



Good Grief: The Story of Charles M. Schulz

By Rheta Grimsley Johnson

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An American icon, brilliant and notoriously private, Charles Schulz is a fascinating paradox. He owns an ice arena, a plane, and is a regular on Forbes' list of top money makers--yet his roots are firmly planted in the snows of St. Paul and the preachings of the church. This fully authorized portrait explores the Peanuts creator's extraordinary life.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The popular cartoonist who distills shrewd psychological insights in Peanuts emerges in this authorized biography as a shy man who suffers from chronic depression and agoraphobia, weighs his words carefully and talks much like his comic-strip characters. Johnson, a syndicated columnist, sketches Schulz's boyhood in St. Paul, where his father ran a barber shop. She links his unhappy first marriage, his sense of futility and his deep religiosity to Peanuts' exploration of themes such as rejection, loss, longing and the nobility of pursuing goals despite near-certain defeat. She interviews Donna Wold, Schulz's unresponsive early love, who inspired "the little red-headed girl" of his strips. Johnson also offers superficial analyses of Snoopy, Charlie Brown, Lucy and the rest of the gang. Devotees will probably enjoy this innocuous, flattering bio, even though it circles around Schulz without deeply penetrating his inner life. 50,000 first printing; \$50,000 ad/promo.

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From Library Journal

This biography of cartoonist Schulz coincides with the 40th anniversary of the "Peanuts" comic strip. Apparently Schulz's work is semi-autobiographical, so this book draws parallels between his life and incidents and characters in the strip. The author belabors Schulz's chronic depression and describes him as having an "aura of anonymity." An overabundance of detail and digression clutter this work, and the book's structure and purpose is not always apparent. But perhaps the book's main problem is that "Schulz is a loser, of the vulnerable, lovable Charlie Brown variety," and that is just not the stuff of which interesting biographies are made. Despite the book's weaknesses, however, the popularity of "Peanuts" will probably create some demand.

- *Annie Davis, Technology Training Assocs., Cambridge, Mass.*

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Users Review

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Valerie Gray:

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