

Stop me if you heard this one before: Plucky Young Hero wants to do everything boys can do, but Headstrong Father can't understand her any more than he will listen to Insightful Newcomer who's saying that Quiet But Powerful Nature must be respected lest she become Angry And Powerful Nature. This is the latest comic of the Disney Kingdoms line, not that you'd know it because the Disney logo is shunted to a few centimeters of the lower left-hand corner. As I've wondered with Figment, the previous title in the line, I wonder if the marketers are worried that the name "Disney" is less appealing, or even more of a turn off, than the title of the property itself. 'Cause, you know, the percentage of people knowing what Big Thunder Mountain Railroad specifically without knowing about Disney in general is a target audience? Inside, the team of Dennis Hopeless and Tigh Walker start with a "cold open" before the credit page, which allows us to see the setting and introduce ourselves to our main character Abby Bullion. She's a modern-day Disney princess for 1878, at least in that she calls herself daddy's princess and she talks to her pet horse. Oh, and the fact that she's the Plucky Young Hero I referenced. Through many, many balloons of forced exposition, we learn all about Abby, but it's not really of any depth. She likes... mines, I guess? So much so that she would risk deeply-rooted societal disapproval and her father's expressed wishes to... work in a mine? Must the story try so very hard to prove this is Not-Just-A-Typical-Girl of the 1870s? Just tell the story. We'll probably get it implicitly. Unless there's some postmodern psychological metaphor that is comparing woman's desire to plumb the depths of a mine as some sexual awakening allegory, but then again my degree in English Literature is completely worthless. As a Disney fan and theme park enthusiast, I really appreciate the way the ride is interwoven through the scenes (something that wasn't quite in focus in the previous Kingdoms series.) I'm Disney-dork enough to approve of the decision to set the comic in Rainbow Ridge (It's the Disneyland Park location. The other parks have different names for the town.) And it's neat to see some familiar scenes. Even on the first page you see the vultures and the goat that are memorable elements of the ride. The characters and settings themselves are very nicely rendered, and the main characters are expressive and clearly delineated with the same kind of attention to detail that you'd expect of "Disney" character design. That's high praise, by the way. Of course, there's not a lot of nuance here, either, as the majority of Abby's depictions show her with the same wistful smile and open eyes. If she were your real life coworker, the office might quietly require her to take a random drug test. The bigger disappointment with the art is that some layouts are a bit confusing, such as miners working on the ceiling, I think?, and others falling from a ladder but then being saved by someone with a rope from somewhere. In the opening sequence, Abby is showing flying from the back of the train to her horse, which is not how I remember physics working. And the last page has Abby looking up at falling rocks, then looking away, then looking up at the sudden appearance of a Mystery Man. Again, either physics or the art is failing here, and maybe a bit of both. The post Big Thunder Mountain Railroad #1 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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