



The Complete Peanuts, Vol. 25: 1999-2000

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The 25th volume of *The Complete Peanuts* collects the very final year-plus of the defining comic strip of the 20th century, which ran for nearly 18,000 strips and for 50 years after its debut in 1950. This masterpiece includes all of 1999 through the final Feb. 13, 2000 strip. In this volume, Rerun takes center stage and cements himself as the last great *Peanuts* character—when he embarks on a career as an underground comic book artist! This volume also features a huge surprise: the complete *Li'l Folks*, the weekly one-panel comic that Charles Schulz produced for his hometown paper. *Li'l Folks* was a clear precursor to *Peanuts*, and its inclusion here will bring *The Complete Peanuts* full circle.

The Complete Peanuts, Vol. 25: 1999-2000 Details

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Leonard says

I like Peanuts, but am not the fan that others are. However this is the 25th and last volume in this series, and the quantity and quality of this art is stupendous. I enjoyed it but would not try to read all 25 volumes. However if you are a Peanuts fan, check out this series.

Benn Allen says

It was with joy and sadness that I read this, the final volume of "Peanuts" comic strips. (There is yet one more volume being released in October that will contain various odds and ends Charles M. Schulz did including some of the "Peanuts" comic books he created.) This volume presents us with the last Great Pumpkin strip. The last football strip. (One of the best. Rerun substitutes for Lucy. But we'll never know if Rerun let Charlie Brown kick the football finally or if he, like his big sister, pulled the ball away at the last second.) The final World War 1 Flying Ace strip. The final Little Red Headed Girl strip, etc. The strips bring a smile to your face, touched with sadness knowing after this, there will never be any new "Peanuts" cartoon strips. Certainly not by Sparky.

The final year (1999) of "Peanuts" mostly starred Rerun. As the title was ending, Schulz began to focus on the youngest Van Pelt kid. While most casual fans of "Peanuts" will probably barely know who Rerun is (he doesn't even appear in last year's "Peanuts Movie"), he was very well developed in the final year of "Peanuts". Rerun went from riding on the back of his Mom's bicycle in the Seventies to ambulating on his own in the '80s and '90s, wanting his own bicycle, his own dog. I get the impression Rerun renewed Schulz's interest in the strip. And that interest shows and helps makes these last cartoons all the more enjoyable.

Since most of the year 2000 strips were Sundays only. (The only daily strip Schulz did was for New Year's Day). There were only a tiny handful, no more than maybe five strips. Because this would leave Volume 25 of the series short, the rest of the book is filled with various cartoons from the precursor to "Peanuts", "Li'l Folks". "Li'l Folks" was an okay strip. It has a dog that had some of Snoopy's characteristics. It had Beethoven. It had its Charlie Brown. But Schulz often recycled jokes in "Li'l Folks" and at least one strip was reworked as the debut cartoon for "Peanuts". LF is amusing and it's fascinating watching Sparky's style evolve to where it would be for the first "Peanuts" daily. But it lacked the characterization and cast "Peanuts" developed which makes it weaker than the title Schulz is most famous for.

So as of now, I have read all 17,897 "Peanuts" comic strips. It took Fantagraphics 12 years to get us all here. Thanks to Gary Groth and the rest of Fantagraphics for providing these books for us fans. And of course, thank you Mr. Charles M. Schulz for Snoopy, Linus, Lucy, Sally, Shroeder, Spike, Rerun and of course, Charlie Brown. You made the world a little brighter and more bearable.

Scott Meesey says

Twice a year for 12 1/2 years. This is the last. :(I will miss the anticipation. I truly enjoyed watching Rerun

getting the best of his older sister and, through her, us. The addition of "Li'l Folks" was wonderful. We miss you, Sparky.

Kelly says

The final installment in Charles Schulz's compilation of his comic strip. The editors ended it with his daily comics, "Li'l Folks."

I will miss the wonderful drawing and the sardonic and cynical demeanor of these characters.

Nick says

There is a wide generational swath of people that grew up reading Peanuts. I was one of those people, and like a lot of others, I aged out of my daily reading of the strips and I no longer followed it in reissue form. I accepted the conventional wisdom that Peanuts was stale long before the period covered in this collection.

I found these strips much fresher than I expected. "Sparky" Schulz breaks the fourth wall or whatever to do some self-referential humor, particularly centered on Rerun's career as an underground cartoonist. Rerun, Spike, and Peppermint Patty are central characters, and to use Bill Watterson's phrase, Charlie Brown, Linus, Lucy, and Schroeder are avuncular but still viable characters. The skill that made it a great visual strip and a great "thinking" strip remains. The lines are quavery - I thought I saw this the most, paradoxically, in the anarchy of Linus's hair. But the high quality is still there.

This books contains a generous sampling of "Lil Folks" cartoons from before Schulz's big break. It's worth noting that none of the included panels show grown-ups, but grown-ups did appear in some of the early work.

