

Chapter 1 Late again



She looks at me every day. Mary Jane Watson. Her picture is all over New York. I love her. But she doesn't know – she can never know. She can't be part of my life. Who am I? I'm Spider-Man and I have an important job to do. I'm also Peter Parker, and I too have a job to do ...



Peter stopped his bike outside Joe's Pizza bar. His boss, Mr Aziz, was standing outside.

'Parker!' he shouted. 'You're late! Always late!'

Mr Aziz turned around. On the back of his t-shirt it said, '29 minutes or it's free!' Peter followed Mr Aziz inside the busy pizza bar.

'This order came in twenty-one minutes ago,' Mr Aziz explained, pointing at the big Joe's Pizzas clock. He passed

eight pizza boxes to Peter. 'You've got seven and a half minutes ... or you'll lose your job! GO!'



Peter rode his bike through the cars, taxis and buses on Manhattan's busy streets. He saw a clock on a street corner. Three minutes to two! He had just three minutes left! There was only one thing to do. He left his bike and ran into a small street. He quickly changed into his Spider-Man clothes. Then he shot a line of webbing and swung into the street. A man saw him and shouted, 'Hey! Spidey's taken that guy's pizzas!'

Some New Yorkers didn't like Spider-Man much. There were bad stories about him in the *Daily Bugle*, the city newspaper, nearly every day. And people believed them.



Spider-Man swung from building to building. Not much time left! But then two young children ran out into a busy street.

Peter put the pizza boxes on a building. He swung down and took the children in his arms. He pulled them to the other side of the street – just in time. The little boy and girl looked at him with big eyes.

'No playing in the street,' Spider-Man said to them.

'Yes, Mr Spider-Man,' they answered.

He collected the pizzas and went into an office building. It was three minutes past two. 'You're late,' said the woman behind the desk. 'I'm not paying for those.'



Peter lost his job at Joe's Pizza bar, but he still had work at the *Daily Bugle*. He took pictures of Spider-Man for

the newspaper. He went to see the top man at the paper, Jonah Jameson. Peter wanted to sell photos of other things – birds in the park, faces of interesting old men. But Jonah Jameson wasn't interested.

'I only pay you because you take pictures of Spider-Man!' he shouted.

'Spider-Man won't let me take any more pictures,' said Peter. 'The city hates him because of you.'

'Well, I don't want your other pictures.'

'OK,' said Peter, and he pulled out a fantastic photo of Spider-Man.

'I'll give you a hundred and fifty,' said Jameson.

'Three hundred,' said Peter.

'OK, OK,' said Jameson. 'Go and see Betty.'

Peter went to get the money from Betty Brandt. Betty worked for Mr Jameson.



'You borrowed some money two weeks ago,' she said kindly, 'I can't give you any more ... Sorry.'



'Oh no!' thought Peter, 'I'm late again.' He ran to the university. He ran faster than any ordinary person. People were looking at him but he didn't care. He turned a corner and ran into someone. Books and papers flew everywhere. Peter took the books and papers in his hands and stood up – right in front of his teacher!

'Oh, Dr Connors! Sorry!' he said.

'Where were you going, Parker?'

'To your class.'

'My class is over,' said Dr Connors. 'Look at you, Peter. You're always late for class. You're always so tired. Your homework on fusion is late.'

'I know ... ,' said Peter, 'I'm planning to write my fusion homework on Dr Otto Octavius.'

'Octavius is a friend of mine. Make sure it's good.'



It was dark when Peter arrived at Aunt May's house in Forest Hills. He walked into the living room. He was thinking about other things and he didn't see Aunt May, MJ and Harry standing there ...