

UNCANNY X-MEN[®]

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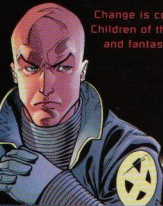
AUSTEN
GARNEY
MORALES



BT!oz

HOLY WAR
1 OF 2

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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

HOLY WAR Part 1 of 2

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PREVIOUSLY



ARCHANGEL
Warren Worthington III
Flight



NIGHTCRAWLER
Kurt Wagner
Teleportation



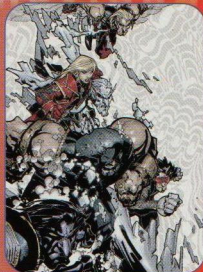
ICEMAN
Bobby Drake
Sub-Thermal Control



HAVOK
Alex Summers
Solar-Generated Plasma Blasts



POLARIS
Lorna Dane
Magnetic Control



CYCLOPS
Scott Summers
Optic Blasts, X-Men Leader



JEAN GREY
Telepath, Telekinetic



WOLVERINE
Logan
Healing, Adamantium Claws



HUSK
Paige Guthrie
Skin Manipulation



CHAMBER
Jonathan Storm
Bio-kinetic Energy Blasts

At the Xavier Institute for Higher Learning, the last few weeks have been anything but normal for several of the X-Men...

Alex Summers, the longtime X-Man known as Havok, has finally emerged from his coma and rejoins the X-Men alongside Lorna Dane, his fiancée. Lorna, better known by her X-Men codename of Polaris, has undergone an extreme shift in attitude and demeanor of late, after witnessing the deaths of sixteen million mutants on the island nation of Genosha several months ago. Add to that the fact that Alex has fallen in love with Annie, the young nurse who aided him out of his coma, and it is easy to see why Lorna and Lorna's relationship is anything but smooth these days... even despite Lorna's recent proposal of marriage to Alex and their upcoming wedding.

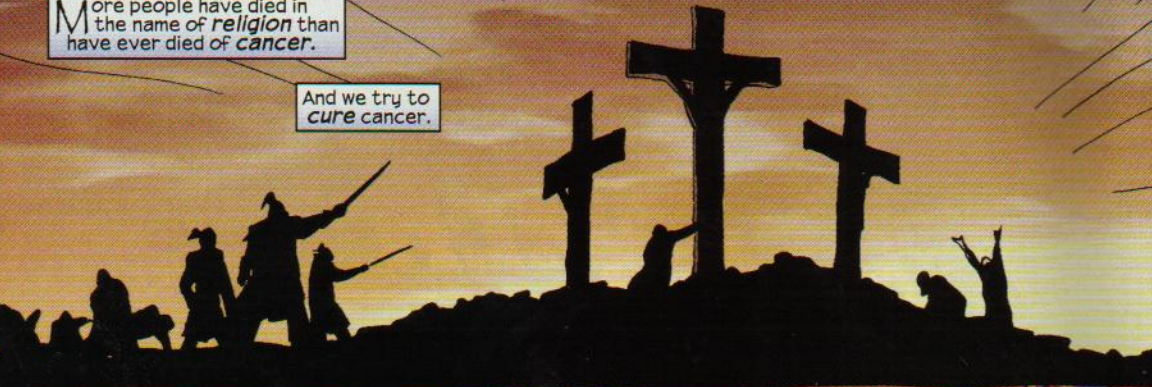
Meanwhile, Kurt Wagner, the X-Man known as Nightcrawler, surprises the team with a shock announcement. He has decided to step down as leader of the X-Men, and quickly leaves the school to accompany Alex and Lorna on a quick archeological expedition to the Bermuda Triangle — a trip which results in a chance encounter with the mysterious Church of Humanity organization, and ends in the death of Alex's old college professor.

While back in New York, Jonathan Storm, the young mutant known as Chamber, has returned to the Xavier Institute after a prolonged absence from the school, only to find his one-time girlfriend Paige Guthrie now romantically involved with someone else. That someone else being Warren Worthington III, the longtime X-Man known as Archangel, who is going through troubles of his own, experiencing a difficult stage of secondary mutation with his newfound healing powers.

But these trying times at the Xavier mansion are only a small hint of the horrors to come...

More people have died in the name of *religion* than have ever died of *cancer*.

And we try to *cure* cancer.



What is it about our specific belief in God and His wishes that makes us so *angry* at the specific beliefs of another?



What is it about the teachings of our respective deities --

-- that makes *us* more right than the *next* person?



Or more wrong?



