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Neil Gaiman

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Full text biography:

Neil Gaiman

Birth Date : 1960

Known As : Gaiman, Neil Richard

Place of Birth: United Kingdom,Portchester

Nationality : British

Occupation : Writer

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Awards:

Mekon Award, Society of Strip Illustrators, and Eagle Award for best graphic novel, both 1988, both for *Violent Cases*; Eagle Award for best writer of American comics, 1990; Harvey Award for best writer, 1990 and 1991; Will Eisner Comic Industry Award for best writer of the year and best graphic album (reprint), 1991; World Fantasy Award for best short story, 1991, for "A Midsummer Night's Dream"; Will Eisner Comic Industry Award for best writer of the year, 1992; Harvey Award for best continuing series, 1992; Will Eisner Comic Industry Award for best writer of the year and best graphic album (new), 1993; Gem Award, Diamond Distributors, for expanding the marketplace for comic books, 1993; Will Eisner Comic Industry Award for best writer of the year, 1994; Guild Award, International Horror Critics, and World Fantasy Award nomination, both 1994, both for *Angels and Visitation: A Miscellany* and short story; GLAAD Award for best comic of the year, 1996, for *Death: The Time of Your Life*; Eagle Award for best comic, 1996; Lucca Best Writer Prize, 1997; *Newsweek* list of best children's books, 1997, for *The Day I Swapped My Dad for Two Goldfish*; Defender of Liberty Award, Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, 1997; MacMillan Silver Pen Award, 1999, for *Smoke and Mirrors: Short Fictions and Illusions*; Hugo Award nomination, 1999, for *Sandman: The Dream Hunters*; Mythopoeic Award for best novel for adults, 1999, for *Stardust: Being a Romance within the Realms of Faerie*; Nebula Award nomination, 1999, for screenplay for the film *Princess Mononoke*; Hugo Award for best science fiction/fantasy novel, Bram Stoker Award for best novel, Horror Writers Association, and British Science Fiction Association (BSFA) Award nomination, all 2002, all for *American Gods*; BSFA Award for best short fiction, Elizabeth Burr/Worzalla Award, Bram Stoker Award, Horror Writers Association, Hugo Award nomination, and Prix Tam Tam Award, all 2003, all for *Coraline*; script *Signal to Noise* received a SONY Radio Award; Hugo Award for Best Short Story, 2004, for "A Study in Emerald"; Bram Stoker Award, 2004, for *The Sandman: Endless Nights*; August Derleth Award, 2006, for *Anansi Boys*; Locus Award for Best Short Story, 2007, 2010, 2011, 2012, and for Best Collection, for *Fragile Things*; Newbery Medal, Locus Award for best young adult book, Hugo Award for best novel, all 2009, and CILIP Carnegie Medal, 2010, all for *The Graveyard Book*; British Fantasy Award, 2010, for *Batman: Whatever Happened to the Caped Crusader?*; Locus Award, and Shirley Jackson Award, both 2011, both for *The Truth is a Cave in the Black Mountains: A Tale of Travel and Darkness with Pictures of All Kinds*; Shirley Jackson Award for Stories, 2011; Ray Bradbury Award for Outstanding Dramatic Presentation, 2011, and Hugo Award for Best Dramatic Presentation, 2012, both for *Doctor Who* episode; Specsavers National Book Awards, Specsavers Book of the Year, British National Book Awards winner, both 2013, and Locus Award for Best Fantasy Novel, 2014, all for *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*; Locus Awards, 2016, for best novelette, for "Black Dog," and for best collection, for *Trigger Warning: Short Fictions and Disturbances*; Hugo Awards for best graphic story, and Dragon Award for best graphic novel, both 2016, both for *The Sandman: Overture*; 1st Place in the Long Poem Category, Science Fiction & Fantasy Poetry Association Rhysling Awards, 2018, for "The Mushroom Hunters."

Personal Information:

Born November 10, 1960, in Portchester, England; son of David Bernard (a company director) and Sheila (a pharmacist) Gaiman; married Mary Therese McGrath, March 14, 1985 (divorced, 2008); married Amanda Palmer, January 3, 2011; children: (first marriage) Michael Richard, Holly Miranda, Madeleine Rose Elvira, (second marriage) Anthony. **Politics:** "Wooly." **Religion:** Jewish. **Avocational Interests:** "Finding more bookshelf space." **Memberships:** Comic Book Legal Defense Fund (board of directors), International Museum of Cartoon Art (advisory board), Science Fiction Foundation (committee member), Society of Strip Illustrators (chair, 1988-90), British Fantasy Society. **Addresses:** Agent: Merilee Heifetz, Writer's House, 21 W. 26th St., New York, NY 10010.

Career Information:

Freelance journalist, 1983-87; full-time writer, 1987--.

Writings:

GRAPHIC NOVELS AND COMIC BOOKS

- *Violent Cases*, illustrated by Dave McKean, Titan (London, England), 1987, Tundra (Northampton, MA), 1991, Dark Horse Comics (Milwaukee, OR), 2003.
- *Black Orchid* (originally published in magazine form in 1989), illustrated by Dave McKean, DC Comics (New York, NY), 1991, illustrated by Dave McKean; lettered by Todd Klein, 2012.
- *Miracleman, Book 4: The Golden Age*, illustrated by Mark Buckingham, Eclipse (Forestville, CA), 1992.
- *Signal to Noise*, illustrated by Dave McKean, Dark Horse Comics (Milwaukee, OR), 1992.
- *The Books of Magic* (originally published in magazine form, four volumes), illustrated by John Bolton and others, DC Comics (New York, NY), 1993, deluxe edition, 2013.
- *The Tragical Comedy, or Comical Tragedy, of Mr. Punch*, illustrated by Dave McKean, VG Graphics (London, England), 1994, Vertigo/DC Comics (New York, NY), 1995, also published as *Mr. Punch*, 20th anniversary edition, 2014.
- (Author of text, with Alice Cooper) *The Compleat Alice Cooper: Incorporating the Three Acts of Alice Cooper's The Last Temptation*, illustrated by Michael Zulli, Marvel Comics (New York, NY), 1995, published as *The Last Temptation*, Dark Horse Comics (Milwaukee, OR), 2000.
- *Angela*, illustrated by Greg Capullo and Mark Pennington, Image (Anaheim, CA), 1995, published as *Spawn: Angela's Hunt*, 2000.
- *Stardust: Being a Romance within the Realms of Faerie*, illustrated by Charles Vess, DC Comics (New York, NY), 1997-98, text published as *Stardust*, Spike (New York, NY), 1999, William Morrow (New York, NY), 2012.
- (Author of text, with Matt Wagner) *Neil Gaiman's Midnight Days*, DC Comics (New York, NY), 1999.
- *Green Lantern/Superman: Legend of the Green Flame*, DC Comics (New York, NY), 2000.
- *Harlequin Valentine*, illustrated by John Bolton, Dark Horse Comics (Milwaukee, OR), 2001.
- (With Dave McKean, Jonathan Carroll, David Drake, Alisa Kwitney, Michael McClure, Rachel Pollack, Ian Sinclair, Karl Woelz, and Ashley-Jayne Nicolaus) *Bento: Story Art Box*, Allen Spiegel Fine Arts (Plantation, FL), 2001.
- *Murder Mysteries* (based on play of the same title, also see below), illustrated by P. Craig Russel, Dark Horse Comics (Milwaukee, OR), 2002.
- (With Andy Kubert) *Marvel 1602*, Marvel Comics (New York, NY), 2004.
- (With Dagmara Matuszak) *Melinda*, Hill House (Ossining, NY), 2004.
- (With Dean Motter) *Mr. X Volume 2 (Mister X)*, IBooks (Brentwood, CA), 2005.
- *Stardust: The Visual Companion: Being an Account of the Making of a Magical Movie*, screenplay by Jane Goldman & Matthew Vaughn, Titan (London, England), 2007.
- *Eternals*, Panini (Kent, England), 2007.
- *The Facts in the Case of the Departure of Miss Finch*, Dark Horse (Milwaukee, OR), 2007.
- *The Dangerous Alphabet*, illustrated by Gris Grimly, HarperCollins (New York, NY), 2008.
- *Batman: Whatever Happened to the Caped Crusader?*, illustrated by Andy Kubert, DC Comics (New York, NY), 2009.
- *Superman: The Black Ring, Volume One*, DC Comics (New York, NY), 2011.
- *Death*, DC Comics (New York, NY), 2014.
- (With Lorenzo Mattotti) *Hansel & Gretel: A Toon Graphic*, Toon Graphics (New York, NY), 2014.
- *Free Country: A Tale of the Children's Crusade*, DC Comics (New York, NY), 2015.

"SANDMAN" SERIES

- *Sandman: The Doll's House* (originally published in magazine form), illustrated by Mike Dringenberg and Malcolm Jones III, DC Comics (New York, NY), 1990.
- *Sandman: Preludes and Nocturnes* (originally published as *Sandman*, Volumes 1-8), illustrated by Sam Keith, Mike Dringenberg, and Malcolm Jones III, DC Comics (New York, NY), 1991.
- *Sandman: Dream Country* (originally published as *Sandman*, Volumes 17-20; includes "A Midsummer's Night's Dream"), illustrated by Kelley Jones, Charles Vess, Colleen Doran, and Malcolm Jones III, DC Comics (New York, NY), 1991.

- *Sandman: Season of Mists* (originally published as *Sandman*, Volumes 21-28), illustrated by Kelley Jones, Malcolm Jones III, Mike Dringenberg, and others, DC Comics (New York, NY), 1992.
- *Sandman: A Game of You* (originally published as *Sandman*, Volumes 32-37), illustrated by Shawn McManus and others, DC Comics (New York, NY), 1993.
- *Sandman: Fables and Reflections* (originally published as *Sandman*, Volumes 29-31, 38-40, 50), illustrated by Bryan Talbot, DC Comics (New York, NY), 1994.
- *Death: The High Cost of Living* (originally published in magazine form, three volumes), illustrated by Dave McKean, Mark Buckingham, and others, DC Comics (New York, NY), 1994.
- *Sandman: Brief Lives* (originally published as *Sandman*, Volumes 41-49), illustrated by Jill Thompson, Dick Giordano, and Vince Locke, DC Comics (New York, NY), 1994.
- *Sandman: World's End* (originally published as *Sandman*, Volumes 51-56), illustrated by Dave McKean, Mark Buckingham, Dick Giordano, and others, DC Comics (New York, NY), 1994.
- (Author of text, with Matt Wagner) *Sandman: Midnight Theatre*, illustrated by Teddy Kristiansen, DC Comics (New York, NY), 1995.
- (Editor, with Edward E. Kramer) *The Sandman: Book of Dreams*, HarperPrism (New York, NY), 1996.
- *Sandman: The Kindly Ones* (originally published as *Sandman*, Volumes 57-69), illustrated by Marc Hempel, Richard Case, and others, DC Comics (New York, NY), 1996.
- *Death: The Time of Your Life*, illustrated by Mark Buckingham and others, DC Comics (New York, NY), 1997.
- (Author of commentary and contributor) *Dustcovers: The Collected Sandman Covers, 1989-1997*, illustrated by Dave McKean, Vertigo/DC Comics (New York, NY), 1997, published as *The Collected Sandman Covers, 1989-1997*, Watson-Guipill (New York, NY), 1997.
- *Sandman: The Wake*, illustrated by Michael Zulli, Charles Vess, and others, DC Comics (New York, NY), 1997.
- (Reteller) *Sandman: The Dream Hunters*, illustrated by Yoshitaka Amano, DC Comics (New York, NY), 1999.
- *The Quotable Sandman: Memorable Lines from the Acclaimed Series*, DC Comics (New York, NY), 2000.
- *The Sandman: Endless Nights*, illustrated by P. Craig Russell, Milo Manara, and others, DC Comics (New York, NY), 2003.
- *Absolute Death*, Vertigo (New York, NY), 2009.
- *Annotated Sandman, Volume Three: The Sandman #40-56*, DC Comics/Vertigo (New York, NY), 2014.
- *Annotated Sandman, Volume 4*, DC Comics/Vertigo (New York, NY), 2015.
- *The Sandman: Overture Deluxe Edition*, DC Comics/Vertigo (New York, NY), 2015.

OTHER FICTION

- (With Terry Pratchett) *Good Omens: The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch* (novel), Gollancz (London, England), 1990, revised edition, Workman (New York, NY), 1990, William Morrow (New York, NY), 2006.
- (With Mary Gentle) *Villains!* (short stories), edited by Mary Gentle and Roz Kaveney, ROC (London, England), 1992.
- (With Mary Gentle and Roz Kaveney) *The Weerds: Book One* (short stories), ROC (London, England), 1992.
- (With Mary Gentle and Roz Kaveney) *The Weerds: Book Two: The Book of the Ancients* (short stories), ROC (London, England), 1992.
- *Angels and Visitations: A Miscellany* (short stories), illustrated by Steve Bissette and others, DreamHaven Books and Art (Minneapolis, MN), 1993.
- *Neverwhere* (novel), BBC Books (London, England), 1996, Avon (New York, NY), 1997.
- *Smoke and Mirrors: Short Fictions and Illusions* (short stories), Avon (New York, NY), 1998.
- *American Gods* (novel), William Morrow (New York, NY), 2001.
- (Reteller) *Snow Glass Apples*, illustrated by George Walker, Biting Dog Press (Duluth, GA), 2003.
- *Anansi Boys*, William Morrow (New York, NY), 2005.
- (With Si Spencer), *Books of Magick: Life during Wartime*, illustrated by Dean Ormston, colored by Fiona Stephenson, lettered by Todd Klein, Comicroft, cover art by Frank Quitely, consultation by Neil Gaiman, Timothy Hunter, created by Neil Gaiman and John Bolton, DC Comics (New York, NY), 2005.
- *Fragile Things* (stories), Headline (London, England), 2006.
- (With Michael Reaves) *InterWorld*, Eos (New York, NY), 2007.
- (With Al Sarrantonio) *Stories*, William Morrow (New York, NY), 2010.
- (Creator of story, with Michael Reaves) *The Silver Dream: An InterWorld Novel*, written by Michael Reaves and Mallory Reaves, HarperTeen (New York, NY), 2013.
- *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, William Morrow (New York, NY), 2013.
- *The Truth Is a Cave in the Black Mountains: A Tale of Travel and Darkness with Pictures of All Kinds*, illustrated by Eddie Campbell, William Morrow (New York, NY), 2014.
- (With Michael Reaves) *Eternity's Wheel: An InterWorld Novel*, HarperCollins Publishers (New York, NY), 2015.
- *Trigger Warning: Short Fictions and Disturbances*, William Morrow (New York, NY), 2015.

SCREENPLAYS

- (With Lenny Henry) *Neverwhere*, BBC2 (London, England), 1996.
- *Signal to Noise*, BBC Radio 3 (London, England), 1996.
- *Day of the Dead: An Annotated Babylon 5 Script* (originally aired as the episode "Day of the Dead" for the series *Babylon 5*, Turner Broadcasting System, 1998), DreamHaven (Minneapolis, MN), 1998.
- *Princess Mononoke* (motion picture; English translation of the Japanese screenplay by Hayao Miyazaki), Miramax (New York, NY), 1999.
- *MirrorMask*, Destination Films/Samuel Goldwyn Films, 2005.
- (With Roger Avary) *Beowulf*, Warner Bros., 2007.

