

MARVEL
PSR 2 of 8

CASEY
KOLINS
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EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES



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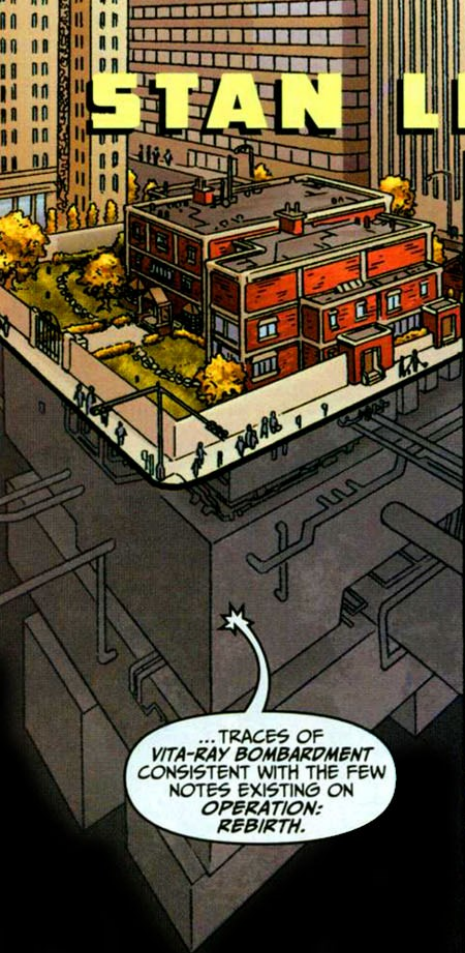
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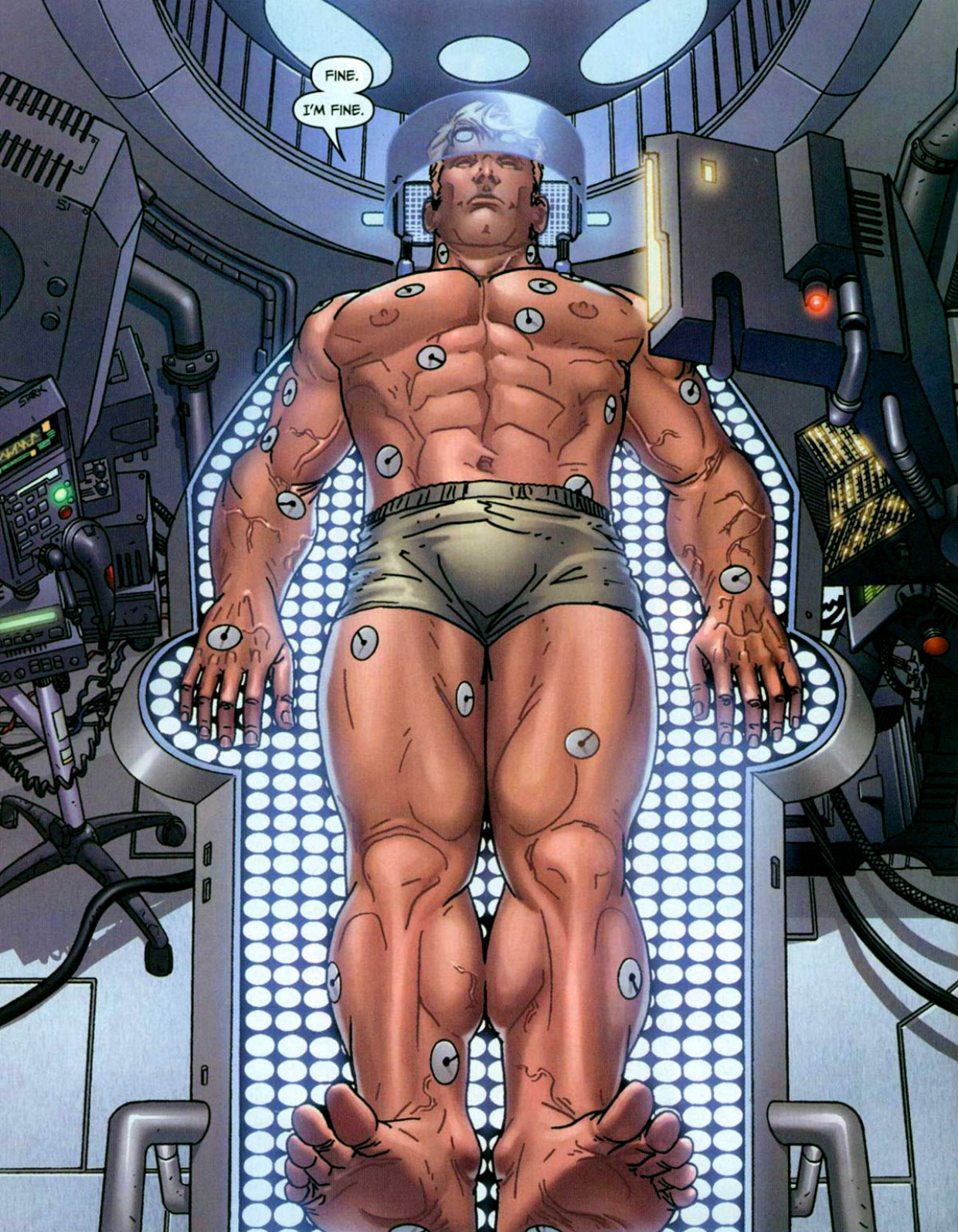
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NOT THAT I **BLAME** YOU. THIS IS A **BONA FIDE LIVING LEGEND** STANDING IN OUR MIDST.

