



The Sandman: The Dream Hunters

Neil Gaiman , Yoshitaka Amano (Illustrator)

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Sandman fans should feel lucky that master fantasy writer Neil Gaiman discovered the mythical world of Japanese fables while researching his translation of Hayao Miyazaki's film Princess Mononoke. At the same time, while preparing for the Sandman 10th anniversary, he met Yoshitaka Amano, his artist for the 11th Sandman book. Amano is the famed designer of the Final Fantasy game series. The product of Gaiman's immersion in Japanese art, culture, and history, Sandman: Dream Hunters is a classic Japanese tale (adapted from "The Fox, the Monk, and the Mikado of All Night's Dreaming") that he has subtly morphed into his Sandman universe.

Like most fables, the story begins with a wager between two jealous animals, a fox and a badger: which of them can drive a young monk from his solitary temple? The winner will make the temple into a new fox or badger home. But as the fox adopts the form of a woman to woo the monk from his hermitage, she falls in love with him. Meanwhile, in far away Kyoto, the wealthy Master of Yin-Yang, the onmyoji, is plagued by his fears and seeks tranquility in his command of sorcery. He learns of the monk and his inner peace; he dispatches demons to plague the monk in his dreams and eventually kill him to bring his peace to the onmyoji. The fox overhears the demons on their way to the monk and begins her struggle to save the man whom at first she so envied.

Dream Hunters is a beautiful package. From the ink-brush painted endpapers to the luminous page layouts--including Amano's gate-fold painting of Morpheus in a sea of reds, oranges, and violets--this book has been crafted for a sensuous reading experience. Gaiman has developed as a prose stylist in the last several years with novels and stories such as Neverwhere and Stardust, and his narrative rings with a sense of timelessness and magic that gently sustains this adult fairy tale. The only disappointment here is that the book is so brief. One could imagine this creative team being even better suited to a longer story of more epic proportions. On the final page of Dream Hunters, in fact, Amano suggest that he will collaborate further with Mr. Gaiman in the future. Readers of Dream Hunters will hope that Amano's dream comes true. --Patrick O'Kelley

The Sandman: The Dream Hunters Details

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(Illustrator)

From Reader Review The Sandman: The Dream Hunters for online ebook

Teresa says

This Japanese folk tale was fairly familiar to me, but it was a pleasure to read an expanded version of it and then to discover in the afterword that Gaiman was a bit freaked out to see how close the story fit in with his *Sandman* series. Though sometimes rather dark (in coloring), the art had much going on in it, and my favorite page was a hitherto uncharacteristic burst of colorful birds, reminding me of a Walter Inglis Anderson (a favorite artist of mine).

Nikki says

It's a little inaccurate to tag this as a graphic novel, as it's actually more of a novella with illustrations. The illustrations are gorgeous -- but then, I expected that, since it's illustrated by Yoshitaka Amano (who did a lot of designs for the Final Fantasy game series).

It's a simple little story, based on a Japanese myth. The writing feels very much like a fairy tale, which is nice; Gaiman is good at adapting his writing. It's interesting to see how easily Dream and his realm are woven into the story which, I'm told, isn't much different to the original folk tale.

Megan Cutler says

[This story is proof that not every story has to have a happy ending - it's all the more fantastic because it doesn't. (hide spoiler)]

Alejandro says

A dreamy masterpiece!

This TPB is the original prose novella written by Neil Gaiman with illustrations of Yoshitaka Amano. Don't get it confused with the comic book format version featuring artwork of P. Craig Russell.

DREAM TEAM

You would not seek to question a poem, or a falling leaf, or the mist on the mountaintop,... ...Why, then, do you question me?

You may be aware of who is Neil Gaiman, the renowned British writer that got fame precisely with *The Sandman* comic book series, but also he has written several prose novels like *American Gods*, *Stardust*,

Coraline, *The Graveyard Book* and *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, just to mention some of the most popular ones.

However, you may haven't heard of Yoshitaka Amano, at least not for his name, but it's very likely that you know his work if you're into anime & manga. Amano is a Japanese illustrator, with wide successful experience in character design. He has worked with anime companies such as Tatsunoko, collaborating with the character design of iconic anime series like *Gatchaman* (also known as "Battle of the Planets" or "G-Force"), *Speed Racer* and *Tekkaman* (also known as "Teknoman"). Also he has been involved in illustrations of the *Vampire Hunter D* prose novel series.

You put together those two talents and you only can get without a question, a truly dreamy masterpiece!

So, just to make it clear, once again, this book isn't a comic book as the other volumes in *The Sandman* series but a prose novella featuring illustrations.

NOTHING IS REALLY FAIR IN LOVE... BUT VENGEANCE?

But you swore to help me!

And I helped you.

