

Episode 136

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SPEAKERS

Onley James, Carissa Andrews



Carissa Andrews 00:10

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 shouts of hustle and 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 Karissa Andrews, international best selling indie author, and this is the author Revolution podcast. Well, hey there guys. Welcome back to the other Revolution podcast. Oh, my goodness, this has been a crazy week. So last week, I mentioned how we had the trees fall down in the middle of a storm. And I am so happy to say that we have found one new vehicle, not both, but we have found one, which has been a bit of a relief considering rental vehicles needed to be returned and all that good fun stuff. What's been interesting is that in holding manifestations, sometimes the key really is to be open and not be as specific as maybe you would be sometimes. For example, originally, you know, we were looking at vehicles, we knew we wanted to get some new ones, but didn't quite have the perspective to know which ones we wanted. Like I was kind of narrowing it down. I thought I figured I'd be looking at like the Lexus 350s. Or I'd be looking at a Toyota rav4, or possibly the Nissan Murano. I wasn't really honestly all that. Sure. I just kind of knew a vague shape that I liked. And what ended up happening is, we were looking at our price ranges and found a Cadillac SRX. And now let me tell you, I in a million years would never have been looking for a Cadillac, I never would have been hunting for this one in specific but holy cow, this car is incredible. It is wonderful. I mean, I don't care if people call me a grandma driving around in this thing. It is like fully loaded. It's got this beautiful sunroof that extends across the whole space of the cab. It's got backup cameras and sensors up the wazoo. It's got this weird adaptive cruise control thing. And it connects to my phone in ways that my previous vehicle never connected to the phone before. So needless to say, it's been an interesting endeavor into learning that when we hold a space open for manifestation, and we're not super specific,

sometimes even better things than we anticipated, could come our way. And it's even kind of beautiful color guys. It's like a burgundy red. It's so pretty. Now, Colin, on the other hand, hasn't found what he wanted. But because the Cadillac is so nice, he's actually looking at the Escalades which weren't on his radar either. Now he's starting to niche down, he's getting a little bit more specific now whether or not we can find what we want in our price range. That's gonna be another question. But we are holding the vibe we are knowing it's ours if that's what we want. And so we are on the hunt for it. Now, what's interesting to me when it comes to manifestation is that sometimes it can strike out of nowhere, like a tree falling on both of your vehicles. At the same time. You know, I wanted to vehicle we wanted to switch things up. We didn't know when we didn't know how. But it forced us out of our comfort zone and into getting something that we actually really wanted, even though we didn't really think it was going to be about right now. The same can be said for my guest for today. But now she is someone who has always been really interested in law of attraction and manifestation as well. But for her inspiration struck in an unusual way. Tick tock so if you've ever questioned whether or not tick tock has some incredible opportunities for authors, this is the podcast episode you're going to want to listen to because this woman has been not only incredibly successful, but she has now since having a book talker review her books on tick tock last year has heightened her Her work has heightened her worth has earned more money than she ever dreamed possible. Well, maybe she dreamed it was possible, but had ever seen as a possibility in her real life up until this point, all because a tick tock er had read her book and started sharing it across tick tock, and it got noticed. And then it expanded across Instagram and other sources of the platforms. Now, she is an entrepreneur at heart, for sure she is someone that like will look for the opportunities wherever they might be. That's why she's also leveraged an incredibly successful Patreon. And she's done the majority of this work just in the past two years. So when I tell you this, I'm telling you in in the place so that you understand that great things, wonderful things can happen. And things can happen fairly quickly, as long as you're just open to the possibilities of it occurring. My guest today is only James, she is a gay romance author, who has been incredibly successful, now only as a student of my rapid release roadmap program. But she is also a one on one coaching client that honestly I could not be more thrilled to be working with and learning about her story and all the interesting ways that she is incorporating manifestation and law of attraction and prosperity into all aspects of her writing. You're going to learn so much in this episode about how to market yourself how to leverage different avenues with your intellectual property in ways that you probably haven't even dreamed of doing yet. So I recommend getting some headphones on getting a notepad and paper maybe ready because there are things that you're going to want to take down as notes. It is that good. So without further ado, let's get into the interview. So hi, Onley I'm so glad that you're on the author Revolution podcast, I talked a little bit in the introduction about how you and I met. But why don't you go ahead and fill my audience in a little bit more about who you are, what you write, and that sort of thing.



Onley James 07:01

Okay, my name is only James as you know, I write gay romance male male romance, and I've been doing that since 2019. And before that, I wrote young adult books under Martina McAtee starting in 2015. And that's it. That's what I do now. And I just started doing that full time in 2021.




Carissa Andrews 07:27


That's fantastic. So I was just gonna say, How long have you been writing? But you said since 2015, right? Or did you write prior to that?

 Onley James 07:33

I always wrote, but I never finished anything. What got you into writing to finish that or writing as an indie author? Honestly, I wasn't intending to publish what I wrote. But my parents always told me that I was a writer, like, from the time I was a little kid, they're like, Oh, you're gonna be a writer someday. Anytime I brought up any other field, they were like, no, no, you're gonna be a writer someday. Like, Well, okay, but I need a job in the meantime. But then my dad passed away in 99. So it was me and my mom. So we were always like, scrambling for money. But then when my mom got sick, I became a nurse. And then when she passed away in 2013, she had never gotten actually see me publish anything. So I was like, I'm gonna do National Novel Writing Month. And I'm gonna finish a book just to say if for nothing else, that I finished a book, so that my mom would be proud of me. Wonderful. What year was that? That was 2014 that I did National Novel Writing Month, it was supposed to be 50,000 words, it ended up being probably close to 75,000. And then by the time all was said and done, the book was 152,000 words. And so I gave it to a few people to read that I trusted. And they were just like, oh my god, this is so good. I can't. This is what they said. Oh, my God, this is so good. I can't believe you wrote it. Thanks. Thank you. Yeah, even my kid was like, I can't believe that you wrote this. So I decided that I didn't I thought about going to traditional publishing. But because there were a lot of LGBT characters and because it was written by four different points of view. And it wasn't really trendy to do paranormal at that time. And people were doing more dystopian and like fairytale retellings, I didn't want anybody to take it and turn it into something it wasn't. And I'm kind of a control freak. So I was like, You know what, I'm going to do it myself. I'm going to do everything myself. I'm going to keep my royalties. And you know, and just go from there. I had no idea what I was doing and it was obvious. I don't think anyone at that timeframe knew what they were doing. Are you kidding? No, like it was a wild west later on just like figuring it out. And it did well, like my way books did very well. But not enough to like live off of but you know, they were in the Grammy swag bags, and they were in the Teen Choice word swag bags and like, like people talked about them and people really liked them. But ya was like a book a month publishing, rapid release kind of thing. And I'm writing these epic 150 160,000 word books. And it just didn't If it wasn't really a good fit for the market at the time, so. So that's why in 2019, I kind of decided to shift to switch gears a little bit, because I had some friends who were writing male male romance. And I already had LGBT characters in my YA books, and it just kind of felt like a really natural progression. And it kind of took off from there.

 Carissa Andrews 10:22

That's awesome. So how many books do you have technically published now?

