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# the X-MEN

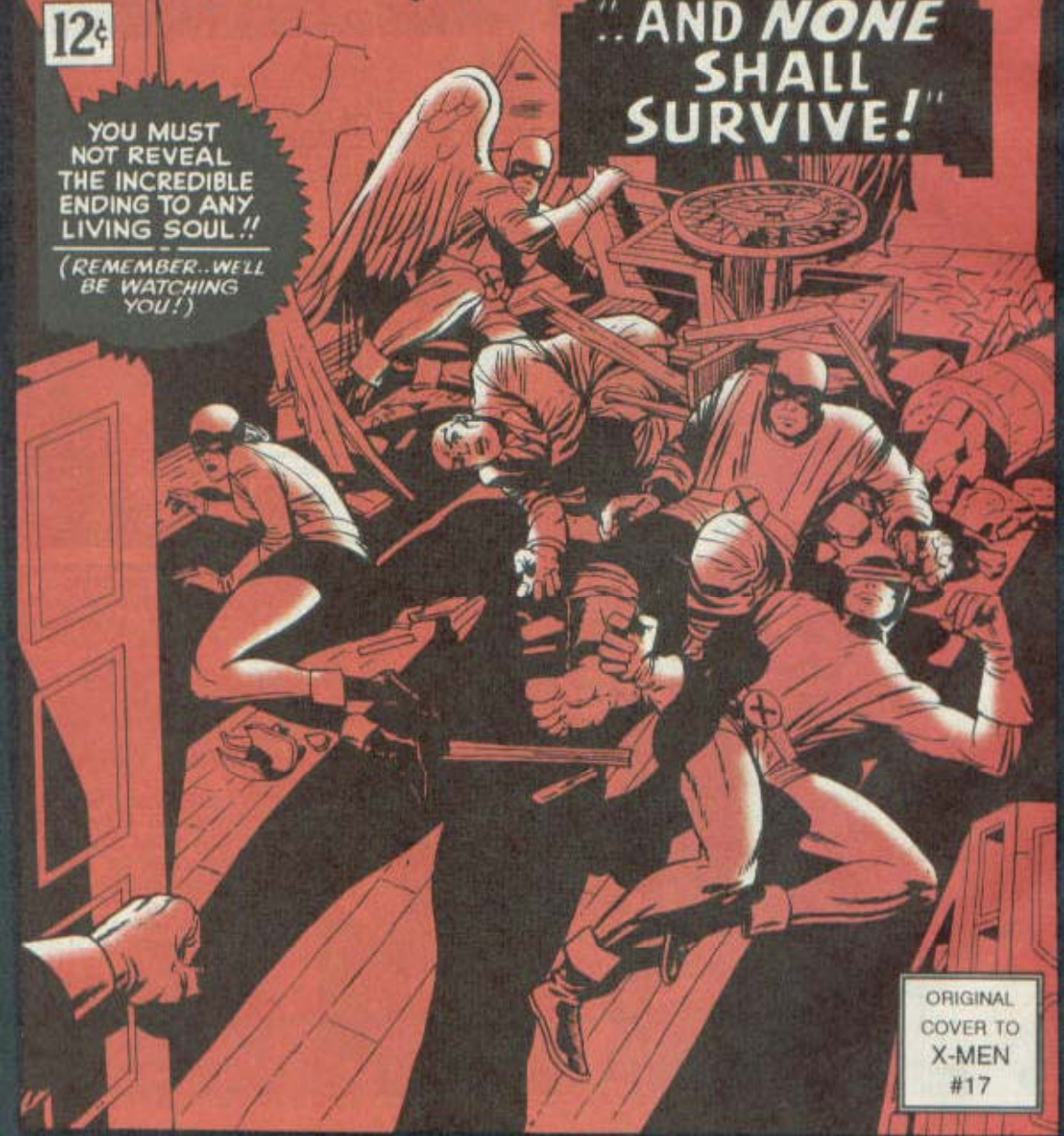
APPROVED  
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NO. 17  
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YOU MUST NOT REVEAL THE INCREDIBLE ENDING TO ANY LIVING SOUL!!  
(REMEMBER...WE'LL BE WATCHING YOU!)

"AND NONE SHALL SURVIVE!"



ORIGINAL  
COVER TO  
X-MEN  
#17

**X-MEN! THE MOST UNUSUAL FIGHTING TEAM OF ALL TIME!**

# ...AND NONE SHALL SURVIVE!



THE FAT'S IN THE FIRE NOW! THERE'S NO WAY FOR PROFESSOR X TO KEEP OUR BATTLE OUT OF THE HEADLINES AFTER ALL THIS!

YOUR PULSE IS IMPOSSIBLE, SON!

THOUGH THE YOUTHFUL X-MEN MANAGED TO DEFEAT THE DEADLY SENTINELS LAST ISH, THEY DID NOT ESCAPE UNSCATHED! WITHIN MOMENTS, A FIRST AID TEAM OF NATIONAL GUARD MEDICS REACHES THE SCENE...

MY TROOPS WILL TAKE COMMAND, INSPECTOR! IT'S A MILITARY MATTER NOW!

OKAY WITH ME, GENERAL!

HAVE A CARE, KILDARE! EACH AND EVERY TOE IS VIRTUALLY PRICELESS!

I WONDER HOW MUCH LONGER THE PROFESSOR CAN KEEP HIS CONNECTION WITH US A SECRET.

WE'D BETTER SEE ABOUT GETTING YOU HOME SAFELY, PROFESSOR XAVIER!

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, OFFICER! MY CAR IS PARKED NOT FAR FROM HERE!

COMB THE AREA!! REPORT ANYTHING THAT MOVES! LET'S GO!

PERHAPS ONE OF THE X-MEN WILL BE GOOD ENOUGH TO DRIVE ME BACK TO MY SCHOOL!

NEW COVER BY PHIL HESTER & ANDE PARKS  
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ON BEHALF OF THE ARMED SERVICES, PROFESSOR, I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR AID! IT WAS MOST COURAGEOUS OF YOU TO OFFER TO COME HERE AND ADVISE US!

I WAS GLAD TO BE ABLE TO HELP, GENERAL!

