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MARVEL® COMICS GROUP

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AUTHORITY

THE
MIGHTY

THOR

TRAPPED WITHIN MY
POWER-PRISM, WITHOUT
YOUR HAMMER, YOU'RE
NOW COMPLETELY
HELPLESS!

NEVER BEFORE HAS
THOR BATTLED A
MENACE AS BIZARRE
AND POWERFUL AS
LOCUS!



When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden waking-stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic hammer MJOLNIR—and the lame physician is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm, Lord of the Living Lightning—and heir to the throne of eternal Asgard....

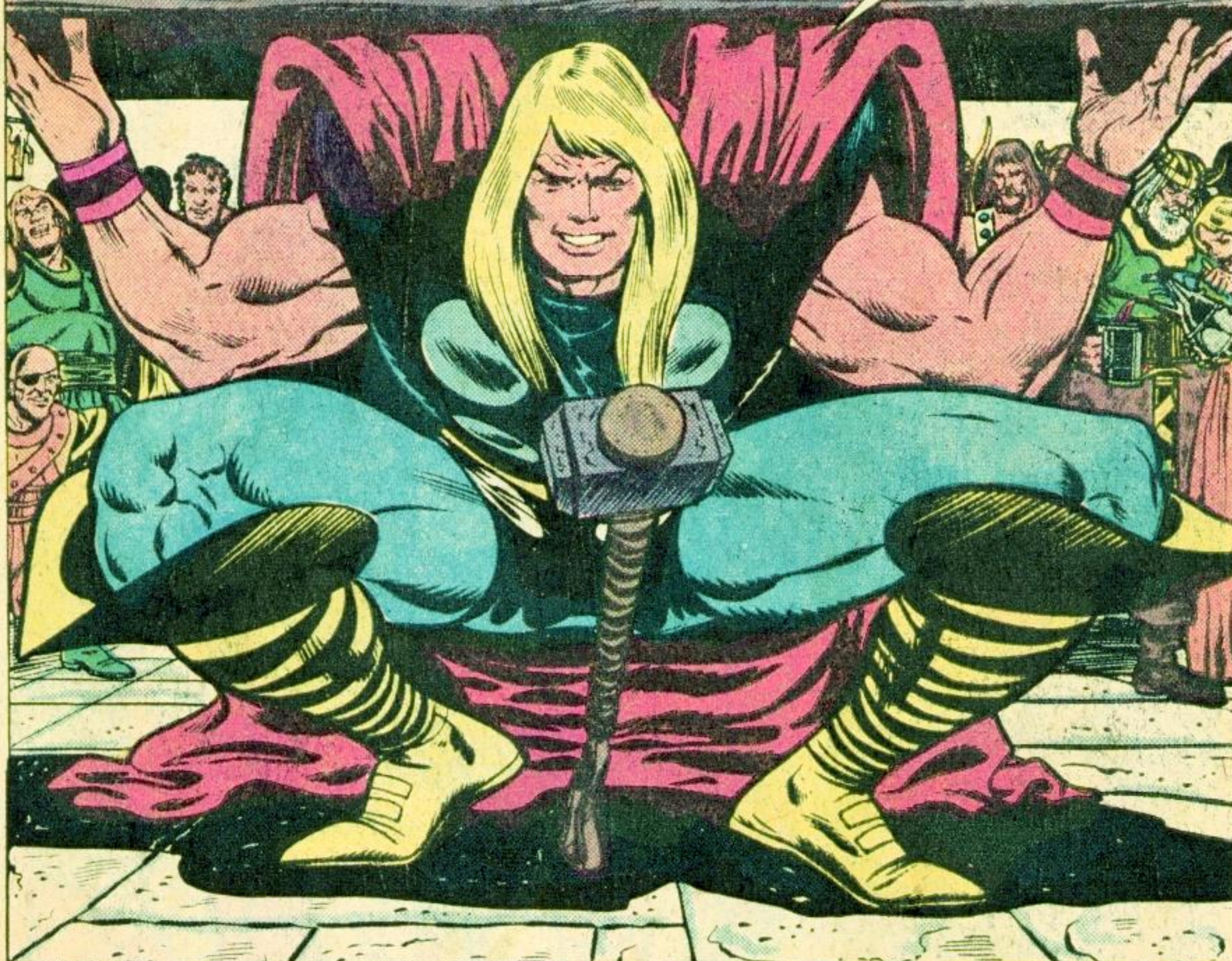
Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE MIGHTY THOR!**

THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO KILL!

FOR NINE DAYS AND NIGHTS HAVE THE FESTIVITIES REIGNED IN THE PALACE IMPERIAL. RAGNAROK, THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS HAS PASSED, AND ASGARD ENDURES—ITS PEOPLE NO LONGER UNDER THE DREADED CURSE WHICH FORETOLD THEIR DEMISE.

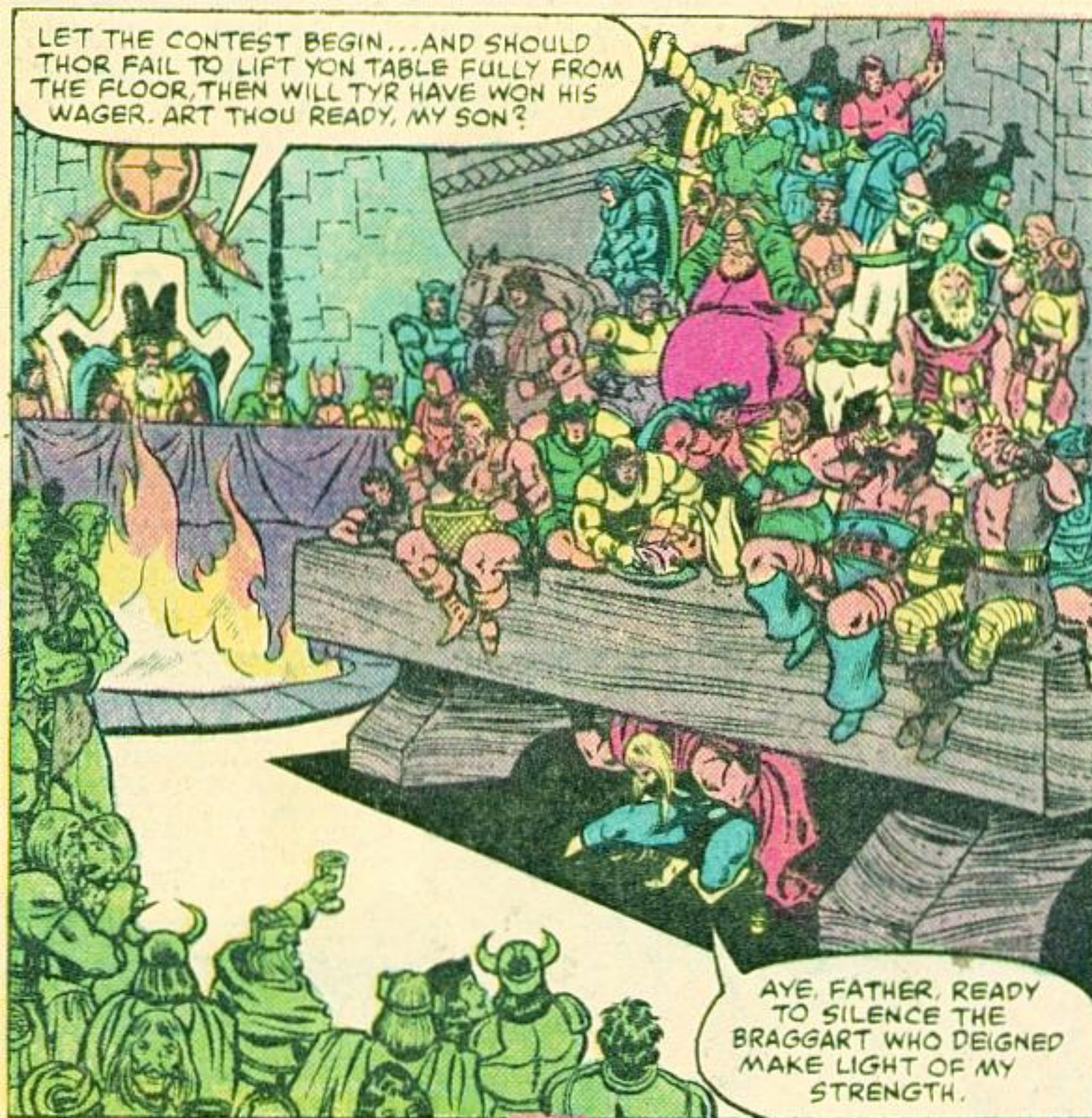
AND AMONG THOSE MOST IN THE MOOD FOR MERRIMENT IS THOR, SON OF LORD ODIN, WHO TAKES HIS LEISURE IN A MOST UNIQUE MANNER.

