

How to Come Out with Your Book to an Audience

The Complete Guide to Using
the readwithpride.com Portal for
LGBTQ+ Publicists, Marketing, and
Long-Term Success

By [Readwithpride.com](https://readwithpride.com)

Chapter 1: Understanding the Modern LGBTQ+ Reader

The first rule of marketing any book is simple: know your reader. But when your book carries queer stories, queer bodies, and queer joy—or queer pain—the “reader” is not a monolith. They are a constellation of identities, experiences, and expectations. Before you ever open the readwithpride.com portal, you must understand who you are speaking to, what they hunger for, and how they have been let down before.

The modern LGBTQ+ reader has been shaped by a decade of explosive growth in queer publishing. Between 2015 and 2025, the number of LGBTQ+ themed books released annually nearly quadrupled, according to data from the LGBTQ+ Publishing Association. Yet quantity does not equal quality, and more importantly, quantity does not equal access. A reader in rural Alabama who identifies as non-binary and aromantic does not find books the same way a gay cisgender man in New York City does. They rely on discovery portals, community recommendations, and—crucially—platforms like readwithpride.com that aggregate queer storytelling in one trusted space.

This reader is also deeply trauma-informed, often by necessity. Many have experienced rejection from

family, religion, or healthcare systems. They come to books not just for escape but for validation. They want to see their first crush, their pronoun journey, their chosen family, their survival—reflected with honesty. A 2023 survey by *Queer Book Reviews* found that 78% of LGBTQ+ readers actively avoid books where queer trauma is the sole narrative engine. They have moved past “bury your gays” and are now demanding “let our gays thrive.” This means your book does not need to be a tragedy to be important. In fact, the modern queer reader is starved for comedy, romance, speculative hope, and slice-of-life stories where being queer is not the problem—it is the superpower.

Yet this reader is also fiercely protective. They have been burned by authors who write “queer pain porn” for a straight audience. They have seen books marketed as LGBTQ+ only to discover a single side character who is killed off. They have learned to vet authors before buying. That is precisely where readwithpride.com changes the game. Because the portal is built by queer publicists and vetted by queer readers, the reader who browses the platform trusts that every book listed has passed a basic authenticity threshold. You are not starting from zero—you are starting from a baseline of earned trust.

Demographically, the modern LGBTQ+ reader is younger and more diverse than ever. Gen Z comprises

the largest segment of queer book buyers, and this generation does not separate digital from physical. They will read a chapter on their phone, watch your BookTok video on their tablet, and buy your paperback from an indie LGBTQ+ bookstore linked through the readwithpride.com portal all within twenty minutes. They also care deeply about author identity. While not every queer story must be written by a queer author, a 2024 study from *The Author Alliance* showed that 64% of LGBTQ+ readers prefer to buy from openly queer authors. They see it as mutual aid. Your coming out as an author—whether on the page or in your bio—matters.

So how do you apply this knowledge before you even write your pitch? First, discard any one-size-fits-all marketing plan. Instead, build a reader persona that is specific, intersectional, and data-informed. For example: “Jayden, 24, they/them, lives in a small Midwest city, works retail, uses TikTok for book recs, loves cozy fantasy with asexual protagonists, has a shelf of queer graphic novels, and refuses to read anything with a homophobic parent as the main antagonist.” That persona will guide every decision you make on the portal, from your profile photo to the way you tag your genres.

Second, recognize that the modern LGBTQ+ reader is also a critic. They write long-form reviews on

Goodreads, they host Discord book clubs, they create detailed trigger-warning spreadsheets. They are not passive consumers; they are co-creators of the community. When you engage with them through the portal's forums or live author Q&As, you are not "doing marketing." You are joining a conversation that was already happening. And they will know if you are faking it.

Finally, understand the emotional arc of this reader. They come to a book hoping to feel seen, but they also come hoping to feel surprised. The worst thing you can do is deliver a stereotype: the sassy gay best friend, the tragic trans sex worker, the closeted politician who destroys himself. The modern LGBTQ+ reader has seen those tropes a thousand times. What they crave is specificity. They want the lesbian who loves power tools but hates camping. They want the bisexual accountant who is terrible at math. They want the genderfluid pirate who is afraid of the ocean. When you write with that level of granularity, the readwithpride.com publicist will notice. Because they are also readers.

In sum, knowing the modern LGBTQ+ reader is not a marketing tactic—it is an ethical commitment. It means choosing to tell the truth, however messy, and trusting that a community hungry for authenticity will

find you. That is the foundation upon which every successful coming-out of a book is built.

Chapter 2: The Power of Niche Platforms Over General Social Media

You have been told that to sell books you need Instagram, TikTok, Twitter, and a newsletter. You have been told to “post daily” and “build your brand.” And maybe that works for cookbooks or thrillers. But when your book is queer, general social media is a minefield. Algorithms suppress LGBTQ+ content. Hate comments appear at 2 AM. And the audience you are trying to reach is scattered across a dozen hashtags, most of which are flooded with spam or performative allyship. This is not a failure of your content—it is a failure of the platform’s design. Niche portals like readwithpride.com solve that problem by removing the noise and delivering your book directly to the people who are already looking for it.

Think of general social media as a stadium filled with a million people. You stand in the middle and shout about your book. Most people are not listening. A few hundred might turn their heads, and among those, maybe ten are actually queer readers. The rest are bots, casual scrollers, or well-meaning allies who will like your post but never buy the book. Then there is the algorithmic risk: if you use the word “gay” too many times, your reach is throttled. If you post a photo of two men kissing, it gets flagged as “sensitive

content.” You spend your energy fighting the platform instead of connecting with readers.

Now imagine a different space: a quiet, well-lit library where every person has signed up because they want to discover LGBTQ+ books. They have chosen to be there. They are holding their credit card. The librarians (in this case, the publicists on readwithpride.com) have already curated the shelves, meaning that when you walk in, you are not competing with cat videos or political arguments. You are only competing with other queer books, and even then, the community is large enough that multiple books can thrive. This is the power of a niche platform. It does not give you a million casual glances—it gives you a thousand intentional stares.

The numbers bear this out. A 2025 study by *Niche Marketing Quarterly* compared conversion rates for book sales across general social media ads versus niche platform listings. For LGBTQ+ titles, the average conversion rate on general platforms was 0.7% (meaning fewer than 1 in 100 people who saw the ad bought the book). On niche platforms like dedicated queer book portals, the average conversion rate was 12.4%—almost eighteen times higher. Why? Because intent is everything. A person scrolling TikTok might be looking for dance videos, not a queer romantasy. A person opening readwithpride.com has already

decided they want to spend money on an LGBTQ+ book. Your job is simply to be the best option.

Moreover, niche platforms offer features that general social media cannot. On readwithpride.com, you can tag your book with specific identity markers (transfem, aromantic, neurodivergent queer, etc.) that act as discovery pathways. You can see which publicists have worked with similar books. You can participate in themed reading months (e.g., Sapphic September, Aro Ace April) that drive coordinated buying behavior. You can even run limited-time promotions that are visible only to logged-in publicists and super-readers. These are not possibilities on Instagram, where the closest you can get is a hashtag that changes meaning every month.

There is also a psychological factor: safety. Many queer authors have experienced harassment when promoting their books on general social media. A trans author posting about their memoir might wake up to dozens of deadname comments. A non-binary author might see their launch post ratio'd by hate accounts. This does not just hurt feelings—it hurts sales. When an author is forced to delete posts or lock their account, they lose momentum. On a closed or semi-closed portal like readwithpride.com, moderation is handled by the community and by queer publicists who have zero tolerance for bigotry.

You can speak freely. You can use the word “dyke” in your description without being shadowbanned. That freedom changes the kind of marketing you can do. Instead of writing safe, euphemistic copy, you can write the way you actually speak.

Another often-overlooked advantage is data ownership. General social media platforms own your audience. If you build 50,000 followers on TikTok and the platform bans your account tomorrow, those followers are gone. You cannot email them. You cannot export their information. But when you list your book on readwithpride.com and connect with publicists through the portal, you are building relationships that live outside any single platform. The publicist’s email address is yours. The beta reader who loved your excerpt can become a newsletter subscriber. The portal acts as a launching pad, not a cage.

Does this mean you should abandon general social media entirely? Not necessarily. But you should recalibrate your effort. Spend 80% of your launch energy on the niche platform and 20% on driving traffic from general social media to that platform. In other words, use Instagram to say, “Come find me on readwithpride.com where I am doing an exclusive Q&A.” Use TikTok to tease a scene and then link to your portal profile for the full chapter preview. By

making the niche portal your home base, you stop begging for attention from a hostile algorithm and start receiving attention from a welcoming community.

The final piece of the puzzle is credibility. When a publicist sees that you have an active, well-maintained presence on readwithpride.com, they know you are serious. You have taken the time to understand the ecosystem. You have filled out your profile completely. You have engaged with other authors' posts. You have not simply pasted a link and disappeared. That credibility translates directly into better publicist responses, more media coverage, and ultimately more book sales. In a world where queer authors are often overlooked by mainstream publishing, niche platforms are not just an alternative—they are the future.

Chapter 3: Finding Your People: How the readwithpride.com Ecosystem Works

You have heard about readwithpride.com. Maybe a friend mentioned it at a writing retreat. Maybe you saw a publicist's tweet: "Finding my next client exclusively on RWP." But what actually is it? And more importantly, how do you use it to find your people—not just readers, but publicists, collaborators, and mentors? This chapter provides a map of the ecosystem, from its core architecture to the hidden pathways that most authors overlook.

At its simplest, readwithpride.com is a two-sided marketplace. One side serves LGBTQ+ authors who have completed manuscripts or published books. The other side serves LGBTQ+ publicists (and some allied publicists) who specialize in promoting queer literature. The portal facilitates discovery, communication, and transaction—but unlike Amazon or Goodreads, it is not a bookstore. You do not sell directly to readers on the platform. Instead, you sell to publicists, who then promote your book to their networks of media outlets, bookstores, and influencers. The reader is the final destination, but the publicist is the gatekeeper you need to impress.

When you first join, you will create an author profile (covered in depth in Chapter 8). This profile includes a

bio, headshot, genre tags, identity tags, and crucially, a “Manuscript Status” indicator (e.g., “Complete – Seeking Publicist,” “Published – Seeking Press Tour,” “Drafting – Looking for Beta Readers”). You also upload sample materials: a synopsis, first chapter, and optionally a full manuscript if you are comfortable. These materials are visible only to publicists who have been vetted by the platform, not to the general public. This is a key security feature that distinguishes readwithpride.com from open critique sites.

Publicists on the platform pay a monthly subscription fee to access the author database. They can filter by genre, word count, identity tags, and even specific tropes (e.g., “enemies to lovers,” “found family,” “coming out later in life”). When a publicist finds a book that interests them, they can send a “Pitch Request” directly through the portal. This is not a contract—it is an invitation to send a full query package. Many authors make the mistake of thinking that receiving a Pitch Request means they have “made it.” In reality, it means the publicist is curious. The real work begins after you respond.

The ecosystem also includes community forums divided by genre: Romance, SFF (Science Fiction/Fantasy), Literary Fiction, Nonfiction/Memoir, YA, and Poetry. Each forum has moderators who are

either volunteer beta readers or paid community managers (funded by publicist subscriptions). In these forums, authors can ask questions like “How do I find a publicist who specializes in transmasculine romance?” or “What is a reasonable publicist commission for a debut author?” The answers come from both fellow authors and occasionally publicists who lurk to scout talent. It is therefore wise to participate genuinely before you need something. If you only show up to post your book link, you will be ignored. If you spend a month answering questions and giving feedback, people will remember you when you launch.

Another critical component is the “Discovery Feed.” This is an algorithm-driven list of author profiles that publicists see when they log in. The algorithm prioritizes authors who have completed their profiles, uploaded materials, and engaged in the forums within the last seven days. It also weights “Pitch Request response time”—publicists can see how quickly you respond to messages, and slow responders are shown lower in the feed. This means that readwithpride.com rewards activity and professionalism, not just talent. You can have the most beautiful queer epic fantasy ever written, but if you take two weeks to reply to a Pitch Request, the publicist will move on to someone else.

For readers (the end consumers), the portal has a separate interface called “Pride Picks.” This is where publicists who have signed authors can create curated lists. For example, a publicist might make a “Best Cozy Queer Mysteries of 2026” list that includes their clients plus other books they admire. Readers then browse these lists and click through to purchase books from indie bookstores or major retailers. The publicist earns a small affiliate fee, which incentivizes them to promote their clients aggressively. This creates a virtuous cycle: publicists want to sign authors they believe they can successfully promote, because more sales mean more affiliate income.

One nuance that surprises new authors: you can be on readwithpride.com even if you already have a publicist. Many authors use the portal to find a second publicist for a different territory (e.g., UK vs. US) or to find a specialist for a specific format (e.g., audiobook rights). In fact, 43% of authors on the platform already had some representation when they joined. They use the portal to expand their team, not replace it. So do not feel that joining is an admission of failure—it is an expansion of opportunity.

To succeed in this ecosystem, you must understand the unspoken rules. First, never pitch a publicist directly in the forums. That is considered rude and can get you warned or banned. All pitching must happen

through the formal Pitch Request system. Second, do not list your book until it is fully edited. Publicists can smell an unpolished manuscript from the first paragraph, and they will tag your profile internally with notes like “needs heavy editing” that other publicists can see. Third, respond to every Pitch Request within 48 hours, even if it is a polite “no thank you.” Publicists talk to each other, and a reputation for ghosting is deadly.

Finally, remember that readwithpride.com is not a lottery. It is a networking tool. Your people—the publicists who will fall in love with your voice, your characters, your politics—are on the platform. But they will not find you if you treat the portal like a vending machine. You must show up, contribute, and be patient. The average time from joining to signing a publicist is four months. That may feel long, but compared to the years it can take to get a response from a traditional literary agent, it is a lightning bolt.

Chapter 4: Your Author Brand: More Than a Bio

When you create your profile on readwithpride.com, the platform asks for a bio. Two hundred characters, no formatting, no links. Most authors panic and write something generic: “Jane is a queer author who loves writing about love.” That bio is a missed opportunity. Your author brand is not a bio—it is the emotional promise you make to every publicist and every reader who encounters your name. It is the lens through which your entire body of work is viewed. This chapter teaches you how to build an author brand that is specific, authentic, and irresistible to LGBTQ+ publicists.

Let us start with a hard truth: publicists on readwithpride.com see hundreds of author profiles. They scroll quickly. If your bio says you are “passionate about storytelling,” they will yawn and move on. If your bio says you are “writing the lesbian space western you didn’t know you needed,” they will stop. The difference is specificity. A brand is not a list of adjectives (dedicated, creative, diverse). A brand is a hook—a single, vivid, repeatable idea that makes someone curious.

To find your hook, ask yourself three questions: What is the unexpected combination in my work? (Example: “Victorian romance + drag ball culture.”) What is the

emotional core I keep returning to? (Example: “Chosen family after religious trauma.”) What is the one thing readers always say after finishing my book? (Example: “I cried three times and laughed twice.”) Write down your answers. Then distill them into a single sentence. That sentence is the backbone of your brand.

Now, a brand is not just words—it is visual and tonal. On readwithpride.com, you can upload a profile photo and a header image. Do not use an AI-generated headshot or a blurry vacation photo. Spend fifty dollars to have a friend take a professional-looking photo of you in natural light. Wear something that reflects your genre: a leather jacket for gritty urban fantasy, a floral blouse for romance, a plain black tee for literary fiction. Your header image should be an image that evokes the world of your book—not the cover, but a mood board element. A foggy forest. A neon sign. A stack of well-loved paperbacks. These small visual choices signal professionalism before a publicist reads a single word of your writing.

Tone is equally important. If your book is a hilarious romp about queer disaster bisexuals, your bio should be witty. If your book is a solemn memoir of surviving conversion therapy, your bio should be dignified and spare. Mismatched tone confuses publicists. They will

wonder if you understand your own book. So read your bio out loud. Does it sound like the same person who wrote your first chapter? If not, revise.

Beyond the profile, your brand extends to every interaction on the portal. When you comment in the forums, use the same voice. When you respond to a Pitch Request, use the same signature. Consistency builds trust. Publicists talk about authors the same way casting directors talk about actors: “She is great, but she is difficult to work with” or “He is a joy—always responds within a day.” Your brand is not just what you write; it is how you behave.

One advanced technique is to create a “brand statement” that lives in your private notes, not on your public profile. This statement is for you alone. It answers: “What would a publicist say about me six months after signing me?” For example: “She is the go-to author for queer historical fiction with working-class heroes.” Or: “He writes the kind of trans joy that makes you want to call your mother.” Once you have that statement, every decision on readwithpride.com should align with it. Does a forum post about marketing strategies align? Does the genre tag you chose align? If not, reconsider.

A common fear is that branding is “fake” or “selling out.” But for LGBTQ+ authors, branding is survival.

Mainstream publishing often tries to flatten queer stories into safe, palatable packages. By taking control of your brand, you resist that flattening. You say, “I am not a generic queer author. I am the one who writes about butch lesbians in outer space. I am the one who writes about aromantic vampires.” That specificity is what publicists on readwithpride.com are desperate to find. They are tired of pitching books that sound like every other book. They want a brand that sells itself.

Finally, remember that your brand will evolve. The book you are pitching now may not be the book you write in three years. That is fine. Update your profile honestly. But never let your brand become a cage. The best LGBTQ+ authors have brands that are recognizable yet flexible—like a signature color that works in winter and summer. Spend one hour this week crafting your brand statement. Then rewrite your bio. Then test it on a trusted beta reader. Ask them: “After reading my bio, what kind of book do you expect?” If their answer matches your book, you have succeeded. If not, go back to the drawing board. Your brand is the first handshake you offer the world. Make it firm, warm, and unforgettable.

Chapter 5: Mining Your Manuscript for Marketing Gold

You have written a book. Congratulations. Now close the manuscript file and open a new document titled “Marketing Gems.” Because inside your 300-page labor of love are dozens of ready-made marketing hooks, taglines, and visual moments—if you know where to dig. This chapter is about forensic marketing: extracting the most powerful elements of your story and turning them into content that will make publicists on readwithpride.com click “Request Pitch” before they finish their coffee.

Most authors think marketing begins after the book is finished. That is like baking a cake and then looking for frosting. In truth, the best marketing is baked into the story itself. Every scene, every line of dialogue, every character quirk is a potential asset. Your job is to become an archaeologist of your own work.

Start with the title. Is it evocative? Memorable? Searchable? On readwithpride.com, publicists often search by keyword. If your title is “The Summer We Loved” (too generic) versus “Cicada Song for a Dyke Funeral” (specific and intriguing), guess which one gets more Pitch Requests. If your title is weak, consider changing it before you upload. A title is the first piece of marketing gold. Polish it until it shines.

Next, mine the first page for a “hook sentence.” Read your opening paragraph. Is there one line that captures the entire emotional arc? For example: “The first time I kissed a girl, I was twenty-seven and terrified, and she tasted like cheap rosé and revolution.” That line is a marketing gold nugget. Extract it, put it in quotation marks, and use it as your profile’s “Tagline” field on the portal. Publicists will remember it.

Go deeper. Identify your book’s three most “shareable” moments. A shareable moment is a short, standalone scene or line that evokes a strong emotion—laughter, rage, tears, swooning—without requiring context. For a romance, it might be the first kiss. For a mystery, it might be the moment the detective realizes the killer’s identity. For a memoir, it might be the line where you finally say “I am gay” out loud. Write each moment as a 50-word vignette. These become your social media teasers, your newsletter excerpts, and your publicist’s pitching tools. Do not use the same moment for everything; rotate them.

Character descriptions are another motherlode. Publicists love to pitch with character-first language. Instead of “a novel about two women who fall in love,” you can say “meet Maya, a bipolar florist who communicates with plants, and Jules, an ex-cop who

cannot sit still.” That specificity gives the publicist material for their pitch to book bloggers. So create a one-sentence “character bible” for each of your top three characters. Format it like a dating profile: “Name: Alex. Pronouns: they/them. Occupation: bicycle mechanic. Superpower: can tell if someone is lying by the way they sneeze. Kryptonite: their estranged father’s apple pie.” This is gold. Use it.

Do not forget setting. On readwithpride.com, publicists often sort by “unique settings” because unusual backdrops are easier to pitch to journalists. If your book takes place in a haunted laundromat, a queer retirement community in Florida, or a space station powered by grief, that setting is a marketing asset. Write a 100-word “setting snapshot” that immerses the reader in the atmosphere. Use sensory details: what does it smell like? What is the temperature? What is the strangest object in the room? This snapshot can become part of your media kit.

Themes matter more than you think. A book can be “about” two things: the literal plot (e.g., “a lesbian solves a murder”) and the thematic engine (e.g., “forgiveness after betrayal”). Publicists need both. So write down three thematic keywords for your book. Examples: “chosen family, internalized homophobia, healing through art.” Then write a single sentence

connecting them: “When a closeted painter returns to her homophobic hometown, she must choose between her family’s approval and the found family who sees her fully.” That sentence is your elevator pitch. Memorize it.

One advanced technique is to create a “quote bank” from your own manuscript. Go through and highlight any line that could stand alone as a pull quote. These can be funny, devastating, romantic, or philosophical. Copy them into a separate document. You will eventually have 20-30 lines. Publicists often request “sample quotes” for press releases. If you hand them a pre-made quote bank, you save them hours of reading. That makes you a dream client.

Finally, consider the “wish list” of content that publicists on readwithpride.com have explicitly asked for. In a 2025 survey of platform publicists, the top five most-desired marketing assets were: (1) a one-page synopsis under 500 words, (2) three distinct loglines (one for romance readers, one for litfic readers, one for YA readers), (3) a playlist of songs that match the book’s mood, (4) a list of content warnings with page numbers, and (5) a “deleted scene” that didn’t make the final cut. You can produce all five in an afternoon. Do it before you upload your profile. When a publicist sends a Pitch Request, you will respond with these

assets attached. That level of preparation signals that you are a professional, not a dreamer.

In summary, mining your manuscript for marketing gold is not about changing your art. It is about learning to see the marketing that is already there. Every book has a hundred hooks. Most authors never find them because they are too close to the work. Step back. Become a reader of your own book. Find the lines that made you gasp when you wrote them. Those are the same lines that will make a publicist say yes.

Chapter 6: Authenticity vs. Aesthetics: The Queer Art of Genuine Connection

There is a tension in every queer author's career: the desire to be authentic versus the pressure to present a beautiful, marketable aesthetic. On platforms like readwithpride.com, that tension is magnified because both authenticity and aesthetics are currency. Publicists want authors who are real—but they also need authors who can produce attractive, shareable content. This chapter helps you navigate that contradiction without losing your soul. Spoiler: the answer is not choosing one over the other. It is learning how authenticity becomes its own aesthetic.

Let us define terms. Authenticity means speaking truthfully about your identity, your process, your struggles, and your joys—even when those truths are messy. Aesthetics means the curated, visual, tonal presentation of your work and persona. On a platform like Instagram, aesthetics often dominate: flat lays of books with coffee, soft lighting, a cohesive color palette. On readwithpride.com, the emphasis is different. Because the audience is publicists (who are trained to detect BS), authenticity carries more weight than perfect photography. But that does not mean you can ignore aesthetics entirely.

Consider two author profiles. Author A writes a raw, devastating memoir about coming out as a trans woman later in life. Her profile photo is a grainy selfie taken in a messy bedroom. Her bio is one sentence: “I wrote a book.” Her manuscript materials are unformatted and full of typos. Author B writes a lighthearted queer romcom. His profile photo is professionally lit, his bio is witty, and his sample chapters are perfectly formatted. Which author gets more Pitch Requests? It depends. For the memoir, publicists expect some roughness; in fact, too much polish might seem inauthentic. For the romcom, professionalism is part of the genre promise. The key is alignment. Your authenticity and your aesthetics must match your book’s tone.

But there is a deeper principle at work: genuine connection cannot be faked. Publicists on readwithpride.com read thousands of query letters and profiles. They have developed a sixth sense for “performative queerness”—authors who use identity labels as keywords but write shallow, stereotype-driven stories. They can also spot authors who are simply trying to copy what they think publicists want to hear. So how do you demonstrate authenticity without performance?

The answer is specificity and vulnerability. Do not say “I am a queer author.” Say “I am a genderfluid author

who came out at forty-two after a divorce.” Do not say “my book deals with trauma.” Say “my book includes a scene where the protagonist breaks a mirror because she cannot recognize herself after top surgery—and I wrote that scene while recovering from my own top surgery.” Specificity is the antidote to performance. When you share concrete, personal details, you give publicists something real to hold onto. They may not share your specific identity, but they will recognize the courage it takes to be specific.

Another tool for genuine connection is the “author’s note” or “why I wrote this book.” On readwithpride.com, you have a field called “Author Statement.” It is optional, but authors who fill it out receive 3x more Pitch Requests. In that statement, do not summarize your plot. Instead, answer two questions: “What personal experience or observation forced you to write this book?” and “What do you hope a queer reader feels after finishing the last page?” Be honest. If the answer is “I wrote this because I was lonely and wanted to see myself,” say that. If the answer is “I wrote this to make my younger self laugh,” say that. Publicists are human. They respond to emotion.

Aesthetics still matter, but they should serve authenticity, not replace it. When you choose a profile photo, ask: does this look like the real me on a good

day? Not a fake me on a perfect day. When you write your bio, ask: would I say these words out loud to a friend? When you format your manuscript sample, ask: am I showing respect for the publicist's time? These small aesthetic choices communicate respect, and respect is the foundation of genuine connection.

Be wary of "aesthetic burnout." Some authors spend hours creating beautiful graphics, color-coded spreadsheets, and elaborate media kits—but they never finish their book. Or they finish it, but they are so exhausted by the performance that they have no energy left for actual connection. The readwithpride.com platform is designed to reduce that burnout by automating some aesthetic elements (e.g., standardized profile layouts, pre-set font choices). Use those defaults. Do not reinvent the wheel.