HE THINKS OF ME AS A CIVILIAN ADVISER! AFTER ALL, THERE'S NO REASON FOR ANYONE TO SUSPECT THAT I'M THE LEADER OF THE X-MEN!



THERE'LL BE SOME MIGHTY RED FACES FROM NOW ON, PROFESSOR! ALL THOSE WHO CALLED THE X-MEN MENACES TO SOCIETY WILL HAVE A LOT OF APOLOGIZING TO DO!

IN FACT, I MYSELF USED TO FEAR THEIR POWER, UNTIL I SAW HOW THEY RISKED THEIR LIVES TO HELP ALL OF US! DON'T YOU AGREE, PROFESSOR?

INDEED I DO, GENERAL!

THAT'S WHY I DECIDED TO RELEASE MY MENTAL HOLD OVER YOUR MIND-- SO THE X-MEN WOULD GET DUE CREDIT!



CAPTAIN, ORDER YOUR MEN TO SEARCH THE RUINS OF THE SENTINELS' FORTRESS!

BE QUICK ABOUT IT! WE MOVE OUT BEFORE SUNDOWN!

WHAT SUPREME IRONY! THE SENTINELS HAD BEEN CREATED TO DESTROY THE X-MEN--

--AND YET, IT WAS NECESSARY FOR US TO SMASH THEM-- IN ORDER TO SAVE HUMANITY-- THE HUMANITY THAT HATED US!



ARE YOU INJURED, PROFESSOR? WE'RE TAKING SOME OF THE X-MEN TO THE HOSPITAL FOR TREATMENT! IF YOU REQUIRE ANY CARE, WE CAN--

NO, I'M PERFECTLY FINE, THANK YOU! I WAS IN THE POLICE HELICOPTER, SAFELY REMOVED FROM ANY OF THE ACTUAL FIGHTING!

I SUSPECTED THAT ICEMAN, THE BEAST AND CYCLOPS WERE INJURED!

PERHAPS ONE OF THE OTHER X-MEN WILL DRIVE ME TO MY SCHOOL? I WOULD ENJOY GETTING TO KNOW THEM BETTER!

THE ANGEL AND I WILL BE GLAD TO DO IT, PROFESSOR!



ATTENTION, BEAST! EXERCISE EXTREME CAUTION! DO NOT REMOVE YOUR MASK! ICEMAN! REMAIN IN ICY FORM! YOUR TRUE IDENTITIES MUST NOT BE EXPOSED!

MAN! IF HE EVER GOT AN INGROWN TOENAIL, IT WOULD BE ENDSVILLE!

CYCLOPS! YOU WILL BE RESPONSIBLE UNTIL I REACH THE HOSPITAL!



SECONDS LATER, CYCLOPS, THE BEAST AND ICEMAN ARE SPEEDILY TRANSPORTED TO THE NEAREST HOSPITAL, AS THE ANGEL AND MARVEL GIRL ACCOMPANY PROFESSOR XAVIER TO HIS WAITING SEDAN...

THE PROFESSOR HAD TO LET US GO TO THE HOSPITAL-- NO MATTER HOW RISKY IT IS! IF HE PROTESTED, IT WOULD HAVE AROUSED TOO MANY SUSPICIONS!

I'M NOT HURT BADLY EXCEPT FOR SOME BRUISES-- BUT I HOPE HANK AND BOBBY ARE OKAY!

AND SO, THE X-MEN LEAVE THE SCENE OF ONE OF THEIR MOST FANTASTIC BATTLES--THE SITE WHERE THE SENTINELS WERE BORN--AND WHERE THEY, ALONG WITH THEIR TRAGIC CREATOR, PERISHED--AS THE RESULT OF A MAD DREAM GONE WRONG!



A SHORT TIME LATER, IN A HUSHED HOSPITAL ROOM...

HIS INJURY WAS MORE SERIOUS THAN I THOUGHT! HE BLACKED OUT IN THE AMBULANCE, AND THEY CAN'T BRING HIM BACK TO CONSCIOUSNESS!

IT WAS GOOD OF YOU TO STOP BY TO SEE THE X-MEN, PROFESSOR-- BUT I'M AFRAID ICEMAN'S CONDITION MUST BE LISTED AS CRITICAL!



DUE TO THE MUTANT NATURE OF HIS BODY, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO MAKE AN ACCURATE DIAGNOSIS OF HIS INJURIES!

SO ALIEN IS HE TO NORMAL MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE, THAT WE CAN DO NOTHING BUT KEEP HIM UNDER OBSERVATION--AND HOPE FOR THE BEST!



I UNDERSTAND, DOCTOR! NONE OF THE USUAL MEDICATIONS CAN BE GIVEN TO ONE WHOSE PHYSICAL MAKEUP DEFIES ANYTHING SCIENCE HAS EVER ENCOUNTERED BEFORE!

EVEN I, WITH MY MUTANT BRAIN, CANNOT HELP BOBBY NOW! HE IS IN THE HANDS OF A POWER GREATER THAN ANY HUMAN!



HE'S STARTING TO MOVE! TRYING TO SPEAK--!

LOOK OUT! I'LL TACKLE THE SENTINEL! I'LL STOP HIM--SOMEHOW--!

I KNOW I'M THE YOUNGEST-- BUT I'LL SHOW THEM-- I'LL PROVE THAT I'M EVERY INCH AN X-MAN! I WON'T FAIL THEM! I WON'T...!



I'LL MAKE THEM PROUD OF ME-- THEY NEED ME-- I-- I WON'T LET THEM DOWN--!

HE'S DELIRIOUS! NO WAY OF KNOWING WHETHER IT'S A GOOD SYMPTOM-- OR A DANGEROUS ONE!



YOU'D BETTER LEAVE NOW, PROFESSOR!

ALL THESE MONTHS-- THESE MANY MISSIONS-- I'VE PROTECTED MY X-MEN! I PRAY THAT BOBBY DRAKE WON'T MARK THE FIRST TIME I'M FACED WITH-- FAILURE!

WITH HEAVY HEART, CHARLES XAVIER NEXT VISITS HANK McCOY--!

HELLO, PROFESSOR! IS THERE ANY CHANGE IN THE ACE-MAN'S CONDITION YET?

