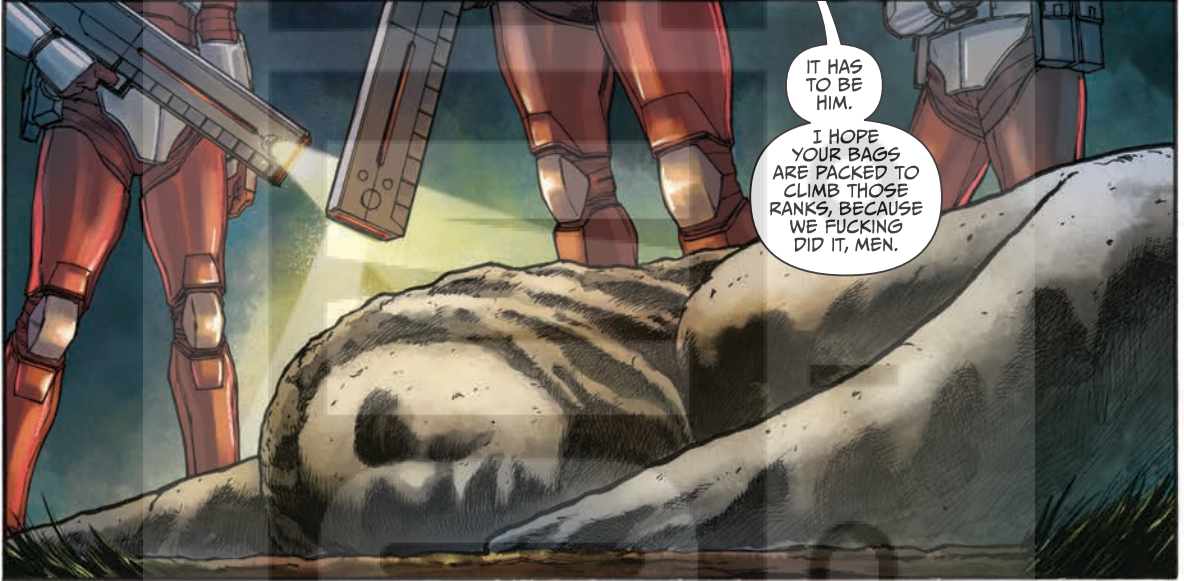




IT'S HIM.



IT HAS TO BE HIM.

I HOPE YOUR BAGS ARE PACKED TO CLIMB THOSE RANKS, BECAUSE WE FUCKING DID IT, MEN.



WE KILLED THE CROWING.





TM

THE  
FUTURE  
IS  
NOW

S  
I  
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T



PRESENT  
DAY.

KALLINE,  
APITY-PRIME.



