



# Delphine

*Richard Sala*

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## **Delphine** Richard Sala

A mysterious traveler gets off the train in a small village surrounded by a thick, sinister forest. He is searching for Delphine, who vanished with only a scrawled-out address on a scrap of paper as a trace. In his newest chiller, Richard Sala takes the tale of Snow White and stands it on its head, retelling it from Prince Charming's perspective (the unnamed traveler) in a contemporary setting. This twisted tale includes all the elements of terror from the original fairy tale, with none of the insipid saccharine coating of the Disney animated adaptation. Yes, there will be blood.

Originally serialized as part of the acclaimed international series, *Delphine* is executed in a rich and ominous duotone that shows off Sala's virtuosity just as much as last year's full-color post-apocalyptic horror fantasy *The Hidden* did; punctuated with stunning full-color chapter breaks.

## **Delphine Details**

Date : Published January 18th 2013 by Fantagraphics (first published October 17th 2012)

ISBN : 9781606995907

Author : Richard Sala

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# From Reader Review Delphine for online ebook

## Sam says

This is a fairy tale in the true sense (rather than the Disney sense) with a grave sense of foreboding from start to finish and a dark gloomy atmosphere that sends shivers up your spine. Sala has taken the traditional fairy tale of the damsel in distress and turned the perspective around to follow the man in his quest while the woman is largely hidden from view, so much so that throughout the book it seems as though our 'damsel' does not need rescuing at all. This combined with the strange disturbing characters and subdued colour palette makes this a chilling and cautionary tale, particularly as our 'hero' reflects on his journey and all that could have been.

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## Sam Quixote says

A young man and woman fall in love while at university but her father's poor health drives the girl, Delphine, back to her hometown to look after him. The two never meet again but later on the man (he remains nameless throughout) decides to reconnect with Delphine and heads to her isolated small town in the middle of nowhere to catch up and hopefully reconnect. But when he arrives and wanders the empty streets of the town he notices strange people - a ghastly looking man grinning and selling mouldy apples, a funeral attended by witches, an insane cabbie, a creepy man and his demented mother, and a horde of small, ugly men following a ghostly, beautiful woman. Somewhere in this nightmare is his beloved Delphine and he is determined to find her. But will he even escape this town let alone find her...?

This might be my favourite out of Richard Sala's books. I'm a big fan of his work and, aside from (the incredibly hard to find at a reasonable price) "Maniac Killer Strikes Again!", I've read them all and "Delphine" is his best, most solid effort to date. An exploration of fairy tales and their symbolism, this book has the best elements of horror and fairy tales mixed in with Sala's own unique drawing style and strong storytelling sense. There's pieces of Hitchcock, Angela Carter, Poe, Charles Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Anderson, ETA Hoffmann, and Charles Addams throughout this book, returning the original fairy tales of Perrault and Grimm to their dark roots, infusing them with macabre moments of horror.

Sala's choice of a sepia colour palette adds to the suffocating atmosphere of inescapable horror as our hero, ostensibly Prince Charming, goes from one nightmarish scenario to another, escaping a random beating by witches to a terrifying house in the dark forest inhabited by a woodsman with a terrible secret. And as day turns to night, the monsters come out to play and Sala really turns up the terror. Those familiar with fairy tales will recognise Sleeping Beauty, the wicked stepmother, the importance of apples, the dwarves, the woodsman, the frog, etc. and Sala has a wicked time playing with all of these elements to craft a wonderfully gothic horror story.

Sala's work sometimes mixes horror and comedy to produce some entertaining books especially the ones featuring the heroines Judy Grood and Peculia, but in "Delphine" Sala ditches comedy and writes this as straight horror - and succeeds completely. There are so many panels that are genuinely scary, like the funeral during the day - somehow witches and fiends in the daytime is more scary than at night. But at night-time? The haunted mirror in the dark room - wow. That creeped me out big time!

"Delphine" is an amazing horror fairy tale written superbly and draw with impeccable skill by one of the

most underrated comics creators out there. Fans of horror comics, and comics in general, need to pick up a Richard Sala book immediately - his work is too good not to. But read "Delphine" in particular as it's a book which showcases his enormous talents at their finest. A remarkable achievement.

