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WHAT IF...

STORM OF THE

X-MEN

HAD REMAINED A THIEF?



30TH
ANNIVERSARY
1962 - 1992



THE AMAZING
SPIDER-MAN

WHAT IF...

THAT PRETTY GIRL,
WHO CAUGHT YOUR EYE
AND SMILED...

WHAT IF YOU HAD SAID
HELLO, INSTEAD OF LETTING
HER SLIP AWAY?

THAT ACHE YOU FEEL, THAT YOU'VE FELT ALL YOUR LIFE,
WHAT IF YOU'D CONTINUED TO TOUCH THOSE PIANO KEYS, AND
WERE NOW A WONDERFUL PIANIST... WOULD IT HAVE
RELIEVED THAT ACHE?

I AM THE WATCHER,
AND I CONTEMPLATE
THAT ONE QUESTION:
WHAT IF.

THE FOURTH DIMENSION IS
TIME, AND BEYOND THAT LIES
THE FIFTH. THIS IS THE PORTAL AT
WHICH I STAND.

THE FIFTH DIMENSION HERALDS
MULTIPLICITIES -- ALL PATHS THAT
COULD BE TAKEN.

TODAY I WONDER ABOUT
HEROIC BLOOD -- ARE HEROES BORN,
THEIR HEROIC DESTINY INEVITABLE?

OR, IF ONE PIECE WERE
TO BE SHIFTED, COULD A SO-CALLED
HERO AS EASILY BECOME WHAT WOULD
BE CALLED A VILLAIN?

WHAT IF STORM STAYED A THIEF?

LOOK AT THIS CHILD,
ORORO, AND WONDER
WITH ME...



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SO MANY HATS ONE COULD WEAR,
SO MANY WAYS TO BE...

DID YOU EVER WONDER,
"AM I LIVING THE WRONG LIFE?"

"IF ONLY I'D STEPPED
RIGHT, INSTEAD OF LEFT?"

THIS BRAVE LITTLE SOUL,
ORORO, WAS BORN ONCE FROM
HER MOTHER'S FLESH.

AND THEN AGAIN, SHE CRAWLED
HER WAY OUT OF A WOMB OF
RUBBLE AFTER BEING BURIED
ALIVE. THIS TIME
HER MOTHER DIED.

ORPHANED, SHE BECAME OF
NECESSITY A THIEF IN CAIRO.
BUT UPON TRAVELING BY
CHANCE INTO AFRICA, SHE
DISCOVERED HER TRUE NATURE--
THAT OF A GODDESS AND A HERO.

SHE MET A PROFESSOR
XAVIER, AND KNOWING SHE
WAS BORN TO HELP OTHER
MUTANTS LIKE HERSELF,
SHE WAS READY TO ACCEPT
HIS TUTELAGE.

BUT WHAT IF SHE HAD NEVER STEPPED ON THAT BOAT, NEVER SAILED FOR AFRICA?

NEVER MET THE TRIBES THAT WORSHIPPED HER AND TAUGHT HER RESPONSIBILITY?

WHO, THEN, WOULD SHE BE?

CAIRO, EGYPT.

IT'S GETTING LIGHT.

IF IT'S DAWN, IT'S TIME FOR ME TO FIND MY BED.

WELL, MAYBE JUST ONE MORE CUP OF COFFEE...

MIGHT BE A HIP CAT OR TWO PROWLING AROUND LOOKING FOR SOME JAVA.

HMMM. NOW WHY IS THAT YOUNG BOY PRETENDING NOT TO SEE ME?

OOPS.

Bump

'SCUSE ME, SIR, DROPPED MY BALL.

"ALL RIGHT, JACK."

"YOU MAY COME WITH ME, AND I'LL TEACH YOU ALL I KNOW."

"BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO *WORK HARD* AND SHARE WHAT YOU GET WITH AN OLD MAN."

