

MARVEL COMICS



EXILES

MARVEL
PG 11



**WINICK
CALAFIORE
CANNON**
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DIRECT EDITION



It was many months ago.

It was long before the Skrull world.

Before the battle with Galactus.

And before the Exiles lost another of their team.



It's on *you*, Mariko.



Hell, no. Get someone else, Clarice.



It doesn't work that way. I lead. I decide.



Says *who*? I wasn't in on voting *you* leader. I'm not sure I would have put you up front.

Mariko-- we need you to do this.



No. C'mon... please. No.

SIX STRANGERS, EACH A HERO FROM A DIFFERENT REALITY, BROUGHT TOGETHER TO ENSURE THAT LIFE AS WE KNOW IT DOESN'T CEASE TO EXIST! BLINK — TELEPORTER; MIMIC — POWERED BY HIS REALITY'S X-MEN; SUNFIRE — MISTRESS OF FLAME; T-BIRD — SUPER-STRENGTH AND SENSES; NOCTURNE — DAUGHTER OF NIGHTCRAWLER; AND MORPH — SHAPE-CHANGING FUNNY MAN. DESTINED TO FIX THE KINKS IN THE CHAINS OF REALITY, STAN LEE PRESENTS THE

EXILES IN

PLAY DATE

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The Exiles had to stop a bank robbery. It was two guys in Halloween masks carrying fake Uzis.

It was over in less than five minutes.

And then the Tallus told the team they had a whole week before teleporting onto the next world.

Everyone was due for a vacation. But some had specific activities in mind.

I do not want to "occupy" Morph for the day while the rest of you go to the beach.

You don't even like the beach, Mariko.

That is utter garbage! Who ever said I didn't like the beach?

I did when I suggested we pick you to get rid of him!

You suggested? Clarice!

God, what's the big deal with Morph going to the beach with us, anyway?

'Cause a few of us want to go native.





Excuse me?

Well, that just isn't fair.

Naked. In the rough. *El buffo*. And the general consensus is that Morph has the maturity level of a *Caesar salad* and we'd rather not deal.

Oh, c'mon, you know how he is.



Not to him! To me!

As far as Morph goes-- I agree with you.

He sees a few of us without clothes on and he'll be like a *six-year-old* after finishing three pounds of *sugar*.

It feels less liberating when someone keeps yelling "you got fries to go with that *shake*?"



But why do I gotta go?

Well... to be fair, you have been with us the *shortest* amount of time--

Two days shorter!



And he'll go with you! He likes *you* best! *Please!* Why should we *all* suffer?

Oh God...

Hey, ladies! What's all the *hubbub*? We got a week to kill and I say we kill 'im *slow*.



