

Stan Lee
PRESENTS:

THE UNCANNY X-MEN!

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BEYOND THE FARTHEST STAR

I'M WOLVERINE.

I'M A LONG WAY
FROM HOME.

AN' I THINK
I'M DYIN'.

THAT'S GOOD NEWS TO
SOME. I'M CRAZY,
Y'SEE-- A BERSERKER,
A PSYCHO-KILLER.
THAT'S FACT, NOT
TRUTH-- THE WHOLE
TRUTH, ANYWAY. I'M
CANADIAN, EX-SECRET
SERVICE, MUTANT,
X-MAN. I'M A WARRIOR.

I'M ON THE RUN-- BUT I'M
USED TO THAT. THE
IMPORTANT THING IS,
I'M FREE.

JUNGLE'S ALIEN, LIKE THIS WHOLE
FLAMIN' PLANET. TOO MANY UNKNOWN
SCENTS, SIGHTS, SOUNDS-- NORMALLY,
I'D SORT 'EM ALL OUT, NO SWEAT.
I'VE BEEN TRYIN'-- BUT I CAN'T. MY
BRAIN'S OVERLOADED-- IT CAN'T
HANDLE THE SENSORY INPUT. I CAN'T
GET MY BEARINGS.

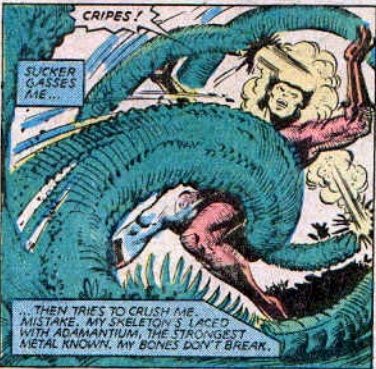
SO, I KEEP MOVIN', AN'
HOPE THINGS GET BETTER.

FAT CHANCE.



AHRRR!

PAIN... AGAIN-- GETTIN' WORSE EACH TIME-- FEELS LIKE I'M BEIN' GUTTED BY... A WHITE HOT BLADE.



CRIPES!

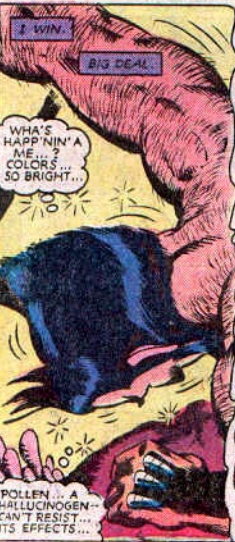
SUCKER GASSES ME...

... THEN TRIES TO CRUSH ME. MISTAKE. MY SKELETON'S LACED WITH ADAMANTUM, THE STRONGEST METAL KNOWN. MY BONES DON'T BREAK.



I HAVE CLAWS, TOO-- RETRACTABLE, HOUSED IN MY FOREARMS, EXTENDED THROUGH APERTURES IN MY HANDS-- FORGED OUT OF THE SAME STUFF.

AN' I KNOW HOW TO USE 'EM.

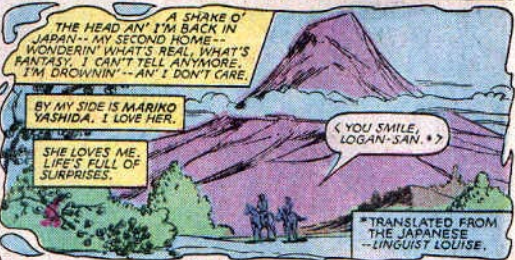


I WIN.

BIG DEAL.

WHY'S HAPP'NIN' A ME...? COLORS... SO BRIGHT...

POLLEN... A HALLUCINOGEN-- CAN'T RESIST ITS EFFECTS...



A SHAKE O' THE HEAD AN' I'M BACK IN JAPAN-- MY SECOND HOME-- WONDERIN' WHAT'S REAL, WHAT'S FANTASY. I CAN'T TELL ANYMORE. I'M DROWNIN'-- AN' I DON'T CARE.

BY MY SIDE IS MARIKO YASHIDA. I LOVE HER.

SHE LOVES ME. LIFE'S FULL OF SURPRISES.

< YOU SMILE, LOGAN-SAN. * >

* TRANSLATED FROM THE JAPANESE -- LINGUIST LOUISE.



< MERELY THINKING HOW INCONGRUOUS WE LOOK. YOU MUST ADMIT, WE'RE A MISMATCHED PAIR. >

< I ADMIT NOTHING OF THE SORT. YOU ARE AN HONORABLE MAN, LOGAN, WITH THE SOUL AND INNER GRACE OF A TRUE SAMURAI. >

< NO WOMAN COULD ASK FOR MORE. >

< THAT'S A RARE, FINE COMPLIMENT, MARIKO. I THANK YOU. >

< IT IS THE TRUTH. IF ANYONE IS UNWORTHY, IT IS I -- WHO LACK YOUR STRENGTH AND COURAGE. >

< KNOW WHO'S BLOWIN SMOKE ? >

< YOU'RE THE BRAVEST WOMAN I KNOW. >

< IT'S GETTING LATE, MARIKO. WE'D BETTER HEAD BACK-- EH?? >

< LOOK, EAGLES-- HEADING OUR WAY. >

AWFUL BIG SUCKERS. SOMETHIN' ABOUT 'EM DOESN'T FEEL QUITE KOSHER...

