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THE MIGHTY

THOR



FLY, THOR!
SAVE YOURSELF!
OUR SUN IS
GOING
NOVA!!

AND THERE'S
NOTHING
YOU CAN DO
TO STOP IT!

THEN WE
SHALL SEE--
IF EVEN AN
IMMORTAL
MAY DIE!

BUCKLER/
GIACOIA

**THE BIRTH AND
DEATH OF
EGO,**
THE LIVING PLANET!



A MARVEL MADHOUSE
MASTERPIECE BROUGHT
TO YOU BY:
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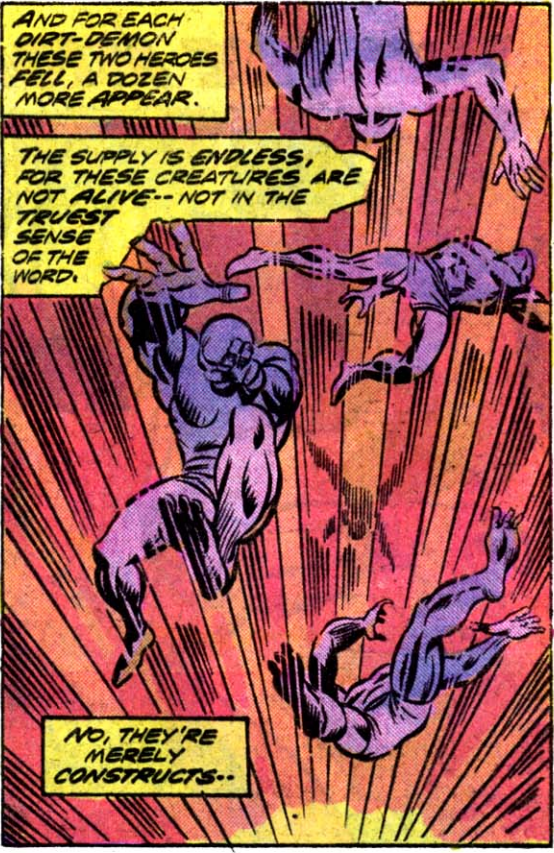
*NOTE FOR NITPICKERS: TO
HELP RICH MEET THE DEADLINE
BEFORE HE DASHED OFF TO THE
CARIBBEAN FOR A WELL-EARNED
VACATION, TWO BUDDIES
NAMED ARVELL JONES AND
KEITH POLLARD STEPPED IN
TO HELP RICH OUT. IF YOU
CAN FIGURE OUT WHAT PANELS
THEY DID, YOU'RE WAY AHEAD
OF US! --ROY.



**BATTLE BENEATH
A WORLD GONE MAD:**

THAT'S WHAT'S
HAPPENING
HERE, TO
THE ALIEN
CALLED
FIRELORD,
AND THE
OLYMPIAN
GOD,
HERCULES!

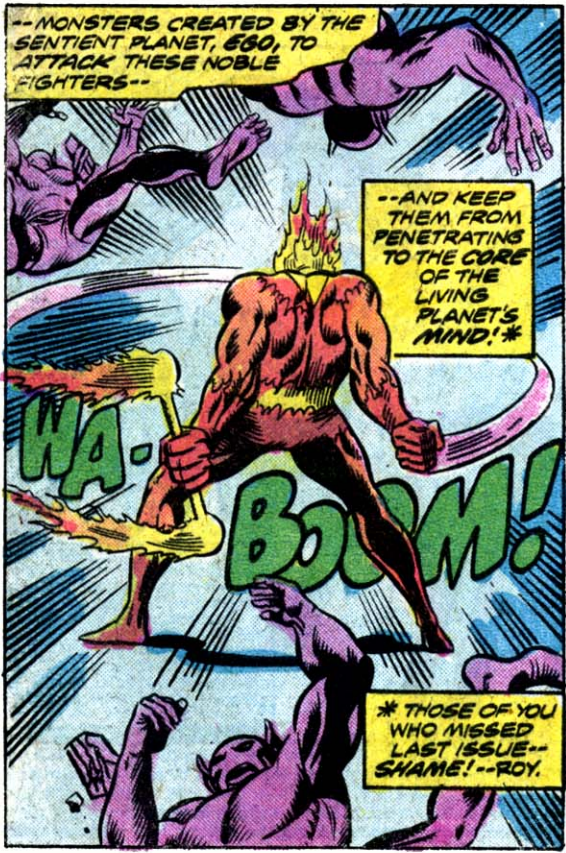
SPAM!



AND FOR EACH
DIRT-DEMON
THESE TWO HEROES
FELL, A DOZEN
MORE APPEAR.

THE SUPPLY IS ENDLESS,
FOR THESE CREATURES ARE
NOT ALIVE-- NOT IN THE
TRUEST
SENSE
OF THE
WORD.

NO, THEY'RE
MERELY
CONSTRUCTS--

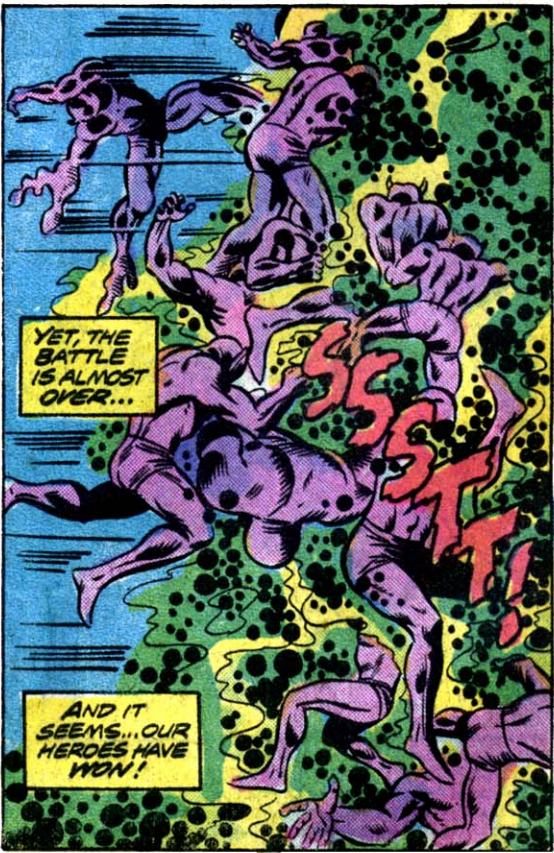


-- MONSTERS CREATED BY THE
SENTIENT PLANET, 660, TO
ATTACK THESE NOBLE
FIGHTERS--

-- AND KEEP
THEM FROM
PENETRATING
TO THE CORE
OF THE
LIVING
PLANET'S
MIND!*

**WA-
BOOM!**

* THOSE OF YOU
WHO MISSED
LAST ISSUE--
SHAME!--ROY.



