

MARVEL®

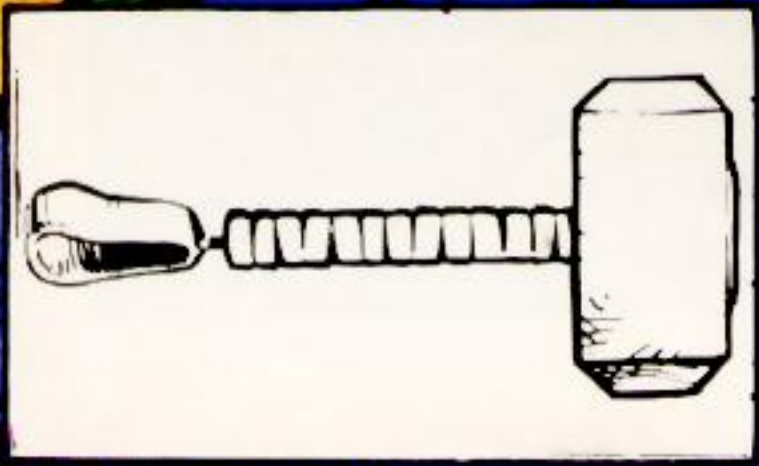
©1984 MARVEL COMICS GROUP

TM

60c 353
U.K. 30p MAR
CAN. 75c

the mighty

THOR



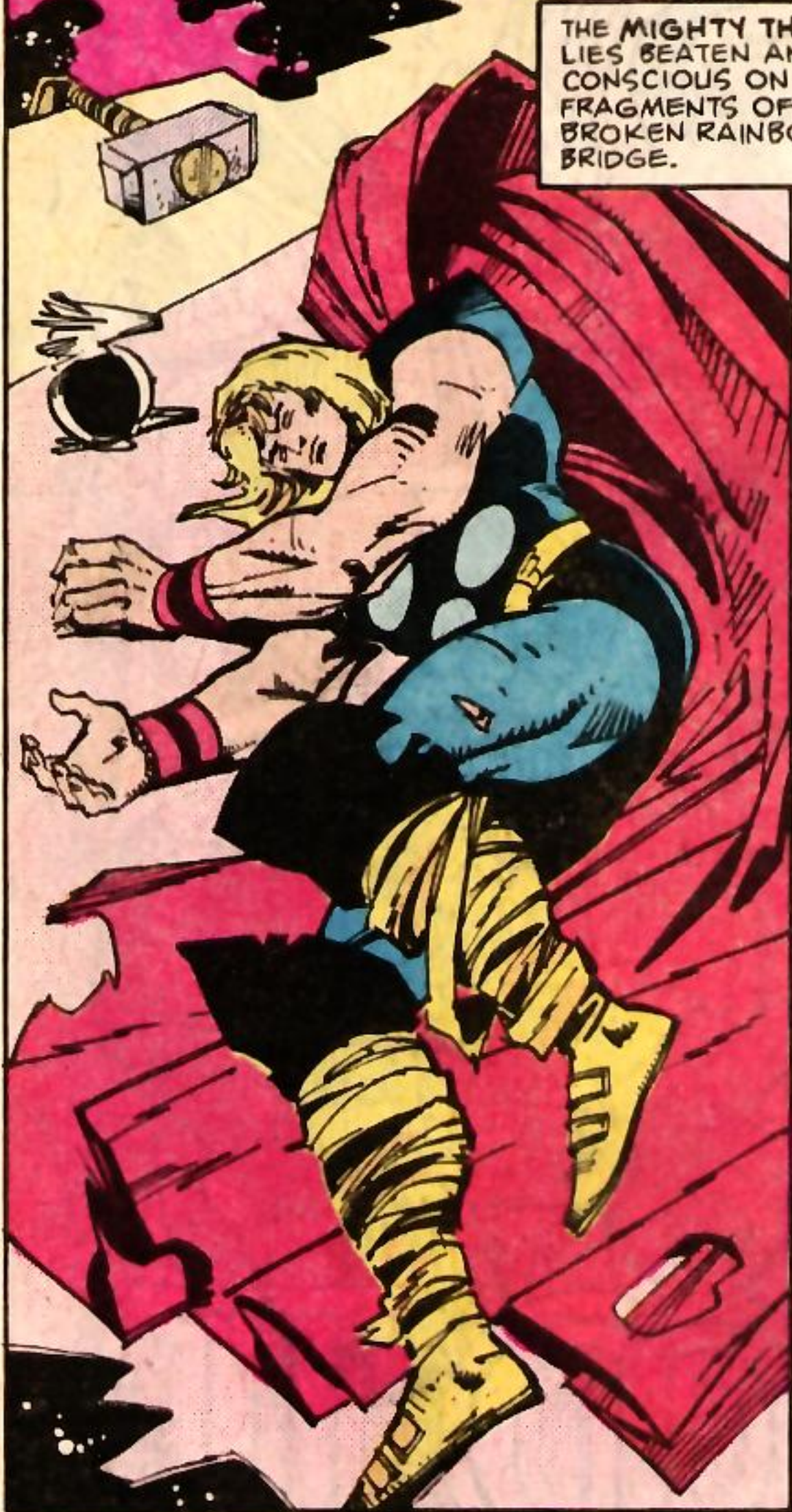
THE FINALE OF THE SURTUR SAGA!

STAN LEE PRESENTS **the MIGHTY THOR**

ASGARD, HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS, STANDS EMPTY, HER HALLS ABANDONED, HER STREETS DESERTED...



THE MIGHTY THOR LIES BEATEN AND UNCONSCIOUS ON THE FRAGMENTS OF THE BROKEN RAINBOW BRIDGE.



ODIN, THE ALLFATHER AND RULER OF ASGARD, IS IMPRISONED IN A CRYSTAL OF ICE THAT CAME FROM THE DAWN OF TIME AND THAT DEFIES EVEN HIS POWERS TO ESCAPE...



ART AND STORY: WALTER SIMONSON · LETTERING: JOHN WORKMAN, JR. · COLORS: CHRISTIE SCHEELE
EDITING: MARK GRIENWALD · EDITOR IN CHIEF: JIM SHOOTER

THOR® Vol. 1, No. 353, March, 1986. (ISSN 0274-533X) Published by MARVEL COMICS GROUP, James E. Galton, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. Michael Hobson, Vice-President, Publishing. Milton Schiffman, Vice-President, Production. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT NEW YORK, NY AND AT ADDITIONAL MAILING OFFICES. Published monthly. Copyright © 1984 by Marvel Comics Group, a division of Cadence Industries Corporation. All rights reserved. Price 60¢ per copy in the U.S. and 75¢ in Canada. Subscription rate \$7.20 for 12 issues. Canada and Foreign, \$9.20. Printed in the U.S.A. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. THOR (including all prominent characters featured in the issue), and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are trademarks of the MARVEL COMICS GROUP. POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO THOR, 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, 10TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016.

...AND IN THE CENTER OF THE FORSAKEN REALM STANDS THE AUTHOR OF THESE EVENTS-- SURTUR OF MUSPELHEIM, LORD OF FLAME, ANCIENT OF DAYS, AND DEMON OF PROPHECY.

BEFORE HIM IS THE ETERNAL FLAME, AND EVEN AS WE WATCH, HE THRUSTS HIS GLOWING BLADE, TWILIGHT, INTO ITS VERY HEART!

ONCE MY SWORD IS LIT, NO POWER IN ALL THE UNIVERSE WILL BE ABLE TO PREVENT ME FROM FLINGING FIRE ACROSS THE NINE WORLDS...

... AND DESTROYING ALL THAT IS...

... AS I WAS MEANT TO DO FROM THE BEGINNING OF TIME*!

DOOOOOP!!!

*THE GORY DETAILS ARE ALL IN THOR #350-352!

NOW! NOW IS THE MOMENT WHEN I--!

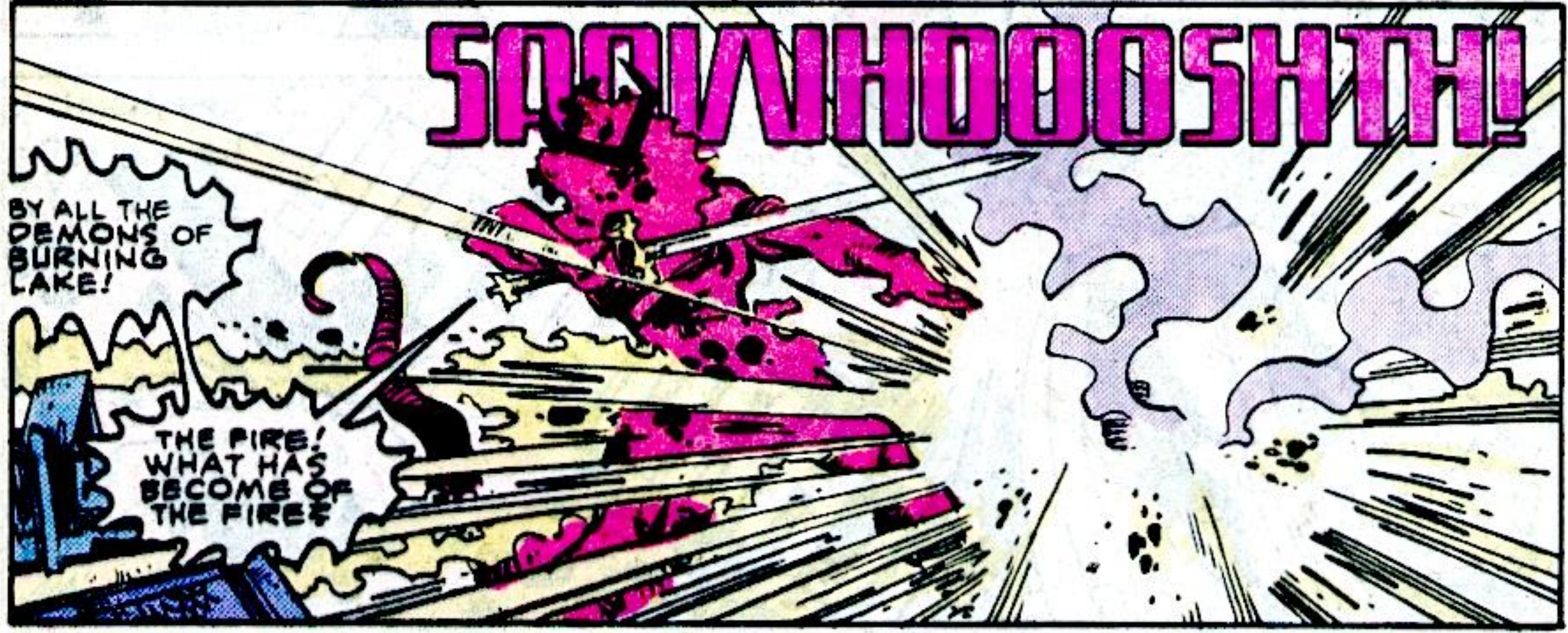
FSSSZZZZZITTT!



SAPWWHOOSH!

BY ALL THE DEMONS OF BURNING LAKE!

THE FIRE! WHAT HAS BECOME OF THE FIRE?



MY SWORD-- WHY ISN'T IT LIT?

MANY QUESTIONS, MIGHTY SURTUR.

ONE ANSWER.



SURELY NOT EVEN THE FATES CAN CHEAT ME OF MY VICTORY LIKE THIS!

LOKI! IT WAS YOU!

AH, MY FIERY FRIEND! EVER THE MASTER OF THE OBVIOUS!

AND THAT ILLUSION WAS CUNNINGLY WROUGHT, NO?

AS LOKI IS THE MASTER OF ILLUSION!

BUT MALEKITH SAID YOU HAD AGREED TO WITHHOLD YOUR SUPPORT FROM ASGARD*

I BELIEVE I DID SAY SOMETHING OF THE SORT TO HIM AT THE TIME BUT YOU KNOW HOW IT IS WITH SCHEMERS...

...THEY ARE EVER THE EASIEST TO DECEIVE.

*BACK IN THOR # 344.

AND YOU, SURTUR, FOR ALL YOUR VAST POWER, ARE SIMPLY AN ELEMENTAL FORCE!

SUBTLETY OF CONCEPTION IS BEYOND YOU.

EVEN MY STEPFATHER, ODIN, READ YOU CORRECTLY.

ARRRGUH!

SHRAPPPT!

'T WAS NOT DIFFICULT TO SEE THAT YOUR TRUE GOAL WAS NOT WHAT MALEKITH CLAIMED, THE DESTRUCTION OF ASGARD WHICH I COULD READILY AGREE TO...

... BUT THE DESTRUCTION OF EVERYTHING! AND OF WHAT USE IS THAT TO ME?

WHY ASPIRE TO BECOME THE LORD OF ALL I SURVEY...

... IF ALL I SURVEY IS A BURNED OUT CINDER?

THE FLAME! WHERE HAST THOU HIDDEN THE FLAME?!

OF COURSE, BEING AN ELEMENTAL DOES HAVE ITS ADVANTAGES!

CHRRASH!

ONE NEVER HAS TO ENTERTAIN MORE THAN ONE THOUGHT AT A TIME!

BUT EVEN A SIMPLE MIND,
GRANTED A BODY OF GREAT
POWER, MAY ACCOMPLISH
MUCH IF ONE IS NOT
CAREFUL.

MY STEP-
BROTHER THOR
IS THE LIVING
PROOF OF
THAT!

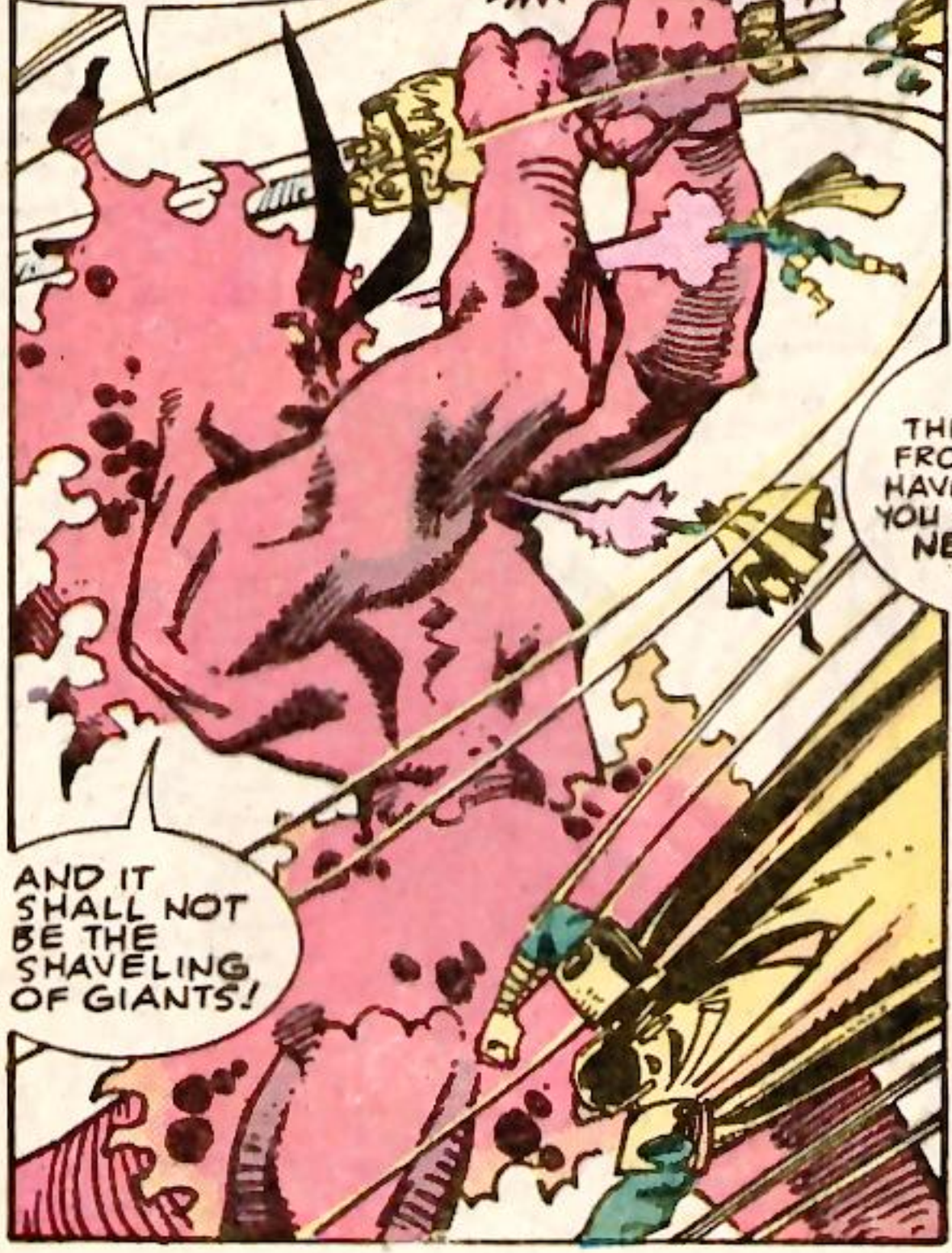


SO WE WILL
TRY TO MAKE
THE PURSUIT
MORE INTER-
ESTING!

