

# mythPRINT



**Quarterly Bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society with Book Reviews, Short Articles, Event Information, and More!**

VOL. 54 NO. 1

SPRING 2017

WHOLE NO. 380



## Quarterly Bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society

VOL. 54 NO. 1

SPRING 2017

WHOLE NO. 380

### TABLE of CONTENTS

#### NEWS

Mythcon 48 Theme and GOH Announced ..... 3

#### FEATURES

*Dungeons & Dragons* on Collaborative Writing by  
Bethany L. Abrahamson ..... 4

ANNOUNCEMENTS.....11

Cover Art: #SLAY. By Dean A. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] © 2017

#### REVIEWS

Richard Firth Green. *Elf-Queens and Holy Friars*.  
Reviewed by Jared Lobdell ..... 5  
George MacDonald. *The Golden Key*. Reviewed by  
Janet Brennan Croft ..... 7  
Kel Richards. *The Sinister Student*. Reviewed by  
Shannyn Jordan ..... 8  
J. K. Rowling. *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child*.  
Reviewed by Ryder W. Miller ..... 2  
Kate Mosse. *The Taxidermist's Daughter*. Reviewed by  
Ryder W. Miller ..... 10

Reviews, discussion group reports, news items, letters, art work, notes or short articles, and other submissions for *Mythprint* are always welcome. In return for printed pieces, contributors who are not already subscribers will receive an electronic copy of the issue in which the item appears. Contributors who are already subscribers will not receive an additional copy. Please contact the editor for details on format, or send materials to:

Megan Abrahamson  
Editor, *Mythprint*  
[REDACTED]

The Mythopoeic Society also publishes two other magazines: *Mythlore* (subscription \$25/year for U.S. Society members) and *The Mythic Circle*, an annual magazine publishing fiction, poems, etc. (\$8/issue for U.S. addresses). Subscriptions and back issues of Society publications may be purchased directly through our web site (using PayPal or Discover card), or you may contact:

Mythopoeic Society Orders Department  
[REDACTED]

Visit The Mythopoeic Society online at [REDACTED]

*Mythprint* is the quarterly bulletin of the Mythopoeic Society, a nonprofit educational organization devoted to the study, discussion, and enjoyment of myth and fantasy literature, especially the works of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, and Charles Williams. To promote these interests, the Society publishes three magazines, maintains a World Wide Web site, and sponsors the annual Mythopoeic Conference and awards for fiction and scholarship, as well as local discussion groups.

#### MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTIONS

Mythopoeic Society membership: \$15/year includes an electronic subscription and \$25/year includes a paper subscription to *Mythprint*; either entitles you to members' rates on publications and other benefits.

#### POSTAGE AND NON-MEMBER SUBSCRIPTION RATES

First Class U.S.	\$25/year
Canada/Mexico	\$33/year
Rest of the world	\$42/year

*Complete & updated price lists can always be found on our website.*

The number in the upper right hand corner of your mailing label is the "Whole Number" of the last issue of your subscription. Checks should be made out to the Mythopoeic Society. Foreign orders should use U.S. funds if possible; otherwise add 15% to the current exchange rate. Back issues of *Mythprint* are available for purchase at our website.

ISSN 0146-9347, © 2017 The Mythopoeic Society

## MYTHCON 48: ALL THAT IS GOLD

The Mythopoeic Society will be  
celebrating the 50th  
anniversary of the society

July 28-31, 2017  
Champaign-Urbana, Illinois

Details of location, housing, and our first Progress Report will be available *soon* (not instantly!). We encourage you to register now and plan to join us next summer in Illinois for an historic conference.

### Conference Theme

#### Gold in fantasy:

- Greed for gold: Tolkien's dwarves and gold lust, economic systems in fantasy and fantasy gaming
- Gold as a color: color symbolism in fantasy and heraldry
- Gold as an element: gold and other fantastic elements and materials like mithril, octarine, meteorite metal, unobtainium, or the list of semi-precious gems in Tolkien's "Errantry"...
- The Golden Age: in fantasy and myth, of fantasy as a genre

#### Digging for Gold in the Archives:

- Primary and secondary materials about the Inklings and other fantasy authors in the archives at Marquette University, the Wade Center, Oxford University, and other locations
- Fan material and society archives Materials in collections at the University of Illinois, especially the Center for Children's Books
- Archives, libraries, writing, and research in fantasy

### Guests of Honor Announced

The Mythopoeic Society and Mythcon 48 are pleased to announce that **William Fliss**, Archivist at the Marquette University Special Collections and Archives, and **Laura Schmidt**, Archivist at the Marion E. Wade Center at Wheaton College, will be our Guests of Honor for this very special conference.

