

THE SHOWDOWN OF THE CENTURY!



VERSUS MARVEL COMICS

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"AMALGAM:

ANY COMBINATION OR MIXTURE OF DIVERSE ELEMENTS."

"HYENA:

ANY OF SEVERAL CARNIVOROUS MAMMALS OF THE GENERA HYENA OR XEOXUR OF AFRICA OR ASIA, HAVING POWERFUL JAWS, RELATIVELY SHORT HIND LIMBS, AND COARSE HAIR."

"DARK CLAW..."

... DARK CLAW IS NOT IN THE "AMERICAN HERITAGE DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE." HE IS UNIQUE AND UNDEFINABLE...

... AND MUCH PREFERENCES IT THAT WAY.



HYENA!
I'M WARNING
YOU--!

WELL,
NOW, THANKS
FOR THE WARN-
ING, DARK
MEAT! LUCKILY
FOR ME--

BOOM!

--WARNINGS
RUIN YOUR
ELEMENT OF
SURPRISE!

ESPECIALLY
WHEN IT COMES
TO GIVING YOU BACK
YOUR LITTLE EXPLO-
SIVE TOYS!



KRAK!

YOU'LL
FIND WE STILL
HAVE A SURPRISE
OR TWO UP OUR
SLEEVES,
HYENA!

SUPER-SOLDIER!



ISN'T IT
FUN WHEN THEY
SHOUT YOUR NAME
IN FEAR?




"FEAR" I
CAN RELATE
TO.


I NEVER
QUITE GOT
THE HANG OF
"FUN."




THEY FIGHT
THEIR MEAN-
INGLESS
SKIRMISHES...



... ALL UN-
KNOWING OF
THE TRUE
WAR AROUND
THEM.




HE WAS
WRONG. THE
OLD GUARDIAN
KNOWS NOW
HE WAS
WRONG.

