



Graphic Novel Study Group
Study Guides

Concrete: Think Like a Mountain **By Paul Chadwick**

Study guide by Morgan Pielli

Note: some versions of this collection include additional stories with it. Since not everyone has likely gotten that copy, we'll only be dealing with the main story, *Think Like a Mountain*.

1. Narrative flow plays an important role in Chadwick's work. Find a page where the narrative flow from one panel to the next is manipulated in a particularly effective way and describe how.
2. Pick two characters and describe some subtle things Chadwick does to show how they feel about one another; such as body language and loaded comments.
3. How does Chadwick's inclusion of tiny details such as bugs in the grass or the chicken wire inside a concrete cylinder effect the readers relationship to the world he's constructing?
4. Of the Earth First! members, Roland is the odd man out, so to speak. What artistic choices does Chadwick make in order to suggest this alienation?
5. Some people find the *Concrete* series to be preachy and/or heavy handed. Do you think Chadwick was able to strike a balance between story and message in *Concrete: Think Like a Mountain*? If so, what about the story helped temper the message? If not, what about the message did you find problematic or overwhelming?
6. Chadwick uses eye contact throughout the book to serve a variety of purposes. Pick one scene in which you felt that having a character make eye contact (either with the reader or with another character) was particularly effective and discuss briefly.
7. Did you feel that the characters were believable and relatable despite the quasi-sci fi premise of a man whose brain was placed in a rock body by aliens? Why or why not?
8. Chadwick often uses surreal or hallucinatory imagery to help us get inside the heads of his characters. Pick a surreal moment in the book and discuss what you learned about that character through it. There's no wrong answer here; speculate away.
9. There is a push-pull within *Concrete* as he tries to decide how far he should go to protect the environment. Does his change from moderate writer on the sidelines to man-of-action seem believable? Paul Chadwick's own writing seem to indicate that his views on environmental matters are more in line with those of Earth First! rather than with *Concrete*. Knowing this in retrospect, does that change your view of *Concrete's* transition?
10. Using a character from the story, talk a little bit about how they, and by proxy Chadwick, feels about taking personal responsibility for one's actions or inaction.