



## Modo: Ember's End

*Arthur Slade , Christopher Steininger (Pencils, inks, lettering)*

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**Modo: Ember's End** Arthur Slade , Christopher Steininger (Pencils, inks, lettering)

Based on the world of Arthur Slade's Hunchback Assignments, Modo: Ember's End follows the titular character on a new adventure. Modo has been trained by the British to be a secret agent and is about to find more action than he can handle in the wild-west town of Ember's End.

## Modo: Ember's End Details

Date : Published 2014

ISBN :

Author : Arthur Slade , Christopher Steininger (Pencils, inks, lettering)

Format : Hardcover 88 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Steampunk, Sequential Art, Graphic Novels, Comics, Childrens, Middle Grade, Westerns

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## From Reader Review Modo: Ember's End for online ebook

### Cindy Mitchell \*Kiss the Book\* says

Slade, Arthur Modo: Ember's End, 84 pages. Illustrated by Christopher Steininger. GRAPHIC NOVEL. Orca, 2018. \$15. Language: PG (1 swear); Mature Content: G; Violence: PG.

Modo and Octavia are British agents who have gone off the grid. They are in the Wild West and have happened on a town that keeps losing their lawmen to an outlaw and his band. The town has a hidden power that makes guns not work and the late Dr. Ember was a genius who has set his daughter up in a home with hidden weapons. As the bad guys encroach on Dr. Ember's daughter in an attempt to access the weapons, it's up to Modo and Octavia to help the town out.

I enjoyed this graphic novel because the art is amazing and Modo and Octavia have great banter. I enjoyed the story and felt like it moved along and was interesting. My only complaint would be that I felt like this is part of a series, as Modo and Octavia weren't developed very well. I had basic questions such as where did they come from and what were they doing in this town? Apparently this is supposed to be a stand-alone, but is a spin-off of Arthur Slade's Hunchback Assignments. As much as I enjoyed the story and the characters it felt like I was dropped in the middle of an ongoing story and it was a bit off-putting. I wish there was another story that set this up-this would be a great graphic novel series.

MS- OPTIONAL. Reviewer, C. Peterson.

<https://kissthebook.blogspot.com/2018...>

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### Melissa says

I found it much lighter than the main novels, but such is the nature of graphic novels. It's light, it's fun, and it was nice to see the characters drawn out.

I wound up buying a copy for myself, for my husband's classroom library, and eventually for the library I work in.

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### Courtney Bates-Hardy says

Modo: Ember's End is a graphic novel that follows the adventures of Modo, the main character from The Hunchback Assignments, a previously published four book series. However, you don't need to have read the series to enjoy the graphic novel. It's a standalone story set in the Old West, with a steampunk twist. Modo is hunchbacked with the unique ability to change his appearance for short amounts of time. His friend, and fellow British spy, Octavia, provides the comic relief as they make their way in Ember's End.

Upon their arrival, they are quickly deputized and pulled into a race to find a mystery device made by a former weapons inventor. Unfortunately, someone else is after it too. The mercenary Ogden Bull will stop at nothing to find it before they do. His assassin, a ninja with glowing eyes, is after them and their only help is a mysterious young woman with a clockwork heart. These characters will stay with you long after you've

finished reading.

A middle school audience will really enjoy this story, although it has appeal for older audiences as well. The graphic novel was crowd-funded through Kickstarter, so there's only a limited number available.

Slade found a solid artistic partner in Christopher Steininger. The art is really excellent: the lines are crisp and clean, and the panels are easy to follow. The character designs are imaginative and evocative, slightly steampunk without being too ostentatious. It can be tempting to get too detailed with steampunk but Steininger strikes the perfect balance.

While there are perhaps too many jokes about Octavia's shoe habit and "bad driving," the story makes up for it in the moments when Octavia manages to be more than a sidekick or a blonde foil to Modo's brooding, no-nonsense nature. The overall effect of the story is charming. Slade shows himself to be an author with a grasp on what makes a good story, with a surprise twist at the end.

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## **Pop Bop says**

A Funny, Engaging, Well-Plotted, and Well Drawn Treat

This stand alone book just sort of came out of the blue, and I couldn't resist giving it a try. Awfully glad I did.

The set up is that two British adventurers, beautiful and sassy Octavia and shape-shifting Modo, are wandering the American West, (in 1885), looking for cowboy excitement. They find it in the town of Ember's End. The sheriff is dead and they become the two new deputies. The town is surrounded and protected by a number of strange inventions, (including an energy field that neutralizes gun powder, so no gunplay). An especially strange mechanism, called "the device", is the macguffin that powers the plot. Naturally, there's a villain with a ninja sidekick who's out to steal the device. And the inventor's mysterious daughter is in peril.

