

#### **4 Quick Qs: Book Talk With Enfys Transcript** **J.R. Mascaro: Recorded April 7, 2023**

Enfys J. Book: We'll get this right eventually.

J.R. Mascaro: Yeah, that's why it's...that's why I like this better than live.

Enfys J. Book: Agreed, agreed. All right.

Jingle: Take a playful look with Enfys Book as they roll for crit hits with pagan wordsmiths.

Enfys J. Book: Hey, friends. This is Enfys J. Book. Before we dive into this interview with J.R. Mascaro, I wanted to let you know that this episode is going to sound a little different, because it was recorded at Sacred Space/Between the Worlds, with a new A/V setup. I've done the best I can to make it as clean as possible, but I'm still learning, so apologies for any imperfections. With that said, the good news is that you can see this episode in video form on YouTube! And now, back to the show.

Enfys J. Book: Hello and welcome to 4 Quick Q's: Book Talk with Enfys. I'm Enfys Book from majorarqueerna.com and this is the interview show where I interview pagan authors with...a dice, rolling a d20 to determine the questions.

With me today is J.R. Mascaro, the author of Seal, Sigil, and Call from Llewellyn Books. Fairly new release there. ...Read the bio here: "J.R. Mascaro is an author, artist, and sorcerer who's been working with energy and communicating with the subtle realms since childhood. He's used his ritual practice to navigate through life and it is his desire to share with others the techniques which have helped him to flourish. J.R. holds a BA in Anthropology with a concentration in Anthropology of Religion and is currently pursuing his Master's of Arts in Social Change at Starr King School for the Ministry, a Unitarian Universalist Theological School and Seminary. He's a member of the Covenant of Unitarian Universalist Pagans. J.R., happy to have you here.

J.R. Mascaro: Happy to be here.

Enfys J. Book: Hey, have you ever been interviewed by a dice before?

J.R. Mascaro: Not outside of Dungeons and Dragons.

Enfys J. Book: Ah, well then this will be very familiar to you. So the way this show works is we're going to roll this d20 and we'll get four questions. They are short questions, but you may talk as long as you like. So...

J.R. Mascaro: Dangerous invitation.

Enfys J. Book: I know, right? So what would you like to... let's show the dice of the day. This is kind of a bluey, purpley, lovely thing. And what would you like to name our dice for the purposes of this interview?

J.R. Mascaro: Okay, hard to keep it concise. So we're going to call it a Gumdrop the Ferocious.

Enfys J. Book: Gumdrop the Ferocious. I love it. All right, Gumdrop the Ferocious, tell us what our first question is going to be. We got an 18. ...Is there a place you've visited that makes you feel particularly connected to your spiritual self?

J.R. Mascaro: So yes, there are several. I feel particularly connected anywhere where I'm really deep in nature, especially surrounded by trees. When I grew up there was an oak grove behind my house, a circle of oaks, and that was always a very deep spiritual experience. Mountains, especially. Yeah, the outdoors, the natural world.

Enfys J. Book: It's so neat to be around mountains. Like I've just moved closer to the Appalachian Mountains and seeing them just when I'm casually driving around is so cool. Because I grew up where there were no mountains in Minnesota and now there's these big things of nature. It's so weird that nobody seems to care. They're right there! It's so magical.

J.R. Mascaro: Where I grew up was in the very northern tip of New Jersey where the Appalachians cut through. And I actually was right there by a glacial lake. So it was a nice place to grow up. A lot of outdoor adventures, wandering through the forest, coming home very dirty.

Enfys J. Book: Sounds like a blast. All right. Gumdrop the...what did we say again?

J.R. Mascaro: Ferocious.

Enfys J. Book: Gumdrop the Ferocious. So for question two, number 18 on this table. ... Tell us something you learned in the course.

J.R. Mascaro: Two 18s in a row.

Enfys J. Book: It is, I know. It must be something special about that number for you.

J.R. Mascaro: There's 18 eidolons in my book.

Enfys J. Book: There you go. It's picking up on that. ...Tell us something that you learned in the course of writing Seal, Sigil, and Call.

J.R. Mascaro: So there are several things I learned about my writing process and myself during the writing of Seal, Sigil, and Call. Probably most vividly is that I, as you know, I have ADHD and I'm not usually a very focused writer. But when I was writing this, which is a practice I've been engaged in for many years, first writing session I sat down and had about 15,000 words by the time I got up.

Enfys J. Book: Oh wow.

J.R. Mascaro: To the neglect of eating lunch or dinner or having water.

Enfys J. Book: All the car alert things on the dash were flashing once.

J.R. Mascaro: Yeah. And then so I learned because I've written so much in my life on other things that I'm not particularly passionate about for work and things like that.

That I learned that when I am, when I believe in what I'm writing, I can actually write much more quickly than I thought I would. And I also learned that it's nice to set timers, reminding me to eat and drink.

Enfys J. Book: And go to the bathroom and things like that.

J.R. Mascaro: Yes.

Enfys J. Book: I fall into a similar trap. And sort of the same, like when I hit, you know, inertia is a very strong force for those of us who are neurodivergent and objects at rest tend to stay at rest and those in motion can stay in motion for a really long time. So I'm sort of, I time box my writing. I have specific writing nights and there's sometimes they're like, oh, I could keep going. I have momentum. And should I, you know, ride the wave or should I just like take care of myself? There's always that difficult thing, question I ask at the very end. I always tend to ride the wave.

J.R. Mascaro: I mean, I ride the wave.

Enfys J. Book: All right. Question three. This is from a batch of “not necessarily writing-specific professional questions.” So Gumdrop the Ferocious...19.

J.R. Mascaro: Great, great dice.

