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THE UNCANNY

X-MEN



**WE DID IT
BEFORE...
DARE WE DO
IT AGAIN?**

ROGUE STORM!



Stan Lee
PRESENTS:

THE UNCANNY X-MEN!™

ROGUE STORM!

TWO MILES ABOVE THE GROUND, THE GERMAN-BORN MUTANT X-MAN, NIGHTCRAWLER, APPEARS LITERALLY OUT OF NOWHERE...

... AND SCREAMS!

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AROUND HIM RAGES THE ULTIMATE STORM-- WEATHER SUCH AS THIS PLANET HAS NOT SEEN SINCE ITS INFANCY-- BUT HE IS ONLY DIMLY AWARE OF IT. INDEED, HE IS BARELY ALIVE-- AND LUCKY TO BE THAT.

AMONG HIS MUTANT POWERS IS THE ABILITY TO TELEPORT. HIS RANGE IS LIMITED BY HIS STRENGTH, AND THE DISTANCE AND DIRECTION OF EACH 'PORT, NEAR IS EASIER THAN FAR, AND NORTH-SOUTH (ALONG EARTH'S MAGNETIC LINES OF FORCE) EASIER THAN EAST-WEST (AGAINST THEM.)

A VERTICAL 'PORT IS THE MOST DIFFICULT, AND DANGEROUS.

HE'S JUST "JUMPED" TWO MILES-- STRAIGHT UP-- BUT IT FEELS AS IF HE'S RUN A TRIPLE MARATHON.

Ohhh-- I HURT SO MUCH, I HAVE TO BE ALIVE.

ON MY FACE-- RAIN! I MADE IT! I'M OUTSIDE DOOM'S CASTLE! I'M--

-- FALLING! MEIN GOTT! I MUST HAVE GREYED OUT FROM THE STRAIN OF TELEPORTING. I'M DROPPING FAST-- AND PICKING UP SPEED EVERY SECOND!

I CAN'T PORT TO THE GROUND. I'LL MATERIALIZE WITH THE SAME VELOCITY I HAVE NOW...

... AND SPLATTER MYSELF ALL OVER THE LANDSCAPE. WHAT A DELIGHTFUL PROSPECT.

I'M STILL FAIRLY HIGH UP, THOUGH.

PERHAPS I CAN TURN THAT-- AND THE VERY VIOLENCE OF THIS GALE-- TO MY ADVANTAGE. THUNDERSTORMS CREATE WINDS BLOWING THROUGH ALL DIMENSIONS: RIGHT, LEFT, DOWN -- UP.

I'LL SKYDIVE-- TRY TO FIND AN UPDRAFT-- AND USE IT TO BLEED OFF SOME OF MY VELOCITY.

I HAVE TO BE CAREFUL, THOUGH. I COULD JUST AS EASILY GLIDE INTO A DOWNDRAFT.

THERE'S A LAKE, A PERFECT PLACE TO LAND-- PROVIDED IT ISN'T FROZEN.

WUNDERBAR! I FOUND ONE!

HE WAITS UNTIL HE REACHES THE APOGEE OF THE UPDRAFT-- WHERE HE STARTS TO FALL AGAIN--

...NIGHTCRAWLER VANISHES FROM THE HEART OF THE STORM...

ACH, IT'S LIKE RIDING A ROLLER-COASTER-- AND THE THUNDER! I FEEL AS IF I'M BEING PUMMELED BY HAMMERS!

BAMF

--AND THEN, WITH A CRACK OF FLAME AND AN UN-HEARD "BAMF" OF IMPLoding AIR...

...TO MATERIALIZE TEN FEET ABOVE THE LAKE.

SO MUCH FOR MY AMBITION TO BE A CHAMPION OLYMPIC DIVER.

STILL, AS THE SAYING GOES, ANY LANDING ONE CAN SWIM AWAY FROM...

THE WATER'S ICE-COLD-- I CAN FEEL IT EVEN THROUGH MY INSULATED COSTUME.

THE SURFACE-- AT LAST!

OH, MY. THAT AIR SMELLS SWEET. FOR A FEW SECONDS, I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK MY LUCK HAD RUN OUT.

AND, CLOSE TO AN HOUR LATER...

P-P-PIECE OF C-C-C-CAKE!

MUST... KEEP MY TEETH CLENCHED TIGHT. IF THEY START CHATTERING, MY FANGS COULD CUT MY LIPS AND TONGUE TO RIBBONS.

AND, AS USUAL, I ALSO THINK I SPOKE TOO SOON. I'M A LONG WAY FROM SHORE AND TOO WEAK TO 'PORT. I'LL HAVE TO SWIM FOR IT.

I... DO NOT LIKE WATER-- ESPECIALLY IN MID-WINTER. HOW DID I EVER GET MYSELF INTO THIS MESS IN THE FIRST PLACE?!

HE ANSWERS HIMSELF WITH A BARKED, IRONIC LAUGH AND THEN HIS FACE TURNS GRIM ONCE MORE AS MEMORIES FLASH BACK TO THE PREVIOUS EVENING, WHEN ARCADE'S HENCHWOMAN, MISS LOCKE, ANNOUNCED TO STORM THAT SHE HAD KIDNAPPED THE X-MEN'S LOVED ONES. DR. DOOM WAS HOLDING ARCADE UNDER A SENTENCE OF DEATH, SHE'D STATED, AND IF THE X-MEN WISHED TO SEE THEIR RELATIVES AND FRIENDS AGAIN, ALIVE, ALL THEY HAD TO DO WAS RESCUE ARCADE.



PROFESSOR XAVIER SENT HAVOK, POLARIS, ICEMAN AND BANSHEE...

... TO FREE THE HOSTAGES MISS LOCKE HELD IN ARCADE'S ASSASSINATION AMUSEMENT PARK, MURDERWORLD...

NIGHTCRAWLER AWOKE IN A FEATURELESS CELL. HE HAD NO IDEA WHERE IT WAS LOCATED OR WHAT SURROUNDED IT. HE COULD ONLY ESCAPE BY TELEPORTING "BLIND," BUT IF HE MATERIALIZED AROUND A SOLID OBJECT, HE RISKED BEING MAIMED, OR WORSE. HE DID IT, ANYWAY.

