

WAR of KINGS™

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WAR of KINGS™

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WAR of KINGS

A devastating galactic war has broken out between the Kree Empire, ruled by Black Bolt and the Inhuman royal family, and the Shi'Ar Imperium, controlled by the despotic mutant Vulcan.

Vulcan saw an opportunity to annex the Kree Empire while it was in a state of upheaval. During the symbolic wedding of the Inhuman princess Crystal and Ronan the Accuser, Vulcan unleashed his Imperial Guard in a callous first strike, sending his war fleets to invade Kree space.

Reeling from this savage attack, in which many Kree colony worlds were annihilated by negabombs, the Inhumans realized they had to overcome the Shi'Ar before any of their own schemes of destiny could be achieved.

The tides of war shifted dramatically when a rescue mission to save Lilandra, the exiled Shi'Ar empress, ended with Gladiator, praetor of the Imperial Guard, betraying his allegiance to Vulcan.

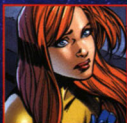
Now there is a deadlock. The Inhumans are trapped in a war they did not want to fight, and Vulcan finds himself committed to a campaign he may not be able to afford...



BLACK BOLT



MEDUSA



CRYSTAL



GORGON



KARNAK



TRITON



MAXIMUS



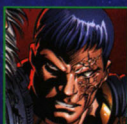
RONAN



LILANDRA



GLADIATOR



VULCAN



SURELY YOU'RE EXAGGERATING, ADMIRAL KA'ARDUM. THE SHI'AR IMPERIUM? OVERSTRETCHED?

NOT YET, EMPEROR VULCAN. NOT TODAY. BUT AT THIS RATE, WITHIN A FEW MONTHS, A YEAR AT MOST.

MY L-LORD... UHM... YOU SHOULD PROBABLY REMOVE YOURSELF FROM THIS LOCA--

QUIET! ADULTS ARE TALKING.



THE IMPERIUM IS PRESENTLY ENGAGED IN NINETY-SEVEN SEPARATE CAMPAIGNS OF PACIFICATION OR ANNEXATION.

SO INCREASE PRODUCTION IN THE SHIPYARDS AND ARSENALS! IT'S NOT COMPLICATED! FOR GOD'S SAKE, DOESN'T ANYBODY OWN A WHIP ANYMORE?

WE HAVE ALREADY BEEN OBLIGED TO DOWN-SCALE SIXTEEN OF THEM IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE SUPPLY OF MEN AND MUNITIONS TO THE KREE WARFRONTS.



MY L-LORD, YOU REALLY SHOULD B--

HUSH!

THERE ARE REPORTS OF UNREST IN THE LABOR POOLS OF MOST MANUFACTURING WORLDS, MAJESTOR.

FURTHERMORE, SEVERAL OUTWORLDS HAVE NOW RISEN IN REVOLT AT THE SCALE OF THE TAXES WE ARE DEMANDING OF THEM

THE SHEER INTENSITY OF THIS WAR WITH THE KREE IS EXHAUSTING OUR MILITARY RESOURCES, MY EMPEROR.

IT IS BEGINNING TO SAP THE SPIRIT OF THE SHI'AR.



DO YOU CONCUR WITH THE ADMIRAL'S ASSESSMENT, CHANCELLOR ARAKI?

--TZZBBBZ--
TZZBZBK--

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE INTELFEED?

COMMUNICATIONS HAVE BEEN IMPAIRED BY THE AFTEREFFECTS OF NEGA-BOMBING.

I URGE YOU TO RETURN TO THE FLAGSHIP, MY LORD!

WHAT?
AND MISS THIS
BRACING
WALK IN THE
COUNTRY?

PERHAPS
WE SHOULD
NEGOTIATE
A
CEASE-FIRE WITH
THE KREE.

THAT
SOUNDS AN
AWFUL LOT LIKE
TREASON,
ADMIRAL. I--

SHARRA
AND
KY'THRI!
A SENTRY! A
SENTRY HAS GOT
THROUGH THE
OFFENSE
BARRAGE!

IT'S
BREACHED
THE SHIELDS!
IT'S--

KREEESH

AAAAAEEEEEE

IMPERIAL
GUARD! PROTECT
THE MAJESTOR!





MUST I DO EVERYTHING MYSELF--

THE SHI'AR MAJESTOR IS UNDER MY PROTECTION.

FTTOOMFF

INDEED. AND WHO MIGHT YOU BE?

THE SHORES OF THE SARTH OCEAN, HALA.

