KNOW YOUR READER

THE SMART AUTHOR'S GUIDE TO CREATING TARGETED MARKETING PERSONAS





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WHY READER PERSONAS MAKE YOUR MARKETING WORK

Your books don't have one audience. Even under one pen name and within one genre, readers split by tone, theme, heat, pacing, and emotional payoff. That's why "romance readers 25–45" or "fantasy fans" never helps you write a better blurb, ad, or TikTok. You need to know who a piece of content is for.

A reader persona is a single, specific person you can picture when you create marketing. It includes the facts (age, job, platforms, budget) and the drivers (wounds, hopes, fantasies, why they read you). When you write to one person, your copy stops sounding generic. If you choose the right hook, the right language, and the right offer, results follow!

WHY YOU NEED MORE THAN ONE PERSONA (EVEN WITH ONE PEN NAME)

You can write only contemporary romance and still attract very different slices of readers. One series might promise cozy comfort and slow-burn intimacy. Another might lean high angst and redemption arcs. Same author, same shelf in the store, different emotional promises. Treating those readers as identical leads to ads that miss, TikToks that don't land, and newsletters that feel "off."

Personas fix that by giving you three layers to work with:

1) YOUR AUTHOR PERSONA

This is the umbrella. It defines your brand voice and the emotional promise people expect whenever they see your name. Think of it as the "monolithic" version of your reader: what they come to you for, across everything.

Author-level decisions this guides: tone on socials, newsletter voice, how you show up on video, recurring themes you highlight, the baseline "why read me" message.

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2) SERIES PERSONAS

Each series attracts a different slice of your audience, even when sub-genre stays the same. The world, themes, and heat level shift who shows up. A series persona helps you target the readers who will binge this world.

Series-level decisions this guides: platform focus, ad angles, trope emphasis, cover and graphic vibe, cadence of content, what kind of preorder incentive to offer.

3) BOOK PERSONAS

very release hooks a slightly different reader inside that series. The main trope, the wound, the fantasy, the pacing, the conflict—these details matter. A book persona zooms in on the exact person who is primed to click "buy" for this story today.

Book-level decisions this guides: headline and first three seconds of a TikTok, the opening line of ad copy, the subject line of the launch email, which quote to put on a graphic, which bonus chapter to promote.

WHAT A USEFUL PERSONA LOOKS LIKE

Surface traits are a starting point. "Reads on KU, loves enemies-to-lovers" is not enough. You need the why behind the click.

FACTS → MEANING → ACTION

- Works long hours → limited attention in the evening → lead with clear trope in the first line.
- Comfortable income → buys special editions and bonuses → offer a preorder epilogue or alt POV.
- Scrolls TikTok for recs → responds to recognizable slang and quick cuts → script TikToks with that tone.
- Past heartbreak → craves redemption and proof people can change → foreground grovel, healing, and earned forgiveness in copy.

This cause-and-effect thinking turns a persona into a marketing compass.

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COMMON MISTAKES PERSONAS PREVENT

- **Talking to everyone.** Vague hooks, soft language, weak results.
- **Using one voice for every series**. Readers feel the mismatch and tune out.
- **Copying trends without alignment.** The sound is viral, but the message doesn't speak to your buyer.
- **Guessing offers**. You run a giveaway when your reader really wants a bonus epilogue or annotated edition.

HOW TO BUILD PERSONAS WITHOUT GUESSING

Use data and observation, then layer intuition.

- **Where to look:** your newsletter replies, DMs, ARC feedback, TikTok/IG comments, Goodreads reviews of your books and comps, storefront reviews that mention tropes or emotions, ad comments that reveal why people clicked or didn't.
- **What to capture:** situations, slang, spending habits, preferred formats, time-of-day behavior, the emotion they want resolved, and what finally pushes them to buy.
- **Depth check:** could you write a paragraph about their day, their wound, and their "why now"? If not, you are still too shallow.

HOW THESE 3 LAYERS WORK TOGETHER IN PRACTICE

- **Author persona keeps your brand consistent.** Readers always recognize your voice and core promise.
- **Series persona sharpens targeting.** You choose the right tropes, visuals, and platforms for that world.
- **Book persona directs launch assets.** You pick the headline, first hook, and incentive that unlock this buyer.

