

Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man (2016) #14
“Days of Deception, Pt. 4: The Custom-Made Perspective”

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[Page 1]

[Splash page. An aerial view of Manhattan Island, with the tactical AI grid from the previous issues.]

Tactical AI: Based on visual surveillance, a large explosion took place at Stark Tower.

Hold.

Cherenkov Radiation burst detected. Source unknown.

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Cherenkov Radiation burst detected. Source unknown.

Biological scans are recording 2.4 million lifeforms on Manhattan Island.

[Page 2]

[Panel 1: The Baxter Building. Reed and Sue are rushing between consoles, having just detected the explosion of Stark Tower in the previous issue. MJ is standing in front of the massive wall monitor, hand cupped over her mouth in terror, with Annie in her arms as Felicia and Johnny try to comfort her.]

Annie: Daddy?

MJ: Oh God... Peter...

Felicia: Don't worry MJ, I've known Peter a long time and I know he loves you with all his heart. He'll go to the ends of the Earth to make sure he comes back to you, even if it's just to tell you he loves you, or to try to make you laugh with one of his jokes.

[Panel 2: Mary Jane and Felicia hugging.]

MJ: Thank you.

Felicia: Anytime.

[Panel 3: A shot from just across the street from Stark Tower, as Spider-Man's gloved hand grasps the rooftop.]

[Panel 4: Spider-Man flops down on the roof, breathing heavily, clutching his chest in pain. His right hand is holding a web-bag filled with canister-like items.]

[Panel 5: Spider-Man grabs the canisters, slinging the bag across his shoulder.]

Spider-Man: I'm okay.... Just a little breather...

[Panel 6: Spider-Man jogs across the rooftops, huffing in pain.]

Spider-Man: Alright... I'm good.

[Page 3]

[Panel 1: Reed looks away from the, holding a holographic keyboard as he types commands into a separate monitor.]

Reed: I'm trying to ping Peter's location, but it's scrambled. He's showing up all over the city.

[Panel 2: A knock on the monitor's camera, with all of the Baxter Building's inhabitants looking at the monitor in relief.]

???: Sorry I took so long.

[Panel 3: Spider-Man is hanging on the side of the Baxter Building, holding the tablet and the web bag while leaning into the camera.]

Spider-Man: Had to deal with a couple of speedbumps.

[Panel 4: Peter takes off his mask as he enters through the ASM #1 trap, MJ rushing over to him.]

MJ: Peter! You're okay!

Peter: I think so. Gonna need to sit down for a while.

But that's not important.

[Panel 5: Peter hands over the tablet to Reed, crunched in several places and flickering, but still functioning, the rest of the formula having been added on the journey over from Avengers Tower.]

Peter: I need this formula made into a serum. It should remove Cindy's excess healing factor without taking her powers. Custom request on her behalf.

Reed: Peter. You're injured. Your scans on entry showed most of your ribs are cracked, and your kneecap is splintered.

Peter: I'm fine. I can heal in a few hours. Cindy has less time than that.

Sue: I'll work on it. I didn't get my PhD in Bio-Chem for nothing.

Peter: I-- *sigh*. Thanks, Sue.

Felicia: Let's get you to the med-bay, Pete.

[Panel 6: MJ and Felicia support Peter as he limps down the hall to the med-bay.]

Peter: We've got a breather.... Let's use it.

[Page 4]

[Panel 1: Black panel. Silent panel.]

[Panel 2: Cindy snaps up, panting and breathing in heavily.]

[Panel 3: Peter, unmasked, is sitting on a adjacent med-bed, as a HERBIE bot scans him over.]

Peter: Welcome back to the land of the living, Cin.

Cindy: I... thanks.

What happened to you?

Peter: I blew up Stark Tower. Still shaking off the worst of it.

HERBIE: Your recovery progress is remarkable, Mr. Parker. Your accelerated healing factor has expedited your complete recovery.

I grant you a clean bill of health!

Peter: Thanks, Herb.

[Panel 4: Peter heads out of the med-bay, Cindy slowly getting used to walking again. Peter's eyes are worn and tired, but his stance is resolute and firm.]