--AND SO I THOUGHT THE SEA AIR MIGHT AID YOUR CONVALESCENCE.

YOU'VE BEEN STARING AT THE SAME HOSPITAL WALLS FOR *TOO LONG*. A CHANGE OF SCENERY WILL IMPROVE YOUR CONSTITUTION, ACCUSER.

BESIDES, IT'S THE *LEAST* A WIFE CAN DO FOR HER HUSBAND.

WIFE. HMM...

I CONFESS I AM STILL COMING TO GRIPS WITH THAT CONCEPT.

YOU KNOW, LADY CRYSTAL, BY RIGHTS, THE SHI'AR SHOULD HAVE *CRUSHED* US ALREADY. THEIR IMPERIUM HAS NEVER BEEN SO STRONG, NOR OUR EMPIRE SO WEAK.

IT IS A TESTAMENT TO THE LEADERSHIP OF ATILAN AND THE POWER OF THE NEW INHUMAN ELITE THAT WE ARE HOLDING OUR OWN.

IT'S MORE THAN THAT. MY COUSIN KARNAK TELLS ME THE SHI'AR ARE IN DANGER OF *OVER-STRETCH*.

DESPITE THEIR *VAST* RESOURCES, VULCAN'S PROGRAM OF EXPANSION HAS *DRAINED* THEM.

SO WE ARE JUST A STUBBORN ADVERSARY WHO HAS APPEARED AT THE *LEAST* OPPORTUNE MOMENT.



THE AVERAGE SHI'AR SOLDIER FIGHTS THIS WAR BECAUSE HE'S BEEN **ORDERED** TO, AND BECAUSE HE'S **AFRAID** OF VULCAN.

THE AVERAGE **KREE** SOLDIER FIGHTS BECAUSE HE REMEMBERS WHAT THE SHI'AR INFLICTED ON US IN THE **LAST** CONFLICT.

IN ANY WAR, I'D ALWAYS BACK THE SIDE THAT'S FIGHTING WITH **SPIRIT**.



JUST NOW, YOU MENTIONED OUR MARRIAGE, LORD RONAN.

THE SHI'AR IMPERIUM **EMBODIES** THE CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE, DOES IT NOT?

AS SYMBOLIZED BY THEIR GODS, SHARRA AND KYTHRI... GODS WHO WERE FORCED INTO MARRIAGE AGAINST THEIR WILL, AND IN THAT UNION FOUND **STRENGTH**.

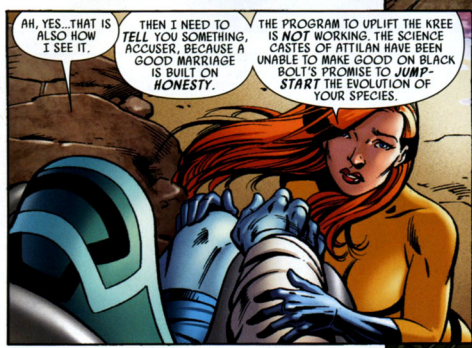
THAT'S WHAT THE IMPERIUM DOES. IT MARRIES OTHER CULTURES BY MEANS OF **SHOTGUN WEDDINGS**.



I SEE OUR DYNASTIC UNION RATHER MORE AS AN **ARRANGED MARRIAGE**. TWO PARTIES WHO UNITE IN A BOND OF MUTUAL CARE AND KINSHIP.

OF COURSE.

YOU MEAN... THE KREE AND THE INHUMANS?



AH, YES... THAT IS ALSO HOW I SEE IT.

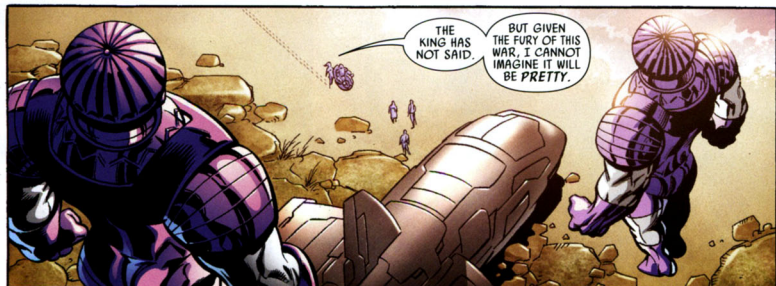
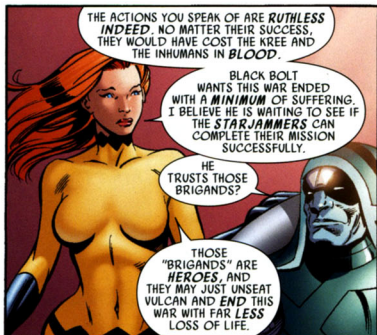
THEN I NEED TO TELL YOU SOMETHING, ACCUSER, BECAUSE A GOOD MARRIAGE IS BUILT ON **HONESTY**.