REMEMBER, HANK-- DO NOT, UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE, REMOVE YOUR MASK! AND, ANOTHER WORD OF CAUTION--

ACT AS THOUGH I AM MERELY A CASUAL FRIEND! NO ONE MUST SUSPECT I AM ACTUALLY YOUR LEADER!

NO, BEAST! HE IS STILL ON THE CRITICAL LIST... THE POOR LAD IS DELIRIOUS!

THE BEAST'S FRACTURES ARE HEALING REMARKABLY WELL! BUT, IT'S A PITY HE WON'T PERMIT US TO REMOVE HIS MASK--AS A SCIENTIST, THERE IS SO MUCH MORE I WANT TO LEARN ABOUT HIS PHYSIOLOGICAL MAKEUP!

PERHAPS THE X-MEN HAVE GOOD REASON FOR WISHING TO KEEP THEIR TRUE IDENTITIES SECRET, DOCTOR!

--UNTIL MANKIND LOSES ITS UNFOUNDED SUSPICION -- ITS DANGEROUS DISTRUST OF MUTANTS!

UNFORTUNATELY, WE HAVE NO LEGAL RIGHT TO INSIST THAT HE UNMASK!

IF ONLY WE KNEW WHO THE X-MEN'S PARENTS ARE! WE MIGHT LEARN SO MUCH ABOUT HUMAN MUTATION!

THEIR PARENTS! THE ONE WEAK LINK IN OUR CHAIN OF SECURITY! IF ANY DEADLY ENEMY OF OURS EVER CAPTURED ONE OF MY X-MEN'S PARENTS, WHAT A HOLD HE WOULD HAVE OVER US!

HOW TRAGIC THAT SCIENCE MUST BE DENIED OUR FULL COOPERATION BECAUSE OF THE EVIL THAT STILL LURKS IN THE WORLD!

BUT, AT THAT VERY MOMENT, NEARBY--

WHAT ON EARTH IS GOING ON UP THERE??

WOULD YOU MIND LETTING A FELLOW HAVE A LITTLE QUIET, PLEASE?

THE ANGEL IS CALLING THE AUTOMATIC PHONE-ANSWERING DEVICE AT X-MEN HEAD-QUARTERS--

--TO LEARN IF THERE WERE ANY MESSAGES WHILE THEY WERE AWAY!

HE LIFTED THE PHONE INTO THE AIR SO WE COULDN'T SEE WHAT NUMBER HE DIALED!

YOU'LL HAVE TO GET DOWN, YOUNG MAN! THAT'S AGAINST HOSPITAL REGULATIONS!

HELLO? WHAT?? HOLY SMOKE-- THAT'S THE LAST THING I EXPECTED!

I'VE GOT TO NOTIFY THE PROFESSOR-- FAST!

I'M ALREADY HERE, WARREN! I DETECTED YOUR MENTAL AGITATION! WHAT'S WRONG? MERELY THINK IT TO ME--!

IT'S MY PARENTS! THEY CALLED THE SCHOOL! LEFT WORD THEY'RE COMING TO VISIT!

THEY'RE WORRIED BECAUSE THEY HAVEN'T HEARD FROM ME!

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THE PHONE-- QUICKLY! PERHAPS I CAN STOP THEM, BEFORE THEY LEAVE!

MAY I HAVE THE PHONE, YOUNG MAN?

SURE, PROFESSOR! THERE YOU ARE....

IF THEY REACH THE SCHOOL AND FIND IT DESERTED, WHAT WILL THEY THINK?? HOW CAN WE EXPLAIN?

THEY MUSTN'T REACH IT FIRST! I'VE HAD A FEELING OF DANGER FROM THERE ALL DAY!

THEN, AFTER QUICKLY DIALING THE ANGEL'S HOME NUMBER--

MRS. WORTHINGTON? THIS IS PROFESSOR XAVIER! I'VE HAD MY STUDENTS WITH ME ON A FIELD TRIP, TO GATHER MATERIAL FOR A RESEARCH PAPER! THAT IS WHY YOUR CALL WAS ANSWERED BY AN AUTOMATIC DEVICE!

AT ANY RATE, WE'RE PLANNING A SHORT MOTOR TRIP AND THOUGHT WE'D STOP OFF AND SEE WARREN WHILE IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD!

BUT, IT'S EXAM TIME NOW--!

OH, WE'LL ONLY STAY A FEW MINUTES, PROFESSOR! SEE YOU LATER! 'BYE NOW!

WELL, THAT'S A RELIEF, PROFESSOR! MY HUSBAND AND I WERE QUITE WORRIED!

I COULDN'T DISSUADE HER! BUT, I CAN'T HELP FEELING UNEASY ABOUT THEIR VISIT!

WHY, SIR? IS ANYTHING WRONG?

YES! WITH ICEMAN CRITICALLY ILL, AND THE BEAST RECOVERING FROM A FRACTURE -- PLUS THIS SENSE OF MENACE I CANNOT SHAKE --

-- I THINK YOU'D BETTER FLY TO THE SCHOOL NOW, ANGEL-- AND DO A LITTLE SCOUTING AROUND!

I'M ON MY WAY, SIR!

IF ONLY MOM AND DAD HADN'T DECIDED TO VISIT THE SCHOOL NOW! THE PROF IS NEVER WRONG WHEN HE SENSES DANGER--AND I CAN'T LET THEM GET INVOLVED IN IT!

I SURE HATE TO LEAVE BOBBY WHILE HE'S SO ILL-- BUT, I GUESS THE PROFESSOR WILL STAY WITH HIM!

GOSH, IT FEELS GREAT TO BE IN FLIGHT AGAIN!

THEN, FOR THE NEXT FEW MINUTES AS HE WINGS HIS WAY TOWARDS WESTCHESTER, THE HIGH-FLYING ANGEL SOARS AND GLIDES LIKE A FALCON IN FLIGHT....!

NO OTHER HUMAN--NO ONE WHO HAS NEVER POSSESSED WINGS--CAN IMAGINE HOW WONDERFUL IT IS TO ACTUALLY FLY!

AND SO, THE HIGH-SPIRITED YOUTH STREAKS OVER THE CITY-- LITTLE DREAMING OF THE STRANGE AND STARTLING *MENACE* THAT AWAITS HIM WHEN HE REACHES HIS DESTINATION ...