To be sure you're getting the latest announcements, subscribe to our Announcements listserv by emailing: [REDACTED], or find us on Facebook or Twitter.

### Call For Papers:

For the fiftieth anniversary of our Society, we would like to see papers and panels relating to gold, and to celebrate the work of our Guests of Honor, to the gold that can be found through library and archival research. As always, papers on any topic relating to J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and mythopoeic fantasy in general, not just our theme, are welcome as well.

Send abstracts of 200-500 words to: Janet Brennan Croft, [REDACTED] by the new deadline of **May 7th, 2017**.



## DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS ON COLLABORATIVE WRITING: WHAT THE INKLINGS MIGHT HAVE LEARNED

By Bethany L. Abrahamson

As a consumer of modern fantasy I'm disappointed that the Inklings, some of the greatest writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, never put their heads together and wrote a story together. Sure, they read each other's works, and encouraged and criticized now and then, but they never pulled off something like Pratchett and Gaiman's *Good Omens* or James S.A. Corey (Daniel Abraham and Ty Franck)'s *Leviathan Wakes*. There's much to be said for writing, or at least creating stories, in a collaborative way. It's what makes many of today's ensemble-cast TV shows so immersive. It's what makes the concept of fanfiction so addictive. It's what makes playing tabletop roleplaying games so enjoyable. Okay, I'm just going to come right out and say it: the Inklings could have learned a thing or two from playing *Dungeons & Dragons*.

As an avid player for many years, I definitely recognize how much inspiration this fantasy game (first created by Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson in 1974) takes from Tolkien and other fantasy writers. A game like *Dungeons & Dragons*, or *D&D*, would arguably not exist without the works of Tolkien. However, if the Inklings had ever written a story together, or played through a *D&D* campaign together, maybe there's something they could have learned about writing in turn.

If you're thinking of writing a story with others, or just wondering what writing with someone else could offer (or if you're one of the Inklings who has traveled into the future just to read

this), I recommend considering the following tips I've taken from *D&D*.

**Designate a game master.** While writing a story in a complete democracy is an idyllic prospect, and many co-written novels are composed by the equal contribution between writers, one of the best lessons of *D&D* is the importance of a central storyline. In *D&D* this usually means designating one person to preside over the game in the role of the game master, or GM. In collaborative writing, this may mean giving one person control over the story's plot. I could see why the Inklings might be against one writer's vision taking precedence over others in a collaborative writing exercise, given that

all members were competent writers with worthy ideas. Accepting advice is one thing, but appointing one person as an arbiter of the creativity of others could rankle any writer's pride. Accepting such a subordinate position depends on understanding the role of the GM. The GM's job is to oversee and drive the main plot, narrowing down creativity to that central arc. However, the game master's job is much more than that. The GM allows the plot to unfold through the decisions of the characters, who are controlled by the players. Rather than write a complete, concrete

plot from beginning to end, the GM is also charged with presenting problems that challenge players while allowing their unique greatness to shine. Maybe the Inklings would be less fearful of a GM in their writing group if they knew that the principal job of this leader is to coordinate the success of the characters for a meaningful story.

**Make sure the game master is prepared.** While many GMs make up plots for *D&D* on the fly, I can't stress enough how important it is to come prepared. This can help writers reap the benefits of collaborative storytelling in a couple of ways. First, it forces the GM to pre-

### MYTHSOC TURNS FIFTY!

The Mythopoeic Society is  
launching into a series of 50th  
anniversaries:

Founding of the Society in 2017;

Initial solicitation of articles for  
*Mythlore* in 2018;

First Mythopoeic Conference  
in 2019.

dict what the characters might choose, which helps the GM keep those motivations foremost in their mind. Second, it forces the GM to think about what could happen rather than what should happen. For a writer, this means that the leader of the writing group should always think about how the unique decisions of the characters drive the plot. Inklings may find putting this amount of trust in others to make decisions that affect the plot of the story somewhat hard to swallow, but preparing to keep an open mind can be very rewarding by allowing players to see solutions to issues that others never saw.

