

Transcript of the Neil Gaiman interview

Neil Gaiman: The author that I always leave out, who I'm starting to feel guilty enough about leaving out of my giant this is where I started, and I've decided to make a conscious effort to put her back in is Enid Blyton. Because when I was four, five years old Enid Blyton's short stories about pixies and fairies, things like the Wishing Chair and the Far Away Tree, they sort of prepared the ground. They might not quite have delivered the thing that I was after, but they let me know that there was something there. Which meant that by the time I was six and I found the Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, and the works of CS Lewis, I was, the ground had been prepared.

CS Lewis, PL Travers who wrote the Mary Poppins books, which are much more interesting books than I think people give them credit for. The idea of Mary Poppins as the sort of chthonic deity of this creature who has existed on the intersection between the numinous and cherry tree lane since the dawn of time is absolutely integral to the stories. And it becomes a way of thinking about the world. When I wrote The Graveyard Book one of the inspirations structurally, the giant obvious inspiration for the Graveyard Book was Kipling's The Jungle Book. But when I actually decided good I'm going to build a novel out of short stories, at that point the nearest thing I could think of was actually the Mary Poppins books. Where that's essentially what she would do. She would build a novel, it would have a beginning and an end, they would have a middle sequence of stories. And one of the stories in The Graveyard Book where the living and the dead dance is absolutely me just doing a PL Travers story. She didn't write that one but if she had it would have gone something like that.