

THOR

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THE
MIGHTY

THOR

BATTLES THE BEING CALLED
FIRELORD!



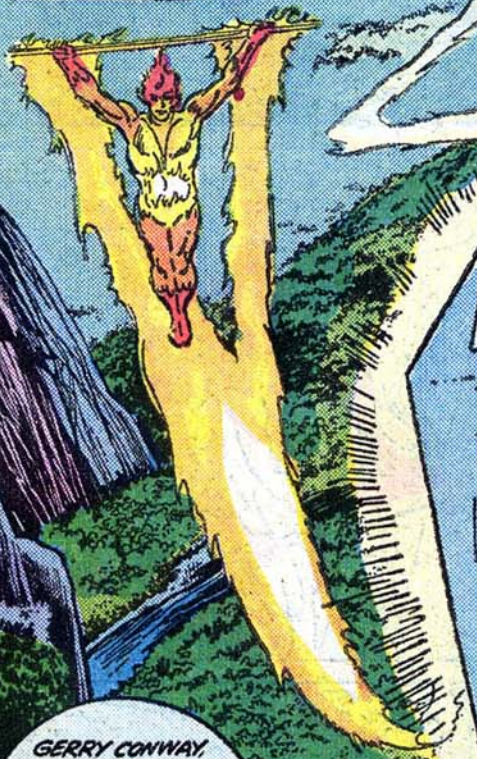
Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE MIGHTY THOR!**

LO, THE RAGING BATTLE!

HIGH IN THE WHITE-TIPPED MOUNTAINS OF THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST, A FLAMING FIGURE CUTS A SCARLET PATH THROUGH THE DUSKY TWILIGHT SKY.

NO, IT'S NOT THE HUMAN TORCH-- IT'S AN ALIEN BEING CALLED FIRELORD--

AND HE'S ABOUT TO MAKE A MOST FATEFUL DISCOVERY!



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IF YOU WANT TO SHARE IN THAT DISCOVERY-- WELL THEN, FAITHFUL ONE-- JUST TURN THE PAGE!



ODD. THERE SEEMS TO BE A **CUBE** OF SOME SORT ON THAT CLIFF BELOW--

--MILES FROM CIVILIZATION--

--HUNDREDS OF FEET FROM THE VALLEY FLOOR!



IT CERTAINLY IS NOT A NATURAL OBJECT.

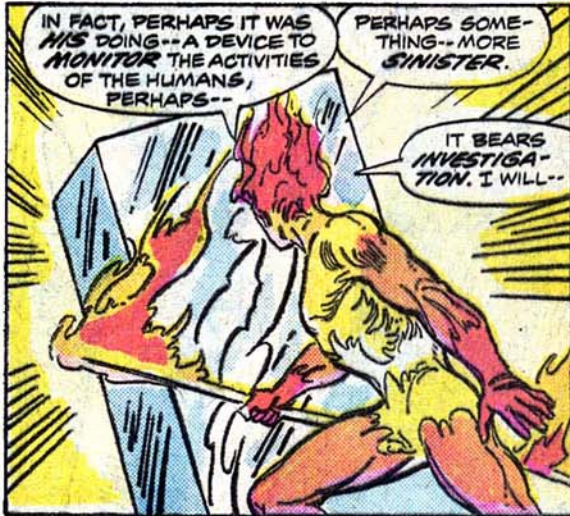
YET--WHETHER IT IS **MAN-MADE** IS SOMETHING YET TO BE DETERMINED.



DURING MY WANDERINGS ACROSS THIS PLANET, I'VE SEEN MANY BIZARRE THINGS-- BUT NOTHING SO BIZARRE AS THIS.

IT RIVALS THE MYSTERIES OF **SALACTUS**, HE WHO WAS ONCE MY **MASTER**.*

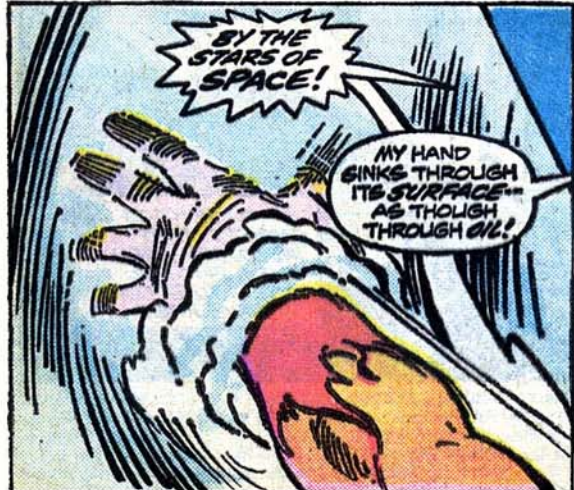
* "UNTIL **THOR** AND **HERCULES** FREED **FIRELORD**, IN ISSUE #228. --ROY.



IN FACT, PERHAPS IT WAS **HIS** DOING--A DEVICE TO **MONITOR** THE ACTIVITIES OF THE HUMANS, PERHAPS--

PERHAPS SOMETHING--MORE **SINISTER**.

IT BEARS **INVESTIGATION**. I WILL--



BY THE **STARS OF SPACE!**

MY HAND SINKS THROUGH ITS **SURFACE**-- AS THOUGH THROUGH **OIL!**



SOME INSTINCT TELLS ME THE **CUBE** WAS MADE TO BE ENTERED.

THEN ENTER IT, I **SHALL**-- FOR I AM **FIRELORD**--

--AND **FIRELORD** KNOWS NO **FEAR!**

THERE IS A MOMENT OF **INCREDIBLE COLD**--

WHEN THE COLD
PASSES--ALL HAS
CHANGED!

THE ALIEN CALLED FIRELORD FINDS
HIMSELF IN A STRANGE, TWISTED
DIMENSION-- WHERE PERSPECTIVE IS
LOST, WHERE SHAPE AND FORM SEEM
TOTALLY WITHOUT MEANING-- AND
WHERE DEPTH IS A MADMAN'S
FANCY!

