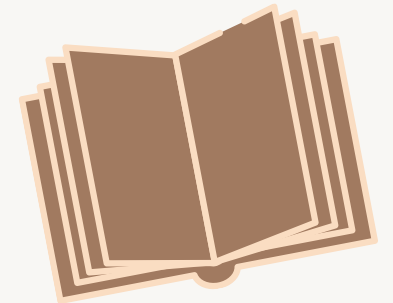


McKenna Pasquale

BAS Computing Technologies and Software Development

Summer 2025



PLOT POINTS

What makes a book go viral on TikTok?



PLOT POINTS MEETS PYTHON

- I explored which traits help books go viral on TikTok:
 - Genre, trend reason, adaptation status, diversity representation, and more.
- I used small data + APIs to track these patterns:
 - Collected real feed data, enriched with Open Library and TMDb
- Compared my feed with other reader personas:
 - To see how TikTok algorithms shape what goes viral

```
# === Movie DB Adaptation Lookup ===
def check_adaptation(title):
    params = {
        "query": title,
        "include_adult": "false",
        "language": "en-US",
        "page": 1,
        "api_key": TMDB_API_KEY
    }
    response = requests.get(TMDB_BASE_URL, params=params)
    if response.status_code == 200:
        results = response.json().get("results", [])
        for result in results:
            media_type = result.get("media_type", "")
            if media_type == "movie":
                return "Film"
            elif media_type == "tv":
                return "TV"
        return "In Dev" if results else "Not Yet Considered"
    else:
        return "Not Yet Considered"

# === Open Library Metadata Lookup ===
def get_open_library_data(title, author):
    params = {
        "title": title,
        "author": author,
    }
    response = requests.get(OPENLIB_BASE_URL, params=params)
    if response.status_code == 200:
        docs = response.json().get("docs", [])
        if docs:
            top = docs[0]
            return {
                "first_publish_year": top.get("first_publish_year", ""),
                "publisher": top.get("publisher", [""][0]),
            }
        return {"first_publish_year": "", "publisher": ""}

# === Loop and Enrich ===
for i, row in df.iterrows():
    title = row["Title"]
    author = row["Author"]
    print(f"Checking: {title} by {author}")

    # Adaptation (only if blank)
    if row["Adaptation"].strip() == "":
        df.at[i, "Adaptation"] = check_adaptation(title)

    # Open Library enrichment
    result = get_open_library_data(title, author)

    # Fill in missing values only
    if row["First_Publish_Year"] == "":
        df.at[i, "First_Publish_Year"] = result["first_publish_year"]
    if row["Publisher"] == "":
        df.at[i, "Publisher"] = result["publisher"]

    time.sleep(0.5) # avoid rate-limiting

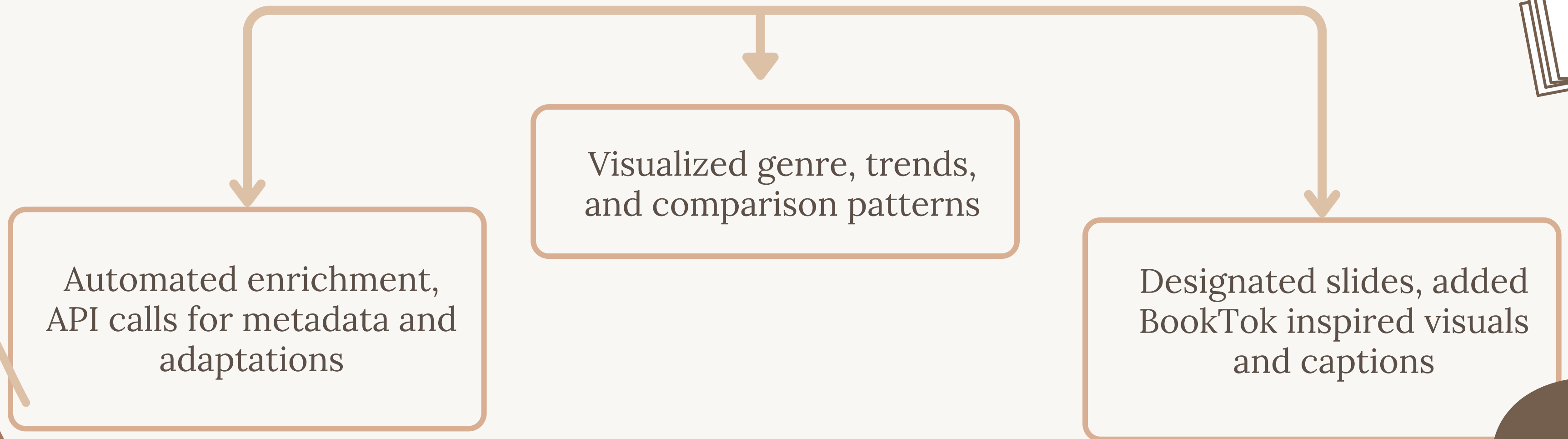
df["Content_Warning_Category"] = df["Content_Warnings"].apply(map_co
```

