

Episode 119

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SPEAKERS

Carissa Andrews, Malorie Cooper



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 potential, we've juggled the demands and continue to be rebels in the face of adversity. Now, after years of hearing the shouts of hustling, grind, we indies are rebelling again, gone are the days of publishing a book a month until we drop, and in its place, sow the seeds of a better way to rapid 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. Welcome back to the author Revolution podcast, my authorly friend, I hope you had a chance to implement some of the tips from last week that could help you increase your royalties this month. I know I certainly did. I signed up for a couple of new promos in March and I have a couple of new ads started to see how they turn out. It should be fun to kind of watch them grow and see what happens. Now, speaking of ads, this week, I have an ADS guru on the show. But she has so much more than that. Now Cooper is actually a force to reckon with. Not only is she a powerhouse of a writer with close to 200 books written between her and her wife, Jill, but she's a master at Facebook ads a cover designer and a powerful voice for authenticity for authors. As a trans woman, male has had to face some really deep parts of herself in order to come out on top as the incredible woman we all know and love. So if you haven't yet had the wonderful introduction to Mal, you are in for a treat. She's an amazing human being. And I am so glad that she found the time to stop by the author Revolution podcast. So without further ado, let's get to our interview. Well, Mal, thank you so much for joining me today on the author Revolution Podcast. I am so excited that you're here soon. I mean, super, super excited. And in my intro, I talked a little bit about how you kind of came into my orbit and why of course, I wanted you to come on to the podcast. But for those who are listening, who maybe haven't met you yet, do you want to explain who you are and why they should be picking their ears and having to listen,

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Malorie Cooper 02:55

I'm sure so my name is Malorie Cooper. I'm a science fiction author, I have both 110 115 books published. And I also teach authors about marketing and how to do Facebook ads and stuff like that, because mastering Facebook ads is what caused me to become a full time author. Once we once Jill and I, my wife got good at that we were able to both basically, four or five months after mastering Facebook ads, you're able to go full time. So it's it's a, it was a life changing thing.

**Carissa Andrews 03:26**

That is amazing. So I'm gonna have to ask you some questions about Facebook ads as we go on. But, um, you do so many different things. So I'm gonna warn everybody, including you that I'll probably be bouncing around a bit because I want them to get the full scope of what it is that you actually do. Because I mean, like you just said, You talk you do you have a bazillion books, you're fantastic at that you teach and do marketing stuff you help with even the authenticity of authors and how to be able to leverage their platforms. So we're gonna be covering a few things here today. There's a lot there's a lot so one of the things that was really kind of cool is I was watching your talk on inkers con about Facebook ads and everything and I do have your help my Facebook ads suck book I'd love it so much. And I also have your launch plan book that one I'm haven't started yet, but I want to get to it soon. And so my curiosity is like what was it literally the Facebook ads and seeing them transform your career that made you want to teach or were you teaching before

M

Malorie Cooper 04:22

then? I'm like I've worked in the software industry for about 20 years now and I watched you did a lot of conferences in there like teaching people and doing like, tutorial videos and stuff like that. So it's kind of always been in my DNA to teach. I could when I was younger, I actually want to be a history professor, but everybody my life convinced me not to if I want to actually like you know, have money. I'm not telling you sure they were right, because they also told me like couldn't make money being an author either. So, you know, but luckily I was really good with computers. I was able to make a career out of that for quite a while I enjoyed it. But when I started writing, I went full time in January of 2017 And then towards like the end of spring that year, I was in the 20 bucks to 50k group and people were loving, lamenting the fact that Facebook ads don't work. And some people are saying, you can't advertise the Facebook ads, they don't work. And I'm like, I'm making like, \$40,000 a month right now. And the only marketing I do is Facebook ads. So I wrote like just a series of posts, just for posts about Facebook ads and the things that you should do in the basic steps and whatnot. And then people said, like, could you like turn this into a PDF or something like that. So it'd be a little easier to parse, I turned into like a PDF, I wrote it all out, you know, made it so that it was edited better, because Facebook posts are like, you know, I made a PDF. And then people were like, like, I would pay you for this is what people started saying, like, this is amazing. So I'm like, Well, cool, I'll turn into a book and you can happily pay me for it. Right? And, and then the first 20 Books 50k conference in Vegas happened that fall. And Craig invited me to come and speak on Facebook ads. And I did. And that sort of started the snowball effect of people want me to come to their conferences and talk about ads and stuff like that. But but you know, when things I start, I kind of tired of just talking about Facebook ads all the time. I'm like, you know, Jill, and I do well, because we know other parts of this industry as well. Like, if you've run Facebook ads

for a terrible book, you're not still not going to do great. So I was I got into, like, how we figured out covers how we do our marketing, our branding, how I build universes, productivity stuff, because like I wrote 100 books in four years. So yeah, so I'm good. I'm good at getting stuff done. So we talked a lot about that, but how to launch. Also, because writing that many books that fast, we tried all the different launch plans and different practices and whatnot. So we have a lot of real practical experience for everything that we teach. Because between the two of us, Joe, and I have over 200 books now. So we've got a lot that we've learned.



