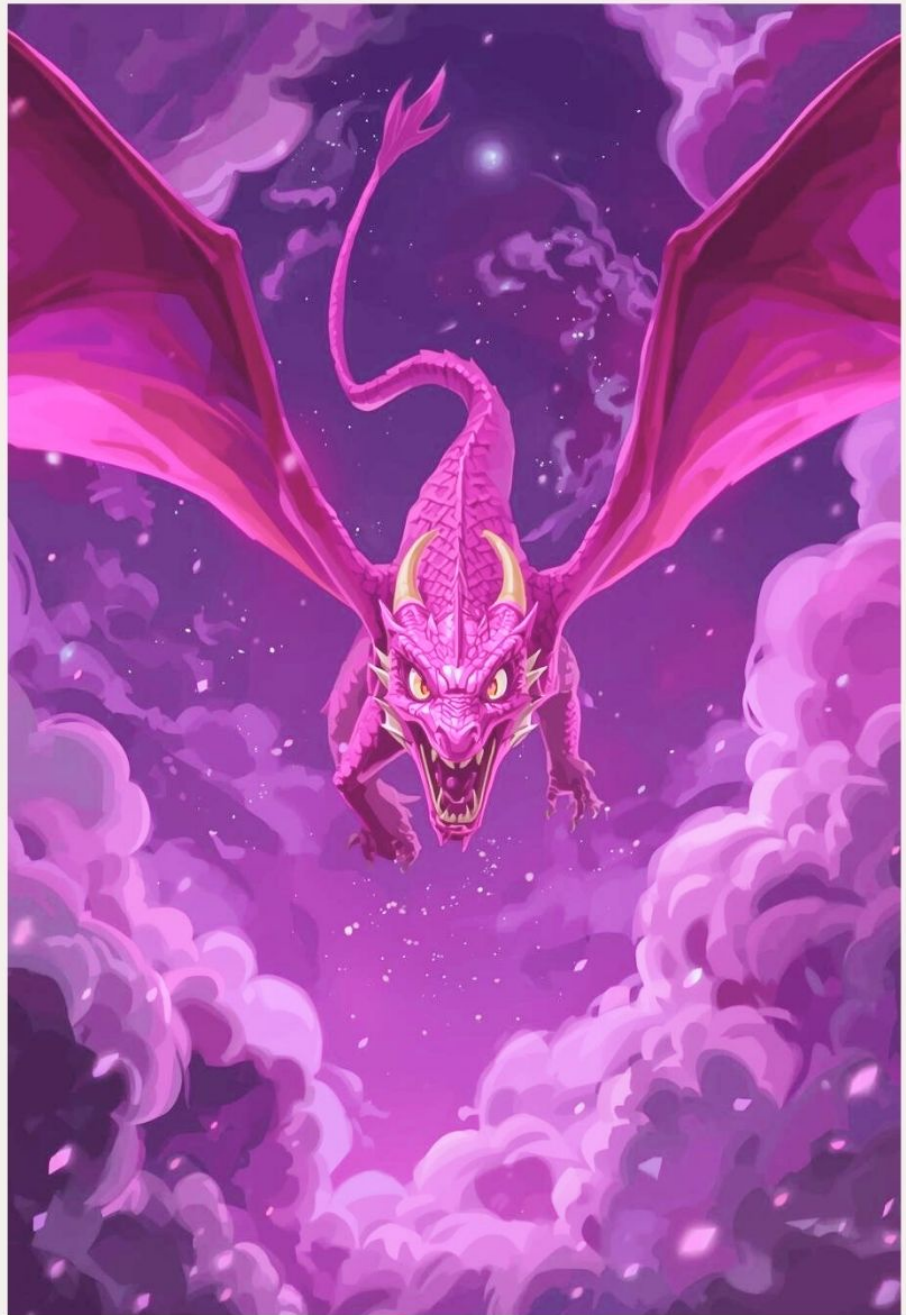


The Dragon's Guide to Author Marketing: Finding Your Readers

From Overwhelmed to Published – One Step at a Time



**Southern
Dragon
Publishing**

Volume 1 2026

Where Every Story Finds Its Fire

<https://SouthernDragonPublishing.com>

FINDING YOUR READERS ONLINE

Facebook Groups ♦ Reddit Communities ♦ Goodreads Groups

Southern Dragon Publishing | February 2026

SECTION 1 — FACEBOOK GROUPS: Search Techniques & Genre Examples

How to Search Facebook for Reader Groups

Facebook's search bar is a powerful discovery tool — if you know what terms to use. Here are the techniques that work in 2026:

