



TM

Emma Frost

MARVEL

PG+ 1

**BOLLERS
GREEN
KETCHUM**

**higher
LEARNING
1 OF 6**

Greg Horn

DIRECT EDITION
00111
7 59606 05432 9
\$2.50 US \$4.00 CAN

THE SHOW VALLEY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

SHOW VALLEY, MASSACHUSETTS



TEN YEARS AGO
2:39 P.M.

...not
bad at all,
Emma.

HIGHER LEARNING

PART
1 of 6

GROWING PAINS

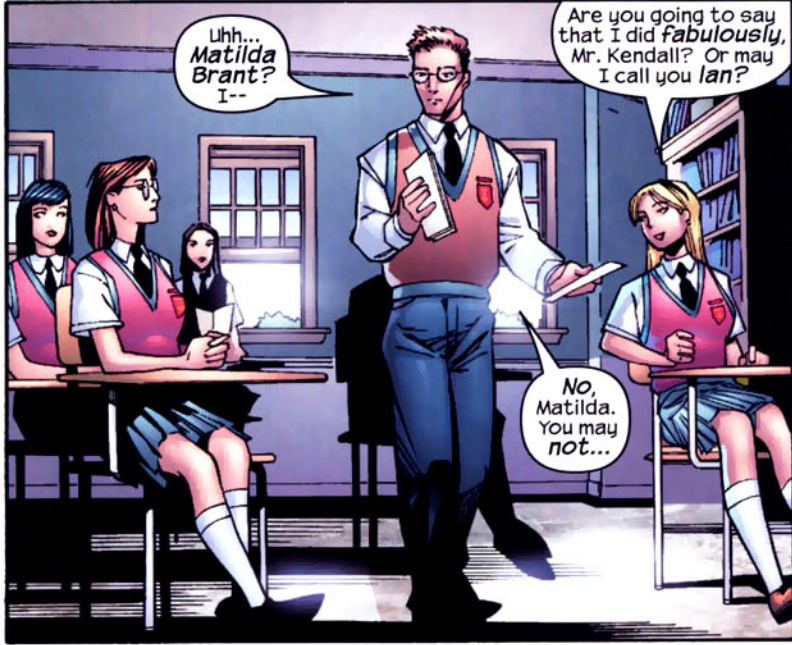
KARL BOLLERS WRITER
RANDY GREEN PENCILER
RICK KETCHAM INKER
PETE PANTAZIS COLORIST
VIRTUAL CALLIGRAPHYS
CORY PETIT LETTERER
MIKE RAICHT ASSOCIATE EDITOR
JOE QUESADA EDITOR IN CHIEF
GREG HORN COVER
MIKE MARTS EDITOR
BILL JEMAS PRESIDENT

Yup, that's
me...

Emma Frost,
everybody's
favorite nobody.

SPECIAL THANKS TO GRAIT MORRISON!





Uhh... Matilda Brant? I--

Are you going to say that I did *fabulously*, Mr. Kendall? Or may I call you *Ian*?

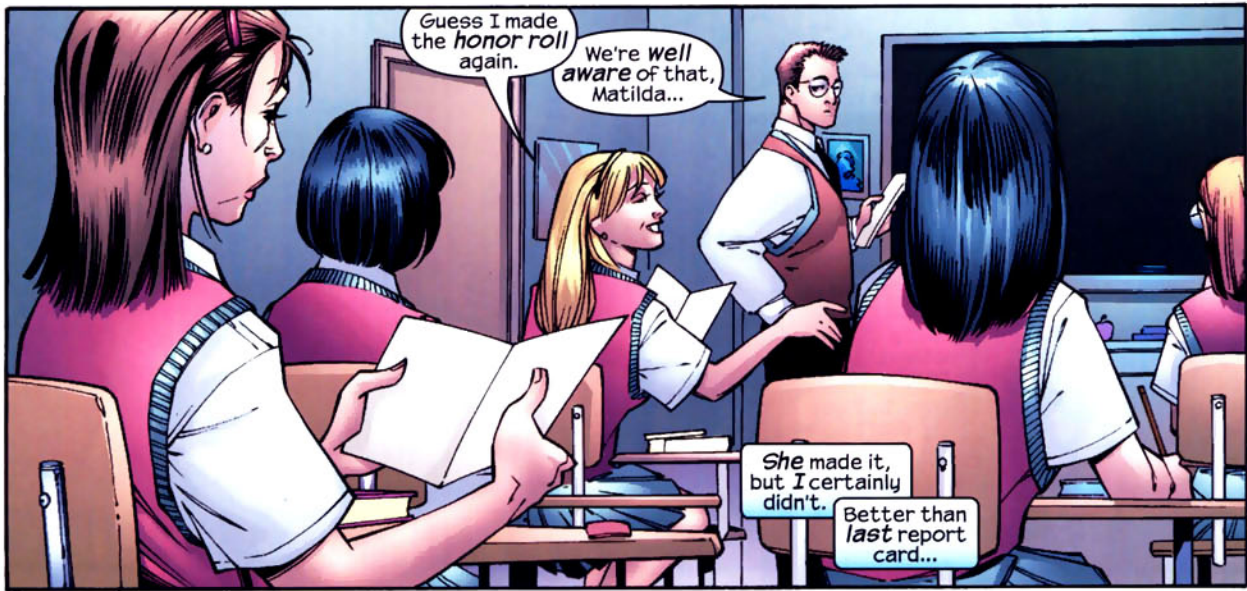
No, Matilda. You may not...



Well, what do you know? **A's.**

In every subject.

English A
Math A
History A
Science A
Spanish A+
Art A+
Phys Ed A

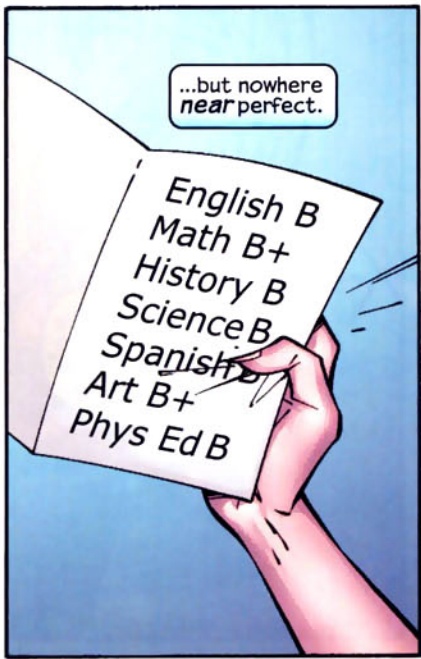


Guess I made the *honor roll* again.

We're well aware of that, Matilda...

She made it, but I certainly didn't.

Better than last report card...



...but nowhere near perfect.

English B
Math B+
History B
Science B
Spanish B
Art B+
Phys Ed B



BRRING

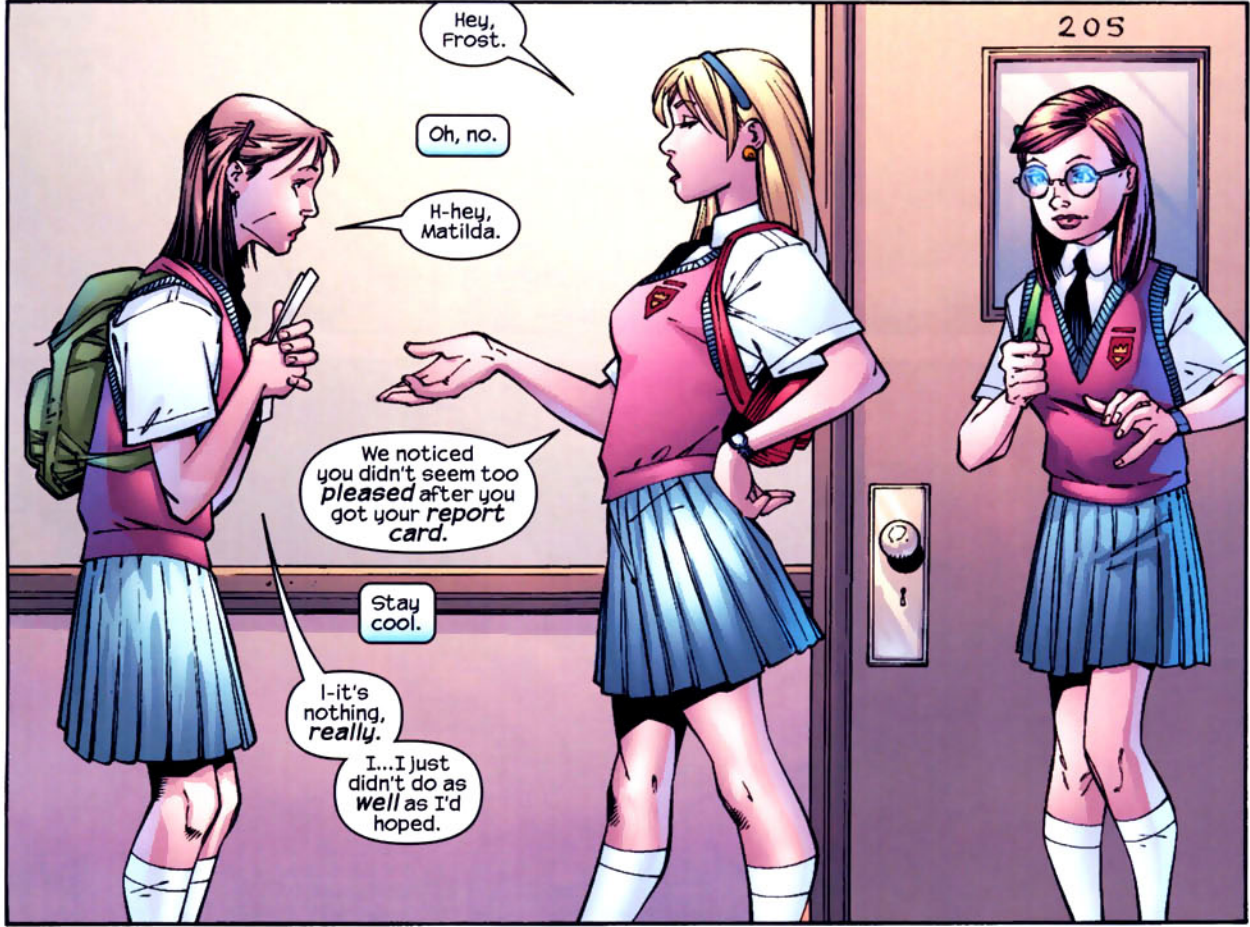
See you tomorrow, class, and remember--this is only the *second* trimester.

