

MARVEL
COMICS



#23

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THE AMAZING

SPIDER-MAN



MACKIE
ROMITA JR
HANNA

DIRECT EDITION

02311

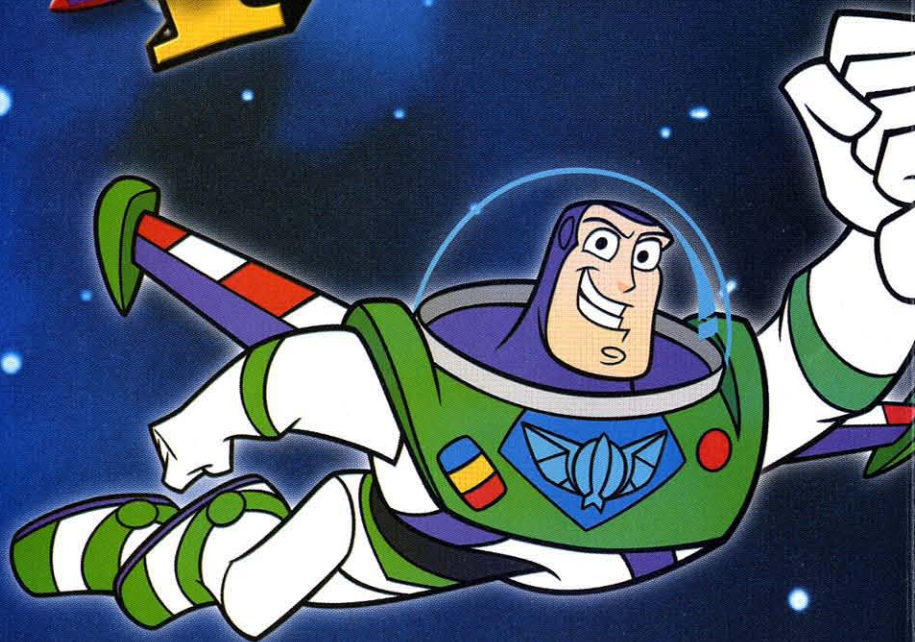


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1 HERO



1 MISSION



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Gotta Have Sweet?

THE HOME OF JILL AND ARTHUR STACY IN FOREST HILLS, QUEENS...

YOU HAVE TO HELP ME KILL HIM!

HE'S A UNITED STATES SENATOR!

HE'S MORE MUCH, MUCH MORE.

I CAN'T BELIEVE I AM STILL HAVING THIS CONVERSATION WITH YOU, ARTHUR.

YOU'RE A PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR. I'VE KNOWN YOU AWHILE. YOU'RE A GOOD GUY.

REMEMBER ME... SPIDER-MAN... MISUNDERSTOOD HERO. THAT'S HERO... CAPITAL H... ALSO ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS!

AND I DO NOT KILL PEOPLE! EVER!

YOU JUST DON'T HAVE ANY IDEA AS TO HOW DANGEROUS STEWART NARD IS.

MAYBE I SHOULD TELL YOU EVERYTHING... MAKE YOU SEE HOW NECESSARY IT IS -

THAT WOULD BE A START. MAYBE... THOUGH I DOUBT IT... YOU COULD EXPLAIN TO ME HOW A MAN I HAVE COME TO RESPECT COULD SUDDENLY GO ALL PSYCHO AND TRY TO ASSASSINATE A UNITED STATES SENATOR?

BUT FIRST... COULD YOU TURN OFF THAT SPIDER-TRACER OF MINE YOU PLAYED AROUND WITH TO LURE ME HERE? IT'S GIVING ME A HEADACHE.

YOU CRUSHED IT. IT'S DEFINITELY OUT OF COMMISSION.

OH BOY! SPIDER-SENSE ALERTING ME TO DANGER!

OKAY, ARTHUR, WE'VE GOT TO MOVE. NOW!

WHAT ARE YOU DOING? WHAT'S GOING ON --?

TRUST ME, ARTHUR! THINGS ARE GOING TO GET BAD FAST!

AT A DEMONSTRATION ON RADIATION, HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT PETER PARKER WAS BITTEN BY AN IRRADIATED SPIDER FROM WHICH HE GAINED THE ARACHNID'S INCREDIBLE ABILITIES. WHEN A BURGLAR KILLED HIS BELOVED UNCLE BEN, A GRIEF-STRIKEN PETER VOWED TO USE HIS GREAT POWERS IN THE SERVICE OF HIS FELLOW MAN, BECAUSE HE LEARNED AN INVALUABLE LESSON: WITH GREAT POWER MUST ALSO COME GREAT RESPONSIBILITY. STAN LEE PRESENTS:

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN!

HOWARD MACKIE JOHN ROMITA Jr. SCOTT HANNA
story and art

GREGORY WRIGHT
colors

RS & COMICRAFT®
TROY PETERI
letters

RALPH
MACCHIO
editor
BOB HARRAS
chief

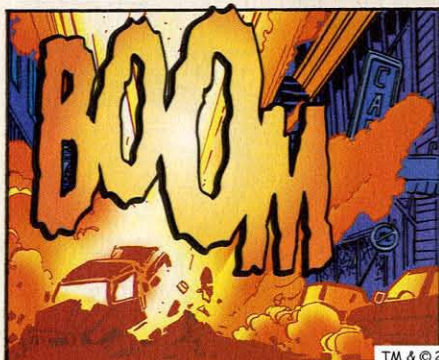
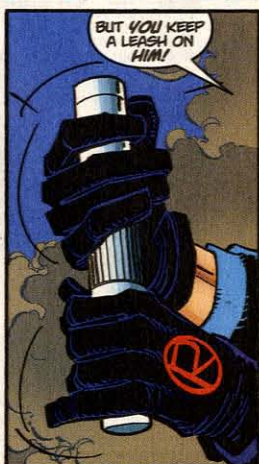
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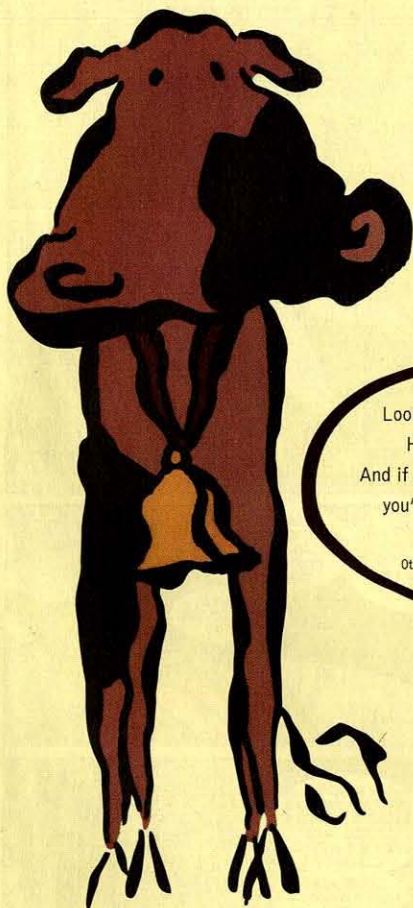
GENTLEMAN FROM

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PART
TWO







Hershel the Cow is Missing

Look for Hershel in the special
Hershey's Syrup bottle.
And if you hear her **MOO**
you'll win a VIP trip for four
to Hershey, PA.

