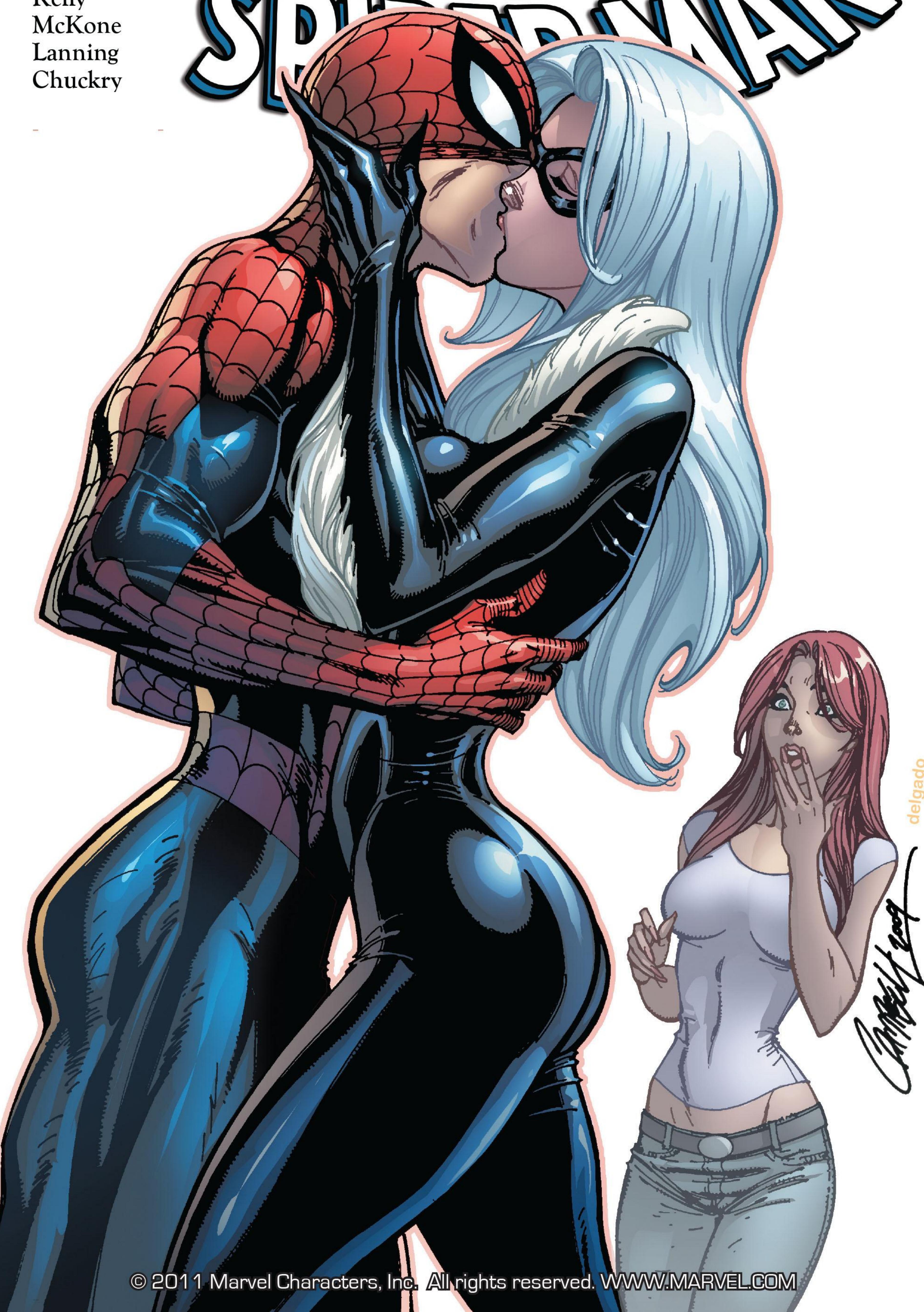


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Kelly
McKone
Lanning
Chuckry

the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN®





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Prologue...

NEW YORK'S
UPPER EAST SIDE.

NO WINDOWS THROUGH
WHICH TO GAUGE
THE SUN'S WARMTH.

MADAME
WEB...

IT HAS
BEEN DAYS...
LONGER? I HAVE
NO TOUCHSTONES
TO GUIDE ME.

...ARE
YOU
DEAD?

IRREGULAR MEALS.
NO NOISE. I HAVE
NEVER BEEN IN A
PLACE SO STILL--

NO...
YOU DON'T
SMELL DEAD.
GOODIE.

MAMA WANTS
ME TO TALK TO
YOU. SHE DOESN'T
LIKE YOU. YOU'RE
DIRTY. BENEATH
HER. OLD AND
DIRTY.

THEN
PERHAPS SHE
SHOULD LET ME GO,
THAT I MIGHT
BATH...

YOU'RE
FUNNY.

SHE IS ON ME
IN A WHISPER.

INSTANTANEOUSLY,
I LOSE MY AIR...

...AND
SHE--

DEAR
GOD, IT'S
ALIVE!

LET HIM
FIND YOUR
STOMACH...
THEN WE CAN
TALK.

DRUGS. IT
ALWAYS STARTS
WITH DRUGS...
COWARDS.

WHAT DO
YOU SEE? WHAT
IS THE SPIDER
DOING?

PLEASE
GOD, HELP
ME...HELP ME
TO LIE.

