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**#428**



**DeFALCO**  
**SKROCE**  
**LAROSA**

# THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN



**A  
FAREWELL  
TO ARMS**



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HEY, IT'S  
THE EVER-  
AMAZING

# SPIDER-MAN!

A true hero at heart, Spider-Man has dedicated his life to preventing injustices against the innocent.



**M**eeet Peter Parker, once a brilliant, though meek, high school student, orphaned as a child and reared by his doting Uncle Ben and Aunt May. At a science fair, Peter was bitten by an irradiated spider and gained the proportionate strength, speed, agility and early warning "spider-sense" of that arachnid. He used these powers for personal fame and fortune as a masked Spider-Man. But when Peter failed to stop a criminal who later killed his beloved Uncle Ben, the youth's costumed identity took on a far deeper significance. He realized that with great power there must also come great responsibility. So Peter Parker became the wall-crawling nemesis of the criminal element; a young man determined to atone for the tragic death of his uncle — The Amazing Spider-Man!

## MARY JANE WATSON-PARKER

The wife of Peter Parker/Spider-Man, and his closest confidant. She has currently returned to Empire State University as a student majoring in psychology.



## DOCTOR OCTOPUS

Otto Octavius was a researcher in atomic physics who had designed and built a chest harness with four artificial arms attached that allowed him to manipulate radioactive substances from a distance. A freak accident bonded his harness to his skin and affected his mind which then turned toward criminal enterprise. Doctor Octopus is one of the web-spinner's earliest enemies who has been thwarted time and again by Spider-Man.



## DOCTOR OCTOPUS II

Carolyn Trainer was a protégé of Otto Octavius who assumed his name and modus operandi following Octavius' demise



## THE HAND

A secretive cult of Asian assassins who worship a master called "The Beast." Due to arcane rituals they perform, the Hand has been able to revive the dead. Their most implacable foe in America has been the scarlet swashbuckler—Daredevil.



## STUNNER

A virtual reality construct possessing super-human strength and endurance. She was the lover of Otto Octavius just before his death. Stunner has taken on the hatred of Spider-Man felt by Octavius.



## THE ROSE

A criminal mastermind whose face is hidden behind a mask; thus, his identity is a secret from all. The Rose's chief goal is the consolidation of New York's underworld behind him and the elimination of Spider-Man as a threat to his power.



## DELILAH

The Rose's primary enforcer, she is a super-powered woman who has been set on the trail of Spider-Man several times, though she has failed to destroy him.



## THE BLACK TARANTULA

A shadowy South American crimelord who has apparently lived for centuries. The Tarantula has come to New York to personally try and take control of the city's criminal element.



## CHESBRO

The Black Tarantula's chief lackey.





PREVIOUSLY IN

# THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN



The criminal mastermind called the Rose removed the body of Doctor Octopus from its grave and had it taken to a meat-packing plant on Manhattan's lower west side.

There, the Rose called upon the Asian order of the Hand to perform a ceremony on the body to resurrect it and then bring it under his control.



Spider-Man, having been captured by the Rose and his minions, was to have his life force used in the ritual to revive the late criminal genius.

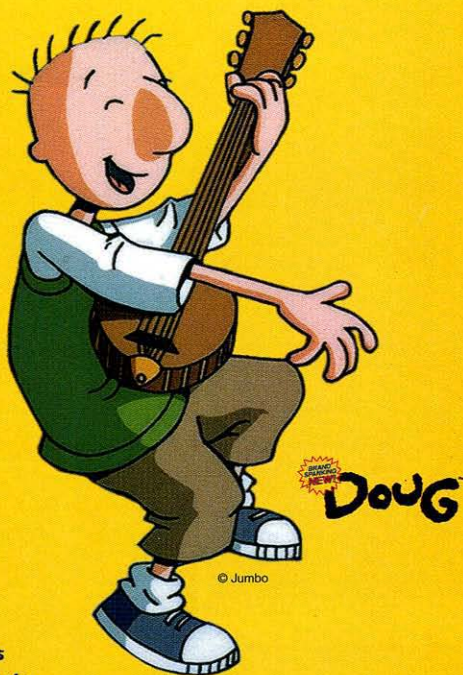
But, through a supreme effort, the webspinner escaped and was pursued by the Rose's chief enforcer--the deadly Delilah.

Having defeated Delilah, Spidey returned to the scene of Ock's imminent resurrection to discover that the ceremony had somehow been completed, and thus--Doctor Octopus lived again!





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# DOCTOR OCTOPUS IS BACK!

THANKS TO A COMBINATION OF DARKEST SORCERY AND CUTTING EDGE SCIENCE, THE MANY-LIMBED MENACE HAS RETURNED! THAT'S ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW. FOR NOW, AND AWAAAAAY WE GO—!

TH-THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING! IT CAN'T BE REAL!

I... I THOUGHT I'D SEEN THE LAST OF DOC OCK!

EITHER HIS DEATH WAS SOME KIND OF MASSIVE HOAX —

--- OR I JUST SLID INTO AN EPISODE OF TALES FROM THE CRYPT!

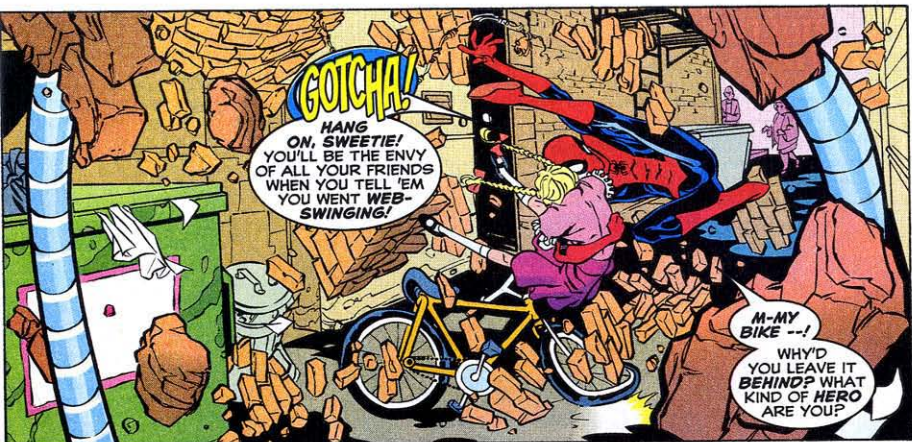
WHEREVER HE'S BEEN, IT CERTAINLY DIDN'T IMPROVE HIS DISPOSITION OR SLOW HIM DOWN.

IT'S TAKING ALL MY SPIDER-LIKE SPEED AND AGILITY TO AVOID HIS FLAILING ARMS AND — Uh-Oh!

