# GIRL GENIUS®

## ELECTRONIC EDITION



# THE SECRET BLUEPRINTS

FOR VOLUME ONE

AIRSHIP ENTERTAINMENT

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# girl genius™

*The Secret Blueprints for Volume One*



*Adventure, Romance, Mad Science*

SF

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# WHEEL ASSEMBLY

Carefully cut out the four large wheels. Stack wheels on top of each other from largest to smallest. Make a hole in the center. Fasten with a rivet, brad, thumb-tack or whatever. Voila! It is ALIVE!

Well, sort of. Not at all, really. It's only made of paper.

Be careful to center the holes very well. A poorly aligned wheel is hard to read.

Now you can decode the secret messages that will appear in the Girl Genius comics and write complicated notes to your friends!

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# girl genius™

*The Secret Blueprints for Volume One*

Wherein you will find

a wealth of Picky Notes and Fine Drawings

with relevance to the upcoming Gaslamp Fantasy

## Girl Genius

from

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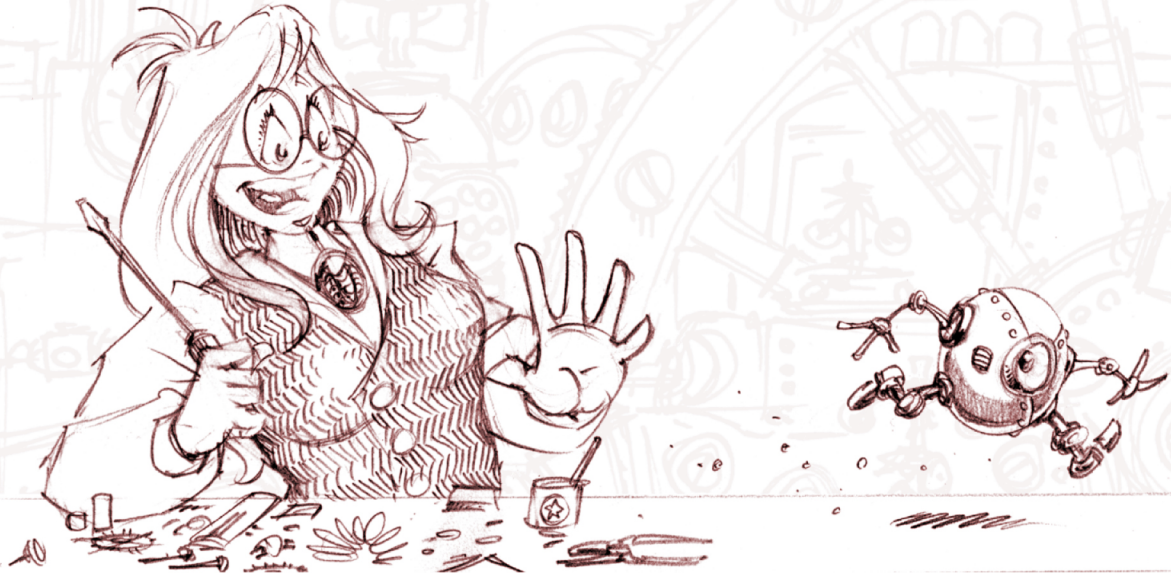
with

Story by Phil & Kaja Foglio

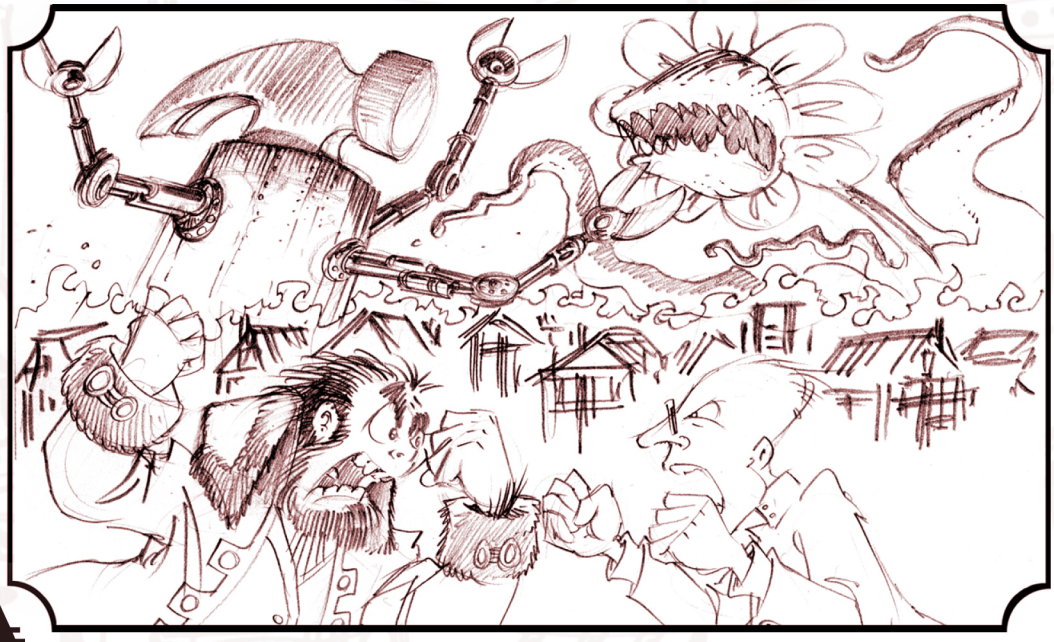
Art by Phil Foglio

and

Blueprints Design & Text by Kaja Foglio

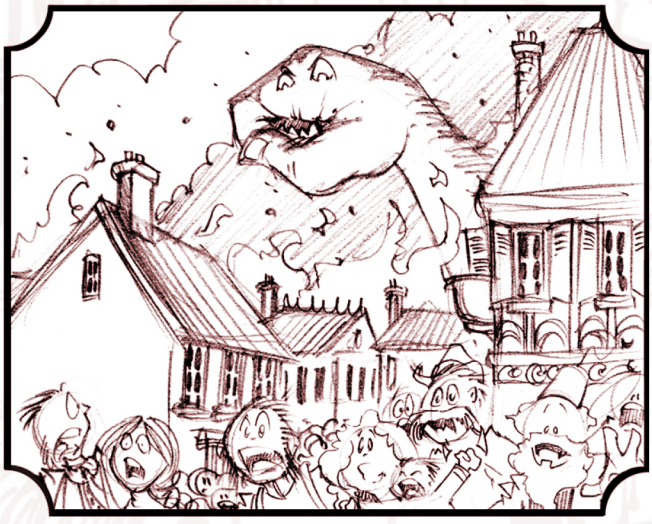



THIS IS A STORY ABOUT SCIENCE... OR MAGIC... OR MAYBE BOTH.
THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THOSE WITH THE SPARK. PEOPLE WHO SEEM TO HAVE THE ABILITY TO TINKER WITH THE LAWS OF PHYSICS AS WE KNOW THEM.
THEY ARE BRILLIANT, FOCUSED AND OFTEN IMPATIENT WITH THOSE WHOSE THOUGHTS DON'T RUN WITH THE SPEED OR IN THE DIRECTION OF THEIR OWN.
BECAUSE OF THIS, SOME OF THOSE THOUGHTS HAVE VEERED OFF IN TRULY ALARMING DIRECTIONS.
THIS MAKES THEM DANGEROUS, SHORTSIGHTED AND FOR THE PROFESSIONAL STORYTELLER, AN ENDLESS SOURCE OF INSPIRATION.
PF



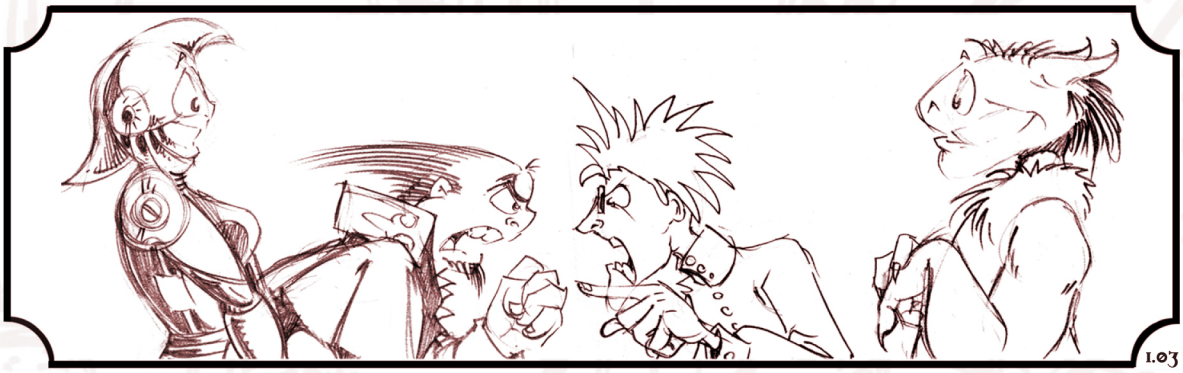
As alchemy grew into science there developed a powerful enough body of knowledge that those with the Spark were able to seize power from older warlord lineages. This early technological elite became the basis for the later Great Houses, in which the Spark often ran (sometimes explosively) through family lines. It was a perfect combination of the old saws "might makes right" and "knowledge is power". New empires coalesced around the Great Houses and lasted only as long as the power of the Spark in residence remained strong.

Unfortunately, those with the Spark usually get along like wet cats. With some notable exceptions, they tend to find each other interesting and hard to stay away from, but quickly begin to squabble. In these circles of mad geniuses, tempers can run high over even small matters of politics. The effect of such disagreements is negligible when the opponents are botanists who study genetic variation in pea plants, but can be devastating when one or both are botanists capable of growing armies of giant carnivorous pea plants with ambulatory stalks.



The Long War was inevitable. How it started is unknown. There were always conflicts between rival Houses, so keeping track of who was fighting or not fighting at any given time became confusing and ultimately pointless. Eventually everybody was simply fighting everybody else. This simplified things greatly.

At last, all of the Great Houses were involved. Monstrosities both mechanical and biological laid waste to town and country, altering the very landscape as a result of their conflicts. Major migrations took place as people caught between aggressors attempted to flee the zones of destruction, or as various Houses recruited workers for their factories and soldiers for their armies. The conflicts ranged across the globe and in some places continue to this day.

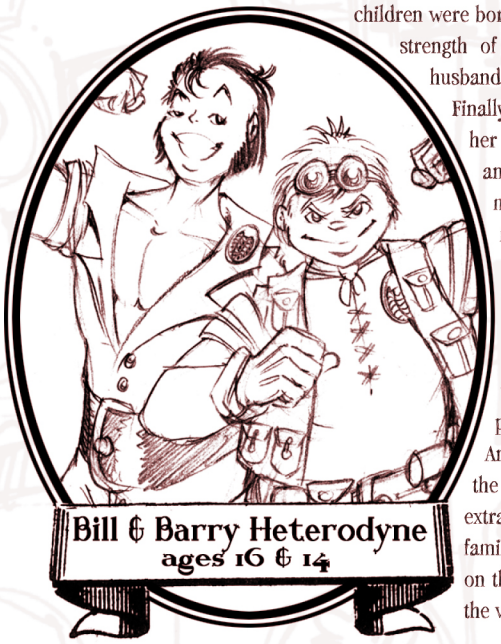


One Great House was that of the **Heterodynes**—a family in which the Spark ran true for generations. Evil despots to a man, the Heterodynes ravaged the countryside and destroyed their enemies with a more than usual ferocity. What is more, they very obviously took a great delight in their work. The Heterodynes were hated and feared, and the people unlucky enough to live in their shadow prayed for a vast supply of enemies to keep them busy at war... far away.



