

Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man (2016) #15

“Days of Deception, Pt. 5: Last Stand of the Friendly Neighborhood”

Writer: Neil Bogenrieder

Assistant Writer: Mohammed Jaafar, Shaun Martineau and Jarod Cordes

Editor: Mark Alford

Preferred Art Team: Stefano Caselli and Marte Gracia

[Page 1]

[Panel 1: Aerial shot. Peter steps out into the mess of New York’s streets. Lampposts and cars are tipped over, torched buildings replacing the street lights for illumination of the night-bathed island.]

Peter: Venom! I’m here!

[Panel 2: Peter walking away from the elevator, as a collection of black shadows collect on the side of the Baxter Building.]

Peter: Is this really the only way you can get me to come out? By threatening to level a city? And then you play chicken when I actually show?

[Panel 3: Venom lands behind Peter, who remains calm despite the large threat behind him.]

Venom: Because we were bonded long enough for me to know that even without that costume....

You’re still dangerous.

[Panel 4: Venom leers over Peter, who remains emotionally calm.]

Venom: Even when you surrender, you still have a trick up your sleeve.

Peter: Wow, Eddie. That’s flattering. Even when I try to play the game by your rules, you’re still scared of me.

[Panel 5: Close-up of Peter’s face, with one eyebrow raised and a smug smirk.]

Peter: Means I’m still doing something right in the world.

Venom: Cute.

And there's no Eddie anymore. It's Venom. Clears up confusion.

Peter: I love how you've made that point multiple times, but nobody really believes you.

[Panel 4: Peter starts walking, Venom staring from him in the background.]

Peter: No matter how much you want to say you're just the Symbiote now-

-And I know you've probably tricked yourself into thinking that's right-

-Eddie is still part of you. Whether you like it or not, he's still got a say. You probably just don't realize it yet.

[Page 2]

[Panel 1: Peter walks out into the light, Venom towering over him as he escorts Peter.]

Peter: So.

Gotta ask.

Why'd you ask for me and not for the reds and blues?

Venom: Well, for one....

[Panel 2: Peter and Venom continue walking. The shot is from the waist up, from the side. Venom leers from Peter's side, as Peter keeps staring ahead.]

Venom: I have at least a modicum of respect for you and your secrets. So there's that.

Besides, all that separates you and Spider-Man is a piece of spandex....

[Panel 3: Venom stands in front of Peter, stopping him right in his tracks, just next to the location of the Symbiote staging ground.]

Venom: And besides, I was never hosted by Spider-Man. I always stood by Peter Parker.

[Page 3]

[Panel 1: Peter has stopped as well, looking down at the ground.]

Peter: So, new question: Now that I'm here...

What do you want from me?

[Panel 2: Venom pauses, looking away from Peter as he contemplates what he's about to say next.]

Peter [op]: What was so important that I had to be here, without any of your Symbiote goons? The Avengers?

What?

[Panel 3: Venom turns around, eyes showing a pang of regret.]

Venom: You always were my first host. My best host. My favorite.

I want you back. To rule this city-the world- as my host again.

[Page 4]

[Panel 1: Peter, slack jawed, has his mouth slightly open in surprise. Silent panel]

[Panel 2: Similar panel, but Peter's grip on his mouth has returned, and his open stare has been replaced by resolute determination.]

Peter: What's the catch?

Venom [op]: Catch?

[Panel 3: Venom has leaned down to approach Peter, like an ex-boyfriend to their former lover.]

Venom: The conditions are yours. All I want is for me-

-us-

-to be together again.

Peter: Gag, you sound like a crappy soap opera.

Alright, I'll... I'll do it. But there will have to be conditions for this whole thing to work.

Venom: Anything.

[Panel 4: Peter is standing, relatively calm, save for holding up two fingers.]

Peter: Number one. We do it together. There can't be anything like what you and Eddie have now.

Venom: Done.

