



TEACHING & ACTIVITY GUIDE

AVA'S DEMON BOOK ONE: REBORN

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Overview: Ava's Demon is set in the year 3031 AD, in a universe of interplanetary travel and advanced medical science, where some people have obtained god-like powers through science. The comic follows Ava Ire, a teenager that has a personal demon that has tormented her since her birth. The demon, Wrathia, can briefly possess her and make her scream violent insanities, and has urged her to end her life.

After Ava comes close to death, Wrathia reveals what she truly is – the ghost of an alien queen – and offers Ava a pact. The pact requires Ava to bind more closely to Wrathia, and to help Wrathia defeat Titan, the god-like figure who destroyed Wrathia's empire, who now has numerous followers across the universe. Ava also learns that other people have demons as well.

IMPORTANT SETTINGS

- Gil's trainee house
- The crashed spaceship
- Limbo
- Titan H.Q.
- Ava's mind

KEY THEMES

- Loneliness
- Possession
- Curses and pacts
- Religion and dogma
- Failure
- Depression

NOTABLE CHARACTERS

- Ava Ire: Our protagonist. Shy and traumatized, constantly subject to Wrathia's cruelty.
- Odin Arrow: Rescuer of Maggie and (reluctantly) Ava. Interstellar traveler with mysterious motivations. Brother of Crow and Raven.
- Maggie/Magnolia Lacivi: Classmate and frenemy of Ava. In a pact with Tuls Tenebrose.
- Tuls Tenebrose: Maggie's pact bond. Longing for his lost Ranunculae.
- Gil Marverde: Aspiring doctor, devotee of Titan.
- Nevy Nervine: Amnesiac alien being, bonded with Gil, trying to find her way home.
- Wrathia Bellarmina: Ava's personal demon; actually the ghost of a vengeful alien queen.
- Pedri Nanezgani: Wrathia's partner and king.
- Titan: Perhaps a god, perhaps an alien creature, seemingly a religion, most definitely a corporation with universal domination in mind.
- Principal Via: Corporate educator that reluctantly puts Gil on his path to becoming a doctor.
- Crow: Odin's sister.
- Raven: Odin's other sister.
- Olai: Thus far unseen "boss" of Odin, Crow, and Raven.
- Strategos Six: Second in command at Titan.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Ava's demon speaks to her viciously and causes her to say things that are cruel and out of character. Though in the book the demon is a supernatural entity, could it also be a metaphor for mental health? Explain your answer.
2. How would you describe society in the year 3031 as presented in Ava's Demon? How are young people treated, and what is expected of them? What does this suggest about how things changed or remained the same in the 1000+ years between now and then?
3. What do you think of Wrathia's decision to poison not only Pedri and herself but also her fighters? What do we learn about her through these actions?
4. Think about Ava's decision to enter into the pact with Wrathia. What were her motivations? Would you make a similar decision? If so, what would you need to be promised in exchange?
5. Why is Gil so committed to Titan? Does his devotion seem reasonable or not? Support your answer with examples from the text.
6. Ava, Gil, Maggie and Odin all have relationships with otherworldly beings. How do their relationships with these entities differ? In what ways are they the same? Draw parallels from real life examples.
7. How would you describe Odin's relationship with his sisters? Considering the interactions between Odin and his sisters, plus the distant or nonexistent relationships with family experienced by other characters, what do you think the book is saying about family relationships?
8. What do you think of Wrathia's statement "Sometimes . . . confidence in yourself is the most convincing argument you can make, even if it's forced." Given that she is usually quite cruel to Ava, what are her motivations for giving her this pep talk? What effect does it have on Ava?
9. All of the characters in Ava's Demon are seeking love in one way or another - either

trying to find lost loved ones, seeking approval from chosen deities, or simply trying to find someone to care for them. Pick two of the characters and write a few sentences each about who/what they are looking for and how it affects the story as a whole.

