

A JOURNEY WITH STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

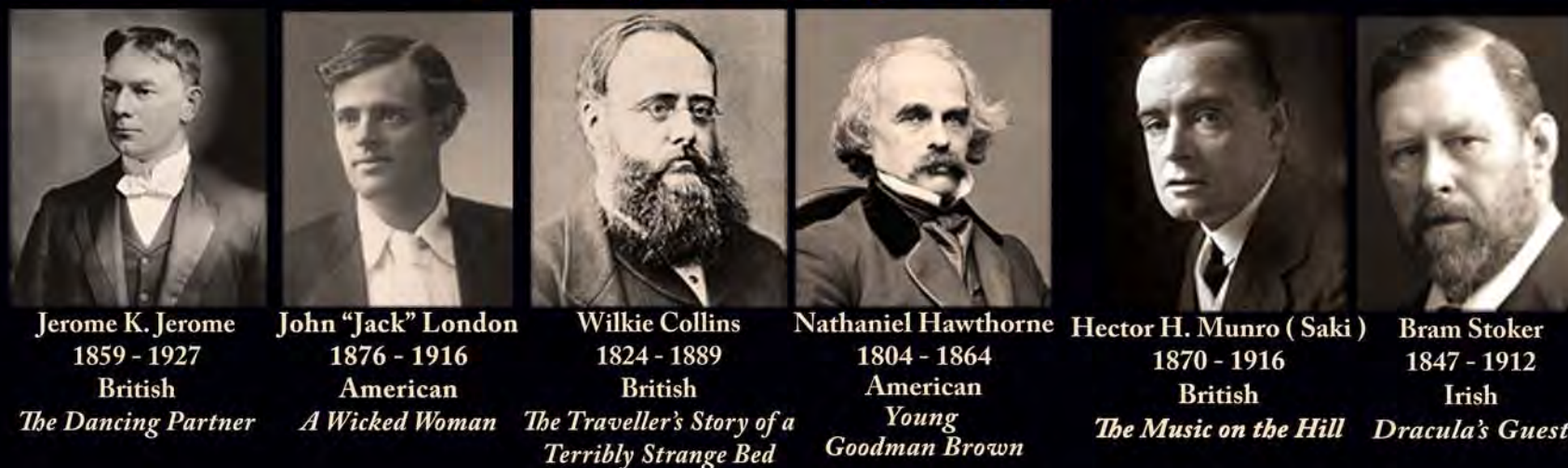


Written By
Jan CJ Jones

Illustrated By
David Stoll

The “strange” bedfellows whose short stories inspired or were adapted for...

A Journey with Strange Bedfellows



CLASSIC TALES WITH TIMELESS THEMES

- ~ **Be careful what you wish for – revere karma**
- ~ **Innocence vs. ignorance**
- ~ **Beware of others’ intentions – listen to your inner voice**
- ~ **People may not be as they seem**
- ~ **Beware nature’s (or God’s) wrath**
- ~ **Curiosity can be dangerous**

A Journey With Strange Bedfellows is a Victorian Gothic horror (steampunk "lite") graphic novel for ages 12 and up. It resurrects and melds six (6) lesser known, immortal short stories originally penned by literary masters Jerome K. Jerome, Jack London, Wilkie Collins, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Hector H. “Saki” Munro and Bram Stoker,. The story was adapted from an original 2 hour-long audio drama that received a Mark Time Ogle Award for excellence in audio storytelling and was featured as an “Official Listening Selection” at HEAR Now: The Audio Fiction and Audio Arts Festival. The graphic novel & audio drama along with a S.T.E.M. / S.T.E.A.M core curriculum Educators’ Guide comprise a “listen, look, learn” literacy education package that can align with public, private, and home-school programs, both secular and non-secular.

Gothic horror stories originated in Great Britain during the mid-1700s as a fiction genre that include the elements of horror and romanticism. Traditionally, these tales transpire in gloomy Gothic style medieval castles or religious edifices that have fallen into ruin or disrepair, where heroes and heroines are confronted by supernatural creatures and inexplicable, other worldly events that require them to endure an “adventure fraught with danger.”

Steampunk is a sub-genre of science fiction with elements of fantasy, horror, history fiction, alternative history or other branches of speculative fiction often making steampunk a hybrid genre with a story set in an alternative world that utilizes steam as a power source rather than electricity and incorporates aesthetic designs inspired by 19th-century industrial steam powered machinery. Steampunk may, therefore, be described as “neo-Victorian.” Steampunk features anachronistic (chronological inconsistencies with) technologies or retro-futuristic (depictions of the future fabricated in an earlier era) inventions as people in the 19th century might have envisioned them, and is similarly rooted in the era’s perspective on fashion, culture, architectural style, and art. Such technology may include fictional machines like those found in the works of H.G. Wells and Jules Verne, or those of authors Philip Pullman, Scott Westerfeld, Stephen Hunt and China Miéville. Other examples of steampunk contain alternative history-style presentations of such technology as lighter-than-air airships, analogue computers, or such digital mechanical computer as Charles Babbage’s Analytical Engine. Steampunk’s first know appearance was in 1987, through it now refers to many works of fiction created as far back as the 1950s.

In the process to adapt and weave together 6 (public domain) short stories into a single, continuous adventure, numerous modifications of the original works occurred. Readers are encouraged to read for themselves the original stories available online via The Gutenberg Project.

A JOURNEY WITH STRANGE BEDFELLOWS



Adapted & Written by Jan C J Jones

Illustrated by David Stoll

Graphics by Freelancer Ink

*To parents who sacrifice for their children.
To my children for whom I would sacrifice all.
To those who sacrifice to help others succeed.
To those who appreciate the sacrifices made for them.*

Otherwise... where would we be?



