

MARVEL
COMICS

THE GATHERING OF FIVE PART TWO

THE AMAZING

SPIDER-MAN

THE RETURN OF THE MOLTEN MAN!

OCT
#440



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DIRECT EDITION



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\$1.99 US \$2.80 CAN

BYRNE

KAYANAN

LAROSA

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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 meet 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!**

MOLTEN MAN

Mark Raxton argued with the inventor he was assisting, Spencer Smythe, and struck him because Raxton wanted to sell his share of the project to the highest bidder. The project involved a liquid metal alloy which was derived from a meteor containing organic material. A sample of the liquid fell on Raxton during the argument and was absorbed by his skin giving him a yellowish metallic appearance as well as superhuman strength and heat-radiating powers. Raxton dubbed himself the Molten Man and went on a crime spree until being defeated by Spider-Man numerous times. Recently, Raxton reformed and was hired by a subsidiary of Osborn Industries, the Multivex Corporation. His stepsister is Liz Allan Osborn.



NORMAN OSBORN

The wealthy industrialist who pursued a life of crime as the costumed *Green Goblin*. Years ago, the Goblin was presumed killed in a battle with *Spider-Man* that also took the life of Peter Parker's girlfriend, *Gwen Stacy*. But recently Osborn resurfaced, having spent years running a criminal empire in Europe where he fled. Having come back to America, Osborn is determined to once again bring horror into the lives of Peter Parker and those he loves.



SCRIS

Part of a deity-worshipping criminal cult located in Europe that Norman Osborn became a member of several years back. They wear hooded cloaks and appear to be supernatural in nature, though they are not. Scris often perform whatever mission Osborn assigns them, usually surveillance.



JOE "ROBBIE" ROBERTSON

A man of great journalistic integrity, he is the conscience of the Daily Bugle newspaper. Robbie began his career there as the paper's city editor, and has risen to become its editor in chief. He is a friend and confidant of Peter Parker.



ALISON MONGRAIN

A woman in the employ of Norman Osborn, the Green Goblin, who recently aided him in his long-planned revenge on Peter Parker.



PREVIOUSLY IN

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN



The webspinner rescued a young girl who was lost in the city's sewers.



Yet instead of congratulating him, the surrounding crowd accused Spidey of actually kidnapping the girl, and forced the much-maligned hero to flee.

But now, trouble comes from a far more dangerous source as a man Peter Parker thought had put his criminal ways behind him, is in the process of literally burning his way through the heart of Manhattan--and cannot be stopped!



Let's see if the citizenry of New York give the wallcrawler a break this time...

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A HOT TIME IN THE OLD TOWN

IT BEGAN LESS THAN AN HOUR AGO, AS PETER PARKER WOKE TO THE SOUND OF HIS BEDROOM CLOCK RADIO, AND A NEWS REPORT THAT CHILLED HIS BLOOD.

NOW HE LOOKS DOWN ON A TRAIL OF DESTRUCTION THAT DRAWS A DEAD STRAIGHT LINE ACROSS THE FACE OF MANHATTAN.

IT'S TRUE!
THE NEWS
REPORTS WERE
RIGHT!

AND IN THE
FORTY-FIVE MINUTES
SINCE I HEARD THE FIRST
OF THEM, HE'S TRAVELED
A MILE OR MORE FROM
WHERE HE STARTED!



THE GATHERING OF FIVE PART TWO

JOHN BYRNE
GUEST WRITER

INKS LAROSA & RAMOS & PALMIOTTI & KAYANAN

**RS & COMICRAFT'S
LIZ AGRAPHIOTIS
LETTERS**

**BOB HARRAS
EDITOR IN CHIEF**

**PENCILER
RAFAEL KAYANAN**

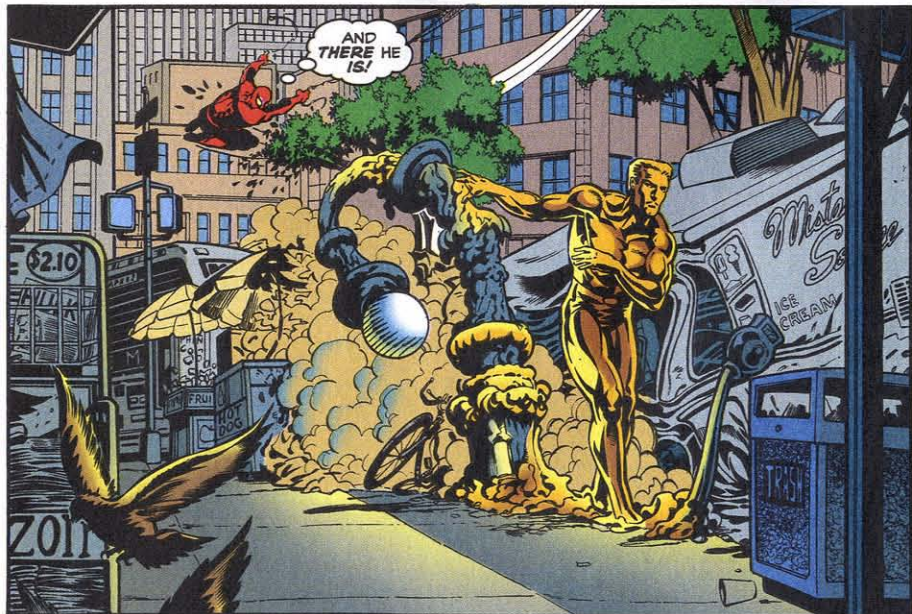
**ROCKWITZ & BERNARDO
COLORS**

**EDITOR
RALPH MACCHIO**

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Game subject to full rules. See page 17 for full rules.

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OF COURSE, I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU FOR SOME TIME.



IT CAN SENSE WHEN ITS BROTHERS AND SISTERS ARE NEAR. YOU KNOW, IT TOLD ME YOU WERE GATHERING THE OTHERS.

"TOLD" YOU? YOU'RE NOT GOING TO PRETEND YOU CAN COMMUNICATE WITH THE THING?



Oh, NOT IN SO MANY WORDS. I DON'T SIT AND CHAT WITH IT, THE WAY YOU AND I ARE CHATTING HERE SO AMICABLY!

BUT IT'S BEEN IN MY POSSESSION A LONG TIME. A VERY LONG TIME. LONG ENOUGH FOR THE TWO OF US TO COME TO A MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING.

INDEED? AND HAD IT TOLD YOU WHY I AM GATHERING THE SHARDS?



IT DIDN'T NEED TO. I ALREADY KNOW. WHY WOULD ANYONE GATHER THE SHARDS?

TO TAKE THE RISK. TO GAMBLE ALL ON A THREE-IN-FIVE CHANCE.

YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST TO TRY TO BRING THE SHARDS TOGETHER, MR. OSBORN.

YOU WON'T BE THE LAST.

YOU'RE WRONG THERE, MAXWELL. I HAVE EVERY INTENTION OF BEING THE FIRST TO SUCCEED IN THE GATHERING.

AND WHEN I DO, THERE WILL BE NO ONE LEFT TO EVER ATTEMPT IT AGAIN!

