



Smoke and Mirrors: Short Fictions and Illusions

By Neil Gaiman

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In the deft hands of Neil Gaiman, magic is no mere illusion . . . and anything is possible. In *Smoke and Mirrors*, Gaiman's imagination and supreme artistry transform a mundane world into a place of terrible wonders—where an old woman can purchase the Holy Grail at a thrift store, where assassins advertise their services in the Yellow Pages under "Pest Control," and where a frightened young boy must barter for his life with a mean-spirited troll living beneath a bridge by the railroad tracks. Explore a new reality, obscured by smoke and darkness yet brilliantly tangible, in this extraordinary collection of short works by a master prestidigitator. It will dazzle your senses, touch your heart, and haunt your dreams.

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Smoke and Mirrors: Short Fictions and Illusions By Neil Gaiman Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #34198 in Books
- Brand: Gaiman, Neil
- Published on: 2008-01-29
- Released on: 2008-01-29
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .83" w x 5.31" l,
- Binding: Paperback
- 339 pages

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

This anthology of short stories, and the occasional story poem, is vintage Neil Gaiman: quirky, sometimes very funny, often dark and disturbing. Most have been published before, but are hard to find elsewhere and cover all of Gaiman's writing life. As Gaiman says in his introduction, "most of the stories in this book are about love in some form or another," but not requited love. The stories in *Smoke and Mirrors* touch on all of Gaiman's themes: sex, death, dreams, and the end of the world. From "Chivalry," about the Holy Grail and where it finally ended up, to "Troll Bridge," a very adult version of "The Three Billy Goats Gruff"; from "Bay Wolf," a story poem that melds *Beowulf* and *Baywatch*, with interesting results, to "Murder Mysteries," which is about a murder, but also about angels, God's will, and Evil, these stories leave lasting impressions. Fans of Ray Bradbury's short stories and of Gaiman's other works will enjoy this collection. --*Nona Vero*

From Publishers Weekly

Imaginative twists on old legends and frightening glimpses into the impossible combine to form this impressive collection of 30 stories and poems by the author of *Neverwhere* and co-creator of *The Sandman* graphic novels. Each entry skirts the edges of a puncture in reality through which something dark and mysterious peeks. Then it moves on and the apparition is hidden away again, but not forgotten. The narratives follow a dream logic: The angel Raguel, the Vengeance of the Lord, can bum a cigarette off a youth in L.A. and tell him the truth behind Lucifer's fall ("Murder Mysteries"), and nonchalant assassins can be found in the Yellow Pages under pest control ("We Can Get Them for You Wholesale"). The bizarre and disturbing essence of the stories is highlighted by their background of absolute normalcy. Their prose is simple yet evocative, and Gaiman's characters are textured with well-defined personalities. Because the characters treat the unreal as ordinary, the eeriness of what unfolds has all the more impact. In "Chivalry," a woman finds the Holy Grail in a secondhand shop, and Galahad must trade something for it that will look just as good on her mantle. Demons take over London in "Cold Colors," because the devil has learned how to network and God can't get "saintware" up and running. The intriguing world behind these pages is indeed smoke and mirrors, just a step or a word or a story away from our own.

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From [Booklist](#)

In 30 prose and verse narratives, dark fantasist Gaiman proves that he knows how to stick to a story's point until it is thrust home. Poe would love him. He lacks Poe's grandiloquence, though, and also H. P. Lovecraft's, which he derides in "Shuggoth's Old Peculiar," one of three Lovecraftian items; the other two, by the way, feature Lawrence Talbot, the wolf man of 1940s horror movies, as a fang for hire, and "Bay Wolf," the verse one of them, mixes up *Beowulf* and *Bay Watch*what a howl! Other top-flight entries are the Raymond Carver^style "Mouse," which is barely touched by fantasy; "Tastings," a highly erotic psychic vampire sketch; and "Snow, Glass, Apples," a ghastly retelling of "Snow White." Best of show is "Murder Mysteries," in which a young man meets an angel who tells him something John Milton didn't know: what provoked Lucifer to rebel against God. A box of bonbons for dark fantasy fans, and a strong successor to *Neverwhere*. *Ray Olson*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Stevie Mozingo:

Now a day those who Living in the era where everything reachable by match the internet and the resources inside it can be true or not require people to be aware of each information they get. How people have to be smart in acquiring any information nowadays? Of course the reply is reading a book. Reading a book can help folks out of this uncertainty Information particularly this Smoke and Mirrors: Short Fictions and Illusions book since this book offers you rich information and knowledge. Of course the details in this book hundred percent guarantees there is no doubt in it as you know.

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Donald Shelby:

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