

Trolls frequently target Amazon and Goodreads with fake, malicious, or pre-release 1-star reviews—often termed "review bombing"—to damage an author's reputation, punish them, or extort them. These fraudulent reviews, sometimes generated by AI or coordinated groups, are often not based on having read the book. While platforms have policies against this, their slow response often fails to curb the damage, making it a significant issue for indie and traditionally published authors alike. [🔗](#)

Key Tactics and Problems

- **Review Bombing:** Coordinated attacks by users who haven't read the book, often to protest the author, the content, or to drive down ratings.
- **Pre-release Targeting:** Books are rated 1-star before they are even released, sometimes on pages created for non-existent books.
- **Extortion/Revenge:** Some trolls seek money to remove bad reviews, or leave reviews based on personal vendettas or ideological disagreements.
- **Bot/AI Use:** Falsely attributed or AI-generated books, along with fake accounts, are used to manipulate ratings.
- **"Read" Status Falsification:** Reviewers on Goodreads may mark books as "Read" and leave 1-star ratings just to influence the average rating, even if they only skimmed or disliked the premise. [🔗](#)

Impact on Authors

- **Career Damage:** Low average ratings can affect sales and, in some cases, cause publishers to lose interest in a series.
- **Vulnerability:** Indie authors are particularly vulnerable, as they rely heavily on organic, positive reviews to be discovered.
- **Ineffective Moderation:** Authors report that both Amazon and Goodreads are slow to remove obviously false or trolling reviews. [🔗](#)

Platform Policies

- **Goodreads/Amazon:** Both platforms state they take the integrity of reviews seriously and can remove fraudulent reviews or ban users who violate community standards.
- **Reporting:** Authors are advised to use the report function for "abusive" or "bogus" reviews, although this process is often described as slow and inefficient. [🔗](#)

Combating the Issue

- **Report, Don't Engage:** Experts advise against replying to trolls, as it can encourage them.
- **Build a Genuine Base:** Focusing on building a loyal readership that will counter-balance fake reviews is often the best defense. [🔗](#)

Dive deeper in AI Mode

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