

MARVEL
COMICS

THE UNCANNY

X-MEN



\$1.25 US
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301
JUN
UK 95p

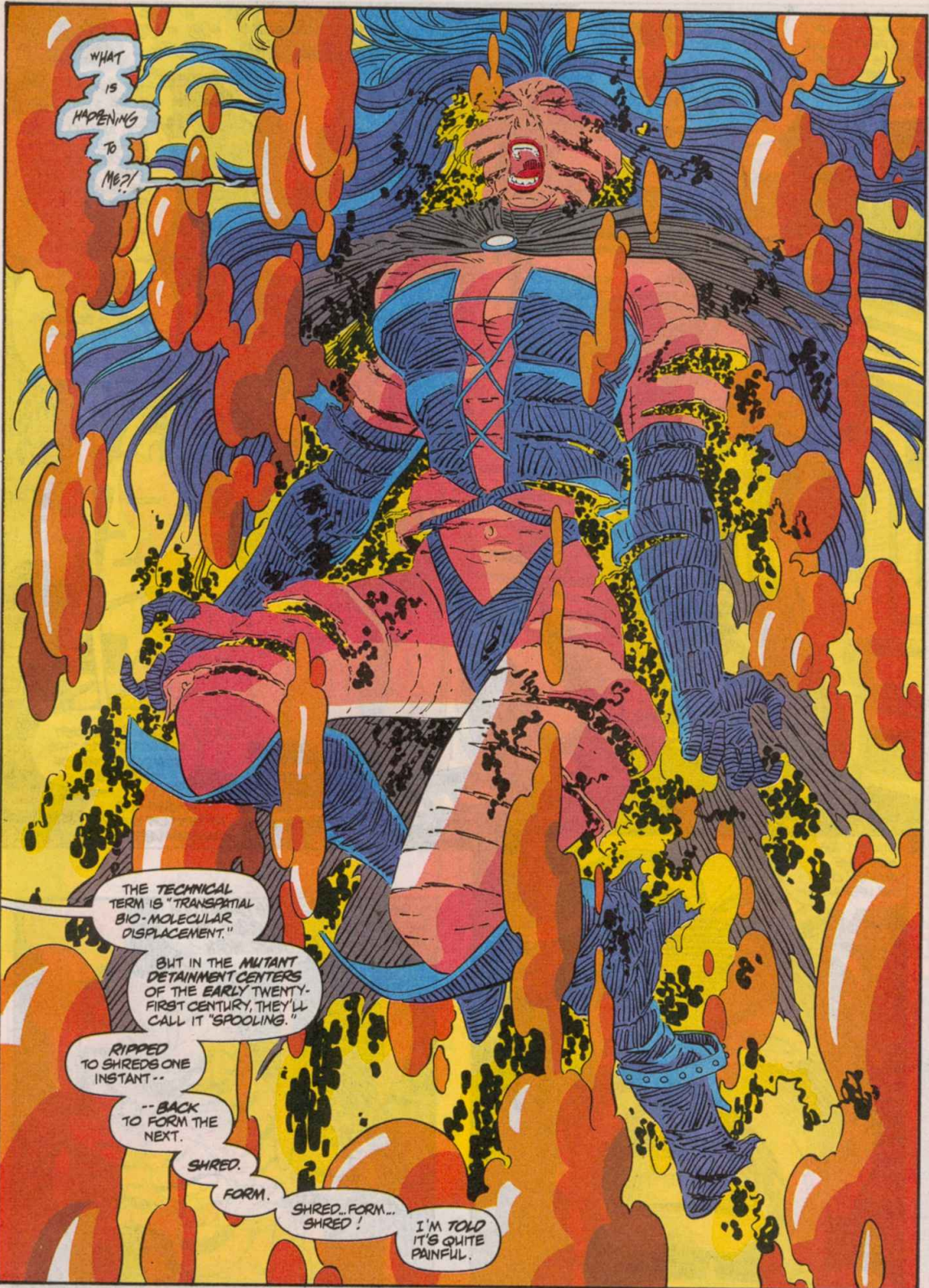
APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY



JR
JR
+
DG

30 YEARS
X
MEN
1963-1993

ASSAULT
ON AERIE
FEATURING
FORGE & MYSTIQUE!



WHAT IS HAPPENING TO ME?!

THE TECHNICAL TERM IS "TRANSPATIAL BIO-MOLECULAR DISPLACEMENT."

BUT IN THE MUTANT DETAINMENT CENTERS OF THE EARLY TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY, THEY'LL CALL IT "SPOOLING."

RIPPED TO SHREDS ONE INSTANT--

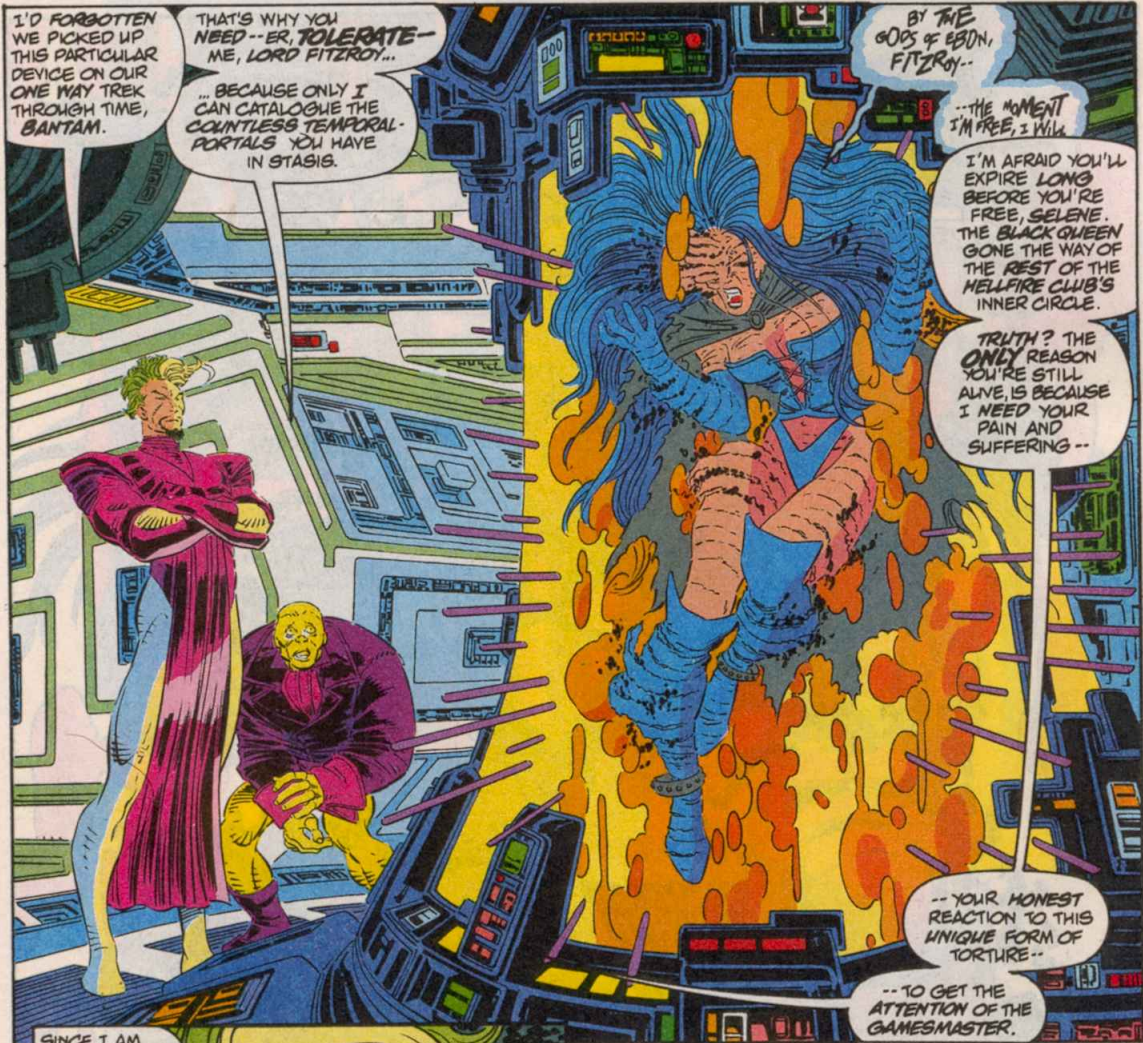
--BACK TO FORM THE NEXT.

