

MARVEL®



the mighty THOR®

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SUPER-SIZED 400TH ISSUE!



**GOD
VS. GOD**
IN
THE GREATEST
BATTLE
OF ALL
TIME



STAN LEE
PRESENTS **the MIGHTY THOR**

LEST THE HEAVENS PERISH!

FEATURING:

THE STARTLING,
WORLD-SHATTERING
CONCLUSION TO
THE WAR OF
THE GODS!!

LET THE COSMOS
WEEP, FOR SETH,
THE SERPENT-GOD
OF DEATH HAS
FINALLY CONQUERED
ETERNAL ASGARD!
WHILE ODIN, THE
ALL-FATHER LEADS
A DESPERATE STRIKE-
FORCE TO RESCUE
THE GOLDEN REALM,
THE MIGHTY THOR
IS LEFT BEHIND IN
THE DIMENSION OF
DEATH TO FACE THE
TERRIBLE CHALLENGE
OF--

WORDS, PICTURES
AND PLOT BY
TOM DE FALCO
AND
RON FRENZ
EMBELLISHED BY
JOE SINNOTT

LETTERED BY
**JOHN WORKMAN AND
MICHAEL HEISLER**

THIS ISSUE
DEDICATED WITH
RESPECT TO
**STAN LEE
AND
JACK KIRBY**

COLORS BY
MAX SCHEELE
EDITED BY
RALPH MACCHIO

"SURTUR, THE FLAME DEMON!"

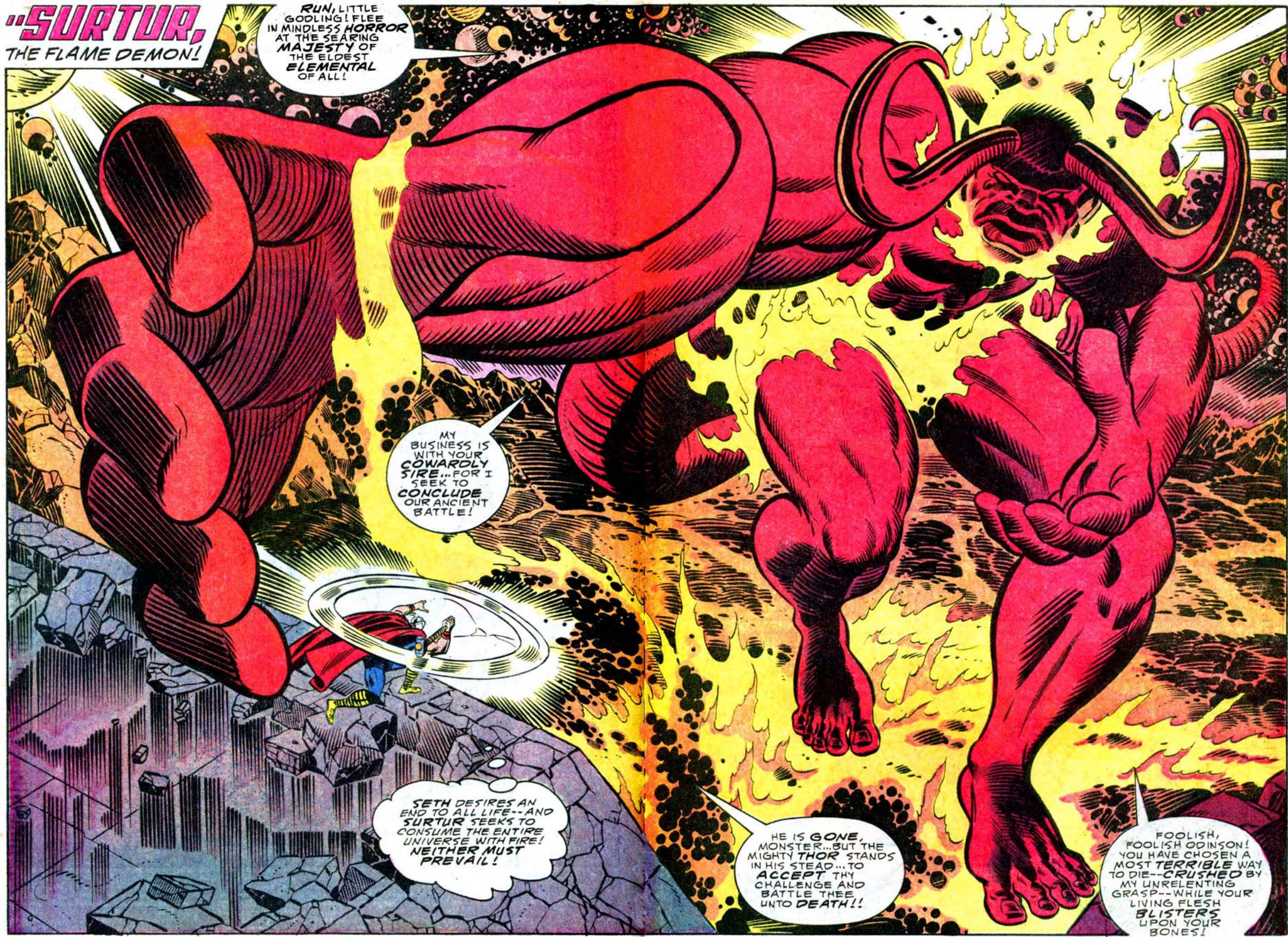
RUN, LITTLE
GODLING! FLEE
IN MINDLESS HORROR
AT THE SEARING
MAJESTY OF
THE ELDEST
ELEMENTAL
OF ALL!

MY
BUSINESS IS
WITH YOUR
COWARDLY
SIRE... FOR I
SEEK TO
CONCLUDE
OUR ANCIENT
BATTLE!

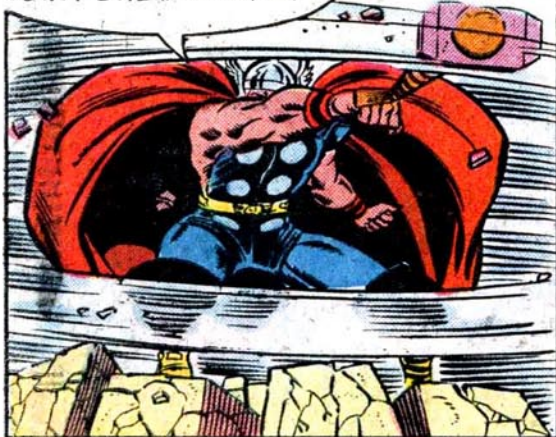
SETH DESIRES AN
END TO ALL LIFE-- AND
SURTUR SEEKS TO
CONSUME THE ENTIRE
UNIVERSE WITH FIRE!
NEITHER MUST
PREVAIL!

HE IS GONE,
MONSTER... BUT THE
MIGHTY THOR STANDS
IN HIS STEAD... TO
ACCEPT THY
CHALLENGE AND
BATTLE THEE
UNTO DEATH!!

FOOLISH,
FOOLISH ODINSON!
YOU HAVE CHOSEN A
MOST TERRIBLE WAY
TO DIE-- CRUSHED BY
MY UNRELENTING
GRASP-- WHILE YOUR
LIVING FLESH
BLISTERS
UPON YOUR
BONES!



PERHAPS NOT, DEMON!
BEFORE MY NOBLE FATHER
LEFT THIS ACCURSED REALM...
TO FIGHT IN THE DEFENSE
OF LIFE ITSELF...HE CON-
FERRED ALL OF HIS SACRED
ODIN POWER UPON ME!



WHAT WIZARDRY
IS THIS--?! YOUR
ENCHANTED HAMMER
SPINS FASTER--
FASTER--

--RAISING A
MONSTROUS
VORTEX!
WHY?
WHY?!



SO THAT I
COULD USE
ODIN'S POWER
TO GROW--

--AND FACE
THEE ON
EQUAL
TERMS!!



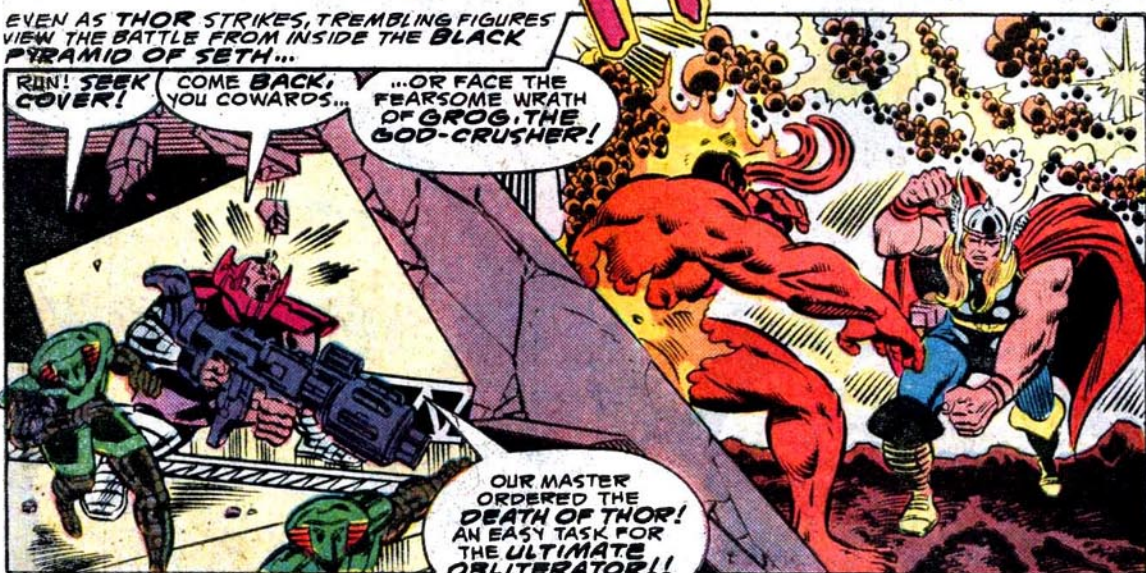
HAVE
AT THEE,
MONSTER!!

EVEN AS THOR STRIKES, TREMBLING FIGURES
VIEW THE BATTLE FROM INSIDE THE BLACK
PYRAMID OF SETH...

RUN! SEEK
COVER!

COME BACK,
YOU COWARDS...

...OR FACE THE
FEARSOME WRATH
OF GROG, THE
GOD-CRUSHER!



OUR MASTER
ORDERED THE
DEATH OF THOR!
AN EASY TASK FOR
THE ULTIMATE
DELIBERATOR!!

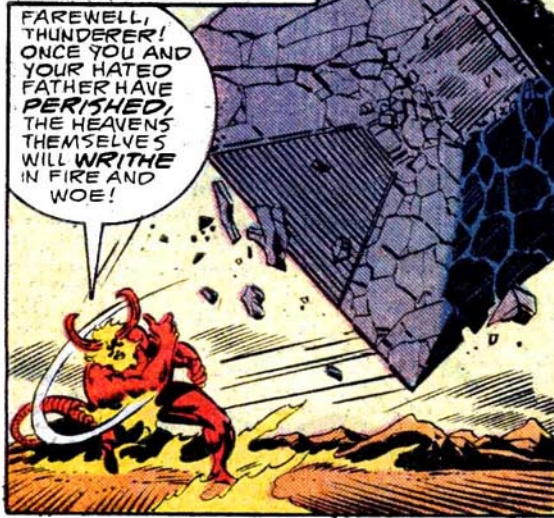
BUT EVEN BEFORE GROG CAN AIM HIS MASSIVE WEAPON, SURTUR SPIES THE BLACK PYRAMID AND--



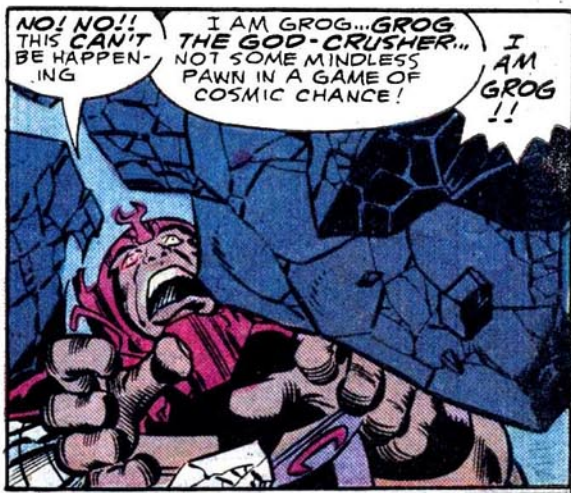
SIZE ALONE WILL NOT SAVE YOU, GOOLING!

MY POWER IS TRULY BEYOND ALL COMPREHENSION!

--AS THE FLAME DEMON UNWITTINGLY HURLS HIM TO HIS DEATH!



FAREWELL, THUNDER! ONCE YOU AND YOUR HATED FATHER HAVE PERISHED, THE HEAVENS THEMSELVES WILL WRITHE IN FIRE AND WOE!



NO! NO!! THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING

I AM GROG...GROG THE GOD-CRUSHER... NOT SOME MINDLESS PAWN IN A GAME OF COSMIC CHANCE!

I AM GROG!!

DEEP WITHIN THE CRUMBLING PYRAMID, THE FORMER STRONGHOLD OF SETH, GROG SHOUTS IN PAIN AND FEAR--



NEVER!!

MY FAITHFUL HAMMER WILL PUT THE LIE TO THY WORDS!

SKRAAAK!

BUT THEN... SUDDENLY... UNEXPECTEDLY...

BEHOLD! NO SOONER DID THE THUNDER GOD'S Mallet SHATTER THE PYRAMID WHEN HE AND SURTUR VANISHED IN A GLOWING NIMBUS OF UNNAMEABLE ENERGIES!

THE BLACK PYRAMID WAS THE CENTER OF SETH'S POWER-- THE HOME OF HIS MYRIAD SORCERIES!



THEY ARE TRAPPED WITHIN A WHIRLWIND OF TERRIBLE FORCES -- WHICH THEY UNKNOWINGLY RELEASED!

MEANWHILE,
IN ASGARD...

FALL BACK!
FALL
BACK!

THE
CITY HAS
FALLEN
TO THE
INVADERS!



ASGARD
IS LOST!

WE MUST
RETREAT
TO THE
NEARBY
HILLS!

THE CELTIC GODS OF
AVALON DO NOT RUN
FROM THEIR ENEMIES,
TYR... NO MATTER WHAT
THE ODDS!

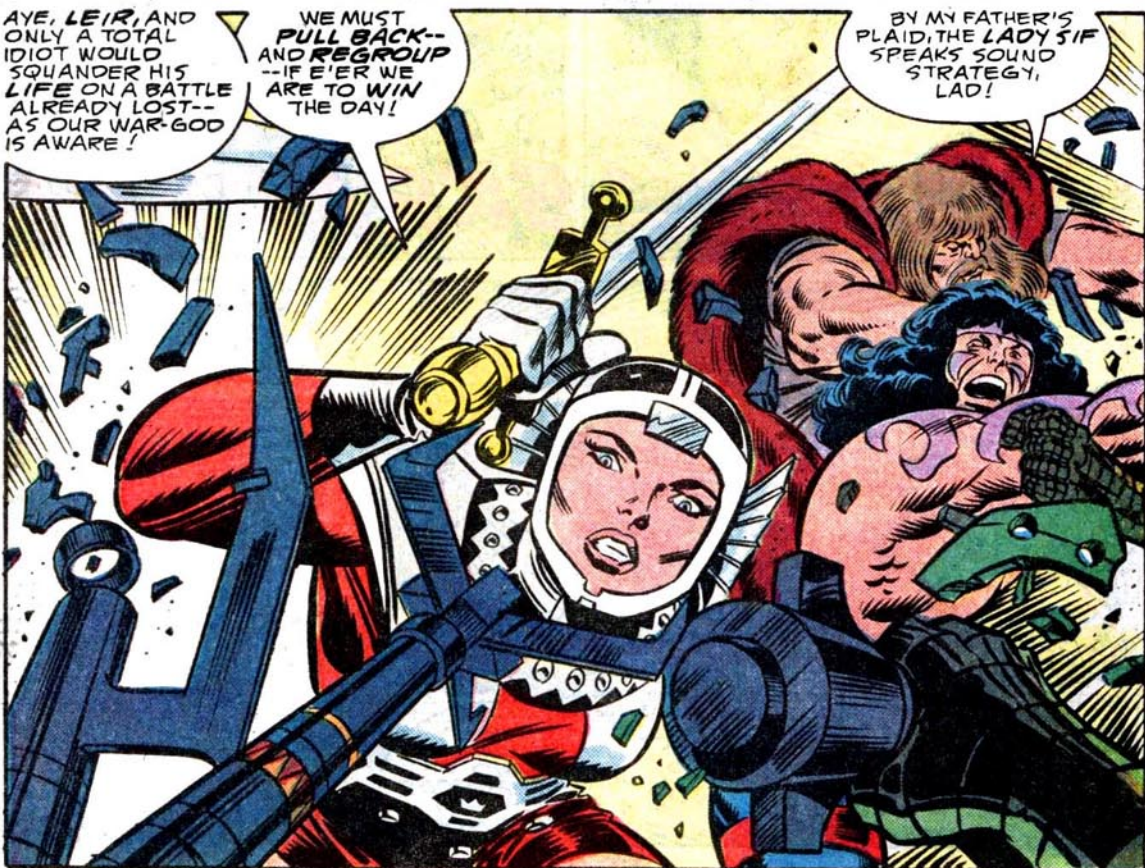


ONLY A
SNIVELING
COWARD
WOULD
MOUTH SUCH
UNMANLY
WORDS!

AYE, LEIR, AND
ONLY A TOTAL
IDIOT WOULD
SQUANDER HIS
LIFE ON A BATTLE
ALREADY LOST--
AS OUR WAR-GOD
IS AWARE!

WE MUST
PULL BACK--
AND REGROUP
--IF E'ER WE
ARE TO WIN
THE DAY!

BY MY FATHER'S
PLAID, THE LADY SIF
SPEAKS SOUND
STRATEGY,
LAD!



ALL RIGHT!
ALL RIGHT!
I SHALL NOT
ARGUE THE
POINT,
DAGDA!

HOWEVER,
IF LEIR **MUST**
RETREAT, HE
SHALL
DO SO--

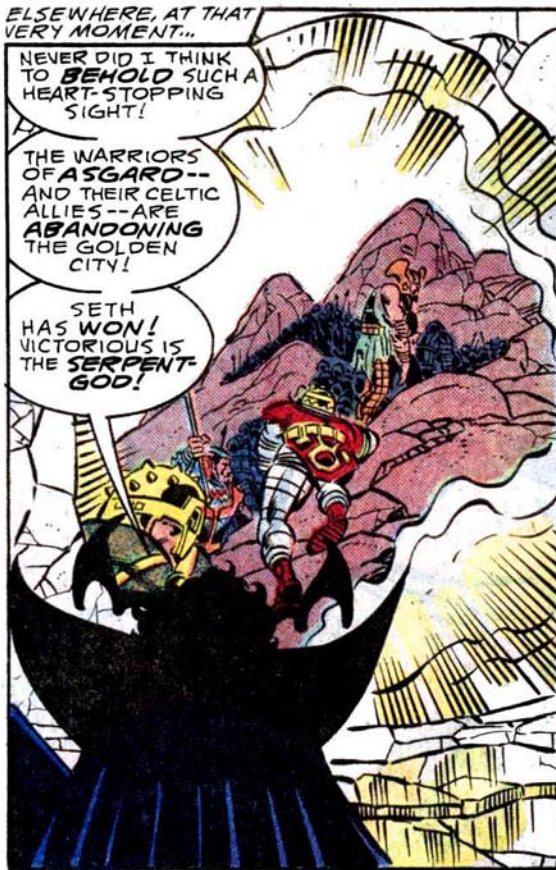


ELSEWHERE, AT THAT
VERY MOMENT...

NEVER DID I THINK
TO **BEHOLD** SUCH A
HEART-STOPPING
SIGHT!

THE WARRIORS
OF **ASGARD**--
AND THEIR CELTIC
ALLIES--ARE
ABANDONING
THE GOLDEN
CITY!

SETH
HAS WON!
VICTORIOUS IS
THE **SERPENT-
GOD!**



SPWOKK!

--IN A MANNER
BEPFITTING A TRUE
SON OF DANU!!



NO! NO!
MY PEOPLE
NEED
ME--!

BE
STILL,
BELOVED
BALDER!

NO LONGER
ART THOU
KING OF
ASGARD!

