

MARVEL
comics

THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN



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CODE
A
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PART
4
OF

BRAK FROM THE
EDGE



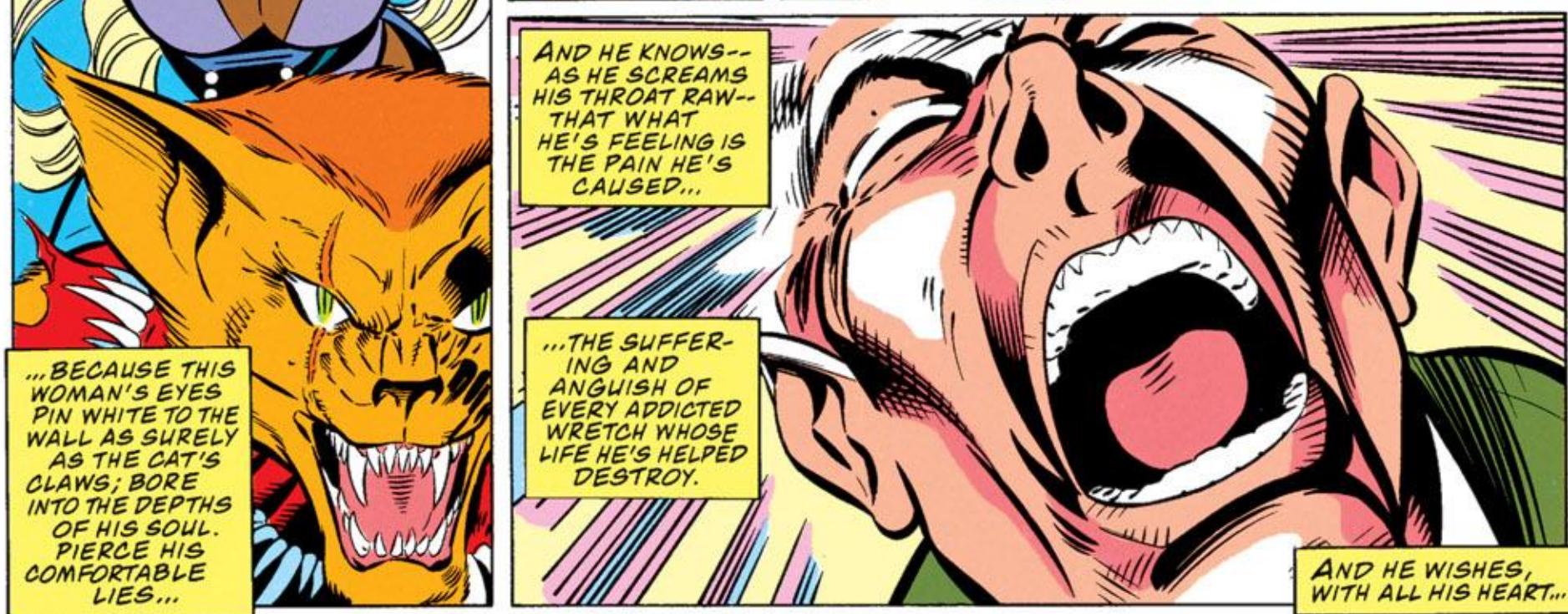
THE PUMA™

RETURNS--
MORE VIOLENT AND
BRUTAL THAN EVER!

Stan Lee
PRESENTS: THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN®







...THAT THE CAT HAD
KILLED HIM, AFTER ALL.



I always thought that,
when you came back to
the house you grew up
in, it was supposed to
seem smaller.

SO HOW COME
I'M the one
who feels small?

How come I
feel dwarfed
by everything
around me?
Dwarfed...

...and lonely...

...and so
very
afraid.



BACK FROM THE EDGE • PART ONE:

OUTCASTS!

J. M.
DEMATTEIS • MARK
WRITER PENCILER

LARRY
MAHLSTEDT • BILL
INKER OAKLEY
LETTERER

BOB
SHAREN
COLORIST

DANNY
FINGEROTH • TOM
EDITOR DEFALCO
ED. IN CHIEF

Why am I here, anyway? What do I think
I'm going to find crawling through the
shadows of AUNT MAY'S house?

Certainly not her. She's a few blocks from
here, in Forest Hills Hospital... dying. And
this house is empty of everything...

...except the
ghosts of
the past.

MY past.

NO--this ISN'T my past. It's
HIS. PETER PARKER'S.

The truth of the matter is...
after my ordeal at Ravencroft...*

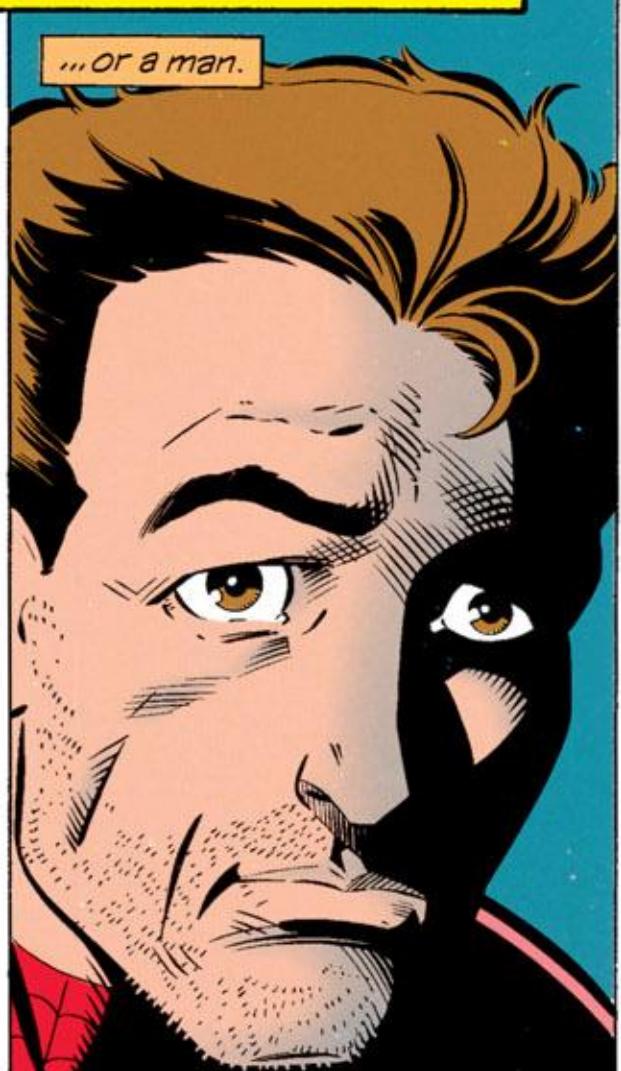
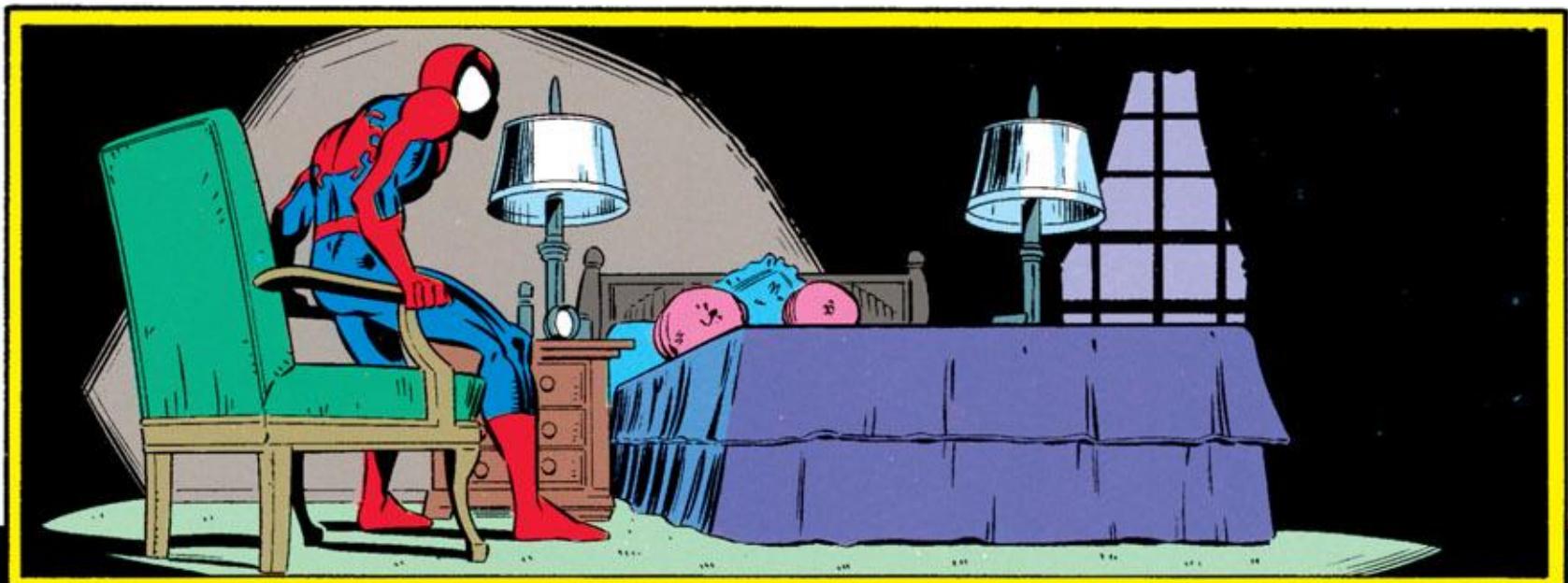
...I don't know
WHO I am: a
mask or a face.
A Spider...

