

# House of MYSTERY

VERTIGO

Matthew  
STURGES  
Luca  
ROSSI  
José  
MARZÁN, JR.  
ANNIE  
WU

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## SYNTHESIS

The next time you're in a bar, take a look at everyone around you.

Really look.

If you try hard, you can sense that within every one of those people is an entire world of stories--

--beginning with their earliest memories and continuing right up to the present moment and beyond into the imagined future.

Everyone's life is an epic drama (well, to *them* it is), replete with backstory and narrative and dream sequences and fantasies.

And all too often we're so caught up in our *own* life story that we utterly fail to notice the great intertwined tales spinning out all around us.

All I ever wanted was to be heard,  
to raise my voice above the throng.

I wanted to be under-  
stood--recognized.

I just wanted  
to make sense  
of my life--

--and so I dragged all  
these poor bastards into  
my personal drama.

I realize that I'm just one  
of a *hodge* of people who  
make their lives all about  
*them*. But--

--not everyone has the  
ability or the hubris to  
do it *literally*. To actually  
*create* a world that's  
all about them.

I created a universe that  
was all about *me*--and we've  
seen how *that* turned out.

So to make up for it,  
I did the only thing I  
could think of to do.



I took  
myself  
out of  
it.

I used every last bit  
of my magic universe-  
creating thingamajig. I  
had to *remove* myself  
from the equation.

Well, not *every* last bit.  
I saved one little bit for  
myself--we'll get to that  
shortly.

# CLOSING TIME

Matthew Sturges:	Luca Rossi:	José Marzan, Jr.:	Lee Loughbridge:	Todd Klein:
writer	pencils	inks	colors	letters
Esao Andrews:	Gregory Lockard:	Shelly Bond:		
cover	assistant editor	editor		

Seeing what Lotus Blossom  
had done, trying to tear the  
world apart with her own  
desire, finally let me realize  
the way out--

--the truth isn't what I see, or what  
you see. The truth lies somewhere in  
the space between.

A world that  
never even  
heard of me.

I let them have  
their lives back.  
Seemed like the  
very *least* I  
could do.

But I decided--and maybe  
this is just my own *pride*  
talking--that they might  
want to read what was once  
or at least might have been.

My story, reduced  
to harmless words  
on paper.

Which, incidentally,  
is what you've been  
reading all this time.

HI! WELCOME TO  
THE HOUSE OF MYSTERY,  
FAMOUS IN SONGS AND  
STORIES AND STUFF!

MY NAME'S  
GUY. WHAT'S  
YOUR?

OH, AND  
BEFORE I FORGET,  
THE FIRST *DRINK* IS  
ON TOP OF THE  
HOUSE!



And now that story's over.

All that follows is epilogue.

HI,  
MY NAME'S FIG.

OH!  
ARE YOU  
MADE OF  
FRUIT?

HEY,  
EVERYBODY--  
MEET FIG!

SHE  
MIGHT BE MADE  
OF FRUIT!

UM,  
HELLO.

NOT  
MADE OF  
FRUIT.

Some  
people  
don't like  
epilogues,  
but I do.

HERE, GIGI,  
I'VE GOT SOMETHING  
FOR YOU.

FOR  
ME? OH,  
NEAT!

It's self-indulgent, I know, but if you  
don't *indulge* yourself from time to  
time, God knows, nobody *else* will.

HEY! LOOK!  
PAPER!

If you *don't* like epilogues?  
Well...fuck you. Too late now.

LOOKIT!



Here're Cress and Genevieve, for instance. You want to know what happened to them?

They found a nice little planet and decided to settle down and raise a family.



Becoming a mother suited Cress, which surprised pretty much everyone who'd ever met her.

She was *happy* for the first time in her life.



They started a detective agency that specialized in finding lost children.

And thanks to Genevieve's special gift and Cress's business savvy, they were wildly successful in every way.



They both lived to a ripe old age and died two days apart, their memories of the House of Mystery long since faded to nostalgia.

