

Live from Rainbow Makers Fair! Transcript



Amber: Hello, this is Amber from the Reading the Rainbow podcast and I'm here at the Rainbow Makers Fair. I am gonna ask some makers and some attendees some questions. So the first person I have here, could you just introduce yourself?

J: My name is Jerrica.

A: All right, Jerrica, have you listened to the podcast before?

J: Yes, I have.

A: All right, what is your favorite queer book?

J: Oh gosh, I like *Heartstopper* by Alice Oseman.

A: *Heartstopper* is so cute. What genre do you think could be gayer?

J: Ooh, just regular fiction.

A: Just regular fiction? Cool, cool, cool. I agree. And finally, if you could be one queer book trope, what would it be?

J: "Oh no, there's only one bed."

A: Such a good one. All right, well, thank you for participating in this questionnaire. And I'm here at the JSTAMP Scales and Stitches stand. Could you introduce yourself?

G: I'm Griffin Lanfranca.

A: And this is?

J: And I'm Jason.

A: Amazing. So this is a queer book podcast. So what is a queer book that has stuck with you?

G: I have reading comprehension issues, so I can't really read all that well. But I do really, a lot of graphic novels I've seen have been very queer oriented. And the graphic novel space is very, it's very queer. Yet I see that a lot of people like put it down as childish or like kids coloring books because it is accommodating people.

A: I have also seen that, but I love queer graphic novels. They're such a good genre of queer literature. In fact, the last person I asked said *Heartstopper* was their favorite, so. What about you?

J: Well, I really like reading books by Andrew Joseph White. He's a trans author. And his most recent book, *You Weren't Meant to be Human*, that one really stuck with me because it was his first adult novel. He just did like young adult novels before that. And his first adult novel, wow, it was rough. It was a tough read. I wouldn't recommend it to anyone unless you really want to be grossed out and have it stick with you because it was a big horror one. Especially if you're a trans man, it was very rough. But it was definitely worth the read. And it's definitely gonna stick with me for a while.

A: Definitely sounds memorable, at least. What genre do you think could be gayer or should be gayer?

J: I think there should be more gay historical fiction.

A: Yes, I agree. Historical fiction is one of my favorites. What about you?

G: I would definitely say like historical fiction because there's so much accurate stuff. And I hate it whenever people are like, well, technically they didn't come out as gay. It's like, obviously, obviously they didn't.

A: They also didn't have the same language for it as we do today, so.

G: I just watched a video essay on autism in the Middle Ages and just neurodivergence in the Middle Ages. And how it was just completely different in the way it was interpreted. But it was very obvious neurodivergent people existed. They just didn't have the language for it.

A: Yeah, I think people of all different varieties have existed and we just didn't identify it that way, so.

G: They've always existed, but just because we don't call them by the same name, I think doesn't invalidate their existence. And I think it's really, I think it's a really western-centric version of looking at history saying just because it isn't the same word, it isn't the same thing.

A: I agree 100%. Alright, my last question is a little bit silly. If you were one queer book trope, what would it be?

G: I think I'd be like, I really like "the roommates" or like the one like their parents can't know. I think that's really fun.

A: That is a really good one. What about you?

J: I think maybe like Enemies to Lovers or something like that.

A: Enemies to Lovers is, I feel, a very inherently queer trope.

G: [inaudible] college roommates.

A: College, yes, absolutely. 100%. Well, thank you so much for answering my questions. I hope the rest of your day goes great! Alright, could you please introduce yourself?

J: Hi, I'm Judy Boyle.

B: Brenda Messler.

A: Alright, what is a queer book that has stuck with you?

B: You'll have to ask her.

J: You're going to have to give me some time to think about that.

A: In that case, while you're thinking about it, another question is what genre do you think should be gayer?

J: No, I've read a lot of lesbian books. Fiction mostly.

B: Yeah.

J: I like all the genres.

A: The most recent answer I've had is historical fiction we think should be more gay.

J: Okay, yeah, I've read a few, but there's not a lot out there.

B: There's not a lot out there, no.

J: Yeah, I would definitely agree with that.

A: Do you have any...

B: Well, I mainly read art books and I guess you'd call them self-help books. So maybe they should be more gay.

A: I mean, perhaps. I feel like art books are pretty, even if they're not explicitly queer, they're pretty implicitly queer, in my opinion. All right, circling back to a queer book that's stuck with you.

B: I can't name one.

J: I know one. *Tipping the Velvet*.

A: Oh, I love that one. I really want to read more by her. What is her name? But I know that one. That one's really good. All right, friends. Well, thank you very much.

B: Thank you.

A: Fabulous. Then could you just introduce yourself?

E: Hi, my name is Elle.

A: Amazing. Could you tell me, or what is a queer book that has stuck with you?

E: I gotta think about this one.

A: That is okay. While you think about it, my next question is, what genre do you think could or should be gayer?

E: Every single one. Supernatural.