Peter: C'mon. We've got your Symbiote boxed up and ready to be interrogated. We need to figure out more about why they're here and what their plans are.

Cindy: How do you interrogate a pile of goo?

Peter: We're going to give it a voice.

[Page 5]

[Panel 1: All of the Baxter Building crew is gathered around a clear glass box, as Reed places a lab rat into the box, which contains Cindy's Symbiote.]

Reed: I'm not sure about this, Peter.

This Symbiote could be radically different from Venom. We don't know what it could do to the rodent.

Peter: Don't worry, Reed. We're giving it a small creature for a reason.

Plus, I modded the box. It has sonic containment tech. If it wants to get out, it'll be screeching in pain instead.

[Panel 2: Peter looks over to Johnny, Felicia and MJ.]

Peter: I'll speak to it alone.

You guys mind giving me a couple of minutes?

Johnny: Sure thing, Pete. We'll be right outside if you need us.

[Panel 3: As MJ closes the door behind her, Peter glares towards the reader, from the Symbiote's POV.]

Peter: Alright, Symby. I'm not going to pussyfoot around, so here are the rules.

I'm going to ask some questions. You back-talk me? I raise the sonics up a notch. You refuse to answer? Sonics. You tell me something and I find out it was a lie?

[Panel 4: Peter's face, teeth grinding.]

Peter: I'll pull **every** trick I know works on Symbiotes, and make your entire existence a **misery**.

[Page 6]

[Panel 1: Peter supports himself by gripping the edge of the table, leaning his face towards the casing.]

Peter: First off: why are your kind on Earth?

Symbiote: Because we were born.

[Panel 2: Peter turns the knob, the increased sonics causing the Symbiote noticeable discomfort.]

Peter: I'm serious. Answer me or it gets worse.

Symbiote: Fine.

[Panel 3: Close up of the Symbiote.]

Symbiote: Our planet... is overpopulated, and with no hosts for our new spawn.

Thus, we got in contact with one of the lesser members of our kind.... The one who calls himself Venom.

Peter [op]: Eddie Brock. We've met.

Symbiote: He promised a way to guarantee us a foothold onto your world, in exchange for a position of power among us. And when a society becomes desperate enough? You're willing to make difficult decisions. And that includes bringing back the inferiors. The ones that pollute the gene pool.

[Panel 4: Close up of Peter's face, where he's sneering in anger. The sound effect of the sonics whining is getting slightly higher in the lower portion of the panel]

Symbiote: But... this form of treatment... Venom never mentioned this side of you.

[Panel 5: Johnny, MJ and Felicia are watching outside.]

MJ: What's he doing?

Felicia: It looks like he's sonic-boarding the Symbiote!

[Panel 5: Peter pounds on the glass, using his other hand to up the sonics, causing the Symbiote to recoil and stretch in pain.]

Symbiote: We were told that you would-

Peter: Would what? Just sit back and let Venom take over the world?! Because I won't!

Symbiote: But our cause is just! Your kind and ours- working together to better the other!

Peter: That's bull and you know it!

You won't stop at Manhattan! You'll take this state!

Then the country!

And then the world!

That's eight billion people in danger of being just disposable hosts!

If I have to kill every single one of you to keep Earth safe-

[Panel 6: Peter cranks up the sonics to their maximum, shouting towards the Symbiote.]

Peter: --I'll do it! Don't think I **won't!**

[Page 7]

[Panel 1: Felicia tries opening the door, with little to no success. Johnny is trying to override the lock, with equally pitiful results.]

MJ: He's killing it! We have to stop him!

Felicia: He's locked himself in! Torch, you have the access codes?!

Johnny: He... he changed them! Only Reed can do that!

[Panel 2: Peter glowering at the Symbiote, as it shrieks in pain, slowly peeling itself off of the lab rat.]

Peter: Do you know what your kind has done to mine? To **me**?!

It feels like **that**.

[Panel 3: Cindy motions for Felicia and Johnny to move aside, with their compliance.]

Cindy: Lemme try.

[Panel 4: Cindy's kick smashes the door down, as both Felicia and Johnny rush towards Peter.]

Cindy: Boss, you've gotta stop!