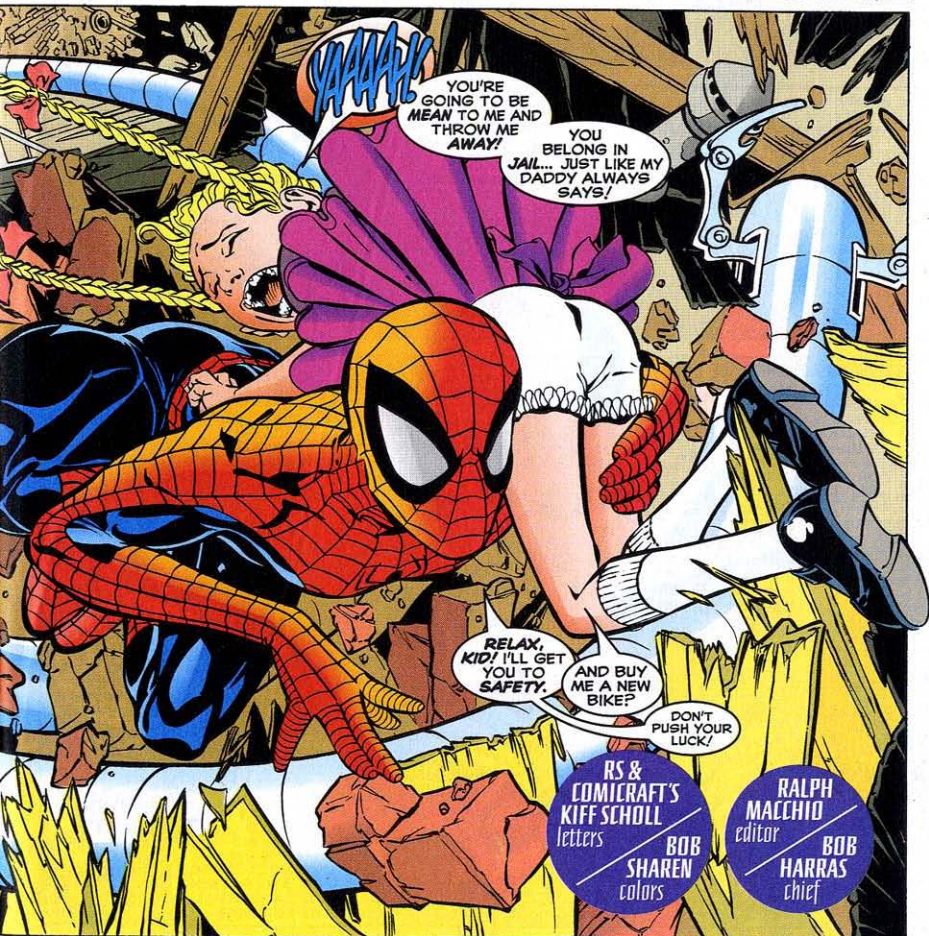
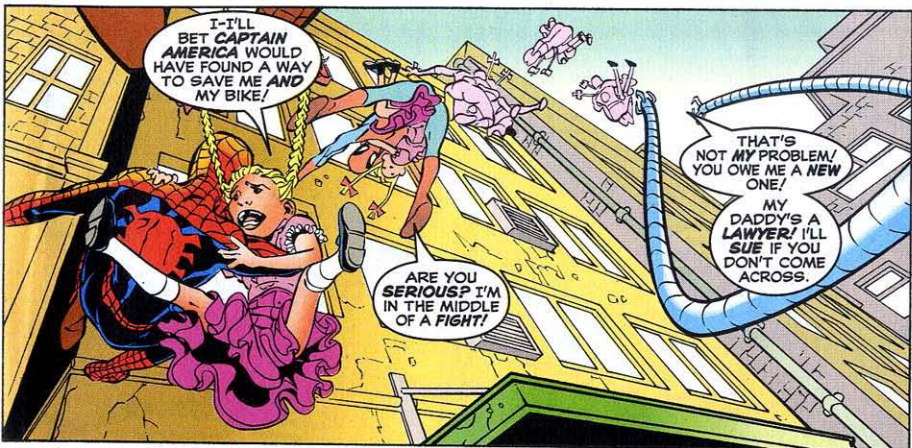
THAT LITTLE GIRL IS ABOUT TO BE CRUSHED BY FALLING DEBRIS, UNLESS —

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MEANWHILE, A  
FEW BLOCKS AWAY...

TH-THIS  
WAS SUPPOSED  
TO BE A SIMPLE  
RESURRECTION!

WHAT  
THE HECK WENT  
WRONG??

YOU'RE  
THE CRIMINAL  
MASTERMIND,  
ROSE -- YOU  
TELL ME!

CALM  
DOWN, DOCTOR  
TRAINER! THERE'S  
NO NEED TO TAKE  
THAT TONE.

NO MATTER  
WHAT YOU MAY  
THINK OF MY  
VARIOUS  
ENTERPRISES,  
I'M ONLY A  
SIMPLE BUSINESS-  
MAN.

IT WAS MASTER  
ZEI AND HIS  
RIDICULOUS TRUE  
BELIEVER NINJAS  
WHO PROMISED TO  
REANIMATE OTTO  
OCTAVIUS --

-- BY  
GIVING HIM THE  
LIFE ESSENCE  
FROM A LIVING  
PERSON.

WHO KNOWS?  
THINGS MIGHT HAVE  
GONE DIFFERENTLY IF THEY  
HADN'T BEEN FORCED TO USE  
YOUR COMPANION, STUNNER,  
AT THE LAST MOMENT.

Oh, WELL! IT'S BAD ENOUGH  
ZEI AND HIS FRIENDS  
WERE APPARENTLY  
KILLED IN THE  
TRANSFER.

I'VE ALSO  
LOST TRACK  
OF MY PERSONAL  
ASSISTANT,  
THE DEADLY  
DEILAH.

THAT PSYCHO'S  
THE LEAST OF MY  
CONCERNS!

WHILE  
STUNNER IS  
ONLY A SIMULACRUM  
PROJECTED FROM THE  
MIND OF ANGELINA  
BRANCALÉ, I HAVE  
NO IDEA HOW ZEI'S  
PROCESS MIGHT  
HAVE AFFECTED HER.

I'M  
ALSO WORRIED  
ABOUT OTTO...

"...HE'S STILL IN  
SHOCK -- OBVIOUSLY  
SUFFERING FROM THE  
TRAUMA OF BEING  
REANIMATED -- AND  
HE'S IN NO CONDITION  
FOR A PROLONGED  
BATTLE WITH HIS  
GREATEST ENEMY!"

I...I DON'T  
WANT TO PLAY  
WITH YOU ANY-  
MORE! PUT ME  
DOWN!

AS SOON  
AS POSSIBLE,  
HONEY!

M-MY  
BRAIN FEELS  
LIKE IT'S ON FIRE! MY  
THOUGHTS ARE  
CONFUSED!

ALL  
I KNOW  
FOR CERTAIN,  
SPIDER-MAN, IS  
THAT I DESIRE YOUR  
DESTRUCTION  
MORE THAN LIFE  
ITSELF!

S'FUNNY,  
DOC. IF I'D JUST  
COME BACK FROM  
WHEREVER YOU  
WERE --

-- I'D  
BE MORE  
INTERESTED IN  
CATCHING UP ON MY  
E-MAIL, AND SCORING  
A PIZZA WITH ALL  
THE TOPPINGS!



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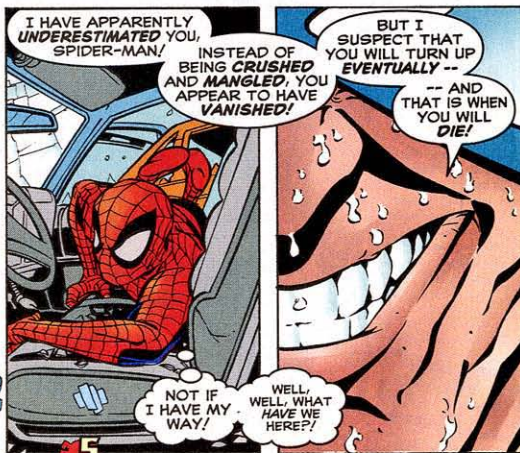
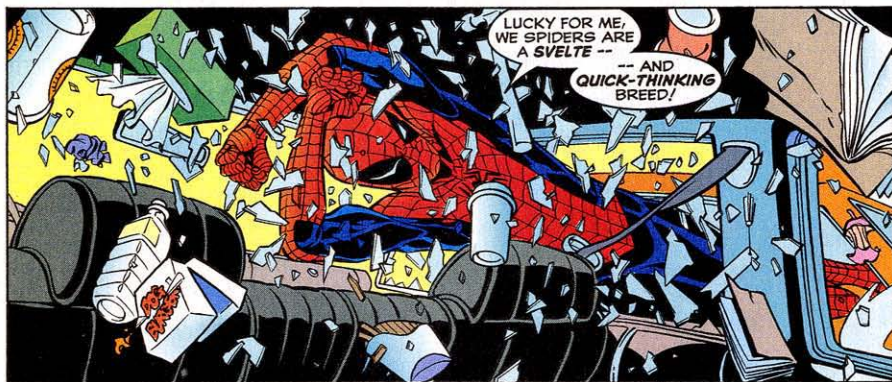
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Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
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Have you built model kits before?  
yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_  
If so, how many? \_\_\_\_\_  
Please circle the kit you want:  
1B 2B 3B 4B  
Today's date \_\_\_\_\_





