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SECRET WARS II
CONTINUES IN THIS ISSUE

the **AMAZING SPIDER-MAN**

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IN THIS ISSUE:
THE **BEYONDER**™ BATTLES **MEPHISTO**!



THE **SOUL** OF THE **SPIDER!**

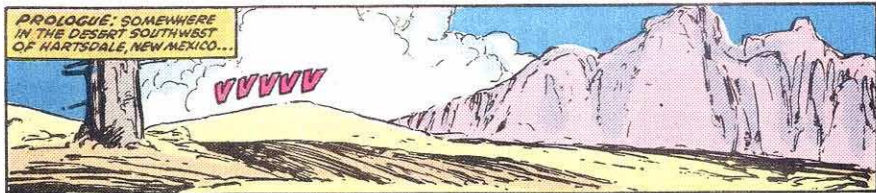
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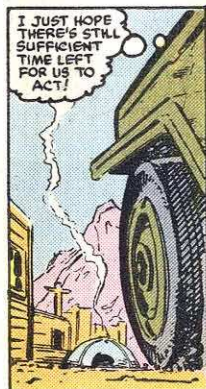


PROLOGUE: SOMEWHERE
IN THE DESERT SOUTHWEST
OF HARTSDALE, NEW MEXICO...



THERE'S THE
RESERVATION--!

VAOOOM!



I JUST HOPE
THERE'S STILL
SUFFICIENT
TIME LEFT
FOR US TO
ACT!



WHERE'S MY
UNCLE? I
MUST SEE
HIM--NOW!!

H-HE'S
IN HIS
TEPEE!

SCREECH!



UNCLE! I JUST
FLEW IN FROM
NEW YORK CITY,
AND DROVE
DIRECTLY FROM
MY PRIVATE
AIRSTRIIP!

WE'RE ALL
IN GREAT
DANGER!

I HAVE SEEN
THE ENEMY OF
ALL LIFE--WHOSE
COMING WAS
FORETOLD IN OUR
ANCIENT
PROPHECIES!



HE'S REAL!
THE ONE
FROM BE-
YOND IS
NO MYTH!

BUT, I FAILED
IN MY MISSION
TO DESTROY
HIM!*

HE WAS
TOO MUCH
FOR EVEN
THE POWER
OF PUMA!

*SEE PETER PARKER #171--ON2!



IT GLADDENS ME TO SEE THAT YOU
SURVIVED YOUR BATTLE WITH HIM,
THOMAS... BUT IN MY HEART, I
HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN THAT YOU
WERE DESTINED TO FAIL.

WE MUST DO SOME-
THING, UNCLE! I'VE
SEEN THIS BEYONDER
IN ACTION! FELT HIS
POWER RUN
THROUGH ME.

HE'S A TH. EAT
TO THE ENTIRE
WORLD! PERHAPS
TO THE UNIVERSE
ITSELF!



THERE IS NOTHING
WE CAN DO NOW,
EXCEPT WAIT AND
PRAY...

FOR
WHAT--?!

SINCE THE
CHAMPION OF
DEATH COULDN'T
STOP THE ONE
FROM BEYOND...



...OUR ONLY HOPE RESTS WITH
THE CHAMPION OF LIFE!

WHO IS THIS MIGHTY
CHAMPION?

I DO
NOT
KNOW...

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Stan Lee
PRESENTS:

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

LO, THERE SHALL COME A CHAMPION!

IN A GALAXY SO DISTANT THAT ITS LIGHT WILL NOT REACH THE MILKY WAY UNTIL LONG AFTER PLANET EARTH HAS BEEN REDUCED TO COSMIC ASH, THE ONE FROM BEYOND STANDS...

... AND PONDER'S THE FATE OF THIS MANY-LAYERED UNIVERSE!

SHOULD HE WIPE IT CLEAN? ERASE IT, AND LEAVE IT AS BARREN AND LIFELESS AS THE ONE IN WHICH HE ONCE DWELLED? OR CONTINUE HIS SEEMINGLY FUTILE QUEST TO FIND PEACE WITHIN THE REALM OF EXISTENCE?

SO GREAT IS HIS INNER TURMOIL THAT THE VERY FABRIC OF REALITY IS RENT AROUND HIM!

SUNS IMplode! WORLDS COLLIDE! PARALLEL DIMENSIONS COLLAPSE UPON THEMSELVES!

AND, YET, THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING--!

CONTINUING THE
AWESOME SAGA OF

SECRET WARS II

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RON FRENZ - LAYOUTS
JOE RUBINSTEIN - FINISHES
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SUDDENLY, THE ONE FROM BEYOND SENSES A NEARBY DISTURBANCE. TO HIM, IT IS ONLY A PETTY ANNOYANCE--



--IN THE FORM OF A VAST SPACE ARMADA-- THE COALITION OF OVER THIRTY THOUSAND ADVANCED GALACTIC CIVILIZATIONS!



COMMANDER, WE HAVE THE **BEYONDER**, BUT WE MUST HURRY! OUR SENSORS INDICATE THAT HE'S PREPARING TO TAMPER WITH THE VERY FRAMEWORK OF REALITY!

WE HAVE NO CHOICE! WE MUST EMPLOY OUR ULTIMATE WEAPON-- THE **GALACTIC ERADICATOR!**



A THOUSAND INHABITED WORLDS WILL PERISH IN ITS AFTERSHOCK, BUT THAT'S A SMALL PRICE TO PAY FOR THE SALVATION OF THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE!

UPON MY COMMAND...



FIRE!!

STREAKING ACROSS THE VOID OF SPACE WITH A SPEED WHICH FAR EXCEEDS LIGHT ITSELF, THE BEAM BURSTS UPON THE SOLITARY FIGURE--



--FORCING HIM BACKWARD A SINGLE STEP!

HE IS NOT AMUSED!



WITH THE MEREST OF SHRUGS, HE CAUSES THE ENTIRE SPACE FLEET--



NOT CONTENT WITH THIS PUNISHMENT, HE REACHES OUT TO THE HOMEWORLDS FROM WHICH THE FLEETS CAME--



--AND TO EVERY PLANET THAT EVER HAD CONTACT WITH ANY OF THESE WORLDS...

