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PLAYWRIGHT
DAVID HEIN
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the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL



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WHEN PETER PARKER WAS BITTEN BY A RADIOACTIVE SPIDER, HE GAINED THE PROPORTIONAL SPEED, STRENGTH AND AGILITY OF A SPIDER; ADHESIVE FINGERTIPS AND TOES; AND THE UNIQUE PRECOGNITIVE AWARENESS OF DANGER CALLED "SPIDER-SENSE"! AFTER LEARNING THAT WITH GREAT POWER THERE MUST ALSO COME GREAT RESPONSIBILITY, HE BECAME THE CRIME-FIGHTING SUPER HERO CALLED...

the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

GREETINGS, TRUE BELIEVERS! Three things are certain in this life: death, taxes...and THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL!

Since the downfall of his company, PETER PARKER has had little to keep him happy save for his patrols as SPIDER-MAN.

Desperately in need of work, Peter returned to his roots at the Daily Bugle, not as a freelance photographer, but as the paper's science editor! As Peter finally begins to embrace the future, his friend and ace reporter BETTY BRANT struggles to move on from the tragedies of the past.

Surely this story will give our web-slinging hero a much-needed respite from the harrowing events of "THREAT LEVEL: RED." HA! Don't bet on it! Read on!



BURY THE LEDES

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WEEKS AGO...



THIS WAY, GENTLEMEN. THE UNDERBOSS WILL SEE YOU NOW.

I DON'T LIKE THIS. IT'S TOO CRAMPED. HOW FAR DOWN ARE WE?

PRETTY FAR, OX.

SMELLS FUNNY.

HUSH. Y'ALL ARE MAKIN' US LOOK BAD.



AND IT'S TOO HOT.

I SAID SHUSH NOW.



TO WARN YA. THERE COULD BE SOME TROUBLE HEADIN' YOUR WAY.

WE WEREN'T THE ONLY ONES CLONED BACK TO LIFE. THE JACKAL RAISED UP NED LEEDS TOO.

THAT REPORTER FROM THE BUGLE?

HE WAS SNIFFIN' AROUND ONE OF MY LITTLE SECRETS AROUND THE TIME HE GOT WHACKED.

LUCKY FOR ME, THAT STORY NEVER SAW THE LIGHT OF DAY.

WELL, MAYBE YOUR LUCK CHANGED.

SOME OF US CLONES STAYED STABLE. OTHERS, LIKE LEEDS, MELTED AWAY...



THE ENFORCERS. BEEN A LONG TIME, BOYS. HOPE YOU DON'T MIND--I'M IN THE MIDDLE OF A STEAM.

BUT THAT SHOULDN'T BOTHER YOU. WORD IS YOU'RE BACK FROM THE DEAD.

AND SURELY THIS CAN'T BE HOTTER THAN THE ACTUAL HELL YOU CRAWLED OUT OF.

THE AFTERLIFE WASN'T LIKE THAT. THERE WAS NO FIRE OR BRIMSTONE. NO PEARLY GATES NEITHER.

ONE SECOND I'M FALLIN' TO MY DEATH. EVERYTHING WENT PITCH BLACK. AND THEN SNAP--

--THAT JACKAL FELLA MADE ME ALIVE AGAIN. THE TRUTH IS, I DON'T LIKE DWELLIN' ON IT.



WHAT ABOUT YOU, OX? HOW CAN YOU BE 'BACK'? YOU'RE ALWAYS AROUND.

NAH. THAT'S SOME OTHER GUY. I'M THE ORIGINAL.

WELL, A CLONE OF THE ORIGINAL. WAIT. THAT MEANS I'M NOT THE ORIGINAL...

STOP. ENOUGH WITH THIS CLONE NONSENSE. WHY ARE YOU ALL HERE?

"...BUT BEFORE HE SHUFFLED OFF, WE CAUGHT OL' NED PLACIN' A CALL..."

"...TO HIS TRUE LOVE AND LONG-WIDOWED WIFE, BETTY BRANT."

"THERE WAS A LOTTA SWEET TALK, TEARFUL GOODBYES..."

"...BUT THEN HE HAD TO GO AND SAY TWO VERY DAMNING WORDS: BLOOD CREEK."

...YOU GO AND REUNITE HER WITH HER HUSBAND IN THE HEREAFTER. UNDERSTOOD?

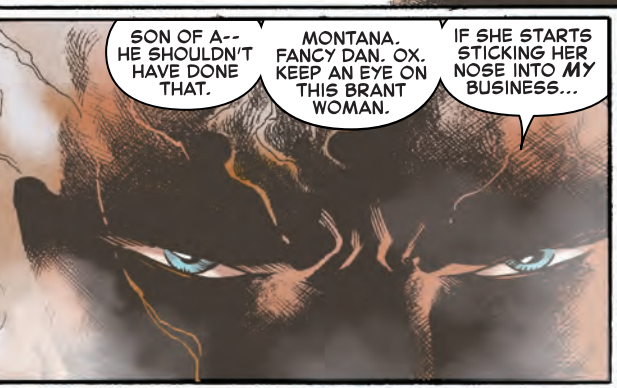
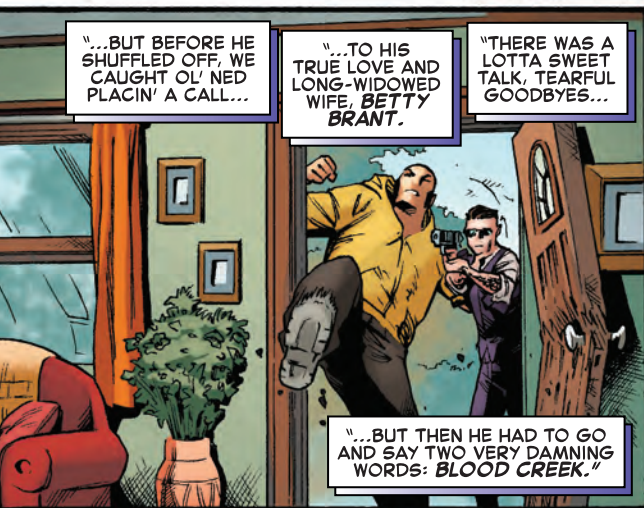
YUP. BUT TAKE IT FROM ME, BOSS, THERE AIN'T NO SUCH THING. THIS IS FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE TALKIN'.

