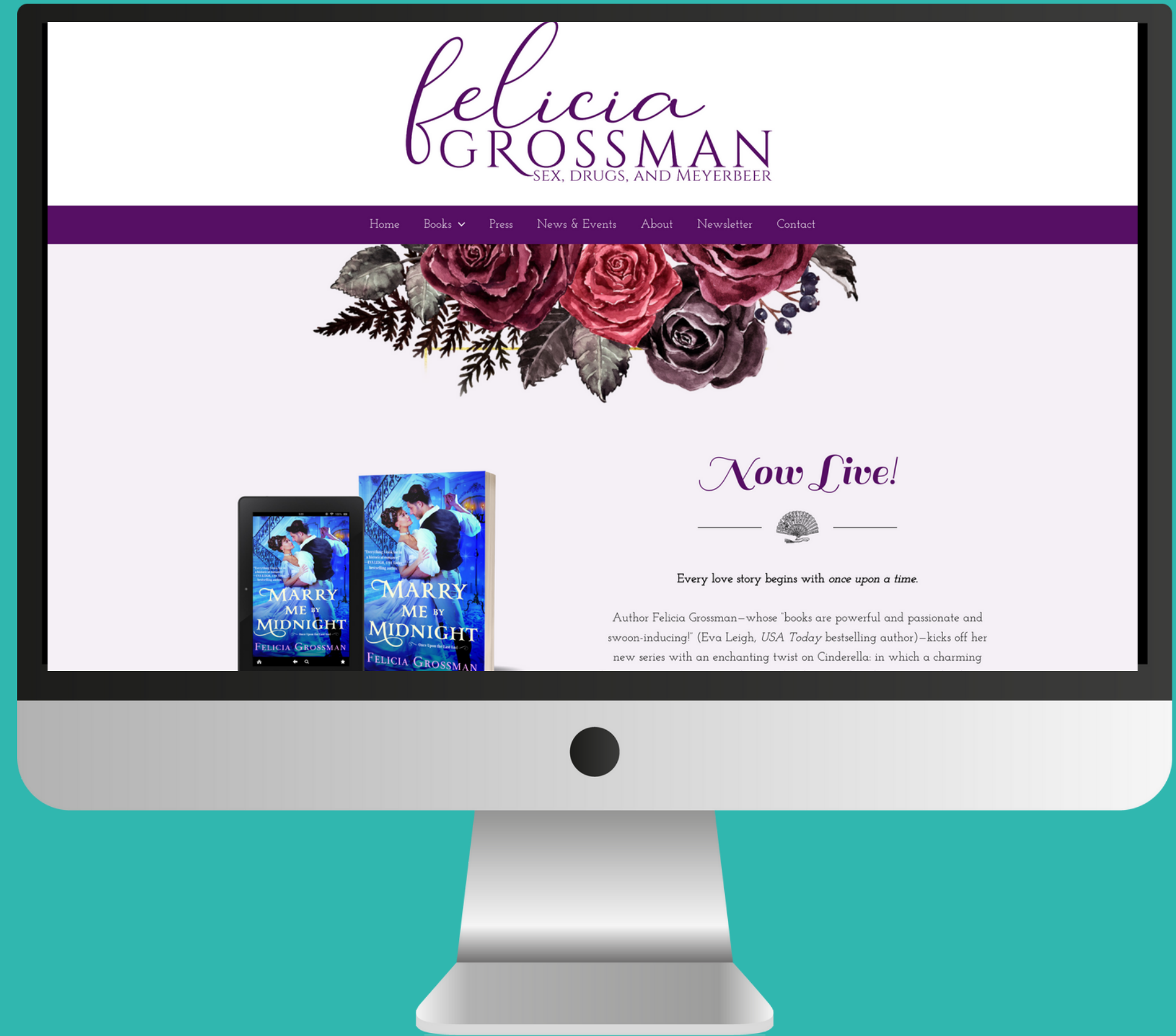


Mastering Your Author Website: the 10 Essentials Every Author Website Needs



MEET CUTE CREATIVE

hello, i'm jessica

- ✿ **author website designer since 2016:** I've built out more than 154 websites for authors and small businesses since then
- ✿ **graphic designer for authors:** I sell Canva templates and help authors ditch their "what do I post?!" social media overwhelm with beautiful and professional Canva templates and **the** Author Content Calendar
- ✿ **soon to be debut author:** my debut novel releases in March 2024 from Forever



Mastering Your Author Website:

the 10 Essentials Every Author Website Needs

Your author website is **your #1 marketing tool**. If social media were to disappear overnight, would you still be able to reach your readers—and more importantly, future readers? If you don't have a well-designed and effective author website, you are neglecting one of the easiest and most impactful selling tools.

In this workshop, we will explore the best options for hosting and designing your website before shifting into the critical things every author website needs. We will then look at some authors who are doing it right with their websites, exploring how their website reflects their brand and helps sell their books for them.

but first...

why do you even need an author website?

- show yourself as a **professional** – a branded website establishes you as a committed author **and** serves as a central hub for you to show off press and potentially connect with media outlets, bloggers and more
- allow readers/agents/publishers to find information about your books and backlist or upcoming WIP's
- have a space you **fully** own – no need to rely on social media which could disappear tomorrow
- **new in 2024:** most newsletter subscription services, like Mailerlite, MailChimp, etc, are **requiring** you to have a custom email address from your domain name (aka author@authorname.com).

step one in setting up your author website: your domain

a domain is your address on the internet aka `www.authernamehere.com`

a domain will cost you around \$25/year and I recommend you research before officially registering your domain. Some things you should search:

- Is there anyone famous (alive or dead) who shared this name?
- Is the domain name easy to spell?
- Is it easy to remember?
- Is it available?

