

MY FAVORITE BIT: RANDEE DAWN TALKS ABOUT THE ONLY SONG WORTH SINGING

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Randee Dawn is joining us today to talk about her novel, *The Only Song Worth Singing*. Here's the publisher's description:

Childhood friends Patrick, Ciaran, and Malachi would've been happy to play music for coins on the streets of Dublin, but when their sound – a blend of traditional tunes and rock styling – lands them a record deal, they also get their first tour of America. As they gather fans, however, they also get the attention of three sidhe, fairies straight out of Irish tradition who play by their own rules.

Mal finds himself beleaguered by a prankster whose malicious tricks make him think he's losing his mind, while Ciaran falls hard for a hanger-on whose primal sexuality saps the life from him. Patrick can save them – if he's willing to trust the superstitions he learned during a painful childhood he thought he'd left behind long ago.

But the only thing that matters more than music to Patrick? His friends.

What's Randee's favorite bit?



The author of books is a sneaky beast. We know exactly what's coming for our characters (at least, once we've finished the book), we know where things shift, and we further know that first readers have no idea what's in store. And we *love* the idea that tens, hundreds or maybe even thousands of people are about to take that journey laid out for them.

That moment, the turning point in *The Only Song Worth Singing* is my favorite bit in my new novel. Now, this is a different place than the "inciting" incident, the moment when wheels begin turning. That happens a little earlier in the book. But for me, the best moment comes when everything could have gone differently, when the life-and-death consequences ahead for my three main characters – band members and best friends Ciaran, Patrick and Malachi – might not have been so dire. It is the moment all of us – reader and characters alike – stand on a precipice and stare into the abyss below.

In the scene, the trio – who have known one another since they were barely adolescents, and who trust the music they make as an almost magical thing (and it is, though they don't know how yet) – have just played a barn-burner of a concert. They're in the dressing room of the club where they've played, toweled off, coming down a bit from the high but still riding the adrenaline of being the center of attention for over two hours. More than anywhere else except on the stage, they are a literal *band* – band of friends, band of musicians, band of brothers.

Outside the room is the real world. A world of hangers-on, of record company executives, of press reps who want them to act nice and shake hands and do the other part of the job of being rising rock stars. But also out there are at least two women they've recently met, who've made the last couple days of their Boston tour disquieting to say the least. One, Sheerie, has managed to burrow into Ciaran's consciousness so much that he can *hear* her in his head. She wants him – and he wants her. But he's going to have to shake hands and play nice through a whole lot of people before they can be together. Another, Caitlin, has charmed Patrick by making him think of home in Ireland, but also feel a deeper sense of home and belonging, something he's never had before. She's a cracking good musician, too. Mal's own mystical creature is out there, too, though he never sees her, or him, or it. But it

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LADY ASTRONAUT STORE



sees him.

All three of them want things. They're young, they're on fire, they feel on some level the world is there for the taking. But what they have in the dressing room is something that's both familiar and sustaining – something that, much later on, will be the key to their survival. So even though there are wonders and delights just through the dressing room door – a kind of portal – the friends bend together as they do after every show. They come together in a huddle, a team gathering on their own playing field once more, for a momentary breather. *Wherever they might go next, there was always this circle to come back to*, as the story goes.

One of the most important elements of the book, to me, is the magic humans create without spells, immortality or any trappings of fantasy. Real magic does happen around us – and to me, I've found it most often during amazing live music shows, and in my own friendships. That's why I wanted to underscore, in a book about Irish fae coming to bedevil three human musicians, the mystical among the mundane. My friendships, my found family, who I've assembled and bonded with over the decades, are some of the most precious things I have. This is also true for our three musicians, who're about to go through the wringer and have every part of that connection tested. No one will survive unchanged.

So as we hesitate on that cliff's edge, Ciaran, Mal and Patrick bend together and wrap their arms around each other's backs. It's a space no one else belongs. Then, like the end of a prayer, Mal says for them all: *An rud is annamh is iontach.* "What is rare, is wonderful." They're having a rare moment.

Then they all jump off the cliff together, not knowing how deep the abyss goes.

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BIO:

Randee Dawn is a Brooklyn-based author and journalist who writes speculative fiction at night and entertainment and lifestyle stories during the day for publications like the *New York Times*, *NBCNews.com*, *Variety*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and *Emmy Magazine*. Her debut novel, *Tune in Tomorrow*, was published by Solaris. *Publishers Weekly* said of *Tune in Tomorrow*: "Dawn balances over-the-top drama and comedy with genuine intrigue to create a fun story with plenty of heart." *Lightspeed* praised it as "an excellent read if you're looking for something to make you smile... well worth your time."

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