

MARVEL
PG 422

AUSTEN
GARNEY
MORALES

UNCANNY

X-MEN



**RULES OF
ENGAGEMENT**
2 of 2

Pat B.

DIRECT EDITION

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Change is coming. A new breed of man has emerged. They are the Children of the Atom, Homo Superior, individuals gifted with strange and fantastic abilities simply by virtue of their genetic makeup. Stan Lee presents...

UNCANNY X-MEN

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT Part 2 of 2

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PREVIOUSLY



At the Xavier Institute for Higher Learning, Alex Summers — a.k.a. Havok — has finally emerged from his coma with the help of Professor Xavier and Carter, the young mutant son of Annie, the school's new nurse. Annie had developed a crush on Alex in the months that she was treating him for his coma, but it looks as though her infatuation may be put on hold now that Alex's old girlfriend Lorna Dane — a.k.a. Polaris — has returned back home to the mansion.

Lorna's demeanor has changed in the months since Alex has been missing — being witness to the deaths of nearly 16 million mutants in Genosha has taken a serious toll on her — but it appears as though she still loves him. So much so, in fact, that she surprisingly proposes to him in the middle of the mansion with all of their X-Men teammates surrounding them. But before Alex can manage a response, their friends offer congratulations and the everyday hustle and bustle of the Xavier Institute continues.

Meanwhile, Cain Marko — a.k.a. Juggernaut — asks his stepbrother Professor X if it would be all right to permanently join the X-Men. Professor X approves Cain's request in theory, but leaves the decision to one of his two field leaders, Cyclops or Nightcrawler. But Kurt Wagner — a.k.a. Nightcrawler — only makes things more complicated when he announces his decision to step down as leader of the X-Men!

Kurt follows up this decision by abruptly agreeing to join Alex and Lorna on an archeological expedition to the Bermuda Triangle with one of their old college professors — a trip which comes as a surprise to Annie, who must now deal with the sudden departure of Alex, just hours after awakening from his coma.

In the meantime, the Xavier Institute for Higher Learning rebuilds itself after recent "riot" troubles at home, and continues to enroll mutant children from all around the world — a fact which has garnered the attention and sudden appearance of Canada's premier group of superhumans, Alpha Flight!



ARCHANGEL
Warren Worthington III
Flight



HUSK
Paige Guthrie
Skin Manipulation



HAVOK
Alex Summers
Solar-Generated Plasma Blasts



ANNIE GHAZIKHANIEN
School Nurse



CARTER GHAZIKHANIEN
Annie's son
Untapped Mental Ability



POLARIS
Lorna Dane
Magnetic Control



JUGGERNAUT
Cain Marko
Super-strength, Invulnerability



NIGHTCRAWLER
Kurt Wagner
Teleportation



SQUIBOY
Samuel Pare
Underwater Breathing



ICEMAN
Bobby Drake
Sub-Thermal Control

THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE

No, Mom, I was thinking of six bridesmaids and a maid of honor.

Jean, probably.

Thanks for inviting us along, Professor Havass.

I needed this escape for lots of reasons.

Yes, I imagine reacclimating to life after such a long coma would be *trying*, Alex.

Fortunately for me, I hadn't even heard you'd been *killed*, so I was spared the needless grief of losing my favorite student.



It's good to have you and Lorna here on this expedition, my boy.

And you, my new friend Kurt.

I am particularly pleased to have you here in light of the *substance* of this discovery.



Me? Why?

Aaah, you'll see in a moment.

No, No taffeta, Mom.

No.

Because I don't like it.



As it did when Heinrich Schliemann first unearthed *Troy*, when we round this corner --

-- the perception of our world will *change forever*.

You see, I was researching *islands* on historical maps --

-- phantom islands that appeared only during particular time periods and then *vanished* into antiquity.

On a hunch, I visited this islet, which corresponds to the *Isla de Demonas* on one of those ancient maps.





Do we have to invite her?

As you can see, the designs are very similar in style to Mayan, Aztec, or Moche motifs --

-- although thousands of miles away, and many, *many* centuries earlier.

What do you mean, many *centuries* earlier?



