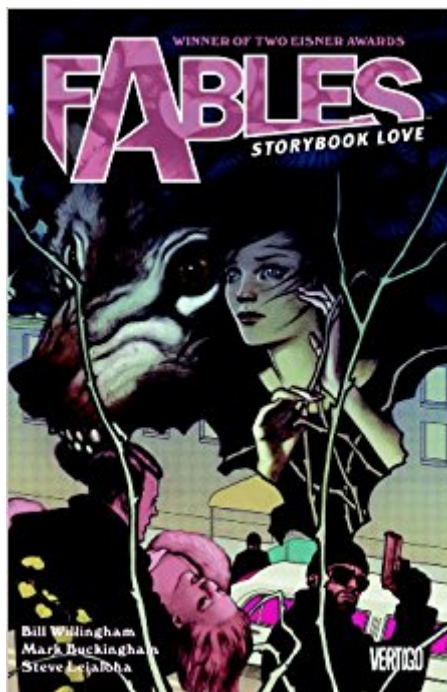


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Fables Vol. 3: Storybook Love



Synopsis

A new Softcover collecting the acclaimed FABLES #11-18, including the 4-part "Storybook Love." Also included are the 2-part "A Sharp Operator" and the single-issue tales "Bag o' Bones" and "Barleycorn Brides." Don't miss this amazing third collection, topped off with a stunning new wraparound cover by James Jean.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

One of the stories in this new collection is appropriately titled "Into the Woods." Like Stephen Sondheim's musical, Willingham's series presents figures from childhood fairytales contending with the problems of adult life. Snow White, Briar Rose (aka Sleeping Beauty), Prince Charming, Little Boy Blue and Goldilocks all appear, as does a trickster named Jack. So does the Big Bad Wolf, who is inescapably reminiscent of Marvel's Wolverine. Even Gulliver's Lilliputians turn up, as do talking animals. This volume collects issues 11 through 18, and, as with many contemporary comics, it will be difficult for readers who haven't started with the first issue to get their bearings. The fairytale characters comprise a community of immortals known as "Fables," who now hide in plain sight from the mundane normal people (known as "mundys," they're much like J.K. Rowling's muggles) in a section of New York City called Fabletown. The stories are of two sorts. Two stand-alone tales take place in past centuries and have a genuine fairytale feel and period charm. The others, set in the present, are gritty, with dysfunctional relationships, blackmail and murder attempts. Take the "mature audiences" advisory seriously: this is a book in which an adult Goldilocks can be seen

naked or covered with blood. Despite its darker elements, Fables features wit and comedy; Willingham can even make scenes simultaneously farcical and horrific. The art ranges from the illustrative to cartoony, and its variety mirrors the stories' many moods. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

The third collection of Fables, the Sandman spin-off about fairy-tale characters exiled in New York, contains four stories. The longest, "Storybook Love," is the most satisfying, but the others have their fairy-tale-like (i.e., grisly) charms. Revealing that the Jack of beanstalk fame and the Jack of the eponymous tall tales are identical, "Bag o' Bones" spins a Civil War yarn in which Jack detains the Grim Reaper, so that no one can die. In "a two-part caper" (all that's given in the way of a title), the Fables community puts Briar Rose, aka the Sleeping Beauty, back on slumberous hold to prevent exposure by a scandal-rag journalist. In "Barleycorn Bride," Bigby Wolf relays some of the Fables' early history in America to explain why 18-year-old Lilliputian boys try to steal magic barleycorns from a jar at the Fables' Manhattan headquarters. The long story concerns a plot to seize Fables leadership by Bluebeard and Goldilocks; it includes some Fables mainstays' apparent demises and begs for future development. Deucedly cleverly written, yeomanly drawn. Ray OlsonCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

In volume 3 of the hit Fables series, Willingham branches out from what came before. While the first two collection comprised one full story arc, this volume gives us two stand alone stories, one two-issue arc and one four-issue arc. The first solo, 'Bag O'Bones', flashes back to the American Civil war and Jack the Trickster's role in it. While none of the other Fables show up, this story is pretty funny, and does a great job showing just how wide the scope of this series is. I can't wait to see what other flashes from the past come up in this series. Next we have the two-part arc the aptly named 'two-part caper'. In this arc, Bigby and the some other fables join forces to stop a reporter from breaking the news of the community to the general public. I would honestly call this the best arc, and transitions perfectly into the next story. The title arc, 'Storybook love' comes next. Some serious political gamesmanship starts up in this arc that leaves me very excited for the next volume, but unfortunately, I didn't think this was the greatest. It might just be personal preferences, but I keep expecting more from Snow White as a character, and this story does not deliver. The end was just needlessly melodramtic. Finally, the one off 'Barleycorn Brides' is a light-hearted backstory on the Lilliputians, and how they came to set up there community in the Farm. Not much to say about this story, it's just a pleasant filler arc.

