

The Sandman: The Wake Study Guide

The Sandman: The Wake by Neil Gaiman

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Plot Summary

Sandman: The Wake by Neil Gaiman is a work of fiction comprising three separate short stories. Each story is adorned with somewhat gruesome and eerie illustrations created by famed Sandman penciller Michael Zulli and others. The majority of the story is tied in with the illustrations because the book is a graphic novel.

In the first scene, a messenger has been sent to inform the members of the Endless family that Morpheus is dead. The first person to be informed is Destiny. The second to be informed, this time by a bat, is Despair. The third to be informed, by an eagle, is Death. The text states that there are some things that even the Endless family does not question too deeply. This was not the first time that such a message had been sent.

In Chapter 1: "Which Occurs in the Wake of What Has Gone Before," Delirium approaches the rest of the family singing, "One for sorrow, two for sorrow, three for sorrow, four for for for I don't know. But I'm bored of sorrow, five for three two one, six for gold, seven for a magpie who tells me where to go..." Chap. 1, p. 5

Destiny, Despair, Desire and Death wait at the crossroads of the Quinsy Mountains. Delirium makes her entrance. Each has come from his or her own realm to discuss and mourn the death of their brother, Morpheus, the Sandman. Delirium, the youngest of the Endless family, says she is surprised that Destruction is not present. Despair says that it is apparent that all who will come are already there. Delirium says that when they thought Despair was dead, they all came. Destiny announces that their brother is dead.

The scenes move relatively quickly from this point. Arrangements are made for a wake and a funeral to mourn Dream, perhaps the most well known and dynamic member of the Endless.

In Chapter 2: "In Which a Wake is Held," people begin to learn about Dream's death and the mourning begins. The reader learns that Dream is not truly dead, that he is simply in a new realm. Dream is immortal and can never truly die.

Many characters from past books arrive at the wake while the family builds a place of remembrance at Fiddler's Green.

In Chapter 3: "In Which We Wake," eulogies are given. Matthew remains at Dream's side and helps him work through the fear of facing his family once again in this new incarnation. Dream has already seen Destruction. The chapter ends with the family waiting in the dining hall.

In "Epilogue: Sunday Mourning," Robbie Gadling attends a Renaissance Fare with his girlfriend Gwen. They discuss the irrelevance of most of the events and fractured history that take place at those events. Robbie, off on his own, meets with Death, and they discuss Dream's death and the fact that Robbie, too, may die one day. That day is not today.



In "Exiles," Master Li is sent by the emperor into exile because of the actions of his son. Master Li gets lost in the desert and finds Dream. Dream offers Master Li the chance to stay and provide counsel. Master Li says he must fulfill his destiny.

In "The Tempest," the final story, William Shakespeare's final play is discussed. Gaiman shows the struggles faced by Shakespeare throughout his career, how he saw his work as both a gift and a burden. In the end, Shakespeare, like Gaiman, lays down his quill for good.



Chapter 1: Which Occurs in the Wake of What Has Gone Before

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The family has come to retrieve books of ritual. They meet Sithcundman, who welcomes the family to the Necropolis Litharge.

Desire says: "Our brother is dead. We have come for the cerements and for the books of ritual, which are in your keeping." Chap. 1, p. 18

Sithcundman orders that the gates to the catacombs be opened but warns the family that maps will do no good because the catacombs are alive and they change at will. It is determined that none of the family can go into the room but that they must have an envoy. Delirium creates one out of mud. Death gives life to the Envoy. Delirium begins to come up with silly names but they eventually agree on Eblis O'Shaughnessy.

Destiny says to Eblis: "Eblis O'Shaughnessy, you were created and gifted by five of the Endless, but you can neither dream nor, ultimately, destroy, and that shall be your triumph and that shall be your tragedy." Chap. 1, p. 21

Delirium gives Eblis an illuminated jellyfish to see his way. Eblis easily finds the room and informs the powers that be that Dream is dead. Eblis is given the cerements and ritual and returns to the Endless.



"And having gained what he had come for, the Envoy returned to the world above. He walked away from the low keening, that echoed through the catacombs, like a mother sorrowing for her departed child." Chap. 1, p. 23

Cain demands an audience with Morpheus/Dream in his new role as Daniel, saying that things have gone on long enough. Cain demands that Daniel recreate Abel as is stated in his contract that was signed by his predecessor. Daniel gives in and does as Cain asks. When Dream is referred to as Morpheus, he says that he has no right to the name and that he is now Dream of the Endless, that is enough.

Matthew sits in mourning, saying that he never should have left his friend alone. Matthew learns that Dream has sent a message about the funeral and wake. He remains despondent.

Destiny leads the family on. Elsewhere, people various people begin to dream. Others begin to return from madness.

Dream meets with Gilbert and tells him that he can give his life back. Gilbert replies:

"If you bring me back to life, my death will have no meaning. I had a fine existence. I was a good place. I spent a little time in the waking world. I even fell in love, once, a little. I lived a good life and it ended. Would you take that away from me?" Chap. 1, p. 20

Various people and entities approach the door to Dreaming, including Titania, Queen of the Faerie, the angel Duma, and Lady Bast.

"And the Lady Bast, her fur thinning and her eyes milky and dim, summons all the power at her disposal, pulls together tiny strands of belief, a handful of instants of half-hearted worship. At a cat show in Glasgow, a teenage boy stares at a one-year-old Abyssinian and, for a moment, he sees a goddess. Head held high, eyes clear, fur sleek, she walks to the Dreaming." Chap. 1, p. 21

A boy, Alex Burgess, asks where he is and seems confused, as do others. Lady Bast announces that they are there to mourn Dream. More people and entities arrive just before the Endless appear in the sky.

Chapter 1: Which Occurs in the Wake of What Has Gone Before Analysis

Sandman: The Wake is not a stand alone book although it is billed by many as such. The reader must understand the nature of the Endless and also should be familiar with former characters so that the story makes sense and is not completely disjointed in areas.



Morpheus, aka the Sandman, aka Dream, has died. The Endless are considered to be immortal, which may also confuse the reader. However, Dream has simply entered another realm, unbeknownst to many. The Endless deeply mourn the loss of their brother. The absence of Destruction is noted by some while Destiny, for one, pushes it aside to attend to the task at hand - retrieving the ceremonies and ritual so that they can have a funeral and wake for the Sandman.

