

Episode 69 - Ruthie Hanson

Emily Einolander 00:00

Oh, I forgot to tell you this is episode 69 Oh my god. Yes

00:12

Oh, the gays when again,

Emily Einolander 00:15

somehow I knew you'd like that Welcome to the Hybrid Pub Scout podcast with me Emily Einolander. We're mapping the frontier between traditional and indie publishing. And today's guest is Ruthie Hanson. Born in Burbank, California, Ruthie has been around the entertainment industry since she was a kid watching her father's storyboard for Disney films. She had her first book published at 19 with her most recent novel blood in the Golden Palace, premiering late 2021. Most of her books focus on queer romances, though her upcoming novel steps back into her first real love high fantasy. Ruthie is a 2019 Kume laude graduate of see sons writing program, and negotiated her first film option two years later through Golden Horseshoe entertainment and director Paul Baker. The script hair of the dog Diner is a low budget survive the night werewolf script with a focus on visual effects. As for the future of her writing, Ruthie is spearheading a Kickstarter campaign for ladies of fortune, a show centered around the lives of Anne Bonny and Mary Reed. So it's been a passion project of hers for years ladies a fortune is only now gaining traction due to the popularity of the HBO sleeper hit our flag being Steph and even involves one of the show's actors. Welcome, Ruthie. Hi. Thanks for coming on the show

01:59

while we wait I gotta wait. Introduce me again. Introduce me.

Emily Einolander 02:03

Okay. Welcome, Ruthie.

02:04

Hi. Oh, there we go. There we go. That was that was steep on it walking into Spanish Jackie's bar like dressed like an ice cream just being like Hi. Oh,

Emily Einolander 02:19

I maybe landed gentry

02:22

but I'm delighted to be granted entry there we go. I may or may not have memorized the entire fucking show. Anyway.

Emily Einolander 02:31

That's all right. I was episode seven is kind of my comfort episode. So I watched that last night's kind of take care.

02:37

So they all they all run together for me. Is that a fancy party?

Emily Einolander 02:41

It's the oranges the oranges okay, because I'm a gym and Oh, lube shipper. So Oh, obviously, obviously. You and anyone with eyes. So every fanfic writer who comes on here gets the icebreaker question. What is your favorite ship?

03:01

Okay. Not a joke. More than one is good. Okay, not a joke. This is the question I spent the most time thinking of, because I'm definitely like a smorgasbord of ships like ever since I was a teenager starting with like Teen Titans and like Starfire. Robin, that was my gateway drug. We'll start by Robin. So I will answer this twofold. I'll answer with the ship I'm obsessed with currently. And then the ship that I've written the most of so the ship that I'm obsessed with currently is the steady dynamic from Stranger Things. Oh, okay. Yeah, um, it's i I won't go into like spoilers or anything in case because the show just aired so I don't want to you know, in case you haven't gotten around to it, but I I've come to realize that my ideal dynamic is like a normal dude. And then like a goblin, like, that's kind of my perfect, sort of, and something about, you know, scrawny weird long haired metal heads. Really, really kind of get the lather going for that. So that's the ship that I'm currently it's currently taken up residence in my mind. The one that I've written the most of is maj mine kitty from the Yakuza games, which I don't know if you're familiar with them or not. So the opposite games are essentially like take Grand Theft Auto, put it in Japan, and lace it with PCP. And you have the opposite games. They are fantastic. Especially if you like like beat them ups. The story goes like the the Japanese mafia stealing a literal mountain of money and no one notices like it it becomes that Oh,

Emily Einolander 04:59

I have a just like lift it with one finger and like you can hear the little like tingle keys walking away.

05:05

It was like stuffed in an office like an actual literal mountain of money. It was like stuffed in a back room and an office and a little tiny fucking Japanese like, and they just, not only did they steal it, but when it was revealed again, it was in the exact same formation of like the, so they just like airlifted it like they removed the roof, airlifted it and then brought it. It's a ridiculous game series. But it's very, very fun. Yeah, so that became my personality during the pandemic. And I and I wrote, I, okay, within six months, like five to six months, I wrote and created a 600 page ebook following these two characters from 1983 to 2019. And this is this was just me going like I was just six months. Yeah, I would just play the game and then I would write and then I would play the game and I'm right. And I like I did the whole thing. I like commissioned like artists for it. Okay, yeah, yeah, I like gave some of my pandemic money away to like all these fan artists that I love and, and

Emily Einolander 06:18

booking like half as much, it took me like, twice as much time as you but still,

06:26

I get I get weirdly fast. Like when I I'm almost 100% sure that I am an undiagnosed ADHD because like when I cling to something, so Okay, so we'll go into like, the history of my fanfiction and stuff like that, but like, the most recent fat, like long, long ish form fanfiction that I wrote, was the Fang and claw series, which I'm still kind of writing which is a What We Do In The Shadows Viago and Anton and and that sort of that I wrote 160,000 words within a month.

Emily Einolander 07:05

I'm sorry. There was some dinner there because my mouth just fell.

07:11

i Yeah. i From from early, like may 5 To like, June 6, or seventh is when I ended nightcap. And so about 160,000 words. God, I get I get nuts. I know, when I like when I have a hyper fixation. If I don't, I don't end until I die.

Emily Einolander 07:37

So I first followed you on Twitter, because you came out as a fanfic author. And I thought that was pretty brave, because I'm, you know, to actually put your name up there and like the screenshot of your ao three profile. Because like, I'm the sort of person where like, if you find my fanfic and realize it's me, I'm like, okay, that's fine. But like, that also means you find my alt Twitter account. And that's a little less. But yeah, so what made you decide to take that step?

