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the mighty THOR



IN THESE PAGES WAITS
DR. STRANGE!

THOR'S **BATTLE
ARMOR** IS BACK!!
BUT IN THE MOST
UNEXPECTED WAY
OF ALL!!

CAN EVEN
THE MASTER OF
THE MYSTIC ARTS
HELP THE MIGHTY
THUNDER GOD
SOLVE THE
SHATTERING
ENIGMA
OF...?



THE
**BEAST
WITHIN!**

STAN LEE PRESENTS *the* MIGHTY THOR®

ON A CONSTRUCTION SITE, HIGH ABOVE THE STREETS OF MANHATTAN, STANDS A VERY CONFUSED AND FRUSTRATED ERIC MASTERSON...

"WITHIN ME DWELLS A MONSTER!"

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?!

I'M ONLY A SIMPLE ARCHITECT! HOW DID MY LIFE EVER GET SO BLASTED COMPLICATED?

NOT ONLY HAVE I BEEN PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY MERGED WITH THE MIGHTY THOR--

--BUT MY EX-WIFE HAS SUDDENLY RETURNED TO FIGHT ME FOR CUSTODY OF OUR SON--

--AND I WAS ALMOST KILLED RECENTLY WHEN I EXPERIENCED ANOTHER ONE OF THOSE RECURRING SPELLS OF WEAKNESS WHILE I WAS BATTLING THE JUGGERNAUT!*

*SEE THE TWO PRECEDING ISSUES--RALF


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THOSE SPELLS SEEM TO BE GROWING IN INTENSITY AND FREQUENCY!

EACH NEW ATTACK LEAVES ME FAR WEAKER THAN THE PREVIOUS ONE!

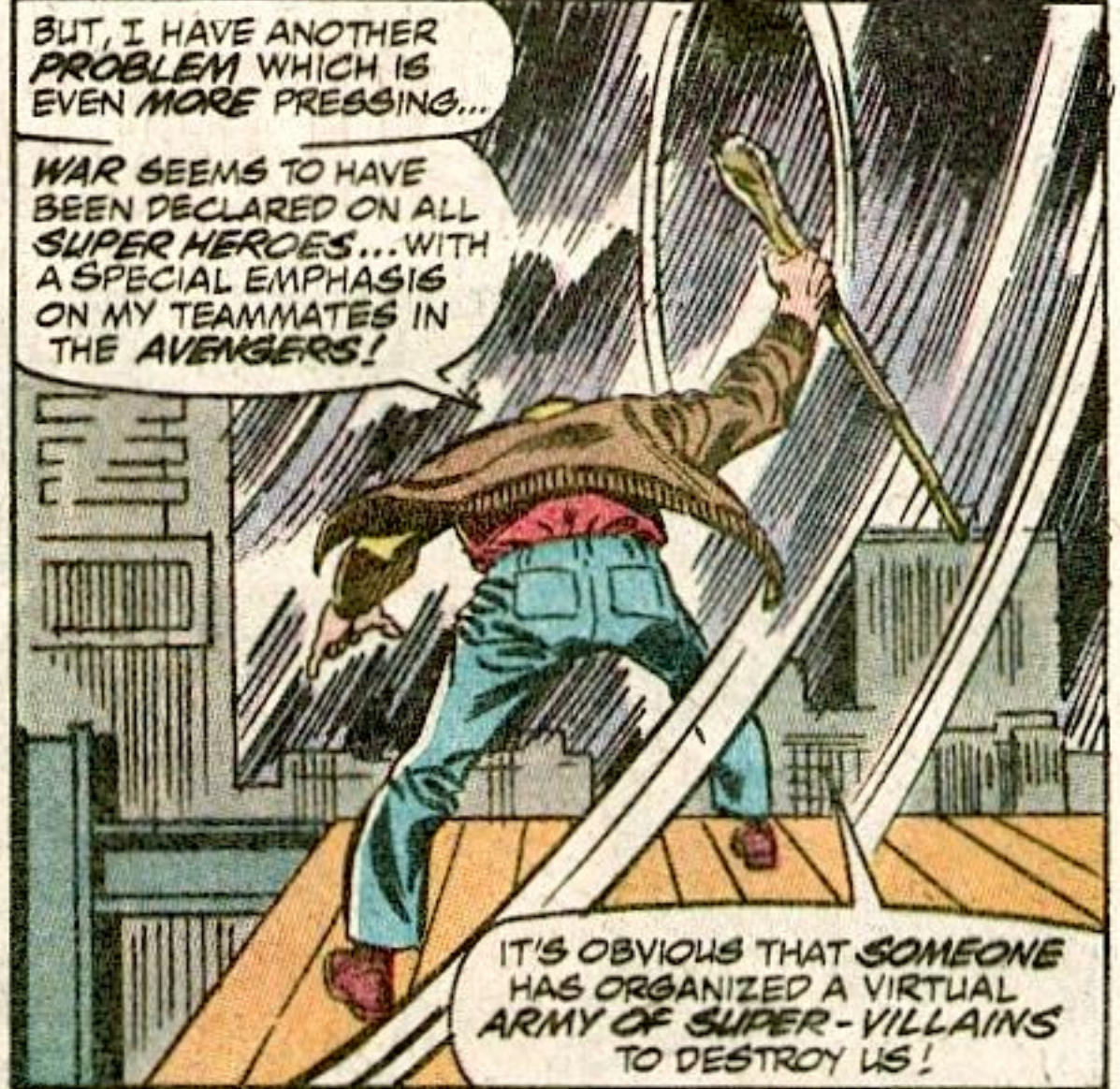
I MUST FIND A WAY TO STOP THEM BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!



BUT, I HAVE ANOTHER PROBLEM WHICH IS EVEN MORE PRESSING...

WAR SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN DECLARED ON ALL SUPER HEROES...WITH A SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON MY TEAMMATES IN THE AVENGERS!

IT'S OBVIOUS THAT SOMEONE HAS ORGANIZED A VIRTUAL ARMY OF SUPER-VILLAINS TO DESTROY US!



WHO COULD HAVE CONCEIVED OF SUCH A PLAN? WHO COULD BENEFIT FROM IT?!

THERE MUST BE AN ANSWER!



AND THE SON OF ODIN SHALL FIND IT!

SO DO I SWEAR!



IN MY MORTAL GUISE, I AM PLAGUED BY DOUBTS AND FEARS!

BUT I HAVE ALREADY WILLED THEM AWAY... AS EASILY AS I HAVE DISPELLED THIS RAGING STORM!



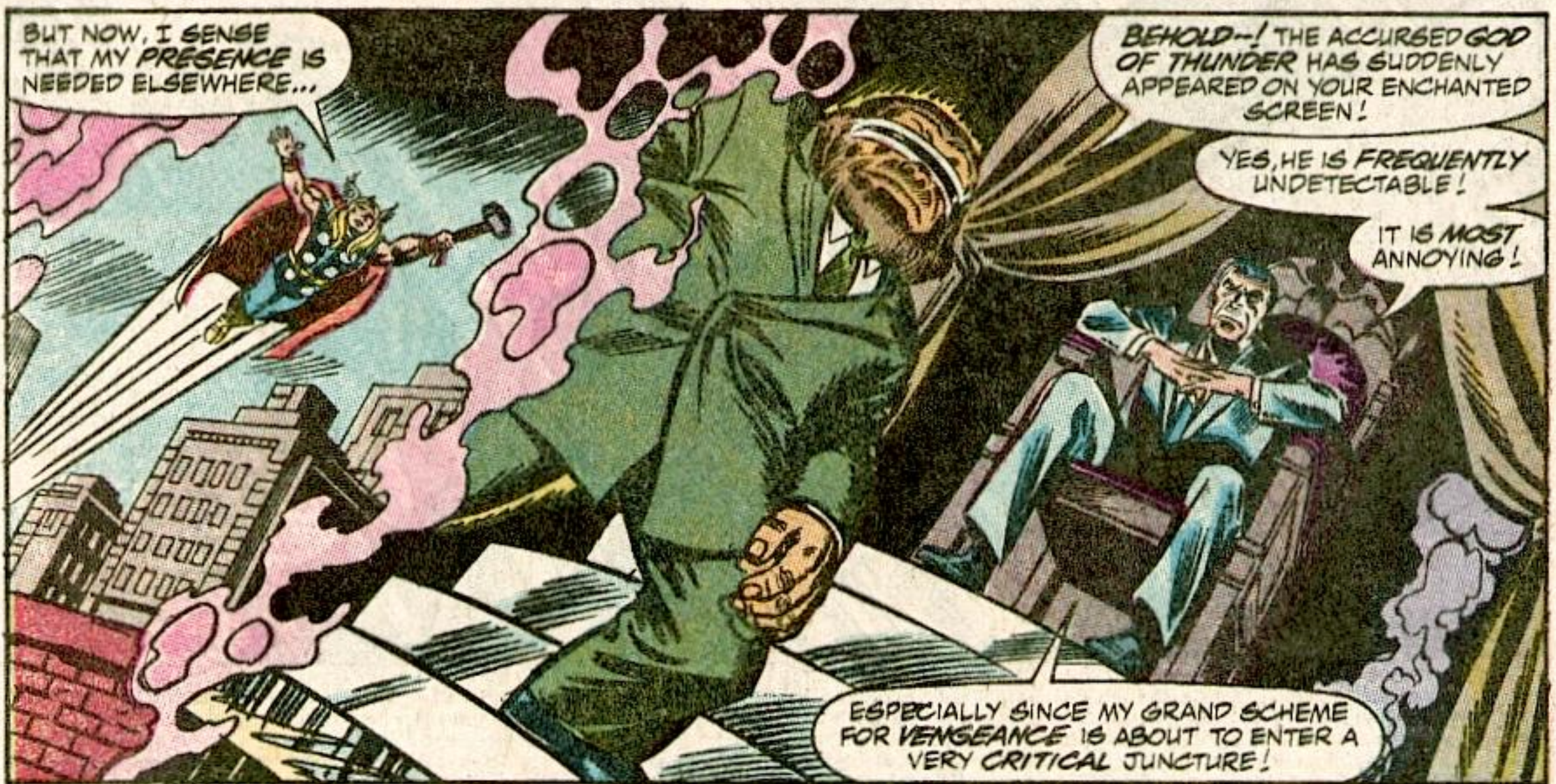
BUT NOW, I SENSE THAT MY PRESENCE IS NEEDED ELSEWHERE...

BEHOLD--! THE ACCURSED GOD OF THUNDER HAS SUDDENLY APPEARED ON YOUR ENCHANTED SCREEN!

YES, HE IS FREQUENTLY UNDETECTABLE!

IT IS MOST ANNOYING!

ESPECIALLY SINCE MY GRAND SCHEME FOR VENGEANCE IS ABOUT TO ENTER A VERY CRITICAL JUNCTURE!



SOMETIME LATER, IN THE APARTMENT OF ERIC MASTERTSON, SUSAN AUSTIN, HIS YOUNG EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT, VOICES HER CONCERN...

I WISH ERIC WOULD GET HOME! IT ISN'T SAFE WITH ALL THOSE SUPER CREEPS FIGHTING IN THE STREETS!

MY POP CAN TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF!

RIGHT, MR. CLEESE?

AYE, KEVIN!

FOR HE IS SECRETLY THOR... JUST AS I, IN TRUTH, AM HERCULES... THE SON OF ZEUS!

HEY! WHAT'S A GUY GOTTA DO TO GET A HUG AROUND HERE?

WELL, I DO HAVE A SCIENCE REPORT DUE...

FORGET IT, PAL! OH, OKAY!

KEVIN, I WAS OUT THINKING ABOUT WHAT WE DISCUSSED LAST NIGHT!

YOU MEAN ABOUT MOM TAKING ME TO LIVE WITH HER?

YEAH, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THAT?

WELL, I LOVE YOU, DAD...

BUT I LOVE HER, TOO!

YOU GUYS DON'T HAVE TO FIGHT OVER ME! I'M SURE YOU CAN WORK SOMETHING OUT IF YOU JUST TRY!

MAYBE YOU'LL EVEN GET BACK TOGETHER!

COME, YOUNG WARRIOR! WHILE YOUR FATHER DINES, I SHALL POINT OUT THE CONSTELLATIONS TO YOU!

MOST OF WHOM I HAVE KNOWN PERSONALLY!

THIS ANOTHER TALL TALE, HARRY...?

MAYHAPS!

THAT KID CONSTANTLY AMAZES ME! HIS HEAD IS SCREWED ON A LOT STRAIGHTER THAN MOST OF US ADULTS!

DON'T LET HIM FOOL YOU, ERIC!

HE'S HURTING!

A YOUNG BOY LIKE THAT NEEDS A STABLE ENVIRONMENT... WITH A STRONG FAMILY UNIT!

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING, SUSAN?

ARE YOU SUGGESTING THAT HE'D BE BETTER OFF WITH MY EX-WIFE AND HER NEW HUSBAND?!

NO, THAT'S NOT IT...

HI, EVERYBODY!
EXCUSE ME FOR
BARGING IN, BUT
YOUR FRONT
DOOR WAS OPEN!



I HOPE YOU HAVEN'T **FORGOTTEN**
OUR APPOINTMENT, ERIC!