Fantagraphics has done a great service with this reissue and I encourage anyone who has managed to miss out on Peanuts, or the committed fan of the strip, to check it out. To return to the generational thing, a lot of people out there see Watterson, not Schulz, as the sine qua non of comics. Comics mavens jump all over the merchandising/non-merchandising aspect, or the accuracy of how children or portrayed, or the occurrence of psychologically grim moments vs. sunny motivational poster moments for the creatives-thought-leader-hacker crowd. Schulz may have been the Elvis to Watterson's Beatles - albeit a highly original, disciplined, and introspective Elvis. But his place in the pantheon is absolutely deserved.

For more background, I would strongly recommend Michaelis's biography of Schulz, and Watterson's review of that biography.

Annie says

I have now read every Sunday Peanuts comic ever written.

Mark Schlatter says

On the minus side, the introduction from President Obama is very short and kinda meh. And half the book is reprints of Schulz's first work, *Li'l Folks* --- basically one-panel comics with kids saying funny things. (The big focus is using language that sounds more adult, e.g. a kid in a sandbox exclaiming "Yes, sir, this is the life for me! Back to the soil!!".) You see some glimpses of *Peanuts* (a kid called Charlie Brown, cute dogs, kids playing Beethoven), but it's not that moving or funny.

The other half of the book, covering the last year of the *Peanuts* strip, has a lot of Rerun (to very good effect), the return of Snoopy's brothers Andy and Olaf, and Sally trying on more philosophies. (My favorite is "We'll always have Minneapolis.") And it's quite strange to see Sally writing a letter to Harry Potter. Good stuff throughout, with only a few strips near the end that show any decline.

Steve says

It took about three years, but I've finally read the full run of *Peanuts*. What's next on my bucket list?

Rick says

On the very first day of 2000, the last daily strip for *Peanuts* ran in the world's newspapers. Then for a few more weeks, right up to the day before Valentine's Day when Charlie Brown's mailbox would surely have remained empty, the Sunday strips continued before the last one ran the day after Charles Schulz died from cancer. The strip was among the list of survivors, by one day. A half-century of excellence came to an end with three panels: Charlie Brown on the phone saying, "No, I think he's writing." Snoopy is shown on his doghouse typing with the words "Dear Friends..." in the upper left corner. Then, a letter from Schulz announcing his retirement in three typed paragraphs with Snoopy looking thoughtful, chin in hand, paper still in the typewriter, in the bottom right.

In the paragraphs, Schulz avoided using the strip's name, *Peanuts*, which he hated from the day the syndicate accepted his proposed daily strip but imposed that name on it. It has been an amazing pleasure reading *The Complete Peanuts*, revisiting strips read long ago in newspapers and 50 cent paperbacks published in the 1960s and discovering overlooked strips and almost all the ones from the late 1980s on when I had stopped following Charlie Brown and crew. The last volume of the Dailies and Sundays includes precursor cartoons from the *Li'l Folks* series that ran in various places in the late 1940s but stopped when the newspaper that carried it refused Schulz a better location in the paper, daily publication, and a raise. He quit and in the fall of that year *Peanuts* made its appearance.

There are very good moments in this last volume but not as many as we are accustomed to. One Sunday panel has a box, opened at the top with Charlie Brown emerging from it. The box says, "Do Not Open Until Someday" on it. Snoopy is writing a story where the human thinks dogs only think about eating, but the dog in the story is waiting. "Someday someone is going to leave the gate open, and I'll be out of here like a rocket." Rerun asks his kindergarten tablemate about forms they have to fill out, saying he doesn't know how. She says, "Just put check marks in those tiny squares." Relieved, he replies "I can do that." On the way home he tells Lucy, "School was good today...we learned how to fill out forms."

One of the best moments is an example of meta-cartooning I suppose. It's one panel. A class trip to the art museum with five of the Peanuts gallery of characters standing in front of a seascape painting—Van Gogh?—and on the far right side is Rerun looking at a framed image of the early 50s version of Snoopy with his back turned to the viewer. The wistfulness in these latter strips seems—and perhaps only seems—to have the end to the strip in mind. Schulz, who was Snoopy in the final appearance, sees the gate opening or his life closing.

Beyond bittersweet foreshadowing there are simpler pleasures: Sally Brown, movie critic, “As soon as it started it was too long.” More sharp jabs at school: Peppermint Patty being inducted into the D- Hall of Fame by her teacher and mistaking it for an honor. Rerun hides under his bed after an exchange with the teacher. “The teacher,” he tells Lucy, “asked me if I thought I’ve learned everything I need to know.” He says, “Yes.” Lucy asks if he did learn everything then. He says “I think I’ve learned all I need to live under a bed.” In another single panel strip, a long line of students are waiting in the rain for the school bus. One wonders if this patience under adverse conditions shows their love for education. Linus says no, “It shows our lives are controlled by those in power.”

As always some things don’t change. Snoopy has not ever learned his master’s name. He remains that “round-headed kid.” Sally gets help on her homework from Charlie and gets the book’s second best sentence after her movie review when he tells her he will help her with the questions after she reads the chapter. “Read the what?” Sally says.

