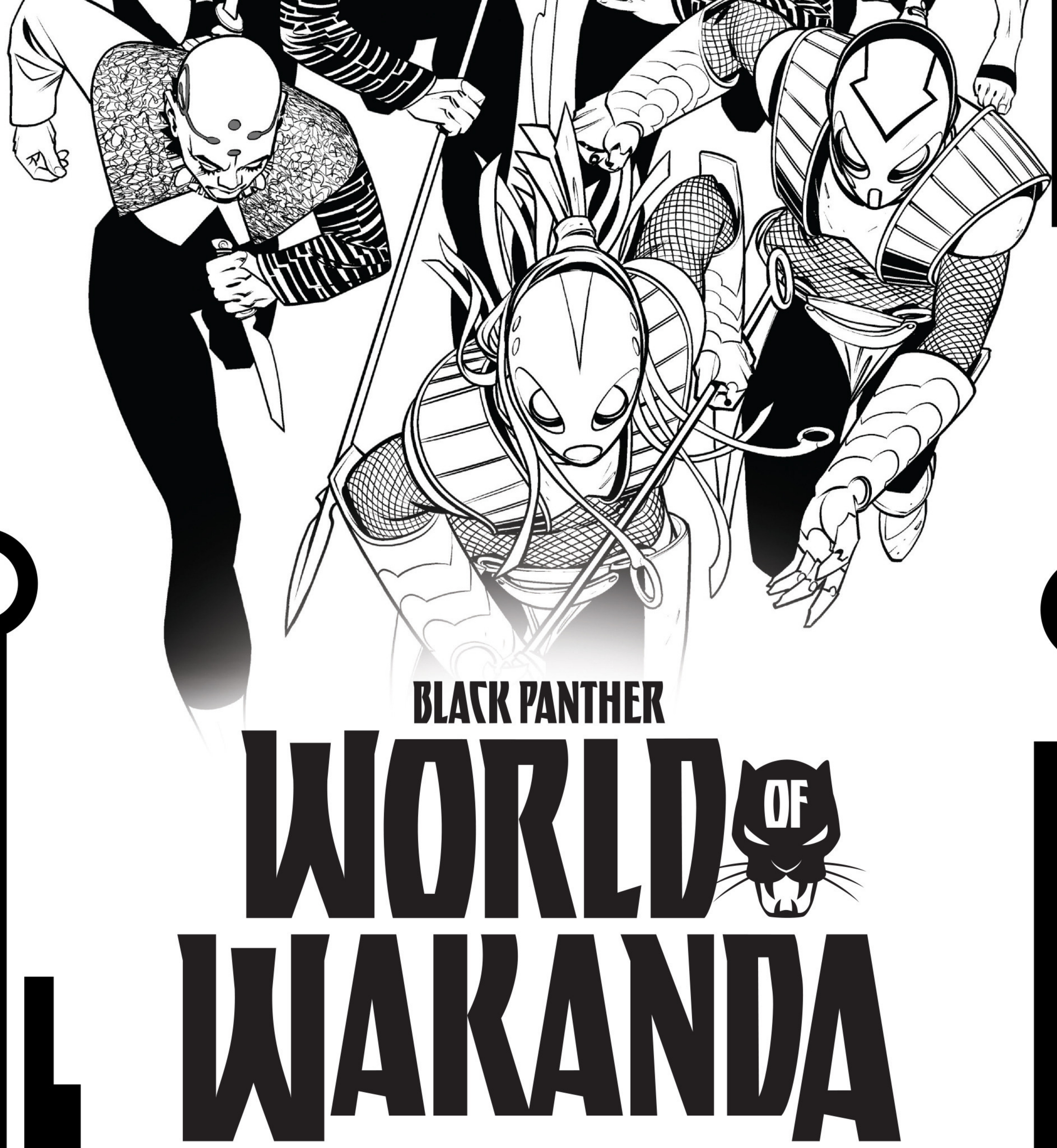
BLACK PANTHER®

WORLD OF WAKANDA™

COATES ● GAY ● MARTINEZ ● POGGI ● ROSENBERG

MARVEL

#4



The ***Dora Milaje*** (pronounced "DOR-ah muh-LAH-jay," and which means "Adored Ones") are the personal bodyguards of the Black Panther and the royal family, recruited from every tribe of Wakanda. An ancient tradition originally designed to help keep the peace among the rival tribes, the *Dora Milaje* used to also be potential wives-in-training for the king, but that aspect has since fallen by the wayside. And now the time has come for the *Dora Milaje* to perhaps evolve even further...

Following a devastating attack by Thanos and The Black Order, Wakanda is in chaos. The *Dora Milaje*, who had previously suffered a schism over T'Challa's leadership, still struggle to balance their allegiance to the crown and responsibility for their own actions.

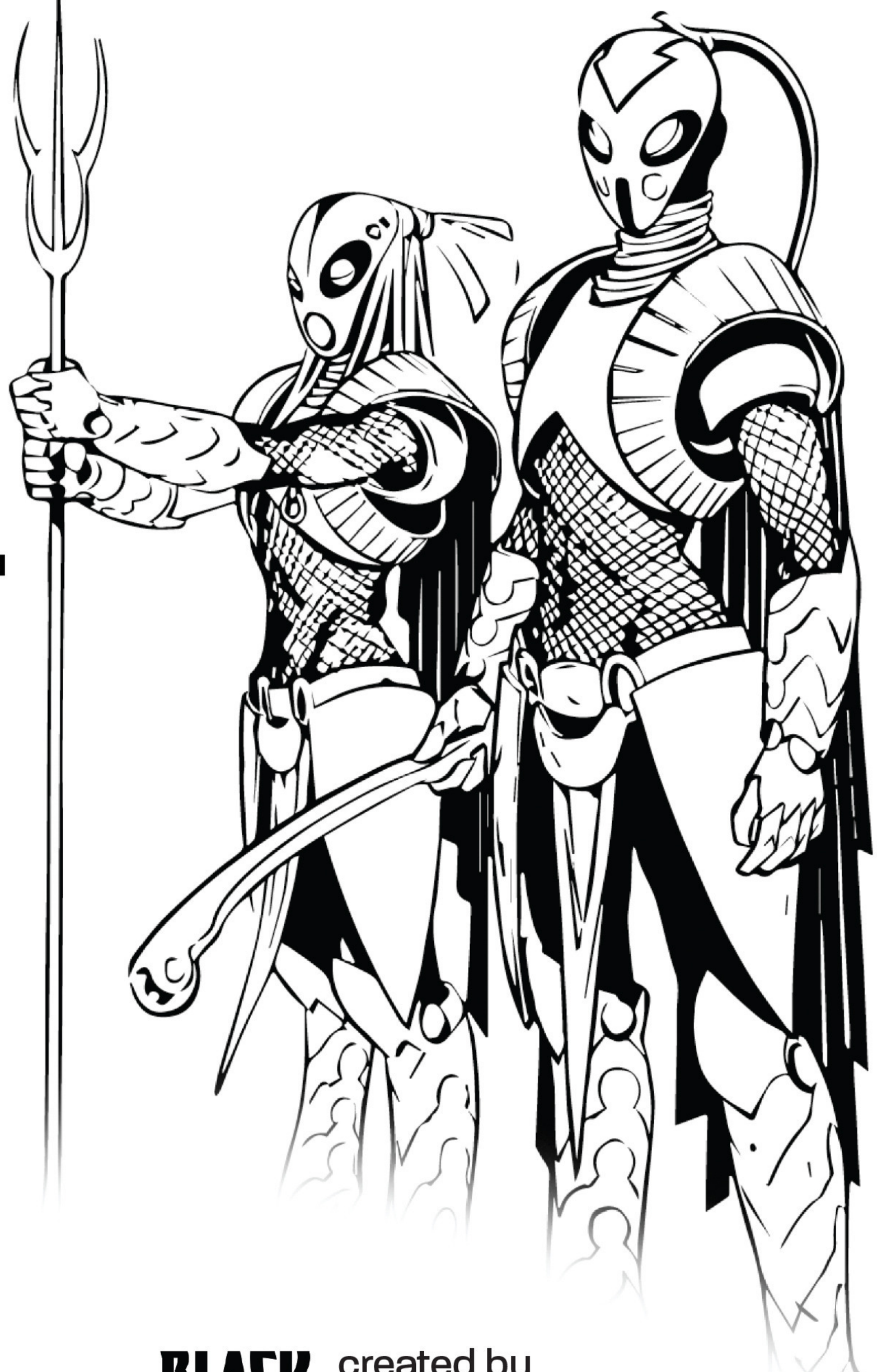
Two of the *Dora Milaje*, Ayo and Aneka, feel the pain of this crisis acutely as they hide their growing romantic relationship. In keeping their secret, however, they were absent for the worst of Thanos' attack. Now, in the aftermath, they must live with their choices...