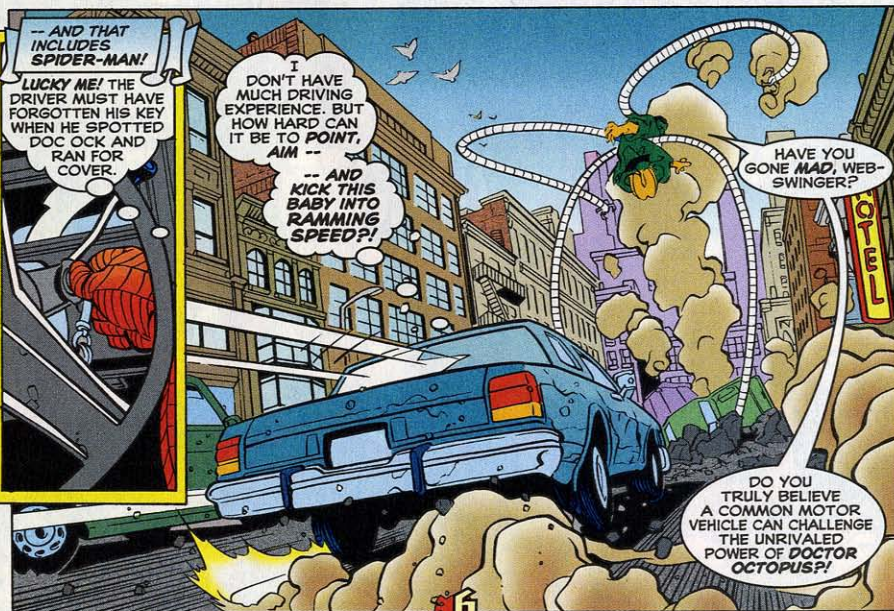
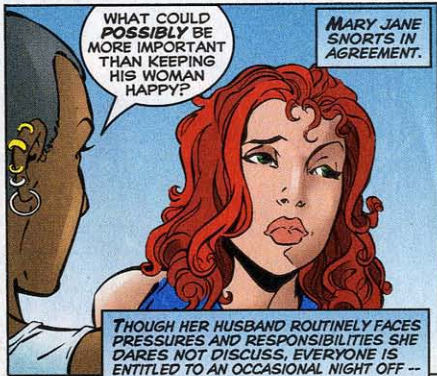
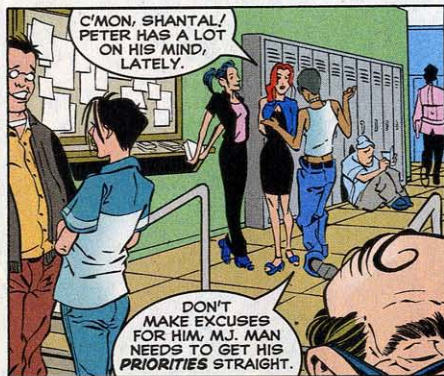
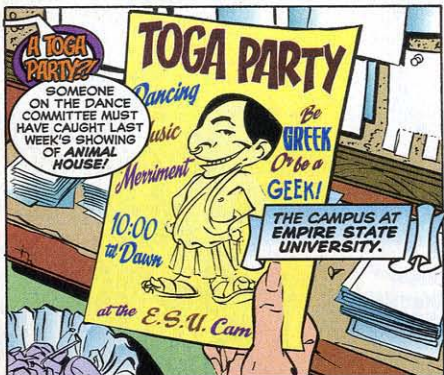




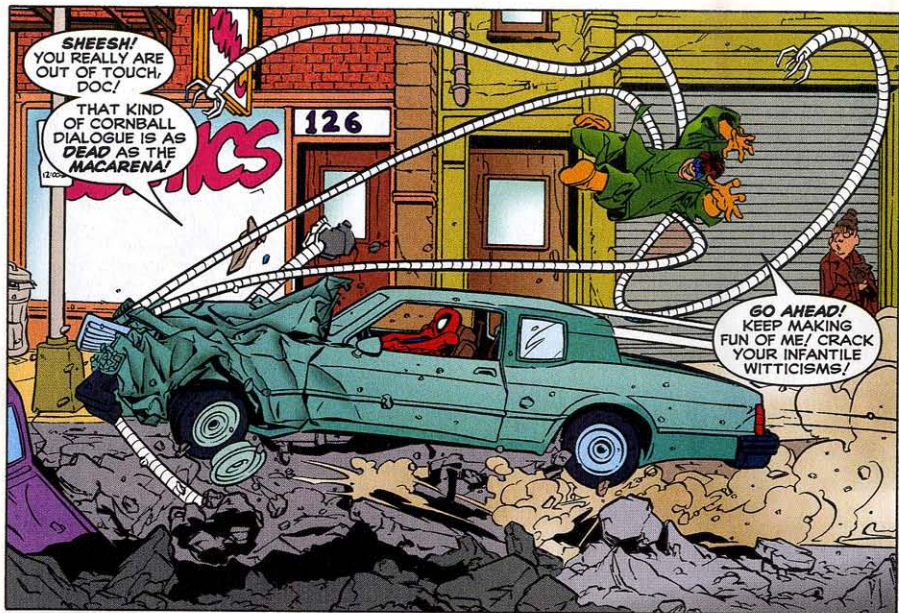
Take a break  
with a KitKat bar.

Fold A to B











AT THAT VERY MOMENT, IN THE EDITORIAL OFFICES OF THE DAILY BUGLE...

JONAH, I JUST HEARD THAT SOMEONE BEARING A STRIKING RESEMBLANCE TO OTTO OCTAVIUS IS TRADING PUNCHES WITH SPIDER-MAN ON THE LOWER EAST SIDE.

SO --P!

YOU'RE THE EDITOR, ROBBIE.

GET A REPORTER AND PHOTOGRAPHER ON THE SCENE!

DAILY BUGLE  
OSBORN  
BUGLE

ALREADY DONE, BUT I THOUGHT YOU'D BE INTERESTED.

YOU THOUGHT WRONG. I HAVE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS ON MY MIND.

LIKE THE FACT THAT NORMAN OSBORN NOW OWNS HALF OF THE BUGLE?

\* AS REVEALED IN SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #249 - "Readin' Real"

THE OWNERSHIP OF THIS NEWSPAPER IS A PRIVATE MATTER BETWEEN ME AND OSBORN.

IT SHOULDN'T CONCERN YOU.

ARE YOU KIDDING? I DON'T KNOW HOW COMFORTABLE I AM WORKING FOR A MAN WHO IS PURPORTED TO BE THE ORIGINAL GREEN GOBLIN.

YOU FOLLOW YOUR CONSCIENCE, ROBBIE. DO WHATEVER YOU THINK IS RIGHT.

I KNOW I DID.

EVEN AS JOE ROBERTSON KNITS HIS BROW IN PUZZLEMENT --

-- SPIDER-MAN EXECUTES A TEXTBOOK TRIPLE BACK-FLIP, AND THEN...