It is not fair,

No,... ...It is not.

This story, *The Dream Hunter*, is a wonderful Japanese-style folk tale, conceived by Neil Gaiman using his known characters of *The Sandman*, and while you'll enjoy to recognize the used characters here, you really don't need have read previously the series to understand and appreciate this stand-alone book.

A monk, a fox and a warlock walk into a bar... oops! No, wrong story!

In reality, you won't find many humor (if not at all) in this remarkable romantic tragedy. (But you can't blame to try to put a smile in your faces!)

A small wager between a he-badger spirit and a she-fox spirit would lead into an epic whirlwind where the lives of a reserved monk, an intense she-fox spirit, and a wicked warlock, never will be the same.

You should be honest with yourself.

True love will be willing to do anything.

Despicable actions found reckoning.

In the middle of all that, you'll meet those mysterious three women, that Neil Gaiman cleverly often used, like "The Kindly Ones" (*The Sandman*) or "The Hempstocks" (*The Ocean at the End of the Lane*), where you never know if they are the same ones or not, **BUT** that's part of their charm.

Morpheus, Lord of the Dreams, will have to intervene in this tragedy since their actions put them right in

Morpheus' realm. With cool cameos of Cain and Abel, and one of Morpheus' ravens, but the real identity of this particular raven isn't clear, definitely isn't Matthew or Lucien, but due a clue in the narrative and the time period of the story, I supposed that it must be Aristeas.

What is certain is that this is magnificent reading.

Yasiru (reviews will soon be removed and linked to blog) says

This is not an adaptation of a single fairy tale as purported, though elements of the Japanese mythic tradition remain strong if not always exactly perfected. In particular, Gaiman captures the elusive spirit of the fox (or 'kitsune', which are as mysterious and versatile as they are pervasive in Japanese myth) exceedingly well, weaving about it a tale of fear against contentment and love against sacrifice morphed (forgive the pun) to fit seamlessly with the established Sandman canon.

Yoshitaka Amano's illustrations truly make this novel however, and the flow and substance of the prose owe much to the art's ability to bring appropriate elements to the fore and add emphasis. This kind of demarcated 'graphic novel', with prose and art switching in their turn, would be difficult without each reinforcing the other (with the art taking a supporting role, but ultimately affecting the feel of the story to the greater extent). But this is here duly overcome to make *The Dream Hunters* a worthy side story to the excellent Sandman series.

Miriam says

Oh hey, I know this story! Well, my version didn't have Cain and Abel and the Raven in it, but the monk and fox part was familiar. Not what I was expecting at all. Slightly disappointed to not get something new to me, but this was a very well-done version with lovely illustrations.

Vasilis Manias says

Ο 5ος τ?μος του Sandman που ?δη διαβ?ζω, ?χει μ?α μικρ? ιδιαιτερ?τητα μι?ς και το πρ?το του μ?ρος ?χει μεταφραστε? σε ?να αυτοτελ?ς βιβλ?ο στα Ελληνικ?. Οι "Κυνηγο? των Ονε?ρων" μας μεταφ?ρουν την εκδοχ? του Gaiman στο Γιαπων?ζικο παραμ?θι "Η Αλεπο? ο Μοναχ?ς και ο Βασιλι?ς των Ονε?ρων" με μ?α ΑΠΙΘΑΝΗ εικονογρ?φηση απ? τον Yoshitaka Amano. Μ?α αλεπο? ερωτε?ται ?ναν ερημ?τη μοναχ? και αποφασ?ζει να θυσι?σει τη ζω? της για να τον γλιτ?σει απ? τον μοχθηρ? ?ρχοντα Ονμι?τζι. Κυκλοφορε? απ? τις εκδ?σεις ΟΞΥ, μην το χ?σετε.

Beth says

Beautifully written and illustrated. The Sandman: The Dream Hunters was published for the 10th anniversary of the beginning of the series in 1999. It was written as a prose story because the artist Gaiman chose, Yoshitaka Amano, does not draw comics.

This is probably one of my favorite short stories in Sandman, a love story set in premodern Japan. The characters are a monk, a fox-spirit who falls in love with him, and an onmyoji (magician) who seeks to destroy the monk for his own purposes. The fox sets out for the realm of the King of All Night's Dreaming to help the monk. This is a bittersweet story about love and duty, in which none of the characters get exactly what they want. I love the ambiguity of the ending.

