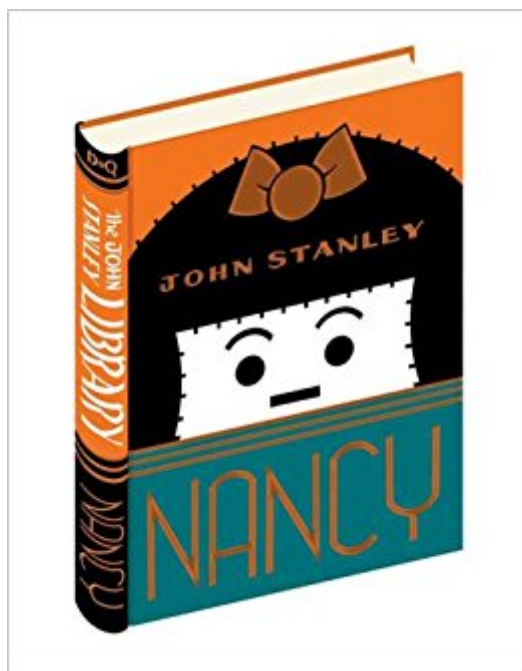


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# Nancy: Volume 1: The John Stanley Library



## Synopsis

Classic comics from the writer of Melvin Monster Created by Ernie Bushmiller, the beloved Brillo-headed Nancy starred in her own comic book series for years, written by arguably the greatest children's comics writer of all time, John Stanley. Most famous for scripting the adventures of Marjorie Henderson Buell's Little Lulu, John Stanley is one of comics' secret geniuses. He provided a visual rough draft for all the comics he wrote and then handed off these "scripts" for someone else to render the finished art. No matter what comic he was writing, he breathed life into his characters. In Stanley's comics, Nancy is no longer a crabby cipher but a hilarious, brilliant, scheming, duplicitous, honest, and loyal little kid-a real little kid. Her adventures with her best friend, the comically destitute Sluggo, involve moneymaking schemes to afford ice-cream sodas, botched trips to the corner store for Nancy's Aunt Fritzzi, and comically raucous attempts to remove loose teeth. Drawn & Quarterly is launching several kid-friendly volumes of Nancy and Nancy and Sluggo as companion volumes to Melvin Monster and Dark Horse's Little Lulu volumes. The books are designed by Seth (The Complete Peanuts; Melvin Monster; Clyde Fans; It's a Good Life, If You Don't Weaken).

## Book Information

Hardcover: 152 pages

Publisher: Drawn and Quarterly (September 15, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 189729977X

ISBN-13: 978-1897299777

Product Dimensions: 8 x 0.8 x 11.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars 10 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #732,577 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #121 in [Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Publishers > Drawn and Quarterly](#) #1153 in [Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Graphic Novels > Literary](#) #2074 in [Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Comic Strips](#)

## Customer Reviews

Grade 5 Up [Nancy and her pal Sluggo](#) were popular characters in the mid-20th century, and this volume collects their escapades from the years 1957-1958. Designed by the critically acclaimed comics creator Seth, this full-color collection is beautifully packaged with a hardcover

binding and heavy, tan-colored pages. These facts, along with certain elements of the content, make this book more likely to appeal to comics collectors and Nancy fans than to contemporary kids. Certainly her high jinks will still entertain, but, like many children's classics, changing social mores and customs, such as the fact that much of the humor stems from Sluggo's extreme poverty and resulting lack of education, mean that it will not have the same appeal it once did, and will leave some parents frowning. In the end, this is an elegant collection, lovingly assembled, that may find new fans but will more likely please the old ones.

—Douglas P. Davey, Halton Hills Public Library, Ontario, Canada Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

In 1957, as Stanley was ending his long run writing Little Lulu, he began work on the comic-book incarnation of an even better-known moppet, the star of Ernie Bushmiller's newspaper strip, Nancy. In Stanley's hands, Nancy is little more than a joke-delivery device for Bushmiller's feisty lass much like Lulu. The supporting characters also have analogues in Lulu. Sluggo is a slender but poor Tubby, pesky neighbor kid Pee Wee is Nancy's Alvin, and the bully Spike is a one-boy West Side Gang. Stanley's Nancy lacks the appeal of his Lulu, though, largely because of Gormley's pedestrian art (which does, however, evoke Bushmiller's brutally unadorned approach). It's not surprising that the liveliest stories involve a new character Stanley created, the eerie proto-goth Oona Goosepimple, who lives in a haunted house with her Addams Family-like clan. Stanley's Nancy isn't as lively as the original comic books he'd soon create for Dell Comics (e.g., Melvin Monster), but what it lacks in cartooning verve it partially makes up for in quiet charm. --Gordon Flagg

I love having the four volumes of Nancy comics. It was part of my childhood and it just delights me to read them! Oona Goosepimple influenced my life!

Beautiful hardcover edition. All pages are fullcolor perfect reproductions of the great originals. But once again, WHERE ARE THE ORIGINAL COVERS??? Someone at Drawn and Quarterly is messing up all this John Stanley collection. So please, in the next volumes, PLEASE, DON'T FORGET TO INCLUDE THE ORIGINAL COVERS!!! PLEASE!

it was what i expected and it was a gift and the person loved it.

My wife's childhood favorite. I got 5 stars for the book as a Christmas present. Now she has other Nancy books on her list....

