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Gary Larson

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The Far Side Gallery is an anthology of Gary Larson's The Far Side comic strips, which were printed from 1982–1984.

The Far Side Gallery Details

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Author : Gary Larson

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From Reader Review The Far Side Gallery for online ebook

Brendan says

It's difficult not to rate a Far Side collection five stars. I grew up on these comics. It's hard thinking of a time I didn't know about their existence. However, now I am much more aware of the world and these comics strike me differently. There are jokes I get now that I didn't get as a child, or jokes I thought I get that I missed completely, not even mentioning the subtext of the strips that I completely glossed over. Great humor, great insight.

Chloe says

This book was the Best!! I loved reading all the different comics about different people.

Ronald says

Read, possibly in 1984.

Michael Finocchiaro says

There is nothing quite like Gary Larson's The Far Side. I class it up there with Bloom County and Calvin and Hobbes as the funniest commentaries on 20th C american life. Absurd truths abound and it is hard to stifle a laugh or a guffaw at Larson's wit and fantastic ideas. Another one to help forget the horrifying headlines of today's depressing world.

Bob Schmitz says

The day after the election I returned all my serious books to the library and picked up silly fiction. I could not bear to read anything serious when we had an orange-haired, racist, misogynist, lying, sexual predator who is proud of his lack of knowledge, etc, etc for our president.

So I picked up my son's Far Side Gallery and read it as my nighttime reading. Wonderful funny stuff. I am sorry Larson retired. I will be reading a lot more of his stuff over the coming months.

Mike (the Paladin) says

The odd and twisted world of Gary Larson, I miss his work. These stay on my shelves along with Charles Schultz work. These are two comics creators who's work stands up well to rereading. Schultz for humor and

wisdom, Larson for humor and....that odd perspective on life he gives us.

I have a couple of other cartoon books in my library, they tend to make me laugh and lighten my mood at times, but I think Larson and Schultz will be around as long as there is thought and introspection along with humor (and that is dying as I write this, but there are still a few).

Sarah Kelleher says

I have all the Far Side Galleries today because I stole them from my parents shelves when I was a kid... I poured over all of them a zillion times, each time I would "get" a few more of the cartoons.

Now I give them to my stepkids to read and they are the same way I was... they love looking at them, but don't exactly get them all. We sit in the living room and pass around the different books, pointing out funny ones to read, and they ask me about the ones that they don't get and I tell them whatever they need to know to get it, and they usually can figure it out and laugh and it is so much fun. It makes me happy to see this little 6 year old boy reading The Far Side and laughing his butt off. I feel like its going to add to their awesomeness. Now he's 8 and he always grabs a Far Side book to take with him on long car trips. He'll pick one up and say, "I think I need to do some reading," and this makes me smile.

Shannon says

I really like Larson's humor. Also. I'm surprised no one mentioned it but.. I found this collection to be very "dark". A lot of the humor I thought was quite morbid. Nothing wrong with that, of course, just a few times I was actually a bit surprised. It's not all light-n-fluffy puns.

Stephen says

5.0 stars. Without a doubt, the funniest (and most clever) cartoon series ever put on paper. Gary Larson is a comic genius.

A. Dawes says

Sometimes cynical, sometimes satirical, sometimes nonsensical, sometimes scathingly critical, sometimes wittingly observational, sometimes reflective, sometimes nostalgic, sometimes farcical .

Always delightful.

Jocelin says

Everytime I read this book it always makes me laugh. I LOVE Gary Larson. His comic strips are classic. I

am so sad that he no longer puts them out. If you are having a bad day pick up a Gary Larson book it will make you feel so much better.

Realini says

The Far Side Gallery by Gary Larson
Amusement and Uproarious fun for A Long Rainy Summer

The Far Side Gallery is hilarious, most of the time. There are jokes, lines that I did not get and others that are not my cup of tea...and we are talking about drawings here.

The uproarious parts make up for the tasteless, cryptic or hard to understand slices of a strange world, or is it Gallery at the Far Side. Come to think of it, we can't say we haven't been warned- we are invited at the "far side" of amusement and positivity, with dark undertones.

- Gary Larson is included in a top of best humor.
- Somewhere...
- I just do not remember where.

This is the way I read lately- if a book is included among the best, I go for it, with disappointing results sometimes. But it is all a matter of probability and professionalism.

The job of a critic is to tell you if a book is worthwhile or not. So you're better off looking for the acclaimed literature, than for Dan Brown.

- If you ask me
- But I am no professional.
- So we're back to square one.

