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===== American Gods (Neil Gaiman) =====

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.. :Author: Emin Reşah .. :Date: 12852

Bu kitabı Pratchett'in *Small Gods* <../small-gods/>\_\_ kitabından sonra okudum ve konunun benzerliği dikkat çekiciydi. Gaiman, Pratchett'in arkadaşı, beraber kitap yazacak kadar ve bu kitabın sonundaki eklerden anladığımız kadarıyla kitabın sıkıştığı yerde katkısı olacak kadar yakın biri.

Ancak kitap bana *Küçük Tanrılar* kadar eğlenceli gelmedi. Bırakacak kadar boş da değildi, en azından Amerikan toplumuna dair gözlemler içerdiğini düşündüğüm için devam ettim. Ancak *Tanrı* fikri, *Small Gods*'taki kadar bile beslenmiş, düşünülmüş değildi. Bunda *gerçek* bir coğrafyada ama A.B.D.'nin ya-pay sınırlarına bağlı olarak yazmak zorunda olmanın da bir etkisi mevcuttur.

Kitapta mitolojik tanrıların *çökmüş* hallerini görüyoruz. Amerikan kültürü yeni tanrılar peşinde, *Media* böyle bir tanrı mesela, teknoloji veya borsa da benzer tanrılar. Bu yeni tanrılar eskileriyle savaşıyor, daha doğrusu, eskileri yenileriyle savaşmaları gerektiğine inanıyor.

Eskilerin başında da meşhur İskandinav bilgelik tanrısı *Odin* var. Bunlar *tanrı* deyince anladığımız şek-ilde namütenahi güçlü varlıklar değil, daha çok Hızır ve İlyas gibi *kendi işinin sahibi* tanrılar. Amerika'ya *binlerce yıldan beri* çıkan her milletin kendi tanrılarını getirdiğini, ancak buranın *tanrılar için* pek uygun bir muhit olmadığını anlatıyor.

Binlerce yıl derken, gerçekten, Thoth ve Anubis gibi Mısır tanrılarının da ortalıkta binlerce yıldır gezindiğini anlatan bir roman bu. *Kolomböncesini* hayli geriye çekmiş.

Kitapta *ele aldığı konuyu toparlamayamak* gibi bir sorun var. Çok fazla tanrı işlenmeden duruyor. Nasıralı İsa bir karakter olarak hiç görünmüyor, Amerika'dan bahsediyorsun ve Hristiyanlıktan bahsetmiyorsun ama Slav tanrılarının önemini anlatıyorsun. Biraz tuhaf. Kitap büyük bir konuyu yarım yamalak işlemiş ve insan okudukça, harcadığı zamana pişman oluyor.

Manasız, total bir mitoloji karikatüründen ileri gitmeyen kısımları var. Karakterler yeterince işlenmeden ortalığa salınmış, bir sayfada düşmanların gözünün önünde boyut değiştirecek kadar büyü yaparken, diğer sayfada saçma bir şekilde ölüyor mesela. En güçlü karakterin ortalıktaki kadim tanrılar değil de, hasbelkader ba'solmuş bir zombi olması da ayrı bir tuhafılık.

Kısacası bu kitabı sevmedim. Gaiman'dan bitirdiğim ilk kitaptı. *Fikir güzel ama uygulama yetersiz* diyebilirim.

## Quotations

“The shit her family ate. You would not believe. Like rice wrapped in leaves. Shit like that.” (p. 11)

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Hell is other people, thought Shadow, then Purgatory is airports. (p. 25)

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("Remember, Shadow, you can't fight back when you're pissing," Low Key said, low-key as always, in the back of his head.) (p. 32)

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"Mead," said Wednesday. "Honey wine. The drink of heroes. The drink of the gods." (p. 41)

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Wednesday looked like he had learned to smile from a manual. (p. 44)

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watched as Wednesday became increasingly flustered (p. 51)

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referred to the little prison cemetery out behind the infirmary as the Bone Orchard, (p. 57)

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Tell him that language is a virus and that religion is an operating system and that prayers are just so much fucking spam. (p. 60)

