

The Reading Guide

Reading Group Questions

1. ANANSI BOYS combines a modern-day story with myths, legends and visions that should be unbelievable, yet Neil Gaiman creates a world in which the extra-ordinary is completely acceptable. How does he achieve this?
2. 'Comedy' is too loose a term to describe the humour in ANANSI BOYS. What are the different forms of humour in the novel, and what part do they play in the drive of the narrative?
3. Fat Charlie and Spider begin as polar opposites, but during the novel Charlie incrementally, and with great subtlety, regains his spider-side. Where are the turning points in Charlie's character, and when did you realise he was no longer Fat Charlie? How does Spider change?
4. Maeve's indignation at becoming a ghost is endearing, but her desire for vengeance is very powerful. Which other characters seek vengeance, and how does this overwhelming desire for revenge affect them?
5. How do Fat Charlie's dreams and visions influence the story? Why are his dreams important?
6. Do you think there is a place for myth, legend and fantasy in a modern, atheist, consumer society? As contemporary culture is increasingly defined by truth and transparency, have we lost the ability to believe in the irrational and mysterious power of myth?

About the Book

Fat Charlie Nancy is not having a good week. His estranged father recently dropped dead on a karaoke stage and has left Fat Charlie with much more than embarrassment. Because, you see, Charlie has discovered that his dad wasn't just any dad. He was Anansi the trickster spider-god. Anansi is the spirit of rebellion, able to overturn the social order, create wealth out of thin air, and even baffle the devil. No wonder Fat Charlie's life is about to be turned upside down.

Written by one of fiction's most audaciously original talents ANANSI BOYS is a kaleidoscopic journey deep into myth that is at once startling, terrifying and fiercely funny.

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About the Author

Neil Gaiman was born in England but now lives in Minnesota, in a big house of uncertain location where he accumulates computers and cats. His website is www.neilgaiman.co.uk.

Reviews

'Bizarre, bonkers...rather brilliant!' Ian Hislop

'Anansi is as charming and dangerous as he ought to be...

A thoughtful, atmospheric novel' *The Times*

'Immensely entertaining... combines the anarchy of Douglas Adams with a Wodehousian generosity of spirit' Susanna Clarke

'Exhilarating and terrifying' *Independent*

'Neil Gaiman is a very good writer indeed, and this is a very funny bedtime story' *Daily Telegraph*

'Anansi Boys draws the reader, ever more wide-eyed and amazed, into a world both feather-light and chockablock with mortal danger' Peter Straub

'Thoughtful, wise, spiritually challenging and incredibly funny...it's a treasure, every word' Manda Scott

'Urbane and sophisticated' *Time Out*