

MARVEL
PG 428

AUSTEN
PHILLIPS

UNCANNY X-MEN



DIRECT EDITION



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**THE
DRACO**
PROLOGUE

Change is coming. A new breed of man has emerged. They are the Children of the Atom, Homo Superior, individuals gifted with strange and fantastic abilities simply by virtue of their genetic makeup.

Stan Lee presents...

UNCANNY X-MEN

"HOW DID I GET HERE?"

A PRELUDE TO "THE DRACO"



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MYSTIQUE...little is known about this woman save that her life has always been shrouded in mystery. With the uncanny ability to morph into any form she desires, Mystique can perfectly impersonate other people and create new identities at will.

Mutant terrorist, government employee, international spy or European aristocrat—throughout her illustrious career, Mystique has worn many faces, answered to many names.

But if there is one item of Mystique's puzzling past that stands out above all others, one enigma that mystifies more than anything else, it is her family history. She is strangely connected to several notable mutants, most of them associated in one way or another with the X-Men, her longtime arch-rivals. She is ex-wife to the notoriously dangerous Weapon X agent SABRETOOTH. She is the foster mother to X-Treme X-Men member ROGUE. But most importantly, she has long been rumored to be the blood mother of X-Men member Kurt Wagner, otherwise known as NIGHTCRAWLER.

Are the rumors true? Is Mystique truly Nightcrawler's mother, as she has claimed to be in the past? And if so, who is Kurt's father? How and when was Kurt born? What were the circumstances? And why would Mystique abandon her son to the tumultuous life of an orphan at such an early age?

The truth, the real reasons, the answers, can all be found where they have always been—secretly locked away and hidden in a tiny corner of one person's mind. Mystique's.

⊗GERMANY, TWENTY YEARS AGO...



Lord, woman! What brought that on?

How Did I Get Here?

A prelude to

DRACO

By Chuck Austen & Sean Phillips

Please don't think I'm complaining, Katsche!

That was *incredible*, but I never in a million years thought--

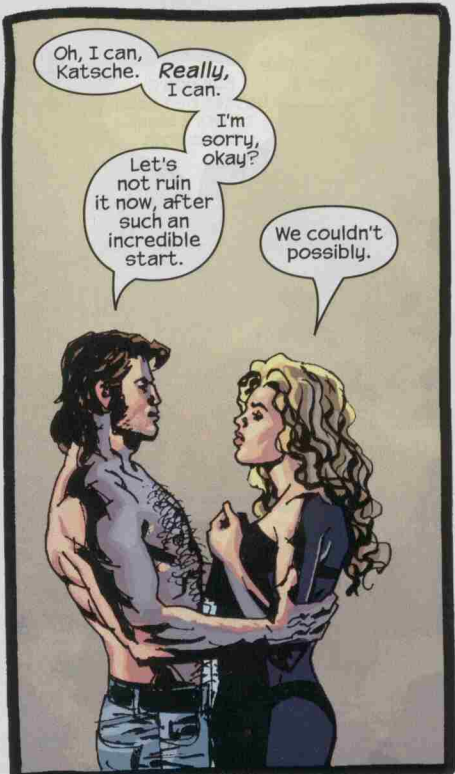
Sean 2002



--I mean you've been shutting me out **completely** since you were hired here--

And I changed my mind.

Can't you just *enjoy* it and stop asking so many **questions**?



Oh, I can, Katsche.

Really, I can.

I'm sorry, okay?

