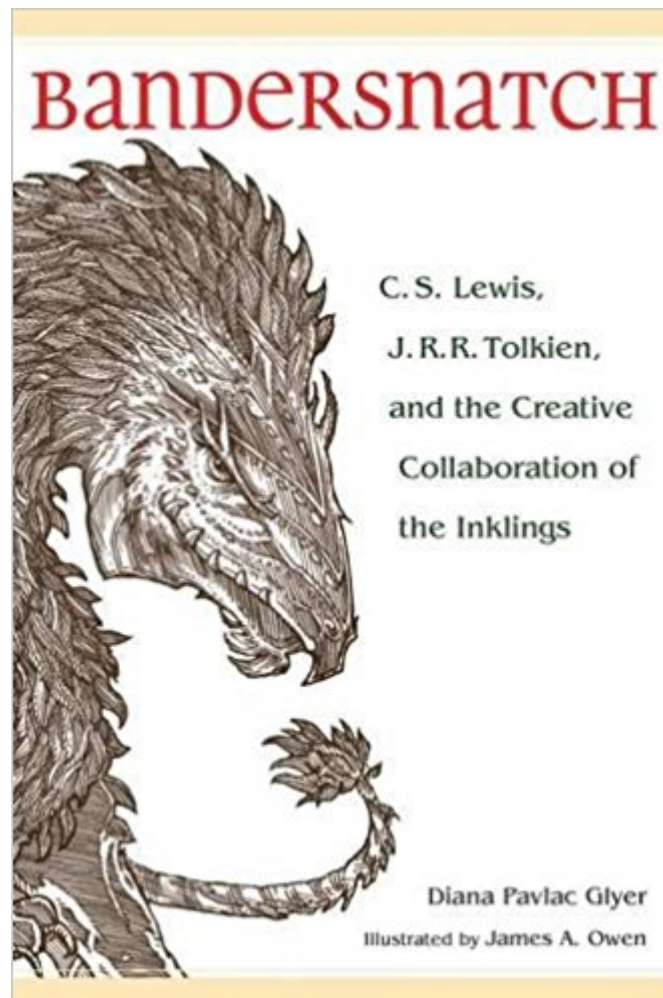




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# Bandersnatch: C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, And The Creative Collaboration Of The Inklings



## Synopsis

An inspiring look at the creative processC.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and the Inklings met each week to read and discuss each other's work-in-progress, offering both encouragement and blistering critique. How did these conversations shape the books they were writing? How does creative collaboration enhance individual talent? And what can we learn from their example?Featuring full-page illustrations by James A. Owen, Bandersnatch offers an inside look at the Inklings of Oxford, and a seat at their table at the Eagle and Child pub. It shows how encouragement and criticism made all the difference in *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and dozens of other books written by the members of their circle. You'll learn what made these writers tick, and more: inspired by their example, you'll discover how collaboration can help your own creative process and lead to genius breakthroughs in whatever work you do.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

No one knows more than Diana Pavlac Glyer about the internal workings of the Inklings. In *Bandersnatch*, she shows us how they inspired, encouraged, refined and opposed one another in the course of producing some of the greatest literature of the last one hundred years. A brilliant and beautifully clear case study of iron sharpening iron. --Michael Ward, coeditor of *C.S. Lewis at Poets Corner*The Inklings are about as important a group as ever existed in the literary world. This tremendous new book about them is much anticipated and hugely welcome! --Eric Metaxas, *New York Times* Bestselling author of *Bonhoeffer and Miracles*What a gift! *Bandersnatch* is a joy to read

and helps dispel that dangerous myth that our greatest writers created in solitude. We all need community in order to do our best work, and this book will show you how some of the greatest minds of the twentieth century did just that. You won't be able to read this book just once. --Jeff Goins, founder of Tribe Writers and author of *The Art of Work*

Diana Pavlac Glyer is an award-winning writer who has spent more than 40 years combing through archives and studying old manuscripts. She is a leading expert on C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien; her book *The Company They Keep* (The Kent State University Press, 2007) changed the way we talk about these writers. Her scholarship, teaching, and work as an artist all circle back to one common theme: creativity thrives in community. James A. Owen has written and illustrated the *Starchild* graphic novel, the *Mythworld* series of novels, the bestselling *The Chronicles of the Imaginarium Geographica*, and the forthcoming series *Fool's Hollow*. He is also the author of the inspirational nonfiction trilogy *The Meditations* and the illustrator/designer of *The Hundred Books Project*, a series that showcases some of the greatest books ever published. His books have been translated into more than twenty languages, and more than a million copies are in print. He works in the Coppervale Studio, a century-old restored church in Northeastern Arizona.