ACTIVITY IDEAS

1. Though Wrathia is a real entity she could also be read as a metaphor for Ava's "inner voice" - and a particularly mean and critical voice at that. Do you have an inner voice - or more than one - that gives you feedback? Create a drawing or write a few sentences about those voices: How they relate to your true self, what tone they take with you (what color would that tone be?), and what they might look like if they were personified.
2. When the Silent Scavengers attack the planet, Odin attempts to bring Maggie with him more or less because he has a crush on her. If you had to make a quick decision to take one or two people with you on a perilous journey, who would you choose? Write a page or draw a short comic about who you would want with you and why.
3. The powers Ava draws from her pact are fire-based, while Maggie's are connected to plants and growth. If you could choose a set of powers connected to elemental forces (fire, water, air, earth) what would they be? Use your imagination and draw a short comic or write a short story or two on the powers of your choice and how you would use them.
4. The book's portrayal of the Titan Corporation is one example of society's relationship with big corporations. Are there any companies with which you have brand loyalty? Are you drawn solely to the product(s) or are you also drawn to company advertising? How does brand loyalty affect people's purchase and decision-making?



TEACHER'S KEY

Reading / Interest Level: Ages 15-18 / Grades 10+

Common Core Aligned Pre-Reading Key Ideas and Details

- **Text to World:** The level of corporate control at all levels of society, particularly in regard to space travel and aligning corporate/business interests with ostensibly benevolent interests and spiritual/religious fervor.
- **Text to Media:** Works about spirit possession, bonds/pacts with the otherworldly, and young people navigating hostile futures: *The Exorcist*, *Beetlejuice*, *Logan's Run*, the *Hunger Games* series.
- **Text to Text:** The mythological predecessors to *Ava's Demon*: Norse mythology (Odin and his ravens); Greek and Roman myths of elemental gods, their troubled relationships with mortals, and their physical transformations (such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses*); Christian demons and the Jewish *dybbuk*; folk legends of faeries and other unkind spirits.
- **Text to History:** History of mental and physical disorders treated as the work of demons and other malevolent entities.

TEACHING GUIDE

In addition to the story's darker themes, *Ava's Demon* examines themes of renewal, starting over, and second chances. These themes will be the focus of this section.

Engage: Guide students' reflection on the motivations for each major character's desire to start fresh.

- What are the reasons that Ava wants to start over at the beginning of the book?
- Ava and Wrathia discuss having a "different" life and having a "new" life. What is the distinction Ava is making? Do you see the same distinction?

Explore: The idea of a fresh start, or second chances, are powerful. Have students explore them.

- Think about a time when you wanted to start over. Think of a specific project, hobby or other situation where creating a different or new situation is appealing.
- What does the concept of "second chance" mean to you?
- Provide an example where you or someone else was given a second chance? What was the most difficult part of that experience? What was the most rewarding?

Explain: Starting over is not without certain complications.

- What challenges make this difficult (include both external and internal obstacles)? Try to think of at least four obstacles, then rank them from most to least difficult.
- Think of a time you have been asked to give someone a second chance (or imagine such a scenario). What were the specific concerns you had around the decision?

Elaborate: Dig deeper on the themes of solutions discussed in the book.

- Think about the discussion of difficulties: starting fresh is potentially impossible if the source of original conflicts is not addressed. Discuss how carrying over old mindsets and patterns hinder or render it impossible to start over.
- The book illustrates how the Titan Corporation is offering a quick and easy solution to unhappiness. Ava is offered an easy opportunity to "Be happy for once in your life." What is the danger of corporations or products selling simple solutions to unhappiness? While these products have an appeal, are you skeptical of their success?



RECOMMENDED TITLES FOR FURTHER READING

- *Clementine Book One* by Tillie Walden. Image Comics, 2022.
- *Sea Serpent's Heir Book One* by Mairghread Scott, illustrated by Pablo Tunica. Image Comics, 2022.
- *Nimona* by Noelle Stevenson. Quill Tree Books, 2015.
- *Monstress Volume 1: Awakening* by Marjorie Liu, illustrated by Sana Takeda. Image Comics, 2016.

