



## DÍAS DE CONSUELO

by Dave Ortega

Published by Radiator Comics

Available for purchase at [radiatorcomics.com](http://radiatorcomics.com)

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Dave Ortega was born in El Paso, Texas where he began his art education. After a decade of art installation and painting, he discovered his passion for narrative through his love of comics.

His self-published comic book series *Días de Consuelo* is about the early life of his grandmother who was born during the Mexican Revolution. Those issues were collected, edited, and published as a graphic novel by Radiator Comics in March 2022.

His comics have been published in several periodicals and anthologies, including *Tales from la Vida: A Latinx Comics Anthology*, *New Frontiers: The Many Worlds Of George Takei*, *Irene Book 5*, and *Beautiful/Decay Book 6*. An excerpt of *Días de Consuelo* appeared in the Illustrated PEN column on the PEN America site. Dave received grants from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, Collective Futures Fund and the Massachusetts Independent Comics Expo. His short comic *Hacienda* won First Place in the 2013 Comics Composition Competition by Comics Workbook.

Other self-published works include a short comic about his grandmother's teenage years living on the Rio Grande (*River*), historical works about the Mexican Revolution (*Battle of Juarez* and *Zacatecas 1 and 2*), a zine about U.S. influence in Central and South American governments (*School of the Americas*), and a short series of illustrated Latin American sayings (*Dichos 1 and 2*).

Dave created *Comics: Frame by Frame*, an interactive educational project in collaboration with the Art Lab at the Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston. His comics have been featured at many fairs, notably Toronto Comic Arts Fair, Comic Arts Brooklyn, New York Art Book Fair, Boston Art Book Fair, Small Press Expo, and Latino Comics Expo.

Dave lives in Somerville, MA where he divides his time between comics, illustration, and teaching.

His website is [daveortegadraws.com](http://daveortegadraws.com) and you can find him on Instagram @daveortegadraws.

## SELECT REVIEWS

### Días de Consuelo

Ortega (River) chronicles the childhood of Consuelo, his 103-year-old grandmother, as she grows up in Mexico during the Revolution in a story—part history lesson and part biography—that emphasizes the bravery and resilience experienced through the generations of one Mexican family. Before Consuelo’s birth, Ortega’s great-great-grandmother Isabel Reyes Badillo Zúñiga lives with her own daughter, Evarista Zúñiga, among the crumbling political infrastructure of Mexico. Evarista eventually marries a local musician, Pedro Castañón, and births Consuelo in 1914. Four years later, however, with the revolution showing no signs of slowing and new constitutional mandates going into effect, insurrectionists breaking into their home leads Pedro to leave for the United States in search of a safer life, though he and sends money to Consuelo and a pregnant Evarista, who stay in Mexico. With only each other for support, Consuelo and Evarista work to survive in a war-torn community and pray for better lives for themselves and their family. In Ortega’s hyperrealistic art, with monochrome sepias developing more color as the years pass, the scope of the story is wisely kept small, allowing the complexity of the Mexican Revolution and its impact on the characters to serve as a backdrop for this deeply personal and affecting narrative. Ages 12–up.

—Publishers Weekly

Amazing. At first, I felt like I was watching a classic movie with Pedro Infante and María Félix, but then it became *my* story and made me feel closer to my own history and to the parts of my family that I didn’t know.

—Comadres y Comics podcast (Recommended Review)

A moving biography about family and place. Dave illustrates his grandmother’s memories of her childhood during the Mexican Revolution. It’s an exciting example of how comics can bring history to life and reveal the connections that exist in the present.

—Sequential Artists Workshop

With immigration in general and Mexico in particular having become such issues of anger in modern America, Dave Ortega’s tender, informative family saga *Días de Consuelo* couldn’t come around at a better time. Pulling a story together from family lore and historical sources, Ortega takes a look at his grandmother’s childhood during the Mexican Revolution and offers not the glory of war, but the reality women faced during those times.

Ortega acknowledges the action and bloodshed, but he never focuses on it, and that is the strength of his narrative. Instead, Ortega turns his vision to not only the plights of Isobel and her daughter and grandchildren — one of whom, Consuelo, is

his 100-year-old grandmother, who appears both as a child and an elderly woman in the comic — but to their quiet, daily moments as well. The family takes no great actions in their survival, but small steps, simple motions. Survival is a process, and it is sometimes bisected by moments of candor or splendor. It is a small approach to relating history, seeping narrative into the cracks of the wider surfaces, those spaces where individuals and the stories their families tell lurk.