2nd Edition

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www.a-strange-journey.com

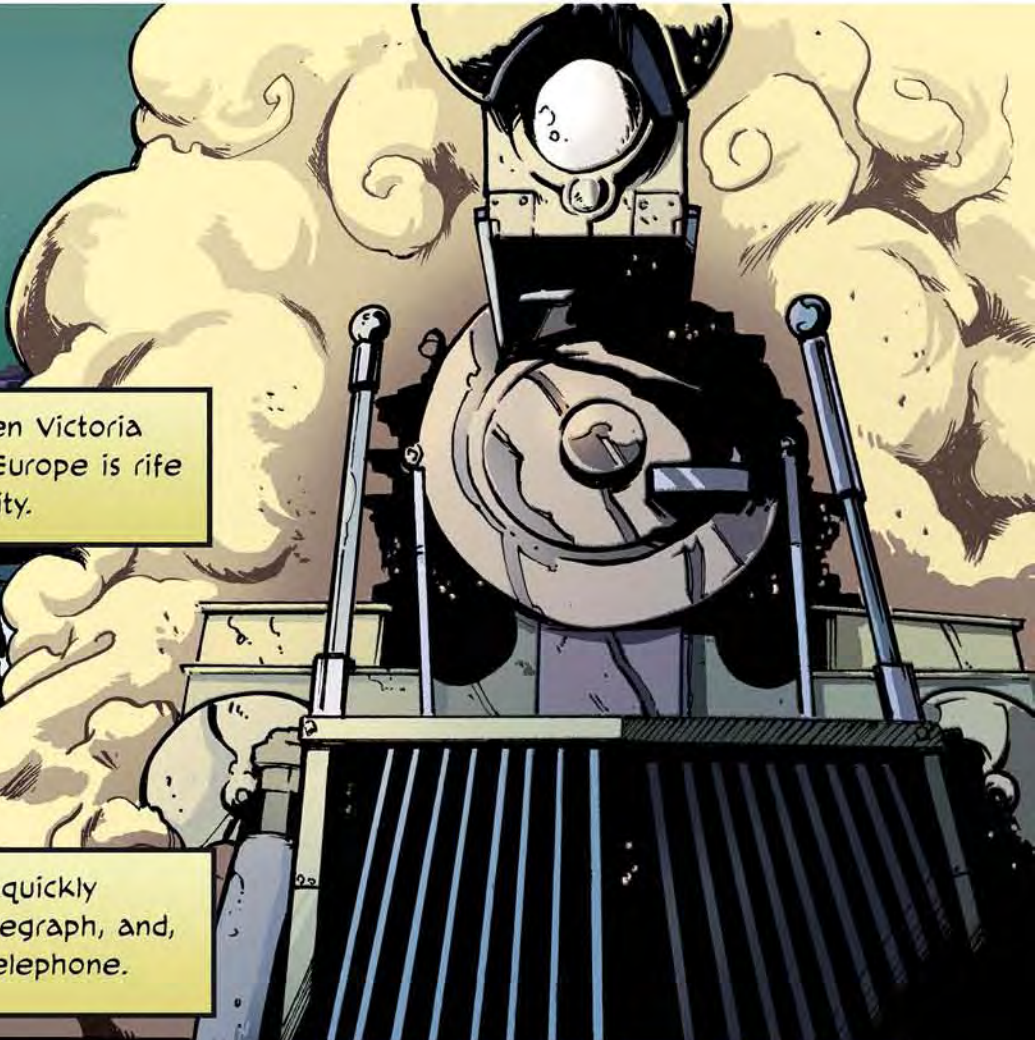
PART ONE



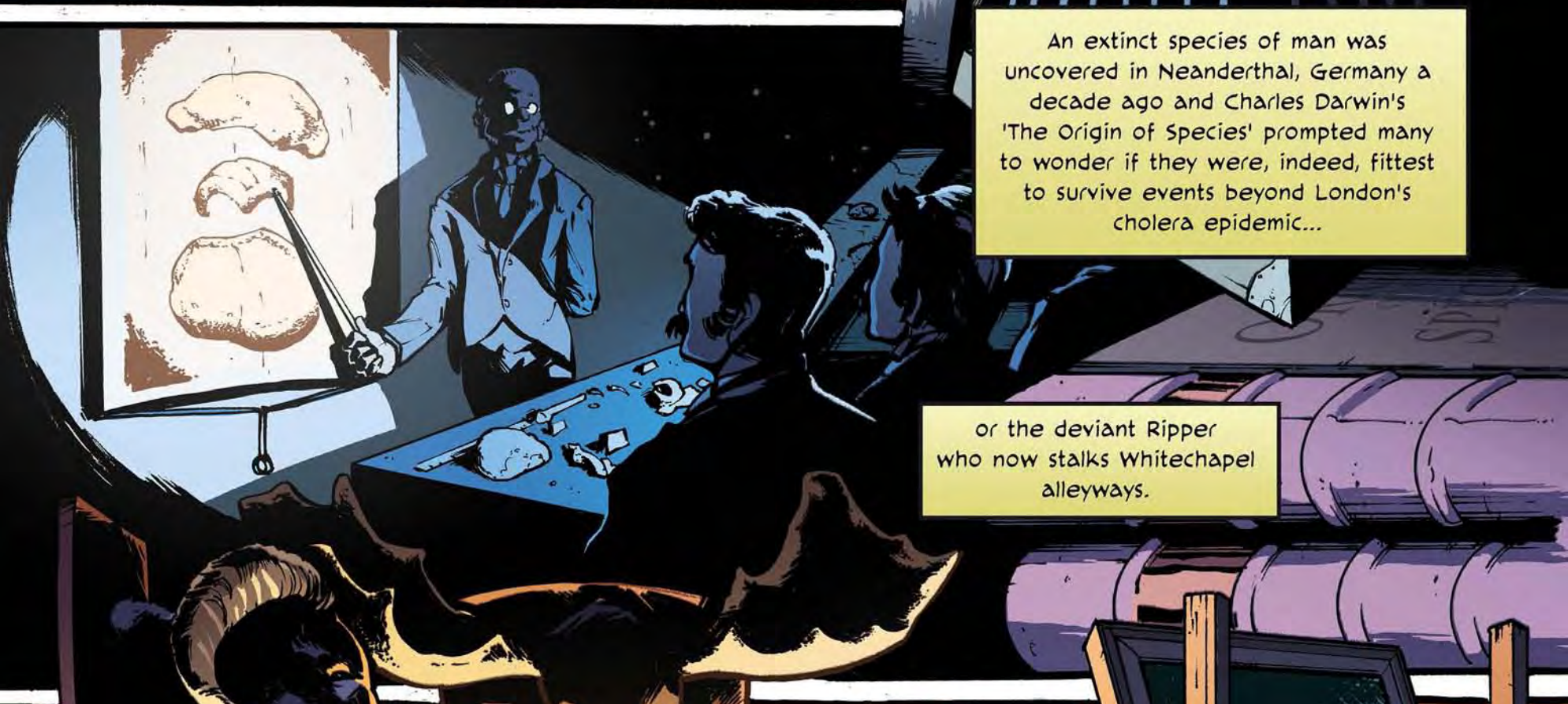
It is eighteen-eighty-nine.

Her Majesty, Queen Victoria rules Great Britain. Europe is rife with activity.

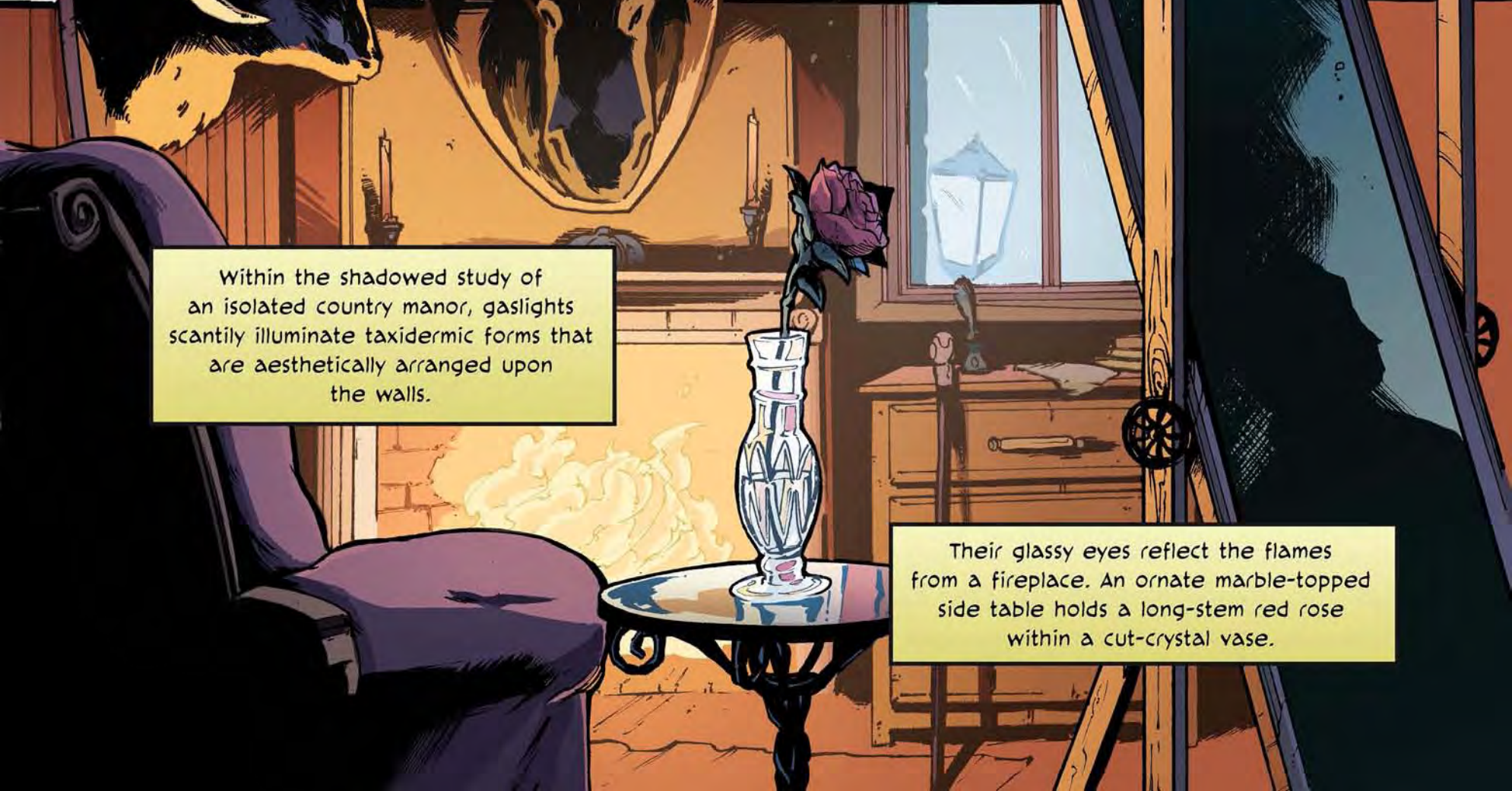
News travels quickly via steam train, telegraph, and, for some, the telephone.



An extinct species of man was uncovered in Neanderthal, Germany a decade ago and Charles Darwin's 'The Origin of Species' prompted many to wonder if they were, indeed, fittest to survive events beyond London's cholera epidemic...




or the deviant Ripper who now stalks Whitechapel alleyways.




Within the shadowed study of an isolated country manor, gaslights scantily illuminate taxidermic forms that are aesthetically arranged upon the walls.

