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EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!

# the AVENGERS



INFERNO IS WRECKING THAT CABLE CAR!

AND IF WE DON'T STOP HIM-- THE WHOLE CITY IS DOOMED!



## INFERNO UNLEASHED!

And there came a day when Earth's mightiest heroes found themselves united against a common threat. On that day, the Avengers were born—to fight the foes no single hero could withstand!

# STAN LEE PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

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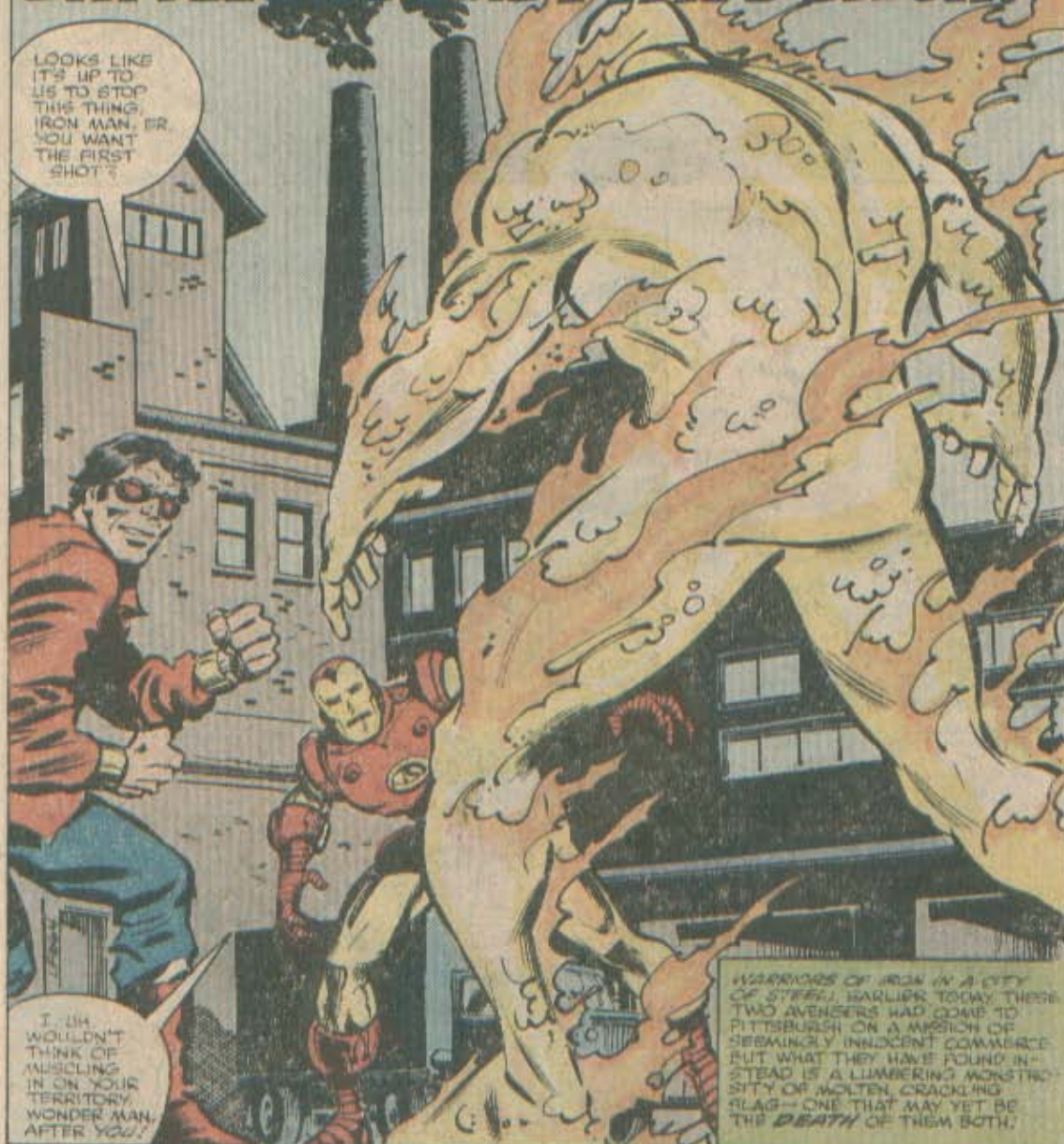
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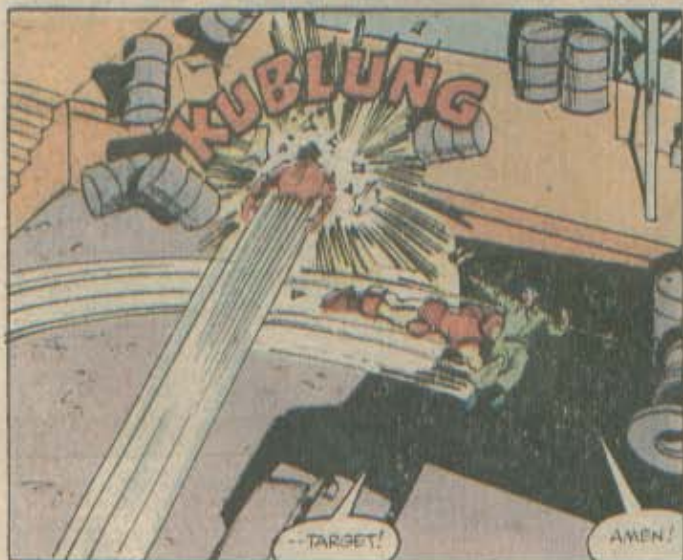
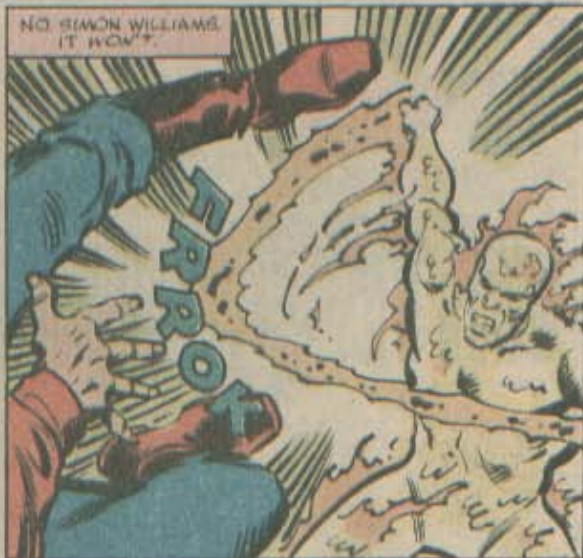
## BATTLEGROUND: PITTSBURGH!