But that's pretty much all of the plot you need. Octavia is high spirited and Modo is a bit cautious and glum, and their double-act deadpan exchanges are the comedy fuel that really moves things along. The supporting characters all get good lines, and there are lots of mini-bits that punch up the narrative. There is a lot of sly, smart humor, seasoned with some subtle throwaway lines and offhand wordplay. The pace is fast, with an occasional break for some banter and horse riding. The Wild West Steampunk doesn't weigh things down, or overwhelm the narrative, but adds a creative angle that freshens up the plot.

This is all supported nicely by artwork that complements the tone of the story. The lines are crisp and the inking is just right. The panels are colorful and the characters are expressive. When the punchline to a joke is a character's expression you know the drawing is on point. You get a nice western feel, with some big scenes, crisp action drawing, the right color scheme, and just enough exaggeration and distortion around the edges to bring the scenes to life.

So, this ended up as a very entertaining find that I enjoyed reading. Please note that this Arthur Slade is in fact the same author who wrote "The Hunchback Assignments", of which this is a spin off. Slade also wrote the remarkable, Bradbury-like standalone "Dust".

(Please note that I had a chance to read a free copy of this book without a review requirement, or any influence regarding review content should I choose to post a review. Apart from that I have no connection at all to either the author or the publisher of this book.)

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### **Stephanie Bange says**

Slade, winner of Canada's Governor General's Award for "Dust", takes his shape-shifting British secret agent character Modo from "The Hunchback Assignments" steampunk series and relocates him to the American Wild West.

The story opens with Modo, paired with fellow spy Octavia Milkweed, riding on horseback. When they arrive in Ember's End, Modo and Tavia are no sooner appointed town deputies, than they are attacked by a mysterious ninja who threatens them to "leave town". Modo and Tavia learn of a mysterious "Magnificent Device" that was built by the late Dr. Ebenezer Ender protect the town and keep his daughter Annette safe. The two secret agents meet Ender's brother-in-law for a battle to the end. An exciting storyline and witty dialogue is enhanced by Modo's eloquent vocabulary and frequent quotations from Shakespeare in the text.

Illustrations by Christopher Steininger are angular and saturated with colors of thorough and rowdy West. As our heroes ride off into the setting sun, one can only hope this is the start of a new GN series for middle grade readers.

Recommended for grades 5-8.

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### **Michelle says**

I thought the graphics were fantastic in this novel. And that is where my praise ends. The lack of diversity and the lack of strength of the female characters was disappointing.

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### **Steven R. McEvoy says**

This book is a stand alone graphic novel. It was written by Arthur Slade, and illustrated by Christopher Steininger. But it is based in the world of Arthur Slade's Hunchback Assignments, that series has been rebranded a few times now. First in Canada it was published as The Hunch Back Assignments, and there were four novels. Later it was rebranded as Modo: Mission Clockwork, and now it is currently being rebranded again as Mission Cloclwork. But no matter what it is called the 4 novels are great reads and this fifth story set after the novels and as a graphic novel is an excellent addition to Modo's story. I read this book first back in 2014 when it came out as part of a kickstarted campaign. And have just reread it again.

Modo is such a great character. You cannot help but love him. And seeing Modo in this adventure fleshed out the images I had in my mind having read the novels about him. And this story is masterfully done. And the combineate of old west, steam punk, and spy story make for a very interesting read. Slade is one of the few authors I was reading almost 2 decades ago that I am still reading today. He writes an intriguing tale in

this volume. And the illustrations by Christopher Steininger bring to life some of the most memorable characters that I have read in the last twenty years. Seeing Modo and Octavia at work in this book was very exciting.

I am thankful this book is being released to a wider market. The Modo books are wonderful stories for young readers, or those with an adventuresome heart. I highly recommend this book to anyone who has read any of the other Modo books, or who loves a great graphic novel.

Read the review on my blog [Book Reviews and More](#) and reviews of other books by Arthur Slade. As well as an author profile and interview with Arthur and his alter ego Stephen Shea.

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### **Stephanie Tournas says**

Spies Modo and Octavia are AWOL from British Intelligence and turn up in Nevada. It's 1885 and they stumble upon a sleepy town called Ember's End, where they are precipitously deputized by an innkeeper. They are attacked by a ninja and the action accelerates as the two investigate. Mysteries abound with the connection between the ninja and an eccentric inventor who disappeared, leaving his daughter and servants in a mansion in town. A mashup of western baddies and scientific contraptions.

Sadly, I didn't detect much in the way of inner motivations in the characters. They were mainly caricatures.

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### **Kazia says**

Reviewed from an ARC. Some of the background characters are pretty racist stereotypes, the (two) women always need saving, and Modo's companion Octavia is always (maybe jokingly?) wanting to spend all their money on shoes. YIKES.