Sometimes life is like that.





Poet and Ann ruled the seas of Ann's homeworld for the better part of a decade, the fiercest and *most* feared pair of buccaneers in living memory.

They had adventures you could scarcely believe, and the tales of their exploits were passed down through generations.



A couple hundred years later, they made a whole series of *movies* about them!

Unfortunately, Poet wasn't always the most faithful of lovers.



Around the seven-year mark, his eye and attention began to wander...



...suffice it to say, it didn't work out for him.



What can I say? Sometimes life is like that.



Jordan Mayer drifted away from the House of Mystery--he and Lotus Blossom never really hit it off.

After a few tough years in his hometown, they finally got on top of the velocinaptor problem and things went mostly back to normal.



He went back to film school with a renewed vigor, burying himself in his work.



He scraped some money together and made his own movie.

It was horrible.

OKAY, LET'S TAKE IT BACK TO "I JUST LOVE YOU TOO GODDAMN FUCKING MUCH."



And--believe it or not--the film became a cult hit.

**MYSTERY HOUSE**

From there, he went on to make a string of modest successes.



He never could quite make it work with the ladies, though.



A reporter once asked him if he was happy. There was a long pause before he answered, "I'm not sure."

Sometimes life's like that.



In case you're curious, here's an excerpt from Jordan's "masterpiece," *Mystery House*:

I WAS STUCK IN A WEIRD HOUSE WHERE THEY TRADED STORIES FOR BEER, BUT I THOUGHT I HAD IT ALL.



HI, MY NAME'S PLUM. I'M A GOOD GIRL FROM THE WRONG SIDE OF THE TRACKS, AND I'M HERE TO APPLY FOR THE WAITRESSING JOB.



HI, I'M LARRY, THE MANAGER OF THE HOUSE OF MYSTERY.



I THINK I'M IN LOVE.

BUT BORDEN, WITH YOUR HANDSOME GOOD LOOKS AND YOUR TOP-SECRET LEVEL-SIX NINJA SKILLS, YOU COULD HAVE ANY WOMAN!



BUT THE CONFLICT WAS THAT PLUM FELL IN LOVE WITH THE WRONG GUY.



OH! THE HOUSE IS SHAKING AND COMING APART ALL AROUND US!

PLUM, WHY CAN'T YOU SEE THAT WE BELONG TOGETHER?



AND THEN SOMEHOW  
PLUM'S FATHER  
SHOWED UP AND THE  
TROUBLE BEGAN.

AS YOU KNOW,  
PLUM, I DESERTED YOU  
AND YOUR MOTHER AT A YOUNG  
AGE TO PURSUE MY STUDIES IN  
THE OCCULT, THUS GIVING  
YOU DADDY ISSUES.

I WISH YOU  
HADN'T *COME* TO THE  
HOUSE OF MYSTERY, FATHER.  
NOW EVERYTHING IS *ALL*  
FUCKED-UP HERE.

THEN THINGS GOT WORSE. I HAD TO  
FIGHT OFF A BIG BLACK MONSTER  
MADE OF DREAMS AND FEAR.

THANK  
GOD, T-BONE, FOR  
BORDEN'S TOP-SECRET  
LEVEL-SIX NINJA  
SKILLS!

HIS  
SKILLS ARE QUITE  
POWERFUL!

I WON'T  
LET YOU *DEFILE*  
THESE PEOPLE, YOU  
MAD HORROR!

AND THEN T-BONE AND I WERE FORCED  
TO FIGHT OFF A CONCERTED GOBLIN  
ATTACK IN THE BLASTED WILDS OUTSIDE  
THE HOUSE OF MYSTERY.

IT'S  
JUST THE TWO  
OF US AGAINST  
AN ENTIRE HORDE  
OF GOBLINS,  
T-BONE!

THERE  
ARE MANY OF  
THEM, I AGREE!  
IT IS A *GOOD* THING  
YOU ARE HERE TO BE  
FIGHTING THEM,  
BORDEN!