If your grades were less than *stellar* this time around, you still have the chance to *improve* them.



Oh. Look. It's the poor little rich girl. "Enema" Frost.

She's a weirdo.



Hey, Frost.

Oh, no.

H-hey, Matilda.

We noticed you didn't seem too pleased after you got your report card.

Stay cool.

I-it's nothing, really.

I...I just didn't do as well as I'd hoped.



Well, I aced every subject. Why not let me help? Maybe I can tutor you.

Really? That would be nice...



Oh. Wow. My God.

Can these grades scream "mediocrity" any louder?

I--

Here it comes.



Sorry, Frost. I'm afraid you're way beyond my help...

...but, then, that's what you've got "Paddy" for, isn't it?



Everybody knows the only reason you were accepted here is because he's the second richest man in the state.

...and a personal chauffeur who drives you to school every day.
~Tt~ Please.

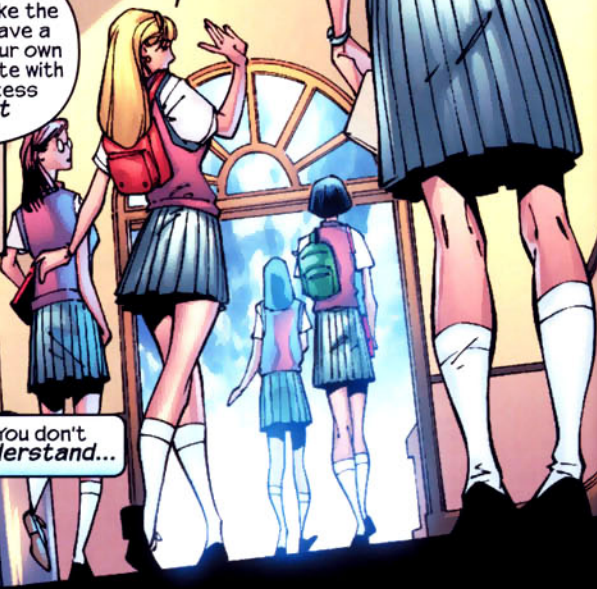
That's... that's **not** true.

What are you wearing to the **dance**, Margo?



So, do you truly expect us to feel **sorry** for you because you're **flat-chested** and don't **test** very well? Get **real**.

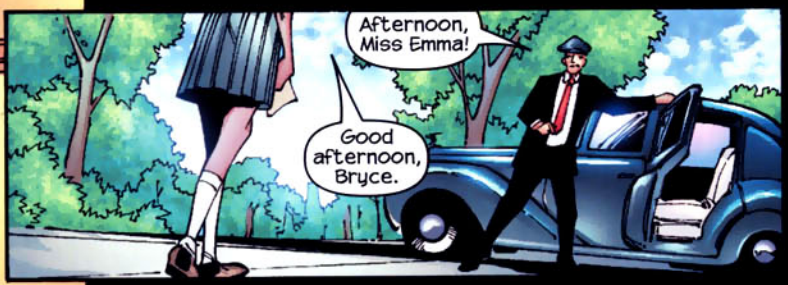
You don't even have to **board** here like the rest of us. You have a **mansion**, with your own **bedroom**, complete with **digital TV**, access to **gourmet foods**...



You don't **understand**...



Ow... my **head**...



Afternoon, Miss Emma!

Good afternoon, Bryce.



Everything **okay** back there, Miss?

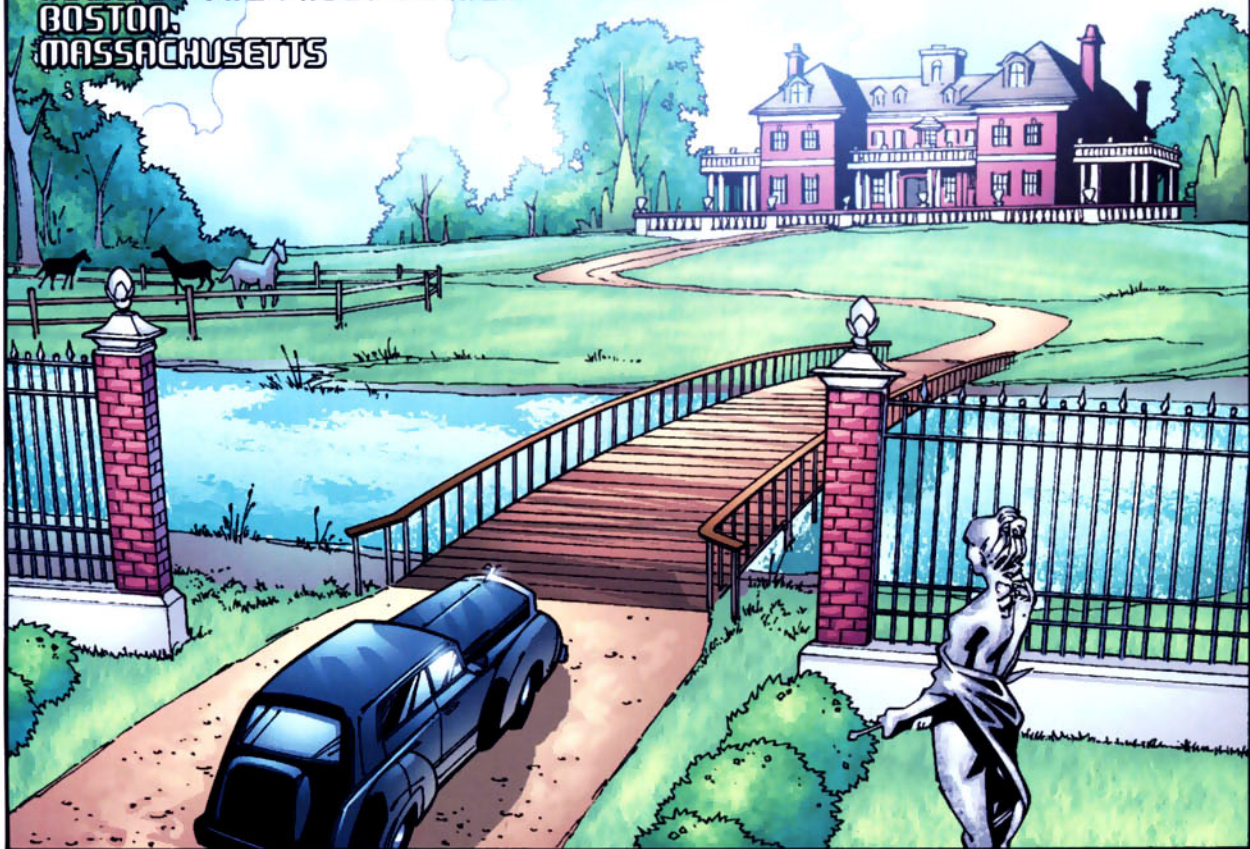
Just a slight **headache**.

So many lately.



I think my brain's about to **explode**.

FROST HOUSE
HOME OF THE FROST FAMILY
BOSTON,
MASSACHUSETTS





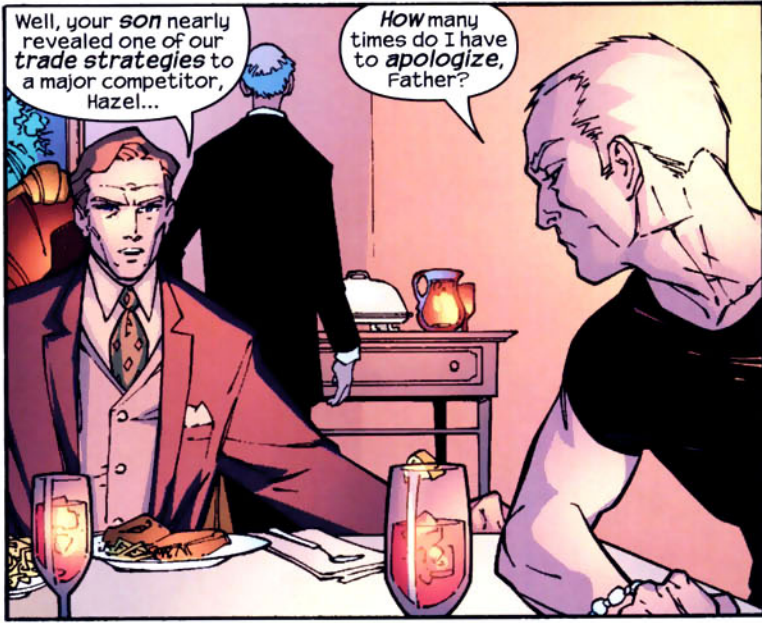
...it's *them*, my family.

So...

Friday is perfect for me. Ten o'clock?

