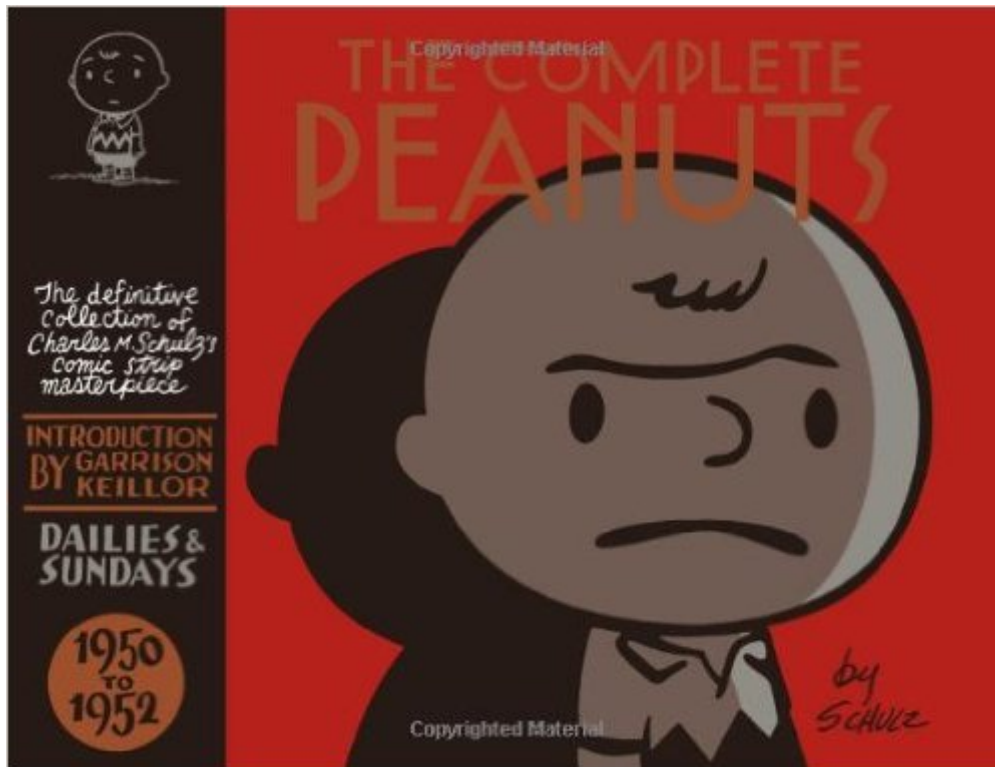


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The Complete Peanuts 1950-1952 (Vol. 1) (The Complete Peanuts)



Synopsis

The first volume in the bestselling archival series collecting the most beloved comic strip ever. Many of these formative strips have never been collected or reprinted anywhere else. Introduction by Garrison Keillor. This first volume, covering the first two and a quarter years of the strip, will be of particular fascination to Peanuts aficionados worldwide: Although there have been literally hundreds of Peanuts books published, many of the strips from the series' first two or three years have never been collected before—in large part because they showed a young Schulz working out the kinks in his new strip and include some characterizations and designs that are quite different from the cast we're all familiar with. (Among other things, three major cast members—Schroeder, Lucy, and Linus—initially show up as infants and only "grow" into their final "mature" selves as the months go by. Even Snoopy debuts as a puppy!) Thus The Complete Peanuts offers a unique chance to see a master of the art form refine his skills and solidify his universe, day by day, week by week, month by month. This volume is rounded out with Garrison Keillor's introduction, a biographical essay by David Michaelis (Schulz and Peanuts) and an in-depth interview with Schulz conducted in 1987 by Gary Groth and Rick Marschall, all wrapped in a gorgeous design by award-winning cartoonist Seth. Black-and-white comic strips throughout

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Customer Reviews

When I was a child and knew few greater pleasures than reading a new Peanuts collection, I would look wistfully at the note on the cover -- such as "Selected cartoons from Ha Ha Herman, Charlie

Brown Vol. 1" -- and wonder just where this mysterious book and all the rest of them were to be found. Not in any bookshop I ever visited, that's for sure. Then one day I borrowed a vast hardcover Peanuts collection from my local library and imagined that this was one of those rare "originals". It conjured up an image of a whole shelf of equally fine first editions going back to 1951. Years later I would occasionally re-read one of those old collections and think, "When I have lots of money I'll collect all of those original Peanuts books, and then at last I'll have every strip, in order, in an attractive sturdy hardcover." Then I found the Peanuts FAQ, which revealed that there were there thousands of strips that had never been printed in any book, and also that that library book was an anomaly: those mysterious "original" Peanuts books were only paperbacks, just as incomplete and (by now) yellow and tatty as the ones I used to buy. "Sigh", I said. But here it is, the fine first editions devoted Peanuts readers have always dreamed of but never expected to see: the first of a complete set containing every strip, beautifully presented, with original newspaper publication dates and even a fannish index pointing to such epochal moments as Lucy's first appearance and Snoopy's first thought. What's most surprising is how soon Peanuts began to become the Peanuts we remember. The early strips reprinted previously tended to foreground the "observational" humour, kids behaving like real kids.

I imagine most fans of Charles Shultz will not need a review to tell them that they need this book; unless Fantagraphics horribly dropped the ball, how could this not be a must-have. But in case you were wondering, I can assure you that *The Complete Peanuts 1950-1952* is a marvelous start to what promises to be an amazing series of books. As has been mentioned before, the early strips of Peanuts are noticeably different from the strip we've come to know and love. Luce and Schroder, for instance, are infants. But what I found remarkable was how much the humor and pathos of the later strip can be found even here. Charlie Brown, more mischevious than we're used to, still struggles with a world that just won't give him a break sometimes; in one strip that is vintage Shultz, Charlie Brown watches despondently as Patty, fighting with Shermey, calls him a Charlie Brown, at which point Shermey says she has gone too far. Snoopy is noticeably different, a mere puppy, on all fours, but still obviously thinks of himself as more than a dog. Several strips involve him being offended when one of the children refers to his canine nature. We even get a brief glimpse of his imaginative abilities, as he fantasizes about making Charlie Brown do tricks for him. But what it all comes down to, though, is the question: are the early strips funny? My laughter reading through this volume would indicate yes. The humor is different, with reoccurring jokes about mud pies, for instance, seeming a bit dated and overly childish. But there is a lot of great material here. If this is Shultz just

hitting his stride, the future volumes (as we all well know) are going to be brilliant. As for the presentation, the strips are rendered vividly, from high-quality proofs, and the book itself is a work of art.

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