Think of it as zoom levels on a camera: wide (author), medium (series), tight (book). You shift focus depending on the job.

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WHAT YOU WILL DO WITH THIS WORKBOOK

By the time you finish this workbook, you'll have more than just a collection of notes—you'll have a system you can use every time you write, market, or launch.

Define your Author Persona. This gives you clarity on your brand voice and the emotional promise you deliver across everything you write. Once you know who that reader is, your tone on TikTok, your newsletter style, and even how you show up on socials stop feeling random—they all line up with what your core audience expects from you.

Create Series Personas. Every series has its own flavor. When you map the persona for each one, you stop blending campaigns together and start speaking directly to the readers who are primed to binge that world. This helps you decide which tropes to emphasize, which platforms to prioritize, and what visuals will click.

Build Book Personas. Each launch deserves its own focused approach. Narrowing in on the buyer for this release helps you shape the right hooks, choose the right preorder incentives, and put the spotlight on the emotions and tropes that will make them click "buy."

Translate each persona into choices. Once the work is done, you'll have a roadmap for your content. Your TikToks, ads, emails, and graphics stop being guesswork. You'll know what to say, what tone to use, which images to pair it with, and how to position your offers.

By the end, your marketing won't feel like shouting into the void. It will feel like a conversation with one specific reader who feels seen—and that's the difference between a scroll-by and a buy!

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PART ONE: BUILDING YOUR AUTHOR PERSONA

Your Author Persona is your foundation. This is the "umbrella reader" who comes to you for a specific emotional experience, regardless of which series or book they're picking up.

Think of them as the north star of your brand. They shape your voice, your tone, and the overall promise that keeps readers loyal across everything you publish.

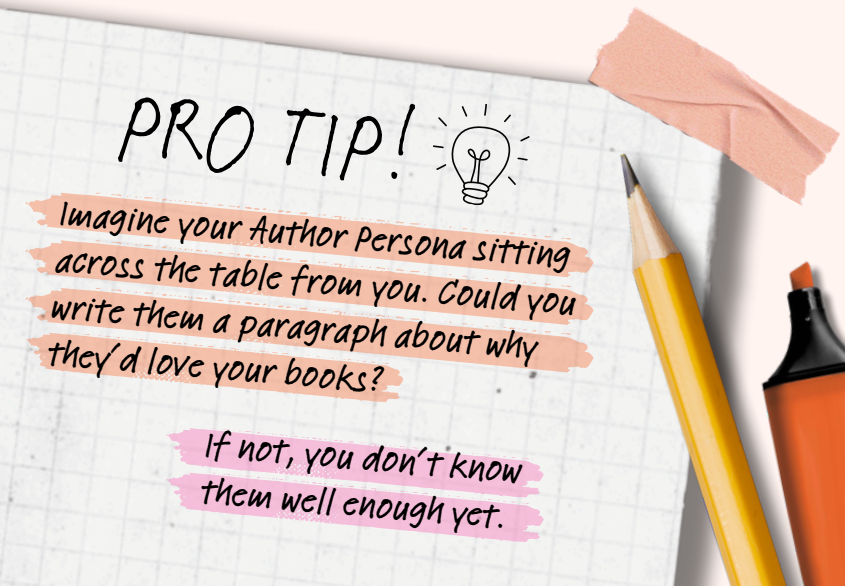
RECAP: WHY YOUR AUTHOR PERSONA MATTERS

- **Voice consistency:** Your TikToks, newsletters, and graphics should all "sound" like they're coming from the same author. Knowing your Author Persona helps you match their energy and expectations.

- **Emotional promise:** Readers come back to you not just for tropes, but for the feeling your books deliver. Your persona makes that emotional throughline clear.

- **Brand identity:** This is what separates you from the noise. It's not "I write romance." It's "I write romance that does ___ for ___ kind of reader."

Without this clarity, your marketing ends up scattered—trying to speak to everyone and resonating with no one.



AUTHOR PERSONA WORKSHEET

Fill this out as if you're describing one real person. The goal isn't just demographics, it's connecting their life and emotions to why they read your books.

BASIC PROFILE

Name: _____
(Naming your persona makes them feel real. You're not writing to "an audience." You're writing to Sam, or Tasha, or Jordan.)

