

## **Warheads**

**ISSUE #1**

**A Thing Of Beauty**

**By DAVID BAILLIE**

### **PAGE 1**

1 - Splash page

Three bulky, male figures shield their faces as the huge glass window in front of them shatters. Through the window comes another male figure.

It's dark and everyone is pretty much in silhouette.

We can't see really see who the guys in the foreground are or what they're wearing, but the one bursting through the big window is wearing a three quarter length dark leather jacket, and is partially covered with light body armour, also leather.

He's shorter and not as bulky as the others, but should still look physically impressive.

## PAGE 2

1 – The glass is still falling, shards becoming embedded in the three original guys (BADGUYS).

The character who came through the window (KURTZBERG) lands a kick into the face of the largest of the three figures (BADGUY1), and we can get a better look at him now. He has no obvious firearm on him, but a long sheathed knife is strapped to his belt. He sports a short haircut and a mean, not-quite handsome face.

2 – The other two look on, shocked by the dramatic entrance. Three others become visible (but in silhouette) behind the shattered window.

BADGUY2 :

Who the fuck are you?

3 – KURTZBERG sneers, while looking at BADGUY2 and punches the guy closest to him (BADGUY3, I suppose...) effortlessly.

KURTZBERG :

We're the fucking X-Men.

KURTZBERG :

Who do you **think** we are?

4 – He grabs the one remaining figure by the throat and lifts him off the ground, again effortlessly, despite being a head shorter than his opponent. He's obviously very strong.

KURTZBERG :

Now **shut up!**

### PAGE 3

1 - One of the figures still the other side of the window speaks, barely visible. We can see that he's big, with short brown hair. His face has some scarring down its right side (across his cheek and over his lip), but we can't yet see much more than this.

Kurtzberg.  
That's enough, son.

LIGER :  
LIGER :

2 - LIGER steps over the body of BADGUY2.  
In the background we can now see the other two people with him. They are climbing in through the shattered window too, and are both female. To prolong the mystery, our view of the team is still somewhat obscured by shadow, and the dust which has been raised during KURTZBERG's brawl.

3 – LIGER reaches down to lift the nape of BADGUY3.  
In this better light we can see now that one side of his face has been sliced up pretty badly.  
*(Reference art available. Note:- it was Wolverine who did this in an issue of the original series, so it should look like the kind of injury resulting from being sliced by his three claws)*  
Over LIGER's shoulder, crossing his torso is a very thick, intricately patterned leather strap. We can't see what it's attached to yet, but whatever it is looks heavy.  
He nonchalantly examines the face of the felled man.

Hmmm... Colonel Francis?

LIGER :

4 - The two female figures with LIGER and KURTZBERG are now fully visible.  
They're both wearing similar leather garments.  
One speaks.

He's out cold, sir.

VALENTINE :

5 – LIGER drops the head (which thunks off the deck, with appropriate SFX), while standing upright. With his free hand he reaches into his jacket.

LIGER :

I know, Valentine.

LIGER :

I was addressing the man that Jacob is currently holding against that wall there.

LIGER :

The one **shitting** his pants like an infant.

6 - He puts a cigar in his mouth. Flicks a light (not a lighter or a match - some more futuristic looking device) and addresses BADGUY2.

LIGER :

Is **that** Colonel David Francis?

## PAGE 4

1 - Pull out a bit so we can see the whole team in the panel, with the two felled bodies lying in uncomfortable positions on the ground. KURTZBERG is still holding BADGUY2 (now SCAREDGUY) against the wall. He looks over his shoulder at his commander, awaiting further orders.  
LIGER lights his cigar.

2- LIGER swings round his massive gun (CLEMENTINE) to point at the SCAREDGUY (we now see that this was what the alien looking heavy duty strap was for).

LIGER :

Drop him Kurtzberg.

3 - KURTZBERG lets the guy drop, and he collapses on the floor, his weak legs giving way. His nerve has gone completely - he is terrified.

4 - LIGER holds the muzzle of his gun inches away from the SCAREDGUY's head.