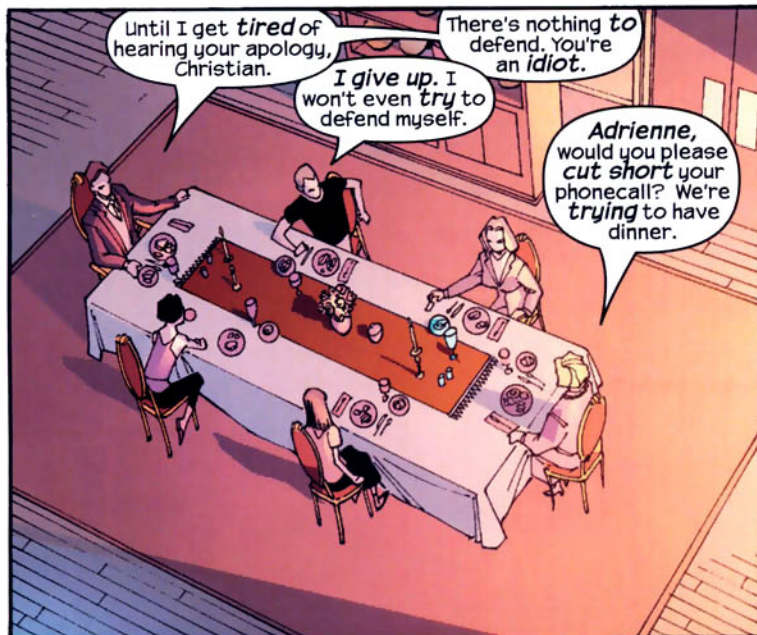


...how was everyone's day?



Well, your *son* nearly revealed one of our *trade strategies* to a major competitor, Hazel...

How many times do I have to apologize, Father?



Until I get *tired* of hearing your apology, Christian.

There's nothing to defend. You're an idiot.

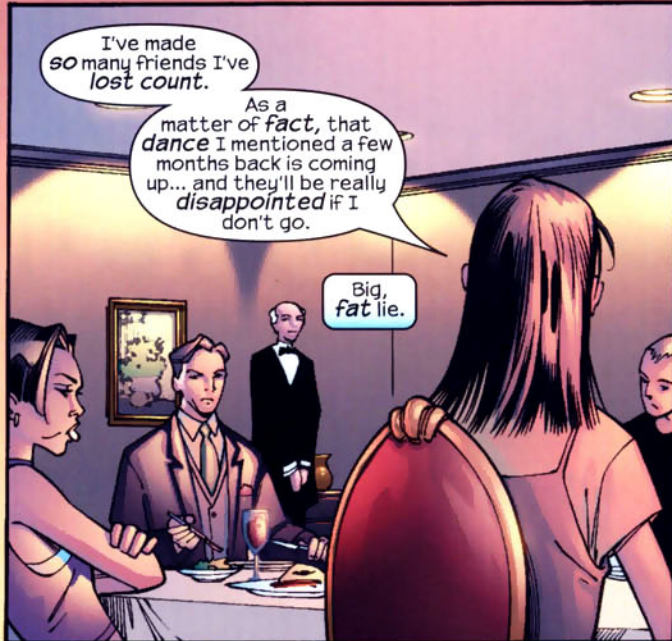
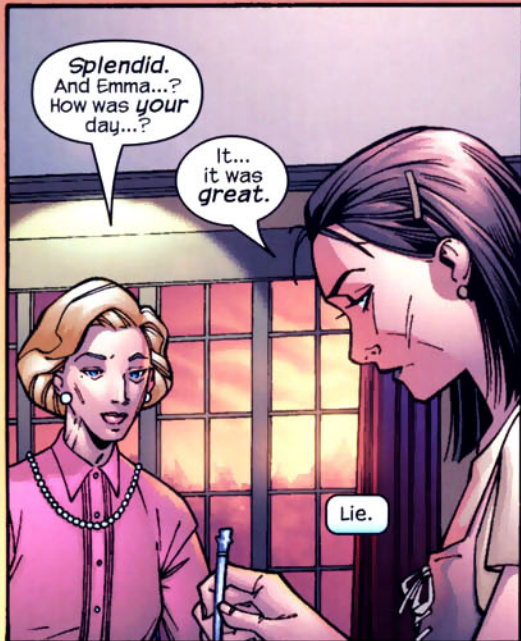
I give up. I won't even *try* to defend myself.

Adrienne, would you please *cut short* your phonecall? We're *trying* to have dinner.



Sorry, *Mother*. That was a rep from a *modeling agency* downtown. They're looking to turn me into the next *Cindy Crawford*.

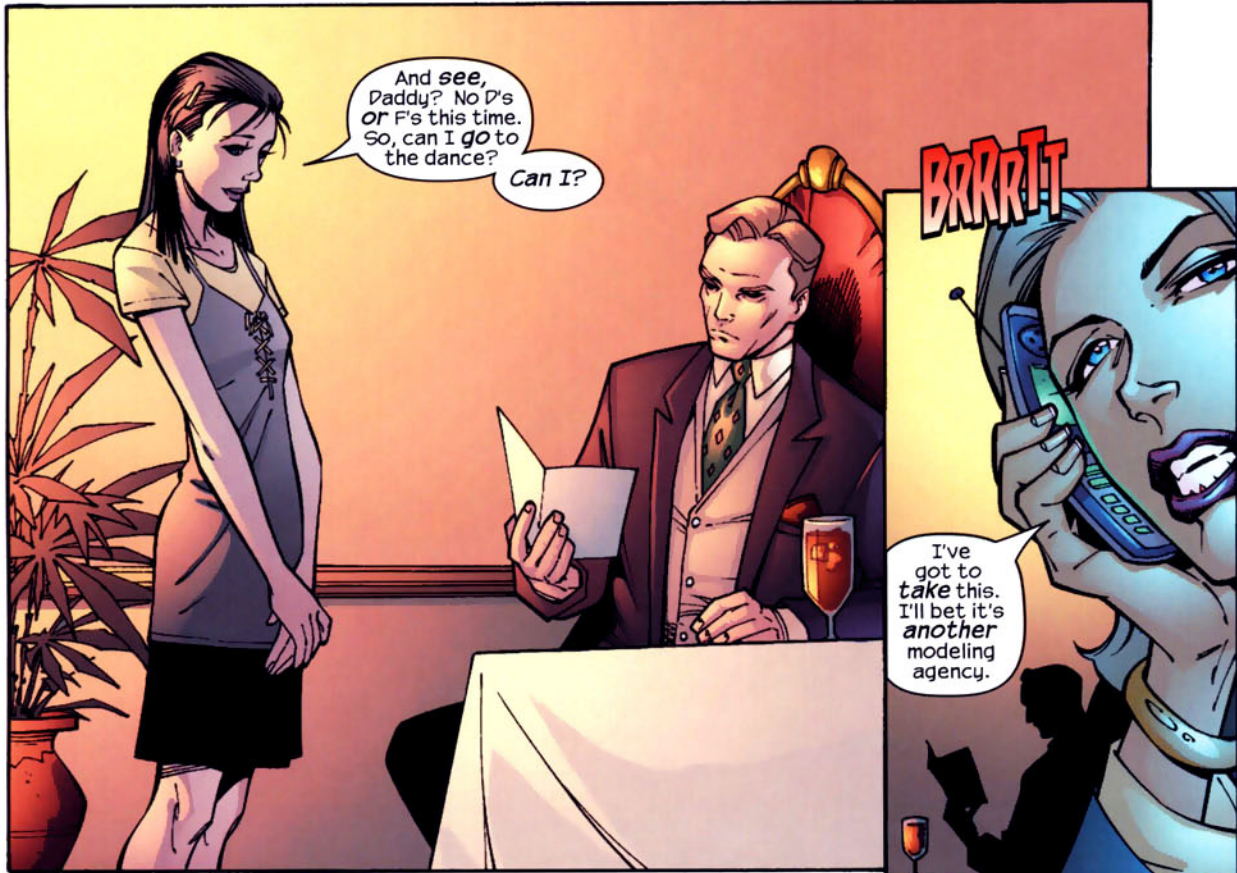
I'm *humoring* him, of course. I intend to work with *Daddy* once I finish my masters.





I *knew* he'd say that. And I'm ready.

Actually, we got our report cards back today.



And *see*, Daddy? No D's or F's this time. So, can I go to the dance? Can I?

BRRRIT!

I've got to take this. I'll bet it's another modeling agency.



Wh-what?! But you said I could attend the dance if I got B's!

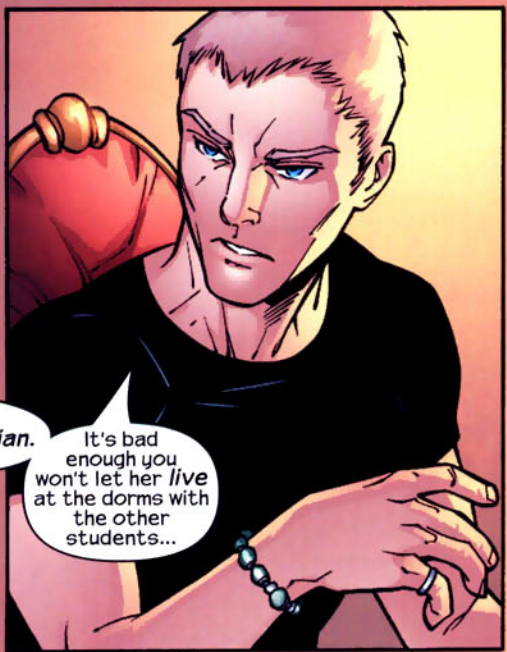
Yes, but B's are not A's. A *Frost* should strive to be better.

Absolutely *not*, Emma. These marks are *simply* unacceptable.

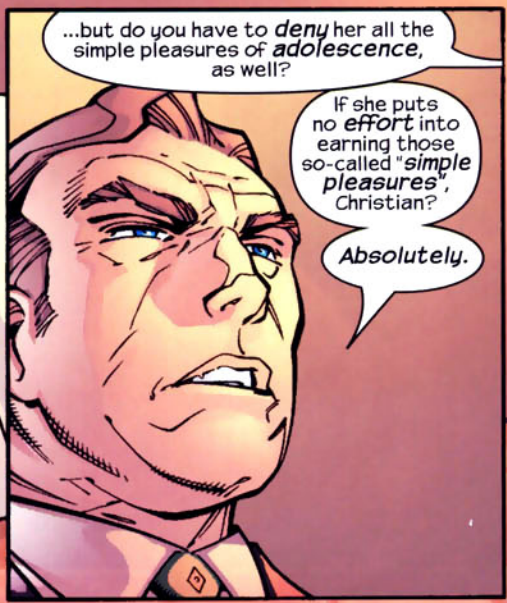


End of discussion.