Personally, I think every public library in the United States should have a copy of this book. It provides a solid introduction to the writing processes of C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and the members of their writing group known as the Inklings. This book, for the general reader, shows the ways members of the Inklings collaborated in each other's written work. The collaborations improved the books, promoted them to the public and provided fellowship among the members. Readers of Tolkien and Lewis's books usually become interested in the Inklings and this book is a great place to learn who they were and to answer many natural questions that arise. It is interesting that *Bandersnatch* is a self-reporting product of collaboration. 1. The author met regularly with a group of her students, "Team *Bandersnatch*", to read the work in progress for their feedback. 2. The book contains 11 beautiful illustrations showing members of the Inklings, with a *Bandersnatch* someplace in each design. The author worked extensively with the artist. 3. The author mentions, in the text, collaborative work with a colleague on research about creative collaborative groups. 4. And, the front-matter says the author's daughter liked the title. It is a book discussing the history of a successful creative writing group that contributed both to Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and Lewis' *Narnia* books but also to many worthy but less well known works of other members such as Owen Barfield, Charles Williams, or Lewis' brother Major Warren Lewis. The book provides an ongoing

discussion of the value of creative collaborative groups, of all kinds, and uses characteristics of the Inklings to illustrate what contributes to successful groups. The discussion provides insights from the author's own long and hard-earned experiences participating in and leading collaborative groups. There is a tip at the end of each chapter on how to make or maintain a group. To sum up, I really enjoyed this book. My opening statement is not hyperbole. I do believe that every public library in the United States should own a copy of this book. In fact, every library that provides information on English literature should do so, either this or its predecessor *The Company They Keep* (an academic book). I think the contributions of the Inklings to English literature and to contemporary culture are so significant that it makes the study of their history relevant, and this book is a wonderful contribution to the great conversation about the Inklings, their place in history and literature, and the process of how they formed and maintained their creative group.

If you want to effortlessly understand more about the writing of the Inklings and almost instantly feel an intimate connection with Lewis, Tolkien, Williams, etc -- If you would like to have a glimpse into the creative genius of these great minds -- don't wait. Read *Bandersnatch*. It will make you want to re-read everything the Inklings wrote.

I was impressed by how readable this was. I liked the emphasis on how they did indeed influence each other, describing the various ways in general and giving examples. I felt like I was getting all the value of a scholarly text without having to wade through scholarly text. I highly recommend this. My one disappointment was the final chapter. There was a change in tone, as if she were writing to younger readers rather than adults as in the earlier chapters. I felt a little talked down to, which is not something I've ever experienced when talking to the author in person. It makes me want to read other books about the Inklings, even though I am primarily a fiction reader. I found myself starting to reread *LORD OF THE RINGS* in parallel with this. I have been rereading C.S. Lewis recently so don't feel the need to revisit those again. But I'm afraid that not even *BANDERSNATCH* can make me want to reread Charles Williams!

I'm glad to see that Diana Glyer's "*Bandersnatch*" is getting the attention it deserves! Her new book raises the standard of publishing excellence with its insightful writing paired with its playful touch -- the fabulous artwork that's just tons of fun to gaze at in search of the hidden bandersnatch drawings. What a clever way to broaden the reader following of a scholar like Glyer, who is world renowned for her expertise on Lewis, Tolkien, and other Inklings. And what a perfect follow-on to

her previous must-have volume, "The Company They Keep," which I also treasure. I can imagine Jack Lewis (whose work I know better than the work of other Inklings) sitting down with a HUGE pot of tea and roaring with delight as he reads "Bandersnatch."

I was familiar with and appreciated her more academic work "The Company They Keep: C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien as Writers in Community" back almost a decade ago. What I appreciate with Bandersnatch, is that the essence of that academic work is imbued in this work but without the academic rigidity such works require; it is like getting to dessert without having to eat one's veg! I found it immensely encouraging to be able to leech off the authors 40-years of trolling manuscripts, letters and other source materials to pierce the shroud on what it was like in this uniquely productive group. I suppose years from now another option would be to pour over Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter and Instagram to piece together what happens in the next phenomenal group of writers in community, but it is more satisfying to know that rather than the seconds it takes to post something forever, we are forming our view from letters and works that took substantially longer and therefore perhaps had more intent than simply tossing off an item (so to speak). I highly recommend Bandersnatch if nothing else because the budding writer in each of us needs nourishing now and again. My sole issue was that I insisted on making it my Christmas present (always winter, never Christmas) due to internal goofs and delays. In hindsight it was my nicest Christmas gift last year ...

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