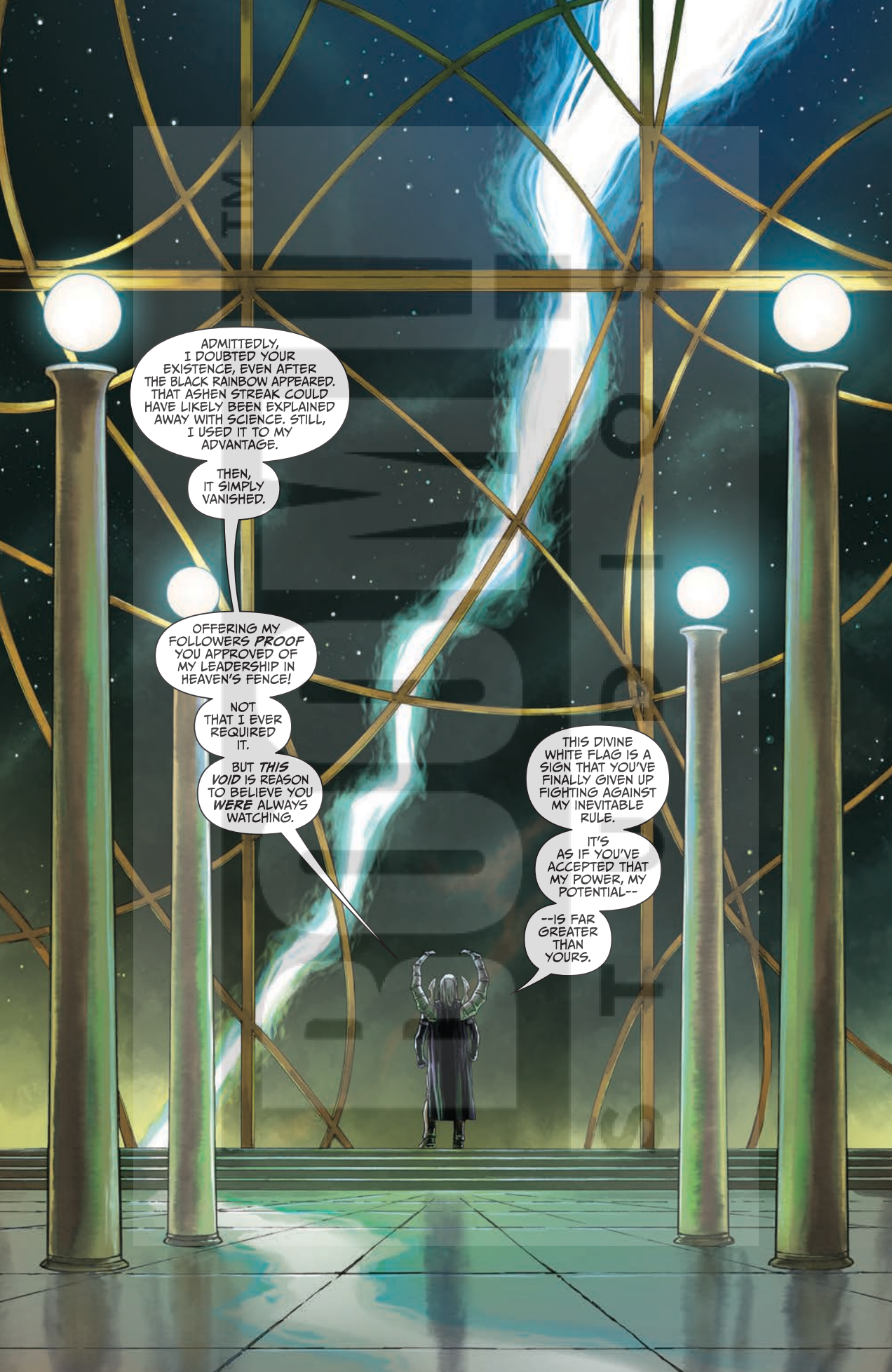


AND HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF.

ONLY THIS...



...I THINK *THIS* VESTIGE IN THE SKY IS NOT THE SAME AT ALL.



ADMITTEDLY, I DOUBTED YOUR EXISTENCE, EVEN AFTER THE BLACK RAINBOW APPEARED. THAT ASHEN STREAK COULD HAVE LIKELY BEEN EXPLAINED AWAY WITH SCIENCE. STILL, I USED IT TO MY ADVANTAGE.

THEN, IT SIMPLY VANISHED.

OFFERING MY FOLLOWERS *PROOF* YOU APPROVED OF MY LEADERSHIP IN HEAVEN'S FENCE!

NOT THAT I EVER REQUIRED IT.

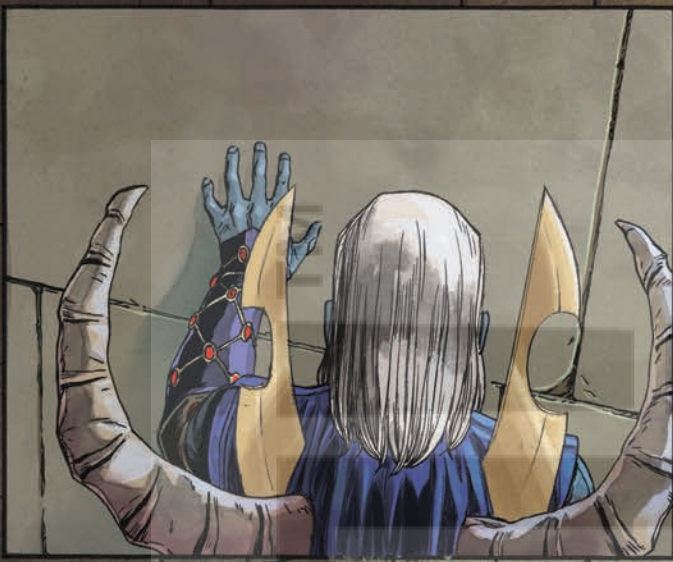
BUT *THIS VOID* IS REASON TO BELIEVE YOU *WERE* ALWAYS WATCHING.

