



The Spiderwick Chronicles

TeachingBooks Movie Transcript

The Spiderwick Chronicles creators Holly Black and Tony DiTerlizzi, interviewed in their studios in Amherst, MA on October 29, 2004.

This is a transcript of the movie available on TeachingBooks.net. It is offered here to give you a quick assessment of the program topics, as well as to enable people with auditory disabilities access to the words.

Because this is a transcript of an edited movie, it should not be used as an assessment of Mr. DiTerlizzi's and Ms. Black's writing. Many of the sentences found here were edited, and all editing decisions are the sole responsibility of TeachingBooks.net.

Tony: Holly and I were doing a signing in New York City...

Holly: Tony and I were signing in New York....

Tony: And we get this letter ...

Holly: The store clerk gave it to us and said that these kids had left it for us...

Tony: They said, "We know you're into fantasy. We know you like faeries and folklore and we have something we think might interest you and a story to go with it..."

Holly: And it was the letter that we put into *The Spiderwick Chronicles*...

Tony: Their Great, Great Uncle, Arthur Spiderwick, had created this field guide to the faerie world...

Holly: It was so cool, that we had to go ahead and contact them.

What It's All About

Holly: *The Spiderwick Chronicles* are the story of Jared, Simon and Mallory Grace who move to their aunt's. It's a creepy old house and some creepy things start happening, and Jared finds Great, Great Uncle Arthur's *Field Guide to the Fantastical World Around Us*. He is convinced that something from that book is causing all the trouble, and that just gets him in deeper trouble and chaos ensues for five books.

The Writer's Perspective

Holly: We call *The Spiderwick Chronicles* a serial, because they really are one big book that has been split into five parts. Book One is a different kind of book because it is the set-up. Jared's anger issues are a big thematic point in *Spiderwick*, and it needed to be something that could escalate.

The antagonist of Book One is very much Mallory; she's the person he has to fight and somehow convince. His method of conquering her is to convince her he's right.

Tony: Book Two picks right up where Book One left off. Book Five picks up right up where Book Four left off. The idea was that when you were done this 7- or 6-year-old reader had read a 500- or 600-page book.

Collaboration

Holly: Collaborating with Tony was so much fun. We'd sit down, and we would kind of talk about what we wanted to do, and then I would go off and write, and he would go off and draw, and we would send things back and forth.

Tony: We really wanted the books to feel like one entity, even though there was two of us working on it, and we came from totally different takes. We wanted the *Spiderwick* books to feel very cohesive.

Holly: We were sending things back and forth, where he would send me a sketch, and I would write a scene for the sketch, and then I would send it back to him, and he would change the sketch based on the scene.

Tony: I did this drawing of Jared with this weird cave creature wrapped around him, and I called Holly up and I'm like, "I've got this idea. I don't know if it'll work, but I think it'd be cool and I think the kids will like it." Her actually being able to incorporate that, and then me actually being able to polish the art to make it really fit, fit well.

We wanted it to be very tactile. We need deckled edges, like the raw torn paper. We need an embossed cover. It needs to feel almost like this old faerie tale book.

We kind of tucked in these extra bits of artwork. I called it "sideways information." It really didn't advance the plot, but it gave you kind of colorful stuff on the side that helped you maybe visualize the world a little better. There is also a cameo of Holly and me in the crowd. So look for that.

Amherst Reads

Voice Over: Amherst Reads is a literary festival that was created by librarians, teachers, students and parents, and what we're doing is we're having a day of events to celebrate reading and books and literacy. This year's literary pick is called, *The Spiderwick Chronicles* by Tony DiTerlizzi and Holly Black. So it's all *Spiderwick* events, all day.

The Field Guide Restoration

Tony: We are currently restoring *Arthur Spiderwick's Field Guild to the Fantastical World Around You*.

Holly: The field guide was in pretty bad repair and so Tony is painstakingly, laboriously restoring it.

Tony: There are actually two different brownies that are illustrated. There are a lot of species of goblins that are illustrated. We've kind of taken Arthur Spiderwick's loose notes, his finished paintings and some of his sketches, and we're compiling them all into a nice, clean, cohesive book.

Holly: One of the cool things about the field guide is that it used to be the kids' Great, Great uncle Arthur's field guide. But it's now also Jared's field guide.

Tony: In the back of *Arthur Spiderwick's Field Guide* is actually an addendum by Jared Grace where he has his own drawings and notes that either coincide or actually — in some cases — conflict with Arthur's observations, based on the experiences that Jared, Simon and Mallory had.

