

Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man (2016) #22  
"House of Spiders, Pt. 1: Deep in the Heart of Texas"

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[Panel 1: Horizon Labs' kickball field, about a half a mile from the main labs. Multiple members of the Horizon think tank (Ones that we haven't really utilized before now) are scattered around the field, mostly notably Sajani Jaffrey, Jurgen Muntz, Bella Fishbach, etc. Peter is up to bat, with MJ, Annie and Cindy in the rafters with Max and his partner, Hector.]

Sajani: And first at bat for Horizon's seasonal kickball game...

The one and only Mr. Peter Parker!

Jurgen: Man, we're gonna lose fast.

[Panel 2: Peter kicks the dust off of home plate, lining himself up for the shot.]

Peter: Aw, don't sell yourself short, Jurgen.

I'm not that good.

[Panel 3: Sajani rolls the ball from the mound to home, smirking.]

Sajani: That what you think, "Thunder-thighs?"

Because you carried your team last game. And something tells me--

[Panel 4: Peter kicks the ball, a small crater rippling into the ball as he kicks it full force.]

Sajani [OP]: --That'll be the case today.

Peter [Capt]: She's right.

Just because I've learned to gauge my spider-powers doesn't mean I control it all the time.

Sometimes...

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[Panel 1: The entire Horizon crew has stopped moving completely, their heads looking up as the ball goes high. Not even Peter has started running, watching his handiwork go into play.]

Peter [Capt]: ...I just like to cut loose just enough to tease the world...

[Panel 2: The ball, along with the heads of the Horizon crew, has moved towards the scoreboard, colliding with one of the steel pillars to bounce off.]

Peter [Capt]: ... and let the know that their favorite skyscraper-swinger is a little closer to the ground than they may think.

[Panel 3: The scoreboard collapses with only one pillar holding it up, the views of the Horizon crew scattered to avoid looking at it.]

Peter: Oooh... that isn't coming out of my paycheck, is it?

Bella: Yeah... I say we just give Parker the home run and leave it at that.

[Panel 4: Cindy and MJ (holding Annie) in the rafters. Cindy looks less than interested, preferring to eat the burger (complete with a faux-aluminum wrapping) in her hand, while MJ and Annie are ecstatic, cheering Peter on.]

Cindy: Honestly? Sports were never my thing.

S'good for my tan line, but other than that it's not my cup of tea.

MJ: Are you only saying that because you weren't allowed to play as an intern?

Cindy: Mmm-hmm.

MJ: Eh, don't worry about it.

Whooo, Pete! Hit it out of the park!

Annie: Go, Daddy!

Hit the ball!

[Panel 5: MJ watches over the field, as the assembled Horizon players change positions on the field. As Peter is walking over towards MJ and her mini-posse, Sajani slaps Peter on the butt, spooking him slightly.]

MJ: And here comes our star-

[Panel 6: A circular panel of MJ's face, mouth curved in a disappointing frown.]

MJ: Really?

[Page 3]

[Panel 1: Peter climbs up on the chain link fence, MJ walking over to greet him.]

Peter: Hey, there, pretty lady.

And Cindy.

Cindy: Hey!

Peter: How did I do?

MJ: Fantastic. I'm practically swooning.

Oh, Spider, My Spider.

Annie: You did **awesome**, daddy!

[Panel 3: Peter holds Annie, lifting her over the fence as MJ leans over it, her eyebrow raised just enough to show a bit of contempt for Peter's coworkers.]

Peter: Of course I did.

I'm your dad. You're supposed to think I'm awesome!

MJ: And that you are.

But your coworkers on the other hand...

"Thunder-thighs?" Really?

[Panel 4: Peter looks over towards the dugout in confusion, to see Sajani in particular biting her lip and leaning on the dugout wall.]

Peter: I think that's just Sajani's thing.

We call her the "Home-Plate-Wrecker" for a reason.

I wouldn't take it personally, Red.

Besides, she's not really my type.

[Panel 5: Peter kisses MJ on the cheek, her blushing as she leans down.]

Peter: I already have a thing for redheads.

MJ: You shameless flirt.

Peter: Guilty as charged.

