MARVEL
PSR 506
STRACZYNSKI
ROMITA JR
HANNA
the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN
THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL:
CHAPTER ONE

PROLOGUE

Somewhere in Peru....

THE BOOK OF
EZEKIEL:
CHAPTER ONE

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I told you, Felix, I don't like knock-knock jokes.
Yeah, but this is a good one.
No such thing.

C'mon, Ramon, just once. Trust me.
Sigh....
All right. Go on.

Knock-knock.
Who's there?
Michael Jackson.

This better be freaking good, Felix. You're talking to somebody who's got *Thriller* on tape, LP, CD and MP3.
It is. Come on.

Knock-knock.
Michael Jackson.
Who's there?
Michael Jackson who?

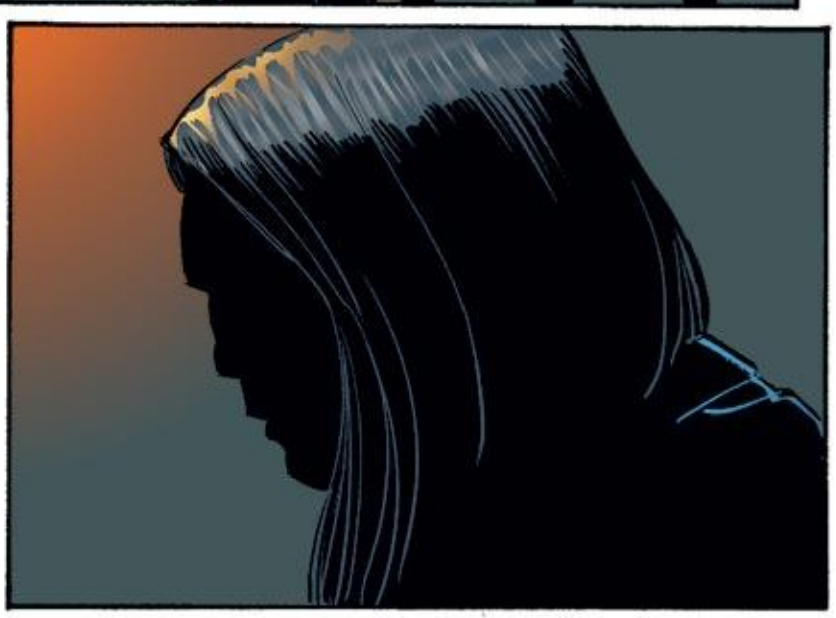
Congratulations! You're on the jury!
That's the most ridiculous--
Knock-knock...

Who...who's there?
...along came a spider and sat down beside her...

Along came a...
Madre de dios...

AAAA

BRRRRRRRRP!
BRRRRRRRRP!
BRRRRRRRRP!

BRRRRRR-


I knew you would come tonight. They wanted to protect me, but I said it would do no good. That you would come regardless.
Did you--
They'll live.
Good. Then there is still hope for you--

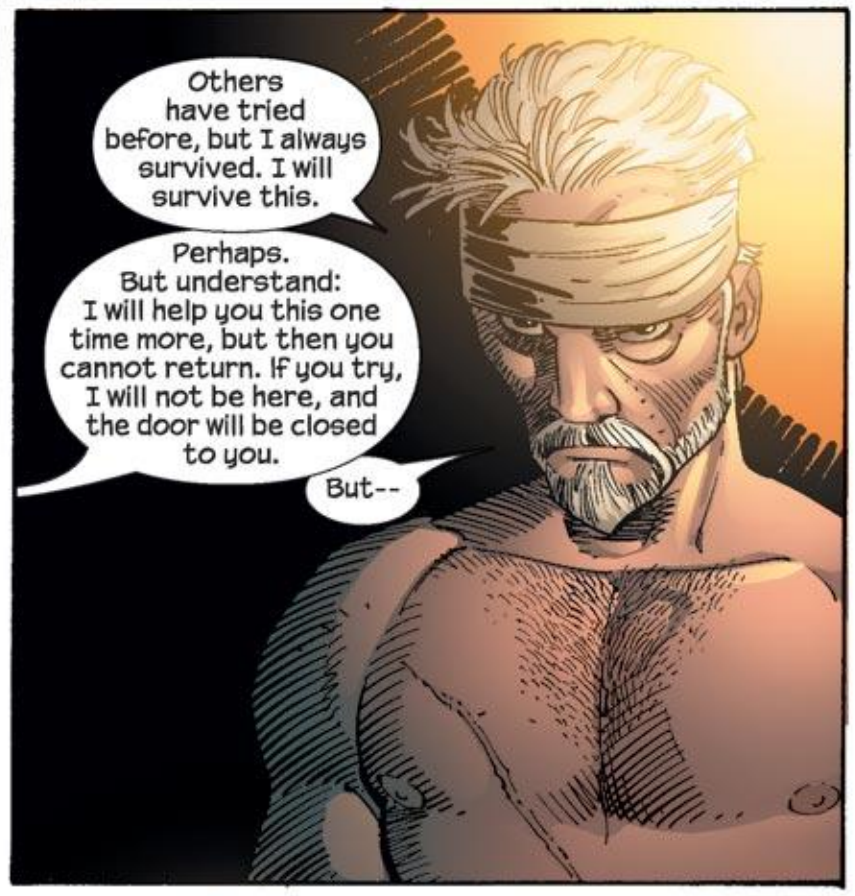
--Ezekiel.
For a little while, at least.

I'm burning up.