SOMEHOW, WHEN I'M HIGH IN THE SKY THIS WAY, I FEEL THERE IS NO DANGER I CANNOT FACE-- NO PROBLEM I CANNOT SOLVE-- NO ENEMY I CANNOT DEFEAT!!

EVERYTHING SEEMS CLEAN--AND PURE-- AND *RIGHT!* THE WAY IT OUGHT TO BE! THE WAY IT *MUST* BE ONE DAY, IF MAN IS EVER TO FULFILL HIS PROMISE-- HIS GLORIOUS *DESTINY!*

BUT, EVEN AS THE ASTOUNDING ANGEL PLUMMETS EARTHWARD TOWARDS HIS GOAL, THE FRONT DOOR OF PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL SLOWLY BEGINS TO OPEN...



ONE OF THEM APPROACHES NOW!

I HAD HOPED TO ATTACK THEM ALL AT ONCE -- TO DEMONSTRATE MY OVERWHELMING POWER!



BUT, PERHAPS IT WILL BE EVEN MORE SATISFYING TO DEFEAT THEM ONE AT A TIME! I WILL THEN BE ABLE TO SAVOR EACH INDIVIDUAL VICTORY -- TO WATCH EACH ACCURSED X-MAN FALL HELPLESSLY BEFORE ME!

THE FIRST ONE COMES! I SHALL CLOSE THE DOOR AGAIN -- AND WAIT!

I WONDER WHAT THE PROFESSOR MEANT ABOUT SENSING DANGER! THE SCHOOL HAS NEVER LOOKED QUIETER -- OR MORE PEACEFUL!

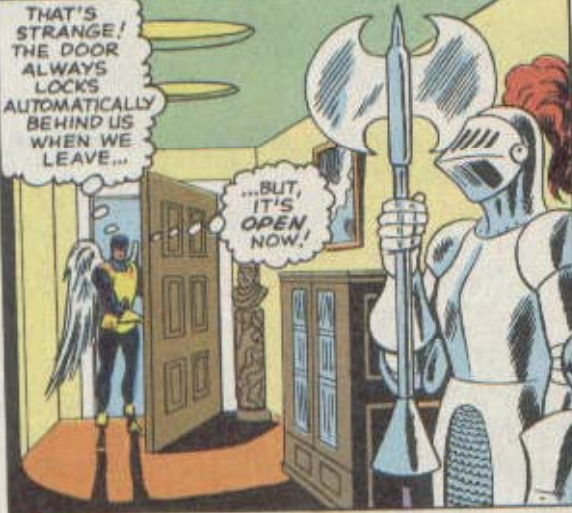


THERE'S NOTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY OUTSIDE THE BUILDING! NOT A SIGN OF LIFE ANYWHERE!



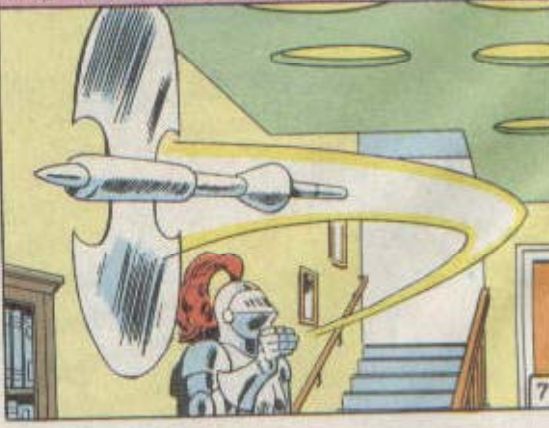
SO I'D BETTER POKE AROUND INSIDE! IT'S NOT LIKE THE PROF TO SEND ANYONE ON A WILD-GOOSE CHASE!

THAT'S STRANGE! THE DOOR ALWAYS LOCKS AUTOMATICALLY BEHIND US WHEN WE LEAVE...



...BUT, IT'S OPEN NOW!

AND THEN, LIKE A SENSELESS SEQUENCE FROM A MAD, FANTASTIC NIGHTMARE, A HEAVY, LETHAL BATTLE-AX SUDDENLY DISENGAGES ITSELF FROM THE STEEL HAND THAT HELD IT, AND HURTLER THRU THE CORRIDOR -- RIGHT TOWARDS THE ANGEL...







BUT, LONG, HARD MONTHS OF CEASELESS TRAINING PROVE THEIR WORTH, AS THE ANGEL'S AMAZING AERIAL AGILITY SUCCEEDS IN SAVING HIS LIFE!



WELCOME HOME, YOU WINGED BLUNDERER! YOU SHALL NEVER LEAVE HERE AGAIN--UNDER YOUR OWN POWER!

THERE IS SOMEONE! BUT WHO?? WHO WOULD DARE--??

JUST STAY WHERE YOU ARE, MISTER! I'LL MAKE YOU EAT THOSE WORDS!



HIS VOICE CAME FROM DOWN THE CORRIDOR! BUT, THERE'S NO PLACE TO HIDE FROM HERE TO THE END OF THE HALL! HE WON'T ESCAPE ME!

NO MATTER HOW FAST HE IS --HOW STRONG HE IS-- I'LL GET HIM! I'VE GOT TO BE SWIFT AND SURE--!



BUT THEN, ZOOMING DOWN THE HALLWAY LIKE A HUMAN MISSILE, THE WINGED MUTANT REALIZES HE'S SPEEDING INTO A TRAP-- TOO LATE TO STOP HIMSELF!

THERE'S SOMETHING IN FRONT OF ME-- IT SUDDENLY DROPPED INTO PLACE--!

I'M GOING TO HIT IT! I-- UNHHH!!



HOW EASY IT WAS TO CLIP THE ANGEL'S WINGS! BUT, HE IS ONLY THE FIRST-- ONLY THE FIRST!

MEANWHILE, PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER PICKS THAT EXACT MOMENT TO CHECK UPON THE CONDITION OF THE X-MEN'S DEPUTY LEADER--

NO, DOC! I'M SORRY! I CAN'T LET YOU EXAMINE MY EYES!

I MUST INSIST, SON! IT'S HOSPITAL ROUTINE! NOW DON'T BE DIFFICULT!