... WHILE THE X-MEN STORM, COLOSSUS, NIGHTCRAWLER, WOLVERINE AND ANGEL CONFRONTED DR. DOOM.

AT FIRST, EVERYTHING WENT THE X-MEN'S WAY.

THEY SHOULD HAVE KNOWN IT WAS TOO GOOD TO LAST.

DOOM BEAT THEM WITH CONTEMPTUOUS EASE.

*SEE THE LAST TWO ISSUES -- LOUISE.

I GAMBLER I WAS IMPRISONED IN DOOM'S CASTLE. ANGEL VISITED HERE LAST SUMMER. ACCORDING TO HIS LAYOUT, THE CATACOMBS EXTENDED NO MORE THAN A KILOMETER BENEATH THE GROUND.

I FIGURED I COULD 'PORT A COUPLE OF MILES, AND THAT WOULD GIVE ME A SUFFICIENT MARGIN OF SAFETY. I THINK IF I WERE A CAT, I'D BE WORKING ON MY TENTH LIFE BY NOW.

*MTIO #68--L.

"BUT MY GAMBLE PAID OFF. I'M FREE! AND IF I CAN FREE THE OTHERS, THE X-MEN WILL GIVE HERR DOKTOR DOOM A REMATCH HE'LL NEVER FORGET."

MEANWHILE, IN DOOM'S STUDY, NIGHTCRAWLER'S ESCAPE HAS NOT GONE UNNOTICED.

FACE IT, VIC, YOU LOST AN X-MAN! DON'T THAT BOTHER YOU NONE?

LITTLE MAN, HAVE YOU NO UNDERSTANDING OF DOOM?

REMEMBER, ARCADE, I DESIGNED THEIR DEATH-TRAPS TO TEST THEM--THEIR ABILITIES, THEIR INTELLIGENCE, THEIR COURAGE. IF THE X-MEN ARE TRULY AS FORMIDABLE AS YOU HAVE--INCESSANTLY--BOASTED, THEY WILL ESCAPE. IF NOT...

ORDERS, SIR?

NIGHTCRAWLER IS OUT. I WISH HIM RETAKEN ALIVE AND RELATIVELY UNHARMED.

SHEE-OOT, VIC, YOU SURE KNOW HOW TO SPOIL A BODY'S FUN.

ARCADE, YOU ARE BENEATH CONTEMPT. YOU ARE INTELLECT WITHOUT PURPOSE, POWER WITHOUT RESPONSIBILITY. YOUR ONLY GOAL IS YOUR OWN SELF-GRATIFICATION--WHAT?!!

ORORO, CLOSE THAT WINDOW, AT ONCE!

AS YOU COMMAND, LORD DOOM.

THIS GALE BEGAN SOON AFTER I DEFEATED THE X-MEN, ON A NIGHT WHEN CLEAR SKIES WERE FORECAST. IT IS CENTERED ON THIS CASTLE AND IT WORSENS BY THE MINUTE. ORORO--STORM--IS A WEATHER-WITCH, COULD THIS BE HER DOING?

NO. SHE IS HELPLESS, IN A PRISON FROM WHICH THERE IS NO ESCAPE. AND YET...

...IF NOT HER, THEN WHO CREATED THIS UNNATURAL TEMPEST, AND CONTROLS IT NOW?

AT THAT VERY MOMENT, THE DEPOSED LATERIAN MONARCH'S ANXIOUS QUESTIONS ARE BEING ECHOED TWO THOUSAND MILES WESTWARD, IN THE CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN HEADQUARTERS OF NORAD-- THE NORTH AMERICAN AIR DEFENSE COMMAND.

THERE IT IS, GENERAL FREDERICKS. THIS IS A REAL-TIME, LIVE SATELLITE TV TRANSMISSION.

GLORY!

AT THE STORM'S CORE, THE WINDS ARE 150 KNOTS, GUSTING TO 200-PLUS. BAROMETRIC PRESSURE'S ALMOST 100 LOW TO MEASURE.

FORTUNATELY, THE MOST EXTREME EFFECTS ARE CONCENTRATED IN UPSTATE NEW YORK IN AN AREA THAT IS VIRTUALLY UNINHABITED. BUT THE CORE IS EXPANDING.

I GET THE PICTURE, COLONEL. I'M CALLING THE PRESIDENT.

AROUND DOOM'S CASTLE, THE WIND ROARS AND THE THUNDER IS FELT MORE THAN HEARD. OCCASIONALLY, AN EXPLOSIVE CRACK MOMENTARILY FILLS THE AIR--

AND THE LIGHTNING FLASHES SO CONTINUOUSLY THAT THE CASTLE IS LIT ALMOST AS BRIGHT AS DAY.

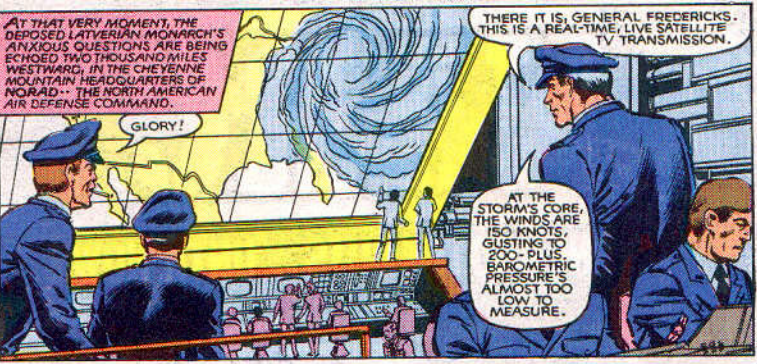
WHAT'S A MATTER, PHIL-- YOU AIN'T SEEN A HURRICANE BEFORE?

I SEEN MY SHARE OF EVERYTHING, TOBE. THIS STILL BEATS 'EM ALL.

I DON'T MIND TELLIN' YA, PARTNER-- I'M SPOOKED.

-- THE SOUND OF CENTURIES OLD, 100-FOOT TALL FIR TREES BEING SNAPPED IN TWO AT THE BASE...

