

MARVEL

8

Mystique

**TINKER,
TAILOR,
MUTANT,
SPY**
Part 2 of 4

Greg Horn

VAUGHAN

RYAN

MILLA



She can be anything you want her to be...
except predictable.
Stan Lee presents...

Mystique

TINKER, TAILOR, MUTANT, SPY Chapter Two

PREVIOUSLY

Born with the ability to look and sound like anyone, the shapeshifting Mystique is a former pro-mutant freedom fighter, wanted by nearly every government in the world for alleged crimes against humanity. In exchange for protection from her countless enemies, Mystique reluctantly agrees to work for Professor Charles Xavier, telepathic leader of the X-Men, a group of mutants sworn to protect a world that fears and hates them. But instead of being invited to join this team, Mystique is asked to participate in politically sensitive operations as a *secret* agent, an operative who can't be traced back to Xavier in the event of her capture or death.

Mystique is also contacted by a man named Shepard, the dashing emissary of a mysterious employer known only as "The Quiet Man." Promising Mystique freedom from her life of indentured servitude, Shepard asks the shapeshifter to work as a double agent *against* Xavier. Mystique considers this offer, but as always, her true intentions remain her own.

For her current mission, Mystique is sent by Xavier to Johannesburg, South Africa to retrieve a mutant strain of smallpox genetically engineered to kill anyone inoculated against the original virus. But unbeknownst to Mystique and her diminutive field handler Shortpack, a strange female mutant who calls herself "The Host" is also on the hunt for this deadly bio-weapon.



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MYSTIQUE
Raven Darkholme
Shapeshifter



SHORTPACK
Real Name Classified
Diminutive Telepath



THE QUIET MAN



SHEPARD



THE HOST

⊗ UNKNOWN LOCATION
NOW

Here we go.

Mystique's plane just entered South African airspace. She should be landing soon.

I don't get it, Shepard.

Raven's not an idiot. She must know there's a tracking device in the necklace you gave her. Why hasn't she tossed it?

Mystique *wants* us at her side, beloved. She's not ready to throw us away as an option yet...not when she thinks we're her only shot at true freedom.

She just has to decide how far she's willing to go for it.

Oh, I'd say she's got a sixty percent shot at scoring the bio-weapon before anyone else does. The real question is whether or not she'll betray that monster Xavier and swipe a sample of it for *us*.