This is the third book in the Fables series. Unlike the first two books this one is comprised of four separate tales. This installment does an excellent job of filling in some background while still moving the main story along. The first installment tells about Jack the Giant killer and his love of a cursed southern belle. The second talks about Bigby Wolf dealing with a reporter who thinks he's discovered the secret of Fabletown. The third is the longest and progresses the story the furthest; this one is about Goldilocks trying to kill Snow White and Bigby. The fourth is about Jack and the Beanstalk. All of the stories are engaging and interesting. The third (Storybook Love) about Snow White and Bigby ends on a total cliffhanger that had me dying to know what would happen next. The illustration is in keeping with previous book; although the fourth story didn't have as detailed artwork as the three that came before it. This book was another engaging, humorous, and interesting set of Fabletown tales. I am absolutely hooked on this series and excited to read the 4th book, March of the Wooden Soldiers. The world continues to gain complexity and I am always surprised by the fables that pop up in the storylines. It is fun to try and figure out who is from which fable/fairy tale. Overall an excellent installment to this series. I am eager to find out what happens next. It was great to get background on some of the characters as well as have the story progress. This is definitely an adult graphic novel; there is nudity and violence. Fans of fairy tales, humorous urban fantasy, or just fantasy graphic novels in general should make sure to check out this series.

The introduction to new characters was nice but they poorly wrapped up the previous volume in this one. The story was a bit more satisfying to read though and very hard to put down near the end of it.

I don't know why it took me this long to get on board the FABLES bandwagon. For years now, left and right, everyone's been pimping this series to me. Now, count me converted. I finally read a FABLES trade paperback, and, it turns out, everyone's right. This is some of the best reading currently being produced in comic book-dom, and I got straight-away hooked. FABLES: STORYBOOK LOVE happens to be the third volume, and is so good I just had to say stuff about it. Some background: Once upon a time, some terrible, terrible thing called the Adversary went on an all-out bloody invasion of the fairy tale kingdoms, causing now suddenly deposed magical creatures, these "fables," to flee to far distances in search of sanctuary. The refugees escaped into our world and were able to make a home of sorts. And, so, today, in a nondescript nook of New York City sits Fabletown. Ah, but if the regular Joes only knew... And, by the way, those fairy tale creatures who couldn't pass for humans instead while their days away in a concealed place called the Farm, in

upstate New York. As you may imagine, being forced to live in seclusion tends to foster unrest.

See *Fables Vol. 2: Animal Farm*. Even though *FABLES* boasts an ensemble cast, it's not surprising that the most noteworthy characters are Snow White, who is Fabletown's no-nonsense deputy mayor, and Bigby Wolf, Fabletown's reformed and resident sheriff. In fact, at the back end of *Fables Vol. 1: Legends in Exile*, Bill Willingham's great prose short story - which focused on the Big Bad Wolf as he was in the olden days and how he first met Snow White - not only put the finishing touch to a wonderful read, but made me start really rooting for something to blossom between these two. Anyway, with that romantic regard in mind, things kind of come to a head in this third volume.

FABLES, Vol. 3: STORYBOOK LOVE reprints issues #11-18 of the series. Things start off with "Bag o' Bones," a fun, homespun-flavored story of Jack Horner set during the Civil War era, including that time he ends up playing cards with the crafty debbil. I haven't yet checked out *JACK OF FABLES*, the spin-off comic, yet it's pretty evident that Jack Horner is one of those likable rogues. To quote Willingham himself: "Jack is basically all of the Jacks who have ever appeared in fairy tales, folklore, nursery rhymes and old folk ballads." So Jack's been a busy, busy cad. Next is a two-parter. Issues #12 & 13 tell of an overly-curious journalist who, believing that Fabletown is a hotbed of vampires, plans to publish an expose. But dummy makes the mistake of telling Bigby about it. Bigby and his fable cohorts concoct a pretty clever scheme to foil the guy. A mostly lighthearted caper, with a grim ending. Then comes the meat of this volume, the four-part "Storybook Love." Goldilocks (the villainess in *FABLES Vol. 2: ANIMAL FARM*) works in concert with Lord Bluebeard to once and for all get rid of Snow White and Bigby. Their shenanigans involve the ensorcelling of Snow and Bigby and sending them off into the wilds, with the notion of then murdering them. It doesn't work, and this story arc culminates in a discovery which binds Snow and Bigby closer (the particulars of which actually end up royally ticking Snow off). Plus, Lord Bluebeard and that insufferably good-looking wastrel, Prince Charming, dabble in friendly, and then not-so-friendly, fencing. Finally, in "Barleycorn Brides," Bigby narrates to Flycatcher the origin of Smalltown's traditional rite of passage. It's cute. I wasn't too sure, going in, whether Bill Willingham would be able to pull this off, but he does, and brilliantly. He gathers all these characters - drawn from all walks of folklore and mythology - and manages to place them into one cohesive continuity. More, Willingham lends character development and a dose of realism to these fantastical elements. I've liked Willingham since back in his days with *THE ELEMENTALS*, and it's nice to see he hasn't lost his storytelling skills (and lest folks forget, dude can also draw). And, naturally, part of the fun is in placing the lesser known characters (Did you know that Bufkin, the flying blue monkey originates from the Oz books?). Mark Buckingham and Steve Leialoha's artwork, by the way, perfectly

complements Willingham's great writing and whimsy and humor. I dig the way they draw Bigby Wolf. Not to mention, I could waste long moments staring at James Jean's expressive covers. FABLES is published under DC Comic's Vertigo label and is intended for mature audiences. These issues are laced with profanity and occasional nudity, so you maybe shouldn't hand these out to the young 'uns. But for those older types who relish urban fantasy and reading stories by Alan Moore and Neil Gaiman, FABLES hits the spot. This series is marked by the unexpected, by its intrigues and grotesqueries and topsy-turvies, where the Big Bad Wolf is a hero and Goldilocks is a psychopath, and the Frog Prince is a janitor. And, for these expatriated fables, is there a happily ever after? Not if Bill Willingham has anything to say about it (and he does).

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