

RISE OF THE BLACK PANTHER[®] #1

COATES ● NARCISSE ● RENAUD ● PAITREAU





RISE OF THE BLACK PANTHER

Since time immemorial, a lineage of fierce warrior kings have protected the African country of Wakanda. Theirs was the title of Black Panther, a mantle of spiritual and political leadership handed down for generations.

Thanks to the Black Panthers, the country has remained hidden, uncolonized and unconquered for untold centuries. Wakanda is home to secret technological advancements and contains the Great Sacred Mound of Vibranium, a source of a rare, ultra-durable metal that absorbs energy and vibration.

Many have sought to conquer Wakanda. All have failed. No king has ever died at the hands of outsiders...

"THE KING AT THE END OF EVERYTHING"

writer **EVAN NARCISSE**

consultant **TA-NEHISI COATES**

artist **PAUL RENAUD**

color artist **STÉPHANE PAITREAU**

letterer **VC's JOE SABINO**

design **MANNY MEDEROS**

logo **RIAN HUGHES**

cover and title pages art by

BRIAN STELFREEZE

variant covers by **PAUL RENAUD;**

CHRIS SPROUSE, KARL STORY &

LAURA MARTIN; TYLER KIRKHAM &

ARIF PRIANTO

associate editor **SARAH BRUNSTAD**

editor **WIL MOSS**

executive editor **TOM BREVOORT**

editor in chief **AXEL ALONSO**

chief creative officer **JOE QUESADA**

president **DAN BUCKLEY**

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**BLACK
PANTHER** created by
**STAN LEE &
JACK KIRBY**

FROM THE JOURNALS OF THE CHIEF
SCIENTIST OF WAKANDA, QUEEN
N'YAMI, WIFE OF KING T'CHAKA:

DEAR T'CHALLA,
YEARS AGO, WHEN YOUR
FATHER WAS BUT A CHILD,
YOUR GRANDFATHER AZZURI
MET A MOST CURIOUS MAN...

YOU
WERE TOLD
TO LEAVE OUR
LANDS.





IT WASN'T THE FACT THAT THIS MAN WAS A SYMBOL OF HIS HOMELAND THAT MADE AZZURI WONDER ABOUT HIM. HE TOO KNEW SIMILAR BLESSINGS AND BURDENS.



NOR WAS IT THE SKILLS THAT THE CAPTAIN DISPLAYED IN COMBAT. YOUR GRANDFATHER KNEW OF THE AMERICAN EXPERIMENTS THAT HAD LEFT SOME MEN MAD AND OTHERS DEAD.

PLEASE, WE JUST WANT TO TALK.



YOU HAVE A PRECIOUS RESOURCE THAT CAN STOP A GREAT EVIL FROM SPREADING ACROSS THE WORLD.



SO YOU HAVE COME TO STEAL WHAT YOU DESIRE, AS ELSEWHERE ON THE CONTINENT?



NO, IT WAS THE MAN'S NAIVETE THAT MADE AZZURI SCOFF AT CAPTAIN AMERICA'S WORDS.

THAT DOES NOT HAPPEN IN WAKANDA.

I'M NOT HERE TO STEAL ANYTHING! YOU DON'T KNOW THE KIND OF MEN WE'RE FIGHTING AGAINST.

I DON'T KNOW YOU EITHER.

THE SUDDEN ARRIVAL
OF A COMMON ENEMY
MADE THEM ALLIES...



...BUT IT WAS THE
CAPTAIN'S NATURE
THAT MADE THEM
FRIENDS.



HE GREW TO APPRECIATE
WAKANDA AS FEW OUTSIDERS
EVER HAD.



SO MUCH SO THAT THE KING
ENTRUSTED HIM WITH THE
HIGHEST GIFT WAKANDA CAN
OFFER. YOUR FATHER, ELDEST
SON OF AZZURI, NEVER
FORGOT THAT.*



*TO SEE MORE OF CAPTAIN AMERICA
AND AZZURI, CHECK OUT
CAPTAIN AMERICA/BLACK PANTHER:
FLAGS OF OUR FATHERS.

YOUR GRANDFATHER NEVER SAW THE CAPTAIN AGAIN. BUT THEIR ONE INTERACTION MADE THE TRIBAL COUNCIL VERY UNEASY FOR YEARS...

CAPTAIN AMERICA'S INDOMITABLE WILL AND INDESTRUCTIBLE SHIELD HELPED THE ALLIES WIN WORLD WAR II--

THEY CALLED YOUR FATHER "AZZURI THE WISE," KING T'CHAKA, BUT THE STUPIDEST THING HE EVER DID WAS GIVE OUR METAL TO THE AMERICAN CAPTAIN.

THE VIBRANIUM-STEEL ALLOY IN THE SHIELD HELPED HIM **SAVE THE WORLD**, JUST AS HE PROMISED.

HMPH. THEY PROBABLY STUMBLED ONTO THE FORMULA BY ACCIDENT. OTHER RUTUKUTM ARE DOUBTLESSLY SEARCHING FOR THE REALM RIGHT NOW, GREEDY FOR THAT WHICH ONLY WE HAVE.

WE'VE NOT HAD ANY VISITORS, CANGZA.

TMA DERISIVE RWANDAN WORD FOR WHITE PEOPLE.

SO THE GOOD CAPTAIN LIKELY KEPT HIS VOW OF SECRECY.

I HAVE HEARD NOTHING FROM MY SPY NETWORK TO SUGGEST THAT THE AMERICANS KNOW HOW TO FIND WAKANDA.

AH, YES...VIA THE INTELLIGENCE BRIEFINGS GIVEN ONLY TO THE BLACK PANTHER?

I SEE YOU HAVE YOUR BROTHER'S BACK AS ALWAYS, S'YAN. DO YOU LIKELY AGREE THAT AZZURI WAS RIGHT IN GIVING A VIBRANIUM SAMPLE TO AN AMERICAN OUTWORLDER?

NOW, NOW, CANGZA...FOR SECURITY'S SAKE, ONLY THE KING CAN BE PRIVY TO THE SPY NETWORK'S FINDINGS.

OUR FATHER KNEW HOW TO FOSTER TRUST, CANGZA.

FOSTERING TRUST WITH RUTUKU... BAH! IS THAT WHY YOU "ADOPTED" THAT WHITE CHILD WHO SURVIVED THAT PLANE CRASH IN THE NORTH?!

HUNTER WOULD NOT HAVE SURVIVED IN WAKANDA HAD I NOT TAKEN HIM IN.

AND THAT IS AS IT SHOULD BE! MAYBE YOU WOULD NOT AGREE WITH GIVING AWAY WAKANDA'S RESOURCES IF YOU HAD YOUR OWN FAMILY TO THINK ABOUT, MY LORD.