WHAT THE --P!

HIYA, DOC! I THOUGHT I'D CATCH YOU OFF-GUARD BY BOUNDING TOWARD YOU!

I DON'T GET IT! BEFORE HE ALLEGEDLY DIED, OCK SUPPOSEDLY LEARNED MY SECRET IDENTITY.

BUT HE HASN'T EVEN ALLUDED TO THAT KNOWLEDGE! WHAT GIVES? WHY ISN'T HE TAUNTING ME WITH IT?!





THEY CALL HIM BOUNCING BILLY WILD BERRY.

TO BILLY, YOUR TONGUE IS NOTHING  
BUT A BIG, PINK TRAMPOLINE.

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**TangyTaffy**  
THE ORIGINAL TONGUE-TEASING TAFFY



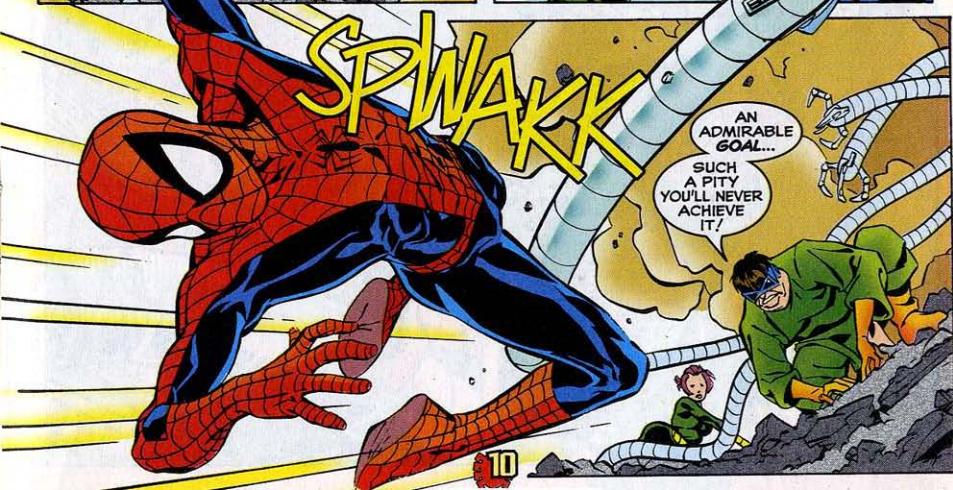
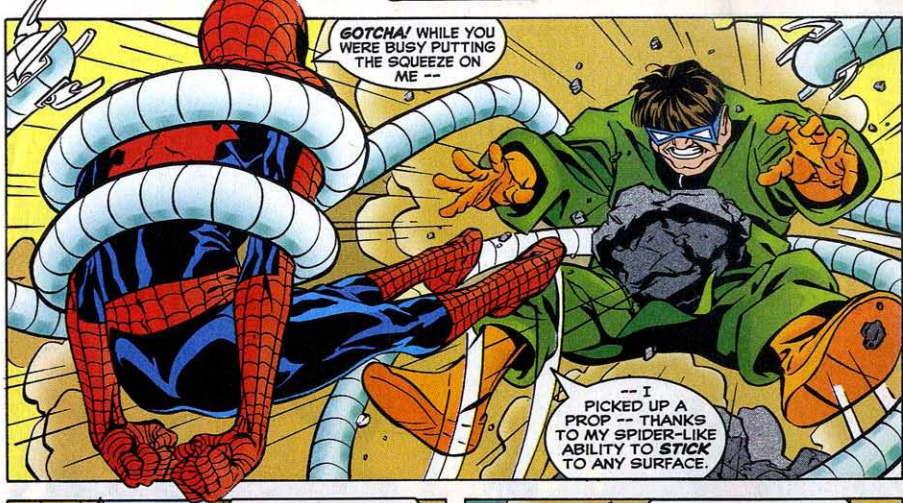
ANY OTHER TAFFY IS JUST PLAIN LAME.

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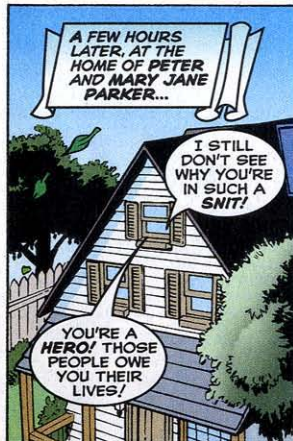


















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THE SECRET  
LABORATORY OF  
DOCTOR CAROLYN  
TRAINER...

ANGELINA...

... POOR  
SWEET  
ANGELINA

Oh, OTTO! THE PROCESS  
THAT RESURRECTED YOU  
MUST HAVE CAUSED A  
BACKLASH... AND IMPOLED  
THE VIRTUAL REALITY  
MATRIX...

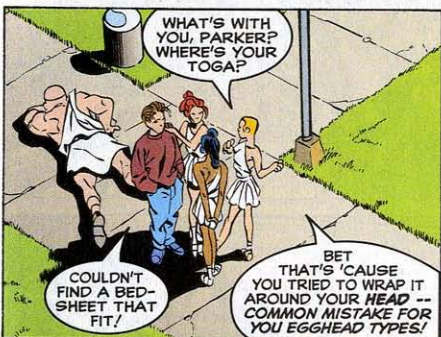
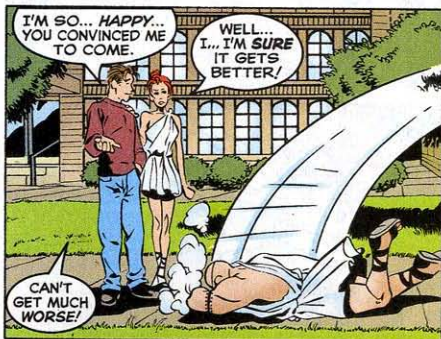
...WHICH  
ALLOWED HER  
TO PROJECT  
HER STUNNER  
PERSONA.

WHATEVER  
THE ACTUAL  
CAUSE, CAROLYN,  
THIS ONCE-VIBRANT  
WOMAN HAS BEEN  
REDUCED TO LITTLE  
MORE THAN A  
VEGETABLE.

SHE'S  
STILL ALIVE, BUT  
BARELY.

I HOLD  
SPIDER-MAN  
RESPONSIBLE  
FOR THIS  
TRAVESTY.  
AND  
HE SHALL  
PAY!









WHEW!

WHAT A DAY!



I REALLY NEED TO HASH THINGS OUT WITH THE ROSE. THIS RELATIONSHIP

Isn't WORKING.

IT'S BAD ENOUGH HE WOULDN'T LET ME SQUARE MYSELF WITH Spider-Man--

-- BUT THEN HE Ditches ME TO GO OFF ON SOME SECRET RENDEZVOUS.

I'M GOING TO HAVE TO -- Hey! WHAT'S THAT SOUND?!



IS THAT YOU, ROSE?

ROSE?!



I AM SO SORRY YOUR DAY WAS A DISAPPOINTMENT, MY DEAR...



...IT'S ABOUT TO GET WORSE.

ON THE CONTRARY, BABY, DELILAH IS ALWAYS UP FOR Fun'n Games.

THE Rougher, THE Better!

EXCELLENT! YOU ARE SUPREMELY CONFIDENT IN YOUR ABILITY TO KILL ME. I CAN SEE IT IN YOUR EYES.

I WONDER IF YOU WILL REMAIN SO SELF-ASSURED WHEN YOU LEARN THAT YOU FACE THE BLACK TARANTULA

OH... GOO!