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### **Megan says**

Wtf just happened? That's all I could think after I read this. I picked this up from the library after skimming through some goodreads reviews that said it was like a dark, twisted Snow White story in graphic novel form. That sounded awesome. Sadly, this story had no resemblance to me to Snow White aside from a few symbolic images like a poisoned apple, an evil stepmother, and a beautiful girl who needs rescuing. I didn't really get the ending - it was very abrupt and weird and just bizarre. I did really like the artwork in this though, so that's why I gave it 3 stars instead of 2. The author also did a great job of creating a super creepy, ominous atmosphere with terrifying characters (the townspeople look more like monsters than humans and there are witches, so some shape-shifting and other supernatural stuff keeps things interesting). The overall story was just slow-going for me though and I couldn't connect with any of the characters. The main guy and girl were kind of boring and annoying. It's a super quick read though because there's barely any text. It's mostly just awesome creepy drawings, so it's good for a quick read when you're in a dark and broody mood and want to look at some disturbing pictures.

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### **Afro Madonna says**

Mahn this was trippy as fuck .

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### **Roxanna Muller says**

I see several reviews saying they're not sure they understood the ending. So I thought I'd mention how I interpreted it. (Spoilers) The way I understood the ending was that the male lead was killed and then became doomed to live forever there as one of the monster-ish townsfolk (like resident evil kind of.) Specifically it turns out that he becomes the creepy goblin school child that he sees when he first enters the town. This "child's" creepiness is the first solid indication that the town is evil. So as he enters the town he literally sees what will become of him if he stays.

It may be that folks who didn't pick up on that are less used to reading graphic novels? Graphic novels often do rely heavily on visuals to tell parts of the story. If you we're reading this, say the way you read a children's picture book, you might miss a lot of the story. The pictures don't just accompany the story, they are at minimum equal to the written words.

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### **vostendrasamigos yotengolibros says**

I liked the illustrations, but the story you know you think is going somewhere and it doesn't, it feels really weak.

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## Orrin Grey says

It took me a while to really become a fan of Richard Sala, but at this point I am most definitely hooked. Delphine is one of his best and most solid works to date, and while the obvious parallels to draw are to the story's fairy tale structure and inspirations, I found that it also had a potent dollop of *giallo* weirdness and story structure.

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## Jan Philipzig says

Darker and maybe more ambitious than your typical Sala book, though not necessarily better. The pacing felt a little off to me, and I am not sure it all really added up to much. Still, I doubt Sala is even capable of creating anything that isn't enjoyable in some crazy way at least...

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## Katie says

A little too trippy for my taste. It would have been creepier if any of it had made sense to me.

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## Michael says

*"...ich kann nicht glauben, daß in irgendeinem Märchen um irgendeine Frau mehr und verzweifelter gekämpft worden ist als um Dich in mir, seit dem Anfang und immer von neuem und vielleicht für immer."*  
(Franz Kafka an Felice Bauer)

Das Märchen, in dem Sala seinen namenlosen Protagonisten - nennen wir ihn doch S - um seine Geliebte Delphine kämpfen läßt, ist eine expressionistische Version von Schneewittchen, angereichert um murnausche Horrorelemente, golemsche Gassen und Räume, einer Natur ganz aus Schatten, Widerhaken und eklem Getier, um einen wilden Hund, Hexen, Zwerge und und und...

Nachdem S seine Jugendliebe nach der Schule für längere Zeit aus den Augen verloren hat, hat er sich auf die Suche gemacht, um sie nun in einer Kleinstadt zu finden, in der aller Spuk und Horror auf den warten, der sich seiner Sache nicht sicher ist.

Und wie kann ein junger Mann sich der Liebe sicher sein in Zeiten, die soviel komplexer sind als anno dunnemals bei Schneewittchen? Selbst wenn Delphine Schneewittchen wäre, wäre S damit nicht automatisch ihr Märchenprinz:

*"Thank God I met you."*

*"Um - I wish you wouldn't say things like that."*

*"Huh? What?"*

*"Like, "thank you, magical, invisible spirit, for giving me this girl to fuck."*

Schwerer hatte es vielleicht nicht einmal Kafka.

