

**MARVEL**

#4 IN A FOUR-ISSUE LIMITED SERIES

# FANTASTIC FOUR

VERSUS THE

# X-MEN



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BOGDANOVIC AND ZUSELITZ '86

STAN LEE  
PRESENTS...

# A MATTER OF FAITH

"I am fourteen,  
going on fifteen,  
# old as I'm gonna get..."

APOLOGIES  
TO YOU, Mr.  
HAMMERSTEIN, FOR  
PLAYING WITH YOUR  
WORDS.

IT'S THAT  
KIND OF  
MOOD.

THAT  
KIND OF  
DAY.

MAYBE  
MY LAST.

KIDS MY AGE  
AREN'T SUPPOSED TO  
THINK ABOUT DEATH.

THE WORLD FOR US IS  
SUPPOSED TO BE FULL OF  
PROMISE AND INFINITE  
POSSIBILITIES.

BUT HERE I AM, ONE  
STEP AWAY FROM THE  
GREAT BEYOND.

I'M KATHERINE PRYDE--  
THOUGH PRETTY NEAR  
EVERYONE CALLS ME "KITTY."

I HAVE ANOTHER NAME:  
SHADOWCAT.

THAT'S BECAUSE I'M A  
MUTANT-- BORN WITH THE  
PARA-HUMAN ABILITY TO  
PHASE MY BODY THROUGH  
SOLID OBJECTS. TROUBLE  
IS, THAT POWER'S OUT OF  
CONTROL, TURNING ME  
INTO A LIVING GHOST.

BY TOMORROW,  
I FIGURE, I'LL  
BE GONE.

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AND MY ONLY HOPE OF SALVATION IS Dr. DOOM--

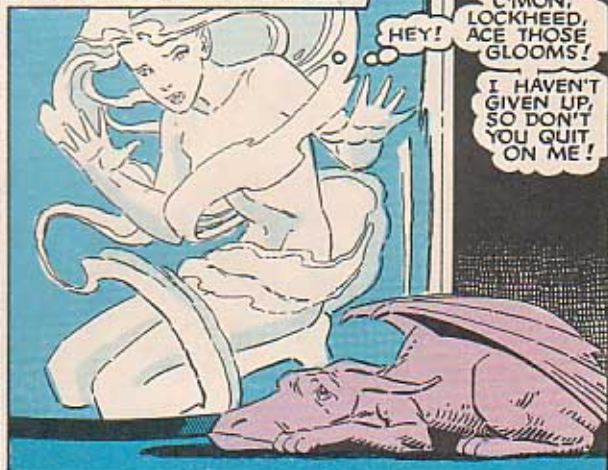
--MAYBE THE MOST INFAMOUS VILLAIN ON EARTH.



TO SAVE ME, MY BEST PALS-- MY TEAMMATES-- THE X-MEN, ARE GOING TO PUT THEMSELVES IN HIS DEBT.

WE'RE THE GOOD GUYS-- PEOPLE CALL US "SUPER HEROES"-- OUR JOB'S PUTTING CREEPS LIKE DOOM OUT OF BUSINESS...

...NOT TURNING TO HIM FOR HELP.



HEY!

C'MON, LOCKHEED, ACE THOSE GLOOMS!

I HAVEN'T GIVEN UP, SO DON'T YOU QUIT ON ME!



HE CAN'T HEAR--

-- BECAUSE I'M SO FAR OUT OF SYNC WITH REALITY I CAN'T TALK!

WHY IS THIS TAKING SO LONG ?!

WHY AREN'T YOU READY, DOOM ?!!

WHY CAN'T YOU DO WHAT YOU PROMISED-- AND GET THIS NIGHTMARE OVER WITH, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER ?!!



IMAGINE LOOKING THROUGH A RAINY WINDOW, WITH WATER SLUICING DOWN THE GLASS.

THERE'S AN IMAGE ON THE OTHER SIDE, RIPPLED AT FIRST BEYOND RECOGNITION.

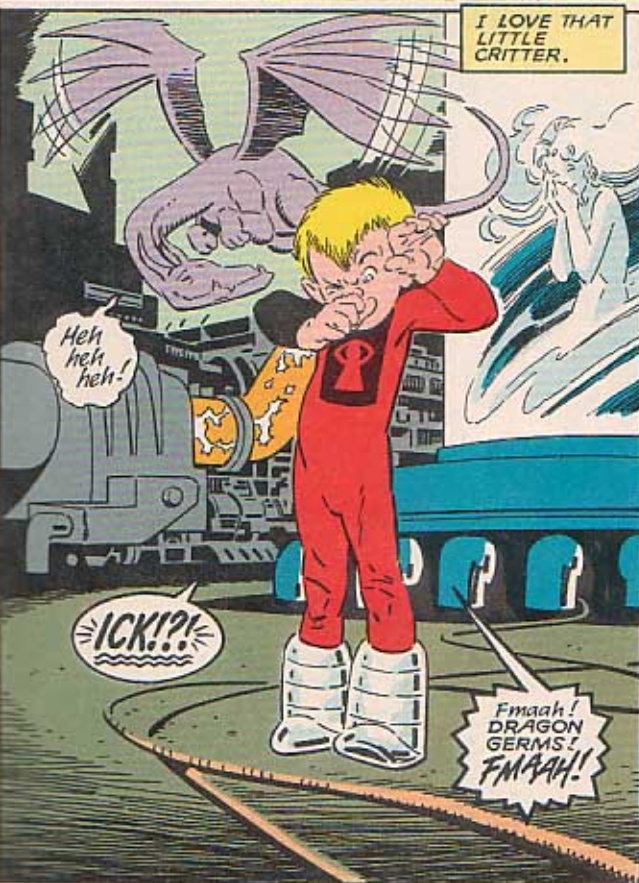
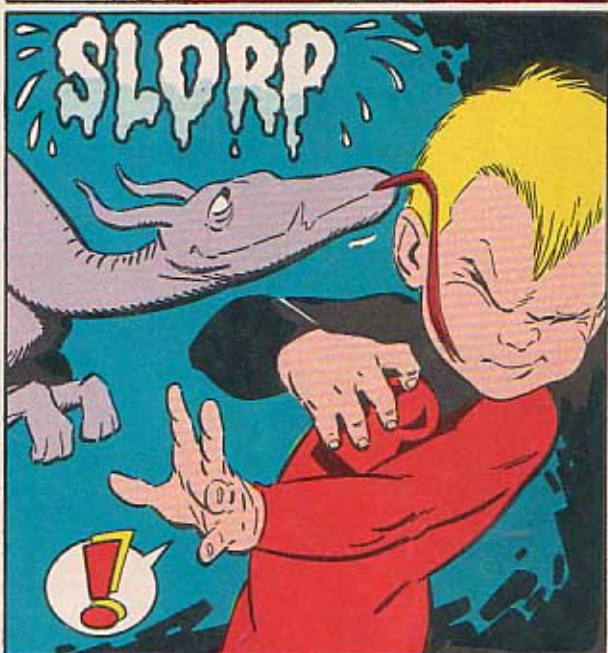
THEN, THE STORM SUBSIDES, THE GLASS CLEARS, THE FIGURE GRADUALLY COMES INTO FOCUS.

THAT'S HOW FRANKLIN RICHARDS MAKES AN ENTRANCE.

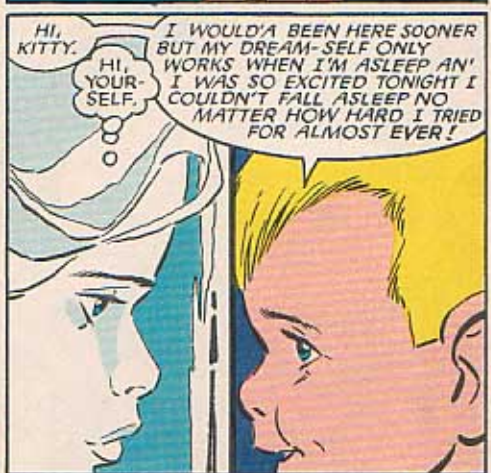
HE ISN'T REALLY HERE, THIS IS AN ASTRAL PROJECTION...

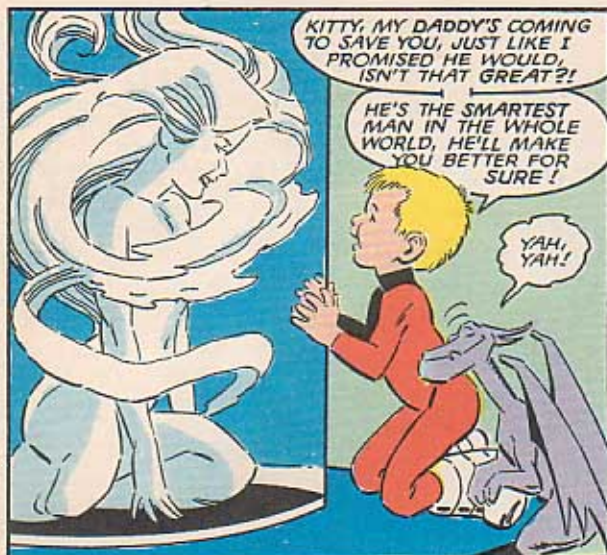


...BUT LOCKHEED CHECKS HIM OUT ANYWAY.



I LOVE THAT LITTLE CRITTER.





KITTY, MY DADDY'S COMING TO SAVE YOU, JUST LIKE I PROMISED HE WOULD, ISN'T THAT GREAT?!

HE'S THE SMARTEST MAN IN THE WHOLE WORLD, HE'LL MAKE YOU BETTER FOR SURE!

YAH, YAH!



Awh, KIDDO-- Mr. FANTASTIC TRIED ONCE ALREADY, REMEMBER? HE EXAMINED ME AND SAID THERE WAS NOTHING HE COULD DO.

THAT'S WHY THE X-MEN ACCEPTED DOOM'S OFFER. YOUR DAD LEFT THEM NO REAL CHOICE.

THERE WERE A LOT OF REAL BAD FEELINGS BETWEEN X-MEN AND FANTASTIC FOUR. I HATE TO SAY IT, BUT IF YOUR DAD TRIES AGAIN, MY GUYS MAY NOT BE INTERESTED. IT COULD START ANOTHER FIGHT.



WHAT A MESS-- TWO TEAMS OF HEROES, MAYBE AT EACH OTHERS' THROATS, AN' NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, DOOM'LL PROBABLY COME OUT ON TOP.

BUT FRANKLIN ISN'T THINKING LIKE THAT.

HE SEES ME IN TROUBLE, HE'S DOING EVERYTHING HE CAN TO SET THINGS RIGHT.

THAT'S SWEET.

WHY DOES HE CARE SO MUCH?



I'M REAL SORRY, KITTY, BUT THERE'S A BAD PART TO THIS, TOO.

I HAVE SPECIAL DREAMS, THAT KIND'A SHOW ME THE FUTURE. I HAD ONE ABOUT YOU.

THERE WAS A BIG FIGHT BETWEEN THE X-MEN AND THE FANTASTIC FOUR, AND EVERYBODY KILLED EVERYBODY, AND AT THE END, Dr. DOOM WAS THE WINNER!

ALL BECAUSE MY DADDY FOUND AN OLD BOOK OF HIS THAT SAID HE WAS A BAD MAN, AS CRUEL AS Dr. DOOM.



THE BOOK PART CAME TRUE.

I'M SCARED ABOUT THE REST.

Oh, NO-- I'VE MADE YOU CRY!



I TALK TOO MUCH-- AN' ALWAYS SAY THE WRONG THING-- THAT'S WHY MY SUPER-NAME'S TATTLETALE.

WHEN I WAS SAD 'N SCARED, MY DADDY TOLD ME A STORY. IT MADE ME FEEL BETTER. WOULD YOU LIKE TO HEAR IT?

I'LL GET MY FINGERS TO PLAY THE PARTS, JUST LIKE MY DAD DID!

wiggle wiggle FIGHT FUMFER



IT'S CALLED "SAGGY, BAGGY, ELEPHANT."

ELSEWHERE--

-- ARCING HIGH ABOVE THE CURVE OF THE WORLD...

... THE FANTASTIC FOUR'S HYPER-SPACE PLANE RACES HEADLONG FROM SUNLIGHT TO SHADOW, LEAVING DAY AND NEW YORK CITY FAST BEHIND...

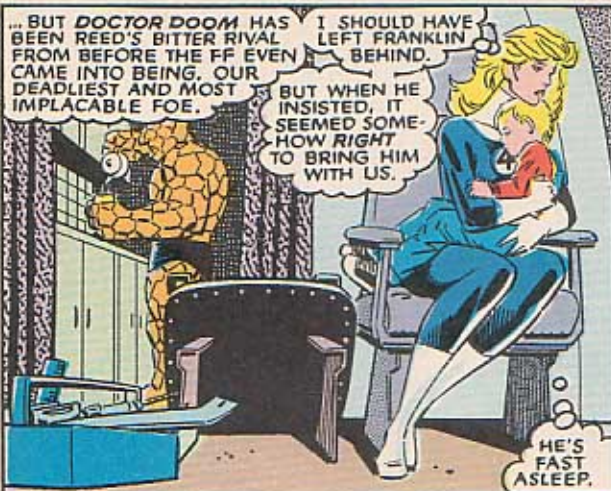


OSTENSIBLY, THIS IS A RESCUE MISSION...

