



Graphic Novel Study Group
Study Guides

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Study guide by Joseph Lambert

1. David B. makes very little attempt to explain the fantastical elements of *The Armed Garden*. The story starts with some historical information, and then very quickly, at the bottom of the second page of the story we see Adam visiting Rohan. From then on things like this happen without a second thought, and it becomes part of the language of the comic, part of its world. Has David B. created a level of trust and/or believability with the reader so that he can do these things and get away with them? Why or why not?
2. In *The Armed Garden* there is a shift in mood when Rohan and his followers fall from grace at the beginning of Chapter 3. When is this shift, and how does the author express the moods before and after?
3. David B. is considered a master when it comes to expressing abstract ideas and concepts visually. He employs different combinations of images with text boxes and dialogue: how do you respond to these combinations and juxtapositions? Do you think they are successful in expressing the ideas, or are there any moments of redundancy?
4. How does Anders Nilsen's entry compare to David B's story in terms of the way they use abstract figures and dialogue, and what is successful about it? And what are the differences in the way you read Anders' story compared to the way you read David's story?
5. Jonathan Bennett uses a strict three tier layout and the main character is always the same size in every panel, how does this affect the way the story is read, specifically concerning pacing and flow? How do his panel layouts compare to the rest of the artists' in the book? His inking style?
6. David B.'s story is 36 pages, Anders Nilsen's is 4, Jonathan Bennett's is 10, David Heatley's is 15, Kurt Wolfgang's is 10, Andrice Arp's is 3, Gabrielle Bell's is 5, Jeffrey Brown's is 3, and 5, Martin Cendreda has several 1-pagers at the beginning and end of the book, and in the middle R. Kikuo Johnson has several strips. How does the storytelling differ between the different lengths of story? Do you think any of the stories would have benefited from being longer? Or shorter?
7. In the same way, how does the story telling compare in relation to their color? *The Armed Garden* is two-color, David Heatley and Martin Cendreda's pages are full color, and many of the stories are black and white.
8. Gabrielle Bell's story *Mike's Café* focuses on a girl telling a story about an old man to her friend over the phone. It deconstructs the story into segments and weaves them through the main narrative of the girl on the phone. Why does her story fizzle out in the end, and how does this relate to her conversation with the boy on the phone?
9. How do the autobiographical stories - Jeffrey Brown's story, *Hollywood Money*; Kurt Wolfgang's *Odd Petal Out*; and Gabrielle Bell's *Mike's Café* compare with the fictional ones? Does this variety in content and style benefit this anthology? Why or why not?