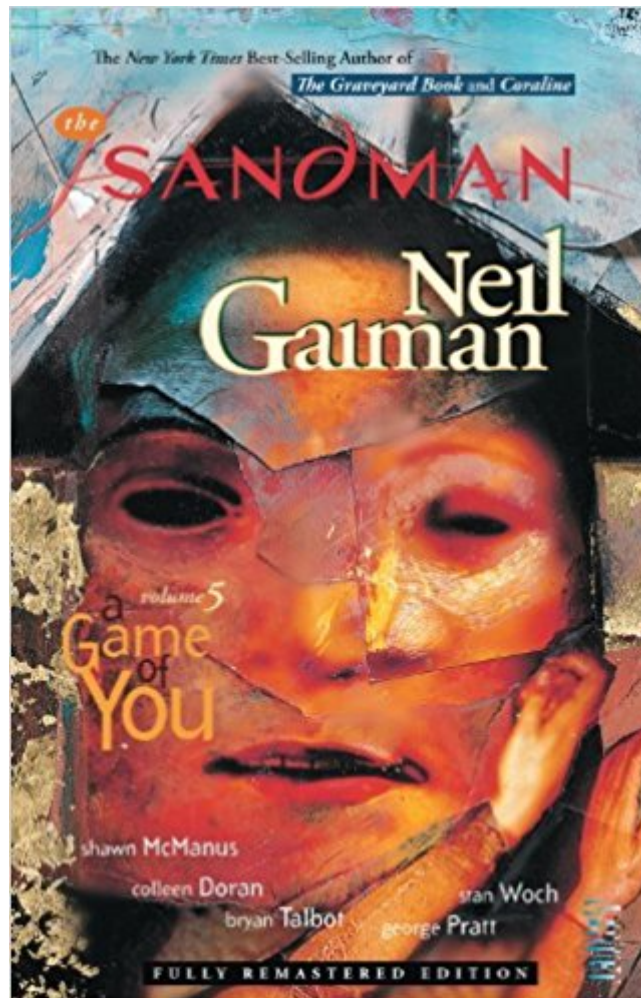


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The Sandman, Vol. 5: A Game Of You



Synopsis

Volume Five of New York Times best selling author Neil Gaiman's acclaimed creation THE SANDMAN collects one of the series' most beloved storylines. Take an apartment house, add in a drag queen, a lesbian couple, some talking animals, a talking severed head, a confused heroine and the deadly Cuckoo. Stir vigorously with a hurricane and Morpheus himself and you get this fifth installment of the SANDMAN series. This story stars Barbie, who first makes an appearance in THE DOLL'S HOUSE and now finds herself a princess in a vivid dreamworld.

Book Information

Paperback: 192 pages

Publisher: Vertigo; New edition edition (May 3, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1401230431

ISBN-13: 978-1401230432

Product Dimensions: 6.7 x 0.3 x 10.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 9.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars See all reviews (110 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

I have always found this to be an underappreciated chapter in the Sandman series. I don't think people realize what Gaiman has pulled off here. Besides coming up with a fascinating adventure story and a dizzying sideline into how we categorize ourselves (profession, gender, dreams, affinities, relations), he has done something few men have ever done -- written intelligently about what it is like to be a woman and a little girl. At first this may not seem like much, but the whole tale of Barbie's quest is inherently feminine. The dream world she inhabits is not a boys world. The questors are female (well, most of them and the last one is trying hard), and the ending turns around the whole notion of being a girl (even more than merely a child) that one of my female friends was convinced that someone TOLD Gaiman what to write! This is also a tale of loyalty. When it all comes down, each of the characters has to make a decision based on what has happened, a decision that could ultimately change each of their lives. Surprising decisions are made, but they are understandable if you stop and think about them. I love this volume, as I love the Sandman series in

general. I only wish (as many did) that Gaiman had written some more. Like any good story, we hate to see it come to an end.

Neil Gaiman does it again! He takes Barbie, a marginal character in the "Doll's House" storyline and makes her into a 3 dimensional character. He also introduces some other great characters like Hazel, Foxglove, Clarissa, and my personal favorite in this volume, Wanda. After reading this tale, I was struck by how the characters matter so much in Sandman stories. How Neil cares about them so much that they keep popping up again and again in unlikely places. Even when someone mentions another person, I can tell that Neil has a character description written up for that person and they will appear in another story. Clarissa will appear again in "Kindly Ones", while Hazel and Foxglove are in both "Death" mini-series. (Also Foxglove is mentioned by another character in the "24 Hours" chapter in "Preludes and Nocturnes.") That aside, "A Game of You" is probably the most personal story of the entire Sandman oeuvre. It's primarily the story of Barbie and her childhood dreams that become very real. The heart of the story is Barbie's relationship with Wanda which is both funny and touching. Dream doesn't appear much in this one, but the story is so good and the main characters so interesting that you won't mind at all.

Of course it's good. All Sandman is good. In this one, though, I'd suggest you not read Samuel Delany's foreword until you've read the book. He analyzes things as if you've read them, gives some surprises away, and generally kills the mood. It's a fine commentary; it's just that it should be an afterword.

A Game of You is one of shakier Sandman collection, but still earns itself a perfect rating as far as I'm concerned. AGOY follows the story of five young women who are drawn into the realm of Morpheus. Strangely, Morpheus is barely in this book, but I feel that it works for the story. One criticism this book often receives is the treatment of the character Wanda, who is a pre-op trans-sexual. Some people think this book comes off as sexist, but I don't see it. Wanda is easily the strongest and most developed character in the book, and most of the sexism is just a representation of the bias society already has for transsexuals. If you like this series so far, you'll love this book.

I really enjoyed this TPB. I've read the first four volumes, and this is right up there with Vol. 1 Preludes and Nocturnes, and Vol. 4 Season of the Mist. The defining strength of A Game Of You lies within the distinctive, well developed cast of characters. Because I cared about each of these

characters in turn, the mildly epic storyline captivated me as it effortlessly moved along. The whole nature of the journey reminded me in some ways of Tolkien's Lord of the Rings, albeit on a smaller scale. The art always varies throughout the Sandman series because of the use of different artists, and A Game of You continues that practice, with some consistency, thanks to Shawn McManus. McManus contributes the majority of the art here, and his style is perfectly suited to this tale. The guest artists are competent, but not quite as masterful as McManus. A Game of You is a fine tale, and a great addition to the Sandman series. It certainly makes me look forward to reading the next volume.

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 5, it is one of the least popular of the series but Gaiman's personal favorite. I tend to side with Gaiman on this one. Perhaps it's that he assigns gender's to his story and considers "A Game of You" to be female. As a woman, I personally liked the story. It centers around Barbie, who was introduced in "A Doll's House" - now disillusioned and alone, she is now confronted by the fantasy realm she used to visit in her dreams, now affecting those around her. 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.

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