

"...HE'S WHERE HE ALWAYS IS."

OKAY.  
STAND STILL.

I AM,  
READER!



DID IT WORK?  
DO YOU KNOW  
WHAT I LOOK  
LIKE NOW?





# QUIET ROOM



I MEAN WITH YOUR FACE, ANNE. MAKE YOUR FACE STAND STILL. DON'T TALK, EVEN.

YOU DON'T WANT ME TO GET A BAD READ.



LISTEN, I KNOW WE JUST MET, BUT THERE'S THIS SHOW I WAS THINKING ABOUT CHECKING OUT DOWNTOWN.

IT'S A NEW SINGER--EVERYONE'S TALKING ABOUT HER. **LADY SHINE**. SUPPOSED TO BE SOMETHING SPECIAL. I KNOW THE BOUNCER--WE CAN JUST WALK IN.



WHAT DO YOU THINK? SHOULD WE GET OUT OF HERE?

READER, YOU JUST READ MY M--



READER! A WORD, IF YOU PLEASE!

→SIGH←

HOLD THAT THOUGHT, ANNE. I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.





WHAT THE HELL, FLAGMAN? YOU REALLY GOTTA WORK ON YOUR *TIMING*.

I'M SORRY TO INTERRUPT, BUT SOMETHING'S GOING ON, AND WITH BLACK BOLT OFF ON ONE OF HIS EXPEDITIONS, I WAS HOPING YOU COULD HELP ME OUT.

WHAT KIND OF SOMETHING IS GOING ON?

HMM. YOU KNOW I DON'T ACTUALLY *WORK* HERE, RIGHT?

IT'S THOSE *SHI'AR*. I GUESS THEY CAME HERE TO WORK OUT SOME INTERNAL DISPUTE... BUT YOU CAN SEE HOW WELL *THAT'S* GOING.

I JUST NEED YOU TO COOL THINGS DOWN, BEFORE THEY START TO KILL EACH OTHER AND DRIVE OFF ALL MY CUSTOMERS. PLEASE?



YES, BUT YOU CERTAINLY DO *DRINK* HERE, SPEAKING OF WHICH, WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU PAID YOUR *TAB*?

HUH. YOU RAISE AN EXCELLENT POINT. PERHAPS WE CAN HELP *EACH OTHER*.



YOU *DARE*?

I *DO!*

NNNGH.



FINE. HANDLE THIS FOR ME AND YOUR *TAB* IS CLEARED. JUST DON'T *BREAK* ANYTHING!





HEY, GUYS. HOW ABOUT YOU ALL RELAX A LITTLE? LET THE CLUB BUY YOU A ROUND.

STEP AWAY, LITTLE MAN. WE DISCUSS MATTERS OF *EMPIRE*, AND WE WILL DISCUSS THEM AS WE *PLEASE*.

OKAY, FINE, WE CAN GO THAT WAY, TOO.

NOW, FIRST OF ALL, YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT EVEN THOUGH I *ABSOLUTELY COULD*, I'M NOT GOING TO BEAT YOU UP. I DON'T NEED TO.

EXCUSE ME?!



HERE. LET ME SHOW YOU WHY.



WHAT ARE *THESE* SUPPOSED TO BE?

*WORDS*. MY NAME'S READER, AND THESE ARE MY VERY BEST FRIENDS.

I'M INHUMAN, AND MY PARTICULAR POWER IS THAT ANYTHING I READ BECOMES REAL.



THINK ABOUT THAT FOR A SECOND. *ANYTHING I READ*.

AND THEN THINK ABOUT THE FACT THAT I MAKE MY LIVING BY *HUNTING* THINGS... BIGGER AND BADDER THINGS THAN A FEW STUFFED-SHIRT SHI'AR.

I DO ALL THAT WITH NOTHING MORE THAN MY LITTLE FRIENDS HERE. SORT OF MAKES YOU WONDER WHAT THEY SAY, HUH?



HERE. LET'S SEE. I'LL JUST PICK ONE...