



#26

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THE AMAZING

# SPIDER-MAN

APPROVED BY THE  
COMICS CODE  
AUTHORITY



**MACKIE  
ROMITA JR  
HANNA**

**DIRECT EDITION**



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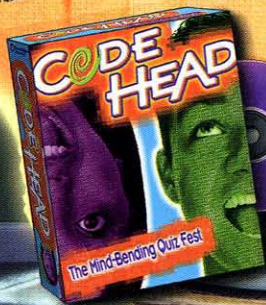
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# THE M A S K

YOU EVER LOOK  
IN THE MIRROR...

...AND WONDER WHO  
IT IS THAT IS STARING  
BACK AT YOU?

I'VE BEEN DOING  
THAT A LOT LATELY.

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!**

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**JOHN ROMITA JR.**

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**GREGORY WRIGHT COLORS**

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COMICRAFT'S TROY PETERI**  
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UNDERNEATH THIS MASK MY NAME IS PETER PARKER.

IN THE COSTUME I'M IN I GO BY THE NAME SPIDER-MAN.

THE WHOLE THING... COSTUMED IDENTITY... SUPER-VILLAINS... SAVING THE WORLD... SEEMS SO RIDICULOUS.

LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A COMIC BOOK.

BUT IT IS WHAT PASSES FOR MY REAL LIFE.

NORMAN OSBORN, THE GREEN GOBLIN, IS MY ARCH-NEMESIS. HOW OFTEN DO YOU GET TO USE THAT TERM IN A SENTENCE?

THIS IS HIS MASK I'M HOLDING IN MY HAND.

WELL... I THINK IT IS.

YOU SEE NORMAN IS THE KIND OF SUPER-VILLAIN WHO NOT ONLY WANTS TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD, BUT WANTS TO MAKE SURE HE SCREWS UP MY LIFE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE WHILE DOING IT.

CAN'T TELL YOU HOW MANY TIMES I'VE WATCHED THAT GUY DIE.

SOMEHOW... HE ALWAYS COMES BACK TO MAKE MY LIFE A LIVING HELL.

THIS TIME AROUND... LAST WEEK IN REAL TIME... HE WAS WORKING ON THIS WHOLE DRUGGING SLASH MIND-CONTROL THING.

HAD ME MASQUERADING AS THE GREEN GOBLIN WITHOUT MY KNOWING ABOUT IT.

I DID A LOT OF STUFF I'M NOT PROUD OF. PUT A REAL SCARE TO A LOT OF PEOPLE I CARE ABOUT.





THIS WAS ALL PART OF  
SOME CRAZY RIGHT-OUT-  
OF-STAR WARS IDEA  
NORMAN HAD ABOUT  
BRINGING ME OVER  
TO THE "DARK SIDE"...  
TURNING ME INTO  
HIS HEIR APPARENT.

THING IS, EVEN WITH MY  
HAVING BEATEN NORMAN  
AGAIN...

...IT'S HAD ME TURNED  
INSIDE OUT EVER SINCE.

HE TOUCHED ON A  
REAL TENDER SPOT  
OF MINE.

I NEVER REALLY  
KNEW MY REAL  
MOM AND DAD.



THEY WERE KILLED IN  
A PLANE CRASH WHEN  
I WAS JUST A KID.

GROWING UP, I  
COULDN'T ACCEPT  
THAT THEY COULD  
REALLY BE DEAD.

HOW COULD  
THEY BE?

HOW COULD I KNOW WHO  
I WAS IF I DIDN'T KNOW  
WHERE I CAME FROM?



MY MEMORIES OF THEM  
ARE STILL SO FUZZY.

ESPECIALLY  
MY DAD.

I DON'T REALLY KNOW  
IF I REMEMBER HIM  
AT ALL OR IF I'M JUST  
REMEMBERING THE  
STORIES AUNT MAY TOLD  
ME NIGHT AFTER NIGHT.



AFTER ALL THAT  
HAPPENED WITH  
NORMAN...

...AFTER ALL THE  
QUESTIONS  
HE RAISED...

...I'VE GOT  
TO KNOW.

I'VE GOT TO  
KNOW WHERE  
I CAME FROM.





MANHATTAN'S UPPER WEST SIDE...

COLUMBUS CIRCLE

EVEN WITH THE CURRENT DEVELOPMENT TRENDS, THERE ARE STILL SOME SLICES OF WHAT USED TO BE REAL NEIGHBORHOODS LEFT IN THE CITY.



THIS IS ONE OF THEM.

OLD MAN FRENZETTI OPENED HIS CIGAR SHOP IN A TIME BEFORE CIGARS WERE THE "IN" THING.

BEFORE SUPER-MODELS POSED ON GLOSSY MAGAZINE COVERS WITH CIGARS SMUGGLED IN FROM CUBA STUCK BETWEEN THEIR COLLAGEN-FILLED LIPS.

HE'S HAD HIS FAIR SHARE OF FAMOUS PEOPLE PASS THROUGH HIS DOORS... NICK FURY, THE THING, THAT SHORT HAIRY GUY FROM CANADA.

BUT TIMES ARE CHANGING.

AND FRENZETTI IS FILLING IT LIKE HIS TIME IS COMING TO AN END.



LOOK AT THIS?

THIS AIN'T NO NEIGHBORHOOD NO MORE.



ALMOST NONE OF US OLD TIMERS LEFT.

EVERYTHING'S STARBUCKS AND GUCCI. HARDLY ANY NATIVE NEW YORKERS LEFT ALIVE.



JUST A BUNCH OF FARM-FED REDNECKS WHO WANT A FANCY ADDRESS SO THEY CAN PRETEND THEIR DADDIES DON'T HAVE A BARBED WIRE COLLECTION BACK HOME IN NEBRASKA.



AND THE NEW BREED OF CRIMINAL...? IN THE OLD DAYS YOU DEALT WITH A BETTER CLASS. MEN OF HONOR. IT WAS THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS AND YOU KNEW IT.

NOW?



PHEW --!

WHAT THE --?

PEOPLE DON'T EVEN CLEAN UP AFTER THEIR MUTTS ANYMORE. THERE OUGHTTA BE A --



HEY? WHAT IS THIS?



