

Saying you love a certain character can mean a lot of different things: you admire what they stand for; you think they're hilarious; they remind you of someone you know (or yourself); you wish they were real so you can hang out with them yourself. I've run through all these variations in saying I love so-and-so, but every now and then there's a character who covers the whole gamut. One of those lucky few is Waid's Matt Murdock. There are plenty of characters claimed to be everymen, but Matt is one of the few who fits that profile yet not boring. He's smart, but no genius; funny, but hardly on Peter Parker's incessant level; comfortably good-looking; courageous and confident, but also vulnerable and deeply compassionate. All of these qualities are on display this issue, most of all in the opening scene of Matt, Kirsten, and Foggy working on Matt's autobiography. On one level, it's completely unrelatable: you're talking about a superhero recalling past costumed exploits for his memoirs, after all. But underneath the fantasy, Waid perfectly captures the warmth of three good friends sitting around in a room and having fun just being with each other. When Matt tries to polish an anecdote by cutting it off where he's got the upper hand, Foggy, being his best friend, immediately punctures the ego-boost: "Fun Daredevil fact: every single time Matt has to improve, he course-corrects by overacting." Kirsten, being his girlfriend, joins in: "It's the perfect summation of your entire Daredevil career, 'I told a lie and got beaten up.'" But there's a tragic dimension to all this jolliness, which is that Matt's gunning for the autobiography money to pay for Foggy's cancer treatments and persuading Foggy to write it to distract him from how costly those treatments are. Trust Matt to make you laugh and melt your heart at the same time. It's a habit he applies to his and Kirsten's latest case, George Smith, formerly a crook-gone-straight called the Stunt-Master who wants to sue the company that sold his codename and image. Unlike Charles Soule's She-Hulk, Waid doesn't get into the legal nitty-gritty of the plot, but he does accurately capture a common feature of legal work in the way Matt deals with George's increasing lividness with the situation. Even as he's working day and night to find some way to give George his day in court, George assails Matt with complaints and rants, at times making Matt's work harder. Yet Matt keeps his cool, despite the new, painfully cocky Stunt-Master's attack on his own identity, trying to work with George through the emotional as well as legal snarls of the case. Matt may be telling a white lie when he says he doesn't care about the new Stunt-Master appropriating his Man Without Fear tagline, but he's definitely sincere in that he cares more for George's fate than his own. Only then does he get into Daredevil gear to confront Stunt-Master, who presents him with yet another one of those unusual yet remarkably well-grounded dilemmas that Waid constantly brings to this series. It doesn't forgive the fact that Stunt-Master is an incredibly shallow villain, in personality, background, and motivation, but it certainly distracts you from that fact. Samnee's storytelling is second to none in the business, capable of hitting the big moments as well as the small, always with the most perfect of timing. The sequence that shows this best is the one with Matt's ongoing phone conversations with George, each pushing the story steadily forward but revealing information in the background: the long hours he and Kirsten put in, Stunt-Master's growing profile, their mixed emotions in handling a somewhat loser of a case. All that suddenly stops with a big newspaper headline proclaiming George's suicide, followed by a wordless panel of Matt's back as he leans looking out against the window while Kirsten reads the paper further. And then the topper: a close-up on him ripping off his shirt to reveal the DD costume underneath, several buttons flying off in the process—a tiny detail that makes all the difference in the world in how you read that scene. No wonder Samnee is credited as co-storyteller with Waid; he actually deserves it. Some Musings: - My heart breaks a little every time I see Foggy get a little thinner. Again, this is Samnee with the

huge little details. - If the new Stunt-Master wasn't such a sadistic asshole, I'd be totally into his shtick, too. Oh, I'd be watching his YouTube channel fervently, you can bet. The post Daredevil #11 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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