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[Panel 1: Peter's phone vibrates in his back pocket, with Sajani whistling off panel.]

Sajani: Daammnn.

Peter: Can it, Sajani.

MJ, we haven't heard that ringtone in ages.

[Panel 2: Cindy is sitting on the fence (As your average edgy teen does), looking over Peter and MJ as they look at the phone's message.]

Cindy: Who's it for?

Peter: Kaine. My brother.

Cindy: Wait, you have a brother? And you didn't think to tell me?

Peter: First, off the fence, Cin. Second, there's a lot of things you don't know about me.

Third, Kaine is a bit of a... unique situation.

We don't talk a lot.

MJ: When was the last time you called him? Or vice versa?

Peter: Ages ago.

Maybe a year or so.

[Panel 3: Cindy is hopping off the fence, joining Peter and MJ on one of the stands. Peter is pulling his phone out of his pocket to view the text.]

Cindy: So.

You gonna open the message or what?

Peter: Yeah, yeah.

I'm working on it, champ.

[Panel 4: Peter looks at the phone, his eyes in a concerned expression.]

Peter: Oh, Lord.

[Panel 5: Peter turns to MJ, putting his phone away as he hands Annie back to her.]

Peter: Pack your bags, MJ.

We're traveling to Houston.

Annie and Cindy: Woo! Day trip!

[Page 5]

[Panel 1: An airfield in Upstate Jersey. Pristine woodlands surround the place, while neatly carved out of the woods is an abandoned Air Force base. We've already seen it in hologram form, but what you're looking at the new headquarters of the Mighty Avengers. There's still some renovating to be done, but what has been fixed is pristine, with the repairs to the rest of the facility moving like clockwork. In the foreground, however, we see Peter, MJ, Cindy and Annie (who is sitting on MJ's shoulders) getting out of an either rented or bought car, each with a small overnight bag with enough clothes to last a few days. Captain Marvel is walking up to them, waving as she approaches.]

[Capt: Avengers Airfield]

Peter: Well, here we are.

The new headquarters of the Avengers.

And here comes the team mom herself.

[Panel 2: Peter and Carol shake hands, with MJ, Annie and Cindy in the background.]

Peter: Good to see you again, Carol.

How's the team holding up?

Carol: Eh, there's still some friction and growing pains, but we're starting to get our rhythm together.

Still not the same without you here full-time.\*

Peter: Like I said, family matters.

[\*Editorial Note: Peter joined as a reserve member in *Captain Marvel and the Mighty Avengers* #1! -Neil]

[Panel 3: Carol looks over to the others, smiling warmly at them.]

Carol: Hey, MJ. How've you been?

MJ: Eh. Life's never boring when you're married to a superhero, so there's that.

Carol: Yeaah... Sorry we raided your home a while back.

We're trying to do better than that now.

MJ: Water under the bridge.

Annie: Captain Marvel?

[Panel 4: MJ lifts Annie off her shoulders, handing her over to Carol, who smiles even warmer than earlier. In the background, Peter mildly coughs, catching Carol's attention.]

Carol: Yep.

Damn, Peter, your kid is seriously lucky. She's going to meet every superhero by the time she's ten.

And that's not even mentioning ***their-***

Peter: \*cough\*

Carol: Right. Back on task.

You said you needed to borrow something.

Follow me.

[Page 6]

[Panel 1: A black-and-white silhouette panel, as the five walk into a hangar, no lights powering it.]

Carol: Here we are.

MJ: Wait... **this** is supposed to get us to Houston?

Peter: S'cheaper than airline tickets.

[Panel 2: The lights flare on, revealing what's in the hangar: the Slipspace gate generator from Days of Deception. It's not as well-put together as it was during the Symbiote invasion (Several large pieces have been torn away and replaced with bulkier, more primitive human technology as opposed to the bulbous, exotic feel of Symbiote technology) but it looks relatively the same, with a young African American woman poking at it with a blowtorch: Lila Rhodes. (It helps to read the *Iron Patriot* mini)]

Cindy: Uh... are we sure using the Symbiote's Slipspace gate is a good idea?

We didn't even cross it. We **blew it up**.

