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MAN[®]

MARVEL[®] COMICS GROUP



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the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN



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 SINCE 1958
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While attending a demonstration in radiology, student PETER PARKER was bitten by a spider which had accidentally been exposed to RADIOACTIVE RAYS. Through a miracle of science, Peter soon found that he had GAINED the arachnid's powers...and had, in effect, become a human spider...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN™

THERE IS SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT CEMETERIES, AND THIS ONE, IN FLUSHING, QUEENS, IS NO EXCEPTION.

THEY ARE THE REPOSITORIES OF MEMORIES MOST DEAR, AND YET THEY ARE SHUNNED AS IF WE WOULD FORGET WHAT THEY HOLD!

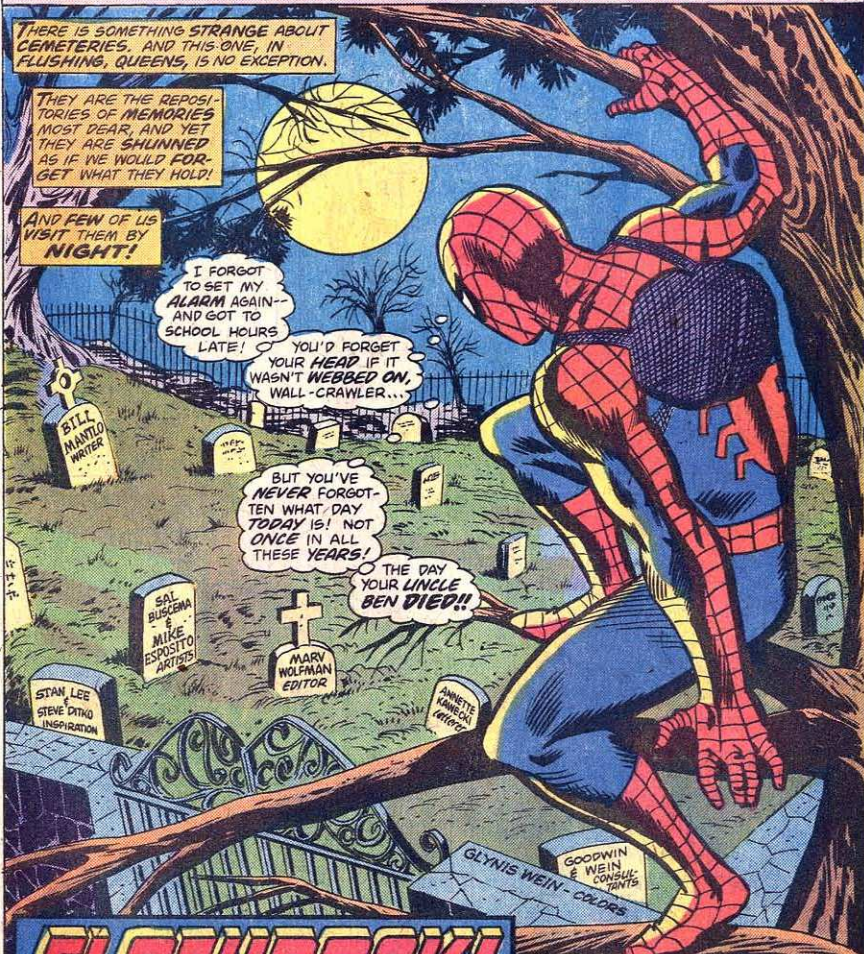
AND FEW OF US VISIT THEM BY NIGHT!

I FORGOT TO SET MY ALARM AGAIN-- AND GOT TO SCHOOL HOURS LATE!

YOU'D FORGET YOUR HEAD IF IT WASN'T WEBBED ON, WALL-CRAWLER...

BUT YOU'VE NEVER FORGOTTEN WHAT DAY TODAY IS! NOT ONCE IN ALL THESE YEARS!

THE DAY YOUR UNCLE BEN DIED!!



FLASHBACK!

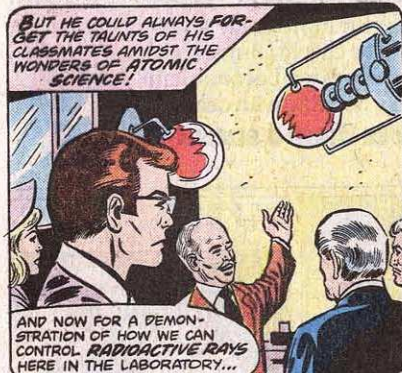
DEDICATED TO OUR OLDER FANS WHO LIVED THESE EVENTS WITH US--AND TO OUR NEW FANS DISCOVERING THE SPIDER-MAN LEGEND FOR THE FIRST TIME!

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FOR PETER PARKER, BEING A TEENAGER MEANT FACING MANY HEARTBREAKING MOMENTS.



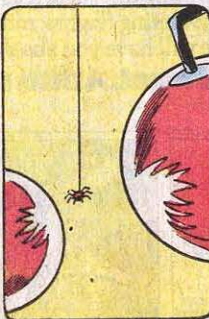
ACCIDENTALLY ABSORBING A FANTASTIC AMOUNT OF RADIOACTIVITY, THE DYING INSECT, IN SUDDEN SHOCK, BIT THE NEAREST LIVING THING--A SPLIT-SECOND BEFORE THE LIFE EBBED FROM ITS RADIOACTIVE BODY!