And as far as
I'm concerned,
Parker is
dead. Dead
and buried.

I'm just
the mask
now. Just--
the SPIDER.

Or am I?

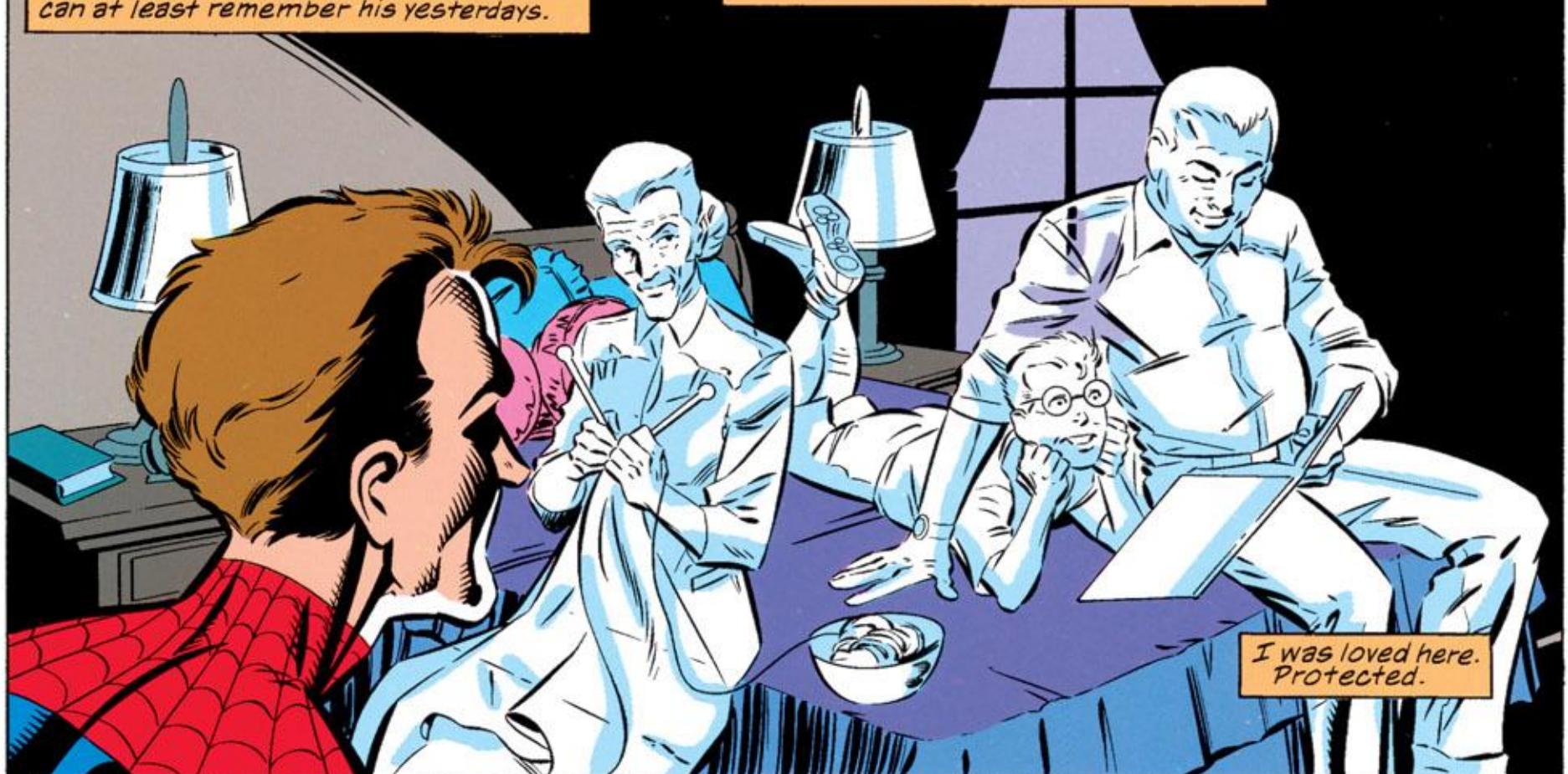
*IN LAST MONTH'S "POWER
AND RESPONSIBILITY"
Crossover--DANNY



Maybe THAT'S why I'm here.