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### **Elizabeth says**

Cute.

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### **Lindsay says**

Shh. You had me at steampunk.

I was privileged enough to have aided the kickstarter for this graphic novel. It just arrived in the mail, with some amazing artwork on the side! I wanted to read it right away, but I was afraid to mark up the cover with fingerprints. I just about gave it the white glove treatment!

Great characters, tremendous script, phenomenal artwork. A must read.

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## Susan says

Ember's End by Arthur Slade Note: This book is a stand-alone adventure that follows two of the characters from Slade's The Hunchback Assignments series. It works quite well.

Modo and Tavia are trained secret agents with the British Empire and have been sent on assignment to the Wild West town of Ember's End. Set in the mid 1800s, the story is lush with western archetypes but also with a few all-too-often left out aspects of the Wild West, such the ethnic diversity of the time and location. I was pleasantly surprised to see the story had some extras in turbans throughout the town. Also, the ladies weren't relegated to the brothels or being ranch wives.

This book, and The Hunchback Assignments series, are touted as steampunk. There was a touch of steampunk goodness in this book, but it was really minor. I kept waiting for that to become part of the story, whether as part of a character or simply background. The town does use pneumatic tubes to shoot messages around quickly. And much later in the story a character is revealed to be part steampunk robot. So my only little quibble is that this story could have used a bit more steampunk.

Tavia does like to dress in style but she's also a practical woman, able to keep up with Modo in the field. Modo himself is a curious character, often keeping his face covered. He has a special ability when it comes to working in disguise. I liked the camaraderie between these two and could tell from the start they would always have each other's backs.

Ember's End is a strange place. The first building our heroes head to is the town saloon, which also happens to be the town library. They learn from the barkeep/librarian that there is no whiskey to serve, but they have a fine fresh milk from a Jersey cow. Also, the now-departed mad scientist who founded the town (Mr. Ember), put a field over the entire town that prevents gunpowder from working. Of course this renders firearms useless. So here we readers are, in the depths of the Wild West with no whiskey and no gun fights. Never fear! There's still plenty of action.

Ember's adult daughter has her secrets and is apparently at the heart of the mystery that surrounds Ember's End. As Tavia and Modo try to untangle this mystery and set things right, they come across a gang of worthy foes including a ninja, because every great steampunk Western should have a ninja!. With no bullets to trade at decent velocity with the bad guys and no half-aged whiskey to toss in their faces, our heroes have to get creative.

The humor is pretty good with this story as well. Tavia and Modo trade it back and forth in good natured jabs. Then there is the librarian/barkeep who has several other town jobs as well. I also enjoyed the preemptive undertaker. In fact, it felt like a nod to the old Spaghetti Westerns. It's a fun story for both kids and adults and I look forward to reading more Modo & Tavia adventures.

Illustration: This graphic novel is lush with color and detail. Christopher Steininger did a good job catching the rust reds that make up a good chunk of the Southwestern palette. I liked that the point of view was often switching, showing the scene from far away and then up close, etc. Modo's eyes are very expressive!

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## Engel Dreizehn says

ARC Copy...interesting take on steampunk-weird westerns complete with giant machines plus two mysterious strangers that come to town, who are very skilled at kicking butt!

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## **Devann says**

*I received an ARC copy of this book from NetGalley*

I haven't read any of the books in the main part of this series [although I've had a copy of one from instafreebie for ages], but the description said this was a standalone so I figured I would give it a shot. While it's fairly easy to extrapolate a general backstory for the characters, I think they might have felt more real and a bit less like caricatures if I had read the other books first. The plot is pretty self-contained though so I definitely wouldn't call it confusing at all. It's a fun story about a wild west town founded by an inventor who put several interesting things into the town - including an anti-gun forcefield. The art is a bit cartoony but it works with the subject matter and target age group.

My main problem with the book was that it seemed like the two main female characters were just there to get saved a lot. Octavia did get a few good shots in occasionally but it seems like Modo is supposed to be the smart one AND the muscle so it doesn't leave much for her to do except make sarcastic comments and get into trouble. And the book literally begins and ends with a joke about her spending all their money on shoes which is just ...#yikes. Also I didn't pay attention to a lot of the background characters but the only POC with a speaking role [I think] was a black boy who was a servant to the rich inventor's daughter which was probably not intentional but was still pretty unfortunate.

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## **Ellen says**

Hmm. Let's call this a 3.75. It's fun and beautifully drawn, but it's also too short, and suffers as a stand alone story, and especially suffers by comparison to my favorite steampunk Western graphic novel, the glorious Rapunzel's Revenge. I'd be interested in checking out the beginning of the series if I can find it, though, to get a little backstory on leads Octavia and Modo.

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