

THE PAST VISITS
HER, UNINVITED.

MERA IS A GIRL AGAIN, IN
XEBEL, STANDING ON THE
WRECKAGE-REEF KNOWN
AS THE STRAND.

HOLD YOUR
GROUND. HERE
THEY COME.

REMEMBER,
MERA, YOU ARE
A PRINCESS OF
XEBEL. FIGHT
LIKE ONE.

AND NEREUS
SPEAKS...

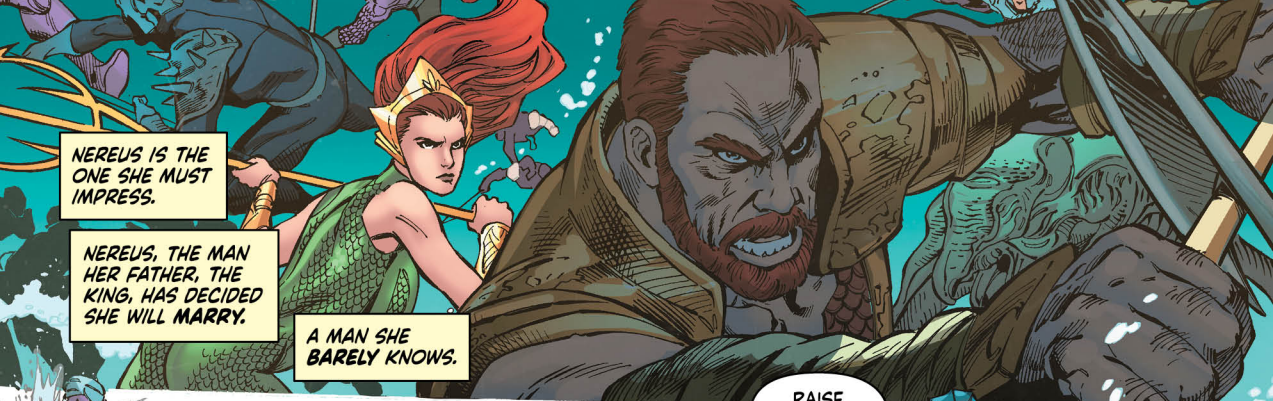
MAKE
THEM EAT
STEEL!

NEREUS, XEBEL
WARLORD, HIS
FORCES ASSEMBLED
AGAINST A RIVAL
CLAN-CHIEF WHO
CHALLENGES THE
THRONE.

HER FIRST
FIGHT. HER
FIRST TASTE
OF DUTY.

AT HER SIDE, THE
TASKMASTER LERON.
HER TEACHER.

SHE CAN'T HEAR HIM OVER THE
THUNDER OF COMBAT, BUT SHE KNOWS
HE IS TAUNTING HER, GOADING HER,
DAMNING HER TECHNIQUE.



NEREUS IS THE ONE SHE MUST IMPRESS.

NEREUS, THE MAN HER FATHER, THE KING, HAS DECIDED SHE WILL MARRY.

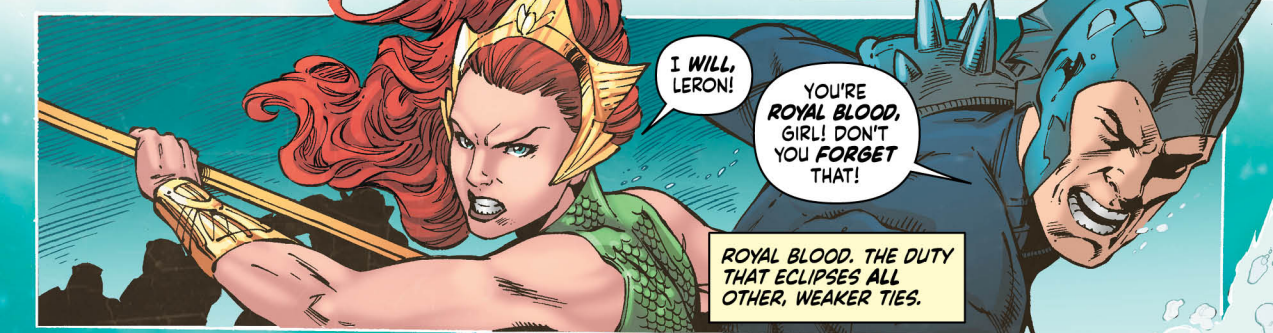
A MAN SHE BARELY KNOWS.