YET, THE
BATTLE
IS ALMOST
OVER...

AND IT
SEEMS... OUR
HEROES HAVE
WON!



HO, FIRELORD...
METHINKS EGO
HATH LOST HIS
TASTE FOR
COMBAT!

HE HATH DIS-
SOLVED HIS MINIONS
--DRAWN THEM BACK
WITHIN HIMSELF--!

SO IT
SEEMS,
MY
FRIEND.

THE FIELD OF
HONOR IS OURS
TO CLAIM!

YET I
WONDER--
DARE WE
BE SO
SURE?

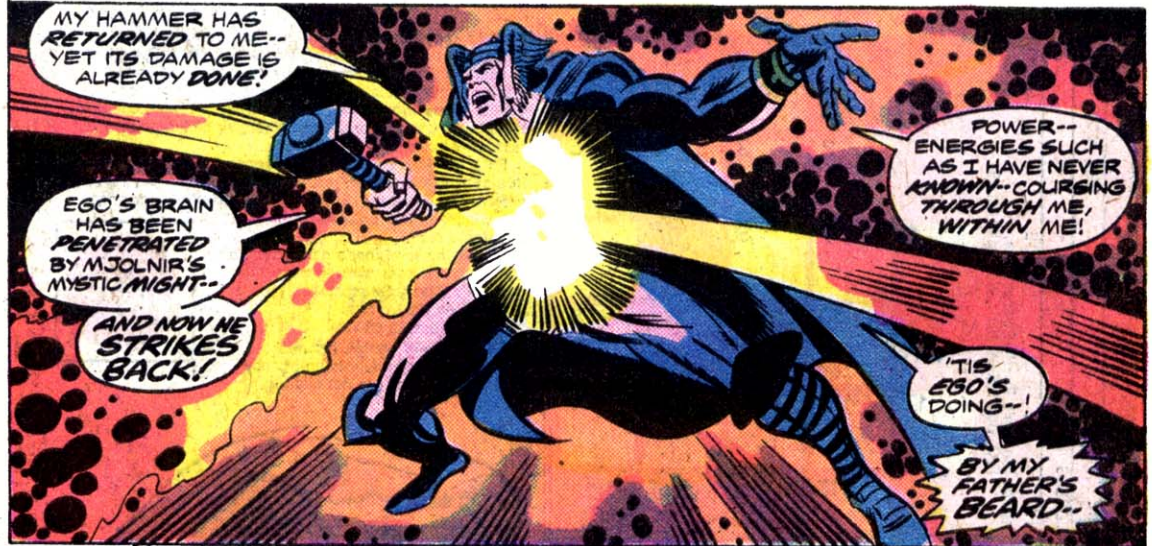
WHAT OF THOR?
HE WENT AHEAD OF
US--TO THE CENTER
OF THIS MAD PLANET--



"...THERE TO CONFRONT
THE BRAIN OF EGO,
AND IF HE CAN--
DESTROY IT!"

"CAN EVEN A GOD
OF THUNDER MEET
EGO MIND TO MIND--
AND LIVE?"

A DESERVING QUESTION, INDEED! HERE
NOW, AN ANSWER...



MY HAMMER HAS
RETURNED TO ME--
YET ITS DAMAGE IS
ALREADY DONE!

EGO'S BRAIN
HAS BEEN
PENETRATED
BY MJOLNIR'S
MYSTIC MIGHT--

AND NOW HE
STRIKES
BACK!

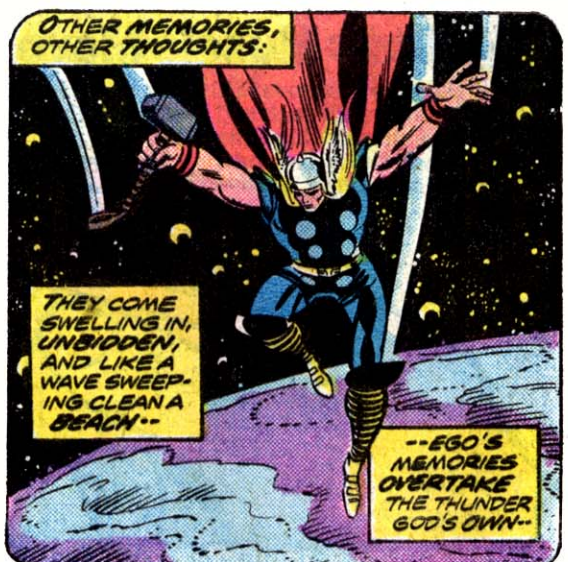
POWER--
ENERGIES SUCH
AS I HAVE NEVER
KNOWN--COURSING
THROUGH ME,
WITHIN ME!

'TIS
EGO'S
DOING--!

BY MY
FATHER'S
BEARD--



--EGO HATH
DRAWN ME
INTO HIS
MIND!



OTHER MEMORIES,
OTHER THOUGHTS:

THEY COME
SWELLING IN,
UNBIDDEN,
AND LIKE A WAVE SWEEP-
ING CLEAN A BEACH--

--EGO'S
MEMORIES
OVERTAKE
THE THUNDER
GOD'S OWN--

--AND DRAW HIM INWARD, TO DREAMS WHICH FIGHT FOR LIFE IN THE LIVING PLANET'S SOUL.

EGROS... ARE YOU WELL, COMPATRIOT? THE WAY YOU COLLAPSED...