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| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>GHR</b> Ghost Rider                | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>WHI</b> What If...           |
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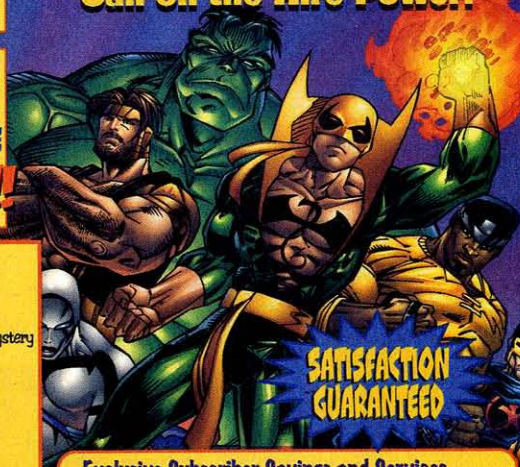
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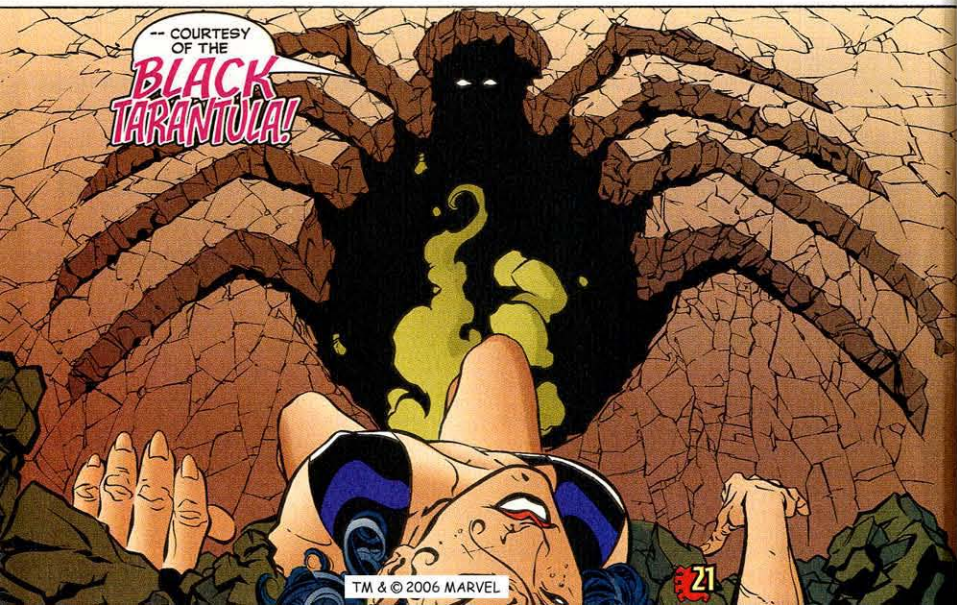
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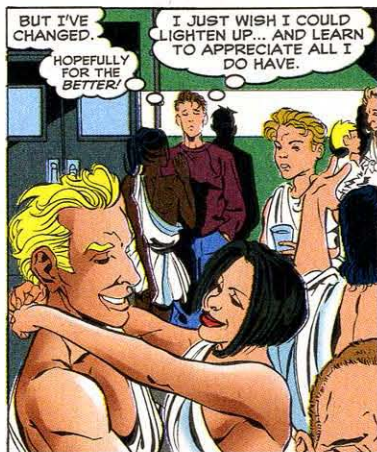
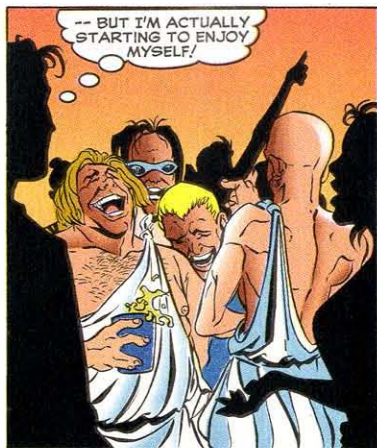
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OF THE REVITALIZED  
DICK DICK**

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# BULLPEN BULLETINS

AVAILABLE SEPTEMBER 17

## HEROES FOR HIRE

The BLACK KNIGHT's old flame — SERS! of the ETERNALS — is back, and the news she brings with her leads to Heroes for Hire's most dangerous mission yet: as they invade the lair of the diabolical DEVIANTS! BY JOHN OSTRANDER and PASCUAL FERRY!

## INCREDIBLE HULK

The Green Goliath is dying as a result of his "split" side in the HEROES REBORN universe! There couldn't be a more inconvenient time for the return of the molevolent MERO! Plus, RICK JONES's situation takes a decidedly ominous turn! BY PETER DAVID and ADAM KUBERT!

## IRON MAN

The heroes' war with GALACTUS has torn a rift in reality — and now IRON MAN merges with Werewolves of the Wildstorm Universe! BY JAMES ROBINSON and LARRY STROMAN!

## THUNDERBOLTS

The thrill-packed finale to the ELEMENTS OF DOOM saga! SONIC BLAIR is the last hope to free her T-bolts teamates from the Elements' citadel! But does CITIZEN V's agenda conflict with her rescue plan? BY KURT BUSIEK and MARK BAGLEY!

## WHAT IF?!

"What if DAREDEVIL's dad had thrown the big fight?" In this mind-boggling alternate reality, MATT MURDOCK is on death row, and it all has something to do with his father, BATLIN JACK MURDOCK! And how do the KINGPIN and ELECTRA fit into this puzzle of deceit? BY BILL ROSEMAN and HECTOR COLLAZO!

## PETER PARKER, SPIDER-MAN

It's more mutant-hatin' madness with the FRIENDS OF HUMANITY! One non-mutant web-slinger stands in the way of their latest nefarious hate crime — but can even SPIDER-MAN overcome an entire organization? BY HOWARD MACKIE and JOHN ROMITA, JR.!

## EXCALIBUR

Who's the mysterious woman from PETE WISDOM's past who now wants him dead? And where exactly is LOCKHEED the dragon? Pick this one up and maybe you'll get some answers! BY BEN RAAB and PETE WOODS!

## PSYLOCKE & ARCHANGEL: CRIMSON DAWN

The dramatic conclusion! Will PSYLOCKE and ARCHANGEL's romance survive the momentous end of their journey to the dimension of the CRIMSON DAWN? BY BEN RAAB and SALVADOR LARROCA!

## X-MAN

NATE GREY faces the new menace called JACKKNIFE — a man who blames the world's most powerful young mutant for his very existence! What is their strange connection, can Nate survive Jackknife's deadly assault? The answers are here! BY TERRY KAVANAGH and ROGER CRUZ!

## X-MEN

Hold on to your socks — it's the explosive conclusion of the "OPERATION: ZERO TOLERANCE" saga! BASTION's war on mutantkind has reached its devastating climax and the Children of the Atom may never be the same again! BY SCOTT LOBBELL and CARLOS PACHECO!

## STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE

TELEPATHY WAR, part two! CAPTAIN SISKI and the crew of DS9 may be all that stands between the FEDERATION and all-out war with the JEM'HADAR! Guest-starring RIKER and DEANNA TROI! BY ANDY MANGELS, MIKE MARTIN and TOM GRINDBERG!

## MARVEL ONLINE Avail. SEPTEMBER 17

## SPIDER-MAN CYBERCOMIC STORYLINE

Part Four! The conclusion to the mind-boggling HOWARD THE DUCK saga, featuring SPIDER-MAN's showdown with the maniacal menace known as DOCTOR BOW! BY GLENN GREENBERG, DAERICK GROSS and MARK BAGDER!