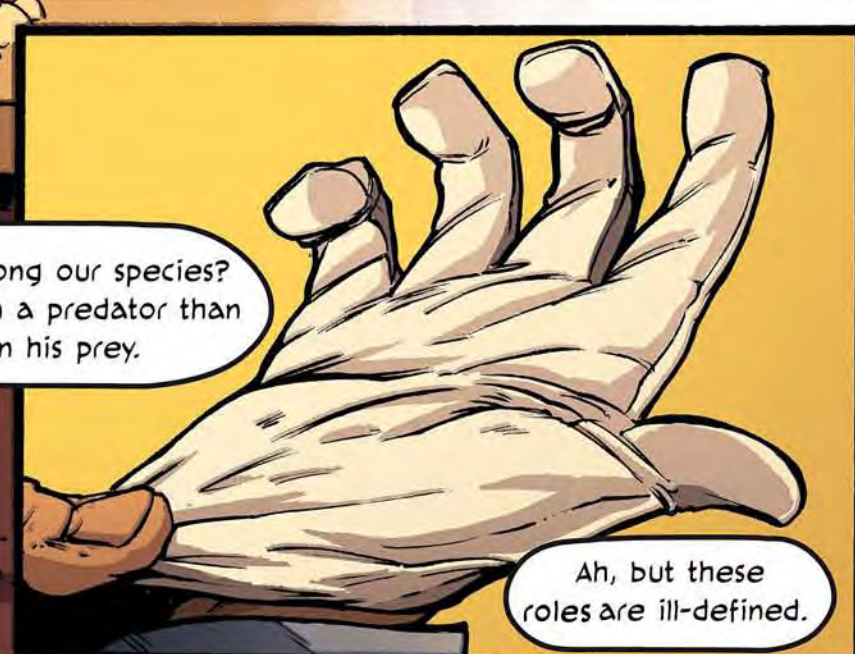
Their glassy eyes reflect the flames from a fireplace. An ornate marble-topped side table holds a long-stem red rose within a cut-crystal vase.



My dressing coat is comfortable, although the distinction between coat and jacket has blurred in recent fashion, just as male and female roles have become less clear between pursuer and the pursued.




Darwin prompts me to wonder...




Who is more fit among our species? Man is no more born a predator than woman is born his prey.

Ah, but these roles are ill-defined.



Although we males engage in the chase, the female is more adept in the capture. Certain experiences compel such confusion.



Predator becomes prey. Innocence mistook for evil.

Evil... innocence. Evil can be both predator and prey.

For example, Jack the Ripper preys upon women, yet, he is hunted by Scotland Yard, is he not?



So, who am I with time to ponder such notions, you ask? Heir? Philosopher?



A name to start...



Hunter Brown. Your host, guide and... servant.

There was a time my name served me not, but time changes all.



Ah, time to don my top hat and tailcoat for there is a to-do this evening.



As many, I've spent much of life in pursuit of the unobtainable.



My journey has been motivated by, and for... love.



It began some time ago...



I'd attended this ostentation for several years.



Men in their finest tail coats and white cravats; beards trimmed; mustaches fine sculpted in a myriad of styles.

Perfectly coiffured ladies in exquisite Parisian gowns with necklines that teased invitation to the delights beneath, even as layer upon layer of petticoats ballooned their skirts in such a way as to challenge a male's proximity.



The uppermost declared 'yes'... the lower bade 'fight for it.'

A combination that titillated any natural male, and terrified the inexperienced.



Admittedly, I was the latter.



Ah, Miss Faith Geibel for whom my heart yearns. Sweet perfection... So beautiful.



I hope the fates provide me courage to speak to her this evening.



Faith is the niece of Nicholas Geibel, an eccentric toy-maker of exceptional skill. He created amazing toys; clockwork innovations that moved and performed in wondrous ways.

What had become of Faith's parents was a mystery. Old Man Geibel had been unexpectedly summoned away.



He had returned with Faith, and here she remained.



Guten Abend, meine Freund... Hallo, hallo.... Ya.. Ah, sehr goot to see you...

There he is. Old Geibel, standing just on the fringe of everything.



How ill-at-ease he looks. Not a participant, really. A watcher; an eavesdropper.

A collector of characters, if you will.



You can tell he disdains the girls' chatter.



There are fewer and fewer men who can dance as I would prefer.



And how stupidly they talk; 'How charming you are looking tonight.' 'Do you often go to dances?'

That is Miss Annette Hallsworthy, also Geibel's niece, his sister's offspring, and Faith's first cousin.

This was Annette's seventeenth birthday ball.

Annette's parents' demise was no mystery. They died in a coach accident when Annette was very young making Annette the debutante heir to the Hallsworthy fortune.



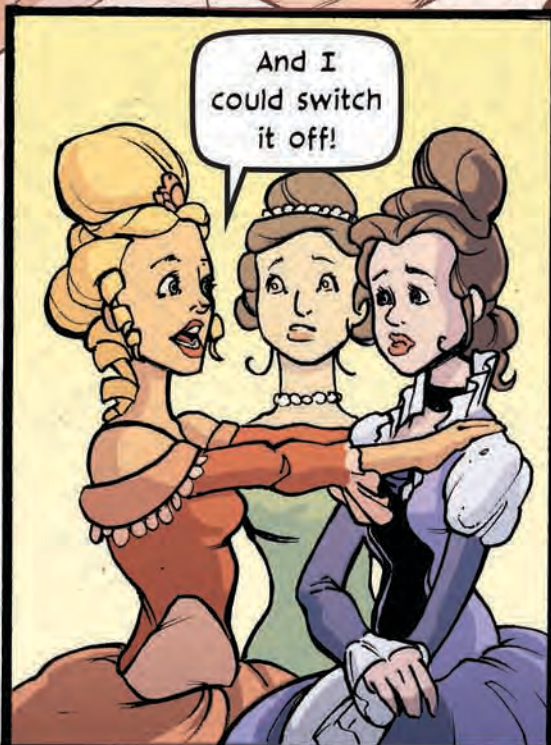
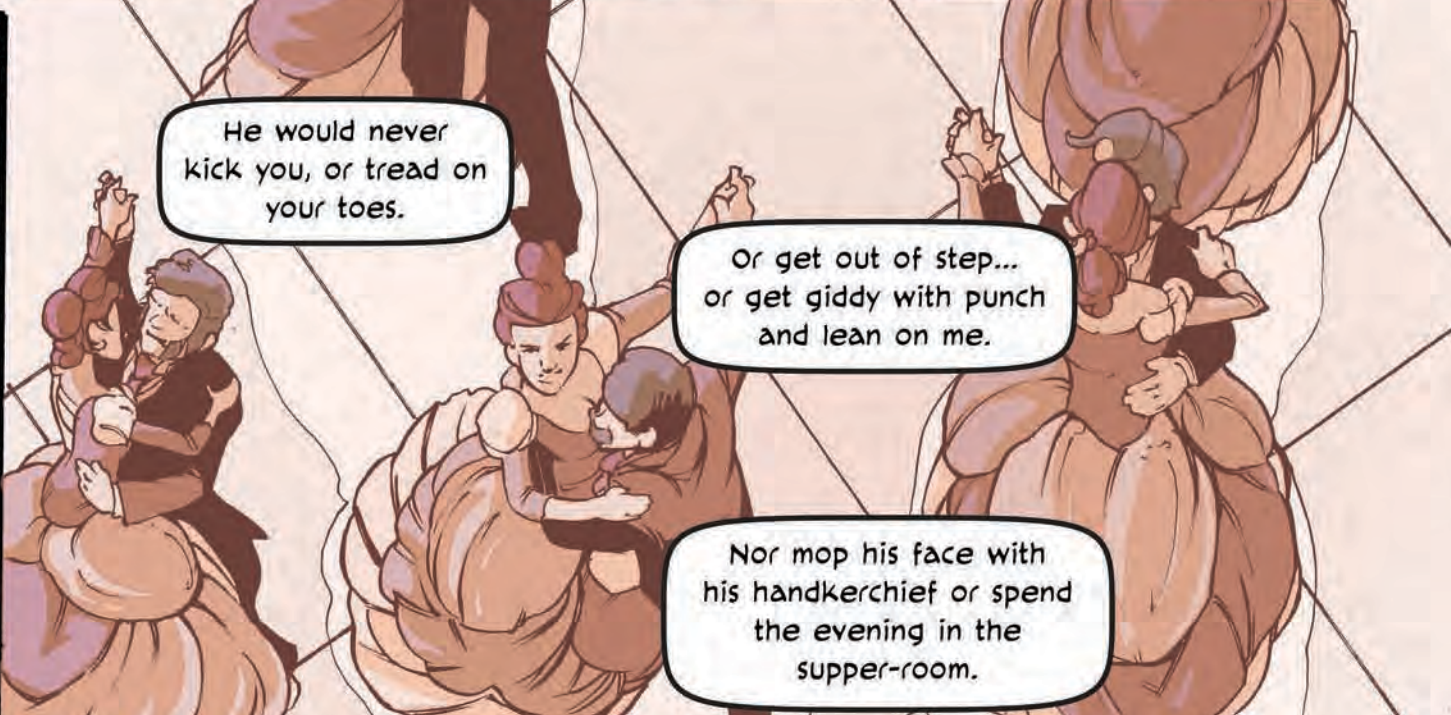
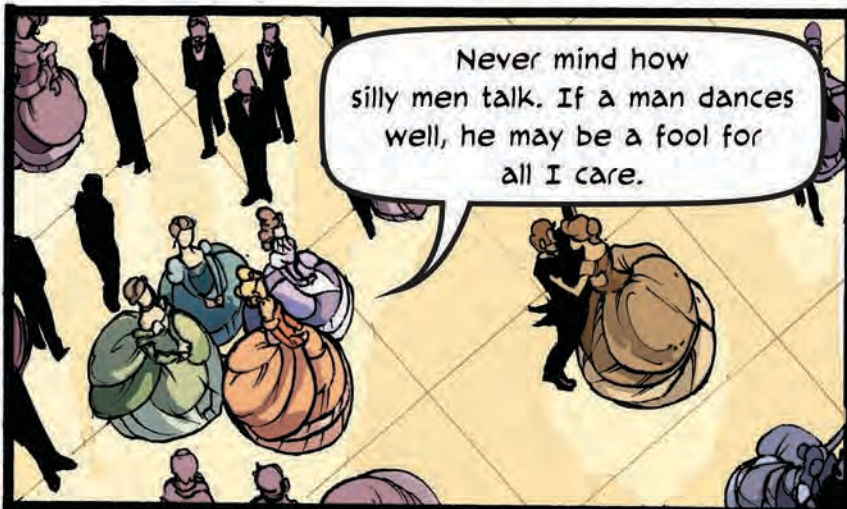
As others, Geibel seemed to just tolerate her.