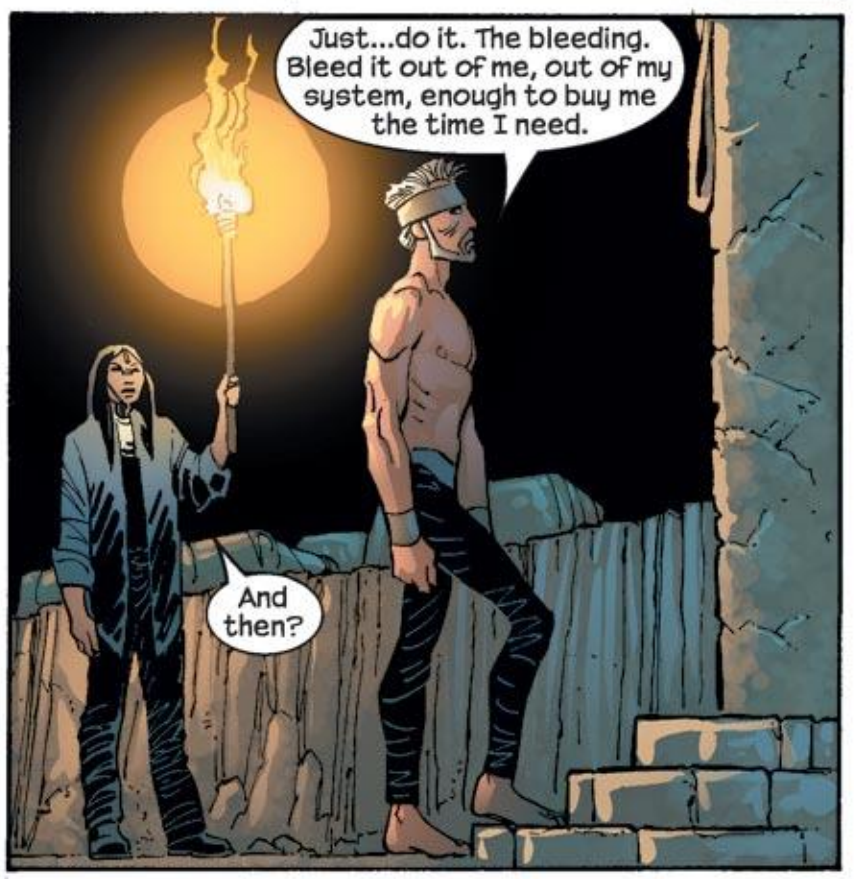
I know.
You have to help me.

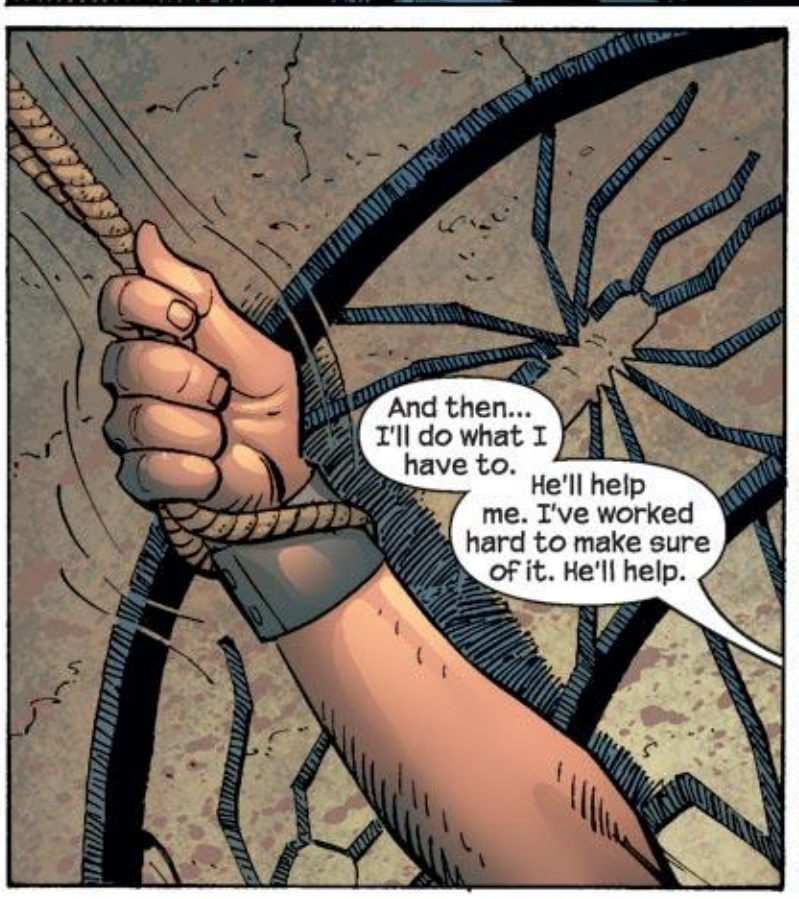
Inca blood flows in my veins. The blood of kings. Of Pachacuti and Inca Roca. When all this was known as Tiwantinsuya, a place of secrets. A place of power.
I am a descendant of kings. I do not *have* to do anything.
I will help you because I *choose* to help you. For what you have done to help my people.

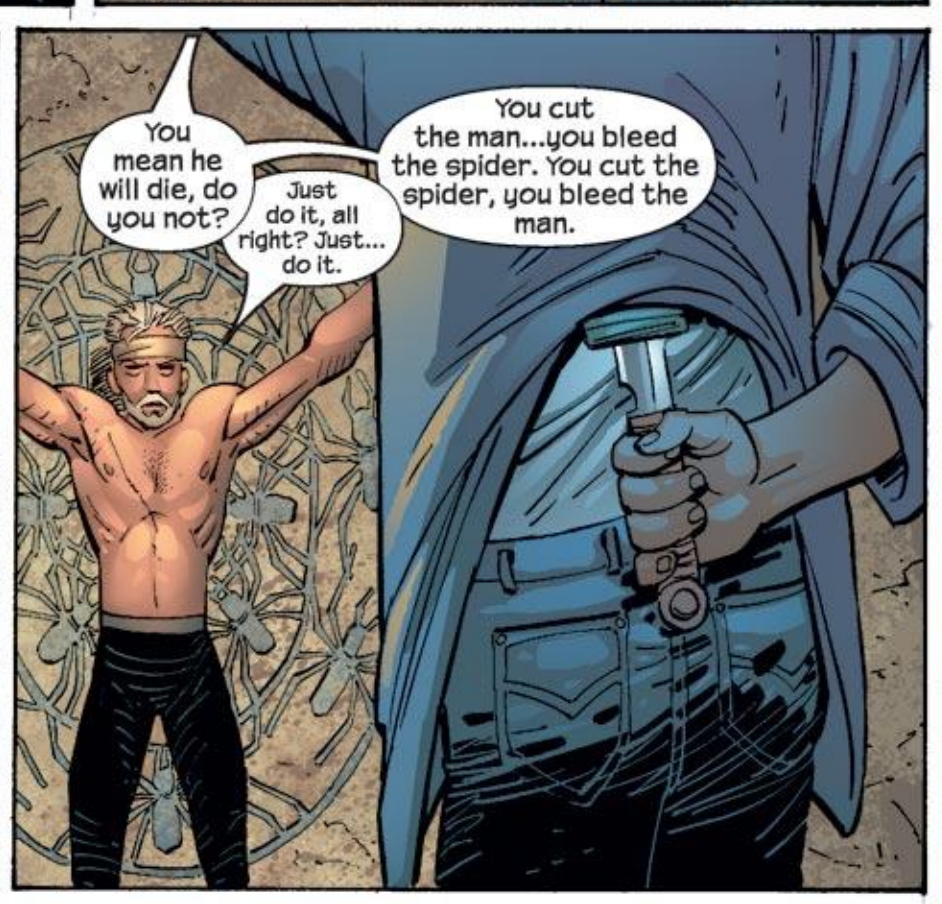
And in sadness for what will happen to you.
Don't write me off yet, Miguel.


