

What is it with Supergirl in the New 52? Over the course of thirty-five issues, Kara Zor-El has had four ongoing writers and a couple of fill-ins. Stranger still, I'd argue that each of those runs was solid. It's rare to get one good run on a female-led series, how did this one get four and promptly have each one replaced without being canceled?! It seems like tempting fate to suggest that the new Supergirl team would be able to match their predecessors, but I wouldn't count them out yet. Weighed down by the effects of "Superman: Doomed" and still fresh off of a shockingly successful tour with the Red Lanterns, Supergirl's life is feeling a little cluttered. "The past is the hardest thing to escape from," reads the opening line of this book. While it would have been frustrating to simply throw out what's come before, the weight of past events forces this issue to take something of a slow start. One of the strangest choices of this issue is to give Kara a brand new status quo at the beginning of the story, only to provide her another one at the end. Perhaps reflecting the presence of two writers, Supergirl #36 seems to be somewhat of two minds, unsure if it wants to focus on Kara reestablishing herself on earth or continuing her training in space. There's also a complicated relationship with the rest of the Super-family that at once seems promising and worrisome. But we're getting ahead of ourselves. The early portion of this issue is strong. In only a couple of pages K. Perkins and Mike Johnson absolutely nail the strange, yet relatable concept of the last citizen of Krypton working as a barista. Though it's only two pages long, this segment of the issue is essential, showing how the new creative team handles the mundane and the emotional core of Kara's character. Her anger, so clearly highlighted in Tony Bedard's run, remains but has quieted, and she immediately feels natural in her surroundings. Unfortunately, especially for those who didn't read Action Comics #35, Clark Kent is not a welcome addition to the book. While his recent worries may make sense in the context of "Superman: Doomed" and Greg Pak's run on Action, here we find a near parody of everything people hate about Superman. Slow to listen, quick to judge, and tangled in webs of morality and indecision, Clark feels like an unnatural addition to the story. His comments do tie into the larger story, but it reads as pretty feeble foreshadowing. Before long, however, Kara is whisked away to Crucible Academy. I cannot tell you how excited the elevator pitch 'Supergirl at Space Hogwarts' makes me. Nonetheless, I was less thrilled with this section of the book. Built upon the least interesting version of the 'fight because of inadequate information' paradigm that's all too present in comics, Kara's trials feel rushed and unnecessary. It also hurts that this keeps us from actually experiencing Crucible in any real way. There are no classmates, no romances, no rivalries, and no connections to teachers. A big part of selling this arc will be selling us on the Crucible concept and throwing Kara into a weird Tron suit and having characters deny her agency in her education isn't the way to do it. Still, while Kara's conversation with Clark and the testing process take up a solid chunk of the book, the rest of the issue seems very promising. Reminiscing about Siobhan, musing on the side effects of Kara's powers, getting fed up with Kara's boss, and even seeing a clever return for a significant Superman Family character; all of them have a spark of life. Even in the cramped pages of the testing, Kara's prospective teachers have a wit to them. It's admittedly not quite there on the page, but Perkins and Johnson make me believe that this could be a fun comic, and not necessarily a fluffy one either. I really liked Emanuela Lupacchino's work with Tony Bedard, so I'm glad to see her sticking with the title. As ever, Lupacchino has a special talent for rendering the way things fall. Whether it be capes, hair, or flying bodies, Lupacchino invests the scene with the power of gravity, making it all the more rewarding when characters finally break free of it. Together with Ray McCarthy and Hi-Fi, Lupacchino positions the book perfectly between hand-drawn flatness and computer-generated depth. The bright colors and soft look of the book

feel very apropos for Supergirl. This is a comic full of gorgeous people and immediately understood expressions. And while some of the test scenes' claustrophobia is likely the art team's doing, you can't say that they don't communicate them brilliantly. The second test, especially, is quite stunning. The post Supergirl #36 – Review appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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