SHRED.

FORM.

SHRED..FORM... SHRED!

I'M TOLD IT'S QUITE PAINFUL.



I'D FORGOTTEN WE PICKED UP THIS PARTICULAR DEVICE ON OUR ONE WAY TREK THROUGH TIME, SANTAM.

THAT'S WHY YOU NEED -- ER, TOLERATE -- ME, LORD FITZROY...

... BECAUSE ONLY I CAN CATALOGUE THE COUNTLESS TEMPORAL-PORTALS YOU HAVE IN STASIS.

BY THE GODS OF EBDN, FITZROY...

--THE MOMENT I'M FREE, I WILL

I'M AFRAID YOU'LL EXPIRE LONG BEFORE YOU'RE FREE, SELENE. THE BLACK QUEEN GONE THE WAY OF THE REST OF THE HELLFIRE CLUB'S INNER CIRCLE.

TRUTH? THE ONLY REASON YOU'RE STILL ALIVE, IS BECAUSE I NEED YOUR PAIN AND SUFFERING --

-- YOUR HONEST REACTION TO THIS UNIQUE FORM OF TORTURE --

-- TO GET THE ATTENTION OF THE GAMESMASTER.



SINCE I AM NOT THE LEADER OF THE UPSTARTS --

--NOT YET ANYWAY--

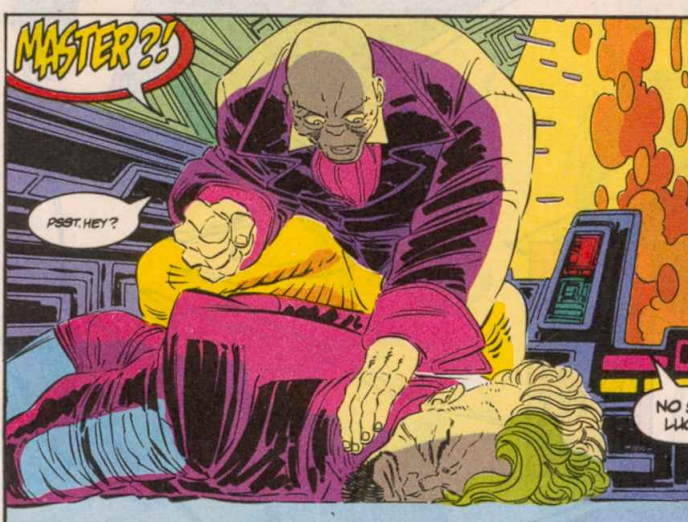
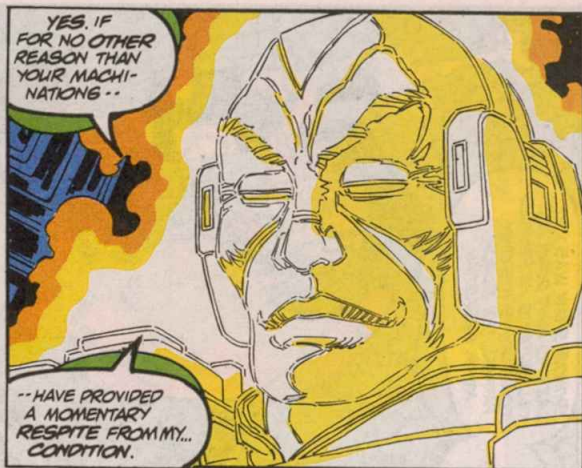
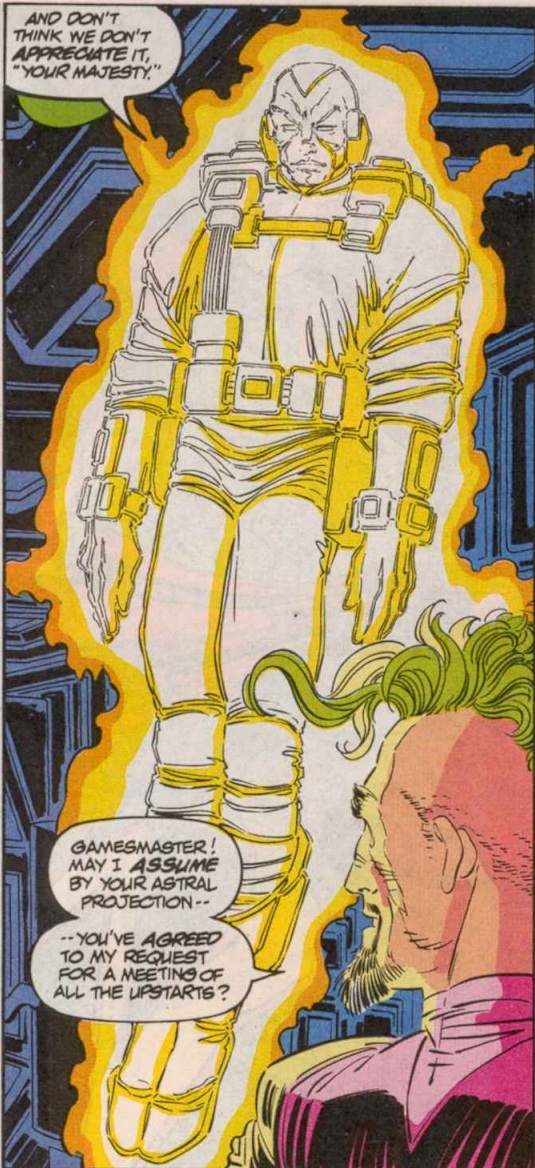
-- I'M FORCED TO BE MORE CREATIVE IN HOW I PETITION THE MAN FOR AN AUDIENCE.



UNGRATEFUL CUR! I CREATED THE UPSTARTS --

--HOPEING COMPETITION WOULD FORGE YOU SAIRED BRATS

INTO THE NEXT GENERATION OF MUTANT LEADERS!



"... IS SOMEPLACE ELSE."

THAT "SOMEPLACE" IS -- AS SPECIFICALLY AS POSSIBLE -- THE MIND OF THE YOUNG MUTANT KNOWN ONLY AS THE GAMESMASTER.

