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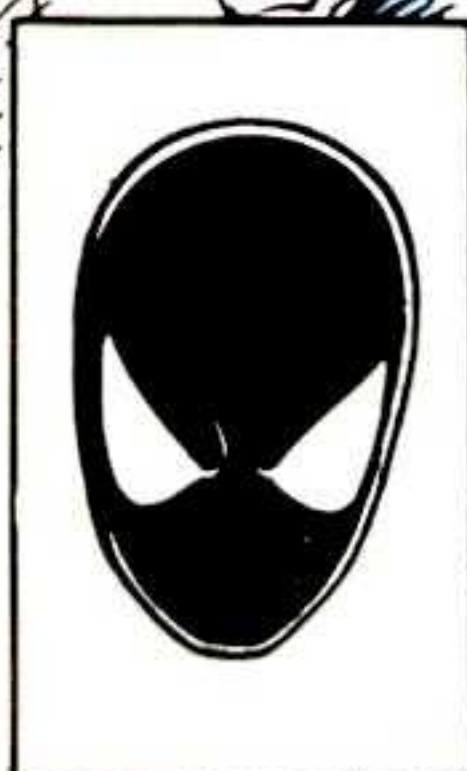
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60c U.K. 30p CAN. 75c 349 NOV

the mighty THOR

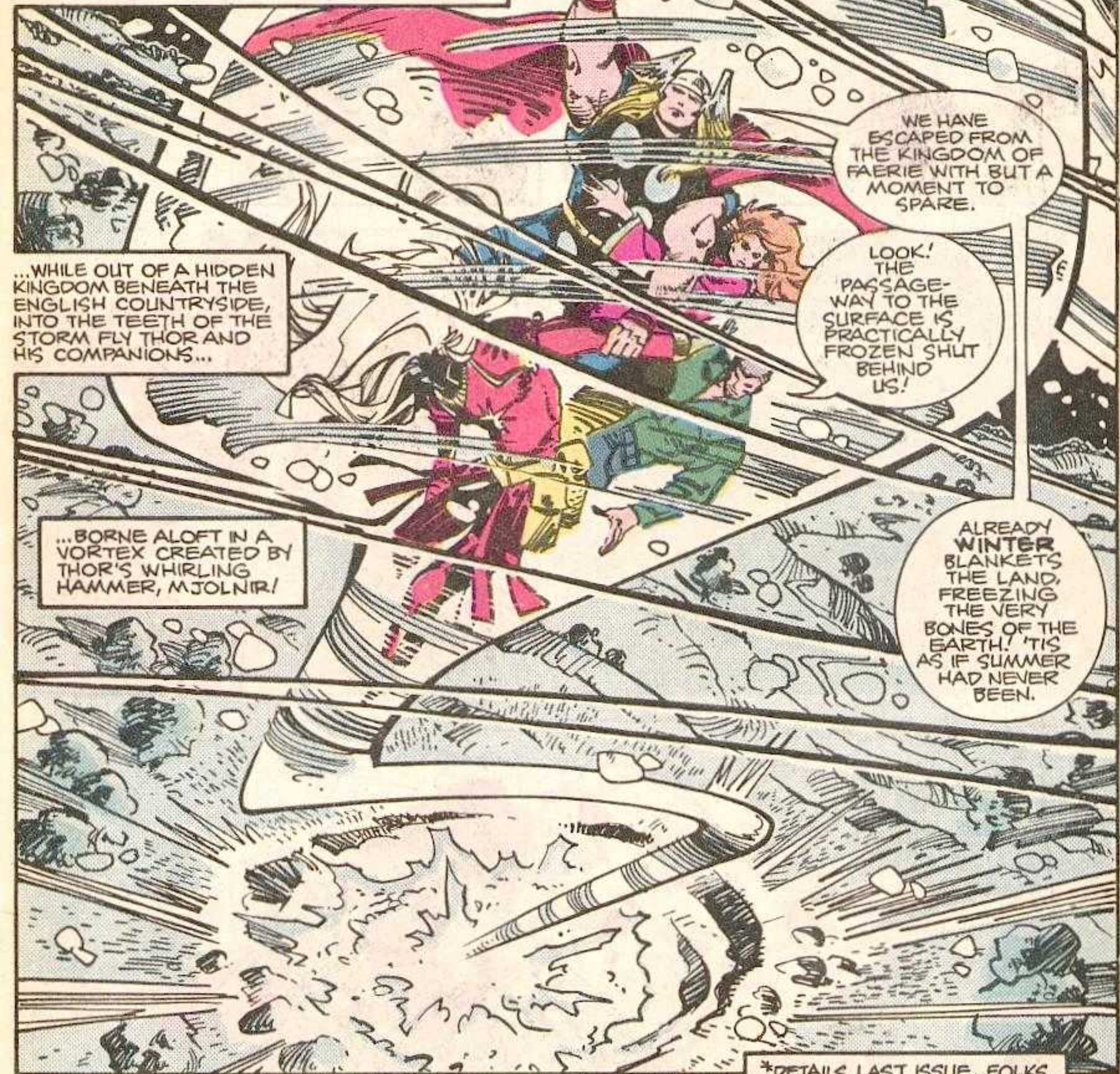


THE BROTHERS OF OLD ASGARD



DEBTS OF HONOR!

THE CASKET OF ANCIENT WINTERS HAS BEEN SHATTERED, FLINGING THE ICY FURIES OF EARTH'S FORMER GLACIAL AGES ACROSS THE WORLD...



WE HAVE ESCAPED FROM THE KINGDOM OF FAERIE WITH BUT A MOMENT TO SPARE.

LOOK! THE PASSAGEWAY TO THE SURFACE IS PRACTICALLY FROZEN SHUT BEHIND US!

...WHILE OUT OF A HIDDEN KINGDOM BENEATH THE ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE, INTO THE TEETH OF THE STORM FLY THOR AND HIS COMPANIONS...


...BORNE ALOFT IN A VORTEX CREATED BY THOR'S WHIRLING HAMMER, MJOLNIR!

ALREADY WINTER BLANKETS THE LAND, FREEZING THE VERY BONES OF THE EARTH! 'TIS AS IF SUMMER HAD NEVER BEEN.

*DETAILS LAST ISSUE, FOLKS.

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THOUGH WE HAVE CAPTURED MALEKITH THE ACCURSED, HE HAS SUCCEEDED IN BRINGING CHAOS TO THE LAND.

THERE IS NO MORE WE CAN DO HERE. WE MUST RETURN TO NEW YORK CITY TO DECIDE ON OUR NEXT COURSE OF ACTION.

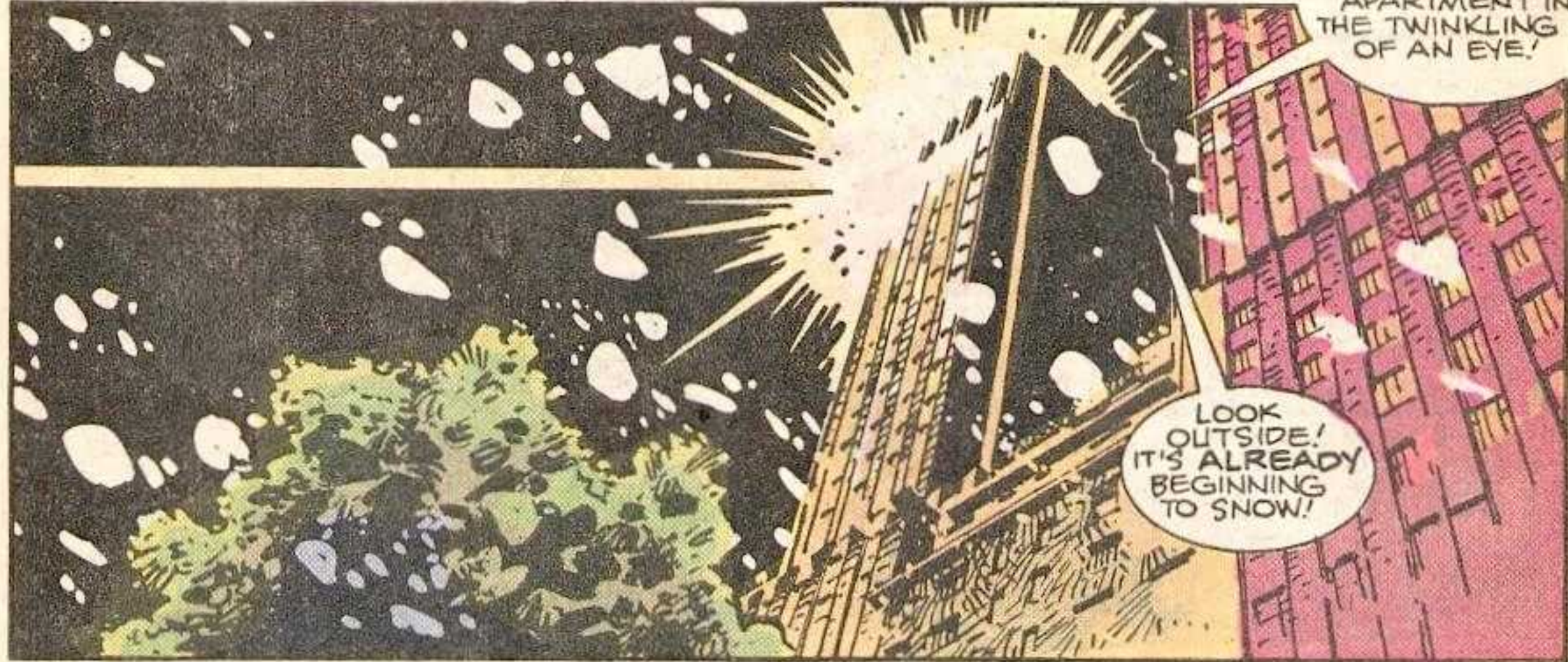
I NEED BUT INCREASE THE SPEED OF MY WHIRLING HAMMER UNTIL THE VORTEX BECOMES A SPACE WARP...

THE WINTER THAT MALEKITH BEGAN WILL BLANKET ALL OF MIDGARD* UNLESS WE CAN FIND SOME WAY TO UNDO THE SPELL.