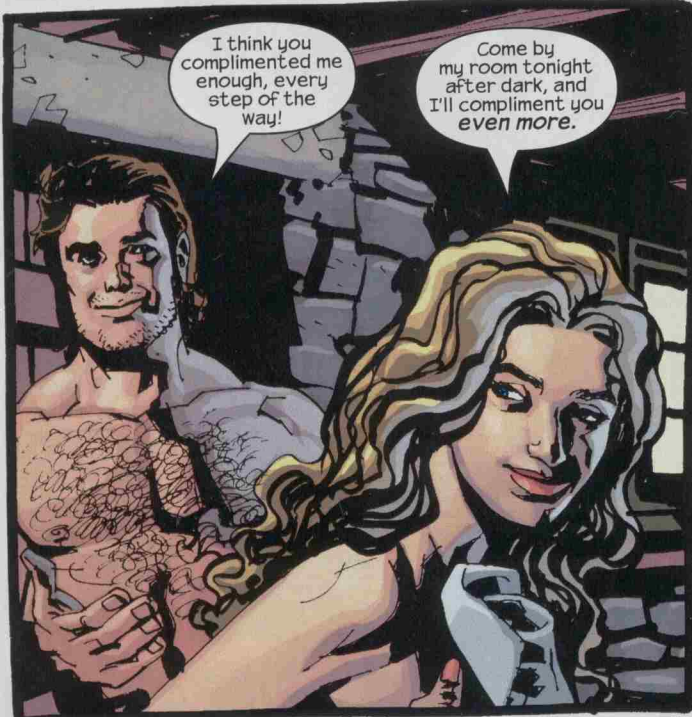
Let's not ruin it now, after such an incredible start.

We couldn't possibly.



It really **was** incredible, wasn't it?

Are you fishing for compliments?



I think you complimented me enough, every step of the way!

Come by my room tonight after dark, and I'll compliment you **even more**.



But wouldn't it be safer if you came **out here**?

I'm not supposed to be in the house after hours.

You're not supposed to be sleeping with a maid, either--but if you **want more...**

All right. I'll be there.

But you'd better be ready to work tired tomorrow.



And you'd better be ready to work *hard* tonight.



Wow.



CLACK KLACK



Hm hm
hmm hmmm
hm...

Dum da
da da dum
doo doo...



Ha ha
ha ha.

HAHAHA!
HAHAHA!
HAHAHA!





Hmph.
Hmm.



Ha ha
ha ha
ha--



Oh, I'm
terribly
sorry,
I--



**OH MY
DEAR
GOD!**



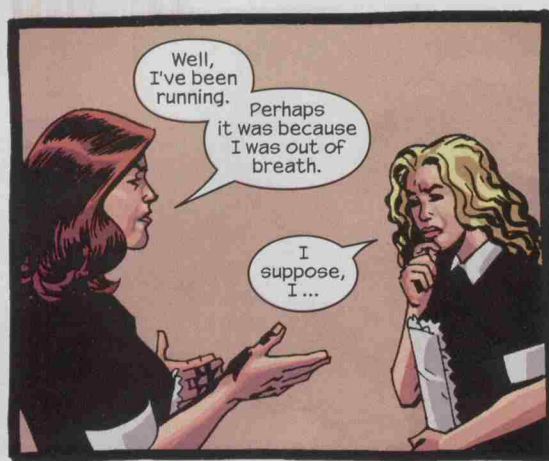
What,
Katsche?

What's
the matter?



Oh, I,
uh--nothing,
I--

--I thought
you were *blue*
for a
moment there,
milady Wagner.



Well, I've been running.

Perhaps it was because I was out of breath.

I suppose, I ...



Milady, are you--

--is that a maid's uniform?

Oh, I uh--

--well--



--it's a little surprise for my husband, if you know what I mean.

I suppose I do, milady.



Oh, and Katsche? Will you be around this evening?

In your room, I mean?



I had planned to be, milady.

Will you be needing me?


No, no. Not at all.



Just curious, is all.



Enjoy your evening, Katsche.




The doctor called me at the office today with the test results, Raven.

You are not barren.

You can have children.

I can?



I know you're surprised, as am I.

This means the problem *must* lie with me.



This must be disappointing to you...

...I must seem half a man to you now that I can't give you the children we both want--

Oh no.

No, no, no...



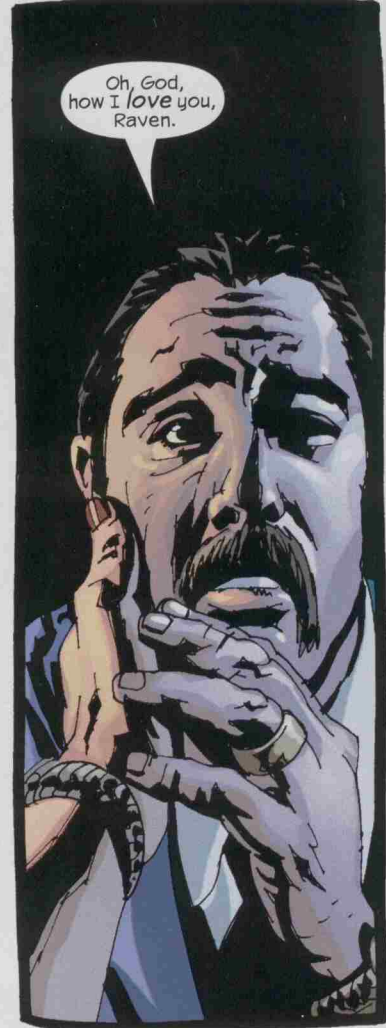
Oh, my darling husband.