Search Approach	How It Works
Use genre + "readers"	Finds groups built around specific genre audiences
Use genre + "book club"	Finds organized reading communities — often highly engaged
Use genre + "fans"	Surfaces fan communities around popular series or authors in your genre
Use trope terms	Targets hyper-engaged reader niches (e.g., "enemies to lovers" readers)
Use "indie author" + genre	Finds author-forward promo groups mixed with readers
Use "BookTok" + genre	Connects to TikTok crossover audiences active on Facebook
Use "ARC readers" + genre	Finds review communities actively seeking new titles

Genre-Specific Facebook Search Examples

Copy, paste, and adapt these directly into the Facebook search bar:

📖 Romance & Subgenres

- Contemporary Romance: *contemporary romance readers book club*
- Historical Romance: *historical romance readers regency book club*
- Romantasy: *romantasy readers fantasy romance BookTok fans*
- Romantic Suspense: *romantic suspense readers thrillers books*
- Steampunk Romance: *steampunk fiction fans readers book club*
- Paranormal Romance: *paranormal romance readers supernatural love stories*

🔍 Mystery, Thriller & Suspense

- Cozy Mystery: *cozy mystery readers book club tea cozies*
- Psychological Thriller: *psychological thriller readers dark suspense book club*
- Historical Mystery: *historical mystery readers detective fiction*
- True Crime Adjacent: *crime fiction fans true crime mystery book club*

🐉 Fantasy & Science Fiction

- Epic Fantasy: *epic fantasy readers book club dragons magic*
- Urban Fantasy: *urban fantasy readers supernatural fiction book club*

- **Dark Fantasy:** *dark fantasy horror fantasy readers book club*
- **Science Fiction:** *science fiction readers sci-fi book club*
- **YA Fantasy:** *young adult fantasy readers YA book club BookTok*

Other Popular Genres

- **Women's Fiction:** *women's fiction readers book club female authors*
- **Literary Fiction:** *literary fiction readers indie authors book club*
- **Nonfiction / Self-Help:** *indie authors nonfiction writing books marketing*
- **Christian Fiction:** *Christian fiction readers inspirational books book club*

Facebook Group Evaluation Checklist

Before joining or posting, ask yourself:

- **Member count** — Look for 1,000+ members to indicate active engagement
- **Recent posts** — Check that posts are from within the last 7 days
- **Engagement rate** — Comments and reactions on posts signal a real, active community
- **Promotion rules** — Read the pinned rules — some groups allow one post per week; others never
- **Reader vs. author ratio** — You want READERS in the group, not just other authors promoting
- **Admin responsiveness** — Active admins mean the group is moderated and spam-free

♦ *PRO TIP: Join as a reader first. Spend 2–4 weeks contributing value — recommending books, joining discussions — before mentioning your own work. Communities that know you convert far better than cold promotional posts.*

SECTION 2 — REDDIT COMMUNITIES: Directory by Genre

Most Active Reader Subreddits in 2026

Reddit's reader communities are among the most engaged on the internet. Redditors are vocal, opinionated, and actively seek recommendations. An honest, well-received post can drive hundreds of downloads.