THOU HAST ISSUED THE CHALLENGE, TYR, AND THOR DOTTH ACCEPT. NOW NEED I ONLY THE WORD OF MY SIRE TO SHOW THEE THE FOLLY OF THY WAYS. FATHER?



MARK GRUENWALD & RALPH MACCHIO WRITERS KEITH POLLARD LAYOUTS CHIC STONE & AL MILGROM FINISHES JOE ROSEN LETTERS GEORGE ROUSSOS COLORS JIM SALICRAN EDITOR JIM SHOOTER EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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AS THOU KNOWEST, THE LOSS OF MY HAND-- TAKEN IN ASGARD'S CAUSE DOETH PREVENT ME FROM ENGAGING IN SUCH SPORT.

NOW HERE BE THY PRIZE... COIN OF THE REALM-- HEARTILY OFFERED AND HARD-WON. I SALUTE THEE.

LOKI, MY HUSBAND, WHY ART THOU SO GLUM. THOU HAST BARELY TOUCHED THY FOOD.



SIGYN SPEAKS TRUE, GOD OF MISCHIEF, YOUR QUEEN BIDS YOU PARTAKE OF THE CELEBRATION ERE IT ENDS.

FOR LOKI, GRACIOUS FRIGGA, THERE CAN BE NO CELEBRATION...



...NAY, NOT SO LONG AS I BE SHACKLED TO MY WIFE-- AT ODIN'S COMMAND-- SHACKLED FOR MY CRIMES LIKE SOME UNRULY MONGREL!



BUT, HUSBAND, ISN'T THIS PUNISHMENT FOR CONSPIRING 'GAINST ASGARD NOT MORE MERCIFUL THAN BEING CHAINED TO A ROCK WITH A SNAKE'S VENOM SCALDING YOU... AS ONCE YOU WERE FORCED TO ENDURE.

CEASE THY PRATTING, WOMAN. THY WIFELY CONCERN SICKENS ME.



AND WHAT OF THEE, BRAVE BALDER, NOBLEST OF SONS. WHY THY DOOR COUNTEenance? BETWEEN THEE AND LOKI, I COULD ALMOST BELIEVE YE ARE NOT HAPPY TO BE ALIVE.

THOU FORGET, MY QUEEN, I HAVE KNOWN THE ICY TOUCH OF DEATH, NOT MERE OBLIVION LIKE THOSE OF YOU WHOSE ESSENCES LORD ODIN BORROWED TO STAVE OFF RAGNAROK.



I AM NOT YET RECONCILED WITH MY NEW LEASE ON LIFE. I FEEL... DIFFERENT NOW... DIFFERENT IN WAYS BEYOND MEASURE.



AHH, WHAT THOU NEEDS IS TO FEEL THE WEIGHT OF COLD STEEL IN THY HAND AGAIN. COME, BALDER, TAKE THY SWORD THAT WE MAY ENGAGE IN SPORT.

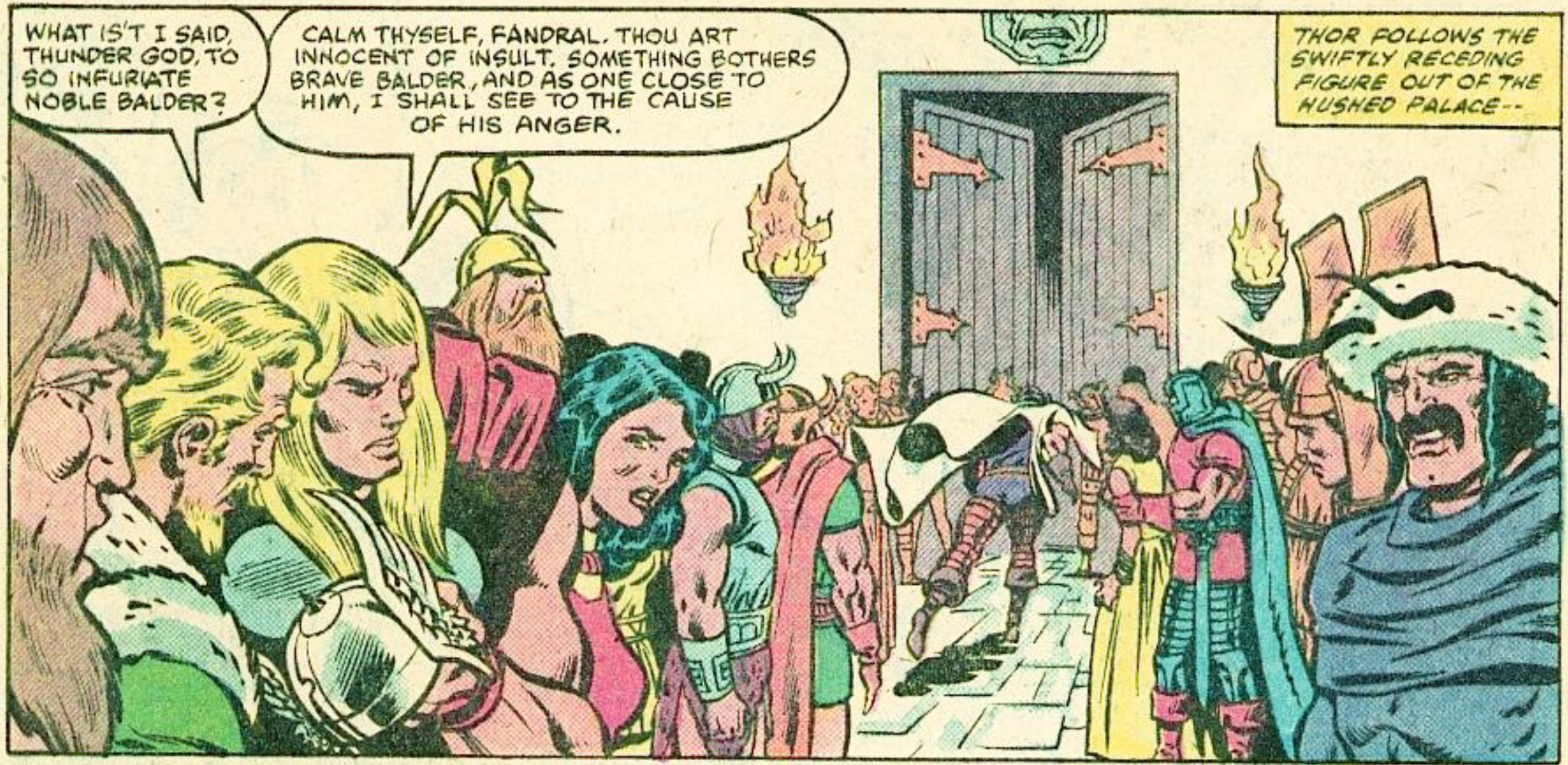
DOST THOU NOT UNDERSTAND, FANDRAL?



