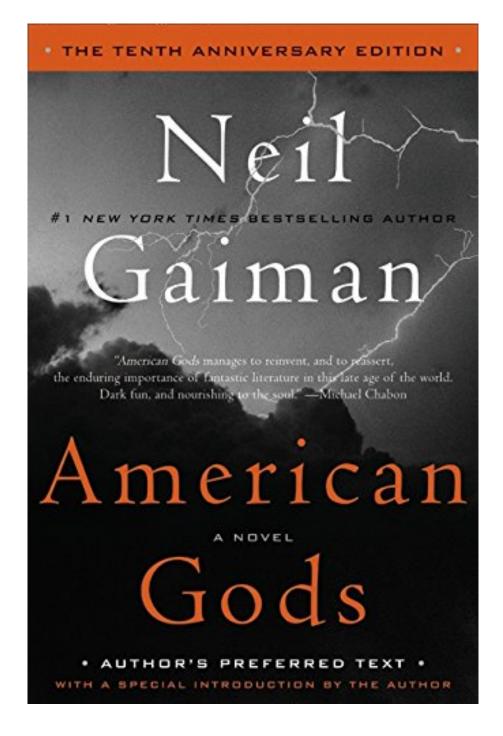


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First published in 2001, American Gods became an instant classic—an intellectual and artistic benchmark from the multiple-award-winning master of innovative fiction, Neil Gaiman. Now discover the mystery and magic of American Gods in this tenth anniversary 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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Most helpful customer reviews

15 of 15 people found the following review helpful.

Like Nothing Else

By Amazon Customer

This is an amazing book and I struggle to even find words to describe it. I my best estimation, the characters in the book or personifications of things that we idolize in American culture. The story that takes place mostly on the road, on the run, and prisons, national monuments, many strange an unforgettable characters. I would love to see this adapted into a television series. There's certainly plenty of material for something like that. Gaiman is one of the most imaginative writers around and this book stretches the imagination. I'm not sure if it's sci-fi, whore, action, drama, comedy, adventure, or some amalgamation of all of the genres on one but it is a great read.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

A book about modern America, written by a Brit. And its Very Good

By craigzon harmer

What happens to gods after their believers die off and they're replaced by new gods?

If they never existed in the first place, then that's not a problem. But if they did, then this book offers an outcome -- they moved to the New World (North America) and live out their immortal existence in relative ignominy.

Ostensibly, the book is about the fate of the Old (and New) Gods in the New World, but it's also about the United Sates.

I'm having a hard time summarizing the book, but I couldn't put it down while I was reading it and I might read it again. Revelations at the end of the book cast a different light on events at the beginning of the book, so a reread of the book would interesting.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Who Needs The Other More: God or Man?

By 500 Books

Virtually every culture, around the world and across time, has some kind of religious/mythological belief system. Where did we come from? How are we to live? Those basic questions gave rise to hundreds, even thousands, of myths to give the answers (see: the entire Masks of God series I spent months of my life reading). In an anthropological/psychological sense, God did not create man. Man created the gods. And in Neil Gaiman's American Gods, we didn't just create them as concepts in the sky; they are corporeal beings

and they need us, our prayers and our tributes, to thrive. But we as Americans haven't been giving them what they need for a long time now. What idols do we regard with something close to reverence today? TVs. Our phones. Our computers. And that has given rise to new gods in competition for our devotion with the old ones.

In its central and most straightforward plot line, American Gods follows Shadow Moon, a convict released from prison at the very beginning of the novel, and his work with the mysterious Mr. Wednesday to round up the old gods to do battle against the new in a final battle. But this isn't a straightforward novel, and its reach expands far beyond the basic premise. Gaiman explores the history of the gods, explaining how they got to the United States in the first place...from prehistoric travel across the land bridge over the Bering Straight, to the Vikings, to the slave trade and more. He shows us how these neglected gods survive in the real world: Bilquis, the Queen of Sheba, is a prostitute, and Thoth and Anubis have set up shop as undertakers for the minority community in a small town in Illinois. There's a short story within the novel of a gay Arab man, trying desperately to sell his brother-in-law's trinkets to distributors in New York City, and his encounter with an ifrit. There's a subplot about an idyllic small town in Wisconsin and how it stays prosperous and comfortable even while surrounding communities suffer. Gaiman has created a rich and thick and layered experience to read and absorb.

So why not a more glowing review, a higher rating? Well, as much as I appreciated it, I didn't connect with it very much. Shadow, our main character, is a cipher who neither speaks particularly often or has an especially rich inner life. And it makes sense, for who he's supposed to be: the only son of a peripatetic single mother who never had many friends growing up, who's spent a few years in the clink and loses the person closest to him right from the start. Why wouldn't he be withdrawn and closed off? Left alone in the world, why wouldn't he practice coin tricks instead of losing himself in his thoughts? But as much as I understand the characterization, it keeps the book at a distance, at least at first. As it moved along I got more swept up in it, but it still didn't quite click. It's actually a book I think would improve on re-read...now that I know what's coming and how it all plays out, I'd like to go back and start it from the beginning. Not right now. But eventually.

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