FOR YOUNG READERS

- *The Day I Swapped My Dad for Two Goldfish* (picture book), illustrated by Dave McKean, Borealis/White Wolf (Clarkson, GA), 1997, HarperCollins (New York, NY), 2004.
- *Coraline* (fantasy), illustrated by Dave McKean, Bloomsbury (London, England), HarperCollins (New York, NY), 2002.
- *The Wolves in the Walls* (picture book), illustrated by Dave McKean, HarperCollins (New York, NY), 2003.
- *Blueberry Girl*, illustrated by Charles Vess, HarperCollins (New York, NY), 2008.
- *Odd and the Frost Giants*, illustrated by Brett Helquist, Bloomsbury (London, England), 2008, HarperCollins (New York, NY), 2009.
- *The Graveyard Book*, illustrated by Dave McKean, HarperCollins (New York, NY), 2008.
- *Crazy Hair*, illustrated by David McKean, HarperCollins (New York, NY), 2009.
- *Instructions*, illustrated by Charles Vess, HarperCollins (New York, NY), 2010.
- *The Tales of Odd*, Bloomsbury Publishing (London, England), 2010.
- *Chu's Day* (picture book), illustrated by Adam Rex, Harper (New York, NY), 2013.
- *Fortunately, the Milk*, illustrated by Skottie Young, Harper (New York, NY), 2013.
- *Chu's First Day of School* (picture book), illustrated by Adam Rex, Harper (New York, NY), 2014.
- *Chu's Day at the Beach* (picture book), illustrated by Adam Rex, Harper (New York, NY), 2015.
- *The Sleeper and the Spindle*, Harper/HarperCollins (New York, NY), 2015.

OTHER

- *Duran Duran: The First Four Years of the Fab Five* (biography), Proteus (New York, NY), 1984.
- *Don't Panic: The Official Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy Companion*, Titan (London, England), Pocket Books (New York, NY), 1988, revised edition with additional material by David K. Dickson published as *Don't Panic: Douglas Adams and the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, Titan (London, England), 1993.
- *Warning: Contains Language* (readings; compact disc), music by Dave McKean and the Flash Girls, DreamHaven (Minneapolis, MN), 1995.
- (Illustrator, with others) *The Dreaming: Beyond the Shores of Night*, DC Comics (New York, NY), 1997.
- (Illustrator, with others) *The Dreaming: Through the Gates of Horn and Ivory*, DC Comics (New York, NY), 1998.
- *Neil Gaiman: Live at the Aladdin* (videotape), Comic Book Legal Defense Fund (Northampton, MA), 2001.
- (With Gene Wolfe) *A Walking Tour of the Shambles* (nonfiction), American Fantasy Press (Woodstock, IL), 2001.
- *Murder Mysteries* (play), illustrated by George Walker, Biting Dog Press (Duluth, GA), 2001.
- *Adventures in the Dream Trade* (nonfiction and fiction), edited by Tony Lewis and Priscilla Olson, NESFA Press (Framingham, MA), 2002.
- *Creatures of The Night*, Dark Horse (Milwaukee, OR), 2004.
- *A Screenplay*, Hill House (Ossining, NY), 2004.
- (Creator, with John Bolton) *Carla Jablonski, Reckonings*, Eos (New York, NY), 2004.
- (Author of introduction) *Edgar Allan Poe, Selected Poems & Tales*, illustrated by Mark Summers, Barnes & Noble (New York, NY), 2004.
- (With David McKean) *The Alchemy of MirrorMask*, Collins Design (New York, NY), 2005.
- *The Sandman Presents Thessaly: Witch for Hire*, illustrated by Shawn McManus, colored by Pamela Rambo, lettered by Nick J. Napolitano (part 1), Rob Leigh (part 2), Phil Balsman (parts 3-4), cover art by Tara McPherson; the Sandman is created by Gaiman, Kieth, and Dringenberg, Thessaly is created by Gaiman and McManus, DC Comics (New York, NY), 2005.
- *M Is for Magic*, illustrated by Teddy Kristiansen, HarperCollins (New York, NY), 2007.
- *The Neil Gaiman Reader*, Wildside Press (Rockville, MD), 2007.
- *Neil Gaiman on His Work and Career: A Conversation with Bill Baker*, Rosen (New York, NY), 2008.

EDITOR

- (With Kim Newman) *Ghastly beyond Belief*, Arrow (London, England), 1985.
- (With Stephen Jones) *Now We Are Sick: A Sampler*, privately published, 1986, published as *Now We Are Sick: An Anthology of Nasty Verse*, DreamHaven (Minneapolis, MN), 1991.
- (With Alex Stewart) *Temps*, ROC (London, England), 1991.
- (With Alex Stewart) *Euro Temps*, ROC (London, England), 1992.
- (With Maria Dahvana) *Unnatural Creatures*, illustrated by Briony Morrow-Cribbs, Harper (New York, NY), 2013.

Also author of the comic book *Outrageous Tales from the Old Testament*. Creator of characters for comic books, including Lady Justice; Wheel of Worlds; Mr. Hero, Newmatic Man; Teknophage; and Lucifer. Coeditor of *The Utterly Comic Relief Comic*, a comic book that raised money for the UK Comic Relief Charity in 1991. Has also written episodes for the *Doctor Who* television series. Contributor to *The Sandman Companion*, DC Comics (New York, NY), 1999, and has contributed prefaces and introductions to several books. Gaiman's works have been represented in numerous anthologies. Contributor to newspapers and magazines, including *Knave*, *Punch*, *Observer*, *Sunday Times*, and *Time Out*. Gaiman's books have been translated into other languages, including Bulgarian, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Norwegian, Spanish, and Swedish. He has written scripts for the films *Avalon*, *Beowulf*, *The Confessions of William Henry Ireland*, *The Fermata*, *Modesty Blaise*, and others.

Media Adaptions:

The Books of Magic was adapted into novel form by Carla Jablonski and others into several individual volumes, including *The Invitation*, *The Blindings*, and *The Children's Crusade*, issued by HarperCollins (New York, NY). *Neverwhere* was released on audio cassette by HighBridge (Minneapolis, MN), 1997; *American Gods* was released on cassette by Harper (New York, NY), 2001, and has been optioned for film; *Coraline* was released as an audiobook read by the author, Harper (New York, NY), 2002; *Two Plays for Voices* (*Snow Glass Apples* and *Murder Mysteries*) was released as an audiobook and on audio CD, Harper (New York, NY), 2003, and adapted as a comic by P. Craig Russell, Dark Horse Books, 2014. Several of Gaiman's works have been optioned for film, including *Sandman*, by Warner Bros., *The Books of Magic*, by Warner Bros.; *Death: The High Cost of Living*, by Warner Bros.; *Good Omens*, by Renaissance Films; *Neverwhere*, by Jim Henson Productions; *Chivalry*, by Miramax; *Stardust*, by Miramax and Dimension Films; and *Coraline*, by Pandemonium Films. *Coraline* was adapted to film, released by Focus Features, 2009. *Signal to Noise* was made into a stage play by NOWtheater (Chicago, IL); *The Graveyard Book* was adapted as a two-volume comic by P. Craig Russell, Harper, 2014.

Sidelights:

An English author (now living in the United States) of comic books, graphic novels (text and pictures in a comic-book format published in book form), prose novels, children's books, short fiction, nonfiction, and screenplays, Neil Gaiman is a best-selling writer who is considered perhaps the most accomplished and influential figure in modern comics as well as one of the most gifted of contemporary fantasists. Characteristically drawing from mythology, history, literature, and popular culture to create his works, Gaiman blends the everyday, the fantastic, the frightening, and the humorous to present his stories, which reveal the mysteries that lie just outside of reality as well as the insights that come from experiencing these mysteries. He refers to the plots and characters of classical literature and myth--most notably fairy tales, horror stories, science fiction, and traditional romances--while adding fresh, modern dimensions. In fact, Gaiman is credited with developing a new mythology with his works, which address themes such as what it means to be human; the importance of the relationship between humanity and art; humanity's desire for dreams and for attaining what they show; and the passage from childish ways of thinking to more mature understanding. Although most of the author's works are not addressed to children, Gaiman often features child and young-adult characters in his books, and young people are among Gaiman's greatest and most loyal fans. The author has become extremely popular, developing a huge cult-like following as well as a celebrity status. The author perhaps is best known as the creator of the comic-book and graphic-novel series about the Sandman. The character, which is based loosely on a crime-fighting superhero that first appeared in DC Comics in the 1930s and 1940s, is the protagonist of an epic series of dark fantasies that spanned eight years and ran for seventy-five monthly issues. Gaiman introduces the Sandman as an immortal being who rules the Dreaming, a surreal world to which humans go when they fall asleep. As the series progresses, the Sandman discovers that he is involved with the fate of human beings on an intimate basis and that his life is tied intrinsically to this relationship. The "Sandman" series has sold millions of copies in both comic book and graphic novel formats and has inspired companion literature and a variety of related merchandise.

As a writer for children, Gaiman has been the subject of controversy for creating *Coraline*, a fantasy for middle-graders about a young girl who enters a bizarre alternate world that eerily mimics her own. Compared to Lewis Carroll's nineteenth-century fantasy *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* for its imaginative depiction of a surreal adventure, *Coraline* has been questioned as an appropriate story for children because it may be too frightening for its intended audience. Gaiman also is the creator of picture books for children, such as *The Day I Swapped My Dad for Two Goldfish*, a comic-book-style fantasy about a boy who trades his dad for two attractive goldfish, and *The Wolves in the Walls*, which features a brave girl who faces the wolves that have taken over her house. His young-adult novel *The Graveyard Book* won the Newbery Medal in 2009. The author's adult novel *American Gods*, the tale of a young drifter who becomes involved with what appears to be a magical war, was a critical and popular success that helped to bring Gaiman to a mainstream audience. Among his many works, Gaiman has written a biography of the English pop/rock group Duran Duran; a comic book with shock-rocker Alice Cooper that the latter turned into an album; a satiric fantasy about the end of the world with English novelist Terry Pratchett; comic books about Todd MacFarlane's popular character Spawn; and scripts for film, television, and radio, both original scripts and adaptations of his own works. Gaiman wrote the English-language script for the well-received Japanese anime film *Princess Mononoke*; the script of the episode "Day of the Dead" for the television series *Babylon 5*; and both a television script and a novel called *Neverwhere* that describes how an office worker rescues a young woman who is bleeding from a switchblade wound and is transported with her to London Below, a mysterious and dangerous world underneath the streets of England's largest city. Throughout

his career, Gaiman has worked with a number of talented artists in the fields of comic books and fantasy, including John Bolton, Michael Zulli, Yoshitaka Amano, Charles Vess, and longtime collaborator Dave McKean.

As a prose stylist, Gaiman is known for writing clearly and strongly, using memorable characters and striking images to build his dreamlike worlds. Although his books and screenplays can range from somber to creepy to horrifying, Gaiman is commended for underscoring them with optimism and sensitivity and for balancing their darkness with humor and wit. Reviewers have praised Gaiman for setting new standards for comic books as literature and for helping to bring increased popularity to both them and graphic novels. In addition, observers have claimed that several of the author's works transcend the genres in which they are written and explore deeper issues than those usually addressed in these works. Although Gaiman occasionally has been accused of being ponderous and self-indulgent, he generally is considered a phenomenon, a brilliant writer and storyteller whose works reflect his inventiveness, originality, and wisdom. Writing in *St. James Guide to Horror, Ghost, and Gothic Writers*, Peter Crowther noted that when Gaiman "is on form (which is most of the time), he is without peer. ... His blending of poetic prose, marvelous inventions, and artistic vision has assured him of his place in the vanguard of modern-day dark fantasists." Keith R.A. DeCandido of *Library Journal* called Gaiman "arguably the most literate writer working in mainstream comics." Referring to Gaiman's graphic novels, Frank McConnell, writing in *Commonweal*, stated that the author "may just be the most gifted and important storyteller in English" and called him "our best and most bound-to-be-remembered writer of fantasy."

Born in Portchester, England, Gaiman was brought up in an upper-middle-class home. His father, David, was the director of a company, while his mother, Sheila, worked as a pharmacist. As a boy, Gaiman was "a completely omnivorous and cheerfully undiscerning reader," as he told Pamela Shelton in an interview for *Authors and Artists for Young Adults (AAYA)*. In an interview with Ray Olson, writing for *Booklist*, Gaiman recalled that he first read *Alice in Wonderland* "when I was five, maybe, and always kept it around as default reading between the ages of five and twelve, and occasionally picked up and reread since. There are things Lewis Carroll did in *Alice* that are etched onto my circuitry." Gaiman was a voracious reader of comic books until the age of sixteen, when he felt that he outgrew the genre as it existed at the time. At his grammar school, Ardingly College, Gaiman said he would get "very grumpy ... when they'd tell us that we couldn't read comics, because 'if you read comics you will not read OTHER THINGS.'" He asked himself, "Why are comics going to stop me reading?" Gaiman proved that his teachers were misguided in their theory: he read the entire children's library in Portchester in two or three years and then started on the adult library. He told Shelton: "I don't think I ever got to 'Z' but I got up to about 'L.'"

When he was about fourteen, Gaiman began his secondary education at Whitgift School. When he was fifteen, Gaiman and his fellow students took a series of vocational tests that were followed by interviews with career advisors. Gaiman told Shelton that these advisors "would look at our tests and say, 'Well, maybe you'd be interested in accountancy,' or whatever. When I went for my interview, the guy said, 'What do you want to do?' and I said, 'Well, I'd really like to write American comics.' And it was obvious that this was the first time he'd ever heard that. He just sort of stared at me for a bit and then said, 'Well, how do you go about doing that, then?' I said, 'I have no idea--you're the career advisor. Advise.' And he looked like I'd slapped him in the face with a wet herring; he sort of stared at me and there was this pause and I went on for a while and then he said, 'Have you ever thought about accountancy?'" Undeterred, Gaiman kept on writing. He also was interested in music. At sixteen, Gaiman played in a punk band that was about to be signed by a record company. Gaiman brought in an attorney who, after reading the contract being offered to the band, discovered that the deal would exploit them; consequently, Gaiman refused to sign the contract. By 1977, he felt that he was ready to become a professional writer. That same year, Gaiman left Whitgift School.

