

QUEENS, NY.

MY WIFE IS STRUGGLING. MY SON IS DESPERATE FOR A FATHER, AND MY DAUGHTER IS GETTING INTO FIGHTS AT SCHOOL.

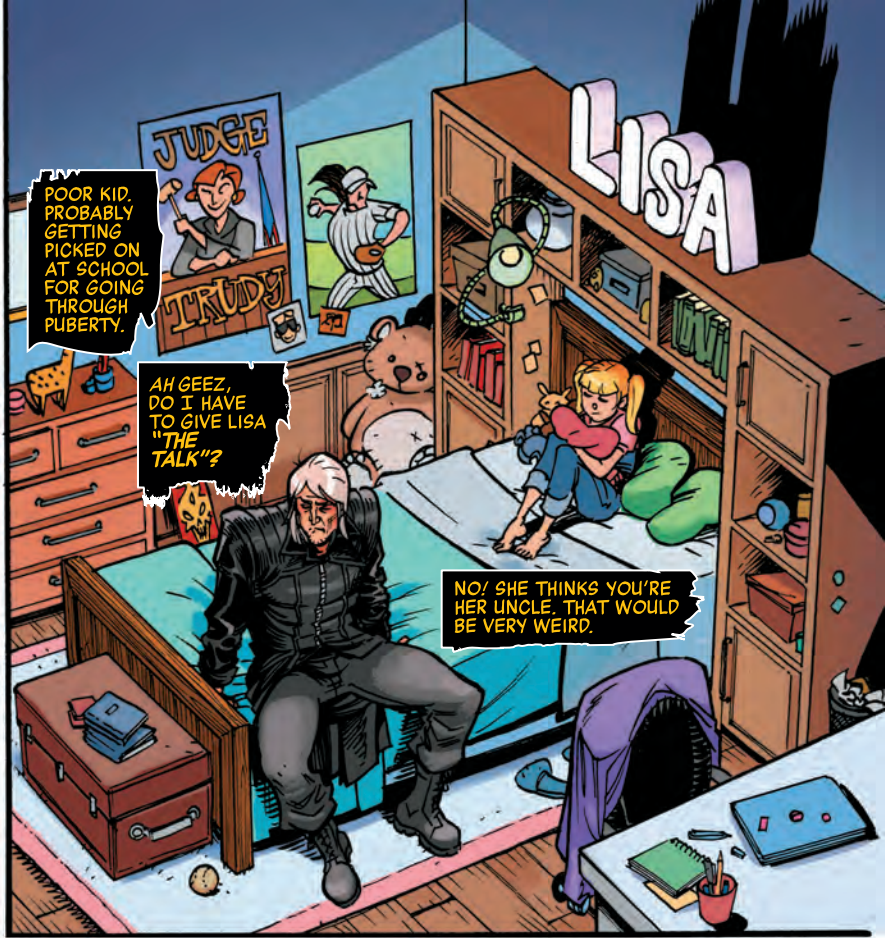
WORST OF ALL, MY HEAD WAS SO FAR UP MY OWN ASS I HAD NO IDEA ANY OF THIS WAS GOING ON THE FIRST TIME AROUND.



POOR KID, PROBABLY GETTING PICKED ON AT SCHOOL FOR GOING THROUGH PUBERTY.

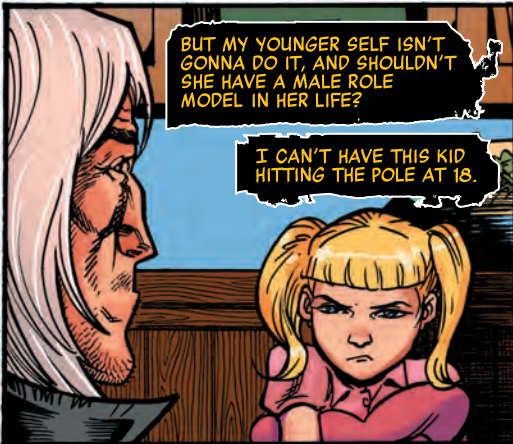
AH GEEZ, DO I HAVE TO GIVE LISA "THE TALK"?

NO! SHE THINKS YOU'RE HER UNCLE. THAT WOULD BE VERY WEIRD.



