

Self-awareness is one of the greatest of human weaknesses. That's right, self-awareness, so beloved by pop psychologists and faux-gurus, is in fact a flaw. It is a kind of narcissism, a dwelling on one's own characteristics and being. That's bad enough, but where it leads is even worse. For the truly self-aware, the denial of imperfection can become arrogance and, eventually, dictatorial evil. Or, inversely, the true acceptance of sins becomes depression and denial of worth, a wallowing in shortcomings that leads through self-pity to bitterness and despair and, finally, evil by another route. *Convergence: Justice League of America #1*, is self-aware. That isn't to say it's evil. Unlike some volume of Grant Morrison's Multiversity saga, the extra-dimensional Gentry are not about to come bursting through the walls of reality to engulf the characters and setting in darkness. But it is flawed. This Justice League, you see, was that which existed right on the cusp of the Crisis, the ill-regarded and poorly remembered Detroit Justice League. In the minds of many readers over the years, it has become a kind of League of Losers, an assembly of wannabes, has-beens, and never-weres attempting to reach for glory beyond their deserts. Which is totally false, both then and now. Just the reappearance of Sue and Ralph Dibny should be enough to banish such dreary appraisals. In a title that featured the excruciating Identity Crisis storyline, there is simply no way the Detroit era can deserve the disrespect heaped upon it. Unfortunately, author Fabian Nicieza chooses to play up this trope by having Ralph narrate the recent history and trials of the Justice League trapped under Braniac's dome. We are treated in wearying detail to a review of Aquaman, Martian Manhunter, Vibe, Steel, Mimic, and Zatanna and the humiliations they have experienced during imprisonment. Rather than speaking of courage during adversity, it is a frustrating exhibition of self-criticism and lack of confidence. You want to cheer for these heroes, but the narrative voice often also makes you want to slap them. To a certain extent, it is inevitable that the story will spend a lot of time setting the stage. Thirty years are a long time in both life and comics, and we need to be reminded of these characters and the moment in history from which they come. But the arrival of Tangent Universe's Secret Six comes, not as an afterthought, but too late in the story to have the full impact it ought. And unfortunately, Nicieza milks the confrontation for yet another meditation on the Justice League's perceived inadequacy. Chris Cross provides art that is fluid and elongated, as if everyone partakes to an extent of Ralph Dibny's powers as Elongated Man. The subtly reinforces the welcome centrality of his character, while also giving the proceedings a light and mobile air, perhaps light enough to come dangerously close to a cartoon. Snakebite's bright colors might have done service to a more positive and self-assured story. *Convergence: Justice League of America #1* appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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