Goodman Beaver

Goodman Beaver is a comics character created by American cartoonist Harvey Kurtzman . Goodman is a naive and optimistic Candide @-@ like character , oblivious to the corruption and degeneration around him , and whose stories were vehicles for biting social satire and pop culture parody . Except for the character 's first appearance , which Kurtzman did alone , the stories were written by Kurtzman and drawn by Will Elder .

Goodman first appeared in a story in Harvey Kurtzman 's Jungle Book in 1959 ; the best @-@ remembered were the five strips the Kurtzman ? Elder team produced in 1961 ? 62 for the Kurtzman @-@ edited magazine Help ! They tend to be in the parodic style Kurtzman developed when he wrote and edited Mad in the 1950s , but with more pointed , adult @-@ oriented satire and much more refined and detailed artwork on Elder 's part , filled with numerous visual gags .

The best @-@ known of the Goodman Beaver stories is " Goodman Goes Playboy " (1962) . A satire on the hedonistic lifestyle of Hugh Hefner using parodies of Archie comics characters , whose publisher threatened a lawsuit . The issue was settled out of court , and the copyright for the story passed to Archie Comics . Hefner , the actual target of the strip , found it amusing . Kurtzman and Elder developed a female version of Goodman Beaver for Playboy magazine called Little Annie Fanny (1962 ? 88) .

Overview

Goodman Beaver is a naïve and optimistic character , oblivious to the degeneration around him . According to Kurtzman , the character was partially inspired by Voltaire 's Candide and Harold Gray 's comic strip character Little Orphan Annie , who , like Goodman , was drawn with blank circles for eyes . Art critic Greil Marcus compares Goodman to Young Goodman Brown in Nathaniel Hawthorne 's tale of the same name ? both are pure @-@ souled characters who become disillusioned by the depravity they confront in the world .

Kurtzman wrote five Goodman Beaver stories for his long @-@ time collaborator Will Elder . Most of the stories were in the parodic style Kurtzman had developed as the creator , editor , and writer of Mad , but dealt with more significant issues concerning modernity . Published in the Kurtzman @-@ edited Help ! in the early 1960s , they were drawn in Elder 's " chickenfat " style , in which he crammed every panel with humorous detail and throwaway gags . Elder cited the Flemish Pieter Bruegel the Elder and the Spanish Diego Velázquez as influences on this style .

Stories

" The Organization Man in the Gray Flannel Executive Suit "

As an editor hired by Schlock Publications Inc . , Goodman loses his youthful idealism when awash in the sea of avarice and selfishness he encounters in the publishing world . In this story Kurtzman used his own personal experiences to satirize the corrupting influence of capitalism and power . Goodman finds himself groping the secretaries , just as the other cynical executives at Schlock do , and ends up stealing from the company .

Goodman was a semi @-@ autobiographical character , reflecting Kurtzman 's disillusioning experiences in the publishing industry . Kurtzman 's artwork is in an exaggerated cartoon style with round , fluid , elongated characters rendered with loose , fluid , and sketchy brushwork and gray wash . Dialogue is in an expressive , handwriting @-@ like style . Kurtzman blends the verbal and visual aspects of the work ? for example , when an enraged Goodman Beaver confronts his diminutive boss Mr. Schlock , Goodman is graphically overwhelmed by Schlock 's word balloons , which demonstrates Goodman 's helpless subservience and Schlock 's effortless psychological dominance over his employees .

= = = " Goodman Meets T * rz * n " = = =

" Goodman Meets T * rz * n " first appeared in the September 1961 issue of Help ! , and was Elder 's first take on Goodman Beaver . Set against the backdrop of the fall of European colonialism in the face of the rise of African nationalism , such as in the Kenyan Mau @-@ Mau Uprising , and the spread of the Soviet sphere of influence , the story throws a modern 1960s spin on the romance of jungle adventure as exemplified by the Tarzan tales . Kurtzman sends up T * rz * n 's attitude of superiority , as when T * rz * n (Tarzan) confronts an African tribe , or when J * ne (Jane) gives T * rz * n basic English lessons .
 Elder 's first efforts had Goodman depicted with more monkey @-@ like features ? thick , black eyebrows , a large mouth , and small jaw and chin . Kurtzman and Elder desired to have a more " lovable " Goodman , so Elder reworked Goodman 's appearance in later stories , redrawing Goodman 's features to conform with this new look for later reprintings of the " Goodman Meets T * rz * n " story .