Age & Stage of Life: _____
(What does this mean for their free time? Their responsibilities? A college student binge-reads in bursts. A mom of three squeezes reading into late-night hours. A mid-career professional might spend disposable income on special editions.)

Location: _____
(Not just city/country—think lifestyle. Do they live in a bustling city, a suburb, or a rural town? This impacts what slang, references, or aesthetics resonate.)

Job / Career Level: _____
(Are they entry-level, climbing the ladder, or seasoned? Stress levels, free time, and spending habits often tie back to their work life.)

Relationship / Family Status: _____
(Single? Married? Parent? Divorced? This matters because it connects to the fantasies they seek in fiction—escapism, validation, or proof that love exists after heartbreak.)

Income Level: _____
(Do they lean toward KU subscriptions? Do they splurge on collector editions and preorder incentives? Knowing this shapes how you present offers.)

Platforms They Use Most: _____
(Are they scrolling TikTok at night? On Facebook groups for book clubs? Do they hang out on Instagram for aesthetics? This tells you where to put your energy.)

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EMOTIONAL CORE

What are they frustrated by in life right now?
(Stress at work? Loneliness? Overwhelm? These frustrations reveal what they're escaping when they read.)

What do they secretly hope for?
(Love that lasts? Freedom from obligations? Adventure? This is the emotional itch your books scratch.)

Why do they read your genre?
(Romance for healing and validation? Fantasy for escape? Dark romance for catharsis? Their "why" explains what they're looking for from you every time.)

What emotional payoff do they want from your books every time?
(Is it a guaranteed HEA, the thrill of obsession, the warmth of comfort, or the shock of a twist? This should stay consistent across your whole author brand.)

THE BOOK PROSE

READING & BUYING HABITS

Formats they prefer (check all that apply):

- ☐ Kindle Unlimited
- ☐ Ebook purchases
- ☐ Paperbacks
- ☐ Special editions / collector copies

How often they buy books:

- ☐ Daily one-clicker
- ☐ Weekly buyer
- ☐ Monthly binge buyer
- ☐ Rarely, only for favorite authors

Do they collect extras?

- ☐ Annotated editions
- ☐ Bonus epilogues / alternate POVs
- ☐ Art prints / swag
- ☐ Companion guides
- ☐ Other: _____

Where do they find new reads?

- ☐ BookTok
- ☐ Instagram Reels
- ☐ Facebook groups
- ☐ Newsletters / swaps
- ☐ BookBub / promo sites
- ☐ Other: _____

PRO TIP!

Don't be afraid to give your persona a face. Find a stock photo that matches the vibe of your reader.

Adding a visual makes them feel more real, and it's easier to "talk" to someone specific when you're writing TikToks, ads, or newsletters.



ONCE YOU'VE MAPPED YOUR AUTHOR PERSONA, YOU CAN:

- **Choose your brand voice:** Is it snarky, heartfelt, dark, cozy, playful?
- **Mirror their slang and humor:** If they say "feral girl approved," you use that in TikToks. If they say "comfort read," you highlight cozy vibes.
- **Highlight consistent themes:** Grovels, family bonds, spicy banter, small towns, betrayal—whatever your persona craves most.
- **Set the foundation for every campaign:** Each series and book persona will narrow from here, but this gives you your anchor.

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PART TWO: BUILDING YOUR SERIES PERSONA

Not every series you write will attract the same type of reader. Even if you stay in one genre, each series has its own personality—different tropes, different vibes, different emotional promises.

