

Episode 102

Tue, 10/12 1:53PM 16:23

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

series, plan, book, author, writing, never ending, mind, arc, granular, accomplish, head, finite, guess, nanowrimo, career, scene, indies, readers, week, challenge

SPEAKERS

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Carissa Andrews 00:09

The indie author revolution has been around for more than a decade. But we indies continue to push the boundaries of what we're capable of. From getting over initial prejudices to staring down perfectionism and author imposter syndrome. We've become a force to reckon with. Indie authors now wear more hats than ever as we strive to create a career full of meaning, prosperity, and potential. We've juggled the demands and continue to be rebels in the face of adversity. Now, after years of hearing the shelter, hustling, grind, we indies are rebelling again. Gone are the days of publishing a book a month until we drop, and in its place are the seeds of a better way to rapidly release a way that feels incredible as we build a sustainable, lifelong author career, that not only increases our visibility and royalties, but it's all done with intention and ease. If you're ready to buck the system and become the visionary entrepreneur, I know you're meant to be, you've come to the right place. I'm Carissa Andrews, international best-selling indie author, and this is the author revolution podcast. Hey there I writerly revolutionary. Boys say that really fast? It's kind of a tongue twister. So this week, I've been thinking a lot about the three-day challenge that I've got going on and what I'm working on for it this next time now that we're kind of doing it again. And one of the questions that I get sometimes when I'm talking to people about writing a series or trying to build their prolific author career, is how far should you plan your series? Like how, how far should you actually go outward in order to, you know, make the most of your series? And to be perfectly honest, it's kind of a loaded question, because when you think about it, there are three different types of series, at least in my opinion, that people are typically writing. And the way that you write those series are going to dictate whether or not you really should plan it out further. Or if you should just kind of wing it, book by book, or whether or not you should at least plan out a little bit, you know, I'm saying, so the three different versions are the finite arcs. Now, this is going to be like, where you're planning out a trilogy, a quadrilogy, six-book series, whatever the case might be, it's going to be a finite arc, where all of the books are going to be interconnected in some way, shape, or form. But it will end after a specific number of books, then there is, of course, the standalone series, which is going to be like where every book is, in a series. Technically, sometimes they're in a specific world building, sometimes they are connected, but they aren't necessarily having to be read in order. So that could be something like, let's see, the Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew, things like that, where you don't necessarily have to remember what book 22 was, when you're reading book 102, you know, I'm saying. So there's that. And then there's the never-ending series where there's a set of books, and maybe they're all connected, there is a you know, almost like an episodic view, think of a television series where you're watching everything from start to finish things supernatural. For instance, if you were to hop into Season Five of Supernatural, and then go over to Season 15, and then back to Season One, and you've never seen any of these shows, you're probably going to be a little bit confused, right. So that's the same kind of concept with a never-ending series where the books are all connected, they all probably have their own arc inside the book themselves, they don't necessarily have to have an overarching theme, although they

usually will kind of have one kind of play out even though it wasn't necessarily intended. But the book itself in the series itself is meant to just continue onward so that you can enjoy the worlds that this particular character or set of characters is living in. So with that in mind, knowing that there are different types of series, it really does depend, you know, how far you should plan out your series really does depend on the type of series that you're writing. Now for me, I've written in all three, I guess I could say, the one that needs the most planning is going to be that finite arc one. If you want your readers to be really wowed by the end of the series to go, oh my gosh, I didn't see that coming. You want to sit down and plan out the entire arc as you're setting it up. Because that way, let me just be frank with you. You're going to be so much faster at dropping those easter eggs, you're gonna be so much better, so much clearer about knowing where your characters are headed. So in the back of your mind and your subconscious mind, you're going to be doing a much better job. highlighting some of the nuances at putting down those little, I guess, red herrings that you want to put down for, you know, distracting readers, whatever. All of that stuff's going to come a lot easier when you know already, what the overall arching theme of this series is going to happen to me. Now, if you're doing those standalone series or the never ending series, it probably isn't, in my opinion as important to plan it out super far in advance. So all in all, the reason we're having this discussion is because look, the the best number, and it has always been the case. So unless we're doing a finite arc that extends beyond four books, I've always said that four books is a pretty darn good insight, or pretty darn good flashlight into where it is that you're trying to go with your books, because you don't need to go super far out. But if you have four books in front of you, where you at least have a good idea of what each book is going to be about. You don't have to go into detail. You don't have to be doing a chapter by chapter synopsis or anything. But just knowing what each book is going to be about is even that is going to help you in writing your series in a way that's really going to be masterful, and highlight how well you are doing with your craft. Now the level of which you want to really plan that series out is dependent on you. One of the things I've been really thinking about a lot is this idea that planning out a series has to be the same across everybody else's creative journeys. And I don't really think that that's the case, I think we each have our own way of kind of sifting through the information extrapolating what we need and being able to put it out and push it out into our written word. So for some of us, it really requires being very clear in our minds of what it is that we're trying to accomplish. And sometimes that's very granular by then going into, you know, the character profiles the world building profiles, the chapter by chapter synopsis. Beat by beat synopsis, understanding the tropes understanding the overarching theme of the book theme of the chapter thing of the entire series, whatever the case might be. But for those of us who are discovery writers, or at least part pantsers, sometimes the thing that we're trying to describe the thing that's really kind of niggling at the backs of our minds, isn't as easy to describe when you're putting it down in an outline. And so sometimes planning a series out, you can't get that detail because your creative mind is going to just, I don't know Trump's all over it, I know that that's definitely the case for myself, when I start to if I get too granular with the amount of planning I'm trying to do, and trust me, I'm a Virgo Guys, if I wanted to plan down to like the nitty gritty, I probably could do so. But my creative mind doesn't allow it for whatever reason, I have a much better grasp of the story, or much better grasp of the overall theme I want to do when I just allow it to unfold a little bit more naturally, like if I know, I want my story to have a hunting vibe. And I know kind of the concepts of whatever it is I'm going to be applying to it. That's pretty much the gist of what I need in order to make it happen. But I know other people, they really do need to understand their characters more they need to go more in depth into, you know, what are their strengths? What are their weaknesses, what are the things that are really causing them to do whatever, what's their backstories. And for me, I guess I don't know if it's because I grew up in a household, or a family where things were a little more tumultuous. I had to learn very early how to read people. And it wasn't because of any kind of abuse or anything but because my brother was born with that brain tumor. I was the oldest child so I kind of had to be able to read everybody in the room I needed to know is my brother, okay? Are my parents, okay, what's happening here? Are we safe, you know, that kind of thing. And so I guess for me, I'm very capable of understanding how people are thinking and feeling when it comes to certain situations inside of a story. So that stuff's very easy. For me the stuff that's hard. The stuff that I do require more planning with is going to be things that are more like the physical aspects of things. For example, a fight scene, and I think we've talked about this before holy cow that takes more planning for me, I have to slow way down and really go into a granular blow by blow idea of like what's happening in this particular scene in order to make it happen. Even if the writing seems like it flows naturally, it was probably still very hard for me those those are the types of scenes that takes me a day or two just to be able to work out and try to figure out what it is I'm trying to accomplish with that particular scene. Now,