SCOTT NEEDS HELP! I WAS AFRAID OF THIS!

PARDON THE INTRUSION, DOCTOR! MY NAME IS XAVIER! I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY OF SEEING THE X-MEN IN ACTION, AND...

I'VE HEARD OF YOU, PROFESSOR! PERHAPS YOU CAN CONVINCE THIS YOUNG MAN TO LET ME CHECK HIS EYES! OPTOMETRY IS MY SPECIALTY-- I BELIEVE I MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP HIM!

NOBODY CAN EXAMINE MY EYES! NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS!

HE WON'T TAKE YOUR WORD FOR IT, SCOTT! YOU'LL HAVE TO CONVINCE HIM--AS DRAMATICALLY AS POSSIBLE! NOW!

THIS IS A MILD EXAMPLE OF WHAT HAPPENS IF MY PROTECTIVE VISOR IS REMOVED FROM MY EYES--EVEN TO THE SLIGHTEST DEGREE!

GOOD HEAVENS...!

ZAP!

YOU MEAN YOU CANNOT CONTROL THE DESTRUCTIVE FORCE OF YOUR EYES?? YOU HAVE TO KEEP THEM SHIELDED ALL THE TIME??

I'M AFRAID THAT'S IT, DOC! IT WOULD BE WORTH YOUR LIFE TO TRY TO REMOVE MY VISOR!

IF YOU'RE THRU WITH YOUR PATIENT, DOCTOR, I WONDER IF I MIGHT SPEAK WITH HIM IN PRIVATE? I WAS ASKED TO BRING HIM A MESSAGE, FROM ONE OF THE OTHER X-MEN!

CERTAINLY, PROFESSOR! THEY AREN'T PRISONERS HERE!

HENCE, A FEW MINUTES LATER...

SAY NOTHING YET, SCOTT! WE MUST BE EXTREMELY CAREFUL TO ACT LIKE CASUAL ACQUAINTANCES, SO NONE SUSPECT MY REAL CONNECTION WITH YOU!

WOULD YOU MIND WHEELING ME TO THAT SHADY ARBOR, MY BOY?

WE'RE ALONE NOW, SIR! WHAT IS IT? IS SOMETHING WRONG?

I'M AFRAID SO! I'VE LOST MENTAL CONTACT WITH THE ANGEL-- AFTER SENDING HIM BACK TO THE SCHOOL!

I SUSPECT SOME DANGER AWAITING US THERE!

ICEMAN IS TOO ILL TO BE MOVED --AND I PREFER THE BEAST AND MARVEL GIRL TO REMAIN HERE IN CASE THEY'RE NEEDED!

BUT, YOU AND I HAD BEST RETURN TO THE SCHOOL AT ONCE! I HAVE A FEELING THAT WARREN NEEDS US!

I'LL GET YOUR CAR, SIR! IT'S PARKED JUST AROUND THE CORNER!

THEN, AFTER AN HOUR OF BREAKNECK DRIVING--!

THERE'S THE SCHOOL AT LAST! HAVE YOU MANAGED TO CONTACT THE ANGEL MENTALLY YET, PROFESSOR?

NO! AND THAT'S WHAT WORRIES ME! I SEEM TO SENSE SOME SORT OF MENTAL BARRIER AROUND THE SCHOOL --SOMETHING MY OWN MUTANT BRAIN CANNOT PENETRATE!



THE BARRIER IS STRONGER THAN EVER HERE INSIDE! TAKE EVERY PRECAUTION, CYCLOPS! THERE IS SOME GREAT POWER BEING USED AGAINST US!

ANGEL! THIS IS CYKE! DO YOU READ ME? WHERE ARE YOU, FELLA?



AH! TWO ADDITIONAL VICTIMS FOR ME! I MUST MAKE SURE THEY DO NOT GET BORED!

PROFESSOR-- LISTEN! WHAT'S THAT??

RRRRREEEEEEEE

MY CEREBRO MACHINE! THE DANGER IS EVEN GREATER THAN I FEARED!



THE MACHINE SEEMS TO BE GOING MAD! THE MENACE MUST BE INCREDIBLY CLOSE!

RRREEEEEEEE

I'LL SHUT IT OFF BEFORE IT DEAFENS US!



CEREBRO ONLY REACTS THAT WAY WHEN A DANGEROUS MUTANT THREATENS! THAT MEANS SOME POWERFUL MONO SUPERIOR HAS INVADDED THIS BUILDING, AND IS WAITING TO ATTACK EVEN NOW!

HE MUST HAVE ALREADY OVERCOME ANGEL-- AND WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHO HE IS!



ONLY THE MOST POWERFUL OF MUTANTS COULD PREVENT ME FROM MENTALLY REACHING OUT TO HIM! WE MUST LEARN WHO HE IS-- WHILE WE STILL CAN!

PROFESSOR! BEHIND YOU!! LOOK OUT--!





IT'S A MECHANICAL MENTAL-WAVE DISTORTER--THE ONE TYPE OF WEAPON I CANNOT FIGHT! IT'S BLACKING OUT MY BRAIN--I CAN'T THINK--OHHHHH!!

I'LL RIP IT OFF YOU! NO MATTER WHAT, I'LL--UNHHH!!

**THWONK!**

A TRANSPARENT SHIELD! IT DROPPED DOWN BETWEEN US!



SOMEONE'S PLAYING A CAT-AND-MOUSE GAME WITH US!

IN ANY GAME LIKE THAT, IT'S CYCLOPS WHO TURNS INTO THE CAT--INTO A POWER-BLASTING TIGER!



BUT, NO SOONER DOES CYCLOPS' BLISTERING FORCE BEAM STRIKE THE STRANGE INVISIBLE SHIELD, THAN IT CAUSES AN EXPLOSIVE BACKLASH, WHICH SENDS THE STARTLED MUTANT REELING...!

UHHH--!!

**THOOOM!**



THEN, REGAINING HIS FOOTING ONCE MORE, THE COURAGEOUS YOUTH AGAIN APPROACHES THE STRANGE BARRIER--BUT WITH FAR GREATER CAUTION--!

IT'S BEEN PREVIOUSLY PREPARED TO HURL BACK THE FORCE OF MY OWN OCULAR BLAST!