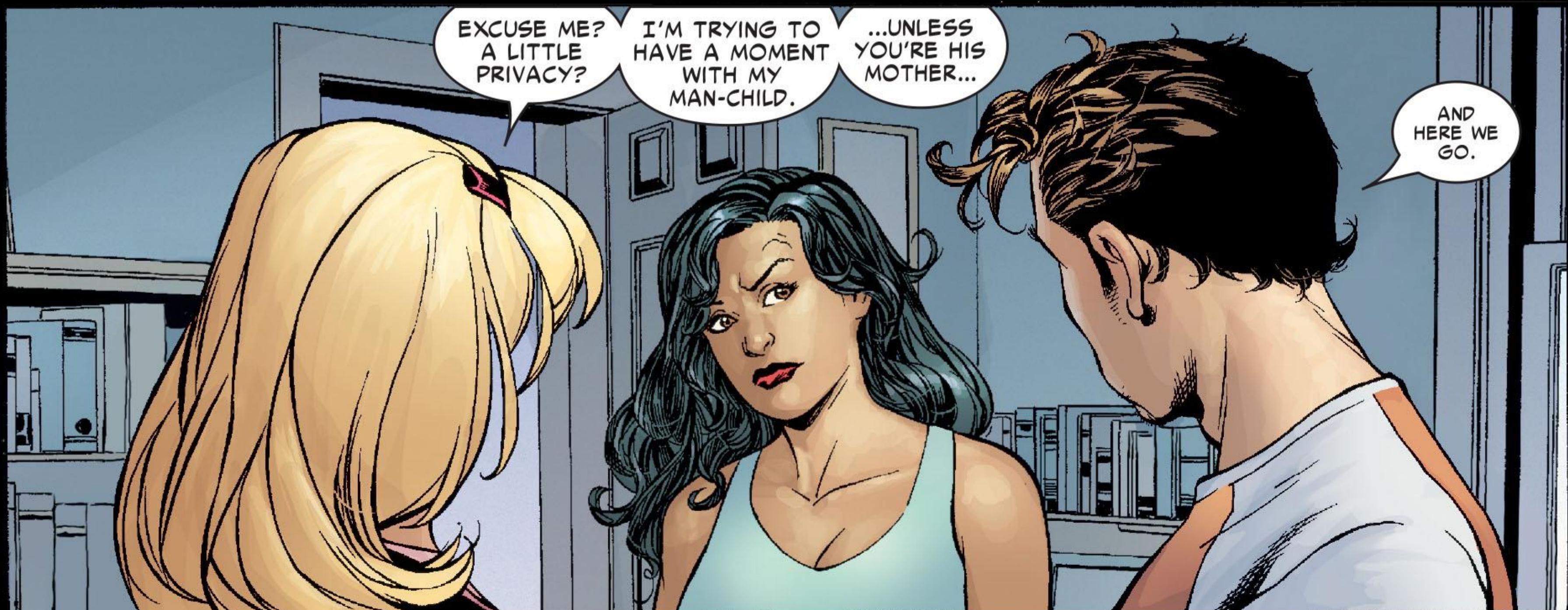
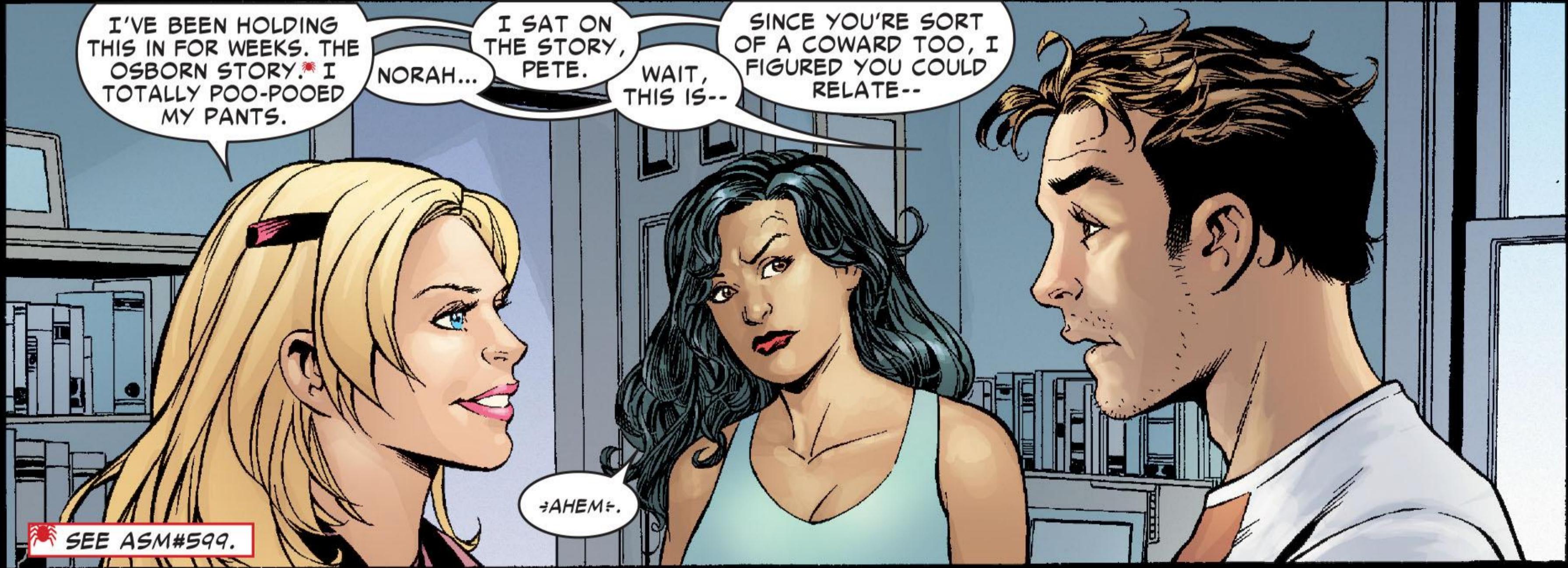
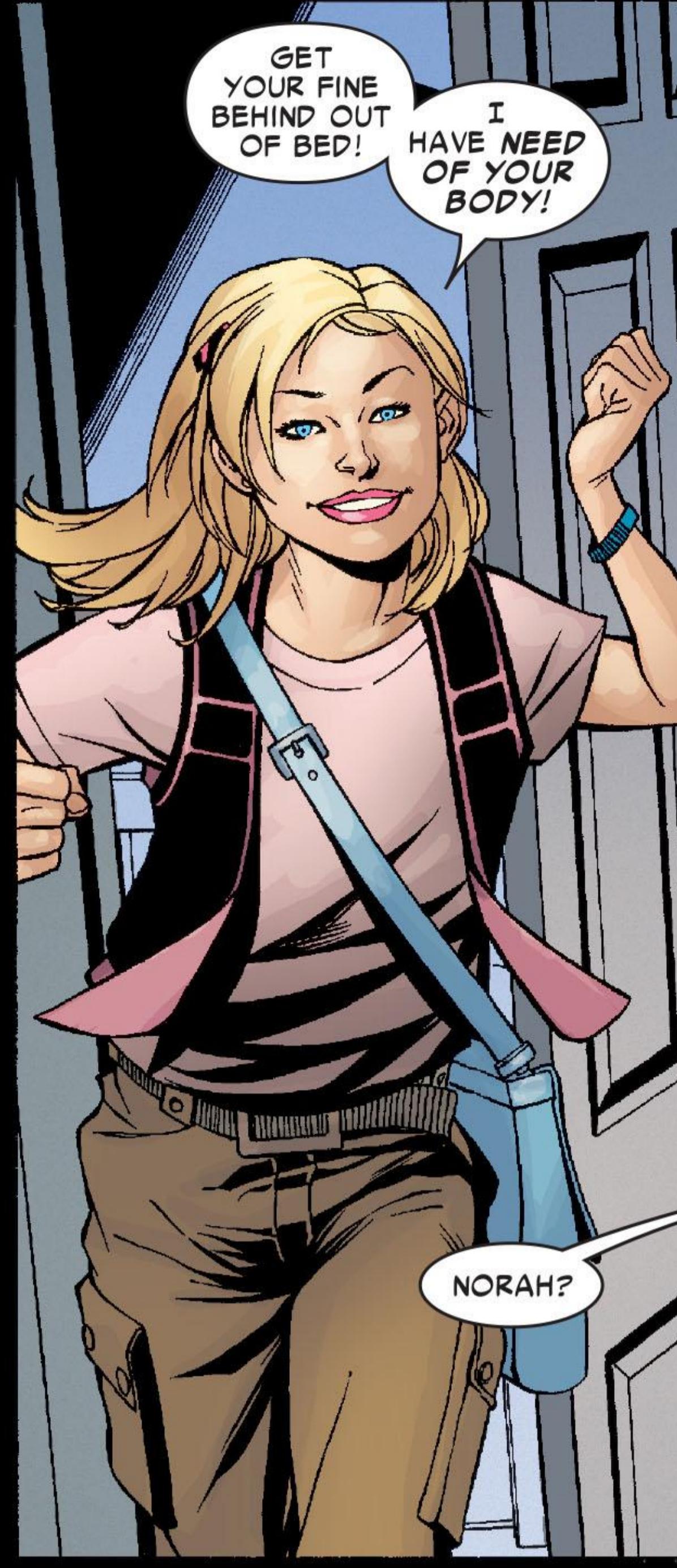
DON'T
CHEW.