LANGUAGES AND TOOLS

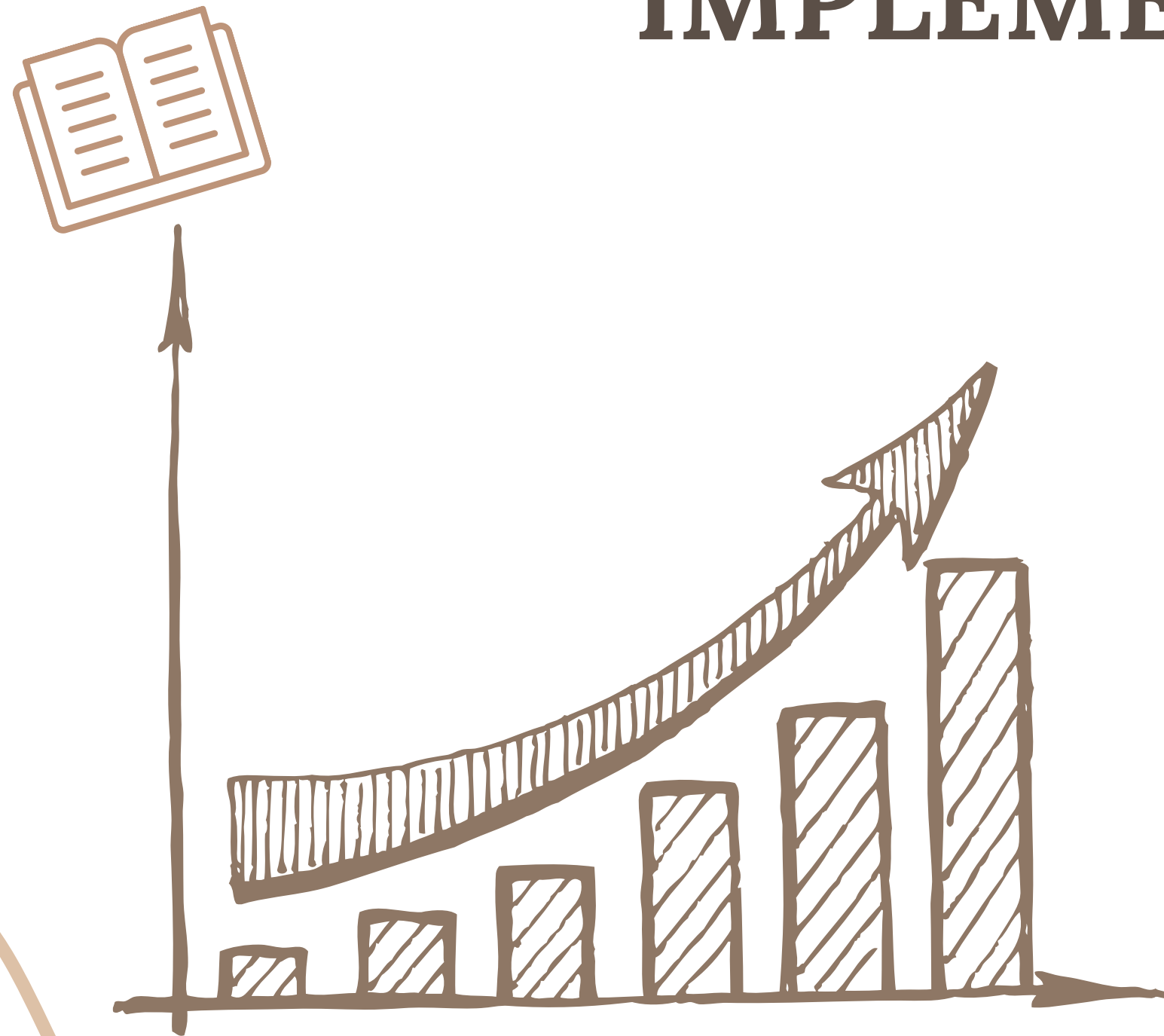
PYTHON

TABLEAU

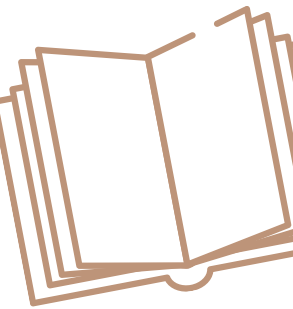
CANVA



IMPLEMENTATION CHANGES



- Started small: Began with my BookTok feed only
- Expanded personas: Added other profiles to compare algorithms.
- Enriched dataset: Used OpenLibrary and TMDb APIs to add missing metadata
- Created custom categories: Mapped genre, trend reason, diversity and adaptation status
- Visualized patterns: Built multiple Tableau charts to show key findings



