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Spider-Man: Return of the Black Cat

Joe Kelly

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Joe Kelly : Spider-Man: Return of the Black Cat before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Spider-Man: Return of the Black Cat:

15 of 17 people found the following review helpful. How to beat a dead horse - or "Why, Guggenheim, why??" By H. BalaOh, well, here it is then, the bad apple in the barrel. AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, publishing thrice a month, has enjoyed a run of really good stories, but then someone went and slipped Marc Guggenheim a sip of stupid juice. This

trade, **THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN: RETURN OF THE BLACK CAT**, collects **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN** #606-611 and the "Kaine of Echoes" story from **WEB OF SPIDER-MAN** #1. The book-end issues aren't so bad. It's the stuff in the middle that cheeses me off, like, severely. I don't know what all this junk is about the Peter Parker luck. Surely it can't be that bad, right, when you've got three gorgeous women squabbling over you? There's Peter's ever angry roommate Michele Gonzales who has this love-hate (mostly hate) relationship with our boy. And gabby journalist Norah Winters is hanging around in the periphery. The newly returned Mary Jane Watson is just easing back into Peter's life. Now we get the return of Felicia Hardy a.k.a. the Black Cat, always sexylicious and once again felonious. And she's still got that bad luck mojo going, much to the chagrin of Spidey. The nitty gritty plot breakdown: Spidey becomes an unwilling accomplice when Felicia breaks into the posh digs of the new owner of the Daily Bugle, Dexter Bennett, only for them to stumble onto a stone corpse. But that's not important. The draw to this two-parter (issues #606-07) is that playful, unpredictable sizzle between Spidey and Black Cat. Something about Felicia - and partly it's because she and Spidey both inhabit a world of costumed crazy - had always called out to Peter, to the freer, more irresponsible side of him. Their relationship is the most interesting thing about this arc, and I like that Peter gives in to temptation even as he realizes that this isn't such a good move. Dude's only human, and it's nice to see that he's not always Mr Goody Two Shoes. Is it me, or is Parker getting laid more often lately? I'll say again, that Peter Parker bad luck is over-rated. The villain-fighting bits come off as lackluster. Diablo, diabolical an alchemist though he may be, isn't the most dynamic of villains and his insurance fraud scheme simply isn't that interesting (how does this sound: In this issue, Spidey battles ****drumroll, please****... insurance fraud!!). Seems a bit too white collar and beneath someone of Diablo's formidable power levels. Also doesn't help that Spidey dismisses him as "Dr. Kevorkian's evil Spanish cousin." Joe Kelly writes the thing, and he excels during the Peter-Felicia moments. I really like Mike McKone's take on Spidey and how much more dramatic and dynamic the wallcrawler looks when rendered in black and red, as opposed to his familiar blue and red threads. Artistically, the downer arrives when Adriana Melo takes over penciling duties late in issue #607. Her style is different enough from McKone's smoother lines that there's immediately this jarring disconnect. Next is "Kaine of Echoes" from **WEB OF SPIDER-MAN** #1, as J.M DeMatteis and Val Semeiks give us further insight into one of Peter's clones, Kaine. This serves as a precursor to the next story arc in **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN**. Speaking of which... Someone was criminally tardy with the intervention, because Marc Guggenheim and his slew of artists went ahead and did "Who Was Ben Reilly" anyway (issues #608-10). Absolutely **NO ONE** demanded this, but still these three issues hit us with a 1990s blast, the story revolving around relics from the Clone Saga, Ben Reilly and Kaine. Bottom-tiered villain, the Raptor, nurses a mad-on for Ben Reilly and comes all out to revenge himself on him and everyone he holds dear. Except that Ben Reilly's been dead for a bit now. This leaves Peter Parker holding the bag, since he's a dead ringer for Reilly (what with Reilly being his clone and all), and this has got the Raptor believing that Peter is actually Reilly. Or something like that. Lame, messy, uninteresting shenanigans ensue, the wake of which leaves the detritus of Aunt May's ruined home, several distraught (but still lovely) cousins, a dangerous loose end that - thankfully for Spidey - Kaine cleans up, and me regarding Guggenheim with truly unfavorable eyes. This read is truly crapdoodle. And haven't Marvel writers learned by now not to ever poke at that unsavory carcass that is the Clone Saga? Let it rest in peace, man. Don't wake it. The only semi-cool thing to come out of this utter misfire is the introduction of Screwball, the World's First Live-Blogging Super-Villain. I've been waiting for the next Rocket Racer to come along. I'll mention that Marco Checchetto, Luke Ross, and Rick Magyar are the artists, because why should only Guggenheim get the blame? I didn't think much of the art, but that could just be resentment by association. Issue #611 rolls around and the tone shifts immediately from oppressive to fun silly buggers, thanks to Joe Kelly Eric Canete. It's usually what happens whenever there's a Deadpool sighting. The Merc with the Mouth takes a contract to take out Spider-Man, and the wallcrawler soon finds himself caught up in Deadpool's insane world of meta references and fourth wall breaking. To add to the surreal vibe, we meet the deadly Lady Stilt-Man (yes, Lady Stilt-Man!). Plenty of fighty fight, and it's probably apropos that it climaxes in a Yo Mama joke-off. As a bonus, this cup of silly is even relevant to the ongoing arc as there's purpose behind the hiring of Deadpool. Hopefully, the currently ongoing Gauntlet arc makes up for the disastrous Clone Saga revisit, but even the Gauntlet stories have been kind of hit or miss for me. Somewhere, Mephisto must be grinning like a bastard. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Customer Wonderful read!! 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Pretty Good By Eliot I like the Ben Reilly story, not so much black cat or deadpool (mostly because the art). Still definatly worth buying (both to read and as a way to expand a collection).

Look out, Spidey! Hot on the heels of his old girlfriend's trip home, the Black Cat's back (and front!), sexier and more dangerous than ever! The deck is **STACKED** as the one woman that loves Spider-Man more than Peter Parker is up to some devilish shenanigans... and nothing bugs Spidey more than shenanigans! Then, Raptor is back for revenge against the man he claims killed his family - Ben Reilly, the clone of Spider-Man! Unfortunately, the only person alive

that fits Ben's description is Peter Parker! Collects Amazing Spider-Man #606-611 and Web of Spider-Man #1.