

Black Star

Eric A. Glover

Arielle Jovellanos, Illustrator

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Black Star is a fast-moving, twisting futuristic thriller about a woman-versus-woman contest of survival.

Harper, a prominent and dedicated scientist, is sent with a crew to a far-off planet, Eleos, to retrieve samples of a flower with therapeutic properties. When the ship crashes on the planet's surface, Harper sets out alone on a 187-kilometer trek to reach an auxiliary shuttle—her only hope of escape.

Harper's plan grows more complicated, however, when it's revealed that she's not the only one who survived the crash. She's being pursued by Parrish, the survival expert she left trapped on the ship; Parrish, motivated by revenge, blames Harper for the death of a beloved crewmate. Clever narrative use of the ship's computer interface, Guardian, results in flashbacks that show the unvarnished truth.

Through heat, flooding, wildfires, and other obstacles, Harper and Parrish battle to outwit each other and reach the shuttle, which can only carry one of them to safety. Their story is filled with action, but also addresses intriguing questions of morality. Harper claims to have put the medical mission, with its hope of saving many lives, first, but Parrish sees her actions as a betrayal and a sign of cowardice. Harper, meanwhile, suspects that Parrish's outrage is motivated not just by a sense of justice, but by Parrish's financial interests. It's easy to root for, and against, both characters at different times, making for a complex, engrossing tale.

The book's art is excellent, capturing an array of natural vistas and technological features in creative, colorful ways, helping to make *Black Star* an impressive science fiction graphic novel.

PETER DABBENE (May / June 2021)

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