



**WHAT IF...**

**THE HULK**

**HAD KILLED**

**WOLVERINE?**

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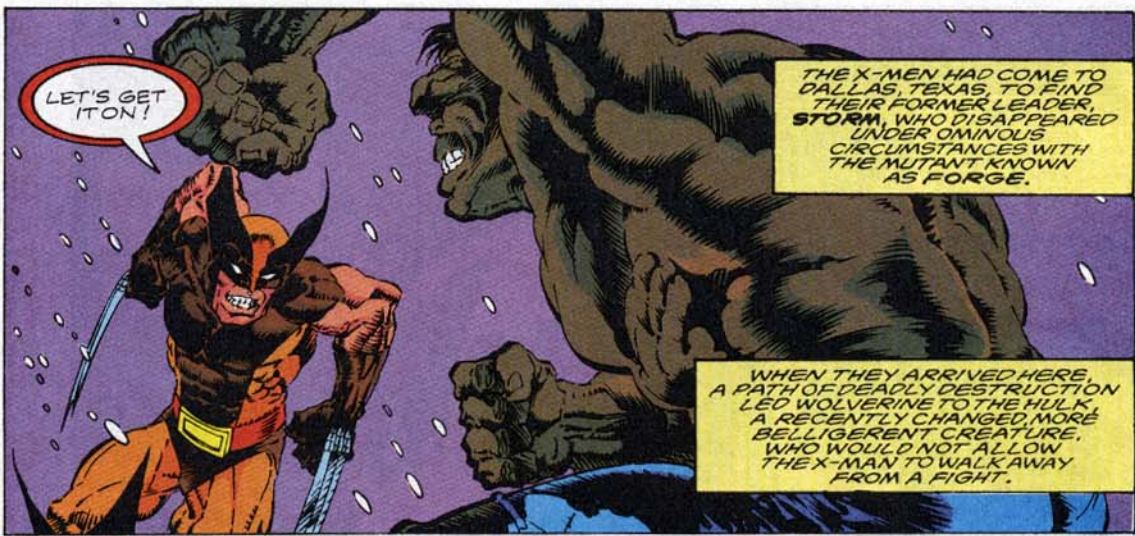


30 YEARS  
**X**  
MEN  
1963-1993









LET'S GET IT ON!

THE X-MEN HAD COME TO DALLAS, TEXAS, TO FIND THEIR FORMER LEADER, STORM, WHO DISAPPEARED UNDER OMINOUS CIRCUMSTANCES WITH THE MUTANT KNOWN AS FORGE.

WHEN THEY ARRIVED HERE, A PATH OF DEADLY DESTRUCTION LED WOLVERINE TO THE HULK, A RECENTLY CHANGED, MORE BELLIGERENT CREATURE, WHO WOULD NOT ALLOW THE X-MAN TO WALK AWAY FROM A FIGHT.



THE VOLATILE MUTANT COULD ONLY TAKE SO MUCH OF THIS VERBAL -- AND PHYSICAL -- ABUSE.

AND FINALLY, WITHOUT THINKING, HE ATTACKS, MAKING HIS FIRST MISTAKE.



HE MAKES HIS SECOND --

HOPE YOU'RE SATISFIED, PAL!



-- WHEN HE LEAVES THE HULK --



-- FOR DEAD.





HERE, AS IN THE REALITY YOU KNOW, IT IS REVEALED THAT THE HULK IS POSSESSED OF INCREDIBLE RECUPERATIVE POWERS.

JUST AS IT HAPPENED IN YOUR WORLD, HE IS RESURRECTED FROM WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN CERTAIN DEATH.

BUT THAT IS WHERE THE SIMILARITIES END.



FURY COURSES THROUGH HIS BODY, DRIVING ALL REASON FROM HIS BRAIN.

ONLY ONE THOUGHT REMAINS IN THE HULK'S MIND--

RATHER HE IS A CREATURE WHOLLY REVIVED BY RAGE.

IN THIS REALITY, THE HULK DOES NOT RISE SHAKILY TO HIS FEET.











YOU WERE DEAD.. I CUT YOUR FLAMIN' HEART OPEN...  
... DEAD.

*SURPRISED BY THE HULK'S SEEMINGLY MIRACULOUS RECOVERY, WOLVERINE DOESN'T HAVE TIME TO REACT, AND CANNOT EVADE THE GRAY GIANT.*



*ONCE WITHIN THE SAVAGE TITAN'S GRASP, THERE IS LITTLE HOPE FOR WOLVERINE.*

*HE KNOWS FULL WELL OF THE MONSTROUS POWER OF THE HULK, THAT A SINGLE BLOW FROM HIS COLOSSAL FIST IS ENOUGH TO KILL MOST PEOPLE.*



**BOOM!**



*WOLVERINE'S FAMOUS HEALING AGENT IS ALL THAT KEEPS HIM ALIVE, A FACT THAT ONLY FURTHER ANGERS AND STRENGTHENS THE HULK.*





THE BESTIAL PASSION OF HIS IRE BUILDS TO A FEVER PITCH--



-- HIS BLOOD-LUST CANNOT BE SATISFIED--



-- EVEN WHEN HIS INCREASINGLY MIGHTY BLOWS DISLODGE A SINGLE ADAMANTIUM VERTEBRA, SEVERING WOLVERINE'S SPINAL CORD!





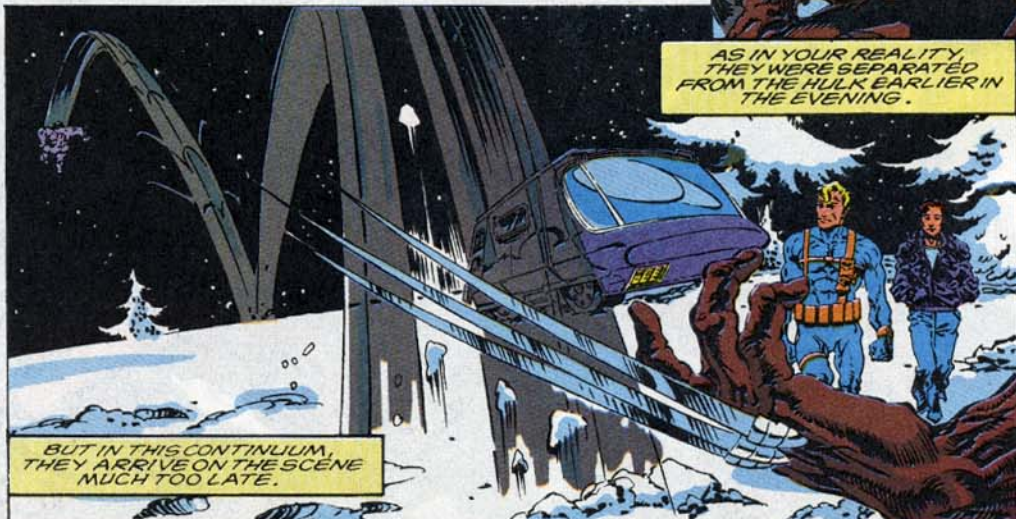


HULK, YOU...  
YOU'VE  
KILLED HIM.