 Onley James 10:25

20. Wow, that's fantastic. Now is that across both pen names, or as only lasts both I have 25 books published. That's awesome. And so there's 20 under only? Yes, there's 20 under only and then there's five under my Martina MCITY name. So when did you start writing as Only then was that 2021 2019 is when I started writing it as only but I was still working as a nurse then. So I

was kind of straddling both at the same time, which was very difficult. It was difficult doing ya. But I had a lot more time because I was writing these giant sweeping novels. But when you when I got into mail mail, and it was just like one, one romance one suspense story, you know, in one, it they, you know, people expect them a little bit quicker. Yeah. But they, it was harder when I was writing romance because I was breaking into a new market, essentially. So I had to learn it all over again, I had to meet new people in the genre, I had to find, you know, assistants that are already in the genre, I had to figure out how to find people who wanted to read arcs, and all that other stuff. So all the stuff I had done, I had to do it again in a new market. But actually, I was thinking about it. I actually started writing full time in 2020. Right before the pandemic. I don't know why I said 2021. But it was 2020. Okay, that's wonderful, though. I mean, I get how like crazy that would be to like, start a brand new pen name and have to do everything over again. You've still written I mean, 20 books since 2019. That's a lot of books.



Carissa Andrews 11:54

So, are these also epics? Or did you pare them down then so that you could rapid release them?



Onley James 11:59

There, I would say my average is probably between 70 and 80,000. Words, for a romance. The other ones were so big, because they were from multiple points of view. So I had four main characters. And then in the second book, I had five and then in the next one, I had six, so I had to keep track of a lot of different people. Whereas in romance, it's very nice, because, you know, you only have to keep track of like those two main characters, which kind of streamlines the process. So that was a little easier. And honestly, now that you think of it, oh my god, I'm so bad with timing. I actually published my first male male romance in August of 2020, not 2019. Okay, kind of collapses on each other for me. Like, why



Carissa Andrews 12:41

I think it was kinda like the last years. I mean, we kind of even know what we're doing.



Onley James 12:48

blends together.



Carissa Andrews 12:50

Right?



Onley James 12:50

It's just all blending together. But yeah, so 2020 to now i August of 2020. to Now I've done 20

books,



Carissa Andrews 12:58

that is crazy. So I'm guessing that you really are enjoying this genre a lot to be able to write that much that frequently.



Onley James 13:06

Oh, I do I really, I really enjoy it. I enjoy my my readers, and I enjoy my readers and why but like, it's they're a more adult group of people. And honestly, these people, they like to spend money on their books, they like to really kind of like be immersed in this world. And coming from a YA paranormal world. I like having these kind of like big sweeping worlds that I can use. So like when I write series, I still get that with like a contemporary setting, I still get all the different characters and everything. I just have to do the main focus of each book on those two characters. So it's kind of the best of both worlds.



Carissa Andrews 13:49

That's really cool. So okay, I want to talk about the LGBT aspect of it, because it plays a role into your very unique situation. So the first thing I'm curious about is so Have you always had an affinity that it sounds like you have to portray LGBTQ IA characters. What kind of brought you into that, like, what, what is your fascination with it? Or like, how did that come to be?



Onley James 14:11

Well, I'm bisexual for one.



Carissa Andrews 14:14

Well, that explains part of it.



Onley James 14:16

I have an ex husband and an ex wife. But then also my daughter is bisexual, she's married to a woman. I've always been very involved in the LGBT community. I've just in my whole life, like I've pretty much always just been around, you know, my mind people essentially. And so it seemed like a pretty natural progressive progression. And honestly, I sound so crazy, but I got out of a really bad relationship. And when I did that, I really started hating certain male female romance novels because I had a hard time separating myself from the main character, and it was like kind of like taking on Got a lot of stress for me, which sucked because I used to love reading romance novels. And the one thing I noticed when I switched to reading male male romance novels is that I really could just kind of immerse myself in the story without it giving me this, like massive anxiety. So I could enjoy the story, enjoy people falling in love, and, you

know, just enjoy this like whole, like, this whole world of romance without having to be bogged down by like, just anything, like even the whole, like a very popular trope and male female romance is like the Alpha hole. And like, you know, the very dominating, you know, misogynistic, and it's fine, read what you want seriously, like, I'm the least judgmental person in the world when it comes to reading what you want. But for me, personally, that was just really triggering. So being able to read male male, where they're both on an equal footing, regardless of you know, just by society standards, there's no real like, stigma, I guess, attached to it. So I mean, obviously to the gay romance part of it, probably, but two men both kind of have equal footing as far as like, their equality and society. So it just made it a lot easier for me to disconnect from my own crap, and focus on the actual stuff that I loved about romance. So when I got to write that that's, that was even better.



Carissa Andrews 16:21

What did a cool way of coming about that though, to be perfectly honest, and I'm with you, I'm not a big fan of the whole alpha aihole thing. That's part of the reason why with my paranormal series that I've got going on right now I have the alpha being a female. So it's like, I'm I don't like that either. Yeah, exactly. So Pride Month, last year, when Tik Tok blew up for you do want to tell us that story?



Onley James 16:46

Yes. So it was that is actually probably the main reason that it did blow up. I released my first book in my latest series, necessary evils in June. And it did pretty well. It was, you know, it was doing about as well as all my other books did. So it was, you know, mid listing it was it was doing what it was supposed to do. But then, about four weeks after it released, all of a sudden, I saw this huge jump in my sales. And I was like, well, that's odd. And the next book was coming out. So I was like, great, maybe people are finally starting to notice it. But then I signed into Tik Tok, which I rarely did. I realize that I had like three or four tags of people who had been who had tagged me in videos, which was daunting, because I was like, Oh, no. Like, do they tag you and books that they don't like, you know, like, I don't know. I don't know how Tik Tok works. I'm like, is this gonna be like a roast of my books. But it was a book talker named burger reader and she had read, unhinged, which was the first book and she had loved it and she had just really pushed it out to all of her followers and at the time, she had like 45 to 50,000 followers on Tik Tok. Wow. And then all of a sudden, I realized that like two other big name tick talkers, had also done videos on it. And it just kind of kept growing from there. Like, you know, other Tik Tok errs would find theirs and then they would read it and they would do reviews on it. And eventually it kind of bled over into Instagram. So that by the time that the second book published, I was making quadruple what I had made before unhinged. And now I'm I'm making I would say probably 10 times as much a month as I did before unhinged launched. So yeah, it the power of viral marketing is definitely there. I wish I could say I did something specific to make it happen. But literally, she said she went to Amazon and typed in gay romance. And that was the first thing that popped up that she she liked the cover for her.



Carissa Andrews 18:53

Well, so you did something specific then number one, you were writing in the right genre number two, your covers were great. So you did something right. It's just that it was the magic


of the magic of TikTok and readers finding your your work.

 Onley James 19:07

Yes. I try to remind myself that if she didn't like the book, it wouldn't have blown up like she probably would have just been like, she probably would have chucked it and moved on with her life. So it's like, if I hadn't written a good book, she probably would have never loved it and neither would anybody else. Right? But sometimes it just does feel very like fate. Or, you know, coincidence, or you know,

 Carissa Andrews 19:28

absolutely. Do you believe in fate and and manifestation?

 Onley James 19:32

Absolutely. Absolutely.

 Carissa Andrews 19:34

That's awesome. Water were You were you actively trying to manifest like big, big sales like for the name to go big?

