

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, thumbtack or whatever. Voilà! 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!

Check our website for updates and news!

www.girlgenius.net





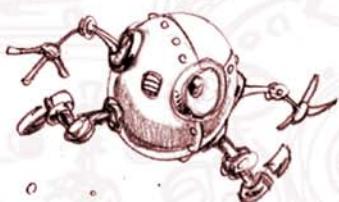
Wherein you will find
a wealth of Picky Notes and Fine Drawings
with relevance to the upcoming Gaslamp Fantasy

Girl Genius
from
Studio Foglio

Story by Phil & Kaja Foglio

Art by Phil Foglio
and

Blueprints Design & Text by Kaja Foglio



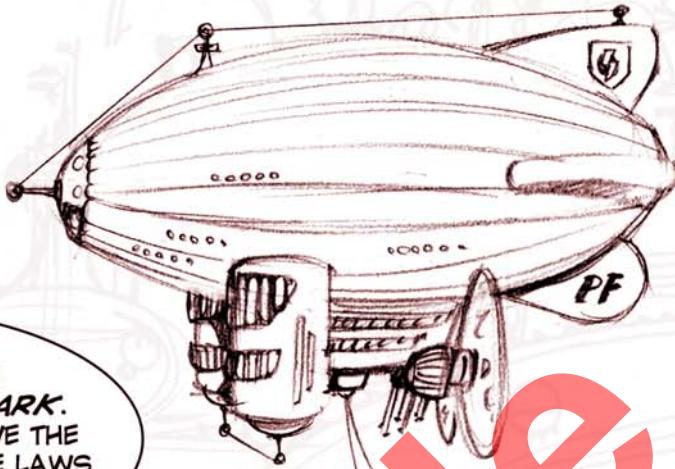
THIS IS A STORY
ABOUT SCIENCE...
OR MAGIC... OR
MAYBE BOTH.

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.





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.

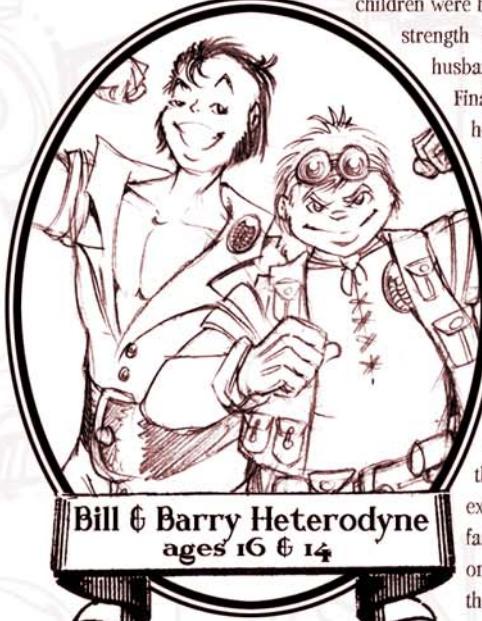
Then what seemed to be a miracle occurred. One of these vicious Heterodynes took to wife the daughter of a conquered house. Her good behavior was bought with the continued health of her family. She proved to be an extraordinary woman who, when her

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.