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X-MEN 35TH ANNIVERSARY

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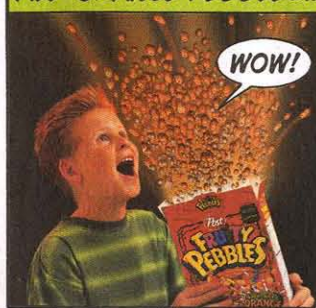
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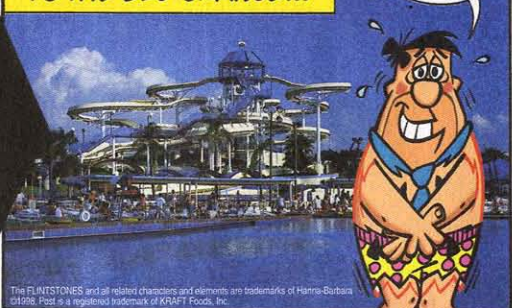
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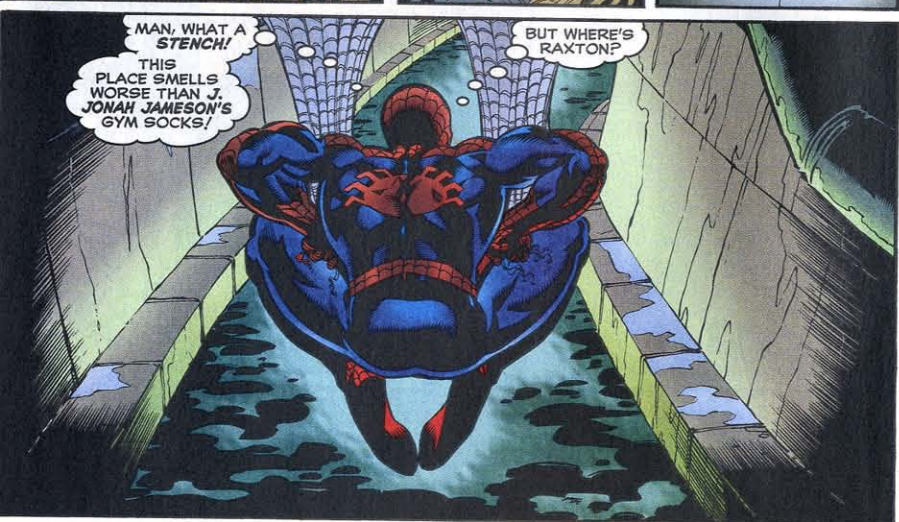
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(continued from facing page)

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the rules of the American Arbitration Association located in Chicago, Illinois); (b) any and all claims, judgments and awards shall be limited to actual out-of-pocket costs incurred, including cost associated with entering this promotion but in no event attorney's fees; and (c) participant hereby waives all rights to claim punitive, incidental and consequential damages or any other damages, other than the actual

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Morning Scramble



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the Basement

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Plus, if you charge \$2,500 in net retail purchases within one year of your account opening date, you can qualify for an exclusive set of three metal Spider-Man cards in a tin collector's case.†

The Marvel MasterCard comes with a fantastic introductory Annual Percentage Rate (APR) on cash advance checks and balance transfers, epic Customer service, additional Marvel product discounts, and more.

So apply for the only credit card that gives you the spending power of a Super Hero! Call 1-888-SPIDEY-1 today to take advantage of this amazing offer.

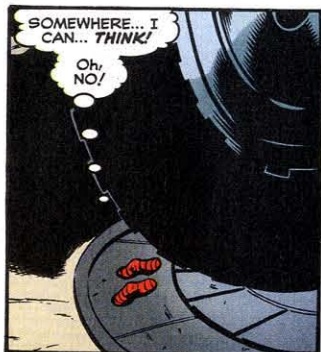


Mention priority code G7WC when you call.

(Applicants must be at least 18 years of age.)



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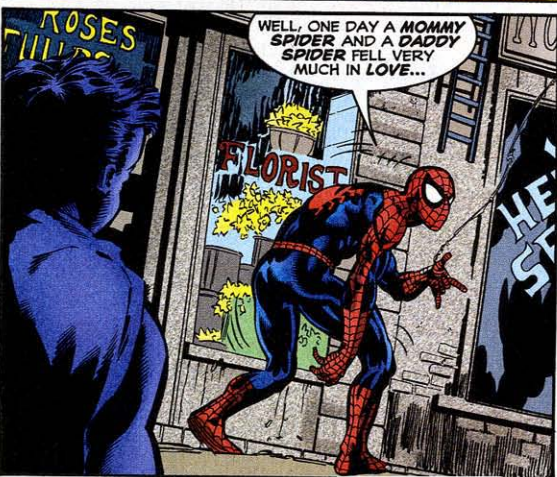
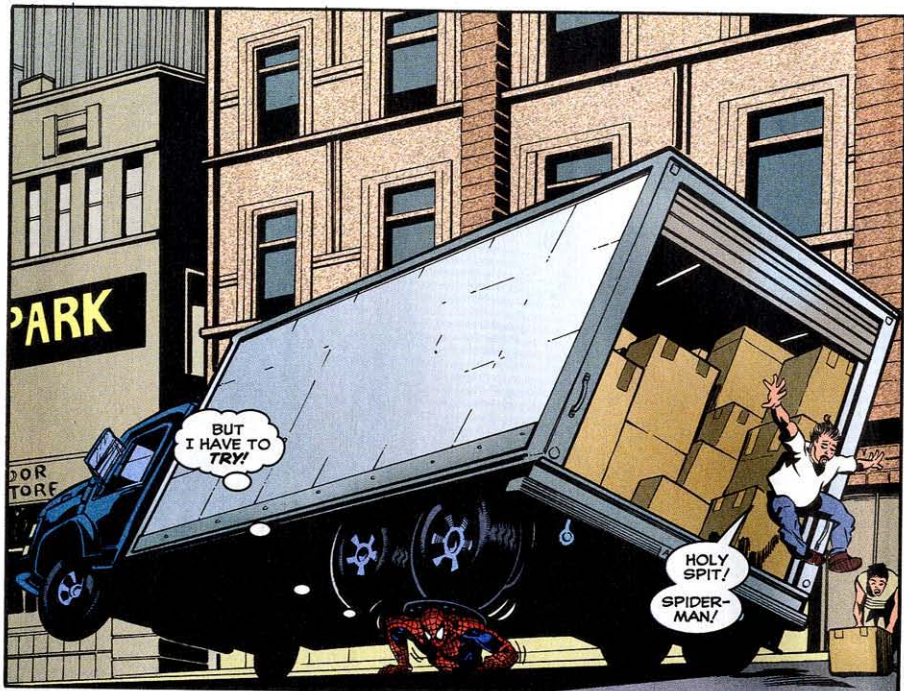
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OFFICIAL RULES. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY.

1. To enter, you must have your parents' permission to play! From a touch-tone phone only, between 8:00 AM & 11:00 PM, Eastern Time, from 7/1/98 through 10/31/98, call the toll-free number found on specially marked packages of Nabisco cookies and crackers. When calling, you will need to provide the last 5 digits of the UPC # found on the Brand Seal on the specially marked package, and your home phone #, including area code. Limit 1 call per day from each phone #. Calls must originate from within the 50 United States, including Wash., D.C. Computer-generated calls not accepted.

