



IT'S NOT THAT WE DOUBT YOU, MY LIEGE...

YOUR DEVOTION TO THE KINGDOM IS BEYOND REPROACH, IT'S JUST THAT WE--



THEY'RE SAVAGES!

ATLANTIS IS WEAK AND YOU WISH TO SEEK AID FROM TRAITORS TO THE KINGDOM!

CROSTAHL IS TOO MEEK TO SAY IT, BUT YOUR PLAN IS A FOOL'S ERRAND!



KALLTHRO MAY BE... PASSIONATE IN HIS VIEWS, BUT HE HAS A POINT.

YOUR RECENT SKIRMISHES WITH THE SURFACE WORLD AND THE AVENGERS HAVE PUT US IN A PRECARIOUS POSITION AS ATLANTIS REBUILDS, MY KING.

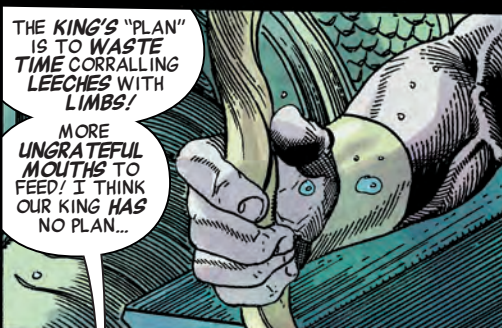


PERHAPS IF YOU GAVE US A WIDER VIEW OF YOUR PLAN...

PLAN?

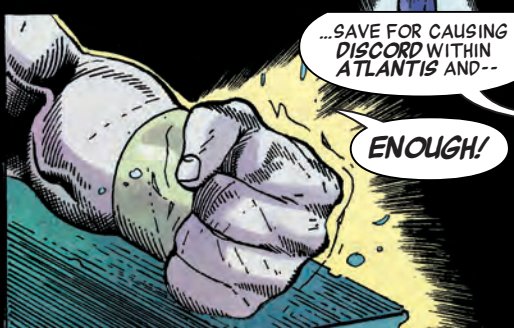
PLAN?!

IT'S CLEAR AS A GLASS SQUID!



THE KING'S "PLAN" IS TO WASTE TIME CORRALLING LEECHES WITH LIMBS!

MORE UNGRATEFUL MOUTHS TO FEED! I THINK OUR KING HAS NO PLAN...




...SAVE FOR CAUSING DISCORD WITHIN ATLANTIS AND--

ENOUGH!



YOU ARE MY COUNCIL.

AND YOU HAVE COUNSELED. YOUR JOB IS DONE.




MY PLAN  
IS UNDERWAY--  
IT HAS BEEN  
FOR YEARS--BUT  
THE HEART OF  
IT IS THIS:

ATLANTIS  
NEEDS ALLIES.  
WE'RE SECURING  
OUTLYING FACTIONS  
OF WATER-BREATHERS,  
BUT IT IS NOT  
ENOUGH.

THE VODANI  
WERE A THRIVING PART  
OF OUR KINGDOM, AND I  
INTEND TO MAKE THAT THE  
CASE ONCE AGAIN.

THEY'VE BEEN  
GONE FOR HUNDREDS  
OF YEARS, AND YOU  
WOULD KEEP THEM AWAY  
BECAUSE OF NARROW-  
MINDED TALES YOUR  
GRANDFATHER  
TOLD YOU?




I WILL BRING  
THE VODANI BACK.  
I WILL MAKE US  
STRONGER...



...AND THEY  
WILL BE UNDER THE  
KING'S PROTECTION,  
KALLTHRO.

Y-YES, KING  
NAMOR...

GOOD.



MY LIEGE, THE JOURNEY  
TO VODAN IS PERILOUS.  
AND WHILE I DO NOT  
WHOLEHEARTEDLY AGREE  
WITH KALLTHRO, I  
ADMIT THAT I SEE NO  
WORTH IN SUCH A  
JOURNEY...

THIS  
IS THE  
"WORTH"...



...I  
AM THEIR  
KING.

THE  
VODANI  
BELONG  
HERE.