THIS DIVINE WHITE FLAG IS A SIGN THAT YOU'VE FINALLY GIVEN UP FIGHTING AGAINST MY INEVITABLE RULE.

IT'S AS IF YOU'VE ACCEPTED THAT MY POWER, MY POTENTIAL--

--IS FAR GREATER THAN YOURS.

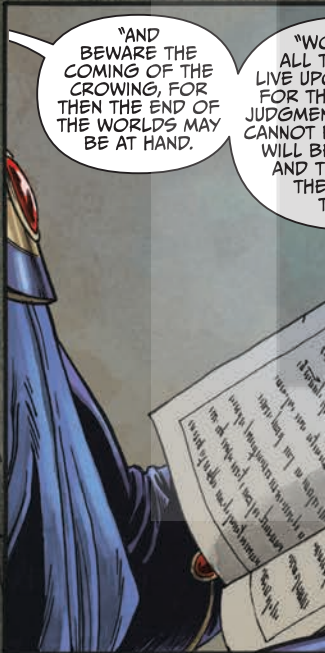
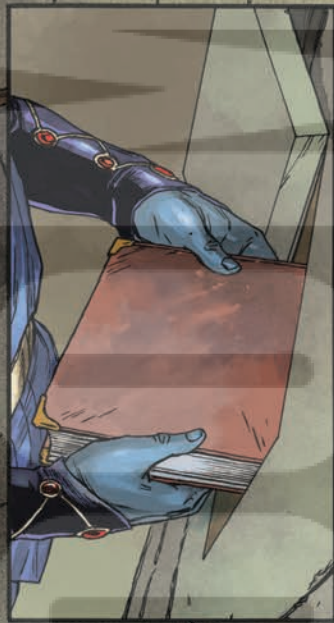




"BUT HIS ARRIVAL WILL NOT BE UNHERALDED. INSTEAD, IT WILL BE PRESAGED... BY THE COMING OF THE VISUAL. THE VISUAL, BEING THE HARBINGER OF THE CROWING AND THUS, THE FINAL JUDGMENT OF GOD, WILL APPEAR AT A TIME OF GREATEST BATTLE..."

"REALITY ITSELF WILL SERVE AS FUEL TO THE VISUAL'S ENERGY."

"AND THE PRIZE, THE WINGED SOLDIERS OF THE LORD WILL PREPARE FOR GOD'S JUDGMENT... AND THEY SHALL BE THE WORD AND THE VISUAL WILL BE THE WAY... AND THE PATH TO GLORY..."



"AND BEWARE THE COMING OF THE CROWING, FOR THEN THE END OF THE WORLDS MAY BE AT HAND."

"WOE BETIDE ALL THOSE WHO LIVE UPON THE FENCE FOR THE CROWING'S JUDGMENT, ONCE DONE, CANNOT BE UNDONE. HIS WILL BE THE POWER AND THE PASSION, THE FIRE AND THE ICE."





"...AND TO THE LIGHT."

HA! THIS DECEITFUL TALE COULDN'T EVEN FORESEE MY ANNIHILATION OF THOSE WINGED WITCHES.



SOME GOD YOU'VE PROVEN TO BE.



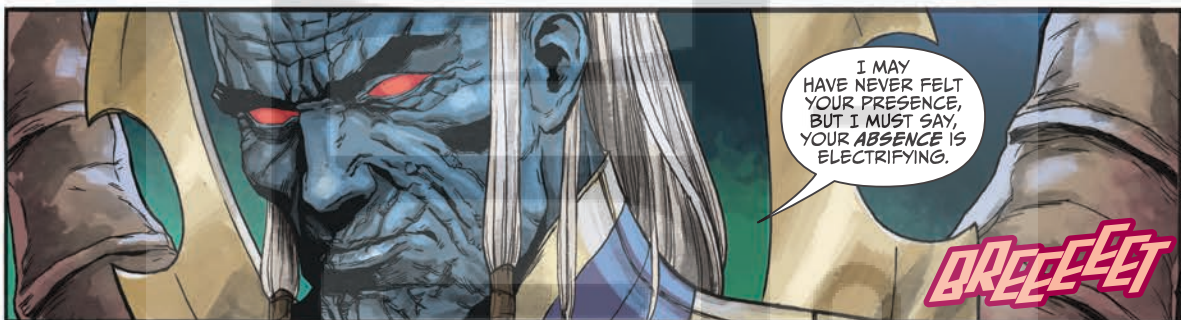
"PRAISE GOD IN THE HIGHEST. HIS NAME SHALL ECHO THROUGH ETERNITY, THROUGH ALL EXPANSE OF HEAVEN'S FENCE, THROUGH THE HALLOWED SPACE OF THE WILLING WELL--"