Carissa Andrews 06:49

That is incredible. So what is your productivity hack? Then? How do you get so many books written in four years and keep your sanity about you? Well,



Malorie Cooper 06:58

I mean, that second part doesn't actually happen. So



Carissa Andrews 07:02

well, you know what I mean? Yeah,



Malorie Cooper 07:05

I mean, to be honest, so I'm not a fast writer. At my best, I can maybe do 1000 words an hour, I'm probably more closer to \$800 an hour. So I'm not like those crazy people who can like bang out 1000 words in 20 minutes or anything like that. I, my main thing is just butt in chair just every day, right? And treat it like a job. And while I was trying to build my back list, it was my primary job, all of the admin stuff fell by the wayside. And some people spend a lot of time doing admin stuff, and working on their ads and whatnot. And I think that no more than 20% of your time should be spent doing admin stuff, spend the bulk of your time being creative writing books and stuff like that. If you're spending more than say, 20 30% of your workout and admin time, you're probably doing busy work. That's not actually like generating any income for you. So that was a big thing, too, is cutting out all the busy work. And looking at stuff and saying this, I can't see any result from doing this. And I'm just gonna stop doing it. And that was, that was a, that was a really big time saver. And then I was able to put more time into writing. The other thing that I'm a really strong believer in, at least for me, this is what works for me, everybody has their own process when it comes to writing and, and what up I've, I tried a lot different ways to write like, I tried, like different strategies and different different ways of breaking up my time and found the way that worked best for me. And one of the things that works best for me is putting out like making my first drafts are really, really good. And I don't even have to go over the whole book a second time. I leave notes about sections, I might want to reread. And I do that and then the book goes off to my editor. I don't like labor over the book again and again. And again. I started doing that because I'm like, Wow, I'm spending like months on books. And these other authors are spending way less time and they're making they're selling more than me. So I'm like clearly these things I'm killing myself over the readers don't care about



Carissa Andrews 08:45

telling a good story with it. You know, if the if the story is great, they can forgive some of those things. I think even Craig's talked about that where they can forget the weird nuances are, you know, misspellings or whatever, as long as the story is what captures them.



Malorie Cooper 08:59

Yeah, exactly. I mean, I still work hard to put out a good book I have like a fairly extensive proofing process, editing and proofing proofreading process I go through but I mean every book has errors and you sort of have to accept that but yeah, so I when I was really going full steam ahead I basically turned writing into almost like an assembly line thing like I was covers were being done in advance pre orders were going up I was writing most of the books about a week or two before they had to come out my editor know what you're talking about. Right? No one does that. No one does that. Right. My editor I write in in Word using Office 365. So my editor and I can both be working in the same word document the same time so she'll be editing the book while I'm still writing it. Oh my goodness. No pressure at all. Right? Like the dog the hounds of hell are like on my tail the whole day was like my editors can show you up oh my god. It's be honest, like, you might find yourself saying like, Well, how do you produce such a good first draft? Now if you're, you know, writing like like, like someone's whipping you. I think a lot of it's just practice Like after about book 30 or so, I started getting really good at just writing scenes correctly the first time, like thinking like, Okay, here's the scene, it's going to have these characters, I'm going to have some action happening. You know, at this point, I need to make sure I describe enough of the setting right away. let the reader know what characters are in the room in like a smooth, non info dumpy way. And then sort of and then build out the the scene, and then have the conflict happen and just do it all right the first time because it's almost it's one of those little things like oh, shoot, I forgot to put this character in, or, oh, I want them to like get tossed over a table. Now go go back. And like say there's tables in the room, I think a lot of stuff ahead of time. And I just get it down the way I want the first time.



Carissa Andrews 10:38

That's awesome. So do you plot in advance, then what is your plotting process look like?



Malorie Cooper 10:42

I don't plot.



Carissa Andrews 10:43

Are you a panter, really?





Malorie Cooper 10:47

I'm a pantsner, who has like, I worked really hard on my setting. So I really understand my setting so that when I put my characters in the setting, I don't have to stop and constantly like, Oh, what's this look like? And what do they do here? I spend a lot of time on my setting ahead of time. I spend a lot of time with my characters, like I'll do things like but when before I write a book, I'll actually put my characters all down for dinner together. And I'll write a scene where they all have dinner together. And like who's making dinner who's like playing cards instead, you know, who's got their feet on the table?



Carissa Andrews 11:17

Who's the eldest? Who's the middle kid who's the baby is that what's going on?



Malorie Cooper 11:20

basically stuff like that. But what's it like, you could have my villain with them, too, I'll set the village down for dinner with them. And then because when you do that, you get to know these little nuances. You're like, oh, yeah, this guy would totally make some sort of smartass remark there, and you get to know the characters really well. And then it becomes so easy just to drop your characters into a setting and say like, I always know what they want. So I'm always like, okay, these, this character wants this, this is their goal. And I just, I just know what they'll do, then. Sure. I just let them go.



Carissa Andrews 11:45

That's really awesome. When I would think to buy this, like you said, by the time you hit book 30, you've kind of figured out and hammered out your typical story archetype. And so for you, that's probably pretty easy, especially since I think I read that all of your books are in the same universe. Correct? So a lot of overlap and character development that's happened, you know, across all these books,



Malorie Cooper 12:06

yes. Yeah. I'm not constantly having to rebuild, setting and greet and do new world building, whatnot, like all my world building is effectively done. And I can, I can leverage so much of that. And also like, with my readers, I don't need to constantly be explaining all sorts of things to them, because they know what they read, like 70 books of mine. So I can just jump right into the action and just start having fun, which is great, too.




