

# Episode 76 - Joan Conte of Trans Book Box

**Emily Einolander** 00:21

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 Joan Conte, Joan Conte, they/them, is an educator, a poet and the CEO of Trans Book Box. Joan is also trans, non binary, queer and disabled. Joan developed Trans Book Box while unemployed during the pandemic, and sought to build a box that dedicated more than a book a year to trans representation. Trans book box is a quarterly subscription service that supports trans voices. All books are recent releases by trans authors. All art is created exclusively for the box by trans artists. All products included in the box are sourced from trans businesses. Lastly, the Trans Book Box team are trans. Their mission is to support trans artists while creating safe spaces for trans readers. They value social change and have a commitment to donating excess profit to trans run organizations that better the lives of trans individuals. Welcome, Joan.

**Joan Conte** 01:32

Hi. Glad to be here.

**Emily Einolander** 01:35

So tell me the story of how you started transport box.

**Joan Conte** 01:39

Yeah, so it was during the pandemic, it was in the mid in the summer of 2021. And at the time, I had recently been laid off from a cafe I was working at part time. And it was kind of a shock. I was sort of wondering, like, what am I going to do with my life now I had been in a long term, professional based job search at that point for over a year and was making no headway on top of that. And so it was just sort of this period of feeling kind of helpless. And like I wasn't making a good impact on the world because I wasn't able to use my degree or my skills to assist anyone and I thought okay, well, what can I do to make meaning. And hilariously, this coincided with the fact that one of the more larger and well established fantasy book boxes out there, of which I will not directly name here had a scandal, because they decided to include Harry Potter merchandise in their box. There's stuff online about it, but basically, they later on sort of apologized. But at the time, they were like, Oh, we don't have any apologies if we lose subscribers for this move, because we surveyed, you know, our people that are subscribed to the box, and most of them were not offended by this. Well, I was offended. And so were many Arab people who were subscribed to the box. And so that was sort of the momentum was I was like, Okay, well, how can I be the positive change the flip side of this, and I thought about it and realize that most of the book boxes that I knew of, or were subscribed to usually only focused one or less than one book a year on trans voices. And I wanted to do the opposite of that I wanted to a book box that was only about trans books, and was exclusively for, you know, trans representation, trans artists, trans creators, and definitely would not have Harry Potter merchandise. So that was sort of the momentum. And I was really lucky, my mentor, Rene works with the Feminist Book Box out of Minneapolis. And I had been a longtime subscriber to that book box and loved Rene and I reached out and I was like, Hey, would you be able to tell me all about how to make a book box happen. And to this day, she has been my biggest

supporter. Anytime I have a question, I just reach out via email, and I get a really quick answer. And it was really nice to have that connection of someone who already knew what to do when he'd already done it and had a whole bunch of tips and just was just a huge supporter of the concept of having a box that was based around, you know, having and featuring trans voices constantly and consistently. So sort of how we got started.

**Emily Einolander** 04:29

Do you know of anyone else doing that at this point?

**Joan Conte** 04:31

No, I do have another set of colleagues and awesome friends who run the Rainbow Crate. The Rainbow Crate is an exclusively LGBT centered book box. And so they do tend to center several trans voices a year or so more often than just once a year, which is great. There are also a monthly subscription service. They're doing really amazing. So I always suggest people check them out. But they're really the only ones out there that are also featuring trans voices consistently. and they have again been just like amazing resources. They've been at this for quite a few years as well. But outside of them, there really isn't anyone else that I've seen who was doing this kind of work so

**Emily Einolander** 05:12

Well, then thank you. And also, thank you for the recommendations, I have written them both down.

**Joan Conte** 05:16

Yeah, we're pretty big. The one thing I have learned is that the book box community is a really, really supportive community, like we are all out here to help one another and not to be like direct competition. So that's always been really cool.

