

# Episode 83

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

editing, book, editor, grammarly, reader, author, write, read, people, words, indie author, programs, story, happening, revolution, publish, head, understand, money, vellum

## SPEAKERS

Carissa Andrews

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Carissa Andrews 00:12

I'm Carissa Andrews, international best selling indie author and CEO of author revolution. With more than 15 books published, it's safe to say I have made a ton of mistakes in my endeavor to become a full time author. The most important thing that I've learned in the past decade is that indie authors need to protect their creativity and their serenity. Being an author is a long game. And that's why I'm on a mission to teach other indies just like you how to publish books, because the sustainable rapid release method, I created the author revolution podcast to give you insights and actionable step by step strategies to help you do just that. If you're an ambitious author, or one of the making, who's looking to create a long term author, career and a life you love, you found your tribe, my friend, let's get your author revolution underway. Well, Hey there and welcome back to the author revolution podcast, who I can't believe we're already in June guys, this is pretty crazy. I'm looking at the calendar going, how in the world did this happen? All right. So this week, I want to talk about something that is on my mind a lot, because I get asked the question, should we hire an editor? What kind of editor how does all this stuff work? And why can't we just self edit our own books? Well, truth be told, you can. But I'm gonna go along with a few caveats when it comes to whether or not you should actually be self editing. Now, let me give you a little bit of history about where I've come from when it comes to self editing books, and then having them professionally edited. In the very beginning, when I first started doing Pendomus, my book was completely 100%, edited with two, not one, but two different editors. In that process, I found out that not all editors are created equal. So I hired two different editors, they did different parts of the editing process and kind of

handled things in different ways. And at first, I thought that was a good thing. But the reality was, by the time Pendomus was finished, the book felt a little bit off kilter to me. And I think it does a little bit to my readers as well, because I followed some of their advice, making sure that I put that hard, crazy scene first, rather than giving some development, I guess, of the story beforehand. And what ends up happening is you have this really dramatic scene, straight out the gate, it hooks the reader, but I have to go back just a little bit, because the world she lives in my main character Runa is so vastly different from where she's headed after this attack, that there has to be some groundwork that's laid there. And I don't think my editors truly understood it. And it wasn't originally developed that way. Now, because it was my first book, because it was the first time I was trying to really get a story underway. I didn't understand story structure the way that I do now. And so I took their advice, thinking they must really know what's happening, because their editors, right, they do this for a living, so they must read a lot of books, they must edit a lot of books. And so therefore, I'm going to trust their expertise. Well, what ended up happening was, like I said, it was disjointed, it didn't quite feel right. And it came across that way to some of my readers, not all of them, some of them like the way that it does the initial attack, and then backtracks, 24 hours, but personally had I wrote it the way that I normally write now, I probably wouldn't have done it that way. Now, in looking at self publishing, we have so many options, and we have so many capabilities to do some of this stuff ourselves that we really want to. But that's the caveat, do we want to so who really shouldn't be self editing? I'm going to tell you, if you don't like editing, you shouldn't be self editing. If you are not great with grammar, you shouldn't be editing. And if you don't understand your stories structure very well. You should not be editing. But does that mean you can't go through your story? Does that mean that you can't continue to work on learning those tips and techniques so that sometime down the road, you can start to self edit your books? Well, absolutely, you can do that. That's a great way to be able to learn this entire process. So at a certain point, hopefully you write a lot cleaner, and you're able to self edit your books or you're able to get to a point where you're editing and the editing process is much cheaper. So here's what I would say. If you are not great. With grammar, you're going to probably still need to get at least a copy editor or line editor. That's one of those things where you're just going to need to make sure that you are doing what needs to be done in order to meet the reader expectations. If you do not understand story structure, or how to develop your story properly, you're going to need to have a developmental editor, those people are going to help you lay the foundation and the groundwork to make sure your story is hitting all of those notes that it has to hit in order to reach reader expectations. that's ultimately what this is all coming down to, when you write a book, you want to make sure you're writing it in a way that is lending itself to the expectations of your reader, right. But in order to do that, you have to understand some of those things. So there's a lot of back and forth. So what did up happening for me is after Pendomus, out of necessity, I did a lot of self editing. But it wasn't 100%, I did self editing