What a humanitarian.



It's bad enough you won't let her *live* at the dorms with the other students...



...but do you have to *deny* her all the simple pleasures of *adolescence*, as well?

If she puts no *effort* into earning those so-called "*simple pleasures*", Christian?

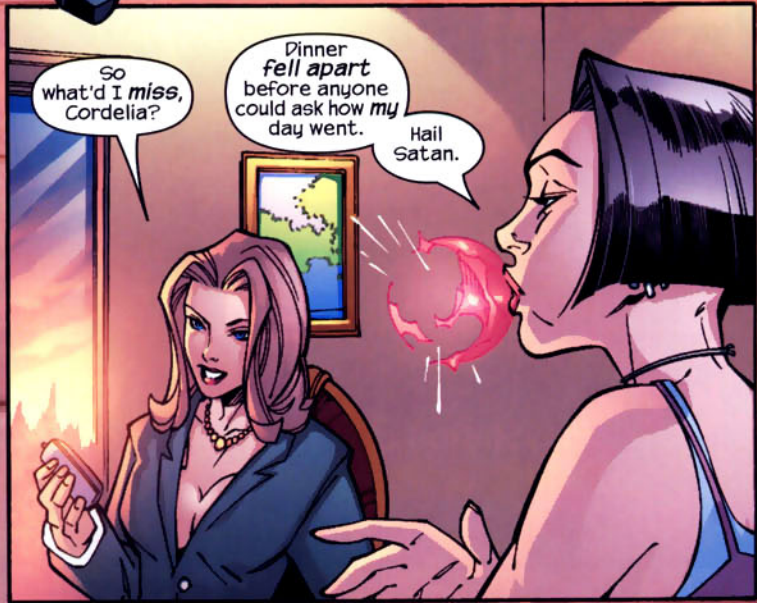
Absolutely.



Emma should *live* at Snow Valley, Father. If she *did*, maybe she'd have more time to *study* instead of spending it driving *back and forth* every day.

She can study *during* the ride, Christian.

Nothing I say is *penetrating*, so how about I *graciously* excuse myself?



So what'd I *miss*, Cordelia?

Dinner *fell apart* before anyone could ask how *my* day went.

Hail Satan.

LATER...

Your grades really are better this trimester, Em...

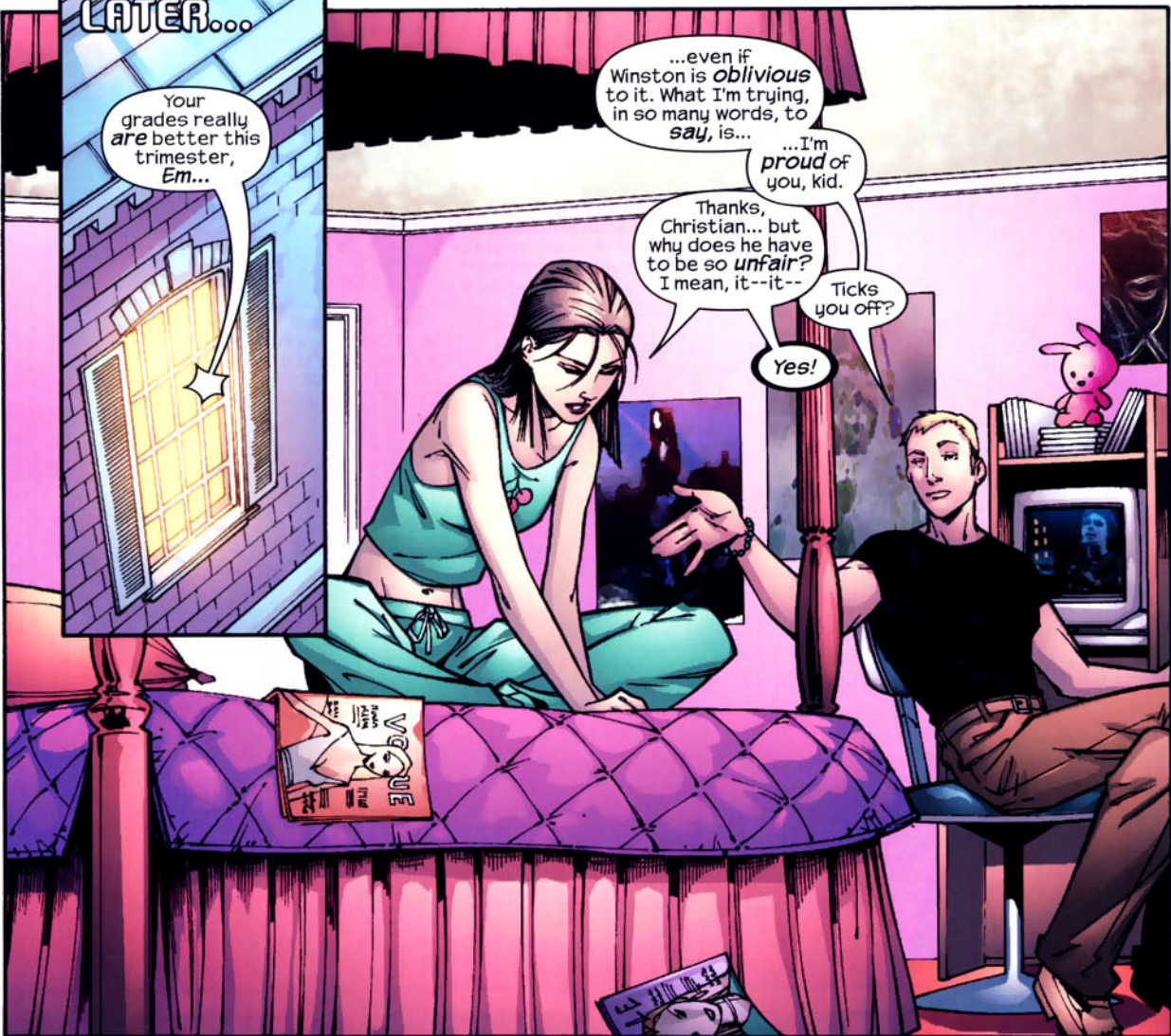
...even if Winston is *oblivious* to it. What I'm trying, in so many words, to *say*, is...

...I'm proud of you, kid.

Thanks, Christian... but why does he have to be so *unfair*? I mean, it--it--

Ticks you off?

Yes!



I could have scored *all A's*, Christian. I really *could* have. It's just that...I...I haven't been *feeling* so well lately.

Why, what's wrong?

For *weeks* I've been having these really intense *headaches*.

Em, *why* haven't you told Winston and Hazel?

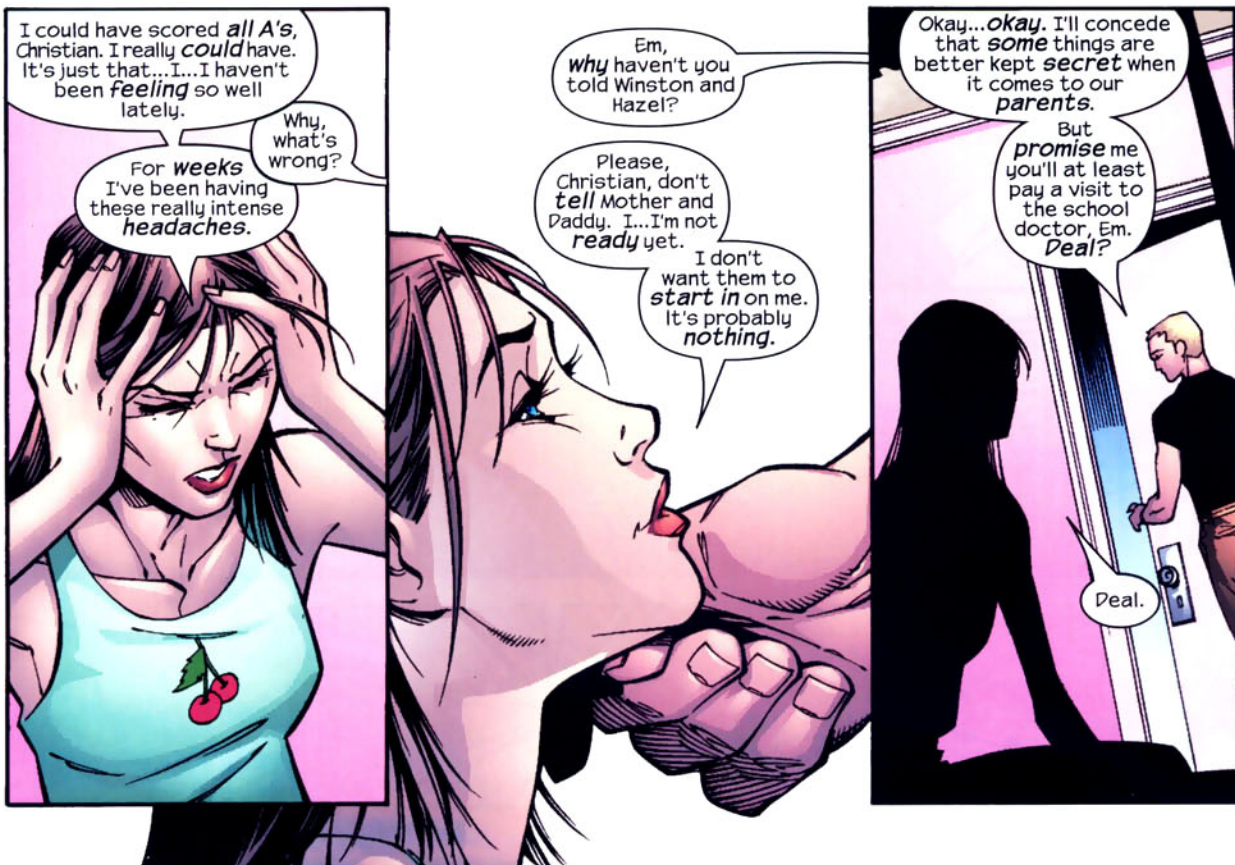
Please, Christian, don't *tell* Mother and Daddy. I...I'm not *ready* yet.

