



EPISODE 14

*Results from Carissa Andrews' 1st BookBub Deal*

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Welcome back everyone. I'm really excited you're here. You've landed at the Author Revolution Podcast and I'm your host, Carissa Andrews. Today's episode is a little different from the ones I've done in the past. I consider it more of a case study than anything else. Today's episode is all designated to the idea of BookBub promos and whether or not they're worth it - and I'm the case study, having just completed my very first BB deal on January 21st.

So, today I want to go over the results of the deal, compare them against a few of the promos I had go out the week before to prep the series for BookBub - as well as talk about my horrifying formatting snafu and the takeaways you can walk away with, even if you're a brand new author who's never even heard of BookBub. Are you ready?

Okay, so to start this off, I do want to talk for a minute about who BookBub is, so those of you who are new to the writing scene can get your bearings and know what in the world I'm talking about and why they're relevant to you.

Bookbub is one of the largest promotional websites for books to date. Sure, you can do other promo sites, and often times you have to, because Bookbub is UBER selective on who and what they put in their newsletters. In fact, to put things into perspective for you, I have been trying to get a featured deal with BookBub on Pendomus since 2017! Before I ever got this first yes, I had to go through 10 no's.



**EPISODE 14: RESULTS FROM CARISSA  
ANDREWS' 1ST BOOKBUB DEAL**

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There is some strategy to the whole “get a Bookbub deal” thing that sometimes needs to happen. Now, from what I gather, not every author has to go through this – especially if they’re in a hot genre that hasn’t really been filled with competition yet. But when you’re writing YA dystopian, like Pendomus is, then the competition is much fiercer and the BookBub gods had to know it would be worth the effort to place in their newsletter.

When I was coming into 2019, I knew I wanted to get serious about enticing Bookbub to let Pendomus in. After my 6th no, I reached out to BookBub and asked them specifically what I could do to help Pendomus’ chances of being selected. I was told that there were a couple of things... While it had good ratings and was chosen as an Amazon Prime title in 2018, the YA category is super competitive. Bookbub likes to make their offers as enticing and as discounted as possible for their readers. Meaning, your book must be at a higher price point and left there for a long time. We’re talking many months. They also prefer (though not exclusively) wide titles. So, available everywhere books can be sold.

At the time, Pendomus and the rest of my books for that matter, were all in with Amazon Kindle Select so I could take advantage of the page reads through Kindle Unlimited. Which meant being exclusive to Amazon was actually hurting my chances of being chosen.

Well, for better or worse, I decided that for 2019, my goal for that series was to get a BookBub deal. I pulled the entire series from being in Amazon exclusively as soon as my 90 day contract was up and I went wide using PublishDrive as my distributor. That meant all three books and my box set of the series, too. Which, I will mention, were carrying the bulk of my royalties in their page reads. So it was a risk, for sure.



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I didn't even try for a Bookbub deal again in 2019 until April because I knew it had to sit at its new higher price point and wide status for a couple of months before they'd even consider it. It was turned down in April. It was turned down in August, September, October. My sales rankings were plummeting (and I will be honest here, I had bigger fish to fry in 2019 than to advertise Pendomus. I was focused on hitting the USAT Bestseller list with the box set *Playing with Fire*), I had no page reads because the books were not in KU. When *Playing with Fire* missed its mark on the USAT and I took a good hard look at my rankings and royalties, I wanted to cry. I mean, seriously. I took a gamble pulling the *Pendomus Chronicles* out and it was looking like it was a poor one.

On the upside, it did look like I'd gained a little traction with *Playing with Fire* – at least following wise. And I had a brand-new release coming out in November – *Awakening* – which picked up my royalties as well. November and December were great, simply because paperback sales saved me. (So, for those of you who wonder if having multiple versions is worth it – I would have to adamantly say that yes, it is.)

However, I was getting discouraged with *Pendomus*. I kept getting no's and I knew I couldn't sustain this for much longer. In mid-December, I flippantly sent one more request, figuring full-well I would get a no. My plan was to pull it from being wide at the end of January and going back to Amazon.

Funnily enough, the Bookbub gods answered me differently – and it still coincided with my plans to go back into KU! On Christmas Eve, 2019... I got my first yes.