*IN HIS RAMPAGE THE HULK HAS FORGOTTEN ABOUT RICK JONES AND COLONEL QUARTERMAIN, HIS COMPANIONS ON A NATIONWIDE SEARCH FOR A CACHE OF DEADLY GAMMA BOMBS.*



HE TRIED TO  
KILL ME!  
NOBODY DOES  
THAT TO  
ME, NOBODY!



*AS IN YOUR REALITY, THEY WERE SEPARATED FROM THE HULK EARLIER IN THE EVENING.*

*BUT IN THIS CONTINUUM, THEY ARRIVE ON THE SCENE MUCH TOO LATE.*



THE EFFECTS OF THIS EVENT ARE FELT IMMEDIATELY IN ROMA'S STARLIGHT CITADEL WHERE ALL ORDER IS MAINTAINED. A DELICATE BALANCE HAS BEEN DISRUPTED.

WOLVERINE WAS TO HAVE BEEN A PRINCIPAL PLAYER IN A GRAND COSMIC "GAME".



AS WAS THE CASE IN THE REALITY YOU KNOW, THE ADVERSARY (IN THE GUISE OF NAZE THE SHAMAN) AND ROMA VIE FOR CONTROL OF THE OMNIVERSE.\*



\*DEPICTED IN THE UNCANNY X-MEN #225.

IN THIS REALITY, THE DEATH OF WOLVERINE HAS CAST THE ODDS IN THE ADVERSARY'S FAVOR.



EVEN THE UNEXPECTED RETURN OF FORGE AND STORM FROM A DIMENSIONAL TRAP SET BY THE ADVERSARY, CANNOT CHANGE THEM.





THE X-MEN MOURN THE LOSS OF THEIR LEADER AND FRIEND AT THE HANDS OF THE HULK, UNAWARE OF THE TRUE CONSEQUENCES OF THIS TRAGEDY.

WHEN THE WORLD IS IN THEIR GREATEST NEED OF THEIR HELP, IN THEIR GRIEF, THEY ARE HOWEVER BRIEFLY, AT THEIR WEAKEST.

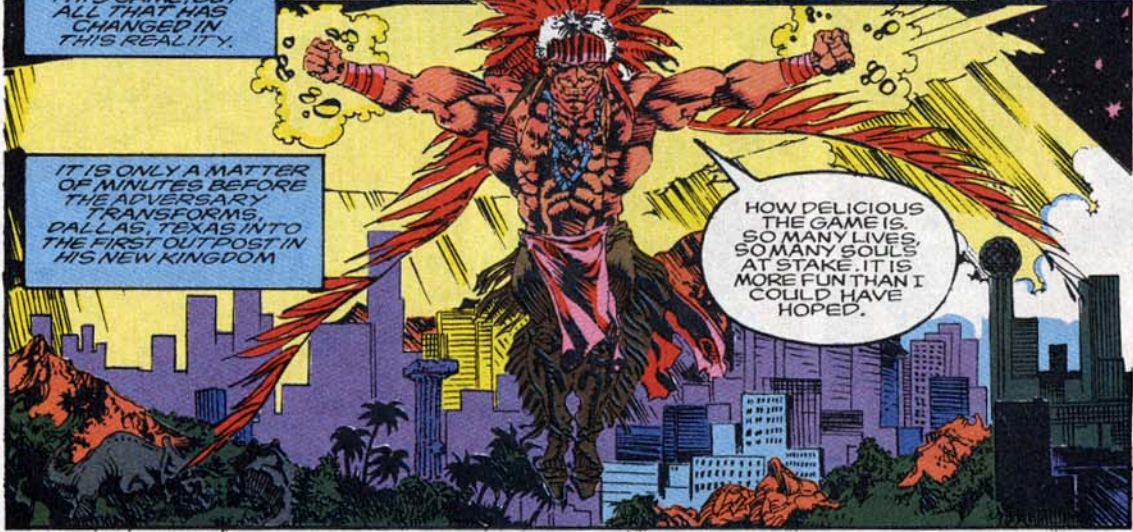
A FACT NOT LOST ON THE ADVERSARY, WHILE THE SCALES OF BALANCE ARE TIPPED HIS WAY, HE LAUNCHES A SUDDEN VIOLENT ATTACK, KILLING MANY--



--WOUNDING THOSE HE CAN'T KILL.



COLOSSUS WAS TO HAVE BEEN ROMA'S WILD CARD IN THIS GAME, BUT ALL THAT HAS CHANGED IN THIS REALITY.



IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF MINUTES BEFORE THE ADVERSARY TRANSFORMS DALLAS, TEXAS INTO THE FIRST OUTPOST IN HIS NEW KINGDOM

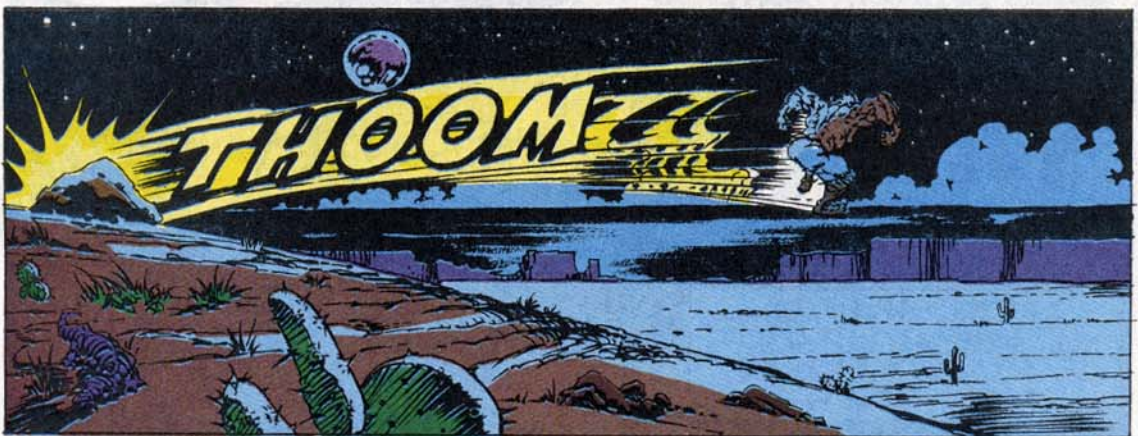
HOW DELICIOUS THE GAME IS, SO MANY LIVES, SO MANY SOULS AT STAKE. IT IS MORE FUN THAN I COULD HAVE HOPED.



