

Aurora author recognized by Irish Writers Centre

Aurora writer Marnie Maguire has been named as one of 12 finalists in the Irish Writers Centre's 2021 Novel Fair.

Described as 'a Dragon's Den for writers,' the Novel Fair introduces up-and-coming writers to publishers and literary agents 'giving novelists the opportunity to bypass the slush pile, pitch their ideas and place their synopses and sample chapters directly into the hands of publishers and agents.'

Ms. Maguire, who is well-known to local writers as a creative writing coach with the Aurora Public Library, found her place in the Novel Fair with the mystery 'Indecent.'

'Indecent' has been a labour of love for Ms. Maguire who has been working on the coming-of-age story for several years. This contest, however, brought renewed 'motivation' to sit down and get it done.

'It was a literary coming of age, but when I went back to work on it, I threaded a mystery plot through it and made it a lot more fun and propelled the novel forward a lot more,' she says. 'It is about an expelled high school senior who is terrified of inheriting her mother's mental illness. The problem is she is hearing the voice of her dead grandmother who is relaying the events that led up to her suspicious death 18 years earlier. As she pieces together the events that led up to her grandmother's death, she also comes to terms with her stereotypes, suspicion and fear of mental illness herself.'

Putting the story forward for the 2021 Novel Fair was not only a boost in confidence but a learning opportunity as well.

'I have always been working on other people's work,' says the literary mentor. 'To finally get back to my own work and then have it validated just shortly after returning to it 'I should have words for it 'I'm a writer! ' but I don't!

'It was a phenomenal experience for me: the most condensed, intense, positive learning experience I have had as a writer in the last twenty years. Starting at 5 am (because of the time change), I meet with umpteen publishers and agents. I had 15 minutes with each of them. Every time I pitched, the focus of my book and my characters became clearer and clearer. In the end, I was invited to send my novel (sometimes the entire manuscript; sometimes the first 50 pages) to nineteen publishers and agents.'

For more on the Irish Writers Centre and the Novel Fair 2021, visit irishwriterscentre.ie.

By Brock Weir Editor Local Journalism Initiative Reporter