I MEAN, I'VE READ AT LEAST **TWENTY** BOOKS ABOUT YOU.

MAYBE I SHOULD READ THEM. IT MIGHT HELP WITH THESE **MEMORY GAPS...**

I'M SURE IT'LL ALL COME BACK IN TIME.



JARVIS, YOU SHOULD'VE SEEN THE LOOKS ON OUR FACES WHEN WE PULLED THAT HUNK OF **ICE** IN FROM THE OCEAN. SENSORS HAD PICKED UP A **HUMAN** BIO-SIGNATURE...

...BUT ONCE WE SAW THE **UNIFORM...** THE WASP ALMOST HAD A **HEART ATTACK**.



IT WAS DEFINITELY A MOMENT FOR THE **HISTORY BOOKS...**



I KNOW I GOT A LITTLE **CRAZY** WHEN I CAME TO, **GIANT-MAN...** I HOPE I DIDN'T **HURT** ANYONE...



...I JUST... DIDN'T KNOW WHERE I **WAS...** I COULDN'T...

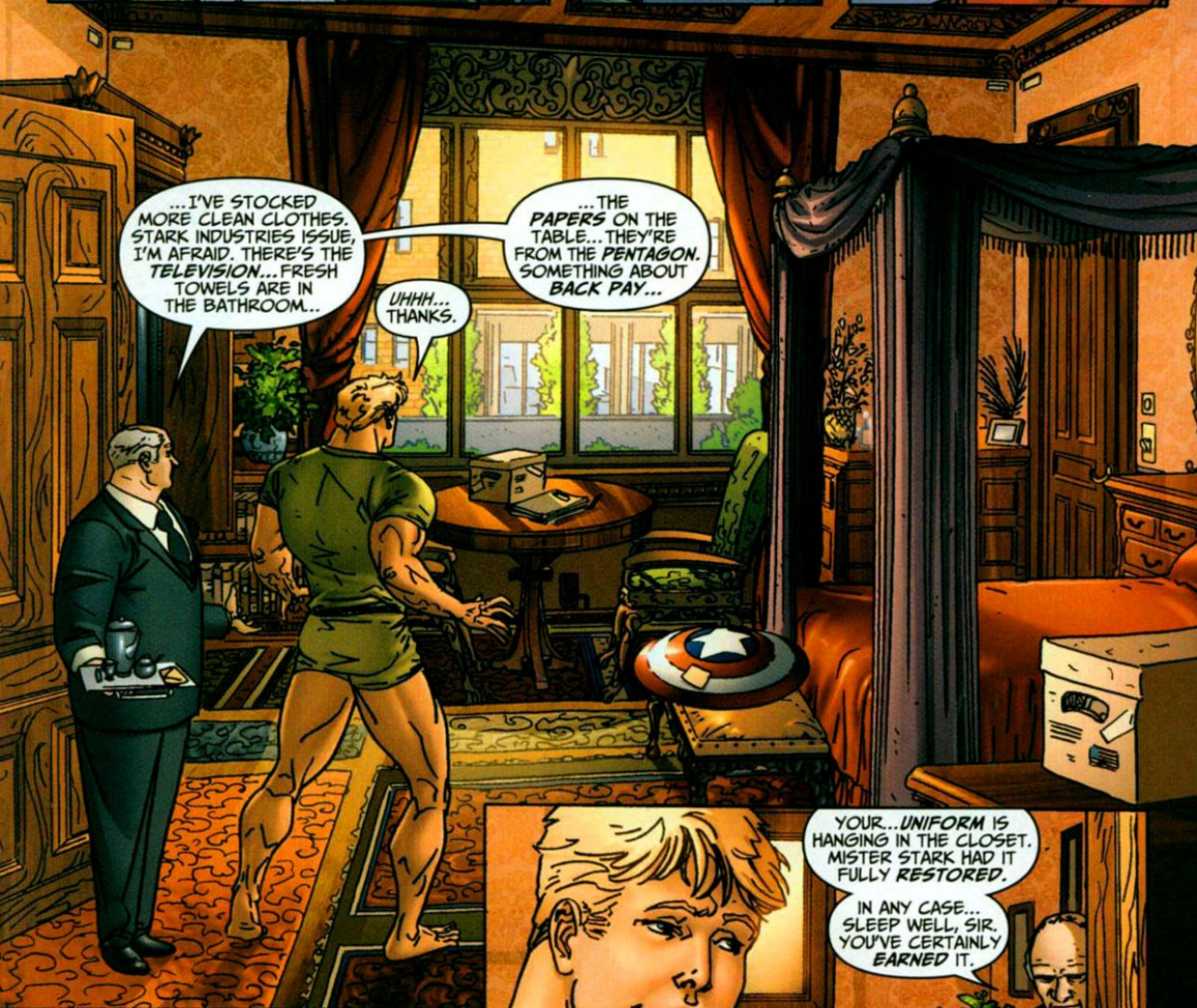
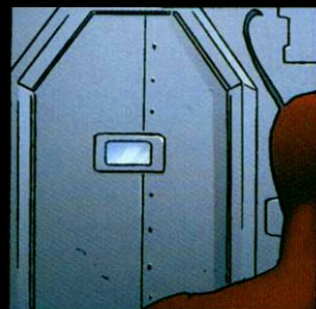


