

**MARVEL**

PG 26

AUSTEN

HENRY

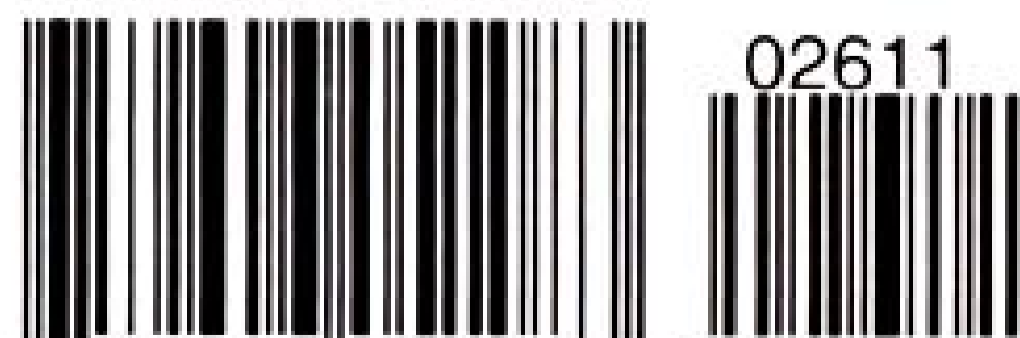
MORALES

# EXILES™

**HARD CHOICES PART 1 OF 2**



**DIRECT EDITION**



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**RICK**<sup>02</sup>  
Transparency  
Digital



Six strangers, each a HERO from a different reality, brought together to ensure that life as we know it doesn't cease to exist! **MAGIK** - sword-wielding teleporter; **MIMIC** - powered by his reality's X-Men; **SUNFIRE** - mistress of flame; **NOCTURNE** - daughter of Nightcrawler; and **MORPH** - shape-changing funny man. Destined to fix the kinks in the chains of reality. Stan Lee presents

# EXILES

**HARD CHOICES** Part 1 of 2



**MIMIC**  
Calvin Rankin  
Mimics the Powers  
of 5 Mutants



**NOCTURNE**  
TJ Wagner  
Hex Bolts, Possession



**MORPH**  
Shape-Shifting



**SUNFIRE**  
Mariko Yashida  
Flame Control/Flight



**SASQUATCH**  
Dr. Heather Hudson  
Super Strength  
and Senses



**MAGIK**  
Illyana Rasputin  
Teleportation and  
Magic Sword

## PREVIOUSLY



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They are the EXILES, reality-hopping nomads forced to repair the broken chain of time. In each new universe, they must complete a mission before moving on. Their only guide is the mysterious Tal-lus, a bracelet Talisman that provides direction, although sometimes oblique, as to what the EXILES are there to rectify. If they cannot repair their own fractured timelines, they may never return home.

The EXILES are a team in turmoil. After barely surviving a battle to save an entire universe, their leader, Blink, was released from her duties as an Exile and disappeared before the Exiles' very eyes... whether or not Blink still lives remains unknown. Left to lead them is Mimic. Not only has he lost the woman he loves, Blink, but he has also lost his will to be a hero. The constant stress of saving whole realities has started to break him.

Blink was replaced on the team by the sword-wielding teleporter, Illyana Rasputin - also know as Magik. What effect will this have on the team? Only time will tell...



# NEW YORK CITY

Chaos theory says that the motion of a butterfly's wings can change weather patterns on the other side of the world.

Come on, man! You can afford it!

Look at that coat! I could eat all year for what you paid for that coat!

# HEROES FOR HIRE, INC.

The idea being that small movements have profound, unforeseen impact.

My check was short again last week, Rand. I didn't get paid for the Octopus job.

This new electronic vouchering system is \$#!#, and you better take care of it!

In certain realities, something screwed up, the butterfly flapped its wings a moment too late--

--and everything changed.

Mister Rand, the man from the IRS is in conference room twelve.

He said he's found some discrepancies that he needs to discuss with you at your earliest convenience.

In other realities, the butterfly flapped its wings a moment too early--

--and everything changed.

The Japanese are on the satellite phone again.

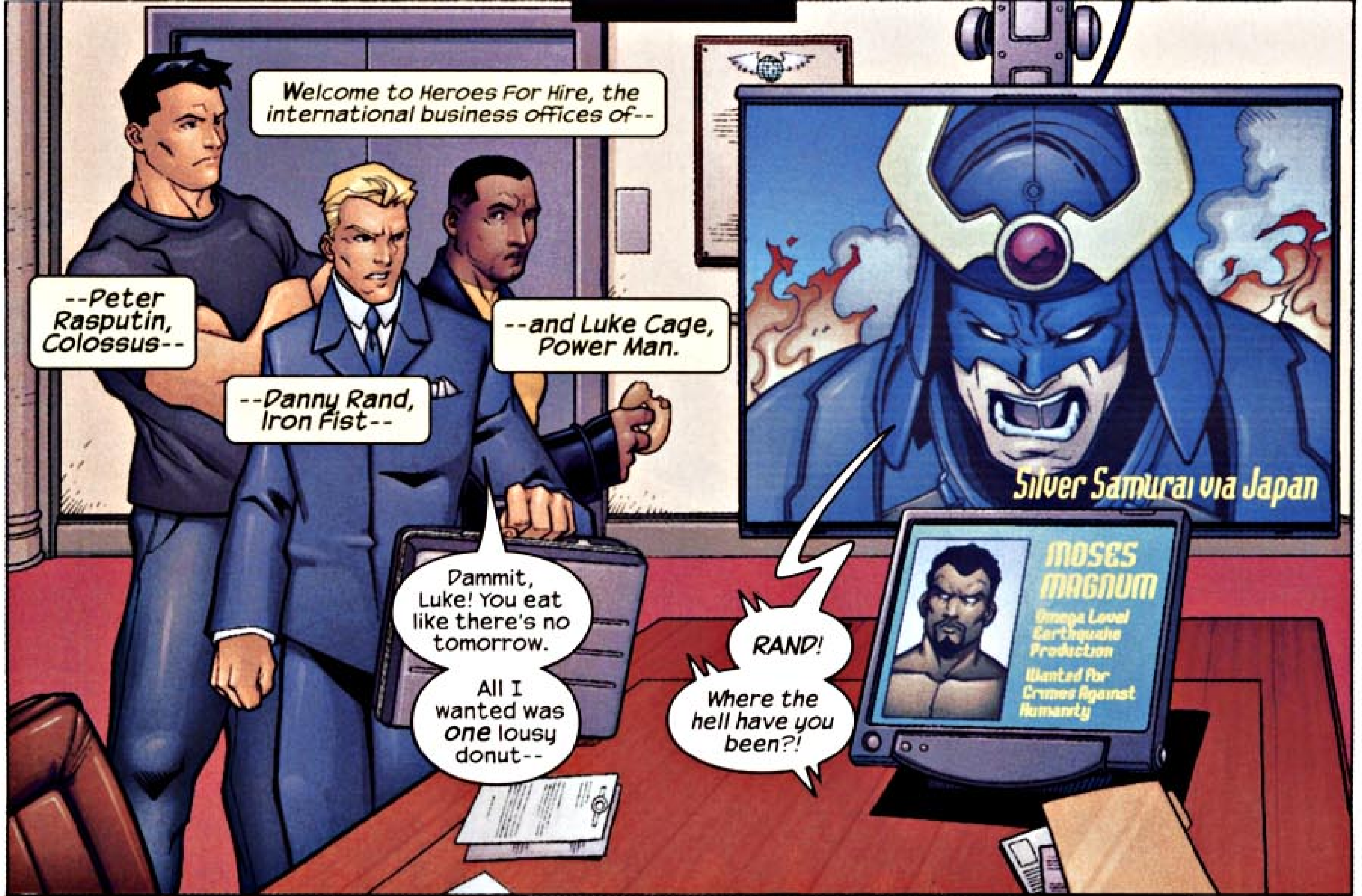
Moses Magnum has upped the ante and is threatening to sink Japan at midnight if they don't make him absolute ruler.

Are there any more of those donuts left, Luke?

I didn't have any breakfast.

Sorry, Danny. This is the last one.





Welcome to Heroes For Hire, the international business offices of--

--Peter Rasputin, Colossus--

--and Luke Cage, Power Man.

--Danny Rand, Iron Fist--

Silver Samurai via Japan

Dammit, Luke! You eat like there's no tomorrow.

All I wanted was one lousy donut--

RAND!

Where the hell have you been?!

