

Funny that it's taken twenty-five issues to get a real, sustained look at the war that started it all. In a way, there's something brilliant to reducing a galaxy-wide conflict responsible for changing and ending so many lives to the periphery of the story. You can read that in a lot of different ways: our ability to get used to anything if it goes on long enough; how we distance ourselves from the unpleasant until it grabs us by the collar and stares us right in the face; the distinction between war as a social and political tool and the actual hostilities between parties. All of these things appear in Hazel's briefing on the Landfall-Wreath situation, which doesn't go so much into what actually set the two worlds off on each other,* but outlines its increasingly obligatory nature. We start from the early draft days that forced everyone to have a stake in what was happening and steadily proceed to the later voluntary/coerced forces that took the battles away from the general populace, leaving them free to put the war out of mind. What we end up with is a conflict running more on momentum than a genuine point of order. There are direct parallels (and, consequently, criticisms) to the development of American war-making, but the biggest and crucial distinction is America evolved over the course of many different engagements, while Landfall and Wreath has been fighting one endless battle. At this point, whole new generations have been sucked into a conflict whose origins they never experienced for themselves. Remember Marko's parents forcibly exposing him as a child to a particularly bloody massacre? Clearly, this war is being run by people way higher up on the ladder, not the folks supporting the bottom rungs. Just when you think you're really getting somewhere in understanding the context of this series, Vaughan decides we've had enough and flips us back to the plot at hand, which doesn't so much advance as stall in an oddly comfortable way. That's entirely due to the strength of the characters, who've proven they can be entertaining while doing practically nothing at all. Let them bicker over the right way to handle a hostage situation or track down their lost family members or acquire sperm from a giant lizard, and you can happily read for a long, long time. Of all these storylines, the one where Gwen and her pals are searching for a cure for the Will is more of an adventurous diversion (and an opportunity for Vaughan and Staples to get in their monthly grossery, i.e., the gang getting pissed on direct from the vagina of one of the aforementioned giant lizards). Maybe it's because the Will is stable (albeit vegetal) in a cushy hospital ward, but you don't feel the same urgency from this quest as, say, Marko and Prince Robot's for their kid, nor are you as torn up by the delay Hazel forewarns for each group in achieving their goals. If it's going to take that long for a reunion, there had better be some good times in between, and Vaughan obliges by introducing yet another party to the mix: "A heroic band of freedom fighters dedicated to ending both of your worlds' reigns of terror...the Revolution." Sounds awesome; so why does Alana regard them with mingled horror and disgust? Should we be afraid of the means they're using, or that their stated purpose is more P.R. than sincere? It takes a special kind of artist to draw an effective montage, and Staples obviously qualifies. This is especially true when the montage is woven together thematically rather than by time or movement. Staples has to communicate the points Vaughan wants to make about war by a series of disconnected images, yet each has to inform and build from the others. Comics are particularly suited for this task, hitting each emotional beat with precision, whereas the moving action of TV and film tends to blend them together into a less distinct mass of sentimentalism. And of course, there's always the pissing giant lizard. Some Musings:* Something disproportionately petty and stupid, you expect. - Marko and Robot, you can have your violent squabbles, but you do not take it out on Ghüs, do you understand? Leave Yuma in a smoking heap for all I care, but Ghüs is off-limits! The post Saga #25 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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