A: Supernatural, agreed. Absolutely. And then we can circle back to book titles if you thought of one. But if not, if you could be one queer book trope, what would it be? My personal favorite is Best Friends Who Are Definitely In Love, Who Didn't Realize They Were Gay The Whole Time.

E: Oh my god, yes. It's the most relatable queer experience, I think. I have one. It's *Go For It, Nakamura*.

A: Okay, that's cool. I think I've seen that one. All right, that's very cute. Fabulous. All right, so first things first. Could I have everybody's name?

P: My name is Patti.

J: Julie.

R: Raven.

A: Amazing. What is a queer book that has stuck with you?

[?]: The author Lee Harrington does a lot of LGBT writing, and he is an amazing human being and an amazing author. So I highly suggest anything by Lee Harrington.

A: All right, I'll have to look him up.

[?]: I was gonna say, I love books, so I read everything. So I couldn't pinpoint one thing in particular.

A: Then you're a good candidate for my next question, though all of you can answer. If you think one genre could or should be more queer, what would it be? Or a better phrasing of that is, which genre should be gayer?

[?]: Fantasy romance.

[?]: Yeah. I was like, paranormal fantasy romance. Yep, yep, absolutely.

[?]: Smut.

A: My gosh, right? Romanticism needs some gays in there.

[?]: It needs more queer vampires.

A: Yes. And if you could be one queer book trope, what would it be?

[?]: Queer fantasy.

[?]: Queer fantasy, great.

[?]: Yeah. Yeah, I can get down with that.

A: Amazing. Thank you so much, friends.

[?]: You're welcome.

A: All right, first of all, could I have your name, please?

J: My name is Juliana.

C: Oh, you want me too?

A: Yeah, if you want to answer.

C: Okay, Cass.

A: Amazing. What is a queer book that has stuck with you?

J: Admittedly, I haven't read a lot recently, so I'm trying to, I'm struggling to think about it.

C: I mean, one thing I might suggest is that you read, I Want to Be a Wall. Remember the main character's name? I did, true, yeah.

J: I don't know if that picked, I don't know if the mic picked that up. But yeah, a manga series that I read. It's called I Want to Be a Wall. It's about a married couple, but she's aroace and he's gay. So it's just a lavender marriage to appease their family. And then they just figure out how to live together as friends.

A: Amazing. What genre do you think could or should be gayer?

J & C: All of them.

A: Perfect. And if you could be one queer book trope, what would it be? \

J: I don't know.

C: Friends to lovers.

A: Friends to lovers is a good one.

J: We already are.

C: Okay, then I'm living my dream, I suppose.

J: Reincarnation.

A: Okay, I like that. That's the first reincarnation answer I've gotten. I like it.

C: [inaudible] reincarnate together.

A: I love that. All right. Thank you, friends. All right, first things first. Can I have your first name?

T: My first name is Tzvia. T-Z-V-I-A.

A: Thank you.

Y: My name is Yonah. Y-O-N-A-H.

A: Are you guys interested in? Yes.

M: My name is Max.

A: All right. What is a queer book that has stuck with you?

T: I don't know if you would call this a queer book, but I would, which would be *Rainbow Fish*. I mean, Rainbow, so queer. Mostly because I think it speaks to a lot of what the queer experience is of having to give up your sparkle and give up your rainbow to try to fit in with everybody else.

A: That's a good answer. I like it.

Y: I have to think about it for a second, but.

A: Okay.

M: It's so, like, stereotypical, but *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe*.

A: That's such a good one, though.

M: It's so good. Being, like, under prejudice, but your parents are still kind of supportive in a way, and then finding each other and making your own world. Like, that's so cool.

A: I love that.

T: Can I give her answer, even though she doesn't think this is her answer? This is my second answer. As an adult, Legends and Lattes. Because everything D&D, everything gay, it's glorious.

A: Cozy fantasy is just such a good genre. I'm so happy that we have that. Did you have a different answer?

Y: No, I'm still trying to think. Okay, we'll come back to it. My next question is, what genre do you think could or should be gayer? Everything.

T: Everything is made better if it's gay.

Y: I'm always disappointed when there is a sci-fi story that doesn't involve anything queer in it, because why are we imagining a future where there aren't the same amount or more queer people than there are today?

A: I agree. Also, sci-fi is just such an inherently queer genre. It's a little bit rude to just not have a queer person in that.

M: Literary nonfiction.

A: Agree. Yeah. As long as they were just reading. All right, circling back, have we come up with a title yet?

Y: No.

A: Okay, then my last question is, if you could be one queer book trope, what would it be?

T: If I could be a queer book show?

[?]: Trope.

T: Oh, trope. If I could be a queer book trope? Probably the queer panic at finding the really cute person walk in, stumbling over your words, and then giving them a rock, as a way of pebbling your potential mate.

A: I love that.

Y: Enemies to lovers, fight scenes that are just incredibly intense and homoerotic, and the sword right at the tip of your chin that leads into getting to the bottom of your conflicts and eventually reaching reconciliation.