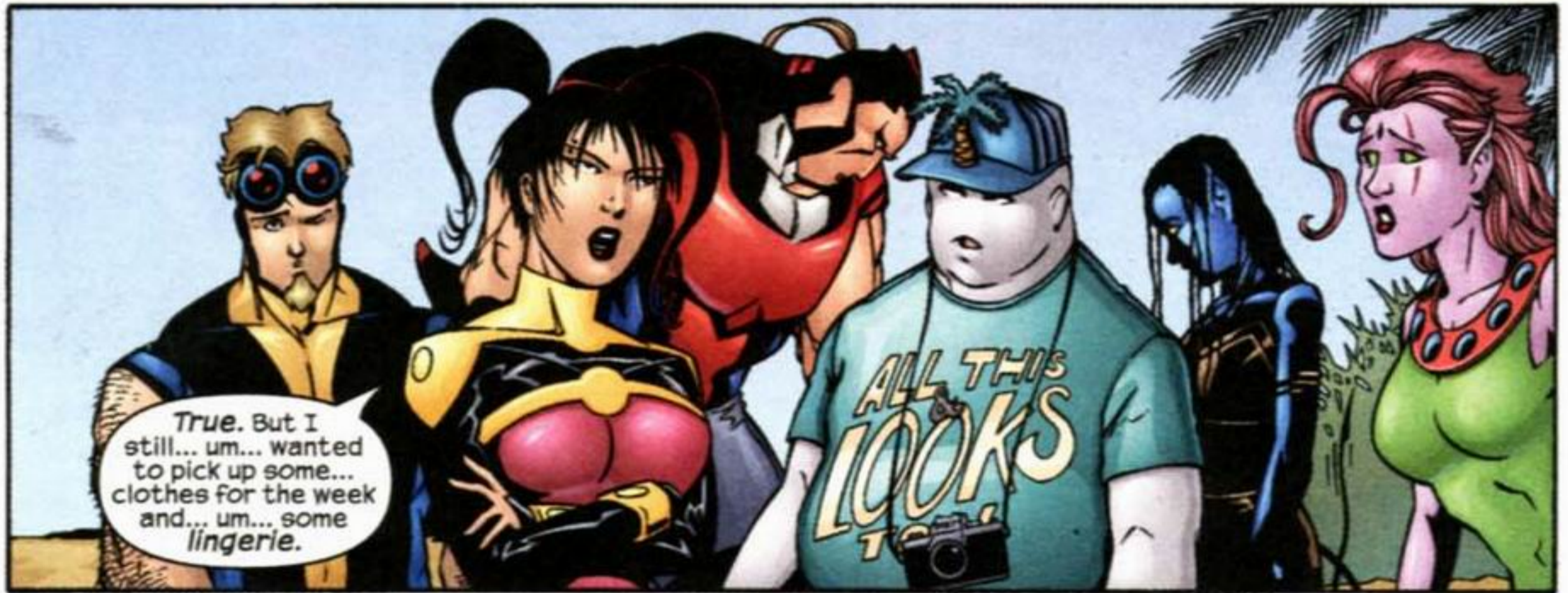
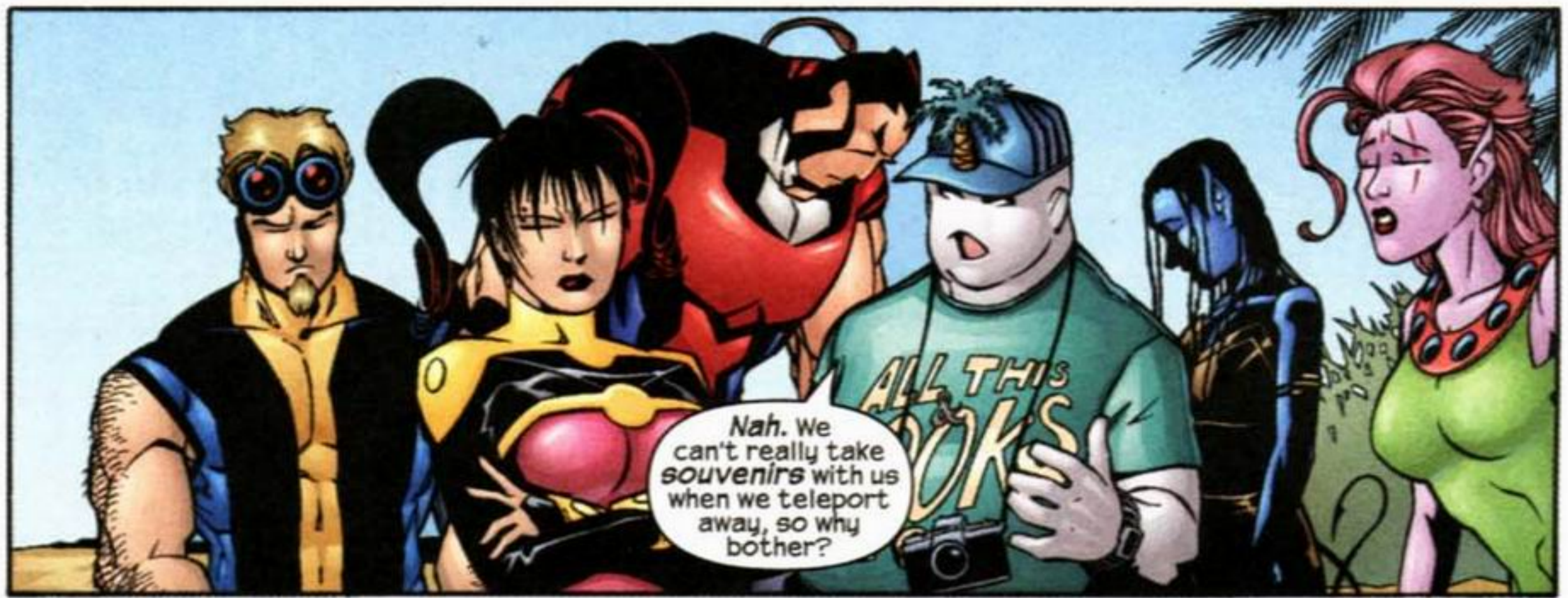
First-- *eats!* Who wants ribs? Or maybe lobster and ribs.