DELPHINE ist ein anspielungsreiches düsteres Horrormärchen, dass sofort in den Bann zieht. Nach Lust und Laune kann man sich einfach nur gruseln oder Motive und Zitate aus Märchen und Fantastik suchen und finden oder sich gar an eine psychologische Deutung wagen.

An DELPHINE hat mich alles überzeugt: die Story und die Zeichnungen von Sala sowie der von Fantagraphics liebevoll gestaltete Hardcover-Band.

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### **FLAMES (Mariana Oliveira & Roberta Frontini) says**

Opinião completa no blogue: <http://flamesmr.blogspot.pt/2017/10/1...>

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### **Melki says**

A young man goes in search of a special girl he met at school and ends up in a creepy, unending, sepia-toned nightmare,.

Are those people really witches and goblins or just innocent merchants and townsfolk?

Here are the deep, dark woods of fairy tales, peopled by an evil stepmother, a kind-hearted woodsman and a big, bad wolf.

This was a darkly enchanting read, filled with luscious but disturbing imagery. When I finished the book, I had that weird feeling you get after waking from a strange, half-remembered dream.

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### **Michelle Morrell says**

A young man goes searching for a lost love and finds far more than he ever expected. Creepy, messed up, never trust those isolated little towns next to malevolent woods!

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### **Harris says**

I had not been familiar with the work of Richard Sala before checking out this intricate dark fable in graphic form, but I will definitely be checking out more of his comics. Sala's drawing style is imminently suited to his creepy, brooding modern interpretation of such fairy tales as Snow White and Sleeping Beauty, with all of the fraught metaphors for relationships, growing up, and sex that come with the territory. "Delphine" follows a young man's visit to a decaying, rural town from which he hopes to rescue the college sweetheart he had lost contact with, but quickly finds himself drawn into a world of terror. My sister called it a "nightmare in ink" in her review, and that really describes the surreal horrors the boy finds in the town, both from without and within. Encountering hideous dwarves, witches, slaving hounds, rot and filth, he also wrestles with regrets, selfishness, and self-doubt. Has he gone mad? The repetition of these folkloric themes are evident throughout, but nothing is spelled out and would reward deeper analysis.

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## Leew49 says

A number of popular fairy tales (Sleeping Beauty might be the best example) are about an innocent young beauty held hostage who must be rescued by a courageous and noble prince. "Delphine" turns the legend upside down. The eponymous heroine is by her own admission far from innocent, and whether she is being held captive or has merely decided to vanish voluntarily is not made clear. Furthermore, her need to be rescued and even her desire for further contact with her former boyfriend (the "prince" in Sala's graphic novel) are debatable at best. Unanswered letters and a failed promise to "keep in touch" might simply mean that she has decided to end the relationship. Nevertheless the young man goes on a quest to find his lost Delphine.

He tracks her to a remote village where everything is threatening and illogical: a waking nightmare. A female figure, glimpsed from a distance, seems to be followed by a group of loving children. But when one of them looks back, we see that he is in fact an angry, threatening dwarf. A ride offered by a stranger turns into an endless journey without rhyme or reason, ending in a mysterious funeral. An offer of lodging for the night is equally dark and threatening. Nothing makes sense, and the young man is reminded of Delphine's own cynical take on the world: What if God is really a spider, and the world was made for the enjoyment of spiders? Humans might be just lumbering, meaningless creatures put here without meaning or purpose.

The young man (I hesitate to use the word "protagonist") continues his quest, which becomes stranger and more horrific. Along the way the line between dream and reality becomes even more blurred. Does he commit murder? Does he find Delphine, held captive by the predictable wicked stepmother? Does he lose an eye? A glimpse of himself in a mirror reveals a hulking monster.

In the penultimate scene we see the young man, wearing an eye patch, telling a friend that he was fortunate not to have pursued his relationship with Delphine, who is now married and has a child. She was crazy, he tells his friend, and she almost ruined my life. Finally we return to the mysterious village and once again glimpse the slender, anonymous female being followed by what appear to be evil deformed dwarves. Is this Delphine? Are they her children? if so, who is the father?

Sala loves to take traditional stories and give them his own dark interpretation. "Delphine" raises more questions than it answers, and leaves the reader with that vague, uneasy feeling that so often occurs in the first few moments of awakening from a nightmare.

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