08:12

So this is going to be a bit of a storytime, and we're gonna, we're gonna actually rewind back to when I was writing nightcap, which was my big Viago and Anton Fick. So I had decided to you mentioned in the intro, I have a Kickstarter going for a proof of concept for a pirate show. And my friend Damian, who I've known for years, who I approached originally in 2017, to play the bad guy for for the show. He ended up being on our flag, nice death as father teach. So he was yeah, he was Ed's father, and he got, you know, flung around by the crack and arm and stuff like that. And He's genuinely, like, one of the nicest human beings. We use. We met playing d&d in here in Burbank, and so genuinely like one of the nicest people where we had a couple of years where we sort of drifted apart because I was going to school and he was dealing with cancer for a little bit. He is fortunately two years out, like free of cancer. Yay. And and we reconnected kind of like during the pandemic and updated each other what we got going on, and then you know, our flagging stuff came out. And the first time I watched the show, when I got to that scene, I was like drinking with my friends. So I was like, kind of drunk but it was like I saw you with the crack and like, I was texting while I was watching the show. And so he had like a 2000 followers something like that, because he also does voice acting he was, I believe Harry stone and a Call of Duty. I think if or Black Ops what one of the shootie games, I don't play the shooter games by the Pew Pew games, one of the pew pew games. Yeah, so he's done like, voice acting, and he's done like, you know, smaller things here and there. And he made a tweet where somebody had linked him to a page of archive that had his character in fanfictions. And it's like, you know, and he took screenshot of it. And he tweeted it and being like, Oh my God, look at this. I'm in fanfiction like, I'm a real actor,

though. And he was, he was delighted, like, genuinely, he was delighted. He's like, like, it's, you know, people liked my character enough to put it, and Twitter aided the fuck up. Like, he got, he went from 2000 followers to like 5000 followers, like, he got just this huge wave of love, very well deserved. Also, he's a wonderful human being. And, and I, I interacted a little bit with that thread, and I got some trickling, you know, of people. Now, during all of this, you know, the Kickstarter was going, some people were kind of being directed towards it. And I was still writing nightcap at the time. And during some of the uploads, we were going to do a live stream, me and Damien. And so I basically left a little note that I deleted once it was done, but like, I left a little note in my chapter being like, hey, like, if you want to support something cool that I'm doing, like, come to my Instagram, on this this day, and this time and, and join us for a live stream. And, and that was really fun. And then we ended up getting a massive, three grand donation for our Kickstarter. Wow, like it insane. And I was like, Who was this? Who was this? And I found out, it was one of my readers. It was a fan fiction reader who she loved my work so much. And she just had all of these savings. And she's like, I want to support something really cool. And I fuck it. I like cried I should I not and I just kind of sat there for a bit. I was like, oh my god, like people genuinely like I have books and stuff. And like people like my books, but I have just a genuine audience that is here for just about everything that I've done. And I was like, okay, and it's and then and then, you know, all the interviews came out with David Jenkins showrunner for our blogging stuff, talking about like, how much he loves and appreciates the fan culture. Tycho's very verbal about how much he loves the fan art? Like there's there is. And as someone who has been writing fanfiction for more than half their lives.

13:13

That is a huge paradigm shift. Because when I was a teenager, you did not you did not connect your person. You're who you were to your fanfictions like you had to put up disclaimers, so you wouldn't get sued. Right, you know, yeah, um, and it's, I kind of woke up and realize, like, oh my god, we're in a much different world. And so I just came to work one day, and I was kind of bored at my desk. So I was like, Alright, fuck it. And it just took on a life of its own. And I was I was sitting there like, watching these 1000s of, because I would get messages also, like my DMs were open, still are. And I get messages from people. This is I think the best. The best kind of consequence of this is I get messages from people who were inspired to write again, or who were inspired to like, or who like, weren't sure that they would be taken seriously as a, you know, as an original writer because they've and it's like, that makes me so happy. Because one of the things that I try to encourage as much as possible is for the production of genuine, sincere art, whether that is you know, visual art whether that is you know, audio art like podcasts, whether that's writing like the world can be so fucking ugly, have had any chance to get more joy into the world, no matter what that is, is if I can help create that, like, I, I feel like I have done my job. I have career goals, I have financial goals, I have goals that I want to be in life, but also like, on a personal level, I want to encourage people to write and to find their passions and to enjoy those hobbies and those passions and even if it's just for

Emily Einolander 15:24

yourself, also having that tangible proof that you're really making somebody happy with oh my

15:29

god, it's amazing. It's amazing. Because that's I just want I just want people to be happy and chill and

Emily Einolander 15:36

\$3,000 is like the monetary equivalent of like, a page long. Quoting back to yourself a oh three.

15:44

Oh, my God. It's I like literally, like, messaged that person on Twitter. I was like, Are you fucking sure. And she's like,

Emily Einolander 15:55

Oh, my God, I love it.

15:57

It's, it's so good. She and she bought all my books. And I was like, okay, mail them to me, because I'm going to sign all of them. And I'm also going to, like, I have extra things that I'm going to like, slip it and like, as presents and send them back to you. It was just, I mean, it's been a wild wild ride. And it's funny because like, I have PTSD from from shit that I won't get into. But even though like 99% of the reaction was very positive, it was still incredibly terrifying. Because it's this, it's this huge amount of attention that I just am not used to. And I was able to navigate it. Okay, but there were there were a couple of moments when it was all happening where I was like, What the fuck have I done? Like, what am I dying?

