

X-MEN

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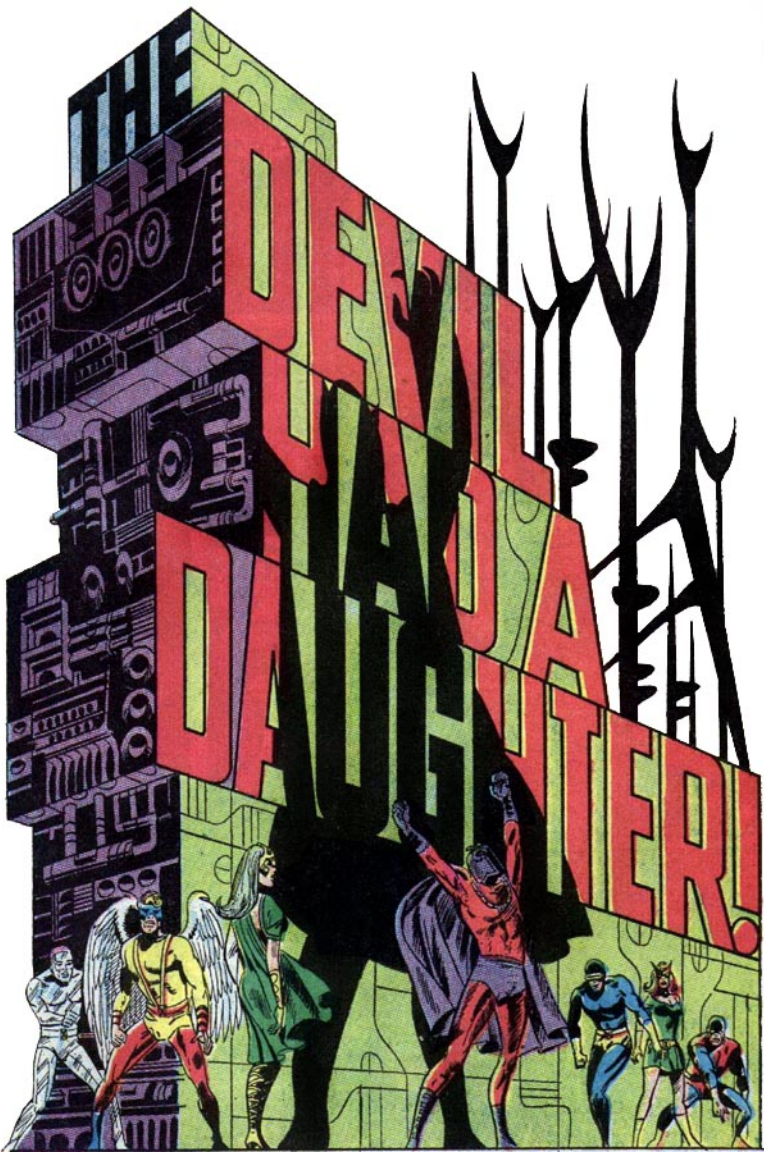


MARVEL
COMICS
GROUP

X-MEN

STERANKO/





FROM THE GRAVE TO WHICH ALL HAD THOUGHT HIM CON-SIGNED, MAGNETO HAS RETURNED



YES! IT IS SO! THE GIRL IS FLESH OF MY FLESH... BLOOD OF MY BLOOD! HERS SHALL BE THE POWER AND GLORY KNOWN TO NO OTHER WOMAN! FOR...
SHE IS... THE DAUGHTER OF MAGNETO!
NOW, MY CHILD, YOU MUST MAKE YOUR CHOICE!

WILL YOU STAND BESIDE THESE FOOLS WHO ARE TOO BLIND OR TOO COWARDLY TO USE THE INFINITE POWER TO WHICH THEY, TOO, WERE BORN...

... A POWER BEYOND ALL OTHER MEN... A MIGHT DESTINED ONLY FOR GODS? OR...