TIP: Go to **<https://www.name.com/domain/search#>** to check if a domain name is available

step two in setting up your author website: hosting

Web hosting is the process of renting or buying space to house a website on the internet. Think of your domain name (aka www.yournamehere.com) as your address and hosting as the land your house sits on. You need to buy land before we can build the house (aka your website!)

free website options:

- WordPress.com
- Carrd.com
- Canva
- Wix

While free, these will have **very** limited customizations but are a good option when starting out on a budget!

paid website options:

- Squarespace
- Wix.com
- ShowIt

step two in setting up your author website: hosting

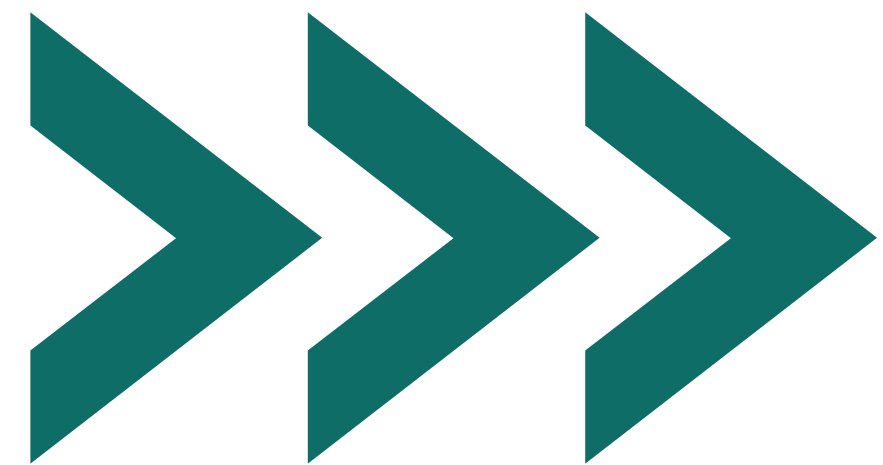
My recommendation?

General website hosting with **free** WordPress platform.

Why?

- Most widely used - over 42% of websites online use it
- Most affordable longterm (~\$5/month as opposed to \$20+ for SquareSpace, Wix, etc.)
- Safest
- SEO Friendly
- Allows for most customization

**now let's talk author
website essentials**





a (kickass) homepage

let's **capture** your reader

Your author homepage is the **first** thing new visitors will see when coming to your website so it is the **most important** page on your website.

Here are the basic things your website homepage needs:

- Latest book and/or upcoming release
- Newsletter sign-up form
- Menu bar with links
- Social media links

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Felicia Grossman

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Now Live!

Every love story begins with once upon a time.

Author Felicia Grossman—whose books are powerful and passionate and swoon-inducing! (Eva Leigh, USA Today bestselling author)—kicks off her new series with an enchanting twist on Cinderella in which a charming heiress must marry to save her family's business, but the one man she dreams of is the one man she can't have.

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hello! shalom! bonjour!

Felicia Grossman is the author of historical romance, usually featuring Jewish protagonists and lots of food references. Originally from Delaware, she now lives in the Rustbelt with her family and Scottish terrier. When not writing romance, she enjoys eclairs, cannolis, and Sondheim musicals. She is represented by Rebecca Podos of Rees Literary.

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All Books by Felicia Crossman



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Kathleen Ayers
WICKED HOT ROMANCE

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Latest Releases by Kathleen Ayers


SINFULLY TEMPTED

The Five Deadly Sins Book 2

Tempting a duke is a Deadly Sin.

Tamsin Sinclair is known for her bold manner. As a Sinclair, nicknamed one of the Deadly Sins she is expected to be improper and uncivilized. Seeking solace from the unrelenting whispers about her at a ball, Tamsin retreats to the gardens and makes the unexpected acquaintance of the eccentric, math collecting, Duke of Ware.

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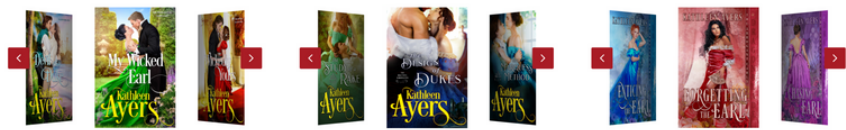
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SERIES BY KATHLEEN AYERS

The Wicked's The Beautiful Barringtons The Arrogant Earls



The Five Deadly Sins



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USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

Lyssa Kay Adams

HOME BOOKS BID EVENTS MASTERCLASS NEWSLETTER CONTACT


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The First Rule of Book Club: Don't Talk About Book Club.



"One of the most compelling and clever rom-com writers in the biz."
#1 New York Times bestselling author Tessa Bailey

WELCOME TO THE **Bromance** BOOK CLUB




COMING SOON

[COURTING THE COUNTESS COMING 2024](#)

A historical romance companion novel to The Bromance Book Club series, which the members read in the first book of the series.

Coming early 2024.

[ADD TO YOUR GOODREADS TAB](#)



SIGN UP FOR MY NEWSLETTER

Stay up to date with Lyssa and her characters! VIP readers get early notice of new releases, first peeks and exclusive excerpts, and all the perks of being a VIP—like a chance to win free stuff!

First name Last name Email address [SUBSCRIBE](#)

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what if you're pre-published or a debut?

The screenshot shows the author's website for the book "Flirty Little Secret" by Jessica Lepe. The page features a pink and yellow color scheme. At the top, the author's name "Jessica Lepe" is displayed in a pink, cursive font, with "romance author" underneath. A navigation bar includes links for "homepage", "about", "flirty little secret", "newsletter", and "contact". The main content area is divided into two sections. The top section is a promotional banner for the book, featuring the book cover on the left and a text block on the right. The book cover is yellow and pink, with the title "FLIRTY little SECRET" and the author's name "JESSICA LEPE". The text block on the right says "FLIRTY little SECRET" in a large, pink, cursive font, followed by a short synopsis and a "preorder now >>" button. The bottom section of the banner is a white box with a pink border, containing a smaller version of the book cover and a "preorder now" button in a cursive font. Below this, there are logos for "An Unlikely Story", "amazon", "BARNES&NOBLE", "TARGET", and "Bookshop". The next section is a blue banner with the text "SIGN UP FOR THE NEWSLETTER" and a form with fields for "name" and "email", and a "subscribe" button. The final section is a white box with a pink border, featuring the word "hello!" in a cursive font, a short bio of the author, a photo of the author holding a stack of books, and a "author media kit >>" button. The footer contains the text "ON THE 'GRAM" and "Copyright © 2023 Jessica Lepe | Designed by Meet Cute Creative".