READER PROFILES



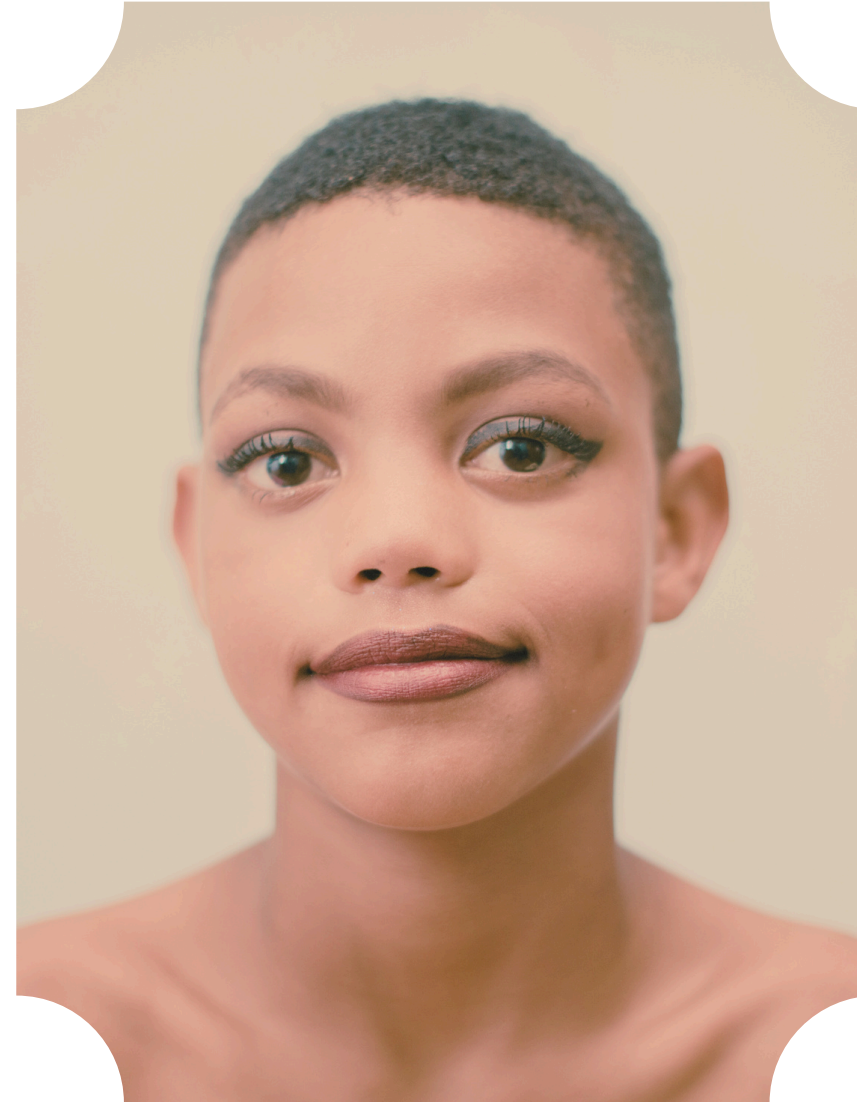
@alex.horrorstories

Sci-Fi, Thrillers, Afrofuturism
Cyberpunk Junkie | Plot Twist Hunter | Black
BookTok Recs



@kenna.fantasyreads

Romantasy, Fantasy, Found Family
Bingeworthy Series | Trauma Arcs | Vampires,
Witches & More



