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Alas, E.C. Segar, arguably the funniest cartoonist to ever lay ink on paper, died at the age of 44, leaving less that a decade's worth of strips featuring his immortal creation Popeye _ so this sixth volume of Segar's Popeye is in fact the final one, enabling collectors to add the last "E" to the P-O-P-E-Y-E spelled out on the spines of Fantagraphics' smashing collection.

This final volume starts off in grand style with "Mystery Melody," featuring the terrifying return of the shape-shifting Sea Hag. Olive Oyl, Wimpy, Poop-deck Pappy, the Jeep, the newly domesticated Goon, and Toar all appear in this four-month epic, as does Bolo, the latest in Segar's cast of massive Popeye opponents.

Other stories include the melodramatic "A Sock for Susan's Sake" (Popeye becomes the protector of a girl who lives on the streets), Popeye's boxing duel with King Smacko, the return of Thimble Theatre's original star Castor Oyl as a detective who solves the case of "Plastic Pan," the Poopdeck Pappy yarn "Wild Oats" (culminating in a six-month prison sentence for the rambunctious oldster), "The Valley of the Goons" (in which Popeye is shocked to discover who the new leader of the Goons is), and the self-explanatory "King Swee'Pea."

And that's just the dailies! Popeye, Volume 6, also includes 62 splendid full-page full-color Sundays, featuring further adventures of Popeye and an epically surreal six-month interplanetary voyage for Sappo, the star of Popeye's "top strip." The supplementary features include two historical articles by Popeye expert Rick Marschall (one on Popeye's translation to the world of licensing and merchandising, and one on Segar's place in comics and pop culture history), an illustrated Segar-written biography of Popeye originally serialized in newspapers of the time, and more rare art and photos. 80 pages of full-color and 86 pages of black-and-white comics

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