



# Strangers in Paradise, Pocket Book 1

*Terry Moore*

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*Strangers In Paradise: Pocket Edition 1*

Katchoo is a beautiful young woman living a quiet life with everything going for her. She's smart, independent and very much in love with her best friend, Francine. Then Katchoo meets David, a gentle but persistent young man who is determined to win Katchoo's heart. The resulting love triangle is a touching comedy of romantic errors until Katchoo's former employer comes looking for her and \$850,000 in missing mob money. As her idyllic life begins to fall apart, Katchoo discovers no one can be trusted and that the past she thought she left behind now threatens to destroy her and everything she loves, including Francine.

## Strangers in Paradise, Pocket Book 1 Details

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Author : Terry Moore

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# From Reader Review Strangers in Paradise, Pocket Book 1 for online ebook

## Scarlett Readz and Runz....Through Novel Time & Distance says

Thank you Matthew for bringing this up unto my radar. I have not read this series prior and I am not sure why it hadn't crossed paths with me before. Perhaps I was busy in the early nineties doing what you did back then, growing up, getting out with friends, and figuring things out!

Reading Vol I feels like I am right back in that time. There are no cell phones! No online media platforms etc. There are words or situations to hang on to, to ponder over and taking a stand, committing to your ideals, and perhaps getting it all wrong. Getting into relationships, breaking up, being real, being crude sometimes, and being vulnerable. There is no bandwagon to jump on or media to hide behind... it's all to figure out raw and real.

Many reviews have been written about this series and I can't word it any better than what hasn't already been said. But here is what **Neil Gaiman** said about it on the back of Vol I: *"What most people don't know about love, sex and relations with other human beings would fill a book. Strangers in Paradise is that book."*

And that is sort of how I feel about it. The characters here are all very different from one another and so are their tempers and experiences and how they deal with certain situations. I want to almost say that perhaps now a days young people don't go through so much drama anymore, but I could be wrong on that or too old by now. But what used to be more taboo just isn't so anymore today. This graphic novel talks about some of those taboos, which I had not come in contact much in the 90's since it simply wasn't talked about.

*"And still the storm approaches. And there's nothing I can do. So I wait and watch and feel his breath against my face, cool and brave. His salt licks my skin, his promise brushes my hair. His fury drives the wind to touch my cheek and whisper something I can't hear."*

*I think he loves me.*

*I think he comes to see me.*

*I am young. I will learn"*

**? Terry Moore, Strangers in Paradise, Pocket Book 1**

*"The ocean tosses up a thousand arms to embrace the storm that falls across her like a drunken sailor. His thunder slaps her thighs, his lighting piercing her waters.*

*They pound me between the hips and I begin to panic, knowing their passion will destroy me."*

**? Terry Moore, Strangers in Paradise, Pocket Book 1**

To sum it up, I will be following Katchoo and her friends along for a few more volumes in the series. I have heard many great things about it since my interest was piqued in it and our library has most of the volumes. As a matter of fact, the staff just contacted me that they are getting a whole new set of all the volumes, since it is having such popular come back.

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## Quentin Wallace says

This year I'm going to finally read the complete Strangers in Paradise series. I've read much of it over the years, but never the entire series from start to finish.

This is different than pretty much any other comic ever published. It's almost like a comic book soap opera, but it's got enough going on it doesn't seem stale or turn off comic book readers. It's a story of two women who are best friends and the different baggage they bring with them through the journey of life.

This first issue introduces us to Katchoo and Francine, who are very sexy characters even though they don't fit the usual "comic book sexy" stereotype. They aren't unrealistic sexual fantasies come to life, they are real women who are just as sexy as the super heroines that normally inhabit the comic world. We see them having real life struggles such as weight, money, relationships, etc. But to keep things interesting, there's also murder and dark secrets from the past.

Overall this is a really strong volume. If I have any complaint it's that Terry Moore's art sometimes come across a little cartoony in serious situations. Domestic violence and murder just don't have the right edge with his artstyle, even though he is great at portraying emotion.

A really good series and something that many readers, especially female readers, would love even if they've never read a graphic novel.

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## Audrey says

I was handed this in trade paperback form when I wandered into a comic book shop one day asking if there were any "realistic" comics without all of the tights and capes. I took it home and fell in love with Katchoo, Francine, and David. Over the years I have re-read this story over and over again as the trio worked their way to the only possible conclusion they could have. It is a beautiful adventure and I recommend whenever I am given the opportunity. It was my gateway drug to the comicbook world and I am forever grateful. The series has recently ended, which only means you don't have to wait for the next issue to get written to keep reading. There are 7 pocket books in all and I would highly suggest buying them all after reading the first one. You won't want to put this one down.