@toni.altlit

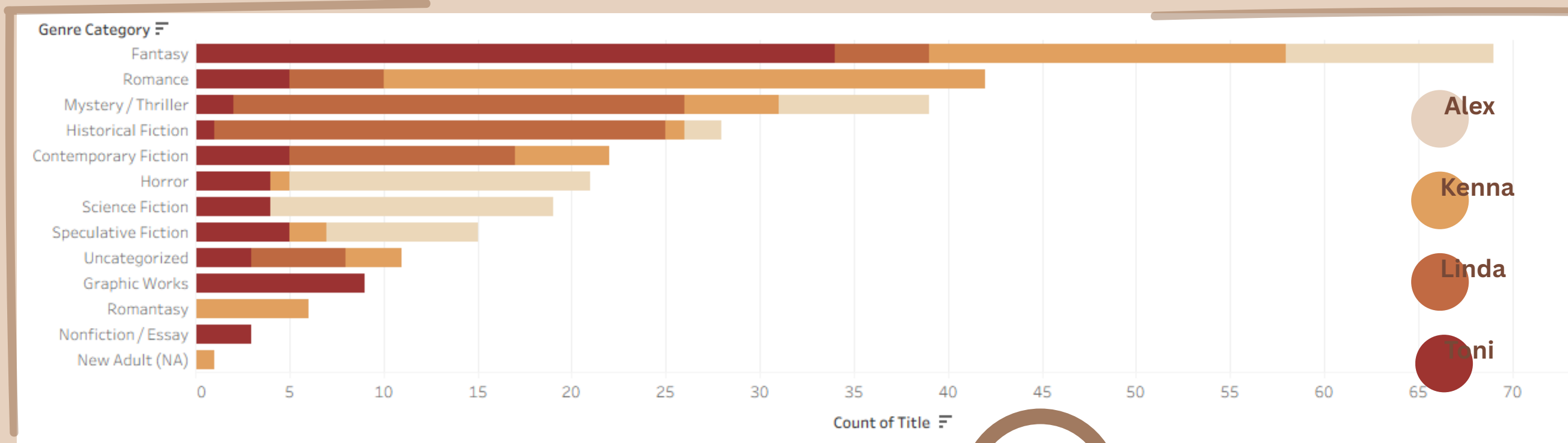
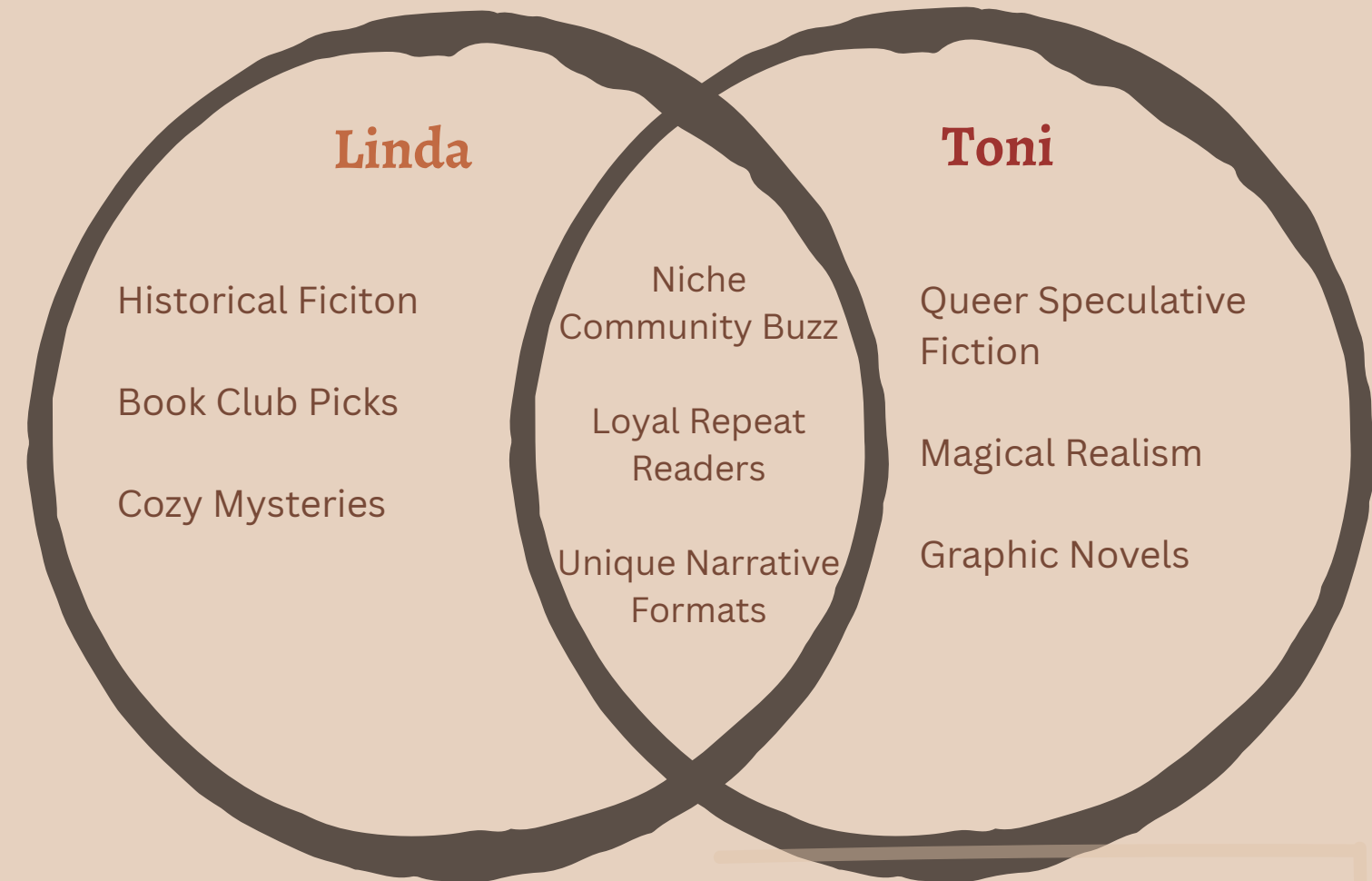