MY KING, DID THE COUNCIL...

THEY VOICED THEIR FEARS, MACHAN, AND THEIR IRRATIONAL PREJUDICES. AND I PLAYED THE PART OF UNFLINCHING RULER.

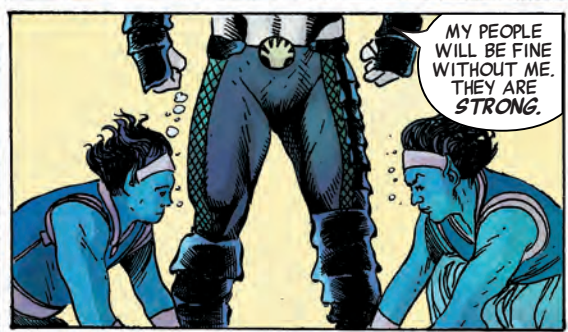
THEY DO NOT... THEY DO NOT SEE THE SITUATION AS CLEARLY AS I DO. THEIR VISION DOES NOT EXTEND BEYOND THE WATERS OF ATLANTIS.

I LOVE MY PEOPLE, BUT THEY DON'T KNOW THE SURFACE-DWELLERS AS I KNOW THEM. TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE.

I WISH YOU WOULD TAKE MYSELF, OR ANY OF YOUR DEFENDERS OF THE DEEP, WITH YOU...

IF THE VODANS DECIDE TO KILL ME, A HANDFUL OF ALLIES WILL CHANGE NOTHING.

VERY WELL, SIR. I WILL... I WILL ENDEAVOR TO KEEP ATLANTIS AT EASE WHILE YOU ARE GONE...



MY PEOPLE WILL BE FINE WITHOUT ME. THEY ARE STRONG.



MY LORD, YOUR PEOPLE...

...THEY SEE YOUR FIGHTS WITH THE SURFACE WORLD, YOUR TIES TO THAT WORLD, AS A PROBLEM.



THEY DO NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND THE THREAT WE FACE.

I'M AFRAID IF WE INTRODUCE THE VODANI BACK INTO THE KINGDOM, IF YOU PUSH OUR PEOPLE TOO HARD, THEY WILL ADOPT A CONCEPT FROM THE SURFACE...

"...DEMOCRACY."

MY CONSIGLIERE--  
MY FRIEND--  
IS RIGHT.

I NEED TO BE  
MORE MINDFUL THAT  
ATLANTIS DOES NOT  
TURN AGAINST ME,  
ESPECIALLY WITH  
WHAT'S COMING.

SO, TO VODAN. EVEN THOUGH NO  
ATLANTEAN HAS SEEN A VODANI  
IN HUNDREDS OF YEARS, THEY STILL  
USE THEM AS **BOOGEYMEN**,  
TO INCITE ANGER AND FEAR  
AMONG THE **WEAK-MINDED**.

IT'S A  
**SURFACE TRAIT**  
THAT I KNOW ALL  
TOO WELL.

MY INTRODUCTION TO  
THAT WORLD WAS A **GREAT**  
WAR, BASED ON FEAR AND THE  
ILLUSION OF **SUPERIORITY**.