**Emily Einolander** 05:32

So in the past, what has been your relationship to books reading and writing? And how did it lead you to where you are now with, you know, particularly the contacts you've made in mentorships you found as well?

**Joan Conte** 05:46

Yeah, so I always like to tell people about my favorite story, which is how I became a reader. So as a young kid, when it became time in school to learn how to read, I learned how to read but didn't tell anyone. I knew how I pretended I didn't know how, because I thought that people could, you know, control my life. If they knew I could read it was hilarious, I had a whole conspiracy theory going. So I didn't actually let people know I could read until I was about 10 - 11 years old. But at that point, I had already been reading all of the textbooks off of my dad's shelf from college just didn't secret. So I have been a reader for a very long time and read obsessively. I went to school to get a writing degree. So my specialty is poetry, which is really niche, a really niche genre to be a part of. And then sort of I went into focusing my life on books, I was on Booktube. For a while I had a booktube channel for about a year between early 2021 in early 2022. And that was an insightful experience, it really got me reading even more than I already was. And this this now, this book box is my biggest connection to reading. And my

biggest fuel to keep reading is been to really dedicate a lot of my reading time to finding all the trans books and reading as many of them as possible.

**Emily Einolander 07:15**

As someone who also wanted to stay connected to books in terms of a self motivated project, I totally understand the desire and the drive to be like, well, you know, for example, I am working at a cafe, but I still want to stay attached to books. So I'm going to do my own thing and do it my way. So what goes into each Trans Book Box package?

**Joan Conte 07:37**

Yeah, so right now our book boxes are primarily based around two main components, which is a book and are so our books are now consistently signed books, which is really amazing, I've made really the effort to get in touch with authors and really communicate with them sort of that it would be great to have these books sides, they are signed. And then we hire on an artist to, they basically make a postcard type art print, as well as a bookmark that has art themed around the book. So it features either the characters or, or something connected to the theme of the book. And those are also included. And then we've been working really hard to include usable items, we featured things in the past like pins, we've also featured candles, we've had towels. And I'm still brainstorming what the next usable item is going to be one of my things that I'm trying to think about is how we can mesh, sort of, the art that we're already creating and the usable items so that they like feature both objects hidden one. And then really on top of that just to add value to the box, we have a newsletter, which I print and include in the box. But also that is emailed to our mailing list, which includes people who you know, might not be subscribed to the box, but want to see what we're doing. So we do have a newsletter. And then I also make sure to have an interview with the author. It's usually on our Instagram sometime in the two months following the book box. And that's also available to everyone. But we really try to see if we can get questions from our subscribers about things they might want to ask the author during the interview.

**Emily Einolander 09:12**

That's so cohesive. And so the usable item is that also in the same way as the art sort of thematically tied into whatever book you're using.

**Joan Conte 09:23**

Yeah, so I kind of just pick it based on sort of what I think might go well with the box, and also sort of where my connections are. So usually the items are sourced through trans businesses. And so I sort of think of like, oh, who do I know that's making things right now and who can I have a connection with so that tends to be a little bit stronger than the theme of the box, but it would be nice to in the future? Have it be sort of a mash of both? Who do I know that makes stuff and how does it connect to the book?

**Emily Einolander 09:52**

And are those usually local people or are they people you know, remotely? Mostly? Yeah, so

**Joan Conte 09:57**

it's been from all over the candles we feed shirt, we're actually a connection through my mentor, Renee, she had worked with this company called homebody candles, Minnesota and they're a Minnesota

based company. And they also have a book subscription service. That's a used book subscription service. They said like a random used book based on your reading tastes with candles. So they're also an amazing resource for that. But I knew that they were trans. Robin made really nice candles. And I had in my mind candles are what go with this box. So that was sort of what put that one behind. We also when I featured some towels, I think that was in my first box that was also through a connection with the feminist book box, they had connected with a small business that was run by a teenage trans girl who was creating art. And so it's just sort of been like, where do I find these connections? I've also been thinking if I could head out to, you know, some more farmers markets and things this year to see if there are any local people that I could find and connect with and contract with, because that would be really great.

