



Little Nemo: 1905-1914

Winsor McCay, Bill Blackbeard (Introduction)

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The legendary adventures of Little Nemo in one volume. As a homage to Winsor McCay's masterpiece, this edition is the first to combine all the episodes from 1905 to 1914 in their original colours. It spirits the reader away on a journey through the wonderful dream worlds of the little hero in pyjamas.

Little Nemo: 1905-1914 Details

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Author : Winsor McCay , Bill Blackbeard (Introduction)

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From Reader Review Little Nemo: 1905-1914 for online ebook

Dan Schwent says

Little Nemo: 1905-1914 contains every Little Nemo newspaper strip from its prime era.

I first encountered Little Nemo in a NES game about a thousand years ago. Since then, everyone from Bill Watterson to Moebius cites him as an influence. I found this on the cheap and decided to dive in.

First off, this book is awkward as hell to read. It's coffee table sized and the print isn't very easy to read. While not exactly small, the font is really understated. Skinny, maybe? Whatever the opposite of bold is. It strained my eyes enough to give me a headache until I learned to limit myself to ten pages at a time. Also, it took me a few minutes to get used to the captions being underneath the panels rather than above. Eventually, McCay dispensed with the captions all together, making for a smoother read.

Once I got used to reading it, I started digging Little Nemo right away. Some bizarre stuff happens right off the bat and I'm having a hard time imaging a Sunday paper featuring Little Nemo in the comics section, what with mushroom forests, ostriches with twenty-foot legs, and creepy ass clowns all over the place.

The stories are one-shots at first but gradually evolve into a linked series with Nemo finally entering Slumberland and meeting the Princess. His arch-nemesis, a kid who is a stogie-smoking clown named Flip, starts ruining Nemo's good time at every turn. They eventually become friends but Flip is still an asshole. Since this was a Sunday strip, some of the stories go on for months and months.

The art is the star of the show here, which is a good thing because old Winsor wrote some wooden-ass dialogue. The lettering looks like Winsor drew the word balloons first and then contorted the dialogue to fit into them. Not only that, every page ends with Nemo waking up. Anyway, Winsor's art style is rooted in illustration and political cartoons, making it way more detailed than I originally thought. There are so many fine lines and tiny details that I have no problem believing some pages took about a week to do. Also, the man draws a mean hippopotamus.

The comic strip was still in its infancy at this point but Winsor McCay was doing some interesting stuff, like varying panel sizes and drawing extremely intricate backgrounds. His use of perspective was light years ahead of its time. I keep forgetting this strip appeared in the newspaper. Imagine a time when a single comic could take up the entire page.

Artistically, I'd say the run through Befuddle Hall, a bizarre series of upside, sideways, and perspective warping rooms was the highlight of the first few years. From there, Nemo experiences a series of stories that start in his bed instead of Slumberland, Winsor mixing up the formula.

You can definitely tell how Winsor McCay's artwork influenced people like Moebius with his clean lines and hyper-detailed backgrounds. You can also see how the subject matter inspired Bill Watterson in Calvin's daydreams, although Calvin never went through the things Nemo went through, like airship rides, polar

wastelands and surrealist architecture. Some of the edifices Nemo explores would be right at home in a Steve Ditko Doctor Strange tale.

While the writing leaves something to be desired, Little Nemo is a fascinating look at comics in their embryonic form. The art holds up surprisingly well and the subject matter is timeless. I'll be cracking open this behemoth periodically for years to come. 4 out of 5 stars.

Alexander Lisovsky says

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Nicolas says

Voici donc une pièce d'archéologie de la bande dessinée : l'une de ses plus anciennes œuvres reconnues comme telle.

Ce très épais recueil regroupe plus de dix ans des aventures du jeune Nemo, aux débuts du XXème siècle (de 1904 à 1913 à peu près). Dans ce recueil, chaque page reprend une page publiée de façon hebdomadaire dans différents journaux. Et chacune de ces pages est évidemment une aventure complète de Nemo au pays des rêves, se terminant par le réveil souvent accidentel et brutal du jeune Nemo.

Bon, ces aventures ne sont pas forcément très intéressantes en soi, et les différents personnages (Nemo, Flip, la princesse, ...) pas vraiment très profonds en termes de caractère. Mais l'intérêt de cette œuvre n'est pas là. Il est plutôt dans les décors extrêmement inventifs, dans les voyages fait dans des domaines du rêve dont chaque enfant a pu voir les échos, et enfin dans le découpage des planches que j'ai trouvé bien plus moderne qu'un Tintin, par exemple.