HERE THERE IS SOUND,
CONTINUOUS SOUND, LIKE THE
MUSIC OF THE SPHERES.
ANOTHER MAN MIGHT FIND
THE SOUND TOO MUCH FOR
HIS MIND TO CONTAIN--BUT
FIRELORD HAS TRAVELED IN
THE VOID BETWEEN THE
STARS--

--AND HE MERELY
SMILES.

HE SMILES--UNTIL
HE SEES, HE'S NOT
ALONE.



WELCOME.

AS THE FIRST OF MANY WHO WILL FOLLOW THEE--THOU ART HONORED.

WELCOME TO MY DOMAIN-- AND TO MY STRUGGLE.

CAREFUL. I HAVE NO PATIENCE FOR OTHER MEN'S PRESUMPTIONS.

TELL ME WHO YOU ARE. THEN--WE'LL TALK.



I AM POWER, FOOL!

LITERALLY, POWER!

AND THOU--THOU ART A PAWNY OF THAT POWER, WHETHER THOU KNOWEST IT-- OR ACCEPTS IT!

I BROUGHT THEE HERE FOR A PURPOSE, ALIEN--!

THOU WILT FULFILL THAT PURPOSE--



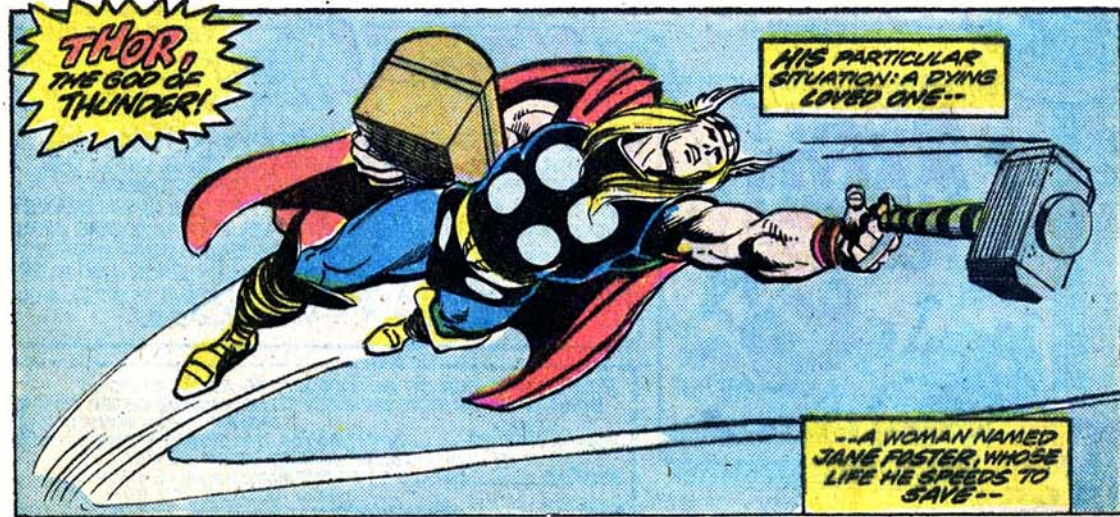
--OR THOU WILT DIE!



WE'LL HAVE TO LEARN THE FIRELORD'S ANSWER LATER.

NOW, WE MUST LOOK TO OTHER THINGS-- OTHER SITUATIONS-- OTHER CHARACTERS.

SUCH AS HIS CHARACTER!



THOR, THE GOD OF THUNDER!

HIS PARTICULAR SITUATION: A DYING LOVED ONE--

--A WOMAN NAMED JANE FOSTER, WHOSE LIFE HE SPEEDS TO SAVE--

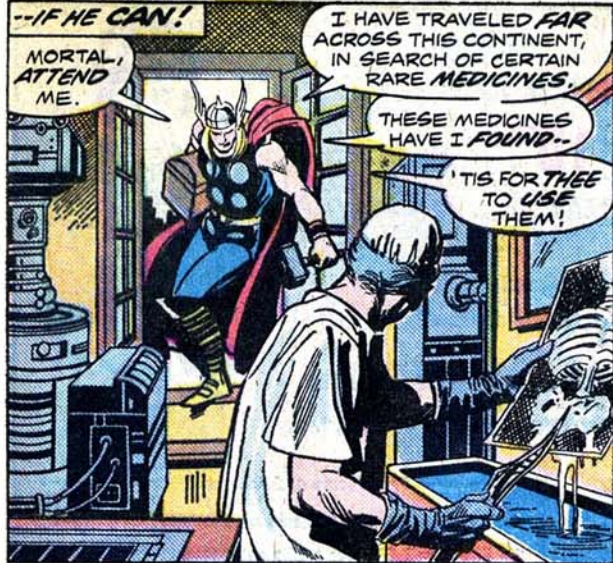
--IF HE CAN!

MORTAL, ATTEND ME.

I HAVE TRAVELED FAR ACROSS THIS CONTINENT, IN SEARCH OF CERTAIN RARE MEDICINES.

THESE MEDICINES HAVE I FOUND--

'TIS FOR THEE TO USE THEM!



MEDICINES?

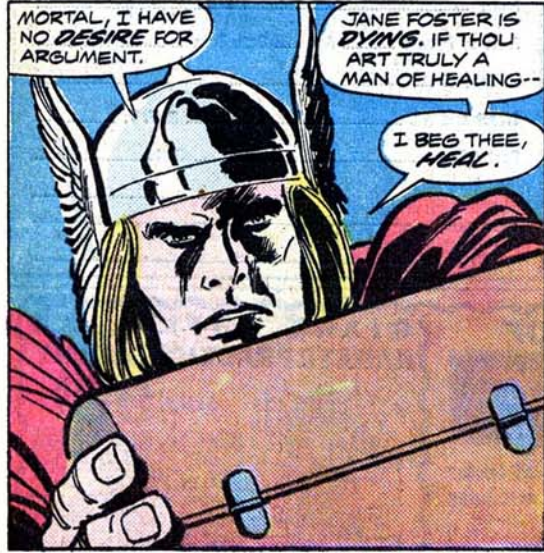
LOOK HERE, WHO DO YOU THINK--



MORTAL, I HAVE NO DESIRE FOR ARGUMENT.