--TO VANISH FROM EXISTENCE!

BUT, HE REALIZES THAT HE HASN'T COMPLETELY WIPED AWAY THE MEMORY OF THESE RACES.



HIS ACTIONS ARE CONSTANTLY BEING OBSERVED BY THE MOST SOPHISTICATED BEINGS IN THIS MULTIVERSE!

HOWEVER, HE CAN FIX THAT...



...BY ELIMINATING THEM TOO!

THEY, TOO, CEASE TO EXIST!

DEEP WITHIN HIS DARK DOMAIN, BROODS THE SUPREME LORD OF HATE AND EVIL... MEPHISTO!

SO! THE BEYONDER NOW VANISHES TO A PLACE WHERE EVEN MY MYSTIC VAPORS CANNOT FOLLOW!

HOW I DESPISE HIM!

ON A WHIM, HE JUST ELIMINATED A FEW THOUSAND GALACTIC RACES--

-- BUT NOT EVEN MY BELOVED DEATH PROFITED BY THIS ACTION!

THOSE BEINGS DIDN'T DIE-- THEY MERELY CEASED LIVING! IT'S AS THOUGH THEY NEVER EXISTED!

COUNTLESS BILLIONS OF SOULS WHOSE SUFFERINGS I WILL FOREVER BE DENIED!

I DEPLORE SUCH WASTE!

NOTHING CAN COMFORT ME NOW--

-- NOT EVEN THE SIMPLE PLEASURE OF WATCHING A HATED ENEMY SUFFERING ETERNAL TORMENT!

THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT NOW THAT THE BEYONDER IS DETERMINED TO DISMANTLE THE ENTIRE MULTI-VERSE!

FWAK!

HOW SHOULD I AWAIT THIS FINAL CATAclysm?

BY CRINGING IN FEAR--

-- OR, BY RAISING A HOARY HOST OF DEMONS TO BATTLE HIM?

NO! MEPHISTO HAS OTHER, FAR MORE POTENT WEAPONS! DECEIT! TREACHERY!

I SHALL STRIKE AT THE BEYONDER IN A WAY HE WOULD NEVER SUSPECT!

THOUGH THE THOUGHT OF IT REVOLTS ME, I SHALL HELP PRESERVE MY OWN INFERNAL DOMAIN BY SIDING WITH THE FORCES OF LIFE!

WAIT! I SUDDENLY SENSE A PRESENCE--!



MEPHISTO!
I'VE COME FOR
YOU AND YOUR
ENTIRE REALM!

I'M GOING TO
ERASE THIS
MESS—AND
THEN CONTINUE
ONTO THE REST
OF THE MULTI-
VERSE!

DON'T
BOTHER
TRYING TO
RESIST ME.
IT WON'T
DO YOU ANY
GOOD!



I DON'T THINK MANY PEOPLE
WILL BE SORRY TO SEE THIS
PLACE GO!

JUST LISTEN TO
THAT RACKET!

HOW COULD
YOU EVER
CONCENTRATE
WITH SO MANY
SOULS SCREAM-
ING IN AGONY?



I ALWAYS
FOUND IT
RATHER...
UPLIFTING!

I'LL
BET!

OH, WELL I SUP-
POSE I SHOULD
GET STARTED. I
HAVE A LOT OF
WORK AHEAD
OF ME!



WAIT! AN IMMORTAL
SUCH AS YOURSELF
SHOULDN'T FEEL
PRESSURED BY
TIME!

THERE IS NO
NEED FOR HASTE!

MY HUMBLE DOMAIN
AND I MAY YET
PROVIDE YOU WITH
A SMALL AMUSE-
MENT, OR TWO.

I DOUBT IT! I'VE ALREADY
SEEN EVERYTHING THIS
MULTIVERSE HAS TO OFFER.

PERHAPS,
THAT IS TRUE...

"...BUT, AS I
UNDERSTAND IT,
YOU ORIGINALLY
BECAME AWARE
OF THIS MULTIVERSE
BECAUSE SOME
COSMIC EVENT
POKE A PINHOLE
INTO YOUR UNI-
VERSE..."

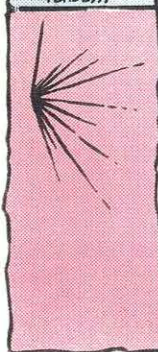
"FASCINATED,
YOU TOOK HUMAN
FORM AND CAME
HERE TO WALK
AMONG MEN,
AND STUDY THE
THING CALLED
DESIRE!"

"OF COURSE, THE
PRESENCE OF ONE
AS POWERFUL AS
YOURSELF DID NOT
GO UNNOTICED BY
THE **GREAT BEINGS**
OF THIS UNIVERSE!"

"...YOU WERE ONLY
INTERESTED IN CON-
TINUING YOUR STUDIES.
EVENTUALLY, YOU MET
A RATHER DISTASTE-
FUL INDIVIDUAL
KNOWN AS **DOCTOR
STRANGE...**"

"...AND YOU
SOON CONCLUDED
THAT YOUR **TRUE**
ROLE IN THIS
UNIVERSE WAS
TO SHOW ALL
THE **OTHER**
BEINGS WHAT
THEIR **TRUE**
ROLES WERE!"

"CONFUSED BY ALL
THIS, YOU TURNED
TO THE ONE BEING
IN THIS UNIVERSE
WHOM YOU PERCEIVED
AS A FRIEND, OWEN
REESE, THE **MOLE-
CULE MAN...**"



"BUT, YOU DIDN'T
CARE ABOUT US..."

