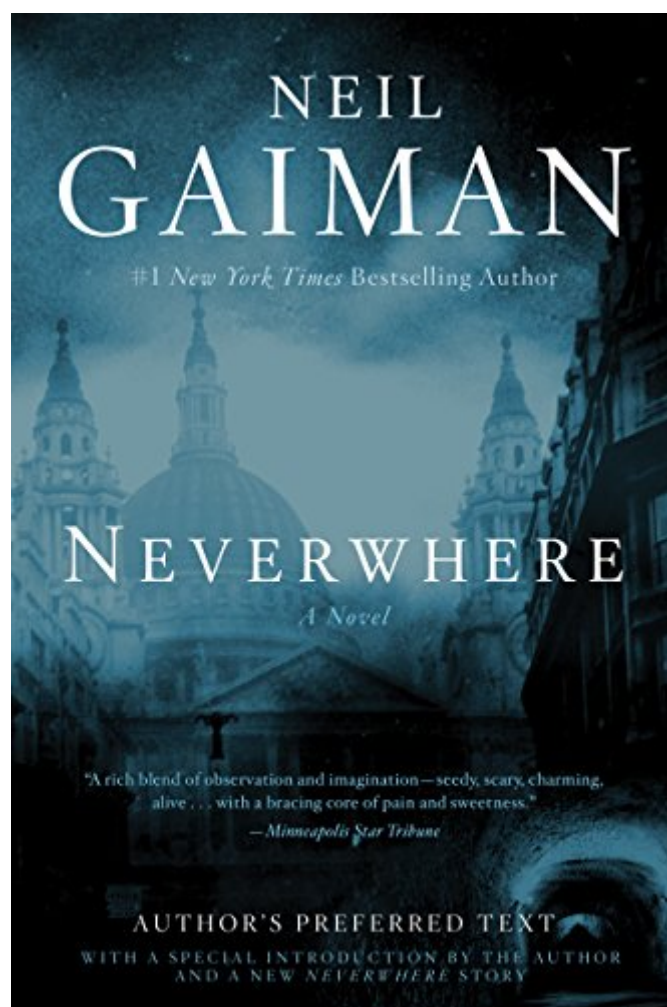


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Neverwhere: A Novel



Synopsis

The #1 New York Times bestselling author's ultimate edition of his wildly successful first novel featuring his "preferred text" and including his special Neverwhere tale "How the Marquis Got His Coat Back" Published in 1997, Neil Gaiman's darkly hypnotic first novel, *Neverwhere*, heralded the arrival of a major talent and became a touchstone of urban fantasy. Over the years, a number of versions were produced both in the U.S. and the U.K. Now Gaiman's preferred edition of his classic novel reconciles these works and reinstates a number of scenes cut from the original published books. *Neverwhere* is the story of Richard Mayhew, a young London businessman with a good heart and an ordinary life, which is changed forever when he discovers a girl bleeding on the sidewalk. He stops to help her—an act of kindness that plunges him into a world he never dreamed existed. Slipping through the cracks of reality, Richard lands in the *Neverwhere*—a London of shadows and darkness, monsters and saints, murderers and angels that exists entirely in a subterranean labyrinth. The *Neverwhere* is home to Door, the mysterious girl Richard helped in the London Above. Door, a noblewoman whose family has been murdered, is on a quest to find the agent that slaughtered her family and thwart the destruction of this underworld kingdom. If Richard is ever to return to his former life, he must join the journey to save Door's world—and find a way to survive. A hallucinatory fantasia of mystery, mythology, and terror that "draws equally from George Lucas, Monty Python, Doctor Who, and John Milton" (USA Today), *Neverwhere* is an "Alice in Wonderland with a punk edge" (Poppy Z. Brite), "that is both the stuff of dreams and nightmares" (San Diego Union-Tribune).

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Customer Reviews

Before he broke out full time into the world of novel writing Gaiman's reputation mostly rested on a relative handful number of comic books he had written, most notably (though not his best stuff) The Sandman series which showed his ability to toy with fantasy and myth to a near demented degree previously not expected for comic books. At best it was flat out amazing, at worst it was merely pleasant. Name recognition alone probably drove a lot of Gaiman starved Sandman fans to this book but fortunately it has much broader appeal as a contemporary fantasy. In this tale normal guy Richard Mayhew helps a stranger and winds up falling through the cracks into "London Below" a quasi-mystical world that coexists and yet can't be seen by "London Above". Now Richard, with a bizarre cast of comrades has to help the lady Door figure out how killed her family and what it all means, while dodging all sorts of unpleasantness that keeps popping up. The idea of a fantastic dark London overlapping the normal London isn't anything new (DC Comics' Hellblazer went over that concept all the time and "Midnight Nation" applies it to the entire US) but the key to a story like this is imagination which Gaiman has in spades. Every texture of the London Below feels real, and almost every page has some bizarre occurrence or some off kilter social commentary disguised as fantasy coming from all sides. He has more good ideas than any man should possibly have and these ideas and his brilliant descriptions are what carry the novel, for the most part, you can read the whole thing like a travelogue and just become immersed in this strange and amazing world.

In the field of Science-Fiction/Fantasy, there is no greater accomplishment than creating a unique and intriguing universe. Although well-written books, The Hobbit and Foundation are classics less for perfect prose than for the creatures, landscapes and societies they introduced. The appeal of the universe ranges outside books, though. It is why Attack of the Clones grossed millions on its opening day and why a lot of people know more about Marvel Comics than they do about any foreign country. Neverwhere by Neil Gaiman is a pretty unmistakable attempt at creating a universe. The novel was Gaiman's first major project after finishing the acclaimed Sandman comic series

(which could be described as his first universe, but is more of an amalgamation of Biblical scripture, Gaelic and other folk tales and the larger world of DC Comics). Because of Sandman's success, Gaiman is sometimes considered a new Tolkien or Asimov, but he fails to reach his potential on *Neverwhere* because, despite his ambition, his universe-creating powers are not at a prime. The universe of this novel is London Below, a dark and outlandish world existing beneath the UK's sprawling capital. It is inhabited by a feudal aristocracy, lonesome warriors and a religious cult that talks to rats. After two ruthless mercenaries slaughter one of London Below's most prominent families, the only survivor, a young woman named Door (for her ability to open mystic gates), escapes to London Above, where reluctant yuppie Richard Mayhew takes her in. Joined by the mordant Marquis de Carabas and a grim female bodyguard called (get this) Hunter, Richard and Door journey through London Below to find out who ordered the deaths of Door's family and why.

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