**Emily Einolander** 11:01

That is a great idea. So for the books themselves, would you say that you gravitate toward any particular genre?

**Joan Conte** 11:09

Yeah, so we've actually had a pretty good mix of genres. I think the thing that has been pretty consistent so far is we have featured a little more young adult voice than we have adult voice. And so I'm hoping to balance that out this year. It's definitely difficult when you run a quarterly subscription service because you only have four options a year to really work with and, you know, play around with. But we've featured a variety of different things. Our goal really or my goal, I should say is like to make sure that each box has a different set of representation so that we're evenly displayed. So different types of trans voices, you know, mixing it up, so that we have non binary voices. We have gender fluid voices, we have trans mask and trans femme voices, but also that we have disability rap, we have bipoc Rap, we have a variety of LGBT rap, like making sure that it's not always dominated by one specific set of voices. And so that has been more of the thing I've been mixing up, I did just do an annual survey of my subscribers. And it seems like fantasy and thriller were the two genres people liked the most. So that gives me at least a little bit of fuel on what I might be looking for coming up this year. Because ultimately, I want it to be something that is built by and for the subscribers. So like whatever it is, they really want to see is what I would also like to put forward with, you know, on top of my mission of making sure that we have a variety of voices inside of our boxes.

**Emily Einolander** 12:37

I can imagine finding books like that, or even you know, a fantasy slash thriller could probably inspire some fun conversation among the people who are subscribed. Do you have a community where people talk about the books and the items that they

**Joan Conte** 12:54

get? So yeah, I when I started this off, I started off by having a Discord community. And unfortunately, most people didn't really interact with the discord, it has sat very dead, despite me trying, I tried in the beginning to like, post in each of the like subsets of chapters, my thoughts and each milestone of the book and realize that no one was really engaging with that. And I realized, you know, through my survey that a lot of the subscribers were very honest, and that they never used the Discord. So this year, my plan is to shift to a more kind of virtual book club format. So I'm asking all of my subscribers,

their availability and hoping to create a Zoom meeting where we can meet and talk about the book and so hoping to do that each quarter so that we have like a physical presence. But then also in those meetings, I hope that I can get some information from people on ways that they would maybe like to connect or how much level of community they would really love to have. Because, you know, that was a big part of my inspiration for this, like, a lot of book clubs. A lot of book boxes don't have a book club component. It's just kind of you read on your own and my mentor actually does have a very good community. She runs her communities through like zoom book club meetings, Zoom meetings with the author and through mighty networks, which is kind of like become kind of an alternative to Facebook. It's like Facebook asked but kind of an online thing where you can make posts and comment and stuff. So

**Emily Einolander** 14:28

can you say the name of that one more time?

**Joan Conte** 14:31

Mighty networks?

**Emily Einolander** 14:33

My D How do you spell that?

**Joan Conte** 14:35

Um, M i g h t y.

**Emily Einolander** 14:38

Okay, hello. Oh, okay, mighty got it.

**Joan Conte** 14:41

Yeah, it's sort of a new new age. I think it came out like a year ago or maybe two years ago version of Facebook that's supposed to be more socially equitable and ad free.

**Emily Einolander** 14:54

So I feel like a lot of us are kind of in this social media liminal space space. at least right now where we're trying to decide where the best place to go next is, since there's been so much decimation of the ones that we've used in the past.

**Joan Conte** 15:09

Yeah, so definitely that has been also my goal is like to figure out what social media do my subscribers use? And like, what is their favorite so far, it seems like Instagram is winning over Twitter. Most people apparently have ditched Twitter at this point. So that also came through in the survey people are like, yeah, Instagram is where I go to find all my information. So it's really important to know where your subscribers are.