*EARTH.

SCHWIAAHH!

...THAT WILL TRANSPORT US ALL TO MELODI'S APARTMENT IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE!



LOOK OUTSIDE! IT'S ALREADY BEGINNING TO SNOW!

NOW THAT THE CASKET IS BROKEN, ROGER, SUCH STORMS SHALL BLANKET THE WORLD...

...THREATENING ALL LIFE ON EARTH.

YOU REALIZE THE CASKET'S POWER IS WHAT KEPT YOUR FATHER ALIVE FOR CENTURIES. WITHOUT IT, YOU WILL NOT LIVE FOREVER AS HE DID.

TOUGH. IT DIDN'T MAKE MY DAD HAPPY. HE WAS UNABLE TO TOUCH PEOPLE. HE'D LIVE AND THEY'D DIE.

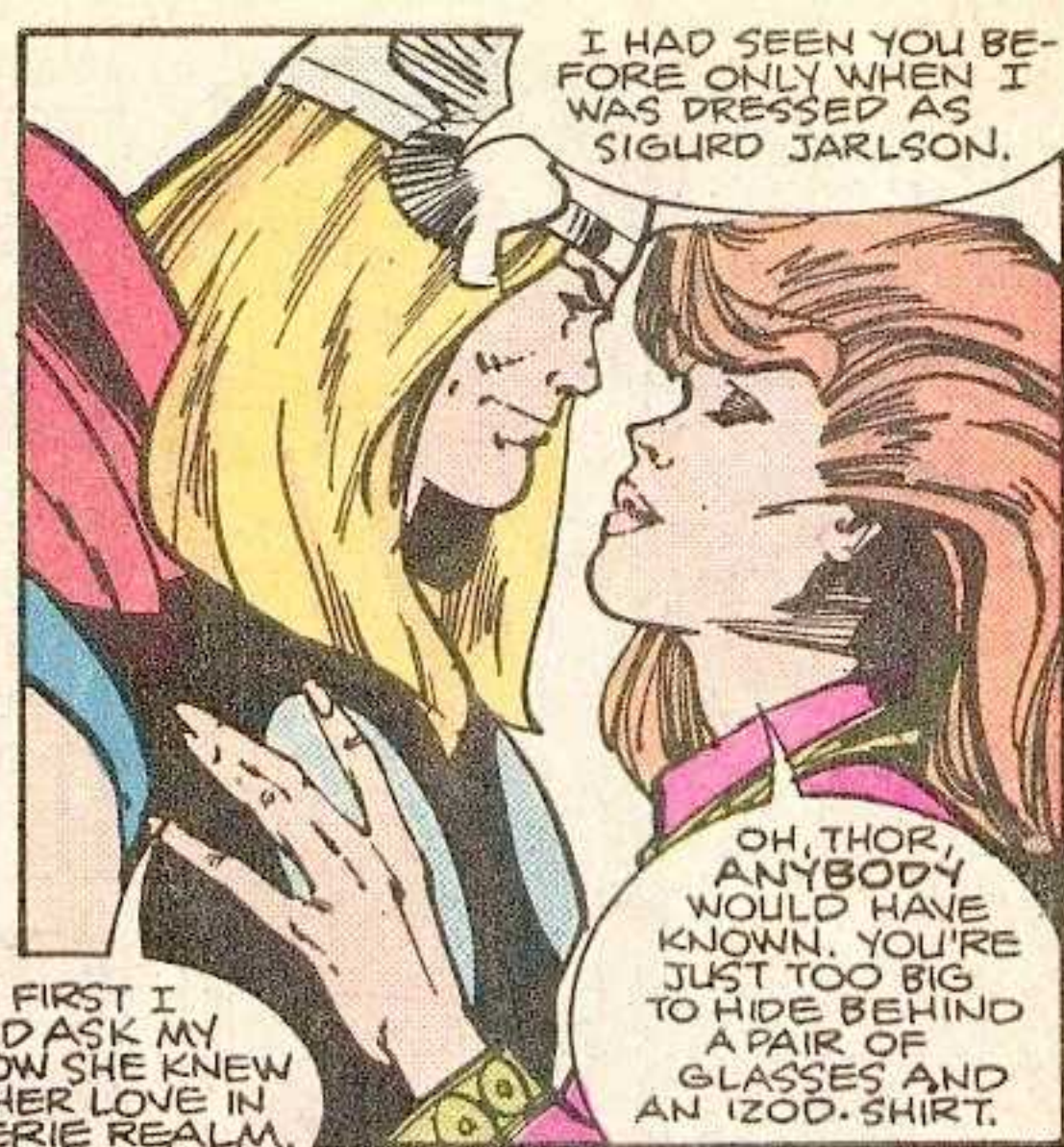


GUESS THAT'S WHY WE DIDN'T GET ALONG. I DIDN'T TOUCH MUCH EITHER.

MAYBE I OUGHT NOT TO LEAVE LIFE WITHOUT GETTING A FIRMER GRIP ON IT. WE'LL SEE.

WHAT ABOUT MALEKITH?

STILL UNCONSCIOUS. I SHALL TAKE HIM TO ASGARD TO FACE MY FATHER WHO BANISHED HIM ONCE BEFORE TO BLACK LIMBO.



I HAD SEEN YOU BEFORE ONLY WHEN I WAS DRESSED AS SIGURD JARLSON.

OH, THOR, ANYBODY WOULD HAVE KNOWN. YOU'RE JUST TOO BIG TO HIDE BEHIND A PAIR OF GLASSES AND AN IZOD-SHIRT.

BUT FIRST I WOULD ASK MY LADY HOW SHE KNEW I WAS HER LOVE IN THE FAERIE REALM.



THAT CAN'T BE IT. EVERYBODY WAS FOOLED BY THOR'S DISGUISE. THAT'S HOW SECRET IDENTITIES WORK.

WHICH MEANS SHE KNEW WHO HE WAS FROM THE START.



AND WITH ALL THE MAGIC I'VE SEEN RECENTLY, I'M BEGINNING TO GET SUSPICIOUS ABOUT THAT "GOLDEN MEAD" SHE GAVE HIM.

CERTAINLY, ROGER. BUT FIRST, I MUST NEEDS MAKE A PHONE CALL.

MY EMPLOYER NO DOUBT HAS BEEN WONDERING WHAT HAS BECOME OF ME RECENTLY AND I WOULD SPEAK WITH JERRY.

UH...SAY, THOR, CAN I TALK TO YOU FOR A COUPLE OF SECONDS... ALONE.

OH, ROGER...



WHILE THOR'S ON THE PHONE, COULD I SEE YOU FOR JUST A MOMENT?

WELL...



OH, PLEASE. IT WON'T TAKE LONG.

LET'S GO OUT ON THE BALCONY SO WE WON'T DISTURB HIM.

HELLO, JERRY? IT'S SIGURD JARLSON.

WHILE ON THE BALCONY OUTSIDE LORELEI'S APARTMENT...

SIGURD!
SPEAK OF THE
DEVIL! WHEN
ONE OF MY
BEST WORKERS
DOESN'T SHOW
UP, I START
TO WORRY.

TO TELL THE
TRUTH, I
SUSPECTED AS
MUCH WHEN
COUSIN NICK
GOT YOU THE
JOB.

I SEE. YUP.
WORK OF
NATIONAL IM-
PORTANCE, HUH?
CAN'T SAY MUCH
ABOUT IT. COULD
BE AWAY FOR
SOME TIME?

NO
PROBLEM.
YOU EVER
NEED ANOTHER
ONE, COME
'ROUND AND
SEE ME.
'BYE.

IF HE'S WORKING FOR
SHIELD*, HE PROBABLY ISN'T
SPIDER-MAN. WONDER IF SIGURD
IS REALLY CAPTAIN AMERICA?

*SUPREME HQ INT'L ESPIONAGE LAW-
ENFORCEMENT DIVISION--THE BIG BOYS.



I KNOW WHAT YOU
MUST BE THINKING,
ROGER, BUT YOU'RE
WRONG.

AM
I?

YOU MUST
BELIEVE ME.
WHATEVER
I'VE DONE, IT'S
BEEN FOR
THOR'S SAKE
ALL ALONG.

HE NEEDS
SOMEONE TO
SHARE HIS LIFE
WITH, SOMEONE
WHO CAN
GIVE HIM
EVERYTHING
HE NEEDS.



AS I CAN.
PROMISE YOU
WON'T TELL HIM
ANYTHING.

WELL...



PROMISE...

I... I...



WHAT
WAS IT
YOU
WANTED,
ROGER?

IT
WAS...
I...



UH,
NOTHING,
THOR.

NOW THAT THAT'S
SETTLED, WOULD
EVERYBODY LIKE A
DRINK?

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
I ACTUALLY CAN'T GET
OUT THE WORDS. AS THOUGH
I'VE BEEN BLOCKED
AGAINST IT.



ROGER, ARE YOU...

MUST BE THE AFTER-EFFECT OF VORTEX TRAVEL. I FEEL DIZZY ALL OF A SUDDEN... AS IT... OOPS!



krash



GEEZ, I'M TERRIBLY SORRY.

WHAT A MESS. GOT ANY PAPER TOWELS?

IN THE KITCHEN, ROGER. AND TRY NOT TO BREAK ANYTHING ELSE.



THOR, YOU SAVED MY LIFE AND EVEN IF I CAN'T TELL YOU WHAT'S HAPPENING, I CAN STILL DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

WHATEVER MELODI REALLY IS, YOU WERE OKAY TILL YOU HAD A SLUG OF THAT MEAD.



THAT ANCIENT EARTHENWARE POT! THAT MUST BE WHERE SHE KEEPS THE STUFF!

BINGO!



I'LL JUST ADD A LITTLE HONEY AND WATER AND WE'RE SET.



MAYBE I CAN'T STOP YOU FROM TAKING IT, BUT I CAN SURE CUT DOWN THE DOSAGE!



HERE THEY ARE. TOOK ME A SECOND TO FIND 'EM.

WE'RE ALMOST DONE. NOW HOW ABOUT THAT DRINK?

AN EXCELLENT IDEA. I WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO SAMPLE A LITTLE MORE OF THE GOLDEN MEAD.