... WILL YOU HEED THE CALL OF YOUR OWN BLOOD, AND ENTHRONED BESIDE ME, RULE ALL OF MANKIND?



THAT, FRIENDS, IS WHAT THEY CALL STACKING THE DECK! HE'S COMBINED THE TWO MOST POWERFUL HUMAN ELEMENTS!

VERILY! FILIAL DUTY AND THE INNER NEED FOR POWER! THE GIRL HAS NO OPTION BUT TO TURN AGAINST US!



SHE COULD HAVE A CHOICE... IF SHE KNEW THE TRUTH ABOUT MAGNETO! I'M NOT WILD ABOUT TELLING A GIRL THAT HER FATHER IS AN INSANE MASS KILLER... BUT IT HAS TO BE... EVEN THOUGH SHE'S GOTTA HATE ME FOR IT!



TELL HER THE REST, BIG MAN! TELL HER HOW YOU'VE USED YOUR MUTANT POWERS TO FEED YOUR OWN MAD EGO! TELL HER...

... ABOUT THE LIVES YOU'VE TAKEN, THE FORTUNES YOU'VE STOLEN, THE MISERY AND MIS-FORTUNE YOU'VE BEEN SPREADIN' AROUND WITH A TROWEL! TELL HER...

... THAT YOU'RE OFFERIN' HER A HALF-INTEREST IN A BLOODY EMPIRE THAT WOULD MAKE GENGHIS KHAN AND ATTILA THE HUN LOOK LIKE THE SMOTHERS BROTHERS!



NEVER **MIND** ALL THAT JAZZ! I'M NOT WAITIN' FOR HER TO MAKE A DECISION! I'VE **HAD IT** UP TO HERE WITH A GUY WHO'D EVEN ...

ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR **MIND**, ICE-MAN? YOU CAN'T TURN THIS INTO A PRIVATE **SALOON BRAWL!**

... **CON** HIS OWN KID INTO JOINING HIS PILLAGE AND PLUNDER ACT! COME ON, MAGNETO, LET'S YOU AND ME SETTLE THIS... **ALONE!**

MAYBE NOT... BUT I SURE KNOW HOW HE **FEELS!** PERSONALLY, I'D GET A HEAP OF SATISFACTION OUT OF CLEANING THE FLOOR WITH THAT MAGNETIZED MENACE **MYSELF!**

BEAST IS RIGHT! THIS IS **NO** TIME FOR INDIVIDUAL **AX GRINDING!** AND THAT'S **NOT** WHAT THE X-MEN ARE ALL ABOUT!

I DON'T CARE ABOUT ANY OF THAT. I'M **ONLY** INTERESTED IN GETTIN' EVEN WITH ANYBODY WHO'D...

...TURN A SWEET KID LIKE LORNA... A KID WITH A HEART AND A SOUL AND A CLEAN FRESH SPIRIT... INTO **QUEEN OF THE GHOULS!**

SO, FOR **ONE** LONE BEING, YOU'D THROW AWAY THE EXTRA-ORDINARY GIFT WITH WHICH YOU WERE BORN AND THE INFINITE TRAINING BY **PROFESSOR XAVIER...**

...WHICH WERE MEANT TO BENEFIT **ALL** MEN!

THEY ARE RIGHT, ICEMAN! NO MATTER **WHAT** MY DECISION... YOU CANNOT **WASTE** YOURSELF ON ME!

HOLD IT, ICEMAN! JUST **TELL** ME... ARE YOU DETERMINED TO DO THIS, NO **MATTER** WHAT?

YOU **KNOW** IT, MAN! SO NO MORE SERMONS OR PATRIOTIC PITCHES!

NO! I'VE PITCHED MY **LAST** PITCH! SO LONG AS I KNOW THERE'S **NO** WAY OF CHANGING YOUR MIND ABOUT THIS...

...WE MIGHT AS WELL MAKE IT ONE GREAT BIG FAMILY **DONNYBROOK!** MAGNETO... THE **JUNIOR** MEMBER OF OUR ORGANIZATION JUST WON THE DAY! WHICH MEANS...