Others have tried before, but I always survived. I will survive this.
Perhaps. But understand: I will help you this one time more, but then you cannot return. If you try, I will not be here, and the door will be closed to you.
But--

I must do this, because if you return again, you will not be as you are now. And either you will die... or I will die.
This is the last.
I'm sorry.


Just...do it. The bleeding. Bleed it out of me, out of my system, enough to buy me the time I need.
And then?


And then... I'll do what I have to.
He'll help me. I've worked hard to make sure of it. He'll help.


You mean he will die, do you not?
Just do it, all right? Just... do it.
You cut the man...you bleed the spider. You cut the spider, you bleed the man.

RRRRRRRRRR!

HONK! HONK! HONK! HONK! HONK! HONK! HONK! HONK! HONK

Sorry... 'scuse me...coming through...bad guys to catch...

Nice dress, lady.

You ever think about washing that car, pal? What do you think this is, Jersey?

'Scuse me! Coming through!

Where did you get *that* idea?
Back off, man--
Look, I'm *not* invulnerable. I want to know who's putting this out there because it really hurts my value as a hostage, and I can't afford that, not in this economy.

Just got to keep him talking until I'm a little closer...can't risk webbing the gun...if it goes off--
I'm not telling you again...back off or I kill her!

You think I'm kidding?
Huh? That it? *You think I'm freaking kidding?!*
STOP

CLICK!

Ungh!
BLAM!

EEEEEEE!
AAAAAIIIGH!
What the--who the heck--

Didn't your mother ever warn you not to play with guns? You'll put your eye out.
Ahgh... get off...get off--

Or maybe I'll just do it for you.
Oooof....!

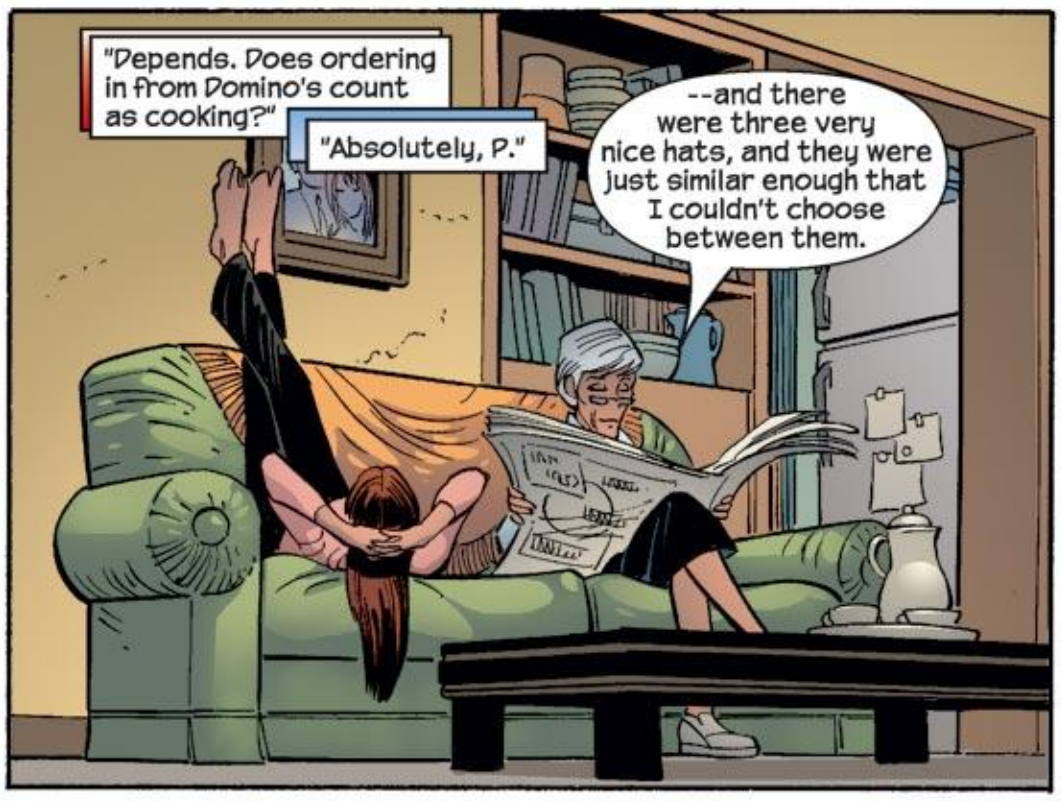
What'll it be? Left or right? Heads or tails?
Ezekiel... let him go--
Maybe I'll take both, just to be sure--