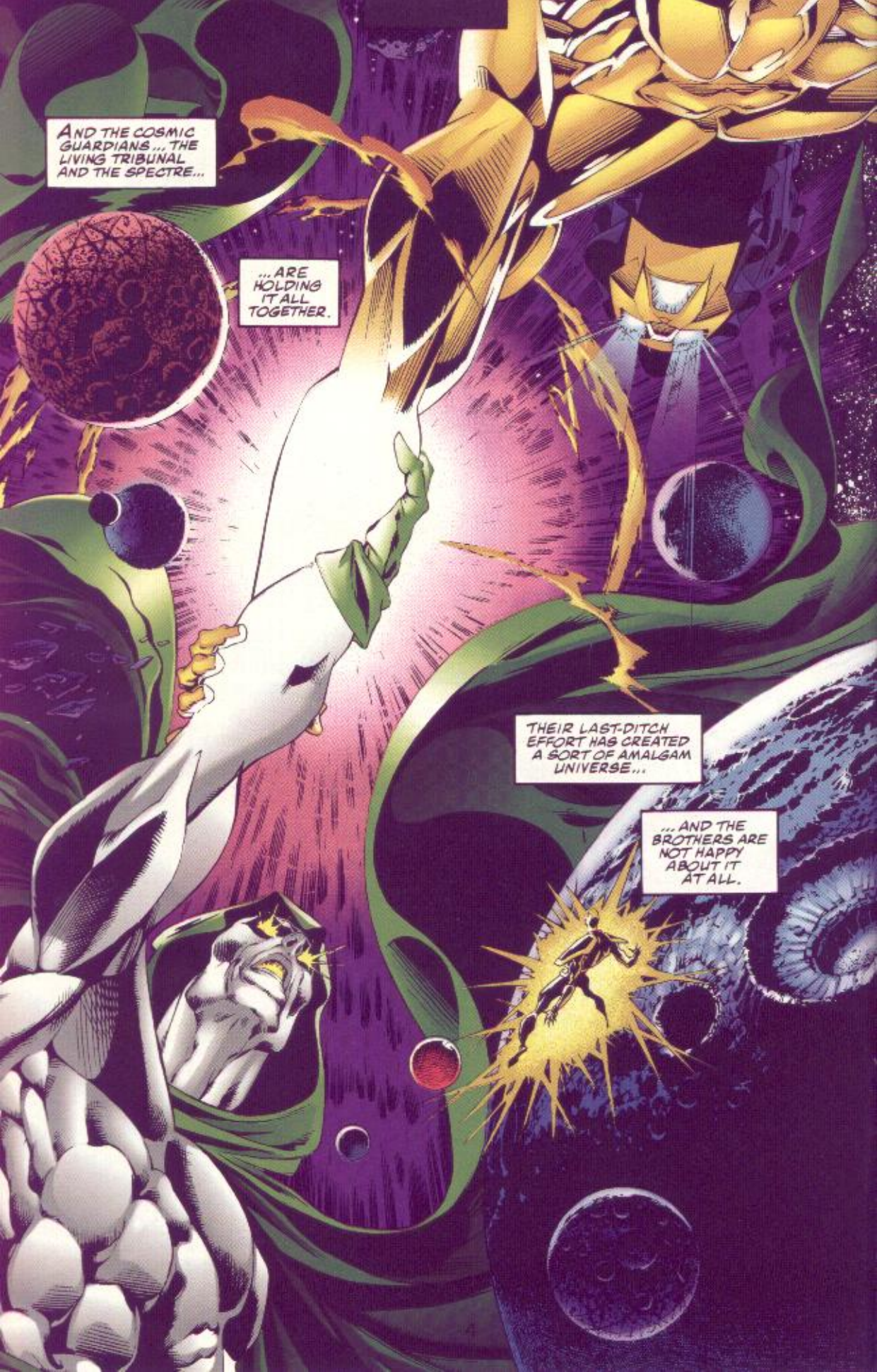


HE HAD THOUGHT
THE MERGING
WAS THE
DOING OF THE
BROTHERS.

IT
WAS
NOT.



AS A RESULT OF THE
WARS, ONE OF THE
UNIVERSES FACED
BEING TORN AWAY AND
HURLED INTO
OBLIVION...

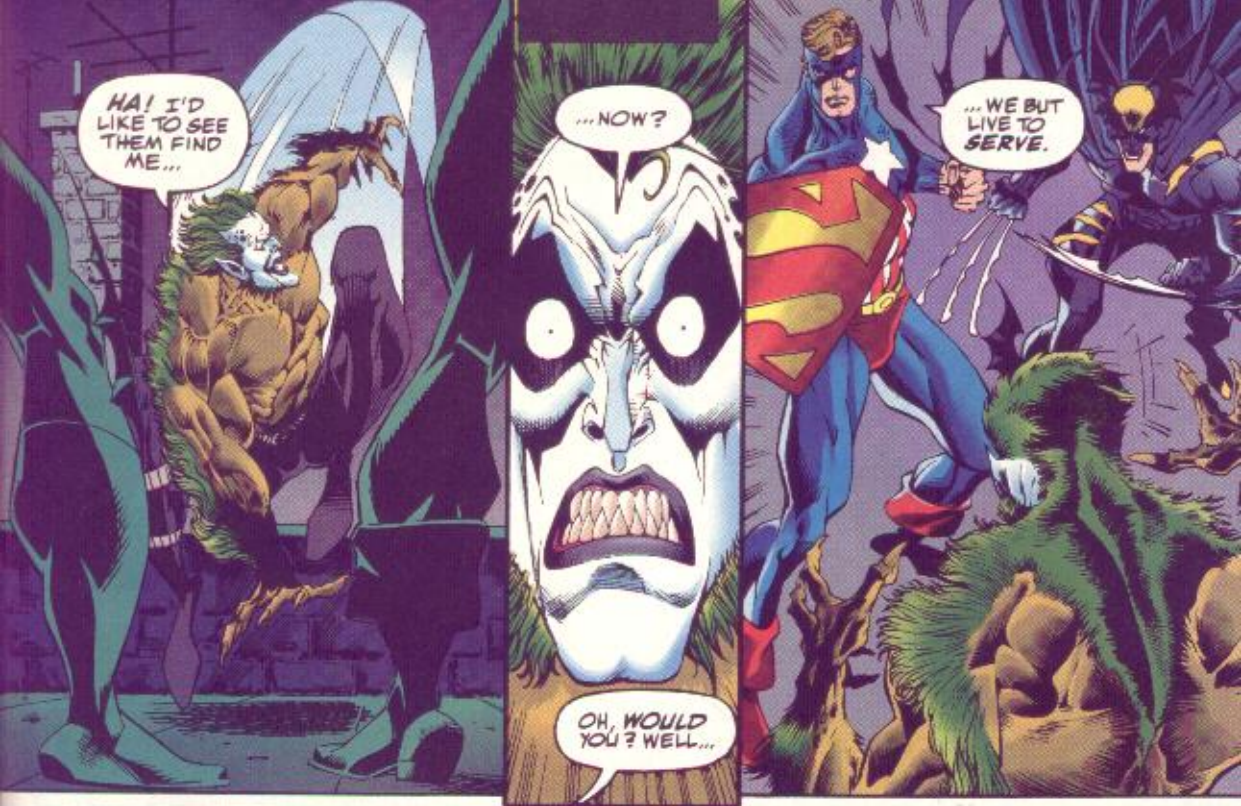


AND THE COSMIC
GUARDIANS... THE
LIVING TRIBUNAL
AND THE SPECTRE...