Peter: Second. Rule one applies to everybody. As long as they're not given freedom to work alongside their Symbiotes-

-a basic human want-

-a need-

-then you'll always be fighting somebody or something. Even if it's all under your nose.

It could even be me.

[Page 5]

[Panel 1: Peter putting his hand down, and into his pocket.]

Peter: So... Do you accept my terms?

Venom: ... Yes.

[Panel 2: Peter holds out his other hand.]

Peter: Alright then...

Come on home.

[Panel 3: Venom slowly slithers off of Eddie, the Symbiote form crawling energetically onto Peter's outreaching hand.]

[Panel 4: Venom has overtaken most of Peter's body, as Peter remains quiet, as if in defeat.]

[Panel 5: Peter has been completely taken over by the Symbiote, his eye being the only part unconsumed.]

[Panel 6: Complete darkness.]

Peter [capt]: I love you, MJ.

[Page 6]

[Panel 1: Large panel. Peter and the Venom Symbiote are standing on a faintly-glowing, grid-like blue landscape. Up above, the sky is glowing with a tiny glimpse of a turquoise aurora, illuminating the two.]

Venom: This...

Peter: Yeah. My mindscape.

Venom: But... why are we here?

The bond should have been instant. We're too familiar for something like to happen.

And the emotions in your head... eugh. They taste... funny. Hard to chew. Almost like...like a brick.

They're wrong.

Familiar... but wrong.

Peter: That depends on who you're talking to. To you, they may be the most reviled thing you've ever encountered in the universe. But to me...

[Panel 2: Peter has control over a strand of thought dust, which forms itself as a memory of Peter and MJ in the hospital shortly after Annie is born.]

Peter: ...They're probably the most important thing in **my** universe.

Venom: Your love for that woman means nothing! We have each other now. Everybody will have a bond. They'll never be lonely ever again.

[Panel 3; Venom tries to insert himself over the thought dust, but he simply passes through it.]

Venom: What?!... Why is this.... These emotions! They're for Mary Jane! But... with more resolve! More solidity!

[Panel 4: Venom lunges at Peter, who has grown a touch more smug with Venom realizing what he's doing.]

Venom: YOU TRICKED ME!

Peter: Oh, don't act like you're free of trickery either.

[Page 7]

[Panel 1: Peter bum-rushes Venom, tackling him to the ground]

Peter: You led an entire campaign that could have given the Skrulls a run for their money-
-and you have the guts to say that I'm the one guilty of lying.

[Panel 2: Venom tries to stop Peter by stabbing him with several tendrils, but these simply rip Peter's "skin" and clothes, revealing a scarlet layer underneath.]

Peter: I'm not doing this for me.... If I was, who knows? I might have lost by now.

But that family you saw? MJ? And Annie? They're the ones keeping me going. Keeping me fighting.

I'm fighting for them.

And you? What are you fighting for?

[Panel 3: Peter has grabbed Venom by the chest, ripping him into pieces as the glow in the sky glows brighter. At the same time, the same tendrils have ripped most of the "Peter Parker" layer, revealing what was underneath him: his Spider-Man costume.]

Peter: Well, I've got news for you, buddy!

This whole war-

-and your... your **days of deception**-

-are over!

[Panel 4: Peter's head is flapping without a neck to tie down to, and Peter grips this "face", starting to tear it.]

Peter: Now, I'm going to say this once, so best if you pay close attention-

[Panel 5: With a few shreds of skin left, Peter's face is gone, replaced with an enraged Spider-Man mask.]

Spider-Man: -GET OUT OF MY HEAD!

[Page 8]

[Panel 1: Medium-sized panel. Peter is on his knees, as the Venom Symbiote crawls off of him and back to an unconscious Eddie.]

Peter: AAAUGH!

Peter [capt]: That did it. Venom should be weakened. Once he's back on Eddie-

[Panel 2: Venom has merged with Eddie, feebly using his unconscious body as a sort of meat puppet, similar to the fight scene in *Spectacular Spider-Man* S2 Ep 7.]

