

A PRE-PUBLICATION AUTHOR BRAND STRATEGY

# Author Brand Positioning

A brand strategy for a debut romantasy author, built before the book is public. Identity first, audience next, book last.

*Anonymised sample deliverable. The author is fictional and actively querying; the structure, depth, and thinking are exactly what a real debut positioning strategy contains.*

## WHAT THIS IS

# Positioning the Author, Not the Book

Priya is querying. There is no cover to reveal, no title to announce, no buy link to share. That is not a gap to work around. It is the whole opportunity: the reader who follows a voice before there is a book to buy is the most loyal reader an author will ever have.

## What this covers

- What is safe to say publicly while querying
- Who Priya is, and why it matters to her fiction
- The writing lane and where it sits in the market
- A platform and newsletter plan for zero-audience conditions
- A phased roadmap to a launch-ready platform

## What it deliberately leaves out

- No book title, character names, or plot specifics
- No promises about sales, reviews, or list size
- No catalogue analysis, because there is no catalogue yet
- No release-cycle marketing calendar

These belong to a later engagement, once the book is announced.

### THE STRATEGY IN ONE LINE

Build an audience that trusts Priya's taste and voice now, so that the day a deal is announced, there is already a room full of the right readers to announce it to.

01

# The Author

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The identity behind the fiction, the writing lane, and what is safe to say now.

# Author Identity

The identity that loads the fiction.

Priya is an emergency-room nurse. She spends her working life making high-stakes decisions with incomplete information, keeping people alive inside a system that is under-resourced and never quite fast enough. That is not a biographical footnote. It is the engine of her books.

## What it gives the work

Competence: a reader trusts that this author knows how pressure actually behaves. Specificity: the details are drawn from years on the ward. And a grounded, physical relationship with danger and the body, so magic in her world has a cost the reader feels on the page.

## What it signals to a reader

Heroines whose expertise is the plot, not set dressing. A point of view: women who are good at hard things, in worlds that were not built for them. Institutions that feel real: the politics, the triage, the people who hold a broken system together.

### AUTHOR IDENTITY STATEMENT

**Priya Anand writes romantasy for readers who want the heroine's competence to matter. Her nursing career gives the work its through-line, competent women under pressure in systems that were not built for them, and its texture: danger with a real cost, magic that is felt in the body, institutions that behave like institutions. The credibility is not a marketing angle. It is on the page.**

# The Writing Lane

Where the work sits, and the gap it fills.

## ONE-LINE POSITIONING, USABLE VERBATIM

**High-stakes romantasy where the heroine's expertise is the reason she survives, and the reason he falls.**

## Comp neighbourhood

Comps name the neighbourhood, not the ambition. All three below are sample comps, fictional, chosen to map the lane.

### What each shares with Priya's reader

|                   |                                                  |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Rhian Volkov      | Costed magic systems, high emotional stakes.     |
| Mara Ellison-Voss | Slow-burn romantasy, morally grey love interest. |
| Camille Aldret    | Competent heroines, found-family ensembles.      |

## What Priya does that the comps do not

The comps write capable heroines. Priya writes professionally competent ones, a heroine whose skill is specific, procedural, and lived. The reader feels the difference between a character who is described as clever and one whose cleverness is shown in how she works a crisis.

### THE LANE, AS A CLAIM

Priya writes romantic fantasy with a competence-driven heroine and a slow-burn romance earned through partnership under pressure. The magic system carries a physical cost. The stakes are institutional as often as they are personal. The reader promise: a heroine you respect, a romance that makes you wait, and a world where being good at your work is its own kind of power.

# Brand Guardrails

What is safe to share right now.

Priya is at Level 1: actively querying. Everything below is calibrated to that. A query boundary crossed in public is not a small mistake, so this page is the rule the rest of the plan runs on.