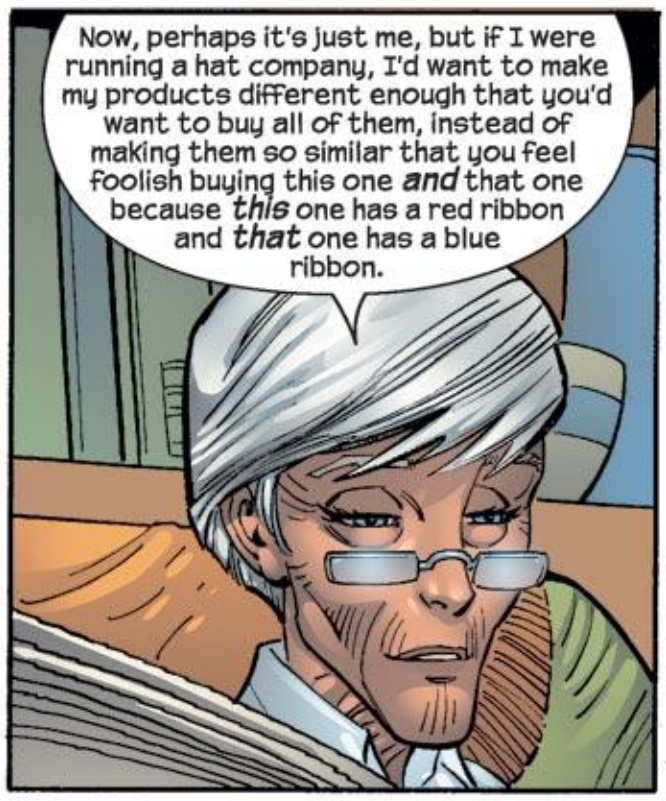
I said let him go!
He's crazy, man! The dude's crazy! I'm getting outta here!

Just gotta get clear, get to my--
That's him!

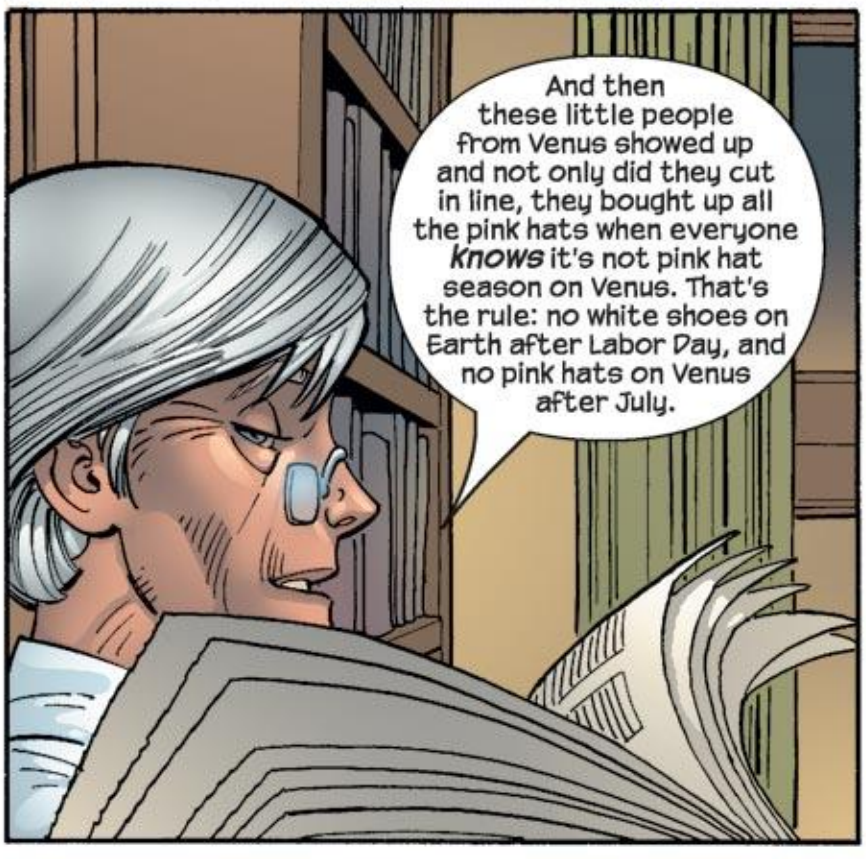
FREEZE!
Okay! Okay! I'm frozen! I'm like SO frozen...I'll do whatever you say....

"...just get me the heck away from those two freaks."
What the heck were you *thinking?* She could have been killed--
Are you kidding?
We're both children of the spider, Peter. Both hunters.
He never had a chance.
Maybe. Maybe not. But I don't like taking chances like that.
No...no, you don't, do you?
And what was that bit with the eyes?
I got carried away, Peter...the thrill of the hunt...
And stop calling me Peter.
Sorry, P. Wasn't thinking.
I mean, I suppose I should be grateful that you showed up--
That would be a commendable start.
--but still...
It worked out in the end. That's what matters.
Anyway...
All things considered, it's... good to see you again, Ezekiel. So what brings you back to New York?
You do, P. But I'll tell you the whole story over dinner.
At your place.
Your wife does cook, doesn't she?


"Depends. Does ordering in from Domino's count as cooking?"
"Absolutely, P."
--and there were three very nice hats, and they were just similar enough that I couldn't choose between them.


Now, perhaps it's just me, but if I were running a hat company, I'd want to make my products different enough that you'd want to buy all of them, instead of making them so similar that you feel foolish buying this one *and* that one because *this* one has a red ribbon and *that* one has a blue ribbon.