WHOEVER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IT KNOWS ABOUT MY POWER--OTHERWISE HE COULD NEVER HAVE CREATED SUCH AN INGENIOUS DEFENSE!



NEXT, WITHOUT WARNING... THE LIGHTS! THEY'VE GONE OUT!

THE ENTIRE BUILDING'S BEEN PLUNGED INTO TOTAL DARKNESS!

**LUCKY**

AND NOW, X-MAN, YOU SHALL LEARN HOW TOTALLY POWERLESS YOU ARE AGAINST--ME!

THAT VOICE-- SOUNDED FAMILIAR-- ALMOST AS IF-- UGGHHH!-



WHOEVER YOU ARE, YOU FORGOT THAT MY FORCE BEAM IS JUST AS EFFECTIVE IN THE DARK AS IN THE LIGHT!



OVER-CONFIDENT FOOL! I FORGET NOTHING!



BEFORE FINISHING YOU, I WANT YOU TO SEE HOW USELESS YOUR MUCH-VAUNTED BEAM IS AGAINST GENUINE POWER!

WHOEVER HE IS, HE SEEMS TO ANTICIPATE MY EVERY MOVE! BUT I'M NOT BEATEN YET-- MY FORCE BEAM STILL HAS PLENTY OF ENERGY LEFT--!



WHEREVER YOU ARE, I'LL GET YOU! I'LL BLAST THIS ROOM IN EVERY DIRECTION!!



THEN, HAVING DESCRIBED A PERFECT CIRCLE WITH HIS AWESOME POWER BEAM, CYCLOPS TENSELY STOPS-- HOLDS HIS BREATH-- AND WAITS-- LISTENING FOR THE SOUND OF A FALLING BODY-- A SOUND THAT NEVER COMES!

NOTHING! IF HE'S STILL IN HERE, HE HAS SOME SORT OF POWER WHICH IS IMPERVIOUS TO MY OWN FORCE BLASTS!



HE MUST HAVE PLANNED THIS WHOLE THING CAREFULLY-- THE ADVANTAGE IS HIS NOW--



--UNLESS I CAN REACH THE LIGHT SWITCH BEFORE HE STOPS ME!

A NICE TRY, X-MAN, BUT A FUTILE ONE! I EXPECTED YOU TO RACE FOR THE SWITCH!



KRAK!



AND NOW, IT IS TIME TO END THE CHARADE--!

--BY USING ONLY MY HAMMERING FISTS, SO THAT YOU STILL CANNOT BE CERTAIN WHAT MY TRUE POWER IS!

AND, AS THE NOW-HELPLESS CYCLOPS SLUMPS TO THE FLOOR, WE RETURN ONCE AGAIN TO THE HOSPITAL, WHERE WE FIND...

HENRY P. MCCOY!  
I THOUGHT YOU WERE PRACTICALLY AN INVALID!

THAT WAS AN HOUR AGO, MA'AM! YOU KNOW HOW QUICKLY WE MUTANTS RECUPERATE!

NOTHING LIKE SOME CAPRICIOUS CALISTHENICS TO WHILE AWAY A LETHARGIC DAY!



BUT, ENOUGH OF MY EXEMPLARY EPITHETS! TO WHAT DO I OWE THE HONOR OF YOUR SUDDEN VISITATION?

HONESTLY, HANK! CAN'T YOU EVER SPEAK LIKE ANY ORDINARY, NORMAL HUMAN BEING?



I DO, JEANIE! IT'S JUST THAT I EMPLOY MELLIFLUOUS ADJECTIVES TO DO IT!

WOMP!

VERY PERSPICACIOUS OF YOU, WENCH!

OH! YOU'RE JUST IMPOSSIBLE!

AND THEREIN LIES MY CHARM!



VERY WELL, YOUNG MAN! I SHALL HOLD YOU IN THE AIR, TELEKINETICALLY, UNTIL YOU PROMISE TO SETTLE DOWN AND LISTEN TO ME!

PRATTLE AWAY THEN, FEMALE! YOU HAVE MY UNDIVIDED ATTENTION!

WELL! IT'S ABOUT TIME!



HANK, I'M WORRIED! THE PROFESSOR AND CYCLOPS ARE GONE-- AND SO IS THEIR CAR! ANGEL IS ALSO GONE-- AND THERE HASN'T BEEN A WORD FROM ANY OF THEM!

JUST LIKE A WOMAN!! IF SOMEONE ISN'T FRACTURING YOUR EARDRUMS EVERY CONCEIVABLE MINUTE, YOU BEGIN TO FEAR THAT SOMETHING'S AMISS!

YOU PROMISED YOU'D BE SERIOUS!



I'M SORRY, JEAN! PERHAPS YOU'VE SOME JUSTIFICATION FOR YOUR CONCERN! IT ISN'T LIKE THE OTHERS TO LEAVE US INCOMMUNICADO!

IF THEY WENT ANYWHERE, IT WOULD BE TO THE SCHOOL! PERHAPS THAT SHOULD BE OUR NEXT DESTINATION!

I HOPED YOU'D SAY THAT, HANK! BUT FIRST, LET'S CHECK ON ICE-MAN!





STILL NO CHANGE IN HIS CONDITION, DOC?

I'M AFRAID NOT, SON! BUT WE HAVE HIM UNDER ROUND-THE-CLOCK OBSERVATION!

DO EVERYTHING YOU CAN FOR HIM, DOCTOR! HE'S GOT TO COME OUT OF THAT COMA!



HE WILL BE ALL RIGHT, WON'T HE? I MEAN-- YOU DON'T THINK THERE'S A CHANCE THAT HE'LL -- I MEAN--

I CAN'T ANSWER THAT, YOUNG LADY! HIS PHYSICAL MAKEUP IS SO DIFFERENT FROM ANYTHING MEDICAL SCIENCE IS FAMILIAR WITH, THAT WE CAN DO NOTHING BUT WAIT--AND HOPE!

HE'S GOT TO PULL THRU! HE WAS LIKE MY OWN BROTHER TO ME! YOU CAN DO IT, YOU HUMAN POPSYCLE-- I KNOW YOU CAN!