A: That's perfect. I do think enemies to lovers is another just inherently queer trope, and I love it. All right, Max is talking to somebody, so we'll come back to him. Circling back, any book titles? So sorry. Yeah, look them up.

Y: The queer story that has had the biggest impact on me, which is not a book, unfortunately, was She-Ra and the Princesses of Power. Firstly, because I was so expecting it to be queer bait, and then it wasn't.

T: I screamed.

Y: I literally screamed. And secondly, because the message in media in general is always about self-sacrifice, and I find so often for queer people, imagining sacrificing yourself is the easy part. Imagining yourself thriving and surviving is harder.

A: That's such a good answer. I also love that that series, the creator, wove in the queer story so much that it just couldn't work without it, and I love it. I love it so much. All right, I'm going to interrupt Max for just a second. Max, my last question is, if you could be one queer book trope, what would it be?

M: What's the last word?

Y: Queer book trope.

M: Happy?

A: Happy is a good trope. I love that. Queer happiness is very important. Yeah. I love that. Yes. All right. Thank you, friends.

Y: I don't know how much this counts, but the works of Oscar Wilde, a lot of them are, I mean, none of them are explicitly queer because he wasn't able to be. But reading his plays and his stories through the lens of knowing about his life and what it was to be forced into the closet in that era, all of his works just shine in a new way, and I remember that being incredibly influential to me when I was a teenager.

A: I am obsessed with Oscar Wilde, and I would argue that *the Picture of Dorian Gray* is very gay. Have you ever read the uncensored *Picture of Dorian Gray*? Okay, so before it was serialized for newspapers, it was altered by editors to make it less gay, but it's so gay. I'm sorry. You can't make a painting of somebody and say you put so much of yourself in it and you can't show it if it's not gay. All right, that's a very good answer. Thank you so much. All right. First of all, introductions. What's your name?

R: Hi, I'm Riley with Crooked Room Craftworks.

A: Amazing. What is a queer book that has stuck with you?

R: I would have to say currently is *Heated Rivalry*.

A: That's such a good one. Hockey romance, but gay is the best thing to come of this year, basically.

R: It really showcases the softer side of masculinity, and I think that's something that the world is in need of right now.

A: I agree. Absolutely. What genre do you think could or should be gay?

R: I feel like the fantasy realm already kind of maybe does that, but I also feel like exposure is very important. So as much as this is a really taboo conversation, but I feel like not in an indoctrinating way, children's books, like being a safe space for kids to be their true and authentic self should be more welcomed.

A: I agree. And the few good queer children's books I've seen, they make me really happy because they're so soft and loving. That's all you're trying to do is introduce kids to a different way of living, and I love that very much.

R: That's the core, right? Like love deserves existence in whichever format it may exist. So just being a safe space for your authentic self, you're coming into your personality, you're coming into your identity, and having acceptance is very important and valuable, especially in the queer community. So being a safe space for kids to recognize and identify with characters of books has always been a mission that I think authors really kind of lean into, but that's where I think that it could use more support from everyone.

A: I think that's a really good answer. My last question. If you could be one queer book trope, what would it be? This doesn't necessarily have to be a book. It can be a queer fan fiction trope too, because I know I read a lot of queer fan fiction. That's very trope-y.

R: [inaudible] currently is *Off Campus*. So I really love that genre.

A: I was recently recommended *Off Campus*.

R: I have watched it through 11 times, start to finish.

A: Oh my gosh. So like fake dating then?

R: Yeah, I think so. I think so.

A: I love that.

R: Yeah, that's my answer. Fake dating.

A: Fake dating is a good trope. All right, thank you so much.

R: Thanks so much.

Am: All right, first things first. Could you introduce yourself?

An: My name is Andrew.

Am: Amazing. What is a queer book that has stuck with you or your favorite queer book?

An: Oh goodness. This might sound a little fan person-ish, but I think the last queer book with queer characters I read was a *Star Trek* series. I didn't go very deep into it, but [inaudible].

Am: *Star Trek* is inherently gay.

An: It is inherently gay.

Am: I will accept that answer.

An: Fantastic, thank you.

Am: All right, what genre do you think could or should be gayer?

An: Could or should be gayer? I would say historical fantasy. Like realistic historical fantasy could probably, or even just historical fiction is probably the best way because usually it's erased.

Am: I agree, absolutely. And my last question is if you could be one queer book trope, what would it be?

An: It's a little bit of a personal question. I don't know if I can answer that one on record. I'm sorry.

Am: That is perfectly okay. I've gotten a lot of enemies to lovers, friends to lovers. Yeah.

An: I'm married. That's who I've been.

Am: Oh my gosh, amazing. Didn't realize.

An: I was being interviewed because I'm famous. Yeah, we're asking what if you could be one queer book trope, what would it be? [inaudible] Yeah, right? I don't know. I was like, that's too, that's too easy. I truly don't know.

Am: Yeah. Friends to lovers is a good one.