MILES AWAY, UNAWARE OF ALL THIS, THE HULK HAS ONLY ONE THING ON HIS MIND.

SO HE'S DEAD?  
SO WHAT? WASN'T  
LIKE HE WAS  
A FRIEND  
OF MINE.

SO WHY DOES  
IT KEEP  
BOTHERIN' ME?







THAT'S RIGHT, MY PAWN. COME BACK TO DALLAS.

COME BACK AND HELP ME RID MY CAPITAL OF SOME BOTHERSOME MUTANT VERMIN.



WHAT AN UNFORTUNATE TURN OF EVENTS FOR YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS --

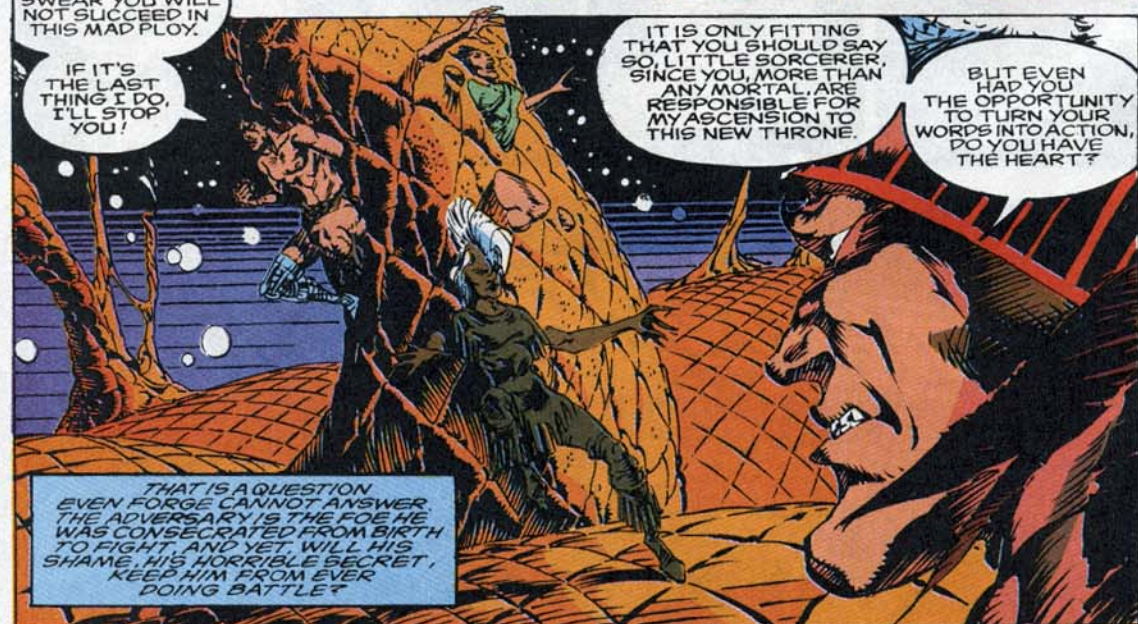
--AND YOUR WORLD!

ADVERSARY, I SWEAR YOU WILL NOT SUCCEED IN THIS MAD PLOY.

IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO, I'LL STOP YOU!

IT IS ONLY FITTING THAT YOU SHOULD SAY SO, LITTLE SORCERER, SINCE YOU, MORE THAN ANY MORTAL, ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR MY ASCENSION TO THIS NEW THRONE.

BUT EVEN HAD YOU THE OPPORTUNITY TO TURN YOUR WORDS INTO ACTION, DO YOU HAVE THE HEART?



THAT IS A QUESTION EVEN FORGE CANNOT ANSWER. THE ADVERSARY IS THE FOE HE WAS CONSECRATED FROM BIRTH TO FIGHT AND YET WILL HIS SHAME, HIS HORRIBLE SECRET, KEEP HIM FROM EVER DOING BATTLE?





HEY, WHAT GIVES?



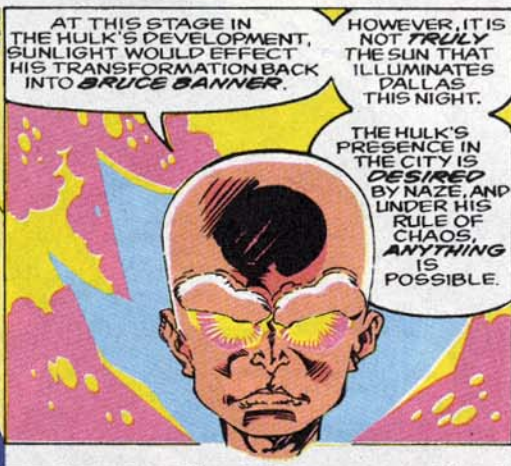
IT'S LIKE THERE'S A *RIP* IN THE NIGHT SKY, AND THE SUN'S SHINING THROUGH!



PROBABLY SHOULDN'T GET ANY CLOSER. DON'T WANT TO TURN BACK TO BANNER.



ONLY, IF IT'S NIGHT, HOW CAN *THAT* BE THE SUN?



AT THIS STAGE IN THE HULK'S DEVELOPMENT, SUNLIGHT WOULD EFFECT HIS TRANSFORMATION BACK INTO *BRUCE BANNER*.

HOWEVER, IT IS NOT *TRULY* THE SUN THAT ILLUMINATES DALLAS THIS NIGHT.

THE HULK'S PRESENCE IN THE CITY IS *DESIRED* BY NAZE, AND UNDER HIS RULE OF CHAOS ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE.



AND IF IT AIN'T THE SUN, IT CAN'T HURT ME, RIGHT?





GUESS THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT.



HEY! LOOKIT THAT!