[This story takes place before the events of **BLACK PANTHER #1**.]

DAWN OF THE MIDNIGHT ANGELS

part 4

writer **ROXANE GAY**
consultant **TA-NEHISI COATES**
penciler **ALITHA E. MARTINEZ**
inker **ROBERTO POGGI**
color artist **RACHELLE ROSENBERG**
letterer **VC'S JOE SABINO**
recap & credits page art by **BRIAN STELFREEZE**
cover by **AFUA RICHARDSON**



assistant editor
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editor
WIL MOSS
executive editor
TOM BREVOORT
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AXEL ALONSO
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JOE QUESADA
publisher
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BLACK PANTHER created by **STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY**

THE FRONT PLAZA OF UPANGA, *DORA MILAJE* TRAINING FACILITY

WE ARE HERE TO CELEBRATE THE FACT THAT ***THE BLACK ORDER*** HAS BEEN DEFEATED AND RUN OUT OF WAKANDA.

BUT WE ARE ALSO HERE TO MOURN MY BELOVED DAUGHTER, ***QUEEN SHURI***, WHO GAVE HER LIFE SO THAT THE GOLDEN CITY COULD BE REBORN.

BEFORE HER PASSING, MY DAUGHTER MADE PEACE WITH HER BROTHER, T'CHALLA. HE IS NOW ONCE AGAIN THE KING OF WAKANDA, SO TO HONOR HER SACRIFICE I ASK THAT YOU, PROUD WOMEN OF THE *DORA MILAJE*, MAKE PEACE WITH T'CHALLA TOO.

BECAUSE FOR WAKANDA TO MOVE FORWARD, WE MUST STAND UNITED.

HOW DOES RAMONDA EXPECT ME TO MOVE FORWARD WHEN I FEEL SO TRAPPED WITH GUILT OVER QUEEN SHURI'S DEATH?

I TOO REGRET NOT BEING HERE FOR OUR QUEEN, ANEKA, BUT WE COULD NOT HAVE PREVENTED HER UNTIMELY DEATH. THE BLACK ORDER NEARLY BROUGHT THIS COUNTRY TO ITS KNEES.

YOU DON'T KNOW THAT, ***AYO***. IF I HADN'T BEEN OFF WITH YOU BEING SELFISH, I COULD HAVE HELPED QUEEN SHURI! I KNOW IT.

ANEKA, I LOVE YOU, I DO, BUT I HAVE DONE NOTHING TO EARN YOUR CONTINUED DISDAIN AND DISMISSAL. HOW MUCH LONGER WILL YOU PUNISH ME?

YOU DO NOT WANT TO WAIT AND FIND OUT. JUST KNOW THAT I PUNISH MYSELF FAR MORE.

ANEKA, AYO-- NOW IS NOT THE TIME FOR INDULGING IN SELF-RECRIMINATION. WE WILL REMEMBER OUR DUTY, WHICH LIVES ON NOW MORE THAN EVER.

YES, MISTRESS ZOLA.

THERE ARE MORE PRESSING CONCERNS. AS A MEANS OF MAKING PEACE WITH T'CHALLA, I WANT THE TWO OF YOU TO ACCOMPANY HIM AS HE CREATES A NEW ALLIANCE CALLED *THE ULTIMATES.**

**SEE THE ULTIMATES: OMNIVERSAL VOL. 1 TPB. -WIL*

I NEED TO BE ALONE RIGHT NOW.

YOU *NEED* TO DO AS I SAY RIGHT NOW, AND THAT MEANS WORKING WITH AYO AND SERVING T'CHALLA. I WILL HEAR NO MORE OF YOUR SELF-PITY.

WE WILL DO YOUR BIDDING, MISTRESS ZOLA...

...THOUGH IT CLEARLY PAINS MY CAPTAIN TO WORK WITH ME.

LATER
WE CANNOT JUST SIT HERE CRYING FOR WHAT HAS BEEN LOST, MISTRESS ZOLA. WE MUST FIGHT AND DESTROY OUR ENEMIES, AND DEFEND OUR COUNTRY'S HONOR!
NO ONE IS JUST SITTING AROUND CRYING, FOLAMI. AYO AND ANEKA ARE WORKING WITH T'CHALLA AND THE ULTIMATES.
QUEEN-MOTHER RAMONDA HAS A FULL SECURITY DETAIL. EVERY MEMBER OF THE *DORA MILAJE* IS WORKING HARD.
ENOUGH! WE NEED TO DO *MORE* THAN PROTECT! WE NEED TO *AVENGE.*
QUITE A DISPLAY OF AGILITY, FOLAMI... CLEARLY YOU HAVE ENHANCED YOURSELF SOMEHOW. ARE YOU FINALLY GOING TO TELL ME WHAT YOU HAVE DONE TO YOURSELF, OR DO I NEED TO HAVE YOUR BLOOD ANALYZED?
I MET AN INCREDIBLE MAN--AOKO--WHO IS AS INTERESTED IN VENGEANCE FOR WAKANDA AS I AM! MISTRESS ZOLA, HE GAVE ME THE POWER TO BE SO MUCH MORE THAN SIMPLY HUMAN! HE WILL GIVE THIS POWER TO *ALL OF US,* IF YOU ALLOW IT.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THE NANITES THAT ARE NOW COURSING THROUGH MY BODY HAVE *TRIPLED* THE STRENGTH OF MY MUSCLES! AND MY SENSES ARE KEEN. I CAN THINK SO CLEARLY, SO QUICKLY, SOMETIMES IT MAKES MY HEAD ACHE.