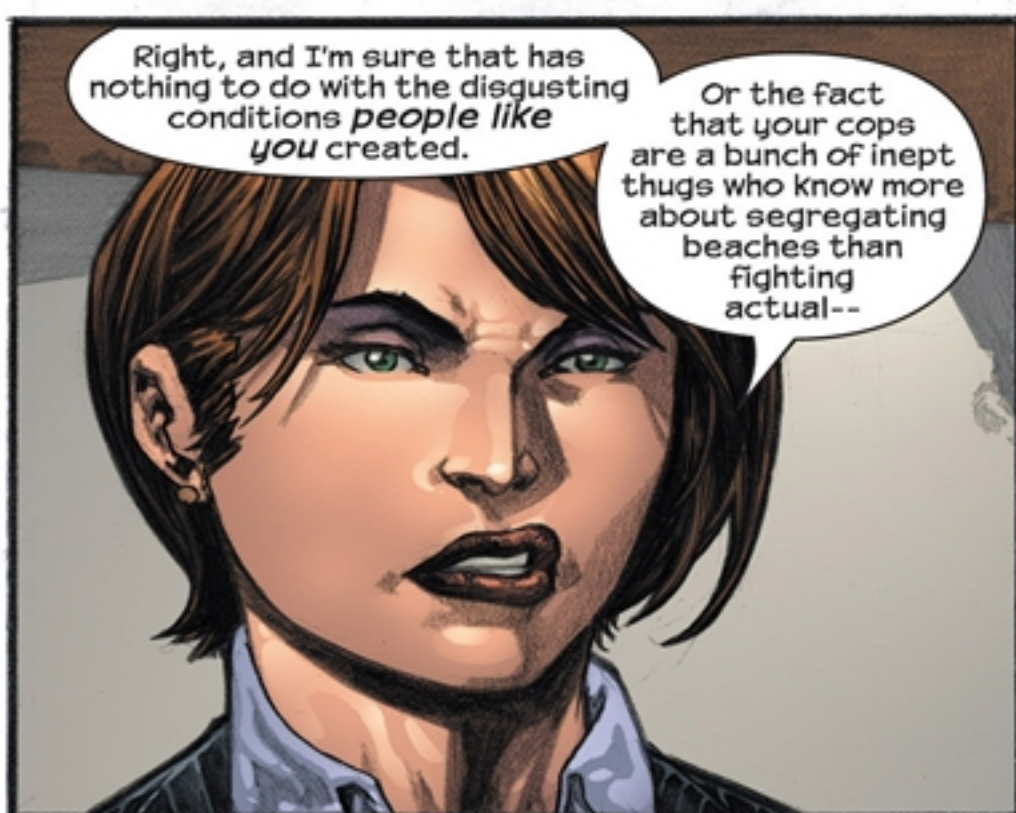
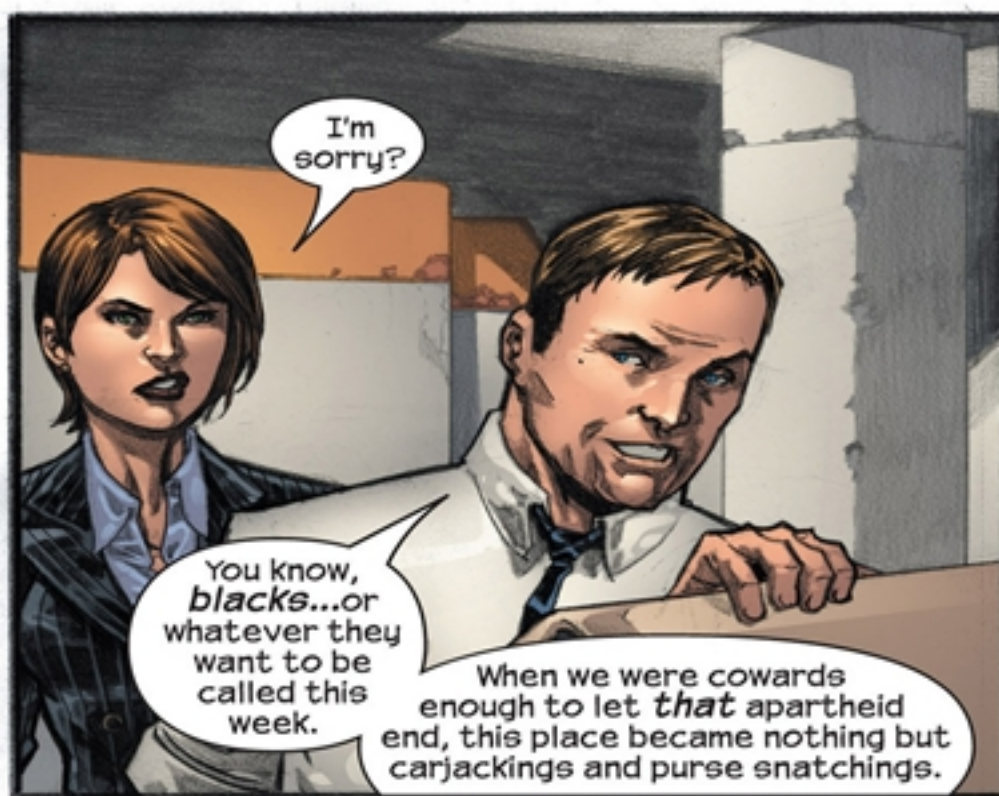
Lord, I'd give anything to be inside that woman's head right now...

Does she honestly stand a chance of acquiring that virus *Xavier* sent her to fetch? If the North Koreans knew about it, others must be looking for it, too.

"...I'd love to see the
cogs in that vicious
engine *spin*."









⊗ GOLD REEF CITY HOTEL
11:34 PM [SAST]





What are you working on over there, anyway?

Um, nothing.
It's a side project... *personal*.



Oooo, somebody's got a little *secret*.



Like I'm the only one?

Come on, let's get down to tacks.