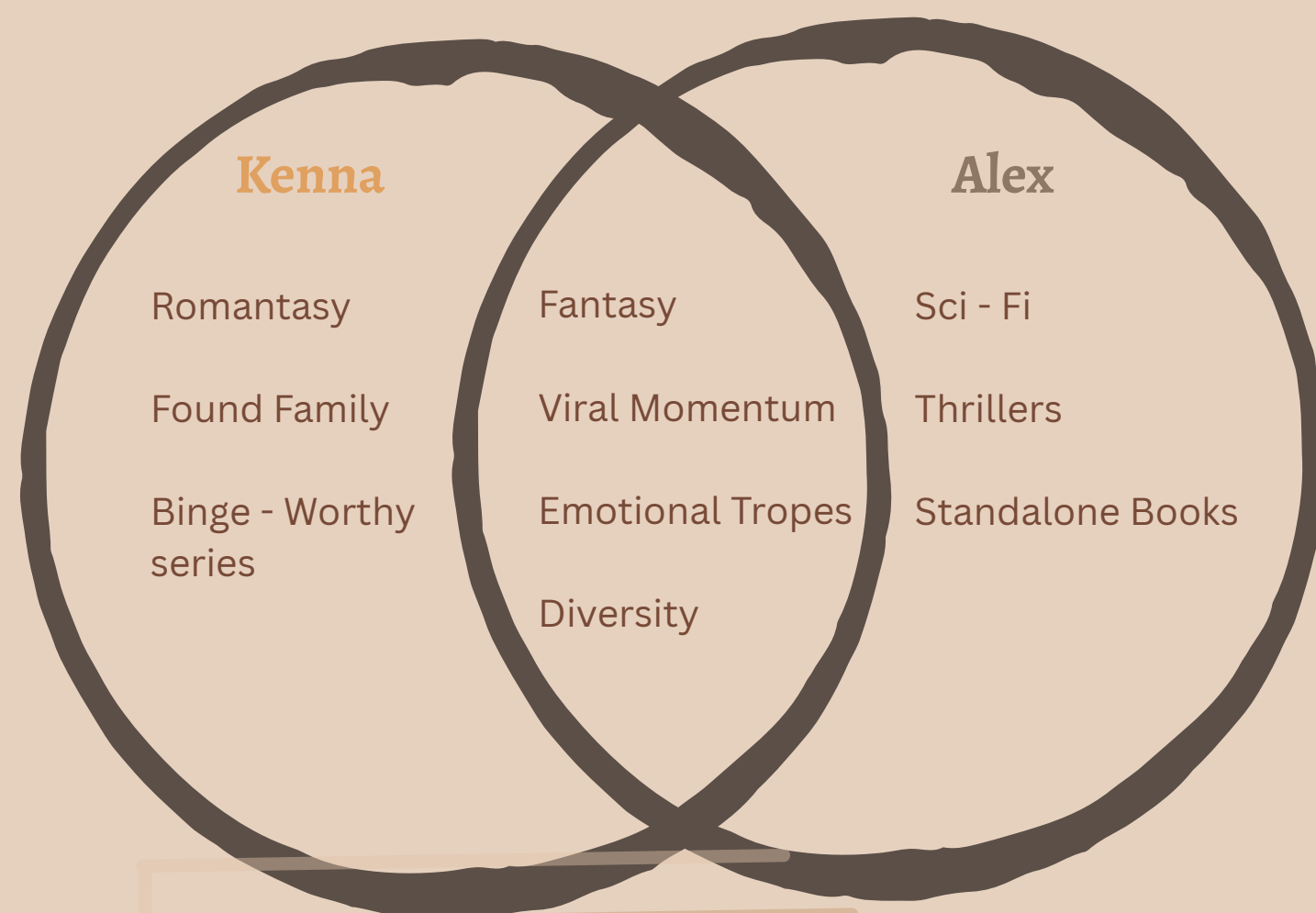
Queer SSF, Magical Realism, Graphic Novels
They/Them | Latinx | Adaptation Hunter



