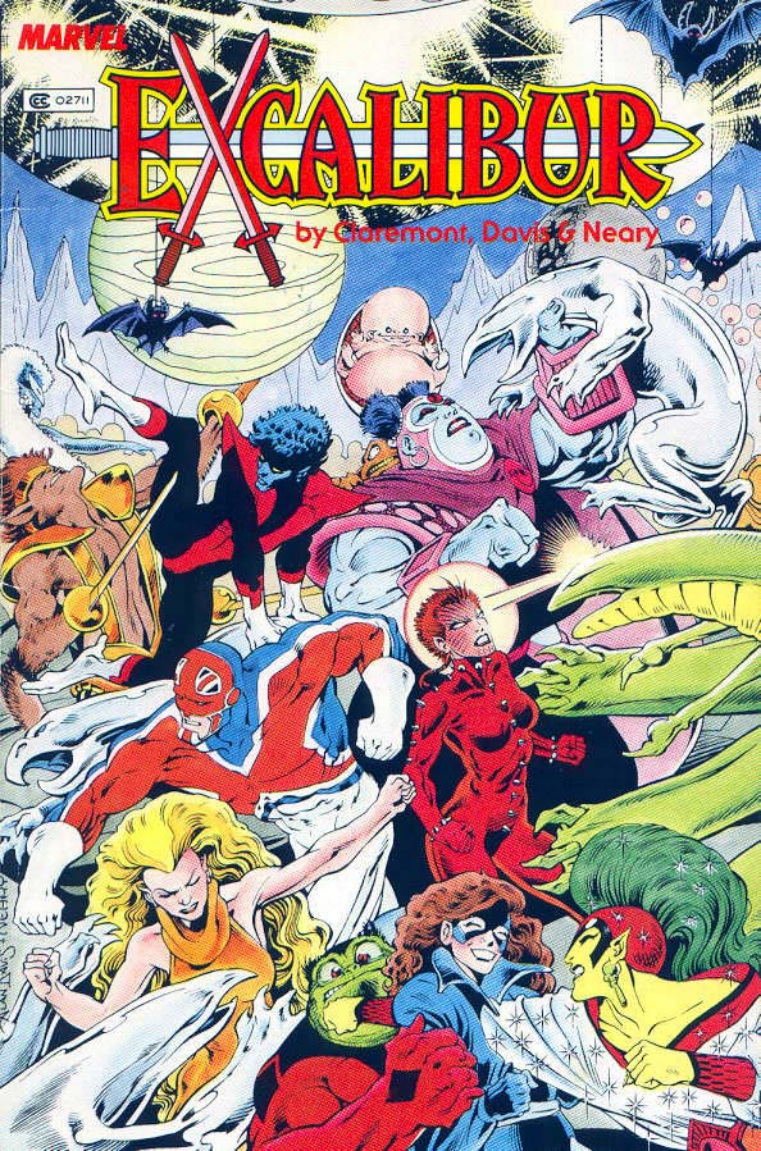


MARVEL

CC 02711

# EXCALIBUR

by Claremont, Davis & Neary



KITTY  
PRYDE

TOSS-TURN

FIDGET TO AND FRO

TICK-TOCK, THE CLOCK-  
TIME DRAGS, SLOWER BY  
THE MINUTE, THROUGH  
A NIGHT THAT LASTS  
FOREVER.

ALL SHE WANTS IS SLEEP.

THE  
ONCE  
AND  
FUTURE  
KING

HEPBURN

NIKOV

SO MUCH-- TOO  
MUCH-- TO ASK,  
A SMALL SLICE  
OF OBLIVION?

TO TAKE  
THE HURT  
AWAY.

BUT, BECAUSE  
SHE HURTS--

--THOUGHTS RACING, IMAGES  
REPLAYING, ETCHING THEM-  
SELVES (THOSE FINAL, AWFUL  
MOMENTS, HOW SHE HATES  
THEM) INTO HER MIND'S-EYE

--SHE CAN'T.

SHE'D CRY.

IF SHE  
HAD ANY  
TEARS  
LEFT.





STAN LEE  
PRESENTS

# EXCAI

TO WONDER  
IF SHE'S LOST  
HER MIND

TIME IS  
MONEY,  
PEOPLE!

X-DIRECTOR

UNDERSTUDY



# LIBUR

LET'S GET  
THAT SET  
RIGGED AND  
READY!

I CAN'T  
KEEP MY  
ACTORS  
WAITING  
FOREVER!!

OR PERHAPS, MIRACU-  
LOUSLY, FOUND THE  
ANSWER TO HER MOST  
HEARTFELT PRAYERS.

MOJO'S  
NEW  
WORLD  
PIX



THE X-MEN--

--THEY'RE ALIVE?

I KNEW IT COULDN'T BE TRUE-- HAD TO BE A MISTAKE--

--THAT THEY'D FIND A WAY TO BEAT THE REAPER!

BUT WHAT'S WITH THE MOVIE STUDIO?

PROFESSOR XAVIER'S OUR TEACHER-- THE MAN WHO FOUNDED THE TEAM-- WHY'S HE PLAYING DIRECTOR??

MOJO'S NEW

PSYLOCKE-- SINCE WHEN DID THE X-MEN DECIDE TO GO--

...HOLLYWOOD?

YOUR EYES--

--YOU'VE GOT NO EYES??!

WE'RE MAGIC PEOPLE, KITTY.

WHERE ELSE WOULD WE BELONG...

--BUT A MAGIC TOWN?

HOLD STILL, MISS BRADDOCK.

THIS'LL ONLY TAKE A SEC.

HOWZZAT?

PERFECT!

KITTY-- WHAT DO YOU THINK?

No!

WATCH IT, KID!

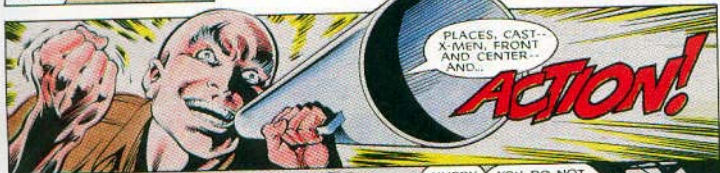
YOU'RE HOGGIN' MY LIGHT!