AWAY WITH THY BLADE! NOT E'EN IN JEST WILL I ACCEPT THE WAYS OF THE WARRIOR! NE'ER AGAIN WILL I DISPATCH A FOE TO THAT HATED SHADOW-REALM IN WHICH I DID WANDER!

SPAK!

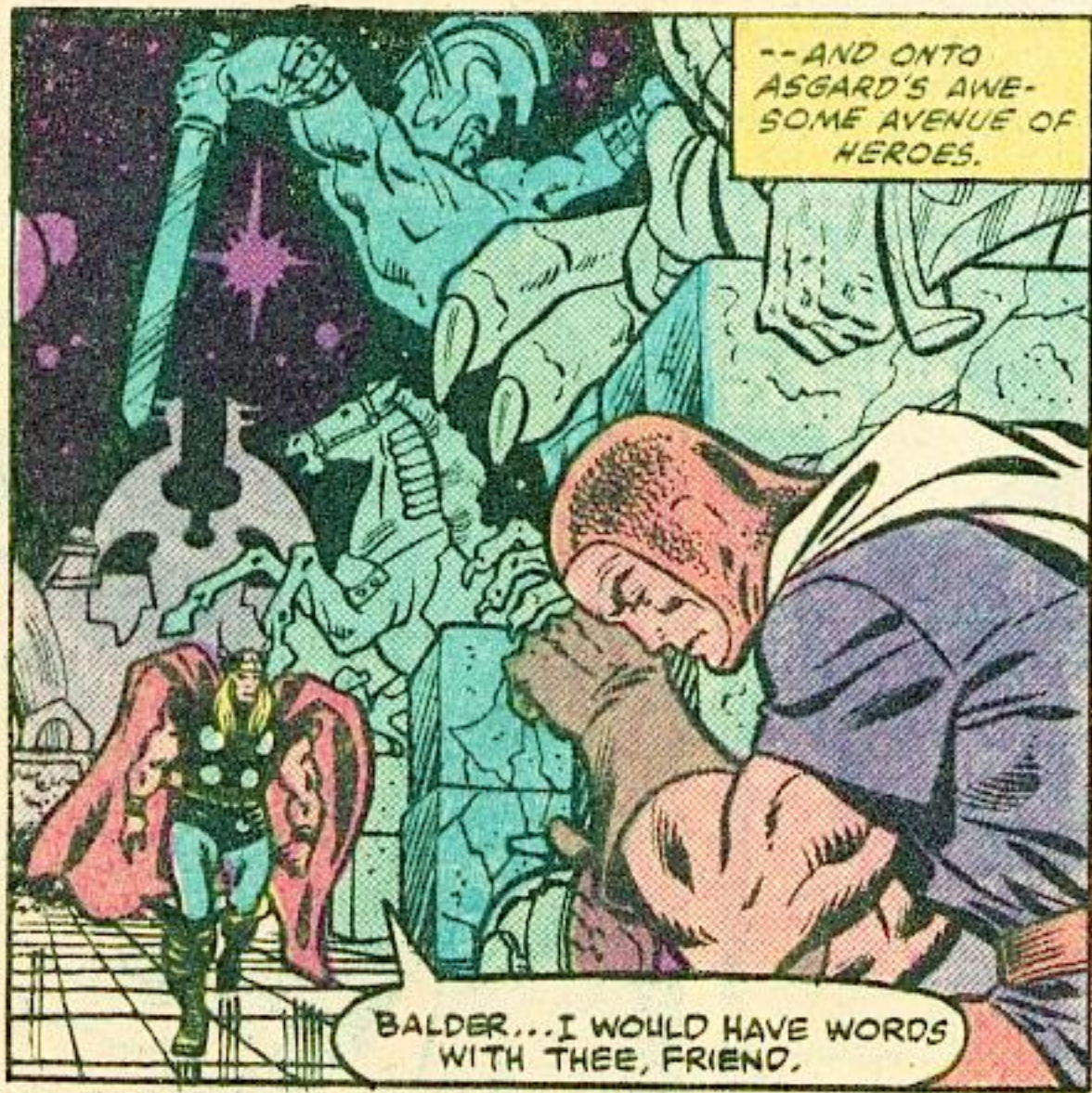
AWAY!



WHAT IS'T I SAID, THUNDER GOD, TO SO INFURIATE NOBLE BALDER?

CALM THYSELF, FANDRAL. THOU ART INNOCENT OF INSULT. SOMETHING BOTHERS BRAVE BALDER, AND AS ONE CLOSE TO HIM, I SHALL SEE TO THE CAUSE OF HIS ANGER.

THOR FOLLOWS THE SWIFTLY RECEDING FIGURE OUT OF THE HUSHED PALACE--



-- AND ONTO ASGARD'S AWE-SOME AVENUE OF HEROES.

BALDER... I WOULD HAVE WORDS WITH THEE, FRIEND.



FORGIVE MINE ACTIONS, THOR, BUT I BE SORELY TROUBLED. FOR NIGH UNTO A YEAR I HOVERED TWIXT LIFE AND DEATH-- ODIN'S PAWN IN HIS GAMBIT TO PREVENT RAGNAROK. IN THAT TIME, MY SPIRIT PASSED AMONG THE DARK HALLS OF VALHALLA...

... VALHALLA, ONCE THE WONDROUS REALM OUR WARRIORS LONGED FOR SHOULD BATTLE CLAIM THEIR LIVES. BUT OF LATE, 'TIS A FOREBODING DOMAIN--

-- SINCE THE DEATH GODDESS HELA DID CONQUER IT.

THIS WE ALL DO KNOW, BRAVE ONE, BUT HOW HAS IT AFFECTED THEE?

I HAVE SEEN THE AGONY OF THOSE SOULS WHO DO LIVE THERE. I HAVE FELT THEIR PAIN AS NONE LIVING COULD, AND IT HATH CHANGED ME... E'EN PHYSICALLY I BE DIFFERENT.

PHYSICALLY? BUT THY BODY DOTH BE THE SAME...HOW--

NAY.

NOTICE MY HAIR... ONCE 'T WAS BROWN.

NOW... IT BE WHITE.

THOR, IS THERE STILL A PLACE IN WARLIKE ASGARD FOR ONE NO LONGER A WARRIOR?

FOR HIM WHO HATH SAVED MY LIFE TIMES UNCOUNTABLE... FOR HIM WHO BE A BROTHER TO ME BEYOND KINDRED FLESH-- THERE SHALL ALWAYS BE A PLACE AMONG ASGARD'S FINEST. AND NOW I LEAVE THEE TO THY SOLITUDE.