SURE! PETE WAS SCHOLARSHIP-MATERIAL AT MIDTOWN HIGH SCHOOL... BUT HIS CLASSMATES DISMISSED THE LONELY, SENSITIVE YOUNG TEENAGER AS...



BUT, AS THE EXPERIMENT BEGAN, NO ONE NOTICED A TINY SPIDER, DESCENDING FROM THE CEILING ON AN ALMOST-INVISIBLE STRAND OF WEB...



A SPIDER WHOM FATE HAD GIVEN A STARKING--IF BRIEF--ROLE IN THE DRAMA WE CALL... LIFE!



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FAN CLUB**

AND, OUTSIDE THE SCIENCE HALL...

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME? I FEEL--
DIFFERENT! AS THOUGH
MY ENTIRE BODY WERE
CHARGED WITH SOME
FANTASTIC ENERGY!

WRAPPED IN HIS OWN THOUGHTS, PETER DIDN'T
HEAR THE AUTO WHICH NARROWLY MISSED HIM...

**HONK!
HONK!**

THAT'S ONE
EGGHEAD WHO
WON'T DAYDREAM
ANYMORE WHEN
HE CROSSES A
STREET!

YOU CAN
SAY THAT
AGAIN!

AND THEN, UNNOTICED
BY THE RIPERS, HE
UNTHINKINGLY LEAPT
TO SAFETY--

--BUT WHAT A
LEAP IT WAS!

WHAT'S
COME OVER
ME? I--I
SCALED THE
WALL JUST
AS EASILY AS
I COULD
WALK!

IT'S INCREDIBLE!
I REACHED THE
ROOF IN MERE
SECONDS--

--AND I'VE
CRUSHED THIS
STEEL PIPE AS
IF IT WERE
PAPER!

IT'S THE SPIDER!
IT HAS TO BE! SOME-
HOW--IN SOME MIR-
ACULOUS WAY, HIS
BITE TRANSFERRED
HIS OWN POWER--
TO ME!

\$100 to the
man who can
stay in
the ring
3 minutes
with CRUSHER
HOGAN

BUT
FATE
HAD TURNED
PETER
PARKER FROM A
BOOKWORM TO A MAN
OF ACTION! THINKING
AND PLANNING DIDN'T
STOP THE ITCH TO TEST HIS
NEW-FOUND POWER... AND
HE GOT HIS CHANCE SOON
ENOUGH! REMOVING HIS GLASSES
--PUTTING A STOCKING OVER
HIS HEAD-- HE STEPPED INTO
THE RING WITH CRUSHER HOGAN...
AND BEAT HIM! RUSHING HOME,
HE DESIGNED HIMSELF A COS-
TUME AND A PAIR OF
WEB-SHOOTERS
...AND SPIDER-
MAN WAS BORN!

I-I'VE GOT TO HAVE
TIME TO THINK--TO PLAN
WHAT TO DO WITH THIS UN-
BELIEVABLE ABILITY WHICH
FATE HAS GIVEN ME!

FOR ONCE IN HIS LIFE, PETER PARKER WAS BREATHING THE SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS! NOBODY KNEW THAT HE WAS THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN--

--BUT HE DIDN'T LET THAT STOP HIM FROM ENJOYING THE PRAISE HEAPED ON HIS ALTER-EGO BY AN ADORING PUBLIC!

I'VE BEEN GROWN UP PRETTY COCKY--AND PRETTY PARTICULAR ABOUT WHOM HE'D TAKE ORDERS FROM!

HEY! WHAT'S GOIN' ON?

STOP, THIEF! STOP HIM! IF HE MAKES IT TO THE ELEVATOR, HE'LL GET AWAY!

THE THIEF MADE GOOD HIS ESCAPE!

WHAT'S WITH YOU, MISTER? ALL YOU HAD TO DO WAS TRIP HIM, OR HOLD HIM JUST FOR A MINUTE!

SORRY, PAL! THAT'S YOUR JOB! I'M THROUGH BEING PUSHED AROUND--

--BY ANYONE! FROM NOW ON, I LOOK OUT FOR NUMBER ONE! AND THAT MEANS--ME!

WHY YOU--? I OUGHTTA RUN YOU IN!

SAVE YOUR BREATH, BLVDY! I'VE GOT THINGS TO DO!

HE WOULDN'T FIND OUT AT THAT MOMENT UNTIL A FEW DAYS LATER--

PETER PARKER MADE HIS FIRST AND MOST TRAGIC MISTAKE! A POLICE CAR! IN FRONT OF OUR HOUSE!

WHAT-- WHAT CAN BE WRONG?!

NOW, ANYBODY WITH THE INTELLIGENCE OF A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD KNOWS THAT IF A MAN APPEARED ON TV WHO SEEMED MORE SPIDER THAN HUMAN, HE'D BE AN OVERNIGHT SENSATION! ESPECIALLY WHEN HIS FEATS WERE PERFORMED WITHOUT THE HELP OF TRICK PHOTOGRAPHY! WELL, YOU CAN JUST IMAGINE HOW THE PUBLIC REACTED TO SPIDER-MAN! IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED, THE WALL-CRAWLING WONDER BECAME THE SENSATION OF THE NATION!

