

Marge's Little Lulu Vol. 1 No. 61 – July 1953



Front Cover Observations

Marge's Little Lulu Vol. 1 No. 61 (July 1953)

Overall Scene & Composition

- The cover features two illustrated children wearing folded paper pirate hats standing beside a freshly dug hole in the ground.
- A small black dog stands at the edge of the hole facing a white bone resting at the bottom.
- A mound of dirt appears behind the children, indicating digging activity.
- A slip of paper labeled "Treasure Map" lies on the ground near the excavation.
- The Dell Comics logo is displayed in the upper-left corner with the price "10¢" printed at the upper-right.
- The title "Little Lulu" appears across the top in large red script with the red "Marge's" banner above it.

Condition & Surface Characteristics

- Light age toning is visible across the off-white background with scattered small surface marks.
- The spine shows moderate wear including stress lines, slight abrasions, and minor tearing along the fold.
- Edge wear is present along all sides with slight corner rounding and small creases, especially near the lower portion.
- Light surface rubbing is visible in multiple background areas.
- A small handwritten notation appears near the upper margin above the title area.

Color & Printing Quality

- Reds, blues, and blacks retain strong saturation and appear evenly printed.
- Linework remains sharp throughout the artwork with no significant misregistration.
- The skull-and-crossbones details printed on the paper hats appear clear and well-defined.
- Background color remains consistent despite visible age toning.

Paper Condition

- Light edge toning is present along all margins, consistent with Golden Age newsprint.
- The paper surface appears smooth with no staining or moisture rippling visible.
- No tears, chips, or missing material are present on the cover sheet.

Overall Impression

A well-preserved Golden Age front cover with strong color integrity, moderate spine and edge wear, light creasing, and typical surface aging. Artwork remains clear and visually appealing.

Back Cover Observations

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Overall Scene & Composition

- The back cover presents a full-page Wheaties advertisement built as a sequence of illustrated baseball scenes arranged in comic-panel format.
- The top section features a portrait of a baseball player identified through printed text as "Ferris Fain," alongside additional figures shown in a locker-room setting.
- Multiple rectangular panels below depict baseball actions including bunting, fielding, running, tagging, and a double-play turn.
- Dialogue balloons throughout the panels convey a narrative centered on teamwork, strategic play, and athletic performance.
- A Wheaties cereal box illustration is included in the lower portion of the page as part of the promotional message.

Condition & Surface Characteristics

- Light age toning is visible across the entire back cover.
- Moderate edge wear is present along all margins, with small surface rubs and minor nicks especially along the bottom edge.
- Creasing is visible in isolated areas, including the upper-left and lower-right sections.
- The spine edge shows vertical wear with slight abrasions and a few small stress marks.
- Small scattered marks are visible in lighter background areas but do not obscure any printed details.

Color & Printing Quality

- Colors remain strong and vivid throughout the advertisement, including bright reds, yellows, blues, and greens.
- Printed linework is crisp and well-defined across all panels with no noticeable misregistration.
- Text within dialogue balloons and promotional blocks appears sharp and evenly printed.
- Shading and halftone areas retain consistent density with only minimal fading.

Paper Condition

- Mild oxidation is present around the outer margins, typical of aging Golden Age newsprint.
- The paper surface appears smooth with no visible stains or moisture rippling.
- No tears, chips, or missing sections are visible.

Overall Impression

A clean and structurally stable back cover advertisement showing strong color integrity, sharp printing, and moderate but typical age wear along edges and spine.

Inside Pages Observations

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Inside Page – Set 1



Overall Scene & Composition

- The page is arranged in a six-panel grid depicting two children at a beach-like setting interacting with an umbrella, a geyser-like water spout, and eventually a whale emerging from the water.
- Early panels show the children experimenting with the umbrella and exploring the unusual landscape.
- Mid-sequence panels depict the whale surfacing and the children reacting to its sudden appearance.
- Final panels show the children clinging to the whale as it moves toward shore.

Condition & Surface Characteristics

- Page shows moderate oxidation with tan aging visible throughout.
- Small scattered dark specks appear along margins.
- Gutter edge shows darkening and minor stress lines but no tearing.
- Corners appear rounded but intact.

Color & Printing Quality

- Colors remain strong, especially reds, greens, and blues.
- Linework appears crisp with stable panel borders.
- No significant misregistration is visible.