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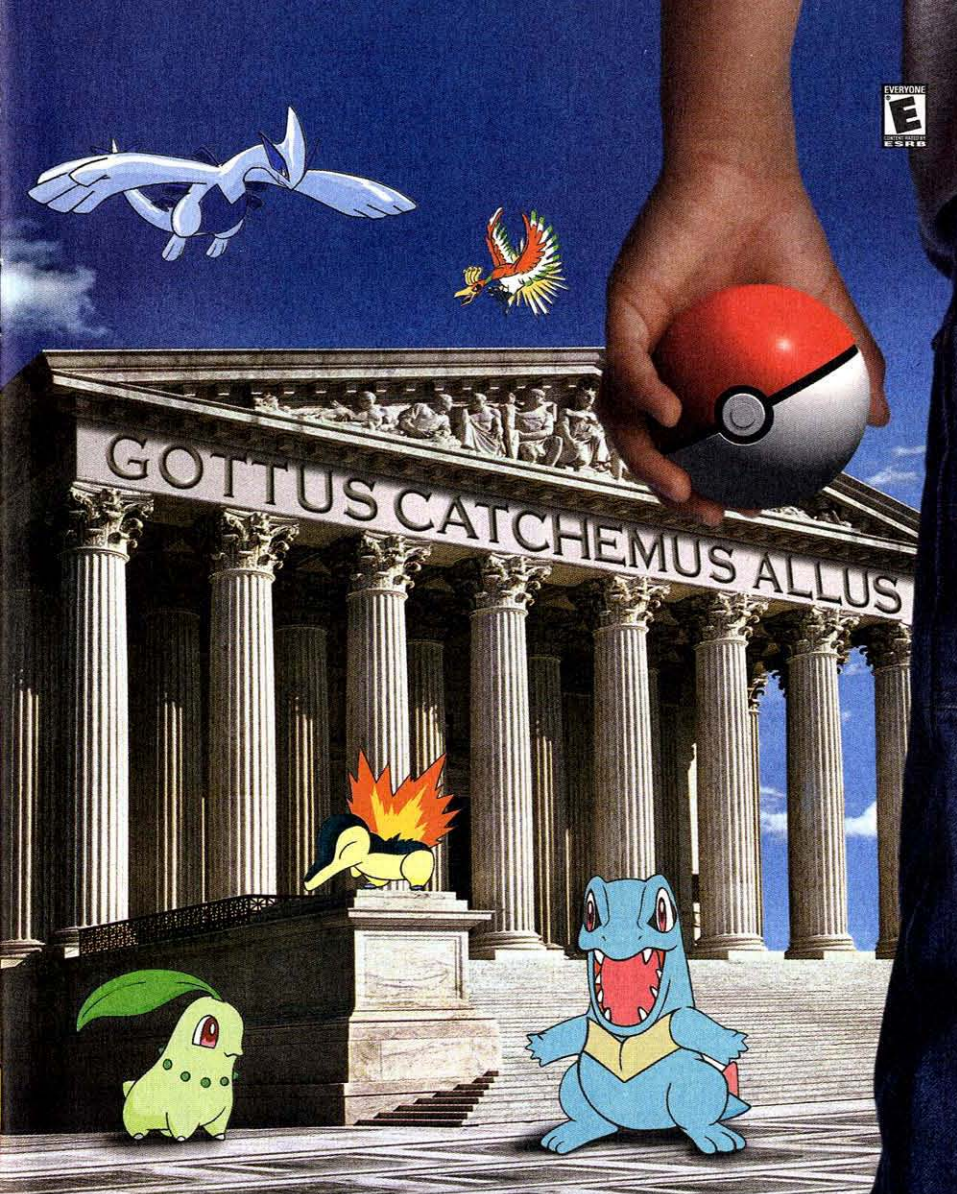
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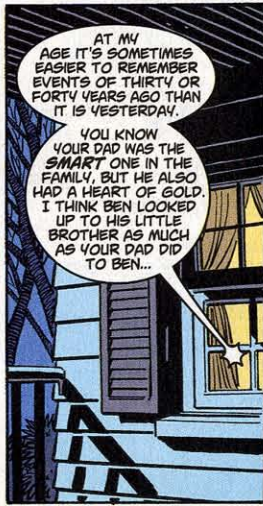
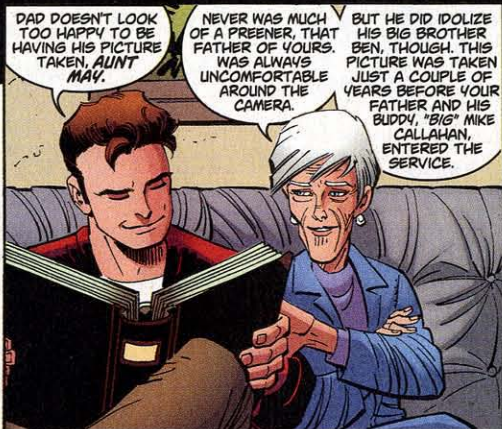
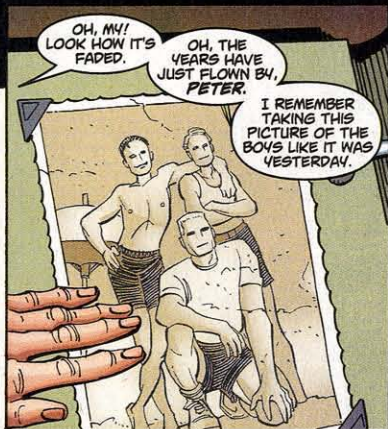


Gold Version • Silver Version





THE NEXT DAY IN  
FOREST HILLS,  
QUEENS...





LATER THAT NIGHT...

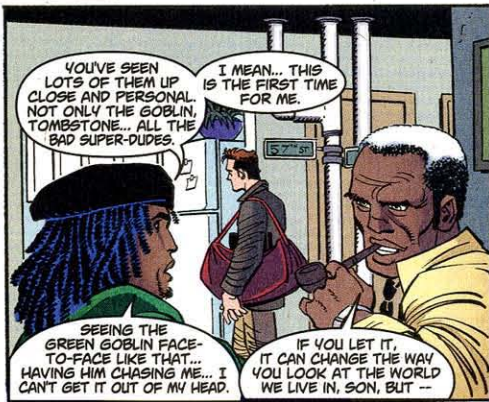
BOY! I NEVER HEARD EVEN HALF OF THOSE STORIES ABOUT MY DAD BEFORE.

MAKES ME REALIZE I REALLY NEVER DID KNOW HIM.

NOT AS ANYTHING MORE THAN A CHARACTER FROM THE OLD FAMILY STORIES.

NOT AS A MAN.  
GOT TO CHANGE THAT.







