

***The Hidden Dominion of Georgie James* by Mike Dawson**
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“This book will make kids **WANT** to read. A powerful story that connects gaming and real-life, with vital lessons for us all. Fans of video gaming, especially Minecraft and Ready Player One, will see themselves in this story. The power of family, teamwork, and coming together to care about the planet, and one another. Artwork that takes full advantage of the comics medium – close reading skills are developed as students make meaning from the powerful panels – full of mystery, emotion, and depth. A perfect addition to classrooms and libraries.” – Tim Smyth

Teacher Guide by Tim Smyth

Eisner nominated author of *Teaching with Comics and Graphic Novels*
Teachingwithcomics.com

Vocabulary –

Dominion, understatement, architect, running a gauntlet, MMORPGs (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game), maximize, inanimate, domestic, feral hog, slaughterhouse, underdog, facsimile, authentic, convenient, vegetarian, ridiculous, legendary, fortified, evade, encounter, flustered, addicted, inflation, composter, civic engagement, infographic, unique, assure, ventured, concealed, corrugated, vaulted, imprints, coordinates, confident, perimeter, obvious, maintain, managed, massive, responsibility, vegan, expanded, diorama, version, chaos, landscaping, indigenous, preserve, groomed, virus, reassemble, sustainable, miniature, pike, encountered.

Before

*Analyze the front and back covers – what do you think you will be reading about?

*Analyze the front cover – what do you think is happening? What is the boy doing/reading? What details do you notice around him/what hidden details do you notice? (Example -can you find the pig?) How does the drawing illustrate the title?

*Analyze the back cover – what do you notice? Where might they be going? Why? Is this pig connected to the pig on the front cover? What are your thoughts on the quote, “I was so worried about protecting my own little corner... I never thought much about what ELSE was out there...” – how do these words connect to the illustration?

During

P. 1 – what is happening? Why is Geordie James searching for a pig? How does this connect to the front and back covers? Describe how Geordie is feeling using visual evidence – describe the look on his face.

Pp. 2 and 3 – why might this be Geordie’s happiest place? What do you think happened? What might happen next? How do the words and art act together to make meaning – how do these pages make you feel?

P. 4, panel 1 – using visual evidence, describe how Geordie feels.

Pp. 4 and 5 - Do the panels on these pages resemble a day in the life of your own school? Why do you think the author put the word school in bold type? How does this add meaning to the panel?

P. 5, panels 3 and 4 – what do you think happened between Geordie and Samesh? Why do you think the artist drew these last two panels with different color schemes?

P. 7 – Mr. Fritts asks the students, “what is our place in the world?” – what do YOU think our place is in the world? What is YOUR place in this world? What do you want it to be?

P. 7, last panel – predict, what is going to happen next? What is the “real bomb?”

P. 8 – Using visual evidence, describe how the students feel about doing this assignment as a group project. How do you feel about group projects? Why?

P. 9 – describe how the artwork in the three panels add to the tension in the story.

P. 10 – put your own thought or dialogue bubbles above the kids’ heads – what are they thinking?

P. 10 – have you ever felt like Geordie does? Has “weird stuff” ever happened to you when you try to share your ideas in school or in life?

P. 11 – using visual evidence, describe how Geordie is feeling.

P. 13 – panel 3 – Geordie only has “...” in his dialogue balloon – what does this mean?

P. 21 – panel 2 – using visual evidence – did Samesh’s older sister know he was failing science?

Pp. 22 and 23 – describe how the use of words, color, and artwork add meaning and feeling to the story. How does Geordie feel about MMORPGs? Do you have a favorite game that makes you feel the same way?

Pp. 24 and 25 – what part of the game would you most enjoy?

P. 26 – do you sometimes play games like these alone? Why do you think Geordie wants to build an amusement park? How might this connect to his father?

P. 27 – using visual evidence, describe how Geordie’s father and sister are feeling. Why might they be feeling this way?

Pp. 27-29 – what is your favorite strategy to use in an MMORPG? Why?

P. 29 – what strategy from other players do you dislike the most? Why?

P. 32 – panels 4 and 5 – how might game play be impacting school? Does this ever happen to you?

P. 36 – how might Anthony’s father impact who he is as a person? What is the difference between Geordie’s relationship with his own father?

P. 36 – using visual evidence, how does the reader know Geordie loves Dominion so much? What do you have hanging up in your room that exemplifies what you love?

Pp. 38-39 – how does the color change impact the tone/feeling of the story? What do the more limited colors represent?

P. 41 – Put a thought bubble over Geordie’s head – what is he thinking? What is he TRYING to say? Have you ever been in a similar situation where you have ideas, but are unable to share them? Do you have any good strategies to help get yourself out of a situation like this? If you were Geordie, what would your idea(s) be for the project?

P. 43 – what finally broke Geordie out of his inability to speak?

Pp. 50-51 – what do you notice about the dialogue balloons for the people on the TV? Why do you think they are drawn like that?