RELEASED 3.19.24
FLIRTY little SECRET
JESSICA LEPE

FLIRTY little SECRET

For fans of Lynn Painter and Lyssa Kay Adams, *You've Got Mail* goes back to high school in this laugh-out-loud debut rom-com where the anonymous (and anxious) woman behind @TheMissGuidedCounselor must decide if she can take her own advice and reach for the life, and love, she wants.

preorder now >>

FLIRTY little SECRET
JESSICA LEPE

Add to Goodreads

preorder now

An Unlikely Story amazon BARNES&NOBLE TARGET Bookshop

SIGN UP FOR THE NEWSLETTER

Get all the latest info on my upcoming releases, sales and more!

name email subscribe

hello!

Jessica Lepe is a former social worker turned website design who spends her days writing, listening to murder podcasts and wrangling knives out of her toddler's hands (sometimes all at the same time).

She discovered her love for reading after sneaking romance novels in her bible at her all-girls Catholic High School and in between the spines of her siddur at synagogue each Saturday and she hasn't stopped reading romance since.

A proud and passionate advocate for mental health, Jessica writes romances with complex and flawed characters with multi-cultural and religious backgrounds that reflect the people she loves most in the world.

Jessica's debut romcom, FLIRTY LITTLE SECRET, will be releasing from Forever on March 19, 2024. She is represented by Jill Marsal at Marsal Lyon Literary Agency.

DATING DR. DIL NISHA SHARMA
THE LOVE DECEPTION LYSSA KAY ADAMS
The Honey Bee N.S. PERKINS
The Favourite Rosie Danan
Rescue Paper Tears in CRK Alexis Hall

author media kit >>

ON THE 'GRAM

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My Work-in-Progress

Out with Lanterns

Daughter of an ancient estate, manipulated for her father's benefit, **Ophelia Blackwood** has spent her life being a pawn in someone else's chess game. A chance encounter with a Women's Land Army recruiter sets her on a new path and challenges everything she thought she knew about her future. Ignoring her father's disapproval, she gives up her life of ease to pursue something more valuable; a choice of her own.

[Read more about OUT WITH LANTERNS >>](#)



Sign up for my newsletter

Sign up for my newsletter to keep up with my writing journey, my path to getting published and so much more!

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Your Email



FLIRTY little SECRET

For fans of Lynn Painter and Lyssa Kay Adams, *You've Got Mail* goes back to high school in this laugh-out-loud debut rom-com where the anonymous (and anxious) woman behind @TheMissGuidedCounselor must decide if she can take her own advice and reach for the life, and love, she wants.

[preorder now >>](#)



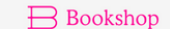
Guidance counselor Lucy Galindo works hard at being Harview High's Most Likely to Blend In. Between managing her anxiety and depression and having never found her place, Lucy knows she'd crumble at the center of attention. So when she spills boiling tea on the hot new teacher (in front of everyone!), it's a nightmare come to life...

Aldrich Fletcher is having the worst first day; thanks to a clumsy (and well, beautiful) mystery woman, his pants are soaked; his ex-girlfriend is his new co-worker, and his estranged dad won't stop trying to talk to him. Thankfully, he can count on his online confidant, the wildly popular @TheMissGuidedCounselor, for advice: like how to woo Lucy, for whom he's falling hard...

Only Lucy has a secret: she's @TheMissGuidedCounselor. And because her alter-ego is everything she's not—brave, confident, wise—Lucy's terrified of her two lives meeting. So when Fletcher realizes the truth, how can he find the courage to tell her—knowing it might end their growing romance? But for them to have a future, Lucy will need to realize she and her alter-ego aren't so different. Because loving yourself can be the bravest thing of all.

[Add to Goodreads](#)

preorder now



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Get all the latest info on my upcoming releases, sales and more!

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hello!

Jessica Lepe is a former social worker turned website design who spends her days writing, listening to murder podcasts and wrangling knives out of her toddler's hands (sometimes all at the same time).

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Jessica's debut romcom, FLIRTY LITTLE SECRET, will be releasing from Forever on March 19, 2024. She is represented by Jill Marsal at Marsal Lyon Literary Agency.



[author media kit >>](#)

ON THE 'GRAM



about page

elements to include on the **about page**

must haves:

Author Photo: A high-resolution, professional photo of you

Author Bio: Include a well-written and engaging author biography that tells visitors about your background, writing journey, and what inspires you. You can also include a professional author photo.

Media Kit: Link to your media kit if published.

about page

elements to include on the **about page**

optional:

Awards and Acclaim: Show off any writing awards or notable reviews you've received.

Social Media links: Include icons or links to your social media profiles so visitors can connect with you on platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, or Goodreads.

Contact Info: Ideally you will have a contact page, but you can also put that information on this page

Other offerings: Do you offer any author services or present workshops? You can share that information here.

about page: live examples



about page: live examples

professional and on-brand author photo

easy to find link to her media kit



long, personal bio written in 1st person to make closer connection to her ideal reader


about page: live examples

Cart/\$0.00

USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR
Adriana Herrera

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MEET ADRIANA



USA Today Best Selling and Audie winning author Adriana was born and raised in the Caribbean, but for the last fifteen years has let her job (and her spouse) take her all over the world. She loves writing stories about people who look and sound like her people, getting unapologetic happy endings. The New York Times once called her book "sweet, thoughtful, and delightfully filthy too."