THY WORDS DO GLADDEN MY HEART THOR. I SHALL NOT FORGET THEM, MY BROTHER.

I SUSPECTED LITTLE OF THE DEPTH OF BALDER'S DILEMMA. TRULY HE BE A CHANGED GOD. I FEAR FOR HIM IN THE COMING DAYS.

THOR, MY LOVE, DIDST THOU FIND BALDER?

AYE, MILADY SIF, WE DID DISCUSS AT LENGTH HIS-- CONDITION.

AND WHAT OF HIS CONDITION?

I KNOW ONLY THAT HE STRUGGLES WITH HIS VERY NATURE. AND WHEN THE BATTLE BE OVER... I WONDER WHAT BALDER WILL HAVE BECOME.

BUT ENOW-- WHAT OF US, MILADY? WHAT OF THE LIFE WE HAVE OFT SPOKEN OF-- TOGETHER?

WITH ASGARD SO TRANQUIL... WITH NO FOES MASSING AT OUR BORDERS, PERHAPS 'TIS TIME WE SPOKE OF OUR BETROTHAL.

AYE... MARRIAGE.



ALWAYS IN THE PAST, DUTY TO THY FATHER AND THE REALM HATH PREVENTED OUR UNION. WE HAVE WAITED LONG, BELOVED.



AYE, TOO LONG, BUT THERE BE NOTHING TO KEEP US APART NOW, SIF.

AYE, LONG HAVE I GAZED AT THY VACANT PALACE WHILST THOU WERT AWAY...ANTICIPATING THE DAY WE COULD SETTLE THEREIN AND FULFILL THE PROMISE OF OUR LOVE.



BUT WE MAY SPEAK OF SUCH MATTERS IN THE DAYS TO COME. NOW THERE BE THINGS TO SHARE IN WAYS BEYOND WORDS.



LATER, THEY PART, AS THOR RETURNS TO HIS OWN CASTLE, THRU DVANGAR...

THE LADY SIF STARES LONGINGLY AFTER HIM...

...WONDERING WHEN SHE WILL AT LAST CALL THE SON OF ODIN-- HUSBAND.



SOON, IN THOR'S BEDCHAMBER...

STRANGE...SIF SPEAKS AS IF SHE DESIRES NE'ER AGAIN TO LEAVE ASGARD. THOUGH MY LOVE FOR HER SURPASSES UNDERSTANDING-- STILL DOTH EARTH CLAIM MY AFFECTIONS, AS WELL. WHY HAST SHE NO FEELINGS FOR IT?



ISN'T HER SPIRIT NOT AS ONE WITH THAT OF THE MORTAL NURSE JANE FOSTER, WHOM I ONCE DID LOVE? DID NOT SIF ONCE LEND HER OWN LIFE-FORCE TO SAVE JANE FROM DEATH?*

*THOR #236. -- JIM.



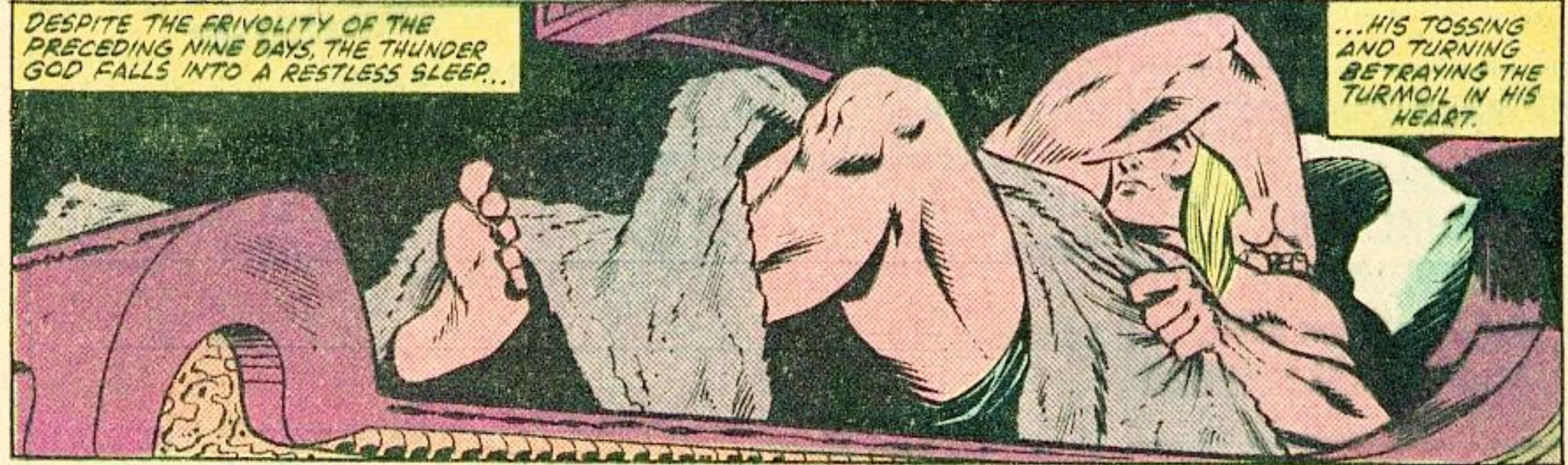
FOR MONTHS AFTER, SIF'S VERY FORM WAS SUBMERGED BENEATH A REVITALIZED JANE'S, UNTIL SHE GRASPED THE HILT OF SIF'S SWORD AND ONCE AGAIN WAS THE GODDESS GIVEN SUBSTANCE.

*THOR #249. -- J.S.



SHE HATH BEEN SIF HERE IN ASGARD E'ER SINCE. I WONDER... IS JANE FOSTER'S PERSONA TRULY GONE-- OR WILL IT BE REBORN IN THE FLESH IF SIF DOTH RETURN TO EARTH?

HOW WILL MILADY REACT WHEN I DO INFORM HER OF MINE INTENT TO DWELL AMONG THE MORTALS AGAIN?



DESPITE THE FRIVOLITY OF THE PRECEDING NINE DAYS, THE THUNDER GOD FALLS INTO A RESTLESS SLEEP...

...HIS TOSSING AND TURNING BETRAYING THE TURMOIL IN HIS HEART.

THE FOLLOWING MORNING FINDS THE AWAKENED IMMORTAL JOINED BY HIS LADY AT A ROYAL REPAST...

SIF... I DID MEAN TO MENTION THIS LAST EVENING, BUT I WISHED NOT TO SPOIL THE MOOD. I HAVE LEARNED OF LATE THAT MY HERITAGE BE AS MUCH ON EARTH-- MIDGARD-- AS IT IS HERE IN ASGARD. THUS, 'TIS MY DESIRE TO MAKE MIDGARD MY HOME.

WHAT? WHAT OF OUR PLANS... OUR FUTURE... OUR LIFE TOGETHER OF WHICH WE SPOKE?

ALL THAT CAN STILL BE OURS, MY LOVE... ON EARTH. WE SHALL TAKE UP RESIDENCE THERE, LIVE SECRETLY AMONG MORTALS, EVER READY TO LEAP TO THEIR DEFENSE. WE CAN STILL VISIT THE REALM ETERNAL WHENEVER THOU WISHES.