The creation of the Envoy gives the reader an insight into the powers of the Endless. The mourning of Dream spreads far and wide, touching many of the people that had been or still are affected by his power.



Chapter 2: In Which a Wake is Held

Chapter 2: In Which a Wake is Held Summary

"Somewhere in the night, entities bigger than storm-clouds are building a house of remembrance. The people on the ground are waiting for the building to be finished before they go inside. They wait awkwardly, shuffling and making small-talk, in the wasteland that was once the heart of the Dreaming. Everybody's here. You're here."
Chap. 2, p. 1

People gather around. A girl, who appears to be crying, speaks to a boy in red striped pajamas. The girl asks if the boy has a handkerchief. The boy tells a story about carrying around a piece of a curtain that used to hang in his bedroom. One side was comfortable while the other is unfriendly. The boy offers the handkerchief and asks the girl if she is crying. The girl says no, they are not tears - she is bleeding.

Eblis O'Shaughnessy approaches the new incarnation of Dream. Dream learns that he must not see his family until after the funeral and wake. Lucien goes on without Dream.

A man approaches Lucien to talk about Dream. He is confused when Lucien says that Dream has not died. "Nobody died. How can you kill an idea? How can you kill the personification of an action?" Lucien, Chap. 2, p. 4

Cain and Abel are also present. Cain is told to rein in his temper.

There is a lengthy soliloquy from Calliope on her relationship with Dream. She tells the tale of her love for him, her hatred of him, and the birth and death of their son. "I am not here to mourn him. I mourned the loss of my love a long time ago. I am here to say goodbye to a stranger who once did me a good turn. And to the man who gave my son the death he craved." Chap. 2, p. 6

The raven returns to ask what is happening. He is told that the mausoleum door will open at dawn and then the funeral and wake shall begin. Mervyn Pumpkinhead is also on the scene. He tells the raven that talking with those that dream is like talking to a zombie and he doesn't know why the raven continues to try. The raven tells Mervyn that he is an imposter since the real Mervyn was blown up by The Kindly Ones. Mervyn makes a joke.

Matthew, the raven, returns to Dream. He says that there isn't a wake, that he simply saw a lot of people he was unfamiliar with plus a pumpkin that should be dead. "I have existed since the beginning of time. This is a true thing. I am older than worlds and suns and gods." Chap. 2, p. 9

Dream says that he will meet his brothers and sisters for the first time the next day and he is afraid. Dream is also afraid of this new incarnation.



Mad Hettie tells about her encounters with Dream and how he was always friendly and kind to her.

Cluracan and others make appearances, talking about Dream.

The crowd shouts for the fiddler to begin to play and start the wake.

Titania, Queen of the Faerie, arrives. She refuses to disclose the nature of her relationship with Dream as the memories are personal.

Dream and Matthew talk about Dream's death. Dream says the Corinthian wanted to kill Matthew, not him, but Dream changed his mind. Matthew asks if he can be sent to the place where ravens go when they have had enough. Dream tells Matthew to return after the wake and the funeral and if he still wishes to go, Dream will send him on. Matthew asks if it will hurt.

Matthew meets with the Guardians of the Gate. The gryphon says he hopes to do as well as the one before him. Matthew wonders why a new gryphon was necessary. Supposedly, gryphons were extinct. The gryphon says that he comes from far away - far from Dreaming. Matthew says that the old gryphon could have been brought back to life.

Rosie and Jed approach Lyta, who is sitting alone. Rosie tries to catch up with Lyta, who seems to be distraught. Rosie tells Lyta that she is pregnant. Lyta tells Rosie to kill it before it breaks her heart.

Matthew visits Eve, Lucien and Bhartari Raja, who are toasting Dream. Matthew refuses the drink. Matthew tells Lucien about Dream saving his life. Lucien says that Dream did not simply let it happen, he made it happen. There were only so many ways in which Dream could change. Dying would force the biggest change.

Thessaly gives a long monologue about her relationship with Dream. He invited her to stay in Dreaming and she accepted. Dream courted her and then eventually returned to his work and duties. Dream did not ask her to stay. She returned to the world and swore she would never shed another tear for him.

Superman (as Clark Kent), Batman, and Martian Manhunter, meet and talk, as do others, including an ancient centaur.

The story returns to the Endless. Matthew approaches, identifying each. Matthew does not recognize the dog or Barnabas. Matthew asks what the family is doing. Delirium says they have met at Fiddler's Green to build a place of remembrance. Matthew questions the location and says he did not know that Dreaming had more than one heart.

Destiny says that Matthew was close to Dream. Matthew says that no one was really close to Dream. Destiny asks Matthew to eulogize Dream. Matthew agrees.



Matthew speaks to Barnabas about the scene in Tom Sawyer where the kids arrive at their own funeral. Matthew wonders aloud if Dream would do the same thing, using Mark Twain's famous quote: "The reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated."

Matthew says they should go since a few billion people were expected to show up and he wants to get a good seat.

Chapter 2: In Which a Wake is Held Analysis

Chapter 2 has many references to the previous nine Sandman books. This may be somewhat confusing to readers unfamiliar with the characters, although at least some of the context may be picked up through language and verbiage. For example, many may know Titania, Queen of the Faeries, as well as Clark Kent and Batman, but more than likely are not familiar with the stories of Rosie and Lyta. The reader is most likely also unaware of the stories and personalities of Calliope and Thessaly.

Dream seems to have little regret about his choice to save Matthew and to leave Dreaming, at least for a while. He regrets the grief thrust upon his family and is wary to see them again. Matthew is surprised that Dream chose to save him over his own life.

Dream leaves the reader wondering if he will wait until the funeral is over until he makes his appearance.



Chapter 3: In Which We Wake

Chapter 3: In Which We Wake Summary

"The stone doors of the mausoleum opened (apparently of their own volition, as there was no one to open them) and the people, and the dreams, and the gods, and all manner of other creatures and beings, went in, each one after its fashion." Chap. 3, p. 2

The mood becomes somber as people file inside the mausoleum. The ceremonies are laid out and Dream's body is covered by a shroud.