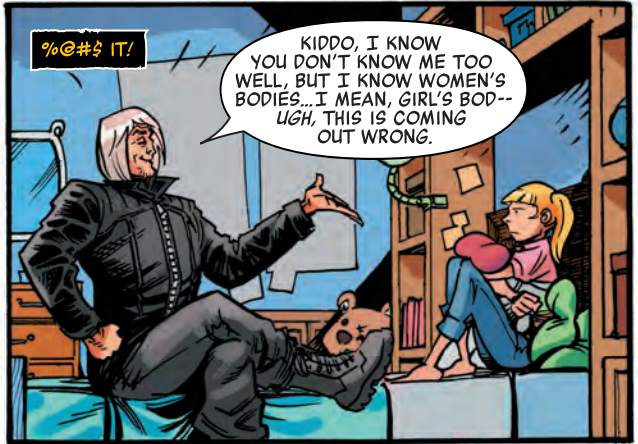
BUT MY YOUNGER SELF ISN'T GONNA DO IT, AND SHOULDN'T SHE HAVE A MALE ROLE MODEL IN HER LIFE?

I CAN'T HAVE THIS KID HITTING THE POLE AT 18.



%@# \$ IT!

KIDDO, I KNOW YOU DON'T KNOW ME TOO WELL, BUT I KNOW WOMEN'S BODIES... I MEAN, GIRL'S BOD-- UGH, THIS IS COMING OUT WRONG.

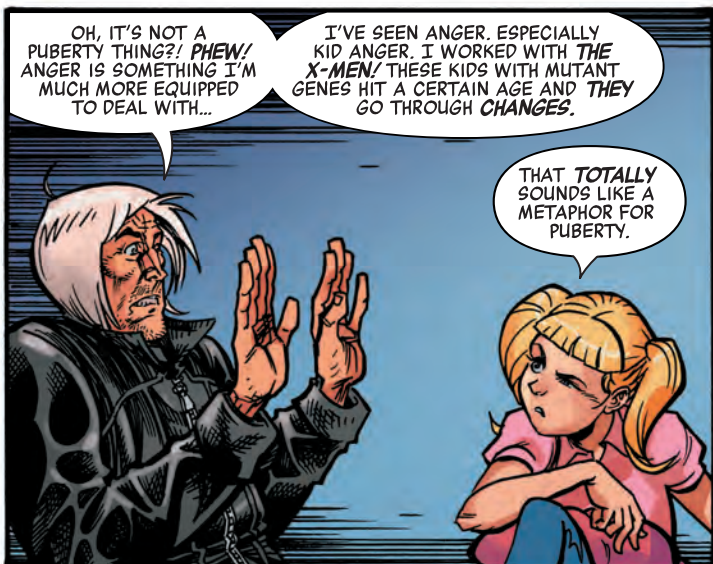


WHEN A CHILD HITS A CERTAIN AGE, THEIR BODY GOES THROUGH CHANGES...

OH MY GOD! WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?! ARE YOU TRYING TO TALK TO ME ABOUT PUBERTY?! I JUST GOT INTO A FIGHT!

GROSS!!!

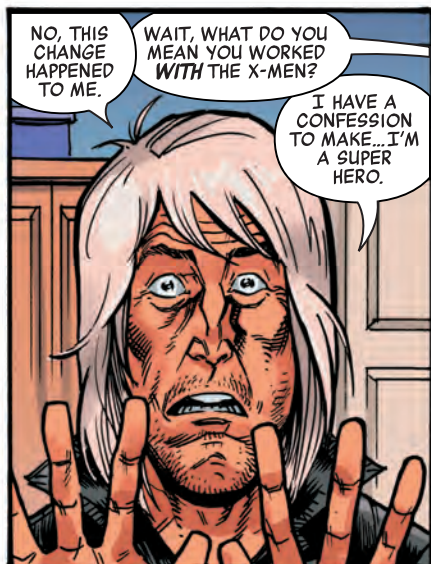




OH, IT'S NOT A PUBERTY THING?! **PHEW!** ANGER IS SOMETHING I'M MUCH MORE EQUIPPED TO DEAL WITH...

I'VE SEEN ANGER, ESPECIALLY KID ANGER. I WORKED WITH **THE X-MEN!** THESE KIDS WITH MUTANT GENES HIT A CERTAIN AGE AND **THEY** GO THROUGH **CHANGES**.

THAT **TOTALLY** SOUNDS LIKE A METAPHOR FOR PUBERTY.



NO, THIS CHANGE HAPPENED TO ME.