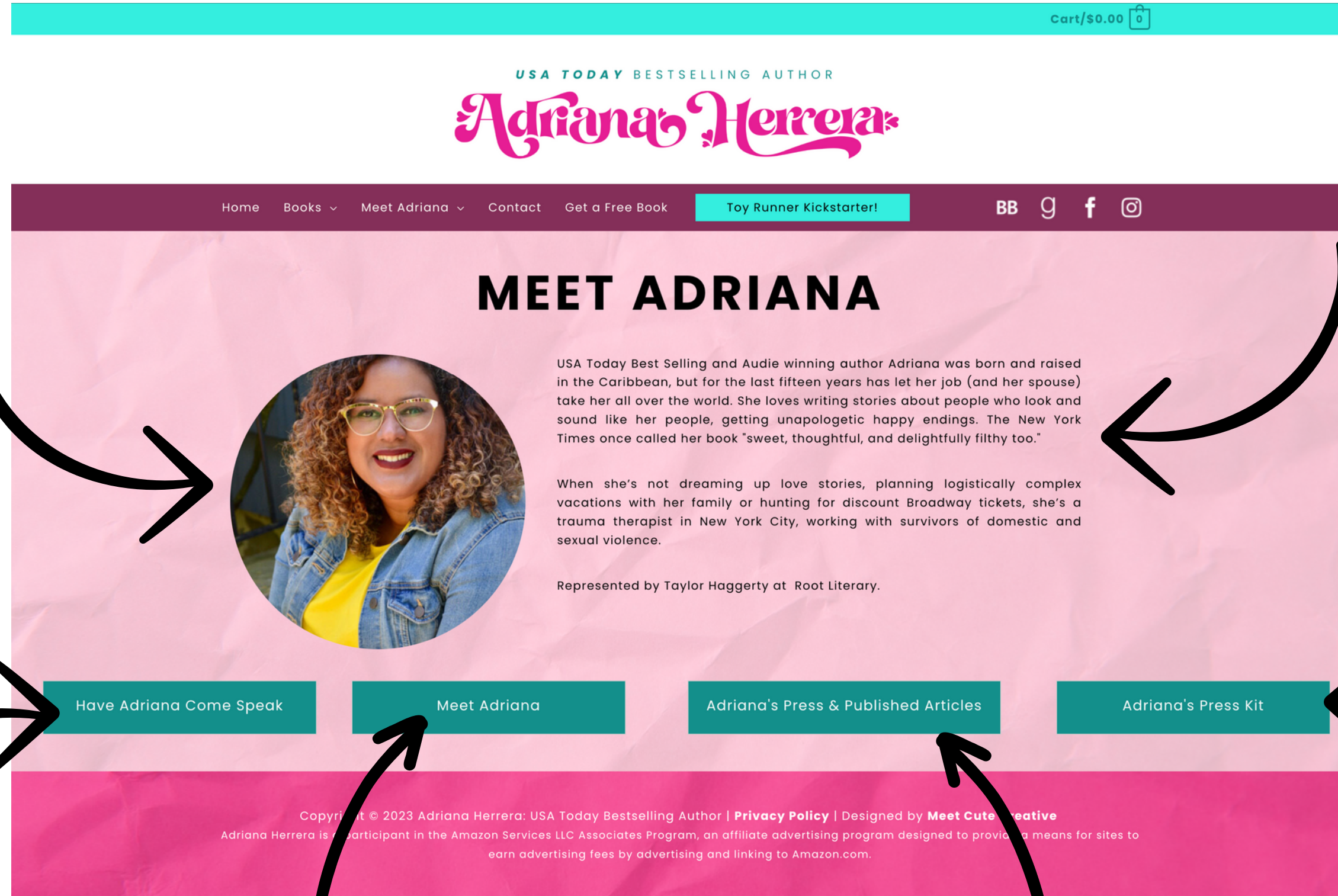
When she's not dreaming up love stories, planning logistically complex vacations with her family or hunting for discount Broadway tickets, she's a trauma therapist in New York City, working with survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

Represented by Taylor Haggerty at Root Literary.

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about page: live examples



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USA TODAY BESTSELLING AUTHOR

Adriana Herrera

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MEET ADRIANA



USA Today Best Selling and Audie winning author Adriana was born and raised in the Caribbean, but for the last fifteen years has let her job (and her spouse) take her all over the world. She loves writing stories about people who look and sound like her people, getting unapologetic happy endings. The New York Times once called her book "sweet, thoughtful, and delightfully filthy too."

When she's not dreaming up love stories, planning logistically complex vacations with her family or hunting for discount Broadway tickets, she's a trauma therapist in New York City, working with survivors of domestic and sexual violence.

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Have Adriana Come Speak

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Adriana's Press & Published Articles

Adriana's Press Kit

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professional author photo

professional bio written in 3rd person

easy-to-find info on how to book her to speak

link to appearances

link to all her press and published articles

link to media kit



author media kit

a **media kit** is a great resource to have on your website and I always recommend authors to have one on a **separate** page from your about page, however to link to it on your **about page**.

what is a media kit?

An author media kit is a **collection of promotional resources** that help journalists, reporters, and bloggers learn more about you and your books.

what should you include in your media kit?

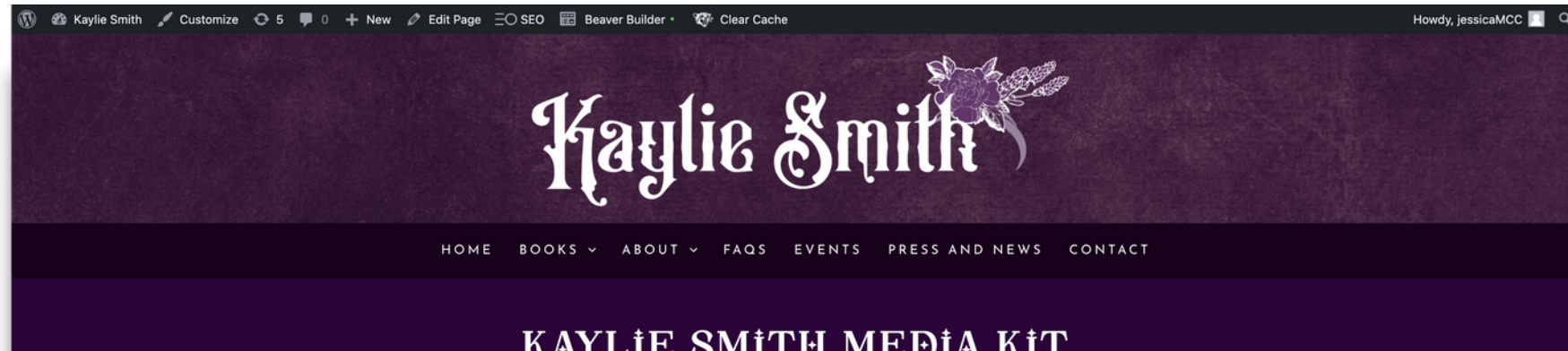
Author Bio: Written in 3rd person. Ideally offer a short version and a long version

Author Photos: High resolution photos that can be easily saved and downloaded.