THOUGH
I SNATCHED
THEE FROM
THE GRASP OF
SETH HIMSELF,
STILL DO THY
MANY WOUNDS
NEED TIME
TO HEAL!

THERE
IS **NO TIME**,
KARNILLA!
NO TIME
AT ALL!



AID ME, O' QUEEN OF THE NORNS!

HELP ME STOP THE LORD OF EXTINCTION!

ART THOU MAD?!

WHY SHOULD I RISK MY KINGDOM--MY PEOPLE--WHEN MY MAGICKS PREVENT HIM FROM DETECTING US!

SETH IS THE SERPENT-GOD OF DEATH! HE MEANS TO EXTINGUISH ALL LIFE!

ALL LIFE!!

LOOK TO THINE OWN MYSTIC PORTALS!

IN THE DIM TUNNELS BENEATH OUR LAND, THE TROLLS ARE BEING HUNTED DOWN--SLAUGHTERED--BY THE LEGIONS OF SETH!

TO THE NORTH, THE GREAT FROST GIANTS ARE FALLING BEFORE THE ADVANCED ARMAMENT OF THE INVADERS!

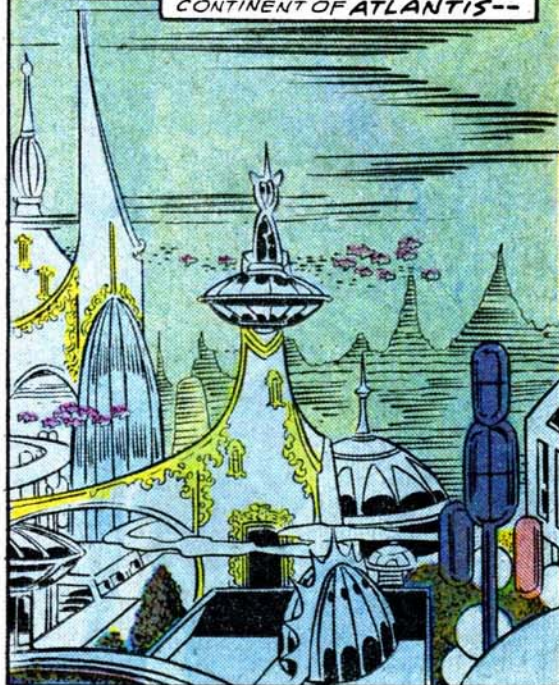
THEY PEOPLE ARE SAFE--FOR NOW--BUT EVENTUALLY HE WILL LEARN OF THEM!

HE WILL COME--!!

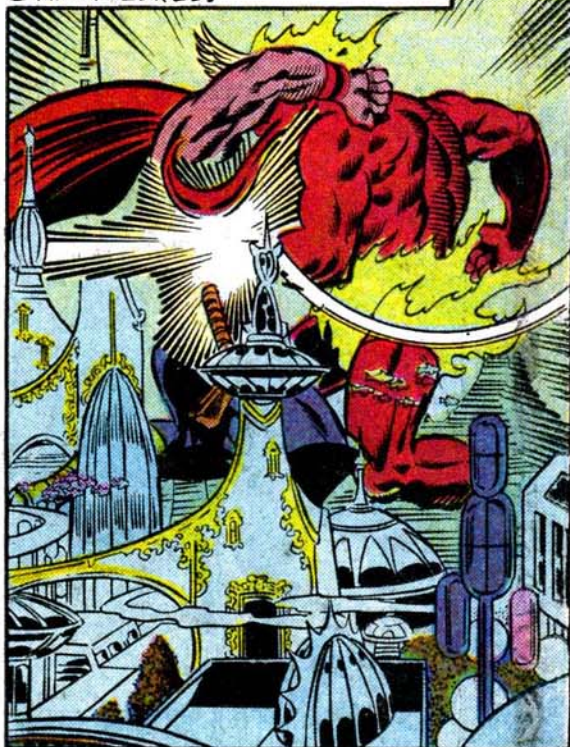
SHALT THOU FACE HIM NOW OR LATER, KARNILLA...? ...NOW OR LATER?

MEANWHILE, AN UNFATHOMABLE DISTANCE AWAY, ON THE PLANET CALLED EARTH...

DEEP WITHIN THE CHILLING DEPTHS OF THE ATLANTIC OCEAN STANDS THE PROUD CONTINENT OF ATLANTIS--



--WHOSE UNDERSEA INHABITANTS ARE SUDDENLY STARTLED BY THE ABRUPT APPEARANCE OF TWO GIANT FIGURES!

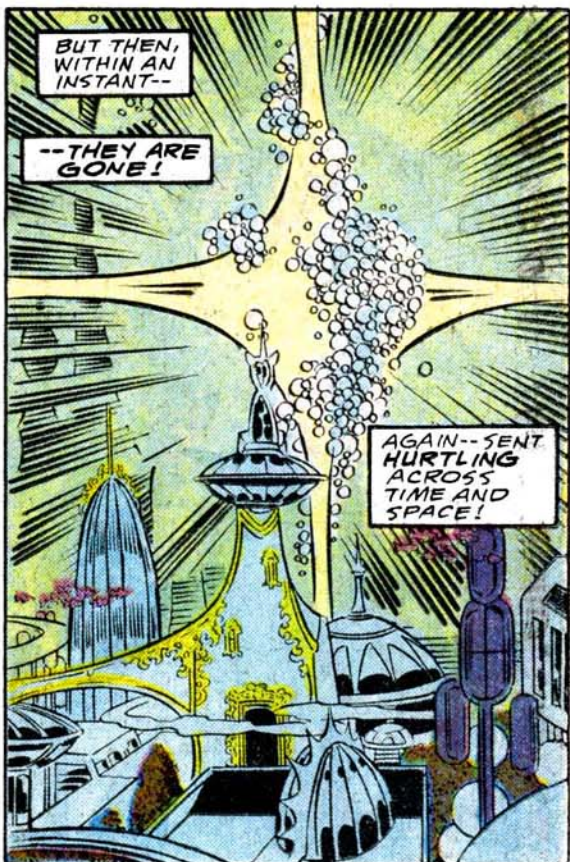


BATTLING FURIOUSLY, EACH SUSPECTING THE OTHER OF CAUSING THEIR UNEXPECTED FLIGHTS ACROSS THE FABRIC OF REALITY, THE TWO GODS CONTINUE THEIR AWESOME STRUGGLE...



BUT THEN, WITHIN AN INSTANT--

--THEY ARE GONE!



AGAIN--SENT HURTLING ACROSS TIME AND SPACE!

ELSEWHERE, AT THAT
SELFSAME INSTANT...

**ALL HAIL
SETH!**

**ALL HAIL THE
CONQUEROR
SUPREME OF
ASGARD!**

**AT LAST! MY REVENGE
IS COMPLETE! THOR AND
HIS PEOPLE HAVE PAID
THE ULTIMATE PRICE
FOR HAVING CAUSED
THE LOSS OF MY
RIGHT HAND!**

**SECURE
THE CITY,
GENERAL
CHEOPS--**

**--AND
PREPARE TO
EXECUTE ALL
PRISONERS!**

**I WOULD SIT UPON
THE IMPERIAL
THRONE OF
ODIN WHEN I
OFFICIALLY
PROCLAIM MY
VICTORY!**

**THUS SHALL
BEGIN A NEW
AGE!**

**AN
AGE OF
DEATH!!**

**THE ASGARDIANS
DESERVE EX-
TERMINATION!**

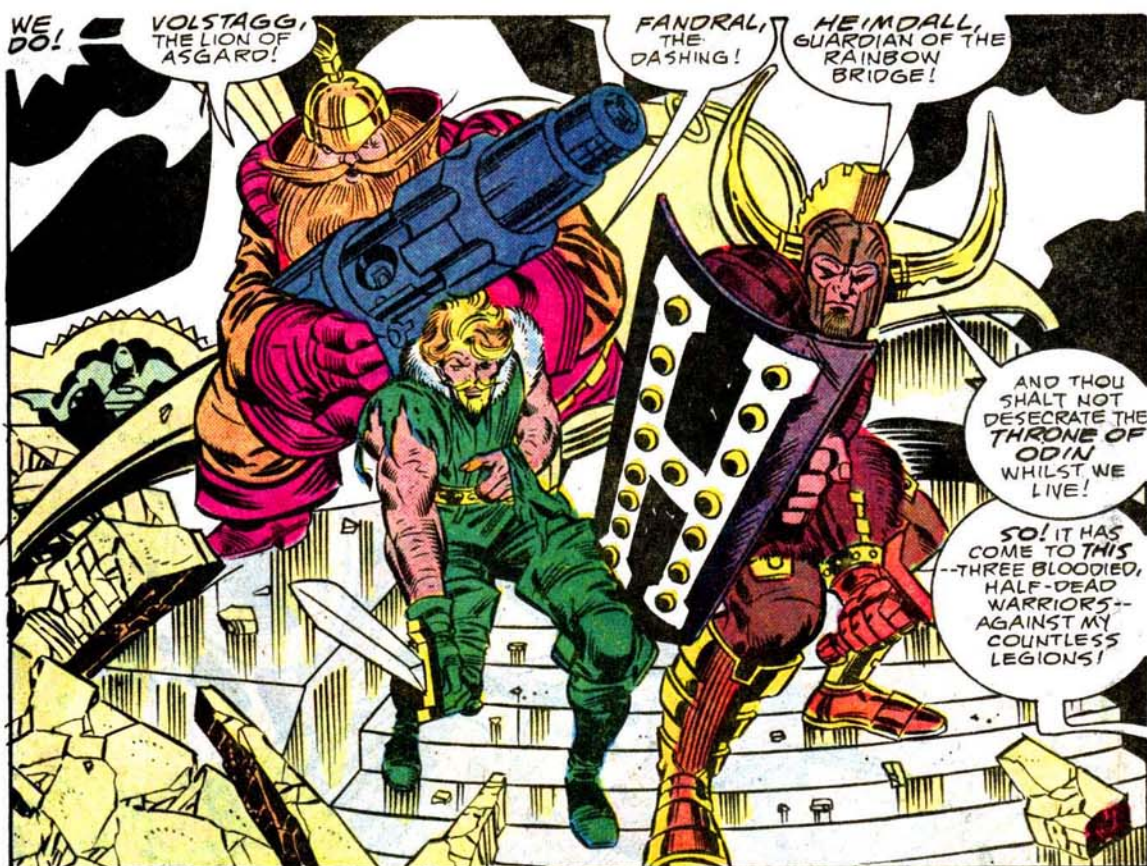
**THEY ARE A RACE
OF MONGRELS--
UPSTART IMMORTALS
WHO DARED CALL
THEMSELVES
GODS!**

**OPEN
THE
PALACE
DOORS
--!**

**AYE,
AND IT'S
YOUR
DEATH WE
SEEK!**

WHAT--?!

**WHO DARES
SUCH INSUPERABLE
ARROGANCE?**



WE DO!

VOLSTAGG, THE LION OF ASGARD!

FANDRAL, THE DASHING!

HEIMDALL, GUARDIAN OF THE RAINBOW BRIDGE!

AND THOU SHALT NOT DESECRATE THE THRONE OF ODIN WHILST WE LIVE!

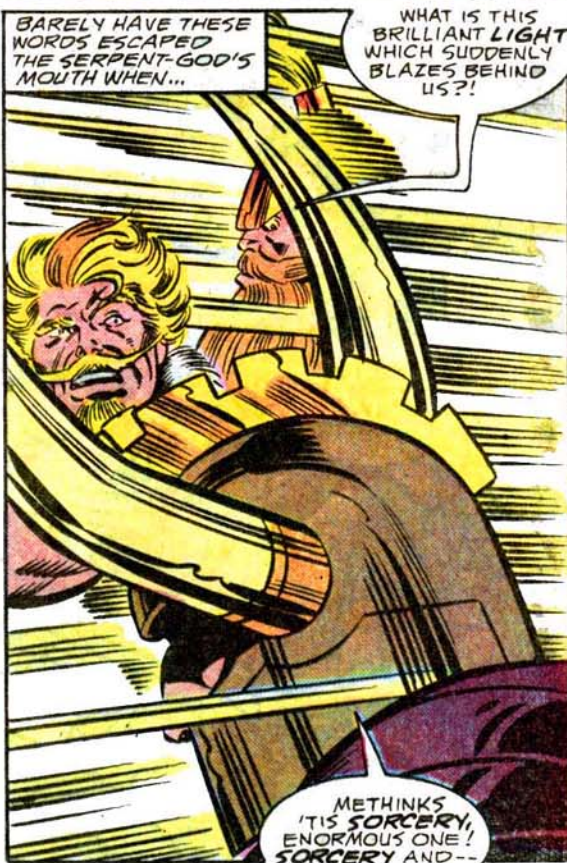
SO! IT HAS COME TO THIS --THREE BLOODIED, HALF-DEAD WARRIORS-- AGAINST MY COUNTLESS LEGIONS!



YOU STUPID ASGARDIANS NEVER CEASE TO AMUSE ME! EVER RIPE FOR ONE MORE FUTILE THOUGH HEROIC GESTURE!

BUT ALAS, THE GAME ENDS HERE... AND NOW!

KILL THEM! KILL THEM ALL!



BARELY HAVE THESE WORDS ESCAPED THE SERPENT-GOD'S MOUTH WHEN...

WHAT IS THIS BRILLIANT LIGHT WHICH SUDDENLY BLAZES BEHIND US?!

METHINKS 'TIS SORCERY, ENORMOUS ONE! SORCERY AND--

-- SALVATION! --

KARNILLA'S
SPELL OF
TRANSPORT
HAS DONE
ITS WORK!

NOW SHALL TROLL,
NORN, AND FROST GIANT
FIGHT IN COMMON CAUSE
... FOR ASGARD!!

FOR
LIFE
ITSELF!!

AYE, AND
LET THE SWORD
ARM OF BALDER
STRIKE BESIDE
THE FLASHING
BLADE OF
FANDRAL!

WELCOME
TO THE
FRAY, MY
FRIEND!

IT IS A
PLEASURE
TO BE HERE,
COMRADE!





"--ODIN,
THE ALL-
FATHER!"

RISE UP,
YE LOYAL
CITIZENS OF
ASGARD!

THY ONE,
TRUE LIEGE
HATH FINALLY
RETURNED IN
THIS-- THE HOUR
OF THY
GRAVEST
NEED!

DEATH
TO THE
FOES OF THE
ETERNAL
CITY!

DEATH TO
SETH
THE
SERPENT-
GOD!

EVEN AS THE LORD OF ASGARD RALLIES HIS TROOPS, HIS EGYPTIAN ALLIES GATHER TOGETHER...

EVEN THOUGH SETH HAS STRIPPED US OF OUR GODLY POWERS, IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO STOP HIM!



THE EARTH FORCE WILL HELP YOU!

ARE YOU CRAZY, WIND WARRIOR? WHY SHOULD WE RISK OUR LIVES?!

WE HAVE NO CHOICE, SKYHAWK!

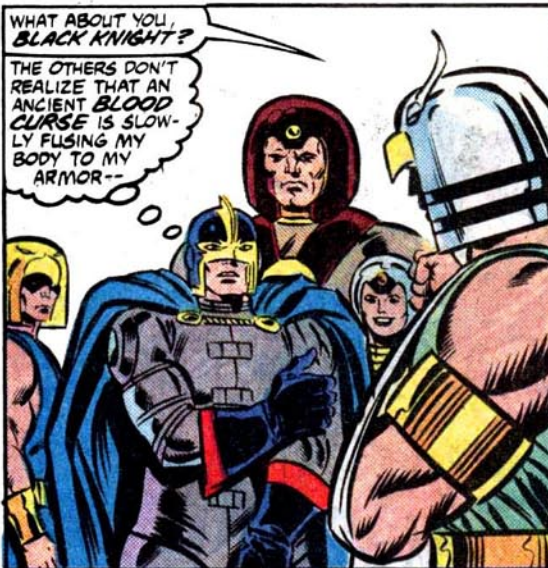
SETH GAVE US THESE LIVES--AND HE'LL PULL THE PLUG--UNLESS HE'S DEFEATED!



I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN YOU'D SIDE WITH HER, EARTH-LORD!

WHAT ABOUT YOU, BLACK KNIGHT?

THE OTHERS DON'T REALIZE THAT AN ANCIENT BLOOD CURSE IS SLOWLY FUSING MY BODY TO MY ARMOR--



--BUT I'VE COME TOO FAR TO LET THAT STOP ME NOW!

I'LL GO...AND FROM THE LOOKS OF THINGS, SO WILL HOGUN THE GRIM!



HOGUN? WHERE IS HE, ANYWAY?!

HE LEFT WHILE THE REST OF YOU WERE BUSY TALKING!

HE'S A MAN OF ACTION... NOT WORDS!

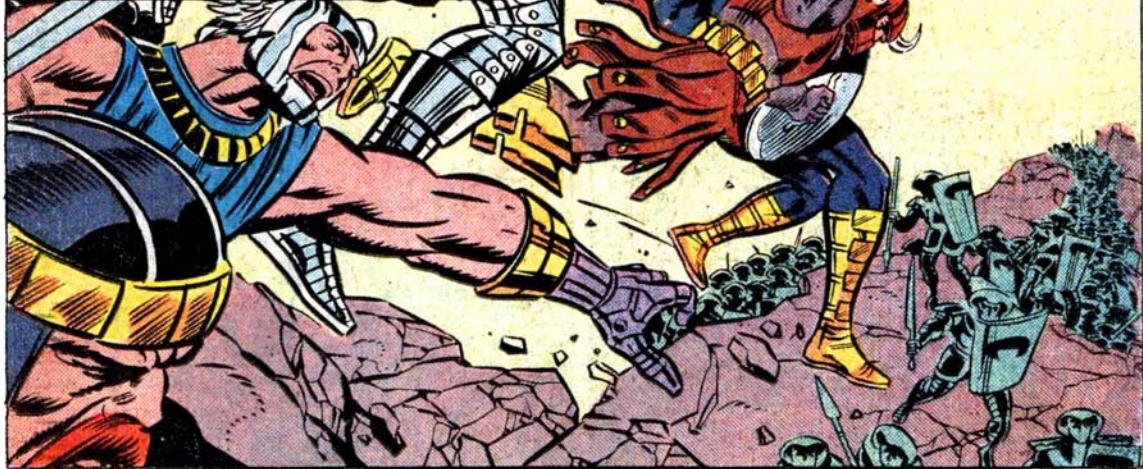


WHEN SETH MARKED MY CHEEK, HE SWORE THAT I WAS FATED TO DIE WHEN NEXT WE MET!

THE TIME HATH COME TO FACE MY DESTINY...



MOMENTS LATER, WITH RENEWED ZEAL INSPIRED BY THE SUDDEN RETURN OF ODIN THE ALL-MIGHTY, THE ASGARDIAN FORCES RACE BACK TOWARD ASGARD... AND GLORY!



SUDDENLY...



OUR FOES MUST BE PANICKING!

THEY HAVE UNLEASHED THEIR MOST FEARSOME MONSTERS!

THESE ARE THE BEASTS WHICH SETH SENT TO BUTCHER MY PEOPLE AND RAVAGE OUR SACRED ISLE!



THE ASGARDIANS AND THE OTHERS CAN BATTLE THE SERPENTINE LEGIONS OF SETH!



THESE CREATURES BELONG TO THE CELTIC GODS OF AVALON--

--AND LEIR,
THE LORD OF
LIGHTNING AND
THE GOD OF
THE SPEAR!