DAILY BUGLE
WHO IS THE SPIDER-MAN?
DAILY BUGLE
WHO IS THE SPIDER-MAN?
DAILY BUGLE
WHO IS THE SPIDER-MAN?
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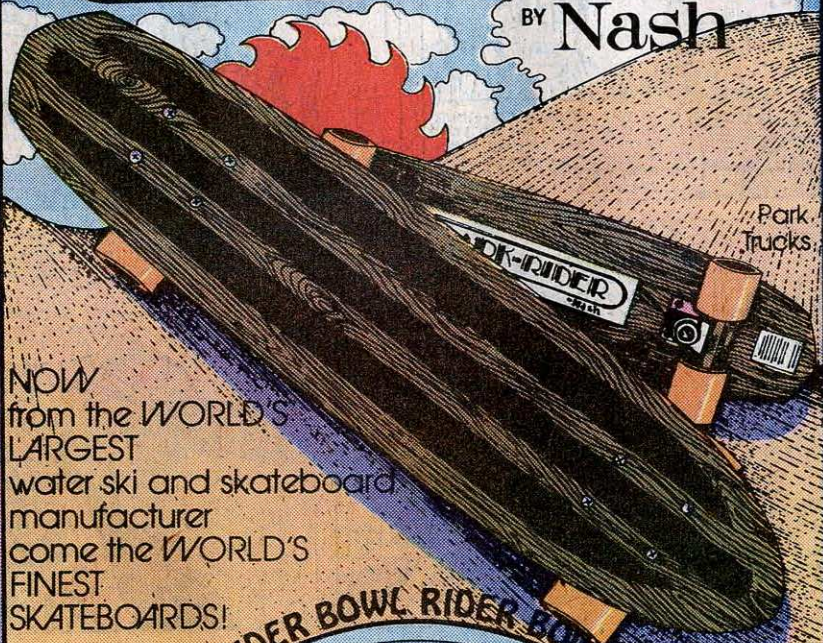
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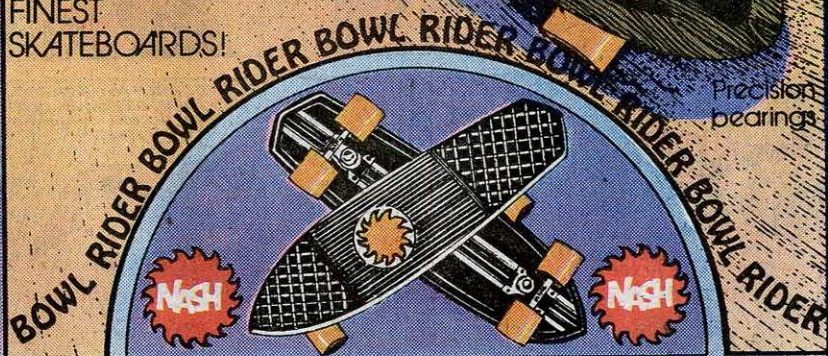
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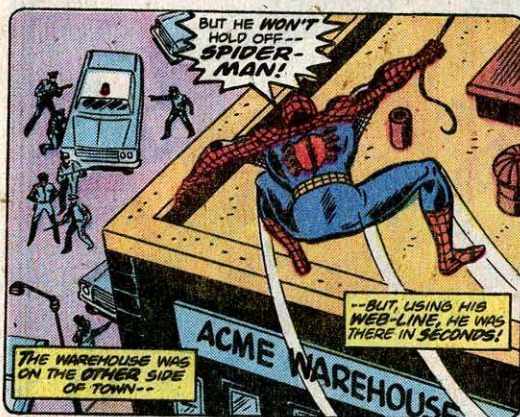
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GODZILLA #1
LOGAN'S RUN #2

SET #4
MS. MARVEL #1
LOGAN'S RUN #1,5,6
HOWARD THE DUCK #3
RED SONJA #5
WHAT IF #4

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PETER TRIED TO HELP...AS SPIDER-MAN! RETURNING TO SHOW BUSINESS, HE PERFORMED BEFORE LARGER AND LARGER AUDIENCES! BUT THE TROUBLE HE HAD CASHING HIS CHECKS--

--WAS NOTHING COMPARED TO--

MIGHT AS WELL GO BACK WHERE YOU CAME FROM, SPIDER-MAN! THERE'LL BE NO MORE SHOWS!

WHAT? WHY?! WHAT HAPPENED?

THE DAILY BUGLE HAD HAPPENED!

DAILY BUGLE
SPIDER-MAN
MENACE

ONE MAN, FOR REASONS OF HIS OWN, HAD DECIDED THAT THE COSTUMED YOUTH WAS A MENACE TO SOCIETY!

BUT THAT MAN WAS J. JONAH JAMESON, PUBLISHER OF A GREAT NEWSPAPER... AND PEOPLE BELIEVED HIM!

PETER WAS DESPERATE... HE WAS BROKE, AND THE RENT WAS DUE! WHERE DOES A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT WITH SUPER-POWERS GO TO GET A JOB? PETER WENT TO THE BAXTER BUILDING--

--TO JOIN THE WORLD-FAMOUS
FANTASTIC FOUR!

BUT, WELL -- MISUNDERSTANDINGS DO HAPPEN!

I MIGHT HAVE KNOWN! YOU GUYS ARE JUST LIKE ALL THE REST! READY TO BELIEVE THE WORST OF ANYONE!

WAIT-- COME BACK!

I'VE SHOWN YOU WHAT I CAN DO! NOW MUCH DOES THE JOB PAY?

AFRAID YOU MADE A MISTAKE-- WE'RE A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION!

