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SECRET  EMPIRE

BLACK WIDOW

hail hydra

**ALPHA FLIGHT STATION.
BEYOND THE PLANETARY DEFENCE SHIELD.**

"YOU ASKED FOR
A STATUS REPORT,
CAROL--WELL,
HERE IT IS.

"THERE IS
NOTHING GOOD
HAPPENING HERE
RIGHT NOW.



"AS THE SIZE AND FREQUENCY OF
THE CHITAUURI WAVES CONTINUE
TO INCREASE, OUR TECHNICIANS
ARE RUNNING OUT OF FIXES.

"THE DAMAGE TO
THE STRUCTURAL
INTEGRITY OF THE
BASE IS JUST
TOO SEVERE.



"AND WHILE
THE ANALYSTS
HAVE DONE
A FINE JOB
PINPOINTING
THE LOCATION
OF THE QUEEN
EGGS THAT ARE
ATTRACTING
THE WAVES
IN FIRST
PLACE--

"--WE STILL
HAVE NO WAY
TO GET THROUGH
THE PLANETARY
DEFENSE SHIELD, SO
IT'S NOT A TERRIBLY
USEFUL PIECE OF
INFORMATION.



"THE ONLY THING
RESEMBLING A BRIGHT SPOT
IS AMERICA'S ABILITY TO
DO INTERDIMENSIONAL
SUPPLY RUNS--WHICH
ACTUALLY BRINGS US TO
OUR NEXT SUBJECT--"



--RELOCATION POSSIBILITIES, WHILE IT'S OBVIOUS NO OTHER PLANETS IN OUR UNIVERSE ARE GOING TO DO US ANY FAVORS AT THIS POINT, SOME OF THE OTHER REALITIES AMERICA CAN ACCESS ARE MORE WELCOMING--

IT'S TRUE, YOU EVER WANNA LIVE IN A REALITY THAT'S A MUSICAL? 'CAUSE I CAN GET YOU THERE.



NO.

CAROL, PLEASE, HEAR US OUT--

NO, MONICA. YOU LISTEN TO ME. WE WERE CHARGED WITH A MISSION. PROTECT THE EARTH FROM THIS CHITAUURI INVASION. DEFEND OUR LITTLE PIECE OF THE STARS.



WHAT HAPPENS IF THAT SHIELD COMES DOWN AS A WAVE IS APPROACHING? DO WE JUST TRUST HYDRA TO TAKE CARE OF IT? I WANT TO BE READY AND ON GUARD. LIKE I SWORE AN OATH TO BE.

SO YOU MAKE YOUR OWN DECISIONS, BUT I WILL **NOT** LEAVE MY POST--I AM CAPTAIN MARVEL OF THE ALPHA FLIGHT SPACE PROGRAM--



--AND I WILL NOT ABANDON SHIP.



=SIGH=



HELLO, AVRIL.



I GOTTA SAY, MY DAYS ARE PRETTY BUSY, WHAT WITH MY STATION FALLING TO PIECES AND MY CREW LOOKING UP THE DEFINITION OF "JUSTIFIABLE MUTINY"...

...SO THE FACT THAT I MAKE THE TIME TO COME DOWN HERE AND VISIT YOU EVERY NIGHT AND YOU DON'T EVEN SAY SO MUCH AS A WORD BACK--



--WELL, IT'S @/#\$ RUDE IS WHAT IT IS.

AND IT WASN'T OUR DEAL.



"WHEN NOVA FISHED YOU OUT OF THE WRECKAGE OF THAT CHITAURI SHIP, YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE OUR LIFELINE--

--OUR LAST CHANCE TO OVERCOME THIS.



"THESE PEOPLE **NEED** THAT. THEY **VOLUNTEERED** FOR THIS MISSION.

"THEY DON'T DESERVE TO DIE UP HERE IN THIS VACUUM, CUT OFF FROM EVERYTHING THEY LOVE--"



--EVEN IF I DO.



SECRET EMPIRE

STEVE ROGERS, A.K.A. CAPTAIN AMERICA, HAS CLAIMED THE UNITED STATES FOR HYDRA. WITH MOST OF EARTH'S HEROES TRAPPED IN THE DARKFORCE BUBBLE SURROUNDING MANHATTAN OR STRANDED BEHIND THE PLANETARY DEFENSE SHIELD, HIS POWER SEEMS ABSOLUTE.

BLACK WIDOW BELIEVES THAT THE ONLY WAY TO STOP CAPTAIN AMERICA IS TO KILL HIM. RECENTLY, HER TEAM OF YOUNG HEROES HELPED HER LIBERATE A MYSTERIOUS OLD MAN FROM A HYDRA PRISON--A MAN WIDOW CLAIMS CAN WIN THEM THE WAR.

MEANWHILE, TONY STARK HOPED TO SAVE CAPTAIN AMERICA BY REASSEMBLING THE COSMIC CUBE THAT REWROTE STEVE'S HISTORY IN THE FIRST PLACE. BUT WHEN ANT-MAN TIPPED HYDRA OFF TO THE LOCATION OF THE UNDERGROUND'S BASE IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS DAUGHTER'S LIFE, STEVE SHOWED UP WITH AN ARMY-- AND A TEMPORARILY RESURRECTED HULK.

CAPTAIN AMERICA Routed the Underground and claimed their cube fragments, but at a terrible cost: his beloved Madame Hydra sacrificed herself to save him from the Mound's destruction. And with the members of the Underground presumed dead, there's nothing to stop Widow from going for the kill.

WRITER ■ NICK SPENCER  **ARTIST** ■ ANDREA SORRENTINO
ADDITIONAL ART ■ ROD REIS; JOSHUA CASSARA &
RACHELLE ROSENBERG
LETTERER ■ VC'S TRAVIS LANHAM
RECAP PAGE ART ■ ANDREA SORRENTINO
COVER ■ MARK BROOKS
VARIANT COVERS ■ DAN MORA & EDGAR DELGADO;
ANDREA SORRENTINO; JOHN TYLER CHRISTOPHER

PRODUCTION DESIGN ■ CARLOS LAO  **ASSISTANT EDITOR** ■ ALANNA SMITH
EDITOR ■ TOM BREVOORT  **EDITOR IN CHIEF** ■ AXEL ALONSO
CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER ■ JOE QUESADA  **PRESIDENT** ■ DAN BUCKLEY
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER ■ ALAN FINE

HYDRA

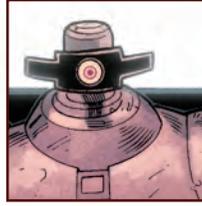
HYDRA COMMAND



CAPTAIN AMERICA



MADAME HYDRA



ARNIM ZOLA



PUNISHER

CAPTURED



SHARON CARTER

BEYOND THE SHIELD



CAPTAIN MARVEL



SPECTRUM



AMERICA CHAVEZ



QUASAR

THE RED ROOM



BLACK WIDOW



WASP



SPIDER-MAN



VIV VISION



IRONHEART



FALCON

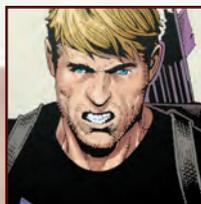


HULK (AMADEUS CHO)

THE UNDERGROUND



SAM WILSON



HAWKEYE



GIANT-MAN