



EPISODE 29

*Why it's Crucial to Invest in a Series for Rapid Releasing*

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Hi there and welcome to a new episode of the Author Revolution Podcast. I'm your host, international bestselling indie author, Carissa Andrews and CEO of Author Revolution, the author's source for all things rapid releasing.

So, hey there, guys! I can't believe we're already in mid-May. This month is already flying by and we're still cooped up like chickens. Or something like that. With a little luck, things will start opening back up in the next couple of weeks, but who knows for sure? In Minnesota, we're going through the weird fluctuation in temps that is spring. Last weekend, for fishing opener and Mother's Day, we had what we affectionately call, "Second Winter" - where it was cold enough to snow and drop at least two inches of the white fluffy stuff. And now this coming weekend, we're meant to be edging toward the 80's. So, yay, Minnesota and our weather whiplash.

In other news, I've been working on cleaning up my outline for my next book, Haunted Legacy, and getting it ready to rock and roll. The plan is to have it finished by the 1st of July, so I can move on to Cursed Legacy, which is the final book in this series. At least thus far...

So, speaking of series, today, we're going to be talking about why it's crucial to plan and invest in a series for rapid releasing.



**EPISODE 29: WHY IT'S CRUCIAL TO INVEST IN A SERIES FOR RAPID RELEASING**

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Now, while I'm wrapping up a four-part series that will rapid release, it's technically not the ideal series in terms of life-altering full-time author income. I know this, but I still couldn't help myself. It was the series I had to write next. It may turn into a bigger world at some point, particularly if it does well, but for now, this four-part arc is as far as I've planned.

So, if it's not ideal, what is? Well, first off, let me say that any book you release, regardless of its strategy is worthy of existence. As artists, we're not always in control of what wants to come through us. In some ways, I feel like we're not really in charge, we're just the vessels for our muse. In fact, this is a theory that Elizabeth Gilbert went into in her book, "Big Magic." If you haven't yet read this book, I highly encourage it. It was such an interesting take on how authors and artists can view their creativity.

At any rate, when we look at rapid releasing as a means to creating long-term, sustainable author income, it means getting those 22-28 books released as quickly as possible. So, with this respect, the ideal series situation to be planning and building is a long-tail series that can continue on with a seemingly unlimited number of storylines.

With this in mind, it's going to be part of my own strategy for 2021, as I take Diana Hawthorne and develop her into a sort of psychic Nancy Drew. I envision her as sort of a cross between Lucifer and Castle. She's a powerful psychic, the most powerful in the world, actually, and she's teamed up with a man who's a private investigator. So, it has that supernatural/cop combo going on. Because she's about solving things based on her psychic abilities, it will be easy to create various storylines to go along with her. In fact, she's pretty insistent anyway. She's managed to sneak her way into three additional books of mine thus far, outside of her full-length novel.

Why do I tell you this? Because I want you to be thinking about whether or not your series concept has the ability to carry you forward for an extended period of time. Look around at the authors in your genre who are doing really well. I bet you'll find they have a series of books that are ongoing. In my space, I think of people like Shayne Silvers, EE Holmes, Wendy Wang, JK Rowling, and so many more. They are killing it in their author space because they've built a world people want to escape into.

If your goal isn't to earn a living as an author, then look, there's no reason to put your writing under the stress-test of rapid releasing. But if it is your goal, then I'm here to give you those tools. Whether or not you choose to do a long-tail series is up to you, obviously, but here are a few of the biggest reasons why doing so could bring you to your dream of being a full-time author:

**You're Not Reinventing the Wheel** – The biggest win for a long-tail series is the amount of time you save in the worldbuilding and prep for each book. Think about it, you only have to build your world and main characters once, then, from that point forward you're focused on expansion, not recreation. This speeds up your outlining, story arc decision, and helps you sink into those characters faster—which will almost always translate into increased speed in writing the story, too. I know for me, it's far easier to start a new book with characters I've already spoken to – er, I mean developed – than it is to start 100% fresh.

**Your Reader's Character Investment** – If you're old enough to remember when Harry Potter was coming out in book form, think about how exciting it was when you knew the next book was coming out. Why? Because you loved the characters and loved the world JK Rowling built. The same goes for any other series out there. Readers are investing their time, mental energy, and emotions into your creation. When they dig in and spend any amount of time with them, they want to stay there. When that's the case, why not give it to them? That's part of the reason I'm going back to Diana Hawthorne. I only anticipated writing one book for her.

It was based on an idea that came to me, and that was it. But due to reader demand (and truthfully, her insistence), I'm going back into her world. Her personality, along with the others in her world, come through so loud and clear and I love diving into all the craziness she could fall prey to. It's a supernatural world where anything could happen and I love that. We'll talk more about marketability in a moment, but the key here is that when your readers tell you what they want, find a way to give it to them. A series will always outsell a single title, hands down.

**Your Publishing Plans are Clear** – When you decide on a long-tail series, you don't have to max out effort trying to figure out that editorial calendar we've been talking about. Instead, your editorial calendar becomes pretty clear and it makes it easy to know what to focus on next. You can line up all of your other service providers – like cover designers, editors, and layout people well in advance. As someone who is doing many different things at one time, take it from me – the less you have to juggle when being creative, the better. Your brain can only hold so much, so if you get into a consistent groove, it helps you as well. In addition, a final bonus is that you can warn your readers, so they know exactly what to expect from you and this series. In return, they will repay you with preorders and continued readership. What can be better than that?