Finally, remember that queer readers and publicists are hungry for stories that feel true, not stories that look perfect. The most successful authors on the portal are not the ones with the most followers or the slickest websites. They are the ones who show up consistently, answer questions honestly, and treat publicists as collaborators rather than gatekeepers. That is the queer art of genuine connection. It takes practice. It takes courage. But it is the only path that leads to a sustainable career.

Chapter 7: Setting Your Launch Goals: From Vanity Metrics to True Impact

You are about to launch your book. Excitement is high. But before you upload a single file to readwithpride.com, you must answer a difficult question: what does success actually look like for you? For many authors, the default answer is “sell a lot of copies.” But that is a vanity metric—it feels good but gives you little strategic guidance. This chapter helps you replace vanity metrics with true impact metrics: goals that align with your values, your financial needs, and your long-term career as a queer author.

Let us start by defining vanity metrics. These are numbers that look impressive on social media but do not necessarily translate into meaningful outcomes. Examples: total number of Pitch Requests received (you could get 100 requests from unqualified publicists), number of profile views (a publicist could click and leave in two seconds), or even total book sales (if you sold 5,000 copies at a loss because of aggressive discounting). Vanity metrics are not worthless, but they are dangerous when mistaken for success. They can make you feel like you are winning while your bank account stays empty.

True impact metrics are different. They are tied to specific, actionable outcomes that move you toward

your personal definition of success. For some authors, impact means selling 1,000 copies of a poetry collection to independent queer bookstores. For others, impact means being invited to speak at three libraries about their memoir. For others, impact means earning back their advance (if they have one) so they can write another book. The key is to define your metrics before you launch, not after.

The readwithpride.com platform offers several data points that can serve as true impact metrics. Here are the most valuable ones, ranked by author survey responses:

1. **Publicist-to-Author Conversion Rate:** Of the publicists who send you a Pitch Request, how many do you ultimately sign with? A conversion rate above 20% is excellent. This metric forces you to improve your query materials and your selectivity—because a low rate means you are either pitching to the wrong publicists or your materials are weak.
2. **Average Response Time to Pitch Requests:** Publicists on the platform can see how long you take to reply. If you reply within 24 hours, you signal professionalism. This metric is impact because it correlates directly

with signing rates. Fast responders sign publicists 3x faster than slow responders.

3. **Reader Review Sentiment Score:** After publicists promote your book, readers leave reviews on readwithpride.com. The platform uses natural language processing to generate a sentiment score (from 0 to 100). A score above 75 means readers are loving your book. This is true impact because it measures reader connection, not just sales.
4. **Number of Publicist-Curated Lists You Appear On:** This is a lagging but powerful metric. Every time a publicist includes your book in one of their “Pride Picks” lists, you gain exposure to thousands of readers. Aim to be on at least three lists within six months of launch.
5. **Your Own Financial Goal:** Be honest. Do you need to earn \$5,000 from this book to pay for a family emergency? Do you want to earn \$50,000 to quit your day job? Set a specific number and track it weekly. The platform shows you estimated royalties from affiliate sales, but remember that most of your income will come from traditional retailer sales driven by publicist efforts.

How do you set these goals? Use the SMART framework: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound. For example: “I will sign with one publicist within 90 days of joining the portal, as measured by a signed agreement.” Or: “I will achieve a reader sentiment score of 80 or above within six months of publication.” Write your goals down. Share them with a trusted accountability partner (another author on the portal). Review them monthly.

One crucial distinction: process goals versus outcome goals. Outcome goals (e.g., “sell 10,000 copies”) are largely outside your control because they depend on publicist effort, market trends, and luck. Process goals (e.g., “respond to every Pitch Request within 24 hours,” “upload five marketing assets to my profile,” “participate in three forum discussions per week”) are entirely within your control. Focus on process goals. The outcomes will follow.

Avoid the comparison trap. On readwithpride.com, you can see other authors’ publicist counts and review scores. This can be motivating or devastating, depending on your mindset. Remind yourself that every author’s path is different. A literary memoir about grief may take a year to find the right publicist; a hot romance may find one in a week. That does not mean the memoir is worse. It means the audience is

different. Compare yourself only to your own past performance.

Finally, celebrate small wins. Did you finish your profile? Win. Did you get your first Pitch Request? Huge win. Did a publicist you admire follow you on social media? Celebrate. Launching a book as a queer author is hard. The world does not always welcome us. By setting meaningful goals and tracking your true impact, you give yourself a roadmap and a reason to keep going when the noise gets loud.

Chapter 8: Creating Your Author Profile on readwithpride.com

You have decided to join readwithpride.com. You have set your goals. Now comes the most important task: creating your author profile. This is not a quick form-fill. It is your digital storefront, your resume, and your first date with every publicist who will ever consider your work. A great profile can generate Pitch Requests within hours. A poor profile will sit in the database, untouched and unread, for years. This chapter walks you through every field, every decision, and every hidden trick to make your profile stand out.

Step 1: Registration and Basic Information

When you first visit readwithpride.com, click “Author Sign-Up.” You will need an email address (use one you check daily), a password, and a display name. Your display name should be your author name exactly as it will appear on your book cover. Do not use nicknames or handles. Consistency is crucial for publicists who will later search for you on Amazon or Goodreads. After verifying your email, you will be prompted to select a subscription plan. Basic membership is free and allows you to create a profile and receive Pitch Requests. Premium membership (\$9.99/month) adds the ability to contact publicists directly, see who has viewed your profile, and access

advanced analytics. For most debut authors, the free plan is sufficient until you receive your first few Pitch Requests. Upgrade later if needed.

Step 2: Profile Photo and Header Image

Upload a profile photo that is a clear, recent headshot. No sunglasses, no hats, no filters that distort your face. The platform recommends 400x400 pixels, JPG or PNG. For the header image (1200x400 pixels), choose an image that evokes the mood of your book without being literal. Do not use your book cover—the header is for atmosphere. A foggy mountain range for a gothic novel. A close-up of a pride flag for a contemporary story. A messy desk for a memoir about creativity. You can change these images monthly, so do not stress about perfection. But do not leave them blank. Blank images signal laziness, and publicists will assume your manuscript is also unfinished.

Step 3: Bio Field (200 characters)

This is the hardest field. You have room for roughly 35 words. Do not waste them on clichés. Use the brand statement you developed in Chapter 4. Example: “Non-binary author writing cozy fantasy where the only monsters are capitalism and bad communication.” Or: “Lesbian poet. Former church organist. My debut collection asks what happens after the ex-gay camp closes.” Test your bio by reading it

aloud. Does it sound like a person you would want to have coffee with? Good. Now paste it.

Step 4: Author Statement (Optional but Powerful)

This is a longer field (up to 2,000 characters) where you can tell your story. Write 300-500 words about why you write, what queerness means to you, and what you hope readers feel. Do not summarize your plot (that goes elsewhere). Do share a vulnerable moment. Example: “I started writing this book when I was still using she/her pronouns. By the time I finished, I had come out as they/them. The protagonist’s journey from fear to freedom is mine, pixel for pixel.” Publicists love Author Statements because they provide interview material. If you get signed, the publicist will lift quotes from your Statement for press releases. So write it carefully and proofread.

Step 5: Manuscript Status and Genre Tags

Select one status: “Complete – Seeking Publicist” (most common), “Published – Seeking Press Tour” (if your book is already out), “Drafting – Looking for Beta Readers” (if you are not ready for publicists). Do not lie. If your manuscript is not fully edited, do not mark it as complete. Publicists can request your full manuscript; if they open it and find typos on page one, they will blacklist you.

Genre tags are critical. You can select up to three primary genres and five secondary tags. Be precise. Instead of “Fiction,” choose “Queer Romance.” Instead of “Fantasy,” choose “Queer SFF – Cozy.” The platform’s search algorithm prioritizes specific tags. If you are unsure, look at successful authors in your niche and copy their tags. Do not use tags that do not fit; publicists will feel misled.

Step 6: Identity Tags

This is unique to readwithpride.com. You can tag your own identity (e.g., “Transgender,” “Bisexual,” “Asexual,” “Two-Spirit”) and your characters’ identities. You are not required to share your own identity, but publicists report that profiles with identity tags receive 2x more Pitch Requests. The reason is simple: publicists often specialize in specific identities. A publicist who focuses on trans memoirs will search for “Transgender” identity tags. If you leave yours blank, you are invisible to that publicist. If you are uncomfortable disclosing, you can tag only your characters. That still helps.

Step 7: Upload Materials

You must upload at least: a one-page synopsis (PDF), the first chapter (PDF), and a “Marketing Gems” document (PDF) as described in Chapter 5. Optionally, you can upload the full manuscript. Most authors

choose to upload the full manuscript only after receiving a Pitch Request, to maintain control. However, having the full manuscript available for trusted publicists can speed up the process. The platform allows you to set permissions: “Visible to all publicists” or “Visible only after I approve a request.” Choose the latter for safety.

Step 8: Link External Accounts

Connect your author website, Goodreads page, and social media profiles. Publicists will check these. If your website is broken or your Twitter is full of unprofessional rants, fix it before linking. You do not need to be active everywhere—choose one or two platforms and be genuinely engaged. A link to a dead account is worse than no link.

Step 9: Privacy and Notification Settings

Set your notification preferences. I recommend turning on email notifications for Pitch Requests and forum mentions. Turn off notifications for “profile views” unless you enjoy anxiety. Also decide whether your profile appears in search engines. Most authors want visibility, but some prefer to stay semi-private. There is no wrong answer.

Step 10: Review and Launch

Before you click “Publish,” read your entire profile as if you were a publicist. Does it make you curious? Does it feel professional? Ask a beta reader (preferably another author on the portal) to review it. Then publish. Congratulations—you are now visible to hundreds of LGBTQ+ publicists. The next chapter will teach you how to navigate their directory to find the perfect match for your book.

Chapter 9: Navigating the Publicist Directory: A Step-by-Step Guide

Your profile is live. Now you wait for Pitch Requests to arrive. But waiting passively is not a strategy. readwithpride.com offers a powerful tool: the Publicist Directory. This searchable database lists every publicist on the platform, along with their specialties, past clients, rates, and current submission preferences. By using the directory strategically, you can identify publicists who are perfect for your book and proactively send them a “Introduction Request” (a feature available with Premium membership). This chapter guides you through the directory step by step, from basic search to advanced filtering to the etiquette of reaching out.

Step 1: Accessing the Directory

From your author dashboard, click “Publicists” in the top navigation bar. You will see a grid of publicist profiles, each with a photo, name, and one-line specialty (e.g., “Specializing in trans YA and queer horror”). By default, the directory is sorted by “Recently Active” (publicists who have logged in within the last 7 days). Always start here. A publicist who hasn’t logged in for six months is unlikely to respond.

Step 2: Using Filters

On the left side of the directory, you will see filter options. Use them ruthlessly. The most useful filters are:

- **Specialty Genres:** Select the genres that match your book. Do not select more than three. A publicist who specializes in “Queer Romance” will not be interested in your experimental poetry collection.
- **Identity Focus:** Some publicists focus on specific LGBTQ+ identities (e.g., “trans and non-binary authors only”). Respect that. If you are cisgender, do not submit to a trans-only publicist.
- **Client Type:** Filters include “Debut authors,” “Established authors,” and “Self-published.” Select the one that fits you. Many publicists explicitly state they do not work with self-published authors because of the additional editing work. Ignoring this will annoy them.
- **Geographic Region:** Publicists often have media contacts in specific countries. If you want US press coverage, filter for US publicists. If you want UK, filter accordingly.

- **Submission Status:** This is critical. Publicists set their status to “Open” (actively seeking new clients), “Closed” (not accepting), or “Selective” (only considering very specific projects). Only contact “Open” or “Selective” publicists whose criteria you meet exactly.

Step 3: Reading a Publicist Profile

Click on a publicist’s name to view their full profile. Pay attention to these sections:

- **About:** Read the entire thing. Publicists often hide deal-breakers here, e.g., “I do not accept simultaneous submissions” or “I require a 10-page sample before requesting a full.”
- **Past Clients:** Look for books similar to yours. If a publicist has successfully promoted a queer cozy mystery, they will understand your queer cozy mystery.
- **Rates & Terms:** Most publicists on the platform charge a flat monthly fee (\$500-\$2,500) plus a commission on sales (10-20%). Some work on commission only. Be sure you understand the financial arrangement before reaching out. If rates are not listed, you can ask during the Introduction Request.

- **Submission Preferences:** Exactly what materials they want (synopsis only? full manuscript? marketing plan?). Follow these to the letter. If they say “no attachments,” do not send attachments.

Step 4: Creating a Shortlist

As you browse, bookmark promising publicists using the “Save to List” button. Create a shortlist of 15-20 candidates. Then rank them: top tier (dream publicists who are a perfect match), second tier (good publicists who have worked with similar genres), third tier (long shots but worth trying). You will approach them in order.

Step 5: The Introduction Request (Premium Feature)

With a Premium membership, you can send an “Introduction Request” directly through the portal. This is not a full query—it is a brief, polite message asking the publicist to look at your profile. The ideal Introduction Request has three parts:

1. **A hook line:** “I saw you specialize in queer horror, and my novel is a gothic retelling of the Medusa myth from a transmasculine perspective.”
2. **A relevant reference:** “Your client Alex Chen’s book ‘Bone Season’ was a huge inspiration.”

3. **A clear ask:** “Would you be open to reviewing my profile and materials? I have a complete manuscript and a full marketing plan.”

Keep the entire message under 150 words. Do not attach any files. Do not ask questions that are answered on their profile (e.g., “What are your rates?”). Do not send the same message to every publicist. Personalize each one.

Step 6: Etiquette and Follow-Up

Publicists on readwithpride.com receive dozens of Introduction Requests daily. They are busy. If you do not hear back within two weeks, send one polite follow-up. Example: “Hi [Name], just checking in on my request from [date]. No pressure if you are at capacity. Thank you again for considering my work.” If you still hear nothing after another week, move on. Do not send a third message. Do not message them on social media. Harassment will get you banned.

Step 7: Handling Responses

When a publicist responds positively, they will likely ask for additional materials or a video call. Be flexible and professional. If they respond negatively (“not a fit at this time”), do not argue. Reply with “Thank you for your time and consideration.” That grace may lead them to recommend you to another publicist.

Step 8: Tracking Your Outreach

Create a simple spreadsheet with columns: Publicist Name, Date Contacted, Status (No Reply/Interested/Not Interested), Follow-Up Date. This prevents you from accidentally double-contacting or forgetting someone. The portal itself has a basic tracking feature (under “My Outreach”), but a spreadsheet gives you more control.

Step 9: Avoiding Common Mistakes

- **Spray and pray:** Sending 100 identical generic messages. Instead, send 20 highly personalized ones.
- **Ignoring submission guidelines:** If a publicist asks for a synopsis only, sending your full manuscript makes you look illiterate.
- **Neglecting your profile:** Before sending any Introduction Requests, ensure your profile is 100% complete. Publicists will click on your name immediately. If your profile is missing a bio or has placeholder text, they will reject you.
- **Being too pushy:** Do not demand a response “as soon as possible.” Do not ask “why not?” after a rejection. Professionalism opens doors; desperation closes them.

Step 10: When to Stop

You do not need to contact every publicist on the platform. After 20-30 targeted Introduction Requests, stop and wait. If after three months you have zero positive responses, revisit your profile and materials. Ask a trusted author friend for brutal feedback. It may be that your book needs more editing, or your marketing assets need strengthening. Do not keep spamming publicists with the same unimproved materials. That only burns bridges.

The Publicist Directory is a gift. Use it wisely, respectfully, and strategically. The right publicist is on the platform right now, waiting for a book exactly like yours. Make sure they can find you.

Chapter 10: The "Discoverability" Features: Hashtags, Tropes, and Trigger Warnings

On readwithpride.com, discoverability is not magic—it is engineering. The platform has built a sophisticated tagging system that allows publicists to filter thousands of books by granular attributes. If you ignore this system, your book becomes invisible. If you master it, publicists will find you even when you are not actively pitching. This chapter explains the three pillars of discoverability on the portal: hashtags, tropes, and trigger warnings. Use them correctly, and your book will surface in front of the exact publicists who are looking for what you wrote.

Hashtags: The First Filter

Hashtags on readwithpride.com work differently than on Instagram. They are not user-generated free-for-all tags. Instead, the platform provides a controlled vocabulary of approved hashtags, organized into categories. When you edit your profile, you will see a “Hashtags” field with a dropdown menu. You can select up to 10 hashtags.

The categories include:

- **Identity**

Hashtags: #lesbian, #gay, #bi, #trans, #nonbinary, #ace, #aro, #pan, #queer (the catch-all).

Select all that apply to your book's characters, not necessarily your own identity.

- **Genre**

Hashtags: #queerromance, #queersff, #queerhorror, #queermystery, #queercontemporary, #queerhistorical, #queernonfiction, #queerpoeetry.

- **Theme**

Hashtags: #foundfamily, #comingout, #firstlove, #grief, #healing, #activism, #religious trauma, #chosen family, #happyending.

- **Setting**

Hashtags: #smalltown, #urban, #historical (specific decade), #fantasyworld, #space, #workplace.

Do not stuff irrelevant hashtags. Adding #trans to a book with no trans characters will irritate publicists who filter by that tag. Be honest. Also, avoid redundant combinations—#queer plus #gay is fine, but #queerromance plus #romance is not (the latter is not an approved tag).

The most powerful hashtag strategy is to combine one identity tag, one genre tag, and one theme tag. Example: #lesbian #queerhistorical #comingout. That trio tells a publicist exactly what to expect. Publicists

often save search feeds for specific hashtag combinations. If your book matches, it will appear in their feed daily.

Tropes: The Second Filter

Tropes are the building blocks of genre fiction, and queer readers (and publicists) love them. On readwithpride.com, you can tag up to 8 tropes from a list of over 100. Examples: enemies to lovers, friends to lovers, only one bed, forced proximity, fake relationship, love triangle, second chance, grumpy/sunshine, hurt/comfort, found family, bury your gays (if you subvert it), happy ending guaranteed, slow burn.

Why are tropes important for discoverability? Because publicists often build entire marketing campaigns around tropes. A publicist might say, "I'm looking for an enemies-to-lesbians romance with a happy ending." If you tagged enemies to lovers and happy ending guaranteed, your profile appears. If you tagged nothing, you are invisible.

The key is specificity. Do not tag slow burn if your characters kiss in chapter two. Do not tag hurt/comfort if your book is mostly fluff. Misleading trope tags lead to negative reader reviews when the book fails to deliver. And publicists read those reviews.

One advanced tactic: tag tropes that are popular but underserved. The platform publishes a monthly “Trope Heat Map” showing which tropes have the highest demand (i.e., most publicist searches) relative to supply (i.e., fewest books tagged). For example, in early 2026, ace romance and polyamory happy ending were high-heat tropes. By tagging those, you stand out. Check the Heat Map regularly.

Trigger Warnings: The Third Filter

This is where readwithpride.com distinguishes itself from mainstream platforms. The portal requires you to list trigger warnings (content warnings) for your book. This is not optional. You must select from a list of common triggers: homophobia, transphobia, deadnaming, conversion therapy, sexual assault, domestic violence, self-harm, suicide, eating disorders, substance abuse, pregnancy loss, animal death, gore, body horror, and a write-in option for other triggers.

Why are trigger warnings a discoverability feature? Because many publicists specialize in “trauma-informed” marketing. They specifically search for books that handle certain triggers with care—or they search for books that have no triggers at all (e.g., “fluffy no-trigger romances”). By being

transparent about your triggers, you attract publicists who want exactly that level of intensity.

There is a debate in queer publishing about trigger warnings “spoiling” the book. The consensus on readwithpride.com is that spoilers are preferable to harm. Readers who need to avoid certain content will thank you. Publicists who promote your book can use the trigger list to pitch to appropriate outlets. For example, a memoir that includes conversion therapy might be pitched to trauma recovery blogs. A book with no triggers might be pitched to “cozy queer” newsletters.

Be careful not to over-warn. If your book includes a single mention of homophobia on page 187, you do not need to tag homophobia as a primary trigger. The platform allows you to specify “minor” or “major” for each trigger. Use “minor” for passing references, “major” for graphic or sustained content.

Putting It All Together

When you finish tagging your book, step back and look at the full set: hashtags, tropes, and triggers. They should tell a coherent story. For example:

- Hashtags: #lesbian #queerromance
 #happyending

- Tropes: grumpy/sunshine, only one bed, forced proximity
- Triggers: homophobia (minor), substance abuse (minor)

That combination paints a clear picture: a lesbian romance with some conflict but ultimately a happy ending, featuring classic tropes and only minor difficult content. A publicist can decide in five seconds whether to investigate further.

Updating Your Tags

You can change your tags at any time. Many authors update their tags after receiving feedback from Pitch Requests. If several publicists say “I loved the book but the trigger warnings were too vague,” add more detail. If a publicist says “I filtered for found family and your book didn’t appear,” add that tag. Treat tagging as an ongoing optimization, not a one-time task.

The Danger of Over-Tagging

It is tempting to select every possible tag to maximize visibility. Resist. Over-tagging confuses publicists and can lead to your profile being flagged as “spammy” by the platform’s moderation algorithm. Stick to the most relevant 70% of tags. Quality over quantity.

Final Check: The Publicist Test

Before you save your tags, imagine you are a publicist. You have exactly 30 seconds to decide if a book is worth your time. Look at your tags. Do they make you curious? Do they promise a specific reading experience? If yes, you have mastered discoverability. Now go write.

Chapter 11: Reading the Room – Understanding Publicist Specializations and Client Lists

Before you send a single pitch through the readwithpride.com portal, you must master one skill that separates successful authors from frustrated ones: **reading the room**. In the context of LGBTQ+ publishing, “reading the room” means studying a publicist’s specialization, their past and current client lists, and the subtle signals they broadcast through their portal profile. This chapter transforms you from a blind pitcher into a strategic matchmaker.

Why Specialization Matters More Than You Think

Generalist publicists can be useful, but on a dedicated LGBTQ+ platform like readwithpride.com, specialization is oxygen. A publicist who focuses on queer young adult fiction may have zero interest in a BDSM-heavy gay romance novel – not because either is invalid, but because their media contacts, pitch angles, and reading communities are different. The portal makes these distinctions visible through tags, badges, and portfolio displays.

Three core specialization categories you will encounter:

1. **Genre anchors** – Some publicists list only romance, some only literary fiction, some

only nonfiction (memoir, history, self-help). A mismatch here kills your pitch instantly.

2. **Identity focus** – Many publicists explicitly serve specific segments of the LGBTQ+ community: trans and nonbinary authors, lesbian fiction, bisexual visibility, queer BIPOC voices, or asexual/aromantic stories. If your book centers a trans protagonist but the publicist's tagline says "specializing in gay male romance," move on.
3. **Career stage** – Emerging author publicists help debut voices; established author publicists work with award winners or series authors. Pitching a debut novel to a publicist who only reps Lambda Literary Award finalists is a waste of a connection.

How to Read a Publicist's Client List on the Portal

The readwithpride.com portal typically displays client lists in one of three ways: a carousel of book covers, a text list of author names, or a combination with testimonials. Do not glance at these lists – study them.

What a client list tells you:

- **Tone and voice** – If all past clients write humorous, lighthearted queer rom-coms,

your dark, trauma-heavy literary novel may feel out of step.

- **Publishing size** – Clients from small presses vs. Big Five imprints signal different levels of access and campaign styles.
- **Collaboration patterns** – Does the same publicist appear with multiple authors from one agency? That suggests strong agency relationships you can leverage if your agent is the same.

Red flags on client lists:

- No client list at all (some new publicists hide it, but experienced ones showcase success)
- Dated clients (last campaign was two years ago – possible inactivity)
- Clients in genres that contradict their stated specialization

The Art of the “Soft Read” Before Pitching

Before you ever click “Contact Publicist” on the portal, perform a three-step soft read:

1. **Read their most recent featured book** (or at least the first chapter available through the

portal's preview system). Note the language they use in their campaign description.

2. **Check their response time badge** – readwithpride.com shows average response times for publicists who opt into metrics. A 14-day average means you adjust your follow-up schedule.
3. **Scan their “perfect client” description** – Many publicists now include a short paragraph: “I work best with authors who...” This is gold. If they say “authors with established social media followings” and you have 200 Instagram followers, self-select out.

Decoding Publicist Bios for Hidden Clues

Publicist bios on the portal are not fluff – they are strategic filters. Learn to decode them:

Phrase	What it really means
"I champion bold, unapologetic queer voices"	Open to bold or political work
"Results-driven campaigns for commercial LGBTQ+ fiction"	Focused on sales and bestsellers
"Nurturing debut authors through their first launch"	Supportive and good for beginners
"Selective availability"	High demand or low capacity – pitch only if perfect match
"LGBTQ+ and allied publicist"	May not have deep community connections but willing to learn

Case Study: Pitching the Wrong Specialization

Consider two authors on readwithpride.com:

- **Jordan** wrote a queer historical mystery set in 1920s Harlem. Jordan pitches a publicist whose client list is entirely contemporary trans YA. The publicist declines within 48 hours with a form rejection.

- **Jordan's friend** takes the time to filter by “historical fiction” and “mystery” tags, finds a publicist whose past clients include a queer noir series and a biography of a Harlem Renaissance figure. The friend secures a call.

The difference is not quality of writing – it is **reading the room**.

Creating Your Publicist Shortlist Using Portal Filters

The portal offers advanced search filters. Use them systematically:

1. **Filter by specialization tags** – Select up to three that match your book.
2. **Filter by client genre** – Cross-reference with your book's primary genre.
3. **Filter by availability** – “Accepting new clients” vs. “Waitlist only.”
4. **Sort by response time** – Fast responders may be less selective; slow responders may be overwhelmed or meticulous.

From the filtered list, manually review each publicist's full profile. Aim for a shortlist of **10–15 publicists**, not 50. Quality over quantity.

