

I was about to start by saying how bizarre it is to have All-New Hawkeye launching when Hawkeye, which is fairly new itself, is still running. But then I thought of how Batman and Spider-Man have about half a dozen titles each, which makes two Hawkeye ongoing series seem positively restrained by comparison. I guess what feels weird about ANH is how it feels like a premature sequel, as if the Empire struck back before the Rebels were done blowing up the Death Star.*It's also worth noting with some amusement that this is Lemire's second time writing a series starring an archer. While his run on Green Arrow was acclaimed and popularly received, I often thought that had more to do with Andrea Sorrentino's striking, fashionable art than the writing. During his time, Lemire expanded the Oliver Queen mythos pretty significantly without doing much of the same for Ollie's character. Lemire's extensive plotting had the effect of hedging Ollie around, not giving him enough breathing space to show who exactly he was. Matt Fraction's Hawkeye had—has—the reverse problem, so interested in Clint's hapless life and personality that he sometimes left the plot behind altogether. From what you're seeing so far on this title, Lemire's striking a pleasant middle ground between the extremes. He's helped by the fact that by now, Clint and Kate have clearly established voices and dynamic between them. There's no breaking of new ground he has to do here; he just has to preserve what's already been done. That's not as easy as it sounds, since Fraction has a very specific rhythm and style to his dialogue, but Lemire emulates it fairly well. Kate: "Can you remind me again why the hell I agreed to come on this extra-stupid, extra-secret mission with you, Clint?" "Because you're my protégé. Because you love me. Because it's fun." "Not your protégé. Do not love you. Not fun." But Lemire occasionally struggles to maintain that snarky humor, as evidenced by Clint's crotchety response to Kate's sign-off: "Don't 'Hawkeye out' me! You need to learn to respect your eld—" Really? He's pulling aphorisms from seventy-year-old Midwesterners now? Otherwise, Lemire steers us through a compelling issue with a steady hand, interspersing gentle flashbacks of Clint and Barney's troubled childhood through the high-paced action of Kate and Clint's S.H.I.E.L.D. mission. It's a bit Arrow, actually. As with Arrow, it's important that Lemire find a way to link the two halves of the issue together, which he seems to recognize as towards the end, past and present run simultaneously on the page. It's not clear what link Clint's history has on the mission at hand, but there's a motif of exploited, vulnerable children that definitely appears at the end of both plotlines in this issue: Kate's discovery of a tank full of deformed children; the young Clint and Barney coming across a circus as they run away from home. I was positive there had to be two artists working on the issue, but evidently not, which should tell you how extensive Pérez's range is. The differences between past and present aren't just a matter of softer color choices; it's an entirely different aesthetic: the flashback panels are as wavering and wispy as memory, the linework weaker and less confident. Once you paint that over with sunset watercolors, you have a dreamlike sequence that indulges entirely in sentimentality. The other half of the issue follows the lead of David Aja and Annie Wu in thin but crisp and precise lines that practically let the story speak for itself. It's nothing showy or ambitious, but it's clean, with just enough humor to have a personality: the Hydra agents caught munching on a burger or taking a selfie. Some Musings:* For those of our readers who don't know, I'm referring to the plots of the first two Star Wars movies. Oh—spoilers, I guess. - I don't remember Kate being this good fending off glorified nurses in Hawkeye #16. What's up with that? The post All-New Hawkeye #1 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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