



## Angels and Magpies: Love and Rockets, Book 13

**Jaime Hernandez**

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*Hernandez's heartbroken and heartbreaking misfits are sure to capture audience attention.*

Jaime Hernandez's *Angels and Magpies* collects stories from three of the artist's comic series, crisscrossing narratives for surprises and character developments rich with insight on memory, relationships, and self-worth.

Women are at the foundation here—particularly Maggie, a Mexican-American from California who takes center stage in all three collections. In “The Love Bunglers,” Hernandez connects her trials and tribulations from childhood to old age, particularly related to her on-again, off-again relationship with Ray. In “God and Science,” Maggie is viewed through a fantasy lens as she plays sidekick to a kooky cast of female superheroes.

Illustrations are reminiscent of “good girl” art, in which women characters are drawn as exaggerated sexual objects, complete with oversized chests and undersized waists. Yet the retro style is paired with a progressive portrayal of women that consistently blurs the lines around traditional gender roles. For instance, well-coiffed Maggie is a gifted mechanic, and her friends are respected wrestlers and muscle-bound superheroes.

*Angels and Magpies* portrays the passage of time in a realistic manner despite the constraints of the medium. Flashbacks are not introduced in the text; they suddenly disrupt the narrative, mimicking memories' sudden emergence in real life. For instance, in “The Love Bunglers,” in the midst of Maggie and Ray's interaction as adults, a two-page spread of wordless panels conveys both characters' lives from childhood on. The abrupt visual montage successfully underscores the weight of the current drama, trusting the audience to make sense of the disruption.

Sometimes disturbing, often darkly comic, and always entertaining, Hernandez's collections are full of heartbroken and heartbreaking misfits sure to capture audience attention. With its overtly sexually scenes, nudity, and violent episodes, *Angels and Magpies* will push the limits for some readers. But paired with the collection's delicate treatment of characters' past and present traumas, such scenes simply add to the book's overall reflections on what makes life endurable—or not.

AMANDA MCCORQUODALE (January/February 2018)

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