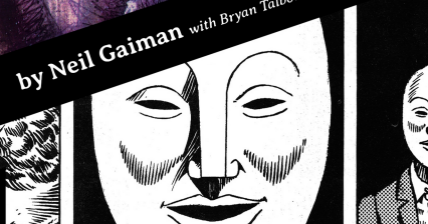


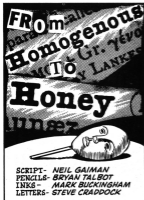


An Honest Answer and Other
Stories



by **Neil Gaiman** with Bryan Talbot and Dave McKean





GOOD EVENING AND WELCOME TO OUR NEW UNIVERSE.

AS YOU CAN TELL, WE'VE MADE A NUMBER OF IMPROVEMENTS ON THE OLD ONE.



TODAY WE'RE GOING TO LOOK AT HOW OUR PRESENT UTOPIA WAS ACHIEVED.

LIGHTS, PLEASE!



THE REMOVAL OF A CONCEPT FROM SOCIETY IS ALWAYS FRAUGHT WITH POTENTIAL PROBLEMS.

WHERE DO WE START?



FIRST SLIDE, PLEASE.

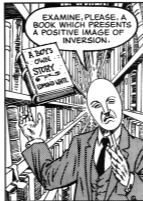


THE OBVIOUS PLACE TO START WAS WITH BOOKS, REPOSITORIES OF IDEAS.

DAINGEROUS.



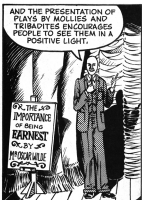
EXAMINE, PLEASE, A BOOK WHICH PRESENTS A POSITIVE IMAGE OF INVERSION.



THAT WAS EASY.

WHAT THEN TO DO ABOUT SOMETHING THAT CONTAINS A FAIRLY SYMPATHETIC CATAMITE?





An Honest Answer

from
NEIL GAIMAN
illuminated by
BRYAN TALBOT
inscribed by
SONJA CURTIS

"Where do you
get your ideas?"

IT'S A QUESTION
WRITERS ARE ASKED
ALL THE TIME. AND WE
DON'T TELL ANY OF YOU
HOW WE GET OUR IDEAS
BECAUSE IT'S A SECRET
—DEEPLY, INEXTRICABLY
LINKED WITH THE
ENTIRE CREATIVE
PROCESS

NOW, I HAVE
RECEIVED EXCLUSIVE
PERMISSION TO LIFT THE
LID ON THE CREATIVE
PROCESS — JUST
THIS ONCE

LIKE YOU,
I HAVE NO IDEA
WHAT WONDERS
ARE IN STORE
FOR US

HELLO?
INFINITE? IT'S
ME, NEIL.
TOO HOO

I NEED
AN IDEA FOR A
FOUR-PAGE
COMIC STRIP

RAY CLOSE
ATTENTION. WE'RE
GOING TO FOLLOW THE
CREATIVE ACTIVITIES
THAT WILL GIVE US
THIS VERY STRIP

NOW — THE
SECRET IS, YOU
OPEN YOURSELF
TO THE INFINITE

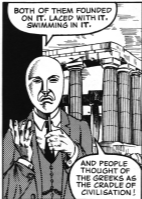
IT'S A DODDLE
— WATCH

OH, AND WHILE YOU'RE
THERE, IF YOU'VE GOT ANY-
THING FOR THIS INTRODUCTION
I PROMISED TO WRITE FOR AN
ANTHOLOGY OF MINOR LATE
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY
METAPHYSICAL POETS —
I'D APPRECIATE IT

THEN
YOU MAKE
A CUP OF
TEA

HELLO?
INFINITE?
IT'S ME AGAIN
— NEIL

STILL OPEN.
UM. HELLO...
....?





AFTER THAT IT WAS JUST A MOPPING-UP OPERATION.



LISTS WERE MADE UP OF THE FEY AND THE QUESTIONABLE IN HISTORY.



