**Podcast: Literaticast**

**Episode: 51: The Art of Graphic Novel Adaptation, with guest Gareth Hinds**

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[00:00:00] Literaticast theme music plays.

Jenn: [00:00:06] Hello and welcome to the Literaticast. I'm Jennifer Laughran and I'm a senior agent at the Andrea Brown Literary Agency where I rep kids books, from picture books through YA and everything in between.

A few orders of business before we get into the show. Lots of folks ask how they can support the show, and there are a few ways. First, Literaticast has a Patreon, throw in a buck and that helps me pay for the hosting fees and editing and whatnot. That can be found at patreon.com/literaticat. Additionally, if you like the show, please leave a review on Apple podcasts. More reviews help more folks find us. And finally, all the books we talk about on the show, as you know, are linked on the show notes, which is live on my webpage, which is JenniferLaughran.com/literaticast. If you click on those links, they direct you to bookshop.org and I get a small affiliate fee every time you buy a book there. And bookshop.org gives money directly to indie bookstores as well. So it's a win-win.

[00:00:59] I mean, this is not a get rich quick scheme or whatever on my behalf. I've literally earned $20 from affiliate links in the past year. But hey, every little bit helps. And of course, all those books are also available at your local bookstore or wherever you prefer to order books.

[00:01:14] Now, my guest today is somebody that I am lucky enough to represent. Graphic novelist Gareth Hines is well known for doing adaptations of classic stories in a graphic novel form. I'm going to talk to him about how he got started, how the graphic novel biz has changed over the years. And just how does he manage to essentially translate from prose to graphic novel form.

[00:01:38] His most recent project is more of a modern classic. It's *Graceling* *The Graphic Novel* based on the hugely best selling fantasy by Kristin Cashore. And it comes out this week. I'm so excited to tell you more about it. Let me see if I can get Gareth on the line.

[00:01:55] Hi, Gareth, welcome to the podcast.

Gareth: [00:01:57] Hey, Jenn. It’s great to be here.

Jenn: [00:01:59] So I already introduced you in the intro, but can you take just a minute to introduce yourself?

Gareth: [00:02:03] Okay, yeah, I'm an illustrator, author, adapter of primarily graphic novel adaptations of the classics. So I'm best known for my *Odyssey* and my *Iliad* adaptations. I've done *Beowulf*, Poe, a bunch of Shakespeare, etc.

Jenn: [00:02:17] Awesome. So let's get into it. When or how did you start drawing seriously?

Gareth: [00:02:24] Well, I've sort of been drawing my whole life. And when I was in high school, I started to actually draw like a weekly strip for the school newspaper. I was doing editorial illustrations for the school paper. And when it was time to decide what to do, where to go to school, what study, I had thought about maybe studying engineering or something considered more safe. But I just looked at my skill set and said, you know, I think I'm gonna go to art school, and I'm gonna try pursuing illustration. And that's when I decided that it was going to be a career.

Jenn: [00:02:54] So you had done some comics, but what drew you to graphic novels as a form?

Gareth: [00:02:58] Well, I tried a lot of different things in art school. And in fact, I thought maybe I was going to focus on editorial or book covers. But I kept coming back to comics. And also, I kept getting the best feedback on my comics. And so my senior thesis project was a, it's going to be a comics adaptation of a Brothers Grimm fairy tale called “Bear Skin.” And by the time I got done with it, it was 80 pages long. So it was a graphic novel and that was kind of how I got started.

Jenn: [00:03:26] You've been making graphic novels for a lot of years at this point. How has the market changed since you started?

Gareth: [00:03:32] Interesting question. So I mean, first of all, I'm like riding this wave of popularity of graphic novels, which has been amazing. When I was in high school, comics were their whole own world with separate retailers and distributors, and the monthly superhero comic was the mainstream. And then *Maus* came along and sort of showed everybody that it didn't have to be that way. But then it took a long time before the market and the availability of lots of material that was more literary, or that was for all different audiences, all different subject matters, all that kind of stuff. It took a while for that to really come about and to be so popular that the market would support it. And now I feel like yeah, there's just this explosion.