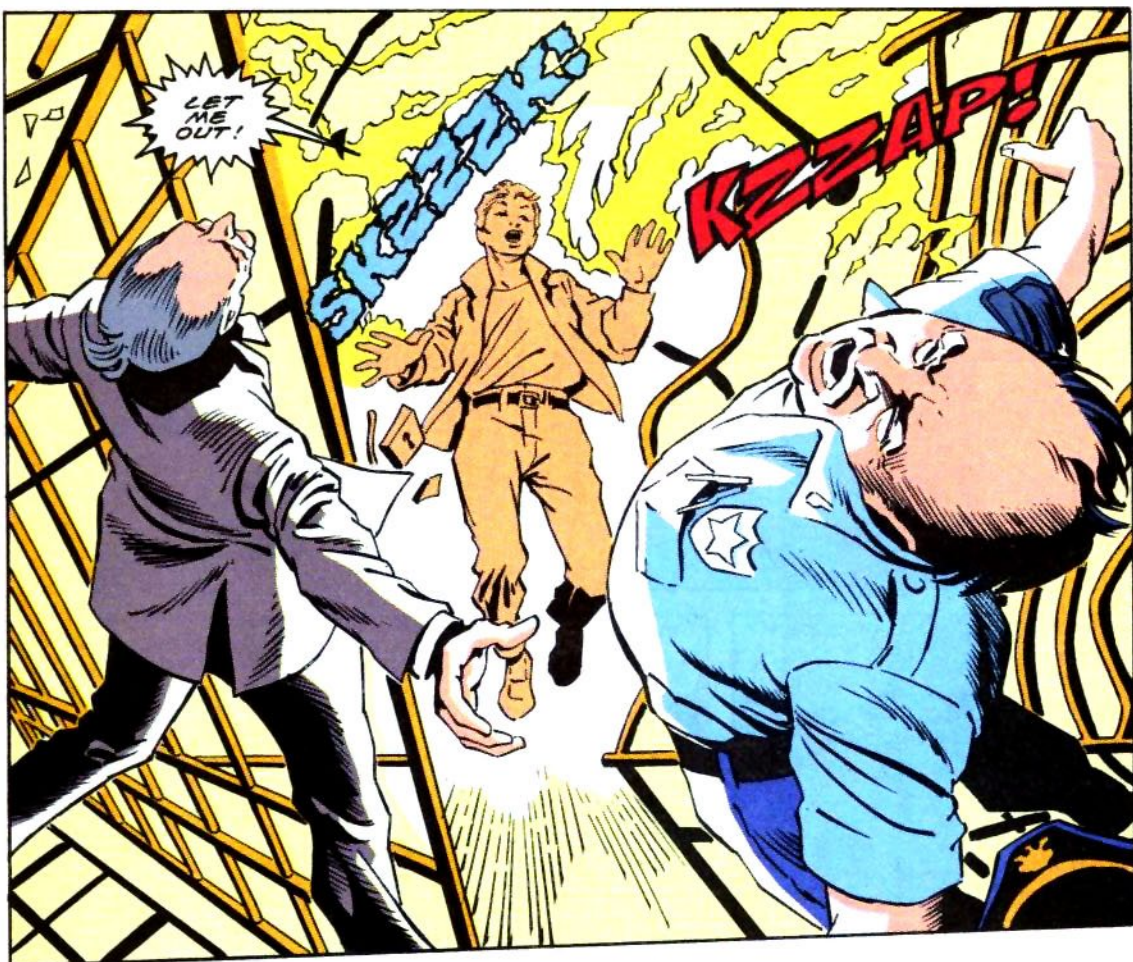
"YOU'LL HAVE TO *RESPECT* MY FRIENDS, FOR ALTHOUGH THEIR LIPSTICK MAY BE THICK AND SMEARED, AND THEIR CLOTHING THIN, THEY ALL HIDE DREAMS IN THEIR SUITCOAT POCKETS--*DIGNIFIED DREAMS*."













YEARS LATER...

MY, MY,
SHE CAN'T
TURN
IT OFF--

HERMAN'S
TRAINING
HAS BEEN
GOOD.

--EXCEPT
FOR OVER
OUR HEADS!

HAHAHAHA!

NOT BAD.

WE CAN DO
SOMETHING
WITH THIS...



I CAN CONTROL THESE
LIGHTNING SPARKS,
SHORT-CIRCUIT
ANY ALARM.



NOW WE CAN GET
INTO THESE
FANCY HOMES...

BUT... THESE
POWERS OF MINE,
IS THIS ALL
I'LL EVER USE
THEM FOR?



WHEN I WAS SMALL
AND HUNGRY,
STEALING MADE
SENSE.



NOW, I'M OLDER,
STRONGER...

I COULD GET
A REAL JOB...

OH, I
DON'T
KNOW...

I WANT
SOMETHING, BUT
I DON'T KNOW
WHAT!



I FEEL SO
STRANGE
THESE
DAYS!

IT WAS ONE
THING TO STEAL
TO STAY ALIVE
AND FEED MY
FRIENDS...

BUT NOW,
WE HAVE SO
MUCH MONEY---
WHY DON'T
WE QUIT?



I FEEL SOMETHING
IN MYSELF... I SEE IT
IN MY FRIENDS...

I FEEL...
GREEDY.