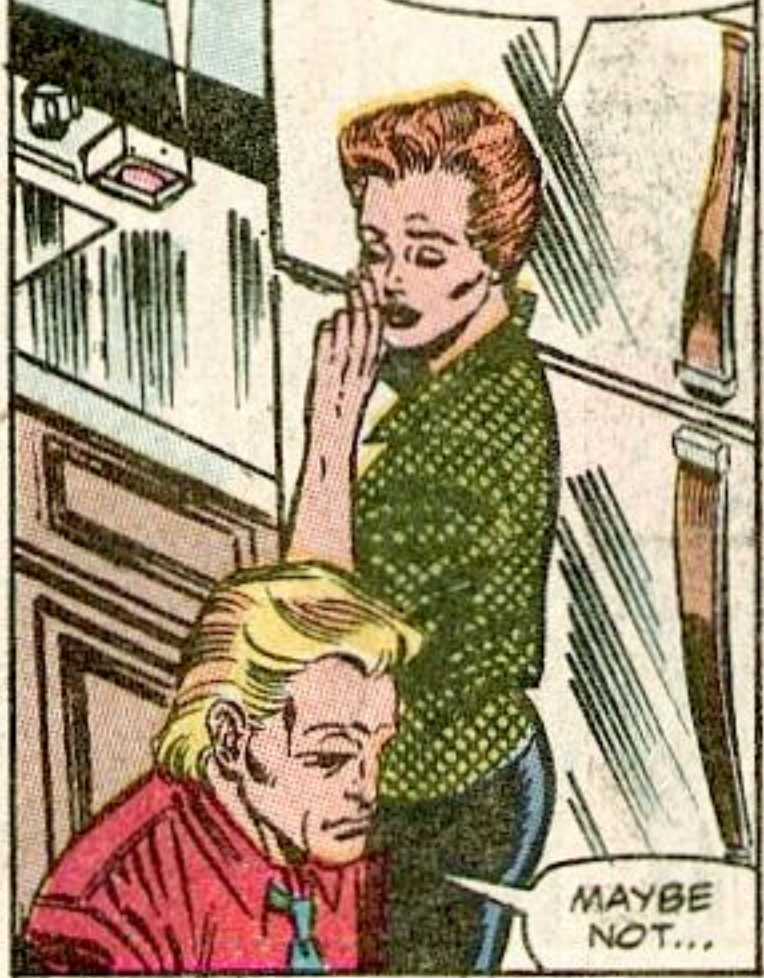
THAT'S JACKIE LUKUS
-- THE ARCHITECT?!
SHE'S SO BEAUTIFUL!
WHAT WAS I THINK-
ING? WHY WOULD
ERIC BE INTERESTED
IN ME?!

GIVE ME
A MINUTE,
JACK!



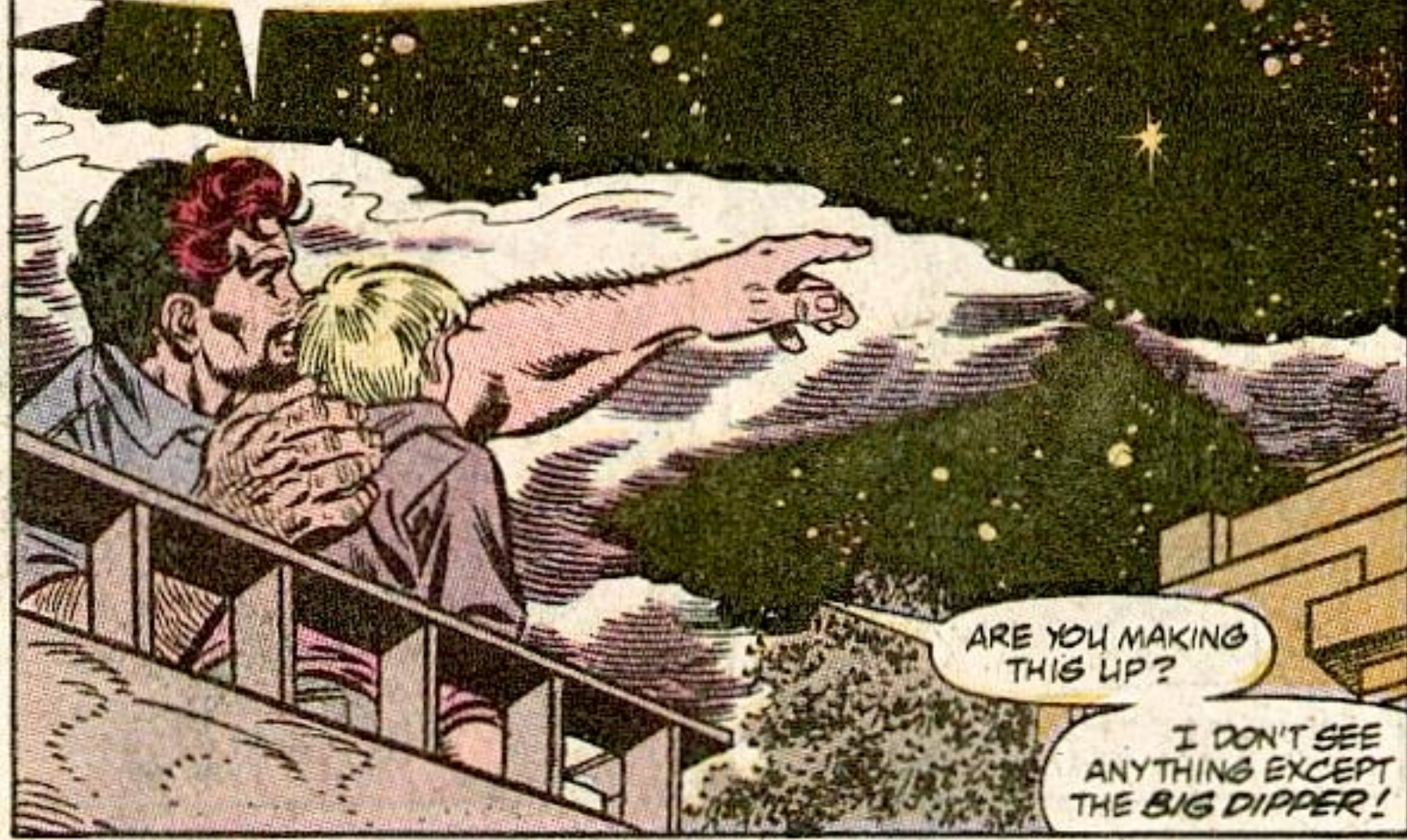
WELL, SUSAN?
YOU WERE
SAYING--?!

I'M SORRY, ERIC!
MAYBE I
SHOULDN'T HAVE
SAID ANYTHING
ABOUT KEVIN!



MEANWHILE, OUT ON THE TERRACE...

...ANDROMEDA, THE BEAUTIFUL
WIFE OF PERSEUS, WHO WAS ALSO
QUITE SMITTEN WITH THE HANDSOME
HERCULES!



LOOK YONDER, KEVIN,
AND BEHOLD THE
BEAUTY OF...



THEY ARE
ALIVE--!



WHAT'S THAT, HARRY?
HARRY--?! YOU LOOK
LIKE YOU PHASED
OUT ON ME, MAN!



I THINK
NOT...



AND, SOMETIME LATER...

I WANT TO APOLOGIZE AGAIN FOR BREAKING IN ON THAT SCENE WITH YOUR FRIEND.

SUSAN IS AN EMPLOYEE. SHE HELPS COORDINATE MY BUSINESS, AND ALSO MINDS MY SON.

YOU DIDN'T INTERRUPT ANYTHING IMPORTANT.

AND, YOU'RE A TERRIBLE LIAR!

WELL, THIS IS MY PLACE...

LOOK, ERIC, YOU MAY NOT BE THE ARCHITECT I AM... BUT YOU ARE A PRETTY DECENT GUY.

IF YOU EVER NEED A FRIEND... OR JUST A SYMPATHETIC PAIR OF EARS... CALL ME, HUH?

WILL DO, LADY! THANKS!

SEE YOU SOON?

NO QUESTION ABOUT IT!

OH, THAT JACKIE LUKUS--!

IF ONLY MY LIFE WASN'T ALREADY SO DARNED COMPLICATED!

WHAT AM I GOING TO DO ABOUT SUSAN?

I ALWAYS THOUGHT SHE SINCERELY CARED ABOUT KEVIN--AND EVEN KIND OF LIKED ME MORE THAN JUST AS A BOSS--BUT AFTER WHAT SHE SAID TONIGHT...

HEY--! WHAT'S THIS?!

DOCTOR STRANGE--? WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF HIM EARLIER?

U.S. News

SECRETS OF THE SEAS

NOW

STRANGE

HE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO GET MY PERSONAL LIFE ON TRACK--

-- BUT I'M CERTAIN HE CAN HELP ME FIND OUT WHAT'S BEEN AILING MY THUNDER SIDE!

AND SO, EARLY THE NEXT MORNING...

IT'S A DISGRACE THE WAY THOSE **SUPER-FREAKS** ARE WRECKING OUR CITY! **TAXES** WILL SKYROCKET!

THERE OUGHTA BE A LAW AGAINST ALL **COSTUMED CLOWNS**--INCLUDING THE **AVENGERS**!

SEIZURES--?!

YEAH, THEY'VE BEEN HITTING **THOR** EVER SINCE HE RETURNED TO EARTH AFTER THE **WAR OF THE GODS**!

WHAT **WAR--?!**

WHY WAS NOT THE **PRINCE OF POWER** INVITED?

WELL, THIS ALL HAPPENED **BEFORE** THE **THUNDER GOD** AND I BECAME **ONE...**

"...BUT, SINCE I NOW SHARE HIS MEMORIES, I CAN TELL YOU IT ALL STARTED WHEN THIS **DEATH GOD**, A REAL **NUTCASE** CALLED **SETH**--

--DECIDED TO BRING AN **END** TO ALL **LIFE**--

--AND STARTED HIS **CAMPAIGN** BY ATTACKING **ASGARD**!

"DETERMINED TO SAVE HIS **HOMEWORLD**, **THOR** GATHERED A FEW **FRIENDS** AND LAUNCHED A **COUNTER-ATTACK** AT **SETH'S OWN DIMENSION OF DEATH**!

"BUT, THINGS DIDN'T GO **EXACTLY** AS **PLANNED**--

--AND **THOR** WAS **UNEXPECTEDLY** **STRIPPED** OF HIS **GODLY POWERS**!

"HOWEVER, HE EVENTUALLY **REGAINED** THEM... AND JOINED WITH HIS **FATHER** TO PUT THE **CRUNCH** ON THE **BAD GUYS**!" *

* A VERY **CONDENSED** VERSION OF THE EVENTS IN **THOR #396-400**--**RALE**

AN AMUSING TALE, BUT HARDLY A **WAR!**

HOW RELATES IT TO THOR'S MALADY?

I'M NOT SURE ... BUT I THINK EVERYTHING'S ALL **TIED** TOGETHER... INCLUDING THE CURRENT **ANTI-SUPER HERO** SENTIMENT!

C'MON, THIS IS OUR STOP!

MAYHAPS I SHOULD INFORM ERIC OF MY OWN RECENT UN-PLEASANTNESS...

NO! 'TWOULD BE MOST UNSEEMLY FOR THE **LION OF OLYMPUS** TO ADMIT TO ANY WEAKNESS!

DOC'S HOUSE IS ONLY A BLOCK AWAY!

WE SHOULD USE THIS DESERTED ALLEY TO GET READY! I'LL **CHANGE** FIRST...

I DON'T KNOW IF COMING HERE WAS **WISE**, OR IF I'LL GET ANY **ANSWERS!**

BUT, WHATEVER HAPPENS--

-- THE MIGHTY **THOR** SHALL FACE IT WITH THE **COURAGE** AND **HONOR** BEFITTING A TRUE **PRINCE** OF THE REALM!

SO BE IT!

AND, BARELY A MINUTE LATER...

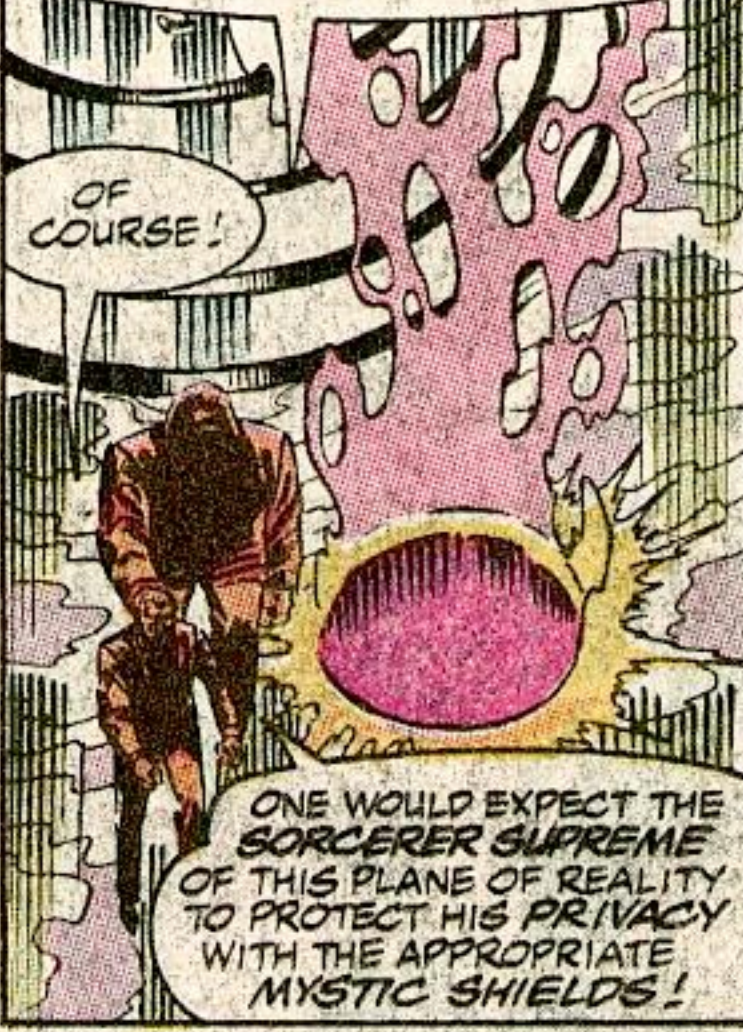
IS THE **DOCTOR** IN?

