

Ultimate Fantastic Four #33

"God Wars"

Script by Mike Carey



PAGE 1 PANEL 1

Open on an establishing shot of Fifth Avenue, New York: part of the very swanky, exclusive stretch of Fifth Avenue that has all the prestigious department stores in it. Since we probably have to be careful about using actual logos and shop signs, these could be lightly fictionalised or just left blank/out of shot. It's a busy day, with lots of shoppers and tourists on the street. The attached jpeg of Macy's, Pasqual, is just to give you something of the flavour – although we could certainly base the shot at least in part on this image and this POV.

NOTE TO LETTERER: all balloons from inside one of the stores...

SUE: You sure you're okay with this, Reed?

REED: Yeah, I'm good. I'm - - good.

SUE: Because I can get someone else to - -

REED: No, I can do it. I want to do it.

SUE: Okay.

REED: Okay.

PAGE 1 PANEL 2

Inside one of the department stores – in the perfume department, although the sign we can see says PARFUMERIE to give an air of Euro-chic. Very up-market, very exclusive: discreet displays, little puffer sprays full of perfume to allow shoppers to try before they buy, and so on. Out wide, but centred on Reed and Sue. They're dressed in trendy casual clothes and they look great – attractive kids without a care in the world. Sue holds out her hands towards Reed, palms up: she's inviting him to sniff her wrists, where she's applied perfume. Reed frowns at the wrists in slight unease, makes no move to bend and sniff. A female shop assistant stands by, indulgent and polite.

SUE: Left hand is Dior Addict. Right is Marc Jacobs.

SUE: Just tell me which one you like best.

REED: Right. Got it.

PAGE 1 PANEL 3

Tight on Reed. He looks up at Sue, a little pleadingly.

REED: Sue, do you think you could throw up a field and keep out the rest of the smells?

REED: I'm not - - I can't quite - -

REED: It's like trying to have a private conversation in a crowded room.

PAGE 1 PANEL 4

Back out to two-shot. Sue grabs Reed's lapels to pull him close, stares into his eyes with a firm, almost reproachful expression. He backs away, pretending to be intimidated.

SUE: What are we trying to be? Starts with an I?

REED: Insensitive? Illiterate? Incandescent?

SUE: Inconspicuous.

PAGE 1 PANEL 5

Close-up on Sue's face, her expression as before – wryly, jokingly stern.

SUE [OP]: No costumes. No powers. Just for one day, Reed - -

SUE [OP]: - - just for the sheer, wicked thrill of it - -

SUE [OP]: - - let's pretend we're normal.

PAGE 2

Pasqual, I'm seeing a fairly static grid here so that we can set up the idea of a weird incursion into the normality of this banal setting. So, for the sake of argument, we could have all three panels on the page seen from an identical POV, and all running the full width of the page.

PAGE 2 PANEL 1

Looking down one of the aisles of the shop. Shoppers shopping, assistants assisting. Everything calm and normal as you could wish for.

PAGE 2 PANEL 2

Shoppers turn to stare, assistants look up in mild surprise as a sound starts up from nowhere.

SFX: AUUUUUUUUU

PAGE 2 PANEL 3

A sudden, powerful wind lifts clothes and hair, makes people shield their faces and squint.

SFX: UUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU

PAGES 3&4 PANEL 1

Rotate POV. Something very big, travelling very fast, smashes through one of the counters in a blur of movement, splintering it to shards and matchwood. People dive for cover.

SFX: WHOOOOOOOOM

PAGES 3&4 PANEL 2

Out wide for the money shot, which takes up most of the space on this spread. The wind was caused by the arrival of Seed Nineteen, riding on their bike/ship/pet Sky-Eater. They've come in so fast that they've blazed a trail of destruction across the entire length of the store, smashing through everything in their path and gouging up the floor. At the end of their blast-trail, Sky-Eater lies broken, nose down. The members of Seed Nineteen and the unconscious Tesseract lie amidst the wreckage. Apart from Tesseract, who lies face-down and doesn't move, they mostly seem either completely unhurt or at worst bumped and scraped. Sky-Eater is badly hurt, though – in fact, as we'll see, almost fatally hurt. It's possible that he'll be leaking some kind of black, ichor-like transmission fluid. NB, Pasqual: Magnificent Brute is human in this scene, until he transforms on PAGE 5 below – after that he remains in beast form.

MAGNIFICENT BRUTE: We did it! No ravens. No bombardiers.

MAGNIFICENT BRUTE: We did it and we got away clean!