Great-Great-&c Grandpa
**Ghengis Ht'rok-din**

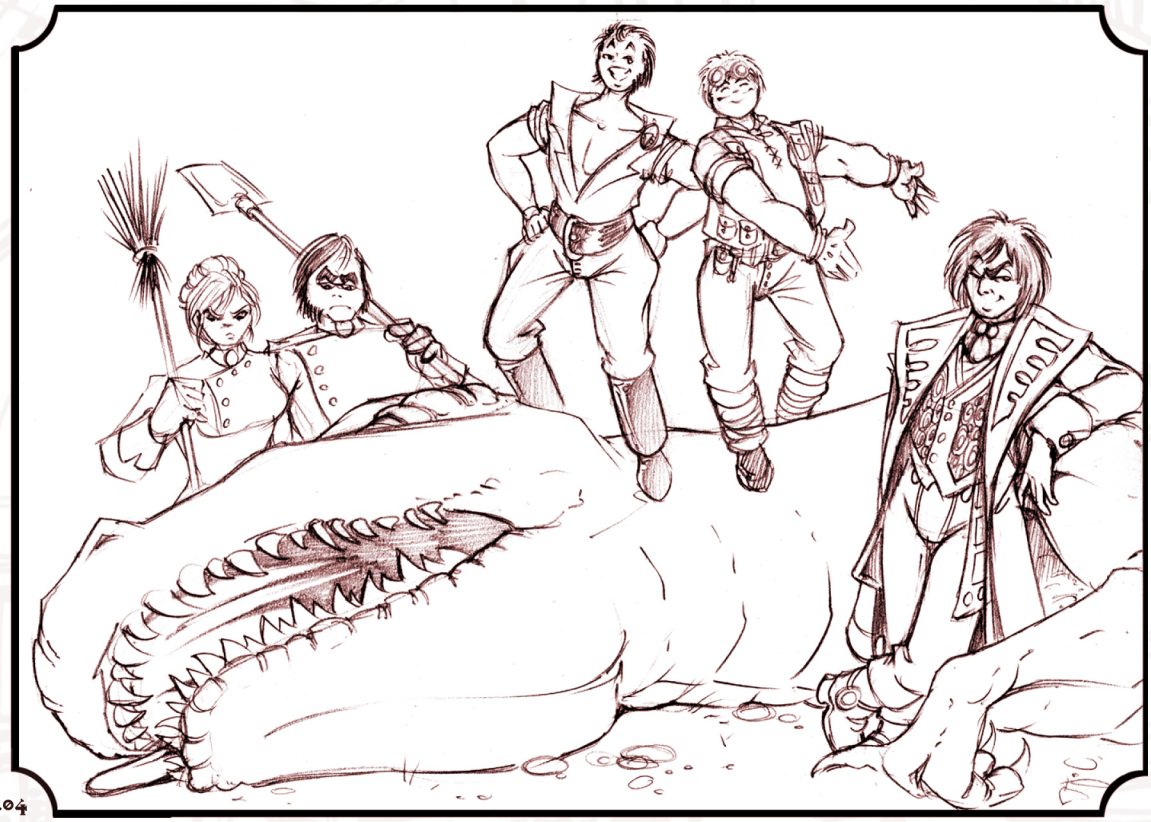
Then what seemed to be a miracle occurred. One of these vicious Heterodynes took to wife the daughter of a conquered house. Her good behavior was bought with the continued health of her family. She proved to be an extraordinary woman who, when her children were born, saw to their education with a strength of purpose that defied all of her husband's efforts to pass on family tradition. Finally she found her chance and poisoned her husband, ridding her people of the ancient scourge and becoming a minor folk hero (and, unfortunately, martyr) into the bargain.



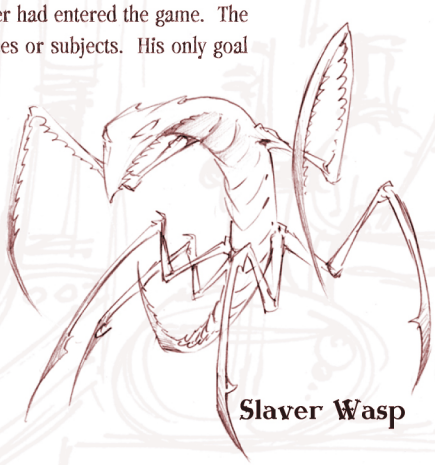
**Bill & Barry Heterodyne**
ages 16 & 14

The **Heterodyne Boys**, as they came to be known, carried the Spark in spades. At a young age, they took their place among the most powerful of the Great Houses. And they used this power for Good. The Heterodyne Boys' one mission was to stop the ravages of the Long War and clean up the damage left by the fighting. So extraordinary were their abilities that they were able to erase the evil history of their family in one generation. Now when people talk about the Heterodynes, it is as Heroes on the scale of King Arthur—Great Ones who will someday return to bring peace to the world.

For twenty-three years, the Heterodyne Boys travelled the globe negotiating peace, stopping monsters and shutting off doomsday devices. Along the way they collected an extraordinary group of like-minded companions, all of whom took their places in the growing body of folklore surrounding these remarkable people. It was a golden age of adventure.

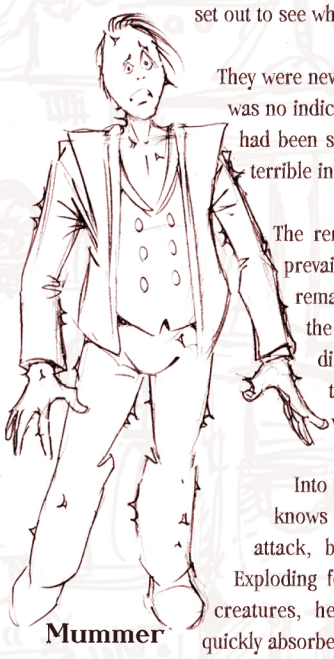


Then came a sudden, dramatic shift in the pace of the Long War. A mysterious new player had entered the game. The "Other," as he came to be known, seemed to have no interest in conquest, land, resources or subjects. His only goal appeared to be the total extermination of other Sparks. The Other followed none of the unwritten rules by which the other Houses fought. There was no negotiation, no exchange of hostile missives, indeed, no communication at all, just sudden and devastating attack. Dozens of the Great Houses fell in the space of a few months. The Other's methods were direct and cataclysmic. Entire countries were laid waste. Mountains were destroyed. Thousands of people were enslaved or worse. These extreme measures brought results. The numbers of those with the Spark, never that high to begin with, were reduced drastically. Those not eliminated directly were often destroyed by their own people in an attempt to avoid the disastrous attention of the Other.



Slaver Wasp

This raising of the stakes had the temporary effect of uniting the remaining Houses, and for a brief time the usual rivalries were put aside. The world looked to its favorite heroes for salvation, and after a brief period of research and preparation, the Heterodyne Boys set out to see what they could do about the Other.



Mummer

They were never heard from again. Roughly a year after their departure, The Other suddenly went quiet. There was no indication of cause. Stories and rumors ran wild. Many people were certain that the Heterodyne Boys had been successful in their quest, but others felt that whatever made the Heterodynes disappear must be terrible indeed, and was probably still out there.

The remaining Houses, mostly minor powers, resumed squabbling immediately, but a darker mood prevailed. Most of the Great Sparks were missing or dead. In many cases, their creations and machines remained to trouble a countryside already ravaged by the Other's attacks. People feared and resented the Great Houses even more than usual. To this day it is not uncommon for children who begin to display the signs of the Spark, (or indeed any abnormal behavior) to be killed, sometimes even by their own families. The World, already in a state of turmoil, plunged ever deeper into a dark age with little communication between regions.

Into this scene stepped Baron Klaus Wulfenbach. No one knows his whereabouts for the duration of the Other's attack, but his dramatic return is well documented. Exploding forth with a terrifying array of machines and creatures, he engineered a series of conquests that quickly absorbed most of what was Eastern Europe. Within the borders of his empire, Klaus has achieved an end to the Long War. The Great Houses that remain independent try to keep a low profile and dream of his downfall. Klaus is not loved, but he is respected and feared, and those who violate his peace are put down swiftly and permanently.

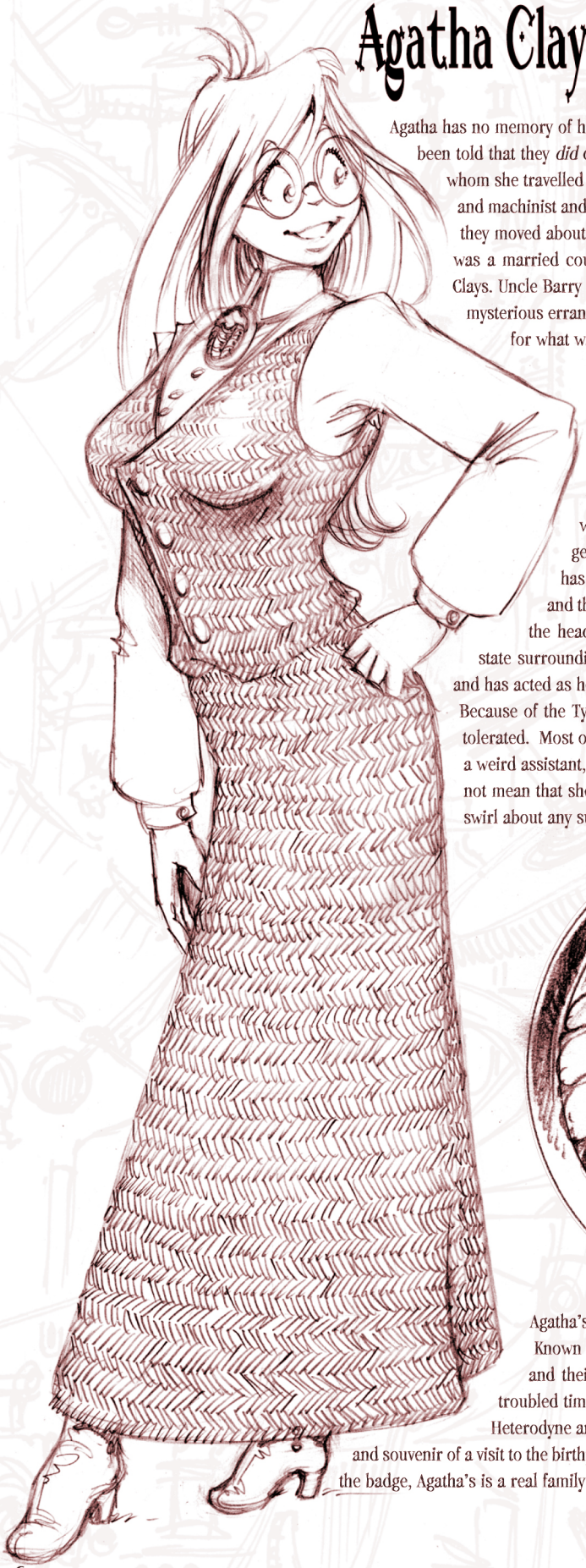


Baron Wulfenbach

The Gifted have always preferred to keep their knowledge proprietary. Machines and creatures must be built (or at least finished) only by the Masters and information is too great a weapon to be casually shared. There is great disregard for the state of the common people, and thus most scientific breakthroughs of the last hundred years or so have resulted not in a higher standard of living for all, but in new and interesting ways to smash your neighbor's castle. Most people outside of the main urban centers still live in a pre-industrial world made strange by the addition of cannibalized parts of discarded machines and the danger of real monsters lurking in the wilderness that surrounds traditional towns. Travel, although simple for those with airships or giant walking battle clanks, is a serious undertaking for the majority of ordinary people who must still use foot or animal transport on bad or nonexistent roads. One exception is the railway system of the Corbettite Monks, but this serves a limited area and has its own dangers. Even without the ravages of the Long War, life is uncertain.