... BUT WE'RE ALL AS KEYED UP AND TENSE AS WE'D BE BEFORE A BATTLE. EVERYONE EXPECTS A FIGHT.

AND WHY NOT?

THE X-MEN-- I HOPE-- ARE STILL OUR FRIENDS...

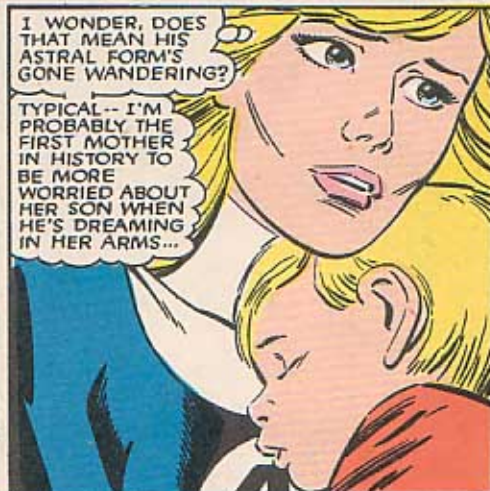


... BUT DOCTOR DOOM HAS BEEN REED'S BITTER RIVAL FROM BEFORE THE FF EVEN CAME INTO BEING. OUR DEADLIEST AND MOST IMPLACABLE FOE.

I SHOULD HAVE LEFT FRANKLIN BEHIND.

BUT WHEN HE INSISTED, IT SEEMED SOMEHOW RIGHT TO BRING HIM WITH US.

HE'S FAST ASLEEP.



I WONDER, DOES THAT MEAN HIS ASTRAL FORM'S GONE WANDERING?

TYPICAL-- I'M PROBABLY THE FIRST MOTHER IN HISTORY TO BE MORE WORRIED ABOUT HER SON WHEN HE'S DREAMING IN HER ARMS...



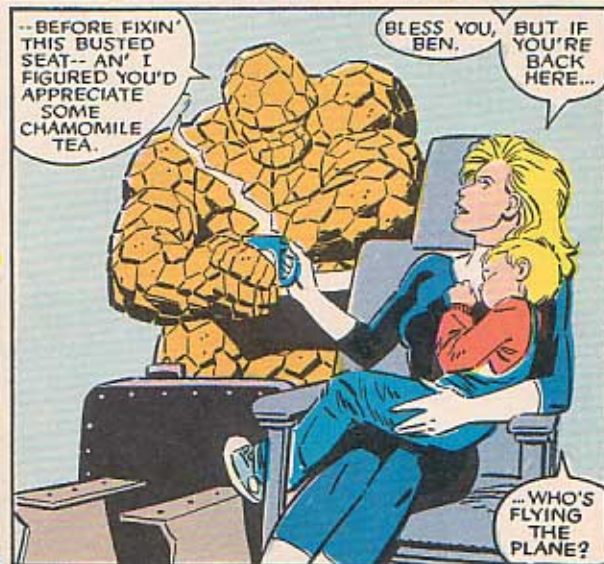
... THAN WHEN HE'S AWAKE AND RUNNING ABOUT.

HIS BODY, I CAN PROTECT.

BUT HIS SPIRIT--

Oh!?

I WAS GETTIN' MYSELF A MUG O' JAVA--

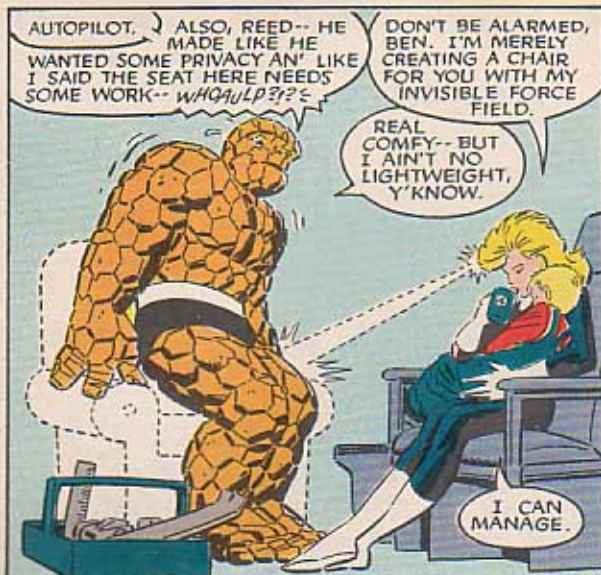


-- BEFORE FIXIN' THIS BUSTED SEAT-- AN' I FIGURED YOU'D APPRECIATE SOME CHAMOMILE TEA.

BLESS YOU, BEN.

BUT IF YOU'RE BACK HERE...

... WHO'S FLYING THE PLANE?



AUTOPILOT. ALSO, REED-- HE MADE LIKE HE WANTED SOME PRIVACY AN' LIKE I SAID THE SEAT HERE NEEDS SOME WORK-- WHOAULP???

DON'T BE ALARMED, BEN. I'M MERELY CREATING A CHAIR FOR YOU WITH MY INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD.

REAL COMFY-- BUT I AIN'T NO LIGHTWEIGHT, Y'KNOW.

I CAN MANAGE.



BET YOU CAN.

WHOLE LOT'S CHANGED SINCE THE ROCKET FLIGHT THAT GAVE US OUR POWERS.

WE'VE CHANGED WITH THE YEARS-- WHY HASN'T DOOM?! WHY DOES HE STILL HATE US???

HATE LIKE THAT, SUZIE, TO A GUY LIKE HIM, IT'S A DRUG.



SORT'A GIVES HIS LIFE PURPOSE, FOCUS-- A GOAL. NO MATTER WHAT DOOM DOES, HE ALWAYS SEES REED STEALIN' HIS THUNDER, DENYIN' HIM HIS "PROPER" PLACE IN THE SUN.

MAYBE WE SHOULD LET HIM WIN ONCE, TO GET THAT OUT OF HIS SYSTEM.

RENCH GRUNCH BEND



YOU'RE TALKIN' ABOUT DOOM, SUZIE. YOU'RE THINKIN' ABOUT SOMEONE ELSE.

OK, BEN, THIS MISSION IS SO IMPORTANT TO REED.

THE STAKES ARE SO HIGH.

SPONCH



IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG-- IF HE FALTERS-- IF HE FAILS--

-- AND SHADOWCAT DIES...

...HE'LL NEVER FORGIVE HIMSELF.

YOU EXPECTIN' THE WORST?

SPINCH POKE



HE HAS NO CONFIDENCE, ONLY DOUBTS.

THEY'RE EATING HIM UP INSIDE LIKE A CANCER.

WE BELIEVE IN HIM, BEN -- THAT'S WHY WE'RE HERE-- WHY WON'T HE BELIEVE IN HIMSELF?!



WE'RE TALKIN' FAITH, SWEET-HEART.

YOU EITHER GOT IT OR YOU AIN'T. AN' THAT'S A BATTLE STRETCH'S GOTTA WIN OR LOSE ALL BY HIS LONESOME-- JUST LIKE THE REST OF THE HUMAN RACE.

WHATEVER HAPPENS, THOUGH, WE'LL TAKE IT AS IT COMES, ONE STEP, ONE DAY AT A TIME.

GOOD OR BAD, SUZIE, WE'LL PULL THROUGH.



BENJAMIN J. GRIMM, YOU ARE A BRICK.

Nawhw-- I'M THE THING.

I'M MADE O' BRICK.

FURTHER FORWARD, IN THE ROW SHARED BY SHE-HULK AND THE HUMAN TORCH...

Hmmh-- FULL-FIGURE WOMEN ARE COMING BACK INTO FASHION. ABOUT TIME!

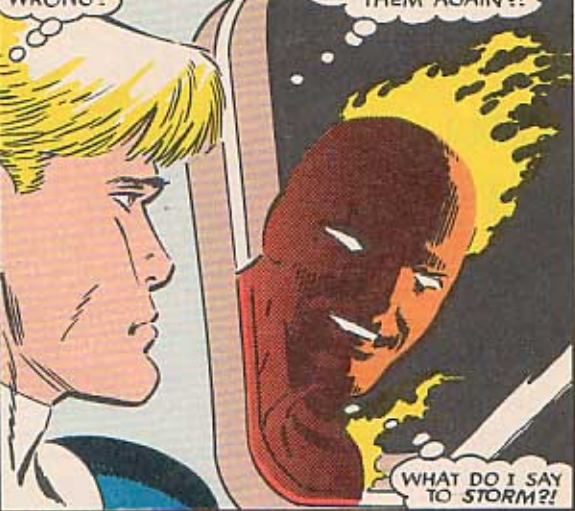
NOT A PEEP OUT OF JOHNNY SINCE WE TOOK OFF. THAT'S NOT LIKE HIM.

USUALLY, HE'S TOO GREGARIOUS FOR WORDS.



I WONDER WHAT'S WRONG?

WHAT DO I SAY TO THE X-MEN WHEN I SEE THEM AGAIN?!



WHAT DO I SAY TO STORM?!



I NEVER MEANT TO BURN HER...

...WHEN OUR TEAMS SCRAPPED ON MUIR ISLE...  
...THAT WAS AN ACCIDENT!

GREAT. AS IF MY SAYING "SORRY" WILL MAKE UP FOR THE PAIN SHE SUFFERED...

...OR HEAL HER ARM.

PENNY FOR 'EM, HOTSHOT.

THAT'S MORE, SHULKIE, THAN MY THOUGHTS ARE WORTH.



I WAS REMEMBERING SOMETHING MY BUDDY, SPIDER-MAN, TOLD ME ONCE:

"... WITH GREAT POWER, COMES GREAT RESPONSIBILITY."

I THINK NOW, AT LAST-- MAYBE TOO LATE-- I'M STARTING TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT REALLY MEANS.

NO ONE EVER SAID GROWING UP WAS EASY, KIDDO.

EVERY ACTION HAS ITS CONSEQUENCES--



-- GOOD AND BAD. JUST ASK YOUR BROTHER-IN-LAW. TRICK IS LEARNING TO LIVE WITH 'EM.

YOU'RE AN AVENGER, SHULKIE. WHY'D YOU COME WITH US THIS TIME?



I WAS IN AT THE START, I WANT TO SEE THE FINISH. MAYBE HELP, IF I'M ABLE.

"ALSO, I RESPECT REED RICHARDS AS I DO FEW OTHERS, JOHNNY-- THEY BROKE THE MOLD WITH HIM-- I WANT TO SEE HIM GET WELL.

"WHAT I DON'T UNDERSTAND IS THIS THING BETWEEN HIM AND DOOM. I HEAR THEY GO BACK PRETTY FAR."



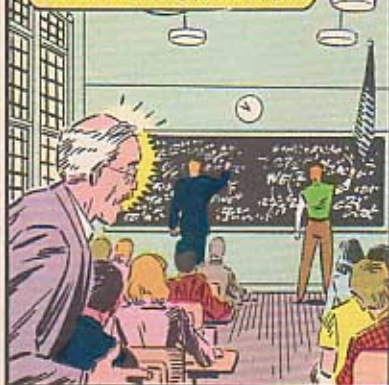
"ALL THE WAY TO COLLEGE."

"REED AND BEN WERE ROOMIES AT STATE U. WAY I HEAR THE STORY, DOOM WAS STIFF AND FORMAL AS A PERSON COULD BE. NOBODY LIKED HIM. AFTER A WHILE, NO ONE TRIED."



"I ATTENDED THE SAME SCHOOL FOR A WHILE, TALKED WITH SOME OF REED'S OLD PROFS-- THEY SAID IT WAS LIKE TEACHING A PAIR OF EINSTEINS, OR MOZARTS, OR DA VINCI'S.

"BOTH OF THEM GRASPED ANY CONCEPT INSTANTLY, NO MATTER HOW COMPLEX.



"BRILLIANCE WAS SECOND NATURE TO THEM, LIKE BREATHING.



"THE SCHOOL COMPUTERS WEREN'T GOOD ENOUGH FOR THEM, SO THEY BUILT THEIR OWN, REVOLUTIONIZED THE FIELD.

"DAY OR NIGHT, THEY'D ARGUE THEORIES-- WACKO MATHEMATICS, PHYSICS, COSMOLOGY THAT EVEN THE SCHOOL'S NOBEL LAUREATES HAD TROUBLE FOLLOWING.



"FOR REED, THIS WAS HEAVEN-- BECAUSE HE LOVED LEARNING FOR LEARNING'S SAKE.