THIS ISN'T REAL!

THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING!!

SOUND CHECK, PICTURE CHECK, COMPLETE.

MOJO'S NEW WORLD PH  
CAMERAS, FULLY FUNCTIONAL.







AND WAKING DOESN'T ALWAYS MAKE THINGS BETTER.

RACHEL-- I DON'T UNDERSTAND--

--THIS HAS TO BE A DREAM-- ONLY IT FEELS SO REAL.

AND THE X-MEN-- MORE PUPPETS THAN PEOPLE-- TRAVESTIES OF THE HEROES I REMEMBER.

WHEN THE REALITY NO LONGER EXISTS...

...EXPLOITERS CAN TAKE THE LEGEND...

...AND MAKE IT WHATEVER THEY WANT, GOOD OR BAD.

RACHEL! YOU'RE NOT IN THIS PRODUCTION!

YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE AT STARDOM, BABY PHOENIX, AND BLEW IT!

WHEN YOUR TEAMMATES NEEDED YOU MOST...

...YOU RAN OUT ON THEM!



MY MISTAKE--

--MY SHAME--

...BUT NOW I'VE A CHANCE--  
...TO MAKE AMENDS.

NOT SO FAST, YOUNG LADY.



NBODY LEAVES WITHOUT MY PERMISSION.

YOU CAN'T HOLD ME!

CARE TO BET YOUR LIFE ON THAT?

STOP IT!

PROFESSOR-- X-MEN--

-- YOU'RE TEARING HER APART!!

SHE'S OUR  
FRIEND!

IF SHE  
STAYS OR  
GOES, IT  
SHOULD BE  
BY HER FREE  
CHOICE!

IT'S WRONG  
TO FORCE  
HER!

AND I  
WON'T LET  
YOU--

IF I CAN REACH  
RACHEL-- TOUCH HER--

...MY POWER  
SHOULD PHASE  
HER THROUGH  
HER CHAINS--

BLESS  
YOU,  
KITTY!

BE  
SEEING  
YOU--

...MAYBE  
SOONER  
THAN YOU  
THINK!

THAT, YOUNG LADY,  
WAS VERY NAUGHTY!

SURE SEEMED  
LIKE A GREAT  
IDEA--

...AT  
THE  
TIME

AND I'M  
SURE YOU  
KNOW--

...WHAT  
HAPPENS  
TO NAUGHTY  
LITTLE  
GIRLS.

WARWOLVES!

MANIFEST  
YOURSELVES--

...AND TEACH THE  
BRAT A LESSON!

NO!

THE  
WALL--!

I'M SOLID AGAIN--  
I CAN'T PHASE--

...CAN'T  
ESCAPE-- ...X-MEN--

...ALL  
MONSTERS--

...NO  
KEEP AWAY  
DON'T  
NO  
PLEASE  
NO!







HOW'S MY BEST DRAGON?

HOW'S ABOUT A SCRATCH, CUTE-UMS...

...IN YOUR FAVORITE SPOT...



...BETWEEN YOUR SHOULDER

**BLAST AND DARNATION!**

FORGOT.



I'M NOT NORMAL ANYMORE, EVEN FOR AN X-MAN.

MY NATURAL STATE IS TO BE PHASED--

-- AS PHYSICALLY INTANGIBLE AS A GHOST--



--TO BECOME SOLID...

... I HAVE TO CONCENTRATE...

HARD AS I CAN.

WOAH!

BUT IT WON'T LAST LONG.

WHAT A MESS!

Oh, GOLLY-- I REMEMBER.

... I FELL ASLEEP...



...WITH THESE PICTURES IN MY ARMS.

ME AND PROFESSOR XAVIER, WHEN I'D JUST JOINED THE SCHOOL.

AND A TEAM SHOT...



...RIGHT BEFORE EVERYTHING FELL APART.

NOW, HE'S GONE, AWAY ACROSS THE UNIVERSE...

PROBABLY NEVER TO RETURN.



AND THE X-MEN...

...THE X-MEN...

**ARE DEAD!**



THE CELTIC SEA,  
OFF THE WEST  
COAST OF ENGLAND.

SHE'D BEEN SWIMMING  
ALONE, WHEN THE POD  
TIPPED UP AND  
ASKED HER TO PLAY.

THE DOLPHINS' NATURAL  
EXUBERANCE WAS TOO  
INFECTIOUS...

TO BE  
DENIED.

SHE KNEW  
NEXT TO  
NOTHING OF  
THE SEA.

SO THEY DELIGHTED  
IN TEACHING HER ITS  
WONDERS AND MYSTERIES.

SHE WAS HAVING  
SO MUCH FUN...

SHE LOST  
ALL TRACK  
OF TIME.

UNTIL...

A BIRD  
OF FIRE...

HERALDING  
THE SUNRISE!

HOW BEAUTI-  
FUL!

BUT HAVE  
I BEEN AWAY  
SO LONG?  
FAREWELL,  
FRIENDS!

SEE YOU  
AGAIN SOON.  
I HOPE I  
UNTIL THEN,  
STAY WELL!!

I KNOW  
BRIAN  
WILL BE  
WORRIED

PLEASE  
LET HIM  
NOT BE  
ANGRY.

HER NAME IS  
MEGGAN.

AND SHE IS  
AS MUCH A  
CREATURE OF  
THE EARTH...

AS OF MAN.

IN OLDEN DAYS,  
SHE'D BE CALLED  
ONE OF THE  
FAERY FOLK.



ACTUALLY, THOUGH, SHE'S A MUTANT.

HOME, DARLING-DEAREST!

DID YOU...



MISS ME?!!

LIVING ROOM--TORN APART--

--A BATTLE?!

BUT UPSTAIRS WAS UNTOUCHED, THE LIGHTHOUSE UNDAMAGED, NO SIGN OF INTRUDERS.

NOT AN ATTACK, THEN--



--SOMETHING WORSE--



PICTURES--OF BRIAN'S TWIN SISTER, BETSY--

--ALL STREWN ABOUT--

--THE TELLY?!

TO RECAP THE LATEST NEWS FROM AMERICA...

HAS BEEN SLAIN IN DALLAS, TEXAS. THE MUTANT SUPER-TEAM KNOWN AS X-MEN...



