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SPEAKERS

Carissa Andrews



Carissa Andrews 00:04

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 impostor syndrome. We've become a force to reckon with. Now, after years 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, we're sowing the seeds of a better way away with more ease, abundance and flow. Get ready to learn about indie authorship from a whole new perspective. We're about to cover everything from releasing your poverty mentality to manifesting your millionaire author destiny. I'm Carissa Andrews, and this is the Author Revolution Podcast. Well, hi there and welcome back to the Author Revolution Podcast. Oh, my goodness, guys. Okay. So here we are, we are at the end of September 2023. NaNoWriMo, is screeching up at us at an alarming pace. Which means in just a couple of days, we're going to be kicking off Preptober. Like what just happened this year has just flown by really has. And when I was thinking about what I wanted to talk about today, I had a plan in place, there was like this whole episode that I was going to record. I just wasn't feeling the vibe of it. And so I kind of did a little bit of brainstorming, I asked my BFF ChatGPT what kind of questions or episodes I could air? Nothing was vibing absolutely nothing. And then when you know it, an idea popped in my head. And I was like, You know what, I think this is something that I need to discuss. Now. You guys know that I'm in the process of transitioning not fully, but transitioning and adding a romcom pen name to my brand to my repertoire to whoever the heck I am, right? I'm in this process. And I'm thinking an awful lot about what does it mean to start this new brand? What does this mean to start a new pen name? What does this mean to start a new genre? What does it mean to my old pen name to my old genre? Like what what is happening with me right now. And I have a lot of fun, cool ideas that are coming about some of it actually, ironically, coming because of Taylor Swift. Kid you not that woman just amazes me, the more I learn about her thanks to my 14 year old daughter becoming an obsessed crazy fanatic. I've learned an awful lot about the cool fun things that she does to make her audience like really excited to wish she would write a book on branding or read a book on like, audience engagement or how it came about for her because it's really cool. Anyway, I've been thinking a lot about like, what does this genre identity crisis feel like to me? Like why? Why does it seem like such a big deal? I mean, it is, but it isn't at the same time, like I feel in the rom com space. I feel more at ease in some ways. Like I like the flow of it, I can very easily pick out tropes, I can

very easily see what's happening. I can very easily feel how things need to go and need to unfold. And yet I still question myself about it because it's new. Does that make sense? It's weird, right? And so I figured if I'm having this kind of identity crisis, maybe some of you are as well, maybe you've been thinking about adding a pen name, maybe the pen name that you're working on right now isn't producing the results that you really want. And so you want to switch it up, maybe you're just getting a little bit bored and stagnant like I was, and you want to add something new to the mix, just to liven up your writing again, and to give yourself some more excitement. So today, we're going to talk about, you know, that genre identity crisis that authors sometimes face sometimes in the beginning of their career, and sometimes like myself, you know, 12 years in, and we're going, what am I doing? Why am I doing it? First things first, I want to talk about this poll of the new genre, right? So for me, the poll to write this rom com series who didn't even start as like a poll, it was an idea that popped into my head. And I went haha, university. You're funny. I think I've said this story before. There was no inclination, no desire, no nothing to want to write this idea that popped into my head. And yet it would not go away. It would not leave my brain. It was like constantly in the back of my head going, but this would be really cool. Nope, seriously, this would be really cool. Hey, hey, remember when you said you wanted to do something, this would be really cool, and it just kept getting louder. So once everything was said and done, I was starting to feel a little bit. I don't know if agitated with paranormal and urban fantasy is the right word, but I was feeling restless. I'm just feeling like I'm not vibing with it as much as I used to. And even though I love it, even though it's my jam, I love the the watching of movies of television shows of reading of books, there was just this kind of darling of that enthusiasm. Does that make sense. And I was not feeling as motivated to write it as, as I did before. And then all of a sudden, you know, I had my daughter starting to get into the reading of more like romancey type books. She's 14, almost 15 years old now. And so of course, as the mom, I need to make sure some of these books are appropriate for her to be reading because she wants to read Colleen Hoover, and she wants to read a couple of others, you know, red, white, royal blue, all the things right. And so as I'm reading these books, I'm finding Oh, you know what, I kind of like this vibe, I like the feeling that it invokes especially when you're feeling the that initial moment when people are starting to realize that there's something more that there's, there's a way to awaken a part of themselves that they've been denying. Does that make sense? That for some reason, that little nugget was something that just really stuck with me. And so then, of course, I started talking to my PA and friend, Jenny, and she was the one that was like, why would you write angst romance? Why don't you write romcom because that's basically in essence, what I was doing with the paranormal and urban fantasy, like I'm good at that I, I can see the humor in things. Ha light bulb great. But the overall motivation behind it was truly to get out of the writing read that I felt like I was falling into because I don't know if it's the manifestation stuff that I've been working with so much. And trying to allow myself to move forward into a new version of who I get to be who I am becoming that this old version of myself is starting to fall away a bit. I don't foresee ever leaving the paranormal and urban fantasy Panem ever, like it's always going to be there, I'm always going to be writing in it. But I just felt this calling to do something new. And the excitement that came from planning out the rom com series was just phenomenal. Like, it was almost as if I was like in the very beginning of my author career at the very beginning when I started writing, you know, pen Domus for the first time and all of a sudden, these ideas are just flowing. Now, for you, it might be the same, right, you might want to switch to a different literary world just to be able to play around with something new to regain your excitement and curiosity that often, I think comes from this decision to change genres. But of course, with that excitement does come some challenges. And these are some challenges that I myself have faced. And some that I know for sure you're going to be coming up against if you're doing it. So if you're thinking about changing your genre, I want you to think about these challenges, just so that you walk in with eyes wide open. Okay. So obviously, the first one is