No Purchase Necessary—For complete rules, toll-free entry #, list of toys and snacks included in prizes and a qualifying UPC, send self-addressed, stamped envelope to: 1998 "Cool School Bus" Request, P.O. Box 3364, Dept. E, St. Cloud, MN 56397-3364, to be received by 10/31/98. WA & VT residents omit return postage. Limit 1 request per outer mailing envelope. Between 10/1/98 & 10/31/98 ONLY, you may listen to complete rules, obtain toll-free entry #, list of toys and snacks included in prizes, and qualifying UPC by calling 1-888-742-3268. Information line will only be open during time period specified.

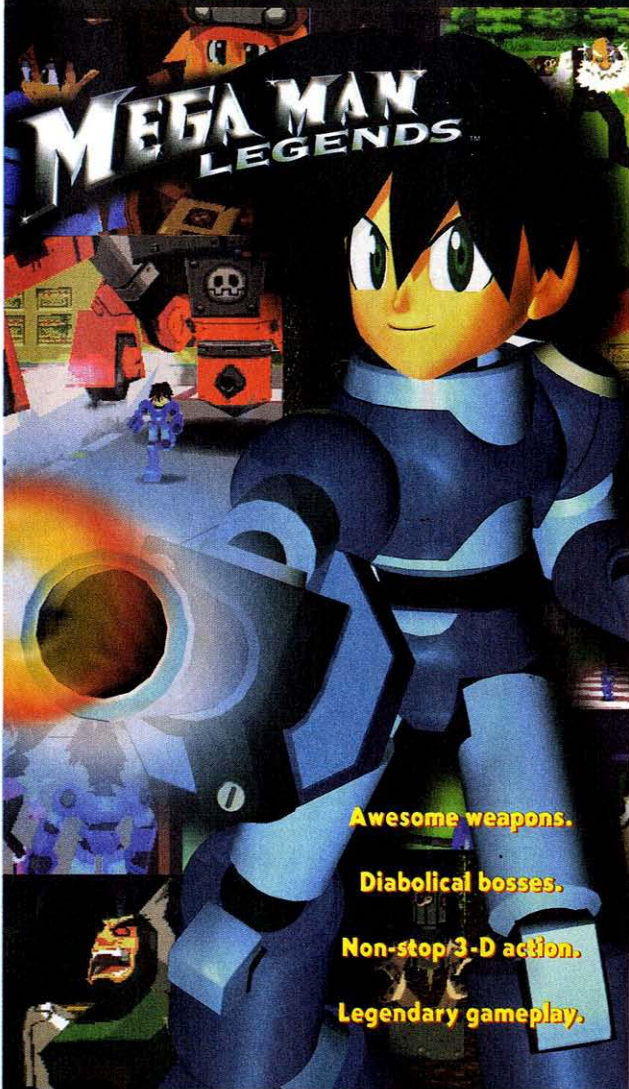
2. Grand Prizes will be awarded at end of program in random drawing from among all eligible, completed calls received in each of the 50 United States and Wash., D.C. Calls from Wash., D.C. will be combined with calls from MD. Please note that calling several times per day will not allow you to be entered into the drawing more than once per day—only one call per day from any given phone number will be entered into the Grand Prize drawing! Drawing conducted on or about 12/15/98. 1st and 2nd Prize Winners will be selected via random intercepts of calls during program period, will be notified that they have won during call, & will be notified by mail within 6-8 weeks of winning call. Grand Prize Winners will be notified by mail on or about 1/15/99. Random intercepts, drawings & notification are under supervision of Carlson Draddy & Associates, an independent judging organization whose decisions are final.

3. Prizes & approx. retail values: Grand Prize (50-1 awarded in each of the 50 United States)—A "School Bus" full of Tiger toys & Nabisco snacks* consisting of a variety of Tiger toys & Nabisco snacks selected by sponsor. Grand Prize includes delivery of Tiger toys & Nabisco snacks to winner's school and house in a School Bus. In Alaska and Hawaii, prizes will be shipped directly to the winner's home and school—no bus delivery available in these areas. Note: The School Bus is not included in the prize (ARV—\$3,000.00 each); 1st Prize (500)—Five Tiger toys & one case of Nabisco snacks, selected by sponsor (ARV—\$125.00 each); 2nd Prize (2,500)—A Tiger toy selected by sponsor & a coupon redeemable for a free Nabisco snack product up to \$3.50 (ARV—\$18.50 each). Coupons must be redeemed by 6/30/99.

4. Open to legal residents of the 50 U.S. states and Wash., D.C. between the ages of 5 and 18 as of 10/31/98. Employees of Tiger Electronics, Ltd., Nabisco, Inc., its affiliates, subsidiaries, agencies, suppliers, phone providers, retailers, immediate families of each & persons living in household of each are not eligible. Void where prohibited. Limit 1 prize per calendar month per phone # of (phone from which call was placed). Limit 1 Grand Prize per household, address or family. Odds of winning Grand Prize depend on total # of eligible calls received in each state. Odds of winning 1st or 2nd Prizes depend on total # of eligible calls received. Parents or legal guardians of potential Grand Prize Winners are required to execute an Affidavit of Eligibility & Publicity/Liability Release within 14 days of attempted notification. Non-compliance may result in disqualification & selection of alternate winner. Entry & acceptance of prize grants sponsor right to use winner's name, city, & state of residence and/or likeness for advertising/publicity, without notice or additional compensation, except where prohibited by law. Prizes may be awarded in name of parent/legal guardian. Taxes are winner's responsibility. No transfer or substitution of prizes, except that sponsor reserves right to substitute prizes of equal or greater value. By participating, entrants agree to abide by Official Rules & judges' decisions. All prizes claimed will be awarded. Sponsor & its agencies not responsible for any losses due to lost, late, postage-due, or misdirected mail or entries, incomplete, lost, inaudible or late information provided via phone or telephone system or electronic equipment failure or data loss. By accepting prize, winners release Sponsor and Promotion Agency, their parents, subsidiaries, affiliates, suppliers, and agents from any and all liability for any loss, harm, damages, cost or expense, including without limitation property damages, personal injury and/or death, arising out of participation in this Sweepstakes or the acceptance, use or misuse of the prize.

5. For list of Grand & 1st Prize winners, available after 2/1/99, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: Nabisco Winners, P.O. Box 3528, Dept. D, St. Cloud, MN 56397-3528, to be received by 4/1/99. Sponsor: Nabisco, Inc. Promotion Agency: Carlson Draddy & Associates. ©1998 Nabisco, Inc.

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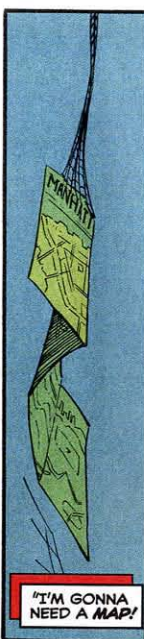
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"AND TO DO THAT, I'M GOING TO NEED MORE THAN MY SPIDER-ABILITIES!"



"I'M GONNA NEED A MAP!"



