

The Ice Cubes on Angela Dawe's narration of THE VILLAINS SERIES

Audiobook review by:

Rach (@RachLHReviews), Mary (@maryreads81), Sabrina (@AllStartsWith1), & Jamie (@the_R1z).
Plus honorary ice cubist, Lee Winter.



RACH



MARY



SABRINA



JAMIE



LEE

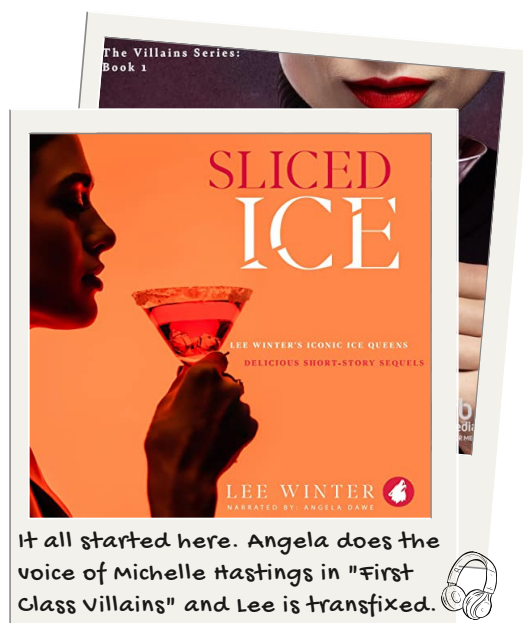
1. Did the characters' voices live up to expectation?

Rach: They went so far beyond my expectations. I know we got a taste of Michelle's voice in *First Class Villains* (from Lee Winter's *Sliced Ice* anthology) but what Angela did with her in these books is more divine and delicious than I ever imagined. I couldn't get enough.

I'm in awe of how Michelle's voice subtly changes as the books progress. Plus, her angry/hurt voice is shiver-worthy. Eden's voice is perfectly in line with her character. I adore it. Angela is a legend at giving characters a unique sound. Then there are all the other characters. Even those who are fleeting get the same care and attention as the main ones.

Mary: Absolutely. I had already gotten an impression of Michelle in *Sliced Ice* and it was clear to me that Angela would voice her wonderfully. After reading the books and looking forward to the upcoming audiobooks, I was really excited about Eden's voice. Angela portrays Eden the way I felt when I read the books. The vibe is perfect. I feel the same way about Hannah and Melba. The warmth and loving nature of both characters comes through very well. The real (female) villains in this series were spoken a bit too sexily for me. This put me in morally difficult situations! *laughs*

Jamie: The characters' voices exceeded my expectations. Catherine Ayers' voice makes me melt.



Lee: Angela outdid herself. There wasn't a single voice I didn't think she'd nailed exactly. Best of all, she improved on the Ayers' voice that she did in *Sliced Ice* (*Flashbang* short story) so in *Chaos Agent*, it was absolutely perfect. I was a big ole teary mess.

Sabrina: The characters' voices didn't only live up to expectations, they exceeded them. Angela Dawe put so much expression and care into each character, lifting Lee Winter's vivid words and bringing them to life. The two of them are such a great duo! Angela Dawe didn't just narrate the books, to me she was truly voice acting.

2. Did Angela make you laugh or cry and, if so, where?

Sabrina: Angela has such a good comedic timing. I had to laugh about the scene in *The Fixer* in which Eden felt the urge to show her boss a drawn line on a paper. Hilarious after all the times she, herself, crossed the line.

The scene in which Michelle confides in her safta about her past felt incredibly intimate and uncomfortable to listen to—in the best way possible.

In *Chaos Agent*, the line, “Two extra votes, I see”, hit the mark and was so unexpected, I couldn’t help but laugh despite the nature of the scene. Michelle’s “Who did this to you?” on the other hand gave me shivers, both times. Goosebump moments. So good!

Jamie: I laughed often with Eden’s antics and stream of thought. I didn’t cry, but felt the pain during the Michelle and Catherine scene.

Mary: There are so many funny dialogues in these books that made me laugh, especially between Michelle and Eden. It’s difficult to single out one. The point that hit me much harder when listening to the audiobooks than when reading the books was the moment where Michelle meets Catherine and they talk to each other. Oh my, that got under my skin. The pain of both women is so palpable and this scene is so important and good.



Rach: Oh my God, yes, in so many places! The line I was anticipating the most was “You started a coffee club”! The dry, disbelief in the tone made me laugh out loud. There are so many giggle-worthy moments but that one stood out for me. Oh, and the banter between O’Brian and Eden always enticed a laugh.

I cried more times than I cared to admit during the audio, but here are the main parts: When Michelle has a headache and Hannah comes into her room for a talk, all that self-loathing was so hard to swallow. Add in Hannah’s soft, caring voice and the tears were streaming down my face. When Eden gets hurt, I cried for Eden and then later for Michelle. The emotions Angela evoked with the character’s tones during those scenes made me a mess.

Then there’s the bed scene where Michelle tells Eden about Catherine and later the meeting between Michelle and Catherine. Those scenes killed me. I mean ugly crying people!

Lee: I laugh at pretty much all my jokes (yes, I’m tragic like that) so just cue the entire start of Eden working at The Fixers trying to fit in and then winning them all over with her pandafication.

I felt Ottilie’s hilarious exasperation the whole time Eden was just stumbling about being awesome and clueless, and even O’Brian was helpless to resist. Poor Tilly.