JANE FOSTER IS DYING. IF THOU ART TRULY A MAN OF HEALING--

I BEG THEE, HEAL.



THE DOCTOR STARES AT THE TOWERING ASgardIAN LORD. HE FROWNS, LOOKS DOWN, THEN SLOWLY NODS...

I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN--

GOD LORD! DO YOU REALIZE WHAT THESE ARE?

AYE...



BUT WE NEED NOT DISCUSS THAT HERE.

THE GOVERNMENT BASE FROM WHICH I TOOK THEM GAVE THEM FREELY, I ASSURE THEE--

AFTER YOU PERSUADED THEM, NO DOUBT.

PLEASE, DOCTOR. HURRY.

THERE IS LITTLE TIME FOR--



I UNDERSTAND, THOR.

MY WIFE DIED BECAUSE OF HEMOPHILIA--AND THEN WE DISCOVERED THE SO-CALLED 'CLOTTING FACTOR.'

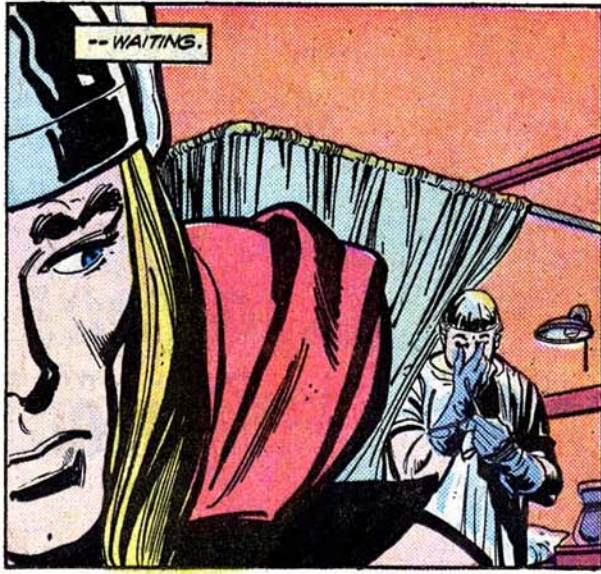
I'LL DO MY BEST.





THERE IS A CONDITION OF TIME IN WHICH THE MINUTES CRAWL LIKE HOURS, AND THE HOURS LINGER LIKE DAYS.

NOT FOR THE FIRST TIME, THOR EXPERIENCES THAT ENDLESS WAITING --AS HE STANDS NOW IN JANE FOSTER'S HOSPITAL ROOM--



-- WAITING.



I TRIED, THOR. I USED EVERY EXPERIMENTAL CHEMICAL YOU GAVE ME.

IT'S NOPELESS. SOMETHING'S GONE OUT OF HER SOUL...



THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO.



JANE FOSTER, ONCE, SHE WAS THE THUNDER GOD'S ONLY TRUE LOVE-- BUT THEN ODIN INTERFERED BETWEEN MORTAL AND GODLING, TEARING THEM APART-- SEEMINGLY FOREVER.*

AFTER COUNTLESS YEARS, HE'S FOUND HIS LOVE FOR HER AGAIN--

*THOR #36.--ROY.



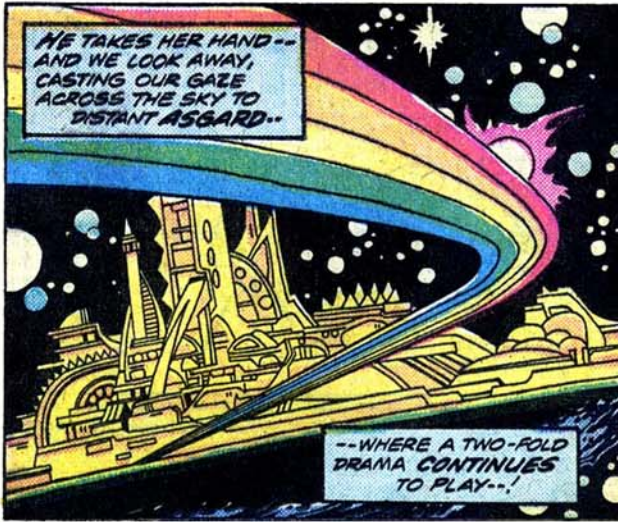
-- ONLY TO FIND HER A VICTIM OF THE FORCES WHICH HAVE KILLED SO MANY OTHERS* -- AND SOON WILL HAVE HER AS WELL!

THOR...?

I AM BESIDE THEE, MILADY.

