



feeders & eaters

and Other Stories

by Neil Gaiman
with Mark Buckingham

THIS IS A TRUE STORY.
PRETTY MUCH.

IT WAS LATE ONE NIGHT, IN A
CITY WHERE I HAD NO RIGHT
TO BE - NOT AT THAT TIME OF
NIGHT ANYWAY.

I HAVEN'T TELL YOU WHICH ONE.

I'D MISSED MY LAST
TRAIN, AND I HAD
NOWHERE TO SLEEP,
SO I PROWLED THE
CITY CENTRE UNTIL
I FOUND AN
ALL-NIGHT CAFE.

SOMEONE'S
WARM TO SIT.

I HAVEN'T HUNGER,
BUT I BOUGHT A
SLICE OF TOAST
AND A CUP
OF GREASY TEA.

SO THEY'D
LEAVE ME
ALONE.

feeders & eaters

HEY YOU.
HEY... I KNOW
YOU. SOME
HERE.

THEN HE SAID
MY NAME.

UM...
HELLO?

DON'T
YOU KNOW
ME?

EDDIE
BARRON?

E'ACH,
MATE. YOU
KNOW ME.

I IGNORED IT, YOU
DON'T WANT TO GET
INVOLVED, NOT WITH
PEOPLE LIKE THAT.

I SUPPOSE THAT WAS WHAT
WAS SO HORRIBLE.

1 END.

HE'D WORKED ON A BUILDING SITE TOGETHER, DURING TEN YEARS BACK, DURING MY ONE AND ONLY REAL FLIRTATION WITH MAHALA WARR.



EDDIE BARROW WAS EX-POLICE. SOMETIMES HE'D TELL ME TRUE STORIES, TALES OF FITTING UP AND DRIVING OVER, OF PUNISHMENT AND CRIME.

HE LEFT THE FORCE AFTER SOME TROUBLE BETWEEN HIM AND ONE OF THE TOP BRIGGS. HE SAID IT WAS THE SUPERVISOR'S WIFE MADE HIM LEAVE.



EDDIE WAS ALWAYS GETTING INTO TROUBLE WITH WOMEN.

THEY REALLY LIKED HIM, WOMEN.

WHEN WE WERE WORKING TOGETHER ON THE SITE THEY'D JUST HUNT HIM DOWN, GIVE HIM SANDWICHES, LITTLE PRESENTS, WHATEVER HE NEVER SEEMED TO DO ANYTHING TO MAKE THEM LIKE HIM.

THEY JUST LIKED HIM.



I USED TO WATCH HIM TO SEE HOW HE DID IT.



BUT IT DIDN'T SEEM TO BE ANYTHING HE DID. EVENTUALLY I DECIDED IT WAS JUST THE WAY HE WAS.

SHH.

STONS.

NOT VERY BRIGHT.



AND TERRIBLY, TERRIBLY GOOD LOOKING.

EDDIE? WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?

HOW-HOW BETWEEN? HAPPENED?



YOU LOOK PAINFUL.

YEAH?



MM-HM.

HAPPENING TO US ALL.

I SKIPPED MY TEA. I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING, AND MAYBE HE THOUGHT I WANTED TO KNOW MORE, THAT I LISTENED.

TO BE HONEST, I HAD ENOUGH PROBLEMS OF MY OWN. I DIDN'T WANT TO HEAR ABOUT HIS PROBLEMS WITH WHATEVER IT WAS. DRINK, OR DRUGS, OR DISEASE.

OR MADNESS.

BUT HE STARTED TALKING IN THIS FLAT BREEZY VOICE, AND...

I LISTENED.

I CAME HERE A FEW YEARS BACK, CAME DOWN WHEN THEY WERE BUILDING THE BY-PASS, STUCK AROUND.

GOT A ROOM IN AN OLD PLACE ROUND THE BACK OF PRINCE ROBERT STREET. GOT A ROOM IN THE ATTIC.

"IT WAS A FAMILY HOUSE REALLY. THERE WAS THE FAMILY, AND THERE WERE TWO BODIES."

"AND AND AND FOREVER."

"SHE NEVER CAME DOWN FOR MEALS, SO IT WAS A WEEK BEFORE HE MET."