THE PROGRAM TO UPLIFT THE KREE IS **NOT** WORKING. THE SCIENCE CASTES OF ATTILAN HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO MAKE GOOD ON BLACK BOLT'S PROMISE TO **JUMP-START** THE EVOLUTION OF YOUR SPECIES.



I BELIEVE THAT YOU AND I SHOULD STAND TOGETHER AND APPROACH BLACK BOLT ON THIS ISSUE WITH ALL URGENCY.

IF WE WAIT UNTIL THIS WAR IS DONE, IT MAY BE FAR TOO LATE, AND THE KREE WILL HAVE BEEN LEFT BEHIND.



CHANDILAR, THE SHI'AR THRONELAND.

FOR ALL MY POWER,
I AM IN AWE OF
THE INFLUENCE THE
EMPERESS WIELDS.

ONE WORD FROM HER,
ONE SPARK, AND THE
FIRE SPREADS THROUGH
THE OLD, DRY TINDER
OF THE IMPERIUM.

THROUGH THE POPULATIONS
VULCAN HAS OPPRESSED
DURING HIS RULE, THROUGH THE
FIEFDOMS AND NOBLE HOUSES
HE HAS DISPOSSESSED
OR SILENCED.

THROUGH THOSE DIVISIONS
OF THE SHI'AR MILITARY HE
HAS SQUANDERED IN HIS
WARS OF EXPANSION OR
SIMPLY USED TOO HARD.

THROUGH THE GREAT
UNDERGROUND NETWORK
OF DISSIDENTS WHO HAVE
RISKED EXECUTION BY KEEPING
THE NAME LILANDRA
NERAMANI ALIVE.

THE FIRE SPREADS
FAST, AND BURNS
BRIGHT.

IT BURNS IN
THE FORM OF
DISCONTENT, OF
SECRET SABOTAGE
TO THE IMPERIAL
INTELFEEED NETWORK,
OF OPEN REVOLT
ON FOUNDRY
WORLDS.

AND IT BURNS
HERE IN THE
AERIE TONIGHT.

WHO GOES
THERE?

THE
FUTURE.

PRÆTOR!
IT IS A BLESSING
TO SEE YOU!

I CANNOT
CLAIM THAT
TITLE ANYMORE,
COUNCILLOR
D'BEK.

IT WILL
BE AWARDED TO
YOU AGAIN, SOON
ENOUGH, OF THAT I
AM CERTAIN!

COUNCILLOR D'BEK'S SEQUENCE
REMAINED LOYAL TO LILANDRA
WHEN THE INFLUENTIAL ARAKI
SEQUENCE SWUNG THE COUNCIL'S
SUPPORT TO VULCAN.

WAS YOUR
ROUTE TO THE
THRONEWORLD
CONTESTED?

WE
MANAGED.

WITH THE HELP OF THE
STARJAMMERS AND THE
GUARDIANS OF THE
GALAXY WE RAN HOODED
UNDER THE EYES OF VULCAN'S
FLEETS. WE FOUGHT WHEN
WE HAD TO.

NOW THE GUARDIANS
HAVE DEPARTED, AND I
AM LEFT WITH THE
STARJAMMERS TO WALK
HER THE LAST, LITTLE WAY.

IS EVERYTHING
PREPARED?

THE HIGH
COUNCIL IS IN
SESSION...

"...AND CHANCELLOR ARAKI
BELIEVES THEY HAVE BEEN
CALLED FOR AN
EXTRAORDINARY
PARLIAMENT TO DISCUSS
MILITARY POLICY."

WHEN HAS
THIS HOUSE EVER
SHIED AWAY FROM
THE VICISSITUDES
OF WAR?

THE KREE
STELLAR EMPIRE
IS AN AGE-OLD FOE
THAT **MUST** BE
PUT DOWN!

THE LOSSES ARE TOO DEAR,
CHANCELLOR! EVEN THE KREE
CEDED TERRITORIES
HAVE TURNED
AGAINST US!