Awards: Any awards you've received

Publications: Any significant publications you have been featured in.

Your Published Works: A list of your published books.



KAYLIE SMITH MEDIA KIT

AUTHOR PHOTOS



Photo credit: Andrea Hannah

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Photo credit: Darci Morello

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AUTHOR BIO

Short Bio

Kaylie Smith is a writer and lover of all things magical and fantasy. She grew up in Louisiana where she frequently haunted bookstores and practiced her writing craft. When she isn't writing or voraciously reading all things witchy, she can be found at home with her menagerie of animals and annoying people about astrology.

Standard Bio

Kaylie Smith is a writer and lover of all things magical and fantasy. She grew up in Louisiana where she frequently haunted bookstores and practiced her writing craft. After getting her degree in graphic design, she decided to fully pursue her dream of being an author, and the first in her YA fantasy series, A RUINOUS FATE, debuts in January 2023 from Disney Hyperion. When she isn't writing or reading, she can be found home with her menagerie of animals, fussing over her houseplants, or annoying people about astrology.

media kit examples

Jessica Lepe

romance author

homepage about flirty little secret newsletter contact

BIO

Jessica Lepe is a former social worker turned website designer who spends her days writing, listening to murder podcasts and wrangling knives out of her toddler's hands (sometimes all at the same time).

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newsletter sign-up

help readers **stay in touch**

You should have **several** ways for visitors to sign-up for your newsletter. For example:

- Sign up form on your website homepage
- A separate newsletter page
- A sign up form in your website footer

free newsletter providers:

- Mailerlite
- MailChimp
- Substack

newsletter sign-up: examples

homepage

Jan Scarbrough
ROMANCES FROM THE HEART

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LATEST RELEASE

Slade Preston has been around horses his whole life. But growing up as a "rich" boy in Kentucky Bluegrass country is nothing like spending the summer as a hired hand at a Montana dude ranch with his mother, baby, and the grandfather he never knew. A Western saddle, complete with saddiebags, doesn't make him a genuine cowboy. Unlike his twin sister, with her perfectly planned life, Slade is still trying to figure it all out. What he never expected was his attraction to a pretty visiting writer.

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CARNAL SINS TAINTED REGIME RUTHLESS EMPIRE

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Meet Jo

I write the same kind of romances I like to read - stories about characters facing real-life challenges with real-life consequences. The stories are emotional, but will have humor and love always find a way to pull the characters through together.

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Praise for Jo McNally

"I love the delicate balance of respect and honesty Ms. McNally gave to the veterans and PTSD. She made Cole real, showing how a man could be strong and fragile at the same time."

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Shoshana Rain
ROMANTIC MAGIC

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NOTHING WILL STOP US FROM REGAINING HER FAMILY'S POWER—NOT EVEN THE THREE TEMPTING MEN STANDING IN HER WAY.

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WHAT I'M WORKING ON

[The New Olympus Book Three](#)

MEET SHOSHANA

A lover of mythology, sexy romances, and heroines who give as good as they get, Shoshana Rain wanted to write fantasy romance since reading Kushiel's Dart. When she's not writing, she's hanging out with her cat and trying to keep her garden alive in the harsh desert summer.

[Read More](#)

