



Where's Dennis? The Magazine Cartoon Art of Hank Ketcham

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A collection of pre-*Menace* cartoons from the Merchant of Dennis.

Although best known as one of the greatest syndicated cartoonists of the twentieth century, *Dennis the Menace* creator Henry "Hank" Ketcham also spent nearly a decade as a gag cartoonist for major New York magazines like *Colliers* and the *Saturday Evening Post*. In these gag cartoons, which were primarily published between 1942 and 1950, one can already see the endearing troublemaker that would become the protagonist in his long-running strip. (In fact, in his *Dennis the Menace* cartoons, Ketcham reused some of the gags and images almost verbatim.) Influenced by Virgil Partch and other artists he met during his early days at Disney animation and as an artist banging on doors in New York, Ketcham's trademark visual humor and unerring line work are also very evident in these pre-Dennis cartoons.

Like many young cartoonists of his era, Ketcham spent much of WWII drawing. As a Navy man, he created food conservation and "Jap-bashing" posters during the day, and at night, he moonlighted as a magazine gag cartoonist producing primarily war-themed gag cartoons, including the regular feature "Half Hitch" for the *Saturday Evening Post*. At the end of his tour, he turned down a chance to return to a guaranteed job at Disney. As it turned out, the siren song of magazine cartooning, which at the time was considered one of the pinnacles of the applied arts, proved just too strong. For the next five years, he was a regular contributor to *True*, *Colliers*, and the *Saturday Evening Post*. On the rare occasion, he even made it into *The New Yorker*, whose ranks at the time included Peter Arno, James Thurber, and Charles Addams.

Collected for the first time are hundreds of Ketcham's long forgotten magazine cartoons. Together they provide a rare glimpse into what would later become one the most beloved comics to grace the comics pages. Illustrated throughout with color and black-and-white cartoons and drawings

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