...**YOU LOSE!!!**



I DON'T KNOW HOW A **SUPER-ROGUE** LIKE YOU PRODUCED A TOP-DRAWER ITEM LIKE **LORNA**... BUT I'M GOING TO **TRY** NOT TO LET IT INFLUENCE ME! YOU'RE **STILL** NUMBER ONE ON MY... **RAT LIST!**



THE **FIRST** BLOW WAS YOURS! BUT THE **LAST**... THE **DEATH BLOW**... SHALL BE **MINE!**

MESMERO! LOYALEST OF ALL MY SERVANTS... PUT AN END TO THESE **NOXIOUS** FOOLS!



THERE IS A FORTUNE... AND MY UNDYING GRATITUDE... TO HIM WHO CLAIMS THEIR... **HEADS!**

GET TO GET LORNA OUT OF HERE! SHE'S IN THE MIDDLE... CAUGHT BETWEEN HER OLD MAN AND HIS SWORN ENEMIES... US!

SHE'S BOUND TO GET HURT! AND I'M NOT WAITIN' FOR THAT TO HAPPEN!

'SCUSE THE COLD FINGERS, HONEY... BUT I DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO SLIP ON MY WOOLY MITTENS!

ALSO... I NEED THIS ICY PROTECTION AGAINST A WARM HUNK OF GIRL LIKE YOU!

WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS, MAN OF ICE? WHY SINGLE ME OUT FOR...

..SPECIAL ATTENTION? AND WHY DO I FEEL SO STRANGE IN YOUR ARMS?

FWISHH!



HEY! CASANOVA JR.! SNAP OUT OF THAT NAUSEATING TRANCE! WE NEED YOUR HELP! GET INTO YOUR...

...FRIGID ROUTINE BEFORE THAT ARMY OF MISFITS CLOBBERS US ALL!



THE BRIDGE OF FROZEN ATMOSPHERIC MOISTURE ARCS TO THE FLOOR AND SPREADS AN ICE CARPET, IMMOBILIZING EACH EVIL MUTANT LIKE A BUTTERFLY ON A PIN!

OKAY! THEY'RE ALL THERE FOR THE PICKIN'S! SO LET'S START PICKIN'!



CAUTIOUSLY, CHUM! ONLY THEIR PEDAL EXTREMITIES ARE FROZEN! THE REST OF THEM CAN STILL PACK A WALLOP!



CYKE'S TRYING TO YANK THE HELMET OFF! BUT HE CAN'T! THE LOWER RINGS...

...WERE MADE SELF-CONTRACTING! SO THAT THEY...

...CLOSED AROUND HIS NECK! HE'S TOTALLY TRAPPED!

WAIT! HE...HE'S USED HIS ENERGY AGAINST THE HELMET! BUT... CAN HE BUST OUTTA THERE-- IN TIME?



ALL RIGHT...WE'VE TAKEN IT LONG ENOUGH! TIME WE STARTED GIVING A LITTLE OF OUR OWN!

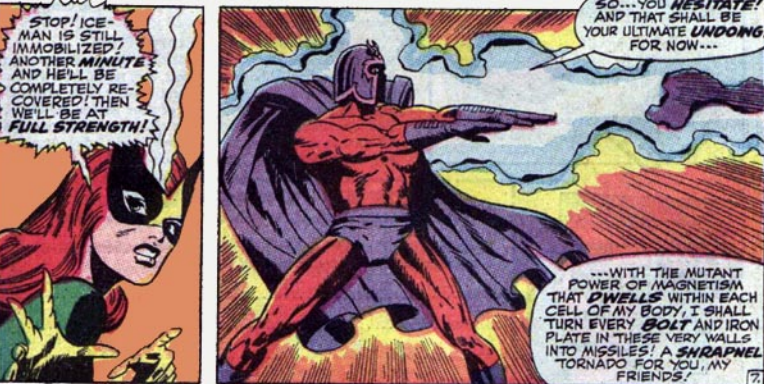
INDUBITABLY, MON CAPITAIN! IT IS NOT ONLY BETTER TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE... IT'S SAFER!