market knowledge you're going to want to know and understand, familiarize yourself with the new genre, you're going to want to understand things like that target audience, your popular tropes, reader expectations, when you don't have enough market research, it actually leads to misalignment with genres, conventions, and then you're not going to get as many sales, you're going to start feeling as if you're not getting the traction you deserve and things like that. Now, interestingly enough, the conversations about target audience and popular tropes and reader expectations. I'm teaching a lot of that stuff in four books five days next week. So hopefully, you're thinking about joining that course. And using some of the information to be able to catapult yourself into that new next level. Another challenge that I faced when it comes to this genre shifting is the branding and pen names, like I've really, for I knew right off the bat, it would have to have a different pen name, right, I knew I would have to be someone else. If for no other reason than to position myself on the sales sites, the the retailer sites, right? Because I didn't want to dilute the rom com pen name or dilute the urban fantasy paranormal pen name by keeping the same thing I know clean. Hoover can do it. It's great. But she was also way bigger when she started branching off into some of the other types of genres. So for me, I knew I wanted to split it up. But I'm really still struggling with the idea of do I want to have two different websites. I've got the Shopify store now and if I keep the Shopify store and just allow that one site to include the rom com store materials like habits own landing page or something like that, will that be enough? And right now I'm leaning towards that decision. I just haven't pulled the trigger. haven't started setting up any pre orders or anything like that on my site, but it's definitely something to be thinking about. Do you want to have two different pen names? Do you want to have a pseudonym? Or do you want to keep the same pen name? Now I'm not saying you can't, I'm not saying it's not possible to keep it, especially if the genres are kind of laterally aligned like they're similar, but they're not like, super close. You know what I mean? Like, if you're writing paranormal romance, and then maybe you're writing urban fantasy, those could probably stick together, those are fine under one pen name, if you're writing paranormal, ghost books, and then you're having you know, a cozy mystery, that's probably fine too. Like job your she's doing that you know, where she rents the Gothic Horror suspense type books. And then she also has like a cozy paranormal mystery under her same pen name that works, because it's a similar readership. But just think through those dynamics, because that's going to come up right, you're also going to need to understand the genre specific marketing, because marketing strategies differ between genres, like how you're going to reach those readers, and use the promotional platforms to be able to cater to those expectations can be a bit of a challenge, especially if you're switching from something like paranormal and urban fantasy to rom com, it's a vastly different thing. You can utilize some of the things, some of the same platforms, some of the same ad platforms to but it's going to be a little bit different, your approach will be different. So you're also going to want to think about like the publishing logistics, will the new pen name require different things like cover designers that are completely different? Or editors that are completely different? Will you want your new pen name to be like wide? Or do you want it to be NKU? Do you want to keep them similar to what you've already done? Or do you want them different, like, those are things that you're gonna want to think about. But when it comes to the genre itself, when it comes to actually writing, there's also creative challenges that I've I've understood or I've come about myself, things like storytelling technique. Each genre is totally different in its like storytelling capabilities. Some of them will want you to write in third person, past tense, some are first person past tense, some are first person present tense, your tone, your narrative structure, all of those things need to be adapted to, like approach the new genre in a way that the readers are going to be excited to read. And if you don't know what those are, it can be a struggle, right? It can be a struggle to get that traction again, character development is also a different animal, depending on different genres. So like an urban fantasy, while the characters are very important. In romance, the characters are important in a very different reason for a different

