

AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR OF  
*AMERICAN GODS* AND *FRAGILE THINGS*

# NEIL GAIMAN



#1 *NEW YORK TIMES* BESTSELLER

# ANANSI BOYS

"Delightful, funny, and affecting. . . . A tall tale to end  
all tall tales." *Washington Post Book World*

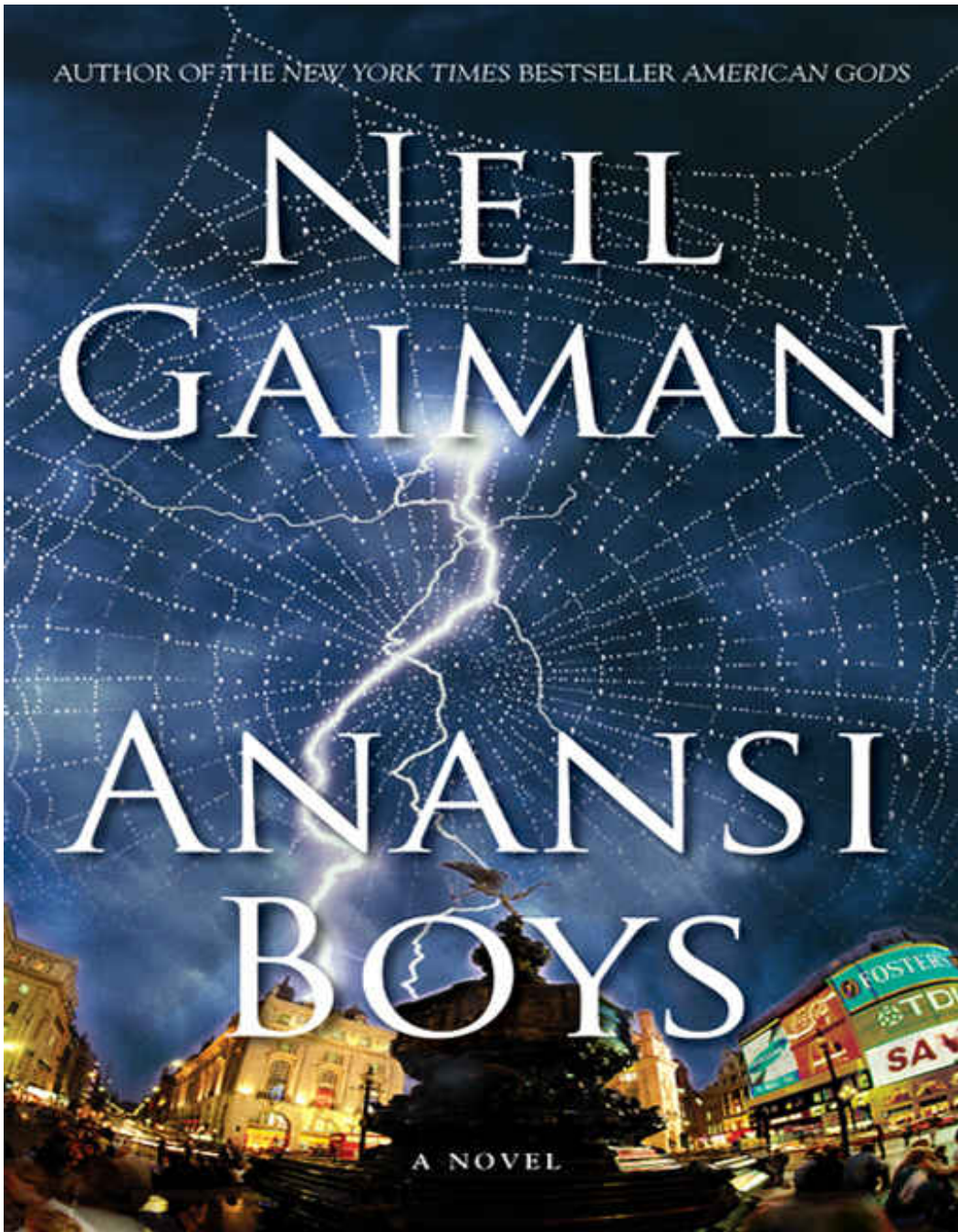
# **ANANSI BOYS**

AUTHOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER AMERICAN GODS

NEIL  
GAIMAN

ANANSI  
BOYS

A NOVEL



# NEIL GAIMAN

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ALSO BY NEIL GAIMAN

MirrorMask: The Illustrated Film Script of the Motion Picture from  
The Jim Henson Company(with Dave McKean)

The Alchemy of MirrorMask(by Dave McKean; commentary by Neil  
Gaiman)

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Smoke and Mirrors

Neverwhere

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FOR YOUNG READERS

(illustrated by Dave McKean)

MirrorMask(with Dave McKean)

The Day I Swapped My Dad for Two Goldfish

The Wolves in the Walls

Coraline

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CREDITS

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\* Several years earlier Spider had actually been tremendously disappointed by a barrellful of monkeys. It had done nothing he had considered particularly entertaining, apart from emit interesting noises, and eventually, once the noises had stopped and the monkeys were no longer doing anything at all—except possibly on an organic level—had needed to be disposed of in the dead of night.

\* The ship had been theSunny Archipelago until an attack of gastric flu had made international news. A cheap attempt to rebrand it without changing the ship's initials done by the chairman of the board, who did not speak English as well as he believed he did, had left the cruise ship rejoicing in the name of theSqueak Attack .

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YOU KNOW HOW IT IS. YOU PICK UP A BOOK, flip to the dedication, and find that, once again, the author has dedicated a book to someone else and not to you.

Not this time.

Because we haven't yet met/have only a glancing acquaintance/are just crazy about each other/ haven't seen each other in much too long/are in some way related/will never meet, but will, I trust, despite that, always think fondly of each other....

This one's for you.

With you know what, and you probably know why.

NOTE:the author would like to take this opportunity to tip his hat respectfully to the ghosts of Zora Neale Hurston, Thorne Smith, P. G.Wodehouse, and Frederick "Tex" Avery.

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## CHAPTER ONE

WHICH IS MOSTLY ABOUT NAMES AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

IT BEGINS, AS MOST THINGS BEGIN, WITH A SONG.

In the beginning, after all, were the words, and they came with a tune. That was how the world was made, how the void was divided, how the lands and the stars and the dreams and the little gods and the animals, how all of them came into the world.

They were sung.

The great beasts were sung into existence, after the Singer had done with the planets and the hills and the trees and the oceans and the lesser beasts. The cliffs that bound existence were sung, and the hunting grounds, and the dark.

Songs remain. They last. The right song can turn an emperor into a laughingstock, can bring down dynasties. A song can last long after the events and the people in it are dust and dreams and gone. That's the power of songs.

There are other things you can do with songs. They do not only make worlds or recreate existence. Fat Charlie Nancy's father, for example, was