What makes us take up arms against those who pray to the same God with different words --

⊗ THE XAVIER INSTITUTE
FOR HIGHER LEARNING...



... and make
"Holy War"
against
them?

EVOLUTION
IS NOT THE
WILL OF GOD.

"Do not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples, who are all around you, because the Lord your God, who is present with you, is a jealous God. The anger of the Lord your God would be kindled against you and he would destroy you from the face of the earth."

- Deuteronomy 7:14

We are the "next person."

Evolved humans.

Mutants.

Jean Grey.

Telekinetic, telepathic, and host to a cosmic entity few of us completely understand...

I'm not picking up any thoughts or heartbeats...

...they... they're all dead.

Logan.

Often called *Wolverine* because he's short, tough, and has these hundred-inch claws that shoot out of each hand.

A great friend to me over the years, and just about anyone he gets along with.

Get 'em down from there!

Paige Guthrie.

Husk.

I'd explain her mutant power, but it disturbs me too much.

Jono Shursmore.

Chamber.

A walking ad for how mutant gifts can ruin a good jawline.

Kurt Wagner.

A.K.A. *Nightcrawler*, teleporting Elf, and to certain females in my past, "Blueberry-Muffin."

But I don't want that getting around.

We really shouldn't disturb the forensic evidence --

Scott Summers.

Cyclops.

Overall leader of the X-Men. Shoots concussive power blasts from his eyes.

A little uptight at times, in my humble opinion.

Logan's right. Get them down.

Bobby Drake.

Ice-man.

Can do a lot of things with ice. Even he doesn't know how much.

But won't the police --



I SAID, TAKE THEM DOWN!



Of course, Scott.

Yeah, all right.



Jean, contact Annie, the new nurse, and get her out here.

How could I refuse such a polite request?

Annie?

Annie, it's me, Jean. I need --

-- Annie, please stop screaming, it's just telepathy, it's not going to hurt--

-- well, when you pull yourself together, can you join us in front of the school?



We need your help, quickly!

The police are going to be unhappy we've tampered with a crime scene...



-- we are the police.

This may shock you to your drawers, Elf, but I'm with Summers on this one.

When it comes to mutants--



Oh my God, Jono, that looks like Jubilee...

No...



WHERE?!

Right here, Logan.

My God, it is her!



DO SOMETHING, DRAKE! GET HER OFFA THERE!

What do you think I'm trying to do?
Calm down, will you?



Calm down, my BUTT! WHERE'S A HEALER?!

WHERE'S XORN?!

WHERE'S WORTHINGTON?!



WHERE THE HELL IS WORTHINGTON?!

Oh my God, this is Angelo here!

Jono, help me!



Oh Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen?

Or cry to you "violence!" And you will not save?

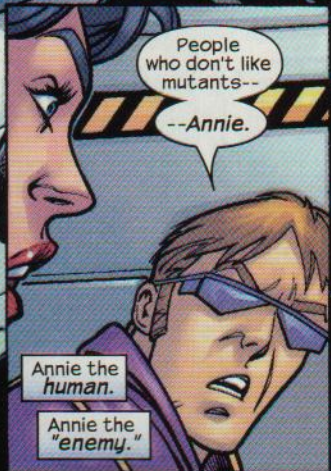


"So the law becomes slack and justice never prevalls."

"The wicked surround the righteous."

Bobby, who did this?

Who could do such a horrible thing?



People who don't like mutants--
--Annie.

Annie the human.

Annie the "enemy."

Don't go there, Bobby.

"Your eyes are too pure to behold evil.

"You cannot look on wrongdoing.

"Why do you look on the treacherous, and are silent when the wicked swallow --

"-- those more righteous than they?"

How long is this going to TAKE, Annie?

Calm, Logan. Patience.

Are you sure you're up for this, Warren?

I'll be fine, Paige. You go worry about Jubilee and Angelo.

You know, I keep saying you people need a doctor around this place. I'm only a nurse.

Kurt, I need to speak with you for a moment.

I can't reach Xorn...

...I'll try Professor Xavier again.

Kurt, I want you to assemble your squad in the first floor conference room --

Scott, it's not just my team anymore--

It is your team, Kurt.


You wanted more responsibility and Xavier gave you the second squad.

Whether you choose to follow up on the responsibility given you is your business --

-- but you are the team leader.

And as team leader I found it easier to share responsibility with Warren, and anyway --





You found it easier to be *liked* if you didn't have to make the unpopular decisions.

So you left those to *Warren* in order to continue being everyone's happy-go-lucky best friend.