I WAS AFRAID THE STRAIN HAD FINALLY **BROKEN** YOU.

JUST A MOMENTARY **DIZZINESS**.

I'M **ALL RIGHT** NOW, CHIMLU, I ASSURE YOU.

THEN WE SHOULD **MOVE ON**. THE PROJECT AWAITS US.

DREAMS-- OF A WORLD WHICH DIED EONS AGO--

--YET STILL EXISTS IN EGO'S UNDYING MEMORY.

HEIMDAL'S EYES! I SEE WHAT EGO SAW-- I HEAR WHAT EGO HEARD-- AND I SPEAK WHAT EGO **SPOKE!**

MY WILL HATH **ABANDONED** ME...

VERILY, I AM BUT A **PAWN** IN THIS GAME...

...A PUPPET WHICH **RELIVES** THE LIVING PLANET'S **PAST!**

AS YOU CAN **SEE**, THE WORK GOES **SMOOTHLY**.

ALREADY, NINETY-FIVE PERCENT OF OUR RACE HAS BEEN PLACED IN A STATE OF **SUSPENSION--**

--AND WITHIN THE NEXT THIRTY-NINE MINUTES, THE REMAINING FIVE PERCENT WILL JOIN THE OTHERS IN THE **SUBTERRANEAN CELLS**.

ONCE THE PROJECT IS COMPLETED, WE'LL BE **SAFE**.

NOTHING WILL DESTROY OUR RACE-- THANKS TO YOU, EGROS.

YOUR GENIUS HAS SAVED US FROM **EXTINCTION--!** YOUR GENIUS, AND, OF COURSE--



**--PROJECT
WORLDGORE!**

IN THE SPAN OF
A SINGLE *SOLAR
REVOLUTION*, WE
CLEARED A PATH
TO THE CENTER OF
OUR *PLANET*--

--WHERE OUR
PEOPLE WILL BE
PROJECTED FROM
THE DISASTER
WHICH IS ABOUT
TO BEFALL US!

I KNOW
THE PROJECT
WELL, CHIMU.

IT'S BEEN MY
LIFE THESE
TWENTY MONTHS.

YOUR SELFLESS
SACRIFICE WILL BE
REWARDED BY THE
GRATITUDE OF AN
ENTIRE *RACE*, ESROS

WITHOUT YOUR
GUIDANCE-- YOUR
ENCOURAGEMENT--YOUR
FAITH-- THE PROJECT
WOULD HAVE FAILED
BEFORE IT WAS
BEGUN.

WE ALL
OWE YOU OUR
LIVES.

GRADUALLY, THE REALITY OF WHAT HE'S WITNESSING BECOMES CLEAR TO THE GOD OF THUNDER: IN A WAY, HE HAS TAKEN ON EGO'S IDENTITY, WITHOUT LOSING HIS OWN...

ALL OF THIS HAPPENED EONS AGO, IN THE FAR-DISTANT PAST... YET FOR EGO THE MOMENT EXISTS TODAY...

IN HIS MADNESS, HE RELIVES THE DRAMA OF HIS FINAL HOURS...

...USING MY BODY IN PLACE OF HIS OWN MORIBUND FORM.

AS YOU CAN SEE, EGROS, OUR WORK IS ALMOST DONE.

ONLY A HANDFUL OF US REMAIN ON THE SURFACE OF OUR WORLD-- TO COMPLETE THE SUSPENDING PROCESS FOR THE REST.

HOW LONG BEFORE THE DISASTER OCCURS?

BY MY COMPUTATIONS, THE TIME GROWS NEAR...

EXTREMELY NEAR, COMPATRIOT.

ONLY TWO THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED SEVENTY--SIX SECONDS REMAIN UNTIL THE END OF ALL WE'VE EVER KNOWN...

... FORTY MINUTES... UNTIL OUR SUN GOES NOVA AND CONSUMES THE CRUST OF OUR ONLY HOME!

THE ANGUISH IN THE ALIEN'S WORDS ALMOST OVERWHELMS THE SON OF ODIN... AND FOR THE FIRST TIME, HE UNDERSTANDS THE TRAGEDY BEFORE HIM...

PERHAPS IF OUR RACE HAD PURSUED ITS EARLY EFFORTS AT STAR TRAVEL, WE MIGHT HAVE ESCAPED THIS FATE...

...BUT WE WERE TOO SHORT-SIGHTED, TOO FOOLISH... AND WE LET THE FUTURE SLIP BY.

ALL WE MAY DO IS HIDE LIKE ANIMALS IN A HOLE... AND PRAY TO THE GODS FOR OUR SURVIVAL!