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## Stephen Arvidson says

Katina Choovanski—"Katchoo," to her friends—is a beautiful and talented artist living a quiet life with everything going for her. She's smart, independent, and very much in love with her best friend, Francine Peters. Then Katchoo meets the gentle but persistent David Qin who is determined to win her heart. The ensuing love triangle is a charming comedy of romantic blunders until a second plot element emerges in the form of a suspense thriller-type arc involving Katchoo's former employer, Darcy Parker, who's now hunting Katchoo and a large sum of stolen mob money.

What's most endearing about *Strangers in Paradise*—aside from the prospect of hot girl-on-girl action (what can I say? I'm a guy.)—is that its principle plotline is centered on real human drama with genuine characters, not superheroes in spandex. If the outstanding, well-paced writing isn't enough to draw you in, perhaps then the clean, consistent, and incredibly detailed artwork will do the trick. The book is laced with both incredible humor and intensity, along with bits of song and evocative poetry that wonderfully complement the story. There's even a couple extended prose segments, including a noir-esque police procedural involving Detective Mike Walsh as he investigates the brutal assault and subsequent murder of a former police officer with ties to predatory crime boss Darcy Parker.

*Strangers in Paradise* is both top-notch and utterly addicting. The believable and rich characterizations in this book are matched by only a small number of comics. Author Terry Moore's stark artistic style deftly captures the variety of characters and the overwhelming emotions etched in their facial expressions. Katina and Francine's loving friendship is sure to tug at the heartstrings of many readers. What's more, given the modern cultural and political landscape, *Strangers in Paradise* imparts a valuable and empowering message about the unseen depth and awe-inspiring beauty of women, regardless of their size or outward appearance.

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## christa says

Remember that summer that you read Scott Pilgrim, lighting one book off the next, until you were dreaming in Pilgrim-ese and finished the entire series in what seemed like minutes. Then you went into that post-Pilgrim funk, missing those loveable -- and sometimes infuriating -- characters and thought that hole would never be filled. Then you said, "Screw it. I'll turn this hole into a doorway into the graphic novel genre." You started searching for that magical series that would capture the inexplicable thing that Brian Lee O'Malley captured with those six volume. While you never found anything that made you feel like you felt when you scoured the city limits for the second and third volumes, you did stumble on some dynamite stuff that deviates from the whole dark-alley, caped do-gooder vein. So that was good.

I have a hypothesis: If Scott Pilgrim had never been born, I might have had a similar experience with Terry Moore's "Strangers In Paradise." I'm don't have that same "Must. Buy. Book. Two." rush, but that's more because a) I now understand the addictive nature of a series; b) I've read more comic books since that summer. Scott Pilgrim had the added tug of being a first love. I will read book two, I just won't be at the bookstore, blurry-eyed, when it opens tomorrow. Hell. I could wait a month.

Pocket Book 1 of Moore's series is the first 13 volumes of the story about Katchoo and Francine -- longtime best friends and currently roommates. The former has the hots for the latter and Francine has the playing-it-cools for Freddie Femur, her boyfriend for the past 364 days. Francine has cinched on her chastity belt for length of the relationship, which really (ahem) rubs Femurs the wrong way. First he storms out of her apartment, then when she goes to make nice she finds him sawing away at one of the women who works in his office.

This enrages Katchoo, a woman one does not want to piss off. Consider this: She fires bullets into her alarm clock one morning. While Francine dissolves into self destruction, Katchoo finds a way to publically humiliate the jerk, first scaring the bejeebees out of him with a common kitchen utensil. In the meantime, David has entered the scene. He's an arty sort who is totally smitten with Katchoo and won't take her "I don't like men" for an answer. He inches his way into her life as a friends, but does nothing to hide his interest in more.

Book one includes an always-shifting love triangle, secrets will be revealed, characters will almost die, and some mysterious characters hunt Kachoo to shake her down for the \$850,000 they believe she stole from the mob.

Oddly enough: I picked up “Strangers in Paradise” at one comic bookstore before walking into another one and having the owner recommend it to me. These kind of quirky coincidences always make it mandatory that I read the book in question. This series is fun, funny, fresh and sometimes almost sexy. Katchoo, part artist, part ass kicker, is a sassy character. It leans a little too close to madcap and some of the poetic and lyrical moments are a little oh-for-crying-out-loud-ish, but whatever.