THE **GOD OF THUNDER** DOETH HIS COUNSEL SEEK!

ENTER, IF YOU PLEASE...



THOR AND HERCULES VANISHED THE MOMENT THEY ENTERED THAT BUILDING!



OF COURSE!

ONE WOULD EXPECT THE SORCERER SUPREME OF THIS PLANE OF REALITY TO PROTECT HIS PRIVACY WITH THE APPROPRIATE MYSTIC SHIELDS!

CAN YOU PENETRATE THEM?



SUCH A QUESTION IS UNWORTHY OF AN ANSWER!

BESIDES, I BELIEVE A MORE DIRECT APPROACH IS IN ORDER!

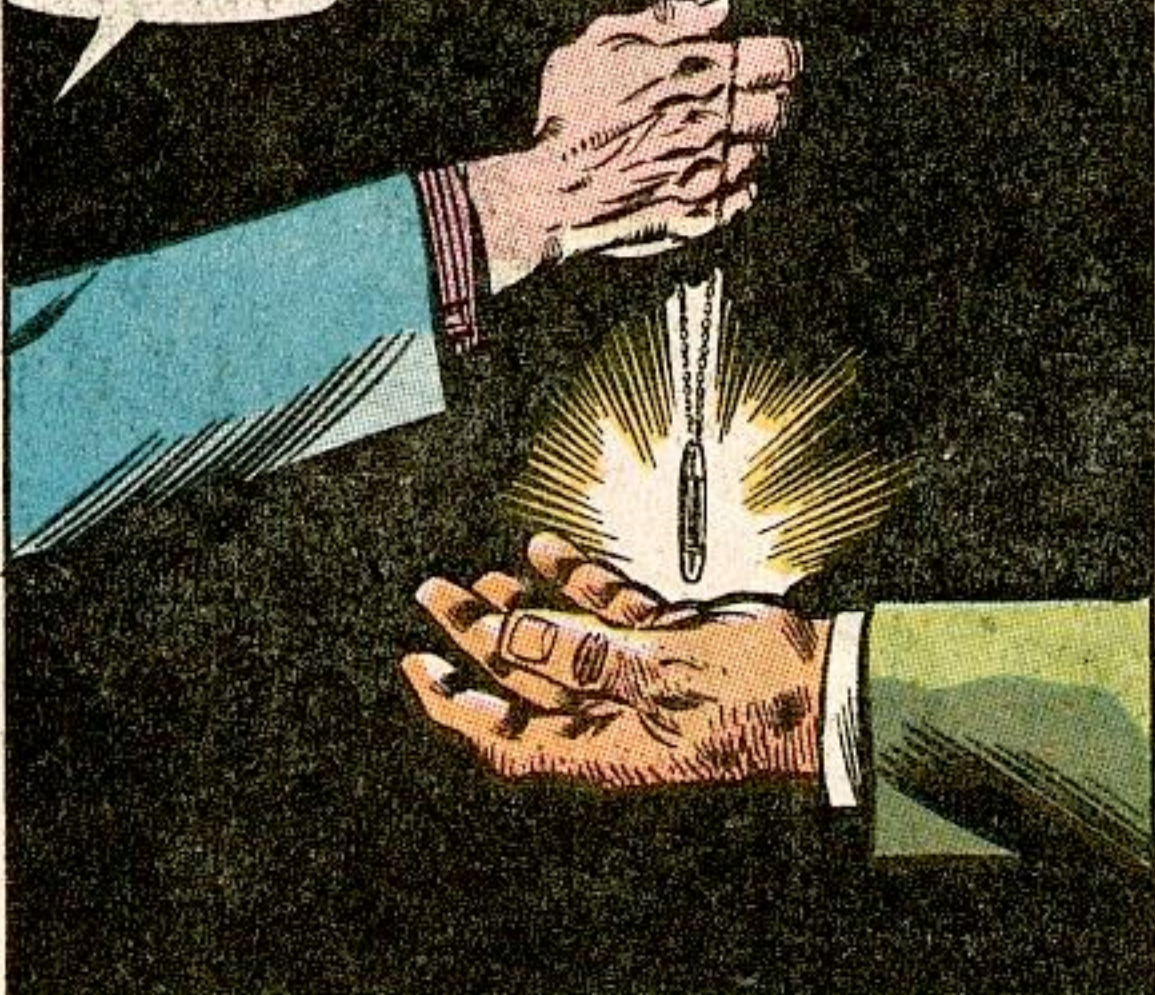
DOCTOR STRANGE MAY PROVE QUITE MEDDLESOME -- AND COULD INTERFERE WITH MY CAREFULLY ORCHESTRATED ACTS OF VENGEANCE!



I AM READY!

EXCELLENT-- BUT YOU WILL NEED AN EDGE!

THIS AMULET CONTAINS AN ENCHANTED ENHANCER WHICH WILL TEMPORARILY GRANT YOU THE NECESSARY POWER TO DEFEAT THE SONS OF ODIN AND ZEUS!



THAT DOORWAY WILL LEAD YOU TO YOUR DESTINATION!

FEAR NOT! I WILL NOT FAIL YOU!



I HAVE COMPLETE FAITH IN YOUR ABILITIES!

YOU EXPENDABLE BLUFFON!

THE PORTAL VANISHED AS SOON AS I CROSSED IT!



OBVIOUSLY A CRUDE DIMENSIONAL GATEWAY!

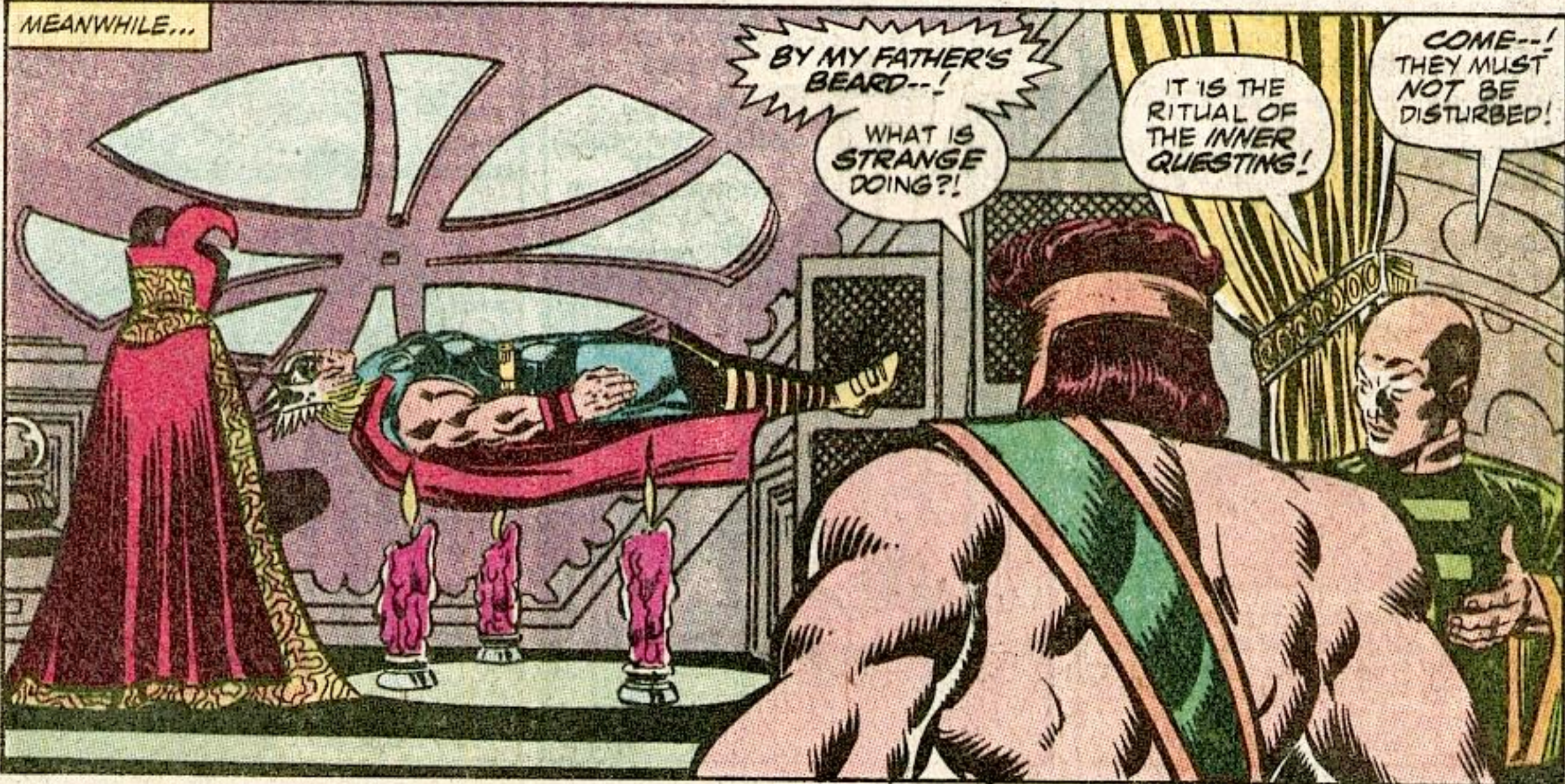
THE INHABITANTS OF THIS BACKWATER WORLD MUST BE ASTOUNDED BY SUCH SIMPLE DEVICES!

I WONDER HOW THEY WILL REACT TO ME?



WE SHALL SOON SEE...

MEANWHILE...



BY MY FATHER'S
BEARD--!

WHAT IS
STRANGE
DOING?!

IT IS THE
RITUAL OF
THE INNER
QUESTING!

COME--!
THEY MUST
NOT BE
DISTURBED!

AND, EVEN AS THE FAITHFUL WONG
LEADS THE PROTESTING HERCULES
AWAY, THE CEREMONY IS BEGUN...

THE ANSWERS YOU
SEEK--AND THE CAUSE
OF YOUR MYSTERIOUS
SPELLS OF WEAK-
NESS-- LIE DEEP
WITHIN YOU!



RELAX! LET YOUR
MIND ROAM FREE!

OUR JOURNEY
IS LONG AND
PERILOUS!



AYE,
DOCTOR...

DOCTOR--?!

OD'S
BLOOD!