I don't want them to *start in* on me. It's probably *nothing*.

Okay...*okay*. I'll concede that *some* things are better kept *secret* when it comes to our *parents*.

But *promise* me you'll at least pay a visit to the school doctor, Em. *Deal?*

Deal.



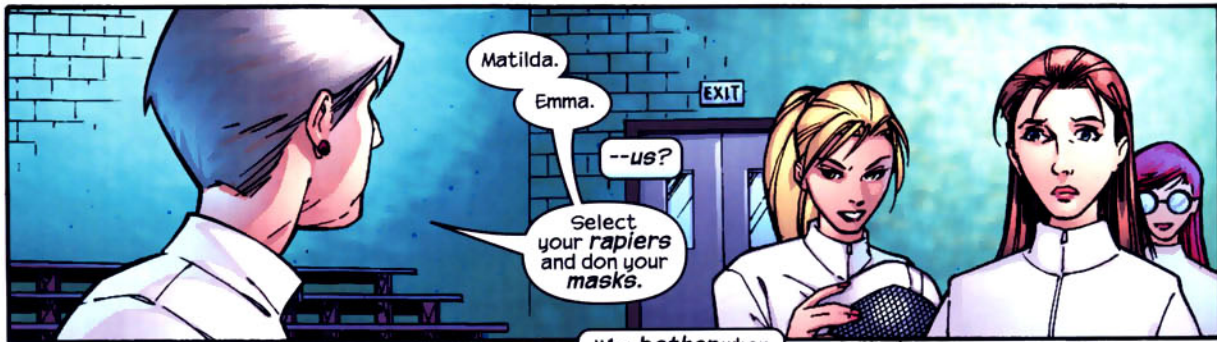
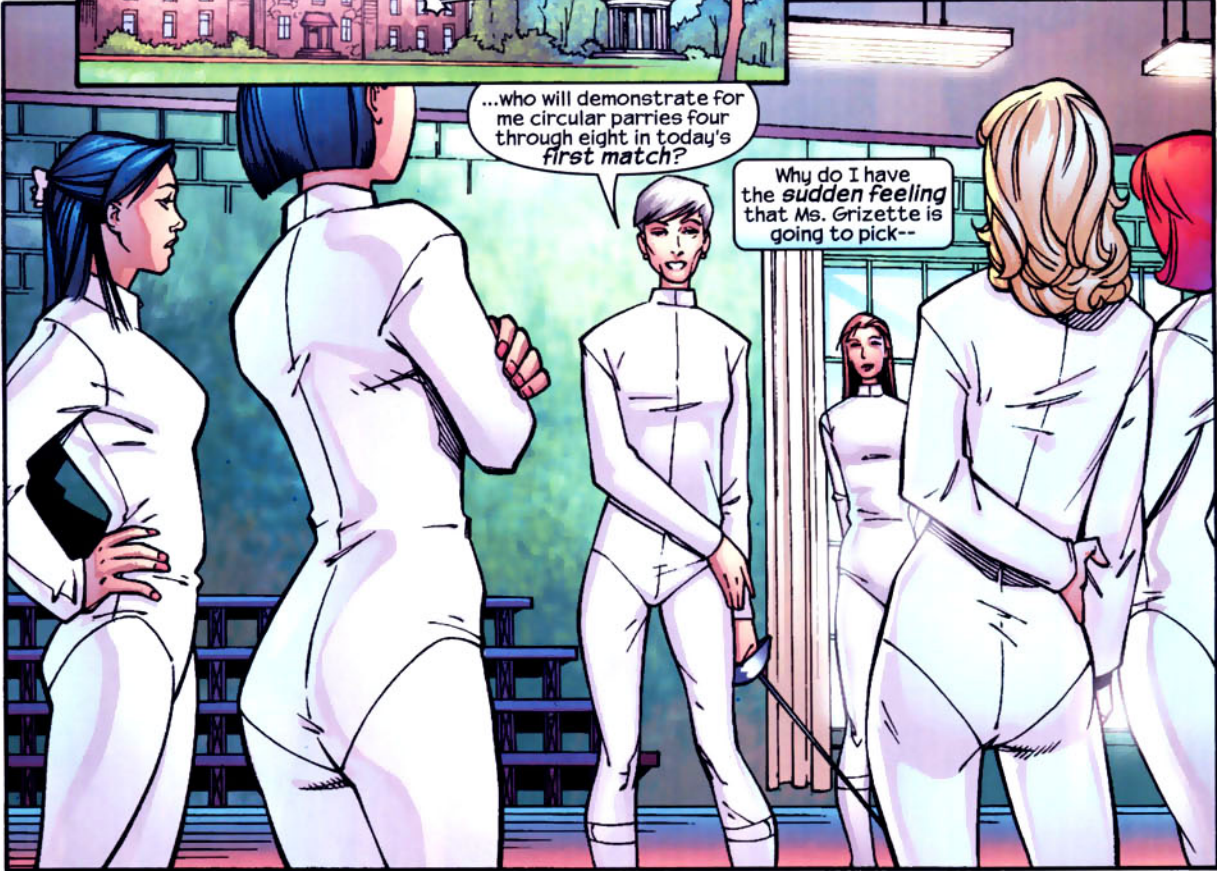
THE SNOW VALLEY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS
THREE DAYS LATER



So then,
my young
ladies...

...who will demonstrate for
me circular parries four
through eight in today's
first match?

Why do I have
the sudden feeling
that Ms. Grizette is
going to pick--



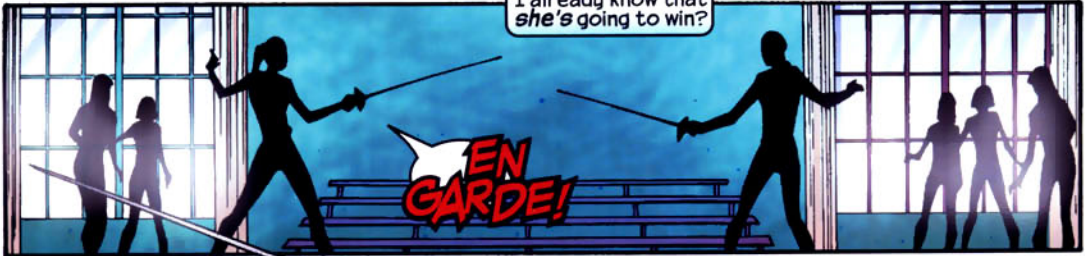
Matilda.

Emma.

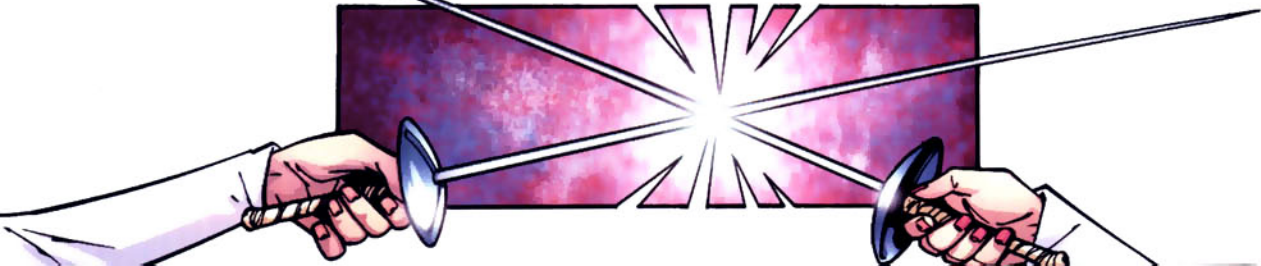
--us?

Select
your rapiers
and don your
masks.

Why bother when
I already know that
she's going to win?



EN
GARDE!



Matilda is a superior athlete.

I'm not.

She's popular.

I'm not.

She's going to the dance and I'm--

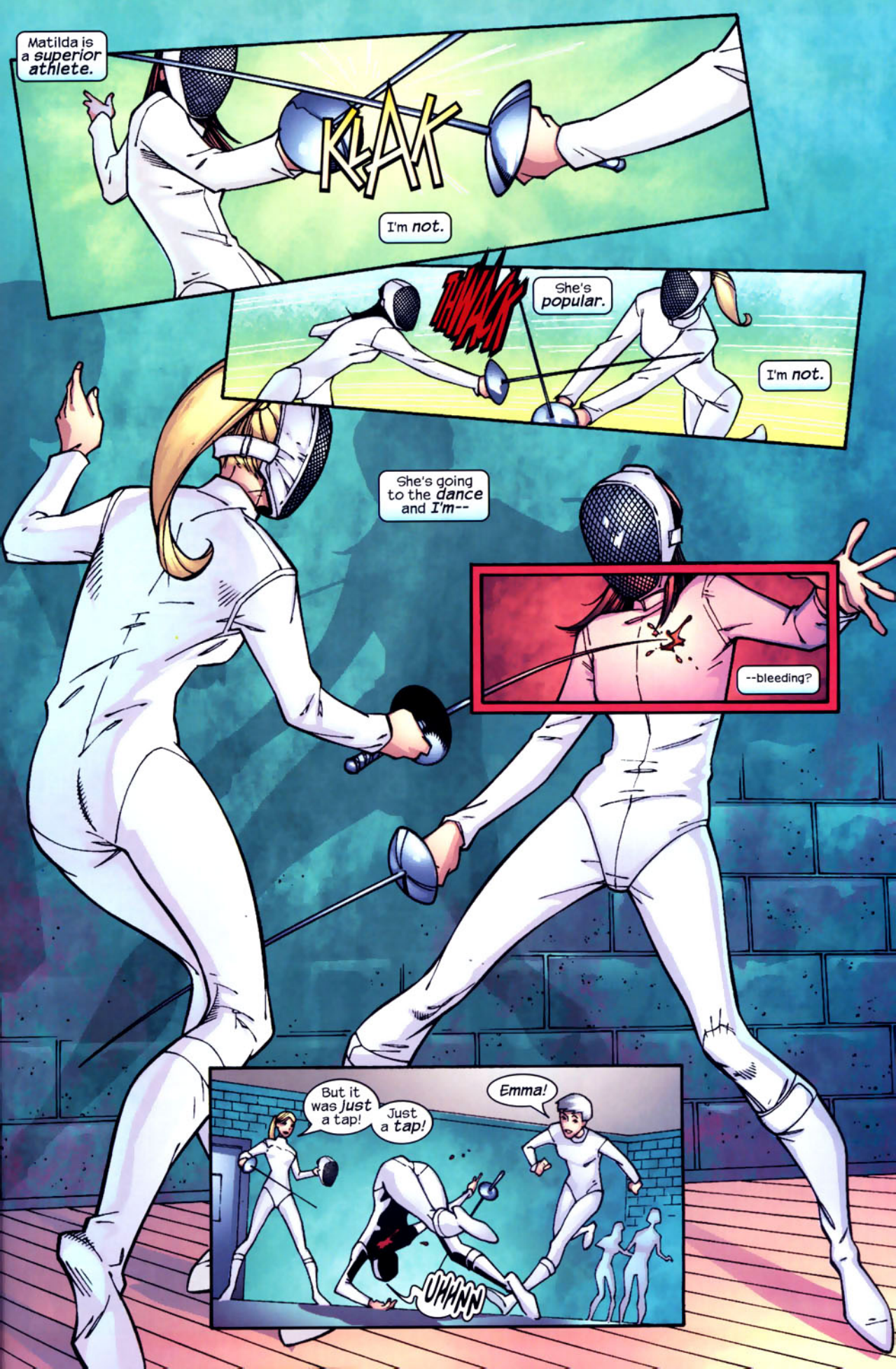
--bleeding?

