
Then.

The Colcord's were a wealthy British family that decided to settle in Toronto, Canada. Somewhere along the line, their youngest, Malcolm, struck out on his own and joined the military. His father had served in the British Navy before he made a few choice real estate investments, eventually hitting it big.

Perhaps Malcolm felt that he could achieve the same thing—perhaps he had a lifelong sense of adventure. Or maybe it was the thrill, the rush of building something out of nothing. Starting an empire from scratch, just as his father did.

Malcolm rose through the ranks and caught the attention of various officers, American and Canadian alike. Highly intelligent and a great strategist, they were certain this scrawny boy had "it." He could disassemble and reassemble a rifle in record time, picked up improvisational hand-to-hand fighting techniques, and had a sort of photographic memory—able to recall complex codes and other formulas. It made his understanding of genetics almost unmatched when he read over the notes of Dr. Essex.

He was recruited into the secretive Department K, stationed as a guard to a very top secret project in the Canadian wilderness. Of course, this meant the job was also very dangerous. And it was.

Now, he lay dying on a stretcher—the sole survivor of a vicious attack by a mutant codenamed Weapon X. It seemed his perfect dream was shattered.

"Stay with me," the brown-eyed, brown-haired male military surgeon whispered as his green scrubs were doused in Colcord's blood.

Colcord looked up with his remaining eye and tried to speak, but found his windpipe was sliced three ways to Saturday. The surgeon immediately shook his head, "Don't speak!" The surgeon looked over at his co-workers, who were desperately trying to stop the bleeding on the other extremities of his body.

Dozens of mountains and valleys suddenly drew themselves out on the heart monitor as Malcolm went into shock as a result of his injuries. He began to convulse on the stretcher.

"Damn it!" the surgeon yelled as he leaped on top and began to pound on the man's chest, being careful not to start any new bleeding.

"Doctor! Stop it!" the female surgeon exclaimed.

"Just get the paddles!" the surgeon exclaimed as he pointed behind him, flinging droplets of blood everywhere. His latex gloves became sticky and lubricated with blood, but he kept on trying to restart the man's heart. When the protective pads were adhered to the proper areas of Colcord's chest, the surgeon grabbed the paddles after jumping back onto the floor.

"Charging one-hundred...clear!" the surgeon shouted as he delivered a shock into Malcolm Colcord's body. His body jolted upwards as if his chest were hailing to Heaven, trying to ask for God's help.

To the surgeon's relief and amazement, Colcord's heart rate returned to a steady, yet weak level.

He sighed, "He's stable...let's patch up the rest of him."

"Sergeant," the female surgeon said as she lightly touched the man's shoulder, "why don't you go get

some air...you've been here since four in the morning."

The soldier-slash-surgeon turned away and removed his goggles from his blood-stained face. It looked like he had bright red Native American war paint applied to everywhere but the dark circles which surrounded his eyes.

"Couldn't save the others...they were mutilated beyond repair," the surgeon, Wade Wilson, said as he walked off, exhausted. The blood didn't bother him, just the fact that he couldn't save more of the men and women that were shipped to the Department K military hospital in the middle of the night. He was dropped by the US Army for being "too good" of an asset. He was eventually picked up by Department K, and given a surgeon's knowledge through an experimental procedure which artificially boosted one's learning skills. Eight years of medical school was condensed into a five month period.

The side effects of insanity have not yet shown up in Wilson's brainwaves.

Sgt. Wilson walked outside and lit up a cigarette before he even cleaned himself up of blood. He inhaled and exhaled the smoke, which made his lungs tingle with false delight. His job was easy enough: save lives. After tonight, however, it seemed that with all of the patients he lost—taking lives didn't seem to be as difficult as he thought. He knew they would all die. He prepared himself for that inevitability, fearing it until it actually happened.

Wade took another drag of his cigarette and looked at the burning ash which fell to the frost-ridden asphalt. He smoked everyday since he was 15, but this cigarette felt different. He wasn't trying to blend into the crowd. It actually calmed him down for the first time. The millions of cigs before that were just a filthy habit.

