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Explainers: The Complete Village Voice Strips (1956-1966)

Jules Feiffer

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Jules Feiffer : Explainers: The Complete Village Voice Strips (1956-1966) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Explainers: The Complete Village Voice Strips (1956-1966):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. (un)Happy DaysBy Tim LukemanAs previous reviewers have noted, while these satiric intelligent strips may be half a century old (or older) now, they're just as sharp-edged scathing as the day they were first printed. At this point, the period references serve a dual purpose: (1) as an on-the-spot, daily record of the temper of the times, with all of its urgent concerns, fears, and absurdities; and (2) as a reminder of just how much things HAVEN'T changed in America, from personal relationships, to conformity non-conformity, to politics, to the ideological illusions (and delusions) that drive destroy so many obsessed, harried, failing human beings. The years covered in this first volume, 1956-1966, are a crucial turning point in America history -- and Feiffer's unblinking gimlet eye sees skewers everything. There is an occasional glimmer of hope human decency, but it's rare all too fragile against the power of hypocrisy, greed, and the unholy urge of empty people to devour the world everyone in it, both metaphorically nearly literally. I eagerly await the next volume, which will take readers through the late 1960s, Watergate, and beyond. Meanwhile, for anyone who wants a vivid, darkly humorous look at recent American history, this volume is definitely recommended without any reservations!2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An Urgent CollectionBy J. SmallridgeNearly fifty years removed I didn't find many of the strips funny (maybe they were never meant to be), but what sustained my interest throughout was the urgency with which the characters in this collection convey their angst, their ideas, their relationships, and their thoughts. There is so much to cover from failed relationships, to failed friendships to presidential statements to questions surrounding the very meaning of life.Jules Feiffer comes at a reader from every angle conceivable and that gives his ideas their power. And their relevance to today. My personal favorite in this entire collection is in which Vice President Richard Nixon explains and explains what he means about his political philosophy. In many ways, it encapsulates the desire the characters here have for swaying a reader to his/her side and outlining a set of beliefs and experiences.This collection isn't so much about humor as it is about viewing the world we live in. I encourage others to buy it and treasure it.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. What a riot.By Ric EberleThese strips tell a very familiar, very human story. There are plenty of them and they capture a wide range of emotions and situations with which I can identify. I'm sure you will agree and be likewise amused.

The first of four volumes collecting Feiffer's landmark Village Voice strips. "My aim was to take the Robert Benchley hero and launch him into the Age of Freud." ?Jules Feiffer In 1956, a relatively unknown cartoonist by the name of Jules Feiffer started contributing a strip to the only alternative weekly published in the US, a small radical newspaper called The Village Voice. It was originally titled Sick Sick Sick, but Feiffer changed the name to, simply, Feiffer, because he got tired of explaining that the title referred to the society he was commenting on, not the nature of his humor, which, he insisted, was not sick. Politically, the '50s was dominated by the insipid Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower; the backwash of Joe McCarthy; and the Cold War, which was in full swing. Culturally, the Beats were revolutionizing literature, Marlon Brando was changing the face of acting, and Elvis Presley was altering the public's perception of pop music. The post-war suburban bliss of the country was being challenged by sociologists and economists in books like *The Lonely Crowd*, *The Other America*, and *The Affluent Society*. The civil rights movement was gaining momentum. Camelot was just around the corner, and would be shattered by the assassinations of JFK, RFK, and MLK. The Vietnam War would polarize the country. It was into this scrambled political-cultural climate that Jules Feiffer flung himself full throttle for the next ten years. His strip tackled just about every issue, private and public, that affected the sentient American: relationships, sexuality, love, family, parents, children, psychoanalysis, neuroses, presidents, politicians, media, race, class, labor, religion, foreign policy, war, and one or two other existential questions. It was the first time that the American public had been subjected to a weekly dose of comics that so uncompromisingly and wittily confronted individuals' private fears and society's public transgressions. *Explainers* is the first of four volumes collecting Feiffer's entire run of weekly strips from The Village Voice. This edition contains approximately 500 strips originally published between 1956 and 1966 in a brick-like landscape hardcover format.

From Booklist Jules Feiffer has had successful careers as playwright, screenwriter, and, lately, children's book creator but remains best known for his Pulitzer Prize-winning weekly comic strip that ran in the Village Voice for 42 years. Initially entitled Sick Sick Sick, the strip captured the era's zeitgeist with acerbic accuracy and mordant humor and was equally incisive in skewering political foibles and gender warfare. This chunky volume, the first of four in a complete edition, shows that Feiffer was at first finding his way visually, for early installments show the strong influences of cartoonist William Steig and UPA animated cartoons. It wasn't long, however, before he developed the strip's hallmark willowy look and balloonless dialogue. Such Eisenhower-era themes as nuclear fallout, bohemia, and jazz figure early on, to be joined by 1966 by pollution, unisex fashions, and, above all, Vietnam. Perusal of the hundreds of intervening cartoons discovers that, for all the strip's contemporary relevance, intellectual pretensions, the banality of television, and miscommunication between the sexes never went out of style as targets of Feiffer's satire. -- Gordon Flag "One of the most original social and political commentators in America." - Tom Clavin, *27 East* "The modern, non-editorial-page cartoon of social and political commentary was pretty much invented by Jules Feiffer." - Booklist "[Feiffer] ranks as one of the five most important and influential cartoonists in the latter half of the 20th century." - Rob Clough, *High-Low* "A veritable Bible of middle class American dysfunction... Feiffer reveals the depths of his subject not only through the dialogues which are filled with psychological, social and politic depths that few cartoonists have ever plumbed but also through an amazing skill to capture the body language so crucial to human communication... a real masterpiece worth delving into." - John E. Mitchell, *North Adams Transcript* "A welcome reintroduction or introduction, for the uninitiated to a great cartoonist who boldly bent his medium to adult purposes long before it was commonplace to do so." - David Kamp, *The New York Times Book* "A satirical masterpiece." - Roger Sabin, *The Observer* "To read *Explainers*... is to be reminded of the absurdity of the human situation, something that might be depressing except for the fact that Feiffer's comics will make you laugh out loud." - Rabbi Rachel Esserman, *The Reporter* "His genius is in bringing larger-than-life societal trends down to the human level. Most characters serve as symbols for something larger, but they never feel anything less than human." - Mason Adams, *The Roanoke Times* "Almost always in the form of near-theatrical monologues or dialogues, 'Feiffer' blew poison darts at Cold War-era politics, sexual mores and America's helpless flailing at the idea of normalcy." - Douglas Wolk, *The Washington Post* "One of, if not the first of the early writer/artists to emerge from the comic book ghetto into the literary/art world." - Will Eisner, creator of *The Spirit* "If you were a Martian trying to figure out America in the second half of the 20th century, you could do worse than to start by reading Jules Feiffer's Village Voice cartoons." - Sarah Boslaugh, *PopMatters* About the Author Jules Feiffer is a cartoonist, playwright, children's book author and illustrator, and member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He teaches a humor writing class at Stony Brook Southampton College and lives in Southampton, New York.