when you were growing up did you include in her parents' house as opposed to her apartment?

[00:11:22] **Alexis** Well, I had a friend who lived in the neighborhood. And I think I must have only gone to her house, like, twice. But that is what I used as kind of the interior blueprint for the house with like having a basement that was a finished basement and having, you know, kind of the access around the side of the house, the steps up into the kitchen. And also in my grandmother's house, my grandmother always kept her curtains drawn because she didn't want people looking in. And I specifically remember a window in the kitchen that faced the house next door that she never had that window open or that curtain. You know. And also, just like, from when I was a teenager and we would like, you know, me and my friends, we'd go to each other's houses. And we weren't supposed to have anybody over. So we'd kind of have to sneak in so the neighbors wouldn't see. So that was a big part of planning out how Gabe was going to sneak in and out of this house without his dad seeing him in very humorous ways.

[00:12:23] **Joce** I love it. I feel like that just brought back so many of those high-school memories like, right? Like when they kind of left off and Gabe left for L.A., I was like, I can really sense that both of them are kind of taken back to that place with them sneaking in and out of Michelle's parents' house. I was like, Are they going to make it? Is this the time where they bump into the parents? What's going to happen here?

[00:12:41] **Alexis** Yes. There's so much tension, like, inherent in that situation.

[00:12:45] **Joce** I love it. And contrasted with that one sex scene where, you know, the forest wallpaper comes into play. I just think the contrast is just hilarious.

[00:12:57] **Alexis** Thank you.

[00:12:58] **Joce** Kind of switching gears a little bit, just kind of in relation to family. Obviously, like we were talking about, Gabe has to kind of sneak in and out of Michelle's parents' house because he has this very tense relationship with his parents, especially, you know, that was the reason why he left to L.A. in the first place. How did you approach portraying this kind of like boundary setting and leaving with the family members of Gabe?

[00:13:21] **Alexis** Well, I think . . . I think boundaries are so important. And I think especially in families that are big and tight knit and especially if there's like, you know, like an immigrant culture within the family, like regardless of where you're from, there can be this feeling that everybody really has to stick together, and you kind of can't like make waves in some ways. But I do also feel like there are some toxic dynamics that can be inherent in some family settings and that for some people, you really do just need to have space until you can figure out how to navigate the situation in a way that is healthy for you. And I wanted to make sure that Gabe was cognizant that there are families where, you know, you kind of . . . for some people, you kind of just need to cut out your family and then that's like the best and most loving thing you can do for yourself. But in his case and over the course of this story, he's done that because it was the only thing he could really think of to do. He couldn't figure out a way to, like, connect with his father when he was

younger. But I wanted to show that where both parties had changed, he didn't have to come back and then compromise or go back to being who he used to be. He could kind of meet his father where he is now and see that he's different and that they're both different. And they can see each other differently from just both of them being older. So I felt like that was really important to get right and to just be aware that this is not always the case for people.

[00:15:02] **Joce** Right. You know. Absolutely. My parents were immigrants. And I feel like that culture, you know, of wanting everything to be so close knit but also understanding that some dynamics are probably not ideal or maybe particularly not ideal for that individuation part of, you know, becoming a young adult, leaving, graduating high school, etc. Yeah. I'm so curious, you know, kind of navigating that part of Gabe's life. How do you think that impacted him, like, leaving when he was so young?

[00:15:34] **Alexis** Oh, that's a great question. I think for Gabe, he saw it as the only thing that he could do. But he realizes later in the story that maybe he also missed out on something by doing that. Like maybe he lost a little bit of something. You know, that sense of community, the ties to his culture. Gabe is Puerto Rican and Mexican. Michelle is Puerto Rican and Italian. And you know, he gets the chance to reinvent himself when he goes away to school and then really just, like, relocates to California and gets to live life on his own terms without anybody doubting him, he feels like. But then he realizes, of course, that he was the one doubting himself all along. And maybe that was also present in his life. But the way that he responded to it could have been a little different.

[00:16:28] **Joce** Yeah. You know, I feel like just kind of reading both of their characters, Gabe and Michelle, I feel like both of them have, gosh, this kind of like inner conflict between, like, there's a part of them that feels a little bit guilty but then another part of them that's like, I really want to explore what it would be like to connect to people in different ways that I maybe wasn't able to before. And obviously, we see with Michelle's character arc that she becomes more familiar with exploring intimacy, sexuality, and kind of being more emotionally vulnerable with people as well. So how would you describe her growth over the course of the book?