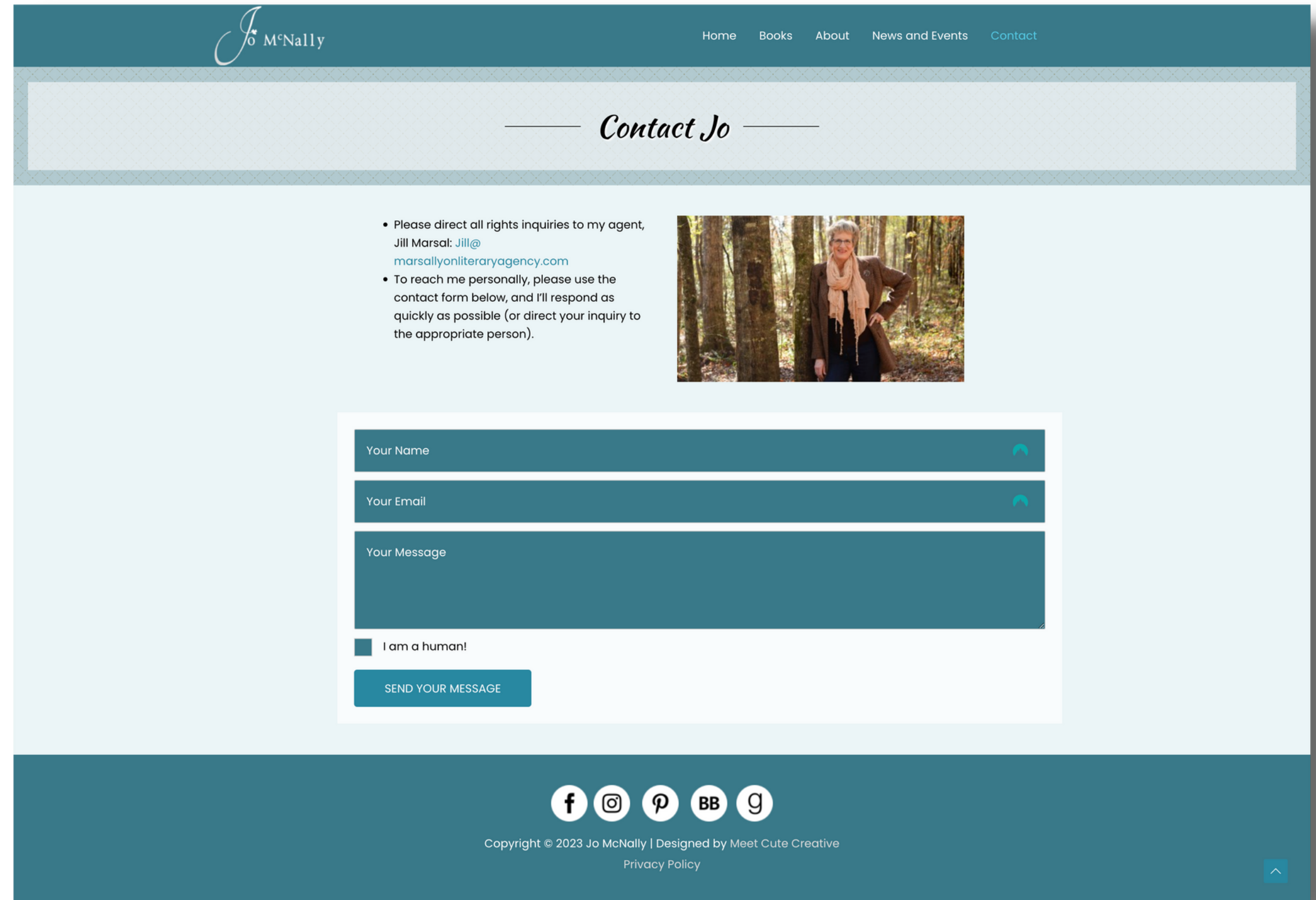
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contact information

make it easy to **reach you**

Don't bury your contact information! Make a very simple contact page for agents, editors, bloggers and readers to find you!





