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ANNIHILATION HERALDS OF GALACTUS™



ANNIHILATION HERALDS OF GALACTUS



IN THE WAKE OF AN INTERGALACTIC WAR AGAINST ANNIHILUS, GALACTUS—DEVOURER OF WORLDS—HAS REUNITED WITH HIS HERALD, THE SILVER SURFER.

FIRELORD, A FORMER HERALD OF GALACTUS, WAS HEAVILY INVOLVED IN THE WAR AND SEEKS OUT SOLDIERS WHO COMMITTED WAR CRIMES. WHEN HE FINDS THESE CENTURIONS—THE EVIL ANNIHILUS' ELITE TROOPS—HE INTENDS TO BRING THEM TO JUSTICE.

TWO PROEMIAL GODS ATTACKED GALACTUS AND BESTED HIM. CAUGHT OFF GUARD, GALACTUS WAS UNPREPARED FOR THE ONSLAUGHT. NOW, GALACTUS IS FREE AND HE SEEKS OUT THESE TWO DARK GODS—AEGIS, LORD OF ALL OF SORROWS, AND TENEBROUS, OF THE DARKNESS BETWEEN.

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CANTICLE 6. CODED TERRITORIES.

WARS
NEVER
END.

THE KREE AND SKRULL HAVE
BEEN AT WAR, TO A GREATER
OR LESSER DEGREE, FOR THE
BETTER PART OF A MILLENNIUM.

THE NEAR-GENOCIDE OF
THE SKRULLS CHANGES
NOTHING. GIVE WHAT
REMAINS OF THE SHAPE-
SHIFTERS ENOUGH TIME
TO BREED, AND SEE HOW
SOON THEY LAUNCH AN
ATTACK ON THE KREE.

WARS LIVE ON, IF
ONLY IN MEMORY--
AND MEMORY IS
MERCELESS.

THEY CALL THEM-
SELVES CENTURIONS.
THESE REMNANTS OF
ANNIHILUS' ELITE
STRIKE FORCE. I CALL
THEM WAR CRIMINALS.

I HUNT THEM
BECAUSE NO
ONE ELSE WILL.

THIS IS THE FIFTH
WORLD CENTURION
FACTIONS HAVE TRIED
TO COMPROMISE.

ON THIS ONE,
THEY PRESENTED
THEMSELVES AS
GODS, PLAYED INTO
THE PRIMITIVE
MIND-SET OF THE
INHABITANTS.

BEFORE THE
ANNIHILATION
WAR, NOVA CORPS
WOULD HAVE SEEN
TO THE PLANET'S
WELL-BEING,
PREVENTED SO
BLATANT A
POWER GRAB.

NO MORE. NOVA CORPS WAS
THE WAR'S FIRST FATALITY. THE
ENTIRETY OF IT ERADICATED
BEFORE WE EVEN KNEW WE
WERE UNDER ATTACK.



IN THE WAKE OF WAR, THERE
MUST BE ACCOUNTABILITY. THERE
WILL BE ACCOUNTABILITY.

NOVA CORPS WILL RISE AGAIN
TO RESTORE THE RULE OF LAW.
THE TERRAN, RICHARD RIDER,
HE WILL SEE TO THAT. WHY ELSE
WOULD HE KEEP THE NAME NOVA,
IF NOT TO INSPIRE?

NOVA CORPS WILL RISE AGAIN.
UNTIL THEN, I WILL SEE TO
THOSE CALLED CENTURIONS.

I AM CALLED FIRELORD, ONCE
HERALD TO WORLD-DEVOURING
GALACTUS, WIELDER OF THE POWER
COSMIC, AND, FOR AS LONG AS NEED BE...

...I WILL
SEE THINGS
SET RIGHT.