NO! OH, NO! IT CAN'T BE TRUE!!

AMONG THE FATALITIES, AN ENGLISH MUTANT KNOWN BY THE CODE-IDENTITY, PSYLOCKE.





OK, BRIAN--  
MY POOR,  
SWEET LUV--

--THIS IS  
TERRIBLE!



NAH. COMES WITH  
THE COSTUME,  
DON'TCHA  
KNOW?

SMELL.  
--DRINK

SO  
STRONG

...MAKES ME ILL.



LOOK  
AT ME.  
CAPTAIN  
BRITAIN!

SOME  
HERO  
COULDN'T  
EVEN SAVE...

MY OWN  
SISTER.



BETSY AND THE X-MEN  
WERE HALF-A-WORLD  
AWAY. HOW COULD  
YOU HAVE POSSIBLY  
KNOWN SHE WAS  
IN DANGER?!

THAT'S THE POINT! WHAT THE  
BLAZES USE AM I IF I DON'T  
KNOW SUCH THINGS?!

BRIAN, SHE  
WAS A GROWN  
WOMAN.

SHE CHOSE HER LIFE--  
SHE'S RESPONSIBLE FOR HER  
DECISIONS AND HER DEEDS--

--YOU'RE  
NOT TO  
BLAME



THE  
DEVIL  
YOU  
SAY!

CHANGELING COW, WHAT DO  
YOU KNOW--ABOUT ANYTHING--  
YOU NEVER HAD A FAMILY, NEVER  
LOST ANYONE YOU  
CARED FOR!

GO AWAY,  
MEGGAN!



I DON'T  
WANT YOUR  
SYMPATHY.



I ONLY  
WANT  
TO BE  
LEFT  
ALONE.



I'M  
SORRY,  
BRIAN!

I DIDN'T  
MEAN TO  
MAKE YOU  
CROSS!

I'M ALWAYS  
SAYING THE  
WRONG THING,  
AND DOING  
WORSE.

BUT IT ISN'T  
TRUE WHAT YOU  
SAID—I DO CARE,  
I DO UNDER-  
STAND!

BETSY WAS GENTLE AND KIND TO  
ME. SHE WAS YOUR  
SISTER, BUT MY FRIEND.

I MISS  
HER, TOO!

MAYBE,  
THOUGH, IT'S  
YOU WHO  
DON'T CARE  
ANYMORE.

ABOUT  
ME.

HAVE I BEEN FOOLING  
MYSELF ALL THESE MONTHS,  
THINKING YOU LOVED ME?

I COULDN'T  
BEAR THAT HURT,  
I'D RATHER  
BE DEAD.

STOP IT,  
SILLY  
GIRL!

HE'S LASHING  
OUT BECAUSE  
HE'S IN PAIN,  
SAME AS YOU  
USED TO BE.

HE GOT YOU PAST  
THAT AWFUL TIME.

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN  
TO RETURN THE FAVOR.

HOPE THIS  
NOTE LOOKS  
RIGHT.



SO BLESSED  
HARD TO  
PUT SPEAKY-  
WORDS ON  
PAPER.

BUT I  
CAN'T  
FACE  
HIM...

NOT WHILE  
HE'S IN SUCH  
A STATE...

...NOT 'TIL  
I KNOW  
WHAT  
TO DO.

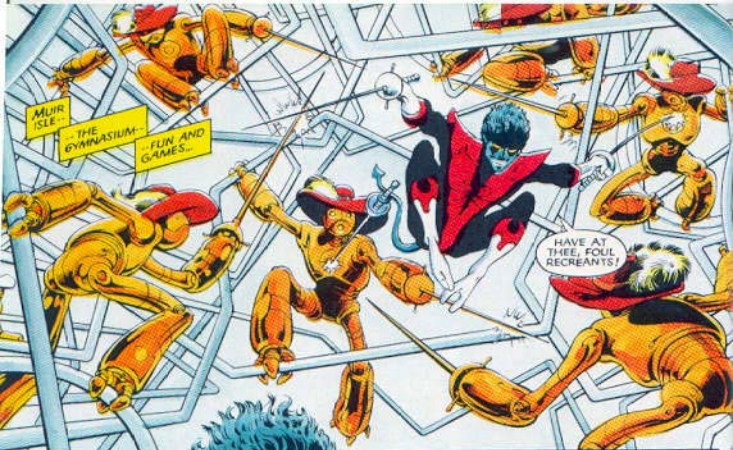
CAN'T  
MANAGE  
ON MY  
OWN,  
EITHER



ONLY ONE  
PLACE TO  
GO FOR THE  
PROPER  
ADVICE.













A FULL-BORE COMBAT EXERCISE--  
WITH THE SAFETY INTERLOCKS  
DISCONNECTED--

--SO SOON  
AFTER YOUR  
RELEASE  
FROM MOIRA'S  
HOSPITAL--

--ARE YOU  
CRAZY?!

LUCKY FOR  
YOU THE  
BACK-UP  
ALARMS...

...SOUNDED IN THE HOUSE  
THE MINUTE YOU STARTED.

I HAD TO  
LEARN, KITTY,  
IF I HAD  
LOST MY  
EDGE.

DOESN'T IT MATTER IF,  
IN THE PROCESS, YOU  
LOSE YOUR LIFE?!

WHAT GIVES, KURT--  
YOU FEEL LEFT OUT  
BECAUSE THE REST OF  
THE X-MEN GOT  
KILLED AND WE  
DIDN'T?

YOU FIGURE  
ON THIS BEING  
THE PERFECT  
WAY TO CATCH  
UP TO 'EM??

YOU HAVE  
NO RIGHT  
TO SAY SUCH  
THINGS!

YOU HAVEN'T  
THE RIGHT  
TO GIVE  
ME A  
CAUSE!

...I KNOW.  
I'M SORRY.

WHEN I AWOKE  
FROM MY COMA,  
I WAS SO... HAPPY  
TO BE ALIVE. DEAR  
KATZCHEN, YOU  
CANNOT  
IMAGINE.

ALL I REMEMBERED WAS  
THE PAIN OF BEING WOUNDED--  
AND THE NEXT THING I KNEW,  
I WAS HERE IN MOIRA Mac-  
TAGGART'S MUTANT RESEARCH  
FACILITY, AND IT WAS  
MONTHS LATER.

