

COMIC BOOK

BOOKWORMS

THE PEAK

INFERNO rages at Marvel Comics

By Tony Burke

Somewhere within the towering city of Manhattan, a vacuum cleaner comes to life and attempts to devour a helpless housewife, an elevator's doors open, unleashing a torrent of blood and bones, and tourists look on in disbelief as the Empire State Building grows before their eyes. Manhattan is being invaded by the evil forces of a magical dimension, and the heroes of Marvel Comics are the only beings standing in their way. This is **INFERNO!**

Presented to us by writers Chris Claremont and Louise Simonson, *Inferno* is an ever-

reaching epic crossing over into many of Marvel's major titles, including *Daredevil*, *Captain America*, and the three Spider-man comicbooks, while focusing on their best-selling series, *The Uncanny X-Men*.

The famous and talented creative team of Stan Lee and Jack Kirby conceived *The X-Men* in 1964, billing them as "*The most unusual teen-agers of all time*". Born with fantastic abilities which they were unable to control, the young mutants were approached by geneticist, and fellow mutant, Professor Charles

Xavier to enroll in his "School For Gifted Youngsters". As the Professor taught them how to control their powers, he used the school as a cover for his students to operate as a force for good that protected mankind against evil mutants.

Members of the group have come and gone over the years, resulting in drastic changes in the book's direction. It is the very nature of change that has contributed highly to the X-Men's popularity. In recent years, Marvel has taken advantage of the comicbook's legion of fans by

flooding the market with numerous spin-off titles. Xavier's first group of graduates from the school have re-formed under the name of *X-Factor*; his newest students have been dubbed *The New Mutants*. *X-Factor* has also taken a group of young mutants under its wing who call themselves the *X-Terminators*. And finally, three former members of the X-Men now reside in England where they protect that country in their team, *Excalibur*.

The complex relationships which tie these groups together form the groundwork for the entire *Inferno* storyline. I invite you now to join me in a tour through the lives of these amazing characters who have changed the face of the comic medium. But I warn you, "*Be careful when you strike a match, even if only to light your way through the darkness, because you never know when you'll ignite an INFERNO!*"

SPARK. Scott Summers, a.k.a. Cyclops of *X-Factor*, began his life as an adventurer in the X-Men. There he met Jean Grey, *Marvel Girl*. They fell in love and planned to marry. Alas, fate stole their dreams away from them when Jean killed herself because her powers of telepathy and telekinesis threatened to destroy the universe.

A year went by and Scott met

By DEREK KWAN

Preconception 1

A film about comic books. Great, I thought.

Preconception 2

It's a documentary? Oh well.

Despite my preconceptions, I enjoyed the movie. *Comic Book Confidential*, purported to be a quasi-documentary on comic books, proved to be less objective. Too often, I heard comic books are dismissed as kid stuff or pulp fiction. *Confidential* strikes for the comicmongers. Under unbiased observations, *Confidential* is fun at the comic industry's detractors. 50's U.S. senator Kefauver wanted restrictions placed on the matter and content of comics. Kefauver headed a Senate com-

Madelyn Pryor, a woman who bore an uncanny resemblance to Jean Grey. They married and Madelyn gave birth to their son, Christopher Charles Summers. Before the baby could reach its first birthday, Scott was called away from his home in Alaska to New York. Jean had been found alive! Leaving his wife and son, Cyclops ran into the arms of his former love and, together, they formed *X-Factor*. Now Madelyn is believed to have perished with the X-Men in a battle to save the Earth, and baby Christopher is missing. Cyclops and *Marvel Girl* are in search for his lost son; what they find may cost them their lives.

SPARK. Rachel Summers, Phoenix of *Excalibur*, comes from the future. It is a future where mutants are destroyed on sight and America is enslaved by huge robots called the Sentinels. Rachel has journeyed through time to try and prevent her future from occurring. But time is a fragile thing that refuses to be changed and Rachel finds herself in a different world. According to her past, Jean Grey never "died", instead she married Scott and gave birth to the baby that would grow up to be Rachel. Also, Scott never met or married Madelyn Pryor, nor did they conceive a son. Phoenix is lost in a world with no meaning and no place for her.

Half a world away, a little brother that she can never truly call her own, is telepathically calling for help. She now journeys to America for a blind date with destiny.

FLAME. Australia, the home of the X-Men and their companion Madelyn Pryor. The X-Men have fabricated an elaborate