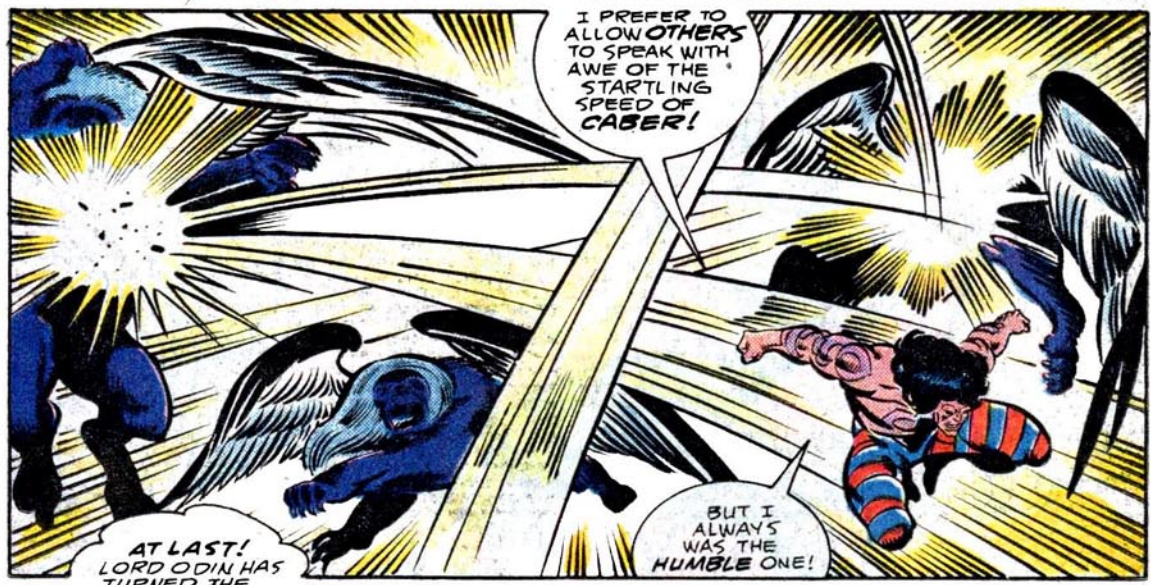


YOU SOUND
MORE LIKE THE
GOD OF HOT
WIND!



HAVE
A LITTLE
DIGNITY,
LEIR! IT
REALLY ISN'T
NECESSARY
TO **SHOUT**
YOUR OWN
NAME EVERY
FEW SECONDS!

TRY TO
BE **MORE**
LIKE ME!



I PREFER TO
ALLOW OTHERS
TO SPEAK WITH
AWE OF THE
STARTLING
SPEED OF
CABER!

BUT I
ALWAYS
WAS THE
HUMBLE ONE!

AT LAST!
LORD ODIN HAS
TURNED THE
TIDE OF BATTLE
AGAINST OUR
ENEMIES! PRAISE
THE FATES
HE HAS
RETURNED!



PERHAPS SETH'S FLEEING
GENERALS LEFT SOME-
THING OF INTEREST
IN THIS COMMAND
TENT!

VIZIER--!



THE EN-
CHANTRESS
--!

HELP ME!

MY SISTER...
LORELEI...
IS DYING!!

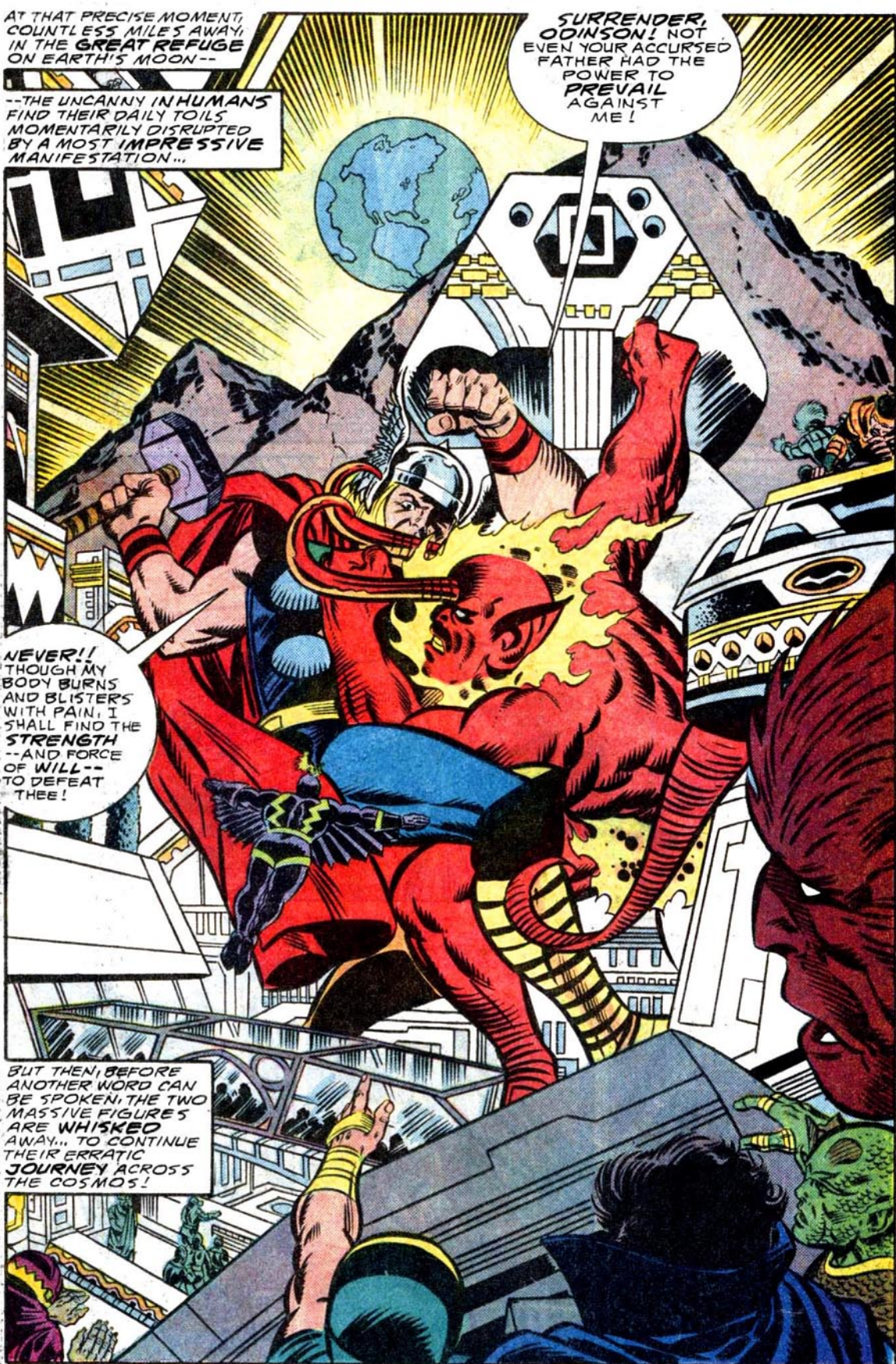
AT THAT PRECISE MOMENT,
COUNTLESS MILES AWAY,
IN THE GREAT REFUGE
ON EARTH'S MOON--

--THE UNCANNY IN HUMANS
FIND THEIR DAILY TOILS
MOMENTARILY DISRUPTED
BY A MOST IMPRESSIVE
MANIFESTATION...

SURRENDER,
ODINSON! NOT
EVEN YOUR ACCURSED
FATHER HAD THE
POWER TO
PREVAIL
AGAINST
ME!

NEVER!!
THOUGH MY
BODY BURNS
AND BLISTERS
WITH PAIN, I
SHALL FIND THE
STRENGTH
--AND FORCE
OF WILL--
TO DEFEAT
THEE!

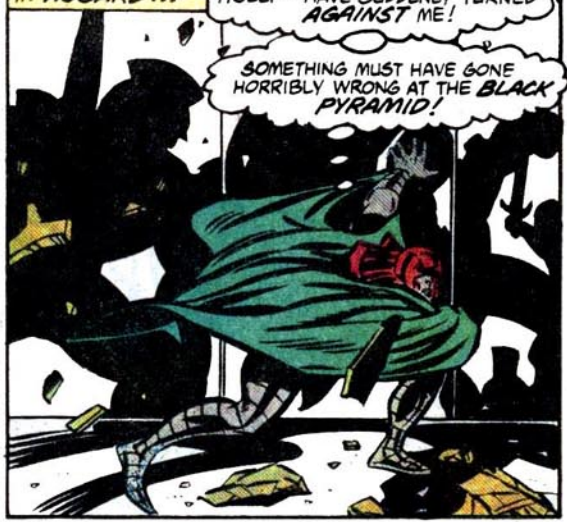
BUT THEN, BEFORE
ANOTHER WORD CAN
BE SPOKEN, THE TWO
MASSIVE FIGURES
ARE WHISKED
AWAY... TO CONTINUE
THEIR ERRATIC
JOURNEY ACROSS
THE COSMOS!



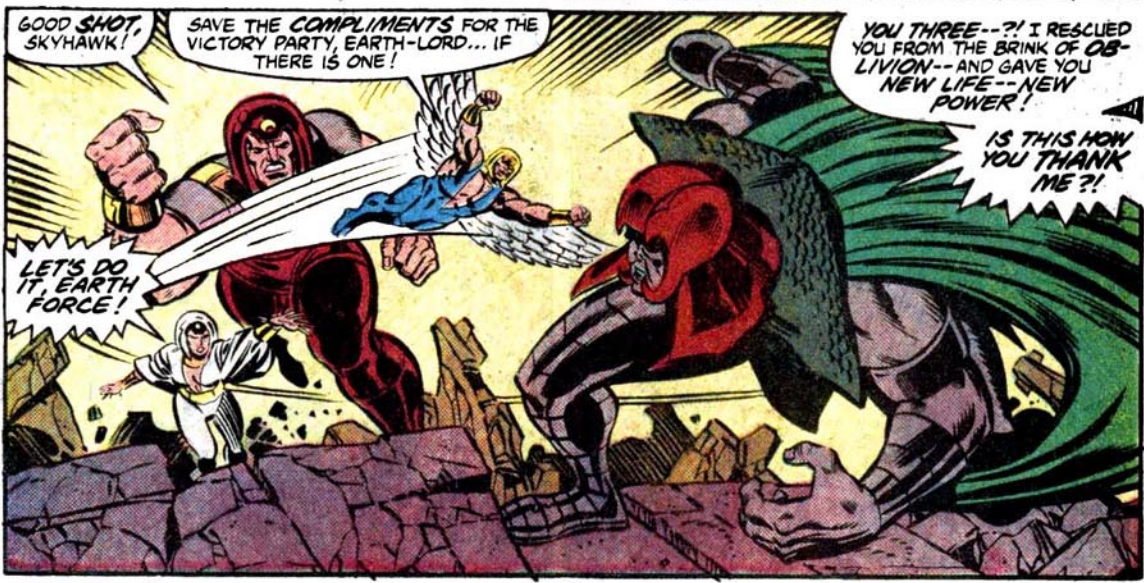
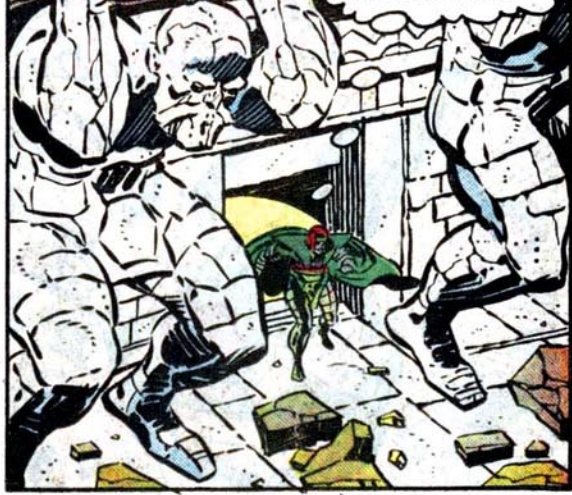
MEANWHILE, BACK
IN ASGARD...

THE FATES-- AND THE BATTLE
ITSELF--HAVE SUDDENLY TURNED
AGAINST ME!

SOMETHING MUST HAVE GONE
HORRIBLY WRONG AT THE BLACK
PYRAMID!



I MUST ESCAPE TO
THE OUTER COURTYARD
SO THAT I CAN--



IN A WORD...
YES!

WHOOH!

YOU USED
US, SETH!

IT WAS ALL PART OF
THE DEAL! BLIND
OBEDIENCE IN
EXCHANGE FOR
A SECOND CHANCE
AT LIFE!

BUT THE
DEAL
STINKS!

I WON'T
SERVE DEATH!

KZZAK!

FOOL! INSECT!
YOU ARE NOTHING
TO ME--

RAK-KRASH!

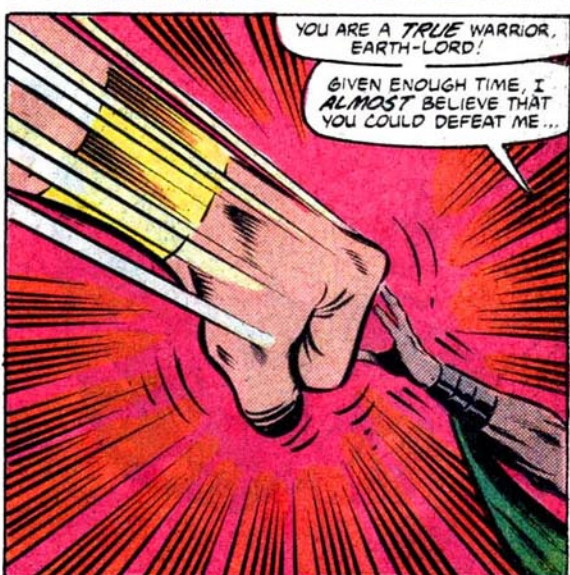
--AND YOUR DEATH
MEANS LESS THAN
NOTHING!

I CAN'T LET
SKYHAWK
DIE IN VAIN!

I'VE GOT TO HIT SETH
WITH THE STRONGEST
WINDS I CAN GENERATE-- WINDS
POWERFUL ENOUGH TO
UPROOT A REDWOOD!

ALL MY LIFE I'VE BEEN AFRAID
TO THINK--TO ACT! NO MORE!

**NO
MORE!!**



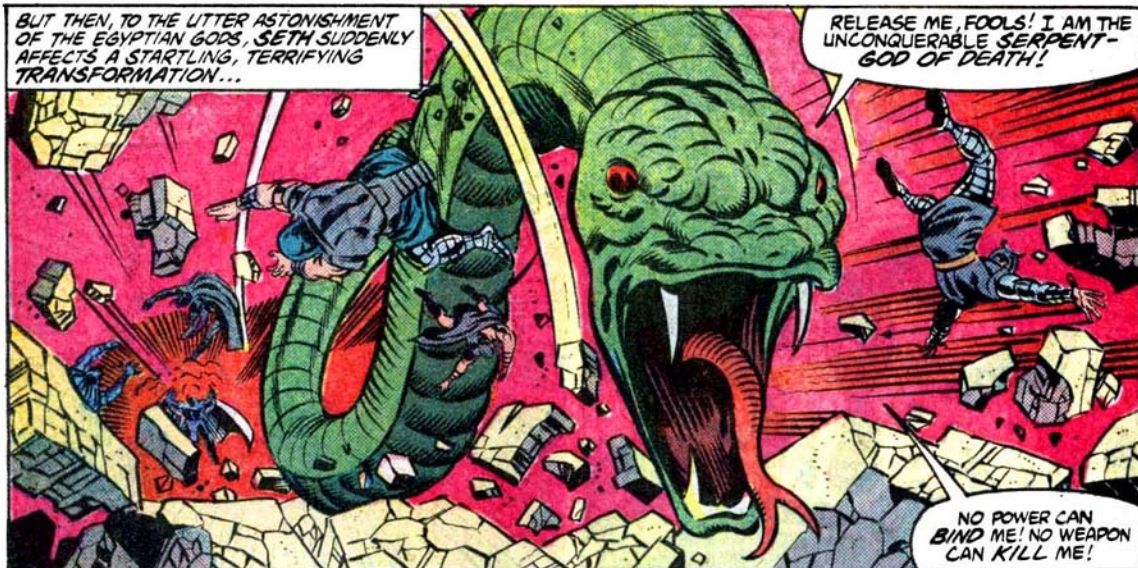
BUT THEN, EVEN BEFORE SETH
CAN TAKE ANOTHER STEP...



THE EARTH
FORCE DID
THEIR PART!



BUT THEN, TO THE LITTER ASTONISHMENT
OF THE EGYPTIAN GODS, SETH SUDDENLY
AFFECTS A STARTLING, TERRIFYING
TRANSFORMATION...



AND, AT THAT EXACT INSTANT...



B-BLOOD CURSE... P-PARALYZING
ME... F-FUSING ME TO ARMOR... T-
TRANSFORMING ME... INTO A LIVING
EXTENSION OF MY INVINCIBLE
EBONY SWORD!





MEANWHILE...

SO! SETH HAS FINALLY REVEALED ANOTHER ASPECT OF HIS MONSTROUS EVIL!

THOUGH I DID BEQUEATH MY SACRED ODIN-POWER TO MY NOBLE SON--



--ODIN IS STILL THE WORD AND THE WAY OF ASGARD!

FROM THE LAND ITSELF, I CAN ABSORB POWER ENOUGH TO MEET YON DEATH-GOD ON EQUAL TERMS!



WHAT?! YOU DARE TO MATCH YOUR FEEBLE BODY AGAINST MY POWER SUPREME?!

AYE! I DARE... FOR ASGARD!!

FOR LIFE ITSELF!!



JUST THEN, ON THE DISTANT PLANET KNOWN AS RIGEL-3, HOME OF THE STAR-SPANNING COLONIZERS...

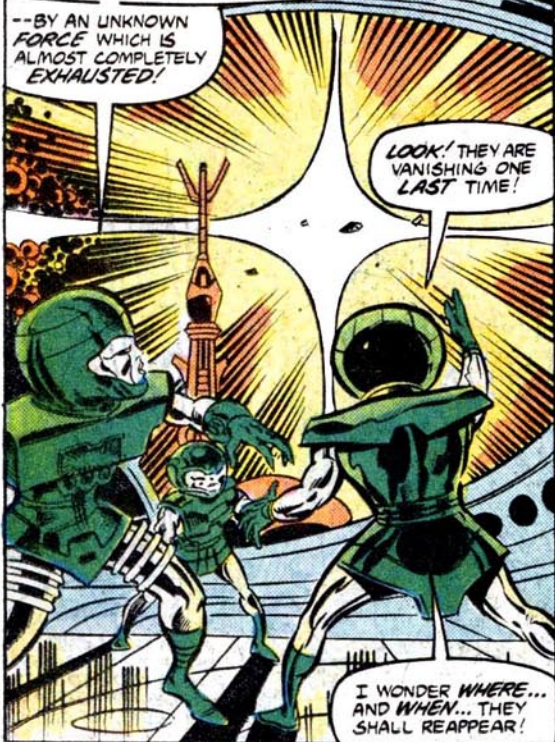
HA! HA! HA! THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE SEEMS TO BE TREMBLING IN FEAR AND HORROR!

SURTUR SPEAKS TRUE! AND YET, MY THOUGHTS KEEP TURNING TO MY FATHER... WHO IS PAST HIS PRIME!

HOW CAN HE FARE AGAINST ONE SUCH AS SETH!

INTERESTING! ACCORDING TO OUR INSTANT COMPUTER ANALYSIS, THOSE TWO GIANTS WERE BEING CATA-PULSED ACROSS THE SPACE AND TIME STREAMS---

--BY AN UNKNOWN FORCE WHICH IS ALMOST COMPLETELY EXHAUSTED!



LOOK! THEY ARE VANISHING ONE LAST TIME!

I WONDER WHERE... AND WHEN... THEY SHALL REAPPEAR!

WHERE THERE IS LIFE, THERE IS HOPE... COURAGE... HONOR... AND GLORY!!



ELSEWHERE, AT THAT VERY MOMENT...

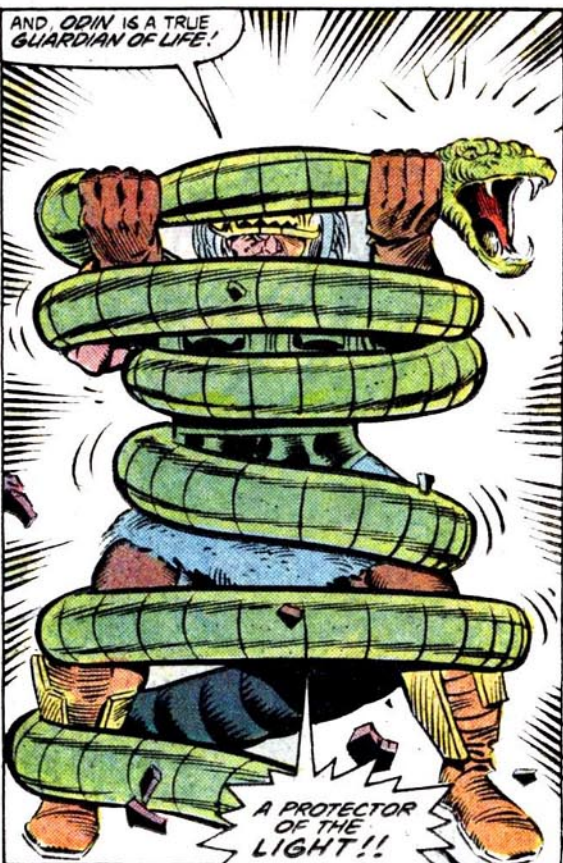
YOU HAVE FOUGHT THE GOOD FIGHT, ODIN... IN VAIN!