MOSES MAGNUM  
Omega Level Earthquake Production  
Wanted for Crimes Against Humanity



These three men employ every major super-powered human on Earth.

Back off, Silver Samurai.

You do not want to start out on my bad side this morning.

Here.

You can have the rest.

Ordinarily, Danny is the voice of reason--



Your bad side? We have offered you two billion for your best people and you refuse us--



--the calm and authoritative power behind this security operation.

There is a difference between "refusing" and asking for fair compensation.

You want Black Knight, Scorpion and the rest of the "Avengers package," you pay for the rest of the "Avenger package".

And the basic "Avenger package" begins at five billion.



But today Danny is the butterfly.

You hold out when billions of lives hang in the balance?!

THAT'S REPREHE--  
=CLIK=

No, Samurai.



That's business.

The butterfly that doesn't flap its wings--



TOKYO, JAPAN

--at all.

They are the  
**EXILES**

It's their job  
to poke the  
butterfly.

It's their job to fix  
the mistakes in  
every reality.



Oh my  
God!  
OH MY  
GOD!

SONY  
ソニー

らた





Where do we start?  
Where  
can we possibly  
begin?

What does  
the Tallus say,  
Mimic?

Probably  
that we have  
to let them  
all die, huh?



As a  
matter of  
fact--

No, wait!  
I was just  
kidding!

Gallows  
humor. Black  
comedy. *Bad joke*,  
you know?

Morph.  
*Chill.*

Why would  
we need to be  
here just to *let*  
them die?

My parents.  
  
My God,  
my parents  
are a few miles  
from here.



Not to  
*let* them die,  
Nocturne.

To prevent  
them from being  
*saved*.



We  
can't do  
that.

Mimic, I'm  
a doctor.



Mimic!

There are  
more people in  
there, and I  
need to go find  
my parents!

If you  
change to  
steel form  
you can--





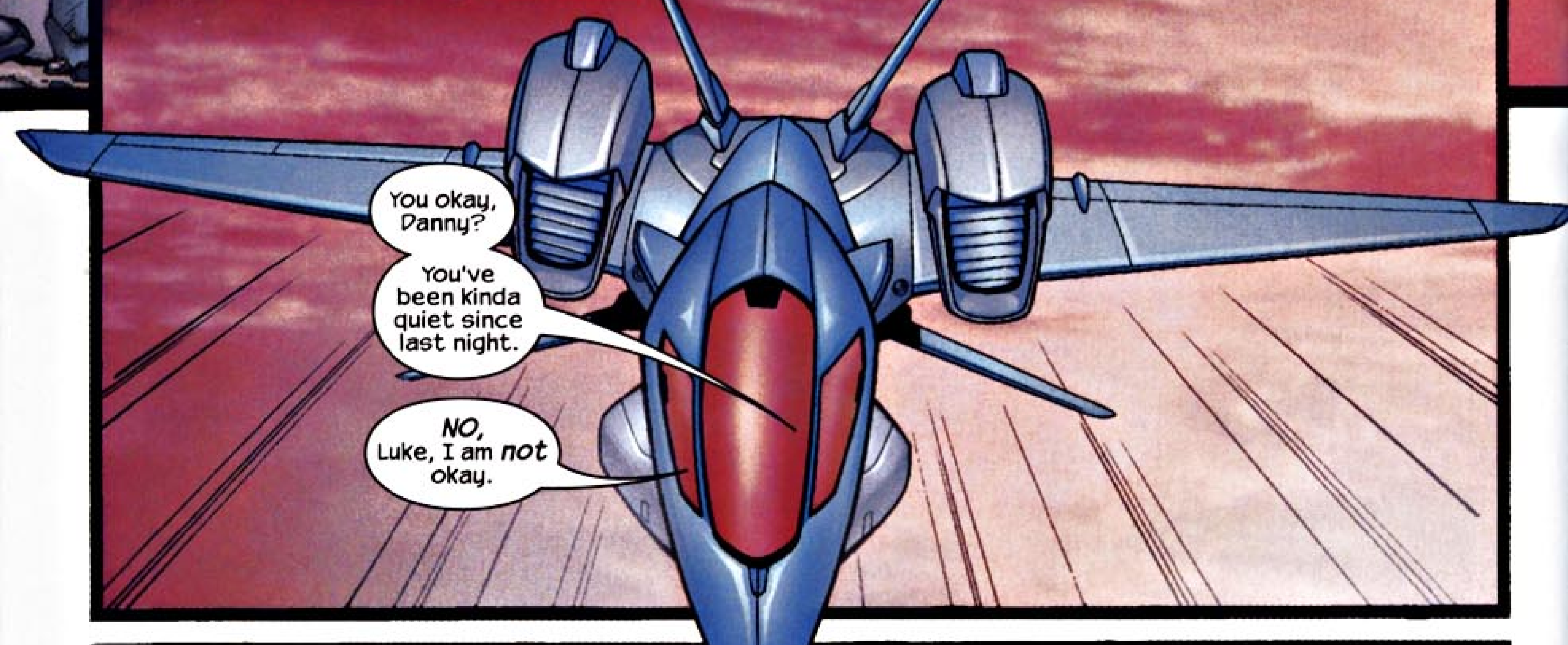
Hey, what are you all doing just standing around?!

There are people *dying* here.

No.  
No, that *can't* be what the *Timebroker* wants!



**OVER THE COAST OF JAPAN...**



You okay, Danny?

You've been kinda quiet since last night.

**NO,** Luke, I am *not* okay.

Millions of people are dead because I woke up on the wrong side of the bed this morning.



I am definitely not okay.





We talked all this through when we decided to *start* the business, Danny.

We're not a group of cops or vigilante do-gooders.

This is a *business*, and sometimes the choices we make--

Millions of people, Luke.

That's not a business decision. That's aiding and abetting *genocide*.

Oh, cry me a river, Rand.



You did *nothin'*, all right?

Moses Magnum killed all those Japanese, and your *whinin'* for some of the responsibility is gettin' on my nerves--

--so just shut the hell up and get us there so I can *kill* somethin'--



--and do it with a *clear conscience* for a change!



**TOKYO**

The *Avengers* were supposed to be here to protect Japan, and die trying, Sunfire.

No.

And after that Moses Magnum is supposed to kill Victor von Doom to complete the conquest of Europe, and the world.

**NO!**

And the entire Japanese race and culture is supposed to be extinguished within ten years on this world.

**NO, NO, NOOOO!**



When did you lose all your *humanity*?!

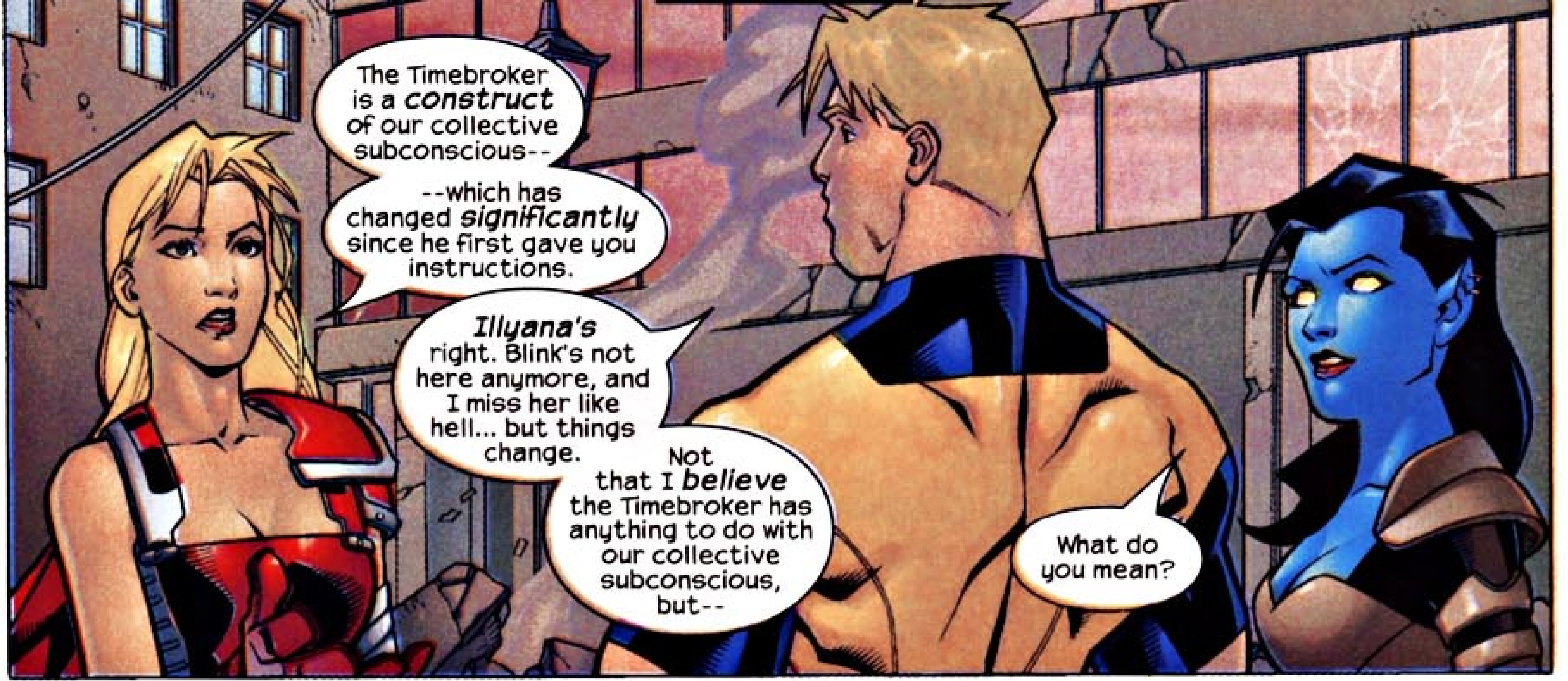
Blink would have never let this happen!