vibe. So you need to understand so that you can align with those expectations. Obviously, themes and tropes are different when you're going into a completely different genre like this, you're going to be thinking about, you know, what is the predominant theme? What are the tropes in the new genre that are really powerful that readers are gobbling up that want to read, especially those voracious readers, especially those readers who are reading a book, a week, a book a day, a book, every two days, I consider myself a book about every three day reader. But I love it and understanding what those readers are looking for, of what they're the vibe that they're trying to get into. That's super important. world building is another one that's a little bit different. So if you're switching a genre, you need to think about like what does a romance genre look like, as opposed to fantasy? What do science fiction worlds look like? As opposed to like a small town romance, knowing and understanding the world aspects of it and how they can be important is a big part of this process as well. There are other challenges to be thinking about, like the type of research you want to do, whether or not you're going to hybridize your genre. So maybe you're going to genre bend, and you're going to do rom com with paranormal or you're going to Broadcom with science fiction or your new rom com with whatever. If you're going to go that route. That's cool. But just be thinking about that, like, is that a creative challenge that you can overcome? Is that something that you want to be incorporating into your books going forward? What does genre bending look like for you? And can you combine the elements from those genres seamlessly? That's something that can be a bit of a challenge as well. Overall, I think when it comes to switching genres, though, the biggest challenge is staying inspired to keep tackling the new genre, especially when it's new, you've only got a couple of books, maybe your other pen name has, you know, 20 some odd books. And so it's easy to be like, hey, readers over there, it's familiar, it's home, it's whatever, even if it's not inspiring you as much anymore. It's still that place where you know how it works. You know, what to expect. Reader expectations are pretty clear, that sort of thing. So just be thinking about all of those as you start to make your decision. gents, okay. But when you're exploring this new technique and this new way of telling stories, what I found is that it really does reinvigorate the passion and creativity for writing. It's a completely different animal, like being in the rom com space, in writing the story and trying to figure out like the character dynamics and how to tease out certain pieces without being too I don't know too crazy or too in your face about it. It's a fine line. And so there's a little bit more, a little bit more creativity that has to be sussed out a little bit more finesse that has to come through the words. And I found that that challenge is actually really inspiring. I like it a lot. And my biggest challenge personally is putting this story high enough on my list of priorities, because for the longest time, especially this year, I wanted it to be this passion project, I wanted it to be this fun thing that I go to, I'm feeling excited to write it, when I am moved to, you know, bring the characters together to do the things to have fun, and I don't want it to turn into something I feel like I have to do. And I have it's like a slog, that's not the vibe that I want to go for with this particular genre. And I'm not saying that that was the case with paranormal, but definitely some of the books have felt like that, especially when I'm on deadline, and I'm trying to reach this thing. And I have trees falling on cars, or I have weird, you know, animals dying or whatever, it's, it's then harder to dig into that place of creativity and love when it feels like it's there's more pressure there. Sometimes. However, on the flip side of that, you know how I feel about deadlines, if we don't put them sometimes we will just keep putting things off. And so for me, I know that about myself that if I continue to push dates or continue to push things out, I won't get to it. And so keep that in mind as well. If you're like me, and you need those hard deadlines. Maybe give yourself that freedom to explore for a while, but have a hard deadline come up so that as it gets closer you go okay, now I need to knuckle down and get a little bit more serious about this passion project. Okay, so when you're switching into this new genre, if you're switching into a completely different pen name, one of the things that I have seen be kind of a challenge to be more of a challenge than I even expected. Is this concept of how do you maintain the balance