LIGER :

I'm asking you a question, **shit for brains**. Is this David Francis?

5 - Same panel again, but silent.

6 - And again, but this time we have a speech balloon from the gun.  
SCAREDGUY, whose head is in danger of being atomised, looks even *more* traumatised by the revelation that the weapon can talk!

CLEMENTINE :

I'd answer him if I were you darling.

CLEMENTINE :

I don't think he's in a good mood.

**PAGE 5**

1 - New scene.

LIGER sits alone with a drink at a table for two in an upmarket restaurant. He's dressed in a much more socially acceptable manner than when we were introduced to him; he's wearing a nicely tailored suit and tie with smart shoes. His drink (a large whiskey on the rocks by the looks of it) is full.

2 – He sips his drink, looking just as grim as he did earlier. In the background we can see couples and families dining, all enjoying themselves. A waiter in black tie delivers a meal on a large silver platter to one of the tables behind LIGER.

CAPTION:

Been three years since I last saw her.  
Of all the members of the old Kether Troop, I think she's the one I miss the most.  
I **know** she is.

CAPTION:

I loved her.

3 – He checks his watch. His drink is almost finished now.

CAPTION :

Didn't know that at the time, of course.  
Sometimes you don't appreciate a thing of beauty when it's there every day –

4 - Leona shows up. She is shown to the table by a waiter. She is wearing a pretty black dress and looks slim and elegant. And quite pretty. (*Leona was a member of the Warheads during their original series*).

LEONA :

Tigon

LEONA :

How have you been?

5 - LIGER stands up to greet her, kissing her on one cheek.

LIGER :

You used to call me Liger.

CAPTION :

- right under your nose.

6 - She smiles at him. He doesn't look one hundred percent comfortable with this.

LEONA :

I'm not a **Warhead** now.

LEONA :

Colonel.

**PAGE 6**

1 – Silent panels from now on, while the monologue continues in the *captions*.  
They both take a seat, and start to talk.

CAPTION :

But when it's gone and its absence leaves a hole inside of you...

CAPTION :

That's when you **know** how precious it **was**.

2 – They continue to have a pleasant conversation while reading the menu.  
In the background one of the couples seen earlier in the background start to look a bit agitated.

CAPTION:

**Holes.**

CAPTION :

I've been jumping in and out of holes for over a decade now.  
I just wasn't ready for one like **this**.

3 – The waiter takes their order.  
The couple in the background look even *more* agitated.

CAPTION :

Leona was fine jumping through wormholes, invading and pillaging alien civilisations.  
It was the parallel universes that started to get to her.

CAPTION :

She didn't like the thought of seeing herself, or someone she knew.  
But different.

4 – The waiter has left them. They continue to talk. The arguing couple are speaking in raised voices now, and attracting attention from the surrounding customers... But *certainly not* LIGER and LEONA. They're far too busy...

CAPTION :

It was only a matter of time before she bumped into herself.

CAPTION :

Wasn't pretty when she did.

5 – The conversation continues warmly in the foreground, while the girl from the arguing couple stands up. She's looking really pissed off.

CAPTION :

That was in the alternative where we picked up Kurtzberg. As far as the team was concerned it was a fair trade. One in one out.

CAPTION :

I wasn't so sure.

## PAGE 7

1 – LIGER and LEONA have a *comfortable* silence in this panel, while the standing girl throws her dinner over her boyfriend.

CAPTION :

Jacob Kurtzberg was famous as the man who killed **Wolverine** in his world. He'd ran out of challenges there.

2 – The dinner-throwing girl storms off, leaving the boyfriend covered in food and looking embarrassed.

LIGER and LEONA are oblivious to *all* of this.

CAPTION :

I could offer him **more**.

3 – LEONA expresses herself with her hands as she begins to tell LIGER a story. The food covered boyfriend in the background has his head in *his* hands.

CAPTION :

And I kinda liked the idea of carrying around a pocketful of **payback** for if I ever fancy revisiting that particular episode.

4 – LIGER listens intently to LEONA's story.