[Panel 5: Cindy and Johnny try to restrain Peter by his arms, while Reed binds him by the body and Sue forcefields his legs. Felicia and MJ begin altering the controls, with the Symbiote slowly recovering.]

Reed: Peter, that's enough!

You need to calm down!

Symbiote: This... was unexpected.

Peter: Let me go! I need to stop them!

Reed: Exactly! We know why they're here and how we can fix this!

There's no need to cause it further harm!

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[Panel 1: Peter continues fighting the combined force, to no avail.]

Peter: You don't-- ngh- you don't get it! We need to destroy that Symbiote now! Or else it's still a threat!

Felicia: Peter, this isn't you! We don't kill!

You don't kill!

That's... that's not how this **works**.

[Panel 2: As the group throws Peter onto the ground, panting and shaking, Peter's bloodshot and exhausted eyes are the only color visible in shadows.]

Peter: This... this is **different**.

Felicia: And how exactly **is** this different?

[Panel 3: Massive panel. Peter has finally snapped, whipping his head around and pointing angrily at the group surrounding him. He's broken down, eyes bagged and tears spilling down his face.]

Peter: **BECAUSE YOU DON'T KNOW VENOM OR ANY OF HIS KIND THE WAY I DO!**

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[Panel 1: All the other characters are frozen, having realized the situation, as Peter shakes from his never-ending sobbing.]

[Panel 2: Peter is leaned up against the wall, slowly recovering from his quick breakdown.]

Peter: They don't just combine with you. They **become** you.

Every thing you know, even the little things you try to block out... they know it. It's **abusive**. They know it, and they love playing **puppetmaster** with your sleeping body.

You know it. But the Symbiote makes it so it's a pleasure cruise. You don't even know you're being drugged until it's too late and you've crashed the car.

[Panel 3: Close up of Peter's face.]

Peter: They **push** you. I would know. Venom pushed me.

And the only way to ever keep them from winning is if **we push back**. Harder. Faster.

We can't run. The only thing that does is encourage them to overtake us. That's all this is to them.

For our **war**, it's almost a **game** to them. Just one giant game of chess. And they've set up all of the pieces just right.

Otherwise, a lot of people just... die. In **stupid, pointless** ways. Trying to hold a line that nobody else will.

[Panel 4: MJ has sat next to Peter, holding Annie as she sits.]

Annie: Daddy... you 'kay?

Peter: MJ... I'm so, so sorry.

MJ: You don't really want to kill Eddie, do you?

Peter: I'm... not sure. Only if there's no other option.

MJ: Then you don't have anything to be sorry for. Not yet.

[Panel 5: MJ, Annie and Peter gingerly hug. Silent panel.]

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[Panel 1: Peter slowly gets up, breathing heavily.]

Peter: I need to be alone for a while.

There's-

[Panel 2: Peter walks away, holding his arms close to his body.]

Peter: -There's some things a hug can't fix.

[Panel 3: MJ and Annie, with Reed investigating an alarm.]

MJ:Peter....

Annie: Daddy... Look out for scary monsters....

Reed: Ah, the security grid just picked up someone on the outer surface of the building.

Looks like Carol was able to make it here in one piece. I'll let her in.

[Panel 4: MJ stands up, with the rest of the group hanging in the background, Reed in particular as he raises up questions.]

Reed: Is it... really this bad? How did we not see this before?

Johnny: I did. When we were first fighting Venom. I just assumed that it was to get Annie back.

Maybe it was.

But when he fought... it was aggressive. He looked like he wanted to get rid of Venom.

MJ: Peter wouldn't let any of us know what's going on.

He thinks that Venom's presence on Earth-

-all of this-

-is his fault.

[Panel 5: Close-up of MJ, who is slightly disheartened.]

MJ: It isn't. We all know that. But he'll keep beating himself up over this.

And eventually, he'll come around. I know my husband.

[Page 11]

[Panel 1: Captain Marvel lands in the main Baxter Building atrium, as the doors seal behind her. Reed greets her by elongating himself high enough for a handshake, as the rest of the group sans Peter has gathered to greet her.]

Reed: Glad you could make it, Carol.

I just received word from Steve....