 Onley James 19:44

Yeah, well, what I was trying to manifest was that I wanted I wanted my brand to be like, synonymous with just like, not only in my genre of being like the top of my genre, but like Just being a name that like in romance that people male or female readers would, would be like, Oh, that's only James, you know, like, Oh, she knows what she's talking about, you know? So I wanted more more than just money. I wanted the, the respect, I guess, or the authority to be like, Oh, well, I can educate other people on how I did it and what I did, but yeah, obviously, the money, like, I obviously wanted the money too. And I just, I wanted money that I would never have to worry again, about where I was gonna get the money. Like, that was my thing. I was like, if I could just have a million dollars in the bank, like and not have to stress over like, because I was living paycheck to paycheck, because I had quit my nursing job way before I actually made any money. I was definitely flying by the seat of my pants. I knew I could make it work, I just knew that I just had to just stay faithful. And just like, trust the process, because I like I knew this would work. I just felt it in my bones that like, this is going to this is going to take off, this is going to work. And I had done a lot of like meditating and a lot of thinking on it. And like, that's why I quit my job is because honestly, I sat up on it. And I just meditated for like three hours. And I opened my eyes and I was like, I'm quitting my job. I can't do it one more day. And that's what I did. And wow.

 Carissa Andrews 19:33



Carissa Andrews 21:22

That's wonderful. You know, it's it's so interesting and fascinating to me to hear stories like that, because that's exactly what I teach where it's literally like, you having to come to the spot where you make the decision of what it is you really want to go for you lock in that vibe, knowing that it's yours. And you just take the inspired actions like quitting a job or like doing the things that you know, you have to do like having great covers writing great stories so that they can be discovered. And just knowing that at some point, it's going to it's good to be there. It's coming. I mean, it sounds like you did all three of those things perfectly. did. So did you know about those aspects? Were you a law of attraction type person, so



Onley James 21:59

I'm definitely a law of attraction type person. I even have their planner. Are we talking abraham hicks planner? Yes, yes. Nice. I love it. It's my favorite. But I I was lucky because I do have a team of people in place from when I was a publisher, a small press publisher. So I already had an amazing graphic designer and an editor and, and a lot of things that probably a lot of new authors don't have in their pocket going in. So I had but I did that by bartering because I wasn't making any money. So it was like, Okay, well, I'm making, you know, \$1,000 this month, but I'll give you 500 of it, if you will do everything I need you to do. And then if and when I hit big, I promise you like I will reward you, you know, yeah. And that paid off like she was she you know, she's one of my best friends. So she was of course onboard, even though she has this insanely successful graphic design business where she makes covers for other people. But she you know, so I have all these things in place that that made it a lot easier for me to kind of take my vision and be like, This is what I want, and everybody to kind of be on board. So when you have like a team or you have like a group of people who are like, you know, yeah, no, you can totally do this. Like, it's a lot easier to believe in yourself when other people do. But I think also if you don't believe in yourself, it doesn't matter how many people believe in you.



Carissa Andrews 23:26

Absolutely. Yeah, cuz you're not gonna do the thing.



Onley James 23:28

Yeah, it's the whole whether you think you can or you can't You're right. Yeah,



Carissa Andrews 23:32

I love that quote. Oh, my gosh, I love that quote so much. I say it all the time. Anyway, continue.



Onley James 23:37

No, but that's it. Like that's, you know, that's the kind of thing is like, eventually I just had to get out of my own way and stop sabotaging myself and just be like, yeah, no, you're allowed to be successful

be successful.



Carissa Andrews 23:46

Yeah, absolutely. Have you taken any, like money courses or anything like that? I'm just curious, because I've done money bootcamp with Denise Duffield Thomas. And she talks about that sort of thing all the time about how you have to get out of your own way and except your own success.



Onley James 23:59

Yeah, I know. I took I don't know if you remember this woman. But way back in the day, there was a female. She was kind of like the female Dave Ramsey, and she had lost all her money.



Carissa Andrews 24:12

So it was it Suze Orman, yes.



Onley James 24:15

Way back in the day. I remember taking a class by Suze Orman. And I remember her basically saying like, if you don't respect your money, then it's going to leave you. You know, and everybody was like, Oh, she's so hippie, dippie trippy. And, like, That's ridiculous. And like, you know, and it's so funny because now all of the things she's saying are so relevant now. Right? Because we're very spiritual. And those of us who are like into manifestation and stuff like that, like all the things she said was very law of attraction and very, you know, very, like it



Carissa Andrews 24:47

probably stems back to Napoleon Hill to when you think about it the thinking Grow Rich. Yeah. Yeah.



Onley James 24:52

So like, that's kind of like the classes that I remember taking. I've taken a few financial planning class. is through like romance author mastermind. And in Inkers Con like, they usually do some really good classes about, you know, when you have this money, like how to how to take care of it and stuff like that. So that's really something I'm looking to do over the next six months into next year is like, really get my finit my financial planning out of the way, but also learn more about how to like keep reinvesting in what I'm doing now.



Carissa Andrews 25:26

That's success. And it's I think that's such a hard thing to like when when you are able to


That's awesome. And it's, I think that's such a key thing to like, when, when you are able to manifest money, especially as a kind of an artist, in a sense, you know, someone who is not necessarily in it for like the the accounting side of things. It's like, you have to have that mindset of like reinvesting and learning at least how to do it, or learning how to hire the right people that know how to do it, because it's so easy to let it slip right through your fingers if you're not careful. And you're not like in that holding the vibe state of this is now my new reality. I'm not changing it.

 Onley James 25:59

Yeah. And I also have to like, sometimes I get a little nervous, like, I'll see money going out of my business account, and I'll be like, Oh, no, but then I'm like, okay, but that's, that's money, that's going to come back to me because like, it's money, I'm paying a translator. It's funny, I'm tape paying a proofreader, and then that's gonna come back to me in sales in Germany, or France, or Italy, or whatever. So it's like losing money now on the short term, but like, going to be making so much more money long term next year. So it's kind of like trying to hold the big picture in your head to make sure that like, it's like, just because you're spending money doesn't mean it's gone forever. Like, it's gonna come back to you. And it's gonna come back to you much, much bigger. Yes. So it's always just like in that that's sort of like manifesting it, like having more than you need. And as you get bigger, that more than you need, might also get bigger, because you're going to need more as you grow. So rather than sitting like on any specific number, I'm always like, I have everything I need. And I don't have to worry about money. And I just tell myself that every single day. And so far, it's been true, like even even this huge move we did, like it cost a fortune, but I had everything I needed. And we still, you know, we still did just fine. And I didn't have to stress over bills being paid or anything like that. And that's a huge thing for me, because I grew up poor, and I hope. Yeah,

 Carissa Andrews 27:25

I feel ya, I totally get where you're coming from when my husband and I first got together. This is like, you know, almost 11 years ago now. We literally left and had nothing like my husband would come from the UK with like a duffel bag. And that was it. And so we were like completely starting from scratch. Like the I didn't get to combine my household with him or anything like that. It was literally starting from nothing. And I get it like when you're when you're in that state of like, paycheck to paycheck and trying to figure out, like, how do you make this thing that you love work and be big, it's like, and then when it does go bigger? You're like, how do I keep it here? Oh, crap. Yeah, yeah.