Afterburn

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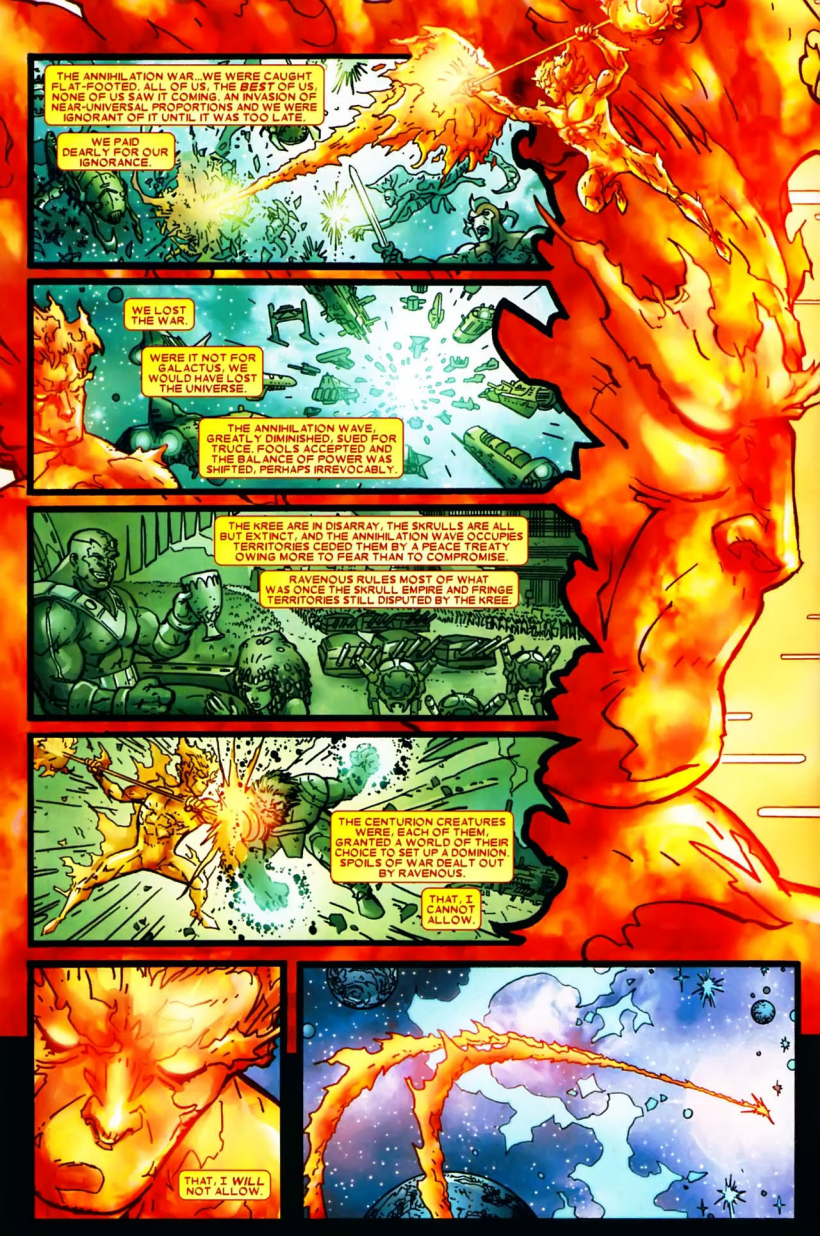
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THE ANNIHILATION WAR...WE WERE CAUGHT FLAT-FOOTED. ALL OF US, THE BEST OF US, NONE OF US SAW IT COMING. AN INVASION OF NEAR-UNIVERSAL PROPORTIONS AND WE WERE IGNORANT OF IT UNTIL IT WAS TOO LATE.

WE PAID DEARLY FOR OUR IGNORANCE.

WE LOST THE WAR.

WERE IT NOT FOR GALACTUS, WE WOULD HAVE LOST THE UNIVERSE.

THE ANNIHILATION WAVE, GREATLY DIMINISHED, SUED FOR TRUCE. FOOLS ACCEPTED AND THE BALANCE OF POWER WAS SHIFTED, PERHAPS IRREVOCABLY.

THE KREE ARE IN DISARRAY, THE SKRULLS ARE ALL BUT EXTINCT, AND THE ANNIHILATION WAVE OCCUPIES TERRITORIES CEDED THEM BY A PEACE TREATY OWING MORE TO FEAR THAN TO COMPROMISE.

RAVENOUS RULES MOST OF WHAT WAS ONCE THE SKRULL EMPIRE AND FRINGE TERRITORIES STILL DISPUTED BY THE KREE.

THE CENTURION CREATURES WERE, EACH OF THEM, GRANTED A WORLD OF THEIR CHOICE TO SET UP A DOMINION. SPOILS OF WAR DEALT OUT BY RAVENOUS.

THAT, I CANNOT ALLOW.

THAT, I WILL NOT ALLOW.

OMINA PRIME.
CEDED TERRITORIES.
ANNIHILATION DAY,
PLUS 274.



"FITTING
RECEPTION FOR
SO AUGUST A
PERSONAGE--"

"I WILL
BE THE JUDGE
OF THAT."



"TRUTH BE
TOLD, I AM
IMPRESSED."

"WE LIVE
TO SERVE THE
EMINENCE."

"WE'LL
SAID...AND MOST
FITTING."



"OTHER
WORLDS HAVE BEEN
LESS...TOLERANT OF
THE NEW ORDER."

"YES...THIS
PLEASES ME. I CHOSE
THIS WORLD FROM AMONG
THE MANY OFFERED BY THE
LORD RAVENOUS IN
GRATITUDE FOR SERVICES
RENDERED."

"A WISE
CHOICE."



"DON'T
YOU THINK
SO?"

"MOST
WISE!"

"AND FLATTERED.
MOST FLATTERED
THAT THE WARLORD SMYT
WOULD FIND OMINA
PRIME WORTHY."

"OURS
IS BUT TO
SERVE."