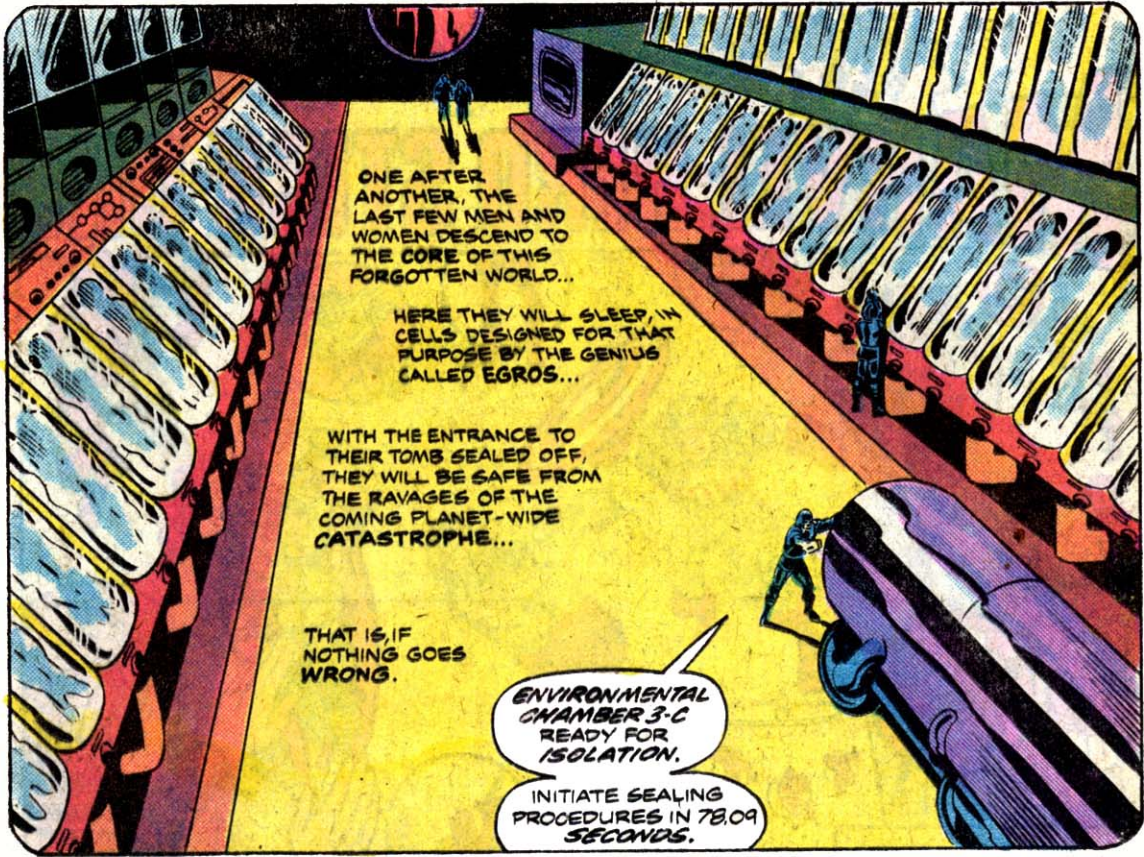
"WE'VE BEEN THROUGH ALL THIS, COMPATRIOT," THE ALIEN BESIDE THOR SAYS, SPEAKING GENTLY. "WHAT'S DONE IS DONE, AND IF WE ARE TO RETAIN OUR SANITY, WE CANNOT LOOK BEHIND."

"LET US HOPE THAT WHEN WE EXIT FROM OUR UNDERGROUND VAULT, A MILLENNIUM FROM NOW, WE ARE SOMEHOW WISER FOR THE EXPERIENCE."

"ONLY BY BELIEVING THIS MAY WE KEEP FROM DESPAIRING..."

"...FOR THE OPPORTUNITY FOR DESPAIR IS GREAT..."

"...AND MEN ARE WEAK."



ONE AFTER ANOTHER, THE LAST FEW MEN AND WOMEN DESCEND TO THE CORE OF THIS FORGOTTEN WORLD...

HERE THEY WILL SLEEP, IN CELLS DESIGNED FOR THAT PURPOSE BY THE GENIUS CALLED EGROS...

WITH THE ENTRANCE TO THEIR TOMBS SEALED OFF, THEY WILL BE SAFE FROM THE RAVAGES OF THE COMING PLANET-WIDE CATASTROPHE...

THAT IS, IF NOTHING GOES WRONG.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHAMBER 3-C READY FOR ISOLATION.

INITIATE SEALING PROCEDURES IN 78.09 SECONDS.

WE HAVEN'T MUCH TIME LEFT, COMPATRIOT. THE CHAMBERS MUST BE QUARANTINED IMMEDIATELY.

YOU AND I SHOULD REMAIN ON THE SURFACE UNTIL THE LAST POSSIBLE INSTANT, TO ENSURE SUCCESS.



ARE ALL THE OTHERS BELOW?

THE LAST MAN DESCENDS NOW.

WHEN HE IS GONE WE WILL BEGIN.



AND SO, A MOMENT LATER...

EGROS--I'VE NEVER SAID THIS TO YOU, BUT IT'S BEEN AN HONOR SERVING AT YOUR SIDE.

SAY NO MORE, THIS SYSTEM CANNOT FAIL.

SOMEDAY, WHEN THE SUN HAS COOLED AND THE SURFACE IS FIT FOR LIFE ONCE MORE--

IF ANYTHING SHOULD HAPPEN, I--

--WE'LL WORK TOGETHER AGAIN, YOU AND I, TO REBUILD OUR LOST WORLD.



BUT FOR NOW, CHIMU, WE NEED NOT CONCERN OURSELVES WITH MIGHT-BES AND MAYBES.

PROJECT WORLDCORE WILL SUCCEED, IF ONLY BECAUSE WE PLANNED SO--

EGROS!

THE SUN!



THE SUB-SOLAR REACTION HAS STARTED FIFTY SECONDS AHEAD OF SCHEDULE!

WITHIN TEN SECONDS, THE HYDROGEN FUSION CHAIN WILL BUILD TO CRITICAL MASS--

--OUR STAR WILL EXPLODE TOO SOON!



NO! IT ISN'T POSSIBLE!

OUR CALCULATIONS WERE SO EXACT-- THERE ISN'T ROOM FOR THIS MUCH ERROR--!

WE MUST FLEE TO THE VAULT, EGROS--

--PERHAPS IF WE OPERATE THE SEALING CONTROLS MANUALLY, WE CAN STILL SURVIVE!



DON'T BE A FOOL! EVERYTHING WAS PLANNED TO THE MILLI-SECOND--!

THERE ISN'T TIME TO SEAL THE CHAMBERS BEFORE THE SOLAR SHOCK WAVE HITS US!