The “Perfect Match” Checklist

Before you pitch, run this checklist for each publicist:

- They have successfully promoted at least two books in my genre in the last 12 months.
- Their stated identity focus (if any) aligns with my book's primary audience.
- Their client list includes authors at a similar career stage to mine.
- Their bio tone matches my book's tone (formal vs. casual, academic vs. playful).
- They have a clear "how to pitch" section that I can follow exactly.
- They have not recently been tagged in negative community feedback (check the portal's publicist review feature, if available).

What If No One Matches Perfectly?

In a smaller genre or niche identity space, you may find zero perfect matches. Then you pivot to **adjacent specialization**. Example: A queer polyamorous romance novel may fit best with a publicist who specializes in LGBTQ+ romance generally and has shown openness to nontraditional structures. You can also consider a **publicist collective** – some portal profiles represent teams, not individuals, offering broader coverage.

The Emotional Labor of Rejection

Even when you read the room perfectly, rejections happen. A publicist may love your concept but be overcommitted, or their favorite editor just left a publishing house, or they are shifting focus. The portal's messaging system allows polite follow-ups, but after two unanswered messages, move on. Rejection is not a verdict on your book's worth – it is a mismatch in capacity or timing.

Pro tip: Use the portal's "save publicist" feature to bookmark profiles you admire. After your book succeeds, you can circle back for future projects.

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 11

1. Spend one full hour browsing publicist profiles without pitching – just reading specializations and client lists.
2. Create a spreadsheet with columns: Publicist Name, Specialization, Client List Highlights, Response Time, Fit Score (1–10).
3. Identify 3–5 "dream" publicists and 5–10 "solid" publicists.
4. Practice writing a mock pitch for your top match, incorporating the specific language from their "perfect client" description.

5. Set a calendar reminder to review publicist profiles weekly – they update their statuses and client lists often.

Chapter 12: The Platform's Secret Weapon – Community Forums and Beta Reader Groups

Beyond the publicist directory and author profiles, readwithpride.com hides its most powerful tool in plain sight: **the Community Hub**, a collection of forums, beta reader groups, and feedback exchanges. Most authors treat this as a casual add-on. The smart ones treat it as a pre-publicist incubation chamber. This chapter reveals how to leverage community features not only to improve your manuscript but also to attract publicist attention before you ever send a pitch.

The Ecosystem Within the Ecosystem

The portal's community features operate on a simple principle: **visibility attracts opportunity**. When you participate authentically in forums, your profile gains activity badges. When you exchange beta reads, your book's early metadata (title, genre, blurb) appears in publicist-accessible databases. Publicists on readwithpride.com routinely browse these spaces to discover emerging talent before the formal submission process.

Key community areas:

- **The Launch Lounge** – For authors at any stage to ask questions about marketing, distribution, and publicity.
- **Beta Reader Matchmaker** – A structured system to pair authors with readers who opt into providing feedback.
- **Genre Neighborhoods** – Dedicated sub-forums for romance, literary, speculative, nonfiction, poetry, and graphic novels.
- **The Pride Pitch Party** – A monthly live event where authors post one-sentence pitches and publicists respond with “I want to see more” reactions.
- **Accountability Squads** – Small, self-organizing groups of authors who share weekly goals.

Why Beta Reader Groups Are Not Optional

Many authors skip beta readers, believing their editor or critique partner is enough. On readwithpride.com, skipping beta readers is like skipping the trailer for your own movie. Here is why:

1. **Publicists check beta reader scores.** Some publicists on the portal have begun requiring a minimum “beta reader readiness” score – a

composite metric based on number of beta readers, average feedback rating, and implementation notes. A book with zero beta readers appears unvetted.

2. **Beta readers become launch day advocates.** A reader who fell in love with your beta draft will leave the first glowing review, share your pre-order link, and tag publicists in their own social posts. That organic momentum is gold.
3. **The portal's algorithm boosts books with high beta engagement.** More beta readers = more activity signals = higher placement in "Discover New LGBTQ+ Books" sections.

How to Use the Beta Reader Matchmaker

The Beta Reader Matchmaker on readwithpride.com works like a dating app for manuscripts. You create a reader request form that includes:

- Genre and subgenre tags
- Content warning checklist (you must honestly list all potentially sensitive material)

- Desired feedback depth (line edits, big-picture structure, sensitivity reading, or all three)
- Timeline (typically 2–4 weeks)
- Exchange type (free with credit, or swap reads with another author)

Pro tip for maximizing matches: Offer to beta read for others before requesting your own. The portal tracks your “community karma” – authors who have given feedback are prioritized in the matchmaking queue.

Beta Reader Etiquette on the Portal

Nothing kills your reputation faster than poor beta reader behavior. Follow these rules:

- **Deliver on time.** Late feedback means late manuscript revisions, which delays your publicist outreach. The portal records timeliness metrics visible to publicists (with your permission).
- **Be specific in your request.** “Tell me if it’s good” is useless. “Does the second act sag between chapters 8 and 12?” is actionable.
- **Thank every beta reader publicly** (with their consent) on your author feed. Tag them.

Publicists watch these thank-yous as social proof.

- **Do not argue with feedback.** You may disagree, but argumentative authors earn flags. Accept, thank, and revise or ignore silently.

Community Forums as Publicist Radar

Publicists rarely announce “I am looking for new clients” in their official profiles – but they do drop hints in forums. Learn to monitor:

- **The Launch Lounge** – When a publicist posts “What are you all working on that keeps you up at night?” they are fishing.
- **Genre Neighborhoods** – Publicists with genre specialties often lurk, offering occasional free advice. Engage with them respectfully. A thoughtful response to their advice can lead to a private message.
- **The Resource Exchange** – Where publicists share templates, checklists, and articles. Upvoting and thanking them builds rapport.

The Pride Pitch Party: Your 60-Second Audition

Once per month, the portal hosts a live, 24-hour pitch event. Authors post in a standardized format:

[GENRE] TITLE – word count
Pitch: One sentence hook.
Comp titles: Two recent LGBTQ+ books.
Content warnings: [list]

Publicists then react with 🚀 (send me a query), 💬 (interesting, tell me more), or ❤️ (public support, not a query request). This is the single most direct path from anonymous author to publicist conversation.

Pitch party rules for success:

- Prepare three versions of your hook. Post the best one at 9 AM EST when publicists are most active.
- Do not pitch more than once per event (the portal filters duplicates).
- If you receive a 🚀, send a query within 24 hours referencing the pitch party.
- If you receive no reactions, do not despair – publicists’ capacity varies. Try again next month with a revised pitch.

Accountability Squads and Collective Advancement

Small groups of 4–6 authors who meet weekly on the portal’s video chat feature can accelerate everyone’s publicist readiness. An effective squad:

- Shares one publicist discovery per week (“I found a publicist who loves queer horror”)
- Exchanges pitch drafts for brutal honesty
- Practices elevator pitches on each other
- Celebrates wins (query responses, beta reader completions, publicist interest)

Publicists occasionally sponsor squads – offering group office hours in exchange for early access to completed manuscripts. Keep an eye on the “Squad Sponsors” section of the portal.

The Danger of Echo Chambers

Community forums are wonderful, but they can become echo chambers where authors reassure each other that “publicists just don’t get it.” Beware of threads that turn into complaint circles. If you find yourself in a forum where every publicist is criticized, every publisher is mocked, and every rejection is blamed on the industry, step away. Productive communities balance support with accountability.

From Community Participant to Publicist Magnet

The ultimate goal of engaging with the portal’s community features is to become an author that publicists discover organically. When a publicist sees your thoughtful forum posts, your high beta reader

ratings, your respectful engagement, and your polished pitch party entry, they will reach out to *you* – no cold query needed.

Your 90-day community engagement plan:

- **Days 1–30:** Complete two beta reads for other authors. Post 10 helpful forum responses. Join one Accountability Squad.
- **Days 31–60:** Request beta readers for your own manuscript. Participate in a Pitch Party. Start a thread in your Genre Neighborhood.
- **Days 61–90:** Synthesize beta feedback into a revised manuscript. Update your author profile with beta reader testimonials. Pitch 3–5 publicists who have interacted with you in forums.

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 12

1. Create your Community Hub profile with a complete bio and photo (accounts with photos receive 3x more beta matches).
2. Sign up for the Beta Reader Matchmaker and complete one beta read for another author this week.

3. Identify three forum threads where you can add value and post thoughtful responses by Friday.
4. Mark your calendar for the next Pride Pitch Party – prepare your hook now.
5. Start or join an Accountability Squad using the portal's squad formation tool.

Chapter 13: The Queer Publicist's Wishlist – What They Are Actually Looking For

You have studied publicist specializations. You have engaged in community forums. Now you need to climb inside the mind of a queer publicist on readwithpride.com. What keeps them up at night? What makes them click “accept” on a pitch within seconds versus letting it expire? This chapter reveals the unspoken wishlist – the qualities, assets, and author behaviors that publicists actively seek but rarely publish in their profiles.

The Five Pillars of a Publicist's Dream Author

After interviewing dozens of LGBTQ+ publicists (anonymously, to protect their candor), five recurring pillars emerged. These are not nice-to-haves; they are dealmakers and dealbreakers.

Pillar 1: A Marketable Hook, Not Just a Summary

Publicists receive hundreds of pitches that say “my book is about a queer person finding love.” That is a summary. A marketable hook says: “My book is *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* meets *Red, White & Royal Blue* but set in a post-apocalyptic sapphic circus.” Publicists want comparison titles, a unique angle, and proof that you understand the current market.

Pillar 2: An Author Who Has Already Built Something

You do not need a massive following. You do need to show *initiative*. Have you started a newsletter? Do you engage on one social platform consistently? Have you collected beta reader testimonials? Publicists want to amplify existing momentum, not create it from scratch. An author with 500 engaged newsletter subscribers is often more attractive than an author with 10,000 passive Instagram followers.

Pillar 3: Clarity on Your Own Goals

Publicists hate vagueness. “I want to be famous” or “I just want people to read my book” are nightmares because they offer no direction. A publicist’s wishlist includes authors who can say: “My primary goal is to sell 5,000 copies in the first three months. Secondary goal is to secure two regional bookstore events. Tertiary is to be considered for a debut author award.” Clear goals = clear strategy.

Pillar 4: Professionalism Without Rigidity

Publicists love authors who respond to emails within 48 hours, meet deadlines, and provide requested materials (headshot, bio, sample chapters) in the correct formats. But they also love authors who can pivot when a media opportunity changes last minute. The sweet spot: reliable *and* flexible.

Pillar 5: A Book That Has Been Vetted by the Community

This is unique to readwithpride.com. Publicists on this portal prioritize books that have already received positive feedback from LGBTQ+ beta readers, sensitivity readers, or early reviewers within the platform. Why? Because a book that resonates with the portal's own community has a higher chance of resonating with the broader queer readership. Your beta reader ratings on the portal are now part of your publicist-facing profile – treat them as seriously as your manuscript.

The Secret Wishlist: What Publicists Won't Say Out Loud

Beyond the five pillars, there is a hidden wishlist – things publicists think but rarely write in their profiles.

- **“I wish authors would send their media kit without me asking.”** A complete media kit (author bio, high-res photos, sample press release, one-pager, and two comp titles) signals preparedness. Publicists will prioritize you.
- **“I wish authors would tell me their budget upfront.”** Many publicists work on fee-for-service models. Hiding your budget until the third email wastes everyone's time. State

early: “My total publicity budget is \$X, and I am open to à la carte options.”

- **“I wish authors would stop pitching before their manuscript is finished.”** A shocking number of authors pitch with only a partial draft or a rough outline. Publicists cannot sell what does not exist. Finish the book.
- **“I wish authors would read my entire profile before pitching.”** If a publicist says “no simultaneous submissions to other publicists in my boutique,” and you submit to three at once, you have disqualified yourself.

The Dealbreaker List

Publicists on readwithpride.com also maintain private dealbreaker lists. Avoid these at all costs:

- **Aggressive follow-ups.** One follow-up after 7–10 days is fine. Four follow-ups in one week will get your profile flagged.
- **Demanding free work.** “Can you just give me a few tips for free?” No. Publicists are professionals. Respect their time.
- **Ignoring content warning requests.** If a publicist asks for a list of content warnings for their own mental health before reading, and

you fail to provide it, you have demonstrated a lack of care for community wellbeing.

- **Badmouthing previous publicists.** Even if your last publicist was terrible, never speak ill of them in a pitch. It signals that you may be difficult to work with.
- **Overpromising your own reach.** Claiming you can “get a feature in The New York Times” when you have no connection there sets false expectations and damages trust.

What Publicists Look for in Your First 50 Words

The first 50 words of your query on readwithpride.com determine whether a publicist reads further. Here is what they scan for:

1. **Your book’s genre and word count** – Immediate fit check.
2. **A specific comp title** – Shows market awareness.
3. **One unique detail** – “Featuring a deaf lesbian protagonist who communicates through sign language poetry.”
4. **Your author platform number** – “My newsletter has 1,200 subscribers” or “My TikTok video about this book got 50k views.”

5. **A clear ask** – “I am seeking a publicist for a 3-month campaign leading up to my September release.”

A sample strong opening: *“Dear [Publicist], I am seeking representation for my 85,000-word queer literary thriller, THE BONE ORCHARD – ALIAS GRACE meets TELL ME I’M WORTHLESS. I have a 2,000-person newsletter and a completed manuscript with five beta reader ratings of 4.5+ on this portal.”*

The “Maybe” Pile vs. The “Yes” Pile

Publicists mentally sort pitches into three piles: Yes, No, and Maybe. The Maybe pile is where most decent pitches live – and where they often die because publicists are busy. To escape Maybe, you need a **spark**. That spark can be:

- A personal connection (you met at a portal event)
- An unusual timing hook (your book releases during Pride Month and you have a related personal story)
- A visual asset (a stunning cover reveal you can share immediately)
- A viral moment (one of your portal forum posts got 50+ upvotes)

Without a spark, your pitch may be “fine” – and fine does not get a response.

How to Discover a Publicist’s Unwritten Wishlist

Every publicist has idiosyncratic preferences. Here is how to uncover them without being creepy:

- **Read their past interviews** – Many LGBTQ+ publicists have been featured on publishing podcasts or blogs. The portal aggregates these in publicist profiles. Look for phrases like “I wish authors would...” or “My favorite campaigns involved...”
- **Look at their followed authors** – On the portal, you can see which authors a publicist follows (if they make that public). The commonalities among those authors reveal their tastes.
- **Attend their portal-hosted webinars** – Publicists occasionally run free “office hours” sessions. Ask respectful questions about what they seek. Take notes.

The Wishlist for Different Book Types

A publicist’s wishlist changes based on your book category. Tailor your pitch accordingly:

Book Type	Publicist's hidden wish
Debut literary fiction	"Show me you have connections to indie bookstores or lit mags."
Commercial romance	"Show me you understand BookTok trends and have a series potential."
Memoir	"Show me you have a unique platform or expertise beyond the memoir itself."
Poetry collection	"Show me you have a live reading plan and community organizing experience."

Book Type

Publicist's hidden wish

YA

"Show me you understand school/library market and have teacher/librarian connections."

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 13

1. Write down your answers to the five pillars: hook, existing momentum, clear goals, professionalism proof, community vetting.
2. Draft a 50-word opening for your pitch that includes all five scan points.
3. Identify your "spark" – the one thing that moves you from Maybe to Yes.
4. Review your recent behavior on the portal for any dealbreakers (over-following up, badmouthing, ignoring warnings).

5. Attend one publicist office hours session this month and ask: “What is the number one thing authors miss in their pitches?”

Chapter 14: Avoiding the Mass Email – The Art of the Targeted Pitch

You have identified your dream publicists. You understand their wishlist. Now comes the moment of execution: writing the pitch. The single biggest mistake authors make on readwithpride.com is sending **mass emails** – identical or nearly identical messages to multiple publicists. This chapter dismantles the mass email habit and rebuilds your approach as a master of the **targeted pitch**. You will learn customization techniques that increase response rates from 2% to over 30%.

Why Mass Emails Fail on a Community Platform

readwithpride.com is not Mailchimp. It is a social ecosystem where publicists talk to each other. When you send the same generic pitch to ten publicists, three things happen:

1. **The portal's duplicate detection** flags your account. Publicists can see a “multiple submissions” warning on your profile if you exceed reasonable limits.
2. **Publicists compare notes** in private backchannels. “Did you get the pitch about the vampire romance that started ‘Dear

Publicist’?” Laughter ensues. Your name becomes a joke.

3. **You signal that you see publicists as interchangeable vending machines** rather than human partners. That perception is almost impossible to reverse.

A targeted pitch, by contrast, says: “I see you. I respect your specific taste. I have done my homework.”

The Anatomy of a Targeted Pitch

A targeted pitch on readwithpride.com has seven components, each customized to the individual publicist:

1. **Personalized salutation** – “Dear Jordan,” not “Dear Publicist.”
2. **Specific reference** – “I saw that you recently worked with [Author Name] on [Book Title] and loved how you positioned it for [audience].”
3. **Your hook** – One sentence that could appear on the book’s back cover.
4. **Why you chose them** – A specific, honest reason beyond “you rep LGBTQ+ books.”

5. **Your proof points** – Beta ratings, newsletter size, portal activity, relevant experience.
6. **Clear ask** – “Would you be open to a 15-minute call to discuss a potential campaign?”
7. **Low-friction next step** – “I have attached a one-page summary and am happy to send the full manuscript upon request.”

The “Specific Reference” Deep Dive

The specific reference is the most powerful customization tool. It proves you did not just copy-paste. Examples:

- *Weak*: “I see you work with queer romance authors.” (Too generic – most publicists on the portal do.)
- *Strong*: “I noticed you rep Alexis Hall’s *Something Fabulous* and particularly admired how you pitched it to BookTok creators specializing in historical romantic comedy. My book has a similar tonal balance of wit and heart.”
- *Stronger*: “In your portal interview last March, you said you were looking for ‘queer horror that doesn’t rely on the bury your gays trope.’ My novel fits that exactly – and I

noticed you followed my beta reader thread on the same topic.”

Finding a specific reference requires research. Spend 10–15 minutes per publicist before writing.

Customization Without Creepiness

There is a fine line between personalized and invasive. Do not cross it.

Appropriate

“I saw your client list includes [public info].”

“You mentioned in your portal bio that you love flawed protagonists.”

“Your response to the Pitch Party thread on ‘messy queer joy’ resonated with me.”

Inappropriate

“I saw you liked a post from your personal Instagram account.”

“I asked around about your divorce.”

“I noticed you were online at 2 AM last night.”

Stick to information the publicist has voluntarily made public on their portal profile or in portal-hosted events. Never scrape personal social media.

The 5:1 Ratio for Targeted Pitches

Do not pitch 50 publicists at once. Use the **5:1 ratio** – for every publicist you pitch, spend at least one hour on research and customization. A realistic weekly goal is **5 targeted pitches**. That is 5 hours of work. Over a month, that is 20 high-quality pitches – more than enough to generate several responses.

Why quality over quantity works:

- Publicists talk. A great pitch to one can lead to a referral to another.
- The portal's algorithm tracks your "thoughtfulness score" based on time spent on profile before messaging. Higher scores improve your placement in publicist search results.
- A single "yes" is infinitely more valuable than fifty "no response" messages.

Template: The Targeted Pitch That Works

Below is a real-world template adapted from successful pitches on readwithpride.com. Fill in the brackets with publicist-specific information.

Subject: Query: [Book Title] – [Genre] – [Your Name]

Dear [Publicist First Name],

I'm writing because of your work on [Specific Book Title by Specific Author]. The way you positioned [specific element, e.g., "the trans joy against a thriller backdrop"] was exactly the energy I want for my novel.

My book, [TITLE], is [word count] of [genre]. Hook: [One sentence]. It's for readers who loved [Comp Title A] and [Comp Title B] but want [unique twist].

I'm coming to you specifically because [personalized reason from research]. I also noticed you're active in the [Name of portal forum] and appreciated your comment about [quote or idea].

Why I'm ready:

- 4.7 average beta rating from 12 readers on this portal
- 1,400 newsletter subscribers (open rate 52%)
- Completed sensitivity reads with [organization or individual]

- Full manuscript available immediately

My ask: Would you have 15 minutes in the next two weeks for a quick call to discuss a potential campaign for a [month/year] release?

I've attached a one-page summary. The full manuscript is available upon request.

Thank you for considering – and thank you for the work you do to amplify queer voices.

Best,

[Your

Name]

[Link to your portal author profile]

The Anti-Template: What to Avoid

The template above is a starting point, not a crutch. Avoid these common targeted-pitch failures:

- **Over-customizing with flattery.** “You are the greatest publicist in the history of publishing” reads as desperate, not genuine.
- **Mentioning a book the publicist did not actually work on.** Double-check client lists. Mistaking a publicist for their competitor is an instant delete.
- **Writing a novel in the pitch.** Keep it under 300 words. Publicists skim on mobile.

- **Attaching the full manuscript without being asked.** That is presumptuous and clogs inboxes. A one-page summary is sufficient.

The Follow-Up That Stays Targeted

When you follow up after 7–10 days with no response, resist the urge to send the same message again. Instead, send a **targeted follow-up** that adds new value:

“Hi [Publicist], following up on my pitch from [date]. Since then, my beta reader count has grown to 15 with a 4.8 average, and I was featured in the portal’s ‘Rising Authors’ newsletter. Would you like me to resend the one-pager?”

This shows continued progress and justifies a second look.

The Portal’s “Pitch Assistant” Tool

readwithpride.com offers an optional AI-assisted Pitch Assistant that analyzes your draft for personalization signals. It flags:

- Generic greetings
- Missing specific references
- Overused phrases (“eager to hear back,” “I believe my book would be a good fit”)

- Length warnings

Use it as a guardrail, not a ghostwriter. The assistant cannot replicate your authentic voice.

Measuring Your Targeted Pitch Success

Keep a simple spreadsheet with columns:

- Publicist name
- Date pitched
- Specific reference used
- Response? (Yes/No/Maybe)
- Notes for future

After 20 pitches, calculate your response rate. On readwithpride.com, a 25% response rate (5 out of 20) is excellent for debut authors. A 10% rate is average. Below 5% means your targeting or pitch quality needs work.

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 14

1. Delete any generic pitch drafts you have saved. Start fresh.
2. Choose 5 publicists from your shortlist. Spend 1 hour researching each.

3. Write 5 distinct targeted pitches using the template. Run each through the Pitch Assistant.
 4. Send no more than 2 pitches per day to avoid triggering spam filters.
 5. Set a follow-up reminder for 10 days after each pitch – but only follow up if you have new information to add.
-

Chapter 15: Your Digital Press Kit – The One-Page That Opens Doors

You have crafted a brilliant targeted pitch. A publicist responds with interest. Their first request will almost certainly be: “Send me your press kit.” This chapter ensures you do not scramble. You will learn to build a **digital press kit** that functions as a persuasive, elegant, and complete snapshot of your book and your author brand – all contained in one page (plus supplementary assets). On readwithpride.com, a professional press kit is the difference between a “maybe” and a “let’s sign a contract.”

What Is a Digital Press Kit (and Why One Page)?

A digital press kit (DPK) is a curated collection of information and assets that helps publicists, journalists, booksellers, and event coordinators understand and promote your book. On readwithpride.com, the standard is a **single webpage** (or a single PDF of one page) that links to supplementary materials. Why one page? Because publicists are busy. They do not click through five tabs. They want to scan, download, and forward.

Your one-page press kit must include:

1. Author bio (short: 100 words)
2. Book blurb (150 words)

3. Key selling points (bullet list)
4. Author photo (high-res)
5. Book cover image (if available)
6. Comparison titles (2–3)
7. Endorsements or beta quotes (2–3 short ones)
8. Contact and social links
9. Link to full manuscript (private, password-protected)

Building Your Kit on the Portal

readwithpride.com provides a native **Press Kit Builder** tool within your author dashboard. It generates a clean, mobile-responsive page with the URL [readwithpride.com/author/\[yourname\]/presskit](https://readwithpride.com/author/[yourname]/presskit). You can customize colors and layout. Crucially, the portal tracks how many times your press kit is viewed and by which publicists (anonymized). High view counts signal interest.

If you prefer to host externally: Use a simple Carrd, Notion page, or Google Drive folder with a single PDF summary. But the portal's native kit is preferred because publicists stay within the ecosystem.

The Author Bio: Short, Punchy, Queer

Your bio should be 100 words maximum. Include:

- Your name and pronouns
- Your connection to the LGBTQ+ community (if comfortable)
- One or two previous publications or credentials (do not pad)
- A surprising or human detail (e.g., “Runs a weekly drag queen book club”)
- Where you live (general region)

Example:

“Jordan Lee (they/them) is a queer nonbinary writer based in Chicago. Their short fiction has appeared in The Rumpus and Litro. When not writing, they lead a monthly queer horror book club. THE BONE ORCHARD is their debut novel.”

Do not include: Your life story, your childhood, your pet’s name, or your educational credentials unless directly relevant.

The Book Blurb: Sell, Don’t Summarize

The blurb is not a synopsis. It is a **sales pitch**. 150 words maximum. Structure:

- **Hook:** One sentence that raises a question.

- **Stakes:** What does the protagonist stand to lose or gain?
- **Tone:** A hint of the emotional journey.
- **Themes:** LGBTQ+ themes mentioned organically.

Example blurb:

“In 1920s Harlem, queer amateur detective Lena Rose can read bones – but she cannot read the heart of the woman she loves. When a rival speakeasy owner turns up dead with Lena’s calling card in his pocket, she has 72 hours to solve the murder before the police pin it on her. With the help of a drag king cabaret, a bootleg whiskey heir, and her own reluctant magic, Lena must untangle a conspiracy that reaches from the dance halls to city hall. THE BONE ORCHARD is a glittering, dangerous love letter to Harlem’s queer past.”

Key Selling Points: The Bullet List That Converts

Below the blurb, include 4–6 bullet points that a publicist can lift directly for a press release or pitch email. Each bullet should be a complete, compelling claim.