HA! NOW THAT'S SOMETHING I CAN AGREE WITH CANGZA ON! ANY OF THESE DORA MILAJE WOULD BEAR YOU A FINE HEIR, T'CHAKA.

I WILL FIND MY OWN QUEEN, BROTHER. NOW, ALL THIS TALK OF VIBRANIUM REMINDS ME OF SOMETHING I NEED TO CHECK ON. I MUST TAKE MY LEAVE, GENTLEMEN.

T'CHAKA WOULD NEVER ADMIT TO CHAFING IN THE SHADOW OF YOUR GRANDFATHER, THE GREAT UNIFIER AZZURI. BUT YOUR FATHER ALWAYS LIKED TO GO HIS OWN WAY. ONE NEVER KNEW WHEN HE'D ACTUALLY BOTHER TO STAND ON CEREMONY. I SUPPOSE THAT'S WHAT DREW US TOGETHER.

AFTER MY FAMILY DIED, I WENT TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD TO TRY TO ESCAPE MY GRIEF. BUT WAKANDA DREW ME BACK.

I COULD HEAR "THE ROAR OF THE PANTHER" FROM A MILE AWAY. NO HELMET, O KING?

WHEN YOUR FATHER AND I MET, I WAS A WOMAN WHO WAS TRYING TO PEEL AWAY THE MYSTERIES OF THE GREAT MOUND. LIKE HIM, I LOOKED AT VIBRANIUM AND SAW THE FUTURE.

NO, IT WAS JUST THE OBLIGATORY TRIBAL COUNCIL STATECRAFT WITH CRUSTY OLD CANGZA. HOW GO YOUR TESTS, MY LOVE?

SEE HERE? THE ENERGY ABSORBED BY THE VIBRANIUM STRENGTHENS STRUCTURAL BONDS ON A SUBATOMIC LEVEL. THAT ENERGY IS STILL THERE-- IT'S JUST DOING SOMETHING ELSE.

I'D BEEN GETTING SCRAPS OF ORE AND MOLDING LESSONS FROM EXTRACTION MASTERS WHO KNEW MY PARENTS.

I HAVE TO WEAR THE MASK OF THE PANTHER HABIT ENOUGH AS IT IS ALREADY, N'YAMI. MY SKIN NEEDS TO BREATHE SOME OF THE TIME.

AND SWEAT, TOO, IT SEEMS. ANOTHER GRUELING SET OF COMBAT PREPARATIONS FOR CHALLENGE DAY, THEN?

SMARTY YAM, YOU COULD BE DOING ALL THIS IN THE PALACE.

I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN YOUR OFFER. BUT WE BOTH KNOW IT WOULDN'T BE AS SIMPLE AS IMPROVED EQUIPMENT AND A STAFF OF ASSISTANTS.

WHY NOT? I AM THE KING AND YOU WOULD BE MY QUEEN...

WHEN HE GOT WORD OF A METAL-WORKING WITCH IN THE COUNTRYSIDE USING VIBRANIUM RINGS AND ANKLETS TO QUELL ACES AND PAINS, YOUR FATHER INVESTIGATED, AND THERE I WAS.

AS I'VE SAID BEFORE, I AM NOT SO SURE I AM MEANT TO BE QUEEN. HOW CAN YOU BE SO CERTAIN?

YOU RETURNED FROM STUDYING ABROAD BECAUSE YOU ARE WAKANDAN IN YOUR HEART. ALL I WANT IS FOR US TO BUILD THIS LAND'S FUTURE TOGETHER.



YOUR FUTURE DEMANDS A LINE OF SUCCESSION, T'CHAKA. MY HEART IS DIVIDED OVER GIVING YOU AN HEIR.

I KNOW YOU LOVE ME AND YOU'VE SAID YOU WANT CHILDREN. WHY THIS UNCERTAINTY?

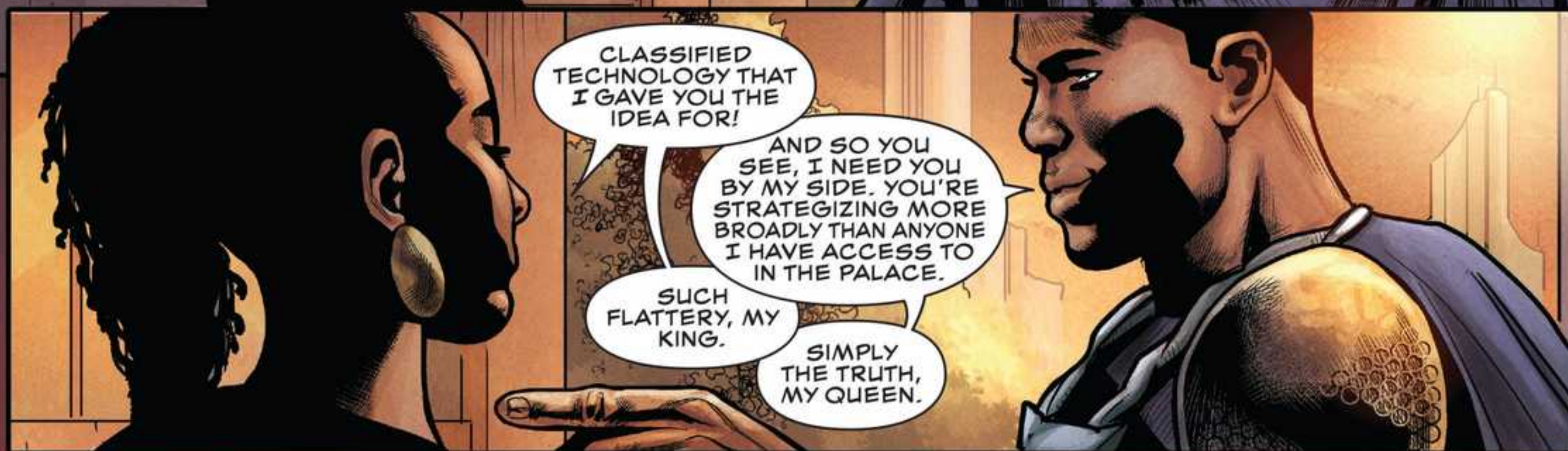
BECAUSE OF ALL THE POSSIBLE FUTURES WAKANDA MIGHT HAVE TO FACE, WHAT WILL ANY CHILDREN OF OURS INHERIT AS SCIONS OF THE REALM?