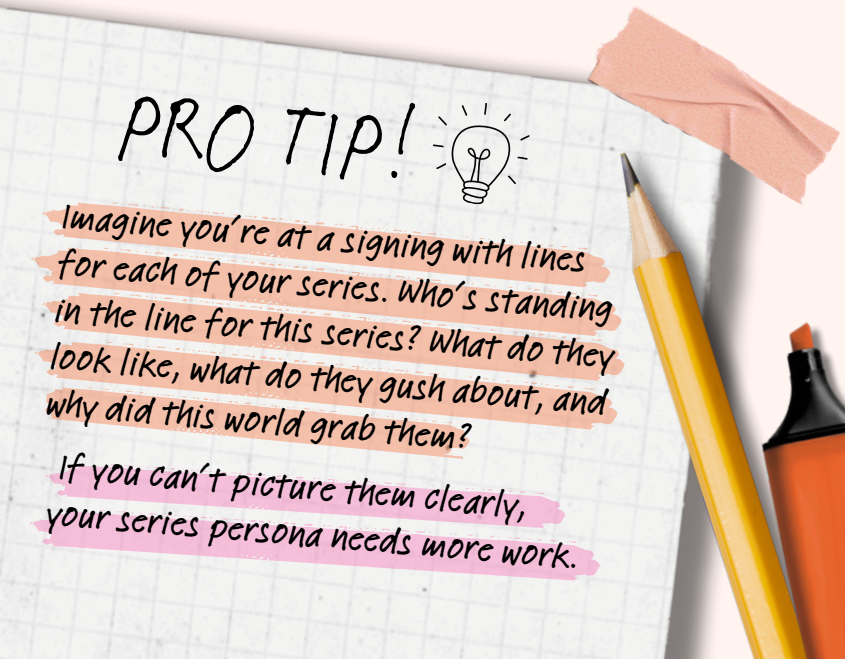
Your Series Persona captures the type of reader who will binge this world. It helps you separate your marketing so each campaign feels sharp and targeted instead of blending together.

RECAP: WHY YOUR SERIES PERSONA(S) MATTERS

- **Targeted marketing:** If one series leans dark and gritty while another is light and tropey, you shouldn't market them the same way. A Series Persona keeps your messaging on-point.

- **Campaign clarity:** Knowing the "why" behind a reader's love for a series helps you decide which tropes to emphasize in ads, what preorder bonuses will convert, and what aesthetic to use in graphics.

- **Reader loyalty:** A Series Persona helps you double down on the elements that make this world bingeable, so readers stick around for the whole set.



SERIES PERSONA WORKSHEET

Fill this out for each active series.

BASIC PROFILE

Name: _____

Age & Stage of Life: _____

Location: _____

Job / Career Level: _____

Relationship / Family Status: _____

Income Level: _____

Platforms They Use Most: _____

EMOTIONAL CORE

Your Author Persona gives you the why ME, the emotional motivations that draw readers to your brand as a whole. Your Series Persona asks, why this WORLD? You're pulling from the same core desires, but now you dig deeper: what about this series (its tropes, themes, and conflicts) taps into those same emotional triggers in a more specific way?

Why does this reader love this series specifically?
(What itch does it scratch that your other series don't? Maybe they crave found family here, while they come to another series for darker obsession.)

_____

_____

_____

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What emotional promise does this series deliver every single time, across every single book?
(Comfort? Catharsis? Angst and healing? Escapist adventure?)

What are they frustrated by right now that this series could solve?
(Maybe they're homesick. Does your series remind them of home?)

What makes them binge the next book right away?
(Are there core tropes that carry across the series? The same small town? Does a new unresolved conflict arise before the end of the previous story?

What wounds or fantasies does this series tap into?
(A single mom series might appeal to readers longing for validation and new beginnings. A mafia romance might appeal to readers craving danger, loyalty, and obsessive love.)

What does this series prove to them emotionally?
(That love survives betrayal? That community matters? That power and desire can coexist?)

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READING & BUYING HABITS

How do they read this series?

- ☐ They binge every release as soon as it drops
- ☐ They wait until the whole series is complete
- ☐ They pick and choose depending on tropes

What formats do they prefer for this series?