IF YOU
BITE, MISTER
ANANSI WILL
BE SAD.

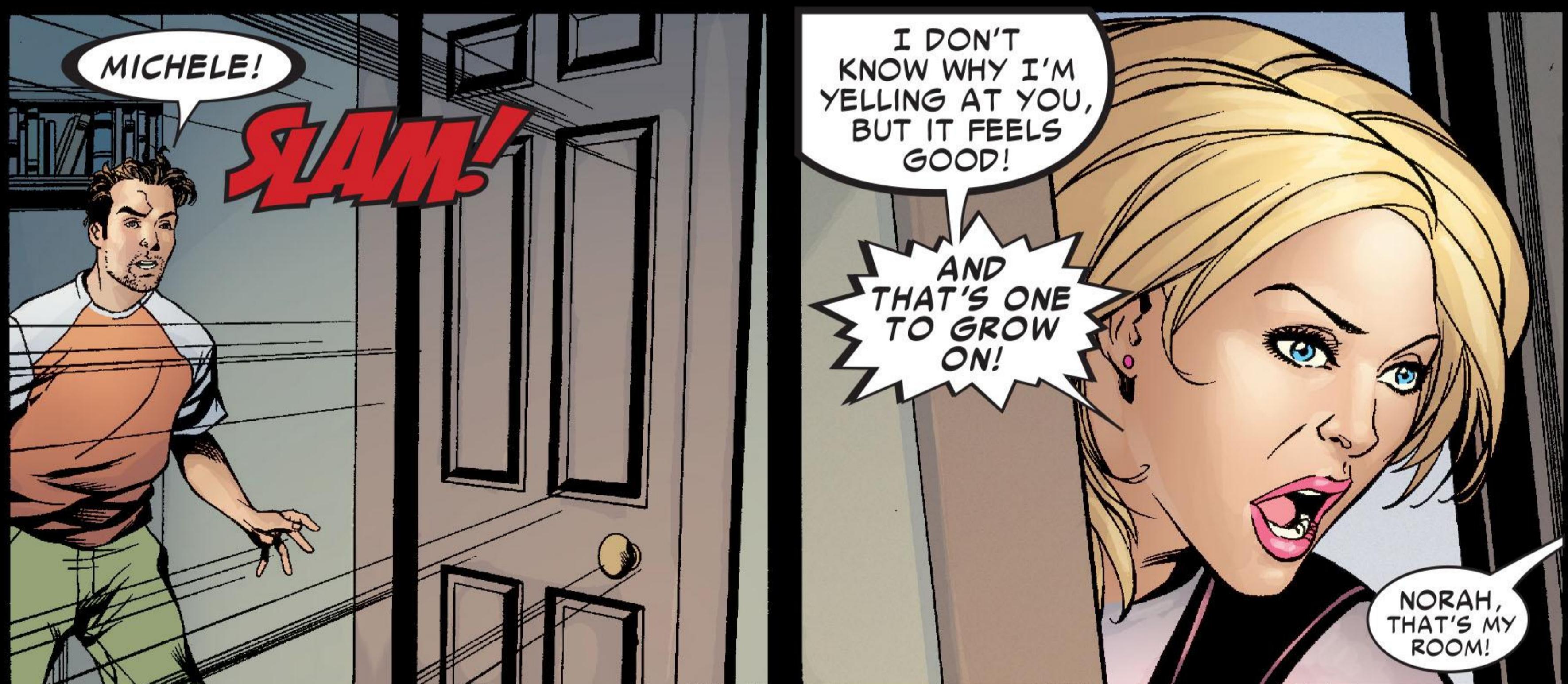
HIS GUTS
WILL LEAK OUT
AND YOUR THROAT
WILL CLOSE
FOREVER.

H-HE...
OH, GOD...









AND FOURTEEN HOURS LATER, I'M STILL CONFUSED ABOUT MICHELE. STILL STINGING FROM THE SIGHT OF MJ...

AND STILL DEBATING WHETHER PUSHING NORAH UNDER A BUS IS MORE HUMANE THAN FEEDING HER TO THE JACKALS IN THE ZOO.

SO I TAKE IT OUT ON YOU. CONGRATULATIONS ON WINNING THE "WORST DAY FOR A SUPER HERO TO CATCH YOU BEING A MENACE" CONTEST!

I KNOW, I KNOW. I'M SORRY. I TOTALLY DOMINATE THE CONVERSATION WHEN I GET IN A MOOD LIKE THIS.

AAAAAAGH!!

BUT YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY A GREAT LISTENER, AND SENSITIVE. I BET YOU READ OPRAH BOOKS.

HELLLLP!!!

GOOD POINT. I DEFINITELY NEED HELP.

BUT LOOK WHO I'M TALKING TO! YOU HAVE YOUR OWN ISSUES WITH WOMEN. AM I RIGHT...?