AYE! BY
GOING AGAINST THE
KREE IN THIS HEADLONG
MANNER, VULCAN HAS MADE
AN OPEN ENEMY OF LORD
RAVENOUS!

PAH! THE IMPERIUM
CONQUERS PETTY
KINGDOMS LIKE
RAVENOUS'S IN
ITS SLEEP!

FOR SHAME,
CHANCELLOR
ARAKI. WOULD
YOU SPILL SHI'AR
BLOOD SO
FREELY?

WHO
ADDRESSES
THIS HOUSE?
**SHOW
YOURSELF!**



GLADLY.

L-LILANDRA?
HERE? SEIZE
HER! SEIZE
HER NOW!



OH, I DON'T THINK
SO.



YOU WILL NOT TOUCH
HER!

YOUR
PERNICIOUS
SECRET ORDER
HAS MANIPULATED THE
FATE OF THE IMPERIUM
FOR TOO LONG,
ARAKI.

THIS IS
A COUP! WHEN
VULCAN LEARNS
OF THIS HE WILL
SLAUGHTER
YOU ALL! HE
WILL--

THIS IS NO
COUP! THIS IS
A RESTORATION
OF LEGAL
AUTHORITY!

I AM
LILANDRA
NERAMANI, MAJESTRIX
OF THE SHI'ARI! I RECLAIM
THE THRONE OF THE AERIE BY
RIGHT OF MY BLOOD
SEQUENCE!

MY FIRST
ACTS WILL BE TO
OUTLAW THE USURPER
VULCAN AND END THIS
DISASTROUS WAR
WITH THE KREE!

WHAT SAYS
THE HIGH
COUNCIL?!

MA-JES-TRIX!
MA-JES-TRIX!
MA-JES-TRIX!



START AT THE TOP AND KEEP IT SIMPLE.

I AM SHIR YDRN TALONIS, OF THE FRATERNITY OF RAPTORS. I AM ALSO KNOWN AS TALON.

AND THIS FRATERNITY, TALON, IT'S SOME KIND OF WARRIORS' LODGE?

IT IS AN ANCIENT ORDER, FOUNDED WHEN THE GALAXY WAS YOUNG. IT HAS A SINGLE DUTY-- TO PROTECT AND DIRECT THE GREAT PURPOSE.



AND WHAT WOULD THAT "GREAT PURPOSE" BE?

THE SHI'AR IMPERIUM, MAJESTOR.

WE WERE CREATED TO KEEP THE IMPERIUM STRONG...

...TO MAKE SURE IT ENDURES FOREVER.



AS EMPEROR I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT I MIGHT HAVE HEARD OF YOU.

WE WERE ONCE THE BYWORD FOR AUTHORITY AND DISCIPLINE, SERVING THE MAJESTORS OF THE YOUNG IMPERIUM.

BUT TIME HAS PASSED. WE HAVE SLUMBERED IN THE NULL VOID FOR MORE THAN SIXTY CENTURIES.

IN OUR ABSENCE, THE SEQUENCE NOBLES OF THE SECRET ORDER HAVE DONE THEIR BEST TO MAINTAIN OUR OBJECTIVES.

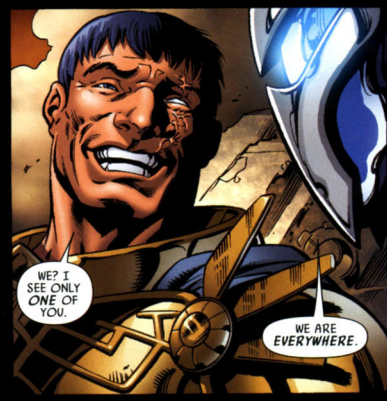


AND WHAT? NOW YOU'RE AWAKE? BACK IN BUSINESS?

AND DELIGHTED TO FIND A STRONG LEADER ON THE THRONE OF AERIE.

THE FRATERNITY OF RAPTORS HAS RETURNED TO SERVE YOU, EMPEROR VULCAN. TO SECURE YOUR RULE.

TO TAKE THE IMPERIUM TO THE NEXT LEVEL.




WE? I SEE ONLY ONE OF YOU.

WE ARE EVERYWHERE.



AND WHAT HELP DO YOU THINK I NEED, SHIR YDRN TALONIS?




YOU ARE LOCKED IN A BRUTALLY EXPENSIVE WAR WITH AN IMPLACABLE FOE. YOUR FORCE OF LEADERSHIP HAS MADE YOU MANY ENEMIES WITHIN THE IMPERIUM.