Destiny steps up and begins to speak. Destiny talks about Dream and how a wake is a time of people memorializing others so that's what shall be done with Dream. Hettie talks with Hob Gadling.

Dream sits and talks with his horse, a gryphon and others. Dream says he will not go to the wake as he has seen himself so there is no need. Hippogriff comments that Dream is behaving differently than before. A stranger appears on the horizon.

Lady Bast takes her turn at the front of the massive crowd: "We were never lovers, and we never will be, now. I do not regret that, however. I regret the conversations we never had, the time we did not spend together. I regret that I never told him that he made me happy, when I was in his company. The world was the better for his being in it. These things alone do I now regret: things left unsaid. And he is gone, and I am old." Chap. 3, p. 7

The scene switches. Jed and Rosie are talking. Jed asks Rosie if she is really pregnant. Rosie says she is just "a tiny wee bit" pregnant but she is sure. Jed seems to be excited and says that families both rock and suck.

Desire steps up to speak. His eulogy is insulting, saying that families are bound together for better or for worse, that he was unfortunate to have been Dream's brother. Dream did not know enough to come out of the rain.

The figure on the horizon draws near. Dream greets him and asks if he needs help to find the memorial. The man says he will not go, that he has only come to Dream's realm to rest. Dream realizes that the man is Destruction. Destruction says he has come to offer some advice.

Despair speaks of her love for Dream, saying that while others may forget, she will not. Wesley Dodds speaks next saying that he met Dream only once but that connection changed everything. The angel Duma sheds a tear in which everyone can see mercy, miracles and purpose. Delirium speaks next, although she would rather not. Matthew is scheduled to follow.



Dream and Destruction talk. Destruction tells Dream that he does not have to stay, but Dream refuses. Destruction says that the meeting with the rest of the family will not be as bad as Dream thinks. Dream asks if he should tell him of their meeting. Destruction says no.

Matthew speaks. He talks about how he is struggling with what to say. In the end he talks about how one cannot kill dreams - not really. Despair is often followed by hope - and there is always hope.

Some people spoke at the wake, some did not.

"But you will remember it, in the soft, lost slumbering moments between waking and true sleep:Remember the whispering voices of the gods of earth and heaven ...the piping laughter of innocent chaos ...the frightened rustling of cold order... The voices of the living, the voices of the dead. They will haunt your sleep until you die." Chap. 3, p. 15

Because it is all a dream, the mausoleum becomes a bridge. What you once thought was a bier is now a boat. The girl in red (Death) speaks and makes sense of everything as she bids goodbye to her brother.

No one can do anything but watch.

The wake ends. Lucien says some will return to the castle, others will return to the waking world. Hippolyta Trevor Hall approaches Dream. She recognizes him as Daniel. Dream tells her of his new identity.

Dream speaks to Lyta. Dream says she fears vengeance. Dream cannot take a life unless it is done to protect Dreaming. Lyta says she did it for Dream. Dream points out that in return, Lyta lost her son. Dream must remind Lyta that he is not Daniel. Dream also talks about the person responsible for the death of the first Despair and how that person will suffer for it until the end of time. Dream hugs Lyta and says that he has put his mark on her. No one will harm Lyta. Dream tells her to go on her way and put her life back together.

Matthew returns. Matthew says that the family is gathering at the door so they had better talk now. Matthew tells Dream what he wants. He says that he does not want to be Dream's raven, that it wouldn't be right. Still, Matthew wants to hang around to give advice and to bail Dream out of trouble when necessary because Dream is still a kid and ravens don't grow on trees. Then Matthew tells Dream to arrange for food for his family and "umpty-zillion" ambassadors and well wishers.

Alexander Burgess finds Dream and says he is lost. Dream gives the boy a candle to find his way home. Others begin to wake and remember some of the dream and the funeral.

Each family member wakes until only Dream is left. Matthew is there to support him. The rest of the family waits in a dining hall.



Between the Pedestals of Night and Morning
Between red death and radiant desire
With not one sound of triumph or of warning
Stands the great sentry on the Bridge of Fire.
O transient soul, thy thought with dreams adorning,
Cast down the laurel, and unstring the lyre:
the wheels of Time are turning, turning, turning,
The slow stream channels deep and doth not tire.
Gods on their bridge above
Whispering lies and love
Shall mock your passage down the sunless river
Which, rolling all its streams,
shall take you, king of dreams,
Unthroned and unapproachable for ever
To where the kings who dreamed of old
Whiten in habitations monumental cold.

Chapter 3: In Which We Wake Analysis

The most somber part of the story begins with the wake. It is unusual that the wake is held before the funeral; however, there are different traditions regarding these events. The scene inside the mausoleum is like one would expect at any funeral, save for the unusual creatures and massive number of attendants. Some of the characters from previous stories meet and talk. While the event is taking place, Dream waits filled with some fear of facing his family again and with the sadness that comes with making the change he chose to make in turning into a new incarnation. At this point, the family, save for Destruction, thinks Dream is dead.

The eulogies are similar in that they mourn Dream but also talk about his cruelty, selfishness, and obsessive devotion to his job and responsibilities. It is astonishing to think of the billions of people that Dream has touched since the beginning of his existence and how those experiences have profoundly touched and changed many.



Desire's eulogy is fitting for a family that at time suffers turmoil. While it is not the most pleasant, it is certainly honest.

Destruction's appearance is somewhat of a surprise. It takes Dream a moment to recognize his own brother, which may be due in part to his new incarnation or their long separation. Destruction chooses to go his own way.

While much of the service is highlighted, Gaiman tells the readers that they may remember it because they were there:

"But you will remember it, in the soft, lost slumbering moments between waking and true sleep:

....Remember the whispering voices of the gods of earth and heaven ...the piping laughter of innocent chaos ...the frightened rustling of cold order... The voices of the living, the voices of the dead. They will haunt your sleep until you die." Chap. 3, p. 15

Dream and Lyta speak about the loss of her son. She has learned her lesson about seeking vengeance. Although Dream sympathizes, he points out that Lyta had no right to do what she did. Dream sense Lyta on her way with reassurances and advice. It is unclear if the talk helped Lyta or if she will heed Dream's advice.