How They Got This Way

Holly: I was afraid of the dark. I would sleep with the light on, and I think I grew to really be interested in a lot of things like ghosts and fairies and the supernatural because I had started out with this fear of them. The way to overcome that fear was to learn more about them.

Tony: When you're a kid, and you can draw and you kind of get good at it, other kids are like, "Oh, you're so lucky! You've got this special talent." I think really the luck was that I was surrounded by adults who nurtured my ability.

Editor's Note: For more information on *The Spiderwick Chronicles* and its creators, please see our TeachingBooks exclusive Authors Up-close programs featuring Tony DiTerlizzi and Holly Black at www.TeachingBooks.net.

Books in The Spiderwick Chronicles Series by Tony DiTerlizzi and Holly Black

- ARTHUR SPIDERWICK'S FIELD GUIDE TO THE FANTASTICAL WORLD AROUND YOU, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2005
- SPIDERWICK CHRONICLES NOTEBOOK FOR FANTASTICAL OBSERVATIONS, THE, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2005
- IRONWOOD TREE, THE: BOOK 4, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2004
- WRATH OF MULGARATH, THE: BOOK 5, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2004
- FIELD GUIDE, THE: BOOK 1, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2003
- LUCINDA'S SECRET: BOOK 3, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2003
- SEEING STONE, THE: BOOK 2, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2003

Additional Books by Holly Black

- VALIANT: A MODERN TALE OF FAERIE, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2005
- TITHE: A MODERN FAERIE TALE, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2002

Additional Books by Tony DiTerlizzi

- BERNIE MAGRUDER & THE BATS IN THE BELFRY (written by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor), Atheneum Books for Young Readers / Simon & Schuster, 2003
- BOOTS AND THE SEVEN LEAGUERS: A-ROCK-AND-TROLL NOVEL (written by Jane Yolen; cover illustration by Tony DiTerlizzi), Harcourt, 2003
- ALIEN & POSSUM: HANGING OUT (written by Tony Johnston), Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2002
- BELOVED DEARLY, THE (written by Doug Cooney), Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2002
- DRAGONRIDERS OF PERN, BOOK 1: DRAGONFLIGHT (written by Anne McCaffrey), Del Rey, 2002
- HARVEY ANGELL (written by Diana Hendry), Pocketbooks, 2002
- HARVEY ANGELL AND THE GHOST CHILD (written by Diana Hendry), Pocketbooks, 2002
- HARVEY ANGELL BEATS TIME (written by Diana Hendry), Pocketbooks, 2002

- SPIDER & THE FLY, THE (based on the poem by Mary Howitt), Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2002
- ALIEN & POSSUM: FRIENDS NO MATTER WHAT (written by Tony Johnston), Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2001
- BERNIE MAGRUDER & THE BUS STATION BLOW-UP (written by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor), Aladdin, 2001
- BERNIE MAGRUDER & THE CASE OF THE BIG STINK (written by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor), Aladdin, 2001
- BERNIE MAGRUDER & THE DISAPPEARING BODIES (written by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor), Aladdin, 2001
- BERNIE MAGRUDER & THE DRIVE-THRU FUNERAL PARLOR (written by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor), Aladdin, 2001
- BERNIE MAGRUDER & THE HAUNTED HOTEL (written by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor), Aladdin, 2001
- BERNIE MAGRUDER & THE PARACHUTE PERIL (written by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor), Aladdin, 2001
- BERNIE MAGRUDER & THE PIRATE'S TREASURE (written by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor), Aladdin, 2001
- ONCE UPON A FAIRY TALE (a contributing illustrator), Viking, 2001
- TED, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2001
- JIMMY ZANGWOW'S OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD MOONPIE ADVENTURE, Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2000
- RIBBITING TALES (written by Nancy Springer), Penguin Putnam, 2000
- DINOSAUR SUMMER (written by Greg Bear), Aspect, 1998
- GIANT BONES (written by Peter S. Beagle), Roc / Penguin Putnam, 1997

Note: Bibliographies created in 2005.

Many thanks to the folks at Simon & Schuster in their help for this production, including but not limited to Michelle Fadlalla and Tracy van Straaten.

Additional thanks to Gretta Miller, Aarick Beher, Rich Matheson, MJ Baumann and all at Clotho Advanced Media, Inc for their invaluable, professional help with this production.

Of course, this entire author program occurred because of the kindness and generosity of Tony DiTerlizzi and Holly Black, who shared their homes, time and energy with us in order to make this production. Thanks also to Angela DeFrancis and Theo Black for opening their homes and assisting with these productions.

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