I, TOO, WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY, MIGHTY THOR, TO SEE YOU DRINK MORE OF MY ENCHANTED LIQUID...

...FOR REPEATED DRAUGHTS WILL ONLY INCREASE YOUR DEPENDENCY ON THE MEAD AND YOUR LOVE FOR ME...

...TILL YOU BURN NIGHT AND DAY WITH DESIRE AND ONLY LORELEI WILL BE ABLE TO ASSUAGE YOUR FEVER.

MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE THE GATES OF ASGARD, HOME OF THE NORSE GODS, THE STEED SILVERHOOF CARRYING BALDER THE BRAVE AND AGNAR OF VANAHEIM THUNDERS TOWARDS THE SHINING CITY...



THE END OF OUR WILD RIDE IS IN SIGHT, MY FRIEND.

BUT WE MUST PAUSE NOT A MOMENT, FOR IF MY DREAM SPOKE TRULY, ALL OUR LIVES MAY BE IN DANGER.



HE THUNDERS THROUGH THE GATES AT FULL TILT AND THE GUARDS MAKE WAY BEFORE HIS GRIM VISAGE.

...AS I KNOW NOW HE MIGHT HAVE DONE WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST EFFORT*...

...SO MATCH-LESS A MAN AT ARMS IS HE.

GOOD AGNAR, TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE NOW.

WHAT A FOOL I WAS TO EVER TRY TO ENGAGE HIM IN SINGLE COMBAT.

AND YET, HE NEITHER SLEW ME, NOR HUMILIATED ME BEFORE VOLSTAGG...

*BACK AROUND THOR 538.



WOULD YOU SEE THAT SILVERHOOF IS STABLED PROPERLY WHILE I AWAY TO LORD ODIN?

I KNOW I CAN DEPEND UPON YOU.

WE SHALL MEET AGAIN.



HE KNEW! HE KNEW WHO I WAS ALL THE TIME!

AND RODE WITH HIS BACK UNDEFENDED AGAINST ME THOUGH I HAD TRIED TO SLAY HIM.

GODSPEED, WARRIOR. I OWE YOU MORE THAN I CAN SAY. YES, WE SHALL MEET AGAIN!

MOMENTS LATER, IN ODIN'S GREAT HALL OF VALASKJALF...

PEACE, CHAMBERLAIN.

...AND YET HE HAS RETURNED FROM THE DESERT WITH A WARNING FOR THE REALM...

...WHEN HE MIGHT HAVE SPENT HIS DAYS IN BITTER CONTEMPLATION OF HIS LIEGE.

MY LIEGE, I BEAR TIDINGS...

NOBLE BALDER, SURELY THIS IS A MOST UNDECOROUS WAY TO GREET-

BALDER WOULD BREAK IN UPON US ONLY IF THE NECESSITY WERE MOST DIRE.

I SENT HIM ON AN ERRAND ALMOST CERTAINLY DOOMED TO FAILURE...

BRAVE BALDER, YOU ARE THE NOBLEST ASGARDIAN OF ALL.

IT DOES NOT MATTER NOW, MY LORD, FOR I HAVE SEEN AN ENIGMA SO VAST AND DANGEROUS THAT ONLY YOU MIGHT READ ITS RIDDLE.

THE NORNS HAVE SHOWN ME A VISION* OF A BURNING SHADOW THAT THREATENS NOT ONLY THE GOLDEN REALM, BUT ALL WHO LIVE!

*LAST ISSUE.

THIS, THEN, IS THE CONFIRMATION OF ALL MY FEARS.

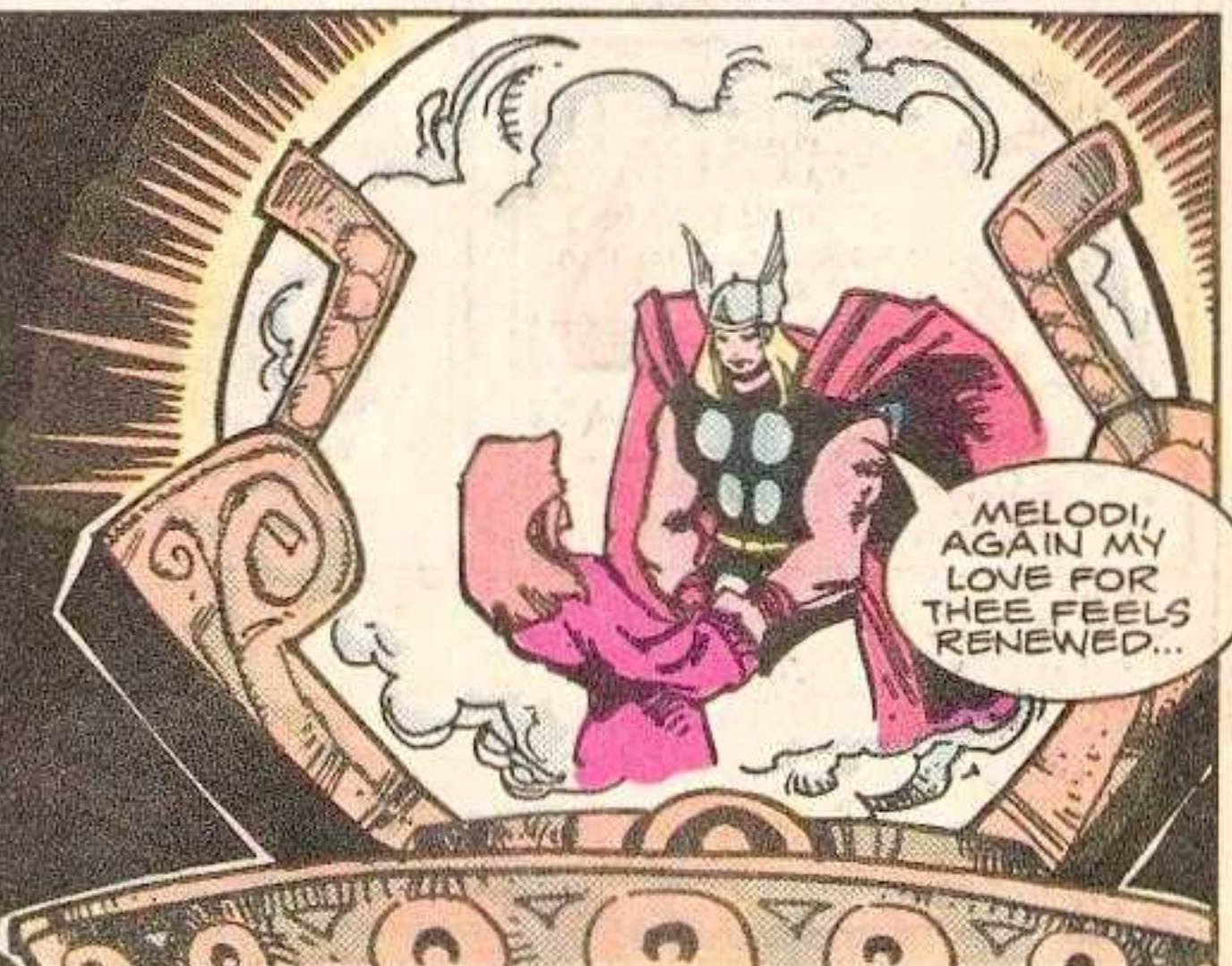
SPEEDILY, BRAVE BALDER, SUMMON THOU MY MOST TRUSTED ADVISORS.

CHAMBERLAIN, PREPARE THE COUNCIL ROOM.

I MYSELF SHALL CALL THOR FROM MIDGARD.

BUT WHAT IS THIS I SEE IN THE CRYSTAL OF VISION?

MELODI, AGAIN MY LOVE FOR THEE FEELS RENEWED...





BY THE RAGING HEAVENS! CAN THIS BE? IS MY SON IN LOVE WITH YET ANOTHER MORTAL WOMAN?

...SO THAT I CAN HARDLY BEAR TO BE PARTED FROM THEE.



I CAN SCARCE GIVE CREDIT TO MY SENSES. BUT WHAT WORDS ARE THESE?

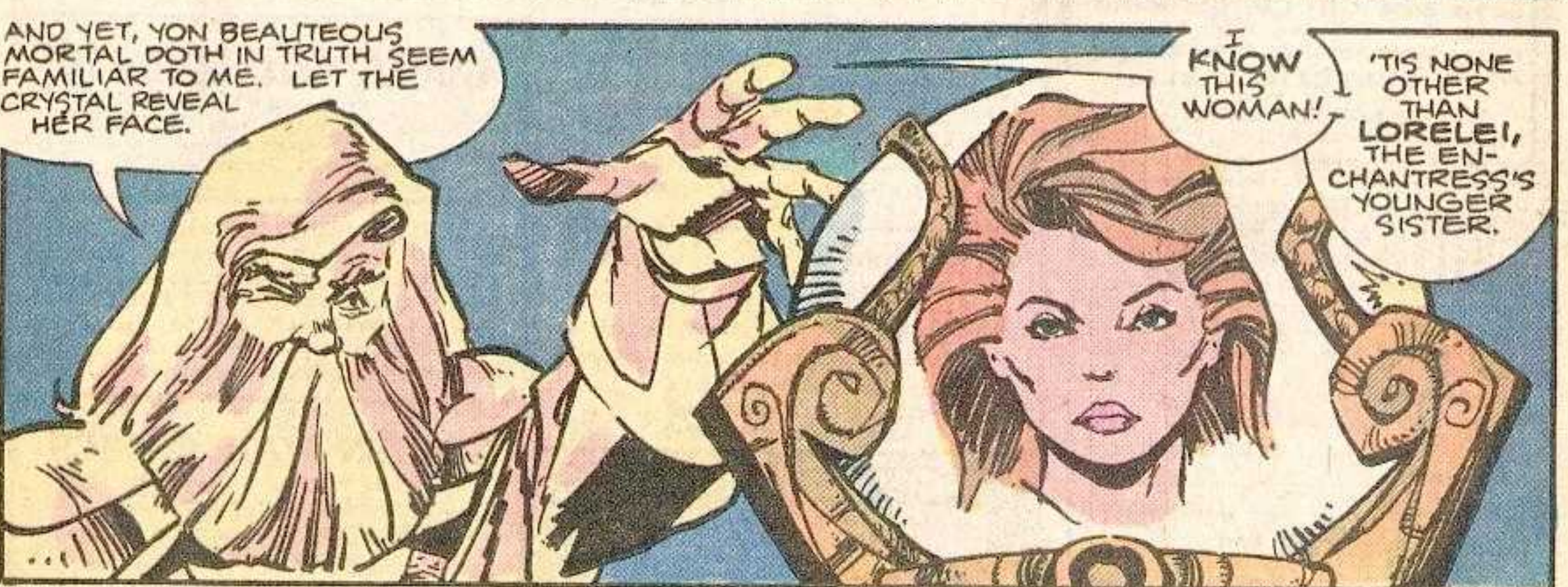
STILL, I MUST AWAY TO ASGARD. MY FATHER SHOULD KNOW OF MALEKITH'S TREACHERY AND OF THE EVENTS ON MIDGARD.