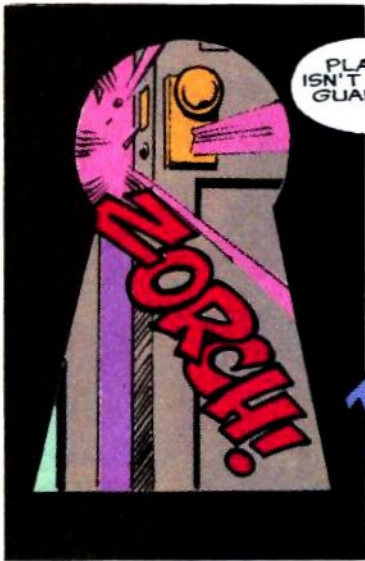


NOT EVEN HERMAN'S SMART,
REASSURING TALK CAN
SOOTHE ME.



OH, I GUESS
I SHOULD
JUST LEAVE
THE THINKING
TO HIM...





PLACE ISN'T EVEN GUARDED.

BOOSH!



LOOKIT THIS DUMP.

Thunk thunk



snikt!

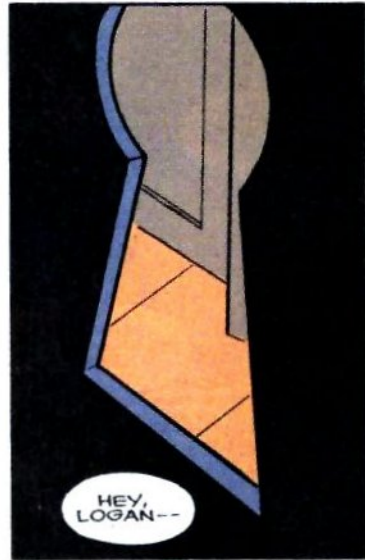


I FOUND IT!



IT WAS IN AN OLD MAN'S SHOE!

EH, PROBABLY SOME CHUMP THIEF WHO DIDN'T EVEN KNOW WHAT HE STOLE.



HEY, LOGAN--



--ANYTHING IN THAT TRUNK?



NOPE.

NOTHIN'..

HEH HEH.



LET'S GO, TROOPS.



WAM!



SOMEONE ELSE COMING!
HERMAN!



WHAT'RE YOU DOING IN THERE?

YOU OKAY?

OH, I'M ALL RIGHT.

JUST A BIT SHOOK UP.



THESE TERRIBLE... UH... PEOPLE WERE HERE!

SEARCHED THE PLACE... THEY WEREN'T VERY NICE.

OH, THEY TOOK THAT BIG STONE, I THINK.
FRIGHTENING FELLOWS!

HERMAN, WHAT DID THEY LOOK LIKE?



I DIDN'T SEE MUCH...
I MUST ADMIT I WAS TOO SCARED...

... BUT I DID SEE BIG BLACK X'S ON THEIR BELTS...



THE X-MEN!

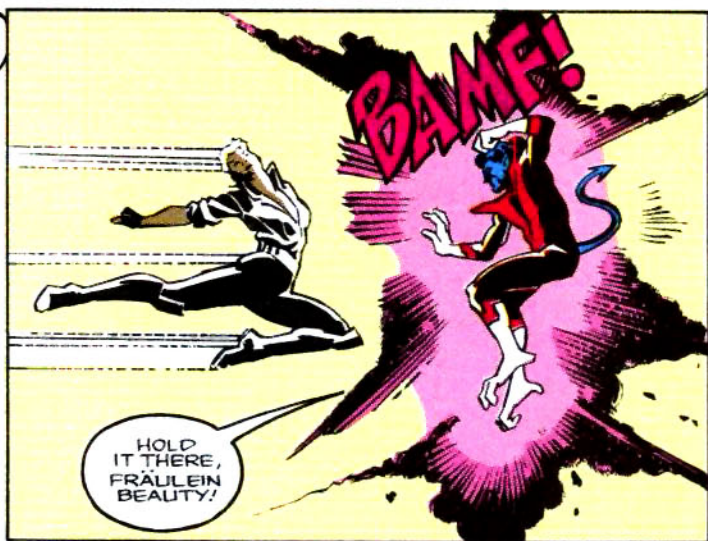
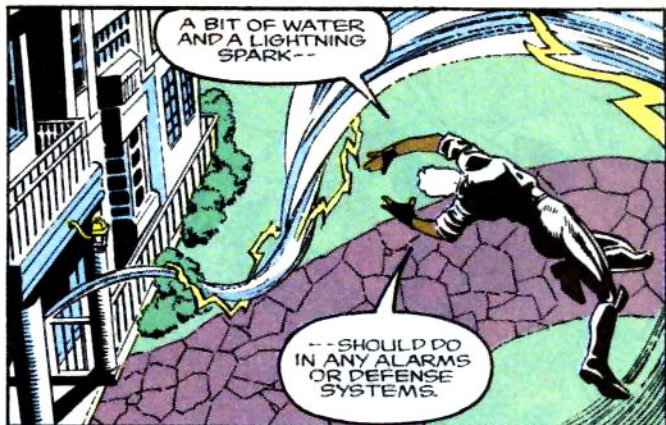
HOW DARE THEY FRIGHTEN YOU!