NOTHING LIES BEYOND THE GRAVE.

SON OF A-- HE SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE THAT.

MONTANA. FANCY DAN. OX. KEEP AN EYE ON THIS BRANT WOMAN.

IF SHE STARTS STICKING HER NOSE INTO MY BUSINESS...



THE EAST VILLAGE TODAY



HIS PRESENCE IS **STRONG**, BETTY. YOUR NED IS CLOSE BY. CAN YOU FEEL IT?

OH, I'M FEELING SOMETHING.

I FEEL YOUR WALLET GETTING LIGHTER...AND LIGHTER.

PETER! SHH!

STOP IT!

SPEAK TO HIM.



NED, I HEARD YOU. I GOT YOUR MESSAGE. AND I LOVE YOU TOO.

NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN US, I ALWAYS WILL.

BUT THERE'S SOMETHING I DON'T UNDERSTAND... "BLOOD CREEK." WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? NED?



I KNOW WHAT IT MEANS, BETTS. BECAUSE I WAS THERE. AS **SPIDER-MAN**.

IT MEANS HE WAS A CLONE AND HIS BRAIN WAS MELTING, LIKE THE REST OF HIM.

BUT I CAN'T TELL YOU THAT. WHAT I WOULDN'T GIVE TO MAKE THIS ALL JUST GO AWAY.



I--I CAN HEAR HIM, BETTY. NED IS SAYING IT'S IMPORTANT-- IT'S--IT'S--

FORGIVE ME. IT'S HAZY. I NEED MORE. I NEED--

NINE NINETY-FIVE FOR AN ADDITIONAL FIVE MINUTES.



ENOUGH! BEGONE! AND TAKE THIS NON-BELIEVER WITH YOU!

FINALLY, YOU READ MY MIND.

MADAME ZORA, PLEASE!

GO!



PETER PARKER! I BROUGHT YOU WITH ME FOR **SUPPORT!**

THAT'S WHAT I'M DOING, BETTY. SUPPORTING YOU IN REALITY.

YOU'RE **BETTER** THAN THIS. ALL THAT HOCUS AND POCUS? IT'S **CRAZY!**

ANY CRAZIER THAN STUFF WE'VE ALL SEEN? ALIENS? NORSE GODS? DOCTOR STRANGE?



I KNOW WHAT I HEARD, PETE. MY LATE HUSBAND'S VOICE OVER THE PHONE. WHY WON'T YOU **BELIEVE** ME?

I DO, BETTY. I **TRUST** YOU. BUT I NEED YOU TO TRUST MY... ..GUT?



THIS IS THE PROBLEM WITH OUR FRIENDSHIP, PARKER. IT'S ALWAYS ABOUT **YOU.**

BUT **EVERY** TIME I REALLY NEED YOU TO BE ON **MY** SIDE, TO BE THERE FOR **ME,** YOU'RE **NEVER--**



UGH.

CASE.

IN.

POINT.



SO NOT LIKING THIS. THAT GUY WAS STALKING US FROM THE SHADOWS...

...BUT SINCE HE DIDN'T SET OFF MY SPIDER-SENSE...

...THAT MEANS HE WASN'T STALKING ME. HE'S STALKING **BETTY.**

AND IF THAT'S THE CASE, I WANT ANSWERS!

GO FIGURE.

I'M LEAVING BETTY'S FAKE PSYCHIC...

...TO GO AFTER A REAL CREEP...

...BECAUSE HE DIDN'T SET OFF MY PSYCHIC POWERS.

THE IRONY HERE IS NOT LOST ON ME.

IS THAT IRONY?

♪ IT'S LIKE RA-AII-AIN ON YOUR WEDDING DAY... ♪

FOCUS, SPIDEY.

ALL RIGHT, PAL, IT'S TIME YOU AND I HAD...



...WORDS?



HOW DID HE--?

I WAS RIGHT ON TOP OF HIM! AND HE UP AND VANISHED LIKE SOME KIND OF--

NAH. IT COULDN'T BE A *GHOST*. COULD IT?



NED?



I DID NOT JUST DO THAT.



THIS HAS GONE ON WAY TOO LONG. I NEED TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF WHATEVER *THIS* IS.

FOR BETTY'S SAKE.

STUPID MELTY NED CLONE. YOU OPENED UP THIS CAN O' WORMS...AND NOW IT'S GONNA BE UP TO *ME* TO CLOSE IT!