

2137
05:55:30.080 --> 05:55:31.040
Sørina Higgins: Well.

2138
05:55:31.900 --> 05:55:32.519
Sørina Higgins: what do they.

2139
05:55:32.520 --> 05:55:35.780
The Mythopoeic Society: Yes, it's that time. Please introduce yourself.

2140
05:55:36.500 --> 05:55:37.339
Sørina Higgins: All right.

2141
05:55:38.290 --> 05:55:46.130
Sørina Higgins: Greetings and salutations, everyone. I'm Serena Higgins, or Sorry, and I am a freelance consulting editor

2142
05:55:46.180 --> 05:55:55.619
Sørina Higgins: through the word hoard service. So I, doctor sick manuscripts. I'm also sometime English teacher, editor, etc.

2143
05:55:55.740 --> 05:56:09.719
Sørina Higgins: And today I want to talk to you about the changing friendship between Tolkien and Williams, or, more accurately, Tolkien's changing feelings towards Charles Williams. Please feel free to interact in the chat at any time.

2144
05:56:09.972 --> 05:56:16.660
Sørina Higgins: I'm happy to look at those as they come up, and then take them either in real time or at the end, and then those in the room will take

2145
05:56:16.740 --> 05:56:18.690
Sørina Higgins: conversation at the end as well.

2146
05:56:19.990 --> 05:56:27.929
Sørina Higgins: this is a story about grief. It's a story of loss, sorrow, death, and rewriting the past

2147
05:56:28.010 --> 05:56:34.550
Sørina Higgins: in every friendship or every relationship, really, whether between humans or even with our pets.

2148
05:56:34.930 --> 05:56:50.650
Sørina Higgins: loss is inevitable, whether through time, distance, conflict, or finally death. And this is one such story. Jr. Tolkien and Charles Williams were friends for about 6 years, from 1,939, until Williams sudden death in 1,945.

2149

05:56:50.800 --> 05:57:01.799

Sørina Higgins: The exact nature of their friendship and the extent of their mutual admiration have been frequently debated, and I often get asked. Well, didn't Tolkien not like Charles Williams.

2150

05:57:01.850 --> 05:57:21.890

Sørina Higgins: and I wasn't certain of the answer. So I decided I'd give this talk, which would force me to find out for sure. And here's the reality. Williams seems to have had a steady affection and admiration for Tolkien, always constantly enjoying his company and his writings, while Tolkien's feelings changed and went through

2151

05:57:22.130 --> 05:57:29.619

Sørina Higgins: several different phases. So essentially 3 different phases to Tolkien's thoughts about Williams.

2152

05:57:29.830 --> 05:57:42.350

Sørina Higgins: deep affection and admiration during the 6 years that they were in Oxford together as members of the Inklings, 1,939 to 45, and then a period of mostly silence on Tolkien's part

2153

05:57:42.420 --> 05:57:44.680

Sørina Higgins: and reflection during his grief.

2154

05:57:45.010 --> 05:57:56.879

Sørina Higgins: and then somewhere around 1,933, or the evidence shows at least after 1,963, distancing himself from the memory of Williams and criticizing him and complaining.

2155

05:57:57.090 --> 05:58:06.989

Sørina Higgins: So we'll look at these 3 phases, and we will focus in particular upon the 1st phase, and Tolkien's contemporary delight in Williams's company

2156

05:58:07.240 --> 05:58:31.819

Sørina Higgins: during those 6 happy years he wrote a poem in praise of Williams, and at the end of the talk we will look at some parts of that poem in detail. I'll do that at the end. After I've given an overview of their history, we'll look at what evidence exists for the reasons explaining Tolkien's later shift of perspective, and talk a bit about how grief can change our perceptions of the past, just as writing can shape a new narrative of one's personal past.

2157

05:58:32.020 --> 05:58:34.669

Sørina Higgins: an historical past or a fictional one.

2158

05:58:34.980 --> 05:58:46.160

Sørina Higgins: Now, before I get into it, I want to give credit to John Raitliff, who wrote an article in 1,985 on this subject, and Bruce Carlton, who wrote a series of blog posts about it in 2,012,

2159

05:58:46.170 --> 05:59:01.560

Sørina Higgins: and also I draw heavily from their work, and also from Greville. Lindop's biography of Williams, as well as some correspondence with David Bratman and others, but apparently not enough.

People have read those works I just mentioned, since I so frequently get questions about their friendship.

2160

05:59:02.420 --> 05:59:12.529

Sørina Higgins: Now, just briefly here, if I shared the right screen, I should be able to drag my notes right under the camera. So I'm looking in the right place and you can't see them. Is that correct? You just the Powerpoint still.

2161

05:59:13.290 --> 05:59:14.260

The Mythopoeic Society: Just the Powerpoint.

2162

05:59:14.260 --> 05:59:19.423

Sørina Higgins: Okay, very good that way. I'm not looking off over my left shoulder from your perspective. Thank you.

2163

05:59:20.210 --> 05:59:23.189

Sørina Higgins: All right. So we think that

2164

05:59:23.630 --> 05:59:41.529

Sørina Higgins: Tolkien and Williams probably met in the spring of 1,936, sometime after that famous or infamous exchange of letters between Lewis and Williams, which, by the way, that famous letter exchange is usually told incorrectly. So, if you want me to correct the record at the end, just ask

2165

05:59:41.680 --> 06:00:08.179

Sørina Higgins: sadly. We don't know anything else about their 1st meeting, but it seems like it went well, because everything they say about each other thereafter is enthusiastic, and we know they had a few other visits, while Williams was still living in London, where he worked for the Oxford University Press for their popular publishing branch there in London, because, after he and Lewis exchanged letters, Williams would sometimes take the train up to Oxford and meet with the Inklings.

2166

06:00:09.130 --> 06:00:11.210

Sørina Higgins: In 1940,

2167

06:00:11.380 --> 06:00:19.099

Sørina Higgins: after Williams moved from London to Oxford because of the bombing, and joined the Inklings on a regular bi-weekly basis.

2168

06:00:19.500 --> 06:00:42.850

Sørina Higgins: Then in 1,940, Lewis and Tolkien sponsored Williams as a lecturer at Oxford there was a shortage of faculty and of students due to the war, but we know that Tolkien had extremely high standards as a pedagogue, and he would not have promoted Tolkien promoted Williams in a faculty position if he didn't trust his scholarship and his teaching ability.

2169

06:00:43.480 --> 06:00:59.790

Sørina Higgins: And then, later on, in the fall of 1941 Tolkien and Lewis got together with Williams to educate him on tutorial pay. So we see that they're interacting in this professional role where Tolkien is sponsoring Williams at the University of

2170

06:00:59.930 --> 06:01:01.336

Sørina Higgins: Oxford. There?

2171

06:01:02.340 --> 06:01:12.330

Sørina Higgins: And we know that Lewis was influential in getting Williams, the honorary Ma. I don't know whether Tolkien was or not, but he definitely was there to celebrate that. So it seems a mark of high respect.

2172

06:01:13.250 --> 06:01:30.019

Sørina Higgins: Williams writes to his wife, me call about pleasant meetings with Tolkien, Lewis, Morny, Lewis, Humphrey Haveard, and other members of the Inklings. Tolkien also writes mostly to his son Christopher. When he doesn't see them, he complains. I haven't seen Charles Williams for weeks.

2173

06:01:30.080 --> 06:01:33.560

Sørina Higgins: and when he does get to see them he mentions that it's a bright light.

2174

06:01:34.280 --> 06:01:42.410

Sørina Higgins: Also. Their admiration of Tolkien's writing was extremely important to him. In January of 1,944.

2175

06:01:43.161 --> 06:01:55.679

Sørina Higgins: He says that he read, oh, let's see, I switched that around in January, 1944, Williams writes to his wife Nicole that he read some of All Hallows Eve aloud to Lewis and Tolkien, who admire and approve.

2176

06:01:55.990 --> 06:02:01.220

Sørina Higgins: So that was important to him that he got their thumbs up on his draft of All Hallows Eve.

2177

06:02:01.860 --> 06:02:03.190

Sørina Higgins: and then.

2178

06:02:03.975 --> 06:02:11.859

Sørina Higgins: we get multiple times when Tolkien says I'm having a difficult time. But it was wonderful to see Lewis and Williams for a few hours.