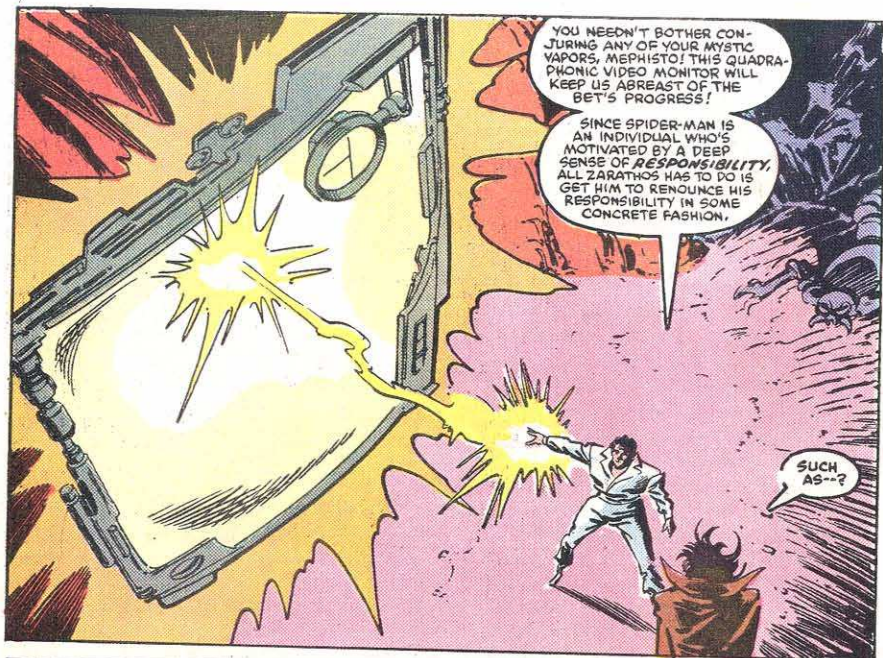
"...HE SHOWED YOU
THE PATH TO EN-
LIGHTENMENT..."

"UNFORTU-
NATE-
LY, ONE SUCH
BEING WAS
PUMA, WHOSE
TRUE ROLE
WAS TO DE-
STROY YOU!"

"...AND EVEN HE
TRIED TO DESTROY
YOU!"







YOU NEEDN'T BOTHER CONJURING ANY OF YOUR MYSTIC VAPORS, MEPHISTO! THIS QUADRA-PHONIC VIDEO MONITOR WILL KEEP US ABREAST OF THE BET'S PROGRESS!

SINCE SPIDER-MAN IS AN INDIVIDUAL WHO'S MOTIVATED BY A DEEP SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY, ALL ZARATHOS HAS TO DO IS GET HIM TO RENOUNCE HIS RESPONSIBILITY IN SOME CONCRETE FASHION.

SUCH AS--?



OH, I'M CERTAIN SOMETHING WILL PRESENT ITSELF!

YOU KNOW, I'M REALLY BEGINNING TO ENJOY THIS! I'M GLAD I CAME.

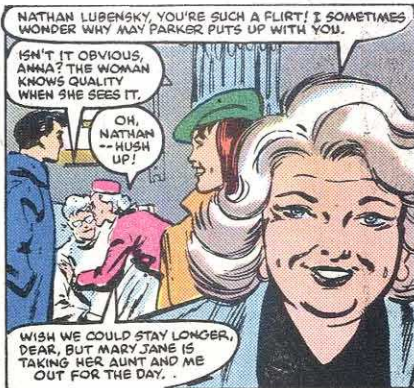
TO THINK THAT MY FATE--AND THE FATE OF ALL THAT I VALUE--IS TIED TO A MERE MORTAL!



WELL, WE'D BEST NOT FAIL ME! I MUST WIN THAT EXTRA DAY! TO PLAN! TO SCHEME! TO CONTINUE TO SURVIVE!

I MUST WIN IT, AND I SHALL! SO SWEARS MEPHISTO!

THAT IMAGE! IT'S A HOSPITAL...



-- TWO TAPS TO THE WAFER-THIN BUTTONS HIDDEN BENBATH THE PALMS OF HIS GLOVES TO TRIGGER HIS WEB-SHOOTERS--



--AND THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN IS SOON SWINGING HIGH ABOVE THE CITY STREETS!

IT WAS REAL NICE OF ANNA WATSON TO STOP IN ON NATHAN TODAY.

GUESS SHE'S IN TOWN TO VISIT MARY JANE FOR THE HOLIDAYS.

OHMIGOSH! I JUST REALIZED THAT I'VE BEEN SO BUSY LATELY THAT I NEVER NAILED DOWN ANY DEFINITE PLANS WITH AUNT MAY FOR CHRISTMAS DAY.



CAN'T WORRY ABOUT THAT NOW! THERE'S THE WAREHOUSE I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR...



THERE! MANAGED TO SLIP IN THROUGH THE SKYLIGHT WITHOUT MAKING A SOUND. THAT BEAM LOOKS LIKE A GOOD PLACE TO SET UP SHOP.

MY CAMERA'S FOCUSED, AND LOADED WITH FILM.



TALK ABOUT A PLUM ASSIGNMENT! THE DAILY BUGLE GOT TIPPED THAT THE POLICE WERE GOING TO BUST THIS HOT CAR RING TODAY... ALL I HAVE TO DO IS SNAP THE PIX!



HEY, MARTY, COME HERE...



EVERYTHING SET FOR TONIGHT?

YEAH, THE HIT IS GOING DOWN AS PLANNED.

IT'S PERFECT! NOBODY'LL EVER THINK TO CONNECT A SMALL GANG LIKE OURS WITH THE DEATH OF A MAJOR PLAYER LIKE--

-- THE KINGPIN OF CRIME!!



HE'S GOT A STANDING DINNER RESERVATION FOR 6:00 AT THE CENTURY CLUB...

"...AND OUR BOY IS SET TO POP HIM GOING IN THE FRONT DOOR!"



I DON'T BELIEVE IT! THOSE CHEAP THUGS ARE ACTUALLY PLANNING TO KNOCK OFF THE NUMBER ONE CRIMELORD IN THE CITY!

SUDDENLY, AT THE PRECISE MOMENT, THE DOORS OF THE WAREHOUSE EXPLODE INWARD...

THIS IS THE POLICE!

GRAB AIR, YOU DIRT-BAGS!



TALK ABOUT A LOUSY SENSE OF TIMING!

