

When I was in high school, being random was kind of a big thing. By that I mean awkwardly injecting non sequiturs into conversation and behaving a bit oddly were somehow considered desirable attributes to have. Of all the so-called random kids I knew back then, though, only a couple were genuine (and probably had a cognitive disorder of some kind). The rest went out of their way to put on a show. I guess it was all they had left if they couldn't pull off acting cool, tough, or smart. Similarly, I can never tell if Nocenti's just trying too hard to be unexpected or if she's genuinely that erratic. I'm not sure it matters—either way, you've got a messy read—but I lean towards the latter. It's never too difficult to see what she's trying to do at any given moment; it's only when you step back that you realize how the moving parts don't really fit together. Unfortunately, a lot of that comes down to the character work, which Nocenti doesn't always seem to think through. This couldn't be clearer in the way she portrays Klarion himself. For example, it's hard to square why Klarion, a warlock from another world, has the dialect of a SoCal street punk: "Chill out, Rasp," "Something strange is happening to your whole body, dude," "Damn, we almost killed each other," "Later, dude. You gotta rest up." Strange language choices aside, you can't get much of a sense of Klarion's basic personality, as most of his actions thus far have been dictated by others. Maybe I'm still attached to the pre-relaunch Klarion who was delightfully grossed out by girls, love, the whole romantic caboodle, but I see it as a step down that Zell can order him around so easily, especially when her charms have yet to be established. I get why Rasp's so into her—the obsessive nerd types always fall for any girl who pays them the slightest attention and Zell admits they have "...history"—but I don't see what's got Klarion all hot and bothered. As Nocenti dilly-dallies with character scenes that don't actually reveal much character, the magic falls by the wayside. Oh, there's plenty of it being thrown around in the issue, but Nocenti makes the common mistake of failing to ground it all. If Klarion needs to stop his fall, he just does it. If he needs to fly, bring Rasp down, or shield himself from a mob, he just does it. It's that arbitrariness that makes magic series boring; it's impossible to tell when something will work or why. By contrast, Nocenti gives a thorough explanation of what the folk over at the Necropolitan Club are up to and it's weirdly at odds with their cadaverous appearance. The tech they injected Rasp with is apparently a prototype of their "Buddybots," a mechanical, adaptive bug that befriends its host and makes them addicted for more Necropolitan tech. Why? "I live in an old bank," snaps mastermind Coal, "...What do you think I want?" It's not a terribly deep motive, but more problematically, it doesn't clarify their hostilities with the Moody Museum, unless it's a generic tech-versus-magic thing. At this point, the best thing Klarion has going for it is McCarthy's art. As undefined as the spells are in the issue, he gives each spellcaster a distinctive style of magic that at least suggests some kind of order in the chaos: Klarion's blue swirls, Piper and Noah's symbol-studded whorls, Rasp's electric bolts. McCarthy's paneling also tells a story of its own, as Rasp's access to "the Shroud" is surrounded by imagery of webs and spiders. It's a pity; McCarthy is capable of drawing anything, yet the script gives him little material to impress with. -Minhquan Nguyen

The post Klarion #2 – Review appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

Read more: <http://weeklycomicbookreview.com/2014/11/18/klarion-2-review-2/>