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60¢ U.K. 25 P
#1

A MARVEL® COMICS LIMITED SERIES



WOLVERINE™



A STAN LEE PRESENTATION

I'M
WOLVERINE.

I'M THE BEST
THERE IS AT
WHAT I DO,
BUT WHAT I
DO BEST ISN'T
VERY NICE.

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WOLVERINE™ Vol. 1, No. 1, September, 1982. Published by MARVEL COMICS GROUP, James E. Gaion, President, Stan Lee, Publisher, Michael Hobson, Vice-President, Publishing, Milton Schiffman, Vice-President, Production. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. Second Class postage paid at New York, NY and at additional mailing office. Published monthly. Copyright © 1982 by Marvel Comics Group, a division of Cadence Industries Corporation. All rights reserved. Price 60¢ per copy in the U.S. and Canada. Printed in the U.S.A. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. WOLVERINE (including all prominent characters featured in the issue), and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are trademarks of the MARVEL COMICS GROUP.

THIS IS HOME TO ME -- THE CANADIAN
ROCKIES -- LAND AS STARK AN'
ELEMENTAL AS MY SOUL.

I'M HERE ON
BUSINESS.

TO
HUNT.

TO
KILL.

LIKE I SAID--
WHAT I DO BEST.

I PICKED UP HIS TRAIL LATE YESTERDAY AN'
JUST BEFORE DAWN, FOUND THE LATEST
EXAMPLES OF HIS HANDIWORK. TWO
MOUNTIES-- WHAT WAS LEFT OF 'EM,
ANYWAY.

THEY WERE
GOOD MEN.
EXPERIENCED.
WELL-ARMED.
CAREFUL.

SUCKERS
NEVER HAD
A CHANCE.

WIND SHIFTED DURING MY
CLIMB. HE KNOWS I'M COMING.

HE'S
CONFUSED,
PROBABLY
A LITTLE
SCARED.

HE'S NOT USED TO BEIN' CHALLENGED
ON HIS OWN TURF. HE'LL WAIT FOR ME
TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE.

IF I WALK BY, HE'LL
CHARGE OUT AFTER ME.

I DON'T WANT THAT--
TOO MUCH RISK OF
HIS ESCAPING AGAIN.
MAD HE MAY BE,
BUT HE AIN'T STUPID.

NO OTHER EXITS. AN' THESE SIGNS ARE HOURS OLD. HE'S STILL INSIDE, PROBABLY SLEEPIN' OFF HIS LAST MEAL.

I LOOK,
LISTEN,
SMELL.
WAIT.

I CAN'T PINPOINT HIM-- HIS CAVE'S TOO DEEP, WITH TOO MANY BRANCH PASSAGES. PERFECT FOR AN AMBUSH. BETTER I LET HIM COME TO ME.

HE ROARS, A CHALLENGE.

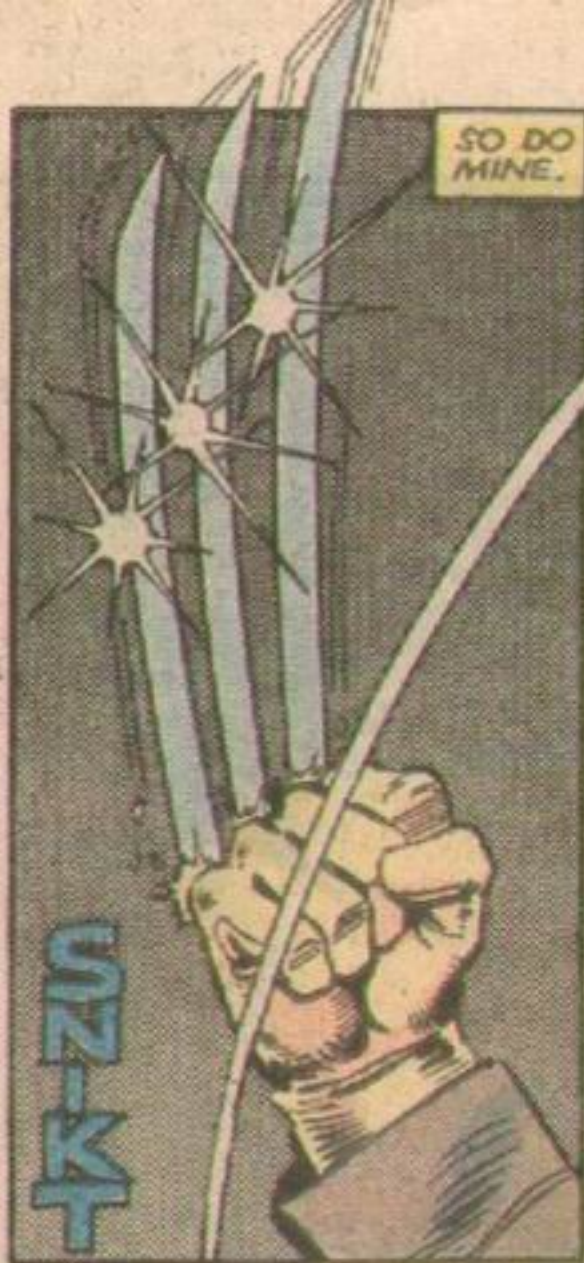
I SMILE--
WON'T BE
LONG NOW.