Other prizes include Hershel T-shirts,
backpacks and baseball caps.



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1. NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. To receive a game piece and official rules without purchase, send a stamped self-addressed envelope to: Hershey's Capture the Cow Sweepstakes, PO Box 5577, Riverton, NJ 08077 (WA and VT residents may omit return postage). Limit one game piece per request; one request per envelope. All requests must be mailed separately. Requests will be honored while supplies last. Requests must be received by June 15, 2001. Game starts July 1, 2000, and ends June 30, 2001, or when all game pieces have been distributed, whichever occurs first. Game open to individual legal U.S. residents. Void where prohibited. Game subject to Official Rules. Void in Puerto Rico or wherever prohibited or restricted by law. Subject to all federal, state and local laws and regulations.
2. Look under cap to find a foil seal game piece which will indicate a prize or "Please Try Again." If the game piece indicates a prize, print your name, street address and phone number on a 3" x 5" piece of paper and send with winning game piece to: Hershey's Capture the Cow Sweepstakes —Prize Claim, PO Box 127, Riverton, NJ 08077. Grand Prize winner claims must be sent via registered mail. Prize claims must be received by July 25, 2001. All prize claims are subject to verification. Grand Prize winning bottles do not contain syrup. For a set of official rules and additional information, call toll free at 1-877-222-2555 or visit our web site at www.hersheys.com/hershelshideout.

THE PRESENT.

THE OFFICE OF SENATOR STEWART WARD.

MY, MY, MY... YOU ARE A COMPLEX LITTLE CREATURE, AREN'T YOU?

ALIEN SYMBIOTE...

...ONE HALF OF THE VILLAINOUS ENTITY KNOWN AS VENOM.

AND I MUST ADMIT THAT, IN THE BRIEF TIME WE HAVE SPENT TOGETHER, YOU HAVE TAUGHT ME SO MUCH ABOUT HOW TO SHARE MY BODY WITH MY OTHERS.

BUT... ALL GOOD THINGS MUST COME TO AN END.

GO!

SLINK OFF, FIND THAT DEGENERATE HOST EDDIE BROCK, IF YOU MUST.

THERE IS NOTHING EITHER OF YOU CAN DO TO HELP, NOR TO HINDER, ME FROM THIS POINT ON.

I AM FULLY CONFIDENT THAT I CAN REMAIN IN CONTROL OF THEM ALL.

TIME TO PUT IT TO THE TEST.

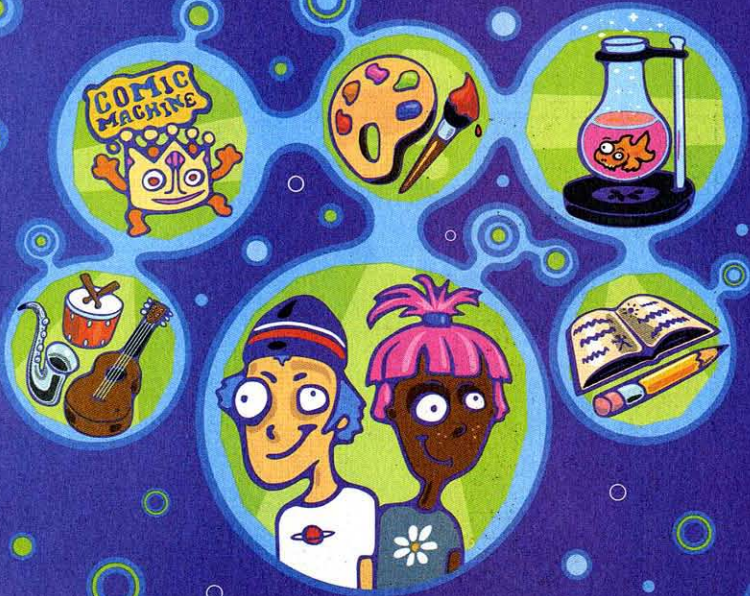
WARD
BZZZZT

YES, SENATOR WARD? YOU SIGNALLED. IS THERE A PROBLEM?

A MINOR PROBLEM, SPECIAL AGENT STANDERS. COULD YOU COME A LITTLE CLOSER?

COME NOW... A LITTLE CLOSER STILL.

I WON'T BITE.



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and feed your head at
Noggin.com.





BUT
THAT'S ABOUT
THE *ONLY* THING
I'M *NOT* GOING
TO DO!



THE FUTURE IS GUMMI

THE PRESENT.

HEAD...
RINGING... THE
BLAST... MUST
HAVE BLACKED
OUT...

STILL
DREAMING...

ARTHUR...
NO! DON'T
KILL HIM!

EWEN!
WATCH OUT FOR
THE GOBLIN!

CAN'T...
SAVE THEM... HAVE
GOT TO... POWER...
RESPONSIBILITY...

HE'S OUT
OF IT, ARTHUR.
TOOK MOST OF
THE BLAST FOR
YOU.
YOU
WANT TO
BRING HIM
WITH US?

NO...
HE'S NO GOOD TO
US IN THIS STATE. BUT
HE'LL RECOVER FAST. I'VE
SEEN WHAT HE CAN DO.

WE'VE GOT TO FIND
MY KIDS... PAUL AND
JILL... BEFORE WARD
DOES.

THEN WE'LL
GO AFTER WARD
DIRECTLY.

ARTHUR...
NO... YOU DON'T
WANT TO DO THIS...
DON'T WANT TO
KILL HIM...
YOU...

GONE.
AND I'M
TOO WEAK TO
FOLLOW.

GOT TO
GET OUT OF
HERE BEFORE
THE POLICE
SHOW UP AND
BLAME ME FOR
IT ALL.

GOT TO
GET SOME REST
AND FIGURE OUT
WHAT TO DO
NEXT.

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The new multi-player water game.



Nick.com
Wave Rave

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THE PAST.

I THINK
WE'VE BOUGHT
OURSELVES
SOME TIME.



BUT I DON'T
WANT TO WAIT
AROUND TOO
LONG.

HYDRA IS
GOING TO HAVE
THIS WHOLE COUNTRY
CRAWLING WITH THEIR
OPERATIVES ALL
SEARCHING FOR
US.



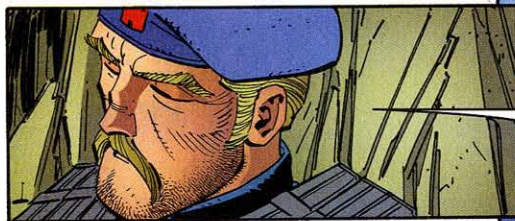
TEN MORE
MINUTES AND WE'RE
MOVING
ON.



WHY ONLY TEN
MINUTES?

WHY NOT
DIG A DEEP
ENOUGH HOLE
THAT THEY CAN'T
FIND US AND THEN
FINISH THE
MISSION?