Emily Einolander 16:52

dreams coming true is scary.

16:55

Yeah, it's like, I'm gonna be that person. And I'm like, no, no,

Emily Einolander 16:59

it's okay. You're just fine.

17:01

I'll handle it. This is not 2012 not 2008. Yeah. Um,

Emily Einolander 17:09

can we talk about your books a little bit? Yeah, she made her little reference to him there. So since this is a publishing podcast, I do like talking about what it's like to work with different presses. And I noticed that you have several romance books with GMs books, which is a small press that focuses on LGBTQ books. As direct Could you talk a little bit about how you found them and what it was like to work with them?

17:34

Sure. Um, so again, this is going to be we're going to go back a few years, but to get into it. So I and this is, this just proves like how long I was on the gay pirate train. Or rather, the gay pirate ship.

Emily Einolander 17:51

Not take a sip of coffee.

17:54

I saw that like, um, so in 2010, I started doing a gay pirate web comic with a friend of mine who I've written the story with. And we were doing conventions to like sell our stuff. And I got approached by a, Oh God, no, I gotta go further. Hold on, I gotta go further. Put, okay, put a pin in the gay pirates. And we're gonna go back. So my first my very first book, my very, very first book, I wrote it when I was 18. And I got it published when I was 19. Through there, they were kind of like a vanity publishing house. So it's like one step above self publishing. And I was very proud of the fact that I got published at 19. But it's, I'm not going to talk about the book, because it was a book that I got published when I was fucking 19. And it's like a book that I wrote was at 19. But like, that's kind of what set it off. And, and then, you know, a few years after that, I started the webcomic. And I got approached, actually, by a, a different publishing company, at the convention being like, hey, like, we like your stuff. Would you be willing to submit a manuscript to us? And I was like, Yeah, okay. Sure. And so I wrote, I wrote like a little 110 120 word, like novel in about a month. And I submitted it to them. And they just didn't like it for some reason. Like, they asked me to do a bunch of changes. So I did a bunch of changes, and they still didn't like I was like, okay, whatever. So I put the manuscript on the back burner. And then I, like a year or so down the line, I met a different publishing house while I was selling my comic books. And I mentioned I was like, Yeah, I have this manuscript, but I don't know if I'm going to do anything with it because like the publishers I wanted me to write It didn't like it. And they're like I said it to us. So that was less than three press, which was my second publishing house and they actually contracted me and I had editors and all that stuff. And I wrote the unscripted series. So unscripted act one and unscripted Act Two, it is a little, I don't know, if you're familiar with the BL pocket books from Japan. I've heard of them. Okay. The idea is, most of them are gay. And it's like, it's called a pocket book, because you literally it's like a small book that you can put in your pocket. And like read it on the train and stuff. And it's, it has a very distinct sort of casual kind of style to them, a lot of them are very contemporary. So unscripted act one was definitely written in that style, where it's a little more goofy. And the whole series sort of revolves around it. It revolves around an action star in Hollywood, who was closeted, and he meets and falls for his like, super fan. It's very, like meet cute, and it's very low stakes, although someone does almost get hit by a car, so low stakes for me. And that the first book was definitely written in a much more kind of fourthwall Breakey. Very cute, very bubbly sort of style. And then when I decided to write the sequel, I kind of let go of the, the attempt to imitate, and I just sort of embraced my own narrative style. And I feel like the sequel is much stronger because of it. I'm a big kind of running motif, I have found like, this is not intentional, but I found a big running motif in my books tend to be discussing social inequity, whether that's class, whether that's race, whether that's, you know, gender and sex, whatever it is, because we live in a naturally inequitable world. And the like, I can't, I cannot picture

22:14

a world in which my books can exist, where they're not affected by that, where the characters are not affected by, you know, what we have to deal with. And so, the sequel, because the the character Ethan, who is the star, he's the action star, is he's mixed race, he is Indian, and white, and his, but because he passes, quote, unquote, he gets these leading roles. Whereas his uncle, who is Uncle Nick, who

started as an actor, and then owned a theatre company, because he's very clearly Indian, like he gave up acting in the 80s, because he was being cast as taxi drivers and terrorists, and you know, all these things. And so it's a look at that, but it's also a look at the invasion of privacy of celebrities. So the first book, *The Ark*, is them getting together the heavy in that one is Ethan's co star who's just, she's kind of a nasty, like, should have made a big and never really and now she's getting up there. So now she's like, fighting the clock and, and that sort of thing. And then the second book is the heavy as a tabloid, who is trying to essentially out Ethan, and sticking paparazzi on them and stuff like that. So it's, it's the idea of like, once someone comes becomes a celebrity, very often, especially in this town, like they're seen as less than human because like, their privacy is no longer theirs. It's, you know, an object. They're an object. Yeah. And, and so the, the second book eventually becomes him dealing with that. And also, I dove into a little bit about this is actually inspired by the press around Chris Evans, when he was doing tours for Captain America. And he talked about his anxiety issues. And he talks about his you know, he didn't like crowds, and he didn't like doing interviews and things like that. And so I kind of using my own experiences with mental health, I dove into the life of a public figure who, from the time he was a teenager, has had issues with mental health has had issues with general anxiety, disorder and general depression. And, and I felt like, because I was able to ignore the parameters of what this book series started out as, which is like an American BL pocket book, I was able to sort of create a stronger narrative cuts of that. So that was less than three press and then less than three ended up closing their doors. Because small publishing houses, it's very hard to keep open.