WAIT, WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU WORKED WITH THE X-MEN?

I HAVE A CONFESSION TO MAKE... I'M A SUPER HERO.



SUPER HEROES ARE STUPID. REAL HEROES DON'T WEAR TIGHTS. THEY SERVE IN THE MILITARY.

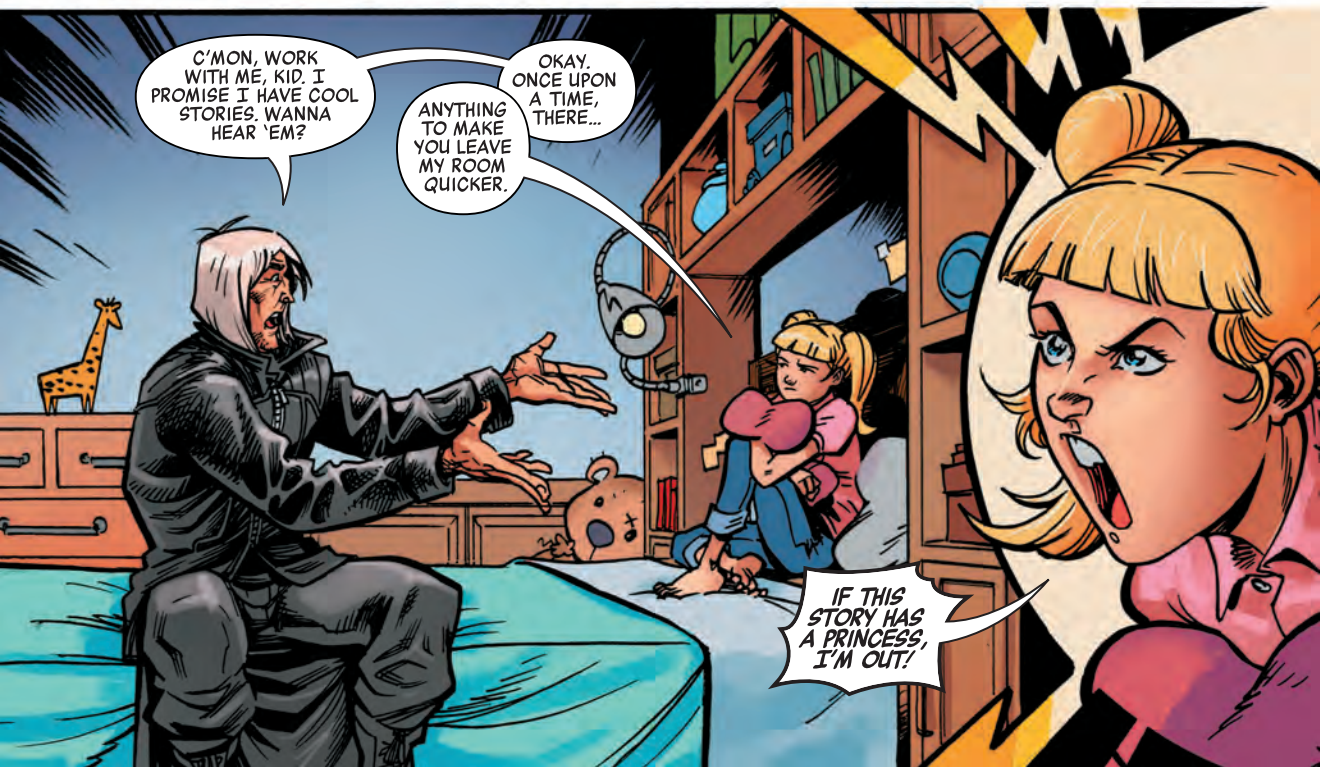
GEEZ, FRANK, YOU ALREADY DID A NUMBER ON THIS ONE.



I MEAN, SOME ARE ALL RIGHT ONCE YOU GET TO KNOW THEM. HAVE YOU EVER HEARD THE ONE ABOUT--



I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S MORE AWKWARD, YOU TRYING TO TELL ME A STORY OR TALKING TO ME ABOUT PUBERTY.



C'MON, WORK WITH ME, KID. I PROMISE I HAVE COOL STORIES. WANNA HEAR 'EM?

OKAY. ONCE UPON A TIME, THERE...
ANYTHING TO MAKE YOU LEAVE MY ROOM QUICKER.

IF THIS STORY HAS A PRINCESS, I'M OUT!

