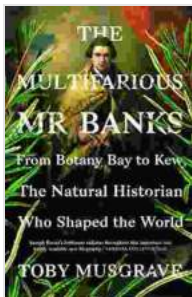


# The Multifarious Mr Banks: Uncovering the Hidden Depths of Mary Poppins' Creator

In the enchanting world of children's literature, few characters have captured the hearts and imaginations of readers and viewers quite like the enigmatic Mary Poppins. With her magical umbrella, bottomless carpet bag, and unwavering optimism, she has become an iconic figure in the realm of fantasy and imagination.



## The Multifarious Mr. Banks: From Botany Bay to Kew, The Natural Historian Who Shaped the World

by Toby Musgrave

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 31586 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 411 pages



But who was the creative mind behind this beloved character? P. L. Travers, the Australian author who brought Mary Poppins to life, was a complex and multifarious figure whose own life story is as fascinating and captivating as the tales she penned.

## Early Life and Childhood Influences

Pamela Lyndon Travers was born on August 9, 1899, in Maryborough, Queensland, Australia. Her father, Travers Goff, was a failed bank manager who turned to farming and journalism after losing his job. Her mother, Margaret Agnes Morehead, was a devout Catholic who instilled in her daughter a strong sense of spirituality.

Travers' childhood was marked by both joy and adversity. She had a close and loving relationship with her mother, but her father was often absent and emotionally distant. As a young girl, she developed a vivid imagination and a love of storytelling, often entertaining her siblings with tales of her own invention.

## **Literary Beginnings**

In 1924, Travers left Australia for England, where she hoped to establish herself as a writer. She initially struggled to find success, but in 1934 she published her first novel, *The Mary Poppins Opens the Door*. The book was an instant success and quickly became a beloved classic.

Over the next several decades, Travers wrote a series of sequels to *Mary Poppins*, each one further exploring the magical world created in the original book. She also wrote other works of fiction, including the novel *I Go By Sea, I Go By Land* and the short story collection *Aunt Sass*.

## **The Inspiration Behind Mary Poppins**

The inspiration for *Mary Poppins* came from a variety of sources. Travers drew upon her own childhood experiences, including her close relationship with her mother and her love of storytelling. She was also influenced by the works of other authors, such as Lewis Carroll and E. Nesbit.

However, the most significant influence on the creation of Mary Poppins was Travers' own complex personality. She was a woman of contradictions, at once charming and aloof, imaginative and practical. These contradictory elements found expression in the character of Mary Poppins, who is both a magical nanny and a stern disciplinarian.

## **Success and Controversy**

The success of the Mary Poppins books brought Travers fame and fortune. However, she also faced her share of controversy. Some critics accused her of being too sentimental and moralistic, while others criticized her portrayal of women and minorities.

Travers was a fiercely independent woman who was not afraid to express her opinions. She often clashed with Disney over the film adaptation of *Mary Poppins*, and she was critical of the way in which her work was marketed and merchandised.