THIS IS WILD SUNSHINE THAT AIN'T SUNSHINE, AT NIGHT, AND A TROPICAL JUNGLE IN THE MIDDLE OF DALLAS.

IT CAN'T GET MUCH WEIRDER THAN THIS.







OKAY, THAT'S IT. THIS HAS GOTTA BE A DREAM OR SOMETHING.

NAW, HIS BREATH STINKS TOO MUCH TO BE A DREAM.

STAY AWAY FROM ME, PAL. I GOT NO BEEF WITH A DUMB ANIMAL LIKE YOU.

I SAID BACK OFF!

WHOMP











OH NO!



LOOK, I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON HERE, AND MY GUESS IS YOU DON'T EITHER.

ALL I KNOW IS, I'M GETTIN' OUTTA HERE.

I JUST HOPE YOU FELLAS ARE SMART ENOUGH TO STAY OUT OF MY WAY.







AS ALWAYS, THE HULK IS PREPARED FOR BATTLE.



BUT NOT FOR PRAISE.

SUDDENLY, THE HULK DECIDES THAT THE STRANGE NEW WORLD IS TO HIS LIKING.

AFTER ALL, ONLY IN THE REALM OF CHAOS COULD A SAVAGE BRUTE LIKE THE HULK BE WELCOME.

AND IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT HIS NEWFOUND JOY WOULD BE DISTURBED EVEN IF HE KNEW THAT HE IS BEING WATCHED.







BUT DALLAS IS A BIG CITY.



ELSEWHERE, PARAMEDICS TREAT THE SURVIVING X-MEN FOR THEIR INJURIES SUFFERED IN THE BATTLE WITH THE ADVERSARY.

BE CAREFUL, DARLING. YOU REALLY DON'T WANT TO TOUCH MAH SKIN.

THE TEAM HAS BEEN JOINED BY THE GOVERNMENT AGENCY, FREEDOM FORCE, AS WAS THE CASE IN THE PLANE OF EXISTENCE KNOWN TO YOU, THE X-MEN ARE CONSIDERED OUTLAWS.

FREEDOM FORCE HAS BEEN SENT TO ARREST THEM, BUT NOW, IN THE FACE OF THIS BIZARRE TURN OF EVENTS, THE TWO GROUPS ARE FORCED INTO A TENUOUS ALLIANCE.



THIS INDIAN--SHAMAN--OR WHATEVER HE TRULY IS, MUST BE POSSESSED OF VAST POWER. YOU SHOULD NEVER HAVE TACKLED HIM ON YOUR OWN, ROGUE. IT WAS IRRESPONSIBLE.

HAVE I TAUGHT YOU NOTHING, MY DAUGHTER?

WE HAD NO CHOICE, MYSTIQUE. HE ATTACKED US WHILE OUR DEFENSES WERE DOWN.

BUT WITH YOU AND THE REST OF FREEDOM FORCE TO HELP, WE CAN, AND MUST, FACE HIM TOGETHER. IT IS OUR ONLY CHANCE OF DEFEATING THIS SORCERER.



ARE YOU NUTS!???

LOOK AROUND YOU, LADY. IF THIS GUY IS BEHIND WHAT'S GOING ON IN THIS CITY, WE DON'T GOT A PRAYER.

AND EVEN IF HE AIN'T, HE'S NO SLOUCH IF HE CAN TROUCE THE LIKES OF YOU AND COLOSSUS--

AND WASTE FOUR X-MEN IN THE PROCESS.

AS AN APPOINTED MEMBER OF FREEDOM FORCE, IT IS YOUR JOB TO PROTECT THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY.

THREE. THAT SORCERER DIDN'T KILL LOGAN.

THAT'S ANOTHER FIGHT, ONE AW'LL ATTEND TO MYSELF, IF WE LIVE THROUGH THIS.

YOU CANNOT BACK OUT OF YOUR DUTIES SIMPLY BECAUSE YOU ARE AFRAID.

BLOB, YOU FOOL STOP IT!

HEY, WATCH WHO YOU'RE CALLING CHICKEN, RUSSKIE!

I WILL NOT TOLERATE THIS EGOTISTICAL IN-FIGHTING WHILE THE FATE OF THIS CITY, AND PERHAPS MUCH MORE, MAY BE AT STAKE.





STILL, THE FACT IS THAT THIS FOE IS TOO POWERFUL, EVEN FOR ALL OF US.

MEANWHILE, WHO KNOWS WHAT THIS MONSTER IS DOING. HOW MANY HE MIGHT KILL.

WE ARE GOING TO NEED HELP AND THE OTHER MEMBERS OF FREEDOM FORCE ARE OUT TRYING TO CONTACT THAT HELP.

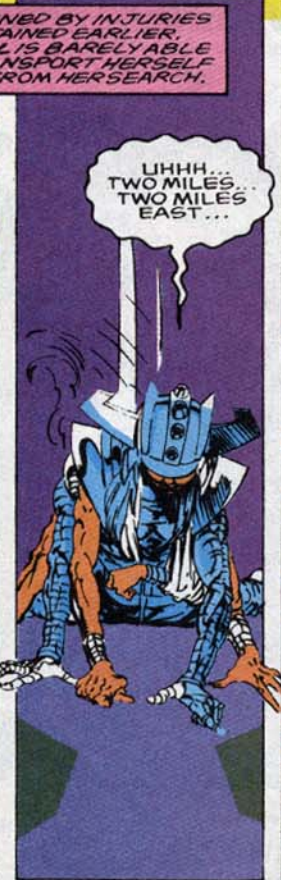
DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND, WE CAN'T WASTE ANYMORE TIME.



SUDDENLY, ALL ARGUMENTS ARE SILENCED.



WEAKENED BY INJURIES SUSTAINED EARLIER, SPIRAL IS BARELY ABLE TO TRANSPORT HERSELF BACK FROM HER SEARCH.



UHHH... TWO MILES... TWO MILES EAST...



I SAW A GRAY GIANT... SLAY A DINOSAUR... SINGLE-HANDED. PERHAPS... HE CAN HELP US.



THE HULK!





HE'S THE ONE THAT KILLED WOLVERINE.

AH'M GOING AFTER HIM.

ROGUE, WAIT!



NO!

I'M SICK OF WAITING!



I GUESS I CAN'T FORCE YOU ALL TO HELP ME BATTLE THAT MAD SHAMAN--



-- BUT THIS IS ONE FIGHT WHERE I DON'T NEED YOUR HELP--



--AN' I DON'T WANT IT!