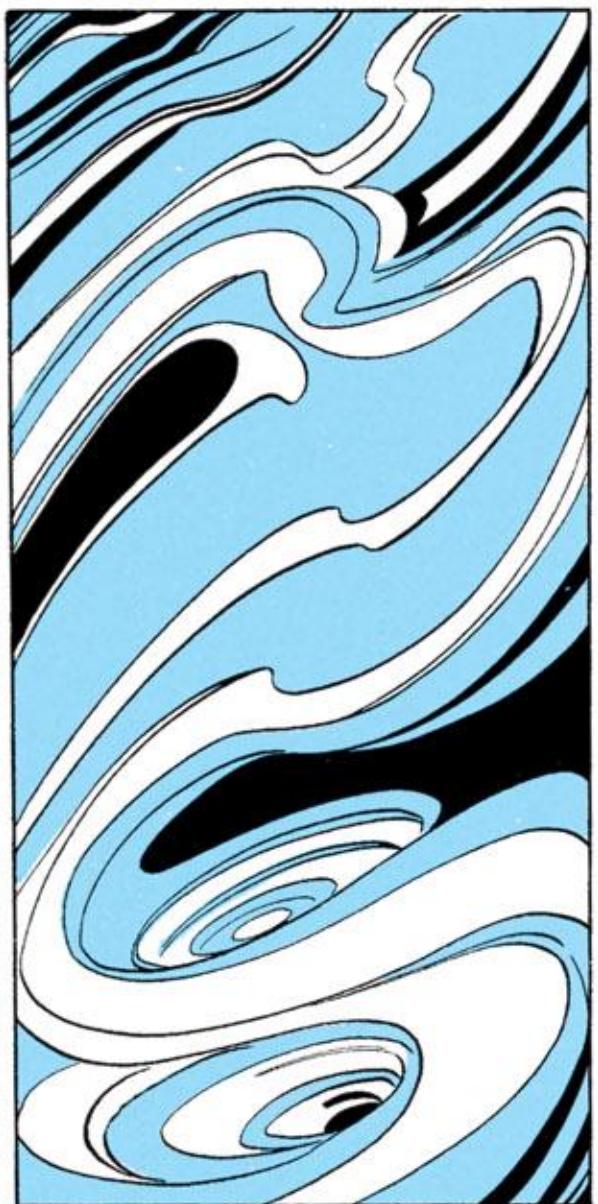
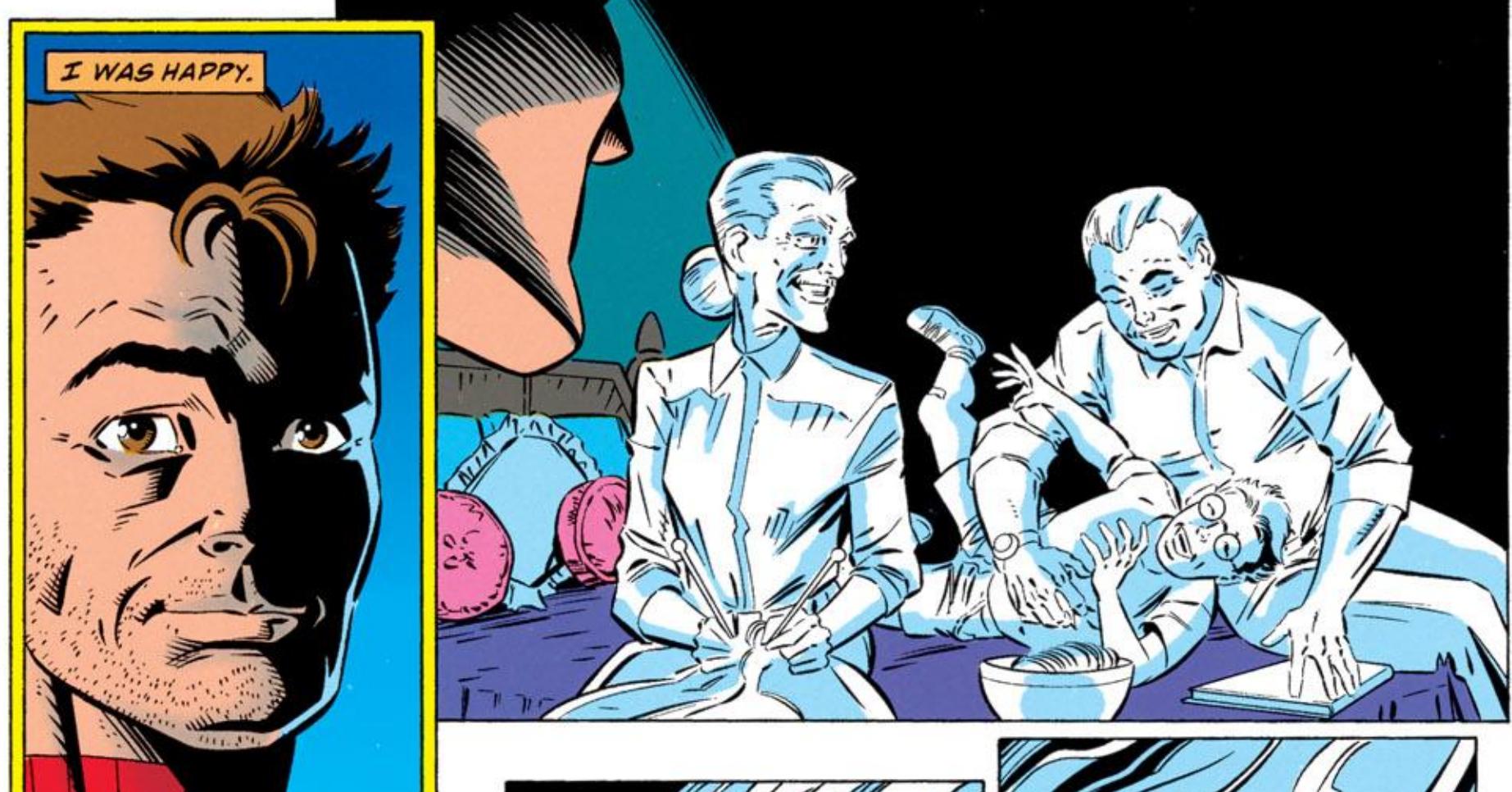
I can't deal with Parker's life, Parker's world as it is today. But here... I can at least remember his yesterdays.