WHAT DO
YOU THINK,
SEEKER?



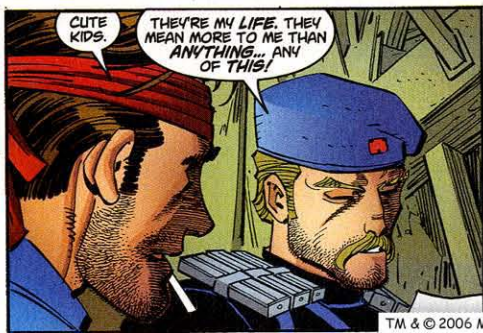
De 7

I miss u very much
and I want u to
come home

Love
Jill

I
THINK IT'S
THE RANGER'S
CALL.

NOW
SHUT UP...
I DON'T WANT
TO WASTE MY
TEN MINUTES
ON YOU.



CUTE
KIDS.

THEY'RE MY LIFE. THEY
MEAN MORE TO ME THAN
ANYTHING... ANY
OF THIS!



YOU'VE GOT TO BELIEVE ME,
ARTHUR. MY INTELLIGENCE
OPERATION WAS
PERFECT.

I WOULD
NEVER DO
ANYTHING TO
COMPROMISE
THIS MISSION.
YOU KNOW ME,
ARTHUR...!

YOU AND
I ARE ALIKE.
NOT LIKE THAT
SCIENCE FICTION
FREAK... THE
RANGER.



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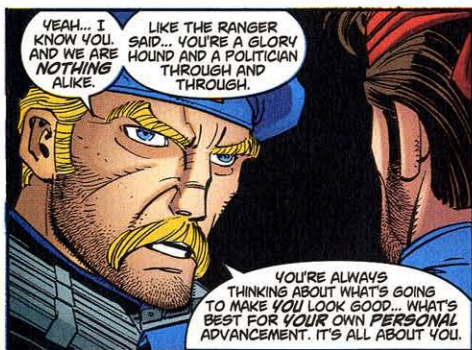
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THE PRESENT.

MAN! I AM EXHAUSTED.

AND IT'S NOT JUST FROM GETTING CAUGHT IN AN EXPLOSION TONIGHT.

LATELY I FEEL LIKE I JUST CAN'T GET ENOUGH SLEEP. I'M BARELY KEEPING MY EYES OPEN.

I WAKE UP MORE TIRED THAN WHEN I NODDED OFF.

AND THE DREAMS... MORE DARK AND DISTURBING THAN THEY'VE BEEN IN A LONG TIME... SO MANY OF THEM INVOLVE GVEN AND THE GOBLIN.

I GUESS... WITH WHAT HAPPENED TO MY WIFE, MJ... THE PLANE CRASH...

I GUESS I SHOULDN'T EXPECT TO JUST BOUNCE BACK.

WELL... I SMELL LIKE I JUST STOOD IN FRONT OF AN EXPLODING BUILDING SO...

...TIME TO HIT THE SHOWERS!

GOT TO ADMIT THAT I'M OUT OF PRACTICE WITH THIS WHOLE ROOMMATE THING.

RANDY'S A GREAT GUY, BUT HE'S ALWAYS AROUND!

AND I'M NOT LOOKING FORWARD TO THE DAY HE STUMBLES ON THE SPIDER-MAN PUDS AND I'VE GOT TO TRY AND EXPLAIN HOW IT'S JUST A BAD HALLOWEEN COSTUME.

OH, WELL...

ZZZZZZ



"...the best superhero
game ever..."

OPM
August 2000



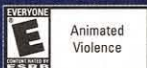
SPIDER-MAN[®]

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YOU DON'T JUST PLAY IT... YOU LIVE IT

MARVEL



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For more on the green fiend's return, see
Spider-Man: Revenge of the Green Goblin
limited series on sale now -- Quick-plug Ralf.



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NO PURCHASE NECESSARY. HOW TO PLAY: Look inside specially-marked packages of 10 oz. Cheez-It® Original crackers. An instant-win game piece with a prize message will appear on the inside panel of the box. Winning messages read "Congratulations! You are a Prize Winner" and describe the prize won. Non-winning messages read "Sorry, No Winner This Time. Please Try Again." The game begins on or about 6:05:00 and is scheduled to end 11:02:00 or when game-piece supply is exhausted, whichever occurs first. To obtain an instant-win Game Piece and complete Official Rules without purchase, mail a self-addressed stamped envelope (VT & WA residents need not affix return postage) to: Cheez-It® Spider-Man® Game Piece, P.O. Box 8419, Dept. CH, Prospect Hts., IL 60070. Requests must be postmarked by 11/02/00 and received by 11/09/00. Limit one request per outer envelope, one game-piece per request. Five (5) Grand Prize Winners' name and likeness will be written into one monthly edition of a Spider-Man comic. ARV: \$1,999.00 each. Odds of winning: 1:482,000. Fifty (50) First Prizes: Spider-Man watch. ARV: \$39.00 each. Odds of winning: 1:48,200. Five hundred (500) Second Prizes: A one-year subscription to the Marvel comic of winner's choice. ARV: \$24.00 each. Odds of winning: 1:4,820. Total ARV of all prizes: \$23,945.00. If you have a winning game piece (subject to verification), hand-print your name, address, city, state, ZIP, and day-time phone number on a 3" X 5" piece of paper, sign across your original winning game piece, place it in secure packaging and mail by First Class registered or certified mail (return receipt requested) to: Cheez-It® Spider-Man® Prize Claim, P.O. Box 8419 Dept. CH, Prospect Hts., IL 60070. You may wish to retain a photocopy for your records. Prize claims must be received by 1/15/01. Open to legal U.S. residents, except employees of Keebler Company, Promotion Activators, Inc., their respective parents, affiliates, subsidiaries, agents, retailers, advertising and promotion agencies and the immediate families or household members of each. All federal, state and local laws and regulations apply. Void where prohibited. Game is subject to complete Official Rules. To obtain a copy, send a self-addressed stamped envelope (WA & VT residents may omit return postage) to: Cheez-It Spider-Man Rules, P.O. Box CH, Prospect Hts., IL 60070. Spider-Man™ & © 2000 Marvel Characters, Inc. Rights Reserved.



THE PAST.

I'LL HAND IT TO YOU, SENTRY. YOU GOT US IN. NOW LET'S WRAP IT AND BLOW IT UP.

YOU WANT TO DESTROY THIS?

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING AT?

NOPE! AND I CAN'T SAY I CARE.



HE'S RIGHT, SENTRY.

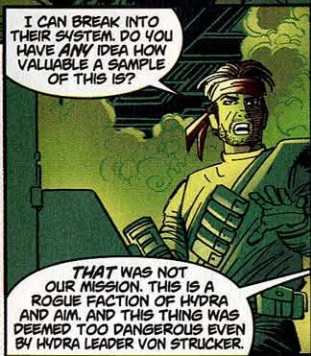
OUR MISSION WAS TO DESTROY THIS INSTALLATION AND MAKE SURE THAT NOTHING BEING DEVELOPED HERE SURVIVED.