IT
ISN'T.

HE'S BIG AN' MEAN--
A ROGUE GRIZZLY
BEAR, NO MORE
FEARSOME-- OR
DEADLY-- CREATURE
EXISTS ON EARTH.

'CEPT ME.

HIS CLAWS
GLEAM IN THE
HALF-LIGHT.



SO DO MINE.

THEY'RE FORGED OF PURE ADAMANTIUM-- THE STRONGEST METAL KNOWN. UNBREAKABLE AN' RAZOR-SHARP, THEY CUT THROUGH STEEL LIKE PAPER.



MY SKELETON'S LACED WITH THE SAME STUFF, WHICH MEANS IT CAN WITHSTAND VIRTUALLY ANY AMOUNT OF PUNISHMENT. AN ASSET IN MY LINE OF WORK

BY BIRTH, I'M A MUTANT. BY PROFESSION, FOR A TIME, I WAS A SECRET AGENT. NOW, BY CHOICE, I'M A SUPER HERO-- ONE O' THE UNCANNY X-MEN.

CHAKK



BEFORE THE ROGUE REALIZES WHAT'S HAP'NIN', HE'S CRIPPLED...

... MORTALLY WOUNDED.



I WANT THIS OVER QUICKLY, BUT DYIN'S A LONG WAY FROM BEIN' DEAD.

THE BEAR HOWLS-- MORE RAGE THAN PAIN-- AN' LUNGES FOR ME. I HIT HIM TOO HARD, TOO FAST-- HE DOESN'T KNOW YET HOW BADLY HE'S HURT. HE'S BECOME A TRUE BERSERKER-- HIS FURY GIVIN' HIM A TERRIBLE, ALMOST IRARESISTIBLE POWER AN' ENDURANCE.

I WISH
THERE WAS
ANOTHER
WAY.

BUT THERE
ISN'T.

THERE'S AN ARROW
IN HIS BACK.

AN ILLEGAL BARBED
POINT, COATED WITH
POISON. BUT THE DOSAGE
DIDN'T KILL. INSTEAD, IT
DROVE THE BEAR INSANE.
THE HUNTER COULD HAVE
KEPT AFTER HIM,
FINISHED HIM OFF, BUT
THE CREEP COULDN'T BE
BOtherED. HE FIGURED
HIS GUNK'D DO THE JOB
FOR HIM.

HE WAS WRONG.

SEVEN MEN, THREE
WOMEN, FIVE KIDS
PAID THE PRICE FOR
HIS STUPIDITY. HE
AS MUCH AS
MURDERED 'EM.

NOW'S THE TIME
TO BALANCE
THE BOOKS.

CHOKK

JOSIE'S
BAR 'N'
GRILL...



... IN THE TOWN
O' COALSPUR,
FIFTY-SEVEN
MILES IN A
STRAIGHT LINE
FROM THE
BEAR'S DEN.

I FOLLOWED
THE HUNTER
THE SAME
WAY I DID
THE BEAR...

... BY SCENT, THERE WAS A RESIDUE LEFT ON THE ARROW.
I BACK-TRAILED THE BEAR TO WHERE HE'D BEEN SHOT,
FOLLOWED THE HUNTER FROM THERE. IT WASN'T EASY,
EVEN FOR MY ENHANCED SENSES. I'VE BEEN ON THE
ROAD FOR DAYS.



BUT THE GRIEF IS WORTH IT.
I'VE STRUCK PAYDIRT.



WHADDYA
WANT, eh?

WE'RE GONNA
TALK, BUB-- YOU,
ME, AN' THE
MOUNTIES--

--ABOUT A
BEAR YOU
SHOT A
FORTNIGHT
AGO.

NO FOOLIN'?



I DON'T THINK
YOU'LL BE TALKIN'
TO ANYONE,
SHORTY...

'SPECIALLY AFTER I'M
THROUGH STOMPIN' YOUR FACE!



BUB, I WAS
HOPIN' YOU'D
DO SOMETHIN'
LIKE THAT.

THE BEAR
LASTED
LONGER...

... BUT
I LET
THE MAN
LIVE.

MARIKO YASHIDA.



DAUGHTER OF ONE OF THE NOBLEST, RICHEST, MOST POWERFUL FAMILIES IN JAPAN, SHE CAN TRACE HER LINEAGE BACK ALMOST 2,000 YEARS. ME, I KNOW MY FATHER -- THAT'S AS FAR AS IT GOES.

FROM THE MOMENT WE MET, I LOVED HER. AN' SHE LOVED ME.

AIN'T LIFE A CROCK?

IN CANADA, I GAVE MY DEPOSITION AN' SAW THE HUNTER BOUND OVER FOR TRIAL, BEFORE HEADIN' STATESIDE TO THE X-MEN'S SECRET HEADQUARTERS NEAR NEW YORK. I FOUND A PILE OF MAIL WAITIN' FOR ME-- ALL THE LETTERS I'D SENT MARIKO, RETURNED UNOPENED. I PHONED HER EMBASSY, THEY SAID SHE'D BEEN SUMMONED BACK TO JAPAN WEEKS AGO.

