

Author Neil Gaiman faces allegations of sexual assault and abuse

Erik Schreiber
29 January 2025

Popular British author Neil Gaiman, known for the comic book series *The Sandman* (1989–1996) and novels such as *American Gods* (2001), has been accused of sexual assault and abuse by multiple women. Gaiman is accused of, among other things, engaging in sexual behavior without consent and forcing women to perform degrading acts.

Gaiman responded in a January 14 statement on his web site:

As I read through this latest collection of accounts, there are moments I half-recognise and moments I don't, descriptions of things that happened sitting beside things that emphatically did not happen. I'm far from a perfect person, but I have never engaged in non-consensual sexual activity with anyone. Ever.

"I am prepared to take responsibility for any missteps I made," the author also insisted. "I'm not willing to turn my back on the truth, and I can't accept being described as someone I am not and cannot and will not admit to doing things I didn't do."

Gaiman has written almost 50 books, largely in the genres of science fiction or fantasy and geared toward children or young adults. More than 50 million copies of his books have been sold worldwide. A number of his works, such as *Good Omens* (1990) and *Coraline* (2002), have been adapted for television and film. Gaiman has won awards such as the Hugo, Nebula and Bram Stoker, as well as the Newbery and Carnegie medals.

Gaiman's denial came in response to a lengthy article in *New York* magazine that related multiple women's

allegations of sexual assault and unwanted sexual behavior. The allegations span a period from 1986 to 2022 and include supposed incidents in the US, the UK and New Zealand.

Katherine Kendall, one of the women interviewed in *New York*, volunteered at one of Gaiman's readings and struck up a flirtatious relationship with him. She claims that the author physically forced himself on her and demanded she kiss him. He eventually relented and later gave Kendall \$60,000 to pay for therapy, according to her account.

Kendra Stout claims that the author coerced her into sex against her explicit wishes while they were on vacation together in 2007. The two were in a sexual relationship at the time. Stout filed a police report in October 2024 accusing Gaiman of rape.

Caroline Wallner and her husband lived on property in Woodstock, New York, that Gaiman bought. She worked for Gaiman as a caretaker and, after her marriage ended, entered a relationship with the author. While babysitting for Gaiman's four-year-old son, she and the child fell asleep on a bed. Wallner alleges that Gaiman returned home, got into bed with them and physically encouraged her to engage in sexual activity with him. Representatives of Gaiman claim that Wallner initiated their sexual encounters and deny that any occurred while his son was present.

Scarlett Pavlovich became friends with Gaiman's then-wife Amanda Palmer, a musician of whom she was a fan, and agreed to babysit for her one weekend. She found herself alone in the house with Gaiman, who encouraged her to take a bath. Later, Gaiman allegedly got into the tub and attempted to perform various sexual acts with her, despite her expressed objections.

Pavlovich, who apparently has a history of abuse, homelessness and psychiatric problems, later agreed to

stay with Gaiman and Palmer indefinitely. She accuses Gaiman of several other instances of sexual abuse. Gaiman claims that their relationship was consensual, according to *New York*.

Many of the allegations against Gaiman were first made public on a Tortoise Media podcast in July. The podcast and the *New York* article have become the opening salvos of a #MeToo-style attack against the author. A campaign to ruin his reputation, strip him of his awards and destroy his career is underway.

Prime Video has ended its adaptation of *Good Omens* with one 90-minute special instead of a full third season as originally planned. It will no longer credit Gaiman as an executive producer on the project. Disney has “paused” the production of *The Graveyard Book*, a movie adaptation of one of Gaiman’s young adult novels.

Norton, which published Gaiman’s *Norse Mythology* (2018), announced in a memo to staff that the company “will not have projects with the author going forward.” DC Comics, which published *The Sandman*, declined to comment when asked whether the company would continue to publish his work. Gaiman’s literary agent at Writers House has similarly refused to comment about whether the agency would continue to represent the author.

At least one bookstore has announced that it would no longer stock Gaiman’s books so as not to make customers “feel uncomfortable,” according to the *New York Times*. On January 24, Dark Horse Comics said in a statement that it “takes seriously the allegations against Neil Gaiman and we are no longer publishing his works. Confirming that the *Anansi Boys* comic series and collected volume have been cancelled.”

Some literary figures are demanding that Gaiman’s awards be taken from him. American author Martha Brockenbrough called for Gaiman’s Newbery medal to be revoked. Other authors such as J.K. Rowling, Maureen Johnson, Jeff VanderMeer and Naomi Alderman have criticized what they see as the literary world’s halfhearted response to the accusations. Ayelet Waldman and Michael Chabon, authors who are friends of Gaiman, have declared themselves at a loss for words.

The accusations against Gaiman are serious. It is possible that the author has behaved in reprehensible ways or caused harm to his accusers. But the

seriousness of the accusations does not provide grounds for dispensing with due process or the presumption of innocence. Nor do the accusations justify an attempt to ostracize Gaiman, erase his work and withdraw the accolades he has received. To destroy anyone based only on accusations is to open the door to major attacks on democratic rights. This approach appeals to upper middle-class layers oblivious to its implications.

Gaiman’s novels and comic books have appealed to broad masses of readers. His work often incorporates elements of the horror or thriller genres without limiting its appeal to fans of those styles. Gaiman has been praised for his invention, his ability to evoke detailed settings and his talent for creating fully realized characters with whom many readers relate. The author, a self-described feminist, is also one of the first to attract a large female readership to comic books.

By some accounts, Gaiman had a troubled childhood. When he was young, Gaiman’s parents became powerful officials in the Church of Scientology, which is notorious for punishing its members harshly even for minor infractions. Some of its methods resemble torture, and the church’s founder L. Ron Hubbard insisted that children were not exempt from these punishments. When Palmer asked Gaiman to tell her about his childhood in the church, he sometimes curled up into a fetal position and cried, according to *New York*.

No charges have been filed against the author. If charges are filed, then any trial must be held before a jury of Gaiman’s peers, not in the media or the court of middle class public opinion.



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