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WHAT IF...

WOLVERINE

LED ALPHA FLIGHT



DIRECT EDITION

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I AM **THE WATCHER.**

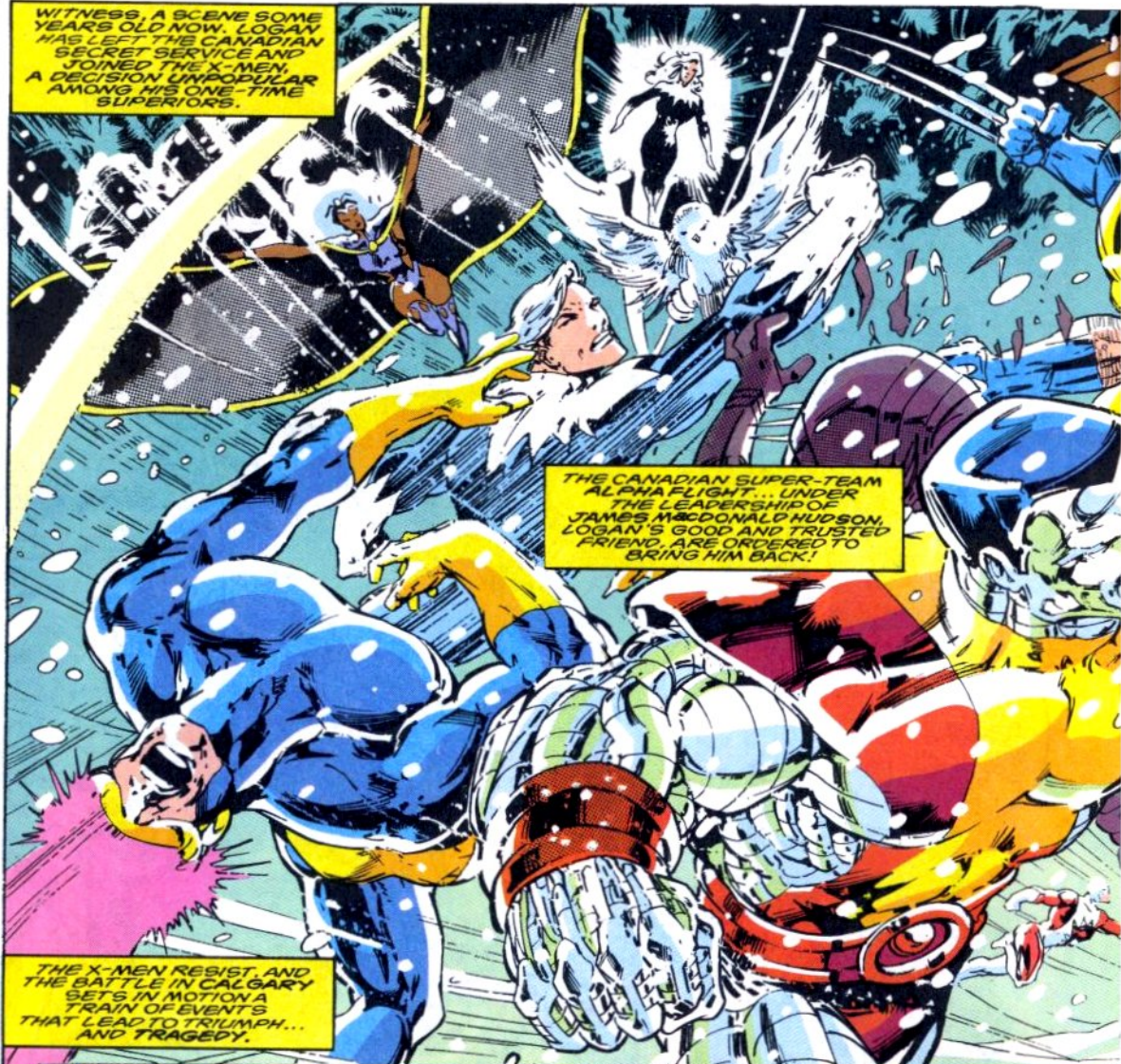
FOR MANY OF YOUR EARTH YEARS I HAVE STUDIED THE LIVES OF EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES AND VILLAINS, SEEN CIRCUMSTANCE PROVOKE ACTION, OR INACTION, GIVING BIRTH TO MANY AND VARIED POSSIBLE FUTURES.

BUT AS ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS, IT IS TO THIS MAN THAT MY ATTENTION RETURNS, HIS LIFE THE AXIS AROUND WHICH A MULTITUDE OF ALTERNATE REALITIES REVOLVE.

