



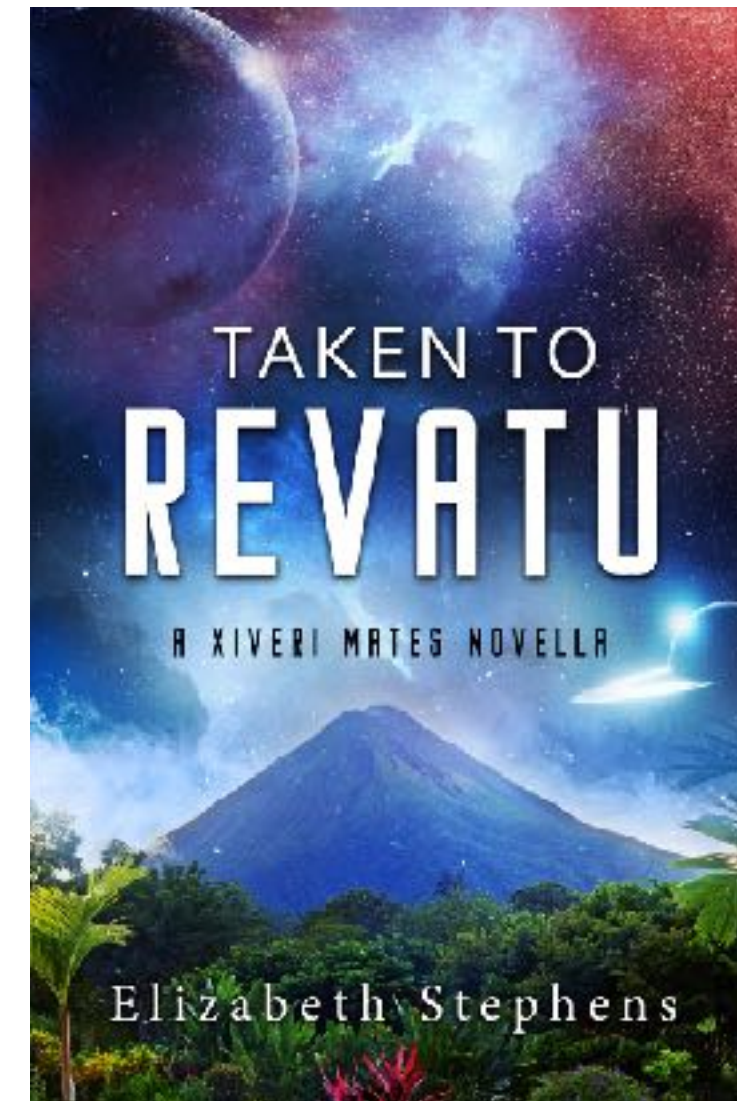
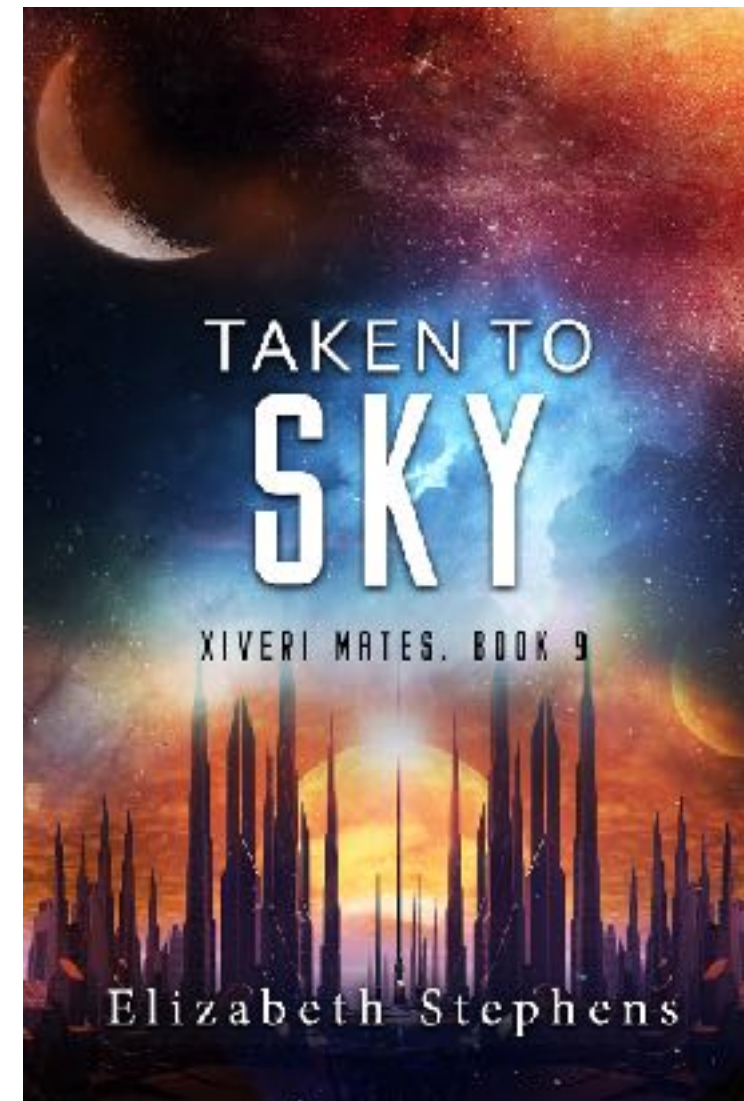
# 6 FIGURE AUTHOR CASE STUDY

ELIZABETH STEPHENS  
AUTHOR OF SCIFI, FANTASY  
AND MONSTER ROMANCE

# 2023

## THE YEAR OF FIRSTS

- Revenue: \$140k\*
- Expenses: +/- \$60k
- Expenses dominated by book orders, artwork, and translations



COMPLETED IN XIVERI MATES:

FRENCH KICKSTARTER COLLECTIONS 2-3  
AUDIOBOOKS 1-3



- Self published earnings: \$60k (Amazon) + \$22k (kickstarter) + \$7k (direct sales) + \$5k (audible) + \$1600 (sensitivity editing) = \$96k
- Everything else: \$39k\*\*
- Total: \$134k (+\$6k in maternity pay) = 140k

\*INCLUDES MATERNITY PAY

\*\*BIG TRAD, AUDIO, BOXES, CLUBS – ANYTHING REQUIRING A CONTRACT  
UNABLE TO DISCLOSE EXACT AMOUNTS PUBLICLY DUE TO NDAS BUT HAPPY TO DISCLOSE PRIVATELY

# 2023

## BOOK REVENUE: \$140K

- Completed a series and launched a kickstarter to celebrate!
- Experimented with influencer marketing instead of paid Amazon and bookbub ads – it worked and was a lot more fun than ads too. Will definitely continue.
- First BBFD – saw 1200 copies sold in 1 day! My most ever.
- First time working with an agent & signing trad deals w audio + a big 6 publisher – advances were lucrative (for my standards) and easy w audio since I don't have to write a new book
- Attended my first romcon – loved it and def saw a general uptick in interest from new readers even if the event itself for me broke even
- First time being contacted by book boxes – LOVE! (It's easy and also can be lucrative - my box payments range from \$500-10k)
- First time ever having Zon revenue LESS than half of my total overall revenue! I am SHOCKED in the best of ways! Big Trad, Audio, box and Direct Sales for the win!!!



