

THE RIPPED BODICE PRESENTS

THE STATE OF RACIAL DIVERSITY IN

ROMANCE PUBLISHING

2017

The Ripped Bodice is the only exclusively romance bookstore in The United States. It is owned by sisters Bea and Leah Koch.



The State of Racial Diversity in Romance Publishing Study tracks the publication of books written by authors who are BIPOC in the traditional romance publishing genre. Answers to frequently asked questions about the study can be found on our website.

What drove us to conduct this study?

Publishing is not a level playing field.

This study provides simple, hard data. The discussion about racial disparities has been ongoing for years and we need to continue tracking the numbers to keep the industry honest. This study highlights just how glaring of an issue racial discrimination continues to be.

This is an urgent issue.

The downward trend in the industry as a whole this year shows that simply noting and discussing the problem is not enough. We need action. It is not acceptable to take decades to reach the numbers that should have been standard years ago.

Do not mistake this data as evidence that books written by authors who are BIPOC do not exist. The books ARE out there. They are being self-published due to publisher's historic and current attitudes towards non white authors.

We firmly believe that publishers need to take more ownership over what they are producing.



What's new this year?

This year we have worked to make the study more helpful to publishers and booksellers alike. To do this, we have required each book counted to have a BISAC code of romance. BISAC codes are used by booksellers and librarians to find books in a particular genre. If books are not tagged as romance, they are not stocked as such and therefore will not be included in this year's study. We have also adjusted last year's numbers with this new criteria, which most notably effects Kensington's books.

We are deeply grateful for the participation of the following publishers:



All publishers are asked to assist in the study by providing a list of the titles they published in the previous year. This years study includes 3,762 books which is why we appreciate publishers who contribute a little bit of their time to this important research.

- Bella Books
- Berkley Books
- Bold Strokes Books
- Dreamspinner Press
- Entangled Publishing
- Forever
- Kensington
- Montlake Romance
- Riptide Publishing
- Sourcebooks
- Tule Publishing

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No excuses.

In 2018, it's time to move towards action.

excuse #1

"These books don't sell"

We are booksellers. We cannot sell something that doesn't exist. We enter the equation after the books have been written, edited, formatted, and printed. For years, the main argument publishers give for not traditionally publishing BIPOC authors has been that the sales are not strong enough. However, our bestsellers from the past year tell a different story.

♥ Ripped Bodice Bestsellers 2017 ♥

A Study in Scarlet Women, Sherry Thomas

An Extraordinary Union, Alyssa Cole

Heroine Complex, Sarah Kuhn

Heroine Worship, Sarah Kuhn

The Hating Game, Sally Thorne

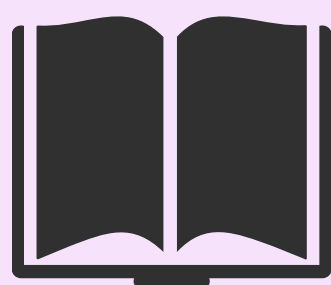
Haven, Rebekah Weatherspoon

The Duchess Deal, Tessa Dare

A Discovery of Witches, Deborah Harkness

Hate to Want You, Alisha Rai

A Promise of Fire, Amanda Bouchet



60% OF THESE BOOKS ARE WRITTEN BY BIPOC AUTHORS

excuse #2

"There are only so many seats at the table"

The romance industry as a whole published *more* books in 2017 than in 2016. 5.5% more. Fewer of these titles were written by BIPOC authors. Clearly there is plenty of room to pull up more chairs as long as the people sitting in those chairs are white.

excuse #3

"We only care about the quality of the books"

Publishers often maintain that there is no bias in the selection of books they choose to publish. Everyone has inherent biases around race, gender, sexuality, etc. These publication choices come from a place of privilege and the starting assumption that everyone gets an equal chance. That assumption is false.














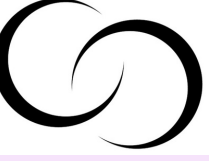

















It is more difficult to get a romance novel published as a BIPOC.

Additionally, "we only care about quality" contains an inherent implication that books by BIPOC do not meet the standards defined by the taste of white readers.

