



Neil Gaiman

Neverwhere
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***Neverwhere* is your first novel. Compared to your work in graphic novels, what were some of the challenges you experienced in writing your first work of narrative fiction?**

I think I was still working out ways to deal with things like narrative voice (who's telling this story? And what does he sound like?) and ways to compensate for not having pictures: I tend to stop and describe people and places — although I think that has as much to do with *Neverwhere* having begun life as a TV series with which I wasn't entirely satisfied. So I wanted everything to look like it did in my head, and the best way to get there was simply to tell the readers.

The cast of characters in *Neverwhere* includes an angel, a beast, an orphaned lady with special powers, and an Amazonesque huntress. Were any of these characters figures you'd explored in other works, or were they completely new to this book?

Everyone's new ... although when I was a very young man (I think I was about 18) I started my first book, about a teenage boy going to learn magic at a public school that taught that sort of thing, and Mr. Croup and Mr. Vandemar were in there. They were eating a dead puppy in sixteenth-century Venice. I never finished the schoolboy magic book (although in 1988 I brought some of it back in the *Books of Magic* graphic novel) but I always knew one day I'd find a home for Mr. Croup and Mr. Vandemar.

Richard Mayhew is such a wonderful protagonist. His foibles — from his curiosity about this strange London Below he's encountered to his hatred of heights — make him extremely likable. Does he share any qualities with any of your other fictional protagonists?

Well, he's not a typical hero, and he has that in common with all the others. Beyond that, I don't really know.

Your account of London's abandoned Underground is captivating. Did many of the obsolete Tube stations you mention in your book really exist at one time? Have you seen them?

Yes, they do and they did. I've been to several of the abandoned stations, although British Museum Station (closed, after a fire 70 years ago) has been completely lost.

At what point in your manuscript did you realize that Richard would choose to remain in London Below. To your knowledge, how have your readers responded to this decision?

I think I always knew. There were lots of things I didn't know, but I always knew that once he had gone back, he wouldn't be the same person who had wanted to go back.

Is there any possibility of a sequel to *Neverwhere*? Richard's decision would seem to leave the door open to further adventures in London Below.

Well, yes. It's just there are so many other stories to tell. But I do know the shape of the next story — it's called *The Seven Sisters*.