AND I THOUGHT,  
I'VE HAD A TASTE OF  
DEATH--BUT I SURVIVED.  
I BEAT THE REAPER!

MY TIME  
WILL COME--  
BUT NOT  
TODAY!

I WANTED TO SHARE THAT  
JOY WITH THOSE I LOVED  
BEST-- YOU AND PETER AND  
LOGAN AND ORORO, WITH  
ALL THE X-MEN--

--ONLY I  
COULDN'T.  
BECAUSE  
THEY WERE  
DEAD.

I KNOW  
HOW YOU  
FEEL,  
KURT.

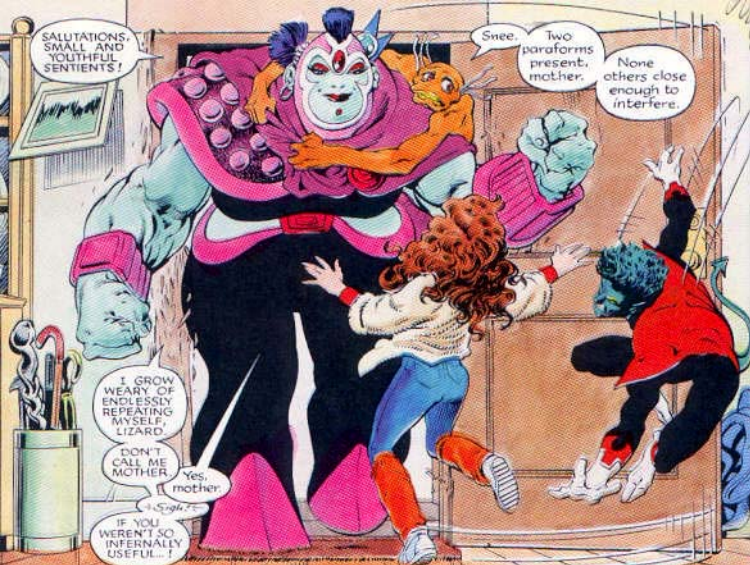
AND THEN,  
LAST NIGHT...

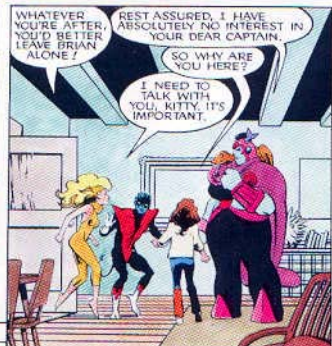
...I HAD  
THIS...  
DREAM.

SAY  
WHAT???

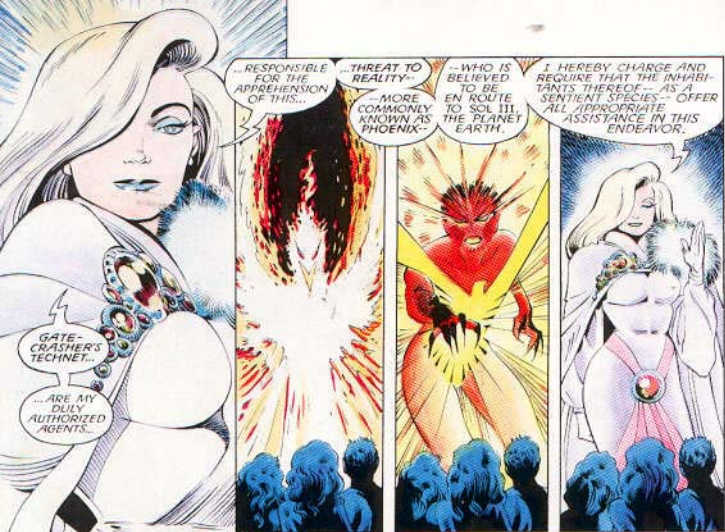












...RESPONSIBLE  
FOR THE  
APPREHENSION  
OF THIS...

...THREAT TO  
REALITY--

...MORE  
COMMONLY  
KNOWN AS  
PHOENIX--

...WHO IS  
BELIEVED  
TO BE  
EN ROUTE  
TO SOL III,  
THE PLANET  
EARTH.

I HEREBY CHARGE AND  
REQUIRE THAT THE INHABI-  
TANTS THEREOF-- AS A  
SENTIENT SPECIES-- OFFER  
ALL APPROPRIATE  
ASSISTANCE IN THIS  
ENDEAVOR.

GATE-  
CRASHER'S  
TECHNET...

...ARE MY  
DULY  
AUTHORIZED  
AGENTS...

WHAT'S  
SHE WANT  
WITH  
RACHEL?

DEAR GIRL--  
SATURNINE  
NEGLECTED TO  
TAKE US INTO HER  
CONFIDENCE...

...AND, TO BE HONEST,  
ONE SIMPLY DOESN'T  
SUBJECT THE OMNI-  
VERSAL MAJESTRIX  
TO THAT SORT OF  
EXAMINATION.

MY RESPONSIBILITY IS MERELY  
TO CAPTURE THE FUGITIVE  
AND DELIVER HER.

STINKING  
BOUNTY  
HUNTER!

I DON'T  
KNOW YOU,  
BLIMP!

ARE THOSE  
TERMS  
PEJORATIVE?

Insults,  
yah!

AND I SURE  
AS HECK DON'T  
KNOW HER!

BUT  
RACHEL'S  
AN  
X-MAN...

...AND UNTIL WE  
KNOW THE SCORE...

...NOBODY  
TAKES HER  
ANYWHERE!

YOUR LOYALTY IS  
TOUCHING, CHILD...

...BUT,  
REGRETTABLY,  
IN THIS  
INSTANCE...



...SADLY MISPLACED.

WHERE'D  
THIS  
CROWD  
COME  
FROM?

I--snee--  
brought  
them.  
Teleporter,  
that's me!

HUSH, YOU  
BOASTFUL  
REPTILE.

THE TECHNET,  
BY NATURE, ABHORS  
VIOLENCE.

BUT, IF  
PROVOKED,  
WE'LL BE  
HAPPY TO  
INDULGE...