**Emily Einolander** 15:33

I mean, I guess I can see doing some Instagram Live sessions.

**Joan Conte** 15:38

Yeah, that could also be an option as well.

**Emily Einolander** 15:42

It sounds like you do a really good job pulling people and listening to your subscribers instead of having it kind of be a one way broadcast sort of situation.

**Joan Conte** 15:52

Yeah. And that was intentionally a part of the model, because I felt like you know, I think it's important to feel like as a subscriber, you have control over what's going to happen. I feel like a lot of book boxes just make stuff happen. And sort of, you know, I have seen, you know, annual surveys and stuff. But I would really like to do more than that. Eventually, if I get a big enough subscriber base, I would like to have voting on books, like just putting forth options for the box and having people vote and choose whatever it is the most people want to read. So that's also a future goal of mine.

**Emily Einolander** 16:27

Yeah, very book clubby. Like, there's something so personal about that, that feels like it's connected to something older. And I love that. So how do you get the books themselves? And the sizes of the publishers play into that at all? Do they cooperate with you? Or do you just buy the books yourself? How's that work?

**Joan Conte** 16:49

Yeah, so most, most publishers have a place where you can register with them as a bookseller, and you're a small bookseller is basically what it is. And that includes book box subscription services, and like extremely tiny bookstores. Basically, how I've gone about picking books is sort of two ways. One way has been sort of doing research on what are the new releases coming up and trying to pick something that you know, has a different voice we haven't featured before. And then the second way this has happened is publishers have personally reached out to me saying that they have a book, they would like me to feature. And it's sort of a mix. Definitely. So big publishers, they have great discounts, that is really the hard part to get away from, like I get, you know, 60 to 50% off my orders with large publishers, which is a game changer as well as free shipping, because they have, you know, the mode to do that. Whereas a lot of smaller publishers give a lot smaller discounts. And then you also end up paying for shipping, I have worked with two small presses, I was trying to think of the name. So I've worked, I'm currently working with a Canadian small press called arsenal, pow, Arsenal Pulp to get our, our book for April. And then I have also reached out in the past and worked with what's their name, I wrote this down, and then I forgot Tatian press. And they reached out to me with a book back in October, and they were amazing to work with. And one thing I have learned is that like smaller publishers, you get just so much more contact, like it's just better communication. And like, they're really helpful with making connections with the authors on you know, on your behalf. Whereas with bigger publishers, it's a lot more hands off. And like a lot of the contact that I do with the author is on my own time and sort of like, personally stalking their website and trying to get him in communication with the author, I would like to work with smaller presses. That's been a big goal of mine. Unfortunately, a lot of smaller presses that reach out to me reach out with poetry, and I surveyed my subscriber base twice on

just like would they be down for poetry? And overwhelmingly, they're not interested in poetry, which is really sad, because I'm a poet. But yeah, that's really sad, especially because it would be nice to feature it at some point. But it's just such a large cost for such a small piece of reading. And I think that's also what turns a lot of people off. Like they want to feel like their value with giving them like a full length novel. So that's also something I've had to think about. It's like, as much as like, I would like to feature poetry, is it something my subscribers would want and hopefully someday in the future, that is something we're able to do, but I do anytime an author reaches out to me or a publisher reaches out to me, I do make sure to feature their work in our newsletter and put information about their books onto our Instagram, because I feel like it's really important to get the word out about all the stuff that we're hearing about.

**Emily Einolander** 19:49

Sneak a poem or two into your newsletter. Yeah, I mean, I know that I have trouble not forcing my taste on my audience sometimes. But, you know, it's all in good fun. So what are some of your chosen organizations that you donate to? or recommend donating to?

