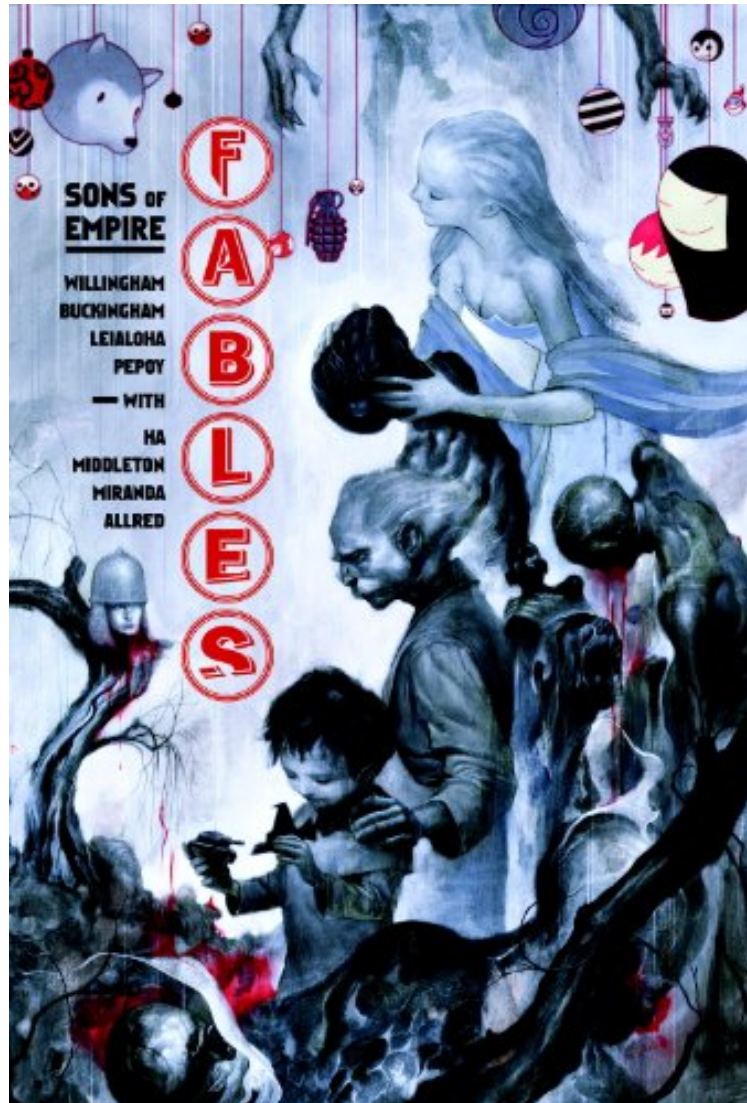


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Fables, Vol. 9: Sons of Empire

Bill Willingham, James Jean
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Bill Willingham, James Jean : Fables, Vol. 9: Sons of Empire before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fables, Vol. 9: Sons of Empire:

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. "In which we take a break from our gathering storm of troubles..."By H. BalaSome SPOILERS for those who haven't yet read the prior FABLES trades.Bill Willingham keeps knocking this thing out of the park, as FABLES remains one of the enduring top notch comic books currently being written. Willingham took popular characters from various fairy tales, folklore, mythology, and literature and plonked them all

