

Issue #2

Chapter 13: Sophie, the Magical Girl from Nibelheim

The narrator turns to the heroine of the story, Sophie, a pretty blonde little girl from a deeply religious coastal village called Nibelheim. Her people, who are called The People of the Book, are oppressed by an evil king. After waking up, she prays that God will deliver her people from him. The reader also learns she has some secret special powers that she's gotten good at hiding. The narrator invites the reader to watch closely and see if they can guess what those powers are.

Chapter 14: Perfect Pancakes—and other Mysteries

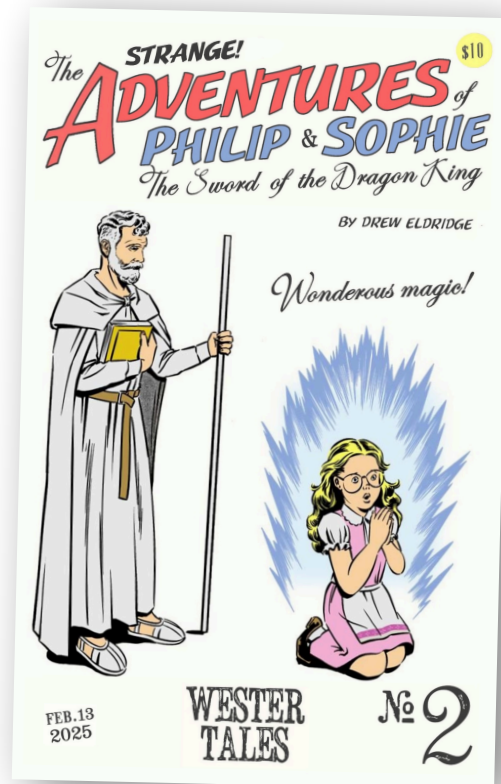
As Sophie helps her mother make breakfast, she is somehow able to know the exact moment her back will be turned so she can grab one of the freshly baked cookies. She also somehow knows that the mailman, Mr. Stanley, will be visiting. In this chapter, the reader learns the girl lives in a small pacifist religious colony on the coast of a remote continent. They can infer that the boy lives in the dangerous interior.

Chapter 15: An Unexpected Guest

Sophie serves Mr. Stanley tea. He reveals that he's come because he's writing a poem for his wife, but is struggling to find the right words. He asks Sophie if she'll help revise it. He also asks if he can take some flowers from her garden for his wife. Sophie enthusiastically agrees. But Mr. Stanley is shocked when Sophie wraps it because it is the exact bow that he envisioned for it. Jokingly, he remarks that he sometimes thinks Sophie can read minds. Sophie laughs awkwardly, reminding him that's impossible. Mr. Stanley agrees and leaves with his flowers.

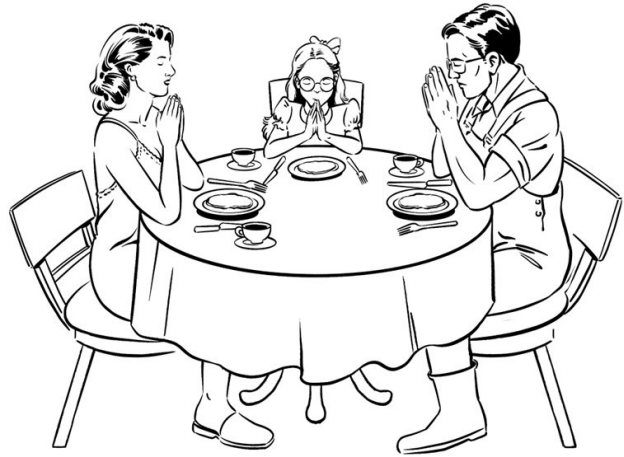
Chapter 16: The Man from the Sea

Sophie wonders how she got her powers and suspects she might have inherited them from her father, around whom strange things also seem to happen. As her and her mother cook breakfast, her mother tells the story of how they met. One day, he simply washed up on shore, seeming to have lost his memory. Sophie is suspicious of that story and believes there must be more to it. Her and her mother joke about some of the possibilities.