ALL
OF
US!



MOCK ME IF YOU
WILL, LOKI! BUT
IN THE END, THERE
SHALL BE ONLY
ONE OF US!

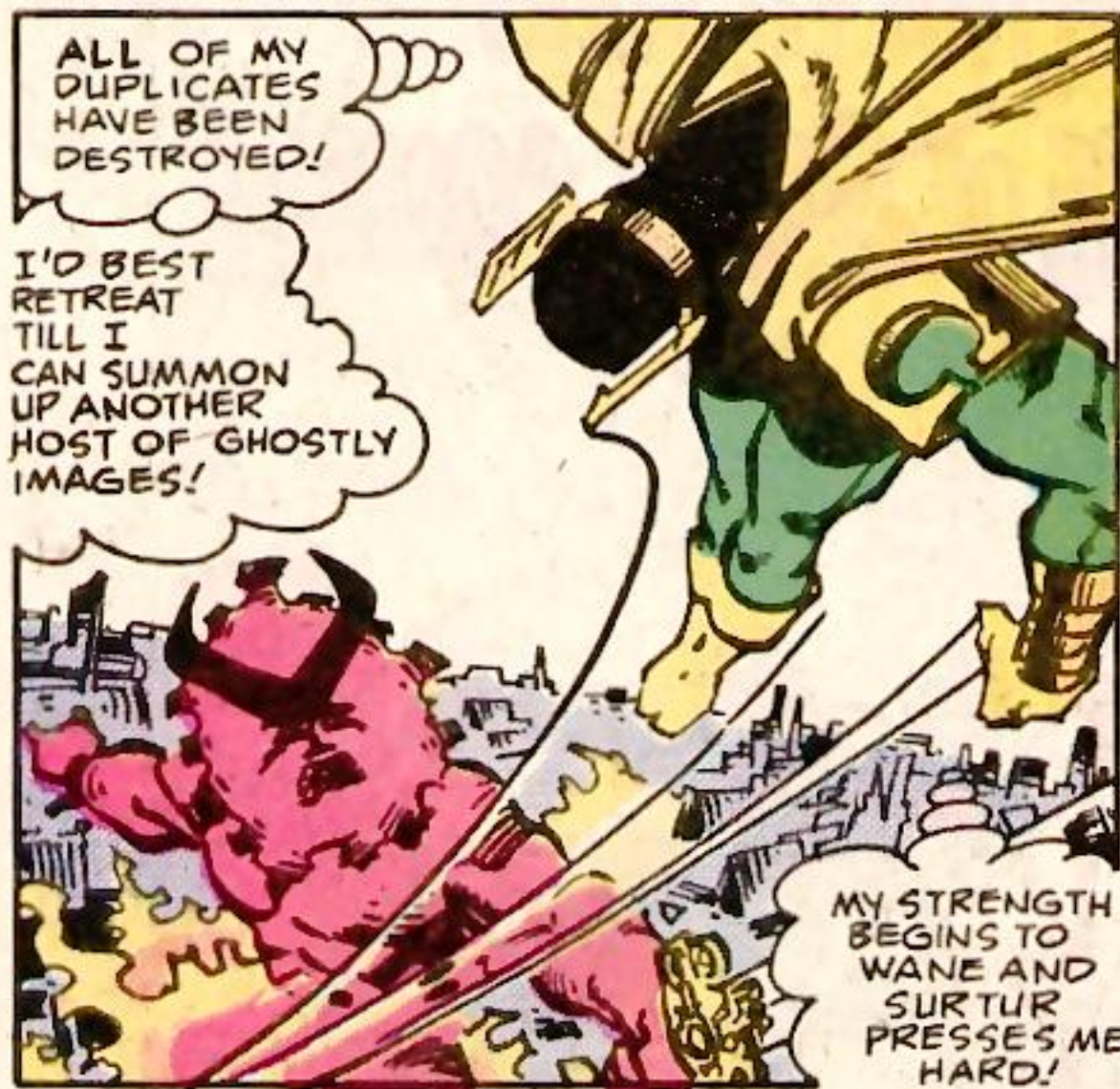


PERHAPS
NONE BUT I,
THE SCION OF THE
FROST GIANTS, COULD
HAVE STOOD BETWEEN
YOU AND THE FLAME AS
NEITHER ODIN NOR
THOR COULD!

AND IT
SHALL NOT
BE THE
SHAVELING
OF GIANTS!



FOR SEEMINGLY ENDLESS MINUTES, THE BATTLE RAGES BETWEEN THE TWO FOES UNTIL...



ALL OF MY DUPLICATES HAVE BEEN DESTROYED!

I'D BEST RETREAT TILL I CAN SUMMON UP ANOTHER HOST OF GHOSTLY IMAGES!

MY STRENGTH BEGINS TO WANE AND SURTUR PRESSES ME HARD!



TOO LONG HAVE YOU LINGERED THIS TIME IN MY SIGHT, FARBAUTI'S SON!

AND THOUGH MY SWORD IS NOT YET ABLAZE WITH THE FIRE OF THE ETERNAL FLAME...

SKAGGERACK!

...THE FIERY ENERGY OF MUSPELHEIM IS STILL MINE TO COMMAND!



WHERE NOW, BOLD LOKI, IS ALL YOUR CRAFT AND GUILDE?

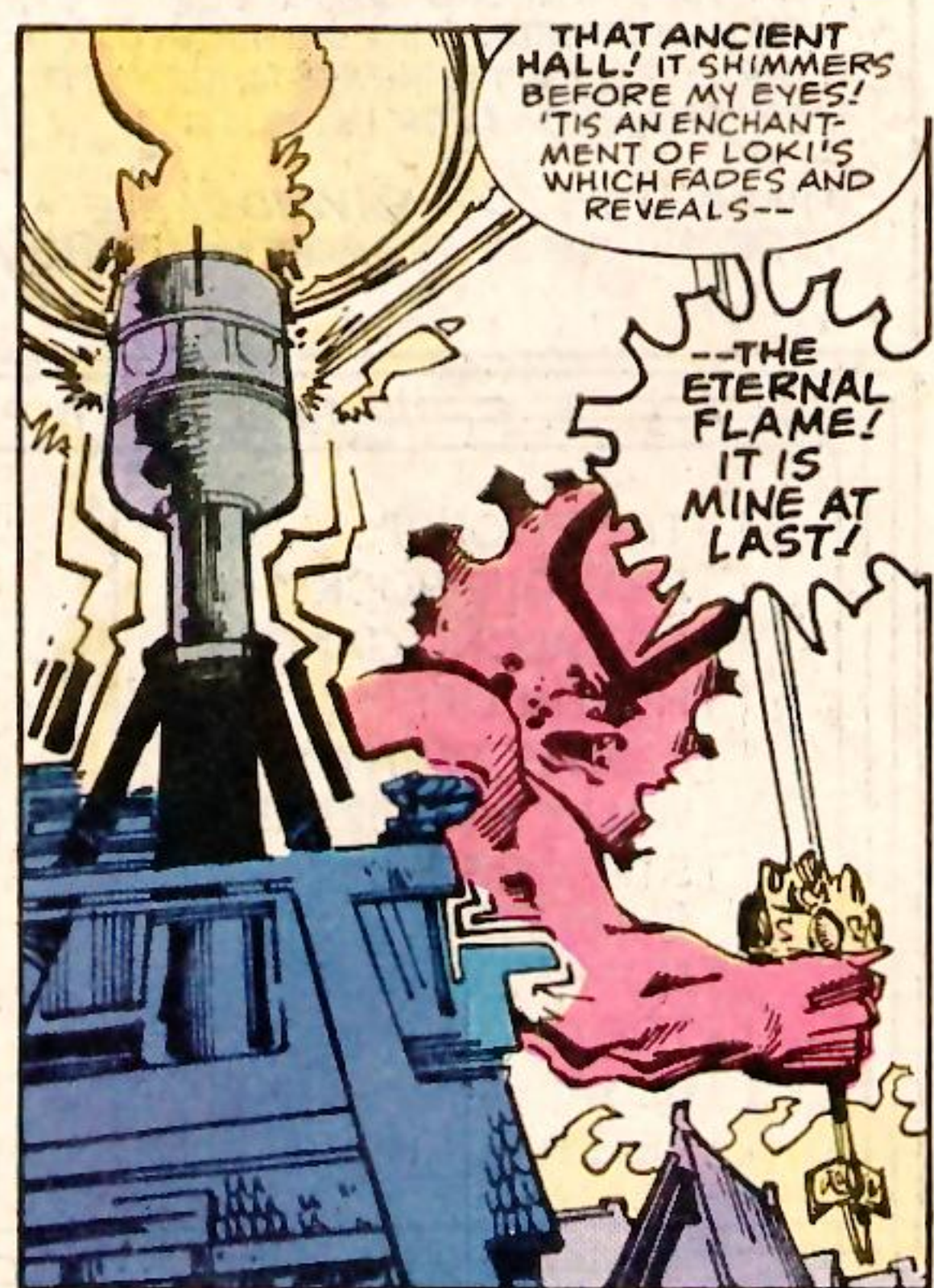


AND WHERE IS THE FLAME I HAVE COME SO FAR TO FIND?

SOMEWHERE HERE IN ASGARD, IT MUST BE HIDDEN, BUT I SHALL UNCOVER IT!

AND WHEN I HAVE, THE FATES SHALL NO LONGER DENY ME MY DESTINY!

I SHALL TAKE WHAT WAS MINE IN THE BEGINNING AND LO, THERE SHALL BE AN ENDING!



THAT ANCIENT HALL! IT SHIMMERS BEFORE MY EYES! 'TIS AN ENCHANTMENT OF LOKI'S WHICH FADES AND REVEALS--

--THE ETERNAL FLAME! IT IS MINE AT LAST!

BUT EVEN AS SURTUR TURNS TOWARD THE SEETHING CAULDRON OF FIRE, WE FIND BENEATH THE ISLE OF GREAT BRITAIN IN THE REALM OF FAERIE...

...ROGER WILLIS IN A RACE FOR LIFE!

AFTER THE MORTAL! LET HIM SEE US AND KNOW THE FEAR OF THE DAMNED!

FOR HE IS THE ONE WHO HELPED CAPTURE MALEKITH AND WE SHALL PAY HIM OUT IN BLOOD*!

*THOR#348.

SOMETHING MUST HAVE HAPPENED TO THE HUMAN TORCH! HE NEVER CAME BACK--

--AND THOUGH I'VE GOT THE CASKET OF ANCIENT WINTERS NEARLY PUT TOGETHER, IT LOOKS AS THOUGH I MAY NOT LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO ENJOY IT!

FASTER, MY BROTHERS! A MOMENT MORE AND HE IS OURS!

THEN WE'LL JUST HAVE TO SKIP THAT MOMENT, BOYS! BESIDES, ROGER AND I ARE FINISHED HERE ANYWAY!

RIGHT, ROGER?

JOHNNY!

I'VE NEVER BEEN SO GLAD TO SEE ANYONE IN ALL MY LIFE!

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?

I RAN INTO A FEW FIRE DEMONS UP ABOVE! MANAGED TO SHAKE 'EM, BUT IT KEPT ME FROM GETTING BACK TO YOU!

DON'T LOOK NOW BUT I THINK THOSE DEMONS HAVE COME BACK FOR A RETURN MATCH!

LOOKS LIKE THE NEXT ROUND IS ABOUT TO START ANY SECOND!



THEN LET'S GET THE HECK OUT OF HERE!

YOU BET! THIS PLACE IS DEFINITELY TOO HOT FOR AN OLD EX-COP TO HANDLE!

NO SWEAT! REED'S RIPROAR 1 IS FASTER THAN ALL THESE GUYS PUT TOGETHER!

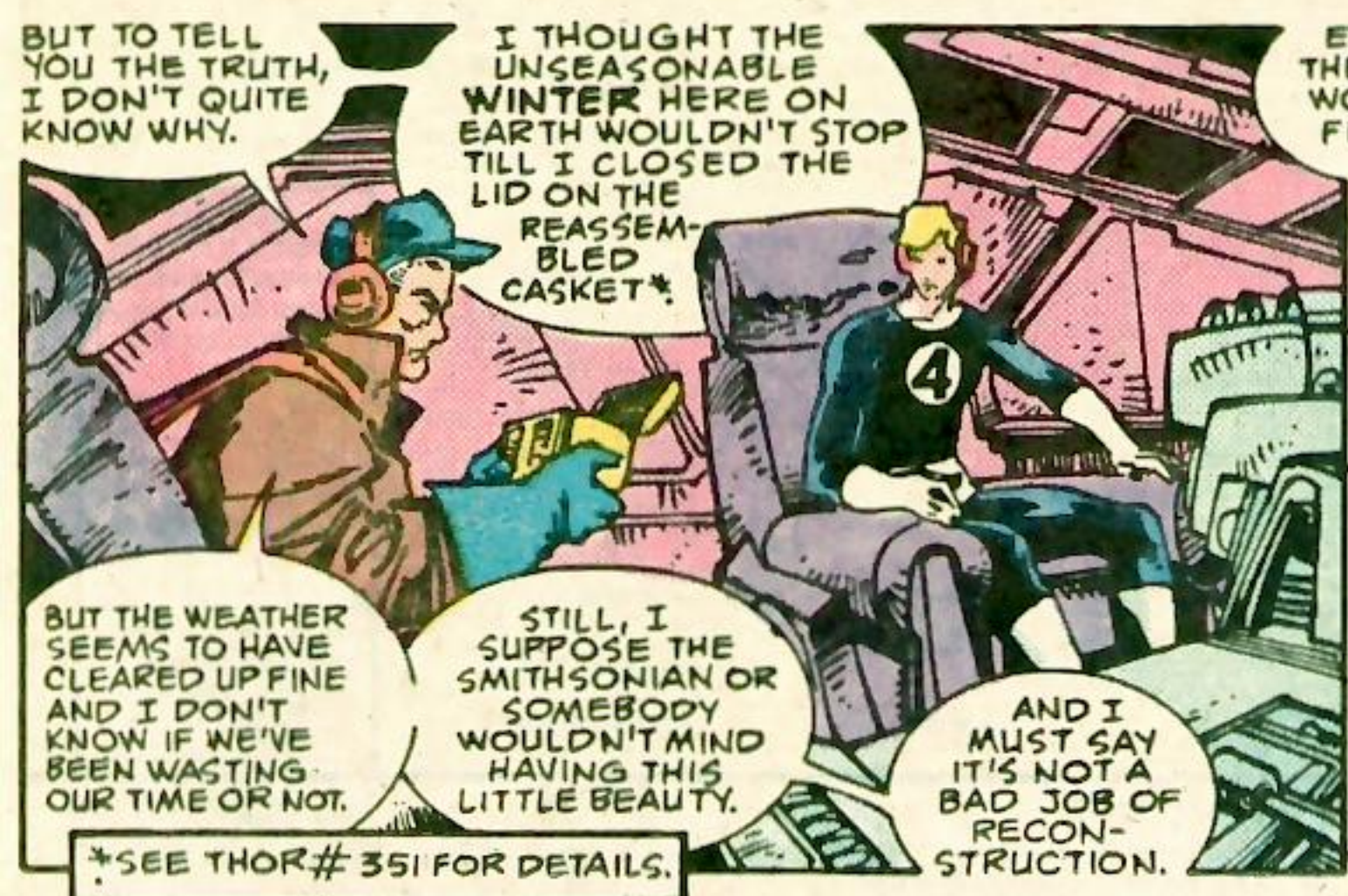


AND WE AREN'T EVEN GOING TO BLOW 'EM A KISS AS WE LEAVE.

