

The background of the book cover is dark blue with a subtle pattern of upward-pointing arrows and a faint line graph, suggesting growth and financial success.

**SHORT  
READS,  
BIG  
PROFITS**

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**KATE RILEY**

# THE SHORT READS GOLD MINE

Hey there!

So you want to know what's really working in the Amazon short reads market?

Good, because I've been tracking my own sales data AND getting the inside scoop from my private mastermind group, and I've got some seriously exciting stuff to share with you.

First things first... if you're not paying attention to short reads, you're missing out on one of the biggest opportunities in publishing right now.

I know this because we've been absolutely crushing it with books people can finish in under 2 hours, and our readers are absolutely devouring them.

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## WHY SHORT READS ARE SO PROFITABLE

Here's the thing: people are BUSY. They want to feel like they accomplished something (like finishing a whole book quickly) without committing their entire weekend to it.

Amazon automatically sorts books into these time categories based on length:

- **15 minutes** (1-11 pages) - Super quick guides
- **30 minutes** (12-21 pages) - Short stories, brief tutorials
- **45 minutes** (22-32 pages) - Longer stories, focused guides
- **1 hour** (33-43 pages) - Complete short stories
- **90 minutes** (44-64 pages) - Novellas, comprehensive guides
- **2+ hours** (65-100 pages) - Long novellas, complete courses

The sweet spot? That **90 minutes to 2 hours range**.

It's long enough to feel substantial but short enough that people can binge your entire series in a weekend.

And here's what's really cool - readers can't stop at just one.

One of my friends just told me about a reader who bought her entire 6-book series in a single day and left reviews on all of them by the next morning!

## THE MONEY MAKERS: WHAT WE'RE SELLING

Let me break down what's working right now based on real sales data.

## ROMANCE - STILL THE ABSOLUTE QUEEN

Okay, I know everyone talks about romance, but there's a reason for that. We are absolutely killing it.

One of my last AI-written books earned over \$2,200 last month alone with no ads. Just hitting a *really* hot subgenre, mashing in those tropes and making sure my cover represented the trope (hockey romcom).

### What's working for us:

- **Small-town contemporary romance** (one friend's bakery owner + new-in-town contractor series brought in \$8K last month)
- **Office romance with grumpy/sunshine tropes** (enemies-to-lovers in corporate settings is gold)
- **Sports romance with forced proximity** (one of my hockey romance friends combined locker room banter + fake dating and is making \$12K/month)
- **Holiday romance with second-chance themes** (Christmas reunions, summer wedding fake dates - one author made \$15K in December alone)
- **Instalove with small-town settings** (love-at-first-sight + everyone-knows-everyone gossip = perfect short reads)
- **Age gap romance** (older man/younger woman with protector themes - consistently strong sellers)
- **Single dad romance** (instant family + grumpy dad meets sunshine teacher tropes work amazingly)

**The magic formula:** 20,000-25,000 words, price it at \$2.99-\$4.99, and for the love of all that's holy, make it a SERIES.

One of my friends went from \$500/month to \$5K/month just by turning her standalone into a long connected series.

## MYSTERY & THRILLER - THE SURPRISE WINNER

This is where things get interesting. Several authors have been quietly making bank with mystery and thriller short reads.

This surprised me, honestly. I'm an avid thriller and mystery reader and writer, but I always focused on full length novels.

#### **What's working:**

- **Small-town cozy mysteries** (amateur sleuth + local secrets - one author's librarian detective series is bringing in \$6K/month)
- **Psychological thrillers with unreliable narrators** (another friend studied what Freida McFadden does with twist endings and is now making \$4K/month)
- **Police procedural shorts with recurring detective** (single-case format + familiar character = binge-worthy)
- **True crime adaptations with local angle** (historical murders in small communities)
- **Workplace mysteries** (murder at the office, secrets in the hospital, etc.)
- **Family secrets psychological suspense** (inheritance mysteries, hidden parentage, buried scandals)

The beautiful thing about mysteries in short format is that you can wrap up a complete case in 15,000-30,000 words.

