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#389

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THE UNCANNY



X-MEN



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A CHANGE IS COMING. A NEW BREED OF MAN, GIFTED WITH STRANGE AND FRIGHTENING POWERS, HAS EMERGED. MANY OF THESE MUTANTS BELIEVE THEY SHOULD RULE—AND THAT OPEN CONFLICT WITH THE HUMAN MAJORITY IS INEVITABLE. HATED AND FEARED BY THOSE THEY'VE SWORN TO PROTECT, ONE GROUP STANDS IN DEFENSE OF A WORLD ON THE BRINK OF GENETIC WAR. STAN LEE PRESENTS:

THE MUTANT X-MEN

HIS NAME IS CHARLES XAVIER.

HE IS A TEACHER, HEAD OF THE XAVIER INSTITUTE, A PRIVATE SCHOOL LOCATED ON THE SUBURBAN OUTSKIRTS OF NEW YORK CITY.

HE IS ALSO A MUTANT AND CONSIDERED BY SOME TO POSSESS THE MOST POWERFUL PSYCHIC ABILITIES ON THE PLANET.

HE HAS A LOT ON HIS MIND.

IN ATLANTA, RESEARCHERS FROM THE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL EXPRESS OPTIMISM THAT NEW DISCOVERIES BY THE LATE NOBEL LAUREATE MOIRA MACTAGGART WILL PRODUCE A VACCINE FOR THE LEGACY VIRUS.

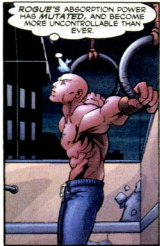
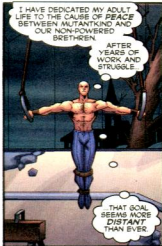
IN CHANDLER, TEXAS, POLICE NOW CONSIDER THE DEATHS OF THE MONTVOYA FAMILY THIS PAST WEEKEND A HATE CRIME. SERAFINA MONTVOYA WAS RECENTLY SUSPENDED FROM SCHOOL AFTER BEING IDENTIFIED AS A MUTANT.

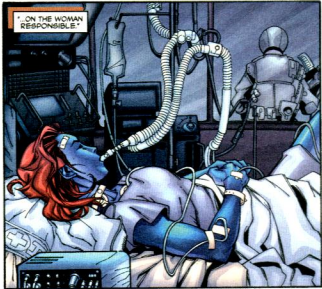
IN WASHINGTON, IN THE WAKE OF THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE ROBERT KELLY, LAWMAKERS CALL FOR A PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE MUTANT ACTIVITIES.

The GOOD SHEPHERD

by CHRIS CLAREMONT & SALVADOR LARROCA

ART THIBERT INKS
HI-FI DESIGN COLORS
RS & COMICRAFT'S SAIDA TI LETTERS
PETE FRANCO ASSISTANT EDITOR
MARK POWERS EDITOR JOE QUESADA EDITOR IN CHIEF





IT WAS A RAW AND BITTER DAY IN SCOTLAND, HE REMEMBERS, WHEN FAMILY AND FRIENDS GATHERED TO LAY MOIRA MACTAGGART TO REST.

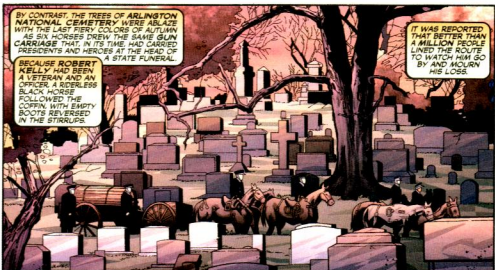
SHE WAS CLAN CHIEFTAIN AND WAS SENT TO HER REST IN FINE STYLE, FOLLOWING TRADITIONS AS ANCIENT AS THE LAND.



BY CONTRAST, THE TREES OF ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY WERE ABLAZE WITH THE LAST FIERY COLORS OF AUTUMN AS SIX HORSES DREW THE SAME GUN CARRIAGE THAT, IN ITS TIME, HAD CARRIED PRESIDENTS AND HEROES AT THE HEAD OF A STATE FUNERAL.

BECAUSE ROBERT KELLY HAD BEEN A VETERAN AND AN OFFICER, A RIDERLESS BLACK HORSE FOLLOWED THE COFFIN, WITH EMPTY BOOTS REVERSED IN THE STIRRUPS.

IT WAS REPORTED THAT BETTER THAN A MILLION PEOPLE LINED THE ROUTE TO WATCH HIM GO BY AND MOURN HIS LOSS.



NIGHTCRAWLER WAS NOT YET AN ANOINTED PRIEST.