GLAD TO SEE YOU STAYED IN ONE PIECE! DID YOU GET THE CASKET?



YEP! INCLUDING THE LAST FRAGMENT. I'M JUST GLUING IT IN PLACE RIGHT NOW.



BUT TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH, I DON'T QUITE KNOW WHY.

I THOUGHT THE UNSEASONABLE WINTER HERE ON EARTH WOULDN'T STOP TILL I CLOSED THE LID ON THE REASSEMBLED CASKET*

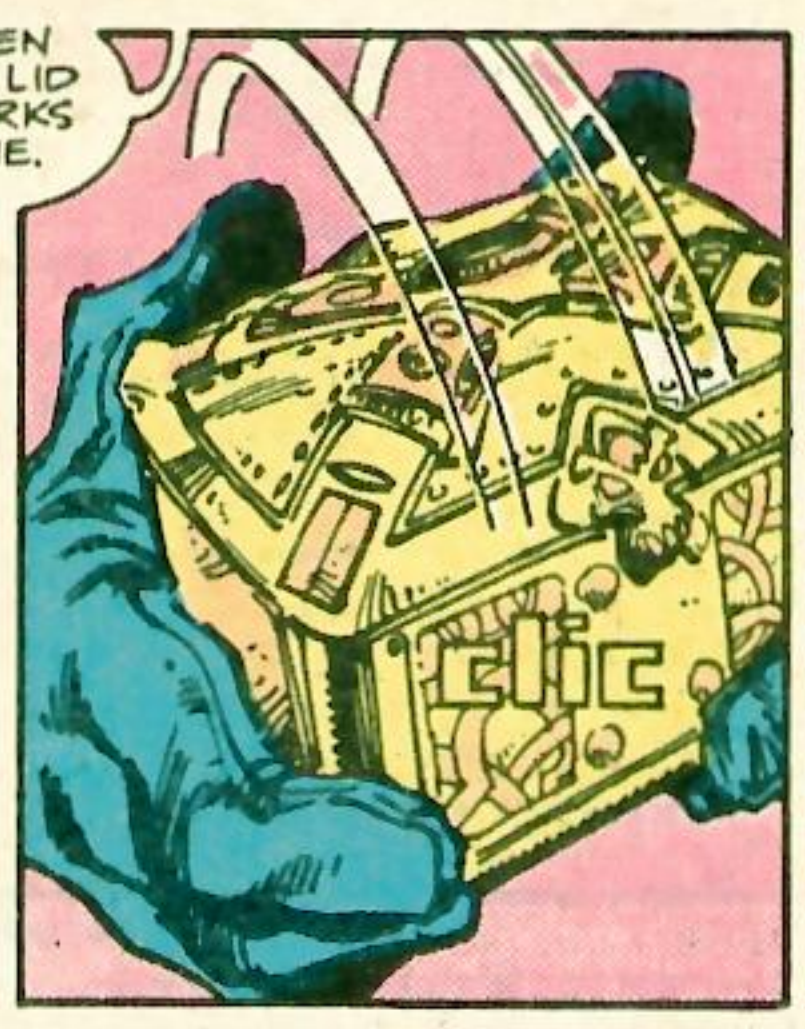
EVEN THE LID WORKS FINE.

BUT THE WEATHER SEEMS TO HAVE CLEARED UP FINE AND I DON'T KNOW IF WE'VE BEEN WASTING OUR TIME OR NOT.

STILL, I SUPPOSE THE SMITHSONIAN OR SOMEBODY WOULDN'T MIND HAVING THIS LITTLE BEAUTY.

AND I MUST SAY IT'S NOT A BAD JOB OF RECONSTRUCTION.

*SEE THOR # 351 FOR DETAILS.



HOLY--!

WHAT IS IT?

THE CASKET! IT'S FREEZING AGAIN! THE WINTER ENCHANTMENT IS BACK INSIDE THE BOX! I'D SWEAR IT!



IT FEELS JUST LIKE IT DID THE FIRST TIME I FOUND IT!

BUT IF THE WINTER WASN'T ON THE EARTH AND IT WASN'T IN THE BOX UNTIL JUST NOW, THEN WHERE WAS IT?

A GOOD QUESTION, JOHNNY, AND ONE WHOSE ANSWER WILL BE FOUND IN ASGARD...

...WHERE AT THE EXACT MOMENT THAT ROGER WILLIS CLOSED THE LID OF THE ANCIENT CASKET...

ВЫДАВАЖЬКА!

MY ICY PRISON HAS VANISHED AS THOUGH IT HAD NEVER BEEN!

BEWARE, SURTUR! THY HOUR OF TRIUMPH IS NOT YET AT HAND!

MAY THE FROST GIANTS BURN IN THE EVER-GLOWING SUN!

ODIN IS FREE OF THE CURSE OF ICE!

BUT THERE IS STILL TIME! THE FLAME MUST BE MINE!

A THOUSAND TIMES NAY, VILLAIN!

THE FLAME SHALL NOT BE THINE, NOW OR EVER!

WHA--! A HAMMER KNOCKING THE BLADE AWAY FROM THE BRAZIER!

BUT THAT CAN ONLY MEAN--!

AYE, FOUL SURTUR!
THOR HATH
RECOVERED
FROM THY
TREACHER-
OUS BLOWS...

...AND IS READY
TO STAND BETWEEN
THEE AND THE
DESTRUCTION OF ALL
WHO LIVE, THOUGH IT BE
AT THE COST OF MY
VERY LIFE!

FOOLISH THOR!
NOTHING YOU CAN
DO SHALL PREVENT
ME FROM DESTROY-
ING YOU!

...AND I GROW
STRONGER BY THE
MOMENT! THE
ODDS ARE MINE!

THE POWER OF
THE FLAME BEGINS
TO FLOW WITHIN MY
SWORD AGAIN...

AND YOU
SHALL PERISH
IN FIRE
AND WOE!

BUT HOW BETTER
FOR A GOD TO DIE,
SURTUR OF MUSPEL-
HEIM, THAN FACING
FEARFUL ODDS?

FOR
ASGARD!

FOR
MIDGARD!

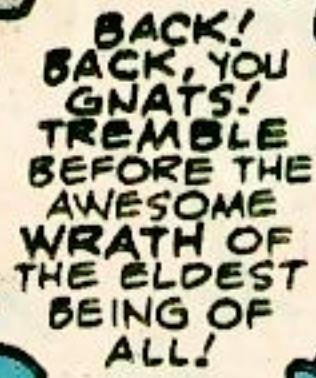
AND WHEN
BETTER TO
DIE THAN WITH
A MAN'S
SONS
BESIDE
HIM!

FOR
MYSELF!

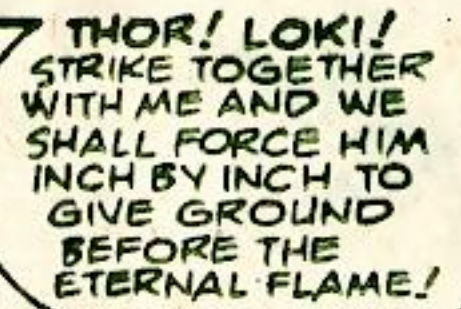
NOT EVEN THE GIANT-BUILT WALLS OF ASGARD CAN CONTAIN THE FEARSOME ENERGIES RELEASED WITHIN THE GOLDEN REALM...



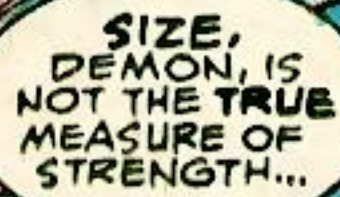
BRAAKATHOOOM!!!



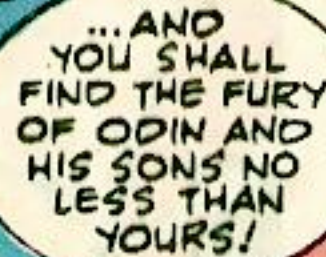
BACK!
BACK, YOU
GNATS!
TREMBLE
BEFORE THE
AWESOME
WRATH OF
THE ELDEST
BEING OF
ALL!



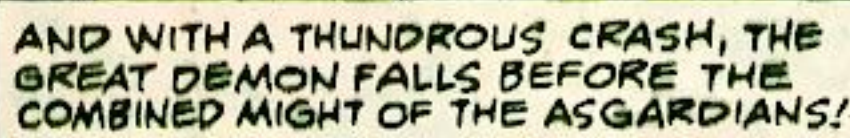
THOR! LOKI!
STRIKE TOGETHER
WITH ME AND WE
SHALL FORCE HIM
INCH BY INCH TO
GIVE GROUND
BEFORE THE
ETERNAL FLAME!



SIZE,
DEMON, IS
NOT THE TRUE
MEASURE OF
STRENGTH...



...AND
YOU SHALL
FIND THE FURY
OF ODIN AND
HIS SONS NO
LESS THAN
YOURS!



AND WITH A THUNDROUS CRASH, THE
GREAT DEMON FALLS BEFORE THE
COMBINED MIGHT OF THE ASGARDIANS!



BOOOM!

BUT EVEN AS THE GODS
CLOSE WITH THEIR
ANCIENT FOE...

FOOLS!
SURTUR IS
NOT SO EASILY
BESTED
BY ODIN
OR HIS
SONS!

WARRAHHH!

YOUR HOUR
IS AT HAND!
EVEN THE
NORNS HAVE
RENOUNCED
YOU!

MY FATHER AND
BROTHER HAVE
FALLEN AND
SURTUR MAY SLAY
THEM BEFORE
THEY CAN TRULY
RECOVER!

BUT AS
HONOR IS
MY SHIELD,
THEY SHALL
NOT DIE TILL
THOR HIM-
SELF HATH
BEEN SLAIN!

AND BY THE MIGHT
OF MY GOOD RIGHT
ARM, NEITHER LOKI
NOR ODIN NOR
THOR SHALL
FALL THIS DAY!

KABASSH!

WELL DONE,
MY SON! THOU
HAST HELD THE
MONSTER AT BAY
LONG ENOUGH
ALONE!

NOW LET
US GIRD
OURSELVES
FOR THE
FINAL EFFORT...

BUT EVEN AS THE
TRIO OF ASGARD-
IANS RENEW THEIR
ATTACK...

... IN THE FURTHEST REACHES OF THE GOLDEN REALM, AT THE BRIDGE ABOVE THE ENDLESS CHASM...

ENOUGH TIME! I TAKE YOUNGLING FOR DINNER NOW!



... A LARGE TROLL CONFRONTS ODIN'S WIFE, FRIGGA, AND HER CHARGES, THE CHILDREN OF ASGARD...

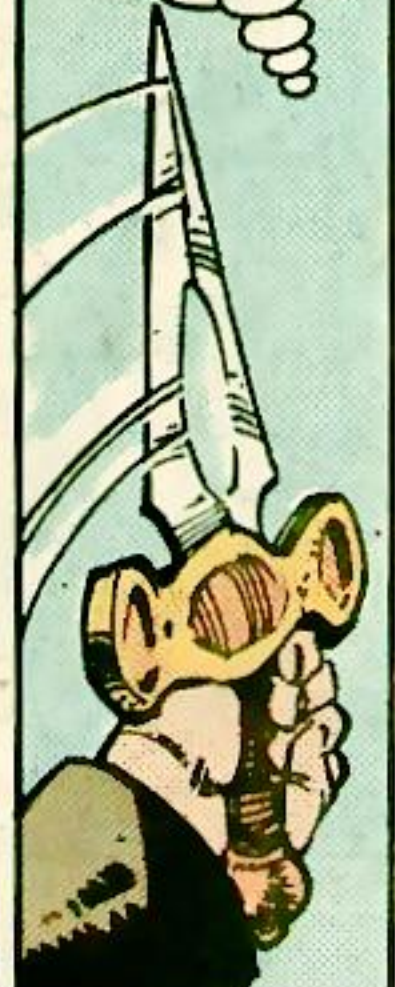
FORGET IT, FISHFACE! WE'VE ALREADY EATEN!

NICE GOING, ARNGRIM!



HE'S COMPLETELY FORGOTTEN THAT I GOT BEHIND HIM * AND MY PREPARATIONS ARE FINISHED!

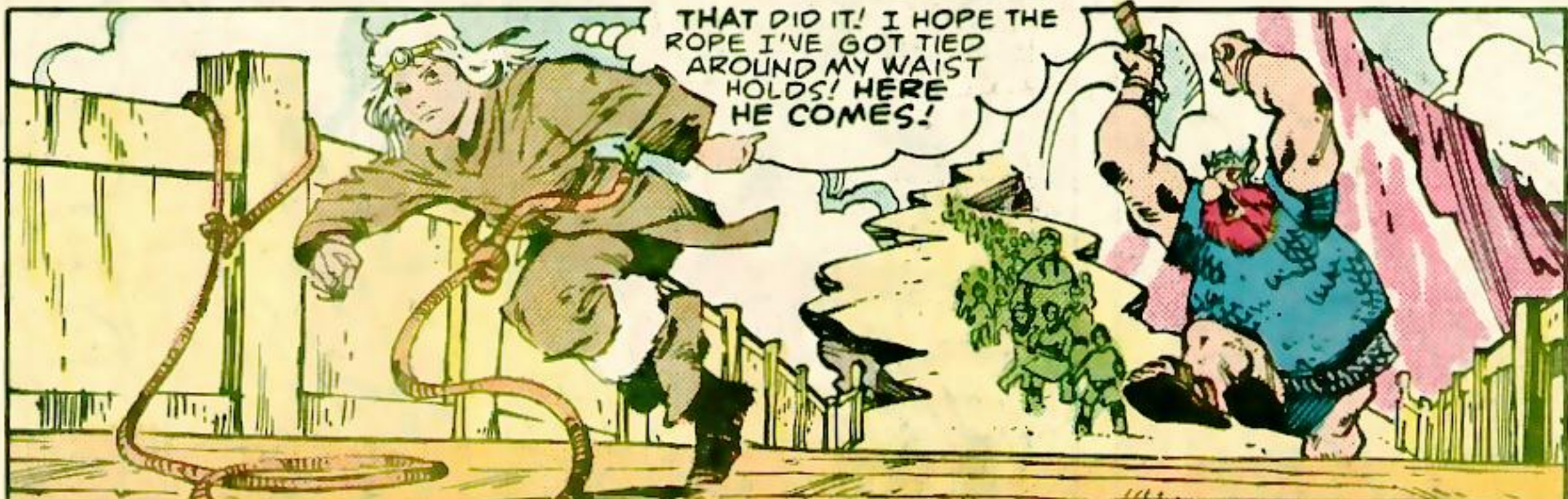
NOW TO REMIND HIM THAT I'M HERE!



RAUGH!



*LAST ISSUE.