Example selling points:

- *A queer historical mystery set in the rarely depicted 1920s Harlem Renaissance LGBTQ+ scene*
- *Features a nonbinary amateur detective and a slow-burn romance between two women of color*
- *Perfect for book clubs seeking literary thrills with romantic subplots*
- *Includes authentic period-accurate slang and settings, vetted by a Harlem historian*
- *Debut author with a built-in platform of 2,000 newsletter subscribers and 15,000 TikTok followers*

Visual Assets: Author Photo and Cover

Your author photo should be:

- High resolution (at least 1200x1600 pixels)
- Well-lit, natural expression (no heavy filters)
- Relevant to your genre (romance authors may smile; horror authors may look serious)
- A square crop option (for social media)

Your cover image (if you have one) must be:

- At least 1800x2700 pixels (standard book cover ratio)
- 300 DPI minimum
- In both JPEG and PNG formats
- Without text overlay (provide a clean version plus the final)

If you do not have a final cover yet, state “Cover image coming [date]” and provide a mood board or placeholder.

Comparison Titles: Choose Wisely

Two or three comp titles show publicists where your book fits in the market. Rules:

- **Recent (published within 3–5 years)**
- **Successful but not blockbuster** (comparing to *Song of Achilles* is fine if accurate; comparing to *Harry Potter* is delusional)
- **At least one LGBTQ+ comp** to show community fit
- **One “unexpected” comp** to show creativity

Example: “For fans of *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* (historical glamour), *Plain Bad Heroines* (queer

horror with humor), and *The Gilded Wolves* (found family in a historical setting).”

Endorsements and Beta Quotes

Even without famous authors, you can include quotes from:

- Beta readers (with their permission and first name only, e.g., “— Alex, early reader”)
- Sensitivity readers (credentialed)
- Fellow portal authors (swap endorsements)

Format: Short, punchy, attribution.

“A thrilling, heart-wrenching debut that kept me guessing until the last bone.” — Sam, beta reader, 4.9/5 on readwithpride.com

Do not fabricate quotes. The portal’s community reporting system catches fraud.

Contact and Social Links

Make it effortless for a publicist to reach you:

- Email address (professional — not “queerwriter4life@gmail.com” unless that is your brand)
- Link to your portal author profile

- Link to your primary social platform (choose one: Instagram, TikTok, or Twitter/X)
- Link to your newsletter signup (optional but impressive)
- **Do not include** your phone number or home address.

The Supplementary Assets Folder

Your one-page press kit links to a **private supplementary folder** (Google Drive or Dropbox). Inside:

- Full manuscript (PDF and EPUB)
- Sample chapters (first three)
- High-res author photos (multiple angles)
- High-res cover (final and placeholder)
- A 30-second author introduction video (optional but powerful)
- A one-sentence logline sheet (for quick reference)

Set permissions to “anyone with the link can view” – but do not make it public. Share the link only with publicists who request it.

Press Kit Etiquette on the Portal

- **Update your kit before every pitch wave.** A publicist who clicks your link and sees “coming soon” for a cover that you actually have is disappointed.
- **Check your links monthly.** Broken links signal carelessness.
- **Do not password-protect the one-page kit itself.** Publicists will not request a password. The kit must be immediately accessible. Only the manuscript folder needs a password (and provide it in the pitch).

The Portal’s Press Kit Analytics

One of readwithpride.com’s most underused features is **press kit analytics**. From your dashboard, you can see:

- Total views
- Unique publicist viewers (anonymized by role)
- Time spent on each section
- Downloads of supplementary assets

Use this data: If a publicist viewed your kit three times but never downloaded the manuscript, your blurb or selling points may need strengthening. If they spent

10 seconds and left, your bio or cover may be turning them off. Iterate based on behavior.

Sample Complete One-Page Press Kit (Abridged for Space)

[Author Photo]

Jordan Lee (they/them) – Chicago-based queer nonbinary writer. Debut novel THE BONE ORCHARD.

Blurb: [150 words as above]

Selling Points:

- 1920s Harlem Renaissance queer historical mystery
- Nonbinary detective + sapphic slow burn
- Book club-friendly with discussion guide available
- Vetted by historian Dr. Aisha Williams

Comp Titles: Evelyn Hugo + Plain Bad Heroines + The Gilded Wolves

Endorsements: “Glittering and dangerous” – Alex, early reader. “A new classic” – Sam, portal beta.

Contact: jordan@jordanleebooks.com |
[@jordanleewrites](#) | [Portal Profile]

[Cover Image]

Full manuscript and assets: [link] Password: BoneOrchard2025

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 15

1. Open the Press Kit Builder on readwithpride.com. Complete all fields even if placeholder.
2. Write your 100-word bio and 150-word blurb. Revise three times.
3. Gather or create your author photo and cover image (or hire a photographer/designer from the portal's service directory).
4. Choose 2–3 comp titles. Verify they are recent and appropriate.
5. Create a supplementary folder with manuscript and assets. Link it from your kit.
6. Ask two beta readers for short quote endorsements.
7. Share your draft press kit with a trusted author friend for feedback.

Chapter 16: Crafting the Perfect “Hook” for a Crowded Inbox

You have your targeted pitch and your press kit. But none of it matters if the publicist never opens your message. The **hook** – the first sentence of your email subject line and opening line – determines whether you are read or routed to trash. On readwithpride.com, where publicists receive 50–200 pitches per week, your hook has approximately 3 seconds to earn a click. This chapter teaches you to write hooks that grab, intrigue, and demand attention – without gimmicks or desperation.

Why the Hook Is Different on a Queer Platform

General publishing advice says: “Use a celebrity comparison” or “Lead with your credentials.” On readwithpride.com, those tactics often backfire because publicists see them as inauthentic. Instead, the most effective hooks on this platform share three qualities:

1. **Specificity** – Vague praise (“important queer story”) loses. Specific details (“lesbian necromancers in a floating academy”) win.
2. **Community grounding** – References to portal activities (beta ratings, forum discussions, Pitch Party reactions) build immediate trust.

3. **Emotional resonance** – Publicists on this platform are often queer themselves. They want to *feel* something from your hook.

The Subject Line: Your First and Only Chance

A subject line on readwithpride.com should be **30–50 characters** (mobile-friendly) and include three elements:

1. Your genre (abbreviated if needed)
2. A unique identifier (title or specific hook phrase)
3. A soft signal of readiness (optional but helpful)

Poor subject lines:

- “Book query” (zero information)
- “Please read my LGBTQ+ novel” (begging)
- “URGENT – Debut author seeking publicist” (not urgent)

Strong subject lines:

- “Query: Sapphic historical mystery – BONE ORCHARD”
- “Portal beta 4.9 – Queer horror, 85k words”

- “Pitch Party follow-up: THE BONE ORCHARD (🚀 from you)”

The third example is gold because it references a specific portal event and a past positive interaction.

The Opening Line: Brevity with Power

Once the publicist opens your email, your opening line must justify their click within 5 seconds. Avoid throat-clearing (“I hope this email finds you well”). Avoid apology (“I know you’re busy”). Start with **the hook itself**.

Formula: [Specific compelling detail] + [Why it matters to this publicist].

Examples:

- *“My queer horror novel just scored a 4.9 average from 14 portal beta readers – and I noticed you said in your bio that you’re ‘starving for fresh voices in queer horror.’”*
- *“In a genre full of ‘bury your gays,’ my sapphic romantasy gives two women a bloody, beautiful happy ending – exactly the kind of campaign you built for [Publicist’s Past Client].”*

- *“Last month at the Pitch Party, you gave my hook a rocket ship. Here’s the completed manuscript.”*

The Three Hook Archetypes That Work on This Portal

Through analyzing hundreds of successful pitch threads on readwithpride.com, three hook archetypes consistently outperform others.

Archetype 1: The Community Validation Hook

Leads with proof that the portal’s own readers love your book.

“Fifteen beta readers. 4.8 average. ‘I couldn’t put it down’ from seven of them. My trans YA contemporary is ready for a publicist who wants to work with a book that the community has already embraced.”

Archetype 2: The Specific Niche Hook

Leads with a hyper-specific subgenre or trope that matches a publicist’s stated interest.

“You said you’re looking for ‘ace romance that doesn’t fade to black.’ My 70k word novel is exactly that: a slow-burn asexual love story between two disaster bi’s who build a vegetable farm together.”

Archetype 3: The Urgent Timing Hook

Leads with a time-sensitive opportunity.

“My sapphic pirate fantasy releases in 4 months. Pre-orders open next week. I have 3,200 newsletter subscribers waiting – but I need a publicist to help me reach beyond my existing audience.”

Hooks to Avoid at All Costs

Some hooks are so ineffective that they actively harm your chances. Do not use:

- **“My book is unlike anything else out there.”** (It isn’t. And publicists hate hyperbole.)
- **“This book will be the next [bestseller].”** (No one knows that. Hubris repels.)
- **“I’m just a small author trying to make it.”** (Pity is not a marketing strategy.)
- **“As a queer person myself...”** (On this platform, that is baseline, not a hook. Lead with your book’s specificity, not your identity as a credential unless directly relevant.)
- **“Dear Publicist Team”** (You are not writing to a team. You are writing to a human.)

The A/B Test for Your Hook

Before you send any pitch, run an **A/B test** using the portal’s “Pitch Sandbox” – a feature that allows you to

send your hook to a panel of volunteer beta readers (other authors) who rate it on clarity, intrigue, and authenticity. After 10 ratings, you receive an aggregated score.

If you do not have access to the Sandbox, test manually:

- Send your hook to two trusted author friends. Ask: “What emotion does this evoke?” and “Would you click?”
- Read your hook aloud. Does it sound natural or performative?
- Sleep on it. A hook that feels clever at midnight may feel cringey at 9 AM.

Adapting Your Hook for Different Publicist Personalities

Not all publicists respond to the same hook style. Segment your publicist shortlist by personality (inferred from their profile tone):

Publicist profile tone

Best hook style

Formal, academic, lists
credentials

Data-heavy (beta scores, newsletter
metrics)

Casual, uses emojis, jokes

Witty, trope-forward, playful

Activist, political, community-
focused

Mission-aligned, social justice angle

Commercial, sales-oriented

Market potential, comp titles, pre-
order numbers

A hook that makes a commercial publicist yawn might excite an activist publicist. Know your audience.

The Hook in Your Portal Profile

Your hook should not live only in emails. On readwithpride.com, your author profile's **tagline** (the line under your name) functions as a permanent hook. Publicists browsing author directories see this tagline before anything else.

Weak tagline: "Author of LGBTQ+ fiction"

Strong tagline: "Lesbian necromancers with feelings | Portal beta 4.9"

Update your tagline monthly to reflect your latest hook iteration.

The Emotional Hook: When Vulnerability Works

Sometimes the most powerful hook is not about your book – it is about why you wrote it. Use vulnerability sparingly and only when it directly connects to your book's unique perspective.

Example: *"I wrote my queer recovery memoir in the two years after leaving conversion therapy. It has 4.7 from 20 beta readers who survived similar experiences. I'm seeking a publicist who understands that this book is both art and witness."*

This works because the vulnerability is relevant and paired with community validation. Vulnerability alone (“this book is my heart”) is not a hook.

Revising Your Hook: The 10-Minute Exercise

If you are stuck, do this 10-minute exercise:

1. Set a timer for 2 minutes. Write every possible hook for your book. No editing.
2. Timer for 2 minutes. Circle the three most specific phrases.
3. Timer for 2 minutes. Combine one specific phrase with a publicist reference.
4. Timer for 2 minutes. Shorten each hook to under 15 words.
5. Timer for 2 minutes. Read each aloud. Choose the one that feels truest.

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 16

1. Write 10 different subject lines for your pitch. Choose the best three.
2. Write 5 different opening hooks using the three archetypes.
3. Test your hooks with the Pitch Sandbox or with author friends.

4. Update your portal profile tagline to your strongest hook phrase.
 5. For each publicist on your shortlist, write a customized version of your hook that references their profile.
 6. Read your final hook aloud to someone who does not know your book. Ask: “What genre is this?”
-

Chapter 17: The Follow-Up – Timing, Tone, and Knowing When to Stop

You sent the perfect pitch. You waited. A week passed. Then two. Silence. Your stomach knots. Should you follow up? How many times? What if you annoy them? This chapter is your definitive guide to the **follow-up** – arguably the most emotionally fraught yet strategically essential skill on readwithpride.com. You will learn precise timing, tone templates, and the hardest lesson: knowing when to stop and move on.

Why Silence Is Not Rejection (Usually)

On readwithpride.com, publicists operate under crushing workloads. Many manage 20–30 active campaigns simultaneously. A non-response after 7 days rarely means “your book is terrible.” More often, it means:

- Your email landed during a launch week for another client
- The publicist is traveling or dealing with personal circumstances
- Your pitch is in a “maybe” pile they have not yet revisited

- The portal's message filtering accidentally flagged you (rare but possible)

Understanding this reframes follow-up from “begging” to “gentle reminder that you exist.”

The Optimal Follow-Up Schedule

Based on response data from the portal (anonymized and aggregated), the following schedule maximizes your chances without damaging your reputation:

Time after initial pitch	Action
0 days	Send pitch. Do nothing else.
7–10 days	Send first follow-up (if no response).
14–17 days	If still no response, send second and final follow-up.
21+ days	No further follow-ups. Mark as “closed” and move on.

Two follow-ups maximum. After that, any additional messages will be marked as “persistent” in the publicist’s view of your profile – a negative flag.

The First Follow-Up: Adding Value, Not Volume

Your first follow-up should **not** be “just checking in” or “bumping this to the top of your inbox.” Those phrases signal desperation. Instead, add value by providing **new information** that has emerged since your initial pitch.

Template for first follow-up (7–10 days):

Subject: Re: Query: [Book Title] – [small update]

Hi [Publicist Name],

Following up on my pitch from [date]. Since then:

- My beta reader rating increased to 4.8 (from 4.6)
- I was featured in the portal's "New Voices" newsletter
- I've added two more endorsements (attached)

No need to respond if you're swamped, but I wanted to share the momentum. The one-pager and full manuscript remain available at the same link.

Best,

[Your Name]

Notice: no demand, no guilt, no "did you see my email?" Just a value-add and an open door.

The Second (Final) Follow-Up: The Graceful Exit

If no response after another 7 days, send a **final follow-up** that assumes the answer is "no" but leaves a positive impression for the future.

Template for second follow-up (14–17 days):

Subject: Final follow-up – [Book Title]

Hi [Publicist Name],

I'm closing the loop on my pitch for [Book Title]. I understand you may be at capacity or my project may not be the right fit right now.

If your availability changes in the future, I'd welcome a conversation. My press kit is always up to date at [link].

Thank you for considering, and for all the work you do for queer authors.

Warmly,
[Your Name]

This message signals professionalism, self-awareness, and respect for boundaries. Publicists remember authors who exit gracefully. Some have reached out months later to say, "Your final follow-up was so classy – are you still looking?"

What to Do If a Publicist Says "Not Right Now"

A publicist may respond to your follow-up with a polite "not right now" – often due to capacity, genre mismatch, or timing. Respond graciously:

“Thank you for letting me know. I appreciate your honesty. If you ever have a colleague you could recommend, I’d be grateful. Wishing you well.”

Do not argue. Do not ask “why?” (unless you have a pre-existing relationship). Do not try to convince them. A “not right now” is a closed door, but a closed door with a good impression can become an open window later.

The Portal’s “Read Receipt” Feature

readwithpride.com offers optional read receipts for messages. Enable them in your settings. If a publicist reads your pitch and does not respond within 14 days, they have likely passed. Do not follow up more than twice even if read receipts show they opened it repeatedly – that is their prerogative.

Caveat: Do not obsess over read receipts. A publicist may open your message on mobile while commuting, intend to respond later, and forget. The receipt alone is not an action signal.

The Emotional Toll of Waiting

The silence between pitch and follow-up is agonizing. Here is how to manage your anxiety:

- **Set a “pitch and detach” rule.** After sending a pitch or follow-up, close the portal tab. Do not check for responses for 24 hours.
- **Keep a pitch calendar** with scheduled follow-up dates. On non-action days, do not think about it.
- **Batch your pitching.** Send 5 pitches in one morning, then do not send more for a week. This limits the number of simultaneous waiting periods.
- **Celebrate your courage.** You pitched. That is a win regardless of response. Many authors never send the first message.

When to Break the Two-Follow-Up Rule

There are two rare exceptions where a third follow-up may be acceptable:

1. **A publicist explicitly asked you to follow up** (e.g., “I’m swamped until May – remind me then”). Mark your calendar and follow up exactly when they asked, no earlier.
2. **You have major news** (book deal, award nomination, viral moment) that substantially changes your pitch. Even then, send one third

follow-up with “Major update” in the subject line and accept silence afterward.

Do not invent fake news to justify a third follow-up. Publicists can smell manufactured urgency.

The Follow-Up No-No List

- **“Per my previous email...”** (Too aggressive)
- **“I’m sure you’re busy but...”** (Passive-aggressive)
- **Calling the publicist’s phone number** (Never. It is not on their profile for a reason.)
- **Messaging them on their personal social media** (Huge violation)
- **Asking mutual contacts to intervene** (Only if the contact offers spontaneously)
- **Sending a revised manuscript without request** (Presumptuous)

Following Up on a Positive Response

If a publicist responds positively (“Let’s set up a call”), your follow-up is not a follow-up – it is a **next step**. Respond within 24 hours with:

1. Gratitude (“Thank you so much for your interest.”)

2. A clear proposed time (“Would any of these three times work for a 20-minute call?”)
3. A confirmation of materials (“I’ve resent the one-pager and manuscript link below.”)

Do not overwhelm them with additional information unless asked.

The Art of the “Soft Follow-Up” via Portal Activity

An advanced technique: instead of a direct follow-up message, increase your visibility on the portal. Publicists who have read your pitch may see your name in other contexts:

- Post a thoughtful comment in a forum thread.
- Update your profile with a new beta reader quote.
- Participate in a Pitch Party (the publicist may notice your name again).

This is not a follow-up – it is ambient presence. It works only if you are genuinely engaged, not performative.

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 17

1. Set up your pitch calendar with follow-up dates before you send any pitch.

2. Write your first-follow-up template now (while calm) so you do not write emotionally later.
3. Enable read receipts on your portal messaging settings.
4. Practice the “pitch and detach” rule for your next batch.
5. For any existing pitches past 21 days with no response, send a graceful final follow-up or close the loop silently.
6. Identify one author friend to be your “follow-up accountability partner” – someone who will talk you out of sending a third message.

Chapter 18: Leveraging Platform Data – What Metrics Matter to a Publicist?

On readwithpride.com, your author profile is not static – it generates **data**. Publicists see metrics that you may not even know exist: how many beta readers rated your book, how many times your press kit was viewed, how consistently you engage in forums, and more. This chapter transforms you from a passive data generator into an active **data strategist**. You will learn which metrics publicists truly care about, how to improve them, and how to present your data as proof of readiness.

The Publicist's Data Dashboard

When a publicist views your author profile (with your privacy settings allowing it), they see a dashboard of metrics. Not all are equally important. Here is the ranking from most to least influential:

Metric	Importance	Why
Beta reader average rating (1–5)	★★★★★	Direct proof of reader appeal
Number of completed beta reads	★★★★☆	Shows community engagement and vetting
Press kit view count (last 30 days)	★★★★☆	Indicates interest from others (social proof)
Forum engagement score	★★★★☆	Reflects professionalism and community standing
Response rate to messages	★★★☆☆	Shows reliability (but rarely visible to authors)
Profile completeness %	★★★☆☆	Signals effort and seriousness
Number of books listed	★★☆☆☆	Less important for debut authors

Focus your energy on the top three: beta ratings, beta count, and press kit views.

Beta Reader Ratings: The North Star Metric

The most important number on your profile is your **average beta reader rating**, displayed prominently. This rating comes from readers who completed a full manuscript read on the portal and submitted a structured review (plot, character, prose, emotional impact, and a 1–5 overall).

What publicists consider “good” ratings:

- 4.8–5.0: Exceptional. Publicists will actively seek you out.
- 4.5–4.7: Strong. You are in consideration for most publicists.
- 4.0–4.4: Average. Publicists will want to read samples themselves.
- Below 4.0: A red flag. Publicists may assume the book needs more work.

How to improve your beta rating:

- **Do not ask friends or family to beta read** – they inflate ratings, and the portal’s algorithm

detects unusual patterns (e.g., all 5s from accounts with no other activity).

- **Use the portal’s “request specific feedback” feature** – ask beta readers to rate you honestly, explaining that low ratings help you improve.
- **Revise based on feedback before your next beta round** – then request a new round. Your rating can increase.
- **Do not delete low ratings** – publicists can see your rating history. Hiding low scores looks worse than showing improvement.

Number of Beta Reads: Proof of Iteration

A single beta reader rating of 5.0 is less impressive than 15 beta readers averaging 4.7. Why? Because a larger sample size reduces luck or bias. Publicists look for **at least 8–12 beta readers** for a debut manuscript.

Beta count benchmarks:

- 0–4: You are not ready to pitch.
- 5–7: Borderline. Proceed only if ratings are very high.
- 8–12: Solid. Most publicists will take you seriously.

- 13–20: Excellent. Shows you have iterated and built community.
- 20+: Exceptional, but diminishing returns after 20.

How to increase your beta count ethically:

- Use the Beta Reader Matchmaker weekly.
- Offer to beta read for others first (the portal prioritizes active exchangers).
- Post in Genre Neighborhoods: “Looking for 3 more beta readers for queer horror – will swap.”
- After each beta round, thank readers publicly and ask if they know others who might be interested.

Press Kit View Count: Social Proof in Action

When a publicist sees that your press kit has been viewed 47 times in the last month, they think: “Other publicists are looking at this author.” That is **social proof**, and it works powerfully. You can influence this metric without being manipulative.

Legitimate ways to increase press kit views:

- Include your press kit link in your forum signature (automatically appended to every forum post).
- Share your press kit link in your newsletter (encourage subscribers to click even if they are not publicists – clicks count).
- Add your press kit link to your social media bio.
- Mention your press kit in Pitch Party entries: “Full press kit at [link].”

Do not: Click your own link repeatedly (portal filters self-views) or ask friends to click (the platform detects anomalous patterns from similar IP addresses).

Forum Engagement Score: The Quiet Signal

Your forum engagement score is a composite of:

- Number of helpful votes received on your posts
- Consistency of posting (not 100 posts in one day, then nothing for months)
- Quality flags (posts reported or removed hurt your score)
- Diversity of forums participated in

Publicists use this score as a **character reference**. A high score suggests you are thoughtful, respectful, and community-oriented – exactly the kind of author a publicist wants to represent.

How to build a strong forum score:

- Post 2–3 times per week, not 20 times per day.
- Answer other authors’ questions helpfully (“I had the same issue – here’s what worked for me”).
- Avoid debate threads that turn hostile.
- Thank people who answer your questions (the “helpful” button is a vote).

Data Presentation in Your Pitch

Do not assume publicists will dig through your profile to find data. **Present your best metrics in your pitch.** Examples:

- *“My manuscript has a 4.8 average from 12 portal beta readers.”*
- *“My press kit received 35 views in the last month (including from two publicists who have not yet responded – but I’m hoping you’ll be the one who does!).”*

- *“I’m in the top 5% of forum engagement scores for the horror genre neighborhood.”*

Be truthful. The portal allows publicists to verify your claims with one click. Lying about metrics is a permanent ban.

Improving Low Metrics Before You Pitch

If your metrics are weak, do not pitch yet. Instead, run a **Metric Improvement Plan (MIP)** :

Weak metric	Improvement action	Timeframe
Low beta rating (under 4.0)	Revise manuscript based on feedback, then request 5 new beta readers	4–6 weeks
Too few beta reads (under 8)	Do 3 beta swaps per week for 3 weeks	3 weeks
Low press kit views (under 10/month)	Add kit link to signature, share on socials, mention in forums	2 weeks

Weak metric	Improvement action	Timeframe
Low forum score (under 50)	Post helpful answers daily for 2 weeks	2 weeks

Do not pitch until your metrics are at least “solid” (beta rating 4.5+, 8+ reads, 20+ press kit views/month, forum score 70+).

The Dark Side: Data Anxiety

Some authors become obsessed with metrics, checking their portal dashboard hourly. This is counterproductive. Set a **weekly metrics review** (every Friday at 10 AM). Update a simple spreadsheet. Look for trends, not fluctuations. A single new beta rating of 3.8 is not a crisis if your average remains 4.6.

Portal Data That Publicists Cannot See (And Why)

For your privacy, publicists cannot see:

- Your personal email address (unless you share it)
- Your exact response times to other publicists
- Your financial information
- Your private messages with other authors
- Your draft manuscripts (only completed, shared beta reads)

This boundary protects you. Do not offer to share private data unless asked.

Using Data to Choose Between Publicists

Data works both ways. When evaluating publicists, look at *their* portal metrics:

- Average response time (displayed on their profile)
- Client satisfaction rating (if they opt into reviews)
- Number of active campaigns (anonymized range: 1–5, 6–10, 11+)
- Portfolio diversity (genres and author stages)

A publicist with 11+ active campaigns may have less time for you than one with 1–5. Balance prestige with availability.

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 18

1. Review your own portal author dashboard. Write down your current beta rating, beta count, press kit views, and forum score.
2. Compare your metrics to the benchmarks above. Identify your weakest metric.
3. Create a 4-week Metric Improvement Plan for that weak metric.

4. Update your pitch template to include your strongest 2–3 metrics.
5. Set a weekly Friday morning appointment to review metrics and log changes.
6. If your metrics are too low to pitch, pause all outreach and execute your MIP first.

Chapter 19: Case Study – A Romance, A Memoir, and A YA Fantasy (Three Different Approaches)

Theory is essential. But nothing teaches like real examples. In this chapter, we follow three fictional (but realistic) authors on readwithpride.com as they navigate the journey from manuscript to publicist partnership. Each faces different challenges, uses different strategies, and achieves different outcomes. By the end, you will see how the principles from previous chapters apply across genres, identities, and career stages.

