



## Hanging Out with the Dream King

*Joseph McCabe , Neil Gaiman , Sophia Quach (Photographer)*

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**Hanging Out with the Dream King** Joseph McCabe , Neil Gaiman , Sophia Quach (Photographer)  
by Various

The most intimate look yet into the life and mind of Neil Gaiman! Artists, writers, editors, musicians, and over two-dozen creators share their thoughts on working with Gaiman to present a unique mosaic portrait of the writer whose name has become synonymous with modern fantasy.

## **Hanging Out with the Dream King Details**

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# From Reader Review Hanging Out with the Dream King for online ebook

## Geo says

This can't be a "traditional" review involving story, plot, characters and such. This is a book of interviews. So my slant on the kinds of information I would normally provide here has to be different. Let's see...

Ok, first off, if you are already a fan of Neil, you will love this. It is a very inward facing view of his interactions with a number of collaborators, and the insights about him as a person, as a writer, as someone to work with are amazing and provide a "depth of field" about him that is far beyond my impressions before reading this. The same is true for the comics industry as a whole, Vertigo in particular, and of course, the complexity of publishing in that space.

One odd thing that I normally wouldn't ever complain about... but the book itself was packages improperly for me. There was a section about 2/3 of the way through where pages were out of order, and probably several missing as well. At first I thought it was just "This page intentionally left blank" on the opposite of pictures and such, but that wasn't the case. Hunting and packing got me cohesive threads again, but it is more work than I generally want to do to read a book. I have no idea if those sequence issues were part of a large run of books all with the same problems or not.

The interviewer/author here is great. He clearly has a great love for the industry, and respect for Neil's body of work. He ties the various interviews together, often asking people questions that flowed out of previous interviews with other collaborators, providing a nice flow from one to the next. While Neil is certain the most common element between all of them, there are clearly many ties between many of these players even outside of their efforts with Neil.

Finally, keeping the interview with Neil himself to the very end was a perfect way to cap this off. It provided a wonderful "wrapper" that brought all of the previous content together and put a pretty bow on it. It reminded me, to some extent, of Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency books where throughout is this vast chaos of unrelated topics that finally all coalesce in the final chapter(s). Or lectures in Advanced Calculus where you have nearly a full year of what feels like very disconnected material, and then finally, two weeks before the final exam, the professor says "Today is where we tie everything from the last year together", and then he proceeds to put that shiny bow on everything, and you walk out just sort of stunned and trying to process it all.

Were it not for the page sequence issues, I probably would have given this 5 stars, and I realize that those issues aren't the author's fault. But I'm not just reviewing the author... this is a package deal.

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## Tita says

This book gives me triple treats. Oh, wait, or is it quadruple treats? Let's see:

1. I like the size: It's in an A5 format, easy to hold and read everywhere. As a commuter I always bring a book to read in the train: it should fit into my already-full backpack, it should be compact enough so I don't have to disturb my fellow passenger (as by reading newspapers) and it should look good - which brings me to the second treat..

2. I like the design: Every page has black borders, so the book looks black all over: from top, bottom and sides. The cover has a black frame as well. So, black, my favorite color, is dominating this rare-looking book. A photo of Gaiman is at the cover; the overall color effect is greenish and moody (.. or dreamy?). It's like the color of an old wooden door once painted moss green but then bleached by weather, worn by time and use.

3. I like, of course, the contents! Gaiman is one of my favorite authors. He's unique in a way that he works superbly with various artists and media (illustrated book, graphic novel, animation, etc.), so it is very interesting to know how he deals with his also-individually-unique collaborators.

4. Well, I guess it's a quadruple treat after all: I like the illustrative information that comes with the contents. I've seen the finished works as novels, books and such, but in this book I can also see works in progress. Sketches and notes and scripts and such. I only wish there's more of these illustration in the book..

In a way, this book is a worthy collection for Gaiman's fans who like to learn more about the process, the struggle, the success: all the 'backstage' stories. This book happens to include interviews with my favorite artists (who collaborated with Gaiman) such as Dave McKean (it goes without saying..), P. Craig Russel (I like his clean, ornamental style, especially in "Ramadan"), Todd Klein (cool lettering!), Jill Thompson (I like her "Little Endless" a lot) and of course Yoshitaka Amano (he's truly one of a kind)!

The book has a friendly conversation atmosphere; it seems like I were also present during the conversations between McCabe and Gaiman and the others. Moreover, the book might inspire people who work in the world of comics and all related fields. They can see that comic/strip world is not at all about fun, fame and fortune only; in the contrary it requires a lot of hardwork, constant performance and full dedication.