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## **Ryan says**

I'm a big fan of poutine. For those of you who are not Canadian, nor have Canadians in your life, poutine is a Quebecois dish based on french fries, which have cheese curds placed on top of them, and then the whole thing is smothered in gravy.

This seems off-topic, but I swear it relates.

The thing with poutine is that it's a really common dish, because it's simple and easy to put together, but few people make it really well. I've been in restaurants where they've just shredded some mozzarella cheese and tossed it on top of the gravy, and other places where the curds are rubbery, or the gravy's watered down or tasteless. It's easy to make, but real easy to get wrong as well. When it's done right, though, poutine is artery-clogging ambrosia, and one of the tastiest foods on the planet.

Strangers in Paradise is poutine literature. It takes a lot of common elements from other stories and mixes them together - between the emo-before-emo-was-a-thing characters, the love triangle between those characters, the feminist politics, the complex interplays of sexuality, cross-gender friendships, and attraction, and the "on the run from the mafia" plot, you've got elements of around half of the cinema and indie comics of the early 1990s represented here in some way, shape, or form. And it works. My gods does it work. Everything fits in perfectly together - the plot, the characters, the artwork - and you end up both loving and hating those characters at the same time for the choices that they're making as the story progresses. It's a difficult, demanding story to read at some points, but it's a very rewarding read at the same time, one that gives you all it has and leaves you wanting even more once you're done.

Another highlight of this GN is the artwork - Moore's black and white brushwork might seem a little simplistic at first, but it's a conscious choice, done to get you to pay more attention to the words on the page, and the way he varies style and layout throughout it (for example, cartoonish styles for dream sequences and complex, multi-ballooned conversations in one panel between good friends), as well as incorporating things like music, poetry, and prose writing throughout the book - it's almost like he's using Strangers in Paradise to teach a seminar on what the GN is capable of while at the same time telling a great story.

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## **Andrew says**

I loved Terry Moore's Echo. It was mature, intelligent, and scary as heck's hockeysticks. Naturally, and after numerous recommendations, I was looking forward to Strangers in Paradise. What a joy it would be to dip

back into a story focused on complex and interesting female characters – from a male author, no less! I've just finished Vol. 1 of the Pocket Editions. Well...

Pros:

- Great, expressive art.
- Compulsively readable, despite its flaws.

Cons:

- Two parallel authorial impulses: An almost creepily-calculated feminism, and hetero-male fantasy
  - Cheesecake illustration with frequent Clothes-Fall-Off syndrome
  - Fetishized scenarios and numerous clichés: women kissing even though they aren't really gay; female nudity-fueled public humiliation; hookers with hearts of gold; insecure ice cream eating; a man-hating lesbian who is just bisexual enough to fulfill male fantasies, Tuff Girlz, etc.
  - Much of the drama comes from the female need for a man, even, or especially, if she hates men.
  - Condescending, pseudo-feminist depiction of male characters (either horny scumbags, or saints – what does this say about the female characters?).
  - Complex characterization sometimes becomes merely messy.
  - Frequent diversion into adolescent romanticism.
  - "Katchoo."
  - Absurd conclusion to the criminal plot.
  - Moore does not create enough visual distinction between his female characters. Their faces are often interchangeable in a pin-up, girl-next-door style. In a structurally complicated narrative, this creates moments of confusion (Okay, she has dark, shoulder-length hair... Francie! Emma! Um... Parker?)
  - Oh, and why did David fall in love with Katchoo (to the point where he expresses it in a creepy, it's-okay-if-you-physically-abuse-me way)? Her looks. Nothing more.
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## **Nathaniel says**

Three and a half stars? I think?

I read a lot of Strangers In Paradise, when they came out in the nineties. I'm certain I missed large chunks of story. By coincidence, I ran across SiP again just recently. It kinda holds up. Kinda. My thoughts about it are complicated.

The easy part, the relationship between Katchoo and Francine and David is the story's heart. It's charming, and difficult, infuriating and messy. This came out at time when Defense of Marriage laws were being contemplated across the country, and federally, so let's give the book and Terry Moore credit for being ahead of its time.

