

Name Your One Reader

A worksheet for the writer whose alarm cannot picture an audience.

You spent forty minutes last week describing your "ideal reader" — age range, education level, household income, podcast preferences, whether she shops at Whole Foods or Trader Joe's. You closed the document and felt no fuel in your chest. You opened the manuscript anyway and spent the next hour rearranging the order of three subheads in Chapter 4.

We know. We have done this. We have a reader-avatar document with eleven demographic fields and zero names to prove it.

The "ideal reader avatar" you have been told to build is not a reader. It is a research project. Your alarm cannot picture a research project holding the book — and the alarm needs to picture someone holding the book to release the fuel that finishes it.

This worksheet is the move that swaps the demographic for one specific human.

SARAH'S AMY

In our book, Sarah spent two years writing a leadership book for *ambitious professionals aged 32 to 45 with corporate experience*. That sentence was on the title page of her proposal. It is also the reason her book did not get finished for two years.

The day Sarah's book started moving was the day she stopped writing for that sentence and started writing for **Amy**. Amy is twenty-eight. Amy works on the third floor of an office building. Amy has a yellow legal pad on her desk. Amy is holding a coffee mug she has not put down in fifteen minutes — because if she puts it down, she will have to start the meeting she has been dreading.

When Sarah's alarm fires now, she does not answer with a demographic. She asks: *what does Amy need on page sixty-eight?* The question changed. The fuel changed.

YOUR TURN

Fill this in for one specific person — first name only is fine, real or imagined. Default "she" below is for cadence; "he" works equally if that is who comes first to mind. The more specific you can be, the more usable the answer.

1. Her name.

First name only. Real or imagined. Write it before the alarm has time to talk you out of it.

2. The room she is in when she opens the first page.

Be specific. The kitchen counter at 5:47 AM with the cold coffee. The bus seat on the way home with the headphones still on. The car after parking but before going inside.

3. The object she is holding.

The coffee mug. The phone she has not opened. The legal pad. The book she just put down before picking up yours.

4. What she is afraid of right now that your book speaks to.

Not "loneliness." The specific feeling at 11:47 PM on a Tuesday in February. The thing she has not told anyone.

5. The one sentence she will say out loud at the end of Chapter Five.

Not the sentence you wish she would say. The sentence that would mean your book did its job for her.

WHEN THE ALARM FIRES

The next time the wound asks *who would want to read this*, open this worksheet. Read her name, her room, her object, her fear. Write the next paragraph for her. You are not writing for an audience. You are writing for one human, in one room, holding one feeling. **She is.**

Name Your One Reader is adapted from Chapter 2 of Circle 1 for Authors by Lorraine and Brandon Cover — the chapter that distinguishes Service-Why from Ego-Why.

Pre-order at circle1living.com.

To find out which mask your alarm wears, the **SPARK Persona Quiz** is three minutes, ten questions, free at circle1living.com/quiz.