# 2023

## SOFT WINS

- Katee Robert geeking out over Dark City Omega will go down in the hall of fame of my long term happy core memories
- Surviving my first full year as a mom while not only maintaining but advancing my career makes me feel like a hero to myself
- Finally earning my first orange banner in the Zon store!
- And if I could remember anything else with my new mom brain, I'm sure there'd be more lol



# 2023

## CHALLENGES

- Running a kickstarter was **HARD** and while I don't regret it at all, I do regret doing as much as I did for it. My pricing didn't really make sense in the end, and I ended up breaking even – which was great, because I got to buy art and put together special editions I wouldn't have been able to afford otherwise. But the amount of work required was hard and also led to a huge gap in my publishing schedule
- My delayed publishing schedule was also do to DCO being shopped and a gap in the middle of my release year meant my Zon algo tanked and my earnings were bordering on “am I going to have to quit my job” levels. Come September things were running deep in the red.
- **BUT...December I earned almost 30% of my revenue for the entire year. It was a really crazy year and the ups and downs were really wild to run with. Just to show the finances that go into this job are anything and everything but elegant.**



# PLANS FOR 2024

YOLO

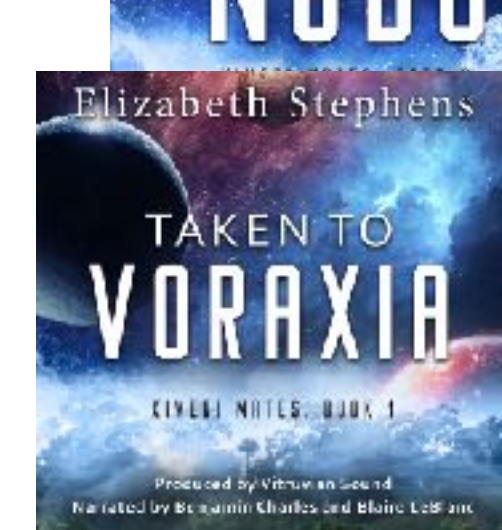
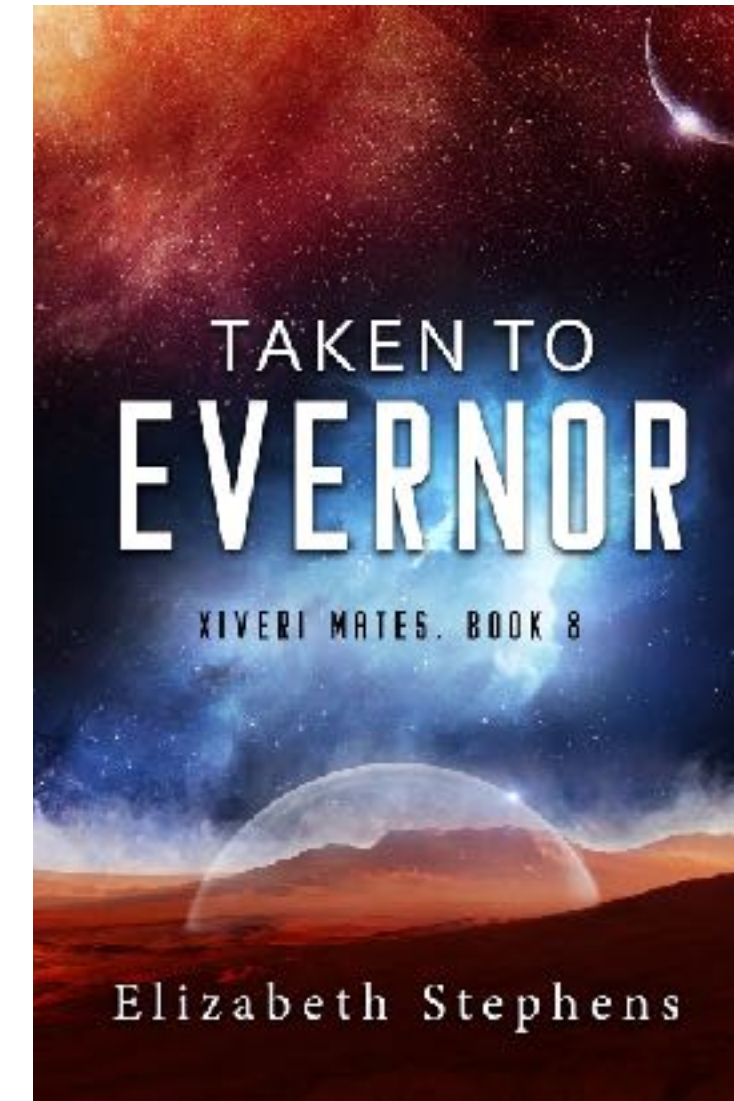
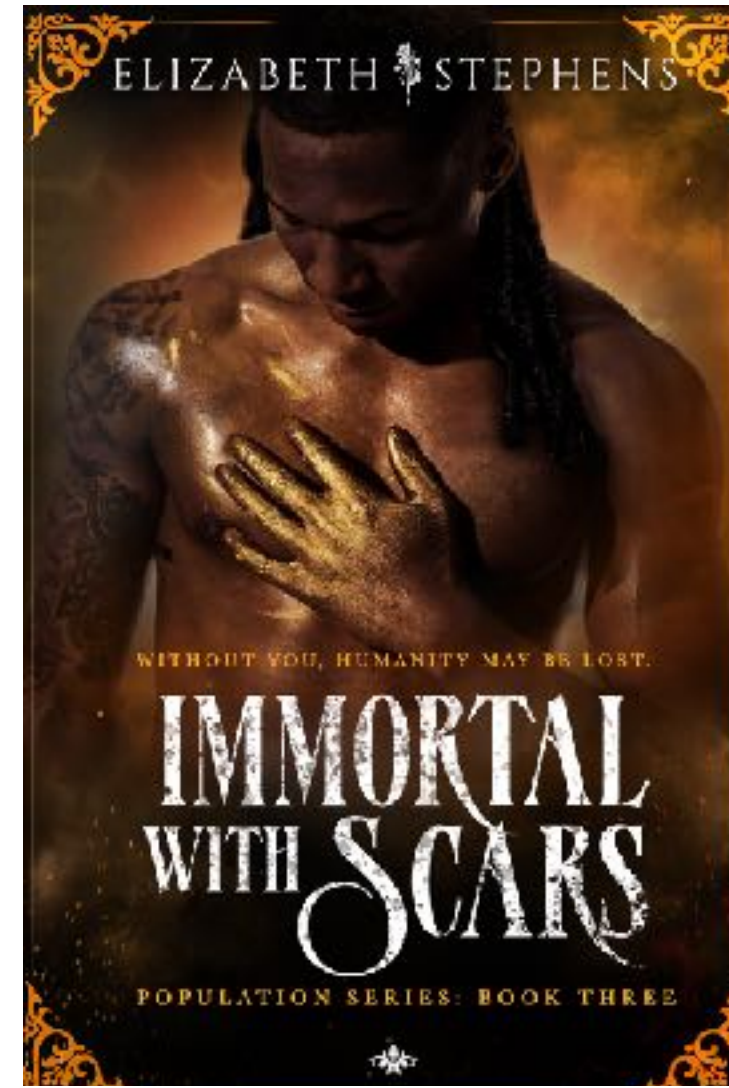
- **WHO KNOWS???** SURVIVE!
- **Release Shadowlands Omega**
- **Attend 4 events!** (ECCC, Apollycon, Steamylit and Romance Bookstore Day)
- **Promote my trad audio titles coming out**
- **Get Montlake the two books I owe them**
- **Maybe eek out another Population book** (Constanzia, baby, I ain't forgotten bout chu)
- **Try not to get distracted by my non-con monster romance series in the meantime...or do...**