OR DID I TOTALLY MISREAD THAT BIT IN THE ALLEY AND YOU'RE ACTUALLY A CERTIFIED HANDBAG INSPECTOR?

I PEE-PEED MYSELF.

AND THAT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR BEING A MUGGER, MISTER DAMPY-PANTS.

Y-YOU'RE
CRAZY.

YOU'RE
TELLING ME!
THAT'S WHY YOU
GOTTA GET IT OUT,
Y'KNOW? UNLEASH THE
NEGATIVITY. TALK
TO A FRIEND...

...OR A FELON
IN NEED OF A
NAPPY CHANGE.
WHATEVER.

THE GOOD
NEWS IS IN FOUR
MINUTES, IT WILL
OFFICIALLY BE
TOMORROW.

AND
TOMORROW
BRINGS THE
PROMISE OF A
BRAND NEW--

TMK
TMK

AAAAAAAAGH!

"START."
I WAS GONNA
SAY "START."
SIGH.

THWIP

FWAT

I'M JUST
GONNA SET
YOU DOWN AND--

DO ME
A FAVOR,
DON'T MENTION
THIS LITTLE
ACCIDENT...

THE
MAYOR WILL
TOTALLY
BILL ME FOR
THIS.

OH
DANG.



I'M GONNA
DIEEEEEE!

WHAT A
BABY! THIS
HAPPENS ALL
THE TIME!

STUPID
CITY FALLING
APART--

AS
ARE MY WEB-
SHOOTERS--!?

AH,
WELL, I
HAVE
ANOTHER.

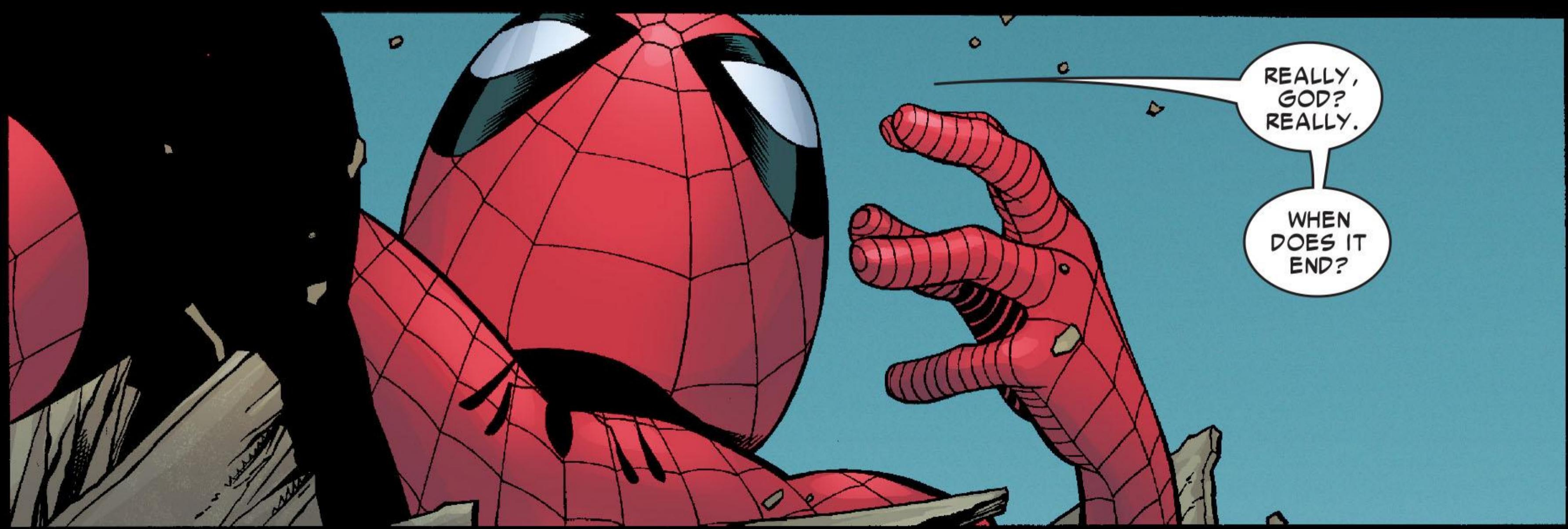
CLAKETY
CLAK

"HAD"
ANOTHER.
JEEZ, LAST TIME
I BUY PARTS IN
CHINATOWN.

YOU'VE
GOTTA BE
KIDDING ME WITH
THE TWO BROKEN
WEB-
SHOOTERS!

I
HATE MY
LIFE.

Glooppt!





LONG-TERM ARRANGEMENT

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KELLY
WRITER

MIKE
MCKONE
PENCILER

ANDY
LANNING
INKER

CHRIS
CHUCKRY
COLORIST

VC'S JOE
CARAMAGNA
LETTERER

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BRENNAN
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38-38-38