But it was just a tap!

Just a tap!

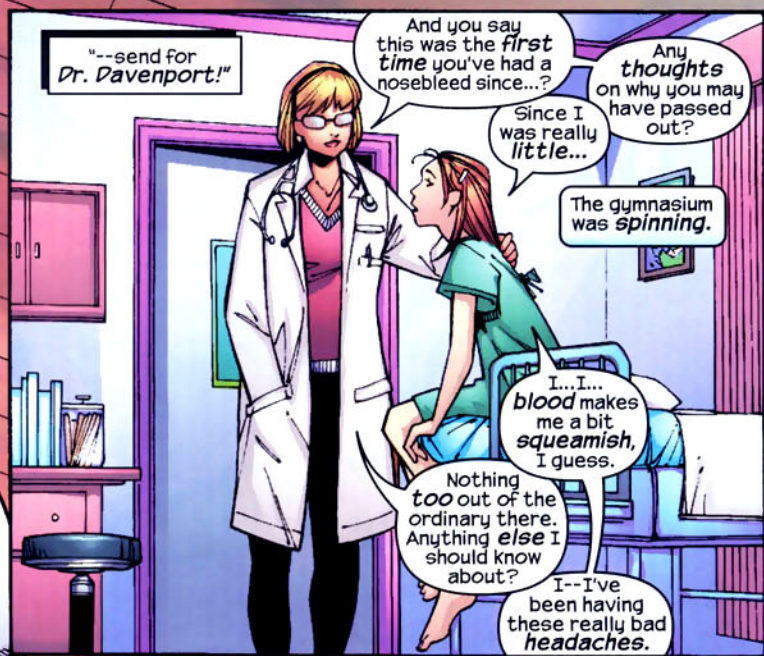
Emma!

UHHNN





Mon Dieu!
Quickly, my young ladies--



"--send for Dr. Davenport!"

And you say this was the *first* time you've had a nosebleed since...?

Any thoughts on why you may have passed out?

Since I was really little...

The gymnasium was spinning.

I...I... blood makes me a bit squeamish, I guess.

Nothing too out of the ordinary there. Anything else I should know about?

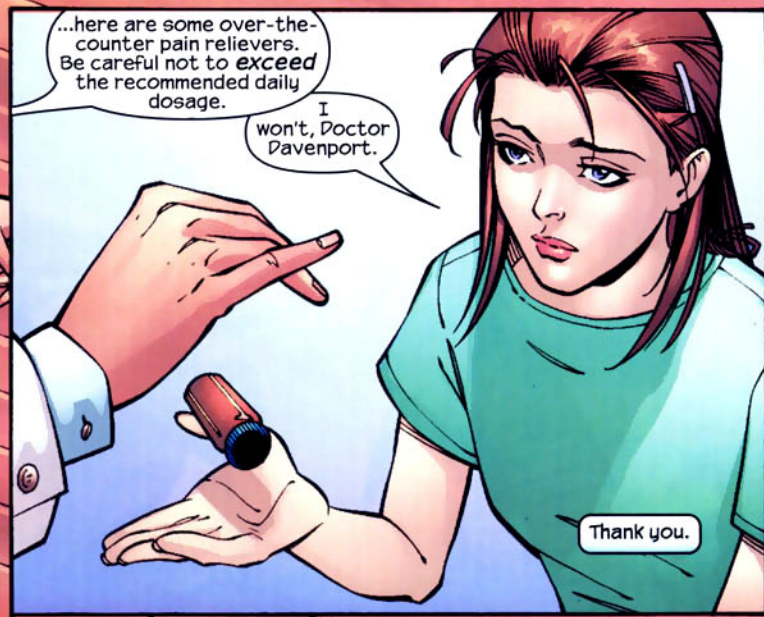
I--I've been having these really bad headaches.



Probably nothing more than *migraines*. Caused by *tension*.



Still, I'd like to see you in two weeks for a *follow-up examination*. In the mean time...



...here are some over-the-counter pain relievers. Be careful not to *exceed* the recommended daily dosage.

I won't, Doctor Davenport.

Thank you.

MR. KENDALL'S CLASS THE FOLLOWING DAY



...and don't forget that the **midterm** is only **three weeks** away. I'll see you all on Monday.



I heard that a lot of **cute boys** from Pemberton are going to the dance tonight... including **Josh Nixon**.

Ooh... he's **so fine!**

Emma...? May I have a **word** with you?

Of course, Mr. Kendall. Is it about my **grades?**



No, I'm just **concerned** about you in general, Emma. I **know** it hasn't been easy, not being here at the **dorms** with the other girls...

...plus, I heard about your... your **incident** in fencing class yesterday.

I want you to know that I'm **here** if there's **any way** I can help. I could even tutor you if you'd like.



Wow. I never noticed how his **eyes** are the same color as the **ocean**.

That-- that's **handsome**-- I mean, **lovely**. It would be lovely. Can we start today?

Hm...



...that'll be **tough**, since I have to **chaperone** the dance tonight.

Aren't you going?

O-of...
...of course I am!

Lie.

FROST HOUSE THAT EVENING

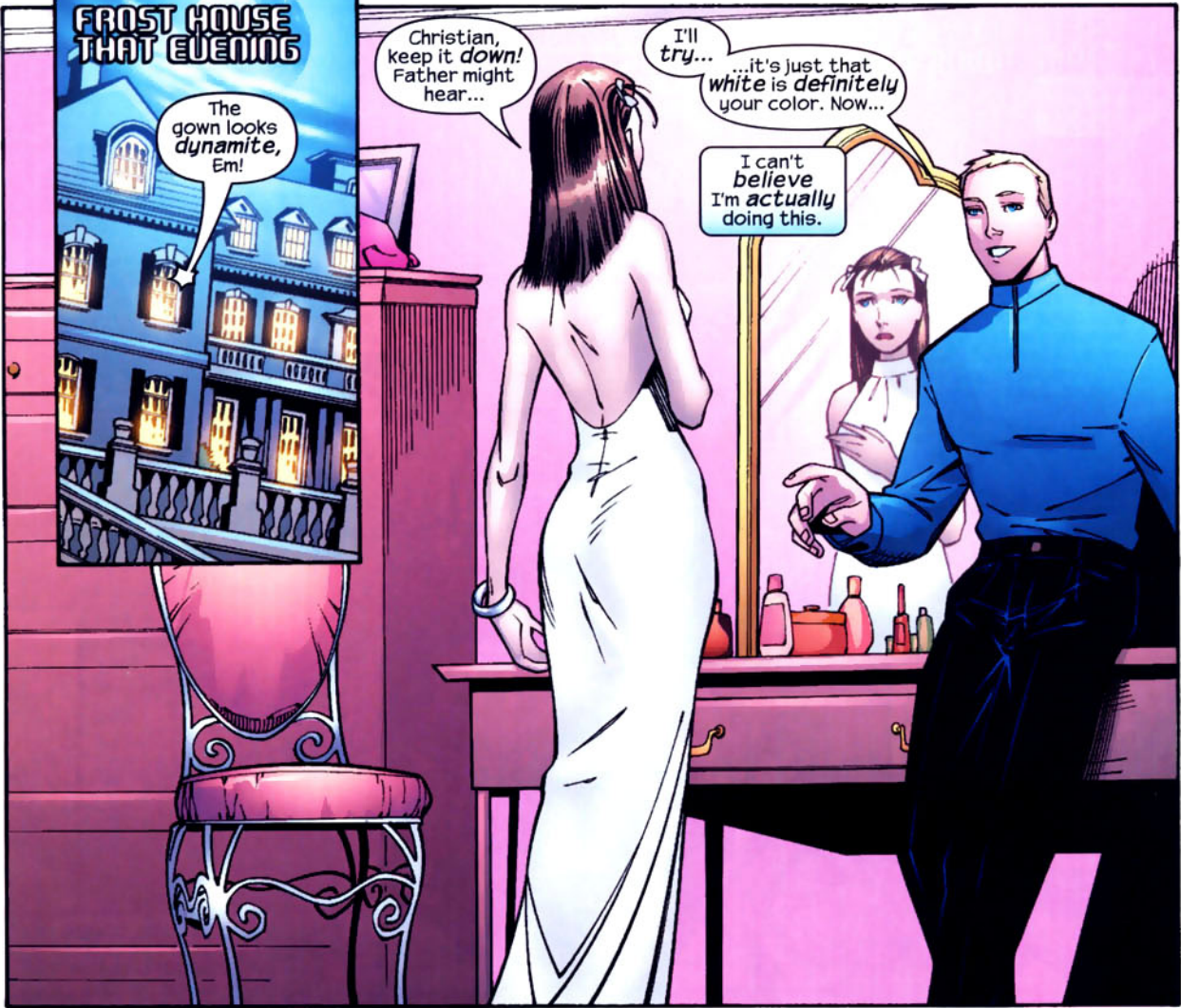
The gown looks dynamite, Em!

