

I was in a good place, Marvel-wise, last year, but now I'm finding myself starting to run lopsided towards DC again, especially with Hawkeye, Iron Fist: The Living Weapon, and She-Hulk coming to an end. So lately, I've been scoping around for a good Marvel title or two to staunch the wound, and Moon Knight seems perfect. I know next to nothing about him and it continues my trend toward solo characters in this universe. (For full disclosure, I actually picked up the series a couple months ago, but time has not been kind enough to let me review it.) What's impressive about this series and this particular arc so far is how convincingly it sets up its political conflict, which as we know from Letter 44 and the like, not every comic book writers can do. Borrowing from real current affairs is an ancient strategy, and if Aliman Lor was merely a stand-in for, say, Omar al-Bashir, then Moon Knight wouldn't be terribly special. It's the range of issues Wood raises with Lor and his ability to articulate their opposing views that sets the title apart. #9 introduced the basic tension of a monster freely ruling the country he brutalized. #10 debated the value of an global institution that would not only allow such a man to stay in power, but legitimize his control. Here, Marc Spector, ex-Moon Knight, tackles the question of the most appropriate way to depose such a leader, which also works as a manifesto for vigilantism: "A direct response to an observable crime. In the case of Lor, he should find justice in a public trial and incarceration. A full accounting of his crimes in front of the world would do more to heal than his corpse turning up on some street corner. Victim of a random crime." Countering him is Dr. Elisa Warsame, who usurped the favor of Khonshu, the Moon Knight's patron deity, in #9. Her point of view has already been made clear in the last couple issues, in which she forcefully argued that a menace such as Lor should be punished immediately and that every minute he's not is a further injustice. Marc and Warsame's conflict is a common one, but it's the clarity with which they defend their positions that works. But Marc suggests that there's something more to Warsame's beef than personal or philosophical grievances. He points out, "She could have moved against Lor when he was less protected, less public. Why act now? And why the intermediaries? Why manipulate soldiers and cops into committing murder?" All very true, all telling us there's more to learn about Warsame in coming issues. Besides this war of ideas, Marc has serious tangible problems with his detention by unknown, masked people in an unknown facility in which all sorts of illegal is done to him. The beatings and lack of Miranda rights are the least of it. There are also pills and shots and not a little bit of psychological abuse, with one masked man telling Marc that submission isn't enough; it's "willing participation" they want. Before you get too up in arms, the man also lists some admittedly rational justifications for Marc's treatment: "You dressed up like a psychopath and breached One World Trade Center. You attacked a visiting delegation at the United Nations building... You blew up [your doctor's] house." But this is akin to Warsame's desire to gun down Lor without a trial, punishment without justice. Smallwood's art is very much of the Chris Samnee/David Aja school, which is a pretty high compliment. The stark setting of the issue doesn't call for a lot of detail, but what little Smallwood provides is eloquent, like the blandness of the food Marc is fed* or the macabre, shadowy texture of Khonshu's massive skull. But it's Sweetwood's powerful storytelling that takes Moon Knight into artistic high class. The opening pages, divided into a grid of 6 by 5 panels, effectively conveys the chain of events after he saved Lor from assassination last issue, the length of time Marc is kept in detention, and the many degradations he experiences. Every panel is precisely constructed to offer the necessary information with maximum impact. The flat pastels provided by Bellaire are the perfect complement for Marc's sterile environment, interrupted by striking reds when the story's tension peaks. Some Musings:* It doesn't look that bad, honestly. Kind of wholesome and probably healthier than what I feed myself on a daily

basis. The post Moon Knight #11 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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