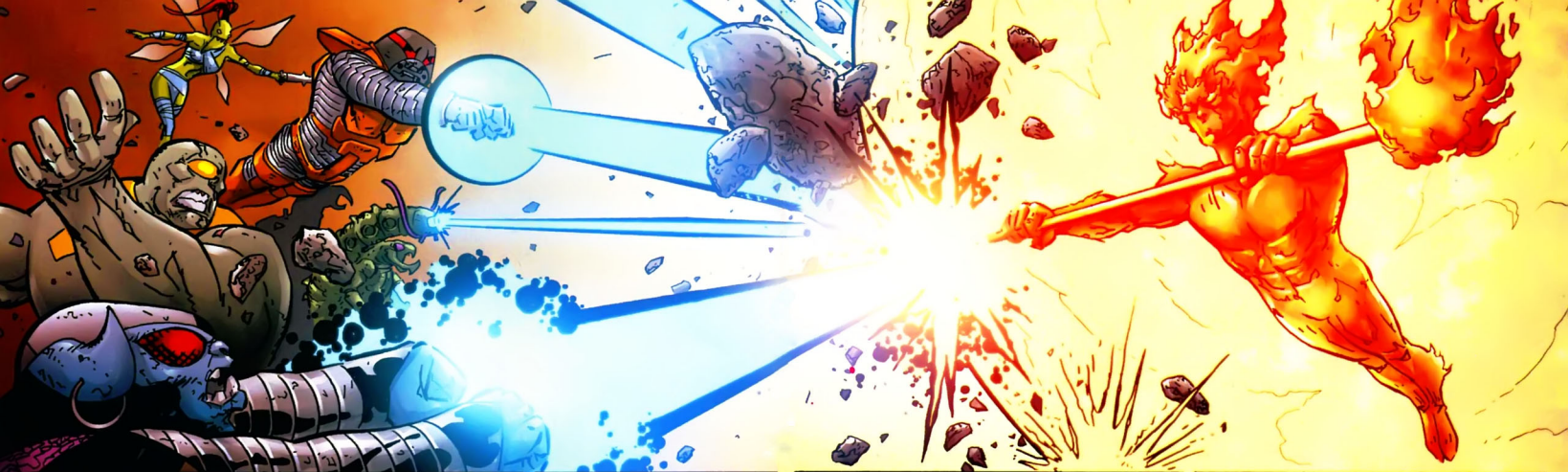


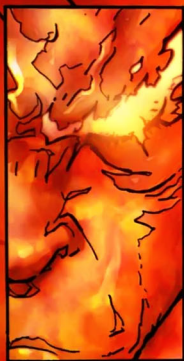


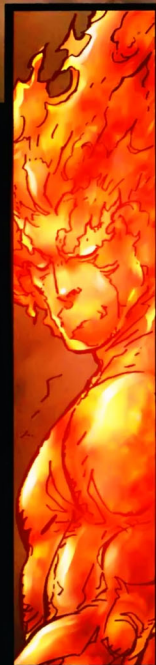














NO! A
PETITION...PLEASE
IF YOU'VE ANY MERCY
LEFT, I BEG YOU,
HEAR ME OUT.

NOT ALL ONCE
CALLED CENTURIONS ARE
LOYAL TO RAVENOUS! THERE
ARE WE FEW AS APPALLED
BY THE ACTIONS OF THE
MANY AS YOU!

WE REMEMBER
WHAT IT ONCE MEANT
TO BE CENTURIONS!



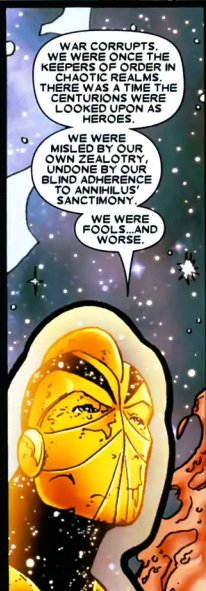
WE TOO SEEK
TO RIGHT THE WRONGS
COMMITTED BY THOSE LOYAL
TO RAVENOUS! WE HUNT
THOSE WE ONCE CALLED
BRETHREN!


WE DO SO
NOT OUT OF ANGER,
NOR RETRIBUTION, NOR
ATONEMENT! WE DO SO
OUT OF SHAME!

WE DO NOT
STAND WITH THOSE
SERVING RAVENOUS!
YOUR CAUSE IS
OURS!

DO WE DIE BY
YOUR HAND BECAUSE
WE STILL HONOR
WHAT IT MEANT TO BE
CENTURIONS?







KNOW THIS,
CENTURION. YOU
LIVE BY MY
TOLERANCE.


THE PATH YOU
HAVE NOW CHOSEN
DOES NOT EXONERATE
YOU FROM PAST
ACTIONS.

WAR IS NOT
AN EXCUSE. NOR IS
PEACE A PARDON. YOUR
KIND ARE WAR CRIMINALS.
THERE IS NOT ONE OF
YOU WITHOUT THE BLOOD
OF INNOCENTS ON
YOUR HANDS.

WHATEVER
REVELATIONS YOU
MAY HAVE COME TO DO
NOT ABSOLVE YOU OF
INNOCENT BLOOD SPILT
IN SERVICE TO A
CORRUPT CAUSE...

...ANY MORE
THAN MY OWN REVELATIONS
ABSOLVE ME OF THE BILLIONS
OF INNOCENTS KILLED WHILE
I SERVED GALACTUS.

I SERVED
UNIVERSAL CONSONANCE
AND TOOK WHAT
COMFORT I COULD FROM
THAT UNTIL IT BECAME
INTOLERABLE.



YOU SERVED A
MANIACAL BEING UNTIL
THE TRUTH BEHIND HIS
WAR BECAME KNOWN.