You could never be half a man to me.

You are worth ten men.

A hundred.

A thousand.



Oh, God, how I love you, Raven.

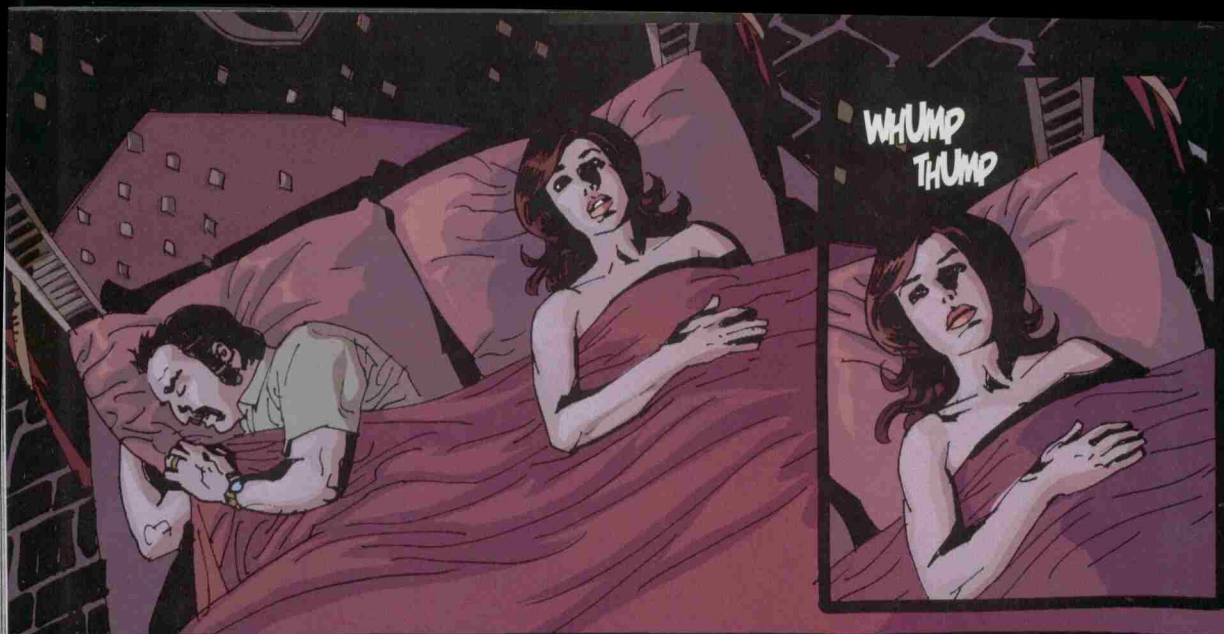


I promise you, I will find other ways to bring you joy.

Oh, Christian, my love--



--you have brought me SO much joy already.



WHUMP
THUMP



AAAAHHH!

GOOD HEAVENS, WHAT WAS THAT?!

What are you doing here?!

Are you insane?!

But I thought--

--you told me--



CLICK
KLATCH

CRASH! SMASH!

GET OUT!
HEEELLP!

Heh heh
heh heh --



AH HA!
HA!
HA!
HA!
HA!

BUT YOU TOLD ME--

WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN HERE, MAN?!

Herr Baron, I--

HE CLIMBED INTO BED WITH ME!

HE GRABBED ME--

I know in vitro fertilization has failed before, but it can often take several tries--

Don't talk.

Don't say anything, just--



When I saw you in that pub, I knew!

I knew you'd be a feisty one--!

Don't talk.

Don't say anything, just--



Well, it looks good.

The egg seems to have taken.

