

MARVEL

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ANNUAL

**ROSENBERG
FOREMAN
CHARALAMPIDIS**

ASTONISHING X-MEN



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ASTONISHING X-MEN

NOTE: THE EVENTS OF THIS ISSUE TAKE PLACE AFTER *PHOENIX RESURRECTION #5* AND *ASTONISHING X-MEN #12*.

PREVIOUSLY IN **ASTONISHING X-MEN...**

PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER, FOUNDER AND LEADER OF THE X-MEN, WAS DEAD. KILLED BY A PHOENIX-POSSESSED CYCLOPS, XAVIER'S ABSENCE IS STILL FELT TO THIS DAY. IN REALITY, HE WAS TRAPPED IN A BRUTAL, PROLONGED DUEL WITH THE SHADOW KING IN THE ASTRAL PLANE. WITH THE HELP OF A TEAM OF X-MEN, CHARLES' CONSCIOUSNESS ESCAPED INTO THE BODY OF FANTOMEX, WHICH HE USED TO ERASE THE TEAM'S MEMORIES OF HIS NEWFOUND EXISTENCE. CHARLES, NOW CALLING HIMSELF "X," IS EMBRACING A NEW DESTINY...

JEAN GREY, ONE OF THE ORIGINAL X-MEN AND HOST OF THE PHOENIX FORCE, WAS DEAD, KILLED IN BATTLE BY ONE OF THEIR GREATEST FOES. JEAN'S DEATH LEFT A CLOUD OVER THE X-MEN THAT NEVER PASSED. RECENTLY, THE X-MEN HAD DISCOVERED THAT JEAN HAD BEEN REVIVED BY THE PHOENIX. NOW, SHE BEGINS A NEW CHAPTER IN HER LIFE, ONE IN WHICH HER HUSBAND, CYCLOPS, IS NO LONGER ALIVE...

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X
CHARLES XAVIER

ASTONISHING X-MEN ANNUAL No. 1, October 2018. Published as a One-Shot by MARVEL WORLDWIDE, INC., a subsidiary of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, LLC. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 135 West 50th Street, New York, NY 10020. © 2018 MARVEL. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. \$4.99 per copy in the U.S. (GST #R127032852) in the direct market; Canadian Agreement #40668537. **Printed in the USA.** DAN BUCKLEY, President, Marvel Entertainment; JOHN NEE, Publisher; JOE QUESADA, Chief Creative Officer; TOM BREVOORT, SVP of Publishing; DAVID BOGART, SVP of Business Affairs & Operations, Publishing & Partnership; DAVID GABRIEL, SVP of Sales & Marketing, Publishing; JEFF YOUNGQUIST, VP of Production & Special Projects; DAN CARR, Executive Director of Publishing Technology; ALEX MORALES, Director of Publishing Operations; DAN EDINGTON, Managing Editor; SUSAN CRESPI, Production Manager; STAN LEE, Chairman Emeritus. For information regarding advertising in Marvel Comics or on Marvel.com, please contact Vit DeBellis, Custom Solutions & Integrated Advertising Manager, at vdebellis@marvel.com. For Marvel subscription inquiries, please call 888-511-5480. **Manufactured between 07/20/2018 and 07/31/2018 by LSC COMMUNICATIONS INC., GLASGOW, KY, USA.**



MONDAY.
THE GRAND SALON.
NEW YORK CITY.



AS A PROFESSOR OF BOTH HARVARD AND CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY, A MACARTHUR FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENT, A NOBEL PRIZE WINNER, A NINE-TIME RECIPIENT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM...





HELLO, JEANNIE. I'M NOT LATE, AM I?

HANK! NO, I WAS EARLY.



I THINK THIS PLACE HAS A DRESS CODE.

NOBODY TOLD ME!



WHAT'S GOING ON? IS EVERYTHING OKAY?

WHY WOULDN'T IT BE?



WE JUST HAVEN'T SPOKEN MUCH SINCE YOUR...

I WORRY, JEANNIE. I'M A WORRIER. YOU KNOW THAT. AND WHAT YOU WENT THROUGH--

LOOK WHO I FOUND OUTSIDE!



I WAS SO HAPPY TO SEE WARREN OUT THERE. I WAS WORRIED I WAS GOING TO HAVE TO PICK UP THE CHECK TONIGHT.

HELLO, JEAN. HANK.



EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT, WARREN?

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED.

HELLO, BOBBY!



