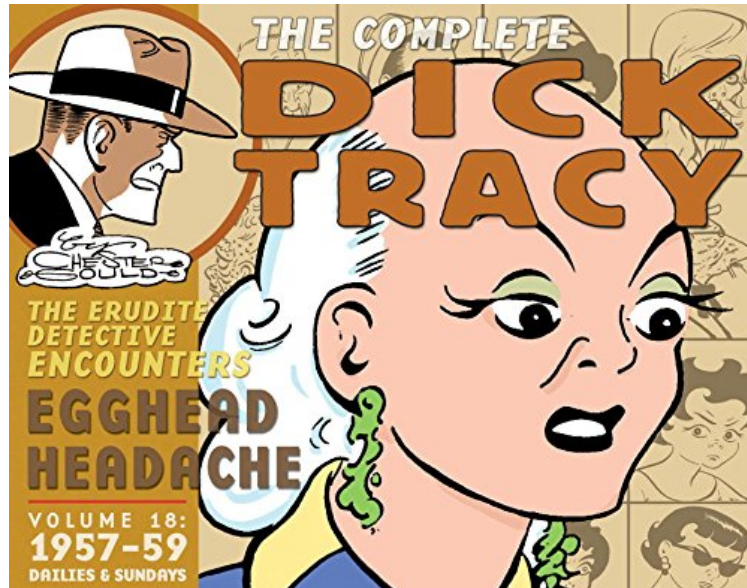


Complete Chester Gould's Dick Tracy Volume 18

Chester Gould

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Chester Gould : Complete Chester Gould's Dick Tracy Volume 18 before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Complete Chester Gould's Dick Tracy Volume 18:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Some Great Villains, Some Not So GreatBy David SwanWe've passed the period of the most recognizable Dick Tracy villains but Blowtop is one of my favorite from the past few years. The brother of classic Tracy villain Flattop, Blowtop's defining characteristic is his explosive temper. He also seeks revenge against Dick Tracy for the death of his brother, at least for a time and then that's forgotten about. This leads to one of the most unintentionally hilarious scenes in Dick Tracy history when Blowtop sets off a bomb at Tracy's house. In the resulting fire Dick Tracy rushes around with his hair literally ablaze. Priceless. Vitamin Flintheart returns and gets tied up with Blowtop for a significant part of the story but strangely enough Gould never capitalizes on the fact the Flintheart was involved in the death of Flattop. The second villain, T.V. Wiggles, is one of the weirdest villains ever and not in a good way. He's a shakedown artist who demands money from bars with television sets or he'll spray corn syrup in the back to ruining them. He is also an ex pro-wrestler (although he looks nothing like one) who knows a pressure point capable putting someone in a comatose state until he undoes the paralyzing effect. As if all the wasn't goofy enough his scheme is to shakedown Vitamin Flintheart who is acting as the agent of Sparkle Plenty who is discovered to have such phenomenal singing talents that she can command a salary of ten grand A WEEK! Everything about this story is ludicrous and cringe worthy. The ending is also one of the sappiest in Dick Tracy history and that's an achievement. Following T.V. Wiggles is a shorter than normal storyline involving the villainous Dr. Plain. I liked this one because Gould diverged somewhat from his typical formula and kept the story very tight and compact. Dr. Plain's gimmick was a missing hand replaced by a flame thrower which he used to immolate people. He had a very specific plan and carried it through. We also don't get the obligatory chase the villain ending. After Dr. Plain, Gould gave his readers 'Empty' Williams, a villain who's defining characteristic is that he says, 'as a matter 'a fact' with nearly every sentence. Empty may be the most inept villain Gould had yet to create