@linda.cozyfinds

Cozy Mysteries, Book Club, Historical Fiction
Book Club Queen | Cat Cuddles | Page-Turners

BATTLE OF THE PERSONAS

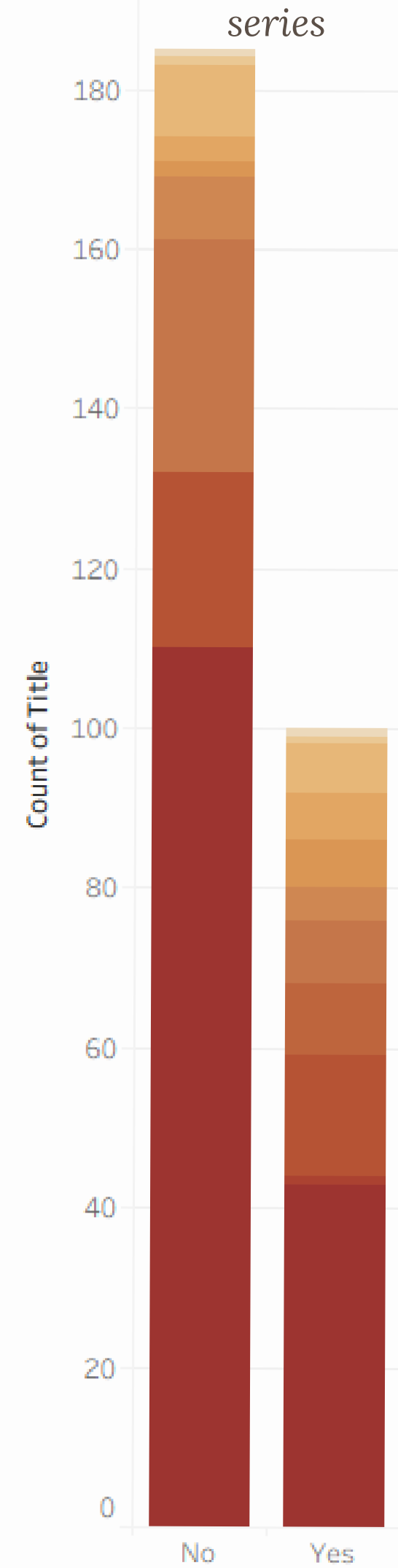


FANTASY RULES, SERIES REIGN

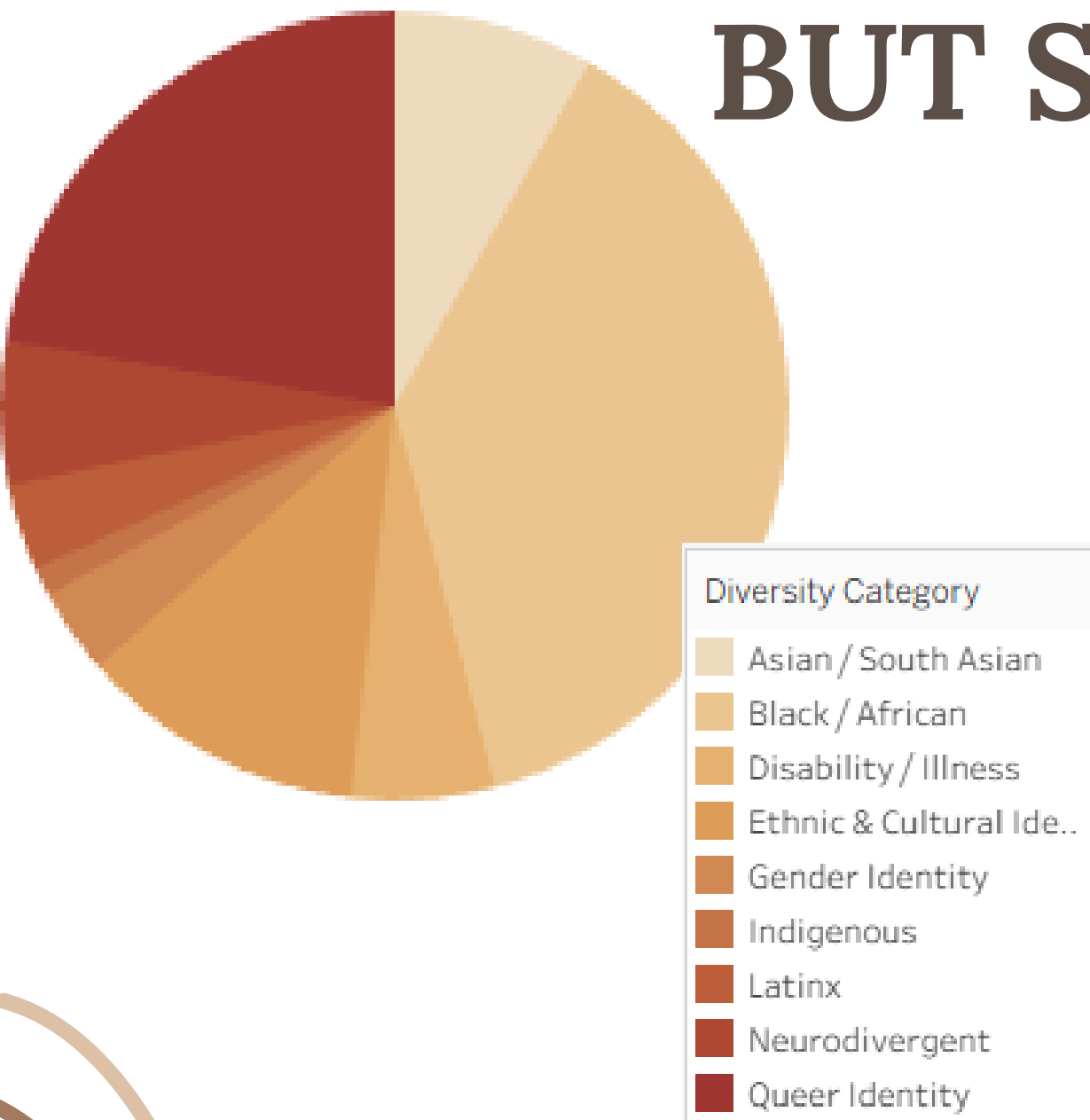
Fantasy, Romance, and Mystery / Thriller dominate, with a strong preference for series over standalones



- Fantasy is the clear favorite for viral moments
- More standalone overall, but series dominate emotional engagement
- Genre lines blur - readers follow emotional tone, not shelves

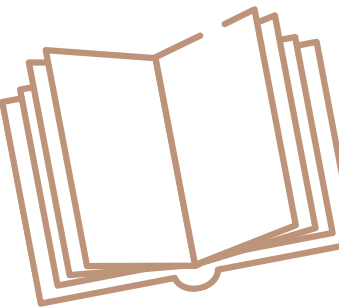


DIVERSE STORIES GO VIRAL - BUT STILL GET OVERLOOKED



Over half of viral BookTok titles include diverse representation, even if mainstream media hasn't caught up