**Characters should be prepared, too.**

Those in the creative process who find themselves supervising a specific character in a series, whether as a writer or a player in *D&D*, find themselves in charge of maintaining the integrity of that character over time. This means standing up for the character and maintaining a clear idea of where they are going. An omniscient writer may be tempted to sacrifice character development for the furthering of a pet plot, but entrusting a single character to an individual prevents this kind of takeover, and can provide great benefits to a story's continuity and believability. While not a popular concept in the Inklings' day, readers no longer see writers as infallible authorities on the characters or worlds they create—especially in a long series with lots of information to track. Breaking up the responsibility of creative vision is one of the most useful things about collaborative writing. A writing GM will soon find that it's just plain helpful to benefit from the ideas of the other writers.

**Include diversity—in the story and out.**

Many writers, many players—in writing and roleplaying, you're going to have diversity no matter what. Even the Inklings, a relatively homogeneous group, consisted of different people with their own interests, biases, and insights. Any time you bring individuals together, you benefit from multiple perspectives. *D&D* encourages diversity in characters in the form of differing races, religions, genders. If you are female, your *D&D* character can be male. If you're Latino, your *D&D* character can be an elf with any skin color. The possibilities are endless—and since it's a fantasy world, the more creative, the better. Tolkien and Lewis mostly created heroes that they personally identified with, and rarely ventured beyond their

comfort zones to represent people who were not like them. Writing (as does roleplaying in *D&D*) affords a person a unique opportunity to portray people that *are* different from themselves, and writing or playing as a group both accentuates and celebrates this diversity. A writing group that embraces the diversity of its writers and characters can not only highlight the diversity of ideas already present in the group, but also allow that group to embrace greater diversity, where the only limit is that of imagination.

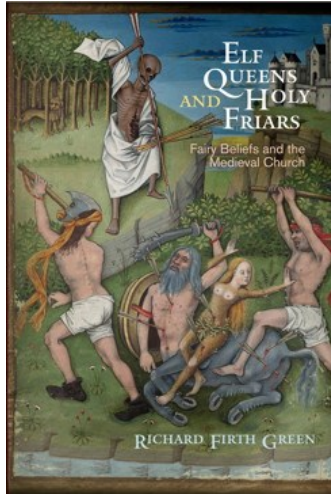
**Be okay with breaking the rules.** One of the greatest things about *D&D* is how it encourages players to stand up for their characters and come up with creative ways to solve problems. Often this means breaking the rules. Which is totally fine—in fact, I think it should be encouraged! Game rules are static, but the creative process is not, and really great ideas shouldn't be dismissed out of hand for not following those rules. I think Tolkien could have learned from this, given his clear interest in world-building and his strongly worded preferences for fantasy. Tolkien famously derided allegory, for example, but really produces something beautiful in his short allegorical story “Leaf by Niggle”—breaking his own rules. The GM may fudge the rules too, to allow for better pacing or a more meaningful encounter. In the realm of fantasy especially, anything can happen. Even if you're writing in a more realistic world, it's okay to embrace the impossible just a little bit.



## REVIEWS

Richard Firth Green. *Elf-Queens and Holy Friars: Fairy Beliefs and the Medieval Church*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016. 285 pp. \$52.25 (hardcover). Reviewed by Jared Lobdell.

The title, of course, is from Chaucer's *Wyf of Bath's Tale*. Part of what Professor Green is arguing is that—even if elven-kind, the *Fées*, the



Fair Folk, are part of the “Little Tradition” (of the Medieval West), they are believed in and accepted by many of the Great and in the Great Tradition. It would be hard to find a better exemplar of the Great and the Great Tradition than the brother-in-law of

John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster (at least as the Middle Ages reckoned brothers-in-law), step-uncle by marriage to Henry IV and Henry V and Henry VI, and uncle by marriage to Henry VII and all the succeeding kings and queens of England.

Professor Green reminds us that the great Hundred-Years-War Constable of France, Bertrand du Guesclin, had a wife reputed to be a *fée*, that there was fairy inter-marriage reputed in the Bourbon line. All this (except for my own Chaucerian genealogical reminder) is from Professor Green’s first chapter, “Believing in Fairies” (pp. 11-41), quite the most valuable to me for the work I’m doing now—which I will get to in a few paragraphs.