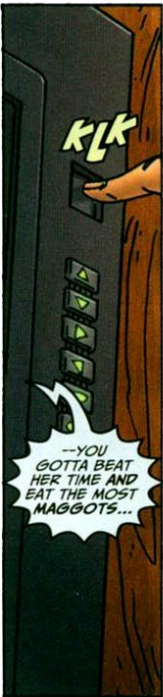
MY GOD.



MAYBE YOU SHOULD TAKE HIM BACK TO HIS ROOM. I NEED TO **COLLATE** THE DATA I'VE GATHERED AND **SPEAK** TO THE OTHERS.

OF COURSE.







...SO PHYSICALLY, HE'S WELL ON HIS WAY TO A COMPLETE RECOVERY.

THAT SERUM THEY GAVE HIM... ITS EFFECT ON HIS PHYSIOLOGY REMAINS UNDIMINISHED, EVEN AFTER ALL THESE YEARS.

WELL, DR. ERSKINE WAS AT THE VERY TOP OF HIS FIELD...UNTIL HE WAS ASSASSINATED.

AS FOR OUR NEWFOUND FRIEND, HE HASN'T BEEN SEEN SINCE 1945. ARMY INTEL LISTS HIM AS M.I.A. THAT COULD MEAN ANYTHING.

THESE ARE HIS ARMY RECORDS, IN FULL. PHYSICAL EXAMS, BLOOD WORK, PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING...STATE OF THE ART FOR THE ERA. MY DATA PERFECTLY MATCHES THESE SPECS. SO IT'S DEFINITELY HIM. BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE...

AT THIS POINT, I'M A LITTLE SKEPTICAL ABOUT HIS CAPACITY TO FUNCTION EMOTIONALLY. HE'S STILL COPING WITH THE REALITY OF HIS SITUATION. FOR HIM TO CONSIDER ACTIVE DUTY AGAIN...IT COULD BE PROBLEMATIC ON SEVERAL LEVELS.

LET IT BE SAID... I HAVE KNOWN WARRIORS WRONGLY BANISHED TO NIFFLEHEIM ITSELF WHO HAVE RETURNED TO PERFORM EVEN GREATER GLORIES...

OKAY, LET'S NOT GET INTO A FULL-ON DEBATE ABOUT THIS JUST YET. LET'S GIVE HIM SOME TIME TO ADJUST. THEN WE'LL SEE WHERE WE ARE.