The humor is weird, for the most part? Go ahead and write to me

- What is your opinion?

Take the first cartoon: two bears are under a bed. As I look again, they might be monsters, and a guy is in his bed, above them. The caption reads:

- "I've got it again, Larry...an eerie feeling like there's something on the top of the bed"

So either you feel amusement or you're just puzzled. I am a little perplexed which may just mean I am slow, do not dig or have no (or a miniscule) sense of humor.

The second is in the same vein- and do not worry, I am not taking you through all of the pages. It is probably a hope that writing it, I may make sense of the joke. Psychology proved that when we write down, we make more sense of things that seemed...well, crazy or pure aberrations.

And it worked!

Not because writing it, the lost significance just blew in my face, but because I now observe a lost detail. A guy has a scorpion on his face and there's another one on top of him, saying:

- Hold still, Carl...Don't...move...an...inch
- In the first place I saw no joke, but at a second look I see that Carl's friend has a rock in his hands, that will take care of the scorpion and of Carl's head. In the first instance I did not notice the rock.

Here is another that is as clear as daylight this time. On the two sides of the ravine we have some cowboys and on the other a group of Indians – we used to call them- and they are Native Americans in the politically correct formulation of the present. The future will definitely argue with this label: why Native Americans? There were no Americans to speak of when the Natives ruled supreme...

Between the two groups, there is a cowboy, with his head hanging on his chest, with about ten arrows sticking out of his apparently inert body- and we can assume he has another thirty in his back. One of the cowboys says:

- “Now stay calm...Let’s hear what they said to Bill”

This is one of the obvious, sadistic amusements –perhaps even a mental case study? It is plain what they said to Bill, who looks like he’s long gone to meet his Maker...in the words of Monty Python.

Amusement and humor are vital for our life satisfaction. In the Positive Psychology lectures at Harvard, humor is given a prominent role.

And we all know how good it feels to laugh. Not only that, but research has showed that we increase our satisfaction just by thinking about the comedy show that we will watch tonight.

The simple anticipation of an amusing moment makes us feel happier.

So there’s a happy thought for you: get this funny book and laugh out loud...at what you get, the unexplained or odd drawings can be ignored...and hey man, perhaps you get it all in and let me know about it or just say like the famous

Groucho Marx, who, upon leaving a party sometimes said:

- Thank you, I had a wonderful time...only not THIS TIME

Matt says

Wonderful. I grew up on these cartoons. My friend and I once made a tape (now lost to the ages, or taped over, same difference) of a fictional radio show where we verably acted out these vignettes and reported on them like they were real news. God bless Gary Larson, wherever he is...

Pramod Nair says

Gary Larson, the American cartoonist and his internationally syndicated cartoon series ‘*The Far Side*’ – syndicated in more than 1900 newspapers – are both legendary in the annals of newspaper cartoon arena. Collected into more than twenty books, Larson’s works, which got translated into seventeen languages, has sold about forty-five million copies worldwide. With a distinctive style of illustration and creatively loaded with surrealistic humor, his single-panel cartoon strips evoke laughter by inspecting the world through fresh perspective and finding inspiration from social and natural events and scenarios.

“**The Far Side Gallery**” is the first volume of a compilation of his comic strips, which were published from 1982 to 1984. Within these cartoon panels the reader can witness and enjoy portrayals of curious family scenes, social events, time warps into pre-historic worlds, human & animal relationships, observations of nature, clever role-reversals – *where roles of ‘humans and animals’ or ‘humans and monsters’ are switched* – with each panel evoking laughter by provoking the thought process.

Gary Larson & Far Side

Gary Larson was born in Washington in 1950 and started cartooning during the mid 70s. He evolved into a serious cartoonist when in 1980 some of his panels were accepted by “*San Francisco Chronicle*” and it was the birth of “*The Far Side*” series. Larson attributes the “*morbid sense of humor*” that his cartoon panels carry to his own family and the pranks that he and his older brother played while growing up. He continued with the series ended till his retirement in 1995.

The Far Side cartoons are composed on single comic panels – *in some cases split in to stamp sized small windows* – and makes use of ink strokes for illustrations. Text is presented either as footer captions or as speech bubbles and is often presented in a manner to fuse effortlessly with the illustration. The characters are often illustrated with a distorted, caricature feel and with a fine portrayal of expressions.

One of the recurring themes within these panels are situations which are made out of ‘*role-reversals*’ between animals, monsters and human beings or scenes in which the artist compare the behavioral attributes of animals to that of humans.

