

"Get ready ta kiss da concrete, Chum!" barks this nameless monster, one of the countless creatures who seem to never have anything better to do than to make life tough for our web-footed friend.

Spider-Man is a national hero, almost a symbol of the mixed-up times we live in. Spidey started about ten years ago as a skinny, introverted high school genius. Now, a decade later, he's a skinny, introverted college loser. He's got a girl friend who thinks him a coward, a batch of life-long friends who don't understand him, an aunt who has two heart attacks a year, and as Peter Parker, struggling photographer, a boss who hates Spider-Man. In the modern day jargon, Spider-Man is relevant. Don't we all have the same problems as Spidey? (We'll some of us... anyway).

Anyway, as relevant as Spider-Man is, he's had the dubious distinction of fighting some of the most gruesome, most horrifying, and downright ugly villains the comic book world has ever seen. They come at him in droves: vultures, lizards, goblins, you name 'em, Spidey's fought 'em. And since no TMT feature is complete without some simply terrifying monsters, we commissioned comics expert Gary Brown to give us a little rundown on all of Spidey's playmates. And you thought Hammer had great villains!..(and playmates)!



THE ALMOST LEGENDARY CAREER OF THE YOUTH KNOWN AS SPIDER-MAN HAD ITS BEGINNING SOME TIME AGO, IN THE SCIENCE HALL OF MIDTOWN HIGH SCHOOL, WHERE A DEMONSTRATION OF RADIOACTIVITY WAS TAKING PLACE...

NO ONE AT THE EXHIBITION NOTICED A TINY SPIDER DESCENDING ON A TWIN STRAND OF WEEB... A SPIDER WHICH FATE HAD CHOSEN TO REWARD A FANTASTIC AMOUNT OF RADIOACTIVITY AT THE PRECISE MOMENT THAT PETER PARKER WALKED BY.

IN SUDDEN SHOCK, THE DYING INSECT BIT THE NEAREST LIVING THING A SPLIT-SECOND BEFORE THE LIFE FADED FROM ITS BODY... AND, THAT NEAREST LIVING THING WAS THE LAD WHO WAS LATER TO BECOME THE WORLD'S MOST EXCITING TEEN-AGER.

A SPIDER JUST BIT ME! BUT... WHY IS MY HAND BURNING SO?!



AS ALMOST EVERY MAGAZINE READER THROUGHOUT THE FREE WORLD KNOWS BY NOW, IT WAS THAT BITE WHICH SO AFFECTED THE CHEMICAL BALANCE IN PETER PARKER'S BLOOD, THAT IT CHANGED HIM INTO THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN!

by GARY BROWN

SPIDER-MAN'S FIENDISH FOES

Suppose you were standing in your high school science class and all of a sudden this radioactive spider dangles down and bites you! What would you do?

Well, you could jump around the room yelling... or sit on the floor and kick... or even grab a newspaper (MT maybe) and go after the spider for revenge. I know I could do all three.

If your name was Peter Parker, however, you would probably discover that the spider's bite affected you in strange ways, ways you wouldn't have expected, let alone believe. Besides giving you a good sized lump on your arm, the nip also transmitted the spider's magnified strength to your frail, abused body. The result: a super-strong, super-sensitive

super-hero named SPIDER-MAN! As a young guy growing up, Peter Parker had enough troubles just getting up for school every morning. Once turned into a web-slinging super-spider though, he found that, along with getting up for school and saving people, he had to go up against some pretty tough characters. Villains bent on both stealing the loot and getting



THEY'VE BECOME GIGANTIC FIGURES...

FIGURES OF MY WORST...MY DEADLIEST ENEMIES!

THEY'RE COMING TOWARDS ME... GROWING AS THEY DRAW NEARER...

AND THE GOBLIN IS LEADING THEM! IT'S ALL HIS DOING! THIS IS THE VICTORY HE'S WAITED FOR!

NOW, SPIDER-MAN... PREPARE TO DIE!

A nightmare scene takes grotesque shape as gigantic versions of Spider-Man's foes combine forces to menace our little web-footed friend. Included in the awesome assemblage are the Vulture, the Rhino, the Green Goblin, and Doctor Octopus--

the best of Spider-Man.

Being a super-hero is not the easiest job in the world—especially when you get into it without the benefit of prior experience. Just when swinging from building to building begins to feel like fun, in flies the first of a long line of fantastically powerful and unbelievably ugly villains — THE VULTURE!

Now the Vulture wasn't the best-looking villain in the world. A

skinny, bald-headed guy who wore a fur collar and a green pair of wings, the Vulture glided through the skies of New York pulling off daring daylight robberies. Spidey originally wanted to make some spending money by getting a few pictures of the old buzzard for J. Jonah Jameson (Publisher of "THE BUGLE") but the two ended up tangling in several classic duels high



in the sky. No matter how swift the Vulture was, he always wound up with a long jail sentence and a few less feathers for his trouble.