HOW CAN YOU BE SO SMALL-MINDED?



THE HYDRA SCIENTISTS WORKING HERE WERE DEVELOPING A BIO-PATHOGEN DERIVED FROM AN ALIEN LIFE FORM.

DID YOU HEAR ME? AN ALIEN!



I CAN BREAK INTO THEIR SYSTEM. DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA HOW VALUABLE A SAMPLE OF THIS IS?

THAT WAS NOT OUR MISSION. THIS IS A ROGUE FACTION OF HYDRA AND AIM, AND THIS THING WAS DEEMED TOO DANGEROUS EVEN BY HYDRA LEADER VON STRUCKER.



ALSO, IT'S NEVER BEEN CONFIRMED THAT ANY OF THIS IS AN ALIEN LIFE FORM.

YOU'RE EXTRAPOLATING, SENTRY. SET THE CHARGES NOW.



CHARGES ARE ALL PLACED AND READY TO BE SET.



THERE HAS BEEN A CHANGE OF PLANS, GENTLEMEN.



DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT, SENTRY.

WHO ARE YOU WORKING FOR? WHICH SIDE?

YOU ARE SUCH A TRADITIONALIST, ARTHUR.

SIDES? THERE ARE NO SIDES.

PATRIOTISM. HONOR. DUTY. A FOOL'S LEXICON. WINNING IS ALL THAT MATTERS.

DYING IN THE SERVICE OF YOUR COUNTRY GETS YOU ONLY A FLAG-DRAPE COFFIN AND TAPS. THAT'S NOT ON MY AGENDA.

AND I WILL NOT BE HAMPERED BY THE LIKES OF YOU.



SOMEHOW THERE IS POETIC JUSTICE TO THIS, ARTHUR.

I REQUESTED THAT YOU BE ON THIS MISSION.

I FELT IT WAS TIME TO SETTLE ALL SCORES.

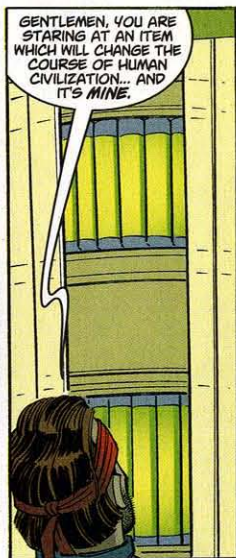
ARE YOU STILL GOING ON ABOUT THAT? IT'S ANCIENT HISTORY.



NOT TO ME.



BY THE WAY, HERE IT IS.



GENTLEMEN, YOU ARE STARING AT AN ITEM WHICH WILL CHANGE THE COURSE OF HUMAN CIVILIZATION... AND IT'S MINE.



A SINGLE VIAL IS ALL THAT I REQUIRE.

THAT'S ALL I NEED. ALL I'D BE ABLE TO TRANSPORT SAFELY.



TRANSPORT! THERE IS NOTHING SAFE IN TRANSPORTING THAT! THE SLIGHTEST MISTAKE AND --



I MAKE NO MISTAKES AND LEAVE NO WITNESSES.

IT'S A SHAME YOUR LITTLE GIRL WILL NEVER GET TO SEE HER DADDY AGAIN, ARTHUR --



SENTRY'S BULLET MISSED YOU, BUT HIT THE REFRIGERANT IN THE CHAMBER CONTAINING THE VIRUS.

PULL IT TOGETHER, ART!

WE'VE GOT TO SET THE TIMERS AND DESTROY THIS PLACE BEFORE THE PATHOGEN ESCAPES.



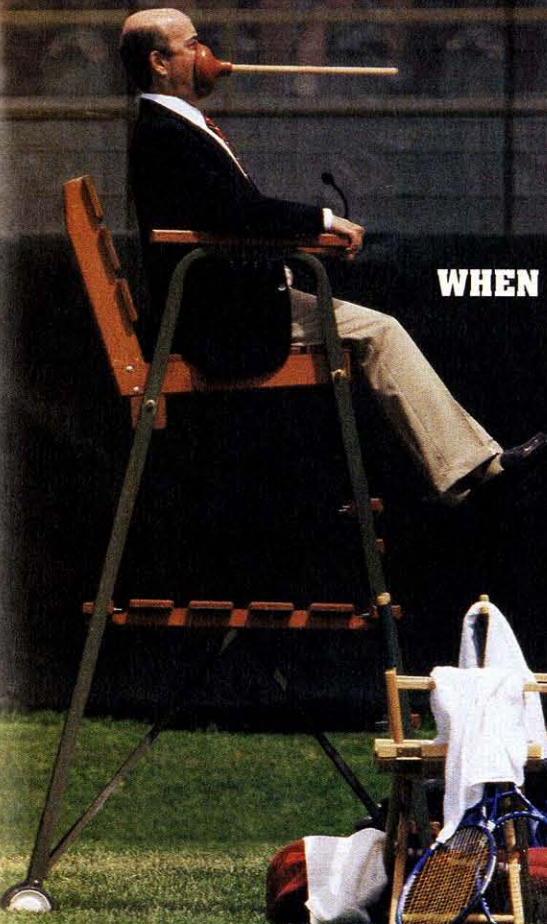
AND WE'VE GOT TO STOP WARD. IF THAT VIAL HE'S CARRYING CRACKS...



WE'LL STOP HIM.



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WHEN PLUMBERS LOSE.



Four-player action, blazing tennis balls, exploding baselines and a couple of angry plumbers.
New Mario Tennis. You don't just play it. You survive it.



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THE PAST.

5A

LEAVE IT TO HYDRA TO PUT A BIOCHEMICAL PLANT DIRECTLY BENEATH A TOWN FILLED WITH INNOCENT CIVILIANS.

THEY NEVER PUT A VALUE ON HUMAN LIVES...
...IT'S WHAT MAKES THEM THE BAD GUYS, RANGER.
AND THAT'S WHY WE'RE IN THE SPY BUSINESS -- TO STOP THEM!

WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM.

WE'RE BEING FOLLOWED.



YEAH, WELL...
...I'VE GOT GOOD NEWS.



WE'RE NOT GOING DOWN ALONE!

THERE'S SENTRY!!



"HE'S MAKING SOME SORT OF EXCHANGE WITH THAT BIG GUY. CAN'T GET A GOOD LOOK AT HIS FACE, BUT..."



I CAN TAKE THEM BOTH OUT FROM HERE.

NO.

THE VIAL. WE CAN'T RISK EXPOSING THIS MASS OF PEOPLE TO ITS CONTENTS.
WE HAVE NO IDEA WHAT IT WILL DO.



WE'VE GOT TO TRY AND TAKE HIM OUT UP CLOSE.

DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT MOVING, SENTRY!!

ON SALE NEXT WEEK

BACKPACK MARVELS: SPIDER-MAN

The wacky web-slinger tangles with the Vulture, the Black Cat and the Juggernaut in this new digested reprint format! By Roger Stern and John Romita Jr.