2179

06:02:12.150 --> 06:02:14.749

Sørina Higgins: and he calls it quite an event for me.

2180

06:02:15.100 --> 06:02:37.809

Sørina Higgins: In April of 1,944, he read the passage of the Dead marshes to Lewis and Williams, and said it was approved, so they both use the same word about each other reading their drafts, and they both find the others approval to be meaningful to them. Again, in May of 44, Tolkien says, I completed my 4th new chapter, Faramir, which received fullest approbation from Csl. And Cw. On Monday morning

2181

06:02:37.960 --> 06:02:57.840

Sørina Higgins: again in later that same month in May 44. He's working on, I think, the Shelab chapter, and

he says I wrote and tore up and rewrote most of it a good many times. Yeah, we know we know you did that, and was rewarded this morning, as both Csl. And Cw. Thought it an admirable performance, and the latest chapters the best. So far.

2182

06:02:58.020 --> 06:03:09.749

Sørina Higgins: so again, their approval and appreciation of each other's work was important to them. Apparently their wives even exchanged gifts to each other, showing that they were part of this larger social circle.

2183

06:03:09.900 --> 06:03:13.900

Sørina Higgins: September of 44. This is an important passage.

2184

06:03:15.900 --> 06:03:44.949

Sørina Higgins: Tolkien says he finally got to go out to an Inklings this evening, after it's been a while enjoyed some pleasant talks which I have not enjoyed for moons. We heard the last chapter of Warney's book, and an article of Lewis's, and a long specimen translation of Virgil. Now I want you to remember this bit of this quote. I did not start home till midnight, and walked with Charles Williams part of the way, when our converse turned on the difficulties of discovering what common factors, if any, existed in the notions associated with freedom as used at present.

2185

06:03:45.040 --> 06:04:01.759

Sørina Higgins: So note that he and Williams left the Inklings together, and they walked. And they talked about an important concept. 1944, an important time to be talking about. What is freedom? And how do people use the word nowadays. So they talked about deep.

2186

06:04:01.900 --> 06:04:09.190

Sørina Higgins: important concepts together, and enjoyed each other's company, and even sought out each other's company.

2187

06:04:09.510 --> 06:04:11.660

Sørina Higgins: And I think that's important.

2188

06:04:13.940 --> 06:04:38.669

Sørina Higgins: Another time in November of 44, Tolkien writes that he hung out with Lewis and Williams, but I can recollect little of the feasts of reason and flow of soul, partly because we all agree so that seems pretty surprising. Given what we know of the things they actually did not agree on. But at this time there was such a rapport among them that they focused on those things they agreed on and discussed those

2189

06:04:38.910 --> 06:04:40.750

Sørina Higgins: at the Inklings.

2190

06:04:42.070 --> 06:04:43.150

Sørina Higgins: Now

2191

06:04:43.450 --> 06:04:54.660

Sørina Higgins: this is another really important conversation, a great event of an Inklings in the fall of 1944, and I want to read a fair bit of it, because it's just so much fun.

2192

06:04:55.090 --> 06:05:13.670

Sørina Higgins: Tolkien got to the Mitre at 8, joined by Williams and Haverg, and took fuel on board before joining the already well oiled diners in maudlin Cs. Lewis and Owen Barfield, which, by the way, this is only one of 2 instances in which we know for sure that Williams and Barfield met in person.

2193

06:05:13.740 --> 06:05:37.689

Sørina Higgins: Cs. Lewis was highly flown, but we were also in good fettle, while Barfield is the only man who can tackle Lewis, making him define everything, and interrupting his most dogmatic pronouncements with subtle distinguishes. The result was a most amusing and highly contentious evening. Wait! I thought you agreed on everything on which had an outsider eavesdropped, he would have thought it a meeting of fell enemies hurling deadly insults before drawing their guns.

2194

06:05:37.690 --> 06:05:44.019

Sørina Higgins: And so I just want to continue this quote because it's so funny and it gets at the heart of the way the inklings interacted.

2195

06:05:44.110 --> 06:05:59.130

Sørina Higgins: Warney was an excellent major form. On one occasion, when the audience had flatly refused to hear Jack discourse on and define chance, Jack said, very well some other time, but if you die tonight you'll be cut off, knowing a great deal less about chance than you might have.

2196

06:05:59.360 --> 06:06:14.710

Sørina Higgins: To which Warny replied, that only illustrates what I've always said. Every cloud has a silver lining. So unfortunately, that quote is not specifically about Tolkien and Williams interaction, but it is about the environment in which they enjoyed each other's company.

2197

06:06:15.770 --> 06:06:30.920

Sørina Higgins: The next important point about their friendship. At this time, on Christmas Eve, 1,944, apparently Charles Williams had just read all of the lord of the rings that existed up to that point

2198

06:06:31.080 --> 06:06:48.579

Sørina Higgins: he also had arranged for his typist, Margaret Douglas, to type the Lord of the Rings as it then existed. So he'd read all of the Lord of the rings that existed by Christmas, 1,944, and Williams had this amazing skill

2199

06:06:48.580 --> 06:07:05.450

Sørina Higgins: to see in a glimpse the big picture of something. If he was writing a work of history, he would see the character, the characteristics of that era at a glance. If he was writing a biography, he would sort of get that person's character. In one glimpse he had this ability to sort of get the Gestalt

2200

06:07:05.450 --> 06:07:25.339

Sørina Higgins: very quickly. And so when he read the Lord of the Rings, which was incomplete, 1,944, he said that the great thing is that the center of its work is not in strife and war and heroism, though they are understood and but depicted, but in freedom, peace, ordinary life, and good living.

2201

06:07:25.600 --> 06:07:43.549

Sørina Higgins: and that's pretty insightful. I think most of us would agree, and Tolkien certainly would agree that that is, at the center of Lord of the Rings. It may not be its main point. Perhaps the main point could be something to do with refusing to wield power for the domination of others, but its heart

2202

06:07:43.740 --> 06:07:52.540

Sørina Higgins: is in the shire, and Williams got this without even having the ability to read the scouring of the shire and the conclusion of it, because those weren't written yet.

2203

06:07:53.050 --> 06:08:00.169

Sørina Higgins: So I think it's important to know that Williams not only read Lord of the Rings, but appreciated it and got it.

2204

06:08:02.610 --> 06:08:05.010

Sørina Higgins: So that is the phase of

2205

06:08:05.230 --> 06:08:17.340

Sørina Higgins: Tolkien's great admiration for Williams, and I have found nothing in the documentation from that period to suggest any strife between them to suggest any

2206

06:08:17.390 --> 06:08:22.840

Sørina Higgins: suspicion of something he might disapprove of on Tolkien's part or any negativity.

2207

06:08:23.880 --> 06:08:27.330

Sørina Higgins: and during the period after William's death.

2208

06:08:28.060 --> 06:08:33.430

Sørina Higgins: Tolkien's positive comments about Williams continue, he writes to Williams, widow.

2209

06:08:33.580 --> 06:08:37.850

Sørina Higgins: dear Mrs. Williams, my heart goes out to you in sympathy, and I can say no more.

2210

06:08:38.070 --> 06:08:48.289

Sørina Higgins: I share a little in your loss, for in the far too brief years since I met him I had grown to admire and love your husband deeply, and am grieved more than I can express.

2211

06:08:48.510 --> 06:09:04.139

Sørina Higgins: Now, of course, this is to the widow of a man who has just died, and in those circumstances we say the most positive things about someone, but I have no reason to doubt Tolkien's sincerity in this comment that he's making, that I admit that he admired and loved Charles Williams deeply.

2212

06:09:04.380 --> 06:09:08.980

Sørina Higgins: And, by the way, thank you to Eric for the photograph here of William's grave.

2213

06:09:09.130 --> 06:09:30.879

Sørina Higgins: And then he also wrote in another letter. This was in 1,955. So 10 years later, I knew Charles

Williams well in his last few years, please remember that quote. I knew Charles Williams well, in his last few years it was good fortune amid disaster, that transferred Williams to Oxford, and we found the others presence and conversation delightful.

2214

06:09:31.560 --> 06:09:46.570

Sørina Higgins: He even refers to Williams's theology. In a letter to his son Michael about the church, he puts in a footnote, referring to something that Williams wrote in a theological work. So, to summarize those 1st 2 phases.