THE TRIBAL WARS THAT TOOK YOUR PARENTS ARE LONG PAST, N'YAMI. WAKANDA ENJOYS PEACE THAT OUR ANCESTORS NEVER KNEW. WHY DOES SUCH BOUNTY CONCERN YOU?

I KNEW THAT THE GRAVITY OF THE THRONE WAS SOMETHING NOT EVEN OUR WONDER-METAL COULD NEGATE. TETHERING A CHILD OF MINE TO THE RESPONSIBILITY OF RULE GAVE ME PAUSE.

I WANT OUR CHILDREN TO HAVE THE STARS, NOT SECRECY. WE'LL BE VENTURING OUT INTO THE COSMOS SOON, AND WITH VIBRANIUM SHIELDING OUR ROCKETS FROM DETECTION, AMERICA AND RUSSIA WON'T EVEN KNOW.

THAT'S CLASSIFIED TECHNOLOGY, MY LOVE.



CLASSIFIED TECHNOLOGY THAT I GAVE YOU THE IDEA FOR!

AND SO YOU SEE, I NEED YOU BY MY SIDE. YOU'RE STRATEGIZING MORE BROADLY THAN ANYONE I HAVE ACCESS TO IN THE PALACE.

SUCH FLATTERY, MY KING.

SIMPLY THE TRUTH, MY QUEEN.



I CAN MAKE NO PROMISES ABOUT THE FUTURE. EVEN HERE IN THE REALM, CHANGE COMES TOO FAST TO RECKON WITH. THE ONLY WAY I'LL MAKE THE BEST DECISIONS WILL BE WITH YOU SITTING NEXT TO ME.

I... OKAY, WE CAN TRY.



IF THIS WORKS OUT, CAN WE BE THE FIRST WAKANDAN ROYAL FAMILY TO FLY INTO SPACE?

ONLY IF YOU PROMISE NOT TO SING AT ALL WHILE WE'RE IN ORBIT.

THE PALACE REGULARS DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO MAKE OF ME WHEN I MOVED INTO THE GOLDEN CITY.

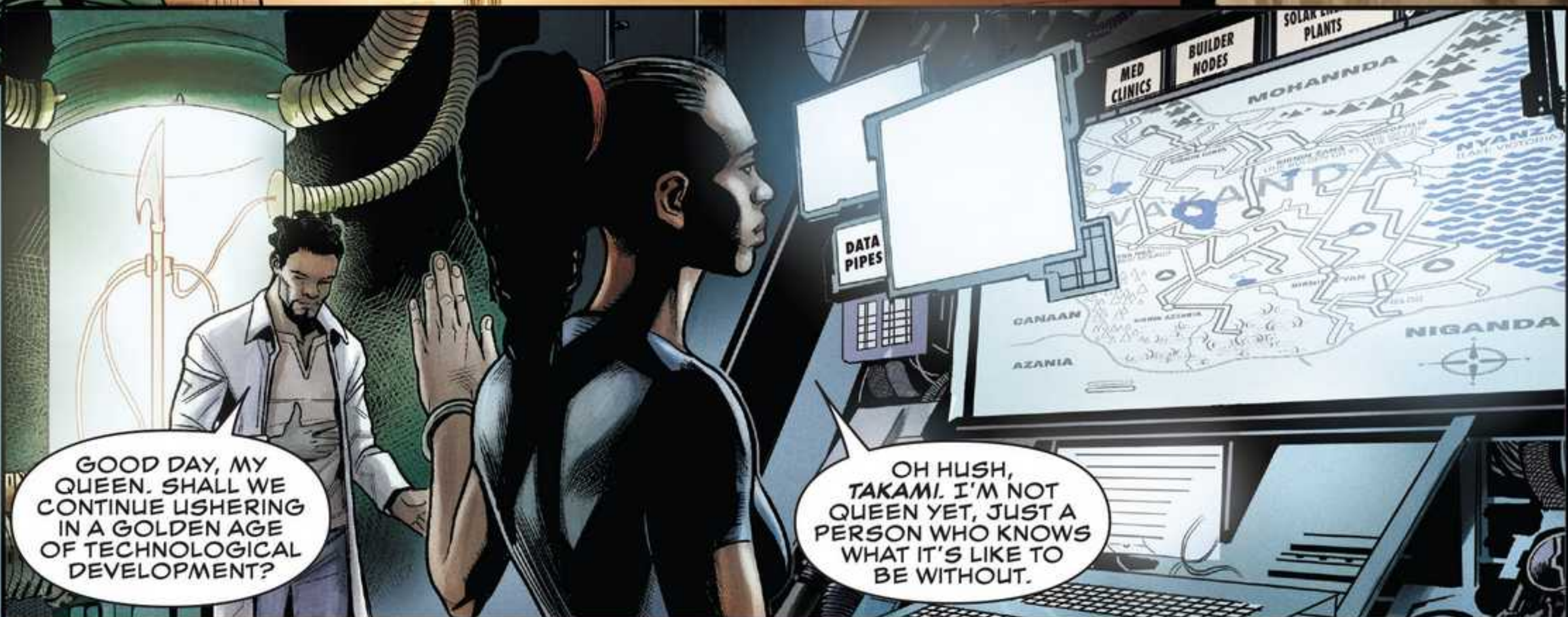
I HEAR HE FOUND HER IN A REFUGEE CAMP ON THE MOHANDAN BORDER.

THE SERVING GIRLS TOLD ME SHE ONLY EATS WITH UTENSILS MADE FROM THE SACRED METAL.

DOES SHE EVEN EAT AT ALL? HOW CAN ONE BE THE KING'S BETROTHED AND STILL BE SO SKINNY?

I WOULD SAY THAT I WAS HURT BY WHAT I OVERHEARD WALKING THE HALLS OF THE PALACE, BUT I'D BEEN ALONE FOR SO LONG THAT OTHERS' OPINIONS MATTERED LITTLE TO ME.

MY HUSBAND'S IN SECURITY AND APPARENTLY SHE'S IN THAT LAB AT ALL HOURS OF THE NIGHT...



GOOD DAY, MY QUEEN. SHALL WE CONTINUE USHERING IN A GOLDEN AGE OF TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT?

OH HUSH, TAKAMI. I'M NOT QUEEN YET, JUST A PERSON WHO KNOWS WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE WITHOUT.



--AND WHILE THE REALM'S BORDERS REMAIN INVIOLENT, TIME STANDS STILL FOR NO ONE. IF WE ARE TO REMAIN OUR OWN MASTERS, WE MUST MAKE SURE EVERY PART OF WAKANDA HAS ITS OWN STRENGTH TO LEND TO A GREATER WHOLE!

HELLO. MY OBA SAID THAT MAN IS THE BLACK PANTHER AND THAT YOU WILL BE HIS WIFE. IS THAT TRUE?