I SEEN A LOTTA WEIRD THINGS SINCE I HIRED ON WITH DOOM, BUT THIS BEATS 'EM ALL.



WELL, I GOTTA ADMIT, I'D RATHER BE IN HERE THAN OUTSIDE. IF THAT NIGHTCRAWLER-DUDE MADE IT TO THE FOREST, HE'S GOT MY SYMPATHIES.

LISTEN TO THEM TREES GO, PHIL. AT THIS RATE, BY MORNING, THE SLOPES 'ROUND HERE ARE GONNA BE SCOURED CLEAN DOWN TO THE BARE ROCK.

Huh?! WHAT'S THAT?!?

PHIL--

--THE WINDOW!!



NIGHTCRAWLER HOWLS, HIS VOICE TOPPING THE STORM, AND BARES HIS TEETH IN A DAEMONIC SNARL.

THESE MERCENARIES ARE AMONG THE BEST IN THE WORLD-- DOOM REQUIRES NO LESS-- SO THE X-MAN'S SUDDEN APPEARANCE AND HORRIFIC VISAGE FREEZES THEM FOR ONLY A SECOND.



YET, BY THE TIME THEY RECOVER THEIR WITS AND OPEN FIRE...

...NIGHTCRAWLER'S SOMEWHERE ELSE.



GUTEN NACHT, MEINE HERREN.

I HOPE YOU HAVE MOST UNPLEASANT DREAMS.

MUNNNGN!



THAT WAS REFRESHINGLY EASY. AND MY BRIEF SCRAP HAS GENERATED A WELCOME ADRENALIN SURGE WITHIN ME. FOR A BRIEF TIME, I'LL BE OPERATING AT PEAK EFFICIENCY. LET'S HOPE I'LL FINISH MY WORK BEFORE IT WEARS OFF.

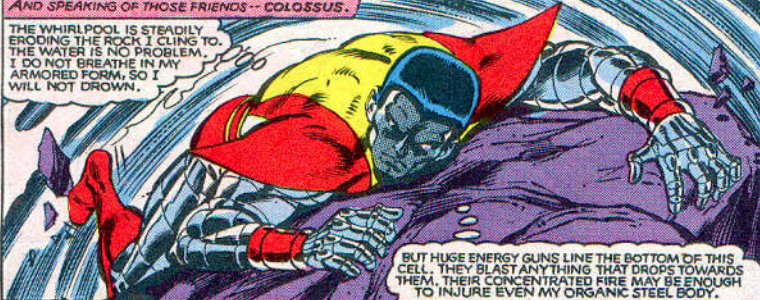
THE STORM IS WORKING TO MY ADVANTAGE, FORCING DOOM'S GOONS TO STAY INSIDE. THE COAST BELOW IS CLEAR.



READY OR NOT, MY FRIENDS, HERE I COME.

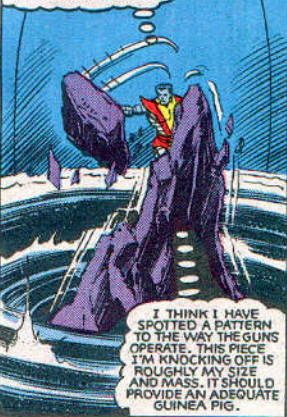
AND SPEAKING OF THOSE FRIENDS -- COLOSSUS.

THE WHIRLPOOL IS STEADILY
ERODING THE ROCK I CLING TO.
THE WATER IS NO PROBLEM.
I DO NOT BREATHE IN MY
ARMORED FORM, SO I
WILL NOT DROWN.



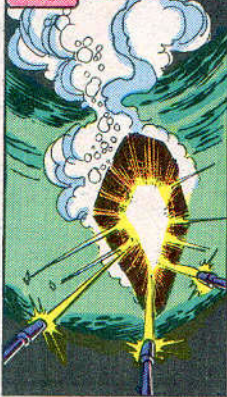
BUT HUGE ENERGY GUNS LINE THE BOTTOM OF THIS
CELL. THEY BLAST ANYTHING THAT DROPS TOWARDS
THEM. THEIR CONCENTRATED FIRE MAY BE ENOUGH
TO INJURE EVEN MY ORGANIC STEEL BODY.

I HAVE BEEN WATCHING
VARIOUS ROCKS FALL.



I THINK I HAVE
SPOTTED A PATTERN
TO THE WAY THE GUNS
OPERATE. THIS PIECE
I'M KNOCKING OFF IS
ROUGHLY MY SIZE
AND MASS. IT SHOULD
PROVIDE AN ADEQUATE
GUINEA PIG.

"AHA! AS I EXPECTED, THE
BLASTERS DISINTEGRATED IT.
NOW TO DROP A SECOND
PIECE --



"-- THIS ONE CONSIDERABLY
SMALLER, THE SIZE OF PETER
RASPUTIN.



"THE GUNS
AREN'T
FIRING!"

SIZE HAS TO BE THE KEY. THEY WILL FIRE ON
THE MASSIVE ARMORED FORM OF COLOSSUS,
WHILE IGNORING THE COMPARATIVELY
SMALLER HUMAN, PETER RASPUTIN.

I REALLY HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE.
IF I DO NOT GO NOW, I WILL
WHEN THIS PILLAR COLLAPSES--
AND THAT WON'T BE LONG.



I MUST BREATHE DEEPLY--
SATURATE MY LUNGS WITH
AIR. IN MY HUMAN SELF,
I AM ALSO MUCH WEAKER
THAN I AM AS COLOSSUS.
SURVIVING THIS WHIRLPOOL
WILL NOT BE EASY.

IT'S A ROUGH PASSAGE, CHUNKS FROM THE CRUMBLING ROCK PILLAR SWIRL ALL ABOUT HIM, SOME LARGE ENOUGH TO DRAW THE ATTENTION OF THE ROOM'S BLASTERS.



GRIMLY, COLOSSUS PASSES ON, STRUGGLING TO CONTROL THE SPEED AND DIRECTION OF HIS DESCENT AS THE WHIRLPOOL DRAWS HIM DOWN.



