



Queen of Snails: A Graphic Memoir

Maureen Burdock

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Maureen Burdock traces the emotions and events of her life in Germany and the US in her excellent graphic memoir *Queen of Snails*.

From her perspective as an adult, prompted by her mother's death, Burdock looks back on the twists and turns of her life. Gaining insights through her own memories, dreams, and musings, as well as through photographs and discussions with others, she delves into the secrets and strange behavior of her parents and grandparents, as well as art, religion, World War II, an eating disorder, sexual abuse, and her own sexual identity.

The book's transitions are organic, imparting a constant urge to see what will be revealed next. The text is further enriched by a wide range of cultural allusions, notes, and references. These are as varied as a digression about people's longtime fascination with being tiny and scientific observations about snails. Memorable turns of phrase abound, as with "Memory Shrapnel," referring to the "shards of stories" inherited over the years.

The art is just as creative about communicating Burdock's story. A notable example is an overhead view of her childhood bedroom that encompasses her childhood world in a single image. The drawings, rendered in colored pencils, are warm, inviting, and intimate.

The rich, fascinating graphic memoir *Queen of Snails* addresses a personal history and heritage; it is a book that contains multitudes.

PETER DABBENE (November / December 2022)

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