BACKPACK MARVELS: X-MEN

The Children of the Atom battle the Brood and the Morlocks in this new digested reprint format! By Chris Claremont and Paul Smith!

BISHOP #14

It's Bishop vs. the Chronomancer in a war that results in a startling new direction for the last X-Man! By Joseph Harris and Georges Jeanty!

CAPTAIN AMERICA #35

This is it—the knockdown, no-holds-barred battle between Captain America and his twisted reflection, Protocore! By Dan Jurgens!

CAPTAIN MARVEL #11

In this very special issue, Genis meets his father, the original Captain Mar-Vell—but he's dead, right? By Peter David and Jim Starlin!

INCREDIBLE HULK #20

The green goliath runs head-on into the forces of Ryker—and learns the secret that has driven his obsessed opponent! By Paul Jenkins and Ron Frenz!

IRON FIST / WOLVERINE #1

Will K'un Lun materialize over Tokyo? Everyone's kung-fu fighting in this all-new adventure that mixes martial arts mayhem with mutant mania! By Jay Faerber and Jamal Igle!

PETER PARKER,
SPIDER-MAN #23

Peter Parker and his roommate Randy Robertson are both having weird dreams... but was it just something they ate—or a case of alien abduction? By Paul Jenkins and Mark Buckingham!

PUNISHER / PRANKSTER JANE

The term "bleeding hearts" takes on a new meaning as comics' two most violent vigilantes make a lethal love connection! By Garth Ennis and Joe Jusko!

SENTRY #3

How can you make the world remember you? That's what Bob Reynolds must do figure out when he faces the Hulk and Spider-Man! By Paul Jenkins and Jae Lee!

DARKDEVIL #1

From the pages of SPIDER-GIRL leaps the mystery man of MC2, Darkdevil. His enigmatic origin begins here! By Tom DeFalco and Ron Frenz!

THUNDERBOLTS #44

Continued from the pages of AVENGERS, the T-Bolts and Earth's Mightiest Heroes stand side-by-side against Count Nefaria! By Fabian Nicieza and Mark Bagley!

X-MAN #69

Transported to another world, Nate Grey comes face-to-face with the X-Man of that reality! By Warren Ellis, Steven Grant and Ariel Olivetti!

X-MEN #106

All of your questions are answered here as the mighty mutants launch a final assault on the lair of the Neo! By Chris Claremont and Leinil Francis Yu!

X-MEN: BLACK SUN #4

Belasco's perverted plans come to fruition in the finale to the X-Men's 25th Anniversary celebration! By Chris Claremont and Pablo Raimondi!

MARVEL
SPOTLIGHTBACKPACK
MARVELS

Remember digests? You know, those small books that contain a bunch of cool comics? We do! That's why we're introducing BACKPACK MARVELS, a series of black-and-white reprints that contain larger-than-life adventures in a format that's small enough to take anywhere! Up first: classic tales starring our most famous characters, Spider-Man and the X-Men! So if you're on the run and need your Marvel fix, then throw a Backpack in your backpack!

Jim Starlin is well known for his grand cosmic sagas. He's also known as the man who killed the original Kree Crusader. Now Starlin returns to pencil Mar-Vell's son, Genis—and Peter David has written a special story that features a father and son reunion! But if Mar-Vell is dead, then how can he be here? Find out in this issue—and you'll also see why Comics International said, "Just buy this and remind yourself how good comics writing can be!"

CAPTAIN MARVEL #11

Stan's
SOAPBOXHI,
HEROES!

When strangers learn I'm a writer, they often ask what I write. I like to watch their reaction when I say, "Soapboxes." They look at me as if I don't have both oars in the water as they mumble, "Did you say Soapboxes?" That's when I really drive 'em batty by replying, "Oh yeah, they're my specialty. I'm the only professional Soapboxer I know!"

That gets rid of them real fast. Hey, a guy who sits at a computer most of the day has to do something for kicks, right? And now for the heavy stuff...

Here's Ben Cassiday of Anderson, IN, who offers a paean of praise for the Silver Surfer....

"Of all your creations, my favorite is the Silver Surfer. How did you think of such a peace-loving man becoming the herald of Galactus?"

Jack Kirby's the guy who really created him, Ben. All I did was give him his gestalt, his personality. I wanted him to be peace-loving because I wanted him to represent everything that's best about the human race, even though we humans ourselves seem to find it so difficult to attain the great qualities that the Surfer knows are within us.

Hey, Oliver M. Villar of Jacksonville, FL, really shakes me up with this one....

"I found Peter Parker's middle name! In WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #19, on page 15, Peter hands a lady a birth certificate that says 'Peter Benjamin Parker'."

Wow! You sure earned your No-Prize with this one, Olle! Imagine telling me something about Spidey that I didn't know! The mind does verily boggle!

All the way from across the ocean, Pritpal Bhagrat of Berks, England, asks....

"If you could be a mutant, who would you be and what powers would you have?"

I'd have to create a brand new character. Prit, because what I'd want doesn't yet exist! I'd want someone who could hold back time, so that I'd have enough time to write comics again in addition to my other work. Wouldn't that be a hoot!

Speaking of time, True Believers, we're out of it now—and space, as well. Till next, Keep the Faith!

Excelsior!

Stan Lee

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THE SPIDER'S WEB

Dear Spider's Web,

In AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #19, something I had hoped for for years finally happened: Peter showed Venom sympathy. Even if it was just one page, Peter and Eddie buried the hatchet. Not a "you don't come-after-me-and-I-won't-come-after-you" deal like in issue #375 of ASM Volume 1, but a real declaration of peace.

Eddie's greatest sins before he bonded with the symbiote were nothing more than shoddy journalism and, at the very worst, obstruction of justice. Overall, he was a decent guy and didn't deserve the hand fate dealt him. I've always pitied Mr. Brock. For the longest time I had hoped that Eddie would get some professional help and realize that Spider-Man never intended to wreck his life, or that Peter would be a big enough man to say "Eddie, I'm sorry, I had to stop the Sin Eater, but I never meant for you to be hurt in the process." It looked like maybe, just maybe, Eddie was on the verge of forgiving Peter, and he had somehow begun to regain his sanity and get his life back on track.

Any hope of this was destroyed on the next page, and now Venom's back to his old self. I'm genuinely sad and even a little angry that after such a long time and after Eddie made such incredible progress, it ended up being all for nothing. Now this guy ever catch a break? I felt the same way when the Scorpion resolved to turn his life around in the early '90s and wasn't successful. To me, one of the most tragic things in real life or fiction is when a screwed-up person tries to change for the better and fails.

I don't want the old, psychotic Venom back. As much as I like to see Spidey and Venom slug it out, I would much rather see a reconciliation between the two. At the moment, both Peter and Eddie have lost their wives, giving them something in common. Peter can still reason with Eddie rather than fighting, tell him that he feels the same pain Brock does. It's not too late for Eddie to change, and Peter Parker will be the one who either helps him make that change and regain his humanity or sends him into another downward spiral, depending on how he handles Venom in their future meetings.