...ARE
HOLDING
IT ALL
TOGETHER.

THEIR LAST-DITCH
EFFORT HAS CREATED
A SORT OF AMALGAM
UNIVERSE...

...AND THE
BROTHERS ARE
NOT HAPPY
ABOUT IT
AT ALL.



HA! I'D LIKE TO SEE THEM FIND ME...

...NOW?

... WE BUT LIVE TO SERVE.

OH, WOULD YOU? WELL...



GIVE IT UP, HYENA!

THE HYENA, GIVE UP?!

DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH!

KTSSH!



YOU WAIT FOR HIM DOWNSTAIRS.

I'LL GO THROUGH AND FLUSH OUT THE GARBAGE.



ELSEWHERE...

MY... MY GOD...



...WHERE AM I?!

HIS MIND THREATENS TO SHUT DOWN...

...AND THEN, ALMOST AS AN ACT OF SELF-PRESERVATION...



... HIS POWER KICKS IN... AND JUST LIKE THAT, ACCESS IS...



BACK! I MADE IT! I~

GEEZ! WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?!

WITH ALL THE CONTESTS TO WORRY ABOUT, A BEAUTY CONTEST AIN'T ONE OF 'EM.

LISTEN FAST, KID: I PULLED FATE'S STRINGS TO GET SOLDIER AND CLAW NEARBY...

...WITH SOME HELP FROM SPEC AND THE TRIB...

...BUT NOW IT'S UP TO YOU. I'VE DONE ALMOST EVERYTHING I COULD.



BUT I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M DOING! I'VE NO CONTROL OVER--!

WHEN I SAID I'D DONE "ALMOST" EVERYTHING... WELL, HERE'S THE REST.

'BYE, KID. BY THE WAY...



...MY NAME'S MORTY. GLAD WE MET.

WHAT THE DEVIL? AN EXPLOSION...

...BUT... SILENT?



AH! A POTENTIAL HOSTAGE!



HEY! SLIM!

MR. POTATO HEAD, LOOK OVER HERE!



BOY, I DON'T USUALLY HAVE TO WORK THIS HARD TO GET SOMEONE'S ATTENTION!



GO AWAY.

HUH? WHAT'S WITH THE LIGHTSHOW--?



AW, NUTS! DOES EVERYBODY IN THIS 'BURG HAVE SUPERPOW--?

YOU! WHERE THE HELL IS HYENA?



IT DOESN'T MATTER. NOTHING MATTERS.



IT MATTERS TO US, SON, BECAUSE WE'RE NOT THE TYPE TO LET CRIMINALS GET AWAY...

NO, YOU'RE NOT. YOU'RE NOT THAT TYPE. YOU'RE ARCHETYPES...

...AND I HIDE CRYSTAL SHARDS IN YOU... FRAGMENTS OF THE BROTHERS OF REALITY...



...THE ONLY LEFTOVERS FROM THE ORIGINAL UNIVERSES THAT CREATED YOU! IT'S WHAT STRANGEFATE WAS LOOKING FOR!



STOP! WHAT ARE YOU DOING ?!?

YOU WANT TO KNOW? OKAY...



"I'M GIVING SPECTRE AND THE LIVING TRIBUNAL ACCESS TO THE POWER WITHIN YOU... AND WE'RE USING IT TO RESTORE THE UNIVERSES."


"IN OTHER WORDS..."

LET THERE BE...



...LIGHT!!





AS QUICKLY, AS DEFINITELY AS IT HAD COME TOGETHER... THE UNIVERSE THAT WAS AN AMALGAM OF TWO OTHERS BLOWS APART.

ACCESS, A TWIG CAUGHT IN A HURRICANE, IS BUFFETED MERCILESSLY, AND HE IS CONVINCED THAT THE THOUGHT CURRENTLY PASSING THROUGH HIS HEAD IS GOING TO BE HIS LAST.

AND FRUSTRATION OVERWHELMS HIM...

... HE REALIZES...

... BECAUSE IT'S REALLY A LAME THOUGHT.

THE ALLEY... THE SAME FREAKING ALLEY... I'M SO SICK OF...

WHAT WE'RE SICK OF IS BEING PAWNS.

HOW DID WE WIND UP HERE?



AWRIGHT! IT WORKED! AT LEAST... PARTIALLY.

