

Bash!

Rudy Gobert

Vince Serrano, Illustrator

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In basketball star Rudy Gobert's action-filled graphic novel *Bash!*, a teenager is hunted by aliens.

Fifteen-year-old Rudy lives with his mother in a poor section of Arcadia, a district in a future version of Earth. His father, Atlas, left the family long ago, and Rudy's dreams of escaping poverty now depend on his own success in Bash, a popular basketball variant that features changing environments—some so harsh that they can result in the deaths of players.

Ulysses, a mysterious old man, appears and tells Rudy that Atlas, a former Bash star himself, was an alien who left Rudy and his mother in order to shield them from the powerful Commodore Jah-Bar, who seeks to kill Atlas and his family. While Rudy plays in a crucial youth league championship game, the nature of Atlas's relationship with Jah-Bar is revealed. Jah-Bar's forces arrive on Earth, ready to move against Atlas and Rudy.

The sports elements of the book are appealing: Bash is a fast-moving game that lends itself to dynamic art and action, particularly after the introduction of aliens to the tale. The illustrations make excellent use of motion lines to complement the dynamic, adrenaline-fueled story. And the story includes an arrogant rival for Rudy as well as a love interest; both are opportunities for his tough but humble personality to shine through. Further, the direct prose is embellished with a profusion of sound effects and exclamation points. The final outcome of Jah-Bar's intrusion is held off for a future volume; this entry rests as an intriguing introduction to Rudy's world.

A teenage athlete discovers hidden potential within himself in *Bash!*, an exciting, entertaining graphic novel.

PETER DABBENE (March / April 2023)

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