YES, IT IS, LITTLE ONE.

DOES HE REALLY EAT SPECIAL PLANTS TO TURN INTO A GIANT WERE-CAT EVERY NIGHT?

NO, DEAR, HE'S ALWAYS A MAN. A VERY GOOD MAN.



YOU KNOW WHAT I LOVE ABOUT YOU, SMARTY YAM?

THE FACT THAT I GIVE YOU AMAZING THINGS TO TAKE CREDIT FOR?

YOU NEVER CALL THESE PEOPLE COMMONERS, LIKE THOSE IN BIRNIN ZANA.

NO WAKANDAN IS COMMON, T'CHAKA. WE USED TO FIGHT ONE ANOTHER WITH TERRIFYING FEROCITY. NOW OUR STRENGTHS COMBINE AND MULTIPLY. YOUR LOVE HAS DONE THE SAME FOR ME.

I KNOW THAT OUR PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT THE GODDESS BAST WATCHES OVER THEIR REALM. I DON'T BELIEVE IN GODS, BUT I BELIEVE IN THEIR BELIEF. I BELIEVED IN YOUR FATHER, TOO. AND SO BAST FOUND ME SUITABLE.

WE ARE AWARE OF THIS WOMAN, SON OF AZZURI, AND THE CHANGES SHE HAS WROUGHT ON THE REALM. WE TAKE GREAT PLEASURE IN YOUR LOVE AND BLESS YOUR UNION.

NOWADAYS, WAKANDANS DON'T KILL EACH OTHER THAT MUCH. BUT MY FAMILY ALL DIED IN THE CONFLICTS THAT PRECEDED UNIFICATION. SO I HAD NO SISTERS OR AUNTIES TO SEW MY GOWNS OR TO STAND BY MY SIDE WHEN I WED YOUR FATHER.

YOU THINK ANYONE'S GOING TO GET ALL THAT?

A BLACK DRESS? ARE YOU SURE?

YES, TAKAMI, I AM. IT WILL REPRESENT THE GRIEF OF WHAT I'VE LOST AND THE GLORY OF WHAT I'M MOVING INTO.

MAYBE NOT...

"...BUT I'LL STILL LOOK GOOD."

OUR MEDIA CALLED IT "THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WEDDING THAT THE WORLD WOULD NEVER SEE." FROM WHAT I'VE SEEN OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD, THEY LOVE ROYAL NUPTIALS.

IF THEY SAW HOW WE DID IT IN WAKANDA, THEY'D BE GREEN WITH ENVY.

EVERY YEAR ON CHALLENGE DAY, THE KING FIGHTS TO PROVE HE IS STILL FIT TO RULE.

THE FIRST TIME I WATCHED T'CHAKA TAKE ON THE REALM'S FIERCEST WARRIORS DURING CHALLENGE DAY, I WEPT AT HIS WOUNDS.

LAST YEAR YOU LEFT MY HEAD RINGING FOR THREE DAYS, TANSO. ONLY RIGHT FOR ME TO RETURN THE FAVOR!

UHH!

BUT AS THE YEARS WENT ON, I THRILLED AT HOW HE STRUCK WITH JUST THE RIGHT AMOUNT OF FORCE AND ANTICIPATED WHEN TO EVADE.

I TOO HAD BEEN RUNNING A GAUNTLET OF SORTS. SNOOTY ATTITUDES AND BARBED WORDS WERE THE WEAPONS BROUGHT AGAINST ME AND, LIKE YOUR FATHER, I HAD TO KNOW WHEN TO ATTACK OR DODGE.

THE YEARS WENT BY, AND YOUR FATHER AND I KEPT ON TRYING TO HAVE CHILDREN. WHILE TONGUES WAGGED THAT THE ORPHAN QUEEN COULDN'T FULFILL HER MOST IMPORTANT DUTY, YOUR FATHER CONTINUED TO RULE.

I HAVE WITH ME REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE SOUTHEAST, MY LORD, PETITIONING FOR ADMISSION INTO THE VIBRANIUM EXTRACTION ACADEMY.

CHANGAMIRE, THEY'VE ONLY JUST STOPPED KILLING EACH OTHER--NOW YOU WANT ME TO LET THESE JAMBAZI BECOME MINERS?

"I CAN'T ENTRUST OUR MOST SACRED TRADE TO HOHEADS AND OPPORTUNISTS. WITH ALL YOUR LEARNING, YOU MUST SEE THAT TO DO SO WOULD BE TO POISON WAKANDA'S VERY LIFEblood."

"MY LORD, THE YOUTH IN THESE PROVINCES SEE NO PATH AHEAD OF THEM. IF WE MUST HAVE MONARCHY, THEN AT LEAST LET THEM HAVE A HAND IN CARVING OUT WAKANDA'S FUTURE."

"THE FUTURE, YOU SAY... VERY WELL, SEND THE BEST AND WORST OF THEIR YOUNGEST, CHANGAMIRE. IF THEY STOKE ANY CHAOS, ALL OF THEIR VILLAGES-- AND YOU--WILL PAY THE PRICE."

YOUR FATHER WOULD TELL ME LATER THAT HE'D BEEN TOO DISTRACTED TO PICK UP THE SUBTLE CHANGES TO MY SCENT...

HUSBAND?

YES, BELOVED? IS THIS POSSIBLY SOMETHING THAT COULD WAIT?

NOT PARTICULARLY. YOU SEE, I'M ALREADY LATE.

...BUT THAT DAY HE BREATHED IN DEEP, AND HIS HEIGHTENED SENSES TOLD HIM THAT HE WAS GOING TO BE A FATHER.



WHILE HE AWAITED YOUR BIRTH, YOUR FATHER CONTINUED TO SAFEGUARD WAKANDA. BUT HE COULD NOT HAVE FORESEEN THE BETRAYAL COMING FROM ONE OF HIS OWN CITIZENS.

MY FATHER TANSO'S INJURIES FROM CHALLENGE DAY HAVE LEFT HIM UNABLE TO WORK THE BORDER PATROL. HE REFUSES THE CAT-KING'S STIPEND OUT OF PRIDE. SEE HOW T'CHAKA TREATS HIS OWN COUNTRYMEN!

WHAT IS THIS FOOLISHNESS YOU SPEAK, M'DEMWE? THOSE MEN THERE ARE THIEVES. WE HAVE PEACE NOW.



HE DENIES US A CONQUEROR'S DESTINY. THIS PEACE MAKES US SOFT. I AM TALKING TO MEN WHO WILL CHANGE THAT.

INDEED WE WILL, M'DEMWE...