**ITEM!** Ahh, Summer! The season of sunshine, swimming pools, baseball — and, for Marvelites, fan and professional alike, summer also means it's time for the country's biggest event dedicated to our little four-color wonders — the famous San Diego Comic Con! And, as always, your Merry Marvel Madmen (and women) were there in force, spreading the word about all the incredible stuff coming your way from the House of Ideas in late '97 and '98!

The talented folks who put in time at the always-crowded Marvel booth, signing autographs and talking up their latest projects to the panting public, read like a who's who of the comic biz: INCREDIBLE HULK scribe (and writer of next month's HEROES REBORN: THE RETURN epic) PETER DAVID; GENERATION X penciler CHRIS BACHALO; PETER PARKER: SPIDER-MAN penciler (and new father!) JOHN ROMITA, JR., along with his legendary father (and penciler of the upcoming KINGPIN one-shot) JOHN ROMITA, SR.; THUNDERBOLTS writer (and soon to take over storytelling duties on the all-new AVENGERS and IRON MAN series) KURT BUSIEK; HEROES FOR HIRE scribe JOHN OSTRANDER; and X-FORCE artist ADAM POLLINA. Also in attendance were editorial types BOB HARRAS, BOBBIE CHASE, TOM BREYVOORT, TIM TUOHY, JASON LIEBIG, PAUL TUTTONE, and the Ridiculous One himself, RALPH MACCHIO! And it just wouldn't be a complete San Diego Con without an appearance by Marvel Guru and Hollywood Mogul-in-the-making STAN (THE MAN) LEE, who regaled the crowd at the Marvel promotional slideshow, and cavorted with Baywatch's DAVID HASSELHOFF at a special preview of David's Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. TV-movie for Fox! Looks like it'll be a winner!

**ITEM!** One of the traditions at the San Diego Convention is the annual awarding of the Eisners, a prestigious industry award for excellence in the genre named for comics pioneer WILL EISNER. Your Marvel Madmen picked up quite a few nominations this year, and we're happy to congratulate Affable AL WILLIAMSON for walking away with the Best Inker award for his beautiful work on UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN! We've always known you were the tops, Al — congrats on the rest of the world finding out too! (And a thousand apologies for not mentioning your nomination in the first place!) For those of you who aren't aware, Al's work can be found in the pages of MARVEL TEAM-UP, still embellishing the pencils of his UNTOLD TALES cohort PAT OLLIFFE. And speaking of UNTOLD TALES, a hearty round of applause is also due to our buddy KURT BUSIEK, that book's erstwhile writer, who garnered Best Comic Series with his excellent Astro City book. Kudos, Kurt; now next year, let's get one of your mildly magnificent Marvel projects up there in the top spot!

**ITEM!** Set your phasers on stun, and plot a course for Marvel's first all-STAR TREK title crossover! It's called TELEPATHY WAR, and it's starting right now, in STAR TREK: STARFLEET ACADEMY #12! The saga continues in next week's DEEP SPACE NINE #12, then into STAR TREK UNLIMITED #6, and the spectacular STAR TREK: TELEPATHY WAR one-shot! So what's so big in the Star Trek Universe that brings the plotlines of all these books together? According to DS9 editor TIM TUOHY, this space-spanning epic kicks off with a bang: the students of Starfleet Academy respond to a distress signal sent by the planet Talos IV, and find that all the telepaths are dead — murdered by soldiers of the JEM'HADAR, in the name of the tyrannical DOMINION! And when the cadets return to Starfleet to report their grisly findings, they're put on trial for treason! (Seems visiting Talos IV is an offense punishable by death!) Things just get more out of control from there, as the fugitive cadets make their way to DS9, and the Jem'Hadar and Dominion declare all-out war on the FEDERATION! Tim informs us, "There's action, adventure... some intrigue. Oh, and one of the characters is revealed to be a traitor. And someone dies!" Sounds like a major event, so don't get left out!

## STAN'S SOAPBOX!

**H**i, Heroes! It's that time again! Big-hearted Marvel is about to anoint three more No-Prize Laureates here on comicdom's most famous page! You can almost hear the drum roll as the world-famous ceremony begins...

**O**ur first recipient of a fully-equipped No-Prize is Matt Kuhns from Anamosa, IA, who reminds us: "FANTASTIC FOUR #67 featured the first appearance of 'Him,' the being who became Adam Warlock. Do you plan to celebrate the 30th anniversary of this momentous issue in October?"

Matt, I celebrate everything — even the anniversaries of my parking tickets! But Warlock hates parties. So I guess the best way to celebrate is to buy lots of extra copies of every comic book he's in! Adam would love that — and so would our accountant!

**O**ur next fully-warranted No-Prize goes to Darrell Walker of Jacksonville, FL, who says: "If I buy a comic on sale in April, the month on the cover is June. Why is the cover date always two months ahead of the actual date?"

Years ago, Dar, publishers were afraid if a magazine stayed unsold on the rack, people would think it was an old copy and pass it by. So they dated the covers ahead, figuring that would make the mags look current. Then, each publisher tried to outdo the other, to make his comic look even newer. So don't be surprised if you see an issue dated "2001" next time you're in the store!

**A**nd our third fully-retrofitted No-Prize is winging its way to fashion-conscious Matt Fillman of Santa Paula, CA, who asks:

"Where do all the costumes come from? Is there a secret Marvel seamstress somewhere?"

Matt, you discovered our secret! Except it's not a seamstress, it's Willie Lumpkin, the Fantastic Four's ex-mailman! When he got too old to carry his mail pouch, he bought a sewing kit, and the rest is history — except, he never got the ketchup stain out of our Cloak of Levitation!

**N**ow, before we tearfully leave each other, let's be serious for a minute (which is as long as I can handle it). I want to thank you thousands and thousands of fans throughout the world for your enthusiasm for everything Marvel. Thanks, heroes — I admire your taste!

Excelsior!

*Stan*  
Stan Lee

I know you couldn't wait to get to this part! Send your letters to "Stan's Soapbox," c/o BULLPEN BULLETINS, Marvel Comics, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10016!



# THE SPIDER'S WEB

**SORRY**

to open on a bit of a negative note, but we've got one little pet peeve to get off our chests. As any regular reader of the Spider-Man letters pages can attest, we generally don't shy away from letters that criticize a given storyline, the direction of the book, or even the work of the creative team. However, sometimes there are some partly or even wholly critical letters that we receive which we don't run. Not because they are critical, mind you; rather we have made it a policy here in the Spider-Man office not to run letters that are overly insulting or demeaning. You know, along the lines of, "This artist stinks, what grade school did you find him in?" or, "Whoever came up with that plot ought to be lobotomized!" or even, "That Macchio's a real waste!" (Actually, we'd be bound by the overwhelming factual evidence to run that one.) If you're not pleased with an aspect of a Spider-Man book, tell us why, but find a civilized way of saying it; otherwise you just won't make the page.

Why bring up an issue like this that seems rather self-explanatory? Well, sometimes a rather fine letter will find itself marred by a bit of overzealousness by the writer in this respect. We prefer not to edit out such comments; we'd rather run letters in full. So you garrulous grumps out there, take heed! Rip us if you must, but opt for the keen critical insight over the personal insult, please.

That is all.

Dear Spider's Web,

Of the many Spider-Man titles, AMAZING SPIDER-MAN is, if not the best, at least the most consistent. You can generally gauge the Spider-Man universe by what's happening in the title. Certainly the disastrous clone saga derailed much of the interest in the Spider-Man titles. I'm not here to add to the volumes of critical knocks that you have already received. You took your lumps and set about correcting the situation—which I applaud.

I am pleased that you have abandoned crossing the story from one Spider-Man title to the next. I have always felt that if you were going to force us to buy all of the Spider-Man titles, then you should just make one weekly book. Actually, I have always felt that five regular Spider titles (not to mention the two quarterlies and all those specials) were just too many. Gullible comic fan that I am, however, I still buy them all.

