

It's a reflection of superhero fiction nowadays that you tend to suspect the new guys up until you see their origin story firsthand. Call it the Terra effect, if you will.* Anyway, caution is practically required when your usual heroes are in a pickle and all of a sudden, some shiny new cape swoops in to save them, just as WonderStar did for Clark and Diana last issue. Throw in the fact that he supposedly woke up in a crater one day with one of his few memories being a devotion to the couple, and alarm bells should be clanging right off the wall. Nonetheless, Tomasi does his best to make WonderStar a likable lad, and damn it if he doesn't succeed a little. Maybe it's the sense you get that he's somehow related to Clark and Diana, with his name and dark hair and earnest personality that gives Clark's a run for the money. To one nonplussed cop, he whispers, "I'm new here and my hope was I could get my favorite heroes to help train me to use these gifts I've been given. How much you wanna bet they don't believe me!" It's suspicious as hell, but kind of charming as hell, too. Fortunately, Clark and Diana aren't new to this rodeo ("Going to be one of those days, isn't it?" Diana says as she watches their fan fly off), and take a few measures to figure out his deal. But even using the lasso to pick up any concerning vibes from him, their conclusion is cautiously optimistic. Diana ultimately decides, "I'm happy for now," but also notes a "void" within WonderStar that tells us she isn't seeing the whole picture. That's the tragedy when a traitor doesn't know/remember he's a traitor, as WonderStar apparently doesn't. Even for his kind of character, the honeymoon phase with Clark and Diana is brief, lasting only long enough for them to pull a triple super-punch together before things go decidedly south. You can't help feeling a bit sorry when he starts freaking out over a presence inside him, begging his mentors, "Don't hate me! I don't know who I am!" [Spoiler alert!] Who he is turns out to be Magog, in a WTF moment worthy of Geoff Johns' famous cliffhangers. You have no idea what Tomasi plans to do with Magog and, more importantly, why he added the WonderStar persona to the character. Even the declaration that he's come to save the world from Clark and Diana doesn't tell us much. He certainly stands in a villainous position now, but in past incarnations, Magog is an antihero, someone well-intentioned but whose extreme methods made him too hard to swallow by half. There've been hints that Clark and Diana's romance is not meant to be, causing wrinkles in the time-space continuum. As a figure from the future, maybe Magog is just trying to avoid the same fate as Booster Gold. WonderStar/Magog dominates most of our attention in this issue, stealing the thunder from the already weak-sauce efforts of the ill-named Mammoth, Debutante (who herself loathes her fancy dress get-up and codename), and Crash (who is literally a large crash dummy). Just like Major Disaster and Atomic Skull last issue, the trio seem to be pawns for some bigger mastermind, but mostly just durable cannon fodder for our powerful heroes until the real villains show themselves. What I love most about Mahnke's art is while it lacks the supermodel quality of Ivan Reis or Jesus Saiz's art, it's both larger than life and endearingly human. You're always aware of how powerful and iconic Clark and Diana are, but their looks and mannerism are warm and familiar, giving credit to the idea that they can be a good couple after all. That relatability is key to making you like WonderStar as much as you do in such a short amount of time. His grins are infectious, and when he later loses control, the desperation is clear in his face and easy to sympathize with. Kudos to the inking team for making the linework as bold as it should be, and another set of kudos to the colorists, who ensure every panel pops with vibrant, superhero goodness. Some Musings: * For those who may not know, I'm referring to the Terra who infamously betrayed the Teen Titans back in the eighties. - Hate, hate, hate those little golden wisps in his hair. It's like a bad bleach job. By: Peter J. Tomasi (story), Doug Mahnke (pencils), Jaime Mendoza, Don Ho, Norm Rapmund, Christian Alamy (inks), Tomev Morey & Hi-Fi (colors) The post

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