



MARVEL

IRON MAN

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE
TO THE ARMoured SUPER HERO

IRON MAN

**THE ULTIMATE GUIDE
TO THE ARMORED SUPER HERO**

WRITTEN BY
MATTHEW K. MANNING





LONDON, NEW YORK, MELBOURNE,
MUNICH, AND DELHI

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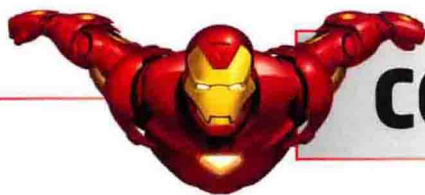
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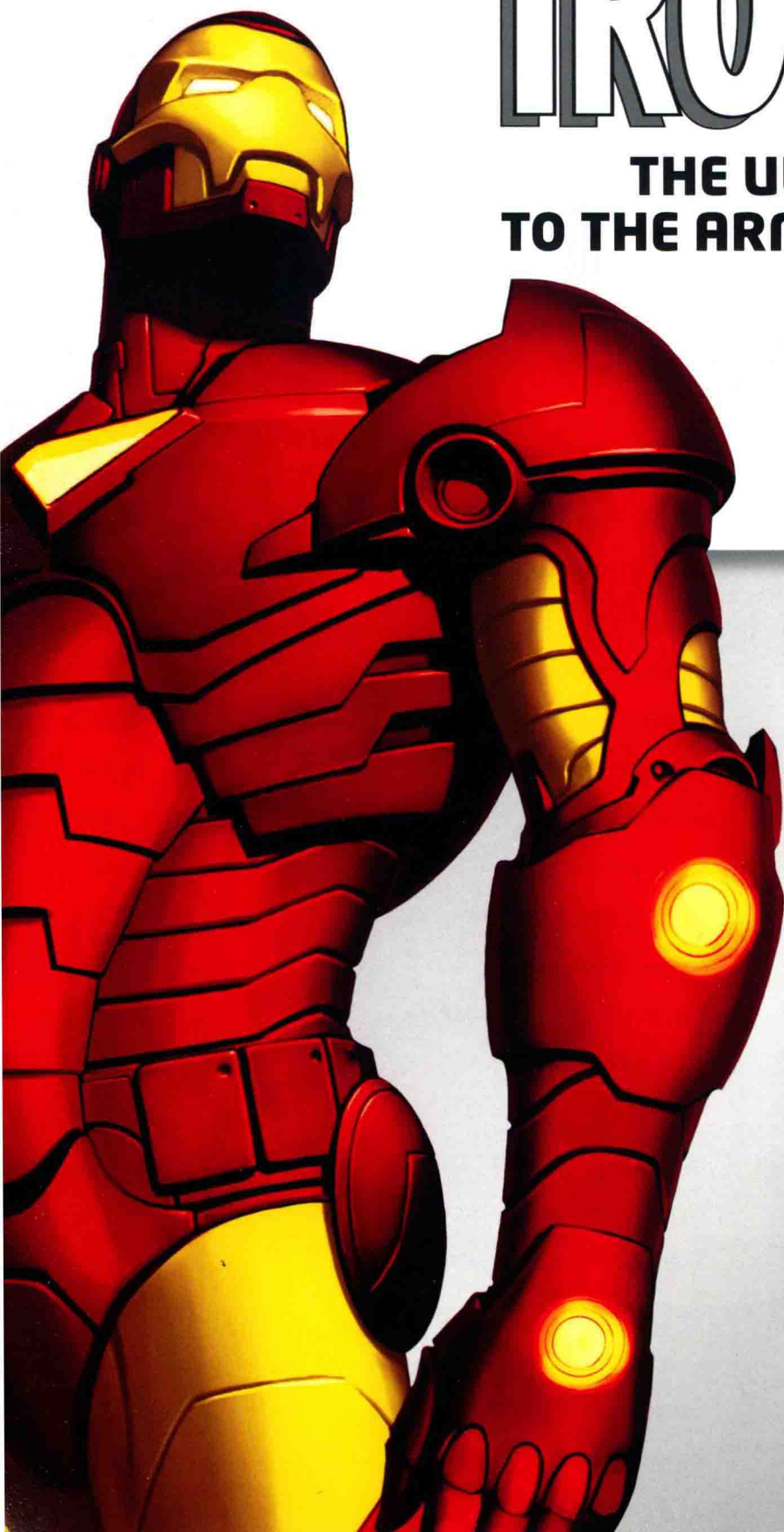
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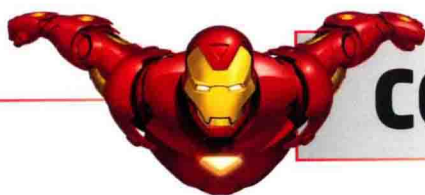