Case Study 1: Alexis – Queer Romance (Contemporary)

The author: Alexis (she/her) is a 34-year-old debut author. She works a full-time job as a nurse. She wrote a 75,000-word contemporary romance between a plus-size bisexual woman and a nonbinary barista. Title: *SWEET NOTHING*.

Her starting point: No platform, 200 Instagram followers, no beta readers, never used the portal.

Her challenge: Limited time and budget. Cannot afford a high-cost publicist. Needs a publicist who works with debut romance authors on flexible fee structures.

Her strategy on readwithpride.com:

- **Months 1–2:** Completes 5 beta swaps (reads other romance novels first, then requests reads for hers). Achieves 4.7 average from 8 beta readers.
- **Month 3:** Joins the Romance Genre Neighborhood. Posts regularly, becomes known for her thoughtful trope analyses. Forum score reaches 75.
- **Month 4:** Participates in Pitch Party. Her hook (“a plus-size bisexual nurse and a nonbinary barista – no miscommunication, just two disasters learning to communicate”) receives 3 rocket ship reactions.
- **Month 5:** Pitches 8 romance-specialized publicists using targeted approach. Highlights her beta rating, forum score, and Pitch Party rockets.
- **Month 6:** Receives 2 positive responses. One publicist offers a sliding-scale fee (\$1,500 for a 3-month campaign). Alexis signs.

Outcome: *Sweet Nothings* sells 3,200 copies in first 3 months – not a bestseller, but profitable. Alexis secures a second book contract.

Key takeaway: Community engagement and beta reads can substitute for a large existing platform. Romance readers on the portal became her first fans.

Case Study 2: Marcus – Queer Memoir (Recovery from Religious Trauma)

The author: Marcus (he/him) is a 45-year-old former pastor who left the church after coming out as gay. He has no writing credentials but a powerful story. Title: *UNLEARNED*.

His starting point: A small Twitter following (1,200) built through his advocacy. No beta readers. Concerned about emotional vulnerability.

His challenge: Memoir requires sensitivity. Publicists worry about legal issues (naming people) and marketability (memoirs by non-famous people are hard sells).

His strategy on readwithpride.com:

- **Month 1:** Does not seek beta readers immediately. Instead, uses the portal's "Sensitivity Reader Network" – three readers with religious trauma backgrounds give detailed feedback on emotional accuracy and safety.

- **Month 2:** Revises based on sensitivity notes. Adds a content warning page. Then seeks 6 beta readers from the “Recovery & Resilience” forum.
- **Month 3:** Beta rating 4.9 from 6 readers (small sample but emotionally resonant). Press kit includes a video of Marcus reading a 2-minute excerpt – powerful.
- **Month 4:** Pitches only publicists who list “memoir” and “spiritual trauma” in their specializations. Only 3 such publicists exist on the portal. He targets them with deep personalization.
- **Month 5:** Two publicists decline (market concerns). One publicist, herself a former evangelical, says yes. They structure a low-cost campaign focused on podcast appearances and faith-based LGBTQ+ organizations.
- **Month 6:** *Unlearned* publishes. Sells only 1,500 copies but becomes a word-of-mouth hit in recovery communities. Wins a small press award.

Key takeaway: Niche books need niche publicists. Broader rejection does not mean your book is bad – it

means you need the right match. Also, sensitivity readers are non-negotiable for memoir.

Case Study 3: Samira – Queer YA Fantasy (Muslim Lesbian Protagonist)

The author: Samira (she/her) is a 28-year-old librarian. She wrote a 90,000-word YA fantasy about a Muslim lesbian girl who must save her city using forbidden magic. Title: *THE SULTAN'S DAUGHTER*.

Her starting point: Strong library connections, 5,000 TikTok followers (book reviews), no beta readers, active on portal.

Her challenge: YA market is crowded. Also, Muslim lesbian representation is still rare – she needs a publicist who understands both Muslim and queer audiences without conflating or erasing either.

Her strategy on readwithpride.com:

- **Month 1–2:** Runs a targeted beta campaign specifically requesting Muslim beta readers and LGBTQ+ Muslim readers (the portal allows demographic filtering). Gets 12 beta readers, average 4.8.
- **Month 3:** Creates a stunning press kit with a custom illustrated map of her fantasy city. Press kit views spike to 80 in first week.

- **Month 4:** Does not pitch immediately. Instead, she uses the portal's "Publicist Request" feature – she posts an "Author Seeking" notice in the YA Neighborhood, listing her beta stats and unique representation angle.
- **Month 5:** Three publicists approach *her*. She interviews all three, asking specific questions about marketing to Muslim bookstores, handling potential Islamophobic backlash, and pitching to YA book boxes.
- **Month 6:** Signs with a boutique publicist who has experience with both queer and BIPOC YA. Campaign includes a Muslim BookTok tour and a partnership with a queer Muslim nonprofit.

Outcome: *The Sultan's Daughter* lands in a YA book box (5,000 copies). Sells 8,000 copies in first 6 months. Samira is invited to speak at ALA (American Library Association).

Key takeaway: Sometimes you do not need to cold pitch – make yourself findable. Also, unique representation is an asset when paired with proof of community validation (beta readers from that community).

Comparative Analysis: What Worked for All Three

Despite different genres and challenges, Alexis, Marcus, and Samira shared five winning behaviors:

1. **They completed beta reads before pitching.** None pitched with zero feedback.
2. **They used portal-specific features** (beta matchmaker, sensitivity network, publicist request).
3. **They personalized their outreach** (or made themselves findable so outreach came to them).
4. **They managed expectations** – none expected a six-figure advance or a New York Times bestseller.
5. **They treated publicists as partners, not saviors.** All three went into campaigns with realistic goals and clear communication.

What Almost Went Wrong (And How They Fixed It)

- **Alexis** almost gave up after two months of low beta reader response. She fixed it by improving her beta request form (adding a more compelling book description and a personal note).

- **Marcus** initially wrote a 400-word pitch (too long). A forum member gave him blunt feedback, and he cut it to 180 words, which improved response rates.
- **Samira** nearly signed with a publicist who had no Muslim marketing experience. Her partner pointed out the red flag; she withdrew and found a better fit.

Applying These Lessons to Your Book

Use this grid to assess where you are compared to the three case studies:

Factor	Alexis (Romance)	Marcus (Memoir)	Samira (YA Fantasy)	YOU
Beta readers (number)	8	6	12	_____
Beta rating	4.7	4.9	4.8	_____
Forum score	75	50 (lower due to lurking)	88	_____

Factor	Alexis (Romance)	Marcus (Memoir)	Samira (YA Fantasy)	YOU
Specialization match difficulty	Easy (many romance publicists)	Hard (few memoir publicists)	Medium	_____
Platform size (pre-pitch)	200 IG	1,200 Twitter	5,000 TikTok + library	_____

Factor	Alexis (Romance)	Marcus (Memoir)	Samira (YA Fantasy)	YOU
Unique hook strength	Medium (tropes)	High (recovery + faith)	High (Muslim lesbian fantasy)	_____

Action: Fill in your numbers. Where you are weaker than the case studies, improve before pitching.

The Publicist's Perspective on These Case Studies

I interviewed three publicists from the portal (anonymized) and asked them to react to these case studies. Their feedback:

- **On Alexis:** “Smart to build forum credibility before pitching. Romance is competitive, but she proved she knew the genre conversation.”
- **On Marcus:** “Brave to be so vulnerable. The sensitivity reader network gave me confidence that he had done the work. I passed because memoir is hard, but I referred him to a colleague.”
- **On Samira:** “She didn’t need me – I needed her. That level of community validation and unique representation is rare. I reached out to her.”

The third comment is the dream: publicists reaching out to *you*. It is possible.

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 19

1. Identify which case study most resembles your book (genre, identity, challenges).

2. List three specific actions from that case study that you have not yet taken.
3. Fill out the comparison grid for your own metrics.
4. For any metric lower than the case studies', create an improvement plan.
5. Share your case study analysis with a writing partner and ask: "Which author am I most like, and what am I missing?"
6. If you are a memoir author, find the sensitivity reader network today. If romance, join the Genre Neighborhood. If YA, set up your Publicist Request post.

Chapter 20: Negotiating with Publicists – Rates, Expectations, and Red Flags

A publicist says yes. Congratulations. Now the real work begins: **negotiation**. This chapter prepares you to discuss money, scope, and expectations with confidence. You will learn typical rate structures on readwithpride.com, how to spot unethical practices, and how to advocate for yourself without alienating your new partner. Negotiation is not adversarial – it is the process of aligning two people toward a shared goal.

Understanding Publicist Rate Structures on the Portal

Publicists on readwithpride.com use four common payment models. Each has pros and cons.

1. Flat Fee per Campaign (most common for debut authors)

- **Range:** \$1,500 – \$10,000 for a 3–6 month campaign
- **What it covers:** A defined list of deliverables (e.g., 15 media pitches, press release distribution, one event coordination)
- **Best for:** Authors with a clear budget and desire for predictability

2. Hourly Rate

- **Range:** \$50 – \$200 per hour
- **What it covers:** Time spent on specific tasks (pitch writing, media list building, follow-ups)
- **Best for:** Limited-scope projects or authors who want to pay only for exactly what they need

3. Commission or Royalty Share

- **Range:** 10% – 20% of book sales or advance
- **What it covers:** Publicist takes a percentage of what the book earns
- **Caution:** Rare on this portal. Some publicists offer it for very high-potential projects. Be wary of publicists who ask for commission with no cap – legitimate offers have a maximum.

4. Hybrid (Flat Fee + Performance Bonus)

- **Example:** \$2,000 flat fee + 5% of sales above 10,000 copies
- **Best for:** Authors who want to align incentives without giving away too much upside

What Should a Campaign Include?

Before you sign, ensure the publicist provides a **scope of work** document that lists specific activities. A typical 3-month campaign for a debut author on readwithpride.com might include:

- Press release writing and distribution (50–100 outlets)
- Targeted pitch to 20–30 book bloggers and BookTok creators
- Coordination of 1–2 virtual launch events via the portal
- Monthly progress reports with metrics
- Assistance with author Q&A prep for interviews

Red flag: A publicist who cannot or will not provide a scope of work. “I’ll just do what’s needed” is too vague.

The Portal’s Suggested Rate Guidelines

readwithpride.com publishes annual rate guidelines based on publicist experience level (self-reported). These are suggestions, not rules, but they help you benchmark:

Publicist level	Flat fee (3 months)	Hourly
Emerging (0–2 years experience)	\$1,500 – \$3,000	\$50 – \$75
Established (3–7 years)	\$3,000 – \$6,000	\$75 – \$125
Senior (8+ years)	\$6,000 – \$10,000+	\$125 – \$200

Do not assume higher price equals better results. An emerging publicist with deep genre connections may outperform a senior publicist who is overextended.

Negotiation Scripts: What to Say and What Not to Say

Negotiation anxiety is real. Use these scripts.

When the fee is above your budget:

“I’m excited to work with you. My budget is [\$X]. Could we explore a reduced scope that fits that amount? For example, could we focus only on media pitches and skip the event coordination?”

When you want to ask for a payment plan:

“Would you be open to a payment plan – for example, 50% upfront and 50% at the halfway point of the campaign?”

When you need to walk away politely:

“Thank you for your time and for the detailed proposal. After reviewing my budget, I don’t think we can align right now. I hope we can work together on a future project.”

What never to say:

- *“Can you do it for free for the exposure?”* (Insulting)

- *“Another publicist offered me a lower rate.”* (Manipulative)
- *“I’ll pay you after the book makes money.”* (Unless they offered commission first)

Red Flags: When to Say No

Not every “yes” is a yes you should accept. Watch for these red flags on readwithpride.com:

▶ **Guarantees of bestseller status** – No ethical publicist can guarantee bestseller lists. Run.

▶ **Requests for full payment upfront without a contract** – A contract is non-negotiable. The portal offers a template.

▶ **Negative community reviews** – Check the publicist’s rating on the portal. Below 3.5 stars with written complaints? Proceed with extreme caution.

▶ **Pressure to sign immediately** – “This offer expires in 24 hours” is a high-pressure tactic. Legitimate publicists give you time.

▶ **Vague about their media contacts** – “I have relationships” without specifics means they may not have any.

▶ **Asks for exclusive rights to your book’s publicity** – You should be free to do your own promotion simultaneously.

The Contract: Essential Clauses

The portal provides a boilerplate contract template. At minimum, ensure these clauses are included:

- **Term** – Start and end dates, plus termination conditions (e.g., 30-day notice by either party)
- **Scope of work** – Specific deliverables, not general promises
- **Fees and payment schedule** – Exact amounts, due dates, and accepted payment methods
- **Expenses** – Who pays for travel, software, or other costs (usually you, but must be capped)
- **Reporting** – How often you receive updates (weekly or biweekly is standard)
- **Ownership** – You own all press materials created; publicist cannot reuse without permission
- **Confidentiality** – Publicist cannot share your manuscript or personal information
- **Dispute resolution** – The portal offers mediation services; include that option

Do not sign anything without reading it. If legal language confuses you, the portal has a volunteer

lawyer network for LGBTQ+ authors (ask in the Resource Exchange forum).

The Conversation About Goals and Expectations

Before signing, have a direct conversation about goals. Use this checklist:

- “What does success look like for a book like mine, given your experience?”
- “How many media placements have you secured for debut authors in the last year?”
- “How do you handle it if a campaign is not performing as hoped?”
- “How quickly do you typically respond to my emails during a campaign?”
- “What do you expect from *me* during the campaign (e.g., social media posts, availability for interviews, quick responses)?”

Write down their answers. If they match your expectations, proceed. If they are evasive, reconsider.

When You Cannot Afford a Publicist at All

If your budget is truly zero, do not despair. The portal offers **community-powered publicity** – a system where authors help each other with small promotional tasks (social shares, review exchanges,

event hosting). It is not a replacement for a professional publicist, but it can generate early momentum. Some authors use community publicity first, then hire a publicist for a second edition or next book.

After You Sign: Maintaining a Healthy Relationship

Negotiation does not end at signing. Throughout the campaign, revisit expectations:

- **Monthly check-in call** – 15 minutes to review progress against scope.
- **Change order process** – If you want to add a task, agree on additional fee in writing before work begins.
- **Feedback loop** – If something is not working, say so respectfully. “The bloggers you pitched last week didn’t seem to respond – could we try a different angle?”

A good publicist will welcome feedback. A defensive publicist is a problem.

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 20

1. Determine your maximum budget for publicity before you start negotiating.

2. Review the portal's rate guidelines and identify which publicist level fits your budget.
 3. Write down your must-have campaign deliverables versus nice-to-haves.
 4. Practice the negotiation scripts aloud (with a friend if possible) until they feel natural.
 5. Download the portal's contract template. Read every word. Flag anything confusing.
 6. For any publicist you are considering, search their name in the portal's review system. Read both positive and negative feedback.
 7. If a publicist gives you a red flag, trust your gut. There are other publicists.
-

Chapter 21: Finding an Ally in the Industry – When the Publicist Says “Yes”

The publicist says yes. You celebrate. Then you panic. What happens now? This chapter guides you through the critical transition from “pitched author” to “signed client.” You will learn how to build a collaborative, respectful partnership that maximizes your publicist’s effectiveness and protects your creative integrity. A “yes” is not the finish line – it is the starting block of a working relationship that can define your career.

The First 48 Hours After “Yes”

After a publicist agrees to represent your book, the portal’s system generates a **Client Agreement** prompt. Do not rush. Take these steps in order:

1. **Send a warm, professional confirmation message.** Example: *“Thank you so much for trusting in my book. I am excited to work together. I will review the agreement and return it within 48 hours.”*
2. **Read the agreement twice.** Compare it to the scope of work discussed during negotiation. If anything is missing (e.g., promised number of pitches, reporting frequency), ask for a revised version before signing.

3. **Sign electronically** (the portal supports DocuSign integration). Keep a signed copy for your records.
4. **Make your first payment** according to the schedule. Prompt payment signals reliability.
5. **Schedule your kickoff call** – ideally within 5–7 days, giving both sides time to prepare.

The Kickoff Call: Agenda and Questions

The first call sets the tone for the entire campaign. Do not treat it as a casual chat. Send an agenda in advance. A strong kickoff call covers:

- **Re-confirm campaign goals** (sales targets, media placement types, event aspirations)
- **Review your “do not pitch” list** (topics you are unwilling to discuss, outlets you dislike)
- **Share your calendar availability** for interviews, events, or media trainings
- **Establish communication norms** (email response time expectations, preferred meeting platform, weekend boundaries)
- **Assign action items** for both sides (e.g., you send high-res photos by Friday; they draft press release by next Wednesday)

Questions to ask your publicist on the kickoff call:

- “Which three media outlets do you believe are the most realistic for my book?”
- “How do you prefer to handle interview requests – do you want me to respond directly or route everything through you?”
- “What is your process for sharing early coverage with me before it goes live?”
- “How do you want me to handle any media inquiries that come to me directly?”
- “What is the best way to give you feedback if I am uncomfortable with a pitch angle?”

Your Role as a Client: Active vs. Passive

Many authors believe that hiring a publicist means they can sit back and watch the magic happen. That is a mistake. The most successful author-publicist partnerships are **collaborative**, not delegative. Your responsibilities include:

- **Responding to publicist emails within 24 hours** (ideally same day during launch week)
- **Providing requested materials on time** (headshots, blurbs, event descriptions, interview prep notes)

- **Promoting your own book alongside the publicist's efforts** – do not stop your newsletter, social media, or community engagement
- **Being available for scheduled media appearances** (reschedule only for emergencies)
- **Sharing leads** – if a local bookstore reaches out to you directly, loop in your publicist immediately

A publicist is an amplifier, not a replacement for your own effort.

The Onboarding Checklist: Materials to Prepare

Before your campaign officially launches, ensure your publicist has the following assets. Use this checklist:

- Final high-res author photo (two options: smiling and serious)
- Final book cover (front, spine, back, and a flat lay)
- One-page press release (written by you or the publicist – agree who drafts)
- Sample interview questions (10–15) with your answers prepared

- List of past media appearances (even small podcasts or blog interviews)
- A two-sentence bio for bylines
- Links to your active social channels and newsletter
- Content warning list (for the publicist's internal use)
- A "personal connection" sheet – any relevant expertise, geographic ties, or personal stories you are willing to share with journalists

Setting Boundaries: What You Can Say No To

A publicist may push you toward interviews or angles that feel uncomfortable. You have the right to say no – but do so with explanation.

Example of a healthy boundary: *"I am not comfortable discussing my trauma from conversion therapy in interviews. Could we focus instead on the hope and recovery themes?"*

Example of an unhealthy avoidance: *"I just don't want to do any press at all."* (If that is true, you may not need a publicist.)

The portal's code of conduct for publicists explicitly states that authors' boundaries regarding sensitive

topics must be respected. If a publicist repeatedly ignores your stated limits, you can file a complaint with portal mediation.

When the Publicist Needs to Push Back

Conversely, a good publicist will sometimes push you – not to violate your boundaries, but to stretch your comfort zone. If you say “I am terrible at live events,” a publicist might say “Let’s practice with a low-stakes 10-minute Instagram Live first.” That is coaching, not coercion. Learn to distinguish between pressure that serves your goals and pressure that serves their convenience.

The First Month: Early Deliverables

During the first month of a typical 3-month campaign on readwithpride.com, expect these deliverables from your publicist:

- **Week 1:** Kickoff call, material collection, media list creation
- **Week 2:** Press release drafted and approved by you, initial pitch batch (10–20 outlets)
- **Week 3:** Follow-ups on initial pitches, first media interview scheduled (if any interest)

- **Week 4:** Progress report (numbers of pitches sent, responses received, coverage secured), adjustment of strategy based on early results

If your publicist misses these milestones without communication, raise the issue immediately. Small delays are normal; silence is not.

Handling Disagreements: The Portal Mediation Process

Even the best partnerships hit rough patches. The portal offers a **mediation service** – a neutral third party (an experienced publicist or author) who listens to both sides and suggests a resolution. To request mediation:

1. Go to your client dashboard. Click “Dispute Resolution.”
2. Describe the issue (missed deadlines, scope disagreements, communication breakdowns).
3. The portal assigns a mediator within 3 business days.
4. Both parties attend a 45-minute video call. The mediator proposes a path forward.

Mediation is free for the first request. Subsequent requests may incur a fee. Most disputes resolve here without terminating the contract.

When to Part Ways: Ending the Relationship Gracefully

If the partnership is truly not working – persistent unprofessionalism, breach of contract, or fundamental mismatch – you can terminate. Check your contract’s termination clause (typically 30 days’ written notice by either party). Send a termination message that is factual and not inflammatory:

“Dear [Publicist], After reviewing the campaign progress over the last [X weeks], I have decided to exercise the termination clause in our agreement. My final payment will be made for work completed up to [date]. Please provide a final report and any transferable assets by [date]. Thank you for your efforts.”

Do not post negative reviews or air grievances publicly on the portal until after termination and a cooling-off period (the portal recommends 30 days). Respectful closure preserves your reputation for future publicists.

Building a Long-Term Allyship

The best case scenario: your publicist becomes a career-long ally, not just a campaign hire. To cultivate that:

- **Send thank-you notes** after major wins (a good review, a booked interview, a sales spike). Publicists work hard and rarely receive gratitude.
- **Keep them updated** even after the contract ends. “Just wanted you to know that speaking event you arranged led to a school visit booking – thank you!”
- **Refer other authors** to them (with their permission). A referred author is the highest compliment.
- **Hire them again** for your next book. Repeat business is the gold standard of allyship.

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 21

1. Before you sign any agreement, schedule a kickoff call agenda and share it with the publicist.
2. Complete the onboarding checklist – do not wait for the publicist to ask for each item.
3. Write down your “do not pitch” topics and share them in writing during the kickoff.
4. Set a weekly 30-minute calendar block for “publicist communications” so you never miss a message.

5. If a dispute arises, use the portal mediation service early, before resentment builds.
6. After a successful campaign, write a short testimonial for the publicist's portal profile (with their permission).

Chapter 22: Pre-Launch Jitters – The 30-Day Countdown on the Portal

Your book has a publication date. The publicist is working. And you are terrified. This is normal. Pre-launch anxiety affects nearly every author on readwithpride.com. This chapter transforms that anxiety into action. You will learn a **30-day countdown plan** – specific tasks for each week leading to launch, all integrated with portal features. By launch day, you will be exhausted but ready, not paralyzed by fear.

The Psychology of Pre-Launch Jitters

Why do authors freeze up in the final month? Three reasons:

1. **Loss of control** – Your book is leaving your hands. Publicists, reviewers, and readers will interpret it in ways you cannot predict.
2. **Imposter syndrome** – “What if I am not actually a good writer? What if the queer community rejects me?”
3. **Fear of failure** – You have invested years. A quiet launch feels like a public verdict on your worth.

Acknowledge these feelings. Then use the portal's structured countdown to channel nervous energy into productive tasks.

The Portal's Pre-Launch Toolkit

readwithpride.com offers a **Pre-Launch Dashboard** that activates 30 days before your publication date. It includes:

- **A checklist** of 20 recommended tasks (you can add your own)
- **Countdown notifications** – daily or weekly reminders to complete tasks
- **Peer support groups** – automatically match you with other authors launching in the same month
- **Publicist sync tool** – a shared calendar showing what your publicist is doing each week

Enable all notifications. You will need them.

Week 4 (30–23 Days Before Launch): Final Proofs and Portal Setup

Tasks:

- Upload your final, formatted manuscript to the portal's "Review Copy" section (publicists and approved media can request access).
- Ensure your book cover is final and uploaded in three sizes (thumbnail, social, high-res).
- Write your "launch week" author bio (shorter than your main bio, optimized for media outlets).
- Complete the portal's "Advanced Metadata" form – ISBN, price, page count, BISAC codes, and LGBTQ+ specific categories.
- Set your book's "Content Warning" display preference (some authors show warnings prominently; others hide behind a click-to-reveal). Choose based on your genre and audience.

Emotional check-in: You may feel overwhelmed by forms. Take breaks. Celebrate each checkbox.

Week 3 (22–16 Days Before Launch): Build Your Launch Team

Your publicist handles media. You handle **your community**. Use the portal's Launch Team feature to recruit superfans.

How to build a launch team on the portal:

1. Go to “Launch Team” under your book dashboard.
2. Create a recruitment post: “Looking for 20 readers to receive an early e-copy in exchange for an honest review on launch day.”
3. Set criteria: must have been active on portal for at least 3 months, must have completed at least 5 beta reads (to ensure they are serious).
4. Review applications. Accept 20–30 people (expect some dropouts).
5. Send them the book via portal’s secure file transfer (DRM-protected, no forwarding).
6. Provide a “launch team kit” with sample social posts, review templates, and a private discussion forum.

Why this matters: Launch day reviews on the portal trigger the algorithm to feature your book in “Hot New Releases.” Without launch team reviews, your book may be invisible.

Week 2 (15–9 Days Before Launch): Media and Events Prep

Your publicist is pitching. You are preparing to be pitched.

Tasks:

- Complete a mock interview with an author friend (record yourself, watch for verbal tics).
- Write 5 “evergreen” answers to common questions (e.g., “Why did you write this book?” “What does queer joy mean to you?”).
- Prepare a 30-second “elevator pitch” of your book for informal encounters (you will use it at launch events).
- Confirm any virtual launch events on the portal’s event calendar. Promote them using the portal’s “Event Reminder” feature (sends notifications to followers).
- Work with your publicist to finalize the press release. Once approved, they will distribute it via the portal’s press wire (included in many publicist packages).

Emotional check-in: Imposter syndrome peaks now. Re-read your best beta reader comment. Tape it to your monitor.

Week 1 (8–2 Days Before Launch): The Quiet Before the Storm

This is the hardest week. Pitching is done. Events are scheduled. Now you wait – but not passively.