General Book Communities — Start Here

Subreddit	Members	Best For Authors	Key Rules
r/books	24M+	Massive reach; good for literary fiction & mainstream releases	No self-promotion; use AMAs or author flair
r/suggestmeabook	3M+	Answer recommendation requests in your genre — builds visibility organically	Only respond when you genuinely fit; no overt promo
r/booksuggestions	1M+	Similar to above; more casual tone	Be helpful, not salesy
r/whattoreadif	500K+	Readers describe mood, you suggest — great for genre authors	Engage genuinely; mention book only if perfect match
r/52book	300K+	Annual reading challenge community; high activity Jan–Mar	No promotion; great for visibility via discussion

Romance Subreddits

Subreddit	Members	Best For Authors	Key Rules
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r/RomanceBooks	285K+	The #1 romance reader hub; trope discussions, new releases, recs	No self-promo posts; authors can do official AMAs
r/FantasyRomance	115K+	Romantasy & fantasy romance; ACOTAR, From Blood and Ash fans	Engage in discussions; ARC giveaways sometimes allowed
r/HistoricalRomance	75K+	Regency, Victorian, Highlander, Viking romance readers	Read rules — some allow monthly promo threads
r/RomanceBookClub	50K+	Monthly reads; high discussion engagement	Participate in book-of-month discussions to build presence
r/ContemporaryRomance	40K+	Modern-day romance fans; trope-driven recommendations	Community-first approach works best

Fantasy & Science Fiction Subreddits

Subreddit	Members	Best For Authors	Key Rules
r/Fantasy	3M+	The gold standard for fantasy readers; annual Stabby awards	Authors can do official AMAs; no direct promo posts
r/sciencefiction	800K+	Broad SFF community; classic and new releases	Discussion-first; no self-promotion
r/HFY	700K+	"Humanity F--- Yeah" — military/space sci-fi readers	Original serial fiction welcomed; builds loyal following
r/worldbuilding	1.2M+	World-builders & readers; great for fantasy/sci-fi authors	Share your world details; builds brand without selling
r/Proglit	90K+	Progressive/literary SFF — Le Guin, Ursula fans	Intellectual discussion preferred

Mystery, Thriller & Horror Subreddits

Subreddit	Members	Best For Authors	Key Rules
r/mystery	350K+	General mystery fiction fans; classic and contemporary	Monthly threads sometimes allow recommendations
r/thrillers	280K+	Psychological & crime thriller readers	Discussion-based; no direct promo
r/CriminalMinds	200K+	True crime + crime fiction crossover audience	Fiction recommendations welcome in designated threads
r/horrorlit	150K+	Literary horror readers — more sophisticated than r/horror	AMAs welcome; discuss craft and themes
r/cozymystery	80K+	Dedicated cozy mystery fans; very active and engaged	Some self-promotion allowed — read pinned rules first

Nonfiction & Special Interest Subreddits

Subreddit	Members	Best For Authors	Key Rules
r/selfhelp	1M+	Self-help & personal development readers	Add genuine value; book mentions in context accepted
r/Entrepreneur	3M+	Business & entrepreneurship community	Nonfiction business authors can share expertise
r/writing	2M+	Writers AND readers of books about writing craft	Writing how-tos and publishing guides welcomed

r/Authorsofreddit	200K+	Mix of writers and their readers	Authors can post excerpts and interact directly with readers
r/YALit	150K+	Young Adult readers of all ages	Engaging discussions about YA; author presence welcomed

- ♦ *PRO TIP: Before posting on any subreddit, spend a week reading threads. Understand the community's tone. Reddit readers can spot a drive-by promotional post immediately — and they will downvote it. Authentic participation is the only currency Reddit accepts.*
- ♦ *AMA STRATEGY: A well-executed "I am [Author Name], I write [genre] — Ask Me Anything" post in the right subreddit can deliver thousands of impressions. Coordinate with moderators first and build up your comment karma (50+) before requesting.*

SECTION 3 — GOODREADS GROUPS: Finding & Joining Effectively

Why Goodreads Groups Still Matter in 2026

Goodreads remains the world's largest book-specific social network, with 150M+ registered members. Group members are self-selected readers — people who actively seek, track, and discuss books. This is a pre-qualified audience for any author.