LOGAN-- SOLDIER-- SPY, X-MAN... A HYBRID OF MUTANT HEALING POWER AND SCIENCE GONE AWRY; HIS BONES LACED WITH UNBREAKABLE ADAMANTIUM, HIS HANDS TIPPED WITH RAZOR-SHARP CLAWS!

HE IS
WOLVERINE

WITNESS, A SCENE SOME YEARS OLD NOW. LOGAN HAS LEFT THE CANADIAN SECRET SERVICE AND JOINED THE X-MEN, A DECISION UNPOPULAR AMONG HIS ONE-TIME SUPERIORS.



THE CANADIAN SUPER-TEAM ALPHA FLIGHT... UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF JAMES McDONALD HUDSON, LOGAN'S GOOD AND TRUSTED FRIEND, ARE ORDERED TO BRING HIM BACK!

THE X-MEN RESIST, AND THE BATTLE IN CALGARY SETS IN MOTION A TRAIN OF EVENTS THAT LEAD TO TRIUMPH... AND TRAGEDY.

AS IN YOUR REALITY, THE ROGUE GLIZZARD UNWITTINGLY UNLEASHED BY ALPHA FLIGHT'S MYSTIC SHAMAN -- IS FINALLY BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL -- AT NO LITTLE COST TO HERSELF -- BY STORM.



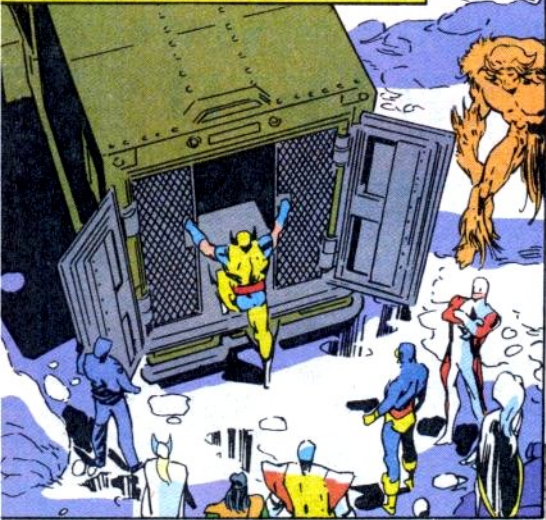
A SELFLESS ACT THE TEMPESTUOUS WOLVERINE REPLAYS WITH HIS FISTS.

THE BATTLE SET TO BEGIN AGAIN, WOLVERINE HIMSELF INTERVENES ENOUGH DAMAGE HAS BEEN DONE. HE WILL SURRENDER TO ALPHA FLIGHT IF HIS FELLOW X-MEN ARE ALLOWED SAFE PASSAGE FROM THE COUNTRY.





HERE THE REALITIES DIVERGE.
IN YOURS, WOLVERINE ESCAPES...
REJOINING HIS FELLOW X-MEN...
FOR YOU, NOW I POSE
THE QUESTION...



WHAT IF **WOLVERINE** HAD REMAINED A CAPTIVE OF **ALPHA FLIGHT**

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AS IN YOUR REALITY,
A DECISION IS MADE...

ANNIE -- CHANGE COURSE!
HEAD FOR THE ROCKIES, AS
SOON AS FEASIBLE. DROP
BELOW RADAR COVER AND
HEAD NORTH FOR CANADA.

WE'RE GOING TO
RESCUE WOLVERINE
WHETHER HE WANTS
US TO OR NOT!

BUT SADLY
THIS TIME...

THERE IS NO
WOLVERINE
TO REVERSE IT!

MANSFIELD AIRBASE...

SIR, I'M AFRAID YOU
WERE RIGHT. THEY'VE
TURNED BACK.

BLAST!
WHY COULDN'T
THEY HAVE JUST
LEFT WELL
ENOUGH ALONE

HHH
CHARLTON...

YES, GENERAL
CHASEN?

...UNLESS ALPHA
FLIGHT CAN
CONVINCE THEM TO
TURN BACK, WE WILL
HAVE TO TREAT IT
AS A HOSTILE
INVASION AND
TAKE MILITARY
ACTION.



MESSAGE
ENDS. I
JUST HOPE
TO GOD...

MOBILIZE
ALL GROUND
AND AIR
DEFENSE. AND
GET ME
HUDSON AT
DEPARTMENT
H!

