

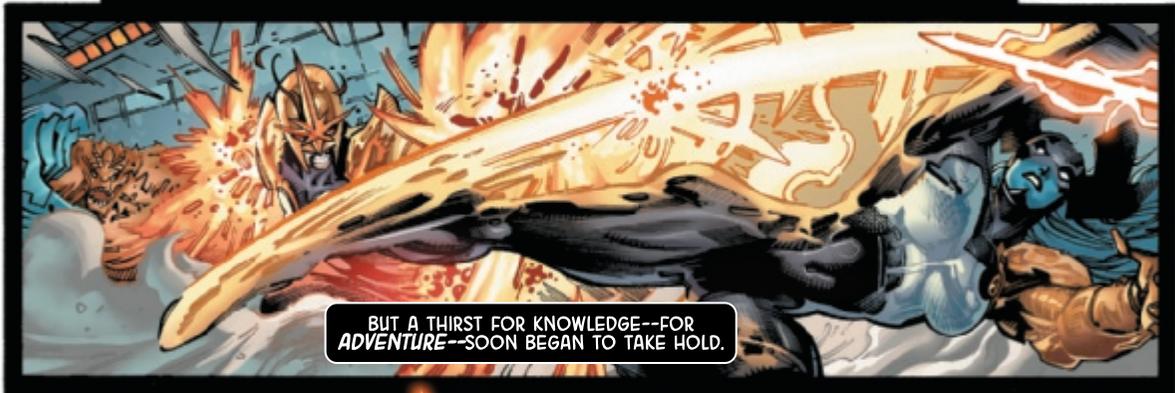


THERE ONCE WAS A PRINCESS WHO LIVED IN A PALACE.

**SINNARIAN  
EMPIRE  
FREIGHTER.**  
TRANSPORTING RARE  
ONDUCIUM ORE TO  
THE EMPIRE.



SURROUNDED BY HER MOTHER, HER SISTERS AND HER BROTHERS, SHE KNEW ONLY LOVE.



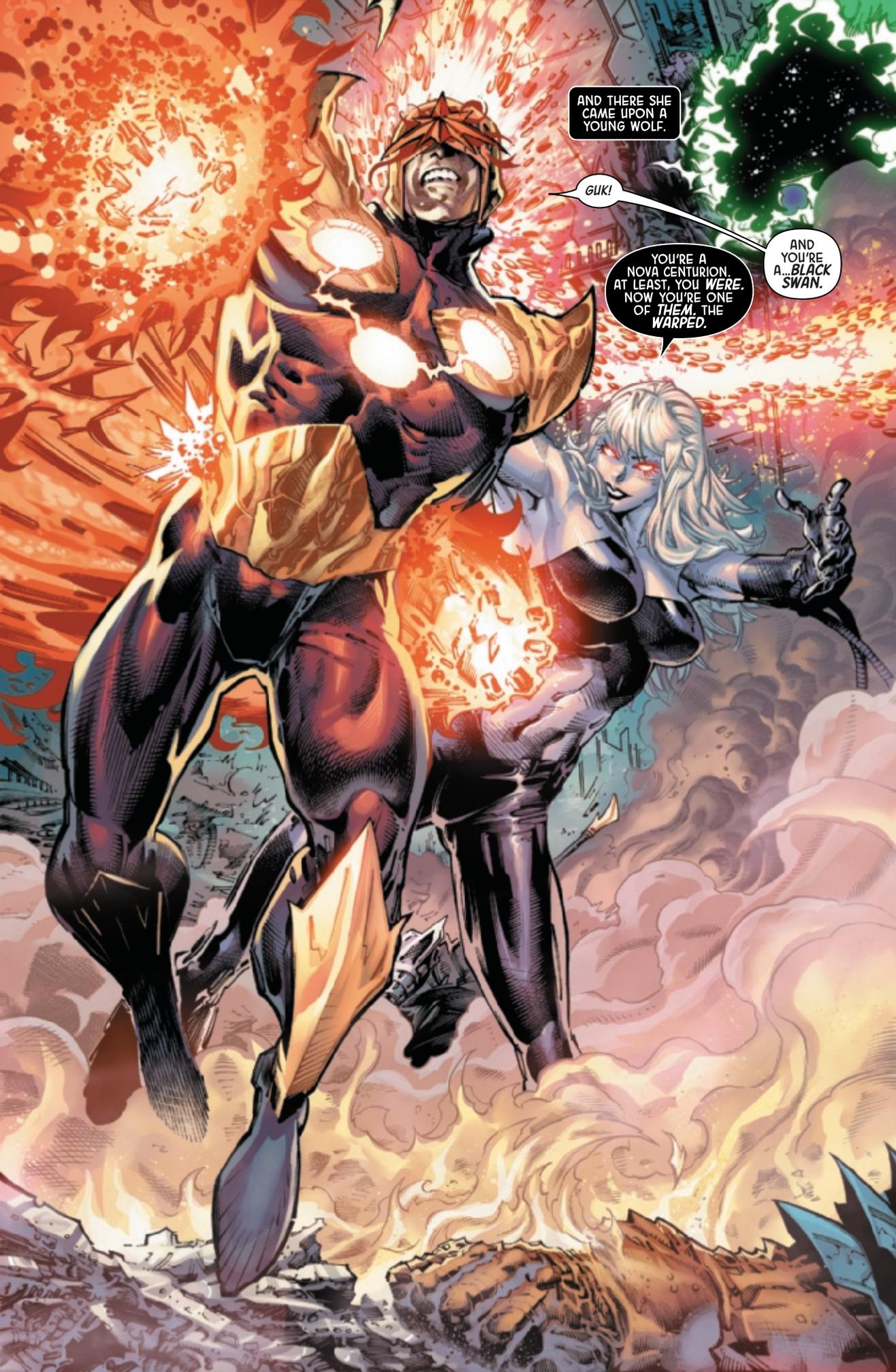
BUT A THIRST FOR KNOWLEDGE--FOR ADVENTURE--SOON BEGAN TO TAKE HOLD.