WHAT HOLD DOETH THAT MAD WORLD HAVE ON THEE, MY DARLING?

AS I SAID, IT IS PART OF MY HERITAGE, AND THINE, TOO. DOST THOU NOT FEEL THE PART OF YOU THAT BE THE FRAIL MORTAL, JANE FOSTER?

NO, MILORD, I--

THOR! WE BEG THY FORGIVENESS FOR THIS INTRUSION-- BUT THERE BE ADVENTURE A'BORNING!

WE HAVE DETECTED THE STIRRINGS OF THE STORM GIANTS IN NEARBY JOTUNHEIM. WE MUST BE OFF TO QUELL THEIR RUMBLINGS!

EH? THE WARRIORS THREE!

AYE, AND VALIANT VOLSTAGG HIMSELF SHALL TAKE CHARGE AND SPEED US 'PON OUR QUEST... BY HELPING THEE CONSUME THY NOURISHMENT.

THOR... DIDST THOU NOT HEAR? WE MUST AWAY, THE STORM GIANTS MAY--

MIDGARD!?!

WHAT CAN SUCH A WORLD OFFER THEE, ODINSON? IN ASGARD THERE BE BATTLES UNENDING, SPLENDOR WITHOUT PEER, AND PLEASURES DIVINE. E'EN THE FOOD BE BETTER HERE! MIDGARD HATH NOTHING TO COMPARE.

I AM CERTAIN YE THREE CAN PREVAIL THYSELVES, FRIEND FANDRAL, FOR I BE JOURNEYING TO MIDGARD THIS DAY.

'TIS TRUE THAT ASGARD BE A PLACE OF WONDERS-- BUT SO IS EARTH. IN THE YEARS I DWELT AMONG MORTALS AS THE LAME DR. BLAKE, I CAME TO SHARE THEIR PAIN AND FRAILTIES... TO REJOICE IN A LIFE NOT LIVED SOLELY IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE.

YE MUST UNDERSTAND THERE BE AS MUCH PRIDE AND SATISFACTION IN HEALING THE SICK AS THERE BE IN THE CONQUEST OF STORM GIANTS OR TROLLS.

I AM SCION OF ASGARD-- YET PART OF ME IS *EVER* WITH MIDGARD. THOUGH MORTALS DO NOT WORSHIP US AS GODS ANY LONGER...

...TIS NOT REASON ENOW TO ABANDON THEM IN THEIR OWN NEVER ENDING STRUGGLES.

AND WHAT OF SIF? WHAT OF OUR LIVES... DOES THY LOVE FOR MORTALS LEAVE NO ROOM FOR ME? WHAT IF RESIDENCE IN MIDGARD BE NOT TO MY LIKING?

FIRST, THOU MUST ALLOW ME TO ENDEAVOR TO *MAKE IT* TO THY LIKING. LET ME RE-ESTABLISH MINE IDENTITY ON MIDGARD, FIND US A PLACE OF DWELLING...

...THEN I SHALL *RETURN* FOR THEE.

I...

SIF... I CRAVE THY LOVE AS THE BREATH OF LIFE ITSELF. DO NOT TURN THY BACK ON ME. I WANT THEE WITH ME-- AT MY SIDE ON MIDGARD. WILT THOU GIVE ME THIS CHANCE, BELOVED?

GET THEE TO MIDGARD, THOR. WHEN THOU RETURN, I- I WILL BE WAITING.

THEY EMBRACE WITH A FERVOR ONLY LOVERS MAY KNOW, AS THE WARRIORS THREE EXIT THOR'S ABODE, WITH MUCH TO THINK UPON THIS DAY.

SOON, IN THE REGAL THRONE ROOM OF THE LORD OF ASGARD...

THOU HAST LEAVE TO APPROACH THE PRESENCE, MY SON.



IF IT BE WITHIN THE POWER OF ODIN... IT IS *THINE*.



I REQUEST A LEAVE OF ABSENCE THAT I MAY PURSUE MY DESTINY ON MIDGARD BELOW, FOR SUCH TIME AS I SEE FIT.



FATHER, WILT THOU GRANT ME A BOON?



THOR...FOR THY PART IN THE SAVING OF IMMORTAL ASGARD...THOU HAST EARNED THE RIGHT TO COME AND GO AS THOU DOST CHOOSE. NEER AGAIN SHALL I DENY THEE THY FREEDOM.



I THANK THEE, FATHER. THEN, BY THY LEAVE AND THAT OF THY WIFE, *QUEEN FRIGGA*, I DO HIE ME FORTH TO MIDGARD. MILADY, I AM EVER THY SERVANT.



GO WITH MY BLESSING, THOR.

TO EARTH, I JOURNEY-- THERE TO FACE WHATE'ER CHALLENGES FATE HATH IN STORE FOR ME. MY FATHER... MY QUEEN...



...FAREWELL!



INSTANTLY, THOR'S WHIRLING MALLET TRANSPORTS HIM FROM THE GLEAMING SPIRES OF THE REALM ETERNAL...



...TO THE SOOTY
SMOKESTACKS
OF EARTH.



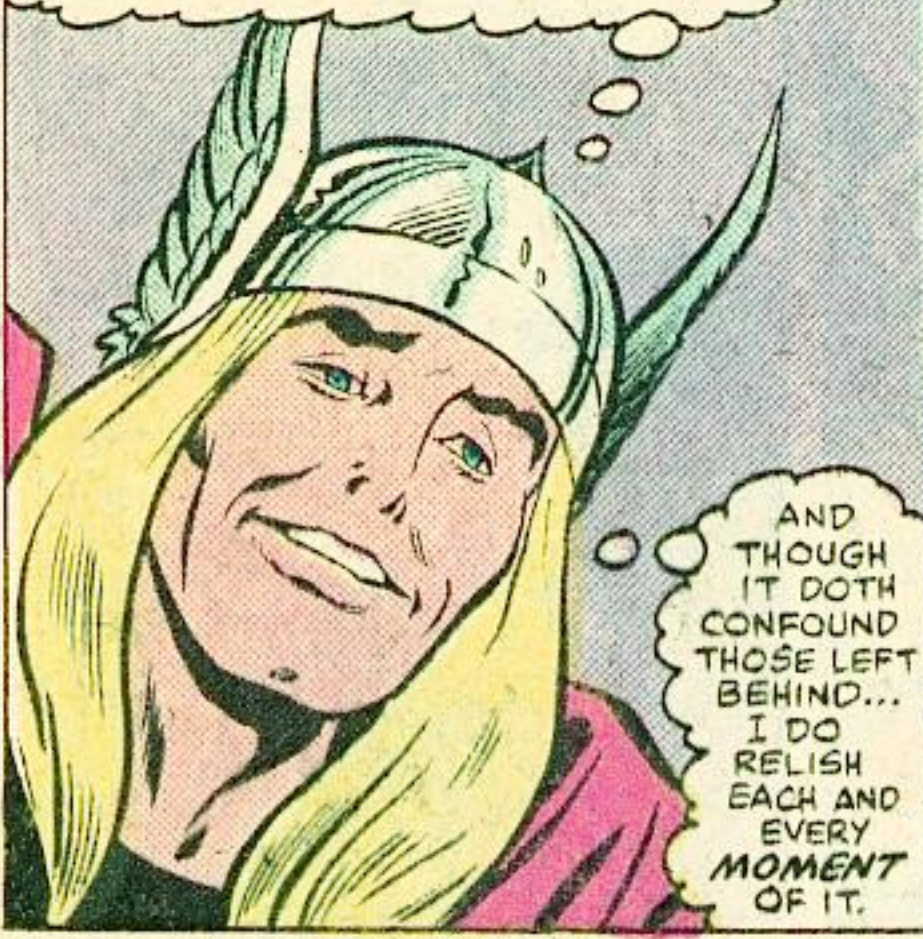
ONCE MORE TO THE
MORTALS' GREATEST
CITY-- NEW YORK--
DO I COME.