 Onley James 28:01

And that's the thing, like when I first started out, like, I had no money for anything, because, you know, I was still raising my daughter. And, you know, in addition to working full time, so even though I did make good money as a nurse, like, there was an extra money because I lived in Florida for one where it's super expensive, but the, the whole thing was, like, I knew that, if nothing else, the cover was the most important, it was the first thing people are gonna see. And so I saved up and I got a cover from this amazing surreal artist. And her name is Natalia Suellen. And I'm in love with her artwork, but she makes these beautiful covers. And she made my first two covers for my YA books. And they, they sold my books, you know, but I had to save

for those covers. And so now I'm in a spot where I can literally, you know, if I wanted to, I could have a photo shoot for like a cover if you know, but it's just, it's weird to kind of see where I came from. And like having to, like I said, barter, just for basic services. But again, I think that's where having like your people kind of come in is like finding your group, finding the people you trust, finding authors that write what you write networking with those authors, you know, like, there's a huge gay and male author network. And we share all kinds of information with each other. We're super welcoming or super helpful. We want everybody to succeed. We're not competing against each other. I love. I hope that that's in all genres. But I don't know



Carissa Andrews 29:36

that that is the case. I don't Yeah, it should be but I don't know that that's the case. I think there are definitely cliques in certain genres. But there are also some really wonderful people, you know, in all genres. I mean, I've I've dealt with many people across all different types of genres, and it's just, it just depends on what you're doing and where you're going. But it's that's wonderful. But you found that network? Is there a way for so if someone wants to get into gay romance or any of that stuff, how would they find that group then?



Onley James 30:08

Well, you have to have, I believe two books published to join that particular group. But there's a ton of, especially on Facebook, there's so many groups for aspiring and gay romance authors. There's a huge community of people willing to help you even people who are huge in my genre, like Lucy Lennox Kham, new hold, like everybody really wants everybody else to succeed, and they're very easy and approachable. I happen to be friends with Keanu hold, because she was actually one of my ya readers. When she published her first book. And she blew up, she just, she's like, in the stratosphere now. But like, in the beginning, she really encouraged me to, like, you know, she's like, No, you can definitely do this, you know, do you can change genres, like you're, you're really good at this. And so I think like, even Lucy Lennox, who's the top of our genre, she is so accessible, she answers all questions. She even has a convention or education con, she does, called page where it's literally all for gay and male, no romance authors, but it's all kinds of content from business marketing, education, as far as like writing content panels, like so there's just there's so much information out there. But again, even just reaching out to somebody and just being like, Hey, I kinda want to break into this, you know, and I don't know where to start, like, so there's, there's, it's out there. But I highly recommend if you're going to write male male romance, you read, read read, male male romance, like you live, eat, sleep and breathe it for a while. Yeah, there's a there's a lot of there's a lot that goes into stuff that people don't really think too much about. There's a lot of just writing any marginalized group at all requires, you know, a lot of sensitivity and a lot of knowledge before you just jump into it. Absolutely. Yeah. And so it's hard for, it's hard for a lot of people to break into that. And when they don't, when they don't think it through as far as like, you know, you do want sensitivity readers, you do want, because you don't want to you want to harm the community you're writing for. So I recommend just really, kind of getting really immersed in the genre. There's tons, tons of books to read fanfiction, which is a such an untapped source. There are so many amazing fan fiction writers that gets such a bad rap. But there's so good. And that's where I started was reading fanfiction. And then eventually, I went over to male male romance and now I write it. But yeah, I mean, definitely, it's a market you can break into, but you know, with the right reasons.



Carissa Andrews 32:45

So what do you think has been the biggest struggle for you as an author when it comes to either this genre or just in specific, like, what was your biggest struggle? Up until this point?



Onley James 32:56

Honestly, my biggest struggle was one figuring out marketing, because I'm not somebody who likes to be in front of a camera. I'm not somebody who, who was comfortable being like, oh, have you read my book, like, and it feels like, you know, you have to bombard people with like, hey, read my book, I wrote a book, do you want to read my book, like, and, and so it was really hard for me to, like, people be like, Oh, my god Did you know she wrote a book, and then people would look at me, and I would just be like, please let a hole open up and let me sink in. And please don't ask me about my book, because I don't know how to explain what I write. But then as as it got bigger, like as necessary evils got bigger especially, I got much more comfortable with like, even though I didn't want to tell everybody Oh, I have a Patreon, I would just put it in my newsletter at the bottom of every newsletter and be like, Hey, if you liked the stuff, you know, you can join my patreon. There's many levels that added to that. And eventually, people just did it. And the more people join my patreon, the more comfortable I got saying, Hey, guys, I have a Patreon. Hey, guys, you know, like, if you want to read my stuff, as I write it, here you go, if you want, little mini ficlet. So like, Here you go. So and then today, I did a 10 minute talk to a bunch of strangers, telling them about my most recent book series in front of a group of non gay romance readers. I stood up there and told these people that I have a series about seven psychopaths raised by a billionaire vigilante, you know, on to like, and it's just like, and they were all fascinated, they were all just like, everybody wanted to talk to me afterwards. And everybody was fascinated. But it took everything for me to get up there and just talk for 10 minutes. And it was just it was crazy. People had questions for me, people came up and asked me questions. So I think a lot of that is stepping out of your comfort zone and just being like, Okay, well, people won't know I have wrote a book if I if I don't tell them but also, maybe just learning how to be subtle with your marketing at first and then getting more comfortable with it. But I think for most of us Marketing is probably one of the biggest hurdles. Oh, for sure.



Carissa Andrews 35:03

Yeah. Unless, of course, you just happen to get super lucky and a tick tock or blows everything up.



Onley James 35:07

Yeah, exactly. And let me tell you, I never saw that coming. I really didn't. I thought I was gonna have to put out 10,000 videos on Tiktok. And then eventually one of them might blow up, it'd be something for like me talking about, like, my face cream or something stupid. You know, people be like, oh, yeah, man. You know?



Carissa Andrews 35:28

It seems like the dumbest ones that you go viral for that.



Onley James 35:33

Stupid things. It's like the one time you decide to like, talk about something happening in your backyard. You know, those are the ones that go viral. And then people are like, Yeah, we want more backyard content. No books. Yeah. I was lucky. I was lucky that, that she found my book and that she enjoyed my book, and that other people kind of got along for the ride. And, and you know, and I was telling them today, during that talk, you know, it's like, don't be afraid of like, big picture ideas. Because my idea was insane. My idea was, like, so absurd. But I liked the idea of it being absurd, because if the most absurd thing was the plot, then I could really get away with anything. So yeah. Like, and honestly, the people the thing people say the most is really seven adopted brothers, and they're all gay. I'm like, Yeah, because it's my world. And I can do what I want to make every single person walking in that planet gay guys do that, because it's my world, I get to do what I want. And I love it.



