

**FANTASTIC FOUR 50. SILENT ISSUE**  
**WRITTEN BY CARLOS PACHECO AND RAFAEL MARIN**  
**"ANNIVERSARY!"**

PLEASE NOTE: THIS IS A SILENT STORY—THERE WILL BE NO DIALOGUE, CAPTIONS OR THOUGHT BALLOONS. THE VISUALS MUST TELL THE STORY CLEARLY. WHEN IN DOUBT, ERR ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION.

**PAGE 1.**

A NYC panoramic to remind and remark the setting of our stories. A warm sun shining on the buildings. It's a placid vista, a non-ominous shot. Some landmarks, real ones and Marvel ones: The Empire State Building, the Chrysler Building, The Daily Bugle... and of course THE BAXTER BUILDING.

Inside the BAXTER BUILDING, we get to see what is a "day in the lives" of Marvel's First Family. FRANKLIN is having some breakfast with a sleepy face, while REED is attending a super-cooking machine he has invented to make them all coffee and toast.

Mmm... it doesn't seem to work. A frowning REED plays with the innards of the machine.

Then enters JOHNNY STORM, who has a look at the breakfast. (NOTE: Johnny has been having difficulty controlling his flame in recent stories, requiring him to wear a protective bodysuit incorporated into his new red costume at all times. So he should probably be so attired here.)

**PAGE 2**

JOHNNY takes the coffee pot, while Reed is still puzzled about the machine's malfunctioning, and places it boldly on his palm.

The coffee boils in a matter of seconds.

A big stone hand takes the coffee pot from his hand...

And Johnny turns to protest, as THE THING has entered the kitchen and is ready to eat his breakfast. We see THE THING has some darts in his other hand. BEHIND HIM, BIG ENOUGH TO BE UNDERSTANDABLE, THERE'S A DARTBOARD WITH THE FACE OF DOCTOR DOOM with some darts in it. AROUND THE BULLSEYE IN FRANKLIN'S CHILDISH HANDWRITING IT SAYS "THE BADDIE".

THE THING sits at the table and reaches a hand towards a stack of pancakes.... but he can't take them! An invisible force field prevents it.

Out of thin air, a single pancake places itself just in front of THE THING.

**PAGE 3**

And a pregnant Invisible Woman makes herself visible and makes the typical signal with a finger: ONLY ONE, BEN.

Grumbling, the Thing transforms himself into BEN GRIMM. He looks at his paunchy belly and sighs...HE SHOULD LOOK A LITTLE BIT SLIMMER THAN IN PAST ISSUES.

And eats the single pancake while Sue kisses FRANKLIN.

This is the moment where REED mends the problem with the cooking machine....

Just when the 3 of them have finished breakfast and are ready to go out!

#### **PAGE 4**

So REED sits and eats a single pastry.

**CHANGE OF SCENE.** SUSAN STORM, dressed not in her FF costume, but in a smart suit that for the moment hides she is about six or seven-month pregnant. Sue is talking to a cellular phone which floats around her. She seems nervous, even worried.

Sitting calmly on a sofa, SHE-HULK, also dressed in civvies. Shulkie is reading a magazine.

Susan hangs up the phone... using a force field, and at the same time, with her hands, she makes a cleaning gesture: all settled!

Both women enter the lift. It should be clear now Sue is worried, and Shulkie palms her back, giving her comfort.

**CHANGE OF SCENE.** Both women at the office of a doctor. A black woman in a white frock opens the door, smiling.

#### **PAGE 5**

The lady-doctor is sitting at her desk. Sue and Jennifer at the other side. Sue is explaining her sudden pregnancy, while Jen smiles. The doctor doesn't seem puzzled: she understands superheroes are not normal.

The lady doctor makes an inviting gesture.

The three women enter a room where we can find some modern machines.

Sue lays on a couch, and the woman applies some cables and wires (yeah, we know it should be a sort of gel, but it's Marvel Earth after all) to take a sonogram of the unborn fetus.

They turn to the machine. On the screen, a black shadow is forming...

Sue stares, expectantly.

Jen stares, expectantly.

The lady doctor stares, frowning. The device doesn't seem to be working properly. A sound: **TAC**

## PAGE 6

Close shot on Susan's face. The sound repeats: **TAC**.