RAISE YOUR GAME, GIRL!

YES, LERON!

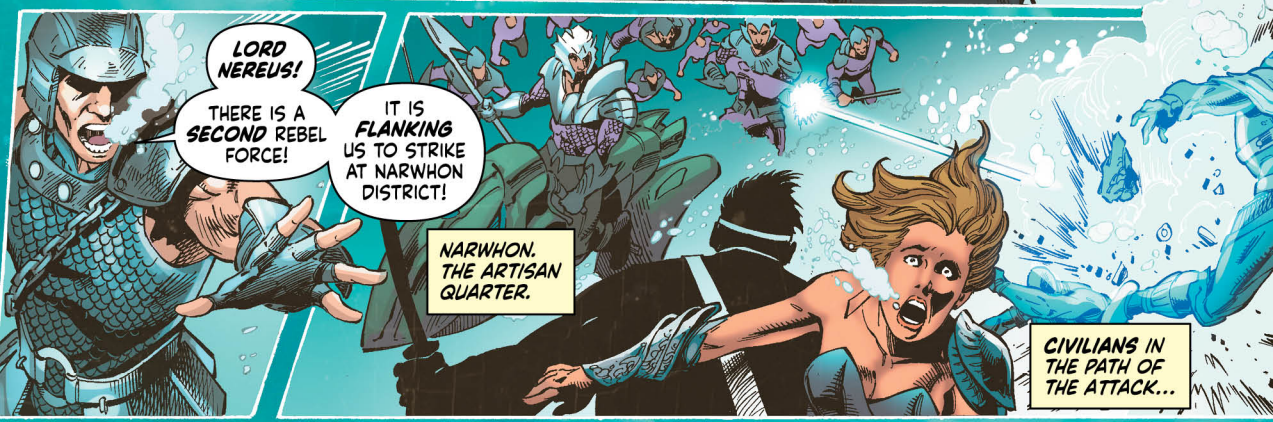
DO YOUR DUTY! TO YOUR HOME, YOUR CITY, YOUR PEOPLE, YOUR BLOODLINE!



I WILL, LERON!

YOU'RE ROYAL BLOOD, GIRL! DON'T YOU FORGET THAT!

ROYAL BLOOD. THE DUTY THAT ECLIPSES ALL OTHER, WEAKER TIES.



LORD NEREUS!

THERE IS A SECOND REBEL FORCE!

IT IS FLANKING US TO STRIKE AT NARWHON DISTRICT!

NARWHON, THE ARTISAN QUARTER.

CIVILIANS IN THE PATH OF THE ATTACK...



IGNORE IT! HOLD THE LINE HERE!

PROTECT THE ROYAL PALACE! THAT'S THE ONLY FIGHT THAT MATTERS!

B-BUT PEOPLE ARE--

WHAT? "PEOPLE"?

YOU HEARD THE WARLORD! THOSE DAMN PEASANTS ARE EXPENDABLE!



LERON!
HOW CAN YOU--

A PRINCESS DOESN'T
FLINCH OR SHIRK!

NOT EVERY DECISION IN
YOUR LIFE WILL BE EASY!

WATCH THE WARLORD AND
LEARN HOW TO MAKE THE TOUGH
CHOICES!