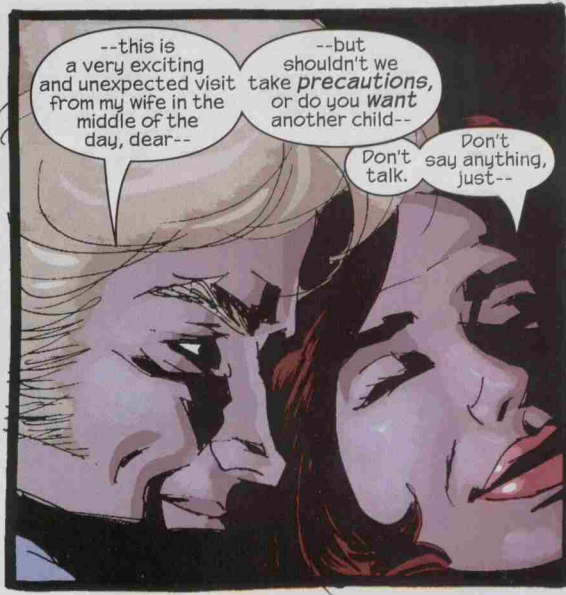


--this is a very exciting and unexpected visit from my wife in the middle of the day, dear--

--but shouldn't we take precautions, or do you want another child--

Don't talk.

Don't say anything, just--



It's in God's hands now.

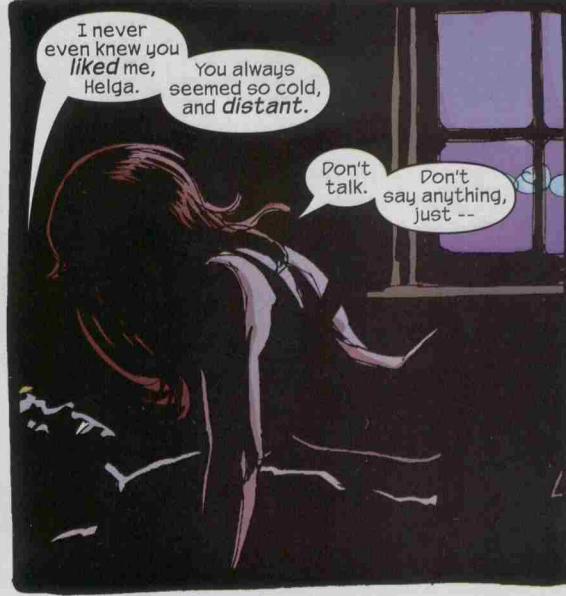


I never even knew you liked me, Helga.

You always seemed so cold, and distant.

Don't talk.

Don't say anything, just --



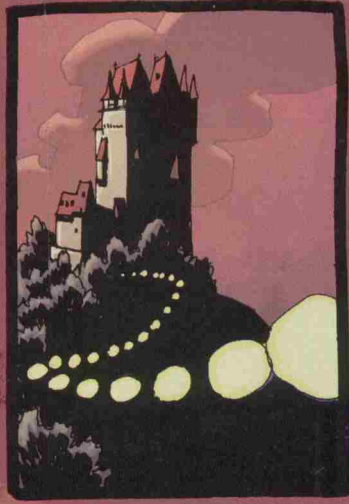


We can try again.



We shall never *stop* trying, my love.

We shall never *stop* trying.



Ah, Raven.



Over here, my darling.

Herr Azazel, I'd like to present my wife, *Raven Wagner*.

Isn't she lovely?

Lovely is a *woefully* inadequate word, my dear Baron.



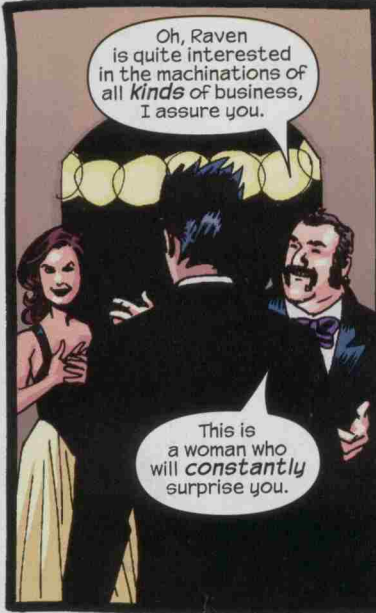
Herr Azazel is the ruler of an island nation off the coast of Bermuda. *La Isla des Demonas.*

We were just discussing some potentially beneficial--

Oh, please, Baron.