...BUT WHEN THE CHAPLAIN WAS DONE, HE SPOKE FOR HIS FELLOW X-MEN OF THIS WOMAN WHO HAD BEEN A FRIEND AND MENTOR TO THEM ALL, AS MUCH IN HER WAY AS XAVIER HIMSELF.

FOR ROBERT KELLY, THE FINAL SALUTE CAME COURTESY OF A TRIPLE SALVO OF RIFLE FIRE TO COMPLEMENT THE PLAYING OF "TAPS."



FOR MOIRA, A SOLITARY PIPER.



HE HAD PLAYED A WELCOME THE NIGHT OF HER BIRTH, AND AFTER LIFE'S END, SENT HER GENTLY ON HER WAY.



I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE SHE'S GONE.

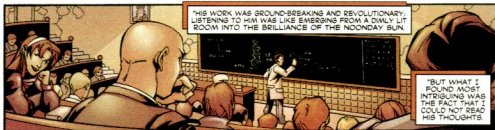
I WONDER IF I EVER TRULY WILL?



"IT SEEMS LIKE WE ONLY JUST MET.

"I'D WON A SCHOLARSHIP TO OXFORD, SO HAD SHE.

"WE MET DURING A TUTORIAL BEING GIVEN BY A RENOWNED GENETICIST.



"HIS WORK WAS GROUND-BREAKING AND REVOLUTIONARY, LISTENING TO HIM WAS LIKE EMERGING FROM A DIMLY LIT ROOM INTO THE BRILLIANCE OF THE NOONDAY SUN.

"BUT WHAT I FOUND MOST INTRIGUING WAS THE FACT THAT I COULD NOT READ HIS THOUGHTS.



"THAT WAS A NEW EXPERIENCE. IN THE ARROGANCE OF YOUTH, I'D COME TO TAKE FOR GRANTED THAT EVERY MIND AROUND ME WAS AN OPEN BOOK. I'D LONG SINCE TRAINED MYSELF NOT TO PRY.

"WHERE MOIRA KINROSS WAS CONCERNED, HOWEVER, I FOUND I DIDN'T WANT TO.



"OF ALL OUR CLASS, WE WERE THE ONLY ONES WHO HAD A CLUE ABOUT THE ULTIMATE IMPLICATIONS OF GENETIC MUTATION, AND WE DISCUSSED THEM PASSIONATELY.

"I'D ALWAYS LIVED A SOLITARY LIFE. I DIDN'T MAKE FRIENDS EASILY, IF AT ALL, AND HERE I WAS, FACE-TO-FACE WITH A SOULMATE.

"WHO ALSO HAD A BOYFRIEND.

"JOE MACTAGGART, LANCE CORPORAL, ROYAL MARINES. ONE LOOK TOLD ME WHAT SHE LIKED IN HIM, AND ALSO, THAT HE HATED ME.



"WHEN MOIRA INVITED ME TO JOIN THEM FOR A WEEKEND EXCURSION, I SHOULD HAVE REFUSED.

"BUT I ENJOYED HER COMPANY TOO MUCH.

"AND JOE MACTAGGART'S JEALOUSY WAS AN IRRESISTIBLE CHALLENGE.

"MY STEP-BROTHER WAS A BULLY. AFTER HIM, I SWORE I WOULD NEVER BACK DOWN FROM ONE AGAIN.

"WE RODE SOUTH AND WEST, THROUGH WILTSHIRE AND ACROSS SALISBURY PLAIN, PAST STONEHENGE AND ONWARD TO THE DEVON COAST, BEFORE BREAKING OUR JOURNEY AT A MODEST COUNTRY PUB.

"I WONDERED IF MOIRA KNEW WHAT SHE WAS DOING, BY HAVING ME RIDE WITH HER?"

"I DIDN'T NEED TELEPATHY TO SENSE THE EMOTIONS ROLING BENEATH JOE'S OUTWARDLY AFFABLE DEEMANOR.

"CLAN CHIEFTAIN SHE MAY BE, MOIRA'S STILL A LASSIE."

"WHO NEEDS A PROPER MAN TO KEEP HER IN A PROPER PLACE."

"HE WAS THE KIND OF MAN WHO COULD NEVER ACCEPT A RIVAL OF ANY KIND."

"AND THAT MAN WOULD BE YOU?"

"A BETTER ONE THAN YOU'LL EVER BE, MATE."

"SHE'S MY WOMAN, THAT'S FACT."

"PUT YOURSELF BETWEEN US."

"HIS SMILE SAID IT ALL."

"STRANGE HOW CRYSTAL CLEAR THAT IMAGE REMAINS."