Carissa Andrews 12:28

So how many books did you when you finally hit the your stride with Facebook ads, then and you were making that great money? And were able to go full time? How many books did you have it in your backlist? At that point? Do you know? Just four? Wow, that is amazing.

 Malorie Cooper 12:42

Things are different in 2016 than they are now that is true that it was easier to sort of like dominate the charts with not that many books now it's a lot harder, because so many books are coming out that you you can't rely on going like sticky really isn't even a thing anymore. Right? It's almost impossible to be sticky back then. You could be sticking with a couple of newsletter shares good newsletter shares. So it certainly was a different game back then.

 Carissa Andrews 13:06

Yeah, and even a couple of promo stacking. I mean, that was when I think 2017 2018 Somewhere in there is when I first hit international bestseller, and it was all just a couple of promo seconds. I didn't I did not spend a whole lot of money on it at all. You know, it was crazy.

 Malorie Cooper 13:20

A BookBub could lift you for months back then. Oh, yeah. Yeah, almost will find that their BookBub tail only last about a week or so. So it's it's definitely a different world now than it was then. For sure. And it works. The same tactics are still keeping me going just really focusing on my advertising. And, and focusing like it's not an advertising itself, but on like, what is the goal, the goal is putting my books in front of people getting they're getting the right eyes on the books, and then getting them to read them.

 Carissa Andrews 13:45

Right? That's absolutely true. I know, when I was watching your inkers con presentation, you had so many great, like opportunities for advertising that I had never even thought of. And I know that so like if they haven't if people listening, there we go see if I can speak today. So if they haven't seen any of your presentations, whether it's on 20 bucks to 50k, or in inkers con, definitely go check those out, as well. But you have this way about being able to give just some really cool ideas that I think a lot of authors have never really experienced or thought of before Do you think your creativity and the way that you you view things in a sci fi realm help you then to be able to kind of think outside the box with your

 Malorie Cooper 14:25

I think that could be part of it. I constantly. So I'm my my background is is an engineering like a lot of people think of software they think of it. But really it's it's it's an engineering software engineering where you're trying to constantly solve problems. So it's all about creative problem solving with technology. So coming into like trying to sell books on the internet. It's also creative problem solving with technology. And I've actually back in the day, I built advertising platforms before. So I understand how, like when I see certain options went on. I know what the engineers who built it were thinking, so I'm like okay, I can leverage this because they obviously put This option and they worded it like I speak engineer even. Yeah, they worded it

like this because it does this thing you know, and I can I can kind of figure that out by by looking at it. I think that's gives me a bit of a leg up over a lot of other people that, that I get the intent of what the platform is trying to do, not just what it says on the tin.



Carissa Andrews 15:18

Gotcha. So do you. Do you still use Facebook ads primarily? Or are you have you branched out? I think I've seen that you branched out but into like Amazon ads and BookBub ads and all those things. Are you still the biggest one,



Malorie Cooper 15:31

Facebook still our biggest advertising location, I actually don't use BookBub ads. One of the main reasons I've been NKU up into well, except for a brief foray going wide. About two years ago, I've been KU and BookBub ads don't work as well, for KU readers. The other thing is that BookBub is basically trained a large group of people that books are either free or 99 cents, right? So unless you're advertising 99 cent books, BookBub does not convert that well. Right. So I don't use as much for that I find that I can actually find more people who are willing to pay full price for books on Facebook that I cannot BookBub AMS is a must, I feel like Amazon is just pay to play now you have to run AMS ads. And also, I feel like you have to run AMS ads defensively these days, because you when someone searches for your name, you want your books to be at the top not to other people's books. Yeah, Amazon's also so good with AMS as now that the books that come up in front of your book look like your books, right? as well. Yeah, so lots of times, I'll be searching for a given author. And I'll find myself accidentally clicking on an ad for an entirely different author. And like, if I'm doing this, I mean, AMS ads are effective, then people are actually taking away any given authors traffic. By putting ads on that author. It's kind of unfortunate that Amazon is pitted us all against each other this way. And they're doing it, they're doing ad revenue. But so I run a lot of defensive AMS ads so that when people search for me, they find me and only me. And also when they go to my product pages, most of the the empty AMS ads are also my books. So it makes sure that when people are looking for me, they they stay with me. And then and then of course branching out is something I try to do as well. I'm also doing things. I'm starting to do ads on YouTube, and I'm doing I do Pinterest ads, and I'm experimenting with with tick tock and also now that now that Facebook has reels, that's a huge opportunity to to if you can create vertical video ads, because vertical video ads are the only ads that can show in reels right now everybody who's doing reels on on Instagram, which also Show on Facebook, you can sort of like get a leg up and get into the Get get your own be part of a small group of people that are advertising there right now.



Carissa Andrews 17:38

Right? Do you have tips on how to use that then? Like how to use it as an author?



Malorie Cooper 17:42

Um, well one of the big things is whenever you're running a video ad of any sort on Facebook, keep it under 15 seconds long. videos over 15 seconds long are you just you wasting your time and money making longer videos and the amount of text that's on your video should be no

and money making longer videos, and the amount of text that's on your video should be no more than your tagline has like one sentence, maybe two. If they're really short. A lot of authors tend to like try and put their entire blurb into a video ad. No one is gonna read because then you have to have the text show up so slow, no one's gonna spend a minute and a half to read your 300 word blurb like no, you are gonna make everybody bored so you were bored making it I know you were I love it. We've always done this. I'm guilty of this as well. I've made those those book trailers that we all did back in the day, right? But there's a great site out there called Videohive dotnet. And they have lots of really awesome videos, many of them for only \$10 And there's one of my favorite pieces of video editing software now it's called mov Avi m o vi, a VI and they have for \$44 you can get their video editing platform it's really easy it's drag and drop for like putting elements on the screen and everything and you can make a decent video in about 10 minutes with that nice follow up there



Carissa Andrews 18:57

are you using that for TikTok as well, then? Or are you doing like or how are you doing it?