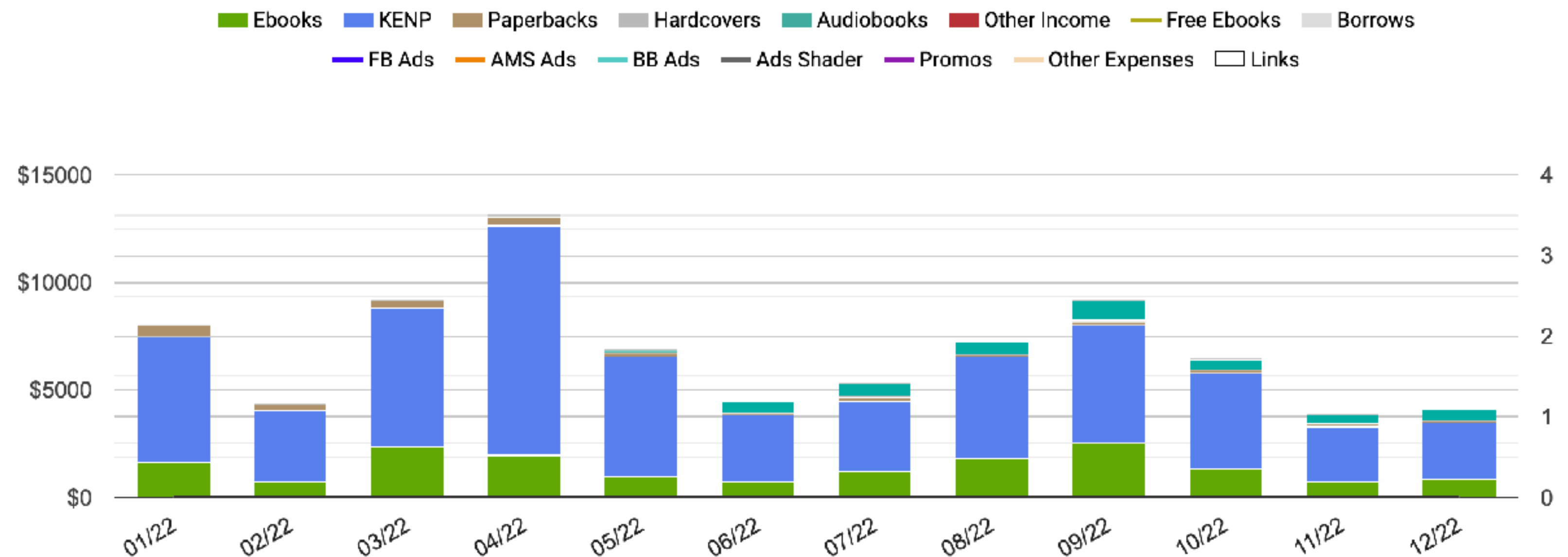
# 2022

THE YEAR OF TIKTOK & TRANSLATIONS!  
(AND MY PREGNANCY 🤰)

- Revenue: \$101k\*
- Expenses: \$48k
- Expenses dominated by audio and translations but also include office supplies, editing, cover work +++



Earnings per type of sales



\*INCLUDES MATERNITY PAY / CHARTS FROM READERLINKS

# 2022

**BOOK REVENUE: \$92,786 + \$8000 (MATERNITY) = \$101K**

- **Pregnancy HURT and I woefully under published relative to my goals (only 2 out of 5 full length novels completed) + 2 novellas**
- **Experimented with French translations (success!) and audio (less so) – in 2022 I spent \$10k on audio and earned back \$4300; I spent \$9k on translations for the first three books and earned back \$12,500**
- **Got very lucky with viral TikTok posts in January (Lemora) and March (Lord of Population via @BlackBooksOnly)**
- **The Population rebrand WORKED and Lord of Population still stands as my 2nd highest selling title after Voraxia**
- **Cut out paid promo sites around releases altogether largely due to exhaustion and planning struggles; still saw OK release results**
- **Started using auto Amazon Ads for French releases – HUGELY successful and easy to use**





# 2022

## THE SOFT WINS

- An AU student reaches out to me to let me know she is writing her senior thesis about Taken to Nobu (and two other novels) as it “functions to provide self-affirming radical pleasure to black women as readers” (@readswithsyd)
- I’m invited to participate in a Charity Anthology by an author I adore (@OctaviaKor) and that anthology goes on to hit the #42 spot on the USA Today Bestseller list
- I’m recognized on the street TWICE - once by Victoria Aveline on the streets of Mexico (WHAT?!) and once by a fan at a local Seattle coffee shop
- I had a baby and she’s the best. The actual best. 🥰💕