Do you think Raven is really interested in a business transaction that barely maintains *my* attention?



Oh, Raven is quite interested in the machinations of all *kinds* of business, I assure you.

This is a woman who will *constantly* surprise you.



Lord knows, I love surprises.



Oh, we *are* trying to have a child, Herr Azazel.

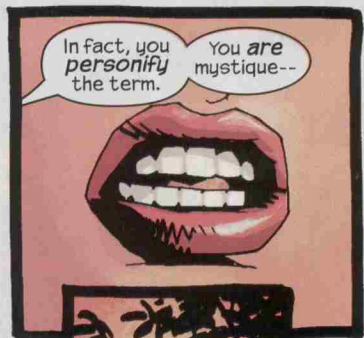
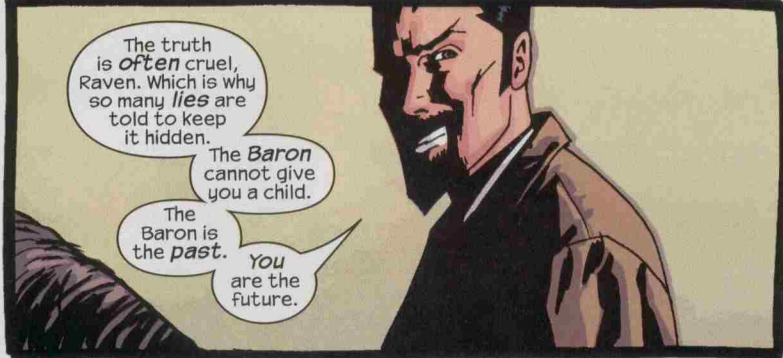
We have been for some time.

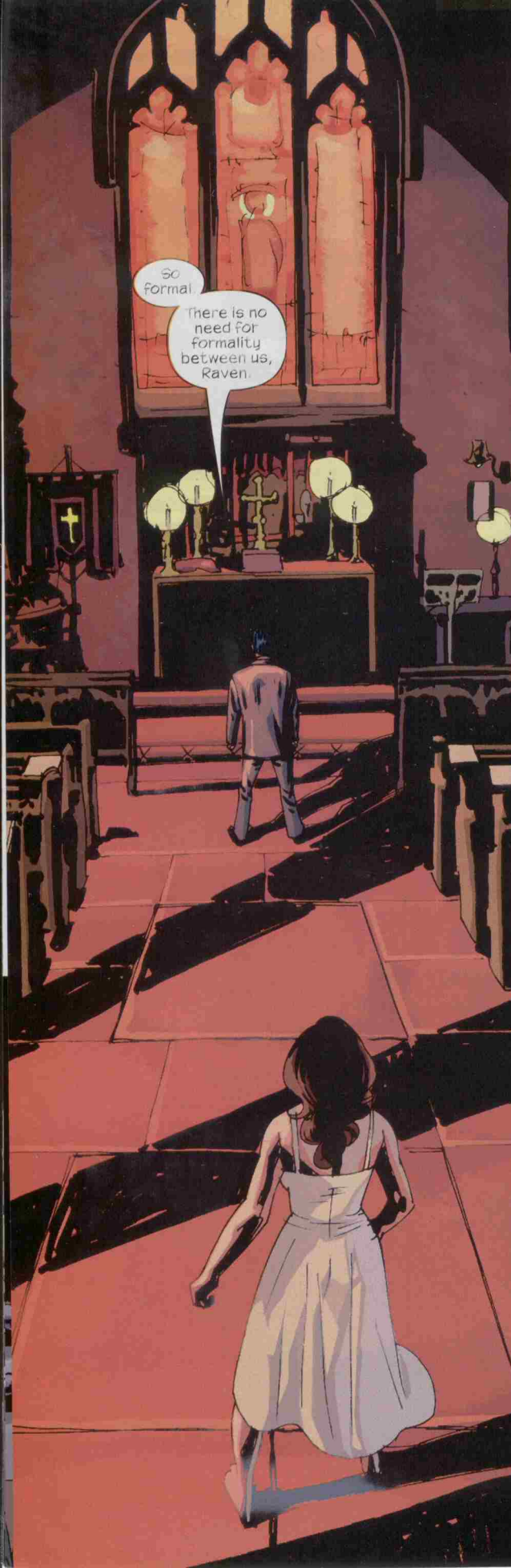
It won't happen for you.



