

Season One, Episode Five: The Two Sides of the Same Coin with Marketing and Media Directors, Tobi Harper Petrie and Monica Fernandez

Intro: Welcome to Red Hen Radio, a podcast brought to you by Red Hen Press. We're a nonprofit publisher fostering diverse stories every year. On this podcast, you'll get to hear from the people who are inside the literary world — the authors and publishing professionals who are working hard to keep independent literature thriving. Stay with us as we introduce you to today's segment.

Tobi: Hello. My name is Tobi Harper Petrie.

Monica: Hi. I'm Monica Fernandez.

Tobi: We are the media and marketing team, also known as the M and M team. And we are here to discuss a little more about what marketing and media are in the publishing industry.

Monica: So exciting.

Tobi: The very shortest version of what, how we can describe it is my job is to get books into bookstores as part of marketing. And then Monica, for media gets, the people into those bookstores to buy them. Of course, both of those jobs are much more complicated than that, but that is the shortest version of what we do.

Monica: We're essentially two sides of the same coin. Neither of us can really work without the other.

Tobi: Yeah. Absolutely. If either of us doesn't do our job, it does not happen. Sometimes people ask me, you know, can you get my book into this bookstore or get my book into that library? And I have to explain that while I wish I could, that is not exactly how it works. People are buying things because they think that their customers will buy them. So I can't decide to put a book into any place. I have to sell the bookstore well enough on it, or I have to talk with our distributor. And the short version of distribution is basically that while we are publishers and we are, you know, publishing books and getting them printed, we are not actually communicating with every individual bookstore and library and school individually.

Right. The distribution chain is the one that does that work. Basically, we have to sell them on our books and then they go around the entire country and the world and convince other people to buy those books. So that's actually really the most of what I'm doing. It's not really essentially getting books into the bookstores. It's getting everyone convinced to buy the books, to put them into their bookstores.

Monica, what's the vaguely longer version of yours?

Monica: So as media director, I am in charge of trying to get publicity for all of our books. So that means anything from reviews, getting on lists, interviews, any kind of media coverage. That entails a lot of connections and communication with a lot of journalists and book review places, Publishers Weekly, Kirkus Reviews, The Washington Post, New York Times.

We have relationships with all of them and have often gotten our books reviewed in many of them. So my job is to try and get as much media coverage as possible. We also work with our marketing and media coordinator, Sam, who's in charge of social media. So that is most of the front facing stuff that you can see on all of our networks and everything. So we all work together as a team to try and get as many people buying our books and knowing our books and talking about our books as possible.

Tobi: I feel like I should also say whenever I say that I work in marketing, people assume that I do what you do.

Monica: Mhmm.

Tobi: Because I think in most other industries, that is what marketing means. It means social media and media and all that. But in publishing, we do tend to refer to it as the person who works with the bookstores and the distributors specifically and not so much the actual media.

A big part of my job in terms of marketing is metadata, which I know what it is in publishing. I finally just looked it up on Oxford. Great description: *A set of data that describes and gives information about other data.*

Monica: [laughs]

Tobi: Which I guess yeah. I guess that is what it is.

I basically am compiling tons and tons of data on Excel sheets with help from Sam and Monica and Piper and our whole team, really, because everybody's doing a little bit in a little way. Every single little piece of information that you've ever seen on a listing online is metadata that somebody put out there to try to sell that book. There's some things, you know, there's some websites that sort of just pull data and then do what they want with them. We've had, like, cool poetry that had, like, an awesome piece of art on the front that somehow got labeled as erotic photography just from, like, a cover search. I don't know. The AI is taking over. So sometimes it's a little weird. But for the most part, you can really guide where a book shows up with metadata. But really everything is about if somebody Googles, you know, *dragon book with happy ending*, like, they should come up with our book that has a dragon and a happy ending.