The return of Electro to big

league super-villaindom in ASM #423 was another step in the right direction. Too many of Spidey's foes lately have been pitifully uninteresting—foes like the Rose, who seems to do little more than stand around and talk ominously. *W h i l e* I realize that it is vital for you to come up with new characters (okay, so the Rose is not all that new—he's still newer than Electro), when they don't measure up, they just make the classic villains look that much better.

While the return of a really cool villain made ASM #423 the best Spider-Man book in a while, the story was still bogged down by too many subplots. Don't get me wrong, Spider-Man has always had a high degree of soap opera, and I'm not suggesting that you turn him into a two-dimensional fighting machine. Recently, however, there have been so many subplots that Spider-Man occasionally seems like a guest star in his own book. Still, a colorful villain like Electro is just the thing to kick-start this book back on the right track. I certainly hope that we can expect more of the same in the future.

David Siegler  
Tyler TX

We certainly hope so, too, David, and we're curious to hear if the return of Doc Ock last issue fulfills your desires for the classic Spider-Man villains.

Gullible? How about dedicated. Yes, we have stopped the practice of linking the Spider-Man titles directly each and every month, basically so that the reader who may only want to follow one or two titles won't be deterred from doing so by not getting the whole story. But we do think that there is enough common continuity among the titles to make it that much more fun for those like you who do buy all the books.

Dear Spider-Team,

I don't usually like the results when an artist or writer tries to update or revamp a classic Spider-Man foe, but the changes experienced by Electro in AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #423 were exceptionally well conceived and executed. Electro has long been one of my favorite Spider-Man villains, right up there with Doc Ock, Green Goblin and Sandman.

The idea of having Electro be able to tap into the Earth's electromagnetic forces was truly inspired. Not only does this perhaps offer the opportunity for there to be some big differences in the way Spidey handles Electro, it also has good comic book logic.

The fact that it makes Electro incredibly powerful is also a nice touch. I won't say it makes him invincible, because I have faith that the webhead will eventually find a way to defeat the new and improved Electro, hopefully by using his scientific intelligence rather than just brute force.

I also appreciated the attention that was given to Joe Robertson's character. Lots of people have written stories that included a role for Robbie, but no one has ever really explored the nature of the relationship between Robbie and Jonah Jameson. It appears from the scenes he had in this issue that at long last the spotlight will be turned on that aspect of his character. I just hope it doesn't end up costing him his marriage to Martha, although that is a realistic and all too common side effect in real life of the kind of devotion Robbie has for Jonah and the Daily Bugle.

Getting to see Delilah and Dragonfly again was nice, as I think these ladies have the same kind of interesting story potential that the Black Cat had back when she was first introduced, although I don't see either of them ending up fighting for the good guys. They are still fascinating characters.

Another fascinating character I'd like to see more of in the comics, one who has showed up recently on the Spider-Man animated series, is Madame Web. I can't recall ever learning about her origin or her underlying motives in helping Spidey. She has such an aura of mystery about her that I think she could be the inspiration for some very interesting stories.

Finally, I want all of you at Spidey HQ to know I am enjoying the post-clone Spider-Man stories nearly as much as I did the pre-clone stories. Keep up the good work and I will eventually be able to completely erase the clone years from my memory.

Ivan A. Martin  
4054-70th Street  
Urbandale, IA 50322-2616

Don't do that, Ivan! One must never, ever mess with the Goddess of Continuity. The clone saga period of the ever-ongoing Spider-Man story happened, like it or not. If you try to forget those couple of years, just think of all the story information you'll lose. Then you will have to rely on Ralf's insufficient little Editor's Notes whenever they are referred to!

Glad you found the newly souped-up Electro to your liking, though. We must admit, as much as we enjoyed delving into the

**MATT HICKS**  
ASSISTANT  
EDITOR

**RALPH MACCHIO**  
EDITOR

**BOB HARRAS**  
CHIEF



character of this seldom explored baddie, we enjoyed watching him finally get to tear up the town even more!

Dear Spider's Web-spinners,

I'm a recurring Spider-Man fan, recurring in the sense that I'll pick up one of his titles when he goes up against my favorite villains or when the storyline intrigues me. The most notable examples of this would be last year's "Media Blizzard" with the revamped Mysterio (one of my faves) and the recent "Revelations." I didn't follow the clone saga, but I liked the Ben Reilly Spider-Man. You didn't have to kill him off.

Anyhow, getting back to my favorite Spider-Man villains...the Scorpion has always been #1, and the people who created a masterpiece with SPIDER-MAN UNLIMITED #13 deserve great praise for their efforts on that issue. When are we going to see the Scorpion again?

Electro is #2, so you can believe I enjoyed AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #423 and am looking forward to his further malevolent appearances.

The introduction of Delilah ranks right up there with my top two, so she's probably up to #3 now.

What I'd like to request is a new major crossover story arc involving the return of the Sinister Six with the following as participants: the Scorpion, Electro, Delilah, (the youthful) Vulture, Mysterio, and either the Shocker of Hydro-Man. What do you say? Please?

Matthew Hayes  
1115 26th Avenue South #14  
Grand Forks, ND 58201

See how fast things change in Spider-Man's corner of the Marvel Universe? Since you wrote your letter, Matthew, the Vulture is back to his crabby old self, the Shocker has apparently received a power boost of his own, and the original Doc Ock is back in the picture. Whew! Despite all this attention paid to this particular stable of villains, however, there are no immediate plans for a return of the Sinister ones as a team. But as we mentioned above, things are developing so fast and furiously that who knows when they might show up!

Dear Spider's Web,

Shocking, jolting and electrifying are the words to describe issue #423 of AMAZING SPIDER-MAN. Electro's return was stunning! In this issue he seemed more powerful than in the past. Poor Spider-Man, he seemed to have only bad luck this whole issue, such as the fact that as Peter Parker he might be ditched by Neil because Neil thinks Paul Stacy would be a better science tutor. I also can't believe you made Spider-Man beg Electro not to kill him. That is an all-time low and I was very disappointed to see that happen.

As for Robbie, why doesn't he stand up to JJ Jameson? Doesn't Robbie understand that JJ is taking advantage of him? Tell you what, since Robbie did not

stand up to ol' fuzzhead in this issue, let him go all out in a future issue. I look forward to Web-tacular excitement in the future!

David W. Roberts  
6629 Davis Ford Road  
Manassas, VA 20111

Sounds like you've come down squarely on the side of Robbie's wife and her opinion that Robbie is spending too much time on the job, David. However, it's not as cut-and-dried as it sounds. There are certainly two sides to this issue. Let's not forget, Robbie is the editor-in-chief of one of New York City's top newspapers. That certainly isn't a job to take if you're looking for nine-to-five hours.

Dear Ralph and Matt,

I just could not resist writing a letter to you guys to tell you how excited I was when I received AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #423 in the mail. It was like I was a little kid again, and boy, did it bring back some memories. I've been collecting ASM since I was a little kid, and have a complete set. I used to read the books all the time, but over the past few years I would get them in the mail, look at them briefly and then box 'em up with my collection. I was also pretty down on Spidey over the past couple of years because of how you guys had the stories jumping from AMAZING to WEB TO SPECTACULAR. I hated that, frankly, as it seemed to me to be nothing more than a marketing tool.

Since you guys have gone back to keeping the story all in each individual title and not jumping from series to series, I've started to read them again with great enthusiasm. When I saw that you brought Electro back I just said silently to myself, "Cool, very cool." Issues #422 and #423 were fantastic! I can't wait to see what happens next. I can remember reading ASM #9 for the first time and meeting Electro. What a great villain I thought he was, and I loved how he plagued Spidey over the years. He was such an interesting character: simple powers, yet gripping. You guys have made an old fan very happy. Thanks, Marvel.