NOW, LET'S SEE...

ACCORDING TO THE FIRST NEWS REPORT I HEARD, RAXTON STARTED HIS LITTLE STROLL HERE...

... AND I PICKED UP HIS TRAIL HERE.



WHICH MEANS IF HE'S CONTINUING ON A STRAIGHT LINE UNDERGROUND...

... I CAN MAYBE FIND HIM AGAIN IF I BACKTRACK FROM THE FURTHEST POINT HE CAN GO...

AND THAT WOULD BE...



"... THERE!"

HURRY! Oh, DO HURRY! WE'VE WASTED SO MUCH TIME ON THIS BOAT.

WE HAD NO CHOICE. WE HAD TO GET OUT OF FRANCE...

... BUT ALL THE AIRPORTS WERE BEING WATCHED.



I'M NOT EVEN CONVINCED THIS OLD TRAMP STEAMER WAS ABLE TO GET US OUT OF COLOGNE WITHOUT SOMEONE KNOWING WE WERE ABOARD!

AND, AS IF A CRUEL
FATE SEEKS TO MOCK
THE WORDS OF JOE
ROBERTSON...

OH!

THE
MOLTEN
MAN!



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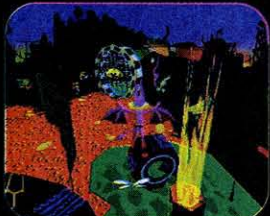




He's a revengeful little devil. And he wants payback from a mad scientist who tried to dissect him alive.



But you've got to jump, glide, punch and whip his tail through 12 levels to help him get even.



Meet the derpsy Devil. He's running loose in a huge 3-D environment full of mutant vegetables.



nasty bosses and all kinds of mind games. (Better watch your back.)



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**JERSEY
DEVIL**

The evil little tyrant is here.

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The power of an immortal.
The soul of a human.
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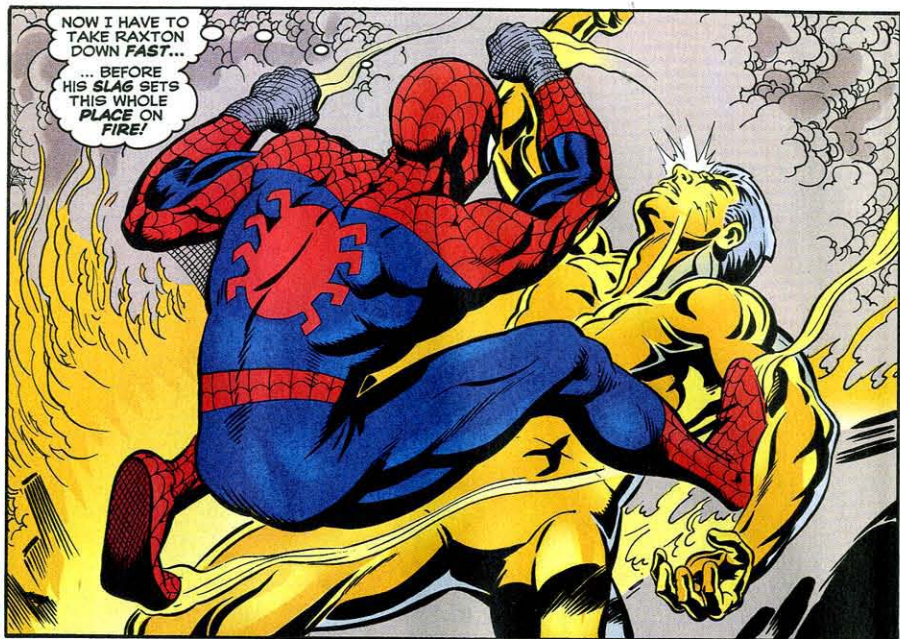
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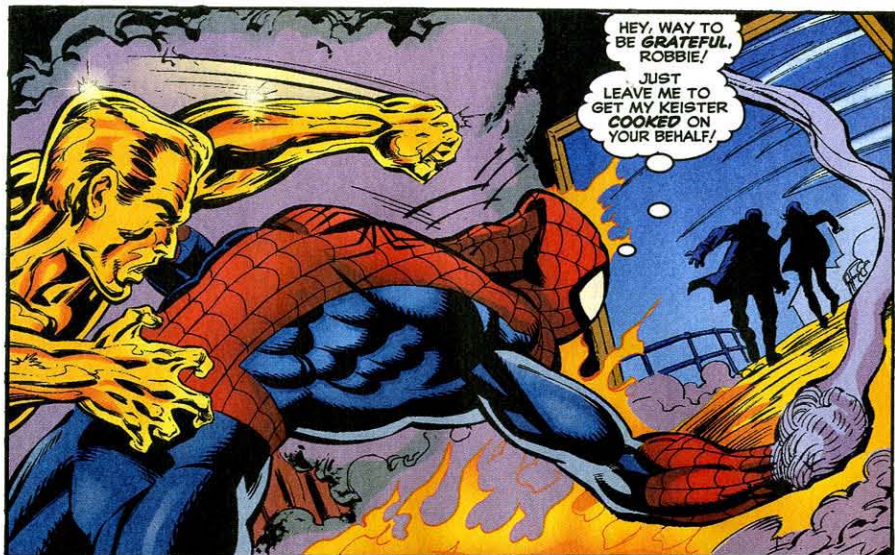
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HEY, WAY TO
BE **GRATEFUL**,
ROBBIE!
JUST
LEAVE ME TO
GET MY KEISTER
COOKED ON
YOUR BEHALF!



Oh,
NO! THIS IS JUST
WHAT I WAS
AFRAID OF!

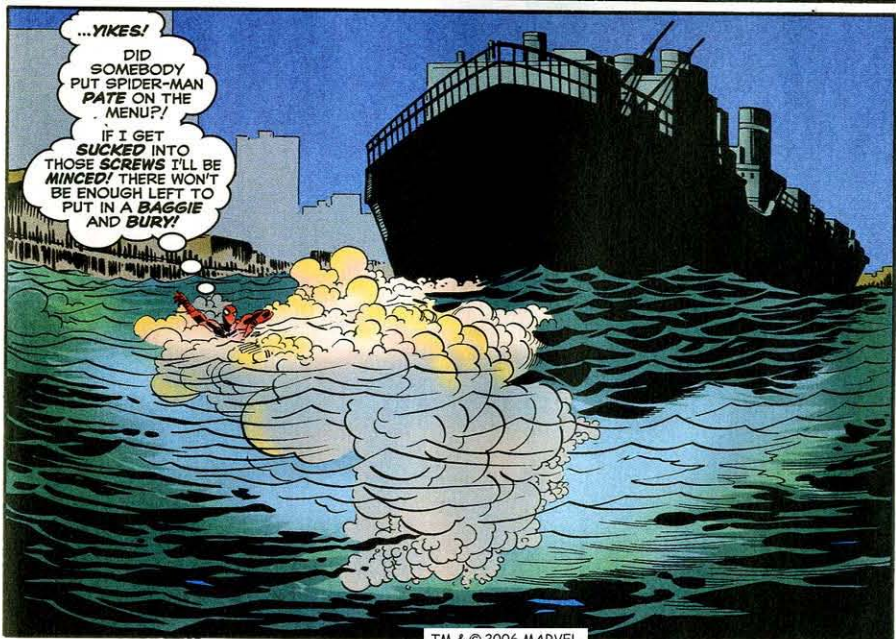
I
SHOULD HAVE
LURED RAXTON OUT
ONTO THE **CONCRETE**
PAVEMENT! ON
THESE **WOODEN**
FLOORS...