Enfys J. Book: I know, it's really well...

J.R. Mascaro: Yeah.

Enfys J. Book: You haven't quite crit'ed yet, but you know, we do have a special thing that happens if you do a critical hit or a critical failure, but we haven't had it yet on the show. So I'm not going to surprise...

J.R. Mascaro: You're not going to ruin the surprise.

Enfys J. Book: What is the most challenging part about teaching?

J.R. Mascaro: All right. So yeah, this, for me, the most challenging part about teaching is assuming a place of authority because for me, I always, you know, I am the definitive authority on my own practice, but I am very, very much. And this really, my writing shows this as well, very much a proponent of, you know, people being their own self-sovereign practitioners and, you know, what feels right for you is the ultimate, you know, dictate of what kind of practice you should be doing. So telling people what to do is sometimes counterintuitive for me, but so I've learned to see it as kind of setting, setting a table, offering a meal, a buffet of ideas and saying, Hey, take from this, what you will,

but I'm going to show you how I do it. Please feel free to take from it. What you feel resonates with you.

Enfys J. Book: Yeah.

J.R. Mascaro: So that my biggest challenge is being, you know, yes, I'm an expert on this, which I mean, I-I am, especially on what I've written, but to me, that is a, an expertise that I've cultivated for myself in my own practice and transmitting it to other people in a teaching setting is not always as natural to me as transmitting it to other people in a book setting where they can read and skim through and say, Oh, well, you know, I, that paragraph didn't jive with me. I'm going to go to the next one. You know, they actually have to sit through my lecture because I'm going to deliver the whole thing.

Enfys J. Book: So there is no "skip to next chapter."

J.R. Mascaro: Yeah.

Enfys J. Book: What I think is so fascinating about this book that you have written is, and I'm going to show it on the screen for those watching on video again, because it's just a beautiful cover, but I appreciate that you have a very cohesive, "This is what resonates for me in my practice," but you're, you're not arrogant about it. Like you're saying, like you're offering people things that may work for them and saying, you know, this, this is a thing that I have found and arts are all of it may be helpful for you or not. I really like that.

J.R. Mascaro: Thank you. That was really my, my goal in setting out was to share something that's been a very foundational part of my experience of being really and to hopefully offer things that other people will find helpful, but do it in a way that's very accessible to everyone. Not only accessible insofar as I hope I've written it in an accessible manner and not obfuscated too much. I don't think I have, I really put a mind not to, but also to say, listen, however you approach reality, whatever your paradigm is, whatever you believe gives efficacy to your, your magic, whatever you believe is actually going on, you know, all of that is as you wish here is a way you can tailor these practices to your world views and your, you know, things that make your soul sing. So I hope I hope I nailed that.

Enfys J. Book: I think you stuck the landing. All right. So our last question for Gumdrop the Ferocious is we have our random encounter question.

Jingle: Random encounter question!

Enfys J. Book: And for this one, we roll a D 20 and a D four and look it up on the encounters table. So this could be just about anything. And I'm hoping every single interview has a different question for this, but let's see, we got another 19 and 2. This D20 must be weighted or something. All right. So 19 and 2, looking up on the encounters table...The question is, what are your favorite simple pleasures?

J.R. Mascaro: My favorite simple pleasures. Oh, there are a lot of them. I really try to take joy in life. You know, a nice cup of tea, you know, being anywhere near running

water, by a river, that sound, reading a good book when it's raining outside, you know, incense, meditation, just a simple, you know, mindfulness meditation out in nature, or even just, you know, my living room and spending time with my pet.

Enfys J. Book: I'd love to say that combining those for like hot tea, good book, raining, cat all at once is one of the best things. All cozy.

J.R. Mascaro: Great.

Enfys J. Book: Well, thank you so much for being here. Would you please tell the good folks listening or watching something you're excited about to tell them? Perhaps it's your book. If you have any classes or anything you want to promote, the floor is yours.

J.R. Mascaro: You can find me at my website, which is [jrmascaro.com](http://jrmascaro.com), which has all of my upcoming events, all of my recorded previous podcasts, as well as links to places that I'll be teaching or reading.

I read Claremancy, so I cross runes and sigil tokens and interpret based on their positioning to one another and the casting area, use it as a oracular figure.

And all that can be found on my website, or you can find me on Instagram @jrmascaro.

I'm going to be at INATS this year.

I'm going to be at Mystic South, and I'll be at several other local things in the New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Pennsylvania, general area.

Enfys J. Book: Amazing. Well, thank you so much to those of you listening or watching to this weird, nerdy, little dice based interview show.

And if you enjoyed this episode of 4 Quick Q's: Book Talk with Enfys, which by the way, was filmed at the Sacred Space/Between the Worlds Conference in north of Baltimore... Timonium, I think is the name of that, or Lutherville? It feels like everywhere I am in this little, like, four-square-mile area has three different names, and I can never tell the boundaries between one or the other.

So anyway, if you enjoyed this episode, be sure to like, subscribe, leave a review on your podcast app of choice.

You can check out more content from me at [majorarqueerna.com](http://majorarqueerna.com).

That's spelled M-A-J-O-R-A-R-Q-U-E-E-R-N-A.com.

And whatever time it is where you are, I hope you have a fantastic day and may the dice of fate roll well for you.

Jingle: Thanks for listening to 4 Quick Q's.

Enfys J. Book: This is Enfys J. Book again.

Tune in next time when you'll hear author T. Thorne Coyle say, Thank you.

It's the small things that get me through, and therefore it's the small things that I cast out into the world to help, hopefully help other people.

So I'm glad it resonates because those small moments save me some days, truly.

Times are hard.

Yeah.

You know, and, but there's still beauty everywhere.

Absolutely.