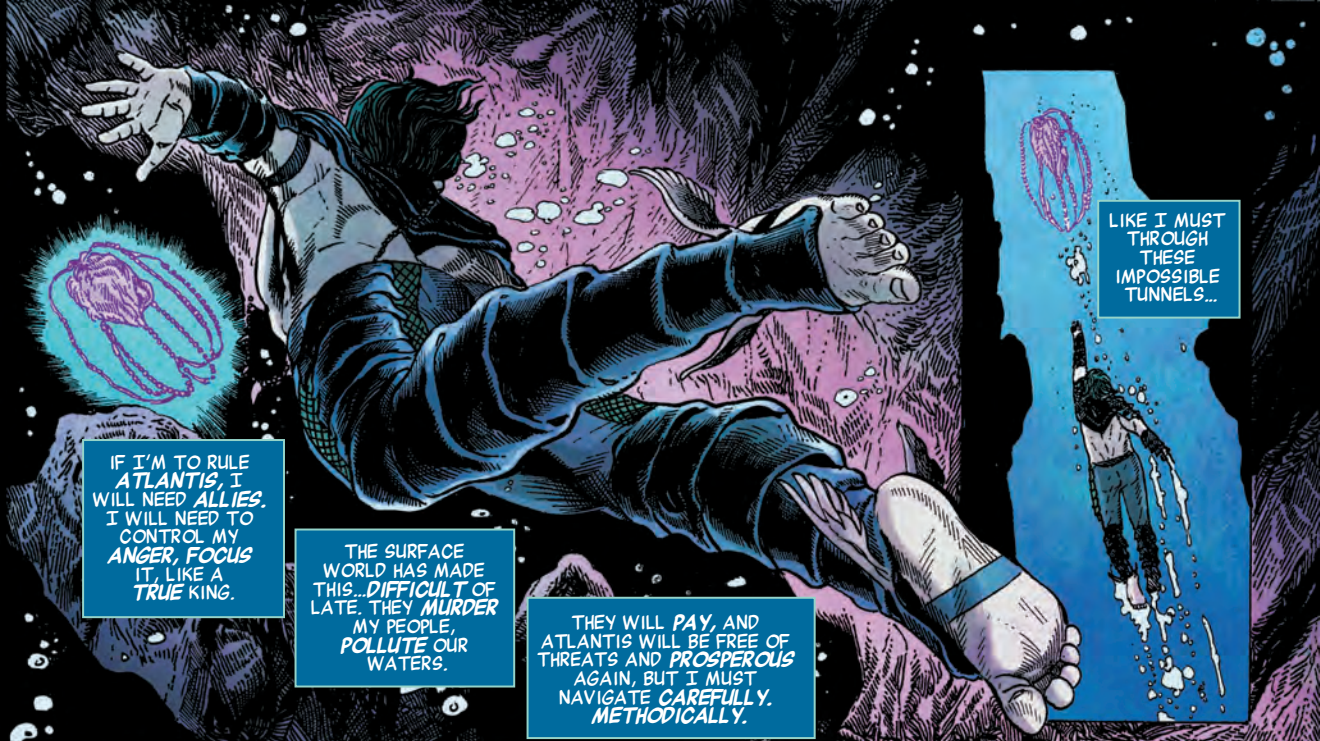
ATLANTIS **MUST** BE BETTER THAN THAT. WE NEED TO HEAL THE  
WOUNDS THAT DIVIDED US IN THE FACE OF **TRUE AGGRESSORS**.

NOBODY KNOWS WHERE PRECISELY VODAN IS, JUST THAT  
THE ONLY **ACCESS** TO THEM IS THROUGH THE **MINDANAO**  
**TRENCH**, THROUGH BYZANTINE CREVICES AND TUNNELS.

EVEN WITH MY  
ABILITY TO SEE IN THE  
**LOWEST OF LIGHT**...

...**KING NAMOR**  
**STILL** REQUIRES  
ASSISTANCE.

I AM NOT  
ABOVE IT.



IF I'M TO RULE ATLANTIS, I WILL NEED **ALLIES**. I WILL NEED TO CONTROL MY **ANGER**, FOCUS IT, LIKE A **TRUE KING**.

THE SURFACE WORLD HAS MADE THIS...**DIFFICULT** OF LATE. THEY **MURDER** MY PEOPLE, **POLLUTE** OUR WATERS.

THEY WILL **PAY**, AND ATLANTIS WILL BE FREE OF THREATS AND **PROSPEROUS** AGAIN, BUT I MUST NAVIGATE **CAREFULLY**. **METHODICALLY**.



LIKE I MUST THROUGH THESE IMPOSSIBLE TUNNELS...



...AT THESE INCREDIBLE **DEPTHS**, SO DEEP THAT EVEN I FEEL THE PRESSURE OF...



...**NO**.



THE **DIOPEA**! THE PRESSURE IS TOO GREAT FOR THEM! I **NEED** THEIR **LIGHT**!



TOO **DEEP**, TOO **FAR** ALONG! I CAN'T--