IN MY YOUTH, I BECAME PART OF A MOVEMENT THAT REAWAKENED A NATION'S CONQUERING SPIRIT. YOU TOO WILL HAVE SUCH A FATE.

THE WEAPONS AND WARRIORS YOU SPOKE OF, **BARON VON STRUCKER**? THE ONES CAPABLE OF DEFEATING THE PANTHER AND HIS ARMIES?



"THEY MOVE THROUGH NEIGHBORING AZANIA, MY YOUNG FRIEND. WHEN I RETURN WITH THEM, YOUR COUNTRYMEN WILL SEE THAT TRUE WARRIORS DO NOT HIDE."

I HAVE SEARCHED FOR THIS DAMNED COUNTRY FOR YEARS. OUR PLANES' INSTRUMENTS COULD DETECT NOTHING FROM HIGH ABOVE. BUT I MADE MY PILOTS FLY DANGEROUSLY LOW, AND THEN MY EYES BEHELD THE ACCURSED WALL THAT I COULD NEVER FORGET.

THE FIRST BATTALION ESTIMATES THAT THEY'RE FOUR DAYS AWAY, SIR.

AND THE ICHOR TANK?

LONG-RANGE ABILITIES WORKING AS PROJECTED.

EXCELLENT.

HAIL HYDRA!

WEEKS LATER, THE PEACE T'CHAKA HAD WORKED FOR FACED ITS GRAVEST THREAT.



SIRE! I'M GETTING REPORTS OF A BREACH ATTEMPT AT THE WESTERN BORDER WALL! PATROL AGENTS SAY IT'S AN ARMY OF WHITE MEN!

"COME IN, HYDRA COMMAND! THE WAKANDANS HAVE SOME KIND OF DEVICE--"



--OUR GUNS WON'T FIRE!



IT'S TIME TO SEE IF YOUR INFORMATION IS CORRECT, YOUNG M'DEMWE...

OPEN FIRE!



"OUR GUNS ARE WORKING AGAIN! HAIL HYDRA!"



TAKAMI--

YES, SIRE?



--IF THAT TANK TAKES OUT ANY MORE JAMMERS, THE REST OF THESE GREEN-AND-YELLOW RUTUKU WILL STORM THE BORDER WALLS.



SO ACTIVATE THE BASHENGA UNIT, PRIORITY ALPHA!

AND, AS IT'S EVER BEEN, THE BLACK PANTHER WRAPPED THE SOUL OF WAKANDA AROUND HIMSELF AND IT PROTECTED HIM.





AND TAKAMI, I NEED THAT TELEMETRY DATA LIKE A NIGANDAN GOAT-HERDER NEEDS RAIN DURING A DROUGHT!

READINGS SHOW A HIGH-VOLATILITY ENERGY POCKET IN THE LOWER FRONT QUADRANT, MY KING!

BASHENGA UNIT--



--THE BEAST'S HEART BEATS BENEATH ITS SORRY EXCUSE FOR AN ELEPHANT'S TRUNK!



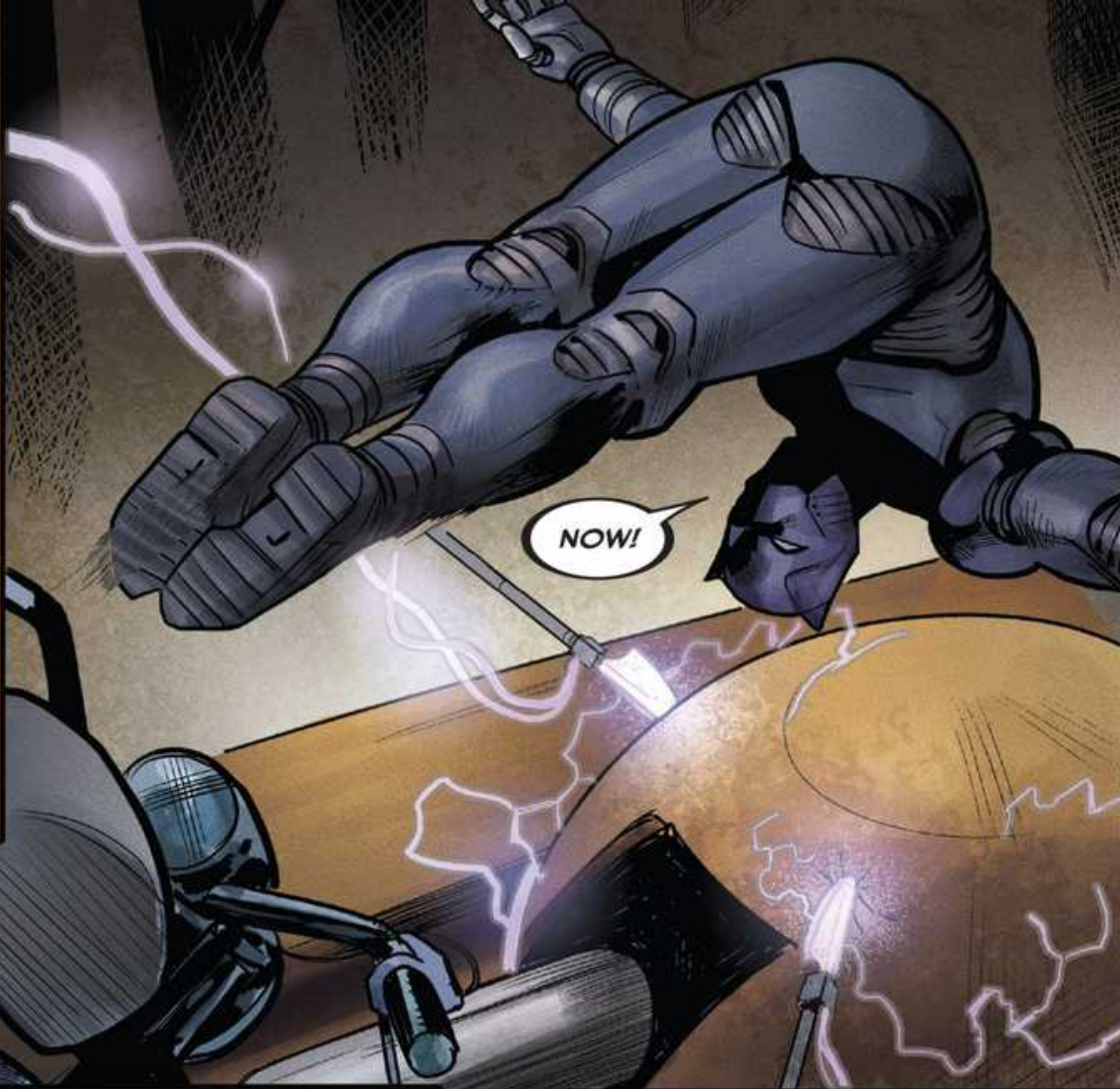
"MAKE YOUR AIM TRUE!"