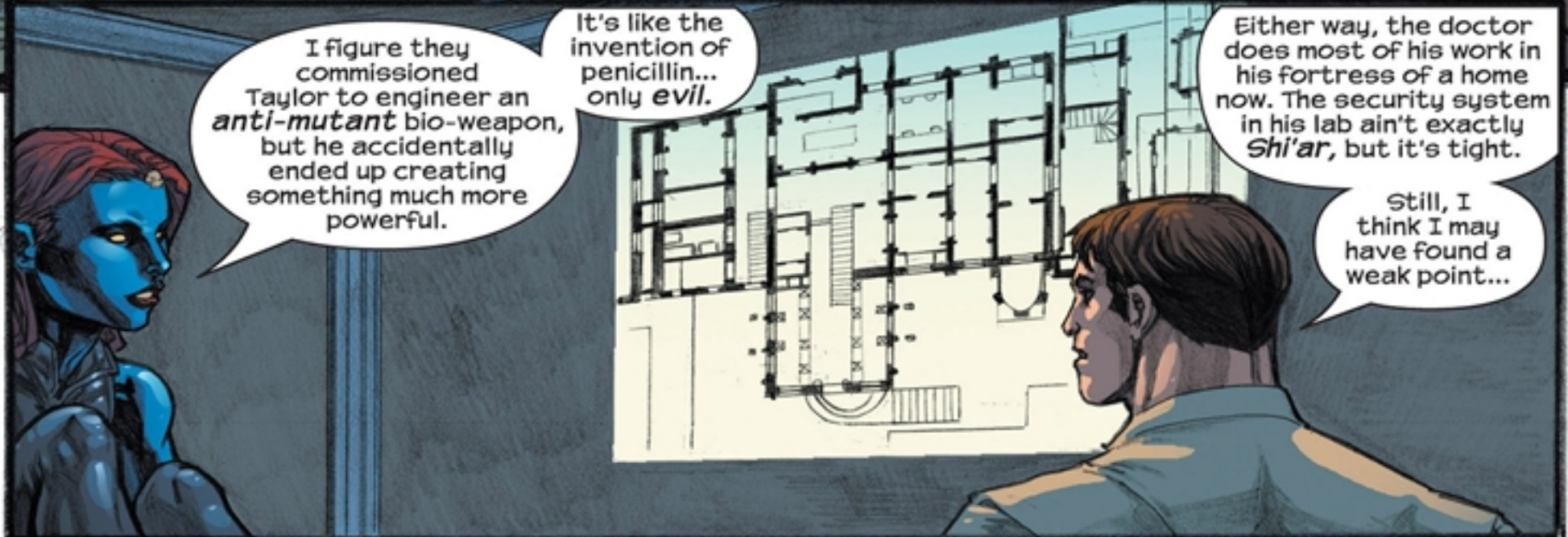


Whatever you say, Grumpy Dwarf.

As the Professor already told you, your target is Dr. Harrison Taylor.

I know he created this freaky mutant strain of smallpox, but my sources have no idea *why*.

Yeah, well, a little birdie told me rich old *white guys* might have something to do with it, big surprise.



I figure they commissioned Taylor to engineer an *anti-mutant* bio-weapon, but he accidentally ended up creating something much more powerful.

It's like the invention of penicillin... only *evil*.

Either way, the doctor does most of his work in his fortress of a home now. The security system in his lab ain't exactly *Shi'ar*, but it's tight.

Still, I think I may have found a weak point...



My initial intelligence reports suggest that Dr. Taylor is romantically involved with his live-in nurse.

I haven't been able to score a good visual, but if you can find her, I'd suggest incapacitating, impersonating, and then--



Yeah, yeah, I don't tell you how to do *your* job.

I'm serious, Mystique. If this psycho senses anything out of the ordinary, he could release his virus and--

Ashes, ashes, we all fall down? Don't sweat it, I'm armed to the teeth with my little tazer hairclip, homing beacon lipstick, biometric... *whatever* wristwatch. Guy doesn't stand a chance.



Fine, I'll stay in touch with you telepathically as long as you're in range. But unlike North Korea, I won't be in the field to save your hide if you run into trouble, so try not to get *shot* for once, okay?

Relax, I'll be back with this guy's test tubes by *breakfast*.



Swell, I'll tell room service.

How do you like your eggs?



Hard-boiled, kid, through and through.

⊗ ROSEBANK,
JOHANNESBURG
12:06 AM (SAST)

<Phillip? Phillip,
come in. Where
the devil are you?
It's been fifteen
minutes.>

<Stupid white
boy probably went
inside to hide from
the rain. He's scared
of getting a
little-->

Gentlemen.

UNF!



<Hands on your head! Take another step and I kill you where you-->

Sorry, I know eleven languages...



...but Afrikaans is still on my to-do list.

ZZAKT



I'm in.



Already? How'd you make it past the three armed guards?

Three? I only ran into two, Shortpack. Either your intel stinks...



"...or this is my lucky night."



Harrison.

You startled me.



Are you looking for your meds, love?

Is...is everything all right?

Why aren't you speaking?



Waiting for you to say more.

Why? And what's wrong with your voice?

Can't impersonate the way people talk until I hear them speak at least ten syllables.



Have all I need from *you* now.

















Mystique?

⊗ TO BE CONTINUED