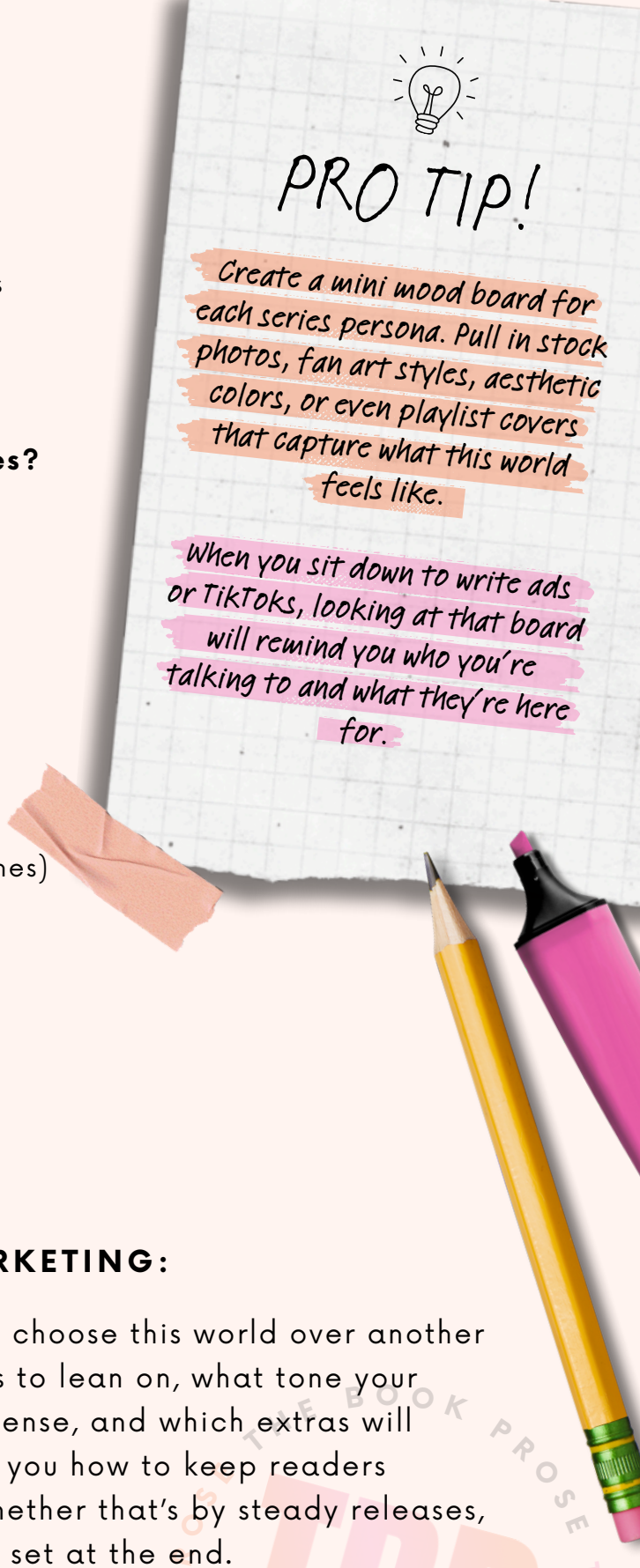
- ☐ Kindle Unlimited
- ☐ Ebook purchases
- ☐ Paperbacks (to match the full set)
- ☐ Special editions / collector's boxes

What extras keep them engaged?

- ☐ Bonus novellas between releases
- ☐ Character art / playlists / maps
- ☐ Annotated editions or special hardcovers
- ☐ Behind-the-scenes extras (alt POVs, cut scenes)

Where do they find this series?

- ☐ BookTok
- ☐ Instagram (aesthetic reels, quotes, art)
- ☐ Facebook groups / reader communities
- ☐ Newsletter promos / swaps
- ☐ BookBub / promo sites



HOW TO APPLY THIS TO YOUR MARKETING:

Your Series Persona shows you why readers choose this world over another one you've written. It tells you which tropes to lean on, what tone your marketing should take, what visuals make sense, and which extras will actually matter. Most importantly, it shows you how to keep readers invested all the way through the series—whether that's by steady releases, novellas in between, or a binge-ready box set at the end.

The clearer you are on this, the easier it is to keep campaigns sharp and each series distinct.

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PART THREE: BUILDING YOUR BOOK PERSONA

Your Book Persona is the sharpest zoom. While your Author Persona defines your overall brand and your Series Persona captures the world of a set of books, the Book Persona is focused on one launch. One trope, one emotional hook, one very specific reader who is primed to click buy on this release.

