



Renowned American comics writer Brian K. Vaughan has a tendency to work with Canadian illustrators, collaborating with them on such works as *Saga*, *Runaways*, *Pride of Baghdad*, and *Y: The Last Man*, for example. After reading *We Stand on Guard*, his recent collaboration with Canuck Steve Skroce, it becomes obvious that such partnerships have made an impact on Vaughan.

*We Stand on Guard* is set about 100 years in the future when the US has taken war on Canada. In the news media it's shown to be a retaliation against Canadian terrorists (a dubious accusation), but in any case, the US is using this an excuse to take over our water resources. Having exhausted most of Canada's more southern lakes, they now set their sights on our very own

Great Slave Lake. However, a small band of resistance fighters who make Yellowknife their home won't give up easily.

The story and art is just great. Like the best futuristic sci-fi, it plays on current fears. Not that we're trembling in the fetal position, of course, but we definitely realize that we're living next to a country whose military casts quite a large shadow over ours. We also realize that we have a lot of freshwater resources while many parts of the US are running short. Skroce's characters are realistic but expressive while his military machinery is over-the-top with its crisp lines and *Pacific Rim*-ish aesthetics.

It was an interesting read as a Canadian because at times it felt almost too much—Canadiana to the point of parody. But then, we see so little comics set in Canada that seeing a Tim Hortons sign in the background seems like a joke when it's just realistic. Not to say that there wasn't any outright pandering, but when the book opens in the year 2112, they're forgiven. (If you're a Rush fan you'll immediately recognize the significance.)

Yellowknifers might be blown away by the details and significance of this town to the plot. I knew ahead of time that Yellowknife was featured but I had no idea how heavily. References to very specific things like Ingraham Trail and Giant Mine (with its deadly arsenic reserves) were an unexpected surprise that almost left me giddy.