Our credit cards are fake and we've been saddled with an unfair existence, so why *not* splurge?



I was going *shopping*, Morph. Y'wanna come with me?







Nah, I like the one before that one.

I'm not actually asking your opinion, Morph.

That one's kinda old school, don't you think? I could see June Cleaver in one of those. Not that I would want to, but I could...

Hmm... now that I think of it, I wouldn't mind seeing June in one of those...

Shut up.

Okay, that one the Morph-man likes. I'm not picky but I appreciate the classics.

You're a minute away from needing skin grafts due to severe burns...

Where's all the sheer stuff you always see on the television fashion shows-- not that I watch those. I tape them. I tape them and then I watch them.

We need sheer. I'm gonna ask the manager for some of the sheer--

Okay, we're done.



We're done, we're done, we are done.

What? We haven't even gotten to the real filthy stuff yet!

Y'know, the underwear with areas gone missing, leopard prints, Oh-- and those Wonderful Bras that make the whole world a bigger place?

Y'know, some of them?



Will you just shut up?!

Hey! This wasn't my idea. If it were up to me, we'd all be up to our waists in burnt animal flesh right now!

You're the one who wanted to go shopping for frilly women's things-- I am merely keeping you company.



"Keeping me company"... you should be stuffing dollar bills in my g-string, ya pervert...

Sorry?

Nothing.



Well we didn't have to come here. You could have made some excuse.



Morph, what are you talking about?



We didn't actually *have* to go buy lingerie. Once you *lured* me away from the rest of the team--

--and they went off to do whatever it was they wanted to do *without* me--

--you could have just *changed your mind*.



You... you *knew* I was doing that?



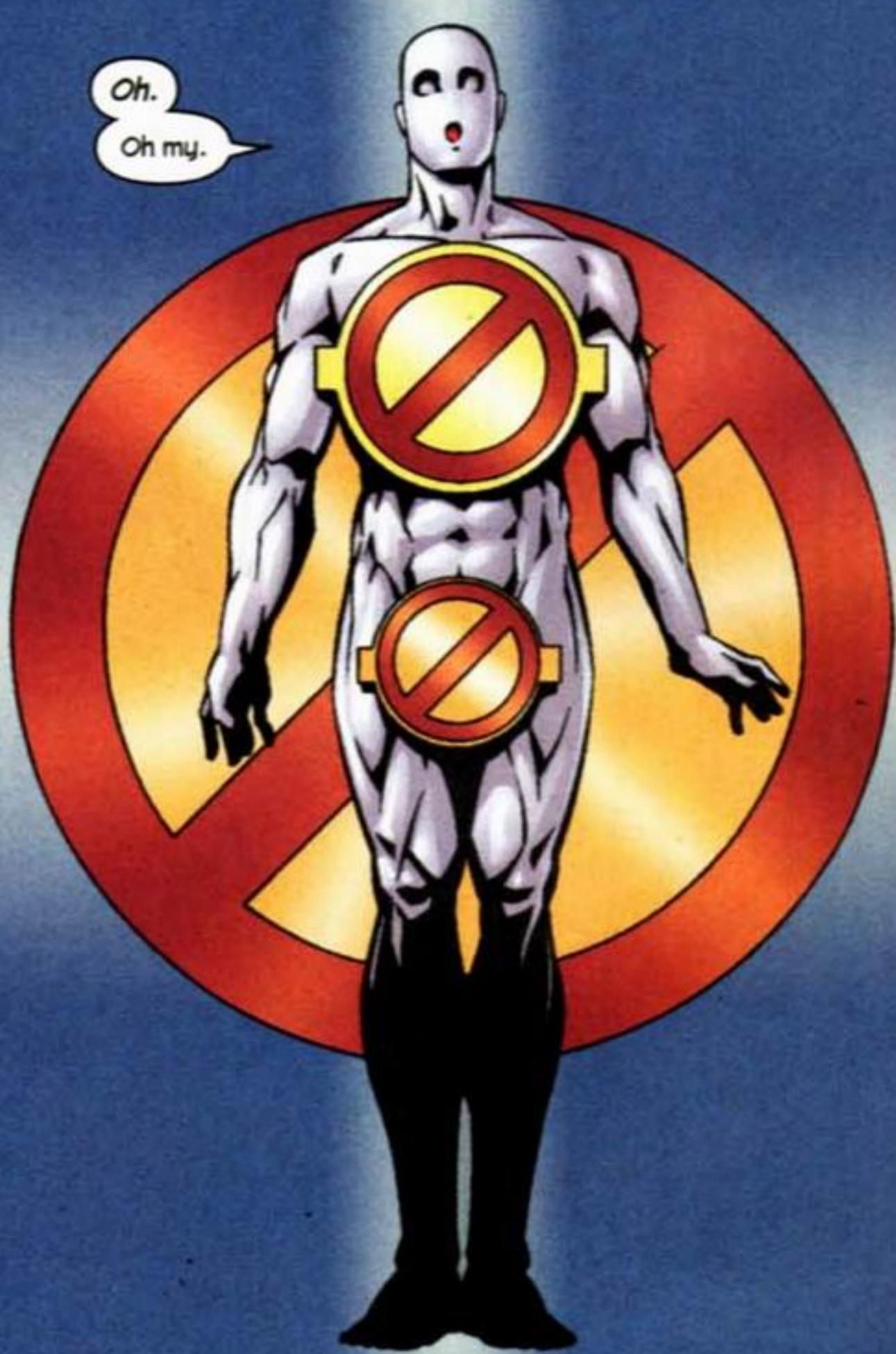
Yeah.