## Safe to say publicly

- Her identity: nurse, reader, what she cares about in the genre
- Genre and subgenre (“romantasy,” “slow-burn romantic fantasy”)
- Vibe, aesthetic, emotional register, mood boards
- What she reads and recommends
- The craft and the writing life, within reason

## Do not share until cleared

- The book’s title or working title
- Character names, plot specifics, world mechanics
- Agent names or query-status specifics
- Comp titles in public copy without Priya’s explicit sign-off
- Anything that reads as “announcing” before it is announced

### WHEN THE LEVEL CHANGES

The moment Priya signs and the publisher announces, these guardrails lift in a set order: title and cover first, then the launch runway takes over from this document. Until then, treat every draft caption as if an agent will read it. The mystery is an asset. Use it.

# 02

## The Reader & the Platforms

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The reader to convert, the empty platforms to build, and the list at the centre.

# Ideal Reader

The reader, drawn as a person.

## Primary reader: Nadia, 29

### WHO SHE IS

Reads 60+ books a year, most of them romantasy and fantasy romance. Works a demanding job, reads to decompress, and is quietly tired of heroines who are “strong” in the blurb and passive on the page.

### HOW SHE DISCOVERS

Via BookTok and a couple of trusted Bookstagram accounts, but she buys on the recommendation of voices she has decided to trust. She will follow an author for a year before a book exists if the author is worth following.

### WHAT SHE CAN'T EASILY FIND

A romantasy heroine whose competence is real and specific. Not a chosen one, but a woman who is simply excellent at something, and whose excellence drives the plot. That gap is Priya's opening.

*Reader profile is inference-based, drawn from genre comps and manuscript analysis. A working hypothesis to sharpen against real engagement data, not a documented fact.*

# Platform Audit

What exists, and what to build.

For a debut, an empty platform is not a failure. It is a blank page with the advantage of no bad habits to undo. Each platform is judged on three things: is it there, does it say the right thing, and is it doing a job.

## Instagram

PRIORITY 1

- ☐ Presence: handle claimed, three posts.
- ☐ Alignment: off. Reads personal, not authorial.
- ☐ Primary platform. Rebuild around the voice and the aesthetic.

## Newsletter

PRIORITY 1

- ☐ Presence: none.
- ☐ Alignment: not yet.
- ☐ The asset she actually owns. Stand up a signup now.

## TikTok

PRIORITY 2

- ☐ Presence: none.
- ☐ Alignment: not yet.
- ☐ Highest discovery upside for the genre. Start lightweight.

**Link hub****PRIORITY 1**

- ☐ Presence: none.
- ☐ Alignment: not yet.
- ☐ One tidy link-in-bio to hold it together.

**Goodreads****LATER**

- ☐ Presence: none.
- ☐ Alignment: not yet.
- ☐ Claim at announcement, not before.

**THE ONE-SENTENCE READ, AND THE BUILD ORDER**

Priya has handles but no home. The fastest win is not more accounts. It is making one platform and one newsletter say the same clear thing, then pointing everything at the list. Build order: newsletter signup live, Instagram rebuilt, link hub, TikTok warmup, Goodreads at announcement.

# Newsletter Strategy

The list is the whole game.

The newsletter is the one audience Priya owns outright. For a debut with no book to sell, it has to earn its signup on voice alone. Five parts make it work.

## Reader value

### WHY SIGN UP NOW

1

Why sign up before there is a book? Because the newsletter is worth reading on its own: Priya's taste, her nurse's-eye read of the genre, her recommendations. The voice is the product.

## Reader magnet

### THE THING WORTH AN EMAIL

2

Not a free chapter, since there is no published book. An identity-led resource: "What an ER Nurse Reads for Fun: Romantasy Where the Heroine's Competence Actually Matters." A reading list only she could write.

## Growth

### HOW THE LIST GROWS

3

Newsletter swaps with five to ten debut and early-career authors in adjacent lanes. Cost nothing, build a list of readers already in the right neighbourhood. Magnet goes live first, then swaps begin.

## Proof for publishing

### WHAT IT SHOWS AN AGENT

4

A list of engaged subscribers is a signal agents and editors notice. It shows the audience-building is already underway and there is a room to announce the deal into. Document it; it is part of the query story.

## Cadence and length

### HOW OFTEN, HOW LONG

5

One issue a month to start, moving to bi-weekly once the voice is settled. Four to seven hundred words, voice-led, never a press release. If it sounds like Priya talking to one reader she likes, it is working.