SO EVEN NOW, THOR RETURNS HOME, AND BRINGS A CAPTIVE WITH HIM...

...A CAPTIVE WHOSE VERY FREEDOM TELLS ME ALL I NEED TO KNOW OF BALDER'S FLAMING SHADOW!

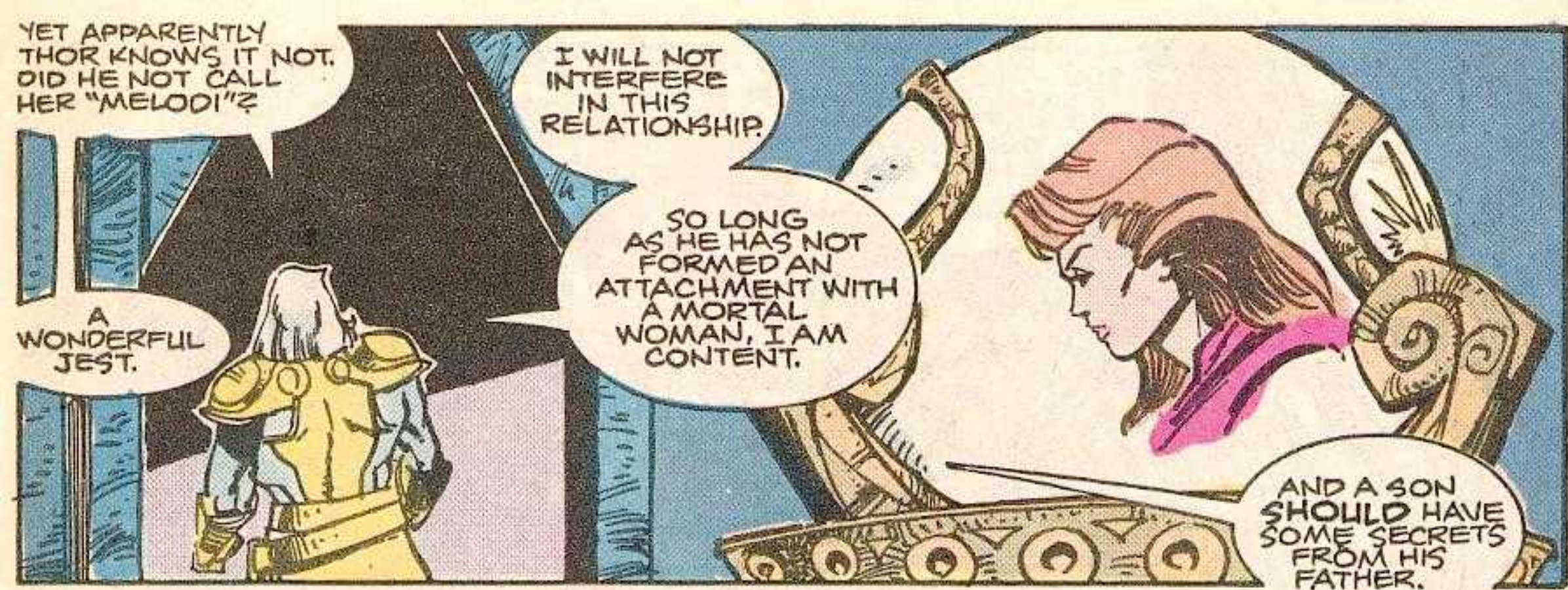
FAREWELL, MY LOVE. I SHALL RETURN WHENERE I CAN.



AND YET, YON BEAUTEOUS MORTAL DOETH IN TRUTH SEEM FAMILIAR TO ME. LET THE CRYSTAL REVEAL HER FACE.

I KNOW THIS WOMAN!

'TIS NONE OTHER THAN LORELEI, THE ENCHANTRESS'S YOUNGER SISTER.



YET APPARENTLY THOR KNOWS IT NOT. DID HE NOT CALL HER "MELODI"?

I WILL NOT INTERFERE IN THIS RELATIONSHIP.

SO LONG AS HE HAS NOT FORMED AN ATTACHMENT WITH A MORTAL WOMAN, I AM CONTENT.

A WONDERFUL JEST.

AND A SON SHOULD HAVE SOME SECRETS FROM HIS FATHER.

SHORTLY, ON THE RAINBOW BRIDGE...



I BID YOU GREETINGS, HEIMDALL. I HAVE RETURNED TO THE REALM ETHERNAL WITH A CAPTIVE AND TIDINGS FOR MY FATHER.

WELCOME HOME, MIGHTY THOR.

METHINKS THE WIND WHISPERS TO ASGARD FROM MANY QUARTERS TODAY. LORD ODIN IS EXPECTING YOU.

EVEN NOW HE GATHERS HIS MOST TRUSTED ADVISORS IN THE GREAT HALL AND AWAITS YOUR ARRIVAL.



...BUT MAYHAP BEFORE THE SUN HAS SET, I SHALL LEARN THE ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS I HAVE BEGUN TO ASK ABOUT THE SHADOWS LOOMING OVER MIDGARD THESE PAST FEW WEEKS.

I CAN SEE THAT MY NEWS WILL BE NO NEWS.

STILL, SOMEDAY, I HOPE TO SURPRISE MY FATHER AT SOMETHING...

SHORTLY, IN THE GREAT HALL...



WELL MET, MY FATHER.

WELCOME HOME, MY SON. THY STEPMOTHER FRIGGA, BRAVE BALDER, THE WARRIORS THREE, AND THE CHAMBERLAIN ARE HERE ALREADY.

NOW OUR NUMBERS ARE COMPLETE. WE HAVE MUCH TO DISCUSS AND LITTLE TIME FOR IT.



VERY GOOD, MY LIEGE. YET I HAVE SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS TO PRESENT TO YOU AT ONCE.

I HAVE BROUGHT MALEKITH THE ACCURSED BACK TO ASGARD. HE RETURNED FROM THE BANISHMENT INTO WHICH YOU SENT HIM...



...AND DESTROYED THE CASKET OF ANCIENT WINTERS, RELEASING ITS FATAL SPELL OF COLD UPON MIDGARD.



I FEARED AS MUCH, THOR.

FOOL THAT YOU ARE, MALEKITH. THINK YOU THAT YOUR MASTER WILL SPARE YOU WHEN HE IS SETTING THE WORLD TO THE TORCH?

LET THE GUARDS BE SUMMONED AND REMOVE THIS EVIL DOER TO THE DUNGEON OF NO-ESCAPE TO AWAIT OUR FURTHER PLEASURE.



WE HAVE MORE IMMEDIATE MATTERS TO PONDER BEFORE US.

BALDER, MY BOSOM COMPANION.

I HAVE HEARD SOMETHING OF YOUR TRAVAILS. HOW FARE YOU?

BETTER THAN I HAVE IN A LONG TIME, THOR. I THINK PERHAPS THE DESERT AGREED WITH ME.

*CHRONICLED AT SOME LENGTH THROUGH PREVIOUS ISSUES OF THOR.

LET ALL NOW
BE SILENT AND
GIVE HEED TO
YOUR LIEGE.

HE HAS LOOSED
A TERRIBLE
WINTER UPON
MIDGARD.

HUGINN, THE RAVEN
OF ODIN, HAS BEEN
SLAIN AND MUNINN
HAS RETURNED WITH
SECRETS THAT HAVE
NEVER SEEN THE
LIGHT OF DAY.

THOR HAS
CAPTURED MALEKITH
THE ACCURSED, SENT
ON A NEFARIOUS
ERRAND BY HIS
MASTER.



BALDER HAS
WITNESSED A
FOREBODING
VISION GRANTED
HIM BY THE
NORNS.

AND BY MY COMMAND,
THE WARRIORS THREE
HAVE BEGUN THE HOST-
ING OF ASGARD IN ALL
HER STRENGTH ON THE
BATTLE PLAIN OF
VIGRID.

AND THAT
ONE IS A
SHADOW OF
FLAME.

LONG HAVE I
HOPED THAT THE
STORY ENDED IN
THOSE DAYS,
BUT I SEE
NOW THAT
LIKE MANY
STORIES...

I,
MYSELF
WITNESSED
THAT FLAME
IN THE DAYS
OF THE BE-
GINNING.

YET ALL
THESE THINGS
ARE BUT THE
SHADOWS
CAST BY ONE
GREAT
SHADOW.