Carissa Andrews 36:34

That is too funny. So okay, what's your what's your most enjoyable part of the writing process, then, or publishing process, whichever,



Onley James 36:41

honestly, and it's not even it's, it's not even the writing, I love writing. But my favorite part of any of the storytelling process is the visual stuff. I love when I get to be part of like designing the covers, I love planning the branding, for any new business, if somebody's got a new business, and I can stick my nose in it and give them my two cents. I'm always down for that. But yeah, anything visual, my graphic designer, what she does for me is she will make my covers, but then she will actually break down every component of the covers the title, the subtitle, every individual character, the background, and then I can take those, put them into Canva. And I can make my own teasers and graphics. That's awesome. So that's my favorite thing is when the book is done, and I have the quotes I want to use, and I get to go in there and Canva and I get to play around with it, and make up all my own advertising stuff, all my own teasers and graphics and stuff like that. That's really my enjoyable part. That's kind of like my hobby part of it almost. So that's just like mindless stuff that I can like, put something on the television and just decompress and just play around.



Carissa Andrews 37:52

Absolutely, I totally get that I actually went to school for graphic design. So for me, it's like when I'm stuck writing, it's like, I need to switch gears and I'll do the visual side of things. And it's a completely different part of your brain. I mean, it's, it's still creative. It's still fun. It's still you being immersed into your world, but it's, it's totally different.



Onley James 38:08

Yeah. And it feels like a break. It feels like, Oh, this is this is a fun little thing. And that's the great thing about writing is that, especially if you're an indie author, there's no shortage of things for you to do. So if you need a break. There's 10 Other things waiting for your attention.



Carissa Andrews 38:20

Absolutely. You can do like a bazillion other things if you really want it. Yeah.



Onley James 38:26

Which is bad when you have ADHD. And you're just like, wait, I have 19 tabs open. What did I start out setting I only have 19.



Carissa Andrews 38:32

I'm pretty sure I have 119.



Onley James 38:36

But I know for a fact I have at least 12 of them open for real right now.



Carissa Andrews 38:42

I don't even want to count mine only I'm pretty sure I've got you beat.



Onley James 38:48

It's like when my assistant goes in and she checks my email. And she's like, Oh, my God, when last time you deleted emails, I was like, I don't know. Like, she's like, I'm not going back in there until you delete. I have mine set up now where it's like automatically starts deleting things, if it's a year or more older, and I haven't looked at it. See, and this is why I'm bad though. Because if I do that, inevitably, I will be like 12 years ago, I know that I sent an email to myself that had a copy of whatever, like Oh, my EIN number or something. And I'll be like, huh, and I'll go back in and they'll be like, I found it. I knew I had it. Right. And people are like, that was like 12 years old. I'm like, and



Carissa Andrews 39:34

but I remembered See, that's why it's important. Oh, yeah, I totally get that. I think I used to do that a lot more 12 years ago. Now. Now it's more about like, shoving it into like Evernote.



Onley James 39:48

Again, Evernote, a great program that I don't think gets enough attention, right. It's a great program. I love it. And it's like ready to link and sync and do things all over the place with that. Like save little things and you can Like, snip them. It's great for research.



Carissa Andrews 40:02

Oh, yeah, absolutely. Or like even when you're driving around town, you're like, oh my god, I have this great idea and you have to do it like on a voice recorded demo, then you could just plunk the memo into into like an actual thing on Evernote and you can find it again. Yeah, it's amazing. Yeah, that's a great app. Okay, so you mentioned briefly your Patreon. So let's talk about this, you're running this, I mean, your Patreon is now super successful, you're earning like 6000 plus dollars, just on Patreon alone every month. So Holy cow. How? Number one, how did this get started? And number two, how did you get it to like such epic proportions? And number three, how did you figure out your levels go.



Onley James 40:40

So, I, I started by blatantly copying another male male romance author, with her levels, just in like how many levels she had, not necessarily what she offered. But she had like five levels, and they were kind of absurd levels. Like I never thought anybody would pay \$50 a month to be part of my, my Patreon. But I was like, You know what, shoot for the stars. I because I write romance. I named my tiers based after like, first base, second base third.



Carissa Andrews 41:10

That totally makes sense in my best tip.



Onley James 41:14

All the way. And so I made all of it up. And I was like, Okay, well, for the \$5 tier, I'm just going to offer, they can read one chapter a week as I write it, they can have access to like the fan art that gets done in the commissioned art I do. And then I created merch through Patreon that they handle, okay, give them the art. And then every quarter when they reach a certain milestone, whatever that first thing is goes out, and then a second and a third. So every three months, they get something that's custom. From me, that's my art that the basically, Patreon has created and sent out so I don't have to think about it.



Carissa Andrews 41:55

That's awesome. I didn't even know that was a thing until I was looking at your Patreon.



Onley James 41:59

Yeah, so. So for the first two tiers, the merchandise is, like postcards, stuff like that very small kind of thing. So it's a five and \$10 tier. But at the \$10 tier, you get up to three chapters, a week of what I'm currently writing. And then for, like, as it goes, like you get access to serials that I'm writing, you get access to, you know, paperbacks, as I finish them, I sign them, and I send them to you, the \$50 tier gets access to sign hardcovers. Oh, wow. Yeah. But it's funny, because when I first started, you know, I was I was shocked if anybody even signed up for \$5. I was like, Yes, excellent. But I did find that most people wanted the \$10 tier, because that's the three. That's the three chapters a week. So I knew that that was a big draw. So that's why I kind of started like, putting it more in my newsletter, like, Hey, I know, you don't want to wait. So you can sign up and and do that. But as necessary evils got bigger, I noticed that people wanted to sign paperbacks. So they were picking up the 20 and \$25 levels, not so many people picked up the \$50. So for a while, I actually retired the \$50 level, because there was nobody in it. And I kind of felt like, like a dope. The \$20 and up level has much more higher tier merch. So they get like T shirts and coffee mugs and stuff like that. So you know, kind of bigger picture items. But then, like, just last week, I decided that instead of doing the individual hardcovers, at the end of every book release, I'm going to at the end of every series, do a box set for my \$50 tier. And they get a special edition, actual book box, all the books, a coloring book, a tote bag, and like really, really specific and limited edition artwork that will only be in the book box, I'm only having 50 made. So after the 50 They'll never be made again, people can buy the books individually in my store. But this, you know, this commemorative box will only be 50. And so I basically told people, like if you're on my \$50 tier, for at least four months, when it launches, you have you know, you get priority access. But if you don't want to sign up, it's going to be \$350 in my store, and I have in my merchandise store, I have the ability to make payments. So I have like, you know, sezzle and I have afterpay and I have Klarna and all that other stuff. So people tend to spend a lot of money in my merch store because they know they can make payments on it. So you know, I was telling them like, look, it's \$350 and you know, I know that's a big expense, but it's there if you want it and I put up like a waitlist form. And I was like, You know what, nobody's nobody's gonna care. But I think I'm up to 27 \$50 a month, subscribers now our patrons now and I have a waitlist of like over 60 people to buy the boxes.



Carissa Andrews 44:53

And you're like, Oh, man. Yeah. Yeah, great problems.