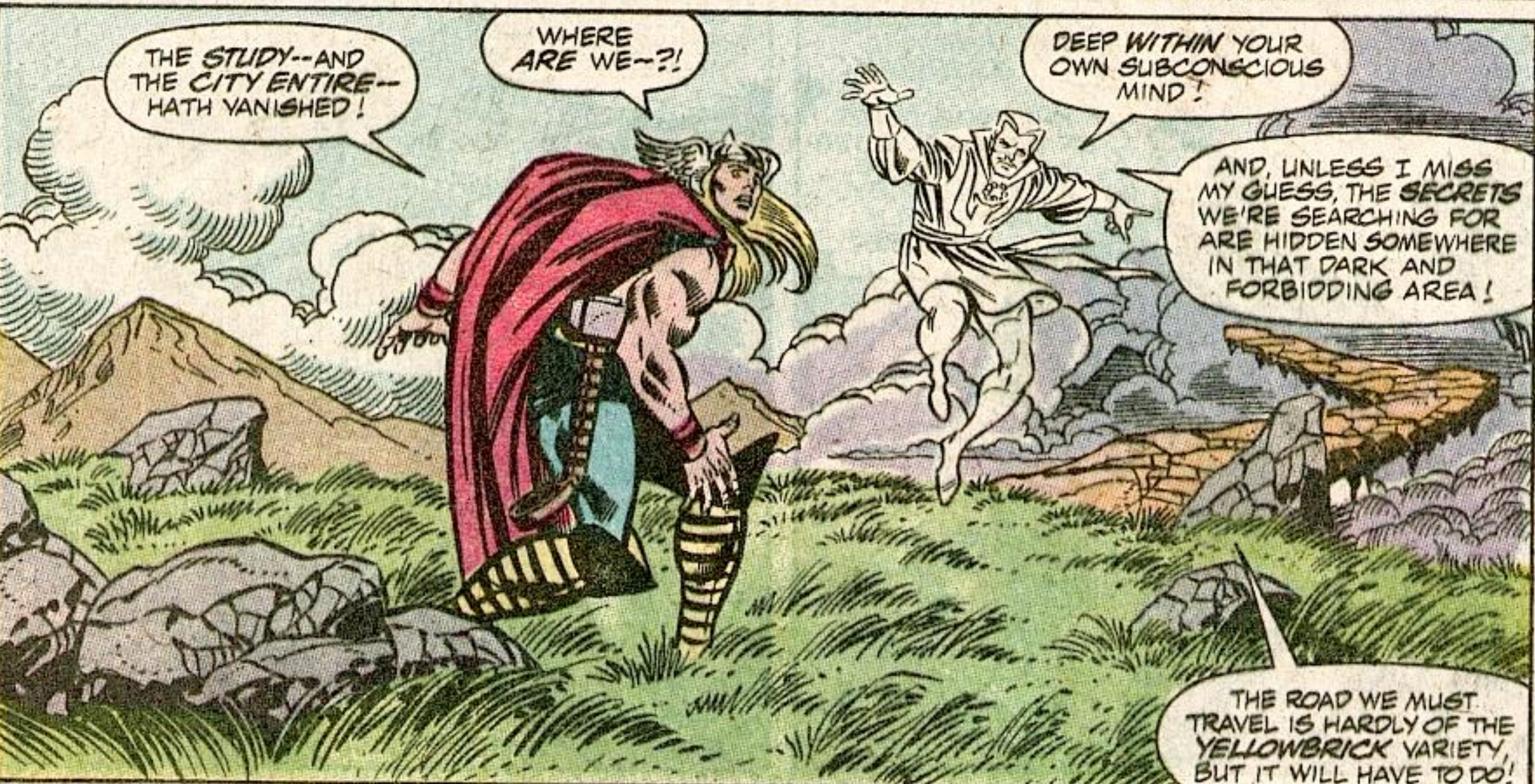


THE STUDY--AND
THE CITY ENTIRE--
HATH VANISHED!

WHERE
ARE WE--?!

DEEP WITHIN YOUR
OWN SUBCONSCIOUS
MIND!

AND, UNLESS I MISS
MY GUESS, THE SECRETS
WE'RE SEARCHING FOR
ARE HIDDEN SOMEWHERE
IN THAT DARK AND
FORBIDDING AREA!



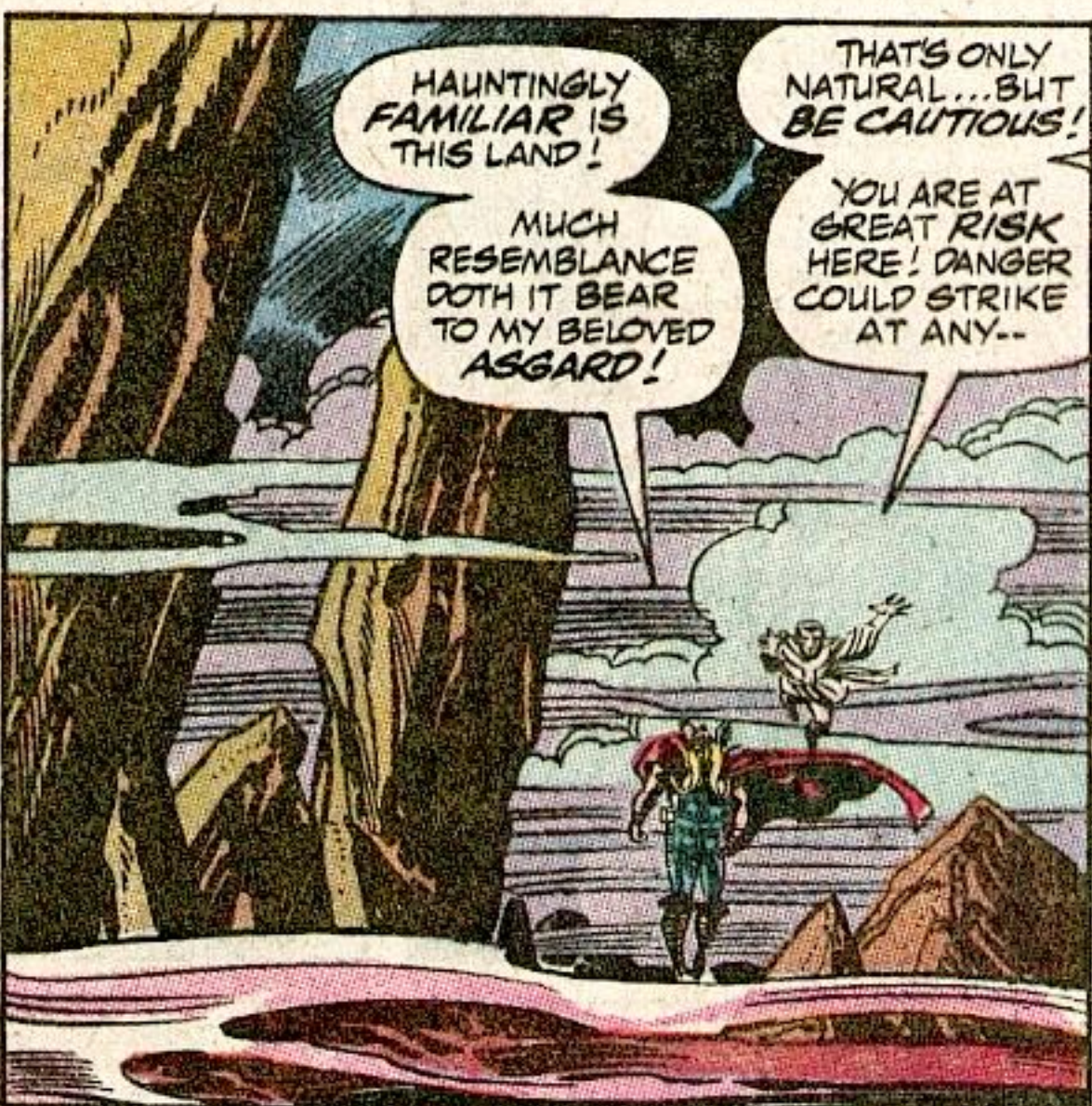
THE ROAD WE MUST
TRAVEL IS HARDLY OF THE
YELLOWBRICK VARIETY,
BUT IT WILL HAVE TO DO!



EVEN AS THEY BEGIN THEIR ARDUOUS TREK--

--AN UNOBSERVED FIGURE QUIETLY SLIPS FROM THE SHADOWS--

--AND SURREPTITIOUSLY BEGINS TO STALK THEM!



HAUNTINGLY FAMILIAR IS THIS LAND!

MUCH RESEMBLANCE DOOTH IT BEAR TO MY BELOVED ASSGARD!

THAT'S ONLY NATURAL...BUT BE CAUTIOUS!

YOU ARE AT GREAT RISK HERE! DANGER COULD STRIKE AT ANY--



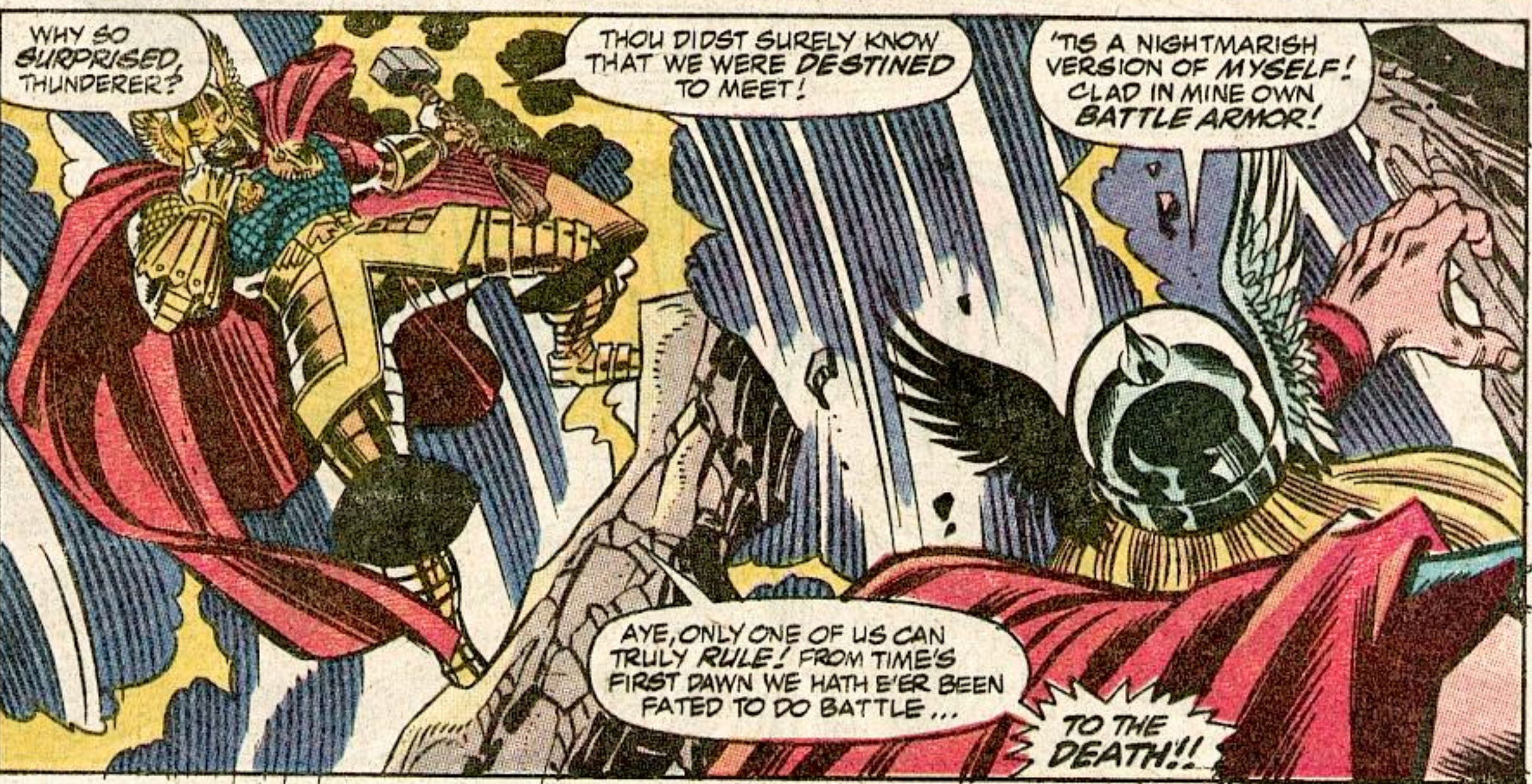
THOR! THOR! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? THE ATTACK CAME MUCH SOONER THAN I IMAGINED!

SINCE I HAVE NO PHYSICAL FORM HERE, I WILL BE UNABLE TO AID YOU!

FEAR NOT, NOBLE DOCTOR! THE THUNDER GOD SHALL ENDURE!

GREAT ODIN! THAT FIGURE IN THE SHADOWS--!

IT CANNOT BE!!



WHY SO SURPRISED, THUNDERER?

THOU DIDST SURELY KNOW THAT WE WERE DESTINED TO MEET!

'TIS A NIGHTMARISH VERSION OF MYSELF! CLAD IN MINE OWN BATTLE ARMOR!

AYE, ONLY ONE OF US CAN TRULY RULE! FROM TIME'S FIRST DAWN WE HATH E'ER BEEN FATED TO DO BATTLE...

TO THE DEATH!!



PRETTY SCARY SPEECH, BUSTER! YOU HAVE A REAL FLAIR FOR THE DRAMATIC!

BY THE EYES OF THE VISHANTI!

WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!



THE NAME'S ERIC MASTERSON! I'M NOT SURE HOW I GOT HERE... OR EVEN WHERE HERE IS EXACTLY!

THERE'S A WHOLE LOT I DON'T UNDERSTAND... BUT ONE THING I DO KNOW... THOR DOESN'T HAVE TO FIGHT ALONE!!

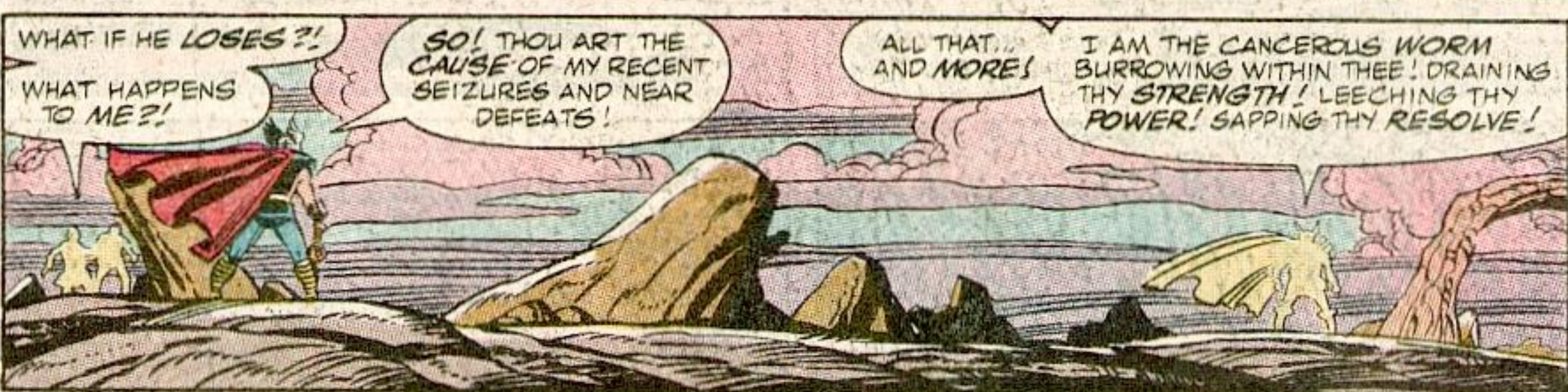


YOUR PRESENCE DEFIES ALL LOGIC, MASTERSON!