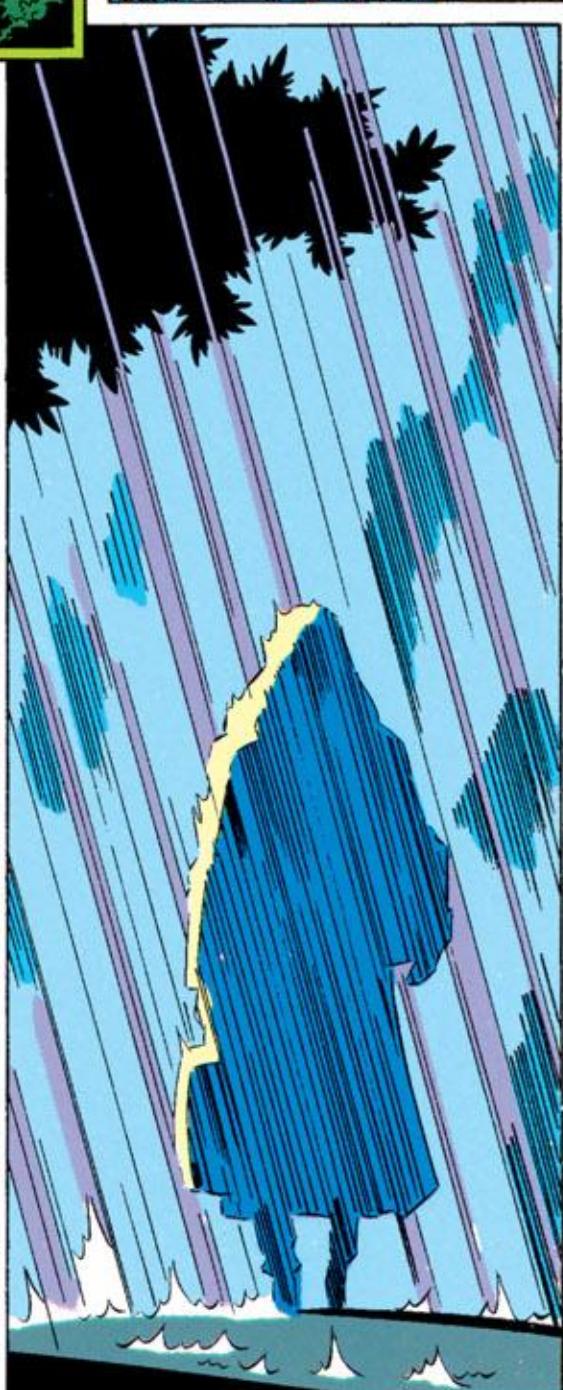
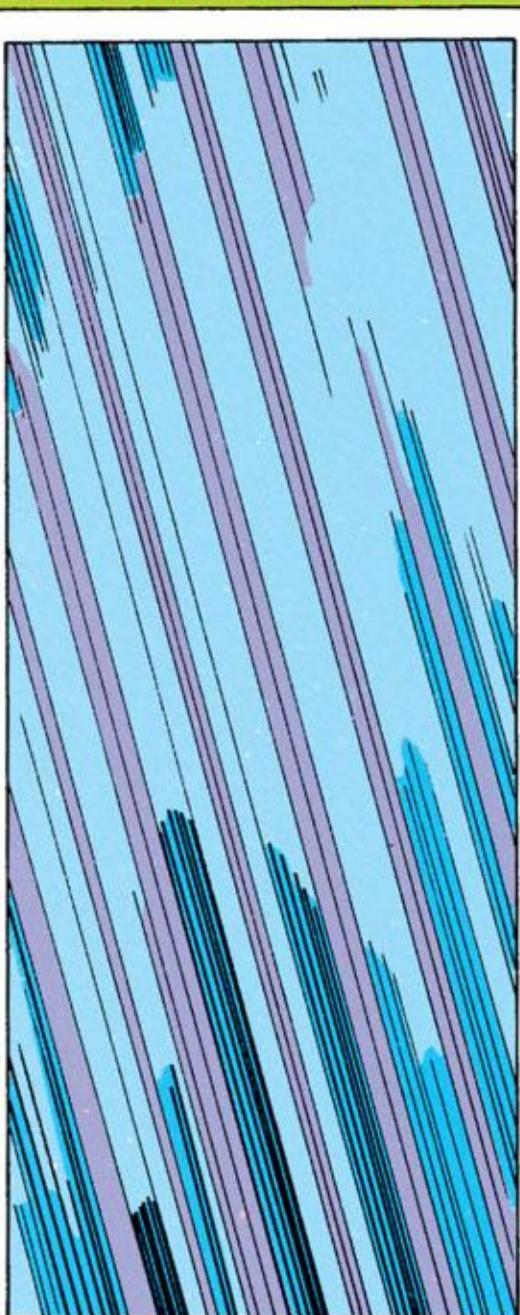
As hard as it was for me, growing up without parents-- there were a lot of wonderful times in this house with Aunt May and Uncle Ben.



I was loved here.
Protected.

I WAS HAPPY.





IT'S NOT A WORD
MARY JANE
WATSON-PARKER
WAS EVER VERY
COMFORTABLE WITH.

FOR SOME PEOPLE,
THE PLACE THEY
GREW UP IN HOLDS
WARM MEMORIES:
MOMENTS TO BE
HIDDEN IN THE
SECRET CORNERS
OF THE HEART AND
TREASURED,
PROTECTED,
THROUGHOUT THE
YEARS.

BUT MARY JANE RAN
AWAY FROM HOME,
FAMILY, AND MEMORIES
COLD AS ICE A LONG
TIME AGO.

SO WHY, SHE WONDERS,
STANDING -- FAR TOO
LONG -- OUTSIDE THE
DOOR OF HER SISTER'S
HOUSE, HAVE I COME
BACK TO PITTSBURGH?

BUT IT'S TOO LATE. HER HAND HAS
KNOCKED, ALMOST WITHOUT HER
REALIZING IT. AND THE DOOR HAS
BEEN OPENED...

...ON THE
PAST.

WHY NOT TURN AND
RUN; GET ON THE
NEXT PLANE TO NEW
YORK AND--

MARY
JANE--?

I WAS... IN
THE NEIGHBORHOOD
AND I THOUGHT--

THAT IS...
I, UM... ah...

Y'THINK
MAYBE I
CAN COME
IN?



BOTH WERE ONCE HUMAN. BOTH HAD FAMILIES, JOBS, LIVES OF RICHNESS AND COMPLEXITY.



NOW, NOCTURNE AND PUMA MOVE THROUGH SHADOWS, OVER ROOFTOPS, LIVE IN ABANDONED BUILDINGS AND COLLAPSED TUNNELS.

BUT AT LEAST THEY HAVE EACH OTHER... MOVING TOGETHER IN A GRACEFUL DANCE; THE BEAST ALWAYS AT THE READY, WAITING TO RESPOND TO HIS MISTRESS'S EVERY COMMAND.

THE MISTRESS ALWAYS THERE WITH A SOFT LOOK OR COMFORTING TOUCH, TO EASE THE MONSTER'S PAIN.

BUT TONIGHT THEIR FOCUS ISN'T ON EACH OTHER--BUT ON A TORMENTED SOUL WHOSE PSYCHIC CRY HAS BEEN CALLING TO NOCTURNE FOR WEEKS NOW.



A CRY THAT HAS, AT LONG LAST...



BUT, WITH TIME, WITH PRACTICE, SHE HAS BEEN ABLE TO MASTER THIS NEW WAY OF HEARING--OF BEING.



HE'S HERE.

THE CAT, SENSING HER ALARM, GROWS TENSE, GROWLING SOFTLY, SNIFING THE AIR. AND THE SCENT OF THE MAN BELOW MAKES PUMA SUDDENLY HUNGRY...

...FOR BLOOD.

I run and run and run, trying to put as much distance between myself and Parker as I can...

SHE CAN FEEL HIS TORMENTED SOUL RADIATING THROUGH THE WALLS OF THIS OLD BUILDING...

...WITH AN INTENSITY SO GREAT SHE ALMOST TURNS AND RUNS.

...RAVENOUSLY HUNGRY...

Can't keep away, can I?