RUMB... LLLL



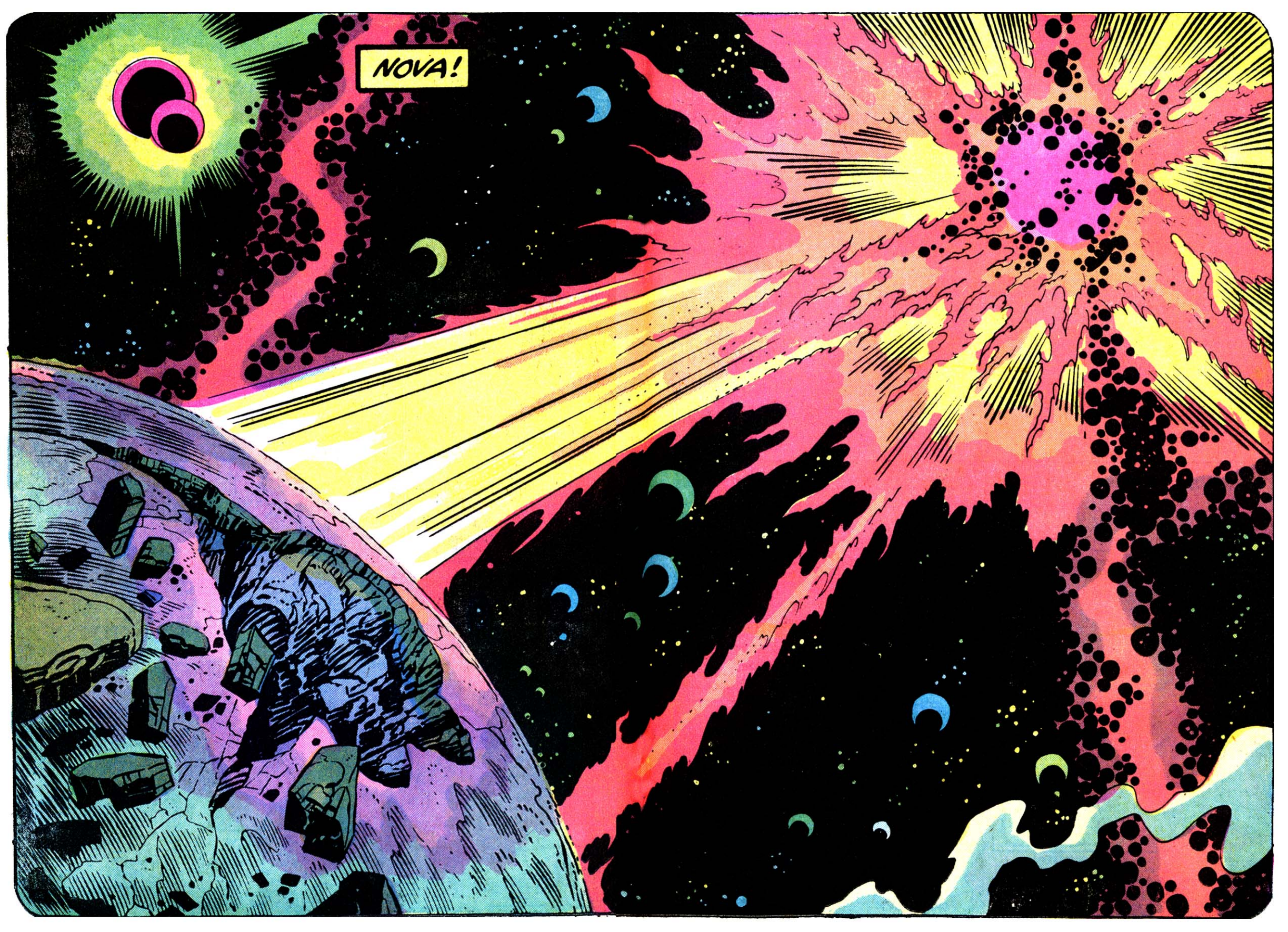
THERE ISN'T TIME!



SADLY, THIS IS TRUE.

BEFORE THE MAN CALLED EGROS HAS FALLEN EVEN A THIRD OF THE DISTANCE TO THE SAFETY OF THE UNDERGROUND VAULT, THE WORLD HE HAS KNOWN ALL HIS LIFE VANISHES AROUND HIM, AS THE TREACHEROUS SUN GOES--

NOVA!



NOW IT HAPPENS: AS EGO REMEMBERS, THOR ALSO REMEMBERS...



A MOMENT OF SEARING AGONY AS RADIATION CONSUMES BOTH MAN AND WORLD.

THEN... AN INSTANT OF STARK, BLINDING TERROR... AS THE MAN REALIZES THAT HIS LIFE IS NOT YET AT AN END...



... BUT IS ONLY NOW BEGINNING.



MAN AND PLANET JOINING AS ONE-- FEEDING ON THE LIVES OF TWO BILLION MEN AND WOMEN.



NO LONGER IS HE EGO, A MAN; NO LONGER IS HE A MEMBER OF A PROUD AND NOBLE RACE.

THE RACE IS DEAD. HE IS THE RACE.

AND THIS IS THE BEGINNING--

--OF HIS GUILT--

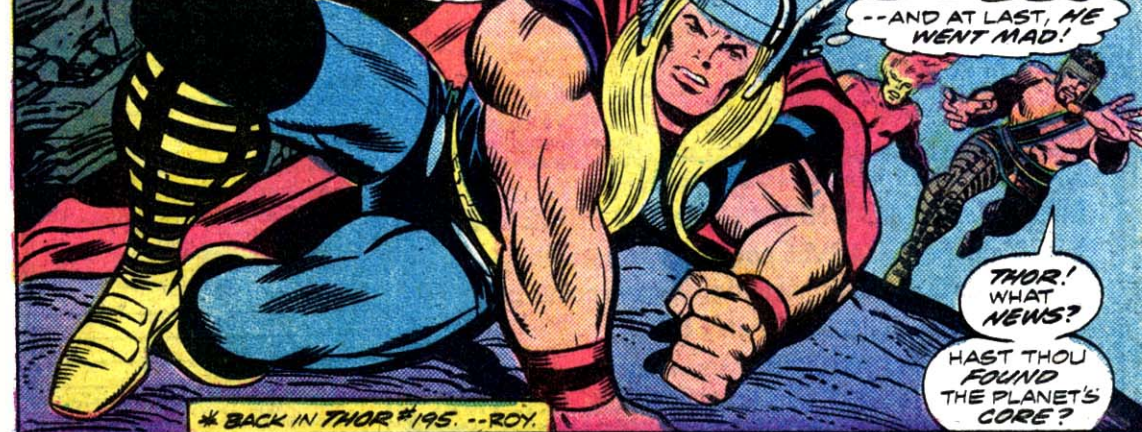
--AND HIS MILLENNIA-LONG NIGHTMARE!