"SHE WAS COMING OUT OF THE LOBBY."

I ALWAYS HAD MY MEALS WITH THE FAMILY.

"WE WERE UP IN THE ATTIC IN SEPARATE ROOMS."

"SHE WAS OLD, SO OLD..."

IT'S FUNNY WITH OLD PEOPLE. YOU DON'T THINK THEY FEEL THINGS LIKE WE DO. I MEAN, HERE'S HER, OLD ENOUGH TO BE MY GRAN, AND...

ANYWAY

"I CAME UP TO
MY ROOM ONE
NIGHT, AND
THERE WAS THIS
BAG OF
MUSHROOMS.
IT WAS, LIKE, A
PRESENT.
I KNEW THAT
STRAIGHT OFF.

"FOR ME.

"NOT ANOTHER
MUSHROOM.
THOUGH, I
KNOCKED ON
HER DOOR."

"I PICKED
THEM MYSELF,
MISTER
BARROW."

"OR,
ARE THESE
FOR ME?"

"THEY
AREN'T, LIKE,
VEGETABLES OR
ANYTHING?"

"OH,
THEY'RE ALL
RIGHT FOR EATING.
THEY'RE FINE FOR
EATING. SANSKY
AND COPS, THEY
ARE."

"EAT THEM GOOD
NOW. THEY'RE BEST
FRIED UP WITH A
LITTLE BUTTER AND
GARLIC."

"BUT YOU
CAN EAT
THEM?"

"OF COURSE.
IT'S DETERMINING
THE THINGS
PEOPLE CAN'T
EAT."

"ALL THIS
STUFF AROUND
PEOPLE CAN'T
EAT, IF ONLY
THEY KNEW
IT."

"I WENT BACK INTO
MY ROOM, THE OTHER
HALF OF THE ATTIC."

"THEY'D DONE THE
CONVERSION A
FEW YEARS BACK."

"I USED TO EAT A
LOT OF MUSHROOMS,
BUT I CAN'T ANY
MORE. WHAT WITH MY
STOMACH."

"AFTER A FEW DAYS
THE MUSHROOMS
DROVE INTO
BLACK STUFF, LIKE
INK, AND I HAD TO
PUT THE WHOLE
MESS INTO A
PLASTIC BAG AND
THROW IT AWAY."



HELLO, MISS CORVEY.

HELLO, MISTER B.

CALL ME EFFIE.

RIGHT, MISS CORVEY.



HOW WERE THE MUSHROOMS?

VERY NICE. THANK YOU, LOVELY.



"SHE'D LEAVE ME OTHER THINGS, LITTLE PRESENTS, AND THEN I DIDN'T SEE HER FOR A WHILE."



I WAS AT DINNER WITH THE FAMILY, THE LAD AT THE POLY, HE'D GONE BACK TO HIS FAMILY FOR THE HOLIDAYS.

IT WAS SUMMER, AND REALLY HOT.

AND SOMEONE SAID THEY HADN'T SEEN HER FOR ABOUT A WEEK, AND MAYBE I COULD LOOK IN ON HER.

"SO I DID.

"SHE WAS IN THE BED. SHE WASN'T WELL. SHE HAD ALL THOSE QUEENS AROUND HER, AND SHE SAID,

EDWARD? I DON'T WANT TO BE A BURDEN ON ANYONE, BUT I'M SO HUNGRY...

I'LL GET YOU SOMETHING TO EAT, THEN.

MEAT. IT MUST BE FRESH MEAT. DID YOU? I WON'T LET ANYONE ELSE COOK IT FOR ME. MEAT, PLEASE, EDWARD.

RAW.



NO PROBLEM.

"I THOUGHT ABOUT
NEAKING IT FROM
THE CAT'S BOWL.
BUT I DIDN'T."



"I WENT DOWN TO THE
BUTCHERS AND GOT
HER HALF A POUND OF
BEST BURLONY."



GET DOWN! IT'S
NOT FOR YOU, PUSS.
IT'S FOR MISS CORNER.
SHE'S NOT VERY WELL,
AND SHE'S GOING TO
COOK IT FOR HER
DINNER.



THANK YOU,
EDWARD. YOU'VE
GOT A GOOD
HEART.

