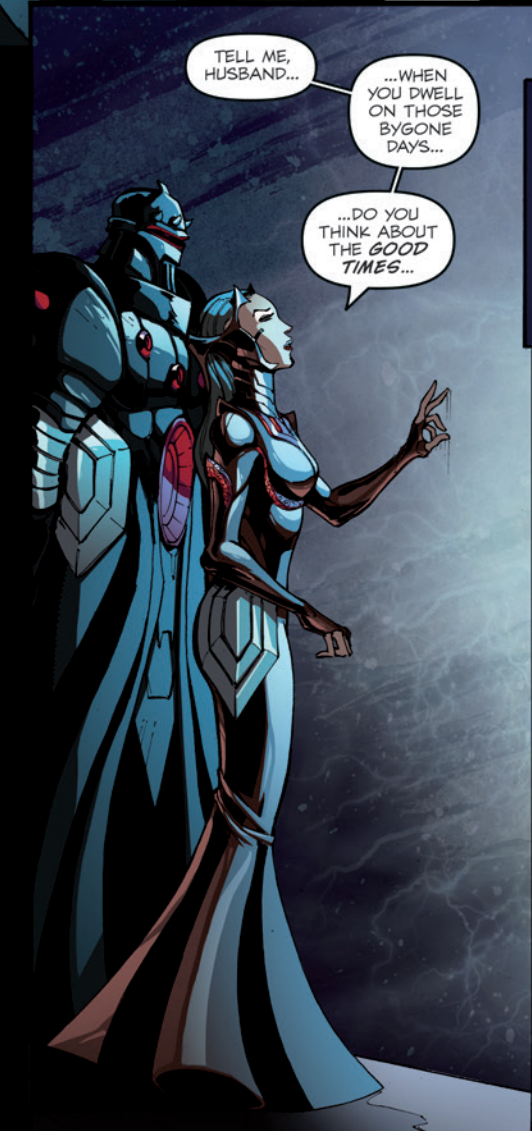


YOU'RE
THINKING
ABOUT THE
PAST.



THE PAST.
YES.



TELL ME, HUSBAND...
...WHEN YOU DWELL ON THOSE BYGONE DAYS...
...DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE GOOD TIMES...



...OR THE BAD?



I'M SURPRISED YOU WOULD ASK SUCH A QUESTION, SHAZRAELLA.
YOU ALREADY KNOW THE ANSWER, DO YOU NOT?
OF COURSE, BUT HUMOR ME.
I WANT TO BE SURE YOU REMEMBER.



THE GOOD MEMORIES...
...THE BAD...

"...IS THERE A
DIFFERENCE?"

"DO YOU RECALL THOSE
DAYS, MY WIFE?"

"WHEN I STOOD AT
THE EMPEROR'S SIDE..."

"...WHEN THE
BURDEN OF RULE
WEIGHED HEAVY
ON HIS BROW..."

SILENCE,
PLEASE!
SILENCE!

I
UNDERSTAND
THERE HAVE
BEEN SERIOUS
ACCUSATIONS
MADE IN THIS
COURT...

...BUT I CANNOT
HELP IF YOU INSIST
ON TALKING OVER
ONE ANOTHER!

"...AND MY DUTY AS
THE *MINISTER OF
DEFENSE* WAS TO
PROTECT HIM FROM
ENEMIES ABROAD
AND AT HOME..."

"...THOSE HE
COULD SEE..."

"...AND THOSE
HE *REFUSED*
TO *ACKNOWLEDGE*."



"BARON DAEGON AND MYSELF STOOD AS THE **PILLARS** OF THE EMPEROR'S RULE..."

I'LL HEAR FROM THOSE WHO HAVE LEVIED THE GRIEVANCE.

"...BUT THERE WAS ANOTHER WHO STOOD IN A POSITION NEITHER OF US COULD HOPE TO ATTAIN—



"—HIS SON, THE SELF-PROCLAIMED **RED FALCON**."

TREAD CAREFULLY, FATHER.

THERE ARE MANY ON THE **COUNCIL OF WORLDS** WHO DO NOT TRUST THE PHAROIDS.

DON'T MAKE THEIR ENEMIES YOUR OWN.

