

= Little Annie Fanny =

Little Annie Fanny is a comics series by Harvey Kurtzman and Will Elder . It appeared in 107 two- to seven @-@ page episodes in Playboy magazine from October 1962 to September 1988 . Little Annie Fanny is a humorous satire of contemporary American society and its sexual mores . Annie Fanny , the title character , is a statuesque , buxom young blonde woman who innocently finds herself nude in every episode . The series is notable for its painted , luminous color artwork and for being the first full @-@ scale , multi @-@ page comics feature in a major American publication .

Kurtzman , a cartoonist , created the series at the culmination of his career . He had launched Mad magazine , worked briefly for Playboy publisher Hugh Hefner and on a series of solo and collaborative projects , then returned to working for Hefner with Little Annie Fanny . Each episode of the comic strip was designed and written by Kurtzman and rendered in oil , tempera , and watercolor by Elder . Hefner edited each episode , often requiring detailed changes to ensure that the series remained true to the magazine 's editorial style . Critical reaction was mixed , with most praising the elaborate , fully painted comic , but some dismissing it as falling short of Kurtzman 's full potential . The complete series was first collected into two volumes in 2000 and 2001 by Dark Horse Comics .

= = History = =

= = = Conception = = =

Harvey Kurtzman founded the satirical Mad magazine in 1952 ; an early fan was onetime cartoonist Hugh Hefner , who founded the men 's magazine Playboy in 1953 . Hefner offered Kurtzman an opportunity to conceive a new humor magazine for his enterprise , which the cartoonist accepted when he left Mad in 1956 in an ownership dispute . Kurtzman took most of the Mad artists with him , including frequent collaborator Will Elder , to create the adult @-@ oriented humor magazine Trump . Although it sold well , Hefner ran into financial problems in 1957 and halted Trump after two issues . He provided office space for the artists , from which they self @-@ published the satirical magazine Humbug in 1957 ? 58 . It failed to gain a significant following , and a dejected Kurtzman began pitching feature proposals to Playboy , all of which were rejected . However , he received a note from Hefner : " I bow to no one in my appreciation for H. Kurtzman . " Hefner 's praise encouraged Kurtzman to meet with publisher Ian Ballantine and create Harvey Kurtzman 's Jungle Book ( 1959 ) . This introduced the innocent and idealistic Goodman Beaver , a male character who continued to appear ? with artwork by Elder ? in Kurtzman 's Help ! ( 1960 ) .

Kurtzman continued to correspond with Hefner and Playboy executive editor Ray Russell , who was interested in Kurtzman 's idea of a comic strip suitable for the magazine 's audience and suggested " satire ... as an excuse or rationale for a slick magazine to be publishing a comic strip . " Although single @-@ panel cartoons were an established part of the magazine , a comic strip was unprecedented and had to be justified . Kurtzman submitted some Goodman Beaver strips and was surprised to receive a favorable response from Hefner , who liked the " fresh and eager " character . He especially enjoyed " Goodman Goes Playboy " , which featured a boisterous romp in Hefner 's mansion . Hefner nevertheless insisted that the material was not right for his magazine , but requested an explanation of the character with a suggestion : " Maybe there is a way of launching a similar series ... that can somehow be related to Playboy " . Kurtzman replied that Goodman Beaver " could be foolish and at the same time wise , " and that he " innocently partakes of the bad while espousing the good . " He further stated that Beaver 's innocent , restive , and charming nature allotted him especial creative freedom . A week later , Kurtzman wrote to Hefner , " What would you think of a girl character ... whom I could apply to my kind of situations ? " Six weeks later Hefner replied , " I think your notion of doing a Goodman Beaver strip of two , three , or four pages , but using a sexy girl ... is a bull 's eye . We can run it every issue . "