2215

06:09:47.130 --> 06:09:56.840

Sørina Higgins: they had great conversations. The 2 of them hung out there even other times the 2 of them went out to dinner together without the Lewis's or anyone else present. They read each other's work.

2216

06:09:57.150 --> 06:10:09.810

Sørina Higgins: Williams deeply and intimately understood Tolkien's writing, and they were close enough friends to tease and have many inside jokes. For instance, the following Clarahue, which must be one of Tolkien's masterpieces.

2217

06:10:09.890 --> 06:10:16.200

Sørina Higgins: the sales of Charles Williams leapt up by millions. When a reviewer surmised he was only Lewis disguised.

2218

06:10:16.820 --> 06:10:25.809

Sørina Higgins: which is, of course, nonsense, Lewis being a master of clarity and simple syntax, and Williams being quite the opposite. But the point is.

2219

06:10:25.840 --> 06:10:28.029

Sørina Higgins: they appreciated and understood each other.

2220

06:10:29.590 --> 06:10:30.710

Sørina Higgins: and then

2221

06:10:31.670 --> 06:10:39.289

Sørina Higgins: we get to around 1,963, and thereafter, when Charles Williams is no longer in the picture.

2222

06:10:40.040 --> 06:10:49.519

Sørina Higgins: Lewis put together a volume called Essays presented to Charles Williams and wrote a preface that's just full of praise of Williams.

2223

06:10:50.370 --> 06:10:52.420

Sørina Higgins: Lewis writes in it that Williams.

2224

06:10:52.863 --> 06:11:00.200

Sørina Higgins: by the time he came to Oxford at 39, very quickly became as dear to all my Oxford friends as he was to me.

2225

06:11:00.460 --> 06:11:06.159

Sørina Higgins: and in Tolkien's copy Tolkien has penciled in the margin. Alas! No!

2226

06:11:07.050 --> 06:11:16.159

Sørina Higgins: Later, in that same preface Lewis writes, in every circle Williams entered. He gave the whole man, and Tolkien has penciled in. No, I think not.

2227

06:11:16.570 --> 06:11:17.310

Sørina Higgins: Huh!

2228

06:11:19.000 --> 06:11:27.699

Sørina Higgins: From a letter to Michael Tolkien a draft letter from November or December 1,963, when Lewis has just died.

2229

06:11:27.830 --> 06:11:46.090

Sørina Higgins: Tolkien writes to Michael, many people still regard me as one of Lewis's intimates. Alas! That ceased to be so some 10 years ago we were separated 1st by the sudden apparition of Charles Williams, and then by his Lewis's marriage. Williams influence spoiled that hideous strength.

2230

06:11:46.430 --> 06:12:04.380

Sørina Higgins: And similarly, in 1,964, Tolkien writes, yes, Csl. Was my closest friend. From about 1,927 to 1,940, and remained very dear to me. His death was a grievous blow, but, in fact, we saw less and less of one another after he came under the dominant influence of Charles Williams, and still less after his strange marriage.

2231

06:12:05.210 --> 06:12:17.940

Sørina Higgins: and a couple of months later, in 1,964. Tolkien admits to Anne Barrett of Houghton Mifflin. I'm a man of limited sympathies, and Charles Williams lies almost completely outside them.

2232

06:12:18.390 --> 06:12:24.320

Sørina Higgins: Okay, now one could say, Well, he's only talking there about Williams's writing, not about the man.

2233

06:12:24.600 --> 06:12:50.259

Sørina Higgins: and he goes on to say I came into fairly close contact with him, heard All Hallows, Eve, and much enjoyed his company. Okay, so he still enjoyed his company, but our minds remained Poles apart. I actively disliked his Arthurian Byzantine mythology, and still think that it spoiled the trilogy of Cs. Lewis. But look at the phrasing, or listen to the phrasing. There. I came into fairly close contact with him.

2234

06:12:50.660 --> 06:12:58.370

Sørina Higgins: That's so impersonal compared to what he said about knowing him very well, and being such close friends

2235

06:12:58.440 --> 06:13:00.809

Sørina Higgins: during his life, and right after his death.

2236

06:13:02.170 --> 06:13:11.500

Sørina Higgins: in 1,965, he writes to Dick Plots about Lewis's mythology. It was broken to bits before it came became coherent.

2237

06:13:11.520 --> 06:13:22.420

Sørina Higgins: It was broken to bits before it could become coherent, I would say, by contact with Williams and his Arthurian stuff, which happened between Perilendra and that hideous strength. A pity, I think.

2238

06:13:22.670 --> 06:13:31.119

Sørina Higgins: but then I was, and remain wholly unsympathetic to Williams mind, I knew Charles Williams only as a friend of Cs. Lewis.

2239

06:13:31.380 --> 06:13:41.520

Sørina Higgins: who I met in his company, spent time in Oxford. We liked one another, and enjoyed talking mostly in Jess, but we had nothing to say to one another at deeper or higher levels.

2240

06:13:42.040 --> 06:13:42.930

Sørina Higgins: Now

2241

06:13:43.070 --> 06:14:11.719

Sørina Higgins: we're reasonably sure that's not true, because we had that letter in which he says they went on this walk after midnight and talked about the nature of freedom, a concept extremely important to both of them. So that does seem to be at least one conversation on record at deeper or higher levels. And it's not true that he only knew him through Lewis, since he chose to spend one on one time with Williams. Next sentence of the same letter. I doubt if he had read anything of mine then available.

2242

06:14:11.970 --> 06:14:12.900

Sørina Higgins: Well.

2243

06:14:13.190 --> 06:14:15.831

Sørina Higgins: we just found out that

2244

06:14:16.590 --> 06:14:32.139

Sørina Higgins: Williams had read everything. Okay, not everything, because reams and reams and reams, but everything of the Lord of the rings that was then available, and had understood it deeply. So yes, as Leah is saying, it seems to be doing a sort of rewriting. I didn't even know this guy right?

2245

06:14:34.260 --> 06:14:46.449

Sørina Higgins: he says. In 1,966 Williams work was an astronomical astronomical accident that had no effect on his work, and no effect on any other inkling except Lewis

2246

06:14:48.020 --> 06:14:57.749

Sørina Higgins: And says to another correspondent in 66. I had no personal discussions with him about literature. His work gave me no pleasure, but I found him a pleasant companion socially.

2247

06:14:58.910 --> 06:15:02.809

Sørina Higgins: and then in an interview he says.

2248

06:15:03.207 --> 06:15:18.159

Sørina Higgins: Oh, sorry I went to put this one up when I read the quote about. I doubt if he had read anything of mine. Then he says an interview. I didn't even know him very well. Just a few minutes ago I read you that letter in which he says I knew him very well.

2249

06:15:19.040 --> 06:15:30.050

Sørina Higgins: and then, finally, there's that report by 3rd or 4th hand, that Paul Drayton told Carpenter that Tolkien had told him that Charles Williams was a witch doctor.

2250

06:15:31.600 --> 06:15:44.040

Sørina Higgins: So what happened? What happened between 1945 and 1,963 for Tolkien to want to do this act of distancing.

2251

06:15:44.570 --> 06:15:48.050

Sørina Higgins: and I think that there are several causes.

2252

06:15:48.160 --> 06:15:50.469

Sørina Higgins: and one is grief.

2253

06:15:51.190 --> 06:15:52.010

Sørina Higgins: but

2254

06:15:52.330 --> 06:15:54.170

Sørina Higgins: grief alone.

2255

06:15:54.410 --> 06:15:57.389

Sørina Higgins: for Charles Williams might not explain it.

2256

06:15:57.420 --> 06:16:01.920

Sørina Higgins: but interestingly, and John Rayliff talks about this.

2257

06:16:01.950 --> 06:16:11.170

Sørina Higgins: It seems that grief for C.S. Lewis's death was also a factor, because when Jack Lewis died in November, 1,963.