Speaking of which... how did you get it here?

Peter: Carol and I went into No-Man's Land a couple of weeks after the Symbiote invasion.

Given that we're two of a handful of people who could survive that much radiation, we got the gate out and began repairing it. Probably easier-- not to mention cheaper-- than maintaining a constantly-crashing Quinjet.

As for maintaining it? Ms. Rhodes here has done an **excellent** job keeping it in tip-top shape.

[Panel 3: Lila hops down, walking over to the control panel while absentmindedly waving to the group.]

Lila: You gave me a piece of alien tech and said “Figure it out, Lila.” Still working on it.

There’s so much I’m still **learning** about this tech, and...

[Panel 4: Lila talks herself down, settling down at a control panel as she types into the panel.]

Lila: Whew... cool it, girl... leave the rambling until **after** they’re gone.

...

Alright, I’m good.

Anyways, you said you wanted to get to Houston, right?

One portal, coming up.

Just let me put in the coordinates...

[Panel 5: MJ leans over to Peter, whispering up into his ear as he looks up in defeat.]

MJ: I’m not sure if I trust this.

Peter: You got a better idea for quick travel to Houston?

Kaine needs our help, and it’s faster coming here than commuting to JFK. **Especially** during rush hour.

MJ: I’m just saying I’d like to hold a little caution regarding the giant wormhole generator that **brought an army of Symbiotes and took over the planet.**

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[Panel 1: Peter walks over to the gate, giving Lila a thumbs up. Lila, in turn, flicks a switch in the background.]

Peter: We made sure the Symbiotes can’t link it to this side. They won’t be able to get through this baby anytime soon.

Fire ‘er up, Lila.

Lila: One sec.



Filtering out excess molecular mass and background radiation...

And...

[Panel 2: A swirling green, blue and purple vortex, barely taller than Peter and his posse, bursts to life in front of them. Their hair slightly blown back, Cindy and MJ stand back, while Peter merely looks on in marvel.]

Lila: ...Done.

Peter: This, ladies, is the **future** at work.

**Beautiful.**

[Panel 3: Peter begins walking into the vortex, his body slowly disintegrating as he walks into the slipspace bridge. Cindy is quickly following, every save her torso, the back of her head and her jogging leg having been consumed by the vortex.]

Peter: C'mon, MJ. It's like walking over a bridge.

Y'know, one that cuts a shortcut through time-space.

You, uh, get used to it. After the first few times.

At least, I did.

Cindy: Houston, here we come! Whoo!

[Panel 4: Takes place a couple of seconds afterwards. MJ looks at the slipspace gate apprehensively, while Lila studies the readings in the background.]

MJ: Ah.

Lila: Just read vitals from Parker and Moon. Confirmed arrival at destination.

Mrs. Parker, if you and daughter are ready?

[Panel 5: MJ gets her "game face" on, marching into the wormhole with Annie holding her hand as they walk through.]

MJ: Oh, yeah. We're ready.

Annie: Yeah!

Bye, science lady!

[Panel 6: Everything in MJ's front, save her top head, has vanished into the bridge, as she squints to avoid going blind.]

MJ: Nothing ventured, nothing gained, Tiger.

I swear, this had better be worth it.

[Panel 7: A blank, white light.]

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[Panel 1: Large panel. MJ and Annie have just fallen into Peter's arms, the portal instead opening parallel to the ground rather than perpendicular. Cindy, meanwhile, in on the ground, blood dripping from her nose as she groans in pain.]

Peter: Gotcha!

MJ: Whoa!

Good catch, Tiger!

Peter: That wasn't expected. Sorry about getting the lead role in *Jackass: Sci-Fi Edition*.

Cindy: **Dammit**. I think I broke my nose.

[Panel 2: Peter puts MJ and Annie back on solid ground. In the background, Cindy leans up against the alley wall, pinching her nose to stop the flowing blood spewing out.]

Peter: Well, congrats. You guys are the first non-superhumans to make slipspace transition.

Make of it what you will.

You gonna be okay, Cin?

Cindy: Yeah, I... \*sigh\* I think I'll be okay.

Peter: See, Parker Luck in full effect right now.