After receiving some rejections for short stories that he had written, Gaiman decided to become a freelance journalist so that he could learn about the world of publishing from the inside. He wrote informational articles for British men's magazines with titles like *Knave*. Gaiman told Shelton that being a journalist "was terrific in giving me an idea of how the world worked. I was the kind of journalist who would go out and do interviews with people and then write them up for magazines. I learned economy and I learned about dialogue." In 1983, he discovered the work of English comic-strip writer Alan Moore, whose *Swamp Thing* became a special favorite. Gaiman told Shelton: "Moore's work convinced me that you really could do work in comics that had the same amount of intelligence, the same amount of passion, the same amount of quality that you could put in any other medium." In 1984, Gaiman produced his first book, *Duran Duran: The First Four Years of the Fab Five*. Once he had established his credibility as a writer, Gaiman was able to sell the short stories that he had done earlier in his career. In 1985, Gaiman married Mary Therese McGrath, with whom he has three children: Michael, Holly, and Madeleine (Maddy). At around this time, Gaiman decided that he was ready to concentrate on fiction. In addition, the comics industry was experiencing a new influx of talent, which inspired Gaiman to consider becoming a contributor to that medium.

In 1986, Gaiman met art student Dave McKean, and the two decided to collaborate. Their first work together was the comic book *Violent Cases*. Serialized initially in *Escape*, a British comic that showcased new strips, *Violent Cases* was published in book form in 1987. The story recounts the memories of an adult narrator--pictured by McKean as a dark-haired young man who bears a striking resemblance to Gaiman--who recalls his memories of hearing about notorious Chicago gangland leader Al Capone from an elderly osteopath who was the mobster's doctor. As a boy of four, the narrator had his arm broken accidentally by his father. In the office of the osteopath, the boy was transfixed by lurid stories about Chicago of the 1920s but, in the evenings, he had nightmares in which his own world and that of Capone's would intersect. As the story begins, the adult narrator is trying to make sense of the experience.

According to Joe Sanders, writing in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, the narrator "discover[s] that grownups are as prone to uncertainty, emotional outbursts, and naïve rationalization as children. The boy is delighted, the grownup narrator perplexed, to see how 'facts' change to fit an interpreter's needs." Writing in London's *Sunday Times*, Nicolette Jones called *Violent Cases* "inspired and ingenious," while Cindy Lynn Speer, writing in an essay on the author's Web site, dubbed it "a brilliant tale of childhood and memory."

At around the same time that *Violent Cases* was published in book form, Gaiman produced the comic book *Outrageous Tales from the Old Testament*, which is credited with giving him almost instant notoriety in the comic-book community.

Gaiman teamed with McKean again to do a limited-run comic series, *Black Orchid*, the first of the author's works to be released by DC Comics, the publisher of the original "Superman" and "Batman" series. A three-part comic book, *Black Orchid*, features an essentially nonviolent female heroine who fights villains that she hardly can remember.

Gaiman then was offered his choice of inactive DC characters to rework from the Golden Age of Comics (the 1930s and 1940s). He chose the Sandman. Originally, the character was millionaire Wesley Dodds who hunted criminals by night wearing a fedora, cape, and gas mask. Dodds would zap the crooks with his gas gun and leave them sleeping until the police got to them. When Gaiman began the series in 1988, he changed the whole scope of the character. The Sandman, who is also called Dream, Morpheus, Oneiros, Lord Shaper, Master of Story, and God of Sleep, became a thin, enigmatic figure with a pale face, dark eyes, and a shock of black hair. The Sandman is one of the Endless, immortals in charge of individual realms of the human psyche. The Sandman's brothers and sisters in the Endless are (in birth order) Destiny, Death, Destruction, the twins Desire and Despair, and Delirium (formerly Delight); Dream (the Sandman) falls between Death and Destruction.

In the "Sandman" book *Sandman: Preludes and Nocturnes*, Gaiman introduces the title character, the ageless lord of dreams, who has just returned home after being captured by a coven of wizards and held in an asylum for the criminally insane for seventy-two years. Dream finds that his home is in ruins, that his powers are diminished, and that his three tools—a helmet, a pouch of sand, and a ruby stone—have been stolen. He finds his missing helpers and the young girl who has become addicted to the sand from his pouch; he also visits Hell to find the demon who stole his helmet and battles an evil doctor who has unleashed the power of dreams on the unsuspecting people of Earth. Dream comes to realize that his captivity has affected him: he has become humanized, and he understands that he eventually will have to die. In *Sandman: The Doll's House*, Dream travels across the United States searching for the Arcana, the stray dreams and nightmares of the twentieth century that have taken on human form; the story is interwoven with a subplot about a young woman, Rose Walker, who has lost her little brother. In *Sandman: Dream Country*, Gaiman features Calliope, a muse and the mother of Dream's son, Orpheus; the story also brings in a real character, the actor and playwright William Shakespeare. In *Sandman: Season of Mists*, Dream meets Lucifer, who has left his position as ruler of Hell and has left the choice of his successor to Dream.

Sandman: A Game of You features Barbara (nicknamed Barble), a character who had appeared in *Sandman: The Doll's House*. Barble is drawn back into the dream realm that she ruled as a child in order to save it from the evil Cuckoo, who plans to destroy it. *Sandman: Fables and Reflections* is a collection of stories featuring the characters from the series and includes Gaiman's retelling of the Greek myth of Orpheus. In *Sandman: Brief Lives*, Dream and Delirium embark on a quest to find their little brother Destruction, who exiled himself to Earth three hundred years before. *Sandman: World's End* includes a collection of tales told by a group of travelers who are waiting out a storm in an inn. *Sandman: The Kindly Ones* brings the series to its conclusion as Hippolyta (Lyta) Hall takes revenge upon Dream for the disappearance of her son. Lyta, who has been driven mad by anger and grief, asks the help of the title characters, mythological beings also known as the Furies. The Kindly Ones take out Lyta's revenge on Dream, who succumbs to their attack. The tale comes full cycle, and Dream's destiny is joined with that of humans in death. In the final chapter of the series, *The Wake*, a funeral is held for Dream; however, as Gaiman notes thematically, dreams really never die, and Dream's role in the Endless is taken on in a new incarnation. The Sandman also appears in a more peripheral role in *Sandman: The Dream Hunters*, a retelling of the Japanese folktale "The Fox, the Monk, and the Mikado of All Night's Dreaming."

Next to the Sandman, Death, Dream's older sister, is the most frequently featured and popular character in the series. Death is charged with shepherding humans who are about to die through their transitions. Once a century, she must come to Earth as a sixteen-year-old girl in order to remind herself what mortality feels like. In contrast to Dream, who characteristically is isolated, brooding, and serious, Death, who is depicted as a spike-haired young woman who dresses like a punk rocker or Goth girl, has a more open and kindly nature. Death is featured in two books of her own, *Death: The High Cost of Living* and *Death: The Time of Your Life*. In the first story, she helps Sexton, a teen who is contemplating suicide, rediscover the joys in being alive as they journey through New York City and, in the second, she helps Foxglove, a newly successful musician, to reveal her true sexual orientation as her companion Hazel prepares to die. Death and the rest of the Endless are also featured in *The Sandman: Endless Nights*, in which Gaiman devotes an individual story to each of the seven siblings.

Writing in *Commonweal* about the "Sandman" series, Frank McConnell stated: "Sandman" is not just one of the best pieces of fiction being done these days; ... it emerges as *the* best piece of fiction being done these days." McConnell stated that what Gaiman has done with the series "is to establish the fact that a comic book can be a work of high and very serious art—a story that other storytellers, in whatever medium they work, will have to take

into account as an exploration of what stories can do and what stories are for." The critic concluded, "I know of nothing quite like it, and I don't expect there will be anything like it for some time. ... Read the damn thing; it's important." Peter Crowder, writing in *St. James Guide to Horror, Ghost, and Gothic Writers*, noted that, with the "Sandman" series of comic books, Gaiman "has truly revolutionized the power of the medium." Crowder called the various volumes of collected stories "almost uniformly excellent, and any one of them would make a good starting point for those readers who, while well-versed in the field of Gothic prose literature, have yet to discover the rare but powerful joy inherent in a great comic book." In 1996, DC Comics surprised the fans of "Sandman" by announcing the cancellation of the series while it was still the company's best seller; however, DC had made this arrangement with Gaiman at the beginning of the series. "Sandman" has sold more than seven million copies; individual copies of the stories also have sold in the millions or in the hundreds of thousands. "A Midsummer's Night's Dream," a story from *Dream Country*, won the World Fantasy Award for the best short story of 1991. This was the first time that a comic book had won an award that was not related to its own medium, and the event caused an uproar among some fantasy devotees. The "Sandman" stories have inspired related volumes, such as a book of quotations from the series, and merchandise such as action figures, stuffed toys, trading cards, jewelry, and watches.

In 1994, Gaiman told Ken Tucker in *Entertainment Weekly*: "Superhero comics are the most perfectly evolved art form for preadolescent male power fantasies, and I don't see that as a bad thing. I want to reach other sorts of people, too." In 1995, he told Pamela Shelton: "If you're too young for 'Sandman,' you will be bored silly by it. It's filled with long bits with people having conversations." Speaking to Nick Hasted in the *Guardian* in 1999, Gaiman said, "Right now, as things stand, 'Sandman' is my serious work. ... It is one giant, overarching story, and I'm proud of it. Compared to 'Sandman,' all the prose work so far is trivia." In 2003, Gaiman wrote an introduction to *The Sandman: King of Dreams*, a collection of text and art from the series with commentary by Alisa Kwitney. He commented: "If I have a concern over *The Sandman*, the 2,000-page story I was able to tell between 1988 and 1996, it is that the things that have come after it, the toys (whether plastic and articulated or soft and cuddly), the posters, the clothes, the calendars and candles, the companion volume, and even the slim book of quotations, along with the various spin-offs and such--will try people's patience and goodwill, and that a book like this will be perceived, not unreasonably, as something that's being used to flog the greasy patch in the driveway where once, long ago, a dead horse used to lie. The ten volumes of 'The Sandman' are what they are, and that's the end of it."

Throughout his career, Gaiman has included young people as main characters in his works. For example, *The Books of Magic*, a collection of four comics published in 1993, predates J.K. Rowling's "Harry Potter" series by featuring a thirteen-year-old boy, Tim Hunter, who is told that he has the capabilities to be the greatest wizard in the world. Tim, a boy from urban London who wears oversized glasses, is taken by the Trenchcoat Brigade--sorcerers with names like The Mysterious Phantom Stranger, the Incurable Hellblazer, and the Enigmatic Dr. Occult--on a tour of the universe to learn its magical history. Tim travels to Hell, to the land of Faerie, and to America, among other places, each of them showing him a different aspect of the world of magic. He also searches for his girlfriend, Molly, who has been abducted into the fantasy realms; after he finds her, the two of them face a series of dangers as they struggle to return to their own world. At the end of the story, Tim must make a decision to embrace or reject his talents as a wizard. *The Books of Magic* also includes cameos by the Sandman and his sister Death.

Writing in *Locus*, Carolyn Cushman remarked: "It's a fascinating look at magic, its benefits and burdens, all dramatically illustrated [by John Bolton, Scott Hampton, Charles Vess, and Paul Johnson], and with a healthy helping of humor." Speaking of the format of *The Books of Magic*, Michael Swanwick, writing for *Book World*, noted: "The graphic novel has come of age. This series is worth any number of movies."

In 1994, Gaiman produced *The Tragical Comedy, or Comical Tragedy, of Mr. Punch* (also published as *Mr. Punch*), a work that he considers one of his best. In this graphic novel, which is illustrated by Dave McKean, a young boy is sent to stay with his grandparent by the seaside while his mother gives birth to his baby sister. While on his visit, the boy encounters a mysterious puppeteer and watches a Punch and Judy show, a sometimes violent form of puppet-theater entertainment. Through a series of strange experiences, he ends up rejecting Mr. Punch's promise that everyone in the world is free to do whatever they want.

Sanders, writing in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, called *Mr. Punch* "perhaps Gaiman and McKean's most impressive collaboration," while Crowder called it "an impressive work, rich not only in freshness and originality but also in compassion, Gaiman's hallmark. ... The collective impact is literally breathtaking." Writing in *Commonweal*, Frank McConnell noted: "This stunning comic book-graphic novel--whatever--is easily the most haunting, inescapable story I have read in years."

In 1996, Gaiman and McKean produced their first work for children, the picture book *The Day I Swapped My Dad for Two Goldfish*. In this tale, a little boy trades his father for two of his neighbor's goldfish while his little sister stares, horrified. When their mother finds out what has happened, she is furious. She makes the children go and get back their father who, unfortunately, has already been traded for an electric guitar. While on their quest to find him, the siblings decide that their father is a very good daddy after all. The children finally retrieve their father, who has been reading a newspaper all during his adventure. At home, their mother makes the children promise not to swap their dad any more.

Writing in *Bloomsbury Review*, Anji Keating called *The Day I Swapped My Dad for Two Goldfish* "a fabulously funny tale" and dubbed the protagonists' journey to fetch their father "delightful." Malcolm Jones, writing in *Newsweek*, predicted that Gaiman and McKean "may shock a few grandparents. ... but in fact the most shocking thing they've done in this droll story is to take the illegible look of cutting-edge magazines like *Raygun* and somehow make it readable."

In 2003, Gaiman and McKean produced a second picture book, *The Wolves in the Walls*. In this work, young Lucy hears wolves living in the walls of the old house where she and her family live; of course, no one believes her. When the wolves emerge to take over the house, Lucy and her family flee. However, Lucy wants her house back, and she also wants the beloved pig-puppet that she left behind. She talks her family into going back into the house, where they move into the walls that had been vacated by the wolves. Lucy and her family frighten the usurpers, who are wearing their clothes and eating their food. The wolves scatter, and everything seems to go back to normal until Lucy hears another noise in the walls; this time, it sounds like elephants.

In her *Booklist* review of *The Wolves in the Walls*, Francisca Goldsmith found the book "visually and emotionally sophisticated, accessible, and inspired by both literary and popular themes and imagery." Writing in *School Library Journal*, Marian Creamer commented that "Gaiman and McKean deftly pair text and illustration to convey a strange, vivid story," and predicted: "Children will delight in the 'scary, creepy tone.'"

Gaiman's first story for middle-graders, *Coraline*, outlines how the title character, a young girl who feels that she is being ignored by her preoccupied parents, enters a terrifying, malevolent alternate reality to save them after they are kidnapped. The story begins when Coraline and her parents move into their new house, which is divided into apartments. Left to her own devices, bored Coraline explores the house and finds a door in the empty flat next door that leads to a world that is a twisted version of her own. There, she meets two odd-looking individuals who call themselves her "other mother" and "other father." The Other Mother, a woman who looks like Coraline's except for her black-button eyes and stiletto fingernails, wants Coraline to stay with her and her husband. Tempted by good food and interesting toys, Coraline considers the offer. However, when the girl returns home, she finds that her parents have disappeared. Coraline discovers that they are trapped in the other world, and she sets out to save them. The Other Mother, who turns out to be a soul-sucking harpy, enters into a deadly game of hide-and-seek with Coraline, who discovers new qualities of bravery and resolve within herself. Before returning home, Coraline saves herself, her parents, and some ghost children who are trapped in the grotesque world.