[Panel 2: Large panel. Most of the heroes assembled to fight the Symbiotes are on their last legs. Jessica Jones, Luke Cage and Iron Fist are collapsed on the street, Moon Knight is desperately throwing every tool at his disposal to slow them down. Captain America, though beaten and with a massive splinter in his helmet, continues to fight, slamming his shield into a Symbiote, and Rom, Toxin and Firestar are barely holding on, firing wide beams to slow down the Onslaught. She-Hulk is being infected in the background, and Falcon is keeping his distance by firing hard-light feathers from the air. Behind shattered police cruisers and busted-up tanks dropped in by the Air Force, Carlie, Yuri, and their officers, along with members of the Army and Marine Corps, fire their weapons, however ineffective, at the oncoming wave.]

Reed [Cont'd cap]: ...things aren't looking good from their end.

Background voice: We're being overrun!

Background voice: Hold this position!

Background voice: Are you insane?! We have to run, or we're all done for!

Background voice: Siege units inbound! Lieutenant, west flank is falling back!

Moon Knight: We're getting pulverized!

Toxin: That's an understatement, Specter! How many of us are left?

She-Hulk: Not enough, Mulli- AAAAGH!

Firestar: Focus, boys! We just lost She-Hulk!

Falcon: Easy for you to say, 'Star! You're the only person here who can actually do something!

Cap: That's enough, everybody! Focus on a Symbiote, and take it to town!

Toxin: You heard Cap! Avengers, A--

Firestar: Not the time, Pat!

[Panel 3: Close-up of Carlie and Yuri, as Carlie reloads her rifle, ignoring several injuries on her side.]

Carlie: We're losing ground, Yuri. We need to start evacuating Manhattan.

Yuri: I thought you wanted to stay and fight! This is news to me!

Carlie: That was when we had a chance of holding them back.

[Panel 4: The symbiotes give up their march and turn around.]

Carlie [OP]: Wait. The hell?...

Yuri: They're turning around.

But why? They had us on the ropes, and now they're just gonna-

[Panel 5: Cap walks over and assesses the damage.]

Captain America: Whatever they're up to, we should use this opportunity to treat our wounded and figure out a new strategy.

I'll contact the Baxter Building and update them on the situation.

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[Panel 1: Reed is at his monitor, when his eyebrow raises in confusion, the rest of the group joining him.]

Reed: Odd. I just received word from Steve. The Symbiotes... they're withdrawing their forces.

They're in full retreat.

Cindy: So we did it, then! We won!

Sue: Not likely. The fight hasn't been going well. Last we heard, Cap's detachment was at breaking point.

Carol: Besides, that isn't how war works, kid. You don't just fall back without warning and that's it. There's a strategy behind this one, and whatever it is, Venom's got me pretty stumped.

Reed: Based on the technology Peter identified for us when the invasion first commenced, I've been looking for a specific burst pattern of Cherenkov radiation.

[Panel 2: Reed points to another monitor, stretching himself to study it closer.]

Reed: I was able to locate it.

However, what befuddles me is that there have been multiple bursts from the slipspace generator in the last hour. And I can't figure out whether something is coming out of them or if they're falling back.

[Panel 3: MJ looks out the window, with a look of terror.]

MJ: Hey, I think I found out for you.

[Page 13 and 14]

[Double page spread. In the center panel, Venom is standing on top of a collapsed delivery truck, surrounded by thousands of Symbiote-infected New Yorkers, covering the streets in a sea of black. Above, the Mighty Avengers are holding patrol.]

Venom: Greetings, New York!

I, like you, love this city! It's been my home for nearly thirteen years, and I would hate for anything to happen to it!

And to this end, to prevent further collateral, I have pulled my allies back!

And this ceasefire and peaceful assimilation of your planet will come at the expense of only one man...

[Panel 1: Close up of Venom, who is still grinning maniacally.]

Venom:Peter Parker!

[Panel 3: Wide shot of Venom, shouting out towards wherever Peter may be.]

Venom: See, Spidey and I? We were always getting along fine!

But then Mr. Parker got in the way of that great life we shared! He convinced Spider-Man to toss me to the side, and for that act, he deserves to suffer!