[00:17:03] **Alexis** Yeah, I think that the way that we respond to things when we're younger, with hindsight, we can go, Hmm, maybe I could have gone about that differently. And with Michelle, she really sees that with how she reacted when Gabe told her that he was leaving. And, you know, she's very upset, hurt, betrayed, angry. And she does realize, you know, pretty quickly that, you know, maybe she should have listened to him more and not responded that way. But then when she tries to reach out, he doesn't respond. So that then kind of adds to all of those feelings. So when they do come back together, they've got all of that to work through as well because it's not like they just never saw each other again. And then neither of them reached out. She reached out multiple times because she was trying to bridge that distance.

[00:17:53] **Alexis** For Michelle, it really was about writing this person who is . . . who is outwardly very confident and kind of blunt and, you know, seems to have it all together. But inside she is really protecting herself from getting too close to anybody, even to the people that she is closest to. Like her, her best cousins, the primas of power, Jasmine and Ava. And when Gabe comes back, she doesn't tell them because she knows kind of how they're going to react. And she doesn't want to hear it. You know, she knows that this is not a great idea, that it's not going to be great for her heart, for her well-being, but she's got to see it through. So I also wanted to show that she was someone who was okay with

physical intimacy, but emotional intimacy and vulnerability were like no-noes for her. You know, that's where she really was the most guarded. But with Gabe, because he'd known her so well and because she really does care for him so much, it was a different experience of being with him. And she just kind of couldn't stop herself from getting closer to him, which to me is like the best kind of romance story.

[00:19:11] **Joce** It is. It's so good. And I feel like there's just, you know, with second-chance romance, with kind of this childhood friends to lovers with a break in between, there's just so much pining. I love pining. It's fantastic.

[00:19:24] **Alexis** Yeah.

[00:19:24] **Joce** Speaking of which, the sex is just hot, hot, hot. And I was listening to the audiobook for A LOT LIKE ADIOS on my commute in stop-and-go traffic. And I was looking next to me because the person next to me kept looking at me. I'm like, Can they . . . ? Can they hear this? But number two, should they hear this? Because it's just so good.

[00:19:43] **Alexis** Right, should I roll my windows down?

[00:19:45] **Joce** Do I roll the windows down now? How did you make like writing those super hot sex scenes? How did you make that a skill?

[00:19:54] **Alexis** Oh gosh. Well, the first time I wrote one, I was so embarrassed. Like, even though it was in a project that wasn't published, nobody was ever going to read, I just . . . I was like, okay, I just have to do this. And I have to just force myself to write this scene and just, like, go all in. And I did. And looking back, it's still kind of like a clunky scene. But I, you know, I had been reading romance for a long time, so I kind of knew how they were supposed to go or how they were supposed to be written. But it's something that . . . I don't know . . . I put a lot of work into, like technical craft work in terms of making sure that the tension in the scene has the right flow, that there's nothing that pulls you out of the scene, that they're interesting, that they are furthering the emotional development, that—you know—sometimes that they're also a little bit funny, that there are those like romantic, like, sigh-inducing moments.

[00:20:58] **Alexis** So writing sex scenes really is a lot of work. I know that some people will leave them till the end. I kind of do. Like, there's one of the scenes that I left toward the end because I just didn't feel like writing it. And I kind of knew what was going to happen in that scene. Or so I thought. When I went back to write it, it's the one where they are kind of on a . . . what is it called . . . a sexcation, a sex vacation, after the quinceanera. And I had to go back. And it just ended up. . . . The scene ended up going a little differently than I thought it would with Michelle really kind of struggling with being that vulnerable and asking for what she wanted. But yeah, those things . . . just they take a lot of work. The first one where they're arguing, and then they leap into bed—I rewrote that like thirty times. It just . . . it just took so much work to get it right because everything else in the story hinged on it.

[00:21:52] **Joce** Gosh, it's so true. And you know that one scene after the quinceanera is one of my favorites in the book.

[00:22:00] **Alexis** Oh good.

[00:22:00] **Joce** I mean, they're all good, but that that one is truly one of my favorites. And I have to ask, how did you think it was originally going to go?