of your established author identity? And this new one? How do you bring about the new era, the new new version of you without the other one falling behind? Or how do you balance those two things. And I think one of the best ways to do that is to first of all, keep them separate for a little bit just so that you can start to build up the vibe or the brand of what you think this new pen name is going to be about. But as you the way that this is the way I'm seeing it, and the way that I plan on incorporating these two names, like I envision that at some point, they're going to know both both ways, it's going to be a pretty obvious thing. And I've already started leaving little easter eggs throughout the websites so that they can start to kind of familiarize themselves because I know Book One is coming out in January sometime I just haven't picked a date yet. And when I do I know that it's going to be something that I need to go bigger with. One of the lessons, I think that is valuable for being an author who has, you know, 20 some odd books in a different genre is that I have a decade's worth of experience, understanding the publishing space, the marketing space in a way that I did not have. When I first started out with pandemics I had no clue. Even though I had worked in retail, even though I'd work with books before and in publishers before printers, whatever, I didn't have the marketplace experience and knowledge that I have now. And I feel as though I'm going to be able to do and launch this new pen name and a much better way simply because I have this knowledge and not just the knowledge of how the industry works. But the knowledge of the tropes and the reader expectations and the storyline structure and all the things that I've been working on for the past year. All the reading that I've done has helped me to understand those things in a much grander scale. Right? That alone, I think is going to help any of you authors out there who are thinking about switching and wanting to go into a different route or just wanting to test the waters with it. You're going to understand what it takes to launch not only a book but a pen name because you're gonna be like, Hey, I exist. Check this thing out. And having an existing pen name having an existing audience who may or may not like what you're writing in This new genre is going to only benefit you because at least they know of you. Right? They're going to know, I love these books that she writes in, you know, urban fantasy. Maybe I'm going to like rom com too. And maybe I already read rom com, because I read multiple genres. I've actually pulled my audience and a lot of my readers will read various genres. I've been so impressed at the number of people who have commented and said, hey, I'll read you no matter what. And so you're coming in then with existing readers, and an existing audience is going to help you as well. And that's so freakin cool. So I'm looking forward to seeing as I launched this pen name, as I go about putting things out into the world, how is this going to look like? Will the launch strategy that I put in place? Will it be the thing that helps it catapult is it going to do well? Is it going to be, you know, accepted, I have this very good feeling that it will be. And I think that's really cool. Now, one of the things that I feel is really important, and I actually struggle a lot with. And part of this, I think, has to do with my number one relator. But seeking support and guidance, I was I'm so lucky, I have this wonderful community that I've been invited to be a part of, for wide rom com authors. And it's this wonderful like place where people are talking about, you know, what it means to be a wide rom com author, you know, the different things that are going on in the romance spectrum, whether it be conferences, or you know, stuff, your Kindle, ebook, whatever day, like we talk about a lot of things. And while I am not super good at, you know, constantly being in there and communicating, I watch a lot. Like I'm looking, I'm seeing what's being said, I am keeping up on like the conversation. But I know that for me, if I say something, and then someone responds back, I feel obligated to respond. And if I continue that cycle, and this is something that I've learned about myself, if I continue that cycle, then I don't get any work done. And I have a lot of work that needs to get done. So I value my time and I value the stuff that I know I need to get done. And I need to work on and I need to produce and I need to put out in the world. And so I put that, you know, the highest priority. But there are people in that group that I'm so fond of, that I feel so connected with. And I'm so excited and grateful that I get to understand who these people are and that I'm a part of this

