

Locas



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著者:Hernandez, Jaime

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The original Love and Rockets comics, which during their initial run, were published for 15 years between 1981 and 1996, featured two incredible ongoing dramas by brothers Jamie and Gilbert Hernandez (with an occasional tale from a third brother, Mario).

Gilbert's "Palomar" stories (collected separately by Fantagraphics), and Mario's "Locas" series were published together in each issue, alternating chapters and cover artwork. While Gilbert's work was more gritty, tragic, and adult oriented, Jaime's work, which focused on teenage best friends Maggie and Hopey in a sort of bizarre Archie Comics universe set in a largely Hispanic southern California neighborhood that featured professional wrestlers, punk rock, and lesbian romance. Both works are masterpieces of the comic book medium, but to have the stories separated and published in their own complete hardcover sets is a dream come true. I'll be reviewing Palomar separately, but for now, let's focus on the brilliance of Locas.

Locas may be single best comic book drama series ever created. As a writer and artist, nobody has been able to capture the youth and vibrance of young adults like Jaime Hernandez. Utilizing the black and white page with a skill that only Frank Miller has been able to equal, Hernandez brings out a charm and grace to his characters that is sexy, realistic, and endearing. From the cocky smile of Hopey, to the ever-growing rounded ass of her best friend Maggie, to the smart and realistic dialogue that makes you feel almost voyeuristic spying on the girls' trials and tribulations.

The characters of Hopey, a short haired undersized punk-rock girl with a penchant for chaos, and her best friend Maggie, an expert mechanic and adventurer at heart who struggles with a ballooning waist size, are so well defined, many readers in the letter columns of the original issues would profess that they had crushes on them, or went to school with girls who were just like them.

It's hard to not fall for either of them in this epic that spans a huge period of time, and ultimately splits them apart as they go their own separate ways. The last page, which brings the two together again, is one of the most bittersweet moments I've read in comics since Bill Watterson's final "Calvin and Hobbes" strip.

Jamie has a blast with the series as he features tales revolving around struggling punk rock bands, the behind the scenes world of professional wrestling (and mostly lady wrestlers to boot), and gang life. One saga, "The Death of Speedy" is a brilliantly tragic tale about the inevitable death of a young man, who was a longtime crush of Maggie's for the first 6 years of the book, who makes the mistake of dating a rival's girl on the side. The eventual death scene is done so brilliantly and with such an eerie presentation, that I still get shivers and look around me after I read it.

Considering the high quality of the paper, and the monstrous weight of the book, the \$49 cover price is a steal, considering you've got over 50 issues of comic book stories collected in this tome. I read the whole thing again in one sitting and am blown away.

This is as good as comic books get.

(Robert Berry @amazon)

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