MAV! THIS IS LIVING!



THIS HAS TO BE THE FIRST DECENT *HOT MEAL* I'VE HAD IN MONTHS.

SAY, HOW ABOUT SOME WINE?



A PARTY, EH?  
LET'S SEE IF I CAN'T SHAKE THINGS UP.

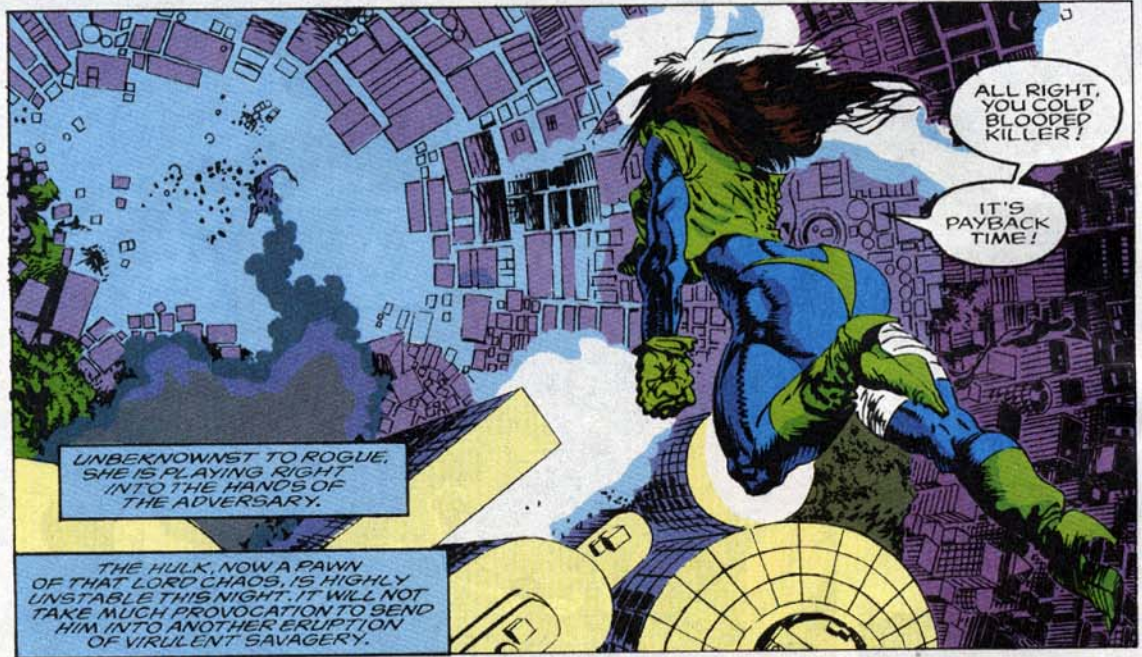


**Wwhhhhhoooooosssttt**



HEY!









-- AND ROGUE HAS JUST  
LIT THE FUSE.









AH'LL SMASH YOUR SKULL INTO PASTE, YOU SCUM!

**CLUK!**



**THUMMP!!**



**CLUNK!**



**FOONP**

LADY, YOU'RE A HEADACHE.



**FOOOONBBASSH**

WHO ARE YOU? I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU BEFORE, AND YOU COME ALONG BEATING ON ME LIKE A DRUM.

ALL YOU COSTUMED CLOWNS ARE THE SAME, JUMPING ME FOR NO REASON. IT'S LIKE YOU'RE BEGGING ME TO KILL YOU.



WELL, IF THAT'S THE WAY YOU WANT IT, THAT'S HOW IT'S GONNA BE.



JEEZ, I DIDN'T EVEN SCRATCH HIM, AN HE'S KNOCKIN' ME AROUND LIKE A TOY. IT DON'T HURT MUCH, THANKS TO MY NEAR INVULNERABILITY, BUT THIS IS GETTIN' ME NOWHERE.





MUCH AS I WANT TO POUND HIM CLEAR THROUGH TO CHINA, IT'S TIME FOR A NEW APPROACH.



USING HER MUTANT ABILITIES TO ABSORB ANOTHER BEING'S POWERS AND PSYCHE WITH A MERE TOUCH, ROGUE SAPS THE STRENGTH FROM THE HULK

LONG ENOUGH FOR THE GRAY BEHEMOTH TO ASCERTAIN EXACTLY WHAT IS BEING DONE TO HIM.

AND LONG ENOUGH FOR HIM TO FIGURE OUT A WAY TO STOP IT.

USUALLY, THE TRANSFER OF POWER IS INSTANTANEOUS, BUT THE HULK'S POWER IS GREAT, AND THIS TIME, THE PROCESS IS A LONG ONE.





NICE TRY, HONEY,  
REAL NICE TRY.

GOTTA ADMIT,  
I FEEL A  
LITTLE WEAK.



AND LIKE AN OLD  
FRIEND OF MINE  
USED TO SAY--









A WRATH THAT CANNOT BE CONTAINED.



NO PROBLEM.



A FEW HOURS AGO, THE WAVE OF ROCK AND EARTH THROWN IN THE GIANT'S PATH WOULD HAVE STOPPED HIM.



BUT NOT ANYMORE.

THE HULK'S STRENGTH IS LIMITED ONLY BY HIS ANGER, AND HIS ANGER IS NOW GREATER THAN IT HAS EVER BEEN, AND GROWING GREATER WITH EACH PASSING SECOND.





HEY, SOMEBODY HELP ME!



CRUNCH



KONG!



HOLY CRUD.  
HE KILLED HIM.



ARRRR RERRMA

THERE IS AN EXPLOSION IN THE HULK'S BRAIN.  
EVERY SHRED OF HUMANITY IS EXPELLED FROM HIS BEING, SUPPLANTED BY ANARCHIC FEROCITY.



HE IS NOTHING MORE THAN A MALIGNANT AUTOMATON, UTTERLY CONSUMED BY A FRENZIED, TOWERING RAGE.



ARRRR



WE'D BETTER TAKE THIS BAD BOY OUT--  
NOW!



THE PAIN THAT PYRO INFLECTS IS INDEED GREAT, AND THE HULK MUST FIND A SHIELD IF HE IS TO ESCAPE INJURY.



LET'S SEE HOW MUCH OF MY NOVA FLAME HIS THICK HIDE CAN TAKE!