GUESS THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO NOW EXCEPT TAKE MY PIX, AND CLEAR OUT BEFORE I'M SPOTTED.



A FEW MINUTES LATER...

HAVE TO DROP MY FILM OFF AT THE DAILY BUGLE, BUT THAT'S NOT MY MAIN WORRY NOW.

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO ABOUT THE KINGPIN? HE'S A MAN WHO GETS A CUT FROM EVERY CRIME COMMITTED IN THIS CITY.



HE PROFITS FROM DRUGS, PROSTITUTION, AND EXTORTION!

AND YET, CAN I LET EVEN A GUY LIKE THAT BE MURDERED?



SEE? I TOLD YOU A CONCRETE PROBLEM WOULD PRESENT ITSELF!

THE KINGPIN OF CRIME IS NOT UNKNOWN TO ME.

I WOULD PREFER THAT HE NOT BE KILLED... YET.

OH, YOU'RE JUST AFRAID OF LOSING A USEFUL AGENT.

TRUST ME, MEPHISTO, IF SPIDER-MAN FAILS TO SAVE HIM...



"...THAT'LL BE THE LEAST OF YOUR HAGGLES!"

THE KINGPIN HAS TRIED TO KILL ME ON MORE OCCASIONS THAN I'D CARE TO REMEMBER.



BUT IT WOULD BE WRONG TO DO NOTHING.

LET HIM DIE!



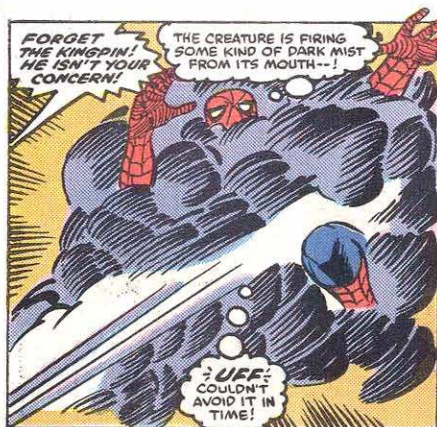
WHAT THE--?!

THE KINGPIN MUST BE PUNISHED FOR HIS MANY CRIMES!

HE DESERVES DEATH!!



WHAT IS THIS THING? WHERE DID IT COME FROM?!

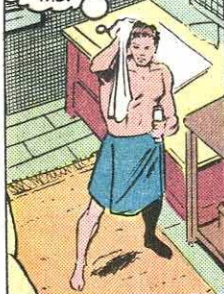






"...EVEN IF I MUST SACRIFICE THE ENTIRE HUMAN RACE TO DO SO!"

AT LAST! I FINALLY MANAGED TO WASH THAT SULFUR SMELL OFF ME.



3 WHEW! THIS COSTUME'S GOING TO NEED A GOOD SOAKING, TOO.

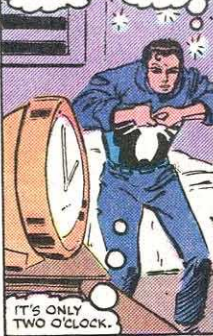
GUESS I'D BETTER SLIP INTO MY BLACK ONE BEFORE I HEAD OUT TO THE DAILY BUGLE.



BUT, A FEW MINUTES LATER...

3 UGNN! HEADACHE'S GETTING WORSE!

MY HEAD FEELS LIKE IT'S GONNA BURST!



IT'S ONLY TWO O'CLOCK.

MAYBE A QUICK NAP WILL HELP.



THERE'S STILL PLENTY OF TIME FOR ME TO GET MY PICTURES TO THE BUGLE--

--AND, FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE KINGPIN!

PETER...



PETER... THAT VOICE--! IT'S SO FAMILIAR!



W-WHO ARE YOU?

DON'T YOU RECOGNIZE US?



HELLO, SON!

MOM! DAD! IS IT REALLY YOU--?!

IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I LAST SAW YOU. I WAS ONLY A KID WHEN YOU... YOU...



WE DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE YOU, SON.

I KNOW.

IS SOMETHING WRONG? THE TWO OF YOU SEEM SO... DISTANT.



IT'S BECAUSE YOUR LIFE HAS BEEN SUCH A GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT TO US, PETER.

WHEN YOU WERE A CHILD, YOU PROMISED TO STUDY HARD IN SCHOOL. YOU LIED! YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A COLLEGE DROP-OUT NOW!



YOU OWED IT TO OUR MEMORY TO COMPLETE YOUR EDUCATION!



WE HAD SUCH HOPES AND DREAMS FOR YOU--BUT YOU LET US DOWN!

T-THIS ISN'T FAIR!

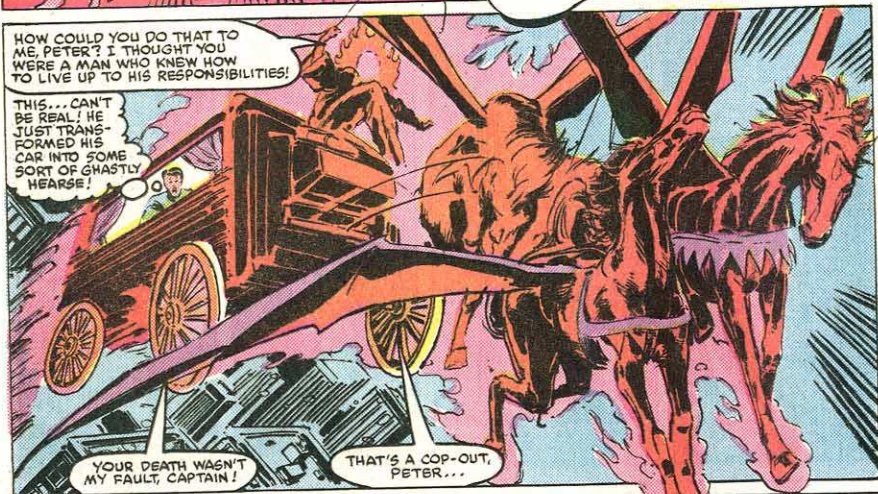
I'VE ALWAYS TRIED MY BEST!

