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# ASTONISHING **X-MEN** #3

*SOULE • MCGUINNESS • MORALES • KEITH*



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**SNIKT**

IMAGINE THIS.

YOU KILL EVERYONE YOU LOVE. PEOPLE WHO TRUST YOU. PEOPLE YOU'VE FOUGHT ALONGSIDE IN A THOUSAND BATTLES.

NNNF!

THE PEOPLE WHO LOVE YOU BACK.

ONE DAY... YOU SLAUGHTER THEM ALL.

YOU'RE TRICKED... IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT... BUT YOU DO IT.

THE BLOOD IS ON YOUR HANDS. LITERALLY ON YOUR HANDS.

AND THEN, SOMEHOW, MIRACULOUSLY, YOU STEP INTO THE PLACE OF YOUR YOUNGER SELF.

**KCHK**

BEFORE IT ALL WENT SO DEEPLY WRONG.

YOUR FRIENDS... YOUR FAMILY... STILL SEE YOU AS THE MAN THEY KNOW. BUT YOU REMEMBER EVERYTHING YOU DID TO THEM.

YOU'RE NOT THE MAN THEY KNOW.

YOU'RE THE MAN YOU ARE.

YOU ARE LOGAN.



THE X-MEN ARE NO STRANGERS TO NEW VERSIONS OF THEMSELVES APPEARING FROM OTHER DIMENSIONS, OTHER TIMES.

THEY TREAT YOU KINDLY, INVITE YOU TO THEIR COUNCILS, GIVE YOU EVERY CHANCE TO BE A HERO.

A HERO.

NNGH!

ALL THE WHILE, YOU CAN SEE THEIR BLOOD ON YOUR HANDS.

NO.

YOU CAN FEEL IT.

THAT IS ONE OF YOUR SECRETS.

THERE ARE OTHERS.

RRRAGH!





THE X-MEN WANT YOU TO BE A WOLVERINE. YOU CAN DO THAT. YOU CAN *PRETEND*.

BUT YOU ARE NOT WOLVERINE. YOU'LL NEVER BE THAT MAN AGAIN. NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO, THERE IS NO MORE *SAVING THE DAY*.

FOR YOU...

...THE DAY WAS LOST A LONG, LONG TIME AGO.



# ACT I



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.



# ASTONISHING

# X-MEN

## LIFE OF X PART THREE

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