"FOR DOOM, THOUGH, THESE DEBATES WERE BATTLES HE ALWAYS HAD TO WIN.

"AND KNOWLEDGE, THE KEY TO POWER.



"AT THE SAME TIME, OUTSIDE OF CLASSWORK, DOOM WAS WORKING IN THE DORM ON SOME SECRET PROJECTS OF HIS OWN.



"ONE AFTERNOON, REED SAW HIS NOTES-- REALIZED THERE WAS A FATAL FLAW IN DOOM'S CALCULATIONS-- TRIED TO WARN HIM OF THE DANGER.

"AS USUAL, DOOM WOULDN'T LISTEN.

HE WENT THROUGH WITH HIS EXPERIMENT. AND, AS REED HAD PREDICTED...

... IT BLEW UP IN HIS FACE.



"DOOM BLAMED REED FOR THE ACCIDENT. HE COULDN'T MAKE A MISTAKE-- OH, NO-- IT HAD TO BE SOMEONE ELSE'S FAULT.

"HE'S HATED REED EVER SINCE.



"HE'D DO ANYTHING TO GET EVEN.

AND THE WAY REED'S BEHAVED-- SINCE HE FOUND THAT ROTTEN DIARY-- THE CREEP MAY JUST HAVE HIS CHANCE. IF REED DOESN'T REGAIN HIS SELF-CONFIDENCE, HIS SELF-RESPECT-- HIS FAITH IN HIMSELF--

-- HE'LL LOSE HIS NEXT FIGHT WITH DOOM...

...BEFORE IT'S EVEN BEGUN.



AND LASTLY, ALONE ON THE FLIGHT DECK, THE FOUNDER AND LEADER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR...

MY DIARY.

LOST SO MANY YEARS, I WAS SO PLEASED WHEN SUE FOUND IT. NOW I WISH SHE NEVER HAD.

ED RICHARDS  
JOURNAL  
STATE  
UNIVERSITY

I KNOW EVERY WORD BY HEART. IF ONLY I KNEW MY MEMORIES-- MY MIND-- AS COMPLETELY.

HOW CAN SO MUCH TRUTH...

... ADD UP TO SUCH A MONSTROUS-- AWFUL-- LIE?!

IF, INDEED, IT IS A LIE?

THAT'S THE QUESTION THAT TORMENTS ME.

EVERY THOUGHT, EVERY THEORY, EVERY OPINION ON THESE PAGES IS MINE.

BUT THE PRESENTATION IS WRONG, THE ORDER TWISTED.

YES, I SPOKE-- OFTEN-- OF THE DANGER POSED BY HOSTILE EXTRA-TERRESTRIALS AND SOCIOPATHS POSSESSING PARAHUMAN ABILITIES, AND THE NEED FOR A PERSON OR GROUP TO ACT AS A HEROIC PARADIGM, TO CATALYZE AND FOCUS SOCIETY'S OPPOSITION TO THESE THREATS.

WE FANTASTIC FOURSOME BECAME THAT EXAMPLE.

I TELL MYSELF THAT WASN'T THE WAY IT HAPPENED-- HAD I SUSPECTED EVEN THE SLIGHTEST RISK, I WOULD HAVE ABORTED THAT FATEFUL SPACEFLIGHT.

BUT-- SUPPOSE THE WARNING SIGNS WERE THERE AND I IGNORED THEM? OR CHOSE NOT TO NOTICE?

BEN, JOHNNY, SUE-- THEY WERE MY FRIENDS, AS CLOSE AS FAMILY-- THEY TRUSTED ME WITH THEIR LIVES--

--I COULDN'T HAVE BETRAYED THEM!

EXCEPT-- THIS DIARY SAYS OUR CREATION WAS NO ACCIDENT...

...BUT THE CULMINATION OF A RUTHLESS COLD-BLOODED PLAN. MY PLAN.

Whuatt?!

FRANKLIN???

I'VE BEEN TO VISIT SHADOWCAT, DADDY.

I TOLD HER YOU WERE COMING.

I TOLD HER YOU'D SAVE HER.

AN' YOU WILL -- I KNOW! I GOTTA GO BACK TO HER, DADDY, TO KEEP HER COMPANY-- SEE YOU SOON!

FRANKLIN, WAIT--

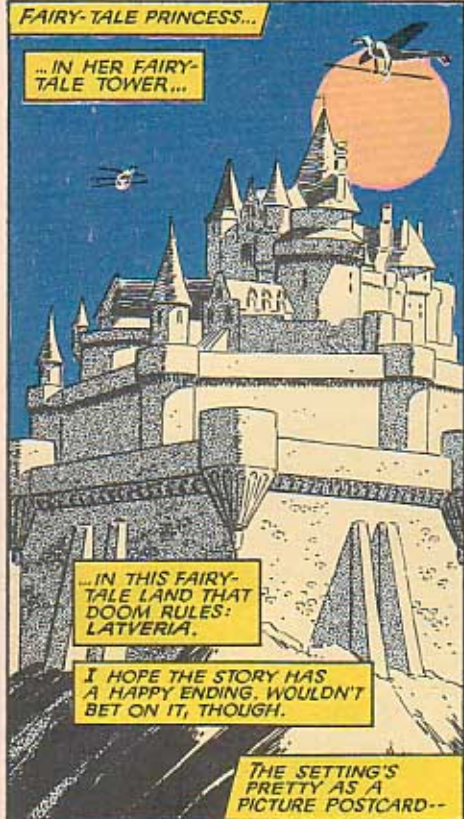
-- YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND--

-- I DON'T KNOW ANYMORE...

-- IF I CAN.

FAIRY-TALE PRINCESS...

...IN HER FAIRY-TALE TOWER...



...IN THIS FAIRY-TALE LAND THAT DOOM RULES: LATVERIA.

I HOPE THE STORY HAS A HAPPY ENDING. WOULDN'T BET ON IT, THOUGH.

THE SETTING'S PRETTY AS A PICTURE POSTCARD--



--IF YOU DON'T NOTICE DOOM'S ROBOT GOONS.

THEIR STANDARD PROCEDURE IS TO SHOOT FIRST, ASK QUESTIONS AFTER.

BUT DOOM REPROGRAMMED THEM TO LEAVE THE X-MEN ALONE.

PROVIDED WE BEHAVE OURSELVES.

IT'S A LOVELY NIGHT.



I'D GIVE ANYTHING TO BE OUT ROMPING THROUGH IT, WITH MY PALS.



IN MY MIND'S EYE, I CAN PICTURE WOLVERINE--

--THE QUINTESSENTIAL HUNTER, WITH SENSES KEENER THAN ANY ANIMAL.



NICE TRY, LONGSHOT! BUT YOU GOTTA BE LOTS SNEAKIER'N THAT...

SHZANG!

SWAT

...TO CATCH ME BY SURPRISE!

HE HAS UNBREAKABLE BONES, AND ADAMANTIUM CLAWS--

HEADS UP YOU TWO!

--WHICH'LL CUT THROUGH ANYTHING-- THAT EXTEND FROM BIONIC HOUSINGS IMPLANTED IN HIS FOREARMS.



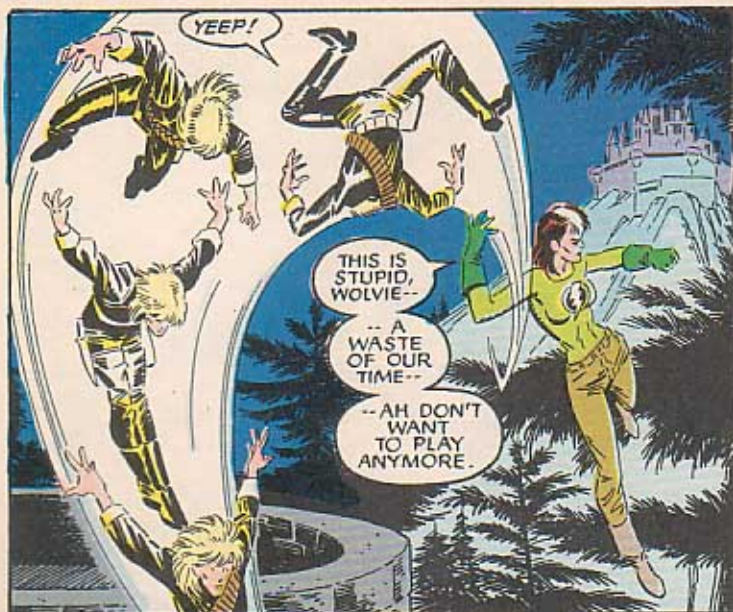
WATCH IT, DAZZLER!

THEY BARELY MISSED US!

DAZZ-- HAVOK-- THERE ARE YOUR TARGETS.

DEAL WITH 'EM!





YEEP!

THIS IS STUPID, WOLVIE--  
-- A WASTE OF OUR TIME--  
--AH DON'T WANT TO PLAY ANYMORE.



THIS AIN'T A GAME, GIRL, IT'S TRAINING!  
LOOK OUT BELOW!

SPLATCH



YOU OKAY, LONGSHOT?

OF COURSE.

I LANDED ON THIS FANTASTIC SOFT GROUND.

SNOW, SWEET HEART.

"SWEETHEART?"  
A SPECIAL KIND...  
... OF FROZEN WATER.

NO TWO ARE ALIKE, KIDDO.

SNOW-FLAKES ARE AS UNIQUE AS PEOPLE.

IT'S NEAT, HAVOK.  
HAVE YOU LOOKED? EVERY PIECE IS DIFFERENT!



WHY'D YOU THROW HIM LIKE THAT?

AH FIGURED LONGSHOT'S WILD LUCK POWER WOULD GUARANTEE HIM A SOFT LANDING.

HEY, ROGUE-- IS SOMETHING WRONG?

WHAT D'YOU THINK, DUMMY?!

KBOOM!



IT'S THIS WAITING, AH HATE IT!

WE'RE MARKIN' TIME, WHILE LORD KNOWS WHAT IS HAPPENIN' TO KITTY!

YOU SWORE YOU'D SAVE SHADOWCAT, DOOM--  
--SO QUIT STALLIN' AN' DO IT!

STOOPID FINGERS!

I'M SORRY, KITTY. MY DAD TOLD THIS STORY LOTS BETTER.

PROBABLY BECAUSE OF HIS STRETCHABLE BODY.

THEM'S THE BREAKS, CUTIE.

I HAD A BABY SISTER, Y'KNOW...

...BUT SHE DIED WHEN SHE WAS BORN...

...AN MY MOMMY CAN'T HAVE ANY MORE.

Oh, FRANKLIN-- POOR THING-- I'M SO SORRY!

I HAVE FRIENDS AN' ALL-- BUT THAT ISN'T THE SAME AS FAMILY.

YEAH. ME, I'M AN ONLY KID, TOO.

IF I HAD A BROTHER/SISTER, FRANKLIN/KITTY, I'D WANT HIM/HER TO BE LIKE YOU-- HEY??!

I HEARD THAT-- YOUR WORDS-- THOUGHTS-- IN MY HEAD???

MY DOING.

PSYLOCKE.

THE X-MEN'S NEW TELEPATH.

I PSIMERGED YOUR THOUGHTS, SO YOU COULD HAVE A PROPER CONVERSATION.

I HOPE YOU DON'T...

...MIND.

IS THE CHILD WELL, PSYLOCKE?

AS WELL AS CAN BE EXPECTED...

...Dr. DOOM.

MY OWN POWERS ARE STILL MAINTAINING THE COHERENCE OF KITTY'S CONSCIOUSNESS...

... AS THE LIFECELL IS HER PHYSICAL BEING.

EXCELLENT.

MY PREPARATIONS ARE COMPLETE.

LET US BEGIN.

I'M SCARED.

I WANT TO GO HOME.

IF ONLY SOMEONE  
COULD JUST HOLD  
MY HAND!



EVEN OUR NEW TEACH,  
MAGNETO, BUT HE  
DOESN'T CARE.

SURVEYING  
YOUR DOMAIN,  
"MY LORD?"

IN A SENSE,  
STORM--



-- IF ONE'S MEMORIES,  
AND THE PAST THEY  
ENCOMPASS, CAN BE  
CONSIDERED A DOMAIN.

ROUGHLY FIVE HUNDRED  
MILES IN THAT DIRECTION  
IS AUSCHWITZ--

-- THE NAZI  
DEATH  
CAMP--



-- WHERE MY  
PARENTS AND  
SISTER WERE  
MURDERED.

I SHOULD HAVE  
DIED WITH THEM.

AND DUE WEST  
FROM LATVERIA  
IS THE SOVIET  
CITY OF  
VINNITSA.



THERE  
WAS A FIRE.  
I WAS INJURED  
SAVING MY WIFE.  
MY DAUGHTER  
REMAINED  
TRAPPED IN THE  
BURNING  
BUILDING.