Now all he had to worry about was if he'd get cancer...



#3 (December 2007)

KIDS WITH GUNS

Part III: "Unforgiven"

Written by [Brad Horton](#)

In the endless void of outer space, in the center of the universe, a sentient android floated motionless in perfect harmony. The fabled M’Kraan Crystal, the Nexus of Realities, was securely lodged in the artificial humanoid’s chest cavity.

His name was Prosh; built by the Celestials and servant to both Cable and Apocalypse. Now, he was charged with one mission and one mission only: ensure the stability of the universe by any means necessary and to safeguard the crystal. For too long, the Crystal was in the possession of the Shi’ar Empire, which turned out to be a colossal mistake for any sentient being to possess.

Without warning, however, in the tranquility of space, the crystal shattered within Prosh’s bio-mechanical body. A beam of intense blue light flickered and then shot off in a straight line—likely headed for a random galaxy.

Prosh, of course, awoke from his slumber as there had been no outside threat for him to even prepare for. No being would dare venture to the center of the universe. Not even a wormhole could take anyone there. He panicked as tiny shards of twinkling crystals hovered motionless in front of him.

{{What happened?}} he asked himself.

As if heeding his call, various colored patterns of the spectrum appeared against the blackness of space. Soon, figures were made distinguishable in the form of black armor under those colored patterns. They were the Celestials. One with black and red armor, in the center, held out its hand. The M’Kraan Crystal reformed itself in front of Prosh.

The android took the crystal and placed it back into his chest as it seemed to merge with him.

{{I’m sorry masters, I did not perform my task,}} Prosh confessed sorrowfully. He looked at the faceless masks which covered the Celestials’ heads, {{Where did that beam of light go? Can I intercept it in time?}}

The center of the universe provided the perfect vantage point. If he willed it, Prosh could be anywhere at any time he chose—however, the Celestials joined hands and faded away into nothing. In their place was a generated hard-light construct of a little blue planet Prosh recognized almost immediately.

{{Oh, no...}}

Undisclosed location.

“Weasel, you cock-knocker,” Deadpool smirked through his mask as he closed the door to the arms-dealer’s New York underground safehouse. Along the walls were dozens of metal shelves with every firearm imaginable. In the center of it all was a ragtag multi-computer network.

The thin, brown-haired man arched an eyebrow with his circular-rimmed glasses from behind his computer console. “Wade? What’re you doing here? You don’t write, don’t call...I was beginning to worry you fell off the grid. I heard about your little spat with T-Ray.”

Deadpool scratched the back of his head as he pulled his mask off, revealing his scarred visage. Weasel was one of the only friends Wade had that really grew accustomed to his face, “Sorry, things have been intense lately. I sorta...joined this new faction of Weapon X.”

Weasel sat up from his chair almost immediately, “Do they need weapons? Information?”

"Business slower than usual?" Deadpool inquired. "You'd think someone like you could make tons of money off leaking celebrity sex tapes."

Weasel half-smiled, "What do you think I do in my spare time?"

"...pervert," Deadpool muttered. He arched an eyebrow, "And you seem pretty nonchalant about that whole all-new Weapon X thing. Has news of that been around for awhile or what?"

Weasel shrugged as he sat back down at his computer terminal, "Nothing out of the ordinary, I guess. Weapon X has always existed in some form. You here to make your payment here in person or what?"

"No," Deadpool said, "I know all transactions are final with you. I wired you the money for my last batch of ammo."

"So, what's with the house call?" Weasel asked.

Deadpool wiped his nose, "I need a weapon. I'm not even sure if they're in production or not, but...I knew you'd be the man to get your hands on one for me."

"What'd we say about nukes?" Weasel groaned.

"It's not a nuke, you sphincter!" Deadpool retaliated. "It's a mutant-nullifier."

Weasel's eyes lit up with conjecture, "Why would you want one of those? You're gonna get yourself into a world of trouble neither of us need. We don't need the X-Men beating down our doors every night."

