



Go West

Garrett Gunn

Saint Yak, Illustrator

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In *Go West*, a man seeks vengeance on the killer of his wife and child in a lawless western territory.

Gunn begins his tale with some background: outlaws have pushed the government out of America's western territories, and now rule with an iron fist. Through the recollections of the book's main character, Slade the Blade, it becomes clear that he worked for the outlaw leader, Creep, and that Slade's family was killed when he tried to quit. Slade collects a few key allies—a woman who leads the town of "Lost Vegas" and her friend, a gang chief. Together with their soldiers, the three confront Creep and his forces.

Slade's backstory might have made compelling reading, but the book focuses on revenge. Though it is fast-paced and action-packed, it doesn't reveal much of Slade's character or conscience. The result is a roughly defined, enigmatic figure who occasionally talks about "contemplating what has happened" or muses, "I never should have drug them into all this."

Despite the fact that the story is set more than one hundred years in the future, the weapons and vehicles used are twentieth-century technology; this is a somewhat charming touch, though one without a real explanation. And though Slade looks like a roughed-up cowboy, another character sports a mohawk and skull bandana—a nod to the story's Mad-Max-meets-classic-western feel.

The book is entertainingly gory and a bit absurd, as when a tomahawk chop slices a man's head in two horizontally. At its best, *Go West* pulls up just short of self-parody, and Saint Yak's art delivers the violence with flair.

PETER DABBENE (July/August 2018)

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