LOOKS LIKE  
IT'S UP TO  
US TO STOP  
THIS THING,  
IRON MAN. OR  
YOU WANT  
THE FIRST  
SHOT?



WARRIORS OF IRON IN A CITY  
OF STEEL. EARLIER TODAY THESE  
TWO AVENGERS HAD COME TO  
PITTSBURGH ON A MISSION OF  
SEEMINGLY INNOCENT COMMERCE.  
BUT WHAT THEY HAVE FOUND IN-  
STEAD IS A LUMBERING MONSTRO-  
SITY OF MOLTEN, CRACKLING  
FLAME—ONE THAT MAY YET BE  
THE DEATH OF THEM BOTH.

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... AS IF HIS FLAME-FLOCKED EYES HOLD MORE THAN THE BEARING HEAT OF HATRED, AS MOST AS IF THEY HIDE AS WELL THE BITTER SHADOW OF--



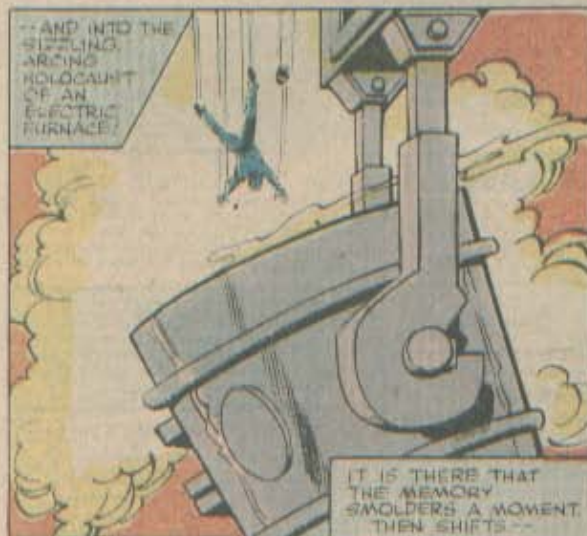
--MEMORY: A MAN NAMED JOE CONROY, EMPLOYEE OF THE PARETTA STEEL MILL AND PROUD OWNER OF A TINY LIRU CHIP FOUND AFTER THE MIGHTY THOR HAD REPAIRED HIS MYSTIC HAMMER AT THAT VERY MILL--



...A MAN WHO WHILE GOING TO ASK FOR WONDER MAN'S AUTOGRAPH FOR HIS DAUGHTER, HAD BEEN DELIBERATELY KNOCKED OVER A CAT-WALK RAIL--



--AND INTO THE SIZZLING ARCING HOLOCAUST OF AN ELECTRIC FURNACE!

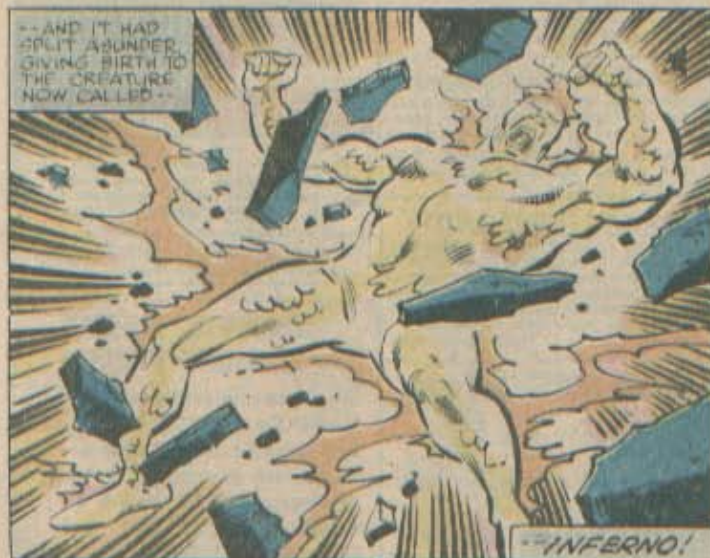


IT IS THERE THAT THE MEMORY SMOLDERS A MOMENT, THEN SHIFTS--

--TO AN INGOT GRAVEYARD OUTSIDE, WHERE METAL CONTAINING THE ATOMIZED REMAINS OF ACCIDENT VICTIMS IS STORED. THE MEMORY RECALLS THAT THE LATEST INGOT HAD BEEN DIFFERENT. IT HAD SEETHED WITH AN INNER ENERGY. IT HAD RUMBLLED, IT HAD ROILED--