2258

06:16:11.290 --> 06:16:40.299

Sørina Higgins: It seems that Tolkien looked back and started reflecting on his loss of Lewis, and realized that it was a multi stage loss. Yes, he lost Jack completely in 63 when Jack died, but he'd already lost him earlier when Louis married Joy Davidman, an American, a former Communist, a divorcee without the Church's blessing, and kept it a secret, and then tried to bring her into the Inklings. So Tolkien felt like he was losing Lewis, and then it seems that he went further back and remembered. But you know what I already started losing, Jack

2259

06:16:40.690 --> 06:16:47.450

Sørina Higgins: when Williams kind of replaced me as best friend, so maybe he found it easier to blame

2260

06:16:47.480 --> 06:17:09.490

Sørina Higgins: Williams's meteoric appearance rather than himself or Jack's character, etc, and, as we all know, grief is hard to explain. It does weird things to us. It does odd things to our memories. It doesn't come in nice, neat stages. It can come all at once, or in waves, or in cycles or roller coasters, and it often does lead us to rewrite our past.

2261

06:17:10.490 --> 06:17:20.440

Sørina Higgins: The next thing that happened to make Tolkien reconsider was that 2 works were published that contained biographical information about Williams.

2262

06:17:20.590 --> 06:17:38.720

Sørina Higgins: 1958. Anne Riddler brought out an edition of a bunch of Williams's Essays. She called it the image of the city, and it has a long introduction that includes some biographical information. And then Alice Mary Hadfields, and introduction to Charles Williams came out in 1,959.

2263

06:17:38.890 --> 06:17:49.444

Sørina Higgins: Now neither of these books contained the facts about William's life that Tolkien would have found most shocking and disturbing. None of those came out until

2264

06:17:50.150 --> 06:17:53.709

Sørina Higgins: after Micah Williams. Death in, I think, 72.

2265

06:17:54.090 --> 06:17:56.230

Sørina Higgins: But there are some hints

2266

06:17:56.700 --> 06:18:03.220

Sørina Higgins: of the things Tolkien would have found disturbing, and there are some matters that he would have disapproved of altogether.

2267

06:18:03.720 --> 06:18:11.830

Sørina Higgins: The one that I was surprised to find there's not very much said at all is about Williams's relationship with Phyllis Jones.

2268

06:18:12.315 --> 06:18:25.350

Sørina Higgins: Who has been variously called his mistress, or his Platonic mistress, or whatever this woman that Williams fell in love with in 1924, and never fell out of love with even though on her side only lasted about

2269

06:18:25.380 --> 06:18:45.629

Sørina Higgins: a year. So Tolkien obviously would not have approved of this extramarital affair. Even if it was only emotional. It was highly physical, physical, and sexual, but apparently not consummated. But Tolkien obviously would not have approved of that. As I say, they're only the merest hints. For instance.

2270

06:18:45.770 --> 06:19:00.940

Sørina Higgins: Riddler says that in one of Liam's relationships at his workplace he saw a second image of romantic love. I mean, that's not much, but Tolkien is a careful reader, so he may have picked up on that and thought, oh, there was something going on there.

2271

06:19:01.520 --> 06:19:10.179

Sørina Higgins: Well, another detail revealed in these works, especially in had fields, is how important

2272

06:19:10.550 --> 06:19:22.129

Sørina Higgins: Tolkien's workplace at Amen House was, and she, being a member of it herself, makes a great deal out of it, and says that it was far more important to him than the inklings were.

2273

06:19:22.540 --> 06:19:30.050

Sørina Higgins: She writes things. Like all William's personal, happy experience of positive mingling with his world lay in those 10 years that he spent

2274

06:19:30.160 --> 06:19:34.300

Sørina Higgins: with Oxford interest in London. It was the most important group of his working life.

2275

06:19:36.280 --> 06:19:57.009

Sørina Higgins: and also teaching at the City Literary Institute in London. She says, I doubt whether the great conversations at Maudlin College during the war described by Cs. Lewis, meant more to him than the 1,000 and One Nights in London cafes with any friend or student. So it's a direct blow against the inklings, saying they weren't nearly as important to him as his London circle.

2276

06:19:57.240 --> 06:20:02.649

Sørina Higgins: She says the greatest break up of his life was leaving London and coming to Oxford.

2277

06:20:03.540 --> 06:20:10.009

Sørina Higgins: and about the inklings she writes by his last 2 years the interest flagged, and it grew a little burdensome.

2278

06:20:10.810 --> 06:20:32.020

Sørina Higgins: Now, I don't mean to suggest here that Tolkien is just petty and like oh, those people were better friends of his than I was, but he may have been surprised if he thought that what Hadfield was saying was true. He may have thought oh, I just didn't know him as well as I thought I did, and Lewis and I in our circle were not as important to him as we thought we were, so I need to reevaluate.

2279

06:20:33.070 --> 06:20:43.349

Sørina Higgins: But there's more. The revelation that probably would have disturbed him most is the fact that Williams was a member of at least one mystical secret society.

2280

06:20:43.816 --> 06:20:52.390

Sørina Higgins: And he didn't even know all of it. He didn't even know about the second group that was much more explicitly occult and much less mystically Christian. But

2281

06:20:52.410 --> 06:21:12.500

Sørina Higgins: this would have been enough. So Williams was a member of the fellowship of the Rosy Cross from 1,917 to 1,927, took it very seriously, memorized all the rituals, rose up the ranks very quickly, and became a leader called Master of the Temple for 3 different periods, and learned the entire system there.

2282

06:21:13.020 --> 06:21:14.090

Sørina Higgins: and

2283

06:21:14.300 --> 06:21:19.670

Sørina Higgins: Riddler talks about this somewhat. Now, of course, Riddler and Hadfield

2284

06:21:19.720 --> 06:21:36.230

Sørina Higgins: get it kind of mixed up in this early scholarship. They call it the Order of the Golden Dawn, which it wasn't. But that would have been even more disturbing to Tolkien than the reality, because he may have known about William Butler, Yeats, Alastair, Crowley, and a few others being members of the Golden Dawn.

2285

06:21:36.570 --> 06:21:42.600

Sørina Higgins: Riddler writes about how Williams learned the idea of the Ubermensch from these groups.

2286

06:21:42.640 --> 06:21:52.410

Sørina Higgins: and that it was a Rosicrucian order that taught him a certain approach to study, and that he touched on the fringe of centers of hidden knowledge and mysteries.

2287

06:21:54.720 --> 06:22:02.529

Sørina Higgins: and she says that its influence upon his work was considerable, and specifically mentions that he learned the sepherotic tree from the

2288

06:22:02.610 --> 06:22:14.069

Sørina Higgins: Kabbalistic tradition, so Tolkien would have disapproved of that highly and found it extremely disturbing. And maybe it was on the heels of that discovery that he said to Paul Drayton that Williams was a witch doctor.

2289

06:22:14.780 --> 06:22:25.350

Sørina Higgins: Furthermore, not only did Williams join a secret society, but he started one or something very like it himself. It wasn't strictly secret, but it was special.

2290

06:22:25.420 --> 06:22:30.600

Sørina Higgins: There's a passage in Hadfield when she recounts that some woman

2291

06:22:30.710 --> 06:22:38.290

Sørina Higgins: wrote a fan letter to Williams saying that she wanted to be a companion of Charles Williams, the capital C, as if it's like a member of A.

2292

06:22:38.330 --> 06:22:40.160

Sørina Higgins: Of a Carolingian order.

2293

06:22:40.760 --> 06:22:57.990

Sørina Higgins: She had already agreed with some other people to set time apart each day for certain readings, and she wanted him to set the same hour apart and join with them like mystically, and kneel on mats and turn towards Mecca or Byzantium, or God knows where. Now Williams laughed this off, and said that this woman was crazy.

2294

06:22:58.260 --> 06:23:13.549

Sørina Higgins: but it doesn't sound to me all that wildly different from what he actually did start in the companions of the coherents, a group that would come together to bear each other's burdens, spiritually, emotionally, and psychologically, and so forth.

2295

06:23:13.970 --> 06:23:15.410

Sørina Higgins: So I think

2296

06:23:15.740 --> 06:23:38.030

Sørina Higgins: that reading this material and or possibly talking to some people who knew about this would have shocked Tolkien. I think it would have complicated his grief further with a feeling of betrayal. The reality was a very good, very close friendship with delightful conversations on important subjects, but it seems that later he had a sense of being lied to.

2297

06:23:38.150 --> 06:23:48.110

Sørina Higgins: or at least of interacting with, masks, with not the whole man, to use Lewis's phrase, and that it made him rewrite the past in his mind.