THERE'S NO COVER ON THIS RIDGE-- WE'RE PERFECT TARGETS.

< LOGAN-- WHAT-- ?! >

< HEAD FOR THE TREE LINE! I'LL EXPLAIN LATER. >

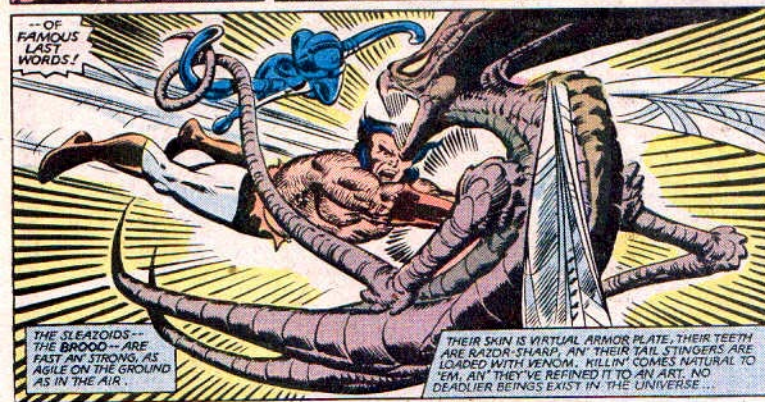
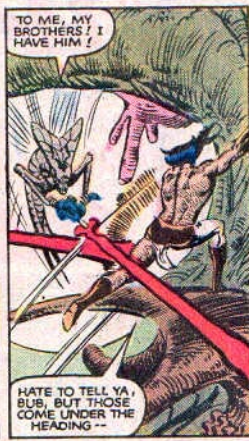
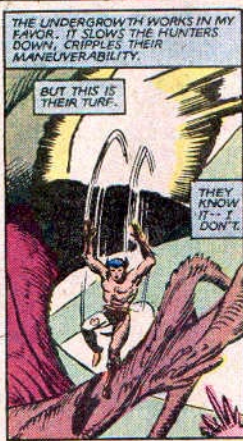
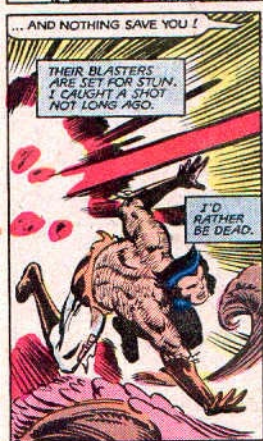
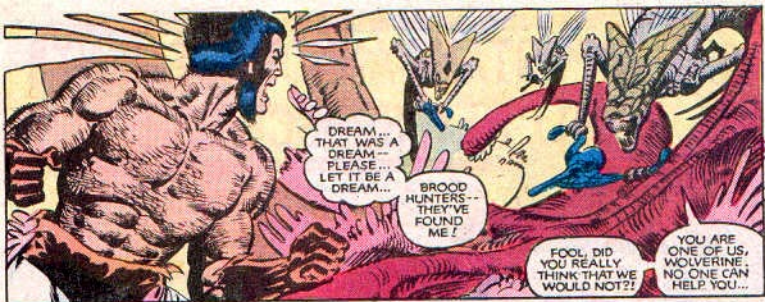
< RIDE, MARIKO! >

YOU HAVE PROVIDED US WITH A SPLENDID HUNT, TERRAN...

... BUT, ALAS, ALL GOOD THINGS MUST EVENTUALLY COME TO AN END.

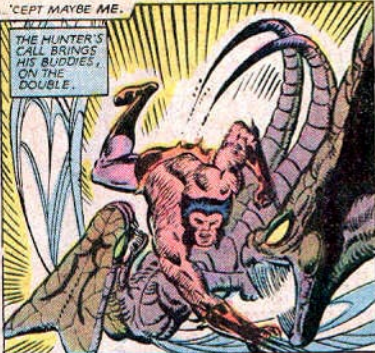
YEARRRGH!

MARIKO!!

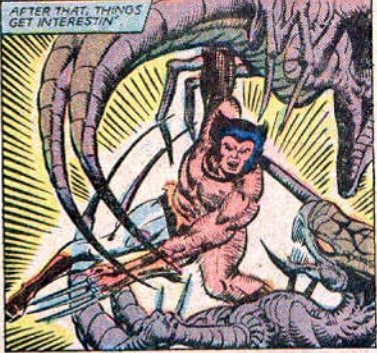


'CEPT MAYBE ME.

THE HUNTER'S
CALL BRINGS
HIS BUDDIES,
ON THE DOUBLE.

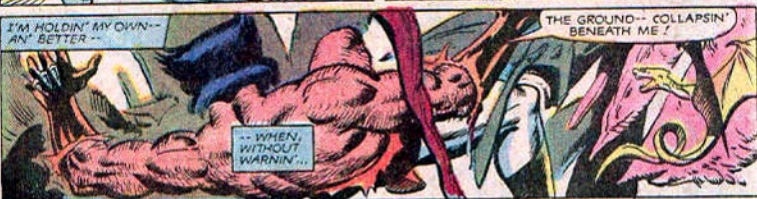


AFTER THAT, THINGS
GET INTERESTIN'

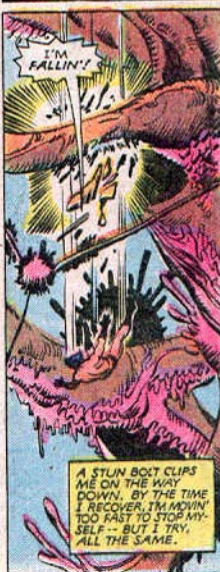


I'M HOLDIN' MY OWN--
AN' BETTER--

THE GROUND-- COLLAPSIN'
BENEATH ME!