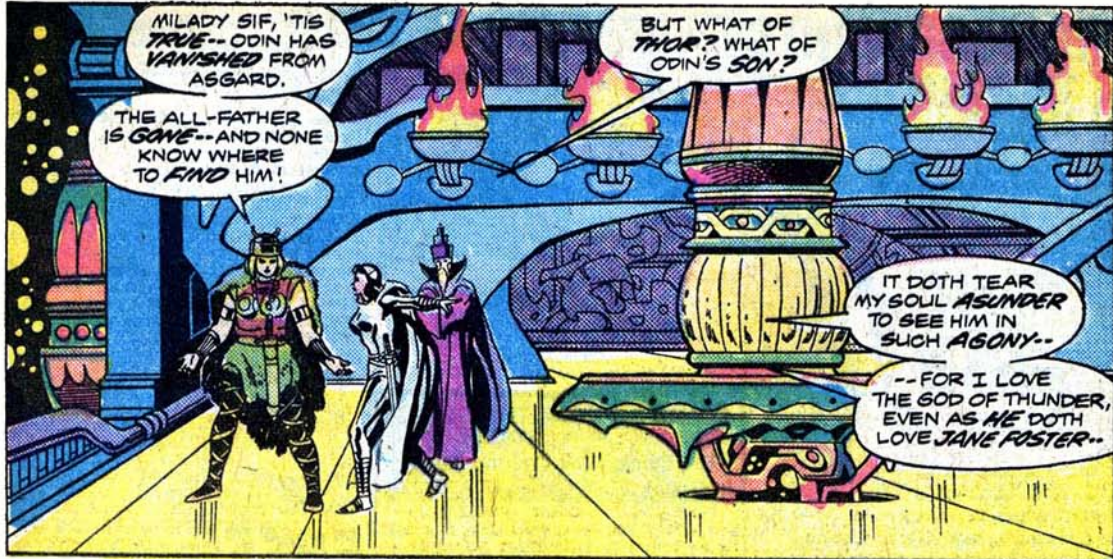
ALWAYS-- BESIDE THEE.

*THOR #230.--ROY.



HE TAKES HER HAND -- AND WE LOOK AWAY, CASTING OUR GAZE ACROSS THE SKY TO DISTANT ASGARD--

--WHERE A TWO-FOLD DRAMA CONTINUES TO PLAY--!



MILADY SIF, 'TIS TRUE-- ODIN HAS VANISHED FROM ASSGARD.

THE ALL-FATHER IS GONE-- AND NONE KNOW WHERE TO FIND HIM!

BUT WHAT OF THOR? WHAT OF ODIN'S SON?

IT DOETH TEAR MY SOUL ASUNDER TO SEE HIM IN SUCH AGONY--

-- FOR I LOVE THE GOD OF THUNDER, EVEN AS HE DOETH LOVE JANE FOSTER--



-- AND I AM LOATHED TO SEE HIM SUFFER-- EVEN ONE MOMENT MORE!

NAY, MILADY. HAST THOU FORGOTTEN--

YET, IF ODIN CANNOT BE FOUND-- JANE FOSTER WILL DIE!



-- THE RUNESTAFF OF KAMO THARNN?



HILDEGARDE, THOU ART EVER MY FRIEND.

THE RUNESTAFF HOLDS THE POWER OF LIFE AND DEATH--



-- A POWER GRANTED ANY WHO MAY TAKE IT.

AND, WHILST I ALONE MAY FAIL--

-- THERE IS ONE WHO MAY AID ME, WHO WILL NOT FAIL --

-- AND SO I GO TO HIM --



-- AND MAY THY GOOD WILL SPEED ME ON MY WAY!



ACROSS COUNTLESS REACHES OF SPACE AND TIME, BENEATH THE HEAVENS WHICH HIDE THE GLORIES OF ASGARD, THERE IS A CERTAIN MANSION ON MANHATTAN'S EAST SIDE, LEASED TO A GROUP OF FIGHTING MEN AND WOMEN CALLED... THE AVENGERS.



IN THAT MANSION, WE FIND--

MASTER HERCULES-- MISTRESS KRISTA... WILL YOU REQUIRE LUNCH NOW...

OR WOULD YOU PREFER TO EAT WITH THE OTHERS?

NOW, METHINKS,

WHEN FOOD MAY BE HAD-- TAKE IT.



HERCULES, THOU DOTH AMAZE ME. THY FRIEND, THOR, SPENDS HIS EVERY WAKING HOUR IN A TIRELESS VIGIL--

WOMAN, THERE ARE TIMES WHEN A MAN MUST BE ALONE.

YET THOU DOTH SIT HERE, AND NOT BESIDE HIM!

HAD I THE POWER TO AID HIM, I WOULD.

SINCE I CANNOT, THEN I MUST--



AH, BUT THOU CAN AID HIM, HERCULES.

JANE FOSTER MAY YET SURVIVE-- IF THOU DOTH HAVE THE STRENGTH TO STAND BESIDE ME!

BY MY SOUL!

WHO DOTH CHALLENGE HERCULES' STRENGTH?



I DO, OLYMPIAN-- SIF, WHO LOVES THOR MORE THAN ANY WOMAN ALIVE!

BECAUSE I LOVE HIM, I WANT FOR HIM-- WHAT HE WANTS.

AND HE WANTS JANE FOSTER TO LIVE.

CANST THOU HELP HIM IN THIS?



AYE... BUT I NEED A STRONG MAN BESIDE ME.

THE QUEST I PLAN IS DANGEROUS-- MORE DANGEROUS THAN THOU MAY GUESS.

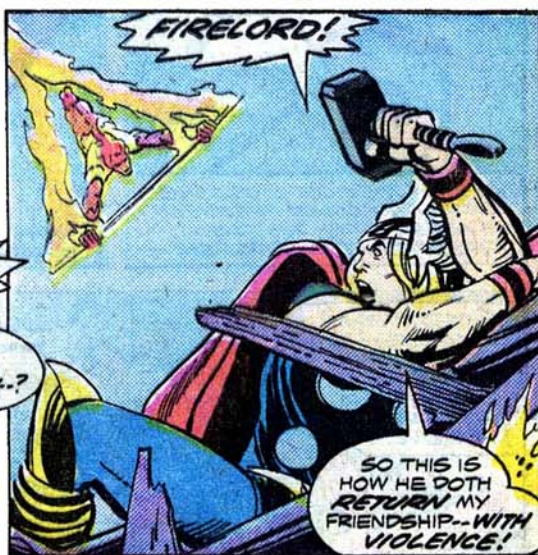
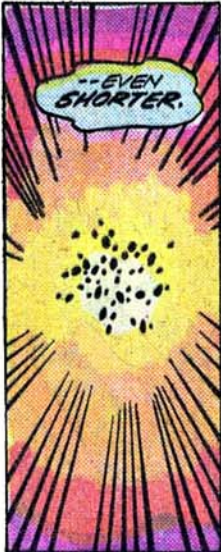
'TIS POSSIBLE-- WE MAY NOT RETURN.