# PLANS FOR 2023

TARGET REVENUE: 120K, NET 60K

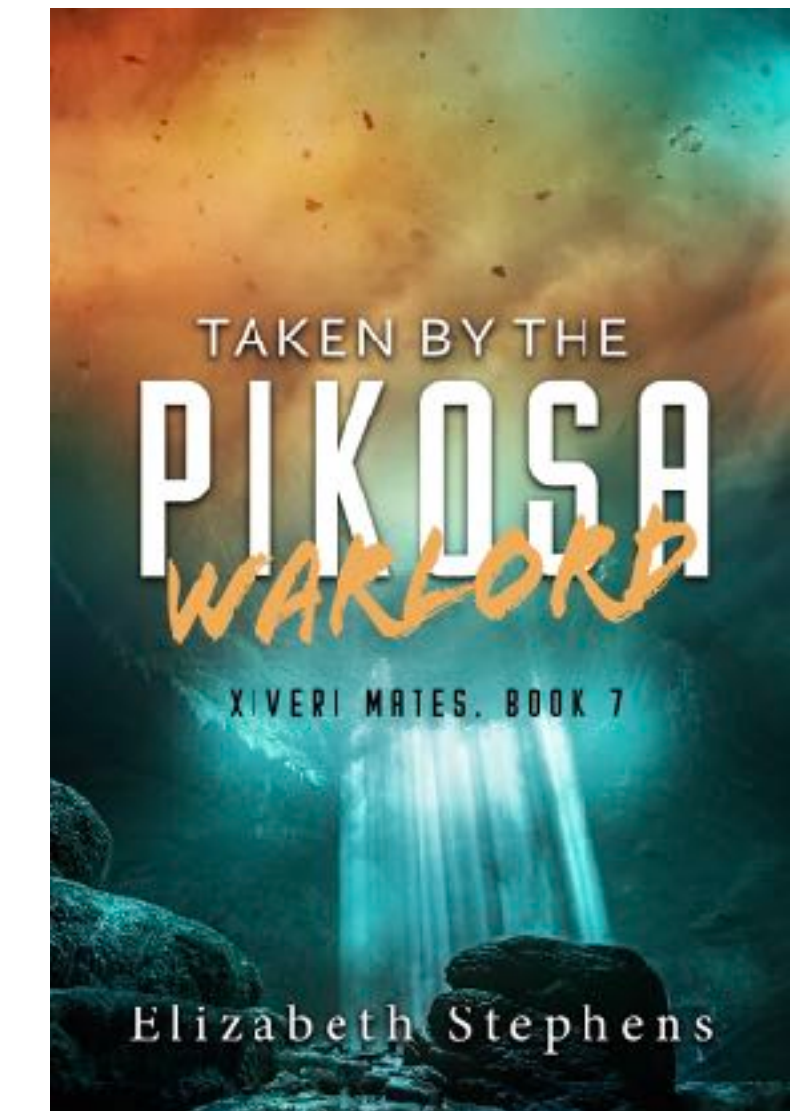
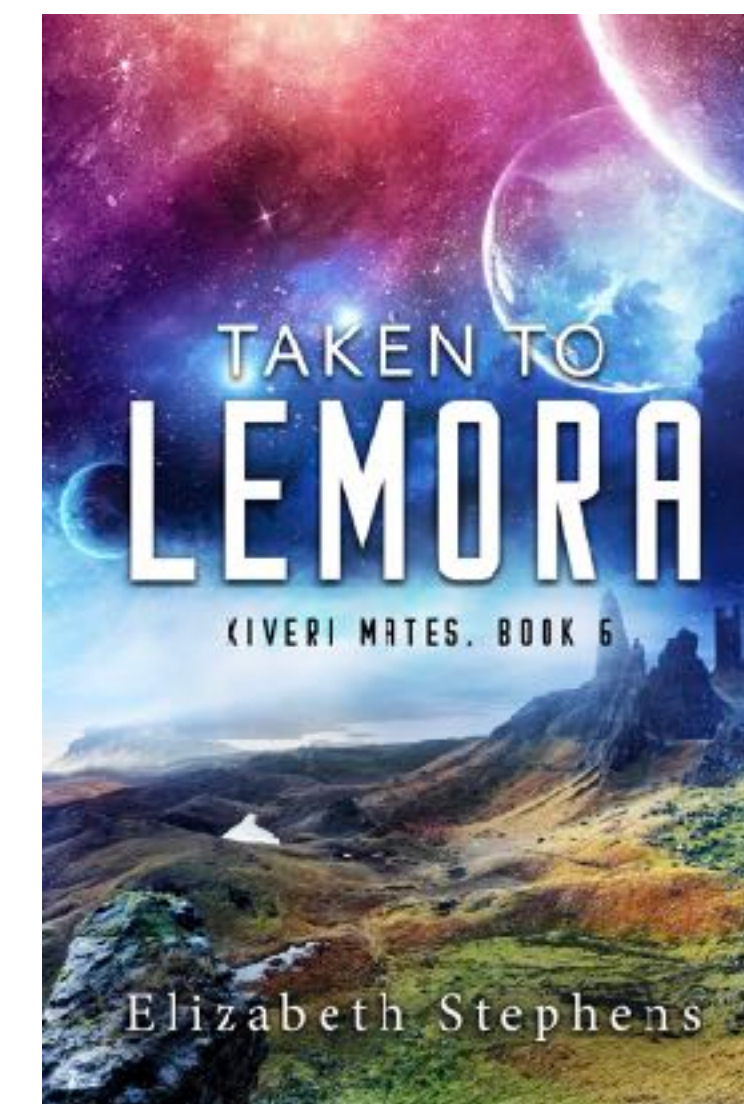
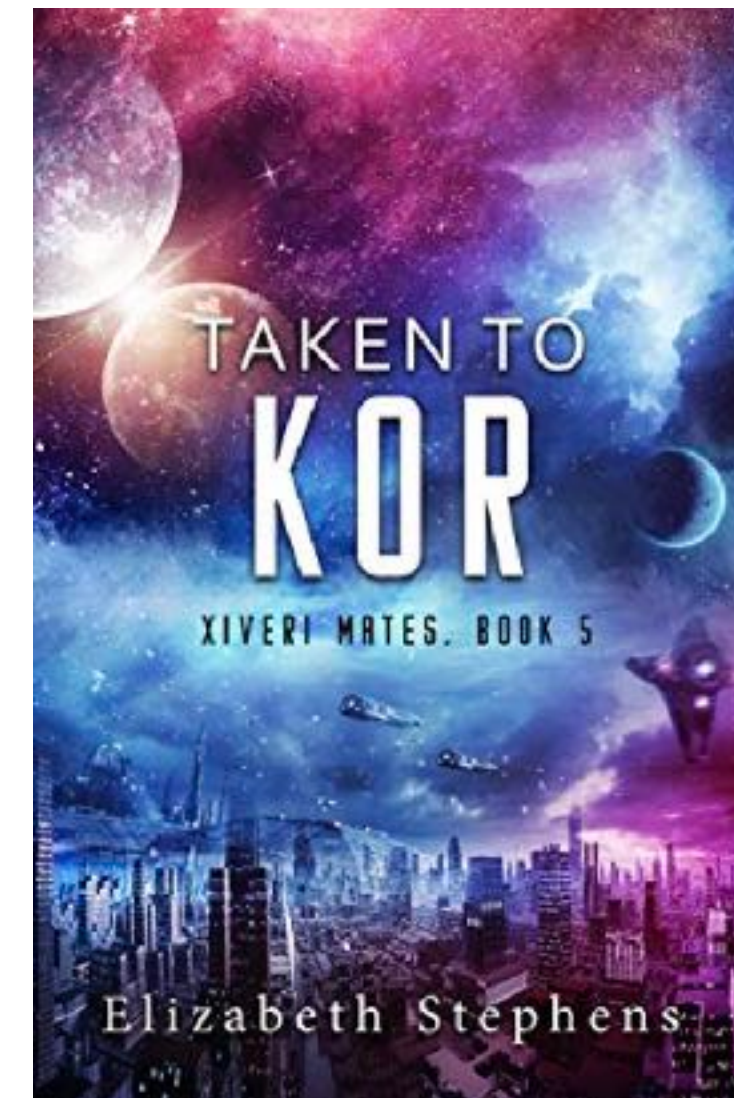
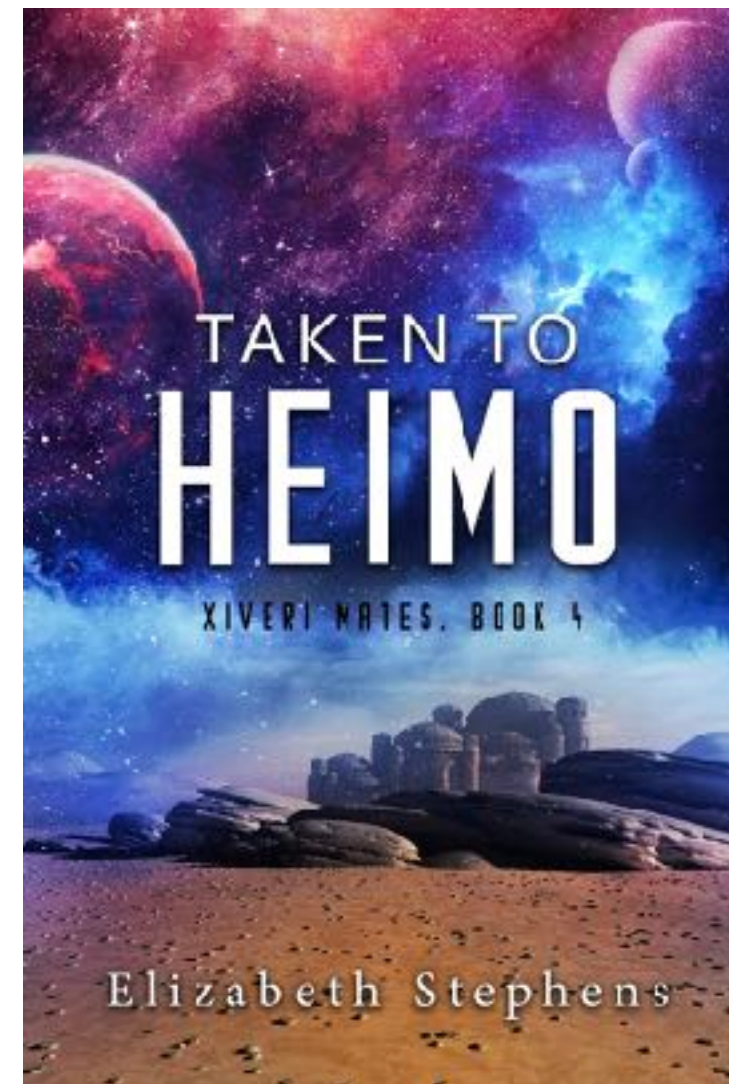
- Publish Sky and finish the Xiveri Mates series!
- Experiment with a kickstarter campaign for the Xiveri Mates Special Cover Edition books
- Publish the next two Xiveri Collections + audiobook collection 1
- Build hype for and release Dark City Omega and Shadowlands Omega
- Publish Population Book 4
- Publish Population discreet cover editions (holidays)
- Target full-length books to launch: 4