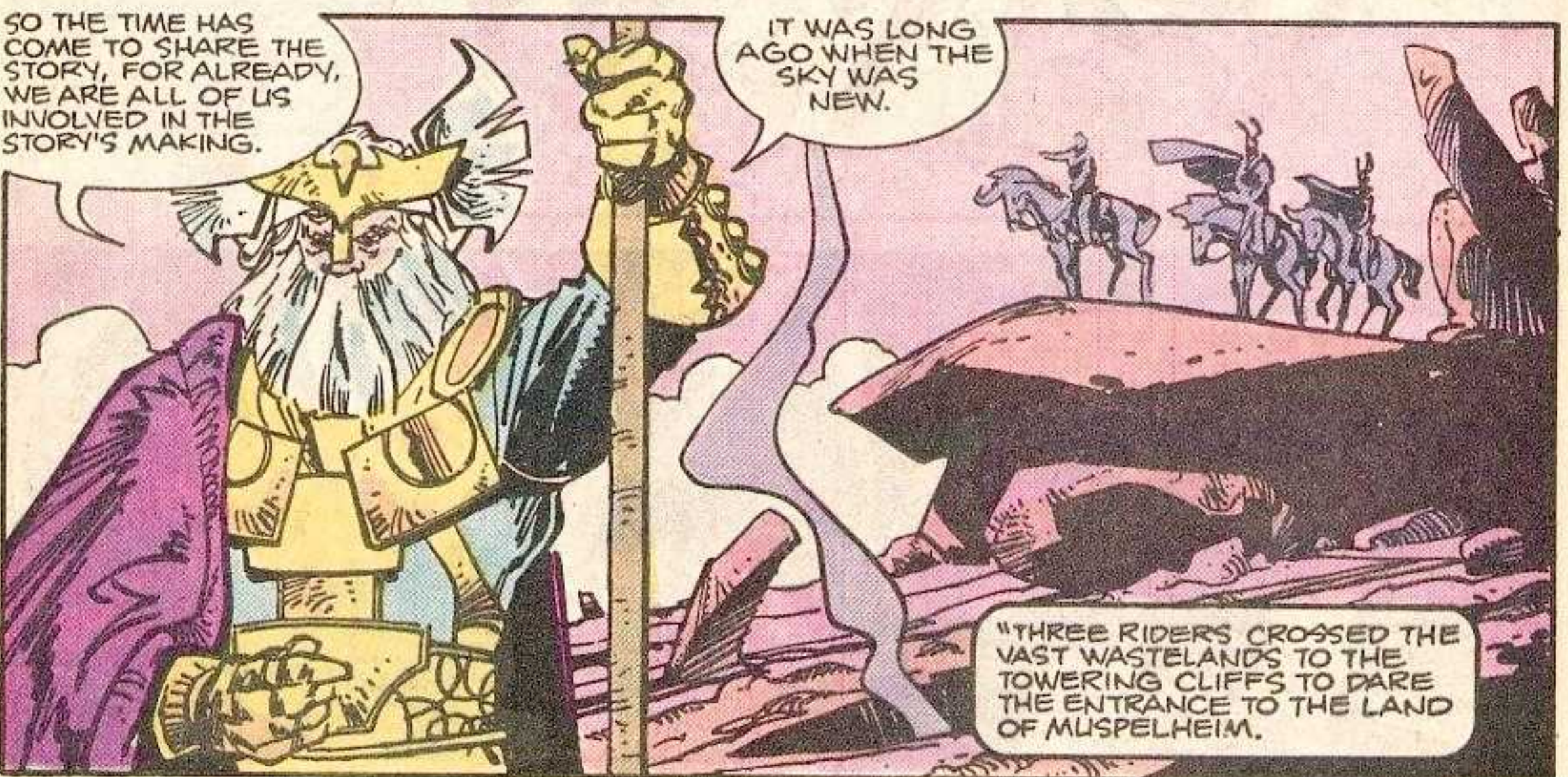
...PERHAPS
IT HAS
NO END.



SO THE TIME HAS
COME TO SHARE THE
STORY, FOR ALREADY,
WE ARE ALL OF US
INVOLVED IN THE
STORY'S MAKING.

IT WAS LONG
AGO WHEN THE
SKY WAS
NEW.

"THREE RIDERS CROSSED THE
VAST WASTELANDS TO THE
TOWERING CLIFFS TO DARE
THE ENTRANCE TO THE LAND
OF MUSPELHEIM.



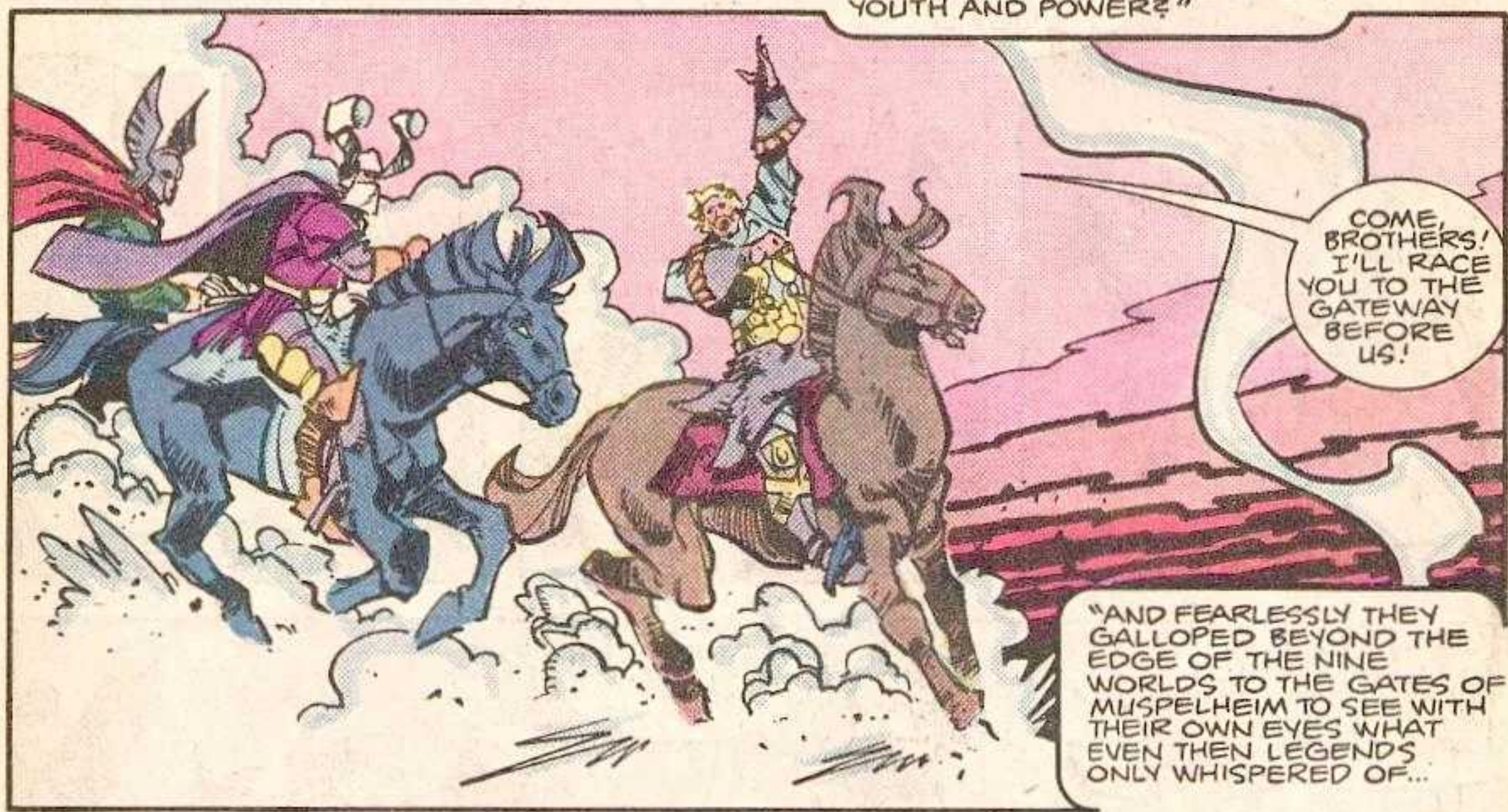
"YOUNG THEY WERE AND RECKLESS, FOR HAD THEY NOT RECENTLY SLAIN THE FATHER OF ALL FROST GIANTS, THE TERRIBLE YMIR?"

"HAD THEY NOT MADE THE WORLD OF HIS BODY AND THE SKY OF HIS SKULL AND THE CLOUDS OF HIS BRAINS?"

"WERE THEY NOT THE SONS OF BOR, THE GRANDSONS OF BURI, THE FIRST OF ALL IMMORTAL GODS?"



"WERE THEY NOT ODIN AND HIS BROTHERS, VILI AND VE, RIDING IN THE DAWN OF THE WORLD AND IN THE FULLNESS OF THEIR YOUTH AND POWER?"



COME, BROTHERS! I'LL RACE YOU TO THE GATEWAY BEFORE US!

"AND FEARLESSLY THEY GALLOPED BEYOND THE EDGE OF THE NINE WORLDS TO THE GATES OF MUSPELHEIM TO SEE WITH THEIR OWN EYES WHAT EVEN THEN LEGENDS ONLY WHISPERED OF..."

"...THE SONS OF MUSPELL, BEINGS OF LIVING FIRE, AND THE MONSTROUS COLOSSUS WHO RULED THEM."



HARDLY A FAIR TEST, LITTLE BROTHER, WHEN YOU ARE SO MUCH LIGHTER THAN WE!

"BUT THEY HAD NOT GONE FAR INTO THE LAND OF FIRE WHEN...

LOOK OUT, BROTHERS! SPEARS OF LIVING FLAME HURLED FROM YONDER HEIGHTS!



WHO SEEKS TO BAR THE WAY OF THREE WEARY TRAVELERS FROM AFAR?

WHY HAVE YOU COME TO THE LAND OF FIRE?

THEN WELCOME, WEARY TRAVELERS. WE ARE DELIGHTED TO EXTEND OUR HOSPITALITY TO YOU.

WE SEEK MERELY TO EXPLORE THE REGIONS UNKNOWN TO US, TO LEARN ALL WE CAN OF THOSE PEOPLES AND RULERS YET UNDISCOVERED.



OUR LORD AND MASTER IS ANXIOUS TO MAKE THE ACQUAINTANCE OF ANY WHO COME THIS WAY.

WE WILL GUIDE YOU TO THE HEART OF THE KINGDOM OF LIGHT TO MEET HIM, THOUGH THOSE WHO JOURNEY HENCE SELDOM COME BACK AGAIN.

NO DOUBT, THEY ARE TOO OVERWHELMED WITH THE GLORY OF MUSPELL TO WISH TO RETURN TO THEIR OWN LANDS.



"AND WITH A LAUGH, THE DEMON TURNED AND BECKONED US TO FOLLOW HIM.

"SURROUNDED BY AN EVER INCREASING NUMBER OF FIERY BEINGS, WE WERE LED DEEP INTO THE LAND UNTIL AT LAST WE CAME TO A SEA OF FLAME!

