



American Gods: The Tenth Anniversary Edition: A Novel

By Neil Gaiman

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First published in 2001, *American Gods* became an instant classic—an intellectual and artistic benchmark from the multiple-award-winning master of innovative fiction, Neil Gaiman. Now discover the mystery and magic of *American Gods* in this tenth anniversary edition. Newly updated and expanded with the author's preferred text, this commemorative volume is a true celebration of a modern masterpiece by the one, the only, Neil Gaiman.

A storm is coming . . .

Locked behind bars for three years, Shadow did his time, quietly waiting for the magic day when he could return to Eagle Point, Indiana. A man no longer scared of what tomorrow might bring, all he wanted was to be with Laura, the wife he deeply loved, and start a new life.

But just days before his release, Laura and Shadow's best friend are killed in an accident. With his life in pieces and nothing to keep him tethered, Shadow accepts a job from a beguiling stranger he meets on the way home, an enigmatic man who calls himself Mr. Wednesday. A trickster and rogue, Wednesday seems to know more about Shadow than Shadow does himself.

Life as Wednesday's bodyguard, driver, and errand boy is far more interesting and dangerous than Shadow ever imagined—it is a job that takes him on a dark and strange road trip and introduces him to a host of eccentric characters whose fates are mysteriously intertwined with his own. Along the way Shadow will learn that the past never dies; that everyone, including his beloved Laura, harbors secrets; and that dreams, totems, legends, and myths are more real than we know. Ultimately, he will discover that beneath the placid surface of everyday life a storm is brewing—an epic war for the very soul of America—and that he is standing squarely in its path.

Relevant and prescient, *American Gods* has been lauded for its brilliant synthesis of "mystery, satire, sex, horror, and poetic prose" (Michael Dirda, *Washington Post Book World*) and as a modern phantasmagoria that "distills the essence of America" (*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*). It is, quite simply, an outstanding work of

literary imagination that will endure for generations.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

American Gods is Neil Gaiman's best and most ambitious novel yet, a scary, strange, and hallucinogenic road-trip story wrapped around a deep examination of the American spirit. Gaiman tackles everything from the onslaught of the information age to the meaning of death, but he doesn't sacrifice the razor-sharp plotting and narrative style he's been delivering since his *Sandman* days.

Shadow gets out of prison early when his wife is killed in a car crash. At a loss, he takes up with a mysterious character called Wednesday, who is much more than he appears. In fact, Wednesday is an old god, once known as Odin the All-father, who is roaming America rounding up his forgotten fellows in preparation for an epic battle against the upstart deities of the Internet, credit cards, television, and all that is wired. Shadow agrees to help Wednesday, and they whirl through a psycho-spiritual storm that becomes all too real in its manifestations. For instance, Shadow's dead wife Laura keeps showing up, and not just as a ghost--the difficulty of their continuing relationship is by turns grim and darkly funny, just like the rest of the book.

Armed only with some coin tricks and a sense of purpose, Shadow travels through, around, and underneath the visible surface of things, digging up all the powerful myths Americans brought with them in their journeys to this land as well as the ones that were already here. Shadow's road story is the heart of the novel, and it's here that Gaiman offers up the details that make this such a cinematic book--the distinctly American foods and diversions, the bizarre roadside attractions, the decrepit gods reduced to shell games and prostitution. "This is a bad land for Gods," says Shadow.

More than a tourist in America, but not a native, Neil Gaiman offers an outside-in and inside-out perspective on the soul and spirituality of the country--our obsessions with money and power, our jumbled religious heritage and its societal outcomes, and the millennial decisions we face about what's real and what's not. -- *Therese Littleton*

From Publishers Weekly

Titans clash, but with more fuss than fury in this fantasy demi-epic from the author of *Neverwhere*. The intriguing premise of Gaiman's tale is that the gods of European yore, who came to North America with their immigrant believers, are squaring off for a rumble with new indigenous deities: "gods of credit card and freeway, of Internet and telephone, of radio and hospital and television, gods of plastic and of beeper and of neon." They all walk around in mufti, disguised as ordinary people, which causes no end of trouble for 32-year-old protagonist Shadow Moon, who can't turn around without bumping into a minor divinity. Released from prison the day after his beloved wife dies in a car accident, Shadow takes a job as emissary for Mr. Wednesday, avatar of the Norse god Grinnir, unaware that his boss's recruiting trip across the American heartland will subject him to repeat visits from the reanimated corpse of his dead wife and brutal roughing up by the goons of Wednesday's adversary, Mr. World. At last Shadow must reevaluate his own deeply held beliefs in order to determine his crucial role in the final showdown. Gaiman tries to keep the magical and the mundane evenly balanced, but he is clearly more interested in the activities of his human protagonists: Shadow's poignant personal moments and the tale's affectionate slices of smalltown life are much better developed than the aimless plot, which bounces Shadow from one episodic encounter to another in a design only the gods seem to know. Mere mortal readers will enjoy the tale's wit, but puzzle over its strained mythopoeia. (One-day laydown, June 19) Forecast: Even when he isn't in top form, Gaiman, creator of the

acclaimed Sandman comics series, trumps many storytellers. Momentously titled, and allotted a dramatic one-day laydown with a 12-city author tour, his latest will appeal to fans and attract mainstream review coverage for better or for worse because of the rich possibilities of its premise.

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From Library Journal

Shadow Moon, recently released from prison and dealing with his wife's death, accepts a job offer from the mysterious Mr. Wednesday. Together they travel across America gathering up Mr. Wednesday's creepy friends. Soon Shadow discovers this road trip involves the upcoming epic battle between the old gods of the immigrants and today's new gods credit cards, TV, and the Internet. He also experiences repeat visits from the reanimated corpse of his dead wife, Laura. Shadow's personal tale and the details of American small-town life are well developed compared with the not-well-defined plot. The focus shifts from the gods' Armageddon to Shadow's life, to subplots about secondary characters. The book has wit but is too busy and not very engaging and includes some graphic language, sex, and disturbing events. George Guidall's clear, well-articulated narration contributes to a positive listening experience. Fans will no doubt enjoy the subject matter and the mythic scope. Denise A. Garofalo, Mid-Hudson Lib. Syst., Poughkeepsie, NY

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Users Review

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Barbara Kimmel:

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Shirley Morales:

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Jennifer Bell:

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Paul Jackson:

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