SHE WAS  
MUCH LIKE  
KITTY, MY  
ANYA.

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL  
OF CHILDREN-- TWO  
YEARS OLD, ORORO, AND  
SHE NEVER CRIED.

squeee!RRK!



THERE'S A  
SQUAWKED  
SCREECH FROM  
OUTSIDE AS  
MAGNETO  
GRABS ONE OF  
DOOM'S ROBOTS--

SHE ONLY LAUGHED-- WITH  
WONDER AND JOY-- AS THOUGH  
LIFE WAS SOME MAGNIFICENT  
ADVENTURE, STAGED FOR HER ALONE.

-- AND USES HIS FANTASTIC MAGNETIC POWERS TO RESHAPE ITS  
ARMORED BODY AS EASILY AS IF IT WAS MADE OF CLAY.

SHE  
BURNED,  
STORM!

MY POWER WAS WEAKER THEN. I USED IT TO  
SAVE MY WIFE, BUT COULDN'T REACH ANYA. A  
CROWD HAD GATHERED. I BEGGED FOR HELP.  
THEY REFUSED ME.

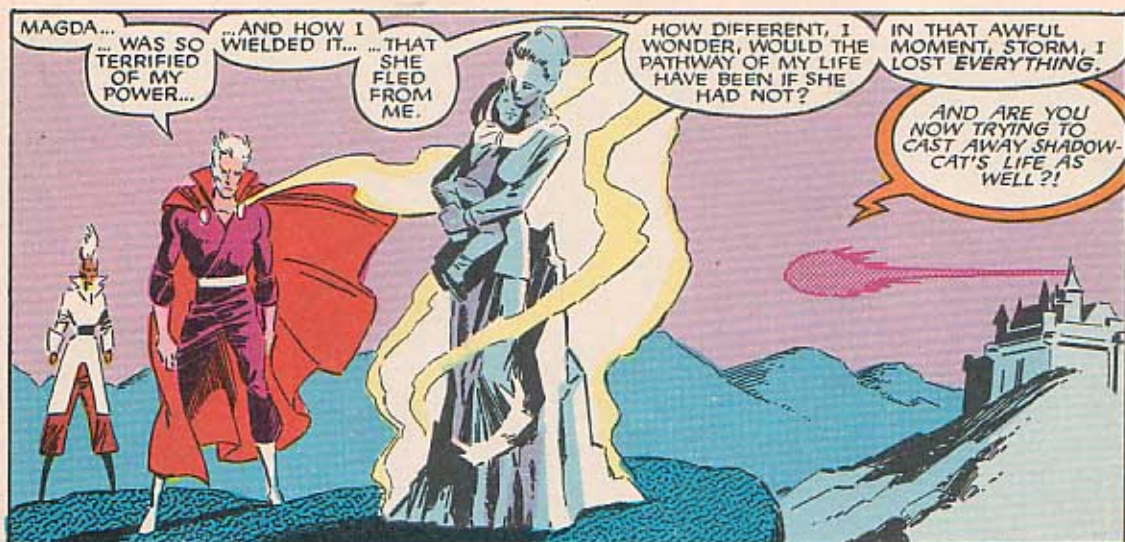
THEY SAW I WAS A  
MUTANT AND SOME CALLED  
FOR ME TO BE HURLED INTO  
THE SAME FLAMES THAT  
CONSUMED MY CHILD.



TOO LATE-- IN RAGE AND A GRIEF  
THAT RAVAGES ME STILL-- I CAME  
AT LAST TO MY BIRTHRIGHT:

...THE ABSOLUTE CONTROL  
OVER THE FORCES AND  
MANIFESTATIONS OF MAGNET-  
ISM THAT IS THE POWER OF...

**MAGNETO!**



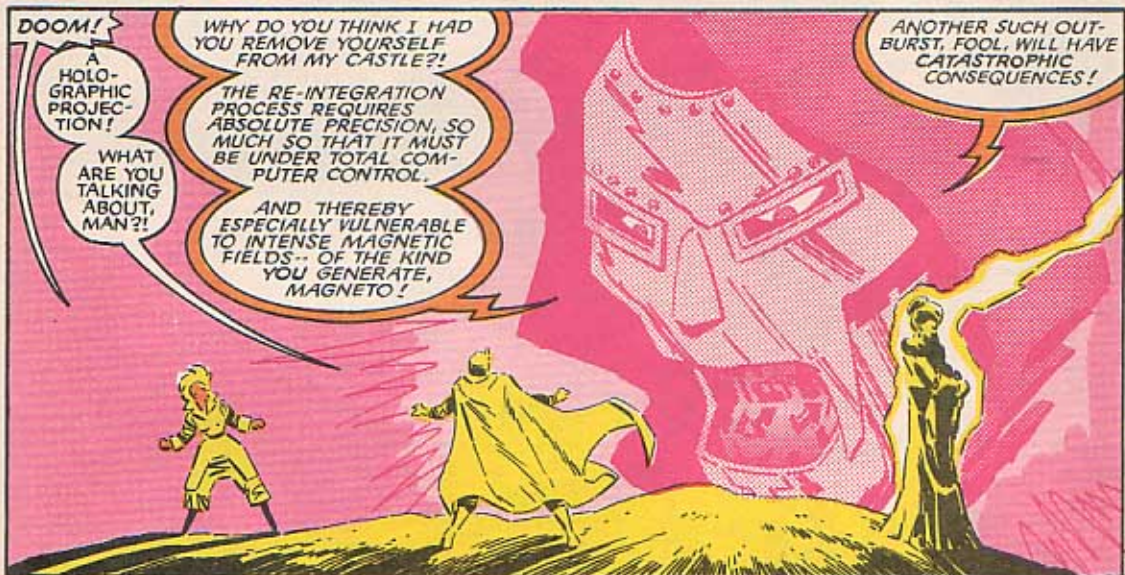
MAGDA... WAS SO TERRIFIED OF MY POWER...

...AND HOW I WIELDED IT... THAT SHE FLED FROM ME.

HOW DIFFERENT, I WONDER, WOULD THE PATHWAY OF MY LIFE HAVE BEEN IF SHE HAD NOT?

IN THAT AWFUL MOMENT, STORM, I LOST EVERYTHING.

AND ARE YOU NOW TRYING TO CAST AWAY SHADOW-CAT'S LIFE AS WELL?!



DOOM!

A HOLO-GRAPHIC PROJECTION!

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, MAN?!

WHY DO YOU THINK I HAD YOU REMOVE YOURSELF FROM MY CASTLE?!

THE RE-INTEGRATION PROCESS REQUIRES ABSOLUTE PRECISION, SO MUCH SO THAT IT MUST BE UNDER TOTAL COMPUTER CONTROL.

AND THEREBY ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE TO INTENSE MAGNETIC FIELDS-- OF THE KIND YOU GENERATE, MAGNETO!

ANOTHER SUCH OUTBURST, FOOL, WILL HAVE CATASTROPHIC CONSEQUENCES!



WE ALL WEAR SCARS, MY FRIEND, AND ALL MAKE MISTAKES.

BUT THE PAST IS DONE. WHAT MATTERS IS WHO WE ARE TODAY, AND WISH TO BE TOMORROW.

Blip!

EASILY SAID-- BUT SO MANY INSIST ON SEEING ONLY THE MAGNETO THAT WAS.



THE ARCH-VILLAIN...

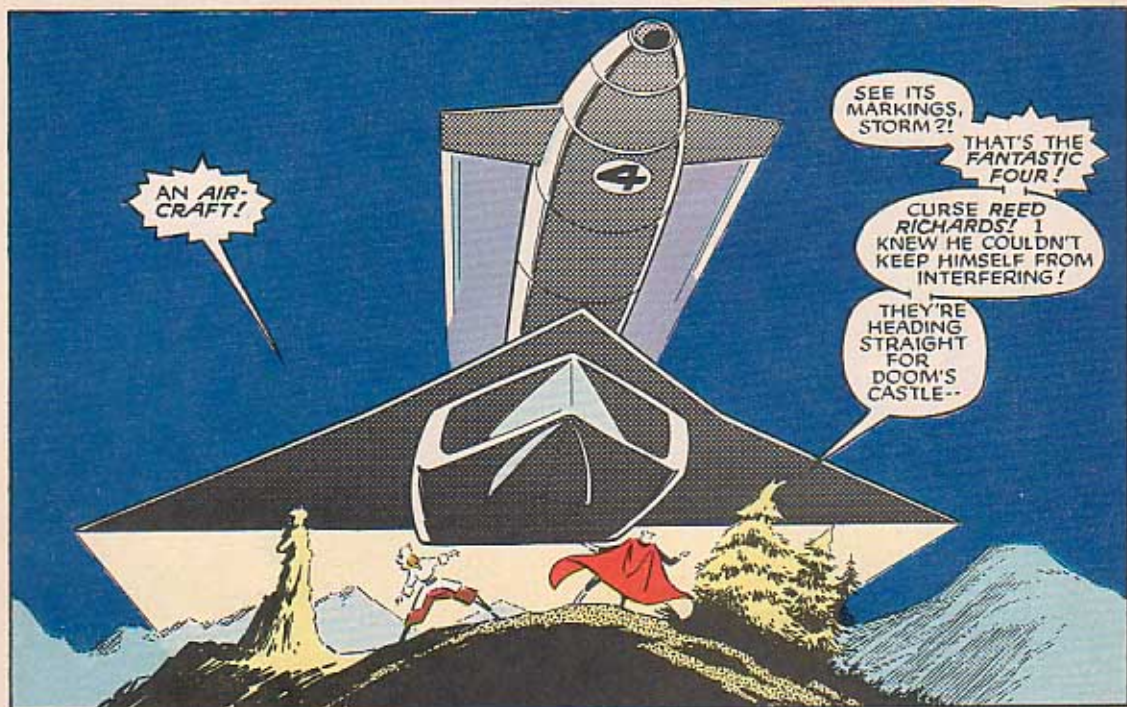
...AVOWED ENEMY OF HUMANKIND.

I HAD MY OPPORTUNITY TO SQUARE THOSE ACCOUNTS BEFORE THE WORLD COURT, BUT THE TRIAL WAS NEVER CONCLUDED. PERHAPS I SHOULD HAVE GONE BACK? YET, TO DO SO NOW...

...WOULD MEAN ABANDONING XAVIER'S SCHOOL, WHEN ITS STUDENTS NEED ME MOST-- WHAT?!

MAGNETO--?!





AN AIR-CRAFT!

SEE ITS MARKINGS, STORM?!

THAT'S THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

CURSE REED RICHARDS! I KNEW HE COULDN'T KEEP HIMSELF FROM INTERFERING!

THEY'RE HEADING STRAIGHT FOR DOOM'S CASTLE--



--BUT THEY WON'T REACH IT!

MAGNETO, WAIT!

WE DO NOT KNOW THAT THEY MEAN ANY HARM--!



WITH SHADOWCAT'S LIFE AT STAKE...

... I PREFER NOT TO TAKE ANY CHANCES.



HAVE YOU LOST YOUR SENSES, MAN, ATTACKING THEM LIKE THAT?!

TRUST ME-- MY MAGNETIC FORCE FIELD ONLY STOPPED THEM.

THE DEVIL WITH THEM!

NEITHER THE AIR-CRAFT NOR THOSE ABOARD ARE DAMAGED.

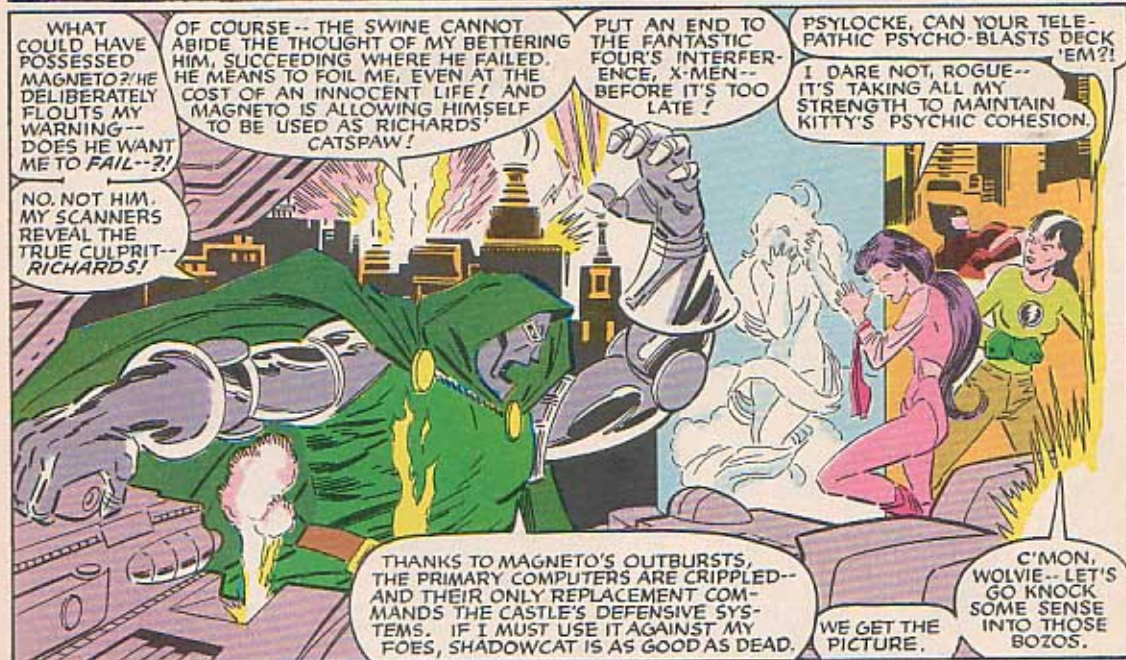
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN...