And if it's the latter, if Eddie begins to obsess about killing Spider-Man again and his life goes right back down the toilet, then I'm really gonna hate you guys.

Rob Brown
Oakville, Ontario
CANADA

Thanks for the letter, Rob. Unfortunately, it sounds as if we're not going to fare too well in your regard. While it certainly isn't our attempt to portray Eddie Brock as a one-note character, we're not sure we see Peter and him reconciling anytime soon. You can say what you will about Eddie "not catching a break," but the fact of the matter is that he has made the choices that have made him a villain. Venom is a killer, and although we may have touched on recent similarities between him and Peter in the events of their lives, they currently don't look to be mending fences anytime soon. Hopefully, however, we can maintain that enmity without reverting Venom to the simplistic portrayal you seem to want to avoid.

Dear Spider's Web,

The biggest news regarding AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #19, as far as I'm concerned, is that Erik Larson is back drawing Spidey again. Having picked up his first run on ASM back when they first hit the shelves, and following his other work ever since, it was a real treat to see Erik hit the web-man again. I would not want to see him on this title every month (I'm enjoying *Savage Dragon* too

much), but this three-month return performance should be fun while it lasts.

As for the writing, while most of Howard Mackie's Spidey work since the reboot has been, in my opinion, rather lackluster, I've noticed a marked improvement in his scripting over the last few months. Some of Spider-Man's lines (such as the quick ID of the peppermint gum on the sidewalk once he'd stopped his fall) actually made me snicker out loud, which is something that hasn't happened in awhile.

The fight with Venom was exciting visually, if not exactly thrilling plot-wise. Venom has never needed much reason to pound on Spidey, and that's exactly what we got this issue: not much reason. As another reader pointed out, though, at least Venom now has a new motivation for wanting Spider-Man dead. The "Sin-Eater" angle was getting kind of old.

I'm officially interested in Jill Stacy again. Gwen's confusion has been suffering, since her introduction from the same "boring good girl" malaise that was Gwen's own problem shortly before her death. Now she's partying all night, showing up at Aunt May's house hammered, and crashing on the couch in one of MJ's nightshirts? Go, girl! I'm still not crazy about her more-than-friendly flirtations with Peter, but I'm definitely more interested in what happens to her now.

In short, ASM seems to be on the right track, at long last. I look forward to the rest of Erik's run and the return of John Romita, Jr. with #22. Can't wait to see what you guys have cooking for #25.

Russ Anderson
Baltimore, MD

"Go, girl?" Shall we take this as an endorsement of Jill's recent behavior, Russ? For shame! You know, the next time people complain about the downfall of morals in society, we will point the finger squarely at you, sir. Well, after Ralf, that is.

Looking forward to #25, eh? And with good reason, we might add. Not only is a refreshed John Jr. on tap for that double-sized epic, but it also features that maniacal ol' Green Goblin (as if you couldn't figure that one out by now). It's the dovetailing of events in this mag, PETER PARKER: SPIDER-MAN and the SPIDER-MAN: REVENGE OF THE GREEN GOBLIN limited series. It's gonna be a doozy, so don't you dare miss it!

Dear Spider's Web,

Hey, Guys! This letter doesn't have much to do with the issue I just read (AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #19, which was great by the way), but it suddenly occurred to me that I have not officially chimed in on the MJ situation. In my opinion she should stay deceased, or at least if she is brought back, she and Peter should separate and eventually divorce. She is one of my favorite supporting characters in all of comics and the private moments spent between MJ and our hero will always be treasured by the fans, yet it has become apparent over the last few issues (which were excellent) that one of the ingredients missing from the Spider books over the last decade is the sexual tension and dating angst so prevalent for so many years. You have the chance to tell a fascinating breakup tale between Peter and Mary Jane and also restore the status quo of Spidey. Please take advantage of this rare opportunity.

As for the aforementioned issue #19, the Jill Stacy plot continues to thicken. I suspect that she may have been the woman climbing out the window of the crackhouse in issue #17. Hopefully, Pete can help her come to her senses before it's too late. That last page was a real shocker as well; Spidey had better watch his back.

Thanks for listening, and as always...Make Mine Marvel!!!!

Terence Connors P.M.M.
Rochelle Park, NJ

Well, at least you didn't encourage Jill's seeming fall into degradation (sheesh—some people!). A rare call, however, for MJ to be declared definitively and irrevocably dead. Interesting...are you banking for some angry Spidey fans to write in with all manner of insults and barbs? You're a brave man, Terence, braver than most. Prepare thyself for the epistolary lashing that is sure to commence!

Dear Ralf,

Certainly, Howard Mackie understands how life's greatest tragedies spring from miscommunication.

I enjoyed AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #19 much more than I expected to, mostly because I've never had much interest in Venom. However, showing me the human face of this villain helped to give me a bit more insight behind the man as opposed to the symbiote, which seems to garner most of the attention. Using Eddie Brock to parallel Peter's own struggle with missing Mary Jane gave it an extra impact and one I found completely plausible.

So often, it's easy to ignore the problems of others, even when they mirror your own. Having Spidey-Man stop the fight to actually talk to Venom was a phenomenal step. I admired Peter's compassion. I also appreciated Brock's rationality in accepting Peter's terms. This is a rare thing in comics especially where heroes and villains are concerned. It helps to remind us all, "There but for the grace of God go I."

It also made the ending far more tragic. Certainly, it's terrible that Brock's wife committed suicide. But Venom's misunderstanding of what was truly terrorizing her makes it all the worse.

Thanks for helping me to understand Brock and better explain the source of his antipathy towards Spider-Man. I think Venom will be a far more interesting villain from this point on for me.

Scot W. Myers
Charleston, SC
swmyers@aol.com

Thanks, Scot. We aim to please. And if we breathed new life into a villain who many (like you) feel has outgrown his original motivation, then we can consider ASM #19 a job well done. And trust us, with Ralf at the helm, that's not a common experience!

NEXT ISSUE:

FINALLY... THE LONG-AWAITED SHOWDOWN WITH SENATOR WARD IS HERE! SPIDEY, ARTHUR STACY AND THE RANGER RACE TO STOP WORLDWIDE DESTRUCTION AMIDST THE CHAOS OF MAXIMUM SECURITY! WILL ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE STACY CLAN LOSE HIS OR HER LIFE? FIND OUT HERE NEXT MONTH IN A PAGE-TURNIN' NAIL-BITER, COURTESY OF HOWARD MACKIE, JOHN ROMITA JR. AND GUEST INKER RANDY ELLIOTT. RALF, MEANWHILE, WILL BE BITING HIS NAILS, WAITING TO SEE IF HE HAS A JOB OR ANOTHER MONTH.

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7 THE PAST.