I LEFT  
LARRY IN THE  
SPACE BETWEEN  
SO THAT YOU AND  
I COULD BE  
TOGETHER.

I CAN NO  
LONGER DENY  
OUR LOVE.

I KNEW  
YOU'D COME  
AROUND,  
BABY.



WE WERE HAPPY FOR A WHILE, THAT WAS BEFORE EVERYTHING CHANGED, FOR THE WORSE.

I'M TAKING YOU TO THE **LIMIT**, KRISTIN!

YOU REAR PLUM...

GOD, BORDEN, I LOVE HOW HOT IT IS WHEN OUR BODIES ARE TOUCHING. IT'S LIKE I'M ON FIRE INSIDE.

BECAUSE THAT'S WHEN PLUM'S YOUNGER BROTHER SHOWED UP. HE WAS A LYING SACK OF SHIT.

YOUR TOP-SECRET LEVEL-SIX NINJA SKILLS MEAN NOTHING TO ME, BORDEN, BECAUSE I HAVE MY OWN JAPANESE MAFIA SKILLS!

WE'LL JUST SEE ABOUT THAT, BLACK-BERRY!



BUT BORDEN, HE'S MY BROTHER!

IT'S TOO LATE FOR THAT, BABE! YOUR BROTHER IS A MONSTER!

BLAM!  
BLAM!  
BLAM!

DAMN YOU, BORDEN!



I'M SORRY, BABY, THAT I KILLED YOUR LYING SACK OF A BROTHER.

YOU HAD NO CHOICE, BORDEN, HE WAS BAD NEWS. I SEE THAT NOW.

BUT THE GOOD TIMES WEREN'T MEANT TO LAST. MAYBE I'M JUST CURSED THAT WAY.



I'M SORRY, BABE. IT JUST ISN'T GOING TO HAPPEN BETWEEN US. I'M NOT A MAN WHO CAN BE TIED DOWN.

NO, I WON'T LET YOU GO, BORDEN. I JUST LOVE YOU TOO GODDAMN MUCH!

BUT NOTHING COULD HAVE PREPARED US FOR THE FINAL, CLIMACTIC BATTLE.

IF WE GO DOWN, T-BONE, FIGHTING THE THINKING MAN AND HIS HORDE OF ROBOTS AND GOBLINS IN ORDER TO SAVE THE WITCH QUEEN, THEN WE GO DOWN TOGETHER!

IT IS BEST TO BE YOUR GOOD FRIEND AND CONFIDANT, BORDEN.

WE WILL BE MEETING AGAIN IN HELL POSSIBLY!

YOUR FRIEND AND ONE-TIME LOVER BORDEN CAN'T SAVE YOU NOW, WITCH QUEEN!

THAT IS WHAT YOU THINK, BORDEN IS TOO MUCH MAN FOR ALL OF US!



I THOUGHT I HAD IT ALL  
FIGURED OUT AFTER  
I DEFEATED THEM. BUT  
WHAT DID I KNOW?  
TURNS OUT? NOTHING.

YOU SHOULD  
HAVE HELD ON TO PLUM,  
WHO WAS THE LOVE OF YOUR  
LIFE, MAYBE!

NO, T-BONE.  
I CAN'T AFFORD  
TO LOVE. IT'S TOO  
DANGEROUS FOR  
THE WOMEN IN  
MY LIFE.

THIS IS  
VERY WISE. BUT  
YOU WILL LOVE  
AGAIN, I  
THINK.

AND JUST WHEN I  
THOUGHT MY LIFE  
WAS BASICALLY OVER,  
THAT'S WHEN EVERY-  
THING CHANGED.

HI, I'M LOTUS  
BLOSSOM, THE NEW  
KID IN TOWN, WHO  
ARE YOU?

YOU DON'T  
WANT ME, BABE.  
I'M DAMAGED  
GOODS.