-- WHEN,
WITHOUT
WARNIN'--



I'M
FALLIN'!

Y'NEVER KNOW-- A
BODY MIGHT GET
LUCKY, SOMETHIN'
MIGHT WORK.

WRONG.

A STUN BOLT CLIPS
ME ON THE WAY
DOWN. BY THE TIME
I RECOVER, I'M MOVIN'
TOO FAST TO STOP MY-
SELF-- BUT I TRY,
ALL THE SAME.

LIKE I SAID, I'M A
MUTANT. MY BODY HAS
THE ABILITY TO HEAL ITSELF,
FAST. I CAN SURVIVE
ALMOST ANY PHYSICAL
TRAUMA. BUT A TUMBLE
FROM THIS HEIGHT MAY
BE A BIT MUCH, EVEN FOR
ME.



WHAT THE
FLAMIN'--?!

I HIT HARD.

THERE'S A
SPLIT-SECOND
OF INCREDIBLE
PAIN...



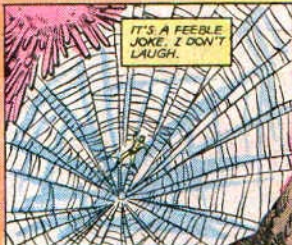
... THEN
OBLIVION.

LATER...



I'M ALIVE.
I'VE DITCHED
THE HUNTERS.

THINGS COULD
BE WORSE.



IT'S A FEEBLE
JOKE. I DON'T
LAUGH.

WHEN YOU'RE CONDEMNED TO HELL, DOES
IT REALLY MATTER WHETHER THE FLAMES THAT
BURN YOU ARE A MILLION DEGREES HOT OR A
BILLION? EITHER WAY, IT HURTS.



OKAY, I
SURVIVED.
HOORAY
FOR ME.

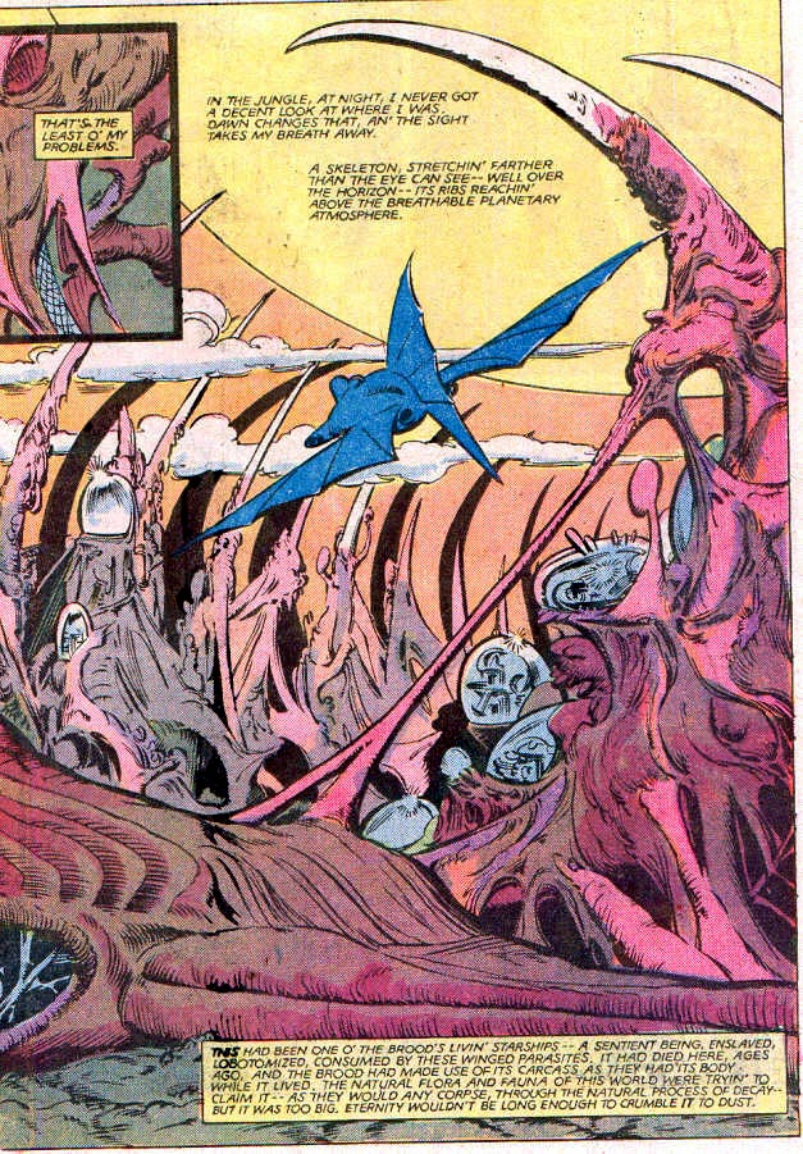




THAT'S THE
LEAST O' MY
PROBLEMS.