This is the state of the World at the time of our story.

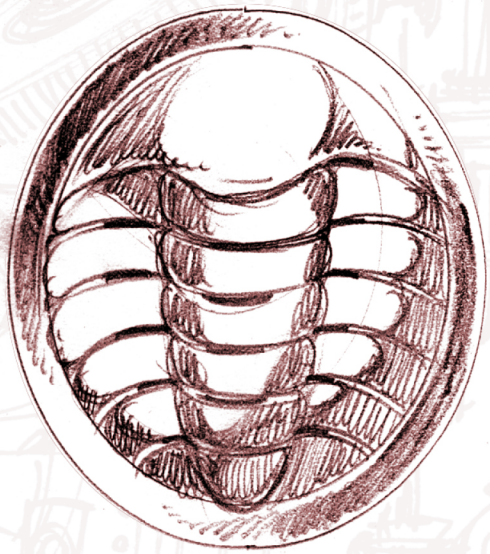
# Agatha Clay/Agatha Heterodyne



Agatha has no memory of her parents or of how they died, only that she has always been told that they *did* die. Her earliest memories are of her Uncle Barry, with whom she travelled extensively in her early years. Uncle Barry was a tinker and machinist and, despite the fact that these were skills highly in demand, they moved about frequently. The only island of stability during this time was a married couple who had been family servants in better days—the Clays. Uncle Barry frequently left Agatha in their care while he vanished on mysterious errands. The year Agatha was seven, he left her with the Clays for what was to be a four month trip. He has yet to return.

Agatha was raised in Beetleburg, the town surrounding Transylvania Polygnostic University, and has attended classes there since she was fifteen. Her life at the University has been difficult and frustrating. She is very smart, but her mind has a strong tendency to wander. She also suffers severe headaches whenever she gets upset, something that happens all too frequently. She has persevered mainly due to an extreme stubborn streak and the encouragement of "The Tyrant"—Dr. Beetle. Beetle is the head of the University and absolute ruler of the small city state surrounding it. Dr. Beetle has always been interested in Agatha and has acted as her mentor and protector.

Because of the Tyrant's patronage, Agatha's presence at the University is tolerated. Most of the staff simply assumes that every mad scientist needs a weird assistant, and Beetle just got a prettier one than usual. This does not mean that she is liked. She is oblivious to the academic politics that swirl about any such institution and thus has few allies.



Agatha's trilobite locket is a common design throughout the Known World. Originally it was worn by the Heterodyne Boys and their retainers, but it has come to be a badge of hope in troubled times. Large deposits of these fossils are found near Castle Heterodyne and the brooches have become a sort of pilgrimage badge and souvenir of a visit to the birthplace of the popular heroes. Although many people wear the badge, Agatha's is a real family heirloom.

# Adam & Lilith Clay

The Spark follows certain patterns. One fairly predictable trait is the early urge to tamper with the stuff of life or to "build a man". This can manifest in as many ways as there are mad scientists, but in the Heterodyne Boys it followed fairly traditional lines and the result was this pair of constructs. In early years, Adam and Lilith were well known as part of the Heterodyne team. Later they tired of the constant action and dropped out of sight. Since descriptions of them tend to exaggerate their monstrous qualities, they have little trouble leading a quiet life. Townsfolk may guess that one or both are constructs, but this is not unheard of in a town run by one of the Gifted. Few would connect the gentle town blacksmith and his wife with the larger-than-life heroes of twenty years ago. Adam and Lilith are obviously student work, and no one nowadays would believe the legendary Heterodynes capable of anything less than perfection.

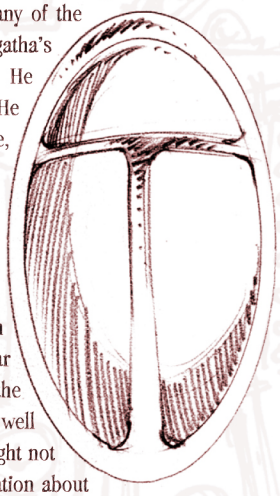
The pair were not built to have children, and Agatha has been their closest concern since she was tiny. Charged with her protection, Adam and Lilith have stayed put as long as possible, passing Agatha off as their daughter and seeing to her education. They have mixed feelings concerning her. On one hand they love her and are happy to have had a child to raise, but on the other they are increasingly worried. Eleven years ago, Beetleburg was an independent city-state ruled by Dr. Beetle, an old friend and mentor of Barry's. Beetle was the only other person who knew who Agatha was, and the only person in the Known World they could trust to handle the problems that would arise if her Spark became too powerful for the inhibiting device that she wore. Beetleburg has now become an island surrounded by Wulfenbach lands. Beetle is aware that his power is eroding and there is an air of desperation about him that makes Adam and Lilith uneasy.

Adam serves as a machinist and blacksmith to the townsfolk and the local farmers, and his machine shop is conveniently located near the city's walls. Lilith keeps the books for the shop and gives piano lessons.

Both Adam and Lilith generally wear clothing that conceals their obvious stitch marks and skin tone variations.

Lilith disguises her oversize left eye with special glasses.

# Dr. Tarsus Beetle & Transylvania Polygnostic



A powerful Spark in his own right, Beetle has been instructor to many of the Gifted, including both the Heterodyne Boys, Klaus Wulfenbach and Agatha's Mother. Beetle rules the city-state around Transylvania Polygnostic University. He was not with the Heterodynes on their last expedition, and still feels bad about this. He is one of the trusted few who knows that Barry Heterodyne returned from the trip alive, and that he did so with Agatha in tow.

When Barry left Agatha with the Clays, it was for a trip either so unimportant or so secret that he never bothered to tell anyone where he was going. Beetle is worried, but his first care is his University, which he will not leave vulnerable by his absence. He has not yet sent out a search party, since to do so would require him to betray his friend's trust. Barry was very clear that no one should know that he was still alive, in fact took great pains to foster the rumor of his death. For many years, Beetle felt that he knew the Heterodynes well enough to trust that Barry could take care of himself, and that a long delay might not call for interference. Later he began to actively collect rumors and information about unusual activity in the outside world, hoping to get some kind of clue as to Barry's whereabouts. Unfortunately, there have been no leads worth following.

Transylvania Polygnostic is one of the Grand Old European Schools, worthy of comparison to The Great Universities in Paris, Wittenburg and Oxford. The town and lands around the University make up the town of Beetleburg, which has been ruled by a continuing line of Tyrants since the founding of the College. Beetle's students are terrified of him, a state that he encourages, but he is a brilliant administrator and is adored by town and University alike. He is the most beloved Tyrant in the history of the University despite (or possibly because of) his ruthlessness in putting down lawbreakers.

Although Baron Wulfenbach's holdings have grown to surround Beetle's territory, Klaus has so far left Beetleburg alone out of deference to his old teacher. In return, Beetle is expected to send full reports of any student that exhibits signs of the Spark. Such people are unusual, potentially dangerous and of acute interest to the Baron. Beetle is also required to immediately report and turn over any unusual machines or creatures that the University ground crews may discover. Artifacts from the Long War still litter the landscape, and some are still quite dangerous. Artifacts of the Other are of special danger and importance, and Klaus has left strict instructions as to the treatment of such items. At this time, Beetle is hiding several forbidden items in hopes that they might give him a weapon against Klaus in what he sees as an inevitable conflict.

# Dr. Silas Merlot & Dr. Hugo Glassvitch

Dr. Silas Merlot is Beetle's second-in-command. Short-tempered, efficient, with a mind for details, Merlot is disliked almost as much as Beetle is loved. More astute students have pointed out that the provision of a "Bad Guy" to carry out unpleasant tasks may be a trick of Beetle's meant to maintain his own personal popularity. Merlot studied at the College of Alchemical Inquiry at Wittenburg before coming to work for Beetle, where he was the first in his class, outdoing even a few minor Sparks. (Being a genius does not always guarantee high marks.) He came to Transylvania Polygnostic in hopes of a position of power.

Merlot sees the power and prestige of those with the Spark and desperately wants this for himself. Sadly for him, he has yet to produce any work of great worth or creativity. He is a fine assistant, but is not the type to handle power well, so it is probably for the best that he has not Broken Through, and probably never will. Sparks of his personality type tend to be vindictive and cruel when they come to power. Merlot hates Agatha, mostly because her clumsy unworkable devices remind him of his own failed attempts at greatness.

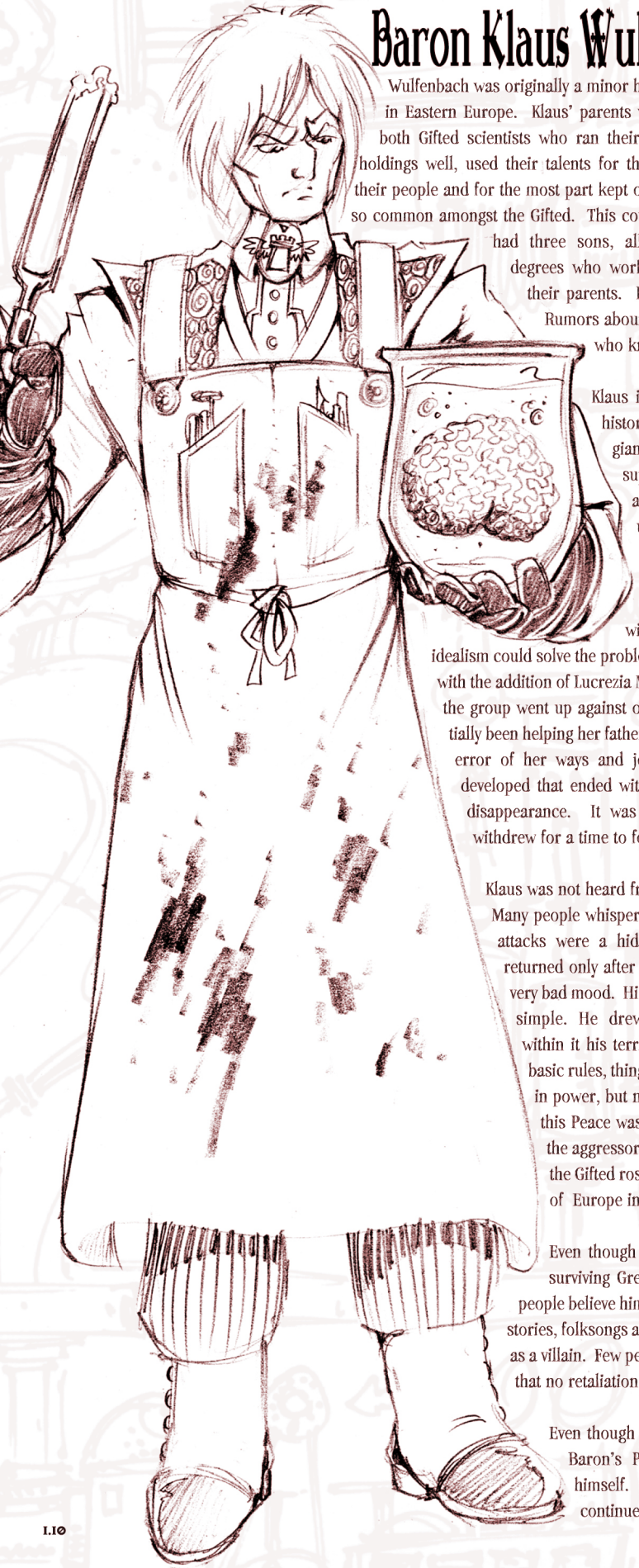
Dr. Hugo Glassvitch studied in Paris, then came to Transylvania Polygnostic. He has worked with Beetle ever since. He is the Chief of Research for the University, a much more interesting and desirable job than that of Second-in-Command/Scapegoat.