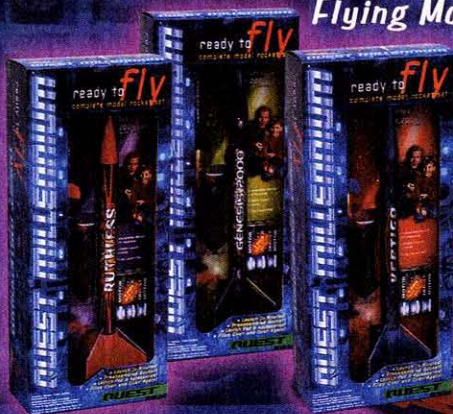
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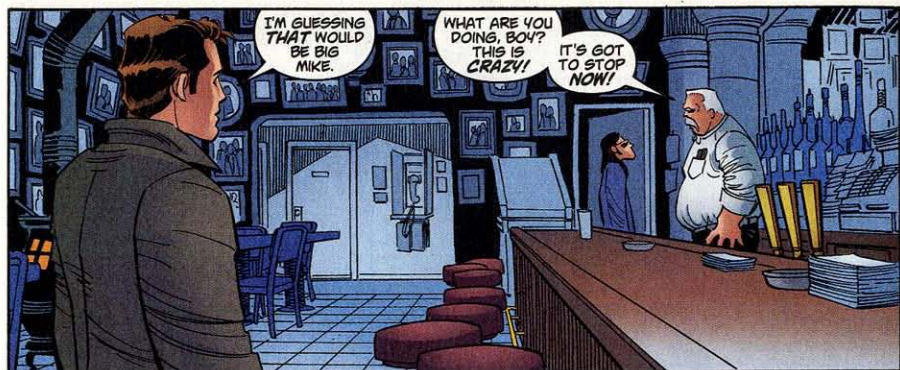
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NOT A DAY GOES BY THAT I DON'T THINK OF RICH... REST HIS SOUL.

I'M GLAD YOU LOOKED ME UP! REAL GLAD!

HOW'S THAT AUNT OF YOURS? THAT MAY PARKER... WHAT A PISTOL! MY FIRST CRUSH, YOU KNOW!

HAVE A SEAT, KID, AND LET'S SHOOT THE BREEZE.



DONNY!  
YOU DO WHAT I SAID AND BACK OFF!

I DON'T WANT TO HAVE THIS TALK ANOTHER TIME. NO MORE!



WHOA!  
WHAT'S GOING ON WITH THAT GUY?



WHEN HE JUST LOOKED OUR WAY MY SPIDER-SENSE WENT OFF BIG TIME.

DON'T LET DONNY GET TO YOU, KID. ALWAYS BEEN A LITTLE OFF.

MY ONLY SON. WHAT A WASTE!

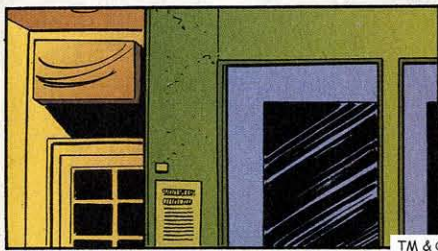
ANYWAY, PETEV, WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?

I WAS WONDERING... IF WE COULD TALK ABOUT MY DAD?



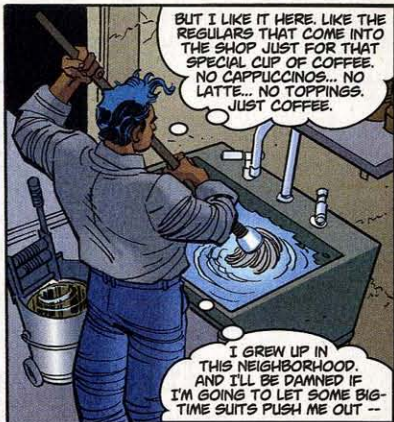
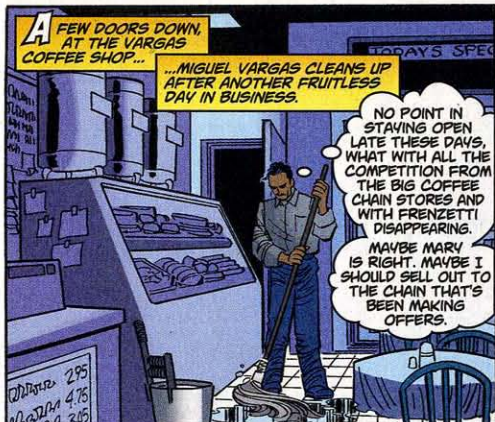
HA!

MIND? I COULD TELL YOU TALES THAT WOULD CURL YOUR HAIR 'TIL SOMEONE THOUGHT YOU WERE AN OSBORN!



LET ME TELL YOU 'BOUT THE TIME ME AND RICH GOT TOGETHER WITH SOME ROCKETTES AND A KEG A' BEER. WELL... IT WAS BEFORE HE MET YOUR MOM, OF COURSE, AND...







## ON SALE NEXT WEEK

## CAPTAIN AMERICA #38

The Super Soldier is determined to settle his feud with Protocide—even if he has to launch a one-man invasion of A.I.M.'s HQ! By Dan Jurgens!

## CAPTAIN MARVEL #11

The Psycho-Man has conquered the Microverse. Next stop: Earth! By Peter David & Chriscross!

## FANTASTIC FOUR: TWGCM #1

The House celebrates the FF's 40th Anniversary with a year-long, action-packed adventure! By Erik Larsen & a calvacade of creators!

## HULK/SENTRY

The Hulk has been smart, savage and everything in between. But did you know that he was also once a sidekick? By Paul Jenkins & Bill Sienkiewicz!

## INCREDIBLE HULK #23

What does the Chicago mob want with Mr. Fixit? And how does it connect to the embarrassing secret of Nobby Stiles? By Paul Jenkins & Kyle Hotz!

## IRON FIST/WOLVERINE #4

Will Danny Rand make the final sacrifice to save Tokyo? And if so, will Logan kick the snout out of Junzo Muto? By Jay Faerber & Jamal Igle!

## KILLRAVEN

Journey to the year 2020 and witness the return of the fighting-mad Martian-mauler, Killraven! By Joe Linsner!

## PETER PARKER: SPIDER-MAN #26

Do New York's Finest view Spider-Man as a hero or a menace? Find out in this stand-alone, street level story! By Paul Jenkins & Joe Bennett!

## THUNDERBOLTS #47

Songbird and Captain Marvel were an item in AVENGERS FOREVER, but will it be love at first fight? By Fabian Nicieza & Mark Bagley!

## ULTIMATE X-MEN #1

Hot on the heels of ULTIMATE SPIDER-MAN comes a fresh look at the world's #1 super team! By Mark Millar & Adam Kubert!

## UNCANNY X-MEN 2000

Amy Stringer is a mutant in danger—but can Professor X get her to make the right choice? By Scott Lobdell & Essad Ribic!

## X-MAN #72

Qabiri wants to "cleanse" our world, but Nate Grey is going to wrap his mop around his head! By Steven Grant & Ariel Olivetti!

## X-MEN #109

It's holiday time at the X-Mansion—as the 100-Page Monster strikes! By Chris Claremont & Leinil Yu!