AN OMNIPATH, HE HAS, FOR SOME TIME NOW, FOUND HIMSELF IN ALMOST CONSTANT CONTACT WITH NEARLY EVERY SENTIENT MIND ON THE PLANET...

... LOVES, HATES, DESIRES FLOAT UNBIDDEN THROUGH HIS MIND LIKE FADED MEMORIES...

... AND THE DIVERSITY OF EMOTION WOULD DRIVE HIM MAD IF NOT FOR THE BLESSED RELEASE OF THE GAME... THE UPSTARTS.

MY APOLOGIES FOR TAKING YOU ALL AWAY FROM WHATEVER YOU WERE DOING, BUT ONE OF YOUR OWN HAS REQUESTED A MEETING.

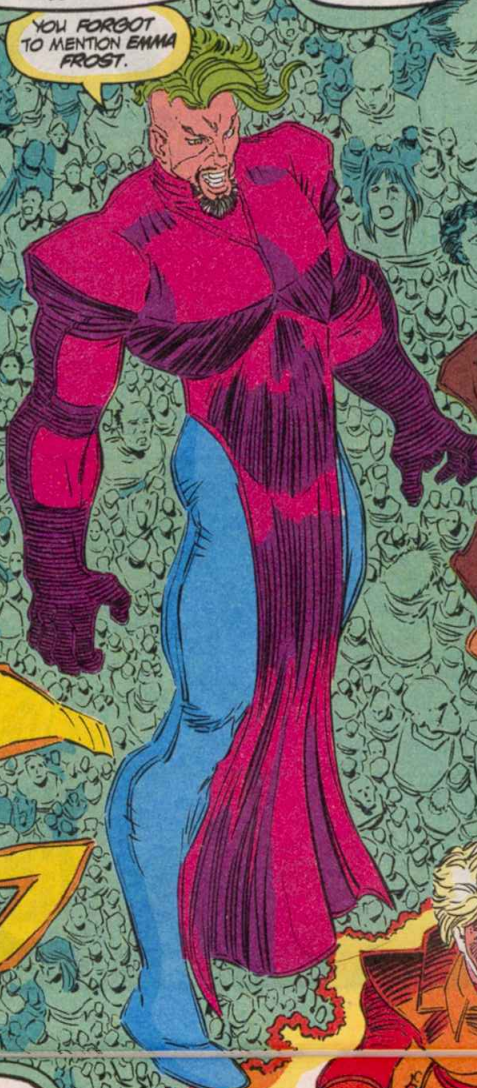
FOR THE BENEFIT OF MS. BLAZE, I BELIEVE INTRODUCTIONS ARE IN ORDER. YOU ALL RECOGNIZE YOUNG FITZROY, OF COURSE.

OUR TERRORIST FROM TOMORROW HAS EARNED QUITE A NUMBER OF POINTS WITH THE SLAUGHTER OF DONALD PIERCE, THE REAVERS, AND A HANDFUL OF HELLIONS.

YOU FORGOT TO MENTION EMMA FROST.

THE WHITE QUEEN IS STILL IN A COMA. DON'T GET GREEDY, TREVOR.

SHINOBI SHAW WAS TOO LAZY TO HUNT DOWN AND KILL MUTANTS, HE SETTLED FOR SLAYING HIS OWN FATHER... THE BLACK KING, SEBASTIAN.



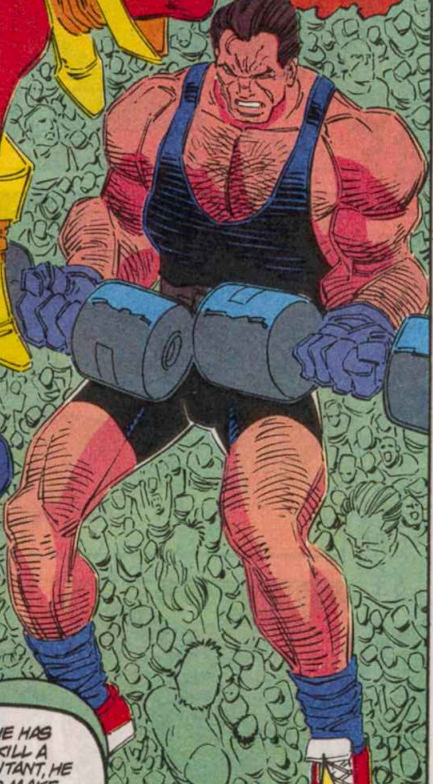
IS THIS GOING TO TAKE LONG?



SIENA BLAZE -- HER FIRST SHOT OUT OF THE GATE, AND SHE TRIED TO KILL ALL THREE LEADERS OF THE X-MEN.*

I AWARDED HER POINTS SIMPLY FOR CHUTZPAH!

NO ONE EVER ACCUSED ME OF THINKING SMALL.



AND THE HERETOFORE UNDISPUTED FORERUNNER OF THE UPSTARTS, FABIAN CORTEZ.

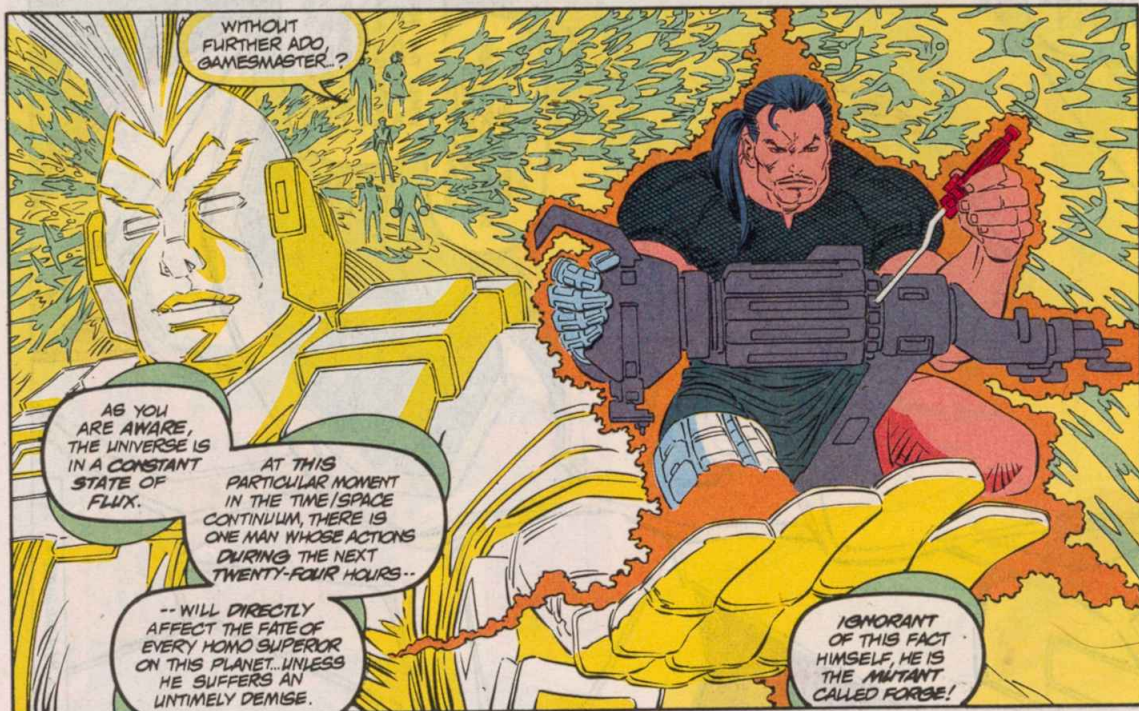
WHILE THE MAJORITY OF HIS POINTS ARE CURRENTLY... IN "ARBITRATION"... HE'S CERTAINLY NOT LACKING FOR A POWER BASE AS FOUNDER OF MAGNETO'S DISCIPLES -- THE ACOLYTES.