FOLAMI, WHO IS THIS MAN?!
I TOLD YOU-- AOKO. LIKE ME, HE KNOWS THAT OUR ENEMIES WILL NOT STOP ATTACKING WAKANDA, AND SO HE IS MAKING SURE THAT NEXT TIME WE ARE READY.

ENOUGH. YOU WILL COME WITH ME.
I CANNOT BELIEVE YOU LET A MAN YOU DID NOT KNOW ALTER YOUR BODY IN WAYS YOU CANNOT FULLY UNDERSTAND--ALL FOR SOMETHING AS FRAGILE AS VENGEANCE.

DR. EKEH, FOLAMI HAS BEEN INJECTED WITH SOME KIND OF NANITE TECHNOLOGY. SHE NEEDS A COMPLETE MEDICAL WORKUP SO WE CAN FIGURE OUT WHAT EXACTLY HAS BEEN DONE TO HER AND IF IT CAN BE UNDONE.
I WILL SEE TO THIS MYSELF, MISTRESS ZOLA.

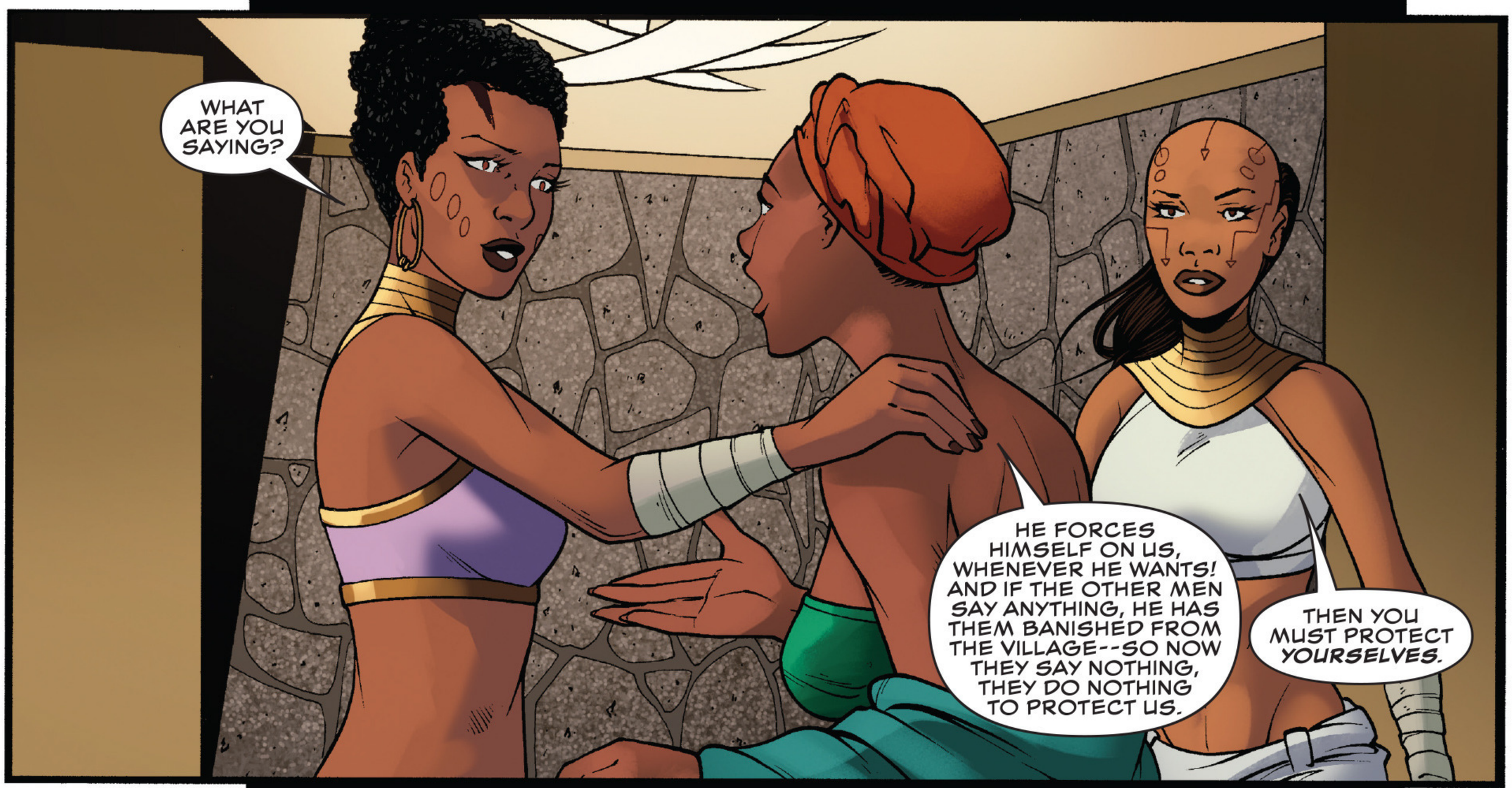
OVER MY DEAD BODY-- OR PERHAPS OVER HERS--WILL I LET ZOLA UNDO WHAT I HAVE DONE!