Merlot knows and resents this, but Glassvitch is his closest colleague and the nearest thing that he has to a friend, so he tries to be civil. For Merlot, this is a real effort.

Glassvitch is a brilliant scientist, although apparently without the Spark. He is perceptive enough to understand some of Merlot's unhappiness and kind enough to tolerate the man, mostly out of pity. Merlot knows and resents this too, but not enough to relinquish the one friend that he has. Glassvitch has a great heart and is kind to everyone around him, but he genuinely likes Agatha. She has been a student in some of his classes over the years and he can see that, for all her difficulties, she really does possess a deep love of Knowledge. He feels sorry for her constant frustration with her work, and tries to give encouragement whenever possible.



# Baron Klaus Wulfenbach



Wulfenbach was originally a minor house in Eastern Europe. Klaus' parents were both Gifted scientists who ran their small holdings well, used their talents for the good of their people and for the most part kept out of the politics so common amongst the Gifted. This couple is said to have had three sons, all Sparks of varying degrees who worked in the lab alongside their parents. Klaus is the only one that anyone has seen in years. Rumors abound as to the fate of the other two, but there is no one who knows for sure.

Klaus is one of the most powerful of the Gifted in known history. The Sparks tend to be specialists. They produce giant insects, or flying warships, or surgically enhanced super-soldiers. Klaus' genius lies in his ability to absorb and integrate the work of others, and usually improve upon it. His primary interest, however, has always been the nature of the Spark itself.

Klaus spent much of his early adulthood adventuring with the Heterodyne Boys. He believed that their unique idealism could solve the problems that fueled the Long War. The friendship changed with the addition of Lucrezia Mongfish, the daughter of a truly evil mad scientist that the group went up against on several of their expeditions. Although she had initially been helping her father in his plans, Lucrezia was eventually convinced of the error of her ways and joined the group of heroes. A tense love triangle developed that ended with Lucrezia's marriage to Bill Heterodyne and Klaus' disappearance. It was generally assumed that he, as the defeated rival, withdrew for a time to forget the girl who rejected him.

Klaus was not heard from at all during the years when the Other was active. Many people whisper that Klaus himself was the Other and the devastating attacks were a hideous revenge directed at the Heterodynes. Klaus returned only after the Other's attacks had ceased, and he returned in a very bad mood. His early idealism had vanished and his new strategy was simple. He drew a circle on the map and declared everything within it his territory. Every year the circle grew. Aside from a few basic rules, things were to stay the same. The ruling Sparks would stay in power, but no hostilities whatsoever were allowed. Any breach of this Peace was met with ruthless conquest and the swift removal of the aggressors. At first no one took this very seriously, and many of the Gifted rose to challenge Klaus. He wound up in control of much of Europe in just a few years.

Even though he stopped the fighting, Klaus is not popular. The surviving Great Houses want their power back, and the common people believe him to be responsible for the ruin of the Heterodynes. In stories, folksongs and plays, Klaus is usually portrayed as a traitor, always as a villain. Few people bother to point out that it speaks well for his rule that no retaliation is ever made for such amusements.

Even though they dislike and fear him, the people know that the Baron's Peace will most likely only last as long as Klaus himself. On account of this, there are many wishes for his continued good health—at least until the Heterodynes return.

# Gilgamesh Wulfenbach

Gil is Baron Wulfenbach's only son.

No-one knows who his mother was. The most prevalent rumors claim that he is the son of Klaus and Lucrezia Mongfish, or that he is a Gifted youth that Klaus has secretly adopted, or that he has no mother and Klaus, in need of an heir, simply built him in the laboratory.

What ***is*** known is that for the last several years Gil was living under an assumed name in Paris, where he was a student at the University. When his time at the University ended, he was brought back to *Castle Wulfenbach* openly as Klaus' son and heir. This has caused a tremendous stir in the Known World, and great disappointment to those who had hoped for an eventual end to Baron Wulfenbach's rule. More optimistic rivals point out that there are few who could hold Klaus' empire, and there is no reason to believe that this new heir is one of those few.

For the last month Gil has been travelling with his father. Klaus seems to be taking pains to annoy his son and keep him off balance, setting up elaborate tests with seemingly pointless results. Most witnesses agree that the idea is to test the strength of Gil's Spark, but some have suspicions that the Baron may have some other goal in mind. All the rumors currently circulating conclude with the opinion that if the Baron is not satisfied with the results, things will not go well for the young man.

Gil has heard these rumors.

He was happy as a student in Paris and is miserable now. He is beginning to feel like a piece of luggage dragged from place to place, he isn't allowed to do anything but tag along with his father and watch, and he is getting very annoyed with the constant testing. He wants very much to please his father, but simply cannot figure out what Klaus is looking for. To make matters worse, Klaus is always right. Always. This quality never sits well with those with the Spark, and it is beginning to grate tremendously with Gil. In an effort to keep from going mad with boredom, Gil has begun making a game out of trying to catch his father in any kind of mistake at all. This has proven to be a bad idea, since he hasn't managed it yet and the failure is only making him more irritable.

Gil sees little in his future besides a life trapped on the *Castle* (Wulfenbach's giant airship) as the heir of a ruler who, in his opinion, is unlikely to ever allow himself to die. Recent experience suggests that Gil will not be allowed to take any serious risks or go anywhere unattended. He has a lab of his own on the *Castle*, but his father has kept him too busy with tests to do much in it as yet.

Gil is not a bad person by nature, but he is beginning to think that becoming one might prove extremely useful. Or at least provide a change.





# Boris Vasily Konstantin Andrei Myshkin Dolokhov

Boris began life with two arms and an eidetic memory. He spent a happy youth as a student librarian in the palace library before he came to the attention of his Duke, an evil genius of the first water who forcibly modified Boris in an attempt at building the ultimate juggler. In addition to the extra arms, he was given enhanced speed, strength and balance. The experiment was a success, and Boris spent several miserable years as court jester before his master sent an army of giant land squid to attack a neighboring Principality. Klaus Wulfenbach, who had just begun to impose his Baron's Peace upon that part of the World, took this as an official Breach of said Peace, and promptly absorbed both Duchy and Principality, ending hostilities immediately.

Klaus has a sharp eye for talent, and could tell that Boris' strength did not lie in the field of entertainment. Boris became Klaus' secretary, and soon rose to the level of second-in-command. He is a fine administrator and is completely loyal to Klaus, whom he views as the man who saved him from a life of undignified slavery.

Boris has little imagination and practically no sense of humor. He is prissy and easily annoyed, and anything that is not orderly gets on his nerves. He hates the Jägermonsters for their noisy, chaotic nature and for what he claims to see as their extraordinary stupidity. The truth is that there is no one else quite like Boris. He has no family. The Jägermonsters' camaraderie and gristly good humor inspire a deep envy in a man who feels very much alone. The Jägermonsters, in turn, pick on Boris at every opportunity. They find his preoccupation with his own personal dignity to be so easy a target that it would be positively ***wrong*** not to make a joke of it. This does not help the secretary's mood toward them at all, and Boris' obvious annoyance merely serves as encouragement.

Boris has worked with Klaus for many years now, and has been attacked by Things Man Was Not Meant To Know more times than he cares to remember (even though he actually *can* remember, and if you ask him, the number is 356. Unless you count the time Dr. Migstrom hit him with a radish pie, which he hardly thinks qualifies.) He still hasn't got used to it, but it's better than a stupid hat with bells on.

If you pour enough vodka into Boris, he will preform his special party trick—juggling the hors d'oeuvres while playing the balalaika. He does not like to go to parties, but he gets invited a lot.

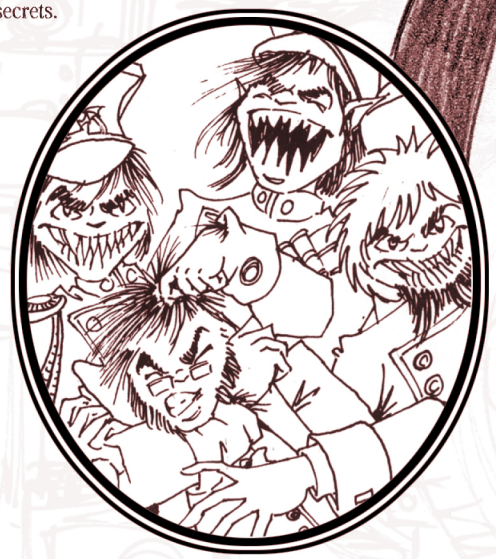
# The Jägermonsters

This band of manic construct soldiers was created by Agatha's Ancestor—Warlord Vlad Heterodyne the Blasphemous—as his personal companions and guard. They look back on the days before the Heterodyne Boys as a Golden Age when they rode with their masters starting wars and terrorizing the populace. Life was exciting then, with fun (their kind) and action (carnage) every day. The Heterodyne Boys themselves were never completely comfortable with the Jägermonsters as retainers, but the concept of releasing them upon an innocent world was unacceptable. Thus they were used primarily for defense. Many of them learned to knit at this time. The Jägermonsters grumbled under Bill and Barry's leadership, but when the Heterodyne Boys disappeared, they were at a true loss. Mechanicsburg, the seat of the Heterodynes, was all but destroyed by the Other. After a time of waiting for their masters to return, they hired out as mercenaries to Baron Wulfenbach.



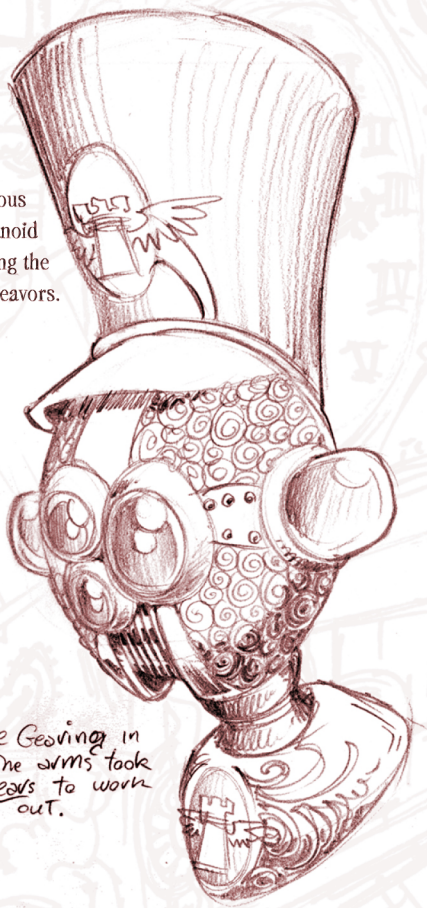
Klaus uses the Monsters primarily for scare tactics, and they are still fairly bored, but at least they have a job and get to fight once in a while.