2298

06:23:49.010 --> 06:24:15.369

Sørina Higgins: So that is my survey of their friendship and the stages of Tolkien's feelings, at least as far as I can reconstruct it from the documents. If you want to ask a couple of questions about that, now you can out loud in the chat, and then we can turn to the poem. We can go back in time to the happy era of their friendship, and we can look at the poem that Tolkien wrote for Williams. So why don't we just take a little like question interlude here? Does anybody wanna

2299

06:24:15.380 --> 06:24:17.679

Sørina Higgins: say or ask anything at this point.

2300

06:24:18.300 --> 06:24:19.579

Sørina Higgins: and then we can go on.

2301

06:24:22.310 --> 06:24:24.580

Sørina Higgins: And if not, that's cool, too.

2302

06:24:26.040 --> 06:24:26.810

Sørina Higgins: Okay?

2303

06:24:28.480 --> 06:24:29.730

Sørina Higgins: And if you

2304

06:24:30.050 --> 06:24:38.942

Sørina Higgins: Oh, jj, you made this interesting comment in the chat that Tolkien wanted Lord of the Rings to replace Arthurian legend as the great British legend. So do you think that maybe

2305

06:24:39.840 --> 06:24:44.529

Sørina Higgins: Williams, using the Arthurian legend as the great British legend, and maybe he felt that it was sort of

2306

06:24:44.710 --> 06:24:54.709

Sørina Higgins: competition or just the not right, not the right way to go about it, because there are lots of reasons that Tolkien decided not to use Arthur Real, and he tried, of course, in the fall of Arthur.

2307

06:24:54.930 --> 06:24:56.378

Sørina Higgins: but he decided that

2308

06:24:56.960 --> 06:24:59.960

Sørina Higgins: It was too Celtic, too Frenchified.

2309

06:24:59.990 --> 06:25:07.739

Sørina Higgins: not closely associated enough with the development of the English language, and too explicitly Christian. So that's why he did not use

2310

06:25:08.740 --> 06:25:18.919

Sørina Higgins: Arthuriana. Well, Tim, what is the great British legend? That is a good question. According to Tolkien, not the Arthurian, because it was appropriated by the French.

2311

06:25:19.220 --> 06:25:23.689

Sørina Higgins: And so that's why he was creating Lord of the Rings to to replace it.

2312

06:25:26.620 --> 06:25:31.919

Sørina Higgins: all right. Well, we'll go on to the poem now and then anything that you think of feel free to say at any point.

2313

06:25:32.650 --> 06:25:39.199

Sørina Higgins: So in 1943, at the height of the inkling social and creative energy

2314

06:25:39.280 --> 06:25:55.710

Sørina Higgins: during the happy time of our friendship of their friendship. Huh! Tolkien wrote a poem about our dear Charles Williams. It's long. It's over 3 pages. It's full of praise and gentle teasing, and inside jokes there are lots of references that may escape the casual reader, or someone who isn't as familiar with Williams works.

2315

06:25:56.978 --> 06:26:00.869

Sørina Higgins: So we will go through it. But first, st the title of the poem

2316

06:26:01.360 --> 06:26:16.030

Sørina Higgins: is not our dear Charles Williams, but a closed letter to Andrea Cherikori, days, surnamed Polygraphius Logothe, of the theme of Geodesia in the Empire bard of the court of Camelot, Mallius Moletarium, in Klingasum sometimes known as Charles Williams

2317

06:26:17.280 --> 06:26:18.580

Sørina Higgins: Yay.

2318

06:26:18.720 --> 06:26:20.009

Sørina Higgins: Brilliant title.

2319

06:26:20.800 --> 06:26:22.570

Sørina Higgins: and it beginneth.

2320

06:26:23.460 --> 06:26:30.149

Sørina Higgins: begins our dear Charles Williams. Many Guises shows the novelist comes first, st

2321

06:26:30.350 --> 06:26:32.668

Sørina Higgins: so take a look at the

2322

06:26:33.030 --> 06:26:37.009

Sørina Higgins: the very beginning there, even before the 1st word. They're quotation marks.

2323

06:26:37.390 --> 06:26:39.669

Sørina Higgins: So this is a persona

2324

06:26:39.860 --> 06:26:57.240

Sørina Higgins: poem. It it's written as if in Tolkien's voice. But a projection of Tolkien, as if this is a conversation at an inklings. So you gotta imagine that this entire 3 page poem, with a little exception, that we'll talk about is Tolkien going on a rant

2325

06:26:57.290 --> 06:27:09.009

Sørina Higgins: at an inklings, and I guess Williams is not present at this specific inklings meeting. But it's written in 43, so I don't think it's to be imagined. I don't think we're to take it as being after Williams death. I think it's just supposed to be like.

2326

06:27:09.150 --> 06:27:11.779

Sørina Higgins: He's not here tonight, and so I can kind of go off

2327

06:27:11.810 --> 06:27:13.439

Sørina Higgins: on this rant.

2328

06:27:13.930 --> 06:27:15.719

Sørina Higgins: So that's why the quotation marks.

2329

06:27:16.190 --> 06:27:28.069

Sørina Higgins: I think it's insightful that Tolkien notes right away that Williams wears many or comes, shows up in many guises, and the novelist comes first. st Novelist has been

2330

06:27:28.310 --> 06:27:35.380

Sørina Higgins: the genre for which Williams is the most most well known. Now, it wasn't necessarily during his lifetime. I think it was more well known

2331

06:27:35.460 --> 06:27:42.350

Sørina Higgins: for his plays, because they were so. They were in the public eye. But if if Tolkien wasn't observing, he was predicting.

2332

06:27:42.380 --> 06:28:00.019

Sørina Higgins: but do you think there might be some sense that even now he knows that there is more to Williams than shows up. He does wear many guises, and in retrospect it almost seems like he's saying here that Williams comes in disguises. But, as I said, the evidence suggests, Tolkien didn't know that at the time

2333

06:28:00.880 --> 06:28:15.484

Sørina Higgins: I find his prose obscure at times. Yeah. Dude me too often are his. Not easily. It flows too often. Are his lights held up in brackets. Now that's clever. That's a nice pun.

2334

06:28:16.370 --> 06:28:26.350

Sørina Higgins: because it's a little bit. So so the literal metaphor there is like wall sconces that are hung in fittings on the wall, right lights held up in brackets

2335

06:28:26.420 --> 06:28:32.400

Sørina Higgins: which you think would be a good thing, because when the lights are hung up on the wall and brackets, they can shed their illumination across the room. But no.

2336

06:28:32.520 --> 06:28:42.650

Sørina Higgins: and what he's actually saying is, the dude's syntax is really really complicated, and he has tons of parentheses in them, and like nested parentheses and brackets that literally hold up

2337

06:28:42.780 --> 06:28:50.119

Sørina Higgins: the progress of the sentence. So here's an example. Okay, I picked a sentence out of place of the lion.

2338

06:28:51.590 --> 06:28:55.520

Sørina Higgins: and the character is just asking is somebody okay?

2339

06:28:55.690 --> 06:28:57.499

Sørina Higgins: So here, go. Here's the sentence.

2340

06:28:57.940 --> 06:29:00.079

Sørina Higgins: I've really only called to ask

2341

06:29:00.100 --> 06:29:14.910

Sørina Higgins: Dash if I may dash a question about Mr. Barringer, Anthony said. We heard in London that he was very ill, and as he's a person of some importance, parentheses. This, he thought guiltily, is the archetypal lie, and parentheses. I thought I'd run down and inquire.

2342

06:29:16.010 --> 06:29:23.090

Sørina Higgins: You see how there's what could be a fairly simple sentence. I really only called to ask a question about Mr. Berenger, he's a person so importance. How's he doing?

2343

06:29:23.640 --> 06:29:36.050

Sørina Higgins: But then we get an interruption in brackets, in parentheses. This, he thought guiltily, is the archetypal lie Mr. Behringer is not a person of any importance, but he's just buttering up the housekeeper.

2344

06:29:37.740 --> 06:29:52.970

Sørina Higgins: And yet it's super clever, because the whole novel, the place of the lion is about the Platonic archetypes coming to life as gigantic animals. So he's this character is telling an archetypal lie in a story in which you have to decide which archetypes to be loyal to.

2345

06:29:53.160 --> 06:29:54.600

Sørina Higgins: So it's not really that

2346

06:29:55.170 --> 06:30:03.359

Sørina Higgins: blames his lights. His insights are held up in the brackets. They're they're helped by the brackets, but it makes it a lot harder to understand

2347

06:30:04.110 --> 06:30:05.180

Sørina Higgins: yet.