CAN'T YOU SEE THAT?!

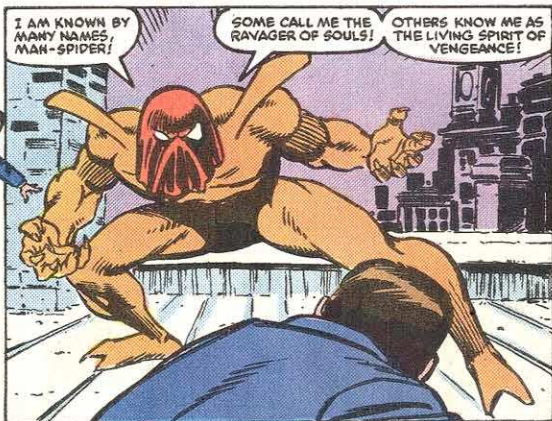


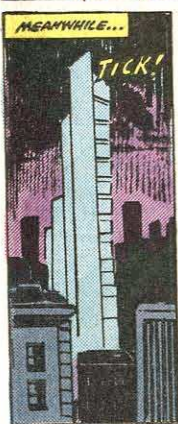
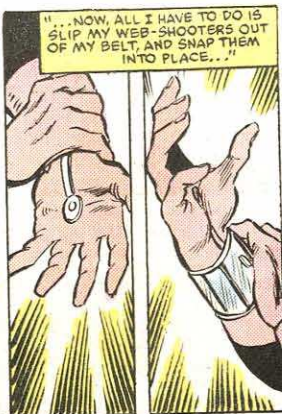






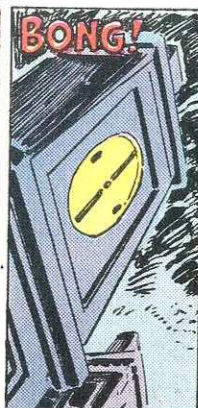


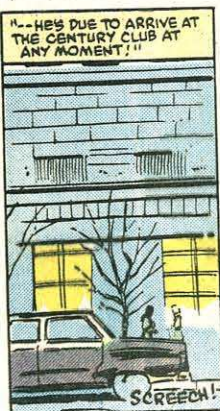


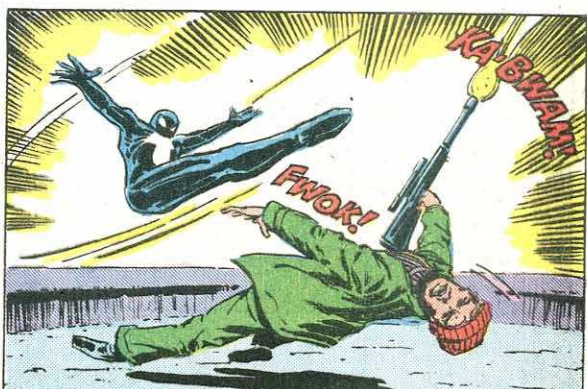














THE BEGINNING OF THE END.
DON'T DARE MISS THE AWESOME CONCLUSION.
NO ONE ELSE WILL.

**SECRET WARS
II**

NEXT ISSUE:

A GIANT-SIZED EXTRAVAGANZA FEATURING THE LONG-DEMANDED...
RETURN OF HOBGOBLIN!
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THE SPIDER'S WEB

JIM OWSLEY
EDITOR
ADAM BLAUSTEIN
ASSISTANT EDITOR

VIEW FROM THE TENTH FLOOR

Unless you're the kind of person who skips immediately to the letters pages of your favorite magazine, I'd say by this point you've now read one of the best Spider-Man issues ever. Tom and Ron pulled out all the stops on this one, delivering all the action, all the drama, all the pizzazz any die-hard Marvelite could ask for. An instant classic, well worth the long hours Assistant Editor Adam Blaustein and I put into bringing it to you.

And, let me tell you, we're all exhausted. Be here next month, when we feature the special all-black issue. No cover, no art, no story. But, a breeze to put out.

Er...that is...I mean...
Be here in thirty days for the gala launching of Marvel's 25th Anniversary celebration, with a giant-sized special issue of AMAZING SPIDER-MAN! And, if that's not enough, the issue contains a bonus re-presentation of the original 11-page origin story from AMAZING FANTASY #151! And, if that's not enough, the issues' tale, "The Choice And The Challenge" features a major turning point in Spider-Man's life! And, if that still isn't enough for you...

...next issue features the return of The Hobgoblin!

There you have it, people. A book so crammed with extras it's more than worth the extra checkies you have to farm out for it. And it's also more than worth the wait. Tom DeFalco, Ron Frenz, Joe Rubenstein. In thirty days.

As for me, I can be reached at the Happy Trails Home For The Terminally Exhausted. Send cookies.

Jim Owsley

SEND ALL LETTERS TO:

Marvel Comics Group, 175 Park Avenue South,
New York, N.Y. 10016. Please include your name
and address. We will, however, withhold them
upon request.

Dear Merry Marvel Men,

WHOOPIE! WOW! WHAT A GREAT ISSUE! Number 269 really hit the spot! After reading #268, I wondered, "Hm... what could that light in space be?" Now I know, and I can't wait to see "The Hero and the Holocaust!" I always wondered why Peter Parker never changed into his civies if he was in tough shape. I guess I know now!

Keep up the great work!!!

Peter Kasperowicz
172 S. Main St.
Cohasset, MA 02025

Dear Spider-Man,

The last two issues (269 & 270) have been just fantastic. Tom, you've outdone yourself! I love the plotting of issue #269!!!! Firelord mistaken for a mutant while eating pizza! Hah! By the way, I have a sneaky suspicion that the mysterious stranger is recognizing Nathan, instead of Pete. It's just a hunch. I love the shoe-falling-out-of-the-tree scene. Firelord's dialogue just makes you believe he's got an over-sized ego! Ron, I've always loved your style. Keep up the good work. I also thought the covers of both issues were superb. I haven't loved a two-issue epic this much since Spidey battled the Juggernaut!! Spidey keeps saying people are out of his "class" or "league" and keeps calling the FF and the Avengers "heavy-hitters." If you ask me, Spider-Man doesn't have a class. The only thing holding him back is his lack of confidence. I've never written a letter to you guys before, but this time I couldn't keep myself back. Every one of you deserves congratulations! You've upheld the tradition that makes Spider-Man the best hero of all!! Till Hobgoblin trades his jet glider in for a Buick.