WOMAN... NOW DOTH THOU UNDERSTAND?

I DO.

BUT I BEG THEE, HERCULES-- BE WARY OF DANGER, IF NOT FOR THY SAKE--

THEN FOR MINE.



TEMPER IS A WORD WITH CERTAIN CONNOTATIONS: IT CONJURES CERTAIN IMAGES, OF SUDDEN ANGERS AND EXPLOSIVE RAGE.

WHAM!

YET, EVEN THE MOST EXPLOSIVE MORTAL FURY COULD NOT MATCH THE ANGER WITHIN THE ALIEN FIRELORD AT THIS MOMENT--

--FOR, IF ANY CREATURE MAY BE SAID TO BE TEMPER INCARNATE--

--IT IS FIRELORD--

--WHOSE TEMPER IS THE MOST BOMBASTIC OF ALL!

JEEPERS, WILL YA LOOKIT THAT? IT'S ALMOST LIKE A MOVIE, AIN'T IT, BILLY?

LIKE A MOVIE, NECK! THAT'S REAL LIFE!

RESTAURANTE FARM-FRESH EGGS

INDEED, THIS IS REAL LIFE--AS THE CROWD MILLING BELOW THE BATTLE IS TOO QUICK TO PERCEIVE!

ALREADY, PANIC IS BREWING IN THE STREET--

--EVEN AS VIOLENCE ERUPTS ANEW--ABOVE!

POW!

STUNNED, THE BEING CALLED FIRELORD FALLS.

HIS BODY TURNS END OVER END-- HIS ARMS FLAIL LIKE THE ARMS OF A PUPPET IN THE WIND--

--AND HE PLUNGES TOWARD THE CROWDED SIDEWALK, SO FAR BELOW--!

HE'S GONNA HIT, GEORGE

HE'S GONNA HIT!

GET THESE PEOPLE BACK, FRED--

I'M TRYING!
I'M TRYING!

BUT, INSTEAD OF A SHUDDERING IMPACT-- THERE IS INSTEAD A BLASTING FURY OF FLAME--

--AS A FIRE-HAIRED ALIEN HALTS HIMSELF WITH A COLUMN OF SHEER COSMIC ENERGY--!

I CAME TO YOU IN FRIENDSHIP, YET YOU GREETED ME-- WITH VIOLENCE!

YOU WILL SUFFER FOR THAT BETRAYAL, ASSGARDIAN! I PROMISE, YOU WILL--

SPLON!

'T WAS THEE WHO DID ATTACK, NOT I!

I SAY THEE NAY!

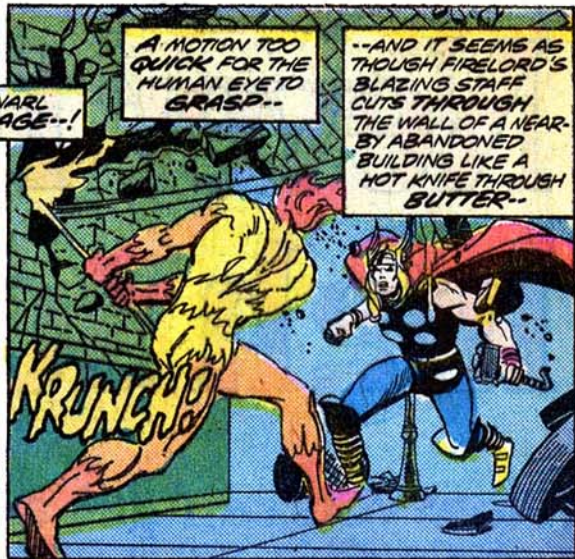
SAILING BACKWARD, FIRELORD TRIES TO STOP HIMSELF--TO NO AVOID!

KAROOM!

ALIEN FLESH MEETS EARTHLY STEEL-- AND THE STEEL GIVES WAY WITH A GRINDING EXPLOSION OF FLYING METAL--!

NOW, FIEND! NOW, LET US TEST THEE!

THOU WHO WOULDST STAND AGAINST ME--





WAIT, THUNDER GOD. IT PAINS ME TO SAY IT, BUT WE MUST HAVE PATIENCE.

ONLY PATIENCE CAN SAVE US NOW.

IS THIS A TRICK, ALIEN?

SOME NEW TREACHERY?



I SWEAR BY BIFROST'S MIGHTY SPAN, IF THOU DOTH SEEK TO DIS-TRACT ME FROM MY PURPOSE, I WILL--

PLEASE, THOR-- I AM NOT A PEACEFUL MAN. MY INSTINCT IS TO FIGHT WHEN WRONGED--

SO BELIEVE ME WHEN I SAY--

WHAT I MUST TELL YOU IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN ANY ARGUMENT!

THOR CONSIDERS, EYES NARROWING; HE PEERS AT THE ALIEN BEFORE HIM... AND THEN NODS.



I'LL LISTEN, FIRELORD.

BUT NOT HERE.

WE MUST GO TO THE AVENGERS' MANSION, WHERE OTHERS MAY ALSO LISTEN, AND JUDGE THE TRUTH OF WHAT THOU DOTH SAY...



AS YOU WILL, I--

HOLD IT, YOU TWO!

IN CASE YOU HADN'T NOTICED-- THIS IS A PUBLIC STREET, NOT A PLAYGROUND FOR SUPER-HEROES.



DETECTIVE SST. BLUMKENN!

WE HAVE AN EXPLANATION--

ALL I GOTTA SAY IS--

IT BETTER BE GOOD.