2348

06:30:05.480 --> 06:30:16.419

Sørina Higgins: So Tolkien is going to praise him. He's not just going to criticize him yet error. Should he spot it, he'll attack its sources and head, exposing ramps and rackets, the tortuous byways of the wicked heart and intellect corrupt.

2349

06:30:16.460 --> 06:30:26.690

Sørina Higgins: yea, many a dart, he crosses with the fiery ones the art of minor fiends, and, major he reveals when Charles is on his trail the devil squeals for cloven feet have vulnerable heels.

2350

06:30:27.000 --> 06:30:33.280

Sørina Higgins: so he's praising him here for being able to hunt down wickedness and expose it.

2351

06:30:33.420 --> 06:30:47.339

Sørina Higgins: Maybe this is in war in heaven, in which the villain performs a kind of a black mass. Maybe

it's Williams History of Witchcraft, or it could be in his last great novel, All Hallows Eve, which he was reading to them in draft at the time.

2352

06:30:47.600 --> 06:31:01.359

Sørina Higgins: But it's not only evil that Williams can expose, Tolkien says, but heavenly footsteps too, can Williams trace? And after Dante plunging, soaring race up to the threshold of eternal grace.

2353

06:31:01.620 --> 06:31:09.750

Sørina Higgins: and I was trying to think what works would have been available for Tolkien to read at this time in which Williams follows Dante soaring up to Paradiso.

2354

06:31:10.422 --> 06:31:20.379

Sørina Higgins: Maybe he came down from heaven. Maybe the little pamphlet, Religion and Love and Dante, although I kind of doubt Tolkien would have read that he was working on figure. Beatrice. I suspect it was really in conversation.

2355

06:31:20.610 --> 06:31:26.169

Sørina Higgins: I suspect that it was when they were talking that Williams would get his kind of inspired flight of speech

2356

06:31:26.340 --> 06:31:28.829

Sørina Higgins: and soar up to Paradiso.

2357

06:31:30.608 --> 06:31:44.720

Sørina Higgins: The limits of all fallen man, maybe, or mine alone, perhaps explain why he seemed best to understand. Of all the 3 infernos dark involved geography. Maybe it's not William's fault that he seems to understand hell the best. Maybe it's just me.

2358

06:31:45.160 --> 06:31:49.779

Sørina Higgins: Maybe I'm just bringing my own sin nature to the reading. And then the word geography

2359

06:31:50.180 --> 06:31:56.529

Sørina Higgins: makes Tolkien think, yeah. Geography. Whoa! I gotta talk about geography for a little bit, guys.

2360

06:31:56.550 --> 06:32:02.260

Sørina Higgins: Here again he exerts a subtle mind. Here he again exerts a subtle mind and laboring pen.

2361

06:32:02.460 --> 06:32:04.870

Sørina Higgins: Geo. Geodc. Geodesi

2362

06:32:05.030 --> 06:32:17.399

Sørina Higgins: say rather for many a fen he wrote, and chapters bogged and tangled rhymes, and has surveyed Europa's lands and climes, and her diving buttocks, breast and head, to say no fowler thing where I, instead, dull eyed, can only see a watershed, a plain, an island, or a mountain chain.

2363

06:32:17.640 --> 06:32:25.790

Sørina Higgins: What the heck is he talking about here? He's not talking about the novels anymore. He's not talking about him to the guys as novelist. He's talking about him as Arthurian poet.

2364

06:32:26.120 --> 06:32:30.850

Sørina Higgins: and specifically, he's talking about this lovely picture, not safe for work warning.

2365

06:32:32.290 --> 06:32:39.039

Sørina Higgins: this map that Williams hired an artist at Oxford University press to make for him, and it was published

2366

06:32:39.210 --> 06:32:42.070

Sørina Higgins: in Taliesin through Logras, in 1,938.

2367

06:32:42.770 --> 06:32:44.290

Sørina Higgins: This image.

2368

06:32:44.300 --> 06:32:54.470

Sørina Higgins: if it had a key, would then be the key to Williams's mythology, because it layers many, many elements, many systems of symbolism from

2369

06:32:54.760 --> 06:33:01.179

Sørina Higgins: the Bible, Christian history, and various systems of occultism.

2370

06:33:01.990 --> 06:33:05.889

Sørina Higgins: So what he does is he takes this map of Europe, and he associates each

2371

06:33:06.270 --> 06:33:09.570

Sørina Higgins: province which he calls a theme with a part of the body.

2372

06:33:09.980 --> 06:33:37.579

Sørina Higgins: and then he associates each of those with a place on the tree of life in the Kabbalistic system, and he associates each one with a virtue and with a sign of the zodiac, and anywhere throughout the poetry, he might refer to one by means of one of the others. So my favorite example is in the poetry when there's a slave girl who is in the stocks, and she's been sitting there all day. Taliesin comes and sets her free and says, does the Caucasian theme ache?

2373

06:33:38.060 --> 06:33:40.929

Sørina Higgins: What he means is, is your butt sore from sitting so long?

2374

06:33:41.631 --> 06:33:48.869

Sørina Higgins: But if you don't know the map, you won't understand what he's saying there with that line. And so Tolkien doesn't, doesn't like this

2375

06:33:49.582 --> 06:33:51.390

Sørina Higgins: and he says

2376

06:33:51.430 --> 06:34:00.738

Sørina Higgins: I don't want to see her diving buttocks breast and head and fowler things. I just I just I just see mountains and rivers. It's all. It's all good

2377

06:34:01.160 --> 06:34:04.050

Sørina Higgins: which actually is a fairly profound

2378

06:34:04.470 --> 06:34:06.699

Sørina Higgins: theological misunderstanding.

2379

06:34:07.400 --> 06:34:10.936

Sørina Higgins: because I don't have time to go into this lucky you

2380

06:34:11.710 --> 06:34:16.550

Sørina Higgins: because to call the woman's loins a fowler thing

2381

06:34:16.570 --> 06:34:42.539

Sørina Higgins: is to completely misunderstand Williams's affirmative theology, and the way that Williams is saying, the body is a thing of glory, and by means of the human body we can get to know God, and I think if pinned down Tolkien would would agree. You know that the body is a positive thing, but he's not super comfortable with this gynecomorphical terrain where history and myth are raveled in a skein of endless interchange.

2382

06:34:42.540 --> 06:34:52.789

Sørina Higgins: But that phrase, endless interchange, gets at the heart of Williams theology, which is coherence, which is the ways in which we are spiritually interconnected.

2383

06:34:52.840 --> 06:34:58.929

Sørina Higgins: But, poor Tolkien! He does not hope to understand the deeds of king or pope, wizard or emperor, of whom there are many.

2384

06:34:59.130 --> 06:35:07.740

Sørina Higgins: Beyond my scope is that dark flux of symbol and event where fable, faith, and fairy are blunt with half guessed meanings. To some great intent I cannot grasp.

2385

06:35:07.940 --> 06:35:15.739

Sørina Higgins: for my elbows to me is but a high peak far beyond the sea, and high and far I'd ever have it be okay. So where is Mount Elbers

2386

06:35:15.840 --> 06:35:16.860

Sørina Higgins: on the map?

2387

06:35:17.940 --> 06:35:23.339

Sørina Higgins: It's the back end, and Tolkien is like, let's keep that far away, please. Thank you very much.

2388

06:35:25.650 --> 06:35:31.650

Sørina Higgins: and then I don't have time to continue and gloss every line. But obviously one.

2389

06:35:31.970 --> 06:35:41.909

Sørina Higgins: One conflict between them is their aesthetic slash. Theological difference on Byzantium, on the use of Byzantium as an image for the mythology.

2390

06:35:43.670 --> 06:35:44.950

Sørina Higgins: and

2391

06:35:45.390 --> 06:36:10.270

Sørina Higgins: not surprisingly, their approach to history. Williams takes history from around the year 400 or so Ad. To 1053, and he compresses it all down into Arthur's lifetime. And later on in the poem we can see that Tolkien just didn't get that. He's just like, when is this set? I'm confused about the varying historical references. And so Tolkien's response is, Oh, buttocks to Caucasia, just

2392

06:36:10.610 --> 06:36:14.350

Sørina Higgins: get rid of that. But then, notice, we have a shift of

2393

06:36:14.960 --> 06:36:24.200

Sørina Higgins: Speaker. Here. We have an end quote and a beginning quote, and I'll wrap up here soon. I know I'm at the end of my time. Somebody else comes in. Tolkien, please. What's biting you.