I may be a total idiot, but I'm not *stupid*.

I was in the *Avengers* and I have a master's degree in *computer engineering*... you'd have to do a little better than "wanna see me in my *underwear*."



I... I'm so *sorry*, Morph. I... we didn't mean to hurt your feelings.





Really?



No... but I think I've punished you enough by ogling you in various stages of near nudity. I figure we're even.

I guess I had that coming. But thank you for being so good about it.

But hey, if you're still racked with guilt we could enter you in a wet t-shirt contest!

I mean, we're in Cancun so there's probably one at the public library or someplace!

I think I'm over it.

Well, that was fast. Geez, you're like a sociopath or something.



Mardi Gras

FUN-O-RAMA

Games & Prizes

Mmm, this is good. Man, I can't remember the last time I had ice cream.

I thought I missed pizza, but ice cream... God... we should have tanked the bank robbery and just stayed here.

It's true. The last pile of realities have really come down hard and fast.

I think whatever powers-that-be that run our show probably figured we needed a vacation.





Ah, I don't think so. I doubt there's any *real* consciousness behind all our hopping around.

I think it's more mathematical... I, um... geez... *look* at that.

What?



iJuega duro!

El sabor de nuestro vivir.

They're just all over the place.

What are? Advertisements?

Yeah... but I mean *cigarette* advertisements... they're just all over this country.

The tobacco companies just *pound away* at foreign markets.

And every time the U.S. raises taxes on cigarette sales they just raise the prices out here and *double* the advertising... *look* at this...



And they just *give away* merchandise so people end up wearing advertisements on their *backs*. Did you *notice* how many people smoke out here?

It's *worse* in Asia. You can't go *anywhere* without seeing people smoking.

I didn't know you had such a big problem with it, though.