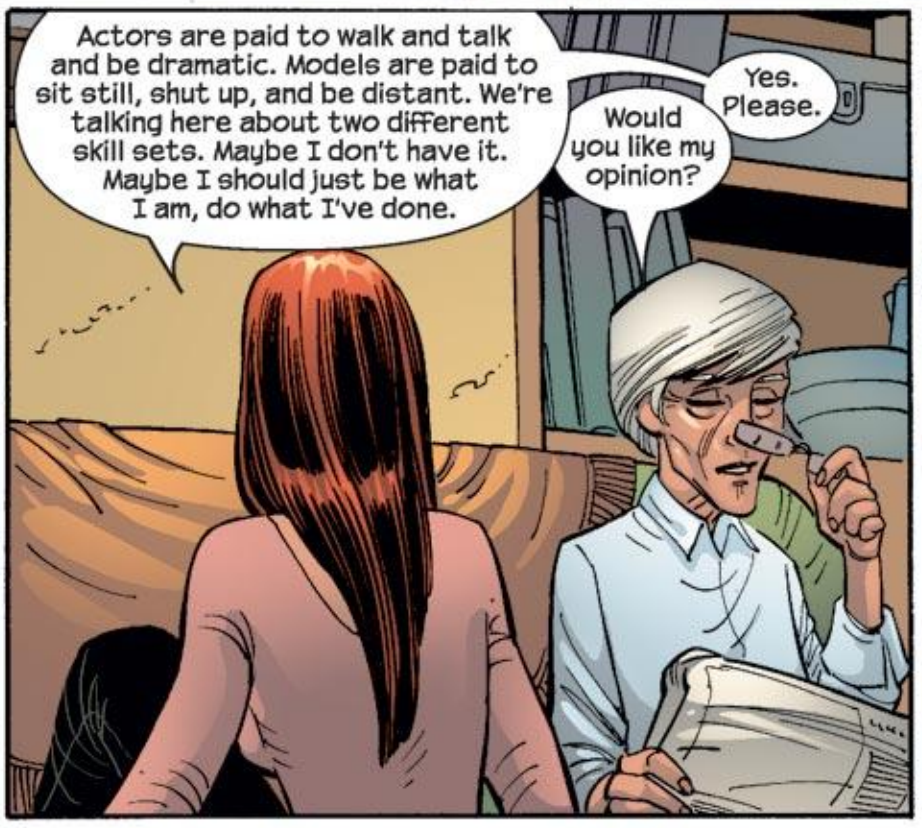
Not that I own a lot of hats to begin with, and I wasn't looking to *buy* two hats in any event, but it's the principle, isn't it, Mary Jane?

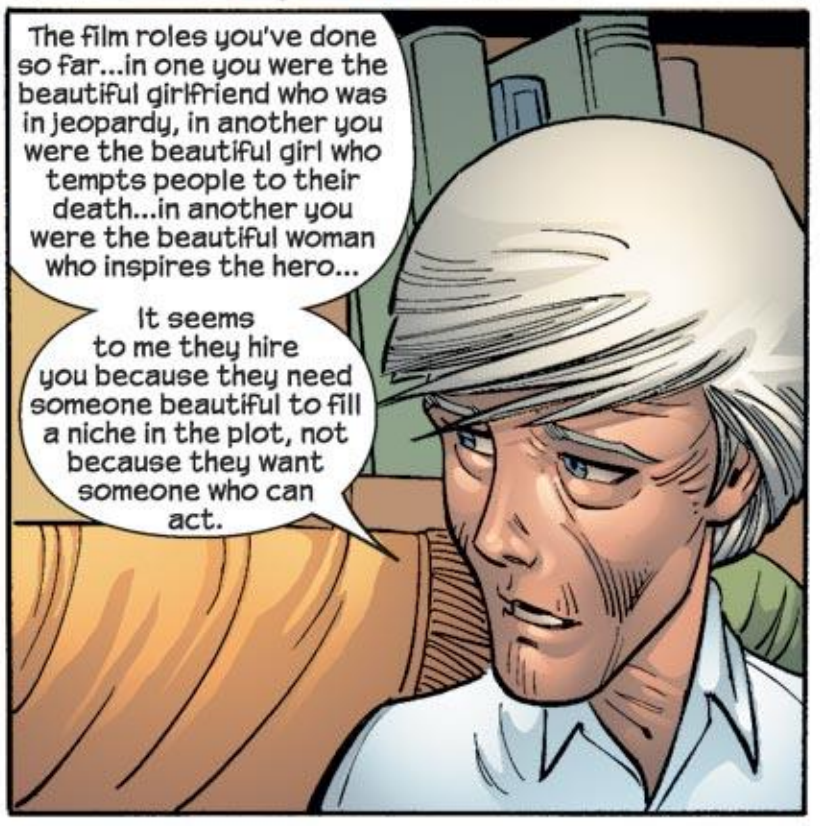

And then these little people from Venus showed up and not only did they cut in line, they bought up all the pink hats when everyone *knows* it's not pink hat season on Venus. That's the rule: no white shoes on Earth after Labor Day, and no pink hats on Venus after July.

Isn't that right?
Uh, huh... I...

...wasn't... listening.
I'm sorry, May, it's--
I understand. You've clearly got a lot on your mind right now.
Is it anything you want to talk about?

When I went to L.A. for the movie, they... they didn't want me for the role. They said they didn't want some model with delusions of being an actress.
I told Peter I turned the job down, I just couldn't...I couldn't, that's all.
But I've been wondering... are they right?


Actors are paid to walk and talk and be dramatic. Models are paid to sit still, shut up, and be distant. We're talking here about two different skill sets. Maybe I don't have it. Maybe I should just be what I am, do what I've done.
Would you like my opinion?
Yes. Please.


The film roles you've done so far...in one you were the beautiful girlfriend who was in jeopardy, in another you were the beautiful girl who tempts people to their death...in another you were the beautiful woman who inspires the hero...
It seems to me they hire you because they need someone beautiful to fill a niche in the plot, not because they want someone who can act.

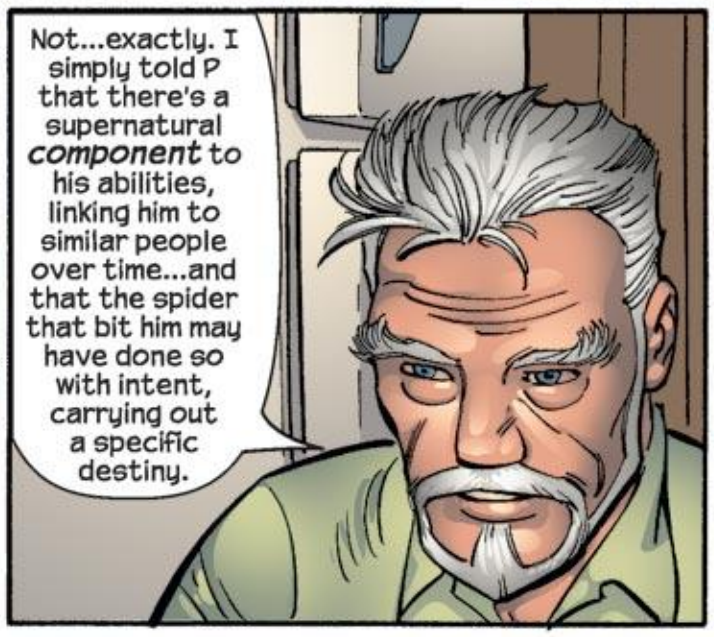
You haven't played a character, MJ, you've only played things that move the story ahead.
I know. Which makes me think maybe I'm expecting too much... maybe I'm shooting too high. Is that possible?
Yes, Mary Jane, it is.