**LOOK
OUT!**



**WE'RE GOING
THROUGH!**





BACON
FOR BREAK



WhoopieCamp™

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FAST ANYMORE.



Evil pigs. Hidden paths. Enchanting worlds. And man-eating plants. Can you believe what Tomba has to go through to conquer the evil swine? Fortunately, he's got a bunch of weapons and tons of spunk. Tomba's here. And it's the first wild action game with role-playing adventure mixed in, too. (You'll love Tomba even more than a BLT on rye.)

TOMBA!

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BULLPEN BULLETINS

ON SALE AUGUST 19

A-NEXT

#1 Introducing the next wave of AVENGERS! But can these future warriors really live up to the legacy of Earth's Mightiest Heroes? By TOM DeFALCO and RON FRENZ!

CAPTAIN AMERICA

#10 What are the RED SKULL, KANG, and U.S.A.GENT up to? Find out in part two of "American Nightmare!" By MARK WAID and ANDY KUBERT!

EXCALIBUR

#125 48-page final issue! At last—the wedding of MEGGAN and CAPTAIN BRITAIN! Wait till you see all the uninvited guests who show up! By BEN RAAB and TREVOR SCOTT!

HEROES FOR HIRE

#16 QUICKSILVER joins the HEROES FOR HIRE in an assault on MOUNT WUNDAGORE, but at any moment, the HHF could revert to subhuman beasts! By JOHN OSTRANDER and PASCUAL FERRI!

INCREDIBLE HULK

#469 This unpredictable ish is full of surprises! All we can reveal is that BRUCE BANNER is in trouble, and the SUPER-ADAPTID is helping him! By JOE CASEY and JAVIER PULIDO!

PETER PARKER, SPIDER-MAN

#96 J. JONAH JAMSON decides to settle matters with NORMAN OSBORN, once and for all! And SPIDEY's got his hands full with MADAME WEB! By HOWARD MACKIE and JOHN ROMITA JR.!

MARVEL ANNUAL '98: PETER PARKER, SPIDER-MAN/ELEKTRA

#98 The wall-crawler and the lethal lady team up to track down the web's deadliest hitman: a bio-engineered killer called THE SILENCER! By HOWARD MACKIE, JOHN MORELLI and JOYCE CHINI!

STRANGE TALES

#2 Twice the horror! Twice the kills! MANTHING tackles the demonic MISTER TERMINEUS, while WEREWOLF BY NIGHT must face a horde of vampires! By J.M. DEMATTEIS, PAUL JENKINS, LIAM SHARP, LEONARDO MANCÓ, and more!

THUNDERBOLTS

#19 The THUNDERBOLTS have faced some dangerous characters before, but this ish features a villain with a neat twist—he was created by one of our frantic fans! By KURT BUSIEK and MARK BAGLEY!

UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN: STRANGE ENCOUNTER

#1 At last! The never-before-told story of the first meeting between SPIDEY and that Marvelous magician, DOCTOR STRANGE! By KURT BUSIEK, ROGER STERN, and NEIL VOKES!

WHAT IF?

#113 One of the most offbeat issues ever! What if TONY STARK had become the Master of the Mystic Arts, instead of DOCTOR STRANGE? By CHRIS DUFFY and GREG SCHIGIEL!

X-MAN

#43 Innocent people are turning up dead, and all the evidence points to a certain teenage mutant telepath! By TERRY KAVANAGH, ROGER CRUZ and BUD LAROSA!

X-MEN: THE MANGA

#15 The GENOSHA saga comes to an end as GAMBIT, JUBILEE, and STORM stage a daring escape that reunites them with the X-MEN! By HIROFUMI ICHIKAWA and YORUYA OHASHI!

X-MEN

#80 The 35th anniversary celebration continues, as KITTY PRYDE, COLOSSUS and NIGHTCRAWLER return to the fold, just in time to investigate the mystery of THE FOUNDER! By JOE KELLY and BRANDON PETERSON!

ITEM! In 1963, the God of Mischief, LOKI, caused the Earth's Mightiest Heroes to come together as the AVENGERS! Now, 35 years later, history is repeating itself in the pages of A-NEXT #1, on sale next week! A-NEXT is the second title from our new MC 2 Universe, which depicts the adventures of our heroes in the not-too-distant future! Our story begins with KEVIN MASTERSON, the son of the deceased super hero, THUNDERSTRIKE, returning to New York to learn more about his father's all-too-brief stint as a hero. When Kevin enters Avengers Mansion, he unleashes a chain of events that causes the founding of a new generation of the legendary super-team! Who are the all-new Thunderstrike and STINGER? Who are MAINFRAME and J-2? What does the future hold for JUBILEE, SPEEDBALL, and JOLT? The answers can all be found in this fantastic, futuristic fable by TOM DeFALCO, RON FRENZ and BRETT BREEDING! Pick up A-NEXT #1, and see if LOKI leads this new group of Avengers survive till their second issue!

ITEM! Everyone gets a little nervous about a visit to the doctor. So imagine what it must be like the first time you visit DOCTOR STRANGE, the Master of the Mystic Arts! UNTOLD TALES OF SPIDER-MAN: STRANGE ENCOUNTER, is a 48-page one-shot revealing the never-before-told story of our amazing arachnid's first-ever appointment with the Doctor! This special will appear like magic in seven short days, compliments of those lords of illusion, KURT BUSIEK, ROGER STERN, NEIL VOKES, and JAY GELDHOFF! As for the plot, it's a doozy! Something is loose in Manhattan, and it's abducting innocent people! The teenage Spidey investigates, but he's going to come up against something he's never faced before: the arcane art of black magic! Fortunately for ol' Web-Head, Doc Strange makes house calls!

ITEM! Just a quick reminder that THUNDERBOLTS #19, hitting stores like lightning next week, features the long-awaited debut of the "Create A Villain" contest from Wizard magazine! With public sentiment turning against them, and without the positive presence of JOLT, will the T-BOLTS save a town besieged by this powerful new foe? KURT BUSIEK, MARK BAGLEY, and SCOTT HANNA are the creative crew bringing you all the thunder!

ITEM! You are cordially invited to attend the wedding of CAPTAIN BRITAIN and MEGGAN on August 19th, in the double-sized EXCALIBUR #125! Since this is a mutant super-hero wedding, you just know there will be plenty of punches thrown along with handfuls of rice! Among the party-crashers in this historic final issue are ARCHANGEL, PSYLOCKE, MIMIC, MICROMAX, the CRAZY GANG, the TECHNET, and many more! Writer BEN RAAB and artists TREVOR SCOTT and SCOTT HANNA are the wedding planners in charge of organizing the fisticuffs and festivities! As a special bonus, the cover is provided by ALAN DAVIS, the super-talented artist who helped launch EXCALIBUR all those years ago! While the wedding marks a new beginning for CAPTAIN BRITAIN and MEGGAN, it also marks a sad ending—you'll be stunned by the fateful decision made by KITTY PRYDE, NIGHTCRAWLER, and COLOSSUS!