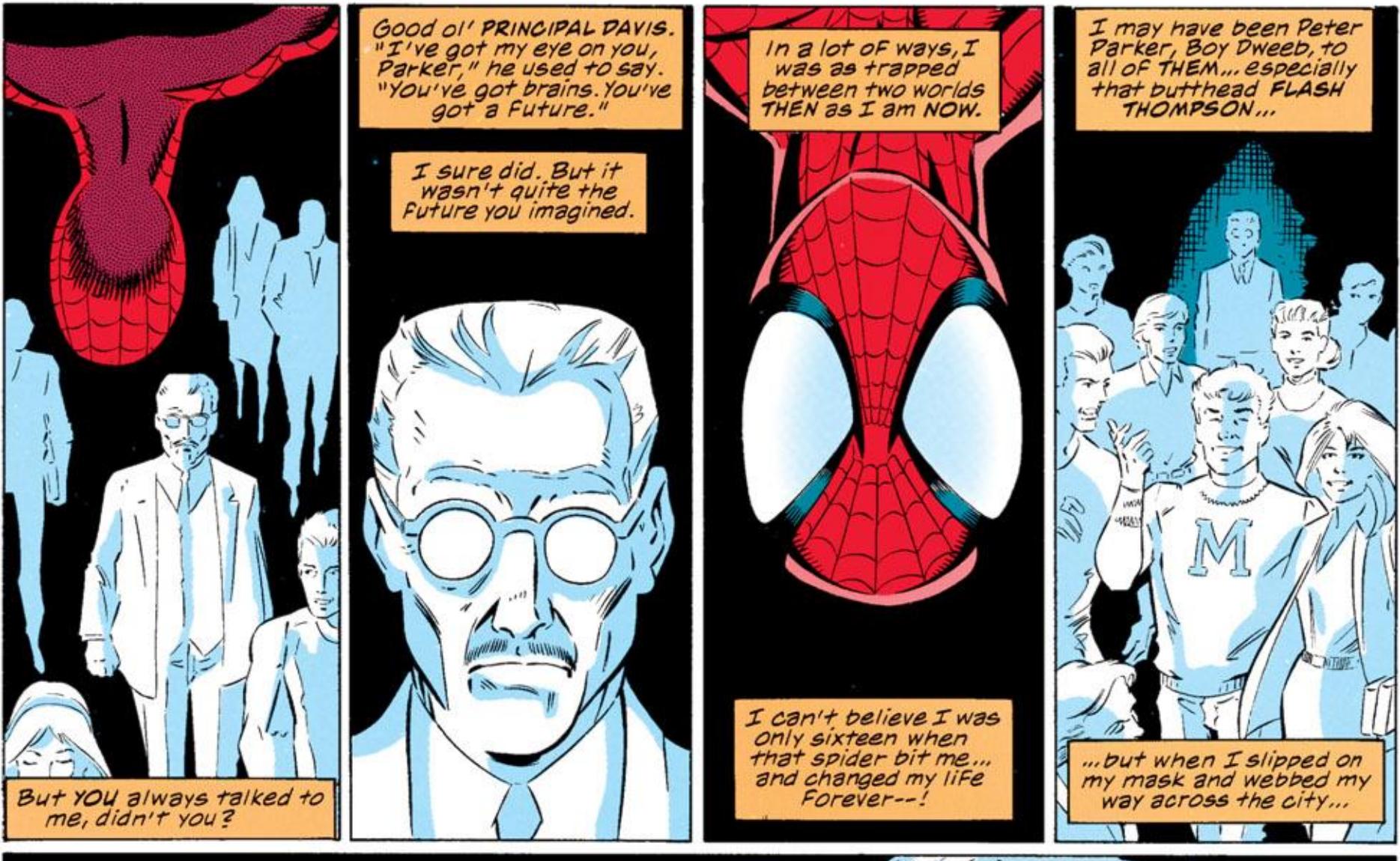
...and end up chasing more ghosts.

MIDTOWN HIGH.

I remember my first day of classes like it was yesterday. I felt so grown-up! I couldn't believe I was actually in High School!

The Seniors seemed so old. And I felt like a gawky little nerd.

I think I was here for two months before another kid even TALKED to me.





...THE DEVILS COME SWARMING OUT OF THE SHADOWS?!

PLIMA!

Another one I watched die:
brought down in a
hail of bullets.*

ROWWR

* IN SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #193.
--DANNY

SHIRAAK

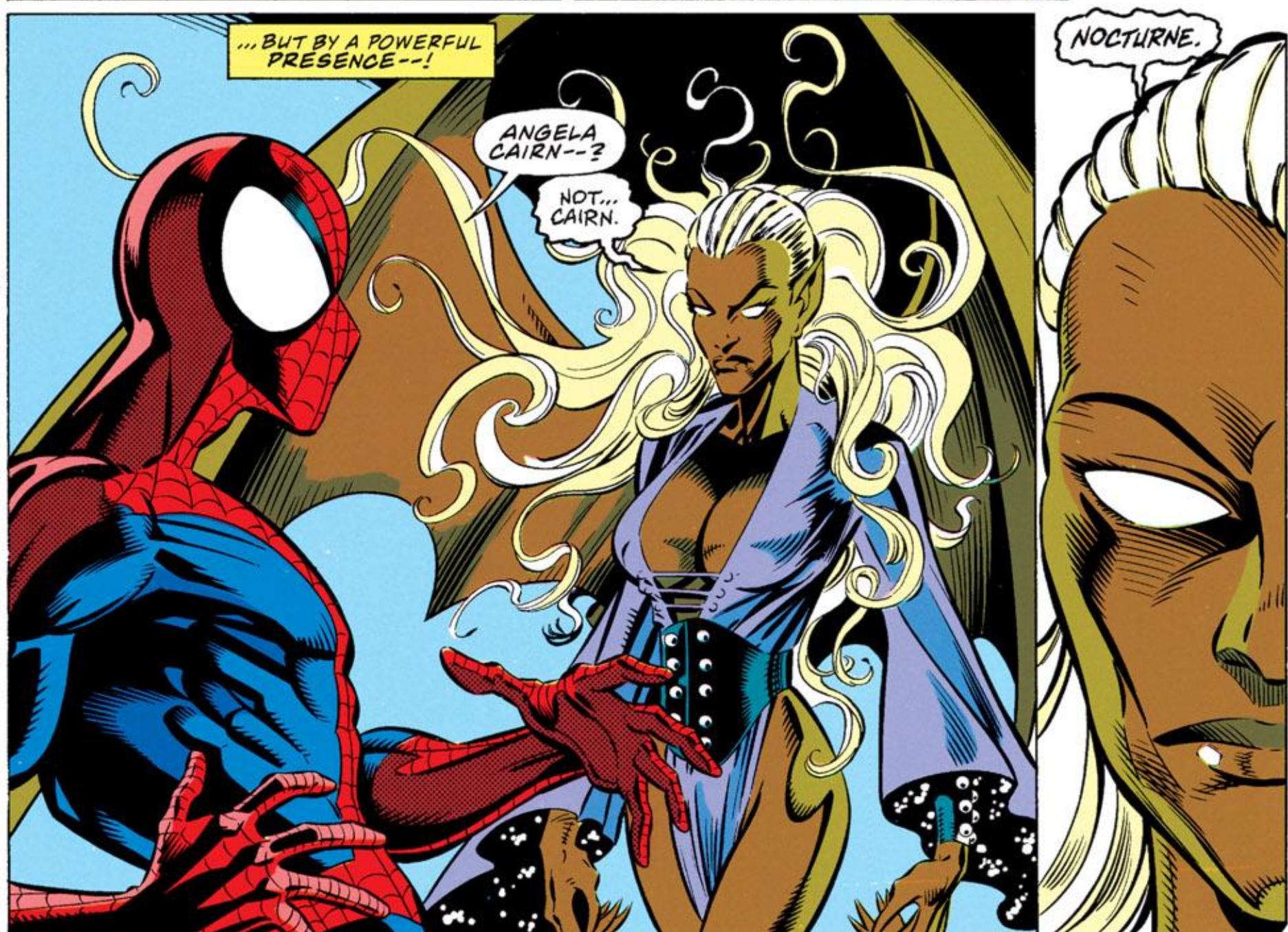
And yet here he is,
back from the grave
--like ALL his
miserable kind.