...IN WHATEVER  
LEVEL OF PHYSICAL  
CONFRONTATION  
YOU DESIRE.





RACHEL SUMMERS.

FALLING

CAST OUT

FLEEING

FROM HEAVEN

HADES

NEVER SURE WHICH

ALL THE SAME TO HER...

-- SCREAMING  
CHEERING  
CRYING...

... WITH JOY  
AND TERROR  
COMBINED...

... AS ALL THE  
COMPONENT ELEMENTS  
OF HER BEING...

ARE  
SHATTERED--

-- SPREAD BEYOND  
REALITY, BEYOND  
CONCEPTION...

... TO THE FARTHEST  
REACHES OF CREATION...

... WHERE SPACE  
HAS NO MEANING,  
AND TIME  
EVEN LESS.

**FLASH!**

FOR THAT  
INFINITE MOMENT,  
SHE IS ALL.

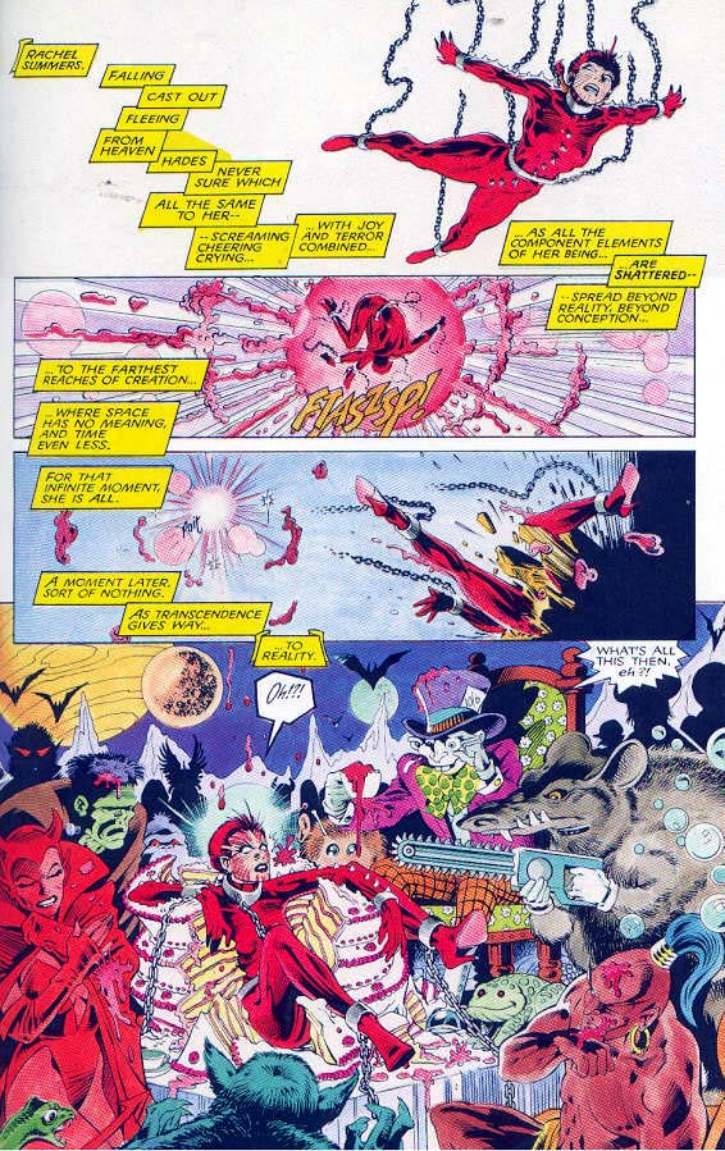
A MOMENT LATER,  
SORT OF NOTHING.

AS TRANSCENDENCE  
GIVES WAY...

... TO REALITY.

Oh!!!

WHAT'S ALL  
THIS THEN,  
eh??







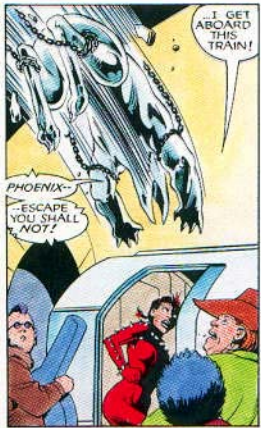
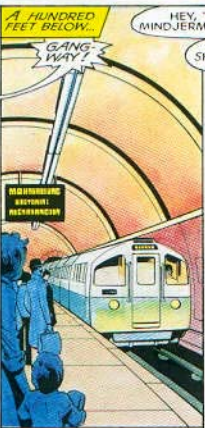
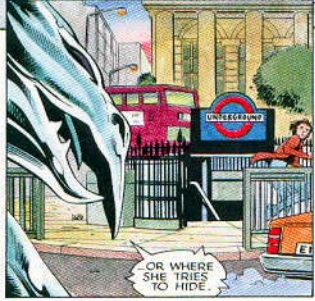


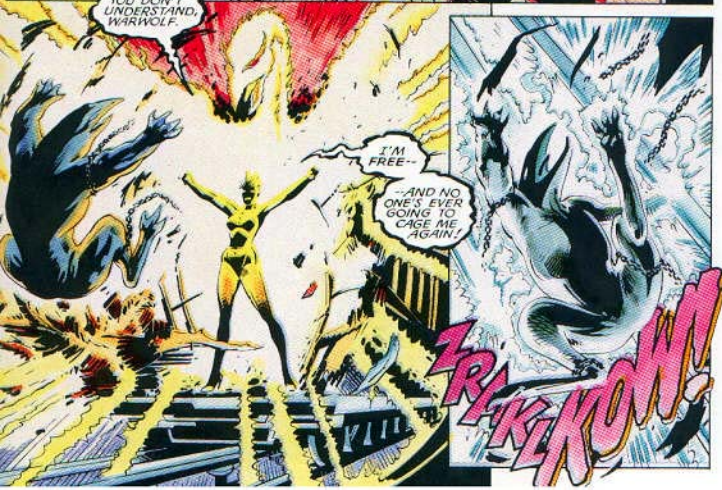
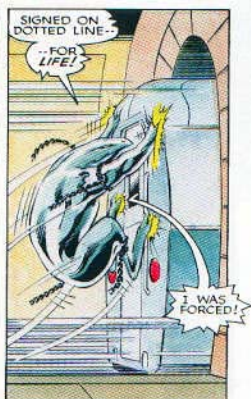
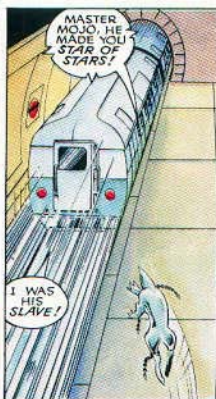
















MY ONLY REGRET, BOWSER, IS THAT IT WAS YOU I FRIED...