down in a Manhattan neighborhood secretly known as Fabletown. There, these immortals live in exile, having, many centuries ago, been driven out of their Homelands by the rapacious Adversary. In issue 50 (see Fables Vol. 8: Wolves), Bigby Wolf succeeded in his mission to strike back at the Adversary, who of course isn't tickled pink by this development. After the big 50th issue hullabaloo, Willingham slows the pace some. This more contemplative set of issues (#52-59) reprinted in FABLES: Vol. 9: SONS OF EMPIRE lends a sense that, in this particular stretch, Willingham is merely biding his time. In fact, what he's doing is setting the stage for some very huge explosions down the road. Things do happen in these issues, just not so much on a grand scale. The 4-part "Sons of Empire" kicks things off. This story arc differs from the norm in that it's narrated mostly from the perspective of the Adversary and his lieutenants. If you've read Fables Vol. 6: Homelands, then you already know that the mysterious Adversary turns out to be Gepetto, the humble old gent who carved Pinocchio. Not too many denizens of the Homelands are clued in that Gepetto is the real power behind the throne, the homie who runs the joint, and that the awesome Emperor is merely a figurehead and another of Gepetto's carved puppets. In "Sons of Empire," Gepetto and his inner circle meet to formulate a plan of action in the war against Fabletown which Gepetto means to initiate in three years' time. We also meet a grown-up Hansel (but no sign of Gretel), and he cuts a rather sinister figure. Today, he's known (and feared) in the Homelands as the Inquisitor General Hansel. He also becomes the Adversary's ambassador to Fabletown (but, of course, we know there's an insidious hidden agenda, right?). At the end of each of these issues are tacked on brief stories focusing on several of FABLES' ancillary characters. So, for instance, we find out how Rapunzel and her hair (which grows impossibly fast) cope in the mundy world. Issue #56 is the Christmas extravaganza and reveals, to no one's surprise, that Santa Claus is himself a fable. This also catches us up with the Wolf household, as Bigby, Snow, and their shapeshifting cubs celebrate their first Christmas. And something happens to Flycatcher, which sets up the upcoming 9-part story arc "The Good Prince" (Fables Vol. 10: The Good Prince). Then comes the two-part "Father and Son" story arc, in which Bigby and Snow take their children to visit their grandfather, the North Wind, for the first time in the Homelands. There, Bigby continues the cubs' training by instructing them to hunt for a kill in the woods. But what Bigby doesn't know is that ravening monsters roam the North Wind's backyard. It's always satisfying whenever the Wolf clan is featured, as I've grown very fond of Bigby, Snow and their rugrats. "Father and Son" also explores more of the uneasy relationship between Bigby and his father, and we also meet Bigby's no-good brothers (these guys really are poster boys for family dysfunction). If nothing else, this two-parter demonstrates that no one is still quite as big and bad and awesome as Bigby Wolf. But where's Ghost, Bigby and Snow's seventh (and invisible) son? "Burning Questions" is this trade's final issue, and in this one Willingham strives to respond to the readers' most often asked questions. So if you want to get the lowdown on things like the training methods for new recruits in the Mouse Police, or Prince Charming's first love, or who caught Snow's wedding bouquet, then this issue'll serve up some answers. Mark Buckingham and Steve Leialoha keep on churning out exemplary artwork. They handle pencils and inks for the 4-part "Sons of Empire" and "Jiminy Christmas," while Michael Allred is decent on the 2-part "Father and Son." Meanwhile, a host of artists take on the 16 really short stories included. Storywise, these issues are rich in content, even if nothing truly momentous happens (unless you count the Adversary declaring his intention to war with Fabletown and the good old U.S. of A. - but, c'mon, that was a given). As usual, Bill Willingham provides depth, humor and twists in his storytelling. Fifty issues plus, and the man refuses to slack off. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By CustomerLove this series. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Preparing For War! By Sir John Jameson War is coming to Fabletown, and The empire's got victory all planned out! At first I thought this would all be filler but I was amazed to find a great level of detail in the way this future war was examined. The plan is simple, spread disease and let our allies kill as many as possible. But a victory seems unlikely when Pinocchio explains why wiping out the mundys won't be so easy. Even though these plans were mainly hypothetical, it really was exciting storytelling. A can't miss if you like good war stories.

Collecting FABLES #52-59! Pinocchio suffers seriously divided loyalties between his father, the evil Adversary, and his fellow Fable refugees in New York. Plus, Bigby Wolf reluctantly decides it's finally time to square accounts with his long-estranged father, the North Wind, and makes a journey with Snow White and their kids to find him.