[Panel 4: Venom, shouting as loud as possible.]

Venom: Peter Parker! If you can hear this, you have one hour! One, single hour, until I order the rest of my kind to slaughter the city, and puppetmaster their corpses in the streets!

And to the UN! We know your plan! We have people everywhere, including your precious orbital defenses! You would dare kill a million of your own people just to stop us!

You get one hour to turn your guns around, or we take them out for a joyride and target any location of our choosing!

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[Panel 1: The Daily Bugle. Jonah and Robbie are fine-tuning the radio, and as it flickers to life, Betty and Flash, along with the rest of the staff, gather around it.]

Robbie: Listen, people! Radio's hot!

Radio: So if -kzzt- 're listen -kzzt- Parker, you'll do the -kzzt- thing and turn yourself in-

Betty: Holy- Flash! He's asking for Peter?! Why?!

Flash: Peter collabs with Spidey a lot, from what I've heard. Makes sense that he'd want Spidey's best friend to suffer.

Jonah: Son... don't do it...

[Panel 2: As Yuri attends to Carlie's wounds, including a large, heavily bleeding gash in her abdomen, a soldier works on fixing the radio as it springs to life.]

Soldier: Got it. Captain Watanabe, we've got a signal.

Yuri: Good. Let's hear what big, black and ugly has to say.

Radio: -because if you don't, your loved ones and every single person will suffer the consequences. I will flood the city in **Symbiotes** and **blood**.

Carlie: Urgh... Yuri, what's?...

Yuri: Shh. Hey, it's gonna be okay. Looks like Venom's calling for somebody.

Carlie: It's... augh, damn it, it **stings!**

Radio: And if that doesn't get you out of the Baxter Building, then we'll use as many Symbiotes as it takes to tear down the door and **drag** you out!

Your hour starts... **now**.

[Panel 3: Back at the Baxter Building. As Cindy preps her webshooters, Carol's hands start glowing, Johnny flames on and Felicia attaches her utility belt, Reed and Sue calm them down.]

Carol: That little...

I'm gonna tear both that Symbiote and Brock apart!

Reed: Carol, control yourself!

Sue: We have a way to defeat the Symbiotes that won't risk any of us!

[Panel 4: Sue points to the Seismic Charges that Peter brought back with him, albeit less dented and scorched than when they were delivered.]

Sue: Peter brought these back from Stark Tower when he leveled the top floors.

Turns out they were seismic charges Tony built specifically to counter Peter should the Symbiote get its hands on him, and they release a massive sonic shockwave upon detonation.

We dive-bomb them and give Steve and his group an opening. Without Venom, they'll be scattered.

[Panel 5: Peter, off panel, catches the group's attention.]

Peter: And risk even more people and damage to the city?

This is a save-who-we-can fight.

And if we can avoid unnecessary casualties-

-Symbiotes included-

-Then we're going with it.

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[Panel 1: Peter has shed his Spider-Man costume, and is dressed in civilian garbs, holding a package in his right hand.]

Peter: I'm going to do it.

I'll give myself up to Venom.

[Panel 2: MJ rushes up to Peter, tugging at his jacket.]

MJ: Peter, you can't do it! I won't let you!

Peter: MJ, I have to do this. I nearly crossed a line I swore I would never cross again when I killed Doc Ock.

MJ: What about me?! What about Annie?!

Peter: That's actually why I'm here. To make some last requests.

[Panel 3: Peter turns to Felicia, a solemn gesture as he points to MJ and Annie.]

Peter: Felicia.... Take care of MJ and Annie.

Keep them safe and after all of this is over, if I don't make it back....

Felicia: Peter, you don't even have to ask.

[Panel 4: Peter hugs Johnny, Reed and Sue, all of them crying.]

Peter: Guys... I'm sorry about what happened back in the interrogation.

I just want you to know....

Reed: We already know, Peter.

Sue: And we've **forgiven** you.

Johnny: You're... well, you're you. We know you'd never do that.

Peter: And that's why I want you guys-

And Ben-

-to keep doing what you do best. Explore. Discover. Innovate. Do it for me.

Reed: It's a promise.