After its publication, *Coraline* became a subject of dispute. Some adult observers saw it as a book that would give nightmares to children. However, other observers have noted that the children of their acquaintance who read the book consider it an exciting rather than overly frightening work. A reviewer in *Publishers Weekly* noted that Gaiman and illustrator McKean "spin an electrifyingly creepy tale likely to haunt young readers for many moons. ... Gaiman twines his tale with a menacing tone and crisp prose fraught with memorable imagery ..., yet keeps the narrative just this side of terrifying." Writing in *School Library Journal*, Bruce Anne Shook commented: "The story is odd, strange, even slightly bizarre, but kids will hang on every word. ... This is just right for all those requests for a scary book." Stephanie Zvirin, writing in *Booklist*, added that Gaiman offers "a chilling and empowering view of children, to be sure, but young readers are likely to miss such subtleties as the clever allusions to classic horror movies and the references to the original dark tales of the Brothers Grimm." A critic in *Kirkus Reviews* found *Coraline* "not for the faint-hearted—who are mostly adults anyway—but for stouthearted kids who love a brush with the sinister, *Coraline* is spot on." *Coraline* has won several major fantasy awards and has become an international best-seller.

Since his success with *Coraline*, Gaiman has continued to focus his writing for younger readers, producing both picture books for the young and novels for more mature readers. In *Blueberry Girl*, illustrated by Vess, Gaiman produces "a rich and beautiful prayer for a girl," as a *Kirkus Reviews* contributor noted. The prayer is issued by three figures hovering above a dancing girl, representing the three ages of woman: the young woman, a mother, and a crone.

The *Kirkus Reviews* writer felt that Gaiman's verses are "lovely, sinuous and sweetly rhyming, piling on blessings." These blessings focus on the young girl being able to find her own way in life and her own truths. Wendy Lukehart, writing for *School Library Journal*, praised the "fresh approach" Gaiman and Vess take in this poem to an unborn child. "Fans of Gaiman and Vess will pounce on this creation," concluded a *Publishers Weekly* reviewer.

For middle-grade readers, Gaiman produced a book focusing on Norse mythology. In *Odd and the Frost Giants*, Odd, the twelve-year-old protagonist, decides to leave his home in a Viking settlement and seek solitude in nature. He has had difficult time recently with the death of his father in a Viking raid and his mother's remarriage to a man Odd cannot stand. Added to this is the accident that left one of Odd's legs crippled. It is spring, but still cold, when Odd heads off for the wilderness to live on his own in a cabin. Soon he has interactions with various animals, helping a bear to free its paw in one instance. After helping the animals, Odd learns that they are actually gods—Thor, Odin, and Loki—whom the Frost Giant has changed into an eagle, a fox, and a wolf because he wants to woo the spring goddess Freya and desires no competition. Thus he has banished the trio from the godly realm of Asgard. Odd conspires to get the gods back to their proper home by using a rainbow bridge. In Odd's subsequent encounter with the Frost Giant, the youth is able to outwit the giant.

A *Publishers Weekly* reviewer found this a "simple but well-done tale," while *School Library Journal* contributor Lauralyn Persson called it "a thoughtful and quietly humorous fantasy." Persson went on to observe that young

readers will appreciate "Gaiman's simple and graceful writing, and the satisfying conclusion." Higher praise came from a *Kirkus Reviews* contributor who termed *Odd and the Frost Giants* a "winner," as well as a "sweet, wistful, slyly funny novella." *Horn Book* reviewer Joanna Rudge Long felt that "Gaiman's narration is impeccable" in this myth-inspired fantasy. Likewise, *Booklist* contributor Ian Chipman praised Gaiman's "deft humor, lively prose, and agile imagination" in this novella.

Writing for younger readers in *Crazy Hair*, Gaiman delivers a "surreal poem," according to *School Library Journal* reviewer Lukehart, about a young girl's encounter with a strange man who has long and wavy hair. Bonnie, the young girl, learns that cockatoos inhabit the man's locks along with gorillas, tigers, and sloths. Eventually Bonnier herself becomes an inhabitant of this mysterious person's hair.

A *Publishers Weekly* reviewer thought that "fans of Gaiman and McKean's ... twisted humor will welcome this lighter-than-usual addition." Similarly, Chipman, writing for *Booklist*, termed *Crazy Hair* "another chaotic picture book popping with bright collage and multimedia imagery," while a *Kirkus Reviews* contributor called it a "rhymed defense of unshorn locks."

If there were ever any lingering doubt about Gaiman's prowess as a writer for young audiences as well as adults, that was erased with his 2008 young-adult work, *The Graveyard Book*. In addition to taking the prestigious Newbery Medal in 2009, it also won the Locus Award for best young-adult book and the Hugo Award for best novel in the same year. The book features Owen Nobody, better known as Bod, who lives in a graveyard and is cared for by a guardian, Silas, who is neither dead nor living. Bod is befriended and educated by assorted ghosts of teachers, children, workers, and numerous others who form a community for the orphan. Bod cannot leave the graveyard for fear of attack by a man named Jack, the very one who killed Bod's family. In the graveyard, Bod has adventures and faces dangers, from the ancient Indigo Man beneath the hill to the strange and terrible Sleur. He learns things about his own family and about why they were murdered. In the graveyard since he was a toddler, by twelve Bod begins to understand what he must do to be able to leave the place and rejoin the living.

Reviewers responded warmly to this novel for teens. *New York Times Book Review* contributor Monica Edinger found it "by turns exciting and witty, sinister and tender." Edinger also felt that *The Graveyard Book* "shows Gaiman at the top of his form" and said that it is "a tale of unforgettable enchantment." Writing in the *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, Don L.F. Nilsen felt that "Gaiman's tale is delightfully spooky, but also heartrending, funny, and instructive at various times." *Spectator* reviewer S.E.G. Hopkin found the work to be "a beautifully constructed book" and noted that "Bod is a charming hero, courageous, considerate and polite in the styles of many centuries." Further praise came from *Independent Online* contributor Tim Martin, who called it a "hugely satisfying little book."

Gaiman returns to the picture-book genre for *Chu's Day*, a "sweet, playful tale about a small panda with an extraordinary knack for inadvertently causing trouble," according to *School Library Journal* contributor Mahnaz Dar. Working with illustrator Adam Rex, Gaiman tells the story of the small panda who has a penchant for sneezing, with rather disastrous results. When his parents take him on an outing one day, they are continually checking on him to make sure that nothing triggers one of his sneezing attacks. They make it safely through a library, with its dusty books, and a restaurant with pepper in the air. However, when they get to the circus, it is all over for little Chu. The dust under the big top tickles his nostrils and he lets go with such a frightening series of sneezes that he brings the circus tent down and spreads chaos through the town. But all is not lost; the story ends happily later in the day with Chu's parents tucking him in for the night.

Booklist reviewer Ann Kelley termed *Chu's Day* a "slight but cute picture book" and went on to praise "Rex's richly detailed illustrations [that] are brimming with fantastic touches." Kelley added: "Anything Gaiman writes is noteworthy." Similarly, Dar called it a "small but delightful dose of fun." A *Kirkus Reviews* critic described the tale as a "modest yet richly colorful day in the life of a small panda who may or may not sneeze," while a *Publishers Weekly* writer noted of this offering that "Gaiman and Rex deliver a classic one-two-three punch."

Gaiman takes inspiration from his earlier book *The Day I Swapped My Dad for Two Goldfish* in his middle-grade novel *Fortunately, the Milk*. Noting in a letter to readers that the father of the former tale was not necessarily a fine example of fatherhood, he set out in *Fortunately, the Milk* to present a dad who has some adventures and excitement. The father in this case goes off to the store one morning to fetch milk for his children's breakfast. However, he takes an inordinate amount of time to do so. While the kids wait impatiently, dad is busy being kidnapped by aliens, walking the plank of a pirate ship, and being rescued by a balloon-navigating stegosaurus. Returning to his two little children with milk in hand, he proceeds to entrance them with his adventures. With illustrations by Skottie Young, *Fortunately, the Milk* "reads like an extemporaneous riff by a clever father," according to a *Publishers Weekly* reviewer, who also commended Young's "wiry, exuberant b&w caricatures."

Writing in *Booklist*, Thom Barthelme had similar praise for *Fortunately, the Milk*, noting that the author's "oversize, tongue-in-cheek narrative twists about like the impromptu nonsense it is," and he predicted that young readers "will devour this one, with or without milk." A *Kirkus Reviews* critic had a high assessment of the work, noting that in its scant 128 pages, Gaiman has attempted "to write the only book anyone will need, ever, packing into it every adventure story written in the past 300 years." Writing in *School Library Journal*, Amy Shepherd also lauded this novel for young readers, noting that "Gaiman knocks it out of the park again with this imaginative story," which is "reminiscent of Roald Dahl's titles."

Gaiman's first adult novel in a number of years, *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* is a work of remembrance and fantasy. An unnamed narrator in his fifties returns to his Sussex, England, hometown to deliver a eulogy. After the funeral, the man begins driving around the countryside and soon arrives at a farmhouse that has a deep significance for him. There lived eleven-year-old Lettie Hempstock with her mother and an old woman they called the grandmother. The narrator was seven when he met Lettie, and their friendship almost killed him and forever altered his life. Now the old grandmother is still at the farmhouse, as is the mother, unchanged; however, there is no sign of Lettie. This takes the man back in time to the frightening events of his youth, when he unwittingly became a gate into the world for evil forces that wanted to destroy it. At the farm, there is a pond, and in the pond back then was a dead fish that had apparently swallowed an old sixpence. This opened up the world to a malign terror and the boy, helped by the Hempstock women, battled it. The boy ultimately realized that the Hempstocks were protectors of the human world, blocking or fighting such evil forces for ages. And now the middle-aged man must come to terms with memories of his youth.

Booklist reviewer Olson lauded *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, noting that "Gaiman mines mythological typology ... and his own childhood" in this story that is both "gracefully" told and a "lovely yarn [that] is good for anyone who can read it." Similar praise came from a *Kirkus Reviews* critic who noted: "Poignant and heartbreaking, eloquent and frightening, impeccably rendered, it's a fable that reminds us how our lives are shaped by childhood experiences." A *Publishers Weekly* writer felt that Gaiman "has crafted a fresh story of magic, humanity, loyalty, and memories," and *Library Journal* reviewer Henry Bankhead joined the chorus of praise for *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, calling it a "slim and magical feat of meaningful storytelling genius." *New Statesman* contributor Alex Hern also had a high assessment of the work, observing: "Gaiman has written a book that reads like a half-remembered fairy tale from childhood. It has the easy flow of a story already heard, deeply known, and slots perfectly into the canon of British magical fiction." For *New York Times Book Review* contributor Benjamin Percy, *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* is a "slim, dark dream of a new novel," while a *California Bookwatch* reviewer found it "simply enchanting."

With *Hansel & Gretel: A Toon Graphic*, Gaiman has teamed with Lorenzo Mattotti to retell the Hansel and Gretel fairy tale. Filled with dark foreboding, Gaiman's recreation stays true to the plot while exacerbating the story's dark elements. He portrays his sibling protagonists as lost and hapless children who do not know how to help themselves. Mattotti's illustrations also emphasize this aspect of the tale. The story switches back and forth between two pages of Gaiman's prose and two pages of Mattotti's images.

Praising the retelling in *Publishers Weekly*, a critic stated that "Hansel and Gretel have seldom seemed more vulnerable and abandoned." A second *Publishers Weekly* columnist was also impressed, asserting that "Gaiman makes the story's horrors feel very real and very human, and Mattotti's artwork is genuinely chilling." The book was also reviewed in *Kirkus Reviews*, where a columnist advised: "The Grimm version is as frightening as a bedtime story gets, but this version will scare people in new ways." Sarah Hunter, writing in *Booklist*, was also impressed, asserting: "While this isn't a graphic novel per se, Gaiman's fans and lovers of visual storytelling will devour this eerie version of a classic." As Andrea Lipinski pointed out in *School Library Journal*, "Gaiman is an incredibly gifted wordsmith, and his retelling harkens back to the Grimms's original narrative." Offering further applause in *School Librarian*, Sue Roe cited Gaiman's "clear, spare prose," and then concluded: "This retelling remains true to the nature of fairy tales as warnings about the dark aspects of human nature and the dangers of the world."

Returning to short prose with *Trigger Warning: Short Fictions and Disturbances*, Gaiman presents several new stories and poems that feature Gaiman's trademark fantasy. The collection, which is comprised of twenty-three pieces, focuses on the imaginary and the impossible. One story, a series of vignettes, portrays each month of the year as a different universe. In this manner, Gaiman explores everything from detective tales to pirates and igloos. As is typical of Gaiman's more fantastical works, elements of the dark and macabre feature prominently.

In an ambivalent *London Observer* review, Edward Docx commented: "There is so much that is clever and skilful in among the embarrassments that by the end I was reminded of Paul McCartney, another copiously talented artist, who seems to have no sense of which of his works are breathtakingly good and which breathtakingly bad." *Booklist* correspondent Chris Francis was far more positive, noting that readers who enjoy "Gaiman's delightfully dramatic minstrel's-tale-by-the-campfire style will love everything in *Trigger Warning*." Andrew O'Hehir in the *New York Times Online* was laudatory as well, and he declared that "Gaiman draws power not just from his storytelling gifts but also from his ability to work the crowd. He's like a conjurer who shows us how the magic trick is worked, joins us in laughing at its transparency and simplicity, and makes us believe in it anyway. There are no real monsters, he assures us, only half-forgotten fears we have clad in ill-fitting masks. ... All the while we wait eagerly for Gaiman to pull off the masks, so we can see the familiar glitter of their eyes." Commending the collection in the *New Statesman*, Frank Cottrell Boyce admitted: "Reading this collection feels like looking over the shoulder of someone whose browser has a thousand and one tabs open. Here's a potential episode of *Doctor Who*; there's a piece of Sherlock fan fiction, a fairy tale, David Bowie, Saint Columba. But all these clicks and hits are linked to one place—a good story, which is 'the purest and most perfect thing' a writer can create, as Neil himself says. There are tales in this collection that are as pure and perfect as anything you'll ever read."

In his interview with Pamela Shelton, Gaiman said: "What I enjoy most is when people say to me, 'When I was sixteen I didn't know what I was going to do with my life and then I read *Sandman* and now I'm at university studying mythology' or whatever. I think it's wonderful when you've opened a door to people and showed them things that they would never have known they would have been interested in." Gaiman finds it satisfying to

introduce his readers to mythology. He told Shelton: "You gain a cultural understanding to the last 2,500 to 3,000 years, which, if you lack it, there's an awful lot of stuff that you will simply never quite understand." In an interview with Nick Hasted in the *Guardian*, Gaiman stated: "What I'm fighting now is the tendency to put novelists in a box, to make them write the same book over and over again. I want to shed skins. I want to keep awake. I definitely have a feeling that if I'm not going forward, if I'm not learning something, then I'm dead."