Dream continues to meet with people from his previous incarnation and must figure out how to deal with them now. This is an odd situation with Dream and one that causes concern.

In the end, Matthew decides not to leave Dream. Matthew and Dream sometimes have a love/hate relationship as Matthew hates to be treated like a lowly raven. However, Matthew is not ready to go and feels that he can be of assistance to Dream in this new life.



Epilogue: Sunday Mourning

Epilogue: Sunday Mourning Summary

Hob Gadling, who now goes by "Robbie," is on his way to a Renaissance Faire with Guenevere, his girlfriend. Robbie is resistant to go to the festival since no one in England even knew about the Renaissance until it was long over. Robbie sees the entire event as being a car crash meshed with Disneyland.

Guenevere says she wishes that she could be a real queen. Robbie says she should be. Guenevere says there were no black queens in England. Robbie mentions Catherine of Aragon. Guenevere comments that Catherine of Aragon was Spanish.

Robbie replies: "There were a lot of Moors and Africans in Spain and Italy in the old days. Remember Othello? Trust me, if Catherine of Aragon had been in Alabama in the 1950s they'd have made her ride in the back of the bus." Epilogue: Sunday Mourning, p. 2

Guenevere changes into her outfit, a dress with a tight fitting bodice that exposes a great deal of cleavage. Robbie comments that Guenevere is fair except that she is mangling the Queen's English and her breasts are hanging out. Guenevere tells Robbie that he doesn't have a romantic bone in his body.

They run into one of Guenevere's friends who has developed a new personality for himself - Lambkin the Humiliator. Guenevere is not impressed. Guenevere tells Robbie not to act so much like a boyfriend.

Sunday Mourning officially begins at this point.

Guenevere tells Robbie that there once was a Sir Robert Gadling. Hinnegan the book-binder told her about it. Hinnegan wants to meet Robbie. Apparently one was a printer, one was a publisher and one was a slaver with a fleet of ships. Robbie apologizes for the slaver. Guenevere tells him that he needs to get over the fact that the English and Americans were involved in the slave trade. Robbie is not responsible.

Robbie goes on to talk about slavery. Guenevere says that slavery was outlawed in England and that every slave that set foot on English soil was free. Robbie says that was true to a point but that some English owned and ran slave ships. They would trade slaves for cotton and molasses. Then the slavers would sell the cotton and molasses to fund the next run. Seventy thousand people were transported across the Atlantic for decades until the English outlawed slavery. Meanwhile, the profits were enormous.

The new law made it worse for the slaves. The slavers made so much money that they could afford to dump two out of three shipments and still make a profit. All of the slaves were chained together. If a few were thrown overboard, the rest would follow. Robbie says he has dreams about faces underwater.



Guenevere tells Robbie that he is not responsible for five hundred years of cultural imperialism. There were African tribes that made slaves of people kidnapped from other tribes. Robbie argues that it may have taken place regardless but not to the extent that it did. Guenevere says it is obvious that she is the first black woman Robbie has ever dated.

Guenevere goes to prepare for court. Robbie wanders around alone and ends up at Hinnegan's booth. The men talk about the other Robert Gadlings.

Robbie runs into Lambkin. Lambkin is hesitant to let Robbie touch his lamb. Robbie explains the "vegetable lamb" and how people used to mistake cotton bushes for lambs although their "blood" was made of green sap. Robbie carries on until Lambkin asks Robbie if he is drunk on a Sunday morning. Robbie says he is not but he can see drunk through a telescope.

Robbie goes on to tell Lambkin all that is wrong with the festival. There is no dung, lice or nits. No one with rotting face cancers. The men go their separate ways.

Robbie sits in the pub. He is approached by a wench named Cordelia. Robbie gives Cordelia \$100 to bring beer but nothing more. He does not want to be called "milord" or hear any of the silly middle English so commonly used. Nor does he want to be bothered by any minstrels. Whatever is left out of the \$100 when he is finished, Cordelia gets to keep.

A long time has passed. Cordelia warns Robbie that at midday, four large hairy men with guitars come to the pub. Robbie thanks Cordelia, takes his beer and leaves. He finds a condemned building and goes inside. He looks around and then sits down to drink his beer.

Death enters the room. She and Robbie speak. Robbie thinks he remembers her but cannot place her. Death says that he used to be a friend of her brother's and that they met for a drink once a century. Robbie realizes who she is and says that he now believes it is true - that Dream is dead. They discuss death. Death says she used to think that dying was one big event. Robbie disagrees. He believes that there are many small deaths until the final one occurs. Robbie asks if it is his time. Death only says maybe. If it is, Robbie will be found slumped over his beer. Robbie asks if there is a heaven or hell or reincarnation. Death asks his opinion. Robbie quotes from Kipling's "The Sack of the Gods": "They will come back—come back again, as long as the red Earth rolls. He never wasted a leaf or a tree. Do you think He would squander souls?" Epilogue, p. 18

Death offers to take Robbie. Robbie says he is not ready yet. Gwen finds Robbie asleep. They leave the festival. Robbie says he might stop drinking for a few hundred years. Gwen laughs and says his driver's license states his age as thirty-two. Gwen wants to visit someone and Robbie wants to go and think, so they go their separate ways. An hour later Gwen wakes Robbie. He tells her about a dream in which he met



Dream on a beach. There was an old bloke that reminded him of a pavement artist. They talked and then walked off into the sunset.

Epilogue: Sunday Mourning Analysis

Hob "Robbie" Gadling is a former character from the Sandman series. Robbie is cynical, judgmental and feels he has the right to be because of all he has been through. Guenevere is a breath of fresh air for Robbie, although they seem to have little in common. Robbie is against going to a Renaissance Faire and one must wonder why he agrees to go unless it is to point out everything that is wrong with it. The Renaissance Faire angle is an inside joke for Gaiman and fans. Many people that read Sandman love Ren Faires and expect Gaiman to love them as well or perhaps even attend them. Gaiman says he has never attended a Ren Faire. This explains why the author chose the odd setting for the Epilogue: Sunday Mourning as it has little to do with mourning except for the end when Robbie meets with Death and again with Dream.