Talk about a great Christmas present, right? And not only that, the day the BookBub deal would launch was *Aztec* and *Pharaoh* (our husky puppies) 1st birthday! If that wasn't a sign, I don't know what is. Right?

Anyway, I immediately freaked out. Yes, I totally squealed out loud and rushed into the office to tell Colin. Then, I hunkered down and got my plan on.

This was a FREE book promotion, and I knew that going free could present it's set of challenges with Amazon. The last thing I wanted was to get to the day and they have to turn it away because Amazon still hasn't price-matched. So, the first week of January, I went free everywhere else and when it was live, I requested it to go free on Amazon. I fully anticipated it take at least a week, because that was my previous experience. However, in 24 hours, Pendomus was free everywhere.

Of course, at this point, I didn't advertise it, though. Instead, I got other promos stacked up to prime Pendomus for its BookBub deal. The week before the deal, I scheduled 5 promos. One with BookRebel, Freebooksy, FreeReadsy, ENT (E-Reader News Today), and Unearthly Ever Afters. I also had 3 author friends share Pendomus in their newsletter this week. Then, once Bookbub went, the only thing I did was the newsletter swaps. I had five more author friends share Pendomus. The results are pretty staggering.

So, without going into the daily detail of each, I'll give you a rundown of things so you have some perspective. And if you want to see the daily play-by-play, head over to [AuthorRevolution.org/14](http://AuthorRevolution.org/14) to download the stats for each day to see how it played out in a more granular detail.

The week of January 13-20th (this is the 8 days prior to the BookBub deal, so it ran Monday to Monday), I got a grand total of 2,127 free downloads of Pendomus. 30 paid books also sold, 4 audiobooks, 3 preorders for books coming out this year, and 689 total page reads (yes, total, because remember, I hadn't been in KU and lost my momentum. Plus, right now, only Polarities and Revolutions are in KU.) My sales ranking went from 433 in the whole Amazon free store to 203 by the 20th.

While that might seem pretty dang awesome, and it is, remember, this is five paid promo sites and 3 newsletter swaps all happening. I say this because even though I know the impact BookBub can have from what other authors say, I'm still very impressed.

So for the seven days since the Bookbub deal (including the day it went out), the results are pretty awesome. So, from January 21st to 27th, I had a grand total of 16,030 total downloads of Pendomus, 95 paid sales, 30 audiobook sales, 21 preorders, and 10,031 page reads. And this is obviously not counting anything still going the 28th and after. My sales ranking went from 203 on the 20th to 12 in the entire Kindle Free Store and held there for three days. By day 4, it rose to 51 and stayed there for two days. Day 6 it was still in the top 100 at #95. It took until the 27th to finally drop off the top 100 and land at 133. Not only that, but when it hit #12 in Amazon, it hit #21 in the whole free store of iTunes, too and stayed in the top 100 all week.

It's safe to say that the BookBub deal has already earned its money back and it's continuing to pay for the other promos that didn't quite pan out in terms of sales. It's done exactly what I had hoped it would do - which is increase awareness for the Pendomus Chronicles, increase my page reads as I head into 2020, and I'm already starting to see reads filter into my other series, the 8th Dimension now that we're hitting week 2.

I also want to mention, page reads for book 2 - Polarities, actually picked up by day 3. Day 2 it was at 210 page reads and jumped to over 2k, then over 3K by day 4. These are some fast readers, guys.



So, one of the things I did well, I think, was to format my book so that in the front and back matter, there was a special video thanking all of my new readers for downloading Pendomus. It's a bit long at about 5 minutes, so I don't know how many people watch it to the end, but it was my way of personalizing the whole experience. In fact, it was a suggestion from my friend and author mentee Stephen Gordon - so thank you Stephen! On the flipside, this also leads me into the formatting snafu I didn't catch until Saturday, the 18th!

While I think the video was a nice touch, it wreaked havoc on my layout. At first, I only added it to the front matter of Pendomus because I wanted people to see it before they read the book. However, somewhere in the midst of adding it, chapter 14 got pulled up to chapter 1 and I missed it. Ugh.

After talking with Stephen Gordon about the fact that I added the video link, I decided to also add it to the backmatter, just in case they missed it in the front. Of course, this was Saturday the 18th when I finally did this.