They go on, and on... 'What a warm day it has been.' 'Do you like this waltz?' 'What a charming dress you have on.'



Although they're very careful to forego complimenting your gowns, Faith, since most you wear are mine given you from the prior season.





Brilliant girl, that Faith. Quite imaginative and an inspiration to her uncle.



And he would pay attention to only me. Completely, entirely... me, me, me!

And you would love only him, forever and ever!



Old Geibel was annoyed by Annette's ridiculing Faith. That night, Faith gave Old Geibel inspiration that gave rise to innovation.

The fates, however, did not grant me even a brief conversation with Faith that evening.

As I worked to bolster my courage over the following year...



The old toy-maker labored on the greatest of his creations

and he completed it for...



...Annette's eighteenth birthday ball which was much the same as the year prior, but for one event...



Old Geibel brought with him a clock work man.



Ladies und gentlemen, may I introduce to you my new friend... Lieutenant Fritz.



The clockwork man dipped his head sharply to acknowledge the crowd.

Good evening. Lieutenant Fritz at your service.





Just a minor adjustment or two... Which of you ladies will be first to dance with him?

He keeps perfect time, never tires. He won't tread on your toes, and he will hold you only as firmly as you desire.



He will delight you with genteel conversation...

He can't be everything you say he is, Uncle.



Faith approached the mechanical man and gently stroked his metallic cheek.

Oh, but he is, Dear cousin.



Though he is neither flesh nor bone, in one way he is superior... He cannot suffer the torments of a broken heart or loves lost.

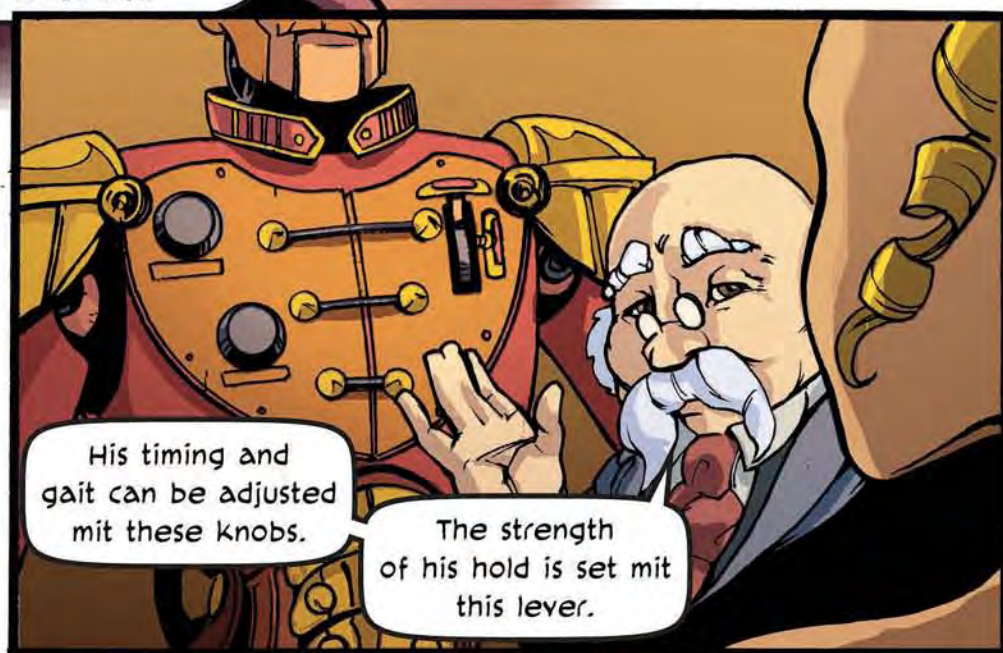


Perfect, indeed!

Well, eh, yes. Thank you, Faith.



Step up, Annette. Stand just here.



His timing and gait can be adjusted mit these knobs.

The strength of his hold is set mit this lever.



He is the perfect dancing partner.

We shall see, Old Man.



Sirs... a waltz!

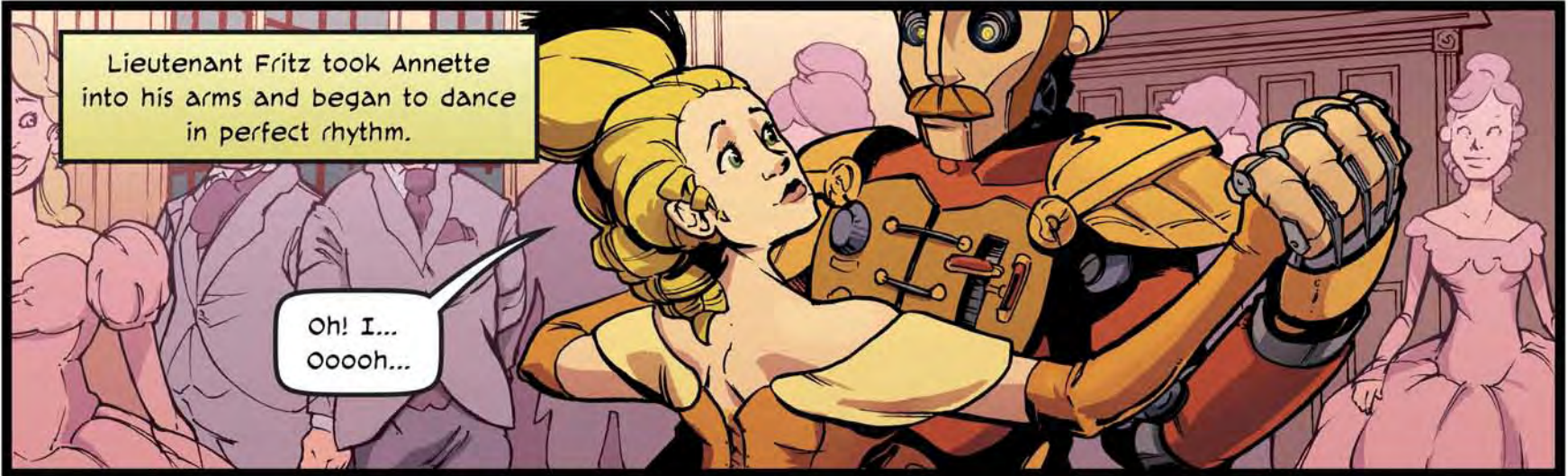


Old Geibel set the knobs and tripped the final switch.



The Clockwork marvel stepped toward Annette and bowed eloquently.

May I have this pleasure, Miss?