## **YOUNG ADULT - THE BINGE READERS**

YA readers are absolutely voracious. They'll buy your entire series if book 1 hooks them.

#### **What's working:**

- YA mystery (especially school-based)
- Contemporary YA (first love, family drama)
- Dystopian shorts
- Mental health themes in verse

The key here is understanding that YA readers want to consume content FAST. Give them books they can read in one sitting.

## **SCI-FI & FANTASY - SMALL BUT MIGHTY**

The sci-fi and fantasy authors in my group don't sell as many books as the romance writers, and neither do I, but our readers are LOYAL and willing to pay premium prices.

### Money makers for my mastermind friends:

- Space opera with found family themes (one friend's connected universe focusing on crew dynamics is bringing in \$2K/month)
- Urban fantasy with reluctant heroes (ordinary person discovers magical abilities, must save the city)
- Post-apocalyptic survival with romance elements (rebuilding civilization + finding love in the wasteland)
- Time travel with historical romance (modern person goes back, falls for historical figure)
- Dystopian shorts with rebellion themes (single mission stories, focus on character growth)
- Portal fantasy with fish-out-of-water humor (modern person in fantasy world, culture clash comedy)
- Superhero origin stories (everyday person gains powers, learns to be hero)

The best thing you can do is build **connected universes**. Once readers fall in love with your world, they'll buy **everything** you write in it.

So even if, say, your first series is only 5 books long and you finish it, you can then create a brand new series and base it in the same world but with completely different characters.

The readers who fell in love with the world will want more even if they never get a chance to "meet" the original characters again.

## SPECIFIC WINNING COMBINATIONS

Based on our testing, here are the combinations/themes that are making money:

### ROMANCE GOLD MINES

- **Small-town baker + grumpy contractor** (renovation romance + forced proximity)
- **Hockey player + sports journalist** (enemies-to-lovers + secret identity)
- **Single dad firefighter + new kindergarten teacher** (instant family + workplace proximity)
- **Christmas tree farm owner + city event planner** (holiday + opposites attract)
- **Small-town sheriff + witness protection newcomer** (protector + secret identity)

### MYSTERY WINNERS

- **Librarian solves historical cold cases** (cozy + local history angle)
- **Food truck owner witnesses murder** (cozy + mobile detective)
- **Therapist's patient confesses to murder** (psychological + ethical dilemma)
- **Wedding planner discovers body at venue** (cozy + high-stakes event)
- **Bookstore owner finds threatening notes** (cozy + literary angle)

## WHAT WE'VE LEARNED ABOUT PRICING AND LENGTH

Based on our collective sales data, here's what actually works...

### 45-90 MINUTE READS

This is where most of us make our money. Complete stories, comprehensive tutorials, full emotional payoff. We price at \$2.99-\$4.99.

**Exception:** If you're launching a brand new pen name and need to gain an audience quickly, price the first book in the series at \$0.99-\$1.99. The other books in the series should be priced at \$2.99+.

### 2+ HOUR READS

Full novellas, complete courses, series starters. We can charge \$3.99-\$6.99+ here.

Personally, this is my bread and butter but I'm seeing a steady increase in sales.

## YOUR GAME PLAN: WHAT ACTUALLY WORKS

This is the strategy you should use to go from zero to 4-figure months:

**Week 1:** Pick ONE subgenre (seriously, don't try to do everything).

Research what's already working. Plan a **6-book series**.

I use ChatGPT for this as it's great at outlining. I then work with Claude Sonnet to write.

**Week 2:** Write your first book (aim for 20,000-25,000 words).

Get a professional cover or use Ideogram if you know what to look for in terms of "AI giveaways" to remove those.

If you want to be sure your cover won't get blasted for being AI (it happens), buy a cheap premade cover from a Facebook group.

Publish!

## **BUILD MOMENTUM**

Next, release books 2 and 3. See what's working.

Start collecting email addresses from readers RIGHT AWAY by making sure you have a link in the front AND back of your book that leads them to a simple opt-in page.

Don't get tied up trying to make this perfect. Your opt-in page just needs to offer something special - a free bonus scene, or a short prequel will work well. Set it up to be delivered automatically.