IN THE JUNGLE, AT NIGHT, I NEVER GOT
A DECENT LOOK AT WHERE I WAS.
DAWN CHANGES THAT, AN' THE SIGHT
TAKES MY BREATH AWAY.

A SKELETON, STRETCHIN' FARTHER
THAN THE EYE CAN SEE -- WELL OVER
THE HORIZON -- ITS RIBS REACHIN'
ABOVE THE BREATHABLE PLANETARY
ATMOSPHERE.



THIS HAD BEEN ONE O' THE BROOD'S LIVIN' STARSHIPS -- A SENTIENT BEING, ENSLAVED,
LOBOTOMIZED, CONSUMED BY THESE WINGED PARASITES. IT HAD DIED HERE, AGES
AGO, AND THE BROOD HAD MADE USE OF ITS CARCASS AS THEY HAD ITS BODY --
WHILE IT LIVED, THE NATURAL FLORA AND FAUNA OF THIS WORLD WERE TRYIN' TO
CLAIM IT -- AS THEY WOULD ANY CORPSE, THROUGH THE NATURAL PROCESS OF DECAY--
BUT IT WAS TOO BIG. ETERNITY WOULDN'T BE LONG ENOUGH TO CRUMBLE IT TO DUST.



HUNT-MASTER, SHOULD WE PURSUE?

TO WHAT END, NOVICE? IF THE FALL DID NOT TERMINATE OUR PREY, THE SCAVENGERS WILL.

BUT HE HOSTS A QUEEN! THE GREAT MOTHER WILL SURELY DESIRE CONFIRMATION OF HIS DEATH.



THE WAY IS OPEN, NOVICE, WOLVERINE'S TRAIL EASY TO FOLLOW. YOU MAY DO SO IF YOU WISH.

WE WILL CONVEY OUR CONDOLENCES TO YOUR PROGENY.

I AM NOT AFRAID, HUNT-MASTER?

THE IGNORANT RARELY ARE. SACRIFICE YOUR LIFE, IF YOU WISH. WE WILL RETURN TO BASE.



I HEAR MOVEMENT, FEEL VIBRATIONS IN THE WEB.



I CAN GUESS WHAT THAT MEANS--

--THE WEB-SPINNERS ARE COMIN' TO INVESTIGATE THEIR CATCH.



I'M GLUED IN PLACE. SHOULDN'T BE TOO MUCH TO HANDLE, THOUGH I'VE GOT SOME FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT.

I'LL POP MY CLAWS AN' CUT MYSELF LOOSE.



WISH MY HEAD WOULD CLEAR. IT'S MUZZY-- IT'S AN EFFORT TO THINK-- AN' NOW IT'S POUNDIN' FIT TO BUST

NO? NOT AGAIN, NOT HERE -- I--

AARRGH!

I BLINK... AND THE WEB BECOMES THE STARSHIP Z REEE SHAR-- PERSONAL YACHT OF LILANDRA, EMPRESS OF THE SHI'AR.



THE X-MEN HAD RESCUED HER FROM THE BROOD, FOILED A COUP D'ÉTAT AGAINST HER LED BY HER REEGADE SISTER, DEATHBIRD -- AN' IN THE PROCESS, SAVED THE EARTH FROM DESTRUCTION.

TO SHOW HER APPRECIATION, ILL INVITED US ABOARD HER YACHT FOR A BANQUET - PART CELEBRATION, PART FAREWELL - SHE WAS RETURNIN' HOME AN' WANTED TO THANK US --

--ME, CAROL DANVERS, CYCLOPS, STORM, COLOSSUS, NIGHTCRAWLER, AN' KITTY PRYDE.

COLOSSUS WASN'T REALLY IN THE MOOD FOR A PARTY, ON ACCOUNT OF HIS SISTER, ILLYANA.

PETEY, WHAT'S DONE IS DONE. MOPIN' WON'T CHANGE ANY THING -- IT CERTAINLY WON'T MAKE ILLYANA A CHILD AGAIN!

I KNOW, WOLVERINE, BUT IT IS A HARD REALITY TO FACE.

*ILLYANA'S INSTANTANEOUS TRANSFORMATION FROM 6 TO 15-YEAR OLD OCCURRED IN X-MEN #160 - GUESS WHO.

MUCH ABOUT OUR BATTLE WITH THE DEMON-LORD BELASCO IS DIFFICULT TO COPE WITH -- NOT THE LEAST OF WHICH WAS MY CONFRONTATION WITH MY OLDER SELF.

THAT STORM WAS A SORCERESS. SHE SAID HALF MY HERITAGE WAS BOUND TO THE ARTS ARCANAE. BUT HOW?! I AM A MUTANT, NOT A MAGICIAN.

COULD I TRULY POSSESS SUCH TALENTS?

SUDDENLY...

BEHOLD, FOOLS! LILANDRA, MAJESTRIX SHI'AR, IS NO MORE! LONG LIVE THE NEW EMPRESS! ME!

DEATH-BIRD!

A TRAP. WE TRIED TO REACT...

...BUT A STASIS BOMB ENDED THE FIGHT AS SOON AS IT HAD BEGUN.*

*SEE LAST ISM L.

I CAME AWAKE
IN PIECES... A
SENSE OF SELF-
AWARENESS...
SCRAMBLED...
CONFUSED.

FOLLOWER
BY A
JUMBLE
OF
BOBBLE-
HOOP
SOUNDS.