BUT, YOU MUST NOT INTERFERE!

THAT'S EASY FOR YOU TO SAY!

THOR AND I WERE MERGED! WE ARE ONE!



WHAT IF HE LOSES?! WHAT HAPPENS TO ME?!

SO! THOU ART THE CAUSE OF MY RECENT SEIZURES AND NEAR DEFEATS!

ALL THAT... AND MORE!

I AM THE CANCEROUS WORM BURROWING WITHIN THEE! DRAINING THY STRENGTH! LEECHING THY POWER! SAPPING THY RESOLVE!



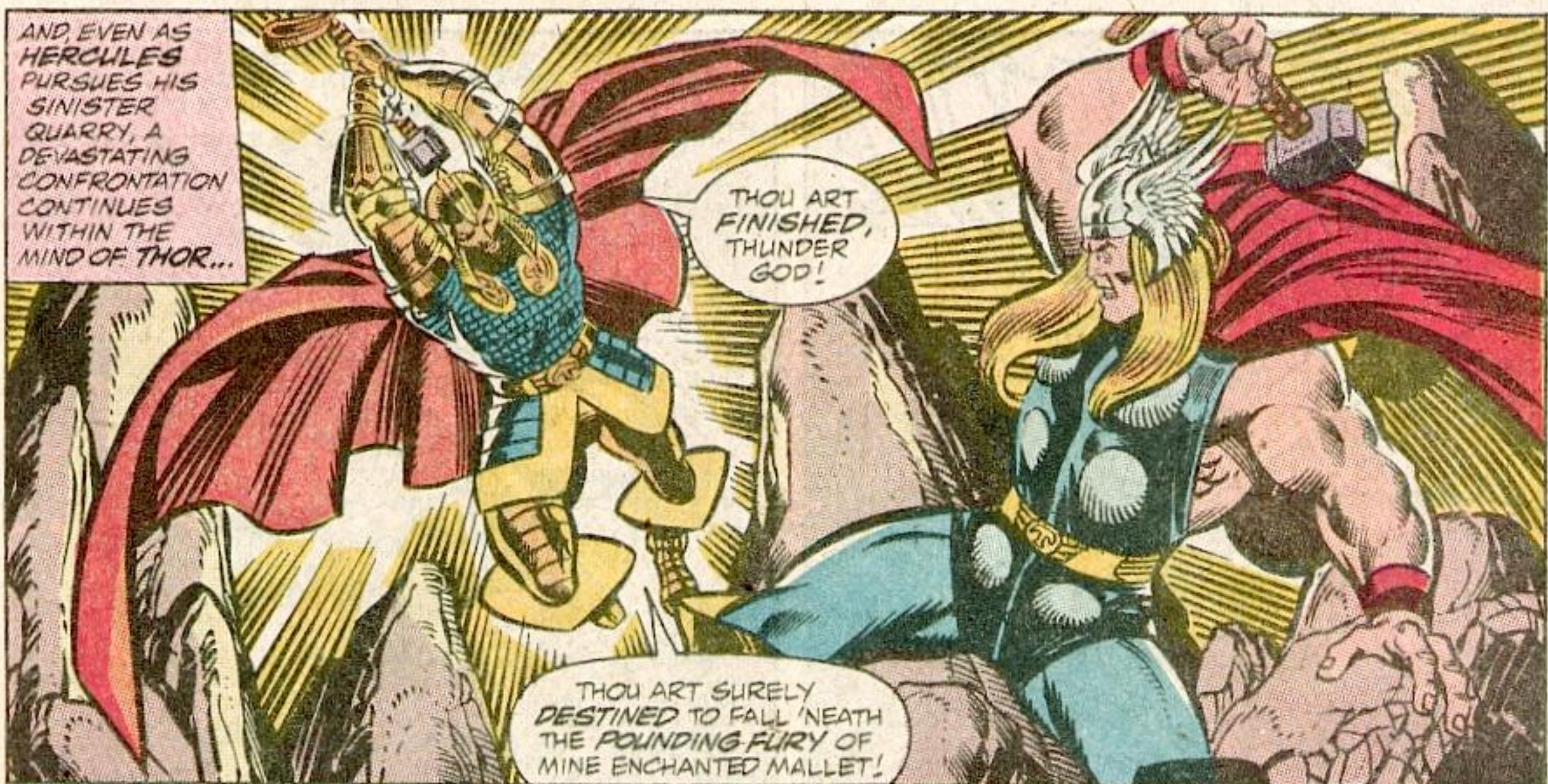
THY DESTRUCTION IS MY SOLE REASON FOR BEING--

--AND MY SACRED HAMMER SREAMS FOR THY BLOOD!



THY DEMONIC DOPPLEGANGER SHALL BE DENIED ITS BLOOD... BY THE ONE AND TRUE HAMMER SUPREME!!







BUH-TRAAK!!

NOT SO, IMPOSTOR!

NEITHER AN EASY TARGET, NOR A HELPLESS VICTIM, IS THE TRUE SON OF ODIN!!



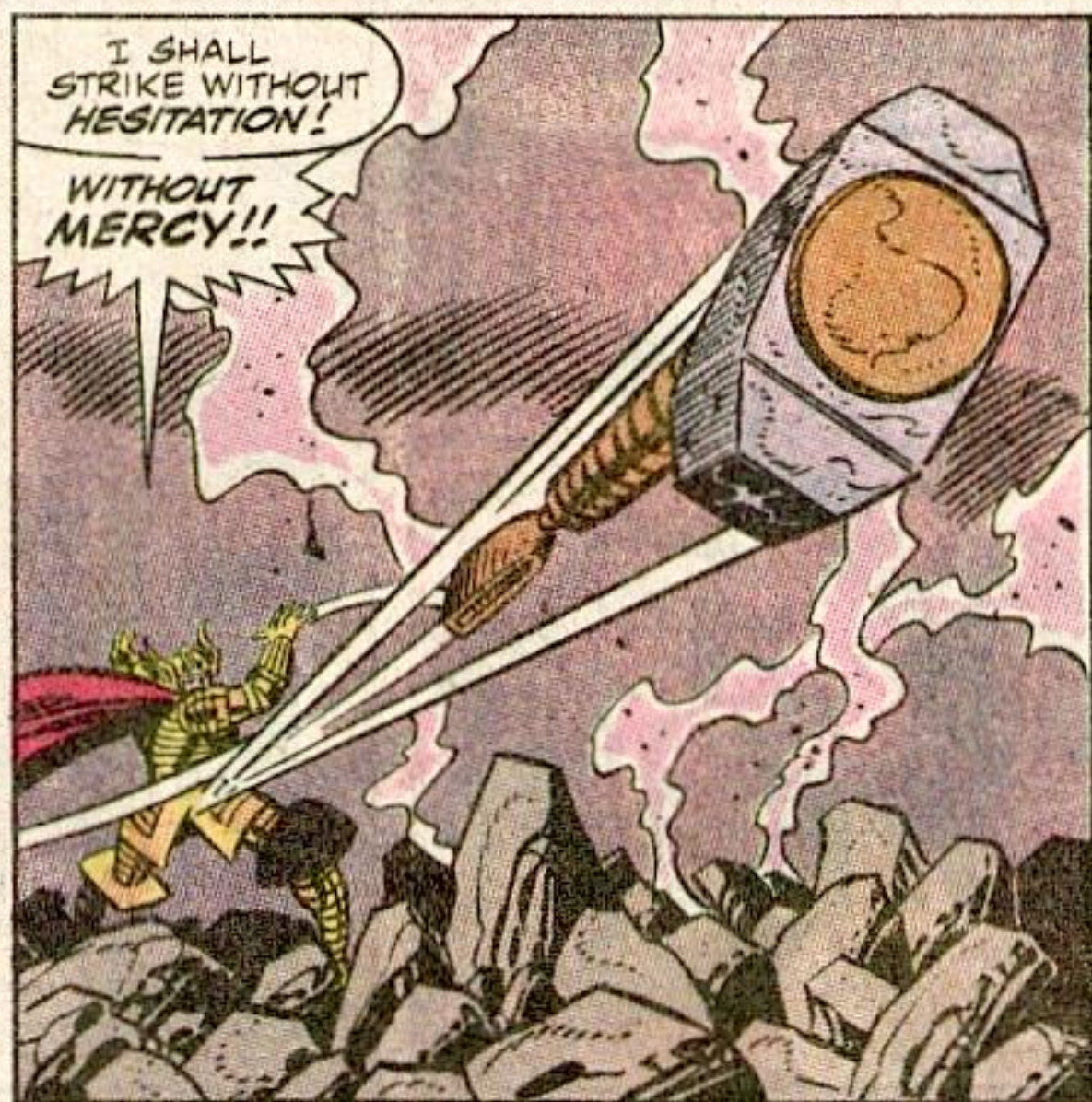
OD'S BLOOD--! SO EQUAL IS OUR IRRESISTIBLE STRENGTH, SO E'EN IS THE UNRELENTING POWER OF OUR HAMMERS--

--THAT WE HAVE SHATTERED THE GROUND 'PON WHICH WE STOOD!



AYE, BUT I HAVE ALREADY RECOVERED... WHILE THOU STILL STRUGGLES TO STAND!

THAT MOMENTARY ADVANTAGE SHALL PROVE THY UNDOING!



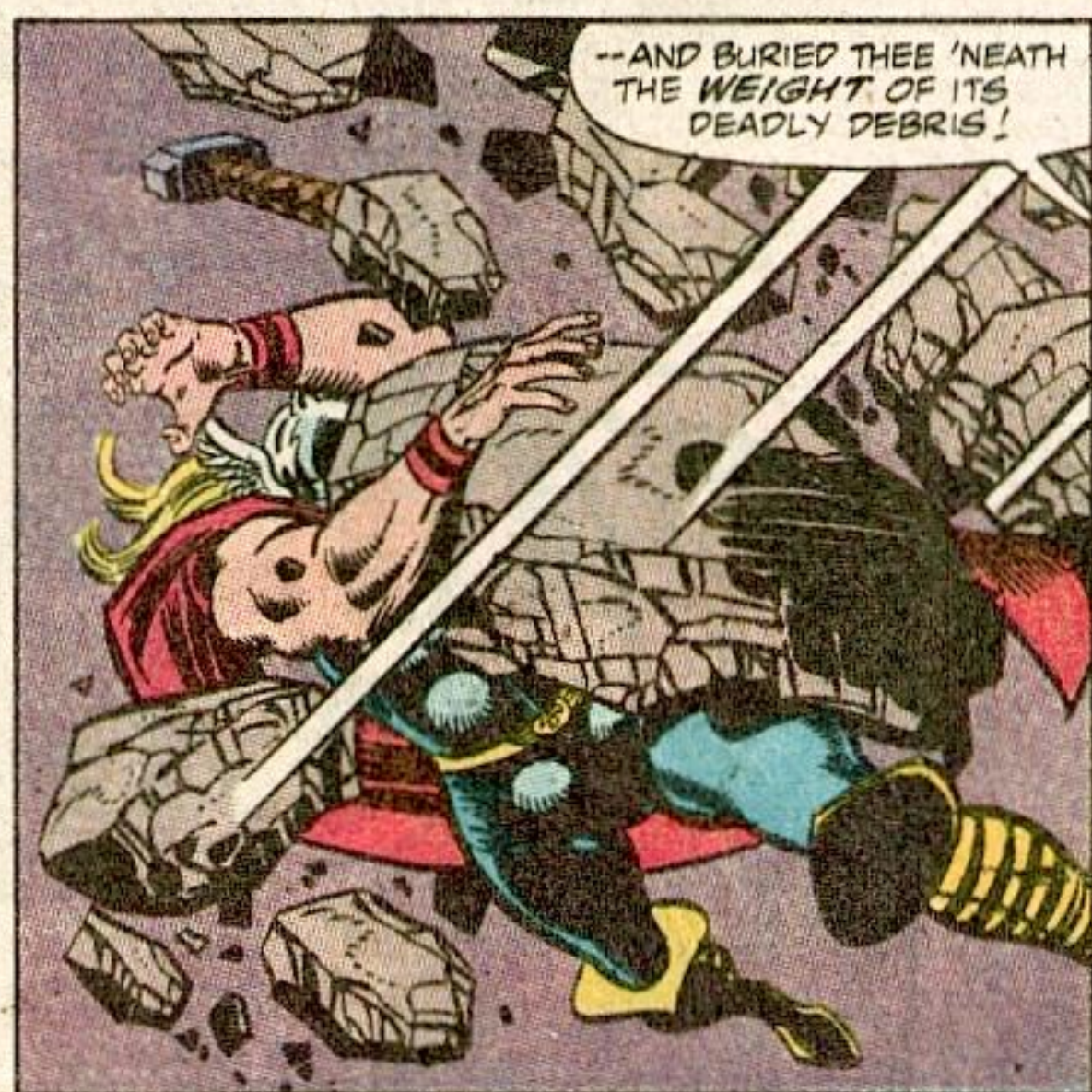
I SHALL STRIKE WITHOUT HESITATION!