ALSO MORE GRATIFYING IF YOU DIG PUNISHING YOUR ENEMIES! AND I DIG!




STOP! ICE-MAN IS STILL IMMOBILIZED! ANOTHER MINUTE AND HE'LL BE COMPLETELY RECOVERED! THEN WE'LL BE AT FULL STRENGTH!

SO...YOU HESITATE! AND THAT SHALL BE YOUR ULTIMATE UNDOING! FOR NOW...



...WITH THE MUTANT POWER OF MAGNETISM THAT DWELLS WITHIN EACH CELL OF MY BODY, I SHALL TURN EVERY BOLT AND IRON PLATE IN THESE VERY WALLS INTO MISSILES! A SHRAPNEL TORNADO FOR YOU, MY FRIENDS!





HIS MUTANT ENERGY IS OVERWHELMING...EVEN THOUGH IT'S *SPLIT* BETWEEN JEAN AND ME! THE *STRAIN* IS UNBEARABLE!

IS THAT THE *BEST* YOU CAN DO, MAGNETO? YOU MUST BE LOSING YOUR GRIP IN YOUR OLD AGE! COME ON...MAKE IT INTERESTING!

JUST AS YOU SAY, MY BOASTFUL ANTAGONIST! I SHALL TURN UP THE MUTANT ENERGY UNTIL YOU ARE *CRUSHED* TO DUST!

WAIT, FATHER! WHY MUST THEY DIE? IS THERE *NO* OTHER WAY?

NONE! I CAN *NOT* REST UNTIL THE X-MEN HAVE BEEN WIPED FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH! THEY WOULD DO THE *SAME* HAD THEY THE UPPER HAND!

THE *GIRL* SHALL GO FIRST! ALREADY I FEEL HER PSYCHOKINETIC POWER IS *CRUMBLING* UNDER MY ASSAULT!

*OH*HHH--! MY WALL OF MENTAL ENERGY COLLAPSED! HE'S *BURYING* ME IN A TIDAL WAVE OF SCRAP IRON!

SOMEHOW? SURE... ONLY *HOW*? HE'S GOT A WHOLE ARMY OF THESE POWER-LOADED FREAKS TO *THROW* AT US!

LET'S FACE IT... WE'VE NEVER BEEN UP AGAINST ANYTHING TO EQUAL IT! I SAY WE BEAT AN ORDERLY *RETREAT!*

HOLD ON, MARVEL GIRL! TRY TO *SLOW DOWN* THAT STUFF WITH YOUR PSYCHIC POWERS... TILL WE CAN OVERCOME MAGNETO, *SOMEHOW!*

UH-OH! LOOKS LIKE THEY DON'T PLAN ON LETTIN' US *USE* OUR ROUND-TRIP TICKETS!

THEY'VE FORMED A *CHAIN*... TO KEEP US FROM GETTING PAST THEM! WELL... A CHAIN'S NO STRONGER THAN ANY *ONE LINK*! SO HERE GOES ONE LIVING LINK!

SUMMONING HIS LAST OUNCE OF *STRENGTH*, CYCLOPS THROWS A MIGHTY PUNCH, ONLY TO FIND...

FOOL! I HAVE THE MUTANT POWER OF... *NEGATIVE ENERGY*! ANY BLOW THAT IS STRUCK *AGAINST* ME IS INSTANTLY RETURNED... WITH *DOUBLE* THE IMPACT!

AND NOW YOU MUST KNOW OUR SECRET! *LINKED TOGETHER* THIS WAY, EACH OF US GAINS THE *TOTAL* FORCE OF ALL THE OTHERS!

THERE IS *NO* WAY OUT FOR YOU! ONE BY ONE WE SHALL CALL THE *ROLL* OF DEATH!