Some things continue to develop. Rerun’s personality, a blend of Lucy and Linus. He has his brother’s literacy and insecurity but with no need of a blanket, but his sister’s aggressiveness and capacity to taunt. In one Sunday strip he tells Linus an elaborate story, ostensibly by Tolstoy, of a woman with four children who all slept together in a cradle. ‘When she put them to bed, she gave each one a ‘sucking rag,’ he concludes in the fourth panel. While Linus listened he was sucking his thumb, clinging to his blanket. In the fifth panel he removes his thumb, clutches his blanket and looks sideways at his baby brother who is looking forward. As he leaves, Rerun says, “Enjoy your ‘sucking rag.’” In the last panel, a self-satisfied Rerun is van pelted with Linus’s blanket. Near the end of the volume Rerun calls Lucy away from her annual responsibility to pull the football away from the rushing up to kick it Charlie Brown. Lucy, proving she somewhat knows her kid brother, has him take her place as the holder. Schulz, proving his abiding genius, doesn’t show the end of the kicking attempt but shows Rerun back at the dinner table with Lucy, who eagerly asks, “What happened.” Rerun’s response proves Lucy doesn’t quite get how much he is like both Linus and Lucy. He says, “You’ll never know.” He has effectively pulled the football from her rushing kick.

There are references to underground comics (though Rerun mistakenly refers to them as basement comics), cell phones, and Harry Potter. Peppermint Patty gives sage advice on how to keep your head from falling off—it involves sitting out against a tree under the clouds. Rerun explains to his seatmate whose elbow keeps bumping into his, “There’s no body checking in art.” Artist friends of mine might disagree.

There are a couple of storylines begun that we lament being left undeveloped, most particularly: Linus potentially becoming a rival for the Little Red-Headed Girl’s affection. Talk about a plot twist! But Schulz gave us everything he had in his long and dedicated life so like Lucy, some things we’ll just never know. President Barack Obama provides the volume with a brief, elegant introduction. The *Li'l Folks* cartoons are all single panel gag cartoons, some funny, but mostly interesting as precursors to *Peanuts*. For those of us who may be going through withdrawal the publisher advertises a 26th volume of “bonus materials and rarities,” which I am both curious and dubious about. Whatever it is, like Paris for Rick and Ilsa, there is always the 50 years of this endlessly rewarding cast of characters who make you laugh, sigh, and yell augh in cathartic agreement at life’s absurdity and grace.

Heather says

What a mix of emotions I have! Since 2004, I've been reading this series and now I can say I have read every single *Peanuts* strip ever. During the prior volume I thought I'd get verklempt while reading the last volume, but it never happened because I was still so engaged by the happenings of the ol' gang. The final message from Sparky came as a record scratch, but I already knew it was coming so it didn't catch me as off-guard as I anticipated.

Originally when Rerun showed up, I thought of him as a jump-the-shark move in the "Enter Cousin Oliver" vein. He grew to become Snoopy's friend, an underground comics artist in this volume, and developed more as an interesting character. I'm embarrassed to admit I wrote him off initially.

In addition to referencing underground comics, a couple of other signs of the times popped up in this volume. Mark McGwire, newfangled cars with fancy electronics, Harry Potter, and vegetarianism all get mentions in this final volume. The Harry Potter mention took me out of the strip a bit, as I had forgotten Pottermania was just in its infancy in November 1999 when that strip ran!

Since I was still engaged by the strip, it came as a surprise when I reached February 13, 2000 and read the message I remember seeing in the newspaper. I noticed the date and flipped back several pages to realize that Schulz had already ended the daily strips but continued on with fresh Sunday strips for several weeks.

While it felt a bit jarring it was also nice to enjoy the predecessor to *Peanuts*, a late-1940s strip called "Li'l Folks" that ran in *The St. Paul Pioneer Press*. There are clear predecessors to *Peanuts* characters—and Snoopy actually looks like a beagle! Schulz even has a character referred to as Charlie Brown, and in one panel two girls have the exact conversation about him that Patty and Shermy have about Charlie Brown in the very first *Peanuts* strip.

The foreword by President Barack Obama? Not his best work, and frankly there have been other authors who seemed to love the strip more genuinely. But hey, they got President Obama, awesome! I love that guy almost as much as I love Snoopy.

Now that I don't need to worry about finding the new volume every six months or so, what will I do with myself? My guess is that I'll start a re-reading project at some point...

Erik says

Still had some of the original charm to the end but the jokes in this one aren't very memorable. *Lil' Folks* was a mildly amusing addition.

Bobbie G says

Since it only covers a year instead of two, like the others, this volume includes an extensive sampling of the "Li'l Folks" panels that preceded "Peanuts." Very dated, but very fun. Intro by President Obama.

Leaflet says

The last volume (#25) of strips in this epic set, with a nice intro by President Obama. I like that Rerun aspires to be an underground comic book artist. I just found out that there will be a surprise volume 26 coming out in October featuring Schulz's non-comic strip art! \0/

Roy DeRousse says

This book is only raised to 3 stars due to the inclusion of "Li'l Folks." Sorry, but the last year of Peanuts simply isn't very funny overall. Compare the Li'l Folks strips to the Peanuts strips. The ones created near the beginning of Schulz's career are actually much funnier than those at the end.

Rebecca says

Finally got to finish these.