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Entry Updated : 02/08/2018

Full text biography:

Terry Pratchett

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Death Date : 2015

Known As : Pratchett, Terence David John

Place of Birth: United Kingdom, Beaconsfield

Place of Death: United Kingdom, Broad Chalke

Nationality : British

Occupation : Novelist

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Awards:

British Science Fiction Awards, 1989, for "Discworld" series, and 1990, for *Good Omens: The Nice and Accurate Predictions of Agnes Nutter, Witch*; Best Children's Book award, Writers' Guild of Great Britain, 1993, for *Johnny and the Dead*; British Book Award for Fantasy and Science Fiction of the Year, 1993; named member, Order of the British Empire, 1998; Carnegie Medal, British Library Association, 2002, for *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents*; Locus Award for best young-adult book, *Locus* magazine, 2004 and 2005, for "Discworld" novels, and 2007, for *Wintersmith*; knighted by Queen Elizabeth II for services to literature, 2009; New England Science Fiction Association (NESFA) Skylark Award, 2009; World Fantasy Life Achievement Award, 2010; Award for Outstanding Achievement, Galaxy National Book Awards, 2010, for unrivaled contribution to the publishing industry; Margaret A. Edwards Award, 2011, for lifetime achievement; Andre Norton Award, Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers of America, 2011, for *I Shall Wear Midnight*; Karl Edward Wagner Special Award, British Fantasy Society, 2011; Kate Wilhelm Solstice Award, Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, 2016; Best Young Adult Book Prize, Locus Awards, 2016, for *The Shepherd's Crown*; Best Young Adult/Middle Grade Prize, Dragon Awards, 2016, for *The Shepherd's Crown*.

Personal Information:

Born Terence David John Pratchett, April 28, 1948, in Penn, near Beaconsfield, England; died of complications from Alzheimer's disease, March 12, 2015, in Broad Chalke, England; son of David (an engineer) and Eileen (a secretary) Pratchett; married Lyn Purves, 1968; children: Rhianna. **Education:** Attended Wycombe Technical High School. **Avocational Interests:** Growing carnivorous plants. **Memberships:** British Society of Authors (past chair).

Career Information:

Writer. Journalist in Buckinghamshire, Bristol, and Bath, England, 1965-80; Central Electricity Board, Western Region, press officer, 1980-87; novelist. Narrativia (television production company), founder, 2012.

Writings:

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- *The Dark Side of the Sun* (science fiction), St. Martin's (New York, NY), 1976.
- *Strata* (science fiction), St. Martin's (New York, NY), 1981.
- *The Unadulterated Cat*, illustrated by Gray Jolliffe, Gollancz (London, England), 1989.
- (With Neil Gaiman) *Good Omens: The Nice and Accurate Predictions of Agnes Nutter, Witch*, Workman (New York, NY), 1990.
- *Nation* (young-adult fiction), HarperCollins (New York, NY), 2008.
- *Dodger* (children's novel), HarperCollins (New York, NY), 2012.
- *Miss Felicity Beedle's The World of Poo*, illustrated by Peter Dennis, Doubleday (London, England), 2012.
- *A Blink of the Screen: Collected Shorter Fiction*, Doubleday (London, England), 2012.
- *Jack Dodger's Guide to London*, HarperCollins (New York, NY), 2013.
- *A Slip of the Keyboard: Collected Nonfiction*, Harper (New York, NY), 2014.
- *Dragons at Crumbling Castle: And Other Tales* (children's stories), Clarion Books (New York, NY), 2014.
- *A Blink of the Screen: Collected Shorter Fiction*, Doubleday (New York, NY), 2015.
- *The Witch's Vacuum Cleaner and Other Stories*, Harper (New York, NY), 2016.

Contributor to numerous books and anthologies. Pratchett's novels have been published in eighteen languages.

Media Adaptions:

The Colour of Magic was adapted as a four-part work by Scott Rockwell with illustrations by Steven Ross, Innovation Corporation, 1991, and published as a graphic novel, Corgi, 1992. *The Light Fantastic* was adapted as a four-part work by Scott Rockwell with illustrations by Steven Ross, Innovation Corporation, 1992, and published as a graphic novel, Corgi, 1993. *Mort* and *Guards! Guards!* were adapted as graphic novels by Stephen Briggs, illustrated by Graham Higgins, Gollancz (London, England), 1994. The "Bromeliad" trilogy and the "Discworld" series were released as audiobooks by Corgi. An album, *Music from the Discworld* by Dave Greenlade, was released by Virgin Records, 1994. Steeleye Span and Terry Pratchett wrote and produced an album titled *Wintersmith*, based on the novels featuring the Wee Free Men, 2013.

The Colour of Magic, *Equal Rites*, *Only You Can Save Mankind*, *Guards! Guards!*, *Wyrd Sisters*, *Mort*, *Small Gods*, *Night Watch*, and *Eric* were adapted for BBC Radio 4. Stage adaptations of Pratchett's works have been produced, including *Lords & Ladies*, adapted by Suzi Holyoake, 1999; *Truckers*, adapted by Bob Eaton, 2002; *Eric*, adapted by Scott Harrison and Lee Harris, 2003; *Only You Can Save Mankind*, adapted by Shaun McKenna with music by Leighton James House, 2004; *Nation*, adapted by Mark Ravenhill, 2009; and *Mort* and *Soul Music*, adapted by Pratchett and Youth Music Theatre UK. Stephen Briggs has adapted *Johnny and the Dead* and fourteen books in the "Discworld" series to plays, including *Mort*, Corgi, 1996; *Wyrd Sisters*, Corgi, 1996; *Men at Arms*, Corgi, 1997; *Maskerade*, Samuel French, 1998; *Carpe Jugulum*, Samuel French, 1999; *Guards! Guards!*,

illustrated by Graham Higgins, Gollancz, 2000; *The Fifth Elephant*, Methuen Drama, 2002; *The Truth*, Methuen Drama, 2002; *Interesting Times*, Methuen Drama, 2002; and *Going Postal*, Methuen Drama, 2005.

Truckers, *Wyrd Sisters*, and *Soul Music* became animated cartoons, created by Cosgrove Hall Films and released by Acorn Media. Pratchett's works have been adapted for television, including *Johnny and the Bomb*, BBC One, 2006; *Hogfather*, Sky One, 2006, and ION Television, 2007; *The Colour of Magic* and *The Light Fantastic*, Sky One, 2008; and *Going Postal*, 2010. *The Wee Free Men* was adapted into film, directed by Sam Raimi, for Sony Pictures Entertainment, 2006.

The "Discworld" novels have been adapted as role-playing games and video games.

Sidelights:

Called the "master of humorous fantasy" by a writer for *Publishers Weekly*, British author Terry Pratchett created books that thrilled both fans and critics during his long and prolific literary career. Among many other recognitions, including an honorary knighthood in 2009, he won the prestigious Carnegie Medal in 2002 for his novel *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents*. Pratchett also received the New England Science Fiction Association (NESFA) Skylark Award; the World Fantasy Life Achievement Award; the Galaxy National Book Awards Outstanding Achievement Award, for unrivaled contribution to the publishing industry; and the Margaret A. Edwards Award for lifetime achievement, as well as nine honorary doctorates.

The author of numerous science fiction and fantasy novels, Pratchett was known primarily for his satirically comic sci-fi "Discworld" series and for his "Bromeliad" trilogy for children. As David V. Barrett stated in *New Statesman & Society*, Pratchett's "Discworld" novels feature "marvelous composition and rattling good stories." "Pratchett is an acquired taste," wrote a contributor to *Publishers Weekly* in a review of "Discworld" installment *Interesting Times*, "but the acquisition seems easy, judging from the robust popularity of Discworld." "Discworld"—as well as most of Pratchett's other works—also offers humorous parodies of other famous science fiction and fantasy writers, such as J.R.R. Tolkien and Larry Niven. The author frequently spoofs such modern trends as New Age philosophy and universal concerns like death in his solo works, as well as in his collaborative novel *Good Omens: The Nice and Accurate Predictions of Agnes Nutter, Witch*, written with acclaimed writer Neil Gaiman. Nevertheless, "in among the slapstick and clever word-play are serious concepts," Barrett pointed out. In "genres assailed by shoddiness, mediocrity, and ... the endless series," asserted *Locus* contributor Faren Miller, "Pratchett is never shoddy, and under the laughter there's a far from mediocre mind at work."

Pratchett was born in 1948 and grew up in Buckinghamshire, England. During his youth, he developed a love of reading science fiction and fantasy, once calling Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* his favorite book. From fantasy he went to myth, and from myth to reading ancient history. Pratchett published his first story in his school magazine, and years later, in 1963, sold his first story to *Science Fantasy*. These publications marked the start of a prolific writing career. In 2007 Pratchett was diagnosed with a rare form of Alzheimer's disease but announced that he planned to continue writing. In 2008 he donated a million dollars to help find a cure for Alzheimer's disease. Despite his increasing frailty, Pratchett completed several new books, including the "Long Earth" series with Stephen Baxter as well as more "Discworld" novels, before succumbing to his disease on March 12, 2015.

At age seventeen, while working as a journalist, Pratchett wrote his first novel, a children's fantasy titled *The Carpet People*, and in 1971 the book found a publisher. Pratchett continued working as a journalist until 1980, by which time he was a press officer for a nuclear power plant. Seven years later, in 1987, he made the move to full-time writer, confident of success due to the novels he had already published.

The Carpet People introduces readers to the world of creatures living in a carpet: deftmenes, moults, and wights. The novel's protagonist, Snibril the Munrung, travels with his brother Glurk through the many Carpet regions—areas distinguished by different colors—to do battle with the evil concept of Fray. A *Times Literary Supplement* reviewer recommended *The Carpet People*, predicting that "the Tolkienian echoes" in Pratchett's tale "may draw in some older readers."

A new edition of *The Carpet People* was published for the first time in the United States in 2013. *Voice of Youth Advocates* critic Judith A. Hayn predicted that "the book will entice young readers into a world with enough adventure, terror, and comic relief to keep them intrigued." A *Publishers Weekly* reviewer called the book "inventive in its carefully worked-out central conceit, often very funny, and dotted with some genuinely scary bits." Recommending the book for young readers new to Pratchett, a *Kirkus Reviews* contributor also predicted that "seasoned Pratchett fans will just revel in his wit, his subversion of tropes and his sense of humanity."

Pratchett introduced young Dodger in his eponymous children's novel, published in 2012. Dodger is a sewer scavenger, or tosher, who emerges from the sewer one night to save a woman from death. Pratchett presented more than an homage to the Dodger of Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* in this Victorian tale: Dickens himself plays a role in the story.

Praising Pratchett's detailed construction of Victorian London, *Horn Book* magazine reviewer Sarah Ellis called Dodger "a glittering conjuring act" and noted that "there's real heart here, too, as Dodger's horizons expand to include nature, art, and love." Praising Pratchett's language, *Booklist* contributor Carolyn Phelan concluded: "Often amusing, this Victorian romp of a novel is lovingly crafted and completely enjoyable." A *Publishers Weekly*

reviewer asserted that "the tale embodies both Dickens's love for the common man and a fierce desire for social justice," while *School Librarian* contributor Tricia Adams dubbed it "a really inventive, funny, heartwarming, involving read that will appeal to readers of Pratchett, historical novels and fantasy readers across the board."

Pratchett used the concept of a flat world when he embarked upon his first "Discworld" novel, *The Color of Magic*. Discworld sits on the shoulders of four giant elephants, which in turn rest on the back of a giant turtle that swims through space. As W.D. Stevens reported in *Science Fiction and Fantasy Review*, Discworld is "populated with wizards, warriors, demons, dragons," and other fantastic creatures and attributes. The protagonist of *The Color of Magic* is a hapless wizard named Rincewind. The wizard teams up with Discworld's first tourist, Twoflower, who is visiting from a remote portion of the disc, along with Twoflower's sapient suitcase, known as the Luggage. The result, according to Stevens, is "one of the funniest, and cleverest, satires to be written."

Rincewind returns in *The Light Fantastic*. This time he and Twoflower must try to prevent Discworld from colliding with a red star that has recently appeared in its sky. This episode introduces toothless octogenarian Cohen the Barbarian. The next book in the series, *Equal Rites*, puts the emphasis on the character of Granny Weatherwax, and the fourth novel in the series, *Mort*, stars the recurring character Death. Granny Weatherwax also appears in *Wyrd Sisters*, this time accompanied by two fellow witches. In the novel Granny and her companions form a trio of witches (reminiscent of those in William Shakespeare's play *Macbeth*) to foil the plot of the evil Lord Felmet and his wife, who have usurped the rightful king. *Wyrd Sisters* prompted Miller to declare: "Pratchett continues to defy the odds. An open-ended series that just keeps getting better? Humorous fantasy with resources beyond puns, buffoonery, and generations of cardboard characters? Unheard of--until Pratchett."

Pyramids, which appeared in 1989, spoofs ancient Egypt. In *Pyramids*, loyal Discworld fans meet Teppic, a teenager who is studying to become an assassin until a relative's death makes him pharaoh. Other well-received Discworld books include *Witches Abroad*, which again features Granny Weatherwax and her witch companions. This time their mission is to stop the inevitable happy ending of a fairy tale because of the deeper disaster it will cause. Another Discworld novel is *Small Gods*, which Miller described in his *Locus* review as "a book about tortoises, eagles, belief systems, conspiracies, religious bigotry, man's need for gods, and gods' even greater need for man." Reviewing the same novel in the *Spectator*, Tom Shone noted that Pratchett's "parodies of sword and sorcery novels are a permanent fixture on the best seller lists throughout most of the year." Shone further commented: "Pratchett is the lucky person on whom the general public's desire for self-parodic fantasy has come to rest and it would now take a very bad book indeed to dislodge it."

Continuing with the "Discworld" books, Pratchett's *Lords and Ladies* examines the dark side of elves. Jackie Cassada, writing in *Library Journal*, remarked that this book shows why Pratchett "may be one of the genre's ... most inventive humorists." *Men at Arms* blends fantasy and mystery in an "average installment in this always entertaining, sometimes hysterically funny series," according to a writer for *Kirkus Reviews*. In *Interesting Times*, Rincewind is sent thousands of miles away to intercede in a squabble on the Counterweight Continent. Twoflower and Cohen the Barbarian also make returns in this installment of the "Discworld" saga. Granny Weatherwax returns in *Maskerade*, called "an enjoyable jaunt into the fantasy world" by Meg Wilson in *Voice of Youth Advocates*.

An exploration of discrimination informs *Jingo*, in which war is averted with a land neighboring the city-state Ankh-Morpork with its mixed population of humans, trolls, and dwarves. Nancy K. Wallace praised the novel in *Voice of Youth Advocates*, remarking that Pratchett's story, with its "dizzying array of favorite characters and rowdy Pythonesque humor," offers a "capricious, lighthearted look at the inanity of war and the warped ethics of diplomatic procedure." *Hogfather* features that eponymous Santa Claus of Discworld, but when Hogfather is kidnapped it falls to Death and his daughter, Susan, to figure out who is behind this dastardly deed. With this novel, declared a reviewer for *Publishers Weekly*, Pratchett has "moved beyond the limits of humorous fantasy, and should be recognized as one of the more significant contemporary English-language satirists." Tom Pearson, reviewing *Hogfather* for *Voice of Youth Advocates*, concluded that "Pratchett has once again brought Discworld to life in all its off-kilter glory."

