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THE GREATEST ADVENTURE STRIP OF ALL TIME GETS THE DELUXE FANTAGRAPHICS TREATMENT

Roy Crane is one of America's greatest cartoonists and Fantagraphics is embarking upon an ambitious reprinting of his best work, beginning with his gorgeous adventure strip, *Captain Easy*.

Crane created the first American adventure strip — before Hal Foster's *Tarzan* and *Prince Valiant*, before Milton Caniff's *Terry and the Pirates*, before Alex Raymond's *Flash Gordon* — and quickly established himself as a master of the comic strip. Begun in 1924 under the eponymous title *Wash Tubbs*, within four months it moved from a gag-a-day strip about a girl-crazy young grocery store clerk to an adventure strip when *Wash Tubbs* embarks on a treasure hunt. *Captain Easy* was introduced in 1929 and began starring in his own Sunday page in 1933, which begins our first volume of *Captain Easy*, with a vintage foreword by Charles Schulz.

The first of six volumes contains the earliest Sunday pages from 1933 to 1935. In his first adventure, *Captain Easy* visits a lost city, battles pirates, dons a deep-sea diving suit to explore a sunken ruin in search of treasure, and everywhere he goes, he finds beautiful women — a lost princess, a pirate queen, a savage woman in need of “taming.” A romantic adventurer from a less politically correct age, *Captain Easy* is a Soldier of Fortune whose bravery and daring are exceeded only by his Southern gallantry.

Crane created the template for the adventure strip, combining adventure and humor in a Bigfoot cartooning style that perfectly conveyed the tongue-in-cheek tone and light-hearted thrills that kept readers on the edge of their seats. As comics historian Brian Walker put it, “the artist's patented visual storytelling technique blended humor, drama, heroics, and pretty girls.” Crane's *Captain Easy* influenced virtually every cartoonist who followed him — from Chester Gould (*Dick Tracy*) to Milton Caniff (*Terry and the Pirates*) — and even Hollywood's adventure movies, starring the likes of Cary Grant or Errol Flynn, adopted Crane's tone of two-fisted, good-natured derring-do. Citing Crane's influence on comics, the artist Gil Kane once said, “Superman was *Captain Easy*; Batman was *Captain Easy*.” According to comic strip historian Richard Marschall, Crane was “a master not only of storytelling but of the art form, developing expressive techniques and a whole dictionary of conventions and signs for future comic strip artists.”

The first volume of Captain Easy also features some of the best and rarest art that Roy Crane created for special occasions, as well as illustrations from the sketchbooks he drew when he traveled to exotic locales to gather inspiration for Captain Easy's adventures. It also contains biographical and critical introductions to Crane and his work.

ROYSTON CAMPBELL CRANE (November 22, 1901 - July 7, 1977), who signed his work Roy Crane, created the comic strip characters Wash Tubbs, Captain Easy, and Buz Sawyer, and influenced many of the subsequent cartoonists in that genre.

“Crane’s work is sheer energy. It’s somewhere between Crane and E.C. Segar that (Carl Barks’ beloved) Donald Duck got forged; the kind of ruddy-cheeked adventurousness that underlies the content is certainly the same work that moves Donald and his nephews through their stories.” — Art Spiegelman

CAPTAIN EASY, SOLDIER OF FORTUNE

The Complete Sunday Newspaper Strips Vol. 1

By Roy Crane

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