= = = " Goodman Goes Playboy " = = =

 Help ! ' s most famous story was " Goodman Goes Playboy " , first published in the February 1962 issue of Help ! The story satirized Hugh Hefner and his lifestyle while parodying Archie comics in a much more outlandish way than Kurtzman 's parody " Starchie " in Mad a decade earlier . Kurtzman called this his favorite Goodman Beaver story , and said that Hefner would point people to it when he wanted to explain to people what Kurtzman 's work was about .
 Goodman has returned to his hometown , and the Archie characters , home from college , are drinking , partying , skirt @-@ chasing hedonists . Jughead is a beatnik , and the others are leading glamorous lifestyles . Archie Andrews parody Archer explains to a behind @-@ the @-@ times Goodman , " You 've been away too long . Nowadays , the gang is interested mainly in hip @-@ ness ? awareness " , rather than keeping up with how the football team is doing . Archer shows Goodman to his place , which must be entered through a staircase built into an enormous statue of a female abdomen . Archer leads Goodman to a Roman @-@ style orgy and has him change into a toga . The party is Archer 's last , as he reveals he has signed a pact with the Devil , and the debt (Archer 's soul) was due that night .
 " Goodman Goes Playboy " appeared in altered form in the book collection Executive 's Comic Book in 1962 : in the orgy scene the exposed nipples were covered with white ink and the parody Archie characters were altered to obscure the resemblance to characters they were based on in a failed attempt to escape legal action from Archie 's publishers .

= = = " Goodman , Underwater " = = =

 While trying to enjoy a book as he floats in a swim ring off a crowded beach , Goodman is interrupted by undersea adventurer Hammer Nelson , who invites Goodman to help him fight underwater crime . Don Quixote @-@ like , the overeager Nelson sees crime where there is none , interrupting swimmers and boaters at play . The pair set out to find a Russian submarine ? and find one , but Nelson mistakes it for a monster to be subdued with his speargun . Goodman realizes Nelson 's insanity , abandons the adventurer , and returns to his book .
 Framed within the story of Don Quixote , " Goodman , Underwater " satirizes Cold War tensions and sets out to deflate the deluded ideals of do @-@ gooders while parodying the 1960s television series Sea Hunt , which starred Lloyd Bridges as Mike Nelson . The illustrations that bookend the story are from 19th @-@ century French artist Gustave Doré 's Don Quixote illustrations . The story first appeared in Help ! # 14 (May 1962) .

= = = " Goodman Meets S * perm * n " = = =

In " Goodman Meets S * perm * n " , Goodman stumbles across the superhero on a fishing trip . S *

perm * n (Superman) has gone into hiding from society , sporting a beard and moccasins . He no longer has the desire to help a society he has lost faith in , and which criticizes him for his good deeds . Goodman takes him back to the city to prove that society is still full of good people . While in the city , Goodman encounters an old woman being attacked by a knife @-@ wielding maniac . Goodman flees in terror , but is stopped by S * perm * n who reveals himself as the old woman in disguise ? he had been testing Goodman 's selflessness . S * perm * n is horrified and disappointed by the degeneration and corruption he sees in the city , and abandons society again .

 First published in Help ! # 15 (August 1962) , Elder described " Goodman Meets S * perm * n " and its detailed splash page as " Marx Brothers on paper . You never knew what to expect " , referring to the busy wealth of gags it was filled with . With artwork by Wally Wood , Kurtzman first parodied Superman in " Superduperman " in the fourth issue of Mad in 1953 .

= = = " Goodman Gets a Gun " = = =

 Goodman attends a pool party in his hometown Riverdale , fresh from joining the police force . He spots the popular Liz Taylbone , with whom he had been smitten since high school , but he is too passive and timid to draw her attention . After watching a Marlon Brando movie on TV in the lounge he is infused with courage and returns to the party imitating Brando 's attitude and mannerisms . He draws the attention of Liz Taylbone and the crowd , but not for his Brando impression as he thinks ? rather , they are impressed to learn that , as an off @-@ duty police officer , Goodman is carrying a pistol . The group coaxes him into going with them to a night club known for its rough clientele . When the rough crowd arrives , Goodman 's group expects the gun to serve as their protection ? until Goodman lets them know his newfound self @-@ confidence drove him to quit the police force two hours earlier . The group abandons Goodman to a thrashing by the thugs .

 " Goodman Gets a Gun " appeared first in Help ! # 16 (November 1962) . It was the only Elder @-@ drawn story not to appear in the Executive 's Comic Book collection of 1962 .

= = Publication history = =

 Goodman Beaver made his first appearance in Harvey Kurtzman 's Jungle Book in 1959 , in " The Organization Man in the Gray Flannel Executive Suit " . Jungle Book was the first American book of original comics , a mass @-@ market paperback that was the first in a planned series . The book sold poorly , but has been a favorite among Kurtzman fans .