Monica: Yeah. So metadata is pretty much increasing the discoverability of books. What is so complicated about your job is that it never ends. There there's always constant updates, especially if something happens with the book, if there is an award that the book won or a new review that the book just got. It is always constantly updating, and we gotta keep everything up

to date. It is a beast that Toby has to manage. And with every new season that we publish, that is just 25 to 30 more titles that we gotta keep track of.

Tobi: It's funny. I think of your job as being like that. Publicity feels like I was talking to a publicist, actually, Kim Dower, who said once that "publicity is the job that never ends and you just have to decide, like, okay, I'm gonna stop working on this book and start working on the next book" [laughs].

Because I guess maybe for metadata too, you can just keep refining it and making it better and better. But for social media, right, or not just social media, for media, you could work forever. You just keep going and going and going.

Monica: What I like about media, and that's definitely true because I do have to, at some point, kind of stop working on a series of books on a season and kind of refocus most of my time on the next season.

But I am always kind of constantly have all of our books just in a catalog in my brain. And so any opportunity that comes up that fits any of our books, whether it's been published this year or five years ago or whatever. I'm always looking for opportunities to kind of share our books if it fits whatever anybody is looking for. So it definitely never ends in that regard, but I definitely do have to kind of, like, start pivoting more of my time and attention to more upcoming seasons.

Tobi: Right. But we are I would say one of my favorite things about working at an independent press is that we get to keep working on books. That's the big thing with big five is that six weeks after a book comes out, it is done. They have dropped it, and they've moved on. And you keep working on a book for more or less at least a year.

Monica: Yeah.

Tobi: And I mean, you'll keep working on it longer. But avidly, you'll keep pushing it and really looking for opportunities for at least a year.

Monica: Yeah. Definitely. And I have gotten so much incredible guidance from recently acquired mentors who've been in our positions for decades.

They have kind of been teaching us so much about how to navigate, play along with the rules, how to play the game correctly. And the ways that we were doing things before are vastly different than how we're doing them now, adapting to kind of new trends and the way that people are getting information and looking at books and all that stuff. Always a constant kind of moving machine for sure.

Tobi: Yeah. Totally. I think one of the questions we get the most is, like, how has publishing changed before and after the pandemic? And, obviously, it did change it a lot. You know?

There's a lot more well, there's a lot more podcasts, but there's a lot more, like, virtual content. But, to be honest, now when I get that question, I think, like, woah.

I mean, that was a few years ago. Like, things have changed so much since the end of the pandemic. You know, like, everything used to be all about Twitter or X, or still called X. So, yeah, I mean, it used to all be about X and Facebook and everything had to be on X and Facebook and every event had to have a Facebook event if anybody was going to come or find it. And now if people are still on Facebook, great, keep on.

But we don't ask people to go on Facebook anymore. We don't ask anyone to go on X. TikTok, who knows what's going on right now? Is there any social media we have that we actually, like, trust is still here and still going? Like, really, truly, like, thriving?

Monica: I think that Instagram is still kind of really it's probably been the most constant social media platform. In terms of, like, recommending authors to get on any social media platform, we usually recommend that they do whatever feels more comfortable for them. We never really wanna force any author to do something that just doesn't feel authentic to them, but a lot of our authors do choose to do Instagram because it's just so much easier. Because on Twitter slash x, you have to kinda keep up a constant stream of content all the time. Whereas on Instagram, images kind of stay on your feed for a while, especially if you have a carousel.

That carousel kind of stays on your feed for quite a while until you scroll through all of the photos. So I think Instagram's a great tool. It has so many different kind of features, reels and the stories and multimedia and music and everything. So I think if we're gonna recommend any kind of social media platform, I'd probably do Instagram.

Tobi: Right. Okay. Good to know. In that case, what else I mean, obviously, not just social media, but what are the other things you do when you're working with authors to help them, like, make their books successful or their just their careers successful?

Monica: Yeah. I get this question a lot, and we work with tons of debut authors and authors that have published before but might not have been as much of an online presence or anything.

