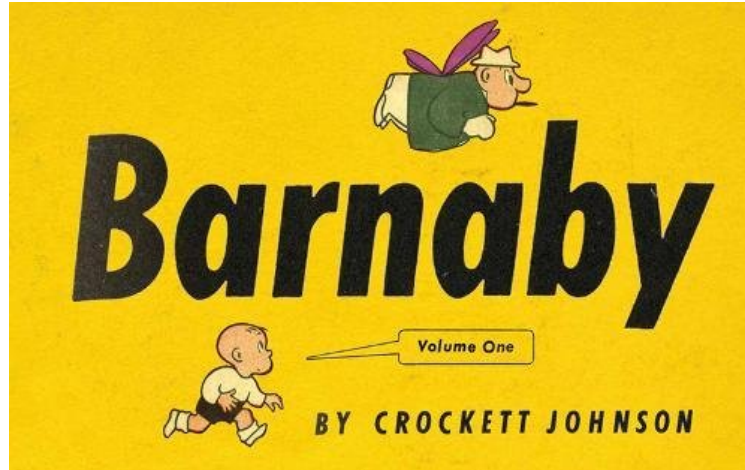


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## Barnaby (Vol. 1) (Barnaby)

*Crockett Johnson*

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#File Name: 1606995227336 pages | File size: 67.Mb

**Crockett Johnson : Barnaby (Vol. 1) (Barnaby)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Barnaby (Vol. 1) (Barnaby):

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Why hasn't this wonderful strip been reprinted before?!By Ajit"Dear, was there ever anybody a little -- er -- out of the ordinary in your family?"Cigar-chomping, tall tale-telling, dumpy, winged, vain, and utterly amoral, Mr. O'Malley flew into Barnaby Baxter's life on April 20, 1942. Precisely two months later you can hear the cadences of Calvin's much-harassed dad in Mr. Baxter's voice.But this is not a rip-off of 'Calvin and Hobbes'. In fact, Bill Waterson wasn't even born when Crockett Johnson's strip came to an end in 1954.However, that end was a dozen years in the future when the strips reprinted in this glorious volume start. But one virtue that these two strips share is that they can be read at different levels, as pure whimsy, as satire, as rollicking humour, and even interpreted with the deepest philosophical undertones.Do not dismiss this as a comic strip for children. In the Golden Age of the newspaper strip the 'funny pages' were read by adults. And Crockett Johnson -- whose real name was 'David Johnson Leisk' was quite clear on his audience. "I don't get anything much from kids," Johnson said, "And I don't draw or write 'Barnaby' for children."That is obvious. I doubt that many five year-olds would know who John Maynard Keynes was, or make sense of sentences such as 'But that's usually obviated by a tautological statement from the sponsor'. If Crockett isn't talking down to children he isn't talking down to adults either, throwing in references to everyone from Shakespeare to Superman.(Duke Ellington, himself a fan of the strip, was so pleased with a reference to himself that he wrote a letter attesting to his own belief in Mr. O'Malley.)So, what makes this strip one of the true classics? The art could not be simpler, pure black and white lines that are reminiscent of 'The Little King' without imitating Otto Soglow.The plots are rooted in the World War II era. (And Fantagraphics has added a twelve-page 'The Elves, Leprechauns, Gnomes, and Little Men's Chowder and Marching Society: A Handy Pocket Guide' at the back of the book, which explains that 'ARP' stood for 'Air Raid Precautions', that 'OCD' was the 'Office of Civilian Defense', and even offers us the text of Senator G. G. Vest's 'Eulogy of the Dog' -- a masterpiece of purple prose.) But the humor is timeless.When Mr. O'Malley tries to train Gorgon the Talking Dog for a turn in the circus that much-suffering canine can only sigh, "This shouldn't happen to a cat!", a marvellous twist on the usual phrase. (And the expression on Gorgon's face is priceless.)When Barnaby and he are running away after