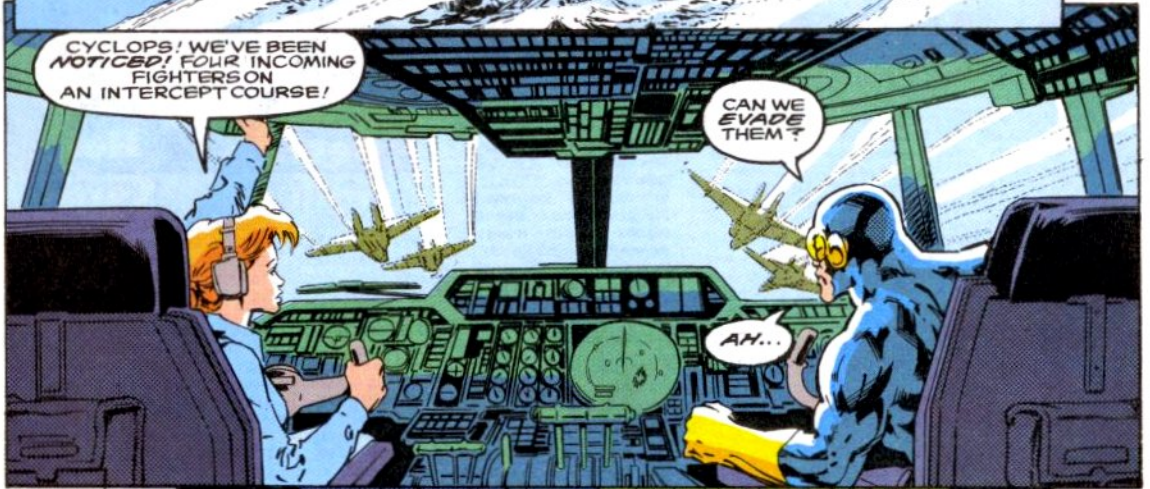
...YOU GET IT
IN TIME!



**PRIORITY MESSAGE
ERASED**



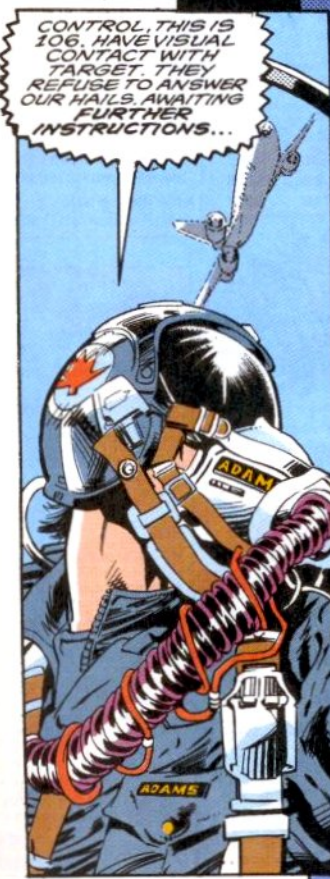
KLK!



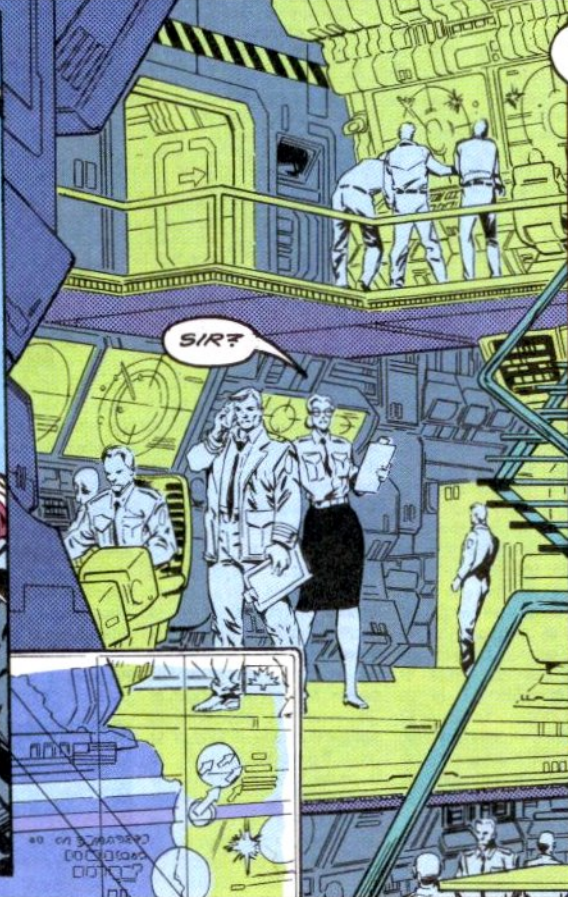
CYCLOPS! WE'VE BEEN NOTICED! FOUR INCOMING FIGHTERS ON AN INTERCEPT COURSE!

CAN WE EVADE THEM?

AH...



CONTROL, THIS IS 106. HAVE VISUAL CONTACT WITH TARGET. THEY REFUSE TO ANSWER OUR HAILS. AWAITING FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS...



SIR?



ANY WORD FROM HUDSON?

NOTHING.

THIS IS GENERAL CHASBN...