LONG ARMS OF THE LAWLESS

Another of the real weirdos Spider-Man had to do battle with was DR. OCTOPUS. As a scientist, the good doctor invented a set of mechanical arms which he wore to carry out radiation experiments. Even though he was called "the most brilliant atomic researcher," something went wrong with one of his tests and a radiation blast permanently fused the mechanical arms to his body. His brain was also damaged in the explosion and Dr. Octopus began entertaining thoughts of becoming "the SUPREME human being on earth." Heck, with six arms he had a head start on everyone else anyway!

Although his mechanical arms gave Doc Ock (as Spidey affectionately called him) a definite advantage over Marvel's web-headed hero, they also proved to be his continual downfall. If the extra arms were not getting tangled up with each other, or getting trapped under fallen debris, then they proved to be quite clumsy wher



BUGLE publisher Jonah Jameson never misses a chance, for some unknown reason, to badmouth poor Spidey in print. But Jonah's adverse editorializing pales in comparison to the devious aggressions of the Green Goblin, considered by many to be Spider-Man's most formidable foe.

fighting with the quick moving Spider-Man. Needless to say, though, Doc Ock has never been soundly defeated by Spidey and keeps coming back for more hand to hand to hand combat.

The fact is, just like Dr. Octopus, most of Spider-Man's foes make a number of return visits each year. Some of them come back for personal satisfaction, some return for more thievery and others reappear because they are just plain stupid! Take **SANDMAN** for instance. Here is a guy who has the ability to change his body into movable sand at will, but has trouble just counting to ten. Each time he comes up against Spidey they slug it out for a few pages, then Spider-Man tricks ol' Sandy into standing in front of a vacuum cleaner or something and it is all over.

Likewise, **THE RHINO**, an ugly dude dressed up in a rhinoceros suit and weighing in at what must have been a couple of tons. He did a great job of crashing through walls and stomping on the ground, but he was no match for our favorite web-slinger. In fact, the Rhino was a real dud as a villain. If he had any brains at all he would have latched on with some football team as a fullback. He would have made a fortune!

There also was the **KANGAROO**. It does not take much to realize that here was a guy who could jump like he was the entire Los Angeles Laker basketball team rolled into one. When asked how he obtained his unique ability to leap, the Kangaroo replied, "I lived in kangaroo country—eating what they ate—going where they went—working, training!" He jumped all over New York, but finally tired and Spidey shipped him off to the stockade, where we hear he's still keeping on his toes.

MORE MONSTERS, MADMEN AND MISCELLANEOUS MEANIES

MYSTERIO was another of Spider-Man's unusual enemies and he was just what his name implied, a real mystery. As a former special effects man for television and motion pictures, he specialized in monster and science fiction costuming. One day he put his talents to work imitating Spider-Man (costume, webbing and all) and going around committing daring robberies. When that became too dangerous, he designed his own



The mad but brainy Doc Ock also has six arms to play around with, but they never reach out in friendship when Spidey is around.

helmeted uniform which made him appear to be something from outer space.

Despite all his special effects and clouds of smoke, Mysterio could not stand up to more than a few Spider-Man punches. Their first battle scene is perhaps one of the most spectacular in all of comics history. Spidey and Mysterio traded blows while hopping across an outer space setting for a movie. Jumping from planet to planet and running across a moon-like terrain was most effective, especially when you consider Mysterio's

background and special talents.

Possibly the greatest villain Spider-Man has ever faced, however, was the **GREEN GOBLIN**. The Goblin was just what his name implied, a green, impish goblin who flew around on what looked like a jet-propelled vacuum cleaner. Believe me, the Green Goblin was a first-class freak—always laughing and zooming around the sky. He possessed a sort of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde complex, being a successful businessman part of the time (whose son was Spidey's best friend) and uncontrollably changing into the Goblin during his off hours.

The pair have clashed many times, but neither has ever actually won a contest. Since the Goblin's problem was basically a psychological one, in his impish state he was reckless, carefree and very cunning. His efforts were directed at making a fool of Spider-Man and totally defeating him. Needless to say, Spidey had his hands full. Certainly when the time comes to choose the ten best villains in all of comics, the Green Goblin will be high in the running, and might even zoom to the top of the list.

LEAPIN' LIZARD!

