

THE SHOWDOWN OF THE CENTURY!



**MARVEL
COMICS**

VERSUS



#3
APR 95



MARZ • JURGENS • CASTELLINI • RUBINSTEIN • NEARY

DIRECT EDITION

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*Dear
diary,*

*Been a while, huh?
Sorry I haven't
written. To tell you
the truth, things
have been kind
of crazy.*

Well...

*... to tell you the
truth, things have
been way crazy.
Like the whole
universe is coming
to an end crazy.*



Hmm, where to start?

Okay, this is what I know. There's our universe, right? And then there's this other one, kind of like ours, but different. Yeah, major revelation, right?

The reason I know this now is because the two universes started merging, people and buildings and everything crossing from one to the other.

Naturally, everybody freaks...

...especially the heroes, 'cause they're trying to to keep total chaos from breaking out.

The thing is, nobody can figure out what's going on, not even big-deal brains like Ms. Frost or Professor Xavier.

I mean, everybody wants to know why it's happening.



Maybe we shouldn't even ask. I'm still not sure I understand what I do know, but here goes.

There are these two, um, gods or entities or whatever you want to call them... one in each universe. Brothers, I guess. They're, like, the embodiment of everything in their universe.

A little tough to grasp, I know. Anyway, they both forgot the other one existed. But they noticed each other because of a few cosmic sort of events.



Now they've decided to find out whose universe is better, so they picked champions - including your favorite pyrokinetic mutant mall rat here - to settle it.

This is the deal: once we're summoned, we have to fight somebody from the other universe until one of us goes down for the count.

And it's not like we have a choice, because the losing universe...

Well, here's the scary part... when it's all over, only one universe is going to survive!

Like I need that kind of pressure!



It's already started. Thor defeated this guy called Captain Marvel...



...but Namor lost to Aquaman...



...and Quicksilver couldn't outrun the Flash. So right now we're losing two-to-one.



It's weird - creepy weird, I mean - how people are reacting, treating this like it's the Super Bowl or something.



BIBBO'S TOTE BOARD

| | |
|------|----------------|
| THOR | CAPTAIN MARVEL |
| AG | DEF. NAMOR |
| FLA | QUICKSILVER |
| SUP | 3-5 OVER HULL |
| BATI | TAIN AI |
| | CA RBOY. |
| | RM |
| | EVEN |

Maybe it's easier to do that than really think about the consequences. Sort of whistling in the dark.

But you want to know the worst thing? I finally find the right guy... I mean Mr. Right...

...and I've gotta fight him for the fate of two universes. Does that stink or what?







THIS...

...THIS IS IT. I GUESS IT'S TIME.

A BALLOON WAREHOUSE? WHAT'S UP WITH THAT?

I WOULD'VE RATHER STAYED IN THE DANGER GROTTO. NOT QUITE SO SPOOKY IN THERE.



WIM, I'D WISH YOU LUCK AND ALL, BUT...

...YOU KNOW.

YEAH...

...I KNOW.



OKAY.

SO WHATEVER HAPPENS, HAPPENS.



RIGHT...



...LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH.

LET'S!





HEY!

THAT WAS YOUR CAPE! YOU TRICKED ME!

I HAD A HECK OF A TEACHER.

BUT...



...BUT I DIDN'T EVEN...

...OH, I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!



YOU OKAY? NOT TOO TIGHT, IS IT?

NO, IT'S JUST... I LOST. YOU DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TO LAND A PUNCH. THAT'S SO LAME.

GOD, NO! I WAS NEVER PLANNING TO HIT YOU.

YOU WEREN'T? THAT'S... SWEET.



UM, YOU ARE PLANNING ON UNTYING ME THOUGH, RIGHT, HANDSOME?



SINCE YOU PUT IT THAT WAY...



DEEP SPACE.

MAN, I DON'T WANT TO BE DOING THIS.



NOR IS IT TO MY LIKING, GREEN LANTERN...

...BUT THIS COMBAT BETWEEN US IS NECESSARY.



IN THE PAST, YOU AND I HAVE PRESERVED OUR TWO UNIVERSES BY ACTING TOGETHER.

NOW WE ATTEMPT TO SAVE AT LEAST ONE BY BATTLING EACH OTHER.

UFF!



THE COSMIC BEINGS WHO COMMAND US ARE THE MOST POWERFUL ENTITIES I'VE EVER ENCOUNTERED.