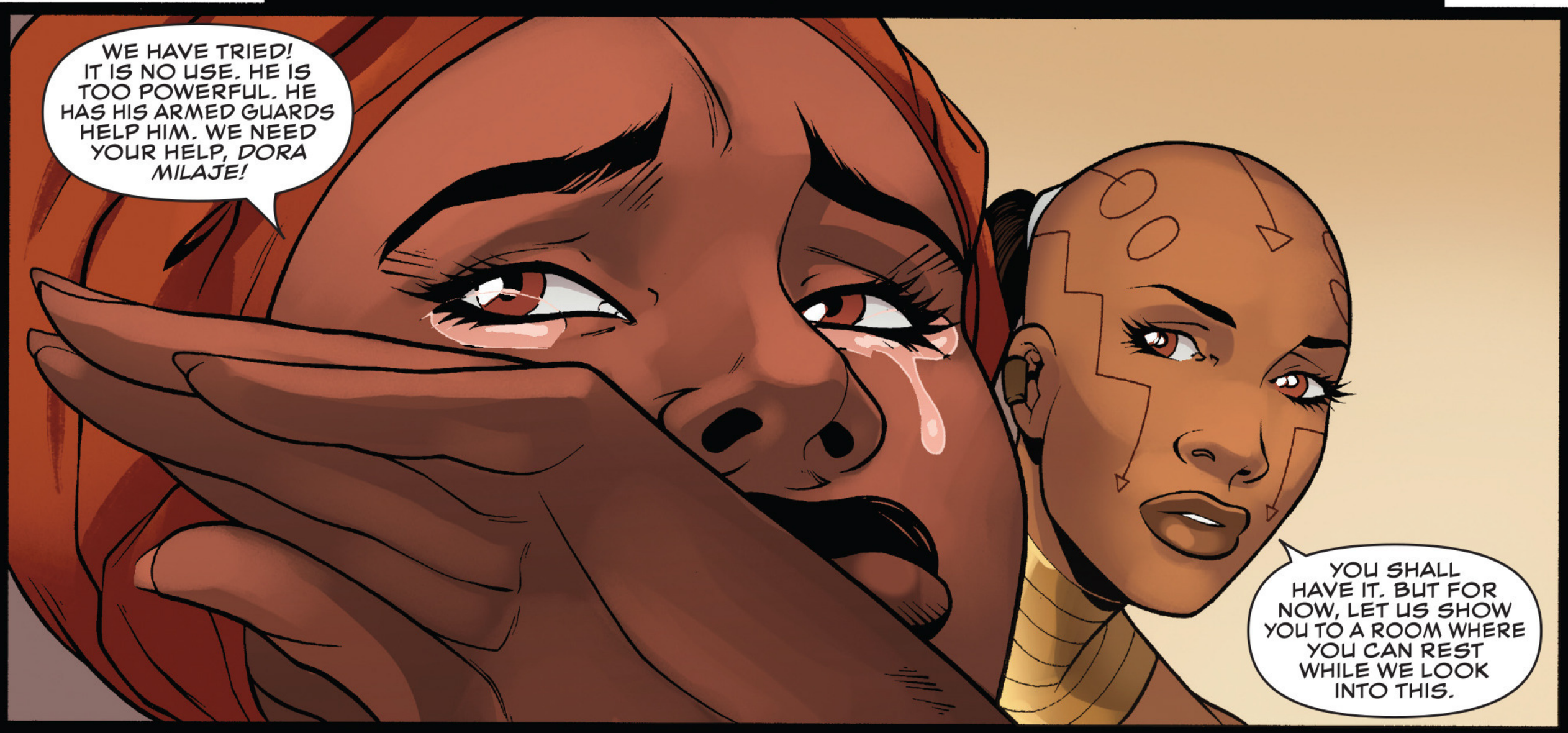
STUDY ME IF YOU MUST. YOU WILL SEE THAT I HAVE BEEN MADE BETTER, AS WE SHOULD ALL BE MADE BETTER.

DEAR GIRL, YOU KNOW NOT WHAT YOU HAVE DONE. FOR THE TIME BEING, YOU ARE CONFINED TO UPANGA. THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES FOR YOUR IRRESPONSIBLE ACTIONS.
IF VENGEANCE FOR WAKANDA DEMANDS SACRIFICE OF ME...

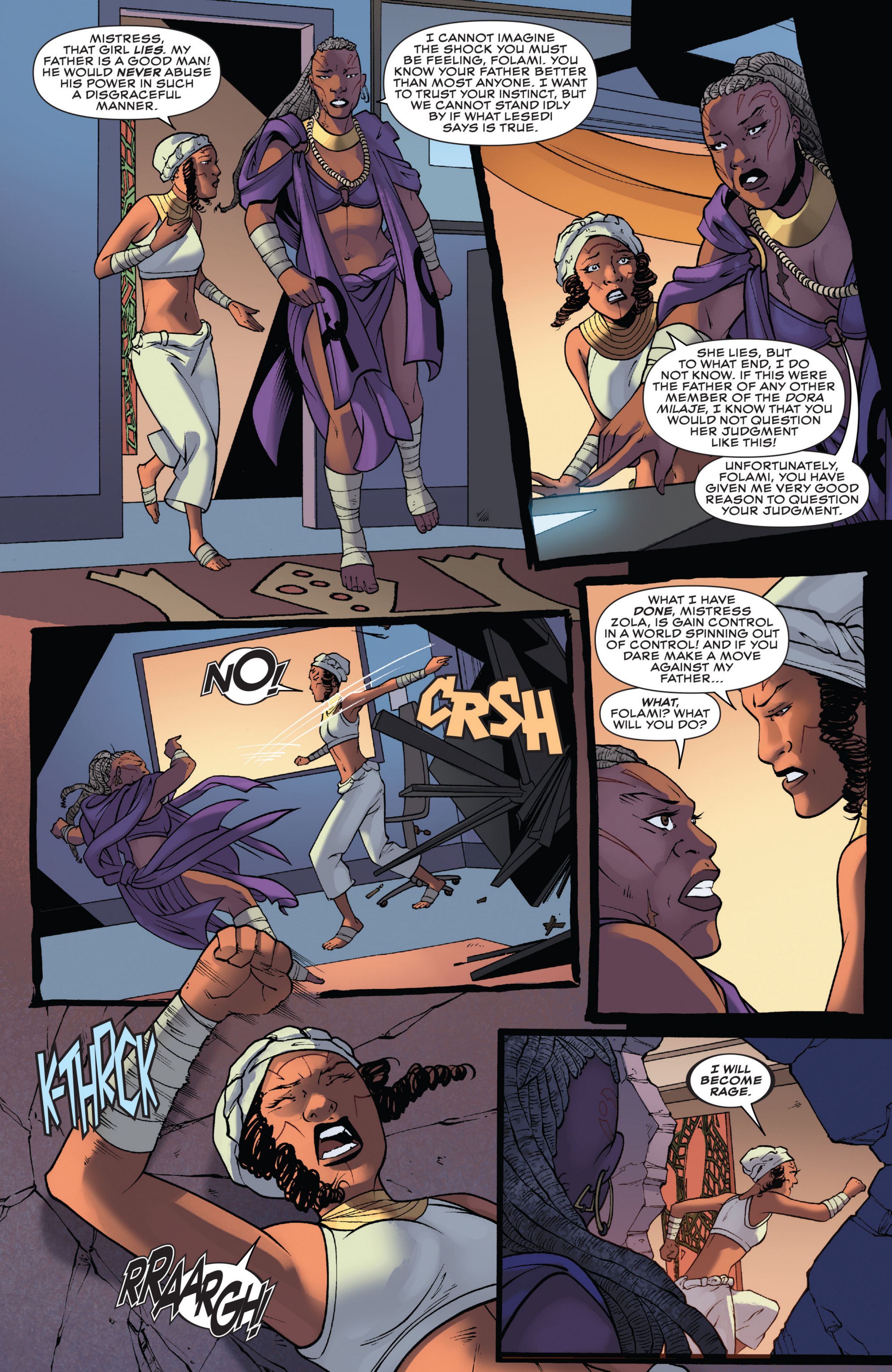
"...THEN I AM WILLING TO PAY THAT PRICE."

THE NIGHT OF ANEKA AND AYO'S RETURN FROM THE ULTIMATES


WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
HE FORCES HIMSELF ON US, WHENEVER HE WANTS! AND IF THE OTHER MEN SAY ANYTHING, HE HAS THEM BANISHED FROM THE VILLAGE--SO NOW THEY SAY NOTHING, THEY DO NOTHING TO PROTECT US.
THEN YOU MUST PROTECT *YOURSELVES.*


WE HAVE TRIED! IT IS NO USE. HE IS TOO POWERFUL. HE HAS HIS ARMED GUARDS HELP HIM. WE NEED YOUR HELP, *DORA MILAJE!*
YOU SHALL HAVE IT. BUT FOR NOW, LET US SHOW YOU TO A ROOM WHERE YOU CAN REST WHILE WE LOOK INTO THIS.