The second chapter, “Policing Vernacular Belief” (pp. 43-75), brings us to the Holy Friars, whose proceedings (along with the proceedings of the Jeanne D’Arc rehabilitation of 1456) provide a great deal of evidence for the folk (or “vernacular” or “Little Tradition”) belief in “fairies” (a word permanently damaged by what C. S. Lewis called Pigwiggenny in the Renaissance and thereafter). The third chapter, “The Incubi Fairies” (pp. 76-108), deals with an odd survival within Fairy-land (so to speak) of classical legends and traditions of *incubi* and *succubi*. The fourth, the intriguingly titled “Christ the Changeling” (pp. 112-146), deals with the legends and belief in fairy changelings (both child and adult), distinguishing changelings from the process and victims of fairy kidnapping or abduction, where no changeling is left behind. Finally, the fifth and longest chapter, “Living in Fairyland” (pp. 147-193, followed by a Postscript, pp. 194-205, and then the full scholarly

apparatus), summarizes material in the other chapters, essentially answering C. S. Lewis’s injunction to try to imagine “what it would feel like to witness, or think we had witnessed, or merely to believe in” the *ferlies* of Medieval Romance (Lewis, “*De Audiendis Poetis*,” p. 17).

The title of Chapter 4 refers to the mediaeval plays where in some cases Christ is represented as a changeling being tried by demons (by that time, not fairies) who had exchanged him. In a feudal patriarchal society a changeling child was of course a huge threat (is this why French changelings are more common in report than Irish or even English?), but the primary problem of fairy-land is that it is a third alternative, and the tendency of the Middle Ages (like some other times) was to reduce alternatives to the simple either/or. And the Holy Friars made it increasingly difficult to spend time imagining the third alternative, the characteristics of the realm of the Fair Folk. It was left for a modern writer, born in Bloemfontein in January 1892, to carry out that exercise of imagination.

Professor Green does give us a few of the Mediaeval visions, centering on the story of Mélusine, on the Elf-Queens with certain similarities to the Court of Mary in Heaven (as also imagined then), and from the Breton forest of Brocéliande and the legends of Arthur. Now the important thing for me, looking particularly in Chapter 1 but indeed throughout Professor Green’s book, is that this whole vernacular world, this whole “Little Tradition,” in the time before the “Holy Friars” demonized it, was simply part of the strange and complex real world, as its inhabitants conceived it.

To put it into Tolkienian terms, this is all part of the Primary World, even the Elf-Queen (like Galadriel) with associational relationship to Mary, Queen of Heaven. When this book came across my desk for review in *Mythprint*, I was preparing to write an essay for a forthcoming book on World-Creation, particularly in connection with Tolkien’s doctrine of subcreation and Primary and Secondary worlds. Providentially (one might say), Professor Green has enlarged the bounds (as generally accepted) of the (Mediaeval) Primary world.

That is not, of course, the only value of this book. It is, after all, primarily (more or less) an account of the war waged against Faërie by the Church (especially – in my view – the unenlight-



ened Church), ending with the great Witchcraft scare (and delusion) of the days of James VI and later Cotton Mather and Justice Hathorne, on this side of the Atlantic. The story is clear and well-documented; the book is not a tract but a learned discussion, trustworthy (I believe) and for me useful in my endeavors—and I should think for the work (and learning) of others. Paperback needed.

---

George MacDonald. *The Golden Key: A Victorian Fairy Tale*. Illustrations by Ruth Sanderson, with an afterword by Jane Yolen. Um. B. Cerdmans, 2016. 136pp. \$16.00. Reviewed by Janet Brennan Croft.

*The Golden Key*, setting aside its own merits as a fairy-tale, is important in Inklings studies as a positive influence on C.S. Lewis, who said it “shocks us more fully awake than we are for most of our lives” (qtd. 130) and called it “absolute heaven” in a letter to Arthur Greeves (*Letters* I.254). On the other hand, it was somewhat of a negative influence on J.R.R. Tolkien, who appreciated MacDonald when younger but whose attempt to write a preface to a new edition from Pantheon Books in 1964 drove him to write the “anti-G.M. tract” *Smith of Wootton Major* (“Genesis” 70) in response to what he found lacking in MacDonald’s vision of Faerie (see Fisher for a survey of Tolkien’s history of enjoying and recommending MacDonald prior to 1964). Tolkien specifically objected to MacDonald’s obvious moral allegory, for which he had a strong distaste, but on re-reading *The Golden Key* myself, I feel he might also have found MacDonald’s story-telling technique sloppy from time to time; there are indeed some barbed comments in his draft introduction about stories “good enough ‘for children’” and “silly tale[s]” through which the reader may in spite of it all catch a “glimpse of Fairy” (74). For example, on page 56 of the edition being reviewed, we are told that Mossy was given his nickname by his companions for his habit of sitting on a favorite moss-covered stone and reading for days on end. But there is no men-