I CALLED HER HOME.



THEY HUNG UP ON ME.

BAD MOVE.



JAPAN AIR LINES FLIGHT 007 LEAVES KENNEDY AIRPORT THE NEXT MORNING FOR ANCHORAGE, ALASKA AND TOKYO.



I'M ON IT.

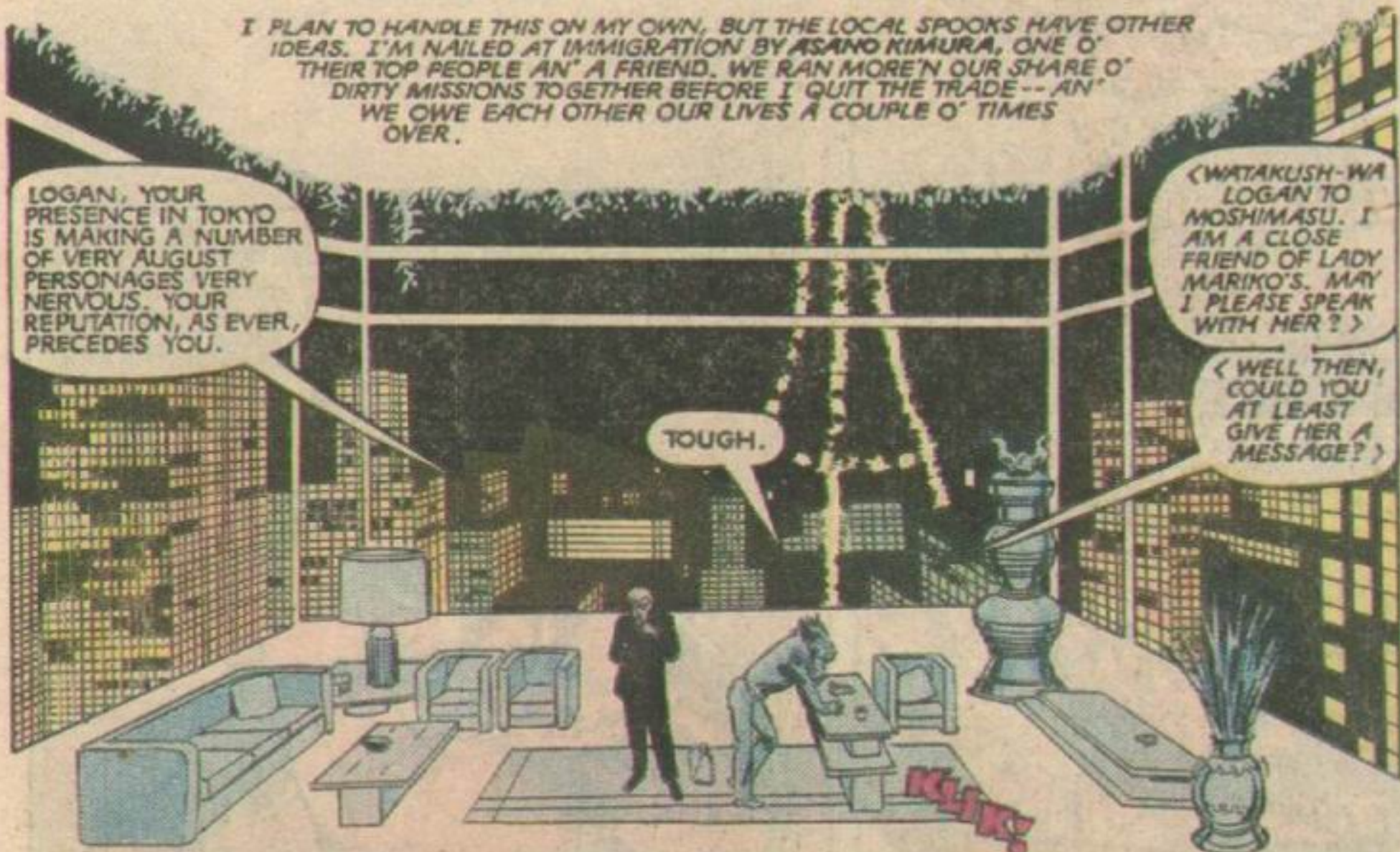
I PLAN TO HANDLE THIS ON MY OWN, BUT THE LOCAL SPOOKS HAVE OTHER IDEAS. I'M NAILED AT IMMIGRATION BY ASANO KIMURA, ONE O' THEIR TOP PEOPLE AN' A FRIEND. WE RAN MORE'N OUR SHARE O' DIRTY MISSIONS TOGETHER BEFORE I QUIT THE TRADE-- AN' WE OWE EACH OTHER OUR LIVES A COUPLE O' TIMES OVER.

LOGAN, YOUR PRESENCE IN TOKYO IS MAKING A NUMBER OF VERY AUGUST PERSONAGES VERY NERVOUS. YOUR REPUTATION, AS EVER, PRECEDES YOU.

TOUGH.