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ANGEL! YOU SHALL DIE WITHIN THE CONTRACTING COILS OF THESE *STEEL* CABLES! SLOWLY... INEXORABLY... THEY SHALL SQUEEZE THE LAST *BREATH* FROM YOUR BODY!

UHHNN!
HE.. HE.. HE'S NOT KIDDIN'! IT'S STARTING *ALREADY*! MY BREATH ... BEING SQUEEZED FROM ME! RIB CAGE GONNA COLLAPSE... ANY SECOND!
ARRRRHH!

ONLY ONE WAY TO SNAP MAGNETO'S HOLD! GOT TO...

...BRING THIS WHOLE EVIL HOUSE OF CARDS DOWN AROUND HIS EARS! WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE OUR CHANCES...WHEN THE ROOF FALLS IN!

KAWOOM!
YEE
AAAA!

I'M FREE! THAT FALLING ROOF MUST HAVE TAKEN HIS MIND OFF HIS WORK!

NO! IT WAS MORE THAN THAT!

LOOK! HE'S BEEN TRAPPED UNDER THE DEBRIS! BUT WAIT! WHAT'S THAT?

I'VE GOT A BETTER VANTAGE POINT... SO I CAN SEE WHAT IT IS! IT'S LORNA... SHE'S USING HER POWERS TO FREE MAGNETO! I NEVER FIGURED SHE'D TURN COMPLETELY AGAINST US, BUT...

...HE'S HER FATHER! AND SHE'S GOT TOO MUCH QUALITY TO DESERT EVEN A FATHER LIKE THAT!

WHATEVER IT IS, THE EVIL MUTANTS HAVE THEIR HANDS FULL! SO...

...LET'S PULL OUT OF HERE WHILE WE'VE GOT THE CHANCE! WE'LL REPAIR TO OUR BASE AND DO SOME FANCY COGITATING! SO THAT NEXT TIME WE...

...MEET THE MUTANT ARMY, WE'LL BE BETTER PREPARED!

RETREAT ISN'T GOING TO BE ALL THAT **EASY!** THERE'S A **DEAD END** AHEAD! WE'RE LOCKED IN!

TIME TO CALL IN OUR **DEAD END SPECIALIST!** BEAST! TEAR A HOLE THROUGH THAT THING!

YOUR WISH IS MY **COMMAND, SIRE!**

ONE **MAN-SIZED ESCAPE HOLE...** COMING UP!



MAWOWWWMP!



YOWWWWWF! I BELIEVE I HAVE JUST SELF-INDUCED ONE KING-SIZED **EXCEDRIN** HEADACHE! BUT THE DEED IS DONE!

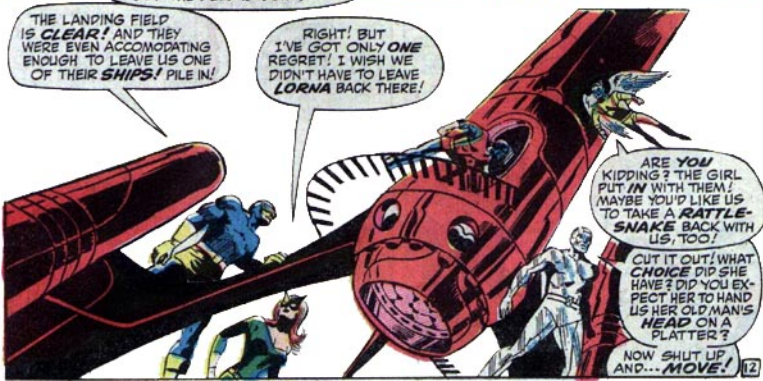
OKAY...EVERYBODY IS **OUT** NOW! SO I'M GOING TO...

...**SEAL UP** THAT WALL AGAIN! IT WON'T RESIST THEIR **MUTANT POWERS** FOR LONG! BUT... **LONG ENOUGH!**



THE **LANDING FIELD** IS **CLEAR!** AND THEY WERE EVEN ACCOMMODATING ENOUGH TO LEAVE US ONE OF THEIR **SHIPS!** PILE IN!