HE IS NOT LONG IN LOOKING.







DID YOU SEE THAT?! HE JUST PICKED BLOB UP!  
I DIDN'T THINK ANYTHING COULD DO THAT.

**POOFF**

IT HAS BEGUN TO DAWN ON SLIPER SABRE AND THE MUTANTS JUST HOW POWERFUL THIS OPPONENT THEY FACE TRULY IS.



YET NONE SEEM AWARE THAT THEIR CONTINUED ATTACKS ARE WHAT FUEL THAT POWER.



NONE, BUT PSYLOCKE.

WAIT! LET ME TRY TO SUBDUCE HIM, SOOTHE HIS ANGER.

FOR ALL THE GOOD IT WILL DO HER.



THE HULK'S UNCHECKED FURY BLOCKS THE TELEPATH'S EFFORTS--



-- AND ASSAULTS HER MIND MUCH IN THE WAY A PHYSICAL BLOW WOULD STRIKE HER BODY.







**SUPER SABRE-- KNOWN FOR HIS INCREDIBLE SPEED.**

**GOT TO TRY TO GET HER OUT OF THERE.**

**HE IS EXHAUSTED, NOT AT HIS BEST, BUT STILL CONFIDENT THAT HE CAN EASILY EVADE WHAT HE THINKS IS A SLOW-MOVING BEHEMOTH.**



**IT IS AN ERROR IN JUDGMENT HE WILL NOT LIVE TO REGRET.**

**IN MINUTES, ONLY TWO FIGURES STILL STAND TO FACE THE MINDLESS HULK.**



**JUST WHEN IT APPEARS NOTHING CAN STOP THE CREATURE...**



**WAIT!**



**YOU'VE GOT TO STOP THIS, HULK.**

**I'M BEGGING YOU, PLEASE STOP.**



**GET AWAY FROM HIM. HE WILL KILL YOU.**



**IT'S OKAY, COLOSSUS.**

**HULK, IT'S ME, RICK JONES. DON'T YOU KNOW ME?**



**RRRRRRRR**



**RRR-RR--**



**RRRR-RICK?**



IN SO CRITICAL A MOMENT, IT IS HARD TO SEE ALL THIS IS A GAME, BUT IN ESSENCE, THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT IT IS.

MY, WHAT A CLEVER MOVE.

POINTLESS BUT STILL RATHER CLEVER. THESE MORTALS DON'T REALIZE THAT THEY CAN'T STOP ME. THIS IS **MY** GAME, I MAKE THE RULES AND BREAK THEM AT MY WHIM.



FORGE EARLIER YOU HINTED THAT YOU KNEW OF A WAY TO STOP THIS ADVERSARY, IF THAT IS SO, TELL ME NOW HOW WE CAN ACHIEVE THIS.

NO, MY LOVE, FOR IF I DO, I MUST ALSO TELL YOU THAT I **MYSELF** BROUGHT THE POWER OF CHAOS INTO THIS WORLD WHEN I SACRIFICED THE SOULS OF MY **NINE** FALLEN COMRADES IN ACT OF REVENGE. \* NOR WILL I SEEK THE **NINE** SOULS NEEDED TO BANISH THEM ONCE MORE.

I-I'M SORRY, I CANNOT.



\* DETAILED IN THE PAGES OF THE UNCANNY X-MEN #227.

GO AHEAD, TELL HER.

YES. I CAN HEAR EVERY WORD YOU SAY. THERE ARE NO SECRETS FROM ME IN MY NEW DOMAIN.



HOWEVER, IF YOU DESIRE PRIVACY, YOU SHALL HAVE IT.

THIS HULK HAS PROVED A MOST USEFUL PAWN, ONE I DO NOT WISH TO LOSE JUST YET.





I KNOW YOU, HULK. YOU'RE NOT TRULY A KILLER.

PLEASE LET THESE PEOPLE HELP YOU.

DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, BUB.



THE LAST THING THESE FREAKS WANT TO DO IS HELP YOU.

THE BATTERED SURVIVORS OF THE CONFLICT HAVE SEEN MANY ODD SIGHTS THIS DAY, BUT NOTHING SO ODD AS THIS.



YOU'RE DEAD! I SAW YOUR BROKEN BODY.

NOT QUITE, PAL.



OH, I'LL GRANT YOU, I WASN'T FEELING SO HOT.

BUT ONCE THAT HEALING FACTOR OF MINE KICKED IN, EVERYTHING WAS AY-O-KAY.



C'MERE, LEMME EXPLAIN IT TO YOU.



OOOPS.



WELL, WOULD YOU LOOK AT THAT?







AHH, HAVOK,  
YOUR ATTEMPT  
AT STEALTH IS  
PATHETIC.

STILL,  
YOU ARE A  
PATHETIC  
LITTLE  
GNAT.



LET US SEE  
WHAT HAPPENS  
WHEN  
THAT POWER  
IS FORCED  
BACK  
INTO YOUR  
PRAIL  
HUMAN FORM.



YES, I  
THOUGHT  
AS MUCH.

MONSTER! I SHALL  
RIP YOU APART WITH  
MY OWN HANDS IF  
I MUST!

YOU ARE A FOOL  
IF YOU THINK I  
WILL LET YOU GET  
CLOSE ENOUGH  
TO DO THAT.



WELL, IF YOU  
AIN'T GONNA  
LET NOBODY GET  
NEAR YOU--

-- WE'RE JUST GONNA  
HAVE TO HURT YOU  
LONG DISTANCE!