STEPHEN
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EXEC. EDITOR

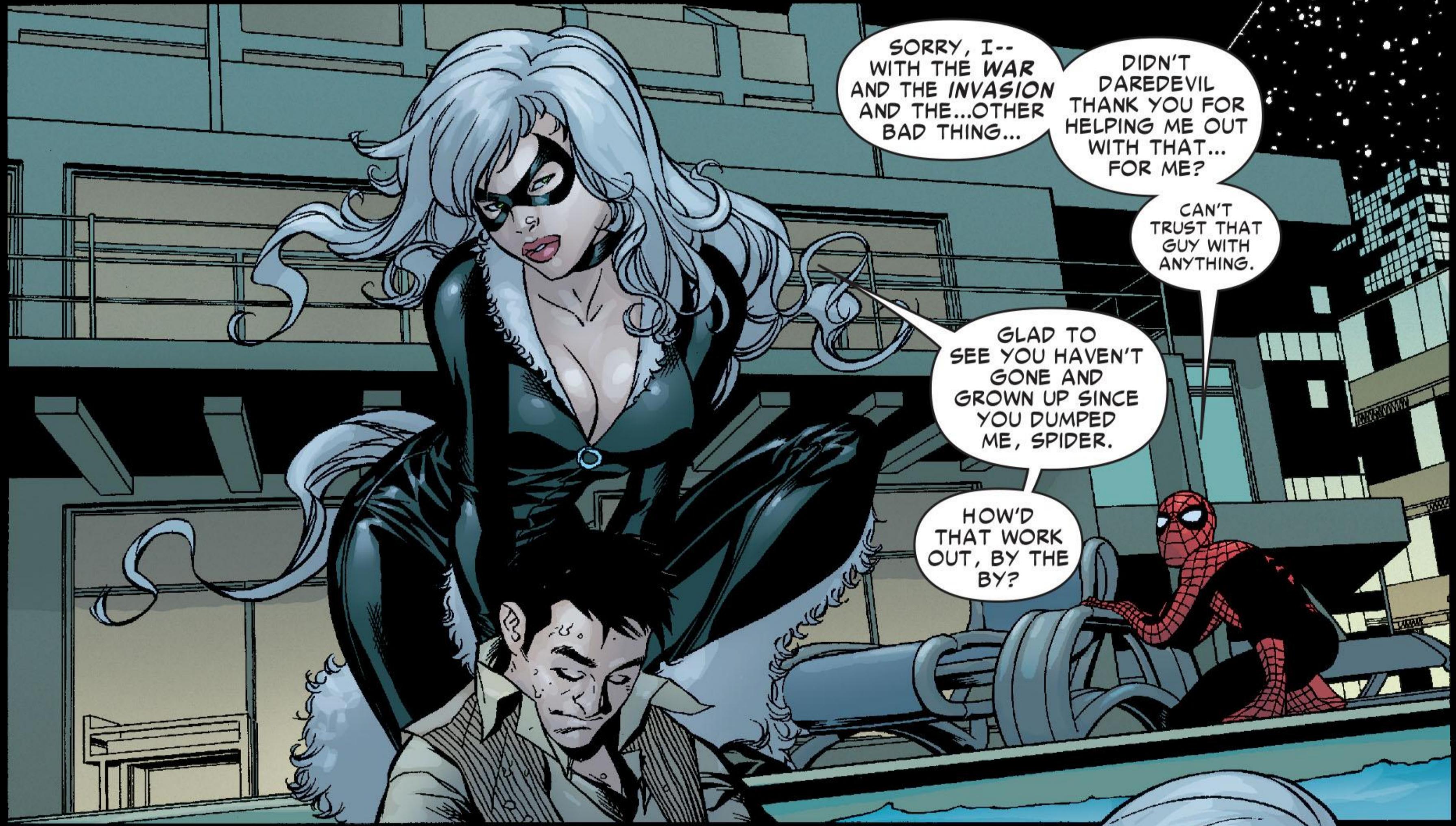
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BUCKLEY
PUBLISHER

ALAN
FINE
EXEC. PRODUCER

GALE, GUGGENHEIM, KELLY, SLOTT, VAN LENTE, WAID & WELLS WEB-HEADS



37 Wet Seconds Later.



YOW!
WAITASEC!
THIS IS
THE OLD
JOB.

YOU.
DUMPED.
ME--

KEEP
TELLING
YOURSELF
THAT. EXCUSE
ME.

AND UNLESS
YOU WANT TO BE
AN ACCESSORY TO
THE FACT, I SUGGEST
YOU SCURRY ON
HOME, LITTLE
SPIDER.

YEAH, THAT
WOULD BE GREAT,
EXCEPT, I TEND TO
STOP PEOPLE FROM
DOING EXACTLY
WHAT YOU'RE
DOING.

YOU ALSO
TEND TO RUN
AWAY FROM **STRONG**
WOMEN. THAT MUST
BE QUITE THE
DILEMMA.

YOU'RE
ROBBING
DEXTER
BENNETT?

AND HE
ACTUALLY
HAS A SAFE
BEHIND A
PICTURE OF
HIMSELF?

SERIOUSLY,
SPIDER. JUST
GO OR YOUR
APPENDIX MIGHT
ACCIDENTALLY
BURST.

YOU
CAN'T DO
THAT, CAN
YOU?

CARE
TO
FIND...

...OUT?

I CAN
SEE WHY YOU'D
BE SO HOT
TO STEAL
THAT.

OH,
WOW...



MOVE!

 I ALMOST PASS OUT FROM THE WAILING OF MY SPIDER-SENSE.

LIKE A CAR SIREN FOR EACH OF THE "GUT BALLS" THAT EXPLODE FROM THE DEAD GUY...

...WHICH ARE MOVING WAY TOO SLOW TO BE BULLETS...

WHICH, IN MY EXPERIENCE, MEANS THEY'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO BE BULLETS...

THEY'RE TINY PRESENTS WRAPPED WITH HATE AND EXPLODEY STUFF.

PLINK

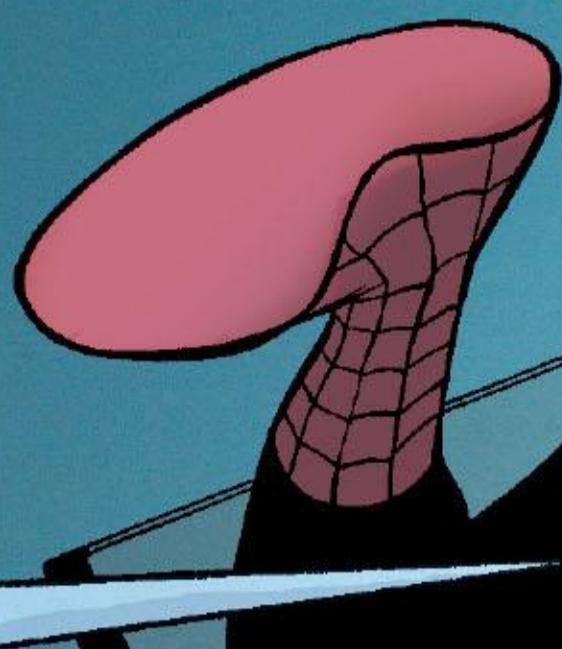
PLINK

PLINK

STEEL.

STEEL SPIKES ERUPTING
FROM THE WALLS
WHEREVER THE LITTLE
SPLEEN-ETTES HIT ...

HOLY
SCHNIKES!



I REALLY HOPE
BENNETT DIDN'T
CHEAP OUT ON
THAT DOOR.

NNGH!
ANOTHER
REASON TO HATE
DEXTER BENNETT.
CHEAPSKEATE.

SERIOUSLY,
CAT...
SERIOUSLY.

IF YOU'RE
MAD AT ME FOR
ANYTHING I DID OR
DIDN'T DO, I'M
SORRY. I'M SCUM.
ALL MEN ARE
SCUM.

PLEASE
UN-BAD
LUCK ME
NOW?

GO GO
GO!