<WATAKUSH-WA LOGAN TO MOSHIMASU. I AM A CLOSE FRIEND OF LADY MARIKO'S. MAY I PLEASE SPEAK WITH HER?>

<WELL THEN, COULD YOU AT LEAST GIVE HER A MESSAGE?>



I'M BEIN' STONEWALLED, ASANO.

OF COURSE, LOGAN, YOU ARE MORE TRULY JAPANESE THAN ANY WESTERNER I HAVE EVER KNOWN...

...BUT I DOUBT EVEN YOU CAN REALLY UNDERSTAND MARIKO'S ACTIONS.



YOU MUST REMEMBER, SHE IS HEIR TO TRADITIONS OF DUTY AND LOYALTY THAT ARE AS OLD AS THESE ISLANDS.

IS SHE IN TROUBLE?

IF SHE IS, OLD FRIEND, SHE IS BEYOND YOUR HELP.

BULL.



LOGAN, SHE IS MARRIED.



HER FATHER DISAPPEARED YEARS AGO, DURING MARIKO'S CHILDHOOD, AND WAS BELIEVED DEAD. HOWEVER, HE RECENTLY SURFACED AND RECLAIMED HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE AS HEAD OF HER FAMILY AND CLAN.

EVIDENTLY, HE HAD INCURRED SOME GREAT OBLIGATION, THE PAYMENT OF WHICH WAS MARIKO'S HAND IN MARRIAGE.



AN' SHE AGREED, JUST LIKE THAT?!

SHE LOVES ME, ASANO!

SO? WE SPEAK OF GIRL, LOGAN-- OF OBLIGATION, DUTY, HONOR.



TO DENY THAT WOULD MEAN DENYING HER ESSENTIAL SELF. SHE WOULD RATHER DIE.

I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT HER.

YOU MUST LEARN, SHE IS LOST TO YOU.



I'VE GOT TO SEE HER.

WHY? TO HURT HER ALL THE MORE? SHE WILL ANSWER NEITHER YOUR LETTERS NOR YOUR TELEPHONE CALLS. RESPECT HER SILENCE, LOGAN, LEAVE HER BE.

IF SHE FEELS FOR YOU AS YOU SAY SHE DOES, THEN THIS MARRIAGE HAS BROKEN HER HEART, TOO. CONFRONTING HER WILL ONLY MAKE THINGS WORSE.



MAYBE, BUT IT'S SOMETHING I HAVETA DO.

LOGAN, FORGIVE ME, BUT I MUST WARN YOU.

YOU NO LONGER HAVE OFFICIAL STATUS OR SPECIAL PRIVILEGES, AS AGENT OR X-MAN. SHOULD YOU STEP OUTSIDE THE LAW, I CANNOT HELP YOU. INDEED, I MAY BE FORCED TO HUNT YOU DOWN.

YOU'RE WELCOME TO TRY.

BE SEEIN' YOU, BUDDY.



THE YASHIMA ANCESTRAL STRONGHOLD STANDS IN THE HILLS OVERLOOKING THE PORT CITY OF AGARASHIMA, IN MIYAGO PREFECTURE, ROUGHLY 300 KLIKS UP THE ROAD FROM TOKYO.

I'M THERE BY MIDNIGHT.

THE DOGS ARE NEW.

THEY DON'T KNOW MY SCENT.

THEY'RE KILLERS-- BUT SO AM I. WE LOCK EYES AN' WILLS, COMMUNICATIN' ON LEVELS FAR MORE COMPREHENSIVE AN' SUBTLE THAN SPEECH. THEY'RE MEAN BUT THEY AREN'T STUPID. THEY LET ME PASS.



I'M GLAD. I GOT NO STOMACH FOR GUTTIN' ANIMALS.



PEOPLE, THOUGH-- THAT'S ANOTHER MATTER.