"HE WANTED TO BREAK ME TO BITS, ALL HE LACKED WAS AN EXCUSE."

"INSTEAD, HE TREATED MOIRA TO A KISS THAT SCANDALIZED THE LOCALS."

"BUT THAT TURNED OUT TO BE JOE'S INTENT ALL ALONG."

"SHE SAID SHE WAS A REBEL, THAT SHE LIKED TO LIVE DANGEROUSLY."

"ONE MORE LIKE IT, THEY'D BE ASKED TO LEAVE."

"I'LL LEAVE Y' NO STRANDED, CHARLEY."

"WAS THAT THE ATTRACTION FOR JOE, AND NOT FOR ME?"

"TAKE MY BIKE, I'LL SEE Y' PR CLASS ON MONDAY."

"I KNOW HOW I PRESENT MYSELF TO PEOPLE, THEN AND NOW: A MAN OF SUCH BOTTOMLESS RESERVE THEY THINK I HAVE NO EMOTIONS WHATSOEVER.

"THEY DO NOT UNDERSTAND, BEING HEADBLIND, HOW CAN THEY?"



"WITH NO EFFORT AT ALL, I COULD LEARN THEIR EVERY SECRET.



"AND POSSESSING THAT KNOWLEDGE, MANIPULATING THEM LIKE PUPPETS.



"THEN, WITHOUT WARNING, I FELT LIKE I'D BEEN SLAPPED.



"I ACTUALLY LAUGHED ALoud, WONDERING IF I'D JUST DEVELOPED AN ACTIVE CONSCIENCE...



"...BUT MY AMUSMENT WAS QUICKLY REPLACED BY A GROWING SENSE OF ALARM...

"... THAT PROPELLED ME OUT OF THE DOOR AND ONTO MOIRA'S BIKE WITHOUT A MOMENT'S HESITATION.



"WITH THE NIGHT HAD COME A VICIOUS AUTUMN GALE, BEFORE I'D EVEN LEFT THE VILLAGE I WAS SOAKED TO THE SKIN AND SHAKING WITH COLD. I DIDN'T CARE.



"I'D NEVER FELT A SENSATION LIKE THIS BUT I COULD NO MORE DENY IT THAN I COULD MY OWN EXISTENCE.

"I RODE LIKE A MADMAN, ALONG ROADS I'D NEVER SEEN BEFORE AS SURELY AS IF I'D BEEN DOING IT MY WHOLE LIFE...



"UNTIL I FOUND
THE WRECK."

"JOE HAD TAKEN A TURN
TOO FAST, TOO MUCH
POWER, TOO MUCH WEIGHT,
TOO MUCH ARROGANCE,
TOO MUCH WIND CONSPIRED
TO SEND HIM HYDROPLANING
INTO A STONE WALL."



"HE WAS UNCONSCIOUS
AND A BLOODY MESS,
BUT NOT SUBSTANTIALLY
HURT."



"THERE WAS NO SIGN
OF HIS PASSENGER."

"I DIDN'T BOTHER USING
MY VOICE TO CALL FOR
HER, THE HOWL OF THE
WIND, THE CANNONADE
OF THUNDER CLOSE
OVERHEAD."

"RENDERED
SPEECH USELESS."



"THE MOMENT I
REACHED OUT TO HER
WITH MY THOUGHTS..."

"... SHE ANSWERED."



"AND I KNEW THAT
IT WAS HER OUTCRY
THAT HAD LED ME
TO HER RESCUE."

"FROM THAT MOMENT
WE WERE IN LOVE."



SHE TOLD JOE WHEN HE
WAS IN THE HOSPITAL THAT
IT WAS OVER BETWEEN
THEM.

HE DIDN'T
BELIEVE HER.
HE NEVER
FORGAVE
HER.

HE ALWAYS
CONSIDERED
HIMSELF THE
BETTER MAN,
AND THE
ONLY ONE
FOR HER.



IN MY OWN WAY, I
WAS JUST AS BLIND
AND FOOLISH. I NEVER
CONSIDERED HIM
A CREDIBLE
THREAT.



HE WAS A THUG.

WHEREAS I WAS A TELEPATH, A MUTANT, AMONG THE FIRST I SUSPECTED OF A NEW BREED OF HUMANITY.

WHAT POSSIBLE HARM COULD SOMEONE LIKE HIM DO TO ME? OR THE LADY I ADORED?

THRRMM

WHAT WAS THAT?

THE SOLARIUM TREMBLED, AS THOUGH THE ESTATE HAD JUST BEEN SHAKEN TO ITS FOUNDATIONS.



PARDON MY ASKING, THUNDERBIRD, BUT WHOSE BRIGHT NOTION WAS IT TO INCARCERATE DR. REYES IN THE DANGER ROOM?

