

OUT OF PRINT

A DECONSTRUCTION OF POP CULTURE BY DAVI BARKER

DENIZENS OF PANGAEA

Medium: WildCATS #1-4 (Images Comics, 1993)
Tsar Date: 45.693.385

I COLLECTED COMICS AS A KID AND ENJOY THEIR FILM ADAPTATIONS AS AN ADULT. WHEN I STARTED THIS PROJECT I OPENED MY CHILDHOOD COLLECTION AND FOUND A HANDWRITTEN NOTE FROM MY PREVIOUS SELF, BEGGING THEIR FUTURE SELF NOT TO SELL THEM. OH, IF THEY ONLY KNEW.

UNLIKE NEWS MEDIA, COMICS CAN BE SENTIMENTAL. I WANTED TO START WITH MY FAVORITE COMIC, SAM KIETH'S THE MAXX, BUT WHEN I PEELED OPEN THE PROTECTIVE SLEEVES AND REFAMILIARIZED MYSELF WITH THEIR ILLUSTRIOUS PAGES, A WAVE OF NOSTALGIA OVERTOOK ME. I DIDN'T HAVE THE HEART TO CUT THEM UP. SO I IMPROVISED. I USED BLACK INK AND WHITE-OUT TO RECONSTRUCT MR. GONE, MAXX, AND JULIE WINTERS OUT OF WILDCATS COMICS, WHICH WERE LESS IMPORTANT TO ME.

THIS WAS MORE OF A PLAYFUL EXPLORATION OF THE MEDIUM THAN A THOUGHTFUL WORK OF ART. LIKE A DOODLE. IT WAS LOW STAKES PLAY.

SAM KIETH IS MY FAVORITE COMIC WRITER AND ILLUSTRATOR. I SEEK OUT ANYTHING HE DOES. READERS MAY BE MORE FAMILIAR WITH HIS WORK ON ARKHAM ASYLUM, WOLVERINE OR THE HULK, BUT FOR ME KIETH IS BEST WHEN HE'S WORKING WITH HIS OWN CHARACTERS IN HIS OWN WORLDS. KIETH'S SURREAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL STYLE WAS A HUGE INFLUENCE ON MY CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT. SO THIS PIECE IS, IN SOME SENSE, A STUDENT IMITATING A MASTER.

KIETH DOESN'T DRAW WHAT A CHARACTER ACTUALLY LOOKS LIKE, BUT RATHER WHAT THEY FEEL LIKE. IN ONE SCENE MAXX MAY BE A RAGING MUSCLEBOUND BEHEMOTH. IN THE NEXT HE'LL BECOME A DEPRESSED BLUBBERY BUTTER BALL. THIS APPROACH SPOKE DEEPLY TO MY PUBESCENT BRAIN.

KIETH INTRODUCED ME TO JUNG'S CONCEPT OF THE ANIMA, THE REPRESSED FEMININE SIDE OF A MAN, AND THE ANIMUS, THE REPRESSED MASCULINE SIDE OF A WOMAN. ONE INTERPRETATION SUGGESTS THAT MAXX IS JULIE'S ANIMUS SET LOOSE ON THE WORLD. THIS CONCEPT HEAVILY INFLUENCED MY EARLY THINKING ON GENDER FLUIDITY.

THERE'S A SCENE WHERE JULIE IS DISCOURAGED, DESPITE HER BEST EFFORTS, BUT SHE MUSTERS JUST A GLIMMER OF OPTIMISM. SHE SAYS:

HER ENTIRE PHYSIQUE CHANGES RADICALLY FROM ONE PANEL TO THE NEXT. INSIDE THE FRIDGE SHE FINDS A LITTLE BLUE MONSTER WITH A MAW OF YELLOW FANGS. IT KIDNAPS HER AND DRAGS HER BACK TO MR. GONE'S COW BATHROOM.