WORLDS ARE NOW RISING IN OPEN REVOLT AGAINST YOUR REGIME, AND YOU CANNOT SERVICE THE WAR DEBT INDEFINITELY.

YOUR HOT-HEADED AGGRESSION HAS MADE BEDFELLOWS OF PREVIOUSLY DIVIDED OPPONENTS.


EVEN THE HOSTS OF RAVENOUS HAVE RISEN AGAINST YOU ALONGSIDE THEIR NATURAL ENEMY, THE KREE.



YOU DARE LECTURE ME ON STRATEGY?! AND WITH SUCH LIES AND SPECULATION?

THE DATASONG HAS REVEALED ALL THIS TO ME. THE DATASONG NEVER LIES.

AND WHAT THE ~~HELL~~ CAN YOU DO TO HELP ME?



AS A GESTURE OF OUR INTENT, AND A DEMONSTRATION OF OUR ABILITIES, THE FRATERNITY HAS STRUCK A PACT WITH KING BLASTAAR OF THE NEGATIVE ZONE.

I CAN SHARE THE DATASONG WITH YOU IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE...



...THERE, THEY FALL UPON THE CEDED TERRITORIES FROM THE NEGATIVE ZONE THROUGH PORTALS MANUFACTURED BY THE COSMIC ROD KING BLASTAAR NOW WIELDS.

RAVENOUS'S ENCLAVE WILL NOT LAST ANOTHER WEEK.



NOW TELL ME...HOW DO YOU INTEND TO DEAL WITH LILANDRA NERAMANI'S COUP ON CHANDILAR?

WHAT? WHAT?!



LIES! LIES! I WOULD HAVE HEARD SOMETHING IF SUCH AN OUTRAGE HAD OCCURRED!

THE INTELFEEED HAS BEEN SABOTAGED BY YOUR OPPONENTS, MAJESTOR.

BUT THE DATASONG IS BEYOND THEIR REACH. LILANDRA IS IN THE HIGH COUNCIL RIGHT NOW, DEMANDING YOUR CENSURE.



NO! NO!! I'LL NEVER GET BACK TO CHANDILAR IN TIME TO--

CALM YOURSELF, MAJESTOR.

I SAID I WOULD PROTECT YOU, AND I WILL.



THE CONCOURSE
OF THE AERIE,
CHANDOLAR.

THE FIRE
SPREADS.

IN LESS THAN AN
HOUR, THE CITY
CENTER IS CHOKED
WITH SCREAMING
CROWDS.

BUT SOME ARE NOT REJOICING.
PRO-VULCAN Mobs RIOT
IN THE STREETS AROUND
THE CHANCELLERY.

THAT'S WHEN
SHE DECIDES
TO WALK
TO THE TEMPLE.

THIS IS
A BAD
IDEA.

TO
CONSOLIDATE
MY CLAIM, I MUST GO
TO THE TEMPLE OF
SHARRA AND K'YTHRI
AND RENEW
MY OATH.

THEN THE
COUNCIL AND THE
CHIEFS OF STAFF CAN
PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE
TO ME AT THE
HIGH ALTAR.

WE GRASP THE
RITUAL SIGNIFICANCE.
LILANDRA. IT'S THE "WALKING
ACROSS THE CONCOURSE
TO GET THERE" PART THAT
HAVOK IS HAVING
TROUBLE WITH.



I'M NOT VULCAN, LORNA.

I NEED TO **SHOW** THE PEOPLE THAT I'VE RETURNED, AND THAT I'M ONE OF **THEM**. I NEED TO WALK **AMONG** THEM WITHOUT FEAR.

THIS WILL **NOT STAND!** YOU HAVE WOEFULLY MISREAD THE WILLINGNESS OF THE SHI'AR TO ACCEPT **REGIME CHANGE** IN A TIME OF WAR!

AND YOU'VE MISREAD MY WILLINGNESS TO LISTEN TO YOU TALK CRAP, ARAKI.



RACHEL, WHAT'S THE SITUATION?

MY HEAD'S **SPINNING**. SO MANY MINDS PACKED IN TIGHT. PROTESTORS AND SUPPORTERS ALIKE...

THE MENTAL CHATTER IS **DEAFENING**... ANGER, JOY, **FEAR**, CONFUSION...

THE MAJESTRIX WILL BE **PERFECTLY SAFE**. SHE IS UNDER **MY PROTECTION**.