Chapter 17: The Escape Plan

Sophie's father arrives for breakfast. After he prays, Sophie brings up the first meeting and asks if he's regained any of his lost memory. He says he hasn't. She also brings up how he once beat the Dragon King in a fight, and that he must have been a warrior of some kind. He casually dismisses this and says he must have got lucky. Then he pulls out a blueprint and says the secret ship he's building is almost done. The reader learns that the People of the Book are hoping to try and escape on it in fall.



Chapter 18: Getting Ready for Church

As Sophie does her chores and gets ready for church, the reader learns more about her, her life in Nibelheim and her religion. She's happy there and cherishes it all very much. Her favorite hobby is writing stories and directing plays at the village festival.

Chapter 19: The Stranger in the Manger

The readers are introduced to a funny man in Sophie's barn named Motumbo, who somehow ended up there one morning after Sophie woke up from a strange dream.

Chapter 20: Queer Happenings

After seeing something spooky, Sophie runs to her best friend's house. Her best friend, Narissa, is the only person Sophie talks to about her powers. Sophie expresses sadness about having her powers because she is afraid they might put her village in danger, but Narissa encourages her. Sophie wishes she knew what God wants her to do with her powers. Narissa suggests asking the village priest about discerning God's will. Sophie agrees and the two of them resolve to try and get to him before church starts.

Chapter 21: Shortcut to the Village Square

Sophie and Narissa take a shortcut through a wood, where they swing across a ravine on a rope. The reader learns more about their friendship, village and religion.



Chapter 22: A Place of Light and Song

Sophie enters the temple, where she finds her priest, Jean-Pierre. Jean-Pierre is a very good man who Sophie adores and trusts. After chatting, he suggests she ask God Himself. He brings her to the altar, where she kneels. Sophie closes her eyes, puts her hands together and reverently asks God what He wants her to do.

Chapter 23: Visions

Sophie has a vision. First, she sees her village being destroyed and enslaved by the Dragon King and his army. Second, she sees the battles the Dragon King wages as he gradually conquers the world. Last, she is transported to the Dragon King's gate. A torch appears in her hand and the gate opens. When she enters, she uses her powers in various ways to get to the throne room, where she sees the Dragon King and his three generals. She gets scared when they approach her and doesn't know what to do. But just before they reach her, a mysterious shadowy figure of a boy emerges from behind her. He gets between Sophie and the villains and draws a sword. The vision ends and she wakes up at the altar.



Chapter 24: Sophie's New Enterprise

Sophie tells Narissa about her vision. Narissa suggests telling her father and Jean-Pierre right away. But after church, a variety of inconvenient circumstances prevent her from being able to. It isn't until later that night when she is alone with her father in his shop that she tells him. He believes her and suggests that they get ready and wait for signs about what to do next. Before going to bed, Sophie prays that God will help prepare the boy too. The reader also learns in this chapter that Sophie's mother has an illness that could eventually be fatal. Her father spends a lot of time in his shop trying to develop a cure.

Chapter 25: The Sword of the Dragon King

As Sophie goes to sleep that night, a village similar to Nibelheim is raided by the Dragon King with his dragon and his army. The Dragon King rounds up the survivors and gives a speech about how, if God really existed or favoured them, He would intervene on their behalf. If God exists, he says while holding up his sword, then God clearly only favours the strong. The reader learns he was raised in the wild interior of the continent "with no help from God" and that he uses this as an excuse for his cruelty. He then invites the villagers to abandon their religion in exchange for protection and security. Everyone but the village elder complies. Before the old man is executed, he boldly prophesies about how a new king will soon rise up and defeat him. Someone with an even rougher upbringing, who is both strong and good.