RIGHT! BUT I'VE GOT ONLY **ONE** REGRET! I WISH WE DIDN'T HAVE TO LEAVE **LORNA** BACK THERE!



ARE YOU **KIDDING?** THE GIRL PUT **IN** WITH THEM! MAYBE YOU'D LIKE US TO TAKE A **RATTLE-SNAKE** BACK WITH US, TOO!

CUT IT OUT! WHAT **CHOICE** DID SHE HAVE? DID YOU EXPECT HER TO HAND US HER **OLD MAN'S HEAD** ON A PLATTER?

NOW SHUT UP AND... **MOVE!**

THEY ESCAPE... CURSE BE THEIR NAME! AND I AM POWERLESS TO STOP THEM... MY LEGS ARE PARALYZED FROM THAT COLLAPSING CEILING!

BUT NOTHING HAS BEEN LOST! MY STRENGTH WILL RETURN IN TIME... AND SO WILL THE X-MEN! THEY CAN NO MORE RESIST THE URGE TO DESTROY ME...

...THAN I CAN TURN A DEAF EAR TO THE RAGING VOICE WITHIN ME THAT CONSTANTLY ECHOES...
"KILL THE X-MEN!"

"KILL THE X-MEN!"

SEVERAL HOURS LATER, IN THEIR TEMPORARY HEAD-QUARTERS IN SAN FRANCISCO...

...I'M NOT SAYING IT FOR YOUR GOOD ALONE, BOBBY! I'M SAYING IT FOR ALL OF US! YOU'RE STILL TOO WEAK TO JUMP BACK INTO ACTION!

SO I'M A LITTLE POOPED... SO WHAT? I'VE FOUGHT IN MUCH WORSE SHAPE THAN THIS!

NOW, COME ON, SCOTT... WHAT'S REALLY BUGGING YOU?

WATCH IT, BOBBY! THAT'S TANTALMOUNT TO CALLING SCOTT A LIAR! AND...

...AND HE'S RIGHT, JEAN! I WAS LYING! BUT THERE'S NO POINT IN THAT NOW! MY REAL REASON FOR WANTING HIM OFF THIS CASE IS...

...THAT HE'S LOST HIS OBJECTIVITY! HE'S EMOTIONALLY INVOLVED WITH THAT GIRL... LORNA!

AND SHE JUST HAPPENS TO BE THE DAUGHTER OF OUR MORTAL ENEMY! THERE'S A CONFLICT OF INTEREST!

HUH?!

YOU HEARD WHAT I SAID! YOU'RE MIXED-UP ABOUT THAT GIRL! AND WE CAN'T AFFORD THE SLIGHTEST DIVIDED ALLEGIANCE!

EVEN IF IT ONLY MEANT A SPLIT SECONDS HESITATION BY YOU UNDER STRESS, THAT FRACTION OF TIME COULD COST US ALL OUR LIVES!

HOLD IT... YOU MAY BE OUR GREAT LEADER AND PROFESSOR XAVIER MAY HAVE TURNED OVER HIS COMMAND TO YOU... BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I HAVE TO STAND FOR BEING CALLED A TRAITOR!

WATCH IT, YOU TWO! WE DON'T NEED MASS DISSENSION!

I'VE NEVER ASKED FOR ANY SPECIAL TREATMENT BECAUSE I'M CAPTAIN OF THE TEAM! AND IF YOU'RE ITCHING TO HAVE IT OUT WITH ME...

...JUST SAY THE WORD! YOU WANT THE RIGHT TO MAKE ADULT DECISIONS, THEN BE READY TO BACK THEM UP WITH A MAN-SIZED FIST!

MY PLEASURE! JUST GET YOUR STOOGE OFF MY BACK AND WE'LL SEE WHO'S PREPARED TO EAT WHOSE WORDS.