DEATH IS UNDEFEATABLE! UNCONQUERABLE!!

NOT SO, MONSTER!

LIFE IS THE MOST POTENT FORCE OF ALL.

AND, ODIN IS A TRUE GUARDIAN OF LIFE!



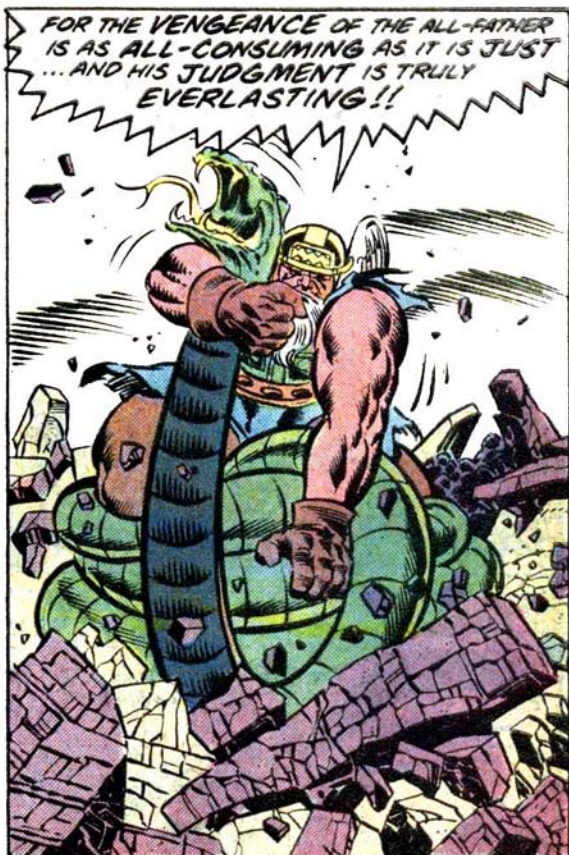
A PROTECTOR OF THE LIGHT!!



ODIN IS NOW AND FOREVER SUPREME!

WOE TO THE ENEMIES OF ASGARD! OF JUSTICE! OF LIFE!!

KWA-BWOM!

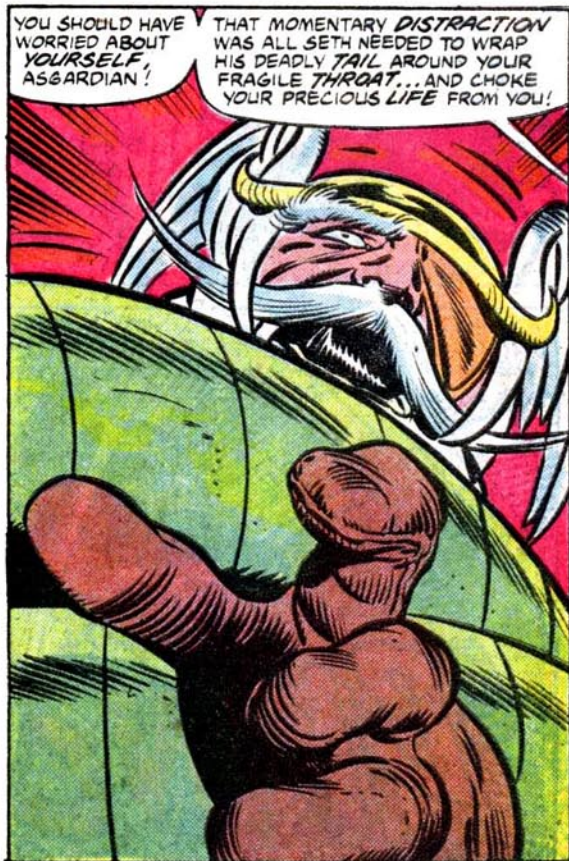


FOR THE VENGEANCE OF THE ALL-FATHER IS AS ALL-CONSUMING AS IT IS JUST ... AND HIS JUDGMENT IS TRULY EVERLASTING!!



UNEXPECTEDLY, AT THAT SPECIFIC INSTANT...

THOR--! HE AND SURTUR HAVE SUDDENLY APPEARED... AND MY SON IS IN DIRE JEOPARDY!



YOU SHOULD HAVE WORRIED ABOUT YOURSELF, ASGARDIAN!

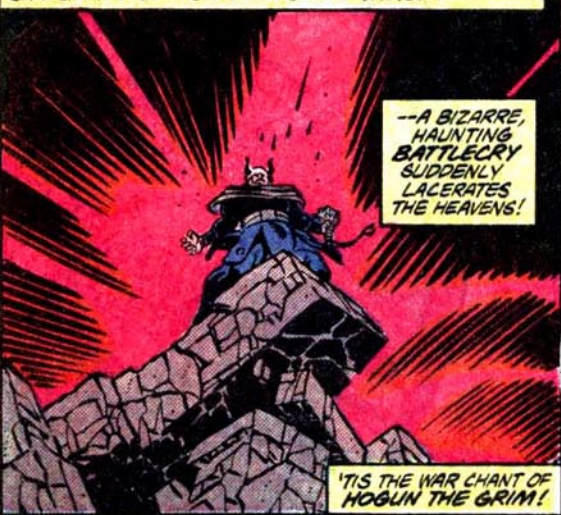
THAT MOMENTARY DISTRACTION WAS ALL SETH NEEDED TO WRAP HIS DEADLY TAIL AROUND YOUR FRAGILE THROAT... AND CHOKE YOUR PRECIOUS LIFE FROM YOU!

YOU ARE FINISHED, ANCIENT,
CREAKING EXCUSE FOR A
GOD! TOTALLY DEFEATED!!

NOTHING CAN
SAVE YOU NOW!



BUT THEN, EVEN BEFORE SETH'S SHARPENED FANGS
CAN SAVAGE ODIN'S UNPROTECTED THROAT--



--A BIZARRE,
HAUNTING
BATTLECRY
SUDDENLY
LACERATES
THE HEAVENS!

'TIS THE WAR CHANT OF
HOGUN THE GRIM!



HEAR ME, O MASTER OF
DEATH! BEFORE ONE AND
ALL, I CHALLENGE THEE--!

UPON MY CHEEK, I
ALREADY WEAR
THY MARK...THE
MARK OF DEATH!



MY FATE IS
SEALED!

'TIS MY DESTINY TO
DIE...HERE AND NOW!



SO BE IT...
BUT I SHALL NOT
DIE ALONE!!

BKWKKKK!!



EYIIII!!



YOU INSUFFERABLE LITTLE INSECT! YOU ALONE HAVE MANAGED TO HURT ME-- TO FILL ME WITH PAIN!

SUCH A MONUMENTAL AFFRONT CANNOT GO UNPUNISHED!

MY PLAN WORKED!

IN HIS FURY, SETH HAS FORGOTTEN THE ALL-FATHER!



YOUR FATHER HAS FALLEN, THOR!

YOUR KINGDOM LIES IN RUINS!

WITHIN MERE MOMENTS, YOU SHALL DIE... AND I SHALL SET THE HEAVENS AFLAME!!

NAY SURTUR...



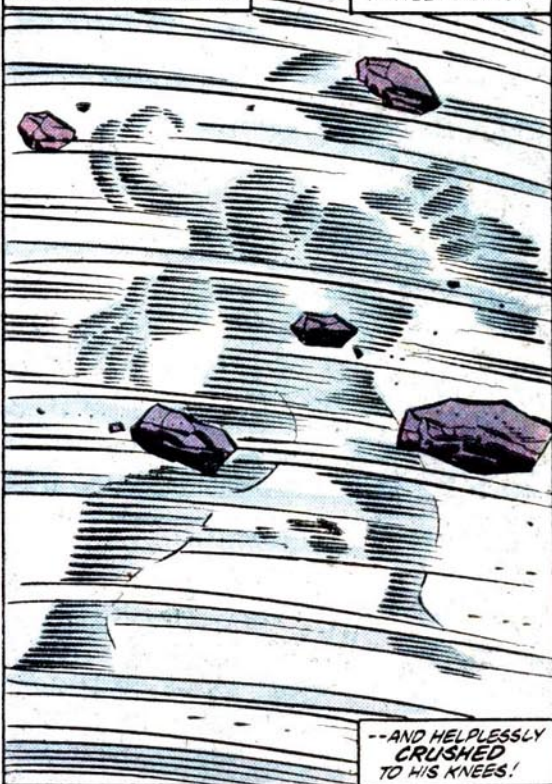
I SAY THEE... NAY!!

KRAAK!!



WITHIN AN INSTANT,
SURTUR IS ENGULFED
BY A MASSIVE VORTEX...

...BLUDGEONED BY
CATACLYSMIC
FORCE-WAVES--



--AND HELPLESSLY
CRUSHED
TO HIS KNEES!

THE PRESSURE CONTINUES TO INCREASE...AS THE
VORTEX BEGINS TO CONTRACT...GROWING SMALLER
AND SMALLER UNTIL--



--IT
IMPLODES!!

THOR HAS TRIUMPHED
OVER HIS FOE!

MAY THE HEAVENS
AID ME WITH MINE!



PROPELLED WITH UNERRING ACCURACY, HOGUN'S
TERRIBLE WEAPON--THE TRANSFORMED AVENGER--
STRIKES TRUE!!



A PIERCING,
UNHOLY WAIL
SCORCHES
THE AIR--

--AND, FROM THE WILDLY FLAILING BODY OF THE
DYING SERPENT-GOD, A FLOOD OF MYSTICAL
ENERGIES SUDDENLY EXPLODE--

--ENERGIES WHICH IMMEDIATELY FLOW BACK INTO THE GODS OF EGYPT!

THE POWER--WHICH
SETH STOLE--IS
RETURNING!

AT LAST! WE HAVE
FINALLY REGAINED
OUR GODHOOD!



BEHOLD! SETH'S
BODY CONTINUES TO
DWINDE!



HE'S SHRINKING--
VANISHING--
INTO NOTHINGNESS!

HAVE WE TRULY
VANQUISHED
HIM, OR--?!

HAVE FAITH IN YOUR OWN SENSE
OF SIGHT, HEIMDALL! WE'VE
DONE IT!

WE'VE
BEATEN
DEATH!

WE MAY HAVE
DEFEATED SETH,
YOUNG VALDOR...



...BUT,
DEATH?!

METHINKS, DEATH
HATH REAPED A BITTER
HARVEST INDEED!

MEANWHILE...

MY HEART IS
BURSTING WITH
A FATHER'S PRIDE!

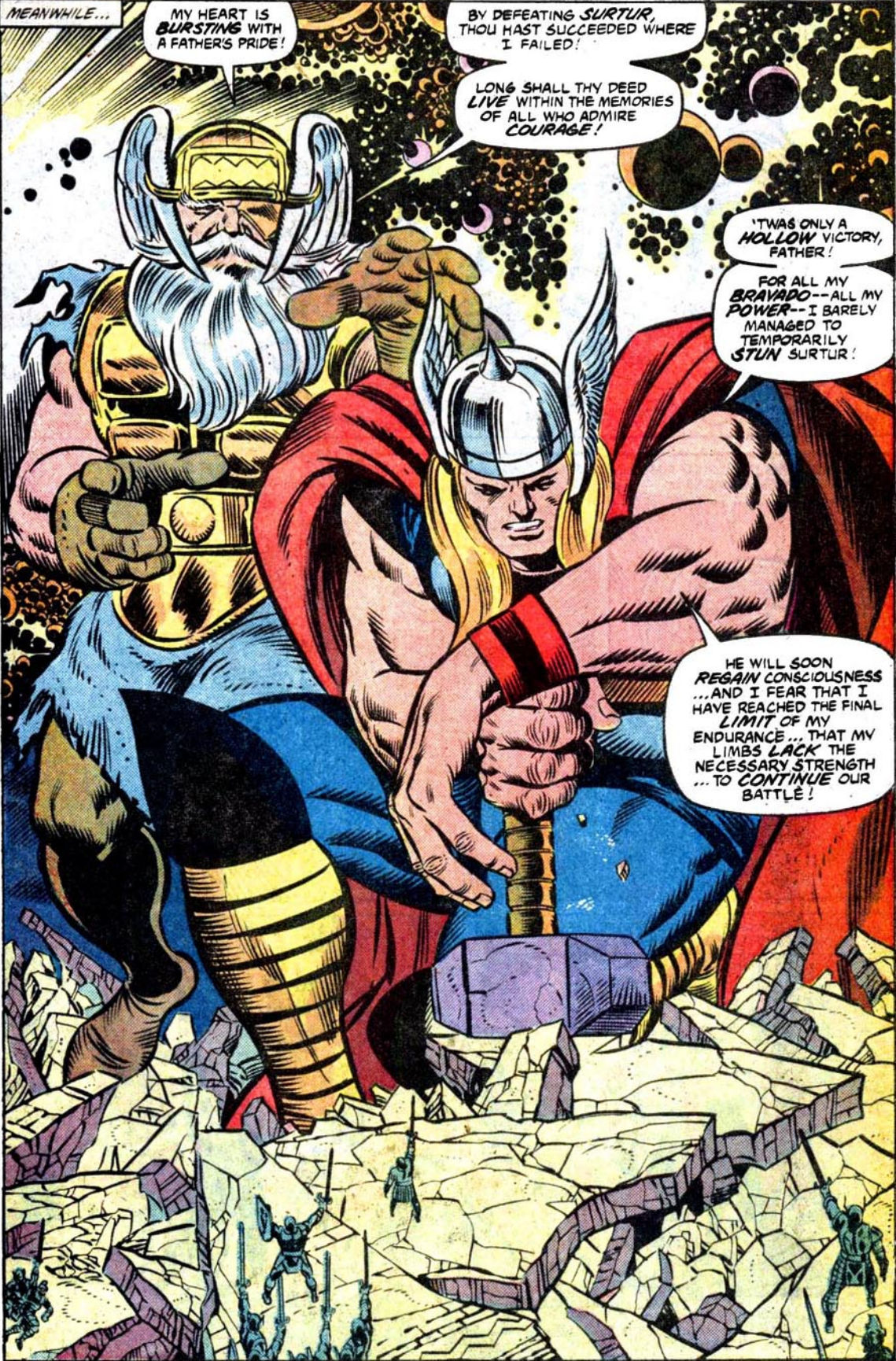
BY DEFEATING *SURTUR*,
THOU HAST SUCCEEDED WHERE
I FAILED!

LONG SHALL THY DEED
LIVE WITHIN THE MEMORIES
OF ALL WHO ADMIRE
COURAGE!

'T WAS ONLY A
HOLLOW VICTORY,
FATHER!

FOR ALL MY
BRAVADO--ALL MY
POWER--I BARELY
MANAGED TO
TEMPORARILY
STUN *SURTUR*!

WE WILL SOON
REGAIN CONSCIOUSNESS
...AND I FEAR THAT I
HAVE REACHED THE FINAL
LIMIT OF MY
ENDURANCE ... THAT MY
LIMBS LACK THE
NECESSARY STRENGTH
... TO CONTINUE OUR
BATTLE!



BUT, ALL IS NOT LOST!

WE MAY YET FIND A WAY TO BIND HIM--AND RESTRAIN HIS POWER-- BEFORE HE AWAKES!

NAY, MY SON! SURTUR IS THE ELDEST-- AND CRAFTIEST-- ELEMENTAL OF ALL!



HE WILL EVENTUALLY WIN FREE OF ANY ENTRAPMENT!



ONLY ONE PRISON COULD POSSIBLY HOLD HIM FOREVERMORE--

--THE BODY OF THE ALL-FATHER HIMSELF!



STAND THEE BACK, BLOOD OF MY BLOOD! I MUST REMOVE MY ODIN-POWER FROM THEE, AND RETURN US TO OUR RIGHTFUL STATURES--



--WHILE I ABSORB THE STRENGTH--THE POWER-- THE VERY ESSENCE OF SURTUR!!



A BLAZING, BLINDING LIGHT SUDDENLY FLARES ACROSS ASGARD, AND THEN...

THOU HAST DONE IT, FATHER!

SURTUR IS GONE-- CONFINED WITHIN THEE -- AND THOU HAST BEEN RESTORED TO THY FORMER GLORY!

A YE, AND LET THE WORD ISSUE FORTH ASGARD STILL STANDS!

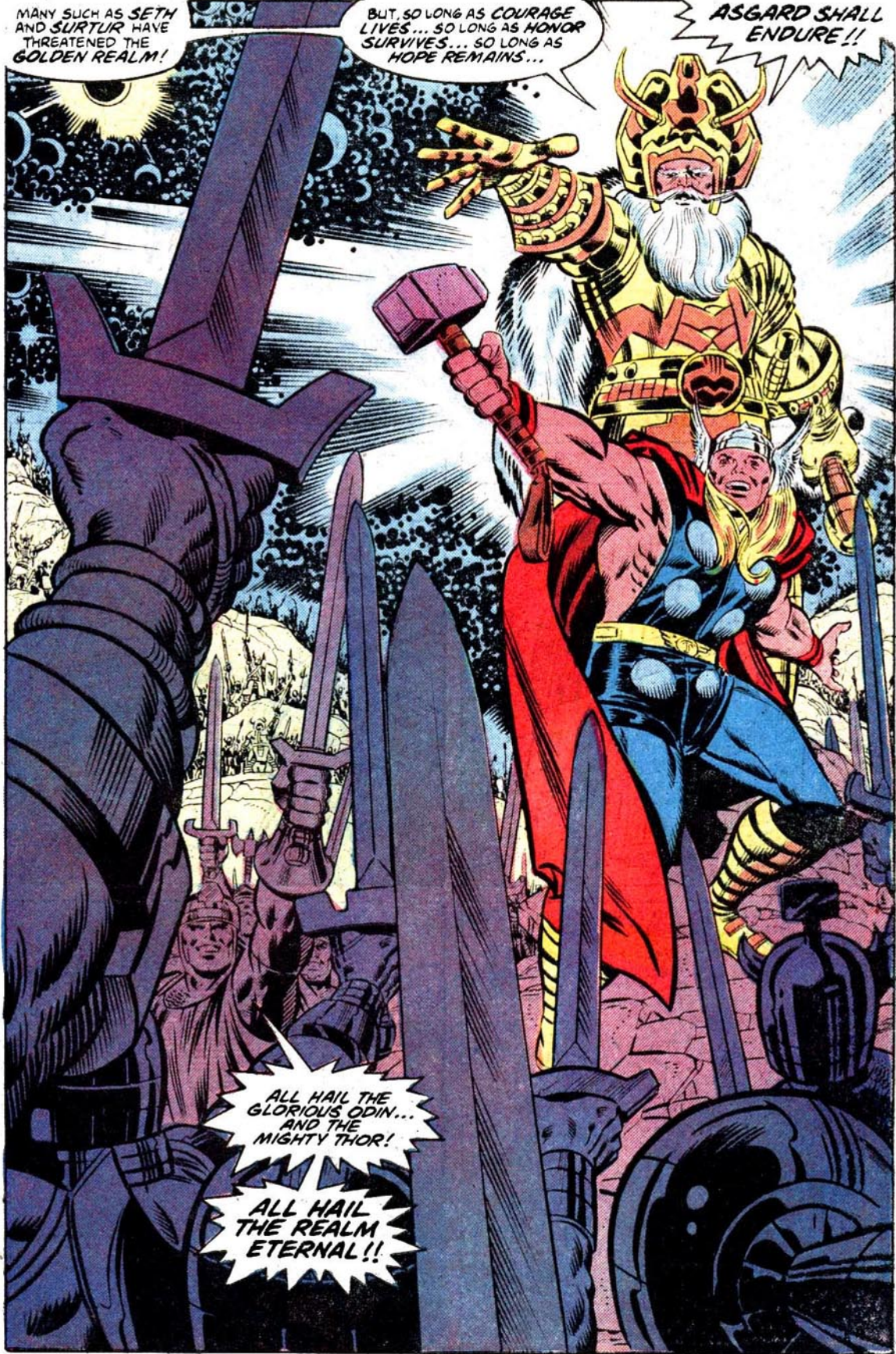
MANY SUCH AS SETH
AND SURTUR HAVE
THREATENED THE
GOLDEN REALM!