25:14

And I spent the next couple of years going to see son, I got my screenwriting degree. And during that time, I had decided to write a Western called the real walkers. Yes. And that is it. That was that was the longest I ever spent working on a project, like, so I will write a book and two, three months, this one took me five years, which is insane. For me, that's, that's much longer. But it was a lot of research. It was a lot of like, I was very meticulous and a lot of the details. And this one is it is a lesbian revenge Western. Yes. And the conceit was because you know, when you get a when you get a screenwriting degree, you have to go through cinema classes, which I loved. And part of the curriculum is you study American film, American cinema. And we spent a good time, you know, talking about westerns, western films. And I grew up with westerns, as well, my dad's a big like John Ford, John Wayne kind of fan. And so I was familiar with, like the iconography and the trappings of a standard Western. And I'm also a big history nut, as well. And one of the most fascinating things about westerns. As far as the disparity between the Hollywood Western like the real West, was, there were whole towns, basically erected by women. Because basically, what would happen is during especially during the gold rush, and the mining boom, um, there would be prospectors who would like gather in an area, but they would, they would be living at a tents, and they just wouldn't take care of themselves. And they would, you know, and so these these women who, you know, were starting to experience financial and personal autonomy for the first time. And I say that specifically talking about the white colonists settlers, like, I'm talking about a very specific group. They decided to go out west, and they're like, there is a market here. And so through sex work, and through through other services, they built towns, communities, like town halls and hospitals, and you know, they establish trade routes and things like that. So the West was kind of built by women in the West was built by women and sex work like it's, it's really a fascinating history. In fact, Wyoming is known as the equality state, because before nationally, women were given the right to vote. All all white women in Wyoming, were given the vote. Like literally every like it was widespread

from the beginning. If you were a white woman in Wyoming, you could vote. And they literally did not join the south during the, during the Civil War, because the south wanted to take away women's right to vote and they're like, no, no, this works for us, like,

Emily Einolander 28:31

what am I getting out of this deal? Yeah.

28:34

So what I wanted to do was not only focused on that aspect, but there are the West was incredibly diverse. As far as people who are immigrating the freeing of enslaved peoples, also, like the fallout from Native American genocide, like there's a lot of it's a really big complex history for for people of color in America. And so what I wanted to do is I wanted to focus on a cast. It's kind of a found family sort of setup, where you have kind of one person from each, quote unquote, forgotten demographic from the Hollywood westerns. So the main character is a girl named Violet. Who is she's one of those. I like to like to frame it as it's a white feminist who goes from third wave to intersectional ism, because she starts with good intentions. She has a good heart, but she sees the world very much in black and white. Like she, there's a conversation in the book, where she is talking to Linus, who is the he is a black man from Alabama. And, and they're talking about the Civil War, and they're all So talking about like the fallout after the Civil War, and he mentioned that his mother is still stuck on the plantation working for her former master, which is the thing that happened, it was it was once they were freed, it's like, okay, cool, you get paid for your work now. But you get paid pennies on the dollar. And you have to live in your old slave quarters, and you have to pay us rent. It's It was horrific. It was absolutely horrific. And so he talks about that experience. And of course, I am I am damn near clear. As far as my background, I'm I'm very white. And so I had to do a lot of research for this. And I had I fortunately have friends and people close to me that I would, I would reference to and I would ask questions of, and so they're having this conversation, and he mentions that his mother is still on her old plantation, like working for her old master. And Violet has a moment where she's like, well, that's not hold on. No, like, the slaves are free. Like, it's fine. That's fine. That's not how it works. And he goes into the details of like, No, this is what is actually happening. So violet goes through a, a metamorphosis, and sort of starts to understand things in a more complex way. And then the, the through line, why this is still a romance and not not just like a really heavy read, is she violet, it's kind of a coming of age story, because violet, discovers her sexuality through May, who is the leader of the rail walkers, and she is the daughter of the Chinese railroad worker. And it's they they fall in love. And she kind of because what they do is they're they're assassins, essentially, they get people search them out and find them out and pay them to kill people who are essentially too rich or too, too white, to be held accountable for their actions. And and they go around, you know, administering justice administering justice, yes, essentially. And she sort of joins them through happenstance. She gets framed, she gets involved in one of their contracted hits, and she gets framed for the murder. And so she has to run away. Oh, my God, it's it was such a fun thing to write. So I was working on that a lot of research, a lot of, you know, took five years. And then, you know, graduated, was ready to start my screenwriting career and then the pandemic hit. And I was like, Well, let me finish this up. It's like, let me give myself a project. So I finished up real Walker's. And during that time, I was looking at indie publishing houses, and JMS books had a what do you call it a fast track, okay, for basically authors who

33:13

are previously published and like have books that they own the rights to, because once less than three press Close the doors like I retain all the rights for unscripted. They're like, so if you've been published before, like, we'll take you on, and we can publish any new stuff that you have. And so I made a deal with them Polish rail walkers, and it has to date become my most financially and critically successful thing. Good like ever.