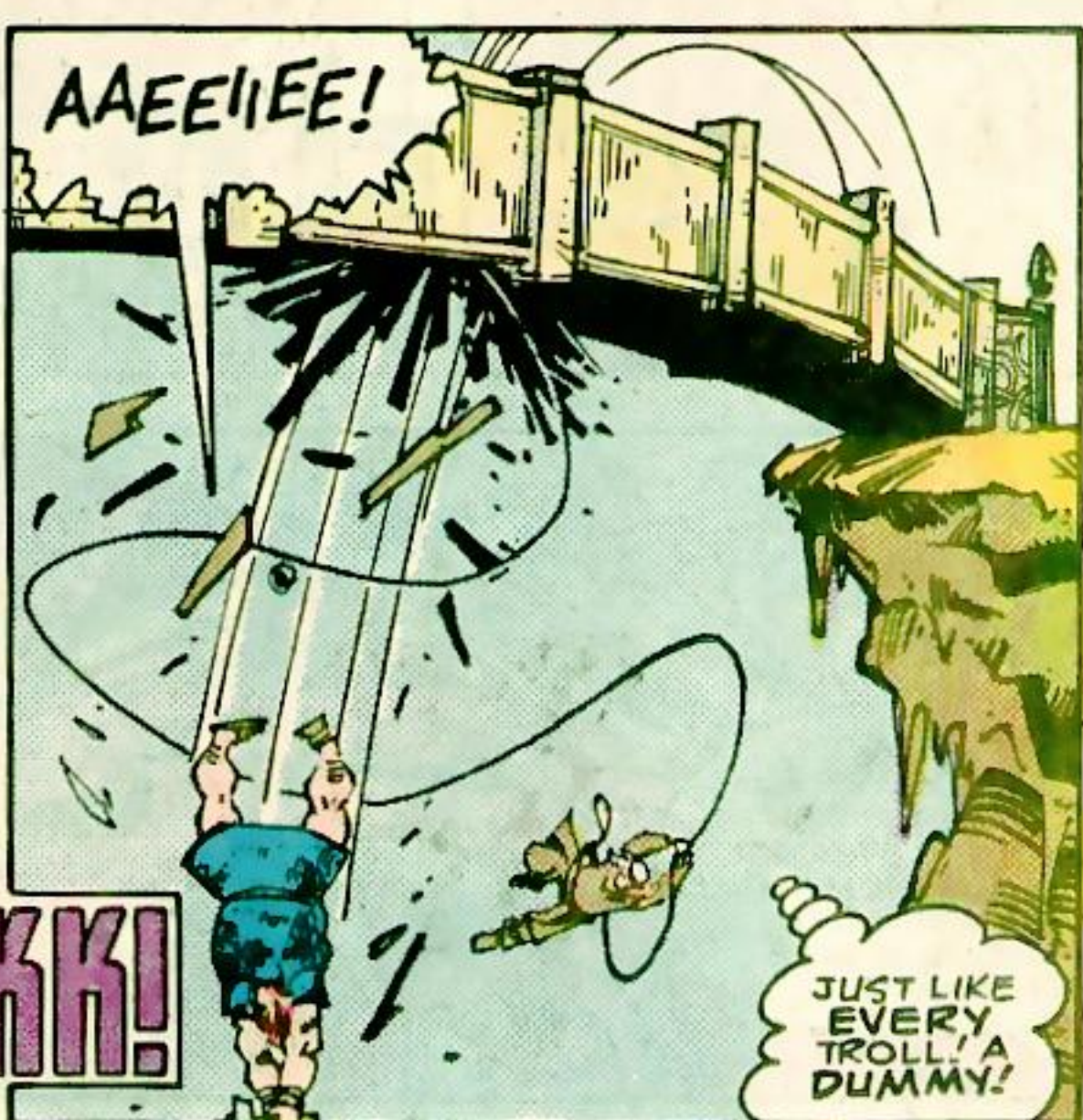


THAT DID IT! I HOPE THE ROPE I'VE GOT TIED AROUND MY WAIST HOLDS! HERE HE COMES!



AND HERE COMES THE AXE! RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BRIDGE!

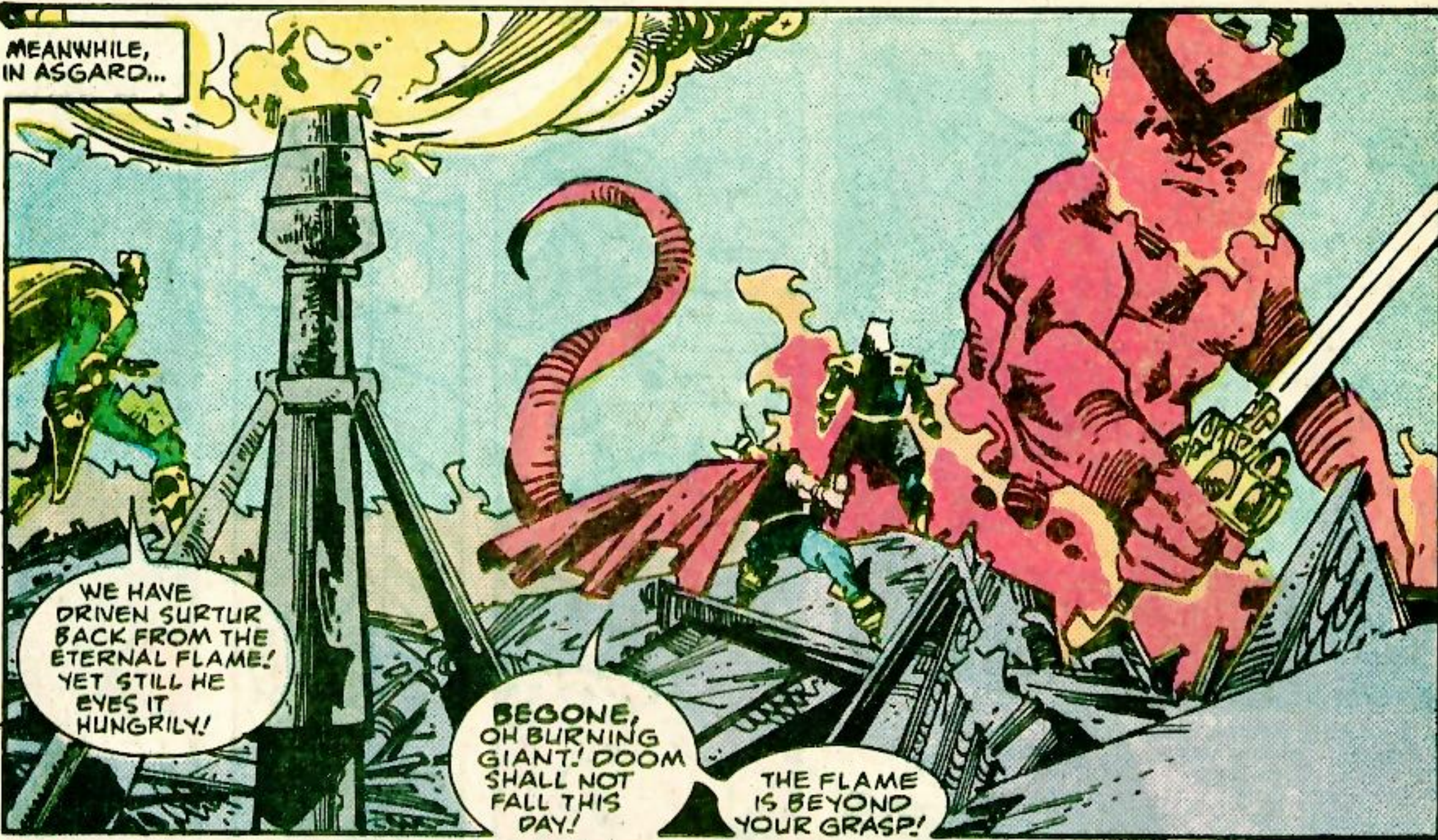
CRACCLAKK!



AAEEIEEE!

JUST LIKE EVERY TROLL! A DUMMY!

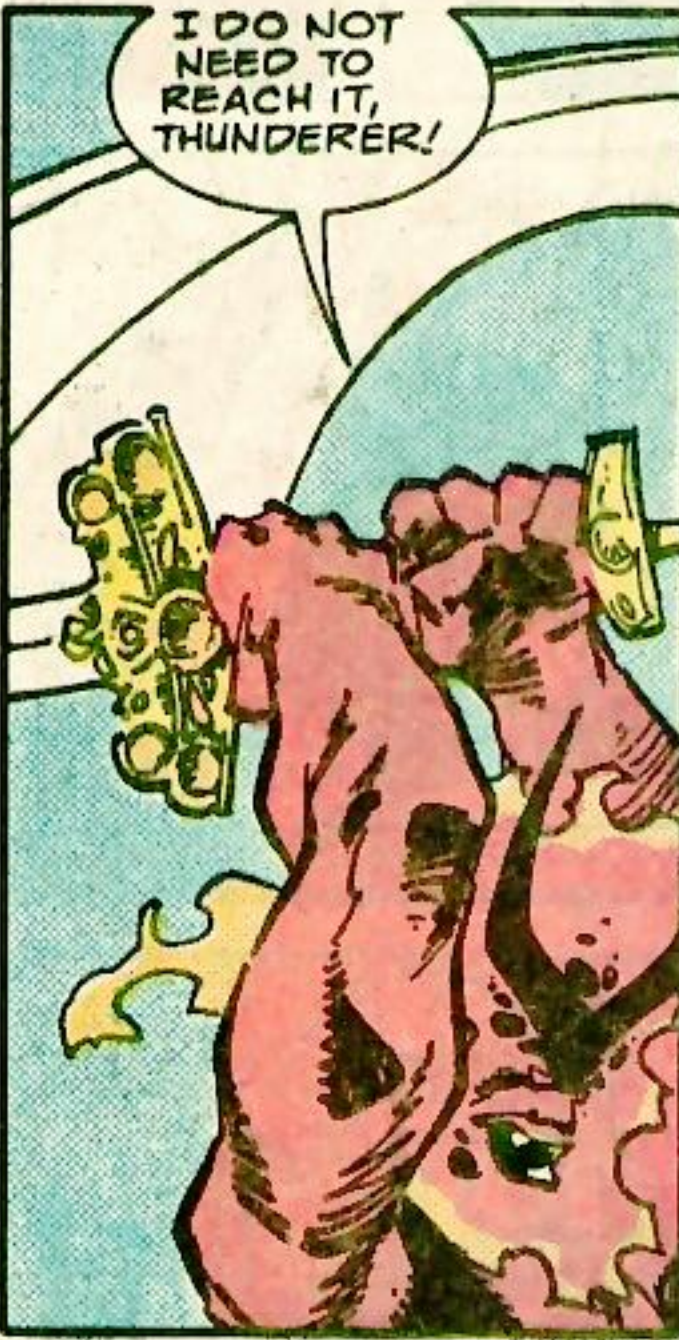
MEANWHILE,
IN ASGARD...



WE HAVE
DRIVEN SURTUR
BACK FROM THE
ETERNAL FLAME!
YET STILL HE
EYES IT
HUNGRILY!

BEGONE,
OH BURNING
GIANT! DOOM
SHALL NOT
FALL THIS
DAY!

THE FLAME
IS BEYOND
YOUR GRASP!



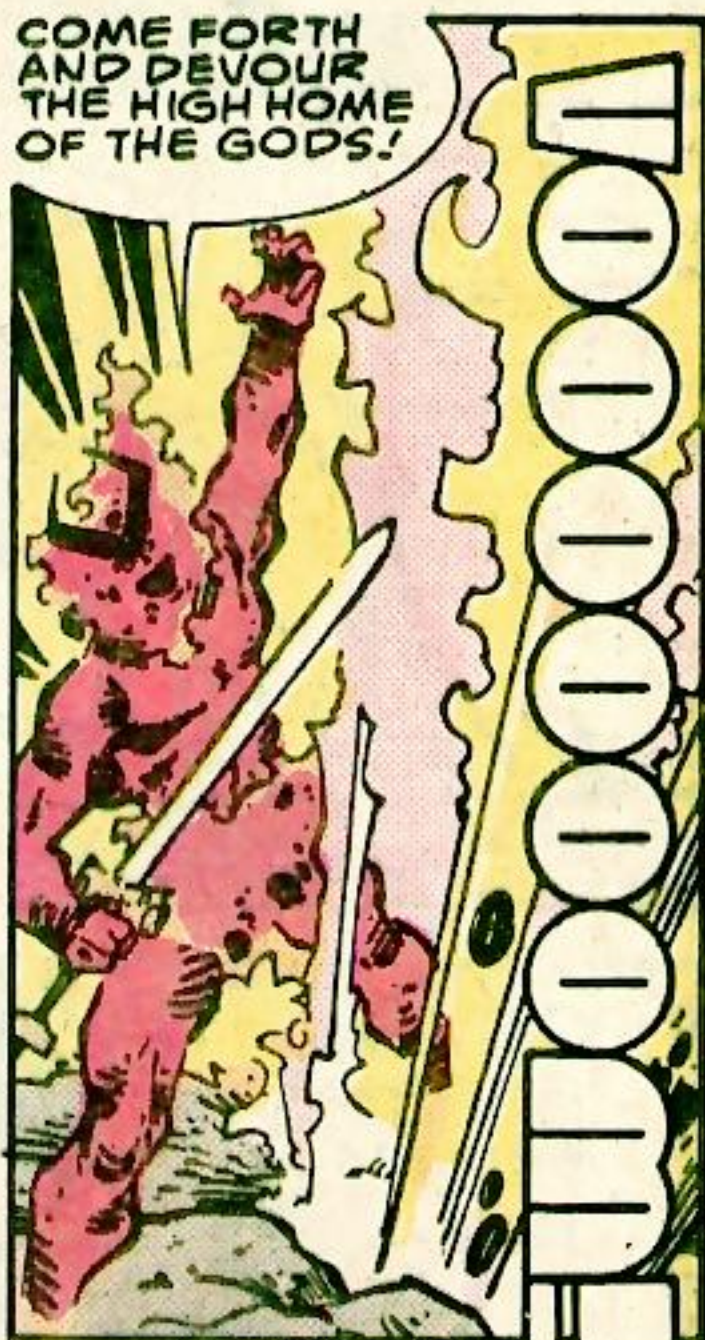
I DO NOT
NEED TO
REACH IT,
THUNDERER!



BY THE POWER I HAVE
PLACED WITHIN THE
SHEATHLESS SWORD
I CARRY, I SHALL CUT
THROUGH THIS WORLD TO
MUSPELHEIM ITSELF!

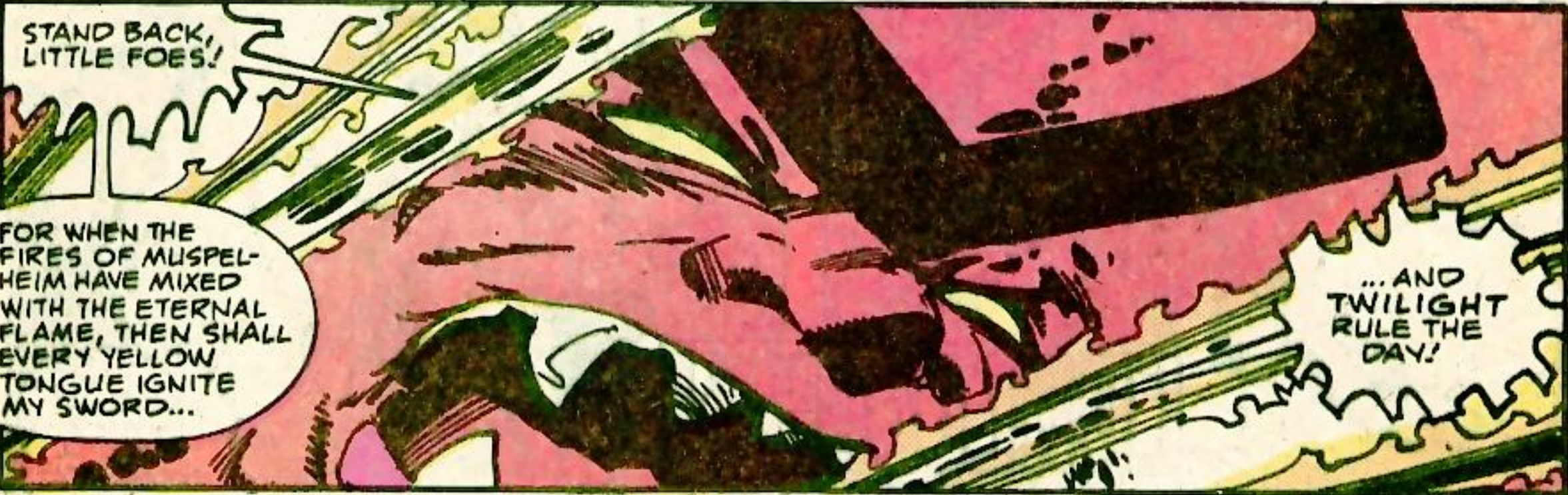
COME
FORTH,
FLAMES
OF OLD!