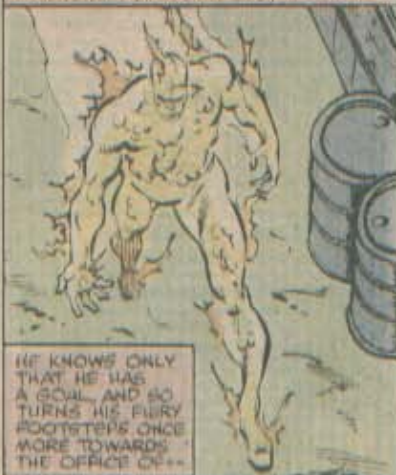


--AND IT HAD SPLIT ASUNDER, GIVING BIRTH TO THE CREATURE NOW CALLED--



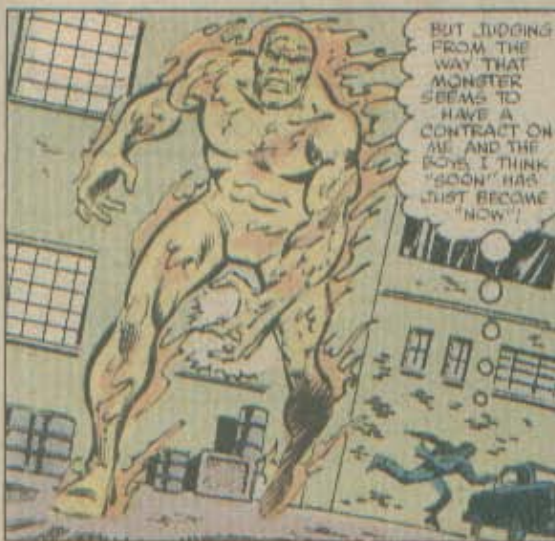
--INFERNO!

INFERNO DOESN'T KNOW THE CONNECTION BETWEEN JOE CONROY, THE MYSTIC LIRU CHIP AND HIS CURRENT EXISTENCE. AND HE DOESN'T CARE.



HE KNOWS ONLY THAT HE HAS A GOAL, AND SO TURNS HIS FURY FOOTSTEPS ONCE MORE TOWARDS THE OFFICE OF--





HE SCRAMBLES UNCERTAINLY ABOARD THE LOOSELY-TETHERED BARGE, KNOWING THAT HE CANNOT SWIM— BUT ALSO KNOWING THAT EACH FOOT HE PUTS BETWEEN HIMSELF AND THE FLAWING FIEND THAT PURSUES HIM MEANS ONE MORE HEARTBEAT OF PRECIOUS LIFE.



W-WE'RE  
FLOATIN'  
DOWN RIVER!  
I'M TRAPPED!



AND INFERNO LUMBERS IMPLACABLY ON



WHILE IN MIDCITY PITTS-BURGH...

LOOK! UP  
IN THE SKY!  
IT'S A BIRD!

IT'S A  
PLANE!

WHAT'RE  
YOU HIGH  
OR SOME  
THIN' THAT'S?



"--AN AVENGERS QUINJET!"

SET US DOWN  
IN THAT  
SQUARE  
BEAST.

RIGHT, CAP.  
JUST AS SOON  
AS WE'RE  
HORIZONTAL.

OH DO HURRY  
BEAST. WONDER  
MANY EMERGENCY  
BEEPER STOPPING  
IN MID-SIGNAL  
CAN ONLY MEAN  
ONE THING!



I KNOW WASP  
EITHER HE FORGOT  
TO CHANGE HIS  
DURACELLS-- OR  
HE'S IN BIG  
TROUBLE!



SPEAKING OF WHICH...

L-L-LOOK, I-I  
DON'T KNOW WHY  
YOU'RE AFTER  
PARETTA, B-BUT  
I'M JUST A HIRED  
HAND! A LACKEY!  
WH-WHAT DO  
YOU WANT  
WITH M--



--HUN? TH-THAT GLOWIN' STONE! THE URU CHIP! THEN YOU'RE--

--JOE! I-I DIDN'T WANNA KNOCK YA OVER THAT CATWALK! HONEST, I-I WAS JUST FOLLOWIN' ORDERS, I--



--AGK! SLIPPED! I-I'M FALLIN'! B-BUT I CAN'T SWIM! I'LL DROWN!



NO, TIM TURPIN, AS FATE WOULD HAVE IT, YOU WON'T EVEN TOUCH THE WATER. THIS MUST BE YOUR LUCKY DAY...