Paper Condition

- Uniform oxidation present across full sheet.
 - No tears, chips, or moisture ripples observed.
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Inside Page – Set 2

AND SHE KEPT HER EYES COVERED EVEN AFTER HE CAME SAFELY DOWN TO THE GROUND!

THIS IS THE WORST PART OF IT!

SHE DIDN'T WANT TO SEE THE BEAUTIFUL LITTLE BAREBACK RIDER REWARD HIM WITH A KISS!

SMACK!

ONE DAY ON HER WAY TO THE BIG TENT TO WATCH THE LITTLE BOY PERFORM, THE LONELY LITTLE GIRL DECIDED THAT SHE WOULD BE THE ONE TO REWARD THE LITTLE BOY THAT DAY.

I CAN'T THINK OF ANY REASON WHY I CAN'T BE THE ONE!

SHE WAITED PATIENTLY WHILE THE LITTLE BOY WENT THROUGH HIS ACT...

WHEN SHE KNEW BY THE CROWD'S APPLAUSE THAT HE WAS SAFELY ON THE GROUND, SHE UNCOVERED HER EYES AND RUSHED TOWARD HIM...

NOW! YA-A-A-Y!

BUT THE LITTLE BOY SAW HER COMING AND RAN AWAY AS FAST AS HE COULD!

HEY!

SHE MIGHT HAVE CAUGHT HIM, BUT, JUST IN TIME, HE SQUEEZED THROUGH THE BARS OF THE LIONS' CAGE!

WHEW! I'M SAFE!

THE CROWD ROARED AS THE LITTLE GIRL WAS CHAGED OUT OF THE TENT BY A CLOWN...

WAP! WAP! WAP! WAP!

Overall Scene & Composition

- This page presents a circus-themed storyline in an eight-panel grid, featuring a small performer repeatedly approaching various circus settings including a ring, stage, and trapeze act.
- A sequence of chase-style panels occurs as the performer reacts to another character's presence.
- The final panels show a comedic escape into a barred cage and a clown finishing the scene.

Condition & Surface Characteristics

- Heavy oxidation present along all edges with darker toning near the gutter.
- Small abrasions appear near panel borders.
- Minor creasing near the upper margin.
- Surface shows small dirt flecks typical of age.

Color & Printing Quality

- Reds, yellows, and blues remain vibrant.
- Linework remains sharp with no blurred areas.
- Halftone shading holds consistent density.

Paper Condition

- Strong oxidation with no structural tearing.
 - No chipping detected along edges.
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Inside Page – Set 3

Overall Scene & Composition

- The page begins a new story titled "The Earwich," arranged in a six-panel grid.
- Panels depict two children at the beach interacting with sand, towels, and small objects.
- Dialogue balloons carry the humorous exchange as the sequence progresses with food-related jokes.
- A lunch pail and beach setting appear prominently in multiple panels.

Condition & Surface Characteristics

- Page is uniformly browned with heavier toning at outer margins.
- Small surface abrasions appear near the lower right corner.
- Spine area shows rust migration shadows but no tearing.

Color & Printing Quality

- Color palette remains strong, particularly blues and pinks.
- Lettering is clear throughout with no smearing.
- Panel outlines remain sharp.

Paper Condition

- Oxidation heavy but fibers intact.
 - No brittleness cracking observed at edges.
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Inside Page – Set 4

Overall Scene & Composition

- A six-panel layout depicting a child leaving a group, interacting with other children, and observing a storefront window.
- The narrative includes dialogue balloons involving group dynamics and a planned scheme involving a handbag store display.
- Backgrounds include grass, trees, walkways, and storefront interiors.

Condition & Surface Characteristics

- Oxidation apparent across full page, heavier along right margin.
- Minor crease visible at lower center panel.
- Gutter darkening present with subtle stress lines.

Color & Printing Quality

- Strong color retention in character clothing and background elements.
- Printed lines remain clean and consistent.
- No misregistration or ink spread detected.

Paper Condition

- Heavy age toning yet structurally sound.
 - No tears or missing material present.
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Overall Impression – Inside Pages

A cohesive interior sequence with strong remaining color, heavy but typical Golden Age oxidation, stable page edges, intact panel borders, and no major structural defects. The interior remains flexible and fully readable across all examined pages.