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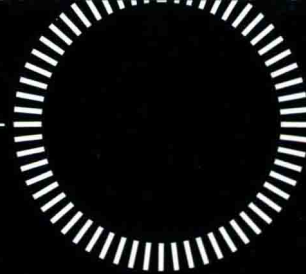
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FOREWORD



I like Iron Man, but I love Tony Stark. I'm not sure if the good luck and great time I've had writing *The Invincible Iron Man* has anything to do with that fact, but I suspect so.

Inspired by Howard Hughes and premiering in *Tales of Suspense* in April '63, Stark was the character that Stan Lee always claimed got the most fan mail from women. In 1966, when Grantray-Lawrence Animation made the *The Marvel Super Heroes* daily animated series (which aired *The Invincible Iron Man* on Wednesday afternoons) (by "animated," I mean "almost-animated via moving various art elements from the original art from the comics around on-screen"), the *Iron Man* theme song started off with the couplet, "Tony Stark makes you feel/He's a cool exec with a heart of steel..." The jingle itself began with Stark—not Iron Man.

Here's my thing. In the book—even in my own pages of the book—you can put different people inside the armor and still call the comic and the character Iron Man and it pretty much still flies. He—or she—still has the helmet, the circle or triangle doodad on the chest, light-up palms, sometimes even rocket-skates in the boots. Flying, that's important. It's fine. It's fun. It works.

Because the suit is the future and that's always fun to watch. Tony is its test pilot. Its inventor. And that combo resonates like a tuning fork deep within us.

There's a thing I think we all relate to in Super Hero stories, no matter what media they come to us wrapped in, that helps explain their enduring popularity. I believe "Super Heroes" endure because of the *transformative* moment—the instant where our hero becomes something *more*.

Name for me a single Super Hero—in comics, film, TV, wherever—where, the whole time they're running around in their Super Hero guise there's a part of you waiting the alter ego to go away so they can return to their civilian life. I can't really think of anybody *other* than Tony Stark who, depending on the day, is at least as interesting and fun to watch as Iron Man. You can't *wait* for Robert Downey Jr. to get back on screen and, if an *Iron Man* creative team is doing its job right, you shouldn't have to wait long for Tony Stark to get back on-panel, either.

This isn't the most original thought of the world, but I think that the common link in all the great stories and myths and characters that resonate with us is *transformation*. I believe that every great and lasting myth, legend, fable, film, pulp, or pop fiction that's ever captured popular imagination did so because, at its root, someone or something starts off in the story as one thing that we recognize with some degree of shame, regret, or empathy and, through crisis and resolution, becomes something *greater than*, and we, the audience, on some level, take at best inspiration and at worst are entertained by that transformative journey. All the stories we love are, in some ways, aspirational or cautionary tales of transformation. Of evolution. And I think Super Hero stories hit us the way they do because we literally *see* the transformation. It's not a wound being healed, it's not a wrong being righted—it's a man becoming superman. Or Superman or Spider-Man or Iron Man as the case may be. We are witness to the miraculous transformation and it just sends us.

Throw in a dash of danger—a sense of rescue to it all—of flesh and blood people digging deep and fighting back—and you've got yourself some mythic resonance.

Tony Stark is a man rescuing his fellow man, a man transforming himself, a man taking the reins of evolution in his teeth and forcing it to go where he wants it to go.

And he looks amazing in a tuxedo.

Here's to you, Tony.

MATT FRACTION

WRITER OF *THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN*

Portland, Oregon
September 2009



INTRODUCING **IRON MAN**

Iron Man has always looked towards the future. From his debut in the pages of *Tales of Suspense* #39, to the most recent issue of his fifth ongoing comic series, his billionaire alter ego Tony Stark has been in a constant state of reinvention. Stark's goal? To stay one step ahead of the competition, and to lead by heroic example.

When he first appeared on the scene, Tony clad himself in a bulky gray armor with all the style and panache of an fire hydrant. His evolution into a hero was just beginning. His look soon transformed into that of an atomic knight in golden shining armor and then to the robotic equivalent of a hot rod. Flash with substance. The idea of piloting their own Iron Man armor became a daydream for thousands of readers. But Tony Stark was just getting warmed up.