AND I'M THE KIND OF  
GIRL YOUR MOTHER WARNED  
YOU ABOUT, OR WOULD HAVE IF  
SHE HADN'T DIED TRAGICALLY  
LEAVING YOU AN ORPHAN AT  
THE AGE OF SIX.

IT IS A  
HAPPY ENDING  
AFTER ALL!

**FIN.**

**MYSTERY  
HOUSE**

illustrated by  
ANNIE WU

titles by  
TODD KLEIN

assistant editor:

editor:

GREGORY LOCKARD SHELLY BOND

written, directed and produced by and starring  
JORDAN MAYER (special thanks to DAVE JUSTUS)

Tursig went on to become the greatest king Goblin-kind had ever known.

But love continued to elude him...

## Annual Otherworldly Monarch Convention

DAPHNE, A WITCH QUEEN! I AM HAPPY TO GREET YOU AND YOUR DOG!

TURSIG, DARLING, COME WITH ME

...but not forever.

TURSIG, I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET KING SLOB, OF THE MOUNTAIN TROLLS OF ASK.

I HAVE PLEASURE TO MEET YOUR ASSAULTANCE


I AM A GAY KING.

I AM ALSO A GUY! WE HAVE MUCH IN COMMON AND THUS SHOULD SHARE A BEVERAGE.

The loneliest goblin found love and killed *fans* of vampires and robots and werewolves and stuff, and lived happily ever after.

WE ADOPTED IT FROM CHINA!

Sometimes, every once in a blue moon, life is like *that*.

Simon's band, The Vomif, had a huge hit with the song "Fuck You (While I Fuck Your Mother)." 

He died of alcohol poisoning six months later. Some *still* believe it was murder. (It wasn't.)

Rod Cannon *finally* found the wife he thought he'd lost after her capture by Martians-- 

--but only after she'd merged with a colony of sentient Martian bacteria.

It was weird, but they made it work.

I actually let Algernon remember everything. I wanted him to *suffer* for his betrayal. 

He felt guilty for years, but he had his daughter and he managed to justify everything he'd done.

By the end of his life he'd pretty much *forgotten* the whole thing.

It turned out that everything the ham guy said was totally *fruee*. Go back and check if you don't believe me. 

But he was like a meat-scented *Cassandra*. No one ever listened to him.



And then, you know,  
*this* happened.

...I NOW  
PRONOUNCE YOU  
MAN AND WIFE. YOU  
MAY KISS THE  
BRIDE.

GO FOR IT,  
HARRY. BUT NO  
TONGUE.

Which, like...  
whatever.







So that's pretty much it, I guess.

The stories we tell end, but *life* keeps going and going until *death*--that most predictable of plotters--writes the inevitable final sentence.

And who knows *what* epilogues may come?



Anyway, as far as *you're* concerned, *my* story's over.

Lots of other stories will get told in that grand old House of Mystery, but you'll never *hear* them.

Not from *me*, anyway...



I've got my own life to lead and I don't care whether it's *interesting* anymore.



I just want to live.

Goodbye.

(Oh, wait--one more thing. Remember how I saved a *little* bit of super universe magic for myself?)

Yeah, so, this  
is what I  
used it for.

My own happy  
ending. My own  
Harry.

Is it a *satisfying* ending? Is  
it thematically appropriate?

I don't  
know.

Honestly, I  
don't give a  
fuck anymore.

A *story* should have a point,  
but a life doesn't need one.  
It just needs to be lived.

And I'm going to  
go live mine now.

So. Bye!

NO,  
SERIOUSLY,  
GET *OUT*. I'M  
ABOUT TO GET  
*LUCKY*  
HERE.

**SLAM!**



IT'S A NICE STORY B-BUT WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN? IS IT A M-M-M-MYSTERY?

THE ONLY MYSTERY I SEE IS WHY YOU'RE STANDING THERE BLEATING LIKE A SPEECH-IMPAIRED SHEEP INSTEAD OF HELPING ME BUILD MY NEW HOUSE.

AND JUST LOOK AT HOW SHE'S COMING TOGETHER.