when it comes to the planning part of your series, I really want you to think about those three different types. What is it that you're trying to accomplish right now? What kind of series are you trying to write? Is it a finite arc? Is it a never ending series? Is it a standalone series? And what is it that you want to accomplish within that series, like, what's the main emotional chord you're trying to pull here, you know what I mean. And when you do that, that's where you can decide how much effort how much time you want to be able to put into a particular series. So like I said, I personally go out for books, unless the series themselves are going to be a little bit longer. And so far, the only one that's a little bit longer is really the Diana Hawthorn series. But because of the never ending series, I don't feel the need to plan it out super far. So I usually have about four books, at least in my head mapped out. So for instance, I have the next two books in the series kind of planned out in the sense of I know what the theme is going to be for their books. I know kind of where I'm heading with them. But I haven't sat down with pen and paper, and I'm not writing out the blow by blows for the chapter synopses just yet, because I want to see where this book Immortals is going. Now with windhaven, I definitely sat down and planned everything out. hopefully that was helpful. Hopefully, you understand now that it's really important for you to kind of come up with your own conclusion of how far you really want to go in advance. There's no right or wrong answer here, guys. There is no magic number, it just, it's what feels comfortable for you. And what you know is going to help you and help guide you to the finalization of that series in a way that makes a lot of sense, and really puts it in a way that readers can enjoy. I guess I'm kind of reaching a point in my career where I feel like there are a lot of people out there who are trying to say that their way is the only way. And I don't want to be that kind of person, I don't want to be that kind of mentor or teacher to you, I want you to know what's feasible, I want you to know what's doable, but I want you to know that you can break the mold to you don't have to do things exactly the same way that I'm teaching, you don't have to do things the exact same way. Another teacher is teaching things, sometimes it really does require testing things out a little bit, and then seeing what works best for you. Because I do know that, you know, as I've been teaching these things, and as I've been working with other Indies, you know, for the past few years, it really is interesting to me how two different authors can come to the exact same ending, meaning they both write a four book series, for example. But the way they got there, the way they got to the finish line can be so vastly different. And the outcomes can be so vastly different, but yet still incredibly beneficial. I, the more I see a you know, along these lines, that when we're true to ourselves, and when we're true to our process, and we're more true to what it is that we're trying to accomplish. That is where the magic is really going to happen. So when I say this is a loaded question of you know, how far out should you plan your series, I want you to turn inward and decide for yourself, where do you think that number is? Do you feel like four is a good number? Hopefully you do, because that's a number that, you know, if you're going to be writing with rapid release roadmap, for example, you're going to be writing four books a year. So it's a great number to be working on every single year, because now you know what you're planning on writing every year. But what if you decide to do two books a year what if you decide to do one book a year, it's all depending on your process and how you're going to try to accomplish your series. So really, take a moment for yourself, kind of check in with yourself and decide what sounds right to you what feels right to you when it comes to your planning process. And then think about those three series types. Because I really do think that that plays a huge role into how you should go about planning that series out and whether or not it's even necessary. Alright guys, well that's what I have for you today. It was something that was on my mind something that I thought would be beneficial for you guys to listen to and kind of get some tips and insights into before we head into our next three day challenge. So speaking of that, don't forget we are going to be starting our next live round of the three day planner series challenge starting on October 25. That's just two weeks away. So make sure you're signed up if you want to get involved by going to authorrevolution.org forward slash plan your series that's all one word, plan your series. And of course if you want to get anything from today's talk like the transcript for this episode, You can head over to authorrevolution.org forward slash 102. I still can't believe we've got over 100 episodes guys, that's crazy. All right. I hope you have a terrific week. But just know that NaNoWriMo is right around the corner. I mean we are heading into NaNoWriMo season on November 1. So if planning your series or planning at least your next book out is important to you, I highly encourage you to join our challenge. It's gonna be a lot of fun we're gonna be doing some cool new things and there is even going to be a giveaway with this time around so it should be a lot of fun. Alright guys, I am going to go get some more audio book recording done because I am trying to get my windhaven witches series finished and wrapped up. It's been a long time coming. So that is on my

game plan for today, I guess. And I hope you guys have a great rest of your day. Have a great rest of your week. And hopefully we'll see you in the plenty serious challenge in two weeks. But until then, go forth and start your author revolution.