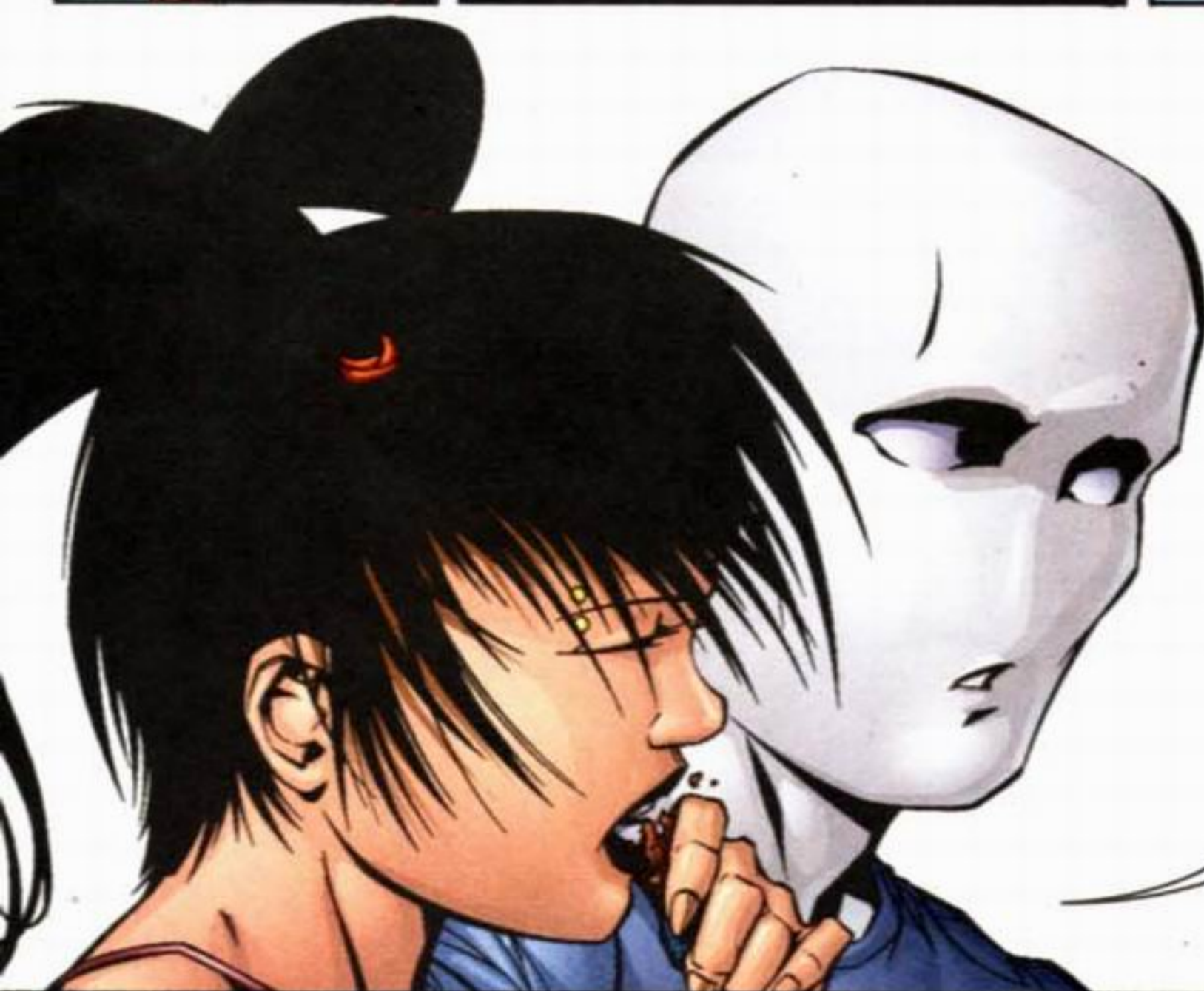
My mom died of *lung cancer* when I was thirteen.



I'm sorry, Morph. I didn't know. That must have been *really* hard.



Yeah. It was.



You've never mentioned *your* folks. They still live in Japan or are they in the States with you?

I'm still *starving*. What do you say we get some *real* food. You said something about ribs. Or *lobster*?