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I KNEW IT! THAT KOOK HAS ROCKS IN HIS HEAD!

BESIDES, AREN'T YOU WANTED BY THE POLICE? THIS ISN'T "OUTLAWS ANONYMOUS!"

TOO LATE, SUE-- HE'S GONE!
AN' GOOD RIDDANCE, IF YA ASK ME!

* SPIDEY #1 -- MARV.

J. JONAH JAMESON NEVER LET UP! OVER THE YEARS, HE HAMMERED AWAY AT SPIDER-MAN--CALLED HIM EVERYTHING FROM A VIGILANTE TO A COMMON CRIMINAL--ATTACKING THE WALL-CRAWLER IN THE TABLOID HEADLINES OF HIS NEWSPAPER...THE DAILY BUGLE...



YET...
WHILE JONAH HATED SPIDER-MAN, STEMMING FROM THE TIME SPIDEY SAVED JJJ'S SON--ASTRONAUT, COL. JONAH JAMESON (WE'LL GET TO HIM LATER) WHEN A SPACE-SHOT WENT AWRY, CAUSING JJJ TO THINK SPIDEY WANTED TO STEAL HIS SON'S FAME FOR HIMSELF--HE IS ALSO (FATE WORKS IN FUNNY WAYS--REMEMBER THAT SPIDER?) FREE-LANCE PHOTOGRAPHER PETER PARKER'S EMPLOYER!!*

*SINCE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #2--MARY.

SPIDER-MAN MENACE

SPIDER-MAN ATTACKS BAXTER BUILDING

SPIDER-MAN: CRIMINAL?

--OR IN A MORE DIRECT FASHION, SUCH AS FINANCING THE CREATION OF SUPER-VILLAINS--

--SUCH AS... THE SCORPION!*

*SPIDEY #20--M.

OR THE ORIGINAL SPIDER-SLAYER!*

**#25--MARY.

OR HIRING LUKE CAGE, POWER MAN, TO DO HIS DIRTY WORK!***

***#123--MARY.

JAMESON AIDED IN THE CREATION OF MENACES TO SOCIETY... LIKE THE FLY! (SPIDEY ANNUAL #10)

AND HURLED MEN-IMPROVED SPIDER-SLAYERS AT THE WEB-SLINGER TIME AND TIME AGAIN!*

*SPIDEY'S 58, 105, 169--MARY.

BEING THE WALL-CRAWLER DIDN'T MAKE OUR HERO'S SCHOOL LIFE ANY BED OF ROSES, EITHER!

TAKE FLASH THOMPSON, MIDTOWN HIGH'S B.M.O.C. (BIG MAN ON CAMPUS) FOR INSTANCE! ALL-AROUND JOCK--

--FLASH DIDN'T HAVE THE TIME OF DAY FOR PETER PARKER!

BUT HE WAS SPIDEY'S GREATEST FAN ...EVEN TO THE POINT OF IMPERSONATING HIS HERO AND GETTING HIMSELF KIDNAPPED BY THE DEADLY DOCTOR DOOM! *

*SPIDEY #5--M.

A LOT'S CHANGED SINCE FLASH GOT BACK FROM VIETNAM!

AND, ALTHOUGH STILL A SPIDEY FAN, HE'S ALSO ONE OF PETE'S CLOSEST FRIENDS!

THEN THERE'S WHAT SOME HAVE LAUGHINGLY REFERRED TO AS PETER PARKER'S LOVE LIFE!

IT STARTED WITH J.J.'S SECRETARY... BETTY BRANT!

YOU COULD SAY THEY FELL IN LOVE BEHIND A DESK IN JONAH'S OFFICE--

**#2--MARY.

--BUT IT'S EASIER TO PIN DOWN THE BREAK-UP OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP...STARTING WHEN BETTY'S BROTHER DIED DURING SPIDEY'S SECOND BATTLE WITH DOCTOR OCTOPUS--AND ENDING WHEN PETER'S SECRET IDENTITY AND SEEMING LOVE OF DANGER DROVE THEM APART! **

**SPIDEY #30--M.

STILL, THINGS DO CHANGE! PETER PARKER--A LITTLE OLDER AND A LITTLE WISER--LEFT HIGH SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL CRUSHES BEHIND, ENROLLED IN EMPIRE STATE UNIVERSITY--

--AND MET... GWEN STACY!

IT DIDN'T START OUT AS LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT--BUT THEN MOST LOVE STORIES NEVER DO! LOVE IT WAS--AND GWEN'S DAD, CAPTAIN STACY, APPROVED!

THINGS BEGAN LOOKING UP FOR A YOUNG PHOTOGRAPHER WITH A FLAIR FOR ACTION PIX--AND FOR A YOUNG MAN AND HIS GIRL!

AND DAILY BUGLE EDITOR 'ROBBIE' ROBERTSON--WELL, HE LIKED TO SEE PEOPLE HAPPY!

HAPPY! YEAH, MAYBE SOMEBODY SHOULD HAVE WARNED PETER PARKER THAT IT'S JUST WHEN THINGS LOOK THEIR BRIGHTEST THAT SOMEBODY LOWERS THE BOOM! IN THIS CASE, THE DEATH OF CAPTAIN STACY AT THE HANDS OF DOCTOR OCTOPUS! ONCE AGAIN, THOUGH NOT BY PETER'S HAND--SOMEONE CLOSE TO HIM HAD DIED--

OCTOPUS SMASHED THE CHIMNEY! IF THE PIECES SHOULD HIT--

--OH, NO!
NO!