AS FOR THOR: IT MARKS THE END OF HIS NIGHTMARE, AS EGO'S MEMORIES RETREAT, TO BE REPLACED BY GRAY, GRIM REALITY.

FOR ALMOST A MILLION YEARS, EGO HELD HIS GUILT IN CHECK--

--YET WHEN TANA NILE REMOVED A PORTION OF HIS PLANETARY SURFACE FOR HER OWN PURPOSES,* EGO'S MENTAL BALANCE WAS DISTURBED--

--AND AT LAST, HE WENT MAD!



THOR! WHAT NEWS?

HAST THOU FOUND THE PLANET'S CORE?

* BACK IN THOR #195. --ROY.

AYE. GALACTUS SPOKE THE TRUTH: EGO IS INSANE. * YET METHINKS THE INSANITY IS NOT WITHOUT CAUSE.



* GALACTUS ASKED THOR'S HELP IN BATTLING EGO LAST ISSUE. --ROY.

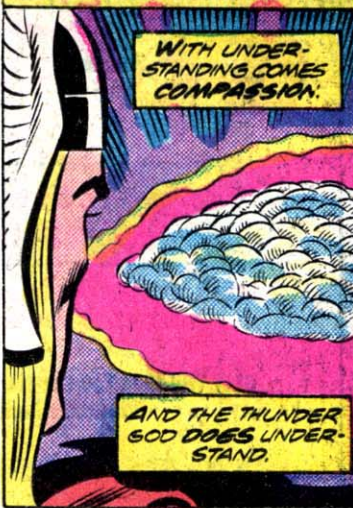
WITH CAUSE OR WITHOUT, THE PLANET IS A DANGER TO US ALL.



IT THREATENS TO ATTACK ALL SENTIENT BEINGS--

AND THAT LEAVES US LITTLE CHOICE.

THOR NODS; BUT HE CANNOT CONDEMN THE LIVING PLANET.



WITH UNDERSTANDING COMES COMPASSION.

AND THE THUNDER GOD DOES UNDERSTAND.

STILL--NO MAN CAN ACT IN A VACUUM.



IDEALS EXIST. COMPASSION EXISTS-- YET SOMETIMES NEITHER IS ENOUGH.

SOMETIMES A MAN MUST THINK NOT OF HIMSELF, OR OF HIS FEELINGS-- BUT OF OTHERS--

-- COUNTLESS OTHERS, WHOSE LIVES DEPEND ON HIS ACTIONS--

-- AND HE MUST DO-- WHAT HE MUST.



STAND BACK, BOTH OF YE! WITHIN THIS HAMMER, A STORM DOTHT RAGE--

-- AND NOW IT DOTHT RAGE-- WITHIN EGO!



KRAKASH

DEEP WITHIN THE BIO-PLANETOID AN OMINOUS RUMBLING BEGINS--



--A WORLD-WIDE SHUDDER WHICH FOLLOWS OUR HEROES TO THE SURFACE--

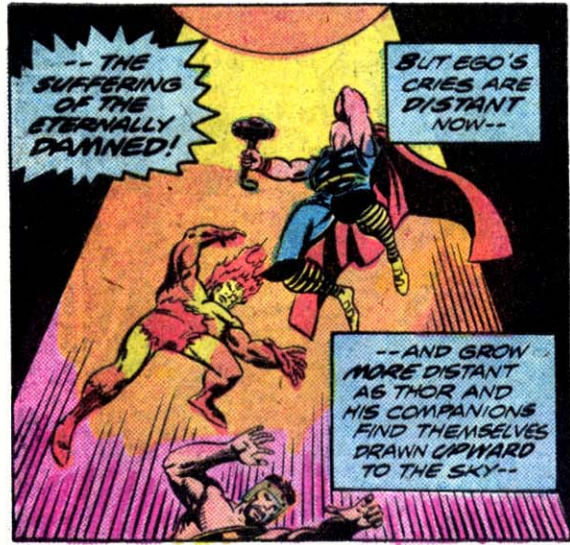
-- WHERE IT ERUPTS INTO A FULL-SCALE EARTHQUAKE!

YET, ALMOST LOUDER THAN THE RUMBLING IS EGO'S SNARLING SCREAM--



-- A CRY BORN OF SELF-HATE-- AND MADNESS!

CURSE YOU, THUNDER GOD! MAY YOUR SOUL SHRIVEL-- MAY YOU SUFFER AS I HAVE SUFFERED--



-- THE SUFFERING OF THE ETERNALLY DAMNED!

BUT EGO'S CRIES ARE DISTANT NOW--

-- AND GROW MORE DISTANT AS THOR AND HIS COMPANIONS FIND THEMSELVES DRAWN UPWARD TO THE SKY--

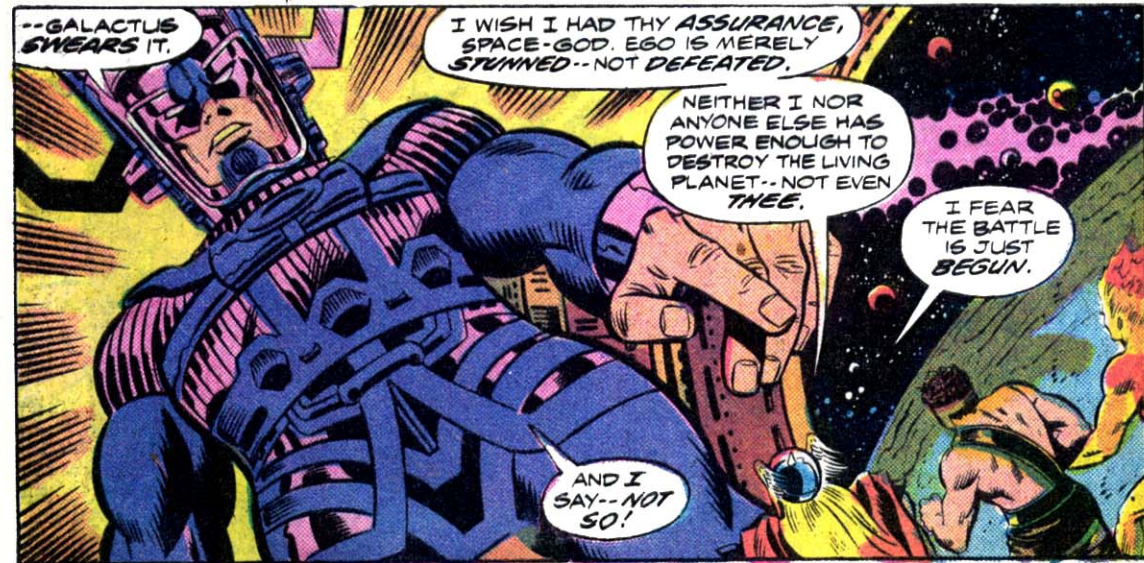


-- AND THE WAITING SPACE-CRAFT OF GALACTUS.

