



Flying Couch

Amy Kurzweil

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Amy Kurzweil's *Flying Couch: A Graphic Memoir* is a bit unusual as memoirs go—though it is the story of her life thus far, Kurzweil's account is largely absent of the kind of physical or emotional traumas that too often seem to be a requirement in memoirs. She's honest about her efforts to live a life that's independent but that still incorporates her family, including her mother, who is a psychotherapist, and her grandmother Bubbe, a Holocaust survivor. Kurzweil tells the stories of all three, but Bubbe's harrowing stories of survival naturally dominate the book, with an immediacy that Kurzweil's own life lacks. In recognizing this, however, Kurzweil is able to merge her grandmother's tale into a larger work about a young woman finding her way in the world. Kurzweil also uses humor throughout *Flying Couch*, which helps to provide a common thread amid the poignant, the sublime, and the commonplace.

Kurzweil's black-and-white art is expressive, and she uses creative touches like a Chutes-and-Ladders-inspired game board to illustrate the potential benefits and hazards of life in New York City, and plenty of drawings from maps and photographs.

The book's title is a nod to the infamous "psychotherapist's couch," and as Kurzweil takes the influences of her mother's training and her grandmother's experiences, and reflects on her own life, it's easy to relate to her efforts to find individuality without casting off the love and protection of family. Young people, in particular, should find *Flying Couch* an enjoyable and edifying read.

PETER DABBENE (Winter 2017)

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