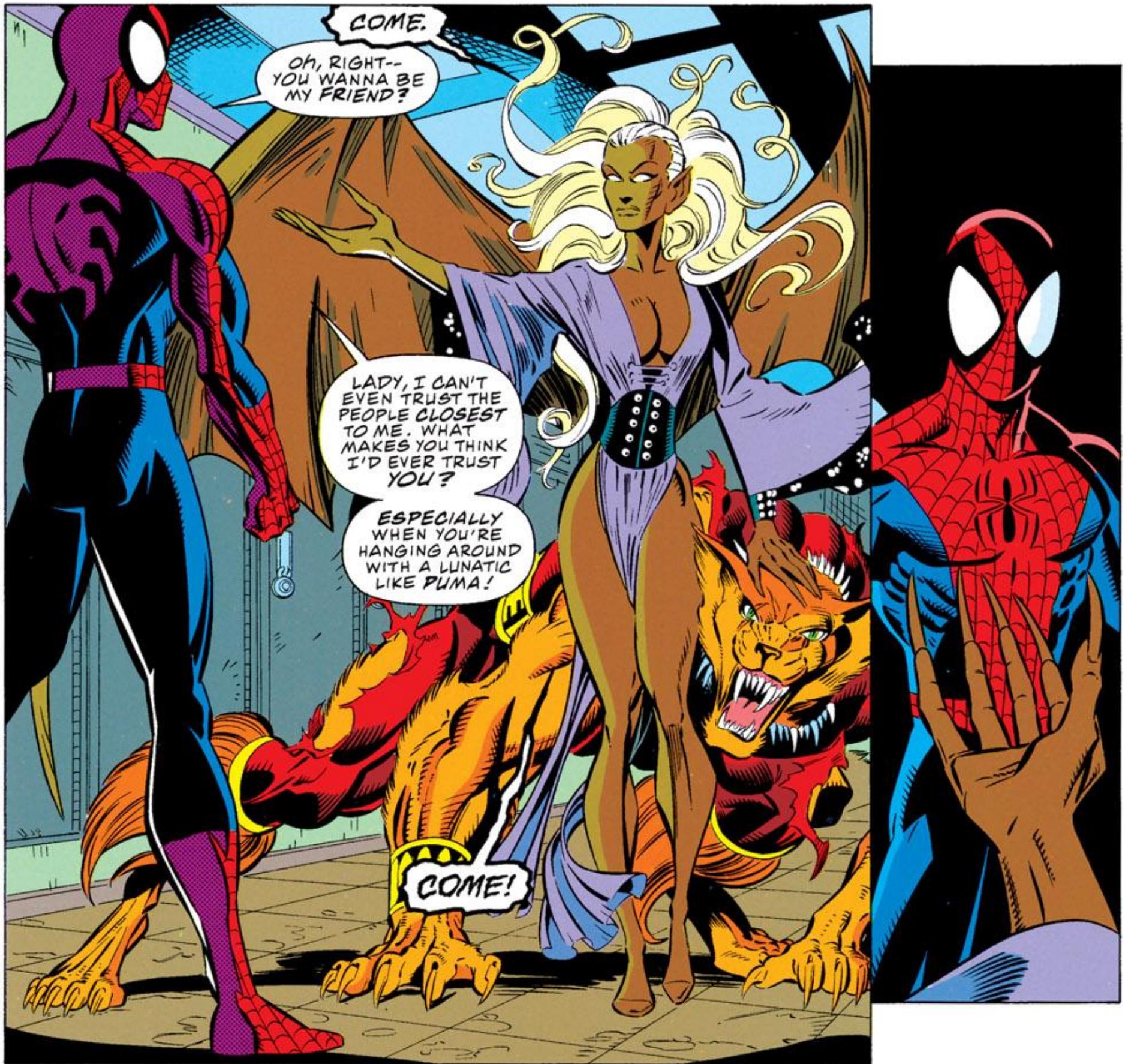
THE GOOD ONES...
THE DECENT ONES... THEY STAY DEAD--

