



## Syndicated interview with Terry Geo - Refraction

You left school at sixteen and started work in television a week later. At seventeen, you became the youngest director in the country. How did such an early start inform your career?

It spoiled me in a way. Most of my school friends were either at college or working in shops while I was meeting celebrities, dining in London and working in Florida. I adapted very quickly and when I was given the reins to direct a show for Yorkshire television, it felt like the natural progression. It's only when I look back, I realise how unique an opportunity it was.

Tell us about *The Final Journey to Oz*.

Wow, my first play. I was eleven years old. Our English teacher assigned us to write a short story. Most people wrote a few pages, I filled half the exercise book – with drawings if I remember correctly. My teacher at the time was so impressed, she suggested I adapt it into a play. I pulled together some class mates and we rehearsed for months at break times and after school. I remember the other teachers rallying around, making costumes for us all, which was really nice of them. When it came to the actual performance, the entire school was assembled. I took on the role of narrator while the cast acted out the play I'd written and directed. Afterwards, kids who had never spoken to me before, congratulated me and asked how I was able to write so well. I didn't know how to answer - writing just came naturally to me. I'd been doing it all my life.

How did you come up with the idea for *Refraction*?

Without giving too much away, the idea of Somnio had been mulling around my head before I started writing. The thought that we could manipulate and see people's dreams intrigued me. The idea formed quite quickly, but then came the difficult part, creating a story to get to Somnio. How do we get there, who are the characters to guide the reader, what are their stories? I remember vividly, sitting at my computer one night, a bottle of wine by my side and I just started writing. First Abby, then Terrell, then Jake and finally Ryder. I knew it would have been so much easier to tell the story from a first-person perspective, but I felt it needed these four independent characters to guide the

reader.

Do you identify with any of the characters?

In a way, they all symbolise different parts of me. Abby's night terrors, Ryder not wanting sympathy for his condition, Jake's frustration with being a gay guy in Yorkshire and Terrell being a huge geek.

What was it like writing your first book?

Creating a story from scratch is difficult. The way I write – and always have – is by sitting in front of a blank page and writing what comes into my mind. I just let it flow and see the story develop in front of me. I'll write things I don't know the answers to yet. As time goes on, I could be in the shower and the solution would pop into my head. I'd quickly get dressed and hop back on to my computer to continue writing. *Somnio* was the catalyst for the whole story but we don't get there until half way through the book, so it sometimes felt like an uphill struggle to reach it, but I persevered. Life and different projects got in the way for a good few years and *Refraction* was left in the background, but never forgotten. In January this year, I set out to finish the book I had started many years before. I had only written 35,000 words up to that point and still not reached *Somnio*. In June, when I finished the book, I had written an additional 80,000 words in just six months. I didn't stop and just pushed myself every day. This was my full-time job. I woke up, ate breakfast and got to work. It was a surreal moment when I finally typed the words *The End*. Of course, that isn't really the end of the process as then it had to go through months of editing, which took off around 15,000 words from the final version.

What's your favourite film? How did this inform your writing?

*The Neverending Story*. I was five when it was released. There was a poster advertising the film in our local shop and every time I saw it; I begged my parents to take me to see it. It's the first movie I remember watching in the cinema. I loved it, although the Gmork terrified me. I started drawing pictures from memory of the incredible creatures and characters I'd seen and started writing dialogue to go with them. I was a geek even at five years old – the first story I ever wrote was fan-fiction based on *The Neverending Story*. I was obsessed with it then and I'm still obsessed with it now, and it's the reason why one of the characters makes an appearance in *Refraction*.

Would you consider yourself a geek?

Definitely. I was a geek well before it was cool. I would write stories, poems and plays and perform them in front of people who lived on our street. I spent hours making clay animations, composing songs and obsessing over films, video games and books. I'm proud to be a geek. It's very much apart of who I am.

Is your book a typical sci-fi novel?



I feel people have deep-rooted opinions about what “sci-fi” means and forgetting entirely that “sci” stands for science. *Refraction* is the epitome of science fiction. It’s set in modern-day London and I’ve done everything I can to make it as believable and relatable as possible. I want it people to think “could that actually be happening right now?” Sci-fi doesn’t have to be set in space - a hundred years in the future and it certainly doesn’t have to be apocalyptic. Science fiction is just that, fiction based on science.