This can be seen in the two panels which I pick up for inspection: In one panel we can witness a mortally scared horse coming out of a movie theater after watching a show of “God Father” and his companion saying “*Get a hold of yourself... It was only a movie, for crying out loud*”. In another panel we see two scared monsters under a bed making this comment “*I’ve got it again, Larry... an eerie feeling like there’s something on top of the bed.*”

The art within the panels of ‘The far side’

The art and the text perfectly combines within these panels to create the perfect rendering of the yarn it narrates and the way in which the artist adds layers of meaning and details through some effortless & frugal pen strokes is truly amazing. The detailing in the art is very deep as the artist gives special care to even the microscopic aspects of the scene, which he depicts.

These cartoon panels travels between the realms of ‘*the real & the unreal*’ and evokes humor even from the portrayal of macabre. Larson’s eye for seeing the world through an unsullied perspective and coming up with illustrations that mock some of our forbidden views, while drenching the panels with dark humor is hugely refreshing to receive. The way in which he paints anthropomorphic creatures in his illustrations for representing his visions never feels exaggerated and connects quiet easily with the viewer.

Larson’s background in biology can be seen as a motivation behind the recurring illustrations of plant and animal life within these cartoon panes for conveying his views. He creates a warped montage staging animals, plants, insects and even monsters to generate strange but incredibly funny comic panels.

Some of the cartoon panels from Larson were controversial as they represented some of the concepts that were often thought of as taboos, but they had a cult following. This anthology, which brings his comic strips initially published as three smaller collections – *The Far Side, Beyond the Far Side & In Search of the Far Side* – can inspire and delight art & cartoon lovers. These cartoon strips are definite monuments in the pop culture scene. It is no wonder that, with his homage to natural history through his illustrations, which feature animal behaviors and studies on the evolution and extinction, a selection of his works were exhibited at *Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History*.

A side note on the lack of his works in public domain & lack of images within this review

Larson considered his works too personal and important to him and this is one reason why his cartoon panels cannot be found in the public domain.

“So, in a nutshell (probably an unfortunate choice of words for me), I only ask that this respect be returned, and the way for anyone to do that is to please, please refrain from putting The Far Side out on the Internet. These cartoons are my "children," of sorts, and like a parent, I'm

concerned about where they go at night without telling me. And, seeing them at someone's web site is like getting the call at 2:00 a.m. that goes, "Uh, Dad, you're not going to like this much, but guess where I am."

He asked the Internet users to refrain from compiling and posting his works online, in a public letter. [a full copy can be read [here](#)]

To draft a review on a compilation volume of comic strips in a convincing manner without the aid of a few samples of scanned images is a difficult task. But when the artist himself feels – *whatever may be the motive* – disdain in placing his works on public domain, I am respecting his views by refraining from using scanned comic panels of his works within this review.

Ronyell says

Introduction:

After reading "The Far Side Gallery 3," I was dying to check out more of Gary Larson's "Far Side Gallery" series and I stumbled upon a collection of Gary Larson's "Far Side Gallery" series in "The Far Side Gallery" (man, I am talking about the "Far Side Gallery" so much in this review)! Anyway, this collection of "Far Side Gallery" stories is just as memorable and hilarious as the "Far Side Gallery 3!"

What is this story about?

Basically, this "Far Side Gallery" collection contains comic strips from "The Far Side," "Beyond the Far Side," and "In Search of the Far Side" and the comic strips all contain hilarious situations that involve various animals and human beings.

What I loved about this story:

Gary Larson's writing: Gary Larson's writing is as usual hilarious and witty to read as the various characters in these comic strips are always making sarcastic comments about the situations they are thrown into. As usual, Gary Larson managed to make some of the puns such as "Hat Hunters" and "Water Buffaloes" come to life in a literal sense and I just rolled over laughing when I read these strips! Some of my favorite comic strips in this collection are:

"Big Bob says he's getting tired of you saying he doesn't really exist." (When the boy's imaginary friend grabs the boy's father roughly by the shirt).

"We've made it, Warren! ...The moon!" (When two astronauts landed on the moon, but one of the astronauts accidentally hit the other astronaut's helmet, cracking it).

The real reason dinosaurs became extinct (Showing the dinosaurs smoking cigarettes).

“For twelve perfect years I was a car-chaser. Pontiacs, Fords, Chryslers...I took them all on...and yesterday my stupid owner backs over me in the driveway.” (A dog tells another dog in heaven how his owner killed him with a car).