BLASTERS FIRE, SCORCHING HIS SIDE AS THEY VAPORIZE A ROCK ONLY METERS FROM AN OUTSTRETCHED ARM.

HE CRIES OUT IN SHOCK AND PAIN, AND LOOSES HALF HIS AIR.

THE GUNS-- I'VE NEARLY REACHED THEM! BY THE WHITE WOLF-- THEY ALL SEEM TO BE POINTED AT ME!



HE SWIMS FOR HIS LIFE...

... EXPECTING EVERY SECOND TO BE HIS LAST.

I'M ... THROUGH! GUNS... ARE NOT... TRACKING ME!



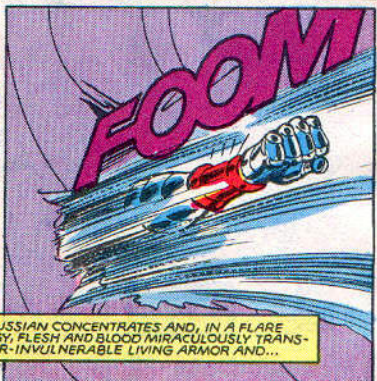
ALMOST... NO AIR LEFT. LUNGS... BURNING. BUT I CANNOT CHANGE YET. I AM STILL TOO CLOSE--MUST PUSH ON... BIT... LONGER.

FINALLY, WHEN IT SEEMS AS THOUGH HIS LUNGS WOULD BURST...

NO MORE TIME. I MUST TAKE THE RISK, OR DROWN.



THE YOUNG RUSSIAN CONCENTRATES AND, IN A FLARE OF BIO-ENERGY, FLESH AND BLOOD MIRACULOUSLY TRANSFORM TO NEAR-INVULNERABLE LIVING ARMOR AND...



ANGEL.

AT THE COST OF SOME SINGED PIN-FEATHERS, I THINK I'VE DOPED THIS PLACE OUT. SO LONG AS I REMAIN ON MY CENTRAL PERCH, I'M SAFE.



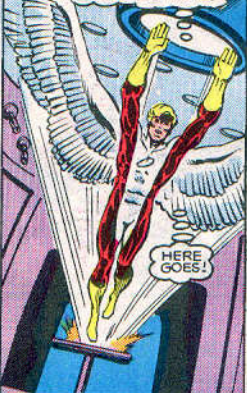
BUT THE MOMENT I FLY OFF, LASERS MOUNTED IN THE WALLS, FLOOR AND CEILING OF THE CELL OPEN FIRE.

THE INDIVIDUAL LIGHT BEAMS AREN'T INTENSE ENOUGH TO KILL, BUT EN MASSE THEIR CUMULATIVE EFFECT IS DEADLY.



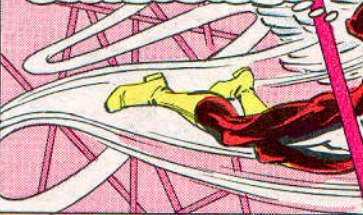
AT FIRST, I THOUGHT THEY FIRED RANDOMLY, BUT THEY DON'T. THERE'S A PROGRAMMED SEQUENCE, FORMING A COMPLEX, INTRICATE MAZE.

IF I WANT TO LEAVE, ALL I HAVE TO DO IS FLY THAT MAZE -- AT TOP SPEED, WITHOUT HESITATION OR MISTAKES. EITHER WOULD BE FATAL.



HERE GOES!

THIS IS AKIN TO THE DANGER ROOM, WHERE PROFESSOR XAVIER TRAINS THE X-MEN IN THE USE OF OUR MUTANT ABILITIES -- THOUGH THE STAKES HERE ARE A WEE BIT HIGHER.



DOOM MUST BE DOING THE SAME THING -- TESTING US, TO SEE WHAT WE CAN DO AND HOW WELL WE CAN DO IT.



I GOT A HOT FLASH FOR YOU, DOOMSIE -- WE'RE THE BEST!

HOLY --! THE CELL BLEW UP BEHIND ME! NICE TRY, FELLA, BUT NO CIGAR!

I RECOGNIZE THIS HALL. I'M IN THE CATACOMBS BENEATH DOOM'S CASTLE.



I'LL BET THE OTHERS ARE NEARBY. I'VE GOT TO FIND 'EM AND FREE 'EM.

Hmnh? THAT ROARING SOUND -- AND THE SUDDEN INCREASE IN AIR PRESSURE! SOMETHING'S COM--

--IGGLUGGMPGH!

WOLVERINE... ...FLOATS IN A ZERO-GRAVITY FIELD, WITHIN A CELL WHOSE OP-ART PAINT SCHEME CREATES THE ILLUSION THAT THERE ARE NO WALLS, NO FLOOR, NO CEILING--ONLY INFINITE SPACE.



HIS SLIGHTEST MOVES TRIGGER VICIOUS PSYCHEDELIC LIGHTSHOWS THAT ARE METHODICALLY, INEXORABLY DRIVING HIM INSANE.

IT'S A FAMILIAR BATTLE-- THIS STRUGGLE TO HOLD ONTO HIS SANITY-- ONE HE'S FOUGHT ALL HIS LIFE.

HE DOESN'T REMEMBER WHAT SET HIM OFF THE DAY HE ALMOST KILLED JAMES AND HEATHER HUDSON-- HIS BEST FRIENDS, AND THE ONLY FAMILY HE'D EVER KNOWN.



IT COULD HAVE BEEN A WORD, A GESTURE, A SMELL. HIS SENSES ARE SO ACUTE THAT HE RESPONDS TO SUBLIMINAL CLUES MOST PEOPLE DON'T EVEN NOTICE.

LOGAN-- WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS? WE MEAN YOU NO HARM. YOU'RE SAFE WITH US. WE LOVE YOU.

YOU'RE A RATIONAL BEING. YOU HAVE AN INTELLECT. USE IT.



DON'T SIMPLY REACT, DON'T BLINDLY FOLLOW YOUR INSTINCTS. AND EMOTIONS. THINK, LOGAN. CONTROL THEM. CONTROL YOURSELF! YOU'RE NOT AN ANIMAL, MY FRIEND. YOU'RE A MAN!



