



Fables, Vol. 21: Happily Ever After

Bill Willingham (Writer), Mark Buckingham (Artist), Steve Leialoha (Illustrator)

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In this penultimate volume of Bill Willingham's *Fables*, the residents of Fabletown look to live "happily ever after," but there is a steep price to pay for happiness as Rose Red clashes with Snow White!

Collecting: *Fables* 141-149

Fables, Vol. 21: Happily Ever After Details

Date : Published May 12th 2015 by Vertigo Comics

ISBN : 9781401251321

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Format : Paperback 200 pages

Genre : Sequential Art, Comics, Fantasy, Graphic Novels, Fiction, Fairy Tales, Graphic Novels Comics

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Gieliza says

3 stars.

Well, that was...anti-climactic. I was all geared up for a showdown but nothing really happens. This volume felt like a huge buildup with no payoff. The only part I liked is the backstory of sorts for Rose Red and Snow White. Oh well...here's hoping that the last volume in the series will be a lot better than this one.

Morgan says

This was a very awkward volume. My favorite comic book series is coming to a close with this second to last trade. With the main story nothing really concludes, but there are several sides stories that do conclude. To be honest I only like a handful of them. Warning: This might contain spoilers.

The over all story I'm kind of liking because they are playing with the King Arthur tale. From the looks of it the ending could be that Rose Red uses Bigby to kill Snow White. I'm not sure that will actually happen though. I really don't see this ending like most people are expecting. I think it ill end with something no one saw coming. I mean the comic is taking a 3 month break before #150 comes out. I expect it to end well.

With the sides stories, that is were I kind of didn't like this volume as much as I wanted too. Most of them opened up some questions rather then ending. I hope the last issue will explain some of that stuff. I really liked the fact Babe was brought back for this though. I missed seeing him say his comical philosophical thoughts. I think that was my favorite side story. I also liked they brought back Jack Horner too. Not only were those two parts funny, they actually concluded a story.

A lot of this volume I felt was more for the really big fans of Fables though. If you're like me and bought every spin-off and Fable trade available you won't get lost as much. However, they reference Fairest and Jack of Fables stories a bit. Maybe look up some stories online if you get lost. I'm hoping #150 does the same thing again, because with some of the spin-off I still have questions, if not that is fine because they are only minor ones.

I'm still very excited to see how this all ends. The second to last issue left a lot of unanswered questions. I've stuck with this comic for about 10 years straight, so see it all end will be a little heartbreaking for me at least. Like I said I've read all things Fables currently in trade format, I'm very ready for this comic to come to a close.

Emily says

Man, I used to love this series. I started falling out of love after Fables, Vol. 18: Cubs in Toyland, and it hasn't really been the same since. He just seems like a kid breaking his own toys now.

The jumping back and forth between plots in this volume (and several before this) was just chaotic and frustrating. Although I liked a few of the wrap-up stories, particularly Briar Rose's, it was a messy way to tie up loose ends before the big finish.

There's only one left, so of course, I'll read it. If there weren't an end in sight, this would have been the last one for me.

Sam Wescott says

[and possibly murder here soon (hide spoiler)]

Sean Gibson says

And so begins the end.

I think I need to keep this brief, because I'll undoubtedly wax nostalgic, poetic, and philosophical at the conclusion of Vol. 22. I guess it's good that you can't see me as I type, as I'm an ugly crier, and I suspect there will be a fair bit of waterworks at that point (albeit incredibly masculine ones).

What can I say in brief about this volume, then? I suppose it's fitting that a series that began with Snow White and Rose Red involved in key roles winds down the same way, and the reveal of how Snow and Rose came into the world was a clever one (no spoilers here, True Believers).

Lancelot versus Brandish? Classic. The typical Fables mix of humorous, absurd, and gut-wrenching. The series of mini "Last So-and-So Story Ever" tales was a delightful addition, though the Charming/Sinbad throwdown was troubling.

I still find it weird that I ended up coming to really dig Charming, that devastatingly handsome debutante of debauchery.

And so we wait another month for the finale to arrive in my hot, sweaty, incredibly hairy palms (oh, like yours aren't).

