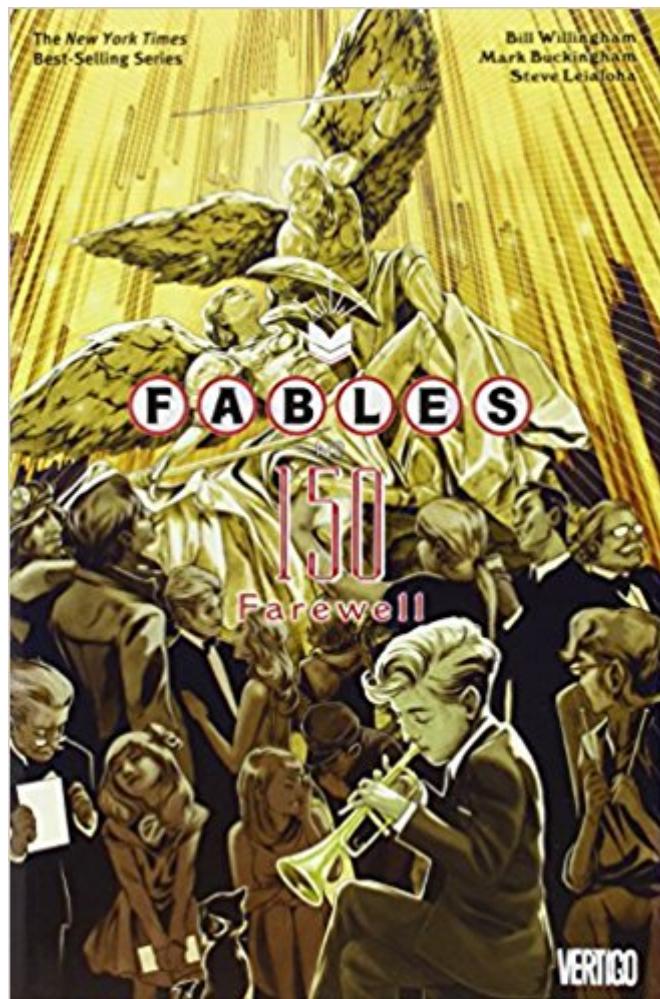


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# Fables Vol. 22: Farewell



## Synopsis

The New York Times Best-selling Series and Winner of 14 Eisner Awards! Completing more than thirteen years of critically-acclaimed storytelling, FABLES #150 is here! Doubling as the final volume of the series, creator Bill Willingham, artist Mark Buckingham and a host of the industry's finest artists deliver the end to this legendary Vertigo series that sees the final fates of beloved characters Bigby Wolf, Snow White, Rose Red, Boy Blue, Pinocchio and countless others. Ready or not, ever after is here.

## Book Information

Series: Fables

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## Customer Reviews

Praise for Fables: "[A] wonderfully twisted concept . . . features fairy tale characters banished to the nourish world of present-day New York." -- WASHINGTON POST "[A] spellbinding epic." -- BOOKLIST "Clever, enjoyable . . . an excellent series in the tradition of SANDMAN, one that rewards careful attention and loyalty." -- PUBLISHERS WEEKLY "One of the best damn series ever written." -- AIN'T IT COOL NEWS

Bill Willingham has been writing, and sometimes drawing, comics for more than twenty years. During that time he's had work published by nearly every comics publisher in the business and he's created many critically acclaimed comic book series, including Elementals, Coventry, PROPOSITION PLAYER and FABLES. Along with FABLES and JACK OF FABLES, Willingham wrote the miniseries DAY OF VENGEANCE and SALVATION RUN. His work has been nominated

for many awards, including the Eisner, Harvey and Ignatz comic industry awards and the International Horror Guild award. He lives somewhere near a good poker room.

Mr. Willingham has been preparing us for the final showdown between Rose Red and Snow White. Deals are made, forces are assembled, people are preemptively taken off of the chess board (violently), sides are taken and everyone prepares for the carnage and slaughter. Much like the Iliad, the buildup is more than the battle - Mr. Willingham borrows a scene from Henry V in the evening before the final battle. This whole plotline (which was forced) is resolved just fine. Very much like volume 21, this collection has several "the last tale of..." stories. Their quality is mixed. That's to be expected with so many characters. It's extremely hard to end a series, and the creators do a decent job here. This book clearly peaked during the epic (and all-time, comic pantheon worthy) first arc where the Fables ran from and fought Gepetto. I'm glad the series didn't end there, but the quality of the series never reached those heights again. It's ok...Fables settled into a well-above average book that occasionally hit lofty clouds. The Lady of the Lake's story is good, and Lumi's is pretty funny. Gepetto doesn't change. Pinnochio's ending is fantastic. Brandish's end, for all of his villainy and page time these last volumes, ends with a whimper (this happens in life too...but these are Fables and I just wish it had been handled a bit better. It felt...rushed). Cinderella has a strong final chapter, and the series ends as it should...with Bigby and Snow. There are letters in the back from Bill Willingham and Mark Buckingham that discuss their time on this series and thank a number of individuals. Mr. Willingham ends with the very appropriate "thank you thank you thank you and farewell." Thank you, Bill.

