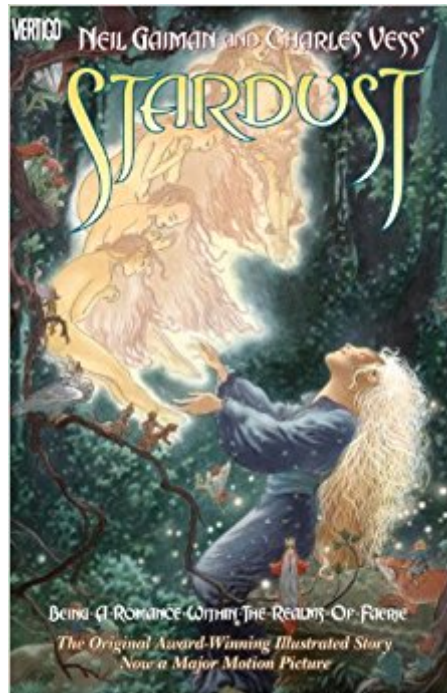




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# Neil Gaiman And Charles Vess' Stardust



## Synopsis

Winner of the American Library Award, Mythopoeic Award and World Fantasy Award for Best Artist! It is here in *Wall* that young Tristran Thorn loses his heart to the town beauty--a woman who is as cold and distant as the star she and Tristran see fall from the sky on a crisp October evening. To gain the hand of his beloved, Tristran rashly vows to fetch the fallen star and embarks upon a lover's quest that will carry him over the ancient wall and into a world beyond his wildest imaginings... NEIL GAIMAN AND CHARLES VESS'S *STARDUST* features the New York Times best-selling author (*THE SANDMAN*) and one of the industry's best illustrators at the height of their creative powers.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A twisting, wonderous tale full of magic." -- The Chicago Tribune

American Library Award Winner Mythopoeic Award Winner World Fantasy Award Winner - Best Artist

Neil Gaiman is the Grimm brothers for the 21st century. And this, lady's and gentlemen, is his faerie tale. It is whimsical. It is crisp; it never drags. It follows the adage of "why use 20 words with 2 will do?" It has moments of dry humor, yet never forgets that this is at heart a serious quest, one for love itself. Indeed, its plot is simple at its core. Yet despite that, the story itself is twisty and full of

adventure. The setting, as most of Gaiman's settings are, has no comparison. The characters are enjoyable. They are not overly complex in and of themselves, but they are extremely varied and certainly have some growth. Gaiman always writes each character like a different individual, and does it well. None of them are an extension of himself. As for the artwork, it is ... difficult to describe as to its style. Frankly, I personally don't think I have a good comparison. Here what I will say: it doesn't get in the way of the tale. It subtly adds something to the story without becoming the story itself. I find myself glancing at it and smiling as I read, rather than gaping at it in awe as I struggle to focus on the words. It is the backup keyboard to the lead guitar, if you will. And like every good backup, there are several sections of full page imagery to show off Vess' talent without distraction. Overall, I recommend this book wholeheartedly. In a sentence: This is the adventure you tried to have as a kid; most of our imaginations simply aren't this powerful. I take no shame in embracing my failure and enjoying instead the wonders of the imaginations of these two artists, who are clearly masters of their craft.

If you like Neil Gaiman, you will like *Stardust*, which I would describe as a fun adult fairy tale. It's not as dark as his other work (though still definitely written for an adult audience), and is a relatively fast read. I bought this edition specifically because I had heard that Charles Vess' illustrations were impressive. I'm glad that I did. I'm not a fan of graphic novels, but that's not what this is. Instead, the illustrations are interspersed through the text and add color to the plot without directing it - essentially, the two aspects work together in a way that is really unique in adult fiction. Would definitely recommend this book to anyone who could use a little mental vacation from the real world.

This book was so enjoyable to read. It took me far away from reality and into a place I haven't gone since I was a child, and I'm so glad I took the journey. I didn't want the story to end by the time I finished the novel. The illustrations were lovely and well worth the extra cost. The only complaint I can give is that since I read along with an audiobook, the text in the book was different than the audiobook sometimes. I thought the audiobook's version of narration was often times better, but that's ok; They were small discrepancies.

When I first heard of *Stardust* as a novel, it was many years after I had seen the film adaptation. I loved the film and very dearly wanted to read the book not to intentionally compare; but to see what the original story was. *Stardust* is a fairy-tale of a different kind. Darker, grislier, more adult. But it doesn't suffer for those reasons, it excels because of them. This novel, and indeed the fantastic and

gorgeous artwork, kept me enthralled for hours and I finished it in one day (not because the book was easy to read, but because I couldn't stop reading it!). Stardust is an adult fairy-tale, the themes are powerful and enthralling and I enjoyed every star dotted page of it.

"Stardust" won the Mythpoeic Award for best adult fairy tale. After all, fairy tales are not just for kids. And they're not for wimpy adults, either. Just read "The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales" by Maria Tatar if you don't believe me. "Stardust" has some pretty Grimm stuff in it too, however the only people who might not enjoy it are those who take Unicorns very very seriously. Or are extremely fond of billy goats. Gaiman's story begins and ends with a fair that will remind you of Christina Rossetti's "Goblin Market": "Backwards up the mossy glen/ Turned and trooped the goblin men,/ With their shrill repeated cry,/ "Come buy, come buy.".../As Laura of "Goblin Market"-fame learned, it is better not to sample the merchandise at such Unseelie gatherings. Dunstan Thorn, who "was not romantic" learns this lesson too, when nine months after the "Stardust" fair, a baby is abandoned at the boundary between Faerie and the English village of Wall with his name pinned to its blanket. Thus begins the story of Tristan Thorn who is raised as a proper Victorian lad until age seventeen. Unlike his father, Tristan is romantic and at the bequest of the most beautiful girl in Wall, he sets out on a quest through the Land of Faerie to fetch her a fallen star. Not just any fallen star, but the one Tristan and Victoria both saw on the night she refused to kiss him. "Stardust" is stuffed with stock fairy tale creatures who have been blown loose from their moorings and brought to life in the most wildly imaginative way. Some of them make only token appearances, but all are memorable. Two of the most poignant are the boy who is turned into a billy goat, and a billy goat, turned into a boy. There are three truly evil witches, and one who is only so-so wicked. There are...well, read the book. Even if you aren't drinking while you read it, you'll feel drunk by the time you finish. If ever there was a book that could be labeled, 'Drink me!', "Stardust" is that book.

I listened to the audio-book version of this and loved it. I watched the movie version of this and became confused. And then, at the end of the audio-book there is an interview with the author, and in it he explained that there were indeed many versions of the book, starting with a graphic-novel. It's really fascinating how the concept and story line evolved and how the story grew. How he found mistakes, (the obsidian blade), and how he anticipates changing the story as time passes. Buy this, but also listen to the audio book and interview.

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