



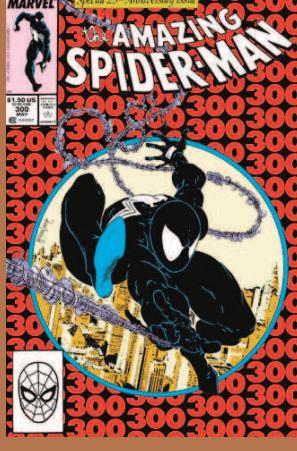
**C**an a film about one of Marvel's most complex antiheroes succeed in a solo venture devoid of the company's signature heroes? We'll find out this weekend as "Venom" opens in theaters to mixed reviews and plenty of doubters. Here's everything you need to know about the title character and his solo film ...

#### FIRST APPEARANCE AS ALIEN COSTUME



"The Amazing Spider-Man" Issue 252 (May 1984)

#### FIRST APPEARANCE IN FULL AS VENOM



"The Amazing Spider-Man" Issue 300 (May 1989)

#### ATTRIBUTES

In the comics, Eddie Brock is 6-foot-3 and has strawberry blond hair. However, in the film, Brock (played by Tom Hardy) is 5-foot-9 with dark brown hair.

#### TALENTED CAST

In addition to Hardy, the cast features four-time Oscar nominee Michelle Williams as Anne Weying and three-time nominee Woody Harrelson as Cletus Kasady.



#### RATING SWITCH



Initially announced as having an R rating, the producers opted to go with a more family-friendly PG-13 rating.

#### OTHER CAST

The film also stars Riz Ahmed, best known for roles in "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story" and "The Night Of" on HBO. You'll also see Reid Scott, Michelle Lee, Jenny Slate and Scott Haze.

#### DIRECTOR

Ruben Fleischer's directorial experience is rooted in television, but he's most well known for having directed the 2009 hit "Zombieland." After "Venom," he's scheduled to helm a second Zombieland film, due out sometime in 2019.

#### WHAT IS IT?

Venom is the result of an alien symbiote bonding with a human host. In the comics, its origins trace to a race of symbiotes from the planet Klyntar, which, when merged with a host, have a personality based on both the symbiote and the host, though one side tends to dominate.

#### HOW DID IT GET HERE?

Peter Parker, aka Spider-Man, was involved in a battle on an alien world that destroyed his signature red and blue costume. Thor suggested he use a device that repaired fabric, but Parker inadvertently used a different device, which freed the symbiote. Despite giving Parker new powers, the suit began affecting his mind. He enlisted the help of Reed Richards of the Fantastic Four to remove it.



#### WHO IS THE HOST?

After Spider-Man, the symbiote latched onto Eddie Brock, a disgraced newspaper reporter exposed by Peter Parker. Their shared hatred of Parker gave rise to Venom.

#### LEAD ACTOR

British heartthrob Tom Hardy made his breakthrough in Christopher Nolan's 2010 thriller "Inception." Since then, the versatile actor has made quite the name for himself with his 2015 appearance in "Mad Max: Fury Road" and Oscar-nominated performance in 2015's "The Revenant." This is his second foray into the comic book realm, appearing as Batman villain Bane in Nolan's 2012 film "The Dark Knight Rises."



#### POWERS

Because of its brief time as Spider-Man's costume and Venom's subsequent hate after Spider-Man's rejection, Venom's powers continue to mimic those of Spider-Man. His alien origin gives him a warning sense, and his own physiology masks him from Spider-Man's Spider Sense. He's extremely strong and agile.

#### ABILITIES

The symbiote imbues the host with enhanced abilities, including shapeshifting, regeneration, organic "webbing" projection, superhuman strength and superhuman durability.

#### WEAKNESSES

The symbiote will flee under assault from high-frequency sonic technology, breaking its connection with the host. Venom is also deathly afraid of fire.



#### STRANGE CODE OF HONOR

Though Venom has come close to killing Spider-Man in their many battles, he has also evolved into a sort of antihero, hunting down and killing those believed to be guilty of crimes. He will protect those in danger and won't harm an innocent.



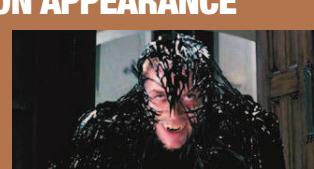
#### NOT ALONE

The Venom symbiote has spawned several new symbiotes in the comics, including the fearsome and insane Carnage (left) as well as Scream, Lasher, Riot, Agony and Phage.



#### FIRST LIVE ACTION APPEARANCE

Eddie Brock/Venom first appeared in a feature film in the 2007 "Spider-Man 3," played by Topher Grace.



Sources: marvel.com; imbd.com

Heather Bremer | The Herald Bulletin

