

"STAN'S CLASS WAS EVIDENT IN THE MOMENT WHEN HIS WIFE WAS BEING RESUSCITATED, DESPITE BEING SHAKEN, HE DIDN'T GIVE UP ON SINGING COMICS FOR THE GATHERED KIDS, AND HE COULD HAVE SAID, 'MAN, SCREW THIS, I'M GOING TO MY WIFE!' NOTHING LIKE THAT HAPPENED DESPITE THE DRAMATIC SITUATION."

DAMN, THAT'S CLASS! YOUR WIFE IS DYING, AND YOU STILL CARE ABOUT YOUR IMAGE AND AUDIENCE! WELL, THAT'S WHAT STAN LEE ALWAYS DID BEST - BUILDING HIS OWN BRAND WITHOUT LOOKING BACK AT OTHERS.

RUSTECKI, IN HIS ACCOUNT, ALSO ADDS AN INTERESTING NOTE:

WE HAD A WONDERFUL DINNER, MADDA ASKED STAN TO SIGN THE "GUEST BOOK," AND I HAD THE IDEA TO TREAT OUR GUESTS TO OUR K&K&A ŻŁIWOWICA (PLUM VODKA). THEY REALLY ENJOYED IT. WE DRANK A LOT, WATCHING THE INCREDIBLY CHERFUL ELDERLY COUPLE, I DIDN'T FOR A MOMENT THINK ABOUT THEIR AGE, THE EXCELLENT PLASTIC SURGERIES THEY WERE OFF, THEY LOOKED ALMOST LIKE OUR PEERS. BY MORNING, THE MARKIOTT MANAGEMENT AND THE AMERICAN EMBASSY WERE ALERTED, ACCUSATIONS WERE FLYING THAT THE LEEES HAD BEEN POISONED. IN ALL THE CHAOS, NO ONE REALIZED THAT THE COUPLE WAS SUFFERING FROM A MASSIVE HANGOVER AFTER CONSUMING AN EXCESSIVE AMOUNT OF 70% ALCOHOL FROM A RURAL DISTILLERY, INSTEAD OF TVP AND LONDON, THEY WENT STRAIGHT TO CALIFORNIA. A FEW DAYS LATER, STAN SENT A VERY NICE LETTER TO THE THREE OF US, AND WE EACH RECEIVED A LIMITED EDITION SPIDER-MAN TIE."

I READ COMICS IS A SERIES OF SHORT PUBLICATIONS ABOUT ME AND MY COMIC READING. IN IT, I INTRODUCE MY FAVORITE CHARACTERS, THE MOST IMPORTANT ALBUMS, CREATORS, AND OTHER ISSUES RELATED TO THE BROAD CONCEPT OF COMICS.

LOOK FOR UPCOMING ISSUES AND OTHER ZINES IN MY FREE DISTR0:



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#04 JULY 2024 I READ COMICS ABOUT



"IN SEPTEMBER 1992, STAN AND HIS WIFE JOAN LANDED IN WARSAW, A TV INTERVIEW, A MEETING WITH READERS, AND A VISIT TO THE US EMBASSY WERE PLANNED. FROM POLAND, THE LEEES WERE SUPPOSED TO FLY TO LONDON, BUT A VISIT TO MADDA PRESSER'S DISRUPTED ALL THESE PLANS.

THIS IS HOW STANISLAW DUDZIK, ONE OF THE PUBLISHING HOUSE'S PRESIDENTS, RECALLS THE SITUATION, SEEMINGLY LESS MYTHOLOGIZING STAN LEE, AND MORE STRAIGHTFORWARD AND MATTER-OF-FACT IN HIS ASSESSMENT:

