

**What If... Presents:
The Pacifist**

By DAVID BAILLIE

(Script for 22 comic pages)

PAGE 1

1 – Close-up of a handshake.

One of the hands is large and masculine, the other petite and feminine.

Speech bubble from OFFPANEL...

PHOENIX:

Jean Grey. Pleased to meet you.

2 - Pull out to let us see the owners of the hands doing the shaking:

PHOENIX (Jean Grey), the female X-Men telepath, and Mr FINCH.

FINCH is a head taller than PHOENIX, and is wearing a uniform of sorts - this shouldn't look like a superhero costume, more like the leather uniforms the X-Men wore in the movies. He has an athletic build, short dark hair and a well-trimmed goatee beard.

FINCH greets PHOENIX as she disembarks from an elevator in the immaculately clean, well-lit hallway of a corporate building.

FINCH:

So Ms Grey, I'm not really an expert on superheroes. What, apart from the **obvious** that is, are your special talents?

PHOENIX:

I'm a telepath.

3 - The two turn and walk together down the hallway.

FINCH has a cheeky grin on his face as he says...

FINCH:

A telepath, eh? You read minds?

FINCH:

You can't be that good or else you'd have punched me by now!

4 - PHOENIX turns to him and answers with no indication of humour.

PHOENIX:

I'm also a pacifist.

5 - FINCH still looks mischievous despite the icy reception his fresh comment has received.

FINCH:

So are **we**, doll. So are we.

PHOENIX:

That's precisely why I'm here Mr Finch.

PAGE 2

1 - A silent panel, showing the two characters walking toward the end of the long hallway, at the end of which is a large double doorway.

2 – An angular view of a dictionary definition (ie. The dictionary is not orthogonal to the panel borders)

Pacifism :: (pac·i·fism)

noun

def 1. The belief that disputes (eg. of an international nature) should and can be settled peacefully.

i. Opposition to war or violence as a means of resolving disputes.

ii. Such opposition demonstrated by refusal to participate in military action.

[From the French : pacifisme, from pacifique,]

Alt::

pac i·fist n. "

3 – Roll credits

The Pacifists

David Baillie – Writer

Xxx – Pencils

Etc.

Joe Quesada – Chief

Dan Buckley – Publisher

4 - Same as panel 1 again, but with them almost at the end of the hall now.

PAGE 3

1 - They stop at the door. FINCH is looking at PHOENIX; one of his hands rests on the brass handle.

FINCH:

Are you ready?

2 - PHOENIX is unsure of the question.

PHOENIX:

You're making me nervous Mr Finch. Ready for what?

FINCH:

Sorry - I just meant do you have any questions before you meet the others?

3 - PHOENIX looks at FINCH. Thoughtfully.

PHOENIX:

Well, I don't understand why your organisation is independent of SHIELD. Surely they are in a unique position to assist in an endeavour such as yours?

4 - FINCH is pleased that she asked that particular question - he has a well practiced response ready.

FINCH:

We plan to **supersede** SHIELD, Ms Grey. We're the next logical progression.

FINCH:

The... Next evolutionary step. I would imagine that you, perhaps more than anyone, can appreciate that.

5 - PHOENIX starts to speak but it's too late, FINCH has started to open the door. In this panel it's not yet open wide enough for us to see what's inside the room.

PHOENIX:

I'm still not entirely clear on –

PAGE 4

1 - FINCH swings open the doors, and we can now see inside the room. It looks like a boardroom, there's a long meeting table with chairs around it. There is some modern art hanging on one wall, and a large flat plasma screen on the adjacent wall.

Standing at the head of the table we have the lead character of this tale, Mr ROOK (he has a name badge on his left breast telling us so).

ROOK wears a uniform similar to FINCH. He is a tall, well built man, with thick, dark hair swept back off his face.

Around the table we have a few other characters wearing the same uniform (male and female). They wear name tags, bearing the names of birds eg. CURLEW, MAGPIE and JAYHAWK. We also have a few characters from the Marvel Universe: TONY STARK, T'CHALLA (the Black Panther), the VISION, HANK PYM (Ant Man). The heroes are in civilian clothing, but should be recognisable to sharp eyed readers.

CAPTION:

December 2004 – Switzerland

2 - ROOK walks around the table, approaching PHOENIX and FINCH.

ROOK:

Ms. Summers-Grey, I'm so glad you could join us.