IN THE MEANTIME, THERE'S A BIT MORE RESEARCH TO BE DONE. SOMETHING I'D LIKE TO CHECK INTO...

SO, ARE WE ALL CONVINCED... THIS IS THE REAL CAPTAIN AMERICA...?

ANYWAY, THAT'S MY PERSPECTIVE.

"NIFFLEHEIM".

I SEE.





A-HA!

I WAS RIGHT!



THIS IS FANTASTIC!



I TAKE IT YOU'VE FOUND SOMETHING OF INTEREST...?

THAT'S PUTTING IT MILDLY, THOR.



CAP'S STATUS AS AN ARMY SPECIAL OPERATIVE AUTOMATICALLY GRANTS HIM THE KIND OF ACROSS-THE-BOARD SECURITY CLEARANCE WE'VE BEEN FIGHTING TO GET.

HERE'S THE THING... THERE'S A LOOPHOLE. IT APPLIES TO ANY OF CAP'S WARTIME ALLIES UNDER A "PROVISIONAL SECURITY CLEARANCE" CLAUSE. WE CAN USE THAT.



YOUR INTENTIONS ARE ADMIRABLE. BUT ANY ACHIEVEMENT ON THE BASIS OF A CONTRACTUAL TECHNICALITY...

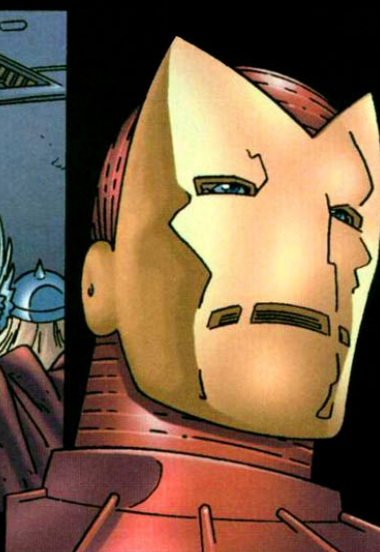
...THERE IS VERY LITTLE HONOR IN THAT.



I'M SORRY YOU FEEL THAT WAY. I WISH WE HAD A MORE "HONORABLE" ALTERNATIVE.

IF WE CAN PROVE OURSELVES TO THE N.S.C. QUICKLY, I DON'T SEE HOW THEY WON'T--

I DO NOT LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE I MUST "PROVE MYSELF" TO POLITICIANS...



WE DON'T ALL LIVE IN YOUR WORLD, THOR.

BUT I'LL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO MAKE SURE EVERYTHING WE'VE BUILT HERE DOESN'T GO TO POT. IF YOU DON'T AGREE WITH MY LEADERSHIP CHOICES, DON'T HOLD BACK.

I'M LISTENING.



YOUR...
"LEADERSHIP"...

PERHAPS THOU
ART LABORING UNDER
FALSE PRESUMPTIONS,
IRON MAN. OUR INTERNAL
STRUGGLES PALE IN
COMPARISON TO OUR **TRUE**
GOALS...TO SOUNDLY SMITE
THE ENEMIES OF MORTAL
MAN. TO **AVENGE** THOSE
WHO HAVE SUFFERED
THE EVIL OF THIS
WORLD.

YOU WOULD DO
WELL NOT TO
CONFUSE THOSE
OBJECTIVES WITH
YOUR **PERSONAL**
CRUSADES...

...

RIGHT.

IF YOU'RE
TRYING TO KEEP
ME ON MY **TOES**...
YOU'RE DOING A
GOOD JOB.



I'D PROPOSE A TEMPORARY
DETENTE...BUT I DOUBT IT'S
IN YOUR NATURE.

AND I'M **SURE** THAT WHERE YOU
COME FROM--WHEREVER THAT
MIGHT BE--YOU DON'T HAVE TO
DEAL WITH ALL THE **RED TAPE** THAT,
QUITE HONESTLY, MAKES ME
WANT TO **STRANGLE**
SOMEONE...



...BUT I'M IN **TOO DEEP**
NOW. I'M **TOO COMMITTED**
TO SEE THIS FAIL.

SO...