Peter [capt]: Bingo.

[Panel 3: Far-away shot, with Peter tackling Venom into the Symbiote Staging ground.]

Venom: What are you doing?!

Peter: Finishing this! Once and for all!

You're here because of me! It's my responsibility to fix that!

[Panel 4: Peter and Venom land on the pipe they first fought on in Issue #11, with Venom taking the impact.]

Peter: Besides-

Oof!

-You said you wanted to go home.

Figured it's my job to **help you along**.

[Panel 5: Venom towers over an injured Peter, the Symbiote army forming a pair of jet-black pillars bending towards him.]

Venom: Really?

You and what army?

[Panel 6: Peter points towards the sky, which Venom, in quick panic, follows.]

Peter: That one.

See, you made one big error pulling back all of your forces to one area. You routed everything to a choke point.

And now... Earth's gonna take advantage of it. If I know Carol.... She called in every favor she could. Pulled every string. And it's going to be raining fire tonight.

[Pages 9 and 10]

[Double page spread. Captain Marvel and Captain America, side-by-side, lead the charging forces, who, while battered, have a renewed fighting spirit and are charging towards the Symbiotes/The Reader. For the first time in a while, we see not just the heroes of the world working to save it, but a plethora of villains. In the spread: Silk, Black Cat, Human Torch (both the F4 one and the Android from the Invaders) Invisible Woman, The Thing, Toxin, Cloak and Dagger, Luke Cage, Jessica Jones, Iron Fist, ROM the Spaceknight, Falcon, Scarlet Witch, Quicksilver, Hawkeye, Mockingbird, She-Hulk (the Symbiote didn't get her completely before the army pulled back), Spectrum, Blue Marvel, Doctor Strange, Moon Knight, Nova (Richard Rider), Thor, Beta Ray Bill, Daredevil, Misty Knight, Hellcat, Shocker, Rhino, Titanium Man, Shang-Chi, Elektra, Punisher and Crossbones (the last two notably rocking flamethrowers and sonic cannons) among dozens of others not visible from the distance away from them.]

Captain Marvel: EVERYBODY!

Captain America: ASSEMBLE!

[Page 11]

[Panel 1: As the Symbiotes have fire rained upon them from the heroes, Peter kicks a Symbiote away as Venom slinks into the shadows. Silk, Black Cat, Captain America and Captain Marvel join Peter as they also take down some Symbiotes.]

Captain Marvel: Good to see you, Pete.

Peter: Feeling's mutual, Carol.

What's the situation upstairs?

Carol: We've got the Symbiotes routed. They're holed up in here. The only way out is through that slipspace gate.

Peter: Then that's where we'll push them.

Steve, get everybody to rush hard. We're going to have to hit them with everything we've got.

Captain America: With pleasure.

[Panel 2: Peter punches out another Symbiote, letting it fall as Cindy arrives, with three metallic cylinders and a red bundle.]

Silk: Good to see you too, boss.

Peter: There's my favorite-slash-only sidekick.

Love how you're not rocking the suit I gift wrapped for you.

Silk: Well, there's a reason for that.

[Panel 3: Silk hands Peter the red bundle, which, as it turns out, is Peter's Spider-Man costume.]

Silk: I'm not gonna take the mantle of somebody who doesn't need replacing.

Peter: Hey, you duct-taped the lenses! Mildly inconvenient, but it'll work. I think.

What'cha got there?

Cindy: The seismic charges. Doc Richards upgraded them. Bigger blast radius and--

Peter: We aren't using those.

[Panel 3: Peter and Cindy are arguing, as Black Cat shouts from behind them.]

Cindy: You said it yourself, we need to bring these things down, this is the easiest way to do it!

Peter: The easiest way isn't always the right one, Cin!

We can do this without killing all of these innocent people they've got as their hosts!

Black Cat: INCOMING!

