CBLDF Discussion Guide

Sandman: Season of Mists
by Neil Gaiman with art by Kelly Jones, Malcolm Jones III, Mike Dringenberg, Matt Wagner, P. Craig Russell, George Pratt, & Dick Giordano

Given their visual nature, comics are easy targets for would-be censors. CBLDF’s Discussion Guides are tools that can be used to lead conversations about challenged graphic novels and to help allay misconceptions about comics.

Synopsis
In Season of Mists, Dream is goaded by Desire and Death into returning to Hell to free Nada. Upon his arrival in Hell, Dream discovers that Lucifer has abdicated his throne and evicted everyone from Hell. Dream accepts the key to Hell and soon finds himself entangled with various factions who are seeking ownership of the abandoned domain.

Themes
Sibling relationships, redemption, revenge, forgiveness, pride

Reasons Challenged
Unsuited to age group

Suggested Age Range
High school and up

Discussion Questions

Remembering
1. Compare the fonts and word balloons for each of the Endless who attend Destiny’s family meeting at the beginning of Season of Mists.
2. Why is Cain chosen to deliver word to Lucifer of Dream’s return trip to Hell?
3. What preparations does Dream make before returning to Hell?

Understanding
4. The main story line in Seasons of Mists is “interrupted” by the standalone story of Charles Rowland. What purpose does this interlude serve?

Applying
5. In what ways do various characters try to manipulate Dream into giving them the key to Hell?

Analyzing
6. In Episode 0, six of the Endless siblings gather for a family meeting. Which siblings have close relationships? Which have antagonistic relationships? Explain your reasoning.
7. Why is Dream inclined to listen to Death but not Destiny when they point out that his treatment of Nada was unjust?
8. Does Destiny have any agency to make any decisions of his own? Explain your reasoning
Evaluating
9. If you were in Dream’s position, to which faction would you cede Hell? Why?

10. In what ways are the various story lines in Season of Mists driven by change or the desire for change?

Creating
12. Dream’s 70-year captivity seems to have led him to commit himself to freeing other people, but is he truly committed to the people he’s set free -- Hector, Lyta, Jed, Rose, and even Nada? Why or why not?

Activities

Illustration
Research other cultures’ concept of Hell. For example, examine Norse, Japanese, Indian, and ancient Greek concepts of the underworld and demons. Based on your research, illustrate what these realms and their denizens would look like, and compare your drawings to the depiction of Hell in Seasons of Mist.

Writing
Imagine that Lucifer has given you the key to the empty domain of Hell. Write an advertisement for the property that emulates a real estate listing. Include the criteria that the new owners must meet in order to take possession of the property.

Digital Presentation
The angels Remiel and Duma ultimately gain possession of Hell, but they have very different responses to the responsibility. Use images and excerpts from Seasons of Mist to develop a digital presentation that compares their responses. In your presentation, evaluate who has the healthier response to the responsibility and explain your reasoning.

For more about attempts to censor Sandman, visit http://cbldf.org/banned-comic/banned-challenged-comics/case-study-sandman/