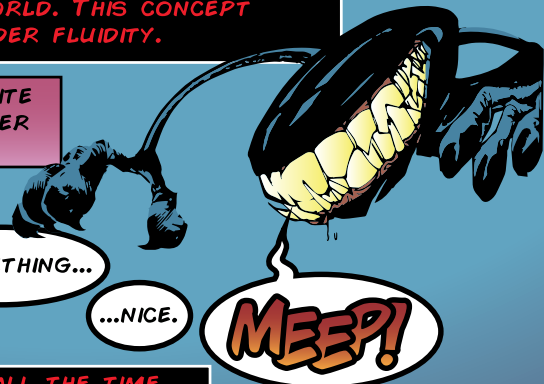
MAYBE THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE FRIDGE...

...SOMETHING...

...NICE.

MEEP!

I FEEL LIKE THAT ALL THE TIME.





MARVEL
Comics

13

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AUTHORITY

THE SNAP HEARD ROUND THE VERSE

MEDIUM: THE INFINITY GAUNTLET #1 (MARVEL COMICS, 1991)

TSAR DATE: 45.731.338

I WAS DOING SO WELL WITH COMIC ADAPTATIONS OF MOVIES, I THOUGHT I'D TRY AN ADAPTATION OF A MOVIE THAT WAS ITSELF AN ADAPTATION OF A COMIC.

AVENGERS: INFINITY WAR WAS OUT IN THEATERS BREAKING HEARTS AND MINDS AND EVERYONE WAS EAGERLY ANTICIPATING AVENGERS: ENDGAME TO COMPLETE THE SAGA. BUT AS A COMIC READER I KNEW THE FILMS WERE ALL AN ADAPTATION OF A COMIC SERIES I STILL HAD IN MY COLLECTION.

THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME I'D CUT UP A COMIC BOOK OF ANY REAL COLLECTOR VALUE, ALTHOUGH I PAID COVER PRICE WHEN IT FIRST CAME OUT. MANY PEOPLE CRITICIZED ME FOR DESTROYING THIS VALUABLE PIECE OF COMIC MEMORABILIA, AND MY LOCAL COMIC BOOK SHOP BECAME RELUCTANT TO SELL ME ANYTHING RARE, BUT MY THINKING IS THAT VALUE IS A SUBJECTIVE PROPOSITION. NO ART SUPPLIES ARE FREE, AND ALL ART AIMS TO CREATE SOMETHING MORE VALUABLE THAN THE MATERIALS THAT GO INTO IT.

DESTRUCTION IS ALSO A SUBJECTIVE PROPOSITION. WHAT I'VE ACTUALLY DONE IS TAKEN A COMIC BOOK WITH THOUSANDS IN CIRCULATION, AND TRANSMUTED IT INTO SOMETHING TRULY ONE OF A KIND. THIS WAS NOT AN ACT OF MALICE, BUT VENERATION. MY HANDS TREMBLED WITH ENERGY AS I HELD THE SCISSORS, AND I GOT THE SMALLEST TASTE OF WHAT IT MUST FEEL LIKE TO BE SOMEONE WHO DOES ART RESTORATION ON PRICELESS MASTERPIECES FOR MUSEUMS. IT'S INTERESTING TO REFLECT THAT IN ALL THE YEARS THIS COMIC WAS IN MY COLLECTION, I'D NEVER READ IT. I NEVER EVEN OPENED IT, BECAUSE THE CONVENTIONAL WISDOM SAYS THAT WILL DIMINISH THE VALUE.

HOW MANY COMIC BOOKS GO STRAIGHT INTO A VAULT SOMEPLACE AND ARE NEVER ENJOYED AS INTENDED? HOW MANY COLLECTORS HAVE NEVER SEEN THE INSIDE PAGES OF THEIR COLLECTION? TO ME THE PURPOSE OF THIS ART IS TO CELEBRATE THESE STORIES. NOT ONLY THE COVERS, BUT THE CONTENTS. TO BRING THE INSIDE PAGES OUT OF THE PLASTIC AND INTO PUBLIC VIEW.

LIKE THANOS HIMSELF, MY HOPE IS THAT THROUGH AN ACT OF DESTRUCTION, SOMETHING OF GREATER VALUE WAS CREATED.

THANOS.