SO ONE DAY SHE SLIPPED BY THE PALACE GUARDS AND SNEAKED OUT THROUGH A GAP IN THE WALLS OF THE HIDDEN CITY--



--INTO THE WILDERNESS.



AND THERE SHE  
CAME UPON A  
YOUNG WOLF.

GUK!

YOU'RE A  
NOVA CENTURION.  
AT LEAST, YOU WERE.  
NOW YOU'RE ONE  
OF THEM. THE  
WARPED.

AND  
YOU'RE  
A...BLACK  
SWAN.



DIDN'T THINK I'D EVER SEE ONE OF YOU AGAIN.



CERTAINLY DIDN'T THINK I'D GET TO KILL ONE OF YOU.

WITHOUT WARNING, THE YOUNG WOLF SANK ITS FANGS DEEP INTO HER ARM.



AND WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF KILLING, LITTLE MAN?

INJURED AND BLEEDING, SHE KEPT IT BACK WITH ROCKS AND WITH STICKS.

BUT AS MUCH AS IT WANTED TO TEAR OUT HER THROAT AND FEAST ON HER INSIDES--

(AND IT WANTED THAT VERY MUCH)



--IT WAS BEING CALLED AWAY BY ITS PACK. DRAWN BY A COMMAND ONLY THE YOUNG WOLF COULD HEAR.

WHAT IS THIS DAMNED...?



OOOH, YOU'RE A LUCKY ONE...

THE PRINCESS WAS FOUND, BARELY ALIVE, AND RETURNED TO THE PALACE.



ENTERING  
THE SINNARIAN  
ATMOSPHERE.

CONTROLS  
ARE...  
SLUGGISH.

WE'RE  
NOT GOING TO  
MAKE IT.

GIVE ME  
A FEW MOMENTS  
TO REROUTE THE PRIMARY  
SYSTEMS AWAY FROM  
THE DAMAGED--

DO IT,  
MAW. DON'T  
EXPLAIN  
IT.



INGRATE.

AS SHE LAY IN BED  
WITH A FEVER, HER  
MOTHER FORBADE  
HER FROM EVER  
LEAVING  
UNACCOMPANIED  
AGAIN.



TRY IT NOW,  
PROXIMA.

BUT MONTHS PASSED,  
AND THE PRINCESS  
RECOVERED, AND HER  
CURIOSITY RETURNED.

HER BROTHER WAS WAITING FOR HER  
AT THE GAP IN THE PALACE WALLS.



CONTROLS  
ARE RESPONDING.  
IT WILL BE A *CRASH*  
LANDING, BUT AT LEAST  
IT WILL BE A  
LANDING.

IT WILL  
BE AS INTACT  
AS I CAN KEEP  
IT, HUSBAND.

WE NEED THE  
CARGO *INTACT*,  
MY LOVE.

IN RETURN FOR HER PROMISE TO NEVER SNEAK  
AWAY AGAIN, HE TOOK HER WITH HIM EVERY TIME  
HE ENTERED THE *LIBRARY OF WORLDS*.



BRACE FOR  
IMPACT!

AND THE PRINCESS  
GLIMPSED ETERNITY--  
AND KNEW HAPPINESS.



UNTIL THE BLACK PRIESTS CAME AND MURDERED HER FAMILY IN FRONT OF HER.

ATTICAN'S SOLDIERS WILL BE HERE SHORTLY. WHEN THEY REACH US, WE SLAUGHTER THEM AND TAKE THEIR CRAFT, THEN RENDEZVOUS WITH THE REBELS AT THEIR NEW BASE.

MAW, HELP BLACK DWARF HIDE THE ONDUCIUM. PROXIMA--

THE EMPEROR'S SOLDIERS ARE HERE.



ALREADY?  
ACH.

BLACK SWAN, IF YOU WOULDN'T MIND?



AND LEAVE ONE OF THOSE SHIPS INTACT!