The raven in this story is said to have once been a poet; clearly it has to be the ancient poet Aristaeus of Marmora, who has been mentioned in the series before as one of Dream's earlier ravens. (This is long before Matthew's time.)

one of my favorite moments (some lines have been left out):
(view spoiler)

Daniel says

5.0 "*Realidad o sueño...*"

"No sé como fue

*que llegaste a mí o yo a ti.
Ni si fue
realidad o un sueño,
despierto o dormido.*

*Estoy perdido en la oscuridad
de un abatido corazón,
sueño o realidad,
que se decida esta noche."*

¡Basta ya! de darle largas, esta novela la leí hace ya 3 meses (¡cómo vuela el tiempo!) Por allá en septiembre muy cerca de mi cumpleaños, había iniciado a leer lo que para mi sería solo una lectura para matar el rato, una fabula japonesa que aparentaba ir sobre animales y sueños, sobre monjes y templos y que al final me sorprendió. Sabía de ante mano que "The Sandman" era uno de los pocos comics que todo conocedor recomienda pero ignoraba el porqué.

*"El miedo permanecía
Estaba ahí cuando dormía y ahí cuando
le daban los buenos días
El miedo lo conducía...*

... Y el miedo lo empujó hacia las tinieblas."

No tardé mucho en darme cuenta la magia que transpiraba esta historia, era como si el misticismo de los sueño se fusionara con lo poético de la vida y a través de viñetas te mostrará como funcionaban las cosas. Muy pocos personajes conforman esta novela, pero hacen tan buena combinación que es como si creasen un micro universo dentro de las propias paginas, nadie sobra y nadie hace falta, algo de lo que Gaiman debe saber mucho.

El misticismo, la magia y toda la atmósfera que se desprende durante la lectura de esta novela es algo casi único, algo filosófico y existencial porque hay historias que son más que historias, hay historias que son sentimientos canalizados, y me atrevo a decir con mucha seguridad que esta es una de esas historias que enamoran y destrozan, recomponen y enseñan.

*"Nada se hace del todo por nada.
Nada se desperdicia.*

*Toma lo que aprendiste
y avanza."*

La habilidad de contar una historia es algo que al parecer le brota por los poros a Gaiman, ya sea una novela gráfica, cómic, cuento, servilleta rayada, relato, lo que sea! Y esta vez cuenta una historia que no decepciona y si no la haz leído no sé a que esperas porque se la RECOMIENDO A TODOS porque si yo logré que mi

mamá leyera este cómic, creo que el cómic tiene algo especial.

ka?yap says

Yoshitaka Amano's art is beautiful.

10wagner says

Linda historia pero el dibujo fenomenal.

Sofia says

Posted on my book blog.

Background: I am a big fan of Neil Gaiman and his *Sandman* series. I came across the more recent, graphic novel retelling of this book first, and while it appealed to me, it was nothing compared to what I experienced when I looked at the original version. The cover is absolutely beautiful, golden and luminous without being kitschy.

Review: It all begins with a wager between a badger and a fox. In a Japanese mountainside, there was a little temple, hardly visited by anyone anymore, and in it lived a monk. The fox and the badger wanted this temple for a den, and decided that whoever got the monk to abandon it would win it. But the monk wasn't easily deceived, and somewhere along the way, the fox falls in love with him. And so begins a tale of love, sadness and sacrifice.

I don't know why this book had such a strong effect on me. It's a simple but lovely story which reminded me of old fables, albeit filled with much more sadness and subtlety than usual. But I found myself being only able to read it very slowly, a few pages at a time, to let it sink in.

The illustrations played a big role. In fact, even though I love Neil Gaiman's writing, Yoshitaka Amano's art is what made this book truly shine (in more than one way). It's beautiful, with an incredible use of color and monochrome, and whimsical lines.

It doesn't matter if you're not familiar with the *Sandman* storyline, as this falls outside of it, but if you are, you'll be able to appreciate the little details much more.

I can't recommend this enough.

Liv says

Gorgeous artwork. This tale is less a graphic novel and more an illustrated novella. I love this visit to Dream and the world of Sandman mixed with Japanese myth.

Jedi JC Daquis says

The Dream Hunters is an absolute beauty. This book is thoroughly satisfying and alluring. Gaiman's prose is exact but rich, and Amano's art is wow, just wow.

The book genuinely felt like an old, old Japanese tale seamlessly embedded in the world of the Dream King. There is one loud message here: that the world of Sandman is vast, boundless and universal. The Dream Hunters is a trademark Gaiman storytelling: simple, elegant and strangely familiar yet enthralling and engaging from the start to the end.

Amano? Is he a god? YES. Oh hell yes. He made this novella an art museum! Before I was only exposed with his Final Fantasy art, and indeed those are fantastic. But this book made me a believer.

To those who still haven't read this book, envy us who did.

Mimi says

Enchanting, utterly romantic and Amano Yoshika's illustrations are hauntingly beautiful. Absolutely adored this, and will probably re-read in the future.

Ray says

A beautiful novella fairy story done in faux Japanese fable form by Gaiman at the top of his form.

