

THE ENTIRE GALAXY IS A MESS. WARRING EMPIRES AND COSMIC TERRORISTS PLAGUE EVERY CORNER. SOMEONE HAS TO RISE ABOVE IT ALL AND FIGHT FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NO ONE TO FIGHT FOR THEM.

THE GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY ARE PETER QUILL A.K.A. STAR-LORD, GAMORA, THE MOST DANGEROUS WOMAN IN THE UNIVERSE, DRAX THE DESTROYER, THE MYSTERIOUS WARRIOR ANGELA, VENOM, CAPTAIN MARVEL, ROCKET RACCOON AND GROOT.

# GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY

SHE'S WANTED ACROSS THE KNOWN WORLDS, SUSPECTED OR INDICTED IN A THOUSAND CRIMES (SOME OF WHICH SHE ACTUALLY DID). MOTHERS MAKE THEIR CHILDREN BEHAVE BY TELLING THEM GAMORA WILL COME TO GET THEM IF THEY DON'T SHAPE UP. IT'S NOT EASY BEING GOOD WHEN YOU'VE BEEN BAD FOR SO LONG.

HE'S NIGHTCRAWLER, A DARK FIGURE TAILOR-MADE TO CREEP THROUGH THE SHADOWS. A SKULKER, BY PROVIDENCE, IF NOT DESIGN. BUT HE'D MUCH RATHER BE OPEN AND BRIGHT AND DASHING—A LARGER THAN LIFE SWASHBUCKLING HERO, WITH A QUICK BLADE AND RAKISH GRIN, WHO ALWAYS ARRIVES JUST IN TIME.

AND FOR A FEW DAYS HE CAN BE JUST THAT—IF HE CAN SURVIVE A FEW SIMPLE DUELS, CULMINATING IN A DEATH MATCH AGAINST GAMORA'S BLADES.



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GAMORA

DRAX

ANGELA

VENOM

CAPTAIN  
MARVEL

ROCKET  
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"FOR THOSE OF YOU JUST JOINING US, WELCOME TO SOLACE BEYOND THE RIFT, AND THE THRILLING 648<sup>TH</sup> QUINQUENNIAL BLADE-FIGHTING CHAMPIONSHIP."

"WE'RE PROUDLY SPONSORED ONCE AGAIN BY RETRIBUTION GARDENS, THE PREEMINENT KREE EMPIRE MILITARY PRESCHOOL FRANCHISE..."

"DIE, KREE SCUM!"

"...WITH TWENTY-SEVEN NEW LOCATIONS OPENING UP THIS STANDARD CYCLE IN THE PERSEUS SPIRAL ARM, AND SELECTED OUTLETS OF THE ORION SPUR."

"IF YOU WANT YOUR SON OR DAUGHTER BATTLE-HARDENED BEFORE HER SEVENTH NAMEDAY, RETRIBUTION GARDENS ISN'T JUST THE BEST CHOICE--IT'S THE ONLY CHOICE."

"WE'RE ALSO TICKLED TO WELCOME A NEW SPONSOR: HIGH DUDGEON KITCHENS."

"MAKERS OF BILETIME PSEUDO CAKES! THE GOOEY, SPONGY TREAT THAT'S FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY, CRÈCHE OR BIRTHING POD."

"WE'RE VIEWING THE FINAL DUEL FROM LAST QUINT'S CONTEST, WHERE HARACON THE GHOST/MAKER WON THE CHAMPIONSHIP FOR THE SECOND CONSECUTIVE TIME."

SOMEDAY--

--BUT NOT TODAY!

"HARACON IS BACK! DEFENDING HIS CHAMPIONSHIP YET AGAIN! LET'S HOPE IT'S AS EXCITING AS THIS DUEL WHERE HE DEFEATED...UM...WHO WAS HIS OPPONENT?"

"WHO CARES? OLD NEWS. GO LOOK AT HIS GRAVE IF YOU WANT TO REMEMBER WHO HE WAS."



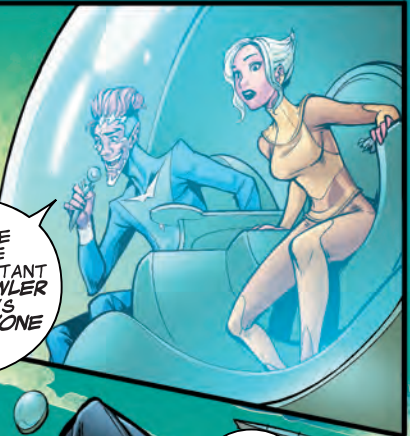
I'M WENDOPHON OF HIN.