Tasks:

- Set up automated social media posts for launch day (using the portal’s scheduler or a tool like Buffer). Do not manually post on launch day – you will be too stressed.
- Write a “thank you” post for your launch team. Schedule it for 6 AM on launch day.
- Prepare a “launch day survival kit” – snacks, water, a playlist, a comfort object, and a written note from your past self reminding you why you wrote this book.
- Turn off non-essential notifications (news, email lists, group chats). Preserve mental bandwidth.
- Do one non-writing thing each day that brings you joy – a walk, a movie, cooking a nice meal. You have earned it.

What NOT to do in Week 1:

- Do not read your book again. You will only find typos you cannot fix.
- Do not refresh your email every five minutes.

- Do not compare your pre-launch metrics to other authors (the portal lets you hide that view – use it).

The Day Before Launch: Tech Check and Breath

Morning:

- Test all links: your book's retailer page, your portal author page, your event registration links.
- Confirm that your book's metadata is correct on Amazon, [Bookshop.org](https://www.bookshop.org), and other major retailers (use the portal's retailer checker tool).
- Ensure your publicist has your emergency phone number (for last-minute interview requests).

Afternoon:

- Write a short "eve of launch" post for your portal feed. Keep it humble and grateful. Example: *"Tomorrow my debut novel goes out into the world. Thank you to my beta readers, my publicist, and everyone on this portal who made me believe it was possible."*
- Eat a real meal. Sleep as early as you can.

Evening:

- Close all portal tabs. Do not check anything after 8 PM. The work is done. Launch day will come whether you refresh or not.

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 22

1. Access your Pre-Launch Dashboard on the portal 30 days before launch. Complete one checklist item per day.
2. Build your launch team by Week 3. Do not skip this – it is the single highest-impact non-publicist activity.
3. Practice your elevator pitch and mock interview before Week 2 ends.
4. Set up automated social posts so you are not glued to your phone on launch day.
5. Create your launch day survival kit now, not at midnight before launch.
6. Share your countdown plan with an accountability partner (another author in your launch cohort).

Chapter 23: Launch Day Playbook – Going Live on readwithpride.com

Launch day. The hours you have prepared for. This chapter is your minute-by-minute playbook – not a list of possibilities, but a sequence of actions. Follow it, and you will navigate launch day with structure rather than panic. The portal's tools are designed to make this day manageable. Use them.

The Night Before: Final Preparations (Review)

You already did most of the work in Chapter 22. But one final check:

- Charge all devices (phone, laptop, tablet).
- Write down your publicist's phone number on paper (in case your phone dies).
- Prepare a simple breakfast you can eat without thinking.
- Set two alarms: one for 1 hour before launch, one for launch time.
- Tell one trusted friend or family member that you may be emotionally unavailable today. Ask them to handle anything non-urgent.

Launch Morning (6:00 AM – 9:00 AM EST)

Most publicists on readwithpride.com target **9:00 AM EST** as the official launch time – when the portal's "New Releases" feed refreshes. Your timeline:

6:00 AM – Wake up. Do not check anything yet. Shower, eat, move your body (stretch or a short walk). Anxiety is physical; movement helps.

7:00 AM – Portal login. Go to your author dashboard. Click "Launch Day Mode" – a special interface that hides non-essential metrics and shows only what matters: sales (estimated), review count, and publicist messages.

7:30 AM – Final review. Check that:

- Your book appears in the "Coming Soon" section (it should switch to "Available Now" at 9:00).
- Your launch team has received their final reminder (the portal auto-sends at 8:00 AM).
- Your publicist has not sent any urgent overnight messages.

8:00 AM – Post your "Good morning" message. Use the portal's feed. Keep it short: *"It's launch day. I'm nervous and grateful. If you read my book today, please consider leaving a review. It helps more than you know."*

8:30 AM – Turn on notifications for your publicist’s messages only. Mute everything else (newsletters, forum notifications, friend tags).

The Launch Moment (9:00 AM – 10:00 AM EST)

At 9:00 AM, your book goes live. Here is what happens automatically (you do not need to do anything):

- The portal sends a “Now Available” notification to anyone who added your book to their wishlist.
- Your book appears in the “New Releases” feed.
- Retailer links go active (if properly set up).

What you should do between 9:00 and 9:30:

- **Do nothing.** Seriously. Wait 30 minutes. Let the system process.
- Drink water. Breathe.

At 9:30 AM, check three things:

1. Is your book page displaying correctly on the portal? (Refresh if needed.)
2. Has any review appeared? (Do not panic if not – reviews take time.)

3. Has your publicist messaged you? (They may send a “we are live” confirmation.)

At 10:00 AM, post your second update: *“The book is out. Thank you to everyone who pre-ordered. If you’re reading today, tag me in your stories – I want to see.”*

Mid-Launch Day (10:00 AM – 3:00 PM EST)

This is the longest stretch. Your energy may flag. Use timed blocks.

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM (Media Hour)

Your publicist may have scheduled interviews or podcast recordings. Be available. Keep your background neutral, your lighting good, and your answers concise. If no interviews are scheduled, use this time to respond to any direct messages from readers (a sentence or two – not long conversations).

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM (Lunch and Data Check)

Eat. Then look at your portal dashboard. Ignore sales numbers (they will be noisy and delayed). Look instead at:

- Number of “shelf adds” (people adding your book to their portal lists)
- Number of click-throughs to retailer pages
- Any new reviews (even one positive review is a win)

Do not look at Amazon rankings. They update slowly and cause unnecessary stress.

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM (Engagement Block)

- Thank every launch team member who posts a review (tag them, write a short personalized thank-you).
- Share a photo of your book (if you have a physical copy) on the portal's "Launch Day Photo Thread."
- Answer any questions in your book's discussion tab (the portal automatically creates one).

Late Launch Day (3:00 PM – 8:00 PM EST)

3:00 PM – 5:00 PM (Second Media Hour)

Some publicists schedule late-afternoon interviews for west coast outlets. Stay ready. If no interviews, use this time to write a "mid-day reflection" post. Share something vulnerable: *"I just saw my first one-star review. It stung. But then I remembered the reader who messaged me saying this book made them feel less alone. That's why I wrote it."* Authenticity resonates.

5:00 PM – 6:00 PM (Dinner break)

Step away from the screen. Eat. Call a friend who is not in publishing. Do not talk about the book.

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM (Evening wind-down)

- Post your final update of the day: *“Launch day is coming to a close. I’m overwhelmed (in a good way). If you bought the book, thank you. If you reviewed it, thank you twice. Now I’m going to sleep.”*
- Thank your publicist publicly (with their permission) in the portal feed.
- Close all tabs. Set your phone to Do Not Disturb.

The Launch Day “Do Not Do” List

- **Do not refresh retailer pages obsessively.** You will drive yourself mad.
- **Do not argue with negative reviews.** Ever. Not even to “clarify.”
- **Do not compare your launch to another author’s.** The portal shows trending books – hide that module for the day.

- **Do not post more than 4–5 times.** Oversaturation annoys even your biggest fans.
- **Do not drink alcohol to “calm nerves.”** You need clarity, not numbness.

After Launch Day: The First 48 Hours

Launch day ends. But the post-launch period is just as important. On Day 2:

- Send a thank-you note to your launch team (the portal has a batch message feature).
- Share a “first 24 hours” summary (without hard numbers if they are low). Focus on gratitude.
- Ask your publicist for a quick 15-minute debrief call to review what worked and what needs adjustment.

On Day 3:

- Return to normal posting cadence (1–2 times per day on the portal feed).
- Start planning your first post-launch event (reading, Q&A, or panel) using the portal’s event tool.

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 23

1. Print this chapter's timeline. Tape it next to your computer on launch day.
2. Set your two alarms the night before launch.
3. Enable Launch Day Mode on your portal dashboard.
4. Prepare your three pre-written posts (morning, noon, evening) so you are not typing under pressure.
5. Have a backup internet source (mobile hotspot) in case your home Wi-Fi fails.
6. After launch day, schedule a debrief with your publicist within 48 hours.

Chapter 24: The “Coming Out” Event – Hosting a Virtual Launch Party on the Platform

A launch day post is good. A **virtual launch party** is transformative. On readwithpride.com, you can host a live, interactive event that turns passive readers into active community members. This chapter teaches you how to plan, promote, and execute a virtual launch party that celebrates your book as a queer milestone – not just a product. You will learn the technical steps, the emotional pacing, and the post-party follow-up that turns attendees into advocates.

Why a Virtual Launch Party on the Portal?

Unlike generic Zoom events, a portal-hosted party integrates with your book page: attendees can buy the book during the event, see your press kit, and join your author feed directly. The portal’s video tool also includes **queer-specific features** – pronoun display, content warning pop-ups before sensitive readings, and live captioning. More importantly, the audience is pre-vetted: only portal members can attend, reducing troll risk.

Typical attendance: 20–100 people for a debut author. Do not expect hundreds. A focused, intimate event is better than a chaotic large one.

Planning Your Party: 4 Weeks Out

Choose a date and time. Avoid major holidays, Pride event weekends, and the launch days of blockbuster queer books (check the portal's event calendar to see conflicts). Aim for **7–9 PM** in your time zone – after work, before late night.

Decide on a format. Three common formats on the portal:

1. **Reading + Q&A** (60 minutes) – You read 10–15 minutes, then answer questions. Best for literary fiction, memoir, poetry.
2. **In-conversation** (75 minutes) – You invite another author or a publicist to interview you. Best for commercial fiction, YA, romance.
3. **Themed celebration** (90 minutes) – Includes games, trivia, giveaways, and a short reading. Best for genre or series books.

Recruit a moderator. If you are nervous, ask a friend or fellow portal author to moderate. They handle tech, keep time, and read audience questions aloud so you can focus on answering.

Promoting Your Party on the Portal

The portal offers three promotion tools:

1. **Event Listing** – Create an event page with description, time, and registration link. It appears in the “Upcoming Events” sidebar.
2. **Push Notification** – For a small fee (\$10–\$25), you can send a one-time notification to everyone who has added your book to their shelf. Highly effective.
3. **Cross-promotion** – Other authors can “share” your event to their feeds. Ask 3–5 author friends to do this.

External promotion: Share the registration link on your social media and newsletter. Emphasize that the event is free, low-pressure, and open to all (though portal registration is required).

Preparing Your Content

Reading selection: Choose 5–7 minutes of material (not 15 – attention spans wane). Pick a passage that works standalone: emotional peak, a funny scene, or a moment of queer joy. Avoid passages that require extensive setup or contain triggering content without a warning.

Q&A preparation: Ask your moderator to collect questions in advance (via the event registration form). Also leave room for live questions. Prepare answers to the 5 most likely questions:

- “Where did the idea come from?”
- “Which character is most like you?”
- “What was the hardest scene to write?”
- “What do you hope readers take away?”
- “What are you working on next?”

Giveaways: The portal allows you to offer digital giveaways (e-copies of your book, bookmarks, or a short story). Giveaways increase attendance. Offer one prize per 20 attendees (e.g., 3 e-copies for 60 registrants).

Technical Rehearsal: Do Not Skip This

One week before the event, run a 30-minute tech check with your moderator:

- Test your camera, microphone, and lighting.
- Practice screen-sharing (if you are showing slides or cover art).
- Confirm that the portal’s “raise hand” feature works for audience questions.
- Set up a backup device (second laptop or phone) in case your main device fails.

During the rehearsal, record a short clip and watch it back. Notice verbal tics (“um,” “like”), eye contact

(look at the camera, not yourself), and background distractions.

The Party Script (Minute by Minute)

A well-timed event respects attendees' time. Use this template for a 60-minute reading + Q&A.

Time	Segment	Who
0:00– 0:05	Welcome, land acknowledgment (if appropriate), tech reminders (mute mics)	Moderator
0:05– 0:10	Author introduction – read a short bio, thank the publicist and launch team	You
0:10– 0:20	Reading (5–7 minutes of material plus brief setup)	You
0:20– 0:25	Transition – ask a pre-submitted question to yourself (easy warm-up)	Moderator
0:25– 0:45	Live Q&A – answer 5–7 questions (2–3 minutes each)	You + Moderator
0:45– 0:50	Giveaway announcements – draw names, congratulate winners	Moderator

Time	Segment	Who
0:50– 0:55	Final thoughts – where to buy the book, upcoming events, thank yous	You
0:55– 1:00	Closing – portal link for feedback survey, goodbye	Moderator

Handling Sensitive Topics During Q&A

Audience members may ask about trauma, identity, or politics. Decide in advance your boundaries. You can say:

- *“I appreciate that question, but I’m not comfortable discussing that detail publicly.”*
- *“That’s a great question for a different setting – let’s stay focused on the book’s themes of [X].”*
- *“I’d prefer to answer that one-on-one – feel free to message me after the event.”*

Your moderator can also screen questions (the portal allows the moderator to see questions before they are read aloud). Use that feature.

After the Party: Converting Attendees into Long-Term Readers

The event is not over when you log off. Within 24 hours:

- **Send a thank-you message** to all registrants via the portal's batch email tool. Include a link to your book, a request for reviews, and a survey (ask what they liked about the event).
- **Post a highlight reel** (a 30-second clip from the reading) on your portal feed and social media.
- **Follow up with giveaway winners** – send their e-copies within 48 hours.
- **Tag your moderator and publicist** in a thank-you post.

Within one week:

- Upload the full event recording to your press kit (with a password for privacy). Publicists can share it with media as proof of your speaking ability.

- Write a short reflection on what you learned. Share it in the portal's "Event Hosts" forum.

Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

Mistake	Fix
Starting late	Log in 15 minutes early. Test everything.
Reading too long	Time your reading with a stopwatch during rehearsal. Cut ruthlessly.
Forgetting to thank attendees	Write "thank the audience" on a sticky note on your monitor.
Technical glitches	Have your moderator run the event while you focus on content.
Low attendance	Promote earlier, cross-promote with other authors, offer a giveaway.

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 24

1. Choose your event date and format at least 4 weeks before launch.
2. Create the event listing on the portal and enable push notifications.
3. Recruit a moderator (friend or fellow author) and schedule a rehearsal.
4. Prepare your reading passage, Q&A answers, and giveaway items.
5. Run a full tech rehearsal 7 days before the event.
6. Within 24 hours after the event, send thank-you messages and post highlights.

Chapter 25: Managing Your First Reviews – The Good, The Bad, and The Trolls

Reviews arrive. Some are glowing. Some are confusing. Some are cruel. On readwithpride.com, reviews are not just feedback – they are public data that influences algorithms, publicist decisions, and future readers. This chapter gives you a protocol for every type of review: the ecstatic five-star, the thoughtful three-star, the angry one-star, and the bigoted troll. You will learn when to respond, when to ignore, and how to protect your mental health.

The Portal's Review Ecosystem

Unlike Amazon or Goodreads, readwithpride.com requires that reviewers have an active account for at least 30 days before leaving a review. This reduces (but does not eliminate) trolls. Reviews are displayed with the reviewer's username and a badge indicating their reading history (e.g., "Beta Reader," "Launch Team," "Verified Purchase").

Review scores: 1–5 stars. The portal calculates an average visible on your book page. It also shows a "recommendation percentage" – what share of reviewers would recommend your book to a friend.

The Golden Rule of Reviews: Do Not Argue

Repeat after me: **You never argue with a review.** Not a one-star. Not a three-star that misinterprets your plot. Not even a review that clearly did not read the book. Arguing publicly:

- Makes you look unprofessional
- Encourages more negative attention
- Gives trolls exactly what they want
- Violates the portal's code of conduct (repeated violations can suspend your account)

Instead, use the strategies below.

Responding to Positive Reviews (4–5 Stars)

You can – and should – respond to positive reviews, but keep it brief and grateful. The portal allows authors to reply publicly to any review.

Template for 5-star:

“Thank you so much, [username]. I’m thrilled the story resonated with you.”

Template for 4-star (with constructive criticism):

“Thank you for the thoughtful review. I appreciate your note about [specific point] – that’s helpful for future books.”

Do not: Ask them to change their review to 5 stars. Do not over-explain your choices. A simple thank-you is enough.

Responding to Constructive 2–3 Star Reviews

A three-star review that says “I liked the characters but the pacing dragged in the middle” is valuable. It may help future readers set expectations. Respond professionally:

“Thank you for reading and for the honest feedback. I hear you on the pacing – it’s something I’ll keep in mind for the next book.”

Note: You are not agreeing that the pacing is bad. You are acknowledging their perspective. That is all.

When to not respond: If the review contains no actionable feedback (“It was fine, I guess”), silence is fine.

Handling One-Star Reviews That Are Genuine (Not Trolling)

Some one-star reviews are legitimate: the reader truly hated your book. That hurts. But it is not an attack. Before responding, ask:

- Does the review mention specific elements (plot, character, writing style)? If yes, it is likely genuine.

- Does it align with common criticisms from beta readers? If yes, there may be truth in it.
- Is the tone frustrated but not abusive? If yes, treat it as genuine.

Response for genuine one-star (optional – you can also stay silent):

“I’m sorry this book wasn’t for you. Thank you for giving it a chance and sharing your perspective.”

That is it. No defense. No argument.

The Troll: Bigoted or Harassing Reviews

On readwithpride.com, reviews that contain slurs, deadnaming, incitement to violence, or explicit attacks on LGBTQ+ identities violate the terms of service. **Do not respond.** Instead:

1. **Flag the review** – Click the flag icon. Select “Hate speech” or “Harassment.”
2. **Block the reviewer** – From their profile, select “Block User.” They can no longer see your content or comment.
3. **Message portal support** – If the review remains after 48 hours, email support@readwithpride.com with the subject “Review Violation – [Your Book Title].”

4. **Tell your publicist** – They may have relationships with portal moderators to expedite removal.

Do not engage. Trolls feed on attention. One flag is enough.

The Gray Area: Reviews That Are Harsh but Not Hateful

Some reviews will be brutally honest without being bigoted. Example: “The writing is amateurish, the plot is predictable, and the queer representation feels like a checklist.” This hurts. But it is not a violation. Your options:

- **Leave it.** Silence is dignity.
- **Learn from it** if multiple reviewers say the same thing. Revise future work accordingly.
- **Do not respond** – a defensive response will only amplify the critique.

The Psychological Toll of Negative Reviews

Even one negative review can ruin your week. Here is how to protect yourself:

- **Set a review-checking schedule.** Check once per day at a set time (e.g., 10 AM). Do not check at night.

- **Use the portal's "hide review scores" feature.** You can hide your average rating from your own view while still seeing individual reviews.
- **Celebrate a ratio.** On average, for every one-star review, you will receive 5–10 five-star reviews. Focus on the many, not the few.
- **Talk to your launch team.** They will often counter negative reviews with their own positive ones organically.
- **Read your best reviews before bed.** End the day with the love, not the hate.

Review Manipulation: What Is Not Allowed

The portal strictly prohibits:

- Offering payment or gifts in exchange for reviews (free ARCs are allowed)
- Reviewing your own book (even anonymously – the portal's IP tracking catches this)
- Asking friends or family to post fake positive reviews (they will be removed and your account may be flagged)

- Organizing downvoting campaigns against other authors' books

Violations can lead to your book being delisted. Do not do any of these.

Turning Reviews into Marketing Assets

With permission from the reviewer (ask via private message), you can use snippets of positive reviews in your press kit, social media, and future book descriptions. The portal has a “Request Quote Permission” button on each review. Click it. The reviewer receives an automated message. If they agree, the quote is officially yours to use.

Example marketing use: *“A triumphant debut” – Alex, 5-star review on readwithpride.com*

When to Ask Your Publicist to Intervene

If a review is factually false (e.g., “this book contains explicit sexual violence” when it does not), your publicist can contact the portal to request a correction. This is rare. Use it only for clear factual errors, not matters of opinion.

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 25

1. Set your review-checking schedule (once daily, at a fixed time).

2. Write templates for responding to 5-star, 4-star, and genuine 1-star reviews. Save them in a document so you are not typing emotionally.
3. Learn how to flag and block trolls. Practice on a test review (the portal has a sandbox mode).
4. Enable the “hide review scores” feature if you are prone to anxiety.
5. Ask your launch team to keep an eye on reviews and flag any harassment on your behalf (so you do not have to see it first).
6. Celebrate your first five positive reviews – screenshot them, print them, put them on your wall.

Chapter 26: Media Training 101 – Staying True to Your Story in Interviews

Your publicist has booked your first podcast interview. Or a local TV segment. Or a TikTok Live with a popular BookToker. You are excited – and terrified. Media appearances can elevate your book or undermine it, depending on how you prepare. This chapter provides media training tailored to LGBTQ+ authors on readwithpride.com. You will learn to answer questions authentically, handle intrusive or uninformed interviewers, and leave every appearance with your dignity and message intact.

Why Media Training Is Different for Queer Authors

General media training advises: “Stay on message, be charming, avoid controversy.” For queer authors, especially those writing about marginalized identities, the stakes are higher. An interviewer may:

- Ask invasive questions about your body, medical history, or trauma
- Misgender you or your characters
- Reduce your book to “an important LGBTQ+ story” without discussing craft
- Try to provoke you into an angry soundbite about a political issue

You need tools to navigate these moments without losing your cool or compromising your truth.

The Three Pillars of Queer Media Training

Pillar 1: Know Your Talking Points (but not a script)

Prepare 3–5 key messages you want every interviewer to walk away with. Examples:

- “My book is a love letter to queer joy, not queer trauma.”
- “The fantasy setting allowed me to explore identity without the constraints of historical bigotry.”
- “I wrote this for the teenager who doesn’t see themselves in mainstream stories.”

Do not memorize scripts. Memorize bullet points. Then practice saying them in different ways.

Pillar 2: The Art of the Pivot

When an interviewer asks an off-topic or uncomfortable question, pivot back to your talking points. Phrases:

- *“That’s an interesting question, but what I really want to focus on is...”*
- *“I’d rather not discuss that. What I can tell you is...”*

- *“What’s more important to me is...”*

Practice pivoting with a friend. Do not let guilt or pressure derail you.

Pillar 3: Your Boundary Scripts

For questions that cross a line (e.g., “Can you describe your coming out story?” when you have said you do not discuss it), have a firm, polite script ready:

“I appreciate your curiosity, but I don’t discuss that part of my life publicly. Let’s talk about the book instead.”

Do not apologize. Do not explain why. Just state the boundary and pivot.

Before the Interview: Preparation Checklist

One week before:

- Ask your publicist for the interviewer’s name, outlet, and sample questions (many provide these).
- Research the interviewer’s past work. Have they interviewed LGBTQ+ authors before? What was their tone?
- Prepare your 3–5 talking points. Write them on an index card.

One day before:

- Test your tech: camera, microphone, lighting, internet speed.
- Choose a quiet, neutral background (or a portal-branded virtual background available in your dashboard).
- Plan your outfit: solid colors, no busy patterns, nothing that reads as a costume.
- Get a good night's sleep. Seriously.

One hour before:

- Eat a light snack, use the bathroom, close all other browser tabs.
- Have water nearby.
- Place your index card near the camera (but out of frame).

During the Interview: Do's and Don'ts

Do

Look at the camera lens (not yourself)

Speak slightly slower than normal

Do

Pause to think – silence is fine

Use the interviewer's name occasionally

Smile when appropriate

Mention your book title twice (beginning and end)

Handling Common Difficult Questions

“Isn’t this book just for LGBTQ+ readers?”

- *“I wrote it for anyone who loves a good [genre] story. Queer readers may see themselves reflected, but the themes of [universal theme] are for everyone.”*

“Why did you include [sensitive content]?”

- *“Because it was true to these characters and this story. I trust readers to decide if it’s right for them.”*

“What do you say to critics who think this book is too political?”

- *“I’m not here to debate critics. I’m here to talk about the art of storytelling.”*

“Can you tell us about your own trauma/identity/body?”

- *“That’s private. What I can share is how that experience informed the character’s journey – but not my personal details.”*

The “Off the Record” Trap

Sometimes an interviewer will say, “Just between us, off the record...” before a sensitive question. There is no such thing as off the record in a recorded interview. If you would not say it on air, do not say it at all. Politely decline:

“I’d prefer to keep everything on the record, thanks. What was your question again?”

After the Interview: Follow-Up

Within 24 hours:

- Send a brief thank-you email to the interviewer (your publicist can handle this).
- Share a link to the interview on your portal feed and social media (once it is live).
- Debrief with your publicist: what went well? What would you do differently?

If the interviewer misrepresented you or edited the interview in a harmful way, your publicist can request a correction or removal. The portal has a “Media Misrepresentation” reporting process for cases involving LGBTQ+ erasure or harm.

Practice: The Mock Interview Exercise

The single best preparation is a mock interview with a trusted friend. Have them ask you the 10 hardest questions you can imagine – including ones you hope never to hear. Record the session. Watch yourself. Notice:

- Do you answer the question you were asked, or a different one?
- Do you use filler words?
- Do you look comfortable?

Repeat the exercise until you feel steady. Most authors need 3–4 mock interviews before a real one.

When to Decline an Interview

You do not have to say yes to every opportunity. Decline if:

- The outlet has a history of misrepresenting queer authors

- The interviewer refuses to provide sample questions
- The timing conflicts with your emotional capacity (e.g., during a difficult anniversary)
- Your publicist advises against it (trust their industry knowledge)

Decline politely: *“Thank you for the invitation, but I am not available at this time. I hope we can work together in the future.”*

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 26

1. Write your 3–5 talking points. Keep them on an index card.
2. Practice pivoting with a friend: they ask an off-topic question, you pivot back.
3. Write your boundary scripts for topics you will not discuss. Memorize the phrasing.
4. Conduct 3 mock interviews, record them, review your performance.
5. Share your mock interview recording with your publicist for additional feedback.
6. Before any real interview, run the tech check and prepare your space.

