

## Sci-Fu

**Yehudi Mercado**

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Yehudi Mercado blends science fiction, kung fu, and hip-hop in *Sci-Fu*, a unique and entertaining graphic-novel adventure.

In 1980s Brooklyn, a young boy named Wax happily spins and scratches vinyl until he inadvertently answers an intergalactic call with his “rhythmical scratching signal.” He and his family and friends are transported to Discopia, a planet ruled by robots who still appreciate a good beat or rap when they hear it. Set up to challenge the domineering ruler of Discopia, Wax trains in the art of Sci-Fu and begins to develop an ego. In the end, a wiser, humbled Wax triumphs—though only with the assistance of his pals.

*Sci-Fu* is fast paced and undeniably fun. Antagonists include a female robot named Rap Punz L, another robot named Ol' Dirty Laundry, and a teddy bear-ish baddie named Teddy Backspin. Most of the characters, good and bad, break into rap frequently throughout the book, and the quips of Spider-Man or Deadpool can't compare to a fight sequence punctuated by lines like “Son I'm gonna clock you going eighty. Ol' Dirty Laundry gonna make ya hate me.”

Though many references to the early days of hip-hop may be lost on younger readers, they aren't critical to the story; for those steeped in rap history, they add an additional witty and nostalgic dimension to the book. Mercado's cartoon-style art matches the tone of his story—freestyling and innovative at times, but always engaging. With *Sci-Fu*, Mercado has created an all-ages delight.

PETER DABBENE (March/April 2018)

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