I was so disappointed buy this book! Not only doesn't it include the Nancy covers, but for some reason the lay-out person decided to print the Nancy pages on the most awful beige/orange kitschy fake old paper, which makes the drawings look like mud. Then he added a new, Nancy inspired, cover and designs (like a print of her skirt covering two pages) which I would say is irreverent. Why not use one of the original covers for the cover and respect the original work by printing it on normal paper?

To start on an ominous note: a number of people appear to have the wrong idea about the issue numbers and dates for this volume. The title page says that the book contains stories from Dell NANCY #146-150 (1957-58). In searching out appropriate screen grabs for the blog post, however, I found an electronic copy of the first story, "Oona Goosepimple," complete with original Dell indicia -- and, guess what, it first appeared in NANCY #162 (April 1959). Wikipedia, and the estimable Don Markstein, come closer than D&Q, but they miss the target as well, with each citing NANCY #166 as the site of Oona's debut. So both the Internet and the "dead tree peddlers" struck out in this case. Actually, the first appearance of the Wednesday Addams-like Oona highlights an important point about Stanley's approach to Ernie Bushmiller's characters. Having pretty much burned out on LITTLE LULU, Stanley was probably delighted to put a new set of "Lulu-esque" characters through their paces. The fact that Nancy, Sluggo, and company were well-established figures in a popular, long-running comic strip, however, must have given the creator some pause. Lulu, who began her career as a pantomime character in gag cartoons, had had plenty of room for development when Stanley began to flesh out her neighborhood. Nancy and Sluggo may have had shallow, uninspired personalities, but Stanley must have felt that he needed to hew to them, at least for a while, as he settled down to his task. One can therefore regard the eccentric Oona's appearance as something of a "sowing of the wind" with an eye towards reaping a later "whirlwind" of story possibilities. The rest of the early stories in this collection are fairly unremarkable, making Oona -- a black-clad girl with beady eyes who gives everyone around her a case of nerves and lives in a spooky house with a surprise (usually of the nasty variety) around every corner -- stand out all the more starkly. Once Stanley gets his feet under him, he begins to pull Nancy and Sluggo in directions the unimaginative Bushmiller would never have contemplated (though Dan Gormley's art, if a bit more unpredictable

than Bushmiller's, does give the comics the same stodgy look as the comic strip). You can see it coming when Stanley devotes an entire one-page gag to sending up Liberace in the person of "La Plunke," an impresario with a rhinestone-studded piano. For panel after panel, Nancy makes bitchy comments about La Plunke's talents, or lack thereof, climaxing by claiming that La Plunke, and not his piano, should be "hung" when she sees the latter getting lowered out of the stage door. Nancy's remarks scandalize her Aunt Fritzi a bit, which seems only right, as Nancy's relationship with her aunt is a lot more abrasive than Lulu's with her parents. Perhaps Stanley thought that Fritzi's not being Nancy's mother gave him a bit more leeway. Likewise, after treating Sluggo as a generic boy character in earlier stories, Stanley takes Bushmiller's notion of Sluggo as a "dead-end kid" and runs with it. In "Lower Education," Nancy forces Sluggo to go to school but thinks better of it after Sluggo starts fantasizing about using his education to become President. She ultimately convinces the janitor to keep Sluggo in the basement and have him sweep floors. Tubby may have played hooky on occasion, but the existence of parental figures in the LITTLE LULU "universe" wouldn't have allowed for this sort of a cynical resolution. Stanley's innovations in handling the NANCY characters didn't prevent him from borrowing liberally from the LULU "template." Rich kid Rollo Haveall is basically Wilbur van Snobbe, take two, while the crook Bill Bungle (aka Bill Bungler, aka Bill Bumble -- perhaps Bill's incompetence was catching) reflects Stanley's apparent delight in using an adult figure who is hopelessly inept at his supposed specialty, a la the truant officer Mr. McNabber in the LULU stories. If the NANCY stories -- even at their best -- fall a little short of the quality of the LULU oeuvre, then one reason may be the lack of a strong "bench" of supporting players. In the stories collected here, at least, Nancy has no "girl sidekick" to compare with Lulu's Annie; eager though Oona is to make friends and do things with Nancy, she's essentially a walk-on oddball. Likewise, the annoying neighbor kid Pee Wee isn't nearly as memorable (or annoying) as Alvin of "Story Telling Time" fame. Given the raw materials that he had to work with, however, Stanley's NANCY tales are unexpectedly fun and entertaining. The last page of this volume has a picture of John Stanley (in the company of his editor Oscar LeBeck, Dan Gormley, and other worthies at Western's New York office) and a brief biography -- which just happens to be the same one that appeared at the end of the earlier MELVIN MONSTER collection. What this Library really needs is a volume-by-volume, bit-by-bit biography of Stanley in the manner of the articles that appeared in Another Rainbow's LITTLE LULU LIBRARY. As long as Fantagraphics keeps reprinting the same two-page Charles Schulz bio in THE COMPLETE PEANUTS, though, I suppose it would be somewhat hypocritical of me to complain about D&Q dropping the ball.

I am very pleased that Drawn and Quarterly Publishing is making many of John Stanley's lesser known works available to readers who have neither the time or money to chase down the original comics. While I enjoyed the Melvin Monster and Thirteen Going on Sixteen collections, the Nancy comics I've read so far have been underwhelming. I guess the main difference is that Dan Gormley suffers in comparison to Little Lulu artist Irving Tripp. Also, the stories just seem like second-class Lulu stories; the joy and verve and outsized personalities of the world of Lulu just aren't there. That being said, the stories were pleasant enough and better than most humor comics being published today. I recommend this volume but for hardcore Stanley fans only.

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