Now wait a *minute*, Scott --

Being a leader isn't about being a *friend*, or being *liked*.

It's about making the right decisions no matter *how* tough they are --

-- or how unpopular they *make* you.




So get *your* team to the conference room --

-- and do it *now*.



You heard the man, Logan.


I hear *too much* of him.



We're getting close to a pint of your blood, Warren.


Keep going.

No. You have to stop at some point.



My new healing factor will keep me going.

You don't know that.



Paige, we need to go meet with Scott and the other team.

No, Kurt, I'm staying.

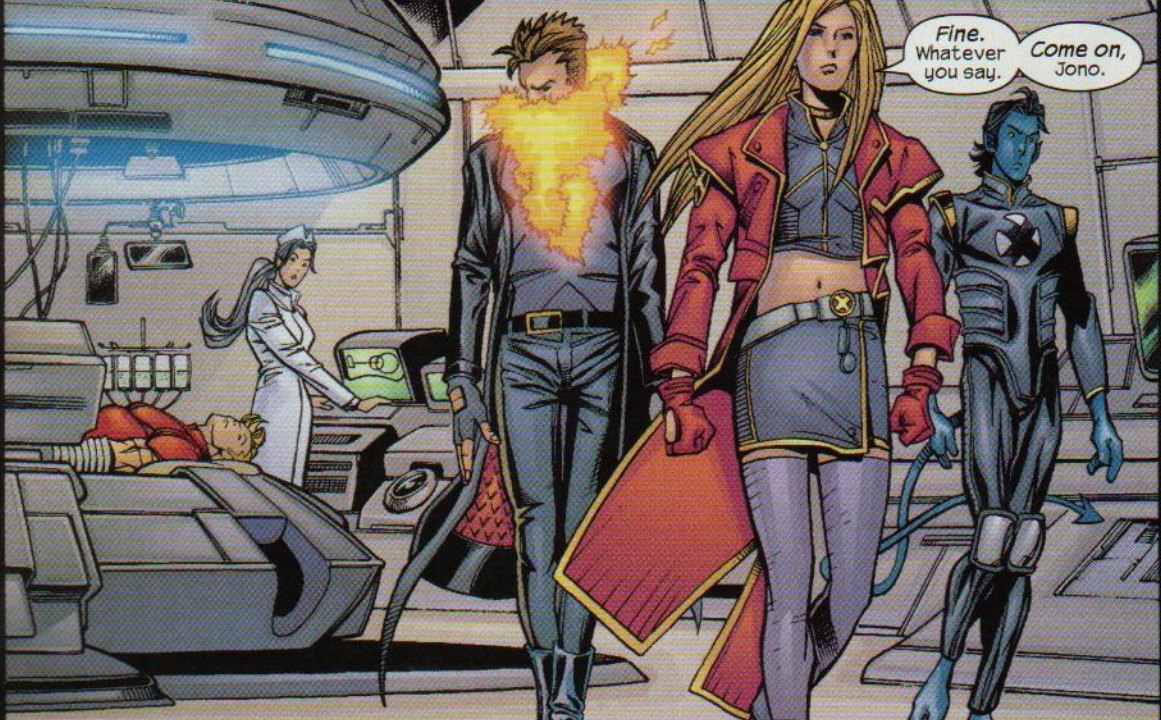


Go with him, Paige. You *and* Chamber.

You're really wasting your time here, anyway.



I'm --
-- I'm what?



Fine. Whatever you say. Come on, Jono.



That wasn't very nice, you know. She talks about you *all the time*. Can't get her to shut up, really.

She likes you a lot.

I know...



...but she *loves* Jono.



What? The kid without a *mouth*?

Please!

There's nothing to *kiss*!



If you knew *anything* about women, handsome, you'd know there's nothing more important than a man who can *kiss*.

⊗ THE WAR ROOM

"For I lift up my hand to heaven, and swear:

"As I live forever, when I whet my flashing sword, and my hand takes hold on judgment--

Who's behind this slaughter?

I want hints, clues, rumors, psychic impressions, whatever you've got --

-- and then we're going to find these monsters!

"--I will take vengeance on my adversaries--

"--and I will repay those who hate me."

Well, Scottie...

... with the crosses and religious symbology, I'd say those idiots in the *priest costumes* Kurt and I ran into a few weeks back are a good bet.

The Church of Humanity. Yes, Alex.

Who?

The Church of Humanity...

...a bunch of clowns who think mutantkind is *against God*.

Our team has faced them a few times in differing circumstances.