Whu--

Well, what a *cruel* thing to say.





So formal.

There is no need for formality between us, Raven.

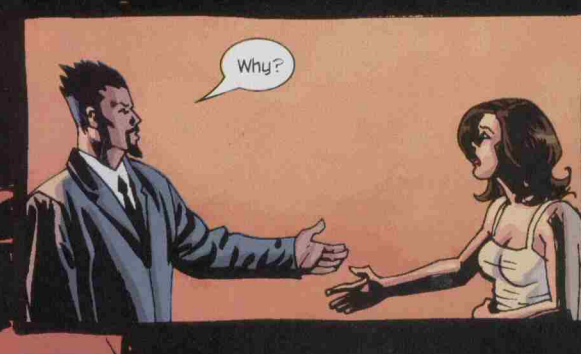


I'm glad you came.



I...I couldn't stay away.

I tried.



Why?



Because you frighten me.



I've never felt so--
--much.



You want to be with me?

So much that I ache.

Where shall we go?
I don't want to wait.



Then don't. Undress.



What? Here?!

NO!

Even I could not be that bold!



But you are *already* that bold, Raven.

You *know* that this world's sanctimonious morals and religious hypocrisies are *beneath* you.

You are a space-traveler among monkeys. A winged angel among pigs.

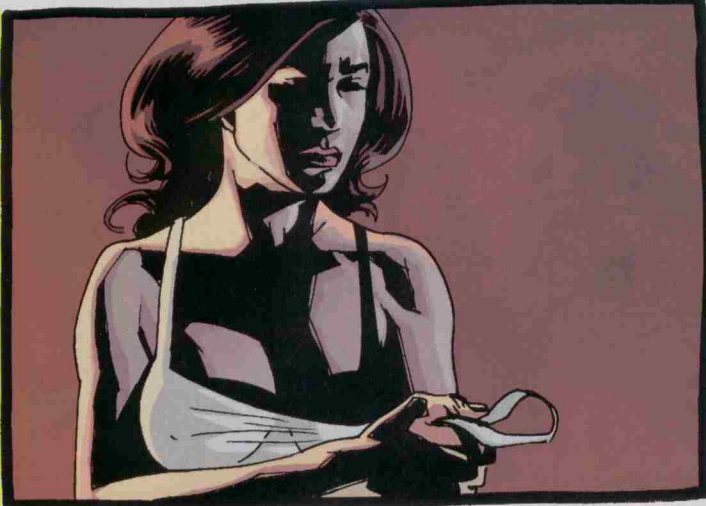
Your mind and spirit and body are more *magnificent* than any totemic icon in this gold-plated, idol encrusted room.

Remove your clothes--



-- and let me worship you.





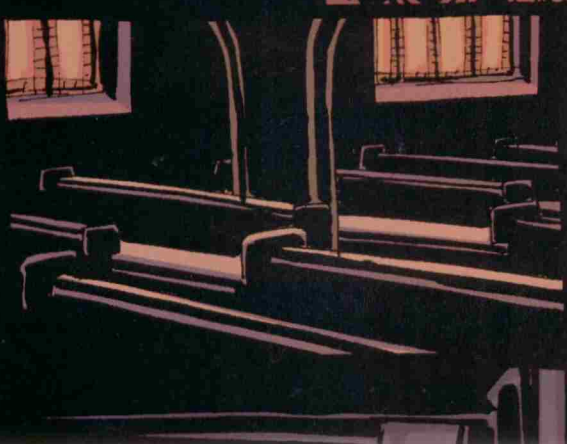
I can almost see it...

...a haze around this less real, less attractive facade you wear.

Stand **naked** before me, Raven.

Now. In *all* ways.







I--AM--
IN--
LOVE!



BAMF



Oh!
Azazel!
You startled me.

Fortunately--
--you didn't fall.



No, I, uh--
--Azazel. Azazel, I'm pregnant.



How wonderful for you, my dear.
And what does the Baron think of all this?