MAGNIFICENT BRUTE: I told you there was a world here.

PAGE 5 PANEL 1

Coming in tighter on the team, but keeping as many of them in shot as we can. Threshold picks herself up, rubbing her elbow and wincing. She holds the Seed in her free hand, and it glows slightly with white light. In the background, Fountain is examining Sky-Eater with a

sombre, concerned expression. In the background, shoppers and shop assistants are running away from these strange, scary people.

THRESHOLD: But why did we even take this direction, Seed? What is this place?

SFX [SEED'S "VOICE"]: MRRMEEE MRRMEEE MRRMEEE

THRESHOLD: Higher priorities? Explain.

FOUNTAIN: Threshold!

PAGE 5 PANEL 2

Two-shot on Fountain and Brute. Fountain looks up at Threshold, his expression solemn. Brute looks dismayed as he lumbers up behind Fountain, staring down at Sky-Eater.

FOUNTAIN: Not clean. Not close. Tesseract is unconscious, Sky-Eater's hurt. Deep hurt.

BRUTE: No! Fountain, you have to help him.

BRUTE: He's just a puppy. You've got something in your bag, right?

PAGE 5 PANEL 3

Out wide. Threshold comes up to stand behind Fountain, who is rummaging inside his tech-bag. They both look at Sky-Eater. The rest of the team stand anxiously by, except for Vykni who is examining the still-unconscious Tesseract. In the background, a security guard comes sprinting up, gun in hand.

THRESHOLD: Can you help him?

FOUNTAIN: Truth? He's hearing the call, Thresh. The call of the all.

THRESHOLD: Then help him to die.

GUARD: [ALIEN GIBBERISH]

PAGE 5 PANEL 4

Two-shot on Threshold and the guard. He's pointing the gun at her chest, looking stern and angry. She stares at him curiously, unimpressed but a little puzzled.

GUARD: [ALIEN GIBBERISH]

THRESHOLD: An indigene. Seed, translate for me.

GUARD: [ALIEN GIBBERISH]

THRESHOLD: What's he saying?

PAGE 5 PANEL 5

Tight on the guard – red-faced, furious, yelling.

GUARD: [ALIEN GIBBERISH] - - care if you're terrorists or joy-riders or just shooting a freakin' commercial.

GUARD: You freeze right there till the cops arrive, or I'll pop you where you stand.

PAGE 5 PANEL 6

Out wide, but centred on the guard and Magnificent Brute. Brute transforms from human into beast form, right in front of the guard, looming over him terrifyingly. The guard is shocked and terrified, mouth open on a scream. Threshold frowns as she watches.

BRUTE: Incredible. That a universe so far down in the nested folds could be inhabited!

BRUTE: A pity it's not civilized.

THRESHOLD: Careful, Brute. That's some sort of weapon he's holding.

PAGE 6 PANEL 1

Two-shot on the guard and Threshold. The guard fires off three shots, panic terror taking over. Threshold steps into the path of the bullets, and they simply disappear into her swirling energy fields. She's unhurried, calm, almost casual.

SFX: BLAM BLAM BLAM

THRESHOLD: There, you see? Projectiles, fortunately.

THRESHOLD: Vykni, we need to deter these people. Do you have enough to work with?

PAGE 6 PANEL 2

Tight on Vykni. His eyes glow with energy that seems to spill out of them in crackling tongues. The debris around him starts to rise from the floor and accrete into a solid shape.

VYKNI: Well, let's see. Broken glass. Wood. Stone. A lot of different plastic polymers.

VYKNI: Yes, Threshold.

PAGE 6 PANEL 3

Out wide. Vykni's power is to instill life into the unliving – so here he's making a huge, powerful golem of shattered glass, metal, wood, plastic and cement. The debris from the crash and the shop fixtures and fittings all around him have basically come together into a massive humanoid figure which towers over the guard and the few shoppers who haven't already fled. They gawp in shock and horror.

VYKNI [LINK FROM PANEL 2]: I believe I do.

PAGE 6 PANEL 4

Rotate POV. The terrified shoppers take to their heels, but the guard lurches backward into a display counter, too frozen with shock to run. Vykni's golem looms over him, its massive fist raised to strike.

PAGE 7 PANEL 1

Tight on the guard. He flinches, eyes closed, unable to bring himself to watch as the massive fist strikes. But it never hits him: the golem's arm smashes down, but it impacts on the spherical surface of one of Sue's invisible force fields and shatters into many razor-sharp fragments.