Recently, after the latest Sandman Overture was released, I went back and reread all of the classic Sandman series from the 90s. Completest that I try to be, I'm glad I read this which was the first time Gaiman went back to the Sandman.

Often, the best Sandman stories are the ones that feature Morpheus (also known as the King of All Night's Dreaming here) as a peripheral character. The more mythological short stories about dreams and gods, with smaller-scale main characters against the backdrop of Gaiman's impressive fantasy world.

In this one--which was published by DC/Vertigo but is a prose novella and beautifully illustrated by Yoshitaka Amano--we encounter a humble monk and a fox spiritess. There is love, and revenge. I shan't say anymore.

This book is recommended not only for Sandman fans but also for anyone interested in story and the written word. Geeky comic fandom not a requirement at all.

Randolph says

This is more of an illustrated story than a graphic novel. Amano's artwork and the Japanese aesthetic rein in Gaiman's excessive tendency to throw in the kitchen sink, in this telling, retelling actually, of the story of the fox and the monk. The story is wonderful and the artwork even more so. Amano really should have gotten top billing since Gaiman is basically just retelling a Japanese fairy tale with some Sandman flourishes.

Thoroughly enjoyable although not really part of the Sandman canon. This was a 10th anniversary project celebrating the Sandman comic. Whoever was really responsible for this collaboration should get the real credit.

Sadly this book actually belongs to my daughter...

Kaethe says

I particularly loved the Japanese-inspired art and mythology. So pretty. It would be easy to believe that somehow the Sandman mythos could be part of Japanese mythological history. It feels real.

Library copy

Brooke says

Gaiman + Amano is a pairing that's like a dream come true, pun intended. Gaiman blends his Sandman characters with a Japanese fable and Amano, the artist and character designer behind many Final Fantasy games illustrates. It's beautiful, and while some video game fans complain that Amano is a one-trick pony, I think that having more of his signature style can only be a good thing.

Linh says

“Hãy theo ta,” con qu? nói, gi?ng nó nghe nh? hai viên s?i c? vào nhau.

“Ng??i s? d?n ta ?i g?p M?ng ?? ch??” nhà s? h?i.

“Ng??i ?ã không h?i m?t bài th?, m?t chi?c lá r?i, hay s??ng mù trên ??nh núi,” con qu? ?áp.

“V?y thì t?i sao l?i ?i h?i ta?”

Quy?n ??u tiên mình ??c trong series The Sandman.

Mình ??c quy?n này t? khi còn ch?a bi?t 'The Sandman' là gì hay Neil Gaiman là ai. Lý do duy nh?t mình ??c nó là do nó có... b?n d?ch ti?ng Vi?t. Không rõ là do Neil Gaiman vi?t quá t?t hay do ng??i d?ch ?ã d?ch quá

m?t mà khi l?n ??u ??c truy?n mình không h? ngh? câu chuy?n này do m?t ng??i Anh vi?t ra. Nh?ng câu v?n ??p, m?t mà và tính t? bi?t bao.

"Chúa công," nhà s? nói. "Th?n là m?t hòa th??ng. Th?n không s? h?u v?t gì tr? cái chén khuy?t th?c. Nh?ng gi?c m? mà h? ly n? m? là gi?c m? c?a th?n. Th?n mu?n nó ???c tr? v? cho th?n."

Nh?ng, nhà vua ?áp, n?u ta tr? gi?c m? l?i cho ng??i, ng??i s? ph?i ch?t thay cho nàng.
 “Th?n hi?u ?i?u ?ó,” nhà s? tr? l?i. “Nh?ng ?ó là gi?c m? c?a th?n. Th?n s? không ?? h? ly n? ch?t thay th?n.”

M?ng ?? g?t ??u. Khu?ng m?t ng?i kh?ng ??i, nh?ng nh? s? th?y d??ng nh? ng?i tho?ng bu?n, nh?ng ng?i c?ng h?i l?ng, v? h?i th??ng tr? bi?t m?nh ?? y?u c?u ??ng.

M'ng ?? gi? tay, và m'ng kính n?m tr?ng tr? trên m?t ??t, và con cáo ??ng bên c?nh nhà s? trong bóng t?i.

Ng??i ?ã ch?n l?a ?úng, dù ph?i hi sinh m?t chút, M?ng ?? nói v?i nhà s?. Vì v?y ta s? ban cho ng??i m?t ??c ân. Ng??i có th? giã t? h? ly n??ng.

Thì?u n? v?i qu? xu?ng ôm chân M?ng ??. “Nh?ng ngài ?ã h?a giúp thi?p!” nàng gi?n d? nói.
Và ta ?ã giúp ng??i r?i.

“Chuyện này thì không công bằng,” nàng nói.

Không, M?ng ?? ?áp. Không công b?ng.