Imagine my horror when I realized that over a thousand copies had gone out (because the big promos had already gone out before then), with chapter 14 as chapter 1. Omg. I wanted to curl into a fetal position. I text Jenny, my bff/pa and told her what happened, but went straight into damage control. I fixed all the files. Uploaded them again to the sites. I emailed KDP to ask them to fix it and send out a mandatory update to anyone who bought it during that week. I did all the things.

The good news is, by the time the BookBub deal went out, the file was fixed and all those people got the pretty, fresh, and accurate file. The bad news is, I don't know how many people started reading Pendomus and thought "what in the fudgeknuckles and I reading right now?"



It's safe to say, it could have attributed for the less than stellar page read response from the week before, for sure. On the upside, I did have the opportunity to update the video locations to warn anyone who actually clicked on the link, that they needed to update their file if the book started with a Traeton chapter. Who knows if anyone actually read that or took action, but I hope so. And I also hope that anyone who got KDP's email about updating their book would make use of that, too.

So, lesson learned: even if you are adding a simple page with a video link, always double back through the entire layout to make sure nothing inadvertently moved on you.

Speaking of lessons... let's talk about the ones I want you to take away (well, other than that last one, anyway) in terms of BookBub Deals.

First, if you don't have a BookBub profile yet. For the love of all that's holy, get one now if you have at least one title out on any bookseller site. Start doing BookBub profile swaps so you can get more followers on this profile. I had over 1500 before the BookBub gods approved Pendomus. I don't know if this is significant, but throwing it out there. You can also do BookBub builders if you search in Facebook Groups. It might cost you \$10-25, but it's worth it to get those numbers up. You have to have at least a thousand before you can send out new release notifications to your followers when a new release launches. And that's free. So, hop to it.

Second, if you have a book on any bookseller site and have your profile, start requesting your BookBub feature now. It could take you a couple of years to get your first yes. So keep trying. Make sure you make use of the comment section to provide any accolades to yourself as an author or to your book. And for the love of all that's holy, be sure to thank them for their time and consideration.

Third, if you're not wide and aren't seeing traction in getting your deal, think about going wide. But, do so with caution because it will most likely tank your sales and page reads until you get it. I still have yet to figure out if it was 100% worth it, when factoring in the loss of sales from last year. Maybe I'll do another review in December to let you know how the whole thing shook out.

Fourth, make sure your book is at a higher price point – meaning, \$2.99 or higher and leave it there until you get the deal. No exceptions. It took me a year without dropping the price for them to give me that yes.

Fifth, have as many options open as possible. If you can, bulk up your backlist as fast as you can. The more reads you have behind the book, the better. Whether that's a series, or a bunch of other books. Also, make sure everything is available in as many different formats as you can manage. Ebook, Paperback, Audiobook. In the middle of those sales numbers I provided were also paperbacks – I just didn't break them out. If I didn't have them or the audiobooks, I was definitely leaving a prime opportunity on the table. You've already done the hard work of creation. Take advantage of providing multiple ways for people to consume your book as humanly possible. This also includes box sets, if you do have a series. Plus, having these options helps you not just in your BookBub deal, but every day of the year.

Whew. That was a lot to cover and I hope you were able to make sense of it all. Like I said, I will include a downloadable PDF with the day-by-day details from both weeks so you can see the difference in a more visual way. I'll also provide links to Bookbub and some of the other items we talked about today. Just go out to [authorrevolution.org/14](http://authorrevolution.org/14) to check them out.





Next week I want to talk about why it's a necessity to have a project management system in place when you write a novel or plan to ever rapid release. If author overwhelm is a big deal, this one simple step is going to make your life a hundred times easier.

One last thing. I know I've said this before, but have you subscribed to this podcast? If not, I would love for you to hit subscribe now so you can be notified whenever a new episode goes live. And if you liked this episode or any of the previous ones, drop me a review. Once I have a few, I plan to do listener shout-outs to feature your review on the air. Plus, it totally helps boost my confidence that what I'm doing is helping you. Which is what this whole podcast is all about. Right?

Well, that's it for me today, guys. Until next time. Go forth and be awesome.



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