tion of companions or books when we are first introduced to him in chapter one, where he appears to live alone with his great-aunt in their “little house [...] on the borders of Fairyland” (10), and his bookishness plays no further part in the story. This is the sort of niggling

detail that would undoubtedly have driven Tolkien back to revision in one of his own stories. Still, imagery from the tale stayed with Tolkien; for example, he may well have borrowed and inverted MacDonald’s plain of shadows for his glass lake filled with shapes and creatures of fire in *Smith* (28-29 in *Smith*, and mentioned as an image he remembered in his draft introduction, 72).

So while *The Golden Key* as a story may be more to the taste of some readers than others, perhaps depending on their affinity for Lewis or Tolkien, it is certainly something with which students of the Inklings should be familiar. This handsome edition is lavishly illustrated with scratchboard drawings by Ruth Sanderson that emphasize the imagery of light and dark in the story, and evoke the 1860 date of its first publication. The faces are full of expression and the fantastic elements finely rendered, especially the fairy and key motif (8-9 and 122-125). I see hints of Tenniel’s Alice and mid-century adventure novels in some drawings, and the visions Mossy and Tangle have travelling under the land from which the shadows come are appropriately misty and cloud-like (68-71).

Eventually, the agent who proposed the *Golden Key* project to Tolkien moved to Farrer, Straus and Giroux, where it was published with illustrations by Maurice Sendak and an afterword by Tolkien’s friend W.H. Auden in 1967, the same year as *Smith of Wootton Major*. A dust-jacket blurb was taken from Tolkien’s “On Fairy-Stories” (Flieger 139), which Auden also quotes in his Afterword. Sendak’s pen-and-ink drawings, heavy with cross-hatching, in many



cases illustrate the same scenes Sanderson does. They are also black and white, but are dreamier, enclosed in clearly-defined frames; the faces are less distinct and expressive, and sometimes even turned away from the reader (perhaps allowing the reader to project him or herself into the story better). Auden's afterword also quotes Lewis, and suggest that hunting for the meaning of the symbolism in this tale would be a mistake; the reader must immerse himself in MacDonald's world without an attempt to consciously interpret it.

For the scholar, an annotated or critical edition would of course be ideal, but I have not been able to locate one; perhaps here is a gap for a future scholar to fill. For general reading purposes, including gift-giving and reading aloud to children, this is a fine edition. Jane Yolen's Afterword is a useful addendum, providing a short sketch of MacDonald's life and an explanation of a few of the references. Most interesting are her three ways of reading the story: as an engrossing fairy-tale with hints of Victorian realism, as a "metaphysical Christian fairy tale" (129) with strong Romantic overtones, and as a metaphor of life as a continuous journey, one where "You must throw yourself in. There is no other way" (95).

Fisher, Jason. "Reluctantly Inspired: George Macdonald and the Genesis of J.R.R. Tolkien's *Smith of Wootton Major*." *North Wind*, vol. 25, 2006, pp. 113-120.

Flieger, Verlyn. "Notes." In *Smith of Wootton Major*. By J.R.R. Tolkien; ed. Verlyn Flieger. Extended ed. London: HarperCollins, 2005. 134-149.

Lewis, C.S. *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis, Volume III: Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy 1950-1963*. HarperOne, 2007.

MacDonald, George. *The Golden Key*. With pictures by Maurice Sendak and an Afterword by W.H. Auden. New York: Farrer, Straus and Giroux; 1967.

Tolkien, J.R.R. "Smith of Wootton Major." In *Smith of Wootton Major*. By J.R.R. Tolkien; ed. Verlyn Flieger. Extended ed. London: HarperCollins, 2005. 5-62.

—. "'Genesis of the story': Tolkien's note to Clyde Kilby." In *Smith of Wootton Major*. By J.R.R. Tolkien; ed. Verlyn Flieger. Extended ed. London: HarperCollins, 2005. 69-70.