TEN TIMES SCARIER! SIXTEEN-AND-A-HALF TIMES MORE EERIE, AND ONE HUNDRED SEVENTY-SIX TIMES MORE MYSTERIOUS!



I THINK IT'S COMING ALONG B-BEAUTIFULLY, BROTHER!

OH, WHAT DO YOU KNOW, YOU GHOOPHANTIC GIGGY?



I KNOW ONE THING, DEAR BROTHER, AND THAT'S THAT I LOVE YOU.

AND, DO YOU WANT TO KNOW A SECRET?

SECRETLY, YOU LOVE M-M-ME, TOO.



I'LL ADMIT IT, ABEL. THAT OF ALL THOSE I'VE EVER LOVED YOU'RE THE ONE I'VE LOVED THE MOST.



AND WE ALL KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS!



NEXT:  
AFTER PARTY

# House of MYSTERY

HOUSE OF MYSTERY #41

SHELLY BOND EDITOR GREGORY LOCKARD ASSISTANT EDITOR

So much mail, so little time...so I've enlisted our esteemed House writer and one of our former House keepers to battle it out over the mailbag this month. And as an added bonus, I've included Esao's cover sketches so you can get a glimpse of "behind the scenes" in this old House. Just leave me out of any close-ups for a while. I'm still trying to get over my post-San Diego convention coma... Okay, enough rambling! Let's hit it, boys!

Dear HOUSE OF MYSTERY Inhabitants,

I am sad to hear that you're closing the doors to the house in the next few months. It's been a fun ride. Any chance you'll bring Harry and Fig back together? And what's the deal with Fig and her mom? You never give much away about that relationship, so I'm convinced it will play a part in the grand finale. Just know that you have some major fans out here in Texas.

Yours,  
Brian Alexis  
Austin, TX

Brian,

Unfortunately, Fig's mom asked to be left out of the proceedings. Her lawyers are nothing short of deadly, and Vertigo's legal department only runs so deep. But we can take comfort in the fact that if her full story were to become known, it would make your eyes bleed. Count yourself lucky I'm prohibited from saying any more than that. As for Fig and Harry, well... the issue you're holding in your hands should have answered that one pretty thoroughly, yes?

-Matt

Dear Cain,

You never call, you never write. So I assume that you've forgotten all about your fond familiar. Maybe if you had kept me in your thoughts I could have helped you out of the mess you've gotten yourself into. And I suspect there's more trouble ahead with that wacky hypocrite Fig. Really... to think that you were once in charge of the house and actually gave a damn about me...here's to knowing you.

And thanks for nothing,  
Gregory

Gregory, you simpering little slip of stonemasonry, where in the seven hells have you been all this time? I put your dinner out for you four years ago. If you think this sudden "reappearance" is going to make me forget the mess you made at the foot of my bed, you've got another thing coming, young man! Have you ever tasted gargoyle stew? No? Well, neither have I...but there's a first time for everything.

Yours in antipathy,  
Cain

Dear Matt,

I'm an aspiring writer and I always wonder where other writers get their ideas from...do you follow the mantra "write what you know" and if so, do you think that limits you as a writer? Who is your favorite character to write in HOUSE OF MYSTERY and why?

Keep up the great work,

Allison Rosenberg  
Lancaster, PA

The secret about ideas is that they're everywhere you look, Alison. The problem isn't which ideas to use, it's which ideas not to. Anything that you love, anything that you're afraid of, anything that infuriates you (especially that) is fodder for your writing. Don't be constrained by that oft-misunderstood canard of "writing what you know." You're a human being—you know everything you need to know. Just go write, and let the details take care of themselves. As for my favorite character, it's always been Tursig. I just love the little bastard.

-Matt

Dear Mister Matthew Sturges, Sir!

Ha.

Ha-ha! Serves ya right, Mister Hoity Toibyl!!!!!! Ye of the existentialist ilk...I mean, if the rumor is true that you killed my series after 50 solid issues that continue to chart high atop the New York Times Bestseller list, then let me be the first to say HA!! This book deserves to die, too!!!!