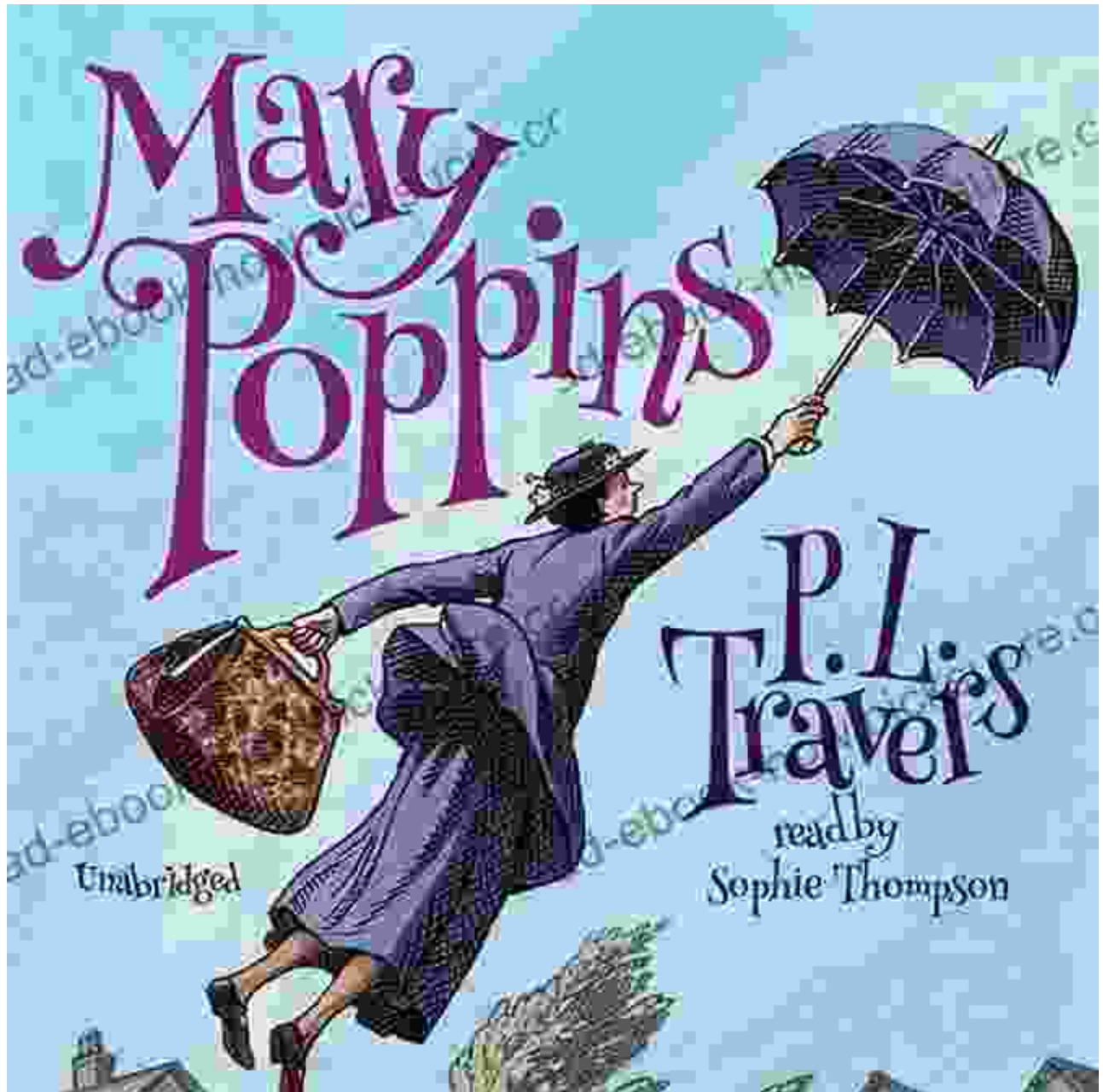
## **Later Years and Legacy**

In her later years, Travers became increasingly reclusive. She spent much of her time in her home in Chelsea, London, where she continued to write and paint. She died in 1996 at the age of 96.

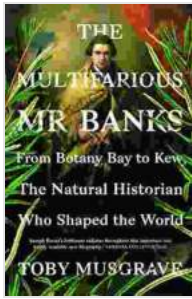
P. L. Travers' legacy is complex and enduring. She is remembered as the creator of one of the most beloved characters in children's literature. However, she was also a complex and controversial figure who left behind a body of work that continues to inspire and provoke debate.

P. L. Travers was a truly multifarious figure. She was a gifted writer, a complex personality, and a pioneer for women in literature. Her creation,

Mary Poppins, has captured the hearts and imaginations of generations of readers and viewers. As we continue to celebrate the enduring legacy of this iconic character, it is important to remember the enigmatic author who brought her to life.



*Featured image: A portrait of P. L. Travers, taken in 1964. Image courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London.*



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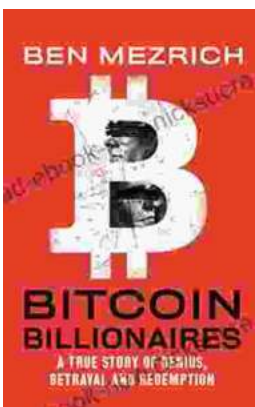
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