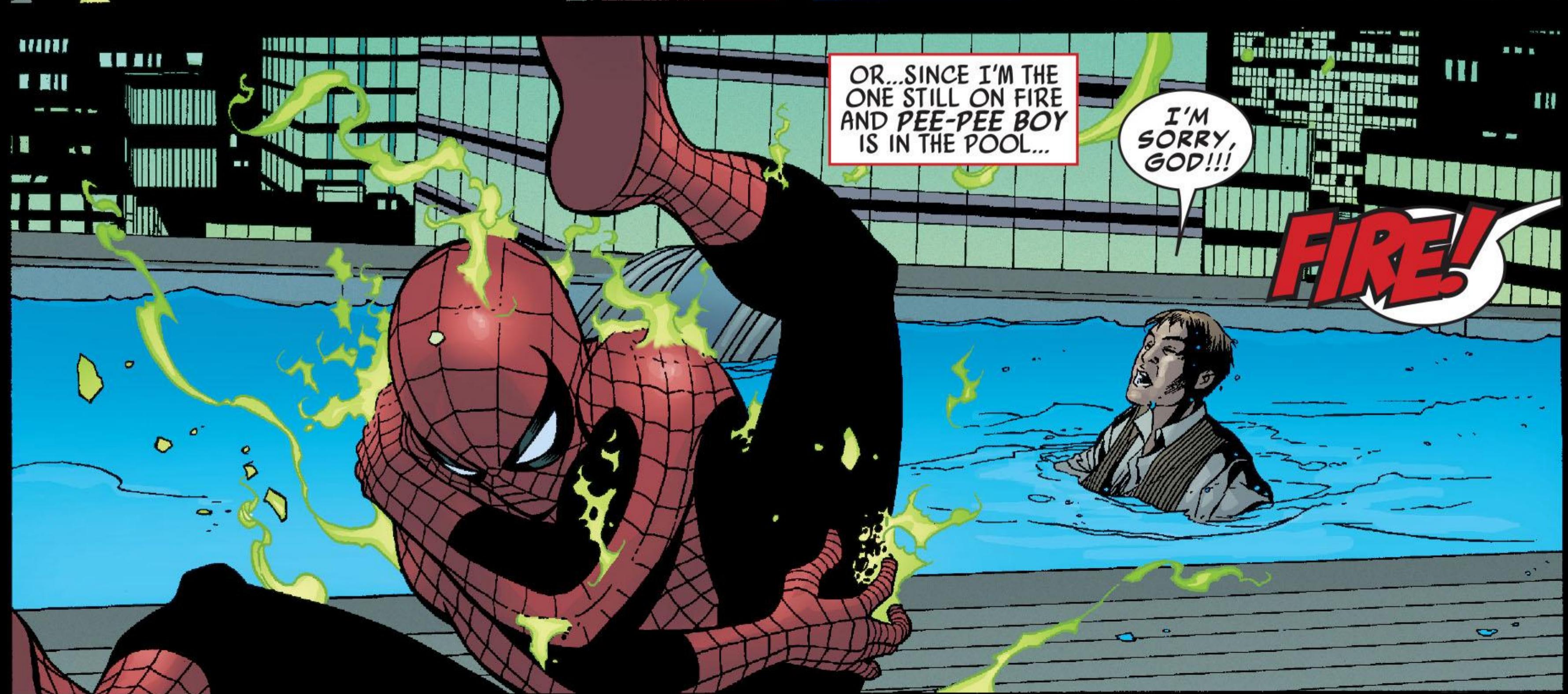
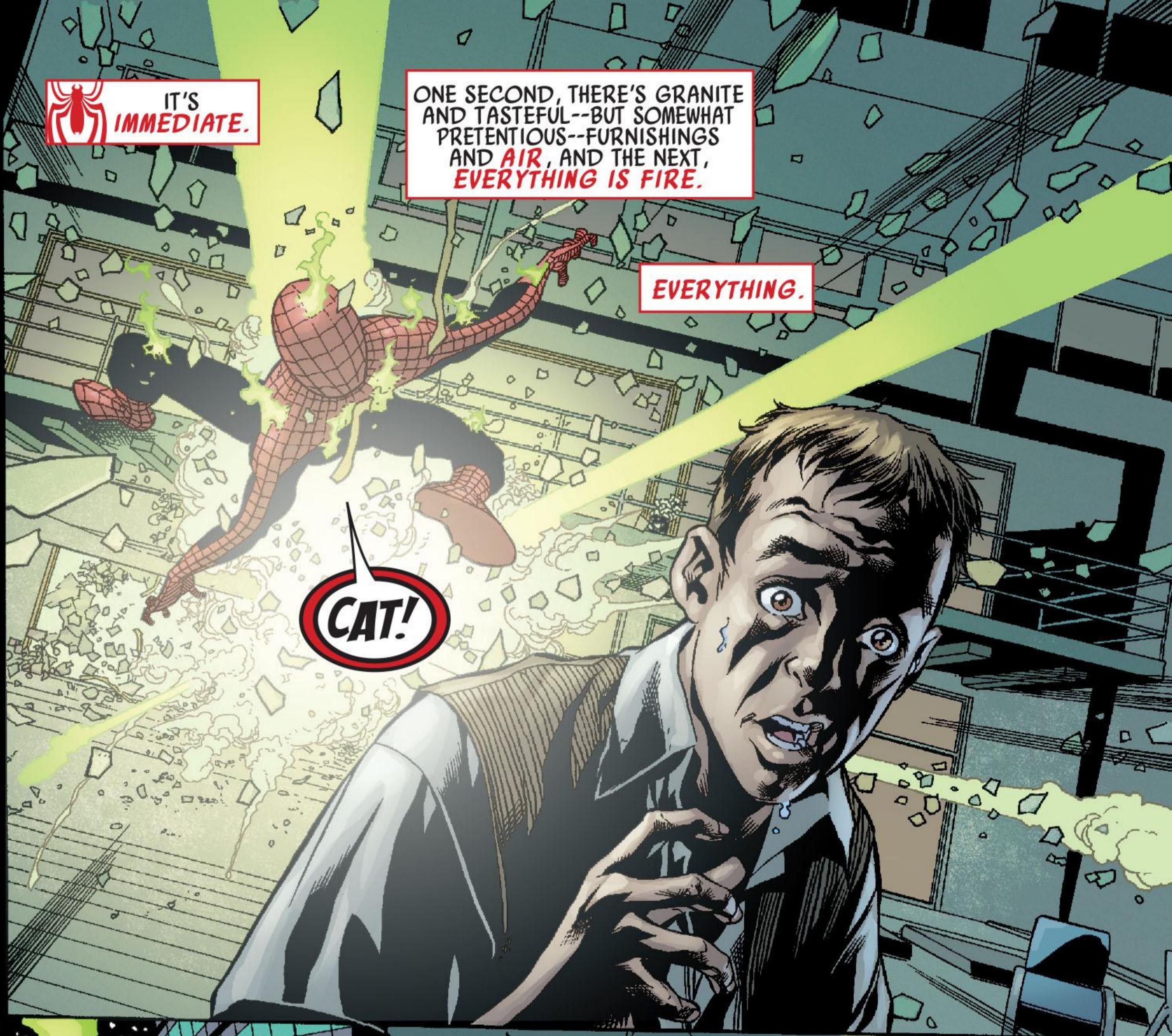
SHUT UP
AND MAN
UP...