THANOS

NOT EVEN DEATH DREADED WHAT I AM CAPABLE OF. AMOUNT THE AND TITAN
WAS SPENDING AND. THUNDERING. SINGING. I THREATEN AND MURDER.
THANOS WRESTED THE INFINITY GEMS FROM THOSE THAT POSSESSED
THEM AND WITH EACH ACQUISITION HE GAINED MASTERY OVER...

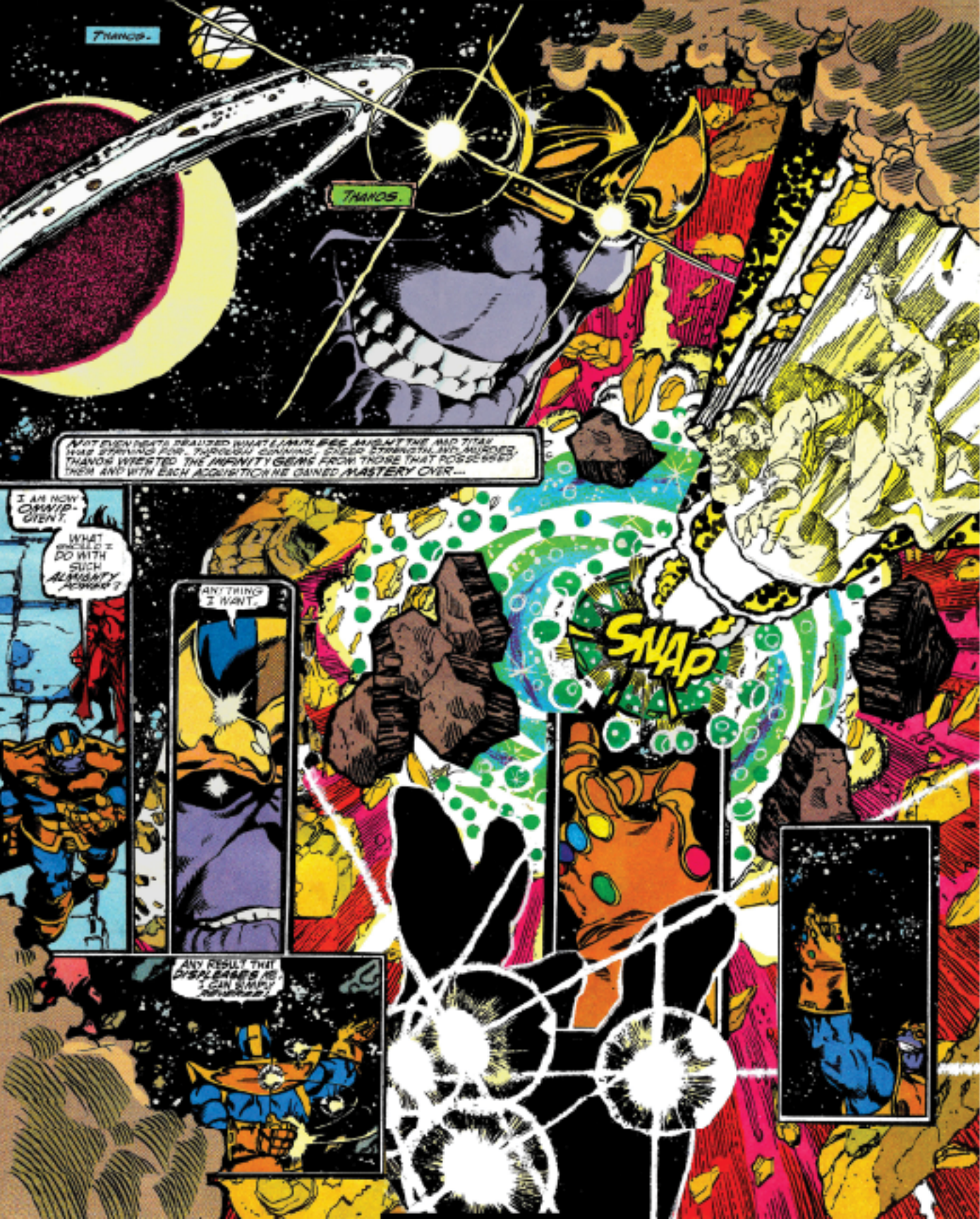
I AM NOW
OMNIPOTENT.