Malorie Cooper 19:02

I haven't really gotten fully into TikTok yet um it's like all my list of things to do.



Carissa Andrews 19:08

It takes a while to get like up into the like wanting to get the motivation for that one.



Malorie Cooper 19:13

I also have I'm so I'm transgender. And whenever I go on Tiktok, the bigots find me really quickly so I've I've not gone on there too much because of that.



Carissa Andrews 19:23

That's when you do the whole block thing. You know? I don't know why they have to do that. But they're really good about finding the right audience though. Like once you get going and and you've kind of been out there a little bit and the right people start finding you and you get



Malorie Cooper 19:38

I have to commit the time to like getting it going. Yeah, like right now Facebook. YouTube is working so well for me on Facebook and Instagram are working so well. I'm like I don't necessarily need to split my focus. But I recognize now that tick tock is a proven thing that I should really be getting into. I mean, there's a woman out there there. There's women out there whose account is she's Miss Excel and She, she she has sells Excel courses. And her her. Her main advertising venue is TikTok. So she's making TikToks about Excel formulas. She has

like a million. I know like, and I read this article, I don't remember how old the article was, but she said several weeks before that article, she had her first six figure day. Oh my gosh, that's impelling Excel courses through tic tok videos. I'm like, Okay, if she can make my TikTok, clearly, I am a fool for not being there. It's that right now. So



Carissa Andrews 20:36

oh my gosh, yeah, it's it's such a fun platform. Once you do get it like are you on it? Just to like play on it and see who's out there?



Malorie Cooper 20:43

Yeah, I watch TikToks a lot. And also, if you if you watch like the reels on Instagram, and you Facebook, they're just repurposed tick tock tick tock logo in the bottom corner. You



Carissa Andrews 20:54

right? I don't have time to do that twice. No. You're lucky you got this one, guys. I am with you on that one. Okay, so I'm super curious. I'm always curious when I am talking to authors who have hit lists USA Today, New York Times. So obviously, you and Jill have done so can you explain that process and how that went for you and how, how I don't know how it worked for you.



Malorie Cooper 21:19

So I was I was in the last box set that got New York Times bestseller before New York Times changed the rules so that indie authors and box sets basically just can't hit the list anymore. Which is why like everybody, now when they aim for lists, they just aim for USA Today. We hit number seven on New York Times and number nine on USA Today, which is weird that we were higher on NYT than USA Today. But it did that back in early 2017. Actually. And it was tricky to because it was right when Amazon changed the rules about books. In KU like like if like it used to be that they really, they really weren't too careful if your book was in KU, and then someone else also had your book in KU, or someone else had your book wide in an octet like the back that they didn't really care about that. And now they're like, if your books in K, you only you can have that text in KU, you can't put that that book in a box set, that someone else is running this also NKU even like they're very strict now about that. Back then they didn't care. While they did care, but they hadn't enforced any rule enforce it at all ever. And we were we were like about to launch our box set. And suddenly, Amazon started bringing the hammer down on everybody. So we had to, I quickly wrote like a new story to put in that box. And then on top of that, one of the authors left an Amazon link in their story. And Apple removed our box set, and we lost all of our apple sales on like the day it went live, they canceled our pre order. So we like had to we moved heaven and earth to get 500 Apple Sales, you know, in that? I think we had like four days to do it. Yeah, we pulled it off. And so some people are like, when they talk about like your, your your MIT Tag, you're like, well, you're part of like a multi author group, like, No, we worked hard. We worked really hard to get our letters and anything like that. I think a lot of people don't I mean, authors know this, but readers don't is that holds the TRad pub people,

they get NYT? It's all gamified as well. Yeah, they know where New York Times is going that day to look at book sales. And they just send a bunch of people ahead of time to buy books like it's, yeah, it's the TRad pub, people also gamify it so I don't feel that bad. You know,



Carissa Andrews 23:32

we literally do I was reading the other day about I can't remember which publisher it was where it was like they actually pay like the booksellers. You know, I think it was Barnes and Noble or something where it's like, you know, just pretend that this is actually hitting the list. So I want this one to be on number one, or whatever. Number two, and then the bookstore to put it in the placement that it technically didn't have. And it's like,



Malorie Cooper 23:54

so rude. It's all marked. Yeah. So I don't feel that bad at all about the fact that like, you know, it was it was me and 14 other people that fit at the same time like



Carissa Andrews 24:06

me, and I'll tell you, I think that's a good way to go, though, in a lot of ways. You know, having all that marketing engine material behind you where everybody's doing that same thing and you're all working towards the same goal, especially if you have a good group of people who are trying to do that. Yeah,



Malorie Cooper 24:20

it's also harder for a lot of authors because we are so are indie authors. And because we're so Amazon focused, even if you're white, the majority of your sales are likely on Amazon. And of course, NYT while USA today who's the only one you can really hit now you can hit like Washington Post to or something like that. But they only they don't look at Amazon sales. So it's hard to hit these lists because you have to you your you know your main you know, retailer isn't even there. So I feel like we're fighting an uphill battle all the time. So whatever advantage people can manage eke out I think is valid.