MARVEL  
SPOTLIGHT

ULTIMATE X-MEN #1

# The Year's #1 Book Is Almost Here!

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MARVEL  
COM

Think the changes triggered by Joe Q. and Bill J. were limited to our comics? There's a revolution afoot, friends, and it's spread from the printed page to your computer screen.

For five years I worked in Marvel's Direct Sales department, spreading the Marvel message to the world. That meant creating our monthly catalog, ads, P.O.P. items and hooking outside sources (i.e. Diamond, Wizard, C&G, Entertainment Weekly, newspapers, etc.) up with materials for media coverage. In essence I became a funnel for all of the wild art and info flowing through The House. But a quick move to Marvel New Media means I can now cut out the middleman and speak directly with you at [marvel.com](http://marvel.com)!

If you haven't checked out our official site lately, you need to surf there pronto. The site's been totally revamped by Steve Milo, Sarah DeSanti, Jeff Youngquist and the entire New Media Machine with an eye on increasing content, easing navigation and decreasing download times. Now you'll find daily updates that take you behind the scenes with the following new features:

- **MARVEL SPOTLIGHT:** What's the coolest book of the week? We'll make our pick... and show you interior pages days before it hits the stands!
- **SNEAK PEEK:** Covers, interior art, character designs... you get to see anything cool we find in the editors' offices!
- **MARVEL BUZZ:** The House makes headlines on all of the comic sites... and we collect the news so you don't have to search all day!
- **SHOWBIZ:** Twice a week ace reporter Rob Alister brings you the latest from all of the Marvel projects currently in production... like *Spider-Man* and *Blade: Bloodhunt*!
- **MARVEL SEARCH ENGINE:** Type in a character's name... we'll deliver a cornucopia of content!
- **COMICS ON SALE:** Each month's offerings... now with more art and better organization!
- **POWER POLL:** Updated to let you speak out on the latest hot topics!
- **CHARACTER HANDBOOK:** Tons of new entries... now synched with key comics!
- **YOUR MAN @ MARVEL:** You wanted more reports from inside The House... and now he delivers every Monday, Wednesday and Friday!

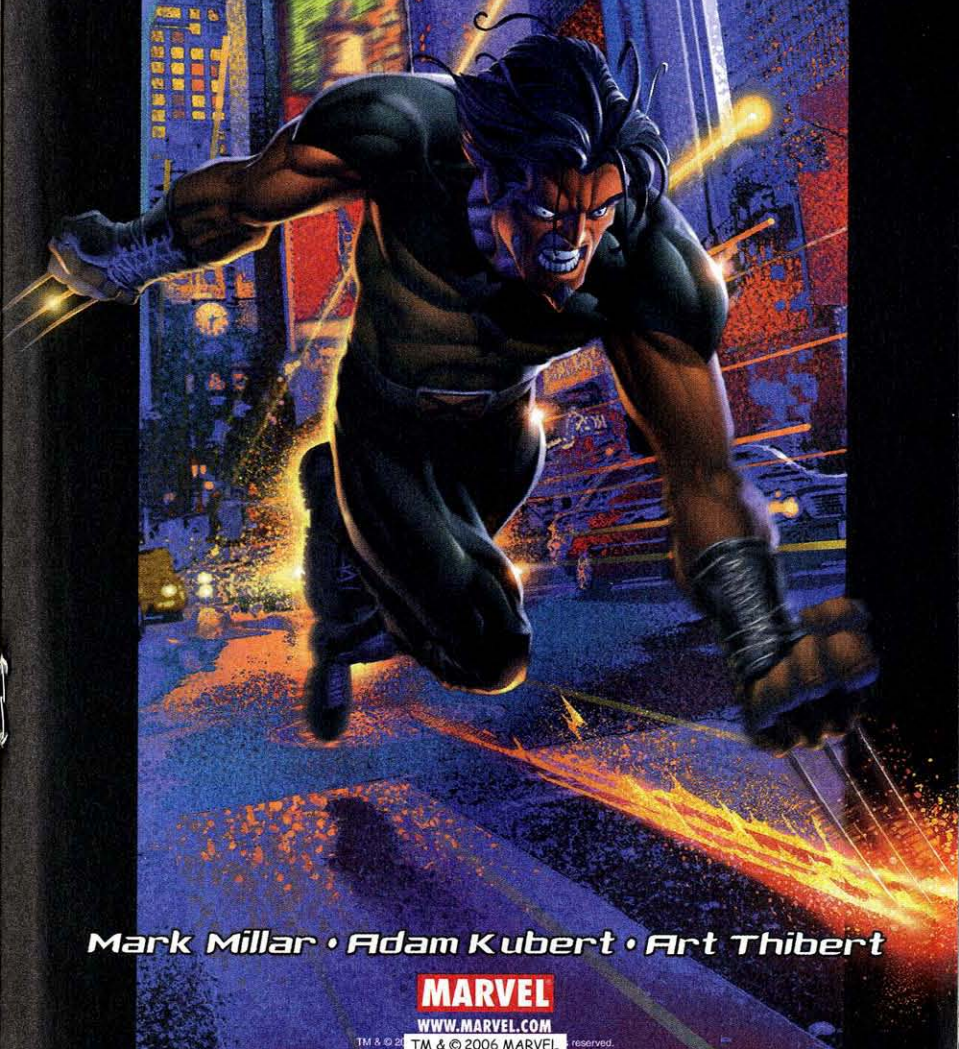
Daily insider updates. Tons of content. Quick download times. Viva la revolution!

Bill Rosemann  
Online Editorial Manager



ULTIMATE

# X-MEN



Mark Millar • Adam Kubert • Art Thibert

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"YOUR INSTRUCTORS HAVE BEEN  
MOST HELPFUL. THEIR POSITIVE  
ENCOURAGEMENT AND TIPS ON  
IMPROVING MY COMPOSITION HAVE  
DONE A WORLD OF GOOD."  
-VICTOR J. MILLER, SR, USA

"I WAS REALLY (AND I  
MEAN REALLY!) IMPRESSED  
AND HAPPY WITH THE QUALITY  
OF THE COURSES."  
-THOMAS DEROUAULT, FRANCE

"THANKS AGAIN... FOR PROVIDING  
A PERSON SUCH AS MYSELF WITH  
THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN."  
-DANIEL BELIC, AUSTRALIA

"I HAVE LEARNED MORE ABOUT  
PENCILING IN THIS SHORT TIME-  
THAN IN THE FIFTEEN YEARS  
I'VE BEEN TRYING TO BREAK  
INTO THIS INDUSTRY!"  
-SANDY CARRUTHERS, CANADA

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**COMING IN THE  
YEAR 2000:  
3 NEW COURSES!**





YOU WANT TO KNOW THE KIND OF MAN YOUR DAD WAS, KID?