So we typically say it starts with your website. Definitely have to have a website so that friends, fans, readers can find you and find information about you. And that website should always be updated. So if you have any events coming up, if you have any reviews that just happened, it should always stay kind of relevant so that it's the most current information as possible.

Other things that authors can do to kind of get their names out there, lots of interaction with other authors, with other readers. We call it being a good literary citizen, and that kind of entails attending and supporting other events and other authors. Really kind of just pumping up the work of other people. As you support them, they will in turn support you. They will see that and appreciate that. You'll just kind of be building this network of people.

And the most important thing is to be genuine in that. It shouldn't be transactional in any way. Sometimes I use the word networking, but I don't like that word because it does sound really transactional. So just being a good literary citizen just means just being out there and supporting other authors.

Tobi: Right. It's being a good part of the community.

Monica: Exactly. Yeah. So it's not just about you and how people can learn about your book and read your book. It's more about how we can all support each other. Because as writers and as readers, we all are in this together.

Tobi: Right. Yeah. Really. We're all gonna we're all gonna sink or swim together for sure.

[jingle]

Tobi: What about other things like I know we send a lot of books out for review. I've been hearing a lot of back and forth on whether reviews sell books. I still firmly believe they do. Certainly for the libraries, if you don't have reviews, libraries will not touch your books, even if you're a fairly famous author, as far as I understand. Stephen King's probably getting getting in anyway.

But if it's a really famous author and they do not have any industry reviews for that book, as far as I understand, it'll still be hard for a library to justify it. Besides reviews, do you work with pitches with authors?

Monica: I do. Yeah. So pitching entails, for the most part, it's kind of just communicating with journalists on coverage.

For authors, we usually recommend that they send out pitches in terms of any op eds or essays that they can write. When they do that, it really it doesn't have to be about your book. In fact, we kind of recommend that it's not about your book. Take a look at what journalists are covering right now, what people are talking about, what is in the zeitgeist right now, and how you can add your voice to that. It doesn't have to be about your book because your byline at the end of your essay or article or whatever can mention your upcoming book. And that will help when readers are reading your specific essay. If they like what you've written, then they can see that you have a book coming out.

In terms of author pitching, that is something that they can definitely do on their own. The pitching that I do is definitely in the same vein, but I'm trying to get journalists to just cover our books in any way. Maybe listing it on a list of top 25 most anticipated books for the summer. Or if they've written on a specific topic, I can kind of swing in there. "I saw that you've written about this. Have you thought about exploring from this angle? This author has written some incredible stuff."

Journalists like to be the first to cover something. I noticed that when the New York Times started covering Percival Everett, the incredible author of *James* who got so much critical acclaim last year. I noticed that the New York Times had done pieces on James and on *Erasure*, which was turned into the Academy Award nominated American Fiction. But nobody in all of the dozens of reviews for *James* ever mentioned that Percival Everett is also a poet. Red Hen has been publishing Percival Everett's poetry for twenty years. So I snuck in, and I got the contact information for the person at the New York Times that did the coverage on *James*.

And I slid in, and I was like, "did you know that he's also a poet?" And he responded. He was like, "I did not know that. Can you send me some of his stuff? I'm not gonna guarantee anything, but we'll take a look and see if it works."

And that happened in the summer of last year, and the review ran in December. I had no idea this was coming, but it really makes a lot of excitement for the journalists to know that this is the first time that anybody's covering it or talking about it. They wanna be the breaking news. If you can kind of find angles to talk about any kind of topic, that will be a really great way to kinda get in and get coverage for you and your book.

Tobi: Now that reminds me, I was on a panel, I don't know how many years ago.

One of the panelists was a publicist, maybe even a self published author, and so she was really good at, like, publicizing her own work. And she had written some book about, like, how many frogs you have to kiss to find a prince. And LA Times had just put out an article about frog populations in, like, local rivers or something. She reached out and she was like, hey. I can see you did an article about frogs.