...IF I ASK
YOU ABOUT
ASGARD, WILL
I GET ANOTHER
FLOWERY
SPEECH--

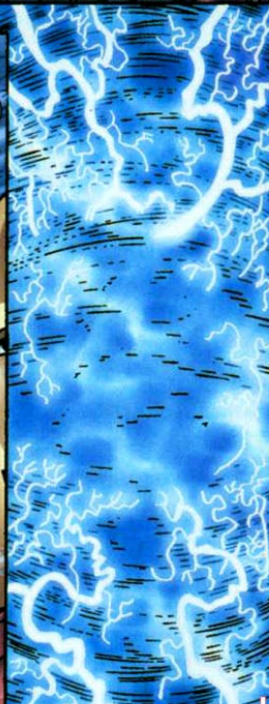
--OR ARE
YOU FINALLY
GOING TO
LEVEL
WITH ME?



I MEAN, YOU CLAIM
GODHOOD...BUT I'M JUST
NOT SURE IF I CAN...



THOR...?



SIGH

I HATE IT
WHEN HE DOES
THAT...!







DON'T MIND ME. JUST...Y'KNOW... RAIDING THE FRIDGE. JARVIS MAKES A MEAN EGG SALAD...

OH, WHERE'S MY MANNERS, HUH?



RICK JONES. NICE T'MEET YOU.



STEVE... ROGERS...

UNBELIEVABLE...!

UHHH...YOU OKAY...?



I'M FINE. JUST...COULDN'T SLEEP...

SO YOU'RE NOT A PROWLER. THEN, WHO ARE YOU...? I MEAN--



YOU MEAN, WHO AM I TO THE AVENGERS? PUH-LEEZE--!

IF IT WASN'T FOR ME, THESE GUYS NEVER WOULD'VE GOT TOGETHER IN THE FIRST PLACE!



A...UHHH... FRIEND OF MINE GOT IN A LITTLE TROUBLE. I CALLED FOR SOME HELP. THEY ANSWERED. AFTERWARDS, THEY DECIDED THAT A VARSITY TEAM MIGHT NOT BE SUCH A BAD IDEA--



I'M AFRAID I CAN'T SAY THE SAME OF MY DECISION TO GIVE YOU A KEY, MISTER JONES.

THESE LATE NIGHT VISITS ARE BEGINNING TO RATTLE MY NERVES.

SHALL I MAKE A FRESH POT OF COFFEE...?





...SO I DO WHAT I CAN TO KEEP THE BIG GREEN LUG IN LINE, AND LEMME TELL YOU...IT'S STEADY WORK.

COULDN'T KEEP HIM AROUND HERE, BUT WHATEVER. SOME THINGS AREN'T MEANT TO BE. HE'S KEPT THESE GUYS BUSY, THAT'S FOR SURE...



BET YOU'VE BEEN IN A FEW HAIRY SITUATIONS, HUH? LIKE, BEHIND ENEMY LINES AN' ALL THAT...

WELL... I DON'T...

PLEASE FORGIVE HIM, SIR...



...HE MAY BE A BIT TOO YOUNG TO REALIZE THAT MEMORIES OF WAR ARE NEVER PLEASANT ONES.

I... HESITATE TO SAY THIS, SIR, WHAT YOU MEANT TO THAT GENERATION... AND SUBSEQUENT GENERATIONS THAT NEEDED YOU MORE THAN YOU'LL EVER KNOW...



...YOU WERE MORE THAN A SOLDIER. YOU WERE A SYMBOL OF EVERY DECENT THING THIS COUNTRY HAS EVER FOUGHT FOR.

TO THINK THAT YOU COULD BE THAT AGAIN...



NO PRESSURE, JARV! GEEZ...

OF COURSE... YOU'RE RIGHT...

MY APOLOGIES, SIR. IT'S...NOT MY PLACE TO SAY SUCH THINGS.



IT'S OKAY, JARVIS. AND I HONESTLY DON'T MIND THE QUESTIONS...

I JUST...

...CAN'T REMEMBER MUCH.

NO WORRIES, CAP. YOU GOT *ENOUGH* TO DEAL WITH JUST MEMORIZING THE CABLE STATIONS...

UH-OH...MY WATCH SAYS IT'S TIME TO HIT IT. GOT A DAY AHEAD OF ME...

THANKS FOR THE *GRUB*, JARVIS. FREE FOOD'S A HELLUVA *PERK* IN THIS BUSINESS.

HANG IN THERE, CAP. YOU'LL BE BACK TO BUTT-KICKING AND NAME-TAKING IN *NO TIME*.

ADIOS, AMIGOS!

KID'S A HANDFUL, EH...?

SIR, YOU HAVE NO IDEA...

SO...

...WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THESE "AVENGERS"? WHAT ARE THEY TRYING TO DO HERE...?

AHH, YES. A LEGITIMATE QUERY...