Isn't this the kind of thing those other Exiles--

--those killers from *Weapon X* are supposed to handle?

The Timebroker said *they* existed to do the really *dirty*--









How is this any different from the lives we chose in our home realities?

You go off to fight for something you *believe* in there--

--you run *just* as much risk of never getting home!

You took that chance *every time* you chose to get involved in your own reality.



I did not *choose* to be here, Sunfire.



That makes *no* difference.

It's the *ideals* we stood for, the *ideals* we chose to *DEFEND* that--



I've already compromised my ideals a hundred times over, *Mariko*.

Two months ago I beat Namor to death in an inferno.

A few hours ago I broke Juggernaut's neck to keep him from killing all of Russia.

And today I kill the Avengers and the Japanese race dies--



--and maybe--

--*MAYBE*--

--I finally go home to *my* world, where Japan still exists--

--and all of this was just a *horribly* bad dream.

None of it ever *really* happened.





You're a good man, Calvin.  
And I know you've been pushed beyond what's fair or right to expect of anyone.



But I'm here to tell you this *isn't* a bad dream--  
--it's a bad reality.

And we need to decide something-- right *here*-- right *now*.  
Do we make a stand for our ideals and say "to hell with the Timebroker *and* the Tallus!" and do what we *know* is right?



Or do we let them turn us into another Weapon X and *blindly* do whatever we're told?  
Something we *weren't* until they began manipulating us through these worlds?  
Do we let the *Timebroker* define us?  
Or do we continue to define *ourselves*--

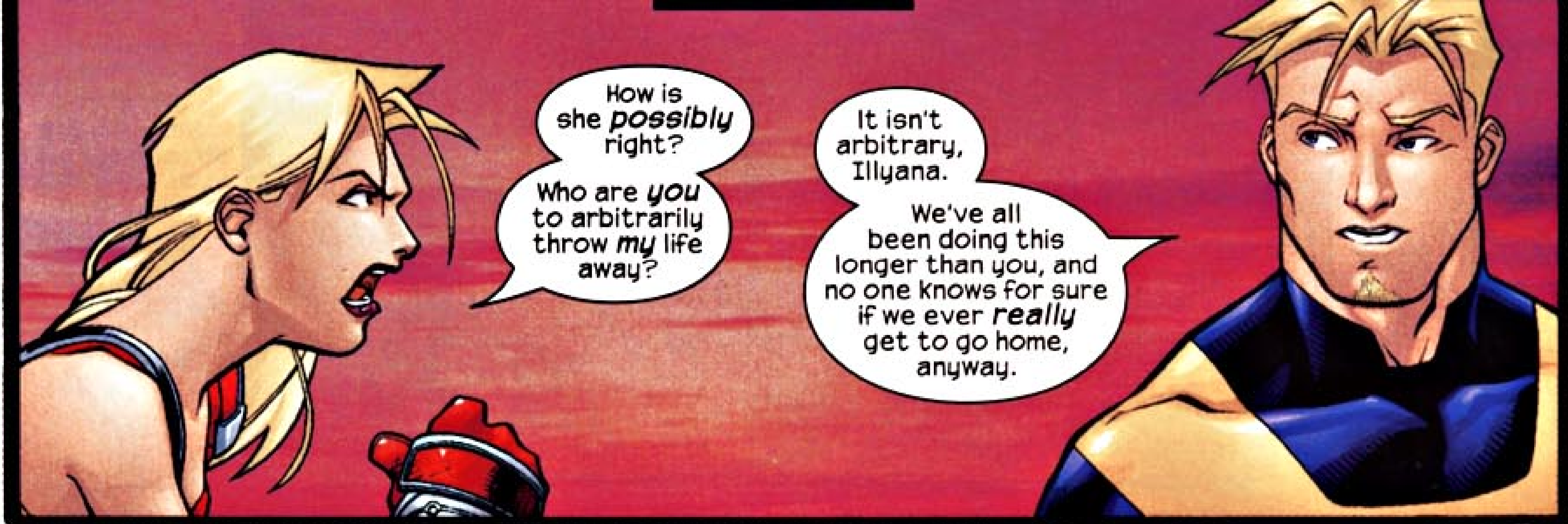


--as heroes?



You're right.  
You're absolutely right.





How is she *possibly* right?  
Who are *you* to arbitrarily throw *my* life away?

It isn't arbitrary, Ilyana.  
We've all been doing this longer than you, and no one knows for sure if we ever *really* get to go home, anyway.



Well, I don't like this.

And I don't *care*. I choose to define myself as a hero.

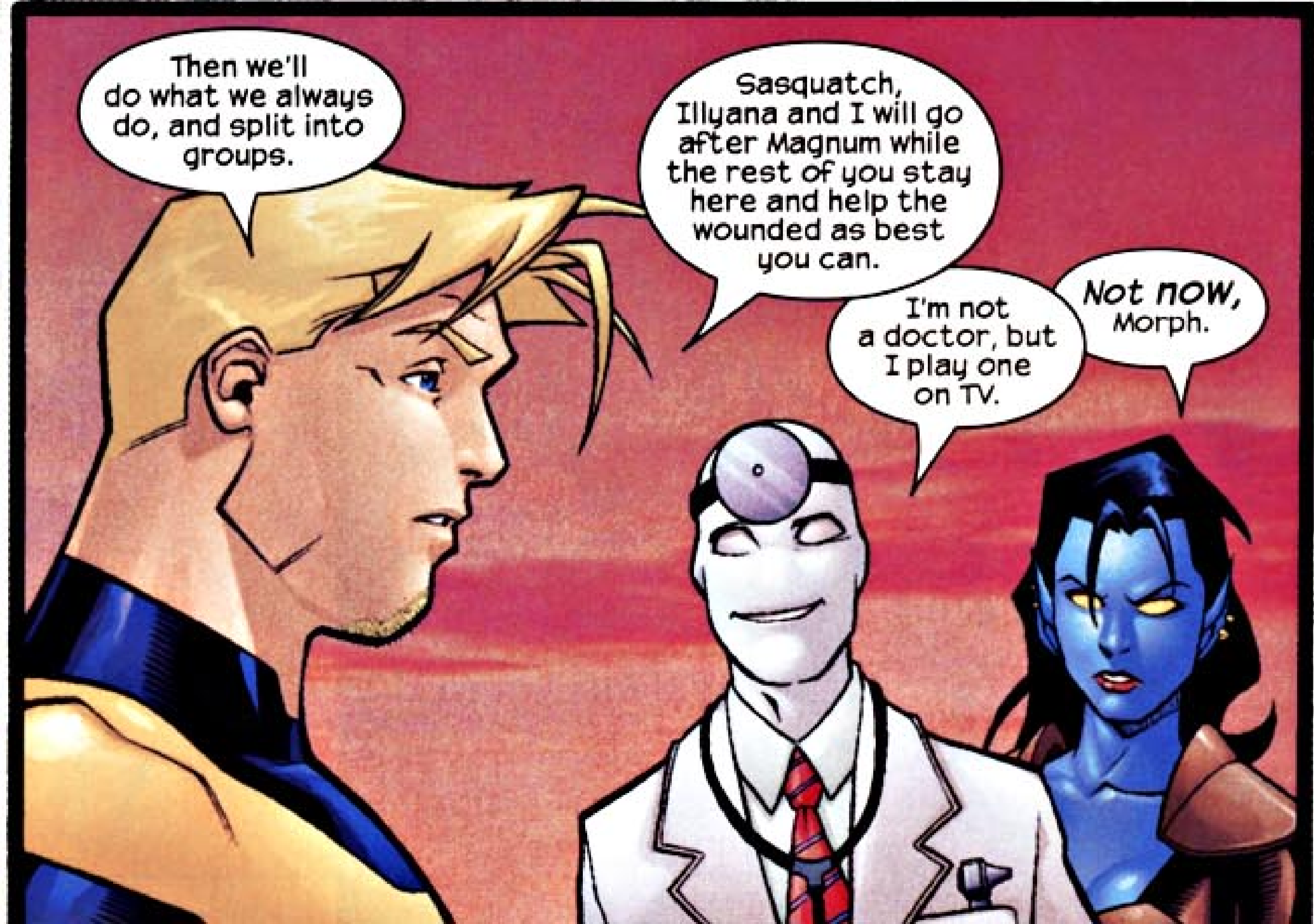
Now, who knows anything about Magnum and his whereabouts?