I WOULDN'T HAVE BELIEVED IT IF I HADN'T HEARD IT WITH MY OWN EARS! TWO X-MEN ACTING LIKE A PAIR OF THUGS IN A GRADE-Z GANGSTER MOVIE!

IS THIS WHAT WE GAVE OUR LIVES TO? IS THIS WHY WE SACRIFICED ANY NORMAL EXISTENCE WE MIGHT HAVE HAD TO BECOME THE X-MEN?

THE MONTHS AND MONTHS OF TENSION AND PAIN THAT WE UNDERTOOK TO PERFECT OUR MUTANT POWERS! THE DEVOTION THAT...

...PROFESSOR XAVIER LAVISHED ON US TO MAKE US THE BEST FIGHTING TEAM THAT EVER LIVED...

--ALL THAT BLOWN TO DUST BY A PAIR OF HOT-HEADED FOOLS! IS THAT GOING TO BE YOUR GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT?

DON'T WHISTLE ME THE THE STARS AND STRIPES FOREVER! HE STARTED IT...

YOU WEREN'T LISTENING TO A WORD SHE SAID, WERE YOU? IT WENT IN ONE DUMB EAR...

--AND RIGHT OUT THE OTHER! WELL... I HEARD HER AND SHE'S RIGHT! THROWING PUNCHES AT EACH OTHER ISN'T GOING TO SOLVE ONE SOLITARY THING!

...WITH THAT JAZZ ABOUT ME BEING A TRAITOR! BUT I'M GONNA FINISH IT! LIKE... NOW!

WELL I'LL BE... YOU... YOU'RE CHICKEN! THAT'S WHAT YOU ARE! I'D NEVER HAVE BELIEVED IT!

YOU STILL DON'T GET IT, DO YOU, YOU WET-EARED PUP!

I GET IT, ALL RIGHT! OUR NOBLE LEADER HAS LOST HIS COOL! I'M GETTIN' OUT OF HERE BEFORE YOU BUST OUT IN BIG WET TEARS!

LET HIM GO! IT'S BETTER THIS WAY! HE'LL COOL OFF...

...IN TIME! AND BY THEN WE'LL BE DONE WITH MAGNETO!

THAT IS, IF MY PLAN DOESN'T RUN INTO ANY SNAGS ALONG THE WAY!

PLAN?! WHAT PLAN? HOW ABOUT LETTING THE LOWLY TROOPS IN ON THE HIGH COMMAND STRATEGY, GENERAL?

SEVERAL DAYS LATER, IN THE GREAT WASTELAND THAT BETRAYS ONLY A SMALL CLUE TO THE FANTASTIC WORLD THAT LIES BENEATH IT...

THERE IT IS AGAIN! THE R-SCOPE GIVES POSITIVE INDICATION OF AN APPROACHING INTRUDER! HE IS CLOSE AT HAND NOW!

AND THE M-DETECTOR PROCLAIMS HIM TO BE A HIGHLY DEVELOPED MUTANT!

RUN FOR YOUR LIVES! THE VERY EARTH ITSELF CRUMBLES BENEATH HIS POWER!

HO!!

IT IS USELESS TO TRY TO ESCAPE ME! NOR HAVE I COME TO DO BATTLE WITH ANY FEEBLE AS YOU!

GO THEN, AND BRING THIS WORD TO YOUR GREAT LEADER! LET MAGNETO KNOW THAT THERE STANDS ONE HERE WHO CAN MATCH HIS MUTANT MASTERY... AND MORE! LET HIM KNOW OF THE COMING OF... **ERIK THE RED!**

BAWACK!

HOOO-BOY! HERE'S A PRETTY KETTLE OF CLAMS! AS IF OUR X-TRAORDINARY FRIENDS DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH TO WORRY ABOUT... THIS VIKING THROWBACK SHOULD ADD A FEW SURPRISES TO THE CONCLUDING EPISODE OF THIS STAGGERING SAGA! SO... **BE THERE, MUTANT WATCHER!**