THIS DOES
NOT MAKE
US "KIN".
DO
RIGHT OR
DIE.



UNDERSTOOD.



WARS
NEVER
END.

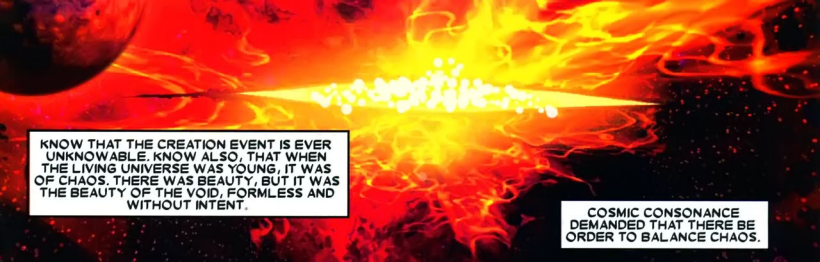
WARS LIVE ON, IF
ONLY IN MEMORY--
AND MEMORY
IS MERCILESS.

IN THE WAKE OF
WAR THERE MUST
BE ACCOUNTABILITY.
THERE WILL BE
ACCOUNTABILITY.

I AM CALLED THE FIRE ORD,
ONCE HERALD TO WORLD--
DEVOURING GALACTUS, WIELDER
OF THE POWER COSMIC, AND,
FOR AS LONG AS NEED BE...


I WILL BE
MERCILESS.

THE END.

A dramatic scene of cosmic fire and a large, dark red planet in the upper left corner. A bright, glowing line of energy or light cuts across the center of the frame.


KNOW THAT THE CREATION EVENT IS EVER UNKNOWNABLE. KNOW ALSO, THAT WHEN THE LIVING UNIVERSE WAS YOUNG, IT WAS OF CHAOS. THERE WAS BEAUTY, BUT IT WAS THE BEAUTY OF THE VOID, FORMLESS AND WITHOUT INTENT.

COSMIC CONSONANCE DEMANDED THAT THERE BE ORDER TO BALANCE CHAOS.

A wide, panoramic view of a vast, fiery field. Numerous silhouetted figures are scattered across the landscape, some appearing to be in motion or interacting with the environment. The background is a deep, dark space with a hint of a starry sky.


THE UNIVERSE DOES NOT MEASURE TIME. KNOW THEN, THAT BY WAY OF NATURAL SEQUENCE, A BALANCE WAS STRUCK AND COSMIC CONSONANCE WAS SET.

FROM CHAOS, ORDER, AND FROM ORDER, INTENT.


A closer view of the silhouetted figures from the previous panel. They are more distinct, showing various postures and some holding objects. The fiery, orange-red background is more prominent.

THEY WERE THE CARETAKERS, CONCEIVED THROUGH INTENT AND, EACH OF THEM, TASKED TO MAINTAIN COSMIC CONSONANCE.

THEY WERE WITHOUT WILL, AND WITHOUT AWARENESS OF ANYTHING BUT THE TASKS SET BEFORE THEM. THEY EXISTED TO SERVE THE LIVING UNIVERSE.

A very close-up, detailed view of the caretakers. The figures are highly stylized, with some showing more complex, almost insect-like or alien features. The fiery background is intense and vibrant.

PROEMIAL GODS, OR SO THEY CAME TO BE KNOWN, IN TIME I CAME TO KNOW THEM BY THE NAMES THEY DEALT THEMSELVES, ONCE PURPOSE EVOLVED INTO AWARENESS.



ANTIPHON THE OVERSEER, FIRST
AMONG EQUALS, TASKED WITH
MONITORING COSMIC CONSONANCE.

BRIO OF LIFE, TASKED
WITH THE WELFARE OF
FLEDGLING LIFE-FORMS.

DIABLERI OF CHAOS,
BECAUSE ORDER
UNCHECKED LEADS
TO ENTROPY.

AGIS OF ALL
SORROWS, TASKED
WITH CULLING THE
LIVING UNIVERSE
OF DIVERGENCES
AND ABERRATIONS.

TENEBOUS OF THE DARKNESS
BETWEEN, TASKED WITH
THE BLACK, THE LIVING MATTER
THAT BINDS THE UNIVERSE AND
MAKES IT WHOLE.

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IT WAS THROUGH DIABLERI THAT
THE CHAOS SPRITES CAME TO BE.
BEINGS BORN OF CHAOS,
POWERFUL BEYOND MEASURE.

THESE WERE DIABLERI'S EYES AND EARS,
MINUTE SENTINELS TASKED BY THEIR
MASTER TO SOW CHAOS AMID ORDER.
THESE TOO SERVED COSMIC CONSONANCE.




THE PROEMIAL GODS SHEPHERDED THE
YOUNG UNIVERSE, MAINTAINING THE
DELICATE BALANCE BETWEEN ORDER
AND CHAOS. AND THE LIVING UNIVERSE
EXPANDED AND FLOURISHED.



LIFE THRIVED ON COUNTLESS
WORLDS, EACH LIFE-FORM UNIQUE,
EACH, BY CHOICES MADE AND
ACTIONS TAKEN, SERVING COSMIC
CONSONANCE.