WHAT
WOULD I
DO WITH
SUCH
ALMIGHTY
POWER?

ANYTHING
I WANT.

SNAP

ANY RESULT THAT
DISPLEASES ME
I CAN SIMPLY
REPEAT.





WADE'S DESIRE

MEDIUM: DEADPOOL #16 (MARVEL COMICS, 1998)
TSAR DATE: 45.1023.353

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW PRIMARILY PROTECTS DISTRIBUTORS (STUDIOS AND PUBLISHERS) NOT CREATORS (WRITERS AND ARTISTS). IN FACT, LITIGIOUS LICENSING ENTANGLEMENT ALMOST KILLED THE FIRST DEADPOOL MOVIE. IT'S ONLY BECAUSE ONE BRAVE CREATOR DEFIED THEIR DISTRIBUTOR AND MOBILIZED A FAN BASE THAT THE FILM EVER MADE IT TO THEATERS.

THE FOURTH-WALL-BREAKING ANTI-HERO HAILS FROM MARVEL COMICS, BUT HIS UNSATISFYING FIRST FILM APPEARANCE IN X-MEN ORIGINS: WOLVERINE MEANS THE CINEMATIC DEADPOOL TECHNICALLY BELONGS TO 20TH CENTURY FOX. HOWEVER, THE CURRENT MARVEL CINEMATIC UNIVERSE BELONGS TO DISNEY.

RYAN REYNOLDS SPENT YEARS TRYING TO UNTANGLE THE LICENSING LIMITATIONS BEFORE GETTING TENTATIVE PERMISSION TO PRODUCE A FEW MINUTES OF TEST FOOTAGE. UNIMPRESSED, THE STUDIO SHELVED THE PROJECT, WHICH WAS ESSENTIALLY DEAD IN THE WATER.

DO YOU THINK IT WAS THE CHARACTER'S CREATORS, FABIAN NICIEZA AND ROB LIEFELD, WHO WANTED TO QUASH THE PROJECT? OR WAS IT THE DISTRIBUTOR'S LAWYERS WHO DISAPPROVED?

THEN THE TEST FOOTAGE WAS LEAKED TO THE INTERNET, OSTENSIBLY A CRIME.

FANS WENT BERSERK, DEMANDING A REAL DEADPOOL MOVIE. THEY WANTED THE "MERC-WITH-A-MOUTH", NOT THE MOUTHLESS MONSTROSITY FOX GAVE US. THEY OVERWHELMED THE STUDIO, AND THE FILM WAS GREENLIT FOR PRODUCTION.

THEY STILL DON'T KNOW WHO LEAKED THE FOOTAGE. THERE IS A SHORT LIST OF SUSPECTS, AND THEY'RE ALL CREATORS, NOT DISTRIBUTORS. WITHOUT THIS ACT OF COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT THE FILM WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN MADE.

I REALLY STARTED TO HIT MY STRIDE WITH THIS TECHNIQUE. IT WAS NO LONGER JUST A CONCEPT, OR AN EXPERIMENT CRUDELY EXECUTED. I WAS DEVELOPING AN INSTINCT FOR HUNTING DOWN THE PERFECT PIECE. BEFORE I WOULDN'T KNOW FOR SURE UNTIL I CUT A PIECE OUT AND TRIED IT, BUT NOW I WAS STARTING TO RECOGNIZE CONGRUENCE INSTANTANEOUSLY. THIS ALLOWED ME TO WORK FASTER, MORE INTUITIVELY, AND I BEGAN TO GET BACK THAT FLOW EXPERIENCE I GET FROM CHAOTIC COLLAGES.

THE BACKGROUND HERE IS ORGANIZED BY COLOR, BUT STILL REMINISCENT OF THE DISJOINTED JUMBLES THAT CHARACTERIZED MY EARLIER WORK. THE SUBJECTS, ESPECIALLY THE CONTOURING OF COLOSSUS'S FACE, HAVE A DELIBERATE, EVEN METICULOUS QUALITY. WERE I PAINTING THIS WOULD BE LIKE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN POLLOCK AND PICASSO... BUT IN THE MEDIUM OF BARBARA KRUGER.