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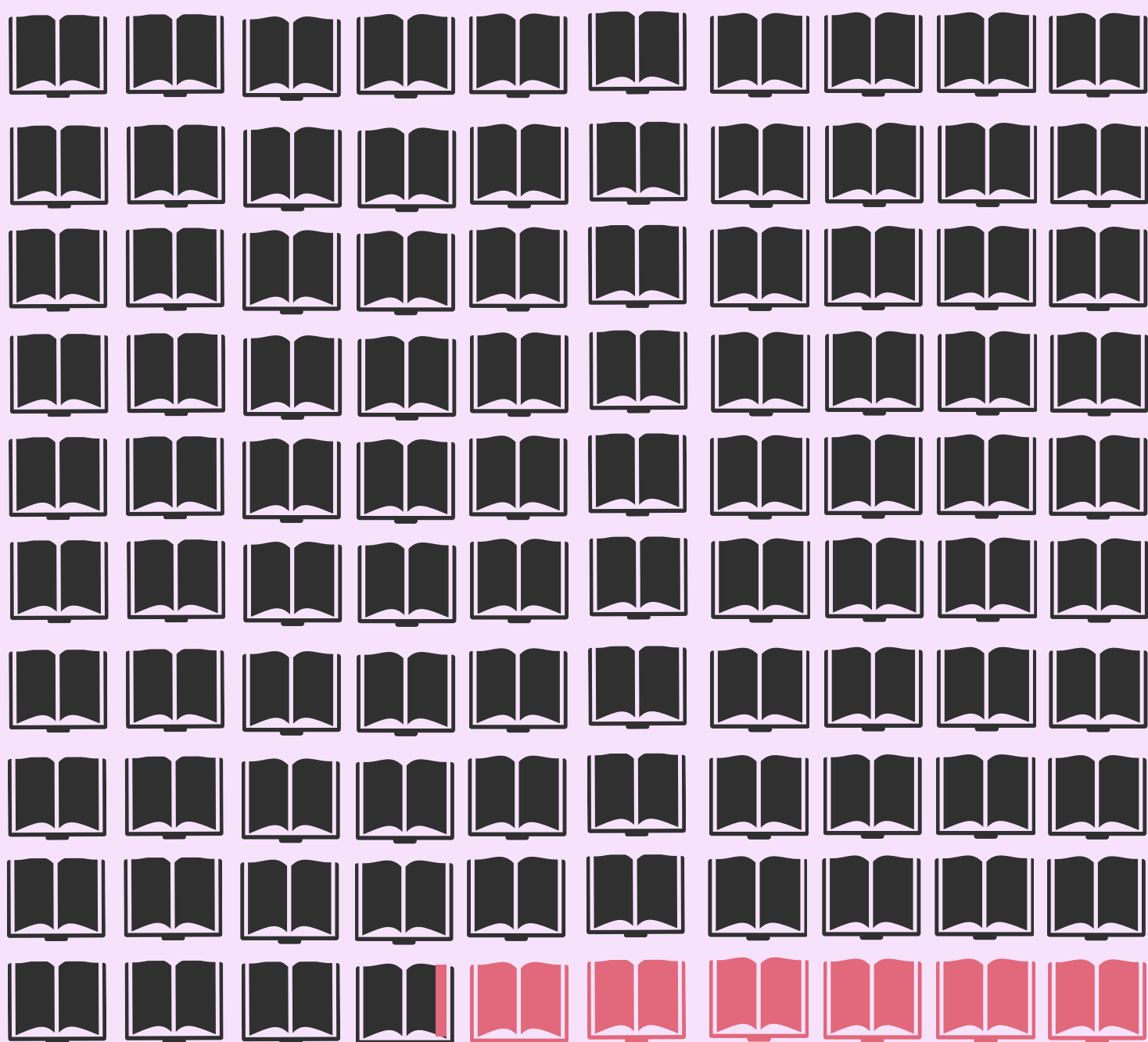
WHAT PERCENTAGE OF BOOKS PUBLISHED IN 2017 WERE WRITTEN BY BIPOC?

	Avon Romance	3.7%
	Bella Books 	4.7%
	Berkley 	7%
	Bold Strokes Books 	3.2%
	Carina Press	2.4%
	Crimson Romance	29.3%
	Dreamspinner Press 	4.9%
	Entangled Publishing 	4%
	Forever & Forever Yours 	5.3%
	Gallery <small>includes Pocket & Pocket Star</small>	12.2%
	Harlequin Series	6.6%
	HQN	4.2%
	Kensington 	12.6%
	Mira Books	7.7%
	Montlake Romance 	3.1%
	Random House <small>includes Ballantine, Bantam, Loveswept & Flirt</small>	.01%
	Riptide Publishing 	4.8%
	St. Martin's Press <small>includes Griffin, SMP & Swerve</small>	6.3%
	Sourcebooks 	11.6%
	Tule Publishing 	0%