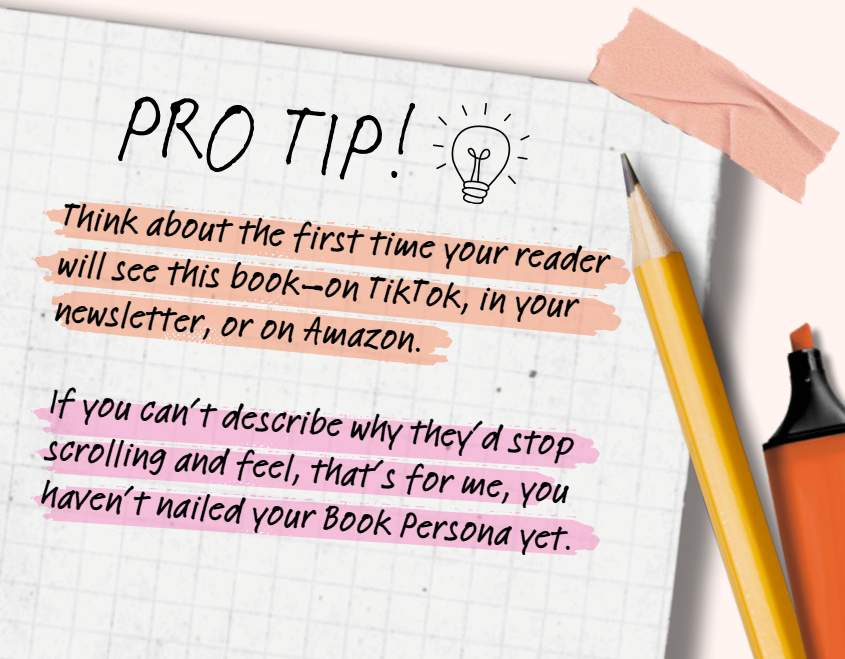
Think of it as your launch compass. It strips away the noise and tells you what matters for this book right now: what to say in ads, how to frame TikToks, which bonus to offer, and what emotion to highlight in your newsletter.

RECAP: WHY YOUR BOOK PERSONA(S) MATTERS

- **Sharper launch messaging.** Instead of trying to speak to every possible reader of your genre, you zero in on the person who can't scroll past this trope.

- **Focused emotional targeting.** Each book delivers a slightly different payoff—even within the same series. This helps you highlight the exact feeling this story provides.

- **Consistent campaigns.** When you know this persona, your ads, TikToks, graphics, and emails all echo the same promise. That consistency builds urgency and trust.



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BOOK PERSONA WORKSHEET

Fill this out for each active series.

BASIC PROFILE

Name: _____

Age & Stage of Life: _____

Location: _____

Job / Career Level: _____

Relationship / Family Status: _____

Income Level: _____

Platforms They Use Most: _____

EMOTIONAL CORE

This is where you go beyond the basics and dig into why this reader wants this book right now. Every release delivers a slightly different flavor of emotion, even within the same series. One book might promise comfort, another might promise obsession, another might promise redemption.

This persona is all about naming the wound, the longing, or the fantasy that this story taps into—and then matching your marketing to that promise.

Why are they primed to buy THIS book?
(Tie it directly to the trope, wound, or setup of this release.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

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What tropes/fantasies are irresistible in this book?
(Enemies-to-lovers? Single dad? Secret identity? Whatever this book is selling hardest.)

What wound or longing does this story tap into?
(Heartbreak, longing, obsession, family bonds, fresh starts, forbidden desire, etc.)

What emotional payoff are they craving in this specific release?
(Validation? Redemption? Catharsis? Comfort? Adventure?)

READING & BUYING HABITS

When do they buy?
- ☐ Preorder as soon as it's live
- ☐ Release day, no hesitation
- ☐ Wait for reviews first
- ☐ Wait for the full series / box set

What pushes them to buy faster?
- ☐ Preorder bonus freebies
- ☐ Special edition / signed copy
- ☐ Early reviews / hype on TikTok
- ☐ Newsletter reminder
- ☐ Promo pricing / discount

What formats do they choose?
- ☐ Kindle Unlimited
- ☐ Ebook purchase
- ☐ Paperback
- ☐ Special edition / hardcover
- ☐ Audiobook

Where do they follow you most?
- ☐ TikTok
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Facebook groups
- ☐ Newsletter
- ☐ BookBub / promo sites

These habits tell you how to time your launch, what format to spotlight, and what kind of bonus or reminder will tip this reader into buying now instead of later.