Emily Einolander 33:43

I love hard work. It paid

33:47

off it got a cut published in February of last year. And I'm still getting royalties for it good, which is insane. Like I used to royalties being like here's \$4 Great, thanks. And then, um, after that, because I cannot fucking stay still, for more than 10 minutes, I decided to write my next book, which I plug in, went out in seven months golf, blood and the Golden Palace, which is a much different, much different book than real lockers. It is. It's one of the few books that I have. That's classified as straight romance. But I haven't written on a solid straight character and over 10 years and so they're both bisexual so

Emily Einolander 34:40

so it still fits their parameters for publishing where Yeah,

34:44

so it still fits the parameter. And that one was I basically while I'm at work, I play a lot of YouTube to like, while I was doing stuff, yeah, just to have noise. And one of the things that I like to do that's fun is I like to go down the rabbit holes of Like, the autopsy of the 50 shades books, because I hate those books. And, and I finally, for like the fifth time, I listened to Dan Olsen's three part, hour long a piece, kind of post mortem on the series,

Emily Einolander 35:22

I have a funny story about why I know about that when you're done.

35:27

And, and after I finished that, I was like, you know, I bet I could do it better. And so, on Google Docs, at work in between assignments, I wrote this book in chunks, like in like, I would just like, and I was like, Okay, so we're gonna do I decided to set it in like a mobster. Senate because it was it's a little bit 50 shades a little bit 365 and then apparently a lot of beauty in the beast, which I did not intend, but I had a, somebody reviewed it being like, this is more of a Beauty and the Beast retelling that, like, hey, you know what, I'll

Emily Einolander 36:07

take it. Sure. Everybody loves that.

36:09

Everybody loves it. And, and, and it's essentially a crime boss, like underboss. So he's like the son of the crime boss in this like, it's like a mix of Chicago, New York sort of situation. And he is he runs the syndicate. But he also on the side runs a club called the Golden Palace.

Emily Einolander 36:35

Gotta have some that were to launder the money, right? Yeah, it's like a

36:39

money laundering thing. But he keeps a very clean. And then his other secret life is he's you know, he's a DOM on the on the BDSM scene, and he has his own little, he has his own little thing. And then the love interest Penny is this 22 year old wallflower who likes to read and you know, is a barista and loves to bake and just doesn't, you know, and, you know, obviously, they they meet and they, you know, all kinds of stuff. Now, when was really fun. It was a lot of it's very trophy, but it's trophy on purpose. You know, it's romance. And it's, it's very fun. And, and one of the criticisms I got was that like the, because there's two simultaneous plots, there's the romance plot. And then there's the mob plot. And one of the critiques that I got was that the mob plot was too easy to figure out. And I was like, Yeah, that was kind of on purpose because of the main character is sort of an idiot.

Emily Einolander 37:42

Have you heard this thing called laughing? Yeah, try it sometime.

37:47

i It was, yeah, no, that was fun. I want to write a sequel, but it's not as it's not as popular as my other books. So

Emily Einolander 37:54

I mean, that's quite a time investment to prioritize the other one,

37:58

too. Yeah, I have a sequel plan for rail walkers, but I want to actually adapt it into a mini series. Right? Yeah. So I have the I have the pilot written for like a five six part like streaming series. So I want to get that out before I write the seek the sequel, because the sequel would be like one of those kind of like an Interview with a Vampire situation where like, you have the modern day, you know, the back and forth temporary story and then the prequel story is maybe going into and it would be the backstory of may and how she became a role Walker in this. But, um, it's gonna be really fucking depressing. I gotta let I gotta let the first book sorta marinate for a few years that we'll get into that. Um, yeah, and so that's, that's it right now. And then my current book, which is not a romance, but it does still have queer characters because again, I cannot write straight people to save my life. And it's a it's a high fantasy, which is inspired by specifically things like the Witcher and Dungeons and Dragons and, and that sort of thing. But the the lore is, it's very Tolkien esque, but the lore is, I kind of created whole cloth like I created my own elves. I have my own language, that sort of thing. And it's more of a it's more of an adventure. And silver The main character is, is disabled and asexual. And yeah, she her whole thing is it begins with her. So all elves in this world who are born with magic. They're, they're born with magic. They are born with the ability to control magic, and she is the daughter of a high priestess, not only that

she's the heir to take over this community. When she comes of age and when she's a child. She gets tricked and her magic is stolen.

Emily Einolander 39:54

Oh no.

39:55

So her hair loses all her color. And she runs away and she comes across Pimentel widely she's considered to be sort of a blight. And she's a she's kind of a black spot on the her family and all this stuff. So it deals with that it deals with and then the the plot is in order to save her friends and there's like a horrible plague happening like in her home land, she has to go back and face her past and, and all that stuff. It's a big adventure. And that is currently being looked at by a publisher that I will not say because Yeah, but that one, that one is probably because my I have an agent now, which I got after I thank you. I got my agent after I after I got my horror film optioned, and then she's been helping me get it in front of although I've been I've been looking for an agent specifically for my books because I write screenplays and I write books. And so she handles my screenplay stuff. But she also has kind of been handling my my book stuff, but I have so much work that I like want to find an agent specific to so well. Yeah, my literature Yeah, exactly. So. So that's and then well, that's been shopping around, I'm kind of working on a on a contemporary fantasy book, as well. I kind of started writing in them at the same time. And then night Sparrow was the one that one out. And that's a high fantasy one. So

Emily Einolander 41:38

so how are the I guess I was going to say, how do you manage? Or how did the skills crossover from books and script writing, but it sounds like they're all kind of intermingled just the way you've been describing things.