TO BE QUITE HONEST, THEY'VE BEEN TRYING TO FIGURE THAT OUT THEMSELVES.

IT'S NOT AN EASY THING THEY'RE ATTEMPTING...FORMING AN ALLIANCE WHOSE SOLE PURPOSE IS TO PROTECT THE INNOCENT FROM WHATEVER THREATS MAY ARISE.

I'M SURE IT'S THEIR HOPE THAT YOU'LL JOIN THEM IN THEIR MISSION...

ME...?

LOOK, JARVIS... I CAN'T FAULT THEIR INTENTIONS...

...BUT I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR ME.

I MEAN...I DON'T BELONG HERE. IN THIS TIME PERIOD. IT'S A FLUKE THAT I'M EVEN ALIVE...!

THE WORLD HAS CHANGED SO DRASTICALLY...I MIGHT END UP BEING MORE OF A HINDRANCE THAN A HELP TO THEM...

I'D LIKE TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING...

...IN THE STUDY.

LOOKS LIKE NO ONE COMES IN HERE...

NO ONE DOES. CURRENTLY, YOU ARE THE MANSION'S ONLY RESIDENT.

BESIDES ME, OF COURSE.

AND YOU'RE CORRECT. THIS IS A MUCH DIFFERENT ERA THAN THE ONE YOU CAME FROM. I SEE PEOPLE HAVING TROUBLE FINDING SOMETHING TO BELIEVE IN...

YOU HAVE RETURNED TO A WORLD STARVING FOR INSPIRATION. WHETHER THEY KNOW IT OR NOT, THE AVENGERS HAVE THE ABILITY TO PROVIDE THAT. BUT DON'T TAKE MY WORD FOR IT...

...I THINK THIS STATES THEIR PUPOSE--AND THEIR POTENTIAL--MUCH BETTER THAN I EVER COULD.

I'VE FOUND SOMETHING THAT I BELIEVE IN.

ONCE YOU READ THAT...PERHAPS YOU WILL, TOO.



ONE WEEK LATER



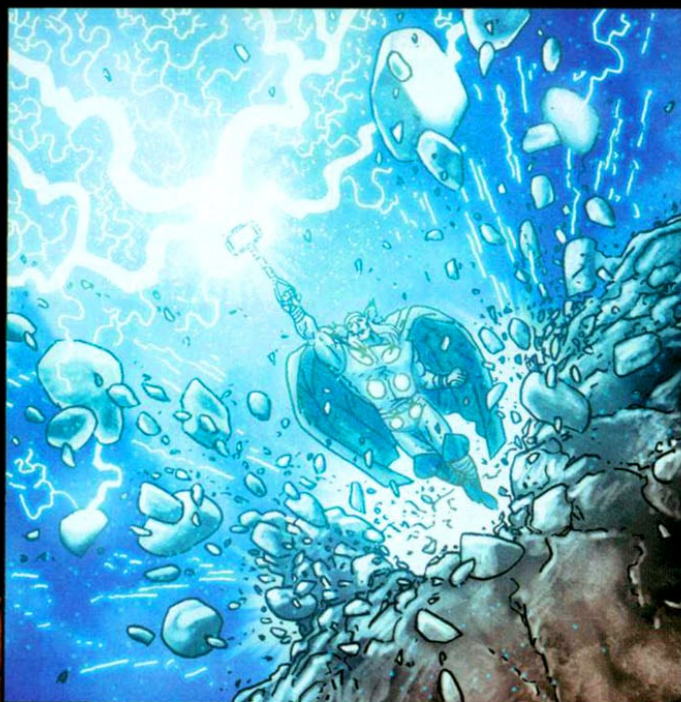




NOT BAD, PEOPLE. A LITTLE TEAM-WORK GOES A LONG WAY...

I DID A QUICK RECON. FOR THE MOMENT, THEY'VE CLEARED OUT...

WHERE ON EARTH IS THOR...?!



SPEAK OF THE DEVIL.

THE NEGOTIATIONS WENT WELL. THESE CREATURES SHALL FOREVER REMAIN IN THEIR SUBTERRANEAN DOMAIN.

THEY WILL NOT SOON FORGET THAT THE AVENGERS GUARD THE GATES OF MORTAL CIVILIZATION...



HEADS UP, PARTNERS. THE ARMY'S MOVING IN.

FRANKLY, I'M STILL SHOCKED THEY COMPLIED WITH OUR REQUEST THAT THEY STAND DOWN...