AND SO WERE THE
PROEMIAL GODS MUCH
DIMINISHED AND THEIR
AGE ENDED.

BUT PURPOSE HAD LONG AGO EVOLVED
INTO AWARENESS AND AWARENESS HAD BECOME
DARK AMBITION. DIABLERI OF CHAOS WOULD
NOT SEE HIMSELF DIMINISHED AND THEREFORE
SOUGHT TO REMAKE THE UNIVERSE IN HIS IMAGE.



TO THIS END, THROUGH
GUILE AND CANT,
DIABLERI CORRUPTED THE
PURPOSE OF THE
PROEMIAL GODS AND
MANY CAME TO
EMBRACE HIS DARK
AMBITION, FOREMOST
AMONG THEM,
TENEBOUS OF THE
DARKNESS BETWEEN
AND AEGIS OF ALL
SORROWS.

SO WERE THE
PROEMIAL GODS SET
AGAINST ONE ANOTHER.
THERE WAS WAR...
AND GODS DIED.

HAD DIABLERI
NOT BROUGHT THE
WAR TO GALACTUS,
HE MIGHT HAVE
PREVAILED.

HIS BLIND
AMBITION WAS HIS
UNDOING. GALACTUS IS
OF GREATER PURPOSE.
GALACTUS KNEW THE
VOID AND THE SPECTRAL
WASTE FROM WHICH
THE VOID WAS
SHAPED.

GALACTUS IS
OF POWER!

GALACTUS'
WAS THE HAND
THAT SLEW DIABLERI,
GALACTUS' THE HAND
THAT IMPRISONED
TENEBOUS AND
AEGIS.

**DEEP SPACE.
UNCHARTED.**

THE
KYLN.

THE KYLN.
MASSIVE POWER
GENERATORS OF
UNKNOWN ORIGIN
BUT CLEAR
PURPOSE.

ALTERED BY
YOUR HAND TO SUIT
YOUR NEED.

A FIT PRISON
FOR FALLEN GODS;
POWERED BY THE CRUNCH,
BY THE ENERGY SURGE
GENERATED BY THE EXPANDING
UNIVERSE. THE ENERGIES THAT
BIRTHED THEM WOULD BIND
THEM FOR ALL TIME...OR SUCH
WAS GALACTUS' INTENT.

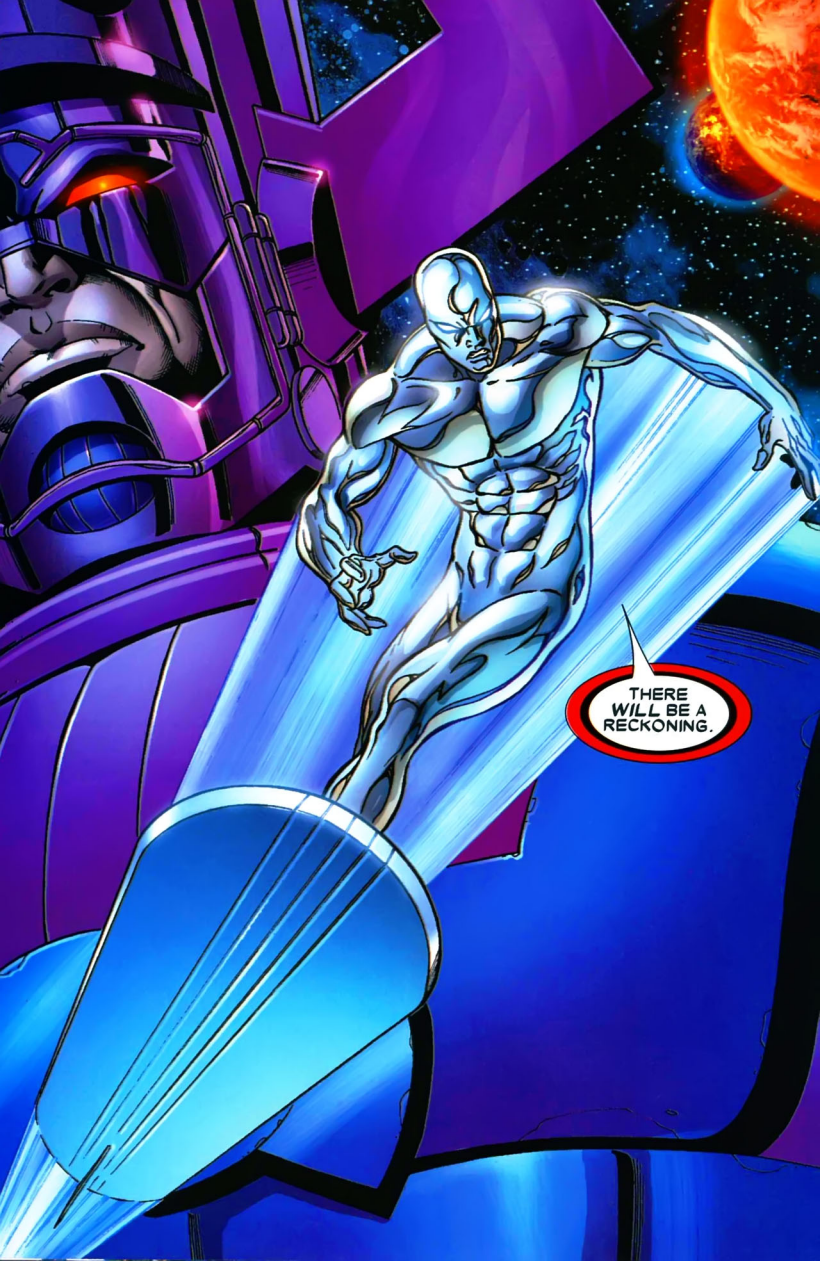
OF ALL THOSE FREED, NONE POSE A
GREATER THREAT THAN TENEBOUS
AND AEGIS. STRIKING AGAINST
GALACTUS WAS MERELY AN ACT
OF VENGEANCE. GIVEN TIME,
THEY WILL STRIKE AGAINST
THE VERY UNIVERSE.