Once again set in the "Discworld" universe, *The Last Continent* spoofs things Australian, while in the twenty-third "Discworld" outing, *Carpe Jugulum*, vampires attempt to overthrow the kingdom of Lancre. "Pratchett lampoons everything from Christian superstition to Swiss Army knives here," wrote a *Publishers Weekly* reviewer of the novel. Susan Salpini, writing in *School Library Journal*, dubbed *Carpe Jugulum* a "marvelous sendup of old horror movies."

The Fifth Elephant deals with the legend of the fifth pachyderm that once stood on the back of the giant tortoise. When it fell off the tortoise, its impact on Discworld left rich mineral and fat deposits in what is now Uberwald. Chief Constable Sam Vimes and his wife from Ankh-Morpork are on hand in this episode to help in a succession crisis on Uberwald. "Pratchett is now inviting comparison with Kurt Vonnegut," declared Roland Green in a *Booklist* review of *The Fifth Elephant*. A writer for *Publishers Weekly* expressed similar praise, calling the novel a "first-rate addition to [Pratchett's] ... long-running Discworld fantasy series." In *The Truth*, a newspaper is established in Ankh-Morpork. The book skewers the press and investigative journalism in this "hilarious romp," as Jackie Cassada described the tale in a *Library Journal* review. A contributor to *Publishers Weekly* concluded that new readers to the "Discworld" series "may find themselves laughing out loud ... while longtime fans are sure to call this Pratchett's best one yet."

Time, religion, and history serve as the philosophical compass in *Thief of Time*, in which a perfect timepiece will stop time unless a member of the History Monks can do something about it. "How can readers resist a book in which the world is saved by the awesome power of chocolate?" wondered Susan Salpini in a *School Library Journal* review. Cohen the Barbarian shows up again in *The Last Hero: A Discworld Fable*, and decides that he and his elderly buddies will go out in a blaze of glory, taking Ankh-Morpork along with them. Rincewind, Captain Carrot, and the inventor/artist Leonard of Quirm must stop Cohen and company before it is too late. In *Booklist*, Ray Olson dubbed *Thief of Time* "another Discworld delight," while a reviewer for *Publishers Weekly* lauded Pratchett's "far-out farce."

City Watch leader Sam Vimes returns in *Night Watch* and is joined by the villainous Carcer in a story that is "bubbling with wit and wisdom" and designed as a "tribute to beat cops everywhere," according to a writer for *Kirkus Reviews*. Vimes reprises his commander watchman role in *Thud!*, which finds the Ankh-Morpork City Watch commander determined to halt the disruption caused by the murder of a rabble-rousing dwarf named Grag Hamcrusher. "As always," concluded Regina Schroeder in *Booklist*, *Thud!* "is funny, fast-paced, [and] the kind of satire that explores serious issues" while also captivating readers. Calling the city of Ankh-Morpork "the most rewarding part of Discworld," a contributor to *Kirkus Reviews* noted that in *Thud!* Pratchett skewers everything from Blackberries to the novel *The Da Vinci Code*, allowing the stalwart Vimes to cope with the resulting "chaos and idiocy as the exasperated, excruciatingly decent British voice of reason."

Sam Vimes has earned a dukedom by the time readers meet up with him in *Monstrous Regiment: A Novel of Discworld*, but his battle to keep the peace continues to keep him busy. In fact, war has broken out, and the army of the Borogravians is winning adherents from among the citizens of Ankh-Morpork. Polly Oliver is so loyal, in fact, that she has joined one of the Borogravian regiments by disguising herself as a boy. In *Booklist*, Regina Schroeder dubbed *Monstrous Regiment* "thoroughly funny and surprisingly insightful," and a *Kirkus Reviews* contributor expressed relief that "Pratchett's droll satire ... isn't afraid to stoop to things like cross-dressing to get a giggle."

The "Discworld" saga continues to spin in *Going Postal: A Novel of Discworld*, as con man Moist von Lipwig is forced by law to endure the ultimate punishment for his crimes: a government job. Charged with turning his criminal mind to improving the British postal system, Moist rises to the occasion, battling a complex communications system, a sea of unsent mail, and a hidden guiding bureaucracy seeking profits above all else. To accomplish the impossible, Moist turns to golem friend and eventual love interest Adora Belle Darkheart as well as Oscar the vampire and a secret society of former postal workers. In *Going Postal*, Pratchett's "inventiveness seems to know no end," according to Carolyn Lehman in *School Library Journal*, and "his playful and irreverent use of language is a delight." In the opinion of a *Kirkus Reviews* writer, it is "almost shamefully enjoyable to watch [Moist] ... restore the mail routes, invent the idea of stamps, and go toe-to-toe with everything from rapacious businessmen to bloodthirsty banshees." His exploits continue in *Making Money*, as Moist begins to look beyond his successes at the postal system but finds his steady climb to the top less than exciting. "Beautifully crafted, wickedly cutting satire on the underpinnings of modern human society," in the opinion of Schroeder, *Making Money* is "smart, funny, and ... thoroughly entertaining."

Pratchett won not only critical acclaim but also the Carnegie Medal for his 2001 novel *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents*. The first of his "Discworld" books specifically geared for young readers, the novel was described by *School Library Journal* contributor Miranda Doyle as a "laugh-out-loud fantasy" that turns the pied-piper tale on its head. Maurice is a rather ill-tempered cat who comes up with a clever scheme: send a horde of unpleasant rats into various towns so that the inhabitants will have to summon a piper to get rid of them. The said piper will be Keith, a young musician in cohort with the cat. After Keith does his bit, he will meet up with Maurice and the rats, and the three parties will split the fee for getting rid of the rats. This works fine until they hit the town of Blintz where there are no resident rodents to add to the infestation. Instead, Maurice and his team are called into service when some evil rat catchers capture all the local humans. A reviewer for *Publishers Weekly* called the novel an "outrageously cheeky tale," and in *Horn Book* Anita L. Burkam wrote that Pratchett's "absorbing, suspenseful adventure is speeded along by the characters' wisecracking patter." Similarly, a contributor to *Kirkus Reviews* noted that *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents* "is at heart a story about stories" and both "excruciatingly funny" and "ferociously intelligent."

With *The Wee Free Men*, Pratchett introduced a trilogy of novels for younger readers that, like *The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents*, is part of the "Discworld" saga. The series follows a nine-year-old dairymaid named Tiffany Aching, who finds that her annoying baby brother has been kidnapped from his home in the rural Chalk by the Elf Queen. Although Tiffany has a few special abilities, such as second sight, she draws on the help of a talking toad and former attorney and the Nac Mac Feegle, a band of rabble-rousing, drunk, blue miniature gnomes no more than six inches in height and fearless. The group bravely infiltrates Fairyland to rescue the Tot, and there Tiffany confronts a headless horseman who turns her dreams against her. Her strength—her magic—is "quiet, inconspicuous, ... grounded in the earth and tempered with compassion, wisdom, and justice for common folk," explained Sue Giffard in a review of *The Wee Free Men* for *School Library Journal*. Described as an "ingenious mélange of fantasy, action, humor, and sly bits of social commentary" by a *Kirkus Reviews* writer, *The Wee Free Men* also addresses weighty issues such as "the nature of love, reality, and dreams," the reviewer added.

In *A Hat Full of Sky*, Pratchett's "humor similarly races from cerebral to burlesque without dropping a stitch," according to *Booklist* contributor Roger Sutton. Now age eleven, Tiffany becomes a witch in training to Miss

Level, but her lessons are derailed when the teen is taken over by a parasitic hiver who intends to steal her very soul. Granny Aching draws the power of the Chalk, and the small but feisty Nac Mac Feegle lend their efforts to driving the deadly hiver away. *A Hat Full of Sky* is "by turns hilarious and achingly beautiful," declared a *Kirkus Reviews* writer, who noted that Pratchett ranges from "biting satire" to a series examination of "the critical question of identity" and reconciling all aspects of one's true nature.

The third "Discworld" story geared for younger readers is *Wintersmith*, which finds thirteen-year-old Tiffany dancing into the Dark Morris and thereby attracting the romantic ardor of the chilly god of Winter. To show his love, the Wintersmith powders the world with snowflakes in the shape of his beloved, and because Tiffany has accidentally disrupted the change of the seasons, she enlists the help of Granny Weatherwax, as well as a clutch of other witches, to put an end to the blizzard of love that threatens to bury the world. In *Booklist*, Holly Koelling described *Wintersmith* as a "rollicking, clever, and quite charming adventure" that is fueled by Pratchett's "exuberant storytelling." In praise of the series' heroine, *Horn Book* contributor Deirdre F. Baker wrote that Tiffany's "tenacity, fierce intelligence, and common sense lift her to almost mythic stature." *Wintersmith* is "full of rich humor, wisdom, and eventfulness," Baker concluded, and a *Kirkus Reviews* writer noted that the book's "sidesplittingly funny adventure ... overlays a deeply thoughtful inquiry into ... how the stories we tell shape our understanding of ourselves and of the world we inhabit."

In 2011 Pratchett published *I Shall Wear Midnight*. Tiffany balances her daily responsibilities with trying to keep the Nac Mac Feegles calm and tending to the marriage of her childhood friend. As people around her begin to turn on her, she fears that the ghost of an ancient witch-burner is after her. Writing in *Voice of Youth Advocates*, Timothy Capehart remarked that "there's nary a one who will be disappointed with this thrilling, humorous, moving, and most wise tale." Reviewing the novel in *Horn Book*, Baker found the novel to be "funny, thought-provoking, and completely engaging from first to last." *Booklist* contributor Ian Chipman remarked that "in terms of pure humor per square word, Pratchett may be the cheeriest writer around."

Pratchett also published *Snuff* in 2011. While taking a two-week vacation in his wife's hometown, Vimes comes across the murder of a young goblin girl. In a review in the London *Guardian*, A.S. Byatt commented that "Pratchett is a master storyteller. He is endlessly inventive, even when telling a routine kind of tale. He gives you more information and more story than you need, just because he can, and this is completely satisfying. He is a master of complex jokes, good bad jokes, good dreadful jokes and a kind of insidious wisdom about human nature (and other forms of alien nature)." Writing in the London *Independent*, Roz Kaveney noted that, despite some minor criticism, "there is something refreshing about a book in which fighting for someone else's rights has to be followed by getting them inscribed in the books of law. Pratchett's comedy is at once hilariously cynical and idealistically practical." Reviewing the novel in the *Washington Post Book World*, Kerry Fried observed that Pratchett connects the book's "demonization of goblins to two of the worst crimes in human history: slavery and the Holocaust. Some might be offended, but Pratchett doesn't make such connections lightly. His first Discworld book may have been a frolic, but his magic has long since been set in strong moral mortar."

With limited ability to use a keyboard due to his Alzheimer's disease, Pratchett made use of dictation software to create the "Discworld" novel *Raising Steam* in 2013. The novel introduces the steam engine, along with several new characters, to Discworld. The new technology and its inventor, young artificer Dick Simnel, have caused a stir in the metropolis of Ankh-Morpork and created unrest in the country. Lord Venrinari sends his trusted minister Moist von Lipwig to oversee the construction of the railway.

"Leavened with Pratchett's usual puns, philosophical quips, and Discworld in-jokes, the story offers an amusing allegory," observed Carl Hays in *Booklist*. "If sometimes the mighty engine of Pratchett's prose skids a bit on the upslope ... we can forgive him," asserted Ben Aaronovitch in the London *Guardian*. "Not least because he remains one of the most consistently funny writers around; a master of the stealth simile, the time-delay pun and the deflationary three-part list. ... On the morning of its release, I could tell which of my fellow tube passengers had downloaded it to their e-readers by the bouts of spontaneous laughter." "Brimming with Pratchett's trademark wit, a yarn with a serious point made with style and elegance," concluded a *Kirkus Reviews* contributor.

Pratchett continued to work on new Discworld books until his death in March 2015, leaving behind copious notes and outlines for future novels in the series. But the author's daughter announced that Pratchett's final completed novel, *The Shepherd's Crown*, published posthumously in 2015, would be the last Discworld book and that no one else would be authorized to shape any of the author's material into new volumes in the series.

The Shepherd's Crown, according to London *Independent* reviewer David Barnett, "is essentially Tiffany's coming of age novel, of a young woman on the cusp of adulthood who has greatness thrust upon her." Fittingly for the novel that completes the long Discworld saga, it is also about both endings and beginnings. Tiffany Aching is now age sixteen and is hoping to settle down soon with Preston, who is away in the city studying medicine. But she must suddenly begin facing more responsibilities when her mentor, Granny Weatherwax, dies. Tiffany has been left Granny's steading, which the already overworked girl must now manage in addition to working her own modest property, the Chalk. Granny had been the most senior of the witches helping to keep Discworld safe, and now Tiffany must prepare to lead the other witches in defending their home from imminent attack by the Faery and Elvish armies. Another narrative strand follows Geoffrey, youngest son of the brutish Lord Swivel. Geoffrey hates the way his father lives, hunting animals for sport, and decides to seek a higher calling by becoming a witch. As the danger grows closer, the Discworld witches manage to work together for their common goal, while Geoffrey finds a special way to contribute to Discworld's defense.

Writing in the *Washington Post*, Michael Dirda lamented that this novel is the last of Tiffany's "thrilling adventures." Noting that the protagonist, first introduced in *The Wee Free Men*, is "no ordinary little girl," the reviewer admired Tiffany's exceptional imagination, determination, and courage, and explained that these illustrate the message in all of Pratchett's fiction: that it is essential to help others. In conclusion, Dirda observed that *The Shepherd's Crown* "is certainly a worthy crown to Terry Pratchett's phenomenal artistic achievement." With similar admiration, Barnett stated that the novel stands as "a sometimes sad, often funny and eminently suitable testament to the life and career" of the author.

In 2012 Pratchett collaborated with Stephen Baxter to produce the novel *The Long Earth*. Thirteen-year-old orphan Joshua Valiente builds a stepper and transports himself to a parallel world. He takes to this type of travel easily and helps others return. Fifteen years later, he is assigned to travel to a parallel universe to find out what is causing other beings to flee their world.

Writing in the London *Guardian*, Adam Roberts summarized that "*The Long Earth* is a short read: the pages rattle past and there's much to enjoy. The dialogue is a bit Hollywood 101, and much of it is characters explaining things to other characters, sometimes at great length. ... But it's a charming, absorbing, and somehow spacious piece of imagineering for all that." Reviewing the novel in the London *Independent*, David Barnett commented: "This is an accessible, fun and thoughtful SF novel that offers the potential for a multitude of stories as great as the myriad of Earths." In a review in *A.V. Club*, Rowan Kaiser mentioned that "the story is filled with dozens of huge philosophical, scientific, and social questions, but it ends up short on answers. It lacks a strong plot."

Pratchett and Baxter followed with *The Long War* in 2013 and *The Long Mars* in 2014. In the former novel, multiple Earths are now linked through air fleets, and while humans spread their influence in the Long Earth, it shapes them as well. A *California Bookwatch* critic called it "a powerful, engrossing saga."

