

# NEIL GAIMAN ON SCREEN



Have you been enjoying the Netflix adaptation of Neil Gaiman's *The Sandman*? It's far from the first time that the author's work has been brought to screen.

Paul Farrington-Douglas (UK)



## Neverwhere (1996)

Gaiman's first TV show, a fantasy about a hidden world called London Below, was released in 1996. The BBC drama was both set and filmed in various tunnels and other locations around (and under) London. The series hasn't stood the test of time (it was made without CGI and on a very low budget, and you can really see it) but the novel, written by Gaiman after the TV show, is way better.



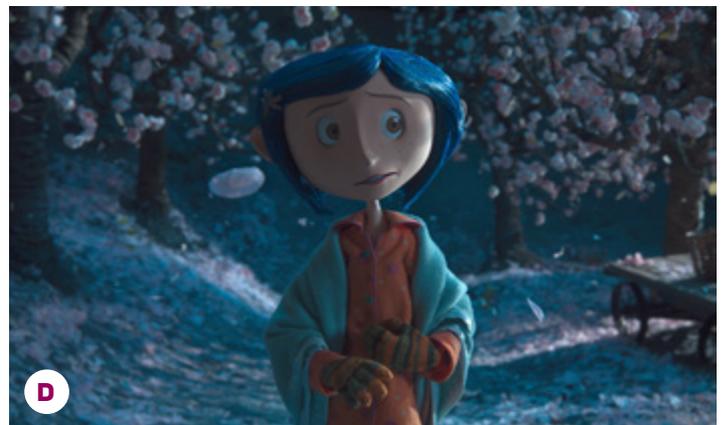
## Stardust (2007)

The 1999 novel *Stardust* has a different feel from a lot of Gaiman's work – more feelgood, less fear. It tells of a young man who enters a fairy kingdom in search of a fallen star that turns out to be a beautiful girl. It was adapted into a movie in 2007. The movie was only a modest success, though it's worth seeing just for Robert de Niro's fierce and terrifying pirate who really only wants to be a drag queen.



## MirrorMask (2005)

This dark fantasy film about a teenage girl's mission to save a magical kingdom was written by Gaiman with Dave McKean, the artist behind the original *Sandman* covers. McKean also designed and directed the low-budget movie. It was not a great success, mainly because the script didn't live up to the impressive (for the time) visual effects.



## Coraline (2009)

This spooky children's novel about an unhappy, lonely girl who discovers she has a mysterious set of "other parents" who seem kinder and less demanding than her own was made into a movie by Henry Selick (*The Nightmare Before Christmas*). It became one of the most successful stop-motion (= animated using models) films of all time and completely terrified a generation of children.



E

### Neil Gaiman's Likely Stories (2016)

Each episode in this four-part mini-series adapts a different Gaiman short story (with a soundtrack by Jarvis Cocker of the band Pulp). It's only available on Shudder TV, a US-only streaming horror channel. As a result, almost no one has seen it.



H

### Good Omens (2019)

A humorous fantasy adventure about the Apocalypse, with a schoolboy Antichrist and a 6,000-year friendship between a demon and an angel, *Good Omens* was a collaboration between Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett, author of the Discworld fantasy novels. It was adapted into a TV series in 2019, this time with Gaiman in control. It was kept loyal to the book and was a huge success with critics and fans alike. A second season is coming next year.



F

### How to Talk to Girls at Parties (2017)

Neil Gaiman has written many short stories. One of these is about a couple of teenage boys in the late 1970s who go to a party to try and meet girls, only to find that the girls they meet are a lot more alien than they expected. "How to Talk to Girls at Parties" was made into a low-budget film starring Elle Fanning and Nicole Kidman in 2017, but the adaptation was a flop (= failure): the 18-page story didn't really work well as a nearly two-hour movie.



i

### Anansi Boys (2023?)

Filming has finished for the Amazon Prime adaptation of *Anansi Boys*, the sequel to *American Gods*. The story follows the sons of the spider god Mr Nancy (Anansi). It is unconnected to the cancelled *American Gods* TV show, and Gaiman is one of the showrunners (= people in charge of a TV series who have control over creative decisions).



G

### American Gods (2017-21)

Gaiman's longest novel is an adult horror-fantasy set in a world where believing in gods and mythological beings makes them exist. It follows an apparently (= seemingly) ordinary man, recently released from prison, who is suddenly the focus of attention for everyone from Odin and Loki to the spider god Anansi. The book was adapted into a TV series that started strongly but ultimately failed due to huge storyline changes, made without Gaiman's input.

## TASK

Which text(s) mention(s)...

1 ... actors or actresses who appeared in the film/series?

2 ... poor visual effects?

3 ... a girl or girls?

4 ... a particular place where the film/series was shot?

5 ... a short story or short stories?

6 ... the end of the world?

7 ... radically changing Gaiman's original story?

8 ... that a very few people have watched it?

9 ... that the film/series was not expensive to make?

10 ... that the film/series was very successful?