WITHOUT MERCY!!



BTOMM!!

I HAVE TOPPLED THE MOUNTAIN WHICH TOWERED ABOVE THEE--



--AND BURIED THEE 'NEATH THE WEIGHT OF ITS DEADLY DEBRIS!

THOR NEVER HAD A CHANCE!
HE MUST BE COVERED BY
TONS OF ROCK!

I'VE GOT
TO FIND A
WAY TO
HELP HIM!

NO! YOU MUST
NOT INTERVENE!

WHY NOT,
DOCTOR?

THOU MUST NEEDS
ADMIT THAT THE
BATTLE IS
O'ER--

--AND I STAND
TRIUMPHANT!!

NAY!

I SAY THEE
NAY!!

IF E'ER THOU
DIDST HOPE TO
DEFEAT THE GOD
OF THUNDER,
THAT HOPE HAST
SURELY FLED!

NO! NO! 'TIS
NOT POSSIBLE!

ALL IS POSSIBLE
TO ONE WHO IS
PURE OF HEART,
AND NOBLE OF
SPIRIT!

TO ONE WHO
STRIVES ON
E'EN IN THE
FACE OF
O'ERWHELMING
DEFEAT!

TO ONE
SUCH AS
THOR!!

NOW SHALL I RIP
AWAY THY HELMET
AND BEHOLD THY
TRUE, EVIL
VISAGE!

'TIS AS I E'ER
SUSPECTED--!

LOKI!!



LOKI! THE MONSTER WITHIN ME WAS MY OWN HALF-BROTHER!

HOW DID HE E'ER ACCOMPLISH THIS FEAT?

BY WHAT MEANS DID HE GAIN SUCH CONTROL O'ER ME?

SO! MY SIMPERING SIBLING HAS FINALLY LEARNED THE TRUTH!

THAT I AM THE CAUSE OF HIS DEBILITATING SEIZURES... AS WELL AS HIS OTHER, RECENT DIFFICULTIES!



THE TIME FOR PRETENSE IS PAST!

LET THE TRUE GOD OF EVIL STAND REVEALED!

THE THUNDER GOD WILL NEVER KNOW THAT I SECRETLY GAINED A HOLD O'ER HIM DURING THE RECENT WAR OF THE GODS!



WHILE HE WAS BEREFT OF HIS POWERS, I COVERTLY LENT HIM SOME OF MINE!*

BUT, WE ARE NOW ENGAGED IN A MUCH MORE INTERESTING WAR!

A WAR INITIATED BY MY CAREFULLY CONSTRUCTED ACTS OF VENGEANCE!

A WAR WHICH WILL CERTAINLY BRING AN END TO THE HATED AVENGERS... AS WELL AS MIGHTY THOR!

* IT HAPPENED IN THOR #398. -- RECORD-KEEPING RALF



AND, JUST THEN...

I AM PLEASED TO HAVE BEEN OF SERVICE, MY FRIEND!

THOU HAST EXORCISED MY INNER DEMON, DOCTOR!

E'ER SHALL THE SON OF ODIN BE IN THY DEBT!

WHERE IS HERCULES? WE MUST AWAY--!

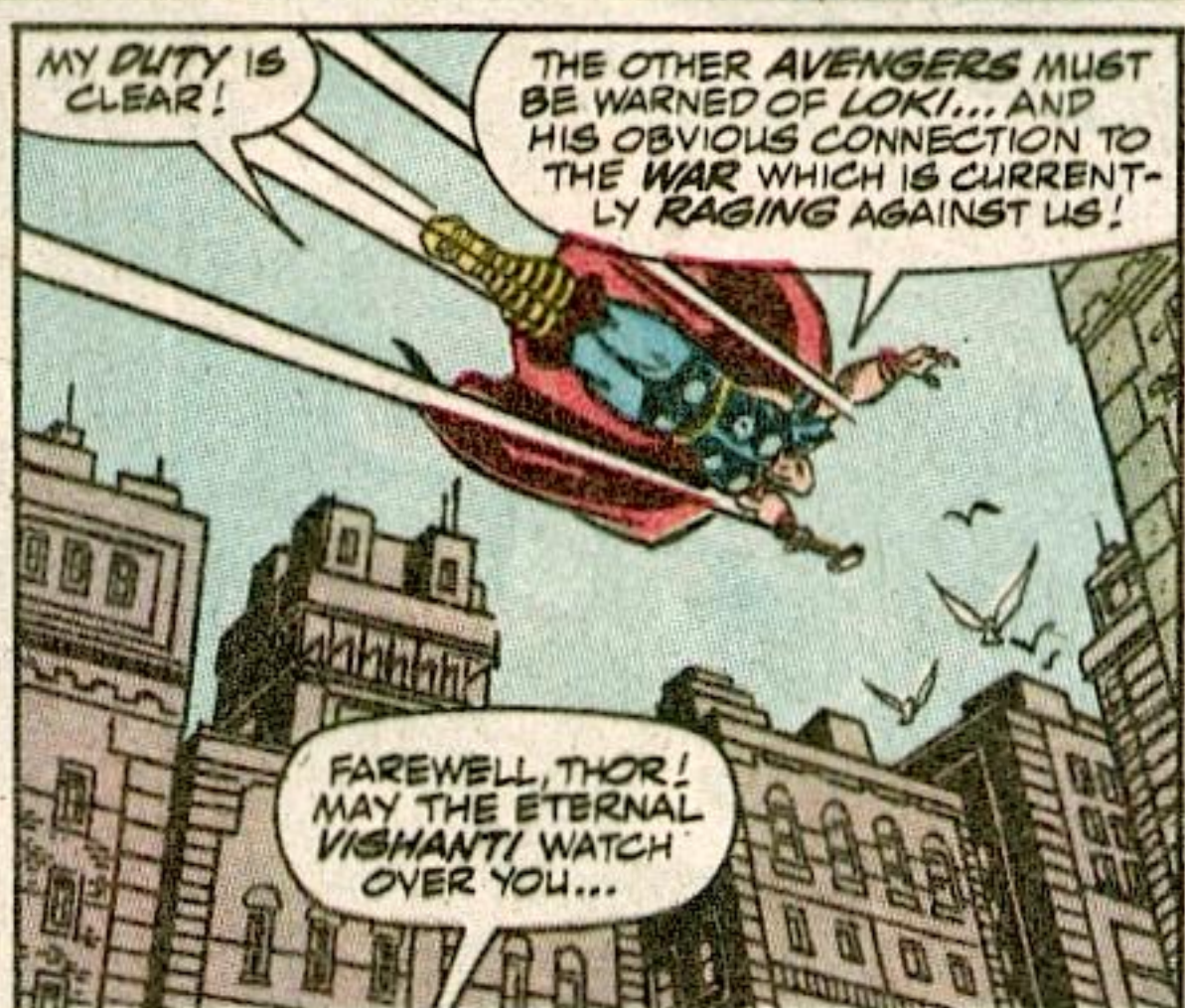
HE IS ALREADY GONE!



HE LEFT IN PURSUIT OF A CREATURE WHO WAS ATTEMPTING TO STORM THE SANCTUM!

MORE OF LOKI'S HANDIWORK, I WAGER!

THOUGH THOR WOULD EAGERLY FLY TO THE AID OF HIS BOISTEROUS COMRADE; I FEAR THAT THE PRINCE OF POWER MUST PRESENTLY FEND FOR HIMSELF!



MY DUTY IS CLEAR!

THE OTHER AVENGERS MUST BE WARNED OF LOKI... AND HIS OBVIOUS CONNECTION TO THE WAR WHICH IS CURRENTLY RAGING AGAINST US!

FAREWELL, THOR! MAY THE ETERNAL VISHANTI WATCH OVER YOU...



I FEAR THAT YOU WILL NEED ALL THAT... AND MORE... TO SURVIVE THE GRIM, DARK BATTLE WHICH NOW AWAITS YOU!

DON'T MISS THE SPECTACULAR, SENSES-SHATTERING CONCLUSION TO THE ACTS OF VENGEANCE IN AVENGERS WEST COAST #55! AND, REJOIN US HERE NEXT MONTH... WHEN GOLDILOCKS JOINS HERCULES IN A NO-HOLDS-BARRED SUPER-SLUGFEST WHICH COULD ONLY BE ENTITLED...

"BEYOND COURAGE, MUST I STRIVE!"



STAN LEE PRESENTS BETA RAY BILL IN...

DEFIANCE MEANS DEATH!

MERE MOMENTS AGO, BETA RAY BILL BURST FREE OF THE SHACKLES WHICH IMPRISONED HIM WITHIN THIS PIRATE SPACECRAFT!

A SPACECRAFT POISED TO ATTACK THE GREAT FLEET WHICH CARRIES THE LAST SURVIVORS OF BILL'S RACE!

A SPACECRAFT POWERED BY PSYCHIC ENERGY DRAINED FROM ITS LIVING CARGO OF HELPLESS SLAVES!

YOU ENSLAVED ME!!

YOU PLUNDERED MY MIND--AND THREATENED TO DO THE SAME TO MY PEOPLE!

BUT NOW THE TIME HAS COME FOR ME TO STRIKE BACK FOR HONOR AND JUSTICE--

--AND THE VENGEANCE OF BETA RAY THOR!!

TOM DEFALCO
WRITER

RON LIM
PENCILER

MIKE DECARLO
INKER

MICHAEL HEISLER
LETTERER

NEL YOMTOV
COLORIST

RALPH MACCHIO
EDITOR

LIKE DEFENSELESS SAILBOATS CAUGHT IN A FURIOUS MAELSTROM, THE PIRATES ARE COMPLETELY OVERWHELMED BY THE RELENTLESS FURY OF STORM BREAKER, BILL'S ENCHANTED HAMMER!



THIS ALIEN AVENSER WILL SURELY CONQUER MY ENTIRE CREW--

--UNLESS I CAN QUICKLY REESTABLISH MY CONTROL OVER THE REMAINING SLAVES!

THEY WILL OBEY MY COMMANDS--



--OR SUFFER THE DIRE CONSEQUENCES!

AND, IN THE SLAVE QUARTERS...

BILL! YOU MUST STOP THIS MADNESS AT ONCE!

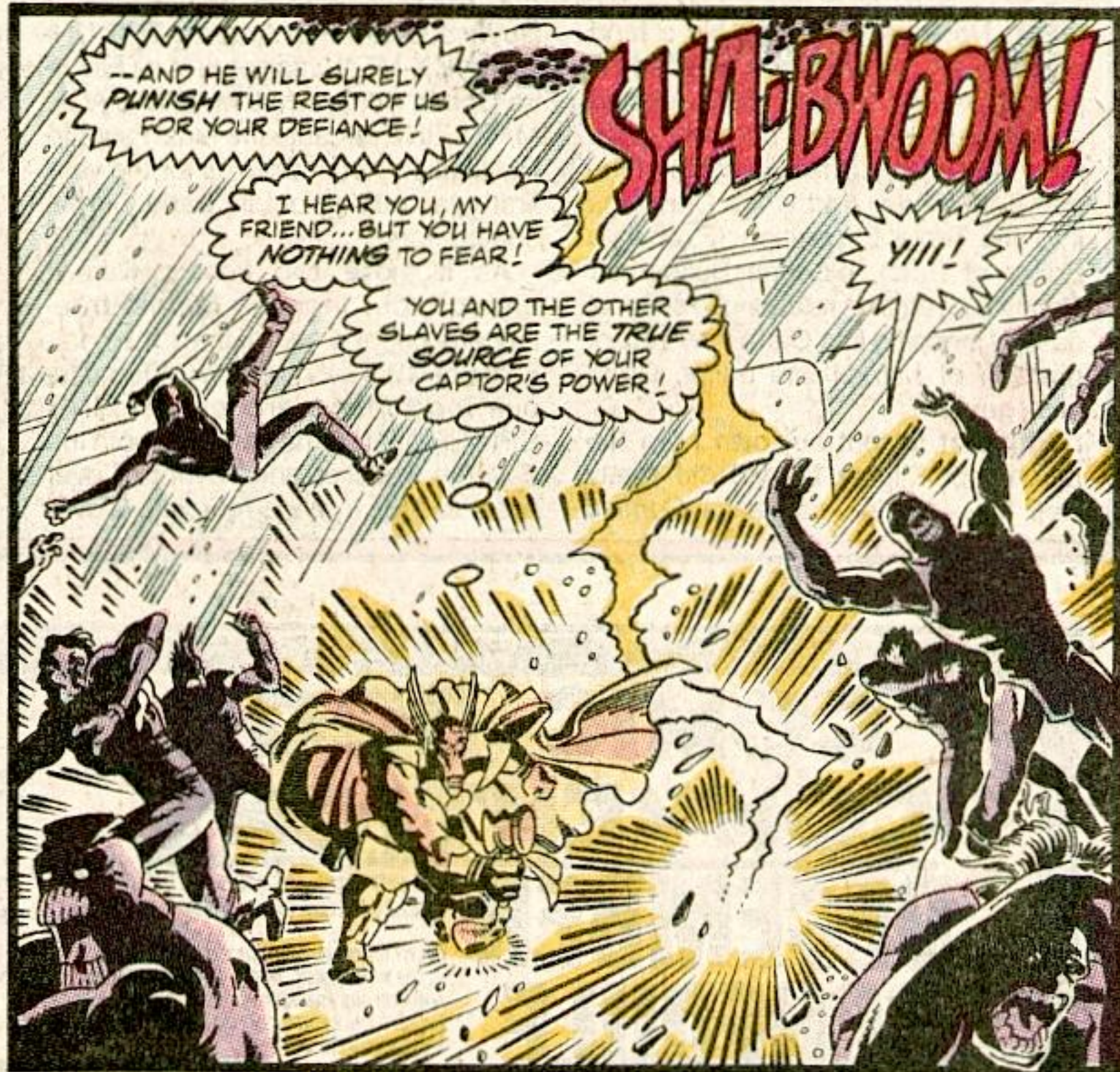


CAPTAIN ORACK IS ALREADY RACING HERE--

--AND HE WILL SURELY PUNISH THE REST OF US FOR YOUR DEFIANCE!