Katrina Choovanski and Francine Peters are best friends since high school (??). They know each others issues and have that best friend shorthand. In most situations Katrina goes by the portmanteau Katchoo. She has a complicated, even dangerous, past, most of which she has kept hidden from Francine. She aspires to be a professional painter. Francine, I will argue in one respect, would be a proto-Gilmore Girl. Lorelai and Rory Gilmore ate all the time; one show was them going to seven Thanksgiving dinners. Francine Peters would fit right in. There is obviously love between Francine and Katchoo, and in this volume Moore flirts with the idea that it could be something more. At least Katchoo seems more open to the idea than Francine.

David Parker is the readers entrance into their world, and an important connection to the other part of SiP. He takes an immediate shine to Katchoo. Katchoo attempts to set him straight, but David is persistent and loyal. Katchoo's past leads her eventually to trust that loyalty. As the story unfolds it becomes apparent a multitude of issues are holding Katchoo back from a relationship with David; her past; her love for Francine, and David's connection to other part of SiP.

It's not a depiction of human friendships without its flaws. Moore has a couple of very trite scenes including Katchoo and David in a downpour sorting things out. But I think its one of the best depictions of human relationships in comics we've had in the past 25 years.

The complicated part comes from the second story line in SiP. The crime drama I guess I'll call it. I'm not sure its good. It's infuriating and messy, and not in the slightest charming. Moore makes it very simple for the reader to distinguish who are the bad guys and who are the good in this story. While the crime drama section of Moore's story gives him an avenue to give us background on Katchoo and David adding depth to his characters, the criminals are narratively portrayed in a very simplistic way.

There's a lot of poetry and music in this volume (and series, if memory serves), most of it original. You're mileage may vary on its quality, but Moore adds some nice story beats giving him reasons to include it. (I seem to remember Moore listened to music while he created? Maybe I'm wrong.)

There is also the issue of violence. There's a surprising amount of violence in this book for a book not based in say, Gotham. There is two types of violence in this book. The type that ties into the criminal stuff, and the violence between Katchoo and David. Katchoo lets David have it physically a couple of times. I could argue that Moore depicts each sort of violence differently, and tries to play the stuff between David and Katchoo, like the Looney Tunes characters. David is never physically bruised as a result, but that lets Moore off the hook too easy. It tempers a lot of praise for the work.

Strangers in Paradise is Moore's first big work on the comic book scene. There's a a lot to like about SiP and some stuff that may annoy, but it worth a read. It's very much a creation of its decade.

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## **Jason says**

Bad, really bad. Trashy, soapy and with annoyingly stupid characters.

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## **Mary Shyne says**

Let me clarify: the art in this comic deserves nothing less than a 5. The linework is incredible, the pacing of the panels is top-notch, the light/dark contrasts stagger, and everything works to convey the story Moore is trying to get across.

Unfortunately, the stars get docked off for the story itself. It feels like a whole bunch of tropes and cliches haphazardly thrown together: macho lesbian former prostitute (if this was a fan fiction we would all be rolling our eyes), emotional over-eater bombshell, sleazy rich sharkskin-suit wearing boyfriend (who gets walked in on having an office affair? come ON!), and overly-understanding-artist-dude-standing-in-for-the-author. It's so over-the-top and soap-opera-esque, which is jarring considering the careful and precise

artwork. I also almost went insane when there was suddenly PAGES OF TEXT we were expected to read (why didn't Moore illustrate these instead?!), and I just flat-out skipped over any poetry/lyrics because FUCK DAT SHIT.

I can understand how this was groundbreaking, but I think it's more groundbreaking as a bridge between great works than a great work itself: the artwork and composition brings new dignity to the graphic novel genre despite the story staying firmly in the melodramatic vein of older comic books. Nevertheless, still planning on finishing this series just for the artwork and panel composition, because DAMN.

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## **Printable Tire says**

Gee, even though this is pretty stupid and annoying and the guy in it is such a pony-tailed sissy and the poetry and songs are terrible and everybody is needy and mooshy and all the men are sleazy even though it's clearly written by a man whatwithall the flirtatious lesbian shit and whatnot and it has this nerdy manga vibe and I can't tell if the far-fetched gangster plotline is a distraction or the only thing keeping this book together- it's still really readable, and the lettering is well done, and I read it all in one sitting. I'll probably read the rest because it will keep me out of trouble. I don't know, I hate to use the term, but could this be... a guilty pleasure?

