

Let's be honest-- Silk's going to have an uphill battle to win over the hearts of readers everywhere. After all, she's created to be a knockoff of Spider-Man, which results in creators going out of their way to establish how she's not just a knockoff of Spider-Man. Robbie Thompson is new to Marvel and has this onerous task. His solution? Write about it. Make Silk the Character struggle with her place in the Marvel universe, just as, meta-narratively, Silk the Intellectual-Property struggles to find a spot within the comics marketplace. Thus, Silk defaults to behavior of what she thinks a superhero (in the tradition of Spider-Man) does-- patrol for criminal behavior, banter during supervillain fights, maintain a secret identity, etc. The story is interesting in that these things just don't work anymore. She doesn't find criminals and/or they get away, she can't come up with a funny quip, and she abandons her roommate for the solitude of a bunker. This kind of story works precisely because of the character Silk herself-- it wouldn't necessarily work for any other established hero and would be difficult for a brand-new character without a tie to a legacy. There's even some ground work laid for future mysteries, as we really don't know anything about Silk apart from the ham-fisted way she burst into Spider-Man's stories and launched the Spider-Verse event. This was certainly one of my complaints about Silk from the beginning, and it made her seem less like a real character and more like something I would have created for fanfic or for rolling up Marvel Super Heroes role-playing PCs. Still, much of what we get in this issue is a little on-the-nose-- the pathos of searching for a lost family, especially an endearing little brother; the ominous feeling of a powerful conspiracy; the redundant return to cliches of working as a news reporter, especially with J. Jonah Jameson. There's also more than a little housecleaning, to clear away things that the new writer doesn't want, namely the roommates and any romantic feelings for Spider-Man. Like two negatives canceling each other out, let's just hope forcing some things away that felt forced in the first place might actually be a positive in the long run. The art from Stacey Lee really helps create a signature tone for the issue, making it a perfect choice. There is a predominance of bold lines and clear but exaggerated expressions. It's stark and graphic, while still being clear and fluid. Actually, I'd say it gives a feeling like reading a newsprint manga, quite distinctive from anything published right now. The colors, too, are a perfect fit. They supplement the bold lines with equally bold areas of color, but it's all an undertone so nothing seems garish. It's effective to distinguish time, flashback, and mood. Finally, the villain Dragonclaw is also an appropriate addition. His name and costume certainly feel right out of the 90s (Silk even comments that it's like a Pokémon name) and the character himself is all about trying to find his own identity and place among the criminal community. It's a subtle but effective parallel to Silk's own struggles without calling attention to it. Although more subtly, and maybe even unintentionally, it means we have a Chinese-American hero fighting a villain with a dragon motif. Not sure what to make of that. The post Silk #1 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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