I'LL GIVE YOU A PRIME EXAMPLE. IT GOES BACK MORE YEARS THAN I CAN REMEMBER.

"YOUR DAD AND I, WE WERE ON LEAVE FROM THE SERVICE. CAME BACK TO THE OLD STOMPING GROUNDS TO RAISE A LITTLE HELL, BUT MOSTLY TO RELAX.

"IT WAS NIGHTTIME... REALLY EARLY MORNING. WED HAD A PRETTY HEAVY NIGHT OF PARTIVING.

"THERE WE WERE... WALKING DOWN THE STREET AND MINDING OUR OWN BUSINESS WHEN WE HEARD AN ARGUMENT TAKING PLACE DOWN IN SOME ALLEY.

"COULDN'T HEAR WHAT WAS BEING SAID, BUT YOU COULD TELL THAT THINGS WERE GOING TO COME TO BLOWS.

"YOUR DAD... HE WANTS TO SEE WHAT'S GOING ON. ME... I WANT TO MIND MY OWN BUSINESS AND GO HOME AND GET SOME SLEEP SO WE CAN GET UP AND PARTY THE NEXT NIGHT.

"OF COURSE, AS ALWAYS, WE DID WHAT YOUR DAD SAID.

"WE GET HALFWAY DOWN THE ALLEY, WE CAN HEAR THE ARGUING LOUDER AND LOUDER, AND THEN THE FIRST BLOW.



"ASKS HIM TO BACK OFF.

"THE BIG GUY IS PRACTICALLY SNORTING FIRE AT THIS POINT, PETE. HE'S STARING DOWN AT YOUR DAD AND I COULD SWEAR HE'S GOING TO BITE HIS HEAD OFF.

"YOUR DAD JUST SMILES AND ASKS WHAT'S GOING ON. LIKE IT WAS NOTHING.

"THE GUY STARTS RANTING IN YOUR DAD'S FACE. SAYS THE LITTLE GUY IS HIS NO-GOOD ROTTEN SON AND THAT THIS IS NONE OF YOUR DAD'S BUSINESS.

"THEN, BEFORE I CAN DO ANYTHING TO STOP HIM, HE TAKES A SWING AT YOUR DAD.

"AND THEN I WATCHED THE MOST AMAZING THING I EVER SAW.

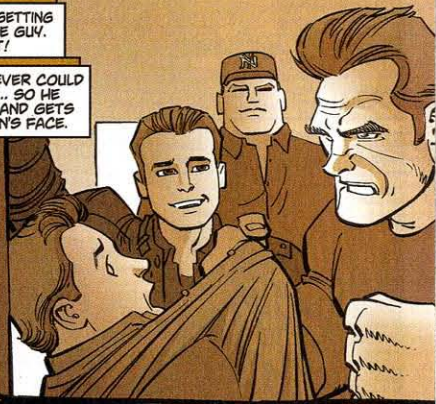
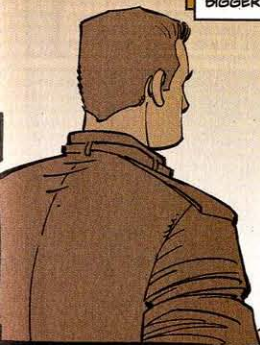






"THERE WAS THE BIGGEST GUY I EVER SAW GETTING READY TO BEAT THE HECK OUT OF A LITTLE GUY. THIS GUY WAS HUGE, PETE... I KID YOU NOT! BIGGER THAN ME!"

"YOUR DAD... HE NEVER COULD STAND A BULLY... SO HE WALKS RIGHT UP AND GETS IN THIS MOUNTAIN'S FACE."



"YOUR DAD... WHO WAS PRETTY GOOD IN A SCRAP FOR A LITTLE GUY... TAKES THE PUNCH."



"IT WAS A PRETTY GOOD BLOW, TOO... BUT YOUR DAD JUST SUCKS IT UP."

"I WANTED TO JUMP IN, BUT RICH STOPPED ME WITH A LOOK."

"HE WAS HURT, STAGGERED BACK, BUT HE DIDN'T TAKE A SHOT AT THE GUY. YOUR DAD KNEW A THING OR TWO, PETE. I'M SURE HE COULDN'T HAVE TAKEN THE BIG GUY OUT, BUT HE DIDN'T. INSTEAD..."

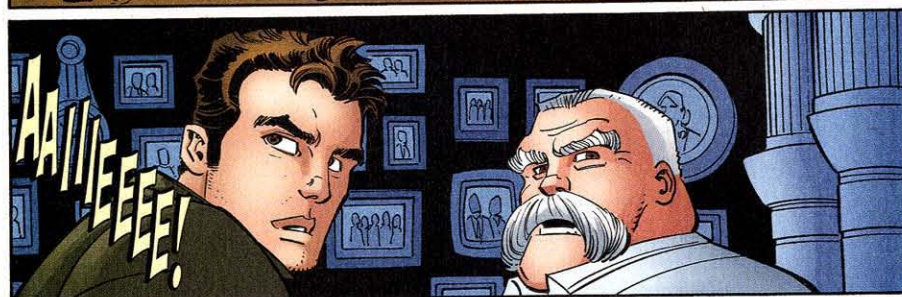
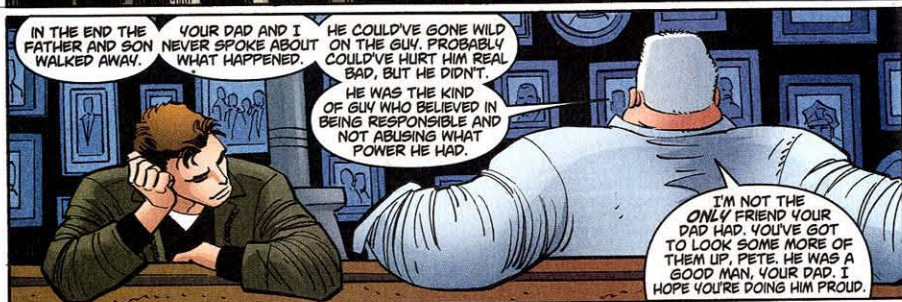


"HE LOOKED UP AT HIM AND ASKED, 'YOU THINK YOUR SON COULDN'T HAVE TAKEN THAT ONE?' HOW WOULD THAT HAVE MADE YOU FEEL? FEEL LIKE TALKING NOW?"

"THE GUY DROPPED HIS HANDS..."











Introducing TWIST-n-FILL™ Cherry goo in a watermelon twist.

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MIKE!  
WHAT IS THIS  
THING?

HELP  
ME!

FOR THE  
LOVE OF GOD,  
**HELP!**



IT'S OKAY, MIGUEL...  
I'M NOT GOING  
TO LET HIM HURT  
YOU!