"NO PRINCESSES,
I PROMISE.

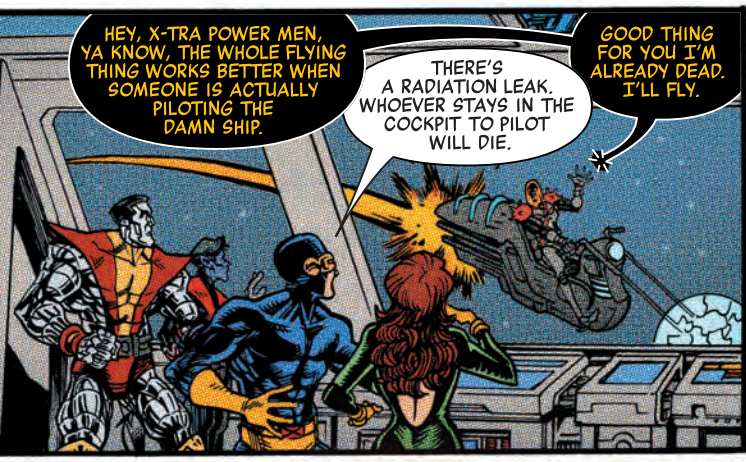
"SO THE X-MEN WERE COMING BACK
FROM SPACE AND WERE IN TROUBLE AND
THIS TIME IT WASN'T MY FAULT.



HEY, X-TRA POWER MEN,
YA KNOW, THE WHOLE FLYING
THING WORKS BETTER WHEN
SOMEONE IS ACTUALLY
PILOTING THE
DAMN SHIP.

THERE'S
A RADIATION LEAK.
WHOEVER STAYS IN THE
COCKPIT TO PILOT
WILL DIE.

GOOD THING
FOR YOU I'M
ALREADY DEAD.
I'LL FLY.



HMMM, I DON'T
NORMALLY FEEL
RADIATION. IT'S MORE
FUZZY THAN I
THOUGHT IT'D BE.

TAC
A TAC
TAC A
TAC

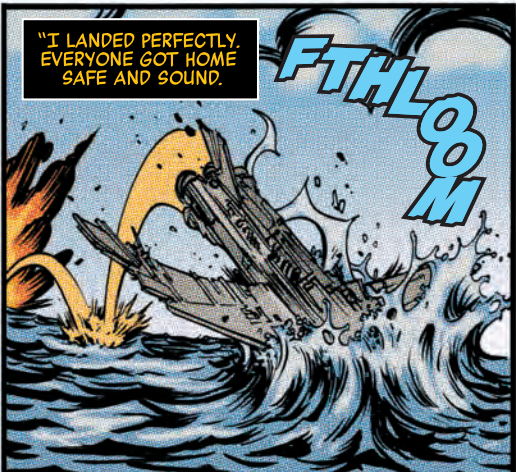


YUP,
THIS AIN'T
GOOD.



"I LANDED PERFECTLY.
EVERYONE GOT HOME
SAFE AND SOUND.

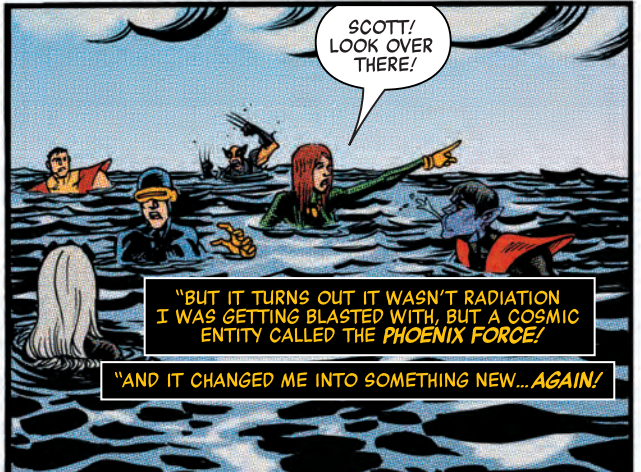
FTHLOOM



SCOTT!
LOOK OVER
THERE!

"BUT IT TURNS OUT IT WASN'T RADIATION
I WAS GETTING BLASTED WITH, BUT A COSMIC
ENTITY CALLED THE PHOENIX FORCE!

"AND IT CHANGED ME INTO SOMETHING NEW... AGAIN!