NOT THE
CORPSES I
EXPECTED.





Just Outside.





HAVE WOMEN GONE CRAZY?!

SERIOUSLY! OR IS IT REALLY JUST ME? BECAUSE EVERY FEMALE IN MY LIFE IS FLIPPIN' INSANE..!

...ESPECIALLY YOU!!

I--

YOU DUMPED ME BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T LIKE WHAT WAS UNDER THIS MASK.

YOU WANTED IT ALL TO BE A GAME WHEN I WAS READY TO MOVE FORWARD! SO HOW DID I BECOME THE BAD GUY?!

IT...IT ISN'T YOU, IT'S ME...

NO. I USED THAT LINE TODAY. YOU DON'T GET OFF THAT EASY--

BUT IT IS ME...

THE THRILL OF IT...THE FUN...THE HEARTACHE.

YOU'RE TOUCHING ME...

I WAS TRYING TO AVOID ALL OF THAT AGAIN. SPARE US BOTH, BUT...

THIS IS THE PART WHERE I LOOK DEEP DOWN INSIDE MYSELF AND FIND MY CLEAR CONSCIENCE SAYING...

...THE SECOND I SAW YOU, EVEN THOUGH I FORGOT WHO YOU ARE UNDER THAT MASK...IT ALL CAME RUSHING BACK...

BUT...YOUR BREATHING'S ALL CHOPPY.

SO IS YOURS.
OH BOY.

ZACK SAYS THE FEED IS LIVE. SHOOT IT!

"RUN, PETER PARKER. RUN AS FAST AS YOU CAN FROM THE CRAZY LADY WHO BROKE YOUR HEART. SHE'S **CRAZY!** THAT'S NOT ATTRACTIVE AT ALL!"

AND THEN THE **REST**
OF ME BEATS THAT PART
TO A BLOODY PULP, AND
LETS CONSCIENCE GO.

I LET IT **ALL** GO BY
PULLING HER CLOSER
AND EVERYTHING ELSE FADES AWAY.

FOR A SECOND...THE
LAST SECOND BEFORE
I SHUT MY BRAIN OFF AND
BECOME ALL **BODY**, I
CAN'T HELP BUT THINK WHAT
A BAD IDEA THIS IS...

...AND
I SMILE.

BRING
IT ON.

To Be
Continued...

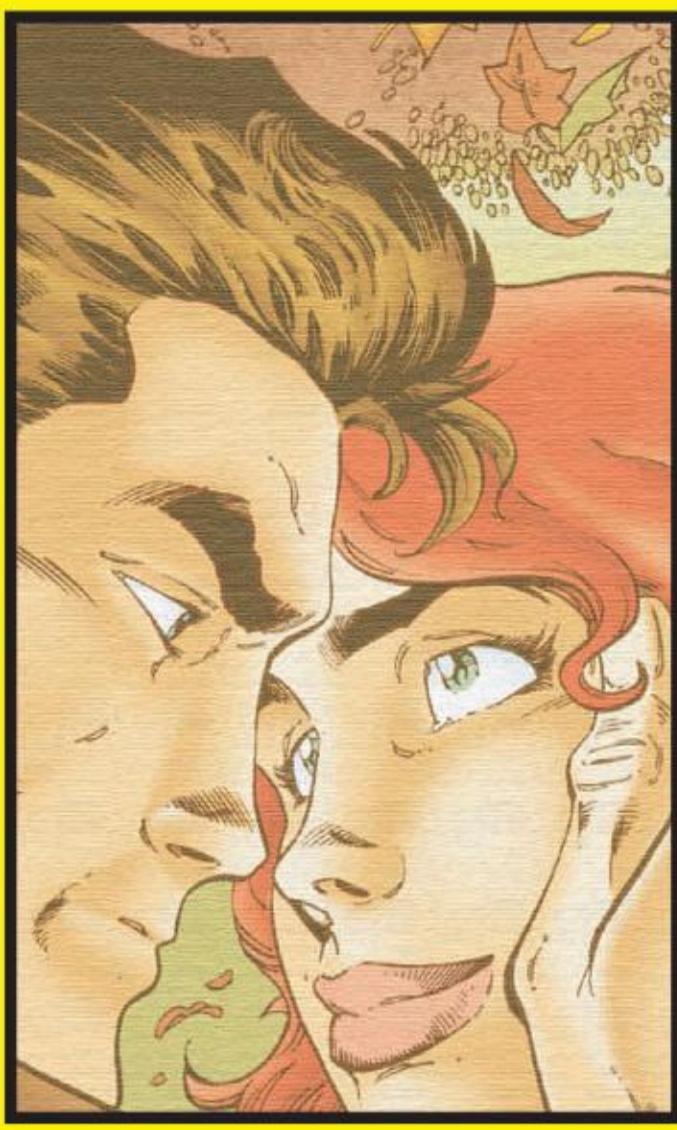
the AMAZING SPIDER-MAIL



TOM BRENNAN STEPHEN WACKER
ASST. EDITOR EDITOR

TOM BREVOORT JOE QUESADA
EXECUTIVE EDITOR EDITOR IN CHIEF

DAN BUCKLEY ALAN FINE
PUBLISHER EXEC. PRODUCER



!!!ERRATTA ALERTTA!!!

Folks, see that above panel of Pete and MJ? It was supposed to run on page 31, panel 8 in this year's ASM Annual, but due to some misunderstanding on the part of ye olde editor, I ran the wrong flashback showing a couple of Pete and MJ look-alikes.

So enjoy this one moment of me actually taking ownership of my mistakes as opposed to blaming the increasingly nervous looking Tom Brennan.

Dear Marvel,

It took me awhile to hop onto the Brand New Day train, but I'm glad I did. The stories have been great, and actually have been getting better as it goes along, which is much appreciated. It's really great to see this arc keep building. I'm very curious as to how a lot of the drama in Peter's life will be resolved. On that note, I'm still begging for much more MJ to be seen. The book feels so vacant without her, even with the great supporting cast of old and new.

