

Stalag-X

Kevin J. Anderson

Steven L. Sears

Mike Ratera, Illustrator

Vault Comics (May 8, 2018)

Hardcover \$29.99 (160pp)

978-1-939424-28-0

Humans fight or collaborate with their alien captors in an effort to survive a harsh prison camp in the science fiction graphic novel *Stalag-X*.

A decade-long war against the alien race called the Krael has humanity in desperate straits. *Stalag-X* begins as the Krael successfully attack a spaceship and haul their captives, including the main character, “Joe Human,” to a prison planet. There, Joe meets other humans—some of whom, like a trenchcoated female assassin named Deacon, have survived by working with the Krael—and begins to piece together a mystery that could give humans the chance they need to defeat their alien enemy.

Reminiscent of World War II prisoner-of-war films like *Stalag 17* and *The Great Escape*, *Stalag-X* isn't afraid to play those influences for humor, with characters including a “Camp Commandant” and an alien experimenter who wears a monocle and goes by the nickname “Mengele.” Ratera's art fleshes out the alien planet of Pondafier in great detail, though his human figures are occasionally a bit stiff-looking.

The authors utilize Joe as a classic lantern-jawed, tough-guy hero, with a few new twists to keep things interesting. It's not surprising that the story reads like a TV miniseries, given Sears's background in the industry; with an ending that invites future stories, and a novella by Anderson about Deacon included at the end of the book, the authors clearly have more media opportunities in mind for the characters and setting of *Stalag-X*.

PETER DABBENE (May/June 2018)

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