

★ **The Journey of Marcel Grob****Philippe Collin****Sébastien Goethals****Sébastien Goethals, Illustrator**

Dead Reckoning (Oct 16, 2022)

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A soldier with the German SS during World War II is confronted about his involvement sixty-five years later in the gripping graphic novel *The Journey of Marcel Grob*.

Marcel is an eighty-three-year-old retired engineer when he faces a formal inquiry into his conduct during World War II. Through a series of extended flashbacks, Marcel's experiences during the war are shown, beginning with his being drafted into the Waffen SS, which he accepted in order to protect his family from the retribution that he feared would have followed had he refused. Grob struggles to balance survival and morality in a war wherein civilians are murdered with little explanation, and wherein any refusal to follow orders risks a death sentence—or worse. Through him, historical events like the Massacre of Marzabotto in Italy are seen from a new perspective.

Marcel was Philippe Collin's great uncle; the story's primary source is Marcel's personal archive. This results in an intimate viewpoint of the internal and external conflicts involved in serving a cause that one doesn't support. The prose is excellent at providing context for Marcel's experiences, and a section of short informational essays by historian Christian Ingrao results in wider understandings of the people, organizations, and events depicted. The artwork is vital or subdued, as needed, and the images give another dimension to the story's horror and immediacy.

The Journey of Marcel Grob is an unforgettable account of World War II, its consequences, and the impossible decisions that were faced within its grasp.

PETER DABBENE (September / October 2022)

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