A cause toutefois de l'absence de scénario et des défauts des personnages, ça n'est pas une œuvre qui peut être avalée d'un coup. Il vaut mieux la lire par petits bouts, la croquer comme une espèce de boîte de chocolats des pays du rêve. Pris comme ça, c'est très bon.

David Schaafsma says

I've had this for a 2-3 weeks, just paging through the large format, 342 page hardcover collection of McCay's "Little Nemo in Slumberland" and "In the Land of Wonderful Dreams" strips from 1905-1914. If you are looking for classics in comics history, those who helped developed comics theory and craft, this is indispensable. I knew about him, had some familiarity, but thought I would finally take a good look, and this is THE collection of his to read. And Katzenjammer Kids they are not. In some ways it is hard to believe they existed in strip format for as long as they did, as surreal and bizarre as they generally are. Amazingly drawn and crafted, with remarkable detail, they essentially are dream states, dream stories, and not really for kids in a conventional sense. They are about the imagination, and fantasy.

I almost went blind reading them, the print is so small. So that's where Chris Ware got his idea for his minuscule print (as in Jimmy Corrigan and in the Acme collections) and his nostalgia for this period. I am sure Seth loves McCay, too. When I read Jimmy Corrigan again I will read it with some Little Nemo for sure, they speak to each other. I would say that the stories don't really advance, don't create a coherent narrative, but hey, it's about dreams, not narrative.

This is awesome, so glad I took the time with it. Great book for comics scholars and artists who want to know the history.

Chris says

Little Nemo has been praised as one of the most original comic strips ever created, and it certainly is. It is surreal, imaginative, and very well-drawn and colored. It doesn't keep up all these qualities through to the end, but there is tremendous gold to be found in this treasure.

Little Nemo is a comic strip about the adventures of a young boy as he encounters a great many surreal situations in his dreams. Each comic starts off with Nemo either in the dreamworld at the start, or in bed, and about to enter it. Each comic contains one final panel of Nemo waking up, often startled by what happened in the dream.

Things start out on a fantastic note. In one early strip, Nemo is taking a walk through a forest made of giant mushrooms. He is told not to touch the mushrooms, because they are very delicate. At one point, he accidentally bumps into one, and it breaks neatly into several giant pieces, which then fall and hit another mushroom, which in turn breaks onto another, and so on, thus starting a chain reaction. Another early comic has Nemo accidentally causing disaster in a world made out of living glass people.

The early strips are more about individual surreal adventures rather than telling a continuing story, and they work quite well. At one point, however, McCay must have decided that he had to create a storyline to tell, and that is where each comic tends to be directly related to the story in question.

That's not a bad thing. The stories at first are generally used as vehicles to get him from one original dream sequence to another. Sometimes these sequences are directly related to the story at hand, but oftentimes they are detours. The comic continues in this style for a long while.

At one point, the character of Flip the clown is introduced, and quickly becomes one of the main characters. Flip is a troublemaker who is not allowed to join the Princess of Slumberland, but he eventually does so anyway after a great many failed tries. He soon joins Nemo as a constant companion, with plots that occasionally result in him being thrown out of or separated from the group, with him later either trying to rejoin, or just causing trouble on his own.

Once Flip gets involved in the comic, the comic begins to slowly revolve more and more around him, but for a long time, the stories continue to be largely Nemo-centric affairs about the strange and unusual experiences he has in Slumberland. One wonderfully creative plot had Nemo and the Princess visit the North Pole, and experience, among other things, a snowmaker, which ends up causing more trouble than it's worth when Nemo climbs up a tower to see it in action. During this plot, Flip constantly tries to catch up with the group, often getting thwarted, and serving as a mild sideshow rather than the main attraction.

Later in the strip, though, McCay begins to have an increasing reliance on story arcs. That becomes a problem, however, when some of these story arcs don't really fit in with the dream-like stories that make the comic so original. For instance, at one point there is a story arc that revolves exclusively around Nemo and a crew on an airship traveling to famous cities around the US and Canada, visiting them, and learning facts about them. There is nothing surreal or dream-like that happens in these stories, and they contribute nothing to the comic. As if realizing this, McCay later had Nemo and his crew land on Mars, where the story becomes wonderfully surreal and creative again.