EVEN MY FORMER MASTER GALACTUS PALES BEFORE THEM!

I'M NOT SAYING WE HAVE A CHOICE, SURFER...



...I'M
JUST SAYING
I DON'T LIKE
IT.

BUT I'LL
DO EVERY-
THING I CAN
TO WIN.

AS
MUST
I.

THE
VICTORY
IS
MINE...

...YET
NEVER
HAVE I MORE
REGRETTED
AN
OPPONENT'S
DEFEAT.



GOTHAM.

SHRIIP!



FIRST BLOOD TO YOU, CATWOMAN.

I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT I'M DOING HERE. NOBODY EVER ACCUSED ME OF BEING A HERO...

...SO WHY WAS I PICKED AS A CHAMPION?



AND FORGIVE ME FOR SAYING SO, BUT YOU DON'T STRIKE ME AS THE HERO TYPE EITHER, ELEKTRA... NOT CARRYING AROUND BLADES LIKE THOSE.



I'VE ALWAYS HAD A THING FOR WHIPS, MYSELF. SUCH A WIDE RANGE OF USES, IF YOU KNOW WH--

SNAP!



--HNF?!

STRONG
LITTLE THING,
AREN'T
YOU?

I'M AN
ASSASSIN. I
KILL MY OPPONENTS
GLADLY.

YEAH, WELL,
DON'T GO TO ANY
EXTRA TROUBLE ON
MY ACCOUNT.

BUT OUR
COMBAT WAS NOT
OF MY CHOOSING. I
WON'T SLAY YOU
MERELY TO APPEASE
THE BEINGS WHO
FORCE THIS
BATTLE...



...BUT
I WILL
WIN.





SMOOTH.

YEAH, THAT WAS JUST GREAT. MY WHOLE UNIVERSE IS DEPENDING ON MR. BIG-SHOT SPIDER-MAN TO SAVE IT...

...AND I'M TOO BUSY MAKING A JERK OUT OF...



...MYSELF?



BOY, HE DISAPPEARED FAST ONCE YOU SHOWED UP.

PETER'S A NICE KID, LOIS. HE JUST DIDN'T KNOW YOU AND I--



WORD JUST CAME IN! THE HULK AND SOME FREAK NAMED METALLO ARE BASHING EACH OTHER AROUND DOWNTOWN!

INNOCENT LIVES AT RISK! PROPERTY DAMAGE! THE MAKINGS OF A GREAT STORY!

I WANT YOU TWO ON IT AS--



HEY, WHERE'D KENT GO?

UM, DON'T WORRY, JONAH...



"... I'M SURE HE'S ON THE JOB ALREADY!"



THE ALLEY.

WAIT.

WAIT A MINUTE.
ALL THIS STUFF YOU'RE
TELLING ME? I MEAN...

...COME
ON.



TWO WHOLE
UNIVERSES EMBODIED
IN THESE COSMIC... BROTHERS,
OR WHATEVER YOU WANNA
CALL THEM.

AND I'M SUPPOSED
TO BE SOME KIND OF
SHARD FROM THE TWO
OF THEM? THAT'S WHY
I'VE BEEN A WANDERER
ALL MY LIFE?

NO!

I DON'T
BELIEVE
IT. I
CAN'T.

I'M
NOTHING
SPECIAL,
AND I DON'T
WANT TO
BE.



YOU'RE
JUST SOME
CRAZY
HOMELESS
GUY, THAT'S
ALL.

AM
I?



AND THAT'S JUST
A CARDBOARD
BOX? IT'S ALL
TRUE...

...AND IN
YOUR HEART,
YOU KNOW IT.
YOU FEEL IT.

THIS PLACE
IS THE CRUX OF
EVERYTHING,
AND YOU ARE THE
KEY. IF ANY-
THING IS TO BE
PRESERVED...



...YOU MUST
BE THE ONE TO DO
IT, AXEL ASHER!
THE ANSWER LIES
WITHIN YOU!

HEY!
WHAT'RE
YOU...?

...WHOA.

WHAT'D YOU DO TO ME?!

UNLEASHED WHAT'S INSIDE OF YOU. EACH OF US CHOOSES THE GUISE BEST SUITED TO WHO WE ARE. THIS IS MINE; THAT'S YOURS.

