

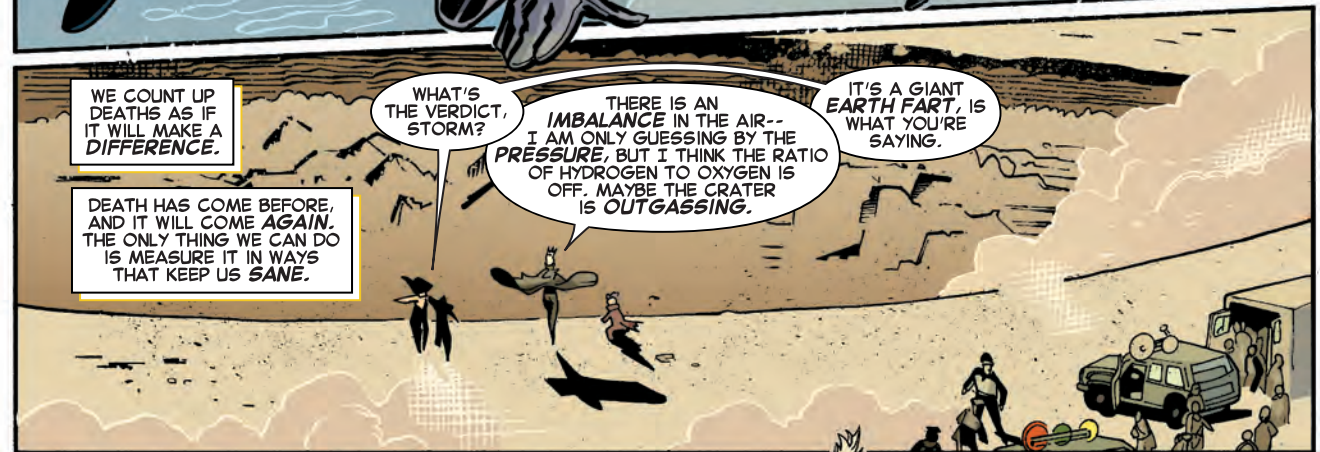
DEATH TOLL?

LOW, CONSIDERING THE SIZE OF THIS... WHATEVER IT IS. TWENTY-THREE IS THE LATEST NUMBER.

TWENTY-THREE ISN'T LOW, RACHEL.

IT COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE, IS ALL I'M SAYING. GOD.

THE EYE OF THE STORM IS IMMUNE TO DEATH, BECAUSE IT IS A KIND OF DEATH. IT PASSES OVER THE WRECKAGE OF THE STORM INDIFFERENTLY.



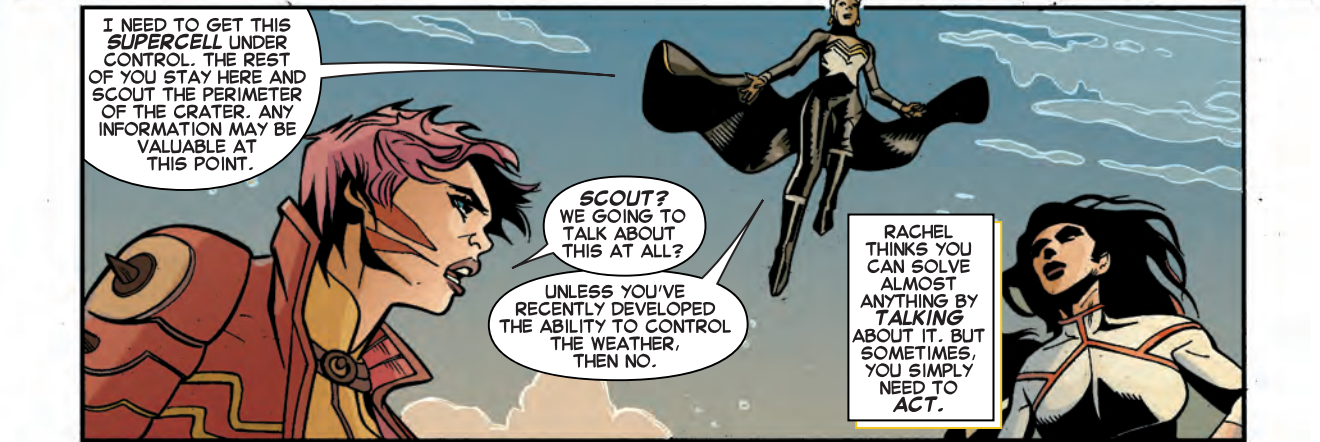
WE COUNT UP DEATHS AS IF IT WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

DEATH HAS COME BEFORE, AND IT WILL COME AGAIN. THE ONLY THING WE CAN DO IS MEASURE IT IN WAYS THAT KEEP US SANE.