### Is your background in writing?

I’ve always been a writer, although it took me a long time to call myself that. Writing is my passion, something I excel in and the one thing I enjoy more than any other. Because of this, I felt I needed to do more with my life. I used to be obsessed with fame. I wanted to be a pop star, an actor, a TV presenter, so I did them all. However brief those professions lasted, I enjoyed them at the time, but fame is fleeting and not something I crave any more. I am happiest now when I write. It gives me a real excitement to create something out of nothing. To build a world and populate it with characters which once only lived in my head. And when you see it come to life, it’s one of the most beautiful and amazing feelings ever.

### What made you choose the title, *Refraction*?

This is difficult to answer as I don’t want to give anything away. It is the perfect title for the book, but the reason won’t become apparent to the reader until the last act of the story.

### You wrote and directed a musical in 2017 for the London stage, *Blink of an Eye*, which received fantastic reviews. How is writing for theatre different to writing a novel?

For me, writing is writing. Whether it be a novel, a blog post or a script. I’ve only recently found out that this isn’t common in the writing world and writers usually stick to their area of expertise. I don’t have that limitation. I find all forms of writing exciting. For me, formatting is my biggest challenge. I just want to be able to write. I have a script-writing programme called Final Draft. It’s used by professional script-writers the world over and is a fantastic bit of kit. It’s quite expensive, especially if you’re just starting out, but totally worth it. It makes the writing process so much easier. You don’t have to worry about formatting or things like that, you just write and the programme does everything else for you. I wrote the musical, *Blink of an Eye*, in just six months. With a script, once you’ve finished writing it, you can tweak any problems and change, add and delete lines in rehearsals as the audience never see the text on the page. You can’t do that with books. Every single word, spelling and punctuation mark has to be perfect on the day of release. That fact didn’t hit me until I had to send *Refraction* over to the copy editor. I spent twelve, sometimes sixteen hours a day scrutinising every line, and still I missed things. It has helped having more sets of eyes look

over the manuscript as well. With 105,000 words to go through, understandably I go word blind after my twentieth reading of the entire book. Writing a novel takes a lot more time, commitment and patience but the end result, when everything is finished, is definitely worth it. I've learned so much through this whole process and now I've finished my first book, I'm itching to start the next one.

You were in a pop-group in the '90s and have been in many musical theatre productions over the years. Does creativity permeate every aspect of your life?

I've always been a creative person. Writing, drama, music, art - it all fills me with joy. When I was a child, I had many dreams and ambitions and wanted to do them all. I was told time and again to stop dreaming and concentrate on one career – but what's the point in living if you don't enjoy it? I went out into the world wanting to experience as much of it as I could and even after the many amazing things I've done, I've still only scratched the surface. My ambition is my main motivator. I've never followed money and have been financially poor for the majority of my life, but I've been happy in the careers I've chosen. If I want something, I know I have to fight to achieve it, so that's what I do. However difficult it may seem at first or however long it takes to get there, anything is in reach if you really believe. The thing is, it's hardwired into me. I've briefly had jobs I hated that came with higher earning potential and I quit after a few months. If I stifle my creativity, it gets me down. Whatever I do in life, I need to use my natural talents, like we all do. I believe no one should ever give up on their dreams. We all get just one shot at life; we shouldn't waste it.

You have fought for gay and equal rights all of your adult life. How can literature be a vehicle for this?

I came out as gay when I was 16. Working class family, no gay friends, middle of Yorkshire, it was difficult, yet I didn't choose this. I had been bullied my whole life and ostracised for being different. I didn't want that. I wanted to fit in, but I couldn't change who I was inside. Knowing this pushed me to fight for equal rights. Whether you're disabled, gay, black, female, Asian, Latino or green - it doesn't matter. We are all the same species and deserve the same rights as everyone else. Over the years, I have marched, campaigned and blogged about my experiences. I have watched the world change as equal marriage spread across the world, gay rights being enforced in more countries and equality starting to blossom. But we're not there yet – not by a long shot. There are still countries in our world where gay people are killed because of their sexuality – which answers the question whether being gay is a choice or not. If you grew up in a country that hang or imprison people for have same-sex relations, would you choose that life? No. No one would. I needed to tell people this, but the more I shouted and begged and screamed, the fewer people listened. That's when I turned to writing. I wrote a musical about modern gay life and showed the darker sides, educating people in a light-entertainment medium. It worked. We had Q and As with the audience after each show, and a lot of them learned about the issues I raised without being preached to. I've done a similar thing with Refraction. The book is very pro-equality without ever making it an issue. Strong females, disabled ex-soldier, gay relationship, black, white, Asian and Latino main characters – they're all there, yet none of that is the main focus of the story. They are just human characters guiding the reader through the world. It's a world I wish we all lived in. I believe we will get there eventually, but it needs more people to stand up and speak out. My husband is Asian and in Singapore where he's from, it's still illegal to



be gay. When we travel there, we are no longer married in the eyes of their laws, which is upsetting for both of us.