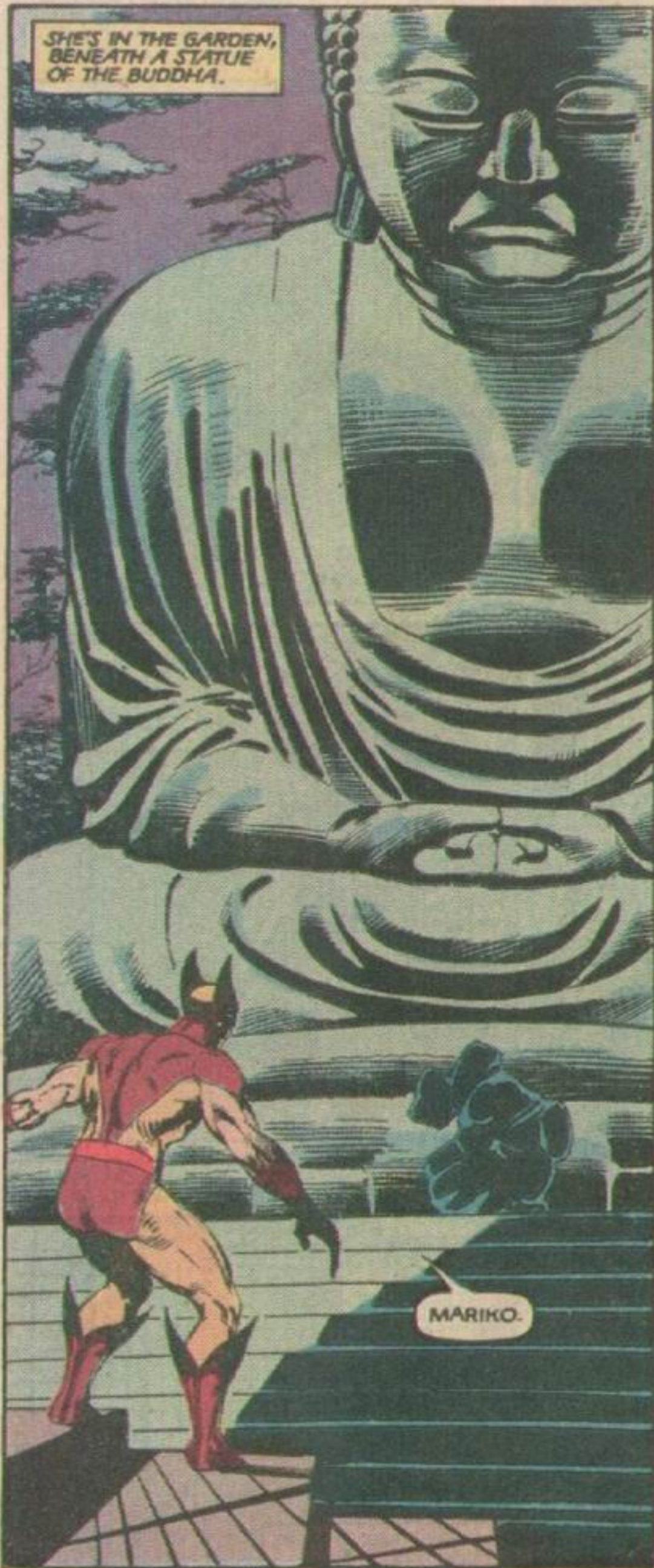
THE NIGHT'S TOO QUIET, TOO STILL. I DON'T LIKE IT.



AS I ENTER THE HOUSE, I THINK OF THE BEAR'S DEN. THE SETTINGS HAVE A LOT IN COMMON.

I LOOK FOR A TRAP. NO LUCK. THE PLACE IS CLEAN.

THAT ONLY MAKES ME MORE WARY STILL.



SHE'S IN THE GARDEN, BENEATH A STATUE OF THE BUDDHA.

MARIKO.

< LOGAN?! > < YOU HAVE COME AT LAST. TOO LATE. >
< I CAME AS SOON AS I HEARD, MARIKO-CHAN. >
< DO NOT CALL ME THAT. YOU HAVE NOT THE RIGHT. >



< WHY ARE YOU HERE?! I HOPED--PRAYED-- NEVER TO SEE YOU AGAIN. >



< YOU OWE ME AN EXPLANATION. >

< I AM MARRIED. >

< WHAT WAS ONCE BETWEEN US IS NO MORE. >



< I WON'T ACCEPT THAT. >

< YOU MUST, LIKE ME, YOU HAVE NO CHOICE. >

< LOOK AT ME, DAMMIT! AT LEAST HAVE THE COURAGE TO... >



< ...FACE ME. >



< ARE YOU SATISFIED ? >

< GO. NOW. BEFORE YOU SHAME ME FURTHER. >

< WHO DID THIS? >

< IT IS NONE OF YOUR CONCERN. >



< MARIKO, COME WITH ME. >

< I CANNOT. >

< ANY COURT IN THE LAND WILL GRANT YOU A DIVORCE. >

< I WILL NOT ASK FOR ONE. >

< I LOVE YOU! >

< AND I... YOU. BUT I AM BOUND BY FAR MORE IMPORTANT OBLIGATIONS. >

< LOGAN, THESE BLADES WERE CRAFTED BY THE SUPREME SWORDSMITH, MASAMUNE, AND ARE AS KEEN, AS STRONG, AS DEADLY TODAY AS WHEN HE FORGED THEM, OVER 800 YEARS AGO. THEY ARE THE SOUL OF MY FAMILY. ALL THAT WE WERE AND ARE AND ARE YET TO BE IS REPRESENTED BY THESE TWO SWORDS. >

< A TRADITION OF DUTY AND HONOR. >

< MY COMMITMENT TO YOU WAS MADE WHEN I WAS FREE. MY FATHER'S RETURN CHANGED THAT. >

< ARE YOU HIS PROPERTY, TO BE USED IN PAYMENT OF A DEBT?! >

< YOU'RE A HUMAN BEING, MARIKO! >



< HEI. >

< AND IF MY FATHER, IN HONOR, GAVE HIS SOLEMN WORD... >

< ... THEN I, HIS DAUGHTER, AM HONOR-BOUND NOT TO FORSWEAR HIM. >

< IF YOU CANNOT COMPREHEND--AND ACCEPT-- THAT, LOGAN, YOU DO NOT TRULY KNOW ME AT ALL. OR NIPPON. >

FOOTSTEPS.