HEAR ME, OH LORD! THREE GIFTS I BRING YOU FROM THE LAND OF FLESH!

OF THEIR OWN FREE WILL AND INCLINATION HAVE THEY COME.

WILL YOU NOT SPEAK WITH THEM?



"FOR A LONG TIME, ALL WAS SILENT UNTIL..."

THERE, IN THE CENTER OF THE LAKE, LOOK!

WELCOME, GOD-LINGS. SURTUR, THE RULER OF MUSPELHEIM, GREETES THE SONS OF BOR!

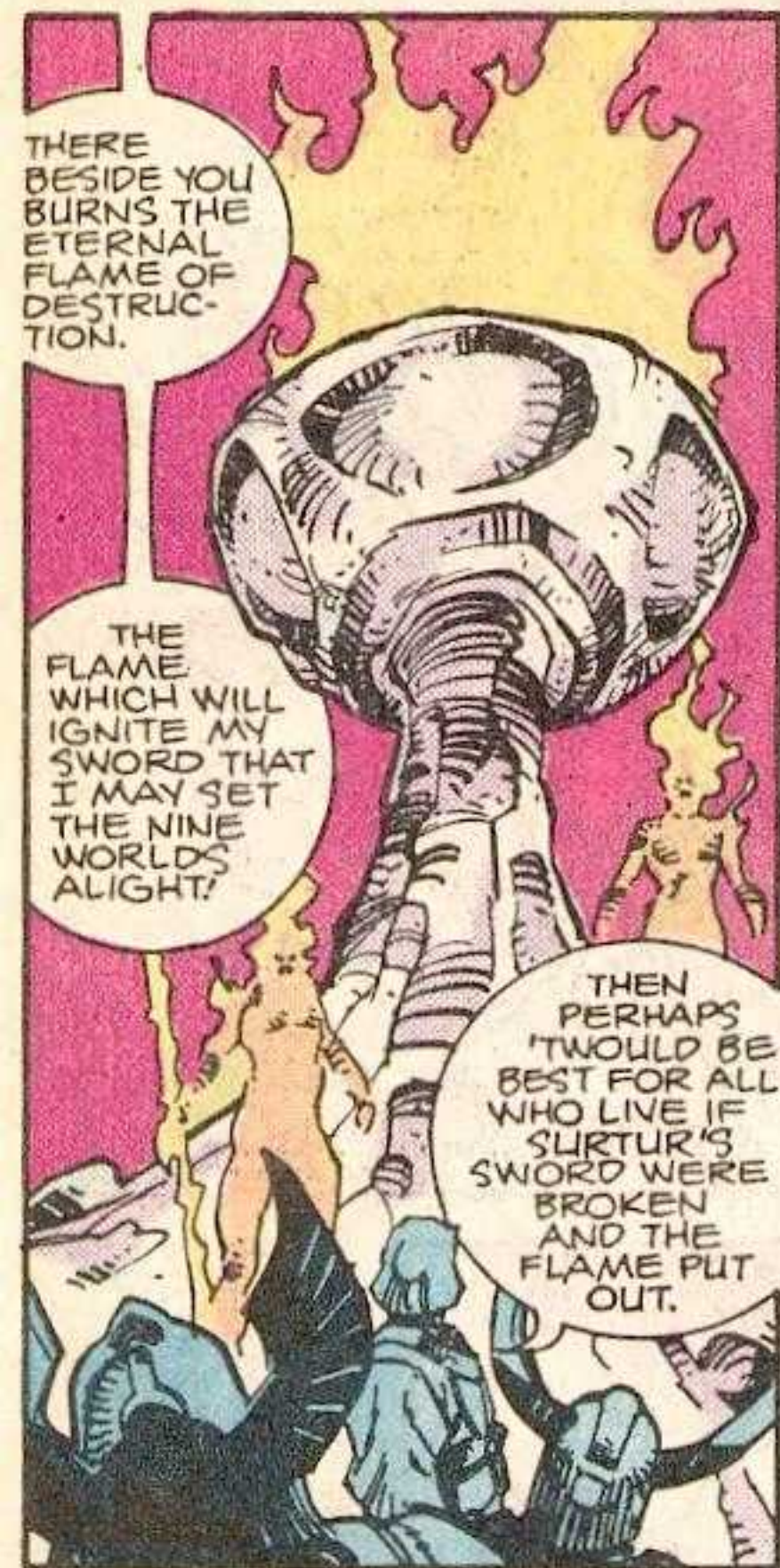
I SALUTE YOUR COURAGE. WHAT WOULD YOU ASK OF ME?

IS IT TRUE, GREAT SURTUR, THAT ONE DAY YOU SHALL DESTROY THE NINE WORLDS WITH FIRE?

IT IS TRUE, LITTLE GOD!

BEHOLD THE SWORD THAT SHALL RAZE ALL THAT IS WHEN THE END OF TIME IS NIGH.

AND SURTUR SHALL BE LAST AS HE WAS FIRST, OLDEST OF ALL WHO LIVE.



THERE BESIDE YOU BURNS THE ETERNAL FLAME OF DESTRUCTION.

THE FLAME WHICH WILL IGNITE MY SWORD THAT I MAY SET THE NINE WORLDS ALIGHT!

THEN PERHAPS 'TWOULD BE BEST FOR ALL WHO LIVE IF SURTUR'S SWORD WERE BROKEN AND THE FLAME PUT OUT.



HAHAHAHA

WELL SPOKEN, YOUNG ODIN.

A RARE JAPE FROM ONE WHO IS ABOUT TO DIE!

THE FLAME CANNOT BE EXTINGUISHED FOR SO THE FATES THEMSELVES HAVE DECREED!

AND AS FOR MY SWORD, BREAK IT IF YOU CAN!



BROTHERS, BEWARE HIS BLADE! SURTUR DOETH STRIKE WITH THE SPEED OF A DEADLY VIPER!

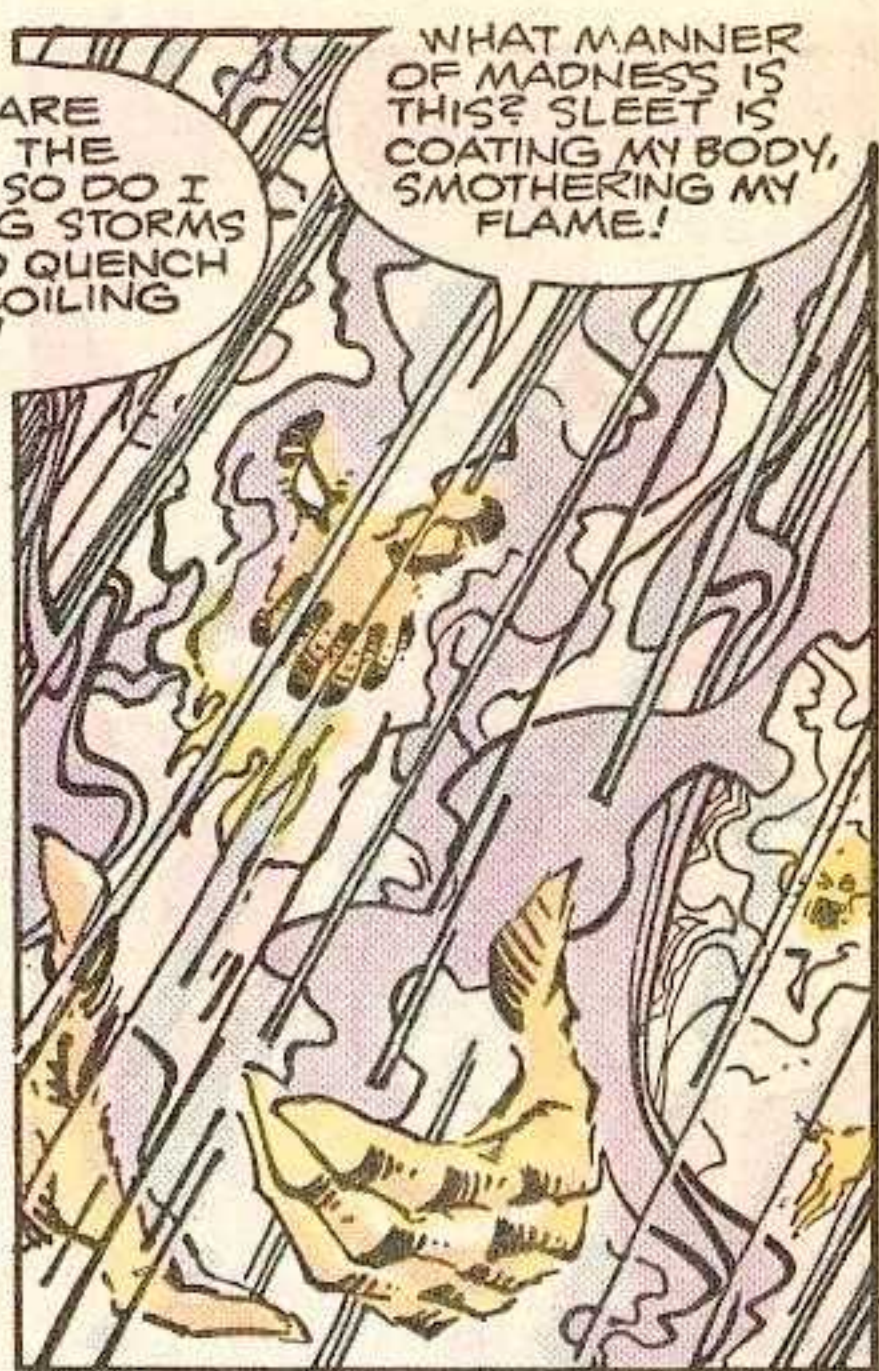
SKATIN HRODDUM!

THE DEMONS
ATTACK FROM
ALL SIDES!

FEAR
NOT,
LITTLE
BROTHER!

FOR AS WE ARE
THE GODS OF THE
WINTRY NORTH, SO DO I
CALL THE RAGING STORMS
OF THE ARCTIC TO QUENCH
THE DEMONS' BOILING
CHOLER!