It's when the universe decides that you're its punching bag for the--

[Panel 3: An explosion up above catches the attention of the four, pieces of debris raining down on them. Peter is pointing his web shooters at the ground, not aiming at anything in particular.]

Peter: -Day.

Everybody, get down!

[Panel 4: Peter's webbing, still in a slightly fluid state, cascades around the group, forming a small dome of hardened webbing.]

[Panel 5: The web-dome has completely shrouded the group, debris raining down and pinging down on them.]

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[Panel 1: We get our first glimpse of Kaine and Aracely. Kaine's Scarlet Spider outfit hasn't changed much aside from the Spider-Symbol, which is altered to look more like the ANAD-Spider-Man symbol. Aracely, aka Hummingbird, is wearing more or less the same costume of her 616 counterpart, with a lighter shade of green on her cape and hood and contour lines on her shoulders. They've just landed in the alleyway, costumes riddled with scuff marks and holes and avoiding their pursuers: several members of the Assassin's Guild.]

Kaine: ***Dammit!*** Peter?!

Aracely: Is this your brother you've been talking about?

...

Never mind.

Kaine: I thought I told you not to do that anymore.

Pete?!

[Panel 2: Peter tears open the web dome, him and Cindy having already changed into their costumes under the cover of the web dome.]

Peter: Say my name and I appear!

[Panel 3: Peter helps Kaine against the building wall, as he grips his bleeding chest in pain.]

Peter: Here, lemme give you a hand.

Kaine: I'm fine, dammit!

I need you to get those things off my tail!

[Panel 4: Peter points towards the oncoming Assassins' Guild members, a lens raised in confusion.]

Peter: Wait, those guys?

They look like Assassin's Guild members to me.

Why are they chasing you?

[Panel 5: Peter pokes a finger at Kaine, lenses narrowed in suspicion.]

Peter: Kaine, tell me.

Why in the hell is the **Assassins' Guild** chasing you?

**What did you do?**

Kaine: That doesn't matter right now! What matters is taking them out!

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[Panel 1: Peter helps Kaine onto the ground, MJ rushing over with Cindy and Aracely.]

Peter: Fine. But you'd better have one really good explanation when we're done here.

Silk! Game face!

Cindy: On it, boss!

[Panel 2: Peter and Cindy leap out of the alleyway, to the surprise of the Guild members.]

Spider-Man: *Salut! Comment es toi aujourd'hui?*

(French for "How are you today?"- I-took-a-French-class-and-barely-passed-in' Neill!)

Singer: The Fu- More of them?! How many Spider-freaks are there?

Spider-Man: Ugh. Always with the drama.

[Panel 3: Spider-Man is in a grapple-lock with Flower, breaking free long enough to elbow her in the face. Silk, in the background, is brawling with Gris Gris, taking a fistful of powder to the face.]

Silk: Hey, boss!

Any reason why you keep giving me the hard ones?

Spider-Man: Depends. What makes you think that?

Flower: Guh!

Silk: Well, how about the fact that ***my frickin' eyes are on fire?!***

[Panel 4: Spider-Man spins a web-line, flinging Flower into Gris Gris and sending both flying several feet..]

Spider-Man: I'd offer to trade dance partners, but that wouldn't be accurate.

Here. Let's even the playing field a bit for you.

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[Panel 1: Silk rubs the powder out of the area surrounding her eyes. In bold yellow lines (transparent coloring) Peter's Spider-Sense goes off, with his lenses widening.]

Spider-Man: You good?

Silk: Yeah. Yeah, I'm good.

Some of it's still in my eyes.

Spider-Man: We'll get them cleaned as soon as-

Spider-Sense!

[Panel 2: Peter webs Cindy out of the way, ducking as a hail of bullets streaks over him. The sender is Smithy, teleporting a semi-automatic into his hands.]

Spider-Man: WHOA!

Silk: What the hell?!

Why didn't my Spider-Sense go off?

[Panel 3: Spider-Man dodges another round, flipping background to avoid the bullets as Smithy brings in heavier firepower: a full automatic assault rifle.]

Spider-Man: That guy you were fighting?

Gris Gris?

