

# CBLDF Discussion Guide

## ***Ice Haven***

**by Daniel Clowes**

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*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 the fictional town of Ice Haven, a young boy goes missing, a poet seethes with envy, a self-conscious teen pines for love, a pair of married detectives drift further apart, and a giant blue rabbit returns to town after his recent release from prison. Through an artful weaving of vignettes, Clowes captures the apathy and angst of a small town.

### **Themes**

Self perception, art criticism, kidnapping

### **Reasons Challenged**

Profanity, course language, and brief non-sexual nudity

### **Suggested Age Range**

High school and above

### **Discussion Questions**

#### **Remembering**

1. How many different characters are introduced in these stories? How are the characters connected to each other?
2. Summarize the events in the story.

#### **Understanding**

3. Who abducted David Goldberg? What evidence points to that person's guilt?
4. How do the historical events of Leopold and Loeb connect with the current events in Ice Haven?

#### **Applying**

5. What questions would you ask the various citizens of Ice Haven if you were conducting the investigation as Mr. or Mrs. Ames?

#### **Analyzing**

6. Which events in the story happened purely in the imagination of one of the characters? Identify specific page numbers and explain what clues in the art or language indicated a shift in reality.
7. How would you describe the emotional lives of most of the characters? Compare that with your own life and that of others around you. Do you think Clowes accurately portrays the range of people's emotions?

#### **Evaluating**

8. What do you think of the "Blue Bunny" strip? How does it influence your reading of the rest of the book?
9. On page 46, Harry Naybors describes the comics he critiques as "strictly for adults." Is this such a comic? What qualities in a comic determine its audience?

10. In many ways, this is a comic book about comic books. What is the significance of the critic in the story, as Harry Naybors asks himself at the end of the book?

### **Creating**

11. Imagine a town that is not filled with separate, sad people. How would such a community be different from Ice Haven?

## **Activities**

### **Illustration**

Create a travel brochure for the town of Ice Haven. Include some of the locations in the book as well as special events the town might host.

### **Dramatic Reading**

Dramatize one of the comic strips. Act out the scene without altering any of the words as presented in the comic. Pay attention to pacing to set the appropriate tone for the story.

### **Persuasive Writing**

Imagine you are either the prosecutor or the defense attorney in Random Wilder's case. What should happen to Random Wilder? Present a compelling argument for which side you have chosen and support your argument with citations from the book.

### **Literary Critique**

Write a critique of this comic. You may include some of Harry Naybors's own words or make it entirely original. Formulate a coherent view of the work and support your argument with specific citations from the book.

*For more about attempts to censor Ice Haven, visit <http://cblddf.org/banned-comic/banned-challenged-comics/case-study-ice-haven/>*

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