

I wouldn't know if there was much demand for Ant-Man, but with a movie coming out and trailers making their way round the internet, of course it's time to up his profile with a solo ongoing title. Synergy—love it! I have little doubt the cinematic Ant-Man will be a smashing success, but I wonder if his comic book counterpart will do as well in an oversaturated market and with such a messy backstory. Like Geoff Johns throwing in a "talks with fish" joke right off the bat in *Aquaman #1*, Spencer addresses the hard sell that is Ant-Man within the opening pages of his debut: "I'll be the first to admit it, the whole 'Ant-Man thing,' it maybe doesn't wow people as much as you might hope. ... You're at a super hero party, guy's like, 'I'm an immortal god who controls thunder and lightning.' Another guy's like, 'I'm the mutant King of Atlantis.' ... I can make myself really small, talk to ants. Also, divorced. Add in the fact that there's been like a dozen Ant-Mans or sorta Ant-Mans, and most of them are either dead or turned bad guy—the whole thing can be a bit of a wash. But I am trying to make the most of it." There's more than a little of Matt Fraction's Clint Barton in Scott Lang, and you'd be forgiven for thinking at certain points that Scott is just Clint in a full spandex suit and helmet. Their hard-luck personality and habit of bringing trouble upon themselves, squandering the little breaks that come their way, make them kindred spirits, and both share a rapidfire, insecure patter of narration (see the monologue above). This makes Scott quite as likable as Clint, but not as original in the eyes of Hawkeye readers. Scott does have one feature that sets him apart not only from Clint but from nearly all superheroes in the biz, and that's his relationship to daughter Cassie Lang. Unlike the outrageously prodigious Franklin and Valeria Richards, Cassie is as grounded as her dad, which makes their interaction the most normalized of all superhero parent-children in the Marvel U. Scott's enthusiasm as he commiserates with Cassie's high school drama and encourages her strident opinions on Hunger Games versus Battle Royale takes him from likable loser to lovable father, which Spencer capitalizes on the rest of the issue. It's refreshing to get a protagonist who's almost entirely motivated by his role as a parent. Much of his troubled history was driven by exactly that, and this same pressure spurs him on through Tony Stark's employment challenge (and belittling remarks--) and ex-wife Peggy's scoldings. The whole time, he's forced to evaluate what being a father means and how his life as a superhero affects that. As to the first question, he gets it exactly right: being a steady provider is important, but not nearly as much as just being there for his child, even if that means giving up a dream job at Stark Industries in New York City to move into a dollhouse apartment perched riskily on a roof in Miami. But as to the intersection of fatherhood and costumed capers, the jury's still out. Peggy may bristle too much around her ex-husband, but she makes a completely valid point when she calls attention to how dangerous life in Marvel's NYC is, and how his attachment to that life puts their daughter at risk. Like a lot of superhero parents, Scott's convinced he can protect her, which is purely delusional, especially considering Cassie's already died once. It's significant that his last move in the issue is shrinking himself and Cassie down to break in his new, miniature pad, in direct violation of Peggy's rule against any shrinking business. Scott's still in the game, and at some point, he'll have to square the inherent danger of that with his determination to be involved in Cassie's life. Rosanas' art is very much in the vein of Chris Samnee, which is the kind of imitation I do not mind at all. It has that same retro, all-American look and the same solid storytelling style that's flexible enough to cover the most grounded dramatics and the most fantastic sci-fi with equal agility. True, Rosana's figures are a little lankier, a little less expressive, and overall, he's missing the snap and boldness Samnee brings on a monthly basis to Daredevil, but it's strong work, nonetheless. Some Musings: - When Scott compares Tony's unwinnable employment challenge to the Kobayashi Maru test from Star Trek, Tony says

ambiguously, "Oh, you're one of those." As a Star Trek fan, I can sense I'm being insulted here, but I'm not sure how. - As a children's attorney who occasionally picks up a family law case where the divorcing parents are just so hideous that the kids are being psychologically traumatized, I hear all kinds of warning bells in the way Scott and Peggy squabble over custody versus visitation, demanding approval before something as innocuous as escorting Cassie home from school, etc. Here's a tip to parents: that crap will screw up your kid, so please don't do it. - "I wonder if you can sue for a hostile work environment before you're technically hired." Good question. Any employment law attorneys wish to chime in here? The post Ant-Man #1 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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