Moses  
Magnum had a *secret island* abode in the Kuril Island chain.

The only thing that could beat him was *Banshee* and his brain-splitting, ultrasonic *scream*.

Elementary, really.

But there are people here that need our help.

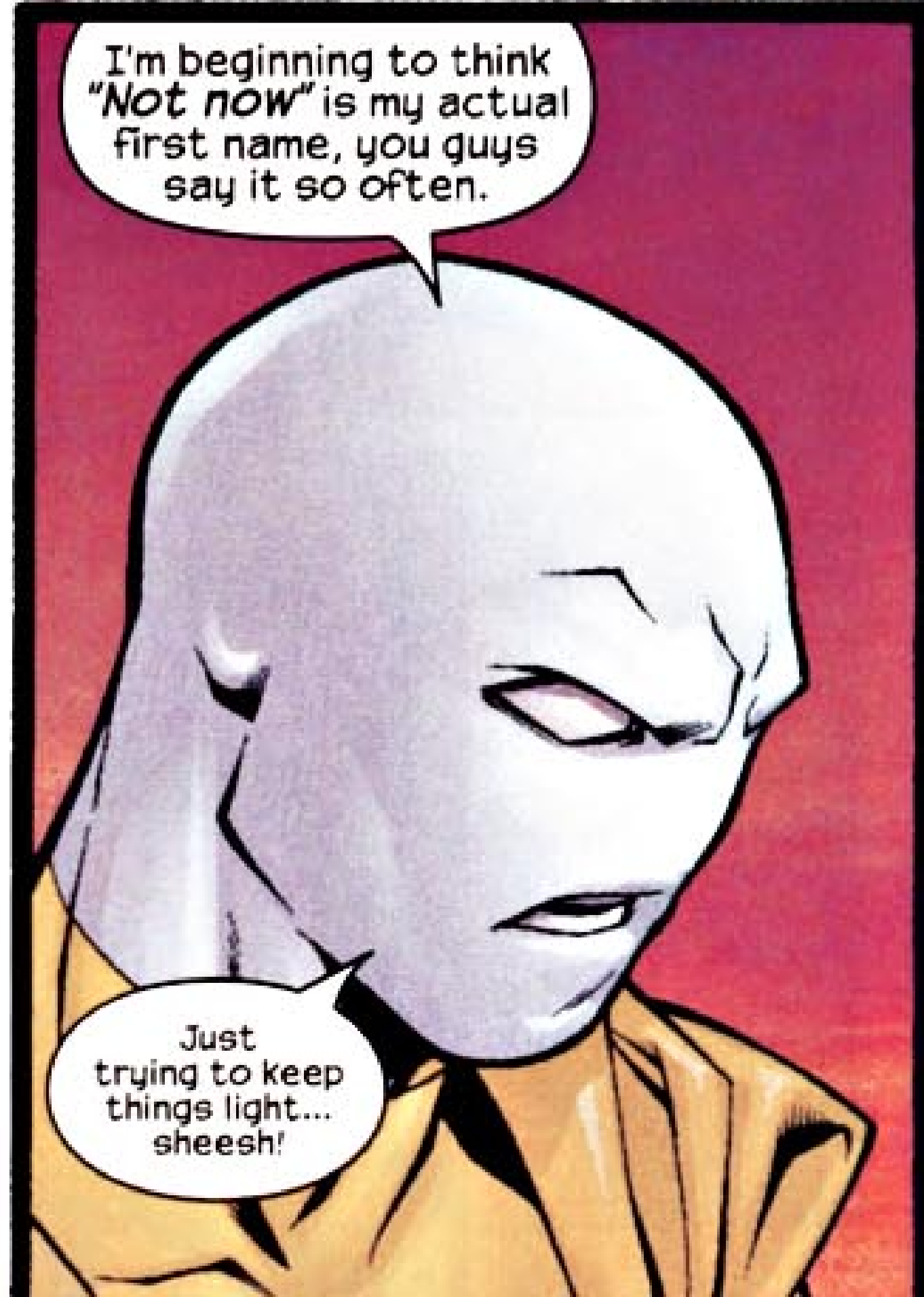


Then we'll do what we always do, and split into groups.

Sasquatch, Ilyana and I will go after Magnum while the rest of you stay here and help the wounded as best you can.

I'm not a doctor, but I play one on TV.

*Not now*, Morph.



I'm beginning to think "*Not now*" is my actual first name, you guys say it so often.

Just trying to keep things light... sheesh!



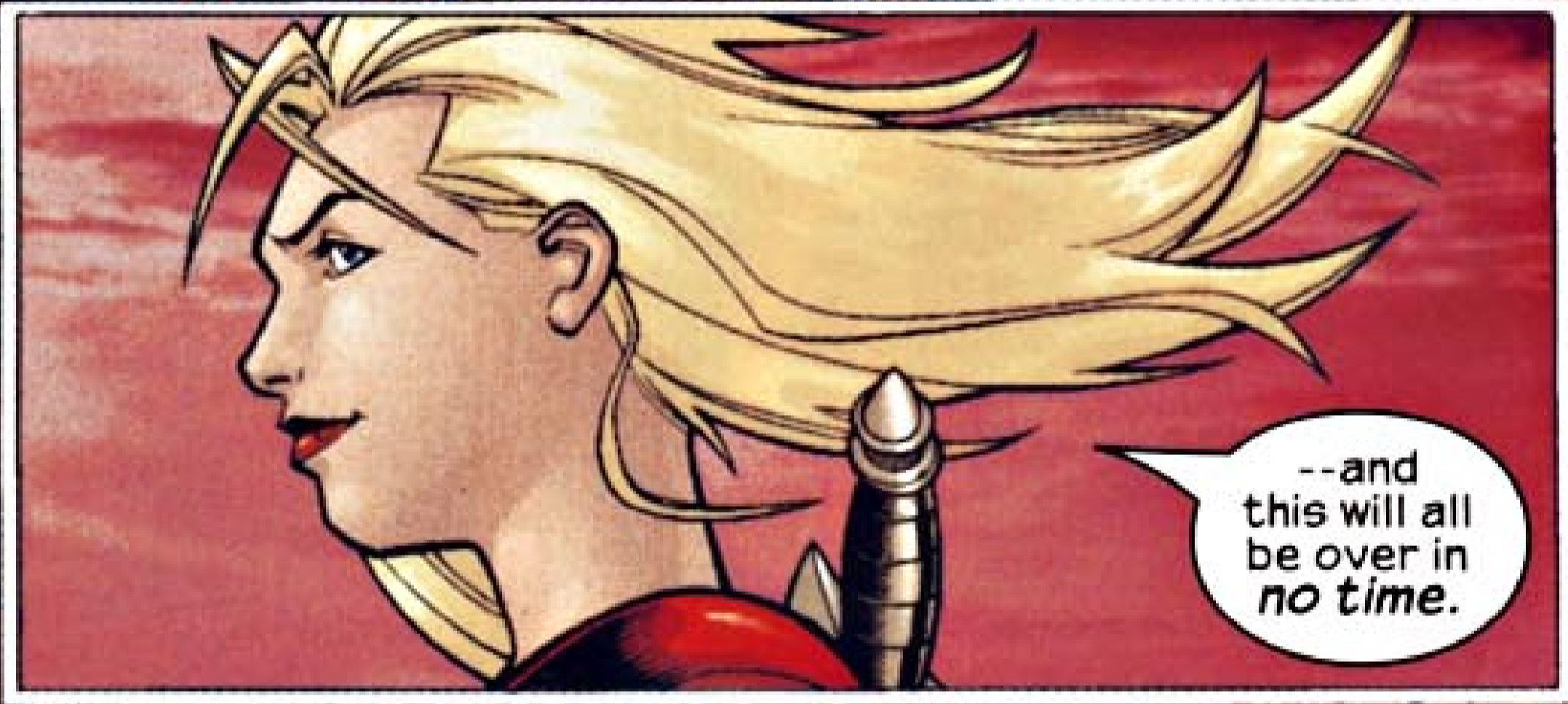


Someone should meet the Avengers where the Tallus told us they would be.