**Joan Conte** 20:14

Yeah, hilariously, when I started this business, I was under the impression that I would turn a profit and not have not actually happen. And when I talk to a lot of my colleagues in the book box world, unfortunately, they also don't really turn a profit. Which is, is really telling and kind of sad, sometimes there's just so much that goes into the box that like is just overhead that you don't think about and then ends up taking all of your money. My goal, at some point here will be this year to make a donation is my plan, if we can keep on saving up money, and then whatever excess profit we make this year can go to our first donation, which would be really great. I do know that both the feminists of Fox and rainbow crate Who are you know, my my friends, they donate a lot to a variety of organizations, which do include trans based organizations. And so that's something that I would like to get a list from them. There are also several local places that I donate to personally, I did a drive one year where I crocheted a bunch of queer flagged beans, they were like bees that in the middle of them, their stripes were based on different flags, and it was custom water. And I took all the proceeds of that. And I do need that new avenues for youth, which is a local organization that basically acts as a shelter for homeless youth, specifically queer youth and trans youth. They help people all the way up to age 25. And then they also give them like work skills, class and college entrance classes and stuff that help them get back on their feet. And so that's an organization I donate to a few times, I would also love to make a donation to the Trans Lifeline as I feel like they're doing a lot of really good work and are sort of, you know, they haven't really affiliated themselves with the current legislature on the 988 hotline, which is where all the money is going to for hotlines right now. And so it would be good to give them a donation as well.

**Emily Einolander** 22:15

Maybe a little bit more specialized in their knowledge.

**Joan Conte** 22:20

Yes, the Trans Lifeline is a crisis hotline specifically for trans people.

**Emily Einolander** 22:26

Great. So if someone wanted to subscribe to your box, what would they do?

**Joan Conte** 22:31

Yeah, so our website is Trans Book Box.com. If you go there, it has all of the options, we have, you know, quarter to quarter payments, we also have lump sum payment options as well, that basically you just sign up there, and then we send you a box, it's very straightforward. Easy. We also have a mailing list so that that form is also on our website. So if anyone wants to go there, there's a button that says like, sign up for our mailing list, and you can enter your email and then we add you to our mailing list.

**Emily Einolander** 23:06

Is your email list? Does it also just come out quarterly? Or is it a little more frequent than the actual send out?

**Joan Conte** 23:14

Yeah, it's currently a quarterly newsletter. And so I'll be sending out the January newsletter in a little bit here. And all of the quarter we use letters include information on his many trans books that came out during that quarter as I could find. So if people are looking for massive amounts of recommendations for trans books, that's basically the highlight of the newsletter.

**Emily Einolander** 23:36

How do you approach that research?

**Joan Conte** 23:40

Yeah, so I do a lot of reading articles that people have written. So not reinventing the wheel, but also just looking at any author, I know about the trends and seeing if they have any books coming out. I have a massive list of trans authors. And so it's just a lot of like looking at people's social media accounts, and Googling their names and putting their names into good reads and seeing if anything comes up. And then I also have the form on my website that's like, if you're an author, tell us about your book. And whenever people tell us about their book, whether they want to be featured or not that ends up in our newsletter as well. And so that also add to our list of authors we know about which is incredibly useful for situations where people are maybe self published or working through smaller presses and might be harder to find that information.

**Emily Einolander** 24:24

Yeah, it was just about to ask about the self publish thing. So that answers that question. Do you do you look for self published authors are those mostly the ones who are coming to you?

**Joan Conte** 24:35

They're mostly the ones that are coming to us, but sometimes it happens the other way around. The book that I'll be featuring in our next box in April is Hazel Jane plant and I basically learned about her book through listening to one of my favorite podcasts, which is gender reveal and gender reveal is another local podcast. They're centered here in Portland. And yeah, I've run ads on their podcast as well before so that has Thoughts have been really helpful for finding community and like people are like, Oh, I'm an author, and I listened to the podcast and heard your ad. And like, I want you to know



about my book. So that's been really helpful. But yeah, they had an episode where they were interviewing Hazel D plan, and I needed a book that had a specific voice. And that was the voice I was looking for. And that's a small press out of Canada. And so that's what I'm working on right now is my current project.

