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Young Adult Fiction

Feathered: Being a fairy tale
Tom Weston
tom weston media
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It didn't take much to convince Jackie that the enchanted faeries and elves of Ireland, known as the Fey People, were real. As soon as she and her older sister Alex got to Dublin to visit their relatives, she heard their singing, which felt like "an undercurrent of vibration on which every other sound carried." While she desperately hoped to meet them, Jackie never dreamed that she'd be tangled up in the Fey People's affairs.

Embroiled in events spanning the past and present, the sisters must settle ancient feuds, return priceless artifacts, and rush to break faerie spells before it is too late.

Tom Weston's research and first-hand experiences in Ireland bring an authenticity to *Feathered: Being a Fairy Tale*, the third volume in his Alex and Jackie Adventures series. The faeries aren't just faeries; they are Tuatha De Danann, the "people of the goodness Danu," an ancient race widely seen in Irish mythology. When Alex travels back to 1014, she meets the real king of Dublin. Alex and Jackie's family live in the real village of Fethard. The author writes with the perspective of someone who is passionate about Ireland.

Weston clearly possesses a deep knowledge of Irish mythology and history and where they intersect. Readers might have to absorb the story slowly in order to fully appreciate some of the multilayered, complex conflicts, revelations, and resolutions in the plot. The spell Jackie casts, for example, must be broken down on many levels, each with different elements. The book's wealth of information and allusions will spark and challenge the imaginations of readers of any age.

Where the book really succeeds is in making all of the content approachable and entertaining. Jackie, Alex, and their family members are distinguished, humorous, and likable characters. The book is cleverly plotted, with unexpected turns and a generally fast pace. At times, additional descriptions might have clarified certain circumstances or increased tension.

Of particular note are the elaborate, colored illustrations surrounding the chapter

headings and the smaller pictures dividing the chapters into sections. They are from the Book of Kells, the ancient illuminated Gospel book thought to be created by Celtic monks in the ninth century and famed for its illustrations. In the novel, the book is accidentally transported from the past to the present. The images add interest and another authentic touch to the story.

With its lush greenery, old stone castles, rich history, and magical folklore, Ireland provided Weston with all the right ingredients for his third installment in his Alex and Jackie series. A nicely balanced modern fantasy adventure, *Feathered* will strongly appeal to tween and early teen readers who like to get lost in humorous stories.

Alicia Sondhi