

I'm not ashamed in saying I picked up this issue almost by virtue of its cover alone. There are worse reasons for getting into a series; I just can't think of any right now! You have to admit, though, it's a pretty compelling cover: the title's bold, stark declaration, They're Not Like Us; the narrow panel centered on a woman's feet shuffling its toes just over the edge of a rooftop; the indistinct people below stating, not exclaiming, "That girl is going to jump." That deserves a perusal, at the very least. Okay, I'm done rationalizing. As for the issue itself, it's more or less your usual "person discovering they have special powers" scenario. The person in question here is a young woman psychologically drained by the voices in her head, which obviously indicate telepathy even before a mystery guy in a suit shows up and talks to her with a closed mouth.* Equally as obvious, that guy is a member of a secret group of similarly empowered individuals who cover the gamut of abilities: superstrength, pyrokinesis, clairvoyance, technopathy, superspeed, etc. Sound familiar, X-Men fans? A great deal of the issue does run through all the usual tropes of a superpower origin story. Our girl Syd (not her real name—more on that in a moment) is bewildered by the discovery of her gift and runs through the obligatory astonishment that superpowers do exist after all: "Wait, so you're both... Jeez, it's just weird even saying this... Um, telepaths?" After all that comes the power and responsibility debate, which is where the issue finally goes somewhere interesting. As she wanders through the richly furnished mansion that serves as the group's home, she's disturbed to learn that all of it—the music library, the listening room, the house itself—is stolen. The Voice informs her, "This is going to sound terrible and wrong to you at first, but we take whatever we want, Syd. We do whatever we want. And before you ask why, let me save you the trouble: We do it because we can. Fate has chosen us to be different from everyone else, better than everyone else, and quite frankly, that's all that matters." So they're not so much the X-Men as the Brotherhood of (Evil) Mutants, except not so interested in dominating society so much as living the good life. It's immoral, to be sure, but extremely attractive: an exclusive club where everyone can do something awesome and you live in the lap of luxury? Sign me up! But no club comes without its rules, and that's where things get sinister. The utmost secrecy of the group seems benign enough, albeit controlling and eccentric: members must dress impeccably and take on new names they don't even get to choose (hence Syd). But the lengths they'll go to cover their tracks shows how deeply and morally compromised they are, if the Voice elbowing a nurse in the throat doesn't already tell you that. When Syd sensibly points out her friends and family will still recognize her even with a new name and identity, the Voice replies, "That's why you're going to kill them." The way he says it makes it sound like she has no choice in the matter and she may not. After he pushes her to escape from the hospital and takes her to their home, she muses about how she just went along with it. "It's almost like I'm not even thinking for myself." Forget Maisie the precog's** insistence that Syd is fated to join them; they want her to join and it's not just for the purpose of helping her control her powers. Gane's art is a bit scrappy, but clear and purposeful. Cooks would call it rustic; fashionistas would say it's intentionally sloppy. Whatever it is, it goes down easy and strikes that nice balance of being both straightforward and stylish. The characters look human and seem to have a nice range of expression. And that's about as much as I can say about Gane's art; except for the hospital escape, which is a brief, conventional affair, the issue is all talking heads. He certainly seems capable of a lot; there's just not a whole lot here for him to work with. Bellaire, as always, brings her perfectly mellow, flat colors to the table, giving the issue vibrance without making it blinding. Some Musings: * And no, it's not David Finch drawing, so it definitely is telepathy. ** I can already tell I'm going to hate her the most. Pretty, preppy know-it-alls are the freaking worst. The post They're Not Like

Us #1 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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