"... HOW DANGEROUS TO SHADOWCAT DOOM SAID YOUR POWERS WERE?!"

**NO!**

THE COMPUTERS' MAGNETIC BUBBLE MEMORY FIELDS ARE DISRUPTING, THE COHERENCY PROJECTOR IS LOSING FOCUS!



WHAT COULD HAVE POSSESSED MAGNETO? HE DELIBERATELY FLOUTS MY WARNING-- DOES HE WANT ME TO FAIL--?!

OF COURSE-- THE SWINE CANNOT ABIDE THE THOUGHT OF MY BETTERING HIM, SUCCEEDING WHERE HE FAILED. HE MEANS TO FOIL ME, EVEN AT THE COST OF AN INNOCENT LIFE! AND MAGNETO IS ALLOWING HIMSELF TO BE USED AS RICHARDS' CATSPAW!

PUT AN END TO THE FANTASTIC FOUR'S INTERFERENCE, X-MEN-- BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

PSYLOCKE, CAN YOUR TELEPATHIC PSYCHO-BLASTS DECK 'EM?!

I DARE NOT, ROGUE-- IT'S TAKING ALL MY STRENGTH TO MAINTAIN KITTY'S PSYCHIC COHESION.

NO. NOT HIM. MY SCANNERS REVEAL THE TRUE CULPRIT-- RICHARDS!

THANKS TO MAGNETO'S OUTBURSTS, THE PRIMARY COMPUTERS ARE CRIPPLED-- AND THEIR ONLY REPLACEMENT COMMANDS THE CASTLE'S DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS. IF I MUST USE IT AGAINST MY FOES, SHADOWCAT IS AS GOOD AS DEAD.

WE GET THE PICTURE.

C'MON, WOLVIE-- LET'S GO KNOCK SOME SENSE INTO THOSE BOZOS.



HURRY, MY FRIENDS.

YOU-- CREEP!

SO NOBLE, SO SUPPORTIVE--

--BUT I'M ON TO YOU, BUSTER. IT'S ALL AN ACT! YOU DON'T CARE A BIT ABOUT ANYONE, EXCEPT YOURSELF.

AND GOOD LUCK!

YOU FIGURE THIS IS A "NO-LOSE" SITUATION. YOU SAVE ME, THE X-MEN ARE IN YOUR DEBT.

YOU FAIL, NOBODY CAN BLAME YOU, 'CAUSE YOU DID YOUR BEST. IF I DIE BECAUSE OF REED RICHARDS' INTERVENTION, ALL THE BETTER FOR YOU. THE X-MEN AND FF WILL NEVER BE FRIENDS AGAIN.

DON'T YOU SEE, MY BEST CHANCE IS FOR YOU AND DR. RICHARDS TO JOIN FORCES--

--BUT I MIGHT AS WELL WISH FOR THE MOON.

MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE...

WHY ARE YOU HERE, RICHARDS? SHADOWCAT'S PLIGHT IS NO LONGER YOUR CONCERN.

WE'VE COME TO SAVE THE DAY, LADY, WHAT ELSE?

HEY--?! YOUR ARM-- THE BURNS ARE HEALED!

NO THANKS TO YOU, TORCH. TAKE CARE NOT TO BURN HER AGAIN.

THAT WAS AN ACCIDENT, MISTER--

-- AN' YOU'VE GOT A NERVE, STRIKING THAT ATTITUDE AFTER MAKING US CRASH!

TORCH!

THAT'S ENOUGH, LAD.

MAGNETO, PLEASE-- WE DON'T WISH TO FIGHT, ONLY HELP.

YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE, RICHARDS. WE BEGGED FOR YOUR AID, REMEMBER? BUT YOU REFUSED.

IS PRIDE WORTH MORE THAN A CHILD'S LIFE?!

IN THE PAST, STORM, YOU X-MEN HAVE RISKED EVERYTHING FOR OUR SAKE\*-- COULD YOU POSSIBLY BELIEVE WE COULDN'T DO THE SAME IN RETURN?!

REED'S CERTAIN HE'S FOUND THE KEY TO SAVING SHADOWCAT!

\*MOST RECENTLY, IN X-MEN ANNUAL #5-- AnnN.

HANG ON, BOSS!

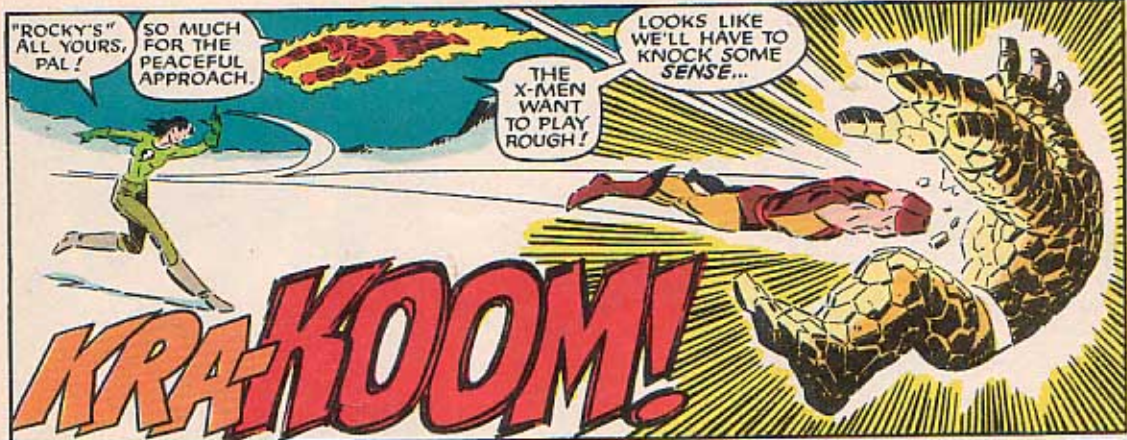
CAVALRY'S ON THE WAY!

WE'LL HIT 'EM HARD AN' FAST-- CLOBBER 'EM BEFORE THEY KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING--

-- THAT OKAY WITH YOU, SHORT-STUFF?!

MAKES MY DAY, DARLIN'!

BUT YOU MIND WHO YOU CALL "SHORT."



"ROCKY'S" ALL YOURS, PAL!

SO MUCH FOR THE PEACEFUL APPROACH.

THE X-MEN WANT TO PLAY ROUGH!

LOOKS LIKE WE'LL HAVE TO KNOCK SOME SENSE...

# KRA-KOOM!



...INTO THEIR THICK MUTIE SKULLS!

YOU'VE BEEN TOLD BEFORE, SUGAR--

Whua--?!!



--TO WATCH THE MOUTH!

CALL US "MUTIES" AGAIN...

FSSSS

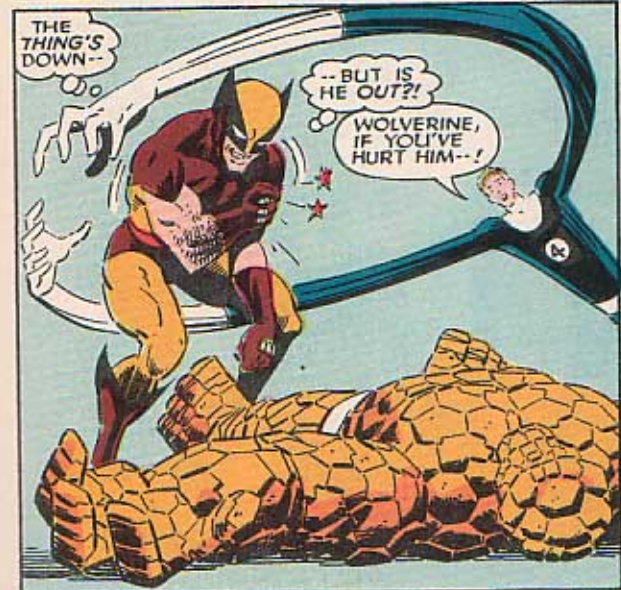
# SHPOOSH!



...AN' AH GUARANTEE YOU'LL NEVER DO ANYTHING AGAIN.

BINGO! SNOWDRIFT WORKED LIKE A CHARM, SNUFFIN' HIS FLAME RIGHT OUT!

THIS IS TOO EASY FOR WORDS, WE SHOULD BEAT ON THESE CHUMPS MORE OFTEN.



THE THING'S DOWN--

...BUT IS HE OUT?!

WOLVERINE, IF YOU'VE HURT HIM--!



L'I'L FELLA LIKE HIM?

CUT ME SOME SLACK, WILLYA, STRETCH?

IF THAT LOVE-TAP WAS HIS BEST SHOT...

... I GOT NOTHIN' TO WORRY ABOUT.

Oh, YEAH?!



SWEET DREAMS, BUB.

FORTUNATELY FOR YOU, BEN, WOLVERINE WAS STILL TOO DAZED FROM YOUR INITIAL IMPACT TO ACT AS QUICKLY AS HE DID WHEN LAST WE FOUGHT.

HIS ADAMANTIUM CLAWS COULD PROBABLY CUT EVEN YOUR SKIN.

WE HAVE TO STOP THIS MADNESS, OLD FRIEND. I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT THE X-MEN--

eh?!

"AIN'T LIKE WE STARTED THIS FRACAS, REED.

"AIN'T LIKE THE X-MEN ARE IN A MOOD TO LISTEN TO ANY EXPLANATIONS, EITHER."

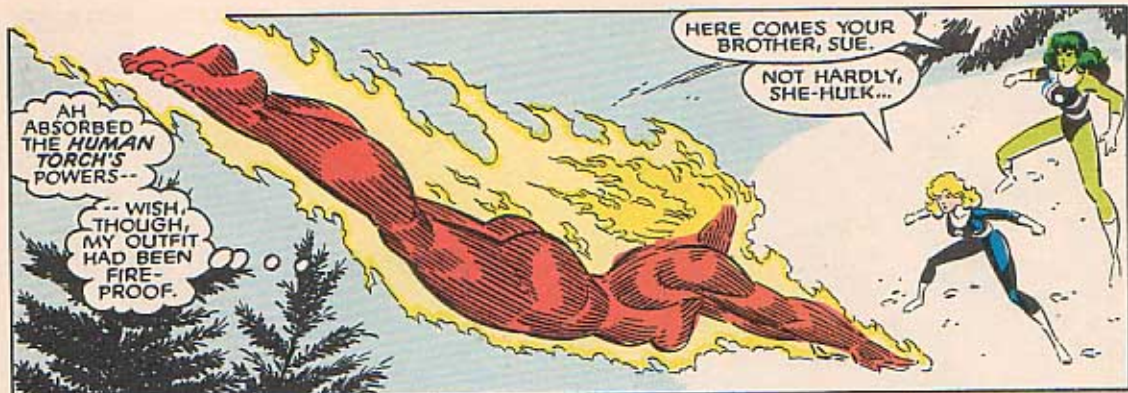
MAYBE I CAN CHANGE THAT ATTITUDE, BIG GUY.

\*X-FF #2--A.

ALISON, SHE-HULK MEANS TO THROW THAT ROCK AT US!

NOT IF I LAZE IT FIRST!

OH, DRAT!

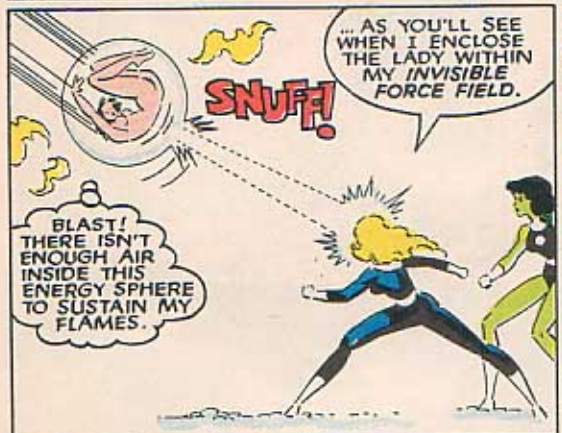


HERE COMES YOUR BROTHER, SUE.

NOT HARDLY, SHE-HULK...