HA! OUR ARMOR HOLDS AGAINST THE KAFFIRS' FEEBLE ATTACKS. READY ANOTHER VOLLEY!



SIRE, SPEARS ARE IN PLACE!



AND, AS IT HAS EVER BEEN, WAKANDA FED ITS ENERGY TO A BLACK PANTHER. YOUR FATHER DID WHAT THEY ALL HAVE. HE STRUCK DOWN THOSE WHO WOULD INVADE US.





HOW MANY DEAD, TAKAMI?

FIVE, SIRE. BUT WE'VE MAINTAINED 98.72% STRUCTURAL INTEGRITY OF THE BORDER WALL. NO SIGNS OF ENCROACHMENT ANYWHERE ELSE.

HUNTER? -GULP- Y-YES, SIRE. TH-THERE'S MORE NEWS, MY KING...

HAVE THE WHITE WOLF ASK THE LOCALS TO BE SURE.

OUT WITH IT, MY FRIEND. IT'S BEEN A LONG DAY.

REPORTS FROM THE PALACE SAY THAT THE QUEEN IS... NOT WELL.



SHE FAINTED SUDDENLY AFTER WE RECEIVED NEWS OF YOUR VICTORY, BROTHER. THE HERBALISTS AND DOCTORS DON'T THINK IT'S STRESS-RELATED.

THE BABY APPEARS TO BE FINE, MY KING. THE QUEEN'S SYMPTOMS MATCH A RARE AUTOIMMUNE DISEASE NEVER ENCOUNTERED HERE IN THE REALM.

DOES A TREATMENT EXIST?

I...I'VE NOT HEARD OF ONE, SIR.

BEFORE SHE FELL ILL, THE QUEEN AND I DISCUSSED POSSIBLE WAKANDAN ENHANCEMENTS OF AMERICAN MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIES. ONE MAN MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP... HOWARD STARK.



FIRST IT'S MAGNETIC-WAVE COMM-TECH THAT SHOULDN'T EXIST. NOW I'M TALKING TO THE KING OF A MYTH!

AND YET, MR. STARK, AMERICA HAD PROOF OF OUR EXISTENCE IN YOUR CAPTAIN'S INDESTRUCTIBLE SHIELD.

LOOK--T'CHAKA, IS IT? I'D CUT HOLES IN NICK FURY'S PARACHUTES FOR A SAMPLE OF YOUR VIBRANIUM, BUT WHAT CAN YOU POSSIBLY NEED MY SUPER-BOOSTER SHOT FOR?

SOMEONE...IMPORTANT TO ME... IS GRAVELY ILL. MY WORK AS KING AND THE FUTURE OF MY COUNTRY DEPENDS ON THEIR...HER SURVIVAL.

LET'S CALL THIS THE START OF A BEAUTIFUL FRIENDSHIP, THEN. KEEP YOUR ROCK FOR NOW. BUT IF MY GENE JUICE WORKS, I WANT A POUND OF YOUR LOVELY METAL.

YOU HAVE MY WORD.

HE NEVER TOLD HIS SUPERIORS WHERE HE GOT THAT AMAZING METAL, BUT I'D DO UNSPEAKABLE THINGS TO GET MORE OF IT.

TO UNSPEAKABLE THINGS, THEN: YOUR BIO-NANITE ENHANCEMENT INFUSION FOR AN OUNCE OF WAKANDAN VIBRANIUM.

HAVE YOUR PEOPLE CALL MY PEOPLE, BECAUSE APPARENTLY MY PEOPLE DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU. SUPER-POLARIZED MAGNETIC WAVES... GOTTA FIND OUT HOW YOU'RE DOING THAT...!

Y'KNOW, ANDEBAH, I WAS PART OF THE SQUAD THAT ENCOUNTERED YOUR COUNTRY WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA YEARS AGO. ITS EXISTENCE WAS CLASSIFIED. GUESS THAT'S WHY THEY HAD ME BE THE POINT PERSON FOR THIS HANDOFF.

SO I'VE SEEN SOME OF THE WONDERS OF YOUR COUNTRY. BUT HOW ON EARTH DID YOU BUILD A SHIP CAPABLE OF FLYING SO QUICKLY FROM AFRICA ALL THE WAY HERE TO LONG ISLAND?

I AM AFRAID THAT IS...WHAT DID YOU CALL IT? "CLASSIFIED." BUT THANK YOU, GABRIEL JONES. YOUR COUNTRY HAS SAVED MY QUEEN'S LI--

IN THE NAME OF MY FATHER--

--DEATH TO THE LACKEYS OF UKATANA!*

*UKATANA IS ZULU FOR KITTEN.

AGENT JONES, LOOK OUT!

THUK

CUT OFF ONE HEAD...

ANDEBAH...?

"BELOVED... SOMETHING HAS..."

NO!

STARK INDUSTRIES



TRAITORS TO WAKANDA THWARTED YOUR FATHER'S EFFORTS TO EASE MY PAIN. I KNEW DEATH WAS CLOSE AT HAND...

I KNOW WHAT HAS TRANSPIRED, MY LOVE. I'M NOT AFRAID. THESE KICKS TELL ME THAT OUR SON WILL HAVE YOUR STRENGTH.

AND HE WILL HAVE YOUR...

...MY LOVE FOR YOU, T'CHAKA. HE WILL ALWAYS HAVE THAT. NOW LIE NEXT TO ME AND LET ME FEEL YOUR WARMTH.