[00:04:14] The other thing that's different is self publishing, I started out self publishing. I self published *Bear* *Skin* and *Beowulf*. And you know, in those days, you had to get together a bunch of money and send a book to the printer and get a couple thousand copies of it. Nowadays, of course, it's there's a much lower barrier to entry.

Jenn: [00:04:31] Yeah, for sure. Obviously, you've done other kinds of illustrated work, too. You'll do other types of projects in the future. But as you say, what you're best known for specifically is doing these adaptations like Shakespeare plays, *Iliad*, *Odyssey*. And now of course, *Graceling*, which we're going to talk about further in a minute.

Gareth: [00:04:46] Yes.

Jenn: [00:04:46] But when you're thinking about an adaptation, what about a work makes you know that it's suited for graphic adaptation? Or more specifically, what makes you know that you want to adapt it?

Gareth: [00:04:58] When I started out, I was just picking my favorite stories and it just so happens that I really like old stories with like mythological content and historical context to them. And once I realized that there was an educational market and that there was a need really for these as a tool to introduce kids to classics in a way that maybe was more accessible or more exciting, that sort of made me start to think in terms of what gets taught the most. Or what is the hardest to teach. Where are those tools really needed? But also, of course, I'm still thinking in terms of just which stories I like, and which stories I think are going to be exciting to illustrate. So hopefully, they have some action in them, or some, I don't know magic or mythological things, monsters, all that kind of stuff I love to draw. I love to draw action scenes. I like to draw big muscular guys, even though I'm not doing, even though I sort of consider myself very different from the traditional superhero genre, there's definitely a strong connection of that, to both my work and my interests, and to ancient literature. I think of *Beowulf* and some of these other early heroes as like, the early superheroes.

Jenn: [00:06:13] Cool. You do amazing fight scenes.

Gareth: [00:06:17] Thank you. I put a lot of craft and work into those scenes.

Jenn: [00:06:20] So graphic novels, like films, can, in a way, make stories much shorter, because obviously anything that's a long description in a book, you can just show a picture of. And so sometimes you can convey a whole scene full descriptive prose in a very few images. But at the same time, the very process of making a graphic novels so labor intensive, and there's such a limited space, particularly for lots of narration or dialogue. So obviously, not every single scene or line that shows up in a lengthy play or novel can show up in a graphic novel. So how do you decide what to keep and what to leave out?

Gareth: [00:06:57] Yeah, it's something that kind of surprised me when I started out that first thesis project, that adaptation of a Brothers Grimm fairy tale. That's a story that's only about two pages long in prose, and it ended up being an 80 page graphic novel. So I realized, hey, this old adage that a picture's worth a thousand words is not exactly correct. So now, I like to say a picture's worth a variable number of words, because there are definitely places where I could summarize a lot, just with a single image. But there's other places where, yeah, it's like, I have to really cut long speeches way down, because it just nobody wants to read a speech that takes up half the page in a graphic novel.

[00:07:37] So what I've found is that, for example, with Shakespeare, I usually have to take out between a third and a half of the material to get it to what feels like the right length for a graphic novel. And with Homer, I had to really rewrite it to get it down to a length that worked.

[00:07:53] Historically, when I started out, there were not a ton of other people doing classic adaptations. But there was the Classics Illustrated line, that had started way back in like the ‘40s and had continued for many decades. And the problem with those is they were all only 48 pages long. It's very hard to do justice to these classics in 48 pages, but a few of them worked like *Moby Dick*, actually, as long as that book is they were able to simplify that down. And it was illustrated by Bill Sienkiewicz really gorgeously. So that was one of my early kind of touchstones of how could be done.