WHAT MANNER
OF MADNESS IS
THIS? SLEET IS
COATING MY BODY,
SMOTHERING MY
FLAME!



I... I
CANNOT
MOVE!

I'M TRAPPED
IN A SHEATH
OF ICE!

QUICKLY,
BROTHERS. HERE
IN THE HEART OF
FIRE'S KINGDOM,
THE STORM WILL
NOT LAST LONG.

AND
SURTUR
RENEWS HIS
ATTACK!

WE MUST
COMBINE OUR
POWER AND
BECOME AS
DEADLY IN
COLD AS HE
IS IN FIRE!

SO
BE
IT!

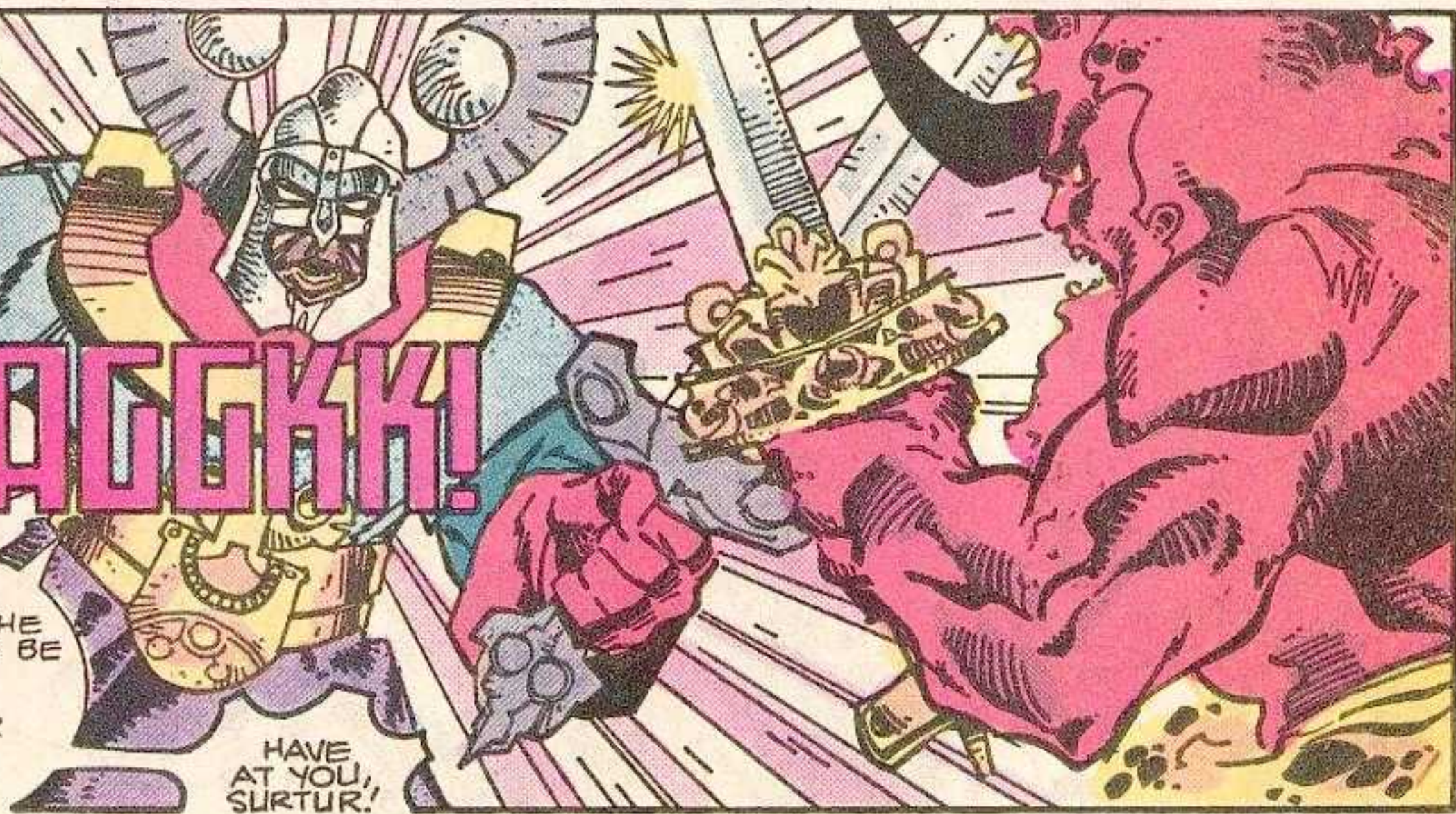


WE...
ARE...
ONE!

GRAGGKK!

LET THE
WRATH OF THE
ICY WASTES BE
MATCHED
AGAINST
THE ANGER
OF THE
BURNING
GIANT.

HAVE
AT YOU,
SURTUR!



"WE FOUGHT THEN, SURTUR FOR THE FLAME AND DESTRUCTION, THE GODS FOR THE STORM AND LIFE!"

"WE BATTLED ACROSS THE TORTURED LANDSCAPE, GOUGING OUT GREAT TRENCHES, OUR BLADES RINGING WITH EVERY BLOW..."

"AND THE CONFLICT RAGED FOR TIME OUT OF MIND."

"SURTUR WAS LIKE NO BEING WE HAD EVER ENCOUNTERED."

"...UNTIL AT LAST WE KNEW THAT HE COULD NOT BE BESTED."

"PERHAPS HE WAS FATED TO DESTROY THE WORLD AND NAUGHT WE COULD DO WOULD PREVENT IT."

"BUT STILL, WE DETERMINED TO MAKE ONE FINAL EFFORT..."

"... AND BROUGHT ALL OUR ENERGY AND POWER INTO FOCUS, CHANNELING IT INTO OUR SWORD AT THE LAST MOMENT BEFORE IMPACT!"

KRAKADOOOM!

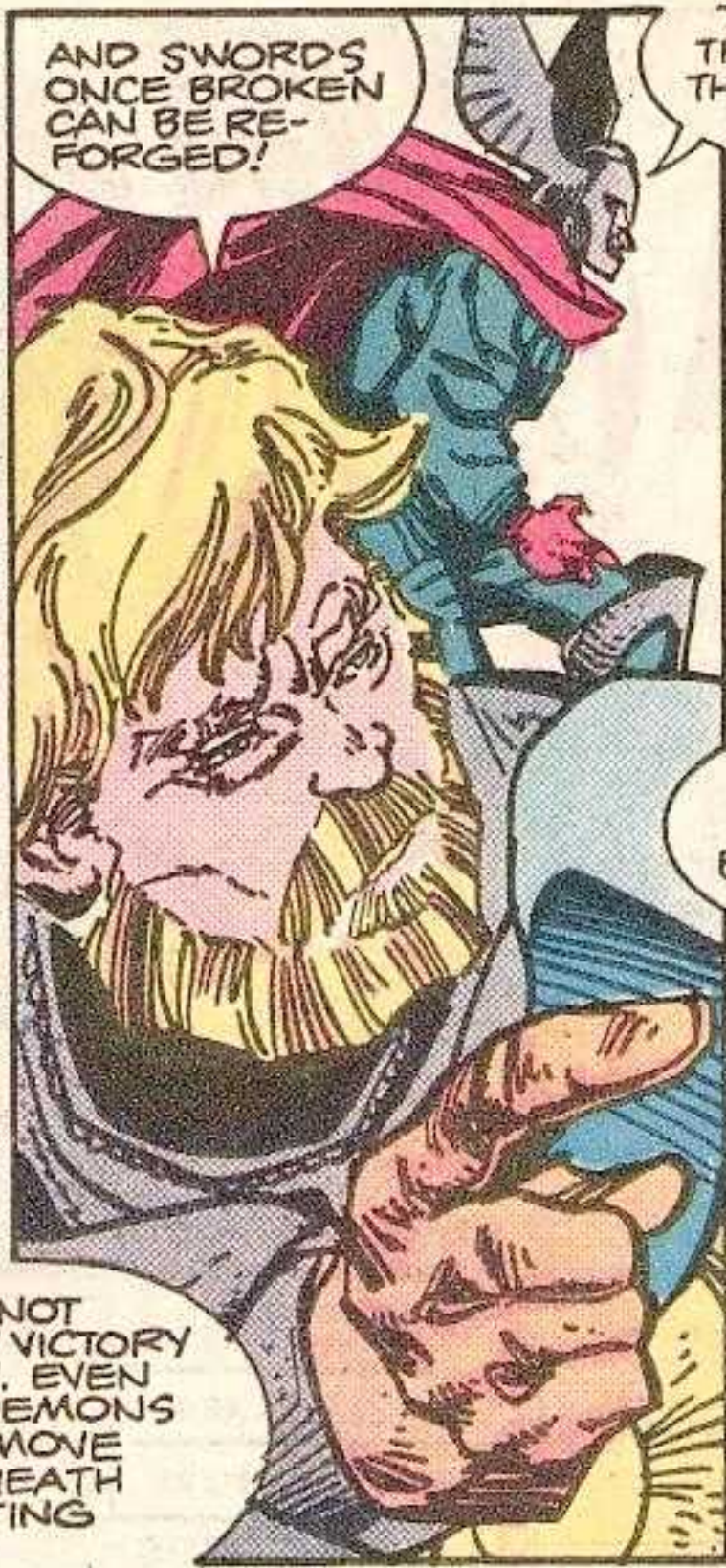
WHEN WE RECOVERED CONSCIOUSNESS, WE FOUND...



OUR FLUSION HAS BEEN DESTROYED AND SURTUR IS SUBMERGED IN HIS SEA OF FLAME!

BUT WE HAVE DESTROYED HIS SWORD! THE SWORD OF DOOM IS BROKEN!

LET US NOT EXALT OUR VICTORY TOO SOON. EVEN NOW THE DEMONS BEGIN TO MOVE AGAIN BENEATH THEIR COATING OF ICE.



AND SWORDS ONCE BROKEN CAN BE RE-FORGED!

THEN WE SHALL FLEE THIS FELL LAND AND TAKE THE FLAME OF DESTRUCTION WITH US.



CATCH, LITTLE BROTHER!



THOUGH SURTUR SHOULD MAKE HIS SWORD ANEW, NEVER SHALL HE BE ABLE TO KINDLE IT WITH THE FLAMES THAT WILL END THE WORLD!