The lady doctor, worried, looks at the machine, that is still making sounds **TAC TAC**  
**TAC**

Veery close shot on Susan's blue eyes. The **TAC** sound surround them

**CHANGE OF SCENE.** Big panel. A party in a great saloon or a disco, the official launch party of the shooting of Johnny Storm's feature film. A placard somewhere announcing COMING SOON: BLAZING STAR!

We get to see many people there, all glamorously dressed (though no night dresses, as it's day). Perhaps some recognizable faces; cameos of actors and actresses who have played Marvel heroes in the cinema and TV: Lou Ferrigno, Wesley Snipes, Hugh Jackman, Famke Janssen, Patrick Stewart, Ian McKellen...

Prominent among the crowd, **BOB DIAMOND**, the actor and ex-superhero, former member of the **SONS OF THE TIGER**. Next to him, **LON ZELIG**, who has already been revealed to the readers as the Super Skrull in disguise. **Roberta Hunt**, the PR person of Hawk Productions is already there. And of course **Hawk** himself, dressed with some decorative cowboy gear (see FF 37 for reference).

There's a TV set --or several-- in some strategic corners, in a high place over the bar: MTV is playing for the moment. In a corner, a group of two black girls and a guy are playing snookers: It's an important detail, as the sound of the ball and the stick (Tac tac tac) will trigger Johnny Storm's thoughts.

**Hawk** turns to greet...

## PAGE 7

In the middle of a crowd of photographers, bodyguards and female fans, **JOHNNY STORM** and **NAMORITA** get to the party. Namorita is in fashionable street clothes, but of course Johnny is forcefully wearing his red new uniform to allow him control his flames. ( We should see only his face's skin since his hands should be covered by his uniform's gloves.)

Johnny greets the people. He is **NERVOUS**, as in the last months he has lost some of his security. Now that Johnny cannot control his flames, he is potentially A **DANGER!**

A girl avoids the security people.

... And embraces a puzzled Johnny Storm! Nita only watches, somewhat angry...

...The girl kisses Johnny's lips....

## PAGE 8

And starts back in pain, touching her lips! She has been burnt!

All around stare, some security men run to help the girl, photographers use their cameras at will...

And Johnny Storm feels helpless... and guilty!

HAWK quickly acts, he takes the girl aside

He gives her some money and calls for a bodyguard...

The girl goes away with some people, presumably to get medical assistance, while Hawk turns smiling to the reporters. All has been a joke of sorts, seems to be his expression...

## **PAGE 9**

But Johnny knows his powers are not under control. He is saddened, feels alone... and dangerous. A couple of minutes may have passed. Johnny has now a long glass with some ice cubes inside.

He goes somewhere apart. In the middle of the crowd, LON ZELIG and BOB DIAMOND look at him.

Nita tries to give him some comfort, she reaches to touch his cheek...

But she can't put her fingers on Johnny's skin due to the heat that irradiates

Johnny realizes for the first time the real dimension of the situation he's living.

In his hand, the ice cubes VAPORIZE!

**FFxx: TAC**

## **PAGE 10**

And the glass explodes, as Johnny's hand has been accumulating heat second by second!

**FFXX (bigger, but ununtrussive): Tac Tac**

In the background, Bob Diamond and Lon Zelig look the Torch's way. The shot might include also a TV set. The music is so loud nobody can hear anything.

**FFXX (bigger): TAC TAC TAC**

On the TV, an anchorman is apparently telling the news of the day: a number 4 appears on screen.

Johnny turns to the TV.

Then the words ANNIVERSARY, and a pin-up of the FF appear on screen.

Close shot on Johnny. His face and pose should remind those of Susan's on page 5. The same kind of expression as Spider-Man's when his spider-sense is tingling.

**FFXX (big, important, intrusive): TAC TAC TAC**

**CHANGE OF SCENE.** Big panel. Washington Square. Some people playing chess in the street, the usual scene, birds, couples. **BEN GRIMM**, TURNED INTO THE THING, in his usual hat and coat, is signing some autographs for a bunch of children.. He feels lonely, but at peace with himself and the world now that he can control his transformations and is a man.