I use [Mailerlite](#) to do this.

You don't even need a domain (though I **strongly recommend** you secure one for your main pen). But then you can simply redirect the domain to an opt-in page hosted by Mailerlite.

Click on the "Sites" option after logging into your account to create a quick squeeze page.

Then go to your domain registrar ([I use NameCheap](#)) and set up a redirection so that whenever someone enters in your pen name URL it sends them to your opt-in page on Mailerlite.

## **SCALE UP**

Add more series and extend your existing one to **at least 5-6 books**. Try different subgenres but stick to the same main genre for each pen name.

For example: A romance pen name means you can publish all subgenres of romance under that one account including fantasy romance, paranormal romance, etc - but with one exception:

Don't publish dark romance or anything "edgy" under a romance pen name that also has clean/sweet/wholesome romance.

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## **THE RULES THAT ACTUALLY MATTER**

### **RULE #1: SERIES BEATS EVERYTHING**

I cannot stress this enough. One of my friends was struggling with standalones making maybe \$200/month. She converted them into a connected series and hit \$2K the next month with no ads.

I mean it; series are *everything* in short reads.

## **RULE #2: CONSISTENT RELEASES WIN**

Monthly releases minimum. This is the beauty of shorter reads! You can get more books out there faster, which is super important if you're building on a new pen name.

Rapid release will help you make more money faster regardless of your genre.

One of my students went from sporadic publishing to monthly releases and her income tripled within 4 months. Amazon's algorithm rewards consistency.

## **RULE #3: PRICING PSYCHOLOGY IS REAL**

\$0.99 = looks cheap (we only use this for promotions like getting people to buy the first book in a long series)

\$2.99-\$3.99 = sweet spot that most of us use

\$4.99+ = premium positioning (works great for longer works, not so much for short reads)

## **RULE #4: COVERS MAKE OR BREAK YOU**

You don't need to invest a lot in book covers. A cheap premade cover can work. Look for FB groups by searching "Premade Book Covers" and you'll find tons. Don't go broke investing in a custom cover when you're starting out.

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# **DON'T MAKE THESE ROOKIE MISTAKES**

**Mixing genres:** We've all watched authors confuse their readers by jumping between genres. With AI you'll be able to jump into a ton of genres, and it's exciting, but until you get to at least \$5,000 a month on Amazon, pick one and dominate it.

**Inconsistent publishing:** I've seen promising authors kill their momentum completely with sporadic releases. You need to focus on rapid releases for now, unless you already have an established pen name.

And if you aren't making \$5k a month within 5-6 months of consistent publishing, you're in the wrong genre or you're not hitting the right tropes (or your covers suck). Hit me up for help. I'll be opening a few one-on-one coaching spots in the near future.

**Skipping the series strategy:** This is the #1 mistake I see new authors make, and I wish I could save them the headache we all went through learning this lesson. Sorry, I know I sound repetitive but it's THAT important.

I've been self published since 2011 (traditionally published since I was 15 years old!), and for years I only wrote standalone books.

I lost so much money doing this. As soon as I switched to writing in series only, I was able to go full-time.

## **YOUR BEST MOVE FOR QUICK WINS:**

1. Romance novellas in smaller subgenres with a focus on “Instalove” or “OTT” romance are HOT.
2. Cozy mysteries with a quirky female lead (make her stand out. Coffee shop owners or librarians are overdone. Do something fresh and new.)
3. YA contemporary fiction (voracious readers who buy everything) - in full transparency, this is not my market as I have no interest in YA, however some of my friends are making a fortune in this genre with shorter reads so feel free to give it a shot.

### **The formula that works:**

Okay, so to summarize:

Pick one subgenre → Write a 6-book series → Release one new book monthly → Price strategically → Rinse and repeat until you exhaust that series and then move onto the next.

The opportunity is there. The readers are hungry. The market is proven. We're living proof.

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*This is information based on actual sales data from myself and other successful authors, not theory or guesswork.*

*Now stop reading and start writing!* 😊

Yours in success,

Kate Riley  
*AI Fiction Writers*