

## chuckle, shrug, sigh

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When I am working on a manuscript, I usually stop now and then and read sections aloud to myself. I try to do it when no one else is around because it likely sounds strange (and I have memories of my sister, under other circumstances, saying, "Mom, Lois is doing that weird thing again..")

I do it (and recommend to young writers that they also do it) because it gives a feeling for pacing and flow, and it certainly makes the writer aware of the verisimilitude (or lack thereof) of the dialogue.

But! Big BUT....! I don't ever read the entire manuscript aloud, after it is done.

And now I am regretting that.

Recently I received a copy of the audio book of SON. Usually I listen to the first few minutes of each audio book, just to hear the sound of the reader's voice (one of my favorites: Arte Johnson reading THE WILLOUGHBY'S. He's great). I don't need to listen to the entire book because, of course, I already know the book well.

I was in the car when I began to listen to the recorded version of son. The reader, actress Bernadette Dunne, is terrific. No complaints there!

But I continued listening, more than I ordinarily do, because the book has three parts, set in three different places, and I wanted to hear how she changed the voice for each, and for new characters ... she does it very effectively. But here is what I heard, which made me cringe:

I OVER-USE: shrug, sigh, and chuckle. I mean *way* over-use.

I think I would have noticed that if I had read the entire book aloud, as Bernadette Dunne was hired to do.

I think it's true that people do use those gestures and inflections to help convey the meaning of what they are saying. But I so wish I had not felt compelled to describe them doing it. Again and Again and Again!

Next book? I will certainly be aware of it, (she sighed, and chuckled). At least I hope I will, (she shrugged.)

Tags: Untagged