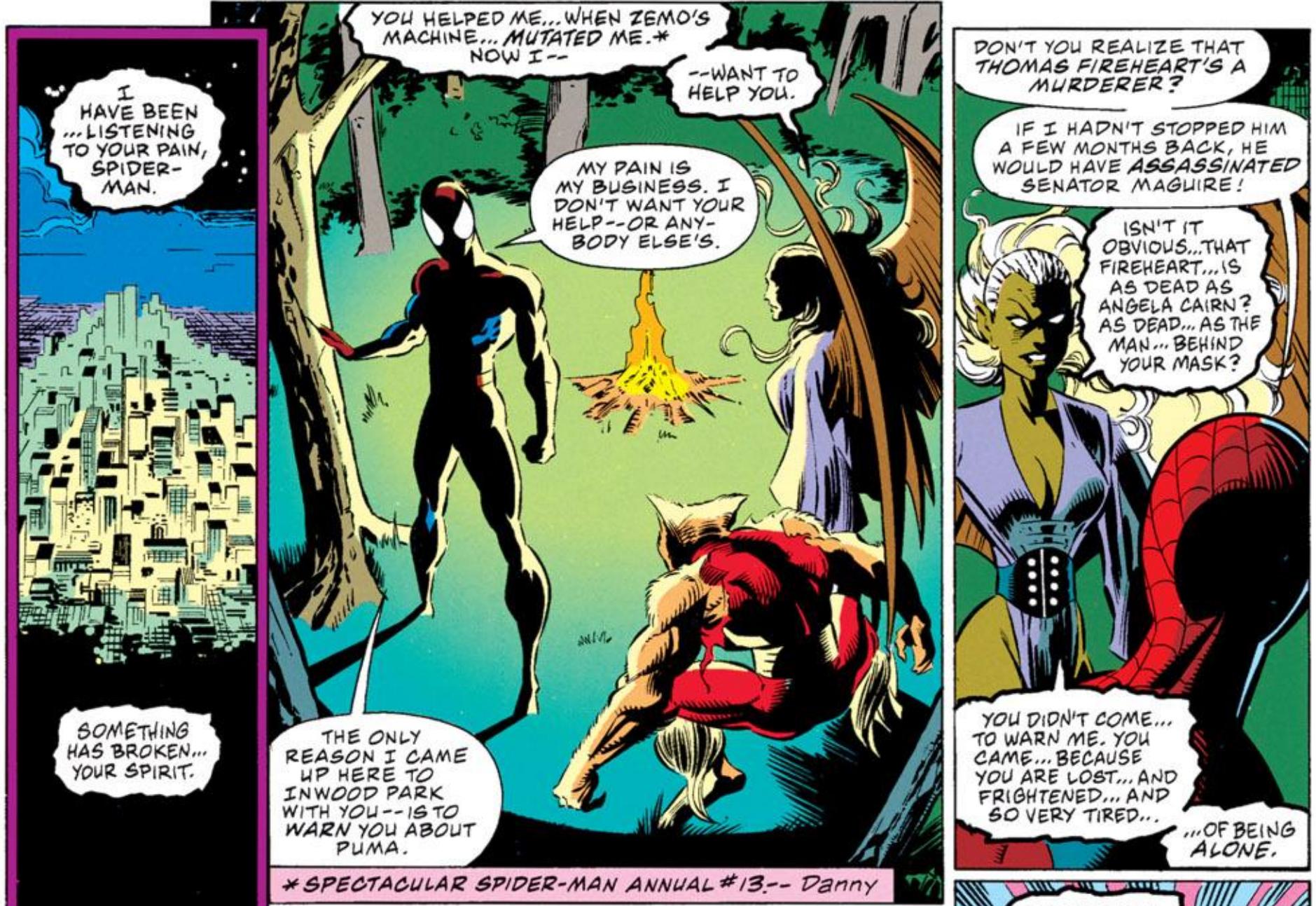
--BUT THE ANIMALS LIKE YOU--

KEEP

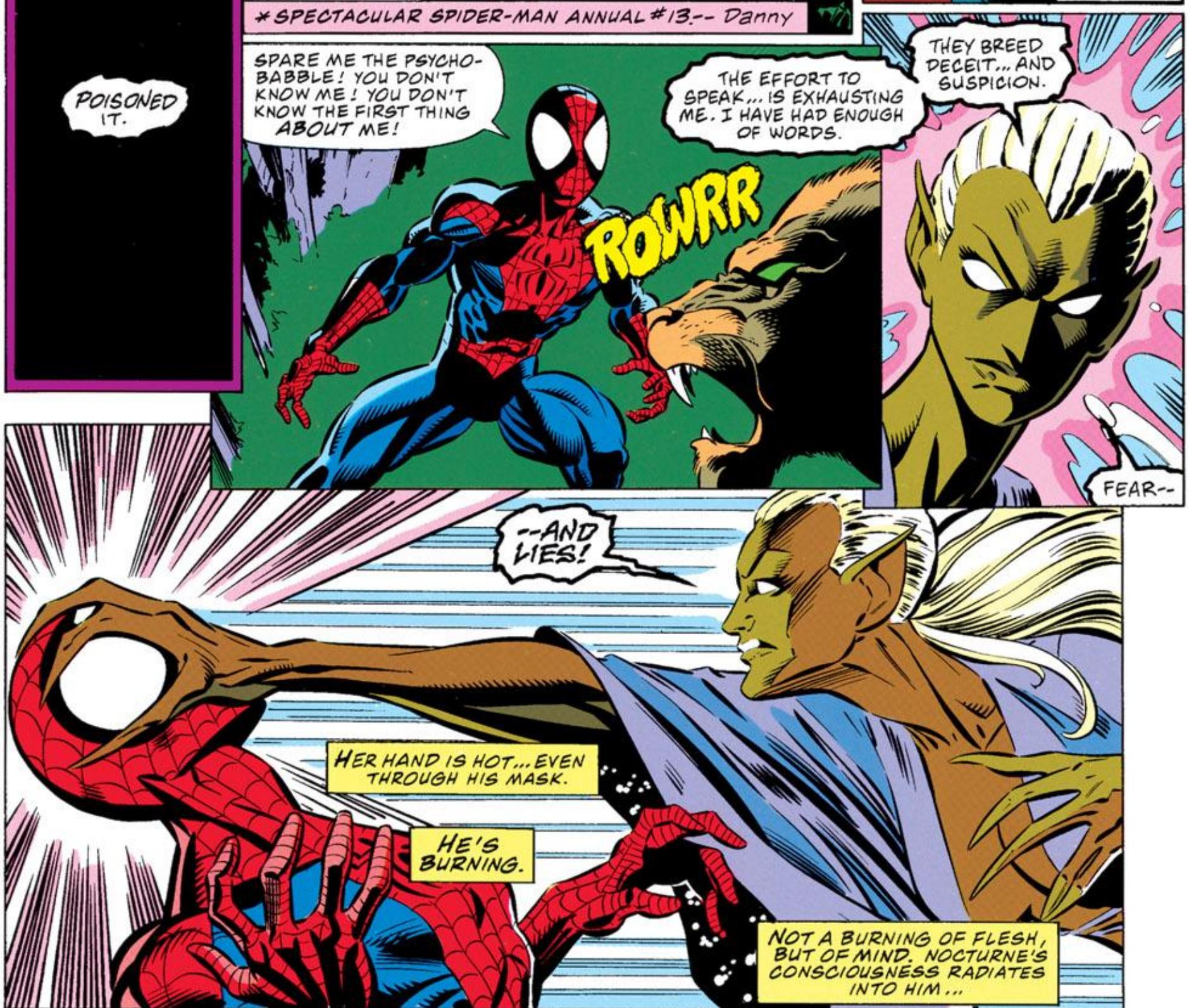
COMING







*SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL #13.-- Danny



...AND THE PAST
--HER PAST--
COMES ALIVE!

HE SEES THROUGH HER EYES;
FEELS THROUGH HER HEART.
AND WHAT HE FEELS MOST OF
ALL--IS LONELINESS.

A PART OF ANGELA
CAIRN MAY HAVE
REJOICED AT HER
TRANSFORMATION
INTO THIS NIGHT-
SONG... THIS
NOCTURNE... BUT
SHE WASN'T PRE-
PARED FOR THE
PROFOUND ALONE-
NESS THAT ATE
AT HER.

THAT'S WHY, WHEN SHE FOUND
THE CAT SLEEPING THERE IN
THE ALLEY, SHE REJOICED.
FOR SHE KNEW, INTUITIVELY...

...THAT SHE'D
FOUND A
KINDRED
SPIRIT. A
COMPANION.

HE'D BEEN SHOT RECENTLY... BADLY WOUNDED. THERE WAS
INFECTION... FEVER... BUT SOMEHOW HIS BODY HAD SURVIVED.

SHE TOOK SOME COMFORT
IN HER ROLE AS PRO-
TECTOR OF LOST SOULS
LIKE HERSELF: OUTCASTS
AND UNTOUCHABLES;
THE SHUNNED, THE
ABUSED, THE REJECTED.

BUT HER LONELINESS
REMAINED.

AS SHE REACHED OUT--TAKING THOMAS FIREHEART'S PAIN INTO HERSELF AND ACCELERATING HIS HEALING-- SHE SAW THAT THE MAN HE'D ONCE BEEN WAS BURIED, DEEP IN THE PUMA'S CONSCIOUSNESS, AND NO EFFORT ON HER PART COULD DRAW HIM OUT.

BUT THE CAT WAS GRATEFUL FOR HER HELP; AND, WITH A STUBBORN LOYALTY AND A STUBBORN PRIDE, HE FOLLOWED HER THAT NIGHT...

...AND EVERY NIGHT THEREAFTER.



NO, NOT LISTENING:
REMEMBERING.
AN ANIMAL'S
MEMORIES, DIM
AND OBSCURE...

...OF THE
MAN HE
USED
TO BE.

THOMAS FIREHEART WAS THE FINAL PRODUCT OF A CENTURIES-LONG BREEDING EXPERIMENT. TRAINED SINCE CHILDHOOD TO CARRY THE MOUNTAIN LION MEDICINE. TO BE THE PROTECTOR OF HIS TRIBE.

(THE SPIDER!)

SAVIOR OF
HIS PEOPLE.

BUT THE PUMA MEDICINE SEDUCED HIM, CONSUMED HIM. HE SURRENDERED CONTROL OF HIMSELF TO THE CAT--AND DISGRACED HIS PEOPLE...DEFILED HIS SOUL.