How about some work on my book about how many frogs you have to kiss to get a prince? And she got it. She got an article in the LA Times. Somehow, just the fact that people were thinking about frogs was enough to get in.

Monica: Yeah. I mean, you never know what's in the land. The frog population article was obviously nonfiction, but the other one is a little bit more kind of creative. That kind of reminds me of other pandemic related essays that landed during the pandemic. One that landed in the New York Times about an author, her book was actually about growing up with a father who was schizophrenic, and she was also a hypochondriac. During the early months of COVID, everybody was kind of feeling the same way that she feels all the time.

And so she wrote about that, and that got placed in the New York Times. And then we also had an essay about truck stops placed in the New York Times around the same time because truck stops were considered an essential business, I guess. The author runs a truck stop, and so she kind of wrote of her observations during the pandemic. Your book doesn't even have to be recent to still be kind of, like, relevant and interesting.

[jingle]

Tobi: Authors can what? They can do social media. They can write pieces. They can be good literary citizens. Obviously, go out and do events. Actually, that's another thing that's changed a lot in the last few years. Right? Like, five years ago, ten years ago at least, you would tell people, like, oh, go out, do as many events as possible, bring as many people as possible. And it was all about just how many events you could do. You know? People would brag, oh, I have 20 on my tour. I have 40 on my tour. And I don't think I've heard anyone say that in a long time because now everybody, you know, even distributors and sales reps are saying, like, if you can't pull 20 people minimum, if you don't know 20 people are gonna show up, don't do it. Don't even go to that city. I think maybe, actually, it's because the industry sort of understands now the cost of all of that on everyone because if authors and publishers are paying for all of that, we're all in the same swimming pool.

Monica: Yeah. And that's definitely changed since the pandemic when everything shifted to virtual events. We all felt how much work goes into setting up events. During the pandemic, when we were doing weekly virtual events, we also had to spend time working with the authors behind the scenes to do sound checks and Internet speed checks. And it was just so much effort. And once we started to open back up, bookstores started getting a little bit pickier with the events that they would say yes to because they understand now how much labor goes into it.

There were many things about our industry that nobody really noticed before. All the travel that we have to do, all the conferences, pretty much anything that requires us to go out is obviously that we've been here.

Tobi: People's social batteries are, like, half what they were. People are tired.

Monica: So tired.

Tobi: You really have to convince people to go out, which is why I'm glad there are still a good amount of virtual events because there's a lot of people who go to those events who can't physically, for whatever reason, whether it might be, you know, physically because of a disability or because they have kids and it's really hard to get a babysitter to go to a reading of all things, saving that for date night or because they live in a rural town three hours away from their local bookstore, And that's just not going to happen. Just makes me think of all those people who now can go to virtual events and virtual conferences and see all these things that they didn't have access to before.

So authors obviously can help the success of their book, but authors need readers. There's several presses that went out of business during the pandemic. So, yeah. So what are some of the things you think of that readers can do to really help the success of a book or the industry in general?

Monica: I mean, readers, their support on social media is really visible, especially if the publishers and the authors are tagged. Obviously, make sure that whatever you have to say is

something positive because authors do not appreciate being tagged in negative reviews. We've definitely noticed so many more bookstagrammers, booktokers, and anybody with an Instagram account tagging us and kind of sharing the books that they buy. Or if they got it from, like, a festival or an event, they do a little book haul, and they tag all of the authors and publishers.

Those are always so fun. So I definitely think readers can help the success of a book by sharing it on social media. Most of our sales are through word-of-mouth. If you know someone or trust a friend and you see that they loved this book, you will check it out because you trust their taste.

Do you have any other ideas?

Tobi: Mine is always reviews. You know, when you're trying to get an audiobook sold or when you're trying to get a book sold in another language, often they're going back and looking at reviews, not just industry reviews, but customer reviews, which are a little harder to control. People are so good about giving five stars to their favorite restaurant on Yelp or five stars to their Lyft driver. And what about your favorite book? So I'm always telling people, put reviews.