**Nothing Sells Your First Book Better Than Your Next Book** – The biggest reason a series is crucial for a rapid release author is because it's hands down your best marketing tool. I've heard it over and over and you probably have, too – nothing sells your first book better than your next book in a series. When you've found that golden ticket series, you run with it and every book released increases the exposure not only of that book, but the series as a whole. It can increase your exposure and give you exponential growth, if handled in the right way.

Now, there are a few things you'll want to think about as you get started, especially if this is your first series – or maybe even your first book.

The biggest one is to consider testing the market first to make sure your investment of time, blood, sweat, or tears into a series will be worth it. This is particularly important if you don't have a name for yourself, or if you're not already keeping tabs on market trends.

So, you might be saying, "Okay, great. But how do I test the market?" Excellent question.

There are a couple of options for you.

**Write a few novellas** – Sometimes the best way to test if a world or set of characters is worthy of further development is by putting them through a smaller story arc. Try writing a 30K-40K novella (or maybe even a smaller novelette), then put it up for free on some of the sample sites like StoryOrigin, BookFunnel, or even Wattpad. As the readers to give you feedback on the story because you're considering making it a larger world. If you start seeing some traction or get emails back, it could be a good one to run with. You could also test it straight to the market by putting it up on Amazon to see what people think of it. If you get reviews that say, "I can't wait to read more!" or "I hope there'll be another book!" you know you're on the right track. The only way to know for sure if it will translate into better income is to then trial it out.

**Write a couple of stand-alones first** – Another way you can test the waters for a series is the way I did with Oracle and Diana Hawthorne's story. Write a few stand-alone books and see if any of those same reviews come up wanting more. When you see those, you'll want to take notice and then take action.

**Do a world-building collaboration and spin off** – Another way to see if your characters have some clout is to build them inside someone else's world. Collaborate with an author who has a larger audience, if possible, and test to see if your characters stand out. If they do, spin them off into their own series.

Be sure you work out this spinoff idea before collaboration starts, however. You'll want that put down as part of your contract so there isn't any squabbling over it later. Remember, we just did talk about collaborations in episode #27. So, if you'd like to learn more about that, head over to that episode for a listen.

**Study market trends & write to market** – As a long-term strategy, and one that you should probably put in place as long as you plan to write a long-tail series, is to study market trends in your specific genre and then write to market. Chris Fox has written a fantastic book called Write to Market as part of his Write Faster, Write Smarter series and I highly recommend it to anyone wanting to learn more about writing to market. As an author who wants to make a living with their writing, knowing marketing trends is extremely important. That's why tools like PublisherRocket and K-Lytics are so helpful. It gives us a leg-up, and allows us to leverage our books in terms of market trends because we know what they are.

The key here is that when you find something that has power, you put all of your energy and focus into creating the series as quickly as possible. You'll know if it has this kind of transformative power within a short period of time, too. For some, it will be instantly. They'll put their short story or novella up and sell thousands of copies. Take that ticket and run with it. Other times, it could have a slower burn. You might sell a hundred copies in month one, 500 by month two, and 2000 by month three. The goal here is to always keep your eye on the prize – which is to make sure your series is marketable.

All of this being said... is there ever a time when you start a series and decide it's not working? Absolutely. Sometimes, even with all the best laid plans and insights, a series just might not take off. When this happens, how do you know when it's time to cut and run?

For starters...

You'll struggle with sales. No matter how much money you throw at it, it just doesn't seem to want to pick up. Of course, you'll want to make sure your covers speak to your market and maybe make adjustments to your book blurb, but if nothing you do perks up sales, it's time to try something new. It's not to say it can't be revived later, but for now, your energies are better spent elsewhere.

Arc readers will tell you. If your ARC team or beta/alpha readers tell you the book stinks, it's time to reconsider the series. Follow the readers, they know.

You'll have trouble giving it away. If you're doing the group giveaways and are struggling to get traction with downloads, it's another sure sign the series might not have the power you hoped.

You don't enjoy what you're writing. This last one is a biggie. I mean, let's face it. Don't get into a long-term relationship with a storyline you don't enjoy. I don't care how much money you think you could make, if you don't enjoy what you're doing, there's no reason to be doing it.

The publishing market is a fickle thing at times, though. You might find that a series you had to let go won't let go of you. It will either stick with you, wanting more attention, despite not getting the sales it deserves, or something in the market might change, putting it back into a better position. No writing is ever lost – or a bad investment. You can always come back around and leverage it in a new way if for some reason, it becomes more relevant. Sometimes, at least in my experience, we can be the vessel for a story the world isn't quite ready for yet. It doesn't mean there's no market – I just means, it's biding its time. So always stay open and alert for changes in the wind, my friend.

Okay, so next week, let's talk about having clarity of vision for your author career. What is it, and how do you get it? I've been doing this for myself, my author career, and even my company mission for Author Revolution. I think you're really going to like this one.



Remember, if you'd like to get links from anything we talked about or download the transcript from today's talk, you can head over to the show notes at [authorrevolution.org/29](http://authorrevolution.org/29).

Finally, if you have any thoughts or concerns regarding this topic, I'd love for you to join in the conversation out on Facebook. Head over to the Author Revolution Facebook page or join into the Author Revolution Online Community to ask away. I'm always around, so chances are, if you need something, I'll be able to respond fairly quickly.

Well, there you have it. I hope you enjoyed today's talk on rapid releasing and why a series is so important. I know I'll be taking my own advice in the coming months. I hope you will, too.

Until next time...

Go forth and be awesome.



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