

EXHIBIT GGG

THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF HENRY PYM

A Look at Kirby's Ant-Man/Giant-Man by Mike Garland

When I was asked to write an article on Ant-Man, I realized I never really gave much thought to the character — and neither, it appears, did anyone else. Therein lies the basic flaw in the character of the Ant-Man: Fans were interested... but not very.

First of all, why make a super-hero out of a character the size of an insect? I'm sure anyone familiar with Ant-Man already knows that he started out as scientist Henry Pym, who shrank himself down, and got trapped in and escaped from an anthill in a then throwaway fantasy story "The Man in the Ant Hill," published in *Tales to Astonish* #27, Jan. 1962 (approximately the same time *FF* #2 appeared). Lee plotted the story and the art was by Kirby/Ayers. (Dick Ayers remembers sending Stan a note back with this story, telling him he found the concept of a man in a world of insects intriguing.) But the scripting (dialogue and captions) was by Stan's brother Larry Lieber, one of the unsung heroes of early Marvel. Lieber scripted many of the early Ant-Man stories.

Shortly after this story was published, Lee began the task of converting his "monster comics" into super-hero magazines. Perhaps it

was due to fan response to the anthill story, or the fact that during this time Lee (or Kirby) was in a "bug" kind of mood (there was also "The Man in the Beehive" story in *Suspense* #32 and the debut of Spider-Man approximately one month before the



Dr. Pym's first appearance from *Tales to Astonish* #27.

Ant-Man introduction), or the fact that DC had successfully re-introduced the Atom, a six-inch super-hero, in *Showcase*. Since the artwork is submitted approximately (but not always) six months before the cover date/month, the Ant-Man story would have been drawn shortly after *Showcase* #36 — the end of the Atom's debut run — and Lee may have wanted a tiny super-hero in his growing stable of stars.

In any event, the Ant-Man debuted in *Tales to Astonish* #35 (Sept. '62), on the rack with *FF* #6, *Hulk* #3, and *Journey into Mystery* #84 among others. The Ant-Man costume was clearly a Kirby creation, and it never looked as good as it did after the first splash page. The chest emblem was designed to resemble a huge ant, complete with head, thorax, and legs. The helmet was beautifully reminiscent of an ant's head with antennae and mandibles. The boots were also unique inasmuch as they appeared to be designed for treading underground, and were never used again after the first issue. Sadly, over time (and with the frenetic pace Kirby was working under), the costume became a diluted version of the original, with the boots resembling the gloves, the helmet sometimes without antennae, and the ant emblem becoming simply a large black ball on the hero's chest.

According to Lieber, Stan named the character Ant-Man, but Larry came up with Henry Pym — just as he came up with Don Blake, Tony Stark, and other characters whom I grew up with, never realizing the creative input of this quiet man. Larry Lieber was the principal scripter not only in Ant-Man's introduction, but also in Thor's, Iron Man's, and the Human Torch's in *Strange Tales*. Stan gave Larry the scripting chores in the monster comics that became hero comics, not to mention the many westerns, romance, and fantasy stories he was scripting at the same time, if anything, this should make him just as important in launching these characters as Stan and Jack were: remember when you go over these classic stories, the words were by Lieber.

Perhaps the reason Ant-Man had problems finding an audience was the premise: a super-hero the size of an insect is interesting, but not sustainable over the long run. The early Ant-Man stories were a good read and Kirby's visuals were entertaining; it had to be a challenge to



Splash page from *Tales to Astonish* #35. Note the ant-like symbol on Ant-Man's chest.



Ant-Man fought his share of Communists, as shown here in Tales To Astonish #36.

guys like Kirby, Ayers, and Heck because the skillful use of perspective was key with this type of character. I like to think of Lieber's early Ant-Man stories as *Scooby-Doo* endings, because they all had a mystery solved with an unmasking at the end. Of course, there were the inevitable anti-Commie stories (Lee peppered his comics with this stuff during this time). Unlike Kane's stylized Atom, where hero and villain were always perfectly physically proportioned, Kirby's Ant-Man looked like he lived in an almost surreal world; villains loomed over him like mountains. Kirby's approach was both cinematic (as usual) and striking — almost nightmare, you say things from the perspective of an insect — all



Kirby made good use of the insect idea, with Ant-Man constantly bumping up and, as shown here from *Astonish* # 38 and 40

effective use of art.

Kirby drew the first six issues (#35-40) to get the character started; of this run, the best story to me was issue #39, "The Scarlet Beetle" — a definite throwback to the pre-hero stuff, but a fun twist having the insect human-size and vice-versa. With #41, Don Heck took over the art chores and coincidentally was drawing Iron Man's first appearance in *Suspense* #39 at the same time, so Heck was starting his super-hero run jumping in with both feet. Lieber continued to script up to #43; by then either it was determined that sales weren't good enough or Lee wanted another female hero at Marvel (or people were getting tired of having Ant-Man converse one-sidedly with a bunch of ants). So by his tenth issue, it was decided to give him a partner.

