

Love in Bloom: What the Explosive Surge in the Popularity of Romance Novels Means for Readers, Authors, and the Publishing Industry

Entrepreneurial Publisher Sourcebooks Enters 2024 as the #1 Romance Publisher in the United States

(Naperville, IL – January 17, 2024) - Romance books are having their day and loving it. What has long been dismissed in the literary world has become a force to be reckoned with as sales of romance novels continue to soar with no signs of slowing down.

Sourcebooks, a women-led entrepreneurial publisher based in Chicago, emerged as a leader in the romance category in 2023, with 228 percent growth in its Bloom Books and Sourcebooks Casablanca imprints combined. As a result, Sourcebooks enters 2024 as the #1 romance publisher in the United States, according to industry statistics.

"Once again, Sourcebooks has proven itself to be the innovation leader in the U.S. publishing market," said Kristen McLean, executive director, primary industry analyst at Circana.

"Their unprecedented triple-digit growth in romance this year is the result of many years of strategic investment combined with a growth mindset that is always focused on uncovering and executing on opportunities others may not see.

As an industry observer, it's been one of my favorite companies to watch."

"Readers are flocking to author signings like they are rock concerts, and these authors are the rock stars," said Dominique Raccah, Sourcebooks publisher and CEO. "The fandom that romance authors are creating is unparalleled in the industry and can be seen everywhere from readers crying over their books on BookTok, to the opening of upwards of fifteen romance-focused bookstores across the country, to conventions that cater to romance-novel-loving fans. These books are changing readers' lives, authors' lives, and the industry as a whole."

"We love hosting chats and signings with Bloom and Casablanca authors," relates Becca Title, owner of the Meet Cute Romance Bookshop in San Diego.

"Their readers are always so enthusiastic and turn out in big numbers to support their favorites, which makes the events a joy."

Sourcebooks romance authors who have contributed to the rapidly expanding success in the genre include:

Ana Huang - #1 New York Times Bestseller

More than 2.2 million copies bought by readers in 2023 and on track to sell millions more.



Ana understands that all readers love to see themselves represented within the pages of their romance novels, and her books often feature Asian American lead characters.

Ana's books are spicy, and many readers say that her *Twisted* series, which features some darker plotlines with "twisted" character archetypes, is a gateway into the current dark romance reading trend.

Lucy Score - #1 New York Times Bestseller

More than 1.7 million copies bought by readers in 2023 and on track to sell millions more.

Amazon MGM Studios is in development on a series adaptation of her book, *Things We Never Got Over*, with executive producer and showrunner Amy Rardin (*Echo*).

Originally from the indie publishing space, where readership and fandom are proliferating, Lucy was recently interviewed by the *Washington Post*, where she divulged that she lost her job when her romance writing career became public news.



Scarlett St. Clair – USA Today and International Bestseller

Scarlett, a member of the Muskogee Nation, is one of the top BookTok-trending authors with more than half a million copies sold in 2023, in what is now being called the "romantasy" genre (it even, as of last year, had its own category on the GoodReads Choice awards).

The author, a former librarian, writes romance-fantasy and fantasy books that are empowering and sex-positive. She is very vocal about banning books with sexual content (along with those that bring light to sexual abuse prevention and LGBTQIA+ and BIPOC representation).

She fiercely believes that the modern library is a safe harbor, a place where every sort of resource should be made to community members.

Katee Robert – *New York Times* and *USA Today* Bestseller

With more than 2 million copies sold (half a million in 2023 alone) of their queer-positive, highly spicy erotic romances, nothing in Robert's work is "off-limits or to be derided," according to Paste Magazine.

Their writing universes are as diverse and inclusive as readers' hearts might desire: Mafia-style romances based on Greek mythology; humans falling in love with gargoyles, dragons, and kraken; sapphic pirates on the high seas; retellings featuring fairy-tale villains with the bleakest hearts earning the love of the partner they would tear apart the world to protect.

With more than seventy books written over the course of their career, Katee's rule-breaking has redefined the genre and what readers clamor to read.



Emily McIntire – *USA Today* Bestseller

McIntire has seen two of her very dark romance books, *Hooked* and *Crossed*, rocket onto bestseller lists, staying for weeks on those lists.

This millennial young mom has documented her entire breast cancer treatment on her huge social media platforms (Instagram, TikTok), sharing with others what she is going through, openly and honestly, so that her journey can inform others facing a similar circumstance.



Emily is surviving thanks to the love and support of her fandom.

Her reaction to her chemo has been extreme, so much so that in June, Bloom Books asked its authors, readers and media to all participate in a day on social media (#BloomforEmily) to encourage Emily, show love and support, and to let her know the entire romance community has "bloomed" for her.

"Usually when you pick up a book from a publisher, you have an idea of what you're getting," notes Rebecca Mills, who reports on books for *Culturess/Fansided*. She continues, "With Sourcebooks Casablanca and Bloom Books, it's the opposite. Both of these imprints do an excellent job of featuring a wide variety of romances from sweet and simple to dark and gritty. Regardless, each time I spot one at the bookstore or in my mailbox, I know I'm in for a treat."

Christa Désir, editorial director, Bloom Books, is looking forward to "more in '24," saying, "Looking forward, I see our strong authors continuing to flourish. The readers are telling us what they love and we're listening, staying agile, being creative and flexible, and I think the

voraciousness for romance is nowhere near over. For me, what I'd love to continue to see is more people falling in love with reading (or falling in love with reading AGAIN) through all these amazing romance books. Publishing in general should always be looking to cultivate readers out of non-readers, and I hope the romance genre continues to be a point of entry for people."

About Sourcebooks

Sourcebooks is a thriving entrepreneurial company that brings extraordinary authors to readers in dynamic, data-driven ways. We create books that transcend categories and defy odds, and we have been honored with hundreds of national bestsellers and awards. We are a company of enthusiastic booklovers passionate about connecting books to readers in new and innovative ways. Story by story, book by book, we have changed more than 300 million lives. Join us as we change 300 million more. Visit sourcebooks.com for more information.

MEDIA CONTACT: Liz Kelsch | Director of Marketing | Sourcebooks | liz.kelsch@sourcebooks.com