breaking the oil line to the furnace, Mr. O'Malley suddenly brakes to a halt with, "But SAY! Why are we running? Your parents don't believe your Fairy Godfather even exists". To which Barnaby, still speeding away, responds, "But they know I do!"Crockett Johnson delineates characters as economically -- and as effectively -- as he does with his art. And there are a world of characters even in the first years of the strip, not just Barnaby, his fairy godfather, and his parents, but Jane Schultz (the girl down the road) and her parents, Gus the Nervous Ghost, Gorgon the Talking Dog, Launcelot McSnoyd the Invisible Leprechaun, Honest John Snagg...When the much harassed Mrs. Krump finally sees off Barnaby from the Kiddie Kamp, and her sympathetic assistant says, "Poor Barnaby. He expected that imaginary pixie to arrive in the midst of it and do card tricks...", Mrs. Krump responds, "You know Miss Pringle... SO DID I" (And there is a look of absolute wonder in her face.)What of the actual book itself?There is a generous helping of extras. There is a three-page foreword by Chris Ware, a four-page introduction by Jeet Heer, a fifteen-page afterword by Philip Nel, Dorothy Parker's famous 'Mash Note' to Crockett Johnson, and the aforementioned 'Pocket Guide', along with copious photographs and cartoons, that place both the strip and Crockett in perspective.Nits?Here is a tiny one: The September 30, 1943 strip seems to have accidentally duplicated one of the four panels.Here is another: Some of the strips seem to have been reprinted from poorer sources. Look at Page 250, for example; every word in the October 15, 1943 strip is beautifully clear but the words in the October 16 strip, while still eminently readable, appear to be smudged.But these are (very, very) minor detractions.And the best part is that Fantagraphics has already announced that there shall be a Barnaby Volume TwoI would give it six stars if I could. Highly recommended.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Humor That Defies Adequate Verbal DescriptionBy AgedWireHeadYou just have to read this comic strip to appreciate it. Crockett Johnson, author of "Harold and the Purple Crayon" had a marvelous way of looking at the world--with eyes far different than most of us. Eight years before "Harold" was first read to children, Mr. Johnson began writing and drawing a daily comic strip named "Barnaby" after the pre-school aged child protagonist who was braving the unusual circumstances of the World War II years in America. Barnaby is joined with his Fairy godfather, Mr. O'Malley, Father, Mother, Grandmother, and a host of other characters.This book begins at the beginning of the strip in 1942 and runs through 1943. It has a strange quietness for a very turbulent time. Not that excitement wasn't constantly occurring in Barnaby's life. The garage burns with father's car in it--due to Mr. O'Malley's desire for a festive fourth of July. Mother and Grandmother's preserves from their victory garden are destroyed. Nazi spies are captured. And this within the first 68 strips!All sort of features of life in America during the war are covered, including the Air Raid Patrol (ARP), of which Barnaby's father and mother are members aspiring for advancement; and all sorts of "war efforts" like victory gardens.I will admit that I have been biased toward Barnaby since I was about 5 (1954). I learned to read using the first edition of this book printed back in 1943. An older brother patiently taught me how to read it and answered thousands of questions I peppered him with. "What does Cuchlamochree mean?" being just one example. Now, I do not want to give the impression that this book is for children. It is not \_not\_ for children, of course, but the subtle humor is probably lost on most children. Although I am surprised at how much I understood. Of course, I didn't read it just once. Barnaby was my best friend. I knew not to put gasoline into inner tubes because Mr. O'Malley already had--to absolute disaster.The character development is consistent throughout the strip, and the story is continuous, much like life is for any child. There are plenty of episodes in each of our lives, but the curtain does not go up and down around each. One blends with the next, past, present, future, in continuum. For Barnaby, the story does not stop when he goes to bed, it just continues. Time moves left-to right, but just as for a child, minutes aren't a real measure. They may be interminably long or infinitesimally short. Wonderful characters populate the strip, like the shaggy dog, Gorgon, who teaches himself new tricks, and tells anecdotes:"And then there's the one about the man who ordered a special cake and he was so fussy about the shape of it that he had it done over four times and when the baker said, "Now that it is finally okay, where shall I deliver this cake? ...The man said, "Oh, I'll eat it here."Barnaby's Fairy Godfather replies, "Yes. We've heard that one, too! Barnaby, isn't there some way we can make this shaggy dog stop telling his shaggy dog stories? I came here to tell you of..."While the dog begins another tale, Barnaby, who fixes most everything with more grace and pure good fortune than his Fairy Godfather can manage in magic, says, "This will stop him, Mr. O'Malley. Watch. PLAY DEAD, Gorgon!"While the dog plays dead, he still continues his stories, causing Mr. O'Malley to exclaim, "I came to tell you -- Say! This talking dog IS amazing...He out talks your Fairy Godfather!" (January 15, 1943)If you like comic strips, if you appreciate fine quiet humor, if you like marvelous character development, if you would like a glimpse of civilian life during the war years in America, buy and read this book. It is far easier than POGO, and just as smart. And the art is special, too.Now, I wonder, which of my parents thought it was a good idea for this book to be available to their five boys? It could not have been Mother...she didn't approve of Barnaby. My Father is still surprising me!0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy paterson davejust great and clever and i hope the fourth volume comes out soon