Are these anthropomorphic features given to the warriors a common artistic practice, Professor?

Aaah, you cut to the heart, Friend Kurt.

It is common in Egyptian motifs, yes --

Can we get away with inviting her and *not* her parents?



This one looks like *you*, Kurt.

Usually.

-- but such depictions usually represent costuming, or ceremonial decorations in Moche and Aztec art.

Look at the tail.



That is your *tail*, right?

What do *you* think?



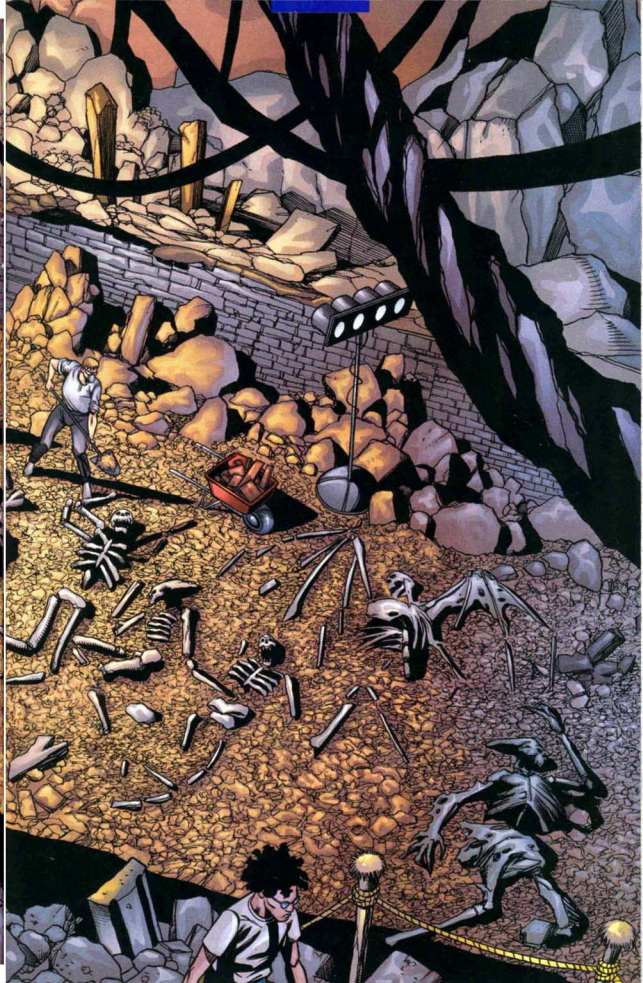
HA!

No, Mom, Kurt just said something Funny.

Yeah, he's the blue furry one.

Professor, you're hinting at something that seems pretty big here, and I'm *dying* to know what it is.

Then come this way, Alex, and let's end the mystery --



The remains you see before you are **mutants**.

Fifteen thousand year old mutants.

But that ... that can't be **right**, Professor.

The Neolithic Revolution and domestication of animals only dates back to **4000 BC** --

We've **carbon-dated** several sets of bones, Alex. We, too, thought there must have been some **mistake**.

But there is **none**.

So ... you're saying there was a mutant civilization that **predates** humankind?

Which in and of itself is --

Oh, gross.

No, there's a bunch of **bones** here. We're at a dig. YIP, just like back in college.

We're looking at an advanced ancient civilization **long dead** before the rise of the Egyptian Empires.

A mutant civilization.



BRRRRRRPP

BRRRRRRPP

**KURT, MOVE!
PROFESSOR!**

AAAAHH!!



THIS SACRILEGE SHALL NOT BE MADE KNOWN!

WHO ARE THESE IDIOTS?!

BAMF!

CHNOOH CHNOOH



What the hell --?

BAMF



Kurt, what happened?

I don't know, Alex ... they're both dead.

Like their equipment all malfunctioned, or --



Or what?

These guys look like priests or bishops ... in some religious order.

But why were they armed?



The grenade pins were pulled, Alex.

Yeah ... but what does that mean?

Suicide?

No, no, it was nothing. Just some backfiring car...



...look, if you insist on having her there, fine. Just put her in a back corner someplace, all right?