WE'RE BACK TO THE UNIVERSES CO-EXISTING. NOW IF WE CAN JUST SEPARATE...

FIRST THINGS FIRST. WHERE ARE THE OTHERS?

I'M NOT SURE.

NOT EVEN WORTH REPEATING, REALLY.

AND THEN, WHEN TO HIS ASTONISHMENT HE DOES COME TO A HALT...

THE MOLE MAN AND HIS MINIONS ARE ENORMOUSLY CONFUSED, BLIND BY NATURE, BEFUPLED BY CIRCUMSTANCES, THERE'S ONE THING THEY DO UNDERSTAND...



...AND THAT THING IS A CHALLENGE.

MOLE MAN. SO YOU SURVIVED THIS INSANITY, DID YOU?



THAT'S MORE OF AN ACCOMPLISHMENT THAN YOU WILL ACHIEVE, HULK!

THIS CAVE IS PLEASING TO US... AND I THINK YOU WOULD BE WELL SERVED TO LEAVE!

NOW!



OH, IS THAT WHAT YOU THINK?

WELL...



...HERE'S A PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS.





BRING FORTH
OUR GREATEST
WEAPON!

OOOH, YOUR
GREATEST WEAPON!
A BIG GUN! AND HERE I
THOUGHT YOUR GREATEST
WEAPON WAS YOUR
INCREDIBLE PRE-
DICTABILITY!

OKAY!
THAT'S MORE
THAN ENOUGH
OF THAT!

THIS PLACE
HAPPENS TO BELONG
TO AN ASSOCIATE OF
MINE... SO I'LL THANK
YOU PEOPLE TO VACATE
IMMEDIATELY.



NOW THERE'S
SOMEONE I NEVER
EXPECTED TO BE
HAPPY TO SEE!



MY JAW STILL ACHES FROM OUR LAST ENCOUNTER, BUT I'LL TAKE YOU OVER THEM ANY DAY OF THE WEEK.

SUPERMAN VS. THE MOLE MEN. THIS SHOULD BE A SHORT FIGHT.



WELL, THIS IS CERTAINLY AN UNFORTUNATE TURN OF EVENTS!



COME, MY PEOPLE!



AND GOOD RIDDANCE. THANKS FOR THE ASSIST... NOT THAT I COULDN'T HAVE HANDLED IT MYSELF.

UNDERSTOOD.

GOOD. SO... DO YOU HAVE ANY CLUE WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

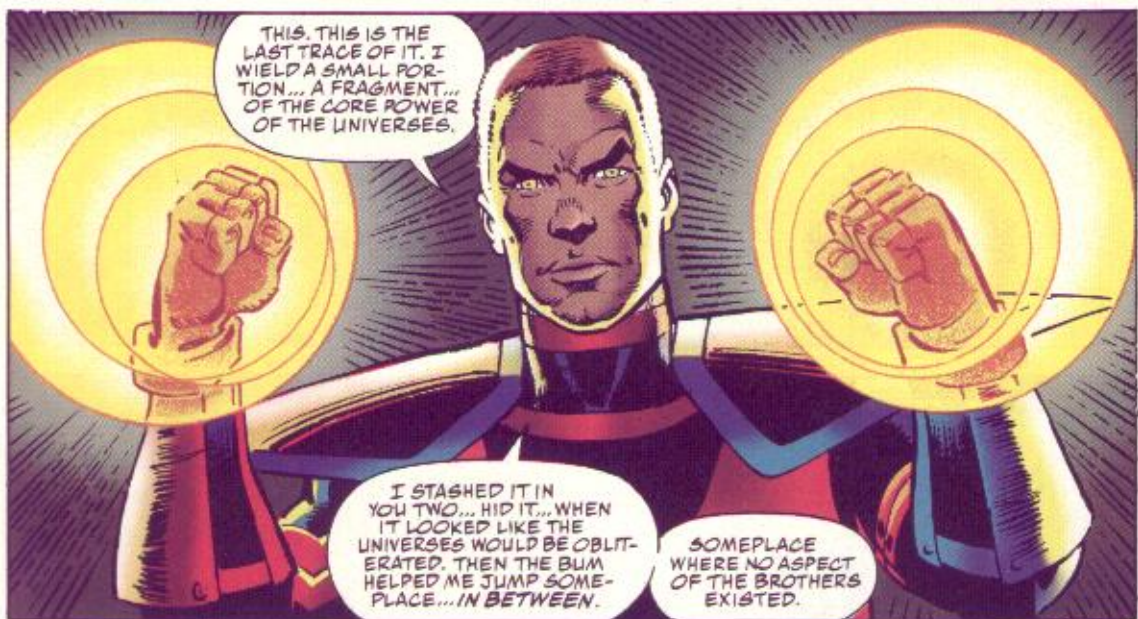
NONE. BUT WHATEVER IT WAS... I HAVE A FUNNY FEELING IT'S NOT OVER.