JACK, WHERE YOU GOING?

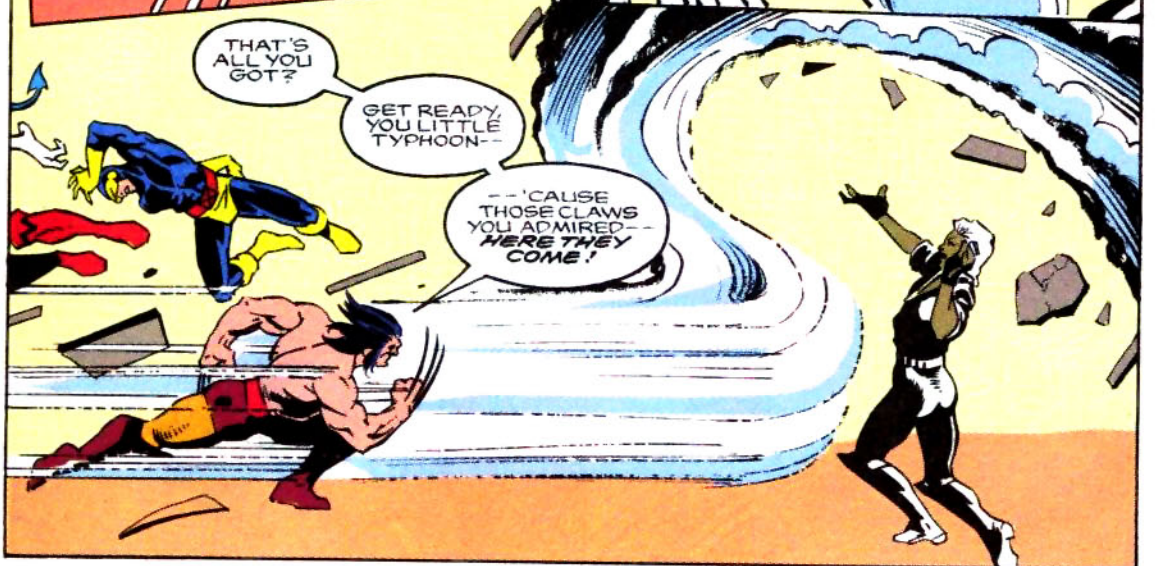
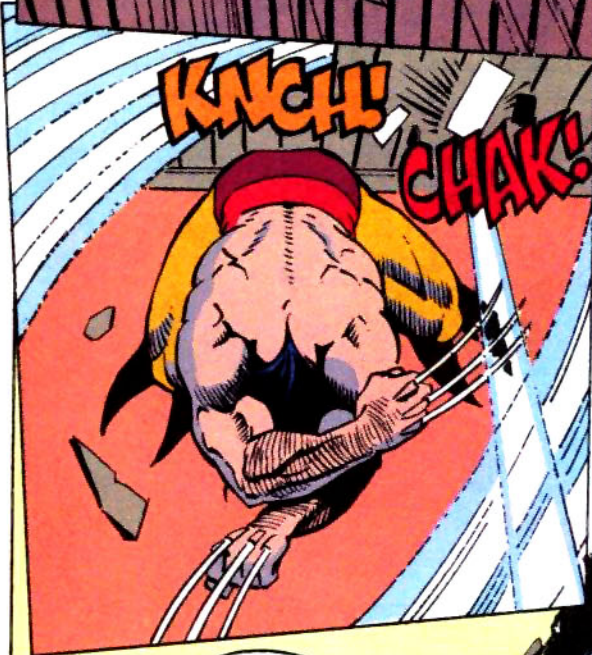
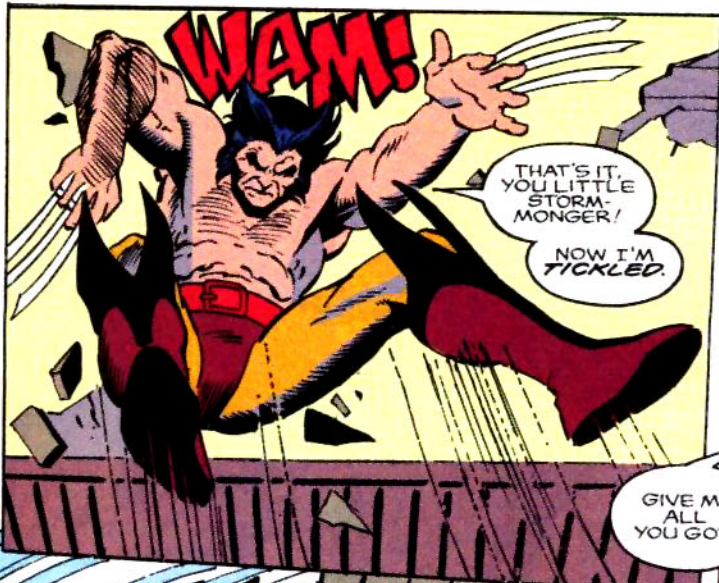
JACK, THERE WAS NO HARM DONE!
FORGET IT, I'M FINE!