YOU'RE RIGHT, THERE, MAC. AN ANIMAL WOULDN'T DO SOME OF THE THINGS I'VE DONE.

MAC, HEATHER-- I'M... SORRY.



YOU GUYS HAVE BEEN GOOD TO ME. SO HOW DO I REPAY YOU? BY TRYIN' TA TEAR YER HEARTS OUT. FACE FACTS, MAC, I'M CRAZY-- A GOVERNMENT CERTIFIED, PSYCHO KILLING THING. I OUGHT'A BE LOCKED AWAY.

YOU'RE ILL, LOGAN. NO MORE, NO LESS. ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS FIND A CURE.



MAC TRIED, I'LL GIVE HIM THAT. THE BERSERKER SPELLS CAME LESS AN' LESS FREQUENTLY. AN' FER A WHILE, AFTER I JOINED THE X-MEN, I GOT 'EM PRETTY MUCH COMPLETELY UNDER CONTROL.

BUT, LATELY, THAT CONTROL'S BEEN SLIPPIN'.



I'M BECOMIN' AS MUCH A DANGER TO THE X-MEN AS TO THE CREEPS WE FIGHT.

I CAN FEEL A BERSERKER RAGE BUILDIN' INSIDE ME. IF I CUT LOOSE, I'LL REVERT TO THE ANIMAL SIDE OF MY NATURE--SO TOTALLY THAT I MAY NEVER REGAIN MY HUMANITY.

I'VE BEEN THAT ROUTE BEFORE. I'D RATHER DIE.

'COURSE, I COULD DO NOTHING. THEN, I'D BE SAFE.

I AIN'T PLAYED THINGS SAFE A DAY IN MY LIFE, AND I AIN'T ABOUT TA START, EITHER.

I HAVETA HARNES THE POWER OF MY RAGE--MAKE IT WORK FOR ME.

I HIT A WALL! AN', AS EXPECTED, IT'S REPELLIN' ME. I SET OFF ANOTHER LIGHTSHOW, TOO-- CRIPES, IT'S MURDER!

I CAN HANDLE IT, THOUGH. I GOT TO.

AT WOLVERINE'S MENTAL COMMAND...

... CLAWS EXTEND FROM THE BACKS OF BOTH HANDS.

SWIPE!

RAZOR-SHARP, FORGED OF UNBREAKABLE ADAMANTIUM, THEY'RE CAPABLE OF CUTTING ANY SUBSTANCE ON EARTH.

AS WOLVERINE COLLIDES WITH ANOTHER WALL, HE SLASHES IT OPEN IN THE SPLIT-SECOND BEFORE IT BOUNCES HIM AWAY.

AGAIN AND AGAIN, HE REPEATS THE PROCESS--

-- OTHERS, CONSIDERABLE.

I'M ON THE FLOOR! I MUST'A SHORT-CIRCUITED THE ANTI-GRAVITY FIELD.

I... FEEL WASTED-- BUT I CAN STILL THINK! I'M STILL IN CONTROL!

SCORE ONE FER THE "PSYCHO"!

-- SOME CUTS SHALLOW, OTHERS DEEP, SOME DOING NO REAL DAMAGE--

WHUNFF!

THUMP!

IT TAKES WOLVERINE BARELY A MINUTE TO FIND A WALL AND CUT HIS WAY TO FREEDOM.



Hmnh?! THE CORRIDOR'S FLOODED! I'M PICKIN' UP FAMILIAR SCENTS-- I GUESS I AIN'T THE ONLY X-MAN BUSTIN' OUTTA DOOM'S DUNGEON. THE SCENTS ARE FRESH, BUT ALMOST TOO DIFFUSE TO FOLLOW.

I SHOULD FIND 'EM, SET UP A BATTLE PLAN-- HOLD IT!

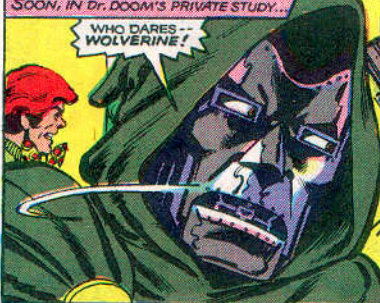
THE AIR'S STINKIN' WITH OZONE. AN' THUNDER'S SHAKIN' THE WALLS, EVEN DOWN HERE. THE CASTLE MUST BE IN THE MIDDLE OF ONE BEAUT OF AN ELECTRICAL STORM.



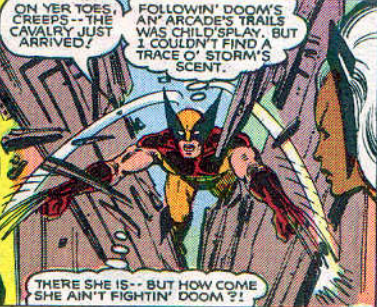
THIS DOESN'T FEEL NATURAL. IF 'RORO CREATED SOMETHIN' THIS BIG AN' POWERFUL, SHE MUST BE FIGHTIN' FOR HER LIFE.

I GOT NO TIME TO CORRAL THE OTHERS. 'RORO NEEDS MY HELP-- NOW!

SOON, IN DR. DOOM'S PRIVATE STUDY...



WHO DARES-- WOLVERINE!



ON YER TOES, CREEPS-- THE CAVALRY JUST ARRIVED!

FOLLOWIN' DOOM'S AN' ARCADE'S TRAILS WAS CHILD'S PLAY. BUT I COULDN'T FIND A TRACE O' STORM'S SCENT.

THERE SHE IS-- BUT HOW COME SHE AIN'T FIGHTIN' DOOM?!