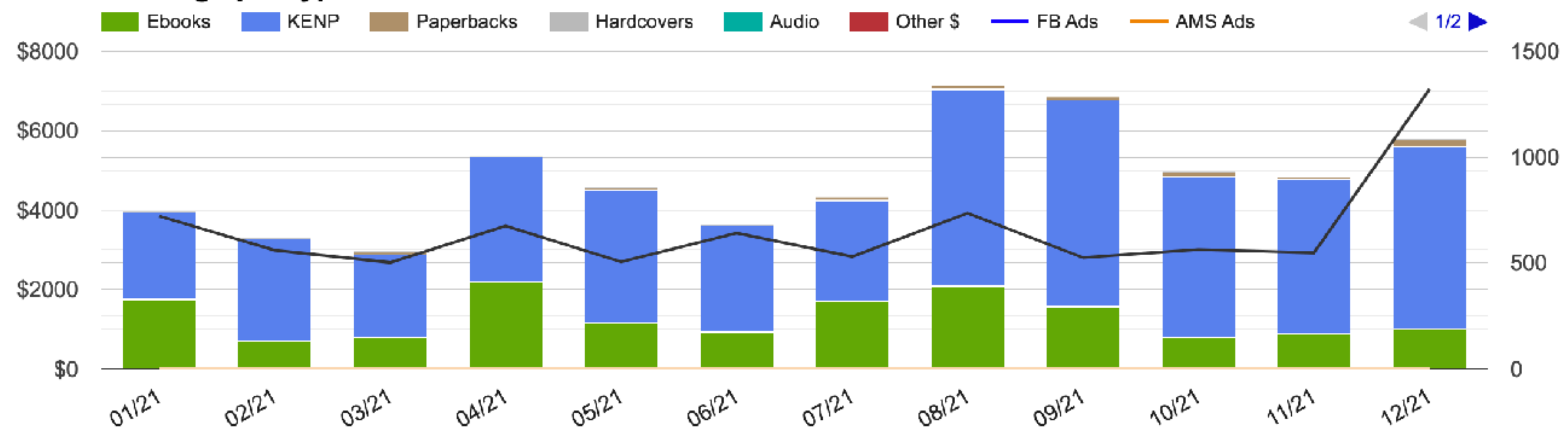
# 2021

## GETTING THE HANG OF IT

- Revenue: \$59,406.01
- Expenses: +/- \$15,000
- Expenses include everything from book editing and cover design, to ad spend to office furniture :P



Earnings per type of sales



# 2021

**BOOK REVENUE: \$59,406.01**

- **Published the next four Xiveri Mates**
- **Wrote 2 additional books (Dark City Omega and Exiled from Nobu)**
- **Cut out Facebook; launched new Instagram account and started playing with TikTok**
- **Experimented with Instagram and Facebook ads (cut out both); nailed bookbub ads**
- **Experimented with new launch plan formats and found one that works (Nick Eric for the win)**
- **Took a break for four months at the end of the year to move from Berlin to San Francisco to Seattle and revenue remained stable (success!)**