CONSIDERING THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF THE ROOM IS TO EVALUATE OUR VARIOUS ABILITIES, PSYLOCKE, WHERE BETTER?

THE PRESUMPTION WAS, ITS DEFENSIVE SYSTEMS COULD COPE WITH ANY OF THE COLLATERAL EFFECTS OF HER DRUG WITHDRAWAL.



SO MUCH FOR THAT IDEA.

ANALYSIS INDICATES THAT RAVE IS SPECIFICALLY CONFIGURED TO AFFECT MUTANTS.

EVEN THOUGH SHE WAS ONLY UNDER ITS INFLUENCE A SHORT WHILE, IT'S HITTING CECILIA SO HARD IT MAKES HEROIN LOOK LIKE A PLACEBO.

NOT ONLY IS SHE IN PHYSICAL AGONY, SHE IS SUFFERING FEARSOME HALLUCINATIONS. THE MORE AFRAID SHE BECOMES, THE MORE SHE LASHES OUT WITH HER POWER.

THE MORE SHE USES, THE STRONGER SHE GETS. THE STRONGER SHE GETS, THE GREATER HER DESIRE FOR THE DRUG TO SUSTAIN THE HIGH.

AND THE GREATER THE DOSAGE REQUIRED TO SATISFY HER CRAVING.

SHE'S UNABLE TO BREAK THE CYCLE, EVEN IF SHE KNEW HOW, RIGHT NOW I DON'T BELIEVE SHE WANTS TO!



NIGHT-CRAWLER-- WHAT'S HAPPENING?

I'M TELEPORTING MYSELF OUT OF HARM'S WAY --

IN ORDER TO DO MUCH THE SAME FOR YOU!



CECILIA'S TOTALLY OUT OF CONTROL! IF YOU HADN'T TACKLED US,

HER FORCE FIELD SPIKES WOULD HAVE SMASHED US JUST AS THEY DID THE CONTROL ROOM!



THAT'S ENOUGH OF THIS FOOLISHNESS, DOCTOR.

IF IT'S A TEST OF WILLS YOU'RE AFTER -- YOUR FORCE FIELD VERSUS MY TELEKINESIS --

-- YOU'LL FIND ME MORE THAN EQUAL TO THE CHALLENGE.



PROFESSOR!
NO NEED TO SHOUT, PSYLOCKE. I AM TELEPATHICALLY MONITORING THE SITUATION, AND DR. REYES' CONDITION.

SHOULD CIRCUMSTANCES WARRANT, AND AT THE PROPER TIME, I SHALL INTERVENE.



"LIKE MANY X-MEN BEFORE HER, CECELIA REYES CAME TO ME FOR HELP. LIKE MANY, SHE WASN'T HAPPY ABOUT IT."

I DON'T WANT TO BE A MUTANT.

ONE MIGHT AS WELL DECRY ONE'S GENDER OR ETHNICITY.

BEEN KNOWN TO DO THAT, TOO, SOMETIMES.

BUT THERE'S A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BEING A WOMAN AND A PUERTO RICAN AND HAVING SOME FREAKY KIND OF FORCE FIELD.

SO TELL ME, CECELIA, WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO BECOME A DOCTOR? AND A TRAUMA SURGEON?



YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE THE MIND-READER. YOU TELL ME.

HAVING A SKILL MEANS KNOWING WHEN NOT TO USE IT.

I SAW MY FATHER SHOT DEAD BEFORE MY EYES. I COULDN'T SAVE HIM.

I REFUSE TO BE THAT HELPLESS EVER AGAIN.



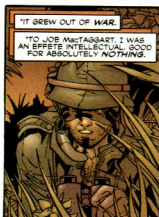
HOW 'BOUT YOU, PROFESSOR? WHAT PROMPTED YOU TO FOUND THE X-MEN?

DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THE WORLD NEEDS -- OR WANTS -- A TEAM OF MUTANT HEROES?



I CANNOT SPEAK FOR THE WORLD, CECELIA, THEN, OR NOW.

FOR ME, THE DECISION WAS AS NATURAL AS IT WAS NECESSARY.



"IT GREW OUT OF WAR.

"TO JOE MacTAGGART, I WAS AN EFFETE INTELLECTUAL, GOOD FOR ABSOLUTELY NOTHING.

"TO PROVE HIM WRONG, TO VALIDATE MYSELF IN TERMS THAT HE WOULD UNDERSTAND, I ENLISTED."

"WAS THERE EVER SO GREAT A FOOL?"