NOT GOING TO LET  
HIM HURT ANYONE  
ANymore!

IT ENDS  
TONIGHT --!  
HUH?!



**KRAK**



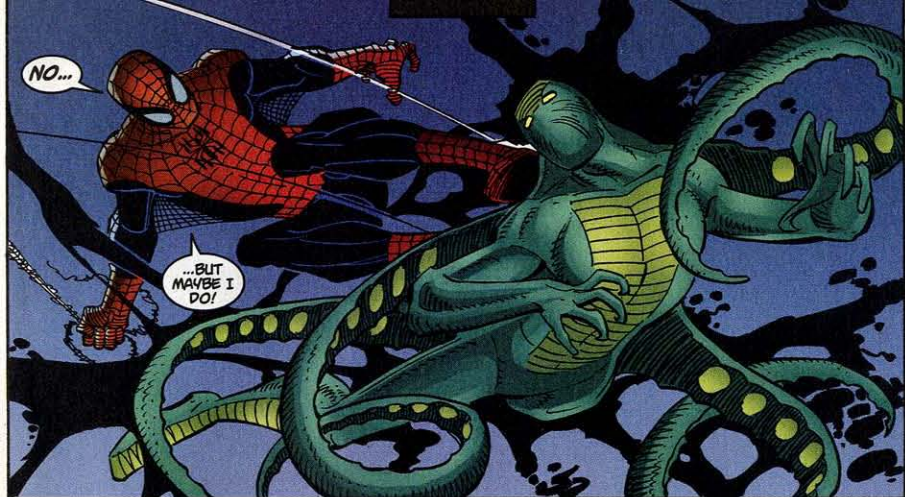
IS THAT RIGHT,  
BIG MIKE  
CALLAHAN?

YOU GOING TO MAKE  
EVERYTHING  
BETTER?

YOU THINK  
YOU GOT IT IN  
YOU TO FACE THE  
POWER OF...

**THE SQUID?**





NO...

...BUT  
MAYBE I  
DO!



HOW ABOUT  
WE GIVE IT  
A TRY?

THE SQUID... THE  
SQUID... I RECOGNIZE  
YOU FROM...

WAIT A  
MINUTE...DIDNT  
I GO UP AGAINST  
YOU A COUPLE  
OF WEEKS  
AGO?

YEAH! IT  
WAS THAT NIGHT THAT  
YOU COSTUMED GUYS  
WERE CRAWLING OUT OF  
THE WOODWORK,  
RIGHT? \*

THE SQUID?  
WHAT... YOU DONT  
REALIZE THAT ANIMAL  
SUPER-VILLAIN NAMES  
ARE PASSE? ESPECIALLY  
SLIMY SEA CREATURE  
MONIKERS! OH, BOY!

I'VE BEEN  
THINKING OF  
CHANGING MY NAME  
TO SOMETHING  
A LITTLE MORE  
MILLENNIAL.

YEAH...  
THAT'S IT...  
MILLENNIAL MAN.  
HE FIGHTS WITH  
THE POWER OF A  
MILLION YEARS.

\* See Peter Parker  
#16. -- Yeah! Ralf.



YUCK!

PLEASE TELL ME  
YOU MADE THIS  
STUFF UP IN A  
LABORATORY AND  
THAT IT'S NOT A  
MUTANT POWER OR  
SOMETHING.

I DONT  
EVEN WANT TO  
THINK ABOUT WHERE  
IT'S COMING FROM.



**SPIDER-MAN!**

I REMEMBER  
YOU, TOO!

YOU HURT  
MY GIRLFRIEND,  
**MS. FORTUNE.**  
SHE... SHE...  
WOULDN'T SEE ME  
AFTER THAT  
NIGHT.

AND  
IT'S YOUR  
FAULT!





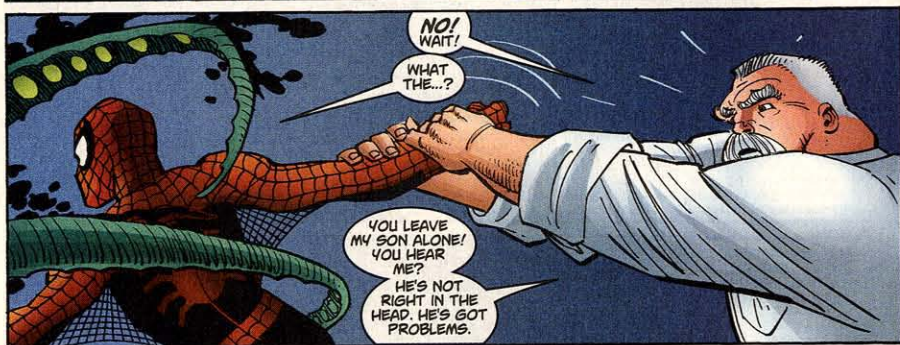
WHAT ARE  
THE ODDS,  
HUH?

SEEMS LIKE  
I RUN IN TO EVERY  
LAME SUPER-VILLAIN  
WITH A LITTLE POWER  
AND A LOT OF  
SPANDEX THESE  
DAYS!



IT'S  
REALLY TIME  
FOR A  
CHANGE!

OKAY,  
SQUIDDY,  
TIME FOR THIS  
ENCOUNTER  
TO COME TO  
AN END!



NO!  
WAIT!

WHAT  
THE...?

YOU LEAVE  
MY SON ALONE!  
YOU HEAR  
ME?

HE'S NOT  
RIGHT IN THE  
HEAD. HE'S GOT  
PROBLEMS.



ACK! OH...  
LIKE... I NEED...  
THIS!



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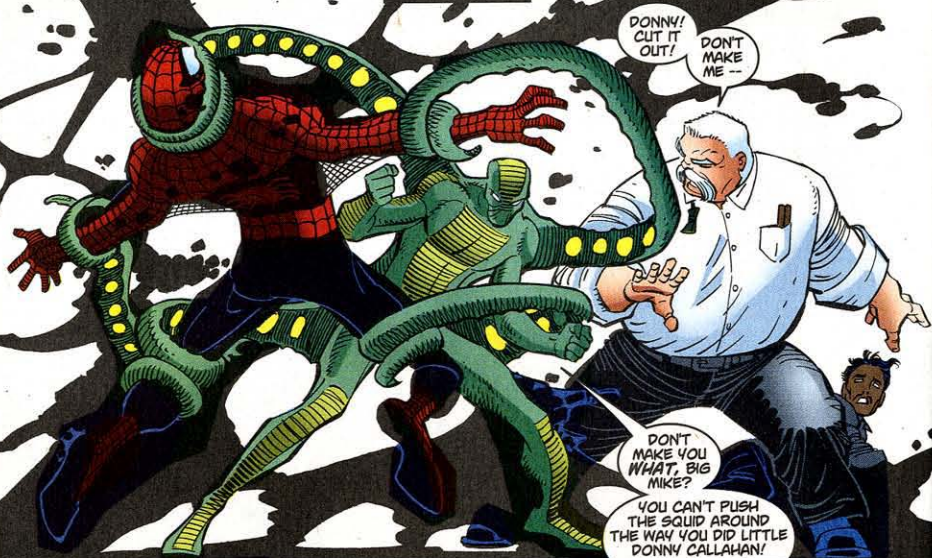
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DONNY!  
CUT IT  
OUT!