2394

06:36:24.240 --> 06:36:30.259

Sørina Higgins: and says you came to praise our Charles, but now you've wandered and he says.

2395

06:36:31.610 --> 06:36:34.700

Sørina Higgins: I I agree. I'm sorry I didn't mean to.

2396

06:36:35.100 --> 06:36:37.380

Sørina Higgins: I was gonna praise him, but

2397

06:36:37.500 --> 06:36:53.499

Sørina Higgins: I won't be muzzled. I don't understand it. And if you know Williams poetry very well, you can learn from Tolkien's poem that he really doesn't understand. He doesn't get what Williams is trying to achieve here, and that's probably due to what Lewis called Williams's damned obscurity.

2398

06:36:53.530 --> 06:37:02.949

Sørina Higgins: But and we'll close with this. Oh, I have a question for you all which you can answer in the chat, or afterwards. Who do you think is speaking in that interruption?

2399

06:37:03.230 --> 06:37:07.699

Sørina Higgins: I have a theory, but I'm not really sure. So who do you think might have interrupted talking, please?

2400

06:37:08.740 --> 06:37:13.300

Sørina Higgins: So we'll close with his positive lines at the very very end.

2401

06:37:13.780 --> 06:37:40.819

Sørina Higgins: Yeah, I don't understand his poetry. But when your cigarette is wagging and your spectacles are twinkling, when tea is brewing or the glasses tinkling, then of your meaning, often I've an inkling, your virtues and your wisdom. Glimpse your laugh, and my heart echoes when with you I cough the pint that goes down quicker than a half, because you're near. So heed me not. Sorry. It's jumped down halfway down the screen. I swear when you, with tattered papers, take the chair and read for hours, maybe I would be there

2402

06:37:40.890 --> 06:37:50.379

Sørina Higgins: and everyone in state. You sit again, and to your car, Imperial, give rein. I'll trundle, grumbling, squeaking, in the train of the great rolling wheels of Charles's Wayne.

2403

06:37:50.680 --> 06:38:15.430

Sørina Higgins: which is another fabulous pun as Charles is. Wayne is the Big Dipper or the Big Bear, and yet a Wayne is also a wagon or a chariot. So Tolkien is like I might grumble, but I'm gonna follow. I'm gonna come after Charles. Great constellation in the region of the summer stars and see where he takes us. So Tolkien loved Williams at this time they were great friends.

2404

06:38:15.770 --> 06:38:29.129

Sørina Higgins: It wasn't just Lewis's friend breaking in on them, and he only distanced himself after finding out about the fellowship of the Rosy Cross and feeling deceived and betrayed. It's like when you find out something about a friend, and you say, but I thought I knew you.

2405

06:38:29.190 --> 06:38:45.779

Sørina Higgins: and if you realize you didn't, it doubles the grief. I lost you, and now I've lost our good memories because they're tainted. And in a way his grief was quadrupled because Lewis died, and he learned that Williams fooled Lewis as well. So he also had to rewrite his memories of Jack Lewis

2406

06:38:46.640 --> 06:38:47.980

Sørina Higgins: interestingly.

2407

06:38:48.030 --> 06:38:54.719

Sørina Higgins: Both Williams and Tolkien also rewrite the past in their most famous and important works.

2408

06:38:54.720 --> 06:39:21.109

Sørina Higgins: Williams does this conflated history in which Arthur's kingdom, Logras is a Romano Byzantian empire, with no East West schism of the Church and Tolkien. Of course, his entire Legendarium is an imagined prehistory to our own human recorded history. So what did they do but rewrite the past all the time, sometimes for better, and sometimes, as in this case, with a rather sadder ending to it.

2409

06:39:21.310 --> 06:39:26.280

Sørina Higgins: So that's what I've got, and I look forward to discussing it with you a little bit. Now for a few minutes.

2410
06:39:27.540 --> 06:39:28.060
Sørina Higgins: Nice.

2411
06:39:28.060 --> 06:39:28.920
The Mythopoeic Society: Question.

2412
06:39:29.350 --> 06:39:29.890
Sørina Higgins: Yeah.

2413
06:39:30.490 --> 06:39:31.145
The Mythopoeic Society: Yeah.

2414
06:39:31.870 --> 06:39:35.140
The Mythopoeic Society: so could you come up here to the microphone, please?

2415
06:39:36.760 --> 06:39:49.099
The Mythopoeic Society: That poem is fascinating, I wonder? Do you see in it? Possibly the seeds of Tolkien's later department, because the poem seems to me to kind of be saying, Yeah, I really like this guy, but it's full of baloney.

2416
06:39:49.590 --> 06:39:50.020
Sørina Higgins: But.

2417
06:39:50.020 --> 06:39:51.449
The Mythopoeic Society: I like him.

2418
06:39:51.450 --> 06:40:00.800
Sørina Higgins: I I think so, and that does seem to be consistent with all the times when he says I really liked him as a person. I just couldn't stand his writing.

2419
06:40:00.880 --> 06:40:10.030
Sørina Higgins: And then, later on, he seems to be more like, I didn't even know him as a person. And yeah, what I did know of him I didn't really like. So I think you're exactly right, and the distancing

2420
06:40:10.080 --> 06:40:15.339
Sørina Higgins: is about the personal. Whereas he was, Tolkien was never into Williams's writing.

2421
06:40:15.510 --> 06:40:18.020
Sørina Higgins: Yeah, yeah. Thanks. Good question.

2422
06:40:21.060 --> 06:40:23.080

Sørina Higgins: Other questions, comments, thoughts.

2423

06:40:24.190 --> 06:40:29.049

The Mythopoeic Society: I find it interesting that after William's death.

2424

06:40:29.130 --> 06:40:36.130

The Mythopoeic Society: and Lewis is asking people to present something to put into a fresh shrift.

2425

06:40:36.650 --> 06:40:56.890

The Mythopoeic Society: Tolkien gives him on fairy stories, which is, I think, probably his best piece of of work as far as we're concerned. So I mean once again, that displays Tolkien's praise for Williams at that time, otherwise he might have like found something else. But he gave him on fairy stories.

2426

06:40:56.890 --> 06:41:02.420

Sørina Higgins: Good. So do you think giving him unfairy stories is a mark of respect.

2427

06:41:04.370 --> 06:41:10.409

The Mythopoeic Society: Yes, I I think so, because that's the 1st publication of that original public.

2428

06:41:10.530 --> 06:41:11.229

Sørina Higgins: I mean.

2429

06:41:11.230 --> 06:41:12.100

The Mythopoeic Society: Maybe.

2430

06:41:12.100 --> 06:41:12.679

Sørina Higgins: I had a.

2431

06:41:12.680 --> 06:41:13.879

The Mythopoeic Society: Had it.

2432

06:41:13.880 --> 06:41:19.057

Sørina Higgins: I had a slightly more cynical, which is like, well, it was already written, he's like, Here, take this.

2433

06:41:19.450 --> 06:41:22.649

Sørina Higgins: but didn't. Didn't they all do that. I don't think anybody wrote a new piece

2434

06:41:22.930 --> 06:41:27.330

Sørina Higgins: for the pieces that they thought Williams would have liked, or that had some resonance with Williams own work.

2435

06:41:29.240 --> 06:41:32.530

Sørina Higgins: and Wardy's piece is like very far afield.

2436

06:41:33.815 --> 06:41:34.540

Sørina Higgins: So

2437

06:41:34.550 --> 06:41:45.619

Sørina Higgins: William asks when I say Tolkien, thought Williams. Fooled Lewis. Can I explain further? Yes, absolutely. There's a line in the preface to the essays presented to Charles Williams.

2438

06:41:45.700 --> 06:41:48.379

Sørina Higgins: That is really really sad in retrospect.

2439

06:41:48.810 --> 06:41:55.840

Sørina Higgins: Lewis is talking about how Williams was incredibly charming, very charismatic. He says everyone who met him fell in love with him.

2440

06:41:57.400 --> 06:41:58.900

Sørina Higgins: And he says

2441

06:41:59.080 --> 06:42:02.150

Sørina Higgins: that Williams's appeal to women

2442

06:42:02.410 --> 06:42:06.290

Sørina Higgins: was extreme was enormous and was inexplicable.

