

I was sadly disappointed by the first two issues of Spider-Man and the X-Men. I've said it before, but how could Spider-Man and a team of teen mutants, including one called Shark Girl, fighting Stegron the Dinosaur Man as seen by the head writer of the Daily Show not be everything I ever wanted in life? Regardless, though the second issue upped the quality of the series, it still failed to live up to its potential. How strange then that a visit to the Mojoverse, one of the least interesting X-Men locales in my opinion, should prove so perfect for the series. With the task of justifying our heroes' predicament handled in the last issue, Elliott Kalan is free to dive straight into his tale, and it does seem a rather perfect one for him. While the team up of the Chameleon and Mojo isn't as natural as Sauron and Stegron, the world of late night television is a perfect place to put Kalan's talents to use. Perhaps I just came to the series in a different mood or with lower expectations but I found this issue to be easily funnier than the last two combined. On some level it makes sense, Mojo and the Chameleon fit naturally into the odd, almost Loony Toons take on Spider-Man that Kalan is crafting with this series. The Chameleon's limited power set becomes fodder for great comedy as his brilliant disguises are swiftly and repeatedly torn to shreds by Spider-Man and Rockslide and Kalan clearly gets Mojo's voice, even if he feels a little too controlled by it at times, rather than the other way around. This is indicative of the remaining flaws with the title. While Kalan has stepped up his game in a pretty significant way, there are still a few places where the feeling of inexperience creeps in. Spider-Man's intentionally bad jokes still feel off and there are some moments where attempts to hide narrative patches under humor can't fully disguise the problems in the plot. Still, Kalan has accomplished that rare feat, the single issue story, and he's done it beautifully. The first two issues felt like they were reaching out for the Marvel comics of Kalan's childhood, but this actually has something of that classic Marvel atmosphere and it's a great benefit to the issue. One other thing that really stands out in this issue is the credit Kalan gives his characters. It would be easy for the humorless among us to say that this sort of series debases the characters, turning them into fools, but Kalan actually does a fine job of laughing with and not at his characters. The Chameleon, for instance, keeps his edge even as he's seen through again and again. Kalan also gives some of his 'lesser' characters a day in the sun as No-Girl and Eye-Boy each prove capable adversaries to Mojo on their own. We also get at least one good moment with each of the kids, which is great, as plenty of other team books can go months without hearing from some of their team members. It's nice to see that Kalan is building these characters up as he's cracking jokes. Marco Failla is our artist once again and, as ever, his energetic and angular sensibility is a great boon to the series. There's a great energy to Failla's work this month. Failla uses classic blocking tropes to great effect. You know exactly what motions Spidey is making as he delivers his opening monologue or confronts the cameraman as his make-up person swoops in to touch him up. Failla also does some solid design work. I don't think I've ever seen Mojo look like this before, but I kind of like it. Admittedly it's harder to see the Clockwork Orange apparatus that's been the character's trademark but the strange, alien eyes are a cool look. Failla's Mojo walks a careful line between the realistic and the simplified. He fits in well with the other geometric characters, but there's something about the way that his folds sit that's all too real. It's a Mojo that captures the eerie grossness of the character without being hard to look at. Of course not all the characters fair so well. Gambit has a slightly vampiric and/or Michael Jackson-esque pallor about him and some cameos from Doctor Octopus and Hammerhead look noticeably off. I'd also be remiss if I didn't mention an incredible spread near the beginning of the issue featuring, at least part of, the Sinister Sixty-Six. From an impressively fierce Lizard to an awesome technological Rhino to a

seemingly Spectacular Spider-Man inspired Venom to a cameo from Vermin(!) Failla does an incredible job of rendering Spider-Man's rogues gallery. A Note: Nick Bradshaw and Ian Herring did a really great job on the cover for this issue. It's eye-catching and represents the events of the issue as well as the format of the series. The post Spider-Man And The X-Men #3 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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