[00:08:25] But I also sometimes see unabridged adaptations. And often I feel like they're actually too long. It feels like you've actually made it harder to read the work even though the visuals definitely add visual interest and support. So anyway, that's just, my personal feeling is that is necessary to abridge and what I'm usually looking for is repetition, because a lot of these things came out of an oral tradition. And so things get repeated a lot. So I can take out some of that. Big descriptions that I can summarize with images. Places where I can maybe jump from one scene to another, maybe I can cut out, you know, jump from the middle of one scene into the next scene rather than have to have the whole thing.

[00:09:13] Sometimes with Shakespeare, there'll be a lot of stuff that's just there for comic relief. And that doesn't even really make sense to a modern audience. Those are things that I can cut out. It's tricky, it's not easy, but I'm always able to find enough things to cut out to get it down to a length I can deal with.

Jenn: [00:09:28] What is like the order of operations for your work? Do you start with a script first or storyboard or?

Gareth: [00:09:35] I start with a text. I mean, I have an original text, which if it's Shakespeare, I can actually just work with the play, I can just start editing it. But if it's something like Homer, I'm rewriting it. So I'm writing a script that is dialogue with some very minimal descriptions. I don't bother to do panels or page breaks or anything like that, because I'm going to mess with all of that stuff once I start drawing. And then I draw the entire book in rough sketches, rough layouts, thumbnails, there's a lot of different words people use for that. And I like to do that in InDesign. There's actually, I have videos that show different parts of my process on YouTube and on my social media. And you can see me kind of abusing InDesign to make it do things that it was not really designed to do as a drawing and layout tool. And then once I've got the book complete in that form, I show it to my editor, I show it to other early readers, I get feedback on it, I make any changes that I feel like need to happen before I then go back and redraw everything cleaner and color it.

Jenn: [00:10:34] Cool. When you're coloring and stuff do you work on the book chronologically or skip around?

Gareth: [00:10:41] Generally speaking, I work chronologically, there are times when I will maybe skip over a scene because I'm still editing it or something like that. And at the beginning, I like to draw a few pages from different parts of the book just so that I can sort of… Maybe there's different color palettes. I want to draw a daytime, a nighttime, an indoor, an outdoor. Just that I sort of have a good sense of the scope of how that style is going to work for the whole book. Because by the way, I like to tinker with the specific tools that I'm using, and with the visual style of the finished art a little bit for each book. So playing around with that for a few samples throughout the book. But then once I've got that, I basically tend to go straight through. And the main reason for that is just so that I can keep track of my progress more easily.

Jenn: [00:11:25] Cool. I just always think of like how film.

Gareth: [00:11:28] Yeah.

Jenn: [00:11:28] Films are made, where they can do things in weird orders.

Gareth: [00:11:31] They can and they often do that because of the availability of actors or whatever. And I don't usually have that problem. The only equivalent thing for me would be you know, if I was waiting for reference. Sometimes I do use actual people for reference. And if I need to go get some reference shots of somebody maybe I'll skip over that panel and come back to it later or whatever. I don't do too much of that. For certain books I have done more of that. But generally, it's mostly drawn from imagination and basic reference.

Jenn: [00:12:00] Cool. What do you find most rewarding about adapting classics for modern young readers?

Gareth: [00:12:07] One of the things I love about it, from my point of view, it allows me to really focus on the illustration and the visual storytelling. I don't have to kind of fight my way through writer's block, because I don't know where the story is going next. The other piece is the feedback. You know, I hear all the time from teachers or from parents whose kids are just, you know, really into the *Iliad*, and they've read it eight times, or whatever. And it blows my mind that, I mean, I didn't read the *Iliad* until I was an adult. I did the *Odyssey* in high school and I loved it, but I didn't… we read like a tiny excerpt of the *Iliad* to go along with that. But so it blows my mind that there's 10 year olds that have read *The* *Iliad*, half a dozen times in my adaptation. So that that kind of thing really, really makes me feel good. And that it's helping teachers, do their job, because, of course, their job is so incredibly hard all the time, especially right now.

Jenn: [00:13:02] For sure. So your latest book, which is coming out, basically, as we speak, is *Graceling*. It's something of a departure for you as it's a modern classic.