Drew Bloom  
394 Bean Road  
Huntington, VT 05462

Thanks yourself, Drew, for sticking with us through all these years. We're pleased that you've been enjoying the Spider-titles of late, but we're even happier that you've taken to actually reading your comics again! Huzzah! Aren't they much more fun that way?

Dear Web-slingers,

What's up? This is the first time I've written to a comic book, because most of the time I'm reading them. So far, the Green Goblin is back, Aunt May is dead and so is the baby. What's gonna happen now? Anyway, enough talk, 'cause I've got some comments/questions to pass around:

1. In issue #423, Spidey had to go face to

face with the all-new, powerful Electro. And, unfortunately, Spidey was defeated. Is Electro really that powerful? Will Spider-Man ever defeat him?

2. I loved the picture of Electro on page 2 of issue #423. It was great. Keep stuff like that coming, Joe Bennett!

3. After seeing Meiko beating up on Yano in issue #423, I've been wondering what's gonna happen to her. Will we see her with Spider-Man again?

4. What's with Spidey's head? He seems to be getting headaches every now and then?

5. Will Spider-Man go up against the Rose or the Black Tarantula anytime soon?

6. Will we ever be able to see the Black Tarantula's face?

Don't worry, I'll be hanging around. Get it? Hanging around...? Oh, never mind.... Make Mine Marvel!

Raheel Sadi  
St. 91 Jorong West Bk. 914  
Singapore 640914

Nice to hear from you, Raheel, especially all the way from Singapore! You must really want those questions answered, so we won't tarry:

1. You did read ASM #425, didn't you?

2. We're always more than happy to be able to fit Joe Bennett's crisp lines into these pages whenever we can. But if you can't wait, look for his work on the WOLVERINE: DAYS OF FUTURE PAST limited series, on sale in October!

3. Most Likely. Ol' Trencant Tom certainly isn't one to introduce a mysterious character and not follow up!

4. Well, back in PETER PARKER, SPIDER-MAN #77, Spidey got a big bite on the neck from Morbius, the Living Vampire and just hasn't been the same since!

5. Like the mysterious Meiko, we're pretty sure you'll be seeing more of these chaps.

6. Probably...eventually. But with a name and disposition like he has, are you sure you want to?

## NEXT ISSUE:

THE ABSORBING MAN AND TITANIA DECIDE TO TAKE THE THUNDERBOLTS ROUTE AND MAKE LIKE HEROES. THE ONLY PROBLEM IS THAT THEIR TARGET IS SPIDER-MAN! SEEMS THE OL' WEBHEAD GOT HIMSELF CAUGHT ON VIDEOTAPE ATTACKING A SEEMINGLY DEFENSELESS NORMAN OSBORN! WHAT A SPOT! SPIDEY'S GONNA NEED SOME HELP ON THIS ONE...THINK DAREDEVIL AND X-MAN WILL BE ENOUGH? FIND OUT FOR SURE IN ONLY 28 DAYS AS TOLD BY TOM "BEST BOY" DEFALCO, STEVE "KEY GRIP" SKROCE, BUD "GAFFER" LAROSA, AND RALF, MAKING SURE THAT NO ANIMALS ARE HARMED IN THE MAKING OF THIS COMIC!

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**#2. CAPTAIN AMERICA WAS PUT IN SUSPENDED ANIMATION OFF AND ON SINCE W.W.II BECAUSE:** (A) Everyone was tired of saluting him. (B) S.H.I.E.L.D. didn't trust him to obey their agenda. (C) It beat being frozen in a giant iceberg again.

**#3. THE SONS OF THE SERPENT ARE:** (A) Circus freaks. (B) A militia hate group headquartered in Washington D.C. (C) The children of the Loch Ness Monster.

**#4. THE AVENGERS WERE FIRST FORMED WHEN:** (A) Captain America resurfaced. (B) Peter Parker was bitten by a radioactive spider. (C) Willie Lumpkin went postal on Lil' Donald Blake and bit his leg forcing him to walk with a cane.

**#5. IRON MAN IS REALLY:** (A) Tony Stark, one of the richest and most brilliant men in the world. (B) A robot who thinks he's human. (C) The guy who works in the back of Mr. Wu's Laundry Service.

**#6. THE PHRASE "FLAME ON":** (A) Appears on the dials of every ACME Oven. (B) Originated back in W.W.II from the original Human Torch. (C) Is a particular favorite of Smokey The Bear.

**#7. THE INHUMANS ARE CALLED THE INHUMANS BECAUSE:** (A) They're not human. (B) They're soooo... hip and trendy. (C) All the other good super hero team names were taken.

**#8. TONY STARK ACCIDENTALLY CAUSED THE CREATION OF:** (A) Popcorn Pizza. (B) The Hole In The Ozone Layer. (C) The Incredible Hulk.

**#9. ANT-MAN'S COSTUME:** (A) Premiered in Avengers #4. (B) Is no panic to get into. (C) Isn't really a costume at all, but a burglar deterrent to scare away anyone who would try to rip-off ash trays from Avengers HQ.

**#10. CAPTAIN AMERICA IS THE LIVING LEGEND OF:** (A) Sagebrush Sing-Alongs.  
(B) World War II. (C) Woodstock.

**#11. THE FANTASTIC FOUR GOT THEIR FANTASTIC POWERS WHEN:**  
**(A)** They won the "Get Super Hero Powers" raffle down at the plant. **(B)** Four ordinary people got together, held their breath, closed their eyes and wished really hard to become super heroes. **(C)** Their space ship was bombarded by cosmic rays, forever changing them.

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**#13. MADAME HYDRA HATES IRON MAN BECAUSE:** (A) He refused to go out with her when she asked really nicely. (B) Iron Man has defeated her and the rest of Hydra countless times from destroying Stark International. (C) She's jealous of the fact that with a face like hers, she doesn't get to cover it with armor, too.

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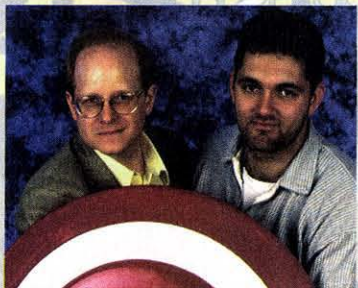
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# HEROES RETURN

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## MARK WAID • Writer

Past Credits: Ha-Zar,

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## RON GARNEY • Artist

Past Credits: Silver Surfer, Ghost Rider,

Amazing Spider-Man, Moon Knight

"It feels like I never left the book. This is the most fun I've ever had in comics."—Ron Garney



# Captain America

#1



# HEROES RETURN

ON SALE THIS NOVEMBER

## SCOTT LOBDELL • Writer

Past Credits: Generation X,  
Uncanny X-Men, X-Men,  
Further Adventures Of  
Cyclops And Phoenix

*"I get to write 'Flame  
On!' and 'It's Clobberin'  
Time!' How cool is that?"*

*-Scott Lobdell*



## ALAN DAVIS • Artist

Past Credits: Excalibur, ClanDestine,  
Captain Britain, Detective Comics,  
Miracleman

*"Alan Davis is the  
Galactus of comic book  
artists... except, of  
course, that Alan's  
head isn't as swollen."*

*-Scott Lobdell*

# Fantastic Four #1



# HEROES RETURN



THE HEROES RETURN IN THE DAWN OF A NEW AGE





A

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B



A

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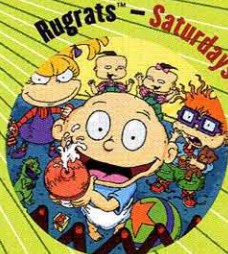
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