but I don't get the impression Gould intended for him to be such a buffoon. His gang accidentally steals a truckload of 120,000 diapers and then try to sell them for \$5000. When that deal goes sour they kill the buyer and just take the money which they could have simply done without the diapers. Everything Empty does is moronic except his ability to escape and extend this overlong storyline. The writer of the introduction stated that his all-time favorite storyline was the one with Crewy Lou and on this rare occasion I actually agree. This biggest asset to this story is that Gould diverges from his very tight formula. Crewy Lou not only finds herself trying to avoid capture, she also finds herself in a war with another criminal named 'the King' as well as her own brother who intends to kill her for bringing shame to the family. I found myself sympathetic to Crewy Lou as she escaped from one deadly situation after another. Everything seems to work in the story from the plot to the characterization. My only complaint is the sudden birth of Dick Tracy's daughter, Bonny Braids. This is as strong of evidence as there is that Gould did almost no long term planning in his plots since there is absolutely no indication that Tess was even pregnant. Bonnie Braids is an annoyingly precious little girl that I could have done without. As far as I'm concerned Blowtop and Crewy Lou are the stars of volume 13 with Dr. Plain coming in third due to his uniqueness and a decently well thought out (if overly complex) plan. Crewy Lou headlines volume 14 but most of her story is here. T.V. Wiggles was just weird and Empty was a total dud. We'll see if the Crewy Lou storyline is a portent of greater stories to come or if it was a single alignment of stars.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. The Rise of the Grotesque Villains By David Swan

The previous volume of Dick Tracy wasn't my favorite. By the standards set by Chester Gould I felt like it was one of his weaker efforts with Dick Tracy doing some of his worst detective work yet. By contrast this is probably my favorite volume so far. Volume 5 starts where the previous left off with a human smuggling ring. This is an extremely brutal story with men being thrown from a ship to their death to remove evidence. One thing this story reminded me was that if Dick Tracy ever asks you to help him in a case run away as fast as possible. It never goes well. Dick Tracy asks a member of the Chinese community named Tau Ming to assist in spying on the human traffickers and he's promptly killed. In the next story a woman named Noana is asked to spy on some criminals and ends up getting waterboarded and later forced into planting bombs. Later in the book a jeweler helping Tracy gets bound, gagged and stuffed in a pipe with the intention of killing him by starvation and a woman asked to spy on her ex gets punched in the face and knocked out. In the previous volume he asked a fellow to dress as a criminal's girlfriend to do some spy work. The disguise worked for half a second before the man was killed. Tracy has even involved Dick Tracy Jr, getting the poor lad a beating. The Noana story was a bit silly. About half way through Dick Tracy has an abrupt mental breakdown and appears to commit suicide. Chester Gould does cheat a bit to convince the reader that Dick Tracy is truly cuckoo and later a mysterious bomb maker named Pete Reppoc shows up. The bomb maker's name is a bit too clever and to the best of my knowledge this is the first time Gould uses his reverse name trick; something he would employ often in the future. The next story introduces Gould's failed attempt at a humorous character, Brighton Spotts. When it comes to gritty detective stories there few who can match Gould but when it comes to comedy Gould is a bit lacking. This is another story with a lot of brutality but I had to laugh at some of Dick Tracy's detective work. A desperate thief named Jojo Nidle ends up backing into the wet paint of a door frame and Tracy removes the frame to take it back to his lab for analysis. What makes it so funny is that there can be no doubt that the fellow who was in the just painted room was Nidle so all that detective work Tracy did was entirely superfluous. This is not the only time in the book where Dick Tracy's detective work has been gratuitous and time wasting. I felt bad for the poor guy who had his door frame hacked up so Tracy could learn something he already knew. The next story is thus far my favorite in the series. Dick Tracy tangles with a villain named Karpse who's using slave labor to create chemical weapons to sell to foreign governments. Dick Tracy ends up getting badly injured and with his plan revealed Karpse decides to lay low and reinvent himself as a legitimate baker and ends up working for Tess Truehearts mom at her bakery. This is where the story gets very interesting as Karpse becomes quite popular as a talented baker and comes off as perhaps a legitimately decent fellow. After getting badly burned in a cooking accident Karpse is put into the same hospital as Dick Tracy but neither knows the others identity. Of the 5 volumes I've read I probably enjoyed this section most of all. The next story where Dick Tracy goes to a health spa and gets entangled in a jewelry heist involving the son of the health spa owner is also a personal favorite. The second to last story features a watershed moment with the introduction of Scardol. Scardol is very reminiscent of future villains with a distinctively appalling appearance. With dark beady eyes, a bizarre squared off chin and grotesquely huge pock marked forehead he looks as hideous outwardly as he is inside. The name Scardol, although not a description of his physical features as later villains would commonly have, is a strange name to go with this strange, ruthless villain. Like just about all Dick Tracy villains he doesn't survive the end of the story but he is one of the most memorable villains we've seen. There is some silliness in this volume but it may well be my favorite thus far and I look forward to starting volume 6.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Next volume of Dick Tracy getting into the 1960s By Michael R. Brown