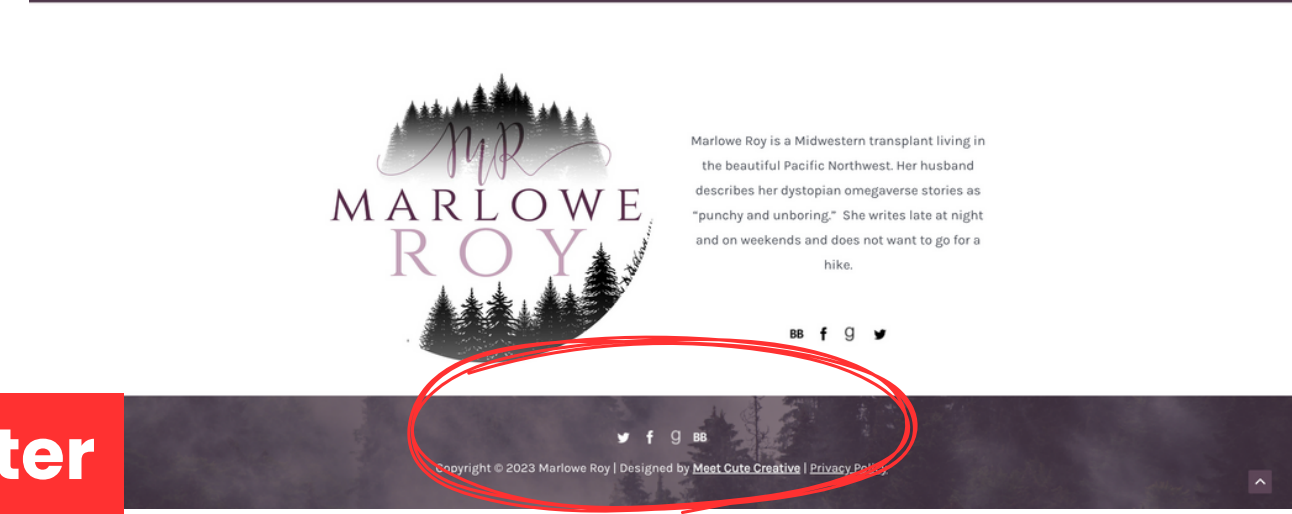
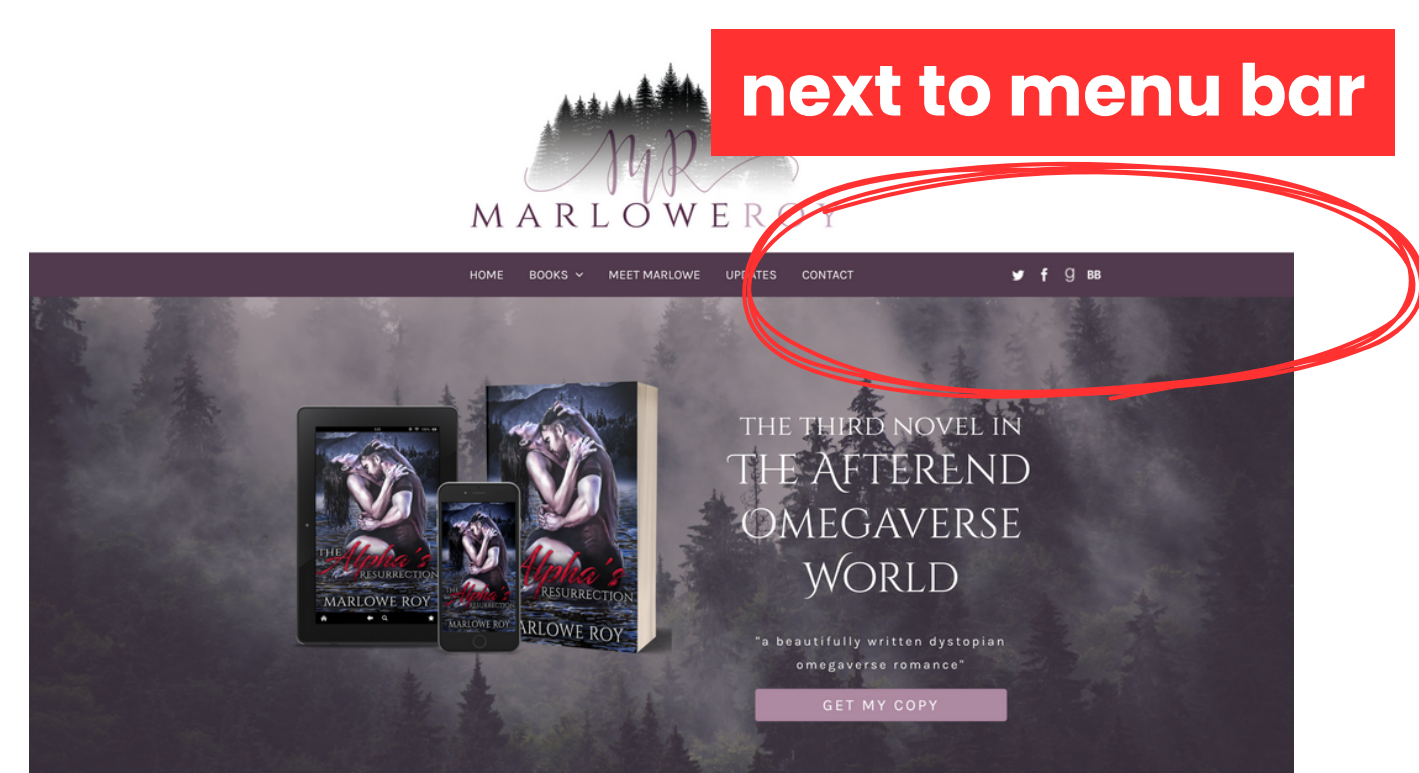
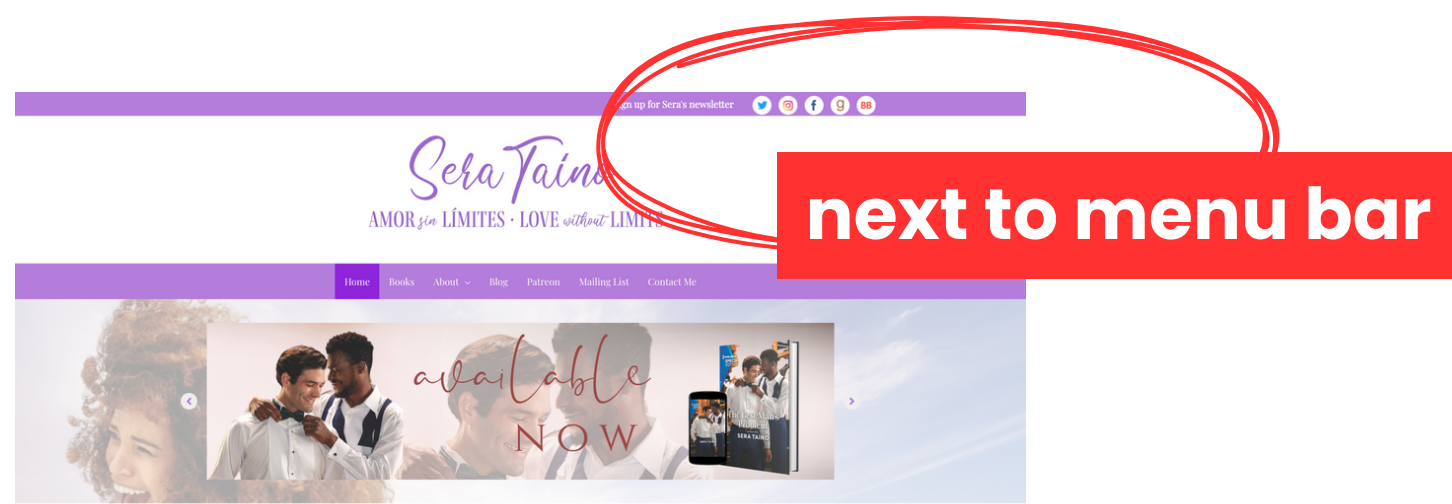
social media

love it or not, social media **is a must**

Social media is an inevitable part of the author journey. I recommend displaying your social media links prominently on all pages of your website so users can easily find and follow you on different platforms.

The easiest way to do this is to link to your social media profiles in your menu bar, heading and/or footer.

social media links: examples



book page

here's **everything** to include

must haves:

- Book Cover
- Book Blurb
- Buy Links
- "Add to Goodreads"
- Other books in the series

optional but recommended:

- Content Warnings

book page

optional:

- Book Playlists
- Book Aesthetic
- Reader Reviews
- Tropes Included

anatomy of a book page

The image shows a screenshot of a book page for 'Fire Devil' by Piper Stone. The page has a dark red background. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the author's name 'Piper Stone' and links for Home, All Books by Piper, Books by Series, Translations, About, Newsletter, and Contact. Social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, Amazon, BookBub, and Goodreads are in the top right corner.

The main content area features a large book cover on the left. The cover shows a muscular man in a black tank top against a fiery background. The title 'FIRE DEVIL' is in large, bold, yellow letters, and the author's name 'PIPER STONE' is at the bottom. The series name 'MISSOULA SMOKEJUMPERS' is also visible.

To the right of the cover, the book title 'Fire Devil' is displayed in white, followed by the subtitle 'Missoula Smokejumpers Prequel'. Below this is a blurb consisting of several lines of text: 'Secrets to tell. Love to conquer. Lives to save. Danger. Domination. Destruction. The Jackals. An elite, rugged team of smokejumpers nestled in the heart of Missoula, Montana. By day they indulge in their penchant for danger, tasked to protect the sanctity and lives of others while risking their own, refusing to follow rules. By night they exude passion, few women able to handle their hunger for domination. Prevent. Protect. Preserve. This is their motto.'