[Panel 4: Peter, Silk and Black Cat are blown back by an explosion. A symbiote-infected police officer, with a now smoking rocket launcher, is blasted by Nova in the background.]

Cindy: Gaagh!

Peter: Felicia!

Cindy!

[Page 12]

[Panel 1: Venom swats away Falcon, She-Hulk and Mockingbird, while also tearing ROM in half.]

Venom: I won't let you take me down that easily!

My brothers! Don't let these "heroes" deter you!

ROM: *Hghkk!*

[Panel 2: Venom swiftly turns around, a horrified reaction at who is calling out to him.]

???: Really? Take a good look at this costume and tell me if you aren't deterred just a *little*.

Venom: Actually... now that you mention it...

[Panel 3: Peter has leapt into the battle in-costume, the seismic charges slung over his back as he slugs Venom across the jaw.]

Spider-Man: Oh, yeah! It's me, your Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man!

Back and better than ever!

If you define having one eye covered by duct tape as better.

[Panel 4: Spider-Man has pulled out one of the seismic charges out, using it to smack several teeth out of Venom's mouth. In his other hand, he is pushing one into the ground, a blinking green light activating as it arms.]

Spider-Man: So, how you feeling now that your homeboys are in full retreat?

Venom: No retreat yet, web- GUHH!

Spider-Man: What's that, Venom? I think the sound of metal clanging against your skull is drowning out whatever gibberish you were spitting out.

[Panel 5: Spider-Man has placed the last of the Seismic Charges, sliding out of the way as he digs the detonator out of the bag.]

Spider-Man: Nuh-uh. Not another step, Brock. You know what I have here?

Venom: A detonator. Let me guess. You plan on activating it. *Quelle surprise.*

Spider-Man: You know me so well. And it's a particularly easy job.

One little push and--

[Page 13]

[Panel 1: Close, tight shot of Spider-Man's narrowed lenses.]

Spider-Man: Bang.

Venom: So, what're you waiting for? Pull the trigger.

Spider-Man: ...

[Panel 2: As carnage rains upon the heroes, Venom looms over Spider-Man, grinning in mocking victory.]

Venom: All of that collateral... you're not willing to hurt so many people for the greater good.

Not since you killed Doc Ock.

Looks like I've called your bluff, Parker.

[Panel 3: Peter looks down as a fur-covered, black latex-coated hand presses down on the detonator, his lenses widening in shock as a faint clicking sound is heard.]

Black Cat: Good thing I never played my bluff, then.

Game over.

[Panel 4: A blue shockwave of sonics erupts from the three charges, knocking Spider-Man, Black Cat, and Venom (the Symbiote peeling off faster off of Eddie) back, disintegrating the surrounding rocks and digging into the walls of the staging ground. The sound effect on display is a massive "BWOMMMMMM", like an untuned electric bass guitar being ground on Hans Zimmer's synthesizer.]

[Panel 5: The portal slowly turns from a cool, refreshing blue into a sickly, blood red, as the Symbiote crawls away from Eddie. In the mix of red, a strong wind is brewing, with a collective mass of Symbiotes either being sucked in or running willingly.]

Venom/Eddie: No.... This... this isn't what I wanted... home... I'll never be able to go back... not now.

[Page 14]

[Panel 1: Captain Marvel and Captain America are standing at the bottom of the panel, pointing out of the hole as multiple heroes race out of the pit.]

Captain Marvel: Portal's gonna overload! Just got an update from Mr. Fantastic! When it kicks out of reverse, it's gonna douse the area in EM radiation! We need to evac!

Captain America: You heard Carol, people! Grab our wounded and move everybody to a safe distance!

[Panel 2: In the background, multiple heroes help each other out of the rapidly-emptying staging ground. She-Hulk is carrying both ROM and Toxin, Falcon and Invisible Woman are airlifting Thing, Moon Knight and Nova, and both Human Torches are assisting Thor up with Beta Ray Bill's assistance, who is also carrying Punisher on his shoulder. In the foreground, Peter, mask torn from the blast, is helped up by Felicia, as the wind begins picking up.]