Well, I--

--it doesn't **matter**. I don't **want** the Baron. I **never** loved him.

But **you**, Azazel. You I--

--I love you.

Fascinating.

I wouldn't have thought you **capable** of such an emotion.

Azazel. Why are you being so **cold**?

I thought--

--I **hoped**--

--you'd be pleased.

Pleased?

Of course I'm pleased, although not for the reasons you might want me to be.

It is, after all, simple science... and it worked as I had hoped.

But it's **hardly** cause for an outpouring of emotion.

But--

--all the things you **said** to me--

--I thought you--

--I thought you **loved** me.

Never confuse physical passion for a condition of the heart, my dear.

Since the dawn of mankind, the two have **rarely** gone hand in hand.

Now go back to the Baron--

--stay safe and warm in the cozy, comfortable, protected little world you've married into--

--and raise **our** child--

--**my** child--

-- as **his**.

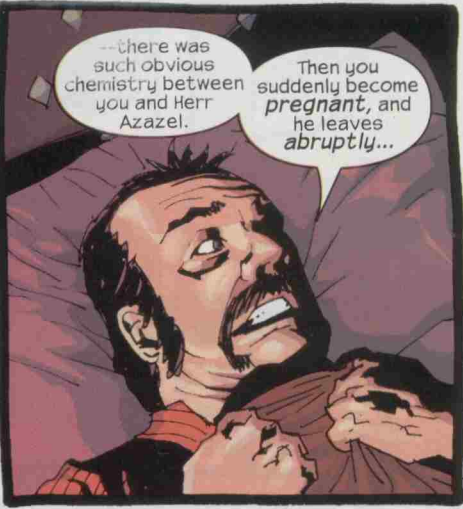




It hurts me that you could even *ask* such a thing, Christian.

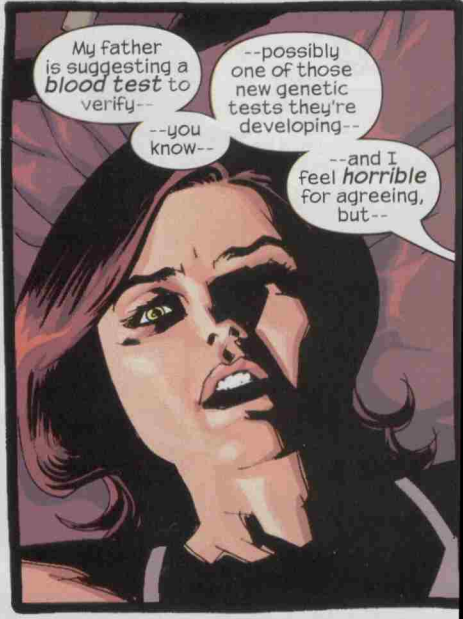
But to press the point over and over and over like this is--

--and I'm *ashamed* of myself for doing so, Raven, but--



--there was such obvious chemistry between you and Herr Azazel.

Then you suddenly become *pregnant*, and he leaves abruptly...



My father is suggesting a *blood test* to verify--

--you know--

--possibly one of those new genetic tests they're developing--

--and I feel *horrible* for agreeing, but--



--if I'm wrong, I will make it up to you, my love, for the rest of our lives.