"I'm not going after the X-Men again," Deadpool muttered. "In fact, I don't think I was perfectly sane at the time when I signed up with the Byron Agency."

"Wait, now I remember, you were taken into custody by SHIELD after the whole Byron business!" Weasel said as he snapped his fingers. "Did this new Weapon X magically wipe your records clean if signed up with them or something?"

Deadpool bit his lip as his eyes darted from side to side, "You mean I wasn't supposed to do that? I probably saved your ass by doing that, too! Lord knows how many guns you've supplied me with, or my crappy teleportation device."

"Wade," Weasel sighed, "when has that EVER worked out in your favor?"

Deadpool sighed, "I guess never. Because of me now, Apocalypse is back."

"Apocalypse?" Weasel wondered. "He hasn't been around for years. The world kinda got foggy for a couple weeks and then everything was back to normal. Figured someone took care of that guy." Weasel chuckled, "You're in deeper shit than normal, Wilson. I don't know if I can bail you out this time."

"Well, it's not TOTALLY my fault," Deadpool confessed. "Turns out Weapon X was trying to bring back Cable from a higher plane of existence...er whatever cotton candy-filled heaven would-be mutant saviors go to."

Weasel arched an eyebrow, "Are you sure they wanted Cable to begin with?"

Deadpool shrugged, "All I know is that there's a five-thousand year old Egyptian warlord running loose out there and it's all my fault...er...partially my fault. One-quarter my fault. So you got a mutant nullifier or what?"

Weasel shook his head, "No, no...I mean I've been sitting on some information that SHIELD doesn't even know about yet."

Deadpool curled his lips back and declared with a false sense of excitement, "...ohhhhkayyyyy! Does it involve a mutant nullifier in any way, shape, or perhaps even form?"

"Well, kinda," Weasel sighed as he spun around in his swivel chair, typing in a few commands into his computer keyboard, bringing up several search results—many with the word 'classified' plastered over them. He continued, "About a year ago, Cable took out a bunch of soldiers working for a mutant called Holocaust. Team America wasn't too happy with that, so they chained him up. He's been there ever since in some kind of vegetative state. The superhero community doesn't know anything about it; otherwise I'm sure someone would have broken him out. The thing is they hold onto a mutant nullifier just in case Cable decides to act like his old self again. They say he's powerless, but it's better to be safe than sorry..."

"...I have no idea what you just said," Deadpool replied. He rubbed his chin, "Still. The X-Men have ways to locate mutants...wonder why they haven't looked...?"

Xavier Institute.

"...Phinehasokpara...," the redheaded, twenty-something Rachel Summers whispered. Hank McCoy, the blue-furred X-Man known as Beast, injected a sedative into her left arm.

"The Shi'ar translator interpreted the name as 'the first born' with 'the mouth of a serpent'...not sure what that means," Beast said as he rubbed his stubbly chin. He sipped a cup of coffee, "Do you have anything Jean?"

Jean Grey-Summers, Rachel's "mother" for all intents and purposes, concentrated as she expanded her telepathic skills, wrapping around Rachel's mind, trying to find her center. Jean opened her eyes, revealing a yellowish glow, "I don't know what she experienced during her coma, but it seems her astral time travel powers had something to do with it. It's possible a piece of her is still roaming the timestream. She feels...fractured inside."

"Can't her connection with the Phoenix help her?" Cyclops, Scott Summers, de-facto leader of the X-Men, and Rachel's "father" asked.

Jean's eyes darted from side to side. In the past year, it seemed as though the "Phoenix Force" was Jean all along, but even that may have been untrue...or at least, not fully explained or misinterpreted. Omega mutants, usually of highly-tuned telekinetic and telepathic ability, were prone to Phoenix manifestations. Jean and Rachel were two such candidates—even Cable himself for a short time.

"I'm not sure," was all that Jean could say. "The Phoenix is everywhere. Not just in one localized person. It's not a cure-all. I can't make it work like that."