Another of Spidey's all-time great villains was the **LIZARD**. The Lizard was... well... a lizard. He lived in the depths of the Florida Everglades and while not being classified as one of the most original of Spider-Man's foes, he certainly gave him some of his most memorable battles. In reality, the Lizard was Dr. Curtis Connors, a one-armed chemist who was trying to regain his lost arm by experimenting with reptiles. Just as a lizard regenerates his tail after it's been chopped off, Dr. Connors was hoping to grow another arm by drinking some special formula prepared after a detailed study of a lizard's body chemistry. Unfortunately (for Spider-Man), Connors managed to grow another arm, but, as the result of an unforeseen side effect, he also changed into a man-sized lizard. The Lizard, complete with his horde of alligators, was not going to let anyone stand in his way—including Spider-Man.

During their numerous meetings, Spider-Man faced a definite disadvantage. He did not want to harm the poor, demented Dr. Connors, even in his Lizard state, yet staying out of the way of the



Walls crumble and the earth trembles before the two-tonned advance of the Rhino. While his body may be the heaviest around, his brain is strictly lightweight and Spider-Man has little trouble leading this loser around by the horn.

FOES

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Lizard's slashing tail and powerful jaws was sometimes more than the teenage spider could handle. Everytime they met it was a matter of Spidey keeping the Lizard occupied while attempting to find some cure to change him back to human form... and if you have ever tried to hold on to a slippery, slimy lizard, you know it ain't an easy thing to do.

All through his adventures, Spider-Man has tangled with many different enemies. Most of them were out to either discredit or defeat him, but rarely did they actually try to kill him. When MORBIUS came along, however, all that changed. Morbius, you see, was an honest-to-goodness, "died in the wool" vampire! As a human, Morbius was slowly dying from an incurable blood disease. Trying to develop an enzyme which would allow him to live accidentally changed him into a blood-craving vampire in the meanest sense of the word.

Morbius donned a bat-like costume and attacked his victims one by one in order to prolong his blood-lusty life. He mistakenly

From the advent of the COMICS CODE on October 26, 1954 to February 1, 1971, the date of its first revision, vampires were expressly forbidden to appear in any magazine published by a member comics group of the COMICS MAGAZINE ASSOCIATION. The establishment of the code, which was demanded by the general public, was carried out by the comics companies so that they could avoid censorship from a source outside of the industry. Comics companies had to cut back on all stories involving vampires and other human deformities (along with violence and crime) in order to have their magazines distributed by the national distributors and to receive the seal of approval from the COMICS CODE AUTHORITY.

One final example of a story that could not be repeated after the establishment and before the revision of the COMICS CODE was

A depiction of a Victorian vampire at work; a page from "Varny the Vampire" by Thomas Prescott-Frost as it appears in Anthony Master's THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE VAMPIRE, one of the books always found on any TMT Required Reading list.



attacked Spidey one evening and the pair fought one of the most awe-inspiring battles ever drawn, with Spider-Man valiantly trying to save his own skin, and Morbius, likewise attempting to go on living by drinking the blood of the costumed hero. Their first encounter left Morbius sinking to the bottom of the local river, but as everyone knows, you cannot keep a good vampire down for long. He's already returned to comics only months after his watery plunge, and he'll no doubt be with us for a long time.

BEWARE THE SPIDER'S BITE

Being Spider-Man then involves a bit more than ironing out a few personal problems and being "relevant." He has gone up against some of the toughest villains ever to grace a comic book page. Villains out to do more than rob a few banks and throw a few punches. Deadly, grotesque-looking characters out to defeat a teen-ager whose only asset is a spider bite and a colorful costume.

So listen, if you happen to be in science class and this glowing spider starts edging toward you—RUN! There just may be a day when you will have to tackle Green Goblin, Morbius and the Lizard... and that, my friend, is no way to spend your free time. ■



"Midnight Mess" from a 1953 issue of TALES FROM THE CRYPT. (This story was reprinted in the hardcover HORROR COMICS LIBRARY OF THE 1950's.)

The story tells of a young man who starts to gag on a bit of food at a restaurant his girlfriend recommended to him. Said girlfriend tells him that the guesses he has made are right: he is choking on blood soup and fricasseed blood clots. She continued to explain that just as normal people go to places to eat prepared food, so do modern-day vampires. This she calmly relates to him as the vampires present drive a spigot through his neck and drink his blood... fresh from the tap! It is no wonder that the public criticized such stories.

Stories like "Midnight Mess" still cannot appear, for the revision of the COMICS CODE only allows vampires in the old traditional sense to appear.

Morbius compensates for his lack of traditional vampire powers with a sharp mind and a quick pair of hands, which he often puts to good use against that suffering superhero, Spider-Man.

Seem here resting in peace is Spider-Man's answer to the Dracula legend, a monster called Morbius. Although he called himself a vampire, he couldn't even turn such basic tricks as changing into a bat or becoming a shapeless vapor. Some vampire...



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