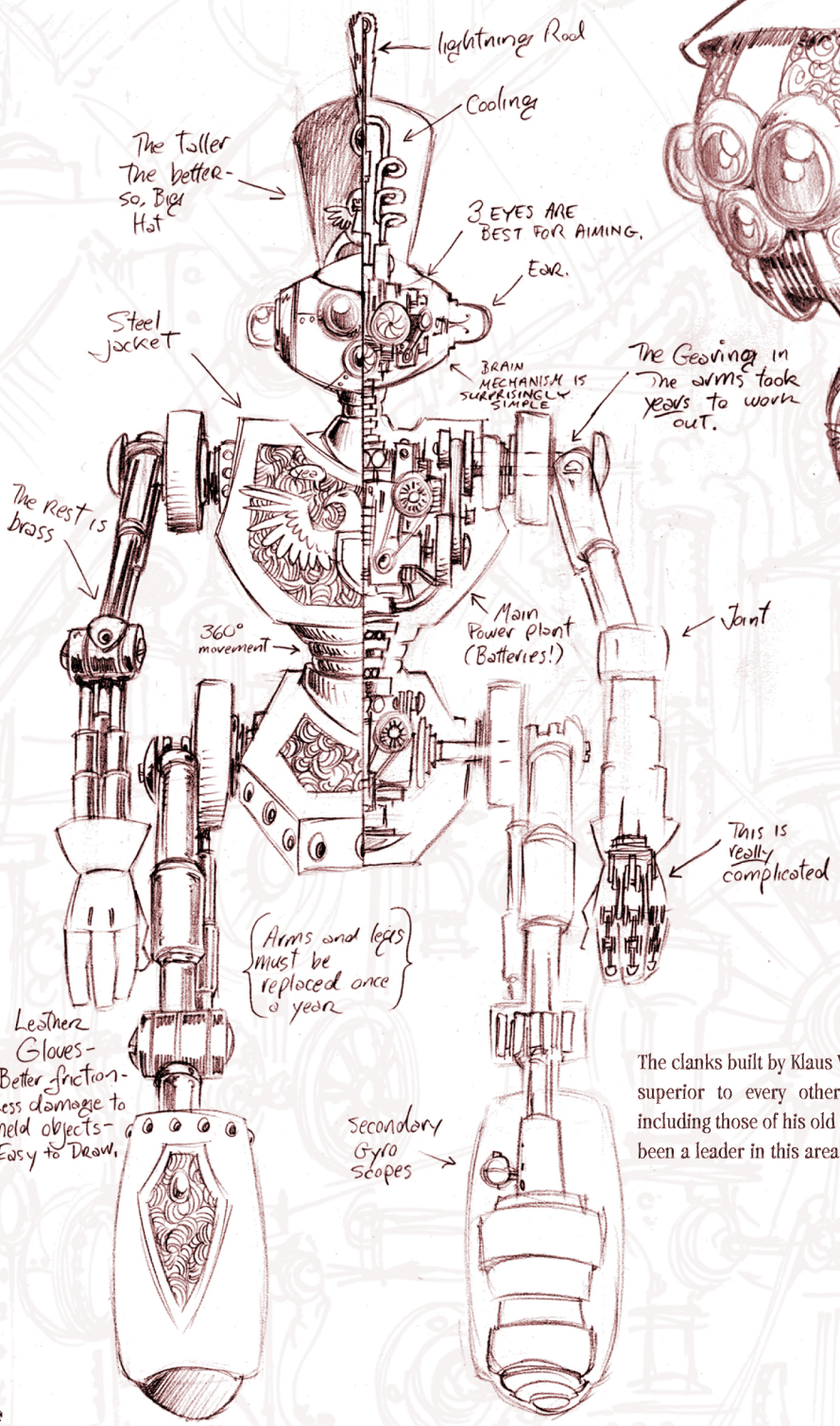
The Jägermonsters are practically indestructible, and many of the original company are still around. They are used to relying on their Gifted master to patch damage and sew on new parts, but they will not let Klaus touch them. They view the details of their creation as proprietary information and would rather go without parts than let an outsider discover their secrets.



# Clanks

The term "clank" is usually used to denote any self-propelled, semi-autonomous machine. They are not all based on the human form, but most scientists favor humanoid or animal shapes. The development of the perfect clank is an ongoing rivalry among the Gifted, and clanks are often used alongside foot soldiers in military endeavors.






The clanks built by Klaus Wulfenbach have so far proven superior to every other type currently being used, including those of his old instructor, Dr. Beetle, who has been a leader in this area for years.

# The Castle Wulfenbach Airship

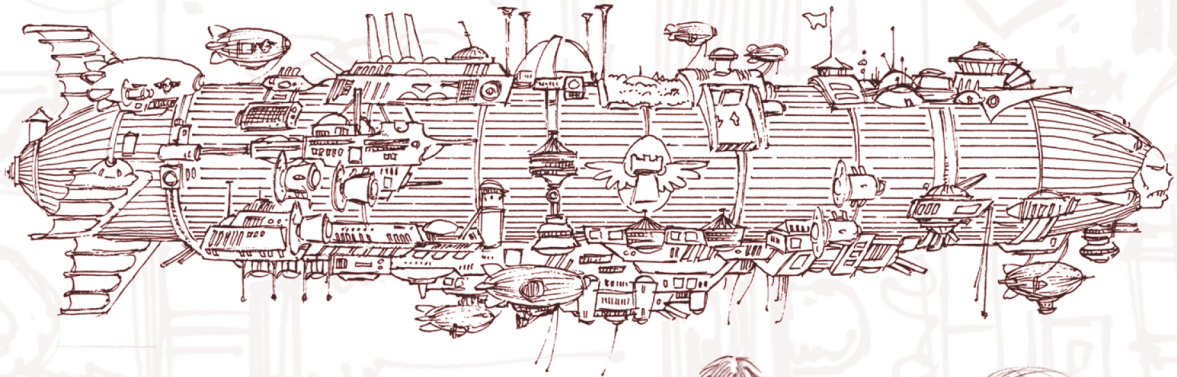
When Klaus returned from his long absence, he found his ancestral home in ruins.

Instead of rebuilding, he began work on a giant airship which was named in honor of the old castle. This is the administrative seat of Klaus' empire, and it is the only capital city in the Known World with the unsettling habit of looming over the horizon in times of trouble. The *Castle* has a staff of hundreds of domestics, laboratory assistants and bureaucrats which is entirely separate from the large crew that actually runs the vessel.

The *Castle* itself is very slow, travelling continually from place to place in a stately tour of the Empire. When speed is needed, one of the smaller auxiliary airships is used. The *Castle* either catches up eventually or the smaller ship simply returns home when its business is completed. Each smaller airship has its own crew and its own captain, as does the main ship. The *Castle's* Captain is the ultimate authority on board, excepting Klaus and Boris, who rarely interfere with the day-to-day running of the ship.

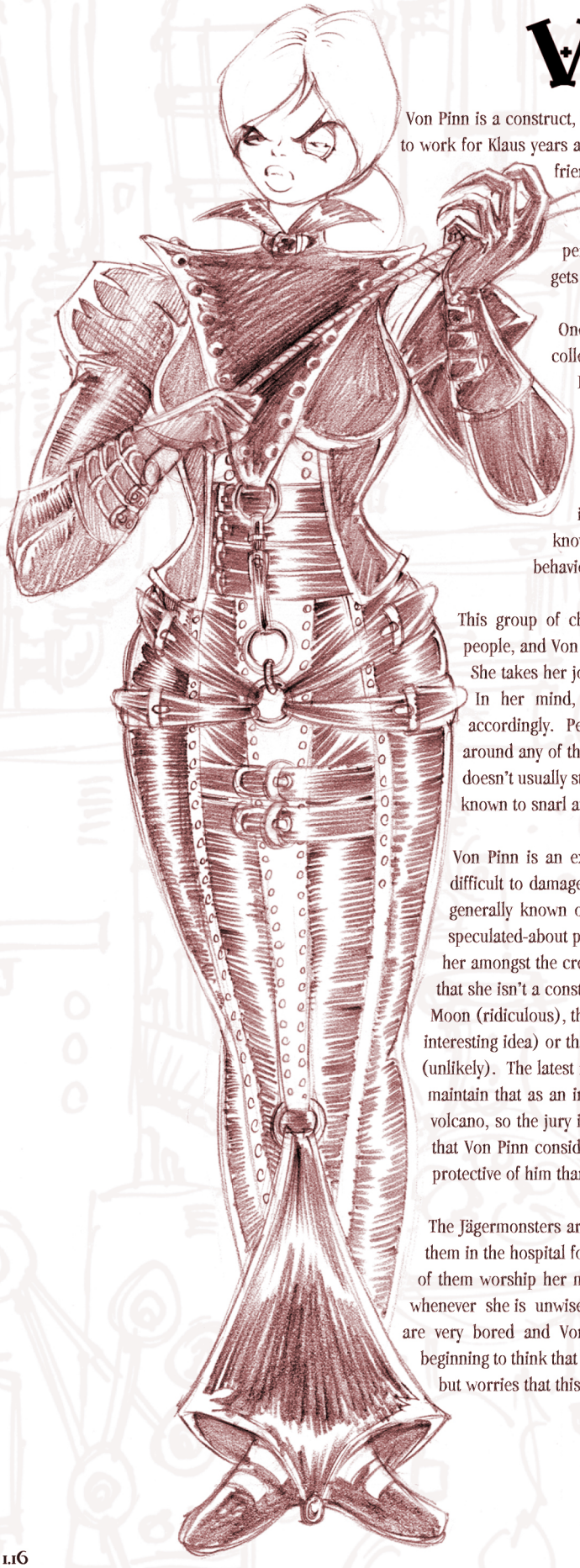
Although the *Castle* is huge, Klaus tries to keep all but the most essential laboratories and offices in various towns and Universities on the ground. His own labs and quarters are on board the *Castle*, as are the new quarters set up for the use of his son.

The *Castle* never lands, and many people on board haven't set foot on the ground in years.





# Von Pinn



Von Pinn is a construct, but beyond this little is known about her past. She came to work for Klaus years ago, but her prickly nature has kept her from making any friends aboard the *Castle*. She seems to prefer this situation, and encourages rumors about her bad temper and viciousness. Actually, she doesn't encourage them, per se, she simply ***is*** bad-tempered and vicious, and word gets around.

One of the more interesting groups on board the *Castle* is the collection of "Pupils" overseen by Von Pinn. Many parts of the Empire are still administered by their original rulers, who answer to Klaus in a relationship that is frankly feudal. Klaus has adopted the Roman Emperor's custom of keeping the firstborn of each Great House in his power. The polite explanation is that they are being raised in an ideal situation to learn the craft of ruling, but everyone knows that they are also hostages kept to ensure the good behavior of Klaus' vassals.

This group of children and young adults is a very important group of people, and Von Pinn's job is to make sure that nothing happens to them. She takes her job very seriously and is fiercely protective of her charges. In her mind, everyone is a potential threat and is to be treated accordingly. People on board the *Castle* have learned to be very careful around any of the Pupils, to treat them kindly and with respect. Von Pinn doesn't usually stop to ask questions when she is angry. She has even been known to snarl at Klaus on occasion, although her loyalty is unquestioned.

Von Pinn is an extremely well-made construct, much stronger and more difficult to damage than Adam or Lilith Clay. Although her existence is not generally known outside the *Castle*, on board the airship she is the most speculated-about person in the Known World. There are more rumors about her amongst the crew and domestic staff than about Klaus himself. It is said that she isn't a construct at all, but actually a princess from a kingdom on the Moon (ridiculous), that she is the reanimation of a dead Lucrezia Mongfish (an interesting idea) or that she is a construct built by Klaus to replace his lost love (unlikely). The latest rumor to go around is that she is Gil's mother, but others maintain that as an infant Gil was found in a giant speckled egg in an extinct volcano, so the jury is still out. Whatever her relationship to Gil, it is obvious that Von Pinn considers him her prize student and she is even more insanely protective of him than of her usual charges.

The Jägermonsters are all in love with Von Pinn. She has already put three of them in the hospital for getting too familiar. This of course only makes the rest of them worship her more and they follow her around trying to be impressive whenever she is unwise enough to come near their barracks. The Jägermonsters are very bored and Von Pinn gives them something to think about. She is beginning to think that she will have to kill one of them to get the message across, but worries that this will backfire and that she will then never get rid of them.