PAGE 7 PANEL 2

Out wide. Sue and Reed make their dramatic appearance. Reed (now in costume) wraps himself around and around the golem (which seems taken aback by its shattered arm) in endless thin strands. Sue levitates the guard out of harm's way. The Seed 19 team are momentarily surprised to meet some serious opposition.

SUE: "No costumes?"

REED: Forgot I had it on.

SUE: Careful, Reed. That thing looks - -

PAGE 7 PANEL 3

Rotate POV. The golem topples and breaks apart, Reed's whiplike strands unbalancing and tripping it.

REED: Brittle?

REED: Yeah, I thought so.

PAGE 8 PANEL 1

Out wide, but centred on Dreamcatcher, Threshold and Vykni. Threshold frowns, perplexed and not entirely happy about this turn of events. Vykni is cold and impassive. Dreamcatcher starts to blur, focussing her power.

VYKNI: Ravens?

THRESHOLD: Or powered indigenes. Seed is too excited to talk any sense.

SFX [SEED]: MRRMEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

THRESHOLD: The girl's a weaver. The other one is trans-fleshed. Dreamcatcher - - ?

PAGE 8 PANEL 2

Two-shot on Dreamcatcher and Sue, with Reed in the background. Dreamcatcher steps through Sue's field and punches her out. Reed whips his head around just in time to see, is alarmed and horrified.

DREAMCATCHER: No problem. If her fields are permeable to light, or ideas, or emotions
- -

SFX: WHUKK

DREAMCATCHER: - - they're permeable to me.

PAGE 8 PANEL 3

Two-shot on Threshold and Reed. Threshold raises her hand, her energy fields swirling round – and the bullets she absorbed earlier shoot out with undiminished force and speed. All

three hit and pass through Reed's body. He reacts in pain and shock, his eyes screwed shut and his mouth open on a gasp.

THRESHOLD: Good work. And assuming they're vulnerable to their own weapons - -

SFX: BLAM BLAM BLAM

THRESHOLD: - - the projectiles I swallowed a moment ago should work on this one.

PAGE 8 PANEL 4

Out wide. Threshold stands over the sprawled, fallen figures of Reed and Sue. She frowns as she looks down at them. The other members of the team follow her gaze: Fountain almost smirks: he's satisfied that they took down the opposition so easily. The others all look a little uncertain.

FOUNTAIN: Nice work, Thresh.

THRESHOLD: Was it? These were seedling warriors, like us.

THRESHOLD: It doesn't make me happy to bring them to harvest.

PAGE 9 PANEL 1

External shot of the store: wide. Police cars are zooming up from both directions, sirens wailing. Onlookers, enthralled and frightened in equal measure, stand in clusters and watch. Some police officers shoo them back out of harm's way.

SFX: WOOWOOWOOWOOWOOWO

PAGE 9 PANEL 2

Back inside, centred on Threshold. She turns at the sound of the sirens, looks concerned and angry. Dreamcatcher stares at her, dismayed – as do some of the others.

THRESHOLD: This is getting out of hand. We're meant to be avoiding a battle, not getting into one.

THRESHOLD: Dream, cloak us.

DREAMCATCHER: But Threshold! Sky-Eater needs - -

THRESHOLD: Just do it. I call rank.

PAGE 9 PANEL 3

Tight on Dreamcatcher. She hangs her head, crest-fallen, even as she starts to blur again.

DREAMCATCHER: Yes, Threshold.

DREAMCATCHER: I'm sorry.

PAGE 9 PANEL 4

Looking towards the street doors. Uniformed cops burst in, armed and ready.

PAGE 9 PANEL 5

Rotate POV. Threshold leads her team right past the cops, who look at them with slightly bemused expressions. They're "cloaked", as Threshold just ordered: this means that Dreamcatcher has disappeared entirely, because she's draping herself over the others as an illusion. They now look like ordinary New York teenagers – Brute a big, muscular jock, Dreamcatcher a gorgeous teen babe, Fountain a bespectacled nerd and Threshold a power-dressed but still young and beautiful businesswoman. Brute is carrying a big, bulky sports bag, which as we'll see in a moment is actually Tesseract – so Tesseract also doesn't appear in the line-up. Threshold points back the way they've come, artfully (as she thinks) misleading the police officers.

THRESHOLD: That way, officer. Powered indigenes are engaging an alien seed-combat unit.

COP: Uh - - thanks, miss.

THRESHOLD: You're welcome. May the All bless your weapons.