## **PAGE 11**

A close shot on THE THING's mass, his shoulder, his impressive quarterback appearance. He gets near to watching two chess players. One of them is a mature man, with slavic features who should look like a refugee from Mother Russia or one of those countries from the Iron Curtain. in his better we see the slogan REMEMBER LATVERIA FALL. The other is a young spectacled blonde man, a sort of Woody Allenesque guy, the typical wise man in the clouds, who wears a T-Shirt with a Hard Rock Bar legend.

We center on the two players

They move pieces. **TAC**

The Thing's bulk is over them. The sound is now the pieces on the board or the clock they set to start counting time. **TAC**

Another move. **TAC**

Player one smiles. **Tac**

Mr. Latverian-exile is still serious, concentrated on the game. There is somewhere on the table --under the board, perhaps-- an issue of **TIME MAGAZINE**, where we see the headline **ONE 4 ALL**, and a picture of our four heroes.

The Thing sees himself reflected in the player's glasses.

**FFXX: TAC TAC TAC**

## **PAGE 12**

We flashback to YANCY STREET, at the time right after the Fantastic Four first got their powers. THE FLASHBACK STARTS HERE. COLORING SHOULD TELL TIME HAS GONE BACK FOR BEN IN HIS MEMORY. THE THING (the first and most horrible version of The Thing, burly and sullen) is looking at his reflection in the window of an Irish pub (A pipe from a wall is dripping onto some cardboards or tins, and this is making the sound: **TAC TAC TAC**). A Will Eisner-like panel: take care to reinforce the dirt of the street, the rough of the woods, the hard of the cobblestones. A graffiti on the walls: **Kirby was here** (ala Killroy )

Ben's body language is clear: he is shy, in pain, doesn't like the reflection he sees in the window. The reflection could be even uglier than the original, as he sees himself even more monstrous as he really is (if this is possible!)

**FFXX (the sound of the pipe dripping): TAC TAC TAC**

Suddenly, the window is smashed by a brick hurled from off panel. Ben's face is suddenly even more horrible, reflected in the shattering glass.

Ben turns and sees how the people of the neighborhood react to his presence on the street. The idea is to tell the scene as in a silent movie: the mob attacks the monster with sticks and stones, and the Thing flees, because he is conscious he can't hit them without killing them. We see how they throw dirt, stones, the lot. They are horrified (later on, as we know, this fear will turn into practical jokes, but this first time of his coming back to Yancy Street is serious, dramatic).

Close shot on Ben's face. The wet dirt that has hit him slips over his face, mixing with the rocky surface of his features.

Shot on the mob; they are young boys and men and women alike. Ben tries to climb up on a streetlight, but it falls in.

Ben ties the street light it into a knot. He is supposedly crying his anger.

Ben stars running, as the quarterback he once was.

**PAGE 13:**

With nowhere else to go, Ben pulls out a culvert from the floor.

He jumps into the sewer.

He falls into the black dirty waters of the sewers.

**CHANGE OF SCENE.** In three or four images, we see how SUE passes from her present self to her of then: her face mixes to a much younger Sue Storm facing her reflection on a mirror, passing from the doctor office to Sue's memory. It is a dressing room of sorts. She is a model and is preparing for a photo session. We can't see her full body for the moment, but she is dressed in a bikini and a sort of Hawaiian long silk shirt. For these three panels, we only see a medium shot of her: she is watching her face on the mirror... and she gradually turns invisible (so, with the last panel we can't see her anymore, not even in the dotted line style artists use to depict her invisibility)

On the dressing table, there is a clock or a vinyl doll of **Little Orphan Annie**. The sound of the clock is TAC TAC TAC. Marilyn Monroe and Doris Day posters on the walls.

**FFXX: TAC TAC TAC**

She starts to vanish. The pencil of make-up seems to float in the air, before an in-existent face.

**FFXX (small, coming from the clock): TAC TAC TAC**

She is nowhere to be seen. She is completely invisible. The pencil falls. (NOTE: Her clothing should still be visible, however, since it's not made of unstable molecules)

**FFXX (smaller, this time coming from the pencil): TAC**

A man enters the room and of course doesn't see her. He is a producer, lots of rings, a gold chain, side whiskers. His shirt is open to the middle of the chest, sunglasses. In a way, he should remind us of a cheap version of Hugh Hefner.