...AND NOT YOUR BLOAT OF A BOSS.

SOMEDAY, THOUGH-- I SWEAR--

--IT'LL BE HIS TURN.



Hush?! THOUGHTS!

SEE HER!

WHAT SHE DID!

LORD HA MERCY!

MUTIE!

WISH I COULD HURT US?

DO THAT

MONSTER!!

HATE HER!

SMASH HER

THEY'RE SO AFRAID.

OF ME.

WITH GOOD REASON.



AS RACHEL STRUGGLES TO EXPLAIN, FAILING WITH EVERY WORD...

SNEE

SNEE

SNEE

WHUFF

WHIFFER



WLOWLOW

Gate-crasher... snee--

--that awful noise



GIVE IT NO MIND, LIZARD.

MERELY POOR, DUMB BEASTIES...

...VENTING THEIR GRIEF.



I sense the starchilde.

SPLENDID

WE'VE SPENT QUITE LONG ENOUGH ON THIS PATHETICALLY PRIMITIVE ORB ALREADY.

MEANWHILE...

...BACK AT A CERTAIN Lighthouse...

WHAT A MESS!

AND THE STENCH IS WORSE!

Ach... EVEN WOLVERINE'S BINGES WERE NEVER AS BAD AS THIS.

WHAT YOU NEED, HERR KAPITAN...

...IS A BATH!

AND IF PERCHANCE...

...YOU SHOULD FAIL TO RESURFACE--

...WELL, BASED ON WHAT I'VE JUST SEEN...

...NO GREAT LOSS.

HOWEVER...

BY ALL THE SAINTED DEVILS--

...SOMEONE TRIED TO KILL ME!

HARDLY. YOU'RE DOING WELL ENOUGH ON THAT SCORE BY YOURSELF.

SIMPLE. I NEED YOU AWAKE AND SOBER, AND I'M NOT IN A MOOD TO BE POLITE ABOUT IT.

NIGHT-CRAWLER?!

WHAT'S THE MEANING OF THIS?!!

THAT'S THE EXPLANATION.

IF YOU WISH AN APOLOGY, HERR BRADDOCK.

...EARN IT!



OVER COFFEE, NIGHTCRAWLER  
RELATES THE DAY'S EVENTS...

...BY THE TIME I RETURNED TO  
THE HOUSE-- AFTER TELEPORTING  
AWAY-- GATECRASHER WAS LONG  
GONE.

WITH  
BOTH KITTY  
AND YOUR  
FRAULEIN  
MEGGAN.

I DUG  
UP OUR  
FILE ON  
YOU...

-- AMONG THEM, THE  
GIRL YOU SUPPOSEDLY  
LOVE-- DOESN'T  
THAT MATTER...

...DON'T  
YOU  
CARE?!

COURSE  
I DO.

IT'S  
JUST--

--WHAT'S  
THE  
POINT?

ALL I AM IS A MAN, TRYING TO LIVE LIFE AS BEST HE  
KNOWS HOW, AND BE TRUE TO WHAT HE WAS TAUGHT.

THOSE BELIEFS GOT  
MY SISTER KILLED!

JA-- AND MY  
DEAREST FRIENDS  
WITH HER! MY  
"FAMILY"!

MEIN GOTT-- SOME-  
TIMES, ALL I YEARN FOR,  
MORE THAN ANYTHING,  
IS TO HAVE BEEN GIVEN  
THE CHANCE, THE PRIVILEGE,  
OF STANDING WITH  
THE X-MEN AND SHARING  
THEIR FATE!

...AND  
SPENT  
THE REST  
OF TODAY  
GETTING  
HERE.

I CANNOT  
TAKE ON THE  
TECHNET  
ALONE.

I NEED  
YOUR  
HELP.

QUITE  
RIGHT, VERY  
SENSIBLE.  
GET ON IT  
DIRECTLY.

TO BE HONEST,  
THOUGH, I'M  
WONDERING  
IF I MADE A  
MISTAKE.

WHAT IS  
WRONG WITH  
YOU, MAN?!

FRIENDS  
ARE IN  
DANGER--

SAVE THEM NOW TO WATCH  
THEM SACRIFICE THEM-  
SELVES LATER.

WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE  
HEROES-- BUT WE NEVER  
REALLY MAKE THINGS  
BETTER. WE HAVE  
NO LASTING EFFECT  
--ON PEOPLE OR  
THE WORLD.

THE DEVIL  
YOU SAY!

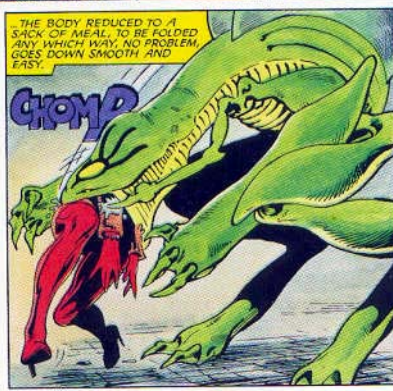
WHEN I SAY  
I'M A "HERO," I  
MEAN IT IN JEST.  
I HAVEN'T THE  
RIGHT TO TRULY  
CALL MYSELF  
ONE, AND YOU  
HAVE EVEN  
LESS!

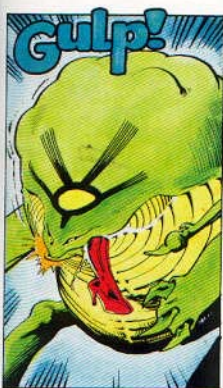
IT ISN'T FAIR.  
THEY'RE DEAD.  
IT'S FAR WORSE  
THAT I REMAIN  
ALIVE TO GRIEVE  
FOR THEM, BECAUSE  
IT'S MORE PAIN  
THAN I CAN  
ENDURE!!