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"Gods die. And when they truly die they are unmourned and unremembered. Ideas are more difficult to kill than people, but they can be killed, in the end." (p. 65)

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he was not convinced that it would make him feel any better to watch other people have sex that he wasn't having. He turned on the TV for company, pressed the Sleep (p. 172)

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they might be dirty, and cheap, and their food might taste like shit, but at least they didn't speak in clichés. (p. 175)

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Trouble is, no one wants to know that their loved ones are traveling in a cooler-van to some big old converted warehouse where they may have twenty, fifty, a hundred cadavers on the go. (p. 191)

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"You don't want to ask after the health of anyone, if you're a funeral director. They think maybe you're scouting for business," (p. 193)

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I feel very sorry for the professionals whenever they find another confusing skull, something that belonged to the wrong sort of people, or whenever they find statues or artifacts that confuse them—for they'll talk about the odd, but they won't talk about the impossible, which is where I feel sorry for them, for as soon as something becomes impossible it slips out of belief entirely, whether it's true or not. I mean, here's a skull that shows the Ainu, the Japanese aboriginal race, were in America nine thousand years ago. (p. 194)

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Women survive their men. Men—men like him—don't live long when their women are gone. (p. 204)

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He told me that they changed the name from Kentucky Fried Chicken to KFC because they don't serve real chicken any more. It's become this genetically modified mutant thing, like a giant centipede with no head, just segment after segment of legs and breasts and wings. (p. 208)

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Death had vanished from the streets of America, thought Shadow; now it happened in hospital rooms and in ambulances. We must not startle the living, thought Shadow. Mr. Ibis had told him that they move the dead about (p. 220)

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but he suspected it was the being dead that made you bitter. (p. 222)

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“So I heard,” said Wednesday. “A great pity. Of course it will come to all of us, in the end.” (p. 226)

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You can always cheat an honest man, but it takes more work. (p. 230)

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He was too cold to shiver. His eyes hurt. This was not simply cold: this was science fiction. This was a story set on the dark side of Mercury, back when they thought Mercury had a dark side. This was somewhere out on rocky Pluto, where the sun is just another star, shining only a little more brightly in the darkness. (p. 256)

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“Because they may babble on about micro-milliseconds and virtual worlds and paradigm shifts and what-have-you, but they still inhabit this planet and are still bound by the cycle of the year. These are the dead months. A victory in these months is a dead victory.” (p. 273)

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“My kind of people see your kind of people...” He hesitated. “It’s like bees and honey. Each bee makes only a tiny, tiny drop of honey. It takes thousands of them, millions perhaps, all working together to make the pot of honey you have on your breakfast table. Now imagine that you could eat nothing but honey. That’s what it’s like for my kind of people...we feed on belief, on prayers, on love. It takes a lot of people believing just the tiniest bit to sustain us. That’s what we need, instead of food. Belief.” (p. 280)

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We build a shell around it like an oyster dealing with a painful particle of grit, coating it with smooth pearl layers in order to cope. This is how we walk and talk and function, day in, day out, immune to others' pain and loss. If it were to touch us it would cripple us or make saints of us; but, for the most part, it does not touch us. (p. 313)

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It was in North Carolina, when she had seen the food for the slave children and the dogs poured into the same trough, and she had seen her little children scrabbling with the dogs for the scraps. (p. 323)

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Like the newspapers used to say, if the truth isn't big enough, you print the legend. (p. 350)

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"There was only one guy in the whole Bible Jesus ever personally promised a place with him in Paradise. Not Peter, not Paul, not any of those guys. He was a convicted thief, being executed. So don't knock the guys on death row. Maybe they know something you don't." (p. 426)

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"You-you're a fucking illuminated gothic black-letter manuscript. You couldn't be hypertext if you tried. (p. 428)

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You could not trust fiction. What good were books, if they couldn't protect you from something like that? (p. 459)

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Terry Pratchett helped unlock a knotty plot point for me on the train to Gothenburg. Eric Edelman answered my diplomatic questions. (page 565)

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