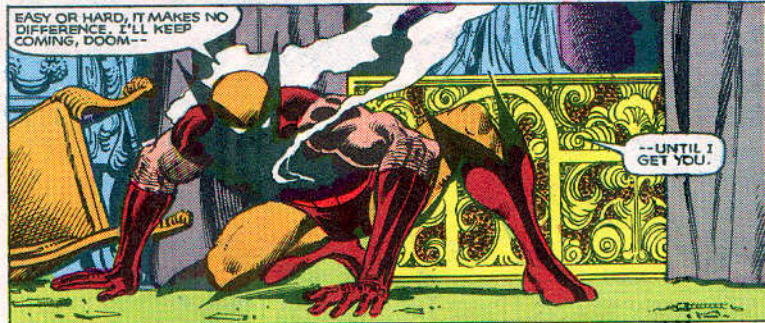
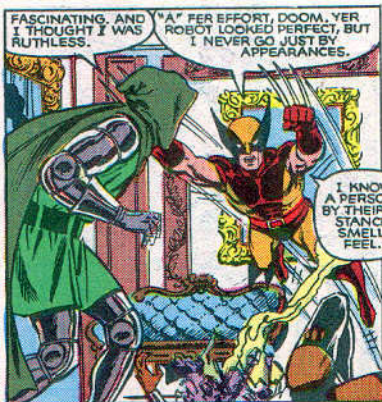


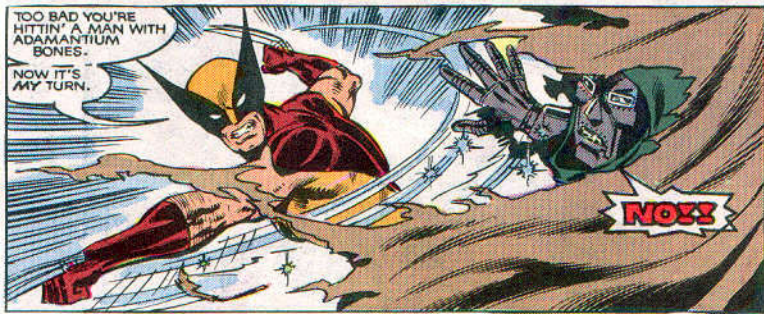
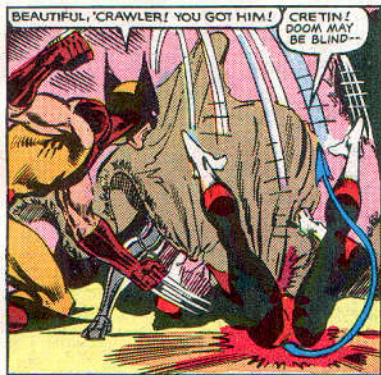
ORORO, DEAL WITH THIS DIMINUTIVE UPSTART.

AS YOU COMMAND, LORD DOOM.



NOT A CHANCE, SWEETHEART!





DOOM ISN'T LYING.

THAT BLINDING FLASH OF LIGHT!

MEIN LEIBER
FREUND, I HOPE
WE DID THE
RIGHT THING.

FREE!!

LORDS OF THE EARTH
AND AIR--

--I--AM--
FREE!

TO THE TRIBES OF
WESTERN KENYA, ORORO
WAS A GODDESS,
MISTRESS OF THE ELEMENTS,
BRINGER OF LIFE. THEY
WORSHIPPED HER, NEVER
REALIZING THAT, ESSENTIALLY,
SHE WAS AS HUMAN AS
THEY...

... NOT A GODDESS,
BUT A MUTANT--
HOMO SUPERIOR.

AS A YOUNG CHILD, SHE WAS BURIED ALIVE, AND THAT
TRAUMA LEFT HER AN INCURABLE CLASTROPHOBE. FOR
ORORO, HER TRANSFORMATION INTO A LIVING STATUE WAS
THE ULTIMATE NIGHTMARE. IN A DESPERATE, INSTINCTIVE
BID FOR FREEDOM, HER SUBCONSCIOUS CREATED WITHIN
HER AN INSATIABLE DEMAND FOR POWER THAT NEAR-INFINITE
POWER--NOW UNLEASHED-- HAS EVOLVED HER BEYOND
ALL COMPREHENSION.

THE TWO X-MEN ARE STUNNED BY HER TRANSFIGURATION.

DOOM IS NOT.

THAT WAS WHY HE'D ALLOWED THEM TO FREE STORM, TO PROVIDE THE MOMENTARY DIVERSION HE NEEDED TO MAKE HIS OWN ESCAPE.

IN RETROSPECT, HOWEVER, HE WONDERS IF HE SHOULD HAVE LEFT WELL ENOUGH ALONE.

DO NOT RUN, DOOM. IT IS A WASTED EFFORT.

NO PLACE ON EARTH CAN HIDE YOU FROM MY WRATH. NO POWER OR ENTITY CAN PROTECT YOU.

I... DEFLECTED THAT LIGHTNING BOLT-- BUT THE EFFORT DRAINED MY ARMOR'S ENERGY RESERVES. ANOTHER SUCH ATTACK MAY WELL DESTROY ME.

HER BREATH IS FIRE AND ICE, HER VOICE ROLLING THUNDER. SHE IS ONE WITH THE ENTIRE PLANET...

IT'S A PROGRESSION THE X-MEN HAVE SEEN BEFORE.

NO.

NOT 'RORO-- NOT HER, TOO, KURT, WE'VE GOT TO STOP HER.

HOW?

AND ALL ITS MYRIAD, ELEMENTAL FORCES ARE HERE TO COMMAND, AS HER MIND IS OVERWHELMED BY MORE-- AND MORE INTENSE-- SENSATIONS THAN SHE HAS EVER CONCEIVED OF, MUCH LESS EXPERIENCED.

AM I NOT BEAUTIFUL, LORD DOOM? AND TERRIBLE? DO YOU NOT FEAR ME? YOU SHOULD.

YOU SHALL.

MY FLOOD WASHED ME TO THE LOWEST LEVELS OF THE CASTLE'S CATACOMBS. IT TOOK SEEMINGLY FOREVER TO CLIMB OUT.



BY THE WHITE WOLF!
WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE?!

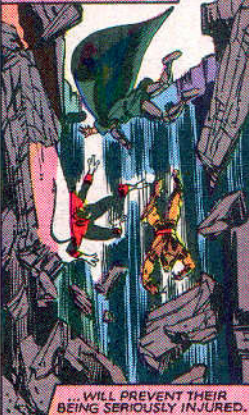
ORORO HAS... CHANGED. SHE IS ATTACKING BOTH DOOM AND OUR FELLOW X-MEN.