Until then.

Carmen says

Just when i thought this story couldnt get any darker...Damn. Great story. Sad to see it almost ending.

Bonnie says

Well. That was a disappointment, especially considering the next one is the last. Nothing major really

happened, it was all about moving pieces around for the conclusion. Which I hope is more entertaining than this was. Yawn.

Quentin Wallace says

Everythings finally coming to a head. This volume has several short "Last Story" Vignettes that wrap up the stories of most of the major characters in just a page or two. The main story deals with Bigby Wolf's rampage, Mrs. Spratt and Brandish's machinations, and sadly, the final battle between Rose Red and Snow White. I have a feeling the last volume is going to be an emotional one. I hate to see this series end.

Apa says

Even more plot set up and changing characters motivations to suit the story. The side show stories were again better - at least they had endings.

Michael Cairns says

So, this series had some good bits and some not so good bits. I've been struggling a little with the last 50 or so issues in this series, just because it's felt so disparate and unconnected. I think the danger with any comic series that lasts this long but isn't intrinsically episodic is exactly what's happened here, the feeling that the author didn't really know where he was going.

Having said that, there have been sparks of genius, from learning about Rose and Snow's mother, to the final stories of the various characters, to the first fables finally returning home.

The art work is, as always, stunning, including a wonderful surprise turn from Terry Moore, one of the greatest comics artists/authors out there.

The rivalry between Snow and Rose has always been strong, but the enmity that has developed in the last few comics also feels a tad contrived.

I'm looking forward to the last, super sized episode in this series, but mostly because of the attachment I built with all the characters way back in the first 50 or so comics.

Sarah says

I know this series is in the tough position of having to provide closure for a lot of characters, and bring the series to a satisfying end. I'm just a little confused by the high body count, considering that it was long established that most popular fables could bounce back again and again by the power of their stories. Did that change at some point? In any case, it's distressing, though better than the butchery of the Unwritten crossover, which I am attempting to unread and put out of my memory forever. I appreciated the chance to catch up with some minor and major characters to find out what their "happily ever after" was looking like, but some of them were less than satisfying. Hopefully the series itself will have a satisfying resolution.

Amanda Roper says

Not my favorite. Everything seems bleak and evil and I really dislike the jaunty little side stories. They don't hold much appeal to me (I *hate* Jack)

Louise says

Eugh... Honestly I'm just so disappointed to see what my favourite comic series has turned into. It's time to admit I've been inflating my ratings for *Fables* for a while, trying to *convince* myself it still is as good as I want it to be. But it's not. And it's actually kind of horrible to see characters I once really liked acting like complete idiots as they're ragged through this completely arbitrary and stupid 'can't fight fate' Rose Red v Snow White ultimate battle to the death bolloxing storyline.

I don't care. I just don't. Nobody is acting like they're established characters, and everyone is just accepting that RR and SW have to do battle even though NO FUCKING REASON is really given as to why it needs to happen until the end of the volume. And even then it basically boils down to 'because destiny says so'. It's the sort of crappy characters doing things because the plot needs them to writing that I thought *Fables* was better than. And it used to be. But it hasn't been particularly well written for a long time.

Eugh...there's one more volume to go, and I *will* read it, but at this point I'm not expecting much from this series anymore.

Rachel says

Whaaaaat is happening. I guess I could blame myself for letting so many months pass that I forgot all these storylines but also this is really bonkers? And kind of needless? And why is everyone dying??

Bill says

I've been a fan of the *Fables* series for years, and would still recommend it for new readers -- but I have to tell them to stop well before this train wreck of character derailment.

It's possibly that the reader is supposed to believe that some powerful enchantment (or narrative force? or fate?) is leading to a conflict so insistently that all the characters take stupid pills -- because the characters we've loved for years act really irrationally here, especially Ozma, Totenkinder, and Rose and Snow.

The only saving grace here is the "Final Story" bits, either wrapping up the tale of other characters, or leaving them with hooks that make you wish they didn't end. Sinbad's "final story" is particularly good (as is another that I won't spoil here), but makes me wish that the final plot arcs of the book focused there rather than the Snow/Rose conflict.
