

It's the big finale! And by big I mean 4.99 kind of big. I mean 4 Pencilers and 8 Inkers kind of big. I mean the kind that actually promises change to status quo and actually delivers kind of big. I mean, if an "Event Comic" ends with a bang but nothing really changes, does it really happen? Thankfully, there's enough to spin out of the epilogue that could allow for some interesting things to be explored in months to come. In that respect, it's a successful event, but as we all know after nine issues, things haven't been exactly consistent in that respect. There are just as many weaknesses on display here as there are strengths, but overall this comic uses those strengths to a good effect. Strengths like big action set pieces and special effects that rival any Hollywood blockbuster. Rogue best several big punches into Sabretooth, Captain America's beat-down on Captain America, and Wasp's energy blast to Havok is particularly brutal. And of course there's the big finale with all kinds of swirling energies and grimacing faces from Red Skull, Dr. Doom, and Scarlet Witch/Brother Voodoo. All of this should be credited to the colorist Paul Mounts who keeps things vibrant and enhances the drama of any scene. Most dramatic of all should be the Thor/Loki battle, because of course an inverted Loki would be "worthy" when Thor would not. It's particularly effective since the action is allowed to slow (and shift in setting, tone, and color) and give Loki some introspection, some gravitas. The resulting splash page of Loki smashing the hammer down becomes a nicely dramatic page turn. But without that balanced kind of pacing, the most prevalent weakness of the series comes to the fore-- it's too scattered, too big for it's own good. The scenes jump around so much that they are presented more like a raw footage of a documentary rather than a narrative. The reader is being guided through scenes of a war film without a path to connect them, while being rushed to boot. Along with the problems of story structure/presentation, there are problems with the resolution as well. I'm not talking about the fact that the denouement was a foregone conclusion-- all readers know that anyway. (Although I would have preferred to have more involvement from the inverted villains in the ultimate re-reversal. Why couldn't all of those Invert-vengers have some actually significant moments like Carnage's?) It's too arbitrary to feel natural. And maybe even contradictory? The In-Villains made a video for the world to watch and accept as truth (I see the citizens of New York dusting off hands and thanking goodness THAT explains it all), enjoying anonymity until they don't -- Carnage made sure Spider-Man gives him a statue. I do appreciate an epilogue, drawn by the Dodson's more upbeat/light penciling style. It helps lend the event overall a sense of closure, which is needed. It's also the opportunity to "show not tell" as Sabretooth's voiceover is not necessarily related to the images we see, but still provides for some philosophical musing on the high concept: "rotten people don't know they're rotten... easier to cook up a story you live in." If only more opportunity was given to these thoughts, or perhaps wear them a bit more on their sleeve. What, for example, is the story behind the Red Skull, or Dr. Doom? Would there be any more complexity to some relatively simple dichotomy of "hero" versus "villain?" Who knows. Although I am somewhat glad that these things are likely to continue in Uncanny Avengers, the story seeds of which this event grew. The post Avengers & X-Men: Axis #9 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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