How many times?

What's their background?

Where are they located and why weren't we briefed on them?

Well --

-- we thought we'd shut them down in Montana, but they kept reappearing --

-- and as far as why you were never briefed, I assumed Warren had --

Dammit, Kurt! Are you brain-dead?!

DID YOU or DID YOU NOT ask Xavier for more responsibility at this school?!

And did he or did he not give you the second squad --

-- as per your request?

He did.

Yes.



That makes it *your* responsibility to inform the other teams of potential threats to mutant-kind.

Especially if your team has failed to effectively deal with them.



Hey, now wait a minute, Scottie --

All right, Scott. Simmer down.

Seems like you're doing an awful lot of *Monday morning quarterbacking* here, big brother.



With all due respect, Alex, this *doesn't* concern you.

With all due respect, Scottie --

--this is *no time* to be a tightwad.



"I will make my arrows drunk with blood--

I'm a mutant and this *does* concern me.

...to get moving before another one of us *dies*.

You're siphoning off anger through authority again, and right now a positive, more *proactive* approach is what we need...

"--and my sword shall devour flesh --"

⊗THE INFIRMARY

"--with the blood of the slain and the captives, from the long-haired enemy."
-- Deuteronomy 32:40



Aaah ... a little light-headed ...

We can't do this much longer, Warren.

The machines are all *blank*. I don't think it's working.

You see anything I'm missing, Logan?





No.
Jubilee's
the same.



Everyone's
the same.



Cut
him off,
Annie.

All
right.

Noooooo...

Just
a --
-- little
longer --

--Annie.
Please.

Warren,
I can't.

Your healing
thingie isn't
replacing your
blood as fast
as I'm draining
it.

Noooooo...

Don't
make me come
over there,
Worthington.

Yank him,
Annie. We don't
need any more
dead today.

Oh, my
God!

Who
died?

Jubi --
-- lee --

You did,
you little
pain in my
butt!

Scared
the life
half outta
me!

Really?

Cool.



Dude.

You ever hear the words "Mouth Wash?"



So, the previous time you encountered these idiots, they said they had to leave you alive.

Then the next time they're shooting at you.

Yes, that's exactly it.



So what changed between then and now?

I mean with you specifically, Kurt?

The only major thing is that I renounced my priesthood...

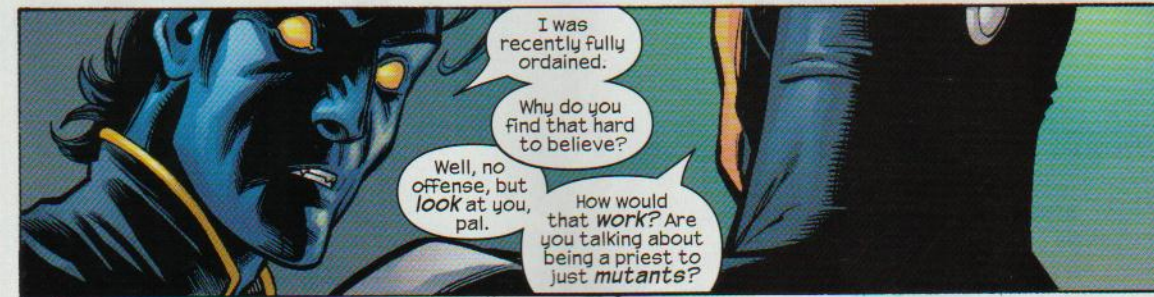


You were a priest?

That's a joke, right?

A joke? No, not at all, Alex.

I've been studying for years now.



I was recently fully ordained.

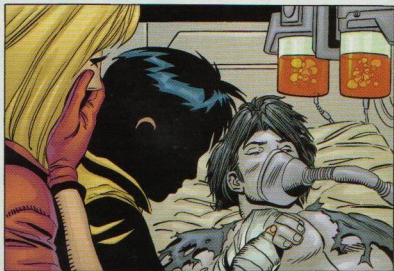
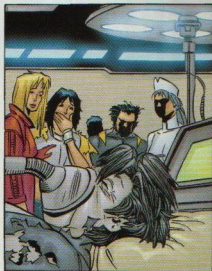
Why do you find that hard to believe?