SLASH!



COME FORTH
AND DEVOUR
THE HIGH HOME
OF THE GODS!

POOOOON!

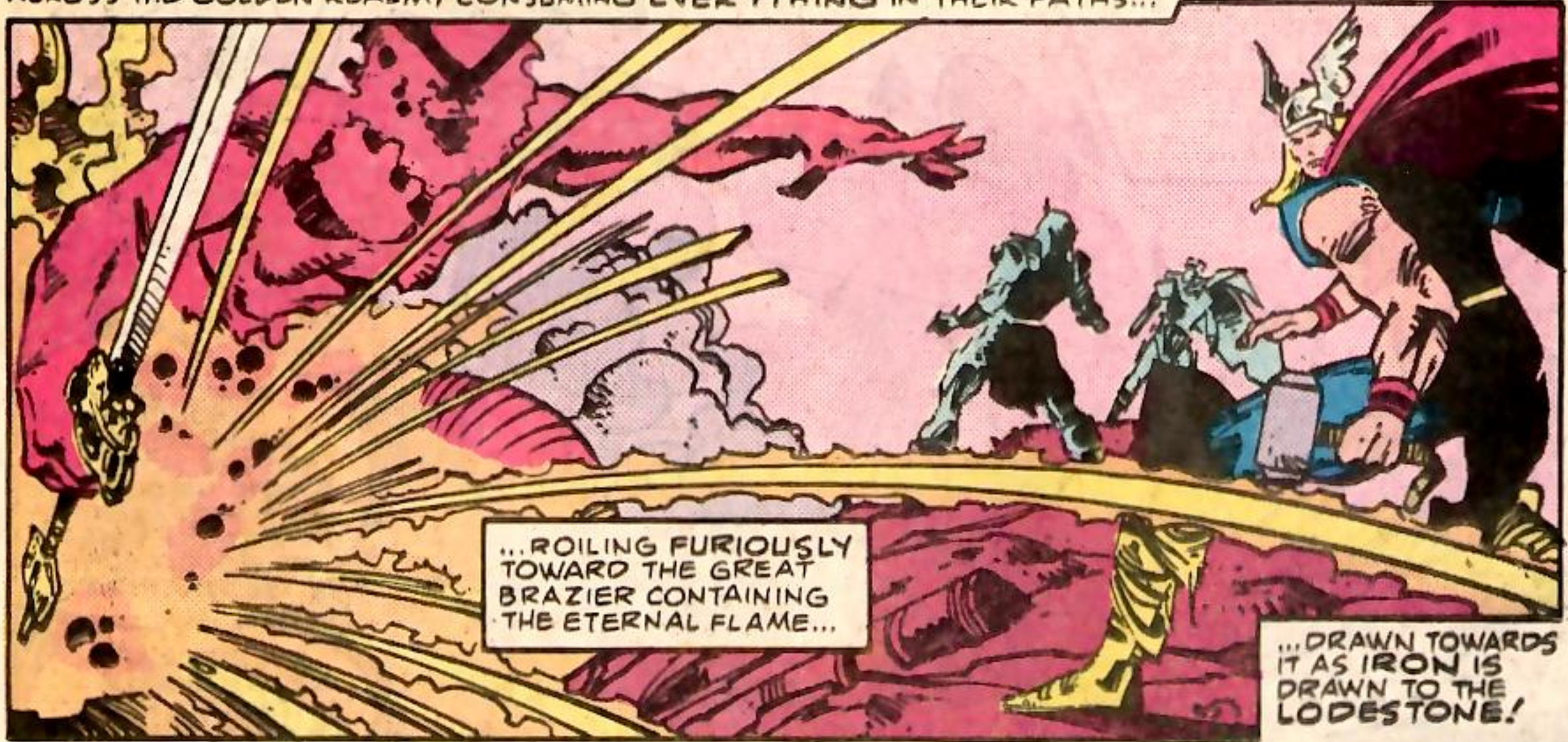


STAND BACK,
LITTLE FOES!

FOR WHEN THE
FIRES OF MUSPEL-
HEIM HAVE MIXED
WITH THE ETERNAL
FLAME, THEN SHALL
EVERY YELLOW
TONGUE IGNITE
MY SWORD...

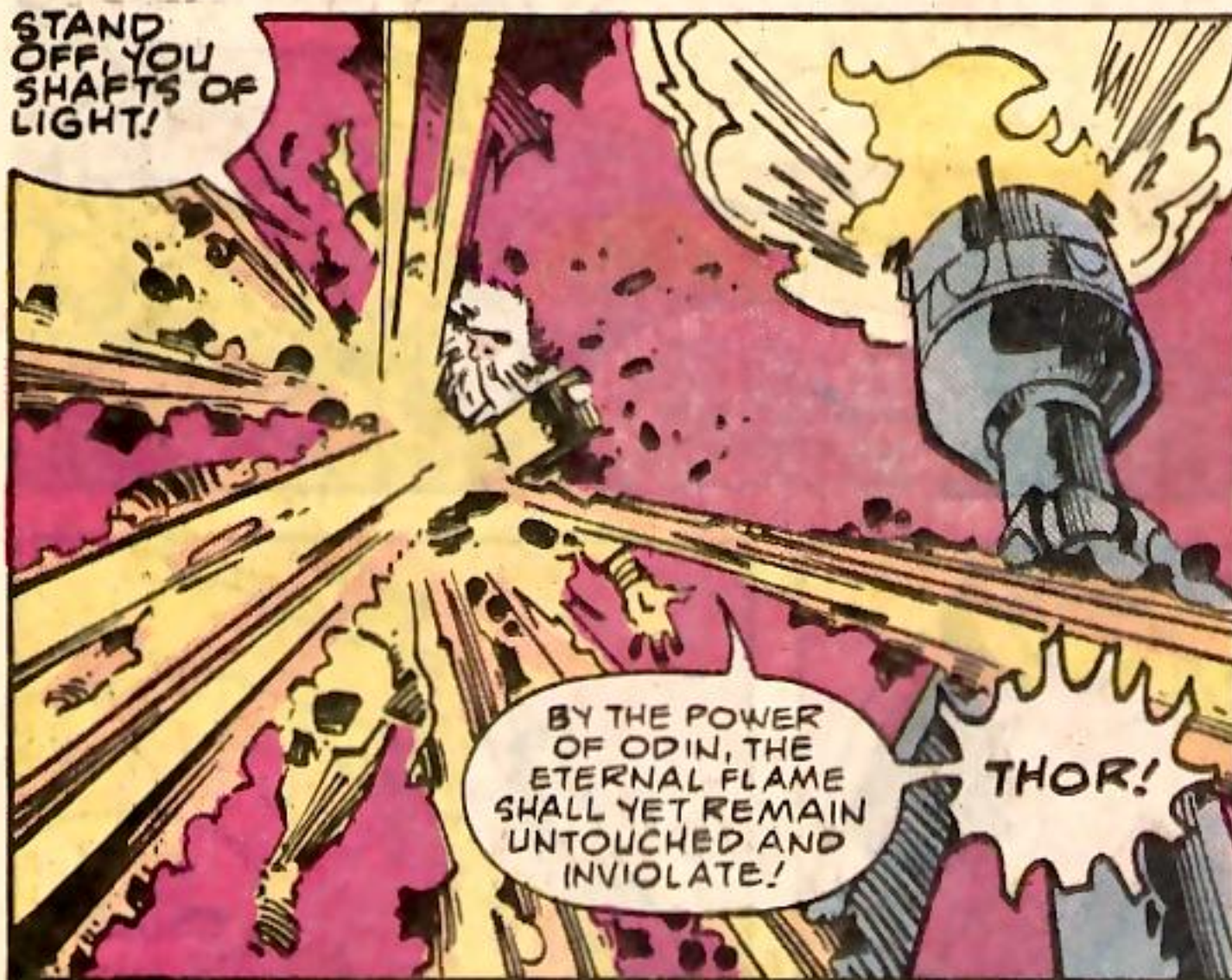
... AND
TWILIGHT
RULE THE
DAY!

BEFORE THE ASTONISHED EYES OF THE ASGARDIANS, THE ROARING FIRES RACE LIKE LIVING THINGS ACROSS THE GOLDEN REALM, CONSUMING EVERYTHING IN THEIR PATHS...



...ROILING FURIOUSLY TOWARD THE GREAT BRAZIER CONTAINING THE ETERNAL FLAME...

...DRAWN TOWARDS IT AS IRON IS DRAWN TO THE LODESTONE!



STAND OFF, YOU SHAFTS OF LIGHT!

BY THE POWER OF ODIN, THE ETERNAL FLAME SHALL YET REMAIN UNTOUCHED AND INVIOLEATE!

THOR!



I HEAR AND UNDERSTAND, MY LIEGE!

YOU TRICKED ME ONCE, SURTUR, INTO CREATING A STORM THAT FASHIONED YOUR PATH TO ASGARD*!

*THOR 350.



BUT NOW THAT VERY POWER OF STORM SHALL HELP DEFEAT YOU!

COME, STORM! COME, FURY! THY MASTER CALLS!

FOR I AM IN MY OWN WORLD NOW AND HERE, MY POWER IS SUPREME!

THOOOM!

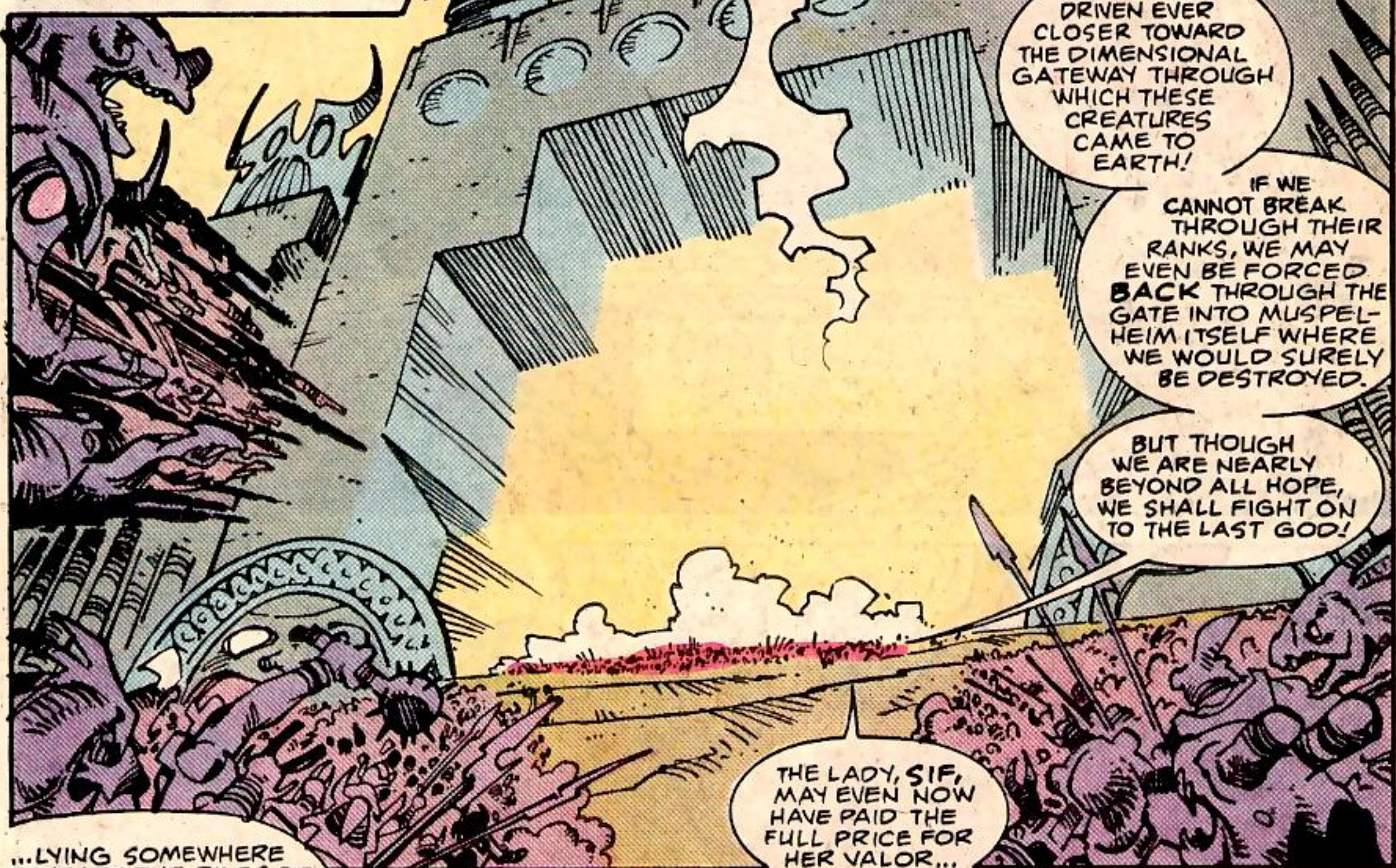


AND WITHOUT PRE-AMBLE, THE SKIES OF ASGARD BLACKEN...

...AS A MAELSTROM OF RAGING WATER CASCADES FROM THE HEAVENS, OBLITERATING ALL SIGHT AND SOUND...

...EXCEPT FOR THE THUNDEROUS ROAR OF THE DELUGE ITSELF!

MEANWHILE, DEEP IN THE SAHARA DESERT OF EARTH, THE FORCES OF ASGARD LED BY BETA RAY BILL STAND AND FIGHT AGAINST OVERWHELMING ODDS AS THE DEMONS OF MUSPELHEIM CLOSE IN FOR THE KILL...



WE ARE DRIVEN EVER CLOSER TOWARD THE DIMENSIONAL GATEWAY THROUGH WHICH THESE CREATURES CAME TO EARTH!

IF WE CANNOT BREAK THROUGH THEIR RANKS, WE MAY EVEN BE FORCED BACK THROUGH THE GATE INTO MUSPELHEIM ITSELF WHERE WE WOULD SURELY BE DESTROYED.

BUT THOUGH WE ARE NEARLY BEYOND ALL HOPE, WE SHALL FIGHT ON TO THE LAST GOD!

THE LADY, SIF, MAY EVEN NOW HAVE PAID THE FULL PRICE FOR HER VALOR...