MEANWHILE, AS THEY SAY--



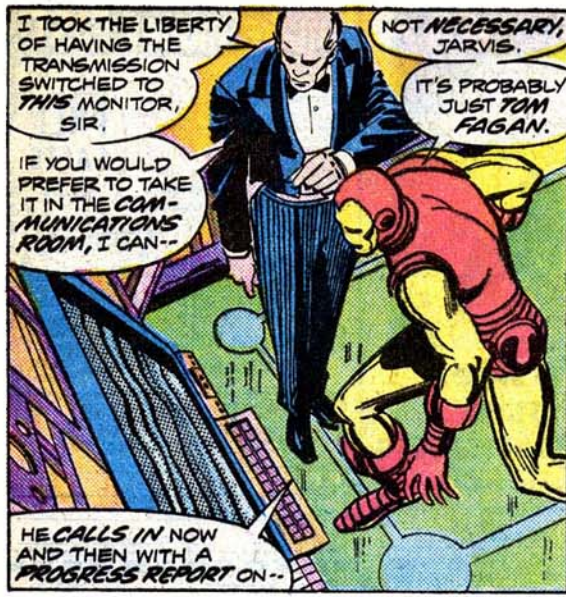
-- CERTAIN OTHER EVENTS OCCUR AT AN EASTSIDE MANSION WE'VE VISITED ONCE THIS ISSUE ALREADY--

--EVENTS WHICH HAVE QUITE A DEFINITE BEARINGS ON THE STORY UNFOLDING BEFORE US:

SIR, I BELIEVE THERE'S A MESSAGE COMING IN.

ACCORDING TO THE LOCATION FINDER-- IT IS APPARENTLY COMING-- FROM VERMONT.

TO BE PRECISE-- RUTLAND, VERMONT!



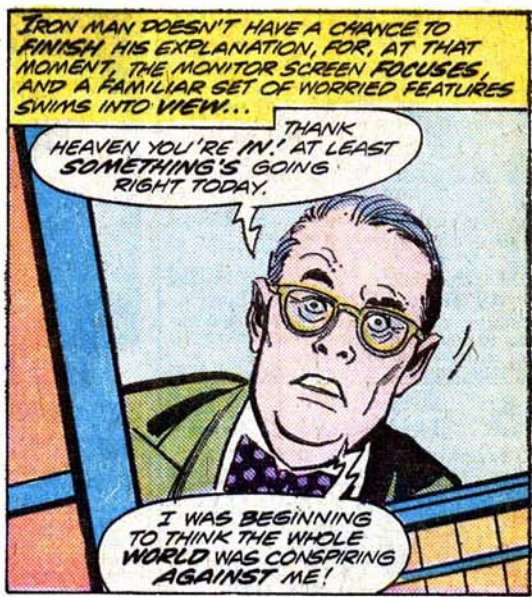
I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF HAVING THE TRANSMISSION SWITCHED TO THIS MONITOR, SIR.

NOT NECESSARY, JARVIS.

IT'S PROBABLY JUST TOM FAGAN.

IF YOU WOULD PREFER TO TAKE IT IN THE COMMUNICATIONS ROOM, I CAN--

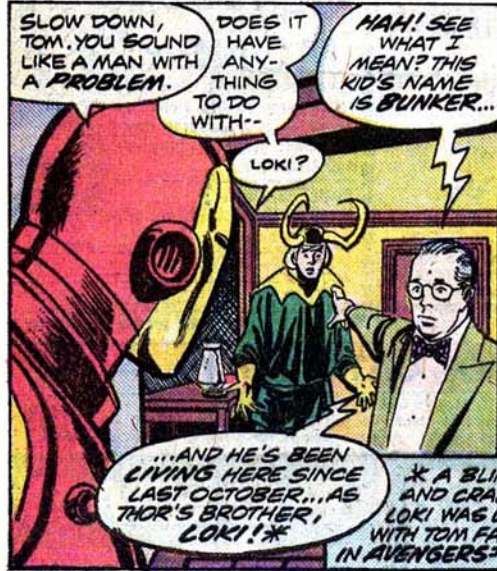
HE CALLS IN NOW AND THEN WITH A PROGRESS REPORT ON--



IRON MAN DOESN'T HAVE A CHANCE TO FINISH HIS EXPLANATION, FOR, AT THAT MOMENT, THE MONITOR SCREEN FOCUSES, AND A FAMILIAR SET OF WORRIED FEATURES SWIMS INTO VIEW...

THANK HEAVEN YOU'RE IN! AT LEAST SOMETHING'S GOING RIGHT TODAY.

I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK THE WHOLE WORLD WAS CONSPIRING AGAINST ME!



SLOW DOWN, TOM. YOU SOUND LIKE A MAN WITH A PROBLEM.

DOES IT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH--

LOKI?

HAH! SEE WHAT I MEAN? THIS KID'S NAME IS BUNKER...

...AND HE'S BEEN LIVING HERE SINCE LAST OCTOBER... AS THOR'S BROTHER, LOKI! *

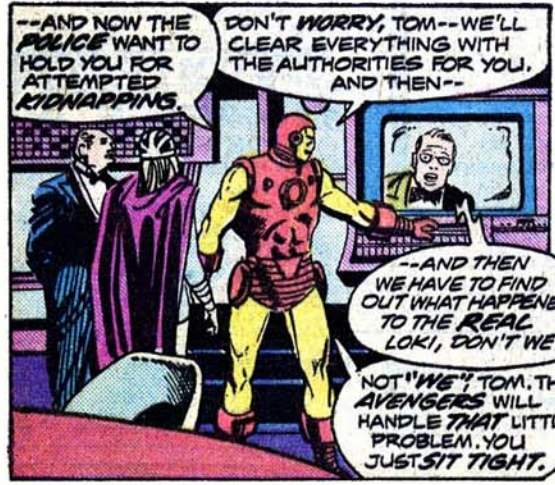
* A BLINDED AND CRAZED LOKI WAS LEFT WITH TOM FAGAN IN AVENGERS #119. --ROY.



