



IT'S NOT THAT WE DOUBT YOU, MY LIEGE...  
YOUR DEVOTION TO THE KINGDOM IS BEYOND REPROACH, IT'S JUST THAT WE--



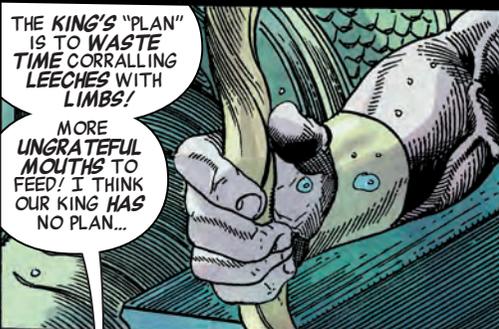
THEY'RE SAVAGES!  
ATLANTIS IS WEAK AND YOU WISH TO SEEK AID FROM TRAITORS TO THE KINGDOM!  
CROSTAHL IS TOO MEEK TO SAY IT, BUT YOUR PLAN IS A FOOL'S ERRAND!



KALL THRO 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.

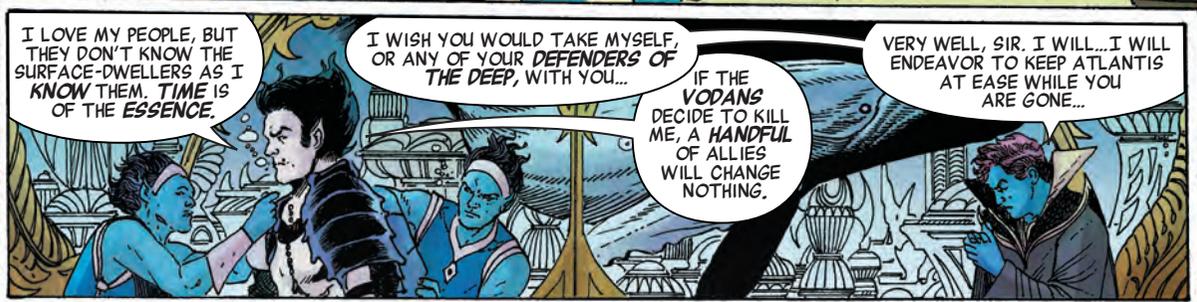
THEY DO NOT... THEY DO NOT SEE THE SITUATION AS CLEARLY AS I DO. THEIR VISION DOES NOT EXTEND BEYOND THE WATERS OF ATLANTIS.

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.