PHOENIX:

Mr Rook

PHOENIX:

Charles sends his apologies for his being unable to attend your think tank.

3 - Close up on ROOK and PHOENIX. ROOK has obviously warmed to PHOENIX already (She *is* a strikingly attractive woman).

ROOK:

It's quite all right – I can only imagine how hectic a life the leader of the X-Men must lead. Please take a seat.

4 - ROOK stands to the side, and holds out his gloved hand - gesturing toward the table.

ROOK:

I'm sure you already know almost everyone here, but allow me to do introductions anyway...

PAGE 5

1 - Complete change of scene. A much younger ROOK is in a bar with a young lady. There are some tough guys in the background playing pool, but not paying much heed to ROOK or his girlfriend.

CAPTION:

JULY 1980

2 - One of the guys from the pool game pinches the girl's bottom. Her mouth is open, and she looks like she's squealing. ROOK, who is talking to the barman ordering drinks, looks out of the corner of his eye to see what's going on, but hasn't yet responded.

3 - ROOK turns and flips out: He grabs the guy, lifting him off his feet. His free hand has formed a fist and his teeth are clenched in anger. The girl is shocked, and even the tough guy looks a bit surprised by the violent reaction.

4 - ROOK is pounding on the guy, really laying into him with all his strength. The tough guy's friends are looking on in disbelief, too shocked to offer any assistance (or maybe they're actually *nice* guys - appearances sometimes deceive!)

5 - The girl is stunned and upset. She puts her hand on ROOK's shoulder. He turns to look at her, with his victim still tight in his grip. He looks slightly ashamed, but he still has traces of his anger etched in his face.

8 - Black panel, with caption.

CAPTION:

Why did they try and hurt us daddy?

PAGE 6

1 - Nick FURY is in an airborne SHIELD command module with FINCH, watching one of many viewing screens. On the screens we can see some sort of super hero battle, but not clearly enough to make out the participants.

The command module is decked out in super hi-tech equipment, and there are SHIELD uniformed stooges scuttling around all over the place being very busy.

CAPTION:

September 2006 -Vancouver

FURY:

I just don't see how this sort of thing is going to work. What does he think he's going to do?

2 – Close in on FINCH

FINCH:

He's a smart guy, Nicky – he's been working towards this for over a decade, and thinking about it for even longer.

FINCH:

If there's something he believes in he won't let it rest until the bastard's done.

3 – A SHIELD operative hands FURY a file. FURY chomps down on his cigar.

FURY:

Is that why you're holding on to his coat tails? Think he'll take you somewhere?

4 – FURY sifts through the file he's been handed, not overtly paying any attention to FINCH. FINCH is looking uncharacteristically sincere.

FINCH:

He's one of the good guys, Fury.

FINCH:

Not enough of them around if you ask me.

5 – FURY looks up again at one of the large flat monitors, which is showing more of the battle.

FINCH:

Well I'll say one thing for him. He likes to get his hands dirty.

PAGE 7

1 – Close-up on one of the monitors showing the fight.

There are multiple superhuman bad guys causing trouble for our merry band of pacifists, including a large number of HYDRA goons.

We see PHOENIX in the midst of all the commotion, along with ROOK.

FURY (off panel):

Does Jean Grey come out to help you guys often? She's quite the big gun.

2 – We close in on the monitor, so its screen fills the panel.

PHOENIX is being aided by another guy in a '*pacifist*' uniform, who is forming ice around a few of the bad guys, as she brings them to a halt with her telepathic powers.

CAPTION:

She wasn't keen at the start, but she's really getting into it now. She's the kinda chick needs to feel like she's achieving something, and I think that Rook can give her that.

CAPTION:

Although sometimes I wonder if that's all he's givin' her.

3 – T'CHALLA brings another one to his knees with a string device like a bola. This bad guy's quite big – as he falls he takes a chunk of wall with him, fragments of brick work exploding into the air.

This panel is free of monitor-screen effects, as we're now seeing it with a naked eye.

CAPTION:

Your mouth ever get you in trouble Finch?

4 – We now see the ice guy from before, and can read his name badge. It says TERN. He's freezing the big guy that T'CHALLA has brought down. TERN has blonde hair, so it could be ICE-MAN. It might not be though – and it's not really important, I just want to show some evidence of the sort of super powered individuals that ROOK has recruited since we last saw him.

