

Lucky Penny

Ananth Hirsh

Yuko Ota

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Lucky Penny features a young woman who's on her own, but hasn't quite figured life out yet. It seems Penny's luck is all bad, as she loses her job and her apartment, and ends up living in a storage unit and working at the local laundromat. She develops a romantic interest in a young man who works at the gym nearby, and trades barbs with the twelve-year-old who runs the laundromat for his parents. There's also a bit of suspense when Penny's storage unit is broken into, but despite the plot twists, this graphic novel succeeds on the ability of Ananth Hirsh and Yuko Ota to bring Penny and the other characters to life in a simple, quirky, charming way. Ota has worked on a long list of publications, and she shows an expert hand in visual storytelling. She draws Penny's eyes using a myriad of styles: huge and watery, as black dots or narrow slits, with no pupils or extra-wide pupils. In a hysterical three-panel sequence, she uses this range to perfectly express Penny's panicked realization that she's packed her car keys deep within the contents of her apartment.

Penny is a poor soul who makes bad decisions, but she's lovable throughout, and memorable even after the last page has been read. The graphic novel universe should consider itself lucky to have her.

PETER DABBENE (Spring 2016)

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