THEY MUST
NOT BE GIVEN THAT
TIME. FIND THEM, HERALD.
GALACTUS WOULD SEE
THIS ENDED.

THEY STILL HARBOR
DIABLERI'S DARK AMBITIONS.
GIVEN TIME, THEY WILL MOVE
TO DISCIPLINE THIS UNIVERSE,
ENFORCE ORDER AS THEY
WOULD HAVE IT.

UNTIL THE
KYLN WAS DESTROYED
BY THE ANNIHILATION
WAVE.

AS YOU
WILL.



THERE
WILL BE A
RECKONING.

IT IS MUCH
CHANGED, THIS
UNIVERSE.

IT HAS
MATURED.

AND
BECOME *FERAL*.
IT HAS FORSAKEN
STRUCTURE. TOO MUCH
IS LEFT TO RANDOM
EVENT.

THIS UNIVERSE
LACKS DISCIPLINE. COSMIC
CONSONANCE CANNOT
BE LEFT TO RANDOM
EVENTS. WHERE ARE THE
CARETAKERS?

FORSAKEN,
EVEN AS WE WERE
FORSAKEN?

BLINDED BY
THEIR OWN PETTY
CONCERNS, MORE
LIKELY... IF SUCH
CARETAKERS EVEN
EXIST.



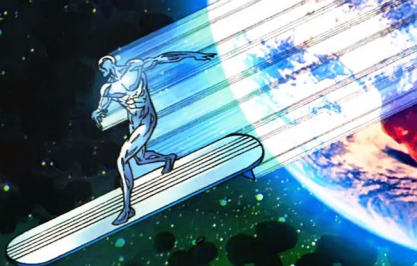
WE EXIST. OF
ALL THE PROEMIAL
GODS, CAN ONLY
TENEBOUS AND AEGIS
REMAIN TO FINISH WHAT
WAS ONCE BEGUN?

THE DEVOURER
SAW FIT TO IMPRISON
US RATHER THAN
EXPUNGE US FROM
EXISTENCE.

THEN THERE
IS HOPE? OTHERS
OF OUR BRETHREN
MIGHT STILL
EXIST?



"THERE IS
ALWAYS
HOPE."



THEIR ENERGY SIGNATURES STAND
OUT LIKE TWIN BEACONS. THEY
MAKE NO EFFORT TO CLOAK
THEMSELVES FROM DISCOVERY.

JUST AS
WELL.



NO CLOAK, HOWEVER WELL-
WROUGHT, CAN HIDE THEM FROM
ME. I CAN TRACK A GRAIN OF DUST
THROUGH THE INFINITE VOID OF
SPACE. CAN SENSE THE PRESENCE
OF ANY LIVING BEING I SEEK.



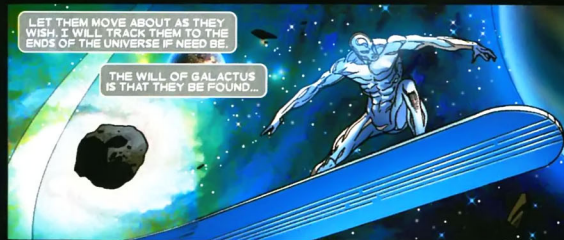
HOLD! THEIR ENERGY
SIGNATURES HAVE
BLINKED OUT! THEY
ARE GONE! HOW IS
THIS POSSIBLE?

NO, NOT GONE, BUT MOVED IN THE
BLINK OF AN EYE TO A POINT SO
DISTANT THAT THEIR TRAIL IS A
MERE WHISPER AMID COSMIC DIN.



LET THEM MOVE ABOUT AS THEY
WISH. I WILL TRACK THEM TO THE
ENDS OF THE UNIVERSE IF NEED BE.

THE WILL OF GALACTUS
IS THAT THEY BE FOUND...



...HIS WILL
BE DONE.

OUR MILLENNIA-LONG IMPRISONMENT, REDUCED TO RUBBLE.

THERE IS NO SATISFACTION HERE, ONLY A REKINDLING OF MY ANGER AT THE INJUSTICE DONE US BY THE DEVOURER.

GALACTUS WAS GIVEN HIS DUE. THE DEVOURER IS NO LONGER OF CONSEQUENCE.