A legendary comic strip finally given the Fantagraphics treatment.Before authoring one of the most beloved childrens book series of all time Harold and the Purple Crayon cartoonist Crockett Johnson created the comic strip Barnaby for over ten years (1942 to 1952). Its subtle ironies and playful allusions never won a broad following, but the adventures

of 5-year-old Barnaby Baxter and his fairy godfather Jackeen J. O'Malley was and is a critical favorite. Fantagraphics will introduce the wonders of Barnaby to a new generation of children and parents alike. Co-edited by Johnson biographer Philip Nel (Dr. Seuss: American Icon) and Fantagraphics Associate Publisher Eric Reynolds, with art direction by graphic novelist Daniel Clowes (Ghost World), this five-volume Barnaby series will collect the entirety of the original newspaper strips from 1942-1952. The first volume will collect all the strips from 1942 and 1943. Barnaby revolved around a precocious five-year-old named Barnaby Baxter and his fairly godfather Jackeen J. O'Malley. Yet O'Malley, a cigar-chomping, bumbling con-artist and fast-talker, was not your typical protector. His grasp of magic was usually specious at best, limited to occasional flashes, often aided and abetted by his fellow members in The Elves, Leprechauns, Gnomes, and Little Mens Chowder Marching Society. Barnaby's deft balance of fantasy, political commentary, sophisticated wit, and elegantly spare images expanded our sense of what comic strips can do. With subtlety and economy, Barnaby proved that comics need not condescend to readers. Its small but influential readership took that message to heart. Black white with some color

From School Library Journal Gr 5 Up Originally published as a daily newspaper strip, albeit in small circulation, this collection introduces the daily expostulations and exasperations of preschooler Barnaby Baxter and his rotund, inappropriate fairy godfather. Mr. J.J. O'Malley uses his cigar as his magic wand and has a host of acquaintances from the magic world that casually abuts our own: a prankster leprechaun, a morose ghost, and other members of the Elves, Leprechauns, Gnomes, and Little Men's Chowder and Marching Society. The adventures are very much of the time in which they were written, with references to wartime rationing, scrap-metal drives, and machine politics, as well as many casual pop-culture allusions that may escape today's readers, but the chatty glossary at the back will help. The artwork is redolent of the ligne claire school, with little shading and with a slight stiffness to the characters' positioning. The humor can be a slow burn, immune to the gag-a-day requirements of many newspaper strips, with a cumulative effect causing an unexpectedly familiar chuckle every few pages and a sense of delight as the ever-expanding cast comes together en masse. Highly verbal and quietly unexpected, the strip is a clear antecedent of the sort of comic situations experienced by Calvin and Hobbes and the visuals predict Johnson's own Harold with his purple crayon, but with a peculiar picaresque aggregation as each story line tumbles almost imperceptibly into the next chaotic chapter. Cleverly absurd, with solid contextual reference material to aid readers. Benjamin Russell, Belmont High School, NH(c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. From Booklist \*Starred \* Crockett Johnson is best known today for his children's books, notably 1955's Harold and the Purple Crayon, but his paramount creation was the celebrated if obscure newspaper strip Barnaby, which, from its distinct visual look (minimalist, Thurberesque drawings; typeset word balloons) to its wry, understated humor, was unlike anything else ever to hit the comics page. When five-year-old Barnaby Baxter wishes for a fairy godfather, what he gets instead is Mr. O'Malley, a pint-size, minimally magical sprite sporting an overcoat, tiny pink wings, and an ever-present cigar (his fine Havana magic wand). These initial 20 months of strips also introduce other characters: Barnaby's concerned parents (who, naturally, never see their child's supernatural companion), his young friend Jane, Gorgon the talking dog, and Gus the ghost. Praised by the intelligentsia (Dorothy Parker called Barnaby and his cast members the most important additions to American arts and letters in Lord knows how many years) but never widely popular, the strip ran for a decade, from 1942 to 1952. There have been sporadic reprintings, but this effort, the initial installment in a five-volume series, is the first to collect it in its entirety. Even Mr. O'Malley couldn't conjure up a more welcome endeavor. --Gordon Flagg Crockett Johnson's Barnaby [is] one of the finest and most thought-provoking comic strips ever created. As expected, this book meets Fantagraphics's usual high standards for bringing the pen-and-ink classic comics back to life. - Michael Taube, The Washington Times A wonderful read with humor that stems from the tension between suburban expectations and a yearning for a more creative, magical way of living. - Johanna Draper Carlson, Comics Worth Reading