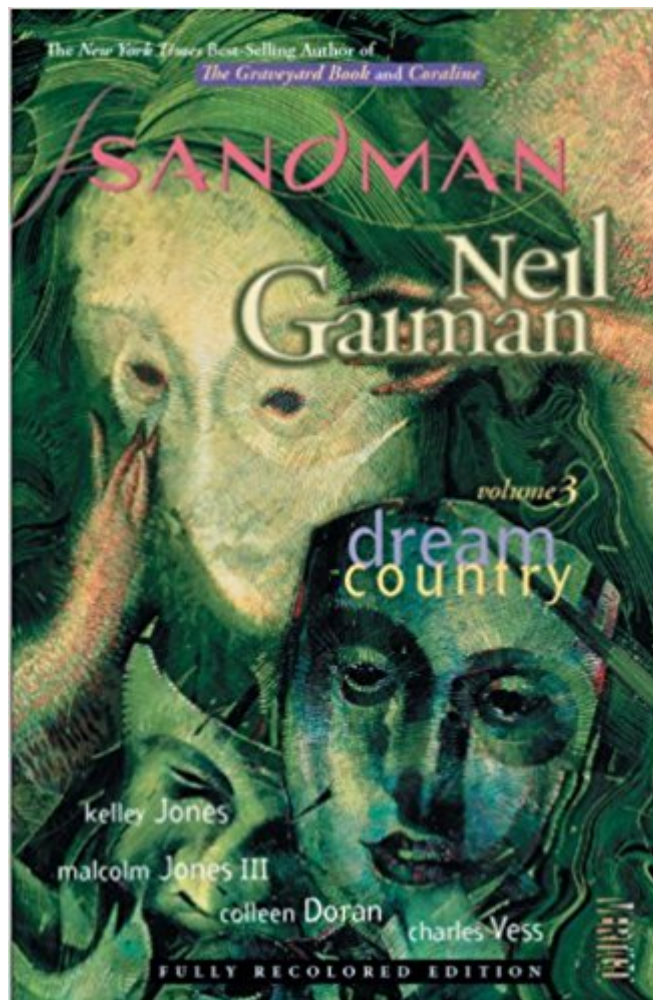


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The Sandman, Vol. 3: Dream Country



Synopsis

The third book of the Sandman collection is a series of four short comic book stories. In each of these otherwise unrelated stories, Morpheus serves only as a minor character. Here we meet the mother of Morpheus's son, find out what cats dream about, and discover the true origin behind Shakespeare's *A Midsummer's Night Dream*. The latter won a World Fantasy Award for best short story, the first time a comic book was given that honor. This volume includes issues 17-20 of the original series and features completely new coloring, approved by the author, of issues 17 and 18.

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Customer Reviews

The third book of the Sandman collection is a series of four short comic book stories. What's remarkable here (considering the publisher and the time that this was originally published) is that the main character of the book--the Sandman, King of Dreams--serves only as a minor character in each of these otherwise unrelated stories. (Actually, he's not even in the last story.) This signaled a couple of important things in the development of what is considered one of the great comics of the second half of the century. First, it marked a distinct move away from the horror genre and into a more fantasy-rich, classical mythology-laden environment. And secondly, it solidly cemented Neil Gaiman as a storyteller. One of the stories here, "A Midsummer Night's Dream," took home the World Fantasy Award for best short story--the first time a comic was given that honor. But for my money, another story in *Dream Country* has it beat hands down. "A Dream of a Thousand Cats" has such hope, beauty, and good old-fashioned chills that rereading it becomes a welcome pleasure.

--Jim Pascoe --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Neil Gaiman is the most critically acclaimed comics writer of the 1990s and is the author of numerous books and graphic novels. He is the New York Times No. 1 best-selling author of *American Gods* and *Anansi Boys*. Kelley Jones is a regular artist on *Batman* for DC Comics. Past credits include *Sandman*, *Swamp Thing*, *Batman & Dracula: Red Rain*, *Batman: Bloodstorm*, and *Batman: Dark Joker - The Wild*. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

How many times have you heard a lot of hype about a product, finally buy it, and then am disappointed? Well, I can honestly say that such is NOT the case here. I've been hearing for years and years how awesome the *Sandman* series was, how if you didn't read it, you were horribly depriving yourself. How this was some of the best *fiction* much less fantasy fiction ever written in any form. How this was a graphical novel series for grown-ups, how it's adult fiction in the best sense of the word. So I finally broke down and started the series. Vol. 1 and 2 were really good, and then I bought Vol. 3 here. Holy cow. "The Dream of a Thousand Cats" ALONE was well worth the price of admission. "Mid-Summer Night's Dream" was award-winning, and worth every accolade Gaiman got. I know you hear lots of hype but in this case it's worth it. There's only one other series out there that can compare to this: *Starman* by James Robison. If you loved that series, with its well-thought-out characters, extremely intricate plots, foreshadowing and "Easter Eggs" which take years to work out, and storylines which bring you to tears and laughter, then this series is for you.