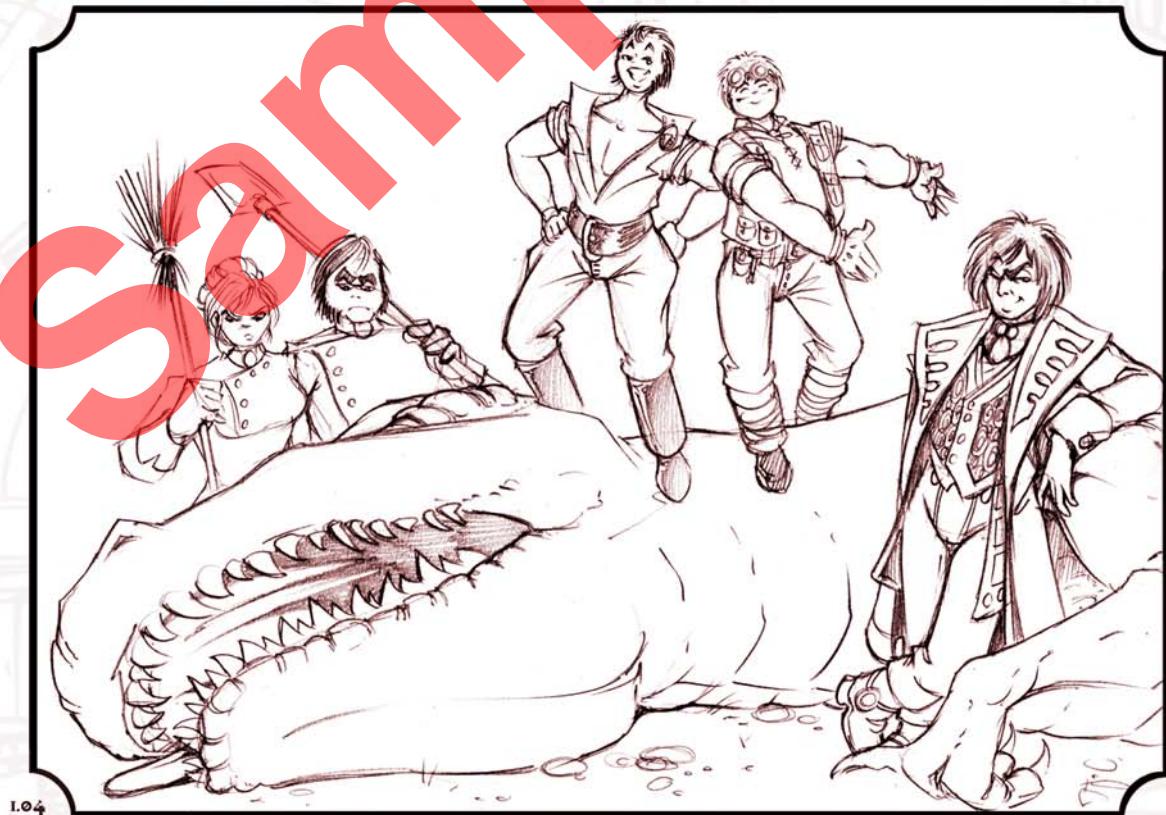
The Heterodyne Boys, as they came to be known, carried the Spark in spades. At a young age, they took their place among the most powerful of the Great Houses.

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.



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

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.

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.



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.

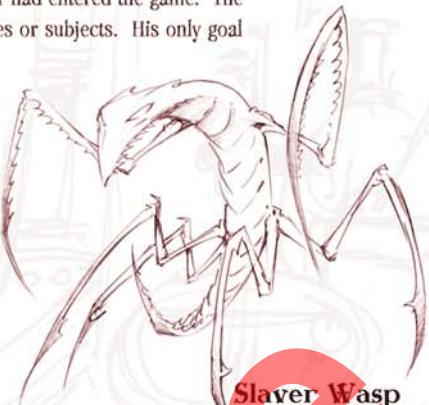
The remaining Houses, mostly minor powers, resumed squabbling immediately, but a darker mood prevailed. Most of the Great Sparks were missing or dead. In many cases, their creations and machines remained to trouble a countryside already ravaged by the Other's attacks. People feared and resented the Great 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

Mummer
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.

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.



Slaver Wasp



Baron Wulfenbach

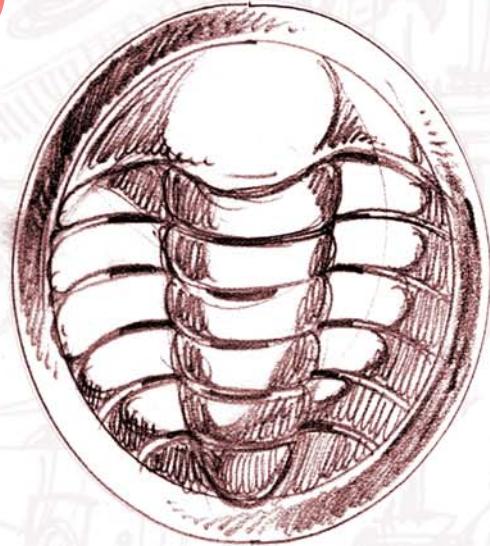
Agatha Clay/Agatha Heterodyne



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.