41:51

I mean, yeah, there's, there's a very big learning curve. If you go from one to the other, though, I've been doing this for so long. And like I've had, you know, I went to school for script writing that I'm able to transition between the two. And because script scripts are very specific, you have a, you have a timeline, you're like you have a time slot to fill, you have to hit certain beats at a certain time. And you have to be incredibly clear. Because a script is not like a book where the reader is like, enjoying it. And like you can, you know, a script is a blueprint for a crew, who you normally do have no idea who's gonna pick it up, like you don't know who you're dealing with, until it happens. But the script is for crew, and it's to basically plot out all of the nuts and bolts of the movie or the show or, or whatever it is. So you have to be incredibly specific, incredibly direct, you have to know where everyone is at all times. It's it's much more technical than writing a than writing a book. And the challenge that I that I had to overcome. And I've seen a lot of like young writers needing to overcome is balancing the technical aspect of writing a script, while still having a unique narrative voice. Because there is room in scriptwriting to have a unique voice and to you know, let your voice characterize things in places and that sort of stuff. You just really need to be succinct. And that's that's really hard to do. And it's it's fortunately a skill that I've been working on for the past decade. Yeah, so they've, they've definitely helped. I have, I have one axe to grind. Oh, if I have one axe to grind, and I am the only person in the world that this bothers apparently. So when you are writing a script, all of the action is present tense.

Because you are directing actors. You're directing actors, you're directing crew, like, like, Karen walks in, like it's that kind of thing. When you're writing a book, you're telling a story that has happened. Okay? Even stuff like a journal entry. You're still recounting past events. Yeah. I get that the Hunger Games did it and did it very well. But the reason why it worked well with the Hunger Games is because Suzanne Collins has a history of television writing. She came from television. Okay, so she wrote her books in present tense, and it worked for the action scenes. And those books became incredibly popular. But I cannot stand narrative and present tense. I can't do it. I can't stand it. I've learned to live with that a little bit. But I'm the only one who has this opinion because I write both scripts and books, but like I want to tear my hair out when I see narrative written in present tense because I'm like you're not telling people what to do. You're telling a story that has already happened.

Emily Einolander 45:12

So you see, you see all present tense as dictation.

45:16

Yes. Dictation it's direction. It's like, like I clutched my clutch my my chest in horror. It's like you know your clutch. This happened like yesterday like, oh,

Emily Einolander 45:35

god damn sorry, I can't join you in your anger right now. I'm one of those people who I everyone apparently

45:44

I am I am. I've made my peace with the fact that this literally only bothers me.

Emily Einolander 45:49

I understand the logic of it. Why you might have that concern.

45:55

I you know, this is this is my axe to grind. No one else cares. I get that.

Emily Einolander 46:03

I mean, it's like when I tried to make one of my former roommates stop texting me in all caps. You know, it's like this to me. I'm like, You're yelling at her yelling at me. He was he was like, he's like, No, you are. And I'm just like, Okay, fine. Like this is my interpretation of the text. All right.

46:21

Oh, Lord. Yeah. Um, yeah. So where did we

Emily Einolander 46:31

get how has been a been doing both of them kind of improved your career?

46:36

Um, I mean, writing is like any skill, you need to practice you need to like constantly be working and constantly be um which is why I kept writing fanfiction even when I started writing original stuff because fanfiction to me. Oh my god, I have another axe to grind. But so fanfiction fanfiction, to me is the weight training room for your writer muscles like it is you are experimenting with stuff you might be exploring ideas, exploring characters exploring scenarios and plotlines and things like that. You're also going to get live feedback, which is really great. And yeah, you you get a better understanding of like, who like what certain audiences go in for what and that sort of thing. So like, it's actually very, very good as a tool for for writing. Now, I have I have an issue with this has just become the like, what grinds your gears podcast? Fine. I have an issue. With the fanfiction to publication pipeline. I have I have an issue. And it's not the issue that people think because usually when when you when people see a book is like, like, let's take the love hypothesis. For example. very famously, it was a Kylo Ren and Rey fanfic that got published into a book. I have not read it. So I will not speak to the quality I don't know. But I know a lot of people love it. Quality for me is not the issue. In the fanfiction to publication pipeline. The issue for me is that fanfiction is one of the few

48:29

crafts that is widely created for the sake of being created. And it is a very open space for amateurs to practice. And there's not a lot of pressure on those amateurs to write what they feel comfortable if and they'll find their voice at the time. And you know, that sort of thing. So now we have all these fanfictions that are making the leap. And you could argue that it started with 50 shades, but they're things like City of Bones I know was a Harry Potter fan fiction. So this has been going on for a few years, when you have big fan fictions that make that leap. Now all of a sudden, there's this undue pressure on young writers to be like, okay, but it has to be this level or like, Oh, I could or they put all their eggs in one basket being like this fanfiction will get me published and things like that. And it's like, no, that's not that's really not how it works usually, and I feel like more often than not, it discourages people from maybe experimenting at a level that that allows them to find their voice. And I'm gonna be I'm gonna be real raw here for a second. Okay. 80% of fanfictions gays Fuck 80% of it is is hella gay. And 90% of the published fanfiction is really hit hit says straight like, so. It's not even really the public, the published fanfictions aren't even really a good sample of the fanfiction culture. So it's not even a good representation because not a one to one. So I have problems with that, and I have problems. Uh, so to be clear, I do not have a problem with writers getting money. I absolutely do not have a problem with writers getting money. I like money. I think writers should be paid more money, actually. I just I fanfiction has always been that kind of opened door to discovering your skill and your voice as a writer. And now with all of these published works, starting from fanfiction, there's kind of an unneeded pressure on these young writers. You know, and and also, there's a lot of influence as well, you know, people kind of copycatting what they think will get them published. And when that works, now, you have a really saturated market of kind of the same story over again, and I recently saw this thing on Twitter, and this is this, like, oh god knife to the heart. There is I don't know if she is an editor, or if she is working in a publishing house or something like that. But someone posted something to the effect of a lot of publishers now are basing their acquisitions on book talk, and on trends in book talk. And it's like, she's,

Emily Einolander 51:40

she's actually a big publishing blogger. I'm like, in the discord. She had this whole thing of like, let me explain myself here. And I have, like, I have an issue with that. But I don't think it's not true. Like I don't like it. But I think that it's there's truth to it, just if you're talking about the way that publishers think.

