

Mitchell Bonds

Hero, Second Class; Author, First Class

by Nancy Owens Barnes

What captivated your attention at age 19? Cars? Parties? Friends? Most likely, some of us didn't even read novels at that age, much less write them. But we're not Mitch Bonds, whom Marcher Lord Press refers to as a "...prodigy who has more authorial voice than most novelists three times his age."

At 19, Mitch completed a 600-page novel just over a year after he began writing it. When he submitted the manuscript to a publisher, the publisher accepted it for publication then asked him simply—can you write more? So, with his first novel released October 2008, Mitch began writing a sequel, the second book in what will become *The Hero Complex* series.

When I call Mitch, now 21, to speak with him about his book and his future plans, I catch him during finals week at the University of Idaho in Moscow. A resident of Priest River, Idaho, he continues to work his way through college as he studies journalism and mass media, with a focus on public relations.

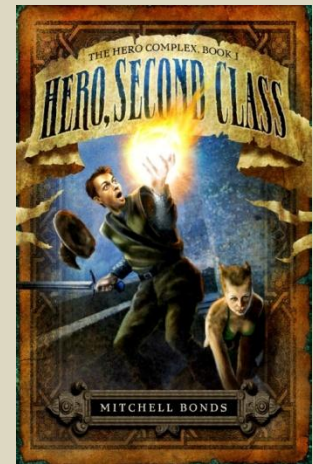
Friendly, energetic and eager to share his story, Mitch describes his newly-published book, *Hero, Second Class*, as a satire of the fantasy genre, written from a Christian perspective.

"Think of Monty Python and the Holy Grail," he tells me, "and you'll have the right idea."

He explains that his book, the story of a young man coming to grips with a

complicated world, is "rife with puns" thanks to his parents, Zack and LeeAnn Bonds, whom he jokingly refers to as "two of the biggest punsters you will ever find on the planet." He credits his folks for encouraging his imagination and creativity, such as the comic book he wrote at the age of eight, and the fantasy world he created at ten, which now forms the backdrop for *Hero, Second Class*. Never enrolled in public school, Mitch attended private school until the third grade when LeeAnn began homeschooling him and his brother. Also a writer, LeAnn has coauthored one book, and has another in the works.

Some have compared Mitch's writing style to that of R. A. Salvatore, as well as Terry Pratchett,



known for his comical work in the fantasy genre.

According to Alex McGilvery, a reviewer for Armchair Interviews, the humor in Mitch's writing "...had me laughing out loud. He manages to poke fun at every convention of adventure writing."

Mitch engages the reader from the first lines of his book's Prologue:

Dawn poked her rosy fingers across the sky. And promptly tore two small holes in it.

And, yes, he's funny. Chapter 1 begins:

Once Upon a Time, in a faraway kingdom, there lived an old man and his wife. They had no children, and the old man prayed every day that he and his wife would have a son.

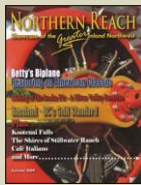
This story has absolutely nothing to do with them.

When asked by an interviewer what his novel is in a nutshell, Mitch replied, "It wouldn't fit in a nutshell, unless the print was very, very small."

After graduation, Mitch plans to join the Air Force, hoping to work in their public affairs department. In the meantime, full class schedules during the academic year and jobs during the summer leave him limited time for actively marketing his book and writing the sequel. But driven by his passion for writing, he continues as time allows.

Near the end of our interview, referring to his sequel Mitch tells me, "The first book is done, but the story's not over yet."

That is exactly how I would refer to Mitch.



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