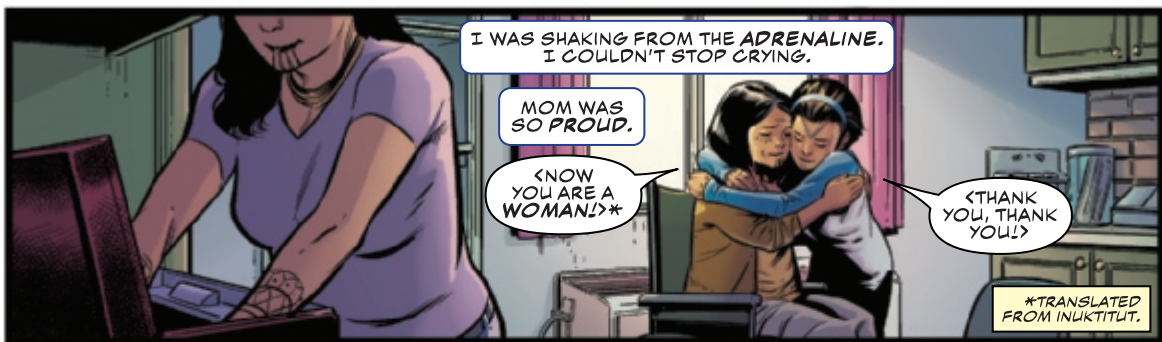


FOR AS LONG AS I COULD  
REMEMBER, I WAITED FOR  
THAT *MOMENT*...

...GETTING INK  
TATTOOS TO MARK  
MY ARRIVAL INTO  
ADULTHOOD.



I COULDN'T  
BELIEVE IT  
WAS FINALLY  
HAPPENING.



I WAS SHAKING FROM THE ADRENALINE. I COULDN'T STOP CRYING.

MOM WAS SO PROUD.

<NOW YOU ARE A WOMAN!>\*

<THANK YOU, THANK YOU!>

\*TRANSLATED FROM INUKTITUT.



BUT THE EUPHORIA PASSED AND I DIDN'T FEEL ANY DIFFERENT.

THERE WAS NO SPECIAL INSIGHT. I WASN'T ANY CLOSER TO MY ANCESTORS.

I WAS STILL JUST... ME, AMKA ALIYAK... ONLY NOW I HAD PRETTY LINES ON MY FACE AND HANDS.



I FELT GUILTY AND STRANGE. I THOUGHT EVERYONE COULD TELL THAT I DIDN'T DESERVE THESE MARKS AND I WASN'T READY TO BE A GROWN WOMAN.

I WONDERED IF I WAS BEING PUNISHED FOR NOT BELIEVING THE OLD STORIES UNCLE TOLD ME WHEN I WAS A CHILD.



THREE YEARS LATER, I STUMBLED ACROSS SILA... SOUL OF THE NORTH AND SPIRIT OF THE SKY, WIND AND WEATHER.

I FREED SILA FROM A HIGH-TECH PRISON AND WAS CAUGHT IN AN EXPLOSION.\*

<YOU ARE A WARRIOR, AMKA ALIYAK...>

\*AS SHOWN IN CHAMPIONS #20 --TOM



I SHOULD HAVE DIED, BUT SILA GAVE ME A PIECE OF THEIR ENERGY...

<...AND THOUGH I DO NOT KNOW WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS, I DO KNOW THIS...>

<...YOU WILL NOT DIE THIS DAY.>



**PANGNIRTUNG, NUNAVUT.**

...SO NOW, I'M A CANADIAN SUPER HERO CALLED SNOWGUARD!

I'M ALSO A NERVOUS 16-YEAR-OLD GIRL COMING HOME FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE SHE LEFT TO GO EXPLORE THE WORLD WITH THE CHAMPIONS.

<IT'S GOOD TO BE HERE.>

CAN YOU TURN INTO A BEAR AT THE SCHOOL PRESENTATION?

DOOO IT! WE COULD SCARE NANALUQ!

<WELCOME HOME.>

<GO IN THE HOUSE AND GET READY FOR DINNER! YOUR COUSIN'S NOT HERE TO USE HER POWERS FOR YOUR SILLY PRANKS!>

BEAR ATTACK!

RAAAAR!

<THE BOYS AREN'T SPEAKING INUKTITUT, MOM?>

<THEY'RE NOT LIKE YOU, MY LOVE. YOU'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED IN THE OLD WAYS...>

<...THAT'S WHY YOU WERE REWARDED BY THE SILAP INUA.>

<READY FOR SOME HOME COOKING?>

<ABSOLUTELY!>

<THEY UNDERSTAND IT, BUT DON'T USE IT ANYMORE. NONE OF THEIR FRIENDS DO, SO, YOU KNOW...>

...IT'S NOT "COOL!"

<I...I GUESS...>







THANK YOU, EVERYONE!



THE CHATTER, THE GOSSIP...IN SOME WAYS IT FEELS LIKE I NEVER LEFT.

