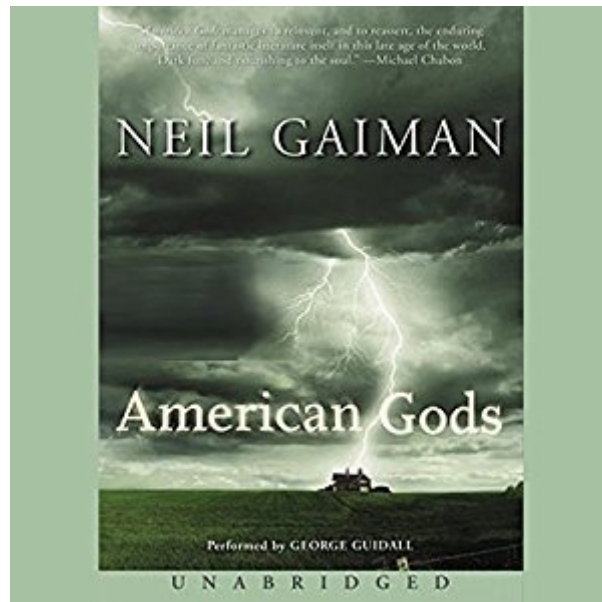


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# American Gods



## Synopsis

First published in 2001, here is the New York Times bestselling novel that became an instant classic and was hailed by USA Today as "a powerful, searing force that makes readers confront what is real and what is not" — now a TV series from FremantleMedia North America is coming to STARZ with Bryan Fuller and Michael Green as showrunners, and starring Ricky Whittle, Ian McShane, Crispin Glover, Cloris Leachman, and Gillian Anderson. Locked behind bars for three years, Shadow did his time, quietly waiting for the day when he could return to Eagle Point, Indiana. A man no longer scared of what tomorrow might bring, all he wanted was to be with Laura, the wife he deeply loved, and start a new life. But just days before his release, Laura and Shadow's best friend are killed in an accident. With his life in pieces and nothing to keep him tethered, Shadow accepts a job from a beguiling stranger he meets on the way home, an enigmatic man who calls himself Mr. Wednesday. A trickster and a rogue, Wednesday seems to know more about Shadow than Shadow does himself. Life as Wednesday's bodyguard, driver, and errand boy is far more interesting and dangerous than Shadow ever imagined. Soon Shadow learns that the past never dies... and that beneath the placid surface of everyday life a storm is brewing — an epic war for the very soul of America — and that he is standing squarely in its path. "Original, engrossing, and endlessly inventive." —George R. R. Martin --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

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Fiction & Literature > Action & Adventure

## Customer Reviews

Released from prison shortly after the accidental death of his wife, ex-con Shadow finds himself

free, but bereft of all the things that gave his previous life meaning. As he bids his farewell to the fragments of that life, an eerie stranger named Mr. Wednesday offers him employment. Wednesday needs someone to act as aid, driver, errand boy, and, in case of Wednesday's death, someone to hold a vigil for him. Shadow consents and finds himself drawn unsuspectingly into a cryptic reality where myth and legend coexist with today's realities. Mr. Wednesday, trickster and wise man, is on a quest. The old gods who came over to this country with each human incursion have weakened as their followers have dwindled and are now threatened with extinction by the modern gods of technology and marketing. Wednesday travels from deity to deity, rounding up help for what will be last battle. He engages ancient Russian gods, Norse legends, Egyptian deities, and countless others who have found their way to America in the past 10,000 or so years. Shadow never quite understands what his role is in all of this, but he experiences visions and dreams which promise that he is far more than Wednesday's factotum. The plot is unendingly inventive as it treks its way across the country. From Chicago to Rhode Island, and Seattle to the magical town of Lakeside, Shadow's journey seems to follow the back roads of America. The people he meets are gritty, and the gods are even grittier. Gaiman creates believable characters with quick brush strokes and builds vivid landscapes that belie their mundane origins. Gaiman, recently moved to the U.S. has invited us along on his own quest to discover an America uniquely his own.

This is a bad land for Gods...The old gods are ignored. The new gods are as quickly taken up as they are abandoned, cast aside for the next big thing. Either you've been forgotten, or you're scared you're going to be rendered obsolete, or maybe you're just getting tired of existing on the whims of people. Shadow, just out of prison and with nothing to go home to, is hired to be Mr. Wednesday's bodyguard as he travels around America to warn all the other incarnations of gods, legends, and myths, that "a storm is coming." There's going to be a battle between the old gods who were brought to melting pot America by their faithful followers generations ago, and the new gods of technology, convenience, and individuality. That's the premise of Neil Gaiman's *American Gods* and it's just crackling with promise! But unfortunately, that's not really what this novel is about. It's what the novel keeps telling us it's about (and what many critics told us it was about), but it doesn't deliver. Yes, there are plenty of gods, myths, and legends, and Gaiman does great things with some of them (e.g., Ibis the undertaker and Mr. Nancy) but most are never developed and a reader who has not read an encyclopedia of folklore probably won't catch all the clever allusions. Yes, there's Neil Gaiman's characteristic style, which I always enjoy. His prose is clean, unvarnished, and exquisite. His characters are recognizable; His America is recognizable. In fact, this was the best

part of the book (and what Gaiman does so well) -- Shadow's roadtrip across the United States gave Gaiman plenty of opportunities to showcase his humorous insights into the human condition and, in this case, small-town American life. This was lovely, and I enjoyed these parts of the book.

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