

**EPISODE 76**

# *Why Rapid Release Authors Should Hire a PA Early in Their Author Career*

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Welcome back to the podcast! It's hard to believe we're already in the middle of April. No, like really hard, considering we just got six inches of snow dumped on us last night. Needless to say, I'm not amused. Hopefully things are looking brighter—and are warmer—wherever you are.

So, this week, I've been thinking about how much things have changed for me in the past couple of years. Before 2019, I really felt more like the struggling artist who was having to do it all herself. Don't get me wrong, my family and friends have always been supportive of my writing and publishing, but none of them are really in the trenches, so other than words of encouragement, I had no support.

For the longest time, I felt like a headless chicken as I tried ALL THE THINGS, hoping to find something that would make my author career take off. At the time, we were also in some pretty dire straits financially, so I felt the pressure to MAKE things work, rather than enjoy the work. In some ways, that's where rapid releasing entered my world. I wanted to get moving faster so I could earn more money faster. Now I can tell you from experience, that's not a fun place to be with your writing when you're an artist and love to write for the creative journey of it.

What ended up happening is plenty of burn out as I worked toward rapid releasing on my own, and we've talked about that on the podcast a lot. Burn out is not fun.



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But I absolutely suck at asking for help. So, one of the things I decided to do was HIRE someone who could help me. Granted, I couldn't afford much, but I knew I had to do something or go completely mental.

The idea of paying someone to help me felt better than asking for favors or seeking help from family and friends who all have their own things going on. So, in mid-2018, I started hunting for that perfect person, with the hope that they could help me feel less stressed by doing some of the things I really didn't want to be doing.

When I look back at my life now, I can honestly say that finding a PA was one of the best decisions I made as an author. Not only has Jenny helped me expand my reach, but she's been an incredible support to me and my family, and I can tell you, she's made the rapid releasing process a billion times easier.

So, I'm at this point you're probably thinking – that's great for you, Carissa, but how can I use a personal assistant? I don't make enough money to hire one. Or maybe you haven't wrapped your head around rapid releasing entirely yet.

Here's the thing, you can start with a PA for as little as \$50 a month. Obviously, what you pay for is what you get. So if you can only afford \$50, don't be one of those jerk authors expecting your PA do work for you full time or be on your beck and call. Don't be that person.

But at the same time, when you can afford more, pay your PA more because they truly will be a lifeline for you.

So, whether you're new to rapid releasing, or new to the thought of having a PA, here some of the ways I leverage Jenny's talents to get more done. I have a sneaky suspicion you'll find most of these appealing in your realm as well. I know you... you introverted writer who only wants to write.

Set up and manage takeovers- I don't do these very frequently, but it's because I choose to put my time and energy into other things. However, if something cool comes across Jenny's desk and she thinks I should join, more often than not she takes on the whole task. The only time I get involved is if we need to come up with new copy for my takeover posts. Otherwise, she schedules it, posts the posts - sometimes as me, sometimes as her - and makes sure that if there are any giveaways, we get in touch with the winners. I love that about her. Most of the time, I have to spend ZERO time thinking about takeovers, even though I'm in them.

Look for promo opportunities - If you're on BookFunnel or StoryOrigin, you know it can be time consuming to look for promo opportunities that might make sense for your books. Jenny often goes into each of those sites for me and signs my books up for promos. She also monitors Facebook groups for other promos outside of the norm and shoots me links if she thinks I should participate and she can't sign me up for it. In fact, she'll even send me links to contests and grants if they come up. All around saving so much time and adding tons of benefit to my overall brand exposure.

Hunt for newsletter swaps - Whether using StoryOrigin or some other site to look for newsletter swaps, or if your PA has connections with bigger name authors - having your PA look for, and coordinate, newsletters swaps is a big deal. Thanks to Jenny, I've been able to swap with big name authors that I would never have had the opportunity to cross paths with. Because of that, I've gained more readers and opened up my own email list to more subscribers.

Create and manage ads - Some, not all, PAs can also manage ads for you. Jenny love to learn, kind of like me. So, she is experienced in Amazon Ads, Facebook Ads, and testing out BookBub ads. I often work with her, showing her what I need done or what I'd like her to focus on, then I do the parts of ad creation and management I like.

Some authors prefer PAs to only look for negative keywords or to shut off keywords, categories, or placements that aren't working. Whatever it is you need help with on ads, chances are, there is a PA out there who can help you and take that on as part of their monthly tasks.

Design graphic/promo images for social – If you don't have a graphic design background or find creating social media posts tiresome, many PAs LOVE doing this part. They're social and creative, remember! Plus, if they love your genre, love to read, and love to play in programs like Canva, you have yourself a win-win situation. As much as I love designing things, I even find it taking too much time away from the things that move the needle forward (eh-hem, like writing), so I will often delegate the social post creation to Jenny so I can free up more of my own time.

Newsletter creation – This is one Jenny doesn't do for me, but she does do for some of her other author clients. I personally like to do my own newsletter. It connects me to my readers in a way that not many other things do. But if maintaining a consistent newsletter isn't your thing, but you know you WANT one... then this might be a good thing for you to put on a PAs plate.

Market research – Whew... market research is a pain in the butt. It's time consuming and tedious, but in the long run, so worth it. I will tell you, no one loves market research, not even PAs. But at the same time, it helps you reach new audiences, find new targets for ads, and so much more. It's worth it, and worth passing off to a PA who can do it well.

