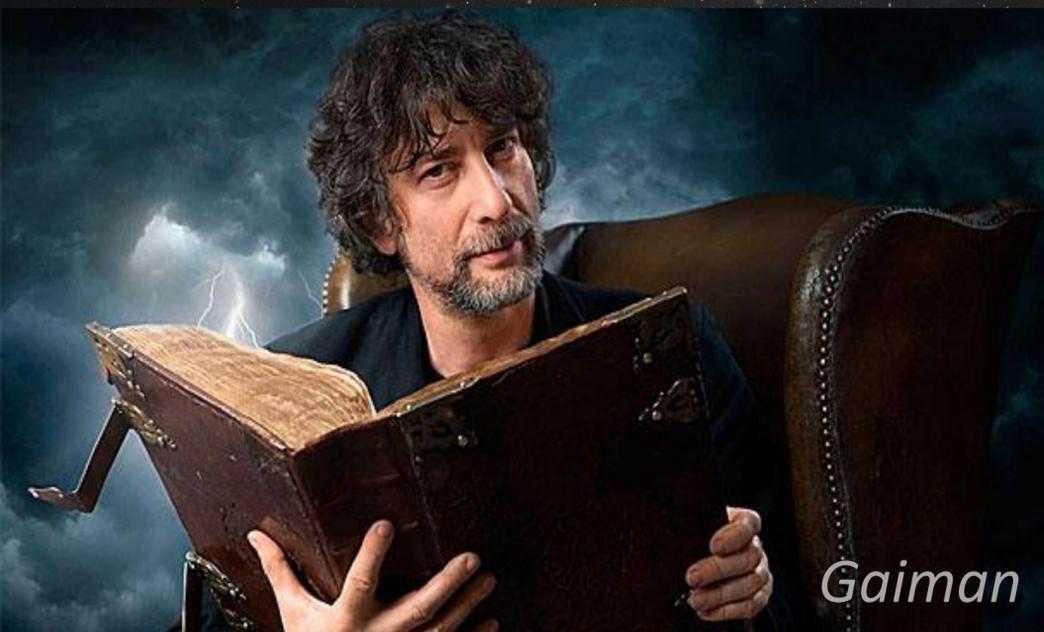


Ventura Book Reviews

Where will
the next book
take you?

Neverwhere

by Neil Gaiman



Neverwhere, one of Neil Gaiman's many novels, was published about ten years ago, and although it is labeled as fiction, the book falls into the fantasy genre. A London man named Richard Mayhew discovers a young girl bleeding on the street and as one thing leads to another, he finds himself caught up in a fantastical world underneath the London that he thought he knew very well. Gaiman's novel includes many strange characters such as people who can speak to rats

and one very old and powerful angel. Richard experiences adventure and terror while also discovering self-confidence and a feeling of purpose.

Gaiman's strong imagination and writing ability is clearly demonstrated in *Neverwhere*. As I read the novel I could easily see the scene he was describing in my head. Richard's personality is easy to figure out and relate to. I enjoyed that the characters were described methodically. When a new character was introduced, Gaiman did not include a long paragraph explaining the person but instead he dropped little details as the character seeped into the story. It made it much easier to follow all the characters and to know them all individually. The novel was also written in the third person omniscient, so you not only have Richard's point of view throughout the story, but other ones as well. The novel at points had a *Harry Potter* feel to it due to the mystical and dark quality of the story. There are also characters in the story that seem to be very similar to certain characters in the *Harry Potter* series. I cannot explain that further without possibly spoiling a surprise so that is all I will say on that. The first *Harry Potter* novel and *Neverwhere* were both published around the same time so one could not have been "stealing" any ideas from the other.

Gaiman demonstrates very strong language and some of his quotes are really what made this novel stick out to me. The first one that I read and thought was very clever is on page thirteen. It says, "Richard had noticed that events were cowards: they didn't occur singly, but instead they would run in packs and leap out at him all at once." This sentence alone made it clear to me that Gaiman put a lot of thought and care into the novel. Another thing that I thought was really smart was when a voice in a loudspeaker in a train station is referred to as "aural wallpaper" (141). Finding cleverly worded things like these is one of the reasons I enjoy reading.

Neil Gaiman's *Neverwhere*, is a creative, magical and humorous novel. Gaiman has written many more novels beyond *Neverwhere*, including some best sellers such as *American Gods* and *Stardust*. He has also written songs, plays, and comics and has been featured in television shows. More information about Neil Gaiman and his many works can be found at www.neilgaiman.com.

Reviewed by Grace Ventura