Onley James 44:59


Great problems. So it's more about it's kind of like finding value. And then also kind of test marketing like, what's, what's important to people? Like, if I had offered up to three chapters and nobody wanted them, then I would have had to have like, pivoted and been like, Okay, well, what else can I offer? But I find with Patreon, most people just don't tell people, they have a Patreon. Like, they don't want to bring it up. They don't want to look like they're asking for money. And it's funny, because so many people say to me, Oh, I wish I could support you, but I'm broke. And I'm always like, I'm fine. Ramez this isn't a charity, I'm not asking you to give me money. I'm trying to give you something of value in return, you know, like something a little exclusive as something that other people don't have access to. You know, so it's, it's a mutually beneficial relationship, which a lot of people do feel like, Oh, well, patrons back in the day, they

took care of you. And then you provided your artwork, which is still the case. But nowadays, people just really are attached that whole starving artist aspect, you know, they just really want, you know, they really think in that kind of mentality. So, with Patreon, you know, but I look at it, and I think, you know, you look at like last podcast on the left, who has like over 50,000 patrons, and your Yeah, and you're just like, Okay, well, then my 580 patrons, like, are doing just fine. You know? Okay, like, I shouldn't feel bad, because they are getting, you know, what they what they put into it. So yeah, like it really, it blew up really quickly. But for a year, I had, I was lucky if I had \$150 A month through Patreon. I was like, yeah, \$150 a month, woohoo, you know, and, and so like, as it grows, like last month, because when you you have the option when you create a Patreon, of like charging people immediately when they sign up, and then charging them again for the following month. Or you can just charge them at the first of the month. I have people pay when they first sign up, because I just I don't know if they'll be there for the first. You know, I don't know, we're gonna get access to all my stuff, read everything they can and then just be like, deuces. So even though technically, I had \$6,000 worth of subscribers last month, I actually made over \$10,000. Wow. signups. Yeah. So that's, that's the kind of the power of Patreon is like, even though it looks like I have 580 subscribers or whatever, and I, you know, make \$6,000 a month off of it, which is amazing in and of itself. Really, I average probably between eight and \$10,000 a month, just with new subscribers coming in. And then when you when you kind of break it down, you have to consider that Patreon takes their cut, and they do, they take a great deal of money and fees. They also charge you for the merchandise that goes out. So I made \$6,000 This month, technically, I got \$4,000 Because of the fees and the stuff like that. So you always have to keep that in mind too. Like you don't want to offer too much that you can't handle, hoping that somebody will sign up but then you can't deliver because people will cancel their membership in a hot minute. Oh, sure. Because they don't feel like they're getting value. And there is an option where they can tell you that they didn't think it was worth it. So if you don't want to look at that 150 times, definitely want to think real hard about what you what you're able to provide. I write very quickly. And it keeps me on task to know that I have to write at least three chapters a week in my current work in progress. So I use that as kind of a marker like okay, well I know that I'm owing these people this, this and this. Yeah. And now that I've sort of stretched out my releases, I'm also doing a serial weekly in my newsletter. So I know I have to do chapter of that every week. And then I usually try to do a little mini fix of like a favorite character, like either every week or every other week. So like I know that I have those milestones and markers that I have to meet and then everything else is kind of like bonus I'm lucky that I have a lot of people who create fan art for me and commissioned art so like I get to share that with my patrons first before like Instagram and all these other social medias get it so that's like little added bonus things that don't cost me anything really. Yeah, but they feel like they're getting like exclusive access they get exclusive access to cover reveals to blurb reveals way before any of the people in my reader group or my newsletter or anything like that. So so making things feel exclusive, even if they don't cost you anything. That's that's a value that's a value that you know people are willing to pay for.




Carissa Andrews 49:36


It sounds to me a kind of like you've been doing with Patreon what like Brandon Sanderson was doing with his Kickstarter where you're you're doing this like awesome, unique thing for your your readership and your patrons and they're able to get access to it all the time. Ongoing, right versus like this one big event and it's done. You know what I mean? That's really cool.

 Onley James 49:57


Yeah, it took it took a minute like again, And it also took me just being bold enough to be like, Hey, I have a Patreon. And the thing I do, and I highly recommend it, there's a program called Insta Bio cs.cc. There's an app you can use. And basically, I'm sure people have seen it. And it's basically like people type in fans dot link slash only Jas. And every single one of my social media pops up, my website, my Patreon, everything, even the the link to the first necessary evils book is all there in one in one fell swoop, they can get to anything from there. So it's on, it's in my bio for Instagram, it's in my bio for any social media that I have. So without me telling people, they can click on that link to say, find my Instagram and see that I have a Patreon. And they'll just go there. And I have the stats to show that people have organically found my Patreon, just by going to my Insta Bio and clicking on it. I can see how many times people have visited my website through that, you know, so having a link that makes it one stop shopping is, you know, in like, you can't put value on that because it's, you know, it's something it's very passive. You don't have to do anything to get that other than just put it somewhere where people can click on it, you know,

 Carissa Andrews 51:14


so it sounds a little bit like a LinkTree too, correct?

 Onley James 51:17

It's just like Linktree. It's just a different version of it. Like every I'm sure there's a million apps for that. But yeah, it's absolutely linked tree and that's something I picked up on Tik Tok. If I'm being honest, everybody's got their link tree. They're like, hey, buy my merch. Hey, hey, come over here and look at this, you know, like, sign my petition. But it works. Because if somebody says, sign my petition, and I click and I'm like, oh, there's a petition, I'll click on it. And, you know, if it's easy, I'll do it. I try to do make it easy for people.

 Carissa Andrews 51:47

Definitely. I agree with you on that one. Oh, my gosh. So have you always been interested in in like, the merch side of things, too? I mean, obviously, you've been you're, you're successful with your merch. So how did that come about? Like, is that always been an interest for you?

 Onley James 52:00

Yes, I tried it a little bit with my YA series. Because when I made that again, I was thinking very cinematic. It was very Vampire Diaries very, like, you know, an ensemble cast kind of thing where I always wanted it to kind of in my head, like be viewed like a TV show. So I always tried to like think about merch in that respect, but there was really no no people weren't willing to pay money in the YA genre, especially when it's very tournament Burnham kind of like, I bought this for 99 cents, throw it over my shoulder, buy the next one for 99 cents. There wasn't really a lot of people putting stock in, in that specifically, but in my latest series, it is a very sarcastic it's very dark humor. So there were a lot of lines that people kept quoting to me over and over

again, saying, I wish this was on a coffee mug. I wish this was in a T shirt. You know, I wish I could wear this around. And so I was like I said to you know, my, my business partner. And I said, Can we do this? And she's like, hell yeah, we can do it. Like why. And so we created a Wix store, or, you know, a store on my Wix platform, which is what I use for my website. And it's all completely integrated. So people buy stuff off my website, and then it goes straight to the distributor. And I don't have to do any.



Carissa Andrews 53:18

Nice. Yeah.