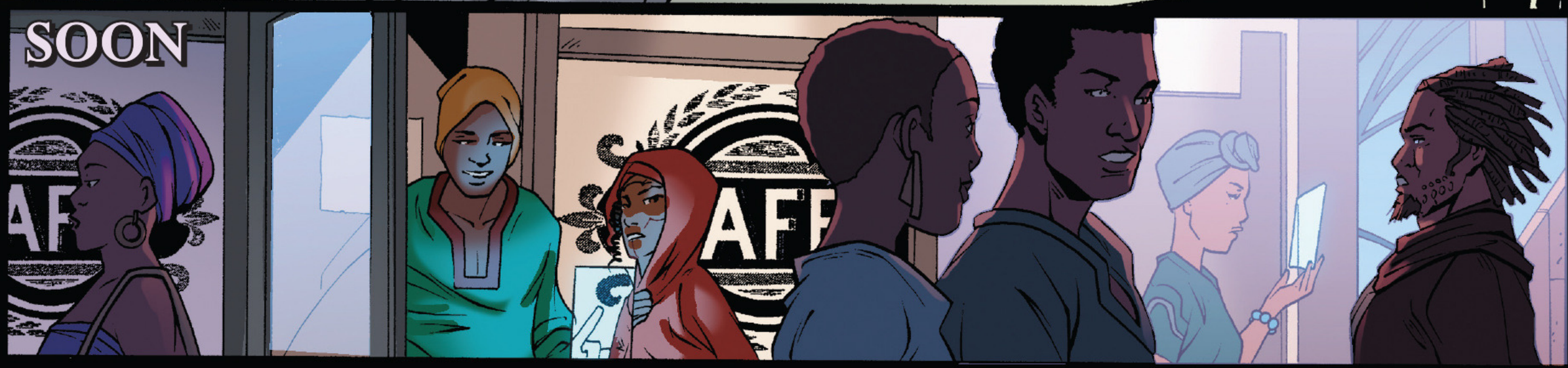
THIS CANNOT BE TRUE! MY FATHER COULD NOT DO THESE TERRIBLE THINGS. WHAT DO I DO?
FOLAMI, WE MUST SPEAK. FOLLOW ME TO MY OFFICE.

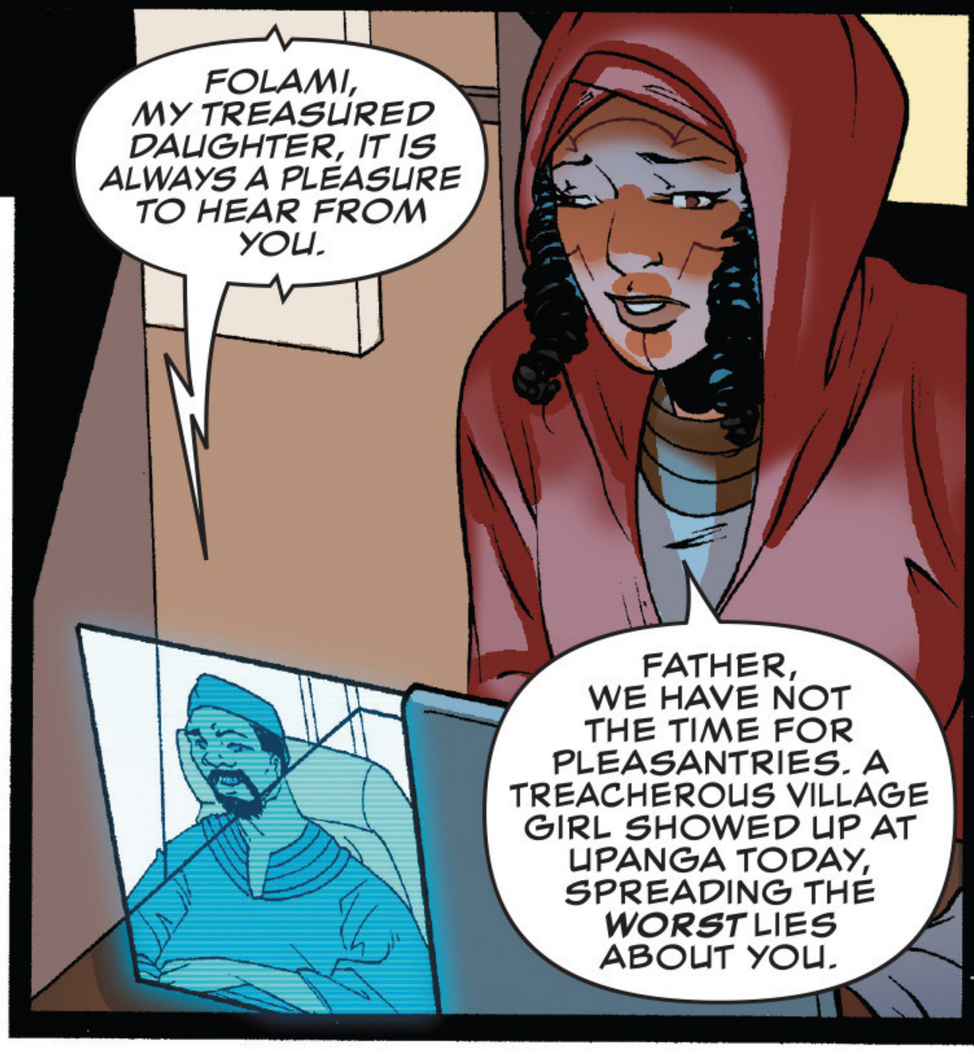

MISTRESS, THAT GIRL LIES. MY FATHER IS A GOOD MAN! HE WOULD NEVER ABUSE HIS POWER IN SUCH A DISGRACEFUL MANNER.
I CANNOT IMAGINE THE SHOCK YOU MUST BE FEELING, FOLAMI. YOU KNOW YOUR FATHER BETTER THAN MOST ANYONE. I WANT TO TRUST YOUR INSTINCT, BUT WE CANNOT STAND IDLY BY IF WHAT LESEDI SAYS IS TRUE.
SHE LIES, BUT TO WHAT END, I DO NOT KNOW. IF THIS WERE THE FATHER OF ANY OTHER MEMBER OF THE DORA MILAJE, I KNOW THAT YOU WOULD NOT QUESTION HER JUDGMENT LIKE THIS!
UNFORTUNATELY, FOLAMI, YOU HAVE GIVEN ME VERY GOOD REASON TO QUESTION YOUR JUDGMENT.
NO!
CRSH
WHAT I HAVE DONE, MISTRESS ZOLA, IS GAIN CONTROL IN A WORLD SPINNING OUT OF CONTROL! AND IF YOU DARE MAKE A MOVE AGAINST MY FATHER...
WHAT, FOLAMI? WHAT WILL YOU DO?
K-THRCK
RRAARGH!
I WILL BECOME RAGE.

