



# Colorado Book Club Resource

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR MAUS I AND MAUS II BY ART SPIEGELMAN

1. What did you think of the book? Did you like it? Love it? Hate it? What made you learn that way?
2. What did you expect before picking up this book? How were your expectations met or missed?
3. What was your reaction to hearing this was a comic about the Holocaust? Did your opinions change during the reading? Do you believe this form demeans or elevates the content? Why?
4. What moments from this text stood out to you? Why?
5. What stylistic techniques did you notice Spiegelman used to move the reader between flashbacks and flash-forwards? Did you find the artistic style effective? Did you find this storytelling method effective? Why?
6. How do the diagrams, charts, maps, and photos affect your reading? Why do you believe they were included in this narrative?
7. There are times where Spiegelman uses authorial intrusion (breaks the 4th wall). Why are these moments included? What did you learn from them? Did they disrupt your reading experience?
8. Prisoner on the Hell Planet is very different from Maus in length, style, and subject matter. Which is more powerful or effective for you? Do you identify or empathize more with the characters drawn as animals or humans? What sense of reality to Prisoner on the Hell Planet brings to the text as a whole? What role does it play?
9. Maus, A Survivor's Tale 1: My Father Bleeds History was originally released as serial comics in Spiegelman's avant-garde magazine Raw. Volume 1 was published as a collection in 1986, volume 2, Maus, A Survivor's Tale: And Here My Troubles Began published in 1991, and the collection in 1992. Do you feel your experience was heightened or diminished by the form in which you read this content? How do you think your experience would have changed reading a different format? Why?
10. Spiegelman uses animal metaphors to represent different nationalities and ethnicities of people (e.g. Germans as cats, Jews as mice, Poles as Pigs, Americans as Dogs). Why do you believe he used animals, rather than humans, to tell his story? Do you think this metaphor is effective?



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11. Why do you think Vladek's account of his pre-war life is included in *Maus*? Why is or isn't this information valuable?
12. How did Vladek's Holocaust experiences contribute to the kind of person he became? Art says "in some ways [Vladek] didn't survive" (II, 90). How do we see this in Vladek's life and relationships?
13. Towards the end of Book II, Francoise confronts Vladek's racial intolerance, even after living through the Holocaust. How does this incident illustrate the meaning of the Holocaust in Vladek's eyes vs. his children? Do you think that *Maus* speaks to other forms of racism and genocide? Why or why not?
14. Why do you believe Vladek is destroyed Anja's diaries, letters, and photographs? Why is Art so angry that these were destroyed?
15. The children of Holocaust survivors are referred to as the Second Generation as their parent's experiences have lasting effects on their lives, including guilt, fear, and anger. How do we see this in Art's experiences?
16. At the end of book 1, Art calls his father a "murderer" for destroying his mother's diaries after her suicide. What does he mean by this?
17. How does Art's relationship with his father change throughout *Maus*? Consider how Vladek used his ability to form relationships to survive the Holocaust; does this change your perspective on this relationship development?
18. In 1992, *The Complete Maus* became the first graphic novel to win a Pulitzer Prize, specifically the Special Award in Letters. Do you believe this is deserving? Why or why not?

*Questions from deathbysundoku.com*



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