

After last issue's dramatic conclusion of Olive rearing out of the flames to break up Pomeline and Co.'s pagan ritual, it's somewhat anticlimactic to open this issue with the groundskeepers running in to douse everyone with buckets of water before sending Olive to detention. But such is the course of many school adventures. The problem with this turn of events is not realism, but that it takes us right to the edge of discovering something about the darkness in Olive, then cuts us off. But a faint picture is beginning to form. Here, she confesses that her mom is in a "kind of...hospital... And this summer the hospital collapsed." If you happened to read *Arkham Manor #2*, you'll know that Olive's absent mother was actually placed in Arkham Asylum (now Arkham Manor). You'll also know that she's in possession of a secondary personality, "Calamity," whom Bruce warily believes capable of burning down the whole institution if released. That might explain why Olive has both a fear and affinity with fire, but it could also mean something more ominous. The fact that Olive has a big blank in her memory from the summer, and that much of what went down between her, her mom, and most likely Batman happened during that time, suggests a couple things. It could mean that the experience of seeing her mom on a rampage was so traumatic that Olive suppressed it. But it could also mean that Olive has inherited something of her mom's destructive persona, one that surfaced during the summer. Batman watching over Olive could thus be seen as what he feels is his responsibility for putting away her mom, or as ensuring Olive's dark side doesn't resurface. These are heavy considerations, but actually the issue is much brighter than that. Olive finally makes peace with Kyle, in a scene as devoid of actual sentiment as it is picturesque. Cloonan-Fletcher have put too little effort into Olive and Kyle's relationship to make us care whether they reconcile or not, and given Kyle's generally cool demeanor, he's not terribly convincing having a heart-to-heart. Their exchange gets quite gooey ("It's okay if you break my heart, I can take it."), but you feel nothing. So it really is for the best that they agree to give Olive some space. Maybe that vacuum will be filled by the obnoxious but cunning Colton, with whom Olive has a classic romantagonistic relationship,* or maybe by the creepy blond with the Gambit eyes who increasingly seems to have supernatural abilities. Fortunately, Cloonan-Fletcher don't emphasize the adolescent romance aspects, which would be a drag, because as we all know, teen relationships are the worst (mostly). Instead, the dominating tone of the issue is your classic gang of kids, snooping around and getting up to no good, which is the best gang of kids. Now that Pomeline and Colton have joined the Olive-Maps duo, the chemistry is much more energetic, with the other older kids annoying Olive out of her funk and Maps softening Pom and Colton's usual aloofness. You're still not necessarily in love with these characters yet, but you're perfectly willing to see them throwing themselves against the ghosts and ghouls possibly haunting Gotham Academy. The art is still the title's biggest selling point, and like Nicola Scott on *Earth 2*, Kerschl will probably keep you invested in the series even if the story drifts below its currently decent quality. The juvenile cartooniness of Kerschl's art doesn't add much complexity to the straightforward emotions at play in the issue—he certainly doesn't help Kyle shed his frigid exterior—but he makes the immaturity of the characters a rather charming thing, whether it's Pom's sulky pouts, Maps' boisterous glee, even Heathcliff's wistful glances as he wonders whether Pom will ever notice him. Some Musings: - You know, the antagonistic romance that plagues almost all rom-coms. A quick Google and Bing indicates that I may be the first to coin the term, so let's make it a thing, people! - Heathcliff joined a cult to get Pom to like him, and yet she's the one complaining he's too fixated on his musical interests to notice her: "Urgh! Seriously? It's like I don't even exist!" Obviously, they have some communication problems. - Pomeline having three smartphones = bad parenting. We all agree on that, right? The post

Gotham Academy #3 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

Read more: <http://weeklycomicbookreview.com/2014/12/05/gotham-academy-3/>