I MUST WARN MY FATHER! HE MUST KNOW HIS PEOPLE ARE CONSPIRING AGAINST HIM.

DORA MILAJE, FOLAMI HAS DEFIED ORDERS AND LEFT UPANGA. I HAVE ACTIVATED THE GPS IN HER KIMOYO BAND--

"--FIND HER AND BRING HER TO ME AT ONCE!"





"...YOUR LOYALTY WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN."

ANEKA DEAR, WHY DO YOU REBUFF ME WHEN ALL I WANT IS TO FEEL THE SOFTNESS OF YOUR HAND AGAINST MINE?

WHILE WE WERE IN NEW YORK, BEING *SELFISH*, OUR QUEEN WAS *MURDERED*. WHAT USE HAVE WE FOR SOFTNESS?

YOU LISTEN TO ME, ANEKA, MY CAPTAIN, MY LOVE... WE ARE POWERFUL WOMEN, BUT EVEN *WE* COULD NOT HAVE STOOD BETWEEN OUR QUEEN AND HER DEATH.

IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE. WE ARE SWORN TO PROTECT WAKANDA, TO OFFER OURSELVES TO T'CHALLA! BUT INSTEAD I OFFERED MYSELF TO *YOU*. I GOT LOST IN YOU.

STOP WITH THIS NONSENSE ABOUT MARRYING T'CHALLA! I SEE HOW YOU LOOK AT ME. YOU WOULD SOONER MARRY A *SHOE* THAN A MAN.

LEAVE ME BE, AYO. JUST LEAVE ME BE.

VERY WELL, ANEKA. BUT ONE OF THESE DAYS...

"...YOU WILL PUSH ME AWAY FOR THE LAST TIME."

THE NEXT MORNING, UPANGA'S WAR ROOM

TODAY IS A NEW DAY.

WE CAN NO LONGER JUST SERVE THE ROYAL FAMILY. WE MUST THINK OF THE GREATER GOOD THROUGHOUT WAKANDA. OUR PEOPLE ARE SUFFERING.

WHAT ARE YOU SUGGESTING, CAPTAIN?

T'CHALLA IS DISTRACTED, AND NEVER WHERE HE NEEDS TO BE WHEN WAKANDA NEEDS HIM MOST. SO WE MUST DO WHAT OUR KING CANNOT OR WILL NOT.

INDEED, KING T'CHALLA IS VERY BUSY. AND HE HAS MADE MISTAKES. BUT WE CANNOT ABANDON HIM NOW, NOT WHEN HE NEEDS US MOST.

I WOULD NEVER SUGGEST THAT. WE CAN LOOK OUT FOR OUR PEOPLE *AND* SERVE THE ROYAL FAMILY. OUR QUEEN WOULD HAVE WANTED IT SO.

ANEKA IS RIGHT. WE MUST DO MORE. FOR QUEEN SHURI!

FOR QUEEN SHURI!!!

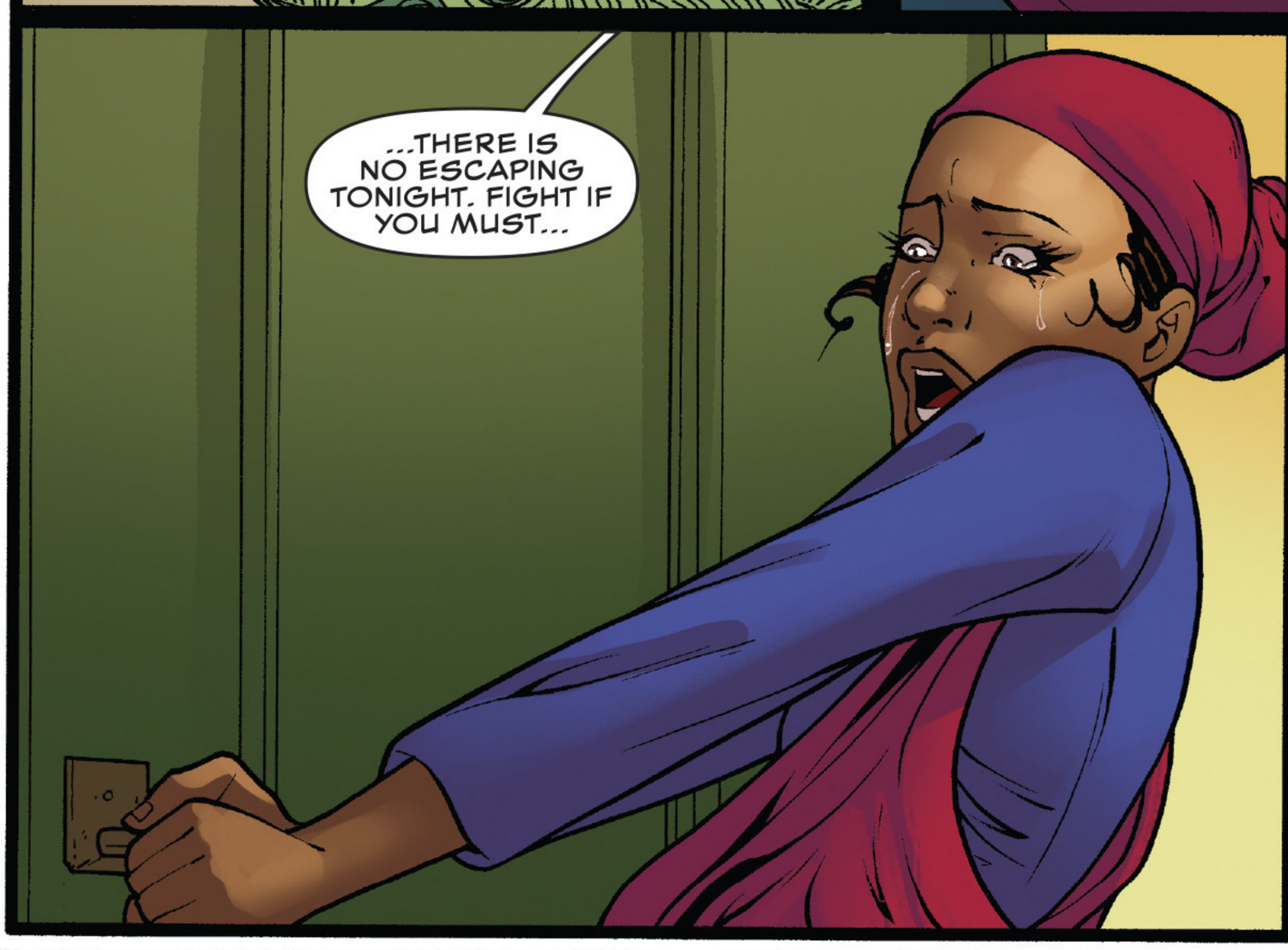
FIRST, WE MUST DEAL WITH THIS VILLAGE CHIEFTAIN WHO TORMENTS THE WOMEN AND GIRLS OF HIS VILLAGE WITHOUT CONSEQUENCE. HIS TRESPASSES CANNOT GO UNANSWERED.
I WILL GO TO KAGARA AND BRING THIS CHIEFTAIN BACK TO THE GOLDEN CITY SO THAT HE CAN FACE JUSTICE.
I WILL GO WITH YOU, MY CAPTAIN. WE WILL DEAL WITH THIS SCUM TOGETHER.
NO, AYO, I CAN HANDLE THIS ALONE. I WANT THE REST OF YOU TO GO, IN PAIRS, TO SOME OF WAKANDA'S OTHER VILLAGES TO LEARN WHAT ELSE HAS GONE IGNORED.
JABARI-LANDS
BIRNIN T'CHAKA
MENA NGAI (THE GREAT MOUND)
AND I WILL BE MAKING SURE T'CHALLA AND RAMONDA HAVE THE PROTECTION THEY NEED WHILE WE LEARN WHERE ELSE OUR EFFORTS ARE NEEDED IN OUR COUNTRY. THERE ARE ENOUGH OF US TO SEE TO ALL OF WAKANDA'S NEEDS.