[Panel 5: Johnny slaps Peter on the shoulder, grinning as he gives a war-hungry smirk.]

Johnny: Just give me a promise in return, Pete.

Venom tries to take you out?

Give him one hell of a punch for me.

Peter: It's a deal.

You just be ready to send him with his tail on fire.

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[Panel 1: Peter walks over to Carol, giving her a hug.]

Peter: Carol, I know we didn't exactly go our separate ways on the best of terms, but promise me this.

Keep being a hero. Make sure everybody else keeps being a hero.

Earth needs every single one it can get. Make sure everybody in this city goes home in one piece. Because I know you can do it.

Carol: You got it.

Stay safe, Pete.

[Panel 2: Peter walks over to Cindy, who is apprehensive about letting Peter go. Peter holds out the package to her, piquing her interest.]

Peter: Hey, champ.

Cindy: Do you really have to do this, boss? There has to be another way. You always find it.

Peter: Not this time, Cindy. I'm not going to risk innocent people to stop Venom.

I'm probably not going to make it back. Which is why I want you to have this.

[Panel 3: Cindy has set the package down, ripping open the brown wrapping.]

[Panel 4: Peter's Spider-Man costume, with the mask on top, is folded and sitting in the brown paper. Cindy is taken aback, hands cupped over her mouth.]

Cindy: Oh, my God.

Peter: The world will **always** need a Spider-Man. No matter who says what.

And if I'm not going to come back from this, I want **you** to take my place.

[Panel 5: Cindy looks up at Peter from her seat, tears welling up in her eyes.]

[Panel 6: Cindy hugs Peter tightly, with Peter slightly recoiling from the impact.]

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[Panel 1: Peter stands in front of MJ and Annie.]

Peter: MJ...

MJ: Promise me something. That you'll come home from this whole thing and we can go back to the way things were.

Peter: I won't make a promise if I know I can't keep it. I won't lie to you, MJ.

[Panel 2: Peter takes MJ's hand, cupping it in both of his.]

Peter: I want you to know that even if I die, I will never stop loving you.

And I won't ask anything of you before I go, because you've already given so much so I could be who I am today.

You are my shining star in the void, MJ. You're-- I love you so much, and-

[Panel 3: Peter and MJ kiss, both of them crying.]

[Panel 4: Peter and MJ pull apart, smiling despite their faces being drenched in tears.]

MJ: I love you too.

Go get 'em, Tiger.

Peter: Always do.

[Panel 5: Peter holds Annie, smiling wide as he grips his daughter.]

Peter: And you... my little princess...

Annie: Daddy... don't go.

Peter: I have to. But, I'll let you in on a little secret. I'll still be alive if you think I am.

Annie: I love you, daddy.

Peter: I love you too.

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[Panel 1: Peter stands on the lift, his friends and family standing around as the lift remains the only thing illuminated in the Baxter Building.]

Peter: Wait. Before I go. One last joke.

[Panel 2: Peter holds up his left hand, giving the Vulcan salute from Star Trek.]

Peter: Live long and prosper.

[Panel 3: Peter begins his descent as the others laugh.]

Peter: See you guys on the other side.

[Panel 4: The lift closes, sealing above Peter and blocking his vision.]

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[Panel 1: Peter stands in the lift, shuffling his hands in his pockets.]

Peter [capt]: Haven't had time to think to myself for a while, but here we are.

What's Venom want me for? I dunno.

But I probably won't like it.

Surprise.

[Panel 2: Peter has pulled out his phone, looking at the home screen.]

Peter [capt]: But it all comes down to this.

If I'm doing this, for any singular purpose...

[Panel 3: Peter's fingers slide across the screen, which has a picture of him, MJ and Annie fast-asleep on the couch.]

Peter [capt]: I'm doing it for them.

My family.

That's what this has all been about.

[Panel 4: The elevator dings, with Peter putting his phone away as the door cracks open.]

Peter [capt]: I have to do this.

Do it for them...

Do it for them...

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[Splash page. Peter marches out of the lift, charging his destiny head-on, an expression of determination and aggression carved into his facial features.]

Peter: VENOM!

I'm here!

[To be continued]