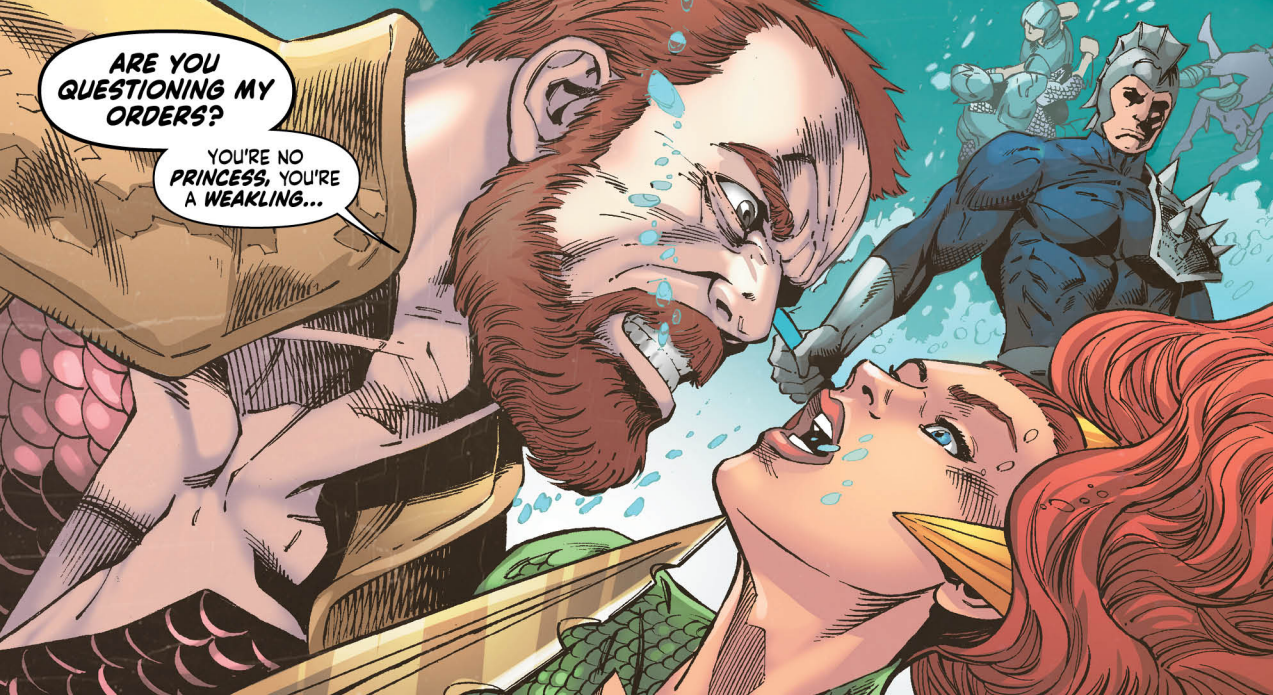
DUTY COMES FIRST!

TO DEFEND THE THRONE, YOU
MUST BE PREPARED TO KILL! AND LET
OTHERS DIE!

CIVILIANS, LOVED ONES,
EVEN A SIBLING OR--

NO! THAT'S NOT RIGHT!
NOT RIGHT! IT'S NOT RIGHT--!

WHAT'S THIS?



ARE YOU QUESTIONING MY
ORDERS?

YOU'RE NO PRINCESS, YOU'RE
A WEAKLING...

"...AND YOU'VE GOT A LOT TO LEARN ABOUT DUTY."

THE MEMORY FADES. CONSCIOUSNESS RETURNS.

SHE'S NO LONGER THAT GIRL IN XEBEL. SHE'S ON THE BEACH IN AMNESTY BAY...

... WITH ANOTHER BLADE AT HER THROAT.

OH GOD, ORM! NO!