BUT, SO LONG AS COURAGE
LIVES... SO LONG AS HONOR
SURVIVES... SO LONG AS
HOPE REMAINS...

ASGARD SHALL
ENDURE!!

ALL HAIL THE
GLORIOUS ODIN...
AND THE
MIGHTY THOR!

ALL HAIL
THE REALM
ETERNAL!!





SOMETIME LATER, EVEN AS THE ASGARDIANS TURN TOWARD THE GRIM CHALLENGE OF REBUILDING THEIR WAR-TORN CITY, THE EGYPTIAN GODS GATHER AROUND THE BARELY BREATHING BODIES OF THE EARTH FORCE...

THESE COURAGEOUS WARRIORS SACRIFICED THEMSELVES FOR US! THEY MUST NOT DIE!

AND, THEY WILL NOT!

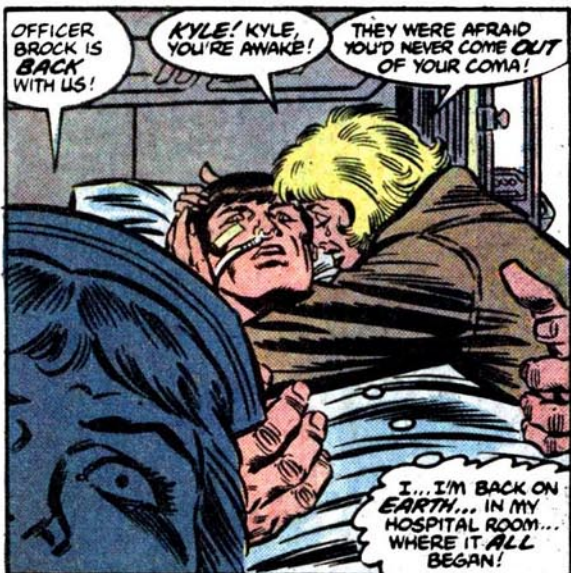
WE SHALL COMBINE ALL OF OUR GODLY FORCES--OUR HEAVENLY MIGHT!

THEY SHALL BE HEALED... EVEN AS WE BEND THE LAWS OF TIME AND SPACE...



"...TO RETURN THEM TO THEIR MORTAL PLANET...MERE MOMENTS AFTER SETH FIRST ABDUCTED THEM!"

DOCTOR! DOCTOR, COME QUICKLY!



OFFICER BROCK IS BACK WITH US!

KYLE! KYLE, YOU'RE AWAKE!

THEY WERE AFRAID YOU'D NEVER COME OUT OF YOUR COMA!

I... I'M BACK ON EARTH... IN MY HOSPITAL ROOM... WHERE IT ALL BEGAN!



WAS IT ONLY A DREAM? DID I REALLY JOIN THOR TO FIGHT IN SOME WAR OF THE GODS, OR--?!

NO-- IT WAS REAL! I STILL HAVE THE SIGN OF ATON!



THEN, THAT MUST MEAN THAT PAM AND SKY-HAWK MADE IT BACK TOO!

THE EARTH FORCE STILL LIVES!

BUT, WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?!

MEANWHILE, IN THE DEVASTATED THRONEROOM OF ODIN THE ALL-HIGH...

I AM UNFAMILIAR WITH THE ALIEN SORCERIES WHICH HAVE ENTHRALLED THIS POOR MORTAL!

FATHER, I CRAVE A BOON!

PLEASE ALLOW ME TO RETURN THIS BRAVE WARRIOR TO THE PLANET OF HIS BIRTH-- TO MIDGARD-- SO THAT I MIGHT SEEK A CURE TO HIS TERRIBLE CURSE!

THOUGH ASGARD DOOTH SORELY NEED THEE IN THIS GRAVE HOUR, THY LEAVE IS GRANTED!

MY OWN SCEPTER IMPERIAL SHALL SPEED THEE ON THY WAY!

BUT, HEED THE WORDS OF THY FATHER...

THE TIME IS NIGH WHEN ASGARD MUST CLAIM ITS OWN!

HOW WILT THOU CHOOSE, MY SON?

HOW WILT THOU CHOOSE?!

A CHOICE MUST BE MADE BETWEEN THE GOLDEN REALM AND THE WORLD OF MORTALS!

THE END

AND SO, THE MIGHTY THOR IS SENT HURTLING TOWARD THE PLANET EARTH TO FACE NEW CHALLENGES... TO BATTLE NEW TERRORS... AND TO WIN NEW GLORY! (IF YOU'D LIKE TO SEE WHAT'S WAITING FOR HIM, JUST PICK UP A COPY OF AVENGERS #300 WHICH DIRECTLY FOLLOWS THE EVENTS OF THIS ISSUE!) SEE YOU NEXT MONTH, TRUE BELIEVER, AND ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT A TRUE WARRIOR BOLD ONLY STRIKES FOR JUSTICE! FOR HONOR!

FOR ASGARD!!

STAN LEE PRESENTS...

THE MIGHTY THOR!

BONUS FEATURE!

"I... THIS HAMMER!"

(OR, "IF YOU KNEW **URU** LIKE WE KNOW **URU**!")

MANY ARE THE WONDERS OF MJOLNIR, THE ENCHANTED HAMMER OF THOR, AND WE'D LIKE TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE A FEW OF THEM WITH YOU!

COMPOSED OF URU, A MAGICAL METALLIC SUBSTANCE WHICH CAN ONLY BE FOUND ON ASGARD, THE HAMMER IS TWO FEET LONG, AND ITS HANDLE IS WRAPPED IN LEATHER!

THOR CAN PROPEL HIMSELF THROUGH THE AIR BY HURLING THE HAMMER, AND HOLDING ON TO ITS THONG!

BY MEANS WHICH ARE BEYOND MORTAL COMPREHENSION, THOR CAN ALWAYS CONTROL THE COURSE OF HIS FLIGHT!

WE DON'T KNOW THE TOP SPEED OR DISTANCE THOR CAN ATTAIN WITH A SINGLE THROW... BUT, IT'S PROBABLY MUCH FASTER AND FARTHER THAN WE'D EVER WANT TO TRAVEL!

TOM DEFALCO
WRITER

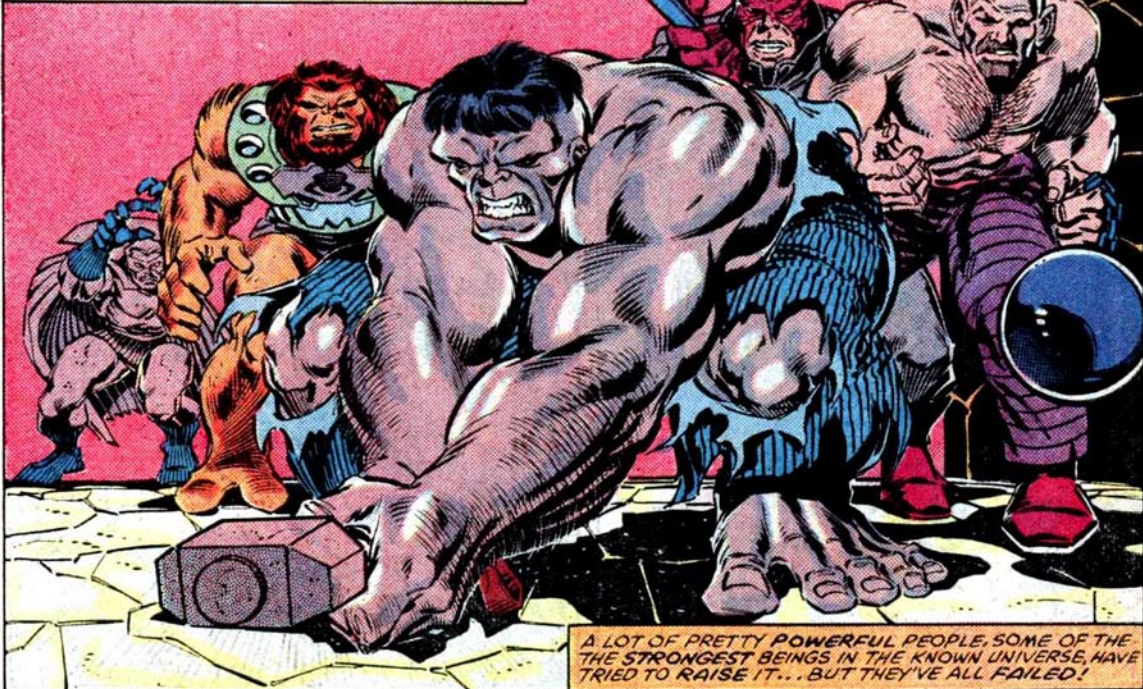
RON FRENZ
PENCILER

BRETT BREEDING
FINISHER

JOE ROSEN
LETTERER

BRETT BREEDING
COLORIST

THANKS TO A SPECIAL ENCHANTMENT WHICH WAS PLACED UPON THE HAMMER BY ODIN (WHO JUST HAPPENS TO BE THOR'S FATHER, AND THE OMNIPOTENT RULER OF THE NORSE GODS)... NO LIVING BEING CAN LIFT MJOLNIR UNLESS HE (OR SHE) IS SOMEONE WHO ODIN HIMSELF, WOULD DEEM WORTHY OF POSSESSING THE HAMMER!



A LOT OF PRETTY POWERFUL PEOPLE, SOME OF THE STRONGEST BEINGS IN THE KNOWN UNIVERSE, HAVE TRIED TO RAISE IT... BUT THEY'VE ALL FAILED!

POSSESSING HIS OWN SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH, THOR OFTEN EMPLOYS MJOLNIR AS A FORMIDABLE THROWING WEAPON!

AND, NO MATTER HOW FAR IT'S THROWN, NO MATTER WHAT IT STRIKES, THE HAMMER ALWAYS RETURNS TO THOR'S HAND!

NEARLY INDESTRUCTIBLE, IT HAS BEEN KNOWN TO SHATTER MOUNTAINS AND PULVERIZE MINOR PLANETIODS!



AS THE GOD OF THUNDER, THOR CAN ALSO USE HIS MAGIC HAMMER TO SUMMON HIS STORM!

RAIN, WIND, THUNDER AND LIGHTNING CAN BE CALLED FROM THE HEAVENS BY MERELY STAMPING THE HANDLE TWICE ON THE GROUND!

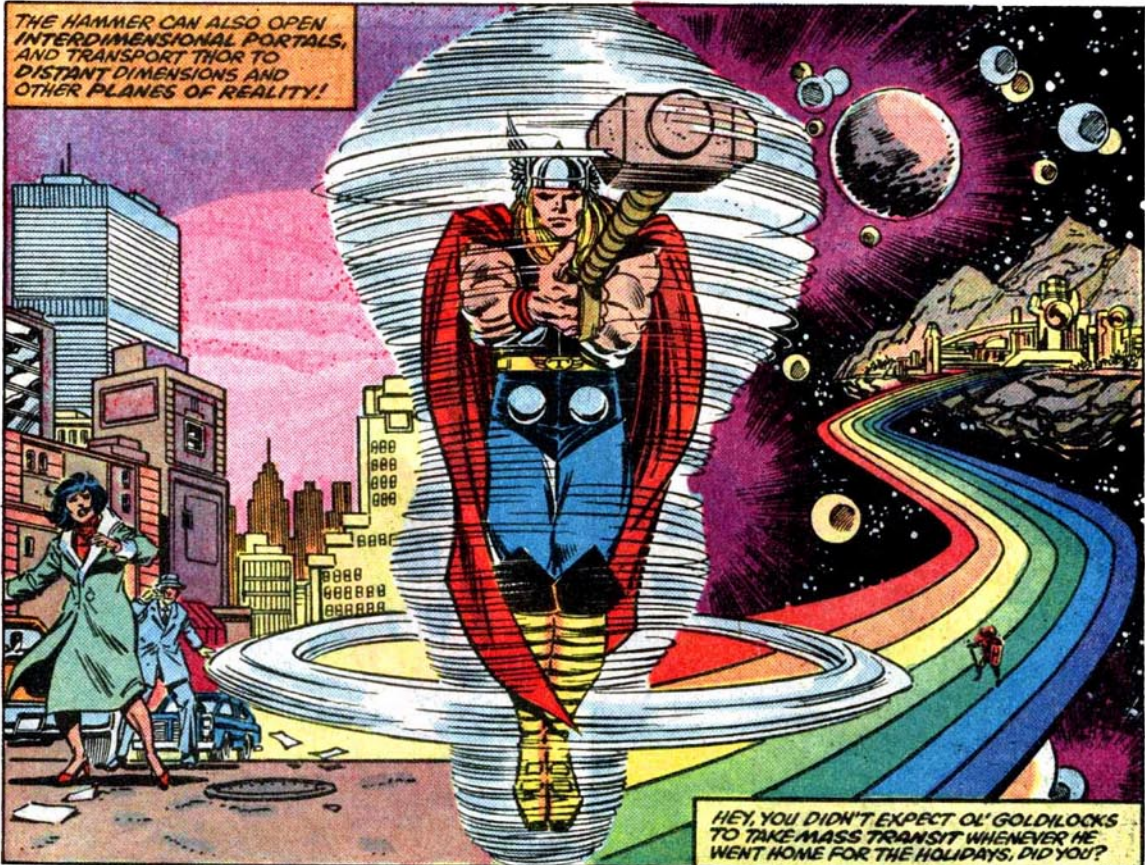


THREE TAPS ENDS THE STORM!

THOR CAN ALSO FIRE VARIOUS FORMS OF MYSTICAL ENERGY FROM THE HAMMER WITHOUT STRIKING IT ON THE GROUND!



THE HAMMER CAN ALSO OPEN INTERDIMENSIONAL PORTALS, AND TRANSPORT THOR TO DISTANT DIMENSIONS AND OTHER PLANES OF REALITY!



HEY, YOU DIDN'T EXPECT OL' GOLDLOCKS TO TAKE MASS TRANSIT WHENEVER HE WENT HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS, DID YOU?



IN TIMES PAST, THOR TRANSFORMED INTO MORTAL IDENTITY BY STAMPING THE HAMMER ONCE ON THE GROUND... AND WILLING THE CHANGE TO OCCUR!

THIS WOULD ALSO CAUSE THE HAMMER ITSELF TO BECOME A GNARLED, WOODEN WALKING STICK!

BUT, THESE DAYS, OUR HERO DOESN'T HAVE A MORTAL IDENTITY... SO HE JUST USES THIS PARTICULAR ENCHANTMENT WHENEVER HE WANTS TO SWITCH HIS CIVILIAN CLOTHES FOR HIS THOR COSTUME... OR VICE VERSA!

"WHO SHALL BE WORTHY?"

IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT A SACRED BOND UNITES ALL THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN PRIVILEGED TO WIELD MJOLNIR! A BOND WHICH STRETCHES FAR INTO INFINITY! WELL, WE'D LIKE TO TAKE A MOMENT TO HONOR A SELECT FEW WHO SHARE THAT SPECIAL BOND...

STEVE ROGERS, WHO LIFTED THE HAMMER IN THE MIDDLE OF A PITCHED BATTLE, AND MANAGED TO THROW IT TO ITS RIGHTFUL OWNER...IN THOR#390!

ODIN, THE ALL-FATHER, WHO ORDERED THE HAMMER FORGED AND BESTOWED VARIOUS ENCHANTMENTS UPON IT!

BETA RAY BILL, A SEMI-HUMANOID ALIEN, WHO SEIZED A GNARLED WOODEN STICK FROM THOR'S MORTAL IDENTITY, STRUCK IT AGAINST A WALL, AND FOUND HIMSELF POSSESSING THE POWERS OF THE THUNDER GOD...IN THOR#337!



DARGO, A TEEN-AGER IN THE YEAR 2587, WHO ACCIDENTALLY GRASPED MJOLNIR DURING A RELIGIOUS CEREMONY IN THOR#384!

AND, OF COURSE, THERE'S OUR HERO-- OI! GOLDLOCKS HIMSELF--THE NOBLEST ASGARDIAN OF THEM ALL!

THE MIGHTY THOR!

A MIGHTY MARVEL BONUS FEATURE!

"THE HEART OF THE HERO!"

A MAN IS KNOWN BY THE COMPANY HE KEEPS! THE SAME IS TRUE FOR THUNDER GODS... AND OUR HAMMER-HURLING FRIEND HAS KEPT THE COMPANY OF SOME OF THE SEXIEST, MOST STUNNING AND EXCITING WOMEN IN THE KNOWN UNIVERSE! JUST FEAST YOUR EAGER EYES ON THIS BEVY OF BEAUTIES, AND DON'T SAY WE NEVER DID ANYTHING FOR YOU...

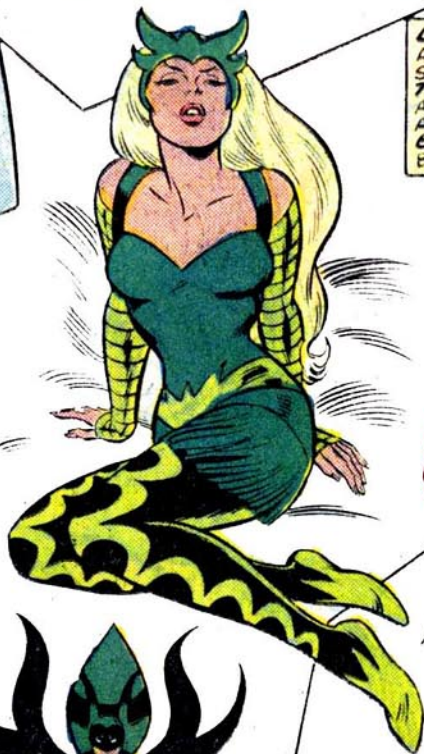
JANE FOSTER

HER TRAGIC LOVE FOR DR. DON BLAKE, THOR'S FORMER MORTAL IDENTITY, WAS DOOMED FROM THE VERY START!



AMORA, THE ENCHANTRESS

IN TIMES PAST, SHE OFTEN SOUGHT TO ENSNARE THOR WITH HER CAPTIVATING CHARMS AND SEDUCTIVE SORCERIES... BUT, THESE DAYS SHE SEEMS TO HAVE FOUND HAPPINESS IN THE ARMS OF HEIMDALL, THE FAITHFUL GUARDIAN OF THE RAINBOW BRIDGE!



LADY SIF

A WARRIOR GODDESS OF ASGARD, SHE FIRST FELL IN LOVE WITH THOR WHEN THEY WERE TEEN-AGERS! UNFORTUNATELY, THOR'S ATTACHMENT WITH THE PLANET EARTH HAS OFTEN COME BETWEEN THEM!



LORELEI

THE YOUNGER SISTER OF AMORA, SHE ONCE USED A MAGIC POTION TO MAKE THOR FALL MADLY IN LOVE WITH HER!



HELA, THE GODDESS OF DEATH
CONDEMNED BY ODIN TO RULE THE DARK AND MISTY LAND OF THE DEAD, SHE HAS OFTEN TRIED TO STRIKE BACK AT THE ALL-FATHER BY CLAIMING THE LIFE OF HIS FAVORITE SON!

STAN LEE PRESENTS:

"WHEN VOLSTAGG WAS IN FLOWER!"

SURRENDER, MY FRIEND! HAVE THE WIT AND GRACE TO ACCEPT THY DEFEAT AS A FOREGONE CONCLUSION!

MANY ARE THE HEROIC DEEDS OF HOGUN THE GRIM! MANY ARE THE HONORS HEAPED UPON THREE--BUT THIS CONTEST TRULY BELONGS TO FANDRAL THE DASHING!

A SPECIAL TALE BASED ON A NEWLY DISCOVERED VERSION OF AN ANCIENT MYTH!

LET THE STRENGTH OF MY LIMBS PUT THE LIE TO THY BOASTING WORDS!