I WAS FLOODED
BY A MULTITUDE
OF SCENTS.

THEY MADE
ME SICK.

LAST CAME SIGHT-- BLURRED,
BIZARRE IMAGES SHOT THROUGH
WITH BLINDING FLASHES OF
COLOR. NOTHIN' MADE SENSE.
THEN, AS I STRUGGLED TO RE-
GAIN MY PSYCHIC BALANCE...

...EVERYTHING
CLICKED
INTO FOCUS.

SLEAZOIDS!

THE BROOD--
WE'RE THEIR
PRISONERS!

THE
OTHERS
DIDN'T
SEEM TO
MIND.

THEY WERE...
ENJOYING
THEMSELVES!

AN INSTANT LATER, I SAW WHY.

WELCOME, HONORED HEROES,
TO THE THRONEWORLD
OF THE SHI'AR.

THIS AFFAIR IS BUT
A SMALL TOKEN OF
OUR GRATITUDE.

MY INTELLECT ACCEPTED THIS AS
REALITY; MY SENSES SCREAMED
FANTASY; NORMALLY, I'D TRUST
MY INSTINCTS EVERY TIME-- BUT
I COULDN'T KEEP MY BEARINGS--
ONE THOUGHT CONTRADICTED
ANOTHER, AND THE HARDER I
TRIED TO SORT THINGS OUT...

CARE TO DANCE, LOGAN? HEY--
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

CAROL,
SOMETHIN'S...
SCREWY.

THIS -- THIS
ISN'T WHAT
IT SEEMS.
WE'RE BEIN'
CONNED --
SET-UP!

... THE MORE
DISORIENTED
I BECAME.

SURE WE ARE, WOLVIE;
I THINK YOU'RE GETTING
PARANOID IN YOUR OLD
AGE. RELAX, HAVE FUN.
ENJOY THE PARTY.

PARDON OUR INTRUSION, WARRIORS-- BUT WE UNDERSTAND THAT YOUR PHYSIOLOGY, CAROL DANVERS, IS DISSIMILAR TO THAT OF YOUR COMRADES.

I'M NOT A MUTANT, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN.

PRECISELY OUR PRELIMINARY DATASCANS ON YOU ARE MOST... INTRIGUING. MY COLLEAGUE AND I WOULD LIKE TO EXAMINE YOU FURTHER.

NOW? OKAY.

CAROL--!

CAROL!!

THIS IS CRAZY! THOSE WINGED CLOWNS ARE SLEAZOIDS!

FIGHT 'EM, CAROL! IT'S A TRICK!

NO GOOD. SHE'S ACTIN' LIKE EV'RYTHING'S...

...NORMAL.

WHAT'S... HAPPENIN' TO ME?: HAVE I FINALLY FLIPPED OUT?!

WOLVERINE, WHAT IS WRONG? WHY DID YOU CALL OUT LIKE THAT TO CAROL?

STORM-- GUYS-- DIDN'T YOU SEE? NO, I GUESS NOT.

I GUESS... IT'S ALL IN MY MIND.

THE OTHERS WERE VERY NICE, CONSIDERATE, CONCERNED. I BRUSHED 'EM AWAY. I WAS SO SCARED I COULD BARELY KEEP FROM SHAKIN'. I THOUGHT I'D PUT THE DARK TIMES BEHIND ME.

BESIDE HER ON THE DIAS WAS A TALL, WEIRD-LOOKIN' DOLL. AT FIRST SIGHT, I WENT ICE-COLD, SUPERNALLY CALM--

--MY AUTOMATIC REACTION TO A COMBAT SITUATION.

WE WERE IN DANGER--WHY WAS I THE ONLY ONE WHO NOTICED?!

WE WERE TAKEN BEFORE LIL FOR OUR AWARDS.

SHE GREETED EACH OF US IN TURN WITH A FOND EMBRACE. THE CEREMONY WENT WITHOUT A HITCH...

UNTIL IT WAS KITTY'S TURN.



NO.

COME UNTO ME, CHILD. THERE IS NAUGHT TO FEAR.

NO! YOU'RE NOT REAL-- THIS ISN'T POSSIBLE! X-MEN, HELP ME-- I CAN'T BUDGE-- DON'T LET HER GET ME!

THE KID STRUGGLED, TO NO AVAIL. I HEARD HER SCREAMS, WANTED TO ACT--

LOGAN!!

BUT I COULDN'T. SOME POWER HELD ME FAST.



HUSH, SMALL ONE.

IT WAS MY TURN.

I WAS THE BIRD...