Gary Larson’s artwork: Gary Larson’s artwork as usual is hilarious to look at as the characters have exaggerated bodies such as their bodies being larger than their heads. I also loved how hilarious the artwork becomes during the collection’s most hilarious moments such as the artwork of the astronaut smashing another astronaut’s helmet after pronouncing that they are on the moon at last.

What made me feel uncomfortable about this story:

For anyone who feels uncomfortable about dealing with the concept of heaven and hell, there are a couple comic strips in this collection that deals with heaven and hell, although it is not as frequent as it was in the “Far Side Gallery 3.”

Final Thoughts:

Overall, “The Far Side Gallery” is a fantastic collection of Gary Larson’s best work in the “Far Side Gallery” series and anyone who is a huge fan of Gary Larson’s work in the “Far Side” series will easily enjoy this collection!

Review is also on: Rabbit Ears Book Blog

Thomas Strömquist says

A collection volume of Larson's classic (almost exclusively) one-frame comic cartoons. Unmistakable style and often both clever and funny. Many of these did not age too well though (or it's just that I've seen them too many times) and it's not a book or books I ever re-read nowadays.

Rich says

A single Far Side cartoon can evoke any number of reactions from people. Usually good ones (from the people I choose to hang out with, anyway.) A collection of Far Side cartoons has a totally different effect. When viewed side by side, for any extended length of time, the effect multiplies not just cumulatively, but *exponentially*. I have almost had to be hospitalized a number of times due to Far Side induced seizures. The first time I read this collection I needed an asthma inhaler by the time I got to the cartoon in which Dorothy and friends encounter the marathon runners on the YBR, and I don't even have asthma! I'm lucky to be alive.

Mitchell Hahn-Branson says

It's a pleasure to revisit early *Far Side* strips and see how much Larson's sense of humor has soaked into pop

culture. I don't remember the early '80s very well, but I'm guessing it was somewhat novel for a cartoonist to skew scenes of everyday life, both to create a completely bizarre alternate universe and to point out how profoundly strange and unsettling the real world was. Nowadays, it seems like most people—or most entertainers, at least—have just accepted that the world really is as odd as Larson always said it was, so some of his stuff now reads as the first iteration of a type of joke that has been made hundreds of times since: Rapunzel has an afro! Mathematicians cheer each other on like champion athletes! Here are some boomerangs having a domestic dispute!

But there's so much else in *The Far Side* that isn't dated at all, so many surreal little nuggets of wonderfulness, even some genuinely scary strips. Oh, yes, Larson was fond of dabbling in creeping horror, and very good at it. The expression on the face of a sentient tree in one panel is meant to be frightening, which it is. But the occasional creepy atmosphere never intrudes much on the fun. Mainly there's just the glee of just turning one more page to find out how much more hilarious weirdness one man can pack into a one-panel comic strip. Before you know it, you've read every single one, and now you're not sure if you should put a hand in your mailbox again for fear of being eaten. Is that a person ringing your doorbell, or a cow?

Good night, sleep tight, don't let the bed buffaloes bite.

Donna Davis says

I can't believe I am writing a review for this; it's sort like being handed an essay assignment titled "What Does Funny Mean to Me?" I suspect the king of the dark and biological cartoon, Gary Larson, has been under-reviewed because his work, which was prodigious and searingly funny until the well ran dry rather suddenly, was primarily done in the 1980's and 90's. Whatever.

My first Larson cartoon reached me by mail. My BFF back home in the Pacific Northwest sent it to me with a card at Christmas when I was living in the Midwestern USA. It had the illustration of two polar bears in a sort of conversational position over the top of an igloo. One of them, who had taken a bite from the top of the igloo, told the other that he just loved these things...crunchy, but with a chewy center.

Horror and hilarity were so wonderfully mingled! I had given birth to 3 children in four years, and was staying home all day. I hadn't had a good laugh that wasn't baby talk in a long time. I smacked it on the front of the refrigerator and snickered every day for a week.

I hope the cartoonist got filthy, stinking rich, and I hope he invested wisely.

Philip says

I wish I could post my favorite Far Side from the book... I don't want to risk violating a batrillion copyright laws though.

Honest Abe at a podium reading:

"and so, the bartender says, Hey! That's not a duck!" (Wait for laughter)

Four score and seven years ago,..."

I think of that cartoon all the time. Sometimes I'll just randomly say, "Wait for laughter..." thinking about it.

I've decided to go through all my Far Side Gallery books. ...Larson is clutch. Twisted. But clutch.