Most Active Goodreads Groups for Finding Readers

Group Name	Members	Genre Focus	Author Access
Goodreads Authors/Readers	55,800+	All genres; organized by genre folders	Authors post directly in genre folders; ARC requests allowed
THE Group for Authors!	12,900+	General; craft + marketing + readers	Active daily; authors can discuss and promote thoughtfully
SciFi & Fantasy Book Club	42,000+	Science Fiction & Fantasy	Monthly group reads; high engagement; author participation welcome
Shh... [Smut, Heroes & HEAs]	20,275+	Contemporary Romance & Erotica	Active book challenges; indie authors showcased regularly
Some Like It Hot!	7,795+	Romantic Fiction (all heat levels)	Indie author showcase thread; reader-author community
Making Connections	14,779+	All genres; read & review focus	Connect readers with books; great for ARC distribution
GOOD REVIEWS	8,607+	All fiction genres	Reviewers actively seeking books; ideal for ARC/review copies
ARC of Authors	4,726+	Fiction (all genres)	Dedicated to pre-release ARC distribution; very active
Christian Fiction Devourers	10,119+	Christian fiction (all subgenres)	Very engaged community; authors can participate in discussions
Around the Year in 52 Books	10,592+	All genres; reading challenge	Recommend your book for challenge prompts; organic discovery
2025–2026 Reading Challenge	33,850+	All genres	Massive reach; suggest titles that fit weekly challenge themes

Stephen King Fans	20,181+	Horror, Thriller, Dark Fiction	Established fan base; dark fiction authors find kindred readers
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Step-by-Step: Joining a Goodreads Group Effectively

STEP 1	Search & Evaluate: Go to goodreads.com/group and search your genre keyword. Sort by "Members" to find the largest communities. Check "Last Activity" — aim for groups active within the last 30 days.
STEP 2	Read Before You Post: Spend one week reading existing threads. Understand what the community values, what they complain about, and what kinds of posts get traction.
STEP 3	Set Up Your Profile: Ensure your Goodreads author profile is complete — photo, bio, website link, list of your books. First-time posters get profile-checked by members.
STEP 4	Read the Rules Carefully: Each group has a pinned "Rules" thread or folder. Some allow one promo post per month; others never allow self-promotion at all.
STEP 5	Contribute First: Answer questions, recommend OTHER authors' books, join reading challenges, participate in book-of-the-month discussions. Do this for 2–4 weeks.
STEP 6	Make Your Introduction: Many groups have a dedicated "Author Introductions" folder. Post there with a friendly, non-salesy intro: who you are, what you write, what you're reading right now.
STEP 7	Use Giveaways Strategically: Goodreads giveaways (ebook or print) are highly effective in genre groups. Announce them in the correct promotional folder.
STEP 8	Respond to Every Comment: When you post and someone responds, reply promptly. Groups reward engagement — your post stays visible longer when active.

Goodreads Genre-Specific Search Terms to Use

Romance	romance readers historical romance romantasy contemporary romance regency romance
Fantasy / SFF	fantasy readers epic fantasy urban fantasy science fiction fantasy book club
Mystery / Thriller	mystery thriller cozy mystery psychological thriller crime fiction readers
Horror	horror readers dark fiction Stephen King fans horror lit
Young Adult	YA readers young adult fantasy YA romance YA book club
Nonfiction	nonfiction authors self-help readers memoir book club business books
Christian Fiction	Christian fiction inspirational romance faith-based readers
Historical Fiction	historical fiction readers historical romance Tudor Victorian fiction

♦ *PRO TIP: Goodreads Groups let you create your OWN group for free. Authors with 500+ followers can create a dedicated fan group for their readers — this is a high-value long-term asset that lets you communicate directly with your most engaged readers.*

♦ **ARC STRATEGY:** The "ARC of Authors" and "GOOD REVIEWS" groups on Goodreads are explicitly designed for authors seeking reviewers. Post your ARC offer with genre, length, and content notes. These groups have reviewers actively looking for new books to read.

