



Ready, Cassette, Go!

Jarett Sitter

Annick Press (May 5, 2026)

Softcover \$15.99 (208pp)

978-1-83402-057-0

A girl learns to trust others and make friends in Jarett Sitter's delightful graphic novel *Ready, Cassette, Go!*

Melody, a guitar player, has been pushing others away since her mother left. When she and her father move to Cassette City, "The City of Play," Melody receives an offer to join a band and compete in a big contest. Though she hesitates, she joins in order to beat an arrogant bully, Styles. They also recruit a robot keyboardist, Atikus. But after Melody's indifference to her bandmates is exposed, the group breaks up. However, as the characters navigate concerns of trust, betrayal, forgiveness, and friendship, and as Melody realizes that she's found real friends, the book moves toward an epic conclusion.

The illustrations are wonder filled and feature a wide variety of character designs. Melody is human, Snackwich is a raccoon, and their bandmate Taki is a mushroom who speaks in an indecipherable language. Humor is prevalent too, in analog-era puns like in the town's welcome sign, which reads "Unwind in Cassette City," and amusing concepts like the refridgowaver, a cross between a fridge and microwave that brings food to room temperature. Other gags have visual elements, as when Melody's bandmate Snackwich puts a robot appendage on his head and laughs about getting "a leg up" on the competition.

In the sweet and lively graphic novel *Ready, Cassette, Go!*, a girl is reminded that life is not a solo act.

PETER DABBENE (May / June 2026)

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