Carissa Andrews 24:54

So we talked really briefly about your AON Is that Is that how you pronounce it? Am Yeah, yeah, unfortunately Yeah, yeah, universe and how it has obviously 100 Plus books in the universe. And I was just hoping that you could explain like the thought process of having all of them interconnected. And why that would help other authors who are thinking like, should they do a series? Should they do standalone? Should they have their series connect whatever, like, you talked about that? I think it was in the 20 books to 50k. Presentation. Yeah. So would you explain that a little bit?

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Malorie Cooper 25:24

Sure. I mean, so when I first started writing, like, I'd read so many big universes in the past, like stuff like like Terry Brooks Shannara series were pretty much almost everything Terry Brooks writes, is Shannara. So once you kind of know the world, you're like, oh, I want to like dive into this particular corner of the world. Of course, Star Wars and Star Trek were big things back in the day. If your fantasy readers there was dragon Lance, which I absolutely loved. I read like everything that said dragon Lance on it for years. I guess I kind of always had in my mind, oh, and of course, there's Tolkien, you know, like I read The Hobbit, Lord of the Rings, and Silmarillion, and all sorts of other stuff that his son dug out of drawers and printed. And I had in my mind, of course, that the best thing to do is just to make these big worlds. And I always kind of wanted to do it. And then as I started writing, I'm like, Well, gee, I want to do my world building again, if I put things in this world, and the other thing is, I can just say to a lot of people, my readers just like, Hey, you want to like learn about this? This thing I alluded to here's a book series about it. And they would they just gobbled it up. I think the thing is that there are people out there that I heard this great phrase for it, they want to explore every corner of the map. Yeah, like if you're like playing like World of Warcraft or something like that, like an RPG and get this map, you're like, I need to fill in the whole map, I need to figure out everything. There's people out there like that, like they will they want to fill in the whole map, do all the side quests. And so that's kind of what I'm doing. I'm making a universe where they can do that. And I have like a main storyline that runs through the universe. And then I have basically stories I've written that are effectively side quests, you can go off and read those, or you can just skip them and just keep reading the main series. And that way kind of worked well, for both kinds of readers.



Carissa Andrews 26:57

That is really cool. I like the idea of that too. I think. For me, I have a bunch of little like little littler series, see if I can speak again. But they all kind of have like this one character that seems to like get her nose into everything. So she seems to go everywhere, even though they're a different series. And they're all you know, have their own arcs and everything like that, but I get it. And it's it's fun to be able to pull those characters back in for different storylines in different worlds. And so I could see why it would be a lot of fun to do.

M

Malorie Cooper 27:25

And it's it's a fun thing. I think for me also, like readers love things like Easter eggs, they love seeing this character come back and like oh, yeah, this person is totally going to be amazing the situation or kick ass or they'll show these bad guys, you know, or whatever. Yeah, there's love that stuff. And, and it's on top of that it's great for marketing, because you don't have to pitch them on a whole new thing. You know, they're they're eager to just dive in and read the next story you have. It's all about the same characters in the same universe and everything.



Carissa Andrews 27:53

Absolutely. I love that as well. And it's a lot of fun to be able to like, put someone in there where they're not even sure that they're they're coming in and all of a sudden, the readers are like, wait a minute, I know this character.



Malorie Cooper 28:03

Yeah, right. It's so much fun to do that.



Carissa Andrews 28:06

Yeah, yeah.



Malorie Cooper 28:07

You're like, Oh, my, you'll be posted. My group like, you know, spoiler is showing up in this book, you know, or something like that. Yeah.



Carissa Andrews 28:14

I love that. And I love when they get excited about things like that, where you're just like, yes, they finally got it or, you know, whatever. It's neat to see them get excited, because especially if you don't tell them if you just let them kind of uncover it. And all of a sudden, they're like, What the?



Malorie Cooper 28:27

Yeah, build buzz and to build hype and excitement and everything. It's, it's it's a great way to do it. And like I said, it's, it's easier to your marketing becomes easier. Your world building is easier. So much stuff is just easier.



Carissa Andrews 28:40

Yeah. And obviously we authors, we need more ease in our lives. We make things hard enough.



Malorie Cooper 28:45

We do. Yeah, this job is not easy. So yeah, make it easier is better. Oh,



Carissa Andrews 28:50

goodness, no doubt. Now, obviously, you have an amazing style. And you have an amazing persona about yourself. I did watch your like we're saying the 20. Actually, we watch both 20 bucks to 50k. Because he did one on Facebook over there as well. Right? And oh my gosh, you just have this great way about you just as authentic, wonderful way about you. And and so I

was hoping you could speak about that a bit about because you obviously had a whole presentation on it. Like how your authentic you and why that matters in an indie authors platform. Well, I