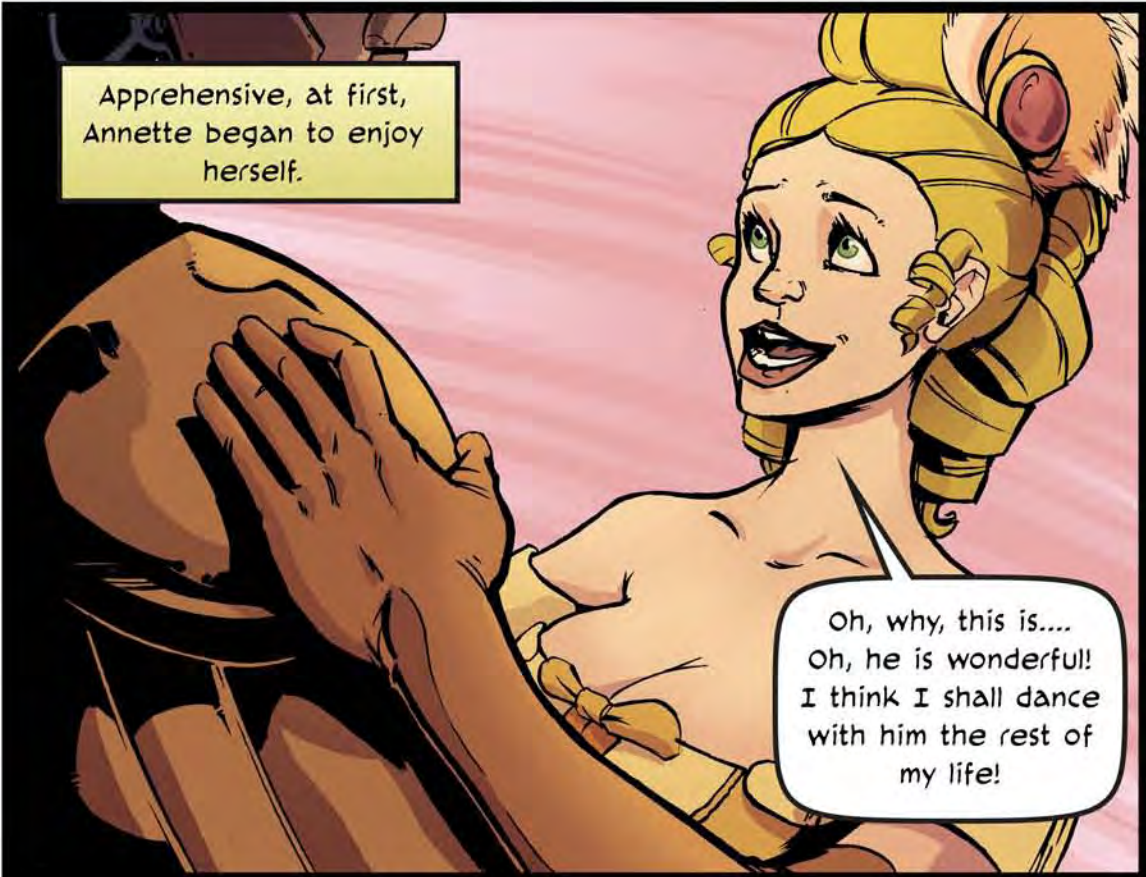


Lieutenant Fritz took Annette into his arms and began to dance in perfect rhythm.

Oh! I... Ooooh...



He will take you in a circle. Be careful that no one knocks against him as it will surely alter their course!

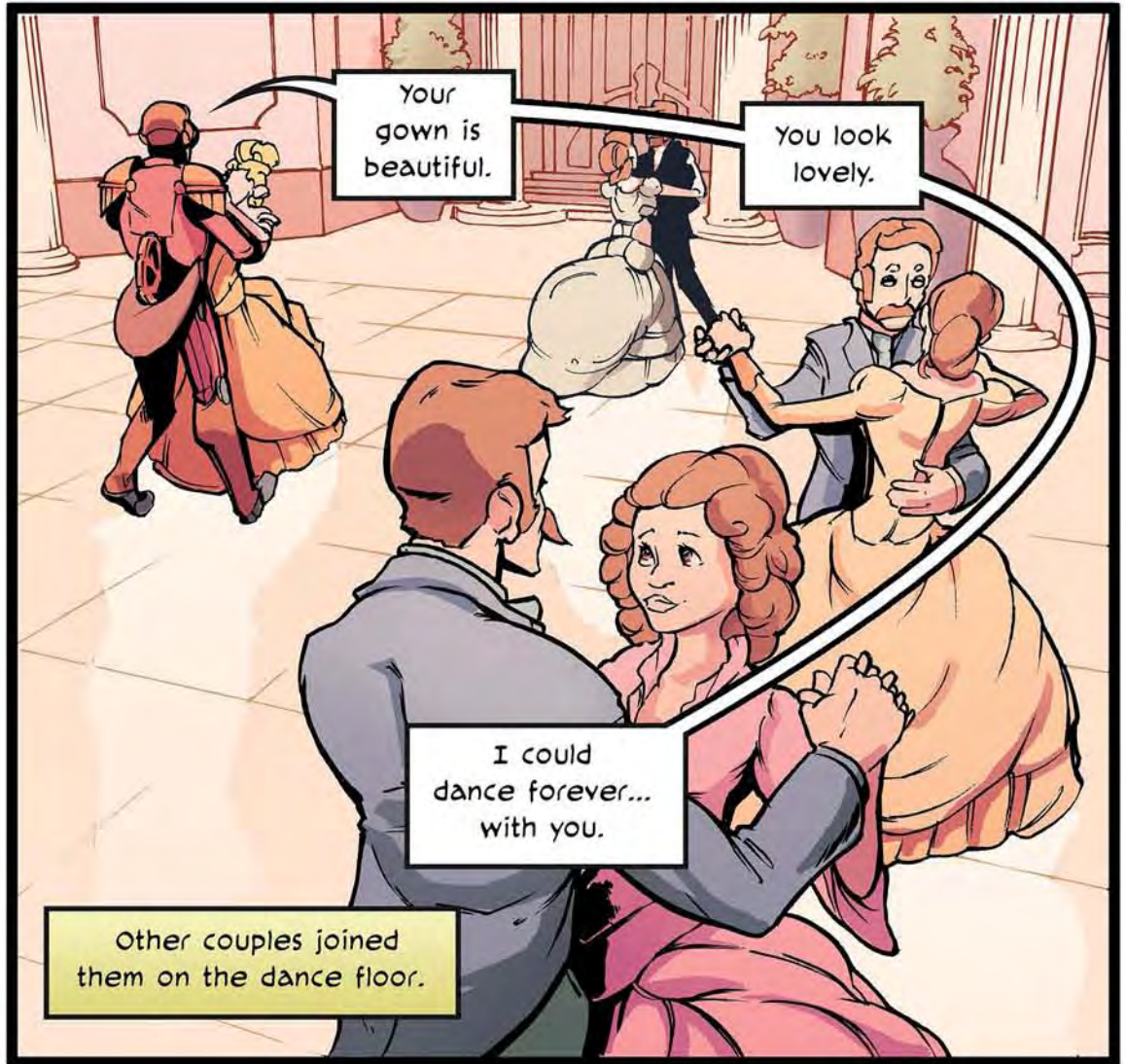


Apprehensive, at first, Annette began to enjoy herself.

Oh, why, this is.... Oh, he is wonderful! I think I shall dance with him the rest of my life!



Oh!
Ooooooh!
Ohoh!





We seemed well-suited. Faith even appreciated my ill attempt at improvised humor.

How well our steps agree.

You look perfect tonight.

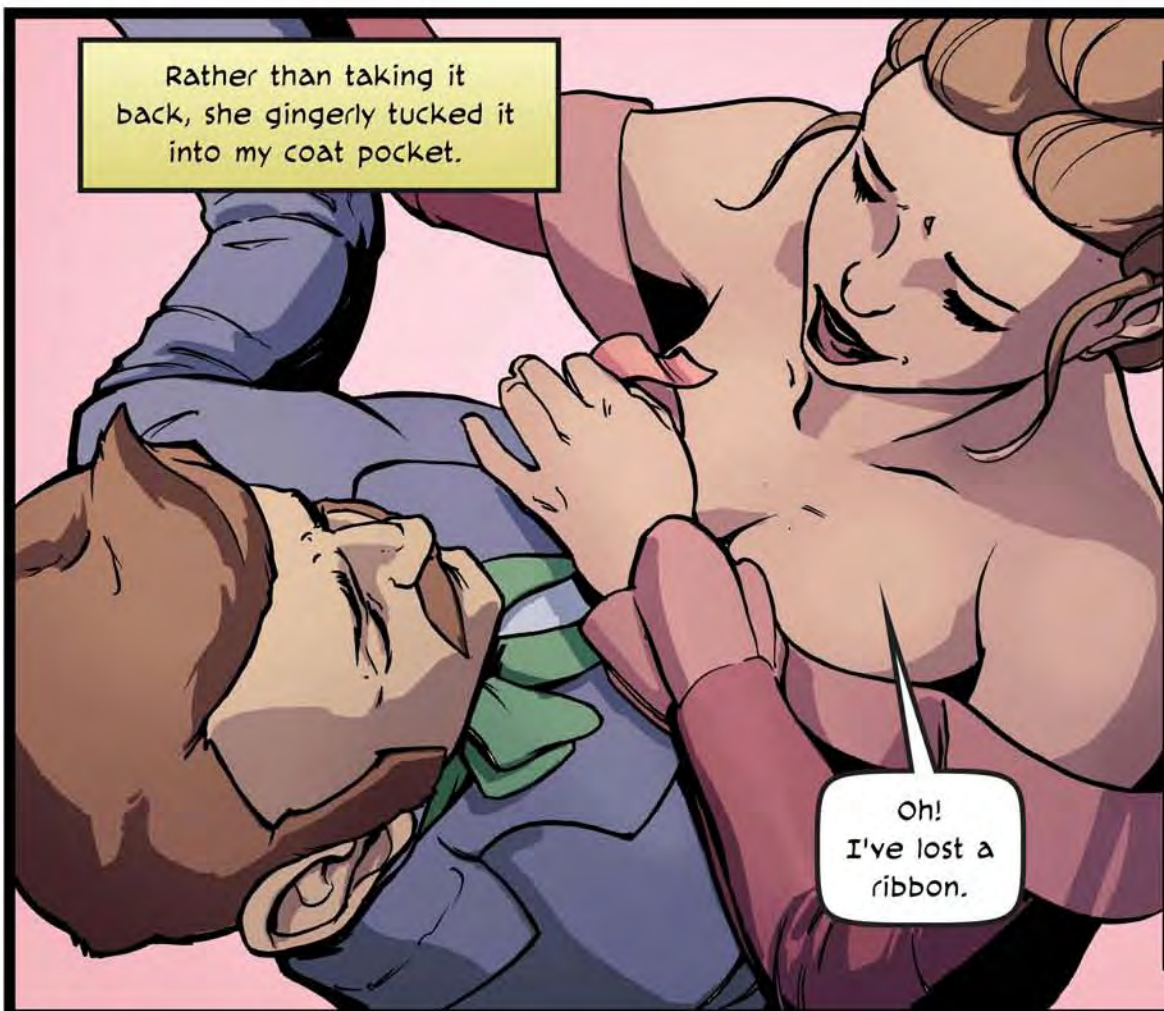
I could dance with you... forever.