# PLANS FOR 2022

**TARGET REVENUE: NO IDEA, AIM FOR 6-FIGURES?**

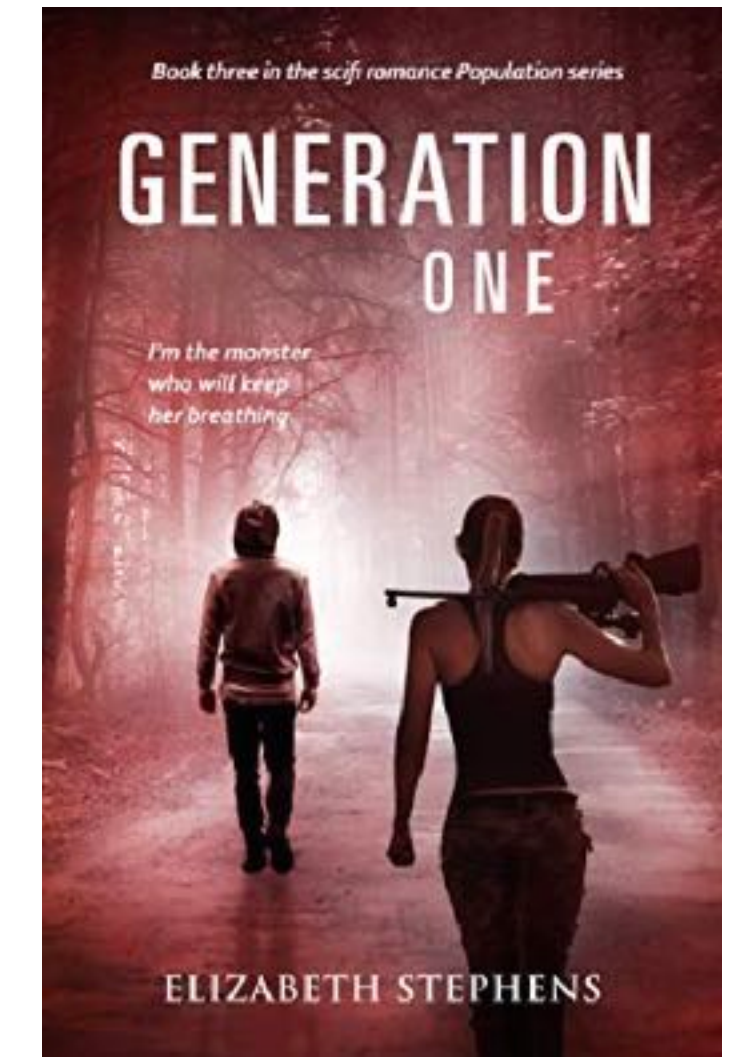
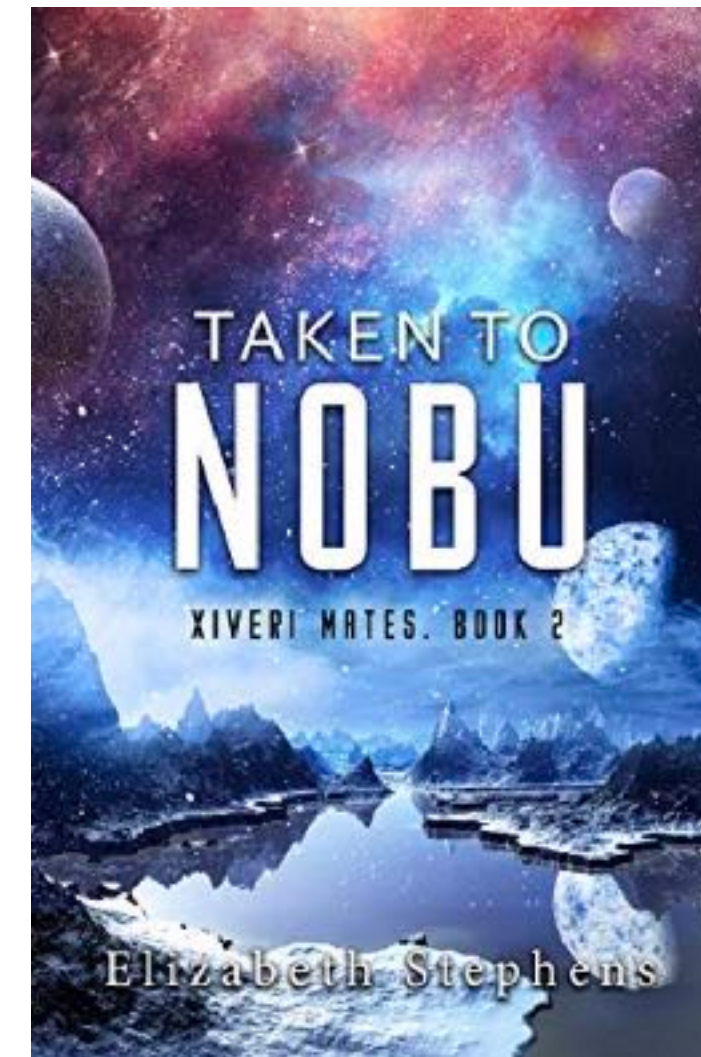
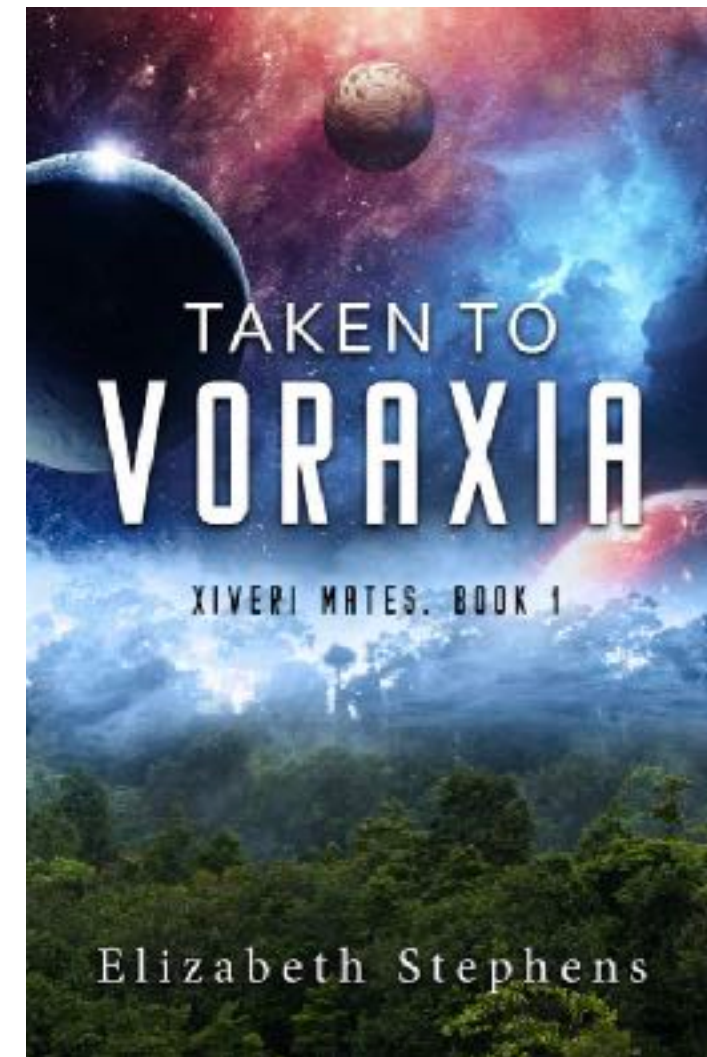
- Rebrand Population one. more. time.
- Take Population series wide
- Finish Xiveri Mates series — publish #8 and #9, as well as a long and short novella
- Xiveri Mates 1-3 box set + short novella
- Xiveri Mates 1-3 audiobooks launch + audiobook “box set” with novella
- Build hype for and release Dark City Omega
- Target full-length books to launch: 5+