M

Malorie Cooper 29:21

think one of the things I talked about this my presentation a bit about this idea of this, we'll talk about authenticity, and you need to be authentic and whatnot. And we talked about so much that the word kind of loses meaning in a way. And so much of what people think is authentic is really what's called curated perfection. And that's like the Instagram like thing where you're like, you see the people on Instagram, you're like no one's life looks like this. No one's houses this clean all the time, you know, kind of thing. And you know, it's fake. So everybody talks about authenticity, authenticity, but no one really wants to like, share everything and you probably shouldn't share everything anyway, like you do need to kept some parts of your life. Personal but I guess that's why I found this one post or someone was talking about that. And they said, Well, we really should be Thinking about his honesty, and just being like your real self with other people and being honest about who you are. And I kind of had a leg up on that, because like, I'm transgender, and I didn't come out until I was 41. So I spent a little bit of time pretending to be a guy. But I was always like, super into fashion. And like, my favorite thing to wear is a cat suit. And I'm actually wearing one right now, it's just off the shoulders. But, um, but I always loved it. And, and but I always had to, like, hide that part about myself and hiding parts of yourself is exhausting. And like, and like FEEL, and that's all that ties up into shame, you start to feel ashamed of the parts of yourself that you're hiding. And shame is actually a construct, that doesn't exist. Shame comes from other people. It's never actually about you. Shame only ever originates from other people. Guilt is different, you can feel guilty about things you actually did wrong. And that's something that can come from yourself. But if it comes from other people, it's shame and it's immediately invalid. I reject the concept of shame entirely. And once you do that, and once you sort of say that, like, hey, the authentic, honest real version of me is okay. And it's not something to be ashamed of. And if I just put it out there into the world and treat it like it's okay, soul, everyone else. Yeah. Like, I'm like up on stage at 20 books wearing a rubber dress while I'm doing this presentation, you know, and everybody thinks it's awesome. Yeah. Because I'm not like, I'm not like treating it like it's a shameful thing. So no one else treats us like, it's a shameful thing. And I'm able to be my real self. And people are attracted to that sort of honesty. Like, if you think about, like, who would you look up to someone who's honest about about everything, or someone who like hides things in lies? Like, obviously, we look up to people who are honest, yeah, and all of our heroes are like that, you know, whatnot. So I strive to be that I tried to be the sort of person that I would look up to. Now coming out as trans and transgender kind of gives you a bit of a leg up. Because once you do that you've done like, the hardest thing there is to do. I bet, yeah, you put because to come on, unfortunately, in our society day, to come out as transgender, you have to put everything on the line, you have to be willing to lose every single thing in your life to do it. Oh, I can imagine, you know, I was willing to lose my career, I was willing to lose my marriage, I was willing to lose my marriage, I knew that it could happen. Like I knew the risk was there. And, and so on, and so forth. I knew that I could lose my family, and all that stuff by I had to do it. And I did it anyway. And I one of things I learned is that it wasn't as bad as I thought it would be. My mayor, I am still married. I'm still an author who makes a living writing military science fiction, which is predominantly a male audience over 50, who lives in the southeastern United States. And I make a living selling books to them as a transgender woman. Which is kind of amazing that that all works. So it kind of like, once I did that I'm like, well, maybe I can just like, just be completely who I am. And, like, I mean, not, I mean, I'm kind of weird. Like, I put on cat suits,

and post pictures of my ass on Facebook, my parents see it kind of thing. Like, like I have, I have very little filter in my life. But it's liberating in a way, it's so liberating that I can do it. It's so funny to like, I post this picture on Instagram the other day, and it was me in this one cat suit. And for whatever reason, I I posted it to side by side images, one from the front and one of my ass. And because it looks so good, it was shiny. It was awesome. And this person posted a question asked me about my writing schedule of whatnot. Like, this is so surreal, having a conversation about writing schedules and sprints with my right. So but like, you know, it's once you once you can sort of like operate with with your as your real self or whatnot. People just accept it. And they're cool with it. And you can sort of distill exist. And there's some of you might have seen this. There's a researcher named Brene. Brown, and she did a bunch of research on happiness and contentment. And she has two TED talks about it. And they're really good. More now, I guess. Yeah. Yeah. Look, look them up. Her first one is amazing. So she did a bunch of study. And what she found is the people who live the most vulnerable people are the happiest people, the people who willingly like make themselves vulnerable. They have they wear their heart on their sleeve, and even if they get hurt a lot because of that, they're still happier, they're still more content than everybody else. And, and I, I took that to heart and I was kind of like, going through this process myself. I'm like, Okay, I'm just gonna go all the way out there. I'm just gonna live in a glass house all the time. And it's been amazing. It's, it's, it's just, it's my life has gotten so much better as a result of that.



Carissa Andrews 34:39

That's incredible, though, it sounds to me like you, you had that process of going, Okay, I am no longer open or available for these kinds of energies. So screw that they can go. So I'm just gonna be me and y'all can suck it up.



Malorie Cooper 34:51

And the thing that happens is like, it turns into a positive thing, not a negative thing, because everybody's like, Wow, I like being around people like being around people who are brave Been authentic and honest, you know and and don't hide themselves and don't equivocate and in stuff like that, so you actually end up like increasing the amount of good energy that comes to you as you give out all this good energy to so



Carissa Andrews 35:13

literally it's almost like a magnet.



Malorie Cooper 35:15

Yeah, it definitely is. Yeah, like, like my my like being just one measurement like my Facebook friend list like exploded i and and I go to I go to I go to like events now like after that presentation I did 20 books and then I maybe it sounds like a bit of a flex that it kind of is because it's okay come on sort of thing never used to happen to me. It took me 30 minutes to like, get to the

bathrooms after the presentation because I couldn't walk more than like two or three steps without someone stopping like I need to talk to me. I'm like, I'm probably like, I wrote the pee everybody. And it takes a while to get out of this dress to do it.