Tell them where we are and *team up* with them.

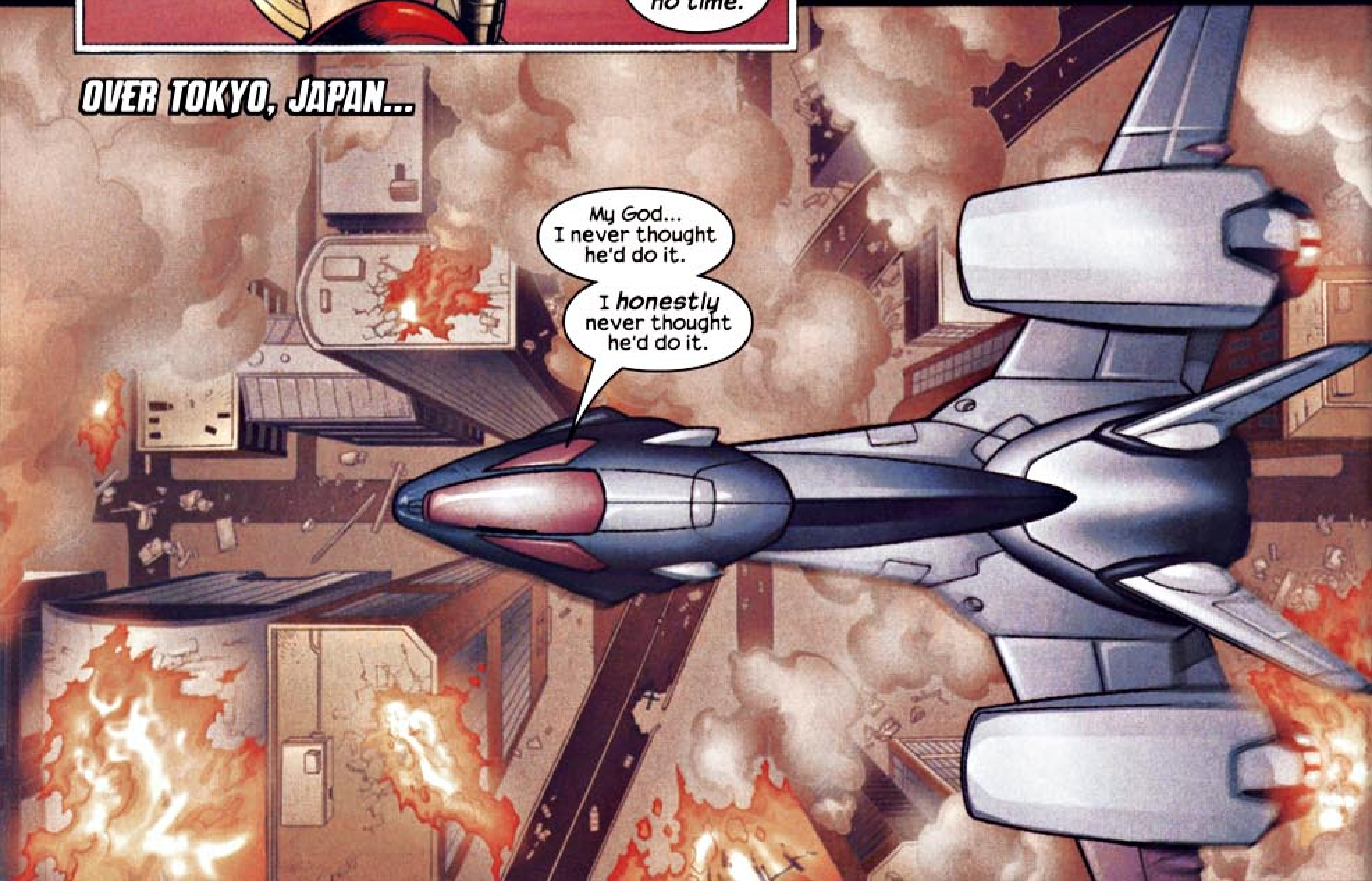
That's a good idea. We can use all the help we can get, if this is an indication of Magnum's power.

You fly Sasquatch to Magnum's lair and I'll go find the Avengers--



--and this will all be over in *no time*.

**OVER TOKYO, JAPAN...**



My God... I never thought he'd do it.

I *honestly* never thought he'd do it.





None of us did, Danny.

Who could?

Someone is there, Luke.

Waving us down.



It's weird but she looks a lot like my little sister, Illyana...

...all grown up, I mean.

What's a blonde woman with a sword doing out here in the middle of this, Colossus?

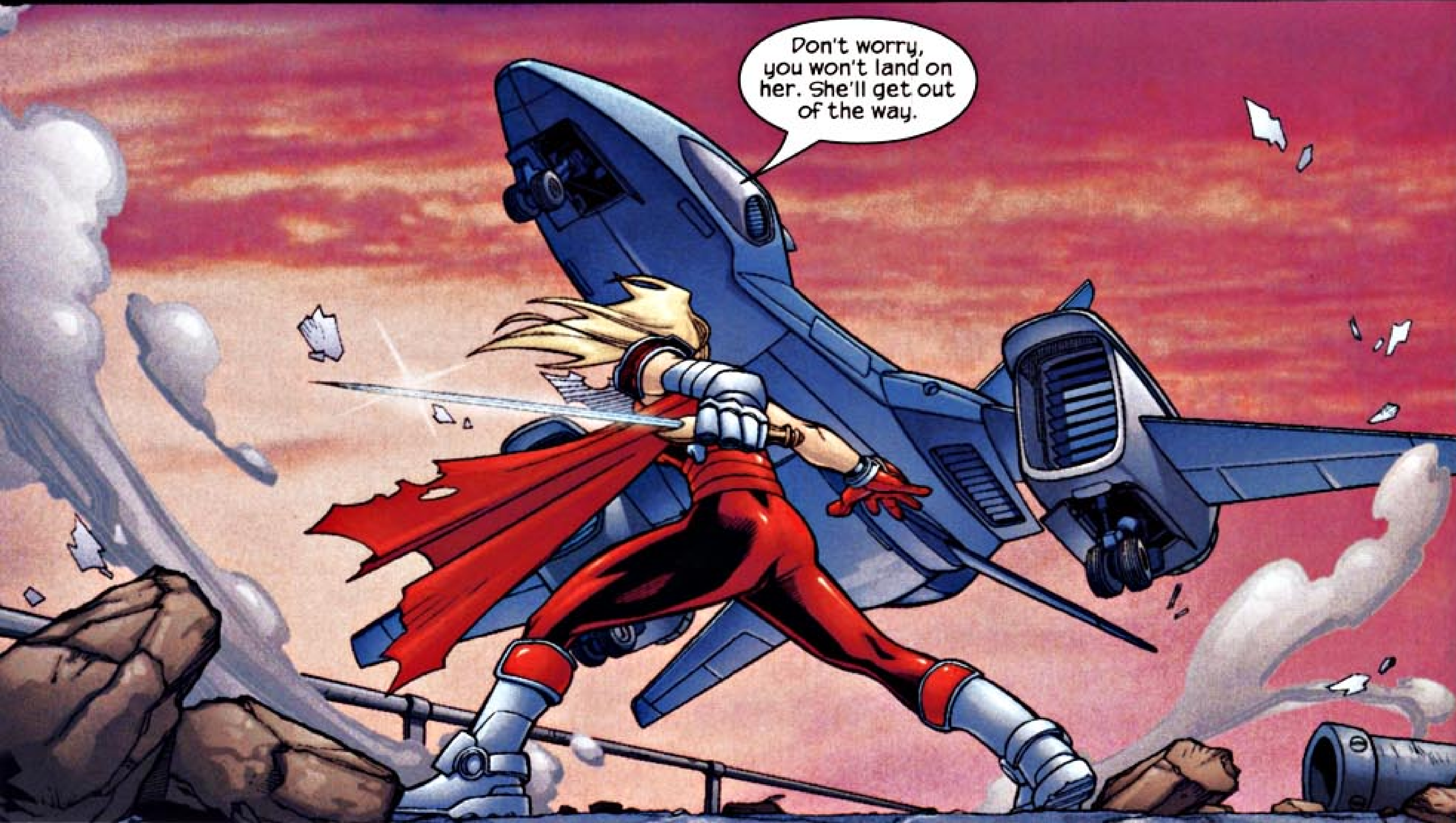
Let's land and ask her.