Onley James 53:20

So. So with that, it's an again, it's very passive income. We make the designs, we put them up and then you know, and then they sell we even do now we're doing seasonal merch, like for Valentine's Day, you know, like we had like, My heart belongs to you. And it was like an actual anatomical heart with a lot on it. Yeah. And like we had all the little candy hearts, but with like really creepy sayings on them. Like really cute, fun colors. Like at Christmas, we had sweatshirts to say Merry murder from the Mulvaney. And like, all of the little crochet looking things were like axes and knives and like guns. They sold out like they were instant, like hits. So like, it's very, like I said, it's fun for us to create that stuff. It's, I'll get an idea and I'll shoot it over to her. Like I had just put out a book on the first and it was really my cereal. It was just a compilation of my cereal that I was running in the newsletter. And we did some like very generic merch for it because I didn't know if anybody would really be interested because again, it's a paranormal, which I don't usually do and it's it's a cereal. So most people read it in the newsletter. But then somebody said to me, they're like, I guess I made I said a lion. Something like humans are basically houseplants with anxiety. And somebody was like, I want that on a shirt. And so like yesterday, I sent it to my graphic designer is like, Can we can we do that? She's like, Yeah, gotcha. And so now she's making that design and it'll be up by tomorrow and then people can buy it. Incredible. Yeah, so we retire merch that doesn't sell well. A lot of stuff will sell immediately like and then we'll you know we'll kind of taper off. But we haven't said braided by book series we have it separated like by people just looking to buy signed paperbacks and sign hardcovers and stuff like that. And then I have like, my merch that's literally mine. So like, I have a only fans Oh, and Le y kind of action for people who like actually want to buy merch, like, if they're coming to like see me to sign in or something like that, like a lot of people want those, so I can sign the shirts and stuff like that. So yeah, like, but it all kind of just grew in like a test marketing kind of way. Like when we saw people saying they wanted something we like looked at it and was like, Is there a way we can do this easily and not get bogged down? Like, because if I had to like sit here and fold T shirts and mail them out, all right, there's no way I would never have time to write again. But if they're doing all the distributing, and I don't have to do anything, I don't even have to send it to the company. It just integrates directly with my Wix shop and does it itself. You know, like, why wouldn't you like my mom, when I used to be in sales, they would say don't leave money on the table. You know, you don't ask for the sale, if you don't ask for the upgrade, you're just leaving money on the table. And so for for things like merchandise and things like Patreon, you know, like if you're if you're not telling people, it's there, and you're not, you know, taking advantage of these opportunities when they come to you like you're leaving money on the table. And this is a business and that's something a lot of authors hate to admit,



Carissa Andrews 56:18

yeah, it's an entertainment business, and you're capitalizing on all the avenues. I think that's wonderful, because I think authors who are listening to this are gonna be like, I know a few of them that are just gonna be like, mind blown. Like, I didn't even know this was like a possibility. You don't I mean, I think it's so key that you're here talking about that, and explaining, like, all the different ways that we can actually use the intellectual property that we've put together to make more money than we are even realizing.



Onley James 56:45

Yep. And even I did commissioned artwork. Well, a couple of people sent me fan art, and I loved it so much. I was like, Can I pay you to do more? And when people saw it, they were like, is this going to be available in your merch store? So I would go to the artist and be like, how much do I have to pay you to have the licensing for this artwork, and they would say, X amount, and I was like, done, and I would give them that money. And then it goes up in my merch store. And then people buy it, people display it in their house, like, you know what I mean? Like, so there's always opportunities. So if I see a way to like, you know, to make money off of it, and I know that sounds very capitalist, but like, you know, again, this is a business. So people don't like that I charge \$35 for a hardcover, they're like \$22, for, you know, a paperback, but that's, you know, I want to make a profit off of what I do. You know, this isn't a charity, you know, people aren't doing me a favor by buying my books. Like, you know, I hopefully I'm providing entertainment for them in exchange for that money, right? And a lot of people just don't, they don't think that way. They have this very, like, oh, I don't want to bother people. Oh, I don't want to inconvenience people. I don't want them to think that I think that I'm better than I am. You know, like, you put a lot of time and effort into to writing that book. Like most of our most of us are selling ebooks for 599. I can't even get a coffee at Starbucks for 599. Right? I don't walk into there for less than \$7. And usually, it's more like 12 right now. And I guarantee you that person spent way less time making my drink than I did writing that book.



Carissa Andrews 58:17

Most people are spending that much money on a card, there's like 12 words on it.



Onley James 58:23


And that's I think the mindset that people have to shift out of before they can ever make a profit on anything is like this is this is my job, this is what I do. This is a business. And you know, like I have every right to make money off of my product off of what I do. And that's the hardest hurdle to get over. Because I was definitely that person who's like, oh, I don't want people to think I'm a big shot. And I don't want people to think that I think I'm better than I am. And you know, like am I charging too much. And



Carissa Andrews 58:52

I think that's especially how like what you're talking about in the YA space the first I started in my kind


I think that's especially key like we're talking about in the YA genre the two I started in my kind of branch out just more into urban fantasy in general. But the white eight mentality for sure, it was it was like that.

 Onley James 59:04

And that comes from a lot of the genre were really and I know people hate when I say this, but ya sort of ruined the genre by giving into the rapid release mentality when when they started doing. Like, when a one pen name is actually a conglomerate, instead of like one person, and they have 10 ghost writers who are popping out a book a week, it trains the audience to, to want that book a week, regardless of the quality. They they begin to look for quantity and they it's like very consumerism. It's very like fast fashion. You know, it's like, I don't care if that blouse only lasts a week because I paid you know, \$3 for it, whatever. I'll just throw it away. You know, and I think that that's a lot of like this addictive seven second tick tock mentality where you just, you want to just consume Have everything now, and then be done that move on to the next thing that that started. And I think that once that started, it was very hard to rein it back in, especially with ya. Because there are a lot of pen names that are not one person, there are multiple people, and they can pump out these books. But that leaves the people who are one person and trying to keep up and you cannot. And I know they say that's not true. But you cannot publish a book a week and still maintain quality.

 Carissa Andrews 1:00:32

I agree, I can't even do a book a month. And that's why I teach a book a quarter, because it's like, you gotta have some, if you're one person, you have to have some quality behind your books, and you don't need to go crazy doing it.


 Onley James 1:00:43

And I'm a fast writer, I mean, I really do pump out, you know, an 80,000 word book in six or seven weeks. And I can get it out quickly. Because I do have a whole team that works for me. And, you know, as I'm writing, they're editing and they're already moving it into place. Yep. But But I actually am slowing down and going to the writing a book a quarter, so that I can offer other things to other people like doing more on my Patreon and doing more stuff with the merchant and doing more coaching and doing stuff like that, and maybe living life a little bit. And, and that's part of the reason I got an office outside of my home. Yeah. At work, and I'm at home at home, because I'm sure everybody who works for themselves knows like, no matter what you're doing, you feel guilty that you're not doing something else. Yeah. So So yeah, like, I think that that's like some people writing a book a quarter sounds insane. They're just like, what? Right? And that's, that's slowing down and actually giving myself a little bit of breathing room, no matter how much people are mad about it, you know? Yeah.

 Carissa Andrews 1:01:48

I mean, like, yeah, and I talked about that, like, we've talked about my pen name in the paranormal, urban fantasy setting, because she wants me to speed up and I'm like, No, I'm not gonna go faster. Just because the audience has been like, not my audience. But the Yeah, we're


all market audience has been trained to go like faster than this. I'm not killing myself, just because that's the overall theme. I'm going to teach them that this is the norm for me. And if this if they like what I write, if you like, how I'm doing things, follow me feel free, but I'm not. I'm not going faster just because you want me to.