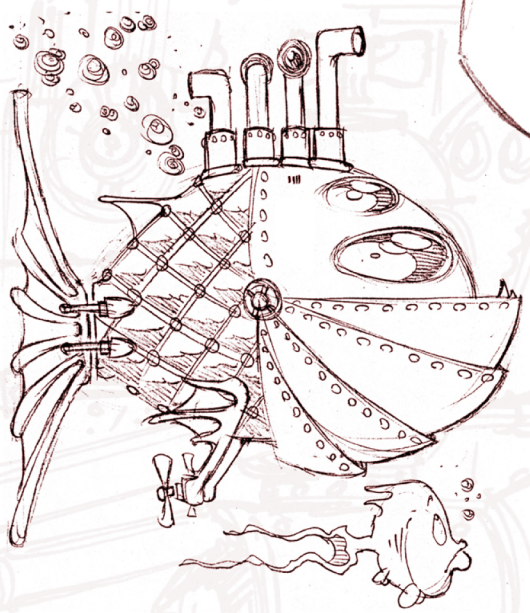
# Ardsley Wooster

The effects of the Long War were dramatic. In many places, the very landscape was altered on a massive scale. Possibly the best-known example of this is the terrible tragedy of Britain, which is now several fathoms below the surface of the Atlantic. This was brought about in the last century by the rather poorly thought out plan of a would-be conqueror. Today post-submergent England is stronger than ever, and controls much of the ocean thanks to an extraordinarily resourceful Queen and an ever growing submarine fleet.

Wooster was raised in the Glass City section of London, and though only a few years older than Gilgamesh Wulfenbach, has traveled extensively. The Queen of England has decreed that all British children should visit the surface world, a policy which has resulted in a remarkably cosmopolitan populace.

Though Wooster does not have the Spark, he showed a remarkable aptitude for science along with diverse other useful traits, and has been schooled at the Oxford College of Non-Intuitive Mechanics as well as the Paris Institute of the Extraordinary. It was here that he met the incognito Gilgamesh, who quietly recommended him as a lab assistant aboard Castle Wulfenbach. He proved himself extremely capable in his first two years on the *Castle*, and was recently surprised and pleased to find himself assigned as First Assistant to the heretofore unknown Wulfenbach heir. Surprise turned to astonishment when said heir returned home and Wooster discovered that this mysterious person was in fact his old acquaintance from school.

The two young men have an easygoing, but still professional, relationship. Wooster performs his duties well, and Gil enjoys hearing about Wooster's travels. It is an arrangement that, for different reasons, both find quite satisfactory.



# Krosp



To put it in the context of folklore, Krosp is the King of the Cats.

Krosp began life as an experiment aboard *Castle Wulfenbach*. His creator, a scientist with the Spark, had a muddled idea that it would be a good idea to create a leader that could command armies of animals. After all, there are cats everywhere, in practically every barn and alley. If only they would rise up and do his bidding!

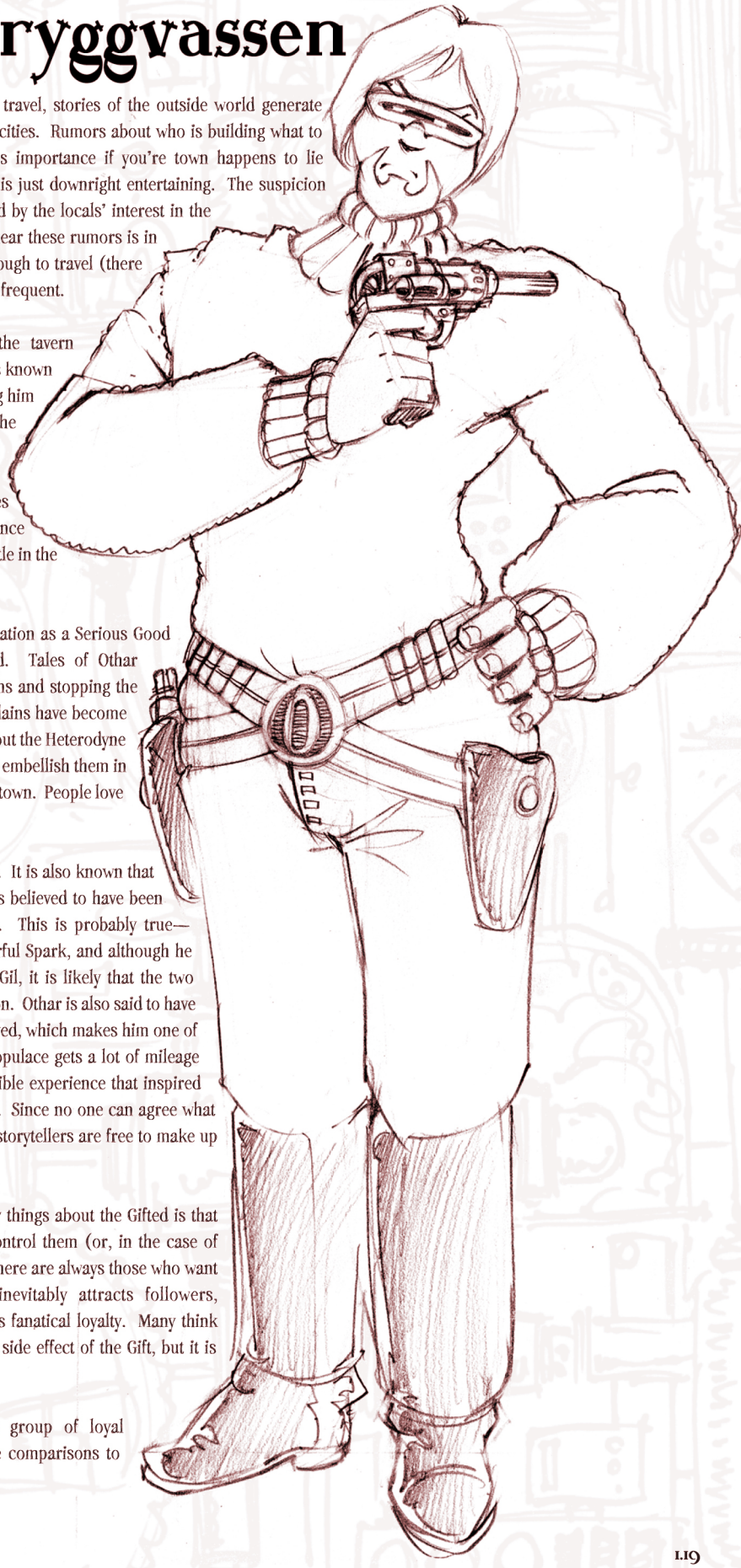
Part of the brain of a great general was used in the construction, and the military genius of this man carried over to the subject, just as the creator hoped. Krosp does indeed have great leadership skills, a strong sense of logic and a brilliant mind. His knowledge of strategy and tactics has been perfected through two years of intense study. The problem was in the idea behind the experiment. Cats, and indeed some other animals, do recognize that this is a seriously major double-alpha cat, they just don't care. Although Krosp possesses an extraordinary human intelligence, the intelligence of his "subjects" is, well, that of cats. They don't understand complex commands. They don't form armies. They don't remember even simple instructions for long. What they do is sleep. The experiment was a failure, and Krosp was ordered destroyed.

Before this order could be carried out, Krosp escaped. The lab assistant responsible for his termination made no report of the mistake, and the experiment was duly logged and forgotten. Krosp was able to hide on board the *Castle*, but he couldn't get off the giant airship. After months of frantic studying as he tried to figure out how to fly one of the smaller lifeboat airships, he finally came to the unhappy conclusion that although he now knew how to fly the craft, his stubby arms and feet wouldn't reach the controls. Then he met Agatha.



His great loves are military history, strategy games and good food. He has human-style thumbs and is bipedal—walking on all fours hurts his back after a while—but he is in every other way still a cat. He considers Agatha to be both his friend and his Very First Real Subject (she is the first person who ever actually responded favorably to one of his requests) and is protective to a fault.

# Othar Tryggvassen



Because of the danger and difficulty of travel, stories of the outside world generate serious interest in almost all towns and cities. Rumors about who is building what to send against whom achieve tremendous importance if you're town happens to lie between the players in question, plus it is just downright entertaining. The suspicion accorded to travellers is usually softened by the locals' interest in the news they carry. And the best place to hear these rumors is in the taverns and inns that those brave enough to travel (there are more of them than you might think) frequent.

Stories of Othar have been making the tavern rounds for the last few years. Not a lot is known about him, but rumor is rapidly assigning him a place in folklore as a young hero on the model of the Heterodyne Boys. Some even say that he is a lost Heterodyne heir. This idea is suspect even in villages where the wildest rumors circulate, since there have been many claimants to that title in the past, and so far all have proven false.

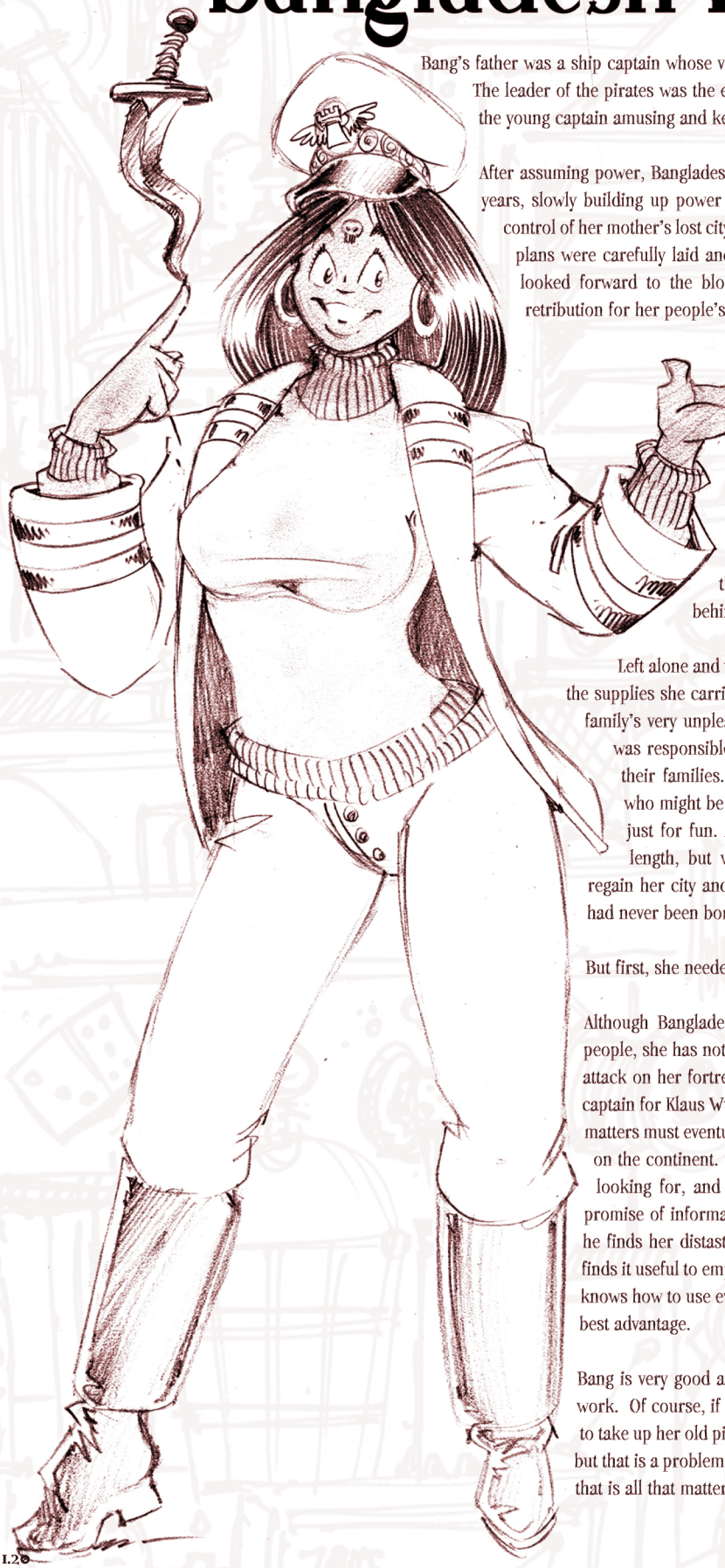
Nevertheless, Othar has a growing reputation as a Serious Good Guy, and the storytellers are delighted. Tales of Othar defeating monsters, rescuing whole towns and stopping the nefarious plans of any number of evil villains have become almost as popular as the old favorites about the Heterodyne Boys, and people who can tell them (and embellish them in interesting ways) are eating well in every town. People love their entertainment.

