

It's bad timing on my part to pick up a title just when its current creative era is coming to an end. Had I known this issue would be Wood and Smallwood's last, I might have thought twice about reviewing the series, but not about following it. While I'm still pondering whether to stay on for the next writer-artist team, I can say with confidence that I don't regret my time with Moon Knight, even if at the end, it proves not quite as daring as it started off being. There's no way to get through a critique of the issue without spoilers, so be on high alert. I had high hopes for the idea of General Lor being a radical dictator and Warsame an innocent victim of his revolution. That would have required a high moral accounting from all parties, including Marc to make a case as to why someone like Lor shouldn't pay, even outside a legitimate court of law. I say "would have" because Wood flips around the entire premise, making a judgment call a whole lot easier. I guess it's an interesting twist for Warsame to be revealed as no poor village girl, but the daughter of a corrupt governor from Akima's colonial days, a man who bled the country dry for him and his own to live high and mighty. That in itself doesn't destroy Warsame's credibility; she's partially redeemed by the fact that regardless of her class, she was still an innocent victim who had her life as she knew it taken from her. But the fact that all she's done thus far—swaying Khonshu, plotting Lor's capture and eventual assassination—was just to get back her former riches does make your sympathy vanish. There's an open question, one I'm not sure Wood meant to leave open since he never addresses it, as to why no one makes a big deal about Lor's violent, extralegal means of punishing Warsame's father, yet everyone brings the hammer down on Warsame's head for wanting to do the same thing to Lor. Is it just because Lor did end up stabilizing the country, or so everyone says? No one's claimed that absolves him of his crimes, but it's significant that he does go free in the end. Marc had good counterpoints to Warsame's grievances, as Khonshu acknowledges, but that doesn't mean she's entirely wrong, either. As I said, Wood doesn't take on these considerations, but rather rushes to condemn Warsame. It's a somewhat humiliating defeat as she gradually loses her powers, then her back-up, then her dignity as Marc stops her with nothing more than a crescent boomerang to her hand.* The scene is saved from total anticlimax by Warsame's helpless, traumatized rage, in which her demands for her family's money seem to mask a desperation to bring back the life she should have had. Smallwood's art doesn't go out of its way to impress, but has such emotional precision that it's striking anyway. There's nothing showy about his storytelling, but every panel works to narrow your focus to the most essential elements of the page. It's not surprising that some of the most evocative sequences are ones in which Smallwood zooms in on a certain movement or facial expression, revealing the psychology at work underneath. Nothing excess comes off his art, just the necessary intensity, which is all the more affecting. Like the best acting, Smallwood's art succeeds in what it doesn't do than what it does, and what it doesn't do is make drama out of a headache, so to speak. Bellaire's coloring smoothly supports his efforts, its flatness taming colors that might otherwise have seemed too vibrant for the series. Most impressive is the accuracy of Bellaire's lighting, able to easily distinguish the edgy, yellow afternoon sun from midair and the frosty, almost white daylight in a Northern European fjord. Some Musings:* Which immediately brought to mind Sailor Moon. Yeah, I said it. The post Moon Knight #12 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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