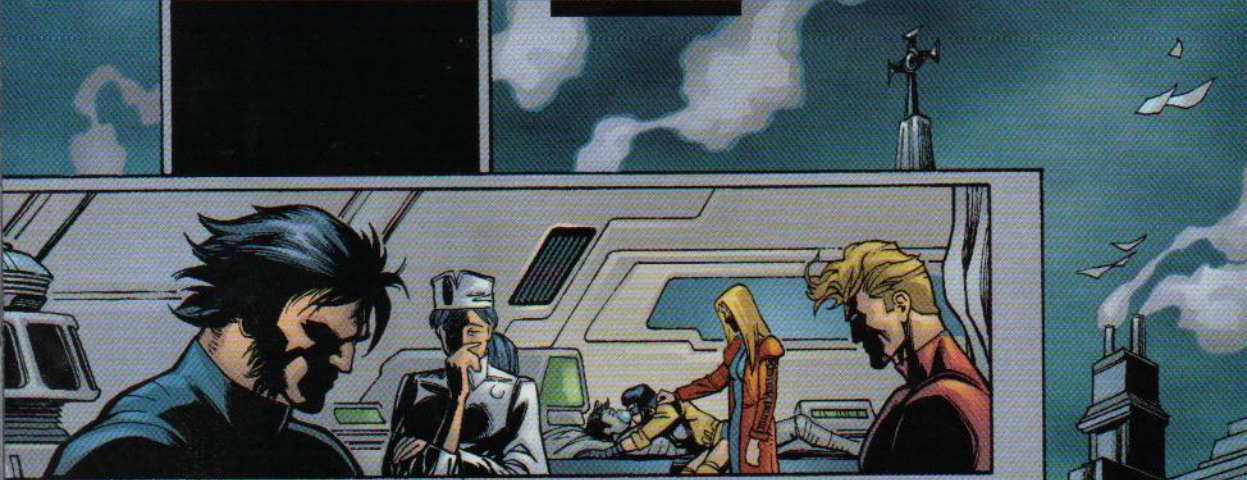
Well, no offense, but look at you, pal.

How would that work? Are you talking about being a priest to just mutants?



THE INFIRMARY





What could they possibly *gain* by convincing you that you'd become a priest, Kurt?

I don't know, Alex...

...please stop asking me that question.

⊗ ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, BROOKLYN

This place looks long abandoned, Kurt...

...this is the same church you always came to?

It is.

When I was doing my priestly duties --

-- or what I apparently *believed* to be my priestly duties --

-- it was under the observance of a man named *Father Whitney*, and this place was always well-maintained.

The ordination ceremony I remember took place inside this building.



We were never here, Kurt.

I've *never* been here.

And there is some psychic residue of someone tampering with your mind, Kurt.

In a way, I'm almost relieved to hear you say that, Jean.

I'd begun to question Father Whitney recently, in spite of his warmth and friendship toward me.

"Like the glaze covering an earthen vessel are smooth lips with an evil heart."
-- Proverbs 26:23

It's funny how kindness is often more truly just a pleasant act of selfishness, isn't it?

Logan, wait here and cover our backs.

Polaris, go around back and come in that way.

REEEEK



Empty.

Apparently for a long time.





But I know I was here.

People saw me leave the mansion...

...I never made a secret of the fact that I was training to be a priest.

But how, Kurt?

I mean, come on. Look at you.

You're a devil in a house of God.



I always used one of my old image inducers to make my appearance human.

In retrospect, it goes *against* everything I believed in, I know...

Just imagine if it had failed during a Mass.

"And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur--"



"...where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

You know scripture?

I know Revelations. It was really more like science fiction to me as a kid.

I was raised a Catholic by the family that adopted me.



Are there any other rooms in this place, Kurt?

Just a few small alcoves... and Whitney's office in the back.

There's blood on the floor.



It's mutant blood.

Trails of it leading out the door from the room in back.

You can tell it's mutant blood, Jean?

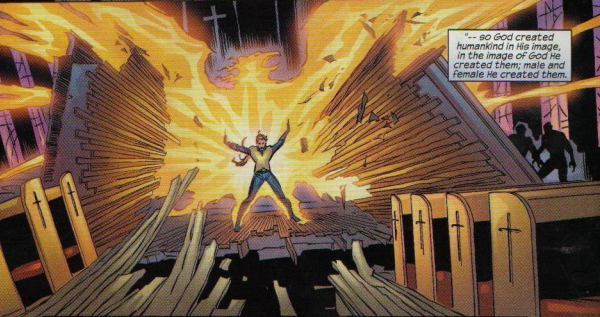


I can tell a lot of things about this place that none of us are going to like.




Stand back, please.

"Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness'--



-- so God created humankind in His image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them.



"God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth'--"

"-- and subdue it."



⊗ TO BE ⊗
CONTINUED...