CAPTION:

Only when I told your momma 'No'!

5 – Pull back to show PHOENIX who has mentally frozen another bad guy.

T'CHALLA gets ready to restrain him by throwing a net over him.

PHOENIX falls from the strain of using her powers to this extent.

CAPTION:

I'll take that as a yes.

PAGE 8

1 – ROOK plants his knee firmly in the back of one of the bad guys as he ties him up with some thick cable. He has a stern look on his face.
It's obvious that he's in charge.

2 - CURLEW accepts custody of the bad guys as the various characters shown on the preceding page bring them in.
The fighting has now stopped. The bad guys are all incapacitated in one way or another. Some of them have icicles hanging from their bodies.

3 – The dust settles.
ROOK helps PHOENIX from the ground.
She smiles at him, touching his face as she stands.

4 – The SHIELD command module has landed and Nick FURY and Mr FINCH exit together via a ramp in the background.
CURLEW is packing the bad guys into an armoured 'meat wagon'. TERN helps him, freezing parts of the bad guys as he touches them.

PAGE 9

1 - ROOK looks up, while dusting himself off and sees FURY and FINCH. His uniform is torn and he is slightly bloody, but he's satisfied that he put on enough of a show to impress the SHIELD commander.

ROOK:

So, Nick?

2 – FURY's still chomping on his smouldering cigar.

FURY:

I can't say I'm not impressed Rook.

FURY:

That **could** have got quite nasty.

3 – ROOK nurses a cut at the side of mouth. He smiles despite the discomfort.

ROOK:

Yes, I'm pleased with today.

4 – FURY points at ROOK, cigar in hand, a trail of stale smoke marking the arc of movement it took to get there.

FURY:

I'm still not going to hand over though, kid. Never.

FURY:

I'm just not convinced it's **always** going to work.

5 – PHOENIX steps up, she's irate. She directs her anger at FURY.

PHOENIX:

What more evidence do you need?

PHOENIX:

He's been doing this all over the world for over a year now - diffusing explosive superhuman situations, saving human lives.

6 – ROOK holds his hand out to pacify her, and speaks calmly.

ROOK:

I'm not asking you to hand anything over Nick. I'm just saying that I don't have a patent pending on these ideas. Look – they work. SHIELD could do with –

7 – FURY walks away dismissively, talking as he goes (as he appears to have a habit of doing)

FURY:

Not going to work kid.

PAGE 10

1 - Silent panel. Everyone is pissed off, except Rook who expected as much. PHOENIX looks at ROOK, as if she's about to say something.

2 - Same as above but with dialogue:

PHOENIX:
How can you be so calm?

ROOK:
Part of the job description Jean.

3 - Finch is checking out Jean Grey's derrière (she's in a tight leather jump suit) from behind as the conversation continues.

ROOK:
We're not losing anything here. We have the resources to keep this up for years without Colonel Fury's help.

4 - We pull out in this panel, so that we can see all the main characters and others who took part in the battle. We can also see the damage done to the surrounding city. It's broken and crumbled, wisps of smoke and dust float in the air.

ROOK:
And no matter what happens it doesn't detract from what we've done here.

ROOK:
No one died.

5 - Close in on ROOK, pleased with himself. In the background FINCH is still staring at Phoenix's ass. She hasn't noticed, or at least hasn't bothered to chide him - perhaps because she's taking too much of an interest in ROOK.

ROOK:
No one died.

PAGE 11

1 – We're back at the first scene in the boardroom, after the meeting has taken place. The characters we saw before round the meeting table are now chatting in smaller groups in the background. ROOK and PHOENIX are having a discussion of their own.

PHOENIX:

I really like your ideas, but I'm not sure how they're going to work.

PHOENIX:

You're suggesting that we simply refuse to fight?

2 – Close in on ROOK, who's about to explain all.

ROOK:

On the simplest level, yes, I am.

3 – Rook explains how he plans to achieve his goal.

ROOK:

If we have a powerful enough group of individuals, with the ability to contain the violence in a given situation,

ROOK:

- So **passive** powers, I don't think anyone leaping about, popping claws and snarling really has a place in this ideology-

ROOK:

Then I believe that we can force non-violent conclusions to ordinarily violent disputes.

4 – Just ROOK.

ROOK:

What do you think?

