

Scene 4 (5 – 7 pages): Lady Mechanika (LM) and Winifred (FRED) arrive in Mechanika City.

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Panel 1: Establishing shot of Mechanika City, late morning.

*Mechanika City is a planned city, everything is clean and beautiful in comparison to London. No carriages, horses, or vehicles are allowed in the city proper, which includes lots of trees, flowers, **park-like paths** lit by gaslight. An elevated **monorail** goes around the City, connecting various parts of the city like the train station, town center, university, manufacturing district, entertainment district, shopping center, airship port, etc. Optionally, the monorail may be suspended (railing is on top of the vehicle) and the top of the rail may be used as an elevated walkway. **Elevated walkways**, some with **moving sidewalks** (like at airports), are also available throughout the city, maybe with visible gears, definitely with ornamental details like handrails, gaslamps, etc. There are many steampunk skyscrapers, tall high-rises but with Victorian (Gothic) architecture, spires, ornate windows, arches, etc. Many of the high-rises have landings/entrances on the third or fourth floor connecting with the elevated walkways and/or monorail stations. Everything has **Victorian ornamental details**. And every steampunk city should have a tall **clock tower**.*

Caption: Mechanika City, the City of Tomorrow.

Panel 2: LM and Fred exit the City monorail onto an elevated platform.

Fred is about 8 years old, skinny brunette, maybe braids. Cute, nerdy, awkward, a young Sheldon. Steampunk schoolgirl clothes, glasses. LM is in city dress. Maybe a long vest/corset/overskirt that goes over a detachable full-length skirt (the skirt can be easily removed to reveal her fight outfit, she has leggings, boots, harnesses and weapons hidden underneath), a parasol and steampunk sunglasses against the sunlight, decorative hat. Steampunk it up.

Fred: This way. We can take the slidewalk.

LM: Are you certain of the name of Mr. Strassman's University?

LM: I received a response from Paderborn Polytechnic, but they didn't have any record of a researcher or student named Wilhelm Strassmann. Perhaps there's another institution with a similar name.

Fred: No, I'm certain. *Polytechnische Schule Paderborn*, Department of Analytical Chemistry.

Panel 3: LM and Fred walk toward one of the elevated moving sidewalks. LM opens her parasol to shield her eyes from the sunlight.

LM: Chemistry? Why would a chemist be interested in an archaeological expedition? Where did your father meet this Mr. Strassmann?

Fred: He isn't just a chemist. He's an **alchemist**. They met in London at some secret society meeting.

LM: Secret society? Alchemist? I hope the professor hasn't fallen victim to some confidence game. Did Strassmann ever ask for money?

Panel 4: LM and Fred take one of the moving sidewalks.

Fred: I don't know. But it was Mr. Strassmann's idea to go to Africa.

LM: Was it now?

Fred: Not that Father needed much convincing. He was just as enthusiastic as Mr. Strassmann.

Panel 5: Closeup of LM.

LM: Winifred. Exactly what is your father searching for in Africa?

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Panel 1: LM and Fred exit the sidewalk and walk along the park-like paths of the City toward Fred's apartment.

Fred: A legendary lost city, built by the ancient Akkadians.

LM: Akkadians? Why in Africa?

Panel 2: Closeup of Fred.

Fred: He acquired an artifact, a tablet found by Mr. Banerji, curator of Ancient Asiatic Antiquaries at the University Museum. He gave the tablet to Father because it was written in Akkadian.

Panel 3: LM and Fred approach Fred's building.

Fred and the Professor live in an apartment in a residential high-rise near the university. The apartment buildings are like hotels or college dorms, they have a furnace/boiler room that supplies central heat (steam radiator) throughout the building (no kitchens or fireplaces in apartments), running water, a communal kitchen and dining hall, and housekeeping service/maintenance provided for all the residents.

Fred: It described an apprentice or servant's journey to a hidden city in Africa where he assisted on various rituals, rituals that Mr. Strassmann claimed were alchemical.