I TOLD YOU I'M A SHARD OF THE BROTHERS, JUST LIKE YOU. I'VE BEEN THE KEEPER OF THE GATEWAY BETWEEN THE TWO UNIVERSES.

YOU SEE IT AS A BOX BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT I WANT IT TO BE. IT MIGHT BE SOMETHING DIFFERENT FOR YOU...

...BECAUSE YOU'RE NEXT IN THE LONG SUCCESSION OF KEEPERS. MY TIME IS ALMOST UP. YOU HAVE TO TAKE UP THE MANTLE...

...YOU HAVE TO BECOME THE ACCESS.

EVERYTHING'S BEEN LEADING TO THIS MOMENT. YOUR WATCH IS MORE CRUCIAL THAN ANY THAT HAVE COME BEFORE.

IT FALLS TO YOU TO PRESERVE THE BALANCE BETWEEN THE TWO UNIVERSES.

YEAH, BUT...

...HOW DO I DO THAT?



FAR, FAR AWAY...



BASTICH!

SAYS YOU.



YA CALL
YERSELF
WOLVERINE?

COMIN' INTA
ONE O' MY
HANGOUTS FER
THIS BRAWL IS
YER LAST
MISTAKE!

--AAGH!

THIS
DUMP? I
AIN'T HERE
BY CHOICE,
LOBO!

PROBABLY
CAN'T EVEN
GET A DECENT
BREW IN--



ANYBODY MENTION
TO YOU I'M A MUTANT?
GOT THIS HEALING FACTOR
THAT LETS ME TAKE A
LOT OF PUNISHMENT...

SHLUK!



...ALMOST
AS MUCH
AS I DISH
OUT!



OUTSIDE
FAWCETT
CITY...

MERELY
GRASPING THE
HAMMER TRANSFORMED
ME. THE POWER COURSES
THROUGH ME, MORE POWER
THAN I EVER HAD AS
WONDER WOMAN...

...THE
POWER OF
A GOD.

IF I
MUST FIGHT
YOU IN THIS
GUISE...

WHO?

...THEN SO
BE IT. BUT I
WARN YOU... I,
TOO, HAVE BEEN
CALLED A *GODDESS*,
AND THE LIGHTNING
IS AT MY COMMAND,
AS WELL.

I AM
STORM, OF
THE X-MEN.

I WAS
TRANSPORTED
HERE. WE ARE
MEANT TO BATTLE,
YOU AND I.

I FEAR
YOU'VE NO HOPE
OF WINNING SUCH
A CONTEST WHILE
I WIELD THIS
WEAPON.

I COULD GAIN
AN EASY VICTORY.
BUT SUCH A
BATTLE...

PERHAPS.

BUT I
WILL NOT
YIELD.

...WOULD
NOT BE
FAIR.





WE FACE ONE ANOTHER AS WAS INTENDED. I MAY HAVE GIVEN UP AN ADVANTAGE...

...BUT THE VICTORY'S STILL GOING TO BE MINE.

NOT WHILE MY MUTANT ABILITIES ALLOW ME TO CONTROL THE ELEMENTS THEMSELVES. THE SKIES HEED ME!

AT MY COMMAND, THE WIND BLOWS ITSELF INTO A GALE! THE RAIN BECOMES A TORRENT!



...TO BEST AN AMAZON CHAMPION WITH THE STRENGTH OF THE GREEK GODS!

YOU'RE GOING TO NEED MORE THAN BAD WEATHER...



WHULD!

NNF!





GREENWICH VILLAGE.

NO FAIR!

ALL RIGHT, SPIDER-MAN! WHERE'D YOU GO?!

psst!
SUPERBOY, UP HERE!



ER CITY

SPAT!



YOU KNOW, IF YOU'RE NOT EVEN GONNA BE ABLE TO FIND ME...



... WE COULD BE AT THIS ALL DAY!



OH, I'LL FIND YOU, BUG-BOY!



HEY!
HOW'D YOU DO THAT?

KA-SPLOOSH!

TACTILE TELEKINESIS. COMES IN REAL HANDY.



NEAT TRICK.

SO WHAT'S YOUR STORY, KID?

YOU SUPERMAN'S KID BROTHER? SECOND COUSIN? WHAT?

I'M A CLONE. TRY TO GRASP THE CONCEPT.



A CLONE?!

YEAH, A CLONE.

HOPE YOU DON'T HAVE A PROBLEM GETTING YOUR BUTT KICKED BY ONE.