Another personal note: Gaiman is a popular writer who keeps a close contact with his readers through his journal; it's very nice that he does that. I feel more attached to his works, by knowing what went on behind them - not only the business matters (publishers, distributors and such) but also the personal matters (family and friends, of whom Neil cares so much).

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### **Anna says**

I received this book as a birthday or Christmas gift many years ago because I was known for loving Gaiman. It's a beautifully made book, but the subject matter - interviews with Gaiman's collaborators - is just plain not interesting to me. It wasn't very exciting finding out how people met or the very details of how a comic was made. Some of the stuff - like how the Endless were thought up - was interesting, but on the whole, there wasn't enough of it to fill the book and make me like it or enjoy my read.

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### **Angela Benedetti says**

If you're looking for a huge wad of Neil Gaiman, this isn't it. If you're looking for a broad and multi-faceted look behind the curtain, primarily on *Sandman* but also on other projects, this is a great collection. It's a series of interviews with people who've collaborated with Gaiman, talking about how they got involved with him and their project, how they got into their profession (artist, writer, colorist, letterer, musician, editor), and some stories about things that went on -- funny or quirky or whatever -- with their projects. The interviews with the collaborators are bracketed by interviews with Gaiman himself; he's the first and last interviews in the book, but his material is nowhere near a majority of what's here.

I love reading about how creative people do what they do, hearing about how other people in creative fields got involved in the business and how they approach their process, so for me this book was very interesting and great fun. I imagine I'll reread it more than once in the future.

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### **Nicky Dierx says**

Some of the interviews I found very interesting in terms of the creation of one of the most influential comic book/graphic novel/pieces of fiction period, to come out in the last 30 years. It's an in depth look into the inner workings of some of the collaborators thoughts on the work they did on the Sandman series. That part I found wonderful. I found it lovely to know more about what went into it's creation.

I found the book seemed to have lost the plot however when it moved on into interviews with other people who have affected Mr. Gaiman's work beyond the Sandman, and in some cases when they were done regarding people he worked with on separate but concurrent projects. The interviews with these people felt stilted, or stunted in some fashion, as though, there was more to the interviews but they had been parred down specifically for the content regarding Gaiman's work.

An interesting read if you're into the Sandman books and what went into their creation, I wouldn't recommend it to anyone outside of that.

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### **Ryan says**

This was both a unique insight on Neil Gaiman's creative process and a showcase for unsung talents behind comic books, like colorists and letterers.

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### **Bookarcana says**

it was really worth reading and really inspiring.

Sometimes the myth and mystery surrounding creation and publication enshroud the possibility of it being a real and concrete possibility, making everything seem sort of hazy and impossible, and hearing real people talk about actual events in honest and concrete manners really lends plausibility to the idea that I might be able to write or collaborate too.

This book really lent that plausibility to my aspirations and in doing so encouraged me to write more.

Not to mention the simple enjoyment of reading little personal accounts of people meeting or interacting with each other. Often the same story would come up from different sources on opposite ends of the book and that was a delight.

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### **Amber Schilling says**

I got about 30 pages into this book, and I just couldn't deal with it anymore. I've read some of SANDMAN but not enough to enjoy this book, which focuses primarily on interviews with people who collaborated on

SANDMAN with Neil Gaiman. If you're really into SANDMAN, you'll enjoy this collection of interviews. If you're more of a fan of Neil's novels/short stories like me, this won't be a very fun read.

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### **Shane Lewis says**

A great read for any fan of the Sandman series. It's full of behind the scenes info.

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### **Hansen says**

This was - or is - one of the first book of interviews I have read. I loved it, it was honest, open, and everyone involved (Mike Dringenberg, Dave McKean, Gene Wolfe, Kelley Jones, Terry Pratchett...) in it got to really say what they thought and relate what their experience of working with Neil Gaiman on Sandman/other miscellaneous things was like. Couldn't close the book for longer than five minutes, and there were some instances where I'd be laughing out loud at some anecdote and the people in the room with me thought I was mad! I liked that some of the artists drew wacky self-portraits of themselves instead of using a photo. Nice touch.

It's a real eye-opener and I'd definitely recommend it to anyone, especially if they're interested in reading anything by Neil Gaiman and aren't sure where to begin.