52:03

Because it's still a business, and I get that aspect, but it's like, it's not

Emily Einolander 52:06

historically a very risk taking business because there's so little margin for a publisher. And so it's like, I'm just gonna keep doing the same thing over and over again, because I know that the people like it, and it's been proven on book talker, it's been proven on a three because look at all these readers. Yeah, then they get into these ruts of being boring. And that's part of why it's taken so long for people who are not white upper class to be published or to work in public. Because it's like, these are risks I am not willing to take. And I think this is just another permeation permeation iteration of it. But yeah, there's more to it than that, obviously. And I agree with like, all of the different dimensions of the takes, but it's just kind of one of those eyeroll like, Yup, yeah, this shit works.

52:54

Just because there are so many weird, cool, like, stories out there to be told, like, but you have when you go with the standard formula every single time, you're gonna get the standard book every single time and I I understand why they don't. Um, but boy, do I wish that publishers would take more risks. Me too. I really do because we get some amazing stuff when they do. Let's let's

Emily Einolander 53:31

skip to ladies of fortune.

53:36

Excellent. Um, yeah, so ladies a fortune is I wrote it wrote the first draft in 2017. I have been obsessed with the Golden Age of Piracy. Um, since I was a teenager, I'm a big history fan, that sort of thing. And two of my favorites are Anne Bonny and Mary Reed, who are real pirates. And they are two of the most infamous female Pirates of the Golden Age. And they have shown up in other things, but they are always side characters. They're always kind of delegated to, you know, side plots and things like that. And their story is fascinating. Their stories is wonderful. Do you know anything about that? So and Bonnie was Irish Gentry, who? She basically abandoned her husband and her comfy life in Ireland. I do know her. Yeah, so she, she basically met, Calico Jack Rackham. Fell in love and was like, Yo, I'm out and she she bounced, went to the Caribbean, and like, became a pirate and became one of the most fearsome like sword fighters of the era. And then Mary Reed became sort of her real her soulmate was they were they were like this and Mary Reed, very famously dressed as a man. Now, the thing you have to if you know anything about and Bonnie know that she was very comfortable being a woman, she would actually fight with her shirt off to distract her enemies. Oh, yeah. Yeah. And she wanted them to know that they were being killed by a woman. So let's Riddle me this Batman. What sis woman dresses as a man, when your best friend is going through her whole phase?

Emily Einolander 55:40

I don't even know how to answer that.

55:42

Yeah. The answer is no system. Thank you very much.

Emily Einolander 55:50

I'm feeling some kinship right now. Honestly.

55:54

Yeah, it's there is zero reason why Mary Reed would be cisgendered when she's like, You know what, I'm just gonna just kind of wrap up my titties. No reason.

Emily Einolander 56:08

I don't need these. These are just in the way.

56:12

Oh, yes. So the idea was to kind of hinge the story on that of their relationship, but also like Mary Reid's gender identity and sort of her coming into her. I'm using her, but

Emily Einolander 56:26

no one used because no one knew now. Yeah, exact time. Um,

56:31

but yeah, like her coming into her own gender identity. And in particular I am. Because we started the Kickstarter, we got insanely funded, we are now almost at \$8,000 went from a \$1,500. Like goal? Yeah. Um, but in particular, I know that when someone actually asked about, like, how are you going to be, because I talk a lot of game about representation in Golden Age, because like 80% of pirates were people of color. So somebody actually asked me like, how are you going to be representative of these these backgrounds and, and identities in the show? And for for Mary, like, there are certain characters that like we know that, and Barney was an Irish redhead, right? Okay, fine. We know that Benjamin horny Gould, who was who Damien is playing is a, you know, a white British guy. And that's very indicative of his character, because he's former British navy, and then he becomes a pirate and but with characters like Mary, for example, we know that Mary was poor. And we know that Mary was English. That's it. That's what we know. So, what I want to do, not only do I want to cast a non binary actor, to be more representative, but I would love to cast a net non binary actor with either Persian or Turkish ancestry. Because things that one of the things that history lessons kind of gloss over was during like the 1500 1600s, there was a lot of trade between the British Empire and the Ottoman Empire. In fact, you could even argue that the Shakespeare play Othello, was based off of the tensions between people from the Middle East, and people in you know, Western Europe. England was also a big cultural melting pot. So I would love to not only cast a non binary Middle Eastern actor, but I would love to cast speak to like, work with that actor and develop an arc because ideally, we would want five seasons because Anne Bonny and Mary read. Their career lasted about five years, so like one season per year, and I would love to do an arc that deals with the fallout of British imperialism specifically in relation to Mary's upbringing and her and her cultural identity and things like that. And I would want to work with the actor

and work with you know, what they think the plotline should encompass and like work that So um, yeah. Where was I going with this?