DON'T  
MAKE  
ME --

DON'T  
MAKE YOU  
WHAT, BIG  
MIKE?

YOU CAN'T PUSH  
THE SQUID AROUND  
THE WAY YOU DID LITTLE  
DONNY CALLAHAN!



SO HELP ME,  
DONNY, I'LL...  
I'LL...

YOU'RE  
RIGHT.



GUESS I'VE JUST BEEN  
HANDLING IT WRONG ALL  
THESE YEARS AND NEVER  
COULD SEE IT.

I DON'T KNOW  
WHAT TO DO ANYMORE,  
DONNY. I'VE TRIED  
MY BEST.



TRIED TO BE  
A GOOD FATHER  
AFTER YOUR MOM  
DIED, BUT I JUST  
DIDN'T DO A GOOD  
ENOUGH JOB, I  
GUESS.

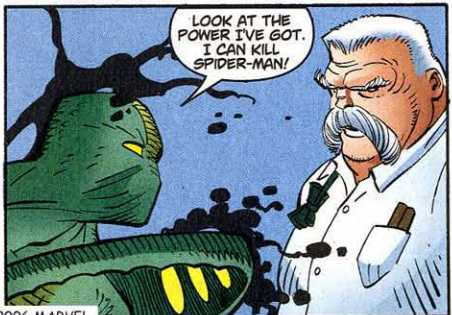


YOU ALWAYS  
FELL IN WITH THE  
WRONG CROWD. ALWAYS  
LET YOURSELF BE  
LED. STREET GANGS  
AND NOW...

...THIS  
WHATEVER IT IS  
YOU'VE BECOME.  
WHY DID YOU LET  
THEM DO THIS TO  
YOU, DONNY?



LAURA IS MY GIRLFRIEND. SHE SAID  
WE DIDN'T HAVE TO BE PUSHED AROUND  
ANYMORE. NOT BY OUR PARENTS...  
NOT BY ANYONE!



LOOK AT THE  
POWER I'VE GOT.  
I CAN KILL  
SPIDER-MAN!



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☐ **IRM** Iron Man  
☐ **MKN** Marvel Knights  
☐ **THO** Thor  
☐ **BLT** Thunderbolts

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☐ **CAB** Cable  
☐ **DDP** Deadpool  
☐ **GAM** Gambit  
☐ **GEN** Generation X  
☐ **MTX** Mutant X  
☐ **XME** Uncanny X-Men  
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☐ **XFO** X-Force  
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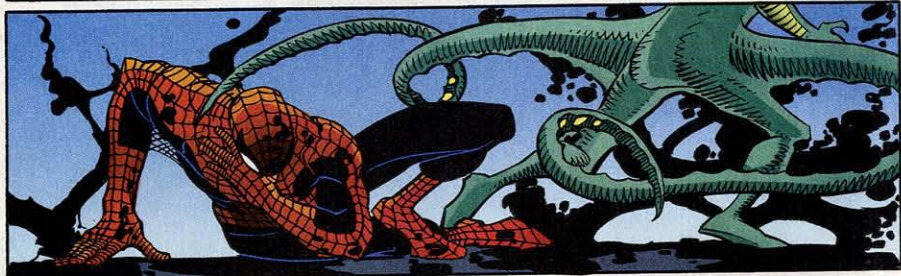
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AND SPIDER-MAN BEGINS TO TALK.

LATE INTO THE NIGHT.

UNTIL THE SUN RISES THE FOLLOWING MORNING.





# THE SPIDER-SLAYER WEB

LARA CASTLE  
ASSISTANT  
EDITOR

RALPH  
MACCHIO  
EDITOR

JOE  
QUESADA  
CHIEF

Dear Spider's Web,

It was very nice seeing Erik Larsen in these pages again. These last three issues had an energy all to themselves, and it's very refreshing. Speaking of refreshing, it was also extremely nice seeing the black costume on Spider-Man again. That was always a favorite of mine, and seeing it on Venom just isn't the same. It was nice to see Spidey in it again.

I was very surprised by the death of Eddie Brock's ex-wife in AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #19. I have to say, I didn't see that one coming at all. I'm not upset in the least, because it was an interesting story point that furthered the plot, and it cleared out some deadwood in the process. That, and it gives Venom a new reason to not like Spider-Man.

As for issues #20 and #21, it's good to see the wrapping up of old subplots. While it's interesting to wonder if J. Jonah Jameson knows who Spider-Man is, it's only fun for so long. It's nice to see this tied up. Also, the Spider-Slayers are back, and it's great to see them drawn by Erik. This has been a great three issues, and I'm looking forward to the Senator Ward story conclusion, and the return of John Romita, Jr!

Daron Jensen  
Bourbonnais, IL  
daronjensen@hotmail.com

We're pleased that you enjoyed our little walk down memory lane so much, Daron. It was indeed nice to have Mr. Larsen back in these pages, even if it was only for three issues. We'd love to have the man back any time, and since he seems to be doing quite a bit of work for this company at the moment, that time could come pretty darn soon.

Hey, people,

I think I have it. This issue really served as an eye-opener for me on a personal level. I think that I finally see the difference (or perhaps what's missing) in these new Spider-books: Peter's winning. Case in point: he defeats the ultimate (yes, that's sarcasm) Spider-Slayer in one page. Hmm, big deal? In the issue before this one, we got to see his first encounter with a Spider-Slayer, and it took him the whole issue to figure out a way to defeat it. But the Smythes have been improving all their models, right? Guess not, because all Peter has to do is turn around and hit it a few times! Now, I know that it's implied on the next page that Peter was in a titanic struggle with the "Ultimate Slayer," but come on. He has to outwit the others, not outfight them. Bad guys shouldn't be subtle!

So, what's my point, you ask? In earlier issues (and you know the ones I'm talking about), we weren't sure that Peter was going to win. They were as much about him growing up as they were about him saving the day. Now, we only see Peter saving the day. Peter cleans everyone's

clocks now. What's up with that? Did he get dumber since he lost his job at Tricorp? Can't he outwit anyone anymore? And don't try to tell me that realizing the "Ultimate Slayer" was the focal point was outwitting Smythe, 'cause I don't buy it. It was just common sense, plain and simple.