ITEM! NATE GREY hasn't been the same since he was hit by the electro-magnetic pulse that blasted out of X-MEN #77! Now, in X-MAN #43, it looks like Nate may actually be a murderer! Could he really be bumping off innocent people in his sleep? That's the \$64,000 question, as Nate searches for answers he may not want to find! Writer TERRY KAVANAGH dreamed up this intriguing story, with ROGER CRUZ and BUD LAROSA delivering an art job that's sure to open your eyes! So sleepwalk down to your comic shop and pick up this issue! It's got a shock ending that will give you nightmares for a month!

STAN'S SOAPBOX!

Hi, Heroes!

I know how tough it must be to keep waiting for each new Soapbox, but I'm proud of you for bravely hanging in there until this memorable moment! To reward your patience, I'll generously explain our No-Price procedure once more. Since almost all your letters are provocative and prize-worthy, the only way I can fairly pick the winners is to blindfold myself, reach into our mighty Marvel mixing bowl and pluck out the ones I grab first. So let's see who the fickle finger of fate has pointed to this ish...

All the way from Melbourne, Australia, Rodney Hamilton wants to know:

"Is the stunning syntax of the boisterous baby blue Beast modeled on your own rather unique eloquent styling and masterful molding of the English language?"

Duh, gee—I dunno, Rod. If you think dat's the way I write, then I guess hey, mebbe ya knows what yer talkin' about—or somethin'. But to answer yer question: Yeah!

Wow, here's an easy one from Greg Clark of Little Rock, AR:

"On many of my comics it says 'direct edition.' What does that mean?"

That refers to comics that are sold only in comic book stores and nowhere else.

Some people, like Brad Sawyer of Sapulpa, OK, seem interested in my bedroom habits:

"With all the movies and cartoons you work on and the Soapbox questions to answer plus the occasional comicbook to write, do you ever sleep?"

Sure, Brad, I'd get tons of sleep—if that was all I did. But don't forget the Spider-Man newspaper strip, plus the college lectures and conventions! And how about meticulously stuffing all those invisible No-Prizes into their special envelopes? But I do find time to doze off—when I read our competitors' mags! (Only kiddin', gang!)

Jeff Charpentier of Eau Claire, WI gets kinda personal with this one:

"Who are some of your favorite non-comic book authors?"

Strangely enough, my favorites today are the same ones who were my favorites years ago—H.G. Wells, Mark Twain, Arthur Conan Doyle, Shakespeare, Charles Dickens and my good friend and favorite contemporary author, Howlin' Harlan Ellison!

Lots of fans ask the same question as Robert Hobbs of Norwalk, IA:

"Will there ever be another Marvel fan club like FOOH in the 1970's?"

You must be a mind reader, Bob. We're actually planning one now! We'll announce it officially as soon as we can dream up a sketchy name!

Just enough room left to give you our world-famous e-mail address: stan@stan@stan.com and our regular mailing address: "Stan's Soapbox," c/o BULLPEN BULLETINS, Marvel, 387 Park Ave South, New York, NY 10016. But don't let that info fall into enemy hands!

Excelsior!

Stan

Stan Lee

LOOKING FOR THE NEAREST COMICS SHOP?

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Design by Richard Starkings and COMICART24



IF THERE WAS EVER A TIME
I NEEDED THAT TRADEMARK
PROPORTIONAL STRENGTH
OF A SPIDER, THIS
WOULD BE IT!

THOUGH I
DON'T REMEMBER
IF SPIDERS
ARE SUPPOSED
TO BE GOOD
SWIMMERS!



RAXTON!

DID HE GET
SUCKED INTO
THE PROP,
OR...



...NO WAY
TO TELL.

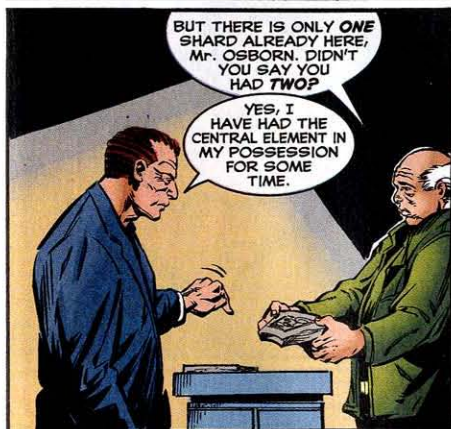
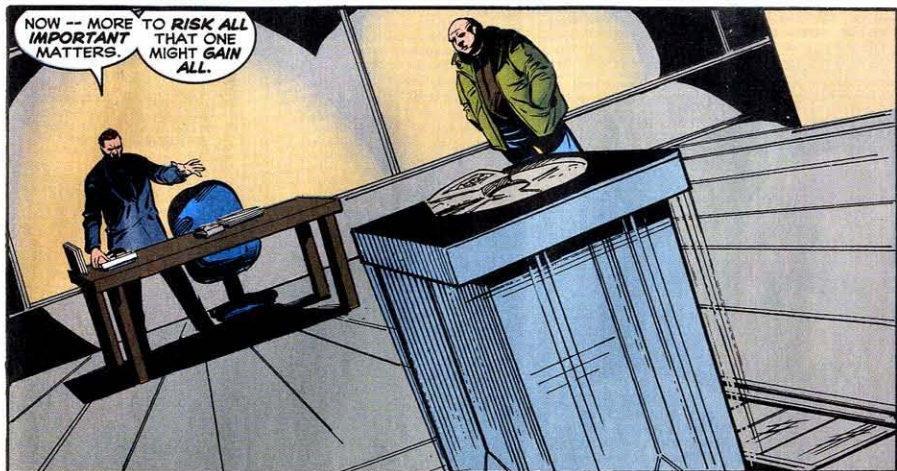
NO **BLOOD** ON THE
WATER -- BUT I'M
NOT SURE THERE
WOULD BE!

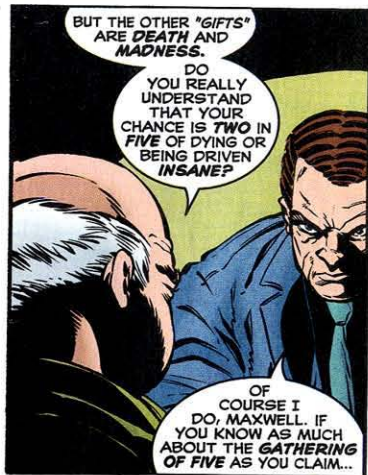
NO TRACE OF RAXTON.
NO WAY TO KNOW
WHY HE WAS AFTER
ROBBIE AND THAT
WOMAN.

ONLY
ONE THING
I CAN BE **SURE**
OF. ONE THING
I KNOW IN MY
GUT.









BUT THE OTHER "GIFTS"
ARE **DEATH** AND
MADNESS.

DO
YOU REALLY
UNDERSTAND
THAT YOUR
CHANCE IS **TWO** IN
FIVE OF DYING OR
BEING DRIVEN
INSANE?