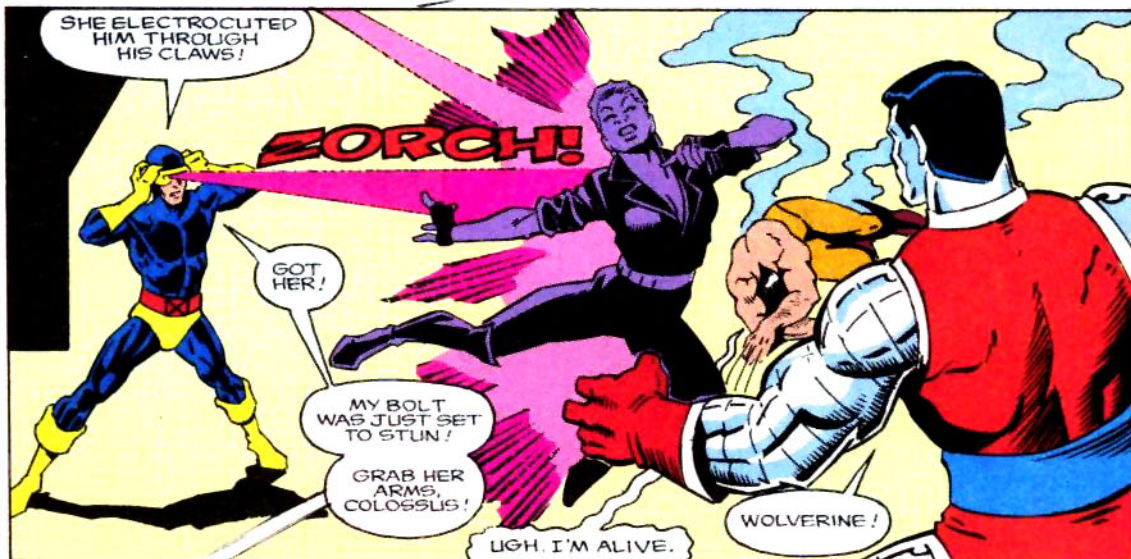
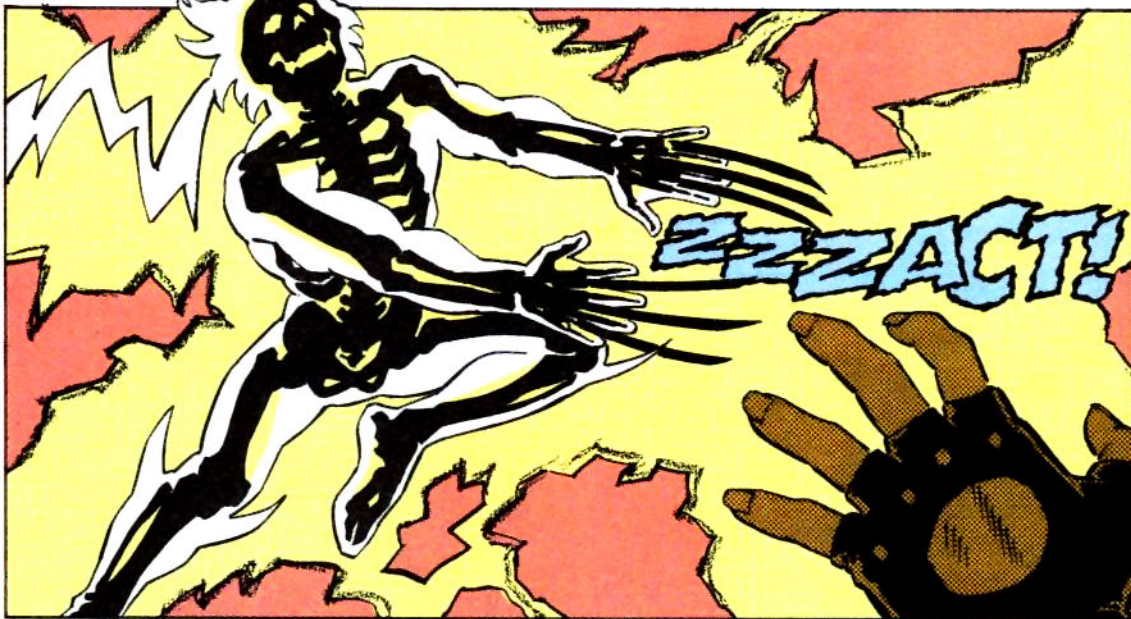
NO!