**Emily Einolander 25:26**

Great. So where else can people find you online, your website is Trans Book Box.com. And you're on Instagram. Also,

**Joan Conte 25:35**

we are on Instagram under a Trans Book Box. We are also still unfortunately, but importantly, I guess on Twitter, and we're just book trans on Twitter. Apparently,

**Emily Einolander 25:45**

I had like a hybrid pub scout on Instagram for a while. And then for some reason, my account got shut down or suspended or something. I don't know what I did. And so that's why it's like a different name than everything else, because it was just like, Okay, well, I guess I can't have my own name anymore. And no one else can either. So weird stuff on the internet happens. But we adapt, don't we?

**Joan Conte 26:12**

Yeah, that's very true.

**Emily Einolander 26:14**

Is there anything else? Any authors any causes? Or just any book related thoughts you have that you'd like to speak to right now?

**Joan Conte 26:25**

Yeah, I think really, the biggest thing I want to add is just like how important it is for publishers specifically to be looking at trans authors and to be publishing their work. One thing I did just a quick piece of dirty math at the end of last year, and looked up how many books in general I had on my list that were published by trans authors, which obviously is not the whole picture, but I took that number. And then I took the number of traditionally published books per year. And basically, it came down to less than 1% of traditionally published books, were featuring trans voices. And that's an incredibly small number. Like when I send out the newsletters, obviously, it looks like a lot. But when you think about just how many other how many books in general, were being published each year, it's just such a small number. And so I think it's really important that publishers be doing more and that they're looking for these books, and that they're trying to get these books published. And I think that's where, you know, indie publishing is doing a lot more, because there are a lot of process out there that are working really hard to get minoritized voices featured voices we don't normally hear from and I feel like large publishing isn't really as focused on that they like pick the flashy books, or the books that you know, are going to be extremely popular, which is great. But it also leaves so much that doesn't happen. And I would love one day to be just so overwhelmed by choice that I can't even decide what to feature in my box. That would be great. But right now, the numbers are just incredibly small.

**Emily Einolander 27:56**

And 1% is not representative of the population of trans people in this country or the world in any way whatsoever. Yeah, I

**Joan Conte 28:07**

don't even remember what the number is last surveyed, I think it's like larger in youth. But that's just I think, because more studies have been done to figure out how many youth identify as trans or non binary at this point as compared to adults.

**Emily Einolander 28:21**

Well, and also maybe just have an easier time talking about it or feel safer coming out despite, you know, the crackdown, apparently that's happening.

**Joan Conte 28:32**

Yeah, that's definitely one thing that I tell people all the time, like, people are like, oh, you know, it's the youth, it's the hip thing. Everyone wants to be trans or non binary. And I'm like, I don't really think that's the case. I think it's just in a very good thing. When I say this, that people feel like they're able to come out at a younger age, they're able to talk about it at a younger age. Whereas I think, for a lot of us who came out a bit later in life, and had that realization later on. And it wasn't because we weren't always trans or non binary, just we didn't know we didn't have the language, there wasn't a way to talk about it yet. And so I think that that's also very important that we keep that in mind and I would love to be able to you know, right now a lot of the books that I feature are young adult and I would like to move into awesome featuring a lot of adult voices and featuring voices by trans people who did come out later in life and found their voice at a much later age.

**Emily Einolander 29:22**

Yeah, it wasn't it wasn't oh, I want to be trendy thing for me. It was more just like Why am I crying all the time?

**Joan Conte 29:31**

I love I love the argument that like that being trans can be trendy and like have you ever tried it? Because it's kind of hard?