AH ABSORBED THE HUMAN TORCH'S POWERS--

-- WISH, THOUGH, MY OUTFIT HAD BEEN FIRE-PROOF.



... AS YOU'LL SEE WHEN I ENCLOSE THE LADY WITHIN MY INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD.

**SNUFF!**

BLAST! THERE ISN'T ENOUGH AIR INSIDE THIS ENERGY SPHERE TO SUSTAIN MY FLAMES.



AH DON'T BUST OUT OF HERE-- PRONTO--

-- THERE WON'T BE ANY TO BREATHE!

WHAT THE HECK IS THE INVISIBLE WOMAN DOIN'--?

**ZANG!**

¡HO-HO--



AH'M LOCKED TIGHT-- MOVIN' TOO FAST-- CAN'T ALTER MY TRAJECTORY, NO TIME TO BUST FREE!

BAIL OUT!

YIKES!!

GANGWAY!



OUCH!

**CRASH!**



YOU GUYS WANT TO PLAY ROUGH?

BE MY PLEASURE TO OBLIGE.

PITY YOU LOST YOUR WEATHER POWERS, STORM.

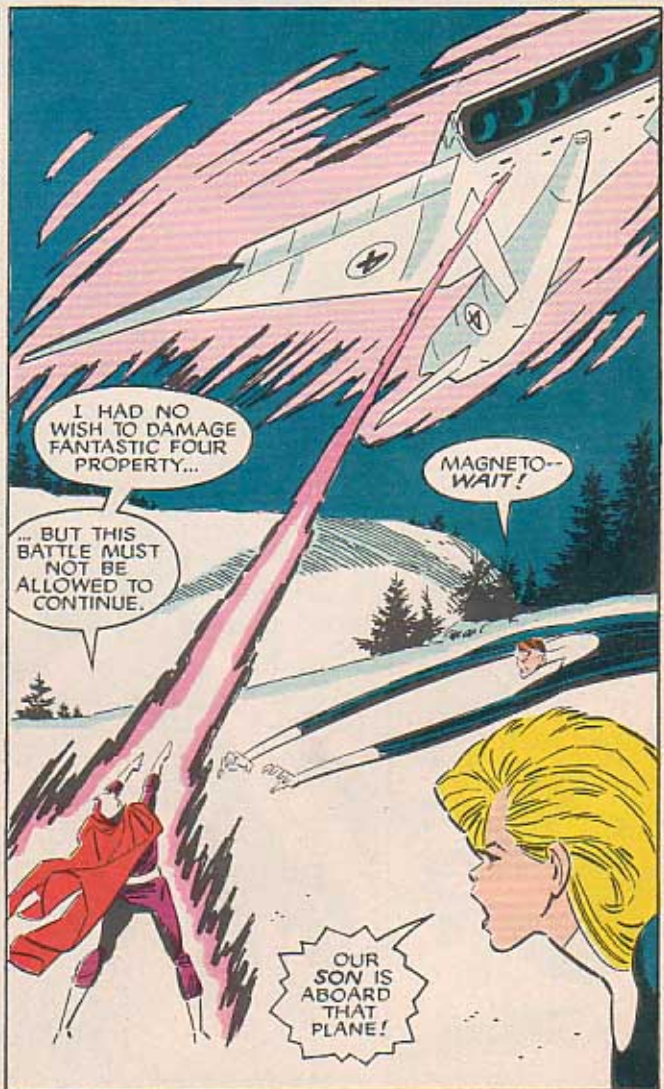


IF YOU HAD 'EM, THEN WE COULD GO A ROUND OR...



**BOOM!**  
SKA

...THREE.

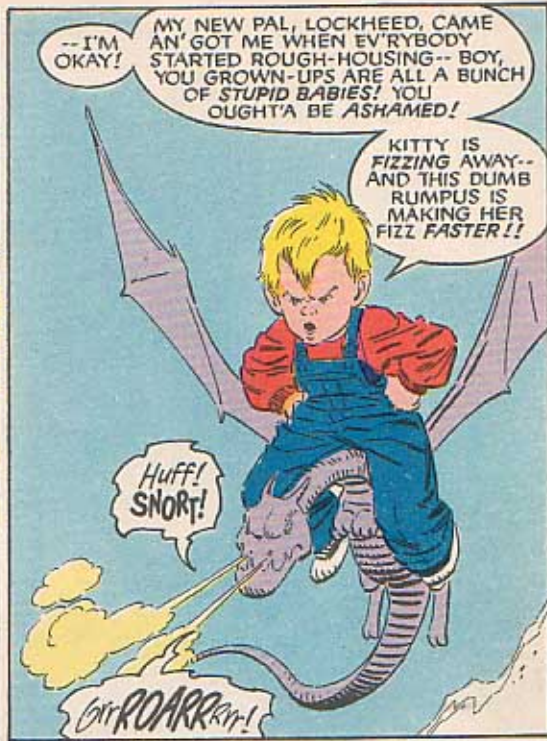
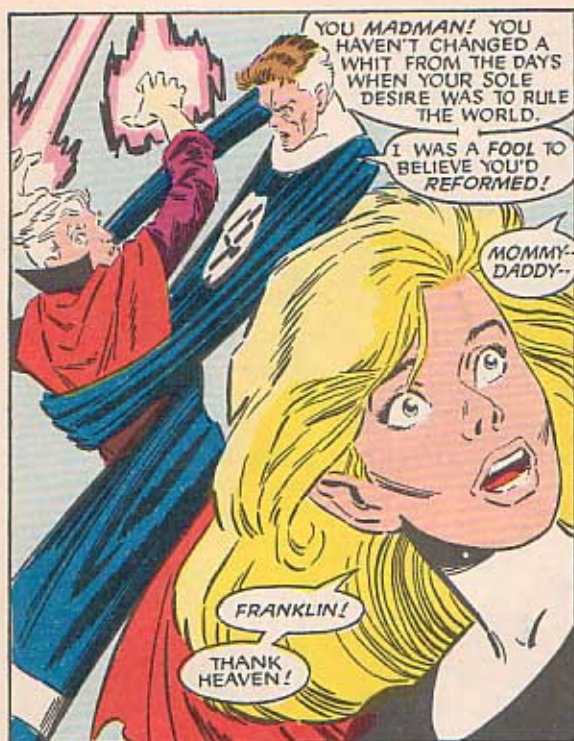


I HAD NO WISH TO DAMAGE FANTASTIC FOUR PROPERTY...

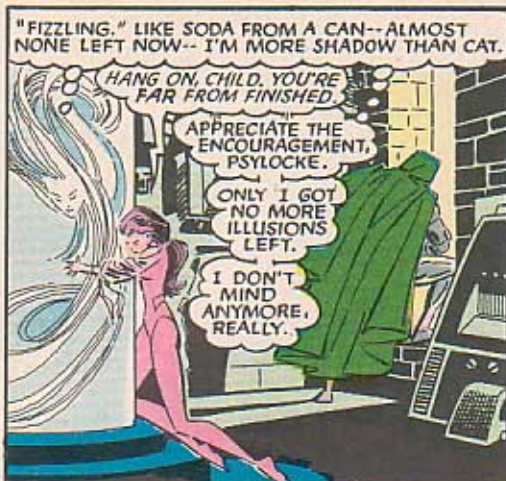
... BUT THIS BATTLE MUST NOT BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE.

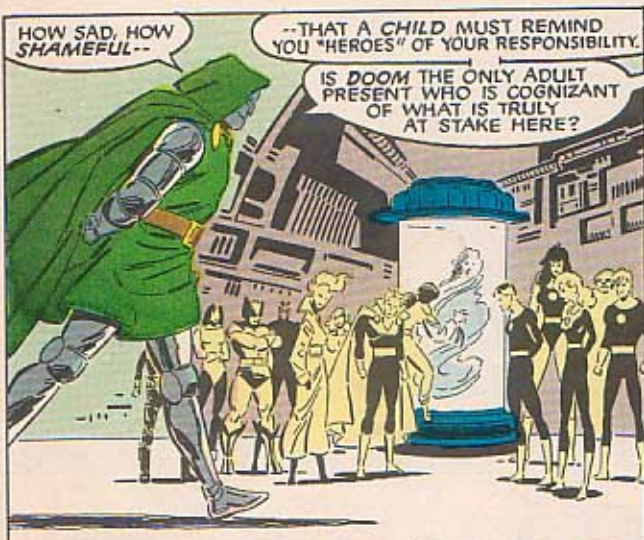
MAGNETO-- WAIT!

OUR SON IS ABOARD THAT PLANE!









HOW SAD, HOW SHAMEFUL--

--THAT A CHILD MUST REMIND YOU "HEROES" OF YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.

IS DOOM THE ONLY ADULT PRESENT WHO IS COGNIZANT OF WHAT IS TRULY AT STAKE HERE?



SHADOWCAT'S PHYSICAL FORM HAS ALREADY REACHED THE POINT OF ULTIMATE DISPERSAL.



ONLY PSYLOCKE'S TELEPATHIC POWERS ARE KEEPING THE GIRL'S PSYCHE FROM FOLLOWING SUIT.



HAD THIS INTERRUPTION NOT OCCURED, I WOULD HAVE SAVED HER BY NOW. AS THINGS STAND-- THANKS TO YOUR COLLECTIVE IDIOTCY-- I REGRET TO SAY THAT SUCCESS CAN NO LONGER BE GUARANTEED.

YOU HAVE YOUR POUND OF FLESH FROM US, DOOM.

AS YOU SAID, SHADOWCAT IS WHY WE ARE HERE.

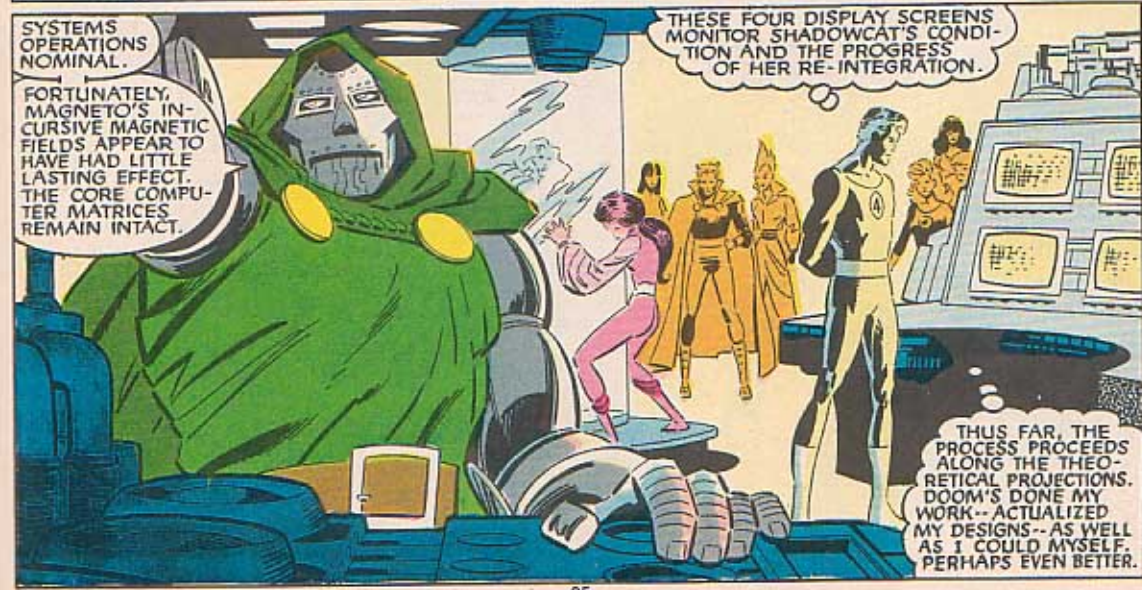


I CAN BUT TRY, MY DEAR.

SAVE HER IF YOU CAN.



ZKAK!



SYSTEMS OPERATIONS NOMINAL.

FORTUNATELY, MAGNETO'S INCURSIVE MAGNETIC FIELDS APPEAR TO HAVE HAD LITTLE LASTING EFFECT. THE CORE COMPUTER MATRICES REMAIN INTACT.

THESE FOUR DISPLAY SCREENS MONITOR SHADOWCAT'S CONDITION AND THE PROGRESS OF HER RE-INTEGRATION.

THUS FAR, THE PROCESS PROCEEDS ALONG THE THEORETICAL PROJECTIONS. DOOM'S DONE MY WORK-- ACTUALIZED MY DESIGNS-- AS WELL AS I COULD MYSELF. PERHAPS EVEN BETTER.



DOES THAT MAKE ME ANGRY? JEALOUS??

AM I SO PETTY???

STOP THINKING ABOUT YOURSELF, RICHARDS!

SHADOWCAT IS THE ONE IN NEED.



GIVE HER YOUR FULL CONCENTRATION. FEEL HARD-DONE-BY-- IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT-- AFTERWARDS-- WAIT!