A CONGREGATION I SHOULD BE GETTING BACK TO, EVEN AS WE

FINALLY, GRAYDON CREED. THOUGH HUMAN, HIS "HERITAGE" IS CAUSE ENOUGH TO EXPLAIN HIS DESIRE TO RULE MUTANTS.

WHILE HE HAS YET TO KILL A SINGLE MUTANT, HE INTENDS TO MAKE UP FOR IN QUANTITY... WHAT HE LACKS IN QUALITY.

IF YOU'RE DONE, GAMESMASTER... WE ALL HAVE THINGS WE COULD BE GETTING BACK TO.



MEANWHILE, AT PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL FOR GIFTED YOUNGSTERS.

COLOSSUS.

WERE HE A NORMAL HUMAN, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN DEAD BY NOW.

IF NOT FROM THE WOUNDS INFLECTED UPON HIM BY THE MUTANT HUNTER CALLED THE X-CUTIONER...*

-- AN INJURY WHICH PREVENTS HIS RETURN TO HUMAN FORM --

-- THEN CERTAINLY AS A RESULT OF A BROKEN HEART...

... A HEART RENT BY THE SUICIDE OF HIS BROTHER AND THE MURDER OF HIS PARENTS.

*UNCANNY X-MEN ANNUAL #17.--BOB

< I'M SORRY, LITTLE SNOWFLAKE. >*

< I FEEL I'VE... LET YOU DOWN. I SHOULD BE ATTENDING TO YOU, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND. >

< YOU ARE BEING SILLY, BIG BROTHER. >

*TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN.--BOB

STAN LEE PRESENTS THE UNCANNY X-MEN IN

DOMINION!

SCOTT LOBDELL - WRITER JOHN ROMITA JR. - PENCILER
DAN GREEN - INKER CHRIS ELIOPoulos - LETTERER
STEVE BUCCELLATO - COLORIST BOB HARRAS - EDITOR
TOM DEVALCO - MASTER MOLD



< NOW, CAK! WE CAN GET BETTER TOGETHER. >

< WHEN... >

< ... WHEN I FIRST LEARNED OF MY MUTANT POWER-- TO TURN MY BODY TO LIVING STEEL-- I REMEMBER BEING SCARED. >

< I REMEMBER WONDERING "WHY ME? WHAT HAVE I DONE SO WRONG THAT I DESERVE THIS ADDITIONAL HARD-SHIP?" AS IF LIFE WERE NOT DIFFICULT ENOUGH-- >

< --HELPING TO SUPPORT OUR FAMILY ON THE HARSH TERRAIN OF THE UST-ORDANSKY COLLECTIVE. >

< JOINING THE X-MEN HELPED... >

< ... BUT IT WASN'T UNTIL I LEARNED YOU WERE A MUTANT AS WELL, THAT I REALIZED I HAD NOTHING TO BE ASHAMED OF... >

< ... NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF. >

< THOUGH YOU MIGHT NEVER HAVE KNOWN THIS-- BECAUSE I MAY NEVER HAVE SAID IT OUT LOUD-- YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THERE FOR ME, ILLYANA... >

< ... AND I WILL ALWAYS BE THERE FOR YOU. >



PIOTR NIKOLAIEVITCH?

< ... JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE STUCK IN COGH; ARMORED FORM... >

< I MEAN, CAN YOU STILL-- GIVE ME A HUG? >



< I WAS GOING TO ASK YOU THE SAME QUESTION, ILLYANA. >



< I PROMISE I WILL... >

< SHHH, PETER. >

< NO MORE PROMISES. >

< JUST HOLD ME. >



WE SHOULD TELL THE LAD.

'TIS NAE OUR PLACE TO HIDE THE TRUTH.

THERE IS **NOTHING** TO TELL HIM, MORRA.

UNTIL WE KNOW MORE, WED ONLY BE UPSETTING HIM FURTHER, AND THE BOY'S SUFFERED ENOUGH.



THEN TELL HIM WHAT YE **DO** KNOW, CHARLES XAVIER!

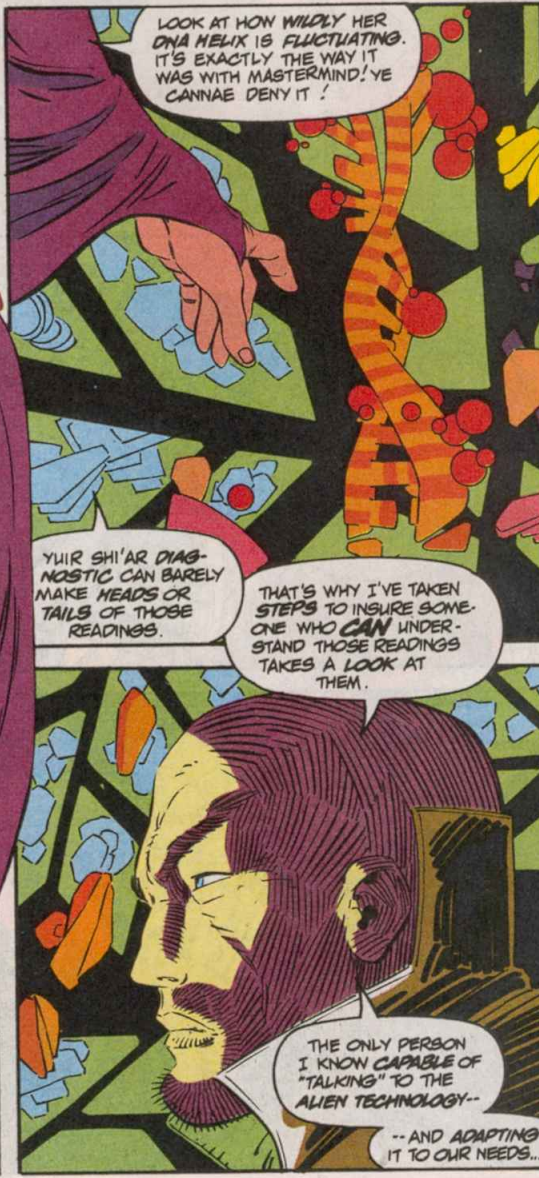
THAT WE BELIEVE THE MUTANT NAMED STRYFE HAS UNLEASHED A VIRUS ON THE MUTANT POPULATION--

--HIS "LEGACY" YE SAY HE CALLED IT--

--AND THERE IS PRECIOUS LITTLE GOOD YE, ME, OR ALL THE SHI'AR TECHNOLOGY IN THE UNIVERSE CAN DO TO STOP IT FROM TAKING THE LIFE OF HIS SISTER.

YOU'RE ASSUMING ILLYANA'S CONDITION IS RELATED TO THE RECENT CASES WE'VE STUDIED--AND WHAT'S MORE--UNTREATABLE.