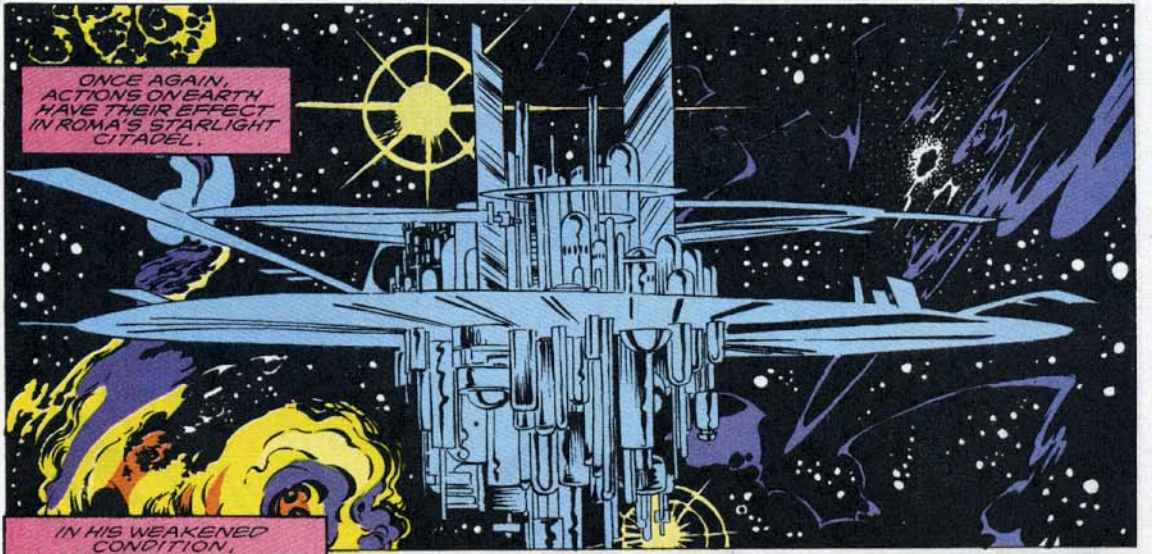


THE HULK CANNOT KNOW IT,  
BUT THE LAMPPOST HE HAS  
HURLED IS MADE OF IRON,  
THE ONE SUBSTANCE THAT  
CAN HARM THE TRICKSTER.




AND HARM HIM  
IT DOES.





ONCE AGAIN,  
ACTIONS ON EARTH  
HAVE THEIR EFFECT  
IN ROMA'S STARLIGHT  
CITADEL.


IN HIS WEAKENED  
CONDITION,  
THE ADVERSARY CANNOT  
MAINTAIN HIS HOLD ON  
THE ENTRAPPED FORGE  
AND STORM.




THE ADVERSARY  
MUST HAVE BEEN  
DEBILITATED  
SOMEHOW.

PERHAPS IF WE  
HURRY WE CAN  
FREE ROMA.

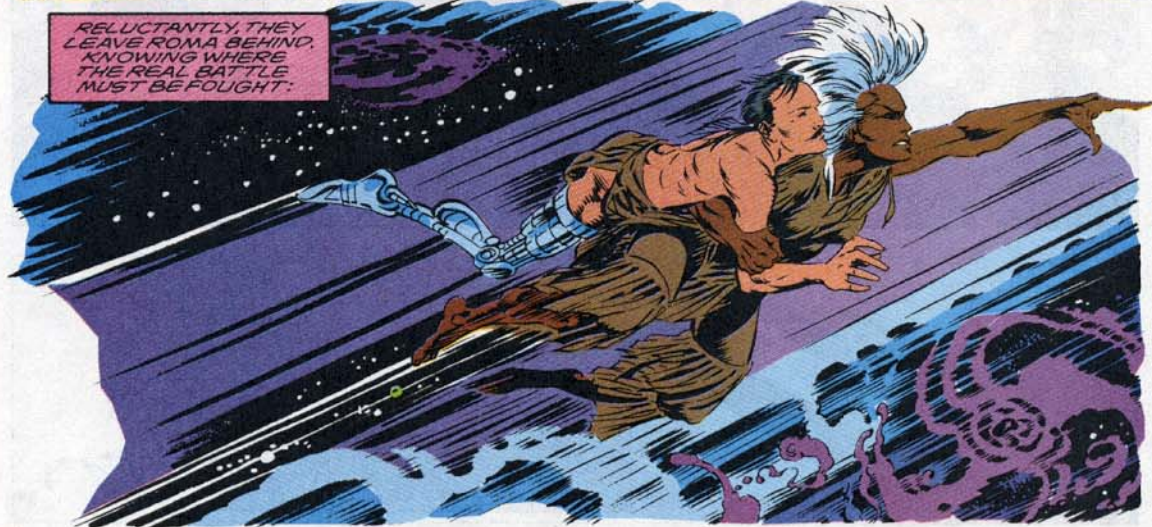
IT IS USELESS.  
SO LONG AS HE  
REMAINS HERE, IN  
THE REALM OF  
ORDER, I REMAIN  
HIS PRISONER.



I HAVE NO CHOICE,  
THEN. I MUST  
CAST HIM OUT.



TAKE ME  
TO HIM, AND  
I WILL  
EXPLAIN.



RELUCTANTLY, THEY  
LEAVE ROMA BEHIND,  
KNOWING WHERE  
THE REAL BATTLE  
MUST BE FOUGHT.





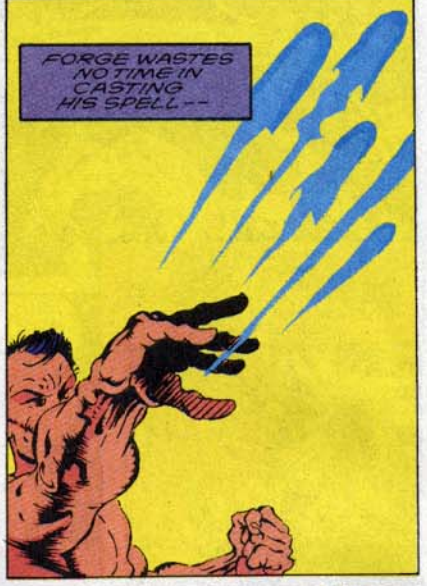
YOUR EFFORTS HAVE BEEN FOR NAUGHT, HUMANS, FOR NONE MAY HURT ME NOW.



LIAR!



I CAN DO MORE THAN HURT YOU, DEMON.



FORGE WASTES NO TIME IN CASTING HIS SPELL--



A SPELL THAT REQUIRES ONE FURTHER ELEMENT--




AN ELEMENT WHICH OROO, MUTANT MISTRESS OF RAIN, THUNDER AND LIGHTNING, CAN EASILY PROVIDE.






**SHHHKOW**



TOGETHER FORGE  
AND STORM HAVE DONE  
WHAT NEITHER COULD  
DO ALONE.



THEY HAVE OPENED  
A GATEWAY THROUGH  
WHICH THEY CAN  
BANISH THE ADVERSARY  
FROM THEIR REALITY.



WELL DONE,  
SHAMAN,  
BUT WHILE YOU  
HAVE OPENED A  
PORTAL, YOU HAVE  
NOT THE MEANS  
TO FORCE ME  
THROUGH IT!