5 –PHOENIX is clearly very impressed...

PHOENIX:

I... I don't know.

PAGE 12

1 – The HULK is tearing chunks out of a town; cars and buildings form a trail of wreckage behind him. ROOK is in his Pacifist gear, along with the other members of the team. VISION swoops down on the HULK. T'CHALLA (in his Panther costume) and CURLEW are on the ground in defensive stances.

CAPTION:

July 2007

2 – HULK swipes at VISION, his enormous arm passing through the android. Next in line for a thumping is ROOK, but HULK hasn't noticed him yet. T'CHALLA reaches out as if to try and grab ROOK to safety.

3 - ROOK stands tall in front of the Hulk, bringing him to a halt. HULK looks down at him. Mr ROOK is a big guy in regular terms, but tiny in comparison to the HULK, who fills the entire panel. HULK's arms are in the air ready to smash ROOK to pieces. ROOK's arms are by his side - he's not even going to defend himself.

ROOK:

I won't fight you Hulk.

PAGE 13

1 – The HULK looks down at ROOK in disbelief. ROOK stays calm.

2 – The HULK drops his arms. Relief floods the faces of the team of pacifiers around them, but the expression on ROOK's face doesn't change. HULK seems fascinated by ROOK.

3 - Pull out to see two figures standing in shadow away from the carnage: Tony STARK and Nick FURY. STARK is in his Iron Man armour, without the helmet, which he is holding under his arm.

In the background HULK sits down in the rubble, like a huge infant, dust rising from under his great rump.

STARK:

So what do you think Nick?

FURY:

Stark, I'm surprised at you. I didn't think you'd be so easily convinced by him.

4 – Close up of Tony STARK, who gives FURY a wry smile.

STARK:

I've been **funding** him.

PAGE 14

1 – Talking heads shot. FURY doesn't look best pleased.

Hrrmph...

FURY:

All along?

FURY:

STARK:
Yes. It sounding like such a preposterous idea, I thought it might just work.

2 – Another talking heads panel; FURY's looking at his feet as he talks.

FURY:
You even decided to bring Iron Man out of retirement to help out?

STARK:
Only when required, the armour's not exactly the easiest device to use in a non-violent manner.

FURY:
No, I don't suppose it is.

3 – FURY starts to leave, finishing his conversation with STARK as he goes. We can see a dusty ROOK approaching.

STARK:
But now it's going back in the box.

STARK:
I'm convinced by him.

FURY:
Someone's gonna get burnt, Stark. Mark my words.

4 – ROOK reaches STARK after FURY has left. STARK says to ROOK...

STARK:
I think he likes you.

5 – ROOK smiles. The main characters are off centre and there's lots of space on the right hand side, so that we can see the beginnings of quite a spectacular sunset behind them.

PAGE 15

1 – A badly injured, maybe even dead, SPIDER-MAN lies in the foreground of this panel. His mask and costume are torn and his face is bloody. His wife MJ is crouched over him, her tears falling on his costume.

In the background we can see urban devastation on an enormous scale.

CAPTION:

December 2009

2 – A blurred black object sweeps across our field of vision, taking MJ with it. In her absence we can see other fallen heroes littered around the streets.

3 – ROOK is climbing over some car debris, trying to get a better vantage point from which to lead the stand.

His uniform looks much more regal in this scene than it has in the past, it almost looks military now.

ROOK:

Try to slow him down so we can get a -

PAGE 16

1 – Close-up of PHOENIX. She too is wearing this plush new uniform, and a thin golden headband, that splits and curls at the centre of her forehead. She is sweating from mental exertion.

PHOENIX:

I'm trying... I'm trying.

2 – ROOK is looking desperate.

ROOK:

I know my love - just hold him a **little** longer.

ROOK:

Tony's called in backup and I think -

3 – The swift-black-blur takes out ROOK.

4 – PHOENIX holds her hands to her temple, eyes shut tight in absolute concentration. She digs her feet into the soft ground, which gather dirt as she is pushed back by some invisible force.

5 – PHOENIX in the foreground, her concentration has broken.

There is a collection of heroes banded together in the background. One of them is Reed RICHARDS, the elastic Mister Fantastic.

Another one of them looks vaguely familiar, in a battered old brown leather jacket and bushy, greying hair. He is painfully thin.

He is wearing dark red glasses and a stony expression. This is CYCLOPS of the X-Men.