Exiles

Exiles Summary

"When I was a child I lived amid the mulberry groves. In summer the mulberry trees would stain the green grass with crimson pulp. Birds of a thousand colours danced in the sky when I was a boy. They brightened the day with their intricate songs. "We are who we choose to be," sang the goldfinch, when the sun was high. "I dream about dreams about dreams," sang the nightingale, under the pale moon." Exiles, p. 2

Master Li writes this at the beginning of Exiles before he starts to tell his story - how he commanded armies, advised emperors, made fortunes, had a family and concubines, all before he was sent into exile. Along the way they met a pack of wolves. They killed the king and the rest lost heart. Master Li talks about having dreams about dreams about dreams.

Master Li talks about his son, who was allied with the White Lotus. The desert he crosses has the name of a bad omen. The guide will not speak the name. Master Li says his life is filled with bad omens. His son is dead and so he has been sent into exile. The emperor tells Li he is lucky to have his head. Now Li is awash in dreams.

Master Li finds a kitten and takes it with him, although it is foolish to do so because of difficult travel and little water.

The guide and Master Li talk about the time it will take to reach Wei. The guide worries about the illusions that often take men from their paths.

Master Li talks about the loss of his guide and seeing many illusions in the desert, including one of his dead son. The kitten becomes scared and runs away. Against his son's advice, Master Li follows the kitten. He goes into the tent of the prefect of the dead where he finds Dream. Dream explains that the Master has entered into the edge of Dreaming. The Master asks for a cup of wine to warm him. The Master leaves. The kitten soon follows. The Master begins to hear the sounds of madness.

Master Li and the kitten meet once again with Dream. Dream offers Master Li the opportunity to be his counselor. Master Li refuses and says he must do as his emperor commands.

Master Li awakes. The kitten makes him cry out, which captures the attention of the guide who had been missing. The guide thought the Master was lost. The kitten saves the Master in return.



Exiles Analysis

The story is told in the same form as many ancient Chinese tales. It is filled with parables and lessons learned.

Master Li is an old man with many years of service to his credit. His son had dabbled in the magical arts and became involved with a group called White Lotus. This behavior caused the Master to lose favor with the emperor. However, the emperor still had some loyalty toward Master Li for his many years of service to him and his father. Therefore, the Master was not put to death, but rather sent into exile with no promise of return. The Master paid a heavy price for his son's misdeeds, from his son's death to being taken away from his home and his family. The Master, being old, does not expect to be asked to return in this lifetime.

Although the Master's deed of saving the kitten seems foolish, it is also apt. The reader is able to tell as the story goes along that the Master will be rewarded for saving the kitten's life, even if it means that he must suffer to do so. The Master is used to suffering and with suffering comes wisdom.

Dream's offer to have the Master stay as his counsel was a generous one. Although the Master has been sent into exile by his emperor, he feels the need to maintain loyalty to the man and will go to Wei to live out his life in exile as he had been ordered. Dream tells the Master to tell the kitten if he changes his mind, portraying the kitten in the light of a familiar or mystical being.

Dream quotes the barbarians who say that while things change, nothing is ever truly lost.

The Master sees his son. The son is upset that the father would leave him to chase after the kitten.

The Master wakes up sitting in the sand. The kitten saves him by scratching him and making him call out. The guide hears the cry and returns to the Master to take him on the rest of the journey to Wei.



The Tempest

The Tempest Summary

The story takes place on the ocean. The year is 1610. There is a tempest in full force, complete with lightning and thunder. A shipmaster and boatswain worry about running aground.

William Shakespeare is writing when his daughter, Judith, approaches to tell him that there is a storm brewing. Judith is surprised that her father is writing a play. She says that her mother said he would write no more. Shakespeare says that will be true soon enough. He outlines the play for his daughter.

Judith wonders if it is a comedy. She says that her mother said they would be rich if he had only written only comedies. Shakespeare says this new play will be written for a king, but not for "Scottish Jimmy." Shakespeare's wife enters the room and angrily tells him to stop talking that way, that Judith will repeat what she hears and it will bring trouble. The mother worries that Judith is twenty-six and unmarried. Shakespeare says perhaps Judith should follow in her mother's footsteps and get pregnant so that some man will make an honest woman of her. Shakespeare leaves to go to the pub.

One of the men at the pub refers to Shakespeare as a "plague-crow," saying that plagues are caused by plays and he is a writer of those plays. The mistress of the inn, Mrs. Quiney, defends Shakespeare.

That night, Shakespeare hears singing outside his window.

Parts of The Tempest are revealed.

Shakespeare sees his old friend Honest Ben Jonson. The friends talk about the play.

Shakespeare and Ben discuss the context of the play. Shakespeare talks about ending his writing career. Ben talks about all of the jobs he has held and of his adventures in life. Ben asks what Shakespeare has done except for writing and acting. Shakespeare says he has done a lot with his life. They adjourn to the pub. Along the way they see men building large fires. Ben talks about his role with the king and how he taught the king that not all Catholics were bad.

Shakespeare and Ben talk about Anne and the work. Ben says some of the sonnets are worth saving while others are prattle, useful only for getting a maiden into bed. Shakespeare says he is too old for such nonsense now. Ben says Shakespeare is a born playwright. Shakespeare says he will be glad to put down his pen.

Judith asks her father to read the play to her. She says she wishes she could read and were not so dull. Judith says that she used to wish her father was a smith or a miller so



that he would be at home with her and Anne instead of being in London to write and act. Shakespeare says he is there now and will not write much longer.

More of the play is revealed.

Anne tells Shakespeare that Tommy Quiney is courting Judith. Shakespeare wishes for a more suitable suitor.

Anne tells Will that he lives in words too much; lives in dreams and not reality. Nothing is ever good enough.

Winter comes. Will laments that he cannot write as fast or as well as he did in his younger years. He speaks with a clergyman about the source of inspiration. What if it did not come from God but from some other place? Will intends to include a man in the play that writes through the use of magic. Yet unlike Faustus, he is a good man. The clergyman tells Will to have him renounce his powers at the end of the play; he will be saved by prayer. Will and the clergyman go separate ways. Will goes home to work on the play and also discusses it with Anne.