ANEKA, WHAT IS THE MEANING OF YOU GOING TO THIS VILLAGE ALONE? YOU ARE A FIERCE WARRIOR, BUT YOU NEED ME BY YOUR SIDE!
WHAT I NEED RIGHT NOW IS TIME TO THINK, AYO. I NEED TO BE USEFUL...
BIRNIN T'CHAKA
BIRNIN DIAKA
MENA NGAI (THE GREAT MOUND)
MOHANNDA
...I NEED SPACE TO BREATHE.
I SEE. YOU KNOW, YOU WILL ONLY HAVE SO MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO WOUND ME AS YOU DO NOW.
SO YOU'VE SAID. JUST GO.
CANAAN
ANEKA, YOU WERE UNNECESSARILY HARSH WITH THAT GIRL, SHE WHO LOVES YOU MORE THAN YOU CHOOSE TO SEE. BUT WE CAN TALK ABOUT YOUR HEART LATER.
FOR NOW, YOU NEED TO KNOW THAT CHIEFTAIN DIYA IS FOLAMI'S FATHER.
THAT...IS A COMPLICATION.
INDEED IT IS. SHE SWEARS BY HER FATHER, AS ANY DAUGHTER WOULD, BUT WE CANNOT GO ON HER WORD ALONE. GO AND DO WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE. BUT KEEP THIS COMPLICATION IN MIND.
I WILL, MISTRESS ZOLA.
AND AS FOR YOUR HEART...

"...YOU SHOULD BE KINDER TO BOTH YOURS AND AYO'S."
THANK YOU, KAEL...
KAGARA, THE HOME OF CHIEFTAIN DIYA

...YOU MAY LEAVE THIS YOUNG DELIGHT AND I ALONE NOW.
UNTIL THE MORNING, SIR.

NO!
MY DEAR...


...THERE IS NO ESCAPING TONIGHT. FIGHT IF YOU MUST...

...BUT KNOW THAT I ENJOY A GOOD FIGHT.

THERE, THERE NOW, YOUNG DELIGHT. I AM NOT SUCH A BAD MAN.
I SIMPLY ENJOY PLEASURE, AND IT IS YOUR DUTY TO PROVIDE IT.
I KNOW THEY WERE JUST HERE. WHERE--
PLEASE, LET ME GO!!!
MERCIFUL BAST...HE HAS HALF-A-DOZEN WOMEN CAGED DOWN HERE!

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS INTRUSION INTO MY HOME??? DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

I KNOW YOU ARE A MAN WHO HAS SWORN TO *LEAD* THE PEOPLE OF KAGARA BUT INSTEAD *PLUNDERS* THEM.

A MAN OF HONOR WOULD NEVER FORCE HIMSELF UPON A WOMAN. HE WOULD NOT KEEP UNWILLING WOMEN LOCKED IN SUCH A TERRIBLE PLACE LIKE ANIMALS.

WHAT HAPPENS IN MY HOME AND IN MY VILLAGE IS NONE OF YOUR CONCERN, *DORA MILAJE*. I URGE YOU TO LEAVE BEFORE I CALL MY MEN.

YOU ARE A VILLAGE CHIEFTAIN, AND AS SUCH, I WILL BRING YOU IN QUIETLY OUT OF RESPECT.

I WILL MAKE SURE THE WOMEN OF THIS VILLAGE GET THE JUSTICE THEY DESERVE. I WILL MAKE SURE YOU GET THE HELP YOU SO CLEARLY NEED.

THE ONLY HELP I NEED IS IN GETTING YOU OUT OF MY HOME.

PLEASE, CHIEFTAIN DIYA. I SERVE WITH YOUR DAUGHTER, WHO IS A STRONG, INTELLIGENT WOMAN. IF YOU HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THAT, YOU WILL COME WITH ME.

I THINK NOT.

SO BE IT THEN.

YOU ARE ALL SAFE NOW. I AM SORRY YOUR FATHERS AND BROTHERS DID NOT HONOR YOU AS THEY SHOULD HAVE BY KEEPING YOU SAFE. I DID WHAT I HAD TO DO.