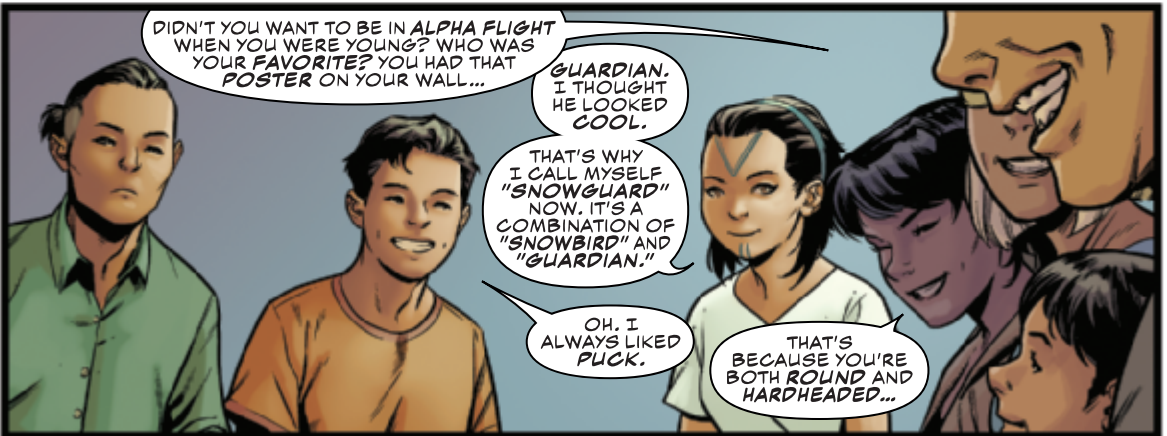


EXCEPT THE THINGS THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT-- I'M A BIT LOST. IT'S ALL PASSED ME BY AS I--



...BUT THEY CAN'T IGNORE US NOW! WE'VE GOT A SUPER HERO IN ALPHA FLIGHT!

EH?  
NO, NO, PILIP... I JOINED THE CHAMPIONS.



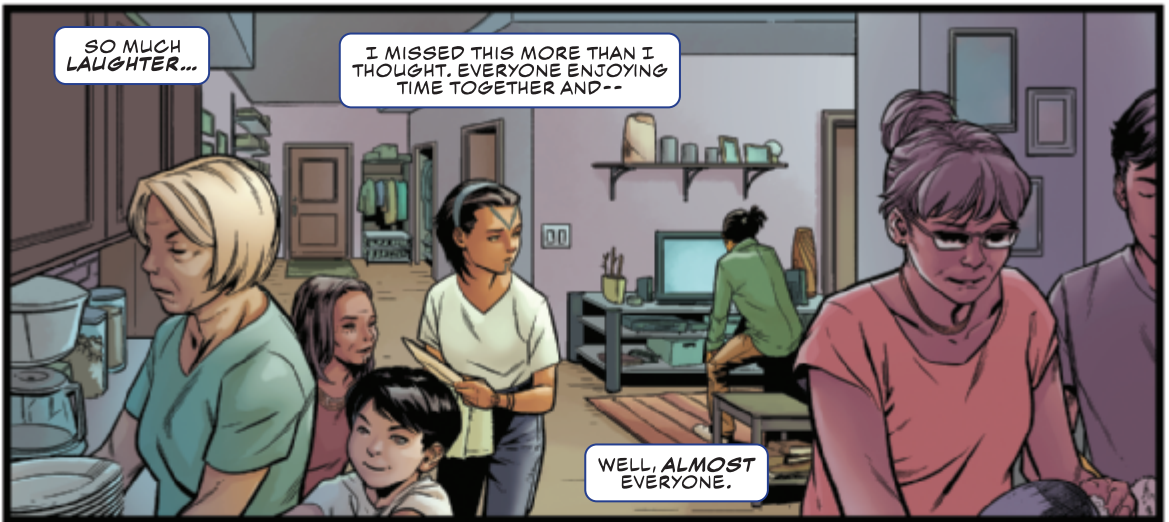
DIDN'T YOU WANT TO BE IN ALPHA FLIGHT WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG? WHO WAS YOUR FAVORITE? YOU HAD THAT POSTER ON YOUR WALL...

GUARDIAN. I THOUGHT HE LOOKED COOL.

THAT'S WHY I CALL MYSELF "SNOWGUARD" NOW. IT'S A COMBINATION OF "SNOWBIRD" AND "GUARDIAN."

OH, I ALWAYS LIKED PUCK.

