



Junkwraith

Ellinor Richey

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A girl confronts a ghost and her own sense of self in the graphic novel *Junkwraith*.

Florence is an ice skater who has lived in bondage to the sport's demands on her time and energy. One day, she throws away the skates in frustration. The act summons a junkwraith, a ghost attracted by abandonment. Flo learns that her memories will fade and disappear unless she defeats the wraith and gets the skates back. Armed with an old map, she embarks on a quest into the Wastelands with her "Juju," a robotic personal assistant named Frank. They meet a strange, memorable cast of characters, including pirates, a librarian, and a special agent who's also in pursuit of the junkwraith.

The story touches on themes of identity, self-determination, and friendship, but perhaps its most thought-provoking idea is that items need a purpose. This, in turn, spawns a question from one of the characters: "What relationship should we have with the things we love?" The cute, the ghastly, and the mundane coexist alongside each other in this surreal story that addresses society's need for "stuff." Flo's internal debate about skating is a sympathetic struggle of growing up: she wonders how much of her feelings for the sport are her own, versus those of her parents, and how much the origins of those feelings even matter.

The book's distinctive art style is disarming. Crude at first glance, it proves revealing upon further examination—a detailed, appealing visual feast that helps to make *Junkwraith* a bizarre and imaginative graphic novel about growing up.

PETER DABBENE (November / December 2021)

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