4. Post or schedule social media – Jenny and I tag team my social media. When there are posts that we know are coming, say a promo week, for example, then Jenny will work up the images for it (usually weeks in advance) and put the images into Buffer for me. Then I go in and create the content I want to go along with it. Jenny doesn't overly enjoy writing, so rather than have her do something she doesn't enjoy, I will usually take that part on.

Alpha/Beta reader – Writing can be a lonely sport. Even when you have the best manuscript that you know readers are going to LOVE, it can be hard. If you like feedback on your work, some PAs will also work as alpha or beta readers. This is where hiring a bibliophile comes in handy, because a lot of the time, they'll do this part for free simply to be one of the first to read the new book! HA! But I will say, if they're doing it for free, remember to take a chill pill and know they have a life, too. They may not be able to read your chapters the moment—or even the week—you send them over. Have a little grace and wait for the influx of comments when they do get the chance to read.

Accountability partner – For the most part, I can hold myself accountable and get things done. But I know many authors who can't. Jenny even has a few that she contacts on a daily basis to make sure they got their word count in. She emails, texts, or calls them to see what they're up to. This holds her authors accountable each day, and gives them a reason to hit the keyboard. I mean, no one likes to tell someone they didn't do what they said they would, right? Most of the time I don't need this aspect from Jenny, but she still offers it up anyway. Especially when she knows I haven't been writing like I should. She'll send me an email in Slack and tell me to hop to it. Of course, that usually comes after reading a cliff-hanger chapter... HA!

After two years with Jenny by my side, I can honestly say looking back, the biggest benefit to having a PA that no one really talks about, is when you choose the right person, you're tapping into the connections that your PA has personally built, as well. It's their job to make connections, talk to authors, and learn the market and that doesn't even have to do with you. In order to get clients, they have to do that for THEM.

Now, as author's we're often so busy doing our thing that we don't have time to connect or reach out in the author community the way would like.



Or, in some cases, we're too introverted to reach out to others. I'm obviously the former, but I know PLENTY of authors who are the latter.

Now, this can be incredibly useful in finding ways to get your name out there and elevate your brand. Like I said, when you do a newsletter swap with a well-known USAT or NYT bestselling author, with an engaged email list – versus an unknown author with a small list, you get more traction. Right? But that's not all... it can lead to friendships with those authors, co-writing opportunities, closed promo opportunities, and so much more. Never underestimate the value of your PA's network, I guess is what I'm saying.

Okay, so now that I have you convinced, how do you go about finding a rock star PA?

Well, I can tell you from experience, it takes a bit of time. I mean, finding a PA is fairly easy if you know any other authors. You can just ask who they use and go from there. But what I found is that not every PA is right for every author and my goal was to find someone I could work with long-term.

What I did was create a spreadsheet and list out the PAs other authors were using or that I knew about. Then, I reached out to see what they charge, if they had openings, and if they had anyone I could contact for references. I mapped out the ones I figured I'd contact, and went down the list, offering to do a trial month with each at their normal rate. Each one knew that when the month ended, I would be moving on to another PA and when the six months was up, I would circle back around and pick someone.

I knew that if I was going to work with someone, they had to be a self-starter and someone who could take what I was putting down and run with it.

I also wanted someone who could chat, have a laugh, and tell me when I was being too critical of myself. Yes, I know, that was a tough order, right?

The trial month turned out to be an absolute life-saver. There were some PAs on my list that I thought FOR SURE they'd be the one because they were being used by much larger named authors than myself. But what I found was I was low on the totem pole and often got lost in the shuffle. However, I did have two that were really good and had Jenny not worked out, I would have hired them for sure.

However, as fate would have it, my PA Jenny and I had built an author-reader relationship here in town and when she said yes to learning about being a PA... well, the rest is history. I love having a PA in the same town as me, with the ability to get together for lunch or coffee, hang out as friends, or do our Inner Sanctum chats together. Plus, Jenny ticked all the boxes for me. She's a self-starter, heck, sometimes I swear she's downright psychic... plus she has built up some amazing connections over the past two years, that help me with newsletter swaps and getting my foot into doors I didn't even know I should walk through. Plus, we have a fun relationship. I mean, we celebrate our kids' birthday parties, we've been trying to go on book tours with each other, and heck, her kids have even been in my book trailer! Plus, she definitely has no problem hauling me on the carpet when I'm being too critical of myself. But, that being said, she's also insanely supportive and a terrific beta reader, too.

I truly couldn't have asked for anyone better.

If you do some digging to find a PA and have a hard time getting that "perfect person," you might find that you need to be the one to nudge them into creation. If that's the case, think about anyone you know who a bibliophile is already. Better yet when they read in your genre, too, because they will be genuinely excited for what you write. Then ask them out to coffee and see if they'd be interested in giving it a try. You never know, they might just say yes.





All right, my writerly friend... I hope I convinced you that hiring a PA, even early on in your author career, can be a huge boost. Not only can they help you do all the things, but they can be incredible friends and confidants as well.

For those of you looking to hire a PA, Jenny and I are in the process of putting together a directory to help you out. Just head over to [authorrevolution.org/76](http://authorrevolution.org/76) to check it out.

Next week, I'm super excited to say that we'll be having USAT Bestselling Author Kel Carpenter on the show for a special author interview. Kel is someone I was introduced to by Jenny, too, I might add. Eh-hem... see what I did there? At any rate, we're going to be talking about her success as an author and her journey to becoming a full-time urban fantasy author. You're going to love it.

Until then... Go forth and start your author revolution!



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