I HEAR YOU, MY FRIEND... BUT YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR!

YOU AND THE OTHER SLAVES ARE THE TRUE SOURCE OF YOUR CAPTOR'S POWER!



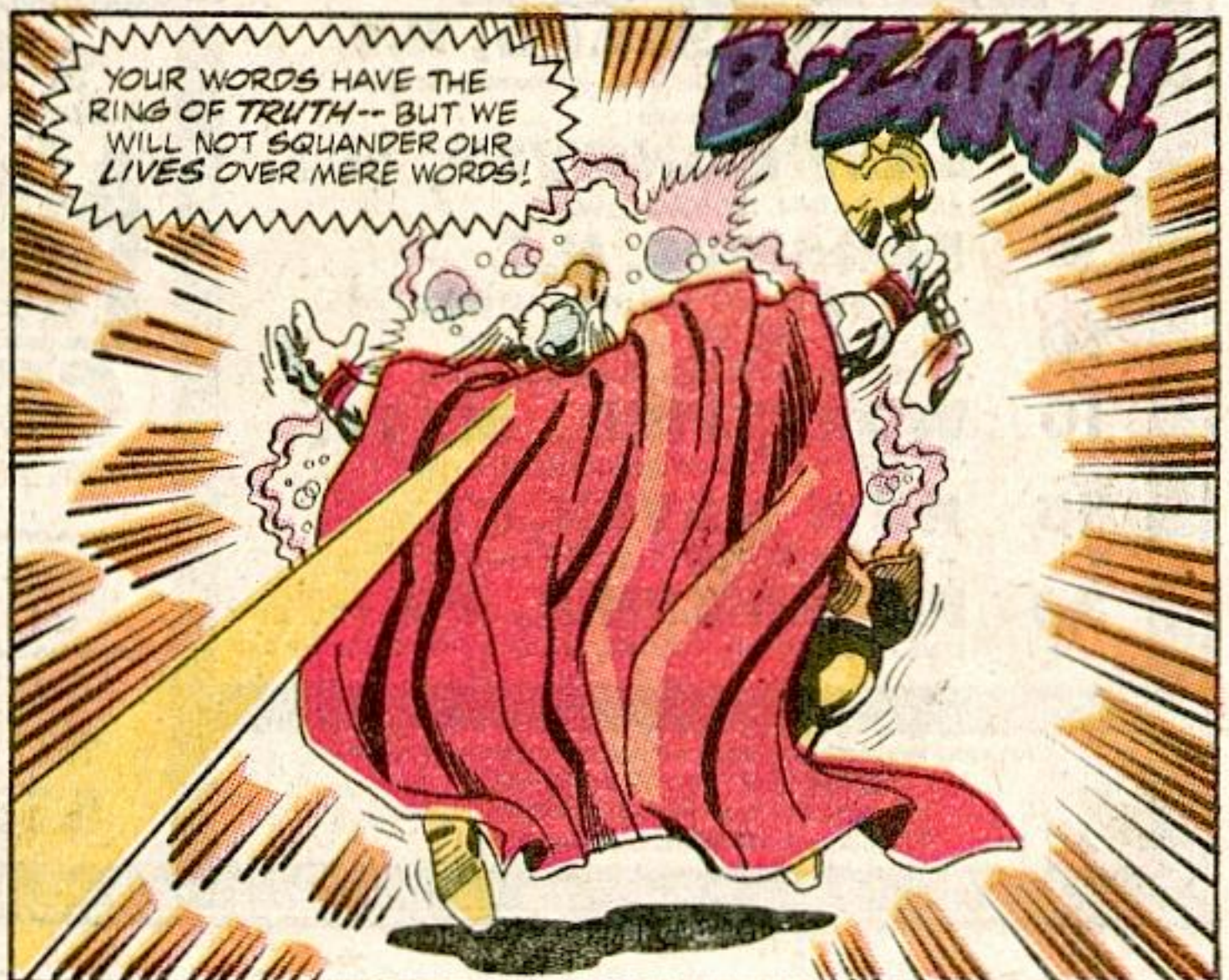
YOU GIVE THEM THE ABILITY TO DOMINATE YOU!

THEY CANNOT RULE WITHOUT YOUR CONSENT!

YOU CAN CHOOSE TO BE FREE!



YOUR WORDS HAVE THE RING OF TRUTH-- BUT WE WILL NOT SQUANDER OUR LIVES OVER MERE WORDS!



WELL DONE, SLAVES! YOU CAUGHT HIM COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE!

THE FOOL NEVER EXPECTED A PSYCHIC BLAST TO ERUPT FROM THE SHIP'S HULL!



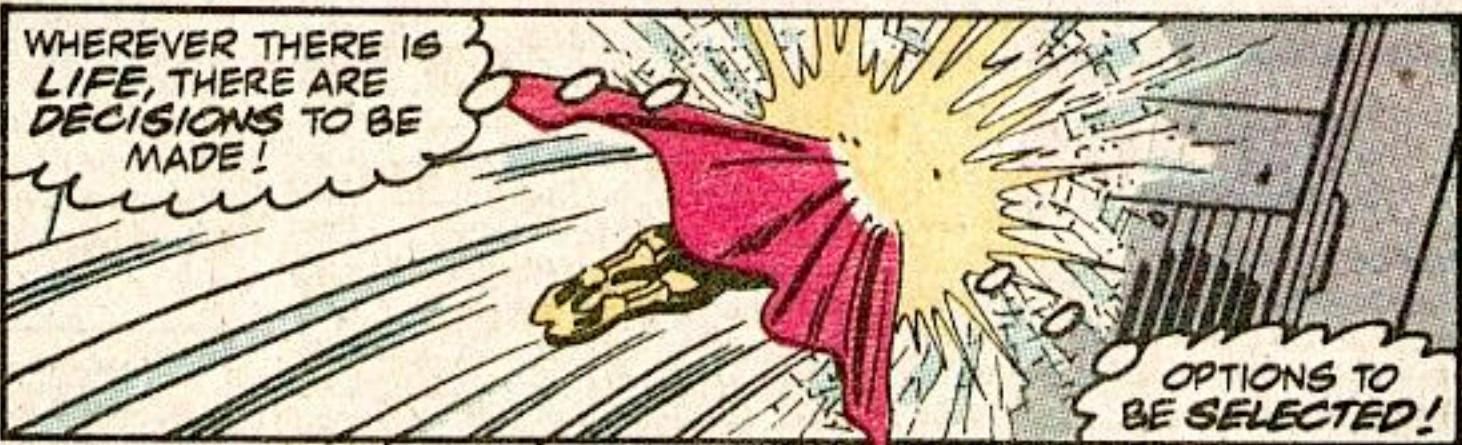
FORGIVE US, BILL! WE HAVE NO CHOICE...

DESTROY HIM --NOW-- BEFORE HE RECOVERS!

YOU ARE SADLY MISTAKEN, FRIEND!

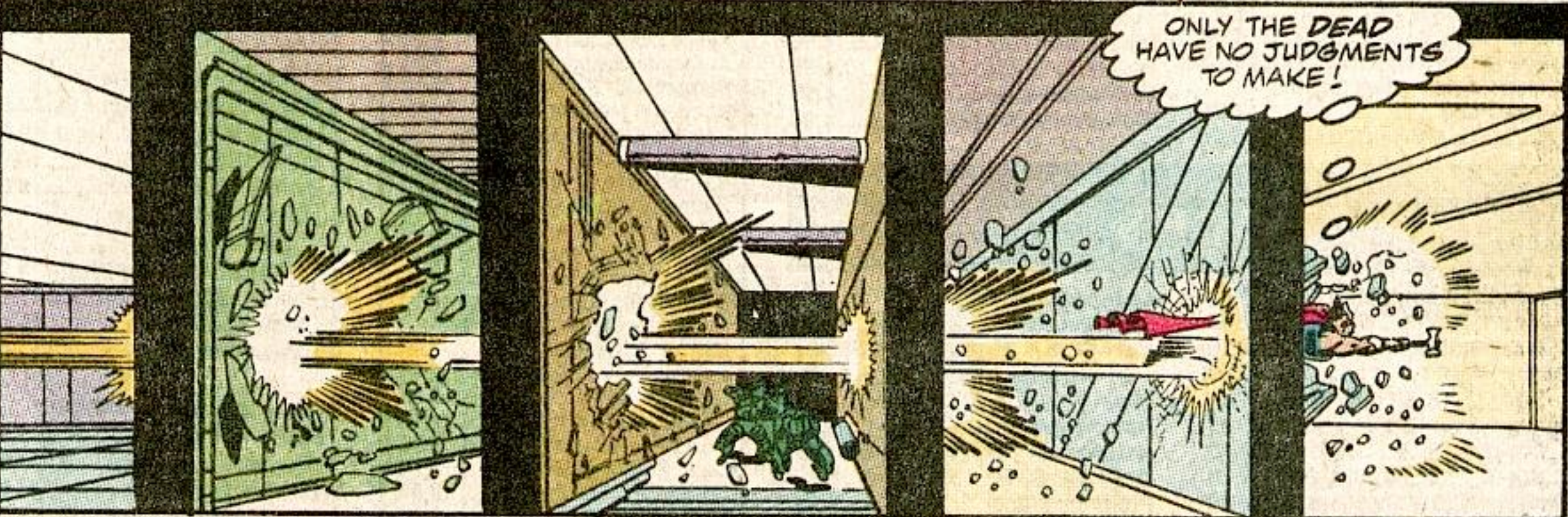


THERE IS ALWAYS A CHOICE!



WHEREVER THERE IS LIFE, THERE ARE DECISIONS TO BE MADE!

OPTIONS TO BE SELECTED!



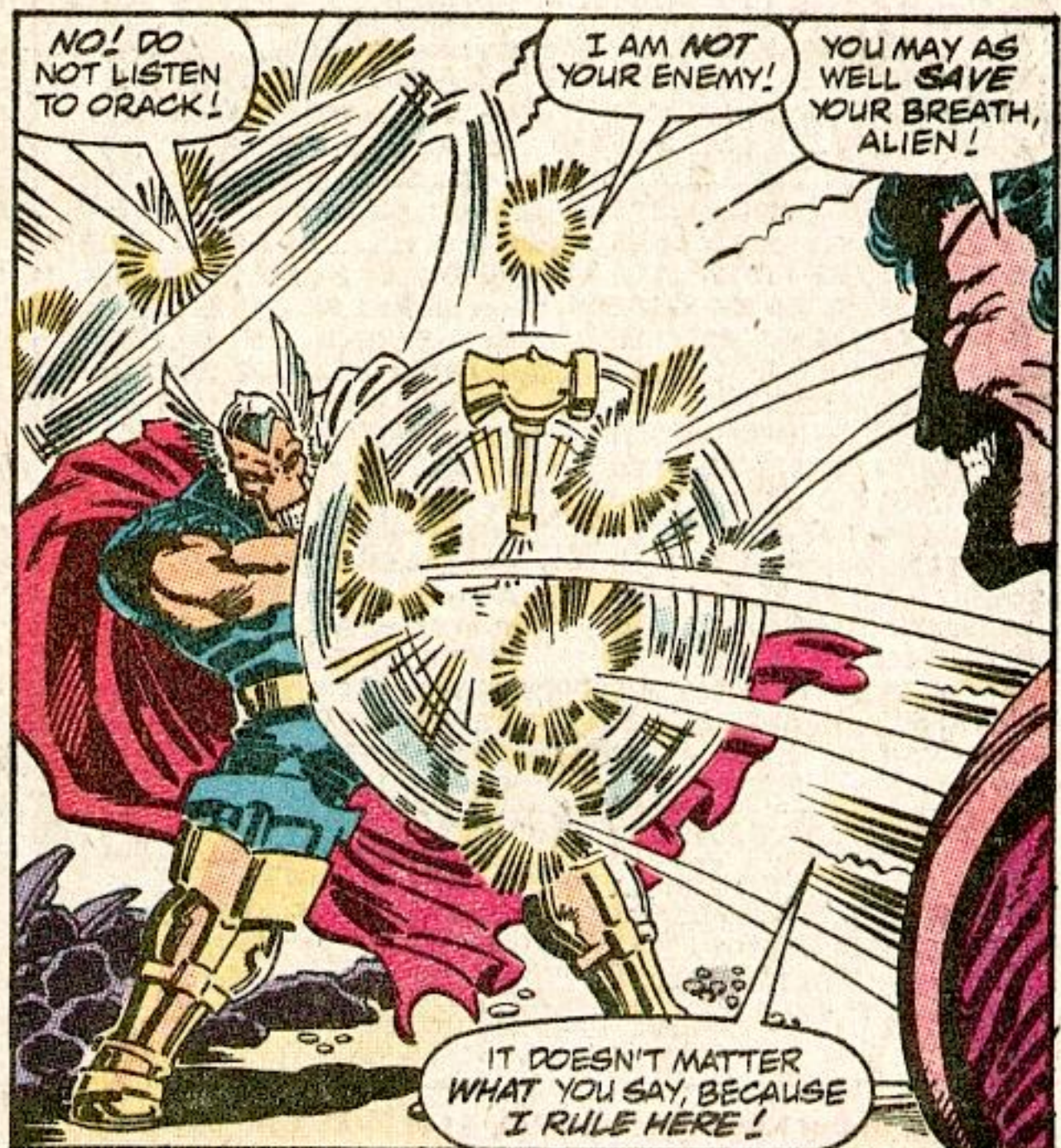
ONLY THE DEAD HAVE NO JUDGMENTS TO MAKE!