WHAT'S THE VERDICT, STORM?

THERE IS AN IMBALANCE IN THE AIR-- I AM ONLY GUESSING BY THE PRESSURE, BUT I THINK THE RATIO OF HYDROGEN TO OXYGEN IS OFF. MAYBE THE CRATER IS OUTGASSING.

IT'S A GIANT EARTH FART, IS WHAT YOU'RE SAYING.

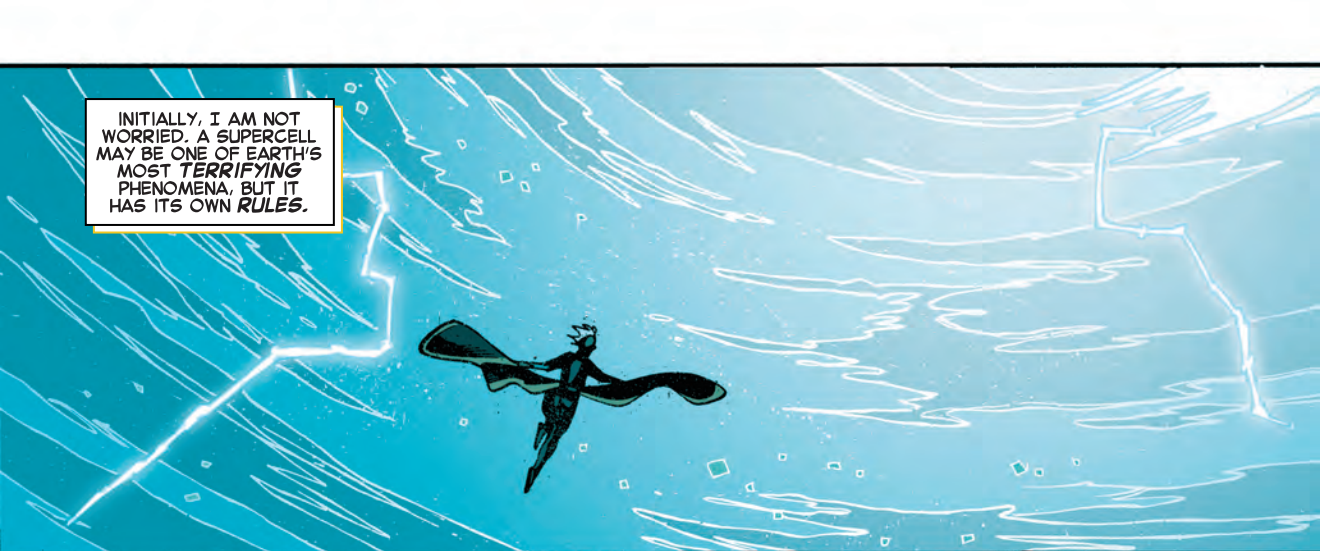


I NEED TO GET THIS SUPERCCELL UNDER CONTROL. THE REST OF YOU STAY HERE AND SCOUT THE PERIMETER OF THE CRATER. ANY INFORMATION MAY BE VALUABLE AT THIS POINT.

SCOUT? WE GOING TO TALK ABOUT THIS AT ALL?

UNLESS YOU'VE RECENTLY DEVELOPED THE ABILITY TO CONTROL THE WEATHER, THEN NO.

RACHEL THINKS YOU CAN SOLVE ALMOST ANYTHING BY TALKING ABOUT IT. BUT SOMETIMES, YOU SIMPLY NEED TO ACT.



INITIALLY, I AM NOT WORRIED. A SUPERCELL MAY BE ONE OF EARTH'S MOST **TERRIFYING** PHENOMENA, BUT IT HAS ITS OWN **RULES**.