## **PAGE 14**

As the man looks for her around the room, we see Sue in her invisible form. She is standing behind the man, going towards the door. She is anguished, as she is not sure if she is going to be able to return to visibility or will be stuck as a spectre for the rest of her life.

SUE touches the door and she suddenly turns visible. The man reacts to her sudden appearance.

**CHANGE OF SCENE.** Now we center on Johnny Storm's past. JOHNNY'S FACE WHILE WATCHING TV MIXES WITH HIS OWN FACE AS HE WAS WHEN HE WAS A TEEN. We see him as a teenager, dressed in a plaid shirt and jeans. He is watching himself in the mirror in the bathroom of his High School. A faucet is dripping: TAC TAC TAC

As Johnny watches his reflection, we see thru all this scene that he is --literally-- playing with fire. A wisp of his hair forms a flaming tupe and he is watching the effect of this on the mirror. He smiles: he is literally a boy with a wish come true.

With a finger, Johnny draws a big letter "Z" on the air.

Johnny's body turns into flame. He is on a power trip and is enjoying the experience. Remember this takes place just a few days after he's gained his powers, as all these flashbacks, and he is not yet a hero but a teen blessed by destiny. (NOTE: We should probably use a design reminiscent of the earliest version of the Torch, the big mass of flame.)

## **PAGE 15**

The mirror cracks, turned into a burned charcoal. The flames expand all over the toilet room. Johnny gets nervous.

Johnny tries to suffocate the flames, to no avail. He turns half-human half-fire. All around, the doors are burning.

**FFXX: DRIIIIIIIIIIILL**

From the interior of one of the stalls, movement: somebody trying to open the door, trapped there. Johnny's heart sinks.

**CHANGE BACK TO SUE'S DAYDREAMING.** She is now only dressed with a bikini, a photographer (a burly, ugly type) is passing an arm over her shoulders, as if to make her feel comfortable.

The photographer has just pinched her. We only see her surprise.

**PAGE 16**

A big panel. Suddenly, out of nowhere, Sue's force field manifests for the first time ever (and it won't be recognized as such till later in the original series, as we know). She turns, angry, ashamed. And we see the photographer "flying", hurled against the wall. The reaction of Sue is so powerful that half the studio breaks by the action of the uncontrolled force field pressing against the walls.

The photographer falls to the floor, semi-unconscious. The camera breaks.

SUE goes out. At the door, the producer looks at her, astonished. She is trying to cover her body with her shirt.

She turns completely invisible and storms away. We only hear her footsteps now:  
Tac tac tac

**FFXX: TAC TAC TAC**

**Change back to the High School.** Johnny is trying to open the door for the kids, and at the same time he tries to absorb the flames. From the locked door where the kids are trapped, comes the sound this time: tac tac tac

**FFXX: TAC TAC TAC**

**PAGE 17**

The flames are burning, but of course Johnny doesn't feel any pain. Still trying to control the fire, he gets to the closed door.

The door collapses, in part from the flames, in part from Johnny's kick.

**FFXX: KRAA-AAK**

Two kids the same age of Johnny get out, coughing, almost suffocated. They have cigarettes in their hands... it should be clear they assume it's their smoking that has caused the fire!

The throw away the cigarettes, ashamed and angry...

Johnny breaks a window.

The three of them jump to the garden outside. The firemen have already arrived. Scenes of panic.

Outside the building, Johnny receives attention from a doctor, a teacher or whoever, as he has a scratch on his forehead. He is sullen, pensive, watching the almost extinguished fire. The sound comes from a hydrant this time.

**FFXX: TAC TAC TAC**

**PAGE 18**

Big panel, dark. Inside the sewers. A hunched figure, squatted against a corner. It's the Thing. The water drips over his face. He is a monster in his dwelling place. Black water, like a long Alien-esque spittle, falls on him.

**FFXX: TAC TAC TAC**

Other figures move in the deeper shadows. They are vaguely human in aspect: hobos, vagabonds, misfits, perhaps they are the Morlocks, or of that tribe we met for the first time in Miller's Daredevil.

But they don't get near Ben, and Ben doesn't get near them.

From the shadows he is hiding among, Ben watches as a group of inhabitants of the sewers have a little celebration on their own: they are roasting an animal, possibly a dog. There's a touch of witch-meeting here.