Goodreads is a good one. Bookshop dot org, even Barnes and Noble, like anywhere where you can rate a book. Rate the book, you know, especially if you're going around talking to people about how much you love it, like rate it. You know, it's weird how big of a difference that makes. Even a book having 25 instead of 10 weirdly makes a really big difference.

There's like some thresholds that, like, you can't even send your book to somewhere unless it has at least 25 reviews. So, like, even that little amount can make a pretty big difference. Also going to events. And when you do go to an event, like, raise your hand, ask a question. I think that's just maybe for the, like, sake of the author who is probably, especially if their debut is probably afraid, could really use some support.

But that occasional person that just, like, chirps up a little bit weirdly makes the biggest difference. And then, of course, authors and readers, just staying nice to your local bookstores.

[jingle]

Monica: A question I get asked a lot, a lot of budding authors ask how they can get attention for them now. If they are trying to get a book published, what can they do now to help that process and make them a little bit more appealing to publishers along the way?

Tobi: Right. Well, some of it is what you've said. It was like being a literary citizen. Be the champion that you are gonna need in ten years. Like, we have an upcoming author, Abi Pollokoff, who somehow doesn't have a book published already. We're doing her debut, but, like, I was looking at her website, and she's been doing events for, like, five years.

She's been, like, moderating and doing festivals and, like, helping other authors, and I couldn't believe that we were doing her debut somehow. But she really did it right. Kristen Millares Young

actually did the same thing. They really know what's up. They're also they sort of did the journalism route in terms of, like, writing the articles you were talking about, the author pitches, op eds or essays or whatever it is that you send out.

And also it doesn't have to be nonfiction. It can be short stories or poetry to sort of like get smaller pieces out there. We published a couple of books where every single small piece, every chapter, every essay in it had been previously published by other journals. But that really helps. Just getting any sort of short pieces at all.

Poetry, essays, nonfiction, fiction, anything at all where you can submit with a paragraph of previous publications. They don't have to be books, just anything. And then when the book does come out in the list of acknowledgments, it links back to every one of those pieces that came out in whatever journals or articles or newspapers. The author tells those people, thank you for publishing this essay. I have now we have a book that it's going to be in.

Then they usually put out a post or, like, congratulations. One of our previous contributors has a book now. The amount of community help helps everyone. It's win wins all over the place. The journal gets a win because one of their contributors has a book now.

The author gets a win. You know, it's one of the best things you can do. And, obviously, build up your social media presence ahead of time. First of all, it'll help you get published. But, also, you want the ball already rolling.

You do not wanna start from scratch.

Monica: Publishers, when they're looking at manuscripts and considering, they wanna see that an author already has some kind of audience. Whether it's huge or small, doesn't quite matter just as long as there's something so that we can rest assured that their partnership with us will result in other connections. There's only so much that we as a press can do, especially considering I'm pitching all of our books as opposed to just one. So it really helps for authors to have their own kind of network and then have an established footprint already.

Yeah. That can really only help.

[jingle]

Tobi: So I guess the big question is, how did you get started in publishing, and what do you hope to succeed now that you're in publishing and in the future?

Monica: My introduction to publishing is a long story. I'll try and keep it short.

Basically, I got a master's degree in creative writing and publishing. It was a joint degree, and I really only went because I liked the creative writing part. But learning about publishing was also pretty cool. I took that course in London. One of the requirements was to do an internship with

another company or take extra classes for the credits, and, obviously, everybody wanted to do the internship.

So after many failed attempts to land internships at the larger publishers in London, I got one with a smaller publisher, and I loved that experience so much. I was able to bounce around to all the different departments and kind of get experience everywhere and learn how everything worked, which was not the case for many of my classmates who were stuck in the mailing department or something like that, a little less fulfilling. So when I came back, I realized that I really loved the industry. I loved the creativity. I loved the community.

