

Mister Fantastic escapes from the Quiet Man, who ... fades away? That's appropriate, I suppose, but for someone who keeps saying he's trying to not be a cliché supervillain, that sure is a cliché move. I'm all for superheroey kinds of tropes, but in this day and age you might have to do a little bit more with your villains than blatantly follow such conventions. It almost makes you wonder if the Quiet Man is really supposed to be anything more than a plot device in general, someone we (and the writer) doesn't have to give much thought to, so long as the plot can merrily trip along each predetermined beat. What's a little better is the tender moment between Bentley (and the Future Kids) and the Wizard. That's a much more rich and complex relationship, although with just a sentence or two, the burden is on the reader to realize just how much Bentley is bending our expectations of heroics and villainy. He's a self-aggrandizing little bastard, sure, but he's got friends, dammit. Overall, as the plot arc nears a conclusion, most of the elements seem to be coalescing, finally. This is actually pretty good news. Whereas the majority of this series' current run has literally split the team apart, the result was forcing each issue to juggle between three or four wholly different set pieces at any given time. With Mister Fantastic's and the Future Foundation's escapes, we see some actual reunions happening. Hey, there's still a lot of juggling in this issue until the page-16 reunions actually happen, but still. And there's not any passage of time shown until suddenly everyone bursts through the door, but still.

And then there's Sleepwalker. Or really just Rick Sheridan, who doesn't exactly win us over with his snarky yet moping personality. Way to make a first impression, Rick. We have to take a few pages to explain the history of our guest star, even though the actual alien hero has yet to appear (thanks again, Rick!) And I'm not quite sure exactly how this is supposed to work. Somehow, Franklin's dream is a nightmare and an actual world? So the alien Sleepwalker who can go into dreams, can go into this physical world? And can bring others with him? I can suspend disbelief with the best of them, but this logic seems to be based on nothing more than "Since the word 'dream' is in common with both descriptions, of course this will work." Kirk/Kessel really help distinguish the look of this story, and the art is definitely the high point of the story. They bring a lot of the emotion to the fore, rendering facial expression and body postures to help convey tone and acting, both in the expository moments and in the action. I love Mister Fantastic's pose as he escapes, and seeing the thoughts process over Bentley and the Wizard. It's too bad the generic monsters that are invading the world are so, well, generic, which does reduce the tension in the battles a bit, though. There is indeed a lot going on, with many guest stars and cameos, and it looks like a giant titanic tussle is looming, and I hope Kirk/Kessel will be on board to deliver more energetic action to come. The post Fantastic Four #643 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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