Shakespeare turns over the play. He is paid a pittance. He asks for a cup of wine in the master's parlor. The patron tells Shakespeare that he was the one that gave him the words and the plays. Shakespeare had the talent but needed to foster it. Shakespeare talks about all of his experiences and how he used them in his plays. The patron tells Shakespeare that he is well loved.

Shakespeare wakes and is sitting at his desk. He has finished the play and knows he will never write another. The burden he has felt has been laid down along with his quill.

Gaiman adds a short postscript about the marriage of Judith and the deaths of Will and Anne.

The Tempest Analysis

The last section of the book is fitting. Shakespeare's work has been used throughout the Sandman series and it is used again here. Shakespeare has returned to Stratford-on-Avon, where he lives with his wife, Anne and their daughter, Judith. The Shakespeares worry about Judith because she is twenty-six and unmarried with few prospects. Eventually, Judith will consent to marry Tommy Quiney, the son of the local innkeeper. The marriage was not a happy one.

Shakespeare focuses his entire being on completing "The Tempest," his final play. Shakespeare says that the idea came to him in a Dream, which in this context means that it came to him through The Dreaming. This is confirmed when the patron of the play is shown to be Desire. The place where Shakespeare meets Desire is church-like in nature, with large stained glass windows of the Endless.



Shakespeare laments all he has given for his art and the little he has received in return. He has received some small rewards and applause but it does not seem to be enough for all that he has put into his works. He is thankful for the words and does not believe that the plays have come from himself but from some outer force or entity. This is considered to be blasphemy by some.

In the end, Shakespeare is grateful to finish his final play which will give him rest. Shakespeare never wrote another play after "The Tempest" and died six years later.



Characters

Dream

Dream is one of the main characters and a main topic in the story *Sandman: The Wake*. Dream goes by many names, including the Sandman, Morpheus, Oneiros, Dream and Lord Shaper. He is a tall, very thin man with bone white skin and jet black hair and eyes. His eyes are often seen as being stars. Dream is referred to in many ways, not all of which are positive. He is seen as being brooding and self-absorbed. His love life is legendary and is filled with bad relationships and worse breakups. Dream is slow to forgive.

In the end of *The Kindly Ones*, Dream was supposedly killed when he sacrificed himself in Matthew's place. Dream was killed by a Corinthian. However, as the personification of an idea, Dream is not entirely real and so he can never truly die. Additionally, Dream is a member of the Endless family - a group of immortals that have existed since before time began.

Dream has simply entered into a new realm in Dreaming. He has taken on the likeness of the child Daniel Hall, although he is recognized by others such as Matthew, Hippogriff and Destruction.

Dream often appears to others as a god might - in a shape which is familiar. For example, when dealing with Lady Bast, the Egyptian goddess, Dream will appear as a cat.

Of all the members of the Endless family Dream is closest to his sister, Death.

The Endless Family

The Endless Family is a group of immortals that inhabit the mythical land of Dreaming. They are the centerpiece of ten Neil Gaiman graphic novels created over a period of nine years. The family is headed by Destiny, the eldest. The family is comprised of Destiny, Dream, Death, Destruction, Delirium, Desire and Despair. Destruction is the "black sheep" of the family and is the only one that does not attend Dream's wake and funeral, although he visits the new incarnation of Dream.

Each character has a very distinct personality and look, including the way their words are inked onto a page. For example, Delirium, who sports rainbow colored hair, has rainbow colored words. Dream's personality has been described as being brooding and self-absorbed. His love life is legendary and is filled with bad relationships and worse breakups. Dream is slow to forgive. Delirium is unstable and kooky.



Although the family has their differences, they come together and plan a wake and funeral for their brother. They also create Eblis O'Shaughnessy, an Envoy, to retrieve the necessary ceremonies and ritual for the event.

The family does not, however, realize that Dream is not dead, that he has simply entered into another realm. "Nobody died. How can you kill an idea? How can you kill the personification of an action?" Lucien, Chap. 2, p. 4

Matthew

Matthew is the raven that has been by Dream's side. Matthew laments the supposed death of Dream, although he knows that Dream is not really dead. Matthew considers Dream to be his boss as well as his best friend, despite their differences. Matthew is responsible for helping to inform the Endless of Dream's death.

Dream gives Matthew the chance to go free, but Matthew says he will hang around to give Dream advice and to bail him out of trouble when necessary.

Eblis O'Shaughnessy

Eblis O'Shaughnessy is the Envoy created by the Endless. Eblis was created so that he could go into the catacombs to retrieve the ceremonies and ritual book for the wake and funeral of Dream.

Rosie Hall

Rosie Hall is a character from a former Sandman book. She returns to Dreaming with her brother Jed when she learns about Sandman's death.

Cain

Cain is one of the two Biblical brothers. Cain approaches Dream and insists that Abel be resurrected per an agreement that was made eons ago.

Lucien

Lucien is the librarian of the castle at Dreaming. He is also a friend Dream and is considered to be Dream's right hand man in many ways.



Hob Gadling

Hob Gadling, who now goes by Robbie, is an immortal human that shows up in several of the Sandman stories. In this case, he is at a Ren Faire, an event that Gaiman himself has never attended.

Guenevere

Guenevere is Rob Gadling's new girlfriend. She is involved with the Ren Faire as Lady Constance du Lac.

William Shakespeare

William Shakespeare is the main character in "Tempest." He is the legendary author of comedies and tragedies that are known and performed throughout the world.

Master Li

Master Li is the exiled adviser to many emperors. He travels through the desert with a guide where he meets Dream.



Objects/Places

Dreaming

The Dreaming is the centerpiece of the Sandman comic's world. It is the home to the Endless family. The Endless Family is a group of immortals that inhabit the mythical land of Dreaming. The Dreaming, also referred to as Dreamtime, appears in many different ways throughout the book and the series as it is a realm - not a concrete place. Therefore, it changes for every person that views it. Because the Dreaming is a part of the imagination, it often seems surreal, which is part of its character and charm to the reader.

There is more than one "heart" to the Dreaming, although the Castle is typically regarded as the main location inside the Dreaming. It is where the Endless live and/or gather. Its gate is guarded by three unearthly creatures - a wyvern, hippogriff and a gryphon. These creatures are mythical and at least one is believed to be otherwise extinct.