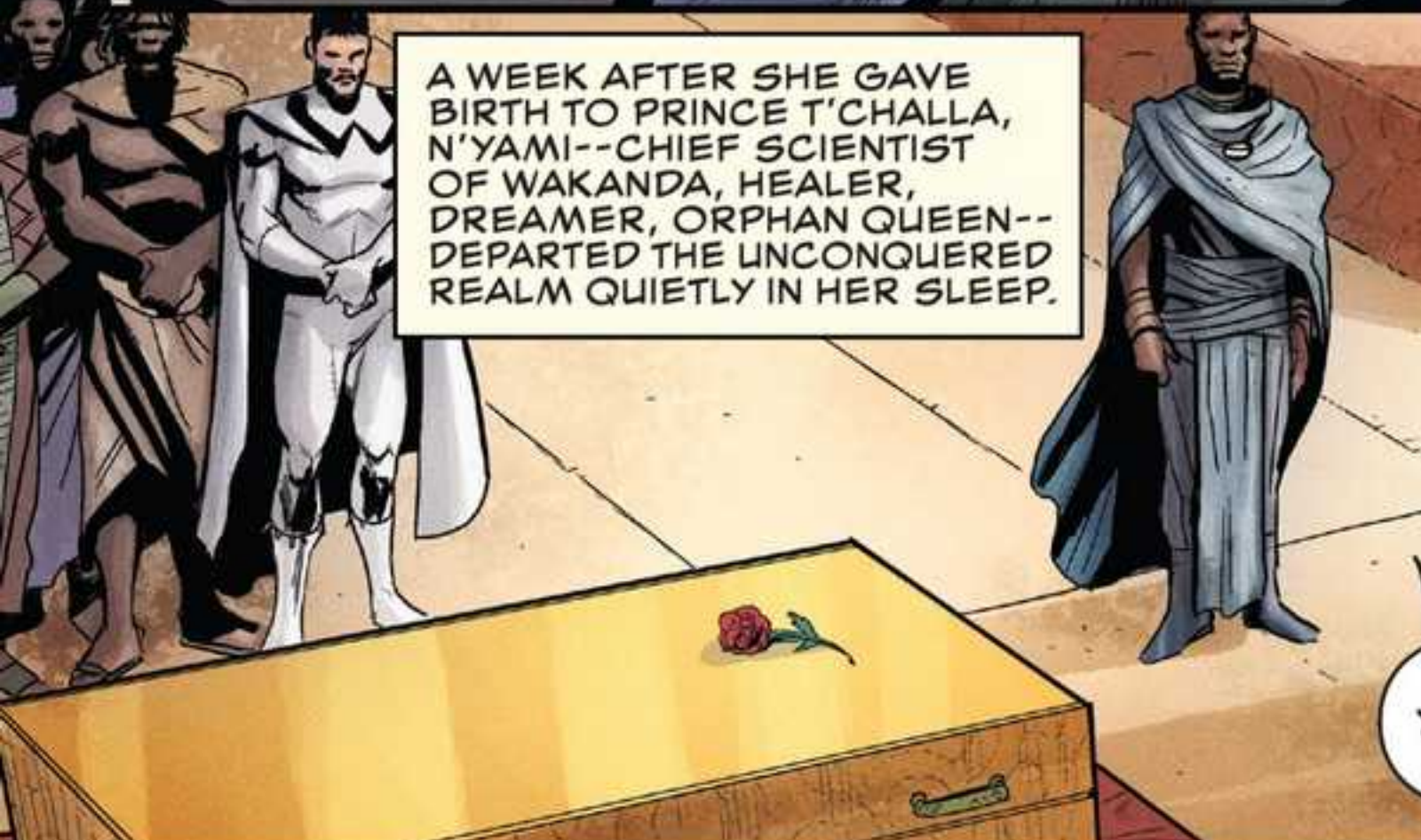


...BUT I HELD ON. FOR THE REALM, FOR YOUR FATHER, FOR THE FUTURE. BUT MOSTLY FOR YOU, T'CHALLA.

WAAAAHHH!

HE HAS YOUR LONG ARMS AND LEGS, MY LOVE.

AND YOUR BIG HEAD, PANTHER KING. HELLO, MY SON. LET'S NOT WASTE ANY TIME GETTING ACQUAINTED, OKAY?



A WEEK AFTER SHE GAVE BIRTH TO PRINCE T'CHALLA, N'YAMI--CHIEF SCIENTIST OF WAKANDA, HEALER, DREAMER, ORPHAN QUEEN--DEPARTED THE UNCONQUERED REALM QUIETLY IN HER SLEEP.



I HAD PROMISED TO TAKE HER TO THE STARS, BROTHER. I...I CANNOT RULE WITHOUT HER.

AND YET YOU MUST.



THE KING'S GRIEF OVERWHELMED HIM FOR WEEKS, MONTHS, YEARS. HE SOUGHT ESCAPE IN DRINK, COURTESANS AND DARK STRATEGIES.



HIS TRUEST JOY CAME FROM HIS YOUNG CUB, FROM WHOM THE KING HID HIS SADNESS... AND THE BURDEN OF RULE.

YOU SHAPE THE VIBRANIUM LIKE SO, MY LORD...



THE BOY'S LESSONS IN ROYAL DUTY BEGAN AT AGE FIVE, WHEN HE ACCOMPANIED HIS FATHER ON BORDER INSPECTION FOR THE FIRST TIME. BUT PRINCE OR NOT, HE WAS ONLY A LITTLE BOY...

...AND LITTLE BOYS
GET LOST.

AM I TO
UNDERSTAND THAT
WAKANDA'S FINEST
WARRIORS HAVE
MISPLACED THE PRINCE
OF THE REALM? HE IS
ONE LITTLE BOY.
THERE ARE TEN
OF YOU.

MY LORD,
I...

I KNOW THE
BOY'S SCENT AS
WELL AS MY OWN. IT
WILL TAKE LONGER TO
FIND HIM IN THIS DAMNABLE
RAIN. IN THE MEANWHILE,
YOU ALL CAN THINK ABOUT
WAYS TO SURVIVE
YOUR EXILE.

FROM THE JOURNALS OF
QUEEN RAMONDA, SECOND
WIFE OF KING T'CHAKA,
MOTHER-IN-ALL-BUT-
BLOOD OF PRINCE
T'CHALLA:

LOOKING BACK AT IT NOW,
I SUPPOSE IT WAS ONLY
RIGHT THAT I MET YOU
BEFORE MEETING YOUR
FATHER...



TEARS RAN
DOWN HIS FACE,
BUT YOUR SON NEVER
WEPT ALOUD, O KING
OF WAKANDA.

HOW DO
YOU KNOW
WHO I AM?

THE WHOLE
CONTINENT WHISPERS
OF WAKANDA AND ITS
PANTHER KINGS--THEY
JUST DON'T KNOW
WHERE TO FIND
THEM.

AND
YET, HERE
YOU ARE.



I AM
MERELY A WOMAN
ON WALKABOUT,
WAKANDAN. MY
NAME IS
RAMONDA.

WOMEN GO
ON WALKABOUT
WHERE YOU
ARE FROM,
RAMONDA?

I WALK TO
FIND THE MEANS
TO RESIST THE GREAT
INJUSTICE CHOKING
THE LIFE OUT OF
MY HOMELAND.

WELL, YOU
CAN WALK WITH
US NOW, RAMONDA,
AND WE CAN ALL
GET OUT OF THE
DAMNED RAIN.