THERE WAS A BOX THERE... AND A HUMAN BEING.

BUT THE POWER LEFT BOTH OF THEM... THE SAME WAY IT WAS DRAWN OUT OF YOU, ALTHOUGH WITH LESS FATAL RESULTS.

WHAT POWER?



THIS, THIS IS THE LAST TRACE OF IT. I WIELD A SMALL PORTION... A FRAGMENT... OF THE CORE POWER OF THE UNIVERSES.

I STASHED IT IN YOU TWO... HID IT... WHEN IT LOOKED LIKE THE UNIVERSES WOULD BE OBLITERATED. THEN THE BUM HELPED ME JUMP SOMEPLACE... IN BETWEEN.

SOMEPLACE WHERE NO ASPECT OF THE BROTHERS EXISTED.



WHEN I REEMERGED, I HAD A DEMIGOD SORCERER ON MY TAIL, AND--

SON, DO YOU REALIZE WE'VE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT?

IT MAY NOT MATTER. THE FACT THAT WE'RE STILL HERE INDICATES OUR RATHER ODD STATUS QWO HAS BEEN RESTORED... OUR UNIVERSES COEXISTING RATHER THAN MASHED TOGETHER.

DOES THAT MEAN WE'RE STILL AT WAR?

WHILE, A UNIVERSE AWAY,
RIGHT NEXT DOOR,
BEINGS OF COSMIC PRO-
PORTIONS COMPARE NOTES...

THE UNLEASHED
ENERGIES HAVE PLACED
KEY PLAYERS IN
DIFFERENT ENVIRONS
THAN BEFORE.

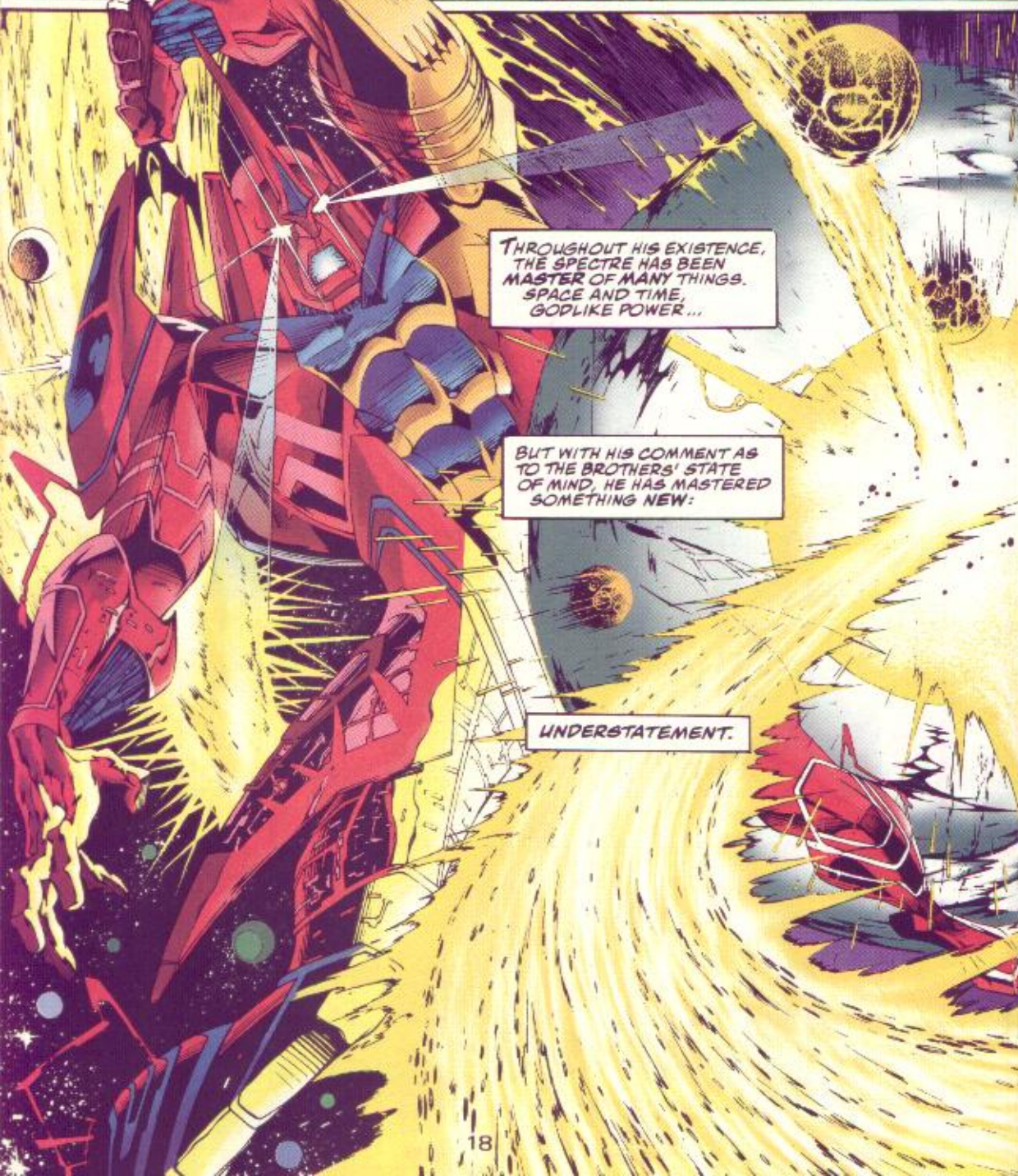
THE UNIVERSES
ARE MOMENTARILY
SAFE... STILL DISTINCT...
BUT OVERLAPPING!

