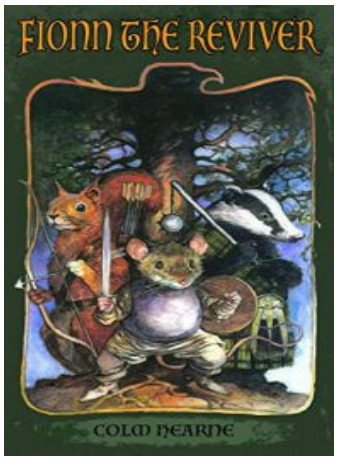
An Interview with Colm Hearne



August, 2022 Featured Guest
at
Time with Tannia
(http://timewithtannia.com)

By:

Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés

1.) Welcome to Time with Tannia, Colm. You describe yourself as an "avid writer since childhood." For the benefit of new authors, How and when did you discover your "voice"?

I discovered my voice when I was a child after reading books and stories about fantasy and adventure by authors like Roald Dahl, Brian Jacques, or C.S. Lewis, and I dreamed about becoming one of them. I was so highly influenced and motivated by Brian Jacques and his "Redwall" books series, that it led me to get the idea for "Fionn the Reviver" when I was a teenager.

2.) Fantasy and Sci-fic are thought-provoking and entertaining genres, leading to discoveries. Do you agree with this statement?

I agree that fantasy and sci-fi are both fascinating and entertaining. For example, in my favourite book, "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe", C.S. Lewis has based the character Aslan on Jesus Christ and even used Aslan's death on the Stone Table as a representation of Jesus' death and resurrection on the cross. This may be used as a way for children and adults to understand Christianity. Another example is "The Lord of the Rings" or "The Hobbit" and the fictional languages. As J.R.R. Tolkien was a linguist and was fascinated by language so much that he invented his own languages in his stories and some of those languages are spoken by real people.

3.) While authors search for their identity, aka "voice," their writing is influenced by other seasoned authors whom they admire. Which one of them inspired you to become an author? What aspect of their stories had a positive, pivotal effect on your decision?

I was influenced by fantasy writers like C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and Brian Jacques. I was always fascinated by fantasy worlds, magical creatures, and good vs. evil. As mentioned above, I was heavily influenced by Brian Jacques and his "Redwall" books. His books had a positive effect on me, especially the first "Redwall" book. It helped me to come up with my fantasy world with

anthropomorphic animals. Even though he is dead, I like to think of me as his successor by bringing back stories of anthropomorphic animals. The same can be said for C.S. Lewis because he often used biblical references in the Narnia books. For example, in "Fionn the Reviver", I made a reference to the Good Samaritan parable where Fionn and another character find an injured one in the middle of the road, and they decide to help the poor stranger, and he becomes their friend.

4.) A quote from your Facebook page: "I originally came up with the premise for 'Fionn The Reviver' when I was just a teenager. With the support of friends and family who have read and enjoyed the story, I'm now achieving a life-long dream by publishing my first novel."

What was the most challenging aspect of the process: (1) developing the story, world, and the characters; (2) the endless edits; (3) keeping yourself focused?

The most challenging part for me was probably the editing process. Yes, writing a book is a lot of work, but also a lot of fun. I enjoyed showing my book to others and getting their feedback and advice on how to edit it. I enjoy listening to constructive criticism about my writing because it helps me how I can improve or edit my work. As for keeping myself focused, I try to write every day, even if it's just a little. As a matter of fact, I've made it a habit or a routine to write at least a hundred words each day because if you want to be successful at something, you have to work at it every day. I do a lot of my writing in a café or somewhere like that.

5.) For your debut novel, "Fionn The Reviver," you chose to publish independently. What are some advantages and disadvantages should new authors consider when deciding how to publish their books: independent, self-publishing, or traditional publisher?

Even though I've only self-published one book so far, I've learned that there are advantages and disadvantages to both traditional publishing and self-publishing. When I was trying to publish my book, I sent the manuscript to traditional publishers, but it didn't work out. It either got rejected, they weren't interested, or I didn't hear anything back from them. Thus, I decided to self-publish my book because I thought it would be easier. I found a self-publishing company in the UK, and they did a great job laying out the text with the illustration and designing the cover. Then it was published on Amazon.

One of the biggest disadvantages of self-publishing is that the author is fully responsible for marketing the book. That is hard, especially if it's a children's book. However, my book was published by a traditional publisher, they would handle the marketing, too. On the other hand, an advantage to marketing your own book is that although it is hard, it's also a good learning process.

Apart from that, it is also interesting to find new ways to get book reviews and sell copies of my book.

6.) Please share with our readers a brief description of your book.

My book is about animals who act like humans like in other fantasy stories like "Redwall," "Narnia," or "The Wind in the Willows." It's about a young mouse warrior named Fionn who travels to a land called Tara where he and his friends must save it from being conquered by the evil falcon, Lord Malus and his army of falcons, rats, and weasels.

7.) On your Facebook Page, you also mentioned a sequel is in the making. When would the sequel to 'Fionn The Reviver' be released? How would it differ from the first one?

It's a prequel. Yes, it is a work in progress; consequently, a release date is not available. It'll differ

from the first book because it takes place before Fionn or his brother, Fergus, were even born. It tells the story of his father, Ferdinand, his uncle, Cael, and their adventures. Furthermore, it also includes some characters from the first book, but they are rather younger.

8.) When marketing your book, which venues have proven more successful and cost-effective for you?

That's a tough question to answer. Because to me, writing the book is the easy part while marketing is the hard part. I'm sure most authors would agree with me. I paid the publisher a few hundred euros to market my book, but they didn't do a great job marketing it. So, I had to do the marketing myself. Don't get me wrong, my book has gotten great reviews and sold some copies. However, I'm trying to find ways to market it, sell more copies, get more reviews, and more exposure. My biggest marketing achievement was to get my book into a couple of local bookshops.

9.) In addition to writing, you also do some volunteering work with the organization, Fighting Words, which supports children with creative writing. What motivated you to reach out to them and give back your knowledge to the next generation of authors?

I started volunteering with **Fighting Words** back in 2018 because I was struggling to get paid employment and wanted to gain more experience. I started doing minor volunteer roles, but as I started going there every day, I was given more important roles, such as typist or illustrator. I've even led a few of the workshops. We do workshops with primary and secondary school students, but I work mainly with the primary school ones. I've always enjoyed volunteering with Fighting Words because the students are fun to work with. In addition to that, the staff and volunteers are really nice, welcoming, and supportive. Being part of Fighting Words has helped me to give something back by encouraging children to take up creative writing.

Here's the link to Fighting Words: **https://www.fightingwords.ie/**

10.) Where can our readers buy your books?

My book is available on Amazon. Also, if you live in Dublin, Ireland, it's available in the bookshop Hodges Figgis on Dawson St.

11.) Where can our readers contact you?

They can contact me by email: **colm.hearne365@gmail.com**

12.) A word of advice to young vivid writers.

My advice to other vivid writers would be to read and write daily. Because the way I see it if you want to be successful at something, you have to work at it every day. Also, depending on what genre you're writing, read other books on the genre to get inspiration for your writing. Finally, get advice from other writers, not just friends and family, and/or join a writers' workshop, so you can get feedback and know how to improve your work.

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