TOM
DeFALCO
SCRIPTER

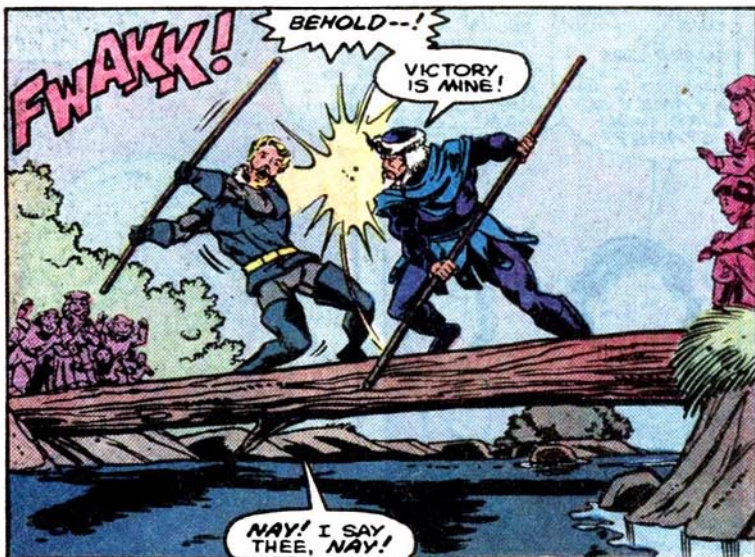
RON
FRENZ
PLOTTER

RICH
YANIZESKY
PENCILER

MARK
McKENNA
INKER

DIANA
ALBERS
LETTERER

ROBBIE
BUSCH
COLORIST





WOW! YOU TWO ARE MUCH BETTER THAN ANY OF THE HEROES MICK AND I HAD WHEN WE LIVED ON EARTH!

YEAH, STALLONE AND SCHWARZENEGGER GOT NOTHING ON YOU!



WE JUST HAVE ONE QUESTION! WHY DO WARRIORS LIKE YOU PAL AROUND WITH A FAMILY GUY LIKE WOLSTAGG?!

DON'T GET US WRONG! KEVIN AND I ARE REAL THANKFUL THAT HE ADOPTED US-- AND BROUGHT US TO ASGARD-- BUT HE JUST ISN'T IN THE SAME LEAGUE AS YOU TWO!



INSOLENT PUPS! HOW DARE YE--?!



CALM THYSELF! THEY ARE ONLY CHILDREN!

PERHAPS A TALE IS IN ORDER...

DOST THOU MEAN--?

AYE!



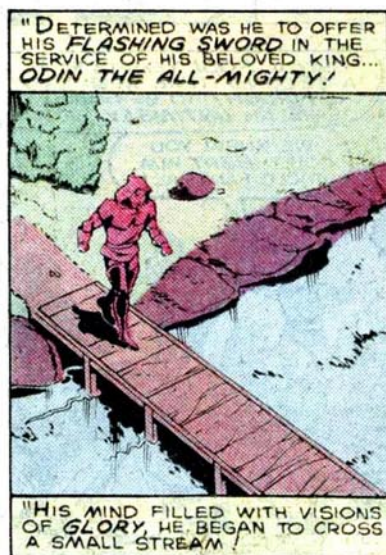
GATHER 'ROUND, ALL YE CHILDREN OF VALIANT VOLSTAGG!

UNCLE FANDRAL HAS A TALE TO TELL! ONE WHICH YE SHALL FIND MOST INTERESTING!



MANY YEARS AGO, A YOUNG WARRIOR STRODE THE ROAD TO ASGARD!

HE WAS A HANDSOME LAD --ONE DESTINED TO BREAK THE HEARTS OF MANY A FAIR MAIDEN!



"DETERMINED WAS HE TO OFFER HIS FLASHING SWORD IN THE SERVICE OF HIS BELOVED KING... ODIN THE ALL-MIGHTY!"

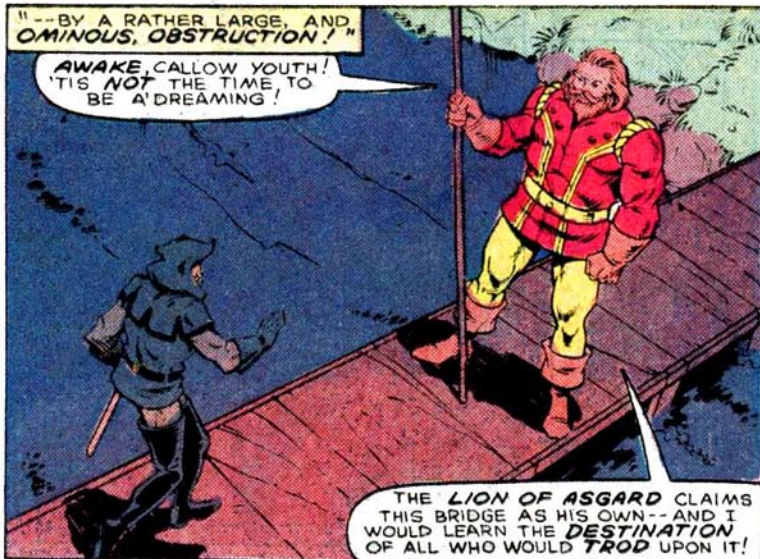
"HIS MIND FILLED WITH VISIONS OF GLORY, HE BEGAN TO CROSS A SMALL STREAM"



"BUT, THEN, HE SUDDENLY NOTICED THAT HIS PATH WAS BLOCKED--"

"--BY A RATHER LARGE, AND OMINOUS, OBSTRUCTION!"

AWAKE, CALLOW YOUTH!
'TIS NOT THE TIME TO
BE A'DREAMING!



THE LION OF ASGARD CLAIMS
THIS BRIDGE AS HIS OWN--AND I
WOULD LEARN THE **DESTINATION**
OF ALL WHO WOULD TROD UPON IT!

TO ASGARD,
GO I! TO
SEEK MY
FORTUNE, AND
LAY MY SWORD
AT THE FEET
OF THE ALL-
FATHER!

HA! ODIN HAS
NEED OF
WARRIORS--NOT
CHILDREN!



RETRACE THY STEPS! RETURN
THEE HOME! NONE MAY CROSS
THIS BRIDGE UNLESS THEY HAVE
PROVEN THEMSELVES WORTHY--

--BY DEFEATING ME
IN SIMPLE COMBAT!



'TWOULD BE MY
PLEASURE,
HONORED SIR!



"WITH THE RECKLESS CONFI-
DENCE OF YOUTH, THE WARRIOR
QUICKLY LEAPT TO THE SHORE..."



ONE
MOMENT IS
ALL I NEED TO
PREPARE A
SUITABLE
WEAPON!

A QUARTER-
STAFF... SO
THAT WE WILL
BE EQUALLY
MATCHED!

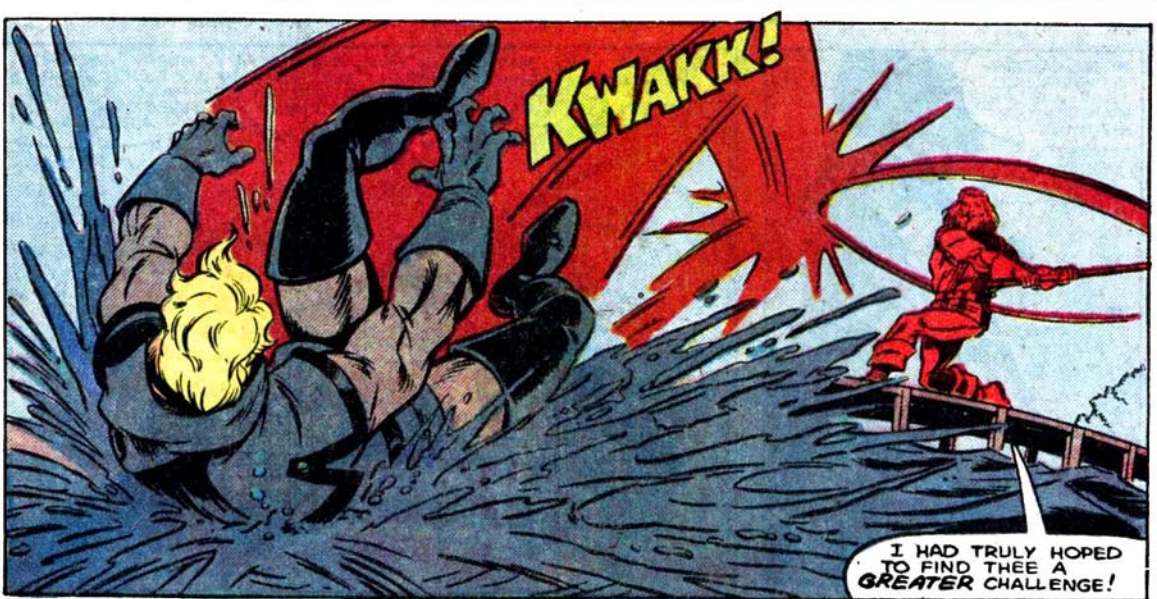


THERE!
I AM READY!

BUT, TO BE FAIR, I MUST
WARN THEE--! MY SKILL
WITH A STAFF...IS ALMOST
EQUAL TO MY MASTERY
OF THE SWORD!



HURRY! HURRY!
MY LUNCH AWAITS
--AND I GROW
WEARY OF THY
ARROGANCE!





VERILY, I AM DIS-APPOINTED!

THIS QUICK VICTORY DID NOT APPEASE MY BATTLE-HUNGRY HEART!

DESPAIR NOT!



MAYHAP, I CAN YET AMUSE THEE--IF THOU WILT DO ME THE HONOR OF A SECOND BOUT!



THOU HAST COURAGE, BOY!

'TIS A PITY THAT IT IS NOT COUPLED WITH INTELLIGENCE!

THIS TIME WE SHALL BATTLE--



--ON MY TERMS!

WITH SKILL AND GRACE--NOT BRUTISH STRENGTH!

OD'S BLOOD--!



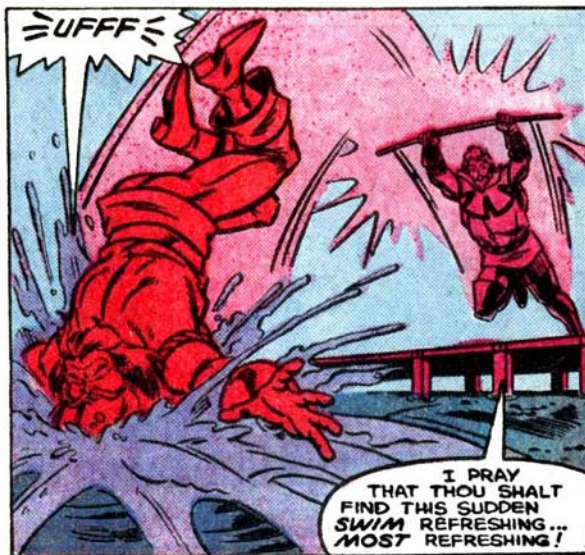
THOU DOST SOAR ABOVE ME!

AYE, LIKE THE PROUD EAGLE DO I FLY--



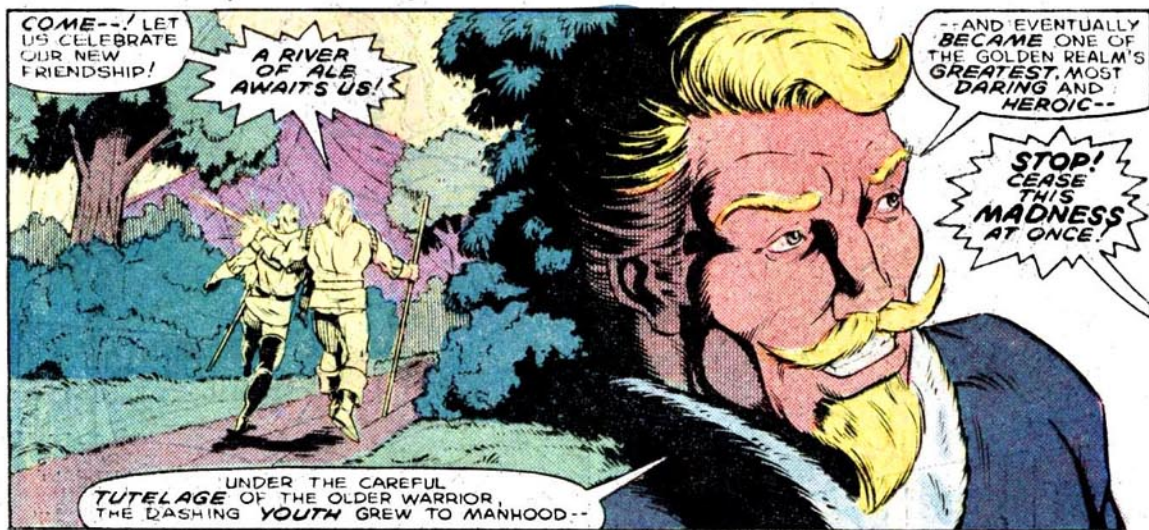
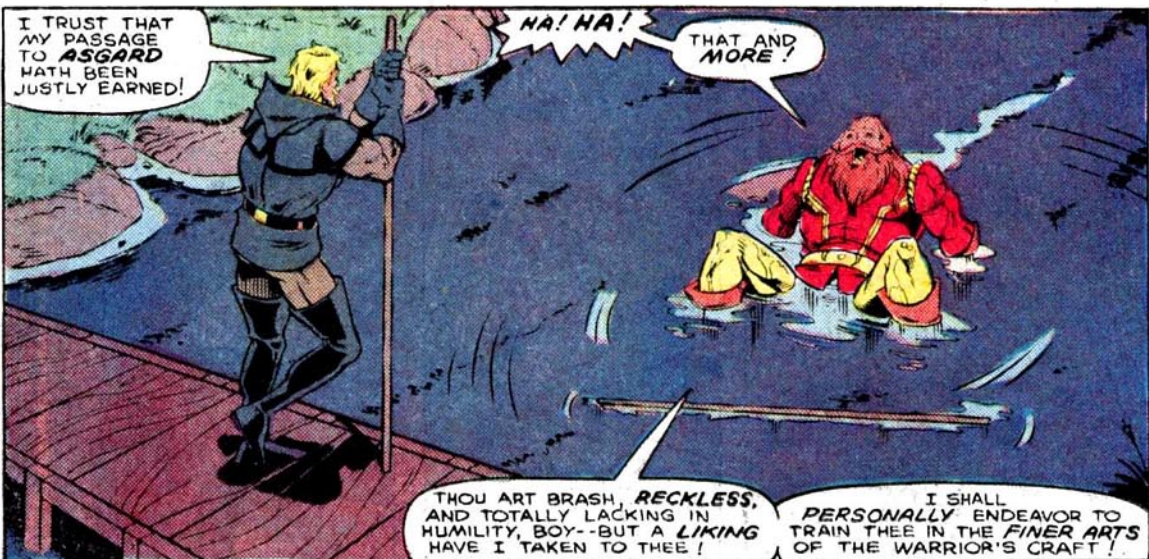
THAKK!

--BUT, LIKE A TRUE WARRIOR BORN DO I STRIKE!



UFFF!

I PRAY THAT THOU SHALT FIND THIS SUDDEN SWIM REFRESHING... MOST REFRESHING!



RELEASE THESE CHILDREN FROM THINE EVIL SPELL!



DARK SORCERY ALONE COULD KEEP THEM SO ENTHALLED! SO QUIET AND WELL-BEHAVED!

FATHER--!

UNCLE FANDRAL WAS TELLING A MOST WONDERFUL TALE!



YEAH! IT WAS ALL ABOUT A HANDSOME KID, AND AN OLDER MORE EXPERIENCED WARRIOR!

THAT WAS YOU --WASN'T IT?

PERHAPS... I WAS QUITE DASHING AND HANDSOME IN THE FLOWER OF MY YOUTH!



DID HE TELL YOU HOW I CONQUERED THE GREAT DRAGON FAFNIR?

OR, HOW I SINGLE-HANDLY DEFEATED THE FORTY HORSEMEN OF MOGUL THE MERCILESS?

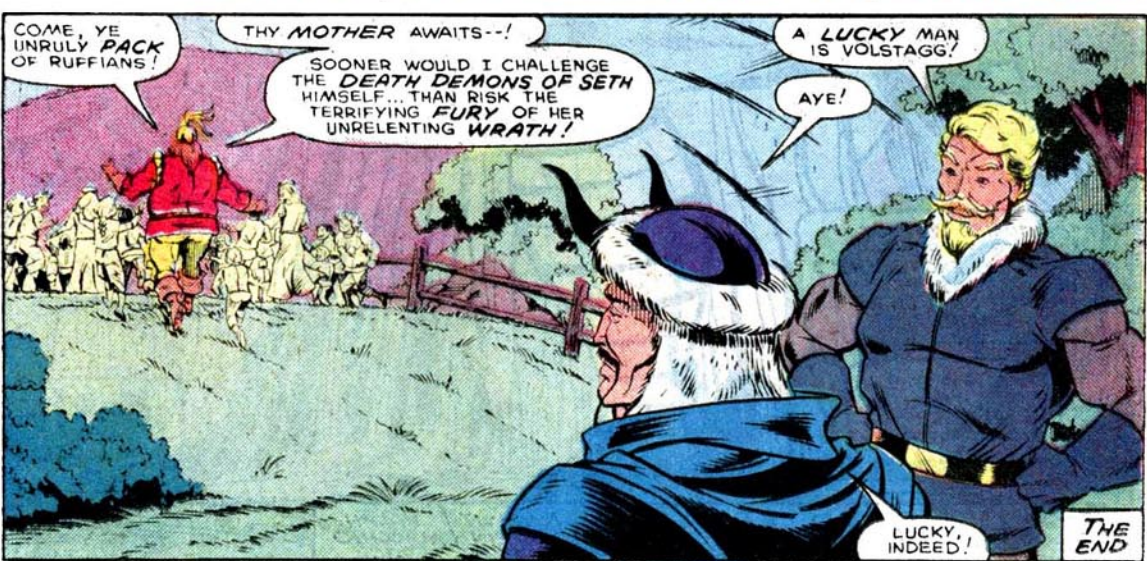
AW, THOSE ARE ONLY MADE-UP STORIES... AREN'T THEY?!



TELL ME, YOUNG MICK, DOST THOU SERIOUSLY THINK THAT ANY TRUE WARRIOR BORN COULD EVER FORSAKE A LIFE OF ADVENTURE, INTRIGUE AND EXCITEMENT--



--FOR THE SIMPLE JOYS OF MARRIAGE AND FAMILY?!



COME, YE UNRULY PACK OF RUFFIANS!

THY MOTHER AWAITS--!

SOONER WOULD I CHALLENGE THE DEATH DEMONS OF SETH HIMSELF... THAN RISK THE TERRIFYING FURY OF HER UNRELENTING WRATH!

A LUCKY MAN IS VOLSTAGG!

AYE!

LUCKY, INDEED!

THE END

STAN LEE is truly Embarrassed by THE LONG-AWAITED FINAL CONCLUSIVE BATTLE BETWEEN THE SONS OF ODIN AND ZEUS!

WHEN WARRIORS CLASP!

FOR CENTURIES WITHOUT NUMBER, THE GODS HAVE PONDERED A MOST PERPLEXING QUESTION ... WHO IS THE GREATEST WARRIOR OF ALL... THE MIGHTY THOR OR THE HEROIC HERCULES? NOW, AT LONG LAST, THE ANSWER CAN BE TOLD!!

FEATURING PULSE-POUNING EXCITEMENT IN THE MERRY MARVEL MANNER!!

"CENTURIES WITHOUT NUMBER"? "PULSE-POUNING EXCITEMENT"? HEY, TOM, YOU'RE LAYIN' IT ON A LITTLE THICK!

THIS IS A BIG FIGHT, RON. OUR READERS EXPECT BIG DRAMA!

BIG, BUT NOT HOKEY!

TOM & RON
DEFALCO & FRENZ
NARRATORS

GARY
HARTLE
PENCILS

DON
HECK
INKS

JACK
MORELLI
LETTERS

EVELYN
STEIN
COLORS

RALPH
MACCHIO
EDITOR

THE LEGENDS SPEAK OF A DAY THAT WILL COME... AGES AND AGES HENCE... WHEN THESE TWO TITANS ARE FATED TO MEET... HIGH ATOP A LONELY PLATEAU... ON A DESERTED, BATTLE-SCARRED PLANET... WHICH IS AN INCOMPREHENSIBLE DISTANCE FROM EARTH...!

IS IT "INCOMPREHENSIBLE" OR "UNCOMPREHENDABLE?"

DON'T SWEAT IT, RON! I'LL USE THEM BOTH!

I WAS AFRAID YOU'D SAY THAT!

WITH NARY A WORD OF GREETING, FOR NONE ARE NEEDED, THE PROUD COMBATANTS QUICKLY ASSUME THEIR POSITIONS--

--AND THE BATTLE IS JOINED... WITH NO QUARTER GIVEN, AND NONE ASKED!

WHAT'S THIS "QUARTER" STUFF, TOM?

JUST AN EXPRESSION I PICKED UP... LIKE IT?

IT'S DEFINITELY NOT YOU!