Noticing the distress the very name of the firebird caused his wife, Cyclops slowly approached Phoenix and hugged her from behind, "Sorry. Sometimes we expect too much of you. It's okay."

"It's not your fault, honey," Jean said, trying to keep tears from running down her face. "I just wish I

could figure out what's going on with her."

"I can tell you."

The three founding X-Men jerked their heads towards the entrance to the med lab and saw an indistinguishable silhouette.

"Sinister..." Cyclops growled as his visor lit up with red energy, just begging to be set loose. "Your St. Croix constructs giving you trouble?"

Nathaniel Essex, expert geneticist of the Victorian era, stepped into the light and was revealed to be holding his chest over a wound which would not heal, "Please, I am not here to fight..."

Beast sniffed the air, "You're bleeding? I thought you had regenerative abilities? Are you going for the sympathy vote?"

"Stop right there," Cyclops demanded as his hand reached for his visor.

Sinister's labored breathing did not impede his explanation, "My worst fears, after planning over one-hundred years, have come true...the same source of my wounds..."

"What?" Cyclops yelled through clenched teeth.

"Did you hear about the disturbance on the astral plane? Tell me, Ms. Grey, did your Cerebro unit pick up any new mutant activity?" Sinister asked. "One with more power than any group of mutants combined?"

"There was a spike, but it was a glitch," Jean said, "We're still updating our systems from when our last Cerebro unit went rogue."

Sinister smiled, "Then ask me what the meaning of the name Rachel keeps speaking is..." After being met with odd stares, Sinister growled as he pointed a finger at Scott Summers, "Do you think his defeat was all by chance!!? I have helped you through it all! By essentially CREATING your son!"

"What're you talking about?" Cyclops asked.

For a moment, Sinister pondered what he should tell him—that Apocalypse was alive or that Apocalypse was alive *and* the Summers family was descended from him.

"Apocalypse is back," Sinister said as he coughed up blood. "And with Cable gone...as well as his alternate self, Rachel may be the only one powerful enough to beat him. Apocalypse's true name has been spoken by Rachel since she awoke from her coma."

"How did you know she was in a coma?" Jean asked as her hair seemed to catch fire and toss in the wind.

"Apocalypse is back?" Beast wondered aloud. "That's impossible. The X-Men have taken out all of Apocalypse's hidden bases...all of his sarcophaguses that allowed him to resuscitate himself or take on another host have been destroyed."

"I'm here to help her," Sinister said. "Or do you forget I have a hundred years of telepathic experience—longer than your precious mentor or even heir to the fabled Phoenix Force...?"

"You're here to help yourself," Cyclops said. He shook his head, "I can have every available X-Man here in two seconds, Sinister. Don't play games with me."

"On the contrary, Mr. Summers," Sinister grinned, despite his massive chest wound, "I'm here to save the world." He held out his hand and with a simple gesture, Rachel stopped speaking the ancient name of Apocalypse. A firebird formed over her left eye.

And she screamed.

"...?" Deadpool paused as he simply gripped his bottom lip in deep thought.

Weasel simply stared, unsure if Deadpool was really thinking about something, or just really confused, "I...I don't really know the whole situation with Cable, so I really...can't...determine...anything."

Deadpool continued to pinch his bottom lip. His eyes looked up at Weasel and he smiled, "Sorry...I was just trying to remember what Pauly Shore's character's name was in *Bio-Dome*. I wanna say...Crawl?"

"You're an idiot," Weasel said with a sigh. "And it was Budd, actually. Crawl was from *Son-In-Law*."

"Nuh-uh!" Deadpool whined like a five-year-old.

"Dude!" Weasel yelled. "The second I check IMDb, you're gonna see I'm right!"

"Shut up!" Deadpool returned as he drew a handgun and pointed it at his friend's head, "Gimmie a nullifier, butthole, or I'll tear off your wiener and shove it up your ass!"