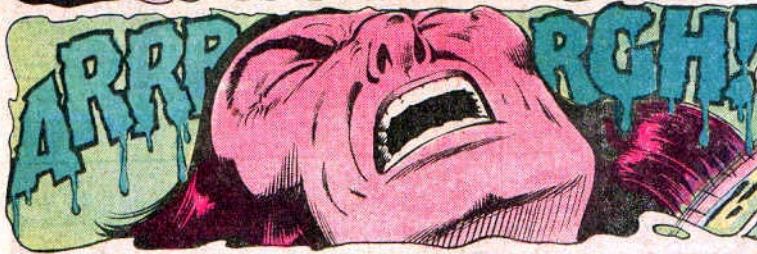
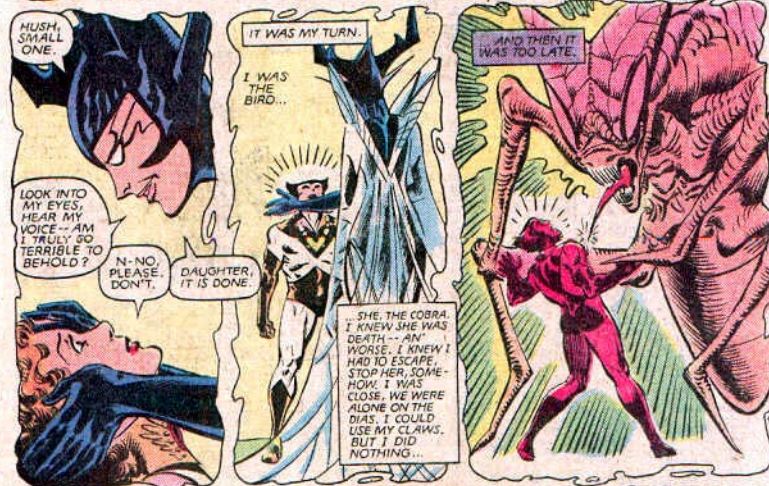
AND THEN IT WAS TOO LATE.

LOOK INTO MY EYES. HEAR MY VOICE-- AM I TRULY GOING TO BEHOLD?

N-NO, PLEASE. DON'T.

DAUGHTER, IT IS DONE.

... SHE, THE COBRA. I KNEW SHE WAS DEATH-- AN' WORSE. I KNEW I HAD TO ESCAPE. STOP HER, SOMEHOW. I WAS CLOSE, WE WERE ALONE ON THE DIAS. I COULD USE MY CLAWS. BUT I DID NOTHING...





MY SCREAM WAKES ME, MEMORIES
WASHIN' THROUGH ME LIKE A SCUMMY
TIDE.

SHAME
TRIGGERS
RAGE.



I NEED AN
OUTLET FOR
THAT RAGE.

I GET ONE. SCAVENGERS,
LOOKIN' FOR LUNCH.



THEY FIND A BIT
MORE THAN THEY
BARGAINED FOR.



I LET MY BERSERKER MOOD SWEEP ME ALONG.



THE X-MEN HAVE NEVER SEEN ME LIKE THIS. PART O' ME HOPES THEY NEVER WILL. I'M THE BEST THERE IS AT WHAT I DO.

BUT WHAT I DO BEST ISN'T VERY NICE.


SOON, THOUGH, MY RAGE -- AND ITS ADRENALIN HIGH -- BEGIN TO FADE. MY CUE TO MAKE MY EXIT.

THE SCAVS HAVE LOST INTEREST IN ME.




AS A MEAL, I'M NOT WORTH THE EFFORT -- ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY CAN TURN ON THEIR OWN WOUNDED AND DEAD.

CUTE...



WHICH WAY, NOW? UP, I THINK. THE SLEAZOIDS PREFER THE HEIGHTS, AS FAR FROM THE PLANETARY SURFACE -- AN' THIS JUNGLE -- AS THEY CAN GET. INTERESTIN' -- THE HUNTERS DIDN'T FOLLOW ME WHEN I FELL. THEY MUST BE PRETTY WARY OF THE JUNGLE AND ITS PREDATORS.

IF WE CAN TURN THAT FEAR TO OUR ADVANTAGE...



I WASN'T BADLY HURT IN THE FIGHT, THAT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER. I FEEL LOUSY. MY MOVES ARE SLOW, MY GRIP WEAK.


I STOP FOR A REST -- AND REALIZE I'VE REACHED THE END OF THE ROAD. I'M GASPIN' -- EACH BREATH CAUSES UNBEARABLE PAIN.

WHEN AN ANIMAL KNOWS ITS TIME HAS COME, IT QUILTS FIGHTIN'. IT LITERALLY LIES DOWN AND DIES.

THINGS GET WORSE.

MY NERVES ARE ON FIRE. THE SLIGHTEST MOVE IS AGONY. STILL, I PUSH ON. STUBBORN. STUPID.

I HOPE IT DOESN'T TAKE TOO LONG.



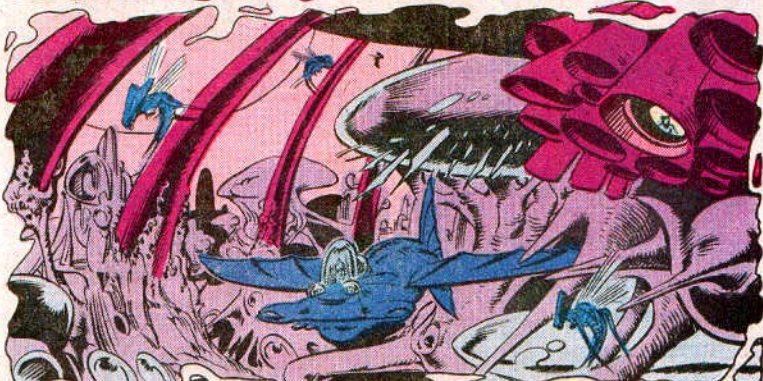
LAST NIGHT, I WOKE. THAT WAS THE FIRST ATTACK ANY. IT WAS A BEAUT. LEAVIN' ME BREATHLESS, SOAKED WITH SWEAT, SHAKIN', SCARED.

BUT MY MIND WAS CLEAR, THE MUZZINESS GONE.