FOR AN EXTENDED MOMENT INFERNO STANDS STARING AT THE DEATH TWITCHES OF A MURDERER...



...AND THEN TURNS FROM THE BLOOD-SLICK SMEAR THAT WAS ONCE A MAN--



--AND WALKS TO THE FAR END OF THE SLOWLY DRIFTING BARGE...

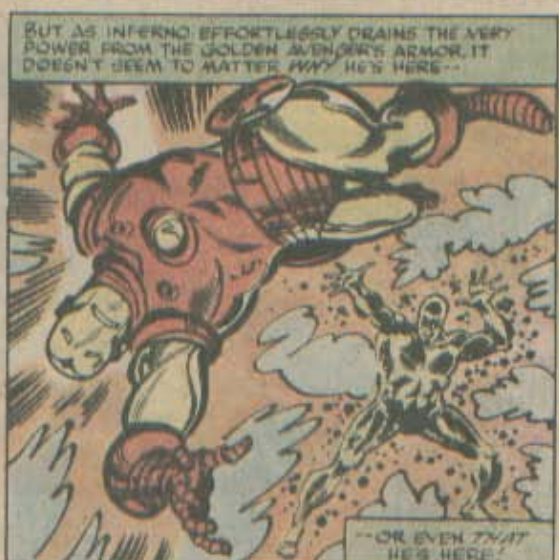
...WHERE HE STEPS OFF, CREATING HISsing FOOT-FALLS AS HE PROCEEDS FROM SHALLOWS TO SHORE



FOR HE KNOWS THAT THOUGH HIS QUEST HAS BEEN FRUITFUL, IT HAS NOT YET BEEN FULFILLED.









INFERNO MERELY ANSWERS WITH A SNIARL, RADIATING A BLAST FURNACE OF HEAT SO INTENSE THAT EVEN THE WASP'S HEROIC FORTITUDE IS TAXED TO ITS LIMITS...



...AND BEYOND!



WHOOOP! LOOKS LIKE I'M JUST IN TIME WITH A BIG HAND FOR THE LITTLE LADY! WHEW.



BUT INFERNO'S GETTING AWAY! WE HAVE TO HEAD HIM OFF!



WAIT, SIMON! WE'RE NOT GETTING ANYWHERE LIKE THIS!



IRON MAN'S RIGHT, OUR ONLY HOPE OF DEFEATING THAT MENACE IS STRATEGY. WE NEED A PLAN!

I NEED A PLAN! I KNOW--I'LL RUN AWAY!



YEAH! WHAT A PLAN!



TAXI!

GET ME TO THE DIQUESNE INCLINE FAST! MAKE IT IN UNDER FIVE MINUTES AND THERE'S A C-NOTE IN IT FOR YOU!



INCLINE, C-NOTE, GORTIA, YAWNE





--AND THUS HE THINKS NOT OF THE CONSEQUENCES AS HE SETS THE TOPPLED TROLLEY CAR ON FIRE. HIS ACTIONS ARE NOT INTENTIONALLY CRUEL; THEY ARE NOT INTENTIONALLY ANYTHING. THEY ARE MERELY NECESSARY...



...AND EFFECTIVE!

THERE'S INFERNO! HE'S TRUCKIN' UP THAT INCLINE!

YEAH, BUT LOOK AT THE TROLLEY! THERE'RE PEOPLE INSIDE!



BLAST! WE CAN'T TAKE A CHANCE ON THOSE PEOPLE'S LIVES BY SPLITTING THE GROUP UP!

AGREED, IRON MAN. SIMON...?

I SEE IT, CAP.



THE DOORWAYS ARE BLOCKED BY FLAME, SO SINCE THE VISION AND I ARE THE STRONGMEN OF THE GROUP--



-- I GUESS WE'LL JUST HAVE TO MAKE A NEW DOORWAY!