group, it's great. So if you're in that process of transitioning to a new pen name, think about reaching out to some of the groups and the communities that are out there who have author peers or mentors in your same genre who can help you it doesn't matter if you've been in the industry for 20 years. If you're switching to a new genre, you're still kind of a beginner. So you're wanting to connect and reach out to people who are in that same space. It's wonderful. When you're genre switching, or when you're playing with different ideas in a different genre, treat this as a journey. Okay, treat it as a journey that is nothing more than an opportunity for growth and development as a writer. You know, it's about your resilience and your adaptability to switch into something that feels better to switch into a genre that is fun. And it creates that like love of writing all over again, that is so powerful. It's such a wonderful place to be back in. Especially when I didn't feel like I was vibing with writing as much as I wanted to. And it was a little bit disconcerting, I'm not gonna lie, because writing has been such a huge part of my life for a long time, like, Wow, a long time. And so, as I'm writing a new things, as I'm branching out into new areas, it's been so much fun. It's like exploring a strange new world, or, you know, excavating some new ancient civilization that no one's ever seen before. It's it's like uncovering something brand new about myself that I didn't realize was there and buried and I needed to unearth it. So if you're feeling that siren call to switch genres, or to take up another one and just play around with it, you know, I really encourage you to try if nothing else, just do it for yourself for a bit and allow it to be the thing that fills you up, allow it to be the thing that you know, fills that creative urge that maybe you haven't had filled for a while. It's probably the number one reason why I finally gave in to that storyline and that call to write this this a rom com title it's or this rom com series because it just it was just something new to try to something new to play around with and there's no reader expectation like hanging over me meaning that I don't have readers who are like absolutely clamoring and waiting on me other than my A patreon supporters who are fantastic, I love them so much. And so because of that, I feel like I can just explore, I feel like I could just play around with the words and the scenes and the, the situations and with the characters, because I know each of the seven books have different characters, right, but their romances are different. And so that's going to be fun to play around with and try out and test out, it's just gonna be a lot of fun. And I think that's so key. Having fun in this process, having fun in transitioning the genre or adding a genre to your your belt. It doesn't have to be an identity crisis necessarily. It just needs to be another facet of who you are. Another facet of what you get to explore and what you get to write in and readers can have that aspect of you that maybe they didn't realize was there either. It's pretty awesome. If you ask me, I think it's great. Well, there you go, guys. That's my take on this switching genres thing. I'm also talking a little bit about this, I have a podcast episode that's going to be airing, I think, in December with Jo Beur, because she switched genres as well. A little bit, right, she went from the Gothic suspense, writing to paranormal cozy. And so we talk a little bit about that for her as well. And I think it's an important conversation to have, especially since I think we as creatives need to find a way to keep that creative cup filled. And this is, at least for me, it has been one of the ways that I have kept that creative, flow going. It's wonderful. Alright, guys, now just to remember, next week, so starting October 1 4 Books, 5 Days kicks off, it is our course on how to plan a series in less than a week, we're going to be using ChatGPT to manage this ideation and strategy process. So if you want to be a part of it, head over to authorrevolution.org/4books5days. You can get enrolled, the enrollment period ends very soon. So it's going to be ending on Saturday, so don't miss out. In the meantime, though, we're going to have so much fun, it's going to be a blast to talk about how ChatGPT has helped in so many ways, when it comes to just kick starting ideas and playing around with concepts and getting things outlined. I mean, it's just a wonderful tool, it really truly is, and nothing to be afraid of, in my personal opinion. So head over to authorrevolution.org/202, if you would like to download today's transcript, and any of the links to any of the resources that I may have talked about today, I will go back through, obviously, ChatGPT is probably one of

them. And then for books, five days will also be there. But enjoy the process. guys enjoy playing around with books, enjoy playing around with your writing styles, and the way that you get to reinvent yourself. I think truly, this is about reinvention, it's about getting the opportunity to recreate who we are, how we get to talk to the world around us how we get to present ourselves online to the people who read. I mean, it's just it's been so eye opening and so fun to play around with it. And I never thought in a million years that I would number one have a an extra pen name and number two of a romance pen name. But here we are. And I could not be more excited and more thankful about it. It's just wonderful. So, enjoy. Have a fun time getting words on the page this week. I hope you do a ton of writing. And if you're at that stage where you're trying to figure out your series, you're getting ready for PrEP. Tober. Join us on four bucks, five days it's going to be a fun course I'm looking forward to it's been so much fun to create for you guys. All right. We'll talk to you again soon. Go forth and start your author revolution.