[00:13:13] Now, I've read both the novel and the YA fantasy novel, which originally came out in 2008 and the graphic novel. They're the same story with the same vibe, they're just totally different experiences to read. You do not have to read the novel to read the graphic novel at all. You can leap straight into the graphic novel. But if somebody is already a fan of the novel, I think they're also going to love the graphic novel and find lots of rewarding Easter eggs and stuff like that.

[00:13:37] But for the for the benefit of listeners who may not know the story, can you give us the elevator pitch for this book?

Gareth: [00:13:42] Okay. Well, it's little hard, because a lot of spoilers as the story goes along. But to just give you the basic setup, it's a fantasy that’s set in a world where there's not really magic, but people have these sort of special talents, a supernatural skill at doing something. And the main character is this young girl who has this talent for killing, it appears, and her uncle is the king. And he has been using her as a kind of a bully a strong man, to enforce his will. And she is really not comfortable with this. And then she meets this guy who also has a very special combat skill, and also is just a really interesting personality that she kind of starts to get really fascinated by. And then sort of has to figure out like, what is her relationship with him? How is she going to change her relationship with the king? And also there's some political intrigue going on and who's behind all of that? So that's the basic setup.

Jenn: [00:14:41] So you were already friends with Kristin Cashore, the author of the novel, but give us the timeline here. How did the graphic novel come about?

Gareth: [00:14:47] Yeah. So Kristin and I met shortly after *Graceling* had come out and we had done some events together. And just really clicked really, really liked each other. And at a certain point I was actually talking with my wife about what would be interesting contemporary books to adapt. She kind of was like. *Graceling*? And we both kind of looked at each other like, wow, that's really a pretty good idea. Maybe we should mention that to Kristin, then.

[00:15:17] So Allison asked her if she'd ever considered it and she was very excited by this idea. Especially, I mean, when I said that I would potentially be interested in doing it. And then her agent, and you, my agent. Everybody was kind of like, yeah, this really sounds like a good idea. The publisher got on board, which of course is important. And yeah, and we did it. And now it's done. And it's coming out. Yay.

Jenn: [00:15:40] How long did it take you?

Gareth: [00:15:42] It took a long time. So as it turned out. This happens to me not infrequently, where I will have a target page length for a book. And in this case, it was about 200 pages. And I will be working along on those rough draft and just blow past that. And just start to be like, okay, I'm getting in trouble here. So it ended up being a two year project, and it ended up being 270 pages instead of 200.

Jenn: [00:16:09] Yeah, I'm actually looking at my copyright and I was like, ooh, how many pages is this? And it doesn't say. Long. Long is the answer.

Gareth: [00:16:15] Yes. Yes. It's actually the same length as the *Iliad*.

Jenn: [00:16:19] Wow, really? It looked so much smaller, but—

Gareth: [00:16:22] Well, it is a smaller trim size. Its actual physical dimensions are smaller. And it's printed on a little bit thinner paper so it doesn't look as thick, but it is actually.

Jenn: [00:16:32] Wow. So you're used to adapting these classics where the author has been gone for hundreds of years. They cannot complain. How different was it to adapt a story written only a decade ago and by a friend? And how much did the two of you collaborate on the project?

Gareth: [00:16:45] Yeah, I mean, I think, part of the reason why I wanted to do it, and also why she wanted to do it, I think, is because we really trusted each other. We really felt like, yeah, there wasn't going to be, I don't know. Nobody was going to be stepping on each other's toes, there weren't going to be control issues. She really trusted me to adapt it the way I wanted to do it, with the understanding that she also trusted me to come, to give her feedback on how the characters were presented, and how the story might change in this new medium.

[00:17:13] So I would send her… I sent her the script. I sent her the rough sketches center that inked art. At every stage where I would get feedback from anybody, I would make sure that she gave me her feedback first. And she was super responsive, and also super complimentary and positive about everything that I was doing. In fact, she at one point gave me one of the nicest compliments. She said that when I sent her the script, she said that it's hard for her to reread her whole novel at this point, because it's been so long and she sees things she doesn't like and whatever. But reading my script sort of gave her the experience of being able to enjoy her novel again, which I was just so gratified by.