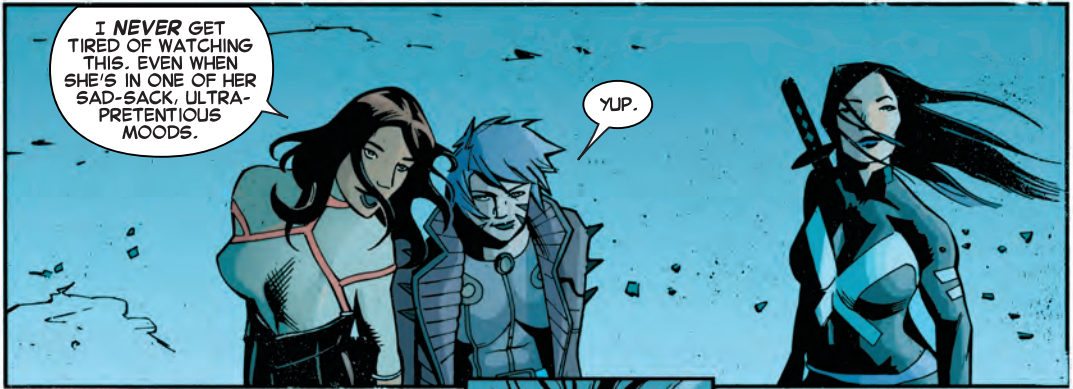
NNGH--

HARNESSED LIGHTNING, IF YOU DON'T LET IT GET AHEAD OF YOU, CAN BE USED TO **IONIZE** THE AIR AND **STABILIZE** IT.

THERE IS A **REASON** THE SKY IS BRIGHT AND CLEAR AFTER A STORM.

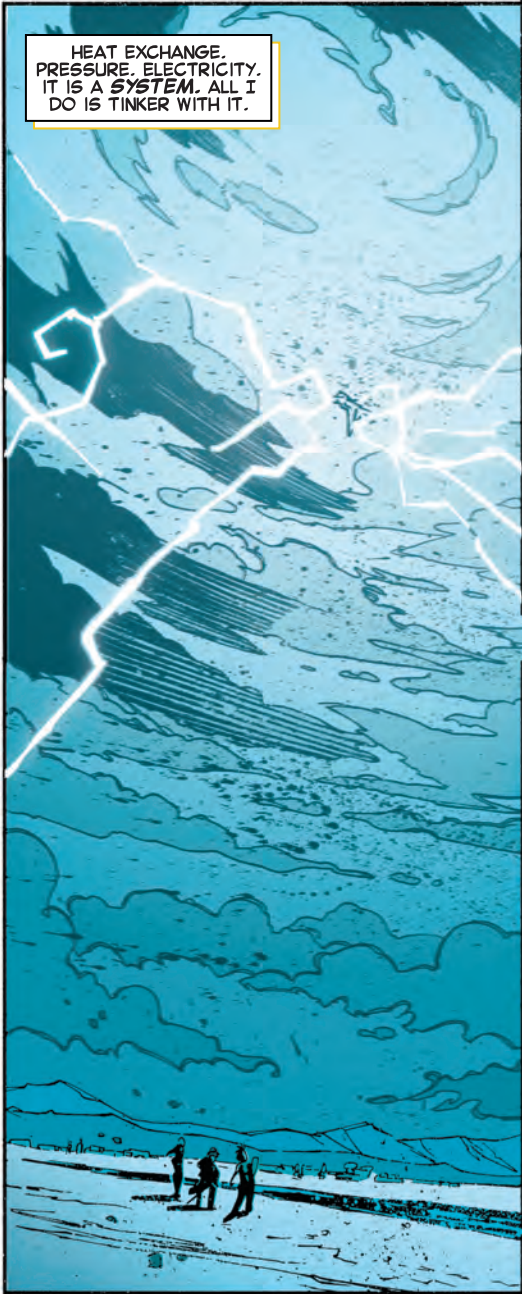


LIGHTNING PURIFIES.



I NEVER GET TIRED OF WATCHING THIS. EVEN WHEN SHE'S IN ONE OF HER SAD-SACK, ULTRA-PRENTENTIOUS MOODS.

YUP.



HEAT EXCHANGE. PRESSURE. ELECTRICITY. IT IS A SYSTEM. ALL I DO IS TINKER WITH IT.



IT WORKS JUST AS I THOUGHT IT WOULD.



WHAT IN--

UNTIL IT DOESN'T ANYMORE.



AAAGH!

I WAS RIGHT. IT'S HYDROGEN.

AND BY CHARGING THE AIR WITH ELECTRICITY, I HAVE JUST INADVERTENTLY SET IT ON FIRE.