Meanwhile the waiter has come over to ask the food guy if he'll be needing anything else this evening.

CAPTION :

Wolverine left me a **reminder** some time ago.  
A reminder of my **mistakes**.

5 – The boyfriend stands, giving the waiter a wad of cash to pay for the (*wasted*) food. LIGER smiles at the end of LEONA's story. Almost a laugh, but not quite. LIGER doesn't laugh.

CAPTION :

A reminder that I don't really deserve some of the things that ordinary people do.  
Love. Happiness. Beauty.  
All of that.

**PAGE 8**

1 – Surrounding couples watch the boyfriend (*presumably the ex-boyfriend now*) as he leaves the restaurant. LIGER and LEONA are still wrapped up in each other's gaze. We think for a second this might be getting romantic.

CAPTION :

We dropped her off in a **quiet** alternative.

Like our own but without all the capes, religious nutters, psychos and wars.

2 – She says that she has to go, but that she's had a lovely night. LIGER looks almost bashful. Everyone else has gone back to eating their food now that the floor show is over.

CAPTION :

In this alternative she'd never been born.

CAPTION :

They **needed** a Leona.

3 – She goes now. Kissing him on the cheek. LIGER looks sad.

4 – He watches her as she goes. The other diners are oblivious to *this* scene.

CAPTION :

Been three years since I last saw her.

It'll probably be at least another three before I see her again.

5 – He orders another tall whiskey from the waiter.

CAPTION :

I didn't know that **holes** could get this **big**.

**PAGE 9**

1 -The waiter brings the drink to a melancholy LIGER, who swaps the glass for a credit card.

2 - LIGER's cell phone erupts into life

SFX :

Bipp Bipp Bipp

3 - He answers. The voice on the other end is portrayed on the page by a JAGGED tailed balloon.

LIGER :

Hello?

JAGGED :

Hi Colonel. It's Jodie.

Kurtzberg's finished interrogating the stooge we picked up in the office this morning.

LIGER :

*(empty balloon)*

4 - He's not in the Warheads frame of mind at the moment, and takes a second to get back into *Colonel Liger mode*.

JAGGED:

You said you wanted to know when we got any info on the whereabouts of this Colonel Francis.

LIGER :

Yes.

LIGER :

Yes of course.

5 - LIGER regains his composure.

LIGER :

What did he say?

**PAGE 10**

1 – LIGER, still on the 'phone...

JAGGED :

We're still not sure why we're having such **trouble** tracking him, but we got a weak signal from his home alternative. We thought he'd skipped town but it looks like he's just laying low.

LIGER :

Can we **isolate** this signal and use it to pinpoint him?

2 - And more. Now we have the *real* LIGER back. He is pleased with his team's results.

JAGGED :

I can open a worm hole near where we last got the spike, then Furman can lock him down from there.

LIGER :

**Excellent** – I'll head back to base straight away.

3 - And yet more of the same. Maybe have something going on in the background. A family leaving, or someone paying their bill - just to vary the panels visually a bit.

LIGER :

Be ready to roll out in an hour.

JAGGED :

Will do sir. I'll tell Kurtzberg and Furman.

4 - Silent panel. He looks like he's thinking.



**PAGE 11**

1 – We're now looking into a shop in a busy shopping mall, like you might look inside a dolls house after taking off one of the walls. It's a magazine/newspaper shop, and on its walls, from floor to ceiling, are mounted racks filled with periodicals. There is a woman in the shop standing reading a glossy mag, with a baby pushchair at her side. She is reading with one hand and rocking the *buggy* with the other. The baby in the chair is pointing toward the ceiling, gurgling.

SFX (*from the baby in the pram*):  
gurgle - canosho wa-oo-ee – thrrrp! - gurgle

2 – A young Japanese GIRL who is also browsing the magazine racks stops and looks down at the child in the pram. She smiles.

SFX :  
Neemasooo – gurg - hic

3 – The MOTHER of the baby looks baffled as the young GIRL asks...

GIRL :  
Is his father Japanese?

**PAGE 12**

1 – 'Talking heads' panel of the two women.