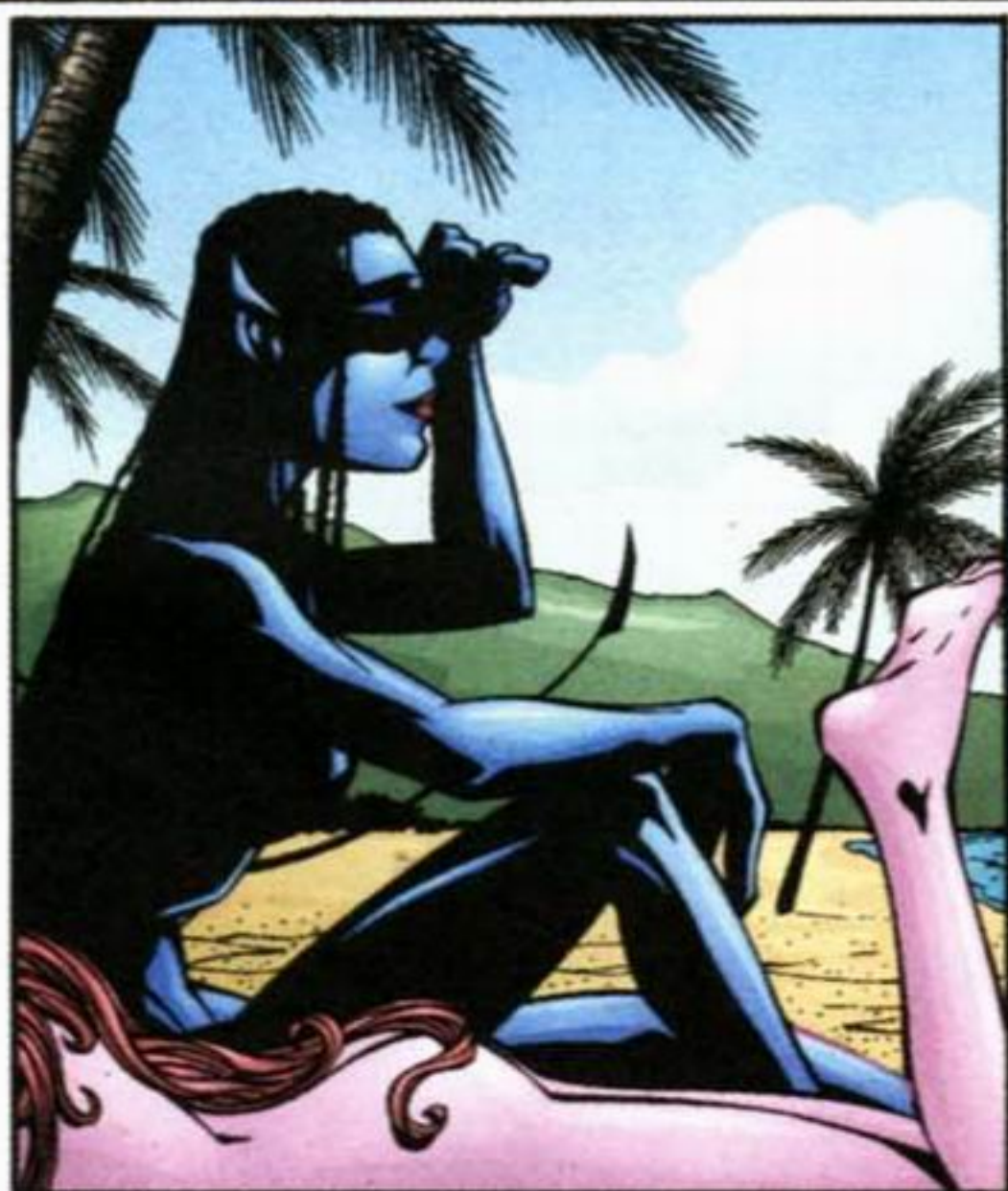
Madam, I said ribs *and* lobster. Let us seek out an establishment fitting persons of our great regard.

We will eat, drink, and make with the merry talk of travelers who don't get to use conventional restroom facilities on a *regular* basis.

I was just thinking that it'd been *a while* since you made a *bathroom* joke.

Good lady, I am *nothing* if not reliable.

Ten miles away.







The service stinks... but this is *awesome*.

Morph, the service isn't *that* bad.

Stinks! I asked for an ice tea what-- *twenty* minutes ago?

Yeah but, you ordered the *entire* menu. It's understandable that they might miss a beverage order or two.

Say what you will, but the tip just went from my standard *twenty* percent down to *eighteen!*

And if I don't see "*Piggy's Delight Seafood Fry Bucket Special*" on this table in about *five* minutes-- we'll drop to *sixteen*.



Thank *God* I don't have a cholesterol level. Can you imagine? You could lube an *engine* with my blood.



Hahaha-- stop-- I'm gonna *choke!*



What got you? The cholesterol part or the lube job part?

Neither. You're freaking out the waiters.



Oh! Hey! You kids enjoying the show? Thank you!



You're a great crowd! I'll be here all week-- be good to your waitresses! And where's my @#%\$% ICE TEA?



You crack me up.

Thank you. Thank you vera much. I appreciate that. I crack me up, too, and I have very discerning tastes.



So, Mariko, why won't you talk about your parents?

I don't know what you mean.

Really.

When I asked you *earlier* about them you evaded the question the way Mimic evades discussions on *professional sports*.

What? You think just because he likes *ice skating*, that makes him *gay*?

No, I think you're trying to *avoid* discussing your parents by careening us into pointless conversation about Calvin's sexuality. Or my political incorrectness.

My parents and I don't get along.

So what? I don't get along with my dad.

I mean we *really* don't get along.

Dude doesn't know *anything* about pro ball.

But I'll tell you, he knows more about *figure skating* than any butch super hero type should, *if you get my meaning*.

If he wasn't doing the *Lambada* with Blink-- I'd wonder.