David Clarke
2513 Plaza St.
Arlington, TX 76010

Dear Gang,

I have just finished reading AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #269-270 and my opinions are as follows:

1) Firelord's appearance—Great! It's about time that you got a superpowered villain for Spidey to fight, instead of these "ordinary" crooks! Keep 'em coming!

2) Spidey's victory (in #270)—Excellent! For too long, Spidey has been thought of as a "wimp" when compared to the Hulk, Thor, etc., but by beating Firelord, Spider-Man has shown that he is a major power in the Marvel Universe (that is my estimation of the effect of the event).

3) Ron Frenz's artwork—It was great! It is also improving rapidly! Keep up the good work! Overall, this was a great story, and I can't wait for the next issue! Keep up the good work!

David Duncan
34 Benedict Terrace
Longmeadow, MA 01106

Dear Wall Crawlers,

Spider-Man—Stop! You can't beat Firelord!... "Wanne Get?"

Those words said it all. Issue #270 was fantastic. I loved seeing Spidey take on the Firelord. Surely, his victory over the former herald of the Big "G" must rank as one of Spider-Man's greatest ever. I really liked the tie-in with the Avengers, too. Especially Hercules' thoughts of the Web-head, as revealed in AVENGERS #258.

But I have a few questions about Spider-Man. First, is Captain America really that much bigger than Spider-Man? I know that the Web-Slinger is alot stronger and more agile than Cap, but I couldn't believe the size difference.

And secondly, if Spider-Man can knock out a guy like Firelord, how can people like the Kingpin, Puma, and Hobgoblin give Spidey so much trouble?

By the way, where is old Hobby, anyway?

J.S.
Dunwoody, GA

Well, JS, to find the answer to your question about Spidey versus Firelord, simply read the next letter! As for Hobgoblin, by now you know where he is...

Dear Marvel,

Spider-Man #270 was awesomely great. The fight scenes were not only entertaining, but were logical and realistic. Spider-Man's struggle for survival, combined with the fact that despite his growing fears and fatigue, Spider-Man kept on coming. Not only did that take tremendous amounts of courage and willpower, it was extremely realistic. Furthermore, it was logical the way Spider-Man used his acrobatic "spider" agility and reflexes to confuse Firelord. In addition, I simply LOVED the way Spider-Man used his "danger" or "spider" sense to enable him to anticipate Firelord's every attack. As in normal humans, Spider-Man's adrenal medulla probably secreted large amounts of epinephrine in his stressful and fearful state at the time of the battle, which stimulated the heartbeat rate, raised blood levels, and inhibited sensations of fatigue (the "fight or flight" hormone) that heightened Spider-Man's physical abilities, thus giving him a great advantage over Firelord.

Furthermore on the subject, I think, in my opinion, that Spider-Man is obviously getting stronger and more powerful than ever before. I mean, in the early days, Spider-Man had only sufficient power to handle ordinary criminals with handguns, criminals with highly sophisticated weaponry, and only small time super-folks. Currently, Spider-Man has been able to beat heavyweights like... Speed Demon, the Submariner (you know, the "fish-man" who defeated the Incredible Hulk years ago), Titania (who defeated the She-Hulk from the SECRET WARS), plus... he damed near defeated the Uncanny X-Men, and he would have, too, given enough time.

In addition, Spider-Man has been only able to hold his own for a LONG period of time against other heavyweights such as: the Unstoppable Juggernaut, the Incredible Hulk, the Avengers, the Silver Surfer, and the fact that he NEARLY defeated the Fantastic Four. Will this seeming power increment ever be established in the current OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE, DELUXE EDITION??? Who knows.

Of course, if Spider-Man is going up against the Fly, his reputation is practically blown. As far as I know, the Fly is the only guy who was strong and fast enough to cause Spider-Man grief, as shown wayback again in Spider-Man #192-193. I would like to see the Fly in the NEAR future, and make it good and snappy, okay?

Tom, Ron... never have I seen you two do so well in all the years I've been living. Thanks.

Peter Chisholm
6033 Catherine St.
Phila, PA 19143

Dear Makers of Marvel History,

Spider-Man #270 was worth waiting, camped out by my local comic shop, for The artwork was tremendous! That fighting sequence on page 21 was the best pencil/ink job of Spidey in action since Ditko. I MEAN IT!

The story wasn't so bad either. Peter Parker is not on Kathryn Cushing's favorite photog list, eh? Well, I don't like her anyway. I'm all for women's rights, but I can't stand pushy women, and that she is. Get rid of her.

Jonah seems to be mellowing some, perhaps Mrs. Jameson has something to do with it. I'd like to see how JJ and Maria are at home sometime, just to give us an idea how she copes with him.

I'm glad Spidey realized someone could've been hurt by the subway stunt. I can't believe he would endanger lives that way. Perhaps he was scared; I would be.

There are some things I wonder about, though, and they are:

1. Why don't you guys decide on Spidey's costume? If you ask me, stick to the Original!!!
2. What happened to the Black Cat since she and Spidey broke up?
3. Is Peter ever going to tell Aunt May his secret and why he does what he must? And what about May and Nate tying the knot?

4. When are we going to see Hobgoblin and the Puma again? How about Sandman? He and Spidey could work together to help him make restitution for his past!

5. How about another appearance by Pete's beautiful neighbors? Maybe Mary Jane? (WOW! MJ!)

And (finally, you say),

6. What's he (Spider-Man) going to do with the gold notebook?

I suspect the man in the shadows is ish #269 was:

- A. the man who saw Peter's face at the airport and photographed him (ish #262)
- B. someone from Nathan Lubensky's past
- C. I—an agent of the Black Cat
- D. an agent of the Beyerder

I suppose the answers to all my questions will be answered one way or another. Keep up the good work, you're re-defining the words Marvel Comics.