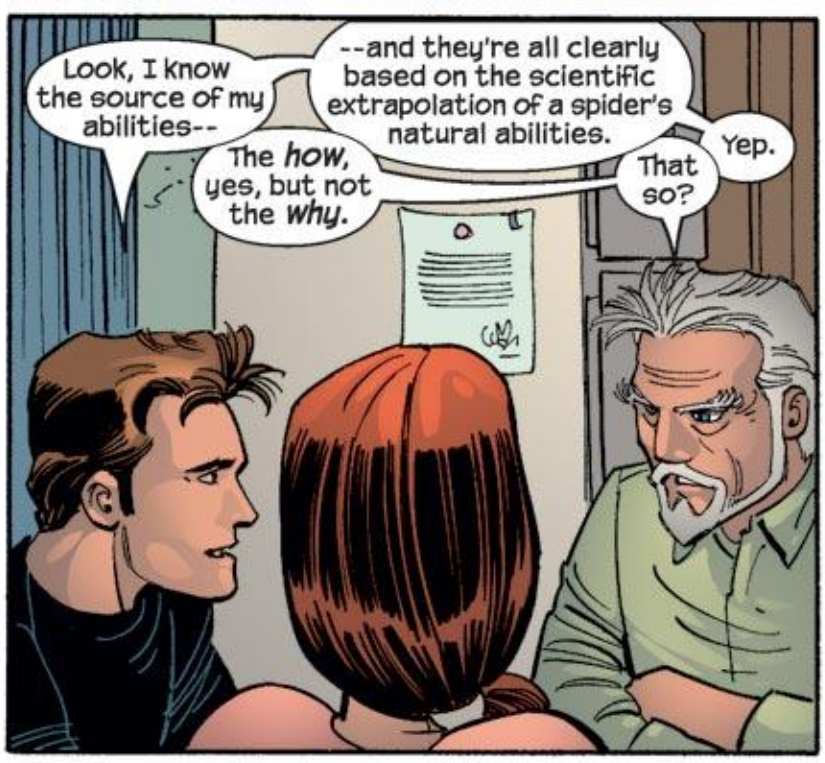
But it's also just as possible that you haven't shot high *enough*.
I left that newspaper behind on purpose, incidentally.

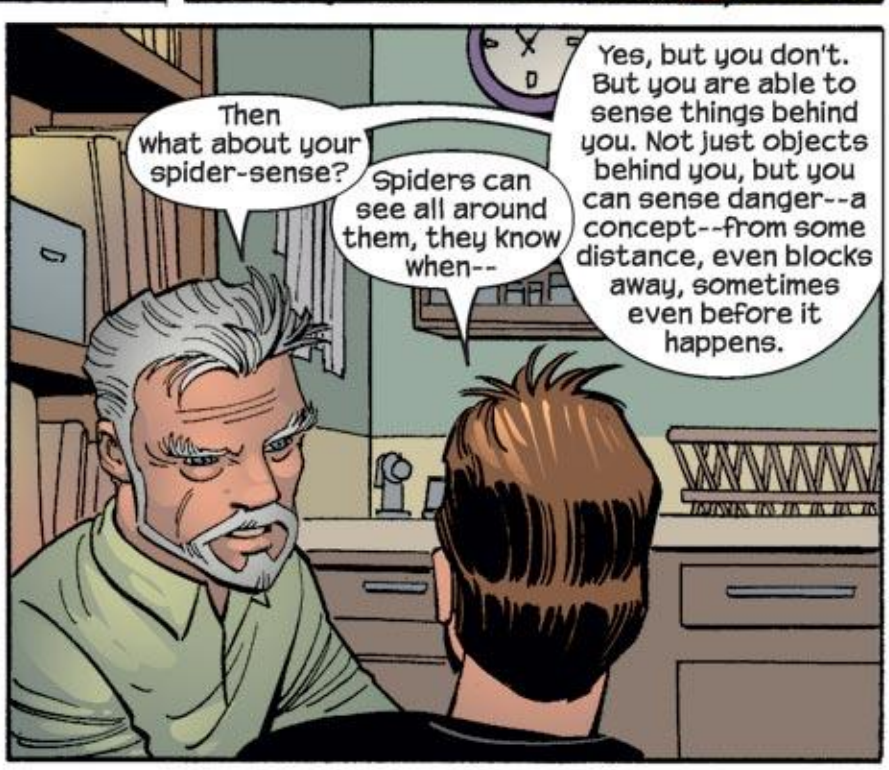
THEATER DIRECTORY
OFF-BROADWAY AUDITIONS
"I have to say, this is quite a surprise..."

...I mean, I often hear about the people Peter meets, but he doesn't usually bring his work home with him, because--
Well, he can't, really.
Secret identity and all that.
Exactly. So this is... nice.

So.
Peter tells me you think he got his powers from Slappy the Spider Fairy.
That's not what I said.
Actually, it is.


Not...exactly. I simply told P that there's a supernatural component to his abilities, linking him to similar people over time...and that the spider that bit him may have done so with intent, carrying out a specific destiny.


Look, I know the source of my abilities--
The how, yes, but not the why.
--and they're all clearly based on the scientific extrapolation of a spider's natural abilities.
That so?
Yep.


Then what about your spider-sense?
Spiders can see all around them, they know when--
Yes, but you don't. But you are able to sense things behind you. Not just objects behind you, but you can sense danger--a concept--from some distance, even blocks away, sometimes even before it happens.

