

Space Junk

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Two young people wonder whether to board the last shuttles from their doomed planet in the graphic novel *Space Junk*.

In a dystopian universe where worlds are abandoned after being stripped of resources, Faith and Hoshi await their turn to be shuttled to the next planet to be inhabited. Most adults have already been sent to prepare the new planet for colonization, but a counselor, Mr. Uzmaki, remains to conduct mandatory preflight sessions with Hoshi and Faith. Mr. Uzmaki discusses the strange metal junk that follows Faith and gifts an emotional support chicken to Hoshi to counter feelings of rage.

Hoshi and Faith bond over their shared resistance to boarding the flight and their hatred for Steve, a bully who's meant to be the third person on their shuttle flight. As Faith's power to attract metal grows and the moment of departure arrives, each person faces a decision about their future.

The moody full-color art captures myriad scenes and emotions, ranging from the beautiful tranquility of an almost-deserted planet to the violent chaos of the book's final confrontation. Hoshi and Faith are damaged individuals, both in the physical sense and in the psychological one, but they are also independent and work together through their feelings of betrayal and abandonment.

Space Junk is a touching graphic novel in which two teenagers find each other amid the wreckage of a discarded planet. The book carries an unspoken environmental message—and potent reminders about the value of community and of putting down roots.

PETER DABBENE (September / October 2024)

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