PERHAPS I CAN WARN THEM OFF... ENOUGH WEATHER TURBULANCE TO FORCE THEM AWAY, WITHOUT ACTIVELY ENDANGERING THEIR LIVES!



DO IT, STORM! AND HURR--



KERRAM!

UNH!

GW!

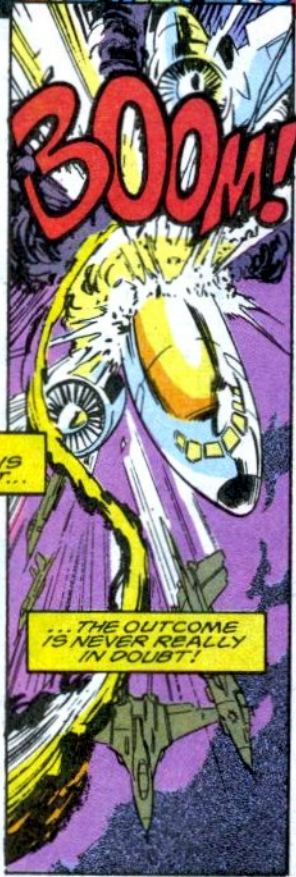
TOO LATE!

WE'RE UNDER ATTACK!

HOLD TIGHT! THIS IS WHERE IT GETS BUMPY!



THOUGH THE EFFORT IS MAGNIFICENT...



BOOM!

... THE OUTCOME IS NEVER REALLY IN DOUBT!



UNNH... SCHU-SCOTT? PETER!

OH NO!



NOOOOOON

BADAMM!



DEAD?!

ALL OF THEM?

OH LORD...

... YOU STUPID, IDIOTIC... LOYAL FOOLS!

WHY IN GOD'S NAME WASN'T I NOTIFIED, CHASEN? I COULD AT LEAST HAVE TRIED TO TALK TO THEM!

AT THE VERY LEAST WE COULD HAVE STOPPED THE X-MEN WITHOUT BLOWING THEM OUT OF THE SKY!



OF COURSE, YOU REALIZE, DON'T YOU?

WHATEVER CHANCE WE HAD OF CONVINCING WOLVERINE TO STAY WITH ALPHA FLIGHT HAS GONE... FOR GOOD!

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH, HUDSON... WE LOGGED A CALL TO DEPARTMENT H AT 17:40 HOURS. WE CHECKED. IT WAS BRASED AT YOUR END. TELL ME...

... WHO EXACTLY WAS ON MONITOR DUTY?





SNKKT!

DEAD!

SNKKT!

PLEASE BELIEVE ME, LOGAN... WE DID ALL WE COULD. NORTHSTAR AND I WE TRIED TO CONVINCE THEM TO TURN BACK. THEY WOULDN'T LISTEN! THE PILOTS... THEY HAD NO CHOICE!



I GUESS WE... NONE OF US FULLY REALIZED--

--JUST HOW MUCH YOU MEANT TO THEM!



JIMMY'S NUTS... GOING IN THERE ALONE! WOLVERINE'LL TEAR HIM APART!

EASY, WALTER. IT IS HUDSON'S CALL. HE WISHED TO PLAY IT THIS WAY. WE IN TURN MUST RESPECT HIS WISHES.

STILL, LIKE YOU, I HAVE GRAVE MISGIVINGS. I REMEMBER WOLVERINE FROM BEFORE--WILD, UNCONTROLLABLE PRONE TO BERBERKER RAGES! IF HE'S NOT CAREFUL...

... HUDSON WILL END UP VERY DEAD!





I DIDN'T COME AFTER YOU TO SETTLE OLD SCORES, LIVES DEPEND ON YOU COMING BACK TO LEAD ALPHA FLIGHT!



MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE WAITED, APPROACHED XAVIER THROUGH OFFICIAL CHANNELS. THAT WOULD HAVE TAKEN TIME I SIMPLY DON'T HAVE!



IF MY APPROACH COST THE X-MEN THEIR LIVES...
...IT'S A BURDEN I'LL BEAR FOREVER!



WAY I SEE IT, WE CAN DO THIS ONE OF TWO WAYS. EITHER YOU HELP ME, HELP SAVE SOME LIVES...

...OR YOU KILL ME RIGHT HERE AND NOW!



I SHOULD'A KNOWN! SHOULD'A KNOWN THEY WOULDN'T, COULDN'T JUST LEAVE IT BE.

