

Make Way for the Christmas Hush is timely tale by Aurora author



You know them all ? they are all around is: that one friend who is the life and soul of the holiday party, almost to the point where it's just a bit too much; that one friend who is a veritable whirlwind as they check things off their holiday to-do list; the one friend who, for one reason or another, finds themselves down as the holiday approaches.

But, if you haven't had time to take a moment and reflect on the spirit of the Christmas season, it might be time to ?Make Way for the Christmas Hush.?

?Make Way for the Christmas Hush?, the latest book written and illustrated by local author Tim Huff incorporates all these characters and more as ?The Christmas Hush? takes ?a wild journey through a panorama of festive scenarios? while bringing the season into perspective.

Here, the titular ?Christmas Hush? is not necessarily a ?what? but a ?who? as they travel the heady world into the holidays, learning things from the different moods and personalities encountered along the way.

This is the fifth children's book written by Mr. Huff, who has previously tackled the issues of homelessness, disabilities, Truth & Reconciliation, and fear and anxiety in his works for children and adults alike.

Mr. Huff first felt the spark of writing as a teen growing up in Toronto. A member of a band, they often played in prisons and detention centres where they formed ?a love for kids who needed a second chance.?

His philanthropic work began in his early 20s working at a drop-in centre for homeless youth in Downtown Toronto, a sector in which he worked for more than 20 years.

Balancing this drive for social justice with a passion for art and animation, his plate was even fuller working with kids with varying degrees of ability including summer camps and other programs, all of which helped inform his work.

He now dedicates his time with The Compassion Series, a roster of programs intended to create a ?unique hub of creative, interactive, relational and live resources addressing complex Canadian social justice and humanitarian issues? for kindergarten-aged kids all the way through adulthood.

Proceeds from ?Make Way or the Christmas Hush? will go directly back into the Compassion Series.

?There are things as a person who committed themselves to social justice issues since I was a teenager that inspire my writing,? Mr. Huff explains. ?The things that I am compelled by and feel led to, those are the things I want to write about.

?Once you know someone is actually going to hear your voice in what you have written, there's something more electric about that in writing diaries for yourself. You speak your heart, but you speak to touch other people. It's one thing to write for your family and friends, but to think total strangers might think, ?Wow, this is speaking to me,' is inspiring.?

Although Mr. Huff first started writing adult fiction ? and continues to do so to this day ? he made a conscious decision to take the issues that were important to them and tailor them to children. But there was also a conscious decision to not write a traditional children's book; he wanted something that would be visually appealing to children, with a message they could understand, but would also be a book from which adults could get something in equal measure.

Perhaps above all, he wants readers to have fun with the stories.

?Make Way for the Christmas Hush was written with the goal to write a multigenerational book,? he says. ?Whether you're four-years-old or 84-years-old, by the time you finish the book, I want you to say, ?Oh, this book was just for me' and that there was no age limit. My adult books are definitely for the 16+ because some of the stories are a little bit more intense coming from the streets and the worlds of everything from drug dealers, to sex trafficking, and everything in between. They are more faith-based adult books, meaning it is not a hard press, but, as a Christian, [thinking about] where is God in all this mess? Does he really exist, or is it just blowing smoke? My kids books, the Compassion Series, they are multi-denominational. Perhaps in a little bit of the way when you watched the Charlie Brown Christmas Special as a kid, you just loved it, but it wasn't until you were adult that you realised the depth of it. It's that same type of sense that could be in here for everybody.

?When I first started as a writer, I was a bit anxious thinking total strangers were going to read my work, but over time you become smart while you're being vulnerable in what you might think or feel. I need to speak the truth and not offend people ? the mission to be that kind of writer, I think is really cathartic. In one sense it helps you to be a better person on

your own but it also proves that we can have that kind of language. The idea is to invite people to a better place and not guilt people to a better place.?

Tim Huff's ?Make Way for the Christmas Hush? is available from retail booksellers and online platforms like Chapters Indigo and Amazon.

By Brock Weir