# 03

## The Build

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The territories to claim, the daily habits, the roadmap, and two ready bios.

# Content Territories

Five territories to claim.

Pillars imply a position already held. A debut has none yet, so the strategy is built on territories to claim, each one workable at the identity level without touching a single query secret.

1

## The Voice

### HIGHEST-TRUST TERRITORY

Who Priya is and what the nurse brings to the genre. Readers follow a voice before a book, so this is the territory that earns the earliest trust.

2

## The Aesthetic

### RECOGNITION BEFORE A TITLE

The vibe of the work: mood boards, genre touchstones, the emotional register. Builds recognition before there is a title.

3

## The Reading Life

### A VOICE FOR THE GENRE

What she reads and recommends. Positions her as a voice worth following for the genre, not only for her own book.

4

## The Process

### CRAFT AND THE QUERYING LIFE

The craft and the querying life, within the guardrails. Builds community with writers and readers who follow publishing.

5

## The Community

### SHOWING UP IN THE CONVERSATION

Showing up in the genre conversation, comp authors, reader touchpoints, so that name recognition is already built when the announcement lands.

# Habits

The rhythms that build a presence.

Published authors develop these habits alongside their books. A debut has to install them on purpose. None of these takes long, and all of them compound.

## **Before you post, ten minutes**

Spend ten minutes in the genre before publishing your own thing. Like and comment on five to ten posts from comp authors, readers, and genre accounts. It primes the feed and earns goodwill before you ask for attention.

## **After you post, the first hour**

Reply to every comment in the first hour where you can. Early engagement travels further, and the reader learns you are actually there.

## **Follow like your reader**

Follow accounts that look like Nadia, not only accounts you personally enjoy. Comp-author followers, BookTok rec accounts, genre hashtags. It teaches the feed who your audience is.

## **Reply to every DM**

At this stage every reader who reaches out is worth knowing by name. Later there will be too many. Right now there are not.

## **Keyword auto-reply**

Once the reader magnet is live, set an Instagram keyword auto-response that delivers the link when someone comments the trigger word. The most efficient list-builder on the platform.

# The Roadmap

What to build toward.

## Phase 1

Foundation

## Phase 2

Warmup

## Phase 3

Pre-announcement

1

### Foundation

FIRST 30 DAYS

Bio finalised (see appendix). Handles and profile images consistent across platforms. Newsletter sign-up live. Link hub built. The infrastructure everything else stands on.

2

### Warmup

30 TO 90 DAYS

Consistent posting on Instagram, TikTok warmup begun. First newsletter issue out. Reader magnet built and live. Following strategy running. First newsletter swaps proposed.

3

### Pre-announcement

90 DAYS ON

Magnet driving list growth toward a first meaningful milestone. Cadence habitual. Goodreads author profile ready to claim. A platform ready to move the second the deal is public.

### THE THROUGH-LINE

Every move above traces to a finding in this document, built in the order a zero-audience debut can actually work through.

## APPENDIX

# Approved Bio Options

Two variations, both Level-1 safe: no title, no plot, no agent. Ready to drop into a profile the day the platform goes live.

## Short, social bio

### Ready to use

ER nurse by day, writing romantasy where the heroine's competence carries the story. Slow burns, costed magic, women who are good at hard things. Reading list in the newsletter.

## Long, professional bio

### Ready to use

Priya Anand writes romantic fantasy for readers who want to respect the heroine. An emergency-room nurse, she brings a working knowledge of high-stakes decisions and a real relationship with danger to fiction about women whose expertise drives the plot. Her stories run on slow-burn romance, magic that costs something, and institutions that behave like institutions. She is currently querying her debut. Until then, she writes a monthly newsletter about the romantasy she loves and the competent heroines she wishes there were more of.

## ON BOTH BIOS

Both earn attention on identity and taste, not on a book that cannot yet be named. When the announcement comes, a single line, title, date, pre-order, slots into the long bio without rewriting a word of the rest.

*“Build the room first. The book walks into it.”*

*A debut’s real launch begins long before the cover reveal, in the quiet months when the right readers decide the author is worth following.*

*This is a sample of how Literary Inspired positions an author. Ready when you are.*