[00:22:07] **Alexis** I think I thought that they were just going to, like, do it a lot and like, you know, that it would just be like hot. But then as I started writing it, like, you know, I had to kind of go back to write it because I skipped most of it because I just didn't feel like writing them going at it like that. And I was like, okay, so like, Michelle's brought all this sexy stuff. Like, exactly what does she have in her bag? Like, how do I make it clear that, you know, there's the reasons for the one room, et cetera? And then she just gets progressively more nervous once they start. And that part surprised me. And then from there I was like, I think I can just, like, summarize how this goes.

[00:22:51] **Joce** Gosh. I love it. I love it. Speaking of writing, I definitely have to ask about the fan fiction parts in A LOT LIKE ADIOS. I'm so curious, how did this come to be? And how did this fit in with the story?

[00:23:05] **Alexis** Well, I kind of set myself up for this in YOU HAD ME AT HOLA where there are these interstitial scenes where the two of them are in character. So those scenes are written in character, although there are slight breaks in the fourth wall. So I said, okay, I need to have something similar in this one. And I used to write fanfic when I was a teenager. And it's kind of like one of my, you know, fond memories and a big source of nostalgia for my childhood. But I did not write fanfic with the hot boy next door. I mostly wrote it with my cousin or with strangers on Live Journal.

[00:23:40] **Joce** Oh my gosh. Me too. Me too. Also a purveyor of fan fiction here.

[00:23:45] **Alexis** Yeah. So, you know, but it's something that like when I think about it, I'm just like, Oh, that's right, that was such a fun time. So I wanted to give Gabe and Michelle something like that that was this thing that bonded them, that they had together this kind of shared world and shared characters and also a way of showing the flashbacks into who they were when they were teenagers without just outright writing a flashback of them, I don't know, doing homework or whatever. I mean, I did write one of those scenes, but it was just one of my backstories. It's not in the book.

[00:24:20] **Joce** I'm just like, this so much better than homework. Thank you.

[00:24:24] **Alexis** Right. But it really was a question of how do I do these scenes? Whereas with HOLA, I couldn't write the book until I knew how I was going to handle those scenes because I had to write them as I went. In this case, because they were going to be flashback scenes, I had to write the book. . . . Well, I wrote the book first because I didn't know how these things were going to go. And then I went back, and I tried to create all kinds of like fake sci-fi shows that they could have been into. Like, what if there's one like Star Wars? What if there's one like Star Trek? What if there's one like Jedi Academy? What if there's one like Farscape? You know, I watched a ton of sci-fi TV shows at the time as research. You know, such a hardship. And then I kind of made a list of tropes. I tried mashing the tropes together. I tried mashing them together with rom-com tropes. I tried mashing them with YA tropes because they were teenagers. I came up with all these different premises and outlines and just kept getting stuck. And I would ask my editor, like, which one do you think is better? And she was like, I think they're both fine. And I was like, Oh, that doesn't help me.

[00:25:29] **Joce** Not helpful. Not helpful.

[00:25:30] **Alexis** So I then just tried writing sample chapters for a few of them. And it was still just kind of like, I, you know, I like them, but I don't know if other people will because it's not based on a real show that they care about, right? Only Gabe and Michelle care about this space show. So that was when I finally came up with the idea of doing the . . . like the chat boxes where they were in Windows Messenger, which is, I guess, what I was using at that time, like in the mid early '00s. I don't even remember, honestly. You know, we're they're using Instant Messenger. And they are talking about fanfic, but they're also talking about themselves and their lives, kind of interspersed in there. I was like, okay, this is the way that we get just kind of like a quick jolt—because it's done in like text format—of who they were, how they talk to each other, and what this story meant to them, which was like the heart of what those scenes were supposed to be. But it took a lot of work to get to that point.

[00:26:33] **Joce** I feel like reading those scenes, it really just took me back to, I guess, like my personal fan fiction days. I would write with people that I met on the internet over, like AOL or MSN Messenger. I was like, I know these chat boxes. These are familiar.

[00:26:46] **Alexis** Yeah. That is exactly what I was going for. I was like, people are going to look at this. And, you know, those of us of a certain generation will see it and go, I know exactly what those icons mean.

[00:26:56] **Joce** It was great. I was like, Wow, nostalgia. Here it is. Is there kind of like a secret outline of the show / full fanfic somewhere? Is it on Patreon? Alexis Daria Patreon? How do I pay for this?