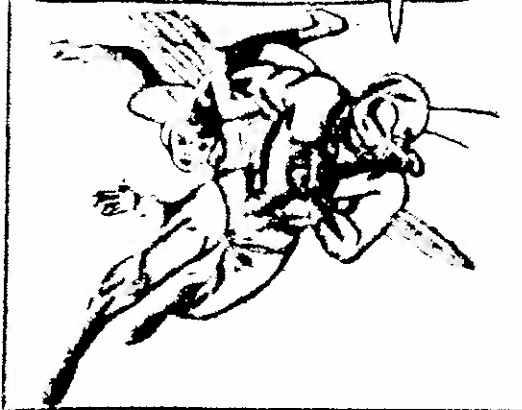
With #44, Kirby was back and the Wasp was with him. Heck backed Kirby on inks, but the scripting was done by one H.E. Huntly, a pseudonym for Ernie Hart, who was an editor under Stan from the Atlas days. Lee was still getting credit as plotter, and this is evident because this story has Commie-villain elements in it. We find out that Pym had a wife, Maria, who came from and died behind the Iron Curtain. Janet Van Dyne, whom Pym transforms into the Wasp (via Kirby), also loses her father in this story, so the two are united to avenge his death. Ant-Man ends up with a partner, Pym ends up with a love interest, and Lee ends up with another Kirby-designed character. Up until this time, Ant-Man fought mostly common criminals, spies, saboteurs and the like; it wasn't until #48 (his 14th issue) that he was given a costumed super-villain. Perhaps the introduction of super-villains or lagging sales (probably sales) prompted Lee to re-vamp the character.

Kirby returned in *Astonish* #49 (once again backed up by Heck) to turn Ant-Man into Giant-Man. The name may have been picked because of the play on Gi-Ant Man, because the Ant-Man angle was not to be abandoned. This issue also introduced a one-time menace called "The Living Eraser" whom Les Daniels in his book *Marvel: Five Fabulous Decades* goes out of his way to showcase as one of those unique Lee creations. Yes, the character is unique and imaginative, but that's my point of contention: Kirby was on the book! One should notice that whenever revisions or additions were made to the Ant-Man character, it was Kirby who worked on that story, and it was in a decidedly different vein than was being done when Kirby wasn't involved.





DON'T YOU TRY ANYTHING LIKE THAT AGAIN!
I DIDN'T SAY I WAS QUITTING! I'VE JUST
GOT TO FIND A WAY TO FIGHT THAT THING!
AND I THINK I'VE FOUND IT NOW!



Dan Heck's inks/finishes over Kirby's layouts created a beautiful, polished look; it was some of Heck's finest work. This panel is from Astonish #44.

Kirby stayed on for #50 and #51 and helped launch The Human Top, who was being groomed to be Giant-Man's arch-villain. To my knowledge these issues have never been reprinted (which holds true for many of the Ant-Man/Giant-Man stories) and that's really a shame, for they have some very imaginative Kirby fight scenes. It was also an early two-parter, but even more interesting is that the first part of the story is inked by Steve Ditko, and the pairing of these two on superhero stories was rare indeed. The second part (#51) was inked by Dick Ayers, probably to help introduce him to the character, for he was to become the primary Giant-Man artist. Issue #57 guest-starred Spider-Man (published around the time of *Spider-Man* #14), and issue #59 had The Hulk, probably to introduce the character to new readers since he became Giant-Man's new "roommate" in the next issue.

Beginning with *Astonish* #60, the book was split between Giant-Man and The Hulk, and while The Hulk was looking for an audience,

sadly, Giant-Man was losing his. His stories seemed to be slipping back to the Ant-Man run of the mill villains (Lee was credited as writer by this time). In issue #65, one last chance was tried with "The New Giant-Man." He was given a slight redress, a new cybernetic helmet (the original was discarded when he went from Ant- to Giant-Man), and the new ability to control the size of others, with some very nice Bob Powell artwork thrown in too, but it was too little, too late. Having never really known what to do with the character, Lee threw in the towel. The hero decided to "retire," another unique approach for a super hero and a first for Marvel, so by issue #70, The Sub-Mariner debuted in place of Giant-Man.

Stan, refusing to say lie, brought back Pym and Van Dyne for cameos in The Sub-Mariner story in *Astonish* #77 and #78. In it, The Wasp decides to tail Namor, which leads to her being captured by Attuma in *Avengers* #26, which in turn brings Giant-Man back to the *Avengers* in #28 with yet another new costume and name: Goliath. (True Marvelites remember Ant-Man was a founder of The Avengers, appeared as Giant Man with issue #2, and left the group in #16. Goliath went on to become one of the "angst-ridden" Lee heroes, developing size changing-induced psychoses, and finally marrying The Wasp in *Avengers* #60 as yet another incarnation, Yellowjacket.)

Ant-Man/Giant-Man has always gotten a bad rap from fandom in general. In comics-related anthologies he's either listed as an "OK" character, one who "never seemed to cut it," or simply as a "joke." Ironically, he was held up to national ridicule, and practically no one knew who he was when it was being done. I'm referring to the classic *Saturday Nite Live* sketch with the super-hero party, where Garrett Morris as Ant-Man gets razed by a John Belushi Hulk and a Dan Akroyd Flash. He became the Rodney Dangerfield of Marvel superheroes; frankly, he deserved a little better. To me at least, Henry Pym, The Astonishing Ant-Man was, all in all, a decent hero for his time. ★

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