IT IS THE TRUTH,  
AND FORGE KNOWS  
IT, EVEN AS HE  
STRUGGLES TO  
MAINTAIN  
THE STALEMATE.



WITHOUT  
WARNING--

ZOOOOKS!

HOLD!  
WHAT MANNER  
OF MAGIC IS  
THIS?!





STILL SO WEAK... CANNOT HOLD HIM... LONG.

QUICKLY, FORGE, DO WHAT YOU MUST... EXPEL THE FIEND.



JUST AS IN THE REALITY YOU KNOW, FORGE IS FACED WITH A CHOICE.



BUT IN THIS REALITY, IT IS A DIFFERENT, AND ULTIMATELY EASIER DECISION THAT HE MAKES.



TELL THEM, SHAMAN, TELL THEM THAT THE GAME IS LOST.



YOU KNOW FULL WELL THAT YOU CANNOT BANISH ME FOREVER WITHOUT NINE HUMAN SOULS FREELY GIVEN.



THEN YOU SHALL NOT BE BANISHED FOREVER!

I NEED ONLY REMOVE YOU FROM THIS REALITY LONG ENOUGH FOR ROMA TO REGAIN CONTROL.



THEN SHE WILL EXILE YOU AS SHE SEES FIT.

THE CHANTING STARTS LOW, AND BUILDS QUICKLY.



FORGE'S LIFE FORCE, HIS VERY SOUL, IS TRANSFORMED INTO MYSTICAL ENERGY AS HE CREATES THE ULTIMATE WEAPON OF MAGIC--



-- HIMSELF.



PERHAPS I LOSE THE GAME, FORGE.



BUT YOU, YOU SHALL LOSE YOUR SOUL.



IN LESS TIME THAN IT TAKES TO TELL--

THE PORTAL IS CLOSED.





INSTANTLY, ORDER IS RESTORED TO ROMA'S STARLIGHT CITADEL, AND THE OMNIVERSE.



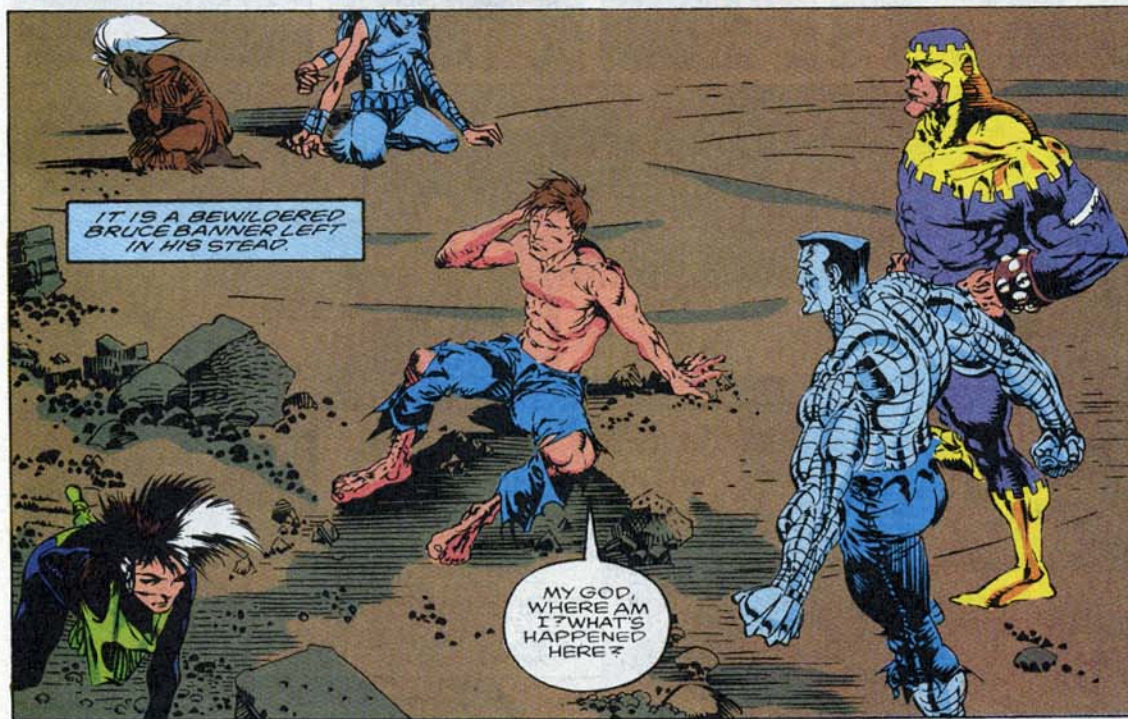
THE OLD WORLD ORDER TAKES HOLD AGAIN AS A NEW DAY DAWNS--



-- TOO QUICKLY FOR THE HULK TO ESCAPE IT--



-- OR ITS EFFECTS.



IT IS A BEWILDERED BRUCE BANNER LEFT IN HIS STEAD.

MY GOD, WHERE AM I? WHAT'S HAPPENED HERE?



PLEASE TELL ME, WHAT'S GOING ON?

HOW DID I GET HERE?

I CAN'T ANSWER THOSE QUESTIONS FOR YOU, DR. BANNER.

BUT AS AN OFFICER OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT, I AM PLACING YOU UNDER ARREST FOR THE MURDERS OF FREEDOM FORCE AGENTS BLOB, SUPER SABRE, PYRO, AND AVALANCHE.

MURDER? MURDER?!?

DEAR LORD, NO, WHAT HAVE I DONE?

WHAT HAVE I DONE?

THE SUN RISES HIGHER IN THE DALLAS SKY, ENDING A NIGHT OF HORROR FOR THOUSANDS OF TEXANS.

THEY ARE GRATEFUL AND JOYFUL FOR THIS RETURN TO NORMALCY.

AND FOR STORM, WHO HAS LOST HER SOUL MATE IN THE PERSON OF FORGE, THE PRICE OF THAT VICTORY SEEMS TOO, TOO HIGH.

EVENTUALLY, WHEN THE HORROR OF SO MUCH DEATH IS DIMMED BY THE PASSAGE OF TIME, THESE BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN WILL REFLECT BACK ON THIS SAD DAY.

THEY WILL COME TO REALIZE THAT IT WAS WOLVERINE'S DEATH WHICH TOUCHED OFF THIS TRAGIC SERIES OF EVENTS THAT CHANGED THEIR LIVES FOREVER--

"AND THEY SHALL ASK THEMSELVES, 'WHAT IF...?'"