**Emily Einolander 29:41**

Have you ever talked to someone who isn't online and tried to explain like who you are to them? Yeah, I don't know. I'm sometimes I'm just like, Well, I've been a weirdo my entire life anyway, so if they don't get it that's basically just par for the course as long as they're not assholes to me. But I know that's just my feelings and not the same as everyone else. But yeah, it's it's not a it's not an easy even, even when you have a relatively cushy life, like, I will admit I do. It's it's, it's not the cushiest part of it for sure. But worth it, I'm happy.

**Joan Conte 30:20**

Yeah, saying, I am incredibly happy with the way my life is. And that has also been a driving force for keeping this business going. I think one thing, you know, that my mentor has told me many times is

most small businesses don't make it past the third year. And I just made it past year one. So I'm 1/3 of the way surviving. And you know, it's really important to focus on that, especially at a time when, you know, I finished my first year of business and debt, which was not where I wanted to be. And I hope to finish the second year of my business, not in debt. But I think the thing is, sometimes it's like, if you want to do something subversive, and in this case, you know, it is subversive, it's very political to run a book box called the Trans Book Box. Like I want to be doing this for the right reasons. And you know, the right reasons don't include making money that wasn't on my list, not saying that there's anything wrong with being a small business in wanting to make a profit, because business should turn you a profit. But I realized for me, and for the model, I'm trying to create a model where I can be my full self where I can be trans where I can be disabled and run a small business that may be turning a profit isn't my main goal. But my main goal is instead to make a community and to build the thing that I've, I've worked so hard to make.

**Emily Einolander 31:32**

But I think that's probably also a big part of the reason that you have trouble finding, or you found the certain proportions you have of trans books from big publishers, just because the more laws come out, saying that you can't carry these books in libraries or bookstores, the less profit incentive there is, and we know just based on behavior, especially in the last few years, that they're really doubling down on how that's the point for them, that it's all about the business, you know, can't pay your workers more, don't want to don't want to take a risk on anything that might not make a lot of money. So the fact that you are doing something that isn't as popular and isn't, as of sure of a thing means that it has to be a labor of love in some ways, and you have to actually care about it.

**Joan Conte 32:27**

Yeah, and that's definitely the number one thing that I want all of my subscribers or future subscribers or even people who just care about my business to know is like this is this is just a project that was made from a place of love and care and from a place of wanting to do something activist light. And this isn't like, just like a for profit business I'm trying to run and I want people to feel like they can reach out to me at any time and personally, you know, give feedback to the process and make it work for them the way they desire.

**Emily Einolander 33:00**

I mean, that also kind of brings to mind the fact that so many of the more popular trends or books or you know, basically books that are about anybody but like white sis hot people have been about the thing itself about the issue, perhaps trauma porn in a lot of situations. But it sounds to me like if you're making something that is for trans people as well, that you might have a little bit more focus on on telling a variety of stories, maybe trying to include a little bit of joy in it, would you say that that's something that comes to mind for you. Yeah, that

**Joan Conte 33:37**

is something that comes to mind. And we have featured, you know, books where trans joy is at the center of the story. We've also featured books that have a very heavy trauma lens on them for like really bad things that have happened to trans people. And we also have had books where the books are set in queer normative worlds where it's just normal to be queer and normal to be trans and not something

that, you know, is questioned constantly. And so it's been interesting to see sort of a mix of what it is, what voices are out there, and what to include, as well, which has been something that I would also love a lot of feedback from, as far as subscribers is like, do they really want you know, a mix of joy and pain? Or is there one that you know, particularly is what they're looking for, but I think it's important for me, and like for my sanity, at least when I'm like reading all of these books to have a mix to have a mix where it's both, you know, it's really hard to be trans but also like, it's really joyful and amazing to be trans as well.

**Emily Einolander** 34:36

Well, Joan, thank you so much for coming on today. You can find hybrid pubs Scout hybrid pubs scout.com on Twitter at hybrid pub scout on Instagram at hybrid pubs Scout pod, please leave us a nice rating and review and, Joan, I hope you have a lovely rest of your day and good luck with your book box. Giving a rip about