Could you? Could you really dance with me forever, Mister Brown?



We continued the dance with nary another word, until one of Faith's pink hair ribbons fell onto my sleeve.



Rather than taking it back, she gingerly tucked it into my coat pocket.

Oh! I've lost a ribbon.



I'm no longer perfect. My apologies.



I promise to overlook the flaw, if you can overlook mine.

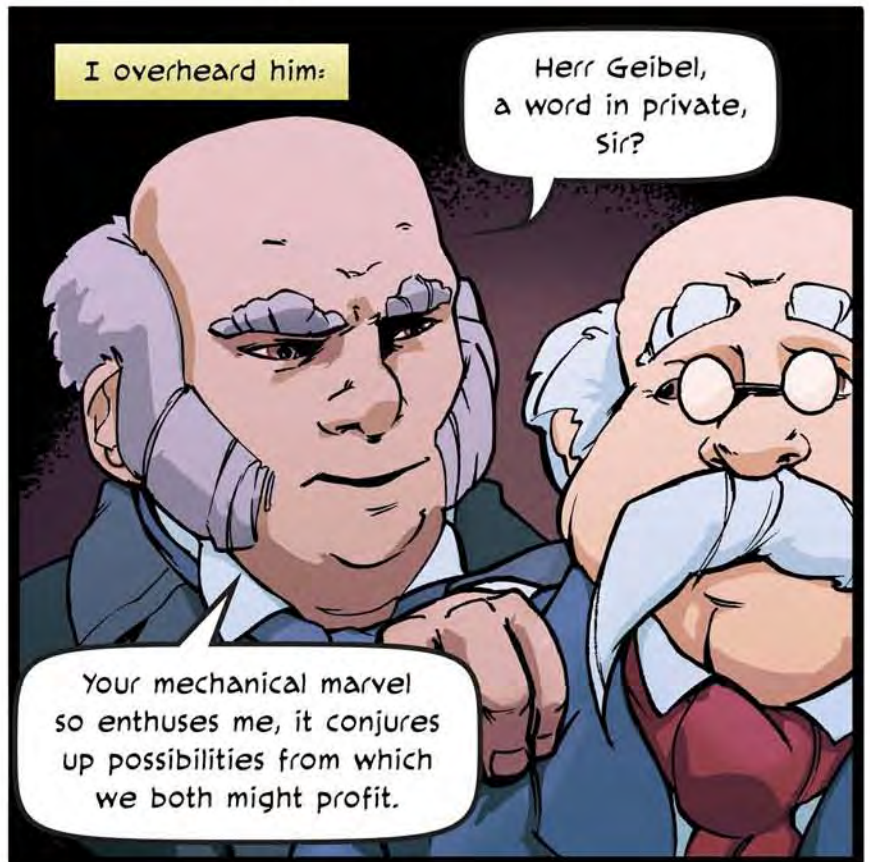
Are you flawed, Mister Brown?



They say 'love is blind' especially when it is true love... And I shall never love but one.



I knew at that moment, I loved Faith Geibel, but my infatuation was interrupted when I spied Felix Wenzel as he slyly approached Old Geibel.



I overheard him:

Herr Geibel, a word in private, Sir?

Your mechanical marvel so enthuses me, it conjures up possibilities from which we both might profit.



A shrewd businessman, Herr Wenzel guided Old Geibel from the room as the Clockwork Man continued to whirl Annette around the floor...

even after the MUSIC STOPPED.



An expanding patch
of blood had begun to seep
through the fabric of her
dress and prompted...

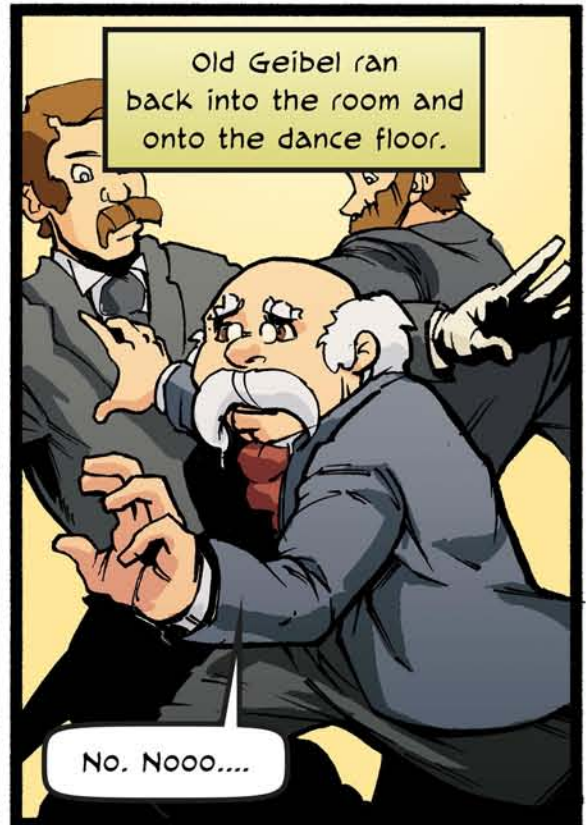




Ladies! Ladies, get back! Men, stop this monstrosity!



One man...two then three together tried to stop the Clockwork Man whose twirling momentum repelled them like rag dolls.



Old Geibel ran back into the room and onto the dance floor.

No. Nooo....



His attempts to disengage the mechanics of his creation failed.



The floor had become slippery with Annette's blood.

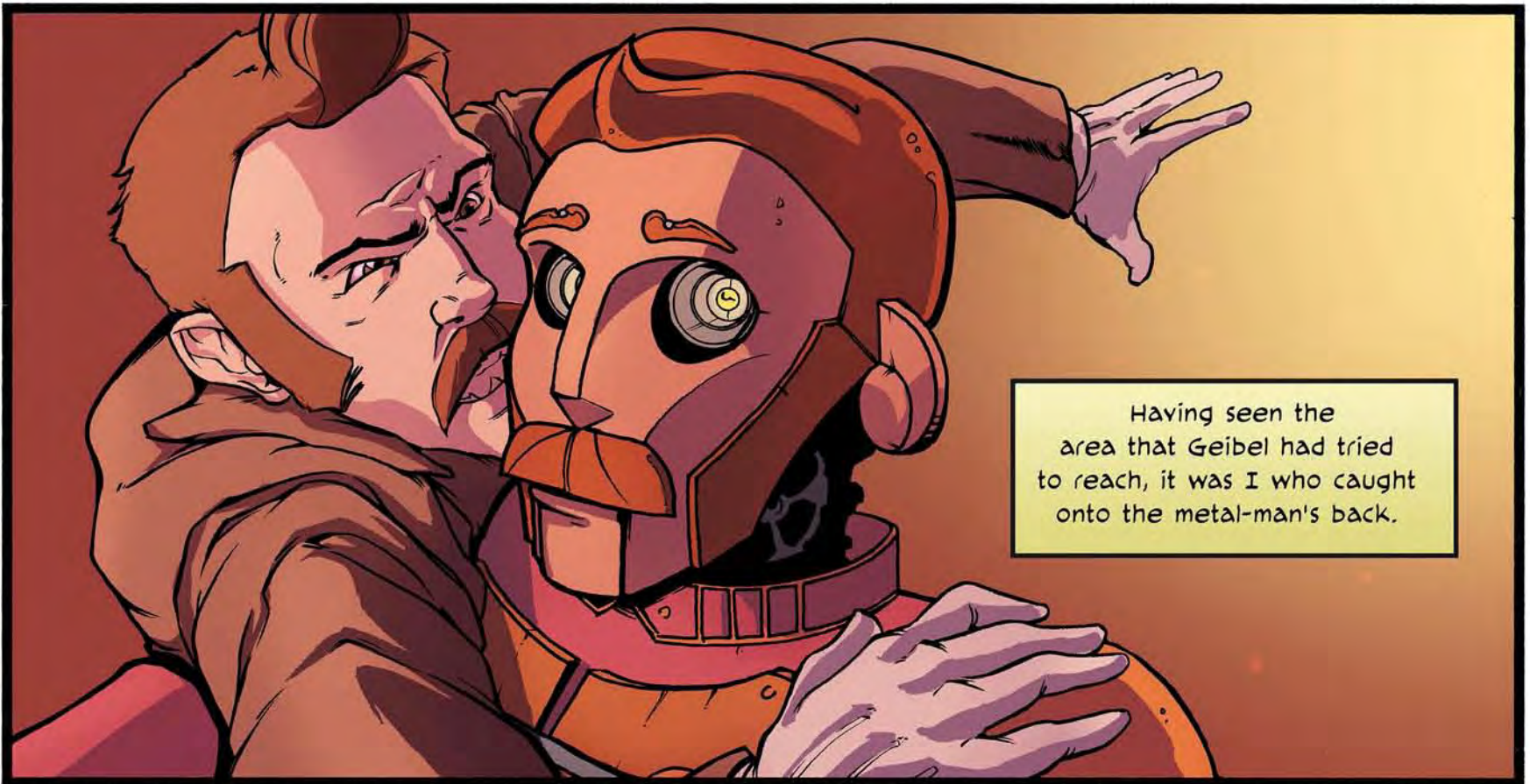


Geibel slipped and was knocked unconscious by the creature's out-stretched arm.



