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Complete Chester Gould's Dick Tracy Volume 2 (v. 2)



Synopsis

Presenting a deluxe hardcover collection of Chester Gould's timeless comic strip, Dick Tracy. The second volume of this multi-year project includes nearly 500 comic strips from May 1933 to January 1935. This special second volume also features an exclusive essay from Consulting Editor and longtime Tracy writer Max Allan Collins. Each volume will feature book design from award-winning designer/artist Ashley Wood. -The Library of American Comics is the world's #1 publisher of classic newspaper comic strips, with 14 Eisner Award nominations and three wins for best book. LOAC has become

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Escape! Freedom! Revenge on Tracy!" screams the wonderfully hyperbolic narrator in this second collection of one of crime fiction's most beloved-and most influential-serialized adventures.

Collecting dailies and Sunday strips from May 1933 to January 1935, the book is an onslaught of plot, chock full of protection racketeers, smugglers at sea, crooked politicians, car theft rings and whatever else Gould's wildly fertile imagination could concoct in time for deadline. Frankly, it's a bit much for prolonged reading but is a wonderful historic resource nonetheless, and fans of police procedurals can bask in the genre's early, experimental days. The world has changed a lot since then, of course, and some plot elements (Tracy "slapping some sense" into a woman; the fairly common endangerment of his adopted son Junior as bad-guy bait) might not sit well with modern readers. A well-written and surprisingly un-fanboy introduction by Max Allan Collins, himself the

author of the Tracy strip from 1977 to 1998, nicely sets the tone, pointing out that much of the territory covered in this book represents Gould's on-the-job education in how to tell a great story. A lengthy and revealing interview with Gould from 1980 will delight long-time fans of the strip.

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A year and a half after its inception, Dick Tracy's familiar ingredients began coming together. In these 1933-35 strips, Gould's drawing becomes simpler and more assured, sporting his trademark use of solid black areas in a panel; and his integration of soap opera and comedy into the predominantly cops-and-robbers milieu grows smoother. While the villains are rather mundane compared with the freakish foes that Tracy would soon begin to encounter, their unalloyed viciousness already attests the black-and-white worldview that would mark the strip's 46-year run.

Flagg, Gordon

Love this era of Chester Gould and Dick Tracy. The artwork is fantastic; it is more "primitive" than the newer, more stylistic stuff, but it is also more detailed and full of raw energy and character.

One of my favorite villains along with his wife

If you wanted to buy just one volume of the Dick Tracy comic strip, this might be the quintessential Chester Gould. Gould has some of his most grotesque creations in the lineup this time, with Pruneface and Mrs. Pruneface (a marriage made in Hades) taking turns to rob, steal, sabotage and kill, especially intrepid Dick. Another killer, Flattop, even made it into the Dick Tracy cartoon series and the Warners Daffy Duck classic featuring Duck Tracy. This is comic strip storytelling at its height, when Caniff, Gray, and Gould were as much a part of the reason the public bought newspapers as the War.

This volume of The Complete Dick Tracy reprints the daily and Sunday strips from September 24, 1942 to March 22, 1944. That's a year and a half of Dick Tracy strips from Chester Gould's peak period. Classic villains in this book include Pruneface, 88 Keyes, Mrs. Pruneface and Flattop, as well as lesser villains Nifty and Laffy. For a Dick Tracy fan, this book is a must get.

In the early 1930s, a new comic became one of the most popular strips ever, especially in the category of crime comics. Dick Tracy, created by Chester Gould, continues to be published today,

albeit as a pale shadow of its former self. Although the strip would hit its peak in the 1940s with villains like Flattop and Pruneface, even the earlier strips (with their more ordinary crooks) have their merit. On the side of law and order, besides Dick Tracy, are fellow detective Pat Patson, adopted son Junior and love interest Tess Trueheart. As Volume 2 (covering 1933 to 1935) begins, two old villains are forging an alliance behind bars: the brainy Stooge Viller and the tough Steve the Tramp. Later will come a series of adventures with crime boss Big Boy and his gang. The rather freakish-looking (although many of Gould's characters are at least slightly strange-looking) Jean Penfield tries to win Tracy's heart even as she writes a crime exposé. Her efforts fail, but not before she fights things out with Tess. The latter strips deal with the return of the pathetic Mary Steele, Junior's real mother who gets entangled with criminals even as she watches her son from a distance. From a writing standpoint, Gould is no Chandler or Hammett, but the mediums are different, something that needs to be recalled as you read these strips - they were supposed to be read one-a-day, not months worth at a time. And while certainly entertaining, the ability to tell a continuing story is not nearly as good as other contemporary strips such as Frank King's wonderful Gasoline Alley. This volume, however, is still early Gould, and his skills are still being honed. While not a top choice among the early comics now being reprinted, this is still worth picking up for fans of this era.

The action continues with Volume Two of the complete collection. A LOT of plotlines involve Junior this time around; including his minor involvement in a criminal gang when he didn't know they were a gang. (SPOILER ALERT!) His mother comes back and at the end of the book, she says, "THAT'S HIM!!" when Junior walks into the room. An emotional roller-coaster ride for Junior throughout the book and I can't wait to see what happens next when Junior finds out his mom is alive. Volume Three comes out next week and Volume Four follows in March. Stay tuned to your wristwatch radios folks!

It's the 1940s Dick Tracy that really moves the strip into the 'golden age' that began with the prior volume. Here, again, we have some of the classic 'grotesques'. And as with the prior volumes, some I've already read in other collections, some are new to me (tho I have heard their names). I expect this to continue for the next few volumes due to prior reprints. This time out, we have several classic villains. First out, is Pruneface. He's actually a german spy (not clearly stated, but he's known as 'Bouche', and later he's teamed up with another character named 'Togo' who appears Japanese). After a long storyline, he is captured and is (we assumed) executed for espionage. A change of pace

story follows, where secondary character 'Frizzletop' (introduced in the last volume) became a nurse for a nursery for working moms funded by a rich lady. A divorced mom puts her child there, who is kidnapped by the nar-do-well father. The child is lost, and a blizzard comes thru. Will the child survive? Then we have 88 Keys. If you only 'know' him because of the movie, there is lots more to this bandleader. A real piece of work. Next up, we get Mrs Pruneface, who arrives to take revenge for her husband. Things turn out bad for her. I had read this story elsewhere, but wasn't aware by how close the 2 stories appeared. I figured they were separated by several years, not several months. Then we have "Laffy" Smith, a fairly minor thug with a weird issue. And surprisingly, the volume ends with the first part of the classic Flattop storyline (which will conclude in the next volume). A highlight of the Flattop story is its the introduction of what will be another longtime secondary character: Vitamin Flintheart, the washed-up old hammy actor. Its funny that while other characters in the strip have aged (had kids, who have grown up), Flintheart remains an apparent 60 year old guy. As Frizzletop, a secondary character introduced in the last volume who last in the earlier stories in the volume was dropped, was the original intention to use Flintheart for awhile and also drop him, when instead he was kept around?? For me, I had already read about Prunefact and Mrs. Pruneface thru a pair of old Tempo paperbacks, and Flattop thru a large format comic magazine (Treasury format). But the rest is new to me, and all enjoyable. I look forward to the next volume, which looks to be another collection of familiar and new strips.

I am slowly buying and reading these old strips. They are dated but I sometimes think that a no nonsense approach to crime is what we need more of today. I will continue to buy and read these collections of Dick Tracy.

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