THERE, BELOW ME,
A CITY OF STATUS
AND SQUALOR... A
PLACE OF SOARING
HOPES AND SHATTERED
DREAMS.



...A PLACE I WILL ONCE
AGAIN MAKE MY HOME.

SOON, I WILL NOT BE A GOD AMONGST GODS,
RESPECTED AND FEARED AS THE HEIR TO A
GREAT THRONE-- BUT MERELY A SINGLE
SOUL AMONGST EIGHT MILLION OTHERS,
QUIETLY GOING ABOUT MINE AFFAIRS.



AND
THOUGH
IT DOTHS
CONFOUND
THOSE LEFT
BEHIND...
I DO
RELISH
EACH AND
EVERY
MOMENT
OF IT.

NOW, MUST I TAP
MJOLNIR ONCE
'PON THE ROOF...



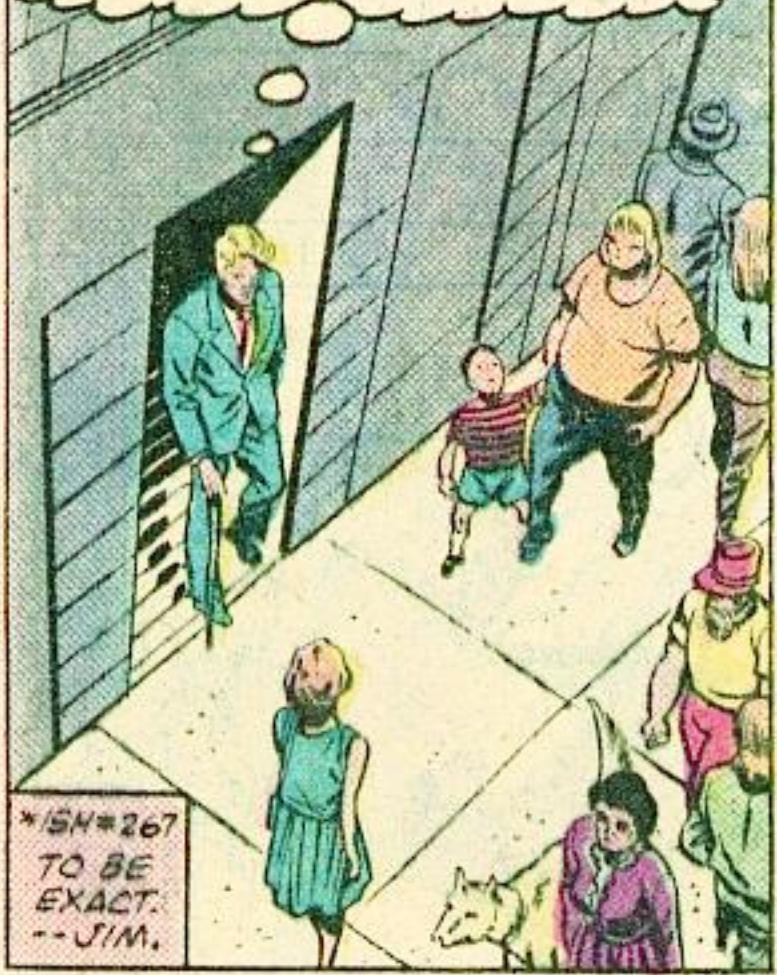
...BRINGING ABOUT
THE CHANGE DIVINE
ODIN HAST DECREED
MUST OCCUR...



...AND EXIT THE
GOD OF THUNDER--
ENTER THE LAME
PHYSICIAN,
DR. DONALD
BLAKE.



IT SEEMS SO LONG SINCE I WANDERED
THE STREETS LIKE THIS. *I THINK I'LL
JUST WALK A BIT AND FEEL THE EBB
AND FLOW OF HUMANITY ONCE AGAIN.



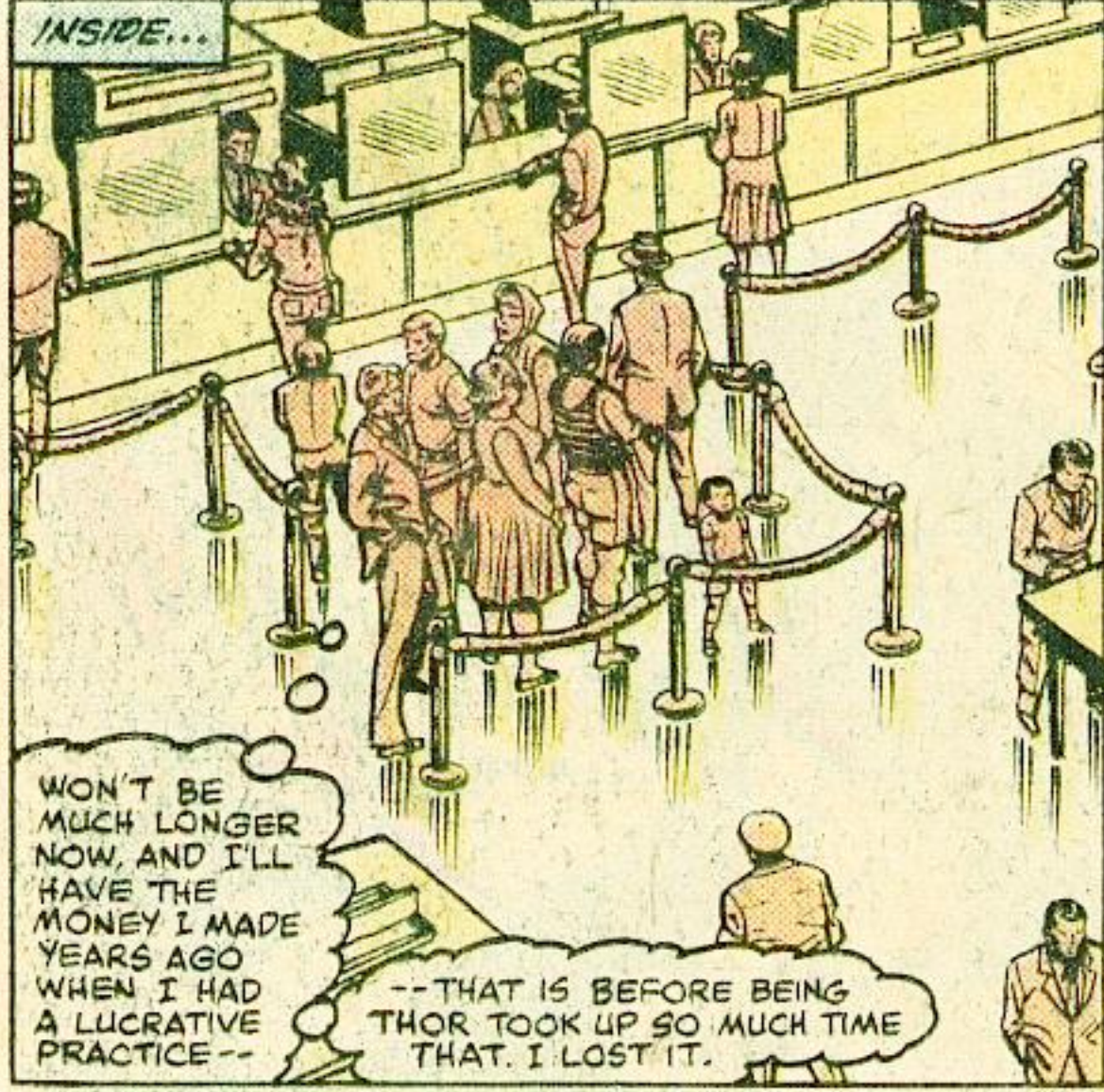
*ISH#267
TO BE
EXACT.
--JIM.