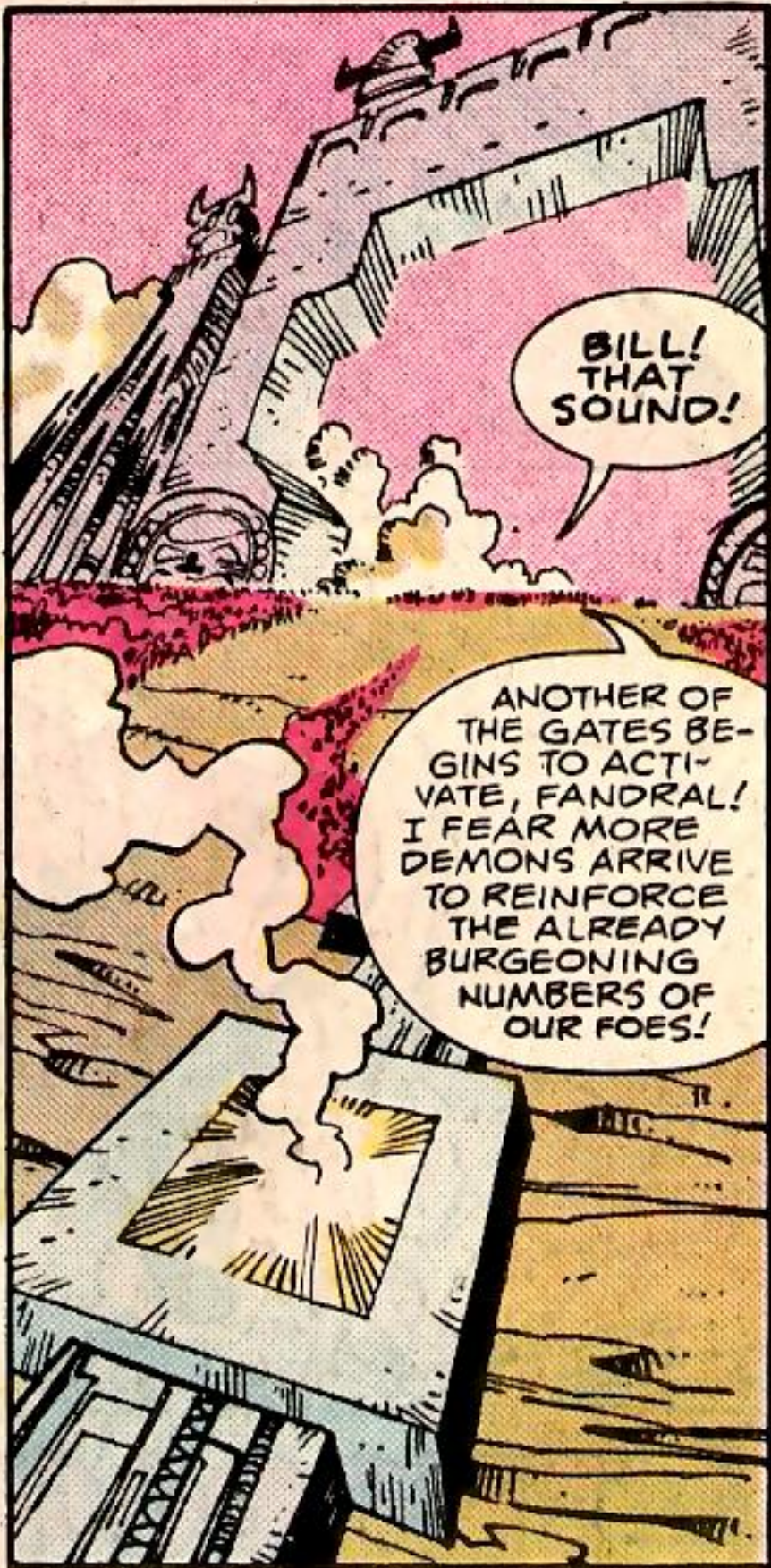
...LYING SOMEWHERE BENEATH THE PILES OF THE DEAD AND DYING IN NEW YORK CITY WHERE WE DEFEATED THE DEMONS PREVIOUSLY*



BUT THOUGH SHE MAY BE DEAD, SHE SHALL NOT GO UNMOURNED!

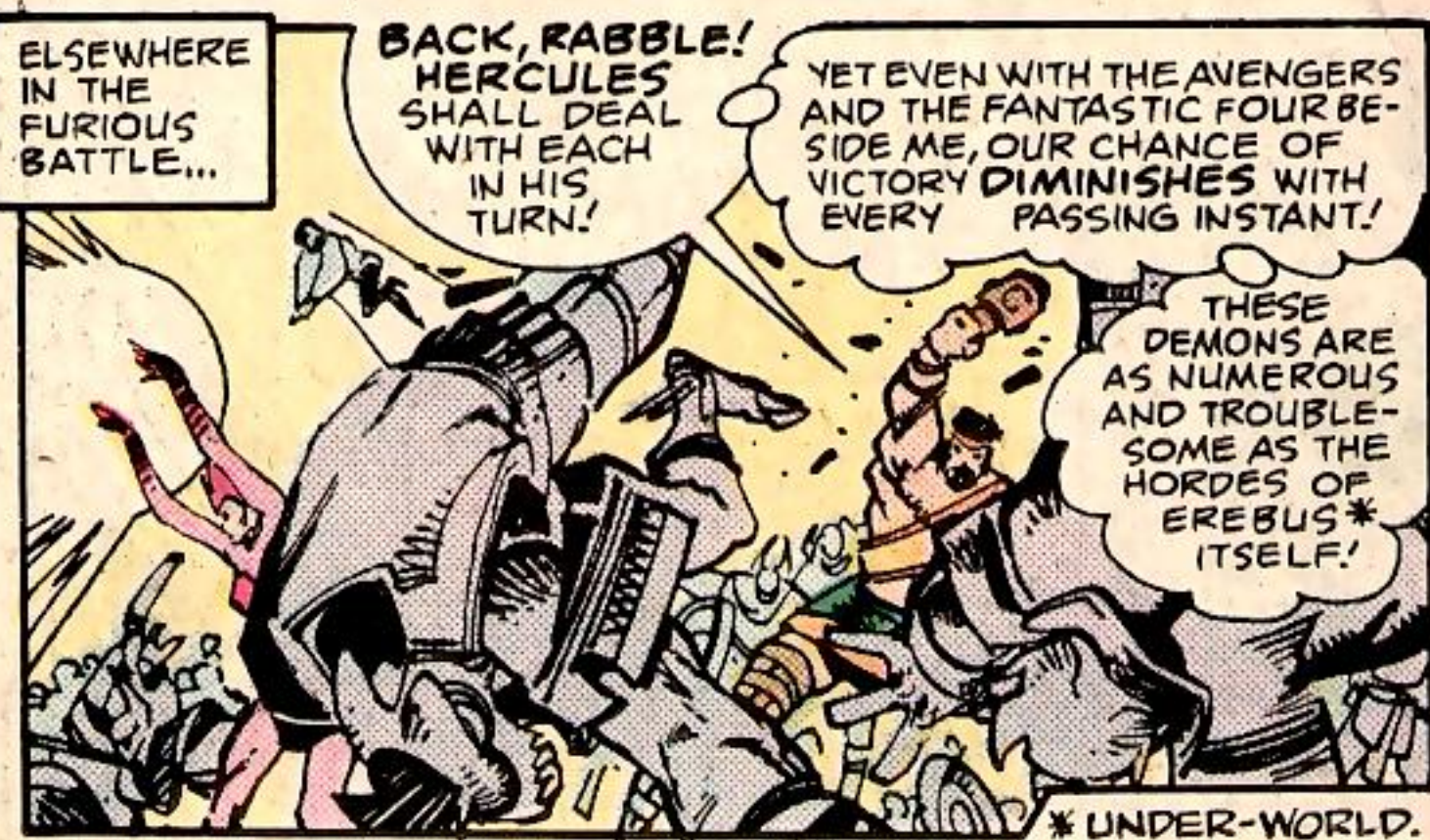
OR UN-AVENGED!

*LAST ISSUE.



BILL! THAT SOUND!

ANOTHER OF THE GATES BEGINS TO ACTIVATE, FANDRAL! I FEAR MORE DEMONS ARRIVE TO REINFORCE THE ALREADY BURGEONING NUMBERS OF OUR FOES!



ELSEWHERE IN THE FURIOUS BATTLE...

BACK, RABBLE! HERCULES SHALL DEAL WITH EACH IN HIS TURN!

YET EVEN WITH THE AVENGERS AND THE FANTASTIC FOUR BESIDE ME, OUR CHANCE OF VICTORY DIMINISHES WITH EVERY PASSING INSTANT!

THESE DEMONS ARE AS NUMEROUS AND TROUBLE-SOME AS THE HORDES OF EREBUS* ITSELF!

* UNDER-WORLD.

"BILL, LOOK! YOU WERE RIGHT! DEMONS THEY ARE... BUT SEE WHO RIDES AT THEIR HEAD!"

"I SEE BALDER THE BRAVE AND BESIDE HIM ON A FELL BEAST, A WOMAN IN ARMOR I DO NOT KNOW!"

"TIS THE NORN QUEEN, BILL! BALDER HATH SUCCEEDED IN PERSUADING KARNILLA TO AID THE CAUSE OF ASGARD AND THE NINE WORLDS!"

OUR FORCES CUT THROUGH THE DEMONS AS THE SCYTHE THROUGH THE WHEAT!

YOUR SORCERIES HAVE BROUGHT US TO THE BATTLE IN TIME, MILADY!

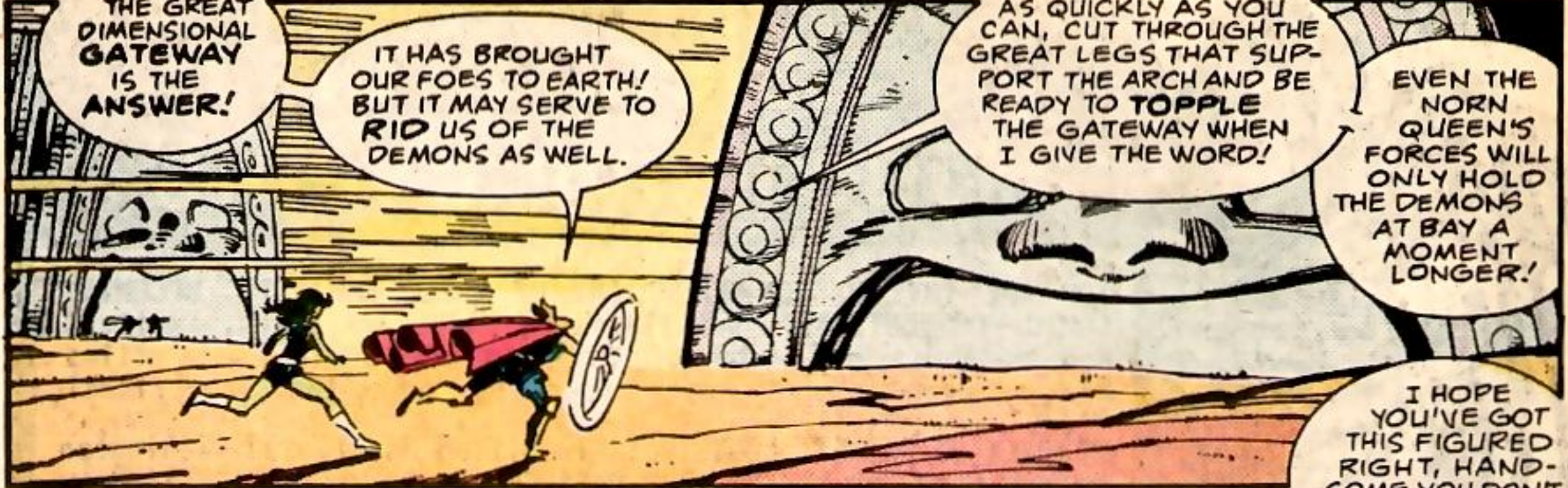
FOR ODIN AND THE QUEEN! LET NOT A FOE ESCAPE!

ENCHANTRESS! QUICKLY! USE YOUR MAGIC AND CALL THE STRONGEST OF THE HEROES TO MY SIDE THIS INSTANT!

MOMENTS LATER, AS HERCULES, VISION, AND SHE-HULK RESPOND...

LET OUR WARRIORS HOLD THE DEMONS AT BAY FOR A MOMENT LONGER AND VICTORY MAY YET BE OURS!

WE HAVE EACH HEARD THE MENTAL SUMMONS, BILL! WHY HAVE YOU CALLED US?



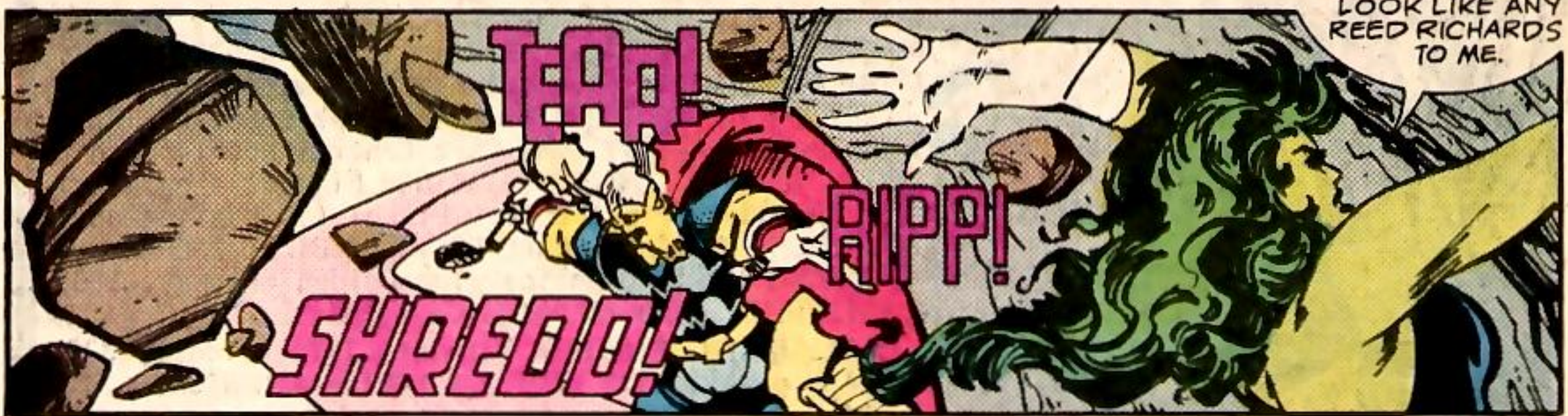
THE GREAT DIMENSIONAL GATEWAY IS THE ANSWER!

IT HAS BROUGHT OUR FOES TO EARTH! BUT IT MAY SERVE TO RID US OF THE DEMONS AS WELL.

AS QUICKLY AS YOU CAN, CUT THROUGH THE GREAT LEGS THAT SUPPORT THE ARCH AND BE READY TO TOPPLE THE GATEWAY WHEN I GIVE THE WORD!

EVEN THE NORN QUEEN'S FORCES WILL ONLY HOLD THE DEMONS AT BAY A MOMENT LONGER!

I HOPE YOU'VE GOT THIS FIGURED RIGHT, HANDSOME. YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE ANY REED RICHARDS TO ME.