Dennis Price
6143 SE Robinson Rd
Bellevue, FL 32620

Dear Marvel,

I have been waiting a long time to see an issue like SPIDER-MAN #270. You did it in that issue what you had only hinted at in a few other stories. You showed us and Spider-Man himself, plus the Avengers, what Spider-Man is really capable of. In defeating Firelord, a herald of Galactus, a guy who has gone toe-to-toe with Hercules and Thor, Spidey proved to me he is far more powerful than he has ever given himself credit for. Remember in the past he has practically defeated a possessed Fantastic Four; he has fought the Hulk to a standstill. This is far more than any other character at his supposed power level could accomplish, say Daredevil, Captain America, or the Black Panther.

I have always believed that given his speed, strength, agility, and especially his spider sense that warns him of any danger, Spider-Man is in a much higher power class than previously thought.

What I'm getting at is, now that you have shown Spider-Man's true potential, keep it up! Let him fight more powerful enemies. And one more thing, I'm tired of the other Marvel heroes treating him like a second-class hero; granted he brings some of it on himself with his attitude, but let's face it, he can wipe the floor with almost every Avenger that has ever been, except Thor. Plus he has been around longer than most of them as well.

His recent fiasco with the Wasp is a perfect example. I hated the way the Wasp treated Spider-Man, like some junior hero learning the ropes. Let's have some respect for Spider-Man from now on.

Keep up the good work. I buy almost every comic that you put out and I'm 24 years old. Make Mine Marvel.

Skip Watson
607 Jordan Ln
Huntsville, AL 35805

Dear Sirs,

It would be impossible for me to describe exactly how excruciatingly good ASM #270 was. Superlatives become inadequate; so suffice it to say that it was the best issue that I've seen in five or so years. Possibly longer. The action was fast and furious, two ingredients that have been sadly lacking for quite a while. The characterization was concise and precise, with a very nice (and welcome) appearance by the original 'old goat', J. Jonah Jameson, as well as a well-portrayed new city editor, whom I'm sure we'll be seeing a lot more of in the near future. The scene with her snapping J.J.'s immortal cigar in half is a classic. The story reads well, and the art, as usual, is terrific.

But the actual core of greatness in this issue lies with the wall-crawler himself. In top form, to be sure, and as formidable as the Peter Parker of old. Never say never seemed to be the theme of this issue, and it was abundantly depicted.

Spidey simply would not quit, nor be beaten, and with each reappearance of Firelord, Spidey simply screwed up his determination, clenched his fists once again and just hit him harder. In the end, it was not the superior power that won, but the one with the greater spirit. That's what Spider-Man started out as being about, and it's fantastic to see a return to those values.

Again, my hearty kudos to all for a job very well done. Please continue more stories in that vein—it's the stuff that classic comic mags are made of.

Gary Bond
PSC Box 4669
Eglin AFB, FL 32542

Dear Web-Spinners,

Just got finished reading AMS #271. The Crusher was great and Malslaughter was awesome. The last scene with Peter and Aunt May really touched my heart. My thanks to Jim, Jim, and the rest of the crew for a great comic. So until Electro loses his juice, Make Mine Marvel!!!!

Edward Hughes
Gouldsboro, PA

Dear Spider-Team,

In reference to issue #271—it couldn't be any better for Crusher Hogan's return. I would've never guessed that you guys would resurrect him from Marvel Memories. Who's next, the Living Brain?

And about Malslaughter, he's something else that really can be made one of Spidey's major villains. See to it when you bring him back, give Crusher an appearance or two, ok?

In closing I just wanna tell you guys that Ron Frenz is the best artist ASM ever had—let's have him for keeps. Keep Marvel's middle name 'Awesome' like always!!

Thomas Frascella
227 Grant Ave
Middlesex, NJ 08846

Dear Spider-People,

I just wanted to tell you I was really impressed by #271. It wasn't the villain. Malslaughter was alright, but he's not someone I'd be especially anxious to see again in a book. Likewise, Madame Fang wasn't anything special. No, the thing that impressed me was the way you used Hogan.

When I first heard you were going to bring back Crusher Hogan, I thought, "Oh, no, another character from Spidey's past somehow gets superpowers and comes to get revenge story." When I saw the cover, I really became worried: Malslaughter—it even sounds like a wrestler.

Then I read the book. Then I read it again. You avoided that cliché plotline, and instead you gave us a truly classic comic book. Page 21, panel 5 was really touching. And the last page; for a few brief seconds, I actually forgot this was a comic book. I was really worried for Peter and Nathan for a moment. What? That's a sign of a good piece of literature. Bravo!

While I'm writing, I may as well give you my theory on the ever-elusive identity of the Hobgoblin. It's terribly obvious; I'm surprised no one's figured it out. Those who accused various members of the bullpen were close; they merely accused the wrong ones. The Hobgoblin is ... (insert drum roll): Howard Mackie. Don't laugh. Think about it. Marvel's most mysterious villain is really Marvel's most mysterious assistant editor. After all, what do we, you, or anybody for that matter, know about him. Very little indeed. No one is even sure what he looks like (except maybe his mother and even that's doubtful). He has never really revealed anything about himself to Marvel-dom assembled. Obviously he has something to hide, and this is it. He did pop up in the bullpen shortly after the Hobgoblin appeared.

Think about it. Howard the Duck in '88.

Anthony Kowalewski
229 Everett St
Southbridge, MA 01550

Say, what does Howard look like, anyway???

Dear Jim,

It was fitting that AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #271 was a nostalgic look back at Crusher Hogan, because the art team of Frenz and Rubenstein evokes a feeling of the "good old days" in Spider-Man's life when things were simpler, even though they really have not been as bad as Peter seems to think they have, until recently.

Before the last year or so, the tales in the assorted Spider-Books have kept the life of the hero at a status quo. Lately, though, with the addition of an editor who does not like Peter's photographs (with good reason, he never took much formal training in photography), the death of Jean DeWolff, Mary Jane's discovery of his identity and even the sun-bathers on his roof, Peter Parker has often had good reason to consider the spider's bite as a curse instead of a blessing.