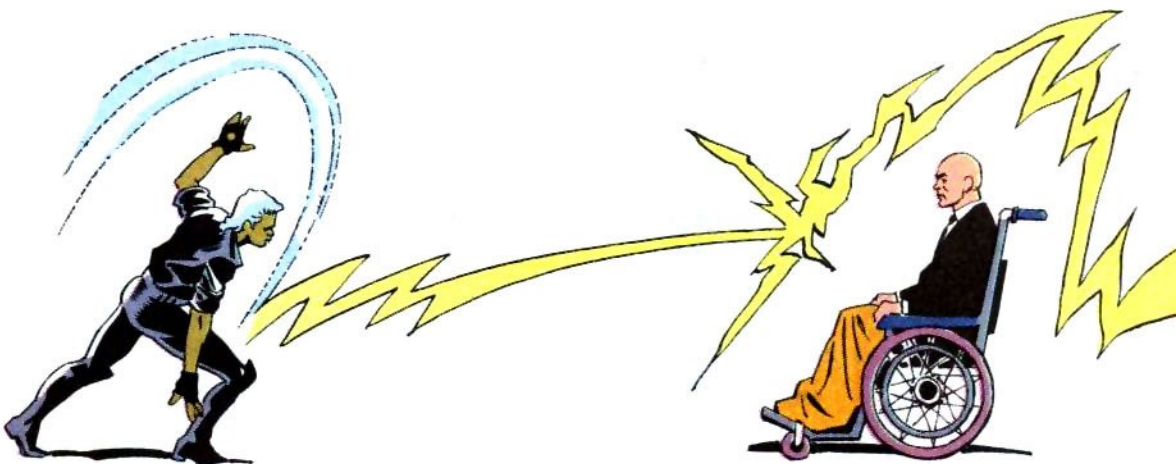


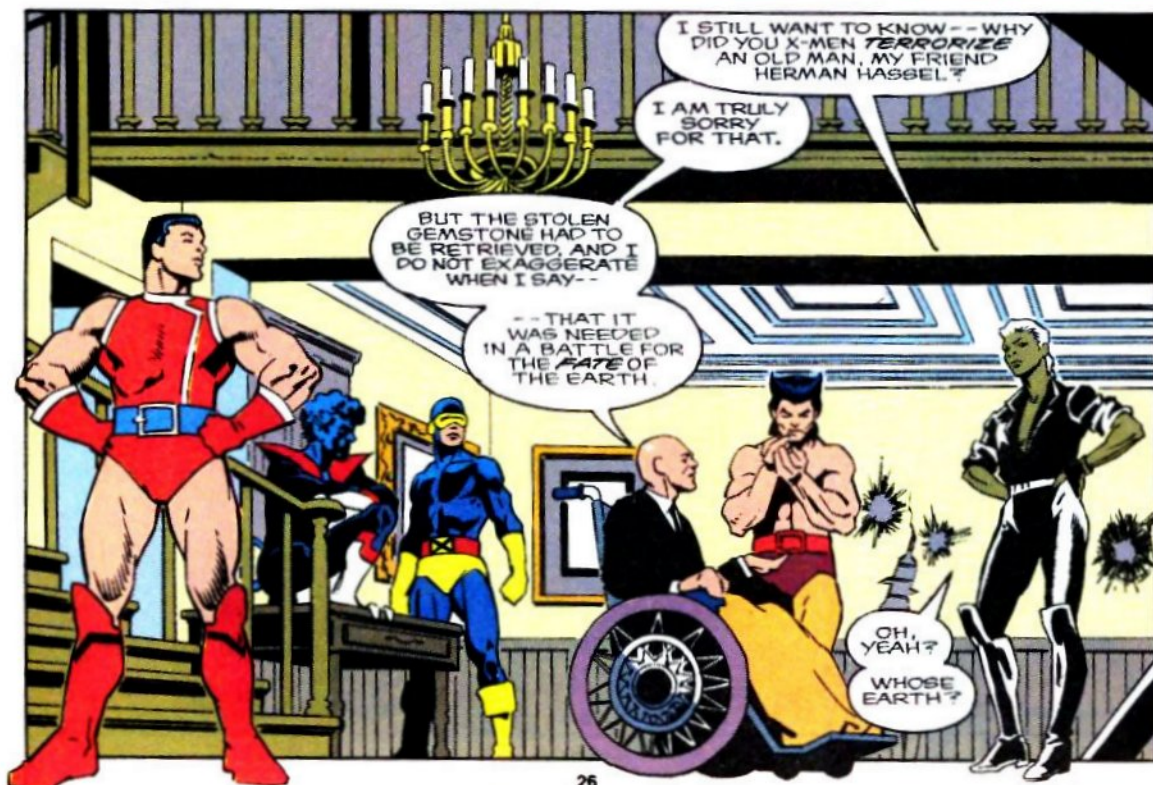
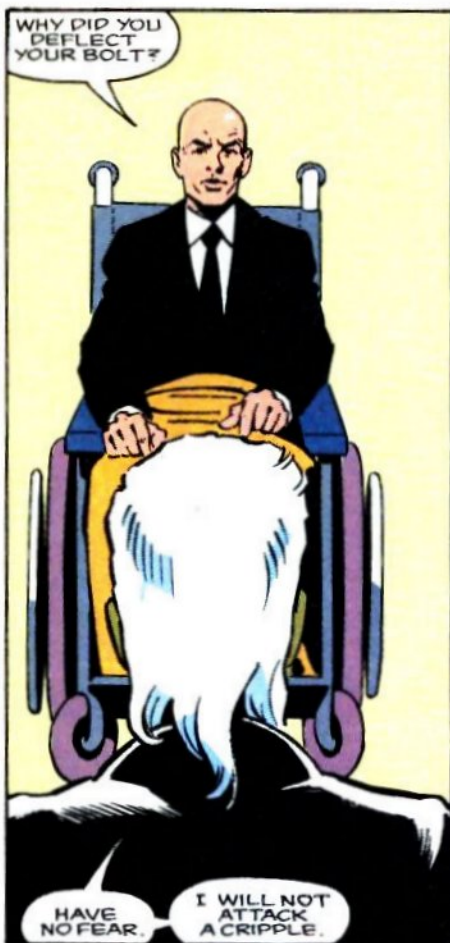














" I SEE THIS BIG MANSION, ALL THIS WEALTH .

" YOU X-MEN FIGHT TO PROTECT A RICH ELITE WORLD, NOT MY WORLD .

AND WHEN YOU USE YOUR STORM-BRINGING POWERS ARE YOU SURE YOU NEVER ACCIDENTALLY FRIGHTEN ANYONE ?

DON'T YOU THINK YOU ARE AS SCARY TO PEOPLE AS WE X-MEN WERE TO YOUR FRIEND ?

I CAN TEACH YOU HOW TO CONTROL YOUR POWERS. TRAIN YOU. THAT IS PART OF WHO WE ARE -- A SCHOOL FOR MUTANTS.



WHY NOT STAY HERE AWHILE.