Christian, keep it *down!* Father might hear...

I'll try...

...it's just that *white* is definitely your color. Now...

I can't believe I'm actually doing this.



...have a seat, please.

Or that Christian is actually helping me.

Thank you.



As we enter... the final phase.

Hair and makeup.

Blush? Mascara? Lipstick? And eyeliner?

Isn't this all a bit much? I don't even have a canvas stretched...

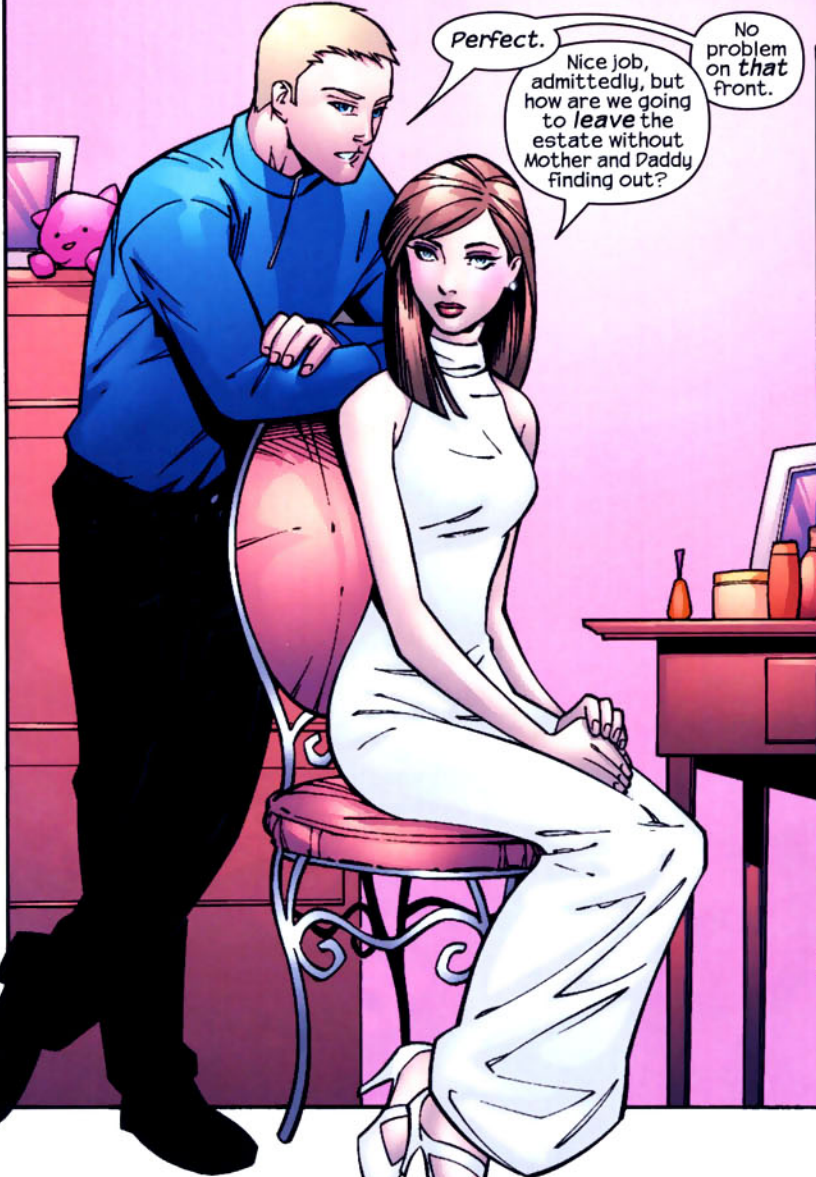


Very funny. Here...





...allow me.
There.



Perfect.
Nice job, admittedly, but how are we going to leave the estate without Mother and Daddy finding out?
No problem on that front.



I do it *all the time*. If there's anyone to worry about, it's *Cordelia*... she's always sticking her pierced little nose where it doesn't belong.
She's not above *blackmail*, you know...

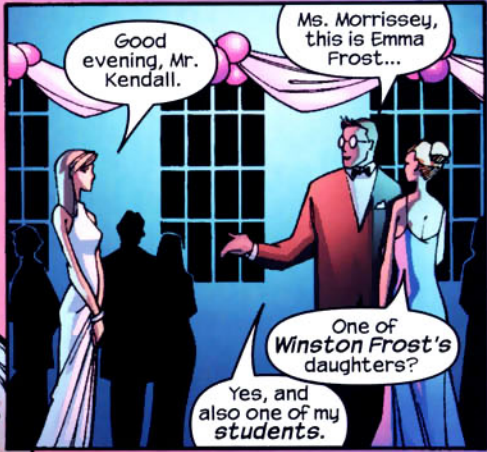
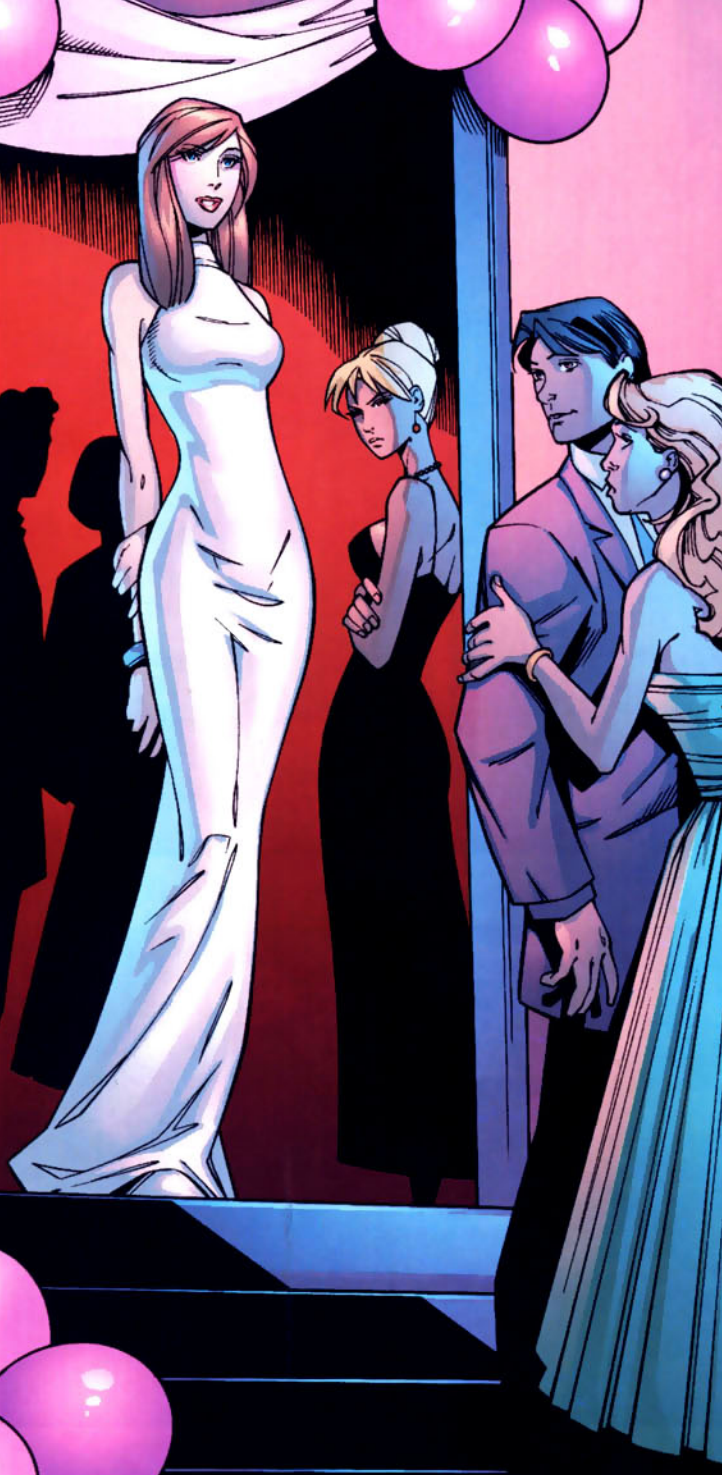


MINUTES LATER

Christian, I can't get over how *easy* that was!
No one ever pays attention to the *servants' exit*, Em.



I've got an appointment of my *OWN* to keep, but I'll be back to pick you up in a *few hours*.
You, too!
Have fun!





Anyone ever tell you your hair smells like *Jasmine* mixed with *honeysuckle*, Emma?

N-no...



Well, I just did. I like it. Wanna dance?

All right...



Not so fast--

Matilda?

What?



Ooops! Guess I ruined your brand new *Gaultier*!

SHRRAPP

At least it's not *borrowed* like yours!

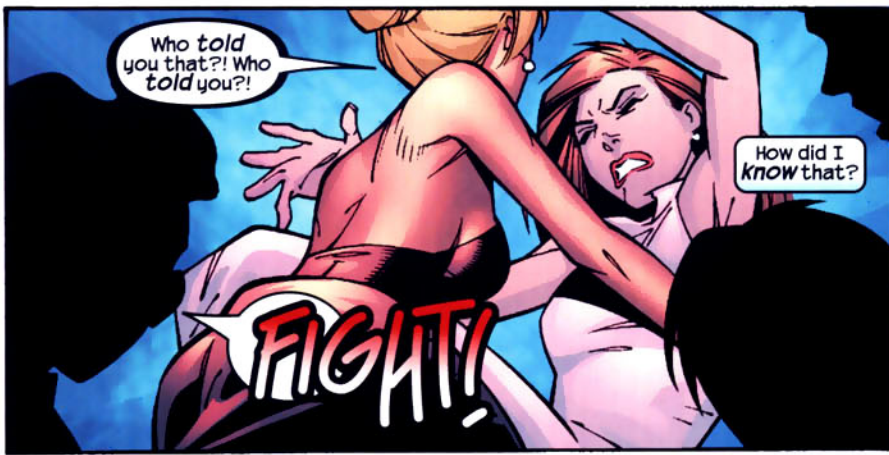
Maybe you should spend a little *less* time worrying about *me*, Matilda--



--and a little *more* time figuring out what you're going to do once your family declares *bankruptcy* next month!