I have one brief comment about a part of ASM #595 that I would like to say in regards to the writing. A lot of people take shots at politicians in the entertainment industry, comics included. There was one in this issue, but I'm actually impressed with the fact that Mr. Kelly took shots at BOTH sides in the issue. It's very rare that you see much fairness involved in entertainment's commentaries on politics, and that makes me feel quite happy to purchase this comic three times a month.

I look forward to the buildup to issue #600. Keep up the good work!

Jon D.
Danville, CA

Thanks for noticing, Jon. We actually heard a lot about #595's two political gags with many readers seeing only one gag or the other and assuming there must be some nefarious brain-washing scheme going on. But not only is there a history at Marvel of reflecting and mentioning current events that goes back decades, you can also rest assured that we have folks of all political and cultural stripes working on our books.

We even have lifelong Donutarian party member Tom Brevoort looking over my shoulder on every issue. He's running on the slogan of: "Yes we can...eat a lot of donuts." Also read his memoir: "The Audacity of Holes" (published by Dunkin Press).

Brevoort will no doubt be the easiest politician to bribe in history.



Dear Spider-Mail,

I've been away from comics for over fifteen years, and only recently decided to get back into it. I must say, a lot's happened in my absence – I read the Civil War Companion only recently, I'm collecting the Secret Invasion Chronicles issues to catch up (hope you guys do this with Dark Reign as well), and just picked up my first Spidey issue in many years: Amazing Spider-Man #597.

I've noticed this disturbing trend of depicting graphic violence and harsh language in Marvel titles now, and to be honest, it bugs me. Not to sound preachy or anything, but the main thing I used to really enjoy about Marvel was how accessible the titles were to all ages, and they didn't have any "Rated T+" or any other ratings stamped on the covers, they were just something that kids of a young age could read as well as the adults. I'd certainly be a bit leery about letting my child read these issues now. However, I'm sure the sales speak for themselves, so if it's what's speaking to the masses these days...

However, getting to #597, I'm liking the Dark Avengers, it's quite the lineup, and I'm going to have to track down the previous two issues to figure out what's going on. I was a little shocked when reading the Civil War trade, and seeing that Norman Osborn's alive again – I always liked him as the Goblin. Never knew Wolverine had a son, or that the Scorpion became Venom. What happened to Eddie Brock? See how far behind I am? Just call me "Rip Vaughn Winkle".

BTW, please don't resurrect Kraven the Hunter (if you haven't already). The "Death of Kraven" arc that ran six issues back in 1987 was one of the most brilliant and gripping Spidey tales of all time, and to resurrect him would lessen the impact of that truly fine story. I can't wait to see what's in store for #600. Wow, it seems like yesterday when I picked up #300!

It's been a long absence, so please don't disappoint!

Vaughn Allan
Calgary, Alberta

Vaughn, one thing that pretty much all Spidey fans can agree on no matter what is that the "Death of Kraven" story from way back in the Bon Jovi'd summer of 1987 is one of the greatest Spider-Man stories ever. Written by J.M. DeMatteis and drawn by Mike Zeck, it's a story every Spidey fan should check out. Particularly as we've introduced Kraven's widow and what looks to be his daughter in Spidey over the last year, that story is being used as a building block for several big stories coming up.

Dear Web-heads,

Do you believe in second chances? I am a life long spider fan, and this is my first time writing in so be gentle. I am one of those people who, after reading the first story arc of Brand New Day, stopped buying the book. I was terribly upset about Peter and MJ's wedding being retconned.

As time went on, I missed Spidey. When I saw my favorite Spider-Man artist John Romita Jr. was returning for the New Ways To Die story, I couldn't help myself. I bought those issues and to my surprise really enjoyed them. I also read Character Assassination and now I'm all aboard for American Son. The writing has been superb and the art has been well, marvelous.

This brings me to my issue with the current state of affairs...why no MJ? I have yet to see anything in these stories that could not take place if Mary Jane was still married to Peter (or at least having her as someone special in his life.). I know you have heard before from other older fans like

me, that we like that as we have grown up, so has Peter. Their relationship and marriage has always been one of the great and unique things to happen to a comic character. I mean, c'mon, not many other comic heroes are married, and none of them have had as meaningful a relationship as Peter and MJ's.

Anyway, I believe in second chances, that's why I started picking up the book again. Hopefully, Marvel does too. There are many of us who can't wait to see Peter and MJ together again. I'm not suggesting you go all "Bobby Ewing" like the newspaper strip did, just give us a solid explanation for them to get together again and make it so. Then this book would go from a 9 to an 11.

So, keep up the good work! Until Norman Osborn scrubs dishes with his head, make mine Marvel!

Eric Schaefer
Via E-mail

Have no fear, Eric. Mary Jane was never meant to be out of the book forever. I daresay we here at ASM HQ value the history she has with Pete even more than our critics do (hopefully you caught the recent trade paperback collection of many of MJ's greatest stories: "Spider-Man/Mary Jane: Face it Tiger, You Just Hit The Jackpot"). You bet your red hair that there are many more plans on the horizon for Pete's former love.

Dear Web-Heads,

Wow. All I can say now that I've finished issue #598. I mean, that's a heck of a cliff-hanger right there. I won't lie to you, I didn't think much of Spidey's title after some of last year's events, and I'm sure you guys are sick of hearing about that. However, American Son has boosted my expectations of this title! I just have three quick questions:

1. Will Joe Kelly be sticking around? Spider-Man's title needs the consistency and if Joe stuck around, there would be some great stories and there'd be a certain familiarity that I think is necessary.
2. Will Steve McNiven ever come back?
3. With Spider-Man #600 coming up, will there be any big plans?

Thanks for reviving this title, and I look forward to many more good reads!

Mike Smith
Ferndale, WA

1. Joe K. is back in the writing chair as we speak for this 2-part Black Cat story. He's also writing a one-shot Deadpool team-up in #611 as well as a top secret story for next spring. But if you really need a reason to buy every issue of Spidey, rest assured he's really writing this letter column also.

2. I wish. McNiven is finishing up his legendary run on Wolverine: Old Man Logan and has some big projects after that, but he's welcome back here any time...even if it's just to write one of these letter columns when Joe Kelly can't.

3-Well, Mike, by now I hope ya read #600. What did you think?

All right, folks...see ya in 7 days for the 2nd part of Black Cat Returns! In the meantime remember: Vote early! Vote often. Vote Bear Claw!

Viva Templar!
Simperin' Steve
9/4/09 (Happy birthday, Sydney!)