'AT LEAST HE LOOKED LIKE LOKI, TALKED LIKE HIM-- AND FOOLED ALL OF US INTO BELIEVING HE WAS LOKI-- UNTIL THIS MORNING, WHEN I WOKE UP, WENT INTO HIS ROOM TO GIVE HIM BREAKFAST--

--AND FOUND BUNKER HERE CLOSE TO HYSTERIC.

'ALL HE REMEMBERS IS FALLING ASLEEP DURING LAST YEAR'S HALLOWE'EN PARTY--'

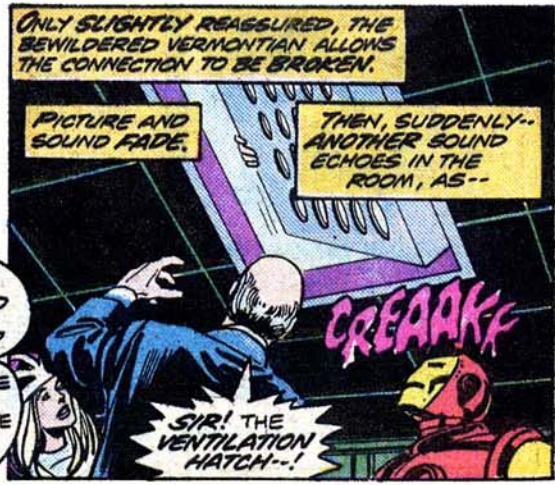


--AND NOW THE POLICE WANT TO HOLD YOU FOR ATTEMPTED KIDNAPPINGS.

DON'T WORRY, TOM-- WE'LL CLEAR EVERYTHING WITH THE AUTHORITIES FOR YOU, AND THEN--

--AND THEN WE HAVE TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO THE REAL LOKI, DON'T WE?

NOT 'WE', TOM. THE AVENGERS WILL HANDLE THAT LITTLE PROBLEM. YOU JUST SIT TIGHT.



ONLY SLIGHTLY REASSURED, THE BEWILDERED VERMONTIAN ALLOWS THE CONNECTION TO BE BROKEN.

PICTURE AND SOUND FADE.

THEN, SUDDENLY-- ANOTHER SOUND ECHOES IN THE ROOM, AS--

CREAKK

SIR! THE VENTILATION HATCH--!

BE AT THY EASE, JARVIS. 'TIS NO ATTACKING VILLAIN SNEAKING UPON THEE...

MY SOUL IS TROUBLED BY BOTH MISERY--AND A STRANGE MYSTERY.

'TIS ONLY THOR, WHO DOTH REQUEST THY ATTENDANCE AND THY AID.

THE MISERY IS MINE ALONE, AND I SHALL KEEP IT.

THE MYSTERY--I WOULD SHARE.



WHAT INTRODUCTIONS ARE NEEDED, ARE MADE, AND WHEN IRON MAN AND KRISTA HAVE SEATED THEMSELVES BESIDE THOR AT THE AVENGERS' MEETING TABLE, THERE IS A MOMENT OF PROFOUND SILENCE... QUIETLY SHATTERED BY...

I HAVE SEEN YOUR FUTURE, ASGARDIAN, AND I MUST TELL YOU--

THE FUTURE IS GRIM.



IS THAT SUPPOSED TO BE METAPHYSICAL OR FACTUAL, FIRELORD?

THIS ISN'T THE PLACE FOR GAME-PLAYING.

I HAVE NO USE FOR GAMES, EARTHMAN.

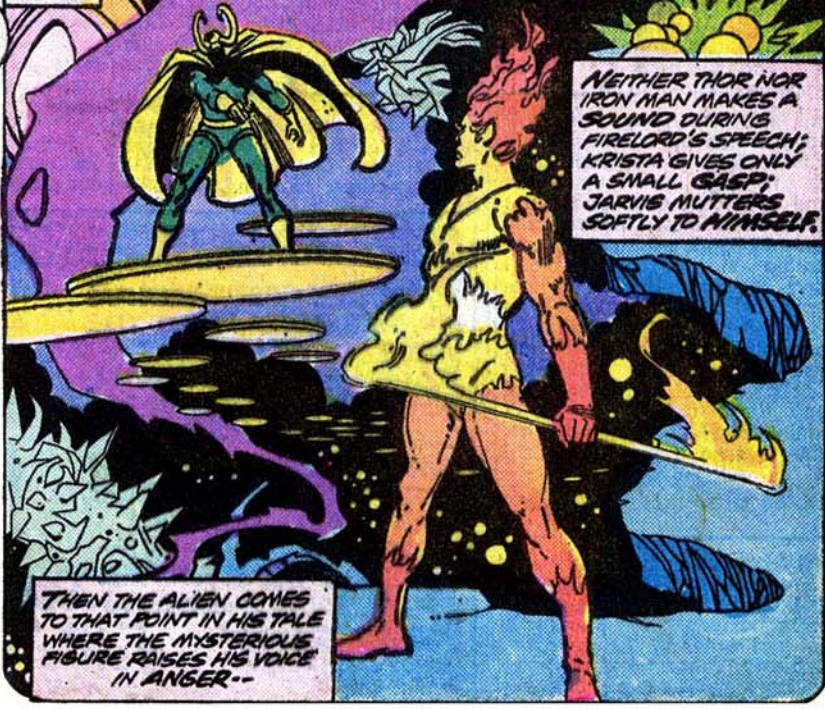
WHAT I TELL YOU IS FACT. IF YOU CHOOSE NOT TO BELIEVE IT--

SPEAKING QUICKLY, FIRELORD RELATES THE EVENTS SURROUNDING HIS DISCOVERY IN THE MOUNTAINS OF NORTHWEST WASHINGTON.



--THE ONLY OF THAT DECISION IS YOURS.

NOW, LISTEN!



NEITHER THOR NOR IRON MAN MAKES A SOUND DURING FIRELORD'S SPEECH; KRISTA GIVES ONLY A SMALL GASP; JARVIS MUTTERS SOFTLY TO HIMSELF.