Othar attended school in the city of Oslo. It is also known that he spent some time in Paris, where he is believed to have been acquainted with Gilgamesh Wulfenbach. This is probably true—Othar is a brilliant scientist and a powerful Spark, and although he would have been a few years ahead of Gil, it is likely that the two students would have had much in common. Othar is also said to have actually been in Oslo when it was destroyed, which makes him one of the few survivors of the tragedy. The populace gets a lot of mileage out of this one, saying that it is this terrible experience that inspired him to become the hero that he is today. Since no one can agree what exactly this terrible experience was, the storytellers are free to make up whatever suits the story.

One of the strangest, most contradictory things about the Gifted is that although most people want to kill or control them (or, in the case of most sane people, get out of their way) there are always those who want to help them. The Spark almost inevitably attracts followers, assistants and lackeys and often inspires fanatical loyalty. Many think that this is some actually some mystical side effect of the Gift, but it is probably just human nature.

Othar has already attracted a small group of loyal companions who only help to reinforce comparisons to the vanished Heterodynes.

# Bangladesh Dupree



Bang's father was a ship captain whose vessel was captured by a band of pirates. The leader of the pirates was the exiled Queen of an island city, who found the young captain amusing and kept him as a member of her court.

After assuming power, Bangladesh led the pirates to gory plunder for two years, slowly building up power and resources. Her plan was to regain control of her mother's lost city and take her rightful place as ruler. Her plans were carefully laid and the time was nearly right. She eagerly looked forward to the bloody reign of terror that would provide retribution for her people's disloyalty.

Her plans collapsed when she returned from a solitary excursion to find her fortress a smoking ruin. Every last pirate was dead and the munitions and supplies that she had stockpiled in preparation for the attack were destroyed. There was no trace of the attacking army, and no hint of who was behind the destruction.

Left alone and with nothing but the clothes she wore and the supplies she carried, Bang made a solemn oath before her family's very unpleasant God to find and destroy whomever was responsible for the ruin of her plans. Then to find their families. Then their friends. Then anyone else who might be handy. Then a few more random people just for fun. And THEN... (she can go on like this at length, but we'll stop here.) Only then would she regain her city and make the inhabitants REALLY wish they had never been born.

But first, she needed a job.

Although Bangladesh has a talent for finding things and people, she has not yet managed to discover much about the attack on her fortress. She hired on as a secondary airship captain for Klaus Wulfenbach with the idea that news of such matters must eventually come to the ears of the largest Power on the continent. Klaus knows who she is and what she is looking for, and part of the price of her services is the promise of information should any come to light. Although he finds her distasteful, Klaus is a good judge of talent and finds it useful to employ a wide range of personality types. He knows how to use even the most alarming of his people to his best advantage.

Bang is very good at the things she does and she enjoys her work. Of course, if she ever does find her enemy and set out to take up her old pirating ways, she will have to be dealt with, but that is a problem for the future. For now she is useful, and that is all that matters.

# Moloch & Omar von Zinzer

The Baron's Peace has been in effect in some areas for years, and the area of influence grows year by year. There are always dissidents, especially among the newly absorbed areas along the borders of the Empire. Occasionally, even someone within a well-established area will get overconfident and attempt an attack on a rival or even a rebellion against Klaus. This doesn't tend to last long.

Moloch and Omar von Zinzer are the last of a group of nine brothers who set out to seek their fortune as soldiers in the army of the Mad Duke d'Omas. This was, in hindsight, a terrible idea, but the uniforms were great and the pay was good. Many young men found themselves making the same decision in order to try to escape the chaos and lawlessness of the Outlands. The von Zinzer brothers single biggest mistake was in not fighting for the House of Wulfenbach.

When d'Omas went to war against Klaus, Moloch and his brothers were part of the crew of the walking gunboat *Vienna*. The gunboat was big, impressive, and like the rest of d'Omas' fleet, didn't stand a chance. The army was scattered and the brothers found themselves stranded deep within the wilds of Wulfenbach territory. Moloch and Omar are to their knowledge the only survivors.

Now that it is just the two of them, things are getting a little tense between the brothers. Used to being in the center of a large, loud family, they are unused to the concept of being alone with their thoughts. Add to this the fact that they are wandering in the lands of a frightening enemy, and you get very nervous people indeed. Omar is handling the situation marginally better than Moloch, as he is a born opportunist and enjoys the excitement. Moloch is wishing that he had never left home, and is discovering that his older brother is really kind of an awful person and that he actually doesn't like him very much. He finds this depressing.

The pair is in the process of walking home, but aren't really sure where home is.



# The Hopefully Unnecessary Glossary

**To Break Through**—to reach the point where it is obvious from one's work or behavior that one has the Spark. Some say that the Spark does not exist in potential, and that Breaking Through is that point at which the Spark develops. This is a dangerous time for one of the Gifted, when their existence is known but they may not yet have built up the power or ability to defend themselves.

**Clanks**—robots, autonomous mechanical devices, usually, but not necessarily, somewhat anthropoid.

**Constructs**—usually organic creations, Frankenstein-type monsters, etc.

The **Gifted**—another polite term for the Mad Scientists

**Madboys/Madgirls**—a not so polite term for the Gifted, used by the general public.



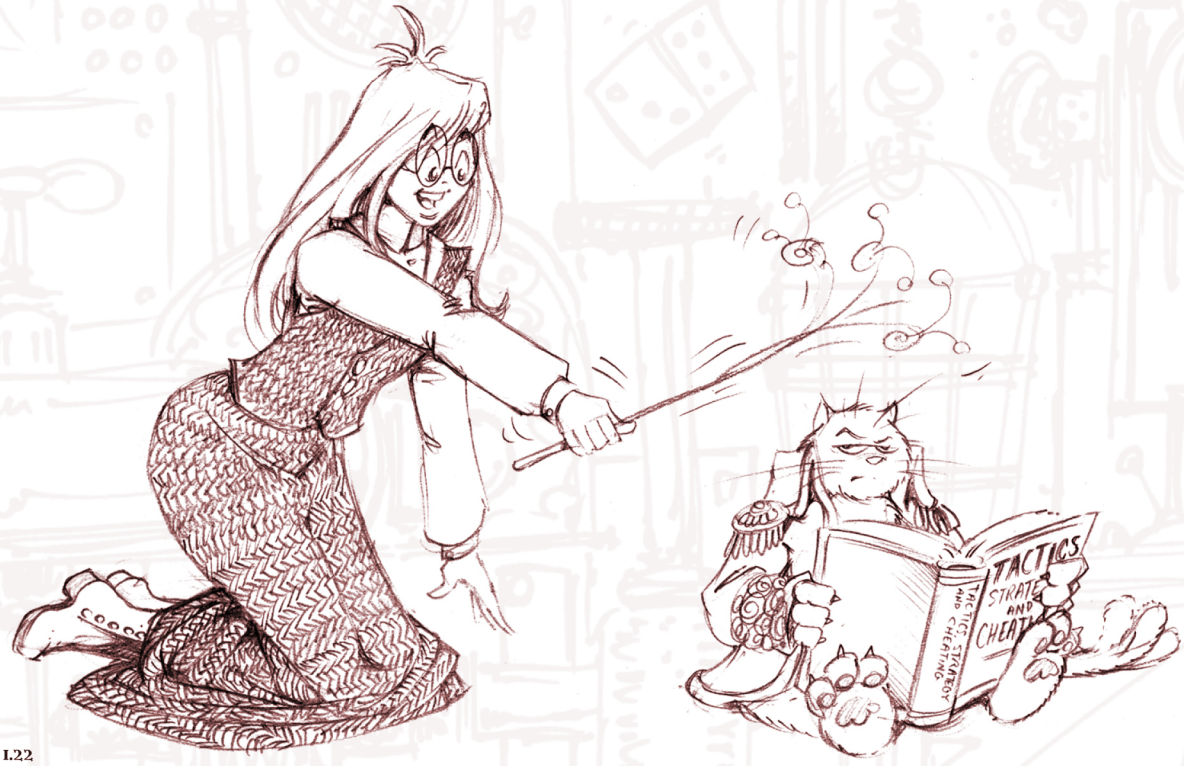
**Mimmoths**—tiny verminous mammoths. Originally somebody's experiment, they escaped and quickly populated most of Europe. They fill the same niche as mice and tend to live alongside them. They get into machinery and push things around with their tusks, wreaking havoc.

**Mummers**—also referred to as revenants. People and animals that the Other has taken over. They retain their own consciousness and are usually allowed to go about their daily business, but are under the complete control of the Other, should he choose to exercise it. Their life is in many ways a living hell, as they are always aware of a master force in their head. There is no known cure except death.

The **Outlands**—the wild areas outside of the main cities. Even though these areas might lie within someone's domain as you see it on the map, they tend to be dangerous to traverse.

**Slaver Wasps**—the transport form for the controlling mechanics of the Other. Nasty things whose purpose is enslavement, but will kill if resisted. Extremely fast and dangerous, they usually appear in swarms. None have been seen for years.

The **Spark**—whatever it is that makes Mad Scientists what they are. A poorly understood concept that identifies and incorporates a batch of personality traits shared by those who have it. Also referred to as the Gift, the Touch, the Curse, the Madness, the Doom, &c. Also referred to as his or her Spark, in this case a personal quality. Also used as another term for a Mad Scientist—you would say that someone is *a* Spark if they have *the* Spark.



# Studio Foglio

And there you have it. Now remember, This book is meant for all of the loyal fans who have been wondering about the mysterious "new project" that we have been dropping hints about for the last six years, and for everyone else out there with a great love of picky details. We don't want you getting all nervous and thinking that if you don't read this book you won't know what is going on in the comic, and we promise that we won't ever test you on it. Unless we think it would be funny.

And who are we? We are Phil and Kaja Foglio, a pair of artists/writers who have a studio in Seattle, Washington. We publish comic books and art prints, and carry a selection of related merchandise over our websites. You can get our work at most good comic shops. We also do a lot of freelance work in Comics, Gaming and Science-Fiction, so if you think that you saw some familiar artwork on a bunch of old Magic the Gathering® cards, you're right. Phil writes and draws a monthly comic strip (What's New with Phil & Dixie™) in Dragon® Magazine. Kaja runs the websites and does all of the graphic design for the company.

Girl Genius™ is our newest project and Studio Foglio's first all-new title. We have been tinkering with the plot for years now. It has been a great source of conversation on long flights or during slow conventions. It is also something to talk about over the breakfast table, always a good thing to have when you've been married for seven years.