Meanwhile, I was so anticipating crying at the scene in bed where Michelle finally tells Eden her past. Instead, that got me all knotted up and I was whining like a trapped puppy rather than in tears. What broke me was Michelle being vulnerable and genuinely apologising to Catherine. And Catherine telling her she’d never been in love before and that she’d torn everything apart trying to find her. My heart! How did Angela convey so much emotion? *Sniffles*



“Vol Haut”
sculpture by
Luo Li Rong
which is in the
Fixers building.

The Big Question:
“Is she nude?”

NOT
by some dead white Italian
dude from the Renaissance era.

3. Which was the best side character Angela narrated and what was it about them (and how they were voiced) that interested you?

Mary: What a difficult question. I find all of the supporting characters in this series great. The loving good ones as well as the unscrupulous evil ones but at least three of them are exceptionally well presented. Like Otilie Zimmermann.

For me, Otilie is an outstanding, polarizing character, of whom we see more as the story progresses but who never fully reveals herself. This interesting tension in her character was maintained by Angela's performance and makes me want more.

Jamie: Definitely Hannah. Angela really conveyed the grandmother vibe with her voice.

Lee: I'm a terrible person to ask because I can't choose. I find O'Brian so cool—his indignation at being called "Riverdance" cracks me up while his utter pragmatism in the face of meting out vengeance on a friend (Eden) is too funny. Angela conveyed him so beautifully.

I adore Hannah's non-judgmental acceptance of her granddaughter and her sneaky match-making. You can hear the love, literally.

And Otilie's long-suffering, tired 'I'm too old for this' vibe always makes me laugh. Truly, I cannot split the three. Angela just "got" them.

Sabrina: I'm going for Otilie. I enjoyed how the subtlety of all the characters with foreign accents enriched the story. But the way Otilie's accent and voice was portrayed showed the depth of her character: her heritage, her educational level, her shades of gray and true colors. A true chameleon.

Rach: This is a tough one, but after a lot of thought, for me, it has to be Francine. The moment I heard the mayor's voice I was like, 'Yes, this is exactly how she's supposed to sound'. Her voice is so imperious. No matter what is happening she has this arrogance about her. It's brilliant. I hated her yet Angela made me want to hear her and know more.

As in many Lee Winter books, there are some non-human side characters that find their way into our hearts.



Aggie's guinea pig Kevin doesn't just make his owner smile.



Eden's converted van Gloria has every amenity.

4. Did something stand out for you after listening to the audiobook version (especially if you've read the book version as well)?

Jamie: I think bringing Michelle to life with Angela's voice magnified the experience and really gave a sense of who Michelle is.

Rach: I've read both books many times and thought I knew them well. However, the one thing the audio highlights for me is just how much Michelle's actions affect Eden. I got it in the books, but I think I was too engrossed in Michelle's feelings. Angela's performance made Eden's hurt, longing, and devastation come to life. The sheer dejection in her voice took my breath away.

Mary: I have read both books and love them. Experiencing the story as an audiobook made many things more intense for me, especially the bond I have with some of the characters. But at this point I finally have to mention Michelle and what Angela has done here. To convey Michelle's cleverness, coolness, brokenness, fragility, complexity and the love that lies dormant within it acoustically is a great achievement. There's more to it than just giving a character a voice. Michelle's inner struggle in particular becomes so visible that it touched me even more.

Lee: When Angela did the line, “Who did this do to you?”, I got goosebumps. I didn’t get that when writing the words myself. Not even close. Many people will recognise the line as part of a meme from social media and it’s one I always wanted to include in my story: A hero crawls to her arch villain’s lair after being attacked. The villain is enraged, because no one gets to attack *her* hero but her. Then she says that line.

The moment I heard Angela say it, wow. It smacked me like a freight train. I felt it. It made the whole scene so real for me. And if you listen to it, you’ll hear what Michelle’s really saying: She loves Eden Lawless with everything she is. Gasp. My poor heart.

Sabrina: Michelle’s pain intensified and feels more tangible when listening to the audiobook. The nuances in her voice bring out her inner battle: the audible cracks in her voice, the venom, the petulance, the resignation. It’s absolutely heartbreaking.

Bonus question: Angela Dawe can read any fiction book in human history for you. What’s it going to be and why?

Sabrina: Anything would do. Angela Dawe could probably awaken every book to life. I heard rumors she **read out a dishwasher instruction manual** and made it sound compelling. I have no doubt that’s true.

Jamie: Honestly, listening to Angela Dawe read anything works for me too! LOL. I enjoyed her reading of the dishwasher manual too!

Rach: This is my favourite non-sapphic series. It’s by Karin Slaughter, the **Will Trent/Grant County** books. It’s a long series and I have a few of the audiobooks, but the narrator changes often so I tend to read most of the books instead. A few years ago, I started imagining how amazing Angela would be for these books. They are full of anguish and tension which, in my opinion, is something Angela performs perfectly. I now hear her when I’m reading them. It would be a dream to hear the voices she would create for the characters.



OVERALL CONCLUSION FROM THE ICE PACK:
Angela Dawe nailed the characters and their inner struggles, producing a top performance that makes a memorable listening experience.

Lee: I have long dreamed Angela Dawe would do all of Fletcher DeLancey’s **Chronicles of Alsea** books. It’s sci-fi with so many strong, sapphic women with power, feistiness, and conflicted goals, which is pure Angela. Right in her wheelhouse. I doubt I’d surface for three months if that happened!

Mary: This is an easy answer. I wish that Angela will narrates Lee’s WIP, working title Number Six. She has already narrated both main characters, Ottilie Zimmermann and Monique Carson (from **Hotel Queens**) and it would be fantastic if she continued that.

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