Over the years, Iron Man has remained on the cutting edge of technology, adapting to the future almost before its arrival. Tony Stark has been a war profiteer, a playboy, a Super Hero financier, an electronics pioneer, a humanitarian, a business consultant, a computer technician, a super-spy and even the US Secretary of Defense. But always at his core, Tony Stark has been Iron Man, a visual symbol of heroism, change and faith in science to shape a better world.

He's Iron Man. The Golden Avenger. Shellhead. But most importantly, he's Tony Stark, one of the greatest minds of his generation.

THE BIRTH OF IRON MAN

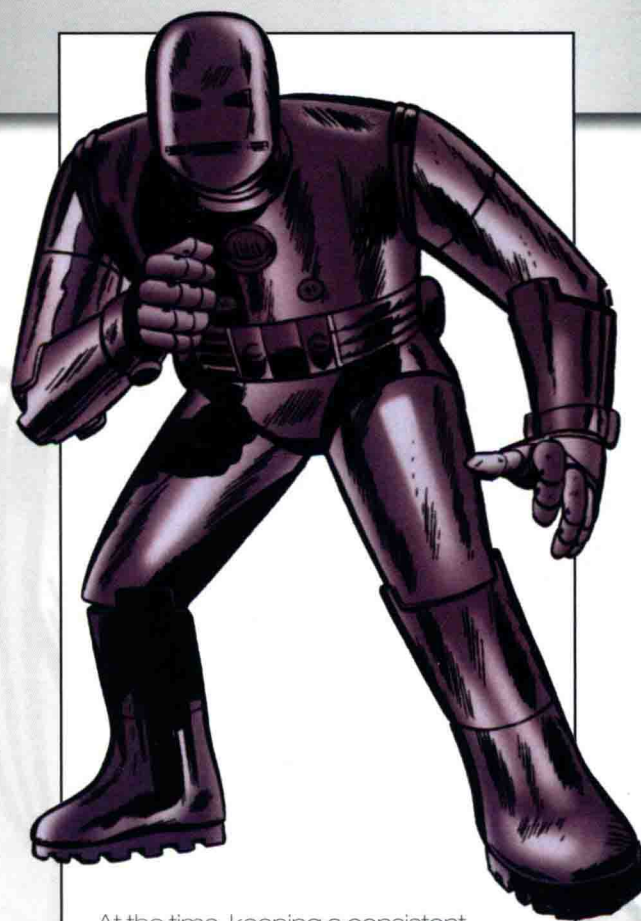
The brainchild of some of the most creative individuals ever to work in the comic book medium, Iron Man made his dramatic debut on the cover to *Tales of Suspense* #39.

By March of 1963, comic book writer and editor Stan Lee was getting pretty sure of himself. And by all accounts, he had every right to be. Working alongside already legendary artists like Jack Kirby and Steve Ditko, Lee had ushered in what was to be known as the Marvel Age of comics. Just a few short months earlier, in November of 1961, Lee and Kirby had introduced the world to the Fantastic Four, in their title's premier issue. They followed up that hit with the debut of the Hulk in May of the following year. Then, teaming with Ditko, Lee introduced Spider-Man that September in the pages of *Amazing Fantasy*'s 15th and final issue. With the introduction of Thor and Ant-Man soon to follow, Lee had a string of runaway successes on his hands, and he felt that practically anything he touched would turn to gold.

So he set out to test that theory. In an increasingly idealistic, anti-establishment age of Civil Rights and anti-Vietnam War protest, Lee decided to create a character that the readership wouldn't readily identify with. He created a weapons designer who worked for the government, rather than rebelling against it. Instead of an everyman character like Spider-Man, who gained instant sympathy from his readers due to his identifiable problems and inner conflicts, Lee created a millionaire playboy, aloof from society's ills and immune to any financial concerns. Despite all these apparent handicaps, Iron Man was a hit with the public—just as Lee had suspected all along.

Lee understood that like all great characters, Tony Stark just needed a touch of tragedy to humanize him. By making Tony injured in a wartime attack and forced to wear a metal chest plate in order to survive, Lee created sympathy for an otherwise detached character. In an unprecedented occurrence in Lee's experience, Iron Man began to receive more mail from female readers than any of his other popular titles, a fact Lee attributed to an inborn maternal instinct to take care of this romantically tragic figure.

