

the Fine Print
Cliff Hicks

'Sandman' ends era of comics

And so an era ends. "The Sandman" No. 75 came out last week, and now the series is done. It's like losing an old friend.

It's really hard to describe the meaning of the series' end to those of you who've never read Neil Gaiman's masterpiece. It is akin, perhaps, to describing love to an infant.

I began reading "The Sandman" back in early 1992, when some guys at the comic shop offered me an issue. I have, since then, read every single issue of the series, having collected all of the hardcover collections.

"The Sandman" tells the story of the Lord of Dreams, who is commonly referred to as Morpheus. He is not necessarily the focus of each story. For some story-arcs, such as "World's End," he barely even appears.

What kind of series is that, you ask? A brilliant one. "The Sandman" really marked the beginning of a different type of comics, for grown-ups.

Certainly, titles like "Swamp Thing" and "Hellblazer" weren't aimed for children, but neither of them was as intellectually stimulating as "The Sandman."

Who else but Gaiman would think of things like Lucifer quitting, closing up hell and giving the key to someone ("Season Of Mists" story arc); or having a man live forever simply because he chooses not to die (the character Hob Galding)?

Much of "The Sandman" is multi-layered, with stories within stories. This is fitting because Morpheus is the self-proclaimed Prince of Stories.

The series was told in story arcs, each of which was collected in hardcover and softcover. They were, in chronological order, "Preludes & Nocturnes," "A Doll's House," "Dream Country," "Season of Mists," "A Game of You," "Fables & Reflections," "Brief Lives," "World's End," "The Kindly Ones" and the final collection, still forthcoming, which will probably be called "And Then We Wake."

Each story arc is drawn by a different artist or series of artists, so that someone familiar with the series can look at a page and probably tell you the arc, simply by the style in which it's drawn.

In its entirety, "The Sandman" reads like a classic epic story, with everything converging on one final conclusion, inevitable, unavoidable and tragic.

Following it was a three-issue epilogue called "The Wake," and two stand-alone stories. Issue No. 75 was "The Tempest," the companion piece to issue No. 13, "A Midsummer Night's Dream."

"The Tempest" ends the series, and I think most people will think of it as a good issue and a fitting end to the series that began the Renaissance of comics. The people who really will be haunted by "The Tempest," though, are other writers.

Gaiman perfectly captures the world that writers live in — their own. All writers see parts of themselves in every character they create.

Now, at the peak of this series' popularity, it ends. Neil knew that the story had to end; that's what gives it meaning.

See SANDMAN on 10



James Mehling/DN

'Kindred' deviates from game

By Cliff Hicks
Staff Reporter

On Tuesday night, Fox showed off its brand new show, "Kindred: The Embraced." What many people don't know is that the show is based on a role-playing game that has been played since the early 1990s.

"Kindred: The Embraced" is a soap-opera/drama series based on a Mafia-like group of vampires who have managed to hide their dark secret from society.

"Vampire: The Masquerade" is the first of White Wolf's five-part "World of Darkness" series of role-playing games, in which the players assume personas they create. The others include: "Werewolf: The Apocalypse," "Mage: The Ascension," "Wraith: The Oblivion" and "Changeling: The Dreaming."

But some differences exist between the television show, "Kindred: The Embraced" and the role-playing game,

"Vampire: The Masquerade."

In "Vampire," there are seven clans, not five. For television, two clans, the Malkavians (mentally deranged vampires) and the Tremere (the Machiavellians of the vampires), were removed.

Also, some scenes occur during sunlight, which, according to the game's rules, is hazardous to vampires, causing them to burst into flames. The rationale given in the show is that the sunlight has to hit them directly, and the scenes occur at dusk.

Across the Internet, the players' main complaint has been that the Nosferatu, who are horribly disfigured in the game, didn't look all that bad. "You'd think if they'd get good special effects, they could afford to do the makeup for a real Nosferatu," said Darren Lanian, a Vampire player from Maine.

Reactions from players have been mixed. Some have lambasted the show for not sticking close enough to the

game mechanics, while others have lauded it for sticking as close as it has.

"Poorly acted, poorly written, just for gamers, no others need apply," said Rochelle Dvorak, owner of Comic World.

The one thing just about everyone likes is Julian Luna (played by Mark Frankel), who is very much what most people see a Prince as.