ACCH, CHARLES--YE ARE NAE BEING REASONABLE.



LOOK AT HOW WILDLY HER DNA HELIX IS FLUCTUATING. IT'S EXACTLY THE WAY IT WAS WITH MASTERMIND! YE CANNAE DENY IT!

YUIR SHI'AR DIAGNOSTIC CAN BARELY MAKE HEADS OR TAILS OF THOSE READINGS.

THAT'S WHY I'VE TAKEN STEPS TO INSURE SOMEONE WHO **CAN** UNDERSTAND THOSE READINGS TAKES A LOOK AT THEM.

THE ONLY PERSON I KNOW CAPABLE OF "TALKING" TO THE ALIEN TECHNOLOGY--

--AND ADAPTING IT TO OUR NEEDS...

DALLAS,
TEXAS.

ACCORDING TO
THE TOUR BOOKS,
EAGLE PLAZA IS--

"--THE LARGEST
CAPITAL FINANCE
MEGAPLEX IN ALL
THE LONE STAR
STATE."

THE PENTAGON,
HOWEVER, HAS A
DIFFERENT
CLASSIFICATION
ENTIRELY.

"THE AERIE SERVES AS
PRIMARY LIVING SPACE
AND LABORATORY FOR
WEAPONS MANUFACTURER
AND TECHNO-FUTURIST--

"--THE MUTANT
INVENTOR KNOWN
ONLY AS FORGE."

NOT THE
FIRST MISTAKE
I'VE EVER
MADE.

WON'T
BE THE
LAST.

I'D EVEN LIKE
TO PRETEND I
DON'T KNOW
WHY I DID IT...

... WHY I DIDN'T
LEAVE WORD WITH
NIGHTCRAWLER
ABOUT THE RECENT
DISCOVERY IN
KUWAIT.*

* UNCANNY # 299 -- BEEN THERE BOB

WHILE THERE'S NO
PROOF MAGNETO
SURVIVED THE
DESTRUCTION OF
ASTEROID M--

-- CAN'T HELP THINKING I
SHOULD HAVE PRESENTED
XAVIER WITH THE EVIDENCE
AND LET HIM DRAW HIS OWN
CONCLUSIONS.

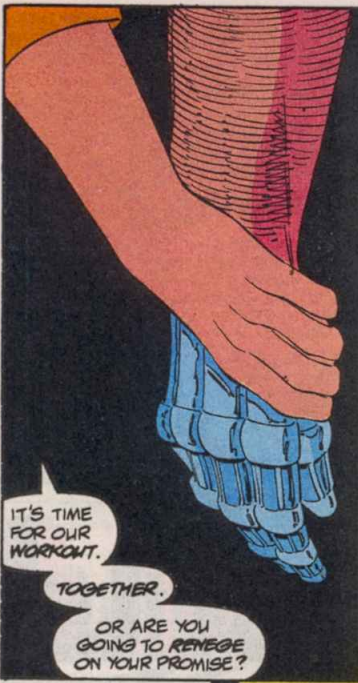
PROBLEM BEING, I WAS
MORE CONCERNED WITH
PUTTING DISTANCE
BETWEEN MYSELF AND
ORORO --

-- BEFORE I WOUND
UP MAKING THINGS
WORSE THAN THEY
ALREADY ARE.

FORGE?

YOU LEFT
ME ALONE,
AGAIN.

YOU KNOW
HOW MUCH
I HATE
"ALONE."



IT'S TIME FOR OUR WORKOUT.

TOGETHER.

OR ARE YOU GOING TO RENEGE ON YOUR PROMISE?

MAN OF MY WORD, RAVEN, THAT'S ME. I SAID IF YOU REFRAINED FROM "MORPHING..."

... IF YOU PICKED ONE PHYSICAL FORM AND STUCK WITH IT FOR THREE DAYS...

... WE COULD GO BACK TO WORKING OUT TOGETHER.



FORGE, I WANT YOU TO KNOW I APPRECIATE EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE FOR ME OVER THE PAST FEW WEEKS.

EVER SINCE IRENE...

... DIED...

... IT'S BEEN GETTING PROGRESSIVELY HARDER TO CONCENTRATE ON JUST BEING MYSELF.

LOSING SOMEONE YOU LOVE--

-- CAN HAVE A DEVASTATING EFFECT ON ONE'S SELF-IMAGE UNDER THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

FOR A SHAPE-SHIFTER...

... IT'S A LIVING NIGHTMARE.

FUNNY, I SPENT SO MANY YEARS PRE-TENDING TO BE ONE PERSON OR THE OTHER...

... I'M AFRAID I LOST TRACK OF THE "REAL" ME SOMEWHERE ALONG THE WAY.

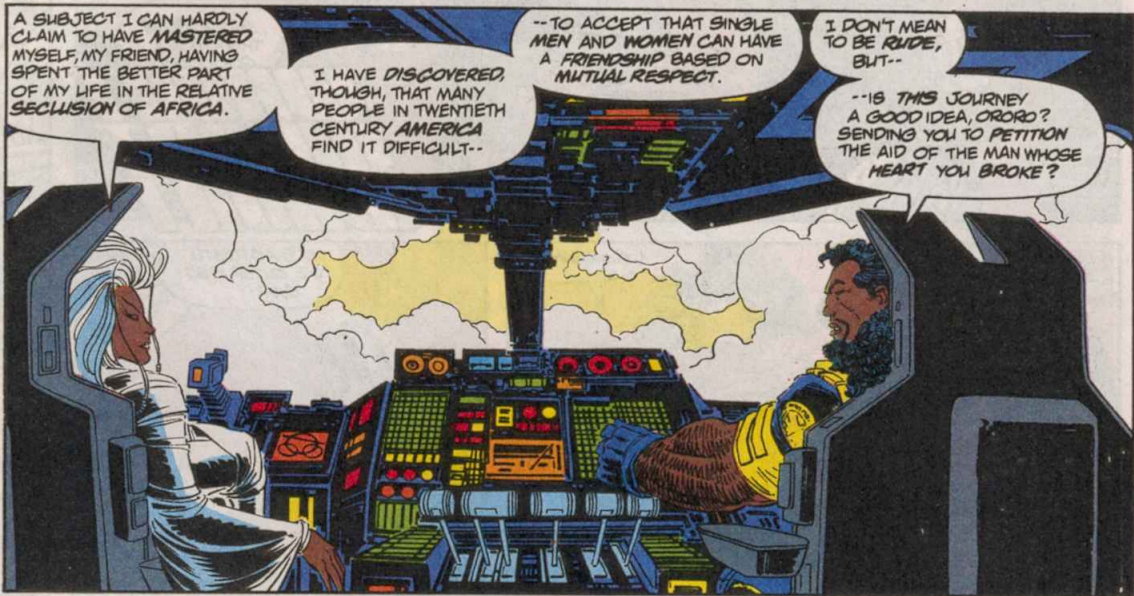
I'M A BUILDER, RAVEN -- MEANING I KNOW THAT IF SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH THE END PRODUCT.

... IT CAN BE TRACED BACK TO THE FOUNDATION. MAYBE IF YOU'D OPEN UP REGARDING YOUR LIFE BEFORE YOU MET DESTA...

I THOUGHT WE CAME HERE TO EXERCISE!