IF THERE'S ANY KICKING AROUND HERE, JUNIOR...



...IT'S MY FOOT IN YOUR FACE!

I PACK MORE OF A WALLOP THAN YOU EXPECTED, RIGHT? COMPARATIVE STRENGTH OF A SPIDER WILL DO THAT.

UNNF!

WHANK!



COMPARATIVE AGILITY, TOO.

BUT PROBABLY NOT ENOUGH OF EITHER TO BEAT YOU SLUGGING IT OUT IN CLOSE QUARTERS.

SUPER KID?

WHERE ARE YOU? THIS SNEAKY STUFF IS SUPPOSE TO BE MY GAG.

uh-oh.

HE'S BELOW--

--AMPH!!





METROPOLIS.

YOU'RE GOING TO BE DEFEATED AGAIN, METALLO...
...JUST LIKE EVERY OTHER TIME.

KL
ANG!

I'M GUESSING YOU'RE THE SUPER-MAN THIS METAL GEEK'S BEEN RANTING ABOUT?



I AM.

AND YOU'RE CALLED THE HULK?

ACTUALLY, I PREFER DR. BANNER, OR BRUCE.

I'LL DESTROY BOTH OF YOU! I'LL--



METROPOLIS IS MY CITY, BRUCE, BUT THANKS FOR THE HELP...

...PROTECTING IT?

HERE WE GO AGAIN.



THE GRAND CANYON.

LOOKS LIKE WE'VE BEEN "SUMMONED." IT'S SHOWTIME.

WE MUST'VE BEEN SENT HERE SO NO INNOCENTS WOULD BE ENDANGER--



--DHH!!

LET'S JUST GET DOWN TO IT.



WITH A PUNCH LIKE THAT, IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS A DOSE OF HEAT VISION ISN'T GOING TO PROVE FATAL...

AAGH!



... BUT I DOUBT EVEN YOU CAN WITHSTAND IT COMPLETELY.



OH, I CAN WITHSTAND A LOT.

THOOM!



YOU'LL NEED TO...



...BECAUSE I'M NOT HOLDING BACK!

THAT SUPPOSED TO WORRY ME?!



HWFF!



NNGH!



I'D PREFER TO CONSIDER YOU A FRIEND, HULK, BUT WITH EVERYTHING THAT'S AT STAKE, I DON'T THINK I CAN.

FOR ME TO SAVE MY WORLD, MY UNIVERSE, AND MOST OF ALL THE WOMAN I LOVE...

...I HAVE TO PUT YOU DOWN!

POW!



HE TOOK EVERYTHING I HAD, AND ALMOST STOOD UP TO IT.

NOTHING LEFT NOW...



...EXCEPT THE WAITING.

MANHATTAN.

SPLSCHI!

BATMAN
MELTS INTO THE
SHADOWS SO
EASILY...

...LIKE
HE'S A PART
OF THEM. I CAN'T
FIGHT WHAT I
CAN'T...

...FIND.



HNNF!

CHUDO!





SHFF!

SHFF!

SHFF!

WE'VE BEEN AT IT FOR HOURS. WE COULD BATTLE FOR DAYS...

...AND NOT HAVE A WINNER UNTIL ONE OF US DROPS FROM EXHAUSTION. WE SHOULD BE LOOKING FOR SOME OTHER OPTION.

WE WEREN'T GIVEN A CHOICE. WE HAVE TO FIGHT UNTIL SOMEONE GOES DOWN.