WHEN CAPTAIN AMERICA'S ASKING, WHO'S GOING TO REFUSE HIM? RIGHT, CAP...?
CAP...?





...PERHAPS THE MOST SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT IN THE RECENT EMERGENCE OF AMERICAN SUPER HEROES IS THE RETURN OF THE ORIGINAL SUPER HERO, CAPTAIN AMERICA. OUR NEWS TEAM HIT THE STREETS TO ASK NEW YORKERS THEIR OPINIONS...



RETURN OF A LEGEND?

I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT WHEN I HEARD! I MEAN... THE STORIES MY GRANDFATHER TOLD ME ABOUT HIM....!

WHAT CAN I SAY? GIVES ME HOPE...



"HOPE"...

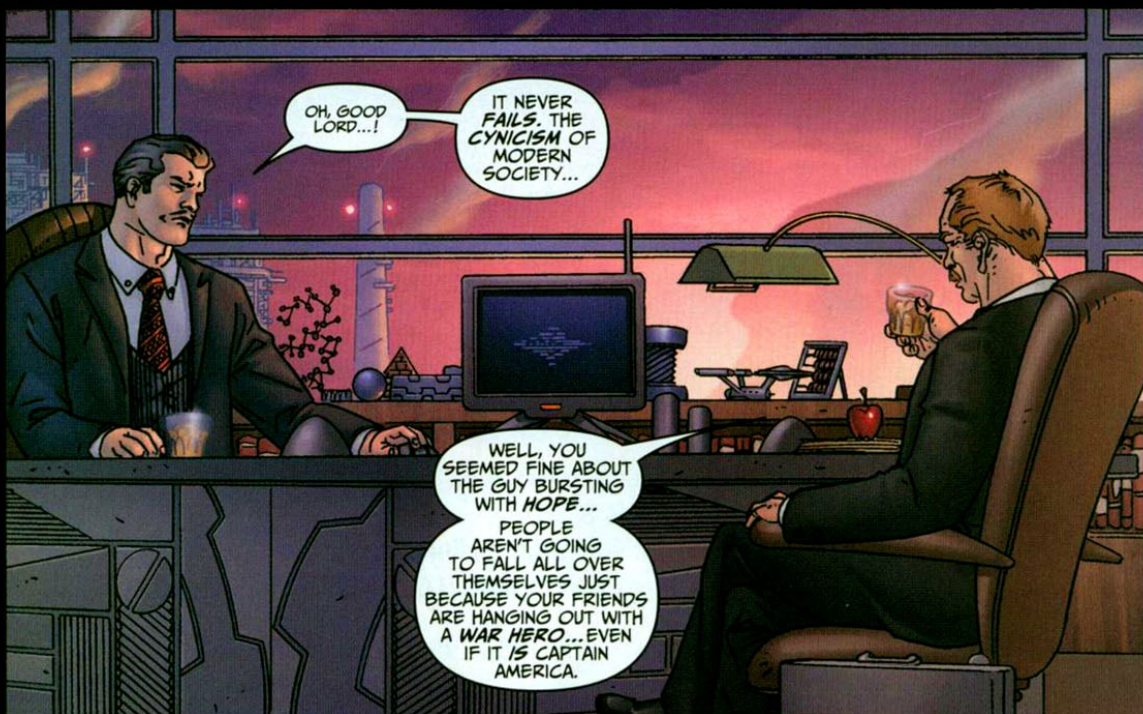
...COULDN'T HAVE PUT IT BETTER MYSELF, AGENT MURCH...

BUT NOT EVERYONE IS SO EASILY CONVINCED BY THE NEWS OF CAPTAIN AMERICA'S RETURN...



I DUNNO... HOW DO WE KNOW HE'S THE REAL THING?

FOR ALL I KNOW, HE COULD BE SOME RINGER IN A FLAG COSTUME...!



OH, GOOD LORD...!

IT NEVER FAILS. THE CYNICISM OF MODERN SOCIETY...

WELL, YOU SEEMED FINE ABOUT THE GUY BURSTING WITH HOPE...

PEOPLE AREN'T GOING TO FALL ALL OVER THEMSELVES JUST BECAUSE YOUR FRIENDS ARE HANGING OUT WITH A WAR HERO... EVEN IF IT IS CAPTAIN AMERICA.



I'M NOT SURE I LIKE THE IMPLICATION. YOU KNOW HE'S THE REAL DEAL.