That sound like a natural ability to you? Or something closer to prescience? Precognition? Remote viewing?
Or are you saying you really do have eight tiny spider-eyes in the back of your head, beneath the hair where nobody can see them?

Don't even think about it, MJ.
Just checking. How many fingers am I holding up?
You do know you have to sleep with me, right?
Three.

Slappy says hello.
...redrum, redrum....

I...think I'll clear my place while you two work this out.
I can seeeeeeeee you...
Keep this up and you only *think* you'll be sleeping with me tonight, pal.

You know, MJ, Jeff Goldblum only picked up the genetic traits of a *fly* in that movie and it was really scary...

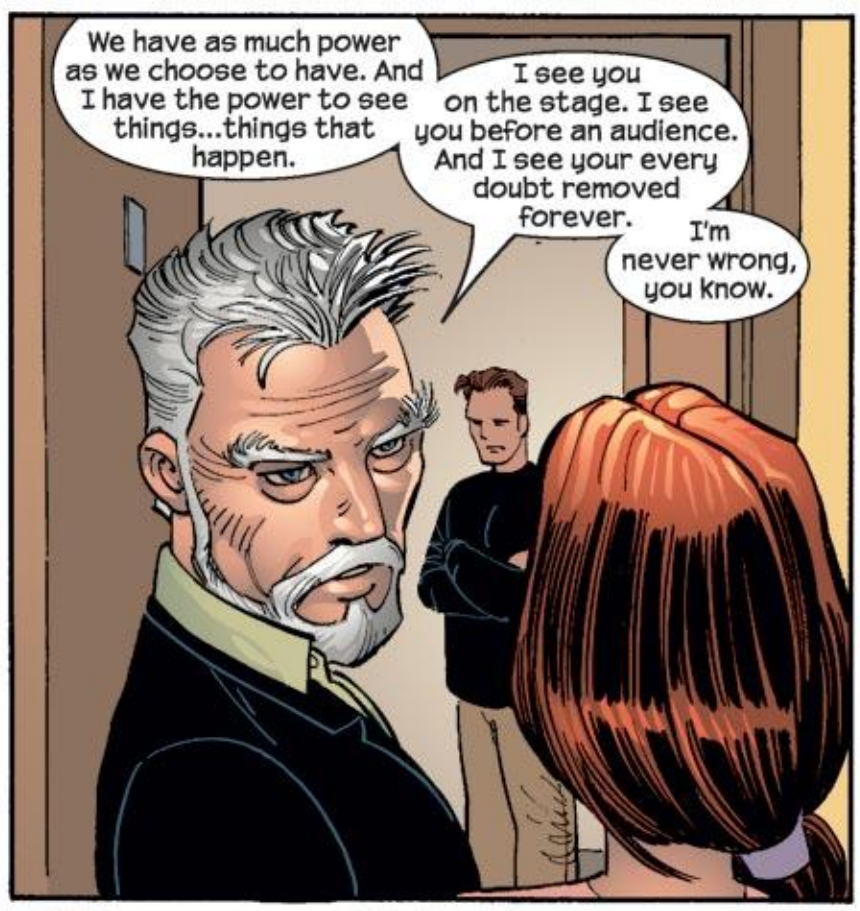
...can you imagine how much scarier it would've been if he'd been in that teleporter with a *spider*?

I am *so* going to hurt you, Peter.
ATER DIRECTORY
OFF BROADWAY AUDITIONS
don't be stupid

"Thank you for the lovely dinner."

My pleasure. Nothing but the best take-out for a friend of Peter's.
Speaking of which...want to take a walk, P?
Sure thing.

Be back in a few, MJ.
One thing, Mary Jane... whatever Peter may think, I do know a few things about destiny.
And about power.


We have as much power as we choose to have. And I have the power to see things...things that happen.
I see you on the stage. I see you before an audience. And I see your every doubt removed forever.
I'm never wrong, you know.

What was that about?
Were you ever a Boy Scout, Peter?
Yeah, but what does that--

"Just doing my good deed for the day."