IT'S AS IF  
IT WAS WRITTEN  
IN ANTICIPATION OF  
MY TRIUMPH.

WELL,  
WELL...

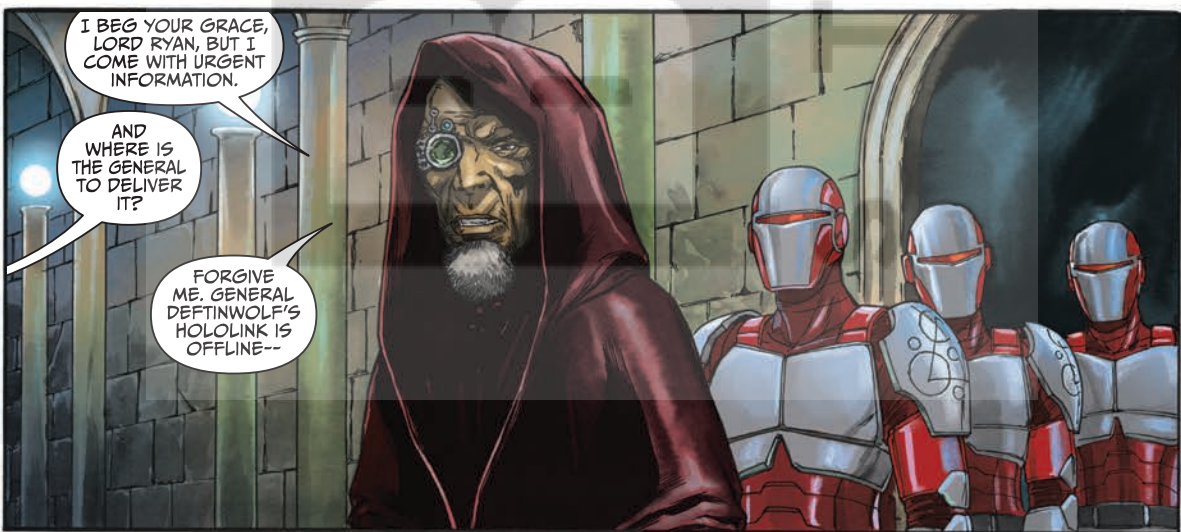


I MAY  
HAVE NEVER FELT  
YOUR PRESENCE,  
BUT I MUST SAY,  
YOUR ABSENCE IS  
ELECTRIFYING.

*BREEEET*



HOW DARE YOU ENTER  
THESE CHAMBERS WITHOUT  
INVITATION, CARDINAL.

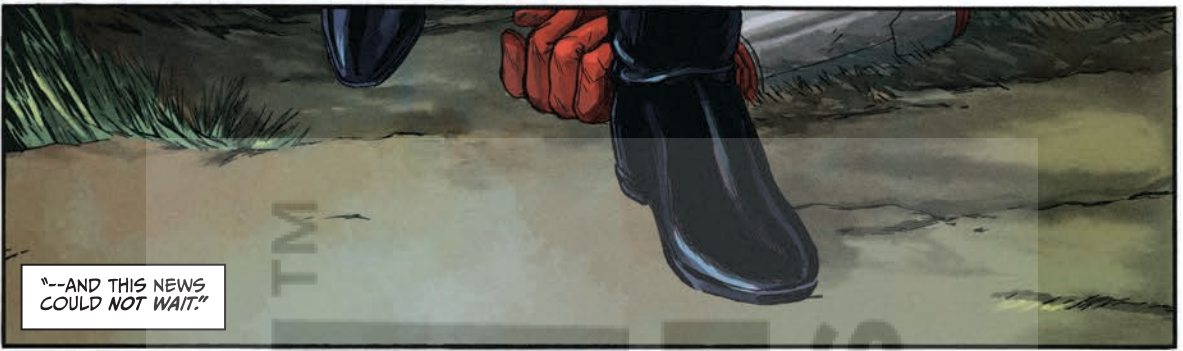


I BEG YOUR GRACE,  
LORD RYAN, BUT I  
COME WITH URGENT  
INFORMATION.

