

## Reading Questions: Neil Gaiman's *Sandman*: Fables and Reflections

1. In what ways are these stories "fables"? In what way are they "reflections"? Be specific in your answer.
2. What story represents Dream at the earliest moment? What kind of character is he at this point? Does he seem to have changed in any ways at later moments, in other stories? How?
3. The theme of storytelling runs through all of these stories. Trace its presence in each story and consider the different uses to which stories are put. Why do these characters tell stories? What is the value of these stories, to both teller and listener?
4. What do Augustus ("August") and Haroun Al Raschid ("Ramadan") have in common? What important differences do they have? What might Gaiman be suggesting about leadership through these stories?
5. Consider the other two stories about rulers: "Three Septembers and a January" (Joshua Norton) and "Thermidor" (Robespierre). What dilemmas do all four rulers seem to share?
6. What, in your opinion, are the qualities of a good ruler? Why? Do any of the four rulers in the aforementioned stories possess these qualities? How does Dream seem to rule the Dreaming?
7. What is your favorite story in the collection? Why?
8. Pick a page that you think is particularly interesting and explain why.
9. Gaiman does not illustrate his own work; thus, most of his stories (in this volume and throughout the 75-issue run of *Sandman*) have a different "look." In what stories does the art seem particularly striking and well-suited to the content of the story?
10. In what ways is Orpheus like his father? In what ways is he different? Be specific.

-- Contributed by Rocco Versaci