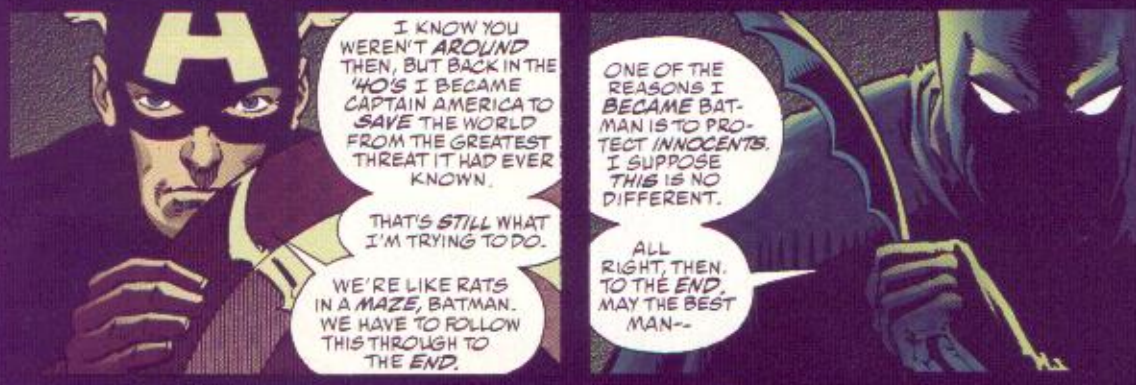


BILLIONS UPON BILLIONS OF LIVES HINGE ON THESE BATTLES. WE SHOULD BE TRYING TO FIND A WAY TO CIRCUMVENT THIS...

... AND STOP THOSE COSMIC BEINGS FROM WIPING OUT ONE UNIVERSE OR THE OTHER.

IF THERE'S NO OUTCOME, THE ENTITIES MIGHT WELL DESTROY BOTH UNIVERSES.

HOW?



I KNOW YOU WEREN'T AROUND THEN, BUT BACK IN THE '40'S I BECAME CAPTAIN AMERICA TO SAVE THE WORLD FROM THE GREATEST THREAT IT HAD EVER KNOWN.

ONE OF THE REASONS I BECAME BATMAN IS TO PROTECT INNOCENTS. I SUPPOSE THIS IS NO DIFFERENT.

THAT'S STILL WHAT I'M TRYING TO DO.

ALL RIGHT, THEN. TO THE END, MAY THE BEST MAN--

WE'RE LIKE RATS IN A MAZE, BATMAN. WE HAVE TO FOLLOW THIS THROUGH TO THE END.




THE SYSTEM'S BEING FLUSHED OUT!

SPOOSH!






...WE'LL
BE OUT OF
HERE IN A
SECOND.



ARE YOU
ALL RIGHT?

SWALLOWED SOME WATER
AND TOOK A BUMP ON THE
HEAD. YOU'RE GOOD WITH
THAT... BATARANG, YOU
CALLED IT?

BUT I'M FINE...
EXCEPT FOR COMING
UP SHORT. I LOST,
AND MAYBE DOOMED
AN ENTIRE UNIVERSE.



WE'RE BOTH STILL
HERE, SO THIS ISN'T
OVER YET. WHAT
NOW?

I'M NOT
SURE. I
DIDN'T
EXPECT--

THAT BOX. DO
YOU SEE THAT BOX,
IN THE ALLEY?
GLOWING?



ONE FROM
EACH
UNIVERSE!

THEY'RE
OUR CHANCE!
WE CAN STILL
SAVE EVERY-
THING!



WE'LL USE THEM!
DO WHAT I SHOWED YOU!

USE US? WHAT IS HE...

I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN.

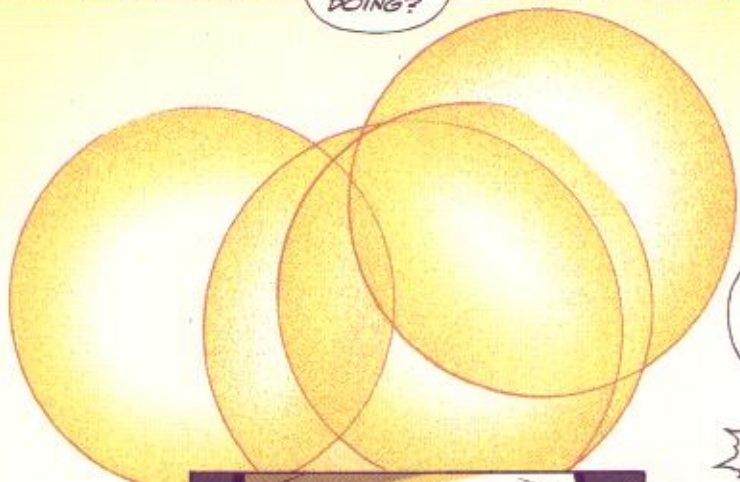
...TALKING ABOUT?



WAIT. I CAN FEEL...
...SOME-THING. I CAN...

IT'S WORKING.
...YES.
WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU...

...WHAT'RE YOU DOING?



ACCESS, HURRY!
THERE'S NO TIME LEFT! THE BOX WON'T CONTAIN IT ANYMORE! WE CAN'T KEEP THE BROTHERS FROM--

NO!



