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Chris Riddell: Illustrator – United Kingdom

Sean Kerns

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In lieu of an abstract, here is a brief excerpt of the content:

Chris Riddell
Illustrator – United Kingdom

Sean Kerns



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I became an illustrator because I love words. As a child I loved words and I loved the idea of making drawings to accompany them.

C. Riddell

BRITISH ILLUSTRATOR AND WRITER Chris Riddell ranks among the foremost illustrators of children's literature in the twenty-first century. Riddell's work as a political cartoonist (he has worked at *The Observer* for over twenty years) infuses his illustrations with subtlety and humor. His attention to even the minutest of details is evidenced in his illustrations for Martin Jenkins' adaptation of *Gulliver's Travels*, in which he also demonstrates his range of capabilities. He varies use of pen-and-ink drawings with full-color pictures to excellent effect. His depictions breathe fresh life into Gulliver's oft-told tale, at times beautiful, scary, and comical—much like Gulliver's adventure itself.

In 2001, Riddell won his first major award, a Kate Greenaway medal, for *Pirate Diary*, which recounts a fictional diary of a cabin boy on-board a pirate ship during the early eighteenth century. Riddell supports Richard Platt's text through intricately detailed drawings in which the sufferings of individuals on-board the ship are unmistakably clear, and these are supported by historically accurate representations of sea vessels and of life at that time.



Riddell chooses not to coddle his young reader audience. For instance, one illustration in Richard Platt's *Pirate Diary* displays a crew-member who is forced to flog his friend; the former holds a blooddrenched whip, his t-shirt sprayed crimson, while the recipient's anguish is shown through his tightly bound wrists and the outline of blood along his torso, hinting at the cuts the whip's strokes have made. The

widespread acclaim Riddell has received—both from critics and young readers—testifies to the quality of work he produces; his accolades include a number of Nestlé Smarties awards. He manages to support stories faithfully and playfully without becoming overly sentimental. To date, Riddell has collaborated with Neil Gaiman (*The Graveyard Book*; *The Sleeper and the Spindle*) and Paul Stewart (*Hugo Pepper*; *The Edge Chronicles*), among others, on over 100 titles.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Sleeper & the Spindle. By Neil Gaiman. London: Bloomsbury, 2014. Print.

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Goth Girl & the Ghost of a Mouse. London: Macmillan, 2013. Print.

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Gulliver's Travels. By Jonathan Swift, adapt. Martin Jenkin. London: Walker Books, 2004. Print. **[End Page 61]**

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