Weasel shook his head, almost nonchalantly as he casually pushed the gun barrel out of his face, "The government put a ban on them. It's an environmentalist thing. They didn't want the weapon to cause some kind of mutant extinction or another Hecatomb. But if you want to take out Apocalypse...I might have the guy to do it."

Deadpool raised an eyebrow, "Mick Edwards?"

"Did you not just hear me talking about Cable a few seconds ago?" Weasel asked. "If we find Cable, we'll find the mutant nullifier you need to take down Apocalypse."

"Heh...oh, yeah," Deadpool chuckled. "Hmm, that's weird. I coulda swore Dr. Colcord told me Cable existed in the Fifth Dimension. Or maybe I was thinking of Mr. Mxyzptlk. Maybe if we say 'Cable' backwards, he'll come back. Heh. ELBAC!"

"I've got the files right here," Weasel said as he typed a few more commands on one of his seven keyboards. "This first one dates back almost a year ago. I guess if you think about it, the fifth dimension is beyond the regular three dimensions we all exist in, maybe Cable returned on his own...just not the right point in time? Kinda like the Nexus from *Star Trek: Generations* that allowed Captain Picard and Captain Kirk to join forces."

Wade rolled his eyes and sarcastically replied, "It's amazing you're such a chick-magnet with all your Gene Roddenberry DVDs. And anyway, Cable was from the future to begin with, nerd-bomber!" Deadpool continued, "At least, that's where he grew up."

"Does anyone else know for sure?" Weasel asked.

Deadpool sighed as he pulled his mask back on, "Something smells like evil manipulative villain up in here. There's something going on and I am not in the mood for another job where I'm taken advantage of, unless I'm working for the Olsen Twins Unlimited Clone Orgy." He turned towards Weasel and leaned against his computer console.

"So, where was this secret hidden base?" he asked.

Near Baghdad.

"...bring them oblivion...", a Caucasian US soldier said as he stood guard in front of a small barred cell in the middle of the desert heat—one-hundred and eleven degree heat, to be exact. It was a small base camp for American forces as they continued their campaign against the civil unrest of Sunni and Shiite parties while trying to uphold the peace and rebuild the country's infrastructure.

The soldier's African-American counterpart arched an eyebrow, "Huh?"

The other soldier replied as he used his eyes to indicate the individual behind them, inside the cell, "That's what *he* keeps sayin'. Hasn't talked in a year. We beat his ass senseless, tortured him, trying to get info out of him, and all of a sudden, he's finally talking. Except of course, he's sayin' all this crazy shit..."

"You know who the guy is, right?" the black soldier asked. "He's one of the most powerful mutants on the planet."

The other soldier appeared to be callous, "You sure that's the same guy?" He smirked as he shook his head while looking out for superior officers to make sure they were guarding the cell like they were supposed to, "His powers are gone. They just turned off, or something. I'm not sure how it all works. Don't ask me how you turn off a part of yourself, but...I guess that's why we're guarding him and not some high-level government agents."

"That sounds dumb. Even if he doesn't have any powers, he could still be a threat," the black soldier commented incongruously.

The white soldier shook his head, "He's been a vegetable for over a year. Nah, I shouldn't say that. He can still feed an' clean himself, he just...looks all zoned out all the time. Never says a word. Well, until now..."

Inside the cell, a muscular man drenched in sweat nervously sat in the Lotus position. His hair was ratty and white, his grizzly beard matching in color and texture. Scabs and welts dotted his body like a ratty old quilt. "Bring them oblivion...", he repeated.

After peering inside, the black soldier smirked, "It seems he found his mind. What was left of it, anyway." He suddenly appeared annoyed, "Such a waste of a good warrior..."

The white soldier arched an eyebrow, "Are you feeling alright, son?"

The black soldier's eyes glowed red as he crushed his M-16 with his bare hands. His lips became unnaturally blue and his skin a light gray tone, his musculature doubling in size. Apocalypse smiled, "I have never felt better, human."