In the third volume, *The Long Mars*, a natural disaster on the original Earth, Datum, has sent populations fleeing to parallel Earths. While engaged in rescue work, Sally is contacted by her missing father, the original inventor of the Stepper device that enables travel between the earths, inviting her to join him on a journey across the Long Mars. In a review of *The Long Mars*, a *Kirkus Reviews* contributor characterized the series as "a sprawling, meandering narrative whose purpose is less to amaze and entertain than to inquire about humanity itself and how attitudes and approaches to existential questions might ... change." Despite some criticisms, a *Publishers Weekly* reviewer concluded that "Baxter and Pratchett remain in fine form, their collaboration producing another thoughtful page-turner" in *The Long Mars*.

In the fourth series installment, *The Long Utopia* humanity continues to spread on the multitude of Earths while human society also evolves on the origin planet, Datum Earth. The AI, Lobsang, suffering a breakdown, attempts a normal life on one of the many worlds while Joshua, his old friend, uncovers unknown family history as he searches for his father. However, a new threat intrudes as an alien planet is enfolded into the Long Earth world and its inhabitants attempt to conquer all of Long Earth. Only Sally Linsay may have the solution to save the day. "[This] vivid story ... is delightfully unpredictable and ... continues humanity's mindstretching journey into the far reaches of the universe," noted a *Californian Bookwatch* contributor. *Booklist* reviewer Maggie Reagan was also impressed with this series addition, commenting that the authors have "created a tighter, more focused narrative that moves faster than its predecessors." Reagan added: "The explosive cliff-hanger ending—also now something of a trademark—promises one final return to the series." *Xpress Reviews* writer Erin Norton also had praise, terming it a "true gem," and further noting that "this is the final novel in the series completed by Pratchett in his lifetime and so will be cherished for that reason alone." Writing in the London *Guardian Online*, Adam Roberts similarly observed: "[The authors'] collaboration is more a hymn to the joys of unfettered world-building than it is to story or character. But if the pace of plotting is gentle, the restless inventiveness more than compensates. ... This penultimate volume is haunted by very non-utopian concepts: the costs of things; the past's inescapability; the encroaching end. We're not there yet, but it won't be long now." London *Independent Online* critic Barry Forshaw also commended this work, noting: "This is very much a science-fiction novel, rich in an awe-inspiring sense of wonder, with mind-boggling concepts thrown out like sparks from a Catherine wheel. Pratchett is dead; long live Baxter and Pratchett." Likewise, *Locus Online* contributor Paul Di Filippo wrote: "This series has shown a rare desire not to replicate familiar thrills from one volume to another, but rather to always be moving into new frontiers of plot and future history, a strategy congruent with the very nature of their SF novum. This volume, more than the previous three, really drives home the weight of the changes, the resonance for the characters of all their shared weird history, and so perhaps ultimately does justify its Grail-asonant title."

The series concludes with *The Long Cosmos*, set in 2070. The Next, the post-humans with super intelligence, have received a mysterious invitation to begin building the Machine—a massive AI computer the size of a continent. Meanwhile, Joshua, now in his seventies, is saved by a troll group and living with them he begins to learn the real purpose of life and of the Long Earth. Reviewing this series finale in the London *Telegraph Online*, Tristram Fane Saunders noted: "Although the familiar protagonists have reached their late sixties, the atmosphere is still one of childlike wonder. ... *The Long Cosmos* may be a bit slapdash in construction, but it, too, hums with shared enthusiasm, reading like a roll-call of the authors' favourite things. ... Even in its loosely sketched form, [the novel] glows with energy, with 'the light that shines behind reality'. It is a perfect symbol for this often beautiful, often frustrating series." *Independent Online* writer David Barnett also had praise, noting: "This book and the series as a whole provides polished sci-fi adventure. ... It is a fine and fitting testament to the work of one of our greatest and much-missed writing legends." Likewise, *Guardian Online* reviewer Jenny Colgan concluded: "If you've been following the series from the beginning, the last chapter will make you cry, all

on its own. And that's before you have to think about the fact that there will, now, be no more Pratchett books, and all that we have lost."

Pratchett addressed younger readers in several other series of books throughout his writing career. His "Bromeliad" fantasy series begins with *Truckers*, which introduces young readers to the nomes. Four-inch-tall people from another planet, the nomes have crashed on Earth and made a new world for themselves under the floorboards of a department store. Some of the nomes, however, have lived on the outside; the fun begins when one of these, Masklin, meets with the nomes of the store. When they learn that their store is going out of business and will be torn down, they must cooperate with the outside nomes to find a new home and escape their old one. "A wild and hilarious chase sequence follows, with the baffled police doubting their sanity," observed a *Horn Book* reviewer. Elizabeth Ward summed up *Truckers* in the *Washington Post Book World* by calling it "a delightful surprise" and a "benevolent little satire."

Diggers takes Masklin and his fellow nomes to their new home in an abandoned quarry. Problems ensue, however, when humans attempt to reactivate the quarry. "In the book's funniest scene," according to Patrick Jones in *Voice of Youth Advocates*, "a group of nomes 'attacks' one of the humans, ties him to his desk chair, and stuffs a note in his hand proclaiming: 'leave us alone.'" "Satire and allegory abound," a *Horn Book* reviewer concluded of *Diggers*, although the critic also noted that the nomes' "trials and emotions are both moving and amusing." In *Wings*, the third "Bromeliad" novel, Masklin and his friends attempt to return to their home planet by placing the Thing--the "magic" box that in *Truckers* had warned them of the store's demise--aboard a communications satellite so that it can summon their old mother ship, which has been waiting for them throughout their earthly exile. Margaret A. Chang lauded *Wings* in *School Library Journal* as a "cheerful, unpretentious tale."

Another trio of books set outside his "Discworld" series, Pratchett's "Johnny Maxwell" series was written in the early 1990s. The series begins with *Only You Can Save Mankind*, a novel that spoofs, among other things, the 1991 Persian Gulf War. In this fantasy tale, the computer game-playing protagonist is faced with a strange dilemma when the commander of the alien force he is about to destroy on-screen asks to surrender. Accepting his role as the Chosen One, the protector of the Scree Wee Empire, Johnny must rescue the aliens from the rest of the world's computer game players. *Only You Can Save Mankind* garnered strong reviews from critics for its blend of humor and suspense. A *Junior Bookshelf* contributor remarked that teen readers "should thoroughly enjoy the teasing competence of Mr. Pratchett's high-tech conundrum, by turns comical, whimsical, and downright terrifying." Miller, in a *Locus* review, stated that the "serious message of this novel shows clearly, but it's delightfully packaged, with the typical Pratchett combination of wit and level-headed humanity."

Johnny Maxwell returns in *Johnny and the Dead*, which finds the hero mixed up in another creepy yet humorous adventure. The residents of an old graveyard--the dead and buried residents, that is--take offense at the city council's plans to sell the cemetery to a corporation intent on replacing the grave sites with a new development. Enlisting the aid of Johnny as their spokesperson, the deceased try to sway public opinion against demolition of their "home." Marcus Crouch, reviewing *Johnny and the Dead* in *Junior Bookshelf*, remarked that the "story surprised with its depth and seriousness" and called it "a lovely, funny, witty, sometimes wise book, exciting and entertaining and always highly readable."

Johnny Maxwell makes a final appearance in *Johnny and the Bomb*. In this episode, Johnny and his friends help an old bag lady only to discover that her bags are full of time. They find themselves traveling back in time to 1941, just before an air raid that hit their town during World War II. Having studied the event in school, they know what to expect but are unsure what to do now that they are in the middle of the action. Michael Gregg, reviewing the novel in *Maggies*, concluded that "there's a giggle on every page and enough to keep the mind mulling over long after the book is put down." A reviewer for *Junior Bookshelf* also had praise for *Johnny and the Bomb*, noting that "no summary can give a fair picture of the intriguing events and lively crosstalk that make up this fascinating story."

Several of Pratchett's short stories have been collected in *A Blink of the Screen: Collected Shorter Fiction* and *Dragons at Crumbling Castle: And Other Tales*. The former title, the author's first collection of short fiction, contains thirty-two works from his student days and his early career. Roughly half of the book includes stories of Discworld; the rest includes a mix of fiction and journalism from Pratchett's early career. Reviewers enjoyed the book's comic and imaginative approach to themes such as political journalism, religion, and the literary canon. Reviewing this collection in *Booklist*, David Pitt noted: "The quality ranges quite considerably, but as a representation of the short-fiction career of one of the fantasy genre's most respected authors, this volume will be much sought after by Pratchett's many devoted fans." A similar mixed assessment was offered by a *Publishers Weekly* contributor, who commented: "Though the stories here aren't his absolute best writing, there is plenty to entertain curious fans." Higher praise came from a *Kirkus Reviews* critic who concluded: "One of the main draws of this collection for serious fans, or aspiring writers, will be the chance to trace the evolution of Pratchett's craft--but there's plenty here for readers who have never heard of him to enjoy."

Dragons at Crumbling Castle contains fourteen stories that the author wrote as a teenager and published in his local newspaper. Reviewers enjoyed the humor in the stories, pointing out that the book provides ample evidence of talents that Pratchett went on to develop in his subsequent career. Pratchett's own commentary on these early stories is included in the book's introduction, and, said *Booklist* contributor Carolyn Phelan, brings the

author's "signature warmth, wit, and intelligence." A writer for *Kirkus Reviews* described *Dragons at Crumbling Castle* as "juvenilia from a genius, showing bright signs of future masterworks."

The Witch's Vacuum Cleaner and Other Stories is a collection of a further fourteen stories that the youthful Pratchett published in his local newspaper. There are tales of magic, fantasy, and whimsy. Mostly the stories are set in the town of Blackbury or in the Welsh town of Llandanffwnfagegettupagogo, which Pratchett referred to as a "Wild West" hamlet. Some feature a troll or a gnome; one even deals with the adventures of an ant. "These whimsical tales already bear this prolific author's hallmark humor and imagination," commented *Booklist* reviewer Julia Smith. "Bravery shows up almost as often as buffoonery in these satiric bits and bobs," noted a *Kirkus Reviews* critic.

Pratchett once told CA: "I've been a journalist of some sort all my working life, and I suppose I tend to think of the books as a kind of journalism—although writing them is as much fun as anyone can have by themselves sitting down with all their clothes on."

Pratchett continued: "I can't speak for the United States—3,000 miles is a great barrier to casual feedback—but what does gratify me in the United Kingdom is that the 'Discworld' books, which are not intended for children, have a big following among kids who, in the words of one librarian, 'don't normally read.'"

Remembering his own childhood, Pratchett remarked: "I got my education from books. The official schooling system merely prevented me from reading as many books as I would have liked. So from personal experience I know that getting children to read is important. Civilization depends on it."

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Good Omens Discussion Questions

mark l.



user 9971393
Berlin, MA

Posted 4/25/12 9:16 AM

[Link to discussion](#)

Fellow bibliophiles,

Apologies for the delay on the discussion questions for our discussion tonight. Hope to see you there.

Warmly,

Mark

Good Omens Questions

1. Do you think that Aziraphale and Crowley are distinctly either good or evil? Why or why not?
2. It is suggested throughout the story that there is some divine plan that lays out every action and event in life. When Adam averts Armageddon at the Tadfield Air Base, it seems to surprise many that are present. Do you think that this surprise is part of the divine plan, or do you think that there was no divine plan in action? Explain.
3. Aziraphale and Crowley made concerted efforts to shape the upbringing of the Antichrist until they discovered that they had the wrong child. Do you suppose that Adam would have found his powers sooner had they been involved in his life? Why or why not? Is it possible that their involvement in Warlock's life made a difference?
4. How do you view the treatment of traditional Christianity in this book, particularly in regards to the characters Aziraphale, Crowley, and Adam? What, in your opinion, is the relationship of free will and "God's ineffable plan" in the events of the book?
5. What are your thoughts on the recurring theme that no angel or demon could even think up the horrible things humans do to each other or the wonderful things they do to help each other? How do you see the role of humanity in the book vs. the role of the supernatural?
6. Do you find a message in this book? If so, what? Do you think its satire works as intended?
7. In your opinion, would this novel work better if viewed as a "political" novel (as books with religious themes tend to be viewed, currently), or if viewed as a humorous novel that happens to satirize religion? In what ways does the humor add and detract from its message?
8. How do you view the roles of Agnes Nutter and Anathema? Do their prophecies fit in to the satire or are they merely there as a plot moving device? What about the roles of other secondary characters? (Newt, Shadwell, Madame Tracy, The Chattering Order of St. Beryl, etc.)

What did each of Gaiman and Pratchett contribute to "Good Omens"?


I've recently started reading *Good Omens* by Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman. This is possibly the first time I've read a book cowritten by two authors who are each well-known and have distinctive styles in their own right, so I was interested to see how much it feels like a Pratchett book and how much like a Gaiman book. Well, I haven't read much of it yet, but so far the writing style is pure Pratchett.

What did each author contribute to the creation of the book?

Did they each write some chapters all by themselves? Did Gaiman provide most of the plot with Pratchett doing most of the writing? Did Gaiman write the descriptions and Pratchett the dialogue? Did one of them write and the other edit? Something else?

terry-pratchett neil-gaiman good-omens

asked Jul 14 '17 at 23:53

 Rand al'Thor ♦
91.9k 36 436 612

- 2 There's a jokey quote that Pratchett did most of the Adam stuff and Gaiman did everything with maggots in. I know some editions had some quotes, I'll see what I can find. - Bah... my ebook doesn't have the anniversary Intro, and my hardcover is in storage. Someone else have at it. - Radhil Jul 15 '17 at 0:04 ✓
- 2 They discussed it at some length in the introduction. Both claim that the other did most of the writing and came up with the best bits. - Valorum Jul 15 '17 at 0:04 ✓
- @Radhil There's also a jokey quote that Gaiman wrote a very dark fantasy book, and Pratchett stood behind his back inserting jokes. - Gallifreyan Jul 15 '17 at 10:20

1 Answer

"two authors who are each well-known and have distinctive styles in their own right" - not according to them. In fact, they make this point multiple times - in the introduction to the book and elsewhere - that they were *not* "the Terry Pratchett" and "the Neil Gaiman"¹. Gaiman hadn't written any novels at that time (okay, one novel - *Don't Panic*, a companion to H2G2). Pratchett had only begun the Discworld cycle, and had only *Colour of Magic* published and *The Light Fantastic* about to be published.

Gaiman met Pratchett during an interview - he claims he was the first person ever to do an interview with Terry Pratchett. Some time after, Gaiman had a short story (5000 words)², but he did not know how it ended. He sent it to Pratchett (among other people), and the latter said *he* wanted to know how it ended, so he proposed Gaiman either sells him the idea of the book, or they write it together.

They state in the introduction to the book⁵ that Gaiman had more influence on the beginning of the book, while Pratchett had more influence towards the end.

They had divided the characters^{2,3} - Gaiman wrote the parts with the four Horsepersons (before they get to the air base, at which point Pratchett took over), and Pratchett wrote the parts with Agness Nutter's execution and Them (before they set for the air base, at which point Gaiman took over) - but by the end each had written some parts for each character.