THEIR ARMS THROBBING WITH THE FORCE OF INNUMERABLE JACKHAMMERS, THE GRIM HEROES STRAIN AGAINST EACH OTHER...

THOR SHOULD DUMP THIS BUM!

DON'T SELL HERC SHORT! HE DIDN'T BECOME THE LION OF OLYMPUS ON GOOD LOOKS ALONE!

ASIDE FROM OL' GOLDILOCKS HIMSELF, THE BIG H HAS ALREADY BEATEN SOME MAJOR HEAVY-WEIGHTS LIKE FIRELORD AND THE HIGH EVOLUTIONARY!

NEVER BEFORE HAS THE IRRESISTIBLE FORCE OF ONE GOD BEEN SO THOROUGHLY TESTED BY THE IMMOVABLE ARM OF ANOTHER!

BUT, THUNDER-FACE IS AN AVENGER!

HE'S DEFEATED EVERYTHING FROM HYPER-ACTIVE SUPER-VILLAINS TO GALAXY CONQUERING ROGUE GODS!

DITTO FOR HERC!

CONTINUING THEIR HEROIC STRUGGLE, THOR AND HERCULES EXERT ALL THEIR GODLY STRENGTH... ALL THEIR IMMORTAL POWER... POWER WHICH IS TRULY INCALCULABLE, UNMENTIONABLE, UNRECORDABLE, UNCOMPREHENDABLE!!

OUCH! SOMEONE SHOULD BURN YOUR THESAURUS!

GIVE ME A BREAK, RON!

YOU SHOULD PAY STAN LEE A ROYALTY ON EVERY LINE YOU TYPE, TOM!

WILL YOU PLEASE STOP INTERRUPTING BEFORE I--

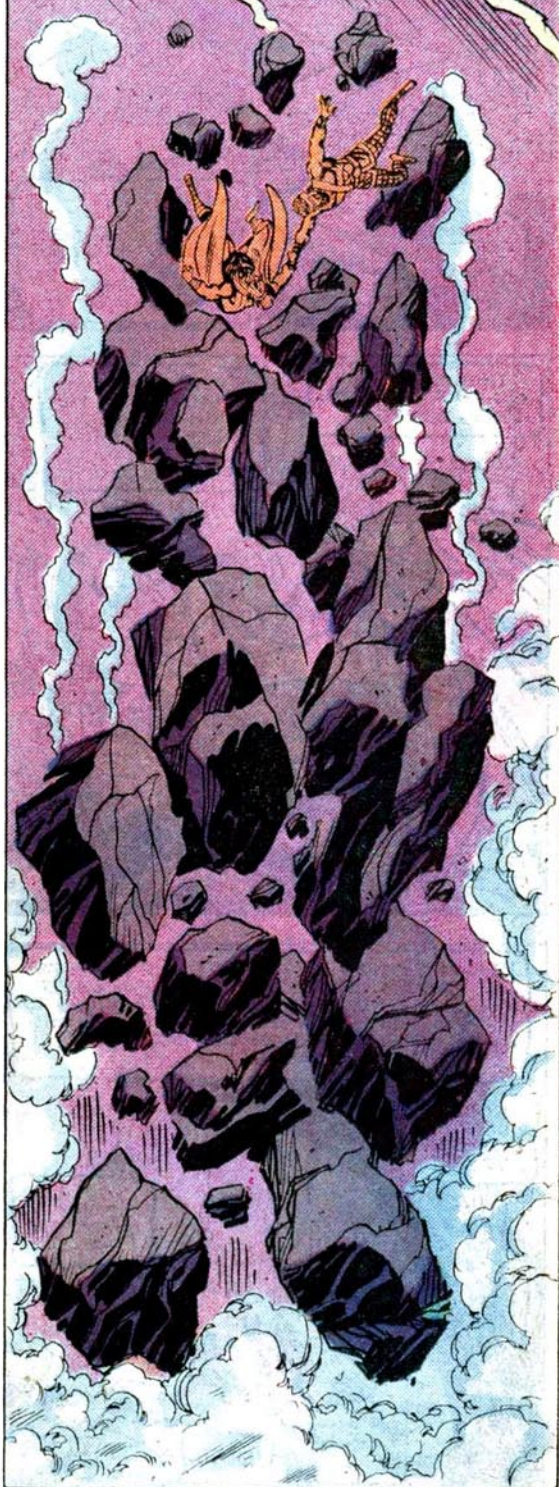
"CRACK"?

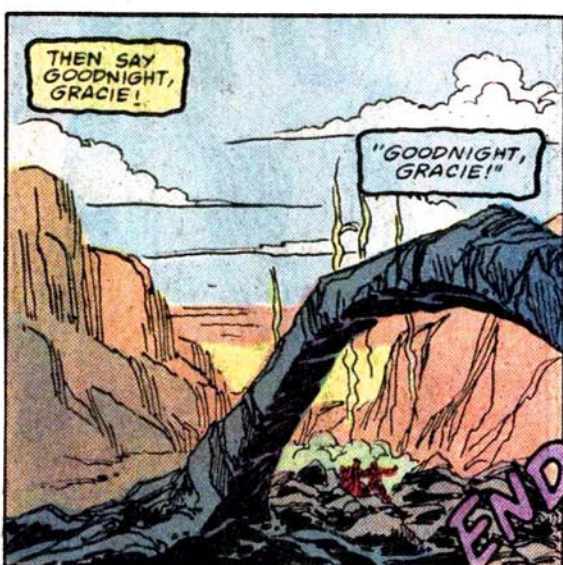
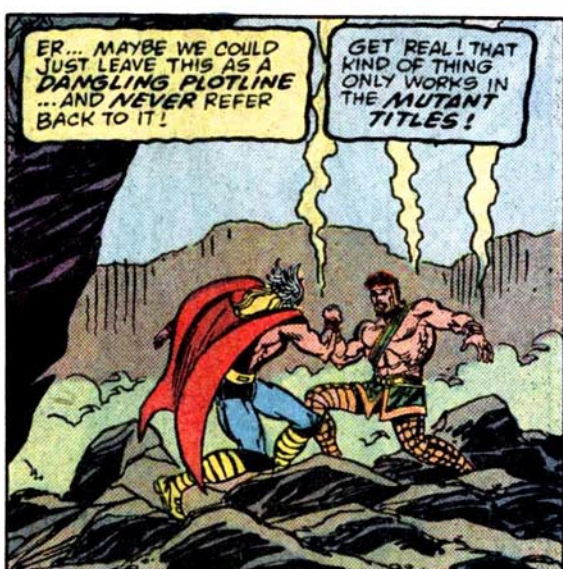
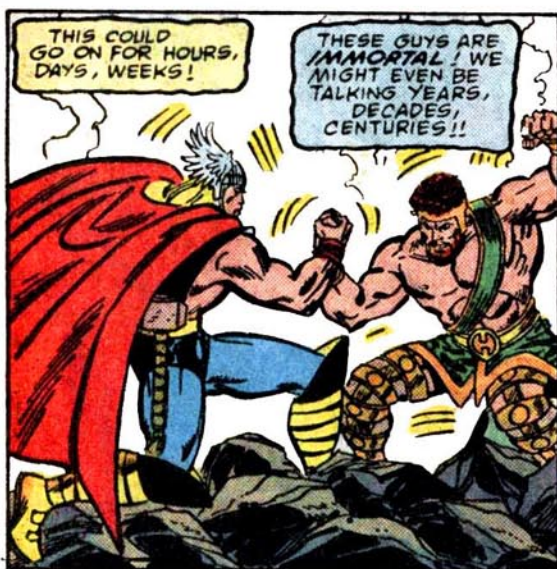
WHAT MEANS "CRACK"?

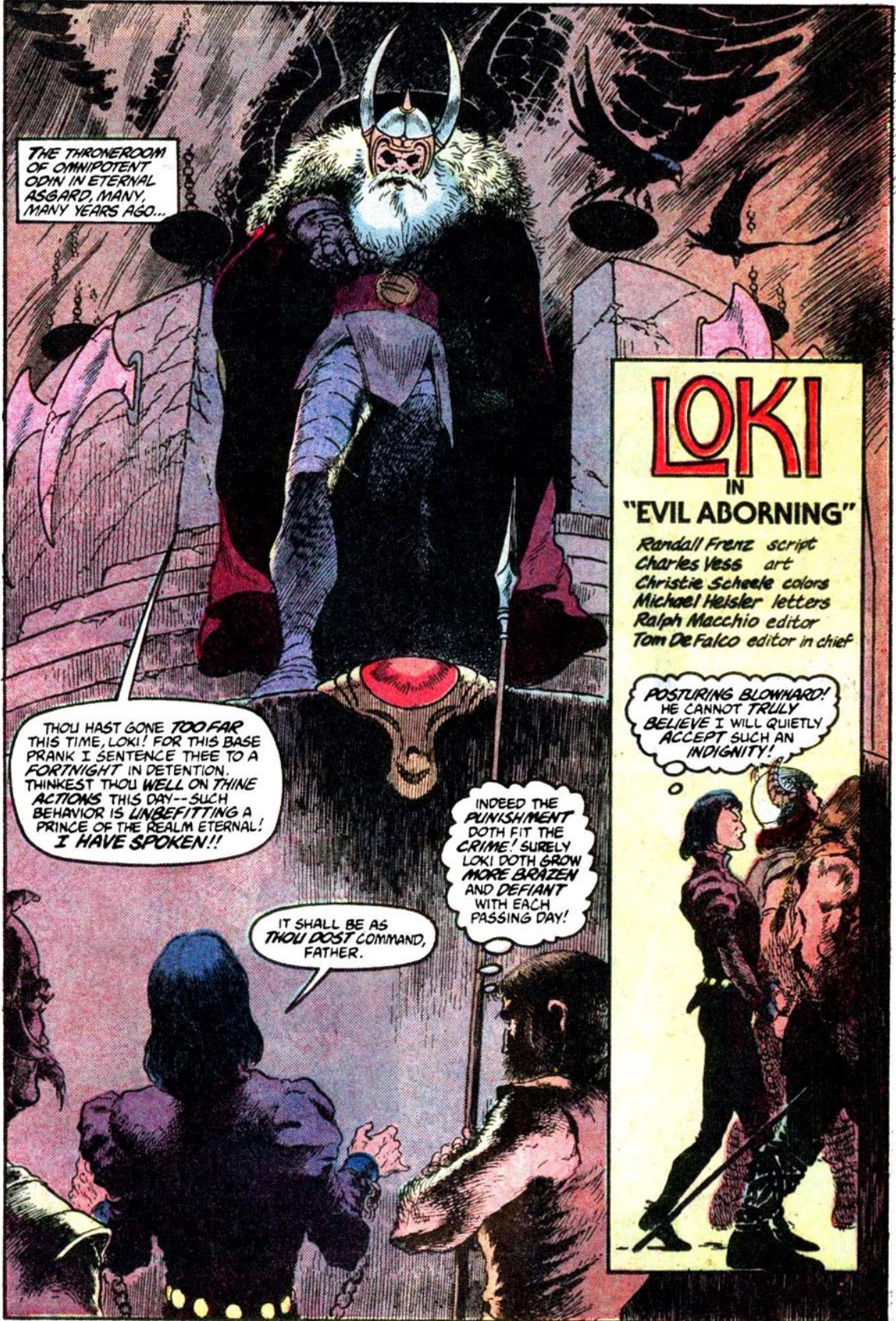
ER, TOM OLD
BUDDY... I THINK
WE HAVE A
PROBLEM!



... A BIG
ONE!!







THE THRONE ROOM
OF OMNIPOTENT
ODIN IN ETERNAL
ASGARD, MANY,
MANY YEARS AGO...

THOU HAST GONE **TOO FAR**
THIS TIME, LOKI! FOR THIS BASE
PRANK I SENTENCE THEE TO A
FORTNIGHT IN DETENTION.
THINKEST THOU WELL ON THINE
ACTIONS THIS DAY--SUCH
BEHAVIOR IS **UNBECFITTING** A
PRINCE OF THE REALM ETERNAL!
I HAVE SPOKEN!!

IT SHALL BE AS
THOU DOST COMMAND,
FATHER.

INDEED THE
PUNISHMENT
DOTH FIT THE
CRIME! SURELY
LOKI DOTH GROW
MORE BRAZEN
AND **DEFIANT**
WITH EACH
PASSING DAY!

LOKI

IN "EVIL ABORNING"

Randall Frenz script
Charles Vess art
Christie Scheele colors
Michael Heisler letters
Ralph Macchio editor
Tom DeFalco editor in chief

POSTURING BLOWHARD!
HE CANNOT TRULY
BELIEVE I WILL QUIETLY
ACCEPT SUCH AN
INDIGNITY!



USING A RUDIMENTARY FORM OF HYPNOSIS, LOKI CAUSES HIMSELF TO SEEM INVISIBLE TO THE BEFUDDLED GUARDS.

HEIMDALL'S EYES!! HE'S GONE! HOW CAN THIS BE?

THE ALL-FATHER LAVISHES ATTENTION ON MY DISGUSTINGLY NOBLE HALF-BROTHER THOR, WHICH ONLY SERVES TO FEED THOR'S ALREADY INSUFFERABLE ARROGANCE, WHILE HE ALL BUT IGNORES ME!

THE ONLY TIME HE DEIGNS TO NOTICE MY PRESENCE IS WHEN HE IS METEING OUT SOME IGNOBLE PUNISHMENT!

QUICKLY, SOUND THE ALARM! LOKI HAS ESCAPED!

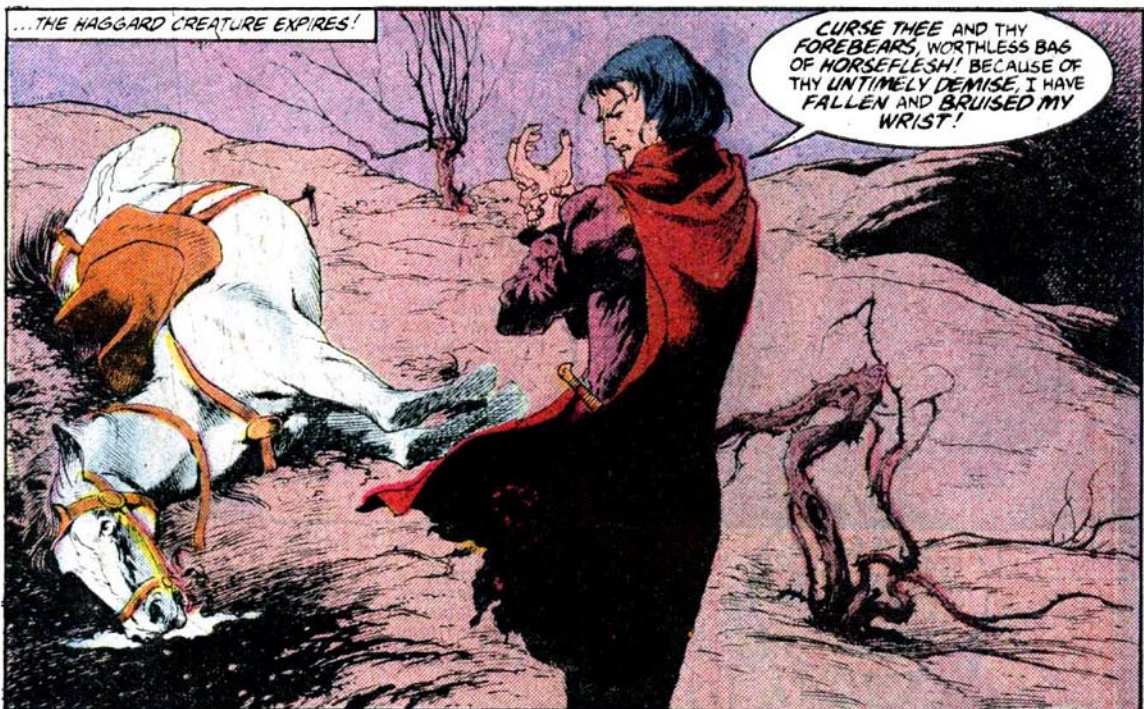
IMPOSSIBLE! NO ONE HAS ENTERED OR LEFT THE AREA!

GATHERING A BUNDLE OF CLOTHES, A SMALL POUCH CONTAINING GOLD AND A DAGGER FOR PROTECTION, LOKI STEALS A HORSE AND RIDES FORTH TO SEEK HIS DESTINY. LEAVING ASGARD, LOKI CROSSES THE PLAIN OF IDA AND HEADS TOWARD THE SHEER CLIFFS OF THE ASGARDIAN MOUNTAINS.



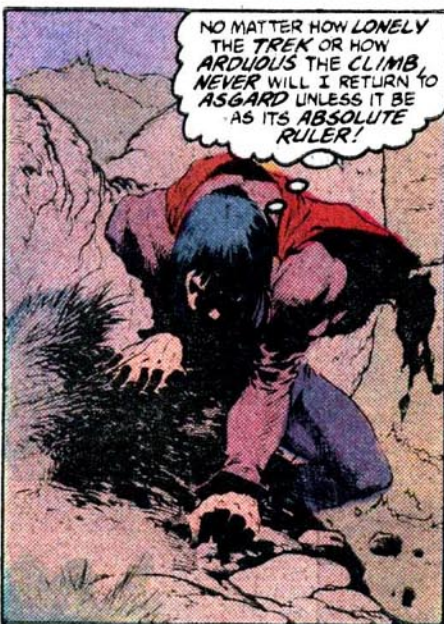


LOKI RIDES FAR INTO THE FOOTHILLS--
PUSHING THE STEED RELENTLESSLY.
AND AFTER SEVERAL DAYS WITHOUT
FOOD OR REST...



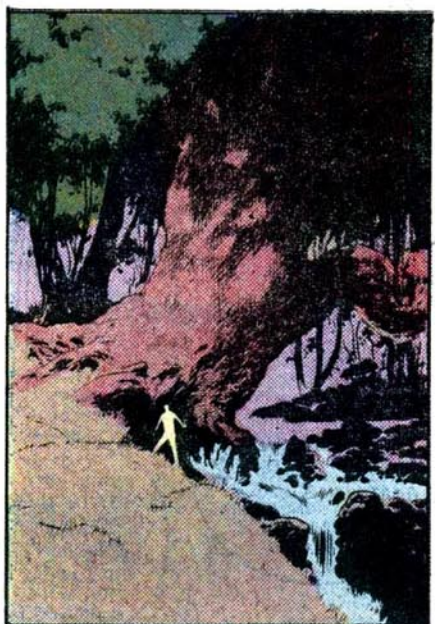
...THE HAGGARD CREATURE EXPIRES!

CURSE THEE AND THY
FOREBEARS, WORTHLESS BAG
OF HORSEFLESH! BECAUSE OF
THY UNTIMELY DEMISE, I HAVE
FALLEN AND BRUISED MY
WRIST!



NO MATTER HOW LONELY
THE TREK OR HOW
ARDUOUS THE CLIMB,
NEVER WILL I RETURN TO
ASGARD UNLESS IT BE
AS ITS ABSOLUTE
RULER!

AFTER A LONG AND
DANGEROUS ASCENT,
HE FINALLY CROSSES
INTO ALFHEIM, THE
ABODE OF THE
LIGHT ELVES. DAYS
HAVE PASSED SINCE
HE HAS EATEN, BUT
HE IS NOURISHED
BY THE BITTER
TASTE OF HATRED.
HE IS DRIVEN BY THE
KNOWLEDGE THAT
ONE DAY HE WILL KNOW
THE SWEET TASTE OF
HIS REVENGE!



DAYS EARLIER, THE TWO QUAKING GUARDS WERE USHERED INTO THE PRESENCE OF ODIN.

FORGIVE US, LORD ODIN! WE KNOW NOT HOW LOKI ESCAPED! OUR VIGILANCE WAS LIKE UNTO HEIMDALL'S OWN!

THERE IS NAUGHT TO FORGIVE, BRAVE WARRIORS! THOU CANST NOT HOPE TO MATCH LOKI'S TALENT FOR THE BLACK ARTS! IT IS HE WHOM I HOLD RESPONSIBLE. BLAME THYSELVES NO MORE!

WELL, GOOD VIZIER, CANST THOU CONSULT THE FLAMES AND SHOW ME THE WHEREABOUTS OF MY WAYWARD SON?!

'TWILL TAKE TIME, MY LORD. NO DOUBT LOKI HAS USED HIS MAGICKS TO SHIELD HIMSELF FROM DISCOVERY.

TIME PASSES UNTIL...