IT'S HAPPENING!

"THE BATTLES
ARE OVER, AND
ONLY *ONE*
UNIVERSE IS
BEING SPARED...

"...BUT NOT
THE WINNING
UNIVERSE!

"*ONE*
UNIVERSE
IS BEING
ELIMINATED...

"...BUT NOT
THE LOSING
UNIVERSE!

"THE BROTHERS
ARE SETTLING
THE CONTEST
THEIR OWN WAY...

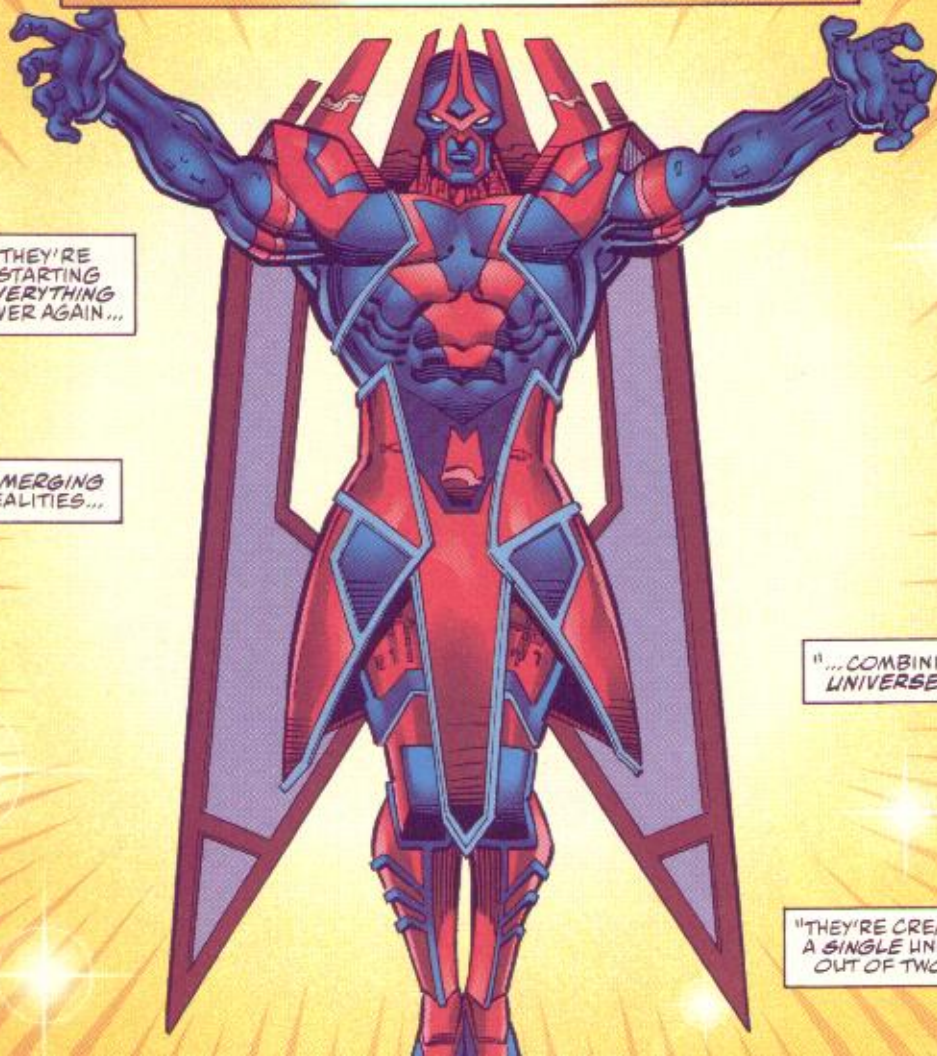
"...BY COMING TOGETHER,
FUSING ALL THAT THEY
ARE SO THEY CAN CO-
EXIST AS ONE UNIFIED
BEING.


"THEY'RE
STARTING
EVERYTHING
OVER AGAIN..."

"...MERGING
REALITIES..."

"...COMBINING
UNIVERSES!

"THEY'RE CREATING
A *SINGLE* UNIVERSE
OUT OF TWO..."





"...BUT WHAT
HAVE THEY
CREATED?"

**NEXT WEEK : THE
COMING OF THE
AMALGAM
UNIVERSE!**