I AM THE
COSMIC GHOST PHOENIX!!!
NO, WAIT. I AM THE
COSMIC GHOST PHOENIX
RIDER?!

THERE'S
NO WAY THAT
WILL FIT ON
A CREDIT
CARD.

"WITH MY NEW
POWERS I BECAME
A GOD AND THAT
TROUBLED SOME
PEOPLE, SO
PROFESSOR X
PUT UP A PSYCHIC
BARRIER TO
PREVENT ME
FROM
FLAMING ON.

"HE ALSO HELPED ME LOCATE
MY LUCKY RABBIT'S FOOT I LOST
WHEN I WAS A KID. SOCK DRAWER.

"THEN SOME THEATER NERDS
CALLED THE **HELLFIRE CLUB**
SEDUCED ME TELEPATHICALLY BECAUSE THEY
WANTED MY POWER FOR THEMSELVES.

MY QUEEN,
I'VE MISSED
YOU SO.

DO I
KNOW THIS
PERSON?

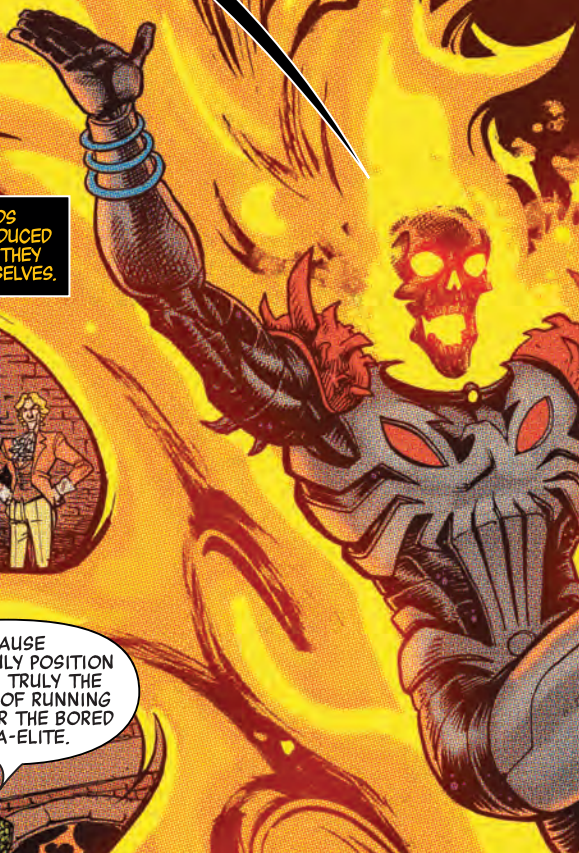
WHY DO
YOU INSIST ON
MAKING HIM THE
BLACK QUEEN?
WYNGARDE WILL
NEVER PULL
THIS OFF.

BECAUSE
IT'S THE ONLY POSITION
OPEN. IT'S TRULY THE
DOWNSIDE OF RUNNING
A CLUB FOR THE BORED
ULTRA-ELITE.

"THE X-MEN
EVENTUALLY CAME
TO MY 'RESCUE.'"

RIDER,
ARE YOU ALL
RIGHT?

YOU WILL
ADDRESS ME
AS BLACK
QUEEN,
PLEBE!



"AND JEAN WAS ABLE TO FREE ME FROM WYNGARDE'S MENTAL GRIP.

"BUT SHE ALSO FREED THE PHOENIX FROM ME AND IT HOPPED INTO HER. NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED.

IT'S NOT YOU, IT'S ME. I'VE CHANGED. I JUST HAVE MORE IN COMMON WITH JEAN.

SHE'S SMART, TALENTED AND, YOU KNOW, TAKES BETTER CARE OF HERSELF. SHE USES A DRY SHAMPOO.

SHE DOES HAVE GREAT HAIR.

"SO JEAN RAN OFF AND DID WHAT COSMIC BEINGS DO WHEN THEY'RE HUNGRY.

"SHE ATE A SUN AND ACCIDENTALLY KILLED AN ENTIRE PLANET FULL OF PEOPLE.

"LONG STORY SHORT, THE SHI'AR WEREN'T TOO PLEASED, SO THEY DECIDED TO HAVE A WORD WITH ME AND THE X-MEN ABOUT THIS PHOENIX BUSINESS.

DON'T WORRY, GUYS, I ACTUALLY HAVE SOME EXPERIENCE IN INTERGALACTIC LAW.