Ben feels disgust, horror.

Center on Ben's frown. His enormous blue eyes. Now it's him who's watching what horror really is.

Ben looks at his deformed hand, now dirty.

## **PAGE 19**

Ben fights to find his inner strength. Makes a decision.

Spectacularly, The Thing climbs out from the sewers. He is all dirty and wet, dripping dark water, even more horrible than ever. But he has made up his mind.

The Thing stands in a dark and lonely street. It's night. There is a tailor's shop there (Big sizes, I suppose). He is defiant. He roars.

He smashes the window of the tailor shop and seizes a mannequin, as if it were a human being, one of those who attacked him during the day.

Ben takes the hat off of the mannequin.

Ben puts the hat on. He lifts the collar of his dirty coat.

Ben walks away in the shadows. Far away, dominating the city, we see the Baxter Building, a light on. In the forefront, the streetlight he destroyed before. And we see the name on it: **YANCY STREET**.

**FFXX (BEN'S FOOTSTEPS): TAC TAC TAC**

## **PAGE 20-21 (DOUBLE SPLASH)**

These two pages should read as an unique item. On the left part, six small panels where we see the three character's faces: as they were in the beginning of the story (the present), and in each of the flashbacks (the past).



Johnny turns, and sees Hawk, Bob Diamond and Lon Zelig are watching him, smiling. Zelig even winks....

A big panel to show how Johnny is a fighter and has decided to try again. In the background, all the participants in the movie. Near Johnny, announcing him again, Hawk.

And in the foreground, THEY PRESENT TO THE PRESS THE PROMOTIONAL POSTER OF THE MOVIE, WHERE JOHNNY IS WEARING THE COSTUME OF **RAWHIDE KID!**

## **PAGE 26**

**Back to WASHINGTON SQUARE.** THE THING, smiling, reaches his hand.

He takes one little piece of the chess board.

Places it in another square. **TAC.**

Both players look at him, really surprised. One player overturns his king. IT'S CHECKMATE!

Ben SMILES. HE changes back to Ben Grimm and goes away, whistling.

On his way, he picks up a newspaper, THE DAILY BUGLE, where the title **HAPPY ANNIVERSARY, FF** can be seen.

## **PAGE 27**

**BACK TO SUSAN'S DOCTOR'S OFFICE.** The woman is hitting the machine, which seems out of order. **TAC**

Sue and Jen look at each other.

Susan smiles. Jen nods.

And now, using her power of invisibility, SUE makes her abdomen invisible, showing the lovely face of her non-born baby.

The little girl opens her enormous blue eyes. A miracle of life and superpowers...

The three women smile.

## **PAGE 28**

**CHANGE OF SCENE.** REED RICHARDS AT HIS LAB, where a strange-looking machine of his is making the sound **TAC TAC TAC.** Reed is elongated, half inside the machine, as usual.

He turns to see his three teammates have returned home. They all are pensive, but not saddened: SUE is holding a black leather clipboard in her hands with the medical results; Johnny scratches his hair and thinks of his possible future as a movie star; Ben has just

tossed his newspaper on a table or counter.

Reed Richards stretches to greet the trio.

Close on Reed's face. He is smiling, unsure. He raises an eyebrow, quizzically, as he doesn't seem to understand what's up with them.

Sue, her hands on her hips, is upset about her husband's attitude. She gives him the newspaper, where the headline says **HAPPY ANNIVERSAY, FF!**

Her hand in her hips, she turns round, as if saying "How could you forget?".

While Johnny and Ben go away too, Reed turns to the readers, and shrugs.

## **PAGE 29**

CHANGE OF SCENE. A VERY BIG PANEL: **DOCTOR DOOM** is sitting on a sort of throne, moody, impressive, menacing as ever. On the walls of this room of his castle, lots of hologrammatic viewscreens with newsfeeds, old and new, with pictures and info about the Fantastic Four's first travel and their exploits. He **too** has remembered!.

Three small panels in the bottom, to center on his metallic gloved hand. Almost the same shot: Doom's fingers on the arm of his throne, drumming: TAC TAC TAC.

**FFXX: TAC TAC TAC**

**FFXX: TAC TAC TAC**

**FFXX: TAC TAC TAC**

**End.**