"MUTAN—urk!!" the soldier shouted before his head was abruptly removed from the rest of his body. Blood showered him in an orgasm of cold blooded murder.

Apocalypse sighed as he carelessly tossed the head aside as he did with so many others who had fallen in battle against him. He turned to the cell door and looked up, silently counting down in his head, "And now, the diversion..."

[[Red alert! Red alert!]]

Red LEDs flashed all around the base as dozens of AIM shock troops stormed the army base, setting off explosions outside, taking the Americans off guard. Apocalypse smiled to himself. AIM, which stood for Advanced Idea Mechanics, was easy to bribe into attacking this particular base with their advanced weaponry. It was such an easy victory they could not pass up.

Apocalypse walked up to the cell door and easily tore it from its hinges. Cable, the broken man, seemed oblivious to the sight of his eternal enemy. Apocalypse, in his younger state, now had access to fine molecular-tuning abilities he did not for thousands of years.

His eyes glowed red as he held out his hand, causing Cable to hover in midair, "What have they done to you? They kicked you out of eternal paradise...? No, you chose to leave, at such a great cost to your mind and body. Your mutant genes are now forever dormant, my adversary...and yet, I do not have the heart to finish you off..."

Cable's eyes darted back and forth, "...bring them oblivion..."

"Your mind is still recuperating, no doubt" Apocalypse nodded, "but even at your most pathetic, one should still be tested as one of the strong..." Apocalypse squinted as he searched Cable's body on the molecular scale, searching for the remnants of the techno-organic virus he originally infected him with as an infant. Sinister had, through his knowledge of genetics, created an "organic" counter-virus to essentially cure Cable of his lifelong ailment, however it did not clean up the scar tissue. Once Apocalypse had a hold of those remnant viruses, he agitated them, brought them to life once more...

"...bring them..." Cable paused as Apocalypse lifted his telekinetic field and let him fall to the cell floor. Almost instantly, silver veins appeared across Cable's left side, quickly spreading to the rest of his body. Tentacles of liquid metal flailed as if consuming its host.

Cable panted as his pupils suddenly shrunk. He grit his teeth and looked up at Apocalypse, "...you?"

"I did you a favor," Apocalypse said in a commanding tone as he slowly walked out of the cell. "When next we meet, you had better put up the fight of your life. If you survive, that is."

{{...why?}} Cable asked, his voice becoming cold and machine-like.

Apocalypse stopped in his tracks. He turned his head, "You and I are the most dangerous men on the planet. I have no more need for incompetent Horsemen or disciples. All I need are individuals, radical icons that will inspire the weak to be stronger. Or...we will all perish."

{{I will not work for your ideals...}} Cable responded as his body struggled to deal with the stress of the re-emergence of his techno-organic virus. {{I will stop you.}}

Apocalypse smirked, "You and I both know that isn't possible. I am eternal. Destroying my body in the Fifth Dimension ensured I will exist forever. Did you think I was foolish to allow the Gathering of the Twelve just to test my own mettle?! I do not enjoy causing death; I merely want this world to

"...now, you're dead," Cable muttered as he picked up both M-16s.

Then.

Wade Wilson coughed slightly, opening his eyes to the brightest light one would ever hope to imagine. "Give it to me straight, doc."

"You're in bad shape, Wilson," Dr. Colcord said bluntly, basked in shadows. All that was visible was the reflection off of his eyeglasses. It was in this same facility that Wade Wilson saved Malcolm's life. It seemed karma stepped in and paid him a favor. "But we've managed to artificially replicate a previous Weapon X ability into your system—hyper-accelerating it to combat the cancer cells. It seems to be working..."

Wade arched a hairless eyebrow, sensing there was more the good doctor had to say, "But?"

Dr. Colcord sighed, "There were a few side-effects."

Sgt. Wilson immediately touched his face, feeling the dry, lifeless skin which now covered his body. Wilson frowned, "I want my wife...where is she?"

"I'm sorry, Wade...there was nothing we could do for her. There are too many loopholes in security as it is."