Jenn: [00:17:49] That's nice.

Gareth: [00:17:50] And her actual feedback were pretty minimal. They were just things like, oh, maybe we should have her say this instead of this. A lot of it was just voice of the characters in specific moments.

Jenn: [00:18:02] Well you definitely capture the voice of Katsa and Po, for sure. So, good job.

Gareth: [00:18:09] Thank you.

Jenn: [00:18:10] What was the hardest scene or spread to work on?

Gareth: [00:18:14] Well, actually, there was a there was a spread that turned out to be emotionally difficult for me. So I have a very good friend who died in February of last year in a rock climbing accident. And she was a big fan of this book and the book is dedicated to her. But somehow it snuck up on me and I didn't realize until I was actually drawing this page that when… There’s a scene, this is a spoiler, but there is a scene where somebody falls off a cliff. And that was an incredibly difficult page for me to draw. It’s only kind of literally found something painful to draw. That was definitely the hardest thing in this book.

Jenn: [00:18:51] Oh my gosh, that just gave me chills. Do you have a favorite panel or scene or spread?

Gareth: [00:18:58] So I really love drawing water and underwater stuff. And so the scenes where Katsa is diving into a lake or fishing in a lake. There's all these great landscapes. I love to paint all the landscapes but that's kind of like throughout the whole middle of the book. But in particular, there's a couple of pages where there are underwater scenes that I really had a lot of fun with and that I'm really pleased with how they came out.

Jenn: [00:19:25] Well that goes with my favorite because mine is probably the page where Katsa is ducking her head underwater. I love the way you're able to convey this rush of the cold water by using these three still small images. You practically feel the weight of her drenched hair when she's flicking it backward. And also I love the epilogue, which no spoilers, is set in a near pitch black cave. But you somehow manage… like there's a very lack of visual details and blackness. But you managed to work with the dark in a way that conveys so much emotion. It's really cool.

Gareth: [00:19:58] Yeah, one of the first questions that I asked Kristin after I had reread the book, when we were going to do this is, hey, you started and ended this book in complete darkness. And I love the symbolism of that. But it's going to be hard to do that in the graphic novel and are you okay if I have to change that? And she was kind of like, oh, did I do that? Yeah, you can change that if you need to. But then I found that it actually worked. And that I was able to work with that as a constraint in a way that I actually really was happy with.

Jenn: [00:20:27] It came out cool. What was your favorite character to draw?

Gareth: [00:20:32] Oh, gosh, well, I really love drawing Po. And also… Po and Giddon. Giddon is sort of, he's not a love interest. He’s interested in Katsa but it turns out that she's not interested in him. And I love his, he's just always kind of cranky. And we find out later that he's a really good guy, but he's sort of cranky throughout this book. And I enjoyed that personality drawing him.

Jenn: [00:20:58] Well, my fave. Well, Po is just so handsome, and also amazing, and I love him. But also, I started crying when Bitterblue showed up and basically cried whenever I saw her because I love Bitterblue.

Gareth: [00:21:10] Yes, she was a lot of fun to draw.

Jenn: [00:21:11] And also, Leck gives me straight up Trump vibes. I don't know if that was on purpose, but… ugh. Anyway.

Gareth: [00:21:20] Let's just say I didn't want him to look like Trump but I'm glad you got those vibes.

Jenn: [00:21:23] For sure. So thank you for indulging my gushing there. I love this book a lot. And I just need to say once again, that by the time this airs, *Graceling The Graphic Novel* will be able to be bought from your favorite bookstore. And everyone should get their own copy. There will be links in the show notes.

Gareth: [00:21:38] Great.

Jenn: [00:21:38] So all that being said, there's a lot of creators and graphic novelists and whatnot that listen to this podcast, or aspiring authors. So what advice would you give to aspiring graphic novel creators?