(PS This book isn't as bad as 1-star but it sure doesn't deserve 4.5 stars so I thought I'd fuck with the statistics)

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## **George says**

Just read the first volume of Strangers in Paradise. Boy oh boy, did it rile me up. In a good way, of course. Let's just say I admire this graphic novel, but I'm not its intended audience. Loved the art. It put me in the mind of Berke Breathed's Bloom County. For some reason Francine's mother reminded me of Bill the Cat.

OK, let's get down to it. Every single male character in this volume is an asshole. Every. Single. One. Does Terry Moore hate men? I doubt it – he is a man, after all. I think it's more likely that he's a shrewd marketer who knows his audience. I admire his audacity: you've got to admire a guy who can make moving statements about feminine empowerment and draw great cheesecake at the same time and get away with it.

SIP is a graphic novel about sex, minus the sex (the first volume is, anyway). Instead we have the slow, richly deserved torment of the male characters. Let's talk about those male characters, shall we? Freddie and David, the scalp-taker and the teddy bear.

Freddie, first; he's the scalp-taker. Go to a used-car lot and he'll try to sell you a car. Go to a bar and he'll try to pick you up. He's an asshole, but at least he's up-front about it. In the interests of fairness I must also state that guys like Freddie get laid a lot. Moore nails him; the only thing he doesn't get right is that there's no way he would wait a year for sex. A real scalp-taker cuts ties and says bye-bye after two weeks.

David is the teddy bear. He's worst than Freddie, because he can't take responsibility for his filthy sexual urges. Here's a scoop: every man has filthy sexual urges. David neuters himself. He is the mascot, the little buddy, the pet. David is the type of character women like, because he's harmless; men despise and pity him.

Unfortunately for him, no woman will ever, ever find him attractive.

I give Katchoo credit; she tells David to go away. He doesn't, of course. David's job is to read puerile poetry and tell Katchoo he loves her and be her designated punching bag while she works out her aggression. This is empowering, for Katchoo. In the spirit of abusive relationships David sits there and takes it. At one point he tells her he had it coming. I guess it's Katchoo's pure soul; either that, or he likes being slapped in the face. Whatever; he stays.

The laundered Mob money storyline was a bit incoherent. It also put my Melodrama Meter off the charts. One of the characters ends up being related to another character, which - in the words of the Church Lady - is rather convenient.

Oh, and there's a wonderful fight scene between a female assassin and a fat guy. Yes, I know comic book violence is not realistic, but if you outweigh somebody by 100 pounds, all you need to do is sit on them and the fight is over. By the end of that one I was waiting for the ninjas to show up; maybe they will, in Volume 2.

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### **James DeSantis says**

This was a real strange book. It's not great, it's not bad, it's weird.

So it's about two women trying to figure out life. This involves all the things in life such as bad breakups, family issues, love and drama, oh yeah and spy shit. So with the two women going through insane issues you have this undercover cop situation going on with a chain, stealing money, and a lot of weird crap that keeps piling up. Really, it's so odd it's hard to explain but it's def a interesting plot none the less.

Good: I enjoy the art a lot. Simple and fun. I also enjoy a lot of the dialog. it's easy, fun, and bouncing. They also feel like people talking and not cartoon characters. The ending was also interesting and keeps it open for new ideas.

Bad: The plot itself is all over the place, and sometimes it doesn't know how to hold back. Like it's going for all out wacky story but then it wants to settle down and it feels disjointed.

Overall fun little weird story. I'll check out volume 2 sometime but this didn't make me go "I MUST READ 2 RIGHT AWAY" Like after finished Rachel Rising.

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### **Zeynep Dilara says**

<http://kraliceicinkitap.blogspot.com....>

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### **Jenny Gonzalez- Blitz says**

This is like a rip-off of "Love & Rockets" for people who are intimidated by punk rock and Latinas(Katchoo & Francine are JUST LIKE Hopey and Maggie, but you know--more "girl next door" looking!). And written

by a Nice Guy(tm) hoping to get into a pseudo-lesbian's pants(cuz he can CHANGE her with his love!) if he acts sympathetic enough to the fact that "yeah, men are jerks, amirite"? Ever notice that everyone with a penis (save Moore's milquetoasty Gary-Stu stand-in David) in this book is EEEEEEEEE-VUUUUUULLLLLLL? Or at least has to make an ass of themselves. I've encountered many people who adore "Strangers In Paradise", but I can't help it---it creeps me out! Do yourself a favor and get some actual "Love & Rockets" books instead!

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