P. 53 – how does Geordie feel about the pig? Why?

P. 55 – predict – what do you think Geordie is going to do about the pig? Why? How do you know?

Pp. 61-62 – have you ever felt like this in school? What should the teacher do?

P. 64 – what is Geordie’s father going to do? Why?

Pp. 64-65 – what do you notice about the changes in color? What is the author trying to tell us?

P. 69 – predict – what is going to happen as Geordie chases after Crackerjack?

P. 69 – what does the change in color mean in the story?

P. 72 – what does Geordie mean in panel 1?

Pp. 76-77 – compare these pages to the cover – what do you notice?

Pp. 80-83 – how do these pages help explain why Geordie is so worried about the run-away pig? How do the color palettes help the reader understand the passage of time?

P. 85 – predict – what is going to happen next?

P. 87 – would you use the fort?

P. 89 – last panel – why is the word “pork” in bold? Why does it make Geordie feel the way he is drawn?

P. 90 – why does Geordie think the family should become vegetarian?

P. 92, last panel – using visual evidence, how does Samesh feel? How do you know?

P. 99 – predict – what might happen between Samesh and Geordie?

P. 105, panel 4 – what do you think Geordie means that maybe human's place in the world is not always at the center?

P. 105 – panels 5 and 6 – how does Geordie's facial expression change? Why?

P. 107 – how does the feelings of Geordie's father change? Why?

P. 109 – do you agree with Geordie's father? Why or why not?

P. 111 – predict – what do you think happened to the pig?

Pp. 114-115 – how does the game Geordie built reflect who he is in real-life?

P. 121 – how/why might Geordie's feeling about animal rights help him get over his fear of sharing his thoughts?

P. 123 – do you think animals have souls?

P. 129 – what things would you want to have in your forest fort?

P. 136 – what do you think about the ideas of Samesh and Geordie? Who do you most agree with? Why?

P. 137 – who do the video game characters represent?

Pp. 139-140 – how do these pages connect to the back cover of the book?

P. 154 – what is your favorite achievement in a game?

P. 155 – predict – what do you think is going to happen?

Pp. 159-161 – who do you think is right? Why? How might they compromise?

P. 165, last panel – what lesson did Samesh learn about game strategy? Why?

P. 172 – how do you think things are going to change?

P. 182, last panel – what is Geordie missing? What is going to happen?

Pp. 190-191 What happened? What do you think Geordie will do? What should he do?

P. 195 – what did Samesh do? Why?

Pp. 198-199 – what happened to the pig? What effect does this have on Geordie? Why is the escaped pig so important to him?

P. 201 – why did Geordie destroy the group project?

P. 203 – what did Geordie do to get back at Samesh? Do you agree with his actions?

P. 208 – what is Geordie planning on doing? Why?

P. 220 – what happened to Geordie's mom? How does this connect to p. 229, panel 2?

P. 231 – what do you think about the advice from Geordie's father?

P. 248 – what does the author mean by "the blocks that build us are the same?"

After

*Go back through the book – how many video game references/easter eggs can you find? (Example – p. 28 – flying Pokémon balls!)

*Draw the cover for YOUR book – the Dominion of _____. Write a part of your story. Make a short comic or 'zine about your dominion.

*Pages 3 and 4 – what is the place where YOU have been happiest? Write a description or poem about it. Draw it.

*Find all the examples of **onomatopoeia** – (such as on pp. 2 and 3 – whoooooo whooooo).

*Pick a page with **onomatopoeia** - replace the sound with a word of your own.

*Pick a page without **onomatopoeia** and add in your own (Pp. 22-26, 29-29, would be some great pages to add in your own sounds!)

Page 4 – draw a typical day in the life in your school.

Page 21 – write a short story describing a time you have had to run a gauntlet – or make a short comic about it!

*Cross-curricular/STEAM activity – have students research local environmental or animal rights issues and design a plan to help improve the issue(s). They can create their own comic to tell a story about how to bring their plan to fruition. Other topics brought up in the comic – recycling, rain barrels, bike riding, composting, invasive plants, forest management, sustainability, etc. Students can create an ad campaign/infographic for their school.

P. 95 – do a small research project – how do pigs survive in the wild?

P. 176 – cross-curricular lesson – students can research how materials can be upcycled into other objects/uses. How might they turn recycled materials into art? What can they create?

P. 178 – cross-curricular lesson - How do recycling plants work? Have students create a comic or infographic explaining the process.

P. 183 – have students research and present on how humans impact/reshape earth.

P. 183 – In what ways are animals builders? Students can research and present.

P. 219 – what was the impact of COVID on schools, farms, etc.?

P. 238 – last page – SYMBOLISM – what does the pig represent, both in the game and in Geordie's life?

*Geordie created an avatar of himself in the game. Create an avatar of yourself. What would your costume look like? Why? What accessories would you have? What would be the major obstacle you would need to overcome in the game? Draw your avatar. Sit with a partner and compare your creations - how would they interact in your game?

*What was your favorite panel or page? Why?