PAGE 10

Pasqual, I've got something very specific in mind by way of layout here. I want PANELS 1 and 5 to be identical in POV and framing – and each should run across the whole width of the page. You'll see why...

PAGE 10 PANEL 1

A New York Street, still in the shopping district. The Seed Nineteen team walk briskly through the crowds of shoppers and other New Yorkers. They stick out like a sore thumb, but nobody looks at them – even though Magnificent Brute is carrying the unconscious Tesseract in his arms. It's as though they're invisible, or at any rate are being taken completely for granted. There's no sign of Dreamcatcher, because (as we saw on the previous page) she's not in physical form any more.

FOUNTAIN: Tesseract's still out, Thresh. Can't figure it.

FOUNTAIN: Wounds are superficial. Acheron haven't left any drugs or pico-tech in his system that I can see.

BRUTE: Sleep, Fountain. Sleep heals. He'll be fine.

PAGE 10 PANEL 2

Tight on Fountain, walking along beside Brute. He checks a small, high-tech device in his hand or on his sleeve. He frowns.

FOUNTAIN: Maybe. Getting some weird waves from his medulla, though.

FOUNTAIN: Wonder if the Acheron found a way to spike him with liveware.

PAGE 10 PANEL 3

Tight on Vykni. He glowers, glancing sidelong at the passers-by.

VYKNI: This place smells. And the indigenes - - they look just human enough to be creepy.

VYKNI: It's like a bad sense-net flick. "Planet of the Monkey People".

PAGE 10 PANEL 4

Tight on Threshold: she's calm but stern, in command and in control.

THRESHOLD: Ignore them, Vykni. It's best if they don't see you stare.

DREAMCATCHER [TAILLESS BALLOON]: They won't see anything I don't want them to see, Threshold.

THRESHOLD: You're still in place, Dream?

PAGE 10 PANEL 5

And back to the identical shot that we saw at the top of the page – but now we see them under their cloak of illusion again. All of the team are in EXACTLY the same positions that they were in in PANEL 1, so that we get the point. Tesseract has once again become a big, bulky shoulder bag that Brute is carrying.

DREAMCATCHER [TAILLESS BALLOON]: Oh yeah. I've got you wrapped up nice and warm.

DREAMCATCHER [TAILLESS BALLOON]: In love.

DREAMCATCHER [TAILLESS BALLOON]: In light.

DREAMCATCHER [TAILLESS BALLOON]: In lies.

PAGE 11 PANEL 1

Out very wide. Looking towards the group as they cross a busy intersection. They look like their true selves again here: we're seeing through Dreamcatcher's illusion to the truth, but nobody else is. The team are still being ignored by everyone they pass.

VYKNI: Where are we going anyway, Thresh?

FOUNTAIN: Somewhere open would be good. Somewhere a songship can land.

THRESHOLD: Agreed. Magnificent Brute, why are you still in regressed form?

PAGE 11 PANEL 2

Tight on Brute. He looks miserable and anxious.

BRUTE: I can't change back. I'm stuck like this.

BRUTE: The Ravens were firing disruptor ordnance, and I took a hit.

PAGE 11 PANEL 3

Out wide. The team come to the stretch of Fifth Avenue where it opens out onto Central Park. Fountain points towards the trees and fields ahead. The team are surprised and excited.

FOUNTAIN: There.

BRUTE: Oh yeaah! Perfect. Even I could park on a space that big.

BRUTE: Throw up a beacon, Thresh. Whistle us home.

PAGE 11 PANEL 4

Centre on Threshold, but with Fountain and Vykni visible in the background. Threshold has just realised that her pouch is empty: she's lost the seed. She stares at the empty pouch in numb horror. Unnerved, puzzled, the others stare at her.

THRESHOLD: I - - I can't.

FOUNTAIN: What?

FOUNTAIN: What do you mean?

PAGE 11 PANEL 5

In tighter on Threshold. She turns the empty pouch upside down to demonstrate that there's nothing there. Her expression is sombre, tragic, utterly bleak.

THRESHOLD: I mean we're trapped here, Fountain.

THRESHOLD: I mean I've killed us all.

PAGE 12 PANEL 1

Back to the trashed department store. Police and paramedics pick through the wreckage.

PAGE 12 PANEL 2

In tighter on one part of this scene. Lumpkin walks briskly past a startled cop, shows his ID in passing. A number of uniformed soldiers from the Baxter Building follow him purposefully.

LUMPKIN: United States army. We'll take it from here.