BUT I AM  
ALIVE,  
BRADDOCK!















WHAT A SIGHT! ALMOST A SHAME TO INTERFERE.

BUT THE PRISONERS MIGHT GET HURT IN THE CROSS-FIRE!

NICE THING ABOUT RACHEL.



SHE BROADCASTS SUCH A POWERFUL AND DISTINCTIVE BIO-PATTERN...

...THAT THE PORTABLE CEREBRO SENSOR-PACK I BROUGHT WITH ME FROM MUIR ISLE LED ME RIGHT TO HER.



I FIGURED GATECRASHER WOULD CATCH UP SOONER OR LATER.

PITY I DIDN'T HAVE A CHANCE TO WARN RACHEL.



BUT THIS IS MY CHANCE TO MAKE AMENDS.

SWEET DREAMS, BODY-BAG.

KLUDE!



NASTY DOGGY!

YOU'LL HAVE TO DO FAR BETTER THAN THIS, YOU KNOW...

...TO BEAT ME.



PERFECT!



SLASSSH!







AN', BY  
CROAKY,  
BY GUM...

SLAM!

...WE BE NOT  
IMPRESSED!



OF ALL THE  
PRETENTIOUS,  
POSTURING,  
IMBECILIC  
TWITS!

LET MYSELF  
BE BLIND-  
SIDED LIKE  
A NOVICE!



IN SHAME, IN PAIN,  
GOOD CAPTAIN?

HOLD THY  
POSE, THEN...

SO THUG  
CAN CAST  
THEE...

...SPEEDILY  
FROM THY  
MISERY!



THE STARCHILDE'S  
ON HER FEET!  
CLIP HER WINGS,  
RINGTOSS--

--BEFORE  
SHE SOARS  
AWAY!

I'M THROUGH  
RUNNING,  
GATECRASHER...

AND I  
WON'T BE  
TAKEN  
AGAIN--

--NOT BY THE  
WARWOLVES...



...AND NOT  
BY AEONCA!

ENERGY  
BANDS--  
HOLDING HER  
FAST!

I FEEL SO  
FUNKY!

MAYBE I CAN  
DISRUPT 'EM...

...OR PHASE  
RAY  
FREE!



BUT AS KITTY  
LUNGES FORWARD...

BLIX!



JOYBOY TAKES HER  
FONDEST DESIRE-- TO  
BE SOLID ONCE MORE...

JRBL!



...AND MAKES IT...

RUDE  
REALITY.

VOOTIE!





BEASTIES--  
SO SLEEK AND  
SHINY--

--LOVE  
THE WAY  
LIGHT  
SPASHES  
ON SILVER  
SKIN--

--THEY DON'T  
APPROVE, OUR  
TAKING PHOENIX.



NAUGHTY, NAUGHTY--  
SHE'S OUR PRIZE!

AS YOU  
BECOME  
MINE!

BUT TOO  
BIG AND  
WRIGGLY  
YOU ARE.



SO CHINA DOLL  
WILL SHRINK YOU--

--TO A  
PRETTIER  
SIZE.

YIPET!

WEAR YOU,  
SHALL I,  
AS A  
GLITTER-  
BANGLE!



POOR HEAD  
ACHES--  
BRIAN!

FEEL SO  
SLIMY  
INSIDE  
AND OUT.

IN  
TROUBLE!!



I'LL HELP  
YOU, MY  
LOVE!  
HA!!!!

THIS IS  
WAXWORKS.

THE  
MEREST  
TOUCH...



--AND THE BODY LOSES  
ALL FIRMNESS

GAAH!!



MEGGAN!

SO DECENT  
A MAN.

SO EASILY--  
FATALLY--  
DISTRACTED...



--BY CONCERN  
FOR THOSE HE  
CARES ABOUT.

A MOMENTARY  
THING...

...THAT  
SCATTERBRAIN  
TURNS INTO  
AN ETERNITY...

GAIK!

...AS HER  
CARESS FIRES  
ALL HIS NEURAL  
SYNAPSES  
AT ONCE...







GONE, AS WELL-- --PREFERING DISCRETION, THE BETTER PART OF VALOR-- --TO LICK WOUNDS, MOURN LOST COMRADES, REGAIN STRENGTH... --AND PLAN FOR ANOTHER CHASE, A HAPPIER DAY.





MEGGAN--  
I WAS SO  
AFRAID FOR  
YOU--!

I KNEW  
YOU'D SAVE  
THE DAY!

OKAY,  
KATZCHEN?

FINE.  
CONSIDERING...  
ALL  
THE BAD  
GUYS GOT  
AWAY.



ONE THING  
ABOUT US  
X-MEN TYPES...

...YOU  
CAN ALWAYS  
TELL WHERE  
WE'VE BEEN.



IF NOT  
FROM THE  
MESS...

...THEN FROM THE  
FACES OF THE  
INNOCENT  
BYSTANDERS...

...CAUGHT  
IN THE  
CROSS-  
FIRE...

...WHOSE  
HOMES AND  
LIVES...

...HAVE  
ALL BEEN  
WRECKED.

AND  
YET...



RACHEL...  
...IS IT  
REALLY  
YOU?!

WARTS  
AND  
ALL--



--A BIT THE  
WORSE FOR WEAR,  
I'M AFRAID.

WE  
BELIEVED  
YOU DEAD.

YOU  
FORGET,  
FUZZY-  
ELE...

I'M  
PHOENIX.

IF I DIE,  
IT'S ONLY  
TO BE  
REBORN--



--HOPEFULLY  
BETTER AND  
BRIGHTER THAN  
BEFORE.



ANOTHER NIGHT...

AFTER THE MESS IN LONDON HAS BEEN TIDIED UP...

AND EXPLANATIONS MADE TO THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES...

ATOP THE SCOTS HIGHLANDS

...SO PROFESSOR XAVIER SPENDS WEEKS PROGRAMMING THE DANGER ROOM FOR MY TRIAL SESSION...

...AND I WALK THROUGH IT UNTOUCHED...

...WITH MY EYES CLOSED!

WOLVERINE CHALLENGED ME...