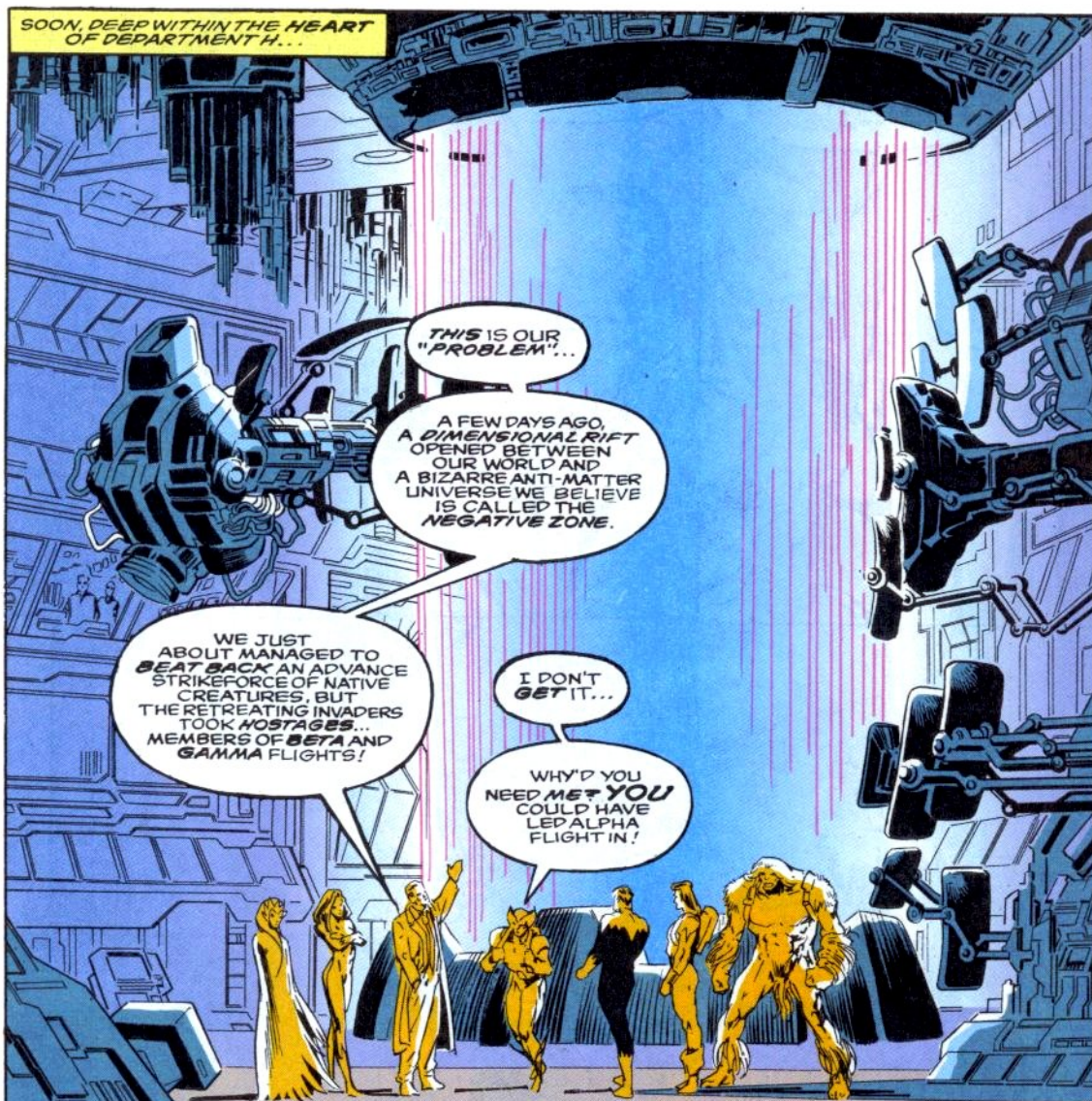
AWRIGHT, JIMMY... IF YOU WANT ME THAT BAD, I'M IN.



WHATEVER HOME I HAD WITH THE X-MEN...

...IT'S GONE!

SOON, DEEP WITHIN THE HEART OF DEPARTMENT H...



THIS IS OUR "PROBLEM"...

A FEW DAYS AGO, A DIMENSIONAL RIFT OPENED BETWEEN OUR WORLD AND A BIZARRE ANTI-MATTER UNIVERSE WE BELIEVE IS CALLED THE NEGATIVE ZONE.

WE JUST ABOUT MANAGED TO BEAT BACK AN ADVANCE STRIKEFORCE OF NATIVE CREATURES, BUT THE RETREATING INVADERS TOOK HOSTAGES... MEMBERS OF BETA AND GAMMA FLIGHTS!

I DON'T GET IT...

WHY'D YOU NEED ME? YOU COULD HAVE LED ALPHA FLIGHT IN!

THE PORTAL HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY UNSTABLE, NEEDING VAST AMOUNTS OF ENERGY AND CONSTANT SUPERVISION JUST TO KEEP IT OPEN!