The main gates to Dreaming are the Gates of Horn and Ivory, which were carved by Dream. The Ivory gates permit lies and deceptions to enter while the Horn gates permit only truth.

Located in the Castle is Lucien's library. Before the library was burned, the room contained every book that had ever been written.

Other locations in Dreaming are Fiddler's Green, the mausoleum, and the homes of the Biblical brothers Cain and Abel.

Fiddler's Green

Like the Castle, Fiddler's Green is considered to the true heart of Dreaming. It is introduced in this book as being the place where the Endless meet to discuss Dream's death, to make plans, and finally, to build a place of remembrance.

"Somewhere in the night, entities bigger than storm-clouds are building a house of remembrance. The people on the ground are waiting for the building to be finished before they go inside. They wait awkwardly, shuffling and making small-talk, in the wasteland that was once the heart of the Dreaming." Chap. 2, p. 1

Fiddler's Green is a place of legend. It is the place that all travelers hope to find when entering Dreaming. Fiddler's Green has the ability to take on human form and go out into the world as Gilbert, a kindly older gentleman. Gilbert is killed in "The Wake." Dream offers Gilbert the opportunity to be brought back to life. Gilbert replies: "If you bring me back to life, my death will have no meaning. I had a fine existence. I was a



good place. I spent a little time in the waking world. I even fell in love, once, a little. I lived a good life and it ended. Would you take that away from me?" Chap. 1, p. 20

Dream promises not to force Gilbert to return.

Mausoleum

The mausoleum is the place where Dream will be buried. It is the location where the wake and funeral are held.

Catacombs

The catacombs are where the ceremonies are held. Moulder tells the Endless that the catacombs are alive and ever changing. The Endless may not enter.

Envoy

The Endless create Eblis O'Shaughnessy, an Envoy, to go down into the catacombs to retrieve the ceremonies for Dream's funeral.

Renaissance Faire

The Renaissance Faire is the place where Robbie and Guenevere go to spend a Sunday. Gwen is involved with the festivities; Robbie thinks the entire concept is ridiculous.

Dreams

Dreams are the place in which most of the events happen to the mortals. Oftentimes they will wake up remembering part or perhaps none of the dream. Sometimes they remember the message. When Robbie meets Death he knows he has seen her before, but it takes a while to realize that he knows her from the Dreaming.

Desert

The desert is the main setting of "Exiles." Master Li is traveling across the desert to get to Wei, which is the place where he will live out the balance of his life.

Soft Places

"Soft Places" are what Dream calls the places that are on the edge of Dreaming. Master Li enters one of those soft places when he enters the tent in the desert.

Stratford-on-Avon

Stratford-on-Avon is the location for "The Tempest." It is the location of William Shakespeare's house as well as his favorite inn/pub.



Themes

Dream

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In the end of *The Kindly Ones*, Dream was supposedly killed when he sacrificed himself in Matthew's place. Dream was killed by a Corinthian. However, as the personification of an idea, Dream is not entirely real and so he can never truly die. Additionally, Dream is a member of the Endless family - a group of immortals that have existed since before time began.

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Dream often appears to others as a god might - in a shape which is familiar. For example, when dealing with Lady Bast, the Egyptian goddess, Dream will appear as a cat.

Of all the members of the Endless family Dream is closest to his sister, Death.

Grief

Grief is a main theme in "*Sandman: The Wake*." At the end of *The Kindly Ones*, Dream is killed by a Corinthian. In the beginning of this last entry in the Sandman series, Matthew the raven and others carry the news of Dream's death to the rest of the Endless family. Word quickly spreads and billions of people - all who have been touched by Dream in some way - come to pay their respects. The grief is the strongest for the Endless family of course, but others come from far, far away to mourn for Dream and to tell their stories. Not all stories are loving or pleasant.

Grief is evident everywhere, even in the underworld. Beings grieve when the Envoy brings the news of Dream's demise.

"And having gained what he had come for, the Envoy returned to the world above. He walked away from the low keening, that echoed through the catacombs, like a mother sorrowing for her departed child." Chap. 1, p. 16



Despite negative memories, those that may have once loved Dream, even for a short time - realize how their lives were touched by his existence.

The Endless Family

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The family does not, however, realize that Dream is not dead, that he has simply entered into another realm.

"Nobody died. How can you kill an idea? How can you kill the personification of an action?" Lucien, Chap. 2, p. 4

Style

Point of View

The point of view used in *Sandman: The Wake* by Neil Gaiman is third person omniscient. This point of view works well in the stories as there are several components and underlying factors that would not be revealed otherwise. While the first person point of view might have been interesting when coming from the characters in their time of confusion, e.g., Dream as he attempts to get used to living in the new realm, the third person point of view conveys the entire story and not just the subjective opinions of the characters. It also permits the reader to take part in the journey and development of each character in the story.

For example, Matthew's perceptions of the activities would be much different than those of any of the members of the Endless family. The Envoy sees things that no one else sees yet is not human. Each character brings a unique point of view to the story that is valid but would be confusing if each were to take over the narrative. Therefore, each person does have the opportunity to speak, but the narrator is always present to fill in the gaps.

Setting

The Dreaming is the centerpiece of the *Sandman* comic's world. It is the home to the Endless family. The Endless Family is a group of immortals that inhabit the mythical land of Dreaming. The Dreaming, also referred to as Dreamtime, appears in many different ways throughout the book and the series as it is a realm - not a concrete place. Therefore, it changes for every person that views it. Because the Dreaming is a part of the imagination, it often seems surreal, which is part of its character and charm to the reader.

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Fiddler's Green is a place of legend. It is the place that all travelers hope to find when entering Dreaming. Fiddler's Green has the ability to take on human form and go out into the world as Gilbert, a kindly older gentleman. Gilbert is killed in "The Wake."