First up, all of the 10 volumes of *The Sandman* novels deserve 5 stars. They are a phenomenal achievement in not only graphic novels but in storytelling itself. The story is complex and cerebral and the characters so well developed that *Sandman* is one of my favorite stories period. The novels are intensely violent and often disturbing but everything that happens serves a purpose, and nothing happens by chance or just for the sake of things happening. Something that happens in one volume may become vitally important 3 or 4 volumes later. By the end of the 10th volume everything has come full circle with an appropriate and satisfying end. With regards to Volume 3 itself it is exceptionally good, with some clever takes on historical events. This volume consists of 4 different, unrelated short stories. While Morpheus plays a role in 3 of the 4 he is more of a minor character than the primary focus. The first story focuses on Calliope, a former lover of Morpheus, who has been imprisoned by a writer to be used for inspiration. The second story concerns a cat whose kittens were killed by humans. She seeks out Morpheus who shows her an alternate reality where cats are the dominant lifeform. The third story concerns Morpheus' involvement in Shakespeare's *A*

Midsummer's Night Dream. This story won a World Fantasy Award, the first comic to do so. The final story is about a minor DC superhero, Element Girl, who is retired and ashamed of her appearance. She wants to die but cannot because she is invulnerable. She meets Death and asks her to speak to the sun god Ra and allow her to die. As far as the volume's content on the Kindle Fire - I was hesitant to abandon the volumes in print worried that the Kindle Fire might provide a more difficult viewing experience. That hasn't turned out to be the case. The novel is easy to read, you can scan in to specific boxes, and the colors are vibrant.

A collection of one shot stories between the Doll's House, and Season of the Mists story arch, you can really get a sense of Gaiman playing with his now iconic character here. From the dream of a heartbroken cat, to the very first production of A Midsummer Night's Dream, the tales weave through time and space as we get to see new sides and aspects of the Lord of Dreams, discovering new facets of him as the author himself discovered them. While there is very little to be lost plot wise by skipping this volume, there is everything to be gained in reading it.

First off, this probably isn't the best volume (Dream Country - issues #17-20) to just pick up and read if you haven't read the past 2 volumes. There's some characters (Death) and story lines (Shakespeare) that rely on volumes 1 and 2 respectively. You could read this one if you really wanted but I'd suspect the gravity and history of the stories would be lost on new readers. As far as the stories go in this volume they are mostly one shots and aren't continuing - much like volume 2 was with A Doll's House - so it's a nice change of pace if you are coming straight out of volume 2 into this one. Each story has a beginning, middle, and end without having to read the entire volume to get the full story. With that said each story has its own message and meaning so be prepared to read each one twice or more to really get a handle on the art and dialogue to better understand its purpose. As such, it is this book that, in my opinion, makes it the reason why many consider the Sandman series to be the "intellectual's graphic novel". We learn a little history about Morpheus and really see him evolve as a character in this book. If you've read this volume along with the first 2 and still don't like the series then this is probably a good stopping point. The book itself is just like the previous two; great paper quality, nice size, recolored artwork and contains a script at the end from Gaiman concerning one of the stories, Calliope (if that interests you). It also contains the World Fantasy Award winning short story, A Midsummer Night's Dream. A quick summary of the 4 issues inside: Calliope: A man imprisons one of the Muses and uses her to spur his creativity which attracts the scorn of Morpheus. A Dream of a Thousand Cats: Even animals can

venture into Dream's domain as we learn of the rule of cats and humans rise over them. A Midsummer Night's Dream: Shakespeare must pay well on his debt to Dream and perform his famous play to an unnatural audience. Facade: An immortal woman wishes for death.

Gaiman is a master. His mind functions in a way no other person's does, and in this series he takes you on the grand tour of it. I will warn you, this volume has a script in the back which constitutes about the last quarter of the book. This script is an earlier version of the story "Calliope" and gives you a look into the creative process. It's very interesting as an inside look at the art of making comics, but may be dull to some who want more story.

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