 The first Elder @-@ drawn Goodman story appeared in Help ! # 12 in 1961 and was followed in 1962 with four more stories in Help ! # 13 ? 16 . A Goodman Beaver collection called Executive 's Comic Book appeared in 1962 from Macfadden Books . In this paperback collection of four stories ? " Goodman Meets T * rz * n " , " Goodman Goes Playboy " , " Goodman , Underwater " , and " Goodman Meets S * perm * n " ? the strips were reformatted to one panel per page . Elder extended the artwork of each panel to fit the page dimensions .

 Kurtzman approached Hugh Hefner in 1960 with the idea of a comic strip feature for Playboy that would star Goodman Beaver . Until then , Playboy had printed many cartoons , but not a comic strip . After exchanging ideas with Hefner the project was approved , but Goodman Beaver was required to be transformed into a voluptuous female . Kurtzman brought in Will Elder as his primary collaborator on Little Annie Fanny .

 In 1984 Kitchen Sink Press published a collection called Goodman Beaver , which reprinted four Kurtzman ? Elder stories from Help ! ? all the Elder @-@ drawn stories except for " Goodman Goes Playboy " , which appeared only in short excerpts permitted by fair use exemptions under US copyright law . The book reprinted the elongated versions of those strips that had appeared in Executive 's Comic Book . Original artwork for 38 of the 139 reproduced panels were lost ; according to Kurtzman , several pages were sent to French magazine Charlie Hebdo for translation and never returned . Kitchen Sink used proofs , photostats , or original magazine appearances for sources from which to reproduce the missing panels .

= = = List of original appearances = = =

= = Reception and legacy = =

Kurtzman had avoided drawing legal fire from the litigious DC Comics and Edgar Rice Burroughs , Inc. when he parodied their copyrighted properties , but the saturnalian depictions of the Archie characters in " Goodman Goes Playboy " provoked legal action from Archie publisher John L. Goldwater , who had earlier played a role in founding the comics industry 's self @-@ censorship body , the Comics Magazine Association of America .

Help ! publisher Jim Warren received a letter on 6 December 1961 accusing the magazine of copyright infringement and demanding removal of the offending issue from newsstands . Warren 's lawyer believed they could succeed if they fought the suit , but the legal costs would make it a " Pyrrhic victory " , and thus recommended settling out of court . Warren could not have the magazine recalled , but he agreed to pay Archie Comics $ 1000 and ran a note of apology in a subsequent issue of Help ! ? the August 1962 issue , in which appeared another character franchise parody , " Goodman Meets S * perm * n " . Warren 's action disappointed Kurtzman , who felt that giving in to such censorship set a " terrible precedent " , and amounted to a kind of prostitution .

When the story was reprinted in the book collection Executive Comic Book in 1962 , Elder modified the artwork to obscure the appearance of the Archie characters . Archie Comics found the characters ' appearances still too close to their copyrighted properties and threatened another lawsuit . Kurtzman and Elder settled out of court by handing over the copyright to the story . Archie Comics held on to the copyright and refused to allow the story to be republished .

The actual target of " Goodman Goes Playboy " had been Hefner , who loved it . Kurtzman began working for Hefner again soon afterwards . The strip Kurtzman produced , Little Annie Fanny , is often thought of as a compromise ? virtuosic in its visuals , but lacking in content in comparison to the Goodman Beaver stories . R. Fiore and other commentators have considered this ironic in light of the Faustian theme of " Goodman Goes Playboy " .

In June 1983 Denis Kitchen requested the right to reprint the story as part of a planned Goodman Beaver collection . Archie Enterprises chairman Michael J. Silberkleit responded that publishing a story that included the likenesses of the Archie characters would be " a serious breach of copyright and trademark law " . When the company learned that Kitchen planned to publish the story with the pages reduced in size and the characters ' faces blacked out , Archie Enterprises threatened another lawsuit , and Kitchen dropped the story from the collection , which appeared in 1984 . Kitchen went as far as to have the book 's cover redone , as the planned one had incorporated a " Goodman Goes Playboy " panel in the background .

Publisher and critic Gary Groth wrote that Elder 's artwork in the Goodman Beaver stories " clinched his reputation as the cartoon Brueghel [sic] with his intricate portraits of a world cheerfully going mad " . Elder considered the stories to be the funniest of his collaborations with Kurtzman , though he said that towards the end of the run he was getting tired of the painstaking work he put into the drawings . The stories placed sixty @-@ fourth on The Comics Journal 's " Top 100 English @-@ Language Comics of the Century " in 1999 , along with four other works with which Kurtzman was involved . Late @-@ 1990s talk of a Goodman Beaver feature film or television series circulated , but the Kurtzman estate was uninterested .

After Comics Journal co @-@ owner Gary Groth discovered that Archie Comics had let the copyright on " Goodman Goes Playboy " expire , he had the story reprinted in The Comics Journal # 262 (September 2004) . It was also made available as a PDF file on the magazine 's website . The story has yet to appear in any reprint collection since the lapse of copyright .

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