The Clockwork Man's hold tightened around Annette...

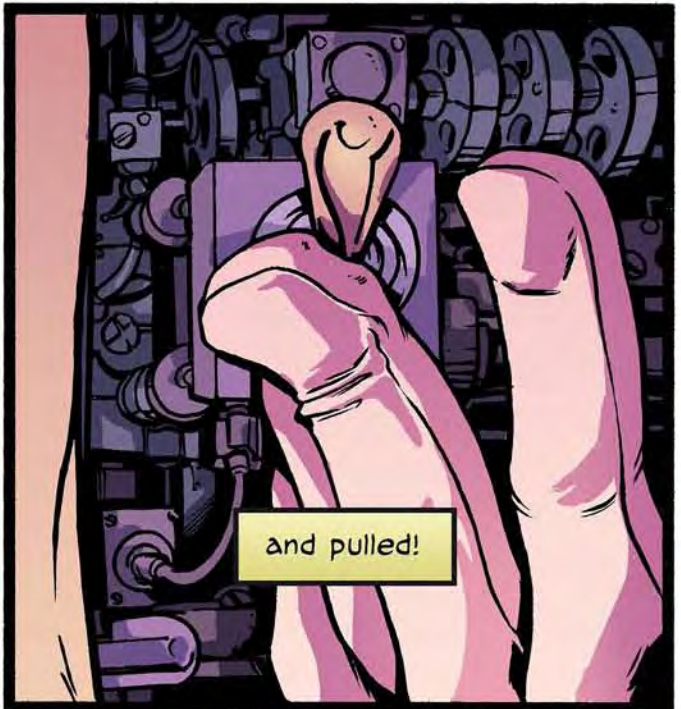
crushing her.



Having seen the area that Geibel had tried to reach, it was I who caught onto the metal-man's back.



Holding on with one arm... Reaching 'round with the other, I found the lever...



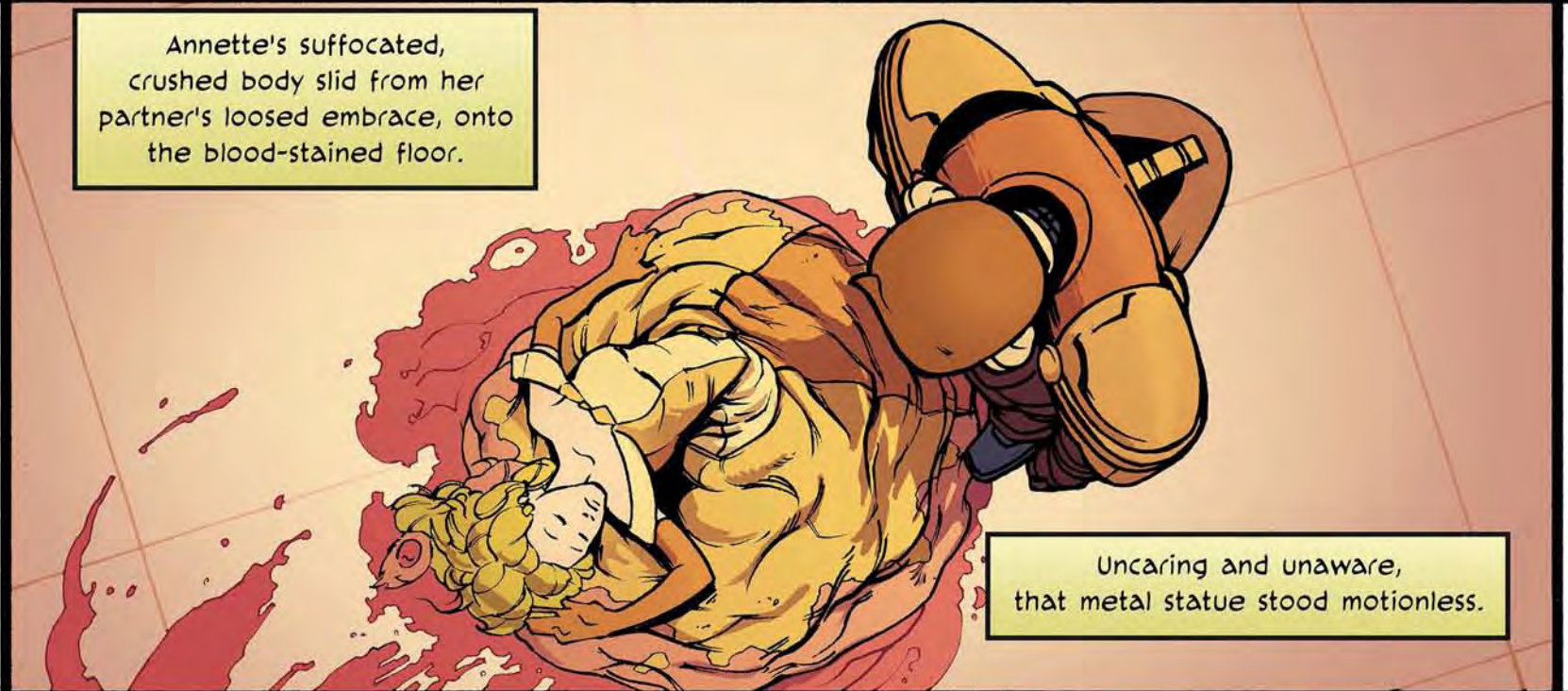
and pulled!



All gawked in disbelief as there stood the two. Inanimate Clockwork Man holding lifeless Annette.



Annette's suffocated, crushed body slid from her partner's loosed embrace, onto the blood-stained floor.



Uncaring and unaware, that metal statue stood motionless.



Innocent of any intentional murderous malevolence.



A sour end to what all thought would continue as an annual affair for years to come.

How fleeting life can be.



How swift its end.



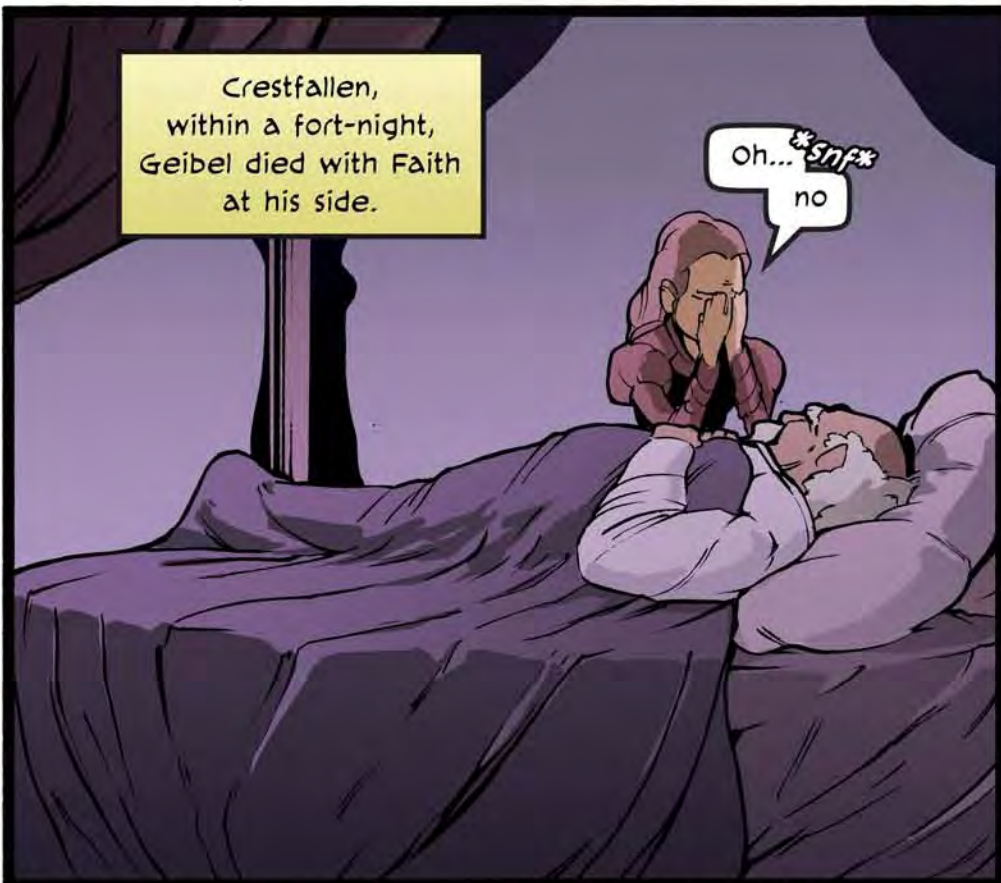
Upon returning home, so shocked was I, I had not bid a proper farewell to Faith.