Chapter 27: Collaborating with BookTokers and Bookstagrammers via the Portal

Social media creators – especially on TikTok (BookTok) and Instagram (Bookstagram) – have become essential to queer book discovery. But reaching out to them cold is inefficient and often ignored. readwithpride.com bridges the gap with a **Creator Collaboration Hub**. This chapter teaches you how to find, vet, and partner with LGBTQ+ book creators who can authentically promote your book to their audiences.

Why Book Creators Matter for Queer Books

A 2025 portal survey found that 62% of LGBTQ+ readers discover new books through BookTok or Bookstagram, compared to 28% through traditional media. Creators offer something traditional reviews cannot: **parasocial trust**. When a creator you follow says “this book made me sob,” you believe them. For queer readers, many of whom have been burned by inauthentic marketing, creator recommendations are gold.

The Portal’s Creator Collaboration Hub

Located under your book dashboard, the Creator Collaboration Hub is a directory of vetted LGBTQ+

creators who have opted into receiving book collaboration requests. Each creator profile includes:

- Platform (TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, or multiple)
- Follower count (brackets: 1k–5k, 5k–20k, 20k–100k, 100k+)
- Genres they prefer (e.g., “queer romance only,” “any queer SFF”)
- Collaboration types they accept (free ARC for honest review, paid promotional post, affiliate link, giveaway)
- Their rates (if paid)
- Past collaboration examples (links)

You can filter by follower count, genre match, and whether they accept free ARCs (many do).

Finding the Right Creator: Not Just Follower Count

A creator with 100,000 followers but low engagement (comments, shares) may be less effective than a creator with 5,000 highly engaged followers. Look at:

- **Engagement rate** – The portal displays “average likes per post ÷ followers.” Above 5% is strong.

- **Comment sentiment** – Are comments genuine (“I loved this”) or generic (“nice post”)?
- **Past queer book collaborations** – Have they featured books similar to yours? How did those books perform (ask the portal for anonymized performance data)?

Start with micro-creators (1k–10k followers). They are more likely to accept free ARCs, more responsive, and their audiences are often more loyal.

The Collaboration Request: Templates and Timing

Once you identify a creator, use the portal’s **Collaboration Request** tool – a standardized form that creators prefer because it respects their boundaries.

Template for a free ARC request (no payment):

“Hi [Creator Name], I’m [Your Name], author of [Book Title] – a [genre] with [brief hook]. I see you’ve enjoyed [similar book they reviewed]. Would you be open to receiving a free e-ARC in exchange for an honest review on your platform? No pressure for a positive review – just your genuine thoughts. The book releases on [date]. Thank you for considering.”

Template for a paid collaboration (if you have budget):

“Hi [Creator Name], my publicist and I are reaching out about a paid collaboration for my book [Title]. Our budget is [\$X] for a [TikTok video / Instagram Reel + story]. We would provide a script guide but welcome your creative freedom. Are you currently open to paid bookings? If so, please share your rates and availability.”

Timing: Send requests 6–8 weeks before your launch date. Creators need time to read and edit.

What to Offer in Exchange

Creators are often underpaid. Respect their labor.

Creator size

Typical offer for a post

1k–5k
followers

Free ARC + a thank-you on your feed + a small gift
(e.g., signed bookmark via mail)

5k–20k

Free ARC + \$25–\$50 gift card or payment

20k–100k

\$100–\$500 per post (depending on engagement)

100k+

\$500–\$2,000+; often handled by their manager

Do not ask for “exposure” as payment. The portal’s creator code of conduct explicitly discourages this, and many creators will reject requests that do not include compensation (or a clear value exchange).

The Free ARC Campaign: How to Maximize It

If you cannot afford paid collaborations, focus on free ARC requests. To increase acceptance:

- **Personalize each request** – Reference a specific video or post they made.
- **Provide a clean, DRM-free e-ARC** (the portal’s file system handles this).
- **Include a one-page “creator pack”** with suggested talking points, key quotes, and content warnings – but tell them they are not required to use it.
- **Do not ask them to remove a negative review.** That is unethical and will be reported.

Tracking: The portal’s Collaboration Hub shows you when a creator has downloaded your ARC and whether they have posted (aggregated data, not individual). Use this to follow up gently: “Just checking if you had a chance to read. No pressure at all.”

Avoiding Common Collaboration Pitfalls

- **Over-requesting:** Do not ask 100 creators at once. Start with 10–15 targeted requests. See response rates.
- **Ignoring follow-up:** If a creator says yes, respond within 24 hours with the ARC and a thank-you.
- **Forgetting to credit:** When a creator posts about your book, reshare it on your portal feed and tag them. Gratitude goes a long way.
- **Pressuring for a timeline:** Creators have lives. If they post a week after launch instead of launch day, that is still valuable.

When a Creator Goes Viral for Your Book

Sometimes a creator's video about your book unexpectedly blows up (100k+ views). When this happens:

- **Thank them publicly** (and privately).
- **Share the video** on your portal feed and socials.
- **Message your publicist** immediately – they may be able to pitch traditional media using the viral moment as a hook.

- **Do not try to replicate it.** Viral moments are lightning in a bottle. Enjoy it, but do not pressure the creator to “do it again.”

Measuring Success of Creator Collaborations

Track these metrics in your portal dashboard:

- **Click-throughs** from creator posts to your retailer page (the portal uses trackable links)
- **Increase in “shelf adds”** after a creator posts
- **Direct sales spikes** (correlate with posting dates)

If a collaboration yields zero measurable impact, do not work with that creator again. If it yields strong results, build a longer-term relationship (e.g., send them your next ARC automatically).

Ethical Considerations: Authenticity and Disclosure

Creators must disclose paid partnerships (the portal reminds them). As an author, do not ask a creator to hide a paid partnership. That violates FTC rules and the portal’s terms. Also, do not ask a creator to lie or omit negative aspects of your book. Authenticity is what makes creator content trustworthy. A creator who says “the pacing was slow but the ending made it worth it” is more persuasive than one who says “perfect in every way.”

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 27

1. Open the Creator Collaboration Hub on your portal dashboard. Browse creators in your genre.
2. Create a shortlist of 10–15 micro-creators with high engagement rates.
3. Write a personalized request template (free ARC version and paid version).
4. Prepare your ARC and creator pack (one page, optional talking points).
5. Send requests in batches of 5 per week to avoid overwhelm.
6. Track responses, send ARCs promptly, and reshare every post that mentions your book.
7. After your campaign, thank all creators publicly in a portal feed post.

Chapter 28: The Post-Launch Lull – How to Keep the Momentum Going

Launch week ends. The adrenaline fades. Sales plateau. Your publicist moves on to other clients. This is the **post-launch lull** – a period that derails many authors. But it does not have to. This chapter provides a 90-day post-launch plan to maintain visibility, grow your readership, and set up your next project while honoring your need for rest.

Why the Lull Happens (And Why It Is Not Your Fault)

After the concentrated effort of launch, three forces align against momentum:

1. **Algorithm decay** – The portal’s “New Releases” feed no longer features your book prominently.
2. **Publicist transition** – Most publicist contracts last 2–4 months. After that, you are largely on your own.
3. **Author exhaustion** – You have spent months in high gear. Your brain and body need recovery.

The lull is normal. Every book experiences it. The difference between successful and stalled authors is

what you do *during* the lull – not whether you avoid it.

Week 1–2 Post-Launch: Active Wind-Down

Do not go from 100 to 0 overnight. Instead, taper.

Week 1 tasks:

- Send a “thank you” message to your launch team (again). Include a link to a private feedback form asking what worked and what they would change.
- Compile a “best of launch” highlight post on your portal feed – top 3 reviews, favorite fan art, a funny behind-the-scenes story.
- Ask your publicist for a final campaign report (media hits, metrics, lessons learned). Schedule a 30-minute debrief call.

Week 2 tasks:

- Reduce your portal posting to 3–4 times per week (from daily). Focus on quality over quantity.
- Respond to any lingering reader messages or comments.

- Take two full days off from all book promotion. Yes, off. No checking sales. No portal.

Month 1–2 Post-Launch: Sustainable Promotion

Now you shift from “launch mode” to **maintenance mode**. Your goal: keep your book visible without burning out.

Weekly rhythm (repeat for 8 weeks):

- **Monday:** Post a short quote from a positive review. That is it.
- **Wednesday:** Share a “book aesthetic” (a photo, playlist, or mood board) related to your book.
- **Friday:** Answer one reader question publicly (collected from your portal inbox).
- **Weekend:** No promotion. Live your life.

Monthly deeper tasks:

- **Pitch local indie bookstores** for a signing or reading (your publicist may have started this; continue if not). Use the portal’s “Bookstore Outreach” template.

- **Apply for LGBTQ+ book awards** (the portal maintains a list with deadlines). Even being longlisted generates visibility.
- **Write one guest post** for a queer book blog or newsletter. Offer: “I’d love to write about [topic related to your book].” Most blogs accept.

Do not: Run a new paid ad campaign unless your publicist advises it. Post-launch ad spend often has low ROI.

Month 3 Post-Launch: The Strategic Pivot

By month three, you have data on what works. Use it.

Analyze your portal analytics:

- Which chapters or quotes were most highlighted by readers? (The portal shows highlight frequency.)
- Which keywords or tropes drove the most discovery (search terms that led to your book)?
- Which external channels (creator posts, newsletters, forums) drove the most click-throughs?

Then pivot your efforts:

- If Chapter 5 was highlighted 200 times, create a graphic of a quote from that chapter and share it with the caption “Readers keep highlighting this line – does it resonate with you?”
- If the keyword “cozy queer fantasy” brought the most traffic, add that phrase to your book’s metadata and use it in future posts.
- If one creator’s video drove 40% of your sales, reach out to that creator about a paid follow-up post (offer a discount to their audience).

The Danger of Over-Promoting

Some authors, panicked by the lull, start posting “Buy my book!” five times a day. This backfires. Readers become annoyed. The portal’s algorithm may flag you as spammy. Instead, follow the **80/20 rule** on your feed: 80% of your posts should be value (insights, behind-the-scenes, community engagement) and 20% direct calls to buy.

Examples of value posts:

- “Here is how I researched the 1920s slang in my book.” (educational)

- “A reader told me this scene reminded them of their grandmother. I cried.” (emotional)
- “What is your favorite queer book trope? I’ll go first: found family.” (interactive)

Re-engaging Your Publicist (or Finding a New One)

If your campaign ended and you want to restart promotion (e.g., for a paperback release or audiobook), you can re-hire your publicist for a shorter, lower-cost “maintenance campaign.” Typical cost: \$500–\$1,000 for 4–6 weeks of targeted pitching to new outlets.

If your original publicist is unavailable, the portal’s “Post-Launch Publicist” filter helps you find publicists who specialize in second-wave campaigns. They are often more affordable and focused.

Avoiding the Comparison Trap

During the lull, you will see other authors launching with big numbers. Their success does not diminish yours. Remember:

- Many authors fudge their numbers. The portal’s metrics are verified, but external claims may not be.

- A “slow burn” book can outsell a “fast spike” book over 12 months. Consistency beats fireworks.
- Some of the most beloved queer books of the last decade sold poorly at launch and grew through word of mouth.

When to Stop Promoting and Start Writing Again

At some point – usually 4–6 months post-launch – you must decide: keep promoting this book, or write the next one? Unless you are a full-time author with a big backlist, the answer is **write the next book**. A new book is the best promotion for your old book. Readers who discover you through your second book will go back and buy your first.

Signs it is time to move on:

- Your daily sales have been flat for 30 days despite varied promotion.
- You feel dread when opening the portal.
- You have a solid draft of a new project calling to you.

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 28

1. Schedule your two full days off within the first two weeks post-launch. Protect them.

2. Set a weekly promotion schedule (e.g., Monday quote, Wednesday aesthetic, Friday Q&A).
3. Compile your portal analytics at month 3. Identify your top channel and top keyword.
4. Apply for 3–5 book awards (use the portal's award list).
5. If you decide to re-engage a publicist, use the "Post-Launch Publicist" filter.
6. Give yourself permission to stop promoting and start writing again when your heart tells you.

Chapter 29: Using Analytics to Plan Your Second Week Push

Launch week is chaos. By week two, data has arrived – and you can use it to make smart, targeted adjustments. This chapter focuses on the **second week after launch**, when the portal's analytics become meaningful and you still have time to influence early momentum. You will learn which metrics matter, how to interpret them, and what actions to take based on the data.

Why Week Two Is the Sweet Spot

Week one data is noisy: pre-orders, launch day spikes, review anomalies. By week two, patterns emerge. You have enough sales and engagement to identify what is working, but not so much time that course correction is impossible. The portal's **Week Two Analytics Dashboard** becomes available 7 days after your launch date. Use it.

The Five Most Important Week Two Metrics

1. Review Velocity and Sentiment

- **What it is:** Number of new reviews per day, plus the average rating of those new reviews (excluding launch team).

- **Good sign:** 2–5 new organic reviews per day, average rating 4.0+.
- **Action if low:** Ask your newsletter subscribers (gently) to leave a review. Use the portal’s “Review Request” feature to send a one-time notification to readers who have marked your book as “finished.”

2. Shelf Adds vs. Sales

- **What it is:** “Shelf add” means a portal user added your book to their “to read” list. “Sale” means they bought it (via link to retailer).
- **Good sign:** Shelf adds are 3–5x sales (many people plan to buy later). If shelf adds are low (less than 2x sales), your discovery is weak.
- **Action if low:** Improve your book’s portal description and cover thumbnail. A/B test two versions using the portal’s “Description Experiment” tool.

3. Click-Through Rate (CTR) from Your Feed

- **What it is:** When you post on your portal feed, what percentage of viewers click your book link?
- **Good sign:** CTR above 2% (industry average for author feeds).

- **Action if low:** Change your post format. Try a question (“Who else loves enemies to lovers?”) before the link. Add an emoji. Post at a different time (test 9 AM vs. 7 PM).

4. External Traffic Sources

- **What it is:** The portal tracks which external sites (TikTok, Instagram, newsletters, etc.) sent readers to your book page.
- **Good sign:** One or two sources driving >10% of traffic.
- **Action:** Double down on those sources. If TikTok is working, make three more TikToks. If a specific newsletter drove clicks, pitch them a follow-up piece.

5. Drop-Off Point in Your Book Preview

- **What it is:** The portal allows readers to preview the first 10% of your book. It shows you the average page where readers stop.
- **Good sign:** Most readers make it past page 10 (or 20% of preview).
- **Action if early drop-off:** Your opening may be too slow. Consider revising the first few pages for a future edition. (Do not panic – many

readers sample multiple books and drop off quickly.)

Diagnosing Problems with Week Two Data

Use this decision tree:

Problem: Low sales but high shelf adds.

- **Diagnosis:** Readers are interested but not converting. Price may be too high, or retailer link is broken.
- **Fix:** Check your retailer links. Consider a limited-time discount (the portal can generate discount codes for your book's retailer page).

Problem: Low shelf adds and low sales.

- **Diagnosis:** Discovery problem. People are not finding your book.
- **Fix:** Increase posting frequency (temporarily) to 2x per day. Use more hashtags. Ask a popular portal author to shout you out.

Problem: High sales but low reviews.

- **Diagnosis:** People are buying but not reviewing. Common.

- **Fix:** Add a “review reminder” to your book’s back matter (a short note asking readers to leave a review on the portal). Update your ebook file.

Problem: Many one-star reviews with similar complaints.

- **Diagnosis:** Legitimate issue with your book (e.g., misleading cover, poor editing, inaccurate content warnings).
- **Fix:** Acknowledge in your feed: *“I’ve heard your feedback about [issue]. I’m sorry this book didn’t meet expectations. I’ll do better next time.”* Do not defend. Do not delete.

The Week Two Action Plan

Day 8 (one week after launch): Open your Week Two Analytics Dashboard. Export the data as a CSV (for later comparison). Identify your strongest and weakest metric.

Day 9: Make one change based on your weakest metric. Example: rewrite your book description. Then wait 24 hours.

Day 10: Check if the change improved the metric. If yes, keep it. If no, revert and try a different change (e.g., change your profile picture).

Day 11–14: Double down on what is working. If your best traffic source is a specific creator, send them a thank-you and ask if they would do a follow-up post (paid or free). If your best post format is “quote graphics,” make five more.

The Danger of Over-Optimizing

Do not change your metadata, description, or cover every day. The portal’s algorithm needs time to register changes. Make at most 2–3 significant changes in week two. Then let the data accumulate for week three.

Also, remember that small sample sizes can mislead. If you have only 10 shelf adds, a change that yields 2 more shelf adds may be random noise. Wait until you have at least 50 data points before concluding a change worked.

Using Analytics to Inform Your Publicist

Share your week two findings with your publicist. They may adjust their pitching based on:

- Which tropes or keywords are driving discovery (use those in press materials)
- Which reader demographics are engaging most (the portal shows age and location aggregates)

- Which chapters are most highlighted (publicists can pitch those as “exclusive excerpts” to media)

Your publicist may not have access to your detailed analytics (privacy settings). You can grant them “analytics view” permission in your dashboard settings. Most authors choose to do so – it helps the campaign.

The Emotional Side of Week Two Data

Week two can be humbling. Your numbers may be lower than you hoped. This does not mean your book is bad. It may mean:

- Your launch team was smaller than needed
- Your publicist’s outreach is still pending (some media outlets take weeks to respond)
- Your book is a “slow burn” that will grow through word of mouth

Do not make drastic decisions (pulling the book, firing your publicist) based on week two data alone. Give it a full month.

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 29

1. On day 8 post-launch, open your Week Two Analytics Dashboard. Export the data.

2. Identify your highest and lowest metric from the five key metrics.
3. Make one change to improve the lowest metric. Wait 24 hours.
4. Double down on the channel or format driving the highest metric.
5. Share anonymized insights with your publicist (or grant them analytics view).
6. Set a reminder to review week three data in 7 days – but do not obsess daily.

Chapter 30: When Things Go Wrong – Crisis Management for Queer Authors

Despite your best efforts, things can go wrong. A publicist drops your campaign. A reviewer starts a harassment campaign. You discover an error in your book after publication. Or you, the author, face a personal crisis that makes promotion impossible. This chapter is your crisis management toolkit – not to prevent every disaster, but to respond with clarity, ethics, and self-protection. On readwithpride.com, the community has faced these situations before. You are not alone.

Types of Crises and Their Severity

Crisis type	Severity	Typical response
Typo or formatting error in book	Low	Correct file, notify retailer, offer apology if severe
Publicist terminates contract early	Medium	Secure final report, find new publicist or go solo
Negative review campaign (non-bigoted)	Medium	Ignore; focus on positive engagement
Bigoted harassment or doxxing	High	Report to portal, involve publicist, consider legal action
Author personal emergency (health, family)	High	Pause all promotion, notify publicist and launch team

Crisis type

Severity

Typical response

Plagiarism
accusation

Critical

Consult lawyer, do not
respond publicly
without legal advice

Crisis 1: A Publicist Drops You Unexpectedly

Scenario: Your publicist sends a termination notice, citing “unforeseen capacity issues” or “misalignment.” You are halfway through your campaign.

Response protocol:

1. **Do not burn bridges.** Respond politely: *“I’m disappointed but respect your decision. Could you provide a final report and any transferable assets (media list, pending pitches) by [date]?”*
2. **Request referrals.** Ask if they can recommend another publicist on the portal who may take over.
3. **Activate your backup plan.** Before hiring any publicist, you should have identified 2–3 alternates. Contact them immediately with “Urgent: Mid-campaign opening.”
4. **Communicate with your launch team.** Briefly: *“My publicist’s contract has ended. I’m between publicists right now but will keep you updated. Your reviews and word of mouth are more important than ever.”* Do not badmouth the former publicist.

Prevention: Choose publicists with clear termination clauses (30 days' notice, transfer of assets). Avoid publicists with a history of mid-campaign dropouts (check portal reviews).

Crisis 2: Bigoted Harassment or Review Bombing

Scenario: A coordinated group leaves dozens of one-star reviews containing slurs, or doxxes you (posts your address or workplace). This is rare on the portal due to verification, but possible.

Response protocol:

1. **Do not engage.** Do not reply to any harassing messages. Do not name the harassers.
2. **Document everything.** Screenshot reviews, messages, and any off-portal harassment. Store in a folder.
3. **Report to portal support** using the “Emergency Harassment” form (available 24/7). Provide screenshots. Portal moderators will remove violating content within hours.
4. **Inform your publicist** – they may have relationships with portal staff to escalate.

5. **Consider legal action.** If doxxing includes threats of violence, contact local police. The portal can provide IP data with a subpoena.
6. **Protect your mental health.** Step away from all social media. Ask a trusted friend to monitor your accounts. Do not read any reviews for 48 hours.

After the crisis: The portal may offer a “reset” – removing all reviews from a certain period if they were clearly targeted. Request this in writing.

Crisis 3: You Discover a Major Error in Your Published Book

Scenario: A reader points out a factual error (e.g., wrong historical date), a plot hole, or an offensive passage you missed. Or the file has formatting glitches.

Response protocol:

1. **Acknowledge immediately** on your portal feed. Do not disappear. Example: *“I’ve been made aware of an error in [specific detail]. I’m working with my publisher/retailer to correct it. I apologize to anyone affected.”*
2. **Correct the file.** If self-published, upload a corrected version to your retailer. If

traditionally published, push your publisher to expedite.

3. **Offer remediation.** For errors that significantly mislead (e.g., wrong content warnings), offer refunds or a free download of the corrected edition. The portal has a “Refund Request” feature you can enable.
4. **Learn without self-flagellation.** Post a follow-up: *“I’ve learned from this mistake and will do better in future editions.”* Then stop apologizing.

What not to do: Delete the original reviews pointing out the error. That looks like cover-up. Leave them; the corrected file will be reflected in future reviews.

Crisis 4: Author Personal Emergency

Scenario: You experience a health crisis, family death, or mental health breakdown. You cannot promote your book.

Response protocol:

1. **Inform your publicist immediately.** Give them permission to pause all active pitches or cancel scheduled appearances.
2. **Post a brief, vague notice** on your portal feed: *“Due to a personal emergency, I will be*

offline for the foreseeable future. Thank you for your understanding and support of my book.” You do not owe details.

3. **Ask a trusted friend or fellow author** to monitor your portal inbox for urgent messages (they can be given “delegate” access).
4. **Cancel any upcoming events** via the portal’s event tool. The system will automatically notify registrants.
5. **When you return**, do not over-explain. A simple “I’m back, thank you for your patience” is enough.

Self-care: The book can wait. You cannot. The portal’s author community is supportive – many have been through similar.

Crisis 5: Plagiarism Accusation

Scenario: Someone claims you copied their work. This is legally serious.

Response protocol:

1. **Do not respond publicly.** Any statement can be used against you.

2. **Hire a lawyer** specializing in intellectual property. The portal maintains a list of LGBTQ+-friendly attorneys.
3. **Gather evidence** of your writing process (draft timestamps, research notes, beta reader communications). The portal stores version histories – request them.
4. **Inform your publicist** but ask them not to comment.
5. **Let the legal process play out.** If the accusation is false, your lawyer will handle. If there is a genuine overlap (unintentional), your lawyer will advise on settlement or correction.

Do not: Delete your book or issue a public apology without legal advice. That can be construed as admission.

The Portal's Crisis Support Resources

readwithpride.com offers:

- **24/7 moderation team** for harassment and bigotry (emergency form)
- **Author crisis fund** – small grants (up to \$500) for authors facing financial hardship due to crises

- **Peer support network** – vetted authors who volunteer to talk you through a crisis
- **Legal referral service** – discounted initial consultations with LGBTQ+ friendly lawyers

Access these from your dashboard under “Help” > “Crisis Support.”

After the Crisis: Rebuilding

Once the immediate crisis is resolved, you need to rebuild trust and momentum.

- **Post a transparent summary** (if appropriate).
Example: *“The error has been corrected, and all affected readers have been refunded. Thank you for your grace.”*
- **Return to a normal posting schedule** gradually. Do not overpost to “make up” for lost time.
- **Re-engage your launch team** with a personal note: “I’m back. Thank you for sticking with me.”
- **Consider a “comeback” event** – a live reading or Q&A where you address (briefly) what happened and focus on the book.

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 30

1. Familiarize yourself with the portal's Crisis Support resources before you need them.
2. Save the "Emergency Harassment" form link somewhere accessible.
3. Identify one or two backup publicists now, before a crisis hits.
4. Write a generic "personal emergency" post template and store it in a draft.
5. Download your book's version history and keep it in a secure folder (for plagiarism defense).
6. If you are in crisis right now, close this book, go to the portal's crisis support page, and ask for help.

Chapter 31: Building a Reader Community on readwithpride.com

You have launched your book. You have survived the post-launch lull. Now comes the long, rewarding work: **building a reader community** that will support not only this book but every book you ever write. On readwithpride.com, a community is not a vague “following” – it is a group of engaged readers who comment, review, share, and show up for your events. This chapter teaches you how to cultivate that community intentionally, authentically, and without burning out.

Why Community, Not Just Sales, Is Your True Asset

Sales are transactional. A reader buys your book, maybe enjoys it, and moves on. A community member feels invested in *you* as an author. They will:

- Leave thoughtful reviews even months after release
- Recommend your book in forums and on social media
- Buy your next book on pre-order without needing to be convinced
- Defend you against trolls (without you asking)

- Provide valuable feedback on works in progress

On readwithpride.com, authors with active communities see 3–5 times higher lifetime sales per reader than those without. More importantly, community sustains you emotionally during the inevitable quiet periods.

The Shift from “Author Promoter” to “Community Host”

During launch, you acted as a promoter: “Buy my book! Read my book!” After launch, you must shift to **host mentality**. A host creates spaces where readers want to gather, even when you are not selling something. Your portal feed becomes a living room, not a billboard.

Signs you have made the shift:

- Readers start threads in your book’s discussion tab without you prompting
- You recognize usernames and remember their preferences
- Readers answer each other’s questions about your book before you can

- You post something personal (“I’m struggling with writer’s block”) and receive supportive comments

The Weekly Community Rhythm

Consistency builds trust. Follow this weekly rhythm for your portal feed and interactions:

Monday (Connection): Post a question not directly about your book. *“What are you reading this week that’s bringing you queer joy?”* or *“What’s a small win you’ve had recently?”* Respond to every answer for the first hour.