= = = Production = = =

Kurtzman recruited his long @-@ time collaborator Will Elder to work on the strip 's illustrations . He suggested to Elder an " outlineless " , painted style , then thought the strip would be better suited by an India inked , outlined comic book style with flat color behind it . Hefner , whose opinion prevailed , preferred the more difficult , fully painted , outlineless look . Kurtzman 's suggestions for the feature 's name included The Perils of Zelda , The Perils of Irma , and Little Mary Mixup ; he settled on Little Annie Fanny , its title and logo a parody of Harold Gray 's Little Orphan Annie . The cartoonist began submitting story ideas for the multi @-@ page comic strip to Hefner for approval . Over the twenty @-@ six years he wrote the character , he was allowed ( with Playboy 's substantial budget ) to travel for research , photography , and sketching . He followed this with a preliminary script for Hefner , who revised it . Kurtzman then worked out the story 's composition , pacing , and action in thumbnail drawings and pencil roughs of each page of the comic , followed by larger , more @-@ detailed layouts on translucent vellum specifying lighting , color , and speech balloon placement . These also required Hefner 's approval ? a typical two- to seven @-@ page episode would take as many as nine pages of layout . Kurtzman then discussed the layout with Elder , who drove from his home in New Jersey to Kurtzman 's in New York . Kurtzman acted out every detail of the strip ; according to Elder , " He would change his voice and take on the characteristics of each role ... We 'd crack each other up and fall down laughing . " This gave Elder what he needed to create the penciling , including " eye pops " ( background gags worked into blank areas of Kurtzman 's layout ; Hefner rejected many , so Elder created as many as possible ) and the final rendering . Elder painted in oil , tempera , and watercolor , never using ink . Beginning with a white illustration board , Elder explained he would " pile on " his oil paint , light colors over dark , then apply tempera , then layer several watercolor washes to give Annie luminous tones . " The colors were like gems to me , " he said . " I worked very hard to give them iridescence . " The work was labor @-@ intensive and deadlines were often difficult to meet , so other artists , including Russ Heath , Arnold Roth , Jack Davis , Al Jaffee , Frank Frazetta , and Paul Coker , were occasionally enlisted to help finish the art . Jaffee , a childhood friend of Elder , said about the experience : " Little Annie Fannie was the most unique , lavishly produced cartoon cum illustration feature ever . Each panel was a miniature masterpiece that Willie glazed and re @-@ glazed in brilliant watercolor until he reached the level of 3 @-@ D @-@ like translucence that he wanted . I know from first @-@ hand experience what went into this project . " Letterers inked the dialog balloons before Kurtzman cleaned and submitted the finished work . Little Annie Fanny , Playboy 's first comic strip , was the first multi @-@ page comics feature in a major American magazine .

= = Characters = =

Annie Fanny is the feature 's lead character . Like other young women in Playboy pictorials , Annie is beautiful , buxom , and often unclothed . She is sexually innocent , oblivious to the worldliness around her . Like her forebear Goodman Beaver , Annie was conceived as a modern Candide , above the story 's corruptions and temptations . Unlike Goodman , however , Annie is never shocked or offended ; she remains blithe . The authors of Icons of the American Comic Book say Annie " glides through a changing world with an untiring optimism " with a " good @-@ natured lack of desire " . She is insulated from the carnal nature of those around her , who explain the new rules of society to her each episode . Ruthie , Annie 's mother hen roommate , appears in the first episode and remains in the strip throughout its run . Wanda Homefree , Annie Fanny 's wild and shapely best friend , first appears in an episode @-@ 10 beauty contest as Miss Greenwich Village and is often seen at Annie 's side throughout the remainder of the series . Ralphie Towzer , Annie 's nerdy @-@ but @-@ hip do @-@ gooder boyfriend , has the look of Goodman Beaver ( with playwright Arthur Miller 's eyeglasses and pipe ) and the temperament of a straight @-@ laced , chastising prude . Solly Brass , Annie 's huckster agent , is based on actor Phil Silvers .

A number of other characters in Little Annie Fanny are derived from Gray 's Little Orphan Annie . Sugardaddy Bigbucks , Annie 's surrogate father and a powerful , manipulative capitalist , is based on Daddy Warbucks . His mysterious assistant , the Wasp , derives from Warbucks ' assistant the

Asp , and Punchjab , his bodyguard , comes from the character Punjab . Other supporting characters include ad man Benton Battbarton ( whose name is taken from the advertising agencies Batten , Barton , Durstine & Osborn and Benton & Bowles ) , Battbarton 's rival Huck Buxton ( modeled on gap @-@ toothed British actor Terry @-@ Thomas ) , Duncan Fyfe Hepplewhite ( an art plagiarist ) , and Freddie Flink ( who resembles comic actor Fred Gwynne from Car 54 , Where Are You ? ) .