MOTHER :

No. He was Russian... Why?

GIRL :

Oh... Well...

GIRL :

He sounds like he's speaking Japanese.

MOTHER :

**Japanese?** Are you sure? What's he saying?

2 – The GIRL holds her index finger to her mouth as she tries to remember her rusty Japanese.

GIRL :

Ummm.. I think he's saying 'She's up there. She's coming from up there'?

3 - Silent panel. The baffled MOTHER and GIRL look up at the ceiling (the top left hand corner of their panel).

4 - A hole rips open in the page at the corner of the panel.

It looks like a cross between an expanding, fiery sphere and the actual paper of the comic splitting open. Both MOTHER and GIRL hold their arms over their faces to shield themselves from the *brilliant* light being released.

SFX :

Brrrzch - OOMmmmm

**PAGE 13**

1 – As the hole increases in size the customers in the shop *scatter* out of the way. Its outer edge is now near the floor.

One elderly lady looks like she's going into shock.

The light has become unbearably bright.

2 - LIGER, VALENTINE, KURTZBERG and FURMAN step through the now shrinking hole. They're wearing different battle gear, but a similar style to what we saw them in the first scene. LIGER is chomping on his cigar.

3 – LIGER looks to his left proudly, to congratulate his team mate VALENTINE on a job well done.

LIGER :

Jodie Valentine - I do believe you're getting even **better** at carving these worm holes, darling.

4 – VALENTINE, now in the foreground, speaks as she surveys her surroundings. In the background KURTZBERG is looking down curiously at the *abandoned* child in the pushchair. The child is reaching out its hand towards him, gleefully unaware of the distress the Warheads sudden appearance has caused everyone else.

VALENTINE :

Thanks sir.

VALENTINE :

I've been training in the sim-suit all week.

5 - LIGER lights up his cigar with the space age device from a few pages ago. KURTZBERG is digging in the pockets of his black flak jacket. The mother of the child looks on from a *safe distance*, rooted to the spot with fear.

LIGER :

Ms Furman - do you have any idea where we can find our **elusive** Colonel?

**PAGE 14**

1 - Georgia FURMAN has one hand on her temple and is concentrating.

FURMAN :

I don't know, sir. I think he's in here somewhere... But this is a **shopping mall**.

2 - LIGER looks round.

In the background, KURTZBERG is giving the little boy a chocolate sweet. Both mercenary and child sport wide grins.

LIGER :

I **wondered** what the hell was going on here!

LIGER :

A shopping mall...

3 - The panel POV pans off to one side, while pulling back.

We see LIGER at the edge of the panel, and now the shop assistant at the cash register is in-panel too. The poor girl looks terrified.

LIGER :

Sorry miss

LIGER :

- am I allowed to smoke in here?

4 - The panel pulls out and pans further again.

We now see a tough guy with a full, dark beard, standing tight against a wall, hiding from the Warheads.

Colonel FRANCIS is a large, strong man, his long sleeved shirt tucked regimentally into his trousers

5 - He *breaks* into a run, away from the team.

**PAGE 15**

1 – FRANCIS vaults the banister of a staircase leading to the floor below...

2 - Hits the steps running and continues...

3 - FRANCIS pulls out a *minute* cellular phone.

4 – Medium shot of him speaking into the phone while on the move.

FRANCIS :

It's Francis here.

FRANCIS :

I need backup. Someone's after me. They must be looking for the artefact.

5 – Similar scale panel, this time a shocked looking FRANCIS is wondering what the hell is going on with his phone, as a JAGGED tailed speech balloon is emitted from it.

JAGGED :

No shit sweetheart. Why else would anyone be after your hairy ass?

6 – FRANCIS spits angrily into his telephone...

FRANCIS :

Who the **fuck** is this?

7 – He looks up in fright at hearing the OFFPANEL voice, but is still in motion (his centre of balance is still quite forward, and we perhaps have motion blur, or directional lines in the background).