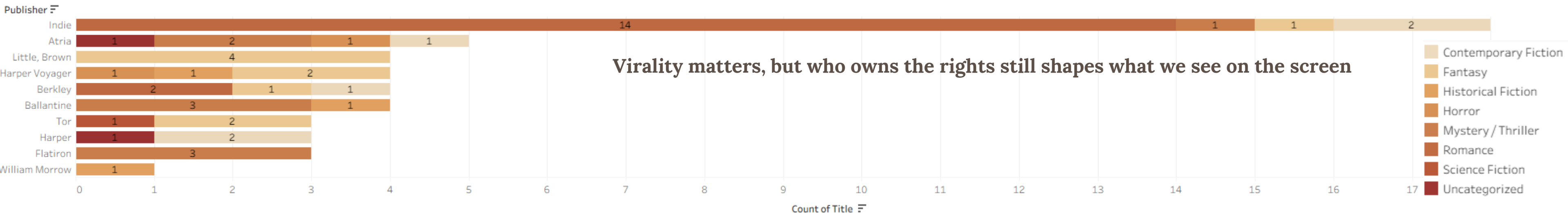
- Queer identity and Black representation top the chart for viral diversity
- Intersectional stories build loyal reader engagement across genres
- Diverse books often stay niche for screen deals, showing the gap between viral and visible



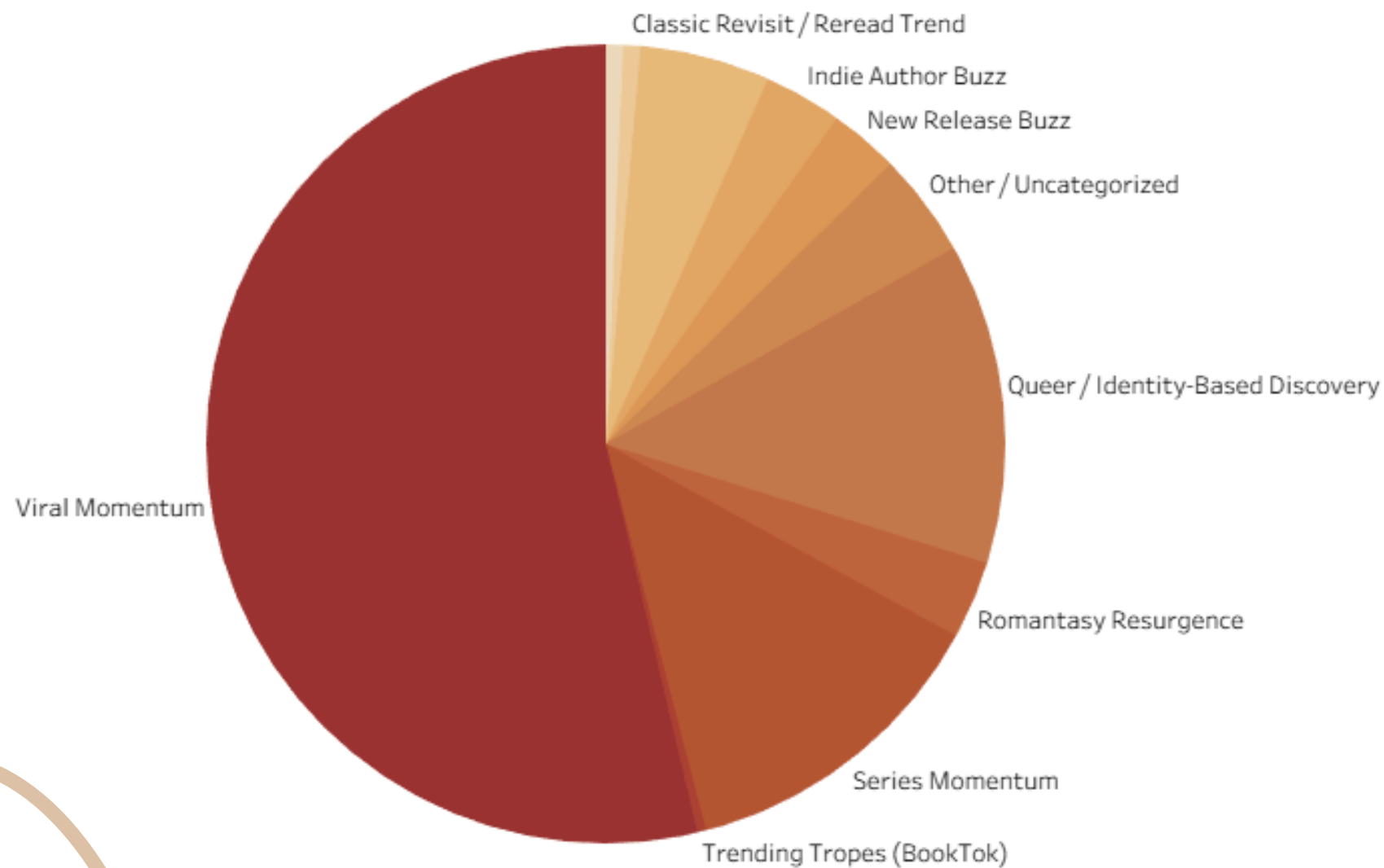
WHO GETS ADAPTED?

Indie presses collectively drive the most viral buzz for adaptations, but big publishers still land the biggest screen deals.