X-Men fought him once. Told me he has powders that kind of work like Mr. Fear's gases.

They might be forcing your Spider-Sense to focus on that rather than your surroundings!

[Panel 4: Using his hand as a balance, Spider-Man flips sideways, spreading his legs out to avoid the bullet spray.]

Spider-Man: So I need you to-

-one sec.

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[Panel 1: Lifting his other hand, Spider-Man fires a web-ball upside down.]

Spider-Man: A little dose of impact webbing.

From Web-shooter with love.

[Panel 2: The impact webbing explodes around Smithy's gun, causing the gun to explode on itself.]

Spider-Man: Here's to giving Bullseye a run for his money.

[Panel 3: As Smithy tries to summon a new gun, Silk slugs him in the face, downing him as an SMG crosses across planes of existence.]

Silk: Denied, sit down!

Spider-Man: Damn. Kid, don't take his jaw off.

[Panel 4: Rubbing her wrist, Silk joins Spider-Man, who is standing over the unconscious Smithy.]

Silk: I didn't kill him, did I?

Spider-Man: Nah. You probably gave his brain a good rattling, though.

Good work.

[Panel 5: A green coloring takes over the panel as Spider-Man and Silk are electrocuted, smoke pouring off of their bodies.]

Both: NYYYYAAAAAGH!

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[Panel 1: A smoking Spider-Man manages to pull himself together, weakly getting on his knees as Harvester stands over him and an unconscious Silk.]

Harvester: Aw. Two more Spiders.

I'll kill your knock off brother, then come back for you two.

Quick paycheck.

Spider-Man: Ngghh...

Is this seriously how I'm going out?

A Deadpool knockoff with punisher's fashion taste?

[Panel 2: Harvester grips Spider-Man by the throat, leering as his eyes narrow.]

Spider-Man: Ngh...

Harvester: Y'know what? Never mind. You're first.

Best to kill the orig-

[Panel 3: Eyes widening in pain, Harvester's head lurches back as he releases Spider-Man.]

Harvester: Hnnk!

No.

[Panel 4: Spider-Man rises up, recovered, helping Silk as Aracely joins them, hand pressed against the back of Harvester's masked head.]

Harvester: No. No. No. No. No. No.

Spider-Man: Up you go, kid.

Silk: Urgh... thanks.

Spider-Man: Don't mention it.

Aracely, right? Hummingbird. What did you do to him?

Aracely: I'm not sure. I've only been using these powers for a few months, but Kaine's been teaching me.

Something called a Weapon of Mass Delusion.

Spider-Man: Mass Delusion?

Comfy.

[Panel 5: A panel of Aracely, shrugging as she tries to explain the science behind it.]

Aracely: Kaine says that when our brain fills with delusions of grandeur, the structure of our mental state becomes easier to fracture.

When it becomes exposed by extreme concentration, it's easier to find a shatterpoint in the mind and exploit it. And thus, if you find a way to challenge those perceptions of reality, their entire mental state collapses.

I think it's just magic, but Kaine says different, so I just go with it.

[Panel 6: A shot of Spider-Man and Silk, with blank stares as they sit with no way to reply.]

[Panel 7: Aracely shrugs.]

Aracely: Like I said, I just prefer to go with magic.

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[Panel 1: Aracely shakes Spider-Man's hand, Peter taken aback by the intensity of her handshake.]



Aracely: But it's nice to finally meet you, Spider-Man!

Spider-Man: ...

Aracely: You're freaked out. Don't worry, I do it to everybody!

Spider-Man: What-- how did you?...

Aracely: I'm an empath!

Isn't that the coolest thing ever?!

Spider-Man: ...Cute?

Anyways, nice to meet you.

Where's--?

[Panel 2: Spider-Man whips around to see Kaine, supported by Mary Jane, who is also holding Annie.]

Kaine: Right... here.

MJ: Peter, he's hurt. We need to get him to ground.

Kaine: Running won't help. We need to take them out and--

Peter: Stop.

We're not going to be killing anybody. I know your morals are a lot looser than mine, but we're playing by my book now.

You have somewhere we can hang out and patch you up?