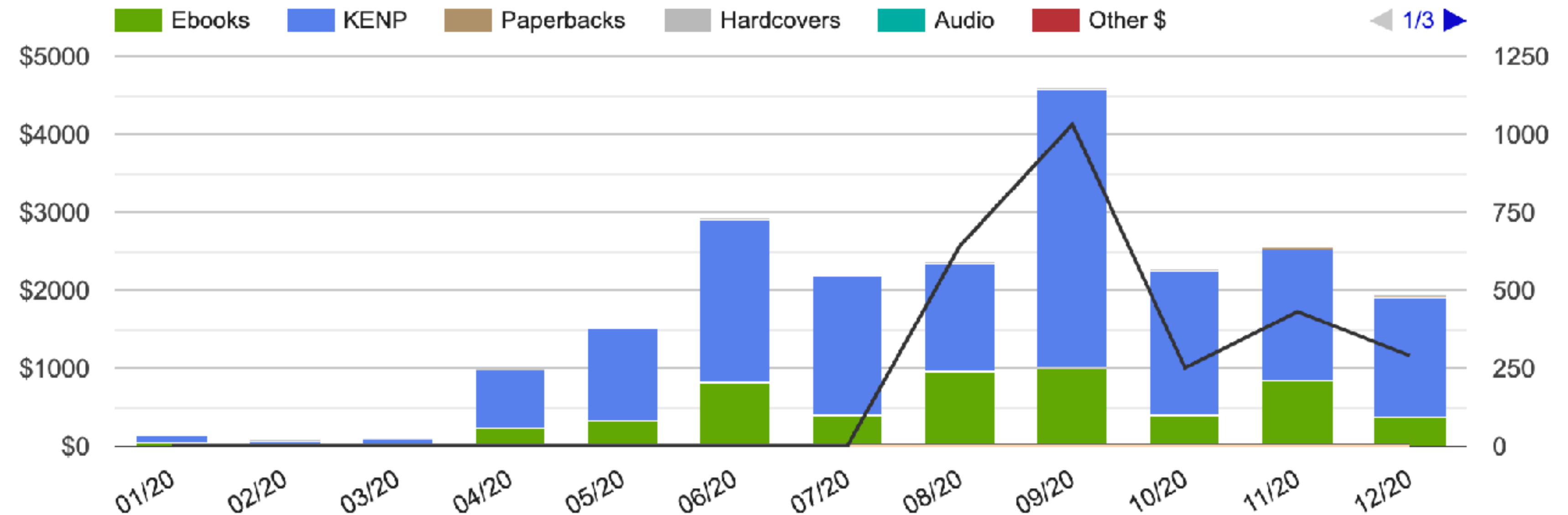
# 2020

## QUIT MY DAY JOB

- Revenue: \$21,960.53
- Expenses: +/- \$2500



Earnings per type of sales



# 2020

**REVENUE: \$21,960.53**

- **Quit my Berlin startup job in February (very lucky here because in Berlin, you can collect unemployment for 6+ months even when you quit)**
- **Published 4 books, including first in Xiveri Mates**
- **Rebranded Population (flopped)**
- **Started building a social following on Instagram (got shut down); started learning more about the industry (millionaire author mastermind and [nicholaserik.com](https://nicholaserik.com) were game changers for me)**
- **Started experimenting with Facebook, Bookbub and Amazon ads based on advice from Nick Eric**
- **Got a dog. Went into lockdown.**