PHOENIX:

Scott?

PAGE 17

1 – The blur has become more solid. It is a huge, nightmarish humanoid creature.

PHOENIX:

I think I've got it. It's slowing down. It's not human.

2 – The creature's hand snatches out - CYCLOPS ducks underneath, touching his ruby glasses as he does so. The thing grabs Reed RICHARDS by his elongated neck and looks like it's choking him. His long rubber arms loop around the shadow creature's attacking arm a couple of times.

OFFPANEL:

Now, Vision!

2 – VISION swoops down from above, phasing through the black creature. It sparks electric blue releasing RICHARDS, who falls to the ground.

VISION:

I think it's of artificial construction, my phasing-

3 – The black creature recovers quickly and savagely swings a sparking limb through the VISION's body, throwing him into the distance.

4 - Close in on CYCLOPS, who looks like he's a couple of decades older than we'd expect. His teeth are clenched as he lets a huge blast escape from above his protective glasses.

5 - This brings the thing to its knees.

Among the characters we can see waiting to take advantage of this is the HULK.

(The HULK is also wearing some sort of uniform suggesting he's part of the team now).

PAGE 18

1 - The Hulk thumps it savagely across the head and it collapses, crackling and lifeless.

2 – He stomps on it for good measure. He looks thoroughly furious.

3 - We pull back to see the state of the city.

In contrast to the first battle when it was relatively untouched, now it is completely levelled. There are casualties all around.

4 – The survivors are battered and bloody and look like they've been fighting all day.

We see the body of MJ beside that of SPIDER-MAN, both deathly still.

ROOK is nowhere to be seen.

PAGE 19

1 - The HULK is sullen. His rational side has been won over by ROOK's arguments in the years since we last saw him. He sits in the dry ruined earth beside the motionless body of our ebony villain, his beastly head propped against one of his fists.

2 - PHOENIX sobs into her hands.

3 - CYCLOPS is walking away, paying her no heed.

4 - The VISION picks himself up from the ground, and dusts down. He seems unperturbed by the devastation.

5 - A SHIELD craft lands in the distance. We go to meet it.

6 – Tony STARK and Nick FURY descend the ramp from the craft. STARK looks upset by the scenes of carnage. FURY just looks typically hard.

PAGE 20

1 – PHOENIX looks up angrily from her hands as FURY approaches. CYCLOPS turns to see his ex-wife react so passionately to FURY's lateness. He looks terribly sad, and we get the impression that it isn't just today's events that have made him so.

2 – Close up of PHOENIX. Tears have made tracks in the dirt on her face.

PHOENIX:

Where **were** you? We were counting on you...

3 – FURY ignores her and walks on.
STARK approaches her, his arms outstretched.

4 – STARK comforts PHOENIX in the background, as FURY wanders off toward nearby rubble.

CAPTION:

Why did they try and hurt us daddy?

PAGE 21

1 – Abrupt change of scene. A younger looking ROOK comforts a small girl (his DAUGHTER) as she cries against his shoulder. She only looks about six.

ROOK:

I don't think they meant to hurt us sweetheart, I think they wanted to hurt each other.

DAUGHTER:

Why?

ROOK:

I don't know...

2 – And back again.

FURY digs in the rubble looking for the body of Rook.

FURY:

Castle?

3 - He finds him, buried beneath concrete debris...

Dead.

A thin stream of blood runs from his lips. His eyes are still open, but stare off into the distance, unfocused.

4 – FURY looks down at ROOK's dead body, sombre.

FURY:

I told you it wouldn't work, son.

FURY:

I told you.

5 - He draws his fingers over the eyes of Rook, closing them.

FURY:

Not in **this** world.

PAGE 22

1 – Back to the younger ROOK and his daughter. ROOK looks up as a NURSE enters the room they're in. We can now tell from the background that it's a room within a hospital.

NURSE:

Mr Castle?

2 – Close up of the nurse. She smiles.

NURSE:

They made it, sir. Your wife and son are going to pull through.

3 – There's a tear on ROOK's cheek as we close in on his face. His eyes are closed, and he looks *incredibly* relieved.

ROOK:

Oh thank God

4 – Silent panel as he holds his daughter tightly against him.

5 – Black panel with caption.

CAPTION:

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall
be called the children of God

Matthew 5:9

THE END