I LEFT SOUTH AFRICA
LOOKING FOR HELP.
ALLIES, ARMS OR MONEY
TO AID IN LIFTING THE
BOOT OF APARTHEID
OFF THE THROATS OF
MY BROTHERS AND
SISTERS. I TOLD MYSELF
MY TIME AWAY FROM
HOME WOULD BE A
SHORT ONE.

--28, 29,
30! READY OR
NOT, HERE I
COME!



BUT THE WARMTH OF YOUR CHEEK AGAINST
MY SHOULDER KEPT ME IN THE GOLDEN CITY,
T'CHALLA. I KNEW THAT SOMEDAY I WOULD
RETURN TO THE HOMELAND THAT NEEDED
ME. BUT YOU WERE A LITTLE BOY WITHOUT
A MOTHER. YOU NEEDED ME MORE.

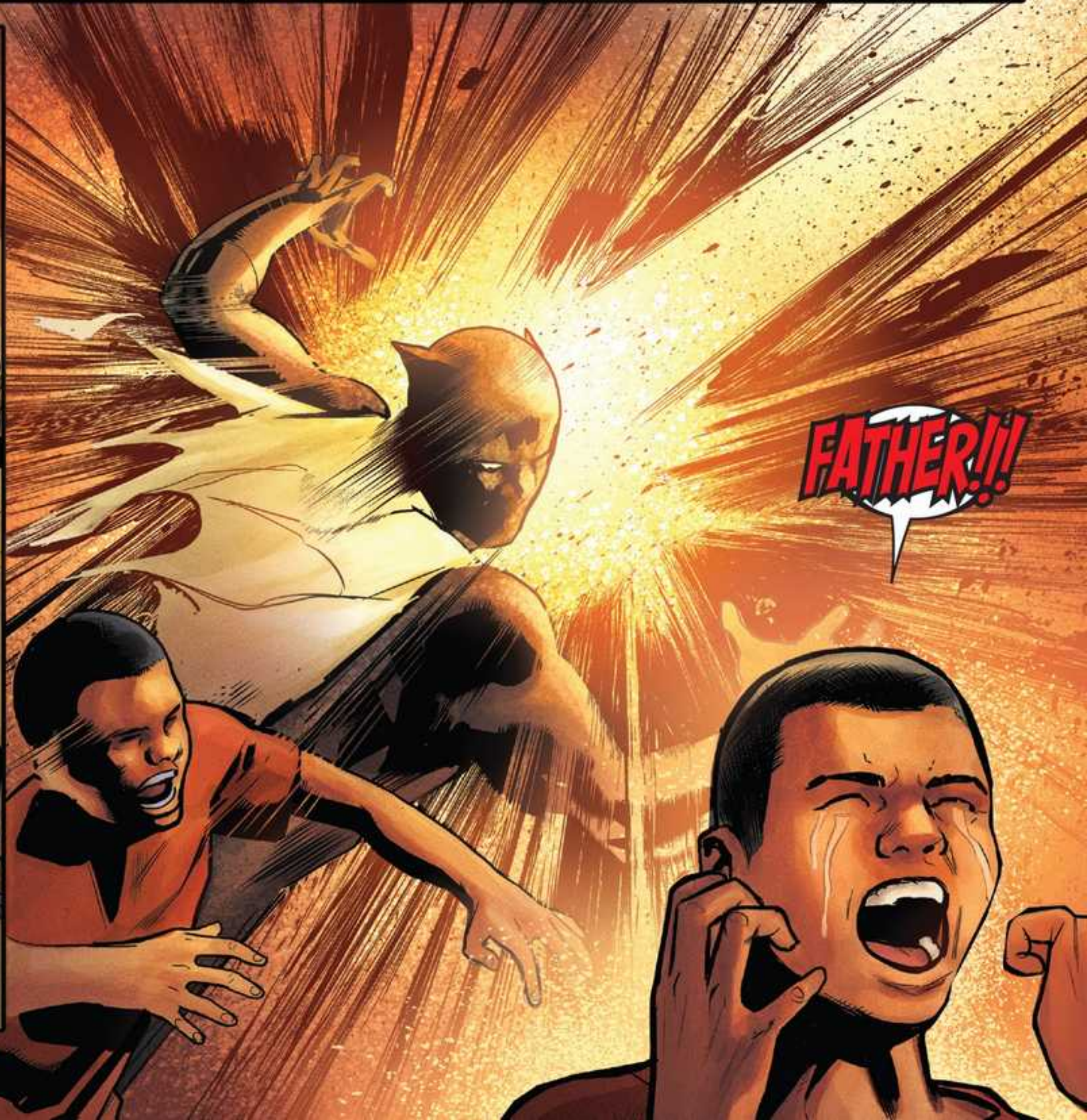
THE WAKANDANS WHO STILL
MOURNED THEIR ORPHAN
QUEEN SCOFFED AT THE
KING MARRYING AN
INTERLOPER WHO WOULD
RAISE THEIR PRINCE.

IN SECRET, WISE CHANGAMIRE
COUNSELED AGAINST ME
BECOMING A QUEEN. BUT THE
LOOK IN YOUR EYES, T'CHALLA,
TOLD ME I WAS DOING THE
RIGHT THING.



IT WAS ALWAYS HARD FOR
ME TO PUBLICLY CELEBRATE
THE ANNIVERSARY OF MY
MARRIAGE TO YOUR FATHER,
EVEN AFTER BEARING HIM A
DAUGHTER. BUT ANOTHER
ANNIVERSARY WEIGHED
EVEN MORE HEAVILY
ON THE ENTIRE COUNTRY...







ARGH!
MEN,
TAKE THE
BOY!



I'M
NOT A
BOY...



...I'M THE
KING.

NYAAAHH!



RETREEEEAT!!!

OH, T'CHALLA...I HAVE READ N'YAMI'S
LETTERS...YOUR MOTHER'S FEARS
ABOUT YOUR FUTURE HAVE TAKEN
UP A HOME IN MY HEART.

YOU ARE BRAVE AND BRILLIANT,
LIKE YOUR PARENTS. I KNOW
YOU WILL RISE TO THE THRONE
IN YOUR TIME. BUT I ALSO
KNOW THE DESTINY YOU INHERIT
MAY STEAL YOUR LIFE...

...UNLESS YOU FIND THE STRENGTH TO
CHANGE PROUD WAKANDA OR THE
CRUEL WORLD THAT SURROUNDS IT.

UNLESS YOU BECOME
A BLACK PANTHER THE
LIKES OF WHICH THIS
REALM HAS NEVER SEEN.



THE BEGINNING

NEXT:



**RISE OF THE
BLACK PANTHER #2**



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