QUICK REFERENCE — Platform Comparison at a Glance

	Facebook Groups	Reddit	Goodreads Groups
Best Genre	Romance, Women's Fiction, Christian Fiction, Cozy Mystery	Fantasy, SFF, Horror, Mystery, Literary	All genres; especially Romance & SFF
Audience Type	Casual readers & book club members	Engaged, opinionated, trend-aware readers	Dedicated bibliophiles & reviewers
Promo Allowed?	Yes, in most groups (follow rules)	Rarely directly; via discussions & AMAs	Yes, in designated group folders
Time Investment	Medium — consistency pays off	High — must build credibility first	Medium — profile + contribution cycle
Best Use	Community building, launch support, giveaways	Organic discovery, AMAs, word-of-mouth	ARC distribution, reviews, reader connection
Free?	Yes — always	Yes — always	Yes — always

THE GOLDEN RULES OF COMMUNITY MARKETING

These apply equally on Facebook, Reddit, and Goodreads:

- **Give before you take** — Spend 70% of your time adding value to the community; spend 30% sharing your work
- **Read the room first** — Every community has unwritten norms beyond the stated rules — lurk before you post
- **Your author profile is your silent salesperson** — Keep it complete and current on every platform
- **ARC readers are gold** — Communities with active reviewers can generate 10–30 reviews per release if cultivated properly
- **Authenticity beats promotion every time** — Readers on all three platforms can spot a form-letter promo post instantly — personalize everything
- **Track what works** — Note which groups/subreddits generate clicks, follows, or review requests and double down on those

Jolene MacFadden ♦ Southern Dragon Publishing ♦ February 2026

REFERENCE GUIDE

Where Book Readers Actually Spend Time Online

A Practical Data-Informed Guide for Authors

By Jolene MacFadden

WHY PLATFORM CHOICE MATTERS

One of the biggest mistakes authors make is assuming they need to be active on every social platform. In reality, reader communities cluster in very specific places depending on genre, demographics, and reading habits. Understanding where readers naturally gather allows authors to focus their time strategically instead of posting blindly.

*The goal is not maximum visibility everywhere.
The goal is meaningful visibility where readers already are.*

WHERE READERS ARE MOST ACTIVE — BY PLATFORM TYPE

 Community Platforms — High-Intent Readers

Goodreads ♦ Facebook Groups ♦ Reddit communities ♦ Discord servers

Why it matters: Users join these spaces specifically to talk about books, request recommendations, and discover new authors. Engagement here tends to be deeper and more authentic than general social media feeds.

 Short-Form Video Platforms — Discovery Engines

TikTok (BookTok) ♦ Instagram Reels ♦ YouTube Shorts

Why it matters: Video content drives emotional discovery. Readers often save or screenshot recommendations and purchase later. Visibility can spread quickly when content resonates.

 Relationship Platforms — Trust Builders

Email newsletters ♦ Substack ♦ Podcasts ♦ Author blogs

Why it matters: Unlike algorithm-driven feeds, these channels give authors direct access to their audience. Readers who subscribe here are typically your most loyal fans.

 Professional / Knowledge Platforms — Nonfiction Authors

LinkedIn ♦ Medium ♦ Niche forums ♦ Industry communities

Why it matters: Readers on these platforms are searching for insight, solutions, and credibility. They are often more willing to invest in books, courses, and consulting.

GENRE-SPECIFIC READER HANGOUTS

Genre	Where Readers Gather Most
Romance	TikTok, Facebook groups, Instagram
Fantasy / Sci-Fi	Reddit, Discord, Twitter/X

Mystery / Thriller	Goodreads, Facebook groups
Literary Fiction	Substack, Instagram, Twitter/X
YA	TikTok, Instagram
Nonfiction	LinkedIn, Facebook groups, podcasts

THE HIDDEN TRUTH ABOUT ALGORITHMS

Algorithms reward engagement, not presence. Posting everywhere without interaction teaches platforms that your content isn't valuable. Focusing on fewer spaces and building real conversations increases visibility more than high posting volume.

♦ Consistency and interaction outperform frequency.

HOW TO IDENTIFY YOUR BEST PLATFORM

Use this 3-question filter:

#	Question
1.	Where do readers of my genre already gather?
2.	Where do they actively talk about books?
3.	Where do they ask for recommendations?

