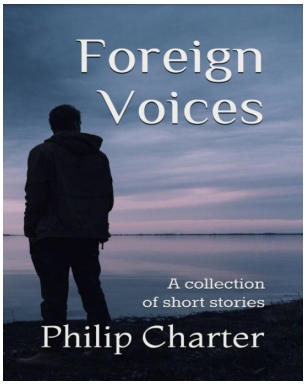
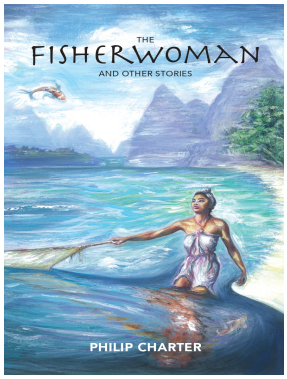
An Interview with Philip Charter





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

By:

Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés

1.) You are a freelance English teacher, coach, editor, and award-winning author. Which one of them defines you better and why?

I describe myself as 'a writer and a teacher'. They aren't mutually exclusive terms, and people can get hung up on terms to pigeon-hole others. I personally like asking people what their passion is. This allows them to define themselves through something other than their job (if that's what they want).

2.) Who came to be first, "the author" or "the freelance coach"? Or should we say, one is the evolution of the other?

Although I have been teaching for slightly long than I have been producing fiction, writing has always been my passion and identity. Becoming an English writing coach was the development of both my skill sets – helping learners with language and offering writing instruction. I'm so happy that I have been able to combine things I love to offer a service people find useful.

3.) For now, we will talk with "the Author" and then will explore your coaching and editing services. How do the environment and your surroundings influence your creativity?

The places I've travelled to and the people I've met have greatly influenced my writing. Nature and movement are essential for my creativity too. Taking in inspiring views, noticing the big and small

things, and going for long daydreamful walks are all important.

4.) In a nutshell, how does your first short stories book, "*Foreign Voices,*" differ from your latest release, "*The Fisherwoman and Other Stories*"? Where can they be bought?

Both books are collections of varied genre short stories, previously published in magazines and anthologies. You'll find sci-fi, mainstream and literary stories, as well as a variety of story lengths. *Foreign Voices* includes many stories about characters who are outsiders whereas in the *The Fisherwoman*, many characters are realising just what 'home' means for them.

My writing style has developed since the release of ***Foreign Voices***, so I think the stories in **The Fisherwoman** are more mature and impactful. Both books are available via Amazon.

5.) Which one of the stories was the most challenging and/or meaningful to write?

In the month that Foreign Voices was published, my father passed away. The book is dedicated to him, and I'm glad he got to see it before he died. So really, the publishing of that book held a lot of significance.

Some of the stories in ***The Fisherwoman*** (for example the title story, *Two Nights Only and The Matchstick House*) evoke a profound sense of place for me. I've visited the places in those stories and have tried to make sense of my experiences through fiction.

6.) Which one of your stories won the 2021 Loft Books Short Story Competition?

Choosing the right story for a competition is no easy task. It depends on whether your piece resonates with the readers and judges. Some competitions have particular word count parameters and some have themes to include. Many, like the Loft Books competition, was open themed, but requested that stories include no violence. I chose ***The Fisherwoman*** because I thought it was the most poignant and meaningful story that fitted the word count limit. I'm glad the judges agreed!

I was proud to win and it gave me the confidence to keep writing better stories. The story has since been nominated for a Pushcart Prize.

7.) We will bring our attention to "the freelance Coach." What is the role of an English coach? Why should someone choose you?

Improving your general English won't help you solve your specific language problems. A language coach offers a personalised program to ensure clients meet their goals. I'm an expert at helping publishers with their written English, so they can build international relationships and level-up their careers.

8.) How do you help your clients to overcome the myth and foes of improving their English communication skills both for native and non-native speakers?

My goal is to show clients how to produce effective written English in their desired form (e.g. emails, proposals, fiction). Together, we improve the accuracy of their English and analyse good examples of the form. This gives people the tools to keep improving on their own.

Spoken and written English are two interlinked skills for non-native speakers to improve. I'm keen to give them some quick wins, but also point out that writing progress can take time.

9.) What are some of the most valuable lessons you have learned as an English coach?

Everyone responds in a different way when learning, and people need a personalised approach to get the best out of them. I have to be flexible to accommodate that. Thankfully, I have so many understanding clients around the world. I know it sounds cheesy, but I feel blessed.

10.) We will conclude with "the freelance Editor." What type of editing services do you offer?

As I work with many non-native speakers, most of my work is proofreading documents. I also offer a critique service for short fiction.

11.) Where can our readers contact you?

English and business enquiries: englishwritingcoach.uk
Author website: philipcharter.com

12.) A word of advice for those wanting to improve their English communication skills but are unsure about its usefulness.

How your life would be different if you could write fantastically well in English? You'd probably have fewer misunderstandings, less frustration, and more opportunities at work. Invest in yourself to become better. We all should.

Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés, author of *El Espejo de mi Alma* (BoD 2015) .
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