### What was the hardest part of writing your book?

The editing process. I can write and write and write but at some point, it will need refining. Going through the manuscript countless times, examining every line and questioning every punctuation mark... It's a bit of a grind. Luckily, I worked with a great copy editor who helped with the pacing of the story and removing the waffley bits – although I did add some of them back in.

### What's next?

There is a lot more to come from the world of *Refraction*. I didn't want to end the book on a cliff hanger, but there are hints throughout the story of things to come. I am also working on some short stories based on the individual characters. When the book begins, Maria is already dead, (not giving anything away there, it's on the back-cover) but her life fascinates me and I feel her story needs to be told. Depending on the success of the book, I'd love to meet the fans, talk at festivals and conventions and hear what people think of *Refraction*. It's a weird thing to contemplate before my first book is published, but to be able to find a publisher would be amazing. Who knows what the future holds?

### About the book

Most stories start at the beginning; this one begins at the end. At least for Maria. Her sudden death sends shockwaves through her family and pushes her grieving mother to the very brink of insanity. After exhausting every avenue conventional medicine has to offer, Maria's father, Henry, brings together the world's greatest minds in the hope of carving out a new path. Months pass, and as Henry watches his beloved Elena slowly drift away, he begins to lose faith. It is only then that a solution presents itself. A discovery so momentous, it saves Elena and reveals the most important scientific and technological breakthrough in modern history.

Silicate is founded; a privately funded facility which delves deeper into the human mind, able to discover answers to questions we are yet to ask. Securing Silicate's secrets becomes of utmost importance; even after treating hundreds of patients, the public are still unaware of the wonders and terrifying reality Silicate has unearthed . . .

The world you know is only half the story.

### About the author

Born in Derbyshire, raised in Yorkshire, resides in London, Terry learned from a young age that he was different from his peers. He preferred the company of girls over boys, didn't like sports and would write at every opportunity. He was bullied throughout his school life both physically and verbally and had to deal with the cruelty of others from an early age.

Terry Geo wrote and directed his first play at age eleven. At sixteen, he started work in television, writing scripts and becoming the youngest director in the country. Terry applied for a job while taking his final exams and started work in television the week after he finished school. For the first time in his life, he found a world where he could shine and be accepted for who he was. He came out as gay to his parents the following week and never again hid his sexuality from anyone. At seventeen he became the youngest director in the country, producing a light entertainment show for Yorkshire Television. After a short stint in a boyband, Terry went back to writing, editing two national publications. He toured the world as an actor, moved to London and in 2017, wrote and directed a musical for the London stage. A year later, Terry married Ken, the love of his life, in London. After their honeymoon in Thailand, he returned to a book he had started some years before. In January 2019, his cat Megara sadly passed away. This hit Terry hard and in memorial to her, he wrote her into the book he was writing. She is now a part of Terry's debut published novel, *Refraction*.

**Title:** Refraction

**Author:** Terry Geo

**Genre:** Sci-Fi, Fantasy

**Publisher:** Independent

**Publication:** October 4 2019

**Availability:** Paperback & eBook

**ISBN:** 9781912256426

**Price:** £8.99 paperback

£5.99 ebook

**Twitter:** [RefractedWorld](#)

**Website:** [refractedworld.com](http://refractedworld.com)

**Press folder:**

[bit.ly/RefractionPR](http://bit.ly/RefractionPR)

**Online profile:** [literallypr.com/public\\_relations/file/Terry-Geo.php](http://literallypr.com/public_relations/file/Terry-Geo.php)

**MEDIA ENQUIRIES:**

[HelenLewis@LiterallyPR.com](mailto:HelenLewis@LiterallyPR.com)

[DianaAshlee@LiterallyPR.com](mailto:DianaAshlee@LiterallyPR.com)