SPIDER-MAN DID IT! IT'S ALL HIS FAULT!

HE'S A MURDERER!

I-TAKE CARE OF... GWEN, SON...

SHE... LOVES YOU... SO VERY MUCH...!

--BE-CAUSE HE WAS... SPIDER-MAN!

* AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #90 --MARV.

BIG DEAL! THAT RADIOACTIVE SPIDER SHOULD HAVE SAVED ITS BITE! FOR ALL HIS FANTASTIC POWER, FOR ALL HIS SUPER-HUMAN STRENGTH--HE DIDN'T HAVE WHAT IT TOOK TO SAVE CAPTAIN STACY, OR...

GWEN STACY IS DEAD, YOU ROMANTIC IDIOT!

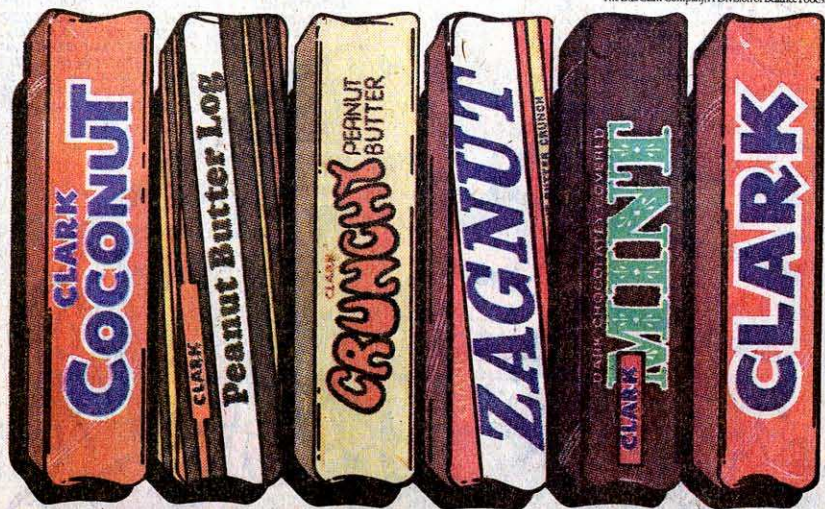
YOU KILLED THE WOMAN I LOVE, GOBLIN!

AND, FOR THAT, YOU'RE GOING TO DIE!

THE WALL-CRAWLER WAS AS GOOD AS HIS WORD--NOT THAT IT MATTERED ANYMORE! THE FIRST GREEN GOBLIN, NORMAN OSBORN--

--FOLLOWED GWEN STACY TO THE GRAVE! *

* SPIDEY # 121 & 122 --MARV.



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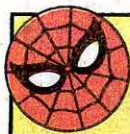
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THE SPIDER'S WEB

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Dear Marvel,

I've just gotta tell you guys how much I enjoyed issue #175. I haven't enjoyed SPIDER-MAN this much since, uh, #174. The Punisher is one of my favorite characters, and always has been since he first appeared—but unlike many Marvelites I would not like to see him in his own mag. He seems to work so well in guest shots that I just don't think he would do as well alone; and there is so much about him that is unknown, you'd have to reveal some of his past, which would dispel the mystery that surrounds him.

I am impatiently awaiting next issue to find out how the Goblin will turn out with still another identity.

Markus Greiner
625 Fullerton
Chicago, IL 60614

Reaction to the guest-appearance of the Punisher has been quite favorable, indeed, even if a bit contradictory. For instance, Mark, you'd prefer to keep his origins shrouded in mystery, while the following letter asks for exactly the opposite. Witness...

Gentlemen:

The Punisher is one of the finest supporting characters in Marvel's entire cast. I, for one, would like to learn more about his origin—just how this self-styled vigilante happened to embark upon his malevolent one-man crusade against crime.

Being incensed with Spider-Man for cracking jokes during battle (in the first panel of page 3) is so within the Punisher's character!

On the other hand, his obtuse comment (in the last panel of page 3) is totally out of character for him—even during his weakest possible moment. In fact, it's out of character for any 1977 comic-book hero. Such a rhetorical inanity is something Batman might have said circa 1966. You should excise such glib dialogue from the speech patterns of your characters—especially one as somber as the Punisher.

As for the apparently impending return of the Green Goblin—obviously, Dr. Hamilton will become the third-generation pumpkin-thrower.

A final point—J. Jonah Jameson seems to finally be on the verge of coming over to Spider-Man's side. Let this happen! Jonah has been Spidey's worst enemy for nearly 15 years, due originally to petty jealousy (see SPIDER-MAN #10). It's time for Jonah to grow up.

Terry Harms
1020 West 41st Place Apt. 3
Kansas City, MO 64111

Dear spider people—

After reading ish #175, I've got to warn you that you've come to another turning point in Spidey's life. JJJ just can't be against Spider-Man anymore. How could he justify it, after the way the web-slinger saved his life?

C'mon, there's no easy way out this time; a foil is a foil, but sooner or later everyone learns his or her lesson.

By the way, does the *Daily Bugle* carry the Spider-Man strip?

Thomas L. Czaplicki
Box 31
Lincoln Park, MI 48146

More likely, the Howard the Duck strip, Tom.

