

Superhero fiction requires a certain amount of belief suspension, but how much is always an important consideration. My rule is simple: the closer to reality a story gets, the more realistic it should be. Conversely, a story that's not meant to be taken seriously deserves more of a pass. Of course, some readers have more to give than others; I have a brainy sort of friend who'll watch Star Trek and spend literally all but twenty minutes of the movie instructing me on how red matter could not possibly work.* So if you're anything like my friend, you might not be the right audience for Silver Surfer. You might read this issue and be physically incapable of getting over why there are aliens speaking Spanish in deep space ("¡Gracias!" "¡Mi héroe!"). I don't even want to know what'll happen if you manage to make it to the space hillbillies. Your brains might actually explode. In fact, that whole sequence, in which the hillbillies attempt to force Dawn into a marriage of convenience, is a pretty good test of whether this title is right for you. "What in tarnation?! That's all of our fruit pies!" screams the would-be groom. His granny is also aghast. "[Silver Surfer's] turnin' 'em into—" "Mammy's weddin' ring!" "Quick, Granny! Help me figure out which one's the right one!" "Land's sakes! They all look the same!" Obviously, it takes someone willing to go along with Silver Surfer's cosmic flow to appreciate what makes it special, and that someone is Dawn. At some point, Slott had to stop relying on quirky mannerisms and pin down what exactly her attraction is. Here, it may be that she's game for just about anything, even when Norrin takes her to a part of the universe that's a complete void, an expanse devoid of any existence whatsoever. Norrin being who he is, any romantic interest would have to be able to see such things as an adventure, which Dawn does: "Nah. Let's go a little farther." But Dawn's easygoing ways can be taken too far, as very often, she's the passive player in these tales. Like any number of superhero girlfriends these days, she's got the guts but rarely the opportunity to put it into action. She's the damsel-in-distress with greater endurance. In this one issue, Norrin rescues her from giant space-ladybugs, deadly Conquistadors, the aforementioned hillbillies, and then a living darkness that captures her in the void. At best, she's encouraging and supportive, especially as a voice for Norrin's board ("[H]e doesn't like it when you break down his molecules and put him back together."); at worst, she's distracting him with inanely feminine concerns, like demanding he maintain the ladybug pattern on all her clothing** or asking excitedly if "we're going out" when he gives her a silver ring to keep track of her. Clearly, there's more work to be done before Dawn can be a viable partner on this series. To sell the silliest jokes, you often need the most deadpan delivery, and Michael Allred delivers the artistic equivalent of a straight face for every gag Slott comes up with. That whole thing with the hillbillies is funny because there's not even a hint of exaggeration in the visuals; it's literally an Appalachian family bumbling around in space, dismayed by the sight of their fruit pies morphing into wedding rings. Allred doesn't try too hard to sell the humor; he lets the gag speak for itself. Laura Allred pulls out colors I've never even heard of to give the title its distinct palette, a combination of soft pastels spiced with schoolhouse reds, yellows, and blues. -Minhquan Nguyen

Some Musings: * This same friend also had strong opinions about the genetic impossibilities in Planet of the Apes. Oh, and he also couldn't stop obsessing over why Danny and Sandy were in a flying car at the end of Grease. Don't even get me started on the fiasco that was watching Groundhog Day. ** Let's try to look past the fact that she's bizarre enough to want that, just because it's her "thing." I guess Slott sees obsessive-compulsiveness as cute? - "He's smart, fast, fearless, and great with kids. A true champion! He's saved my life—and helped save everyone on my planet. You'll see!" That's Dawn boosting Toomie, by the way. The post Silver Surfer #7 – Review appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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