"HE WAS A BOASTFUL, PROUD WARRIOR... AND HE LONGED FOR THE DAY WHEN HE WOULD RULE **MICROSPACE**."



"HE WAS TRAINED IN WAR... BUT NOT IN **DIPLOMACY**."

OUR TEMPLES HAVE BEEN SACKED...

...OUR PRIESTS SLAIN AND OUR PROPHETS ABDUCTED.

WHETHER THE MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL BELIEVE IT OR NOT, WE ARE PLACING NO BLAME.

WE ONLY WANT OUR PEOPLE SAFELY RETURNED.

"FALCON, HOWEVER, DID NOT SEE THE **DISSIMILARITY** BETWEEN THE TWO..."

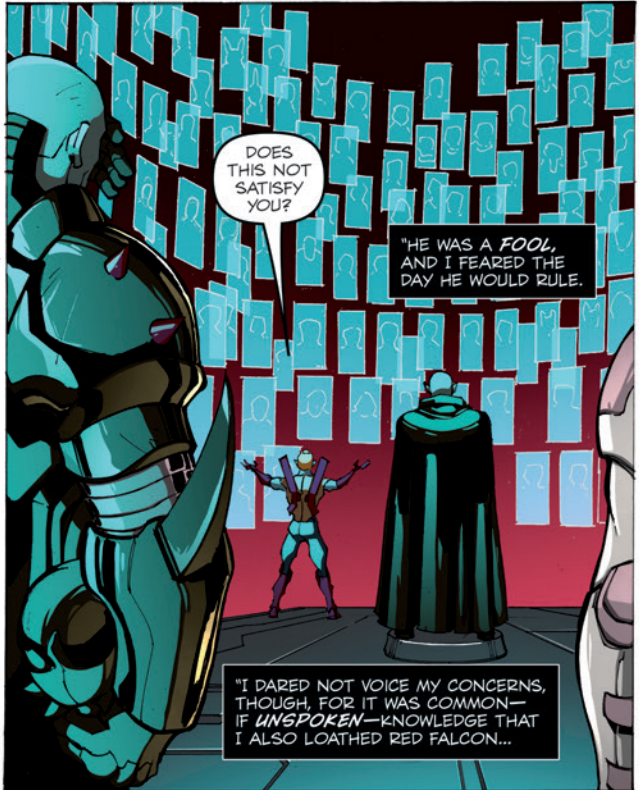


"...AND HE WAS, THEREFORE, **DANGEROUS**."

DO NOT DESPAIR. YOUR EMPEROR WATCHES OVER YOU.

AS SUCH, HE WILL DISPATCH THE **RED FALCON** TO TRACK AND RESCUE YOUR PROPHETS...

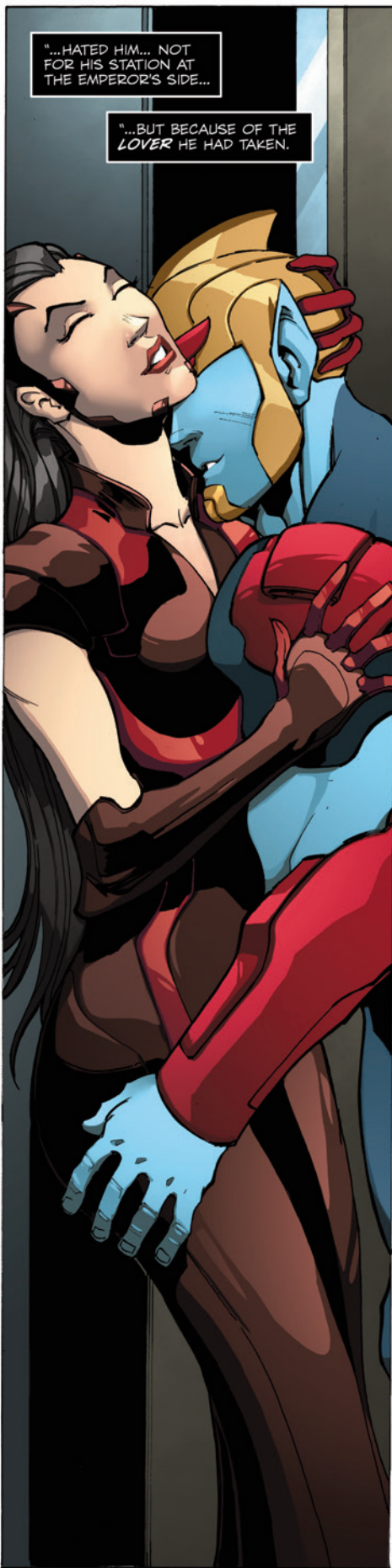
...AND METE OUT PUNISHMENT TO THOSE WHO DESERVE IT!



