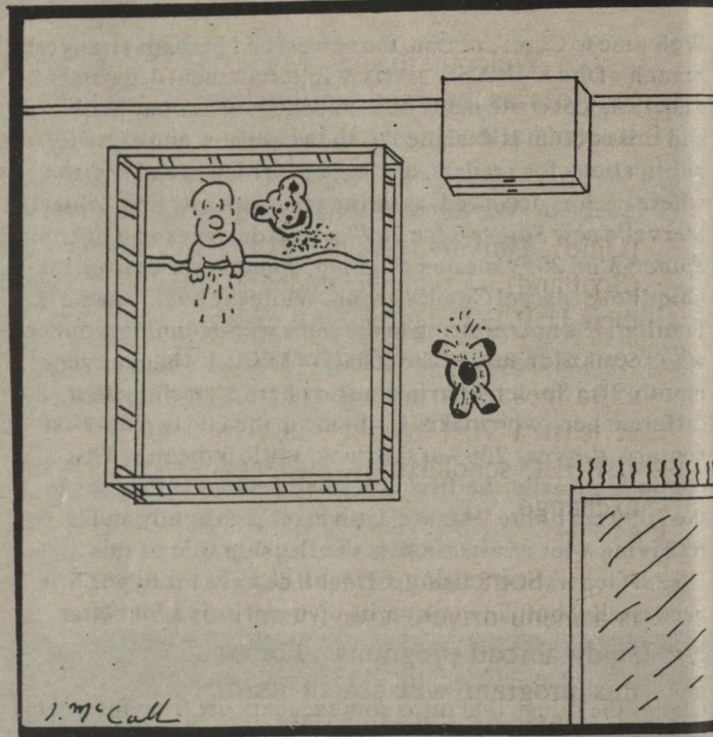


giving girlfriend, Dana, and the petty, ruthlessly conniving rival researcher Aaron. Best of all is that patented Peter David pacing and dialogue, crisp and fast-moving but never rushed or forced, and with more than a few humorous lines from the characters.

The book's weakest point is the visuals, though penciller Rick Leonardi turns in some of his best stuff. His fluid style allows for some uniquely designed architecture, vehicles and machinery, and his talents are best put to use in the action scenes, as his imaginative lay-outs and dynamic figure drawings create an almost dizzying series of acrobatics amongst the towering cityscape. Leonardi's work is reminiscent of Gene Colan and has similar problems, an undisciplined style that makes portions of the art seem cartoony or unfinished at times, particularly disconcerting in a comic book emphasizing visuals as much as this comic does. With some refinement and toning down of the exaggerations, the art could be just about perfect. Another small, annoying point about this book is the "foil-enhanced" cover on issue one, an unnecessary bit of sales gimmickry that jacks up the comic's price considerably for a visual enhancement that in this case is little more than a glorified frame for the illustration. With a solid story and characters, though, and reasonably competent art, *Spider-Man 2099* is still an interesting and worthwhile new comic.

MENTAL BLOCS BY JAY McCALLUM



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