So long, sucker!

Jack of Fables  
Lucifer's Hollow, HELL, USA

Jack,

I told Willingham that leaving your ghost wandering around was going to come back and bite us in the ass. Let me put it to you this way, pal: there's no trouble you can cause me now that a simple one-shot couldn't cure. You reading me, jackwad? You think Vertigo wouldn't publish a special entitled *The Infinite Playing of Jack of Fables*? They'd fall all over themselves. Trust me.

(And no, HOUSE OF MYSTERY didn't make it to 50 issues. You know what? 42 was all we needed. Fuck on that.)

-M

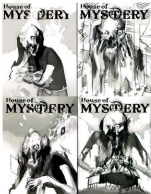
Uh...not sure how anyone could follow that one... how about:

NEXT UP:

What could be cooler than an "After Party" that includes three writers and three very different explanations of what happened after the end days of this particular House of Mystery? Be here in 30 as we bid farewell in post-modern style via Matt Sturges, our trusty house writer, Bill Willingham, Matt's original co-writer, and a

former house scribe from the land of sordid secrets: Steven T. Seagle and his art partner-in-crime Teddy Kristiansen!

BYOB & T (tissues).  
BOND



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HOUSE OF MYSTERY #42

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VERTIGO

## THE HOTLIST



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CURA: MY REVOLUTION SC  
DMZ #69  
FABLES #109  
GREEK STREET VOL. 3: MEDUSA LUCK  
HOUSE OF MYSTERY #41  
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JOMIRE VOL. 2: UNVAMPIRE  
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09.11  
THE HOT LIST

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ON THE

## LEDGE

SPACEMAN



**BRIAN AZZARELLO** has been writing comics professionally since the mid-1990s. He is the author of IDONY DOUBLE, BATMAN: BROKEN CITY and the Harvey and Eisner Award-winning 100 BULLETS, all created in collaboration with artist Eduardo Risso. His other work for DC includes the titles JOKER, LOVELESS, SUPERMAN: FOR TOMORROW, SGT. ROCK: BETWEEN HELL AND A HARD PLACE, FILTHY RICH, FIRST WAVE and most recently the all-new WONDER WOMAN ongoing series. Azzarello lives in Chicago with his wife, artist All Thompson, and twitters only when he has something to say.

Dear Future,

Fuck you.

You promised me a jetpack, and didn't deliver. You've led me on and really let me down, so you can go to hell.

I'll admit it: when you handed me a glass of Tanq and a Space Food Stick I fell for you hard. You told me you were gonna be beyond my wildest dreams and we would be going places (using that jetpack, right?). You literally promised me the moon and I bought in hook, line and sinker. Well, if I still had that Space Food Stick I'd shove it up your fat bony ass, you two-faced, fun-squashing bag of woe. You can go to hell.

Now, while you may think I'm being harsh, you should know: I don't care what you think, because I don't trust you. Time and time again you've come to nothing. Like, what happened to Super Sonic Transport? Everything in the sky was supposed to be an SST by now. Well, the Concorde has been grounded for the better part of a decade, and while it was in the air it cost so much to ride, it was nothing but a roller coaster for rich people. Thanks a lot for the glad hand, future. You can go to hell.

And while I confess you haven't been a total failure, I'm still left with the feeling it's all been a con game, a bait and switch. Sure, it's fantastic having the greatest public library and XXX bookstore at my fingertips 24/7, but the truth? Really? It's all just a big distraction—designed to lose me in things I don't care about but become obsessed with—and then it becomes about money, and that's what it's always about. Smart phone this, tablet that, aye aye aye... Delivering information is not action and adventure, and that's what you promised. Where's my jetpack? You stink.

So go to hell, future. Get a move on; time's a-wasting. And if you have any trouble finding your way...

I'll take you there myself.

Sincerely,

Brian Azzarello

P.S. Fucking cure cancer and all is forgiven.

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