YOU'RE WASTING VALLUABLE SWEAT TIME.





AT THAT MOMENT...
--LEONARD SAMSON IS A FRIEND OF MINE, RAVEN.

I'VE NEVER BEEN A BIG FAN OF PSYCHIATRY...

...BUT IF YOU THINK IT'S A GOOD IDEA



A PERIMETER BREACH!

COMPANY'S

COME

TO

CALL?

UNINVITED COMPANY AT THAT.



LET'S ACTIVATE THE OUTER SEC-CAM--

KIK

--AND PUT A FACE TO THE ALARM KLAXON.



HOW POSITIVELY ENTHUSIASTIC OF YOU!

MOST PEOPLE RUN AND HIDE...

...BUT HERE YOU ARE TRYING TO GET ME ON TAPE!

SEEING AS I'M A WANTED MAN, YOU'LL UNDERSTAND IF I'M A BIT CAMERA SHY?

IMPOSSIBLE.

WHOEVER IT IS, HE'S SHATTERED THE TITANIUM-POLYMER LENS!

ANY CHANCE HE'LL BE ABLE TO BREAK THROUGH THE AERIES DEFENSES?

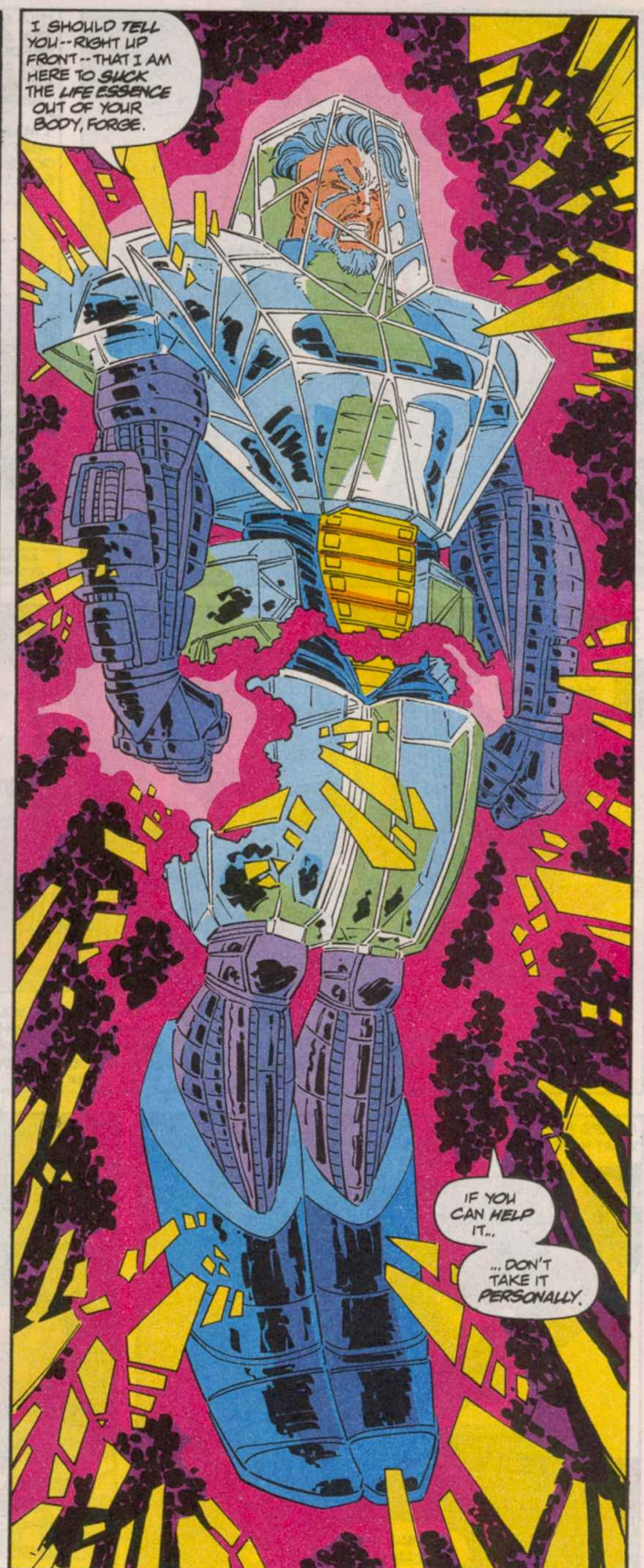
FIVE MINUTES AGO, I WOULD HAVE SAID NO...



BUT NOW YOU REALIZE IT'S TRUE WHAT THEY SAY--

--TIMING IS EVERYTHING!--

RAVEN-- GET BEHIND ME!!



I SHOULD TELL YOU--RIGHT UP FRONT--THAT I AM HERE TO SUCK THE LIFE ESSENCE OUT OF YOUR BODY, FORGE.

IF YOU CAN HELP IT...

...DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY.



NICE
GHN.

BEFORE YOU FIRE
IT, THERE'S SOME-
THING YOU SHOULD
KNOW.

THIS BODY
ARMOR I'M
WEARING IS
CONSTRUCTED
OUT OF OSMIUM
MESH. IT IS
IMPREGNABLE.

IT WAS
CREATED
ONE HUNDRED
YEARS IN THE
FUTURE.

FAIR
ENOUGH.

BEFORE I FIRE
IT, THERE'S SOME-
THING YOU SHOULD
KNOW.

THIS GEO-THERMAL .960 I'M
HOLDING IS CONSTRUCTED OUT OF
A VIBRANIUM POLYMER. IT
HURTS LIKE ALL GET OUT.

IT WAS
CREATED
BY ME.

THIS
MORNING.

OVER
BREAK-
FAST.

FWISHAT!

SH BOOM!

AND IF
YOU HAVEN'T
NOTICED...

I'VE ALWAYS
BEEN JUST A
LITTLE BIT
AHEAD OF MY
TIME.



THE AERIE.

UNLIKE EVERY OTHER MUTANT ON THE BLOCK, I'M NOT A BIG FAN OF MINDLESS VIOLENCE.

WHY DON'T YOU DO US BOTH A FAVOR AND LIE THERE UNTIL THE AUTHORITIES ARRIVE?

YOU CAN EXPLAIN YOUR MOTIVATION TO HENRY PETER GYRICH OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL. I'M SURE HE'LL BE FULL OF QUESTIONS.

PLEASE...

...HELP ME...

... HELP ME FINISH THE JOB I STARTED!

URGHN!

FUNNY, YOU'RE NOT THE WARRIOR THAT PICTURE BOOKS PAINTED YOU TO BE!

THE GENESIS OF LEGEND WOULD NEVER HAVE ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE SET-UP SO EASILY...

... TO DIE SO EASILY!

IT IS THE NAME YOU **WOULD** HAVE TAKEN IN THE FUTURE.