AND A SCENT I'D NEVER SMELT BEFORE TONIGHT.

YET ONE I RECOGNIZE INSTANTLY.

IT CLINGS TO MARIKO, TAINTING THE JASMINE I LOVE.

A MAN.

MARIKO!

HER HUSBAND.

< WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?! YOU WERE TOLD TO AWAIT ME IN OUR APARTMENTS. IF YOU ARE DETERMINED TO DEFY ME, WIFE, YOU LEAVE ME NO CHOICE... >

< ... BUT TO CONTINUE TO CHASTISE YOU, UNTIL YOU LEARN--ONCE AND FOR ALL--YOUR PROPER PLACE. >



BUB, YOU'VE JUST SIGNED YOUR DEATH WARRANT!



< FOR THE LOVE YOU BEAR ME, DO NOT HARM HIM. >

< HE DESERVES IT. HE BEATS YOU, MARIKO. IF I DON'T STOP HIM, HE'LL KEEP ON DOING IT! >

< THAT IS HIS RIGHT. >

< PLEASE, LOGAN. >

I SHOULDN'T HAVE LISTENED.

BUT MARIKO KNOWS I CAN DENY HER NOTHING, NOT EVEN THE LIFE OF A MAN I HATE.



THERE'S A 10 a.m. J.A.L. FLIGHT OUT OF NARITA FOR NEW YORK.



I INTEND TO BE ON IT.

?!?

< LOGAN--
HIE!!
NO!! >



THE SHURIKEN WERE POISONED, DESIGNED TO KILL ME.



BUT WHAT MAKES ME A MUTANT IS MY BODY'S ABILITY TO HEAL VIRTUALLY ANY WOUND, COUNTER-ACT ANY DISEASE. IT'S A NIFTY TALENT-- ESPECIALLY IN MY LINE OF WORK-- AN' IT'S SAVED ME MORE THAN ONCE.

EVEN SO, WHEN I FINALLY WAKE, I HURT LIKE BLAZES. THE STUFF THEY USED WAS POTENT. I BARELY MADE IT.



KOM-BAN WA, LOGAN-SAN. HAJIMEMASHITE. < GOOD EVENING, Mr. LOGAN. I AM PLEASSED TO MEET YOU. >

WATAKUSHI-WA ...

< I KNOW WHO YOU ARE, LORD SHINGEN. >

< LORD OF THE MANOR, LORD OF CLAN YASHIDA. MARIKO'S FATHER. >

YOUR JAPANESE IS AS FLAWLESS AS MY ENGLISH, WOLVERINE-- YES, I ALSO KNOW WHO AND WHAT YOU ARE --

-- BUT YOUR TONE IS RUDE, YOUR MANNER DISRESPECTFUL.

YUP.

THE POISON'S AFTER-EFFECTS SCRAMBLED MY SENSES-- ALL I'M SURE OF IS WHAT I CAN SEE. THE TWO SUMO ARE NO PROBLEM. WHAT WORRIES ME IS WHO'S WAITING OUTSIDE.



I CAN'T START ANYTHING WITH MARIKO PRESENT--TOO RISKY--SHE COULD GET HURT. I STALL. TIME IS ON MY SIDE.

IT RUNS OUT.

YOU ASPIRE TO MY DAUGHTER'S HAND. THE ARROGANCE OF YOU GAIJIN IS BEYOND BELIEF. OUR FAMILY IS AS OLD AS THE EMPEROR'S, WITH AS LEGITIMATE A CLAIM TO THE THRONE.



BUT I FORGET. WE LIVE IN AN AGE, IN A NATION, WHERE SUCH PRECEPTS HAVE BECOME AS EPHEMERAL AS THE MORNING DEW.