I KNOW IT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU TO KEEP ALL YOUR IDENTITIES SECRET! BUT, IF YOU KNOW HIS PARENTS, I SUGGEST THEY BE NOTIFIED --AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

THEN-- YOU DO THINK IT'S-- VERY SERIOUS?!!

WE'VE DALLIED LONG ENOUGH! WE'VE GOT TO CONTACT THE OTHERS!



IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO ICE-MAN-- I-I'LL -- OH, I CAN'T EVEN THINK OF IT!

DON'T THINK OF IT! CONCENTRATE ON THE TASK AT HAND! WE'VE GOT TO REACH OUR HEAD-QUARTERS WITH ALL DELIBERATE SPEED!

YOU-- YOU'RE HEADING FOR THE OPEN WINDOW!



NATURALLY! WE'RE ONLY THREE STORIES UP! SUCH A LEAP IS A MERE BAGATELLE TO THE BEAST!

AND YOU HAVE YOUR TELEKINESIS!

OF COURSE! I FORGOT -- I CAN FLOAT MYSELF DOWN GENTLY BY MEANS OF MY POWER OF LEVITATION!



AND THAT SAME POWER WILL EASILY LIFT ME OVER THE OUTER WALL....!

AS FOR ME, MY METHOD IS SOMEWHAT LESS SUBTLE, BUT EQUALLY AS EFFECTIVE NONETHELESS!



FINALLY, AFTER A SPECTACULAR SUCCESSION OF RUNNING, LEAPING, CLIMBING AND TELEPORTING WITH MILE-CONSUMING GYMNASTIC SKILL, THE TWO MARVELOUS MUTANTS REACH THEIR GOAL....

IT SEEMS SO QUIET-- SO FOREBODING--!

STAY BEHIND ME, LASS! I'LL CHARGE IN FIRST, AT TOP SPEED, TO BEAR THE BRUNT OF WHATEVER AWAITS US!



BUT, EVEN THE AGILE BEAST IS NOT PREPARED FOR THE SIMPLE, YET STARTLINGLY DANGEROUS SURPRISE THAT CONFRONTS HIM....!

SOMETHING HAPPENED TO THE HALLWAY--!

EVERYTHING HAS BEEN COATED WITH A WAXLIKE GLOSS-- THERE'S NO FRICTION-- NOTHING TO HOLD ONTO--

IT'S LIKE BEING A SATELLITE IN SPACE-- THERE'S NO WAY TO CHECK OUR MOMENTUM-- NO WAY TO STOP!



NO MATTER WHAT I REACH-- THE WALLS-- CEILING-- FLOOR-- THEY'RE ALL AS SMOOTH AS GLASS!

JEANIE WILL BE ALL RIGHT, BECAUSE SHE ENTERED SLOWLY-- BUT I HURTTLED IN LIKE A PROJECTILE!



EVEN MY NATURAL AGILITY CAN'T HELP ME NOW! I'VE GOT TO KEEP SLIDING ALONG -- OUT OF CONTROL -- UNTIL I REACH -- WHAT???



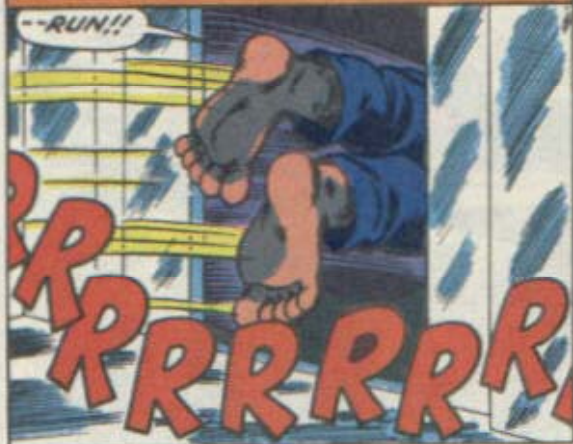


HE'S MOVING SO FAST-- EVEN WITH MY TELEKINETIC POWER OPERATING AT FULL INTENSITY, I CAN'T EXERT ENOUGH FORCE UPON HIM TO SLOW HIM DOWN!

IN FRONT OF HIM-- THERE'S A DOOR! IT'S SLIDING OPEN!! IT MUST BE PART OF THE TRAP!

STAY BACK, GIRL! YOU CAN'T HELP ME-- BUT THERE MAY BE TIME TO SAVE YOURSELF! RUN! RUN!!

AND THEN, THE DESPERATE ADMONITION OF HANK MCCOY IS DROWNED OUT BY THE SOUND OF HEAVY STEEL DOORS BEGINNING TO ROLL TOGETHER AGAIN--!



--RUN!!

RRRRRRRR



I CAN'T PRY IT OPEN! I CAN'T REACH HIM--!!

NATURALLY! THIS IS HOW I PLANNED IT!

THAT VOICE!! DIRECTLY BEHIND ME! WHO--??



WE MEET AGAIN, MARVEL GIRL! A PITY IT MUST BE FOR THE VERY LAST TIME!

YOU!



HOW PATHETIC! DO YOU REALLY FEEL THAT YOUR FEEBLE KINETIC POWER CAN HAVE ANY EFFECT UPON SOMEONE AS SUPREMELY POWERFUL AS I?

SO! YOU CHOOSE NOT TO ANSWER ME! YOU PREFER TO KEEP STRUGGLING TILL THE END! A NOBLE, IF USELESS, GESTURE!

IT'S ALL UP TO ME NOW! I MUST STOP HIM!! I MUST!



HE'S COMING CLOSER!! BUT NOW?? WHY ISN'T MY POWER AFFECTING HIM?? WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?? WHY DO I FEEL MYSELF GROWING WEAK--WEAKER--?



BY NOW, YOU SHOULD BE STARTING TO REALIZE THAT YOU HAVE BEEN INHALING ODPORLESS SLEEP GAS, WHICH HAS DULLED YOUR BRAIN, AND HENCE YOUR KINETIC POWER, AS WELL!

THEN THAT'S WHY-- MY KNEES ARE SAGGING-- CAN'T KEEP MY EYES OPEN-- SO WEAK--



BUT-- YOU HAVEN'T WON-- YET! I WON'T GIVE UP-- NONE OF US-- WILL EVER-- GIVE UP!