where I had different programs. And we'll go over those in just a minute. But I had to I had different programs that I went through, I rewrite everything. And then I sent it to a team, not just a couple, but a team of beta readers. And their job was to read through it and give me any feedback on stuff that I knew I needed to fix. So then I would go through their list of edits, I would add it all in and one more time, I would run it through those programs, right. So even if you're not using an editor that you're paying, you're going to want to make sure you have another set of eyes, hopefully many sets of eyes, reading your story to make sure that they're giving you feedback. And giving you not just feedback, but really good actionable feedback, you want to make sure that you're getting the stuff that a normal editor would probably be looking for. So sometimes, that means having a beta reader who is a teacher, for example, or an English teacher, maybe I should be more specific, because you never know I mean, it's not like you know, economics couldn't edit a book, but probably not the best person. Go for an English teacher, if you can, you want to make sure that they are a reader of your genre. Because if they're not a reader in your genre, they're not going to be able to help you understand whether or not you're hitting tropes, whether or not you are meeting their expectations as a reader, be very cautious about who it is that you choose as a beta or alpha reader on your team. Because you want to make sure they are doing the job that you are asking of them. If you're not quite sure whether or not those people are going to fit, you're going to want to start, I guess vetting them, the only way you're going to know is by giving them the book and seeing if they can do the thing. But as you get more advanced in your publishing strategies, this could really mean having people that you know are going to read the book, they're going to give you the feedback in a quick turnaround time, especially if you're trying to rapid release or if you're trying to write and publish your books quickly throughout the year. So one of the things that I did, then, like I said, I had this team of people who are doing my alpha and beta reading, I would make those self edits using different programs. And like I said, talk about those in a sec. I don't want to confuse you with any of that stuff yet. Then I would hand it over one last time to my final proofers people who have read the book, let me know if there was any stragglers anything that was happening outside of the edits that we had already done. And then I would make those final final edits. And the book would be complete. Now all of that shifted right after Oracle, I no longer needed to do all of the edits myself or have my beta and alpha readers do all those edits. Instead, I let my editor handle all that stuff. And Suzanne is fantastic. Now with a men's, I'm testing something out one more time, and I just want to give it a shot, it's kind of my shot in the dark kind of thing. Now that I've done this enough times, I feel really confident in my writing in my story building in the way that I handle things. And so I know that I write very clean, she's told me I write very clean. And so I want to see if I can eliminate some of the money that has to go out just some of it. Because I do have those beta and alpha readers, I do have proofers. But I do have other things that I'm putting my money into instead. I know a lot of people are talking about how editing is really where you should put the bulk of your money

editing and covers. Because if your book is not spot on, and it's not doing the thing, you can get really slammed for it. And while that's true, if you're someone who's been doing this craft for a while, I feel like maybe that's a bit of an overstatement. Maybe it really comes down to once you have a good strong foundation for how to write your books. Maybe you can take out some of these things and it doesn't equal more time or money more whatever. So my process this time with a men's was to go through the whole book. Obviously I wrote the whole book. I put it through Grammarly. So the first program that I use is Grammarly. And some people like pro writing aid, I think either one is pretty comparable in its own right, but I personally like Grammarly and I go chapter by chapter, put the whole thing in there, let it do its thing. And then I pull one chapter over into vellum, I read it inside vellum, make sure everything's looking good. And, you know, if there's any weird stuff happening then great. I'll fix those when I'm in there. If for some reason it missed, you know, tense or something along those lines, if there was something weird when I'm reading it, I will fix it. And a little caveat here, I will often read out loud because when you're reading a book with just your eyes and just inside your head, after you've written it, you can miss words that you didn't realize you didn't type because your brain assumes that words there for for whatever reason, mine is the I miss that a lot. And so I will read it out loud to discover not only the rhythm of my writing, but I will also find out if there's any like weird awkward sentences if I've missed a word if I've doubled up a word usually Grammarly catches that but anything like that I will go through and it helps me to hear also things like repetitive phrases or repetitive words that are annoying to me. And it helps me to be able to eliminate those words that just really don't need to be there and kind of mix and match a little bit better. Once all of the chapters are edited through Grammarly, and they're put into vellum, then what I end up doing is one more time I export the whole thing so that it can come out as a Word doc and I upload it to a program called auto crit, auto crits really cool because it gives you a lot of insights that Grammarly really doesn't it compares it to books in your genre. It can give you some feedback on overuse words on adverb usage. It helps with all that stuff that an editor really is going to be finding sweet spot a lot of different things in there that Grammarly doesn't necessarily focus on. But a normal editor would. And so then I cleaned it up one more time, do all the little tweaks and fixes that I want to do for it. And then with this time around, I have sent it off to my ARC readers. So those readers, I have many of them who have in the past sent me back information when things were weird if there was a sentence that was strange, or if the grammar was off, or if there was a punctuation mistake. So I already know that my arc team is really great at being betas as well. So my goal then is to wait for them to give me the feedback. Once they give it to me, I will make some more edits. And then the final final version is going to go off to my to proofers, who will read the book one last time, make sure there's nothing strange about the whole thing, and then it will go up. But I need to make sure that this process is going to work. So my goal with amends at least as of right now is to see what happens. I'm going to put it up I'm going to

