

The Little Creative Interview
with C. E. CANNERY

Let's Meet...

C. E. CANNERY

C. E. CANNERY is an aspiring author, who has written a number of self-published books. Her love of storytelling began in the long car rides from her small town to the closest Walmart, where she and her siblings would read their stories to each other. From then her life took her on a different route, but she still loves writing and reading. She now has a master's degree in Environmental Sciences from University College Dublin.

1) When did you first begin expressing yourself creatively and how?

I was about seven, living in an unfurnished house, and across that unfurnished floor, I would walk to and fro, mumbling some story about a dragon getting “madder and madder and madder” because of those dastardly humans harassing it. That was the most I remembered of my first verbal storytelling foray—that and, of course, my mother laughing and saying that she used to do the same thing at my age. But perhaps that was not the very first creative thing I've done. I suppose I had scribbled things when I was even younger, for I quite vividly recall drawing mermaids all over my schoolwork in kindergarten, but even then, there was a story to the image. I don't quite recall, but it might have been a mermaid society or mermaids going to school—you can probably tell which Disney princess was my favorite back then.

However, if we are talking about when I first began to seriously (or at least write with the intention to publish) write, then that would have been in my first year of college. I had suffered an accident that, I suppose, compelled me to write. Before, I had not considered it. In high school, I did take a creative writing class, and I recall my teacher liking one of my stories—it was a post-apocalypse, nuclear war story from the POV of a child, but it had only ever been a fun thing. After my mortality had been questioned, though, my priorities changed.

2) From where do you draw inspiration for your work?

At first, all of my writings were basically fan-fictions of other epic fantasy novels that I had read as a child. I had loved Eragon, Sabriel, the Drizzt books, the Earthsea series, and so my first doodles were in the same like. However, I have also always loved history, so some more historical elements would break through every once in a while. Then, as I grew up, I started to find that other types of books were speaking to me, darker books—Catch 22, Crime and Punishment, Dickens, and I suppose, Wizard of the Crow (though not sure if that one was as dark, but I loved it nonetheless.)

None of these things, though, would have sparked an idea in me alone, if not for nature. Place, in this case, was always very important to me. In the dark woods, I could imagine the morphs of those stories that had already been put in my head long ago. I could imagine fairies or ghosts or great tales—and one could readily see this in my books as I take great care to describe the great green woods of my home state or the flat plains of one that I have driven through or the great red deserts of our SW (another one of my old homes)—but, only in the right places could they exist. There has always been a deep sense of story about a place to me as if the land knew things, and if one were only still enough, they could see all the spirits of long ago, still living. And I strive to capture a bit of that magic.

3) What work are you currently most proud of?

I think this is between my two currently published books. (I have others floating around on the internet that I have now disowned in shame!) I was proud of Maygest's Tale because it was the first book I wrote that was all from one person's POV without resorting to some crazy head-hopping, and Inna, I am proud of because it is the most cohesive. Maygest's Tale was written without a structure and can be a bit wild as a result, but Inna is very orderly in contrast. I suppose I'm proud because I didn't think I had enough self-discipline to accomplish either task.

4) What advice would you give to others about the creative side of what you do?

Watch things. Watch people talking. Watch the way the wind ripples the leaves. Watch the way you feel when you are angry, hurt, sad, happy—all of it. Pay attention. These solid feelings will do you well when you go to write. The other half of it is: read! A lot. And not just your genre. Read things around and things not related. You never know what flavors of words will work together. Next piece of advice, find a quiet place or at least somewhere where you won't be bothered. Writing requires your attention for long lengths of time. And most important, out of all of these, be ready to take a punch to the gut or multiple punches. Writing is a brutal sport. People don't have to like your work, and you can't take it personally. It is what it is, sometimes.

5) What advice would you give to others about the business side of what you do?

This is probably where I'd need some advice myself. I think the first part is that you need to make your book ready for consumption. Get your editors, proof-readers, beta readers, etc., sorted. Then come the ARCs—get them! (I didn't and regretted it.) Next comes the part where you send your stuff out for review to a bunch of bloggers, editorial sites, book award sites, and pretty much to anyone who will listen. After that, I suppose you just keep going.

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