As for Jolly Jonah, we feel constrained to point out that the facts have never stopped him before—so why should they, now? There have been many occasions upon which Spidey has saved JJJ or his son, John; these incidents have only served to fuel Jonah's jealousy. Of course, we mere armadillos cannot

hope to predict the actual future actions of the volatile Jameson... so you'll have to keep reading to see what effect, if any, the aforementioned incident has had upon the appoleptic publisher.

Dear Marvel,

I love your comics. They are the proverbial "cat's pajamas" and they put that proverbial "sunshine" in my proverbial "life." I only have one problem—in their desire to be fresh as the proverbial "daisy" in their dialogue, I feel that many Marvel writers have those "old" proverbial "butterflies in their stomachs" in taking the proverbial "bull by the horns" and feel compelled to let the reader know when using those proverbial "cliche phrases" that they are, proverbially, "with it," by having every character and her proverbial "brother" accompany those phrases with a certain proverbial phrase.

Sorry for kicking the proverbial dead horse.

Eric M. Heideman
1010 15th Ave. SE
Minneapolis, MN 55414

We get the proverbial point, Eric—and we promise to warn our proverbial scripters to watch themselves in the proverbial future!

Dear Marvel,

I bought a book today on 150 ways to play solitaire. I was just flipping through the pages, when I noticed a game called Will-o'-the-Wisp. It says that this game got its name because it is not so easy to win as it appears on paper. It also says that Will o' the Wisp is similar to the game Spiderette, which in turn is patterned after the game Spider. I was just wondering if all this had anything to do with Marvel's Will o' the Wisp and his relationship to Spider-Man?

Maureen Toonkel
1507 Monks Ave S-13
Mankato, MN 56001

According to Lively Len Wein, he conceived the Will-o'-the-Wisp character a full fifteen or more years ago, Maureen—but he and we are delighted with your sleuthing and the amazing coincidences you unearthed! We thank you for bringing this startling observation to our attention, and now we must also thank all of you Spidophiles for making this yet another enchanting installment of "The Spider's Web"!

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BUT, IF YOU THINK LIFE WAS UNRELENTINGLY GRIM FOR OUR WEB-SLINGER--

--CONSIDER THE CASE OF
CURT CONNERS, A ONE-
ARMED SCIENTIST--

--WHO TRIED TO REGENERATE
HIS LOST LIMB... FAILED... AND
INSTEAD BECAME--

*SPIDEY
#6--MARV.

THE LETHAL
LIZARD!

TRAGEDY HAUNTED FREDERICK FOSWELL,
ALSO! AS THE BIG MAN, HE AND HIS EN-
FORCERS TRIED TO DESTROY SPIDER-
MAN! BUT, REPENTANT--

--HE GAVE
HIS LIFE TO
SAVE J.
JONAH
JAMESON!

*AMAZING
SPIDER-
MAN #10
& 52, AND
MARVEL
TEAM-UP #
40--MARV.

HE DIED A HERO, YET
HAD HE LIVED, HE WOULD HAVE SEEN HIS DAUGHTER FALL VICTIM TO A REVENGE HE NEVER WANTED!*

OR CONSIDER THE PLIGHT OF COLONEL JOHN JAMESON--WHO NEVER SHARED HIS FATHER'S HATRED
OF SPIDER-MAN!

WHAT DID HE DO
TO DESERVE BECOM-
ING... THE
MAN-WOLF?!

*SPIDEY
#124--MARV.

NOTHING! BUT, AS FATE CHOSE A SPIDER TO
IRRADIATE PETER PARKER--SO IT CHOSE A MOONSTONE TO CHANGE JOHN JAMESON INTO A MONSTER!

JUST AS IT TURNED MICHAEL MORBIUS, A MAN WITH AN INCURABLE BLOOD DISEASE--

--INTO A
BLOOD-
LUSTING
LIVING
VAMPIRE!

AND PETER PARKER
INTO A SIX-ARMED
FREAK!*

QUITE A SENSE OF
HUMOR, FATE!

*SPIDEY #100-
102--MARV.

AND YOU MIGHT CALL THE CASE OF HARRY OSBORN--

--NORMAN OSBORN'S SON, AND PETER PARKER'S FRIEND AND SCHOOL-MATE--

--A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF "WASTE ON THE REBOUND!"

HARRY DIDN'T ASK FOR HIS DRUG ADDICTION--BUT THE NEWS OF HIS FATHER'S DEATH AND HIS OWN NEUROSES CREATED THE NEW **GREEN GOBLIN!***

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KINGPIN!



THE CHAMELEON!



ELECTRO!



THE SANDMAN!



THE VULTURE!



KRAVEN--



--THE HUNTER!

MOLTEN MAN!



THE SHOCKER!



AND, OF COURSE--



DOCTOR OCTOPUS!

MYSTERIO!



THE RHINO!



HAMMERHEAD!



MIRAGE!



WILL-O'-THE-WISP!



(WELL, MAYBE HE'S DESERVING!)

THE BEETLE!



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--THE DINOSAUR MAN!