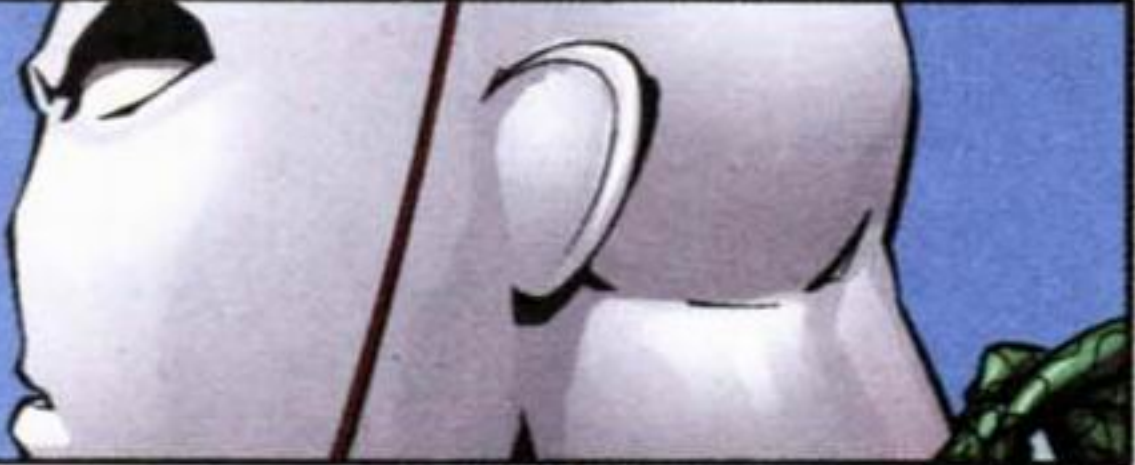
I *really* don't get along with my dad. After my mother died he *insisted* I take a more "serious approach to life." I was *thirteen*.

Well it *worked*. Every time I saw him I made belching noises-- *good ones, too*.

And it just went on from there. The more *stoic* he got, the more *ridiculous* I got. It went on like that for years.

So, *now* you have this uncontrollable bag of childish reflexes that sits in front of you.






That was *me* sharing something *intimate* about myself so you would feel more comfortable opening up.




Ah. Right.



My parents, to say the *least*, were strict.

I had to get *straight A's*. I had to *excel* in music--piano, violin. I had to apply myself only in areas that *furthered* my education.

All this so I could *marry* and have *babies*.




I was *twelve* when my powers began to manifest. My mother and father saw it as a great *shame* and refused to let me explore them.

As I got older I began *voicing* my "dissent," and it got *ugly*. I left home when I was sixteen, fled Japan and came to America.

Professor X found me two days after I arrived.


The rest is history. I found a family in the form of the X-Men.




Had you tried to contact them *recently*? I mean, before you were taken out of time and stuff?

It must be different, no? You became a *public figure*.

You helped *save the world* a couple of times! Even *my ol' man* lightened up after I met the president.



It's not *just* being a mutant.



Then what is it?



I'm gay.



You're extremely happy?



Yes, but not the definition I'm referring to.



Oh. And it's not one of those modern women things? Experimenting and such?



Nope.



The dating the womenfolk kind of gay?



Yep.



I see. That doesn't play too well back home in Tokyo, huh?



No, it doesn't.

And does the rest of the team know about this?

Yeah. It's come up pretty naturally.

I see. Am I just clueless, or is it the fact that I never shut up for two minutes that got in the way of me picking it up?



The latter... maybe some... and...
...well... I wasn't making a real effort to tell you.

I'd gotten the impression that you might have stronger feelings for me than just friendship.



Well, duh. Yeah. You're as cool as school, hot as Georgia asphalt, and seem to like a lot of my idiocy.



Morph--

Nah-- don't. It's cool. Honest. I'm sorry I wasn't more attentive.

This must have been awkward for you.

Don't sweat it. Don't sweat it.



You're taking this awfully well.

True. But it's crap. I'm dying inside.

This is just how I react.



I'm sorry, Morph.

Yeah, sure, not a problem-- can we get the DAMN TEA, please?!



Are you sure you're okay, Morph?

Yeah, girl, I'm cool.



I would have given anything not to hurt your feelings.

Me too, but what are you gonna do? You haven't done anything. It's just who you are.

Besides... I like you. I do. The fact that we can't be anything more than friends and teammates, well... it's disappointing. But I can live with it.