[00:27:09] **Alexis** It currently only exists on my laptop. But I am actually thinking of starting a Patreon next year and doing a serial of the fanfic from the book. And maybe also Carmen in Charge from YOU HAD ME AT HOLA. But I just need more time.

[00:27:22] **Joce** Oh my gosh. All right.

[00:27:24] **Alexis** Because yes, an entire outline does exist. And the chat scenes were actually all longer. And I ended up trimming out some more of the actual fanfic details because I was like, Nobody knows who these characters are.

[00:27:35] **Joce** I will be your first patron. You heard it here.

[00:27:39] **Alexis** Yay! Thank you.

[00:27:41] **Joce** All right. Well, there is a set of questions that I like to do with a lot of the authors that we have on the podcast that have a back list of books that's kind of like a superlatives section. So it's basically like a "who's the most likely to" or "who's your character that's most likely to." So.

[00:27:59] **Alexis** All right. I'm ready. I mean, I feel like I should have listed out all my characters first, just so I don't forget anybody, but I'm ready.

[00:28:06] **Joce** That's okay. We'll do it. Okay, my first question is, who is your character that is . . . would be the most supportive and nurturing after a breakup?

[00:28:15] **Alexis** Ava. Ava from the Primas of Power. Her book comes next.



[00:28:20] **Joce** I feel like, you know, in A LOT LIKE ADIOS, I was like, Ava seems more maybe like mysterious or subdued a little bit. I was like, I'm so curious what she's going to end up being like.

[00:28:33] **Alexis** I'm curious too.

[00:28:35] **Joce** Who is your character who would hype you up the most before a first date? Like, the one that you would invite over to your house to maybe put some makeup on and pick an outfit?

[00:28:44] **Alexis** Oh, that would be Natasha from the Dance Off series. And unfortunately, her book is currently out of print or unavailable because it was an e-book. But Natasha was the one who was like all about the clothing. Like, she would come over and do your hair and like, give you a pep talk.

[00:29:01] **Joce** Sign me up. I mean, I go on dates with my husband, but I'll invite Natasha over to hype me up for a date with my husband.

[00:29:09] **Alexis** She'll show you an outfit.

[00:29:09] **Joce** Yes, absolutely. All right. Who is a character that you would be most likely to bring to a large family dinner with complicated dynamics?

[00:29:19] **Alexis** Hmm. I would say, either, Michelle from A LOT LIKE ADIOS or Gina from TAKE THE LEAD because Michelle is so good at navigating those complicated dynamics because she'll just kind of like, jump in there and start talking and not be bothered by the kind of unspoken tension the way that she does during the business meeting scene with Gabe and his investor. But Gina also is just, like, incredibly sweet and so good at being "on" like for the cameras on the Dance Off. So I think she would also be really good at that.

[00:29:56] **Joce** Oh, I love it. I love it. The last one of these is which character's TED Talk would you be the most likely to listen to?

[00:30:06] **Alexis** I think Jasmine would do a really good one, Jasmine from YOU HAD ME AT HOLA. I think she would have a lot to say about being in the entertainment industry and about her lessons on the road to love. Because she had a bumpy road.

[00:30:24] **Joce** She definitely did. I would for sure listen to a Jasmine TED Talk. I would also listen to a Michelle TED Talk about just kind of navigating the business world because I do not have a business mind, and she definitely does.

[00:30:35] **Alexis** Oh yeah, I think she would do a good job at that, going from corporate to freelance and then starting her own business. Yeah, that'd be a good one too.

[00:30:40] **Joce** Yeah, totally. And I feel like people are really into that these days, so I feel like a lot of people would jump on that bandwagon.

[00:30:46] **Alexis** Mm hmm. Maybe I'll write that for my newsletter. I don't know.

[00:30:50] **Joce** Or the Patreon. The Patreon.

[00:30:53] **Alexis** Yes.

[00:30:54] **Joce** All right. Um, a couple of questions before we finish off the interview here. Just in the spirit of Latinx Heritage Month—I mean, we strive to promote books by Latinx authors all year—but if you could recommend some books that you have read maybe this year or some books that are coming out, I'm sure our listeners would really appreciate that.

