







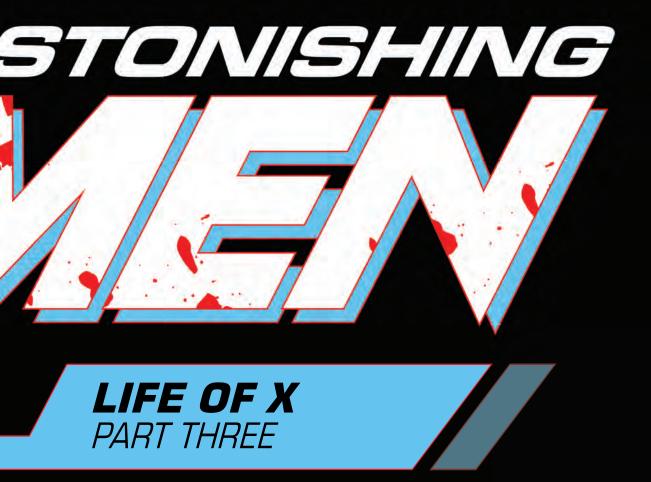




THE SHADOW KING AND CHARLES XAVIER ARE PLAYING A GAME. THE BOARD: THE REALITY-WARPING LANDSCAPE OF THE ASTRAL PLANE. THE PIECES: ROGUE, GAMBIT, MYSTIQUE, FANTOMEX AND LOGAN. IF THE SHADOW KING WINS, HE TAKES THEIR SOULS, THEIR BODIES AND OUR WORLD. IF XAVIER WINS, HE WILL BE ALLOWED TO GRANT HIS X-MEN A MERCIFUL DEATH. THIS IS ALL THERE IS — FOR XAVIER IS DEAD, HIS SPIRIT THE PRISONER OF THE SHADOW KING.

IN OUR WORLD, PSYLOCKE MAINTAINS A PSYCHIC LINK ATOP A LONDON SKYSCRAPER, ALLOWING THE SPIRIT-BOUND X-MEN TO REMAIN IN THE ASTRAL PLANE TO FIGHT THEIR DESPERATE BATTLE. BISHOP AND ANGEL STAND GUARD, PROTECTING HER FROM HUMAN AUTHORITIES WARY OF POWERFUL MUTANTS ACTING WITHOUT EXPLANATION IN ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST DENSELY POPULATED CITIES.

ALL FIVE X-MEN SURVIVED THE FIRST ROUND OF THE SHADOW KING'S GAME. ACCESS TO THE NEXT LEVEL CAME IN THE FORM OF THREE DOORS. EACH WAS LABELED — ONE FOR ROGUE AND GAMBIT, ONE FOR FANTOMEX AND MYSTIQUE, AND THE FINAL FOR LOGAN, WHO WILL WALK HIS PATH ALONE.



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