BUT IT IS NOTHING
SHORT OF MIRACULOUS
THAT THEY EXIST AT
ALL.

WE HAVE ONLY DELAYED THE
INEVITABLE, THE BROTHERS
MUST BE RECONCILED... THE
BROTHERS MUST BE WILL-
ING TO COEXIST... THE
BROTHERS...

KRAKOOOM!

THE
BROTHERS...
MUST BE
ANGRY...



THROUGHOUT HIS EXISTENCE,
THE SPECTRE HAS BEEN
MASTER OF MANY THINGS.
SPACE AND TIME,
GODLIKE POWER...

BUT WITH HIS COMMENT AS
TO THE BROTHERS' STATE
OF MIND, HE HAS MASTERED
SOMETHING NEW:

UNDERSTATEMENT.

POWER IS UNLEASHED THAT
NONE HAVE EVER WITNESSED...

... AND THE SPECTRE AND
THE LIVING TRIBUNAL
ARE AWED.





AND YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO WAIT JUST A BIT LONGER.

SO WHATTAYA THINK, PORKY? MAYBE I CAN CONVINCE YOU TO SELL THE DAILY PLANET?

LIKE... NOW?



FIGURES. I OWE HIM ONE AND, AGAIN, I'M UN-APPRECIATED.

NICE COSTUME.



VENICE...

ROBIN AND JUBILEE HAVE NO IDEA HOW THEY GOT THERE...

AND DON'T CARE.



WHERE IS HE?!

WHERE HAS DARKSEID HIDDEN HIMSELF?

BUT I CAN'T STAND BY AND LET YOUR TUSSELE BRING THE CITY DOWN AROUND INNOCENT PEOPLE'S SKULLS.

UNHHH!

AND WHY DOES HE WASTE MY TIME WITH FOOLS SUCH AS YOU?

CAN'T SAY I CARE WHAT YOU DO TO LOBO, THANOS.

DI
THINK
LORD

IF Y
SO "E
OF D
PRE
EMBR

AND

IT'LL BE A COLD DAY IN HELL BEFORE I NEED YOUR HELP, YA PUNY BASTICH!

"DOWN BELOW"? DOLT! THIS SPHERE IS HELL ENOUGH FOR ANY!

THEN IT JUST GOT PRETTY CHILLY DOWN BELOW!



THANOS!

DID YOU TRULY THINK TO HIDE FROM THE LORD OF APOKOLIPS?

IF YOU ARE SO "ENAMORED" OF DEATH... PREPARE TO EMBRACE HER!



MEANTIME, IN CENTRAL PARK...

...THOSE WHO HAD RELUCTANTLY BEEN AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS...

...FIND SUDDEN AND BLESSED RELIEF IN JOINING FORCES...



...HOWEVER TEMPORARY THAT RELIEF MIGHT BE.



AND...

FOR ODIN! FOR ASGARD!

STAND DOWN AND SURRENDER!



THERE'S FIRE IN YOU. I LIKE THAT.

I'LL DESTROY IT, BUT I LIKE IT.



APPARENTLY YOU MUST HAVE THE FOLLY OF YOUR RESISTANCE EMPHASIZED TO YOU!

HAVE AT THEE, THEN!



TWENTY BLOCKS AWAY, WINDOWS SHATTER.