[00:31:14] **Alexis** There's so many. There's. . . . Okay. Well, Mia Sosa's next book is coming out in the spring or late winter, I think. It's called THE WEDDING CRASHER. And it's the follow up to THE WORST BEST MAN. So if you haven't read THE WORST BEST MAN, definitely read that because it is amazing. And it's a true rom-com in that it is romantic and sexy and so funny. So definitely keep an eye out for THE WEDDING CRASHER. I got to read part of an early draft of that. And I was already like, Mia, please send me the finished copy.

[00:31:46] **Joce** I'm so jealous. I'm so jealous.

[00:31:48] **Alexis** I'm also a big fan of Elizabeth Acevedo, who has written THE POET X and WITH THE FIRE ON HIGH and CLAP WHEN YOU LAND. And her audiobooks are just phenomenal. She does the narration for them. And they're kind of like spoken word Afro-Latina heroines, like teenage heroines, in, you know, major cities like New York. I think Philadelphia is . . . with THE FIRE FROM ON HIGH. But they just really capture, like, all the angst and tenderness of that age in a really beautiful way.

[00:32:29] **Joce** Amazing. Oh my gosh, I feel like I love both of them. And I'm so excited for THE WEDDING CRASHER. I'm, again, beyond jealous that you've gotten to read some.

[00:32:38] **Alexis** Yeah. I'm like, okay, when? When am I going to get the next. . . ? Like the final version of it, Mia? I know it's done.

[00:32:43] **Joce** We're all ready. Okay, last question here. I must ask. And I've wanted to ask this for maybe like four years of my life. But are you watching the new season of "Dancing with the Stars?" And if you are, what are your thoughts?

[00:32:57] **Alexis** Okay, so I have only been watching some of the dances on YouTube the next day because I'm on deadline.

[00:33:02] **Joce** Okay.

[00:33:09] **Alexis** Let's just say that my favorite dancer on the show is paired with someone who I really am not rooting for.

[00:33:14] **Joce** Oh no.

[00:33:14] **Alexis** That's bittersweet, but I am super excited for Jenna and JoJo dancing together. And you know, I had been working on a Dance Off book. Two women—like Lori from the Dance Off books and another female celebrity—were paired up together on the show. And this was hopefully going to come out a few years ago. And now I'm like, Oh, they've finally done it on the show. And it just like, it's also a little bittersweet because I'm like, aw, I want to finish that book; I just don't have time. They've got some amazing

dancers this season. I just hope that everybody stays safe. I know that a couple of people have already had to, like, take some days off because of COVID. So that, I guess, is my greater concern for them.

[00:34:01] **Joce** Gosh, yeah, for sure. It was Cheryl that tested positive. Is that right?

[00:34:04] **Alexis** Cheryl and then her partner.

[00:34:06] **Joce** Oh no, they both tested positive?

[00:34:09] **Alexis** They both have. Yeah.

[00:34:09] **Joce** Oh geez. The last I heard it was only her, and I did not hear that her partner also had.

[00:34:14] **Alexis** Yeah, it was just like a couple of days ago that I saw it on Instagram. And I was like, Oh, no. You know? And then I think about, like all the other people who work on the show, like the cast and crew, the makeup and stylist people. Like everybody. You know, there's so many people who work on that show. And it's one of the reasons I love it because it's giving all of these jobs to people, you know, all these creatives. But I don't know. With everything going on now, I'm like, Oh gosh. Stay safe, everyone, please.

[00:34:40] **Joce** Oh my gosh. Yeah, I feel like that's what's happening right now. I mean, pandemic life. We're just trying to get back into it. And I'm like, Is this safe? Is this not safe? But.

[00:34:50] **Alexis** Yeah, yeah.

[00:34:51] **Joce** My gosh. Well, thank you so much for taking the time to come on the podcast today. I really appreciate it.

[00:34:58] **Alexis** Thanks for having me. This was super fun.

[00:35:03] **Joce** And that's our show. I'd like to thank Alexis Daria for talking with me about A LOT LIKE ADIOS, which is out now from Avon Books. You can find her at alexisdaria.com and on both Instagram and Twitter (@alexisdaria). Many thanks to our patrons, whose support makes this podcast possible. This episode was produced by me, Joce, and edited by Kendra Winchester. Our music is by Miki Saito with Isaac Greene. You can find us on Instagram and Twitter (@thereadingwomen). Thank you so much for listening.