...TO WALK DOWN THE MAIN STREET OF SALEM CENTER...

...UNDISGUISED, IN MY NATURAL SHAPE.



OH, NIGHTCRAWLER, I'D GIVE ANYTHING... TO HAVE SEEN THAT!

IT WAS AN EXPERIENCE.

AND THOSE WERE THE DAYS.

YOUR TURN, RACHEL.



ANY MEMORIES OF THE X-MEN...

...YOU'D CARE TO SHARE?



NOT THE KIND YOU MEAN, KITTY.

NOT THE KIND I CAN TRUST.



THE FACTS IN MY HEAD, THEY'RE SO JUMBLED UP...

...I DON'T KNOW ANYMORE WHAT'S REAL AND WHAT ISN'T...

...WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED...

...WHAT'S A LIE.

BUT THAT DOESN'T MATTER.

BECAUSE THE CLUTTER DOESN'T AFFECT MY EMOTIONAL REALITIES-- PERHAPS, IN TURN, BECAUSE THE PHOENIX BY NATURE RELATES, RESPONDS BETTER TO FEELINGS THAN RATIONALITY.

I KNOW WHO I AM--

--WHO I CARE FOR, WHO I DON'T-- THAT'S WHAT MATTERS.

THE REST, I CAN TAKE OR LEAVE.

SPEAKING OF LEAVING...

...IT'S AWFULLY LATE. TIME, I THINK, TO FOLLOW EVERYBODY ELSE'S EXAMPLE...

...AND RETURN HOME TO BED.

IS THAT IT?!

PACK UP, CALL THINGS QUITS...

AND GO OUR SEPARATE WAYS?!!

WE ACCOMPLISHED WHAT WE SET OUT TO DO

NOW, WHILE I DEAL WITH THE WARWOLVES...

...THE REST OF YOU CAN GO ON WITH YOUR LIVES.

WHAT ABOUT THOSE LIVES--

--HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO LIVE THEM?!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND, RACHEL, WHAT DO YOU MEAN?!

THE DREAM, CAPTAIN-- CHARLES XAVIER'S DREAM-- OF A WORLD WHERE ALL EARTH'S CHILDREN, MUTANT AND OTHERWISE, LIVE TOGETHER IN PEACE AND HARMONY!

WHERE PEOPLE ARE JUDGED FOR WHO THEY ARE-- NOT WHAT THEY LOOK LIKE OR HOW THEY'RE BORN.

THAT'S WHY HE CREATED THE X-MEN, TO EXEMPLIFY THAT DREAM.

ARE YOU SAYING, SIMPLY BECAUSE THE X-MEN ARE DEAD...

...WE'RE SUPPOSED TO GIVE IT UP?!





THE DREAM WE HAD, NIGHT-CRAWLER-- REMEMBER, BACK BEFORE THIS CRAZY CAPER BEGAN-- IN IT, RACHEL SAID TO ME!

"WHEN THE REALITY NO LONGER EXISTS, EXPLOITERS CAN TAKE THE LEGEND..."

"... AND MAKE IT WHATEVER THEY WANT..."

"... GOOD OR BAD."



ARE YOU SUGGESTING WE TAKE THE X-MEN'S PLACE?

NOBODY CAN DO THAT. BUT KING ARTHUR HAD A DREAM, TOO.



OF A WORLD WHERE NIGHT SERVED RIGHT, INSTEAD OF SUBJUGATING IT.

HIS KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE WERE THE AGENTS OF THAT DREAM...

AND HIS SWORD, EXCALIBUR, THE SYMBOL OF IT.



HE DIED, THE TABLE WAS DESTROYED, HIS KNIGHTS MOSTLY SLAIN-- YET THE DREAM SURVIVED.

THEY BECAME LEGEND--

--AND THE SWORD, THE MEANS OF KEEPING THE LEGEND ALIVE AND VITAL THROUGH THE AGES.



THE X-MEN THOUGHT ENOUGH OF PROFESSOR XAVIER'S DREAM TO OFFER UP THEIR LIVES. IS IT SO MUCH TO ASK THAT WE FIGHT TO PRESERVE IT?

THE SWORD, EXCALIBUR, REPRESENTED HOPE.

IT WAS LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS OF FEAR AND IGNORANCE AND HATE.



DO WE WANT--

--HAVE WE THE RIGHT--

--TO SNUFF IT OUT?



I'VE  
RUN MY  
WHOLE  
LIFE.

I CAN'T  
REMEMBER A  
TIME WHEN I  
WASN'T  
AFRAID.

I LET PEOPLE  
TELL ME WHAT  
TO DO-- IT'S  
EASIER THAT  
WAY, Y'KNOW...

...SAVES YOU FROM  
HAVING TO TAKE  
RESPONSIBILITY  
FOR ANYTHING.



WELL, I'M  
TIRED OF  
RUNNING.

I WANT  
TO TAKE A  
STAND.

BECAUSE IF I DON'T,  
THEN MAYBE I BETTER  
LET THE WARWOLVES  
CARRY ME BACK...

...TO THE  
MAKE-BELIEVE  
SLAWEORLD...

...WHERE  
I BELONG.



A WORLD OF ILLUSION AND  
ARTIFICE, WHERE WHATEVER  
SELLS BEST GETS THE GLORY...

...WHETHER  
IT'S TRUTH  
OR LIES.

MY  
SELF, I  
STAND  
FOR TRUTH.

AND  
STAND  
BY  
YOU.



RACHEL'S LIFE  
SOUNDS MUCH  
LIKE MINE,  
BRIAN.

I WON'T  
HAVE ANYONE  
ELSE ENDURE  
SUCH  
HORROR.



I LIKE  
THIS DREAM.

IT'S WORTH  
FIGHTING  
FOR.

HOW  
ABOUT  
YOU?





WHAT  
THE  
HECK!

COUNT  
ME IN--

--WITH  
ALL MY  
HEART!

AND SO-- WITH LAUGHTER  
AND TRANSCENDENT JOY--  
THE DREAM IS RECONSECRATED...

...AND  
**EXCALIBUR...**

...THAT MOST ANCIENT  
AND NOBLE BLADE...

...ONCE MORE  
REDRAWN.

THE  
**BEGINNING!**