AN AMAZING STORYTELLER! WE DRANK ICE-COLD VODKA, WHICH HE HAD NEVER TRIED BEFORE. IN SHORT, THE EVENING WAS DELIGHTFUL, AFTER ONE OF THE DINNERS, JOAN UNEXPECTEDLY FELT ILL. THE NEXT DAY, STAN WAS SUPPOSED TO SIGN COMICS, BUT INSTEAD, WE WERE RUNNING AROUND LIKE MAD THROUGH THE ENTIRE "HILTON" HOTEL LOOKING FOR MEDICINE. THE CLINIC THERE DIDN'T HAVE THE RIGHT MEDICATIONS, SO JOAN WAS LITERALLY WASTING A DAY. DETERMINED, I GRABBED A DOCTOR BY THE SCRUFF, ALMOST DRAGGING HER OUT OF SURGERY, AND DEMANDED HER HELP. I BEGGED HER, AND SHE RESPONDED, "PLEASE CALL AN AMBULANCE," BUT BY THE TIME THE AMBULANCE ARRIVED, JOAN WOULD HAVE ALREADY BEEN DEAD. IMAGINE THIS: STAN LEE - A WALKING POP CULTURE ICON - REDUCED TO A SITUATION WITH NO WAY OUT, TOTALLY CORNERED, LIKE BEING IN A TURKISH PRISON, NO MEDICINES, NO KNOWLEDGE OF THE LANGUAGE, AND THUS ENTIRELY DEPENDENT ON ME. FORTUNATELY, THE DOCTOR TOOK GOOD CARE OF HER AND, IN SHORT, SAVED HER. A COMPLETELY UNPREDICTABLE SITUATION. THANKFULLY, THE POOR WOMAN DIDN'T DIE, THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN SOMETHING!"

TM-SEMIC WAS THE LARGEST POLISH COMIC BOOK PUBLISHER IN THE 90S. DURING ITS OPERATION, IT PUBLISHED OVER 900 ITEMS, INTRODUCING AMERICAN SUPERHERO COMICS TO POLAND IN 1990. ALTHOUGH ALMAPRESS HAD PREVIOUSLY RELEASED A MAKESHIFT SUPERMAN COMPOSED OF VARIOUS, RATHER CREATIVELY COMBINED FRAGMENTS OF VARIOUS ISSUES, IT WAS A TYPICAL PIRATE. TM-SEMIC, ON THE OTHER HAND, WAS A LEGITIMATE ENDEAVOR.

IT'S NO SURPRISE THAT EVEN STAN "THE MAN" LEE, THE FACE-OF-MARVEL-MAN, MASTER OF SELF-PROMOTION, AND UNBEATABLE CHAMPION OF ADDING HIMSELF TO OTHERS' IDEAS, MADE HIS WAY TO POLAND.

MARCIN RUSTECKI, THE THEN-HEAD OF TM-SEMIC, RECALLS THE SITUATION:

"STAN ARRIVED SOMEWHAT BY ACCIDENT; HE WAS ON A TOUR IN SCANDINAVIA AT THE TIME. HE WAS LOOKED AFTER BY OUR TWO PRESIDENTS. MANY PEOPLE ASK US WHY WE DIDN'T ORGANIZE A PRESS CONFERENCE OR EVEN A FULL-FLEDGED MEETING WITH READERS. UNFORTUNATELY, STAN WAS HERE ALMOST LITERALLY FOR A FEW MINUTES. OUR FIRST MEETING TOOK PLACE IN WARSAW'S OLD TOWN, WHERE WE WENT FOR DINNER TO MARK HIS VISIT. HE RECOGNIZED ME FROM AFAR, RAISING BOTH HANDS IN GREETING. FOR ME, IT WAS SOMETHING INCREDIBLE! AN ABSOLUTELY METAPHYSICAL EXPERIENCE! I DON'T WANT TO MYTHOLOGIZE IT TOO MUCH, BUT WE HUGGED EACH OTHER DESPITE NOT KNOWING EACH OTHER AT ALL. THEN HE DREW SPIDER-MAN FOR THE PEOPLE HE MET THERE, AND OF COURSE, WE TALKED A LOT - AMONG OTHER THINGS, ABOUT HIS COLLABORATION WITH MOEBIUS (...)."