Below the blurb are three buttons: 'Add to Goodreads', 'Add to Bookbub', and 'Read on KindleUnlimited'. Below these buttons is a section titled 'Other books in the series' which contains four smaller book covers: 'Fire Devil', 'Ignite', 'Burn', and 'Wildfire', all by Piper Stone.

Annotations with yellow arrows and boxes point to various elements: 'book cover' points to the main cover; 'book title and series name' points to the title and subtitle; 'book blurb' points to the text block; 'goodreads link' points to the 'Add to Goodreads' button; 'buy button' points to the 'Read on KindleUnlimited' button; and 'other books in the series' points to the row of smaller covers.

book cover

book title and series name

book blurb

goodreads link

buy button

other books in the series

anatomy of a book page

The image shows a screenshot of a book page for 'Sins of Betrayal' by Juniper Nyx. The page layout includes a header with the publisher's name and navigation links, a book cover on the left, and a main content area on the right. Red callout boxes with arrows point to specific elements: 'high res book cover' points to the book cover image; 'goodreads link' points to the 'add to goodreads' button; 'buy button' points to the 'read now' button; 'book title' points to the title 'Sins of Betrayal'; 'tropes' points to the 'Tropes' section; 'book blurb' points to the main text blurb; 'hidden content warnings' points to the 'content warnings +' button; and 'book playlist' points to the Spotify playlist player at the bottom.

high res book cover

goodreads link

buy button

book title

tropes

book blurb

hidden content warnings

book playlist

anatomy of a book page





events

let's meet up

An events page helps with two things:

- letting readers find events where you will be so they can meet you
- establishes social proof –shows that you have events and things going on that establish you as an author

things you can include on this page:

- online events like Instagram Live chats
- bookstore events
- conferences



press/media

time to **show off**

A **media page** can help show off some of your news and media placements. It can be an important tool in your marketing toolbox.

news/media: examples

Home About Books Other Writings **KYLA ZHAO** News Newsletter Writer Resources Contact

author news

KYLA ZHAO

Subscribe to Kyla's musings

Your Name Your Email

Home About Books Other Writings Newsletter Writer Resources Contact

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felicia GROSSMAN
SEX, DRUGS, AND MEYERBEER

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Press

The New York Times
Romance Novels That Celebrate the Hard Work of Love
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Entertainment
Hot stuff: The 6 best romance novels of summer 2023
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heyalma
Felicia Grossman Proves Regency Romance Can Be Delightfully Jewish
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Jewish Book Council
Marry Me By Midnight
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BookPage
Two amazing romance remixes of classic stories
[Read More](#)

KIRKUS
A masterful, original take on a beloved fairy tale is sure to please romance readers.
[Read More](#)

LIBRARY JOURNAL
Marry Me By Midnight
[Read More](#)

SmartBites
Marry Me By Midnight by Felicia Grossman
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LOVE IN PANELS!
Review: Marry Me by Midnight, by Felicia Grossman
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Bookishly Jewish
Marry Me by Midnight
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REBEKAH WEATHERSPOON

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EVENTS

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 7, 2023
THE RIPPED BODICE BROOKLYN
Rebekah will be in conversation with fellow author Zoraida Córdova to discuss her YA debut HER GOOD SIDE. There will be a book signing to follow. This is a ticketed event. Your ticket includes a copy of Her Good Side.
Oct 7, 2023 5pm EST
[TICKET AVAILABLE HERE](#)

October 11, 2023
WATER STREET BOOK STORE
Exeter, NH - Join us for a Q&A and signing with acclaimed romance author (and former Exeter resident), Rebekah Weatherspoon!
October 11 - 7pm EST
[LEARN MORE](#)

October 21, 2023
LAS VEGAS BOOK FESTIVAL
Historic Fifth Street School - Las Vegas, NV
LOVE & LASSOS: A Conversation about Cowboy Romances with Beverly Jenkins, Reese Ryan & Nina Crespo. Panel and Signing: 1:30pm PST. This event is free and open to the public.
[LEARN MORE](#)

Nov 5, 2023
B&N MOVING CELEBRATION
New Barnes & Noble, Marina Del Rey. To celebrate the opening of their new location, Rebekah will be signing copies of HER GOOD SIDE.
When: Sunday, Nov 5 at 2pm PST
[REGISTER HERE](#)

Nov 10-11, 2023
YALL FEST
Charleston, SC
Young Adult Book Festival. This event is free and open to the public. Rebekah will be speaking about and signing her YA debut HER GOOD SIDE. Time of panels and signings TBD.
[REGISTER HERE](#)

NEWS

'COWBOYS OF CALIFORNIA' TRILOGY OPTIONED FOR TV
Valerie C. Woods, a co-executive producer on season four of OWN's *Queen Sugar* and the upcoming second season of Netflix's *Sweet Magnolias*, and her MCV Productions have landed the rights to Weatherspoon's romance trilogy and have begun development on the series' first book, *A Cowboy to Remember*. Woods will write the pilot episode of the series and executive produce.
[FULL ANNOUNCEMENT](#)

I'M WRITING YOUNG ADULT BOOKS!
After a seven house auction, HER GOOD SIDE, a ya romantic comedy will be released with Razorbill Fall 2022
[FULL ANNOUNCEMENT](#)

HARBOR WINS BIG!
Harbor, Book 3 in the Beards and Bondage Series has won a Swoonie for Erotic Romance and A Ripped Bodice Awards for Excellence in Romantic Fiction!
[The Swoon Awards Full List of Winners](#)
[The Ripped Bodice Awards Full List of Winners](#)

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privacy policy

let's cover your **ass**

A website needs a privacy policy to inform users about how their personal data is collected, used, and protected while interacting with the site. It establishes transparency and trust, ensures legal compliance with privacy regulations, and provides users with the necessary information to make informed decisions about sharing their information online.

If you are collecting email addresses for your newsletter or using any kind of analytics tools, you need a privacy policy!

slides & resource guide

www.meetcutecreative.com/larwa

any questions?