Each city is run by a vampire-like mob-boss-type figure who is the Prince of the city. The Princes are usually very politically dominant, making today's politicians seem gentle.

Players' other common agreement is that while the players may love the series, without previous knowledge of the game and its background, viewers may be lost.

Only time will tell whether "Kindred: The Embraced" makes it. But as Shelly Minzer, a Vampire player from San Francisco, said, "they (the actors) have got to stop acting like it's 'Melrose Place' and more like it's 'The X-Files'."

By Patrick Hambrecht
Senior Reporter

Students will have a "terrific opportunity" to be given free deodorant samples, cold vanilla beverages and a Sony music compilation compact disc today at the Right Guard Right Sound Listening Party.

The "Listening Party" will be presented in two two-hour sessions at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. in the Nebraska Union's Centennial Room.

The party will be coordinated by Market Source, said Marty Merrick, the company's group director.

Merrick said the Sony Corporation had made a free "really neat CD with some great alternative music" for college students, including new songs from bands Mercury Rev, Eve's Plum and the Emmet Swim-

"When I say cool music, I'm talking about new music. Alternative music."

MARTY MERRICK

Group director for Market Source

ming October Project.

"When I say cool music, I'm talking about new music. Alternative music," Merrick said. "This is very similar to what radio stations are doing to create awareness.

"It's like the kind of music alternative stations play."

Merrick then asked if Lincoln had an alternative station.

"KRNU? What sort of music do they play? Pearl Jam, do they play Pearl Jam?"

"It's like Pearl Jam, Smashing

Pumpkins and what's that other band I'm thinking of — The Crash Test Dummies," Merrick said. "It's alternative music."

Right Guard is sponsoring the promotional event to help college students "make a positive association with the brand," Merrick said.

"College students are a key market for Right Guard," he said. "College students are a hard-to-reach consumer market. They don't consistently watch TV, read the newspaper or read magazines."

Students shoot for awards

By Gerry Beltz
Senior Reporter

While this year's Academy Awards proved that even a talking pig could get 15 minutes of fame, the Student Academy Awards may hold cinematic surprises for the future.

The 23rd Annual Student Academy Awards will open this Thursday at 7:30 p.m. at the Mary Ripma Ross Film Theatre and run through Sunday evening. Admission to all shows is free.

Dan Ladely, director of the Mary Ripma Ross Film Theatre, also wears the hat of coordinator for Region Two of the three-region competition.

In past years, the competition has been divided into seven regions, but this year's competition is made up of only three regions, Ladely said.

Now, California is region one, New York is region three and the rest of the country is region two.

This year boasts about 50 entries, Ladely said, totaling more than 26 hours of film.

Ladely and other judges will begin viewing the films Thursday night. Winning films will continue to the semifinals in Chicago, he said.

"This is kind of the 'wedding out' process," he said, "and eventually, actual members of the Academy will vote on the films."

Past winners of Student Academy Awards competitions include Robert Zemeckis and John Singleton, Ladely said, adding that most winners of the awards go on to work in the movie industry.

"Winning the competition can be a big boost to the career," he said, "plus the winner gets to visit movie sets, opportunities to make contacts and so on."

"It's really a wonderful opportunity."

The films are sorted into four categories. They are: alternative, animation, documentary and dramatic. Although the entries are usually very heavy with drama, Ladely said, the restructuring of the regions has changed one certain category.

"We're getting a little more animation than we used to," he said.

One highlight of the weekend will take place Saturday at 7 p.m. when a compilation film of last year's four winners will be screened. Admission to this event is also free.

"It's really worth your while that night," he said. "It's a cheap date."

Complete schedules and show times are available at the Ross Film Theatre Box Office.

Right Guard tries to attract 'key market'

But college students are still "an important consumer segment" to large corporations because they're "acquiring their purchasing decisions, often for the first time," Merrick said.

In addition to the CDs, students also will be given free samples of Right Guard deodorant, Soft and Dri deodorant, and Arizona chocolate and vanilla beverages. One free Schwinn bicycle also will be given away.

While college participants collect products, a series of television stations will play advertisements and music videos from Sony CDs. Sony PlayStations also will be set up with new video games.

To attend, each student must have a valid college identification and one of the Right Guard tickets given away by the UPC office.