FREEZE DISPLAY TWO--

-- BLAST, THE DATA STREAM IS MOVING TOO QUICKLY, IT'S ALREADY SCROLLED PAST!

SHUT DOWN THE RE-INTEGRATION PROCESS, DOOM-- AT ONCE!

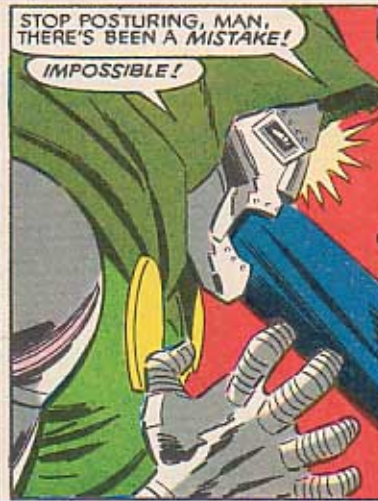


IT'S NEAT, WATCHING Mr. FANTASTIC'S BODY STRETCH LIKE SILLY PUTTY-- EVEN THOUGH WHAT HE'S DOING MAKES ME SCREAM AND CRY INSIDE.

I DON'T CARE ABOUT HIS REASONS, ALL I KNOW IS THAT HE'S KILLED ME!



IF THE CHILD DIES, RICHARDS, LET IT BE ON YOUR HEAD! AND IT WILL BE DOOM'S PLEASURE TO SEE YOU PUNISHED TO THE FULL EXTENT OF THE LAW!



STOP POSTURING, MAN, THERE'S BEEN A MISTAKE!

IMPOSSIBLE!

HEY, DOOMSIE, REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME REED GAVE YOU A WARNING, BACK IN COLLEGE?

DIDN'T YOU LEARN YOUR LESSON THEN?

THANKS, OLD FRIEND, FOR THAT VOTE OF CONFIDENCE.

STOP FIGHTING!



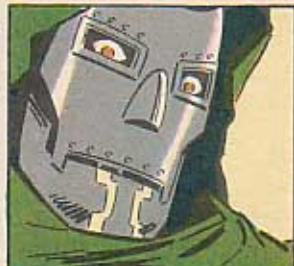
POPPA-- --MISS SHADYKITTY'S AWFUL SICK--

--CAN'T YOU AN' MISTER DOOM WAIT TILL LATER TO DO MORE YELLING?!



AN' YOU, MISTER DOOM-- DOES IT MATTER IF MY PA HELPS, SO LONG AS KITTY GETS SAVED?

I MEAN, ISN'T THAT MORE IMPORTANT THAN BEIN' BOSS, OR PROVIN' HOW SMART YOU ARE?



I SAW NO ANOMALY, RICHARDS. EXPLAIN YOURSELF.

THE REINTEGRATION PROCESS ALLOWS FOR SHADOWCAT'S WILD GENETIC STRUCTURE-- BUT EVIDENTLY, THE SPECIFIC INTERACTION OF THE DEVICE AND HER PHASING POWER GENERATE AN ONGOING FEEDBACK, INFINITESIMAL AT FIRST, SO SMALL IT SEEMS IRRELEVANT.

BUT AS THE PROCESS CONTINUES...

... THE FEEDBACK INCREASES EXPONENTIALLY--

--EVENTUALLY REACHING THE POINT WHERE NO AMOUNT OF FORCE CAN OVERCOME THE BUILT-UP SUB-MOLECULAR RESISTANCE, DESTROYING THE ORGANISM.

DOOM-- YOUR DISPLAYS--

--THEY'RE SPOUTING GIBBERISH!

THE BUBBLE MEMORY MATRICES APPEAR TO BE MORE VULNERABLE TO MAGNETO'S ACTIONS THAN I ANTICIPATED. THE DISRUPTION IS COMPLETE AND IRREPARABLE.

THERE'S STILL A CHANCE-- IF I PLOT THE REINTEGRATION MYSELF!

PERFORM ALL THE CALCULATIONS IN YOUR HEAD-- INSTANTLY, WITH NO MARGIN FOR ERROR? IMPOSSIBLE!

NOT EVEN DOOM'S INCOMPARABLE MENTALITY IS CAPABLE OF SUCH A FEAT.

WHATEVER YOU'RE GOING TO TRY, DO IT NOW!

I'M LOSING HER!

MY BRAIN CREATED THIS MACHINE, SURELY IT CAN SOLVE THIS PROBLEM.

BUT-- I'D MISSED THAT FEEDBACK ANOMALY.

SUPPOSE I MAKE ANOTHER MISTAKE??

I NEED TO BE CERTAIN.

BUT AFTER ALL I'VE BEEN THROUGH THESE PAST DAYS...

... I MAY NEVER BE CERTAIN AGAIN.

PROBLEMS, OLD FRIEND? MAY I BE OF ASSISTANCE?

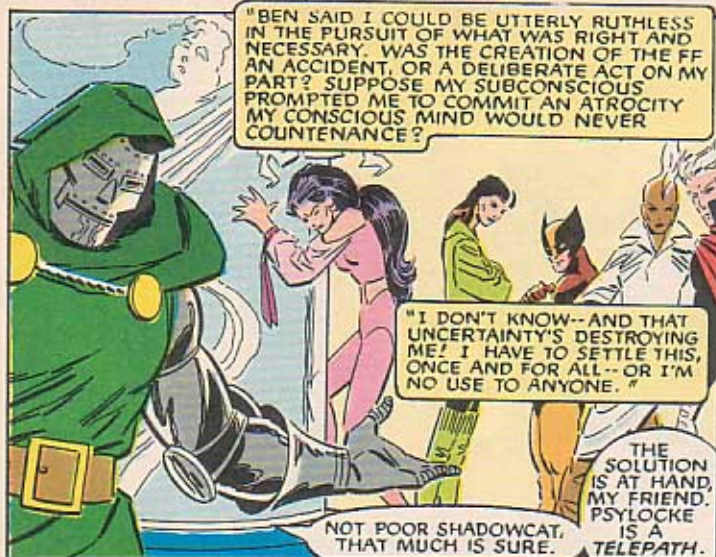
CURSE YOU, VICTOR, THIS IS THE MOMENT YOU'VE WAITED YOUR WHOLE LIFE FOR-- YOU FINALLY HAVE REED COMPLETELY AT YOUR MERCY--AND YOU'RE *LOVING* IT TO THE HILT!

IT'S THE SORT OF THING THAT CAN'T BE PREDICTED, ONLY DISCOVERED AND DEALT WITH THROUGH EXPERIENCE. JUST LIKE THE COSMIC RAYS THAT TRANSFORMED SUE, BEN, JOHNNY AND ME INTO THE FANTASTIC FOUR.

TRY AS I MIGHT, I CAN'T DRIVE THAT ACCURSED DIARY FROM MY THOUGHTS!

SUE, YOU SAID I COULDN'T HAVE WRITTEN IT--

-- BUT YOU'RE WRONG.



"BEN SAID I COULD BE UTTERLY RUTHLESS IN THE PURSUIT OF WHAT WAS RIGHT AND NECESSARY. WAS THE CREATION OF THE FF AN ACCIDENT, OR A DELIBERATE ACT ON MY PART? SUPPOSE MY SUBCONSCIOUS PROMPTED ME TO COMMIT AN ATROCITY MY CONSCIOUS MIND WOULD NEVER COUNTESSANCE?"

"I DON'T KNOW-- AND THAT UNCERTAINTY'S DESTROYING ME! I HAVE TO SETTLE THIS, ONCE AND FOR ALL-- OR I'M NO USE TO ANYONE."

THE SOLUTION IS AT HAND, MY FRIEND. PSYLOCKE IS A TELEPATH.

NOT POOR SHADOWCAT, THAT MUCH IS SURE.



HAVE HER READ YOUR INNERMOST THOUGHTS, THAT SHOULD SETTLE ALL DOUBTS.

BUT DO SO QUICKLY-- OR AN INNOCENT LIFE WILL BE FORFEIT!



HE'S RIGHT. SO EASY, SO TEMPTING--

--ONE WAY OR THE OTHER...

...AT LAST I'LL KNOW FOR SURE.



FOR PITY'S SAKE--

--THERE'S NO MORE TIME!



WHAT IS DOOM SUGGESTING-- IF PSYLOCKE HELPS ME, SHADOWCAT WILL DIE!

AND EVEN IF SHE COULD DO BOTH, SUPPOSE HER PSYPROBE ONLY CONFIRMS MY WORST FEARS???



CHOOSE, MY FRIEND.



STORM, LET ME ABSORB HIS PSYCHE. I'LL SAVE THE KID!

NO, ROGUE. WE SHALL HELP ONLY IF ASKED. THAT DECISION-- AND ITS CONSEQUENCES-- MUST REMAIN REED RICHARDS' ALONE!

TAKIN' A BIG RISK, BOSS.

I HAD NO CHOICE. AND YOU KNOW WHY.



YUP. IF THE MAN NEEDS BETTS TO VALIDATE HIS LIFE-- IF HE HAS SO LITTLE FAITH IN HIMSELF-- HE'LL NEVER BE AS GOOD AGAIN.

DEEP DOWN INSIDE, WHERE A PERSON NEEDS TO BE CERTAIN...

...THERE'LL ALWAYS BE DOUBT.

AN' THAT DOUBT'LL EAT UP HIS SOUL LIKE A CANCER, KILLIN' HIM AS SURELY AS ANY BULLET.



SUPPOSE PSYLOCKE LEARNS THE TRUTH, BUT LIES TO ME--

--FOR SHADOWCAT'S SAKE??

HOW CAN I BELIEVE HER???



LORD FORGIVE ME--

-- I DON'T KNOW WHO TO TURN TO--

-- I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO!



SOMETHING ABOUT DOOM'S ATTITUDE -- AS IF WHAT'S HAPPENING TO REED ISN'T A SURPRISE...

BUT HOW-- UNLESS-- OH, NO! OH, NO!

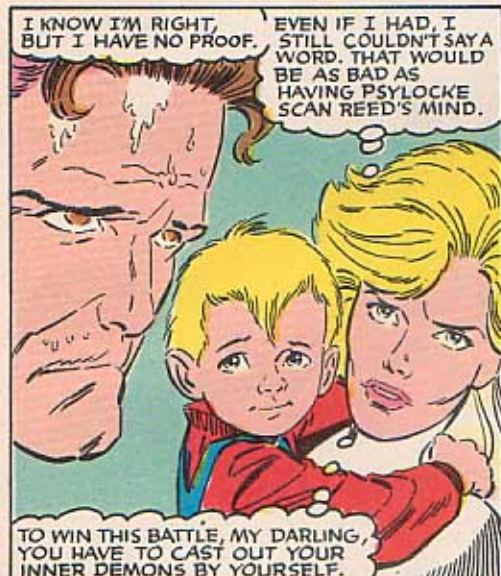
ALL ALONG, I'VE BEEN WRACKING MY BRAINS-- IF REED DIDN'T WRITE THAT DIARY, WHO COULD HAVE?!



WHO KNOWS REED AS WELL AS REED DOES HIMSELF, YET REMAINS A TWISTED DOPPELGÄNGER OF HIM, FILLED WITH HATRED AND ENVY?

WHO HAS BOTH MOTIVE AND IMMUNITY TO CRAFT SO CRUEL A DECEPTION?!

DOOM.



I KNOW I'M RIGHT, BUT I HAVE NO PROOF.

EVEN IF I HAD, I STILL COULDN'T SAY A WORD. THAT WOULD BE AS BAD AS HAVING PSYLOCKE SCAN REED'S MIND.

TO WIN THIS BATTLE, MY DARLING, YOU HAVE TO CAST OUT YOUR INNER DEMONS BY YOURSELF.



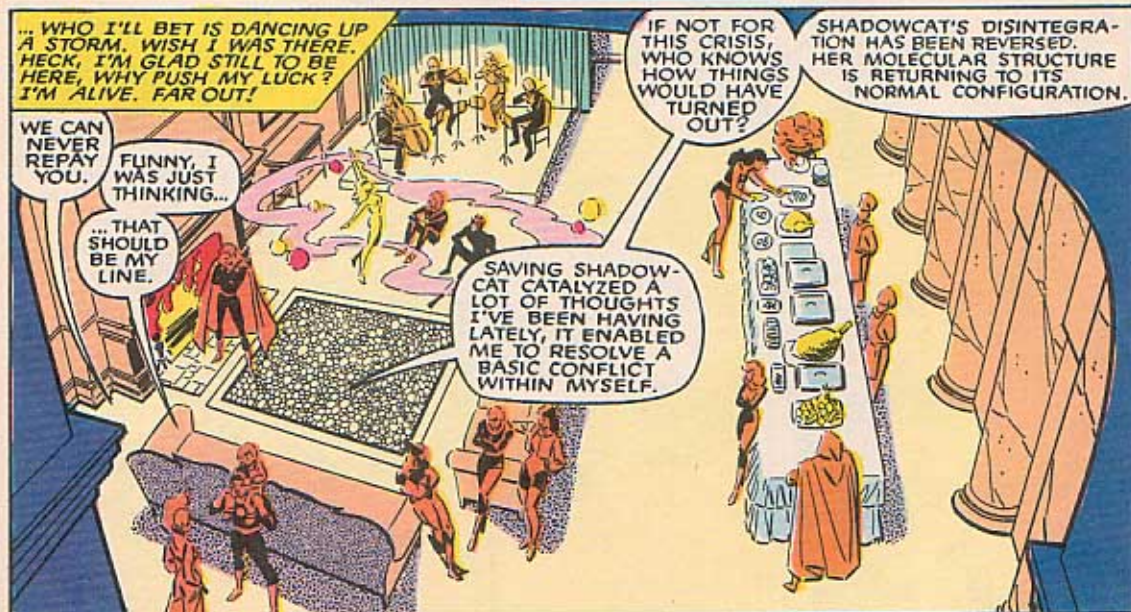
THE ANSWER TO WHO AND WHAT YOU ARE...