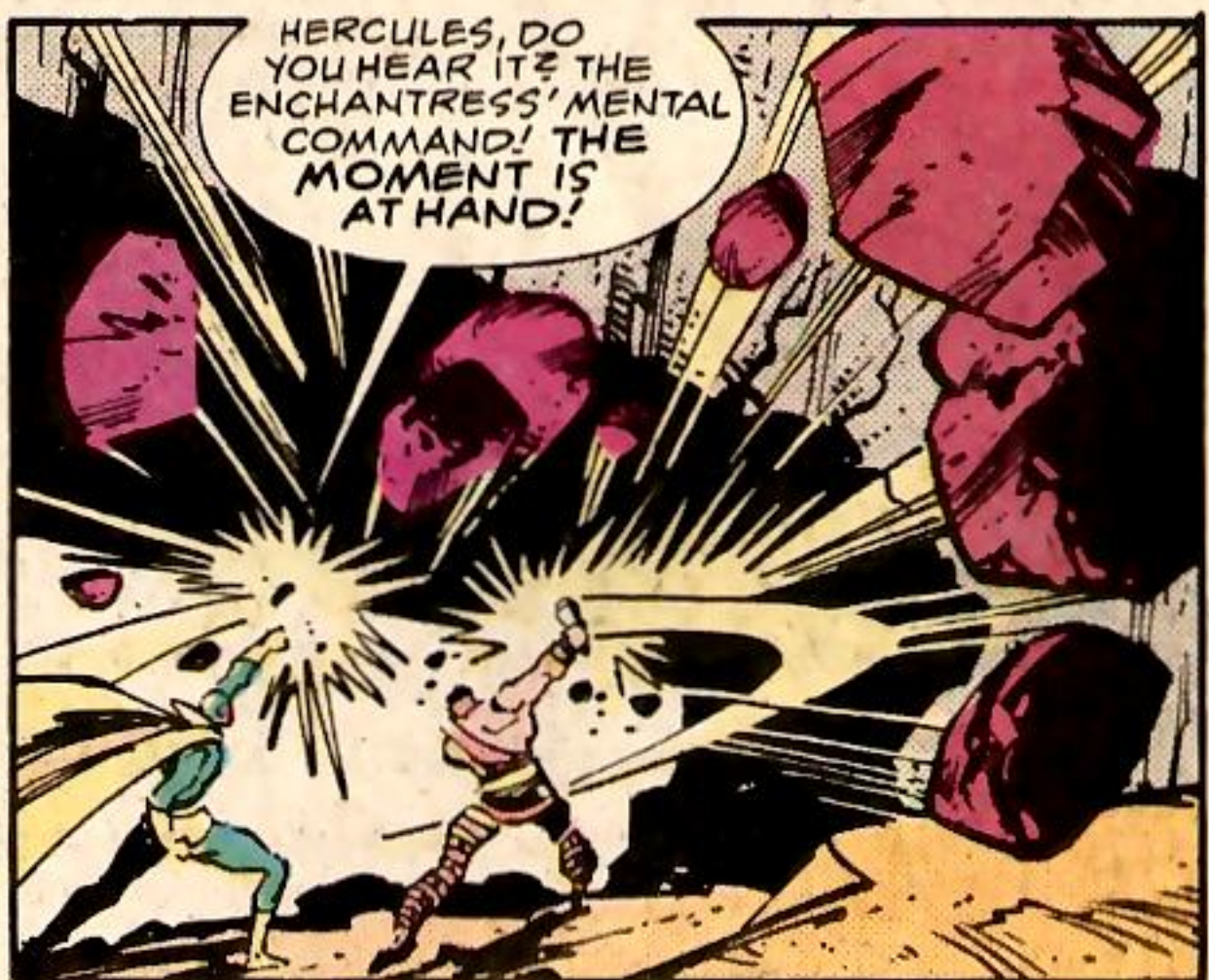
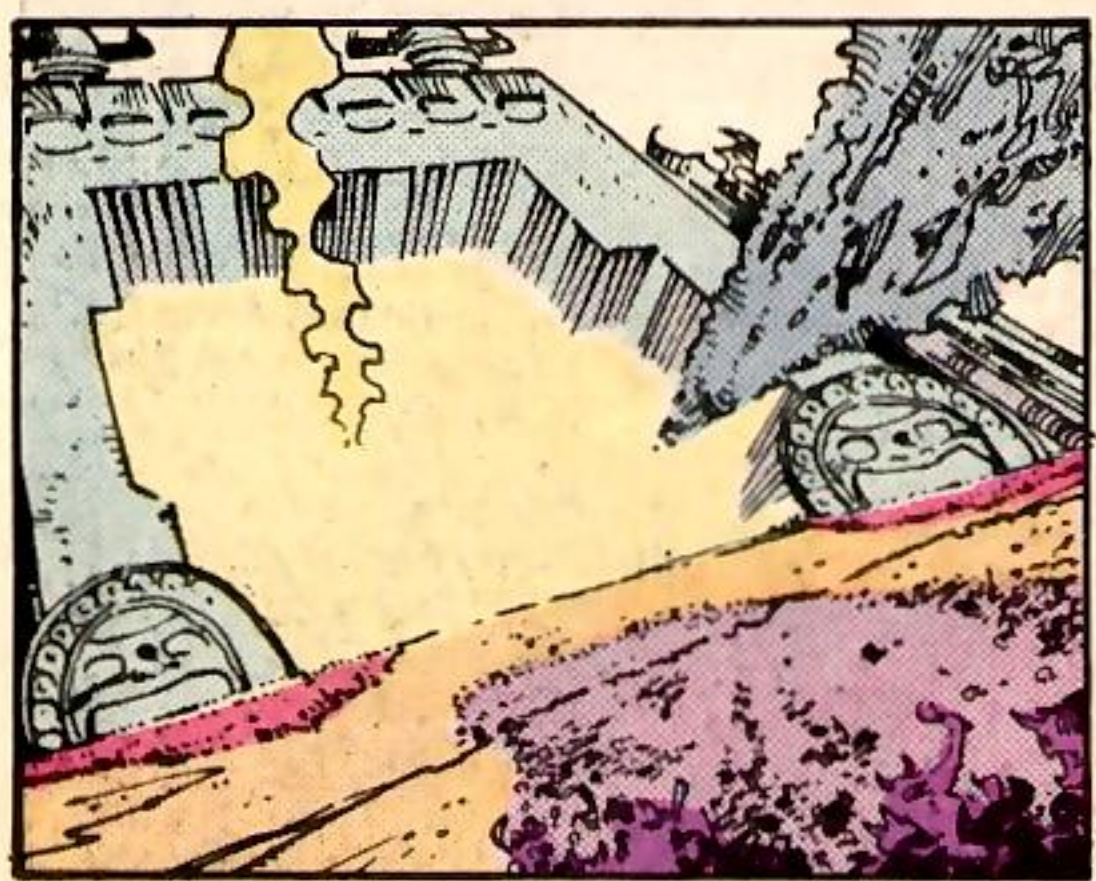


TEAR!
RIPP!
SHREDD!



WE'LL KNOW IN A MOMENT, MISS! THE PILLARS BEGIN TO TREMBLE!

ENCHANTRESS, TELL KARNILLA TO SWING HER FORCES AROUND AND DRIVE THE DEMONS TOWARD THE GATEWAY...



HERCULES, DO YOU HEAR IT? THE ENCHANTRESS' MENTAL COMMAND! THE MOMENT IS AT HAND!

...AND CALL THE ASGARDIANS TO FALL BACK BEYOND THE FEET OF THE GREAT PILLARS, DRAWING THE DEMONS AFTER THEM!

BY THE BEARD OF ZEUS!
THIS...WEIGHT OF STONE
DOETH BARELY...STIR BE-
FORE EVEN THE PRODIGI-
OUS STRENGTH OF THE
MIGHTIEST...HERO OF
THEM ALL!



PERHAPS IF
THE...HERO'S
WIND...WERE
BETTER EM-
PLOYED...THAN
IN BOASTING...
MY POWER-
FUL FRIEND!

HARDER, SHE-HULK! WE
MUST...PUSH HARDER!
OR WE SHALL...LOSE
THE MOMENT!



IT ISN'T
GOING TO
WORK!

WE
CAN'T
BUDGE--



WAIT!
IT'S BE-
GINNING
TO TIP!

SSHHHHYHR

SHE'S GOING
OVER! WE'VE
DONE IT!



NO FORCE
ON EARTH
CAN STOP
IT NOW!

RRRRRAAAAAAAAAAKKKKKKKK

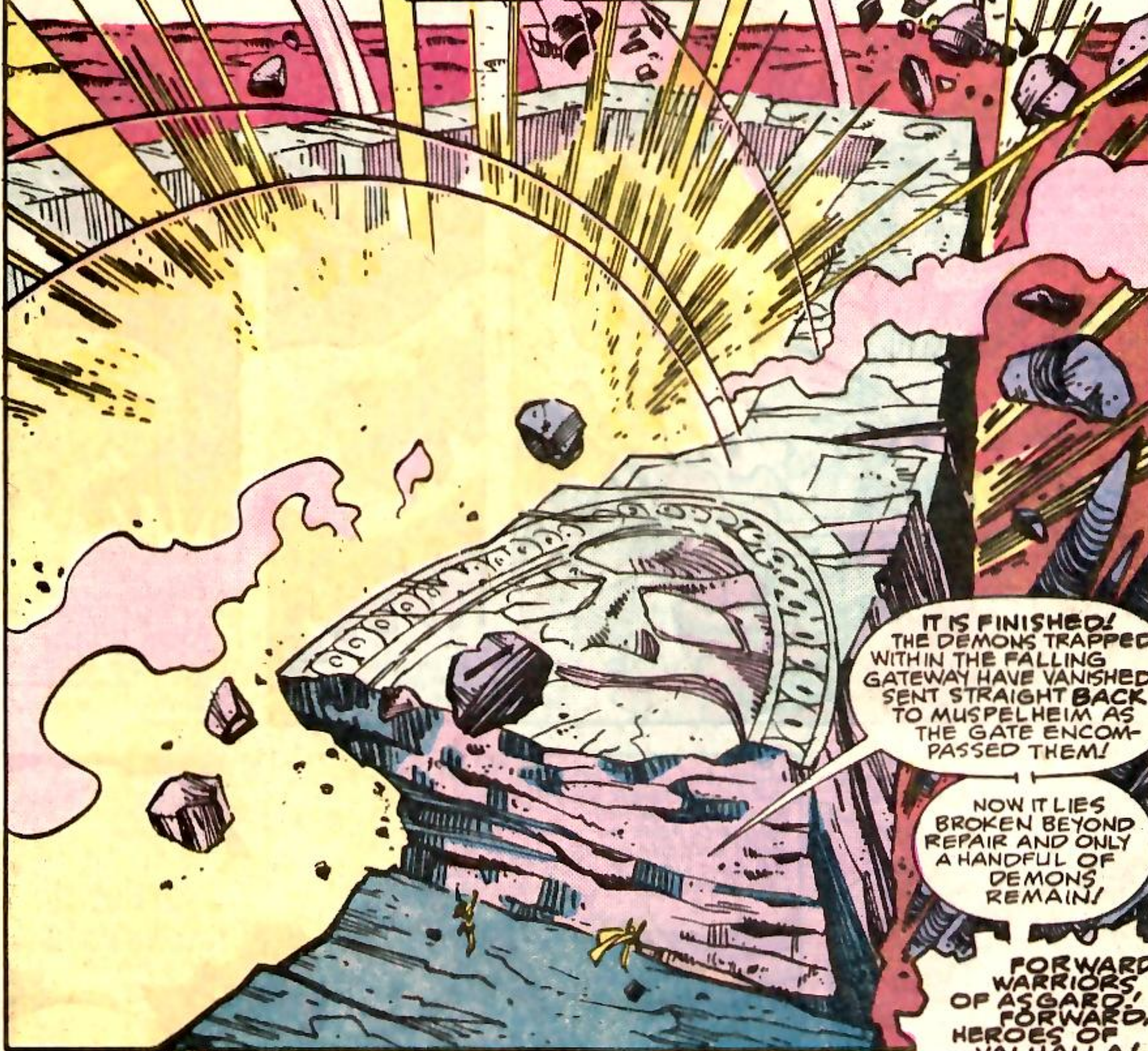
AND BELOW THE GREAT
GATEWAY, THOUSANDS OF
DEMONS PAUSE IN THE
PURSUIT OF THEIR FOES
AND GLANCE SKYWARD...



UH-OH.

KKKKKKKK!!!!!!

THOOOOOOOM!



IT IS FINISHED!
THE DEMONS TRAPPED
WITHIN THE FALLING
GATEWAY HAVE VANISHED
SENT STRAIGHT BACK
TO MUSPELHEIM AS
THE GATE ENCOMPASSED THEM!

NOW IT LIES
BROKEN BEYOND
REPAIR AND ONLY
A HANDFUL OF
DEMONS
REMAIN!

FORWARD,
WARRIORS
OF ASGARD!
FORWARD,
HEROES OF
VALHALLA!
FORWARD ALL
AS WE SWEEP
THE ENEMY BE-
FORE US TO HIS
TOTAL DE-
STRUCTION!



YET AS BILL AND HIS ALLIES CHARGE INTO BATTLE WITH RINGING SWORDS AND HEARTS, IN ASGARD WE FIND...

EVEN THOR'S RAGING STORM FAILED TO QUENCH THE LAST OF SURTUR'S FIRES AS THEY RACE TO REACH THE ETERNAL FLAME!

IN ANOTHER MOMENT, THEY SHALL MINGLE WITH IT DESPITE ALL OUR EFFORTS AND OUR CAUSE BE LOST!



THE DAY IS MINE! ODIN, YOUR REIGN IS FINISHED!

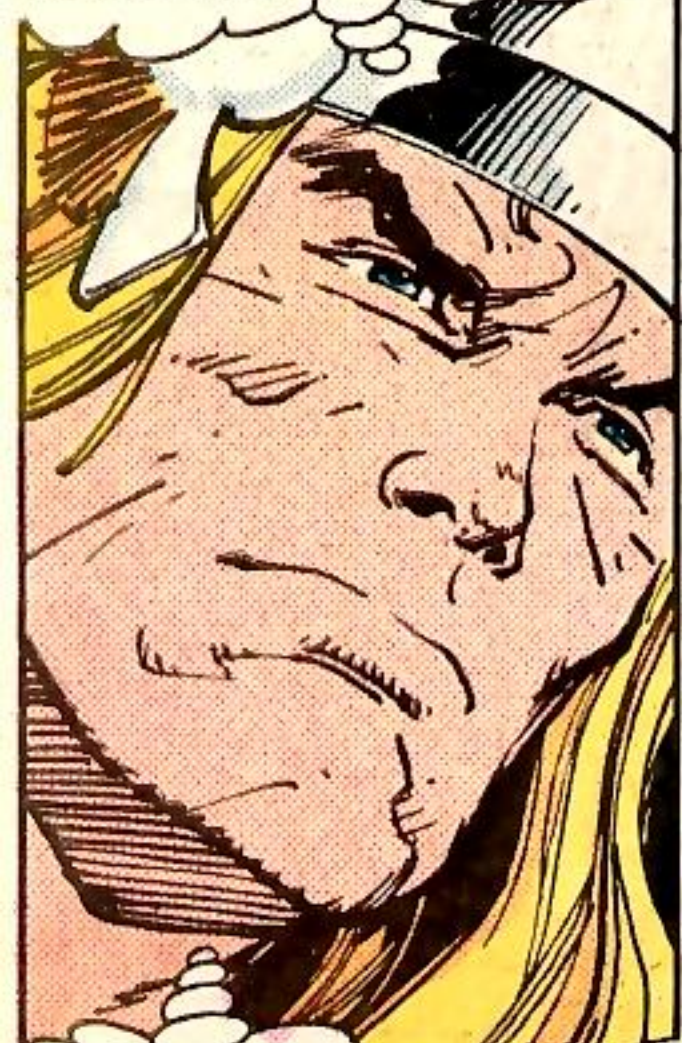


BUT WAIT! WHAT MOCKERY IS THIS? I SENSE MY DEMONS ON MIDGARD* HAVE BEEN DEFEATED BY THE ASGARDIANS!



SURELY NO HUMAN AGENCY, NO ASGARDIAN TRICKERY COULD HAVE UNDONE THE ELITE OF MUSPEL-HEIM! *EARTH.

SURTUR IS MOMENTARILY DISTRACTED AND EVEN HIS FLAMES PAUSE AT HIS HESITATION!