MEMORY TOLD ME I WAS IN MY ROOM IN LILANDRA'S PALACE ON THE SHI'AR THRONELAND.

A GLANCE THROUGH THE WINDOW SHOT THAT BELIEF TO BLAZES.




STORM, WAKE UP-- WE GOT TROUBLE!

LOGAN--WHAT IS IT?

DARLIN', YOU WON'T BELIEVE IT.

SHE DIDN'T.



YOU'VE BEEN BEHAVING STRANGELY EVER SINCE OUR ARRIVAL. YOU'RE IN OBVIOUS PAIN NOW. YOU'RE ILL, WOLVERINE, THAT'S ALL.

LET ME SUMMON A PHYSICIAN...



A NERVE PINCH STOPPED HER, KAYO'D HER. I COULDN'T AFFORD DISCOVERY, NOT 'TIL I'D FIGURED OUT WHAT WAS GOIN' ON.

SHE DISMISSED MY STORY OUT OF HAND. THAT'S WAY OUT OF CHARACTER. THE SLEAZOIDS MUST BE AFFECTIN' OUR PERCEPTIONS, TO KEEP US IN LINE.

LOOKS LIKE, FOR THIS CAPER, I'M ON MY OWN.

I MADE ONE STOP BEFORE I LEFT KITTY'S ROOM.

KID SHE MAY BE, BUT SHE'S PROVED-- TIME AN' AGAIN-- THAT SHE'S GOT MORE GUTS AN' SMARTS THAN MOST ADULTS. THAN MOST HEROES.

I REMEMBERED HER STRUGGLIN' IN THE THRONE ROOM-- AN' HOW ALL I DID WAS WATCH. WHAT HAD BEEN DONE TO US? WHY WAS I SO SICK, AN' NONE OF THE OTHERS?

I WANTED TO TAKE THE KID WITH ME, BUT I'D BE MOVIN' HARD AN' FAST-- AN' PLAYIN' ROUGH-- AN' I COULDN'T GUARANTEE HER SURVIVAL.

I'M SORRY, KIDDO.

BUT DON'T FRET. I'LL BE BACK. WE'LL GET OUT OF THIS MESS, AN' COME HOME SAFE AN' SOUND, YOU GOT MY WORD.

FOR NOW, SHE WAS BETTER OFF WHERE SHE WAS.

THE PROMISE SOUNDED HOLLOW.

SUDDENLY, AN IMAGE FLASHED THROUGH MY MIND-- KITTY CRADLED IN MY ARMS. MY RIGHT HAND LYIN' BELOW HER BREASTBONE. THE STACCATO CLICK OF CLAWS EXTENDING, RETRACTING, THE LIGHT PADIN' FROM HER EYES..

WHAT HAD BEEN DONE TO US, TO MAKE ME THINK SUCH THINGS?!

ELSEWHERE IN THE PALACE, I FOUND THE ANSWER.

A CADRE OF SLEAZOIDS HAD GATHERED FOR A CEREMONY. THE OBJECT OF THEIR ATTENTION WAS AN OLD FOE OF THE X-MEN, A RENEGADE MEMBER OF LLANDRA'S IMPERIAL GUARD FANG.

I GRINNED. SERVED THE SUCKER RIGHT IF THE BROOD-- FOR WHOM HE'D WORKED TO OVERTHROW LIL-- WERE GONNA REWARD HIS TREACHERY WITH TORTURE OR EXECUTION.

HE WAS PLEADIN' THEY WERE LAUGHIN'. SURPRISINGLY, I UNDERSTOOD THEIR LANGUAGE.

FANG'S BODY BEGAN TO SMOKE. HE SHRIEKED. I STOPPED GRINNIN'.

WHY... ARE YOU DOING... THIS?! MY MISTRESS, DEATHBIRD, IS YOUR ALLY!

THE BROOD NEEDS NO ALLIES, OUTWORLDER. THERE ARE ONLY ENEMIES-- AND SLAVES! WE USED DEATHBIRD...

...AS WE NOW USE YOU!

"THE EMBRYO OF A WARRIOR-PRIME WAS IMPLANTED WITHIN YOU. THAT EGG HAS NOW REACHED MATURITY. IT IS 'HATCHING.'"

"AND, IN THE PROCESS, ABSORB THE TOTALITY...

"... OF YOUR MEMORIES, YOUR ABILITIES, YOUR GENETIC POTENTIAL."

"IT WILL CONSUME YOU, FANG, TRANSFORM YOU."

"FAREWELL, 'ALLY.' YOU GAVE YOUR LIFE FOR THE NOBLEST OF REASONS--"

THAT ONE OF THE BROOD MIGHT BE BORN!"

THE PIECES FELL INTO PLACE. THE CEREMONY IN THE THRONE ROOM FINALLY MADE SENSE.

WE'D BEEN INFECTED, TOO-- MADE HOSTS FOR THEIR QUEEN'S EGGS. WHAT HAPPENED TO FANG-- WOULD HAPPEN TO US.

NO!!

AN INTRUDER!

ONE OF THE X-MEN!

SEIZE HIM!

THE CHASE WAS ON

EVEN IF WE ESCAPE, WHAT'S THE POINT? PERHAPS AN ANTIDOTE, A CURE EXISTS, BUT IF ONE DOESN'T...

I WANT TO QUIT-- IT'D BE EASY TO QUIT-- BUT... I CAN'T. I'M NOT AN ANIMAL. I'M A MAN. AN X-MAN!