OF
COURSE I
DO, MAXWELL. IF
YOU KNOW AS MUCH
ABOUT THE **GATHERING**
OF **FIVE** AS YOU CLAIM...



...YOU KNOW THAT THE
ENCHANTMENT WILL
NOT **WORK** UNLESS
ALL **FIVE** COME
VOLUNTARILY.

INCLUDING
THE **ONE** WHO
INITIATES THE
GATHERING.



AND IF THE **ONE** WHO
DOES SO **LACKS**
THE **PUREST** OF
MOTIVES...



...YOU
UNDERSTAND, DO
YOU, THAT THE **GIFTS**
ARE NEVER QUITE WHAT
THEY **SEEM** TO BE.



POWER, IMMORTALITY,
KNOWLEDGE, MADNESS
AND DEATH -- ALL THESE
THINGS WEAR **MANY**
GUISES.

HE WHO
GAINS THE **GIFT**
HE **CRAVES** MAY FIND
IT, IN THE END, MORE
A **CURSE** THAN A
BLESSING!

THE **GATHERING OF FIVE** DRAWS CLOSER.
THE FINAL CHAPTER UNFOLDS AT AN EVER-QUICKENING PACE.
OUR TALE CONTINUES IN THE PAGES OF PETER PARKER: SPIDER-MAN #96

DO YOURSELF A FAVOR,
TRUE BELIEVER!
DO NOT MISS IT!

THE SPIDER'S WEB

Dear *Spider's Web* (or should it be Ricochet Replies, or something like that for a while?).

Peter has certainly figured out a way to go on in spite of Norman Osborn. I'm impressed. Even if, as the ad hints, he'll be back to Spider-Man in a couple of months, these get-ups are neat.

And the return of the package which may or may not be little May. I hope this subplot gets tied up along with the rest of "Identity Crisis," because my chief reaction to it is some mild curiosity about how long you can drag out everyone involved never saying anything that would tell us whether it is May or not. At this point, whatever they say is going to look contrived because we know you're hiding something, and it feels like you are never going to resolve it, so there's very little suspense about how you will.

I also have a request about the Thunderbolts. Mary Jane mentioned in this issue that they had been exposed, but that's about all the reaction we've seen. Considering that Peter teamed up with them and concluded they were all right, and considering that Peter's old foe the Beetle was one of them—and the one who gave Peter the evidence to clear himself from that murder accusation—I would think that Peter would have had a reaction to the news, even with everything else on his plate. After all, Abe's reaction to giving him that evidence was to spend a long time wondering why he had done it.

On the other hand, looking back on the storylines these last two months, I'm not sure you could have fit it in. Maybe when the Thunderbolts return to Earth, he could remember his reaction, or have some way of telling us.

Mary Catelli
(Address withheld by request)

You hit the nail right on the head, Mary! With all the excitement going on here at Spider Central, we never got around to having Peter comment on the Thunderbolts "unmasking." Sure, we love to include as much of that cross-continuity stuff as possible, but when you're in the midst of such exciting fare as "SpiderHunt" and "Identity Crisis," you don't always get the opportunity to fit in everything you'd like. Sorry!

As for the "package"...hmm. Interesting you should bring it up. Any issue now, you should be finding out exactly what that "package" consists of, and, suffice it to say, despite your cynicism, we're bound to knock your socks off with this one!

Dear *Spider's Web*,
AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #434, or should I say AMAZING RICOCHET #1, was great! I was glad to see Alison

Mongrain again, and I'm glad she survived the yacht explosion! For some weird reason, I really think she's a cool supporting character!

I was also glad to see the Black Tarantula storyline finally taking off! I feel you were too slow in bringing it along. But I have to admit you have me stumped as to who he is! Is he someone we've seen before?

The cover to ASM #434 was great! Who drew it? I also liked the rooftop artwork on page 21. It is important to show Spider-Man as kind of a loner, alone on the tops of buildings, looking down at the troubles of the city. I hope to see more.

Speaking of Tarantulas, where is the original Tarantula; he was a favorite villain of mine and a lot of other Spidey fans too, I would say! Bring back old pointy toes!

Well, until Delilah smiles, Make Mine Marvel and Spider-Man!

Brendan Walsh
1501 Hood
Chicago, IL 60660

Let's see if we have this straight, Brendan. You think that Alison Mongrain is...cool? This from a guy whose favorite character is Man-Wolf. To each his own.

Dear *Spider's Web*,

Re: AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #434
Ricochet seems like an interesting character. His costume looks like he should be bouncing around because a silver and blue blur looks really cool.

I have only one complaint about the costume: Peter's hair. Is it a silver colored wig, or does Peter use wash-out dye? Since I didn't see his hair fall off on page 21, I guess it's dye. I think it would be funny to see Peter fighting as Ricochet on one page and on the next have him walking into the Daily Bugle with silver hair! The only problem is, someone would probably make the connection.

Why would Peter, as Ricochet, strike up a deal with Delilah? I know he wants a piece of the Black Tarantula, but teaming up with Delilah is a bad choice. Speaking of our mystery villain, what did he really come to New York for? This issue hinted that he was after one of these three women: Marina, Shantal or Mary Jane.

Wait a minute. I just thought of something. Around ASM #419, Ben Urich was trying to dig up facts about the Black Tarantula. One of his contacts said something happened recently to his wife and child and now he wanted to expand to New York from South America. A few issues later, a woman named Marina is introduced. None of her past was revealed until ish #434. She said she had a son named Fabian and she tended to be secretive about him. Nothing was said about the boy's father! My answer to all this is:

Marina is married to the Black Tarantula and Fabian is his son! That would explain why Chesbro is following MJ and Marina. MJ is Marina's best friend and she knows what Marina does and where she goes and the Black Tarantula needs all this information to get her (or at least his son) back. On top of all this, Marina and Fabian sound like South American names. If I'm right, send my No-Prize in the mail.

What did Osborn give to Alison Mongrain? At first I thought it was little May Parker who had presumably died at birth, but now I'm not so sure. I would like to see this plot resolved in the next two issues. I'm getting rather sick of this mystery.

Josh Savitski
103 Eddy Street
Throop, PA 18447

Wow, another letter writer clamoring for the end to the Alison Mongrain/package mystery. Good thing we're wrapping that one up in this very storyline, else we'd be in deep!

Good guessing on the connection between the Black Tarantula and Marina, Josh! As you know by now, you were absolutely correct! However, we cannot send you a No-Prize. That particular distinction, at least as far as this office goes, may be earned only by spotting an error in a Marvel comic and explaining why that might not actually be an error.

Example: Ralf is the worst editor at Marvel and should never have been hired. His entire career is one big mistake on Marvel's part.

Explanation: This is not really a mistake because Ralf was never hired on his own merits. Marvel took pity on him for having been fired seven times by the moving company that his own family owns and decided to give this poor slob a home, despite whatever damage he could cause. Therefore, Marvel knew they were hiring the worst editor in the world, and it wasn't a mistake!

