

It's fairly well established in the comic book sphere that Superman and Wonder Woman are among the most difficult characters to grasp. To prove it, just consider Grant Morrison's erratic take on Clark in Action Comics, or Brian Azzarello's blank one of Diana in Wonder Woman, or Charles Soule's insipid one of both on this title... And these are good writers; the characters themselves are just often too big and iconic to easily humanize.* So it's a smart move on DC's part to bring in Tomasi, character writer supreme, to do for Superman and Wonder Woman what he did for Batman. His work in Batman and Robin made Bruce Wayne come to life as a person, with all his wryness, grief, compassion, habits, and hang-ups—in other words, all his humanity—first, vigilante second. That's exactly what we need for Clark and Diana, because thus far, they've spent more of their relationship in costume than out. And really, there's only so much you can get from their heroic interactions. Their different approaches to the whole heroing business have already been done to death. Even Tomasi can't find a new way to spin it beyond Diana shaking her head sadly over everyone's, but especially Clark's, lack of warrior training and Clark lecturing her lack of human perspective. Those opening pages read like every other Superman-Wonder Woman debate, and had the rest of the issue followed suit, you could probably give up the cause as lost. Fortunately, Tomasi uses the scene (a flashback to Darkseid's first invasion, as it turns out) to show how far both characters have come, as individuals and as a couple. When we cut to Diana, in evening dress, impatiently waiting for Clark to finish typing down his thoughts so they can get on with their date night, it's obvious that Diana, at least, has learned a great deal about mortal life since those tense early days. Believe it or not, these pedestrian squabbles are what their relationship needed. To believe that they can be a legitimate couple, they need to act like it. That includes petty grievances: "Why don't you type faster? You have super speed." "Diana, I've explained this a hundred times...I can type fast, but I can't write fast. There's a difference." And moments of real affection: "And I'm astounded at how you got that stain out. That's even beyond an Amazon's power." "Credit my mother." "Oh, I most certainly do." Even so, Tomasi hints that on the most basic level, Diana and Clark are too different to work out in the long run. Clark's easygoing nature clearly grates on Diana's more practical attitude, which is not to say that Diana's the problem here. Clark giving up their cab for someone in need may be cute the first time, but anyone can share Diana's annoyance when he loans out cab number four—while she's getting soaked under a sudden squall. Her frosty announcement of "Date night over" signals danger for the lovebirds beyond the fact that the storm is a supervillain's handiwork. On that note, neither Major Disaster nor Atomic Skull prove to be terribly interesting opponents, though they're strong enough to give even our power couple a struggle. Maybe that's why Tomasi makes a last-minute shift in focus to a far more intriguing player, a flying man in gold who dubs himself "WonderStar," a name that suggests, along with his godlike physique, an intimate connection with Clark and Diana. A hypothetical future child, perhaps? Artificially conceived offspring? Getting Mahnke to work on this series definitely raises its artistic profile quite a bit. His characters don't have the supermodel quality of, say, Tony Daniel or Ivan Reis, but they're all the more human for it. Clark's bulging eyes and sputter of coffee when Diana interrupts him is an expression that would just look forced or awkward on either Daniel or Reis' figures, and Diana's stone face as the rain drips down her hair and dress says everything about her feelings toward Clark in that moment. Mahnke's cinematic vision is also superb, choosing the most epic compositions to liven up what is essentially a conversation sequence between Clark and Diana. Mahnke may be one of the few artists who can make a hailstorm look massive but not clownish, which is a high compliment in this area. Some Musings: * Although Greg Pak is almost getting there on Action

Comics. It's too soon to tell for Geoff Johns on Superman. - It's sweet to see Clark getting defensive when his girlfriend picks at his best friend's present: "This relic was Ernest Hemingway's and a birthday gift from Bruce." - I don't even know how to respond to that one nuclear plant worker mistaking Atomic Skull for "one of them purple lanterns of love!" He may have deserved to die. The post Superman/Wonder Woman #13 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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