I DON'T DARE LEAVE THIS LAB FOR MORE THAN A FEW HOURS AT A TIME! AND SINCE WE HAVE NO IDEA HOW LONG THIS RESCUE WILL TAKE, OR EVEN IF TIME RUNS AT THE SAME RATE IN THERE...

OKAY.





LISTEN, JIMMY... IF WE DON'T MAKE IT BACK, I WANT YOU TO CONTACT PROFESSOR X, TELL HIM WHAT HAPPENED TO THE X-MEN. I FIGURE I OWE HIM AT LEAST THAT MUCH.



YOU SURE, LOGAN? IF XAVIER ALREADY BELIEVES THE X-MEN DEAD, BURIED WHEN MAGNETO'S VOLCANO BASE EXPLODED...



...ISN'T IT BETTER TO SAVE HIM MORE PAIN, NOT RAISE HIS HOPES ONLY TO DASH THEM AGAIN?

YEAH...

YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, JIMMY.

OKAY, ALPHA...



LET'S DO IT!



YES! COME TO ME, LITTLE MAN, DEATH AWAITS YOU...

...AT THE HANDS OF ANNIHILUS!



AH!

YOU--YOU... MANIAC! GET--

AWAY!



UUUH!

THE COSMIC CONTROL ROD! YOU...ALMOST--



NO!



RELAX, WOLVERINE!



... I HAVE YOU!

AN' NONE TOO SOON!

STILL, IT CONFIRMS WHAT I SUSPECTED, THE DEVICE AT ANNIHILUS'S THROAT WAS NOT ONLY THE SOURCE OF HIS POWER, BUT FROM THE LOOKS OF IT...

"...PRETTY DARN VITAL TOO!"
YOU DO NOT KNOW WHAT YOU HAVE DONE! RETURN THE COSMIC CONTROL ROD TO ME --

...NOW!

WAIT! I FIGURE NOW WE'VE BOTH GOT SOMETHING THE OTHER WANTS...

LET'S TALK!



SHK!



UNTIL...

--LEFT TWO X-MEN DEAD AND DOCTOR MOIRA MAC TAGGART CRITICALLY WOUNDED.



A BATTLE BETWEEN THE OUTLAW TEAM OF MUTANTS THE X-MEN AND--

NOT GOOD. NOT GOOD AT ALL. I'VE MANAGED TO KEEP ALL X-MEN-RELATED NEWS ITEMS FROM LOGAN, BUT THIS...

SETH WINTERS
LIVE
NATIONAL
NETWORK
12:20



IF THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN RECEIVED AT DEPARTMENT H, IT MEANS THAT WE, SKRT, X-MEN, HAVE FAILED IN OUR BID TO RESCUE JEAN GREY FROM THE CLUTCHES OF THE HELLFIRE CLUB.

WHETHER SKRT OURSELVES ARE DEAD OR ALIVE MAKES NO DIFFERENCE. IF THE POWER WITH CRSK JEAN GREY HAS BEEN SUBVERTED...



...COUNTLESS LIVES ARE AT RISK!

BLAST!

NOW WHAT DO I DO?



THE TANGLED WEBB JUST KEEPS GETTING MORE TANGLED!



SKRRRAAA!

RRRAGH!



OORRR!

OKAY, TIME!



THAT WAS GOOD, KID. A BIG IMPROVEMENT.

YEAH, I CAN FEEL MY REFLEXES REALLY COMING ON!



YOU'RE STILL JUST A LITTLE WILD, A BIT RECKLESS. THE TRICK IS TO CHANNEL THAT FIRE BURNING IN YOUR GUT-- USE THE BEAST, NOT BE USED BY IT!



HEY, I'D ALMOST GIVEN UP ON WILD CHILD AS A LOST CAUSE. WORKING WITH HIM ONE-TO-ONE LOGAN REACHED HIM. TAMED THE BEAST.



SO MUCH ACCOMPLISHED. SO MUCH TO LOSE...

WOLVERINE. A WORD.





GO!

HIT 'EM HARD, ALPHA!



HE LEAVES HER ARMS AS WALTER LANGKOWSKI--

-- BUT ARRIVES AS SASQUATCH!

SINCE OUR INVITE OBVIOUSLY GOT LOST IN THE POST...

SKRAKASH!

... I'VE COME TO R.S.V.P. IN PERSON.







THAT'S RIGHT, MYSTIC. I ABSORB KINETIC ENERGY! THE HARDER YOU HIT-- THE STRONGER I GET.