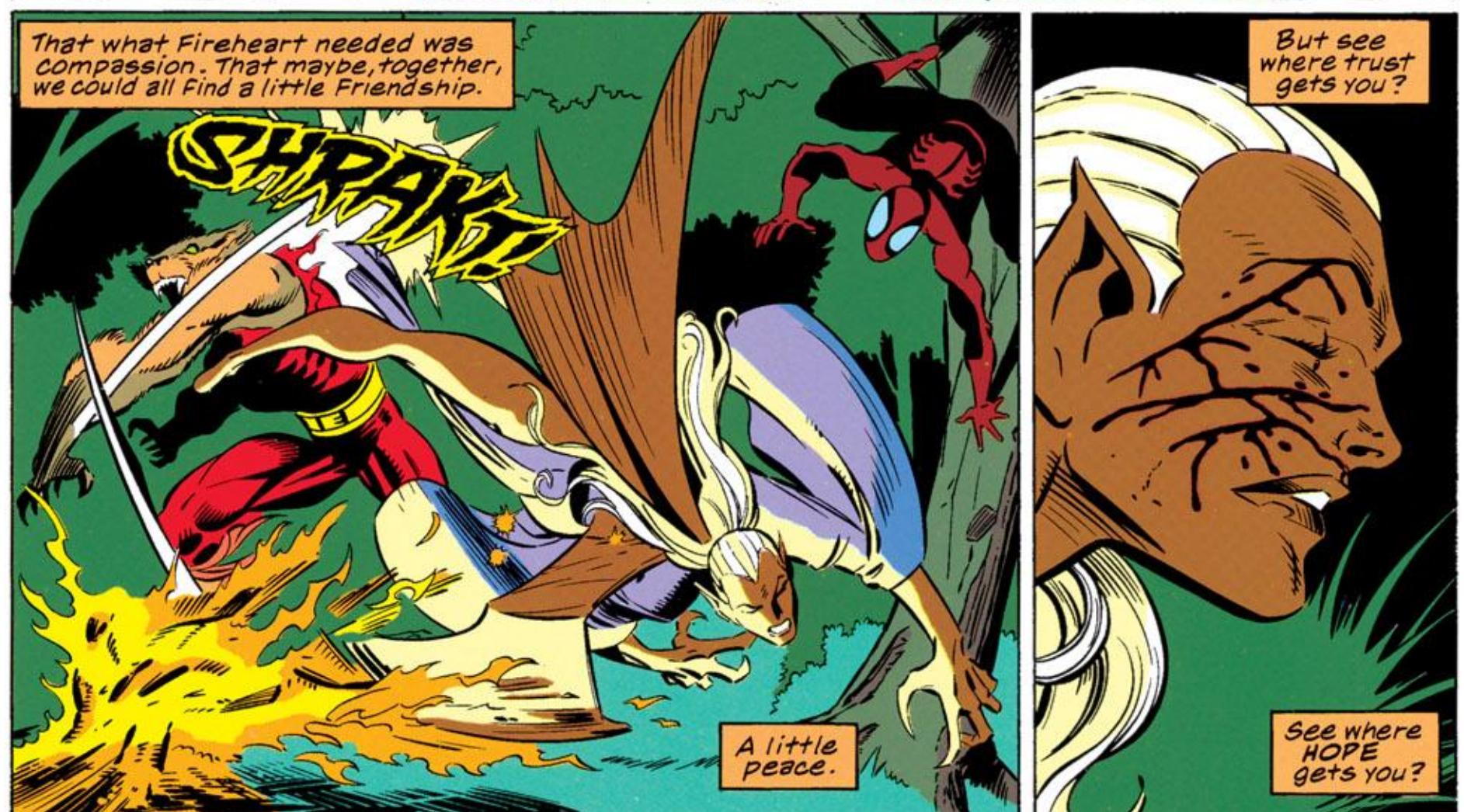
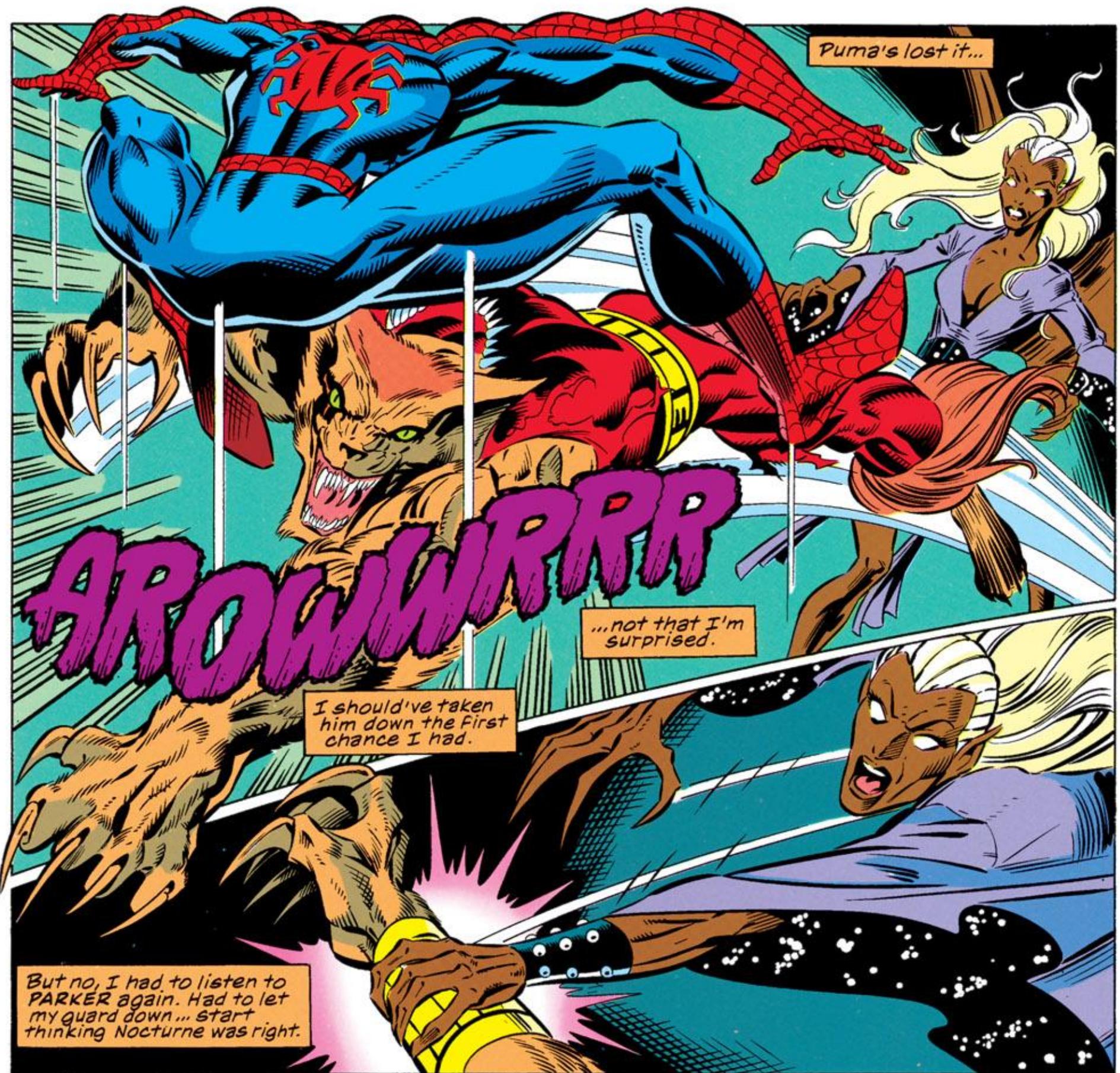
(ALWAYS THERE--
TO WITNESS
OUR SHAME!)

FELL, LIKE
LUCIFER...

(KILL HIM-- AND WE
KILL OUR SHAME--
KILL OUR PAST!)

...INTO A HELL
OF HIS OWN
MAKING.

(WE CAN
BE FREE!)



Nocturne was right about ONE thing:

Peter Parker doesn't exist any more. He's as dead as Thomas Fireheart.

There's just the Puma and the Spider...

...AND ONLY ONE OF US IS COMING OUT OF THIS ALIVE!

TO BE CONTINUED--
IN THE PAGES OF
SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #218!

AND NEXT MONTH IN AMAZING--
"DEADMEN!"--GUEST-
STARRING DAREDEVIL!
(IF YOU THOUGHT THE RETURN OF THE
CLONE WAS SOMETHING... WAIT'LL
YOU SEE WHAT HAPPENS TO SPIDEY NEXT!)