Peter: Fel... you did that. Why?

Felicia: You aren't very good at compromising your morals.

It's what makes you... well, you. Figured that if you wouldn't give up your ethics for a split-second, I'd risk mine for you.

Peter: You... didn't have to do that.

Felicia: I didn't. But you would have, to save me.

[Panel 3: Peter points over to the Venom Symbiote, as it begins slithering away weakly.]

Peter: Venom!

Felicia, get to a safe distance with the rest of the group! I'll handle this!

[Panel 4: Peter slams down a plastic container over the Symbiote, which it begins banging against as the wind takes a turn for the worst. His attention, at this point, has turned to a near-unconscious Eddie, who is splayed across the ground.]

Peter: Got it!

Eddie! Grab my hand!

[Panel 5: Both Peter and Eddie have achieved lift, Peter only tied down by the container containing Venom. Dust and debris begin flying, the red glow of the gate the only thing barely seen as several chunks of street debris bang against Peter.]

Peter: Eddie! You've gotta... you've gotta get in gear! Gimme your other hand!

Eddie: Spidey? What are we?... Oh, God! What's going on!

Peter: Eddie, I'm not leaving you behind, no matter how much that Symbiote messed with your head! Now, c'mon! Gimme your damn hand!

[Page 15]

[Panel 1: Eddie looks back towards the portal, filled with deep regret, holding a shank made out of a street sign behind his back.]

Eddie: No... not this time, Parker.

You know we'll just go back to where we started, right? I'll get that Symbiote again, and somebody else will suffer!

Peter: Eddie, don't talk like that! We are getting out of here, got it?

Eddie: No.

As long as Venom and I are on the same planet, nobody else is safe.

I have to do this.

[Panel 2: Large panel. Eddie's shank has jammed into Peter's hand, causing him to howl in pain and let Eddie go by reflex.]

Peter: RAAAUGH!

[Panel 3: Eddie, finally at peace with his actions, smiles and closes his eyes as he's sucked into the portal.]

Eddie: See you on the other side... Parker.

[Panel 4: Eddie has vanished in the portal's glow, a tiny burst of light alerting to the audience that he has passed through.]

[Panel 5: Peter looks over towards the portal in defeat, as the dust kicks up around him, leaving his body barely visible, only by the general shape and the white of his lenses.]

[Page 16 and 17]

[Double Page spread. From the Tactical AI Satellite Display, zoomed in on New York, as a large blast of radiation covers a large mile, in diameter, circle of New York, ending in an area just near the tip of the northern section of Manhattan.]

AI: AI Sarah standing by on Oscorp Tactical Satellite Gabriel.

A large source of radiation has coated a sizable portion of Manhattan. Current projections deem this section of the city uninhabitable.

Update: an unidentified superhuman with powers similar to Spider-Man was deployed to Orbital Battle Cluster Sigma-Beta-3 and has neutralized hostile forces in control of the cluster.

Update: The Baxter Building has managed to reestablish contact with outside sources. Power was momentarily lost, and a Symbiote prisoner has managed to escape.

Update: Captain Steven Rogers has reported that all major Symbiote holdouts have been neutralized, and the slipspace gate bringing them to Earth has been disabled. There has been no contact with Spider-Man for a period of twenty minutes.

[Page 18]

[Panel 1: The heroes of the crisis have all gathered in the street, licking their wounds. Behind them are the crippled NYPD, led by Carlie and Yuri, as well as the battered Marines and Army troops. Silk and Captain America stand at the forefront, anxiously waiting for something to come out of the glowing mist. Silent panel.]

[Panel 2: Close up of Silk and Cap. Cindy is visibly concerned, while Cap is a bit better at hiding it, though it is clear to the reader what he's thinking.]

Silk: Is he?...

Captain America: I'm not sure, kid.

But until we see a body, he isn't dead. He's survived far worse.