[Panel 3: Spider-Man helps Kaine up, taking the weight off MJ as they walk over to the side of the street.]

Kaine: ...Yeah.

You got a phone?

I'm gonna call some friends over. They'll be happy to meet you.

[Panel 4: Spider-Man's lens narrow, with Kaine's unchanging as he stares at him.]

Spider-Man: I don't think that's--

Kaine: Relax. They know who I am. But, uh... you might want to change into civvies before we get there.

You too... uh....

Cindy: It's Silk.

Kaine: Right.... You.

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[Panel 1: Scene transition to Kaine's apartment; the penthouse room at the Four Seasons hotel. It's relatively well-kept; though no housekeeping services are evident (the pile of bottles in the corner and last night's burger trash on the couch is the first clue.) it's pretty clean. Peter and Cindy (Now in civilian clothes) have helped Kaine onto the kitchen table, with the help of Doctor Donald Meland, while MJ shakes hands with Officer Wally Layton.]

Donald: So, you're Kaine's famous brother?

Peter: Lord, you've heard of me?

Donald: Oh, Kaine won't shut up about you. Says you're the biggest thorn in his side since he was born.

Peter: Aw. I'm flattered.

Aracely: He's lying when he says that, by the way.

He actually really likes you and just says it to sound edgy.

[Panel 2: Peter, with surgical precision, places a Horizon-brand medical patch over Kaine's gaping chest wound, as he grunts in pain.]

Peter: Hold still for a second, bro.

This is gonna sting a little.

Kaine: Urgh!

Damn. You weren't kidding. That thing has a kick.

Peter: Well, it's pumping bio-mimetic gel into the wound to patch it up and repair your skin tissue. So I would kind of hope so.

Y'know, in a non-sadist way.

[Panel 3: Wally walks over, patting Kaine on the shoulder.]

Wally: Not knowing when to pick your battles?

Never change, Kaine. Never change.

Otherwise Donald's gonna be bored to death just sitting in his office.

Kaine: Cute. But I don't exactly get hurt for your husband's entertainment.

[Panel 4: Kaine sits up, asking Wally and Layton to leave as MJ approaches the table, Peter placing his spare medical supplies in his bag.]

Kaine: Could you give us a minute?

Peter and I need to talk. It's a bit of a... family matter.

Wally: Of course. Take all the time you need.

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[Panel 1: As the door closes, Peter turns to Kaine, who is holding hands with Annie.]

Annie: Hi, Uncle Kaine!

Kaine: Aw. You taught her to call me "Uncle."

Because I totally deserve that name.

So... Doc Ock?

Peter: Yep. Six feet under.

[Panel 2: Peter sits down next to Kaine, twiddling his thumbs as Kaine picks up Annie, balancing her on his knee.]

Peter: All for her. I didn't want to do it, but-- well, sometimes you'll cross lines to keep family safe.

Kaine: If it makes you feel any better?

He always was a stubborn--

[Panel 3: Peter and Kaine both, reflexively, look over at Annie, who is still on Kaine's knee and smiling as though nobody said anything.]

Annie: What?

Kaine: Uh.... He was a stubborn--

Peter: Bum. He was a stubborn bum.

Kaine: Right.

Should've stayed dead the first time you killed him.

[Panel 4: Peter looks at Kaine, who smirks with a hint of annoyance.]

Peter: Wait. I only killed him once--

Kaine: No, but... y'know, I killed him.

And I'm a--

Peter: Yeah, well, my sense of humor has definitely been instilled in you.

Anyways...

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[Panel 1: As Peter rises from the table, Kaine helps Annie off his knee, as Aracely points towards her room, Cindy in tow.]

Kaine: Aracely, the adults need to talk.

Why don't you show Annie your war trophy collection?

Aracely: Oohh, she'll love it!

Annie, have you ever seen a severed salamander tail?

Because I have a huge one!

Cindy: I'll tag along. This is something that sounds Parker-exclusive.

Aracely: You're welcome to come! I have this crazy collection of old Mandroid brains!

[Panel 2: As yet another door closes behind them, Peter and MJ surround Kaine, who is picking up his tattered suit.]

