



In conversation with **SOPHIE** **ESCABASSE,** creator of *Taxi Ghost*

When Adele gets her first period, she not only has to adapt to the changes in her body, but she also discovers that she can see ghosts. What made you tie these two events together?

Having your period is a milestone and a life-changing event in itself. Even if most of the changes cannot be perceived by the people around you, you know that you'll never be quite the same. Your status has changed, and that modifies your view of yourself and the world. I thought it was the perfect timing for Adèle's medium power to manifest. A veil on reality has been lifted to open a whole new world to her.

Do you believe in ghosts? Have you ever seen one?

I totally believe in ghosts! I've never seen any myself, but I'm pretty sure some of the places I've lived in over the years had some. Also, the whole story of *Taxi Ghost* started with a weird feeling I repeatedly experienced while alone (supposedly alone) in my car. For instance, I would drop my kids at school in the morning and on my way back home it would happen: the creeping feeling that someone was still behind me.

I would stop the car and check, but of course no one I could see was ever there. That happened SO many times!

The popularity of graphic novels that combine elements of magic and young girls coming of age, including your own the *Witches of Brooklyn* series, is on the rise. Why do you think readers are drawn to these stories?

Magic adds a whole new color palette to play with; it expands our world. My love for magical girls started as a kid, mainly watching anime. I loved how in most of these shows magic was a secret but an empowering one. With magic, the main character was becoming stronger and more independent and resourceful. It was exciting to watch, and of course, I wanted to have magic, too! To a certain extent, girl magic (girl power) is flirting with the ideas of feminism. Magic becomes a means of self-expression and discovery.

You are both the author and the illustrator of *Taxi Ghost*. What is your process for bringing the text and the illustrations together?

I imagine and write the story at the same time as I sketch the characters and the places where the actions take place. I also collect a lot of images to create an image bank that I will go back to for inspiration throughout the creation of the book. I tend to keep my synopsis light, not writing all the dialogues and details, to ensure that I continue to be surprised by my characters when sketching the book.