Ortega realizes his personal vision with an art style dominated by clarity, with clean lines that capture humans and landscapes perfectly and plainly, complimented by some muted coloring that give the story the feeling of the distance past, part of an incorporeal past that only exists in the memory of an elderly woman now. But Ortega has the history books to prove the stories in his grandmother's mind are real ones, though faded like the oranges and greens and blues that slowly build up their presence as the issues move along, inching us closer to what we think of as the present, though still very far removed. Unfortunately, with the current political rhetoric and the loss of empathy that too many Americans have embraced as normality, not removed enough.

— *John Seven, The Beat* (refers to self-published series)

### Comics: Frame By Frame

Last fall, Ortega self-published the first in a projected series of comic books based on the memories of his grandmother, who was born at the height of the Mexican Revolution. The initial issue, *Días de Consuelo* actually predates her birth — it sets the story of her parents' courtship and marriage against the violent backdrop of the revolution. "As I've been talking to my grandmother, my curiosity was piqued about her and my history; I thought it would be perfect for a graphic-novel format," says Ortega. "There are large gaps in the story, and I've had to decide how to fill them."

He threw himself into research. The comic includes a summary of the history of the Mexican Revolution, as well as references to paper currency issued at the time (colloquially called "bedsheets" because it was so big), and courtship rituals of the day. Future issues — Ortega thinks there will be five, maybe six — will follow the young family as his grandmother's father flees to the US, and she, her baby sister, and her mother stay in Mexico with her grandmother — the artist's great-great grandmother. "It's a powerful woman's story," Ortega says.

He has written other comics, which he takes to book fairs and expos. "It's how I get my work out there," he says. They're mostly about Mexican history and the Spanish Conquest. "It's not a closed loop of history," he says. "It's still an open wound."

A clever, funny handout comic Ortega designed for "Frame by Frame" follows Don Quixote and Sancho Panza on a meta-adventure. Toward the end, Don Quixote explains compartmentalization — the distillation of information — as a means by which the brain works, as well as comic strips. "So, comics are like memory, memory is like comics," Sancho Panza replies, "and death comes to us all."

— *Cate McQuaid, The Boston Globe*



## Hacienda

Our decision to award *Hacienda* First Place recognizes Dave Ortega's creation of an ambitious, multi-layered narrative that cuts through history, class, status and power in a deftly constructed story which takes the reader back and forth in time to reveal the conceit and illusion undergirding dominant paradigms in a way that only comics can. This complex concoction of culture and character made for a winning combination.

— Comics Workbook Award Committee

## APPEARANCES - 2022

### March

Latinx Comic Arts Festival - Modesto, CA

### April

MoCCA Arts Festival presented by The Society of Illustrators - New York City

Boston Comics in Color Festival

Signing event at Hub Comics - Boston, MA

## SCHEDULED APPEARANCES - 2022

### September

El Paso Museum of History Event - El Paso, TX

Small Press Expo - Bethesda, MD

### October

Cartoon Crossroads Columbus - Columbus, OH

Massachusetts Independent Comics Expo - Boston, MA

### November

Boston Art Book Fair

## STOCKISTS

A Room of One's Own - Madison, WI  
Big Planet Comics - Washington DC  
Birdcage Bottom Books - Mail Order  
Bread & Salt Hospitality - Somerville, MA  
Busboys & Poets - Washington, DC  
Comix Experience - San Francisco, CA  
Copacetic Comics - Pittsburgh, PA  
EXILE Books - Miami, FL  
Firestorm Co-Op - Asheville, NC  
Gutter Pop Comics - Buffalo, NY

Howling Pages - Chicago, IL  
Hub Comics - Boston, MA  
Indigo Bridge - Lincoln, NE  
Know/How Books + Prints - St. Louis, MO  
Librarie Racines - Montréal, QC  
Lion's Tooth - Milwaukee, WI  
Literarity Bookstore - El Paso, TX  
Little Deer Comics - Dublin, Ireland  
Million Year Picnic - Cambridge, MA  
Mission Comics - San Francisco, CA

Pensacola Pop Comics - Pensacola, FL  
Push/Pull - Seattle, WA  
Quimby's Bookstore - Chicago, IL  
Seite Books - Los Angeles, CA  
Silver Sprocket - San Francisco, CA  
The Concern Newsstand - Chapel Hill, NC  
Vault of Midnight - Michigan (3 locations)