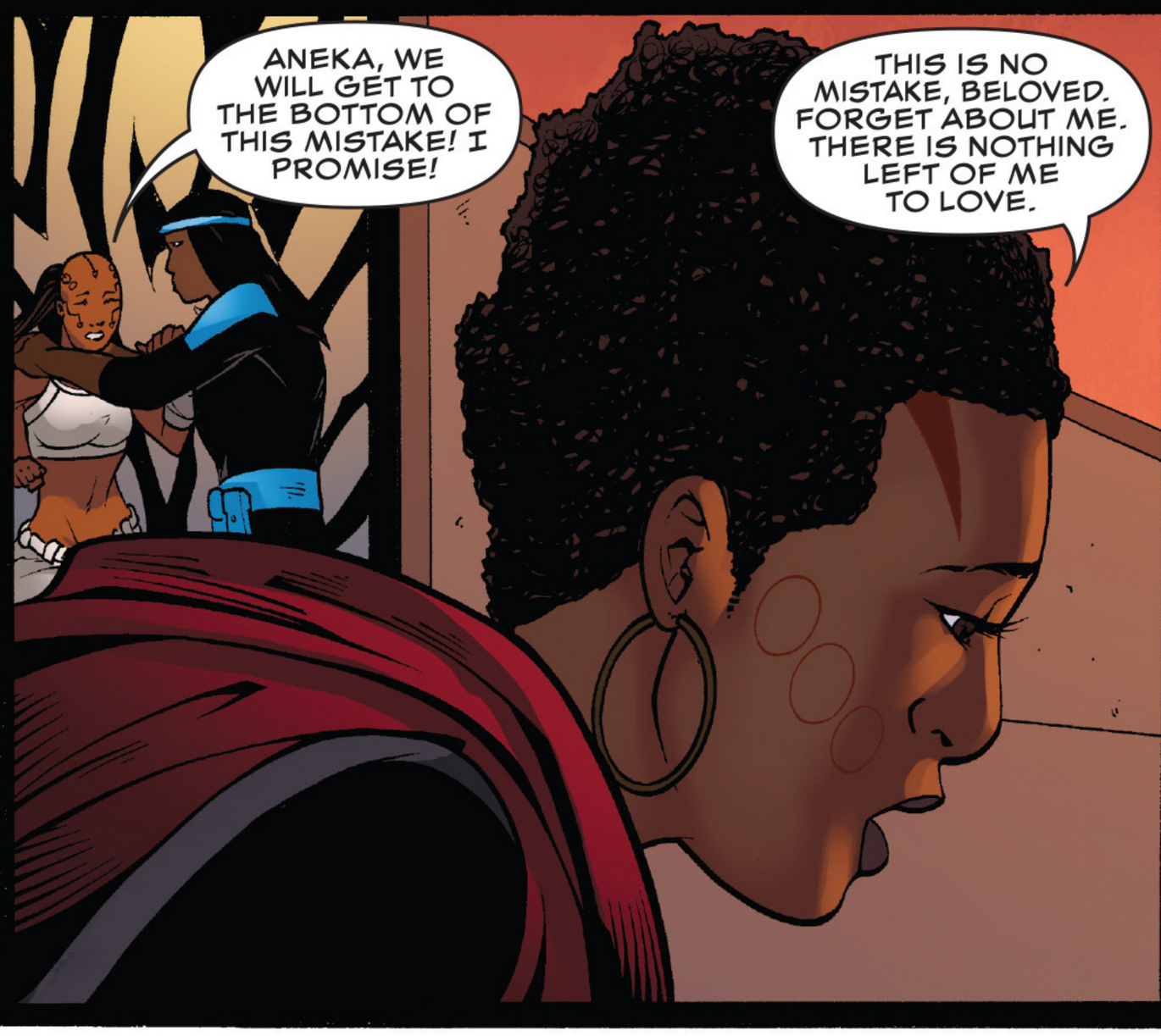
THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE GOLDEN CITY
I WILL HIDE OUT HERE WHILE I PLAN MY NEXT MOVES. I MUST BE BETTER THAN ALL OF THE *DORA MILAJE* COMBINED. DAMN ZOLA! WERE IT NOT FOR HER, I COULD GO HOME TO KAGARA TO PROTECT MY FATHER MYSELF.
SOON, FATHER, I WILL COME TO YOU. AT LEAST FOR NOW I HAVE BLOCKED MY GPS SIGNAL. I WILL NOT BE FOUND UNTIL I CHOOSE TO BE.
MOTHER?
FOLAMI, MY DEAR DAUGHTER, I HAVE UNBEARABLE NEWS.
SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED TO MY FATHER, HASN'T IT?
HOW DID YOU KNOW?
I FEEL IT IN THE MUSCLE OF MY HEART, THROUGH THE CENTER OF MY BONES. TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED. TELL ME ALL OF IT.
I CAME HOME FROM VISITING YOUR SISTER AND FOUND YOUR FATHER LYING DEAD, IN HIS OWN COLD BLOOD. IT WAS A TERRIBLE SIGHT MINE EYES CANNOT UNSEE.
MOTHER, KNOW THIS: ***MY FATHER WILL BE AVENGED.***

ANEKA AND AYO, I KNOW YOU ARE BEHIND THIS.
YOU WILL PAY FOR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE TO MY FATHER. I WILL AVENGE HIS DEATH WITH MY BARE HANDS.
FOR NOW I HAVE BECOME RAGE!

LATER,
THE GOLDEN CITY

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS? ANEKA IS A CAPTAIN OF THE *DORA MILAJE*-- RELEASE HER AT ONCE!
CLICK

THIS CAPTAIN HAS COMMITTED MURDER. THERE IS NO RELEASE IN HER FUTURE.


ANEKA, WE WILL GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS MISTAKE! I PROMISE!
THIS IS NO MISTAKE, BELOVED. FORGET ABOUT ME. THERE IS NOTHING LEFT OF ME TO LOVE.

THE CHARGE AGAINST YOU IS SERIOUS, CAPTAIN. THE MURDER OF ANY WAKANDAN CITIZEN CANNOT BE TAKEN LIGHTLY, BUT THE MURDER OF A *VILLAGE CHIEFTAIN* IS AN EVEN GREATER CRIME.

I DO NOT TAKE LIVES LIGHTLY, YOUR HONOR. WOMEN AND GIRLS WERE NOT SAFE AROUND THE CHIEFTAIN AND NO ONE DID A THING. SO I DID WHAT HAD TO BE DONE. I AM JUSTICE.

BANG
JUSTICE IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN APPOINTED TO ADMINISTER IT. THAT RESPONSIBILITY IS NOT YOURS.
YOU DO NOT DICTATE MY RESPONSIBILITIES. I ADHERE TO A HIGHER CODE.

VERY WELL. YOU ARE TO BE HELD IN CUSTODY UNTIL WE CAN HOLD A PROPER TRIAL. YOUR HIGHER CODE CANNOT ALTER YOUR FATE.

THAT NIGHT

THIS PLACE IS TOO GOOD FOR THE LIKES OF YOU.

I DO NOT HAVE THE ENERGY FOR YOUR PETTINESS TODAY, FOLAMI. YOU WILL NOT BELIEVE ME, BUT I HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO TAKE YOUR FATHER'S LIFE. HE HAD WOMEN IN A CAGE LIKE *ANIMALS*.

YOU *LIE*. MAY THE POISON FALLING FROM YOUR LIPS BE YOUR UNDOING. YOU MURDERED MY FATHER AND YOU WILL PAY DEARLY!

THE MAN I KILLED WAS A TERRIBLE MAN. THAT HE WAS ALSO YOUR FATHER BREAKS MY HEART, BUT HIS MISDEEDS ARE HIS BURDEN TO BEAR.

YOU ARE A LIAR, *CAPTAIN*. MY FATHER WAS AN HONORABLE MAN, BELOVED BY HIS PEOPLE.

I AM AFRAID YOU DID NOT TRULY KNOW YOUR FATHER, BUT I AM SORRY FOR YOUR LOSS AND FOR MY HAND IN IT.

SKEERUNCH

I AM STRONGER THAN YOU COULD POSSIBLY IMAGINE. YOU AND EVERYTHING YOU LOVE ARE AT MY MERCY. I HOPE YOU REMEMBER YOUR PRECIOUS AYO WELL, BECAUSE WHEN I AM DONE, THAT MEMORY IS ALL YOU WILL HAVE OF HER.

FAREWELL...

NO, COME BACK!

GUARD! GUARD! ANYONE! I NEED HELP!

I MUST GET TO AYO. I MUST WARN HER. DEAR GOD, WHAT HAVE I DONE?!

TO BE CONCLUDED

BLACK PANTHER

WORLD OF WAKANDA LETTERS PAGE

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