They would discuss the plot on the phone, and then it would be a

mad dash to get to the next good bit before the other one could

Gaiman says in the same interview that

then we'd go footnoting each other's bits, and adding gags

Since the Internet was not a thing back then, they would exchange their drafts in the form of floppy disks.

This BBC website⁴ offers an interview with Neil Gaiman, where he says mostly the same things:

Terry took the first 5,000 words and typed them into his word processor, and by the time he had finished they were the first 10,000 words. Terry had borrowed all the things about me that he thought were amusing, like my tendency back then to wear sunglasses even when it wasn't sunny, and given them, along with a vintage Bentley, to Crawleigh, who had now become Crowley. The

We wrote the first draft in about nine weeks. Nine weeks of gloriously long phone calls, in which we would read each other what we'd written, and try to make the other one laugh. We'd plot, delightedly, and then hurry off the phone, determined to get to the next good bit before the other one could. We'd rewrite each other, footnote each other's pages, sometimes even footnote each other's footnotes.

We would throw characters in, hand them off when we got stuck. We finished the book and decided we would only tell people a little about the writing process - we would tell them that Agnes Nutter was Terry's, and the Four Horsemen (and the Other Four Motorcyclists) were mine.

[. .]

All that remained was to find a title for the book we'd written. I suggested Good Omens, Terry liked The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch. We compromised, or rather, we collaborated, and we had a title and a subtitle.

People still ask us who wrote what, and, mostly, we've forgotten. We tried to make sure that by the end we'd each written all of the major characters (I handed over the Four Horsemen to Terry when they got to the air force base, and I took the Them). There were bits we were both convinced we had written, and bits we were both convinced that we hadn't.

¹ Interview excerpt on YouTube

² Another interview on YouTube

³ A longer interview on YouTube (starts at 6:45 and goes on for ~15 minutes; also see 33:35 for a very nice story about Terry Pratchett)

⁴ <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-30512620>

⁵ Which I don't possess at the moment, and which only appears to exist in relatively recent editions.

edited Jul 15 '17 at 10:26

answered Jul 15 '17 at 9:05



Gallifreyan

15.2k 6 73 132

¹ Stupid Internet, googling the author names along with "Good Omens" yields news about the Amazon adaptation. – Gallifreyan Jul 15 '17 at 9:10

I don't have a copy of the book at hand, and the digital edition lacks the relevant part, but the introduction says the same things. – Gallifreyan Jul 15 '17 at 10:19

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Good Omens: How Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett wrote a book

22 December 2014



Cult novel Good Omens, by Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett, has been adapted for radio. Here Neil Gaiman tells the story of how it came to be written.

For the uninitiated, Good Omens is a story about how the world is going to end next Saturday. Just after tea. And how the only things standing between us and the inevitable Armageddon are a demon, Crowley, and an angel (and rare book dealer), Aziraphale, who are, rather uncomfortably, working together, not to mention a witch, a very small witchfinder army, the Antichrist (who is 11, and very nice) and his dog.

Terry Pratchett and I met in February 1985, in a Chinese restaurant. I was a young journalist. He was a former journalist and Electricity Board PR, and a writer who had just published his second Discworld novel. I was the first journalist who had ever interviewed him.

I remember we made each other laugh a lot. We laughed at the same things. We became friends. It was easy.

In 1987 I wrote a book about Douglas Adams and the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy. By the end of it I had learned that I could write in a style I thought of as Classic English Humour. Douglas had science fiction tied up, Terry had fantasy, but nobody was writing funny horror. And an exchange in Marlowe's The Jew of Malta, combined with a late night viewing of The Omen and a love of Richmal Compton's immortal Just William stories, had put a story into my head, about a demonic baby-swap that goes wrong, in which the Antichrist grows up to be a nice kid, with a dog and a gang.

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Replay

I wrote the first 5,000 words of William the Antichrist. It had a demon named Crawleigh. He drove a Citroen 2CV, and was ineffectual. Proper demons like Hastur and Ligur loathed him. It had a baby swap. I sent it to a few friends for feedback. Then my graphic novel Sandman happened, and it was almost a year later that the phone rang.

"It's Terry," said Terry. "Ere. That thing you sent me. Are you doing anything with it?"

"Not really."

"Well, I think I know what happens next. Do you want to sell it to me? Or write it together?"

"Write it together," I said, because I was not stupid, and because that was the nearest I was ever going to get to Michaelangelo phoning to ask if I wanted to paint a ceiling with him.

Terry took the first 5,000 words and typed them into his word processor, and by the time he had finished they were the first 10,000 words. Terry had borrowed all the things about me that he thought were amusing, like my tendency back then to wear sunglasses even when it wasn't sunny, and given them, along with a vintage Bentley, to Crawleigh, who had now become Crowley. The Satanic Nurses were Satanic Nuns.

The book was under way.

We wrote the first draft in about nine weeks. Nine weeks of gloriously long phone calls, in which we would read each other what we'd written, and try to make the other one laugh. We'd plot, delightedly, and then hurry off the phone, determined to get to the next good bit before the other one could. We'd rewrite each other, footnote each other's pages, sometimes even footnote each other's footnotes.

We would throw characters in, hand them off when we got stuck. We finished the book and decided we would only tell people a little about the writing process - we would tell them that Agnes Nutter was Terry's, and the Four Horsemen (and the Other Four Motorcyclists) were mine.

The second draft took about four months, as we took what we'd done and did our very best to make it look like we knew what had been doing all along. Pepper became a girl, and so did War. I went to stay with Terry at the end of the book, to patch it all together and make sure it worked, and slept in his spare room. The window was open, and there was a dovecote nearby. When he woke me that morning, the air of the bedroom was filled with fluttering white doves. I assumed this always happened in the Pratchett household, but he said it was only me.

All that remained was to find a title for the book we'd written. I suggested Good Omens, Terry liked The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch. We compromised, or rather, we collaborated, and we had a title and a subtitle.

More about Neil Gaiman

- Author of bestselling novels including *Neverwhere*, *American Gods*, and *The Ocean At The End Of The Lane*; also wrote the graphic novel series, *The Sandman*
- Books for children include *Coraline* and *The Graveyard Book*
- Has also written episodes for *Doctor Who*, including "The Doctor's Wife"

People still ask us who wrote what, and, mostly, we've forgotten. We tried to make sure that by the end we'd each written all of the major characters (I handed over the Four Horsemen to Terry when they got to the air force base, and I took the Them). There were bits we were both convinced we had written, and bits we were both convinced that we hadn't.

And then, 25 years ago, the book was published, and something odd happened. It took on a life of its own, in the UK, in the US, all around the world. People would bring copies of Good Omens to signings, and the books were either swollen as if they had been dropped in the bath during an exciting bit, or so well read that the pages were now trying to escape.

The only brand-new copies we would ever see were gifts, or replacements for copies borrowed by friends and never returned. "It's my sixth copy. The others never came back," people would tell us, with a mixture of pride and resignation. We would write HAVE A NICE DOOMSDAY on their books. Or one of us would write BURN THIS BOOK and the other, when he got it, APPLY HOLY MATCH HERE.

Our story of an 11-year-old Antichrist, of an angel and a demon, a witchfinder and a witch, had found its audience. It began to appear on lists of best-loved novels. People wrote fan fiction (mostly about Crowley and Aziraphale), people dressed up as the characters (mostly Crowley and Aziraphale), people asked us when we were going to write a sequel, one featuring Crowley and Aziraphale.

The Good Omens film never quite happened, although Terry Gilliam worked hard to make it happen, and Johnny Depp would have made a fine Crowley. But some things became inevitable. And after last year's triumphant adaptation by Dirk Maggs and Heather Larmour of my novel Neverwhere, a Good Omens radio series became inevitable.

Have a nice doomsday.

The Omen

Includes plot spoilers

- It's 6 June at 0600. One baby is delivered stillborn. Another is delivered as his mother dies. The American diplomat father of the stillborn baby is persuaded by a priest to swap babies. He does not tell his wife.
- All is well until the child - Damien - turns five. A series of sinister deaths follow.
- Enter a spooky nanny with an even spookier black dog to "guard" Damien while his father is away.
- Enter priest spouting prophecies about Damien ruling the world.
- Cue the Book of Revelation and its apocalyptic visions.

Good Omens will be broadcast on Radio 4 between 22 and 27 December at 23:00 GMT. You can catch up via the [BBC iPlayer](#)

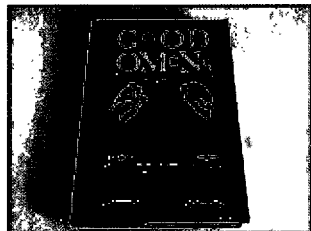
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Good Omens: The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch: A Novel

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When a scatterbrained Satanist nun goofs up a baby-switching scheme and delivers the infant Antichrist to the wrong couple, it's just the beginning of the comic errors in the divine plan for Armageddon which this fast-paced novel by two British writers zanily details. Aziraphale, an angel who doubles as a rare-book dealer, and Crowley, a demon friend who's assigned to the same territory, like life on Earth too much to allow the long-planned war between Heaven and Hell to happen. They set out to find the Antichrist and avert Armageddon, on the way encountering the last living descendant of Agnes Nutter, Anathema, who's been deciphering accurate prophecies of the world's doom but is unaware she's living in the same town as the Antichrist, now a thoroughly human and normal 11-year-old named Adam. As the appointed day and hour approach, Aziraphale and Crowley blunder through seas of fire and rains of fish, and come across a misguided witch hunter, a middle-aged fortune teller and the Four Horsepersons of the Apocalypse. It's up to Adam in the neatly tied end, as his humanity prevails over the Divine Plan and earthly bungling. Some humor is strictly British, but most will appeal even to Americans "and other aliens." *Literary Guild alternate. (Sept.)*

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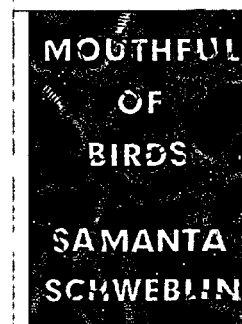
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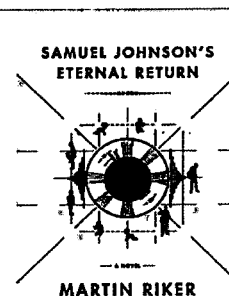
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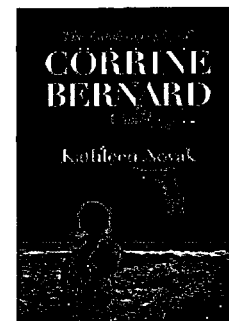
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The Four Bikers of the Apocalypse

By JOE QUEENAN

GOOD OMENS

The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of
Agnes Nutter, Witch.

By Neil Gaiman and
Terry Pratchett.

354 pp. New York:
Workman Publishing.

\$18.95.

There are several sure cures for the recurring disease of Anglophilia. The most extreme, of course, is marriage to a British national, which will permanently disabuse any American of the notion that always and everywhere English people are witty and clever, imperturbable and sophisticated. This is particularly true if the spouse has relatives in Liverpool.

Less extravagant remedies include a prolonged screening of prime-time British television programs (three-hour snooker matches in which the contestants tell anti-Irish jokes), tea and scones with anyone even vaguely associated with Led Zeppelin or the Sex Pistols, a Saturday afternoon at an Arsenal-Tottenham Hotspur soccer hecatomb or 25 minutes in an East End pub.

The least extensive cure of all is the casual perusal of a book that has recently

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as its American counterpart. "Good Omens: The Nice and Accurate Prophecies of Agnes Nutter, Witch" is just such a book.

"Good Omens" is an ostensibly funny novel that deals with the efforts of a London-based angel named Aziraphale and a demon named Crowley to prevent Armageddon from taking place on the following weekend, as predicted in a book written by a 17th-century witch. In order to insure their continued survival in a world they have grown quite fond of over the centuries, the two old friends must intercept the Four Bikers of the Apocalypse before they have a chance to join forces with the "Destroyer of Kings, Angel of the Bottomless Pit . . . Father of Lies, Spawn of Satan, and Lord of Darkness" - or, as he is more commonly known, the Antichrist, currently residing in the village of Lower Tadfield.

"Good Omens" is a direct descendant of "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy," a vastly overpraised book or radio program or industry or something that became quite popular in Britain a decade ago when it became apparent that Margaret Thatcher would be in office for some time and that laughs were going to be hard to come by.

Just as Douglas Adams worked his joke to death by juxtaposing the tedious lives of ordinary people with events of cosmic significance, so Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett, two former journalists, go on and on for 354 pages with their schoolboy wisecracks about Good, Evil, the Meaning of Life and people who drink Perrier. Here's a typical example:

"Over the years a huge number of theological man-hours have been spent debating the famous question:

"How Many Angels Can Dance on the Head of a Pin?"

"In order to arrive at an answer, the following facts must be taken into consideration:

"Firstly: angels simply don't dance. It's one of the distinguishing characteristics that marks an angel. They may listen appreciatively to the Music of the Spheres, but they don't feel the urge to get down and boogie to it. So, none." Chuckle when ready. Mr. Gaiman and Mr. Pratchett are the sorts of writers who feel that anything having to do with nuns is uproariously funny - and, in point of fact, virtually anything having to do with nuns, the planet's original terrorists, is uproariously funny. But

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many times before, if not with Peter Cook and Dudley Moore, then with Father Guido Sarducci.

IN fact, the whole Supernatural in Your Own Backyard shtick was pretty well milked dry years ago by everyone from Woody Allen ("Mr. Big") to Monty Python ("Life of Brian") to John Denver and George Burns ("Oh, God!"). There is no more damning statement one can make about a satirical novel than to note that a film starring John Denver was funnier.

Obviously, it would be difficult to write a 354-page satirical novel without getting off a few good lines. I counted four. There is also a nice passage about an ancient prophesy warning denizens of the Future to avoid buying Betamax, a snippy remark about Welsh-language television and one truly funny bit about the decision made by the Four Bikers of the Apocalypse to change their names from the likes of War and Famine to All Foreigners Especially the French and Things Not Working Properly Even After You've Given Them a Good Thumping.

Other bits that will pass muster include a sequence dealing with an apocryphal scriptural text called the Buggre Alle This Bible, a proposed recipe for leftover toad and the intervention of extraterrestrial forces in the workings of the London cellular phone system.

But to get to this material, the reader must wade through reams and reams of undergraduate dreck: recycled science-fiction cliches about using the gift of prophesy to make a killing in the stock market; shopworn jokes about American television programs (would you believe the book includes a joke about "Have Gun, Will Travel"?); and an infuriating running gag about Queen, a vaudevillian rock group whose hits are buried far in the past and should have been buried sooner.

Add to this names that are not funny (Citron Deux-Chevaux), jokes that fall flat ("a plaque on both your houses") and pointless wisecracks about people and institutions that are impregnable to satire because they are self-parodying entities - televangelists, the British monetary system, any publication involving Rupert Murdoch - and you have a book that reads like Benny Hill's version of "The Tibetan Book of the Dead." Or John Denver's.

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