Maybe she's here to help, too?

Hold up.

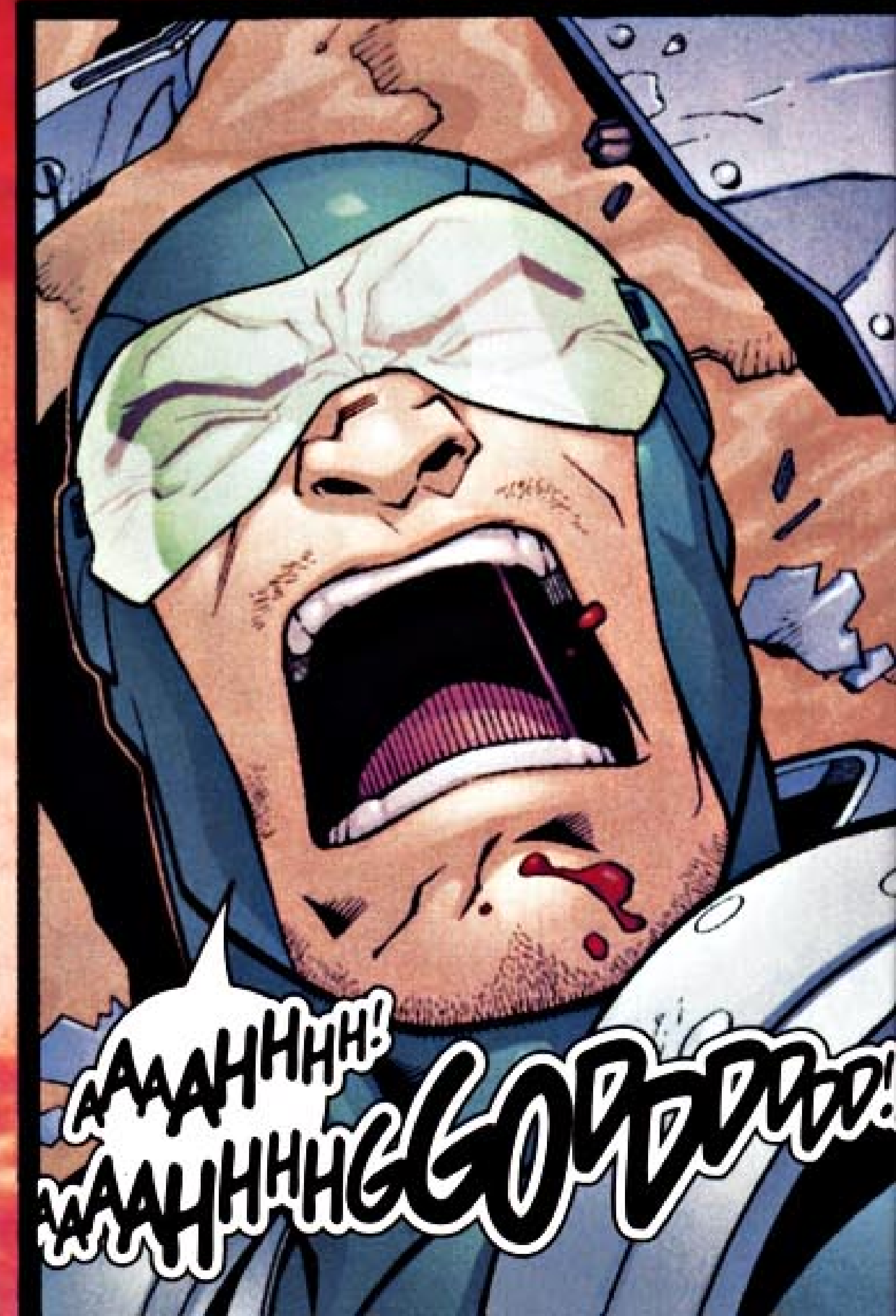
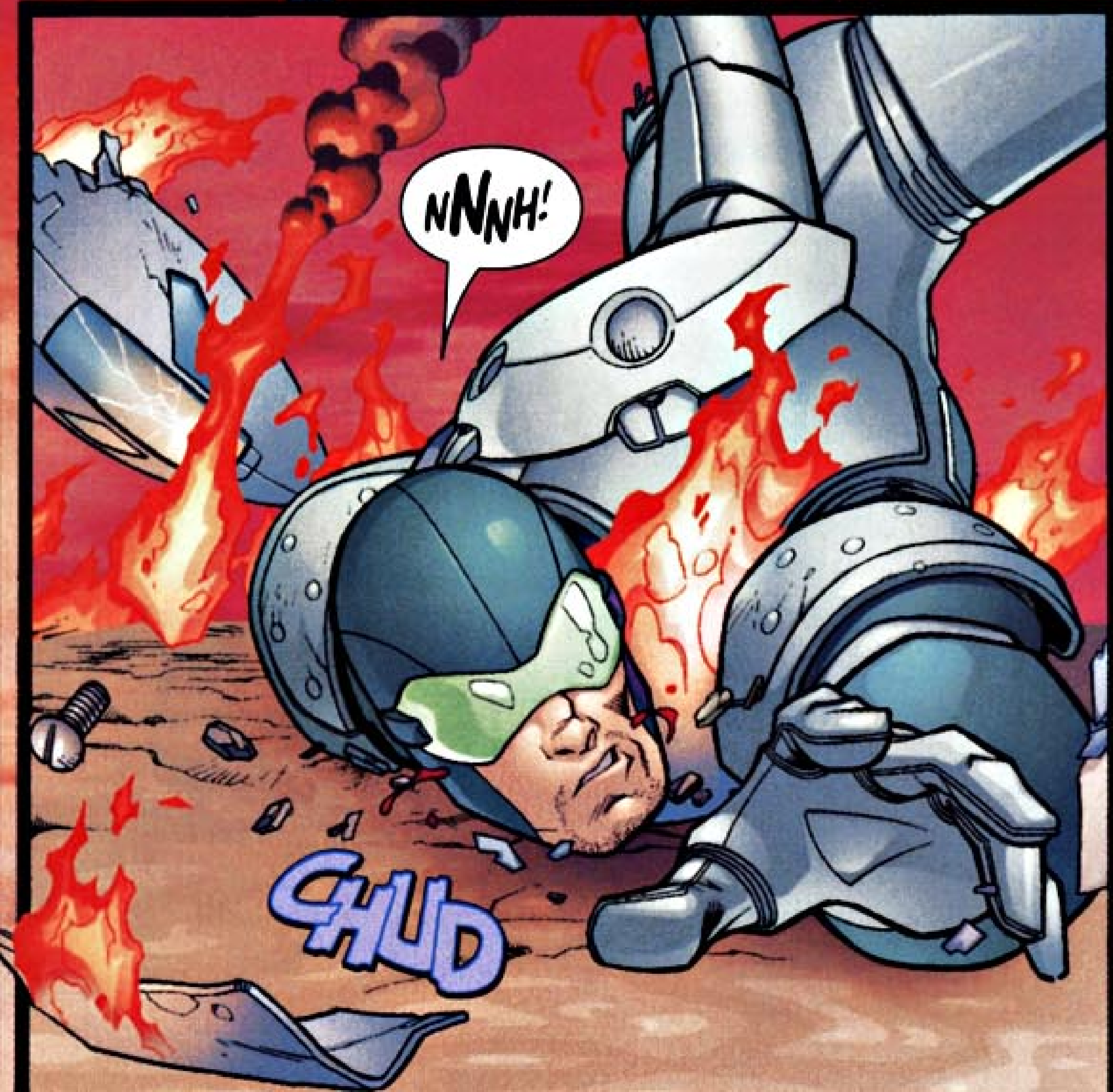
What's she doing? Is she getting under us?