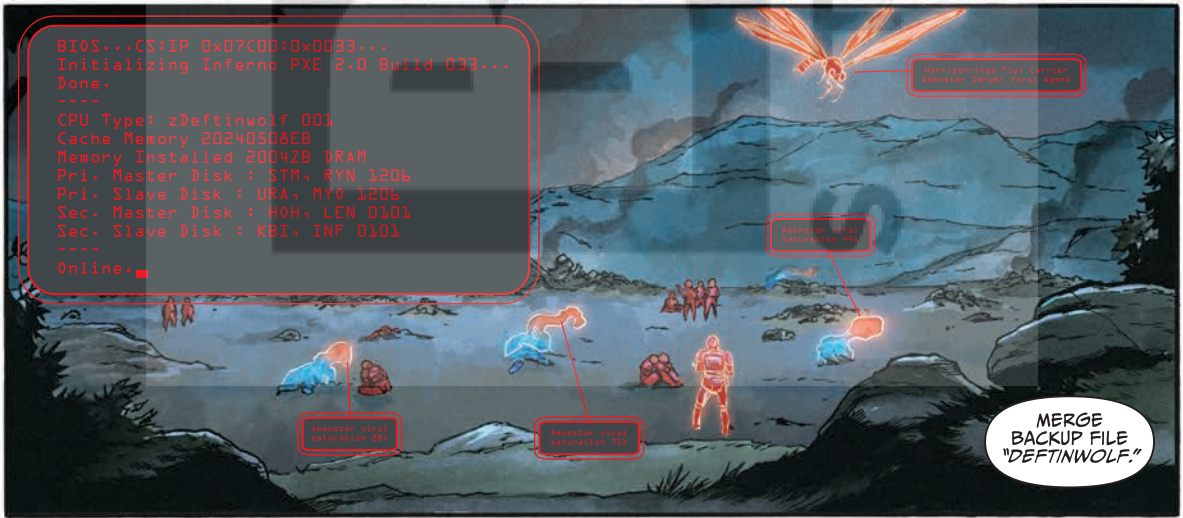
AND  
WHERE IS  
THE GENERAL  
TO DELIVER  
IT?