Stan Lee had once more created a hero with a lasting fan base and media legacy. Iron Man first appeared sporting a gray suit of armor; as if to reflect Lee's own Midas touch, by Iron Man's second appearance, the color of his armor had turned to gold.



At the time, keeping a consistent shade of gray was a troublesome challenge for a newsprint press. To remedy the situation, Stan Lee decided to have Iron Man paint his armor gold (which conveniently printed as yellow) in his second appearance.



"Here you have this character, who on the outside is invulnerable, I mean, just can't be touched, but inside is this wounded figure.

Stan made it very much an in-your-face wound, you know, his heart was broken,

literally broken."

Iron Man writer Gerry Conway

THE CREATORS

STAN LEE

The creator behind hundreds of Marvel characters, Stan "The Man" Lee not only helped to usher in Marvel's rise to fame in the 1960s, but also served as a guiding force behind the company for years in a myriad of forms, including writer, editor, president, and chairman. Lee wrote nearly all of Iron Man's original adventures, inventing a gallery of villains for the hero, including the Mandarin and the Crimson Dynamo, as well as many supporting characters, such as Tony's longtime allies Pepper Potts and Happy Hogan. Legendary for his enthusiasm as a spokesman for all things Marvel, Stan even made a cameo in the 2008 Iron Man feature film, playing a Hugh Hefner-like playboy bachelor.

LARRY LIEBER

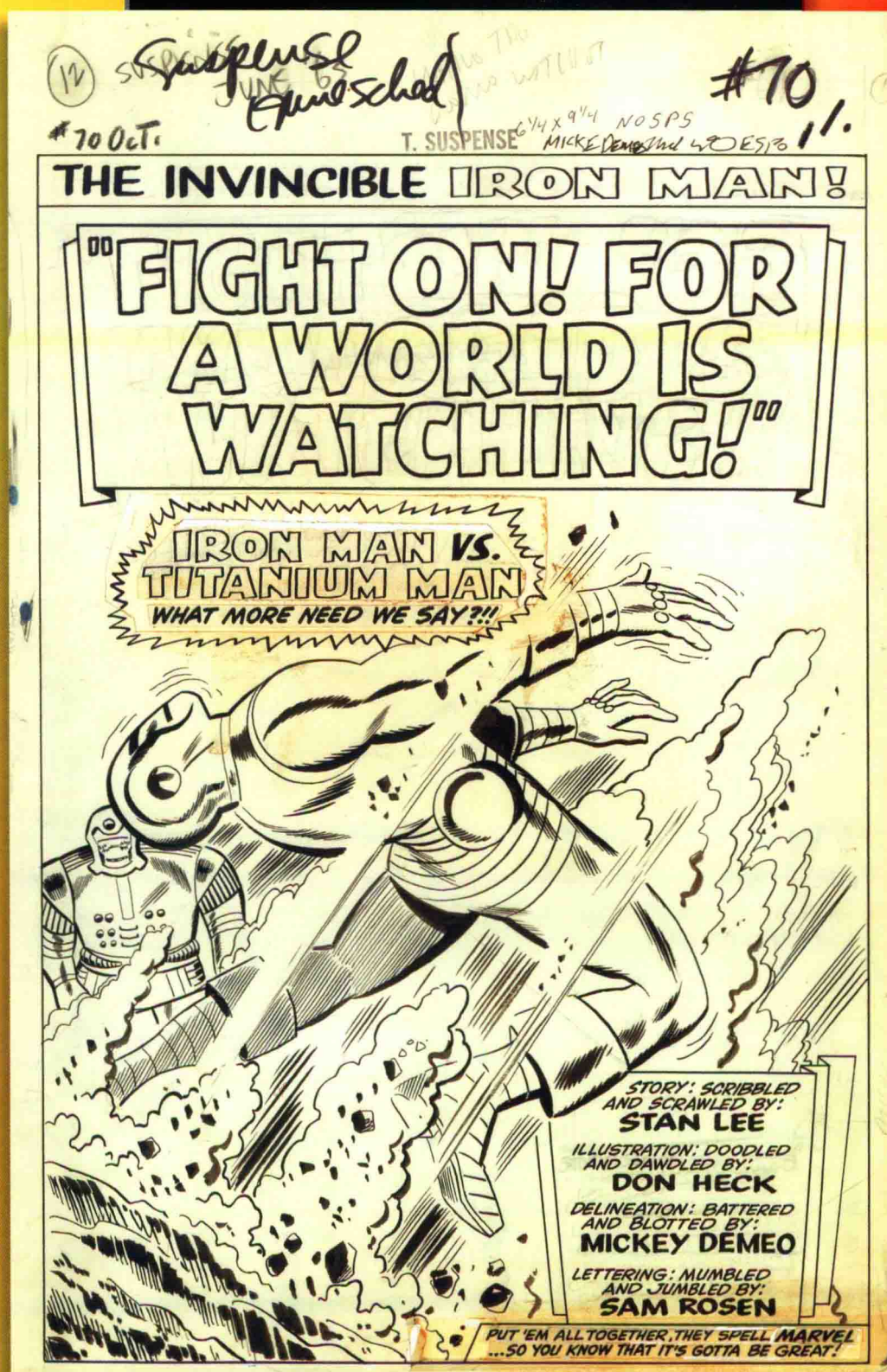
Stan Lee's younger brother, writer Larry Lieber opted not to alter the family name as his brother had done. A newspaper cartoonist as well as a scribe, Lieber's main claim to fame was his scripting Iron Man's first appearance in *Tales of Suspense* #39. With Stan only providing the plot of Iron Man's legendary origin, Larry provided the dialog over Don Heck's pencils. It was Larry who conceived the name Tony Stark, as Stan was in the habit of giving characters first and last names that began with the same letter, just to make them more memorable in his own mind.