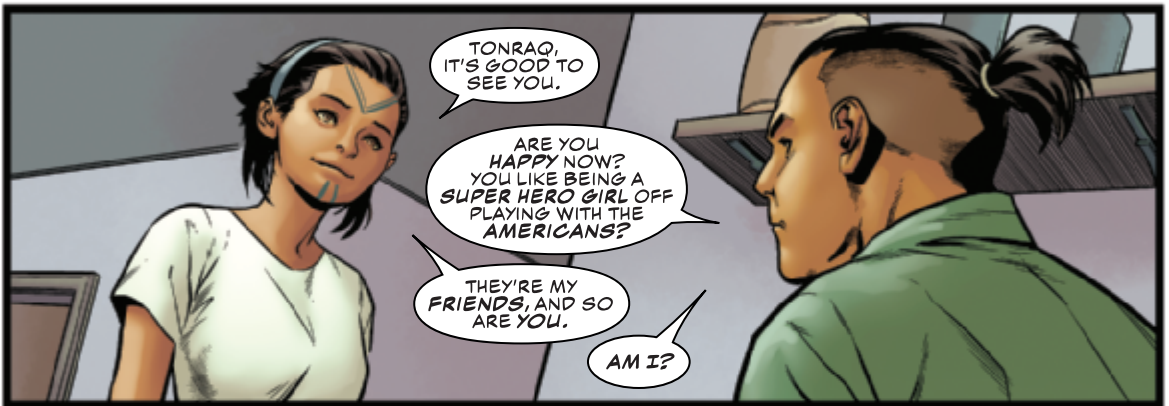
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU'RE BOTH ROUND AND HARDHEADED...



SO MUCH LAUGHTER...

I MISSED THIS MORE THAN I THOUGHT. EVERYONE ENJOYING TIME TOGETHER AND--

WELL, ALMOST EVERYONE.

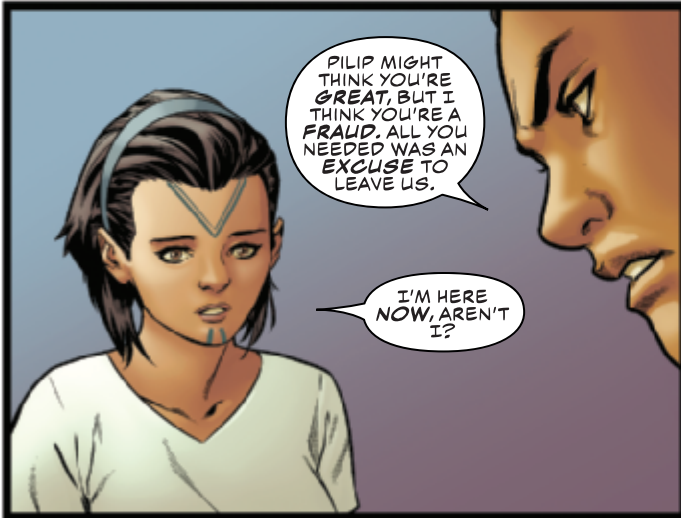


TONRAQ, IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU.

ARE YOU HAPPY NOW? YOU LIKE BEING A SUPER HERO GIRL OFF PLAYING WITH THE AMERICANS?

THEY'RE MY FRIENDS, AND SO ARE YOU.

AM I?



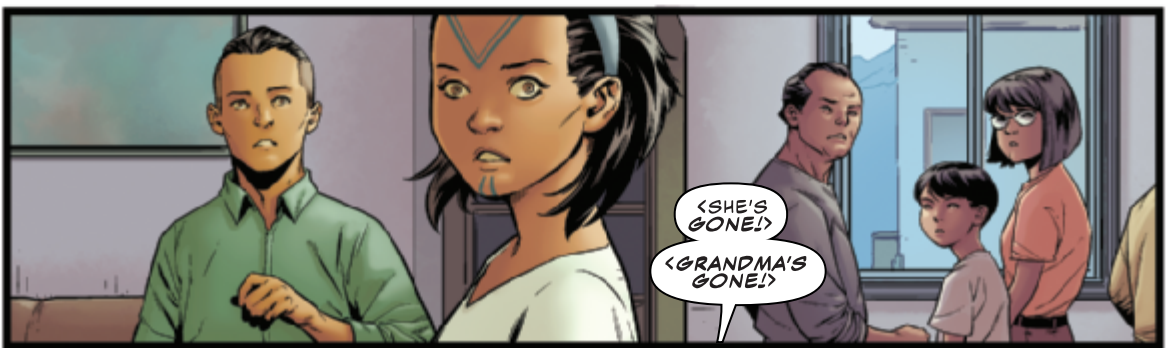
PILIP MIGHT THINK YOU'RE GREAT, BUT I THINK YOU'RE A FRAUD. ALL YOU NEEDED WAS AN EXCUSE TO LEAVE US.

I'M HERE NOW, AREN'T I?



GET YOUR CELEBRITY CHECKMARK AND IMPRESS THE LOCALS... WHY NOT?

GO PLAY "NATIVE" FOR THE WHITE FOLK IF YOU WANT, JUST DON'T PRETEND YOU'RE ONE OF US ANYMORE, BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT.



<SHE'S GONE!>

<GRANDMA'S GONE!>