ONLY THE DEAD ARE TOTALLY FREE FROM CHOICE!

THAT IS A FREEDOM YOU SHALL SOON BE GRANTED!

ATTACK HIM, SLAVES! OBLITERATE THIS ARROGANT AGITATOR!

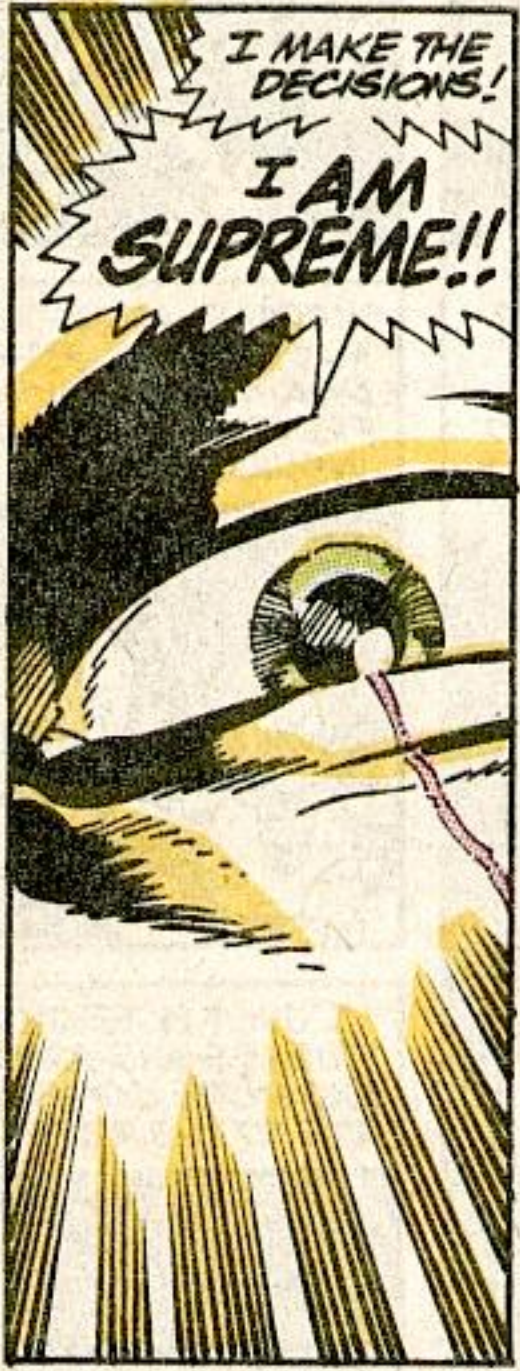
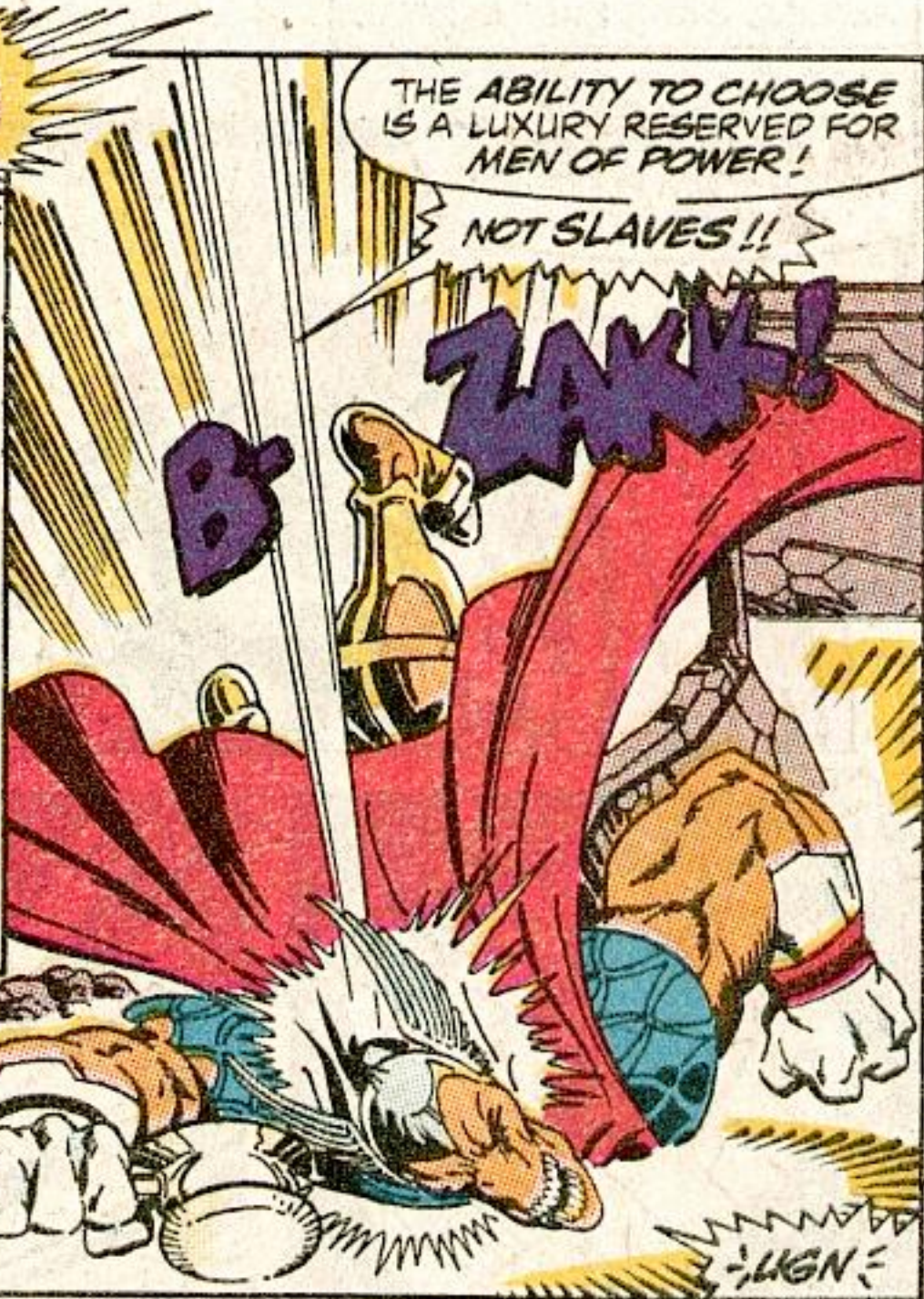


NO! DO NOT LISTEN TO ORACK!

I AM NOT YOUR ENEMY!

YOU MAY AS WELL SAVE YOUR BREATH, ALIEN!

IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU SAY, BECAUSE I RULE HERE!



AND SO, SOMETIME LATER...

FAREWELL, MY FRIENDS!
I MUST NOW RETURN TO
THE **GREAT FLEET**
WHICH I AM PLEDGED
TO PROTECT!

WE OWE YOU A DEBT WHICH CAN
NEVER BE REPAID, BILL!

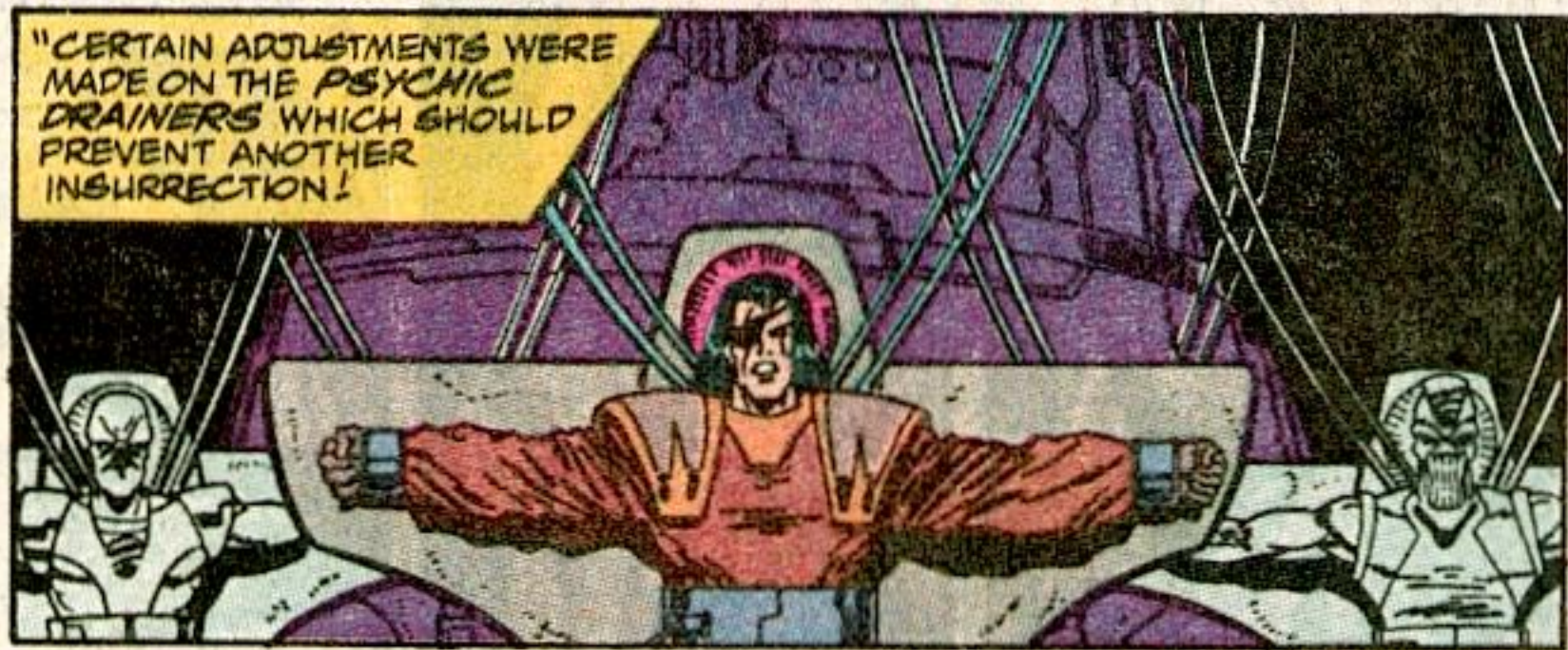
ALWAYS REMEMBER
THAT THE MIND OF A SEN-
TIENT BEING CAN ONLY
BE LIMITED BY THE
BOUNDARIES OF HIS
OWN IMAGINATION!



THE FORMER
SLAVES INTEND
TO USE THE
PIRATE'S SHIP
TO RETURN TO
THEIR
HOMEWORLDS!



UNFORTUNATELY,
THAT SHIP STILL REQUIRES
MASSIVE QUANTITIES OF
PSYCHIC ENERGY FOR
FUEL!



"CERTAIN ADJUSTMENTS WERE
MADE ON THE **PSYCHIC**
DRAINERS WHICH SHOULD
PREVENT ANOTHER
INSURRECTION!



"I JUST HOPE THAT MY
FRIENDS ARE **KINDER**
AND MORE **COMPASSION-**
ATE TO THEIR CAPTIVES--

"--OR, HISTORY
WILL **SURELY**
REPEAT ITSELF!



"FOR THE SENTIENT MIND
POSSESSES A **POTENTIAL**
--FOR **GOOD** AND **EVIL**--
WHICH IS **TRULY BOUNDLESS!**"

THE END?