COP: But this is a civil - -

LUMPKIN: Read it and weep, kid. You can read, can't you? I mean, they still teach that?

PAGE 12 PANEL 3

Two-shot on Reed and Sue, but with Lumpkin and his men approaching in the background. Sue is helping Reed to his feet: he's shaky, still in a certain amount of pain, but clearly both alive and unwounded.

REED: Hi, Lieutenant Lumpkin. Thanks for coming down.

LUMPKIN: Just another day at the office, Richards. You look a little rough.

REED: I was shot three times in the chest.

PAGE 12 PANEL 4

Tight on Reed. He presses one hand against his chest, gingerly.

REED: I guess I don't keep anything important in there any more.

REED: And - - I can't even find the holes, now. They just healed up.

PAGE 12 PANEL 5

Tight on Sue. She's examining Sky-Eater, carefully and with a certain tenderness.

SUE: Lieutenant, the people who did all the damage here left this thing behind them. I don't know what it is, but it's alive.

SUE: So it's coming home with us. I want to examine it.

PAGE 12 PANEL 6

Close-up on Lumpkin's face. He looks glum.

LUMPKIN: Well, hey.

LUMPKIN: Ain't we got fun.

PAGE 13 PANEL 1

External shot of the store, after a brief time lapse. Sky-Eater is being lifted up on a massive travois by customised hydraulic equipment. Hard-hatted men work under Lumpkin's direction, carefully but quickly. A crowd has gathered to gawk.

PAGE 13 PANEL 2

Two-shot on Reed and Sue. They exchange a glance, which on Sue's part is one of concern, on Reed's slight uncertainty.

SUE: You're sure you're okay?

REED: Yeah, I'm fine.

REED: Maybe if one of the bullets had stayed inside me, I might have to - -

PAGE 13 PANEL 3

Close-up on Reed's face, low angle, seen from below. He glances down, and his face is lit from below as Seed glows with a bright, unearthly radiance.

REED: ...

SFX: MRRMEEEEEEEEEE

PAGE 13 PANEL 4

Out wide. Reed has gone down on one knee, and he holds Seed carefully in his hand, staring at it intently. Sue stands behind him, also looking down at it. Any soldiers in shot are also staring, edgy and dubious about this development.

REED: More lost property.

SFX: MRRMEE MRRMEE MRRMEE

REED: These are some real careless aliens.

PAGE 14 PANEL 1

Back to Central Park. The Seed Nineteen team, with Dreamcatcher now among them again, walk into a glade of trees. Skyscrapers in the background remind us of where we are.

PAGE 14 PANEL 2

Tight on Vykni. He talks to the trees, without looking to either side: giving them their orders in a terse, focused way.

VYKNI: You're on guard.

VYKNI: No one gets by you.

PAGE 14 PANEL 3

Out wide. The substance of the trees warps and flows. The team walk on by, not taking any notice: they're familiar with Vykni's powers and they take all this in their stride.

PAGE 14 PANEL 4

Identical POV. The trees have turned into humanoid giants, still tree-like and still rooted in the ground but with stern, impassive faces and thick, powerful limbs. They look off to right and left, alert, watchful, on the case.

PAGE 15 PANEL 1

In the heart of the glade, deep among the trees and out of reach of prying eyes. Brute carefully sets Tesseract down on the ground. His head lolls. Threshold watches him with concern. The others look to her, scared but trusting, waiting for their orders.

THRESHOLD: Fountain, whatever you can do to stabilize Tesseract's condition, do it.

FOUNTAIN: Don't know what his condition is.

FOUNTAIN: But you want me to dance in the dark, I'll dance.

PAGE 15 PANEL 2

Two-shot on Tesseract and Fountain. Tesseract's eyes half-open and he grimaces as if in pain – but he's still out of it, rambling like a man in a fever. Fountain kneels beside him, takes high-tech kit from his bag.

TESSERACT [WEAKLY]: Come in! Come in on my - -

TESSERACT [WEAKLY]: Is anybody hearing this? I need - -

TESSERACT [WEAKLY]: Come in.

FOUNTAIN: Copy, soldier. We're coming in.

PAGE 15 PANEL 3

Centre on Threshold, but with the others in shot. Vykni frowns: Dreamcatcher looks startled and scared. Threshold is decisive, calm, sure of what she has to do.

THRESHOLD: Hold that perimeter, Vykni.

THRESHOLD: You'll be on your own here. Fountain, Dreamcatcher and Brute are coming with me.