THE TIME HAS COME FOR US TO LEAVE, THOR.

OUR WORK HERE IS DONE.

NEVER AGAIN WILL EGO THREATEN OUR GALAXY--



-- GALACTUS SWEARS IT.

I WISH I HAD THY ASSURANCE, SPACE-GOD. EGO IS MERELY STUNNED-- NOT DEFEATED.

NEITHER I NOR ANYONE ELSE HAS POWER ENOUGH TO DESTROY THE LIVING PLANET-- NOT EVEN THEE.

I FEAR THE BATTLE IS JUST BEGUN.

AND I SAY-- NOT SO!



WHILE THE THREE OF YOU DIRECTED EGO'S ATTENTION INWARD TO HIS CORE, I TRANSPORTED A SIDEREAL PROPULSION UNIT FROM MY PRIMARY RESIDENCE IN THIS SECTION OF THE SPACE-TIME CONTINUUM--

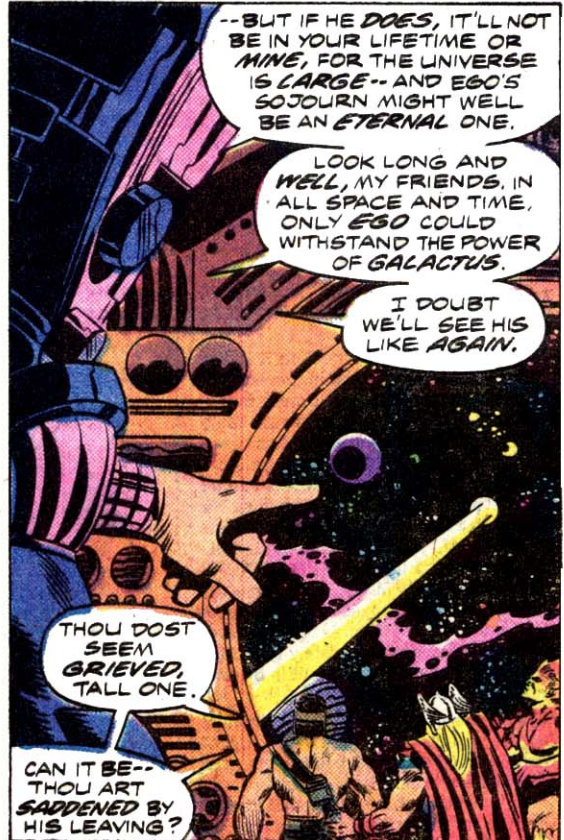
--AND ATTACHED THAT DEVICE TO THE LIVING PLANET'S SOUTH POLAR AXIS!

AT THIS PRECISE INSTANT, THE ENGINE IS IGNITING-- THE UNIT THRUSTS--



-- AND EGO BEGINS HIS EXILE!

PERHAPS SOMEDAY HE'LL RETURN, FOR THE SAVANTS SAY THE UNIVERSE IS CURVED-- AND THAT ALL THINGS RETURN TO THEIR STARTING POINT--



--BUT IF HE DOES, IT'LL NOT BE IN YOUR LIFETIME OR MINE, FOR THE UNIVERSE IS LARGE-- AND EGO'S SOJOURN MIGHT WELL BE AN ETERNAL ONE.

LOOK LONG AND WELL, MY FRIENDS, IN ALL SPACE AND TIME, ONLY EGO COULD WITHSTAND THE POWER OF GALACTUS.

I DOUBT WE'LL SEE HIS LIKE AGAIN.

THOU DOST SEEM GRIEVED, TALL ONE.

CAN IT BE-- THOU ART SADDENED BY HIS LEAVING?

ARE YOU SO BLIND,
YOU NEED TO ASK?

ONCE, I TOO
WAS A MAN, MUCH
AS EGO WAS A MAN--
AND A PART OF THAT
MAN STILL BREATHES
WITHIN ME, AS A PART
STILL BREATHES
WITHIN EGO.

TO SURVIVE, I MUST DO
MANY THINGS WHICH
SHAME ME--THINGS I
WOULD NOT DO, HAD
I THE CHOICE.

WERE I NOT
GALACTUS, AND WERE
NOT EGO MAD-- WE
MIGHT HAVE BEEN
COMRADES IN A WAY
YOU CAN NEVER
UNDERSTAND.

BUT I AM
GALACTUS--
AND EGO IS
MAD-- AND
OUR DESTINIES
ARE DECREED.

WE HAVE OUR
ROLES, AND WE MUST
FULFILL THEM--
THOUGH THE SADNESS
IS GREAT INDEED.

MASTER,
FORGIVE ME--
BUT MAY I
SPEAK?

OF COURSE.
WHO HAS A
GREATER
RIGHT, THAN
YOU-- MY
MOST FAITH-
FUL HERALD?

SPEAK,
FIRELORD.
GALACTUS
LISTENS.



MASTER... ONCE I WAS A MAN, MUCH AS YOU WERE A MAN... A FREE MAN, WITH MY OWN DESTINY.



I'VE SERVED YOU LONG AND WELL, WITHOUT CONCEIT OR COMPLAINT.