THEN THE ALIEN COMES TO THAT POINT IN HIS TALE WHERE THE MYSTERIOUS FIGURE RAISES HIS VOICE IN ANGER--

--AND THE IDENTITY OF THE VILLAIN BECOMES ALL TOO OMINOUSLY CLEAR!

I AM POWER, FOOL! LITERALLY, POWER!

AND THEE--THOU ART A PAWN OF THAT POWER, WHETHER THOU KNOWEST IT--OR ACCEPTS IT! I BROUGHT THEE HERE FOR A PURPOSE, ALIEN--!

THOU WILT FUL-FILL THAT PURPOSE--OR THOU WILT DIE!

SO SWEARS LOKI, FUTURE LORD OF ASSGARD!

HIS VOICE, WHEN HE SPEAKS, IS ALTERED SOMEHOW; IT IS LOW, GUTTERAL--THERE IS NO SUBLIME SOPHISTICATED HERE, NO GENTLE RHYTHM--NO BROTHERLY "THEE" OR "THOU".

WHEN THE POWER OF DORMAMMU PASSED THROUGH ME, I ABSORBED THE SPIRIT OF HIS MYSTIC BEING...*

EVERYTHING THAT HE WAS, I AM.

ALL THAT MADE HIM GREAT RESIDES IN ME-- IS MINE TO CONTROL-- MINE TO COMMAND!

THESE MANY MONTHS, I HAVE WAITED--STUDYING THE FULL EXTENT OF MY ABILITIES--LEARNING ALL MY NEWLY-GAINED SECRETS--

* SHOWN IN THE CATAclySMIC CONCLUSION OF AVENGERS #118.--ROY.

THERE IS ONLY STARK INSANITY.

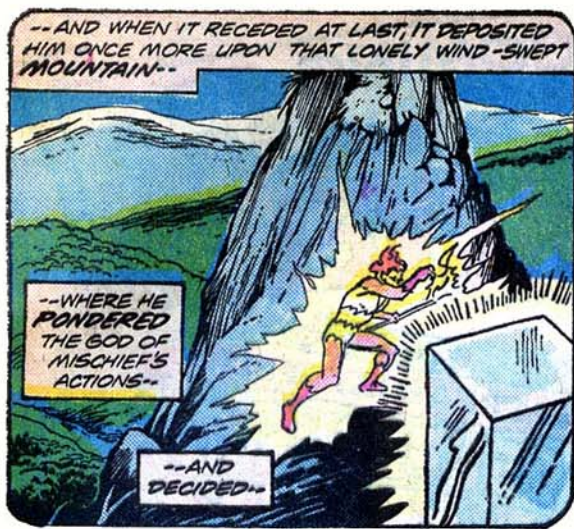
AND COMBINED WITH THAT INSANITY--

IS AN AWARENESS OF PERSONAL, TRANSCENDENTAL FORCE!

--UNTIL I WAS READY TO STRIKE!

AND NOW I SHALL STRIKE--THROUGH YOU!!

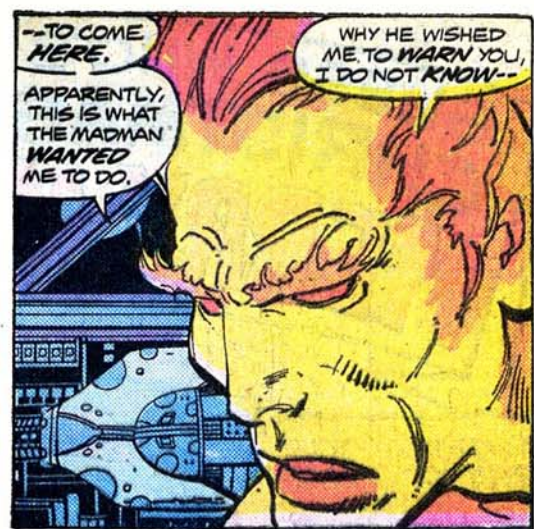
A GREAT BURST OF ENERGY WASHED OVER THE FIRELORD THEN; CATCHING HIM UP LIKE A BIRD IN A STORM, IT WHIRLED HIM AWAY THROUGH TIME AND SPACE--



-- AND WHEN IT RECEDED AT LAST, IT DEPOSITED HIM ONCE MORE UPON THAT LONELY WIND-SWEPT MOUNTAIN--

-- WHERE HE PONDERED THE GOD OF MISCHIEF'S ACTIONS--

-- AND DECIDED--



-- TO COME HERE.

APPARENTLY, THIS IS WHAT THE MADMAN WANTED ME TO DO.

WHY HE WISHED ME TO WARN YOU, I DO NOT KNOW--



-- BUT I HAVE WARNED YOU, AND SO-- MY OBLIGATIONS IN THIS MATTER HAVE BEEN ATTENDED TO, UNLESS, OF COURSE, YOU DESIRE FURTHER--

-- OD'S BLOOD, I KNOW NOT WHAT TO DESIRE.

COME ON, THOR, IT'S OBVIOUS.

LOKI INTENDS TO ATTACK US. WE HAVE TO--



"WE"? MUST IT ALWAYS BE "WE"?

AVENGERS, I AM TORN-- FOR WHILE MY HONOR DOETH DEMAND I STAY WITH THEE, TO FACE THIS MENACE, WHATE'ER THE COST--

-- MY HEART DOETH TELL ME TO GO--

-- TO HURRY ONCE MORE TO JANE FOSTER'S SIDE!



GOOD LORD, I'D FORGOTTEN-- KRISTA TOLD ME, JUST A SHORT WHILE AGO!

I WISH THERE WAS SOMETHING I COULD SAY-- SOMETHING I COULD DO.

FUNNY, ISN'T IT? WE HAVE POWER ENOUGH TO RESHAPE A WORLD...

YET, IN THE END, THE WORLD GOES AWAY -- AND A MAN MUST STAND AS ALWAYS... ALONE.

TO BE CONTINUED!

NEXT ISSUE MIDGARD A FLAME!