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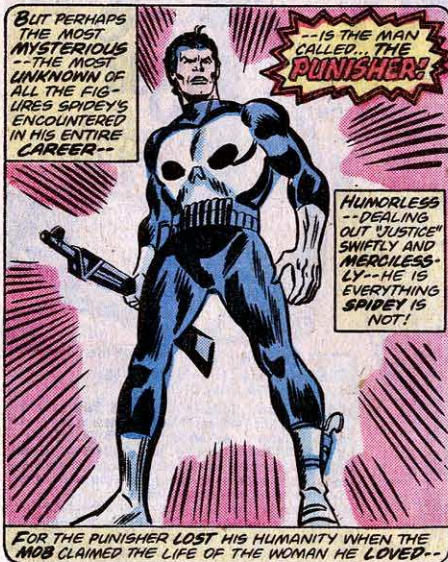
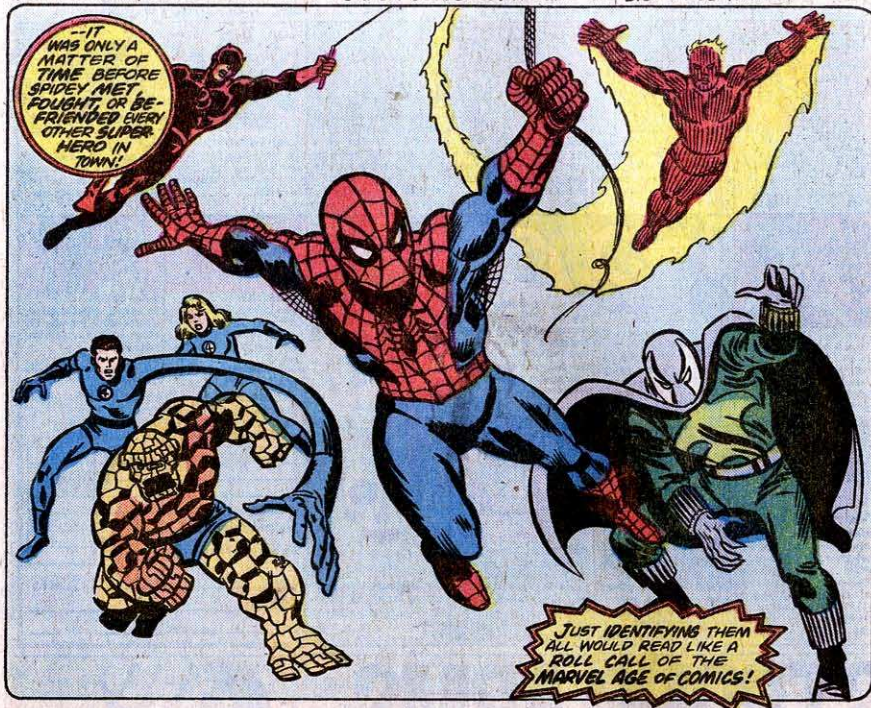
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--WHO REMEMBERS THE GOOD IN PEOPLE OVER THE BAD!

AUNT MAY IS PLACING FLOWERS ON UNCLE BEN'S GRAVE--GETTING READY TO LEAVE!

I'LL WATCH HER FROM HERE--

--MAKE SURE SHE GETS SAFELY TO THE BUS STOP AND ON THE BUS--



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STAN'S SOAPBOX

It's a funny thing—no "ha ha" funny, but kind of odd—no matter what part of the country I visit, the questions asked on college campuses are pretty much the same. One querulous query I'm hit with constantly is "How come Marvel is always bringing out new titles when you guys have so much trouble producing the old ones on time?" Okay, to save you the trouble of laying it on me sometime in the future, I'll try to illuminate this burning issue here and now. Y'know, if we were just interested in doing things the easy way, we'd never change our mags. We'd just keep publishing the same titles all the time. After all, why not? They sell pretty well. We know how to do 'em. They're nice and safe and don't pose too many problems. So, how come we're always tossing new titles, new heroes, and new concepts at you? Why knock ourselves out designing an issue of CLOSE ENCOUNTERS, doing the life story of THE BEATLES, coming up with MACHINE MAN, adding SPIDER-WOMAN to our merry menagerie of costumed cavers? Is it because we're never satisfied unless we have too much

work to do? Is it because we're gluttons for punishment? Is it 'cause we're nuts? Probably! But mainly it's because of you, kiddo! You, and the limitless legions of Marveldom Assembled who bombard us with hundreds of letters a week demanding new books, new characters, and new ideas! If a few weeks go by without something unexpected and different issuing forth from the mighty Marvel fantasy factory, you accuse us of not doing right by you, of lying down on the job, or of growing soft and indolent! But it's not your fault. It's the age we live in. Look at TV—new shows cropping up all the time as old ones are dropped and reshuffled. Each month the public (and that's you and me, Charliel) gets more and more jaded, more demanding of new products, new surprises, new types of entertainment. The whole pace of life, all over the world, seems to be speeding up. We seek more books, more movies, more games, more cars—we want more of everything, and we want it faster and faster! But fear thee not, O Faithful One! Let not a single wrinkle of apprehension furrow thy noble brow! As you can see, we're trying to give you the

best of both worlds. We're keeping the world-famous Marvel line-up as intact as possible, so that you can enjoy your favorites month in and month out without interruption—while, at the same time, we've got dozens of brand new projects on the drawing board—new themes, new titles, new plans and ideas! After all, our own writers and artists are just like you! While they still enjoy the Marvel roster of the world's best-selling super-heroes, they too wanna sink their teeth into exciting new and different projects! And that's it! That's the reason for all the new stuff, even though it gives us deadline nightmares! We're doing it for you—and we're doing it for us! Some new features will succeed, and some will fall by the wayside—your guess is as good as ours. But that's what makes for excitement, and remember—excitement's the name of the game. So bear with us, hear? No matter what the future brings, we promise it won't be dull!

Excelsior!