2443

06:42:07.152 --> 06:42:24.029

Sørina Higgins: Sorry. I'm forgetting that bit, and was not inexplicable to other men, which is usually the case right? Usually men are like what all the girls like him, but in this case the man understood why, and he says if he had been a bad man he could have done whatever he wanted, as as either a Don Juan or a charlatan.

2444

06:42:24.510 --> 06:42:31.360

Sørina Higgins: Well, now, we, sitting here in 2024, know that Williams was a bad man and a charlatan, that he sexually abused

2445

06:42:31.440 --> 06:42:42.840

Sørina Higgins: many women that he spiritually abused many women, causing one of them to have a breakdown for 6 weeks, messing up their lives, ruining their future relationships.

2446

06:42:43.390 --> 06:42:45.630

Sørina Higgins: Tolkien did not know that.

2447

06:42:46.210 --> 06:43:07.040

Sørina Higgins: but he certainly would have felt that Williams fooled Lewis as far as the relationship with Phyllis Jones, and as far as being an occultist, and like an actual member of an occult secret society. So he would have thought that Williams put himself forward as a much better as a much better Christian than he

really was, and that he pulled the wool over Lewis's eyes. About that.

2448
06:43:07.930 --> 06:43:11.950
Sørina Higgins: Does that answer, Thomas? Or do you want me to dig in anymore.

2449
06:43:17.660 --> 06:43:22.420
The Mythopoeic Society: Serena. This makes a lot of sense. I've read all of the

2450
06:43:22.520 --> 06:43:29.079
The Mythopoeic Society: Tolkien's statements and looked at them kind of quizzically, and tried to figure out how they were consistent.

2451
06:43:29.340 --> 06:43:34.160
The Mythopoeic Society: This makes sense of it better than anything I've I've heard so far. So thank you.

2452
06:43:34.160 --> 06:43:36.119
Sørina Higgins: Good. Oh, thank you. And that's Donald. Right?

2453
06:43:36.200 --> 06:43:38.220
Sørina Higgins: Yes, hey? Yeah. Good.

2454
06:43:38.220 --> 06:43:39.470
The Mythopoeic Society: Down to 2 min.

2455
06:43:40.460 --> 06:43:41.110
Sørina Higgins: Okay.

2456
06:43:43.090 --> 06:43:44.510
Sørina Higgins: Anything else? Can I correct?

2457
06:43:44.510 --> 06:43:45.450
The Mythopoeic Society: And so.

2458
06:43:45.450 --> 06:43:46.680
Sørina Higgins: Yeah. Go ahead.

2459
06:43:48.640 --> 06:43:51.390
The Mythopoeic Society: I've got a clearer hue for Williams.

2460
06:43:51.390 --> 06:43:52.110
Sørina Higgins: Please.

2461
06:43:53.010 --> 06:43:59.409

The Mythopoeic Society: Charles Williams, Oxonian, but not professorial, worked in the office editorial.

2462

06:43:59.560 --> 06:44:04.450

The Mythopoeic Society: Jack brought him in, and in a twinkling he became the oddest inkling.

2463

06:44:04.450 --> 06:44:06.060

Sørina Higgins: Oh, man!

2464

06:44:09.280 --> 06:44:14.105

Sørina Higgins: Oh, that's very, very good. Thank you. The other one by Tolkien is

2465

06:44:14.910 --> 06:44:17.490

Sørina Higgins: saying my wait. Is it talking?

2466

06:44:17.510 --> 06:44:23.230

Sørina Higgins: Yeah, saying, my audience, though select and small. I'm gonna get all in my head before I say it.

2467

06:44:23.900 --> 06:44:30.110

Sørina Higgins: My audience, though select and small, is crammed with wealth of knowledge. It's rather stout and somewhat tall, and lives at Mudlin College.

2468

06:44:31.200 --> 06:44:38.159

Sørina Higgins: Lovely little clarity about friends in the 1 min remaining. Do you want me to clear up the incorrect story that's usually told about the letters

2469

06:44:38.180 --> 06:44:40.410

Sørina Higgins: so that you can correct people when they get it wrong.

2470

06:44:41.030 --> 06:44:41.740

The Mythopoeic Society: Because.

2471

06:44:41.740 --> 06:44:52.390

Sørina Higgins: Get this story that Lewis and Tolkien met by this great act of Providence. When their fan letters crossed in the mail, they did not cross in the mail. I am not convinced that Williams was going to write one.

2472

06:44:52.820 --> 06:45:06.469

Sørina Higgins: So what happened is, Williams was editing the allegory of Love was seeing the proofs through the Oxford Industry press, and meanwhile Lewis read the place of the lion lent to him by Neville Coghill. Lewis loved it, and wrote Williams a fan letter.

2473

06:45:06.833 --> 06:45:22.160

Sørina Higgins: Williams wrote back and said, it has never before happened to me that a man has been admiring my work while I am simultaneously admiring his. My admiration for the staff work of the

Omnipotence rises every day. If you had delayed another 24 h, our letters would have crossed in the mail.

2474

06:45:22.620 --> 06:45:43.780

Sørina Higgins: I'm not convinced that that's 100% honest. I think he probably would not have written a fan letter. It's not really a Williams in Williamsian thing to do. I think he was just saying I liked your book. I was reading it cool. You sent me a letter right away, and I almost could have as well. So that's it. So if you hear anybody say their letters crossed in the mail. Nope.

2475

06:45:44.040 --> 06:45:46.439

Sørina Higgins: alright, thank you, everybody. This is great.

2476

06:45:46.440 --> 06:45:52.040

The Mythopoeic Society: This leaves the question you asked. Who do you think? Interrupted Tolkien.

2477

06:45:52.040 --> 06:45:52.640

Sørina Higgins: So.

2478

06:45:52.640 --> 06:45:54.720

The Mythopoeic Society: And is the other speaker.

2479

06:45:54.720 --> 06:45:56.520

Sørina Higgins: Thank you, Janet. Who do you think.

2480

06:45:58.740 --> 06:45:59.680

The Mythopoeic Society: warning.

2481

06:46:00.580 --> 06:46:04.489

Sørina Higgins: I thought, Warny, I thought, Warny, except it does say Lewis.

2482

06:46:04.850 --> 06:46:05.420

Sørina Higgins: Now.

2483

06:46:05.420 --> 06:46:05.890

The Mythopoeic Society: Yeah.

2484

06:46:05.890 --> 06:46:08.559

Sørina Higgins: Would Warnie call his brother Lewis

2485

06:46:09.570 --> 06:46:11.900

Sørina Higgins: think so? So that.

2486

06:46:11.900 --> 06:46:13.459

The Mythopoeic Society: It sounds like sort of

2487

06:46:13.620 --> 06:46:25.769

The Mythopoeic Society: a warning as the host as this genial. Now, Tolkien, let's settle down, and I don't know one who's notorious for interrupting Tolkien would be Dyson.

2488

06:46:25.770 --> 06:46:30.759

Sørina Higgins: I thought. Dyson is a really good candidate, except it almost sounds nicer than Dyson.

2489

06:46:31.140 --> 06:46:32.809

The Mythopoeic Society: Yeah, exactly. It does.

2490

06:46:32.810 --> 06:46:34.236

Sørina Higgins: Nicer, Dyson.

2491

06:46:36.100 --> 06:46:39.910

Sørina Higgins: So do you think it might be another Tolkien persona?

2492

06:46:40.040 --> 06:46:49.679

Sørina Higgins: You think he's split himself up like he kind of ends up doing in the Notion Club papers to some extent, and it's like the better side of him. The friendly side is scolding the critical side of him.

2493

06:46:50.170 --> 06:46:52.219

The Mythopoeic Society: That would make sense possible.

2494

06:46:52.220 --> 06:46:53.469

Sørina Higgins: Yeah. So it could be that.

2495

06:46:54.080 --> 06:46:54.730

The Mythopoeic Society: And.

2496

06:46:55.380 --> 06:46:56.750

Sørina Higgins: Think that's all I've got.

2497

06:46:57.540 --> 06:46:59.420

The Mythopoeic Society: Okay. Thank you.

2498

06:46:59.420 --> 06:47:01.270

Sørina Higgins: Happy to see you.