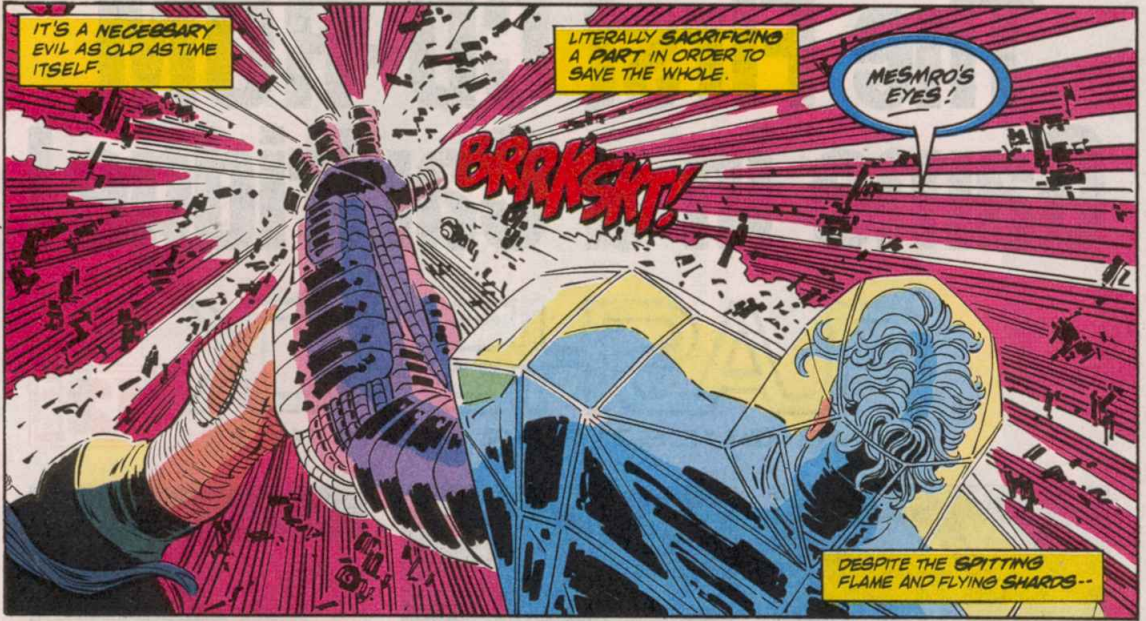
... A FUTURE THAT DEPENDED ON YOUR CONTINUED EXISTENCE.

HOW SAD THAT MUST NOT BE ALLOWED!

SAID HE HAS THE ABILITY TO SIPHON LIFE ENERGIES!

GENESIS?! S'NAME BISHOP CALLED ME THE DAY WE MET.

LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HE TRIES IT ON A BIONIC HAND.



IT'S A NECESSARY EVIL AS OLD AS TIME ITSELF.

LITERALLY SACRIFICING A PART IN ORDER TO SAVE THE WHOLE.

MESMRO'S EYES!

BRAKSH!

DESPITE THE SPITTING FLAME AND FLYING SHARDS--



--IT DOES LITTLE MORE THAN ANTAGONIZE HIS ENEMY.

YOU COULDN'T POSSIBLY KNOW...

...AS WE'VE JUST MET...

BUT MY FATHER USED TO

MUTILATE ME LIKE THIS.

ENJOYED MAKING ME LOOK FOOLISH



INCOMPETENT

AND YOU, NO DOUBT, GAVE HIM AMPLE OPPORTUNITY.

C'MON, FORGE--REACH THE GUN...

HOPE IT'S HELD ITS CHARGE.



BEFORE I ARRIVED I WAS CONTENT TO KILL YOU QUICKLY, FORGE.

IIMATS

AS IT IS--BY THE TIME I'VE DECORATED YOUR HOME WITH YOUR LOWER INTENTIONS--

--YOU'RE GOING TO WANT TO FINISH THE JOB YOURSELF!

INDEED...?



AND WHAT REASON CAN YOU THINK OF--

-- THAT HE'D WANT TO MISS YOUR FUNERAL, TREVOR?

BISHOP!!

HOW DID YOU FIND ME HERE?!

I LOOKED UNDER CHRONOLOGICALLY DISPLACED GENE-TRASH IN THE PHONE BOOK.

VOILA.

IT'S YOUR FAULT I'M TRAPPED IN THIS CENTURY.



YOU AND THE CURSED XSE, HOUNDED ME AT EVERY TURN--

-- TOSSING ME INTO THE PIT, SO THAT THE ONLY ESCAPE FROM MY FATHER'S WRATH...

... WAS TO TRAVEL BACK IN TIME!*

* SEE UNCANNY # 287 FOR THE FULL STORY.

YOU'VE REALLY KIND OF FIXATED ON THIS "FATHER" DEAL.

WHY IS IT WE NEVER HEAR ABOUT YOUR MATERNAL RELATIONSHIP?



YOU WERE THERE WHEN SHE DIED AT YOUR SISTER'S HAND--

-- AND NOW I WILL AVENGE HER MURDER!

IT'S NOT A SOUND OFTEN ATTRIBUTED TO TORN FLESH.

INSTEAD OF THE RIPPING AND TEARING...

... IT'S MORE LIKE THE NOISE A BALLOON MAKES WHEN LOSING AIR...

... OR THE SOUND OF BREAKING GLASS.

PREEPPT!



AN ILLUSION SHATTERED

WURRRNN!

RAVEN ?!

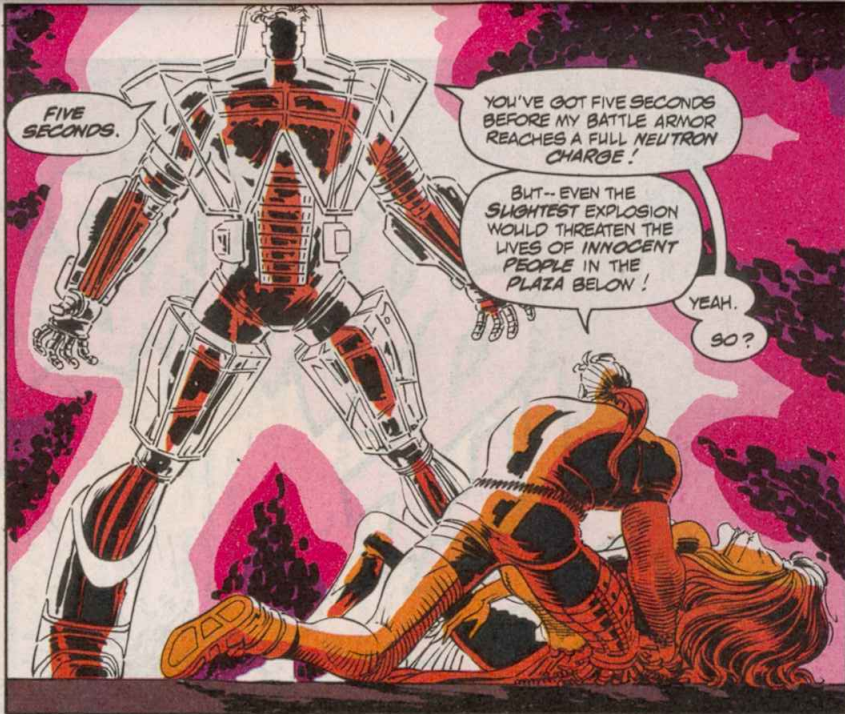
I TOLD YOU TO STAY AWAY-- TO SEND FOR HELP!

DID.

BUT... Y' THINK I'D

MISS ALL

THE FUN'S



FIVE SECONDS.

YOU'VE GOT FIVE SECONDS BEFORE MY BATTLE ARMOR REACHES A FULL NEUTRON CHARGE!

