

Ad removed. [Details](#)

Exclusive

New LGBTQ+ publisher to 'put queer writers first' after success of Heated Rivalry novels

Mar 06 • Written by [Chantelle Billson](#)[Share](#) [Save for later](#) [Comment](#)

L-R: Matt Cain and Harry Glasstone, founders of Pansy. (The Authors Lounge)

“After decades of neglect, Pansy is here to put queer writers and readers first,” says Harry Glasstone, co-founder of LGBTQ+ publisher Pansy, following the popularity of the *Heated Rivalry* novels.

Pansy, founded by novelist [Matt Cain](#) and his husband Harry Glasstone, will launch on 4 June with the publication of Cain’s latest novel, *The Castle of Stories*.

Glasstone described the venture as a “boutique independent publisher” catering to “readers who want to relax on holiday or just be moved, entertained or amused by a queer-themed book”.

Queer publishers are needed now more than ever. Last year, [reporting by The Guardian](#) highlighted that UK librarians are increasingly being asked to remove books, as the influence of pressure groups behind book bans in the US spreads.

“Our mission is to bring queer books by queer authors to all readers, both from within the queer community and our allies,” he said. “And we’ll achieve this without compromising the authenticity or integrity of our queer books and authors.”

‘Political and disruptive, but also playful and fun’

Cain said the name was chosen in part to reclaim the homophobic slur as “an act of empowerment”.

“We think this sums up the ethos behind Pansy – political and disruptive, but also playful and fun,” he said. However the “rich queer history” also helped secure its place as the publisher’s name.

Cain, a patron of LGBTQ+ History Month, explained: “Yes, it’s been used as a homophobic slur since the late 1800s, but in early modern England pansies were worn by men and women to indicate that they didn’t intend to marry. In Shakespeare’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, Puck gives the Queen of the Fairies a magic potion made from the juice of the pansy that will make her wake up and fall in love with the first person she sees – so the pansy has the power to inspire a love that overrides social rules and disrupts the social order.”

The “seed for Pansy had been growing for a long time”, Cain said. He began writing fiction in the 00s, but “received over 30 rejections from agents”. After finally securing representation, he received a further 50 rejections from publishers.

Many, he said, cited the queer content as problematic. “One called it ‘a bit too explicit for comfort’. Another had a problem with the story being told from a gay character’s point of view as this ‘pushes the novel into that niche market for me’.”



Pansy founders Harry Glasstone and Matt Cain. (The Authors Lounge)

In 2017, Cain crowdfunded for his novel *The Madonna of Bolton*, raising “funds in record time”.

As part of the campaign, he shared rejection letters to highlight the industry’s attitudes. Despite the book’s success, he said there was “still resistance to publishing queer authors”.

“Even my biggest-selling novel *The Secret Life of Albert Entwistle* was rejected by several editors, one of whom suggested I only reveal my central character’s sexuality ‘towards the end’ – quite something considering the story is about a closeted gay man searching for the long-lost love of his life. The same editor also commented that she didn’t want me to be ‘so explicit on the wider LGTB+ issues.’”

Although the book eventually secured a publishing deal and sold well, Cain said he often felt he was “fighting for resources”, with his books created as “low-priority status”.

Pansy will make sure ‘the next *Heated Rivalry* comes from a queer author’

He argued that the **success of the *Heated Rivalry* novels**, which surged only after the television adaptation became a hit, shows why Pansy is needed.

“The belief still prevailed in the industry that queer books would only appeal to niche audiences and that straight female readers – who make up the majority of the market – would be turned off by gay sex,” he said.

“The *Heated Rivalry* novels have blown both of those beliefs apart. But outrageously, those books weren’t published in print in the UK until the launch of the hit TV series. I think that’s indicative of the industry’s disinterest and disengagement in mainstream queer fiction. Pansy is here to make sure that doesn’t happen again – and to make sure that the next *Heated Rivalry* comes from a queer author.”

Glasstone said the publisher plans to release one book per quarter so that “every body can be a lead title”.

“Many big publishers take on too many titles, meaning lots of them don’t get the push they deserve,” he said. “When queer books targeted at the mainstream are occasionally published in the UK, they can be overlooked or under-resourced by publishing houses that underestimate their potential readership and, in the process, clip the wings of LGBTQ+ authors.”

