

I generally try to be as objective as I can for these things, but I'm only human. Every now and then, a story makes a point I find so disagreeable that it infects my reading ever afterwards. Basically, I read something I personally don't like and it makes me so cranky that I end up hating the rest of the story. On the other hand, if I can manage to contain my nerd-rage to that one point, it can expose serious flaws that actually are worth talking about. I'll leave it up to you to decide if that's the case when I attack the Voice for his utterly despicable philosophies. Oh, yeah—I said it. To be clear, I don't have a problem with his loathing of "simple-minded tourism and vapid consumerism" and all the other superficiality that plagues mankind. But using that to justify his and the others' sadism is a logical leap so audacious that his argument falls apart from the moment he makes it. Really? The choices are being a sheep or a sociopath? That really does seem to be what the Voice is proposing here: "They're lemmings...zombies... I know you think our behavior is somewhat extreme, mad even, but this... This is the alternative." If that sounds crazy, it's because it's meant to be crazy. Syd continues to be the title's sole moral compass, recognizing the appeal of what the Voice has to say, but eventually realizing its shortcomings. At one point, she embarks on her own diatribe about the banality of most people's lives, and how it allows cover for the "very real monsters always hiding just out of view, endlessly consumed with taking advantage of whoever they can, just to make their own puny lives the tiniest bit better. Which only begs the question... What does that make us?" Because as previously suggested, not all of the gang's* victims are vandals and pedophiles. This and the last issue have attempted to give the gang an antihero flavor, but by turning their eyes on Syd's parents, we're brought back to the chillingly pragmatic regard for human life we saw in #1. Remember: house rules demand the deaths of friends and family to minimize the chances of the gang getting caught. It'll be interesting to see how or whether they'll persuade Syd to go along with that. From what little we see, her mom and dad seem to care a lot for their daughter, even if they're also clearly entitled and prickly around the edges. In the meantime, we're slowly getting more individual personalities out of the gang, though they do all tend to blend into one psychotic note in the end.** They're bad people, but they're also fiercely loyal, compassionate, supportive, affectionate, even sweet to each other. So the capacity for good is there; it's just not applied to anyone they consider on their level. This issue suggests their powers may be to blame; to cope with her telepathy, Syd enters a Calm of her own, one in which only her comrades clearly stand out and the rest of humanity fades out of view. If that's how the Voice has seen things for this long, no wonder he views the normal people as nothing. Wherever this story goes, at least it's exposed us to Gane's talents. I love any artist who goes through the trouble of making each and every character, even the background ones, into individuals, with distinctive looks and designs. But Gane takes it a step further and adds personality and history to the crowd scenes: a Muslim mother indulging her two kids; two nurses walking out together, the one smiling tolerantly as her companion chats on the phone; a guy in short-sleeves, shorts, and beanie, a duffel bag slung over either shoulder. Gane even lets you see the interior of a shopping catalogue a woman is reading. Bellaire indulges all of Gane's details, individually coloring each piece of clothing and adding to the incredible mosaic of life in every page. Some Musings:* For lack of a better name for them, I'll keep it simple and just call them "the gang."** I didn't mean to rhyme there, but I'm gonna roll with it.- Who wants to bet that Blurgirl wants to make a love confession to Syd? She's obviously turned on by Syd's fighting prowess. The post They're Not Like Us #3 appeared first on Weekly Comic Book Review.

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