Someplace a long way away from me...



...I just haven't got the patience for stupid people these days.

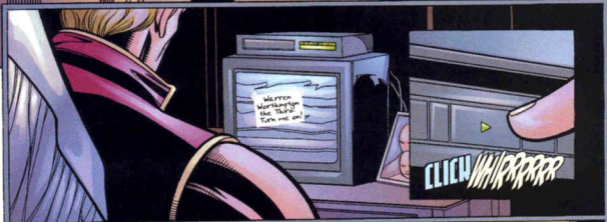
THE XAVIER
INSTITUTE FOR
HIGHER LEARNING
HOME OF THE
X-MEN...



Stacy?

Stacy,
it's me,
Warren.

The
door was
open --



Hiya, Angel-baby.
You remember your
old buddy, Stacy.



By now you've
figured out that
I could see not
only Paige's lust
for you --

-- but yours
for her as well,
that day in the
infirmary.

And **NO WAY**
was I sticking
around for those
fireworks.



But that doesn't mean I wasn't going to show you what you missed.

you ready? On the count of three.

One --

-- two --



-- three.

Whoa.



You wanted me. We both know it. You were throwing off enough lust pheromones to fill a room.

But I guess you prefer the blonde, wholesome type. The kind you can take home to mother.

Your loss.



Just picture this the next time you're holding hands and wishing for more with naive little Paige-poo.

Warren ...?

What the hell are you watching?



PAIGE?!

Oh, look!

I found a jump rope!





MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE...

There has to be something you can do, Jack.

I have the entire Canadian superteam of Alpha Flight on the front lawn of my school ... rounding up my students, no less.

This can't be legal.

And right now your attorney's telling you it *is* legal when the safety of children is at issue -- isn't he, Professor Xavier?

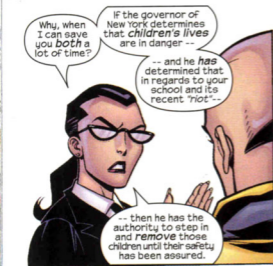
It's going well, Guardian.

No one's happy about it, but so far Xavier and his X-Men are cooperating.

We should have the entire school vacated within the hour, boss.

Thanks, Sasquatch. That's good to hear.

What about the Samuel Pare kid? Any sign of him?



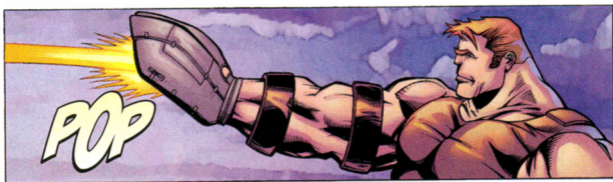


⊗ OUT BACK...





Oh, I think she's *really* cute.
I'd give her a *nine*, Sammy. Maybe more.



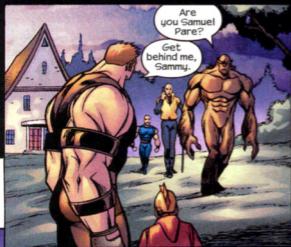
All right, *top ten* girls at the school.
Number one would be *Jean*, I guess.



Dude, think about it, eh?
Emma Frost is, like, *oh my GOD!*
I mean -- you've seen that reverse *X-bra* thing she wears, right?



Oooooo yeeeeeah. Forgot about her for a sec.
She might as well walk around *naked*, the way she dresses.
Except for the *boots*, maybe.
She should wear the boots *all* the time.
Samuel Pare?



Are you Samuel Pare?
Get behind me, Sammy.



What the hell do YOU want, hairball?



So it really *is* the Juggernaut. Will wonders never cease?

Stand aside and give me the boy.

Kiss mine, scruffy.

Cain, calm down. Please.



Let them take the boy. He'll be all right.



Why? What do they want Sammy for?

There seems to be some question about the children's safety at my school --



-- and we don't want to do anything to *worsen* that impression now, do we?



That the Pare kid, Sasquatch?

Yeah.

He was playing catch with Juggernaut here.

So it's true.

So WHAT'S true?



What the hell's goin' on here, Chuck? Why are you lettin' them take him?