VYKNI: With you where? Thresh, this place is dangerous. You can't - -

PAGE 15 PANEL 4

Tight on Threshold. Her expression as before – calmly determined, brooking no argument.

THRESHOLD: I'm going back for Seed.

THRESHOLD: We can't do anything without her.

PAGE 15 PANEL 5

Out wide. Threshold leads the way, Dreamcatcher and Brute falling in beside her. Vykni still pleads and remonstrates, not happy.

VYKNI: We can't do anything without you, either.

VYKNI: Seed will find her own way back.

BRUTE: But suppose the indigenes have found her. Trapped her...

PAGE 15 PANEL 6

Close-up on Threshold's face. She bares her teeth: that's the one possibility she doesn't even want to think about.

THRESHOLD: Then I'll walk over their broken bodies to get her back - -

THRESHOLD: - - and make us a family again.

PAGE 16 PANEL 1

External establishing shot of the Baxter Building. Evening, with the sky reddening as the sun goes down.

LETTERING NOTE: balloons here come from inside the building.

THING: So you threw down with a bunch of aliens?

REED: I think - - yeah. They could've been.

THING: Aliens with super powers?

REED: Or very advanced tech.

THING: And you trashed most of Sak's?

REED: Well, the cosmetics department. And ladies' lingerie.

PAGE 16 PANEL 2

Inside the building, in one of the lab areas. Reed is examining the Seed, which he's got hooked up to some vastly complex, Kirby-esque apparatus. The Thing and the Torch watch him, the Thing seeming truculent and reproachful, Johnny with a leering grin on his face. The Torch isn't flamed on – like Sue, earlier, he's dressed in casual clothes. Reed throws out an arm as if to indicate that the Thing and Johnny are crowding him.

THING: Dude, that's cold. You said it was just a shopping trip.

TORCH: There's a name for guys who hang out in ladies' lingerie.

REED: Look, I'm trying to concentrate here.

PAGE 16 PANEL 3

Tight on Reed, with the Seed in shot. He stares at it, frowning: it's a puzzle that he's determined to solve.

REED: They had this thing with them. The one who seemed to be the leader was carrying it.

REED: It might give us some idea of where they came from.

PAGE 16 PANEL 4

Out wide. Johnny and Ben seem to find this statement amusing: they riff on it, while Reed goes on with his work, adjusting a dial here or a circuit there.

TORCH: Yeah, turn it over. There's probably a return address.

THING: Nah, some of these gourds got a homing instinct.

THING: Go on, girl. Go on, Lassie. Show us the way.

PAGE 16 PANEL 5

Tight on Reed. He swivels to glower at the two jokers, annoyed at their needling.

REED: I'm scanning its intrinsic energy signature, you jerks.

REED: And I'd do it a lot faster with you some place else.

PAGE 16 PANEL 6

The corridor outside the lab. Johnny and Ben stroll away, casual, a little bored.

BEN: So you think Sue would be up for a game of Dancing Stage Max against the master?

JOHNNY: We didn't fix the floor after last time. And she's kind of - - dissecting a motor-bike or something.

JOHNNY: Gonna have to be Grand Theft Auto.

PAGE 17 PANEL 1

Another lab – a very large one. Sue and her father, Doctor Storm, are hooking Sky-Eater up to intravenous drips. Technicians wheel diagnostic equipment into place around the ailing, dormant star-bike.

PAGE 17 PANEL 2

Two-shot on Sue and Doctor Storm. Sue slides a scanning plate across Sky-Eater's metallic hide. The plate is on a jointed positioning arm. The screen shows a schematic circuit diagram of Sky-Eater's interior. Doctor Storm frowns, watching his daughter at work.

DOCTOR STORM: You're sure this thing is alive, Sue?

SUE: Heat and moisture gradients track like a living body's, dad. And I'm fairly sure it's photosynthesizing.

SUE: Oh yeah. It's alive. Trust me.

PAGE 17 PANEL 3

Close-up on Sue's face – tense, a little unhappy.

SUE: I just don't know how long I can keep it that way.

PAGE 18 PANEL 1

A street in Manhattan. Threshold, Fountain and Magnificent Brute, in their “normal human, nothing to see here” disguises, wander past the shop windows and look around them warily. They remain in their human forms throughout this scene.

DREAMCATCHER [TAILLESS BALLOON]: So is Seed close, Threshold?

THRESHOLD: Very close, Dream. A league away at most.

THRESHOLD: We won't leave Vykní and Tesseract alone for long.