TEN MILES AWAY, ZOO ANIMALS ROAR.

HALF A WORLD AWAY, CHILDREN WAKE UP SCREAMING...



...THE LATTER A COMMON OCCURRENCE WHEN A BATTLE INVOLVES--





--DARKSEID! DO NOT THINK I'VE FORGOTTEN YOU!

MY HAMMER ... WHERE...?





WE HAVE TO STOP THEM!


NO WAY! DON'T YOU GET IT? I DIDN'T BELIEVE IN ANY KIND OF GOD OR GODS UNTIL THIS... AND NOW YOU WANT ME TO GO ARGUE WITH SOME?!

YOU MUST BE NUTS!



YOU JUST GET US THERE. WE'LL DO THE REST.

OH, AND AREN'T WE MR. CONFIDENT?



AWRIGHT, AWRIGHT... JUST POINT THOSE CREEPY BLANK EYEBALLS SOMEWHERE ELSE, OKAY?

I'M GONNA REGRET THIS.

FOR A MOMENT, BATMAN AND
CAPTAIN AMERICA FEEL NOTHING
... AND THEN ...

AND BEFORE THEM, THEY SEE
EXACTLY AS MUCH AS THEIR
MINDS WILL ALLOW THEM TO
GRASP. SOMETHING THAT
REPRESENTS THE BAREST
FRAGMENT OF THE REALITY,
OR UNREALITY, THAT
FACES THEM.

...THEY
CONTINUE
TO FEEL IT.

WE'RE IN
BETWEEN. IT'S NOT
A GEOGRAPHIC PLACE
... IT'S MORE A STATE
OF CONSCIOUS-
NESS.

I DON'T
UNDERSTAND...

YOU KNOW
"RACIAL MEMORY"?
THOUGHTS AND FEARS
SO INGRAINED THAT
EVERYONE HAS THEM?
FOR THAT MATTER, DID
YOU EVER HAVE
DEJA VU?

WELL...
THIS IS WHERE
ALL THAT COMES
FROM.

SO IT'S REALLY
HAPPENING... BUT
IT'S ALL IN OUR
MINDS.

FOR
SOME
REASON, I'M
COMFORTABLE
WITH THAT.

THE UNIVERSE IS HEMORRHAGING, AND THE MOST POWERFUL BEINGS ON EARTH...

...SUFFOCATE IN THEIR HELPLESSNESS.

LOIS...?

CLARK! I... I WAS AFRAID YOU WERE OFF DOING...

...DOING WHO KNOWS WHAT?

IF THERE WAS ANYTHING I COULD DO... I'D BE DOING IT.

AS IT IS... THE BEST PLACE FOR ME TO BE IS WITH YOU.

WELL, JAMESON? GOING TO TAKE ONE LAST POTSHOT AT ME?

FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH...

...I'M SORRY.

...

oh.

ACROSS THE COUNTRY...

...ACROSS THE WORLD...

...OLD LOVERS AND YOUNG ONES WATCH HELPLESSLY.

AND IN BETWEEN... THE WOULD-BE SAVIORS FEEL EQUALLY HELPLESS.



THOSE SPECKS ON THE SWORDS... ARE THEY...?

YUP. THE SPECTRE AND THE LIVING TRIBUNAL, TRYING TO HOLD THE BROTHERS BACK. FOR ALL THE DIFFERENCE THEY'RE MAKING.

WE... WE HAVE TO GO BACK. FORM AN ARMY...

THE SPECTRE'S MORE POWERFUL THAN A BILLION ARMIES, AND YOU SEE HOW HE'S FARING.

AND YOU'RE SAYING THIS IS ALL SOME KIND OF COSMIC "STATE OF MIND."



BASICALLY, YEAH.


ALL RIGHT. THEN WE HAVE TO CHANGE OUR MIND.

THEY ARE
WITNESSING
THE END OF
EVERYTHING.

THEIR THOUGHTS,
THEIR FEARS,
HORRORS, REGRETS
... THEY ARE ALL
PRIVATE.

ALL SAVE FOR ONE,
WHO CHOOSES TO
GIVE VOICE TO HIS.
A VOICE THAT
SPEAKS WITH THE
HUSH OF A NEWLY
DYING STAR, AS
THANOS SAYS...

It's... it's
the most
beautiful
thing I've
ever seen...



IN THE UNREALITY OF REALITY
THAT SURROUNDS THEM,
CAPTAIN AMERICA AND BATMAN
LEAP TO INTERCEDE.

TO MORTALS, THEY
HAVE OFTEN SEEMED
MORE THAN MORTAL.
HERE...

... HERE THEY
ARE DUST
MOTES WITH
ATTITUDE.