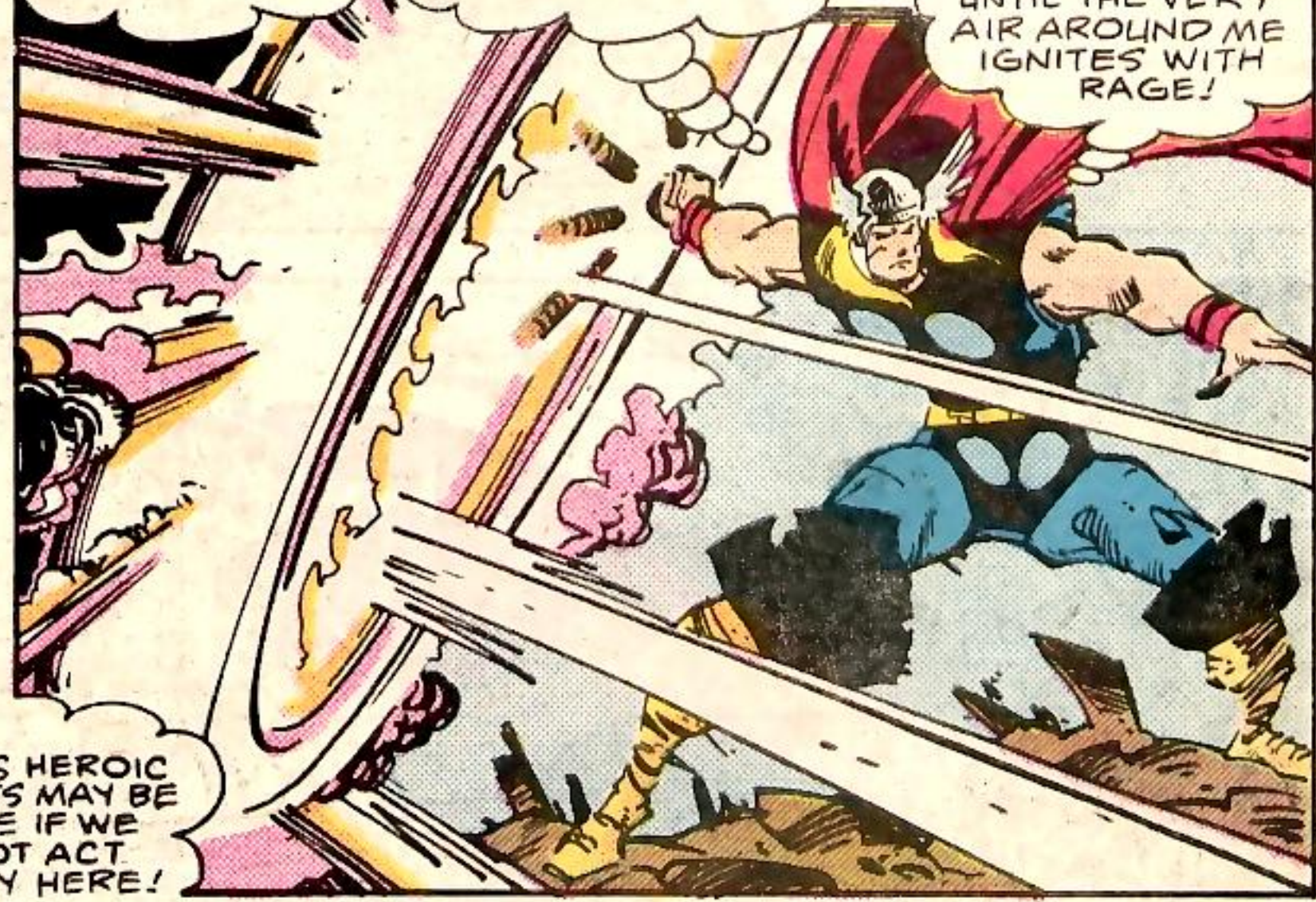
IF WHAT HE SAYS IS TRUE, THEN BILL HAS WON THE DAY ON EARTH!

BUT HIS HEROIC EFFORTS MAY BE UNDONE IF WE DO NOT ACT SWIFTLY HERE!

MUCH OF SURTUR'S GREAT POWER MUST REST WITHIN HIS SWORD, FOR IN PAST ENCOUNTERS HE WAS NEVER SO STRONG!

SO BE IT! SURTUR AND THE SWORD, TWILIGHT, MUST BE PARTED AND ONLY THE GOD OF THUNDER POSSESSES THE MEANS TO DO IT!

NOW SHALL I HURL MY HAMMER AS NEVER BEFORE, WHIRLING MJOLNIR UNTIL THE VERY AIR AROUND ME IGNITES WITH RAGE!





THOUGH MY HANDS DO BLISTER AND BURN WITH PAIN, ONLY THUS CAN I STRIKE WITH SUFFICIENT FORCE TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT MUST BE DONE!

ODIN GRANT THAT MY AIM IS TRUE!



THE SHEATHLESS SWORD! I MUST RECOVER MY GRIP ERE--!



TOO LATE, SURTUR! YOUR CONNECTION WITH THE ETHERNAL FLAME HAS BEEN SEVERED!



AND WITHOUT IT, YOU CAN NO LONGER SUPPRESS MY ABILITY TO ASSUME THE GUISE OF THE GREAT WARRIOR WHOM YOU FOUGHT IN MUSPELHEIM SO LONG AGO!*

AND THIS IS THE HOUR OF YOUR DEFEAT!

NOW, DEMON, WE ARE EVENLY MATCHED!

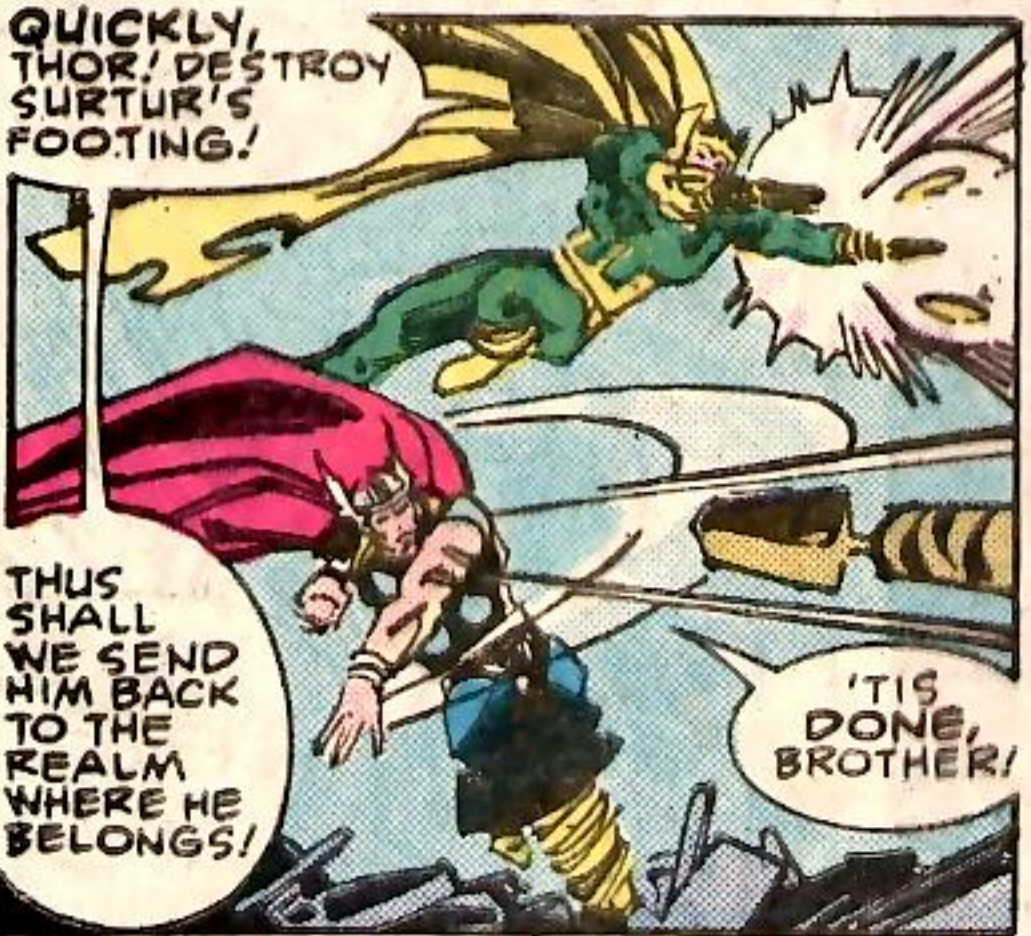
*THOR #349 TOLD THE TALE.



NEVER! I SHALL NOT BE ROBBED OF THE LAUREL SO CLOSE TO VICTORY!

THOR! LOKI! SURTUR AND I STAND ON THE BRINK OF THE CLEFT TO MUSPELHEIM!

DO WHAT MUST BE DONE!



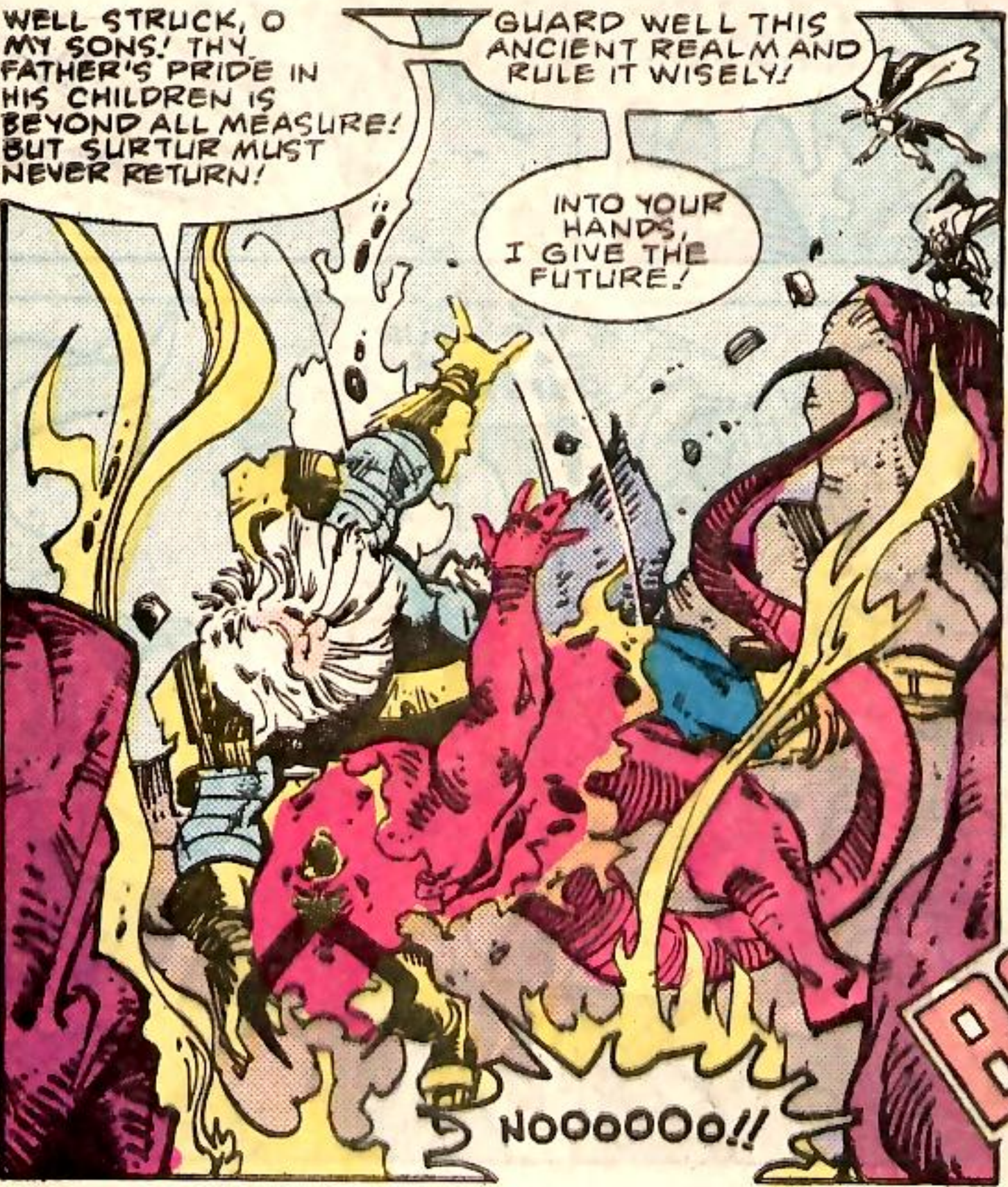
QUICKLY, THOR! DESTROY SURTUR'S FOOTING!

THUS SHALL WE SEND HIM BACK TO THE REALM WHERE HE BELONGS!

'TIS DONE, BROTHER!



THWASSH!



WELL STRUCK, O MY SONS! THY FATHER'S PRIDE IN HIS CHILDREN IS BEYOND ALL MEASURE! BUT SURTUR MUST NEVER RETURN!

GUARD WELL THIS ANCIENT REALM AND RULE IT WISELY!

INTO YOUR HANDS, I GIVE THE FUTURE!

NOOOOOO!!

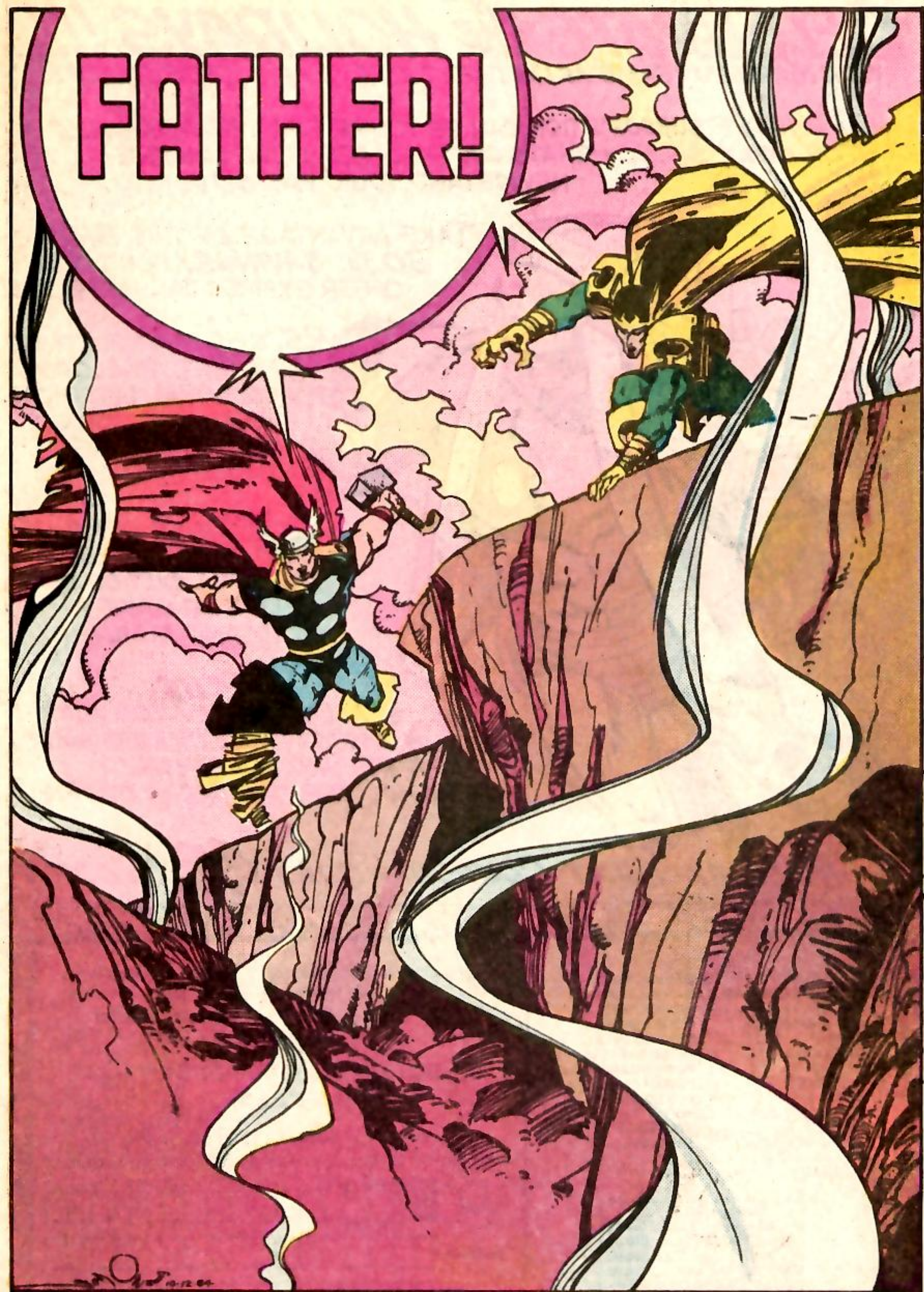


AND WITH A DEAFENING CRASH, THE GREAT CLEFT SLAMS SHUT UPON THE FALLING FIGURES...

BARRROOUM!

...LEAVING ONLY SILENCE.

FATHER!



next: PICKIN' UP THE PIECES! WHAT ELSE IS THERE TO SAY?

THIS ISSUE ESPECIALLY IS FOR STAN, JACK, VINNIE, ARTIE, AND SAM.