< FATHER, I BEG YOU... >

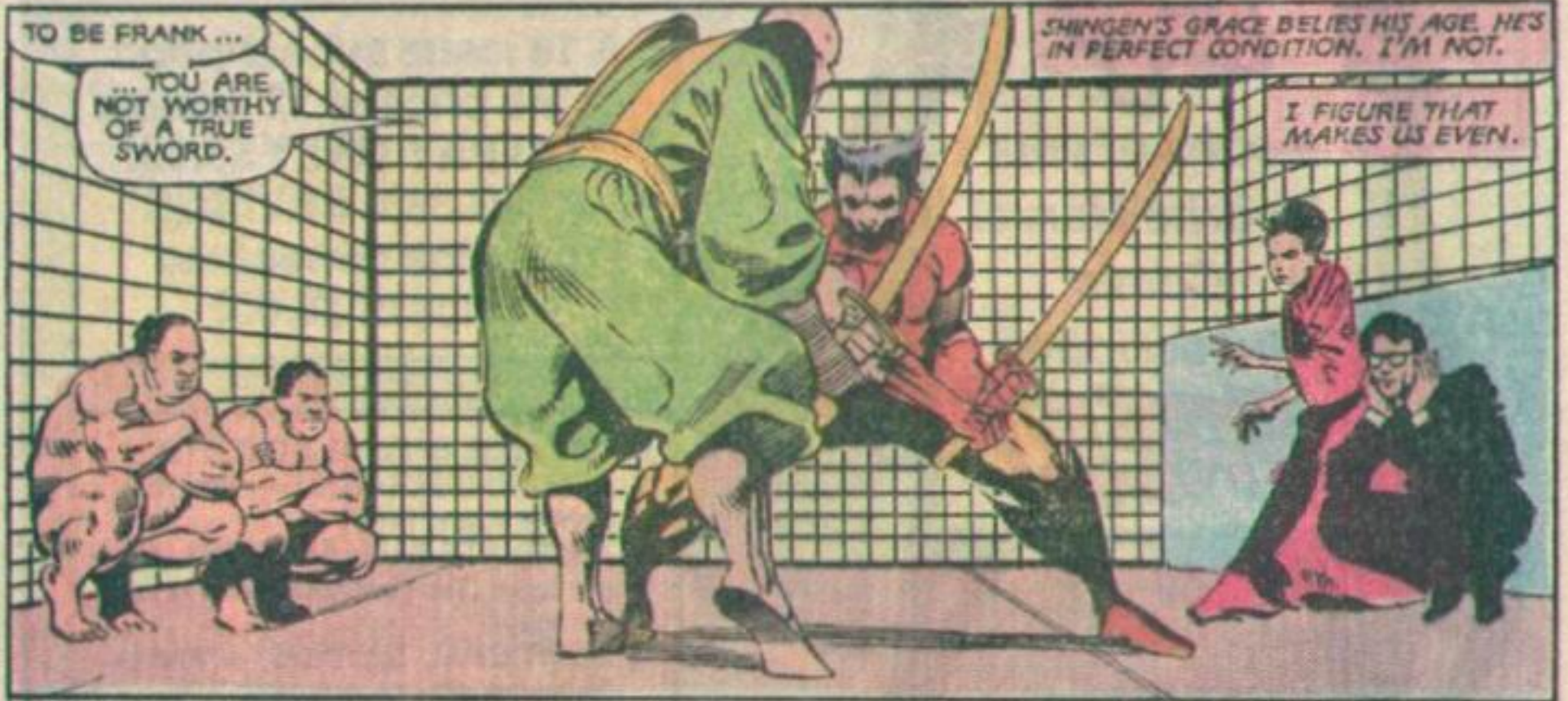
< BE SILENT CHILD. >



SHE THINKS THE WORLD OF YOU, WOLVERINE. LET US SEE YOU PROVE IT-- BY FACING AN OLD MAN IN SINGLE COMBAT.

WITH BOKAN, LORD SHINGEN--WOODEN PRACTICE SWORDS?

WHY NOT THE REAL THING?



TO BE FRANK ...

... YOU ARE NOT WORTHY OF A TRUE SWORD.

SHINGEN'S GRACE BELIES HIS AGE. HE'S IN PERFECT CONDITION. I'M NOT.

I FIGURE THAT MAKES US EVEN.



IT'S BEEN YEARS SINCE I HELD A SWORD. I WAS GOOD.



SHINGEN'S AN EXPERT.

AND HE CHEATS.



SO MUCH FOR "HONOR".

I ROLL WITH THE KICK, CURSING THE POISON FOR SLOWING MY REFLEXES. I'M VULNERABLE FOR ALL OF THREE SECONDS.

PLENTY OF TIME.

HE STRIKES THE NERVE CLUSTERS...



THE CRUCIAL PRESSURE POINTS, WHERE A BLOW CAN EITHER INSTANTLY PARALYZE SOMEONE, OR KILL.



TOO LATE, I REALIZE...

WHICH OF THEM HE'S GOING FOR.





BUT I SURPRISE HIM.

ANY ONE OF THOSE BLOWS WOULD HAVE FINISHED AN ORDINARY MAN.

I'M NOT ORDINARY.

I HEAR MARIKO GASP AS I POP MY CLAWS, SEE SHINGEN SMILE.



I'VE PLAYED INTO HIS HANDS.

MARIKO SAW THE DUEL, WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING WHAT HIS STRIKES WERE DOING TO ME.

SHINGEN CHALLENGED ME TO MOCK, "FRIENDLY" COMBAT. SHE THOUGHT HIS ATTACKS WERE MEANT TO HUMILIATE ME. NOW, THOUGH, WHEN I APPEAR TO BE LOSING...

... I TURN OUR FIGHT INTO THE REAL THING. I COULDN'T DISHONOR MYSELF MORE IN HER EYES IF I TRIED.



SHINGEN ATTACKS, BUT MY HEART, MY HEAD AREN'T IN THIS FIGHT.

I CUT CLOTH INSTEAD OF FLESH.

HE FLAMIN' NEAR SNAPS MY SPINE.

DOESN'T HURT MUCH...