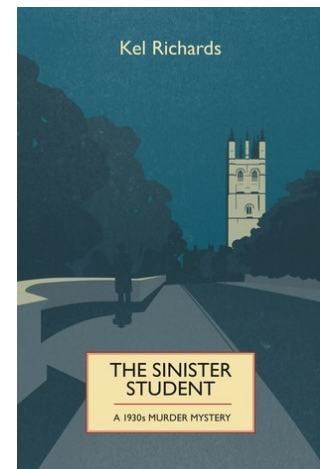
—. "Tolkien's draft introduction to *The Golden Key*." In *Smith of Wootton Major*. By J.R.R. Tolkien; ed. Verlyn Flieger. Extended ed. London: HarperCollins, 2005. 71-75.

Kel Richards. *The Sinister Student*. SPCK, 2016. 240 pp. \$6.58. Reviewed by Shannyn Jordan.

If I could be a fly on the wall of history I would chose to alight in the study where the Inklings engaged in their critique sessions. The concept of a cozy mystery (crime fiction in which sex and violence are downplayed or treated humorously, and the crime and detection take place in a small, socially intimate community) with C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien as the detectives, thrilled me beyond words. I was so excited when I started to read this book. That it opened with the group reading of the final chapter of Tolkien's *There and Back Again* was simply the icing on the cake.

Richards immediately intrigued me with his first person amalgam of Tolkien and Lewis' writing styles. Description, though sometimes tedious in length, was vibrant with Tolkien's manner. Dialogue matched Lewis' directness. His characterization of the professors was vivid and on point, for most of the plot. There were points in the story where it felt like taking a stroll with two of my favorite people from history, listening to the timber of their voices echo on the Oxford stone.

The story itself was where my problems began. When I picked up this story it promised me a "1930's Mystery." What I got was a cozy-scifi fusion with time travel (that seemed like it would barely avoid copyright infringement), a predictable murder mystery, a flat romance, and a weak religious de-





bate.

Richards chose the most simple of strawman arguments for the POV, Morris, to pick with his old mentor. At first, I thought his observation that the cross being a tool of brutal execution made Christianity a death cult to be a strange familiarity between Morris and Lewis. Or maybe a case of the student deliberately provoking an argument with his teacher as a way to celebrate old times. Instead, this argument continued, hashed out by many of the main cast including Tolkien and Lewis' brother Warren, as a sort of unifying thread through the book. But it was anything but unifying. The transitions between the argument and the action of the story were downright uncomfortable at times. Lewis, his brother, and J. R. R. Tolkien served in the Great War. To see these men taking such a cavalier approach to death and dismemberment—at one point standing over a severed head and the next “speaking of death, old chap, the cross...” was jarring and uncharacteristic.

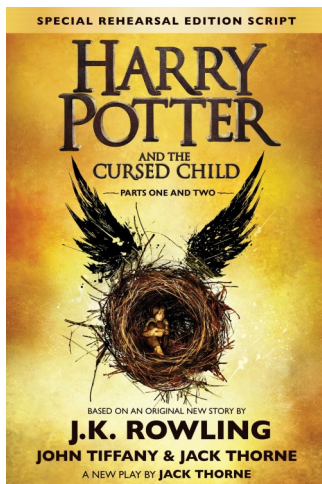
The murder itself was compelling. Although a beheading is hardly cozy material, it did present the detectives a difficult question to ponder, namely that such a death could occur in a locked room.

The best bits of this book actually featured Warnie, Lewis' brother, in his pursuit of the “Case of the Missing Milton.” The genius theft from the Bodleian Library in some ways presented a far more challenging mystery than the actual murder.

The romance, or attempt at it, between Morris and Penelope felt flat and really only served the purpose of giving a few hints here and there to her relationship with the victim and murder-

er.

Perhaps the most difficult part of this book to swallow was the time traveler, though I might have forgiven it had it handled the other parts of the plot better. Right before the murder, the reader is introduced to a fishy character with impossible knowledge.



I pegged him as a time traveler from the get-go, but was reluctant to believe it. Barely veiled references to the popular British scifi drama *Doctor Who*—a wardrobe time machine that is bigger on the inside (yes, wardrobe), a sonic screwdriver, and perhaps most infuriating, Atlantean heads turned to stone—felt like too much of a departure from the model of a “1930’s mystery.” I love *Doctor Who*. I love cozies. I love Tolkien and Lewis. I wouldn’t even be adverse to their fusion, if I had been expecting it, and if it didn’t imply that temporal paradox was the inspiration behind some of the most unique works of fiction of our era.