Gareth: [00:21:51] So I think the first thing is that if you're starting out, if you're early on, you're still learning how to draw or whatever. The big thing is just to have a sketchbook and just draw all the time, have it with you all the time, draw everything, practice drawing from life. It's okay to copy from your favorite comics, I personally think that rather than copy the way somebody draws, copy the way they tell their stories. So I used to do these little messy sketches of people's pages, studying their page composition. And I picked up tools that way for how I would do my own scenes.

[00:22:23] I also think that once you're actually drawing your own comics, it's very important to try to get them. You want to show them to people, but you want to get them to the point where you can show them without explaining. Because the real challenge is to have the story all hold up on its own on the page without you there to back it up. So getting, like rough drafts are good, but get your draft clean enough so you can show it to somebody and they can understand it. And they can give you feedback on it. And it's very good for writers, especially, to have, like a group, have some friends, make a little writers’ group online or in person or whatever, where you can discuss what you're doing and show each other stuff. And share advice and share your pain. Whatever it may be. That's a tool that I find that… I lean on my writer friends and my trusted reader friends a lot. And most of the authors that I know do that as well.

Jenn: [00:23:23] Yeah, I mean, I think it's super important to build a community. Particularly because most people don't have… their families might be amazing, but they probably don't know much about publishing. Or necessarily want to hear all your stories about querying and whatnot.

Gareth: [00:23:38] And you have to you have to try a lot of readers, by the way, to find good readers, because some people will just love everything you do, and other people won't understand what you're doing. And you know, you want to find people who will sort of look at it kind of objectively and just be like, huh, I didn't understand this. Or, can you tell me what's going on here? Or I wonder if this scene could be, like I really like this scene, but I want it to go on longer or whatever. You want them to give you actionable feedback.

Jenn: [00:24:05] Yeah, I got a lot of people in my inbox who have shown their work to their children, or to their second grade class or whatever. And that's great. And they were oh, the kids love it.

Gareth: [00:24:14] Yeah.

Jenn: [00:24:14] Like, of course, because they love you.

Gareth: [00:24:19] Yeah.

Jenn: [00:24:19] And you probably are telling it in an amazing way. But that doesn't necessarily mean it's going to translate well into a published book. So it's not… like, the second graders may be very clever but they probably don't know that much about publishing or what works in terms of narrative and that kind of thing. So.

Gareth: [00:24:35] Yeah.

Jenn: [00:24:35] Also, sidebar. I'm always so envious of people who can draw because I cannot. And the other day I saw this TikTok, where a teacher, I think she's maybe a ninth grade teacher, she showed artwork that her class had done. Self portraits that her class had done the first week of school and then another self portrait from nine weeks later. And it was amazing. Like these kids when they first started the, it was like what I would draw, or like what most children would draw. Sort of a circle, two little eyeballs, whatever.

Gareth: [00:25:17] Yep.

Jenn: [00:25:18] And she actually, they were amazing by the end of nine weeks, which made me realize that this is actually something that people can learn to do.

Gareth: [00:25:24] Yeah. It’s pretty cool. And there are places online, and I don't really know what they are these days. But there are places online where there are forums where people, show their work and talk about how to improve. And it's often kind of nice to get advice on a place like that, and also to see how people improve, because yeah, when people really dedicate themselves to it, they can improve very rapidly.

Jenn: [00:25:50] Yeah, I mean, I guess, really, I'm never going to do that. So it's something that I just have to know about myself. So I can be envious. But I also know, like, I'm not going to put in that work. But I—

Gareth: [00:25:59] Yeah, I mean, I stopped playing a musical instrument in high school because I was just like, you know, all my time is going into drawing and martial arts and I'm not going to be doing music. It's just not going to happen.

Jenn: [00:26:10] Do you have any resources that you recommend for people who are starting their journey, like, maybe books to look at, or?