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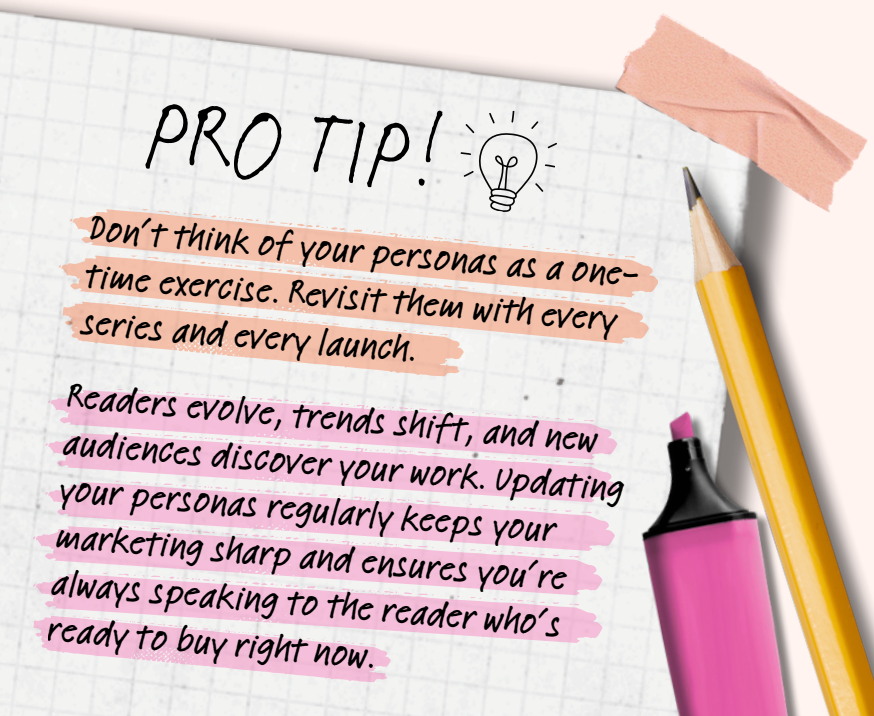
HOW THESE PERSONAS ALL COME TOGETHER

Your Book Persona is where everything you've built finally narrows into focus. The Author Persona gave you the foundation: your voice, your promise, and the reason readers choose you again and again. The Series Persona zoomed in on one world, showing you what makes that story universe irresistible and what keeps readers coming back for the next installment. Now the Book Persona pulls it all into the present moment. It forces you to think about the exact person who will see your launch, connect with your trope, and decide to buy this story right now.

When you put all three layers together, you get a complete picture of your audience. The Author Persona is your compass, keeping your branding and messaging consistent. The Series Persona makes sure your campaigns don't blur together by tailoring your tone, visuals, and extras to each world. The Book Persona ensures that every release has its own clear, compelling messaging so readers never have to wonder if your story is for them.

This is what takes your marketing from scattered and stressful to intentional and strategic. Instead of throwing out content and hoping something sticks, you'll know who you're talking to, what they want, and how they like to buy. And when a reader feels seen at that level, they don't just scroll by—they click, they buy, and they come back for the next book.



PART FOUR: REFLECTION

Take a moment to step back and connect all three personas you've created. Imagine your ideal reader discovering your next release for the very first time. Where are they—scrolling TikTok, opening your newsletter, browsing KU? What do they see that makes them pause? What emotion hits first—comfort, curiosity, obsession, hope? Write a short paragraph describing that exact moment and why it convinces them to buy.

WRAPPING THINGS UP

You've now built your Author Persona, your Series Personas, and your Book Personas. Together they give you a complete framework for understanding who you're writing and marketing to.

The goal isn't to make them perfect. The goal is clarity. When you know the person behind your marketing, every decision gets easier. You'll know which tropes to spotlight, what language to use, what platforms to focus on, and what extras will actually make readers excited to buy.

Keep this guide close and revisit it often. Update your personas as you grow, as you write new series, and as new readers discover your work. The clearer your personas are, the sharper your marketing will feel. The more specific your reader becomes to you, the more they'll feel like your books were written just for them.

Marketing doesn't have to feel like guesswork. When you use personas, it becomes a conversation with someone who already wants what you're offering.

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WHAT'S NEXT?

You don't have to figure this out alone. At The Book Prose, we help authors turn strategy into action with tools, resources, and hands-on support. Here's where to go next:

The Release Roadmap (Free Resource)
A customizable launch plan that helps you prep for release day without the panic. Map out your timeline, ARC team, promos, and more.
Download HERE

Hook Like a Pro (Course)
Our signature training on creating content that actually converts. Learn the PROSE Method and start writing marketing hooks that sell books.
Join HERE

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