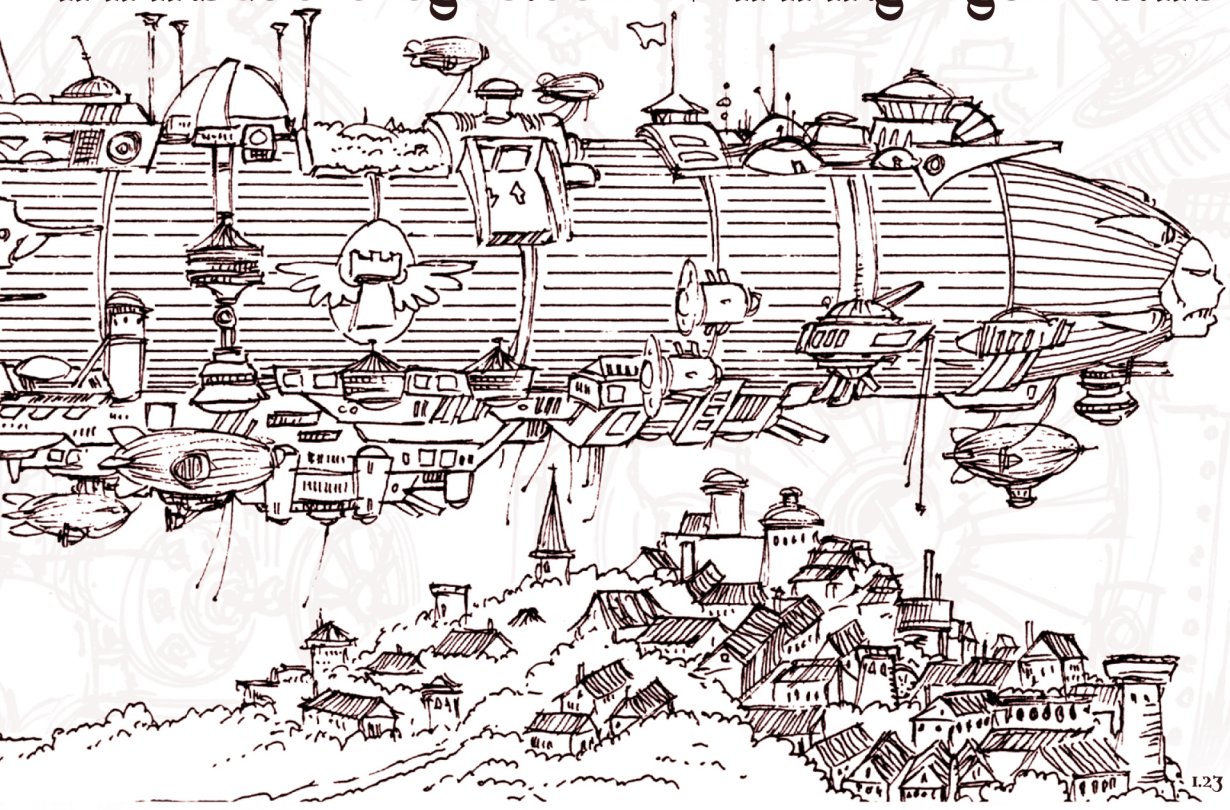
The original idea was to take all of the wonderful things that show up in Phil's doodles and make a book that would have a place for them, combining all kinds of things that we both love (Mad Science, airships, Victoriana, Jules Verne and H. Rider Haggard–style adventure) into a book that we would enjoy working on for a long time. The story was such a great toy that it was difficult to stop playing with it long enough to get the actual comic made, but we already have years of plot lined up and it was time to get started.

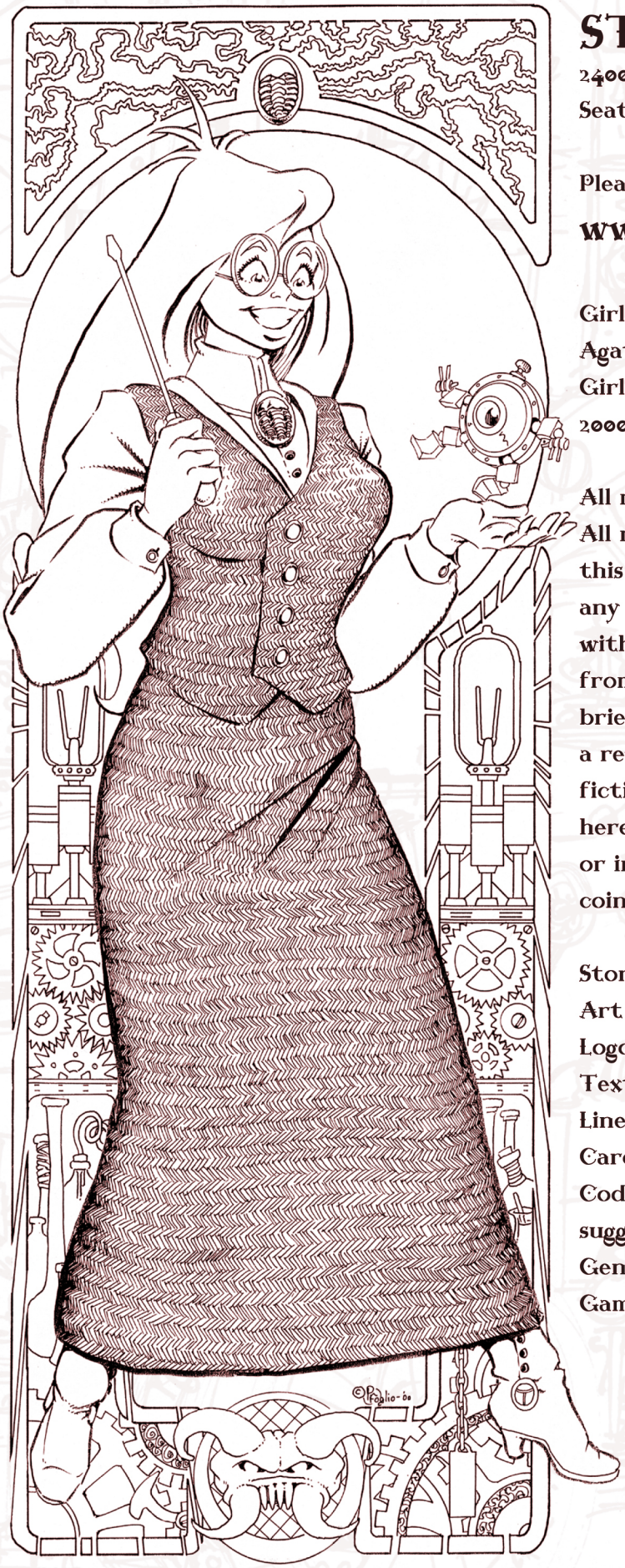
Issue #1 of the comic magazine will arrive in shops in February 2001. Look for an issue every other month. The first story arc is being inked by Brian Snōddy, a fantastic black and white artist who has worked in the comics and game industries for many years.

In addition, we are pleased to announce Girl Genius: THE WORKS—a strategy card game coming in April 2001 from Cheapass Games. Your friends will always say that they like your work, but when they decide to spend their own time and money on a related project you know that they mean it. Thank you to all of our friends who have been so supportive and to everyone who has bought and bothered to read this book. We hope that you enjoy it as much as we do.

To keep up with the latest news about Girl Genius or any of our other work, check our websites at:

**www.studiofoglio.com & www.girlgenius.ws**






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**www.studiofoglio.com**



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Story by Phil & Kaja Foglio.
Art by Phil Foglio.
Logos, Book Design, Code Wheel, Text & Artist Wrangling by Kaja.
Line Editing by the Fabulous Carol Monahan.
Code by Kaja Foglio with helpful suggestions by James Ernest, Super Genius Mastermind of Cheapass Games—www.cheapass.com

ISBN#1-890856-10-X
PRINTED IN CANADA
First Printing: January 2001




Did you think we would forget to give you something to decode? Never! At the bottom of the page you will find a short, simple message to start with. Read the instructions on the back of the large wheel carefully before you start.

Warning: all encoded mail arriving at the Studio Foglio offices will be delegated to the only individuals with time to deal with it. And the cats are really slow at answering mail.

Important—
Cut the wheel
out from
this side!



⏚9M✳⌗

U6Cஃ A U6J✳ Aஃஃ I6UU6ஃ U3ALP6ஃ 6C86E ABA3NA UAKU ⌗6 UGI6 3Q ஃI⊛CX Q8AJ3⊛C6 EJQP6 3Q U3Gஃ⊛Q ✳QBJ⊛Q HD S%W N SW99 I⌗W2WPI9. %SS9W A%%U ⌗H⏀PL ⊛NH⌗NW7 R ✳ஃஃ✳.

**Welcome** to Phil & Kaja Foglio's all-new gaslamp fantasy comic Girl Genius. This Preview Book combines sketches from the character development process with detailed worldbuilding notes to give long-time Foglio fans and new readers alike a taste of the extensive story coming in February 2001.

You don't have to read this book to enjoy the series, but it certainly adds to the fun. So put on your lab coat and goggles, grab your test tubes, and join Studio Foglio in a story where Mad Science rules the World... but not very well.

the official

# girl genius™

## Decoder Wheel

### THE KEY BOX

Setup instructions are given at the beginning of the message and will be contained within a box or < > brackets. *These symbols are not encoded* and provide the initial configuration for a decoding session.

Look at the first three symbols in the box. Starting with the center ring and working outward, set the rings so that these three symbols align with the red arrow. You are now set up to begin decoding. Symbol alignment can shift during a decoding session (see *Commands*.)

The next two symbols in the box indicate the *Code Ring* and the *Target Ring*. The *Code Ring* represents the symbols in the coded message. The corresponding symbols on the *Target Ring* form the translation. Code and Target Rings can shift during a decoding session. (see *Commands*.)

### COMMANDS

The *Commands* are the eight symbols on the rings that are neither numbers nor letters. Except for the Commands given in the Key Box, which are not encoded, always make sure that you decode a symbol before acting on it! Sometimes a Command symbol is really just a letter or number in disguise, and Commands are often encoded as other symbols. Some Commands are made up of more than one symbol (see below). When you decode a Command, follow its instructions before decoding any further.

- =Blue (inner) Ring
- =Yellow (middle) Ring
- =Red (outer) Ring
- (FOLLOWED BY A RING COMMAND)=**Code Ring**. The indicated ring immediately becomes the new Code Ring.
- (FOLLOWED BY A RING COMMAND)=**Target Ring**. The indicated Ring immediately becomes the new Target Ring.
- (FOLLOWED BY A RING COMMAND AND A ONE DIGIT NUMBER)=**Spin Clockwise**. Spin the indicated ring as many symbols clockwise as is indicated by the following number. Use the red arrow as a guide.
- (FOLLOWED BY A RING COMMAND AND A ONE DIGIT NUMBER)=**Spin Counter-Clockwise**. Spin the indicated ring as many symbols counter-clockwise as is indicated by the following number. Use the red arrow as a guide.
- =**Ignore/Resume**. Ignore everything (including Commands) until you see this Command again.

### DECODING THE MESSAGE

Work from left to right. Find the symbol that you wish to decode on the Code Ring. Look for its corresponding symbol on the Target Ring. If what you decode turns out to be a Command, follow its instructions before proceeding.

ALWAYS DECODE A SYMBOL BEFORE FOLLOWING COMMAND INSTRUCTIONS!

SF studiofoglio.com

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Attention! Cut from other side!

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ELECTRONIC EDITION



## OTHER BOOKS FROM AIRSHIP ENTERTAINMENT AND STUDIO FOGLIO

### Girl Genius® Graphic Novels

**Girl Genius Volume One:**
*Agatha Heterodyne and the Beetleburg Clank*

**Girl Genius Volume Two:**
*Agatha Heterodyne and the Airship City*

**Girl Genius Volume Three:**
*Agatha Heterodyne and the Monster Engine*

**Girl Genius Volume Four:**
*Agatha Heterodyne and the Circus of Dreams*

**Girl Genius Volume Five:**
*Agatha Heterodyne and the Clockwork Princess*

**Girl Genius Volume Six:**
*Agatha Heterodyne and the Golden Trilobite*

**Girl Genius Volume Seven:**
*Agatha Heterodyne and the Voice of the Castle*

**Girl Genius Volume Eight:**
*Currently untitled. To be released in early 2009.*

## TO PRINT THE DECODER WHEEL:

**A free, high-resolution, downloadable PDF of the decoder wheel is available at:**

**www.girlgeniusonline.com/fun/decoder.php**

**You can find many more free wallpapers, cutouts and printable goodies at:**

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