Wednesday (Behind the Scenes): Share something from your writing life – a messy desk, a deleted scene, a playlist, a struggle you overcame. The key is **vulnerability without oversharing**. Example: *“I rewrote this chapter six times. Here’s a photo of the whiteboard where I tracked character arcs.”*

Friday (Celebration or Gratitude): Highlight a reader’s comment, a fan’s artwork, or a positive review. Tag the reader (with their permission). *“Look what @ReaderName noticed about Chapter 7 – I didn’t even catch that parallel myself!”*

Saturday/Sunday: Rest. Do not post. Your community needs breaks too.

Using Portal Features to Deepen Engagement

readwithpride.com offers several tools beyond the basic feed.

Book Discussion Tab: Every book page has a discussion tab where readers can start threads. Monitor it daily. Answer questions within 24 hours. If a thread goes unanswered for a week, the portal sends you a reminder. Proactively start threads yourself: *“I’m curious – which secondary character would you want to see get their own book?”*

Reader-Sourced FAQ: You can pin a “Frequently Asked Questions” post to the top of your discussion tab. Update it monthly with questions you actually receive. Example: “Q: Is there going to be a sequel? A: I’m working on it!” This reduces repetitive messages.

Community Polls: The portal’s poll feature lets you ask quick questions with one click. Use it for low-stakes decisions: *“Should I release the deleted chapter as a newsletter exclusive or as a free portal download?”* Readers love feeling consulted.

Live Text Chat (Not Video): For authors who dislike video, the portal offers a scheduled text-based chat. You type answers; readers type questions. It is lower pressure and often more accessible. Schedule one monthly for 60 minutes.

Rewarding Your Most Active Readers

A healthy community has tiers of engagement. Recognize your most active members without making others feel excluded.

- **For frequent commenters:** Send a direct message thanking them. Ask if they would like a signed bookmark (you can mail cheaply).
- **For readers who leave detailed reviews:** Feature their review in your feed with a shout-out.
- **For superfans (10+ reviews or comments):** Invite them to a private “beta reader” group for your next manuscript. Give them a free e-copy before anyone else.

Never promise monetary rewards. The portal prohibits paying for reviews or positive engagement. But genuine, non-transactional gratitude is always welcome.

Handling Difficult Community Members

Even in a queer-affirming space, conflicts arise. Someone may post a spoiler without warning. Two readers may argue about interpretation. Someone may repeatedly post off-topic political rants.

Protocol:

1. **Publicly acknowledge the issue neutrally.** *“Heads up – please use the spoiler tag for discussion of the ending. Thank you!”*
2. **Privately message the person** if the behavior continues: *“I appreciate your engagement, but would you mind keeping comments to book discussion? Thanks for understanding.”*
3. **Use the portal’s moderation tools.** You can hide comments, mute users from your book’s discussion tab, or report harassment.
4. **Do not escalate publicly.** Never shame a community member in front of others. That poisons the whole space.

Growing Your Community Beyond the Portal

Your portal community should be your home base, but you can invite readers to connect elsewhere – on your newsletter, Discord, or social media. The portal allows you to share links in your feed (once per week maximum). Use this to cross-pollinate.

Best cross-promotion practices:

- “I post exclusive behind-the-scenes content on my newsletter. Sign up here: [link]”
- “Join my Discord server for weekly queer book discussions: [link]”

- “I’m most active on Instagram @YourName – come say hi.”

Do not pressure portal readers to leave. Some prefer staying within the portal ecosystem. Respect that.

The Community Health Check: Monthly Metrics

Once a month, review these metrics in your portal dashboard:

- **Active commenters (last 30 days)** – Number of unique users who commented on your feed or discussion tab.
- **Response time** – How quickly you reply to comments. Under 6 hours is excellent.
- **Repeat engagement rate** – What percentage of commenters from last month commented again this month? Above 40% is strong.
- **Flagged content** – Any user reports? Zero is ideal.

If numbers drop, post a more personal, open-ended question to reignite conversation.

Avoiding Community Burnout

Building community is emotionally rewarding but also draining. Set boundaries:

- **Designated hours:** Check your portal feed twice per day (e.g., 10 AM and 6 PM), not constantly.
- **Template responses:** Save common replies (e.g., “Thank you for reading!”) so you are not typing the same thing 20 times.
- **Take a week off** every 3–4 months. Post: *“Taking a community break this week to focus on writing. I’ll read every comment when I return. Appreciate you!”* Your community will survive.

When Community Becomes a Distraction from Writing

The ultimate purpose of community is to support your writing career – not replace it. If you are spending more than 1 hour per day on portal engagement and not making progress on your next book, scale back. A vibrant community will still be there when you return from a writing sprint.

The ideal ratio: For every 1 hour of community engagement, spend 3 hours writing or revising. Adjust based on your personal rhythm.

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 31

1. Write down your weekly community rhythm (Monday question, Wednesday behind-scenes, Friday gratitude).
2. Schedule 30 minutes each morning to respond to comments and check discussion tabs.
3. Create your first community poll: "What would you like to see more of on my feed?"
4. Identify your top 3 most active readers. Send them a private thank-you message today.
5. Set up your monthly community health check reminder (same day each month).
6. If you are already overwhelmed, post a "taking a break" notice and step away for 48 hours.

Chapter 32: Turning One Launch into a Career – Plan Your Next Book

One book does not make a career. A career is built over multiple projects, each learning from the last. This chapter guides you through the transition from “author of a debut” to “working author with a trajectory.” You will learn how to use the data and relationships from your first launch to plan your second book – and how to keep readwithpride.com central to your long-term growth.

The Post-Debut Identity Shift

After your first launch, you may feel pressure to replicate its success – or despair if it was not as successful as you hoped. Neither extreme is useful. Instead, adopt the identity of a **career author**: someone who writes not for one moment of glory but for a sustainable practice over years.

Key mindset changes:

- You are not “a debut author” forever. After 12–18 months, you become “an author.”
- Each book builds on the previous one. Even a “failure” teaches you what not to do next.

- Your portal metrics (beta ratings, community engagement, publicist relationships) carry over to your next project.

Mining Your First Book's Data for Your Second Book

Before you write a single word of your next manuscript, analyze your first book's performance on the portal. Look for patterns:

What did readers love?

- Which chapters had the most highlights? Those contain your strongest writing voice.
- Which tropes or tags drove the most discovery? If "found family" brought in readers, lean into it.
- Which reviews used similar praise words ("hilarious," "heartbreaking," "lyrical")? Those are your brand.

What did readers criticize?

- Recurring complaints (e.g., "slow middle," "underdeveloped side character") become your revision focus for the next book.
- If multiple readers said the book was too short or too long, adjust your target word count.

- If readers wanted more of a particular character, consider writing a spin-off or sequel.

What did readers ignore?

- Themes or subplots you thought were central but no one mentioned – perhaps they did not land. Do not double down on them in book two.

Choosing What to Write Next: Three Pathways

Based on your data, choose one of three pathways:

Pathway 1: The Sequel or Series

Best if: Your book ended with unanswered questions, readers are asking for more, and you have a clear arc for multiple books.

Challenges: Sequels often sell fewer copies than book one. Manage expectations.

Portal advantage: You can create a “series page” linking all books. Readers who finish book one receive a portal notification when book two is listed.

Pathway 2: The Standalone in the Same Genre

Best if: You want to build a brand as “the author who writes queer romantasy” or “queer historical mystery.” Same audience, new story.

Challenges: Avoid repeating yourself. Each book must feel fresh.

Portal advantage: Publicists who worked with you on book one may offer a repeat-client discount.

Pathway 3: The Genre Pivot

Best if: Your first book's sales were disappointing in its genre, or you discovered a new passion. Example: from literary fiction to YA fantasy.

Challenges: You may lose existing readers. Build a new audience from scratch.

Portal advantage: The portal's genre neighborhoods allow you to immerse yourself in the new community before you even finish the draft.

Using Portal Beta Readers for Early Drafts of Book Two

You already know the power of beta readers. For book two, start even earlier. As soon as you have a complete first draft (no matter how rough), use the Beta Reader Matchmaker. Specify: "This is a very early draft – looking for big-picture feedback only, not line edits."

The portal allows you to mark a manuscript as "early draft" so readers know what to expect. Some readers love being part of the process from the beginning. They become invested in your career, not just a single book.

Re-engaging Your Publicist (or Finding a New One) for Book Two

Your first publicist may be interested in representing your second book – especially if the first campaign went well. Reach out 6–9 months before your planned publication date.

Template for repeat client:

“Hi [Publicist], I’m writing to you because I’d love to work together again on my second book, [Title or working title]. It’s a [genre] similar in tone to my debut but with [new twist]. I have a draft complete and plan to publish in [month/year]. Would you be open to a conversation about representing it?”

If your first publicist is unavailable or you want a change, the portal’s publicist directory now includes a filter for “willing to work with previously published authors.” Use it.

Building a Pre-Order Strategy for Book Two

With one book under your belt, you can attempt a pre-order campaign – something many debut authors avoid due to uncertainty. The portal’s pre-order tools allow you to:

- List your book up to 12 months in advance

- Offer a discount to readers who pre-order (e.g., 10% off)
- Send automated reminders to readers who shelved your first book

Minimum pre-order goals: Aim for 100–200 pre-orders for a second book. That signals to your publicist and the portal algorithm that you have a loyal base.

The Financial Reality: Advances, Royalties, and Expectations

Unless your first book was a breakout success, your second book advance (if traditionally published) may be similar or even lower. Do not be discouraged. Many authors build slowly. On the portal, the median second book earns 20–30% more than the first – not a fortune, but progress.

If you self-publish: Use your first book’s sales data to estimate a realistic print run. Do not overprint. The portal’s print-on-demand integration minimizes risk.

Avoiding the Sophomore Slump

The “sophomore slump” – a second book that is less loved than the first – is real but not inevitable. Prevention tactics:

- **Do not rush.** Give yourself at least 6 months more than you think you need.
- **Use beta readers early and often.** Your first book's beta readers will be brutally honest if the second is weaker.
- **Write what excites you, not what you think the market wants.** Readers can sense when you are phoning it in.
- **Keep one foot in your old world.** Include a cameo from a beloved character or a reference to the first book to reward returning readers.

Long-Term Career Planning: The 5-Year Author Arc

Sit down with a notebook and sketch a 5-year plan. It does not have to be accurate – it is a direction.

Questions to answer:

- How many books do you want to publish in the next 5 years? (3 is realistic for most.)
- Which genres or themes will you explore?
- What income level do you need from writing to sustain it? (Be honest – many authors keep day jobs.)

- What role do you want the portal to play (community hub, beta reader source, publicist matchmaker)?

Review your plan annually. Adjust as life changes.

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 32

1. Open your first book's portal analytics. List the top 3 things readers loved and top 3 criticisms.
2. Choose your next book pathway (sequel, same-genre standalone, or pivot).
3. Write a one-page "lessons learned" document from your first launch. Keep it somewhere visible.
4. If you have a draft of book two, request early beta readers on the portal today.
5. Reach out to your first publicist (if you want to work together again) no later than 9 months before your target publication date.
6. Draft your 5-year author arc. Share it with an accountability partner.

Chapter 33: Giving Back – Mentoring New Authors on the Portal

You have learned the portal inside and out. You have survived rejection, launch, reviews, and the lull. Now you have something invaluable: **experience**. This chapter invites you to give back to the community that supported you by mentoring new LGBTQ+ authors. Mentoring is not charity – it deepens your own understanding, expands your network, and builds legacy. On readwithpride.com, the most respected authors are often the most generous.

Why Mentoring Matters on a Queer Platform

LGBTQ+ authors face barriers that mainstream authors do not: gatekeepers who dismiss “niche” stories, internalized shame, lack of family support, and financial precarity. A mentor who has walked that path can be the difference between giving up and persisting. The portal’s mentoring program formalizes this support, but informal mentoring happens every day in forums, DMs, and beta exchanges.

Benefits to you as a mentor:

- Seeing a new author succeed is genuinely joyful (combats career fatigue)
- You articulate your own process, which clarifies it for yourself

- You build a network of grateful authors who will champion your future work
- The portal awards “Community Steward” badges that publicists notice (indicating leadership and reliability)

The Portal’s Formal Mentoring Program

readwithpride.com offers a structured **Author Mentorship Program** with three levels:

Level 1: Beta Mentor – You commit to beta reading for 3–5 new authors per year. The portal matches you with authors whose manuscripts fit your genre expertise. You provide written feedback within 4 weeks. In return, you receive priority access to the portal’s advanced analytics tools.

Level 2: Launch Mentor – You are assigned to a debut author for 3 months leading up to their launch. You advise on portal profile optimization, beta reader recruitment, and pitch party preparation. You do not provide legal or financial advice – just experience. Time commitment: 2–3 hours per month.

Level 3: Career Mentor – For experienced authors (3+ books). You guide a mid-career author through challenges like genre pivots, publicist negotiations, or handling a crisis. Time commitment: 1–2 hours per month for 6 months.

To apply, go to your dashboard, click “Mentorship,” and complete a brief application (your portal activity and book metrics determine eligibility). The program is free for both mentors and mentees.

Informal Mentoring: Every Interaction Counts

Even if you do not join the formal program, you can mentor informally every day on the portal:

- **Answer questions in forums** with patience and detail. A new author asking “How do I find beta readers?” may need a step-by-step answer, not a one-sentence reply.
- **Share your failures** as well as your successes. “My first Pitch Party got zero rockets – here is what I changed to eventually get a publicist.” Vulnerability is powerful teaching.
- **Offer to look at a query letter** for a specific author who seems stuck. Send a private message: “I saw your post about struggling with your pitch. I’m no expert, but I could take a look if you’d like.”
- **Nominate other authors** for portal spotlights. The “Author to Watch” feature relies on community nominations. Use it generously.

The Ethics of Mentoring: Boundaries and Humility

Mentoring goes wrong when the mentor oversteps. Follow these ethical guidelines:

- **Do not claim expertise you do not have.** If you have never worked with a publicist, do not advise on publicist negotiation. Say “I don’t know – let’s find out together.”
- **Do not charge money** for informal mentoring. The portal’s formal program is free; offering paid mentoring outside of it is prohibited unless you are a certified coach (and even then, you must disclose).
- **Do not use mentoring as a pipeline for your own gain.** Do not ask mentees to buy your books, join your paid course, or promote you. That is exploitation.
- **Respect confidentiality.** If a mentee shares a manuscript or a personal struggle, do not repeat it without permission.
- **Know when to refer.** If a mentee needs legal advice, financial planning, or mental health support, direct them to portal resources, not your own opinions.

How Mentoring Improves Your Own Career

Selfishly (and that is okay), mentoring benefits you:

- **You stay current.** Explaining portal features to new authors forces you to learn updates you might have ignored.
- **You build a referral network.** Mentees who succeed remember who helped them. They will recommend you to publicists, anthologies, and awards.
- **You gain perspective.** Your own career frustrations feel smaller when you see a new author struggling with a problem you solved two years ago.
- **The portal's algorithm favors active mentors.** Your posts receive slightly higher visibility when you hold a mentorship badge.

The Mentoring Relationship: A Sample Arc

Here is what a healthy 3-month launch mentoring relationship might look like:

Month 1 (Discovery): Weekly 30-minute calls. You review the mentee's portal profile, beta reader strategy, and book blurb. You share templates you used. You set goals for the month (e.g., "complete 4 beta swaps").

Month 2 (Action): Bi-weekly calls. The mentee executes. You provide feedback on their Pitch Party

entry. You introduce them to one relevant contact (e.g., a publicist you know who is open to debuts – after getting permission from both sides).

Month 3 (Launch prep): Weekly calls again. You help them create a launch day timeline. You review their press kit. You offer to write a testimonial for their portal profile (if you genuinely believe in the book). After launch, you check in once more to celebrate or debrief.

When Mentoring Is Not Working

Sometimes a mentee is not ready – they ignore advice, miss meetings, or blame others for their lack of progress. You are not obligated to continue. Send a kind but firm message:

“I’ve enjoyed our time, but I’m not seeing the follow-through needed to make this mentorship effective. I think you may need a different kind of support. I’m stepping back, but I wish you the best.”

Then notify the portal’s mentorship coordinator so they can reassign or close the match.

The Ripple Effect: Creating a Culture of Generosity

When you mentor, you model behavior for your mentee. They, in turn, are more likely to mentor someone else. Over time, the portal’s culture shifts

from “every author for themselves” to a cooperative ecosystem. This benefits everyone – publicists have better-prepared authors, readers find more polished books, and the community becomes a place where people want to stay.

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 33

1. Decide whether to join the formal mentoring program (Level 1, 2, or 3). Apply today if yes.
2. If not formal, identify one question in the forums this week that you can answer thoroughly. Write a response of at least 200 words.
3. Send a private message to one newer author whose work you have noticed. Offer one specific piece of encouragement or advice.
4. Review the ethical guidelines. Write down your personal boundaries for mentoring (e.g., “I will not read manuscripts over 100,000 words”).
5. Nominate an author for a portal spotlight. Write a short, heartfelt nomination.
6. If you have benefited from a mentor in the past, send them a thank-you message today.

Chapter 34: The Long Game – Sustainability, Growth, and Legacy

You have written a book, launched it, built a community, and maybe even started a second. Now zoom out. This chapter is about the **long game**: how to sustain yourself as a queer author over years and decades, not just months. You will learn to balance writing with life, to navigate the ups and downs of the industry, and to think about the legacy you want to leave on readwithpride.com and beyond.

The Reality of a Sustainable Writing Career

For most LGBTQ+ authors, writing does not pay all the bills. A sustainable career is not necessarily a full-time one. It is a career that does not burn you out, that brings you joy more often than despair, and that allows you to keep creating even when sales are low.

Sustainable metrics:

- You complete at least one manuscript per year (or whatever pace fits your life)
- You enjoy the process more than you dread it
- You have at least one non-writing income source (job, savings, partner, freelance) so that a slow book season is not a crisis
- You take breaks without guilt

Financial Planning for Queer Authors

The portal's financial health survey found that 68% of LGBTQ+ authors earn less than \$5,000 per year from writing. That is not a failure – it is structural. Publishing pays poorly, and queer books are still undervalued by many retailers.

Practical financial strategies:

- **Treat writing advances as bonuses, not salary.** If you get one, save half for taxes and half for future project expenses.
- **Diversify income** – speak at schools or libraries (many pay), teach online workshops, offer sensitivity reading services (the portal has a Sensitivity Reader Directory).
- **Apply for grants** – the portal maintains a list of LGBTQ+ literary grants (e.g., Lambda Literary Fellowship, Queer Writers' Fund). Even small \$500 grants help.
- **Share resources** – join or start a mutual aid pod with other portal authors. You can share editing, cover design, or publicity costs.

Protecting Your Mental Health Over the Long Term

The emotional cycle of writing – hope, doubt, rejection, revision, launch, waiting – is exhausting.

Long-term sustainability requires active mental health care.

Author-proven practices:

- **The 90-day review:** Every quarter, write down three things that went well and three that were hard. Look for patterns. Adjust your schedule or expectations accordingly.
- **A non-writing creative outlet** – gardening, painting, cooking, music. When writing feels pointless, you need somewhere else to pour creative energy.
- **Therapy or support groups** – the portal’s “Author Circles” are free, facilitated peer support groups that meet weekly over video. Topics include imposter syndrome, rejection sensitivity, and work-life balance.
- **Sabbaticals:** Every 12–18 months, take 2–4 weeks completely off writing. Announce it on your portal feed, set an auto-reply, and do not open your manuscript folder.

Navigating Industry Changes

The publishing world shifts. New social platforms rise. Algorithms change. The portal itself may evolve. Long-term authors adapt without panicking.

Strategies:

- **Stay connected to the portal's "Industry Updates" feed** – weekly news about LGBTQ+ publishing.
- **Attend one professional development event per year** (the portal hosts a virtual conference every March).
- **Maintain an email list** – it is the one platform you own. Even if the portal changes, your newsletter subscribers are yours.
- **Be a slow adopter** – do not jump on every new trend. Watch what works for authors similar to you before investing energy.

Leaving a Legacy: What Do You Want to Be Known For?

Legacy is not just for famous authors. Every author leaves traces: the readers who felt seen, the community you helped build, the mentorship you offered. Ask yourself:

- "What do I want a new author to say about me in five years?"
- "What would I want my author obituary to say?" (Morbid but clarifying.)

- “If I could change one thing in queer publishing, what would it be? How can I work toward that?”

Write your answers. Keep them somewhere private. Revisit them every year on your writing birthday (the anniversary of your first book’s launch).

The Portal as a Living Archive

readwithpride.com is designed to preserve author legacies. Your profile, books, reviews, and forum posts remain visible indefinitely (unless you delete them). Future queer authors will be able to discover your work years from now. That is a form of immortality.

Actions that build legacy on the portal:

- Keep your profile updated even if you are between books
- Leave thoughtful reviews of other authors’ books (those reviews stay with their profiles)
- Participate in the “Queer Literary History” forum, where authors document the evolution of LGBTQ+ publishing
- Donate a portion of your book royalties to the portal’s author emergency fund (optional, but impactful)

When to Step Back or Stop

Sometimes sustainability means knowing when to pause or stop. If writing has become a source of constant pain, if you are neglecting your health or relationships, if you no longer feel joy even when things go well – step back. You can return later, or not. Your value as a human being is not measured by your publication record.

The portal allows you to set your status to “Inactive – taking a break.” Your books remain for sale, but you are not expected to engage. No shame. No questions asked.

Summary Action Steps for Chapter 34

1. Calculate your writing income from the last 12 months. Compare it to your expenses. Adjust expectations if needed.
2. Choose one mental health practice from the list above and commit to it for 90 days.
3. Review your 5-year author arc (from Chapter 32). Update it based on what you have learned.
4. Write your legacy statement (one paragraph). Store it where you will see it yearly.

5. If you are feeling burned out, set your portal status to “Inactive” and take a real break.
6. Identify one author you admire who has sustained a long career. Reach out and ask them one question about longevity.

Chapter 35: Conclusion – The Book Is Out, Now the Real Work Begins

You have reached the final chapter of this guide – but for your journey as an author, this is only the beginning. This conclusion synthesizes everything you have learned and sends you forward with clarity, courage, and a reminder: **the book is out, but the real work – the work of being a queer author in a world that needs your voice – has just begun.**

The Four Truths of Coming Out with Your Book

Let us name the four truths that underlie every chapter of this book. Carry them with you.

Truth 1: Your book is not the destination; it is a vehicle.

The goal is not simply to publish a book. The goal is to reach the readers who need it. A book that sells ten copies to ten people who feel transformed is more valuable than a book that sells a thousand copies to people who forget it by morning. The book is a vehicle, not a trophy.

Truth 2: Rejection is redirection.

Every “no” from a publicist, every one-star review, every ignored pitch is not a verdict on your worth. It is information. Use it to pivot, improve, or persist. The most successful authors on readwithpride.com are

not the ones who never failed – they are the ones who failed forward.

Truth 3: Community is stronger than algorithms.

When the portal’s algorithm changes (and it will), your community will remain. Invest in relationships, not just metrics. A reader who feels seen by you will follow you across platforms, through genre shifts, and through quiet years.

Truth 4: You belong here.

Imposter syndrome whispers that you are not queer enough, not talented enough, not professional enough. That voice is a liar. The portal exists because LGBTQ+ authors were excluded from mainstream spaces. You belong because you showed up. End of story.

A Final Walk Through the Portal’s Gifts

Before you close this book, revisit the portal’s core offerings with new eyes:

- **The Author Profile** – not a form, but a declaration of your creative existence.
- **The Beta Reader Matchmaker** – not a tool, but a circle of trusted first readers.
- **The Publicist Directory** – not a cold database, but a map of potential allies.

- **The Community Forums** – not a distraction, but a lifeline.
- **The Launch Tools** – not a checklist, but a launchpad.
- **The Analytics** – not a judgment, but a mirror.

Use them. Abuse them (within the rules). Make them yours.

The 100-Day Challenge: Your Next Step

You have read 35 chapters. Now act. Take the **100-Day Challenge**:

Day range	Action
1–10	Complete your portal profile (if not done). Request 3 beta reads.
11–20	Write 5 targeted publicist pitches. Send 1 per day.
21–30	Participate in a Pitch Party. Revise your hook based on feedback.
31–40	Build your press kit. Share it in your forum signature.
41–50	Host a small live text chat on the portal (invite 10 friends).
51–60	Apply for one book award or grant.
61–70	Mentor one newer author (even just a single forum answer).

Day range	Action
71–80	Plan your next book. Write the first chapter.
81–90	Review your analytics. Identify one improvement. Implement it.
91–100	Celebrate. You have done 100 days of focused work. Then repeat.

Print this challenge. Stick it on your wall. Check off each box.

A Letter to Your Future Self

Write a letter to yourself one year from now. Address it: “To the author I will be in one year.” In it, describe what you hope to have achieved, what you hope to have learned, and what you promise to forgive yourself for (failures, delays, doubts). Seal it in an envelope. Open it on the anniversary of your portal registration.

I have written hundreds of such letters with authors. Every single one, a year later, has said: “I did not achieve everything I wanted. But I am still here. And I am proud.”

The Last Word: Keep Coming Out

Coming out is not a one-time event. For queer people, we come out again and again – to new colleagues, new neighbors, new doctors, new readers. Each time, we risk rejection. Each time, we gain the possibility of authentic connection.

Publishing your book on readwithpride.com is a form of coming out. You are saying: “This is my queer story. It matters. I matter.” Not everyone will receive it. But those who do will carry a piece of you with them.

So keep coming out. Keep writing. Keep pitching. Keep building community. Keep resting. Keep failing and trying again.

The portal is waiting. Your readers are waiting. And you – you are ready.

Now go. Begin.

End of Book.