How to put into words what Fables has meant to me in the past thirteen years or so? I am a comic book fan, and the past decade has tried its hardest to make me less so. Thru all the New 52s and the Secret Wars and the multiple rebrandings and this and that character's death and resurrection, all thru that claptrap, Fables stayed the course and kept assembled its acclaimed pack of storytellers. For thirteen years or so, it's treated us to yarns that are twisty and tangled and delightfully dark and wondrously clever and endlessly playful. Yeah, I'd heard murmurs of those who nag and moan that Fables achieved its peak during its first half run, back when Fabletown took the fight to the Adversary. And I agree. Willingham would not again scale those rarified heights. Oh, I soaked in the extended Mr. Dark storyline, and I found moments to relish even in the spotty arcs that came after, those meandering arcs that suffered for lack of a singular drive. The conflict between Rose Red and Snow White took me to deep waters as I could never quite get a grasp of

what exactly was going on. I questioned Rose Red's motivation. There's this centuries-old curse, yeah. But was that really just it? Rose Red's fatalistic succumbing to the whims of a curse? And since I'm talking some smack, I confess I wasn't thrilled with how underwhelming was the reunion of the Wolf pack. This then is the culmination of Willingham's long-game plot. Fables #150 is a whomping 163 pages long - the main story itself runs 78 pages - and packed to the brim with resolutions and call backs and all manner of epic sh--. But couple that with bittersweet partings and a dose of melancholia, a taste of the elegiac. It's a tale that honors its enduring, sprawling cast of characters, even though not all get their deserved happy endings, even though some get their just desserts. There are two deaths that I mourned, one death at which I crowed. Gratifyingly, Flycatcher has one more test of character, Cindy has a heroic send-off, except that, as it turns out... oh never mind. A smorgasbord of "The Last [insert character here] Story" vignettes awaits you, should you be in a mood to pry into the later affairs of Pinnochio and Clara and the wolf cubs and such. These vignettes dive into the fallout of the war between Rose Red and Snow White. We learn of Fabletown's lasting impression on the Mundy world. We DON'T learn what was up with Junebug and Rodney and June and the giant talking rats what scratched Junebug's back. We don't even get to see Beauty's reaction to Beast's death. I know, I know. It's a lot of characters to keep track of, lot of dangling story arcs to pinch off. What's fitting is that, as the story proper ends, the curtain descends on where it all started, with Bigby and Snow, my two most favorites in a sweeping roster of favorites. How it ends may not be to your liking. You may find it anticlimactic. But Willingham has always favored tweaking things just a bit. I, for one, am content with his swerve of ----

\*\*\*\*\*SPOILERS FOR THE REST OF THE PARAGRAPH\*\*\*\*\* ----- denying us the much anticipated epic clash. So, now, there's all kinds of empty time for Bill Willingham. What's next for him? I hear tell there's further collaboration with Buckingham. If I had a say in it, Mr. Willingham would dust off a certain three-decades-old joint from Comico. Bill, what are the Elementals up to? And, lest we forget, all hail Mark Buckingham and Steve Leialoha!

I just finished fables. I never thought it would, could or should end, but here it is, here it was. The end. I read a lot of comics, graphic novels and whatnot. And whenever anybody ever asks me what to read next, I always say, Fables. It's long. It will make you weep in both joy and sadness, it will make you laugh, bite your nails, shout in victory, shout in frustration, and conjure up any emotional response a book can conjure, and more. This series was epic. Homer could learn a thing or two from Bill Willingham. In a series as long as this, the most important thing is character development. These characters ran so deep, they became a part of my life. You leave knowing their characters so

well they seem like friends. You can ask yourself, "what would Snow do?" And be able to come up with a real, complex answer. These characters are more complex than some people I know. And these people drive a story more intriguing and better told than almost anything I've watched or read before, sharing a stage with monuments such as Harry Potter or The Godfather. Their are characters that I will never forget adventuring with. Never before has a series given me so many to remember. Thank you, Bill Willingham.

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