

Once again, the comic has split in two-- Spider-Man deals with the Ghost's attack on Parker Industries in one, and the Black Cat plans her own... on Aunt May? This looks like the ongoing structure of Amazing Spider-Man post-Spider-Verse event. Unfortunately, it results in providing only 14 pages of Spider-Man story every issue with an only tangential 6-page backup, and thus feeling like a poor value for a \$4 full-price comic. As I've said before, with the same creative team involved, why not structure this so it feels more like a subplot rather than its own ongoing story? It's always nice to see Spider-Man fighting some villains outside his classic repertoire, and the Ghost makes a compelling antagonist as an anti-business anarchist. (I wonder if this is also a subtle way of catering to certain fans who, like the Ghost, are against Parker's current status quo as a company leader?) It just goes to show how even the typical "Parker-luck" type of dilemmas can still get our hero into some entertaining trouble. Anna-Marie also gives a new twist on the familiar Spider-tropes. She repeatedly calls out Parker, or covers for him, adding a touch of humor to the drama of a secret identity. Whether this is truly born from her support of Parker, or will ultimately lead to some further complications, makes for some interesting suspense. Here is a good woman, who came to love a supervillain in disguise, and is now faced with supporting his enemy, who is a hero. There's some pretty complex stuff going on here, and I really want some focus on Anna-Marie and what she must be going through. It's unfortunate that comicbooks these days don't rely on thought bubbles to allow us to explore these insights anymore. The art overall suffers a bit in the action scenes, in particular when the drones attack Parker and his scientists. The angles shift to extremes, and suddenly, confusing the flow. The colors do not help to delineate the action, either. Part of the problem is that the technology creates "smart walls," which would seem to require more attention to staging, which is a clear weak area for this art team. The strengths are certainly in the figure posing and expression, but there relatively little opportunity for this. As for the Black Cat, we continue to witness a development that is more akin to devolvement. She's reduced to just wanting to steal back the things that she stole in the first place. There is some attempt to contextualize this desire-- "Looking at [her stolen painting] every day made [her] feel ... lucky. To be surrounded by such beauty"-- but it feels a little flat, especially when the majority of her thoughts are consumed with some vendetta against Regina Venderkamp for some reason. Again, I might forgive such oversimplification if this was simply a subplot, but by calling attention to her importance by giving the Black Cat her own chapter, the book tries to have its cake and eat it too, which doesn't work. The post Amazing Spider-Man #17 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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