

And "just like that, Spider-Verse is over." If that sounds dismissive, hey, I didn't write it. That was the editor's own words as he opened the letter column at the end of the issue. I would hope the creators involved could sound more... enthusiastic as they capped off their very own epic. After all, this issue was bursting with action, with dynamic poses, staging, and intense effects. Nearly all of the key players were brought into a throw-down that did not let up in its pace and kept the stakes raised until the very end. So, why does it feel just a bit... unsatisfying, actually? I mean, this issue was very enjoyable, but when the all lead-up from all the previous issues left me feeling "great!", and when this one is "good!", it can't help but feel like a bit of a let down. Some of that could be a structural problem, as the stage for the final battle has a single, albeit large, setting, and our view switches too dramatically from scene to scene, making it difficult to maintain a coherent thread from beginning to end. For example, a key dramatic moment involves Spider-Ham being switched for a baby, combined with Not-Uncle Ben seeming to abandon his team. But something's missing in the set-up; it doesn't read well, since the baby was never actually seen in direct danger. Likewise in the twist; no one seems to react to Ben's seeming cowardice, so any opportunity for pathos is lost. In other words, should a comedian make a joke in the first place if no one will understand it? Another source of dissatisfaction comes from a lack of Spider-Man's own heroic story. There's been some hints of things before, like Spider-Man questioning his place as a leader of essentially "himselves," and the arrival of Not-Uncle Ben could even have him wondering again about his motivations of heroism. None of these hints were really played out, as Spider-Man just punches peoples enough times, quips, drops the mic on his plot twist, and then collapses into Silk's arms to end the scene. Sure, we certainly want our title hero to be the one to win the day and to keep his moral upstanding, but contrast what little we get from Mayday. Her character actually goes through some significant soul-searching when dramatically appropriate. Spider-Man, though? Nothing has to get mentioned here, perhaps better saved for the epilogue next issue. The biggest disappointment, by far, was the sudden appearance of a character introduced in the beginning of this story arc and, frankly, allowed to be forgotten. Thus it's suggested that the villains' big takedown comes largely from this source of help, and our heroes, despite having built up over and over that this is **THIER** moment, couldn't have done it on their own. Add to that some very significant glossing over of the whole "prophecy" MacGuffin that's been fueling the villains' motivations and, essentially, the entire plot. Nothing is really resolved at all and if any question were ever really answered, they were not answered as a reward for a plot moment nor as fuel for more plot. Again, what was presented as key to the villains' downfall turns out to be nothing of the kind. There was some opportunity, even, for a character like the Master Weaver to crank it all up to some pretty metaphorical, meta-narrative levels, but it's all abandoned for the sake of Superior Spider-Man's hack-and-slash solution to this issue's battle. Artistically, there's enough action going on to keep the book vibrant and the reader gripped. However, the fault of the story becomes a fault of the art as well, as there is little through-line to keep the visual narrative coherent, too. Characters, difficult to distinguish in the best of times, become even more hard to follow as the scenes shift and juggle the various strands. Whereas in the past some distinctive scenery might help, and also some distinctive color palettes, this issue provides little of either. There are a few dramatic angles when they can help sell a scene, especially when characters burst into the area, but by and large most characters default to talking heads or pictures of characters from torso up. I always hesitate to call any artist's work as rushed, but when all these little things add up, that's really the feeling that's created. It's probably a compliment, in a way, as I want to really stick with these characters for more time

than I'm allowed, to really savor the action and development. The post Amazing Spider-Man #16 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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