



The Quiet Author's Keyword Checklist

*Get Your Book Found on Amazon
Without Spending a Dime on Ads*

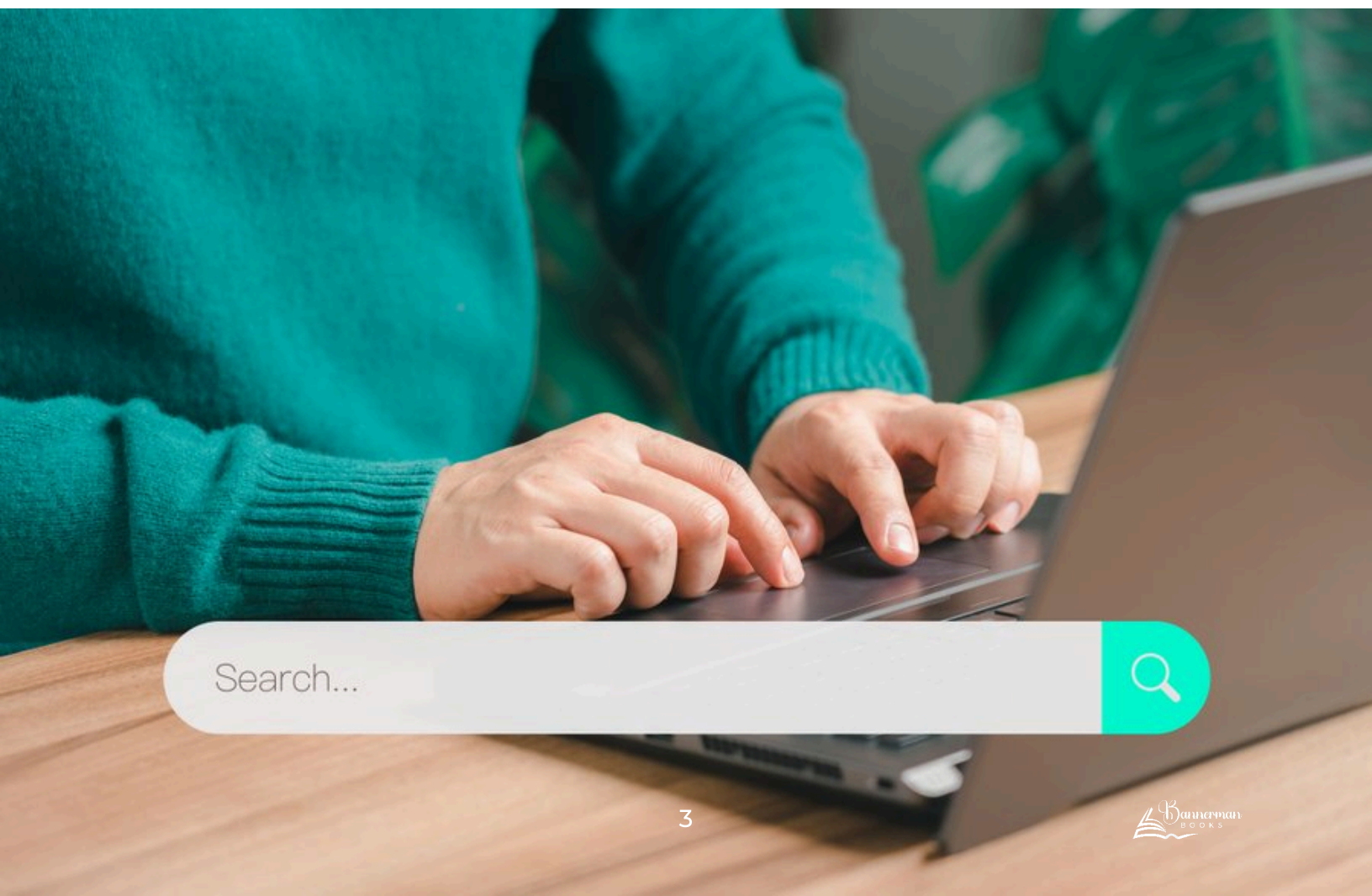
A woman with long, wavy blonde hair and a surprised expression, wearing a blue top, is sitting at a desk. She has a tattoo of a rose on her right shoulder. The background shows a modern living space with a grey sofa, a plant, and a shelf. The foreground shows a wooden desk with several books.