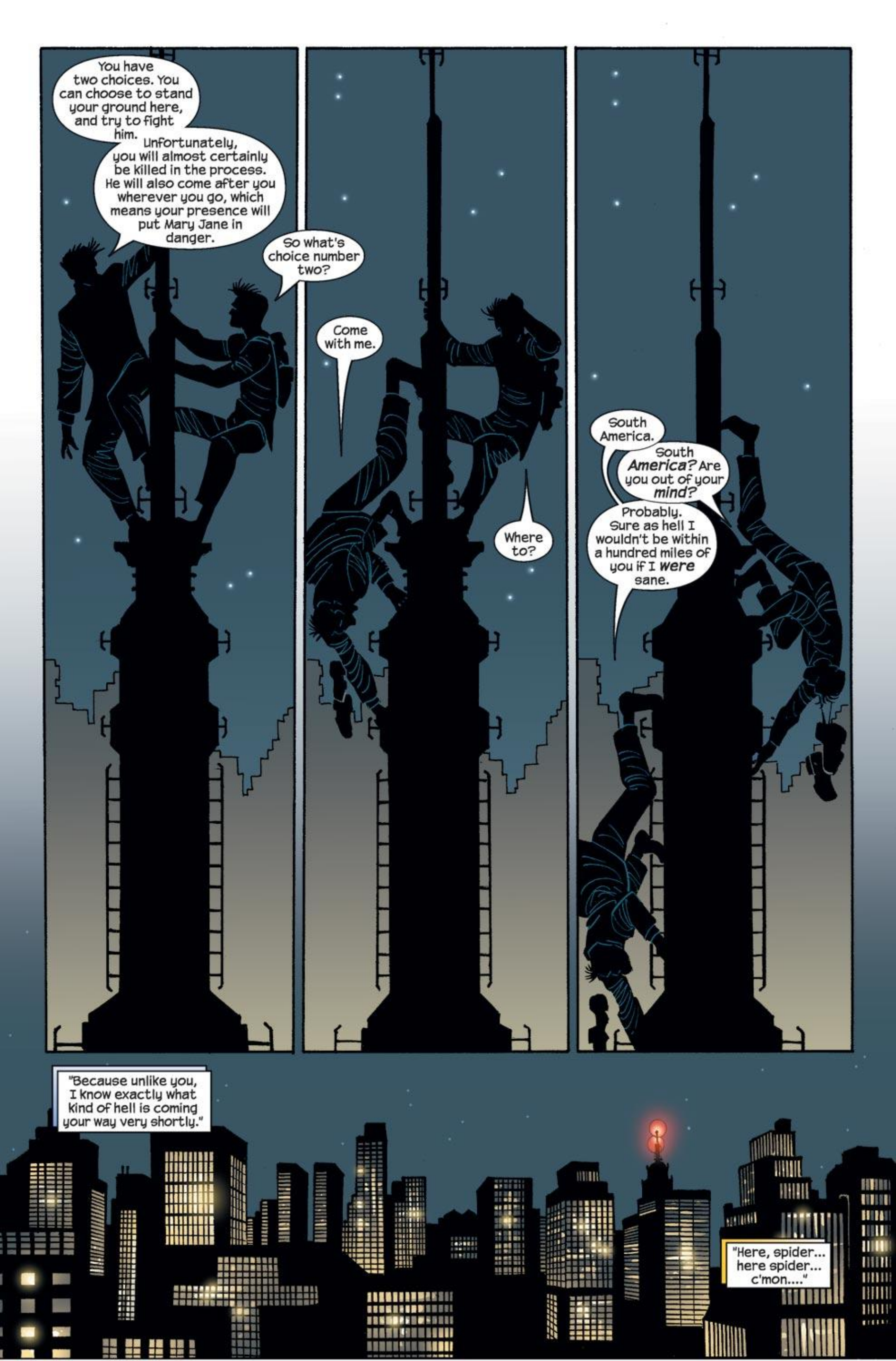
Nice night.
Yeah, it is.
So why do I get the feeling you're about to ruin it for me?
You're in danger, Peter. Terrible danger.
You, and everyone you care about.
"You've probably noticed that for the past year, more and more of your battles have been with forces coming from the supernatural side of the street.
"This is not a coincidence. It's what I warned you about before.
"You've been noticed.
"Your power has a supernatural aspect to it, whether you care to admit it or not, and sooner or later, what goes around, comes around.
"It's not going to stop.
"And it's about to get a whole lot worse."

What you have to understand is that power has three components.
Those that want it.
Those that give it.
And the final component, those who control it. The gatekeepers.

The spider is your totem. Real totemic power comes through supernatural channels. But the way you got your power circumvented that. Which wasn't so bad, as long as the gatekeepers didn't notice.
But now that I've been noticed--
The bill is coming due.

I told you that you were going to go through several trials in terms of supernatural forces arrayed against you. I told you that the worst of them, Shathra, was not the last.
And that there was one more coming. The most dangerous of all.

And I'm guessing you didn't come all this way to tell me he's been held up in traffic.
I'm afraid so, P.
He's coming. The Gatekeeper is coming. Maybe even tonight.


You have two choices. You can choose to stand your ground here, and try to fight him.
Unfortunately, you will almost certainly be killed in the process. He will also come after you wherever you go, which means your presence will put Mary Jane in danger.
So what's choice number two?
Come with me.
Where to?
South America.
South *America?* Are you out of your *mind?*
Probably. Sure as hell I wouldn't be within a hundred miles of you if I *were* sane.
"Because unlike you, I know exactly what kind of hell is coming your way very shortly."
"Here, spider... here spider... c'mon...."

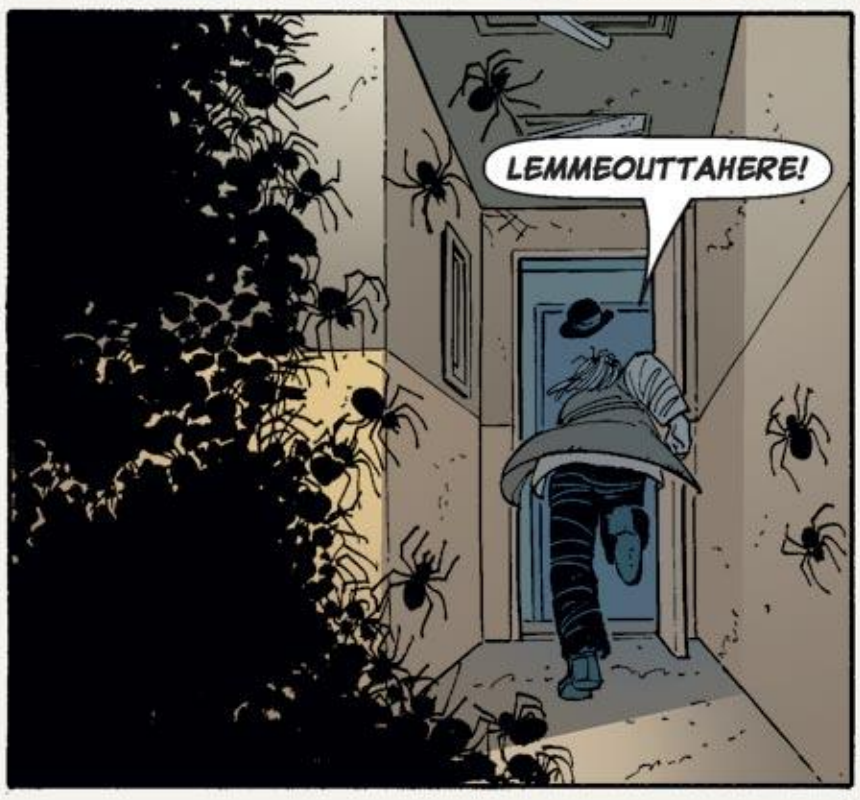
Gotcha!

Heh...*that'll* teach you ta mess around with Lightnin' Jack, fastest spider-smasher in this part of--

--hunh?

WHAM!
WHAM!
WHAM!
WHAM!

Holy...


LEMMEOUTTAHERE!

NEXT: THE GATEKEEPER COMETH
⟨tho don't mith it!⟩