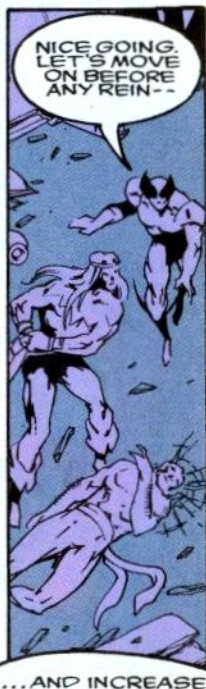
THEN, MY FRIEND, I WILL STRIKE NOT AT YOUR BODY...



... BUT AT YOUR MIND!



DUST FROM THE REALM OF DREAMS. I WISH YOU PLEASANT ONES.



NICE GOING. LET'S MOVE ON BEFORE ANY REIN--



WOW!

GHH! CAN'T... CAN'T STAND! CRUSHING...



THAT IS MY PARTICULAR TALENT, WOLVERINE. TO TAKE, SAY THE MASS OF AN OBJECT-- OR PERSON...

... AND INCREASE IT GEOMETRICALLY UNTIL THEY ARE CRUSHED BY THEIR OWN BODY WEIGHT.

BELOW...

I... I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT! I THOUGHT I WAS FAST, BUT WOLVERINE HAD DEALT WITH THESE GUARDS BEFORE. I HAD A CHANCE TO REALIZE WE WERE EVEN UNDER ATTACK!

MERCILESS, REMORSELESS... HE BORE THESE MEN NO MALICE AND YET STILL HE GUTTED THEM LIKE DOGS!

HOW, I WONDER, WOULD HE DEAL WITH ME, SHOULD HE EVER DISCOVER I WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATHS OF THE X-MEN!

NnnnoRTHST AAAH!

THE COMM-LINK! IT'S WOLVERINE! AND HE SOUNDS IN AGONY! TIME FOR THE BACK-UP--

-- TO HIT THE FRONT LINE!

KRAK

HUUK!

Uuur... thu-THANKS, KID. I'M REAL GLAD I KEPT YOU IN RESERVE.



I GUESS THAT MAKES A SET. PIERCE MAY HAVE HAD ONE HECK OF A RIGHT--

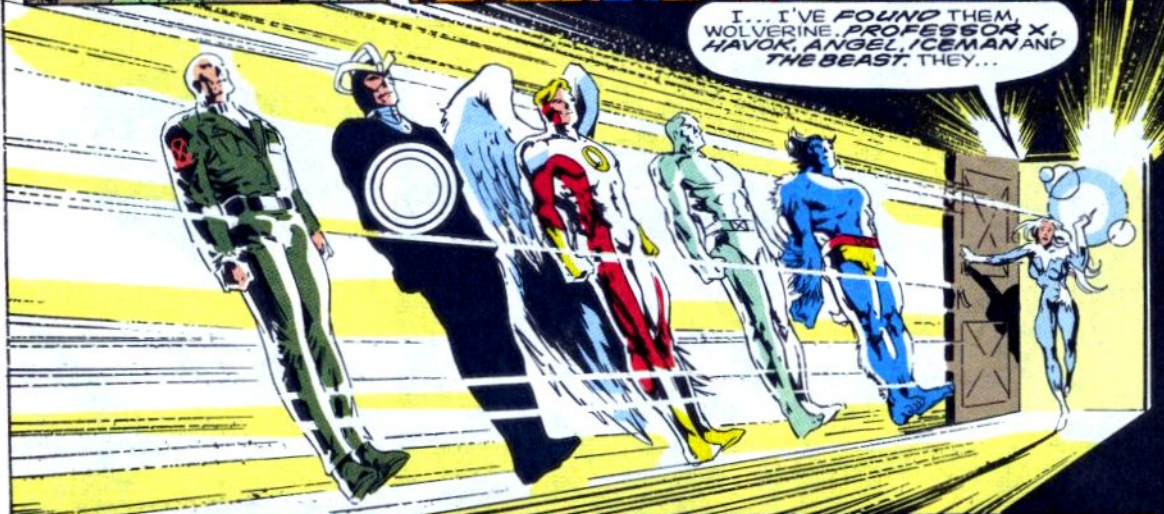


...BUT HE ALSO HAD A GLASS JAW!

WE'RE NOT DONE YET. WE STILL HAVE TO FIND JEANNIE... AND THE X-MEN, IF THEY'RE STILL ALIVE!



AURORA, TALK TO ME, DARLIN'...



I... I'VE FOUND THEM. WOLVERINE, PROFESSOR X, HAVOK, ANGEL, ICEMAN AND THE BEAST. THEY...



... THEY'RE ALIVE. BUT--

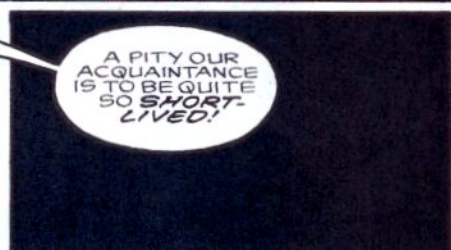


OH!