FORGIVE  
ME, GENERAL  
DEFTINWOLF'S  
HOLOLINK IS  
OFFLINE--





"--AND THIS NEWS  
COULD NOT WAIT."



```
BIOS...CS:IP 0x07C00:0x0033...
Initializing Inferno PXE 2.0 Build 033...
Done.
----
CPU Type: zDefinewolf 001
Cache Memory 20240504EB
Memory Installed 20042B DRAM
Pri. Master Disk : STM, RYN 1206
Pri. Slave Disk : URA, MYO 1206
Sec. Master Disk : H0H, LEN 0101
Sec. Slave Disk : KBL, INF 0101
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Online.
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Intelligence/Info Page selected  
Agent: Serial\_Viral\_Agent

Serial\_Viral\_Saturation 99

Serial\_Viral\_Saturation 99

Serial\_Viral\_Saturation 75

MERGE  
BACKUP FILE  
"DEFINWOLF."



TM  
OVERRIDE  
EXTERNAL OCULAR  
ILLUMINATION SETTING  
"BLUE." REPLACE  
"RED."



*BRNNNG  
BLEEE*



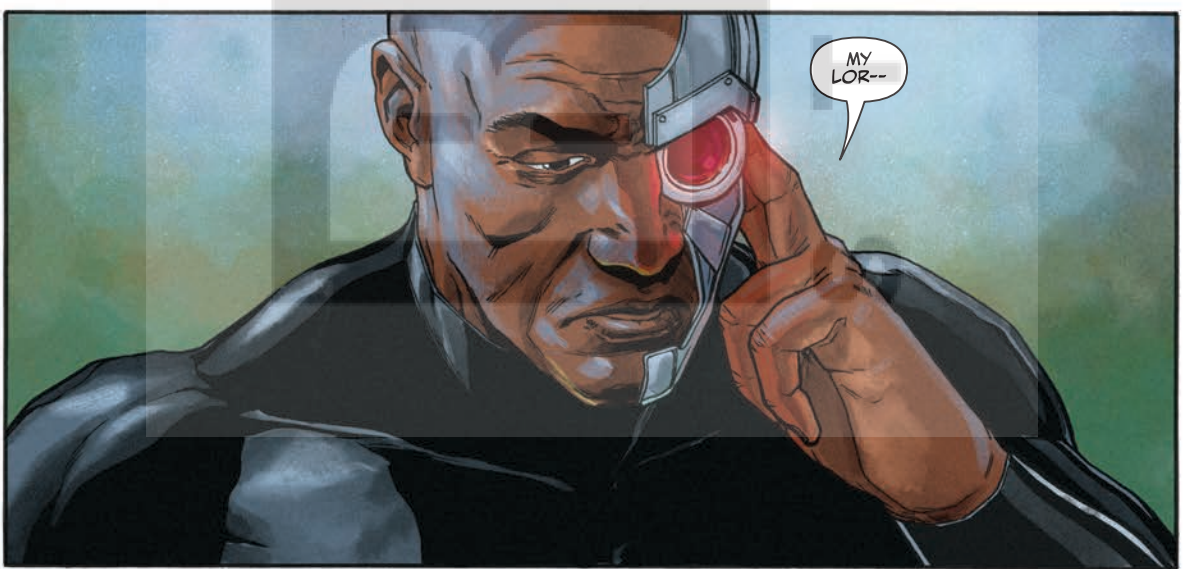
*BRNNNG  
BLEEE*



*BRNNNG  
BLEEE*



*BRNNNG  
BLEEE*



MY  
LOR--





I HAVE JUST RECEIVED AN EXTRAORDINARY REPORT, GENERAL. CAN YOU EXPLAIN WHY YOU WERE NOT THE ONE TO RELAY THIS INFORMATION TO ME?



MY COMMUNICATION DEVICE SHORTED AND DEMANDED A BUFFER ON THE BATTLEFIELD.

I'M DEEPLY DISAPPOINTED I COULDN'T TELL YOU MYSELF THAT AFTER SO MANY YEARS, I FINALLY PUT AN END TO THE REBEL GENERAL.

INFERNO IS DEA--



CONGRATULATIONS ON DOING YOUR JOB. IT'S ABOUT TIME. BUT THIS NEWS IS FAR BIGGER THAN YOURS.





THE CROWING IS DEAD.



!

I HAD NOT BEEN... BRIEFED ON THAT NEWS.



I'VE SENT ADMIRAL CROM TO CONFIRM AND TO FIND THE VISUAL. SHE HAS SOMETHING I REQUIRE. WITH THE CROWING OUT OF OUR WAY, IT SHOULD BE SIMPLE.