NEXT ISSUE:

THE'S BAAAAACK! THAT'S RIGHT, BOYS AND GIRLS, NORMAN... ONCE AGAIN, SUITS UP AS THE GREEN GOBLIN! NOW THAT THE GATHERING OF FIVE HAS BEEN COMPLETED, NOTHING CAN STAND IN HIS WAY! PLUS, PETER RECEIVES SOME SHOCKING NEWS FROM ALISON MONGRAIN! THIS IS IT, FRIENDS! JOHN BYRNE WRITES AND SUPPLIES THE COVER TO THIS SOON-TO-BE-A-CLASSIC, RAFAEL KAYANAN DRAWS IT, BID LAROSA INKS IT, AND RALF FINALLY FIRES THE LETTER COLUMN WRITER FOR STEPPING OVER THE LINE IN MAKING FUN OF HIM ONCE TOO OFTEN!

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| <input type="checkbox"/> THO Thor | |

Spider-Man

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The X-Men

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With **BANJO-KAZOOIE**

You Could Win Instantly a **NINTENDO® 64 HOME ENTERTAINMENT CENTER!**

Dude! Banjo and Kazooie, of *N64* game fame, have craved by the Keebler® Hollow Tree hoping to snag their missing magic puzzle piece. They've bagged some honeycombs, music notes and feathers, but no puzzle piece.

Gracious, I saw Fast Eddie with a puzzle piece that fits that description.

I'd invite you in for a look, but...

...right now you're too big for the door.

???

unless I use a little...

Elfin magic.

ZAP!

Is that it?

No!

Over there!

Over there!

Meanwhile... Fast Eddie was wrapping Keebler packages at lightning speed.

Much better, come in.

And before he could be stopped, Fast Eddie bolted out the door to deliver the cookies and sandwich crackers.

Fast Eddie wrapped the puzzle piece in a package!

Wait!

OK, dude!

If you help Banjo and Kazooie find their missing stuff, you could win one of a bunch of rad prizes instantly.

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N64® HOME ENTERTAINMENT CENTER

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SECOND PRIZE:

THIRD PRIZE:
1 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION TO NINTENDO POWER® MAGAZINE

FOURTH PRIZE:
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How To Play/Prize Claim.** Scratch off the playing area on the game piece to determine if you are a potential winner, subject to verification. The symbol revealed determines the prize you win. Winning symbols are depicted as follows: Grand Prize game piece reveals a magic puzzle piece. First Prize game piece reveals a feather. Second Prize game piece reveals a honeycomb. Third Prize game piece reveals a music note. Fourth Prize game piece reveals "Instant Winner, Free Product Coupon" and does not reveal a symbol. Non-winning game pieces will read "Please Try Again" and will not reveal a symbol. If your game piece indicates that you are a winner, legally print your name, address, daytime phone number on a 3x5" card and sign your name in ballpoint pen on the game piece. **GRAND, FIRST, SECOND, and THIRD PRIZE WINNERS:** mail potentially winning game piece and 3x5" card to: "Find the Magic Puzzle Piece" Prize Claim, P.O. Box 3362, Maple Plain, MN 55553-3362. Make a copy of game piece for your records. Prize claims must be received no later than March 2, 1999, and must be mailed separately to be eligible for prizes. Upon verification, winners will be notified by mail within 6-8 weeks. If won by minor, prize may be awarded in the name of parent or legal guardian on behalf of the minor. **3. Verification.** Prize claims are subject to verification by Game Marketing Group, an independent judging organization, whose decisions are final and binding in all matters relating to this game. If any prize or prize notification is returned as undeliverable, such prize will be forfeited. No copies or reproductions of game pieces accepted. Neither Keebler Company, nor any of its subsidiaries, affiliates or agencies are responsible for lost, late, damaged, delayed, misdirected, incomplete or illegible requests, prize claims, or postage-due mail. Game pieces are void and will be rejected if not obtained in accordance with the Official Rules and through authorized legitimate channels, or if any part is determined by Game Marketing Group, in its sole discretion, to be forged, mutilated, illegible or tampered with in any way (except for legal hand-written signature of potential winner) or if they contain printing or other errors. Liability for an irregular game piece is limited to replacement with another game piece, while supplies last. In the event of a printing or other error that results in more winning game pieces being distributed, or more prizes claimed, than intended in any prize category as set forth in the Official Rules, these prizes in such category will be awarded in a random drawing from among all eligible prize claims received in such category. Any person making an attempt to forge game pieces or defraud Keebler Company in any way will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Prize claims become the exclusive property of Keebler Company and will not be returned. By participating, participants agree to abide by and be bound by the Official Rules and all judges' decisions. **4. Eligibility.** Open only to legal U.S. residents, excluding employees of Keebler Company, Nintendo America Inc., any of their affiliate companies, subsidiaries, distributors, agents, retailers, advertising and promotional agencies, suppliers, Game Marketing Group, and their immediate families or persons residing in the same households of such employees. Subject to applicable federal, state, and local laws. **5. Prizes Offered/Approximate Retail Value (ARV)/Odds of Winning.** Grand: (1) Nintendo® 64 Entertainment Center, includes: Nintendo® 64 System, 32" Wide Screen TV, Surround Sound Receiver and Surround Sound Speakers and one Banjo-Kazooie™ Game Pak. ARV \$5,000. Odds 1:190,100. First: (10) Nintendo® 64 System with one Banjo-Kazooie™ Game Pak. ARV \$200 each. Odds 1:1,901,000. Second: (50) Nintendo® Game Boy® pocket System. ARV \$54.95 each. Odds 1:380,200. Third: (100) One Year Subscription to Nintendo Power® Magazine. ARV \$19.95 each. Odds 1:190,100. Fourth: (30,000) Free Keebler Product Coupon redeemable at participating stores offering Keebler products. Coupons must be redeemed strictly in accordance with terms and conditions of use and must be redeemed no later than December 31, 1999. ARV \$3.19 each. Odds 1:634. Total ARV of all Prizes: \$105,541.50. **6. General.** By accepting prize, winner (and if winner is a minor, winner's parent/legal guardian) agrees that neither Keebler Company, Nintendo of America Inc., Game Marketing Group, or their respective subsidiaries, affiliates, and the agents, employees, directors or officers of any of the above organizations will have any liability whatsoever for any injuries, losses, or damages of any kind incurred in connection with or resulting from acceptance, possession or use/misuse of any prize, or participation in this promotion. By accepting a prize, winner (and if winner is a minor, winner's parent/legal guardian) agrees that Keebler Company may use winner's name, hometown, likeness, and/or prize information, without limitation, for promotional purposes without further compensation, where legal. Grand Prize winner will be required to execute and return an Affidavit of Eligibility and a Liability/Privacy Release (where legal) within 14 days of notification. If won by a minor, minor must have parent/legal guardian sign documents on his/her behalf. In the event of non-compliance with these requirements, prize will be forfeited. Taxes, if any, on prizes are solely the winner's responsibility. No prize transfer. No prize or cash substitutes allowed, except at sole discretion of Keebler Company for a prize of equal or greater value. Unclaimed prizes will not be awarded. **7. Winner List.** For a list of major prize winners, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope by March 2, 1999, to: "Find the Magic Puzzle Piece" Winners List, P.O. Box 3361, Maple Plain, MN 55553-3361.

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