THEY SHOUT. THEY
DEMAND. THEY
PLEAD.



AND,
ULTIMATELY...

...THEY FAIL.

EVER SINCE HUMANITY WAS CONCEIVED, IT HAS SENSELESSLY TRIED TO DESTROY ITSELF.

AND AT THE LAST MOMENT, BATMAN AND CAP UNDERSTAND WHY.

FOR THE BROTHERS ULTIMATELY SEEK A SIMILAR GOAL FOR THEMSELVES.



THE MORTAL HEROES SCREAM AS THEIR VERY CORES ARE RENT ASUNDER, AND THEIR LIVES FLASH BEFORE THEIR EYES.

AND AS IT HAPPENS...



... BEFORE THE EYES OF THE BROTHERS AS WELL.



AND THEY SEE...

A CHILD WITNESSING HIS PARENTS GUNNED DOWN...SWEARING VENGEANCE...

UNSELFISHLY DEVOTING HIS LIFE TO PROTECTING THOSE WHO CANNOT PROTECT THEMSELVES...

FROM THE NOTHINGNESS OF A BLIGHTED SOUL, HE FASHIONED A DARK GUARDIAN AND JOINED OTHERS IN BATTLE...

HE BECAME ONE AMONG MANY... BUT REMAINED FOREVER UNIQUE.

AND THEY SEE...

A YOUNG MAN WITH WILLING SPIRIT AND WEAK FLESH, SUBJECTING HIMSELF TO EXPERIMENTS SO HE CAN FIGHT AGAINST A GREAT EVIL...

A MAN WHOSE BATTLE CARRIES HIM ACROSS DECADES TO A HARSH, CYNICAL WORLD THAT NEEDED HIM EVEN MORE, AND WAS EVEN LESS WILLING TO ADMIT IT...



HE FOUND NEW ENEMIES... AND NEW ALLIES...

HE BECAME ONE AMONG MANY... BUT REMAINED FOREVER UNIQUE.

AND THE BROTHERS
LOOK AT EACH OTHER
... AS IF TRULY SEEING
EACH OTHER FOR THE
FIRST TIME.

CENTURIES
... EONS
PASS...

... AS THE BROTHERS
COME TO THE SLOW
REALIZATION THAT
THEY WHO ENCOMPASS
THE WHOLE OF REALITY...

... HAVE BECOME
SMALLER THAN
THE SMALLEST
OF THEIR
COMPONENTS.



AND A BILLION,
BILLION YEARS
HENCE, THE
BROTHERS...

...FOR THE FIRST
TIME IN RECORDED
AND UNRECORDED
HISTORY...

...SPEAK.

AND THEY
SAY THE
SAME THING.

YOU'VE
DONE
WELL.



A BILLION BILLION YEARS HAVE ROLLED BACK UPON THEMSELVES.

THE STATUS QUO HAS BEEN RESTORED.

THE UNIVERSES ARE SEPARATE ONCE MORE.

DAILY PLANET

THE SUPERBEINGS OF BOTH WORLDS DO NOT FULLY UNDERSTAND WHAT HAS HAPPENED.

SOME DO NOT CARE, MOURNING THEIR LOSSES RATHER THAN CELEBRATING THEIR SALVATION.

SOME WHO HAVE HAD CONGRESS WITH GODS SEEK ANSWERS.




SOME WHO ARE GODS HAVE NONE TO GIVE.

SOME WHO CONSIDER THEMSELVES RULERS MUSE HOW LIMITED THEIR "KINGDOMS" ARE.

AND TWO...



...TWO HAVE A FAINT GLIMMERING OF THE TRUTH ... AND ARE HUMBLED BY IT.



AND THERE IS
ONE WHO KNOWS
THE WHOLE
TRUTH.


THE TRUTH OF
THE BROTHERS'
REALIZATION
THAT THEIR
CREATIONS HAD
SURPASSED
THE CREATORS
THEMSELVES.




HE KNOWS... AND
REJECTS IT ALL.

FOR HE HAS ALWAYS
CONSIDERED HIM-
SELF A SEEKER OF
TRUTH.

THAT TRUTH...
AND MANY
MORE BESIDES...



AND IF HE HAS
FOUND IT,
THEN HIS LIFE
NO LONGER
HAS PURPOSE.



SO HE REJECTS THE
PRIZE IN FAVOR OF
THE QUEST. FOR HIS
IS THE POWER OF
ACCESS...



... AND
UNIVERSES
BECKON.

AND WHEN
UNIVERSES
BECKON...

... WHICH
OF US
COULD
SAY NO?

The End