- Fantasy and Romantasy span both indie and trad publishers
- Indie hits rely on BookTok to break through, one viral moment at a time
- Big trad names place multiple titles each year, backed by marketing budgets

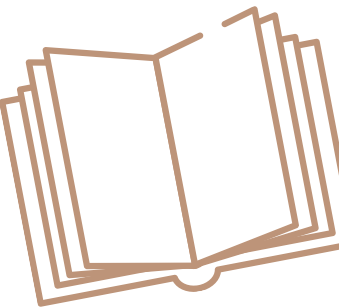


WHY DO BOOKS GO VIRAL?



Viral momentum reflects the emotional and community-driven force behind BookTok's top trends. Nearly half of viral books thrive not from marketing budgets, but from raw reader response

- Organic buzz often outpaces marketing, especially for binge-worthy series
- Queer Rep and found family remain among the most shared TikTok themes
- Indie and classic revisits show small but loyal engagement



TECHNICAL CHALLENGES & SUCCESSES

- Messy metadata
- Python script troubleshooting
- Data consistency and categories
- API enrichment not reliable

CHALLENGES

- Learned Tableau quickly
- Refined python scripts
- Publisher insights
- Clear visuals

SUCCESSES

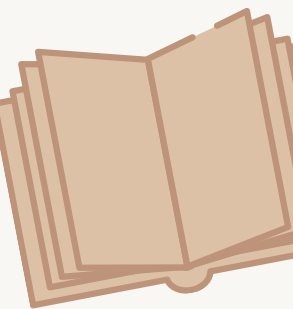


PROJECT DO-OVERS

Reflecting on what I'd do differently next time with small data collection, enrichment, and visualization

Lessons Learned

- Define categories and tags early
- Automate more enrichment
- Expand persona windows across time periods
- Document each round of collection

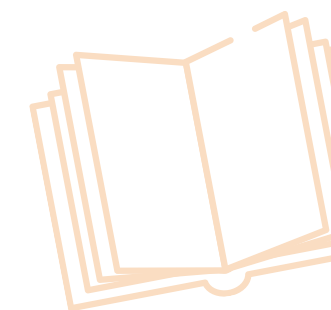


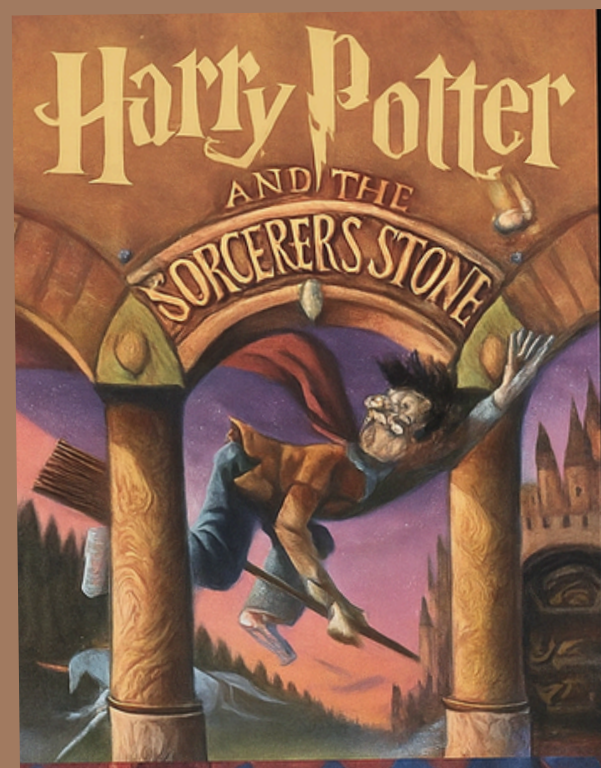
Fiction Readers & The Fantasy Boom

Fiction readers, especially for fantasy, romantasy, and thrillers, lead viral trends on BookTok and drive huge shelf demand

- Fantasy is the top viral genre in my small data
- Adult romantasy and fan-fic style tropes bring in new readers
- Series trends show we love binge-worthy universes

More men are reading fantasy too -
busting old myths





THE LORD OF RINGS



J.R.R. TOLKIEN

THE HUNGER GAMES



BY THE
AUTHOR OF
THE HUNGER GAMES
SUZANNE
COLLINS

GEORGE R.R.
MARTIN



A GAME OF
THRONES

A MAJOR MAJOR NOVEL

BOOK LOVERS IMPACT: TRENDING BOOKS FUEL ADAPTATIONS



Small fandoms create buzz



Word of mouth sells backlist titles overnight



Viral tropes like 'found family' and 'queer rep', move to the top of the TBR shelves



Diverse stories still see fewer adaptation deals



SMALL DATA, BIG SHELF POWER

- BookTok trends keep Barnes & Noble alive
- Indie bookstores see spikes for backlist authors
- Libraries track holds to buy more viral books
- Fans create lifelong community and loyalty
- Readers create fanart, digital covers, and character art that spreads trends further





WWW.MPASQUALE.COM



GITHUB.COM/MPASQUALE3

THE END

DIY API SMALL DATA | OPEN LIBRARY | TMDB | TABLEAU | PYTHON