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Neil Gaiman Lecture on Reading and Obligation

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Neil Gaiman is the universally beloved author of the classics *Coraline*, *American Gods*, and *The Sandman* series, among other works. He has even written a couple of the best *Doctor Who* episodes in recent years.

On October 14, 2013, he gave a lecture at The Reading Agency on the topics of reading and obligation.

An excerpt from the lecture:

> The simplest way to make sure that we raise literate children is to teach them to read, and to show them that reading is a pleasurable activity. And that means, at its simplest, finding books that they enjoy giving them access to those books and letting them read them.
>
> I don't think there is such a thing as a bad book for children. Every now and again it becomes fashionable among some adults to point at a subset of children's books, a genre, perhaps, or an author, and to declare them bad books, books that children should be stopped from reading. I've seen it happen over and over; Enid Blyton was declared a bad author, so was R. L Stine, so were dozens of others. Comics have been decried as fostering illiteracy.
>
> It's tosh. It's snobbery and it's foolishness.
>
> There are no bad authors for children, that children like and want to read and seek out, because every child is different. They can find the stories they need to, and they bring themselves to stories. A hackneyed, worn-out idea isn't hackneyed and worn out to them. This is the first time the child has encountered it. Do not discourage children from reading because you feel they are reading the wrong thing. Fiction you do not like is the gateway drug to other books you may prefer. And not everyone has the same taste as you.

Here is the video of the full lecture.

Neil Gaiman Lecture @ The Reading Agency

[embedvideo id="yNIUWv9_ZH0? website="youtube"]

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