[Panel 3: Felicia is adjusting her lenses to compensate for the foglike radiation, only to shout out in glee when she hits the frequency she's looking for and looks into the cloud.]

Felicia: I found him! It's Spidey!

[Panel 4: Just having permeated the radiation, Peter comes out trailing gas on his shoulders, managing to contain the Venom Symbiote in a bag of webbing.]

Peter: Hey guys.

I'm back.

I also got a Symbiote.

It's been a... A heckuva day.

[Page 19]

[Panel 1: Cindy and Felicia have hug-tackled him, while both Caps put their hands on his shoulders.]

Carol: Good job, Peter.

You did it.

Cap: I'm inclined to agree with Carol, Peter.

You saved us all.

[Panel 2: Peter looks up towards the radiation cloud, his singular open lens and mouth noting a disappointed and somewhat depressed mood.]

Peter: No.

I didn't.

And even if we saved as many as we could....

[Panel 3: Spider-Man walks away from the cloud, as Carlie and Yuri look on.]

Spider-Man: ...I'm not sure if we did enough.

Carlie: Hot damn. He did it again.

I'm starting to think Spidey's the only reason we've been getting out of these messes.

[Panel 4: Spider-Man walks up to Carlie, clapping her on the shoulder in a half-assed manner, Yuri wearing an expression that would make the reader swear she was going to draw her gun at any minute.]

Spider-Man: No, it... it wasn't just me, Carlie.

I did some of it. But... you helped slow them down.

[Panel 5: A group of the massive team of heroes, silently gathered to both celebrate their victory and mourn their losses.]

Peter: Cap and his guys... they all played a part. They made that final push that pushed the Symbiotes back through the portal.

[Page 20]

[Panel 1: Peter's lens has narrowed, as he walks away from the cavalcade of police cars. Carlie is looking towards the assembled heroes and villains (note: Shocker is getting tackled in the background by Moon Knight), while Yuri glares at him menacingly.]

Peter: Wheels within wheels, Carlie. Always turning, even if we don't realize it.

The Symbiotes were one of those wheels.

Carlie: You delirious or something? Because half of what you just said is absolute nonsense.

[Panel 2: A close-up of Yuri's face, still glaring at Spider-Man.]

Spider-Man [op]: I dunno. Maybe I'm finally going insane.

[Panel 3: Silk and Black Cat have joined Spider-Man, as he walks out of the maze of vehicles.]

Spider-Man: Funny. All it took was getting dressed up in spandex and fighting off an alien invasion every other week.

Say, you don't happen to have any blankets around here, do you?

Carlie: In the back of that SWAT van. Tired?

[Panel 4: Peter tries breaking open the door on the back of the van, but fails to do so, instead just smacking his fist against it.]

Spider-Man: Like you wouldn't believe.

Stupid door...

Actually, y'know what?

[Page 21]

[Splash page. Spider-Man has lied down on the ground, as Black Cat and Silk sit on the bumper of the SWAT van. Carlie has turned her attention to speaking with Captain America, and Yuri has stormed off in the opposite direction, away from the cavalcade, whereas MJ (carrying Annie) have come running up with Reed to the patchwork camp of heroes.]

Spider-Man: After spending the day fighting Symbiotes?

I'm starting to think anywhere's okay to sleep.

Spider-Man [capt]: And so we'd done it. We'd won.

Earth's last stand. Every one of our best and brightest who rode into the valley of death.

For the first time in years, we were united. The Symbiotes had done the impossible. They'd brought us together against a common threat.

A story that **shouldn't** have been needed to be told, but it **was** needed **regardless**. Good people stolen from us because we were too blind to see **darkness** in the **light**.

Now all that's left is to rebuild. Just like we always do. And the foundation will be a moral. A simple one, but at the same time the most complex thing that we will never understand.

No matter how much pressure you put on a person, they will always find a way to succeed in some way. Because, above all else, **life persists**.

[To be Concluded...]