"SHE WAS UP AND ABOUT
AGAIN SOON AFTER THAT.
SHE WAS FINE."

"AND THEN THOMPSON
WENT MISSING..."

THOMPSON?

HE LOOKED UP THEN, AS
IF HE'D FORGOTTEN I
WAS THERE. AND HE SAID,

THE CAT.

I WAS NEVER
MUCH OF A ONE FOR
CATS, NOT REALLY
DOGS I LIKED
BIG MYTHICAL
THINGS.

DO
ANYTHING
FOR YELL A
DOG WILL

NOT CATS.
GO OFF FOR DOGS
YOU DON'T SEE
THEM..

WHEN I WAS A
LAD, WE HAD A CAT.
IT WAS CALLED GAMBER.
TURNED OUT THERE WERE
SOME PEOPLE A FEW
ROADS OVER WHO
HAD A CAT THEY CALLED
MARGALADE.

GAMBER
CAT.
GETTING
FED BY ALL
OF US...

GADELY LITTLE
BASTARDS.

YOU
DON'T TRUST
THEM

SO I
DIDN'T THINK
ANYTHING WHEN
THOMPSON WENT
AWAY.

THE FAMILY
WERE WORRIED.
NOT ME.
I KNEW IT'D COME
BACK.

"AND A FEW NIGHTS LATER, I HEARD IT.

"I WAS TRYING TO SLEEP AND IT WAS— IT WAS REALLY QUIET, LIKE, MEOWING.

"I THOUGHT MAYBE IT WAS STUCK UP IN THE RAFTERS OR OUT ON THE ROOF.

"SO I WENT LOOKING.

"IT WAS COMING FROM MISS CORNBERG'S ROOM— THE OTHER HALF OF THE ATTIC. I KNOCKED, BUT NO-ONE ANSWERED.

"THE DOOR WASN'T LOCKED, SO I WENT IN. I THOUGHT MAYBE THE CAT WAS STUCK SOMEWHERE OR HURT OR SOMETHING. I DON'T KNOW.

"BUT WHEN YOU CAN'T SLEEP THESE THINGS GET ON YOUR NERVES...

"WHATEVER."

Mria.

Mria...





YOU
KILLED
HIM.



HE WAS OLD,
THAT I HAD TO KEEP
HIS BONES. AND YOU
KILLED HIM. HE WAS
MY FRESH MEAT.



AND I
NEED MY MEAT.
I NEED THE
LIFE.



YOU
KILLED
MY FRESH
MEAT.

I'M
AN OLD
WOMAN.



I-I DON'T
EVER WANT TO
BE A B-SURFEYON
ANYBODY.

N-NOT
EVER.



NOW
WHO'S GOING
TO FEED
ME...?



I--

THAT
MEANS I
HAVE TO GO
NOW.



THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED
LIKE I SAID BEFORE,
IT'S A TRUE STORY,
PRETTY MUCH.



IT REALLY
HAPPENED.



ON THE TRAIN HOME I
ENCOUNTERED A WOMAN
CARRYING A BABY.

IT WAS FLOATING IN FORMALDEHYDE,
IN A MEDICAL GLASS CONTAINER.

WE NEEDED TO SELL IT, AND
WE TALKED FOR A WHILE,
ABOUT HER REASONS,
AND ABOUT OTHER THINGS.

BUT IT IS NOT
NECESSARY TO
SPEAK FLATTER
OF THAT HERE.





AN IMAGE TO MAINTAIN...

HI NEIL, IT'S
BUCKY.



YOU OKAY?
GREAT.



WRITTEN ANYTHING
FOR ME LATELY?



NEED AN INKER ON ANY
OF YOUR OTHER
BOOKS?
NOT AT THE
MOMENT...



MW? I SEE...



LOOK, I HOPED I
WOULDN'T HAVE TO
RESORT TO THIS
BUT...



REMEMBER MY
WEDDING?



REMEMBER THE EVENING
PARTY?

YOU...
DISCO DANCING!



WELL, I GOT IT
ALL ON VIDEO...



WHAT'S
THAT...?



YOU'VE JUST STARTED
WORK ON A NEW STORY
FOR ME.
THAT'S GREAT.



I NEW YOU'D
'SEE SENSE...