DOES THIS NOT SATISFY YOU?

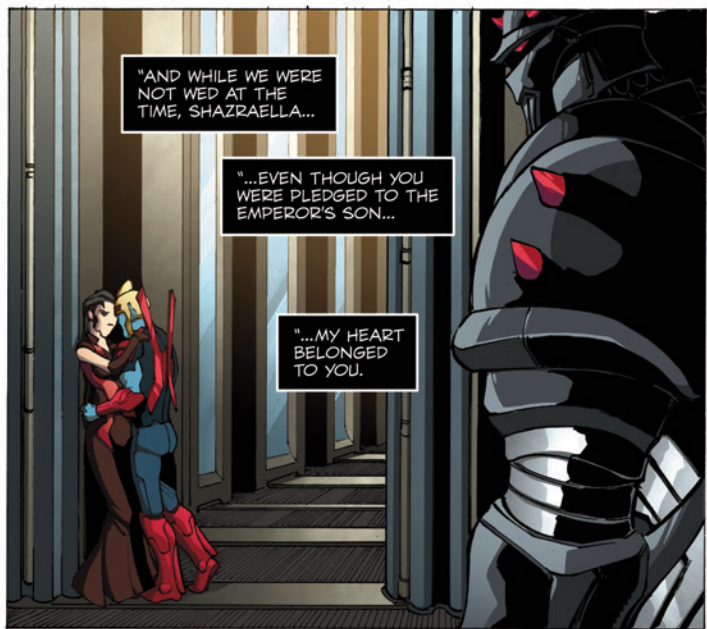
"HE WAS A **FOOL**, AND I FEARED THE DAY HE WOULD RULE."

"I DARED NOT VOICE MY CONCERNS, THOUGH, FOR IT WAS COMMON—IF **UNSPOKEN**—KNOWLEDGE THAT I ALSO LOATHED **RED FALCON**..."



"...HATED HIM... NOT FOR HIS STATION AT THE EMPEROR'S SIDE...

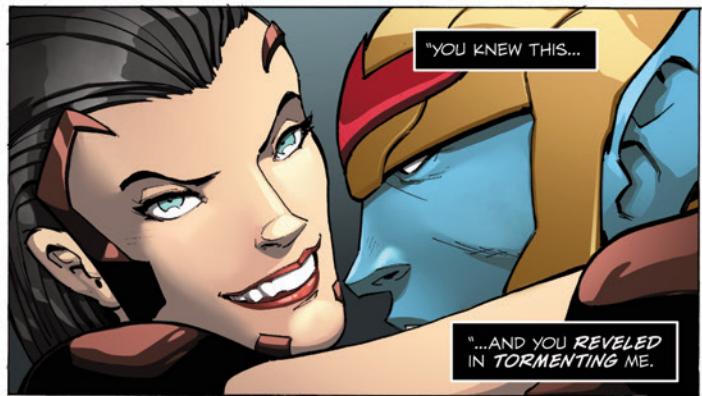
"...BUT BECAUSE OF THE **LOVER** HE HAD TAKEN.



"AND WHILE WE WERE NOT WED AT THE TIME, SHAZRAELLA...

"...EVEN THOUGH YOU WERE PLEDGED TO THE EMPEROR'S SON...

"...MY HEART BELONGED TO YOU.



"YOU KNEW THIS...

"...AND YOU **REVELED** IN **TORMENTING** ME.



"PERHAPS IT WAS YOU WHO SHOULD HAVE DRAWN MY IRE..."



COME, MY FALCON.

THESE HALLWAYS AFFORD US LITTLE PRIVACY.

LET US WITHDRAW... TO MY CHAMBERS.

"...BUT I WAS **INCAPABLE** OF **DESPISING** YOU.