Peter: So... war trophies?

Kaine: That's just what I call them. Aracely thinks of them more as souvenirs.

But that's another story.

Peter: So is this afternoon.

Kaine, what the hell are you doing running from the Assassin's Guild?!

That's not even the Houston branch, it's New Orleans! Gambit turf! How did you manage to get mixed up with them?

[Panel 3: Large panel. Kaine's upper body, as he's removing the medical patch from his chest, the wound having healed. In the background, elements from Yost's Scarlet Spider run (specifically #3) are shown (Remember that various elements of Kaine's Scarlet Spider run are relatively similar in the FNSM universe.)]

Kaine: Long story short... the Guild's had a restructuring.

For some reason--

--and I'm sure you and your buddies in New York had something to do with this--

--Kingpin has been handling affairs of individual factions less and less over the past year.

It's gotten to the point where factions are fighting for control over each other's turf.

And Belladonna Boudreaux won out against the Texas leadership.

As it turns out, she's pretty pissed off at me for stealing some of her contracts. And given that she has control over the area, well...

Now they're gunning for me.

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[Panel 1: Peter and MJ, leaning on the table.]

Peter: Okaaaayy.

So, why exactly is Belladonna mad for stealing contracted kills? Is it the money or something else?

Kaine [OP]: It's exactly the money.

After I took Aracely in, they came and told me they would be coming.

[Panel 2: Kaine concentrates, the suit regenerating in his hands as he continues talking. (I dunno, I kinda like the regenerating Scarlet Spider suit. I'll just handwave it away as Peter making that feature as a good-luck present for Kaine.)]

Kaine: Being the idiot that I am, I didn't think anything of it.

Peter [OP]: But here they are.

Kaine: Mmm-hm.

Here they are.

[Panel 3: The suit having completed its regeneration cycle, Kaine slips on the top, reaching for his gloves as he fits one hand.]

Peter: So. That brings us to today's question.

Why exactly did you call me here?

Kaine: So that you know what I'm about to do.

It's a line you're afraid to cross, but I'm *not*.

I figured you'd be safer here, especially if we combined our numbers. Especially considering that Kingpin is right on your doorstep.

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[Panel 1: Peter leans over as Kaine pulls out a box from underneath a chair, trying to piece together the puzzle.]

Peter: Kaine, Fisk doesn't know who I am under the mask.

Kaine: Maybe. But that doesn't mean there aren't members of the Assassin's Guild living across the street from you.

Here's an offer. You guys stay in **Houston** for a while.

The Avengers can handle New York. They have practically everybody up there.

We'll be the Spectacular Spider-Brothers of Houston.

Plus, you know, an empath and Spider-Girl.

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[Panel 1: As Kaine sets down the box, Peter folds his arms, pulling Mary Jane closer.]

MJ: We can't just leave New York, Kaine.

We have lives there. You can't expect us to throw them away to hide for God knows how long.

Peter: Plus, the superhero community is a bit less... stable than it was three months ago. I'm needed there. Cindy, too.

You of all people should know, being one of... two people who use their powers for good here.

[Panel 2: Kaine opens the box, the contents unknown. Instead of the fake cheerful expression he slapped on moments ago, he's turned dead serious.]

Kaine: Fine. I won't stop you.

But I'll still advise it. Because what I'm about to do will probably put you in a few crosshairs.

Get me kicked out of the **New Warriors**.

But I don't **care**.

[Panel 3: MJ and Peter have a look of shock at what's in the box. We still don't know what it is.]

Kaine [OP]: I'll do whatever it takes to protect the life I've built up here.

My first *real* life.

Peter: Kaine... you're not planning on...

MJ: Peter.

I think he's serious.

[Page 20]

[Splash page, and final cliffhanger page because this chapter is way too long as it is. Kaine is standing in front of a window, the pale moonlight illuminating his costume as he holds the content of his box in his hand; a six-round revolver, with only one bullet in the chamber. Peter has MJ move behind him, ready to take the bullet.]

Kaine: I am.

I'm going to fix this once and for all, and solve the problem at the source.

I'm going to put a bullet between Belladonna Boudreaux's eyes.

[To be continued]