NOW I ASK YOU-- I BEG YOU--

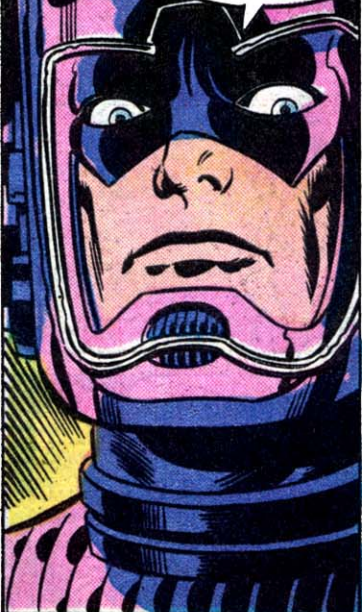
LET ME BE THAT FREE MAN AGAIN.

AYE. THY SPEECH WAS MOST FAIR IN ITS SENTIMENT, GALACTUS. WILT THOU APPLY THE SENTIMENT TO THE REALITY--



--OR WAS THY SPEECH ONLY SPEECH?

I MEANT WHAT I SAID, THUNDER GOD, AND THIS, TOO, I MEAN-- FIND ME A HERALD TO REPLACE HIM, A HERALD FAITHFUL AND TRUE-- AND FIRELORD WILL GO FREE.



LET'S TAKE THAT PRONOUNCEMENT AS A CUE, AND EXCHANGE THAT SCENE FOR A MORE CONVIVIAL ONE: THIS ONE OCCURRING IN THE IMPERIAL THRONE ROOM OF ASGARD...



...WHERE, A FEW EARTH-DAYS LATER, ALL-FATHER ODIN EXPLODES WITH A BELLOWING LAUGH...

MY SON ASTOUNDS ME, LADY SIF-- NO SOONER DOES HE PERFORM ONE MIRACLE, THAN HE SUMMARILY PERFORMS ANOTHER.

WHERE, INDEED, CAN HE FIND A NEW HERALD FOR GALACTUS-- AND THUS FREE HIS FRIEND--



--THAN ON EARTH, THE MOST FAVORED OF PLANETS?

ANY OTHER GOD WOULD HAVE BEEN DEFEATED BY GALACTUS' DEMAND-- BUT NOT THOR.

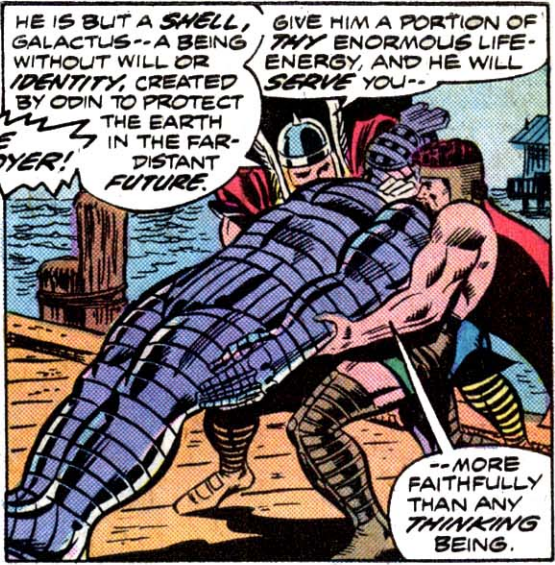
MY SON'S WITS ARE ALWAYS ABOUT HIM--

--AND HE HAS REMEMBERED WHAT I ALMOST DID NOT--



"-- THAT THERE IS ONE PARTICULAR CREATURE WHO WOULD BE PERFECT FOR THE SPACE-GOD'S NEEDS, AND WHOSE USEFULNESS AT PRESENT IS ALMOST NON-EXISTENT--"

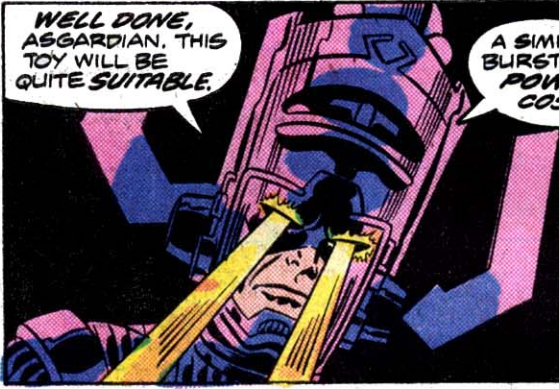
THE DESTROYER!



HE IS BUT A **SHELL**, GALACTUS-- A BEING WITHOUT WILL OR **IDENTITY**, CREATED BY ODIN TO PROTECT THE EARTH IN THE FAR-DISTANT FUTURE.

GIVE HIM A PORTION OF **THY ENORMOUS LIFE-ENERGY**, AND HE WILL **SERVE YOU--**

-- MORE FAITHFULLY THAN ANY THINKING BEING.



WELL DONE, ASGARDIAN. THIS TOY WILL BE QUITE SUITABLE.

A SIMPLE BURST OF THE **POWER COSMIC--**



-- AND HE LIVES, MY MINDLESS SLAVE!



SO THEN, THE DEED IS **DONE**-- THE FIRELORD IS **FREE**-- AND AS FOR GALACTUS AND THE DESTROYER--

-- ON MY WORD, WE'LL TROUBLE YOU NO MORE.

LIGHT: FLASHING AND REFLECTING--

-- AND WHEN THE GLOW HAS FADED--



-- TRUE TO HIS WORD, GALACTUS IS GONE.

AND SO, A MOMENT AFTER, IS FIRE-LORD--



-- WITHOUT A SINGLE WORD OF GRATITUDE.

THINKST THOU WE'LL MEET YON FRIEND AGAIN, THOR?

'TIS A SMALL WORLD, HERCULES-- AND FRIEND OR FOE--

-- WE ALWAYS "MEET AGAIN."

NEXT ISSUE THE UNEXPECTED RETURN OF AN UNEXPECTED FRIEND, IN A TALE TITLED (FOR REASONS WHICH WILL BE FRIGHTENINGLY CLEAR):

WHERE DARKNESS DWELLS, DWELL I!



A
RAVEN
SCAN

Thor 228
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