While I'm on the subject of Peter growing up, how about this: Gwen's death shakes him to his core, just like Uncle Ben's, but MJ dies, and he opens a box and he's done with it? He missed the funeral, right? Have we seen him go to her grave at all? It's like she meant nothing to him. One would think that a death like that would be a cornerstone in the Spider-Man universe, but instead, it's barely a subplot. (This can only mean one of two things: you have bad writers, which I doubt, or she's not really dead.) The people around Peter are who make him what he is, but instead, we just see him beating on baddies. Are we doomed to see Peter stay a shadow of his former self? I hope not.

I'm sure you've had enough of my criticism by this point. I even want to tell me to shut up. It's not that the comics are bad, by any means. It's just that they could be better. I think you guys want that, and I'm sure the fans want it. Thanks for listening, and keep up the good work.

Mark Parisi  
via the Internet

Thanks for writing, Mark. We'd love to answer your complaints point-by-point but that would get in the way of insulting Ralf down below, so we hope you'll understand. After all, the two things aren't completely unconnected, if you catch our drift.

Dear Spider's Web,

Did I miss something? What exactly did Ralf do to earn such a record of incompetence? I have to admit, the constant wisecracks are starting to get at my funny bone, but I'd still like to be cleared up on the matter. The way I see it, either you guys'll see that you're teasing him for a truly petty reason (which I doubt...), or the next time you slam him, I'll get the full gist of the joke and bust a button laughing. Until then, I'll just sit here reading (and enjoying) my Spidey comics.

Nina Marie  
Phoenix, AZ

Some of you may have assumed that, because this is Ralf's final issue of AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, we would dispense with the usual insults, japes and jibes, in favor of something poignant and respectful. Let us assure you, that is not the case.

There seems to be a conventional wisdom shared by the contributors to this page that we are somehow only fooling around, poking fun at a well-liked and well-respected

colleague; that while we may poke fun at personal flaws and foibles, we do it out of an affectionate regard; that the character of "Ralf" is somehow a gross and grotesque exaggeration of reality. Let us assure you, that is not the case.

Many have assumed that we were stretching the truth a bit when we joked that Ralf threatened to exhaust our supply of rare and precious no-prizes; that the multitude of continuity errors and glitches were somehow as easily explained away as we made them seem in our pal, glib responses. Let us assure you, that is not the case.

Certainly we were being hyperbolic when we spoke of Ralf's attendance. Could any professional manage to hold down employment with a track record like that, you may have wondered? Surely we were in just when we suggested that Ralf's usual method for avoiding the traffic on the George Washington Bridge is to delay coming into work until most people are heading home. Let us assure you, that is not the case.

So just in case there was any room for doubt, in case there was any one reader out there laboring under the misconception that "he couldn't really be that bad, could he?"—we would like to set the record straight once and for all. We do not like Ralf. We do not respect him. And we certainly wouldn't want anyone to be left with the impression that we do.

And just in case you find yourself wondering if this "final insult" is really just one long, grandiose expression of fondness disguised as an insult, a veiled paean of gratitude to an underappreciated colleague by an editorial staff that would sooner take the opportunity to thank and salute him if only they weren't too cynical and emotionally stunted to express the sentiment...

...Let us assure you, unequivocally, that is most definitely not the case.

## NEXT ISSUE:

THE BATTLE WITH THE GREEN GOBLIN MAY BE OVER, BUT ITS AFTERMATH HAS LEFT PETER QUESTIONING SPIDER-MAN'S ROLE. PLUS, HOW COULD SOMETHING AS SIMPLE AS RESCUING A KITTEN FROM A TREE LAND SPIDEY IN THE MIST OF AN ALL-OUT A.I.M. ASSAULT? WE DON'T KNOW, BUT WE'RE BETTING THAT HOWARD, JOHN AND SCOTT DO, SO COME ON BACK HERE NEXT MONTH FOR THE ANSWER. ONE THING'S FOR SURE RALF WON'T BE HERE TO MESS IT UP!

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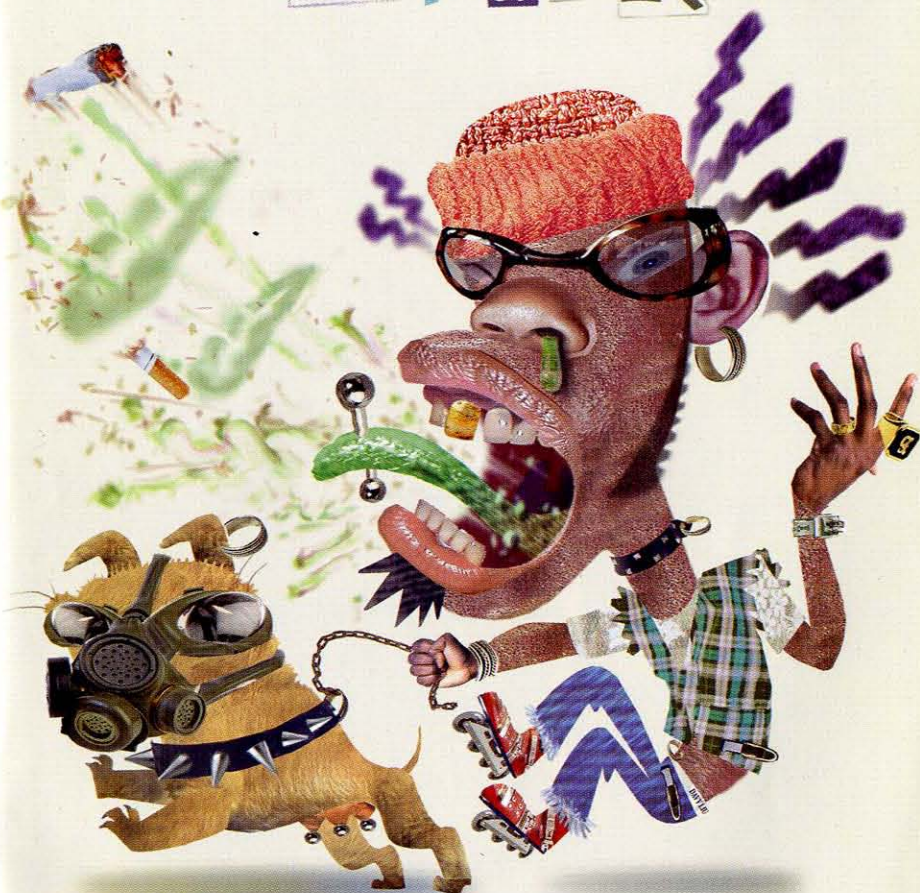
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