It's probably just our viewing angle.

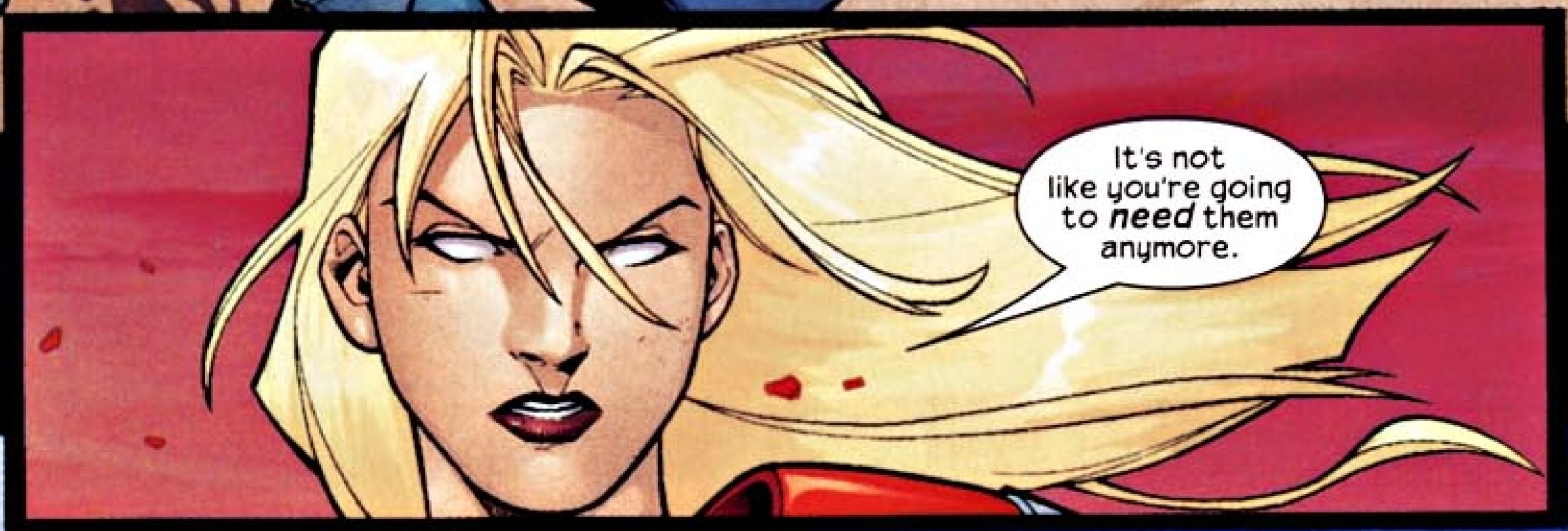


Don't worry, you won't land on her. She'll get out of the way.









**THE KURIL ISLAND CHAIN**

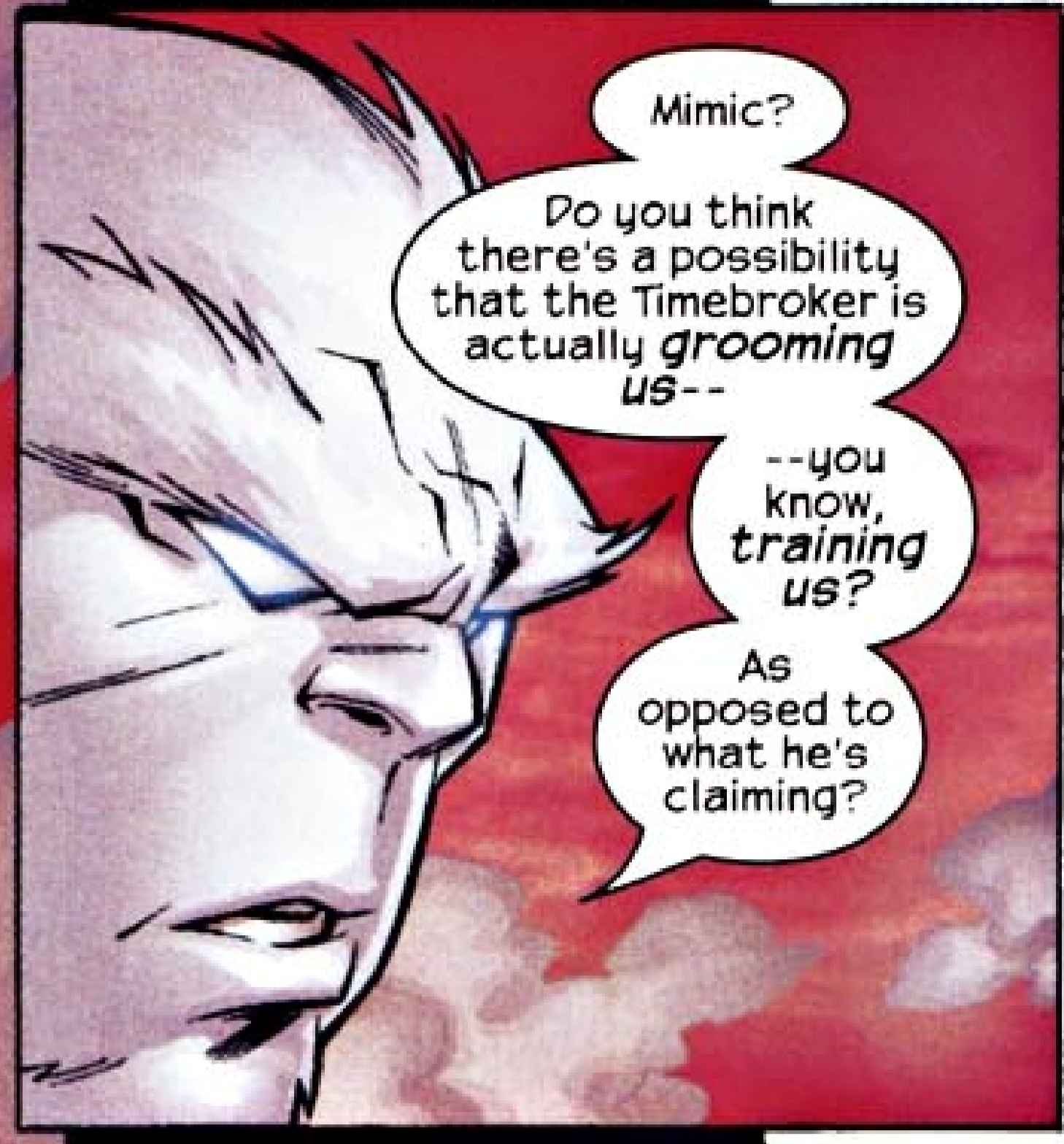






I imagine there are going to be sentry guards... probably robotic.