"MY FIRST DAY IN COMBAT, I THOUGHT I WOULD GO MAD. I HAD NO MENTORS. MY SKILLS AS A TELEPATH WERE ENTIRELY SELF-UGHT."

"BUT THAT TRAINING IN NO WAY PREPARED ME FOR THE SHOCK OF PEOPLE AROUND ME BEING MAIMED AND DYING IN SUCH VIOLENCE AS CANNOT BE IMAGINED BY THOSE WHO WERE NOT THERE."

"SOMEHOW, I FOUND A WAY TO COPE."

"I WOULD NOT KILL. I WOULD NOT ORDER MEN TO KILL OR TO BE KILLED."

"BUT I WOULD NOT RUN AWAY."

"I MADE A NICHE FOR MYSELF IN 'SEARCH & RESCUE.'"

"AND IN THE PROCESS BECAME SOMETHING OF A SMALL LEGEND."

"MOIRA COINED A PHRASE, AND THE SOLDIERS FOLLOWED SUIT. THEY CALLED ME 'THE GOOD SHEPHERD.' PATRON SAINT OF THE LOST AND ABANDONED. THEY SAID THAT WHEN I WAS ON THE CASE, EVERYONE CAME HOME."

"COMIN' UP ON THE ELLZEE TROOP."

"WE'RE DEEP IN INDIAN COUNTRY, SO YOU BAIL AS SOON AS THE SKIDS TOUCH GRASS, HEAR?"

"YO!"

"YOU BEEN AWFUL QUIET THIS RIDE, CHARLEY? YOU COOL?"

"I'M ICE, BENES. JUST LIKE ALWAYS."

"OUTSTANDING!"

"I LIED."

"I WAS THE NEXT BEST THING TO DEAD."

Dear Charles:
Forgive me for writing such words while you are still in that awful place but they will not keep until you return, no, that isn't true. I cannot bear to say them to your face. I cannot marry you, Charles, and return the ring you gave me to seal our engagement. Do not ask me why, and do not seek me out. Just respect my decision and get on with your life. I will try to find mine.
Mira

"STRANGE HOW YOU NEVER REALIZE HOW MUCH YOU TRULY CARE FOR SOMEONE- UNTIL YOU LOSE THEM."

"EVERYTHING WAS FINE WHEN I'D SEEN MOIRA ON RFR. WE DIDN'T TALK MUCH OF OUR FUTURE BECAUSE I HAD HALF A TOUR TO FINISH AND NEITHER OF US WANTED TO JINX IT.

"BUT THE FUTURE WAS THERE, IMPLICIT IN EVERY KISS AND CARESS, IN ALL THE THINGS WE LEFT UNSAID.

"THEN, WITH BARELY A MONTH TO GO, SHE CALLED IT **QUITS**.

"I'D NEVER KNOWN **PASSION** UNTIL I MET HER, OR UNDERSTOOD THE TRUTH OF **LOVE**.

"IT HAD BECOME THE FOUNDATION OF MY LIFE -- THAT I LOVED MOIRA AND SHE LOVED ME, AND FROM THAT **LOVE** WE WOULD BUILD A **LIFE**.

"MY MISTAKE.

"FOR A LONG TIME THERE WAS JUST A WELCOME **OLIVION**.

"THEN CAME A GRADUAL AWARENESS THAT I WASN'T DEAD, TAGGED WITH ENOUGH PAIN TO MAKE ME WISH I WAS.

"MAYBE, IF I LAY THERE LONG ENOUGH, THE WISH WOULD COME **TRUE**.

"I WAS GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS WHEN I HIT THE JUNGLE.

"LIVE OR DIE, I REALLY DIDN'T CARE.

"THE ACE IN THE HOLE TELEPATHY GAVE ME WAS THAT I ALWAYS KNEW WHEN THE ENEMY WAS CLOSE.

"MY TEAMS NEVER GOT AMBUSHED.

"OF COURSE, SINCE MINES DON'T HAVE BRAINS.

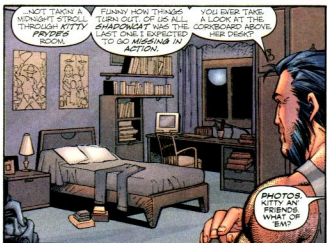
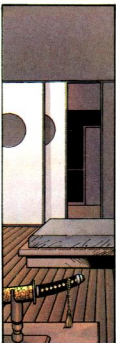
"...THAT ADVANTAGE DIDN'T MUCH APPLY TO THEM.

PLINK

CHOOMP

"THAT WOULD BE **NICE**. SERVE MOIRA RIGHT FOR DUMPING ME. MAYBE THE NEWS WOULD MAKE HER **CRY**.

