

It is time to sing the praises of colors, particularly those of Hi-Fi, the colorist of The New 52: Futures End #36. Hi-Fi has accomplished the incredible feat of coloring all, or nearly all, of the issues of this weekly series, providing a visual stability missing from the other DC weeklies. Indeed, in that this title has a distinctive look, and it does, it comes from Hi-Fi's work. In a medium where colorists are only beginning to get the recognition that is their due, this is a massive accomplishment. The colors themselves shine brightly with dark undertones that allow them to blend well with the ink work of the title's other artists. The overall effect is to suggest fragile life and perilous action. The world of these hues is a vibrant place that could go badly wrong at any moment, a land of light menaced by an encroaching shadow that has crept into its deep places and supporting crust. The New 52: Futures End #36 unfortunately sees the fragility of the world matched by that of the storyline. Last issue provided perhaps the iconic moment of the series as the three Batmen, Present, Beyond, and Bat Joker, came face-to-face. Unfortunately, this issue slips from that defining moment into one of the title's all-too-frequent pauses. The different storylines into which this issue splits proceed nicely, but at the cost of losing forward momentum for the overall narrative. With only twelve issues to go, that is not where The New 52: Futures End needs to find itself. In one storyline, Frankenstein rests in the House of Mystery, his mystical nature fighting against the superscience of the Nth metal infusing him. Constantine appears, confusingly, to be present both in the House and in Smallville, Kansas, where he has journeyed in the company of Clark Kent in a continuation of a storyline not seen for a while. The Constantine/Superman story seems crucial to the weekly, as it links directly to the looming menace of Braniac. However, it proceeds only a small distance in this issue, despite Constantine's interesting theory that Smallville might be inherently evil, thus drawing the goodness of Superman to it through a kind of metaphysical magnetism. Meanwhile, Fifty Sue aids in the recovery of a lost Cadmus vault to an obscure purpose, and Terry McGinnis deepens his relationship with Plastique in a move that might, should rumors prove correct, function only as a cheap segue into tragedy. As the series nears its conclusion, it's worth pausing to speculate as to the shape the story will reveal once we have a retrospective distance. The story aspires to an epic fable of time and sacrifice, a tale of how decisions shape the course of not just one universe, but several. But for that ambition to triumph, the series would need a driving thematic force, a kind of heartbeat imbuing all of the character explorations and plot moments. Unfortunately, these guiding themes only come through about half the time. For the other half, we have a set of disconnected storylines that impede the grand scheme rather than expedite it. The post The New 52: Futures End #36 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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