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# Fables Vol. 12: The Dark Ages




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## Synopsis

Tourists of the world unite! If you've ever craved a guided tour of Fabletown's secret Manhattan location, prepare to be voraciously satiated. Pinnochio has a field day taking a certain VIP around the city. And exactly which Fabletown denizens are no longer active (dead, alive or otherwise) just might shock you into a comic book coma. Also in this volume, you'll find the 4-part story featuring Freddy and Mouse, two local rogues who just want to get along and perhaps turn a bit of profit in the post-war, topsy-turvy world. Meanwhile, in Fabletown, a new political group forms called the Society of Seconds, and what they want doesn't seem very reasonable at all.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"One of the best damn series ever written.""This clever, enjoyable series ... is an excellent series in the tradition of Sandman, one that rewards careful attention and loyalty.""Readers will delight in his mischievous take on such sacred children's archetypes, especially Prince Charming's unapologetic smarminess.""An epic, beautifully written story that places Fables, familiar characters from folklore, in the mundane world after a mysterious Adversary conquers their homelands ... the series has proved tremendously popular."

Oh, yes, baby! Fables took us before through a wonderful, wild, delicious ride that introduced characters, locations (the farm, the homelands, Fabletown) and took us through a terrible, fascinating war between evil Gepetto and his magic-fueled armies in the homelands and the force from Fabletown. Now, we're in the aftermath. The Peace after the War. And things are getting ugly,

event by incident. Dark Ages refers, no doubt in great part, to the fact that dark powers are being released into the chaos that is the Homelands (now no longer kept in check by the tyranny of Gepetto and his sorcerers and armies), where mercenaries are looting and no one is in charge; and dark power released as well in the Fables' NYC town, where Gepetto is still vicious and bitter over his powerless situation post-amnesty.In the first secton, a sort of establishing one, an interlude, "Around the Town", we get interesting (different from what we're used to, too) art by Michael Allred--very two-D, darkly outlined, thick areas of color. A sort of retro art look, but I liked it. Pinocchio is showing his toxic maker around Fabletown, where most don't wish him well at all. He gets an opportunity to spout his menacing philosophy, and there's nothing likable about this still-menacing (if momentarily neutered magically) puppetmaker. I like how Pinocchio is drawn in a very boy-like way, unlike the original/usual Pinocchio who has a huge head and square jaw, as if he were a dwarf rather than a boy. I also liked seeing Bigby and Snow's brood taking in the city. (Bigby looks like a young Marlon Brando in this chapter.)After that, we are in familiar visual ground with Buckingham's style as we move into a series of chapters that toggle between Fabletown in the city and parts of the homeland, where things are happening that not everyone is yet aware of--very dangerous things that bode ill for the residents of all fabley places. One is Mr. Dark (and yes, that connects to the title) and the other is Baba Yaga, who you may recall is imprisoned way down there in Fabletown's dungeons. There is a short, but hilarious, section with Bufkin, the flying monkey, and his digestive event. Bad things are also happening to our dear Boy Blue, whose wounds post-Wartime are not healing well at all.The darkness in this Dark Age refers not just that of the sorcerous villains that are revived/released, but the darkness within the hearts of characters--from the first pages showing us the wasteland of Gepetto's heart and mind, to the darkness in the looting mercernaries, to the surprising revelation of the darkness in Rose Red.A new romance, a visit to Mowgli's jungle, a terrible loss, and some insight into the emotional dysfunction of one of the main female Fables--a very good scene that's sad and insightful.As usual, you get so me glorious cover pages reproduced inside (non-glossy) for those of us who prefer the bound volume to the individual issues. It's totally worth taking a pause to enjoy each of the covers, including the bound volume's glossy one that gives a Fables version of a Madonna and dead Christ.I've never been let down by the FABLES series, and I look forward to seeing what's up next.

A lot of people probably thought that Gepetto and his empire were taken down a little easily in the previous story arc. I agree, but fortunately Willingham does a nice job of putting the heat right back on them due to some unintended consequences of their victory. We also get a final? resolution to

Boy Blue’s story. Boy Blue has been a low key hero throughout the book so what happens to him is quite touching.The book soars the most though whenever Gepetto’s around. I hope he has a long run as a grumpy bad guy who the good guys are forced to put up with thanks to the deal they made.The next arc looks to set up a confrontation between the book’s main hero Bigby (the big bad wolf) and Beast (of Beauty and the ...). Frankly, one problem with the series is that Bigby’s gotten a little too big so I’m hoping we see him taken down a peg or two.

"The Dark Ages" is the latest graphic novel compilation of the outstanding Fables series written by Bill Willingham supported by various artists. The premise is characters from folklore like Prince Charming, Hansel and Gretel, etc. are real and secretly living in New York. They have been driven from their other dimensionally home worlds due the depredations of the "Adversary".At this point if you have not read the series, stop reading this review. In order for someone to fully appreciate and understand what is going, you have to read the series in order.What we have seen so far, our heroes have successfully defeated the forces of the Adversary and his empire is destroyed. The true power of this empire, Gepetto, is now an unwanted and very reluctant citizen of Fabletown in Manhattan. But he is under control. Everything should be fine, right? WRONG!Gepetto is utterly unrepentant over anything he has done. He hates where he’s at. He hates everything around him. But he does have a point however twisted. His empire kept order. Our heroes have serious destabilized the worlds of folklore. In the ensuing chaos, two soldiers-of-fortune unwittingly unleash an evil from confinement worse than the one they defeated. Unfortunately our heroes are first on the agenda....They are forced to run as things literally collapse around them. They do not understand this new opponent. They do not even know the true nature of this new enemy. Not even Frau Tottenkinder does not understand what is happening. But they do know they have run.....It is a common criticism of "The Good Prince" that everything was cut and dried with victory inevitable. Apparently Mr. Willingham heard your complaints. Now everything is in disarray and out of control.Our favorites are all here. Flycatcher, King Cole, Bigby, Snow White, etc. have key roles in the action. My favorite part is when Boy Blue sadly, quietly and dispassionately tells Rose Red exactly what he thinks of her. What I didn’t like is the author instantly creating a rivalry between Beast and Bigby. One of the things I liked about these characters was regardless of what they thought of each other when there was crisis, truces were declared. They pulled together and took care of business.As for the art, Mark Buckingham is the best Fables artist. I really don’t care for the others featured much. But Willingham’s writing and the character’s so rich I don’t notice much.

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