Because he's playing catch with a *wanted* criminal, for one.

Hand the kid over, lady.

What? NO!

Carter's my SON! Get away from me!



I'll take that "WANTED CRIMINAL" crap and shove it right --

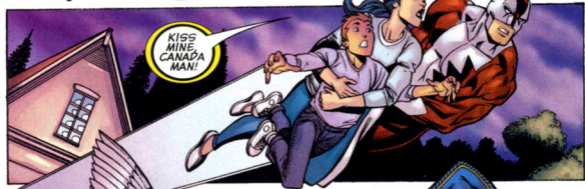
Who died and made YOU King, lady?

The state of New York, THAT'S who!

And if you're the "Juggernaut", we're sending someone for YOU next.

I said BACK OFF--











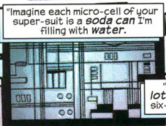
Holy Mother of God.



S-Sasquatch?

Ever put a Coke in the freezer, Vindicator?

What, Iceman? Why?



"Imagine each micro-cell of your super-suit is a **soda can** I'm filling with **water**."

"-- the water freezes --"

"Like a lotta little six-packs --"

"-- expands --"

"-- and the cans explode."



To turn a phrase, darlin', I just put **your can on ice**.



Dammit, Iceman!

You X-Men should know we have a legal RIGHT to be here!

Xavier wasn't returning the mother's phone calls --

-- a Canadian citizen --

-- a woman whose boy's LIFE had been ENTRUSTED to Xavier and was out performing RESCUE MISSIONS!



And additionally, this same boy claimed to be consorting with known criminals such as the JUGGERNAUT here!



We got in touch with the governor of New York --

-- with OBVIOUSLY sufficient reason to remove these children for their own safety.

Good, God ...

You don't think the MOTHER has the right to remove her son?!

Wait, man. Hold up a second.

I don't stop for nothin', pal.





I'm
JUGGERNAUT.



BOOM!



Yowza.

EARTHMOVER!
GET JUGGERNAUT!
NOW!



Yeah, I've been --
--there's a way, I think --
-- I have some stuff here --



Try **THIS**,
why don't you?



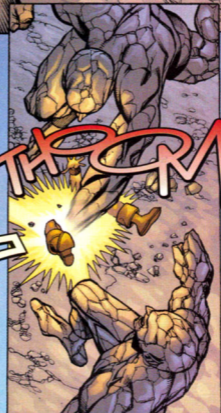
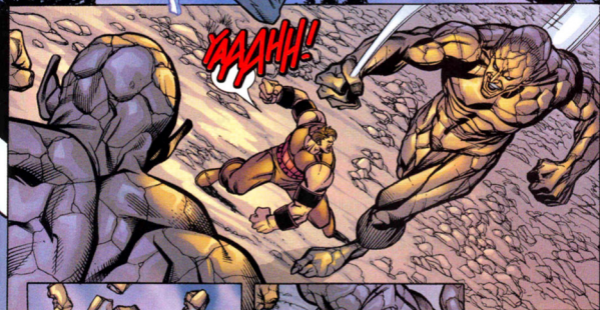
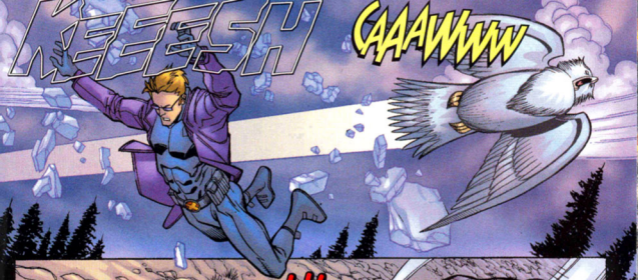
What, are ya tryin' to make me sneeze?





Please, Jack. Think of something quickly.

Things are escalating rapidly here.





There we go!



Uh-oh.



So you going to talk to me or what, Jono?

You Yanks. Always want to talk about feelings.

Worthington almost got you killed. Do you want to talk about that, yeah?



Don't blame him, Jono--and stick to the subject!

Do you love me -- do you hate me --

-- are you sorry for how you treated me?