Not that I have a choice in the matter, being that we're all shuttled around time and space together--



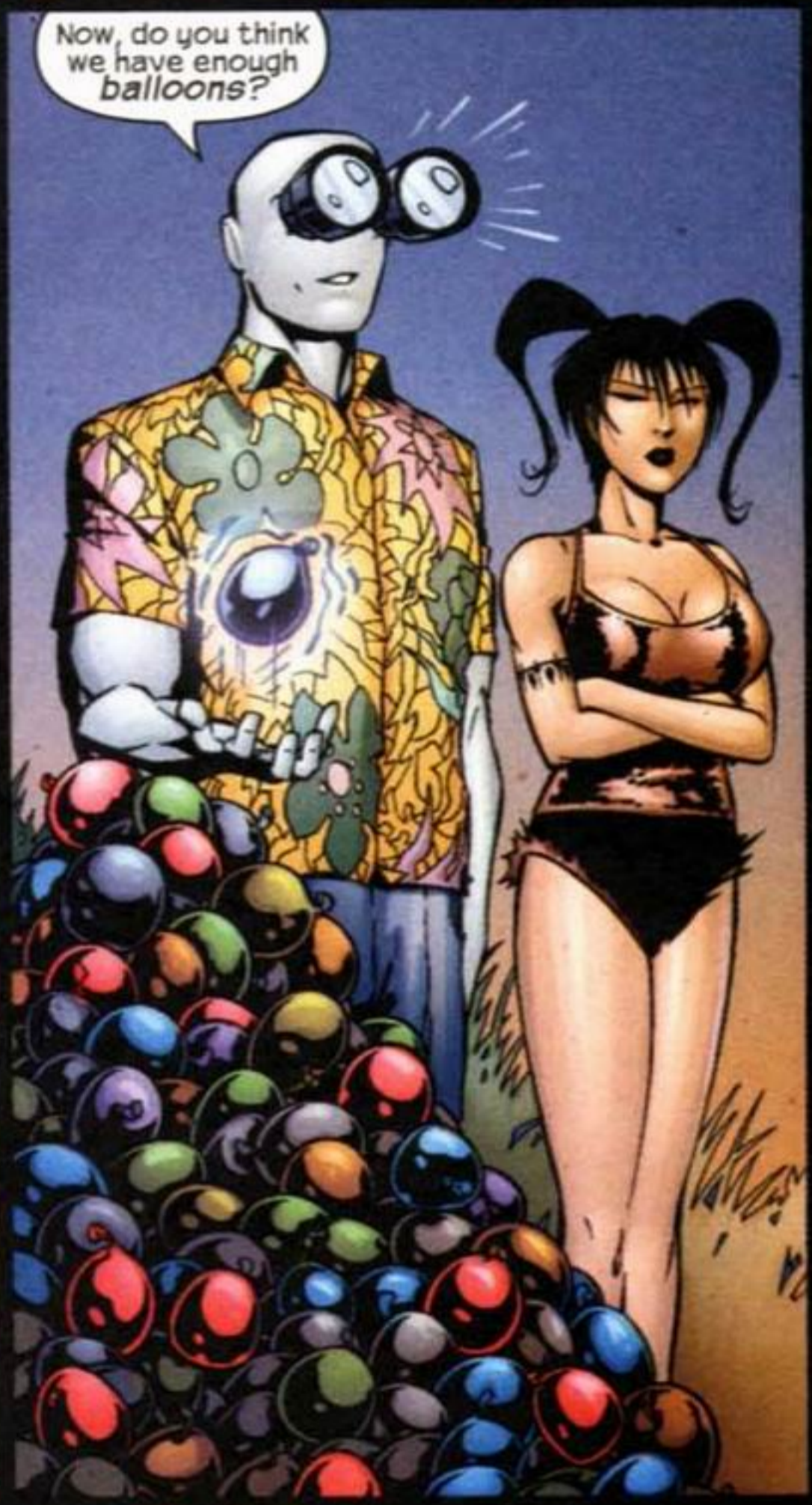
But even if we weren't-- I'd still want to hang with you.

Honestly?

Yes. Honestly.

I'd definitely want you to take me to all those gay bars, as well. So if we ever get out of here, that's how you can make this up to me.

Deal.



Now, do you think we have enough balloons?



I'd say so... but don't you think they'll run away as soon as the first one hits? Mimic flies like Northstar now, Blink can teleport...

Not a problem. I'm unloading them all *at once*. They'll *think twice* before trying to dump *me* for a day!

Water balloons will do the trick.

Water balloons? Weren't you paying attention? I filled these with *beer*!



SPROING!

Morph, you are *bad*.

I am *SO* bad.

END.