THIS WONDERFUL DEVELOPMENT REQUIRES A CHANGE IN OUR PLANS. COME TO ME THE INSTANT YOU STEP FOOT IN HOUSE ATLANTIC.





I HATE COMING OUT HERE.

THIS WHOLE PLANET MAKES MY SKIN CRAWL.

WELL, WE GOT NO CHOICE, UNLESS YOU'RE CONSIDERING PISSING OFF ARCHMAKER.

YOU WANNA BE A SCIENCE EXPERIMENT TODAY?







THAT'S  
WHAT I  
THOUGHT.



NOW  
WOULD YOU  
STOP CRYING  
AND GO CHECK  
ON THE  
FREIGHT?



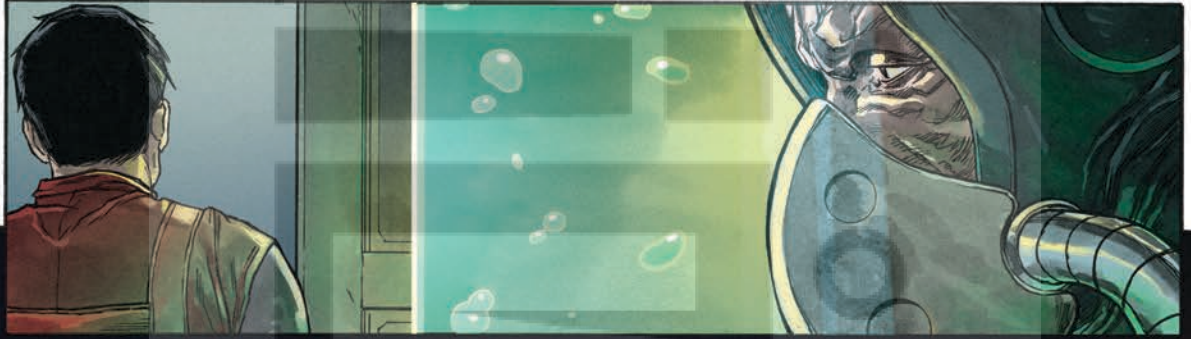
I'M NOT TRYING TO END  
UP OUT THERE WITH THOSE  
POOR FUCKERS. ~~SCOFFS~~  
ARMS AND HEADS AND  
ASSHOLES FLOATING  
AROUND...

NO  
THANKS.



ALMOST  
THERE. HOPE  
YOU HEAPS OF  
TRASH ARE READY  
TO MEET YOUR  
MAKER.





BREE-HOFF II.







APITY-PRIME.



THANKS FOR GIVING ME A HAND. I COULDN'T LEAVE HER LYING HERE LIKE THAT.





I WANT HER BACK SO BADLY, CHASE. SHE ALWAYS HAD A PLAN, ALWAYS A STEP AHEAD.

SHE MADE ME BETTER.

WHEN WE MET, I WAS JUST A SCARED KID WITH A NONSTOP SHITTY ATTITUDE LIVING IN A HOLE, AVOIDING MY LIFE.

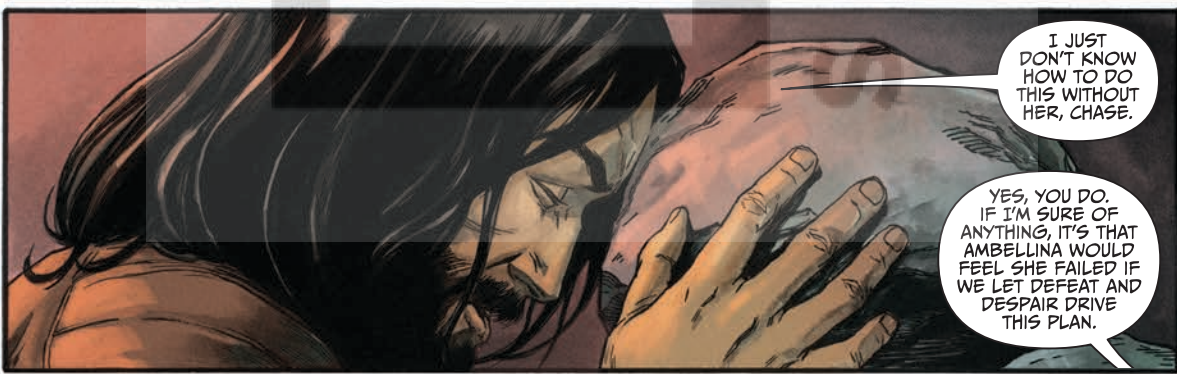


TO BE FAIR, YOU STILL HAVE A SHITTY ATTITUDE MOST OF THE TIME.



EH, MAYBE FIFTY PERCENT. AN IMPROVEMENT, NO LESS.

I'LL GIVE YOU THAT.



I JUST DON'T KNOW HOW TO DO THIS WITHOUT HER, CHASE.

YES, YOU DO. IF I'M SURE OF ANYTHING, IT'S THAT AMBELLINA WOULD FEEL SHE FAILED IF WE LET DEFEAT AND DESPAIR DRIVE THIS PLAN.





SHE WOULD WANT YOU TO TAKE CONTROL OF THE SITUATION, CLAUDIO.  
AND THAT IS WHAT YOU'LL DO.



YOU'RE FORGETTING THAT THE CREATOR DOESN'T WANT ME TO HAVE ANY CONTROL. HE'S SHOWN US WHAT HE'S CAPABLE OF.