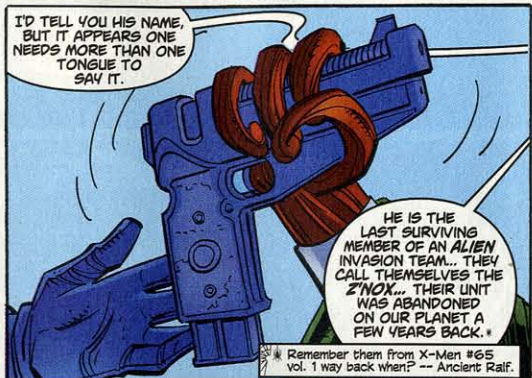
PLEASE...
GIVE ME AN
EXCUSE,
SENTRY.

YOU HAVE NO
IDEA WHAT YOU'RE
UP AGAINST. HAVE NO
IDEA OF THE OPPORTUNITIES
WHICH WILL OPEN UP TO
US IF YOU TWO JOIN ME.



OVER
MY DEAD
BODY.

THAT
TOO CAN BE
ARRANGED.
ALLOW ME
TO INTRODUCE MY
ASSOCIATE.



I'D TELL YOU HIS NAME,
BUT IT APPEARS ONE
NEEDS MORE THAN ONE
TONGUE TO SAY IT.

HE IS THE
LAST SURVIVING
MEMBER OF AN ALIEN
INVASION TEAM... THEY
CALL THEMSELVES THE
Z'NOX... THEIR UNIT
WAS ABANDONED
ON OUR PLANET A
FEW YEARS BACK.*

*Remember them from X-Men #65
vol. 1 way back when? -- Ancient Raif.



I PLAN ON
HELPING
HIM.
WITH
JUST ONE
OR TWO
CAVEATS.

IT WAS
FROM THE DNA
OF ONE OF HIS FALLEN
BRETHREN THAT HYDRA
WAS ABLE TO CREATE
THE PATHOGEN.

HE'D LIKE
TO EXTRACT HIS
OWN POUND OF FLESH
FOR WHAT HAPPENED TO
THE REST OF HIS TEAM...
I BELIEVE HIS MATE WAS
ON BOARD THEIR SHIP
WHEN IT BLEW UP.



I'M HOPING IT IS A MOVIE, RANDY!



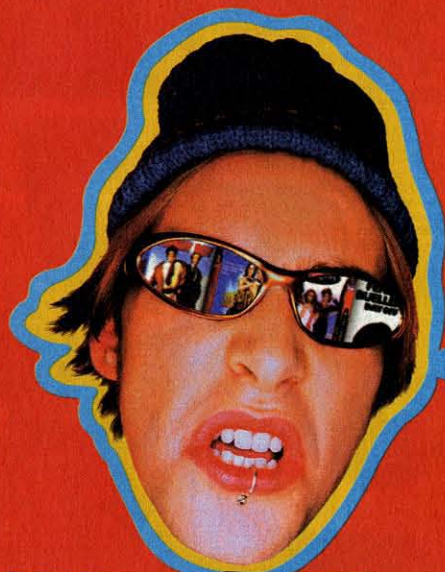
GET YOUR HANDS OFF ME!

ARE YOU GOING TO SAVE MY LIFE LIKE YOU SAVED MY COUSIN GIVEN WHEN THE GREEN GOBLIN TOOK HER TO THE TOP OF THAT BRIDGE?

SHE DIED UP THERE BECAUSE OF YOU!

I'LL TAKE MY CHANCES ON MY OWN!

WHEN YOU OWN YOUR FAVORITE MOVIES,
NO ONE CAN SAY...



BE KIND,
REWIND!



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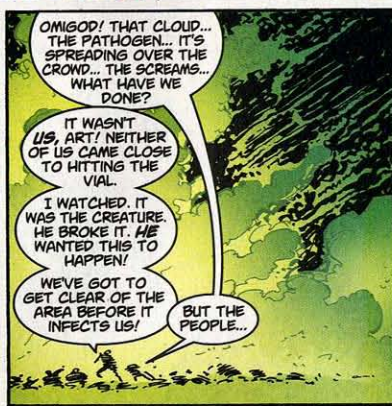


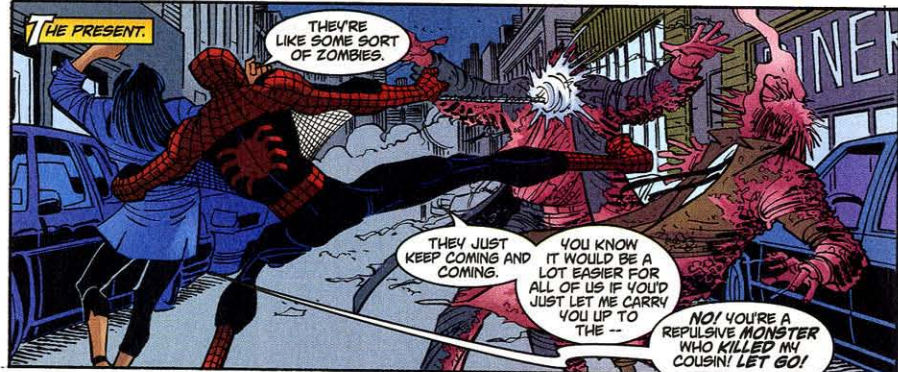
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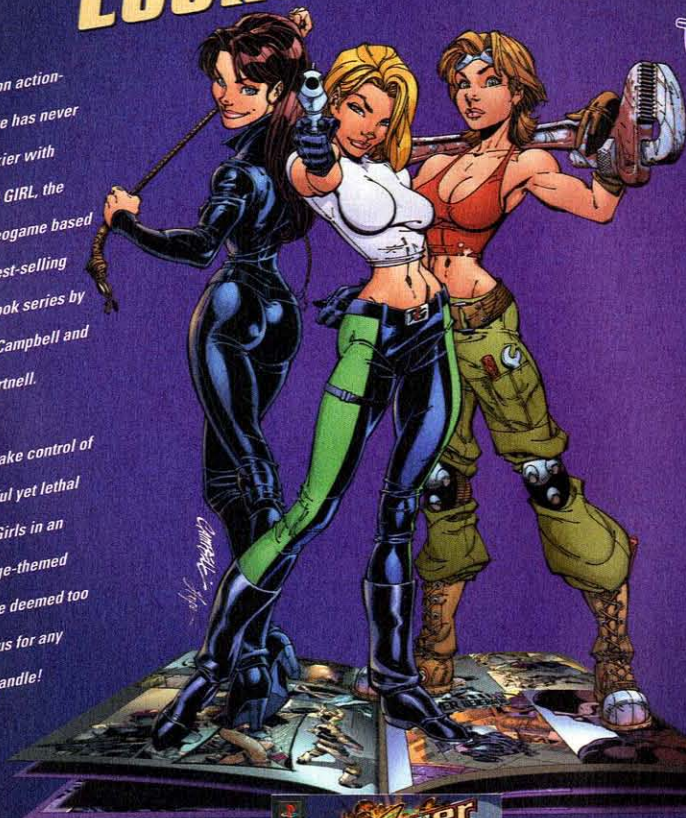
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TALK TO ME,
ARTHUR!
WHAT IS
GOING ON
HERE?



YES, ARTHUR... WHY
DON'T YOU TELL
SPIDER-MAN ALL
ABOUT IT?