"I...can't remember all my surgeon knowledge...," Wade suddenly said randomly. "Feeling kind of...like I just took a bong hit to end all bong hits. My brain is floating inside my skull..."

"That's your brain trying to repair itself from the damage your prior neuron experiment caused," Dr. Colcord said. "You may experience memory lapses, or even memories that are simply untrue."

"I don't...understand..." Wade said as he went into a violent seizure.

"Damn it! He's flatlining!" Dr. Colcord shouted. "Stay with me, Wilson!"

"I never...got to...take a dump outside the White House...!" Wilson spat before succumbing to his own body's malfunctioning cells.

Now.

Nathan Summers couldn't help but grin, the shit-eating kind, as he pulled the triggers of his newfound guns. Explosions bombarded his senses, a sensation he found strangely soothing. Bullets sprayed into the AIM agents, their ridiculous yellow uniforms making them unusually easy targets. Lucky for Cable, he needed an easy warm up to get back into practice.

"Fuck!" an American soldier yelled as he turned his fire elsewhere, "he's escaped!"

"Wait!" Cable shouted as a solitary bullet shot through his neck. A second tap soon punctured his heart, splattering blood and liquid metal everywhere. Nathan grimaced in pain, dropping to his knees while trying to grip his throat.

"He wasn't aiming for us, you id---!" another soldier yelled before succumbing to a bullet wound through the head by an AIM agent's blast.

"We didn't shoot him!"

"Who did?"

"AIM?"

"It was Kawalski! That fuckin' idiot! Always with the civilian casualties! Goddamn!"

The Iraqi sun beat down on Cable's scabbed and injured flesh as he gasped for breath. He concentrated on the virus which still had hold of his body.

[[ASSIMILATE ALL ORGANIC TISSUE]] it repeated over and over, except his will kept it in check. Was it because his entire body was already consumed? Did Apocalypse re-engineer it to bend to Cable's wishes? Or did Sinister's tampering prove to be more useful than before?

Come on, Nate...think like a Technarch...Warlock could fly through worm holes...you can survive a couple of bullets!!

And so it was, the virus spread over Cable's insides, spreading nanites into his blood stream, stopping the bleeding and repairing the rest with organic machines.

"...gggggg.....fuck!" he spat.

It wasn't a pleasant process.

So much so, that Cable failed to notice a fighter jet rocketing through the sky and very high speeds, screeching downwards towards the war torn base. For a moment, Cable thought it was a rescue, but it was a solitary jet...and he could hear the Radiohead music playing via the onboard computer.

"It's gonna crash...," Cable muttered to himself as an explosion from behind took him by surprise. He looked up once more, noticing the pilot was past the point of no return to hit the eject button and parachute to safety. "Who the hell's **that** stupid...?"

"LUUUUCYYYY!!!! IIII'M HOOOOOMME!!!" came a shout from above as the pilot seat was ejected at the last possible moment, leaving the speeding jet to crash head on into the base, setting off a massive explosion, sending flames and debris everywhere within the vicinity. Soldiers, those that did not take proper cover, were consumed by the flames or maimed by the super-heated metallic debris of the jet or the base itself.

Cable lifted his head after diving for cover. He coughed as he wiped the soot from his eyes, "...okay, that narrows it down..."

Deadpool casually floated towards the ground in a parachute harness as he calmly ate a banana, "This shit is bananas! B-A-N-A-N-A-S!!! Ain't no holler back merc!" His eyes lit up as he caught sight of the casualties, "Hey! Cool! AIM's here! I need free cable and these nerds are the only ones who can do it! I'm talkin' porn channels 24-7!"

Upon landing, Deadpool quickly discarded his harness and unsheathed a solitary katana. He slowly inched the edge of the blade towards the crotch region of an American soldier lying on the ground, wounded from shrapnel in the knee. "Where's the mutant nullifier, numb nuts?"

Cable, witnessing this, stood up, albeit slowly and demanded with his authoritative tone, "Leave him alone."