ANTIPHON THE OVERSEER.

HE LIVES?

HE DOES NOT.

HE WAS THE WEAKEST OF US, TASKED WITH SEEING ALL BUT FORBIDDEN TO ACT. HIS WAS THE MOST VULNERABLE FORM, FORM FITTED TO FUNCTION.

OF US ALL, ONLY ANTIPHON STOOD NEUTRAL. WHY WOULD THE DEVOURER IMPRISON ONE WHO REJECTED DIABLER'S AMBITION?

PERHAPS THE OVERSEER CAME TO EMBRACE IT OVER TIME. PERHAPS HE TOO CAME TO RESENT BEING DIMINISHED.

THIS DOES NOT BODE WELL. WHAT IF WE TWO ARE ALL THAT IS LEFT TO FINISH WHAT WAS ONCE BEGUN?

THEN WE DO WHAT MUST BE DONE TO RESTORE DISCIPLINE TO THE LIVING UNIVERSE. OURS MUST BE THE GUIDING HAND.

SO MUCH TO UNDO. SO MUCH TO MAKE RIGHT.



MADNESS!

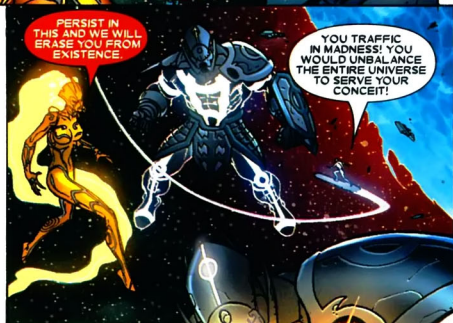
COSMIC
CONSONANCE IS IN A
CONSTANT STATE OF FLUX,
IMBALANCES CORRECTED BY
NATURAL ORDER. NO ONE
WILL CAN EVER BE IMPOSED.
EVEN THANOS CAME TO
LEARN THAT.

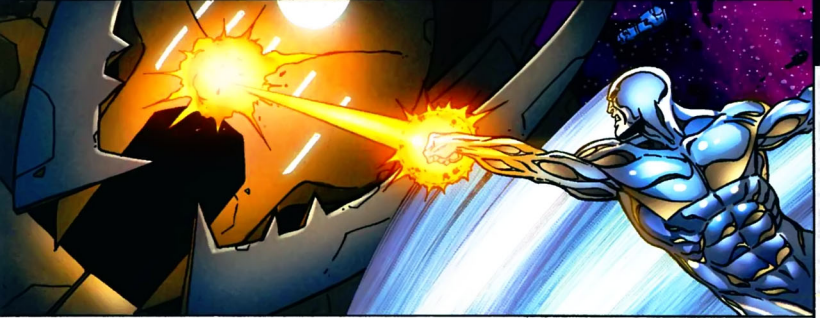
THESE TWO
ARE BLINDED TO
CONSEQUENCE BY
AMBITION.

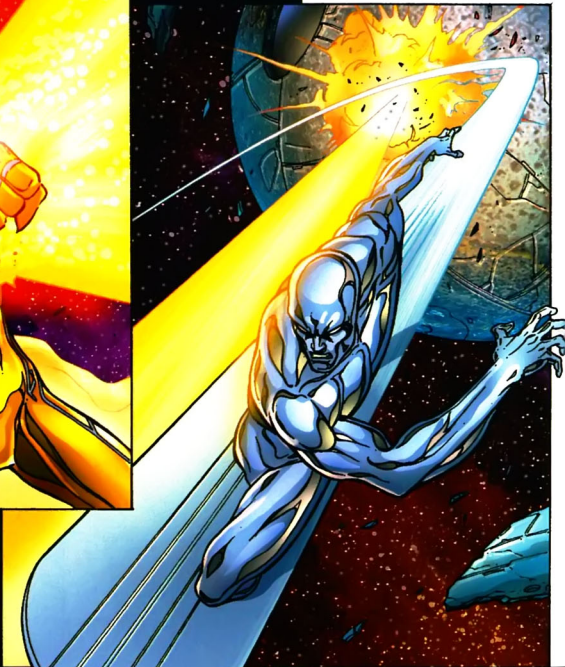
THIS GOES
NO FURTHER.
MY COURSE IS
CLEAR, SUMMON
GALACTUS...

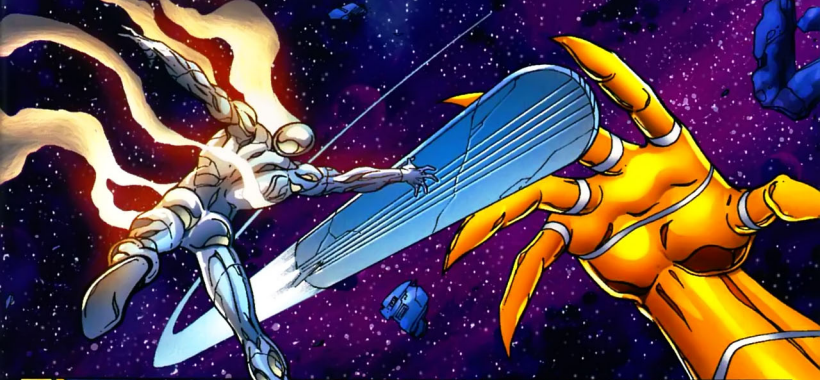
...THEN HOLD
THEM HERE UNTIL
GALACTUS RENDERS
JUDGEMENT.