Happily, Richards did not resort to God in the (Time) Machine for the resolution of the plot. The murder mystery returned to Earth using very human motives and semi-plausible execution. The unifying argument of the cross was resolved in a half paragraph’s casual concession from Morris that Lewis had been right all along—confirming my fear that it really was just there to give Lewis something theological to do. It wasn’t the time travel elements that turned me off of this book, as I said; I’m a lover of those things. It simply wasn’t a cozy. I can see the appeal in time travel to meet these authors, and I think it will interest readers who like scifi crossovers along those lines. Lovers of cozy mysteries might be a little taken aback by the scifi, but I think the thrill of a detective novel with Tolkien and Lewis more than makes up for the genre departure.

---

J. K. Rowling, John Tiffany & Jack Thorne. *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child (Parts 1 & 2)*. Arthur A. Levine Books, 2016. 320 pp. \$13.03. Reviewed by Ryder W. Miller.

I knew *Harry Potter* was not going to be over after watching the screen credits of the final *Harry Potter* movie. To the benefit of fantasy fans the series continues and now will likely succeed on the stage as it has in cinema and the literary world. It is great fun that it has contin-

ued, but there are still dark forces for new generations to contend with.

In *The Cursed Child*, Harry, and Ron and Hermione are now parents sending their children off to Hogwarts. Much of the story focuses on Harry's relationship with his son Albus, named after the famous wizard Headmaster of Hogwarts. Harry was an orphan and found fellowship and knowledge at Hogwarts. Rowling has created a wonderful community of people with tales of a school that some youngsters dream of going to.

There was also dark magic afoot and a fair bit of social commentary. Rowling did not copy the Inklings in this, but her tales were a different fantastical tale for a new audience who has changed over the generations. Her tales abound with fantastic elements with some that seem to struggle to be fresh, but others that are startling and fascinating. Tolkien and other fantasists have provided depth and history for this, but Rowling has had modern ideas for a fantastic world that matches the wonders of modern times.

Responsibility to protect the world has not all fallen on the shoulders of Harry's son Albus Potter. Albus has become fast friends with Scorpius Malfoy, even though their parents did not get along well together. It is up to them to try to set things right, and they use some of the magic of their day to change the world or history. They use a "Time-Turner" to go back and save Cedric Diggory who died in the past in the original series. Much has changed by their actions and it is up to the old stars to help set things back on course again.

One will find it hard to imagine a world where Voldemort killed Harry Potter and won The Battle of Hogwarts, but one should not meddle in time traveling. In this frenetic tale one will find some of their beloved characters as well as some new characters, especially a new generation, that we would have wondered about.

The story is both gripping and heartfelt. So much is at stake like usual in a frenetic tale that we are compelled to finish for the fascinating conclusions. This intergenerational tale has its share of surprises. There is also Harry's struggles to be a father and fight dark forces. There are also dreams and trips to the past where one

gets to see the old Hogwarts' teachers, but also reenactments of crimes.

This is bound to be spectacular onstage, but some of the challenges seem insurmountable without cinematic special effects. There are magic wands that shoot magic, and people who are more than just one person by themselves. It will be fun to see how they do some of these magical things. Jack Thorne and John Tiffany are theater people who will have to be able to pull it off.

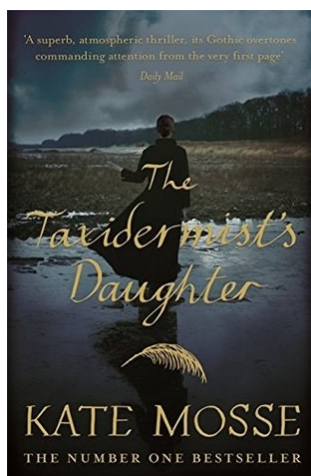
The new movie *Fantastical Beasts and Where to Find Them* (2016) was also riveting, if not a lot of fun. It is great to see folks being concerned about endangered species, in this case fantastical beasts who we don't see anymore. One might wonder where all these creatures went to? Maybe they were the victims of extinction rather than just metaphors, symbols, or flights of fancy. In the movie there are those who care about these wonderful creations, some of whom have too much magic for the town to contain them. Sensory overload at times here, but the story is more for the younger set who might be more able to digest it.