DON HECK

Although he didn't design the Iron Man armor itself, Don Heck did just about everything else to bring Tony Stark's adventures to life. The interior artist for *Tales of Suspense* #39, as well as most of Iron Man's other early exploits, Don Heck created the dramatic pacing that kept readers coming back for more. Designing the look of millionaire Tony Stark based on Stan Lee's suggestion of a Howard Hughes-type personality, Heck gave the character a trademark mustache, adding a dash of famous swashbuckling actor Errol Flynn to Tony's appearance. Over the years, Heck would design many other characters in Shellhead's life, including Pepper Potts and Happy Hogan.

JACK KIRBY

The guiding force behind Marvel Comics' trademark look in the 1960s, Jack "the King" Kirby's work is as popular today as it was 40 years ago. Always experimenting with his craft and pushing the boundaries of forced perspective and dynamic storytelling, Kirby had already co-created dozens of Marvel icons, from Captain America to the Fantastic Four. Knowing Kirby's flair for creating characters that resonated with readers, Lee tasked Jack with designing Iron Man for the cover of the all-important *Tales of Suspense* #39. While Iron Man's look has evolved and changed many times over the years, Kirby's vision of a robotic suit of armor is still fondly remembered by fans as a symbol of the classic Marvel Age.



This original art for the splash page for *Tales of Suspense* #70 showcases Stan Lee's lighthearted credit box, which was one of his trademarks. Lee always made sure his staff were acknowledged for their work, something rarely seen at the time.

TALES OF #39 SUSPENSE



“You are not facing a wounded, dying man now... or an aged, gentle professor! This is Iron Man who opposes you, and all you stand for!”

IRON MAN

MAIN CHARACTERS: Iron Man; Wong-Chu; Professor Yinsen

SUPPORTING CHARACTERS: An unnamed general and US government employees; female socialites; prisoners and soldiers of Wong-Chu's camp

LOCATIONS: Stark Industries; Wong-Chu's South Vietnam camp; US military camp in South Vietnam

PUBLICATION DATE

March 1963

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Stan Lee

COVER ARTIST

Jack Kirby and Don Heck

PLOTTER

Stan Lee

SCRIPTER

Larry Lieber

PENCILER/INKER

Don Heck

LETTERER

Art Simek

BACKGROUND

It was all told in a mere 13 pages. Despite having his landmark debut crammed into an anthology comic with a few other science fiction stories, there was no question that Iron Man was the true star of *Tales of Suspense* #39. Not only was this fledgling hero given the lead story feature, his top billing was also touted on the cover, with a blurb proclaiming that Iron Man had sprung from the same creative well as Spider-Man and the Fantastic Four. And for the most part, he did. Iron Man was Stan Lee's brainchild, but when the time came to actually pen his initial tale, Lee's busy schedule didn't permit him to script the hero's first outing. Lee plotted the adventure and handed the story summary to artist Don Heck. The dialog chores found their way to the desk of Larry Lieber, Stan's younger brother, and co-conspirator on another Marvel icon, the mighty Thor. The result was another certified success for Marvel, and Iron Man remained at the helm of *Tales of Suspense* for the rest of the title's lifespan.