THE FACT STANDS THAT HIS POWER STILL SUPERSEDES MINE.

WHAT IF THAT WASN'T A FACT?



COME ON, CHASE, YOU'VE SEEN IT YOURSELF...

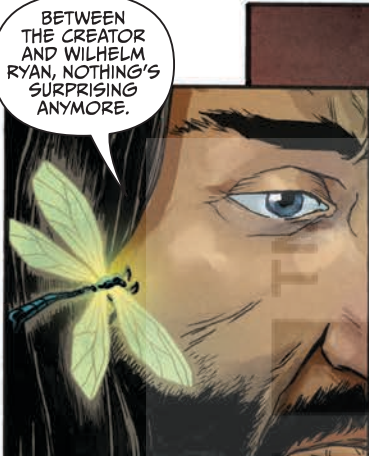
I KNOW IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE, BUT, SOMEHOW, I FEEL *DISTANT* FROM HIM. ALMOST AS IF WHATEVER CONNECTION WE ONCE HAD IS COMPLETELY SEVERED.



NOT SURE WHAT THAT MEANS FOR ANY OF THIS. MAYBE HE'S AFRAID YOU'LL GIVE ME THE UPPER HAND, SO HE CUT YOU OFF.

IT COULD BE. BUT IT DOES SEEM PECULIAR, DON'T YOU THINK?





BETWEEN THE CREATOR AND WILHELM RYAN, NOTHING'S SURPRISING ANYMORE.



I CAN ONLY IMAGINE HOW FAR OFF-WORLD THEY'VE GONE OR HOW MANY HE'S SENT TO OTHER PLANETS.

MOST OF THE UNIVERSE COULD BE INFECTED AT THIS POINT FOR ALL WE KNOW.

WE COULD KEEP MOVING FORWARD TO HOUSE ATLANTIC.

EVEN IF WE KILL RYAN, IT DOESN'T SAVE ANYONE WHO'S BEEN INFECTED, AND HE GETS TO LIVE OUT ETERNITY WITH ALL THOSE HOSTAGES.




PERHAPS HE HAS AN ANTIDOTE TO THE VIRUS SOMEWHERE IN THERE?



DAMMIT! THESE THINGS ARE EVERYWHERE.

SLAP



I HIGHLY DOUBT HE WOULD HAVE DEVELOPED ONE. HE WANTS NO STONE LEFT UNTURNED WHEN IT COMES TO LOYALTY.




YOU'RE RIGHT. RYAN WOULD NEVER RISK THAT.






WAIT--

DO YOU HEAR  
SOMETHING?



FOLLOW  
THE SMELL  
OF BULLSHIT,  
IT'LL LEAD YOU  
STRAIGHT TO  
THE PEN.



HOW COULD I HAVE  
BEEN SO STUPID TO  
LET YOU AND THAT  
OLD BASTARD FOOL  
ME INTO COMING TO  
THIS REVOLTING  
PLANET?

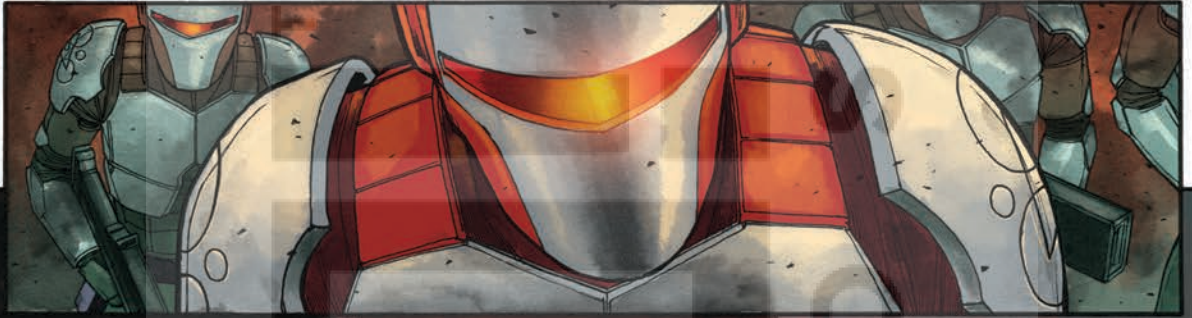




**KABOOOOOOOM**







TO BE CONTINUED...