THE RIPPED BODICE PRESENTS THE STATE OF RACIAL DIVERSITY IN ROMANCE PUBLISHING HOW DID PUBLISHERS IMPROVE BETWEEN 2016 AND 2017?			
2016	2017	PUBLISHER	CHANGE
12.2%	29.3%	Crimson Romance	+ 17%
2.9%	11.6%	Sourcebooks	+ 8.7%
5.5%	12.2%	Gallery	+ 6.7%
0%	4.2%	HQN	+ 4.2%
1.4%	4.8%	Riptide Publishing	+ 3.4%
4.4	7.7%	Mira Books	+ 3.4%
3.9%	7%	Berkley	+ 3.2%
2.8%	4.7%	Avon Romance	+ 1.9%
1.9%	3.2%	Montlake Romance	+ 1.2%
6%	6.3%	St. Martin's Press	+ .3%
0%	0%	Tule Publishing	NO CHANGE
12.7%	12.6%	Kensington	NO CHANGE
5.8%	4.9%	Dreamspinner Press	- .85%
8.3%	6.6%	Harlequin Series	- 1.7%
1.8%	.01%	Random House	- 1.8%
6.6%	4.7%	Bella Books	- 1.9%
5.4%	2.4%	Carina Press	- 3%
7%	3.2%	Bold Strokes Books	- 3.8%
8.9%	4%	Entangled Publishing	- 4.9%
17.5%	5.3%	Forever	- 12.2%

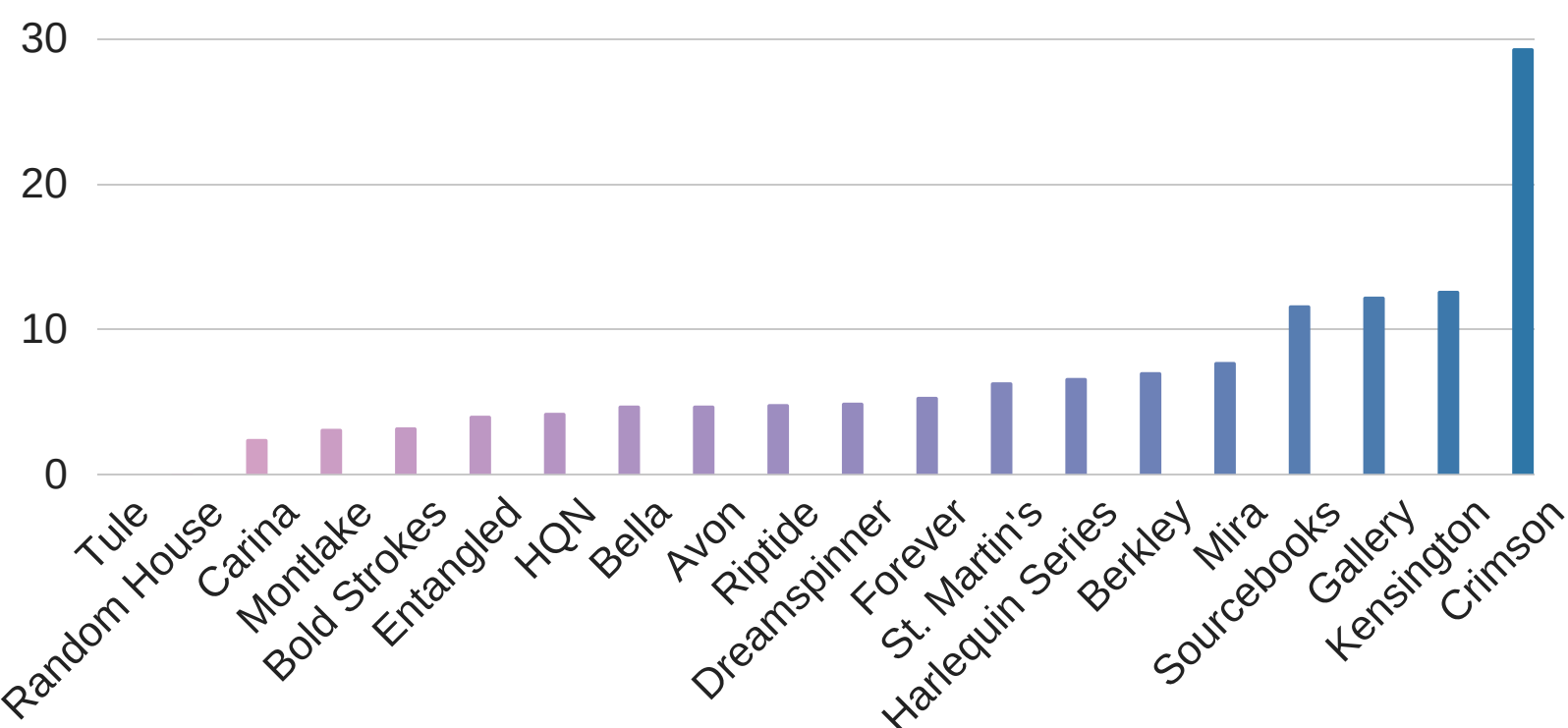
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For every 100 books published by the leading romance publishers in 2017, only 6.2 were written by BIPOC. Down from 7.8 in 2016.

percentage of books released in 2017 written by BIPOC



80% of publishers surveyed had
fewer than 10%
of their books written by BIPOC.

10 out of 20 publishers had
the same or fewer
books written by BIPOC authors in
2017 than in 2016