Issue #271 is a good example of this new trend, as again he finds that superheroes call him away from keeping his premises to Aunt May. While Malslaughter certainly was not a great threat to Spider-Man, the complete futility of his situation: rescuing Hogan and the fighter while Nathan was being attacked by Joan sharks, was expressed well. The closing scene with Aunt May ended as many have in the past, but I have one complaint: Peter needs to stop letting Aunt May dictate their relationship. Whenever he feels that he has let her down, he listens to her complaints and then backs away. For once, I would like to see him stop her from closing the door on his face (and their relationship) and go inside and talk with her.

Finally, there is one more point that I would like to make. In the Marvel Universe most of the biggest solitary heroes are single. Spider-Man, Daredevil, Thor, and Cap all have had relationships that could have but for various reasons (death, the danger of being linked to a superhero, etc.) have not led to the altar. Now that Mary Jane knows that Pete is Spider-Man, there is no reason why they couldn't marry if their relationship called for it. While this certainly would be a major change in the life of Marvel's "star attraction," it would be a very welcome one.

Thanks for a very good comic, another of those trends you seem to be starting behind the scenes of Marvel's Spider-Books!

Roger Z. Cadenhed
Gariand, TX

Friends,

As I approach my 20th year of being an ardent fan of SPIDER-MAN, I would like to express to everyone involved in the magazine over the last two decades, my appreciation and admiration of the title's continuing high quality. After all these years, I consider Pete, Flash, Harry, Mary Jane, Robbie, Betty, and JJJ to be very special friends, not just delightful creations of someone's imagination.

The magazine has never lost its appeal to me—as a youngster, I eagerly awaited each new villain and his/her battle with Spidey. Now, I concentrate more on the personal relationships between Pete and his friends. I hope that you'll continue to supply me with another 20 years of fond memories. Thanks a lot guys, it's been a blast!

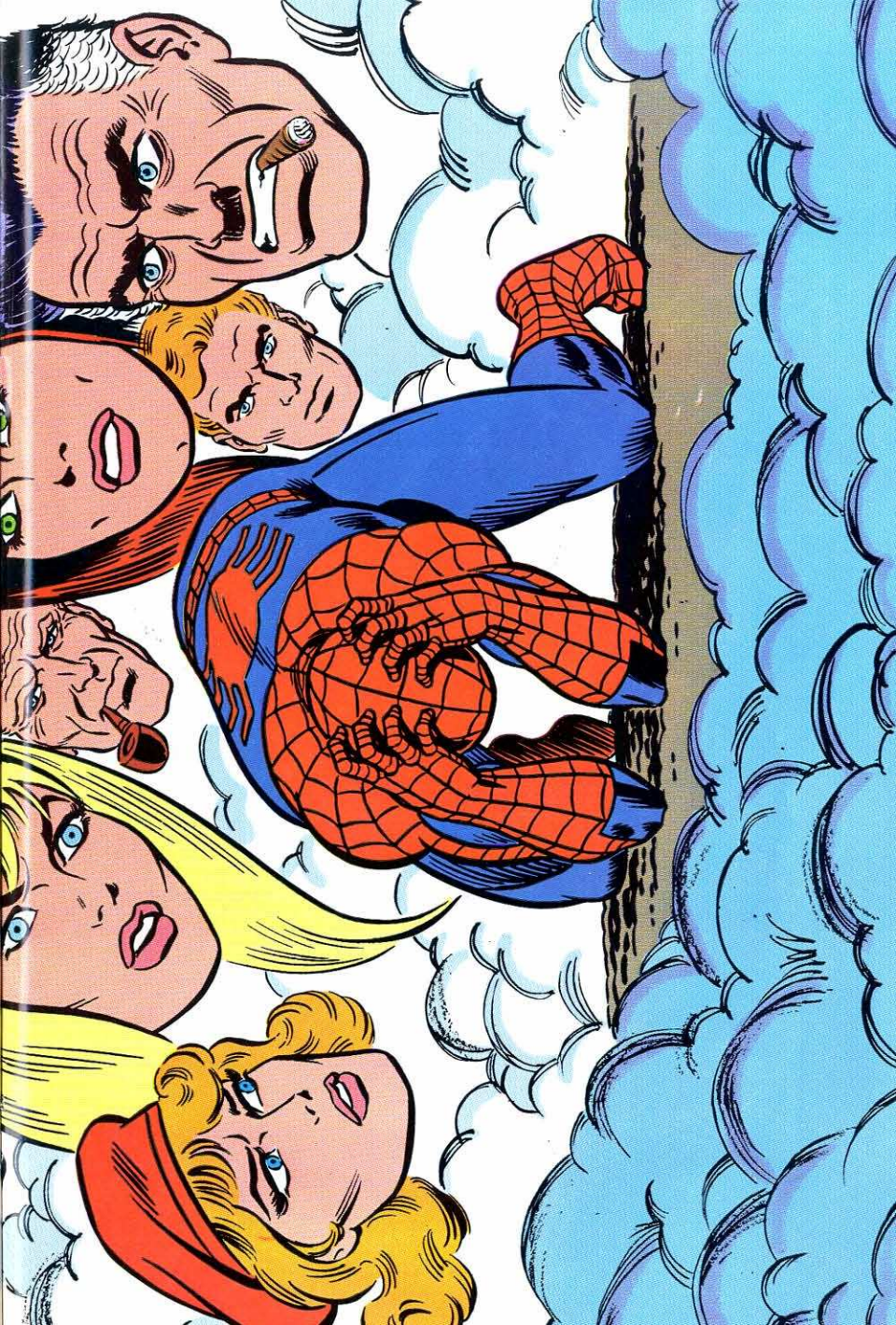
Graig Lowen
1608 Brocton St. #2
Los Angeles, CA 90025

As Marvel moves into its 25th year of bringing you the very best in comics entertainment, we'd just like to thank you, Greg, for being around for so much of the way.



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