

MIAMI BOOK FAIR INT'L NOVEMBER 14, 2016 3:58 PM

Kids and their parents will find plenty to do at Miami Book Fair's Children's Alley



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Nicole Swift's goal for Children's Alley at Miami Book Fair is simply to get more kids reading.

As the fair's programming director in charge of youth events and authors, Swift set out to pick diverse authors and genres for the annual downtown Miami event.

Children's Alley events include drawing, music performances, science experiments, nutritional advice and singing. This year, the fair will host about 100 children's authors and youth sections such as comic books, mythology, science fiction, humor, mystery, thrillers and fantasy.

"It gets so many kids reading," she said.

Children's Alley isn't just for kids, there's something for parents, too, with live music and drinks at the Porch and cookbook authors at the Kitchen Stadium.

Parents might have even recognized Irish author Eoin Colfer from reading his books when they were children, a tradition they can now pass onto their kids.

Colfer, whose Artemis Fowl series gained him international acclaim in 2001, talked about his latest book, "Iron Man: The Gauntlet," when he appeared Sunday at the fair. Artemis Fowl is an eight-book science fiction fantasy series that follows the adventures of teenage criminal mastermind Artemis Fowl and Captain Holly Short, who is a fairy Artemis originally kidnaps.

Colfer said he wasn't always a full-on fantasy writer but he plunged into the world of fairies and giants with Artemis Fowl.

"I just abandoned myself to the fantasy world," he said.

Throughout the series, Artemis discovers that being a villain is not the way to live his life, Colfer said.

"He will always have that kind of dark part in his heart," he said. "That kind of drives him through the rest of the series."

While the Artemis Fowl series is heavily invested in building an underground world for fairies, for Colfer's new book, "Iron Man: The Gauntlet" he was already working with a created world.

Colfer said he grew up reading Iron Man comic books so he had background knowledge on Tony Stark.

"I always like that character because he was a bit troubled," he said.

For the book, Stark attends an international ecosummit in Ireland where he struggles with the guilt of the destruction his company has caused. While at the summit, he runs into one of his enemies and loses his armor except for one gauntlet.

"I think when you take away the armor, what you get is a man who is driven by guilt," Colfer said.

Other children's authors scheduled to appear at the fair include Lois Lowry, Gene Luen Yang and "Blues Clues" co-creator Todd Kessler.

New York Times bestselling author Ridley Pearson, who with Dave Barry co-wrote "Peter and the Starcatchers," brings his new novel "Lock and Key: The Initiation." It's an original story in which future English detective Sherlock Holmes and enemy James Moriarty are young roommates at an elite boarding school as told by the perspective of Moria Moriarty, James' younger sister.

When a precious heirloom goes missing at school, Sherlock, James and Moria work to solve the mystery.

Pearson touches upon the sexism that Moria experiences at the boarding school.

"I definitely wanted to write a character who's more like my girls, who has brains," he said. "I think Sherlock sees Moria as a human being instead of a girl, and he's very interested in her because of her intelligence."

Most kids can identify with the sibling relationship that Moria and James have, Pearson said.

"I see James being pulled into a dark world and she's frustrated by it," he said. "He just won't listen because he sees this change coming to him of power and influence that he's never had."

Pearson said readers will be able to see the characters develop throughout the series. His session is Friday at 1 p.m. in the Chapman Conference Center.

IF YOU GO

Children's Alley at Miami Book Fair is open 9 a.m. Friday, 10 a.m. Saturday and Sunday at 300 NE Second Ave., Miami.



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