After continuing that re-energized creative spark, McCay loses it again late in the book. During the last two years of Little Nemo, the comic degenerates into slapstick comedy involving Flip and his efforts to break into Slumberland. The title begins to reflect this. This is where "Little Nemo in Slumberland" is now known as "In the Land of Wonderful Dreams", and each story now has its own title. Each title tends to be about Flip; i.e. "Flip Breaks In", "Something's Up, Must Be Flip", etc., sadly showing that Flip has succeeded in hijacking the comic, derailing it from its original form, the story of Nemo's trips through surreal dreamscapes. Some surreal dreamlike elements continue to present themselves even after this transformation, but the story had gone downhill, and the collection ends on a sour note.

I loved this comic collection and I'm very glad I got a chance to read through 10 years worth of the most original newspaper comic I'd ever seen. Even so, I did notice the comic's bumpy quality, ranging from just plain fantastic to downright bland.

I still recommend you check out this collection. There's a lot going for it, and don't let the later drop in story quality get to you - all great things go through that kind of phase. McCay may not have kept up his creative spark forever, but when he had it going for him, he turned out wonderful, amazing, truly original work, work that was ahead of its time, work that's rare and original even in our time, work that is worth seeing for yourself.

David says

This book is huge. I love the illustrations. The text can get wearisome after a while (it's so damn small in this edition!).

Kelly says

I have not gotten that far into this work, but it is so enchanting and endearing that I might shell out the insane \$125 to own the Sunday Press edition (which is the actual size of the original comic printed in the paper). Our Nemo has finally! found his way to the princess, who desires him as a playmate. There were many obstacles, which he encountered night after night. In particular, Nemo's nemesis, Flip, a sinister clown-like character proves problematic; this individual smokes a cigar and often dons a large hat the reads "Wake Up!" and inevitably Nemo wakes up and is thwarted in making his way to the princess. I will give a full review when I finish it. In the process of savoring Nemo's adventures.....

Also, the illustrations are superb. Many thanks to the comic fairy who keeps the shelves well-stocked with lovely books.

Shadowdenizen says

If there was a higher score than 5, this would receive it from me. (I can't believe I somehow overlooked rating/reviewing this until now.)

There's a handful of writers and artists that define and transcend their medium, although most are sadly, only recognized posthumously.

But, almost every comic artist/writer since this series began owes a debt of gratitude and a sincere round of "Thanks" to the brilliant Winsor McCay, and his creation Little Nemo. This strip is, quite simply, sublime.

D.M. says

After years of trying to convince myself to track down the individual volumes of Nemo released in the late 80s, I was pretty excited when this single-volume collection turned up. Regrettably, it includes only the original run of the strip, not the brief return it had in the 1920s or the '...Rarebit Fiend' strips (which I think had been included in the earlier books). Still, it's an affordable and solid collection of McCay's constantly inventive and whimsical strips 'Little Nemo in Slumberland' and 'In the Land of Wonderful Dreams.' And that's more than I might have expected.

Though anyone who's interested in these strips knows the art is eye-boggling, it is perhaps less well-known how painful the writing is. McCay seems to have never bothered to try realistic dialogue, and his characters speak in a strangely stilted way that would have been unnatural even at the time. In spite of that, his imagination seems to be boundless. Nemo, Flip and the others get into fairly repetitive situations, but with twists to them that are constantly surprising, made even more remarkable by McCay's illustrative talent. There are also innovations evident in his design and structure that would take years (if not decades) for the rest of sequential art to catch up to.

This edition's greatest failing is only one for those who want more than just to read the strips: there are many

things left unexplained about the reality surrounding McCay's fanciful tales. Why the shift to Hearst? Why was the first paper turned to monochrome just before that switch? Could McCay really not have known the strip was being cancelled with Hearst to such an extent he didn't feel he should close down the story properly? Why the gaps in publication (as shown by the helpful notes at the back of the volume, detailing each page's publication date)? If (as is suggested in the very brief introduction) the strip was not popular at any point, why was there a stage show based on it, and why would McCay have suggested children in all the major US cities would be delighted by a visit from the characters of that show (as seen in the abruptly-ended city-tour series about halfway through the book)?

I may have my issues with this book and its contents, but when all is said and done, I'm just happy to have all these wonderful pages in one place. This volume is an absolute must for true fans of comic art.