WE REMOVED THEM ALL, ALONG WITH THEIR IDEAS AND THEIR CREATIONS, NO MORE MONA LISA.

NO MORE DAVID.



NO MORE CARRY ON CAMPING DHALGREEN BOOKS OF BLOOD AND GUTS IN HIGH SCHOOL ...

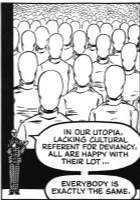
CAN I HAVE THE NEXT SLIDE PLEASE ?



THE WORLD TODAY IS A SIMPLER PLACE. WE'VE TAKEN OUT ALL THE COMPLICATIONS.



ALL THE SQUARE PEGS AND THE PAINFUL AND THE STRANGE.



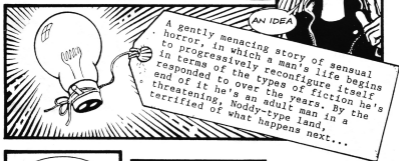
IN OUR UTOPIA, LACKING CULTURAL REFERENT FOR DEVIANCY, ALL ARE HAPPY WITH THEIR LOT ...

EVERYBODY IS EXACTLY THE SAME.



ISN'T IT SWEET ?

"(THE CLAUSE IS AIMED AT) THE WHOLE GAMUT OF HOMO-SEXUALITY, HOMOSEXUAL ACTS, HOMOSEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS, EVEN THE ABSTRACT CONCEPT."
— LORD CAITHNESS, LOCAL GOVERNMENT MINISTER 1988.





A CAT BOOK?

A FUNNY CAT BOOK?

DID I ASK FOR A FUNNY CAT BOOK? HAVE I DONE ANYTHING TO IMPLY THAT I BELIEVE THE UNIVERSE IS IN ANYWAY DEFICIENT IN THE MATTER OF FUNNY CAT BOOKS?

After that, the infinite offered up, in short order...

a haiku

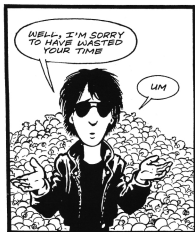
TOO SHORT-

two pantoums

TOO MUCH LIKE HARD WORK

a particularly filthy sonnet

TOO DIFFICULT FOR BRYAN TO DRAW CONVINCINGLY-



The following Thursday the author received a note from the Infinite, apologising for the interruption in service, and asking if it could have its funny cat-book idea back, because there were people who needed it.

But it was too late. It had already been used as the introduction to an anthology of minor Late-Seventeenth Century Metaphysical Poets.

I L L A N E L L E S

by mclean 204 © 24-2-1989



I get the feeling I've been here before



Which is of course unlikely to be true,



*But in these times
it's so hard to be sure.*

to make just a guess, the of (1) is are
and the theory, it is hard to find
give on the equivalence of the equa-
tions. (2) is a nice little quantum
mechanics paper to see some rather
old things about the universe:

- There are no such things as "things". Objects are ghostly, with no definite properties (such as position or mass) until they are measured. The properties exist in a twilight state of "superposition" until then.
- All particles are waves, and waves are particles, appearing as one or the other depending on what sort of measurement is being performed.
- A particle moving between two points travels all possible paths between them simultaneously.
- Particles that are millions of miles apart can affect each other simultaneously.

Take one example of quantum strangeness in detail (see diagram on next page). Richard Feynman, a No-

Consider the cold buttons of law,

is impossible, absolutely impossible to



The chink of padlock muffled curse of screw



I get the feeling I've been here before.



*A thousand worlds
and every world's a door.*



The lights go out, I think I think of you



*But in these times
it's so hard to be sure.*



*There's black blood
slowly clotting on the floor*

There is no crime though somewhere there's a clue



Adhering to the bottom of my shoe.



I get the feeling I've been here before.

Not far away the game begins anew



But in these times it's so hard to be sure

I've never been intentionally obscure



I've never been intentionally taboo.



I get the feeling I've been here before.

*But in these times
it's so hard to be sure.*