As this column was being prepared, we were shocked by the unexpected death of John Verpoorten. He worked at Marvel for nearly twelve years, the last seven of them as our Production Manager. To those of you who read our books, his name may not be quite so familiar as those of our regular artists and writers, but among working professionals probably no one outside of Stan himself represented Marvel more. A Production Manager stands at the center of things. He oversees the flow of work as it moves from artist to writer to letterer to colorist and on to the engraver and printer, and he tries to make certain that all this happens something like on schedule. Amid the collective craziness that is the Marvel style, this can be an almost impossible task. The testimony

to John is not that he did the impossible, but that he did it with warmth, with humor, and with understanding. Having started in the field as an artist—older fans will remember his inking on such strips as the FANTASTIC FOUR, the INHUMANS, and CAPTAIN AMERICA—may have left John with more tolerance and appreciation of all the many problems that can befall anyone producing comic books at any step of the way. Certainly, there are few staffers or freelancers for

whom at one time or another he didn't bend a rule, make an exception, or go out on a limb. This wasn't a job requirement or any kind of a necessity, but it made Marvel a better place to work and ultimately probably made the work produced by Marvel better as well. Like most of us in comics, John sometimes got tired, and sometimes grew cynical. But never so tired that a bit of office horseplay or silliness couldn't make him smile, and not so cynical that a well-drawn page or a well-produced book wouldn't make him look with interest. Whether he was inclined to admit it or not, John cared; about comics, and about the people he knew and dealt with in producing them. And in the end, of all the things we'll miss about John, it's the caring we'll miss most.

JOHN VERPOORTEN
1940–1977

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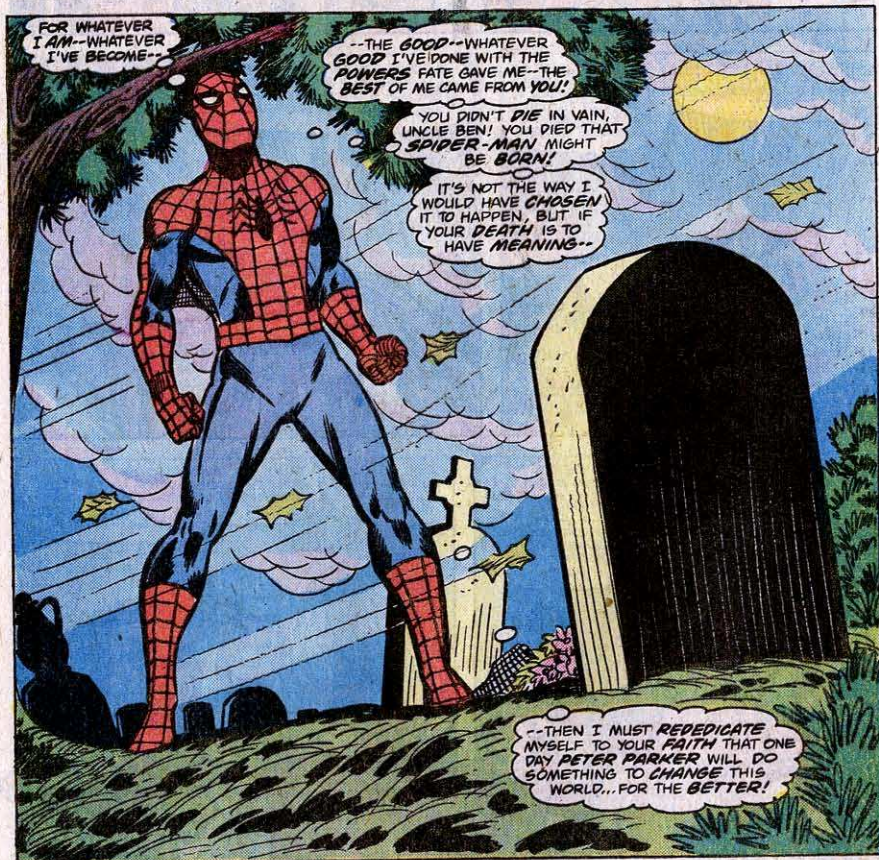




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--THE YOUNG MAN KNOWN TO THE WORLD AS SPIDER-MAN SWINGS OFF INTO THE NIGHT!

PERHAPS OUR STORY SHOULD END HERE--

--BUT LIFE, UNLIKE FICTION, IS RARELY SO CLEAN-CUT!



BRRR!
COLD NIGHT
T'BE WALKIN'
OUT HERE--

--'SPECIALLY WHEN I SHOULD BE AT HOME, CELEBRATIN' A BIRTHDAY WITH MY BOY, TOMMY! POOR KID! HE'S A SMART ONE--BUT THE OTHER KIDS PICK ON HIM 'CAUSE HE AIN'T A FIGHTER!



WISH I COULD'VE AFFORDED TO BUY THE LAD A PRESENT THIS YEAR THAT MEANT SOMETH--

EH? WHAT'S THAT IN FRONT OF THAT TOMB-STONE?

WHY, I DON'T BELIEVE IT!



WHAT FOOL WOULD LEAVE AN EXPENSIVE THING LIKE A MICROSCOPE IN A GRAVEYARD??

SOMETHIN' STICKY ON IT--BUT IT SEEMS T'BE EVAPORATIN'!

WELL, FINDERS-KEEPERS! THIS IS JUST WHAT MY TOMMY WOULD LOVE!



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