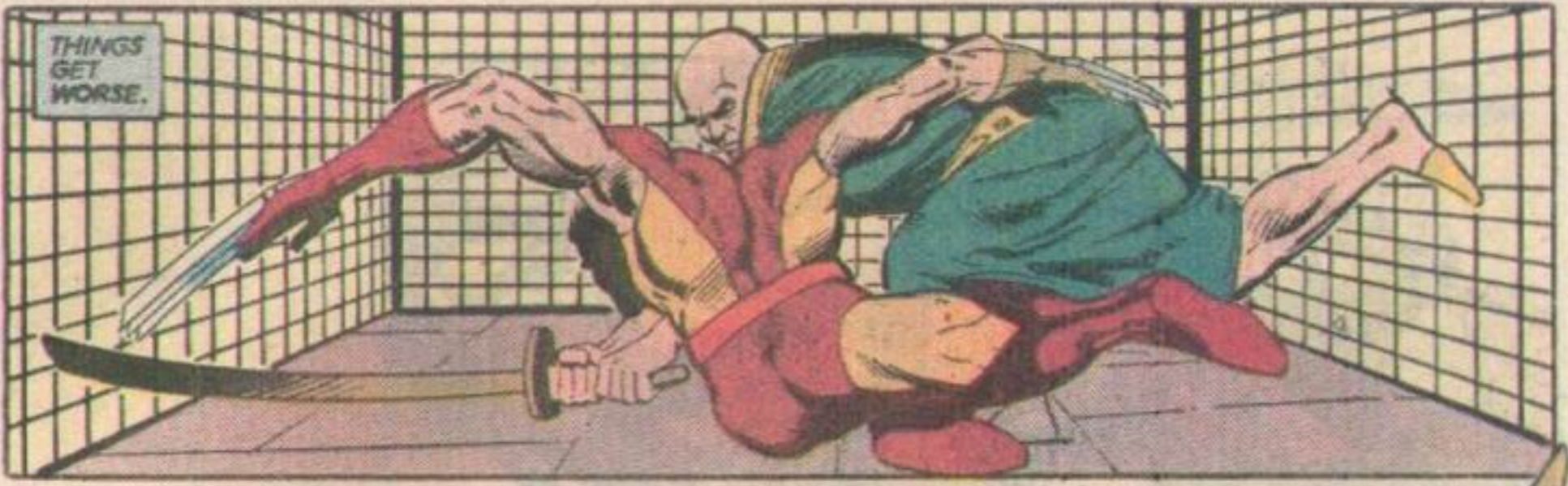
... BUT MY LEGS GO NUMB.



HE FOLLOWS UP WITH A TSUKI STRIKE TO THE THROAT.

I TRY TO BREATHE, AN SPIT BLOOD INSTEAD.

THINGS
GET
WORSE.



AND NO MATTER
WHAT I DO...



...IT'S OBVIOUS TO
ALL CONCERNED...

... THAT THE OUTCOME IS NEVER IN DOUBT.



"BEHOLD, DAUGHTER, I HEAR SHINGEN SAY, THOUGH I SEE ONLY MARIKO, AS I STRUGGLE TO HOLD OFF OBLIVION, 'THE 'MAN' YOU PROFESS TO LOVE, EXCEPT THAT HE IS NO MAN AT ALL, BUT AN ANIMAL CAST IN A SEMBLANCE OF HUMAN FORM.'

"GAZE UPON HIM, MARIKO. WITNESS HIS TRUE NATURE, HIS TRUE SELF. HERE IS THE ... THING TO WHICH YOU HAVE GIVEN YOUR HEART. ANSWER ME TRUTHFULLY-- IS HE WORTHY OF SUCH A PRIZE?"



I WAKE IN TOKYO, IN AN ALLEY OFF THE GINZA.

I CAN STILL SEE HER FACE-- THE SORROW IN HER EYES, HER VOICE, AS SHE CONDEMNS ME. I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS POSSIBLE TO FEEL SUCH SHAME, TO FEEL SO SICK AT HEART.

I'M LOST INSIDE, MY SOUL-- ALL THAT I THOUGHT I WAS, AND AM, AND EVER WILL BE-- SHATTERED, CAST TO THE WINDS.

COMPARED TO THIS, DEATH IS A MERCY.

< WHAT HAVE WE HERE, MY BROTHERS? >

< LOST YOUR WAY, LITTLE GAIGIN? HAD A BIT TOO MUCH TO DRINK? TOO BAD.. >

< THIS IS OUR COUNTRY, FOREIGNER. WE PREFER IT KEPT NEAT, CLEAN-- PURE? WE DONT WANT IT SOILED WITH YOUR FILTH. >



THEY DIE INSTANTLY,
WITHOUT A SOUND.



A PROFESSIONAL
JOB. I ASSUME
IT'S ASANO.

I'M WRONG.



< UPSY-
DAISY,
LOVER. >



A WOMAN.
STRONG.
THAT'S
GOOD.

Sigh.

< YOU'VE
SEEN BETTER
DAYS, DARLIN',
BUT YOUR
LUCK'S ABOUT
TO CHANGE. >



'CAUSE IF
SHE LETS GO,
I'LL DROP IN A
HEAP. MY
BODY'S A LUMP
OF CLAY.
NOTHIN' WORKS.
I'M HELPLESS.
SHE KNOWS IT.
THAT TURNS
HER ON.

< YOU'RE MINE,
WOLVERINE. >



< NOW-- AND
FOREVER. >

TO BE
CONTINUED