Pansy will also enable authors a greater role in the publishing process.

“We have what we call an ‘authors-first’ business model,” Glasstone said, “offering authors a share of the profits and involving them in key decisions at every stage of the publishing process.”

More:

[heated rivalry](#) [publishing](#) [queer](#) [queer stories](#)



26 LGBTQ+ couples we were rooting for but whose break-ups really, really hurt

Please [login](#) or [register](#) to comment on this story.

Conversation

Let’s create a safe space for open discussion. Read our guidelines [here](#).

Log in

Be the first to comment...

Powered by OpenWeb

[Terms](#) | [Privacy](#) | [Feedback](#)



Queer News. Straight Up.

The LGBTQ+ stories you don’t want to miss, delivered to your inbox daily.

Email address *

Register

By registering you agree to our [Privacy Policy](#)

Dermatologists: The 1 Vitamin You Need If You Have Wrinkles

She stopped using her moisturizer and tried this instead — the results surprised everyone.

Anti-Aging Center | Sponsored

[Read More](#)

Good drivers save money

Get a personalized rate for your safe driving with Snapshot®

[Get quote](#)

Progressive Insurance | Sponsored

Moisturizer Won't Tighten Skin! Use This Household Item Instead

She stopped using her moisturizer and tried this instead — the results surprised everyone.

Anti-Aging Center | Sponsored

Read More

16 TV stars you grew up watching who later came out as LGBTQ+

Many former Disney actors, singers and stars have shared that they're part of the LGBT community, and here are 16 to have done so.

PinkNews

Sources close to Hudson Williams respond to resurfaced swastika photo

PinkNews

David Harbour on Lily Allen's West End fallout and mental health

PinkNews

Perrie Edwards Heartbroken Over Jesy Nelson's Twins' SMA Diagnosis

PinkNews

Laverne Cox on dating 'MAGA' cop: 'A lot of people will never forgive me'

PinkNews

Ad removed. [Details](#)

Ad removed. [Details](#)

Related articles



TV • Jun 02
Heated Rivalry fans convinced key season 2 role has been cast after Hudson Williams pic



TV • May 27
Heated Rivalry season 2 gets major update as casting rumours continue



Books • May 18
The must-read LGBTQ+ books coming in 2026

Books • Apr 27

Everything you should know about Rachel Reid’s Game Changers books that inspired Heated Rivalry



TV • Apr 17

Jill Biden bids \$35k for Heated Rivalry cameo that sells for more than triple that



Latest News



Current Affairs • Jun 10

Simu Liu warns of online ‘bad actors’ as he defends Hudson Williams over resurfaced swastika photo



Current Affairs • Jun 10

Jennifer An details alleged 2009 choking by Kanye West on La Roux set as court filing cites “horrific” messages



Current Affairs • Jun 10

David Harbour says Lily Allen’s West End Girl fallout sparked a “frightening mental health emergency”



Current Affairs • Jun 10

‘We are so proud’: Zohran Mamdani frames New York as a Pride ‘haven’ under Trump

What to buy now



Fashion • Mar 27

Connor Ives and MAC team up to re-release the iconic ‘Protect The Dolls’ t-shirt

Music • Mar 12

The Pussycat Dolls confirm reunion with new single and tour – how to get tickets

Music • Jan 23

A full guide to the 2026 Harry Styles Together, Together tour including dates and presale info

Shopping • Nov 24 2025

Ten truly awesome Christmas gifts you can buy to support queer-owned businesses

Exclusive



Opinion • Jun 04

Patagonia, Pattie Gonia and the pink glass ceiling



Opinion • Jun 03

‘I came out as trans at 45 – this is what Pride means to me’



Exclusive • May 26

DJ Meredith Marks teases Lisa Barlow collab ahead of Mighty Hoopla set



Exclusive • May 22

‘I wrote an article about peas and got accused of “neutering women”’



Download the PinkNews app
Award winning LGBTQ+ journalism



Pink

About us

Editorial Policy

Contact us

Advertise

Work for us

Terms and conditions

Privacy policy