= = Synopsis = =

Little Annie Fanny takes the reader through the changing attitudes of American culture , satirizing contemporary trends and fads . In each of the 107 episodes , Annie experiences the latest popular movie , fashion statement , national politics , or society headline . During the strip 's first decade , when it ran up to eleven times per year , Annie meets caricatures of the Beatles ( who lust for Annie ) , Sean Connery ( playing " James Bomb " ) , reclusive Catcher in the Rye author J. D. Salinger ( as " Salinger Fiengold " ) , NFL champions Green Bay Packers ( as the " Greenback Busters " ) , and Elvis Presley , Bob Dylan , and Sonny & Cher on the " Hoopadedoo Show " ( Hullabaloo show ) . During these early years , the strip pokes fun at miniskirts , LSD , free love , and bra burning . Background caricatures include Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev , prissy @-@ but @-@ powerful J. Edgar Hoover , unisex fashion designer Rudi Gernreich , and the " Put a Tiger in Your Tank " ad campaign of Humble Oil . During the 1970s , when the strip ran three to five times per year , Annie sees violent films such as A Clockwork Orange and The French Connection and meets sex novelist Philip Roth , consumer advocate Ralph Nader , chess champion Bobby Fischer , and shock rocker Alice Cooper . She experiences disco , streaking , C.B. radio , nudist colonies , and women 's liberation . Background " eye pops " include Hollywood heavy Charles Bronson , Laugh @-@ In 's Arte Johnson , the Avis TV commercial 's O. J. Simpson , and Star Wars ' C @-@ 3PO . In the 1980s , when Little Annie Fanny appeared once or twice a year , Annie deals with personal computers , goes to Urban Cowboy 's Gilley 's Club , cruises on The Love Boat , and encounters Indiana Jones , Ayatollah Khomeini , Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker , and Woody Allen . Elder 's background gags include the Coneheads , Howard Cosell , Miss Piggy , E.T. , and Billy Beer .

= = Reception = =

Comics historian Don Markstein said that Little Annie Fanny " reached a high point seldom achieved by cartoon art " . Writing for his Don Markstein 's Toonopedia website : " Harvey Kurtzman ... strove for most of his life to advance the boundaries of comics , not just in terms of storytelling but also in production values " , concluding that Little Annie Fanny achieved at least the latter . About its venue he said , " Playboy magazine , whatever you may say about its content , always did a first @-@ rate job of printing color pictures . " According to comics commentators Randy Duncan and Matthew J. Smith , the series " reads today as an amusing look at the evolving mores of the sexual revolution " . Comics editor Monte Beauchamp said that Little Annie Fanny was " the most elaborate comic strip ever created " and cartoonist @-@ critic R. C. Harvey called it " a masterpiece ... the most lavish color comic strip of all time " .

Not all were as impressed . Noting that Kurtzman was financially strapped before making his living for twenty @-@ six years from Playboy , historian Paul Buhle wrote : " The strip had many brilliant early moments , but went downhill as the writer and artist bent to editor Hugh Hefner 's demands for as much titillation as possible . " Cartoonist Art Spiegelman said that Little Annie Fanny devolved from the more interesting Goodman Beaver . Underground cartoonist Robert Crumb , whose career Kurtzman helped launch , scorned Playboy and Annie . Monty Python 's Terry Gilliam , the former assistant editor of Help ! , said that Little Annie Fanny was not as sharp as Kurtzman 's earlier work : " technically brilliant but ... slightly compromised . " Art agent and publisher Denis Kitchen , who handles Kurtzman and Eisner 's estates , said that " most Kurtzman devotees would not consider Little Annie Fanny genius work ... [ and ] some would argue the opposite : that it was genius diluted or degraded " . Kitchen placed the onus on Kurtzman 's employer Hefner , who " was often a

punctilious taskmaster with a heavy red pen who often had very different ideas about what was funny or satiric " and insisted that each strip " had to include Annie disrobing " . Beauchamp agreed : " Unfortunately , Hefner was notorious for his heavy editorial hand . " Duncan and Smith also agreed , and wrote that " humor sometimes mixes awkwardly with the loaded topics of the era , and some have found Annie 's lack of character development and the requisite sexual hijinks an impediment to taking her seriously . " However , they repeated their respect : " The eternally innocent Annie performed admirably as a nonjudgmental witness to the changing tides of the sexual revolution . "

= = Other media = =

The December 1978 issue of Playboy mentioned a " worldwide search for the actress " who would " portray Little Annie Fanny in a live @-@ action movie " . In 2000 , Playboy TV approached Mainframe Entertainment to create a CGI animated television series based on Little Annie Fanny , but no series was ever produced .

Twenty @-@ six early episodes of the comic were reprinted in book form by Playboy Press in 1966 and 1972 . After Kurtzman 's death in 1993 , Playboy revived the comic in 1998 with art by Ray Lago and Bill Schorr , publishing two episodes . Dark Horse Comics collected all episodes of the series and published them in two volumes ( 2000 and 2001 ) , with annotations by Denis Kitchen and others .

= = = = Books = = = =

= = = = Journals , newspapers , websites = = = =