I had only her pink hair ribbon, and its sweet perfume as a memento.



Unable to prove any wrong-doing on his part, the authorities restricted Old Geibel to making toys suitable for only child's play; none could be clockwork in their make-up.



Crestfallen, within a fort-night, Geibel died with Faith at his side.

oh... *snf*
no



Faith, you... you know you must... You must go...

...oh, no. *sob*



Having been Annette's first cousin, and only living heir, Faith became a wealthy young woman.

She had many suitors, but turned them all away

including me.



With Old Geibel's death, she was exceedingly saddened and fell into great morose. I heard she became confused, uncertain if suitors were more interested in her money than in her heart.



There were whispered suspicions that Old Geibel had built the clockwork man with malicious intent.

He must have realized the financial benefit to Faith upon Annette's death and, thus, a boon for himself.



Howbeit, Faith had reason to leave.



Within the year, Faith vanished into the night.

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Jan C J Jones, Executive Producer - Writer
Forest Rose Productions LLC
www.forest-rose-productions.com/

After earning a Bachelor of Science Degree from Eastern New Mexico University, Jan worked in science research where she honed her technical writing abilities. Yielding to her passion for creative writing, she founded Forest Rose Productions where she began writing for & producing visual and performance media that included scripts for film, video, multi-media, and various theatrical productions. Her credits include projects with the Walt Disney Company (Buena Vista Home Video) and The Kennedy Center's Imagination Celebration. Jan has garnered numerous writing awards along with 2 Telly Awards for video editing. She adapted, wrote and produced (in association with FinalRune Productions - Fred Greenhalgh, Director), the 2 hour long audio drama, "A Journey With Strange Bedfellows" which received a 2015 Mark Time Ogle Award for excellence in audio storytelling in the horror genre. It was featured as an "Official Listening Selection" at HEAR Now: The Audio Fiction and Arts Festival.

David Stoll, Sequential Artist - Graphic Novel Illustrator
Stoll Comics
stollcomics.com/

David is a freelance artist-illustrator who was born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona where he began drawing comics in elementary school. He earned his Bachelor of Fine Arts from Northern Arizona University (Flagstaff, AZ) followed by a Masters of Fine Arts in Sequential Art from the Savannah College of Art and Design (Savannah, GA), one of the most prestigious schools in the U.S. recognized for its sequential art program.



Resurrected classic Gothic horror
adapted from the audio drama...

A JOURNEY WITH STRANGE BEDFELLOWS

Written & Adapted by Jan C J Jones
Audio Drama Directed by Fred Greenhalgh
Graphic Novel Illustrated by David Stoll

Socially shy Hunter Brown loved sweet-tempered Faith Geibel from afar for several years. Now, just when Faith has noticed him (at her cousin's annual birthday ball), a clockwork dancer murders the guest of honor, its creator dies and Faith mysteriously disappears without a word. The allure of Faith's mesmerizing gaze and the incendiary ecstasy borne of their first kiss convince Hunter that his destiny is irreversibly linked to Faith's. He must find her. Hunter is drawn into a perilous journey that takes him from etiquette-proper Victorian England, into the murderous alleyways of Paris, through Satan's unhallowed Hungarian forest and eastward to Faith's Transylvanian origin. The insidious murder of Hunter's best friend, an unavoidable encounter with a demonic stranger, and tracking a blood trail through a centuries-old graveyard (at night) while surrounded by nocturnal predators prelude Hunter's discovery of Faith's long-guarded secret. To remain in her existence, and ensure Faith's survival, Hunter must make the ultimate sacrifice.

I am a man forever in love, and a creature forever loved, until the end of my days.
– Hunter Brown from "A Journey With Strange Bedfellows"

What are you willing to sacrifice
to win that which you most desire?

For ages 12 and up



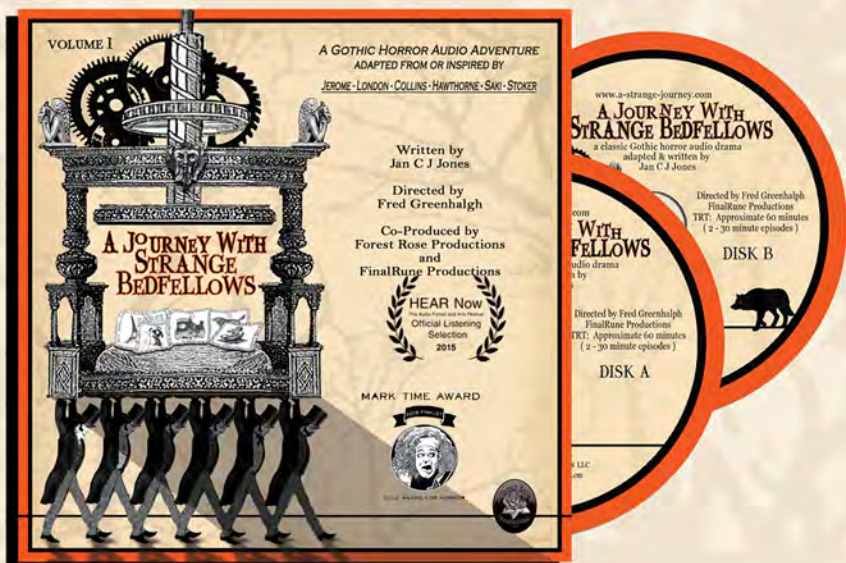
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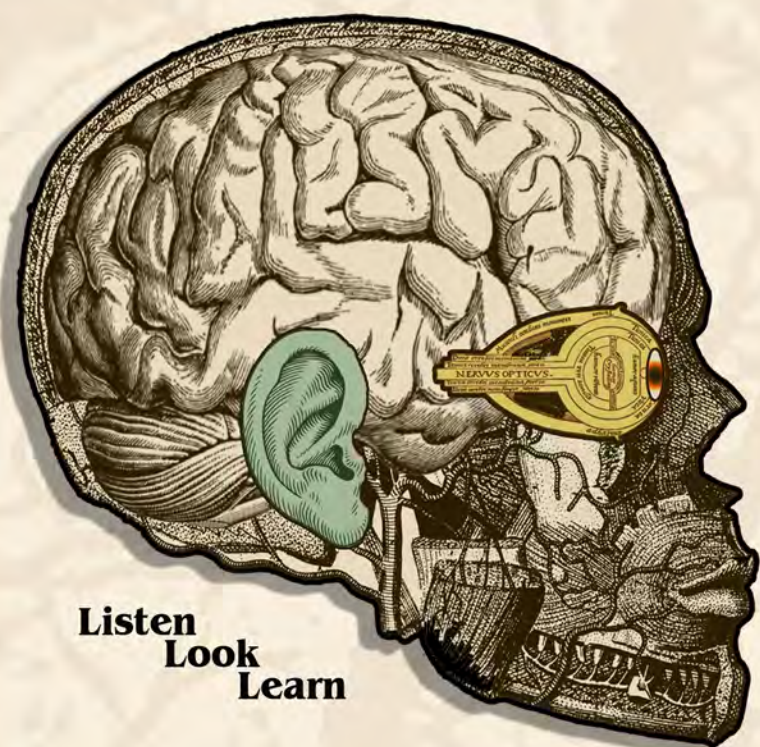
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 Hunter Brown from "A Journey With Strange Bedfellows"



The Audio Drama

Adapted & Written by Jan C J Jones



Listen
 Look
 Learn

A Strange Compendium for the Consummate Educationalist
 An educators' guide based in S.T.E.A.M. core principles

The Graphic Novel

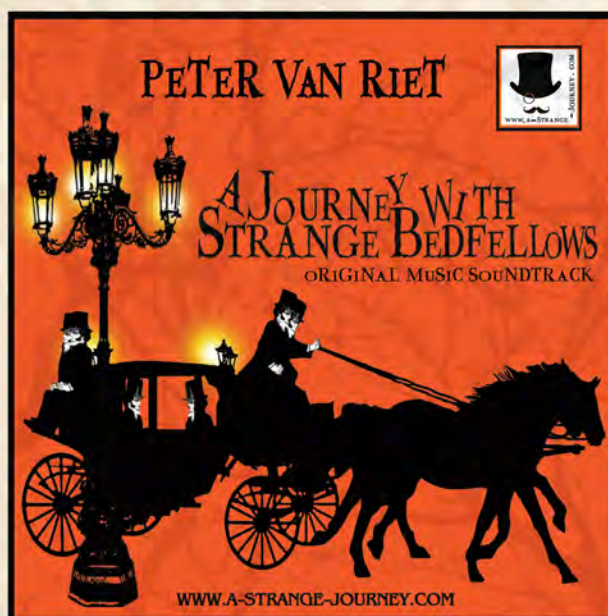


Illustrated by David Stoll

Brilliant surprise ending!
I didn't see that coming!



Coming Soon!



The Music Soundtrack
 by Peter Van Riet



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