Linda says

This edition contains the entire Little Nemo series running from 1905 through 1914 so it is rather imposing. But whether you read this one or another, everyone ought to read something of the Little Nemo series.

Little Nemo is a young lad who dreams through the entire cartoon until the last panel, where he routinely falls out of bed and wakes up his parents (who then comment on how often he falls out or tell him to go back to sleep - one time they even suggest they should build a fence around his bed to keep him from falling out!). He dreams that he is requested by the Princess of Slumberland to come and be her playmate. The first set of cartoons shows his journey there and the machinations of the "villian" who tries to keep him out of Slumberland - Flip, supposedly a kid too, but whose face is green, who smokes a stogie and dresses in a full-length coat.

Over the series things grow and change. Flip becomes a pal rather than an enemy, but he keeps his unfortunate characteristic of causing trouble while not meaning to. The Princess takes Nemo on various trips around Slumberland. Etc. Etc.

The cartoons are not funny, funny, but they have an aspect of art and understanding that is lacking in a lot of the comics of the times like the Katzenjammer Kids. Most of that era's cartoons were blunt - like Three Stooges jokes. This has more subtlety.

Again, this particular edition may be a bit overwhelming - it's 428 pages - but everyone ought to read something of Little Nemo. He's a darling and these comics show us a part of the culture of the time that we often miss.

And the drawing is marvelous! Look for the little things that McCay adds to the panels.

John says

I think it's safe to say that if a book has Bill Blackbeard's name on it, you should pick it up if you enjoy seeing the best things comics have to offer. His insight into the history that surrounds the comics, the creators and editors and the time they all existed in is always thorough. The comics themselves are the baroque dreams of a child that we never get to know in a size bigger than all but the Sunday Press books. The only downside to this book is that it doesn't reprint the sundays that make up the 1924 resurrection but then, there is no other

edition with 1905-1914 all together.

Gabriela says

If you like to remember your inner child, if you like comics from the early 1900s, if you enjoy art, if you enjoy great story telling, this book is for you. I found this gem and bought it immediatly, no matter how much it cost me. I was introduced to Little Nemo by the movie Little Nemo's adventure in Slumberland, when I was a little girl. I watched that VHS so many times I started dreaming about Slumberland. It's just great to see the original drawings and stories. Where it all came from.

P.H.T. Bennet says

Quite trip. I grew up with these, then lost track of them until I was in my mid-20s, when they blew my mind with the level of ingenuity, imagination, and early world-building without apology. There are more than a few characterizations here that are quite un-PC, yet to throw the collection out for those would mean throwing out most of literature and political discourse. I choose to focus on the wonderful tension he creates by throwing Nemo and the reader into a world that is at times frightening, awe-inspiring, completely nonsensical and disorienting, yet never boring. Like Nemo, I often felt both relieved and disappointed when he woke up, which is perhaps why my daughters and I always needed breaks as we read through the collection.

Moureco says

A obra fundacional da literatura em banda desenhada: Little Nemo in Slumberland, a recolha das pranchas publicadas no New York Herald pela primeira vez em 15.10.1905. Quando McCay mudou para o William Hearst Media Group, mudou-lhe o título para Little Nemo in the Land of Wonderful Dreams, mas a base manteve-se a mesma: cada prancha conta uma história, que é um sonho de Nemo, que acaba (quase) invariavelmente com Nemo a cair da cama.

picti mundi says

"Winsor McCay zählt mit seinen von ihm erdachten und gezeichneten Zeitungskurzgeschichten zu den prägendsten Vertretern der amerikanischen Comicstrips des 20. Jahrhunderts. [...] Ähnlich wie bei „Little Sammy Sneeze“ ist die Grundidee von „Little Nemo in Slumberland“ (Der kleine Nemo [Niemand] im Schlummerland) recht einfach, sie erzählt von den Träumen des Protagonisten und endet jeweils mit dem Erwachen oder dem Gewecktwerden Nemos. Dieses simple Gerüst der Comicstrips wird jedoch vielfältig und andauernd variiert, sodass aus der Grundidee beinahe endlose und mitunter äußerst irreale Möglichkeiten erwachsen."

Ein ausführlicherer Beitrag zum Autoren, seinen Zeichentrickfilmen und "Little Nemo" ist hier zu lesen.