SKRAAA!



NO! I FIGURED JEANNIE FOR A CAPTIVE, BUT WHAT IF--





-- WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO YOU?!

NOTHING, MY DEAR LOGAN...

... THAT I DID NOT WISH THEM TO!

I MUST THANK YOU, WOLVERINE, FOR DEALING SO COMPREHENSIVELY WITH SHAW AND THE OTHERS. YOU SAVED ME THE JOB!

I AM NOW BLACK KING OF THE HELLFIRE CLUB, AND WITH THE HELP OF MY BLACK QUEEN I WILL SOON RULE THIS WORLD!

IT'S JEAN ALL RIGHT, BUT **NOT** THE WOMAN I KNEW. SHE'S CHANGED... MORE EVEN, I FIGURE, THAN WYNGARDE **REALIZES!** HE THINKS HE CONTROLS HER.



HE'S WRONG!



NOW THEN, MY DEAR, YOU HAVE A LITTLE **GAME** DEVISED FOR OUR SOMEWHAT **CAPTIVE** AUDIENCE, I BELIEVE!



INDEED, JASON, MY LOVE, AND IT'S ONE MY LITTLE MAN-ANIMAL HERE WILL **SO** ENJOY!



IT'S CALLED... **TRUTH AND CONSEQUENCES.** I SHOW WOLVERINE THE **TRUTH** ABOUT THE DEATH OF THE X-MEN, AND YOU, MY SWEET NORTHSTAR...



... TAKE THE **CONSEQUENCES!**

LULIAH!
NO... NO!

RASED



YOU! YOU KILLED THEM! YOU KILLED THEM ALL!

DEAD.





JEANNIE?



OH GOD, JEANNIE...

...WHAT HAVE I DONE?



WHAT HAD TO BE DONE.

THAT MOMENT, WHEN OUR MINDS TOUCHED, THE PART OF ME THAT WAS STILL JEAN GREY BEGGED YOU TO SET ME FREE BEFORE THE PHOENIX POWER OVERWHELMED ME COMPLETELY AND COUNTLESS LIVES WERE LOST!



DEAR LOGAN, YOU HAVE SAVED ME...

...FROM MYSELF?



IN THIS REALITY, WOLVERINE PREVENTS THE RISE OF *DARK PHOENIX* AND THE DEATHS OF *BILLIONS* ON THE PLANET *D'SBAR*. BUT OUR TALE IS NOT YET OVER...

IT'S BEEN OVER AN *HOUR* NOW! WHAT ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT IN THERE, WHAT'S THERE TO *DISCUSS*? IT'S A FOREGONE CONCLUSION HE WON'T STAY, NOT AFTER WHAT NORTHSTAR DID AND *I* HELPED COVER UP!



TALKIN' TO YOURSELF, JIMMY? *GUILT* MAKES YOU DO THAT!



LOOK, PROFESSOR XAVIER, LOGAN, I DON'T WANT TO HOLD YOU UP SO WHY DON'T I JUST--

DOCTOR HUDSON, LOGAN IS *STAYING* WITH ALPHA FLIGHT.

NATURALLY, BUT -- *WHAT?!*

I'M STAYIN'. 'COURSE, I *SHOULD* GO WALK OUTTA HERE AND NEVER LOOK BACK FEW MONTHS AGO I'D A DONE SO WITHOUT HESITATION.

WELL, MAYBE ENOUGH HESITATION TO *QUIT* NORTHSTAR ON THE WAY OUT!

'CEPT YOU WERE RIGHT, LEADERSHIP *HAS* GIVEN ME A FRESH PERSPECTIVE, SOOTHED THE SAVAGE BEAST. I'VE GOT A JOB TO DO AND IT'S ONLY *PART* DONE.

I SEE WILD CHILD, A REFLECTION OF WHAT I MIGHT'VE BECOME. I SEE NORTHSTAR -- ARROGANT, STUPID, BUT FULL OF POTENTIAL. IF I GIVE IN, I GIVE IN ON *THEM*. I GO BACK TO THE X-MEN, I LOSE ALL *I* HAVE GAINED.

YA WANTED ME, HUDSON, YA *GOT* ME!



WHETHER YA LIKE IT OR NOT!

AND SO IT IS THAT THOUGH WOLVERINE REMAINS ALWAYS ON CALL SHOULD THE X-MEN NEED HIM...

... HE IS FIRST AND FOREMOST LEADER OF ALPHA FLIGHT!

AND PERHAPS THE WORLD IS A BETTER PLACE BECAUSE OF IT!



THE END