

Manga Critique

Note: I wasn't sure how to organize this since I haven't really done a critique/review for a work before. Each paragraph is pretty much a separate idea and does not necessarily relate to the paragraph before or after it.

Overall, I enjoyed reading Brenner Ryan's *There is no Cell Coverage in Purgatory* even if it does have problems. The story strikes a balance between charming and disheartening as the reader follows Graham through his life in the garage. The concept behind the story is interesting, and I enjoyed thinking about how electronics would act if they were sentient. It reminded me of *Toy Story*, except that there is usually a happy ending for the toys in those movies. The artist did a good job of conveying emotion through the use of emoticons, which makes sense since Graham is a phone.

Currently, I am curious to see where the story goes. It was a bit unclear if there was some overall story going on, or if each page was meant to be its own self-contained story. Details carried over from one page to the next, but each page often started with a new scenario. I think it would make the series easier to read if the artist either fully embraced a connected storyline or tried to make each page related to the others as little as possible. Right now, it is at kind of a weird middle ground.

The art was good, but the author should work on action shots. There were a few panels where motion lines were used to convey movement, but otherwise the characters felt fairly static. This might be forgivable though, as the realistic art style does have its benefits. Since all the characters are realistic looking, it makes the cartoon aspects of the comic funnier. The characters' cartoon style arms contrast their bodies especially well.

I don't know if the artist was trying to convey some sort of message about the meaning of life, or if misfortune is just played for comedic effect. The main character doesn't seem to be satisfied with his life, but pretty much everything bad that happens to him is out of his control. It would be interesting to see if things shape up for him in later pages, or if he just keeps running into trouble. The last page shows that he has evil qualities. Is he being punished for being a bad person/electronic? Without more pages it is difficult to tell.

I am also curious as to why the electronics refer to their owner as "God". It could just be because they view him as some omnipotent being, or it could be something else. Perhaps they believe that they were created by "God" or they call him "God" because he gets to decide who lives (stays in the house) or dies (who goes to the garage).

The artist seemed to rely on exposition in situations where art would have been able to convey the message. For example, when Graham is bringing flowers to Alexa, there is probably a way to convey that through images instead of just saying it. The manga would likely be more engaging if there was less text and more imagery.

I liked the bits of humor that were thrown in that showed the artist's attention to detail. Graham was named after Alexander Graham Bell because he is a phone, and he is an LG phone even though his life is very unfortunate. The electronics all seemed to make references to things or act in a way that would be consistent with the world they lived in.

The artist seemed to introduce a lot of characters without using them very much. The grandfather is shown on the first page, but then he is never brought up again. The tv remote is only around for one page before he dies, and the GameCube is also only on one page. I'm sure that this is a problem that would be fixed if there were more pages.