I HAD BEST REMOVE EVERYONE FROM HARM'S WAY.

HIS METHOD IS SIMPLE, BUT EFFECTIVE.

HE SMASHES THE GRANITE FLOOR OF THE STUDY, TRUSTING THAT NIGHTCRAWLER'S PHENOMINAL AGILITY, WOLVERINE'S ADAMANTIUM-LACED SKELETON AND DOOM'S ARMOR...



... WILL PREVENT THEIR BEING SERIOUSLY INJURED.

ORORO? IT IS... PETER. I STAND BEFORE YOU AS A FRIEND.

I HAVE NO FRIENDS. I NEED NONE.



YOU ARE SO... DIFFERENT.

I AM THAT I AM, LITTLE BROTHER.

I AM POWER!!



AAH!!

MY METAL FORM NATURALLY ATTRACTS HER LIGHTNING BOLTS. EVEN THE TINIEST STRIKE CAUSES ME PAIN. HOWEVER, I CAN WITHSTAND THEIR ONSLAUGHT... FOR THE MOMENT.

I MUST ENDURE-- TRY TO REACH ORORO-- BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE.

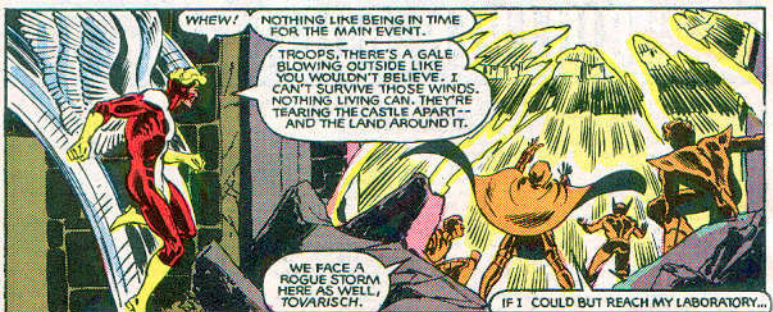


I HAVE NO WISH TO HARM YOU, PIOTR NIKOLIEVITCH.

BEGONE!



NO!!



WHEW!

NOTHING LIKE BEING IN TIME FOR THE MAIN EVENT.

TROOPS, THERE'S A GALE BLOWING OUTSIDE LIKE YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE. I CAN'T SURVIVE THOSE WINDS. NOTHING LIVING CAN. THEY'RE TEARING THE CASTLE APART-- AND THE LAND AROUND IT.

WE FACE A ROGUE STORM HERE AS WELL, TOVARISCH.

IF I COULD BUT REACH MY LABORATORY...



HAVEN'T YOU ALREADY DONE ENOUGH, DOOM?! I'LL LAY ANY ODDS YOU'RE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS!

ASSESS BLAME WHEN THE CRISIS IS PAST, ANGEL--ASSUMING WE LIVE SO LONG.

MY INTELLECT, MY POWERS, MY DEVICES, ARE THE ONLY THINGS THAT CAN SAVE US.



YOUR INTELLECT, YOUR POWERS, YOUR DEVICES ARE FINITE. DOOM, THEY HAVE LIMITS. I HAVE NONE.

FOR ALL YOUR POSTURING, YOU ARE STILL NO MORE THAN A MAN.



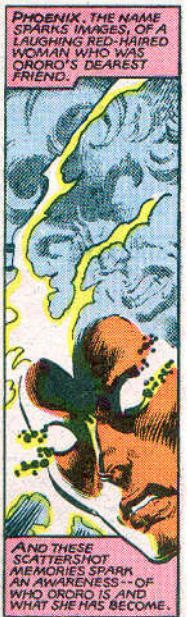
I AM A GODDESS!



NO! YOU ARE ORORO!

REMEMBER THAT, WIND-RIDER! FIND YOUR SELF ONCE MORE-- FIND YOUR SOUL, YOUR HUMANITY, YOUR HUMANITY! HOLD ONTO THAT, WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND ALL YOUR STRENGTH, OR WE ARE LOST.

YOU FACE THE GORGN WITHIN YOU, ORORO, AS PHOENIX DID. YOU MUST TRIUMPH, AS SHE DID NOT!



PHOENIX, THE NAME SPARKS IMAGES, OF A LAUGHING RED-HAIRED WOMAN WHO WAS ORORO'S DEAREST FRIEND.

AND THESE SCATTERSHOT MEMORIES SPARK AN AWARENESS-- OF WHO ORORO IS AND WHAT SHE HAS BECOME.

SHE SCREAMS...

... IN RAGE AND GRIEF... FOR HER DEAD FRIEND, FOR HERSELF--

... AND THEN RIDES A SPEAR OF RAW ENERGY THROUGH THE HEART OF THE STORM TO THE EDGE OF SPACE.



IF I WERE THE AVENGER, THOR, I COULD DISPERSE THIS STORM WITH A THOUGHT.

BUT I MUST WORK WITH THE FORCES OF NATURE, NOT RIDE ROUGHSHOD OVER THEM, AND GENTLY SHARE THEM TO MY WILL.



THE EFFORT... IS AS TREMENDOUS AS THE HOLOCAUST ITSELF. I DID NOT DREAM I WAS CAPABLE OF CREATING SUCH A THING.

HER POWER SINGS WITHIN HER...



... AND, AT LAST, ORORO UNDERSTANDS HOW JEAN GREY FELT AS PHOENIX... THOSE MEMORIES OF HER BELOVED FRIEND GIVE HER THE STRENGTH SHE NEEDS TO FACE HER INNER DEMONS. "THE POWER IS MINE," THEY CRY, "WHY GIVE IT UP?!" SHE FIGHTS, SHE ENDURES AND FINALLY...

... SHE TRIUMPHS-- OVER THE STORM AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, OVER THE DARK SIDE OF HER SOUL.



THE EFFORT NEARLY KILLS HER.

SHE'S FALLING!

THE STORM'S SLACKENING, BUT THE WINDS ARE STILL AWFULLY FIERCE.