The One Thing Most Authors Get Wrong

Most first-time authors spend weeks on their cover and almost no time on the metadata fields that actually determine whether readers find their book.

Amazon operates like a search engine and your keywords tell it exactly who to show your book to. Get them right and the algorithm does the work. Get them wrong and it doesn't matter how good your cover looks.

The good news is that fixing it takes about 30 minutes and the results keep working long after you set it up.



The rule that changes everything:

Write in reader language, not author language. Readers don't search for "a tale of redemption." They search for "enemies to lovers fantasy" or "cozy mystery small town bakery."

Authors think in themes while readers search for genre, tropes, and specific elements

Source: River Editor, rivereditor.com, 2026

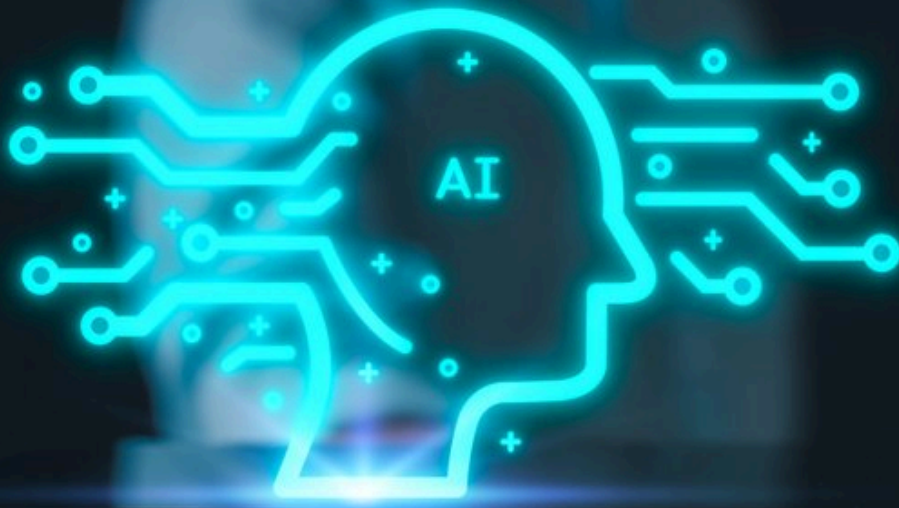
The AI Tools Doing the Heavy Lifting

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You don't have to guess what readers are searching for.

These free tools find it for you.

- **ChatGPT, Claude, or Gemini:** Ask for high-traffic, low-competition keywords for your genre and topic. Include your subgenre, character type, and core themes for best results.
- **Amazon Autocomplete:** Type a phrase related to your book into Amazon's search bar. The suggestions that drop down are exactly what readers are searching for right now.



Sample ChatGPT Prompt:

“Generate 10 Amazon keyword phrases for a cozy mystery novel featuring a Black female detective in a small Southern town. Focus on phrases readers are actually searching for, including genre, tropes, setting, and character type. Avoid generic terms and prioritize long-tail phrases with lower competition.”

Paid Tools

- **Publisher Rocket:** The most widely used keyword tool for authors. One-time purchase, no monthly subscription.

recommend keywords that drive discoverability.

Source: River Editor, rivereditor.com, 2026

- **BookBeam:** AI-powered keyword and category research with competition analysis. Starting at \$47 per month.

- **River AI:** Analyzes your book, competitors, and reader search behavior to



Your Quick-Start Keyword Checklist

Fill in one phrase per slot before you publish or update your Amazon listing.

Slot 1: Core genre or subgenre

Slot 2: Main character type

Slot 3: Core theme or emotional tone

Slot 4: Trope readers search for

Slot 5: Setting or time period

Slot 6: Reader audience

Slot 7: Long-tail niche phrase



Remember:

- Never repeat words already in your title. That's wasted space.
- Use phrases separated by spaces, not commas.
- Refresh your keywords every 90 days as search trends evolve.



READY TO SKIP THE RESEARCH?

Let Story to Shelf do it for you. For \$99 you'll get a custom keyword and category strategy built specifically for your book, delivered in a ready-to-use PDF with an optional 15-minute Q&A call included.

Amazon Keyword and Category Research for Authors



Story to Shelf

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