Aaah, crap.

Can you two do this somewhere else?



Nnnnhhh ...

Sorry?!

Brilliant.

Yeah, I'm more sorry than a person could ever hope to be, believe me, Paige.

Sorry I came back, sorry I wanted to see you.

Sorry I saw you nuzzling the winged movie star in there.

You're one to talk after bawking that bubblegum rockstar!

For doing it so publicly without even the decency of a phone call or an e-mail or a "Dear Jane" letter.

Mmmmm ...

Are you all right, Cain?

... you're nice.

There was no commitment between us, Paige.

You Americans are so ruled by your emotions you ignore the realities around you.

Oh to hell with you!

I'm seeing someone else now. How's that for a reality?!

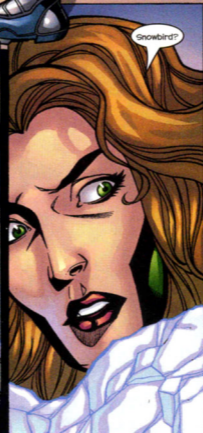
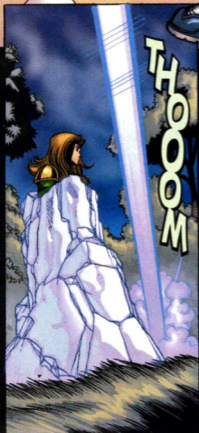


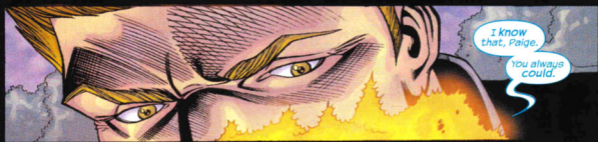
SUGGERAAAAA!

⊗MEANWHILE...

You're about five miles from the mansion, Guardian.

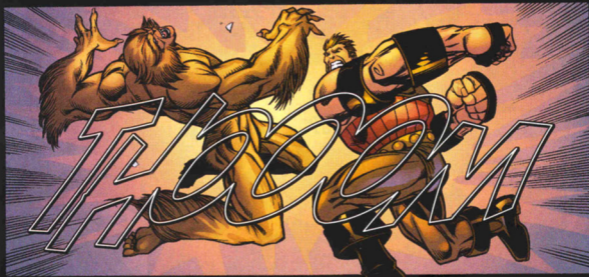
With luck, by the time you get back, the screaming will all be over.







Why couldn't you have loved me the way I loved you, Jono?



POOM



Excuse me, Miss Ishikawa, but I think you need to hear this.



SHOON



Hello?

Good afternoon. My name is Jack White, and I am legal counsel for Mister Xavier.

I have a proposition for you.



I have no interest in --

if you call off your Canadian hounds, we promise not to go to the press.

We also promise not to reveal that the governor of your great state is an anti-mutant racist who is politically motivated to shut down Xavier's school --

-- because of his monetary connections to the Church of Humanity --

-- and their spiritual leader --



SHRAAAAKKK!



CAIN, STOP!



-- a former federal suspect who is legally barred from making political contributions to your employer.

That information can't be true.







⊗ LATER...

You know I ain't got much, kid ...

... Black Tom spent all my money tryin' ta cure himself. ... well ... And the life I led ...

... it don't allow for a lot of keepin' things.



But here. Just so you remember me once in a while.

I know it's kinda like someone givin' ya a dented **garbage can lid** or something, but --

No, Cain, this is **Wow**.

This is **legendary!**

Thanks!

Maybe you can show it to those **jerk**s who pick on you and tell 'em I'll come kick their **butts** if they do anything bad to you.

Or you could just **hit 'em** with it.

You'll come **see me** sometimes, won't you?



Oh sure, kid. Sure.

Alla time.

If you need anything --

-- and I mean anything --

-- I'll be here till they kick me out.

I will, Cain!
I promise!



Cain,
I --

Zip it,
Chuck.

I don't want to hear any of your sympathetic psychobabble --

-- or that crap you pass off as higher thinking.

Because if any of it were true --

-- you would have never let that kid go back to the hellhole he calls home.



END