Gareth: [00:26:17] Well, I definitely think everybody should read *Understanding* *Comics* by Scott McCloud, if they haven't. It's really the, sort of, most accessible and cool thing about the medium of comics. Not just if you want to draw comics, but just if you enjoy comics, it will actually make you enjoy them more, potentially. And Scott McCloud did a good how to book, Lynda Barry has done some amazing books. Jessica Bell and Matt Madden have done a really good book or series of books. So there's definitely a lot of how tos and resources out there. There's a lot of art schools that have very good comics programs. But I also ultimately feel like in a lot of ways that the real work of comics happens when it's just you there at the drawing table. So practicing and just trying lots of different things, I think is really the key thing.

Jenn: [00:27:06] So on the topic of books to recommend. What graphic novels that are not your own would you like to pimp for a moment?

Gareth: [00:27:13] Sure, sure. Let's see so some recent ones in the last couple of years that I really loved include The Thud, which is a European import about autistic kid who's whose mom goes into a coma and he is sent to this village that, he is sent to a special school that is in a village where many of the people in the village have neurodiversity of one kind or another. It's a really interesting scenario with really interesting characters, but also the art is just incredibly gorgeous.

[00:27:43] There's some great recent adaptations, the *Slaughterhouse*-*Five* that's by Ryan North and Albert Monteys, I think is his name. *Long* *Way Down* the Jason Reynolds book adapted by Danica Novgorodoff. *Daughters of Ys*, which I'm going to call an adaptation because it's like a folk tale that M.T. Anderson did the script adapted into a graphic novel and it was illustrated by Jo Rioux and is absolutely gorgeous.

[00:28:11] A really funny one if you just want something on the lighter side is *The Dire Days of Willowweep Manor*, which is a kind of a Jane Austen meets, I don't know, alternate reality choose your own adventure kind of thing. It's really crazy. And also I'm kind of obsessed with this book *Geis*, which is spelled G-E-I-S. It's a trilogy by Alexis Deacon and the first two books are out and the third book comes out next year. And that is one of my absolute favorites the last couple years.

Jenn: [00:28:39] Cool. So speaking of obsessions, we're finally ready for the bonus question that everybody loves, which is what are you obsessed with right now? It does not have to be bookish, but it can be. And I will go first so you can think about what your obsession is.

Gareth: [00:28:51] Okay.

Jenn: [00:28:52] So mine is usually a TV show or food or something. But this time for once I'm going bookish. Sterling just put out an amazing edition of *Dracula*. It's called *Dracula, the Deluxe Edition*, illustrated by Edward Gorey. So Edward Gorey had done a theater production. He built all the sets and stuff and this is kind of outtakes from that, I guess. The thing about it is this edition is oversized. It has a velvet cover. And the edges are completely decorated with bats. It's the most luxurious thing. I've already bought several copies as gifts. Hopefully my family is not listening to this. It is a limited edition though. So get it while you can. I'll put a link in the show notes.

[00:29:35] Gareth, what are you obsessed with?

Gareth: [00:29:37] So I think what I'm obsessed with right now, ironically, is recording videos and podcasts. I got some new equipment and I started a TikTok. I'm not putting like a ton of time and energy into it. But I have really enjoyed making these little short videos and also recording voiceovers for some of my process videos that I'm doing for *Graceling*. And also I have a couple of friends on the west coast that I've been doing a project with that has involved. I don't know. It's multimedia. It has involved podcast and videos and drawing stuff that's being animated and all kinds of interesting experiments in audio/video.

[00:30:18] Literaticast theme music plays in the background.

Jenn: [00:30:19] Cool. Well, I will put a link to your TikTok also. Thank you so much for joining me on the podcast. It was great to talk to you.

Gareth: [00:30:26] Thanks so much, Jenn. It's always great to talk to you.

Jenn: [00:30:30] Thanks again to Gareth Hinds for joining me. *Graceling the Graphic Novel* drops November 16. And by the time you're hearing this, it should be on bookstore shelves and can be ordered from your favorite retailer. Links to *Graceling* and all the other books we chatted about are up in the show notes on my website. JenniferLaughran.com/Literaticast. Thanks so much for listening and see you next time.