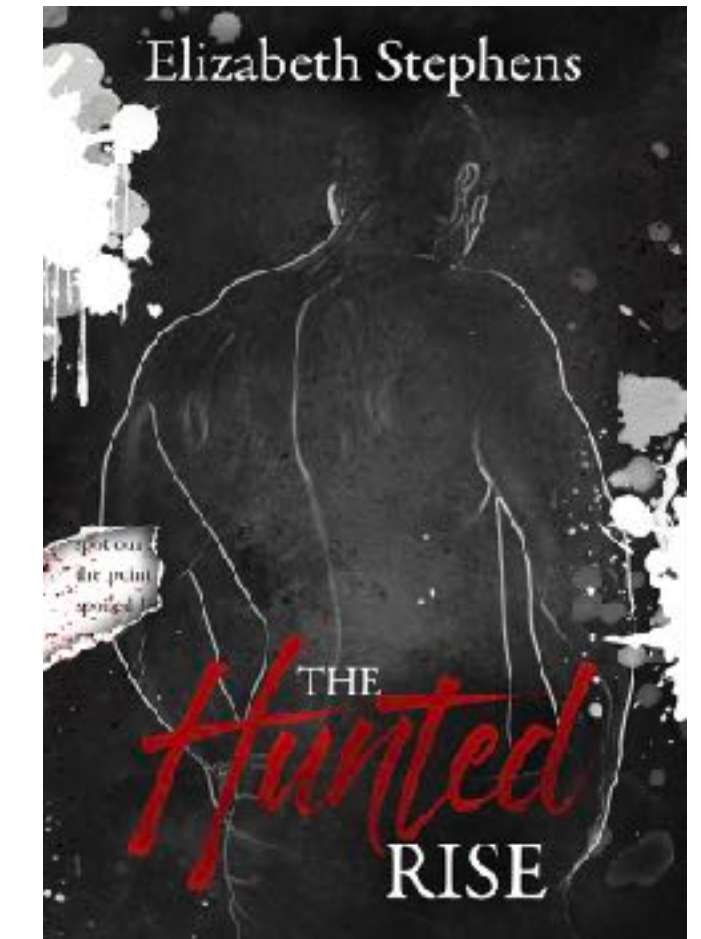
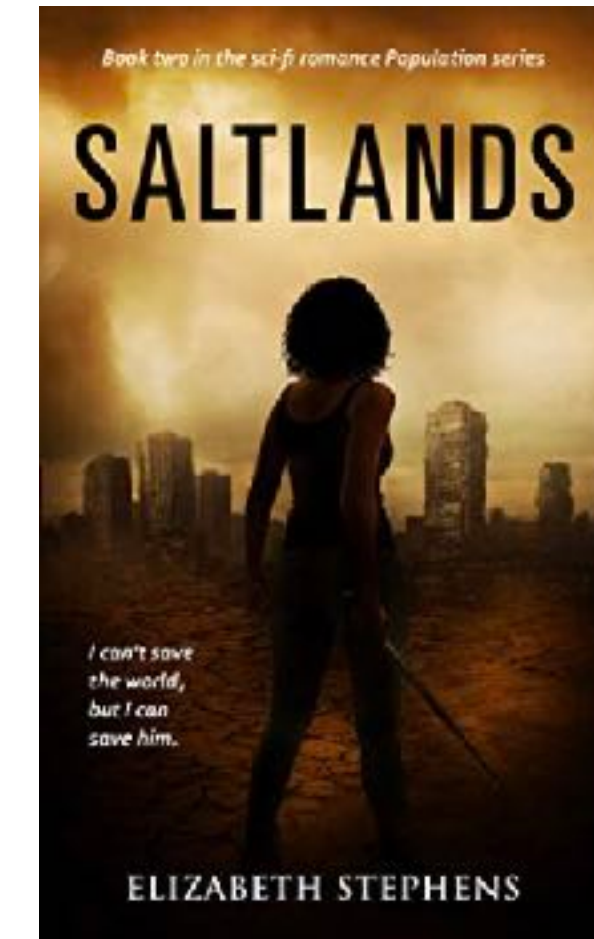
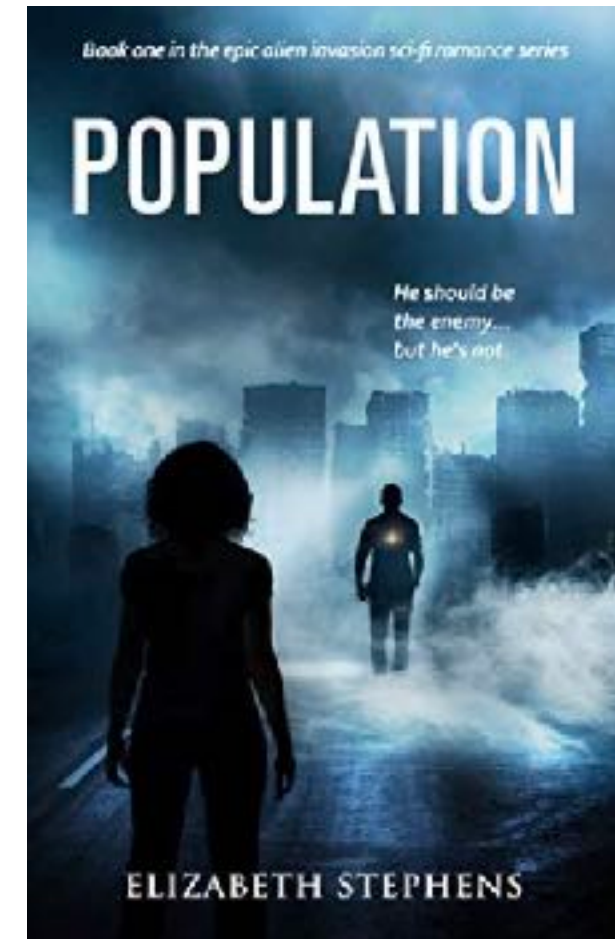


LOUIS HELPING ME WRITE TAKEN TO VORAXIA IN MARCH 2020  
IN BERLIN, GERMANY

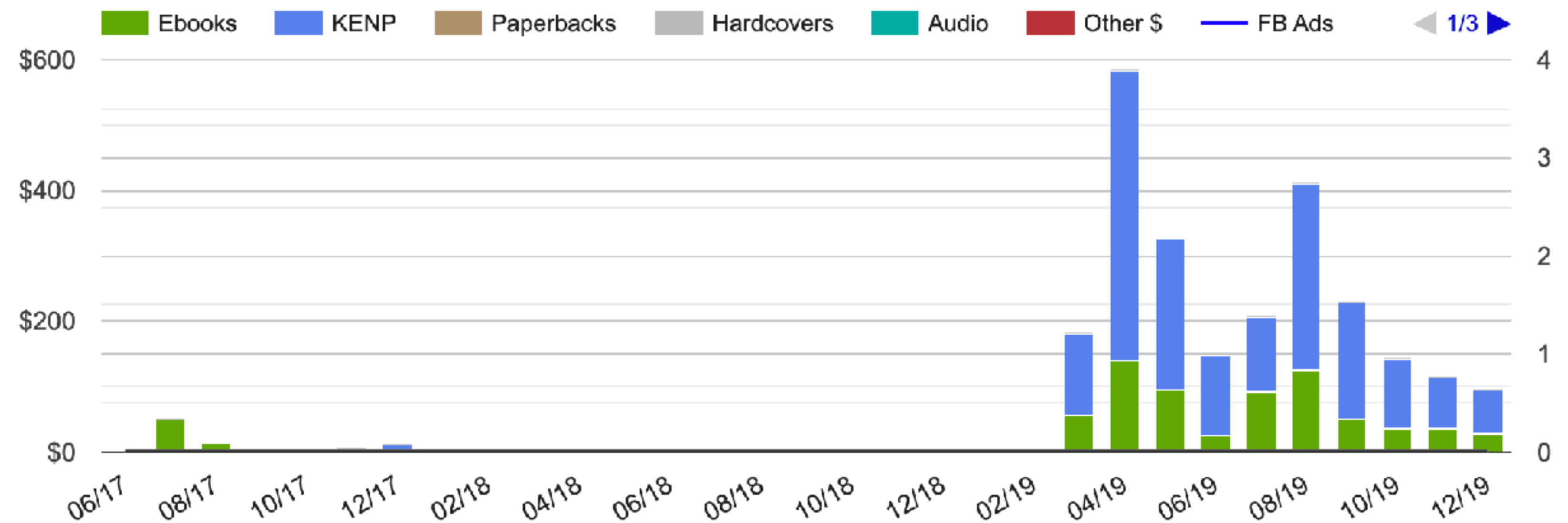
# 2015-2019

## “HOBBY” PUBLISHING

- 2015-2017 Revenue: no idea, probably \$0
- 2018: \$378.72
- 2019: \$2,437.18
- Expenses: no idea, probably \$0



Earnings per type of sales





# 2015-2019

## AVERAGE YEARLY BOOK REVENUE: \$700?

- Published 1 book per year for those 4 years
- I was 24 and did not have the confidence to write steamy romance 'alone', so I published Population with an indie press (got my rights back 2 years later), hated it, vowed never to work with a publisher again
- On marketing, I attended a few writing conferences, got a small list of ARC readers together from FB groups
- Had no intention of ever being a full-time author – worked for a human rights NGO in Geneva (2015), the UN in Addis Ababa (2016), an int'l civil society NGO in Johannesburg (2017-2019), and for a privacy startup in Berlin (2019)
- Moved a lot (lol) and got married in South Africa



ME AND MY GRAMMA AT THE WRITE ON THE RIVER BOOK CONFERENCE  
IN WENATCHEE, WA