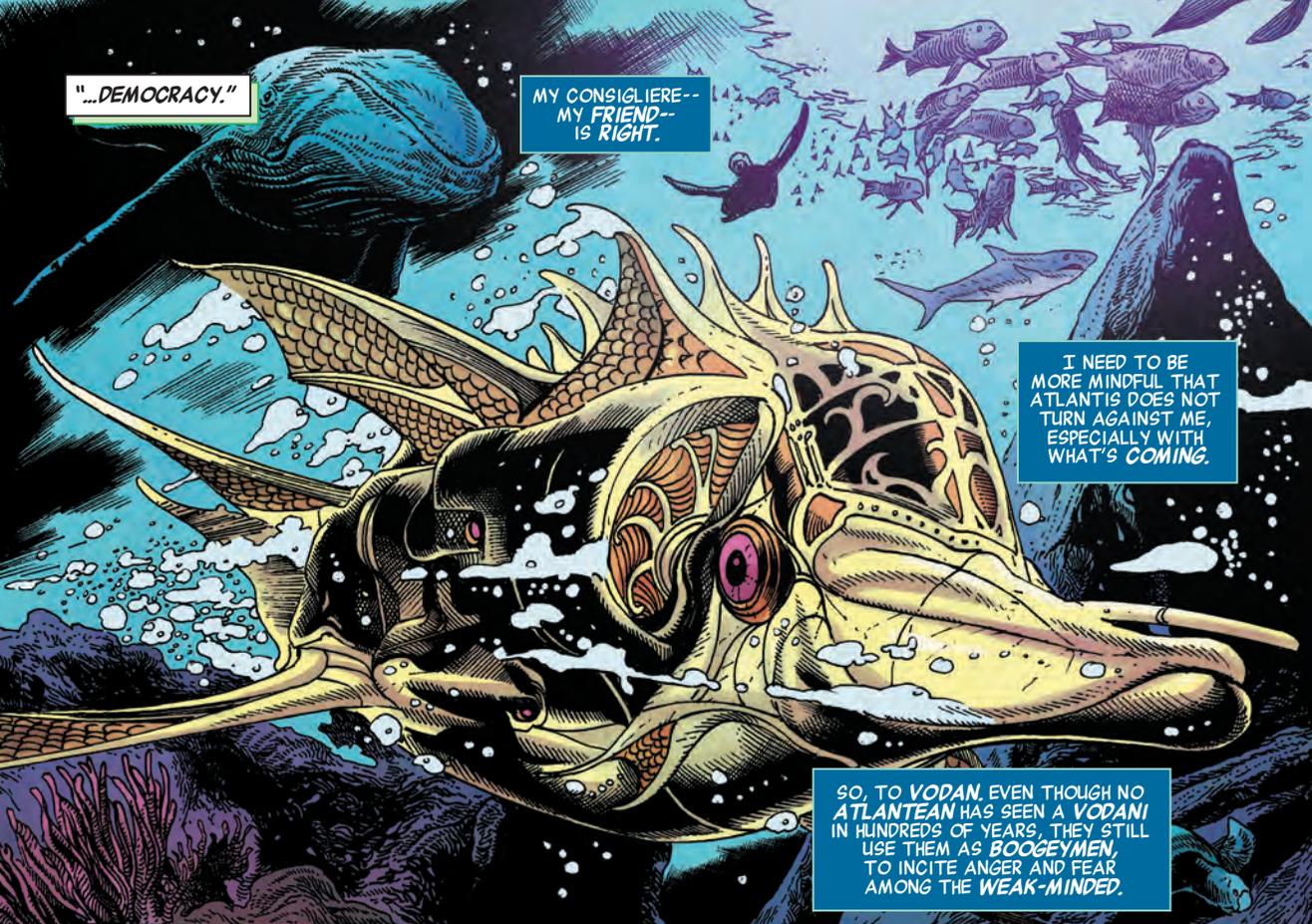
MY LORD, YOUR PEOPLE...

...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."

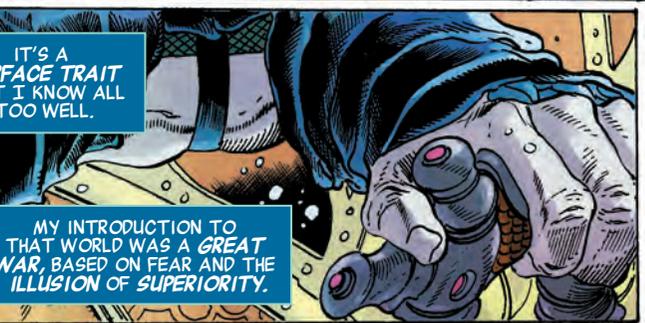
MY CONSIGLIERE--  
MY FRIEND--  
IS RIGHT.

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**.



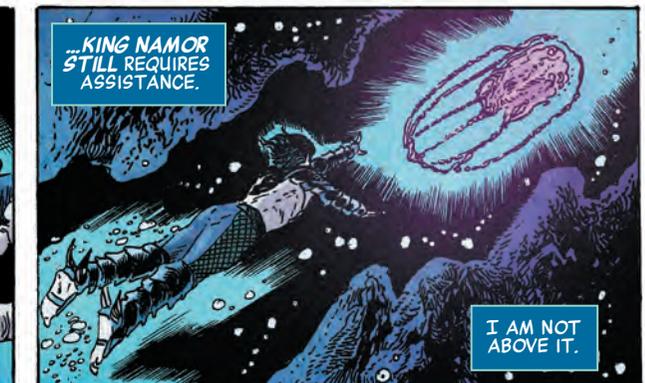
ATLANTIS **MUST** BE BETTER THAN THAT. WE NEED TO HEAL THE  
WOUNDS THAT DIVIDED US IN THE FACE OF **TRUE AGGRESSORS**.



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--