I KNOW WHO YOU ARE.

BIG GLOBE - TROTTING HEROES.

WELL, I DON'T THINK I HAVE TO SAVE THE WORLD TO BE A HERO. I KNOW PLENTY OF HEROES RIGHT IN THE STREETS.



PLEASE, STAY AND GET TO KNOW US BEFORE YOU JUDGE US.



NO.

NO. NOT IN THIS BIG FANCY PLACE.

THE BEST PEOPLE I KNOW IN THE WORLD HAVE NO MONEY AND ARE ALWAYS HUNGRY.

I DON'T TRUST THIS PLACE.



FAIR ENOUGH.

BUT THE OFFER REMAINS AND EXTEND MY APOLOGIES TO YOUR FRIEND MR. HASSEL. ANY DAMAGES...

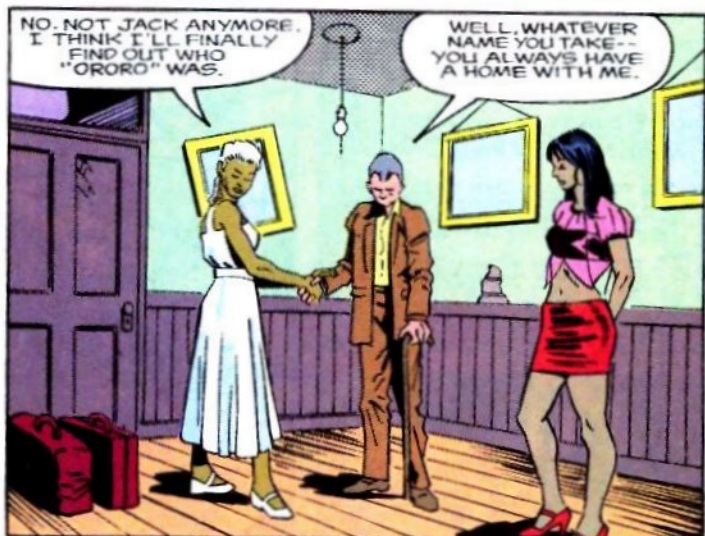
THANKS, BUT I'LL TAKE CARE OF MY OWN.