AND AS ALWAYS, MY CHARMING BROADCAST PARTNER, ILLUMINATING EVERY MOMENT OF THE ACTION, IS HULDÁN WULL OF KREEVAR UNDERWAVE.

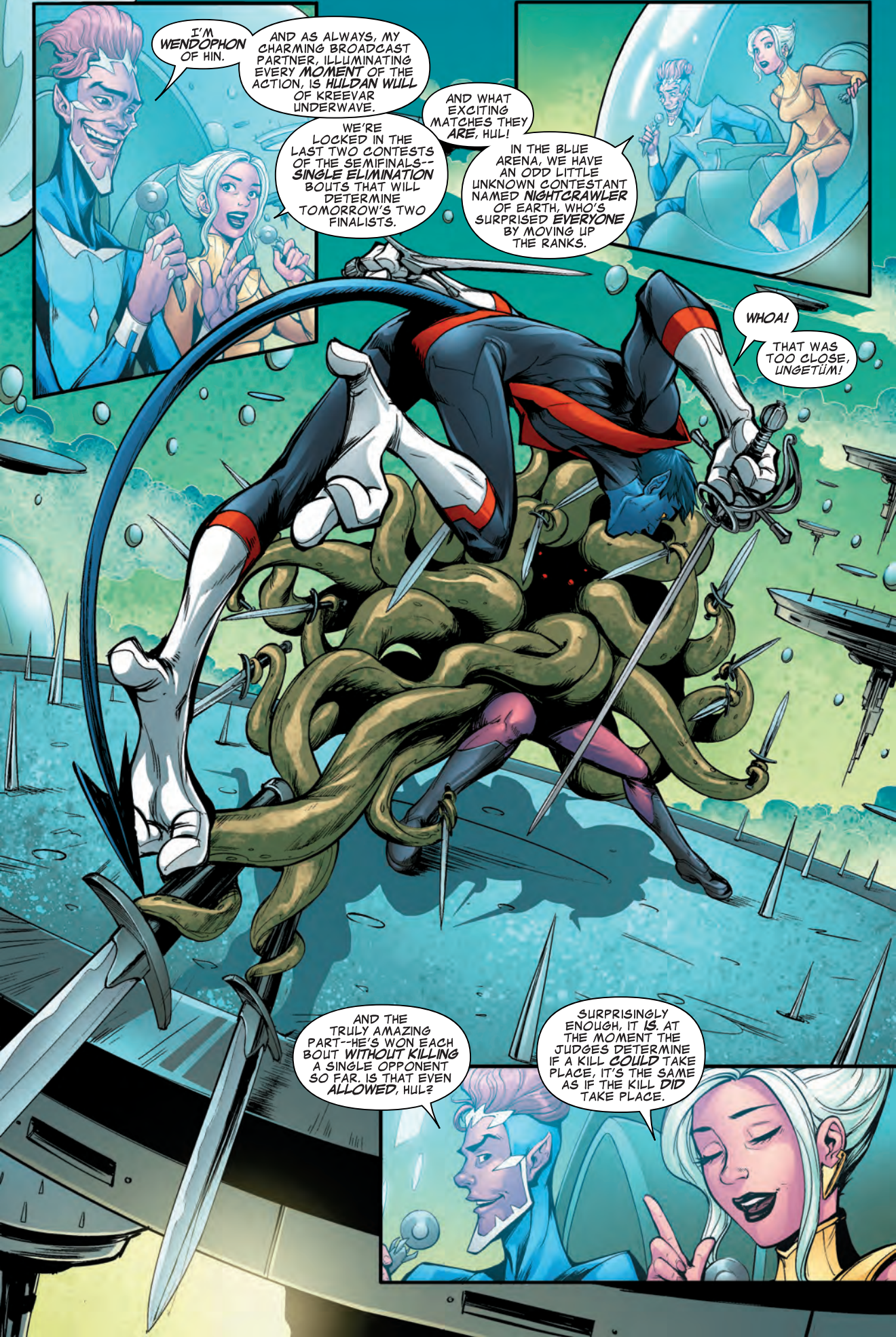
WE'RE LOCKED IN THE LAST TWO CONTESTS OF THE SEMIFINALS-- SINGLE ELIMINATION BOUTS THAT WILL DETERMINE TOMORROW'S TWO FINALISTS.