THEN, AFTER AN INVIGORATING, IF
SOMEWHAT AIMLESS STROLL...

NOW, IT'S DOWN TO BUSINESS. I'LL
HAVE TO GET MYSELF AN APARTMENT
AND RE-ESTABLISH MY PRACTICE, ALL
OF WHICH IS GOING TO TAKE--



-- MONEY.



WON'T BE MUCH LONGER NOW, AND I'LL HAVE THE MONEY I MADE YEARS AGO WHEN I HAD A LUCRATIVE PRACTICE--

--THAT IS BEFORE BEING THOR TOOK UP SO MUCH TIME THAT I LOST IT.

DR. BLAKE, OUR RECORDS SHOW IT'S BEEN SEVERAL YEARS SINCE ANY FUNDS WERE EITHER DEPOSITED OR WITHDRAWN FROM YOUR ACCOUNT, SO YOU'LL NEED AUTHORIZATION TO DO SO. PLEASE SEE MS. PRUNZE, ONE OF OUR INVESTIGATORS.



SURE. RIGHT AWAY.



HAVE A SEAT, DR. BLAKE. THIS SHOULDN'T TAKE LONG. DO YOU HAVE ANY REFERENCES... PEOPLE WHO MIGHT VOUCH FOR YOU SHOULD WE FIND IT NECESSARY TO CONSULT THEM ABOUT YOUR WHEREABOUTS AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS?

WILL TONY STARK DO, MA'AM?



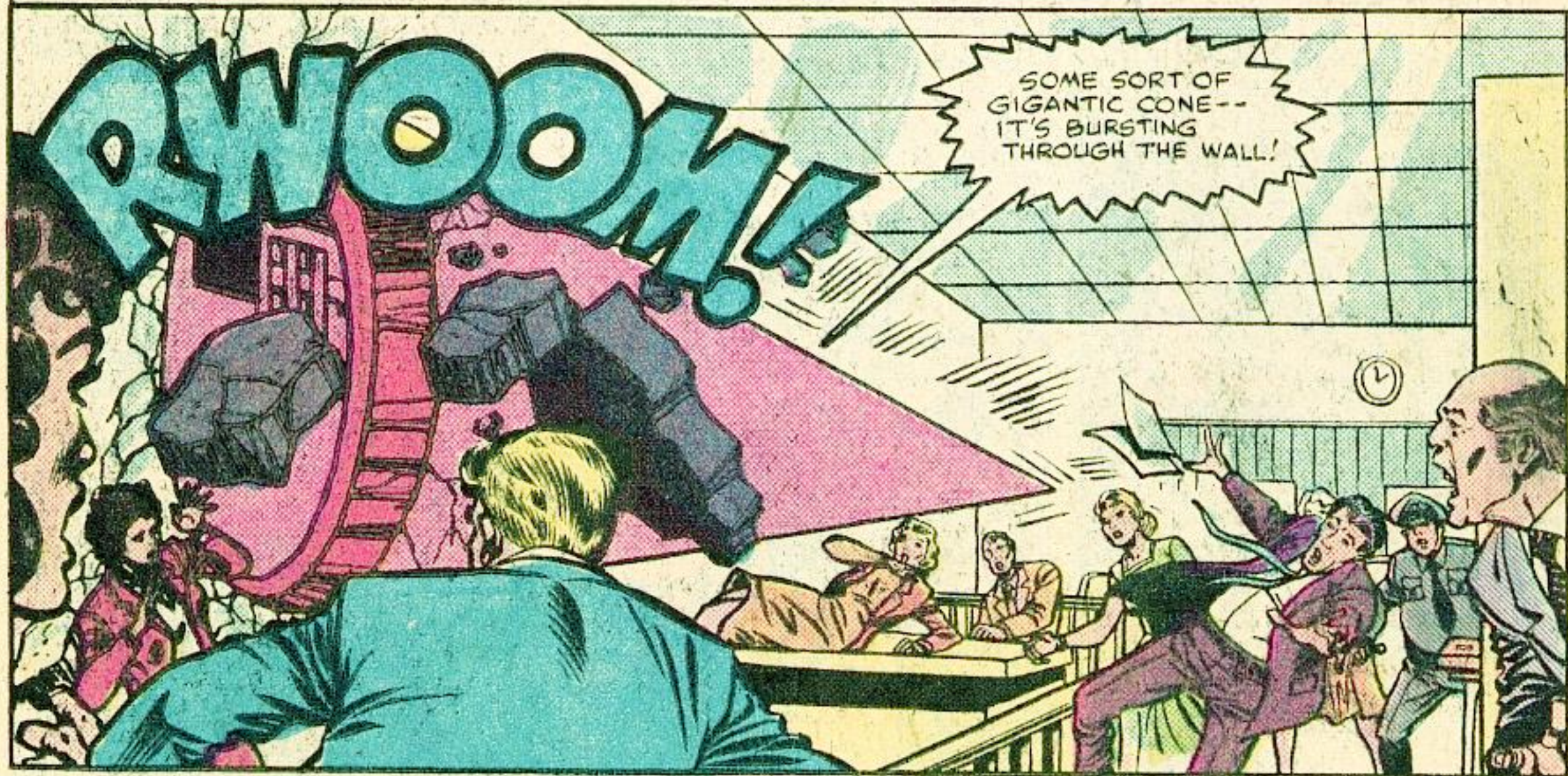
STARK-- THE HEAD OF STARK INTERNATIONAL INDUSTRIES ON LONG ISLAND? YOU CAN'T GET MUCH MORE REPUTABLE THAN THAT. WAS HE A PATIENT AT ANY TIME?

JUST A GOOD FRIEND.



I SEE. WELL, LET'S-- WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE TROUBLE? EVERYTHING'S SHAKING-- THE WHOLE BANK'S QUIVERING!

OVER THERE-- LOOK!



RWOOOK!

SOME SORT OF GIGANTIC CONE-- IT'S BURSTING THROUGH THE WALL!

MY, MY, HAVE I CAUSED SO MUCH ACTIVITY BY SIMPLY ENTERING THE BANK? IT LOOKS AS IF I MAY HAVE A PANIC ON MY HANDS.



I'LL GET TO THAT IN A MOMENT, BUT I DO HATE FEELING STIFLED, SO ALLOW ME TO IMPRISON YOU BEHIND THESE PERFECTLY FORMED PARALLEL LINES... ONLY A PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE, I ASSURE YOU.



WHAT SORT OF STRANGE POWER CAN THIS MAN HAVE? ALL HE DOES IS GESTURE AND WALLS COLLAPSE AND BARS GO UP.



