Fantastic Four by J. Michael Straczynski, Vol. 1 by Mike McKone

So Straczynski Scores With Existing Material Too!

The new ongoing creative team of writer J. Michael Straczynski (Amazing Spider-Man, Supreme Power) and artist Mike McKone (Teen Titans, Exiles) unite their talents to chart a new course for the world's greatest comic magazine! First up: an intriguing offer for a conflicted Reed, and a windfall for Ben! Plus: A visit from state officials has dire ramifications for Sue and the rest of the Richards clan! Collects Fantastic Four 527-532.

My Personal Review:
I like comics a lot but I find that mega-classic characters (XMen, Spidey,...) have stories of irregular quality, all the more deteriorated by the fact that each new writer feels obliged to try and present the same mythology again and again from a supposedly fresher perspective. Still, a lot of them fail in their ambition to re-invent classic characters. Not Straczynski. I am not a big fan of the F4 and I think it's because of their seemingly all-too-well balanced group: the F4 are complementary but never in real opposition (their arguments have a comedic sense in my opinion) and thus, there is not a lot to feed on once you have scratched the surface of the characters. Having said that, the only reason why I bought this book is because Mr Straczynski wrote it. I had found that Midnight Nation, Rising Stars and Supreme Power had great story-lines but most of all, the charaterization of the protagonists (the main ones but secondary roles as well) was brilliantly exposed and written. And here again, careful attention is brought to both characters AND story.

Rather than trying to re-invent the F4 for the reader, Straczynski shows the characters re-inventing themselves. Reed Richards is caught in an intergalactic plot that goes back (via a time travel paradox) to the very accident that created the F4. The story analyzes how and why the F4 became what they are in a very modern, yet not cynical, manner. In a few pages, you understand the links between the F4. Richards is definitely the brain of the group and the leader, you will see why. Those superheroes suddenly turn into quasi-divine figures as you see that their fate is linked to
the very existence of Earth... and the rest! Welcome metaphysics into the world of the F4!

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