Emily Einolander 59:30

I was just asking you about what it was going to be. Yes. I think we got there. Yes. So

59:36

it is a it is a show about Ambani and Mary Reed. And there they are fascinating characters in history. And it's it's also embodies a big swashbuckling pirate show like it's a big epic show, but Nord fights Yes, fights tidies class and there Oh, yeah. And and we started the Kickstarter, we decided to launch the Kickstarter mean, Damian. June the first, because I was like, hey, it's you know, it's the start of Pride Month. And then of course, our flagging staff renewed the same day. And it's like, that's not a sign. Like, I don't know. Um, yeah, y'all

Emily Einolander 1:00:18

knew they weren't gonna do it on the first day of Pride Month, though, oh, yes, along like that. Do you have anything that you would like to say to aspiring writers, whether they want to get into film or TV or just write books,

1:00:32

um, so a couple of things, one, keep fucking writing, just keep going. Write every day, if you can, no matter what it is, like, just keep writer's block sucks. The, what I like to do for writer's block is I have a million projects going at once. So, I will jump from one thing to another. Um, keep writing and be open to notes. So if you want to, if you want to just write for yourself, fine, great. But if you want to be published, if you want to get into film, get into television, that sort of thing. You are going to get notes, you are going to get requested changes, you are going to get criticism. And you have to separate yourself from your work. You have to separate yourself from your work, because so many, let me let me tell you a little anecdote. So when I, for those who don't know what an option is, in Hollywood, right? Basically, you write a script, and a director will come to you and be like, hey, I really like your script. And they rent out the rights to shop it around. For a certain lot of time. So like, for example, my wearable script got optioned for about 18 months, okay. And they pay like a small fee at the beginning. And then every renewal, the fee doubles.

Emily Einolander 1:02:06

So like, as they try to sell it, they're paying more and more to correct. So

1:02:11

incentivizes them to, like, sell fast. Yeah. Um, so while we were kind of, so he didn't option it immediately. He contacted me, you really liked it. But he wanted to spend a couple of months on rewrites. And I was like, Cool, great. Let's do it. You know, I took his notes, and I did the thing. And then we would meet occasionally to, for him to give me notes and to work on the script. And every time we sat down too, for him to give me notes, he would always preface it with, okay, I don't want you to take this the wrong way. Or I don't wish it was like, Honey, I'm fine. Like, just tell me the notes like yeah, he's so used to young, like green writers being upset or defensive or things like that. Know that if someone

is giving you a note with somebody is giving you a criticism, they're giving it to you so that you can make your thing better. Yes, so that you can make your work better. It is not a personal thing. Now granted, sometimes people will give you stupid notes. Yeah. And it's up to you at your discretion to like be like, No, this is dumb and doesn't make any sense. Or this, you know, does make sense. You really have to kind of let your ego go and really look at what they're saying in a in a kind of a utilitarian mindset. It's like, okay, this is a product, what bits is this product missing? To make it the best product it can be? And, you know, what do I need to add? What do I need to take off. And the working with Paul was great, because like, it became the strongest script, it could have been, by the end of the rewrites. And we I actually, during one of our rewrite sessions, like halfway through conversation, I like, got hit with inspiration for a specific death. And I like my eyes went wide. I was like, oh my god, I gotta write this down. So like, be open, be open to notes, be open to fixing things. Especially if you want to work in the entertainment industry. Like books, you're a little more you've got a little more agency, but when you're writing a script, it's it's very collaborative. So you need to you need to be open to criticism and into notes. No,

Emily Einolander 1:04:35

I love that. And I you know, I'll I'll throw my agreements in there. Because I think what has made me comfortable with that is just all my editing experience, because I know that when I'm giving notes as an editor, I'm not feeling malice at all. I'm just like, oh, this is missing or this could be made a little better. And that's why we kind of explained as we go in the comments, like, what our reasoning is, but, you know, it makes it so now that when people give me notes, I'm just like, Okay, thanks. Cool. Yeah. Okay, thanks. That's

1:05:11

all you have to say. Even if you're not going to take the note, even know that the note is stupid, you're not going to take it just say, Okay, thanks. I had an I had a note I have. I've had a couple of notes like that by usually by other writers. So like, not even by producers or directors, but like other writers who be like, oh, you should combine these two completely different characters who serve completely different purposes to like, cut down on the runtime of like, 110 page script was like, Thanks, but no, but thank you,

Emily Einolander 1:05:40

thank you, for that. noted, noted,

1:05:45

thank you for your input. Yeah, so it's up to your discretion, but like, and, and also, and this is just, this is just a, this isn't even a piece of writing advice. This is a piece of like, if you're going to be in the public, I understand that you are part of the product. Like unless you make it big as like a ghost writer, and you don't want to have anything to do in the as like a public figure. Like you need to understand that now more than ever, who you are is going to dictate how people receive your work. So you've got to be so try and be humble. Also trying to be kind is a very rough world that we're living in like everybody's fucking going through it everybody's everybody's taking drugs for something so just like try and this is a reminder to take your medication. Stay hydrated, stay hydrated. Yeah. So just try and be kind try and be humble and understand that. You know, people are people are going to a lot of

times people are going to judge your work based on you. So try and try and keep that in mind. And you know, try basically don't be racist. Dick, don't be at the deck. There you go. Don't be a dick.

Emily Einolander 1:07:17

All right with that, where can people find you online

1:07:20

so they can find me? Ruthie writes 91 on Twitter, I basically live there now so you have my comm given away my archive of her own name you can find you can find my fanfiction under the bobble hat. I put a hold of my fanfiction at the moment so that I focus on ladies portrait and stuff like that, but I have a lot of shit to go through. And, and you can also find my personal website which has all my stuff. Ruthie Hanson work.com. So

Emily Einolander 1:07:56

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