"OR BETTER STILL, **BREAK** HER HEART AS SHE DID **MINE**.



OR BETRAYED HER. IS IT ANY WONDER SHE WAS SO ANGRY THESE PAST MONTHS?



THE KID'S TOUGHER THAN YOU GIVE HER CREDIT FOR WOLVERINE.



WHOPRE YOU CALLIN' 'KID', RIVER RAT, CONSIDERIN' YOU AINT THAT MUCH OLDER.

AH'M S'POSED T' HAVE AN OLD SOUL, REMEMBER?



ACTUALLY, T' BE PRECISE, A WHOLE SKULL FULL'A OLD SOULS.

THAT'S MY PROBLEM THESE DAYS, AH CAN'T GET RID OF 'EM.

WELL, FIND A WAY.

SAME GOES FOR KITTY.

OKAY, SHE'S MISSING. WE'LL FIND HER. THAT'S PARTLY WHY AH BROUGHT YOU HERE.



WHY ARE WE HERE, ROGUE? AN' WHY WERE YOU SO INSISTENT ON KEEPING OUR INTENTIONS HIDDEN FROM XAVIER?

FORE WE LAUNCHED UP T' THE SPACE PLATFORM, KITTY LEFT ME A LETTER—T' BE OPENED IN THE EVENT ANYTHING HAPPENED TO HER YADDA YADDA YADDA.

DIDNT THINK ANYTHING OF IT AT THE TIME, AN' WITH ALL THAT'S HAPPENED SINCE, AH HAVEN'T HAD THE INCLINATION T' FOLLOW UP TLL NOW.



READIN' THAT LETTER, LOGAN, IT'S ALMOST LIKE SHE KNEW SHE WAS GOING TO DISAPPEAR.

THE RESTRICTIONS AN' ALL, THEY'RE HER IDEA.

THAT BOOK IS THE REASON.

IT'S THE ONE SHE FOUND AT MYSTIQUE'S.

"IRENE ADLER'S DIARY OF DESTINY."

"VOLUME SEVEN."





I THOUGHT THERE WAS JUST THE ONE.

DIDN'T WE ALL?

SEE ALL THE POST-ITS AN NOTATIONS? SHE'S BEEN RESEARCHIN' THE ENTRIES SOMETHIN' FIERCE.

THIS PAGE IS MARKED WITH TODAY'S DATE-- OH MY!



THOSE FIGURES, THEY'RE US!

DESTINY WROTE THIS DIARY DECADES AGO. HOW COULD SHE HAVE KNOWN?!

SHE WAS A *PRECOG*. HER MUTANT POWER WAS TO FORESEE THE FUTURE.

LOOK AT THE FACING PAGE. THAT FACE IS MYSTIQUE!

BUILDING LOOKS KINDA FAMILIAR, TOO.



"IT'S THE NEW FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL FACILITY OUT ON LONG ISLAND. STATE-OF-THE-ART INCARCERATION FOR SUPER-POWERED CRIMINALS."



"THE PICTURES CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE. LOOKS LIKE SOMEONE'S BREAKIN' INTO THE PLACE."

"DON'T SAY MUCH FOR THEIR SECURITY."



"ACTUALLY, DARLIN', IT SAYS MORE ABOUT THE INTRUDER."

"WOLVERINE. THAT'S GAMBITT"





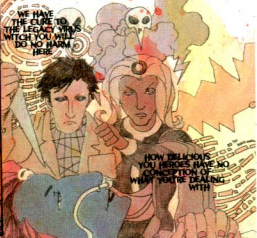
THESE DRAWINGS—THE WORDS SCRAWLED IN AND AROUND THEM—

GAMBIT AND STORM ARE ASKING THE SAME THING.

"YOUR FATE IS SEALED?" WHAT THE HECK DOES THAT MEAN?

WHERE ARE THEY ANYWAY?

BEEN OFF-CAMPUS ALL DAY.



WE HAVE THE CURE TO THE LEGACY VIRUS WHICH YOU WILL DO NO HARM HERE.

HOW DELICIOUS YOU HEROES HAVE NO CONCEPTION OF WHAT YOU'RE DEALING WITH.



—OR THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DESTINY'S DIARIES!

PLURAL? THERE ARE MORE THAN ONE?



BRAVA WINDRIDER, YOU'RE PAYING ATTENTION.

WHEN IRENE TURNED THIRTEEN, HER POWER OF PRECOGNITION CATALYZED.

SHE STARTED ALTO-WRITING, TRANSCRIBING AS BEST AS SHE COULD, THE VISIONS CASCADING THROUGH HER HEAD.



