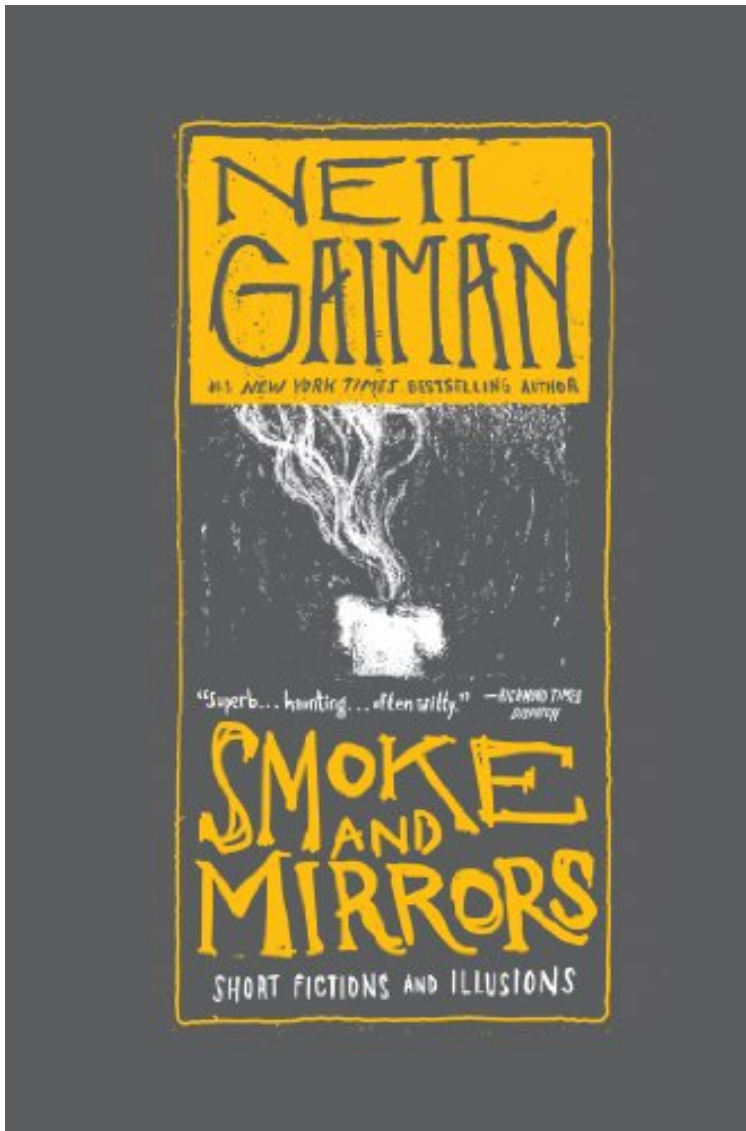


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# Smoke and Mirrors: Short Fictions and Illusions



*Par Neil Gaiman*  
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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurIn 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..com 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. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.