see does anyone go oh my gosh, did this ever get edited. I want to see if anyone says anything, or mentions anything. Because with Oracle the first book in this particular series, I actually did this process then. And I didn't have any problems. And this was well before I hired Suzanne to be able to be my editor. And so I think I had a really good system in place beforehand. But I knew with the windhaven witches, especially that I needed to have an editor or wanted to have an editor to make sure it was spot on because I was listening. Now with this one I'm not listening, I'm just trying to get it out there. I'm just trying to put the books up and trying to build my backlist. This is a series that I can foresee going onward for as long as I really want it to and as long as the readers are reading it. But I want to try to narrow down my output and I want to try to narrow down my timeframes. One of the ways that I'm kind of working with it and kind of using some tweaks is with editing. But that's only because I know I write very cleanly. And it's gotten that way, because in 10 years, I've written a lot of books. So for you, if you're new to self publishing, if you're new to this concept of self editing, maybe Now's not the time to go about doing it. But if you're backed into a corner and you don't have the funds to be able to hire an editor, and let me just say, editors should not cost you in my personal opinion 1000s of dollars. If you're going over \$500 in my personal opinion, number one, either you've got some serious issues with the way that you are crafting your stories. And you really need to stop putting so much effort into publishing quickly and put more effort into story structure and making sure you know how to craft your books and make sure you know how to structure your sentences. Because there's a there's a mismatch there and you need to be able to work on that first. But if you've gotten past that or if you already are a good writer and you know how to tell stories And they come out well, or if you're writing nonfiction, and you know that it doesn't need to be crafted in like perfection, you're not putting it together in a emotional or creative way necessarily, then whatever you you can do your editing probably right off the bat. But like I said, if you've got this under you, if you if you have a good team that you can rely on, to look for your obvious mistakes and your awkward phrases and stuff like that, why not give it a try? It's personally my opinion that we, in the authors, we have so much leeway and control over how we're going to manage our indie author business. And when we know that we're good at something, but other people are telling us we have to do this, we have to have a graphic designer, we have to have an editor that always makes me question that it makes me wonder, do we bow? Do we really? Not all of us do. I don't believe that. And so I want you to think about this. The truth is, self editing can be the same as self publishing, if you know what you're doing. Don't listen to the naysayers. Don't listen to the people who are telling you that you can't do this. You might, you might be able to do it just fine and have no problem whatsoever. Some people, on the other hand might not like I said, so my goal with this particular podcast episode is I want you to think about the way that you structure your stories, the way that you write, the way that you put your sentences and your phrases and your scenes together. Are you confident in them. And if you are, then don't let editors or

having to hire an editor stop you from moving forward. I know one of us out there one of us out there going Oh, the only reason I haven't published my book is because I can't afford an editor or I can't decide on an editor. I can't find an editor or it really needs to be edited. But I'm scared to send it to an editor. Stop that. If you are confident in your writing, I want you to go through the process. I want you to think about how you can make yourself editing become a reality so that your book can get out there. Use Grammarly use pro writing aid, use auto crit, whatever the programs are for you. Those are the three that I know that work fantastically right off the bat, I want you to use them. And I want you to see how far you can get. Maybe you publish your book. And you get people saying, Oh my gosh, was this thing even edited? What was happening here? And let me just tell you kendamas was edited by two different people. And I have people saying that. So no one did that with Oracle at all. And that one wasn't edited, professionally. So I just want you to think about it. And I want you to consider what are your options? And what is it you need to do right now to take steps to move yourself forward? What steps do you need to do in order for your book to make it out into the world this year, because my friend 2021 is almost half over. You have six months plus in order to make magic happen. You can put your book out there this year, people can read it and they can leave your reviews. And it will feel amazing. Alright, so that's what I have for you today. I would love to know what you think about the process of self editing. And if you think it's something that maybe you should be doing, or maybe you shouldn't head over to the author revolution online community on Facebook, and let's have a chat about it. I am so excited to be able to help people just like you reach their writerly goals. And I want you to know that I'm always always around. So anytime you have a question head into the group and then just drop your question. I want to know what is really hanging you up this year, what's the thing that you need to get over so that your books can make it into the world. So if you want to download the transcript to today's episode, head over to [authorrevolution.org](http://authorrevolution.org) forward slash 83 I will make sure that there are links to autocorrect to Grammarly pro writing aid, or whatever else. And I want you to know that no matter how you move forward with your books, it is the exact right thing for you at that particular moment in time. I know you're not making decisions on editing based off of, you know, just a frivolous I don't want to spend money thing because sometimes you really are backed into a corner. I get it my friend. I mean 2012 onward, it was a struggle, and I am so glad to no longer be there. But I can tell you I completely and 100% understand when money is an issue and editing is expensive. Alright, have a wonderful rest of the week. I hope that you are making big leaps and bounds with everything that you're doing for your writing. And I will talk to you next week. So until next time, go forth and start your author revolution.