OFFPANEL :

The boss calls her Clementine

**PAGE 16**

1 - We see VALENTINE waiting for FRANCIS as he turns a corner. She has a small lady-like pistol in one hand, the other hand resting on her hip. He stops *dead*.

VALENTINE :

I think it's a girlfriend substitute.

2 –Close up shot of VALENTINE tapping her head as she says to FRANCIS...

VALENTINE :

We thought we'd lost you there for a second Colonel. It's not often that Ms Furman can't track a brain pattern if I get her in the vicinity.

VALENTINE :

You carrying some sort of **augmentation** in there?

3 – VALENTINE points to FRANCIS' cell phone. She doesn't seem flustered by the situation at all. He however has broken into a sweat and looks quite panicked.

VALENTINE :

You **shouldn't** have made the call. I can follow a cell phone signal like the smell of hot dogs up 52nd street!

VALENTINE :

And Clementine can intercept 'em no problem at all.

4 – FRANCIS lunges at VALENTINE with a clumsy, heavy punch. She parries with ease, putting her knee in his guts.

FRANCIS :

*Oooph-*

5 - He grabs her around the midriff, lifting her off the ground and pushing her towards the wall behind her. She is offended by his invasion of her personal space, her eyes bulging at his impertinence.

6 – Holding her pistol away from him, she brings one of her feet gymnastically high, kicking him square on the jaw –throwing him away from her.

OFFPANEL :

You need a hand there Valentine, or are you having fun?

**PAGE 17**

1 – VALENTINE composes herself, inhaling deeply, as the Warheads stand by in the background ready to offer assistance.

VALENTINE :

I'm fine thanks, sir. He's not even **half** as tough as he looks.

2 - LIGER strolls over to the beaten, felled FRANCIS, who is nursing his jaw after VALENTINE's vicious kick.

LIGER :

Where **is** it Colonel?

FRANCIS :

Where's **what**?

3 – LIGER turns his back on FRANCIS, glancing heavenward as if looking for guidance. FRANCIS is defiant as he sits on the ground.

LIGER :

You've led us a merry dance David, but there's no point playing any more games with us. If you don't cooperate we **will** kill you.

FRANCIS :

Then you'll **never** find it.

4 – LIGER turns back to face FRANCIS, sneering. In the background FURMAN is deep in concentration.

LIGER :

True. But at least dead you won't be such a pain in my **arse**!

LIGER :

Georgia - can you read him, see what the **hell** he's done with it?

FURMAN :

I'm having trouble, sir - I think he's somehow obstructing my mental probe.

5 – Head shot of FRANCIS, who is getting desperate.

FRANCIS :

Why do you want it anyway? Is this just another job or do you have any idea what this artefact is?

**PAGE 18**

1 – LIGER close up. He's looking serious and mean, his scarred side facing us.

LIGER :

I know what it is.

LIGER :

I also know that it'll be a hell of a lot safer with my bosses than with a third rate mercenary who fights girls...

LIGER :

And loses.

2 - Close up of FRANCIS.

FRANCIS :

It's a thing of beauty you know.

3 - Silent panel as LIGER takes the measure of FRANCIS. He's not sure what to make of him, why won't he just give it up? He surely knows that they're not going to just *let him go*.

The rest of the team aren't sure what to think. KURTZBERG doesn't seem to be taking much interest.

4 – Head and shoulders of FRANCIS, as he pleads his case.

FRANCIS :

Do you think the people paying your salary **appreciate** that?

FRANCIS :

Any importance they place on it is purely down to its investment value.

5 – FURMAN has a *Eureka!* look on her face as she finally figures out why she was having trouble tracking Colonel FRANCIS earlier.

LIGER looks round at FRANCIS.

FURMAN :

It's in his head sir. That's why I can't read him.

FURMAN :

He's somehow got the thing actually **in** his head.

**PAGE 19**

1 – FRANCIS smiles as if this revelation is proof of his intellectual superiority.

FRANCIS :

It's grafted to the inside of my skull.

FRANCIS :

You'll have to kill me if you want it.

2 – Long shot of the whole group, FRANCIS still on his knees in front of LIGER who addresses his entire team...