Carissa Andrews 35:51

And they're like, Okay, please.



Malorie Cooper 35:53

I just need some time. But yeah, it was it was really cool. I actually said to a friend lady, I'm like, am I if I become one of the popular girls, and everyone's back before it came out, I was always, you know, I was weird. And I was it's not but but because I was constantly hiding so much of myself it I actually didn't put off as good an energy as a result, you know? Sure. Because I was always having to edit myself and Mario was saying and thinking and stuff like that. So I couldn't even know I wanted to be a girl. You know, that was like, unacceptable. So I was I was constantly having to like, I spent like, I would literally spend like an hour to a day worried that people were gonna figure it out. Really? Oh, yeah, it was the amount of mental energy consumed was unimaginable. Oh,



Carissa Andrews 36:44

well, that has got to be such a relief then to no longer have to be worrying about that and thinking thinking about it at all.



Malorie Cooper 36:49

Yeah, it's it's like, it's amazing how much of my life has just become much more productive and positive as a result of that. So



Carissa Andrews 36:57

awesome. Well, now I gotta ask you, are you going to be at 20 bucks to 50k? Or 20? Books? Vegas? There we go. This?



Malorie Cooper 37:03

I will Yeah, Craig is basically made me swear on a on a on a stack of catsuits that I will actually be there.



Carissa Andrews 37:09

Awesome. I'm gonna be there. I'm gonna be hunting you down. I gotta say, oh, yeah,



Malorie Cooper 37:13

that'd be great. I can't wait. I told him I can't come to Madrid. And he got He's like, he's like, Well, you are coming to Vegas. Right? Like, you have to like, of course, Craig. Well, I'll be at, um, I'm gonna be at increased Con this year to because it's happening in person this year, I



Carissa Andrews 37:27

saw that. I haven't decided if I'm going to be able to go to that one yet or not. I have to double check my calendar on that. But I did the virtual last year, obviously.



Malorie Cooper 37:35

So if you're a romance author, it's the place to be. I think it's a place to be if you're any kind of author because the quality of the advice you get there the presenters that Alessandra gets are all top notch. So awesome. Yeah, so I highly recommend it.



Carissa Andrews 37:48

Oh, for sure. Well, the presentations even just in the virtual format last year, were great. So for sure. I



Malorie Cooper 37:54

can't speak to what's going to happen this year. But the crazy thing was in 2019, there were 120 authors, their number for Amazon reps. Wow. 120 People like you got like, basically the ability to speak and spend as much time talking to Amazon reps as you wanted. That's



Carissa Andrews 38:08

incredible. Yeah. So for people who are going to 20 bucks or inkers con Do you have advice to be able to talk like how to talk to those Amazon reps and like sort of questions that they shouldn't be asking.



Malorie Cooper 38:20

I guess one things to keep in mind is that the Amazon reps can't really give you a lot of answers. Because




Carissa Andrews 38:25

they have all that extra times not a whole lot of help their mouth come on. Well,

 **Malorie Cooper** 38:31

I mean, like you don't don't expect them to like, like spill the beans, you know, on how Amazon does things I'm sure that they they're coached very carefully about what to say and what not to say. But I think it is worth knowing that they are listening. So when you're when you're telling them about your experiences and problems you're having of try not to be antagonistic of course because they'll discount you for being antagonistic but if you can just be honest and say like this is something I struggled with, chews up a lot of my time, or just causes uncertainty and what they do listen and I actually have seen things I've talked to Amazon reps about where they say like Okay, it's good to hear that we've been hearing that a lot I've actually seen those changes show up in the platform in a positive way. So it is it is actually useful and actually I got to do some programs to from talking directly to the reps and just sort of finding out what was available and what I could take advantage of and stuff like that so it's it is definitely worth it to talk to them

 **Carissa Andrews** 39:18

that's awesome I'm definitely looking forward to seeing how the the 20Booksto50K situation works to like the I think day one is going to be you know talking with different reps and different vendors I

 **Malorie Cooper** 39:29

guess any conference you go to if the draft to digital guys are there be friends as Draft2Digital guys because you will get free drinks.

 **Carissa Andrews** 39:38

What if you're not a drinker?

 **Malorie Cooper** 39:41

They might buy your food you never know. Hang out with the Draft2Digital guys got it. Or maybe you could get a milkshake if you don't. I don't know whatever you want. Like it needs kombucha. There you go. And they sponsor like one night usually at Nink used they buy everybody drinks for like the entire Tonight for as long as it takes, oh my gosh, I think basically drink on their dime for five or six hours. It's, it's a lot of fun.

 **Carissa Andrews** 40:06

They're like go advertise or something I don't know, right now,



Malorie Cooper 40:10

I gotta tell you like whenever I think about, like, you know, who do I want to use for why distribution like I'm gonna use drop to digital because I love those guys you know



Carissa Andrews 40:18

Absolutley.



Malorie Cooper 40:28

Those are great guys to me to the Findaway people are great at conventions to their find the vendors, the vendors are awesome to hang out with.



Carissa Andrews 40:37

Good tip, I will keep that in mind.



Malorie Cooper 40:39

Pro tip, you'll get a lot of free food if you hang out with the vendors. That's awesome.



