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Complete Chester Gould's Dick Tracy Volume 21



Synopsis

Dick Tracy leaps into the Space Age when Diet Smith's experimental Space Coupe brings back a visitor from outer space! Meet Moon Maid, the most outrageous character in the strip's entire history. Prior to venturing where no detective has gone before, Tracy deals with some very earthbound and gruesomely entertaining adventures, including the use of napalm (!) to flush out a gang of crooks from their hideout. In these strips from August 27, 1962 through April 12, 1964 Tracy mixes it up with the criminal 52 Gang each named for a card in the poker deck who have found a novel way to dispose of the corpses of their enemies, Junior is smitten by a girl who literally wants him dead, Sparkle Plenty falls into the hands of crazed modern artists and their ape accomplice, and (six months before it happened in the "real world") a doctor has perfected heart transplant surgery but in this case it's on unwilling victims!

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Customer Reviews

Chester Gould (1900–1985) was born in Pawnee, Oklahoma, the son of a newspaperman and grandson of a circuit-riding preacher. He attended Oklahoma A&M (now Oklahoma State University) before transferring to Northwestern University in Chicago, from which he graduated in 1923. He produced the minor comic strips *Fillum Fables* and *The Radio Catts* before striking it big with *Dick Tracy* in 1931. Originally titled *Plainclothes Tracy*, the rechristened strip became one of the most successful and lauded comic strips of all time, as well as a media and merchandising sensation. He was twice accorded the *Cartoonist of the Year* • Reuben Award by his peers.

Gould continued to write and illustrate Dick Tracy until his retirement in 1977.

I honestly think this one of Tracy's strongest years from the late fifties and sixties. Whereas in some storylines he seemed to be repeating concepts, here he comes up with some interesting stuff. By this time, Gould, though still talented, often seemed to go through the motions. These years though, things pick up and it feels a lot more like the Tracy of the 40s. The 52 Gang- 4 stars. As much as some disliked the space era, I felt the space coupe to be a fun concept. The space ship allows for some very creative murders. (Though, I'm not a big fan of how Gould slams NASA,) Tracy has a lot more agency here in this book than past years where he just seemed to be playing clean-up for the villains once their stories ran out. We get to see him infiltrate an isolated villain stronghold and there's a very violent climax. Thistle Dew and Uncle Punky- 3 stars. The most traditional story here, but it is a lot of fun and lacks some of the pacing problems Gould had at the time. Thistle Dew is one of Gould's more interesting character designs. The ending is a bit abrupt, though. The Palette Brothers- 4 stars. Yeah, the chimp in this is too close to the monkey from the recent Brush storyline, but it is handled better. The Palette Brothers don't stand out, but Gould's criticism of modern art, their impressive mountain hideout, and the big action scene make this story work. Small-Mouth Bass and Olga- 4 stars. One of Gould's most unique stories predicting the heart transplant before it even happened with a solid conclusion. Moon Maid- 2 stars. I'm not anti-Moon Maid, I'm just not a big fan of non-crime stories that are humor-heavy. The story drags and Junior's relationship with Moon Maid is rushed and forced. (It does amuse me that conservative Gould had the moon people have the Bible in English.)

For my generation (born in the 60's), Dick Tracy stripes were like a passion every morning in the newspaper. I remember that I looked for the stripes in the houses of my friends and cousins. Then, I put them all in order in a page, forming a real book. I had them all till today. The emotion to purchase all the stripes in single volumes was extraordinary for me. The moments that I was reading the stripes is like a return to my youthful. The volumes are very good and I expected to collect them all. Highly recommended.

I really like this book. For me the Moon Maid was my favorite as this story line was what I read as a kid. Very well presented, unfortunately mine was damaged in shipment. Recommended.

These are great books and a real value for the money. I am very pleased with this book and the

entire collection. If you enjoy Dick Tracy comic strips then you should read these books!

Now we have the beginning of the "Space Phase" of Dick Tracy. Now, while am sure many purists hate this phase, as an SF fan who grew up reading Tracy during this phase, I like it. I even had a plastic model kit of the Space Coupe I made. As noted, we are introduced to the latest invention of Diet Smith Industries- the atomic powered Space Coupe, which uses magnetism (he who controls magnetism, controls the world!) to propel itself, even into space. However, after showing off the Space Coupe to Tracy, the Coupe and its inventor/pilot are kidnapped by a sinister group of individuals, who are all hooded! They soon force the Space Coupe to dump a body into orbit and soon use it to go after other international foes of crime. We soon learn that the gang is the international syndicate known as the the 52 Gang, as all the members are noted by cards, and all wear black hoods that entirely cover the heads and upper bodies. Retreating to their lair on the top of a mesa, the plot new crimes, but Tracy is working to find them. Soon discovered, Tracy drops in by parachute and replaces a gang member and works to undermine the group. He succeeds in grabbing the ringleader, "Ace of Spades" and takes off in the Space Coupe. They soon are able to return to clean up the gang, but things don't turn out well for the gang. Next up is another story that more focuses on Junior. He is being targeted by Uncle Punky and his niece Thistle Dew, as Junior sketch of Thistle's father send him to the chair. They use the a bizarre woman to get his picture, then have Thistle try to seduce Junior, which seems to work, before kidnapping him. Before they can kill him, he escapes and they are on the lamb and must contact an underworld lawyer thru a raven for help! The Space Coupe is back as Diet Smith takes BO and family on a trip back to BO's old stomping ground near a place called "Slingshot Mountain". But Sparkle is kidnapped and they find a false tomb in the nearby cemetery. They soon learn the Sparkle has been kidnapped by a chimp (or ape) named "Li'l Dropout" owned by a pair of artist painters named the Palette Twins. They are residing in the hollowed out mountain, which has a secret entrance in the cemetery! We later learn it was hollowed out as a fort/prison during the Civil War, and further that there is more to these artists then meets the eye! A bizarre package found in a bus locker containing a still living human heart kicks off the next story, which deals with illicit operations and organ snatching. And the Moon Maid is introduced! On a mission to the Moon, she stowed away. She is childlike, with horns and had thermal and laser powers. She does help save a mother and her newborn child. She doesn't know English. Yet. And Junior is smitten with her. What will happen next with these 2? I happen to know, but look forward to seeing it turn out. Clearly we will have more of the Moon, the Space Coupe, as well as more down to earth villains in the next volume.

In another year or so, Gould will hit his full stride. In this volume he has nearly reached his peak as an illustrator, but it will take a while longer for his storytelling to catch up with his expressionist vision. In a few months though, the writing and the draftsmanship mesh to create a long run of classics that only Harold Gray and Hal Foster can claim to equal. This whole series is a dream come true for fans of the newspaper comic strip. Watching the development of a master through the daily creation of a viable world is unparalleled pleasure.

Another fine volume in the Dick Tracy series.

I have been a Dick Tracy fan for my entire life and it is great to finally have the complete series available to see again.

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