BUT-- EVEN THE SLIGHTEST EXPLOSION WOULD THREATEN THE LIVES OF INNOCENT PEOPLE IN THE PLAZA BELOW!

YEAH. SO?



PUT THE SHIP IN HOVER, BISHOP-- THEN JOIN ME WHEN YOU CAN.

I WILL SEE TO FORGE AND MYSTIQUE...

...AND ASK THAT THE BRIGHT LADY PROTECT HIM UNTIL I ARRIVE!

EVEN AS SHE THINKS THESE THOUGHTS, ORORO IS AWARE OF A SIMPLE TRUTH.

THAT NO PRAYER EVER GOES UNANSWERED.

BUT-- WHERE THE X-MEN ARE CONCERNED-- MORE OFTEN THAN NOT THE ANSWER...

... IS "NO".

**BRICKS
ARE
FALLING**



NEXT ISSUE: ?/?

X-MAIL

© MARVEL COMICS GROUP

387 Park Avenue South - New York, New York - 10016

Attention correspondents: If you don't want your full address printed, please be sure to tell us so!

Dear X-People,

Beautiful. That's the only word to aptly describe #297 of UNCANNY X-MEN. As a collector of Marvel titles for twenty years (and X-Men for the last fourteen), this is the first issue to bring a tear to my eye.

From beginning to end, this was, in my mind, the single greatest issue of X-MEN to date. Hank and Warren rebuilding their old hangout from the early days of their career was poignant. Jubilee's interaction with the temporarily mobile Professor Xavier was heart wrenching to watch. It was sad and touching to watch Charles walk and run like he used to do before the Shadow King crippled him once more, and, in the end, Jubilee's silent gesture of aid to the man touched me most deeply.

Saddest of all was the angst that Rogue was suffering: wanting Remy to give himself to her, but knowing that she could never touch him. I think this would be the perfect time to have Rogue go off on a quest of self-discovery. Now is the moment to explore her origins. It would not hurt her character if she were to eventually gain control of her powers. She's been alone and apart for too long. Rogue, above all the other X-persons represents that most common of traits to all of mankind—the desire to love and be loved. That's what makes her the most special of all.

In closing, I eagerly await issue #300, and hope you continue for 300 more. Until Professor X borrows Willard Scott's toupee... Make Mine Marvel!!!

Joe Coffey
P.O. Box 230508
Hartford, CT 06123-0508

Thanks for the kind words, Joe. We kinda felt #297 was a special issue as well and judging from the several tons of mail we received, so does a majority of X-Men fans. It's important to remember that what makes the X-Men special is not just the foes they fight, or what they stand for, but also just who they are as people. And keep watching Rogue and Gambit, Joe, these two have a lot in store.

Dear X-Mail,
RE: Issue #297.

Is it me, or does Scott Lobdell write the most touching and emotional stories for the Marvel Universe? The final pages really touched me. To see Charles stand and walk like a normal man... that's touching to me for more than one reason.

First the emotion of being confined to a wheelchair—no matter how high tech—then walking and having full feeling restored. Second, I myself am a paralytic. Although I can't run, jump more than two inches, or leg press thirty-two pounds,

I can sympathize with the Prof. Technically I am a paralytic, however, I can walk short distances without any mechanical help. I know the feeling of being reduced to sitting. For three months, I couldn't stand, much less walk. Luckily, mine was an incomplete spinal cord injury, and I recovered most of the lost functions. I still can't feel hot and cold, but that is all I've truly lost.

In closing, I'd like to say thanks for writing very touching stories, and thanks for listening.

Troy Marvel
735 S. Park
Montrose, CO 81401

No, thank you, Troy. Your letter serves a reminder that heroes aren't only found in comics. The best of luck to you, guy!

Dear Staff of UNCANNY X-MEN,

Thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you for UNCANNY X-MEN #297.

Ever since their flirtation began, I had been dreading the resolution of Gambit's and Rogue's romance. A convenient plot twist, such as Gambit being uniquely immune to Rogue's power, or her suddenly gaining full control of her powers would have taken much of the reality out of that storyline. The casts of the various X-titles have always seemed very real to me, because, like real people, the solutions to their problems are rarely easy. Indeed, many of their problems seemed to have no real solution (i.e. the burdens Rogue and Cyclops carry due to the complications of their powers). I sometimes wonder if our empathy with characters who suffer so greatly is due to a need on our part to see someone whose problems are an exaggerated reflection of our own. How many of us, like Cyclops, have had a responsibility that we thought would never end? Looking at the world around us, it is clear that Rogue's yearning for somebody to hold her is echoed in far too many hearts. It is the human strengths and weaknesses in these characters that give them a place in our hearts, and all the super-battles in the world could not replace the moment when Gambit found the maturity and compassion to reach out to Rogue in a display of what true love is about. The fears that I have had since Mr. Claremont's departure from the comic have finally been laid to rest. By the way, I notice that Gambit and Rogue have still never touched. Please have them do so, and establish that he is not immune to her power—give the characters the strength and maturity to develop a relationship despite this adversity.

I have often complained of late that since the X-Men titles have become Marvel's premier comic books, every issue

seems to try and top the last with a Universe-threatening menace worse than the last. During this time there just hasn't been enough time for Logan, Kurt, and Peter to go to a bar and have a relatively unimportant brush with Juggernaut. My complaints on this ground have been silenced. The scenes with Warren and Hank, and those with Jubilee and the Professor have also earned my highest regard. Issue #297 was truly tops. Again, thank you.

Paul J. Lepant
420 North 6th Ave.
Brighton, CO 80601

As you know, Paul, often times our fans clamor for great battles between the X-Men and the favorite villain of the month. And as fans ourselves, we hope that we have given them some truly memorable fights! But when the dust clears, we know that we also have to provide ample exposure of the characters who have made this book so special. We promise to keep on doing just that!

Hi everybody,

I just can't believe it! You actually did it! UNCANNY X-MEN #297 was a complete issue without any fights with weird people from the weird past/future of any of our beloved heroes. No "saving the world three times before breakfast." No "only the X-Men can prevent oblivion." I loved every page of it! Especially the Rogue/Gambit part. This romantic stuff is just killing me!! I know that most readers only want action, but the characters lose so much if they just jump from one adventure to the next. Please keep on showing more of the X-Men's private lives. That's what them so alive to me.

Vivien Lo
(Address withheld by request)

We couldn't agree more, Vivien!

Dear Bob and Lisa,

I was just starting into UNCANNY #297, and felt compelled to write after reading Hank and Warren's sudden burst of nostalgia while rebuilding Harry's Hideaway.

I've been away from collecting for about a year-and-a-half until recently when a close friend stuck the first three issues of the "X-cutioner's Song" under my nose. After finishing, I said to him, "I've been away too long!"

Reading rough the X-Mail, I've noticed that most of it is just criticism. Someone wants this, or someone wants that. The only thing I want is to say, "Thank you!"

Going through my old comics, I realized that after 9 years of collecting X-memorabilia, it's more than just a hobby—it's a genuine love. For all the cast of misfits that live in the pages of the X-titles, they've all become more like a family than anything else.

Before I step out for the evening, I would like to propose a toast to the entire staff at Marvel—past, present, and future. May you all have a great year, and congratulations on issue #300!

Matt Miller
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