I'M STILL ALIVE. I'M GONNA FIGHT TO STAY THAT WAY!

I MAY LOSE. BUT I'LL NEVER SURRENDER!

THAT NOISE -- A SLEAZOID!

I RECOGNIZE THE MARKINGS-- IT'S THE WARRIOR FANG HOSTED. I LIKE THE IRONY.

HE'S MY TICKET BACK INTO THE PALACE. BY SKY-DIVING, I CAN REACH HIM.

IT'S RISKY-- IF HE HEARS ME AND DODGES, THERE'S NOTHING BUT MILES OF OPEN AIR BETWEEN ME AND THE GROUND.

MY KIND OF GAMBLE. I PLAY IT PERFECTLY.


THE SLEAZOID IS ON HIS FIRST FLIGHT, TESTING HIS WINGS.

INEXPERIENCED, A LITTLE OVERCONFIDENT AND CARELESS. HIS MIND ON OTHER THINGS...

...HE NEVER KNOWS WHAT HITS HIM.

SNIK!

HE TRIES TO IMPALE ME ON HIS STINGERS. I MAKE SURE HE CAN'T.



THAT'S ALL SHE WROTE, BUB. COOPERATE, OR I'LL GUT YOU.

I'M NOT BLUFFING.

HE KNOWS IT.



HE DOES AS HE'S TOLD, CONFIDENT-- HE TELLS ME -- THAT HE'S CARRYIN' ME TO CERTAIN DEATH.

YOUR FATE IS SEALED, HUMAN.

SO'S YOURS, IF YOU DON'T SHUT UP.

THEN ...



... ANOTHER ATTACK, THE WORST YET. SO MUCH PAIN, HITTIN' SO FAST, THAT I CAN'T EVEN SCREAM.

FOR MY PRISONER, IT'S A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY.

HE MAKES THE MOST OF IT.

BROTHERS-- A PRESENT FOR YOU!



WOLVERINE, HOW NICE OF YOU TO DROP IN.

TAKE HIM, HUNTERS. BUT IF HE RESISTS--

--KILL HIM!

THEY DO
THEIR
BEST.



I DO BETTER.

I HAVEN'T SCRAPPED THIS MUCH IN AGES. MAKES A PLEASANT CHANGE.



BUT TRASHIN' A HUNTIN' CADRE'S ONE THING, TAKIN' ON THEIR ENTIRE RACE ...

... IS SOME-THIN' ELSE.

AGAIN... AGONY...

... BURNING, GROWING WITHIN ME, CORRUPTING MY BODY, MURDERING ME



I'VE BEEN WOUNDED-- TOO OFTEN TO COUNT-- BUT I'VE NEVER ENDURED ANYTHING TO EQUAL THIS.

I HUNGER FOR OBLIVION-- ANYTHING TO TAKE THE PAIN AWAY--

... BUT THAT RELEASE IS DENIED ME.

MY FLESH BEGINS TO SMOKE-- COMPREHENSION-- THE TRANSFORMATION, MY METAMORPHOSIS, HAS BEGUN



I FIGHT.

NEW THOUGHTS, SENSATIONS, BECOME FAMILIAR-- OLD ONES, ALIEN-- AS THE EGG REACHES INTO MY MIND, RESHAPING IT IN HER IMAGE



AS, SIMULTANEOUSLY, SHE TRIES TO RESHAPE MY BODY.



BUT MY SKELETON IS ADAMANTIUM. HER POWER CAN'T AFFECT IT. I USE THAT AS AN ANCHOR, A LIFELINE...

AND MAKE A FINAL, CONVULSIVE, ALL-OR-NOTHING EFFORT



IT'S A TOSS-UP WHICH OF US SCREAMS THE LOUDEST-- AND WHICH OF US DIES.

SUNRISE.

ANOTHER NIGHT HAS PASSED.

YOU LOSE, QUEENIE.

I'M ALIVE. YOUR KID ISN'T.

MY MUTANT IMMUNE SYSTEM SAVED ME.

THE EGG WAS ALIEN, A PARASITE--SO MY BODY AUTOMATICALLY REACTED TO IT AS A DISEASE.

THAT WAS WHY I WAS SO SICK... SIDE-EFFECTS OF MY BODY'S STRUGGLE TO EXPUNGE THE INVADER, AND ITS TO SURVIVE. BUT ALTHOUGH IT NEVER GAINED MORE THAN A TOehold, THE EGG STILL PUT UP A HELLUVA FIGHT.

I CAN SEE THE PALACE, IMAGINE THE X-MEN HYPNOTISED 'N' HAPPY WITHIN.

I REMEMBER MY HALLUCINATION ABOUT KILLING KITTY. IF I HAVE TO--IF SHE CAN'T BE CURED-- I'LL DO IT.

I ALMOST LOST AN' THE STRAIN FLAMIN' NEAR KILLED ME.

THEY'RE INFECTED, TOO. ONLY I CAN'T SAVE 'EM THE WAY I DID MYSELF. FOR ALL I KNOW, I MAY ALREADY BE TOO LATE. THEIR METAMORPHOSIS MAY ALREADY HAVE TAKEN PLACE.

I'LL... KILL THEM ALL. MY FRIENDS.

THEN, IT'LL BE THE SLEAZOIDS' TURN.

NEXT RESCUE MISSION!