AND WHAT EXCITING MATCHES THEY ARE, HUL!

IN THE BLUE ARENA, WE HAVE AN ODD LITTLE UNKNOWN CONTESTANT NAMED NIGHTCRAWLER OF EARTH, WHO'S SURPRISED EVERYONE BY MOVING UP THE RANKS.



WHOA!  
THAT WAS TOO CLOSE, UNGETUM!




AND THE TRULY AMAZING PART--HE'S WON EACH BOUT WITHOUT KILLING A SINGLE OPPONENT SO FAR. IS THAT EVEN ALLOWED, HUL?

SURPRISINGLY ENOUGH, IT IS. AT THE MOMENT THE JUDGES DETERMINE IF A KILL *COULD* TAKE PLACE, IT'S THE SAME AS IF THE KILL *DID* TAKE PLACE.







"THIS RULE WAS ADDED TWO QUINTS BACK TO ACCOMMODATE CONTESTANTS FROM PRIMITIVE BACKWATER WORLDS WHO MAINTAIN EXOTIC TABOOS AGAINST KILLING FOR SPORT."




"WOW. DO TELL US, FOR YOU NEWCOMERS, HOW DID NIGHTCRAWLER REACH THIS LEVEL?"




"LET'S LOOK AT SOME OF THE DUELS HE'S HAD TO WIN ALONG THE WAY IN HIS HARD CLIMB TO THE SEMIFINALS."




"THIS WAS AGAINST YANNAK OF KARTH. LOOK AT THAT AMAZING SWORD TECHNIQUE!"



"THAT WAS IN THE GOLD ARENA. THEN NIGHTCRAWLER ADVANCED TO THE STARLIGHT ARENA, TO FACE POLLA QUAD, KNOWN AS THE DEATH MERCHANT."




"KNOWN AS THE SURRENDER MERCHANT AFTER THIS BOLT, EVEN THOUGH THE STARLIGHT ARENA WAS CONSIDERED HIS FAVORITE COMBAT SPHERE."



"NIGHTCRAWLER ALSO FOUGHT ONCE BEFORE IN THE BLUE ARENA, WHEN HE FACED GRRRR-SOMETHING. I CAN'T REALLY PRONOUNCE THE GROWLING TONGUE."




NIGHTCRAWLER--HOW DID YOU COME FROM SUCH AN OBSCURE LITTLE WORLD TO DISTINGUISH YOURSELF IN THE BLADE-FIGHTING LEAGUES?




SAME OLD TALE YOU'VE HEARD A MILLION TIMES, WEN.



EARTH CHILD GETS KIDNAPPED YOUNG BY SPACE PIRATES.



THROUGH BRAVERY AND MIT AUSDAUER HE WORKS HIS WAY UP IN THE CREW.



SPACE PIRATES FORCE HIM TO ENTER THE COMPETITION SO THEY CAN WIN BIG BY BETTING ON HIM--OR IS THAT AGAINST HIM?



"BACK TO THE SEMIFINAL DUEL WHERE NIGHTCRAWLER FACES THE TOP SKRULL CONTENDER!"

YOU HAVE NO CHANCE, BACKWORLDER!

JA!

"THE SIX-TIME SKRULL BLADE CHAMPION CONTESSA YUOW SCREET HAS CHOSEN THE PERFECT FORM FOR OUR COMPETITION."

BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY I BELIEVE YOU!

"SINCE THE RULES ALLOW FOR UP TO ONE BLADE PER APPENDAGE, SHE CHOSE A FORMIDABLE SHAPE--I THINK I COUNT NO LESS THAN THIRTY BLADE-WIELDING TENTACLES."

"DO WE HAVE ANY WORD YET ON WHAT SPECIES SHE COPIED FOR THE CONTEST?"

THE TROUBLE, FREUNDIN, IS YOU HAVE NO LIP OR DOWN OR FRONT OR BACK!

"NONE. NO COPY AT ALL, WEN. I'M INFORMED THIS IS AN ORIGINAL SHAPE PERFECTED OVER MANY YEARS AND ABSOLUTELY PROPRIETARY TO HER."

YOU HAVE NO VULNERABLE SIDE TO EXPLOIT.

"SHE CALLS IT BLADE FURY AND NO OTHER SKRULL SHIFTER CAN LEGALLY TRY TO COPY IT."

"MY, BUT THAT IS INTERESTING INDEED."

EXCEPT--

--MAYBE I'VE BEEN THINKING IN THE WRONG DIMENSIONS, HMM?