Sadly for some, for defenders, we find out that Harry does not like pigeons. His son Albus, however, does. Our city landscapes would be more drab without them and they have been living with mankind for thousands of years. Like *The Hobbit* movies, there are those who are bothered by some creatures that don't always seem to have rights. We should remember that nobody thought the Passenger Pigeon that once flew through the air in flocks that covered the entire sky would become extinct. It is great that the fantasy world still continues also, like this connection to a Nature of sorts with pigeons, even if some are not too impressed with the contemporary and its new wonders.

---

Kate Mosse. *The Taxidermist's Daughter*. ARTHUR A. WILLIAM MORROW, 2016. 413 pp. \$13.03. Reviewed by RYDER W. MILLER. \$10.80.

Fans of Charles Williams and mystery readers will probably like this challenging tale which



once had a museum and she a mother, but now they have fallen on less successful times. Murder and mayhem is underfoot one week in April 1912, and the Giffords must sort it out. The story goes back almost a generation with a inspiring Connie searching for a murderer and also sorting out events from their past.

The book also has supernatural elements, beginning from the get go: "For it is believed that on the Eve of St. Mark, the ghosts of those destined to die in the coming year will be seen walking into the church at the turning of the hour" (p.3). Ghosts have also returned.

The action-filled tale takes place England in Fishbourne off of a Mill Pond. Mosse, and accomplished member of the literati, is also from Sussex.

Those who like a challenge and mystery will enjoy this book. There is action and suspense to the final pages with all the characters finally falling into perspective by the end. Connie has flashbacks and the reader has to be on their toes while things are being fleshed out. The characters are also at the mercy of a criminal who has murdered in the past and present. The community is also at the mercy of the elements and flooding waters. Though there are a lot of descriptions of nature and references to beautiful birds, this is a dark environ for this tale.

Mosse personally appreciates the art of Taxidermy which seeks to bring to a life of sorts to dead animals. There is still beauty in some of these recently

acknowledges the dark places of the human psyche and believes in the darkness in some people's souls. It is also a tale of revenge and retribution. The chief protagonist is heroine Constantia Gifford (or, Connie) who helps her father, a Taxidermist, who once was more successful. He

departed animals and they have been used by educators to help some identify these animals. Animals though have been killed to make trophies. These are not the birds that fly into skyscrapers by accident either. Some also might find the process ghastly, and usually these specimens are kept far enough away from those who might smell their remaining rotting flesh. Pretty feathers sometimes nonetheless. In a sense they have become ghosts themselves which help remind that there are wonderful and beautiful things out there in the wild which is usually not dangerous, this though is a gothic story.

There are some ghastly parts in this that young children might not understand, but most students have encountered worse by high school. Charles Williams might have had the birds fighting back. Tolkien would concur, but some might have been evil birds. Lewis would have given them voices.

Mosse's compelling tale is really not about a connection with Nature, but about what people do to each other, revenge, and those who try to set things right.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### From Stone Table Books

C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien both raved about the book, *Phantastes* by George MacDonald as the first ever fantasy novel in the English language, but some modern readers find it hard going.

Now you can get *Phantastes* as retold by Mark Worthing. This book artfully maintains the flavour of the original work, but also makes it more accessible to modern readers.

You can also get a book by Worthing that covers the historical development of the fantasy genre from folk tales and fairy stories right through to modern fantasy. *Narnia, Middle Earth and the Kingdom of God*.

These are recommended to anyone who loves fantasy literature, and particularly those interested in C. S. Lewis.

## Submit to Mythprint!

*We are always looking for reviews, but we also publish letters to the editor, short articles and notes on Inklings topics, art, discussion reports, and more!*

The Mythopoeic Society



This issue of Mythprint is brought to you for free and open access by the [Mythopoeic Society](#) at the [SWOSU Digital Commons](#).

For more issues of Mythprint go to [https://dc.swosu.edu/mythprint/all\\_issues.html](https://dc.swosu.edu/mythprint/all_issues.html)

To join the Mythopoeic Society, go to: <http://www.mythsoc.org/join.htm>

Authors and artists of items in this issue may request to have their materials removed from the digital repository. To do so, contact the platform administrator at [archives@mythsoc.org](mailto:archives@mythsoc.org) or the *Mythprint* editor at [mythprint@mythsoc.org](mailto:mythprint@mythsoc.org).



## MYTHCON 48: All That Is Gold



July 28 - 31, 2017

Call for Papers due May 7th!