LIGER :

Who's got the sharpest knife?

KURTZBERG :

That would be me, sir.

3 – LIGER smiles approvingly in the direction of KURTZBERG.

LIGER :

Good man, Jacob.

4 – Tight close up, small panel. LIGER checks his watch.

LIGER :

Let's make this quick. I want to be back in time to see the Twin Peaks omnibus on Channel 77 tonight.

5 – Tight close-up on the KURTZBERG's belt as he unsheathes his *huge* serrated knife from its sheath.

6 - Black panel.

**PAGE 20**

1 - Interior of an old fashioned, musty office.

A very old man in a brown cloth suit sits behind a heavy antique desk, smoking a cigar. LIGER Is *standing* on the other side of the desk, his cigar also lit, and in his hand. Between the two of them the room is quite *full* of smoke.

LIGER :

He was keen on keeping it for himself.

OLDMAN :

I'll say - you'd **have** to be bloody keen to get the thing stuck to the inside of your cranium!

2 - From a different angle this time so that we can see the surface of the desk, upon which the artefact (whatever it is) sits. Still bloody, and covered in gristle. Neither man looks at all disgusted by the mess.

OLDMAN :

You could have cleaned it up a bit before you brought it to me Tigon. I wouldn't have minded waiting the extra ten minutes!

3 - Close up of LIGER.

LIGER :

I wonder what made him want it so much.

4 - Both characters in panel. The OLDMAN holds his hands out as he shares the wisdom of his years (cigar in one of those hands). LIGER is taken aback by what the OLDMAN says...

OLDMAN :

It's like anything that a man loves. He wants it all to himself and even the **thought** of another getting his hands on it makes him feel **sick**.

LIGER :

Love?

5 - The OLDMAN opens one of the drawers in his desk and puts the bloody artefact in it.

Yes, well...  
OLDMAN :

He loved it **his** way  
OLDMAN :

And we'll love it **ours**.  
OLDMAN :

**PAGE 21**

1 - Close up on the OLDMAN.

OLDMAN :

Thanks again Tigon. As ever you've been the consummate professional.

OLDMAN :

I'll see that it's reflected in your bonus.

2 - Close up LIGER

LIGER :

Thanks sir.

3 - Close up OLDMAN again.

OLDMAN :

And the fifth team member I promised you is on his way to the firm as we speak.

OLDMAN :

I think you'll like him. He has the right size balls.

4 - And again...

OLDMAN :

In the meantime you get some rest.

OLDMAN :

Some down time.

OLDMAN :

You've **all** been working very hard these last few months.

5 -Pull out to show both of them now.

OLDMAN :

I wouldn't want to burn out my best team.

LIGER :

Thanks sir.

6 - LIGER stands to leave. The OLDMAN holds his hand out to stop him, and say one last thing...

OLDMAN :

Don't let this get to you, Tigon.

OLDMAN :

You're too **good** for that.

**PAGE 22**

1 - LIGER leaves the office. The door frame bisects the panel so we can see both the *inside* of the office and the *outside* corridor at the same time.

2 -LIGER walks down the corridor, his eyes low to the floor. Other people pass him in the other direction - exotic looking people, dressed odd and alien garb. It's a busy corridor.

It's also quite modern looking – in *evident* contrast to the office we've just seen.

3 – LIGER continues to walk. He nods as he passes DEATH'S HEAD II (*this is a cheeky cameo from another character from Marvel UK days*)

CAPTION :

Some people don't **deserve** it.  
Love. Happiness. Beauty.  
All of that.

4 – We close in on LIGER, who is looking out at the reader now.

CAPTION :

And some never **know** it.

5 – The final panel is just big enough to get all of his head in. He gazes straight into the eyes of the reader.

CAPTION :

I **wish** I was one of those.

*This final caption should be outside of the final panel somehow, as it's not part of the story telling.*

CAPTION :

Made for our searching: yes, in spite of all,  
Some shape of beauty moves away the pall  
From our dark spirits...

John Keats

**THE END.**