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### **Julia says**

I'm a great fan of Neil Gaiman (and yes, he's on GoodReads, so I've become one of his 2224 friends :-) However, this book concentrates on interviews with those who have collaborated with Gaiman, primarily the artists who worked with him on the SANDMAN comic book series. While I picked up some interesting information, the only real "find" was that Gaiman is an admirer of Jonathan Carroll, one of my all-time favorites. They share a sense of dark magical realism--as if the reader were an ice skater, and these authors suddenly make you realize the ice is a thin skin over miles of dark water underneath you. Gaiman and Carroll are both "dream kings", but they know that dreams and nightmares are only separated by a thin line. I'd hoped this book would be more of a biography of Gaiman, but it's not.

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### **Nicolo Yu says**

This is an excellent resource for Neil Gaiman's expansive body of work. This book collects interviews with his collaborators from comic books, novels and music.

I particularly enjoyed the collected interviews of his comic book collaborators as I can get a behind the scenes look into the creation process of my favorite stories.

This book should be in every Gaiman fan's library.

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## Airiz C says

A collection of interviews focusing on Neil Gaiman and the other authors/artists he collaborated with, *Hanging Out with the Dream King* is a one of a kind backstage pass for fans of Gaiman's oeuvre, especially of *The Sandman* graphic novels.

Conversations with David McKean, Craig Russell, Karen Berger, Sam Keith, Colleen Doran, Mike Dringenberg, Tori Amos, Terry Pratchett, and many others are very fascinating—I've jotted down the names of those whose works I suddenly wanted to check out after reading the interviews. This is a satisfying treat to devoted fans who want to know the not-so-easy albeit enjoyable process of partaking in the creation of today's set of most phenomenal masterpieces.

Presentation-wise, this also receives a thumb up from me. The black-edged pages, vibrant illustrations from various works, and creative portraits of the interviewees are a bonus! All in all it's an amazing fan package. Take note that the bigger chunk of this book was devoted to the Dream King's collaborators. If you want something more Gaiman-centric, I suggest you try reading *Prince of Stories: The Many Worlds of Neil Gaiman*.

(thanks, Venus for lending me a copy!)

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## Gwern says

Interviews with Neil Gaiman and 27 people involved in either *Sandman* or Gaiman's other projects or both, split into 3 sections of 4/13/10 corresponding roughly to before S, working on S, and after S, spiced up with some random artwork and a number of self-portraits from the artists. The after section was the most interesting one to me, featuring short (typically ~5 pages) interviews with Tori Amos, Alice Cooper, Yoshitaka Amano (about the amazing *The Dream Hunters*), Terry Pratchett, and Gene Wolfe. They tend to the unfortunately short but fun: Amano's is mostly about his odd career, Pratchett discusses writing *Good Omens* with Gaiman and Discworld, Alice Cooper explains how he got into *Sandman* via his son collecting *Star Wars* toys, and Gene Wolfe discusses religion and Gaiman.

The bulk of the book, however, is interviews with the artists, going into detail about the means of production and how they were recruited & managed and namedropping frantically - specifically, with the pencilers, inkers, colorers, letterers, and editors. There apparently are also 'color separators' who come in for dudgeon from the others - actually, pretty much every category of workers criticizes another category at some point, with the pencilers being upset by the inkers, the inkers being upset by the colorers, everyone being upset by editors and color separators. (Letterers escape opprobrium, but perhaps that is because Todd Klein was almost the only letterer involved and he is very good at the job.) One inker (or was that a penciler?) committed suicide early in the run and many people mention how sad that was. Also wasn't good for the schedule.

As a *Sandman* fan but only extremely casual comics fan who occasionally reads a trade paperback decades after publication, I had no idea about the complexity of the production system which goes into making an American comic book, nor did I fully appreciate how many people were involved in making *Sandman*. It sounds exhausting and makes me wonder how any of these comics get published on time (or turn a profit). In

comparison, manga production, with a single mangaka and some assistants sending in chapters weekly to an editor, is simplicity itself. Unfortunately, the very inside-baseball focus put it all above my head; while the interviewees are constantly explaining how they were brought on because of their work on this or that comic, or moved on to the next comic, or they thought X and Y were fantastic & underrated inkers who saved the 'loose' pencils they sent in for one issue, I haven't the slightest idea any of what they are talking about (I don't even understand why 'pencilers' are distinct things from 'inkers'). There are a few cute anecdotes here and there, like the S artist who met his wife because she heard he was a colorist on S and thought that was cool, but it's tough sledding for the non-comics-geek.

Only for people who are big comics nerds *and* also S nerds.

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### **Bondama says**

A dear friend of mine sent this wonderful book to me from England. It's totally fascinating so far -- a series of interview not only with Neil, but with all or most of his collaborators - especially the artists who were responsible for at least 1/3 of the success of the "Sandman" series.

I love every word -- and the pictures aren't bad, either.

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