TRUE. BUT THAT LITTLE STUNT THEY PULLED IN ARIZONA... USING THE CAPTAIN'S PRIORITY STATUS TO FLY INTO RESTRICTED AIRSPACE...

YOU CAN LET THEM KNOW FROM ME... THEY WON'T BE USING HIM AS AN EXCUSE AGAIN.

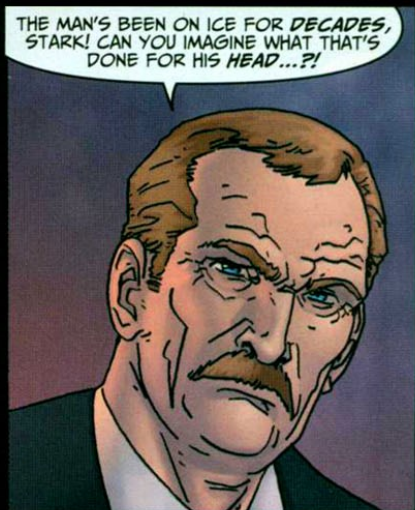


THAT WAS AN EMERGENCY SITUATION, MURCH...
...AND I KNOW FOR A FACT THAT THE ARMY WAS GRATEFUL FOR THE ASSISTANCE.



MAYBE THEY WERE. BUT THE N.S.C. DOESN'T APPRECIATE WHEN PEOPLE DON'T TAKE US SERIOUSLY.

AND THE BIG DEAL THEY'VE MADE ABOUT CAPTAIN AMERICA IN THEIR RANKS... WE'RE NOT COMPLETELY CONVINCED HE'S MENTALLY FIT FOR THE JOB.

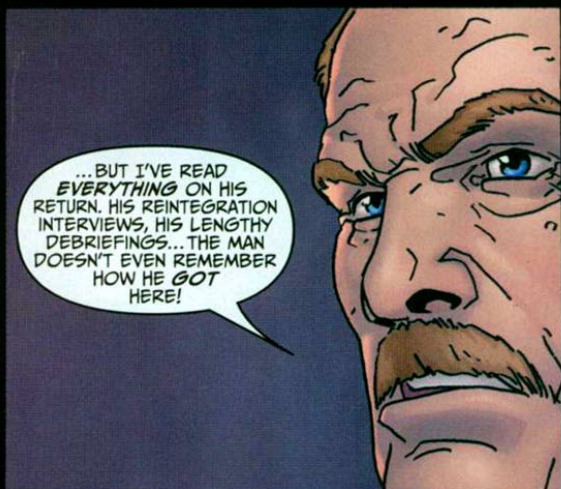


THE MAN'S BEEN ON ICE FOR DECADES, STARK! CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT THAT'S DONE FOR HIS HEAD...?!



HAVE YOU TALKED TO HIM?

NOT YET...



...BUT I'VE READ EVERYTHING ON HIS RETURN. HIS REINTEGRATION INTERVIEWS, HIS LENGTHY DEBRIEFINGS... THE MAN DOESN'T EVEN REMEMBER HOW HE GOT HERE!

OKAY...LET'S TRY A DIFFERENT TACK...

LET'S SAY HE CHECKS OUT...TO YOUR SATISFACTION...

...WOULD THAT **ENSURE** THE AVENGERS THEIR SECURITY CLEARANCE?



HE IS A NATIONAL HERO. AN ICON...

STARK, I HAVE TO TELL YOU...



...IT'S SO MUCH EASIER TO TALK DIRECTLY TO YOU. IT'S CERTAINLY MORE PRODUCTIVE THAN DEALING WITH A BODYGUARD WITH DELUSIONS OF GRANDEUR...

I TRUST IRON MAN WITH MY LIFE. AS FOR CAPTAIN AMERICA--



FINE. JUST BETWEEN US...

...YOUR FRIENDS' CHANCES HAVE CERTAINLY IMPROVED WITH THE GOOD CAPTAIN ON THEIR SIDE. MY BOSSES CAN BE **SUCKERS** FOR THAT PATRIOTIC CRAP.

CAN I QUOTE YOU ON THAT...?



I'M A TRUE PATRIOT, STARK.

THAT MEANS...I'M GOING TO BE WATCHING THE AVENGERS VERY CLOSELY. IT'S **POSSIBLE** THIS COULD WORK OUT FOR THEM...AND FOR CAPTAIN AMERICA...

...IF HE DOESN'T CRACK UNDER THE **PRESSURE**, THAT IS.



TO BE CONTINUED...

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