JEAN, YOU DIDN'T TELL ME WE WERE DOING A WHOLE REUNION THING. I THOUGHT IT WAS JUST GOING TO BE THE TWO OF US.

I'M SORRY, I WAS WORRIED YOU WOULDN'T ALL--

NO WAY, THIS IS GREAT!



ARE WE WAITING FOR ONE MORE OR...?



NO.

OH...OH, YEAH. OKAY. MY BAD.

SOON...

AND SHE SAYS, "I DON'T WANT HER TO CALL ME MOM. SHE'S OLDER THAN ME."

HA! THERE ARE COMPLICATIONS TO TIME TRAVEL THAT YOU CAN NEVER QUITE ANTICIPATE.

WE NEED ANOTHER BOTTLE.

I'LL ORDER IT. AND THIS TIME YOU'RE HAVING A GLASS, WARREN.

NO, BOBBY. I'M NOT.

C'MOOON. CAN'T YOU JUST LOOSEN UP A LITTLE--

IF I LET MY GUARD DOWN FOR EVEN A SECOND, BAD THINGS HAPPEN. YOU KNOW THAT.

CHANGING THE SUBJECT...JEAN, WHAT MADE YOU PICK THIS PLACE?

YOU DON'T REMEMBER?

NO. SHOULD I?

UH-OH. YOU DID IT NOW, WORTHINGTON.

AFTER OUR FIRST MISSION, CHARLES TOOK US HERE TO CELEBRATE.

WE ALL HATED IT.



WEAPONIZING NOSTALGIA SEEMS A TAD GAUCHE, NO?

SO WHAT? YOU WANT TO RE-CREATE OLD TIMES? GET THE BAND BACK TOGETHER?

NO. IT'S THE OPPOSITE, ISN'T IT?



IT IS.



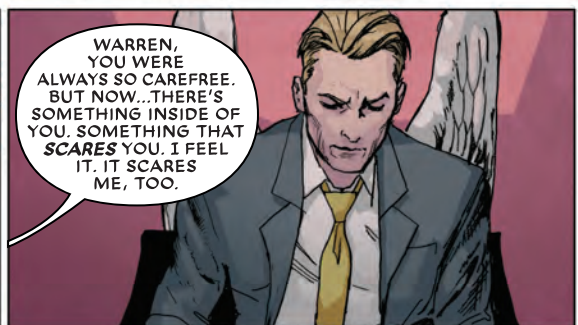
LOOK AT US IN THAT MEMORY AND LOOK AT US NOW. LOOK AT WHAT WE'VE LOST.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?



HANK, I KNOW THIS ISN'T WHAT YOU WANTED FOR YOUR LIFE. YOU'VE GIVEN SO MUCH TO CHARLES' DREAM. AND IT WAS NEVER YOUR DREAM ANYWAY.

I DO HAVE REGRETS WHEN I THINK WHAT MY LIFE WOULD BE IF I HADN'T GIVEN SO MUCH OF IT TO HIM.

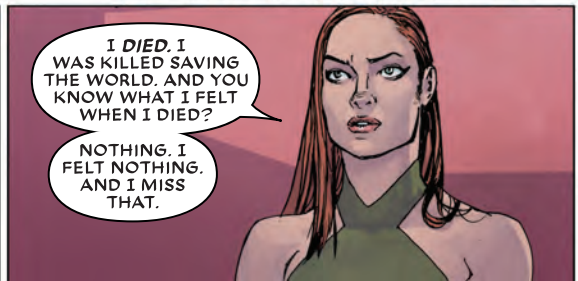


WARREN, YOU WERE ALWAYS SO CAREFREE. BUT NOW...THERE'S SOMETHING INSIDE OF YOU. SOMETHING THAT SCARES YOU. I FEEL IT. IT SCARES ME, TOO.



BOBBY...WELL, YOU SEEM PRETTY OKAY, ACTUALLY.

THANKH, JEAM!



I DIED. I WAS KILLED SAVING THE WORLD. AND YOU KNOW WHAT I FELT WHEN I DIED?

NOTHING. I FELT NOTHING. AND I MISS THAT.



AND FOR WHAT? IS IT EVER OVER? AFTER ALL WE'VE GIVEN, ALL THE FRIENDS AND FAMILY WE'VE LOST...WHAT DO WE HAVE?

WE BARELY EVEN HAVE EACH OTHER. WE SLOWLY SLIP AWAY. AND ALL I CAN THINK...

...IS THAT I SHOULDN'T HAVE COME BACK.

WELL, THIS IS A FUN CONVERSATION.