Deadpool, unfazed, simply scoffed at the sight of Cable—probably not recognizing who he was, "Be with you in a minute, Scruffy."

"Time is something both of us don't have, Wade," Cable said, as if he knew something Deadpool did not.

Deadpool sighed, frustrated, "Okay, you have my attention." He sheathed his katana and pulled out a modified enlarged uzi, pointing it at Cable. Before pulling the trigger as he originally intended, Wade paused, peering at the bearded man covered in bruises and cuts. Not to mention a hefty techno-organic infection on his entire left side.

"...Cable?" Wade asked. "No fair, dude. All this time I thought I helped bring Apocalypse back instead of you, and you're...here?!"

"I came back on my own, Wade," Cable said. "I wound up here—imprisoned for over a year...tortured, broken down, humiliated....But I was focused on only one thing."

"What...?" Deadpool asked.

"We're more alike than you think, Wilson," Cable said cryptically.

Epilogue

Some time ago...

"Project Askani is now in effect," Dr. Robert Windsor smiled as he toasted a champagne glass in the air. "I trust we have an understanding...? I want these two mutants to be pushed together, not forced, but..."

"Manipulated?" an unseen man asked. "All for the greater good against an ageless mutant? And you say this is all linked to the mutant named Cable I met a few weeks ago?"

"Apocalypse poses a threat to both of our plans and dreams, sir," Dr. Windsor said.

The man crossed his arms, "I will not influence the will of others like that."

"You won't have to," Dr. Windsor grinned, "because you will have no knowledge of doing it at all, neither will your new recruits. This is a classified project. We have taken the proper procedures to ensure even with a mind like yours that you shall not even know your own participation. You will more than likely cross paths with Apocalypse within the next few years. We cannot risk him knowing."

The man rubbed his eyes, "You know I will never allow that. I see behind your façade, the things you've done."

Dr. Windsor's eyes suddenly turned red, "Then you've seen what Apocalypse is—the threat he poses to the world. He will bring about the Biblical End of Days—all to uphold the baseless beliefs named after Charles Darwin—"

"A brilliant scientist," the man commented.

Dr. Windsor grinned with a sinister smirk, "I've met him...very overrated man."

"You are a Swiss Army knife of various abilities you've grafted to yourself," the man said. "Why not stop Apocalypse by yourself?"

Sinister almost lost his form of Dr. Windsor by laughing, "The proverbial Lucifer taking a stand against the Almighty? Don't be crass. I have more patience than that to come up with a better plan." He sighed as he folded his hands, "Do you want to save the world or not?"

The man sighed, "Fine. I will protect these students, train them in the use of their powers. Give my life for them if I need to. And I will willingly erase the events of today from my conscious mind. I have some foresight into the future to know part of what you say is true. Perhaps not in my lifetime..."

"Make sure the boy is molded into a leader," Windsor added with a smile. "The girl will no doubt be attracted to that."

Professor Charles Xavier wheeled himself up to Dr. Windsor's seat, "I will not be held responsible for what may happen to you if this all fails. You had better wish we don't meet again..."

NEXT ISSUE: *Now that our titular characters have finally met, what's gonna go down? Are they gonna stand around and talk, fight, make cookies, or drink beer? Well, most of that stuff actually happens. Be here in 2010, for Cable/Deadpool #4, written by Brad Horton! Sorry, I'm giving myself two years to complete the issue, so when I do, it will be ahead of schedule.*

CABLE / DEADPOOL BIBLIO/GRAPHY

- The Celestials are godlike beings who have conducted various genetic experiments on sentient life across the cosmos for billions of years, including humans. I think one of them has a toaster for a head. They made Prosh and the transmode virus which gave birth to the Technarch and Phalanx--and which infected Apocalypse and Cable.

- When last we saw of Cable, he merged with his alternate reality self, Nate Grey, and became one with the universe in the *Cable 2003 Annual*. He later briefly appeared to the X-Men's Cyclops, Phoenix,