So I started looking for publishing jobs, and I thought they only existed in New York, But I was very wrong as I've learned since then. Long story short, two different people from my life who have no connection with each other, both recommended Red Hen to me within the same week. There was an internship listing, so I applied for it and got the internship in 2017, and I've been here ever since. I get asked this question a lot, and there's no formula for getting into publishing. Everybody here at Red Hen has gotten in a different way.

And we've had many people who weren't even English majors. Several people have gotten film studies or history even. If you kind of decide that you wanna work in publishing, the only thing that I usually recommend is to just get involved with the literary community. But your story is quite different than mine. So how did you get into publishing?

Tobi: Well, I started working in publishing, I guess, technically, when I was, like, eight years old. My parents worked in publishing, and I wanted to help out. But again, I was eight. So how helpful could I be? They did have a rejection pile.

Like, they'd already been read. I was not I was not in acquisitions, but they'd already been read. They'd already been rejected. But somebody had to, like, open them up, do the SASE, plop in the little slip of paper that said, like, you know, we're sorry, but you've been rejected. This is before the Internet took care of everything.

And I think I did that for quarters. I don't remember how many quarters, but it was enough for me. I was pretty excited about it. And, anyway, so from there, I, you know, kept going to school, so I didn't do that full time. And then when I was in high school, I started wanting to work summers, and I worked in a warehouse.

I made a really big shipment to the wrong place once, but I think I only made one major mistake. Anyway, don't send the wrong book to Alaska. And then, yeah, from there, I think I ended up helping us move from Excel to QuickBooks one summer. And then I went to college and I came back over the next summer, and I would work at Starbucks from 4AM to, like, 8AM. And then I would come in for a shift at the press.

And at the point that I passed out at my desk, I would go back to bed. [laughs]

Monica: Oh my god. [laughs]

Tobi: But I did bring a lot of free Starbucks back to the office. I think that was everyone's favorite part about me. Before grad school, I was like the executive assistant on my laptop for a couple years.

At the end of my master's, I was planning on being a professor, and I was working as a computer tech. Really wanted to work in publishing, but I had just always known my whole life that I would never be qualified to work in publishing because I I know publishing. I know how hard it is. Everybody wants to work in publishing. Everyone wants to work in editing.

I knew that that was not an option for me, and I would never be qualified for that. And then Mark, our then publisher, had a heart attack, which he survived, but obviously took a little while to recover from. And in the meantime, I went to AWP, which is a big conference. It's a very important conference for us. And so I basically went to AWP, led the team at AWP, and that sort of started staff and supporters saying like, "why doesn't Tobi move back to LA and work at Red Hen?"

I remember talking to Kate and just saying, you know, I'm really, I'm used to having health insurance now. It's a shame I can't work at Red Hen. You know? You guys don't have health insurance because I'd worked there, you know, five years before. "She was like, what do you mean? We have health insurance." I was like, "What do you mean? We're like, we still you know, we're a real company now. Like, what do you do if we're not we're not giving quarters to eight year olds. You know?" I think it was, like, twenty years in at that point.

You know? And then I realized I had a master's in English, and I had been running the Graduate Literature Association group, and I'd run a conference, and I'd run a journal, and I'd I'd printed and published a journal. I realized, you know, maybe I am qualified. And just to confirm that everyone thought I was qualified, I wrote, like, a six page CV and a two page cover letter and sent it to every single one of our supporters and board members. And every single one of them had to sign off and approve my hire and donate to my first year of hire just to make absolutely sure everybody was really on board and thought it was a good idea.

Obviously, a lot of people knew me. I'd been working there for, you know, a while at that point part time. Oh, I also came in every year for AWP. I came in for every benefit every year. I wrote notes at a lot of the board meetings, which was really when I realized I wanted to work at Red Hen. I was writing down. I wanted to get a new job, and I started writing down things I wanted in my new job. And I wrote down, you know, time off for AWP, time off for Red Hen board meetings, time off for Red Hen's benefit. And then I was like, I just wrote Red Hen down, like, six times in my quest for a new job. And then just as all of this is sort of coming together, a position opened up at Red Hen, a place for me to live opened up, and the place I was working, a couple doors closed.