Carissa Andrews 40:43

This is the first time I've actually gone to 20Books in person, I've obviously been lingering around and watching for a long time. And then I think it was gonna go in 2020. And then of course, obviously COVID hit and it was like Well, that's not gonna happen. And last year, we hadn't my youngest wasn't vaccinated, so they were like, that was not gonna happen either. So it's like




Malorie Cooper 41:03


this 20 books last year into in 2020 21, actually, like sat in this nice spot will Delta was one thing was bound down and Omicron hadn't shown up yet. So very few people. I mean, people did, but very few people got COVID Especially because once all of us author started drinking, we didn't really mask nearly as much as we should.





Carissa Andrews 41:23


Whoops.


 Malorie Cooper 41:25
There were some people who were religious about their math, they were like very hardcore math never took them off. But I'm like, speaking a lot. And I lost my mask and like whatever.


 Carissa Andrews 41:38
Lost It's okay. It'll show up maybe

 Malorie Cooper 41:41
a mask again later. Especially I should have done that. I recently went to a convention in Tennessee and met a bit me in Yeah, so I got Omicron from that. So I I've learned my lesson, but now I'm like, boosted and I've had COVID So I feel like I'm like invulnerable now and like built up Teflon and just slide.

 Carissa Andrews 41:59
You are You are definitely the shielded version. At this point.

 Malorie Cooper 42:04
Yeah, I'm going to Superstars next week in Colorado. So I'm feeling pretty good about that.

 Carissa Andrews 42:08
So awesome. So what are you speaking? Are you speaking? Are you just going?

 Malorie Cooper 42:12
I'm speaking Yeah. I'm doing a three hour presentation on world building. Wow. Yeah, that's gonna be intense. And then I have two Facebook presentations plus a couple panels that I'm on so they get their money's worth out of a very sir. They're like we're paying for you to get here. So

 Carissa Andrews 42:27
you're gonna be like, I'm on my way. That's so great. Yes, fun. Well, okay. Now, if people want to learn more about you learn more about what you do. On either side, either your sci fi or on your, like the the advertising marketing side of things. How do they find you?



Malorie Cooper 42:43

So the science fiction it is Aeon14. That's aeon14.com. And if you like stories about like adventure with female leads, and sometimes entirely female tasks, I have some books where I don't think there's any men in them at all. So it's, I figured, like, hey, there's lots of books that didn't have women in them. It's time for some books that don't have any men in them. Yeah, we can do we can do it both ways. It's fine. So if you like that sort of thing, and you love like a lot of action, really good world building, but the main focus being great characters, my books, I think are awesome if you'd like that sort of thing. And if you wanted, like, see what my wife and I Jill have, as far as like our, our consulting for authors, you can go to thewritingwives.com, which is kind of cute. Right? She came up with that. That is and we teach Facebook advertising, we teach courses on blurbs on launches, we do mentorships. And you can actually just do consulting with us and just about anything. So that's one of



Carissa Andrews 43:42

Is there an application process that they need to fill out or do they just send you an email through your website,



Malorie Cooper 43:46

there's certain things people can sign to sign right up for for certain consulting things. Or they can they can fill out a form and we can oftentimes do like a 30 minute free consult to find out if we're a good fit to work together on stuff. So that's fantastic. I even do crazy things like I design covers, but don't you know, don't need more of that business. So no one asked me about that.



Carissa Andrews 44:05

Were you a graphic designer in another life too?



Malorie Cooper 44:08

Well, I mean, I worked in in interface design for websites and web applications. For years, I got really good at understanding design elements and how to how to build things out and whatnot. I've always loved doing art and whatnot. So I I started doing covers for some people and now they won't stop asking me to do covers.



Carissa Andrews 44:28

I like I said, I don't really want to do covers.



Malorie Cooper 44:32

Thev're like here's a hunch of monev I'm like

they're like here's a bunch of money. I'm like,



Carissa Andrews 44:34

You spoke my language shoot.



Malorie Cooper 44:38

That's my weakness. Money.



Carissa Andrews 44:39

Right? Like, oh, it's all good. It's all good. I get it. Well, Mal, thank you so much for being here today. I had a blast. And I I'm always opening this door if you ever want to come back on to the author Revolution podcast because you're just amazing. I love everything that you do and everything you stand for, and I think you're a bright shining star out there. So thank you so much for being here.



Malorie Cooper 45:03

You're too sweet. Thank you.



Carissa Andrews 45:06

Isn't Mal awesome? I just love her sense of humor and natural laid back way about her. Whenever I've listened to her talks, whether they're about Facebook ads, or if they're about how to keep your ideal readers like enjoying your books, I have always found myself enjoying her talk more than I expected. And don't get me wrong. I've always expected to enjoy the talk. But there are certain people you just know they're gonna say or do something that's unexpected or makes you laugh out loud. And mal definitely has a way of doing that. I love it. So for those of you who would like to find quick links to Mal and her wife, Jill's website, The Writing Wives, I will make sure that it's in the show notes, as well as links to Mal's books, and of course, the actual transcript to today's show. So head over to authorrevolution.org/119 to get the goods. As always, I hope you enjoyed this talk as much as I did. And I have to say I'm super excited to be going to 20Books Vegas this year, so that I can meet some of these awesome podcast guests in person, including Mal obviously, I'm going to be chasing down any of the presentations that she is doing, it's going to be epic. Now in the meantime, however, I am going to be writing my little heart out and I hope you are to go forth and start your author revolution.