LM: Your father doesn't actually believe he's found the secret to transmuting lead into gold, does he?

Panel 4: The interior lobby of the apartment building.

Fred: Maybe. He's more interested in discovering the ancient city. He thinks it might be a mythical city described in certain Babylonian legends.

Fred: Mr. Strassmann believes it though. That's what he's looking for. The secret to alchemy.

Panel 5: They approach a Victorian steampunk elevator.

Elevator Operator: Good morning, Miss _____.

Fred: Hi, _____. **This** is Lady Mechanika. She'll be staying with us a few days.

Panel 6: Elevator interior, they ride the elevator with the operator up to one of the higher floors.

Fred: You are staying, right?

LM: Just a day or two while I make sure all is well here and with your father. Provided it's acceptable with Mrs. _____.

Panel 7: They walk down the hall to Fred's apartment. Fred opens the door with her key which she wears around her neck (maybe a steampunk key with gears).

Fred: Of course it's okay. She loves having company. It must be terribly tedious having only me to talk to everyday.

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Panel 1: Fred opens the door and they enter into the entrance hall, which is decorated in Victorian entrance hall style (*furnished with a couple of mahogany chairs, hat and umbrella stand, maybe some flower-pots, statuettes, pictures, etc.*). As they walk down the hallway into the parlour, in the background very subtly so you'd see it only if you were looking very carefully, ***one of the doors leading from the hall is cracked open slightly, someone within watching surreptitiously.***

Fred: Mrs. _____! I'm home! Lady Mechanika is with me. Did you get her telegram?

Panel 2: In the parlour, which opens onto a balcony, (*the parlour should be elaborately decorated in the Victorian style, lots of collectibles, pictures, books, etc., an ornate fireplace, sofas, several chairs, small tables, rugs, window treatments, wallpaper, etc.*), Fred and LM look around, confused that the housekeeper hasn't come out to greet them. LM looks concerned and cautious.

Fred: Mrs. _____?

Panel 3: Fred sees the body in a room adjoining the parlour, the library/study, and screams.

Fred: AAAAHHHHHH!!!!

Panel 4: LM quickly runs to Fred, blocking her view of the body.

LM: Stay here.

Panel 5: LM goes into the study and partially closes the doors to shield the body from Fred's view.

Panel 6: LM examines the body of the housekeeper, on the floor, throat slashed or strangled. She looks around the room. Nothing looks disturbed, except by housekeeper's death. In the background, books, artifacts and trinkets on archaeology, ancient languages, cuneiform, Mesopotamia (Sumer, Akkad, Babylon..), etc. suitable for a professor of antiquities.

LM: Nothing looks out of place.

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Panel 1: LM searches the desk. Everything looks in order.

Panel 2: She opens an intricate looking keepsake box on the desk, some petty cash and a few letters/papers are inside.

LM: Doesn't look like they even searched the place. So what were they after?

LM: Fred, did your father keep anything here related to the Africa expedition? Maybe a copy of the Akkadian text or something?

Panel 3: Closeup of LM.

LM: Fred?

Panel 4: LM rushes back into the parlour. Fred is gone, the doors to the balcony are open, curtains billowing.

Panel 5: LM runs out on the balcony, sees ropes tied to the railing and looks over. Two men, one carrying an unconscious Fred, are rappelling down the building, almost at the bottom.

LM: **FRED!**

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Panel 1: LM leaps over the railing, removing her skirt and drawing a weapon.

Panel 2: LM grabs the rope when she's halfway down the building, continues sliding down.

Panel 3: The kidnapers have reached the bottom. The one with Fred uncovers and gets on a **steampunk motorcycle**, Fred still harnessed to him and seated in front of him or in a sidecar.

Panel 4: The kidnapper with Fred speeds away, a plume of steam trailing behind him. The other shoots at LM as he gets on his own bike.