HURRY! EVEN NOW, HE EMERGES FROM THE FIRE!



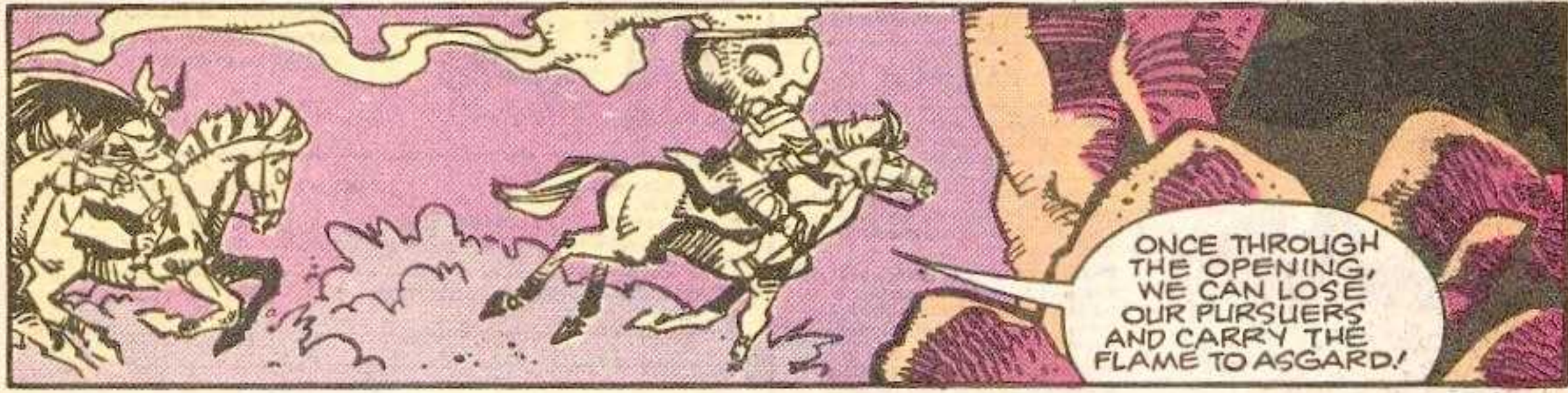
STOP, GODLINGS!

STOP OR KNOW THAT I SHALL NEVER REST UNTIL I HAVE MY REVENGE!



"BUT HARD WE RODE UNTIL AT LAST WE SAW BEFORE US THE GATEWAY BACK TO THE NINE WORLDS!"

HURRY!
THE DEMONS
ARE NEARLY
UPON US!



ONCE THROUGH
THE OPENING,
WE CAN LOSE
OUR PURSUERS
AND CARRY THE
FLAME TO ASGARD!



"BUT UNSEEN BY ME,
VILI AND VE DID NOT
FOLLOW ME THROUGH
THE DOOR TO FREEDOM!"



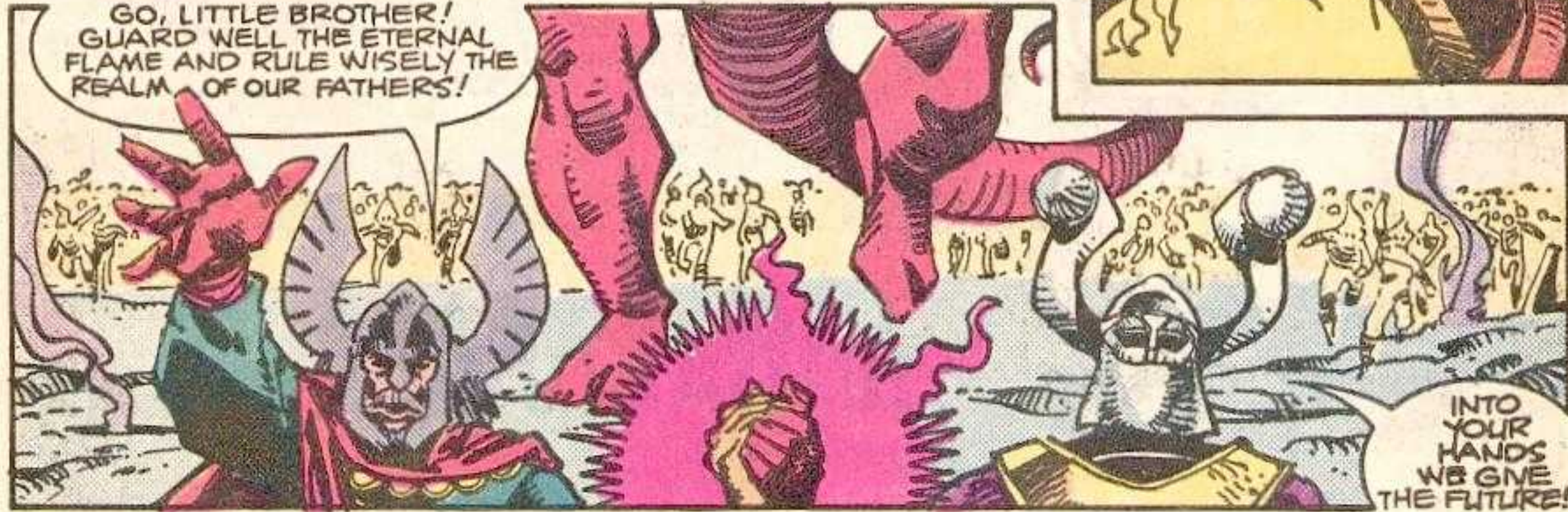
"SUDDENLY, I
REALIZED THAT
I WAS ALONE!"

MY BROTHERS!
WHY DO YOU HESITATE?
THROUGH THE ENTRANCE
QUICKLY BEFORE
ALL IS LOST!



NAY,
ODIN!
OUR
RIDE
ENDS
HERE!

FOR SHOULD WE
ESCAPE WITH YOU,
THEN SURELY SHALL
SURTUR ENTER
THE NINE WORLDS
AND SEEK US OUT,
NO MATTER
WHERE WE HAVE
HIDDEN.



GO, LITTLE BROTHER!
GUARD WELL THE ETERNAL
FLAME AND RULE WISELY THE
REALM OF OUR FATHERS!

INTO
YOUR
HANDS
WE GIVE
THE FUTURE!



"AND WHEN I HAD RECOVERED..."

"... I SAW BEFORE ME NOT THE GATES TO THE KINGDOM OF FIRE, BUT THE SOLID CLIFFS TOWERING UP ENDLESSLY INTO THE CLOUDS ABOVE!"



"THE ENTRANCE TO MUSPELHEIM ... WAS GONE."



"VILI! VE! MY BROTHERS! DO NOT LEAVE ME!"



"SUDDENLY A SECOND SHOCK, MORE POWERFUL THAN THE FIRST, ENGLUFED ME!"



"AS I ROSE AGAIN, I WAS SEETHING WITH ENERGY, ENERGY THAT COULD SHAKE THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE COSMOS!"

"THIS WAS BORN THE ODIN-POWER, THE BIRTHRIGHT OF THE SONS OF BOR!"

"AND I KNEW THAT MY BROTHERS HAD GIVEN UP THEIR POWERS... FOREVER."

ENOUGH POWER TO LEVEL A WORLD, TO OVERTHROW A UNIVERSE!

...AND THAT THE SACRIFICE OF MY BROTHERS WOULD BE IN VAIN.

BUT NOT ENOUGH TO SAVE MY BROTHERS!

I KNEW THAT TO BREACH THE WALLS ONCE MORE WAS TO OPEN THE WORLD AGAIN TO SURTUR...

OH, VILI! OH, VE! WOULD THAT WE HAD NEVER JOURNEYED TO THAT CURSED LAND!



AND YET, HAVE I NOT GUARDED THE ETERNAL FLAME, LO, THESE MANY EONS?

DOES IT NOT, EVEN NOW, RESIDE SAFE WITHIN THE WALLS OF ASGARD?

AND YET, SAFE NO LONGER!

FOR DEADLY SURTUR HAS AT LAST BREACHED THE WALLS OF MUSPELHEIM...



...SHATTERING THEM WHERE THEY WERE WEAKEST IN THE HEART OF THE BURNING GALAXY!

A GALAXY HE DESTROYED TO CREATE THE FORGE WHEREIN HE MIGHT REMAKE THE SWORD OF DOOM!

CERTAIN IT IS THAT SURTUR WILL SEEK OUT THE FOOT OF THE RAINBOW BRIDGE ON EARTH...

SO HAVE I CALLED THE HOSTING OF ASGARD.



...THAT HE MIGHT TRAVEL THEREBY TO ASGARD AND IGNITE THE SWORD OF DOOM IN THE ETERNAL FLAME!

FORETELLING IS USELESS WHEN EVEN THE NORNS SEE THE FUTURE ONLY IN SHADOWS.

BUT NOW IS THE TIME WHEN ALL DEBTS MUST BE PAID.

ON EARTH, THEN, MUST THE FORCES OF ASGARD BE DEPLOYED AGAINST THE ONSLAUGHT OF THE SONS OF MUSPELL.

THERE IS ONE WHOSE MIGHT WE SHALL SORELY NEED IN THE COMING TRIAL...

...WHOSE COURAGE AND POWER ARE THE EQUAL OF MY SON'S!



AND WHO UNDERSTOOD EVEN THEN THE PRICE I WOULD ASK IF THE MARCH OF EVIL THAT DESTROYED HIS HOME REACHED OUT FOR THE GOLDEN REALM.

NOW, FOR THE LIFELESS SHARDS OF HIS RAVAGED HOMELAND, FOR THE BLOOD I OWE MY BROTHERS...

...FOR THE SAKE OF ALL THOSE WHOSE VERY EXISTENCE MAKES THEM ENEMIES OF THE FIRE THAT DESTROYS...

I SUMMON TO ASGARD...

...BETA RAY BILL!



KATHHUM!

NEXT:

RAGNAROK AND ROLL!

I WOULDN'T MISS THE NEXT ISSUE IF I WERE YOU, KIDS. YOU JUST MIGHT REGRET IT FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE. 'NUFF SAID!