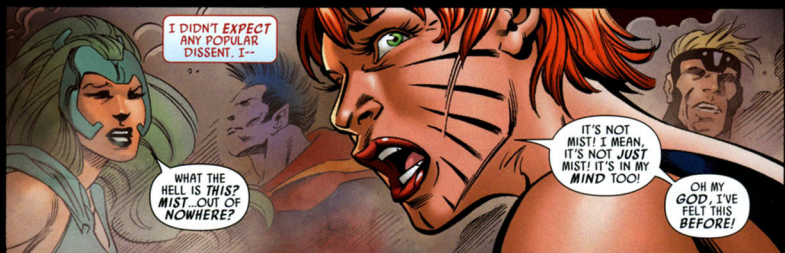


HAVE I **MISJUDGED** THE MOOD OF THE PEOPLE, KALLARK?

DO THEY REALLY **LOVE** VULCAN?

OF **COURSE NOT**, MAJESTRIX.

I TELL HER **NO**, BUT I AM **DISMAYED**.



I DIDN'T **EXPECT** ANY POPULAR **DISSENT**. I--

WHAT THE **HELL** IS THIS? **MIST...OUT OF NOWHERE?**

IT'S NOT **MIST!** I MEAN, IT'S NOT **JUST MIST!** IT'S IN MY **MIND TOO!**

OH MY **GOD**, I'VE FELT THIS **BEFORE!**



INCOMING!

ATTENTION!

D'BEK!
NO!

AGGHH!

SHUNK



THE DEATH
COMMANDOS.
CHANCELLOR ARAKI'S
COVERT NETWORK
SQUAD.

I CAN'T
BELIEVE HE'D
TRY SOMETHING
THIS BRAZEN.

THESE ARE THE BASTARDS WHO MURDERED MY FAMILY!

RACHEL! GET A GRIP! YOU'RE NO GOOD TO US WITH YOUR MIND CLOUDED!

TAKE KORVUS AND GET LILANDRA INTO COVER!



CALL OFF YOUR KILLERS!



I DIDN'T CALL THEM IN. BUT I APPLAUD THEIR WORK.

GET THE MAJESTRIX TO COVER!



SKRWITCHS

AIGHH!

METAL WINGS? TRY AGAIN.



UNHAND ME! I AM YOUR EMPRESS!

COME ON!

I CAN'T--

COME ON!

HYPERNOVA FIRST.
SHE PLASMA-FRIES TWO
LOYAL COUNCILMEN
BEFORE I PUT
HER DOWN.



WARSHOT
NEXT.

BY THE TIME FLAW THE
WARSKRULL HITS ME, I CAN
HEAR ARAKI LAUGHING
AND SHOUTING
OVER THE TUMULT.

PANIC HAS SEIZED THE
CONCOURSE. A
HUNDRED THOUSAND
PEOPLE ARE CAUGHT
IN ITS GRIP.



I HEAR EXPLOSIONS,
SCREAMS. I HEAR
SOMEONE SHRIEKING
MY NAME.

KALLARK!
GLADIATOR!



TRAITOR
TO THE
THROW!



KILL HER!
FIND THE FALSE
EMPRESS AND
KILL HER!



DEATH
TO THE FALSE
EMPRESS!

THIS IS
THE FUTURE
SHE BRINGS
US!

THROW HER
BACK WHERE
SHE CAME!

MOVE,
YOUR
HIGHNESS!

KEEP
GOING! GET
OUT OF THE
OPEN!

IS THIS
WHAT
THEY THINK
OF ME?



WATCH
OUT!

IS THI--
OW!

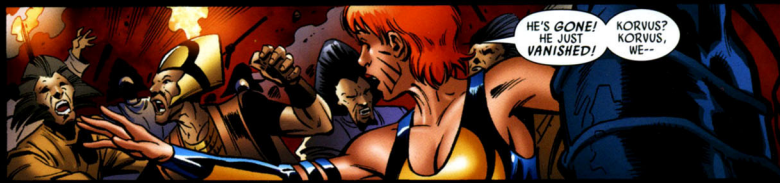
WHERE'S THE
SHOOTER?
WHERE'S THE
SHOOTER?



THERE!
HE'S--



WHAT THE
HELL--?! HOW
DID HE
CHANGE--



HE'S GONE!
HE JUST
VANISHED!

KORVUS?
KORVUS,
WE--



OH NO.
OH NO NO
NO.

AND
THAT IS THE
MOMENT...



...WHEN THE
FIRE GOES
OUT.

KING TAKES QUEEN

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