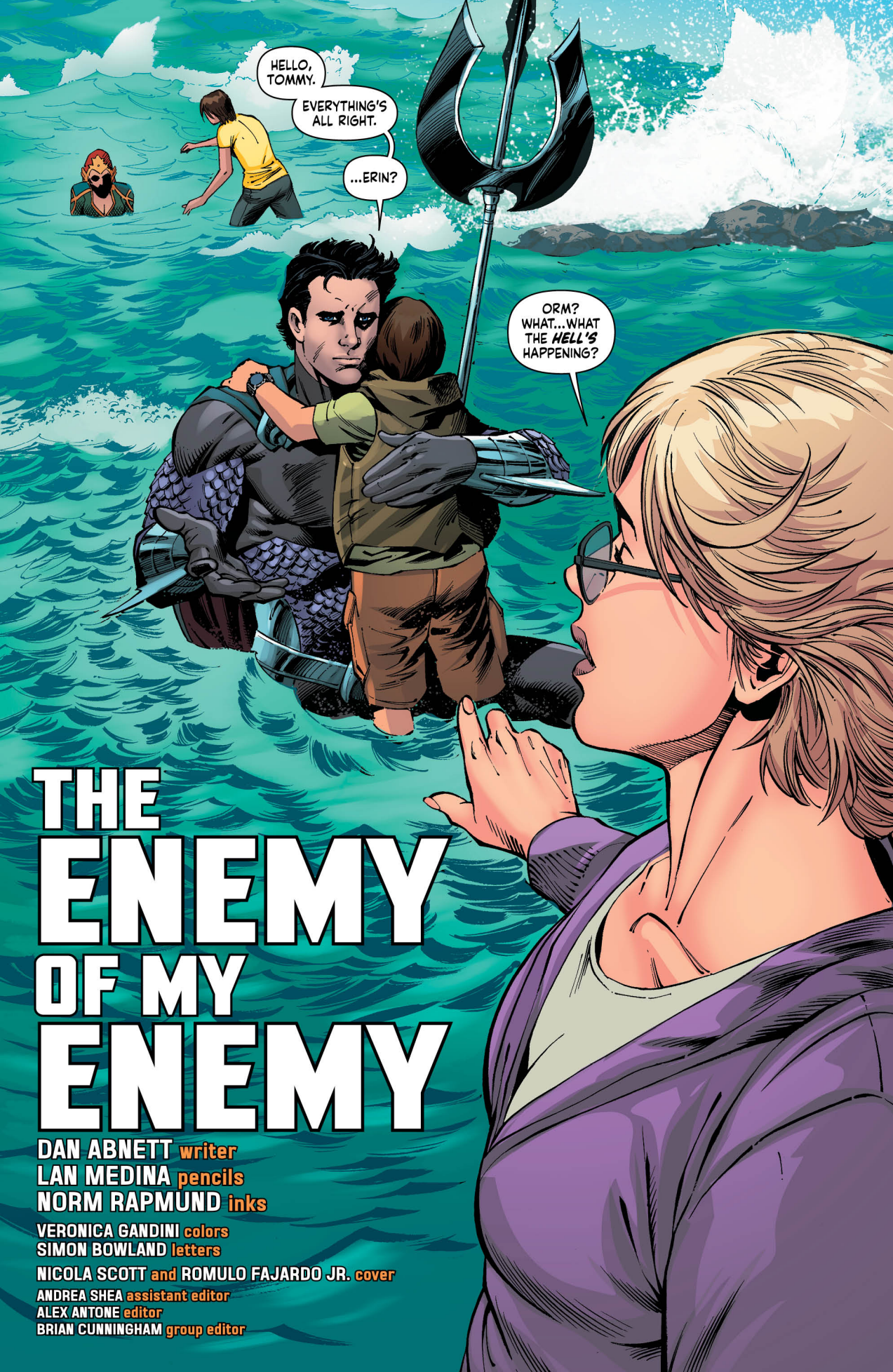
O-ORM?!

DADDY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

PLEASE DON'T HURT HER!

I...

NOT IN FRONT OF YOUR SON, ORM.



HELLO,
TOMMY.

EVERYTHING'S
ALL RIGHT.

...ERIN?

ORM?
WHAT...WHAT
THE HELL'S
HAPPENING?

THE ENEMY OF MY ENEMY

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