BITCH!



Who told you that?! Who told you?!

How did I know that?

FIGHT!



Hey!



SHRRRRPP

No!



Riches to rags, Frost.

That's different, right?

Emma...



HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!

I should *never* have come here.



Give me that!

Emma!

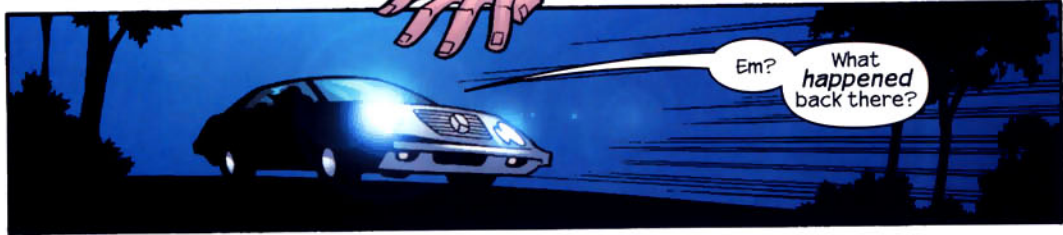
WAIT!

What?!
What did I do wrong?



SNAPT

HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!



Em? What happened back there?



Em? Em?

I must be out of my mind.

How am I ever going to show my face at *school* again?

They'll *never* let me live it--

Damn you to *hell*, Emma Frost! I strictly *forbade* your attending that *insipid* dance!

And not *only* did you disobey my *order* not to go, you *chose* to add insult to *injury* by engaging in some lawless *catfight* while there!

And *losing!*

H-how do you... *know...?*

Cordelia.

Christian *said* she would--

Christian?! What does *he* have to do with this?

Nothing.

It was all *my* idea.

No matter *what* Cordelia told you.

I didn't *find out* from your *sister*.

Your *teacher*. Mr. Kendall. He called.

Told me *everything*.

THE SNOW VALLEY SCHOOL FOR GIRLS
MONDAY AFTERNOON





Now just stop and *think* about all the people who would be *hurt* if that were to happen.

Ha. Name *one*.

Well...

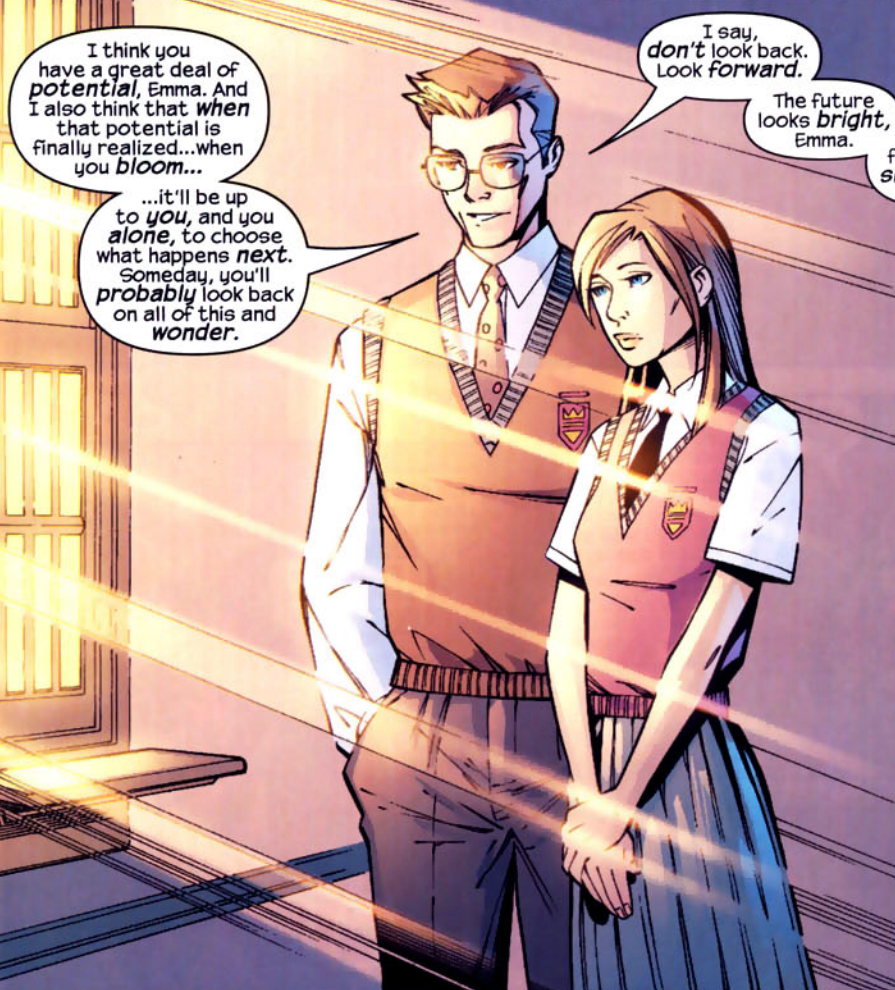


...there's me, Emma.

There's *me*.



This is only the *beginning*. There's a *long road* ahead.



I think you have a great deal of *potential*, Emma. And I also think that *when* that potential is finally realized...when you *bloom*...

...it'll be up to *you*, and you *alone*, to choose what happens *next*. Someday, you'll *probably* look back on all of this and *wonder*.

I say, *don't look back*. Look *forward*.

The future looks *bright*, Emma.

Don't forget your *sunglasses*.



There's your *ride*. Same time *tomorrow*?

Wouldn't miss it, Mr. Kendall.

Umm... *hey*...



...can I call you *Ian*...?

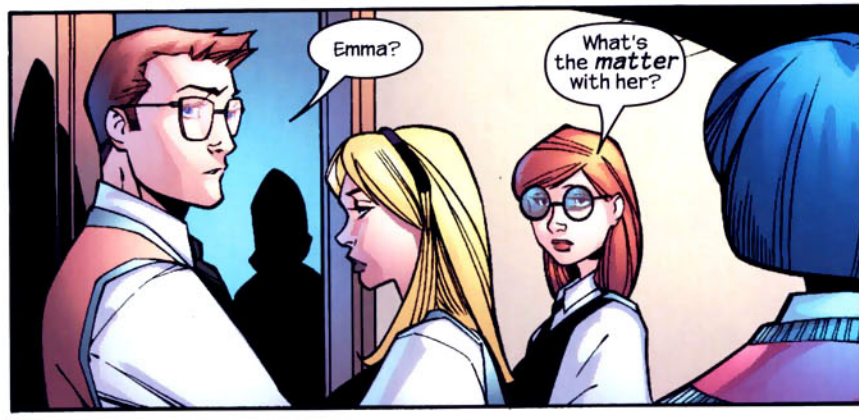


"Sure, Emma... though it's time for you to head home now."



Feel kind of funny.

Oh God, not NOW...



Emma?

What's the matter with her?



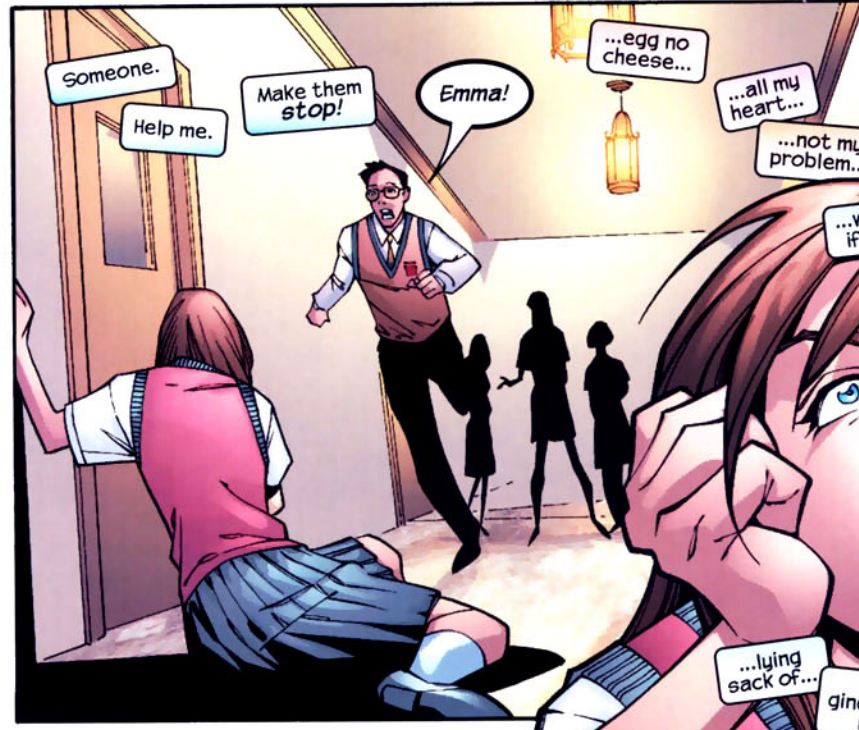
...just wanna pass...

...hate the shoes...

What? Who said--?

...to fifth period...

...cheat off Nicole...



Someone.

Help me.

Make them stop!

Emma!

...egg no cheese...

...all my heart...

...not my problem...

...don't even try...

...wonder if she...

Make them STOP!

...lying sack of...

...no gingerbread men...

...kiss my hairy...

...those keys are mine...

EMMA!



TO BE CONTINUED