I WILL
HOLD THEM
TO THE LAST OF
MY ENDURANCE.
I WILL HOLD
THEM!













ENOUGH OF THIS. THE HERALD WILL DIE OF WOUNDS SUSTAINED.

AND SHOULD THE DEVOURER FOLLOW?

HE TOO SHALL DIE.

THEIR POWER DWARFS MINE. I CANNOT WITHSTAND THEM. THEY DRAW POWER FROM THE CRUNCH, FROM THE ENERGIES THAT BIRTHED THEM...

THE ENERGIES THAT BIRTHED THEM!

DARE I CHANNEL THE ENERGIES OF THE CRUNCH, BEND THE VERY ESSENCE OF THE CREATION EVENT TO MY WILL?

I CHANNEL THE COSMIC ENERGY THAT IS THE UNIVERSE'S BOUNTY; SUCH IS THE GIFT GIVEN TO ME BY GALACTUS' TOUCH.

NO...
NNNGH...CHOICE THEY MUST BE HELD!

AND IF THE SILVER SURFER IS CONSUMED IN THE ACT...

...SO BE IT!









HE STILL LIVES, BUT BARELY SO.

NEVER, IN ALL THE MILLENNIA THAT GALACTUS HAS SERVED COSMIC CONSONANCE, HAS GALACTUS BEEN SERVED WITH GREATER FIDELITY.

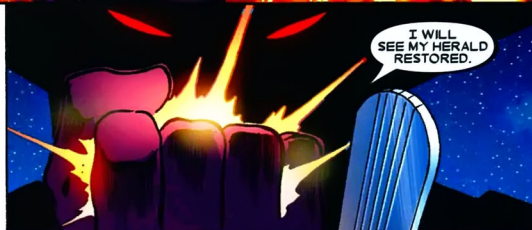


TO CHANNEL THE ENERGIES OF THE CRUNCH, ENERGIES THAT NOT EVEN GALACTUS CAN LONG WITHSTAND WITHOUT BEING CONSUMED...A FOOLHARDY ACT OF VALOR, HERALD.

HIS VERY ESSENCE IS IRRADIATED. THE ENERGIES OF THE CRUNCH DEVOUR HIM FROM WITHIN. HE DIES EVEN AS I WATCH.



NO. THE SILVER SURFER WILL NOT DIE THIS DAY. GALACTUS WILL NOT ALLOW IT.



I WILL SEE MY HERALD RESTORED.



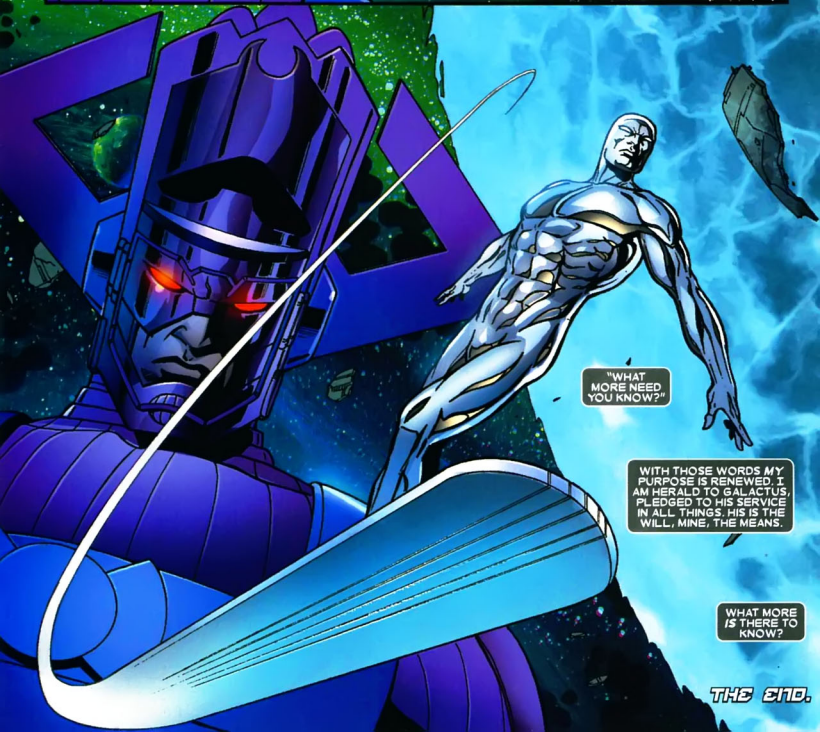
ARISE, NORRIN RADD, CALLED SILVER SURFER, MOST FAVORED OF GALACTUS. KNOW THAT YOU HAVE SERVED WELL AND TRUE.

TENEBOUS... AEGIS...



GONE. THE LIVING UNIVERSE HAS RECLAIMED THEM.

RECLAIMED? I...



THE END.