... LIES IN THE HEARTS OF THOSE YOU LOVE...

... AND IN YOUR OWN SOUL.

THEY REQUIRE NO PROOF, MERELY FAITH-- WHICH MAKES THEM THE HARDEST ANSWERS OF ALL.

THE NEXT HOURS, THANKFULLY, ARE A BIG BLUR. NEXT THING I KNOW, IT'S NIGHT AND I CAN HEAR THE SOUND OF LAUGHTER, SEE FLASHES OF LIGHT THROUGH THE WINDOWS, THROWN OFF BY DAZZLER...



... WHO I'LL BET IS DANCING UP A STORM. WISH I WAS THERE. HECK, I'M GLAD STILL TO BE HERE, WHY PUSH MY LUCK? I'M ALIVE. FAR OUT!

WE CAN NEVER REPAY YOU.

FUNNY, I WAS JUST THINKING...

... THAT SHOULD BE MY LINE.

IF NOT FOR THIS CRISIS, WHO KNOWS HOW THINGS WOULD HAVE TURNED OUT?

SAVING SHADOWCAT CATALYZED A LOT OF THOUGHTS I'VE BEEN HAVING LATELY, IT ENABLED ME TO RESOLVE A BASIC CONFLICT WITHIN MYSELF.

SHADOWCAT'S DISINTEGRATION HAS BEEN REVERSED. HER MOLECULAR STRUCTURE IS RETURNING TO ITS NORMAL CONFIGURATION.



IT WON'T BE A QUICK CONVALESCENCE, I'M AFRAID. IN EFFECT...

WE'LL BE LETTING THE NATURAL HEALING PROCESS RUN ITS COURSE.



BUT THE PROGNOSIS IS GOOD. HER RECOVERY SHOULD BE COMPLETE.

YAY, DADDY!

MY MISTAKE-- AND DOOM'S-- WAS IN TRYING TO RUSH THINGS ALONG.



FORTUNATELY, THAT ERROR WAS CORRECTABLE. HOW BLITHELY HE FORGIVES.

EVERYONE BUT HIMSELF.

UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, VICTOR...

... YOU'RE BEHAVING WITH UNCOMMON GOOD GRACE.

EVEN A GYPSY'S SON, SUSAN, HAS SOME SMALL AWARENESS OF THE RULES OF HOSPITALITY.



YOU KNOW, MY SON HAD A PROPHETIC DREAM-- A SORT OF HARBINGER OF THIS WHOLE ADVENTURE.

FASCINATING.

IN IT, HE SAW YOU AND REED MERGE INTO ONE.

WE ARE MUCH ALIKE, RICHARDS AND I. AS CAIN AND ABEL, AS DAVID AND JONATHAN--WHAT OF IT?



ON YOUR TOES, THING.

DOOM WANTS TROUBLE, DOLL...

I'LL GIVE HIM A MOUTHFUL.

MAGNETO'S MAKIN' A MOVE, TOO.



DR. RICHARDS-- IN DARKER TIMES, WE WERE BITTER FOES. I DO NOT ASK YOU NOW TO FORGET WHAT I WAS, OR FORGIVE WHAT WAS DONE.

THIS DAY, HOWEVER, I ACTED THE FOOL. I LET RAGE AND FEAR AND MISTRUST RULE...



... AND ALMOST PAID THE MOST TERRIBLE OF PRICES.

PLEASE-- ACCEPT MY THANKS FOR THE LIFE OF KITTY...



... AND...  
... MY APOLOGY.



THE MAGNETO I REMEMBER COULD NOT HAVE SAID THOSE WORDS. HE HAD TOO MUCH ARROGANCE TO EVER ADMIT A MISTAKE.

PERHAPS-- I HAVE MISJUDGED YOU.

I TRULY HOPE SO.

THIS WILL BE A DOUBLE CELEBRATION, LOGAN, IF MAGNETO AND REED RICHARDS HAVE INDEED MADE THEIR PEACE.

IT'S ONLY A FIRST STEP, DARLIN'. TRICK'LL BE MAKIN' THAT "PEACE" LAST.

TRY SOME CAVIAR, MY DEAR. LATVERIA PRODUCES THE FINEST IN THE WORLD.

YOU WROTE THAT DIARY, VICTOR! YOU-- A COLD MAN, WHO THINKS OF OTHERS SOLELY AS PAWNS...



...ABOUT RICHARDS' MISSUS AND DOOM. ME, I'M MORE WORRIED RIGHT NOW...

...WHO DELIGHTS IN USING PEOPLE LIKE PUPPETS!

YOU CRAFTED THAT FORGERY-- SET THIS TRAP-- YEARS AGO, NOT CARING ABOUT THE DAMAGE IT WOULD CAUSE, OR WHO WOULD BE HURT, WHEN IT WAS FINALLY SPRUNG...

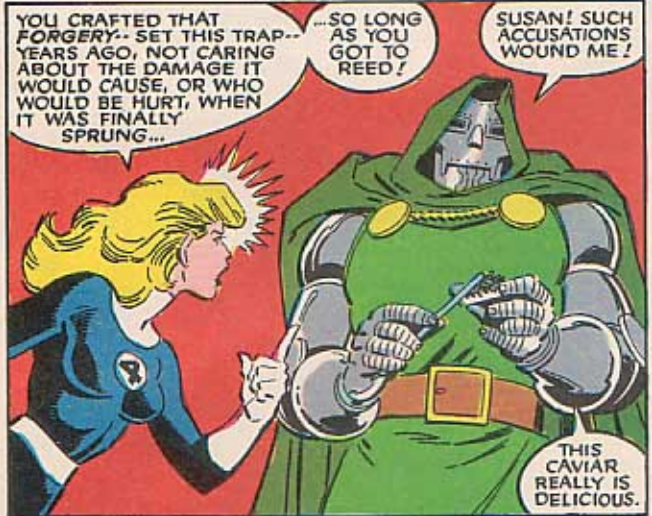
...SO LONG AS YOU GOT TO REED!

SUSAN! SUCH ACCUSATIONS WOUND ME!

IF REED HAD TURNED TO PSYLOCKE-- AS YOU OH-SO-SOLICITOUSLY SUGGESTED-- HE WOULD NEVER AGAIN HAVE BEEN THE SAME MAN.

A SMIDGEN OF DOUBT WOULD ALWAYS REMAIN-- A CHINK IN HIS ARMOR, A WOUND THAT WOULD NEVER HEAL.

YOU'RE DENYING YOURSELF A RARE TREAT



THIS CAVIAR REALLY IS DELICIOUS.

EFFECTUALLY SPEAKING...

... THE FOUNDER AND LEADER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR...

... WOULD HAVE BEEN CRIPPLED. AND YOU'D HAVE FINALLY ACHIEVED THE VICTORY OVER HIM...

... YOU'VE LUSTED AFTER SINCE COLLEGE.



WHAT GIVES--?

BE READY, X-MEN.

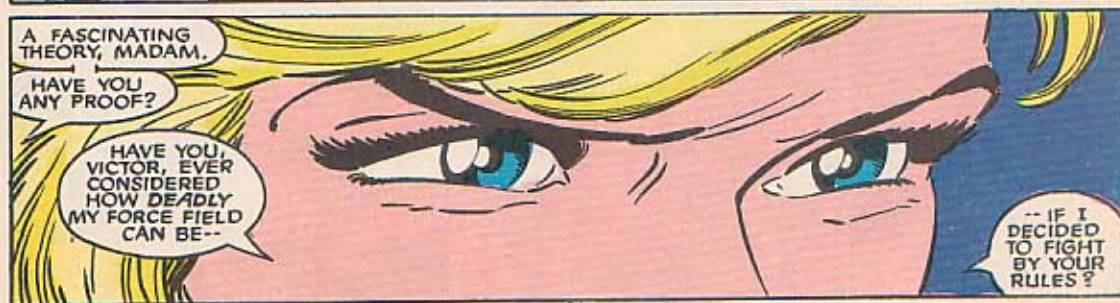
ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN.

A FASCINATING THEORY, MADAM.

HAVE YOU ANY PROOF?

HAVE YOU, VICTOR, EVER CONSIDERED HOW DEADLY MY FORCE FIELD CAN BE--

-- IF I DECIDED TO FIGHT BY YOUR RULES?







IS THAT A CHALLENGE, SUSAN--

-- YOUR WILL AND NATURAL STRENGTH, VERSUS MY TECHNOLOGY?

BE CAREFUL, VICTOR. A LIONESS IS MOST DANGEROUS...

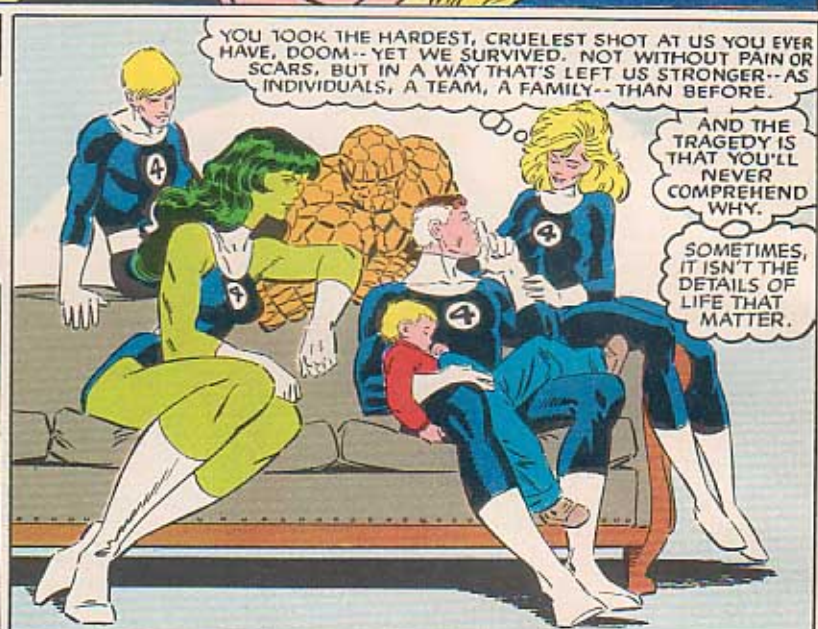
... DEFENDING MATE AND CUB AND DEN.

BUT THERE'S NO NEED TO SPEAK OF CHALLENGES OR PROOF...



... BECAUSE THIS MATCH IS OVER...

... AND WE WON!



YOU TOOK THE HARDEST, CRUELEST SHOT AT US YOU EVER HAVE, DOOM-- YET WE SURVIVED. NOT WITHOUT PAIN OR SCARS, BUT IN A WAY THAT'S LEFT US STRONGER-- AS INDIVIDUALS, A TEAM, A FAMILY-- THAN BEFORE.

AND THE TRAGEDY IS THAT YOU'LL NEVER COMPREHEND WHY.

SOMETIMES, IT ISN'T THE DETAILS OF LIFE THAT MATTER.



"WHAT'S MOST IMPORTANT IS FAITH, AND TRUST..."

"... AND LOVE."

FRANKLIN'S BODY'S IN DREAMLAND...



... SO HIS ASTRAL SELF CAN COME VISITING.

I'LL BE OUT OF THIS TUBE SOMEDAY, FRANKLIN. MAYBE THEN WE CAN HOLD HANDS FOR REAL.

I'D LIKE THAT.



DOWNSTAIRS, THEY'RE PLAYING A WALTZ, MY FAVORITE. I LEAD. HE LEARNS FAST. WAY TO GO!

MAYBE, IF IT'S OKAY, I COULD VISIT, FROM TIME TO TIME-- Y'KNOW, THIS WAY, WHEN I'M ASLEEP.



I'D LIKE THAT, TOO.

OUR NIGHTMARE'S OVER.

OUR DREAM HAS JUST BEGUN.

FIN