PAGE 18 PANEL 2

Tight on Brute, see through the glass of a shop window as he peers in at a display of DVDs. He's bemused, but fascinated in spite of himself.

BRUTE: This is a weird place. Primitive, but kind of exciting.

BRUTE: I mean, it's like they took a lot of bricks and stone and built a jungle.

PAGE 18 PANEL 3

Tight on Threshold. She frowns.

DREAMCATCHER [TAILLESS BALLOON]: They mimic the higher life forms as if they've seen them. Or dreamed about them.

DREAMCATCHER [TAILLESS BALLOON]: It's like watching children playing at being grown-ups.

THRESHOLD: These children could hurt us if they play too roughly. Don't forget that.

PAGE 18 PANEL 4

Out wide. Threshold is accosted by a homeless guy who's begging for money. The team stare at him, at a loss.

HOMELESS GUY: [ALIEN GIBBERISH]

BRUTE: What's he saying?

THRESHOLD: Without Seed to translate, I can't make out a word of it.

PAGE 18 PANEL 5

Tight on the homeless guy. He gapes in bewildered astonishment, his jaw dropping.

DREAMCATCHER [TAILLESS BALLOON]: He wants coins – exchange tokens – to spend on artificial stimulants.

DREAMCATCHER [TAILLESS BALLOON]: But I think I can persuade his brain to manufacture the chemicals for itself.

PAGE 18 PANEL 6

Out wide. They walk on, towards the Baxter Building which rises in the middle distance ahead of them. Behind them, the homeless guy has slumped against a wall, limp and blissed-out.

THRESHOLD: That building up ahead - - That's where we're going.

FOUNTAIN: Orders, Thresh?

THRESHOLD: Find Seed. Get her back. And if anyone tries to stop you - -

PAGE 19 PANEL 1

Back in the lab. Tight on Reed. He stares at a bank of diagnostic equipment. His expression is thoughtful, intent.

THRESHOLD CAPTION: “ - - make them sorry.”

REED: How are you doing all this?

REED: And what is the this that you’re doing?

REED: You don’t have a power source. You don’t have a - -

PAGE 19 PANEL 2

Pull back or rotate POV to bring the Seed into shot. Reed snaps round to stare at it, alerted by the sound.

SFX: MRRRRRRMEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

REED: Oh so now you want to talk?

REED: Well my name’s Reed. What’s yours?

PAGE 19 PANEL 3

Tight on the Seed. It starts to emit light again – this time a writhing, polychromatic light.

SFX: PIT PIT PIT PIT PIT PIT PIT PIT PIT PIT

PAGE 19 PANEL 4

Close-up on Reed’s face: he’s surprised and alarmed.

PAGE 19 PANEL 5

The corridor outside the lab. Very, very intense light flares out through the open doorway as the Seed activates and floods the entire lab with its radiance.

SFX: FWAAAASHHHHH

PAGE 19 PANEL 6

Identical POV. The light has died. Nothing moves.

PAGE 19 PANEL 7

Identical POV. Reed's hand comes into shot, sliding along the floor at the base of the doorway. His arm is elongated but limp, loosely spooled. His fingers grope feebly. They're tented, claw-like, clutching at nothing.

PAGE 19 PANEL 8

Identical POV. Reed's hand is still, the fingers now lying flat along the ground. He's lost consciousness – and possibly more than that.

PAGE 20 PANEL 1

The lobby of the Baxter Building. Threshold and her team walk in off the street. There are armed soldiers on guard, and they're instantly challenged. Fountain lifts up a device which he's taken from his bag – something that produces a visible pulse of energy but doesn't appear to be aimed at anyone in particular.

SOLDIER: [ALIEN GIBBERISH]

THRESHOLD: These are soldiers, I think. And they're no threat to us. Gently, Fountain.

THRESHOLD: Onto it.

SFX [FOUNTAIN'S DEVICE]: FLECK FLECK FLECK FLECK

PAGE 20 PANEL 2

Rotate POV. The team walk on: the soldiers are frozen in the same postures as they were in PANEL 1.

SFX: AROOOOOOOOOO

FOUNTAIN: Slow time. Should last until we're long gone.

FOUNTAIN: But we've tripped an alarm of some kind. Watch out for retaliation.

PAGE 20 PANEL 3

Tight on Threshold. Laser cannons drop from the ceiling and target the team, but Threshold is able to swallow the beams without difficulty.

THRESHOLD: Energy weapons. Good.