Language and Meaning

The language and meaning used in "Sandman: The Wake" by Neil Gaiman reflects the times in which the stories are set. Gaiman does not give an exact time period for any of the stories but offers clues to the reader that might help to pinpoint a general era. For example, in *The Wake*, Gaiman introduces Mad Hettie, whose UK English is indicative of the time in which she lived. Gaiman is fond of making references to specific characters and using the language that is best related to them. For example, the reader expects Clark Kent to speak in the style befitting a journalist, while Batman typically speaks in clipped tones. When it comes to the Endless family, each has their own distinct style. For example, Despair's language always evokes sorrow as that is her personality. Delirium also lives up to her name by using sing-song language and often speaking nonsense.

The time periods dictate the language but not in such a way to make the language difficult for the reader. The language used is common, but Gaiman uses it in such a way that the common language used reflects the times and proper behavior of the characters.

Structure

Sandman: The Wake by Neil Gaiman is a work of fiction. It is comprised of three separate short stories. Each story is adorned with somewhat gruesome and eerie illustrations created by famed *Sandman* penciller Michael Zulli. The majority of the story is tied in with the illustrations because the book is in fact a graphic novel.

The illustrations lend a sense of unease to the stories which Gaiman's intent. The opening page to each section gives a list of credits of those that worked on the story from the writer and editor to colorist.

"*Sandman: The Wake*" by Neil Gaiman is broken down into six sections. The first four sections are the main part of "The Wake." The additional two sections are seemingly unrelated short stories. The shortest section is pages; the longest section is pages; the average length of the sections is pages.

"Chapter 1: Which Occurs in the Wake of What Has Gone Before" contains 24 pages.

"Chapter 2: In Which a Wake is Held" contains 24 pages.



"Chapter 3: In Which We Wake" contains 24 pages.

"Epilogue: Sunday Mourning" contains 24 pages.

"Exiles" contains 24 pages.

"Tempest" contains 41 pages.

There is also an additional, lengthy history page and a poster.

The stories are told in chronological order but rely upon flashbacks to fill in the back story where necessary.



Quotes

"One for sorrow, two for sorrow, three for sorrow, four for for for I don't know. But I'm bored of sorrow, five for three two one, six for gold, seven for a magpie who tells me where to go..."

Delirium, Chap. 1, p. 5

"Our brother is dead. We have come for the ceremonies and for the books of ritual, which are in your keeping."

Destiny, Chap. 1, p. 6

"Eblis O'Shaughnessy, you were created and gifted by five of the Endless, but you can neither dream nor, ultimately, destroy, and that shall be your triumph and that shall be your tragedy."

Destiny, Chap. 1, p. 15

"And having gained what he had come for, the Envoy returned to the world above. He walked away from the low keening, that echoed through the catacombs, like a mother sorrowing for her departed child."

Chap. 1, p. 17

"If you bring me back to life, my death will have no meaning. I had a fine existence. I was a good place. I spent a little time in the waking world. I even fell in love, once, a little. I lived a good life and it ended. Would you take that away from me?"

Gilbert, Chap. 1, p. 20

"And the Lady Bast, her fur thinning and her eyes milky and dim, summons all the power at her disposal, pulls together tiny strands of belief, a handful of instants of half-hearted worship. At a cat show in Glasgow, a teenage boy stares at a one-year-old Abyssinian and, for a moment, he sees a goddess. Head held high, eyes clear, fur sleek, she walks to the Dreaming."

Chap. 1, p. 21

"Somewhere in the night, entities bigger than storm-clouds are building a house of remembrance. The people on the ground are waiting for the building to be finished before they go inside. They wait awkwardly, shuffling and making small-talk, in the wasteland that was once the heart of the Dreaming. Everybody's here. You're here."

Chap. 2, p. 1

"Nobody died. How can you kill an idea? How can you kill the personification of an action?"

Lucien, Chap. 2, p. 4

"I am not here to mourn him. I mourned the loss of my love a long time ago. I am here to say goodbye to a stranger who once did me a good turn. And to the man who gave my



son the death he craved."

Chap. 2, p. 6

"I have existed since the beginning of time. This is a true thing. I am older than worlds and suns and gods."

Chap. 2, p. 9

"The stone doors of the mausoleum opened (apparently of their own volition, as there was no one to open them) and the people, and the dreams, and the gods, and all manner of other creatures and beings, went in, each one after its fashion."

Chap. 3, p. 2

"We were never lovers, and we never will be, now. I do not regret that, however. I regret the conversations we never had, the time we did not spend together. I regret that I never told him that he made me happy, when I was in his company. The world was the better for his being in it. These things alone do I now regret: things left unsaid. And he is gone, and I am old."

Chap. 3, p. 7

"But you will remember it, in the soft, lost slumbering moments between waking and true sleep:Remember the whispering voices of the gods of earth and heaven ...the piping laughter of innocent chaos ...the frightened rustling of cold order... The voices of the living, the voices of the dead. They will haunt your sleep until you die."

Chap. 3, p. 15

Topics for Discussion

The Endless family is mysterious and each has supernatural powers, which might be seen as or compared to magic. Magic in stories is important, especially when it allows the readers to use their imagination. Discuss the use of imagination in the stories and why it is important in regards to believing the story line. How much imagination is required of the characters? How do some manage to separate imagination from reality while others do not?

The Endless family is a group of immortal brothers and sisters that reign over all people and activities in the book. Discuss the family, their members, powers and duties as they apply to the stories.

Morpheus, the Sandman, is referred to by many names throughout the book. Discuss the Sandman's persona, alternate names, and how he is viewed by various characters.

The very nature of the Endless family deals with strange worlds and alternate realities. Discuss the use of strange worlds and how they are used. Also examine any metaphorical use of the other worlds.

Morpheus is one of the most enigmatic and famous characters in mythology. Explain the history of Morpheus. When did the character first appear in literature? What culture seemingly created Morpheus? How has the character changed throughout history? Why do you think Gaiman chose Morpheus as a main character? What other mythological entity would you like to see portrayed in a graphic novel series?

Examine the origin of the Endless. Some say that the characters have always existed and therefore are immortal and eternal. What is your opinion on the subject? Do you think the family is actually "Endless?" Where do you think they came from? If eternal and immortal, how were they created?

Many characters end up in strange worlds or alternate realities, suggesting the existence of a parallel universe. What are your thoughts on a parallel universe? Do you think one can exist? Can there be more than one? If so, are certain intersections or events predestined or does free will rule over all? What do you think might be happening in your parallel universe right now?