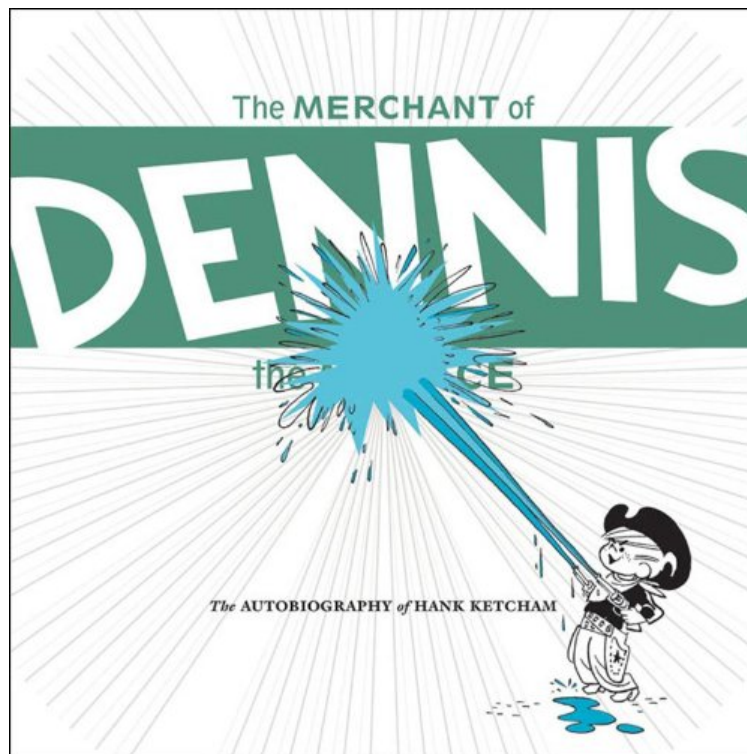


[Free] The Merchant of Dennis the Menace: The Autobiography of Hank Ketcham

The Merchant of Dennis the Menace: The Autobiography of Hank Ketcham

Hank Ketcham

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Hank Ketcham : The Merchant of Dennis the Menace: The Autobiography of Hank Ketcham before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Merchant of Dennis the Menace: The Autobiography of Hank Ketcham:

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Classic Cartoons, A Great Cartoonist, Needs a Reprint!By W. LanganI saw this book about 8 years ago at a college library. It features some of the best Dennis the Menace cartoons and tells of some of Hank Ketcham's real-life adventures (Hank is the author of the classic cartoon). Hank based the cartoon on himself and his real-life son, Dennis (He used to tell people "Our son Dennis is a real menace!"). If you look at some of the real-life family photos, you'll notice quite a resemblance between the Mitchell family and the Ketcham family! Hank Ketcham later took off to live in Europe in the 1960's (there's a hilarious cartoon that shows Mr. Wilson's delight that Dennis is going on a vacation but disappointed that his little nemesis will be returning!). Some of you may not understand a lot of what I'm talking about in this review and I guess you'd have to pick up a copy of The Merchant of Dennis the Menace to get a better idea of what I'm saying (which, unless this gets reprinted, many of you may never get the chance).11 of 23 people found the following review helpful. Superb collection of stylish, cold, empty Dennis artBy n0s4a2Hank Ketcham's cartoons are exquisite, absolutely lyrical, yet formula driven. This is the best collection of his work, and it is very instructive for aspiring cartoonists, because it shows a lot of

preliminary sketches and model sheets (similar to the development of animated films by Disney, where Ketcham worked for a time). Yet Ketcham was an artistic mediocrity with great technical facility but nothing genuine to say, and he was a stranger to his own family, especially to his son, Dennis. It's positively weird that Ketcham shows pictures of his son at age 5, the obvious inspiration for the successful strip, but after that HE PRETENDS HIS SON DOESN'T EVEN EXIST! I went through the book several times trying to find out the fate of the real Dennis, but he is simply ignored. Apparently, Ketcham's wife had psychological problems, the cartoonist divorced her and moved to Switzerland, never speaking to the boy again. Ketcham remarried, his former wife committed suicide, little Dennis came back from Vietnam with problems that he never fully overcame, and the two had no relationship beyond the stipend his father sent to keep him quiet. None of this is hinted at in Ketcham's book, which is strictly about how wonderful suburbia is, and how cute that little rascal Dennis is, and how Ketcham's career just went up and up and up. He made himself a wealthy man by selling the character every which way, eventually training assistants who gradually took over the drawing and writing, leaving Ketcham a rich, leisurely copyright owner. The gags have an artificial, frozen-in-the-fifties quality, and in all the years I have read it, it has never once been funny, thought provoking or connected to any real feelings. But the drawing of the characters and backgrounds was (when Ketcham did it personally) unsurpassed in its flowing simplicity, in its bold, unerring design. He was a true master, and his strip is still being produced, but it is just a meaningless commodity. I wonder where his son Dennis is today?

In this engaging memoir, the Dennis the Menace creator charmingly tells his own colorful story, with copious illustrations of his artistic development, a behind-the-scenes section, and his hand-picked favorite strips. Hank Ketcham, the self-styled "Merchant of Dennis," passed away in 2001 at the age of 81, but not before writing this engaging memoir. In this volume, the Dennis the Menace creator charmingly tells his own colorful story, starting when he was about "five-ana-half" and first picked up the "magic pencil." A child of the Great Depression from Seattle, Ketcham abandoned college for Hollywood, to pursue a dream of making drawings for Walt Disney films. Initially rebuffed at Disney, he persisted in huffing and puffing at the Mouse Factory door (all the while drawing "Andy Pandas, rabbits, squirrels, and monkeys" at Walter Lantz studio) until finally he was let inside to labor happily on Pinocchio, Bambi, Fantasia and a host of Donald Duck shorts. World War II intervened, but Photographer's Mate Ketcham was, nevertheless, able to resume his artistic career in the Navy, where, in Washington, D.C., he created cartoons for the War Bond program. Following the war, Ketcham developed into a successful freelancer, placing cartoons in The New Yorker, Saturday Evening Post and Collier's. Then one fateful day, his harried wife screamed at him that his son Dennis was a menace! That, of course, sparked an idea that subsequently was sold to a newspaper syndicate in the fall of 1950. Within a year, Dennis the Menace was up to a hundred daily subscribers—a figure that climbed steadily. The Merchant of Dennis the Menace not only traces the humorous adventures of Hank Ketcham—with copious illustrations of his artistic development from a kid with an early knack for copying cartoon characters to a mature and masterful artist of everyday life in the Mitchell and Wilson households—it also offers a special insight into the life and times of the half-pint "Menace." In one unique section, Ketcham takes us behind the scenes of Dennis and provides complete backgrounds for all the major characters, including their genealogies. We are also treated to official model sheets, in-depth analysis of each character's personality and motivations, and an exclusive peek at the private sketches that Ketcham referred to of rooms in the Wilson and Mitchell homes, their backyards, and the neighborhood. To top it all off, the book includes a dozen of Ketcham's hand-picked, all-time favorite strips.

About the Author Hank Ketcham was born in 1920 and created Dennis the Menace in 1950. He passed away in 2001.