Spine Observations

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Overall Setting & Perspective

- The comic is positioned horizontally on a white wire rack, photographed from a low side-angle that reveals the spine profile and how the cover rests against the interior pages.
- The front cover extends slightly over the rack's upper surface, allowing an unobstructed view of the spine area.

Spine Shape & Alignment

- The spine appears straight with no visible lean or spine roll.
- A shallow natural curvature is present, typical for a saddle-stitched Golden Age comic resting under light pressure.
- The book lies evenly on the rack, indicating no twisting or warping along the spine.

Spine Surface Condition

- Light abrasions and small areas of color loss are visible along the fold, especially toward the center and lower spine area.
- Micro-creases and stress lines run vertically along the fold, consistent with normal handling over time.
- Ink wear is visible where the cover artwork meets the spine fold.

Staple Zone Condition

- Staples are not visible in this angle, but subtle impressions along the spine indicate their underlying position.
- No swelling, tearing, or raised areas suggestive of staple pulling or detachment are visible.
- No rust staining is visible from this angle.

Cover Attachment & Flex Points

- The cover lies fully flush against the interior pages with no lifting or separation along the spine.
- Mild flex stress marks appear near the midpoint, though the spine remains structurally intact.
- No evidence of splitting or weakness is visible along the fold.

Edge & Corner Wear

- The lower spine corner shows light rounding and minor rubbing.
- The upper spine corner exhibits mild wear but remains fully intact.
- Edge wear along the spine is moderate and typical for a 1953 Dell comic.

Overall Impression

A stable and well-preserved spine showing light to moderate age wear, intact structural alignment, no visible roll, and securely attached cover. The spine condition is consistent with a gently handled Golden Age comic and shows no signs of detachment or structural failure.

Staples Observations

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Upper Staple Area



- The upper staple zone shows a **significant tear in the cover paper**, exposing raw fibers along the fold.
- The tear widens horizontally across the spine fold, indicating **paper failure caused by mechanical stress**.
- Surrounding paper shows **abrasion, fraying, and color loss**, most visible where the fold meets the adjacent artwork.
- The staple itself is **not visible**, suggesting it may be recessed or covered by the remaining paper layer.
- The damaged area displays **compression and crumpling**, consistent with repeated flexing or historical pressure on the spine.

Lower Staple Area



- The lower staple is **visible and seated tightly** within the fold.
- Mild rusting is present, seen as **darkening around the staple metal**.
- Stress lines and fine creases radiate outward from the staple entry point, consistent with **normal aging and handling wear**.
- There is **minor discoloration** around the staple zone, but no major tearing or breaks in the cover paper.
- The surrounding spine area shows **light abrasion and small surface wrinkles**.

Overall Impression

Staple areas display **mixed condition**, with the upper staple zone showing notable structural damage including tearing and fiber exposure, while the lower staple remains firmly seated with only mild rust and stress wear. Despite the upper-side tear, the cover retains functional attachment and the spine remains structurally coherent for a 1953 Golden Age comic.

Brittleness Test Observations

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Overall View of the Test

- The image shows the lower-outer corner of an interior page being gently lifted by hand, allowing clear assessment of paper flexibility.

Page Flex Response

- The page forms a smooth, shallow curve when lifted, indicating **retained flexibility** rather than fracture-prone rigidity.
- No cracking, flaking, or audible snap is visible, even at the lifted edge.
- The bend remains continuous without hard angular breaks, supporting a **non-brittle** classification.

Color & Oxidation Indicators

- The paper displays **heavy uniform oxidation**, presenting a deep tan color typical of aged mid-century newsprint.
- The underside of the page is darker, showing long-term lignin oxidation but not crossing into fiber failure.
- No localized dark stains or moisture effects are present.

Surface Texture & Fiber Condition

- The surface appears dry and matte, lacking gloss but showing no powdering or flaking.
- Edge fibers remain intact; no micro-tears or splintering appear at the lifted corner.
- Overall texture suggests **advanced aging** but **not yet brittle**.

Mechanical Stress Behavior

- The page resists bending slightly but maintains cohesion, indicating **late-stage oxidation with partial flexibility**.
- No whitening lines, which would indicate fiber breakage, are visible during the lift.
- The page's behavior suggests it is near the brittle threshold but has not crossed it.

Overall Impression

A heavily oxidized but **still flexible** interior page. The paper shows advanced aging, dryness, and darkened tone but **has not become brittle**, demonstrating enough structural resilience to pass a gentle corner-lift brittleness test without cracking.