I just suddenly realized I'd hit a ceiling that wasn't gonna break for ten or fifteen years. So it kinda felt like the universe was like, go back to LA and start doing this. And I started off as development associate. I, like, wasn't even in anywhere close to where I am now in editing or marketing. And I did, you know, grant writing for a while and then did operations.

And then, you know, in 2018, you and I both joined the media and marketing team officially as staff. And I can't believe that that was seven years ago now. And I don't know. I never would have thought considered marketing, but now I love it, and I can't imagine doing anything else. I mean, I like editorial. I get to do editorial. But marketing is definitely I get to be connected to every department and every arm of the industry, and the authors feel like it's, like, the best of all the world.

Monica: For sure. We get the most creative freedom in terms of how to talk about the books, how to pitch them, even the metadata that you work with, all of the keywords that you come up with. There's no routine really for us. In terms of the day to day, like, we never really know what we're doing.

Tobi: To some extent with every title, you're doing a little bit fresh. Everything's especially what we do. All of our books are pretty unique. I certainly did not have any qualifications for what I'm doing now when I was first hired.

Everything that you kind of learn in publishing can really be learned on the job.

Tobi: You can take a publishing class, but that's not gonna teach you how to supervise an intern. It's not gonna teach you how to, like, call the New York Times and set an appointment. You know?

Monica: Yeah. There's so much about publishing that you kind of you just don't even know what you don't know until you're working here.

Tobi: I think that's why internships are so essential in all of those programs.

Monica: We love being able to share our experiences with our interns and get them a leg up on kind of their experiences and their journey. I think we should probably wrap up. Is there any other final thoughts that you have in terms of the importance of marketing and media for writers or your experience as working in marketing and media here at Red Hen?

Tobi: I do, actually. I have one thing I really try to remember to tell everybody, and that is that rejection is the top thing you will experience in publishing at every level. As a writer, as a marketing person, as a media person, like, you'll send out your book a hundred times and get it accepted once. We'll send out a hundred pitches and get one accepted. You know, I think a lot of times people think it's just the authors, but we are all being rejected at every level, every moment.

You know, I'll pitch a book to a bookstore and they decide whether or not to buy it. And that's in its way, a form of rejection. But I think just not taking it personally, like understanding, like if we send a book for review and it doesn't get accepted, that doesn't mean the book was bad. It might mean that they did another book similar to it a week ago, and they just can't do that again right now. You know, there's so it is so rarely personal and it weirdly is often not even about the quality of the work, depending on where you're at and what you're pitching.

But a lot of times it's just timing. So much of it is just timing and luck. So definitely don't take rejection personally. Just keep on keeping on. If you're a writer, don't forget to edit.

Don't forget to have beta readers and don't forget to submit your work. There's so many people who write for hours and hours and don't spend, you know, an hour a month just actually putting their work out there to be accepted, and that was the only way to get published.

Monica: Thank you so much, Tobi. This is a great discussion. I always love talking about marketing and media.

And if anybody has any further questions for us regarding our jobs or the process of publishing or anything like that, feel free to send us an email. We hope to hear from you soon, and we can't wait to read your stuff.

Outro: Thank you for listening to Red Hen Radio, the podcast where independent literature takes flight. We hope you enjoyed today's episode.

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Special thank you to our supporters who have generously contributed to the making of this podcast, we couldn't do this without you! Thank you as well to our Red Hen podcasting team, Samantha Diaz on media and marketing, Piper Gourley on sound editing, and Kate Gale and Tobi Harper Petrie on the mic. Tremendous thank yous to our special guests for their generosity of time and wisdom. For more information, find us at redhen.org. In the meantime, keep reading, keep writing, and keep dreaming. Talk to you soon!