Well, here we are getting into the 1960s era of Dick Tracy, with another volume of all new (to me) stuff. First up, is the conclusion of the Fresh and "Little Boy Beard" story left incomplete at the end of the previous volume. Fresh's Aunt Soso had rescued them, but actually she hates Fresh for killing her mother, Soso's twin sister! With her chauffeur Tartar Soss, they setup an interesting death trap for the pair so it looks like an accident. But Tracy and company save them and put an end to the

Soso and are able to pin an earlier murder on her (from earlier in the storyline) And as I wondered if the Beard Boy was yet another attempt, after Little Pineapple, to YET again create a popular child character, we will actually have to have him around until August. No idea if he every reappeared in the strip, but doubt it. Well, Little Boy Beard will hang around. This leads into the next storyline, where Fresh gets a job with a man running a kennel and dog-training center. He trains seeing-eye dogs and the like. But sadly, some of his employees, led by "Trusty" Hubbub, are instead training dogs and a pair of panthers to rob! There is a big deal were it seems that Little Boy Beard is in danger from the panthers! Next up is a strange case of 2 newly released cons with strange patches on the waists: "Spready" Spensive and "Duke" Keene. Turns out they are keys to a safety deposit box leading to a load of money hidden away by an now dead crime lord, Mr Etah, at his abandoned estate. We also met their lawyer, Mona the Mouthpiece. Interesting how that character gets thru this storyline. That abandoned case leads Tracy to the next storyline, when he meets an old lady and her 2 grandchildren. There is much more to her then meets the eye! A real tearjerker that also leads to solving a 40 year old cold case of a man who escaped the gallows for murdering a police chief. Our next major villain, "Brush", who claims that his face is covered by hair, perhaps due to radiation mutation. From this he gets donations from various people. But he's a fake. This leads to a gripping tale of murder, and escape when the bad guy, now "unmasked" makes off with the money in a huge bag. His stash of loot falls into other's hands, which leads to the final, short, storyline. A cautionary tale that leads to murder and lives destroyed. No cliffhanger this volume. The next volume we will be introduced to the Space Coupe and Moon Maid!!! I know others hate this period, but as a long-time science fiction fan, I recall a little of this period and look forward to reading it. Can't wait! As always, this volume is rounded out by other articles for the intro and background, which delves into the storylines and the characters and where Gould got some of his info. Interesting is the final article on the Dick Tracy cartoon from UPI, which I recall seeing as a kid. I think its available on DVD, hopefully unedited.

The 1950s just about came to a close in Volume Eighteen as Chester Gould introduces one character after another whose crimes start off as relatively petty, but who end up trapped in larger and more deadly conspiracies. New characters include the gamecock queen Miss Egghead, Cuban secret serviceman Wunbrow, the tragic Headache, and bizarre Popsie and her mother. Throw in a wacko named Pansy, a cross-country chase after a million dollars of hidden heist loot, Tracy left for dead on a deserted island, a couple more million in slot machine coins, and a throwback to the 1940s in the Mole-lookalike named Rhodent, and it's clear that Chester Gould is definitely not resting on his laurels. Included are all strips from December 15, 1957 through July 11, 1959.

About the Author Chester Gould (1900–1985) was born in Pawnee, Oklahoma, the son of a newspaperman and grandson of a circuit-riding preacher. He attended Oklahoma AM (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.