SHE DIDN'T COMPREHEND ANY OF WHAT SHE 'SAW.' SHE SIMPLY FELT COMPELLED TO PUT IT DOWN ON PAPER.

IT TOOK HER A YEAR WHEN SHE WAS FINISHED. SHE WAS ALSO BLIND.



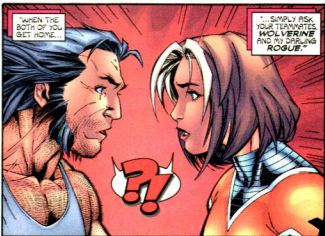
THERE ARE THIRTEEN VOLUMES. IRENE AND I HAVE SPENT THE BEST PART OF OUR LIVES TOGETHER TRYING TO DECRYPT HER ENTRIES.

UNFORTUNATELY AS YOUR MENTOR CHARLES XAVIER WILL DOUBTLESS DISCOVER, IT ISN'T EASY.

SOME ENTRIES ARE IN CODE, OTHERS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND OVER TIME MORE THAN HALF THE VOLUMES HAVE DISAPPEARED.

EVERYTHING WE COULD INTERPRET POINTED TO A FUTURE OF UNPARALLELED DARKNESS, OF DEVASTATION AND DEATH FOR MUTANKIND.

AS DESTINY IRENE FORESAW HER OWN DEATH IN SERVICE OF THE GREATER GOOD, SHE DID NOTHING TO AVOID IT AND IN THE END WHAT DID WE ACCOMPLISH?





NOW
IS THE
TIME



IT MAY HAVE
BEEN POSSIBLE TO
USE MY TELEPATHY
TO PURGE BOTH THE
DRUG AND HER DESIRE
FOR IT FROM HER
SYSTEM.

BUT THAT CURE
WOULD BE FAR WORSE
THAN THE DISEASE. IT
WOULD LEAVE CECELIA
FOREVER IN DOUBT ABOUT
HER OWN ABILITIES, HER
OWN STRENGTH, FOREVER
DEPENDENT ON ME AS
A CRUTCH.

IN EFFECT,
I WOULD
BECOME HER
NEW DRUG.



THE MOST INSIDIOUS
ELEMENT OF RAVE IS
THAT IT MAKES ITS
VICTIMS WANT TO USE
THEIR POWER THE
MORE YOU USE THE
GREATER THE
RUSH.

BUT THE MORE
YOU USE—OF BOTH
DRUG AND POWERS—
THE GREATER THE
COLLATERAL
DEVASTATION.

THIS FAR, THE DANGER
ROOM HAS BEEN ABLE TO
CONTAIN THAT ASPECT OF
CECELIA'S ADDICTION BUT IT'S
CLEAR BOTH THE ROOM'S
DEFENSES AND CECELIA
HERSELF ARE VERY NEAR
THE LIMIT OF THEIR
ENDURANCE.

MY HOPE IS
THAT HER EXERTIONS
ARE BURNING THE TOXINS
FROM HER SYSTEM. IF SHE
CAN SURVIVE THIS LAST
TRIAL, ALL SHOULD
BE WELL.



MIND YOU,
HER SURVIVAL
MAY NOT BE AT
ISSUE HERE!

PROFESSOR?!

A MOST FORMIDABLE DISPLAY OF MIGHT AND DEXTERITY. CECELA

ABSENT CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES, YOU ARE TO BE COMMENDED FOR YOUR GROWING SKILL.

I'M SORRY I'M SO SORRY I DIDN'T MEAN TO LASH OUT LIKE THAT I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF YOU CAUGHT ME BY SURPRISE YOU SCARED ME I THOUGHT YOU WERE AN ENEMY I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU HURT ANYONE BUT THERE ARE MONSTERS ALL AROUND.

THE DRUG IS MAKING HER PARANOID AND DELUSIONAL

SHE IS SO ON EDGE AND HER POWER OPERATES AT SUCH PITCH THAT THE MOMENT SHE PERCEIVES A THREAT...

XAVIER'S USING HIS TELEPATHY TO PROJECT AN ASTRAL IMAGE OF HIMSELF, GIVING THE DOC OBVIOUS TARGETS TO SHOOT AT

PROBLEM IS, SHE'S GENERATING SO MANY SPIKES IN SUCH RANDOM PATTERNS THAT HE MAY STILL BE CLIPPED

SHE ACTS ON IT

GET AWAY FROM ME!

HAS EVERYONE ON THIS TEAM GOT A DEATH WISH?!

HOW DID XAVIER GET INSIDE?!

BRILLIANT, NIGHTCRAWLER! YOU LIKE FUNERALS SO MUCH... YOU WANT TO OFFICIATE AT ANOTHER?!

PRESUMABLY, HE HAS A KEY.

