

This issue feels much more like a #1 than a #2, if for anything but that it allows all the team players some panel time. I know that "Captain America" is in the title, so perhaps that's the reason for his intense starring role last issue, and perhaps you could say that this issue flips the problem, so that Captain America is really background dressing here and there in this issue, but balance among the starring characters has always been lacking in this series. As I've said, this issue allows for some team action, although honestly I never expected to read a comicbook in which Spectrum goes up against the villain Blue Streak. A point is made about that, when Tony Stark thinks this is not "a valid use of the Avengers brand," once again continuing the trend to have characters say very metatextual criticisms about their own story. ("I don't like what I see," he says elsewhere. Hmm.) In most ways, though, it's a fun and light super-throwdown, allowing characters a bit of action and to show off abilities and personalities and quirks. Again, a wonderful team intro, very appropriate for a #1 issue. The artist gets to show off a lot of dynamic poses for this battle, too, as well as distinct use of setting and background. At times, however, the drawings feel a bit too stiff, despite the extreme posing, and sometimes a bit disconnected from the background. Take, for instance, She-Hulk trying to punch Green Light. The anatomy is distorted on one arm, the distance between the figure and the wall/punch is inconsistent, and the rendering is too bold and scratchy. Kaluu's appearance is likewise strangely depicted--barely registering that he is in a laundromat for some reason and seemingly being in shadows that aren't pleasingly rendered. Some of this problem might land with the colors, as the hyper-realistic backgrounds are often fading/washed-out, making the figure awkwardly placed and looking more like drag-and-dropped from another artboard. Spectrum's first appearance on panel is an example of this. I'm not sure how the art chores were divided, but the issue shifts focus onto Cage and his confrontation with the Mighty Avengers. This section doesn't seem to have the same issues as the art in the other half, making me think it's an uncredited division of labor. Of course, it has its own issues and strengths. The faces are rendered different, more expressive and distorted (and there's one pose with a strident She-Hulk that's simply amazing) but the backgrounds are more sparse, often to the point of non-existent. Apparently, Cage already sold all of the Mighty Avengers' furniture and pictures-but-not-the-frames, 'cause that's one mightily empty mansion. Having Inverted-Cage be the "villain" works well here, precisely because he can BE an antagonist. In other words, the real intrigue of the "AXIS" event is seeing interaction between the inverted and non-inverted. Having Jessica Jones verbally confront Cage is exciting to see, as is She-Hulk's legal take-down of Cage's maneuver. The previous issue had none of this, making Captain America an "inverted-protagonist," which as you can see is not actually the same thing as an "antagonist." That's why it's a team book, you see. The other nice thing about it is that the Mighty Avengers don't have to appear "stupid" here. They see their teammate and friend acting out-of-character and they not only call him out on it but show consequences to it-- Jessica kicks him out and essentially lays down an ultimatum. That leads into the cliffhanger, which promises more of the hero versus hero trope that has been a large focus of pretty much every major storyline at Marvel for the past decade. That makes appearances of folks like Blue Streak that much more appreciated, at any rate. by Danny Wall

The post Captain America & the Mighty Avengers #2 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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