IT'LL BE DANGEROUS...



...BUT I HAVE TO TRY TO REACH HER!

SHE'S FALLING AT TERMINAL VELOCITY. A SUDDEN STOP WILL BREAK EVERY BONE IN HER BODY. I HAVE TO MATCH SPEEDS, THEN GRADUALLY BREAK HER DESCENT.



AN-- ANGEL...? WHO BETTER TO RESCUE A DAMSEL IN DISTRESS? RELAX, ORORO, YOU'RE IN GOOD HANDS. YOU'RE SAFE.



SOON...
SUNRISE.
IT IS SO...
BEAUTIFUL.
A GOOD
OMEN, I
THINK.

THANK YOU,
ANGEL.

ANYTIME, STORM.
AFTER ALL, WHAT
ARE HEROES FOR?

GOING SOMEWHERE,
COMRADE ARCADE?

HEY, BE A PAL,
COLOSSUS.
LEMME GO.

I THINK NOT.



AND UNLESS YOU BEHAVE
YOURSELF, I WILL LEAVE
YOU TO WOLVERINE'S
TENDER MERCIES.

SOUNDS GOOD
TO ME, BUB.

I AM... PLEASED
THAT YOU ARE
ALIVE AND
WELL, ORORO.

I'LL
BET.



LORD DOOM, I ASK A
FINAL TIME FOR ARCADE
INNOCENT LIVES ARE AT
STAKE. WE MUST HAVE
HIM... AND YOUR PLEDGE
TO TAKE NO FURTHER
HOSTILE ACTION
TOWARDS HIM.

YOU ASK
MUCH,
CHILD.

HE INSULTED
ME. HONOR
DEMANDS
SATISFACTION.
AN... APOLOGY
WILL
SUFFICE.



YOU HEARD HIM, ARCADE.
APOLOGIZE.

NO WAY,
BIMBO!

WOLVERINE...

I'M
SORRY!!

I'LL NEVER
INSULT-- OR
BOTHER--
YOU AGAIN,
VIC. YOU
GOT MY WORD.

FOR WHAT IT
IS WORTH!



ORORO, I, TOO, WOULD
LIKE TO APOLOGIZE.

I AM A
CREATURE OF
HABIT.
YOU X-MEN
ATTACKED
MY HOME,
SEEMINGLY
WITHOUT
PROVOCATION.
I RESPONDED
IN KIND.



I WOULD HOPE THAT
WE MIGHT BEGIN ANEW.
YOU ARE A FASCINATING
WOMAN. I SHOULD
LIKE TO KNOW
YOU BETTER.

VERY... WELL, LORD
DOOM. WE PART NEITHER
AS FRIENDS NOR ENEMIES.
OUR SLATE IS CLEAN. THE
NEXT MOVE -- FOR GOOD
OR ILL -- IS YOURS.

AT THAT MOMENT, 1500 MILES SOUTH, THE MORNING SUN RISES OVER A REMOTE ISLAND LOCATED DEEP WITHIN THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE; TWO YOUNG PEOPLE SLOWLY, LANGOROUSLY WAKEN.

ONE IS ALEYTYS FORRESTER, CAPTAIN/OWNER OF THE TRAWLER, ARCADIA, WASHED OVERBOARD DAYS AGO IN A FREAK SQUALL.

HER COMPANION IS SCOTT SUMMERS, CREWMAN AND FRIEND. HE DROVE IN AFTER HER, UNKNOWN TO LEE, SCOTT-- AS CYCLOPS-- WAS ONCE LEADER OF THE UNCANNY X-MEN.

"MORNING, SLEEPY-HEAD."

AFTER THE DEATH OF HIS BELOVED JEAN GREY--PHOENIX, SCOTT TOOK A LEAVE OF ABSENCE. LAST CHRISTMAS, FOLLOWING WEEKS ON THE ROAD, HE SIGNED ABOARD THE ARCADIA. IT'S A DECISION HE HASN'T REGRETTED.

Mmmmm-- MORNING YOURSELF, JEAN.

JEAN? WHO'S JEAN?

HMMH?! LEE?

I'M SORRY. I... I THOUGHT YOU WERE SOMEONE ELSE.

NOT PARTICULARLY. THIS IS SOMETHING I HAVE TO WORK OUT ON MY OWN.

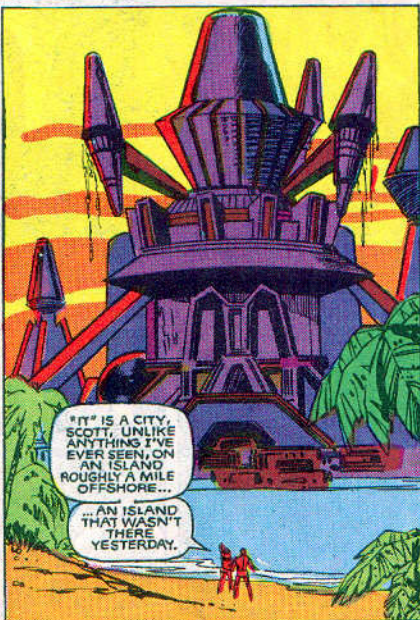
SCOTT, DON'T...

GOOD LORD!

LEE?! YOUR VOICE TRAILED OFF! WHAT'S WRONG?!

OBVIOUSLY. WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT?

I CAN'T SEE! WHAT IS IT?!



"IT" IS A CITY, SCOTT. UNLIKE ANYTHING I'VE EVER SEEN, ON AN ISLAND ROUGHLY A MILE OFFSHORE...

...AN ISLAND THAT WASN'T THERE YESTERDAY.

ONCE MORE, SCOTT CURSES THE BLINDFOLD WHICH KEEPS HIS EYES SEALED SHUT, AND HIS DEADLY OPTIC BLASTS IN CHECK. HE LOST HIS RUBY QUARTZ GLASSES-- DESIGNED TO CONTROL THE AWESOME POWER OF THOSE MUTANT BEAMS-- IN THE SURF, AS A CONSEQUENCE. FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS LIFE, HE IS HELPLESS.

CRY, MUTANT!