AND LATER...



I HAVEN'T HAD A DRESS ON SINCE BEFORE I WAS ORPHANED!

WELL, JACK, YOU LOOK LOVELY.



NO. NOT JACK ANYMORE. I THINK I'LL FINALLY FIND OUT WHO "ORORO" WAS.

WELL, WHATEVER NAME YOU TAKE-- YOU ALWAYS HAVE A HOME WITH ME.



WHERE WILL YOU GO?

ANYWHERE AS LONG AS THERE ARE NO BUILDINGS.

FOR A WHILE, I WANT NOTHING BUT BIG SKIES, WIND AND GRASS.



MAYBE AFRICA.



THE WATCHER.

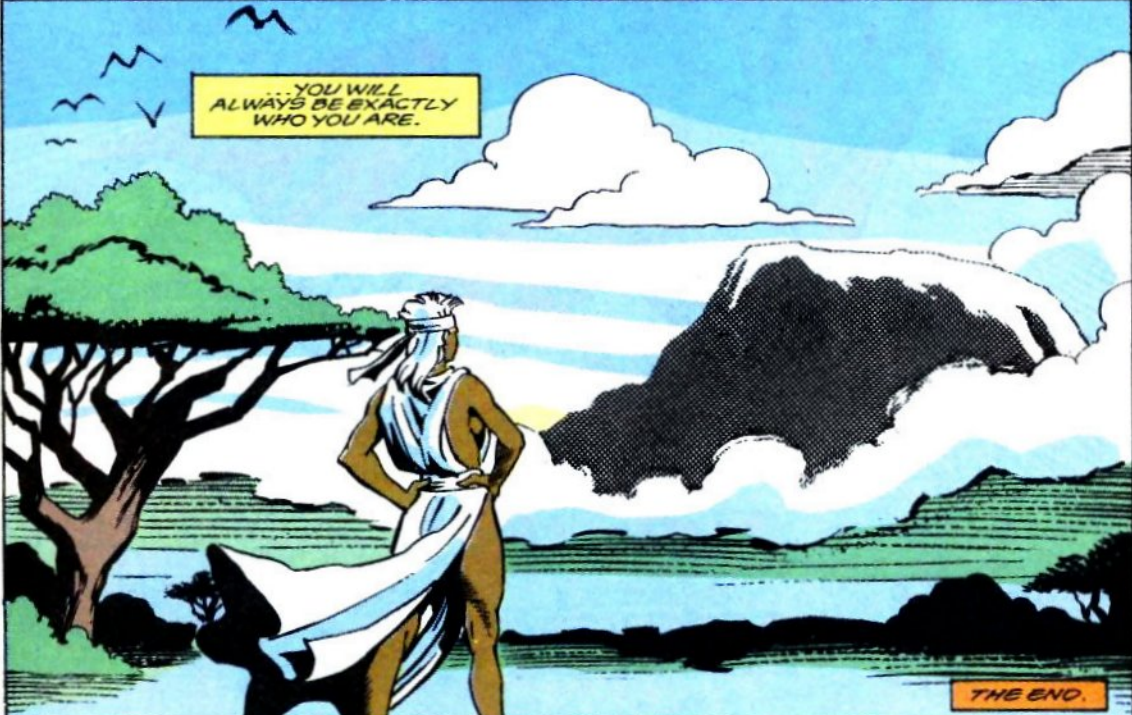
AN ALTERNATE PATH,
BUT WAS IT SO
DIFFERENT?

PERHAPS, EVEN
AS A THIEF YOU
CAN LEARN HOW
TO BE A HERO.

PERHAPS, IN THE NOBLE
LITTLE TWO-BIT GRIFTER
HERMAN HASSEL--

--STORM FOUND
A MENTOR AS WISE
AS XAVIER.

PERHAPS, IT DOESN'T
MATTER WHICH HAT YOU
WEAR, OR IF YOU TURN
RIGHT OR LEFT AT
THE CROSSROADS.



...YOU WILL
ALWAYS BE EXACTLY
WHO YOU ARE.

THE END.