I'LL USE MY TELEKINESIS TO GIVE HIM COVER. AND SEE AS WELL IF I CANT ADD TO THE GENERAL DISTRACTION.



DO YOU THINK THERE'S A METHOD TO THIS MADNESS, BEAST?

WHERE PROFESSOR XAVIER'S CONCERNED, MY FRIENDS, THERE INVARIABLY IS.

NICE OF HIM TO CLUE US IN.

HIS INTENTIONS APPEAR FAIRLY OBVIOUS, THUNDERBIRD. HE'S MOVING CLOSE TO CECELIA.

APPARENTLY, FOR WHAT HE HAS IN MIND, PROXIMITY MATTERS.



IT'S UP TO US TO SEE THAT HE REACHES HER SAFELY!



KEEP MOVING, ALL OF YOU!

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME! I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF!

BUT IF YOU REMAIN TOO LONG IN ANY SINGLE SPOT—



KLONK



LEAVE IT OFF, ROGUE!

THIS IS CHARLEY'S PLAY. LET HIM RUN IT TO THE END.

EVEN IF IT KILLS HIM?

LOGAN, THE TEAM'S BEING MASSACRED!

THE MAN HAS SOMETHING TO PROVE, DARLING. WITH ALL THAT'S HAPPENED, HE HAS TO SHOW HIMSELF AS WELL AS US— THAT HE'S WORTHY OF OUR TRUST.

COMPARED T' THAT, DEATH IS NOTHING.



CECEILIA, IT'S CHARLES.

GO AWAY!

LISTEN TO ME, CHILD. I'M HERE TO HELP.

GO AWAY!



NOT ON A BET. I AM A DOCTOR, AS ARE YOU. WE BOTH SWORE AN OATH.

THINK OF ALL YOU'VE ACCOMPLISHED. CECEILIA YOU ARE A TRAUMA SURGEON. YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS.

COURAGE, NERVES OF STEEL. SELF-CONFIDENCE AND MORE SELF-CONTROL THAN GOD! YOU HOLD LIVES IN YOUR HANDS.

SO TAKE THE SKILLS YOU'VE LEARNED. THE TALENT THAT IS THEIR FOUNDATION. TURN THEM TO YOUR ADVANTAGE. BE A SURGEON. TAKE CONTROL.

I'M SCARED! THERE ARE MONSTERS!



AND IS CECEILIA REYES AFRAID OF MONSTERS?

IS CECEILIA REYES A VICTIM?



YOU DON'T KNOW HOW RAVE MAKES ME FEEL!

I DO KNOW WHAT YOU CAN DO. THE DRUG IS JUST THE EXCUSE.



IT IS THE FEAR WHICH MUST BE OVERCOME--
-OF HAVING POWERS AND WIELDING THEM SAFELY--
-OF BEING A MUTANT.



WILL IT EVER GO AWAY?

DARLIN, THAT'S A QUESTION WE EACH AN' EVERY ONE OF US ASKS, EVERY FLAMIN' DAY OF OUR LIVES.

THAT'S PART OF WHAT BEIN' AN X-MAN IS ALL ABOUT--
--FACIN' UP T' THAT FEAR AN' SPITTIN' IN ITS EYE!

LOOK AT WHAT I'VE DONE--THE DAMAGE I'VE CAUSED!

CONSIDER IT A RITE OF PASSAGE.

YOU'RE NOT REALLY PART OF THE TEAM UNTIL YOU'VE TRASHED THE DANGER ROOM.

IS HE SERIOUS?

PROFESSOR, IS THE DOCTOR ALL RIGHT?

SHE HAS A WAY TO TRAVEL, PSYLOCKE-- AS DO WE ALL-- BUT SHE HAS MADE THE FIRST, THE CRUCIAL STEP.

SHE'LL BE FINE.

IN HIS MIND HE SENSES MOIRA'S SMILE AND REMEMBERS SHE WAS THE ONE WHO FIRST CALLED HIM THE "GOOD SHEPHERD," COMMITTED TO BRINGING HIS PEOPLE HOME SAFE AND SOUND, NO MATTER THE ODDS.

IT'S A WILD FLOCK HE CARES FOR, AND THE WOLVES WHO THREATEN THEM ARE FERCE BEYOND IMAGINING. BUT THERE IS STRENGTH IN THEIR FELLOWSHIP, AND IN THE HOPE OF A BETTER AND BRIGHTER TOMORROW.

THAT IS HIS DREAM.

FOR THOSE WHO DIED, FOR THOSE AS YET UNBORN, HE AND HIS X-MEN WILL STRIVE TO MAKE IT REALITY.

Fin.