

You know those "caper films," the ones featuring a heist, a long con, or otherwise convoluted series of events that take our heroes through an overly-complicated and intricate plan? Love those things. So it's great that in this issue, the majority of the story is focusing on the Thing's caper to escape prison with the Sandman. Also great is the fact that this caper brings in a lot of familiar faces. From She-Hulk to Darla "Miss Fantastic" to Medusa, this was virtually a who's-who (sorry-- "virtually a Marvel Handbook") of past FF members. Still, most of them are essentially cameo appearances, with some token dialogue at best. Ant-Man, who is pretty integral to the plan, has one line: "We all here? Good." Unfortunately, what makes caper films so great are those little complications when everything goes horribly wrong, and the twists make for a roller coaster thrill ride. There's none of that here, so the tension is, essentially, absent. There is one moment, however, and it's quite effective, as the Thing faces off against Sharon/She-Thing. The art slows down, becomes enshrouded in shadows, and silent panels are allowed to pause the ongoing narration. It's actually quite heartbreaking as the She-Thing looks over her shoulder at the fleeing Thing. He didn't even offer to have her escape with them. That's cold, Ben Grimm. Sharon knows she is being abandoned yet again, her misery palpable. We know, too, that she's probably going to be abandoned by the writer, too, as she's left in obscurity. That leaves her in good company, perhaps, as there's a lot that's abandoned by the writer, most notably the whole reason that the Thing's in prison in the first place. Remember the murder of the Puppet Master? This was my original complaint-- it's nothing more than an arbitrary and flagrant event to push the Thing into his plot, with all kinds of natural and essential questions that are blatantly ignored. The entire ranks of the Avengers have descended upon the Fantastic Four for less than this, but the Thing can escape prison with no one batting an eye. Equally arbitrary is the decision to switch back to blue uniforms. It's explicitly called out by the Invisible Woman that the red colors "never felt quite right" and she figured they "go full circle" and return to blue. I think I got a bruise from the metacommentary hitting me over the head so hard. Elsewhere, we are promised that the villain will "tell [us] everything," but I guess we'll have to wait another issue at least. Despite him revealing himself and his accomplices, we are no closer to finding out why all of this is happening than we did at the beginning of this relaunched series over one year ago. Pretty much all of the guys' lackeys are unnamed, too, leaving it to the readers to speculate on why we should care about the villain and his motivations. That's a heck of a long time for a buy-in with no hint at anything more significant than moments of "OK, so this character does this thing. And later, he does this. Then, he goes here." The post Fantastic Four #13 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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