



Growing Up Golem

Donna Minkowitz

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In the tradition of Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*, Donna Minkowitz's *Growing Up Golem* is a sharply funny memoir about growing up inspired by the Jewish legend of the golem. The author's mother told Minkowitz that she could do Jewish magic and, growing up, Minkowitz completely believed her. Her mother, an unusually domineering figure, exerted even more sway over Minkowitz than mothers typically do over their children, so it is the "magical realist" premise of the book that instead of giving birth to her, her mother actually created Minkowitz as her own personal golem, a little automaton made of clay. In the book, Minkowitz struggles to control her own life as an adult, even as she publicly appears to be a radical, take-no-prisoners lesbian journalist. In her career, dating, and especially with her own eccentric family, Minkowitz finds herself compelled to do what other people want, to horrible and hilarious effect. In sex, for example, she often feels like "a giant robot dildo." Matters come to a head when a disabling arm injury renders her almost helpless (and permanently unable to use a computer). She must find a way to work, find people who love her, and stand up for her own desires—against the bossing she's always tolerated from girlfriends, mother, and every other single person—before her injury gets even worse.

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