AH! THE FLAMES REVEAL THY SON TO BE ENTERING THE ENCHANTED FOREST ON FOOT. HE IS UNHARMED AT PRESENT.

I SHALL SEND A DETACHMENT OF WARRIORS TO RETURN HIM. HE WILL LEARN NOT TO TRIFLE WITH HIS SIRE.

MY LORD, PERHAPS LOKI'S REBELLIOUS NATURE MAY BE VENTED IN THE WILD. HE MUST FACE HIS INNER DEMONS ALONE. AT BEST, THOU MAY ONLY FORESTALL THAT WHICH MUST BE. RETURNING HIM HERE WILL SOLVE NOTHING.

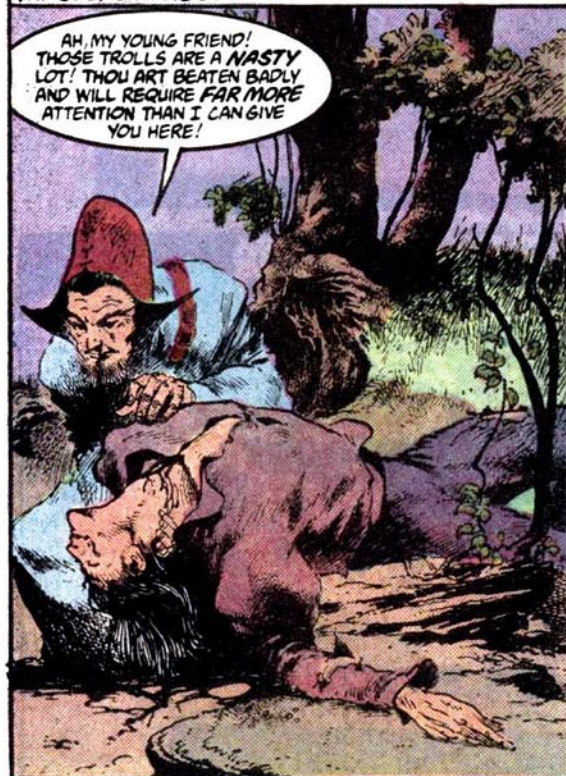
I SPOKE WITH THE ANGER OF A FATHER, LOYAL ONE! THOU ART CORRECT! THOUGH IT SADDENS ME GREATLY, I MUST ALLOW MY SON TO FIND HIS OWN WAY AND TO BEAR THE FULL PRICE FOR HIS HATRED AND BITTERNESS.

LOKI HAS BEEN DRAWN TO THE ENCHANTED FOREST AS IF SOMEHOW SENSING HIS DESTINY AWAITING HIM THERE. HE ENTERS THE DARK, FORBIDDING WOODS CAUTIOUSLY BUT SHORTLY DROPS HIS GUARD!

SUDDENLY...



LOKI IS DISCOVERED SOON AFTER BY AN AGING WIZARD NAMED **ELDRED**, WHO IS IN THE FOREST GATHERING **MAGICAL HERBS**.

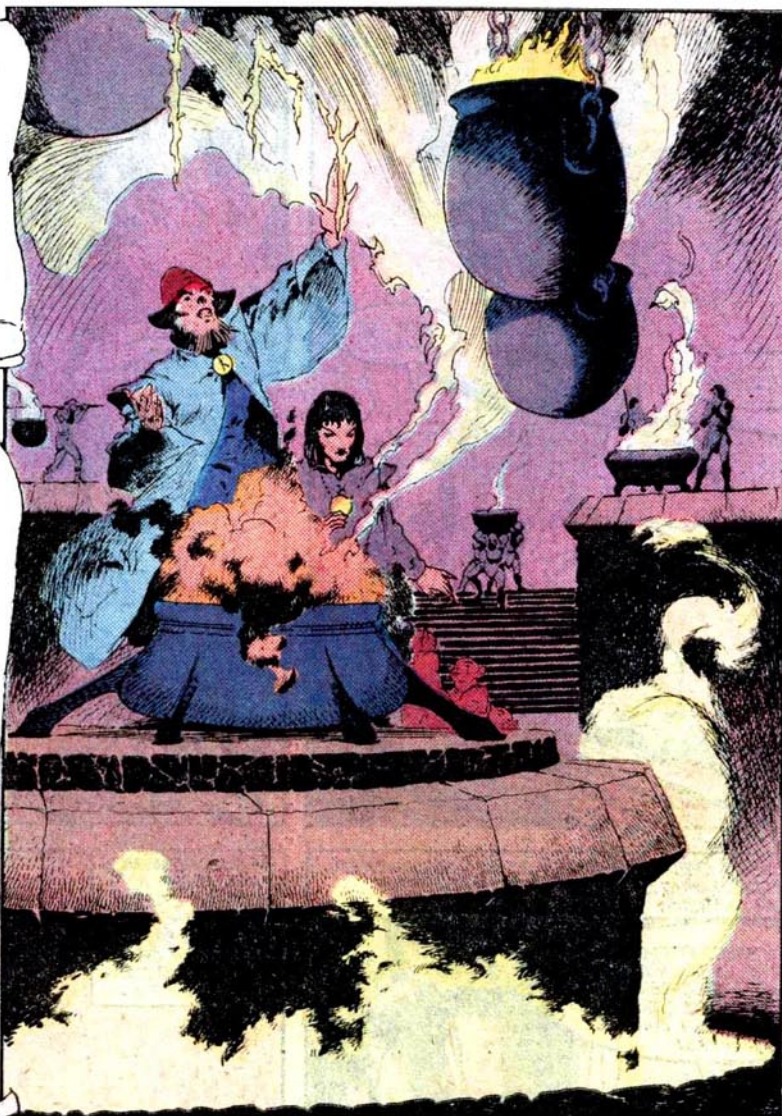


MAGICAL WINDS CARRY THEM TO **ELDRED'S CASTLE**, ACROSS THE SEA OF **MARMORA** NEAR THE BORDER OF **ASGARD** AND THE **OUTER REGIONS**.



IN THE MONTHS THAT FOLLOW, ELDRED NURSES LOKI BACK TO HEALTH AND COMES TO ADMIRE HIS CRAFTINESS AND NATURAL SORCEROUS TALENT.

DESPITE THE MISGIVINGS OF HIS LIGHT ELF SERVANTS, ELDRED TAKES LOKI ON AS HIS APPRENTICE AND HE BECOMES THE SON ELDRED NEVER HAD. ELDRED TEACHES LOKI THE SECRETS OF THE SACRED RUNES AND OTHER FORBIDDEN ARTS. LOKI PRETENDS A BENEVOLENT DISPOSITION TOWARD HIS TEACHER, BIDDING HIS TIME AND LEARNING ALL THAT ELDRED CAN TEACH.

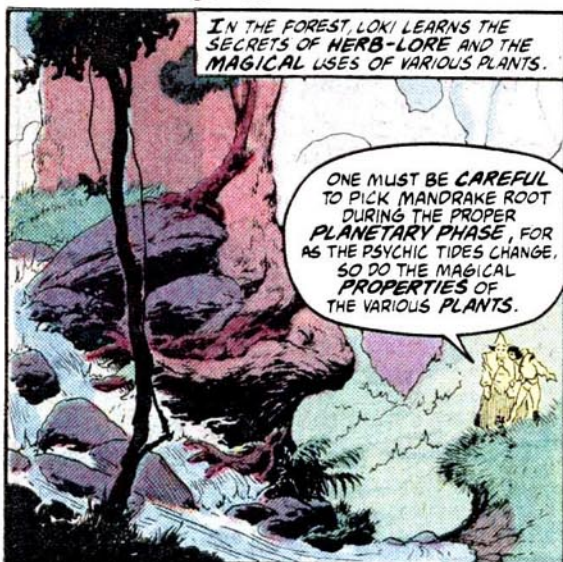


IN THE FOREST, LOKI LEARNS THE SECRETS OF HERB-LORE AND THE MAGICAL USES OF VARIOUS PLANTS.

ONE MUST BE CAREFUL TO PICK MANDRAKE ROOT DURING THE PROPER PLANETARY PHASE, FOR AS THE PSYCHIC TIDES CHANGE, SO DO THE MAGICAL PROPERTIES OF THE VARIOUS PLANTS.

ONLY THROUGH THE PROPER USE OF THE SACRED RUNES MAY ONE MASTER THE FIRE ELEMENTALS AND THE POWER THEY CONFER!

THE GULLIBLE OLD FOOL GIVES ME THE VERY MEANS WITH WHICH TO DESTROY HIM AND CLAIM HIS DEEPEST SECRETS!



ONE AUTUMN EVE, AS ELDRED LAY SLEEPING, LOKI JOURNEYS IN HIS ASTRAL FORM TO MUSPELHEIM...

I MUST CARRY OUT MY PLAN NOW, BEFORE THE SENILE OLD FOSSIL SUSPECTS ANYTHING!

...THE REALM OF THE FIRE DEMONS!

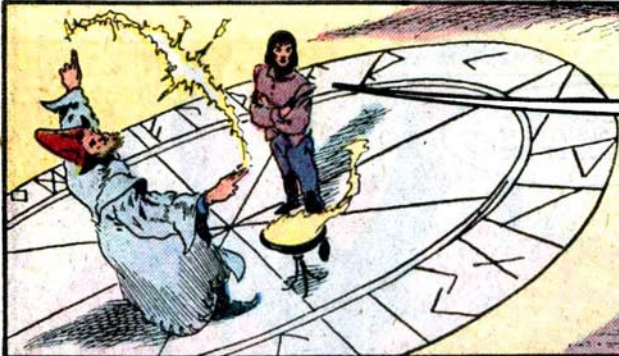
PUNY ASGARDIAN! WHAT HAS SURTUR TO DO WITH THE LIKES OF YOU!?

LOKI COMES AS A FRIEND, FIERY ONE, TO OFFER A MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL PACT...AN ALLIANCE TO BRING ME THE POWER I CRAVE AND THE SOULS THOU DOST CRAVE!

I OFFER THEE THE SOUL OF ELDRED THE ENCHANTER IN EXCHANGE FOR ELDRED'S SORCEROUS POWER AND AN ALLIANCE WITH THEE AGAINST ASGARD. SURELY ASGARD CONTAINS MORE NOBLE SOULS THAN EVEN ONE SUCH AS THEE CAN CONSUME:

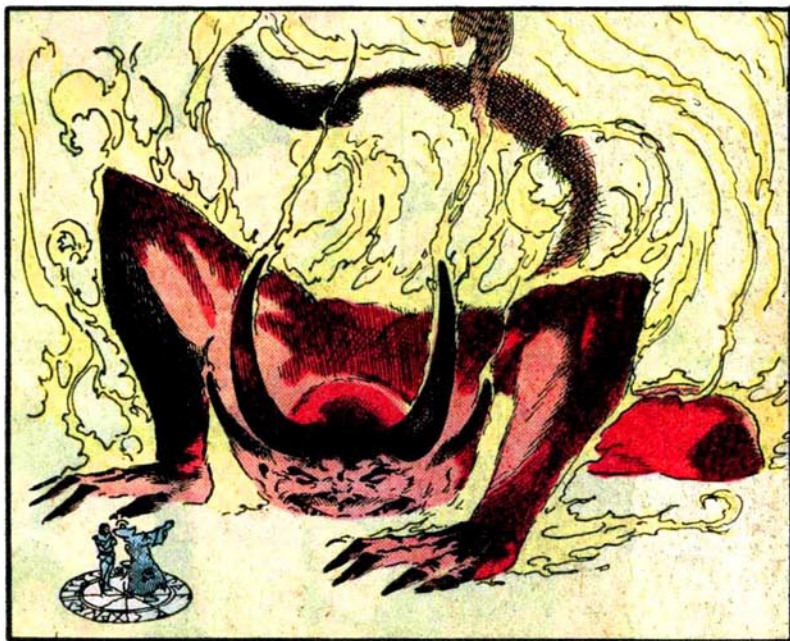
FOR SIXTEEN YEARS, LOKI HAS NURSED HIS HATRED, FANNED THE SPARK OF BITTERNESS UNTIL NOW IT BURSTS FORTH AS FIERY VENGEANCE! AS SURTUR ACCEPTS THE PACT, LOKI FEELS ONLY GRIM SATISFACTION... NOT AN OUNCE OF REGRET FOR THE BASE BETRAYAL HE HAS SET IN MOTION.





WE CALL UPON THEE,
LORD OF THE FIERY SOUTH!
HEED OUR COMMANDS AND
OPEN UNTO US THE GATES OF
THE FIERY KINGDOMS! SEND
UNTO US SURTUR, LORD OF
THE FIRE DEMONS!! WE
COMMAND THEE!

IT HAS TAKEN SEVERAL
DAYS FOR LOKI TO CONVINCE
ELDRED THAT HE IS READY
TO INVOKE SUCH A DEMON TO
VISIBLE APPEARANCE.
ELDRED SUSPECTED NO MORE
THAN YOUTHFUL
EXUBERANCE. NOW HE IS
IN THE GRIP OF ICY FEAR!
HE KNOWS THAT LOKI HAS
BEEN HIDING THE TRUE
EXTENT OF HIS POWER!
HE KNOWS THAT LOKI
TRICKED HIM INTO MAKING
HIMSELF VULNERABLE!
HE KNOWS... TOO LATE!



YOU KNOW MUCH OF THE BLACK ARTS,
OLD FOOL! BUT YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE
DARKNESS THAT MAY LURK IN A GOD'S
SOUL IS SORELY LACKING!



BY THE GODS!
NO! DON'T PUSH ME
FROM THE PROTECTION
OF THE CIRCLE!

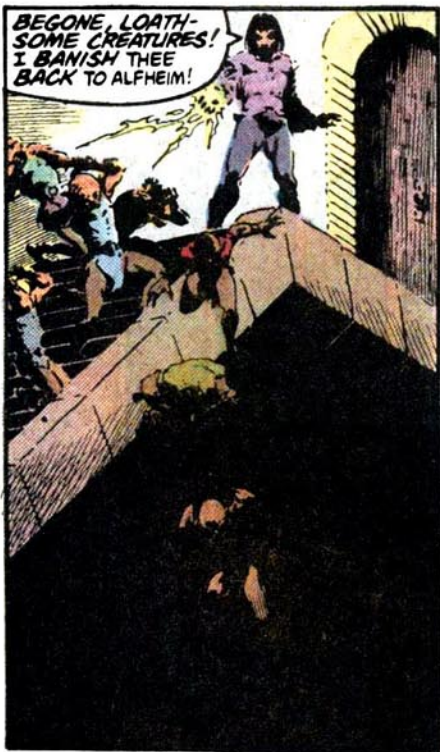
NOOOOOO!



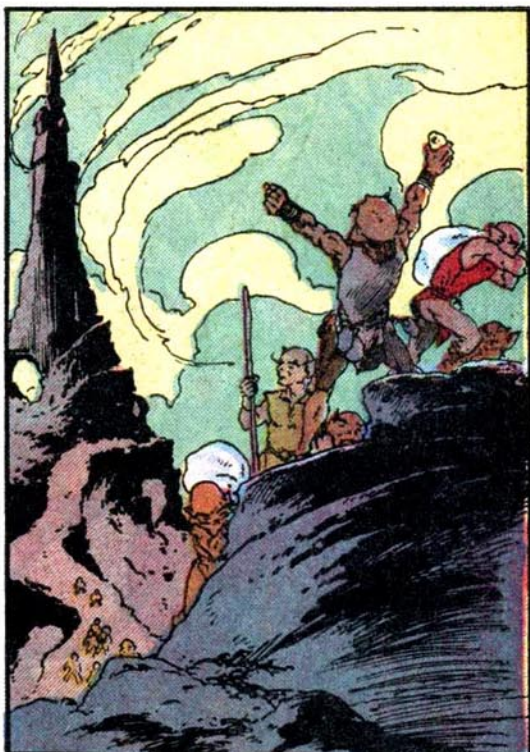
AHH! I CAN FEEL ELDRED'S
POWER AS IT COURSES
THROUGH MY VERY BEING!
I AM TRIUMPHANT!



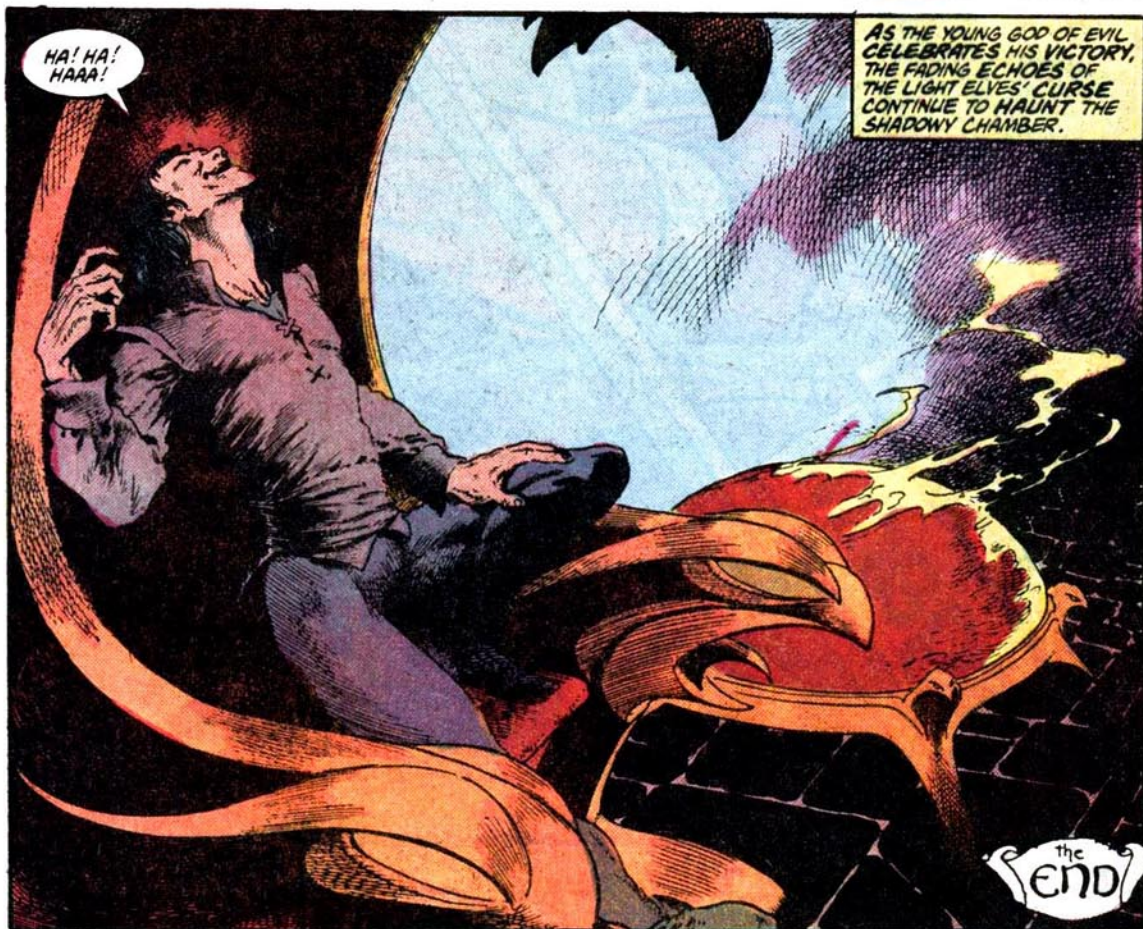
BEGONE, LOATH-
SOME CREATURES!
I BANISH THEE
BACK TO ALFHEIM!



THE LIGHT
ELVES MOURN
THE DEATH OF
THEIR KINDLY
MASTER, AND
CURSE LOKI
FOR HIS
TREACHERY
AGAINST THE
ONE WHO HAD
BEFRIENDED
HIM. ELDRÉD'S
CASTLE COMES
UNDER THE IRON
GRIP OF THE EVIL
ONE WHO MAKES
IT HIS OWN.
AND FROM WITHIN
ITS NOW
LITTERLY COLD
AND CHEERLESS
WALLS, LOKI
PLOTS THE
DOWNFALL OF
ASGARD AND
HIS HATED
HALF-BROTHER.



HA! HA!
HAAA!



AS THE YOUNG GOD OF EVIL
CELEBRATES HIS VICTORY,
THE FADING ECHOES OF
THE LIGHT ELVES' CURSE
CONTINUE TO HAUNT THE
SHADOWY CHAMBER.

the
end



Warrior woman
of asgard!

Sif

JOHN WORKMAN AND BOB SINNOTT