If a platform doesn't satisfy at least two of these, it's probably not a priority platform for you.

STRATEGY OVER TREND-CHASING

Trends change. Reader behavior changes more slowly. Authors who succeed long-term do not chase every new platform. They build a system:

VISIBILITY PLATFORM	→	CONVERSATION PLATFORM	→	RELATIONSHIP PLATFORM
e.g. TikTok		e.g. Facebook Group		e.g. Email List

FINAL TAKEAWAY

Successful author marketing isn't about being everywhere.

It's about being intentional.

When you show up consistently in the places your readers already trust, you stop marketing *at* readers and start connecting *with* them.

And connection is what sells books.

WORKSHEET 1

Reader Avatar Builder for Authors

Purpose: Identify your most likely reader so you stop marketing blindly and start showing up where they already are.

SECTION 1 — CORE READER PROFILE

Genre(s) I write:

Primary book themes:

Reader gender (if relevant):

Reader age range:

Life stage (check all that apply):

- ☐ Student
- ☐ Working professional
- ☐ Parent
- ☐ Retired
- ☐ Caregiver
- ☐ Other: _____

SECTION 2 — READING BEHAVIOR

How often do they read?

- ☐ Daily
- ☐ Weekly
- ☐ Monthly
- ☐ Occasionally

Preferred format:

- ☐ Paperback
- ☐ Hardcover
- ☐ Ebook
- ☐ Audiobook

Where do they discover books? (check top 3)

- ☐ TikTok / BookTok
- ☐ Facebook groups
- ☐ Goodreads
- ☐ Amazon browsing
- ☐ Podcasts

- ☐ Bookstores
- ☐ Friends / word of mouth
- ☐ Book clubs
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Other: _____

SECTION 3 — MOTIVATION & EMOTION

Why do they read books like mine?

What emotional experience are they seeking?

- ☐ Escape
- ☐ Inspiration
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Comfort
- ☐ Adventure
- ☐ Validation
- ☐ Humor
- ☐ Other: _____

SECTION 4 — PROBLEMS YOUR BOOK SOLVES

♦ Example: "Helps them unwind after stressful workdays"

What problem does your book solve for them?

SECTION 5 — ONLINE HABITS

Where do they spend time online? Top 3 platforms:

#	Platform
1.	
2.	
3.	

What do they do there?

- ☐ Scroll passively
- ☐ Comment often
- ☐ Share posts
- ☐ Ask for recommendations
- ☐ Watch videos
- ☐ Join discussions

SECTION 6 — COMMUNITY CLUES

What communities might they belong to?

FINAL AVATAR SUMMARY

Give your reader a name:

"My ideal reader is _____"

Write a 2–3 sentence description:

WORKSHEET 2

Platform Match-Up Strategy Chart

Purpose: Choose platforms intentionally instead of guessing or chasing trends.

STEP 1 — LIST POSSIBLE PLATFORMS

List any platforms where your readers might be:

Platform	Why I Think My Readers Are Here

STEP 2 — COMMUNITY RESEARCH

For each platform, research real communities.

Platform	Group / Community Name	Active?	Engagement Level	Author Friendly?
		Yes / No	High / Med / Low	Yes / No

STEP 3 — OBSERVATION NOTES (LURKING PHASE)

♦ Watch for 2–4 weeks before posting. Record what you learn below.

What posts get the most engagement?

Community culture:

What readers talk about most:

STEP 4 — SELECT PRIMARY PLATFORMS

Choose 1–2 primary platforms where you will focus your energy.

	Primary Platform	Reason for Choosing
#1		
#2		

STEP 5 — SUPPORTING PLATFORM SYSTEM

Choose supporting platforms that feed your primary ones.

Supporting Platform	Purpose	Example Content

STEP 6 — WEEKLY ACTION PLAN

Daily engagement time goal:

My posting schedule:

Day	Platform	Content Type
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		

Friday		
Saturday / Sunday		

FINAL STRATEGY STATEMENT

My marketing focus strategy: