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FORMULA 10. RACER!



DETAILS INSIDE

FOR THE
OFFICIAL
CHARLES
CARR
COMIC
BOOK
CLUB



X-MEN



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THE UNCANNY X-MEN!™

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REUNION

FOR OVER AN HOUR, CYCLOPS AND STORM-- PAST AND PRESENT LEADERS OF THE UNCANNY X-MEN, THAT OUTLAW TEAM OF MUTANT SUPER HEROES-- HAVE BEEN PLAYING THEIR OWN UNIQUE VERSION OF HANDBALL IN THE GYMNASIUM OF THE VENERABLE SUBURBAN NEW YORK MANSION THAT ONCE SERVED AS THE X-MEN'S SECRET HEADQUARTERS.

MY
POINT!

TO THEM, THIS IS A QUIET
ENDING TO A QUIET DAY--
A RARE, WELCOME CHANGE
OF PACE IN THEIR HECTIC,
HELTER-SKELTER LIVES.

BOTH ARE BLISSFULLY UNAWARE
THAT THIS IS MERELY THE CALM
BEFORE THE TEMPEST.



MY ADVANTAGE, SCOTT, ONE MORE POINT AND I WIN THE GAME.

WOLFE 15
SCOTT 14



I'LL BELIEVE THAT WHEN I SEE IT, ORORO. SO FAR, NEITHER OF US HAS EVER BEEN MORE THAN A POINT AHEAD OF THE OTHER.

OHNNNN. BROTHER...

TIRED?



EXHAUSTED, YOU LOOK PRETTY BUSHED YOURSELF.

PLAYING IS HARD WORK, BUT I'VE STILL STRENGTH ENOUGH TO BEAT YOU.

ENOUGH TO TRY, AT ANY RATE.

YOU SERVE, SCOTT.



THEIR RULES ARE SIMPLE:

CYCLOPS PROPELS AND MANEUVERS THE BALL USING ONLY HIS POWERFUL, AND POTENTIALLY DEADLY, OPTIC BLASTS...



...WHILE STORM--WHO MUST REMAIN AIRBORNE DURING THE GAME--MANIPULATES IT WITH THE WINDS SHE CONTROLS. BEYOND THAT, ANYTHING GOES.

YOU KNOW, SCOTT, THIS METHOD OF HONING OUR POWERS MAY BE CRUDEER THAN THE DANGER ROOM...



...BUT IT IS ALSO MUCH MORE FUN.



THANK WOLVERINE FOR THE IDEA.

I THINK, AT LAST COUNT, NIGHTCRAWLER OWED HIM A TRUCKLOAD.

AHA! THIS LAST VOLLEY THREW STORM A FRACTION OFF-BALANCE.

THOUGH HE AND NIGHTCRAWLER USUALLY PLAY FOR BEER.



SHE'S GIVEN ME THE OPENING I WAS LOOKING FOR.



A SPLIT-SECOND APART, CYCLOPS FIRES A PAIR OF OPTIC BLASTS...

... IN SEEMINGLY RANDOM PATTERNS AROUND THE ROOM, ONE FLASHES RIGHT IN FRONT OF STORM, EASILY MISSING THE BALL, MOMENTARILY DISORIENTING HER, BEFORE SHE CAN RECOVER, THE SECOND BEAM RICOCHETS OFF A WALL BEHIND HER TO DELECT THE BALL ONTO THE FLOOR.



YOUR POINT. WE'RE TIED ONCE MORE.

THAT WAS A VERY NICE -- AND NASTY -- MOVE, SCOTT.

WOLVERINE WOULD HAVE BEEN PROUD OF YOU.



CONSIDER IT MY SWAN SONG. I'M BEAT.

I, TOO, SHALL WE CALL THIS A DRAW?

THE LATEST IN A SERIES. THE GAMES I WIN WITH EXPERIENCE...



... ARE BALANCED BY THE ONES YOU WIN WITH SKILL. AND VICE VERSA. YOU'RE VERY GOOD.

YOU SOUND SURPRISED.

I LIKE BEING THE BEST. IT'S NOT EASY GETTING USED TO HAVING A RIVAL... MUCH LESS AN EQUAL. C'MON, LET'S HIT THE SHOWERS.

INTERLUDE:

A BILLION AND A HALF KILOMETERS OUT-SYSTEM FROM EARTH...



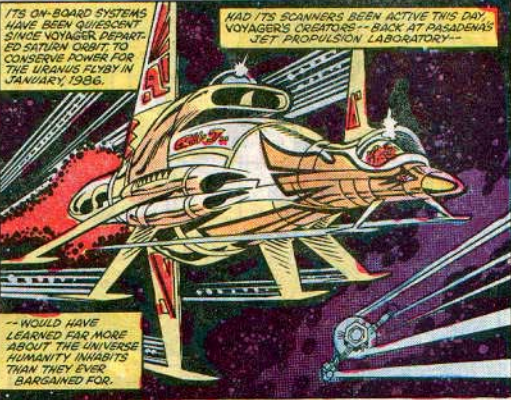
A TINY, TOUGH, MAGNIFICENT SPACECRAFT RUSHES TOWARDS INTER-STELLAR SPACE.

THIS IS VOYAGER 2, AN UNMANNED NASA PROBE THAT-- TOGETHER WITH ITS COMPANION CRAFT VOYAGER 1-- HAS ASTONISHED SCIENTIST AND LAYMAN ALIKE...



...WITH ITS BREATHTAKING VIEWS OF THE OUTER PLANETS.

ITS ON-BOARD SYSTEMS HAVE BEEN QUIESCENT SINCE VOYAGER DEPARTED SATURN ORBIT, TO CONSERVE POWER FOR THE URANUS FLYBY IN JANUARY, 1986.



HAD ITS SCANNERS BEEN ACTIVE THIS DAY, VOYAGER'S CREW WOULD BE BACK AT PASADENA'S JET PROPULSION LABORATORY--

-- WOULD HAVE LEARNED FAR MORE ABOUT THE UNIVERSE HUMANITY INHABITS THAN THEY EVER BARGAINED FOR.

THE STARSHIP IS INDISPUTABLY ALIEN. ITS PILOT IS NOT.



AFTER TWENTY YEARS, MAJOR CHRISTOPHER SUMMERS, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE, IS RETURNING HOME...

... TO A PLANET-- AND A SON-- HE BARELY REMEMBERS.



I'M ALMOST AT THE END OF A JOURNEY I NEVER THOUGHT I'D MAKE. I WISH THE CIRCUMSTANCES WERE DIFFERENT.

BUT IF THEY WERE, I PROBABLY WOULDN'T BE HERE.

FUNNY, AS A KID, I ALWAYS DREAMED OF EXPLORING SPACE. MY DREAM CAME TRUE AT THE COST OF EVERYTHING I HELD DEAR, AND IF I HAD IT ALL TO DO OVER AGAIN, I-- EH?! THE SCANNERS!



A SHI'AR DREADNOUGHT!

THEY'VE FOUND ME!!

INTERLUDE: IN THE HEART OF THE LEGENDARY BERMUDDA TRIANGLE LIES AN ISLAND RAISED FROM THE OCEAN FLOOR BY MAGNETO. MUTANT MASTER OF MAGNETISM, FOR USE AS HIS BASE.

RECENTLY, IT WAS THE SITE OF AN BRAC CONFRONTATION BETWEEN HIM AND THE X-MEN IN AFTER HIS DEFEAT...

© X-MEN #150 - LOUISE.

...THEY APPROPRIATED THE ISLAND FOR THEIR OWN USE.

YOU NEED A HAND WITH THOSE CRATES, COLOSSUS?

NYET, DR. CORBAU. WHEN I AM IN MY ARMORED FORM...

...MY STRENGTH IS QUITE CONSIDERABLE. I CAN EASILY HANDLE THIS LOAD. BUT YOUR OFFER IS APPRECIATED.

THOSE COMPUTER ELEMENTS GO TO THE LABORATORY, PETER.

< I KNOW WHERE THAT IS, PIOTR NIKOLJEVITCH. I WILL SHOW YOU THE WAY. >

< LEAD ON, LITTLE SISTER. >

AS THEY LEAVE THE WARD, NIGHT-CRAWLER MATERIALIZES IN A CHARACTERISTIC BURST OF SMOKE AND FLAME.

ACH! THIS ISLAND IS SO ANCIENT, SO... ALIEN. WE KNOW VIRTUALLY NOTHING ABOUT IT.

I WONDER IF IT IS A SAFE HAVEN FOR ILYANA--OR THE X-MEN?

CONSIDERING HOW OFTEN THE SECURITY OF OUR MANSION HAS BEEN BREACHED OF LATE, NIGHTCRAWLER, WOULD IT HAVE BEEN ANY SAFER TO REMAIN AT HOME? I DOUBT IT.

PROFESSOR, YOU READ MY THOUGHTS!

I APOLOGIZE, KURT. BUT THEY WERE SO OBVIOUS, AND SO STRONG, I COULDN'T HELP IT. YOU KNOW THERE'S A GROWING ANTI-MUTANT SENTIMENT IN THE STATES.

ALSO, THIS ISLAND WAS ONE OF MAGNETO'S PRIMARY INSTALLATIONS. MOST OF HIS RECORDS ARE INTACT. IT IS AN UNPARALLELED OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN ABOUT OUR ARCH-FOE. THE BENEFITS, I BELIEVE, FAR OUTWEIGH THE RISKS.

I HOPE SO. TO BE HONEST, ~~EVER~~ PROFESSOR, THIS PLACE GIVES ME THE CREEPS.

I FEAR-- FROM WHAT I'VE LEARNED RECENTLY-- THAT IT MAY HAVE OFFICIAL SANCTION. FOR THE MOMENT IT IS SIMPLY TOO DANGEROUS TO REMAIN IN WESTCHESTER.

ELSEWHERE, ATOP THE TOWER THAT SERVES AS THE X-MEN'S LIVING QUARTERS...

...STANDS A WOMAN NAMED CAROL DANVERS.

AS MS. MARVEL, SHE WAS A MAINSTAY OF THE AVENGERS--THE WORLD'S MIGHTIEST SUPER HERO TEAM--

--BUT THAT WAS BEFORE SHE LOST HER POWERS, HER MEMORY, AND VERY NEARLY HER LIFE AT THE HANDS OF ROGUE AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF EVIL MUTANTS.™

PERHAPS IT WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER IF I HAD DIED. I FEEL SO CUT OFF FROM EVERYTHING, EVERYONE. THE MORE I LEARN AND REMEMBER...

...THE MORE I REALIZE HOW MUCH I'VE TRULY LOST, THAT CAN NEVER BE REGAINED.

MAJOR?

WHO?! WOLVERINE!

™ IN AVENGERS ANNUAL #10 --LOUISE.

YOU STARTLED ME. I DIDN'T HEAR YOU APPROACH.

NO ONE EVER DOES.

PARDON MY ASKING, BUT DIDN'T WE MEET A FEW YEARS AGO?

YEAH--WHEN YOU WERE AIR FORCE INTELLIGENCE AND I WAS CANADIAN SECRET SERVICE. YOU AN' YOUR PARTNER, COLONEL MIKE ROSSI, AN' ME RAN SOME PRETTY HAIRY CAPERS TOGETHER.

THOSE WERE GOOD TIMES.

I DON'T REMEMBER. NOT YOU, NOT THE MISSIONS, NOT EVEN ROSSI.

I LOVED HIM, WOLVERINE. YET I CAN'T PICTURE HIS FACE, HEAR HIS VOICE, AND WHEN I THINK OF HIM--

S--SORRY, I... I DIDN'T MEAN TO COME APART LIKE THAT.

S'ALL RIGHT BLAST! WHAT IS IT, KITTY? THAT WAS THE WRONG WALL TO PHASE THROUGH AN' THE WRONG TIME TO DO IT.

OH, YEAH, I SEE THAT. THE PROFESSOR SENT ME TO FIND YOU.

YOU'VE DONE THAT. NOW SCRAM. I'M BUSY.

GO, WOLVERINE. I'LL BE FINE, REALLY.

--I FEEL NOTHING!

INTERLUDE: 400,000 KILOMETERS ABOVE THE EARTH'S SURFACE...

COME ON, OLD BUS. HOLD TOGETHER. THIS IS THE HOME STRETCH--DON'T FAIL ME NOW.

NO CONTACTS ON MY SCOPES. I MUST HAVE DITCHED THE BATTLESHIP IN THE ASTEROID BELT, LIKE I FIGURED.

PLASMA TORPEDOES-- COMING FROM AHEAD OF ME! THE SHYAR!

I UNDERESTIMATED THEM. THE MOMENT THEY LOST ME THEY MUST HAVE COME STRAIGHT HERE.

THEY'RE USING THEIR MAIN BATTERIES. MY SHIELDS WON'T HOLD AGAINST THAT KIND OF FIREPOWER.

CORSAIR, M'LAD. YOU'RE REPUTED TO BE THE BEST PILOT IN SPACE. HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO PROVE IT.

WHILE CORSAIR--LEADER OF THE STARJAMMERS, A DEVIL-MAY-CARE BAND OF INTERSTELLAR FREEBOOTERS--RUNS A VIRTUALLY IMPASSIBLE GAUNTLET OF NUCLEAR MISSILES AND ENERGY BEAMS...

...WE RETURN ONCE MORE TO PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS.

I MUST SAY I'VE OUTDONE MYSELF.

THOUGH, WHEN IT COMES TO COOKING, MY STANDARDS ARE PRETTY LOW.

DINNER'S READY, ORORO.

I HAVE THE MAIL, SCOTT.

ANYTHING INTERESTING?

BILLS, MAGAZINES, CIRCULARS-- THE USUAL, OH, HERE'S A POST CARD FROM KITTY!

"HAVING A WONDERFUL TIME. WISH YOU WERE HERE." HOW ELOQUENT.

AH, KITTEN. SHE TRIED FOR A CARIBBEAN TAN AND GOT SUNBURNED INSTEAD. SHE'S PRACTICING HER DANCING. SHE'S DETERMINED TO BE IN THE PIECE HER TEACHER, STEVIE HUNTER, IS CHOREOGRAPHING. I MUST TELL STEVIE THAT.

EVERYONE IS WELL, THOUGH CAROL SEEMS QUITE DEPRESSED.

THAT'S SOME POST-CARD.

KITTY WRITES VERY SMALL. WHAT IS THAT?

A LETTER FROM EMMA FROST'S MASSACHUSETTS ACADEMY, OFFICIALLY REVOKING KITTY'S ADMISSION. THE WHITE QUEEN WAS AS GOOD AS HER WORD.

IT'S TOO LATE IN THE TERM--IT WOULD BE TOO DISRUPTIVE--FOR KITTY'S PARENTS TO TRANSFER HER ANYWHERE ELSE. SO XAVIER'S SCHOOL HAS HER FOR ONE MORE YEAR, AT LEAST.

"SEE X-MEN #152--L."

YOU UNDER-RATE YOURSELF. THIS IS ALL QUITE DELICIOUS.

THANKS.

SCOTT, YOU CALLED ME YOUR "RIVAL" EARLIER. AM I? DO YOU WISH TO RECLAIM YOUR OLD POSITION AS TEAM LEADER?

DO YOU WISH TO GIVE IT UP?

I... AM NOT CERTAIN. I TOOK IT RELUCTANTLY. THE RESPONSIBILITY... FRIGHTENED ME.

BUT OVER THE MONTHS...

... I HAVE GROWN TO ACCEPT IT, I AM GOOD AT IT-- THOUGH I CONCEDE YOU ARE THE BEST.

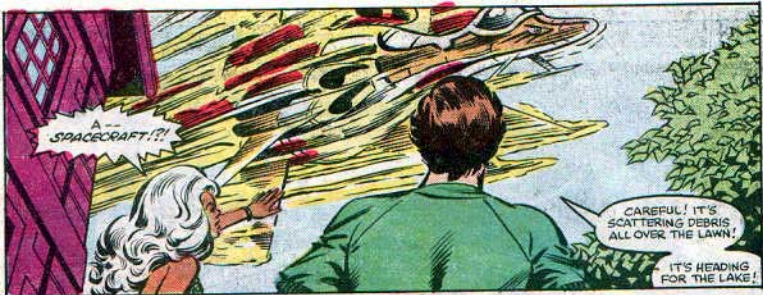
AGAIN, THANKS. BUT TO BE HONEST, I'M NOT SURE I WANT THE JOB BACK.

SO MUCH HAS CHANGED, IS CHANGING IN MY LIFE, I FEEL LIKE I'M AT A CROSSROADS--

GOOD LORD!

THAT ROARING SOUND--!

WHAT THE BLAZES IS HAPPENING???



A--
SPACECRAFT!?!

CAREFUL! IT'S
SCATTERING DEBRIS
ALL OVER THE LAWN!

IT'S HEADING
FOR THE LAKE!



IN A MATTER OF SECONDS, BOTH X-MEN ARE IN THE WATER, SEARCHING FOR SURVIVORS.



SOMEONE MUST HAVE
SEEN OR HEARD ITS
APPROACH.

HOWEVER
WILL WE
EXPLAIN
THIS?



YOU'RE THE BOSS, ORORO.
I'M SURE YOU'LL THINK
OF SOMETHING.

WONDERFUL.

THERE'S
THE
PILOT!



HE'S
STILL
ALIVE!

SCOTT, I
RECOGNIZE--!

ME, TOO.
IT'S
CORSAIR.

HE IS
FAR MORE
THAN THAT,
MY FRIEND.



AND I FEAR THE TIME HAS COME
TO BREAK MY OATH NEVER TO
REVEAL TO YOU THE TRUTH
ABOUT HIM.

LORDS
OF THE
EARTH
AND AIR!

ORORO, I THINK WE
CAN FORGET ABOUT
EXPLANATIONS.

CORSAIR DREAMS-- AND THE IMAGES ARE AS VIVID AS LIFE, THE PAIN AS REAL, THE GRIEF AS SHARP.

HIS PLANE WAS BURNING. ANNE GAVE SCOTT THE ONLY PARACHUTE, WRAPPED ALEX IN HIS BIG BROTHER'S ARMS, AND SHOVED THE TWO BOYS OUT THE ESCAPE HATCH.

THEN SHE RETURNED TO HER HUSBAND'S SIDE, AND BOTH OF THEM WERE SWEPT ACROSS THE UNIVERSE...

MORE RECENT MEMORIES SCATTERSHOT ACROSS HIS MIND'S EYE!

...WHERE SHE PAID FOR HER LOVE AND LOYALTY...

... AN AMBUSH, DAYS AGO-- FOUR STURJAMMERS VERSUS A BATTALION OF IMPERIAL COMBAT TROOPERS.

THE ODDS WERE HOPELESS, REGARDLESS, ONE OF THEM HAD TO GET AWAY, TO REACH EARTH, TO ALERT THE X-MEN. CORSAIR WAS THE OBVIOUS CHOICE.

... WITH HER LIFE.

AND, FOR THE SECOND TIME IN HIS LIFE, FEELS HIS HEART BREAK.

GOOD EVENING, CYCLOPS. PARDON MY DROPPING IN UNANNOUNCED...

CAN THE SNAPPY PATTERN, CORSAIR. EXPLAIN THIS LOCKET AND THESE AIR FORCE DOGTAGS.

THE WOMAN'S FACE IS... FAMILIAR. AND THE TWO BOYS ARE ME AND MY BROTHER, ALEX.

THE TAGS ARE MINE, SCOTT. THE WOMAN IS MY WIFE. THE CHILDREN MY SONS.

YOU'RE LYING!

SCOTT-- FORGIVE ME, BUT HE IS NOT.



SHE SUMMONS THE WIND THAT IS HER NAMESAKE AND SETS IT SPINNING IN THE PARLOR. IN SECONDS, STORM GENERATES AN INCREDIBLE, IRRESISTIBLE VORTEX THAT REACHES THROUGH THE HOUSE, GATHERING IN EVERYTHING THAT ISN'T FASTENED DOWN.



THE FURNITURE DOES NOT SURVIVE. OUR HEROES, PROTECTED BY STORM FROM HER CREATION, DO.



REGRETTABLY, SO ALSO DO THEIR FOES.



THE SIDRI ARE FREE-LANCERS, WORKING FOR BOUNTY.

THE IMPERIAL SHI'AR WOULD NEVER USE THEM, SO IT'S UNLIKELY THEY CAME FROM THE PREAD-NOUGHT.

THAT LEAVES THE OPPOSITION... THE TRAITORS WHO KIDNAPPED LILANDRA.



MY FATHER-- ALIVE! AS A KID, I DREAMED OF THIS MEETING. I PRAYED FOR IT.

NOW THAT IT'S HAPPENED, I FEEL... HAPPY, ANGRY-- MOSTLY NUMB.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, OR SAY.



SCOTT IS TRYING TO HIDE IT BUT HIS EMOTIONS ARE TEARING HIM APART INSIDE, AND IT IS PARTLY MY FAULT, BLESSED GODDESS I KEPT SILENT ABOUT CORSAIR TO SPARE HIM PAIN...

... ONLY TO CAUSE HIM EVEN GREATER PAIN.

WHAT NEXT?

YOU TELL ME, FIGHT OR RUN?

RUN.

WE NEED THE OTHER X-MEN AND WE MUST DRAW THESE MONSTERS AWAY BEFORE INNOCENT CIVILIANS BECOME INVOLVED.

WE'LL USE THE BLACKBIRD. I'LL CALL YOU OVER OUR MICRO-TRANSCIVERS WHEN WE'RE READY TO LIFT-OFF.

AND I SHALL COME IF I AM ABLE.

WHAT'S SHE TALKING ABOUT?!

STORM'S ACTING AS OUR REARGUARD, TO BUY US THE TIME WE NEED TO REACH THE PLANE.

ONE WOMAN AGAINST THE SIDRI?!

IT'S THE ONLY WAY.

COME ON!

YOU CAN'T LEAVE HER!

THE HANGAR'S A MILE DOWN THIS TUNNEL, HIDDEN BENEATH A COPSE ON THE ESTATE. SECURITY SENSORS INDICATE NEITHER HANGAR NOR TUNNEL HAVE BEEN BREACHED. THIS MONOCAR WILL HAVE US THERE IN A COUPLE OF MINUTES.

YOU COLD-BLOODED--!

THEY'LL TEAR HER APART! WE HAVE TO HELP HER!

SHE'S YOUR FRIEND, SCOTT. DON'T YOU CARE--?!

STORM... ORORO...!

YES!!

BUT I'LL LEAVE HER JUST THE SAME...

... AS I'D EXPECT HER TO LEAVE ME..

THE SIDRI ARE GENERATING ADDITIONAL ARMOR, MAKING THEMSELVES MORE RESISTANT TO MY LIGHTNING BOLTS.

AND THE STRAIN IS BEGINNING TO WEAR ME DOWN.

I CANNOT MAINTAIN THIS EFFORT MUCH LONGER.

MEANWHILE, ABOARD THE X-MEN'S CUSTOM-DESIGNED, SPECIALLY MODIFIED VERSION OF THE FAMED SR-71 BLACKBIRD...

STORM, THIS IS CYCLOPS. TIME TO GO.

SCANNERS READ ALL CLEAR TOPSIDE. ALL I HAVE TO DO IS POP THE SURFACE HATCH, FIREWALL THE THROTTLES AND WE'RE ON OUR WAY.

King's Draged

AND NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON. I HAVEN'T TRIED THIS MANEUVER IN AGES. I HOPE IT WORKS.

THE PHYSICAL COST TO HER IS SHATTERING...

...AS SHE USES HER ELEMENTAL POWERS TO CONJURE A MONSOON, CREATING A FLASH FLOOD IN THE NARROW TUNNEL WHICH SHE HURLS AT THE ALIENS...

...YET SHE STILL FINDS STRENGTH ENOUGH TO STREAK DOWN THE TRANSIT TUNNEL TO THE MANSAR AT FULL SPEED.

THIS IS WHY BOTH SCOTT AND I KNEW I HAD TO STAY-- BECAUSE WHEREVER THE BLACKBIRD WENT, I COULD FOLLOW. ONCE SHE WAS AIRBORNE, SCOTT COULD NOT.

SECONDS LATER, THUNDER RIPPLES ACROSS THE TOWN OF SALEM CENTER-- SCARING EVERYONE AWAKENED BY THE CRASH OF CORSAIR'S STARSHIP--

--AS TWO ULTRA-HIGH-PERFORMANCE JET ENGINES PUNCH 77,000 KILOGRAMS OF SLEEK, EBONY AIRCRAFT STRAIGHT UP INTO THE SKY.

ON-BOARD CAMERAS AND SENSORS OPERATIONAL--TO GATHER AS MUCH DATA AS POSSIBLE FOR PROFESSOR X--THE PLANE MAKES A LOW PASS OVER THE MANSION.

MY LORD.

CHARLES LOVED THAT OLD HOUSE. I DID, TOO. IT WAS THE ONLY REAL HOME I REMEMBER. IT'LL BREAK HIS HEART TO SEE IT LIKE THIS.

"KEEP YOUR EYES PEELLED," HE TELLS THE OTHERS. "THEIR SHIP SHOULD BE SOMEWHERE NEARBY. MAYBE WE CAN PUT IT OUT OF COMMISSION."

"TAKE ANOTHER LOOK, LAD," CORSAIR REPLIES GRIMLY. "THE SIDRI DON'T NEED A SHIP."

"THEY ARE A SHIP!!"

ON THAT NOTE, LET'S SHIFT OUR SCENE BRIEFLY TO THE F.A.A. REGIONAL AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL CENTER ON LONG ISLAND, RESPONSIBLE FOR ROUTING AND DIRECTING ALL AIRCRAFT IN THE NEW YORK AREA.

TROUBLE, PHIL?

UNIDENTIFIED CONTACT, ROY.

POPPED UP OUTTA NOWHERE IN WESTCHESTER, VECTOR IS DUE SOUTH TOWARDS THE CITY AT LOW ALTITUDE. IT WON'T ACKNOWLEDGE MY TRANSMISSIONS.

I'LL ALERT THE AIR FORCE-- GOOD GRIEF! WHAT THE HECK IS THAT?!

I-- I DON'T KNOW, BUT IT'S AS BIG AS A SKYSCRAPER--

"--AND IT'S BARRELING PULL-TILT INTO THE MOST CROWDED AIR-SPACE ON EARTH!!"

YOW!!

CYCLOPS TRIES TO CLIMB AWAY FROM THE CITY...

... BUT THE SIDRI CUT HIM OFF, FORCING HIM INTO A LOW-LEVEL GAME OF CAT AND MOUSE THAT BEGINS AT MANHATTAN'S TRIBOROUGH BRIDGE...

...AND CONTINUES
DOWN THE EAST
RIVER.

I MAY BE STATING THE
OBVIOUS, LAD, BUT THIS IS
HARDLY THE WAY TO SAFE-
GUARD INNOCENT LIVES.

THANKS, "POP."
I NEEDED
THAT.

WE CAN'T USE
CONVENTIONAL
WEAPONS.

BUT THAT
DIDN'T MEAN
WE'RE HELPLESS.
FAR FROM IT.

I'VE BEEN
WAITING FOR A
CHANCE TO FIELD TEST THIS
EXPERIMENTAL WINDSHIELD.
LOOKS LIKE THIS IS IT.

HE FIRES A
FULL-POWER
OPTIC BLAST.

THEY'RE TOO
DANGEROUS
TO OTHERS, TOO
DIFFICULT TO
CONTROL.

AS THE BEAM HITS THE CANOPY--
ITSELF COMPOSED OF A SYNTHESIS OF
PLASTIGLASS AND RUBY QUARTZ--
SPECIAL POLARIZING ELEMENTS FOCUS
AND AMPLIFY ITS ENERGY...

... AS A RUBY
DOES WITH
COHERENT
LIGHT IN A
LASER.

ZAP!

THE EFFECT IS
MOST IMPRESSIVE.

AND, INsofar AS THEIR Foe IS CONCERNED,
TOTALLY SEQUENTIAL.

A NICE TRY, SCOTT, BUT
WHEN THE SINDRI MERGE
INTO THEIR SHIP MATRIX,
THE BOND THAT LINKS
THEM IS ALMOST
IMPOSSIBLE TO
BREAK.

SUPPOSE
WE DISRUPT THAT
MATRIX.
WHAT GOOD
WILL THAT
DO US?

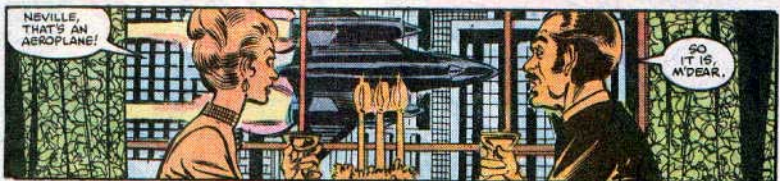


A VIOLENT DISSOLUTION WILL
ACT LIKE A GIGANTIC SHORT
CIRCUIT, IT'LL STUN THEM--LONG
ENOUGH FOR US TO ESCAPE, OR
PERHAPS EVEN DESTROY THEM.

BUT SHATTERING THE
MATRIX REQUIRES A PHENO-
MENAL AMOUNT OF ENERGY.
I DOUBT YOU CAN HACK
IT ALONE.



LET'S GIVE
IT OUR BEST
SHOT, ANY-
WAY, BUT WHEN
IT'S DOWN,
WE'LL RUN.



NEVILLE,
THAT'S AN
AEROPLANE!

SO
IT IS,
M'DEAR.



VERY NICE
FLYING, SON.
I COULDN'T
HAVE DONE
BETTER
MYSELF.

THE NAME IS CYCLOPS,
MISTER, YOU HAVEN'T
THE RIGHT TO CALL
ME ANYTHING
ELSE.

SCOTT, THE FORCES OF
NATURE ARE
OFTEN FAR
GREATER THAN
THE WOMAN WHO
SUMMONS THEM.



IF YOU KEEP
HAMMERING AWAY
AT THE SINDRI,
WHILE I CREATE
A GALE...

IT'S
WORTH A
TRY, ORORO.
BUT WE'RE
BOTH PRETTY
TIRED. CAN
YOU MAINTAIN
TOTAL CONTROL
OVER YOUR
STORM?

I SHALL
HAVE TO,
SHAN'T
I?

GOOD
LUCK.

TO DO WHAT IS NECESSARY, I MUST WARP WEATHER PATTERNS THROUGHOUT THE NEW YORK METROPLEX. THE EFFECTS OF SUCH AN ATMOSPHERIC TRAUMA WILL BE FELT FOR DAYS, PERHAPS LONGER, AND THEY MAY BE SEVERE.



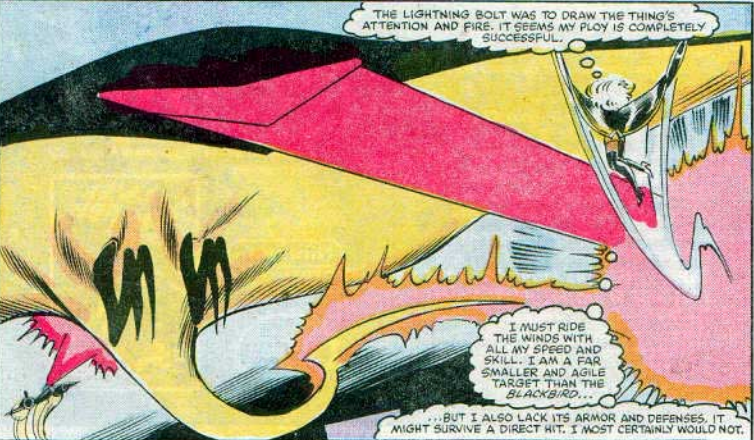
YET IF I DO NOTHING, WE THREE ARE SURELY DOOMED. ARE OUR LIVES WORTH ENDANGERING THE CITY?

AND IF THE ANSWER IS "YES" ARE WE NOT THEN IN DANGER OF FOLLOWING THE SAME ARROGANT PATH THAT MAGNETO TROD?



SO OFTEN, IT SEEMS WE MUST CHOOSE-- NOT BETWEEN GOOD AND BAD BUT BETWEEN THE LESSER OF TWO EVILS.

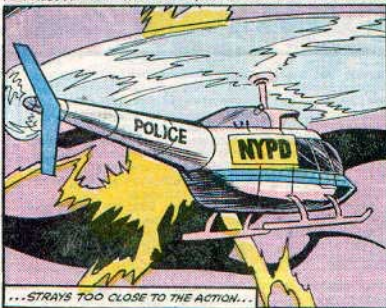
THE LIGHTNING BOLT WAS TO DRAW THE THING'S ATTENTION AND FIRE. IT SEEMS MY PLOY IS COMPLETELY SUCCESSFUL.



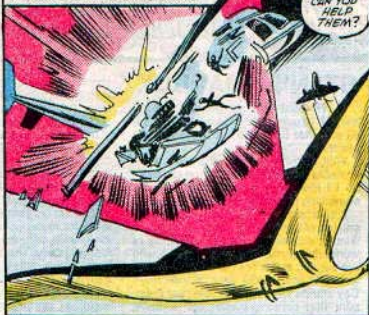
I MUST RIDE THE WINDS WITH ALL MY SPEED AND SKILL. I AM A FAR SMALLER AND AGILE TARGET THAN THE BLACKBIRD...

... BUT I ALSO LACK ITS ARMOR AND DEFENSES. IT MIGHT SURVIVE A DIRECT HIT. I MOST CERTAINLY WOULD NOT.

HOWEVER, AS THE AERIAL DOGFIGHT RAGES ACROSS THE UPPER NEW YORK BAY, WHAT BOTH X-MEN FEARED FINALLY COMES TO PASS. AN NYPD HELICOPTER, ON ROUTINE HARBOR PATROL...



... AND IS MISTAKEN BY THE SIDRI FOR ONE OF THE COMBATANTS.



I WONDER: DO MY QUESTIONS, MY DOUBTS, MAKE ME THE WRONG PERSON TO LEAD THE X-MEN?

I WONDER IF SCOTT IS FREE OF THEM?

SUDDENLY, IT'S THE SIDRI MATRIX WHICH IS ON THE DEFENSIVE...

... AS STORM'S CYCLONE FOLLOWS IT WHEREVER IT GOES, WHILE CYCLOPS BLASTS IT AGAIN AND AGAIN WITH HIS ENHANCED EYE BEAMS.

IT ISN'T LONG BEFORE THE TWO-PRONGED ATTACK GETS RESULTS.

MAGNIFICENT! THAT'S A ONE-IN-A-LIFETIME SIGHT, BOY!

THE MATRIX IS LOSING ITS COHESIVENESS. ONE HARD PUNCH SHOULD DISRUPT IT COMPLETELY.

USING HIS OPTIC BLASTS LIKE A BATTERING RAM, CYCLOPS SMASHES THE BLACK-BIRD AT FULL THROTTLE THROUGH THE HEART OF THE ALIEN.

WITH AN EERIE, ALMOST HUMAN SHRIEK OF AGONY, IT SHATTERS...

...ITS THOUSANDS OF LESSER SELVES TOPPLING TO THE GROUND LIKE LIVING SNOW.

SOUND THE EMERGENCY HORN!

EVACUATE THE AREA -- ON THE DOUBLE!

A PETROLEUM STORAGE FACILITY? PERFECT, CYCLOPS. YOU COULDN'T HAVE CHOSEN A MORE IDEAL SITE IF YOU'D TRIED.

THE MATRIX IS IN SHOCK NOW. IT'S VULNERABLE. AND THE MOST EFFECTIVE WEAPON AGAINST IT IS HEAT.

BLAST THAT TANK FARM--SET THE OIL AFIRE--AND THE EXPLOSION IS SURE TO KILL IT.

"KILL IT?!"
"YOU MEAN, THAT
THING'S ALIVE?"
I... I THOUGHT
IT WAS A
CONSTRUCT, A
MECHANISM.

IT'S A
COLONY
CREATURE,
LIVING AND
SENTIENT,
SO WHAT?

I CAN'T-- I WON'T--
KILL, CORSAIR.

THIS IS NO TIME FOR
SCRUPLES, BOY. IT HAS
NO COMPUNCTIONS ABOUT
KILLING YOU-- OR ANYONE
ELSE WHO GETS IN ITS
WAY.

YOU SANCTIMONIOUS FOOL, WE
CAN'T LET IT REINTEGRATE! WE'VE
ONLY SECONDS TO ACT.

SECONDS
BEFORE
WHAT?

STORM,
STOP
HIM!

WHY?
CORSAIR--
DON'T!

I'M SORRY, BUT I'VE NO
ALTERNATIVE. I'VE FOUGHT
THESE THINGS, YOU HAVEN'T.
THIS IS THE ONLY WAY,
BELIEVE ME.

NOW, WE
CAN GO.

WHAROOM!!

WHAT ABOUT THE REFINERY WORKERS, CORSAIR? THE FIREMEN WHO'LL RISK THEIR LIVES TO EXTINGUISH THAT BLAZE? THE COST, IN POLLUTION, TO THE ENVIRONMENT?

DID YOU CONSIDER THAT?! DID YOU CARE?!

CALLOUS AS IT SOUNDS, CYCLOPS, ALL OF THAT IS NEGLIGIBLE, EVEN EXPENDABLE. YOU WORRY ABOUT A FEW SCORE LIVES.

I'M TRYING TO SAVE A WORLD.

THIS WORLD.

YOU ARE CORRECT, CORSAIR. IT IS CALLOUS. AND CRUEL. AND INHUMAN.

THEN, I GUESS, SO AM I.

ALL RIGHT, MISTER, DROP THE OTHER SHOE, EXPLAIN YOURSELF. WHY DOES THE EARTH NEED SAVING, AND FROM WHOM?!

"TEN STANDARD DAYS AGO, A MEETING OF THE SHI'AR GRAND COUNCIL WAS RAIDED BY A TERRORIST COMMANDO FORCE. MOST OF THE MINISTERS WERE SLAUGHTERED IN THE ATTACK, SOME EXECUTED EVEN AFTER THEY'D SURRENDERED.

"LILANDRA WAS KIDNAPPED. MY STARJAMMERS AND I WERE IMPLICATED AND THE TRAIL LEFT BY THE TERRORISTS LED STRAIGHT TO EARTH.

THEY'RE PREPARED TO GO TO ANY LENGTHS TO LIBERATE THEIR EMPRESS, OR AVENGE HER. AND IF, IN THE PROCESS, THEY HAVE TO REDUCE THE EARTH TO A LIFELESS, BURNED-OUT CINDER--

--SO BE IT!

"A FAST BATTLE FORCE -- LED BY CHANCELLOR ARAKI AND ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET LORD SAMEDAR -- SET OUT IMMEDIATELY TO RESCUE HER. LEAD ELEMENTS OF THE FORCE HAVE ALREADY ARRIVED IN LOCAL EARTH SPACE.

NEXT ISSUE:

DEATH-BIRD!