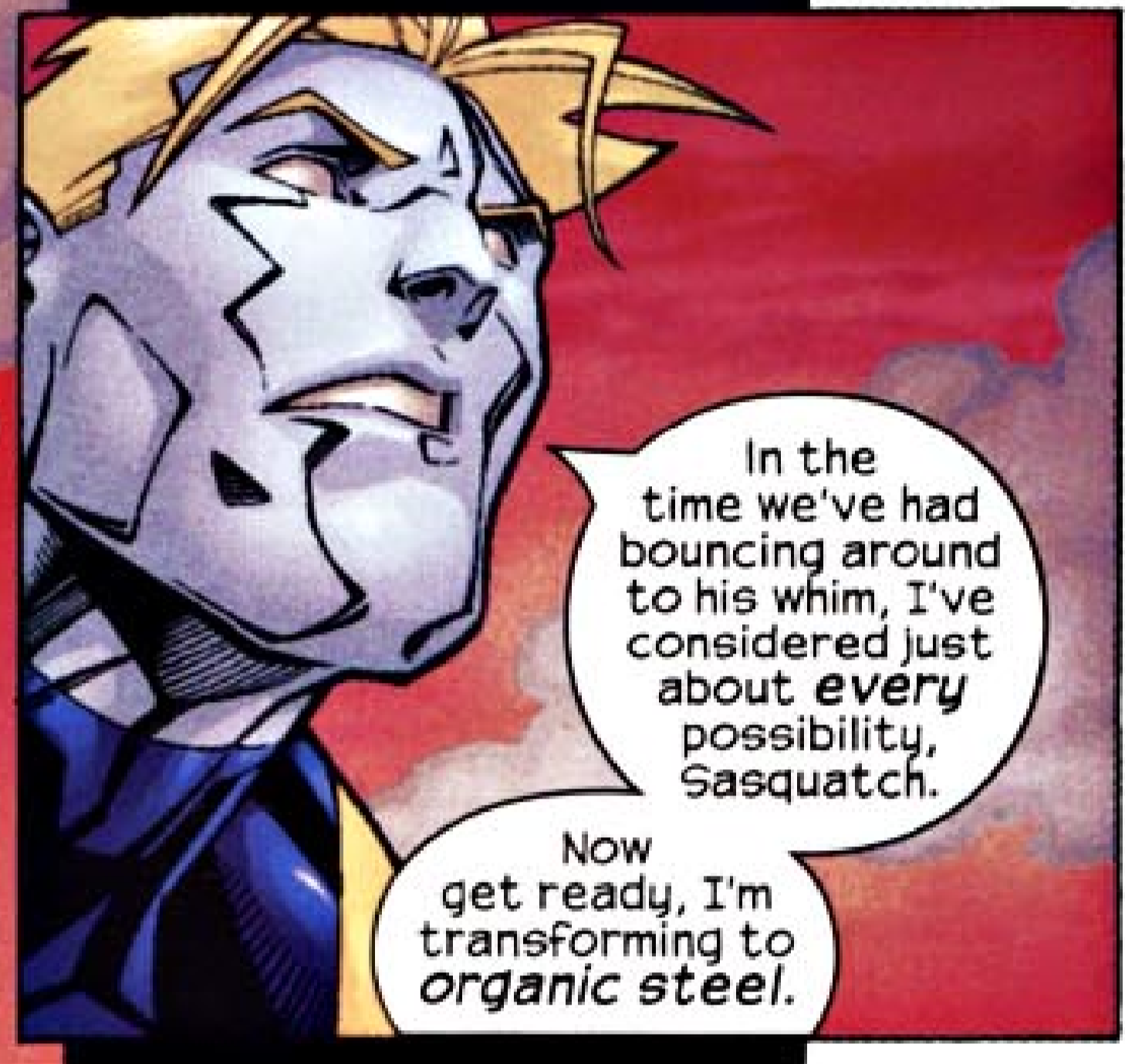
We'll do what we can.



Mimic?  
Do you think there's a possibility that the Timebroker is actually *grooming* us--

--you know, *training* us?

As opposed to what he's claiming?

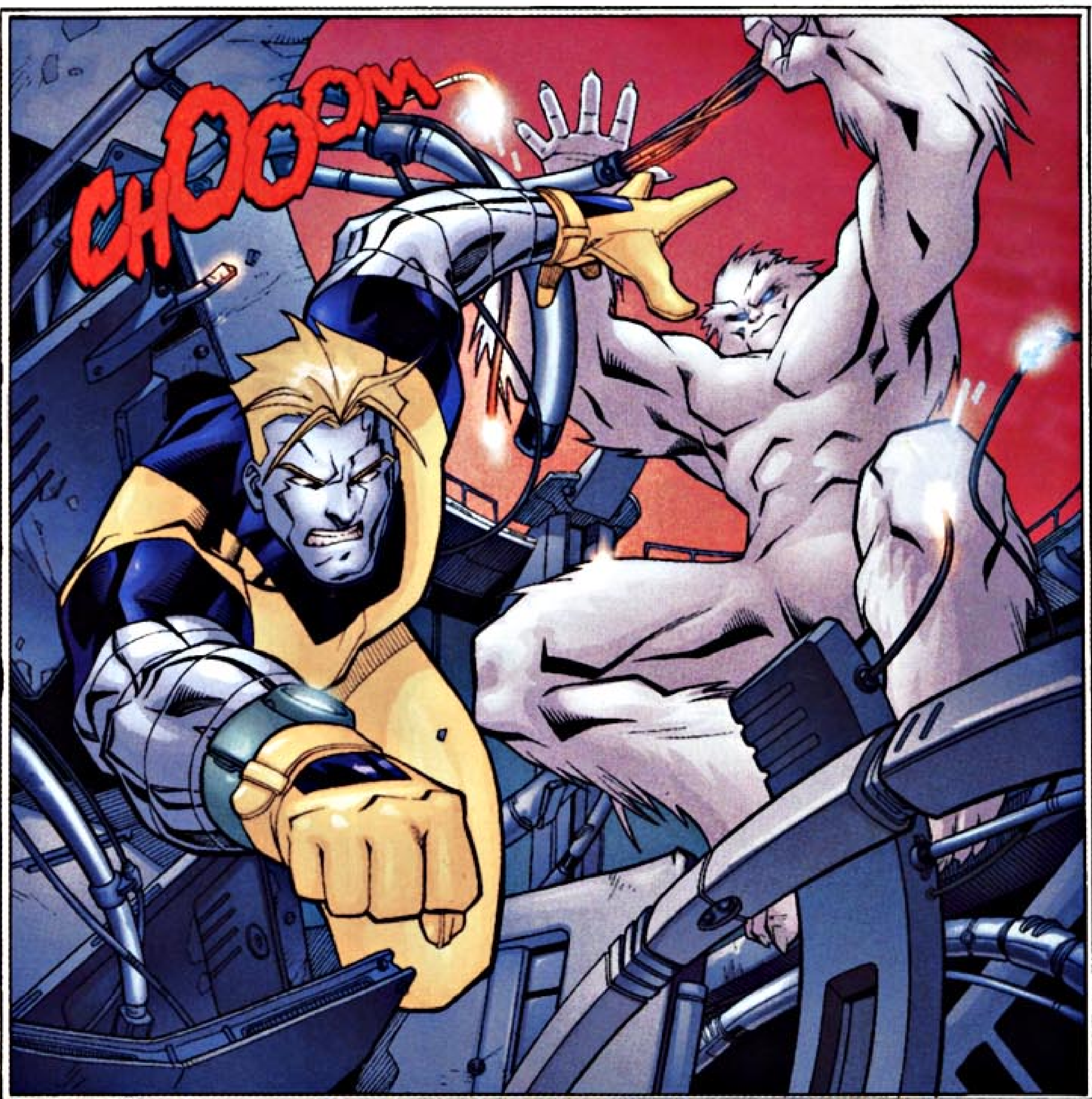


In the time we've had bouncing around to his whim, I've considered just about *every* possibility, Sasquatch.

Now get ready, I'm transforming to *organic steel*.



We're going into freefall.





TOKYO



KANG!

AVENGERS!  
ANYBODY!

I NEED  
HELP!



JUST  
DIE, DAMN  
YOU!



Don't you get  
it? Huh? You're  
supposed  
to be dead  
anyway!

So just  
do us all a  
favor--



--AND  
SHUT UP  
AND DIE  
LIKE YOU'RE  
SUPPOSED  
TO!





Oh, God, not like this...



There's a *reasonable* explanation for all of this.

I don't care to hear any of it.



Turn around--  
--and drop the sword, lady--



Illyana?! It's me, Peter, your brother!

My God, it *is* you! How did you grow up so fast?





What are you doing here in Japan-- with that sword?



Peter?  
My God... I have to kill my brother?

**MOSES MAGNUM'S LAIR**



**WHERE'S MAGNUM?!**





I'M GETTING TIRED OF ASKING THIS QUESTION!



WHERE IS MOSES MAGNUM?!



HE WENT TO THE TOKYO AREA!  
SOMETHING ABOUT PEOPLE HELPING AND PUTTING A STOP TO IT!



He took most of his soldiers and went to kill whoever is helping the Japanese.



TOKYO

Mariko-- we should go find your parents.

I keep trying, but there are so many people that I can't just walk past them all.

Are you okay, Morph?

You haven't tried to be funny in over an hour.





Well... it's a little *hard* to find any humor at the moment.



I'm sorry it took something like this, but I have to say--

--I find you a more interesting, well-rounded person when you turn the *Joke machine* off from time to time.



So does that mean you'll have sex with me now?





I don't know...  
...try looking like *Spider-Woman* and we'll talk.



Uh, guys?  
We have company.



Indeed you do, my dear.

In fact, I'm *Moses Magnum*-- the *host* of this little party you're crashing--



--and I'm here to toss you out of this life on your *ear*.

**TO BE  
CONTINUED**