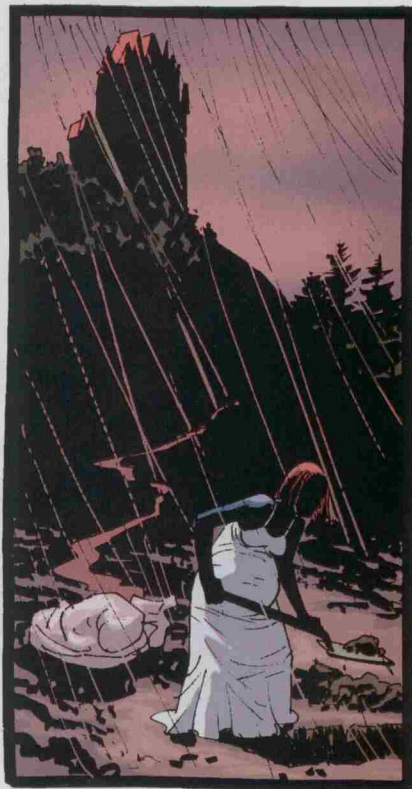
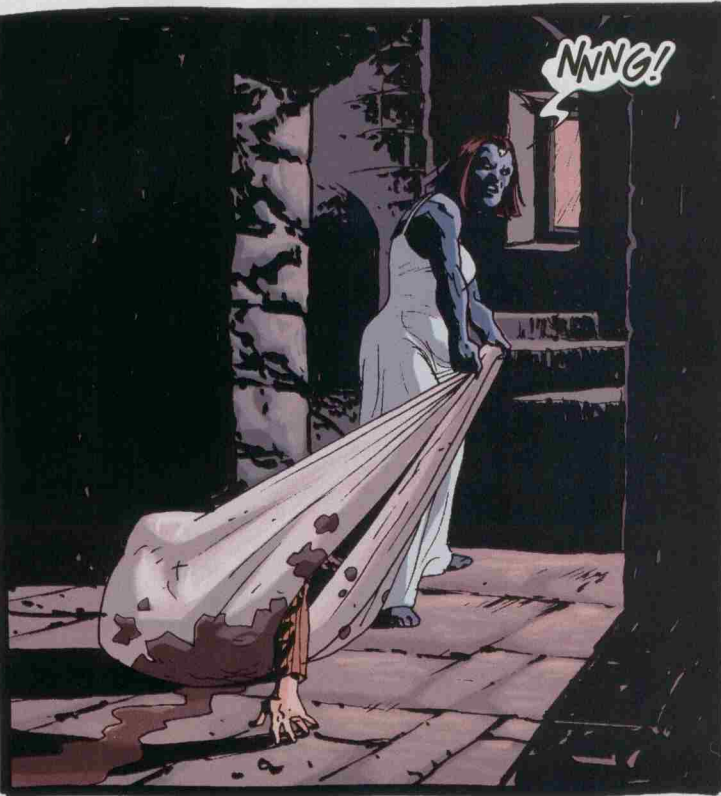
I promise, you Raven.

I will deny you *nothing*.

Ever.



But if I am right--





AAAAHHHHH!



GGAAH!

That's it, push, Baroness Wagner.

The baby is almost here.

Oh dear God, it's blue.



WHU--
WHAT'S WRONG WITH MY BABY?!



I'm sorry, doctor.

Nothing is wrong with your baby! The baby is fine, it just needs air.

So PUSH!



Heeere he is...

OH MY DEAR GOD!!



Child of Satan!

CHILD OF SATAN!

CALM yourself, woman! Be STILL!



That will be a typical reaction in your life...if you survive, young man.

The humane thing to do would be to suffocate you now and send you back to God.

Doctor?



Tell me, please.

What's wrong with my baby?

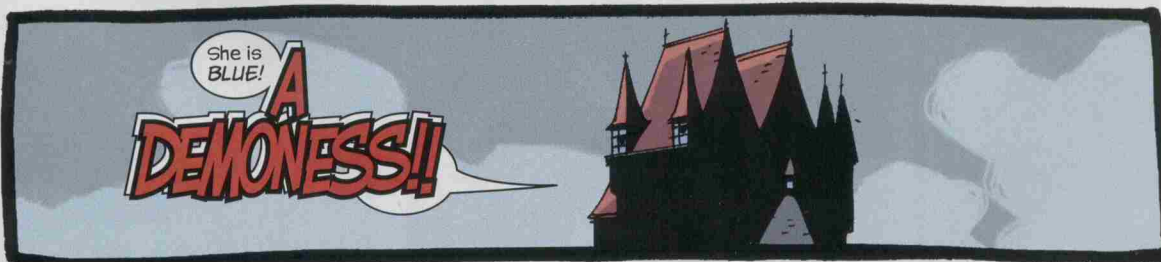
She is blue!

Like the child!



What's wrong with my baby?

I --



She is BLUE!

A DEMONESS!!



She went this way!
Toward the falls!

Dammit Azazel!
Damn you to HELL!



I had everything I ever wanted in life, before you!

I was happy, and rich and powerful and--

-- how could I have been so stupid? How could I have let you do this to me?!



I'll change my appearance and escape, yes. But with nothing.

No money, no clothes, and nothing of any value whatsoever.



Nothing.



Why couldn't you love me, Azazel?



BAMF



Why?

⊗END