TELL HIM ABOUT
OUR SHARED HISTORY...
ABOUT THE ALIEN PATHOGEN...
ABOUT HOW YOU WERE
RESPONSIBLE FOR INFECTING
ME WITH IT.

BUT THERE
ARE PARTS OF
THE STORY YOU
DON'T KNOW,
RIGHT? LIKE HOW I
LEARNED OF THE
ZNOX.



LIKE HOW I
SURVIVED AND
ESCAPED FROM
S.H.I.E.L.D.

HOW THE PATHOGEN
HAS BEEN LAYING
DORMANT WITHIN MY
BODY FOR ALL THESE
YEARS, THOUGH
YOU SURELY SUSPECTED.

WAITING.

WAITING FOR THE
RETURN OF THE ZNOX
TO RELEASE IT UPON
THE WORLD.

GUESS WHAT,
ARTHUR.
THEY'RE
HERE.

NEXT ISSUE:
PLAGUE!

(OUR MOMENTOUS
MAXIMUM SECURITY
CROSSOVER!)

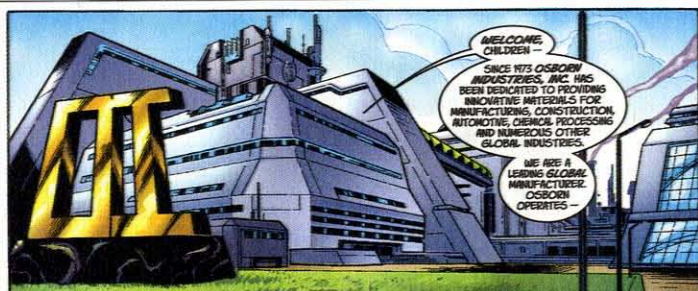


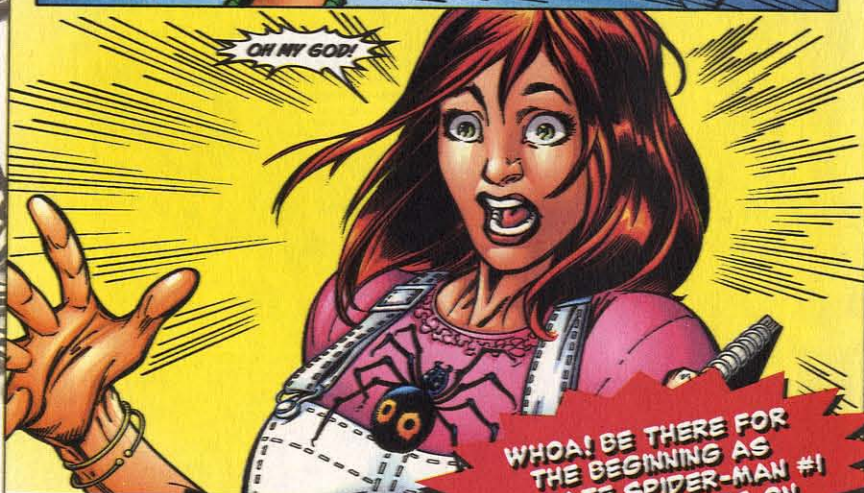
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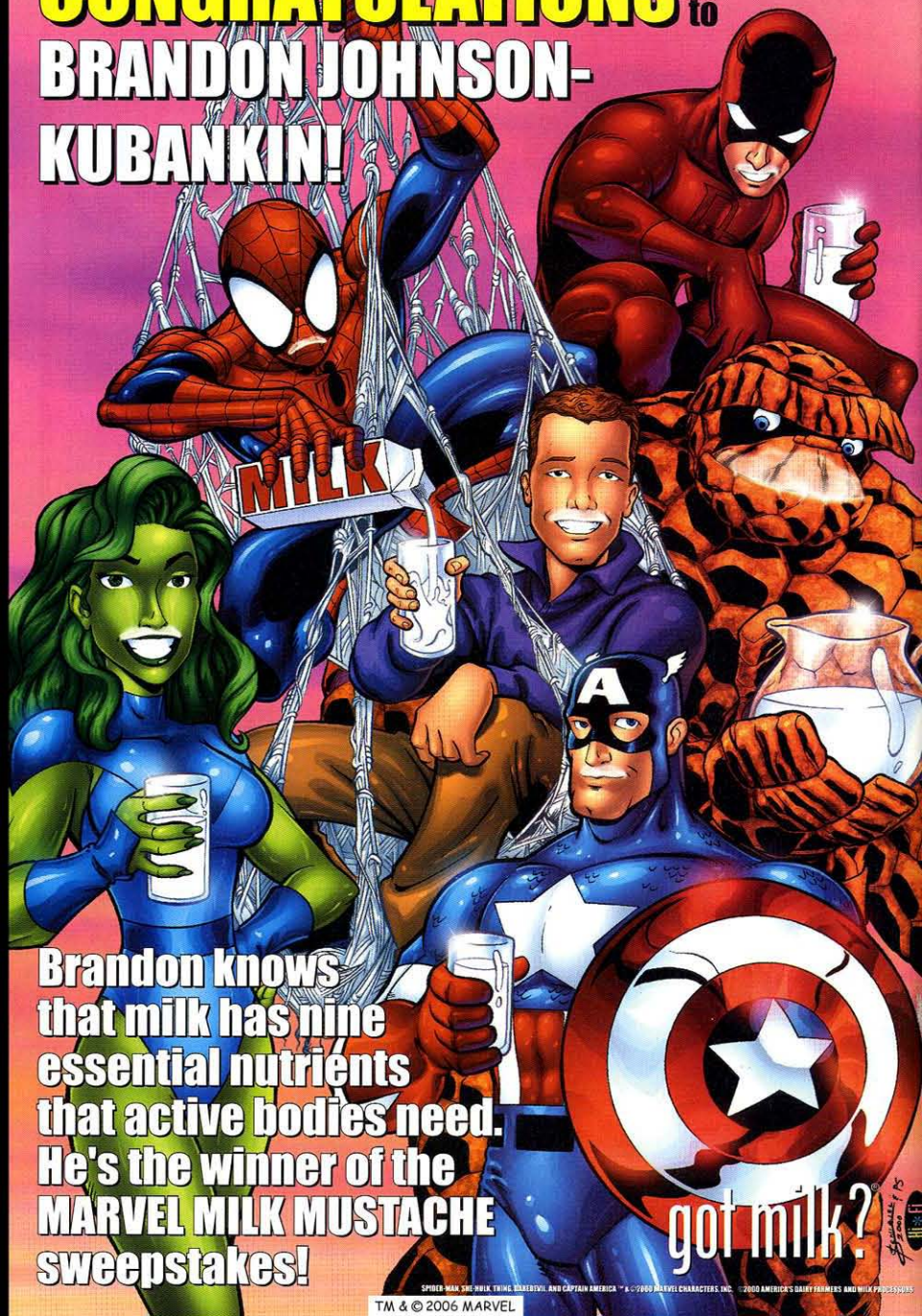
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