THAT NO LONGER MATTERS, YOU LITTLE FOOL! THE EPISODE IS ENDED!



ONLY ONE OF YOUR NUMBER REMAINS TO BE BEATEN, AND HE IS THE WEAKEST OF ALL!

THUS, THE ERA OF THE X-MEN IS OVER--AT LAST!



AND, EVEN AS THOSE FATEFUL WORDS ARE BEING INTONED, BACK AT THE HOSPITAL WE FIND...

THAT'S YOUR CALL, JOHN! ANYTHING SERIOUS?

COULD BE! IT MEANS MY FROZEN X-MAN PATIENT HAS REACHED THE MOMENT OF CRISIS!



YOU'RE DR. JOHN THOMAS, AREN'T YOU? WE'VE SOME QUESTIONS TO ASK YOU--!

SINCE ICEMAN HAS BEEN YOUR PATIENT, HAVE YOU MANAGED TO "THAW HIM OUT" AND DISCOVER HIS REAL IDENTITY??

SORRY! NO TIME TO TALK TO NEWS-MEN!

NOW HOLD ON, DOCTOR! WE REPRESENT THE **AFFILIATED PRESS!** WE HAVE OVER THIRTY MILLION READERS THRUOUT THE FREE WORLD!

YOU WOULDN'T WANT THOSE THIRTY MILLION PEOPLE TO THINK YOU DIDN'T CARE ABOUT THEM, WOULD YOU?

THEY CAN TAKE THIRTY MILLION JUMPS IN THE LAKE-- AND SO CAN YOU! I'VE GOT A PATIENT IN THERE WHO MAY BE DYING-- AND THAT'S ALL I CARE ABOUT!

NOW GET OUT-- BEFORE I HAVE YOU THROWN OUT!

SORRY FOR THE DELAY, NURSE! WHAT'S WRONG? WHAT HAPPENED?

IT'S HIS **PULSE, DOCTOR!** IT'S SLOWING DOWN, I-I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO!

I HATE TO ADMIT IT, BUT NEITHER DO I!

THEY NEED ME -- I KNOW THEY DO -- THEY NEED ME--!

HE'S BEEN **DELIRIOUS** AGAIN -- MUMBLING TO HIMSELF FOR HOURS--!

I'VE NEVER FELT SO **HELPLESS** BEFORE!

I MUSTN'T **FAIL** THEM-- NOT WHEN THEY NEED ME--!

IT'S ALMOST AS THOUGH HE HEARS VOICES THAT **WE** CAN'T HEAR-- AS THOUGH SOMEONE IS CALLING TO HIM-- DEPENDING ON HIM--!!

PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER, NURSE! HERE'S SOME NEW MEDICATION I WANT-- RIGHT AWAY!

IT'S A NEW TYPE OF **SULFA** DRUG-- VERY **POTENT!** WE'VE GOT TO RISK IT!

**BUT, WHAT OF THE OTHER X-MEN?** WE HAD BEST RETURN TO THEM **FAST**-- BECAUSE FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS, THEY MAY NOT BE AROUND MUCH LONGER--!

I REGRET WE CANNOT WAIT FOR THE **ICEMAN** TO JOIN YOU, BUT I FEAR YOU WILL HAVE TO MAKE YOUR FINAL JOURNEY **WITHOUT** HIM!

AND NOW, I'LL MAKE SURE YOU'RE ALL **SECURELY LOCKED** INSIDE YOUR **STEEL GONDOLA!**

FOR YOUR OWN SAFETY, OF COURSE!

**SLAM!**

WE WOULDN'T WANT YOU FALLING OUT-- NOT AFTER YOU REACH **100,000 FEET** IN THE AIR!

THEN, SECONDS LATER...



YOU'LL ORBIT THE EDGE OF SPACE-- HELPLESS --OUT OF CONTROL--

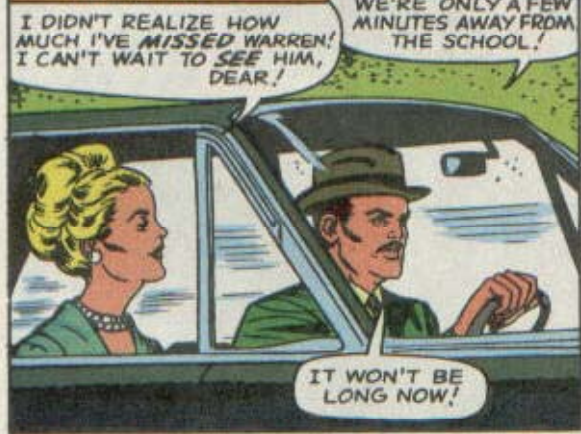


--UNTIL YOUR SMALL SUPPLY OF AIR GIVES OUT!!



AND THAT WILL BE THE END OF THE X-MEN-- FOREVER!

WHILE, JUST A SCANT FEW MILES AWAY FROM THAT STARTLING SCENE, MR. AND MRS. WARREN WORHTINGTON BEGIN THE FINAL LAP OF THEIR MOTOR TRIP--



I DIDN'T REALIZE HOW MUCH I'VE MISSED WARREN! I CAN'T WAIT TO SEE HIM, DEAR!

WE'RE ONLY A FEW MINUTES AWAY FROM THE SCHOOL!

IT WON'T BE LONG NOW!

ONE THING HAS ALWAYS PUZZLED ME --- PROFESSOR XAVIER HAS SO FEW STUDENTS, I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW HE CAN AFFORD TO RUN HIS SCHOOL!



I ALWAYS THOUGHT HE WAS INDEPENDENTLY WEALTHY-- JUST KEPT THE SCHOOL FOR A LARK!

ANYWAY, HE IS THE MOST CHARMING-- OH! THERE'S THE SCHOOL NOW!



STRANGE THAT NO ONE CAME TO THE DOOR! THEY MUST HAVE HEARD OUR CAR!

PERHAPS THEY'RE BUSY WITH EXAMS, DEAR!



WELL, NO MATTER! I HEAR SOMEONE COMING--!

RINNING



AH! YOU MUST BE PARENTS OF A STUDENT--!

B-BUT WHO ARE YOU??

I? I AM POWER--!!

MEN  
CALL ME--  
**MAGNETO!**