 Onley James 1:02:22


We know their weight because we've seen it. Yeah, George RR Martin puts out a book every seven years if we're lucky, right? Young people read for it. It's, you know, it's like different rules for different genres. But even in ya Sarah J. Moss has put out a book a month, she puts out a book every two years, you know, like, like, we know, they will wait for it. But there is so much devaluing of indie authors, because for so long, there was a stigma like, oh, well, if you publish your own book, it's clearly garbage. And I think a lot of indie authors bought into that. Well, yeah, yeah, I'm not Trad pub, like. So obviously, I should only charge 99 cents for my book. But it's just not true. Like if you can go read fanfiction for free and like I said, there's some phenomenal fan fiction writers. Definitely at least on tier with, like traditional publishers. Absolutely. Yeah. And a lot of traditionally published people started out writing fanfiction. Look at Cassandra Clare, she started out writing Harry Potter fanfiction. Yeah, no, no, James.

 Carissa Andrews 1:03:20


Just gonna say that. Yeah,

 Onley James 1:03:21

yeah, there's a ton of people who started out honing their skills, as you know, fanfiction writers. So I just, I think we need to stop devaluing our work, like, you can't possibly be a good writer if you're not traditionally publishing, because the dirty little secret of the traditional publishing world is that there's a lot of crappy writers out there who've been signed, because their book happened to meet a trend that they were about to launch, you know, and the thing about influencers is we literally, they train people what to think influencers are paid to go out there and be like, you're gonna love this book? And people read it. And they're like, I did I did love this book. Or did they excel in expecting to love it? And so they kind of like, you know, Jedi mind trick themselves into liking it, you know? So I think there's a lot of that behind traditional publishing too. Because let me tell you something, I've seen the quality going down hill rapidly, lots of errors, lots of spelling errors, you know, and you're just like, wait a minute, this is this is a traditional, this is a big five publisher, you know? Yeah. So like, I think people just don't give themselves enough credit in the indie world, especially since we're doing all of this ourselves.

 Carissa Andrews 1:04:32

Absolutely. Yeah. And it gets to be kind of like headless chicken moment time, and you're not quite sure where to put your focus. And so it's, it's like, how do you put your value in yourself when you know, like, every little thing that you had to cut a corner on or whatever, and then still be able to promote it? Like it's the best thing on the planet?

 Onley James 1:04:49


Yep. Yeah, it's hard. I mean, that's why a lot of authors are like, I don't know what the problem is. I can like, promote my friend's book, no problem. But as soon as I'm trying to talk about mine, it's like, well, that's why because you know, so intimately like all the details into this book, this link, and I think that's the thing. It's like, what we see as cutting corners, or what we see is like, you know, taking shortcuts or whatever. It's actually just really good business.

 Carissa Andrews 1:05:13


Yeah. Right? What a great Mindset shift.

 Onley James 1:05:17

You know, you have to look at your margins, like one of my friends says, I don't like he, he breaks novellas, you know, like, so he writes a little, you know, gay romance novellas, and he only charges 299 for them. So he does like very passing edits. But he doesn't like spend 1000s of dollars on an editor, because that would not that would cut into his profits. And he does just fine without that. So like, I think it's really knowing your market and knowing where you can cut corners, that doesn't make you cheap. It just makes you good at business. It means you understand profit and loss, you understand, you know, how to make an actual profit off of your work. It's on reframing how you think about things.

 Carissa Andrews 1:05:57


Yes. And I think reframing is so key. People need to understand that that's okay. But like, just because we've been telling something, a story to ourselves over and over again, doesn't necessarily make it true. It just makes it a story we've told over and over. And that's it. Yep. Yeah.

 Onley James 1:06:12

If you say something to yourself often enough, you believe it, it becomes truth.

 Carissa Andrews 1:06:15

Yes, absolutely. So why not? Tell yourself a better story? Yes, I love it.

 Onley James 1:06:22

Your brain doesn't know if you're sarcastic or not. So you can even tell yourself something great about yourself. sarcastically. Your brain doesn't know the difference. Yeah. I love that difference. Eventually, your branch is like, Oh, hey, we are great. Okay. All right.



Carissa Andrews 1:06:35

totally great. I agree. I agree. Well, only where can people find your great self online they like if they're looking for you. They want to come come check it out. Figure out your Patreon. All that good stuff. Where did they go? Like I said,



Onley James 1:06:51

I have my my Insta Bio. So it's fans, fa n s.li n k slash only O N ley, Jas, and that should take you instantly to everything. So you can find me anywhere. You can find me on Facebook, Patreon Instagram, you find me on Tik Tok Twitter, or email me on my web,



Carissa Andrews 1:07:15

Did I just see you roll your eyes about Tiktok. After all of this?



Onley James 1:07:18

I love TikTok because I will just go completely zombie. And just scroll doom. Scroll on tip talk for an hour, you and everybody else. Yeah. Why I roll my eyes because it is a curse. And also a blessing can absolutely changed my whole life. But it's also kind of an albatross. And so



Carissa Andrews 1:07:41

I completely understand that one. Oh, my goodness. Well, thank you so much for joining the podcast today, I am so glad that you are able to find time even amidst your crazy thunderstorm situation over there. Right now. So I appreciate it. And thank you for sharing your story. I know that so many people who are listening are going to be inspired by not only what you're writing, because I think it's key that we have more diversity and more amazing stories like you're telling, but also the incredible success that you've been able to achieve, doing what you love and doing the types of stories and work that you love. But then seeing all the opportunities. I mean, to be honest, it's like you have done things that I don't think many authors are even comprehending yet. And so it's just it's phenomenal to have you on here. And I'm so glad that you said yes.



Onley James 1:08:30

Thank you. Well, it was fun being here. All right.



Carissa Andrews 1:08:34

Now, wasn't that an awesome interview? I don't know. I mean, I've interviewed a lot of different people. But this is one of those episodes where there was so much good stuff packed into it

people. But this is one of those episodes where there was so much good stuff packed into it, that I just it's hard to be able to pick out just one thing, I mean, from understanding how great amazing things can happen like a tick tock explosion, all the way to being able to leverage Patreon in new and exciting ways and using your IP your books, your stories, as we to be able to create merchandise that readers are clamoring over and loving, not to mention creating these great events that are so similar to what Brandon Sanderson just did for his Kickstarter event, but doing it on a monthly basis. I mean, how incredible is that? So I hope you took some notes from only I hope you got some really great insights, and maybe inspired you in new ways on how you can go about creating some new and fun engaging things for your readers to be able to, I don't know, just test your creativity a little bit further. I know for me, one of the big ones is the merchandising aspect. I want to kind of take a little bit of time to play around with different ideas and think about ways that I can incorporate merchandising and Patreon for my fiction side of things, and how to be able to create a Patreon that's even more enticing that's even more engaged. During for my author revolution side, it's all stuff that's in the works. And this interview was not only an opportunity, I guess for only to be able to explain what she does, but for me to learn from her and understand new ways to be able to leverage the IP that I've created. So if that's the case for me, I know it's the case for you as well. So if you'd like to download the transcript to today's podcast episode, or get any of the links to some of the things that we discussed today, like only his books, her website, or even her Patreon, head over to authorrevolution.org/136 to get all the goods. All right, guys, I hope you go on and have a wonderful rest of your week. I hope everything that is coming to you this summer is in good fashion. You're not having any trees land on your vehicles. But I do hope that new insights are creating some incredible opportunities for you this summer. I hope you get those flashes of insight, those crazy things that can shake up your world but for good reasons for good ways. So go forth my friend, and start your author revolution.