THRESHOLD: I'll save these beams for later.

PAGE 20 PANEL 4

Tight on Brute. He holds up a bulkhead door without difficulty as it tries to slide down and seal off the corridor, the metal buckling in his hands. The others step through.

BRUTE: Do we know where we're going?

THRESHOLD: Up.

THRESHOLD: All the way.

PAGE 21 PANEL 1

Johnny's living quarters. He and Ben are sitting on the floor playing a computer game on a massive screen which fills the whole wall. Ben is playing by means of an over-sized, customised control pad. They both look around at the sound of the siren, puzzled and interested.

SFX: AROOOOOOOOOO

JOHNNY: What's the deal?

BEN: Who cares? I finally figured out that nitro refill thing.

JOHNNY: No, c'mon. Let's go see.

PAGE 21 PANEL 2

Outside in a broad hallway area. Soldiers with guns and rifles at the ready are surrounding the elevator doors when Johnny and Ben come onto the scene. Lumpkin is in command.

JOHNNY: Hey, guys. What up?

LUMPKIN: Containment breach, kid. We've got intruders in the building.

JOHNNY: Cool. We can help you dis-intrude.

PAGE 21 PANEL 3

Two-shot on Lumpkin and Johnny. Lumpkin glowers at Johnny, who smiles blandly and amiably back.

LUMPKIN: Or you could get out of the line of fire and let us do our job.

JOHNNY: But we're superheroes, dog.

JOHNNY: The line of fire's where we're meant to be.

PAGE 21 PANEL 4

Close-up on the elevator's control panel. The light indicating this floor flashes red.

SFX: BING

PAGE 21 PANEL 5

Looking from inside the elevator through the doors as they open. The soldiers all point their weapons into the interior, and Johnny and Ben peer in with avid, slightly wary interest.

PAGE 22 PANEL 1

Reversing POV so that we're looking past Johnny, Ben and the soldiers from behind into the elevator. Instead of armed intruders, it contains three innocent-looking little children – scaled-down, near-infant versions of Threshold, Brute and Fountain. Or another way of framing the shot would be to have the three kids stepping out of the elevator, all the startled soldiers still automatically training their guns on them while Johnny and Ben stare, baffled.

JOHNNY: Well now I know what an anti-climax is.

JOHNNY: And it's not nearly as much fun as it sounds.

PAGE 22 PANEL 2

Tight on the kids. Li'l Threshold frowns as she sizes up the opposition. Li'l Fountain steps forward, as grim and threatening as a toddler can be.

THRESHOLD: Nice weave, Dreamcatcher.

DREAMCATCHER [TAILLESS BALLOON]: Thank you, Thresh.

THRESHOLD: Despite appearances, the smallest is the most dangerous. He's a pyrophore.

FOUNTAIN: Then let me take him.

PAGE 22 PANEL 3

Out wide, but centred on Johnny and Li'l Fountain. Johnny has gone down on one knee, amused and indulgent. Fountain faces him squarely, totally serious. Lumpkin looks alarmed: he knows this isn't right.

JOHNNY: I think maybe you guys lost your way or something.

FOUNTAIN: Wrong song, indigene. If anyone's lost, it's you.

LUMPKIN: Storm, get back. Let me check them out before you - -

PAGE 22 PANEL 4

Two-shot on Johnny and Li'l Fountain. Fountain clasps Johnny's hand in both of his. Johnny is startled, confused, because the effect is immediate: he can already feel things moving and changing inside him, even if nothing shows yet.

FOUNTAIN: I'm Grail Fountain. And this is my blessing touch.

FOUNTAIN: You stole the Seed. Now you get to bleed.

PAGE 22 PANEL 5

Tight on Johnny. Head and shoulders only. He staggers up onto his feet, lurches back, alarmed and scared. His eyes are wide, and little licks of flame burn inside them. His skin is starting to glow. The blessing touch is stimulating his flame powers to uncontrollable levels, and it's happening very fast.

JOHNNY: H - - Hey! This feels - -

JOHNNY: What have you done to me?

JOHNNY: What have you - - ?

PAGE 23

Splash. Out wide. Johnny throws back his head and screams, his back arched. Vivid, searing yellow-white light bursts from his mouth and eyes and various parts of his body as he flares quickly but unevenly towards nova heat. The soldiers cower back. Ben stands helpless, alarmed but impotent, the speed of events catching him flat-footed.

JOHNNY [SCREAMS]: AAAAHHRRRRRRR!

To be continued