KRRATCH

AND A SPLIT SECOND LATER A RED WHITE AND BLUE AVENGER DROPS DEFTLY THROUGH THAT OPENING...



...ONLY TO RE-EMERGE THE FOLLOWING SPLIT SECOND WITH A PAIR OF STARTLED AND GRATEFUL TRAVELERS!



OKAY, MS. M... IF CAP CAN DO IT, SO CAN I.



BEASTS AWAY!

YIKE! THAT PLACE IS HOTTER THAN STUDIO 54 ON A SATURDAY NIGHT!



MY SENSORS INDICATE THAT THIS IS THE LAST REMAINING HUMAN.



TH-TH- THANKS, BUDDY! Y-YOU CAN RIDE FREE ON MY CAR ANY TIME!

AND INSIDE...



I'D BETTER MAKE THIS A QUICK PASS. THE HEAT IS SIMPLY RUINING MY EYE SHADOW!

VISUAL CHECK CONFIRMS THE VISION'S READINGS-- ALL PASSENGERS CLEAR.



THEN WE'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO OUR PRIME OBJECTIVE!







— EH? WHY ARE YOU SHOWING ME YOUR HAND? WHAT'S THAT PIECE OF—

GASP!

CONROY!



I— IT CAN'T BE! YOU'RE DEAD! I KNOW YOU'RE DEAD!

I HAD TURPIN KILL YOU!



DON'T YOU SEE? I HAD TO DO IT! IF YOU HAD TOLD THE COPS OR THE MAGGIA ABOUT MY NUMBERS SCAM, I WOULD'VE BEEN—

— DEAD.



BUT THEN...

SAVE THE SOB STORY, PARETTA! NO ONE'S CANCELLIN' YOUR TICKET YET!

**SPAKRESH**



THE AVENGERS! THANK HEAVEN! D-D-DON'T LET THAT THING HURT ME!

DON'T WORRY, PARETTA. IRON MAN'S RIGGED HIS POWER STORAGE PODS FOR FUSION RELEASE! WE'RE GOING TO BLOW THIS FIRE MONSTER INTO CINDERS!



AND THEN WE'RE TAKING YOU TO THE NEAREST PRECINCT HOUSE, MISTER. WE HEARD YOUR CONFESSION FROM OUTSIDE!

OH, UH, YOU DIDN'T REALLY BELIEVE THAT, DID YOU?

BUT FROM THE LOOK IN CAPTAIN AMERICA'S STEELY EYES, VINCE PARETTA KNOWS THAT HE HAS BEEN BELIEVED AND MORE IMPORTANTLY--



-- INFERNO KNOWS AS WELL.

THROUGH THE BLAZING BEHEMOTH'S REACTION TO THAT KNOWLEDGE IS SOMEWHAT UNEXPECTED!



I THINK INFERNO'S GOTTEN WHAT HE WAS AFTER-- HE WON'T HURT ANYONE ELSE, AND IF WHAT PARETTA SAID IS TRUE, THE POOR CREATURE'S SUFFERED ENOUGH.

LET'S LEAVE HIM IN PEACE.



PEACE? NO, INFERNO WILL NEVER HAVE PEACE, ALL HE'LL HAVE ARE SHATTERED RECOLLECTIONS...



...IMAGES OF A LITTLE GIRL NAMED ANNIE, A LAUGHING WOMAN NAMED DARLEEN... AND A LOVING HUSBAND AND FATHER NAMED JOE CONROY.



FOR MOST MEN, THAT WOULD NOT BE NEARLY ENOUGH, FOR INFERNO...



...IT HAS TO BE.



NEXT ISSUE: THE RETURN OF THE MAN CALLED... PEREZ! YES, GORGEOUS GEORGE BRINGS HIS PRODIGIOUS PENCILS BACK TO THE EARTH'S WISHTIEST HEROES IN A TALE CALLED...

# INTERLUDE!