



Explainers: The Complete Village Voice Strips (1956-1966)

Jules Feiffer

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The first of four volumes collecting Feiffer's landmark *Village Voice* strips.

"My aim was to take the Robert Benchley hero and launch him into the Age of Freud." ?Jules Feiffer

In 1956, a relatively unknown cartoonist by the name of Jules Feiffer started contributing a strip to the only alternative weekly published in the US, a small radical newspaper called *The Village Voice*. It was originally titled *Sick Sick Sick*, but Feiffer changed the name to, simply, *Feiffer*, because he got tired of explaining that the title referred to the society he was commenting on, not the nature of his humor, which, he insisted, was not sick.

Politically, the '50s was dominated by the insipid Presidency of Dwight D. Eisenhower; the backwash of Joe McCarthy; and the Cold War, which was in full swing. Culturally, the Beats were revolutionizing literature, Marlon Brando was changing the face of acting, and Elvis Presley was altering the public's perception of pop music. The post-war suburban bliss of the country was being challenged by sociologists and economists in books like *The Lonely Crowd*, *The Other America*, and *The Affluent Society*. The civil rights movement was gaining momentum. Camelot was just around the corner, and would be shattered by the assassinations of JFK, RFK, and MLK. The Vietnam War would polarize the country. It was into this scrambled political-cultural climate that Jules Feiffer flung himself full throttle for the next ten years.

His strip tackled just about every issue, private and public, that affected the sentient American: relationships, sexuality, love, family, parents, children, psychoanalysis, neuroses, presidents, politicians, media, race, class, labor, religion, foreign policy, war, and one or two other existential questions. It was the first time that the American public had been subjected to a weekly dose of comics that so uncompromisingly and wittily confronted individuals' private fears and society's public transgressions. *Explainers* is the first of four volumes collecting Feiffer's entire run of weekly strips from *The Village Voice*. This edition contains approximately 500 strips originally published between 1956 and 1966 in a brick-like landscape hardcover format.

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