LET US OUT OF HERE!

WHAT IS ALL THIS COMMOTION OUT HERE?! THIS IS SUPPOSED TO BE A BANK, NOT A BALLPARK!



LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF-- I'M--

AARON VERNE! WHAT THE DEVIL ARE YOU DOING HERE? I FIRED YOU!

PRECISELY, MR. HUNNICUT.

AND NOW I'VE COME BACK.

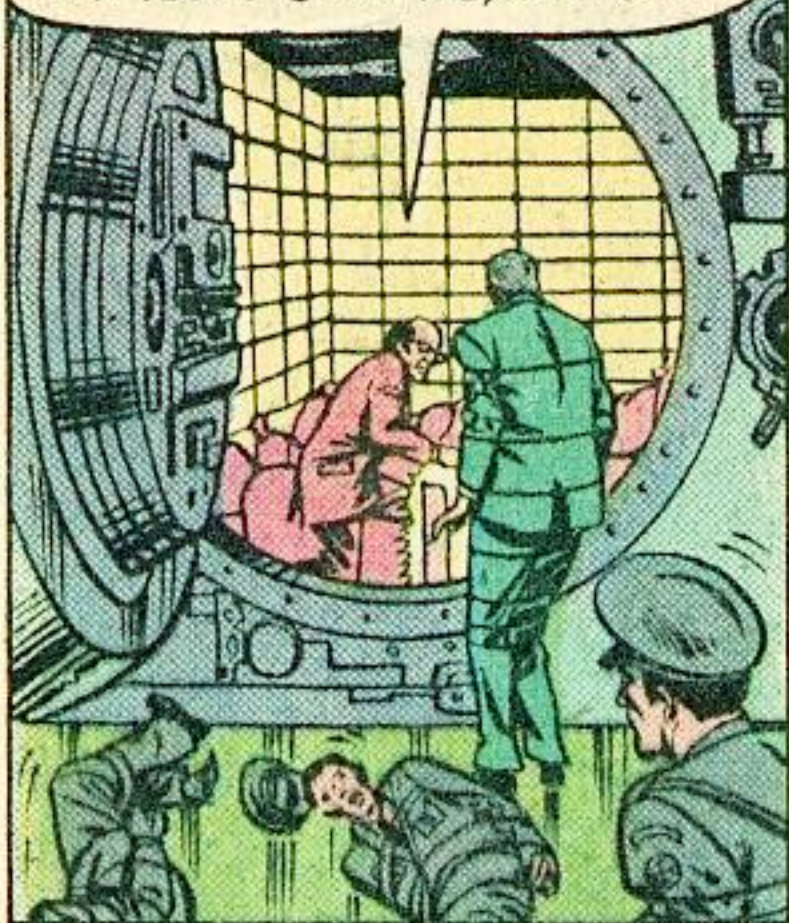


WHAT ARE YOU TALK--AWP! I'M BEING WRAPPED IN CIRCLES?!

I'M TALKING ABOUT A WITHDRAWAL, SIR.

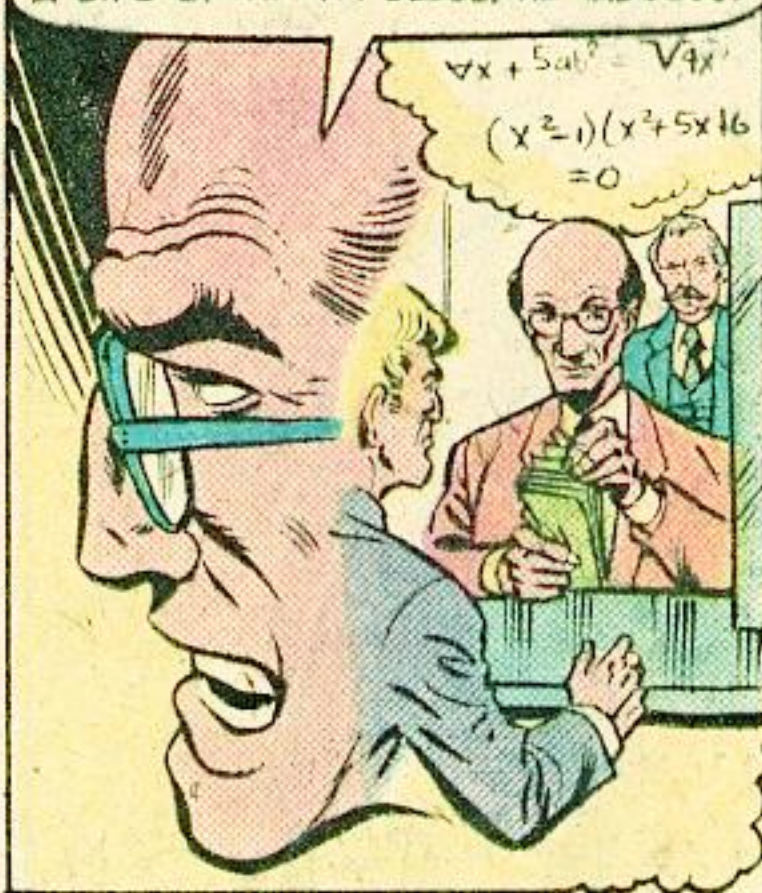


HOW NICE. THE VAULT'S OPEN-- AS IF YOU'D BEEN EXPECTING ME. COME NOW, DON'T LOOK LIKE THAT. THIS ISN'T A CRIME-- IT'S MERE COMPENSATION, FOR THE YEARS OF AGGRAVATION YOU'VE GIVEN ME, HUNNICUT.



I SUPPOSE I'M GOING TO HAVE TO TELL YOU HOW I'VE COME BY THESE EXTRAORDINARY POWERS. YOU SEEM SO INTERESTED.

YOU'RE AWARE OF MY ALL-CONSUMING INTEREST IN MATHEMATICS-- SPECIFICALLY *GEOMETRY*. BUT I NEVER HAD THE FUNDS TO PURSUE ITS STUDY IN COLLEGE, AND SO, UNABLE TO GET A JOB IN MY CHOSEN FIELD I'VE LIVED A LIFE OF MEANINGLESS, MENIAL JOBS.



"AND TODAY YOU FIRED ME FROM THIS ONE-- BECAUSE OF MY PASSION. YOU SAID MY MIND WAS NEVER ON MY 'WORK'.



"I WENT HOME DAZED, DIS-ILLUSIONED... AND AS ALWAYS SOUGHT MY RELEASE IN THE REALM OF IDEAS --



"-- IN THE MIND, WHERE FLAWLESS GEOMETRIC SHAPES FLOATED BEFORE ME, BECKONING WITH THEIR PERFECTION.

"AND IN MY FLIGHT OF FANCY, I REACHED OUT FOR THEM, AND SUDDENLY--

"-- THEY WERE REAL! AND ALL BECAUSE I *BELIEVED* IN WHAT I SAW SO STRONGLY.



"IN SOME STRANGE WAY, MY MIND HAD TAPPED INTO A UNIVERSAL EQUATION-- AND WHAT I HAD CONCEIVED THEN ASSUMED THREE-DIMENSIONAL REALITY.

AND EVEN IF YOU DENY MY STORY-- YOU MUST ACCEPT THE EVIDENCE OF YOUR BEADY LITTLE EYES, HUNNICUT.

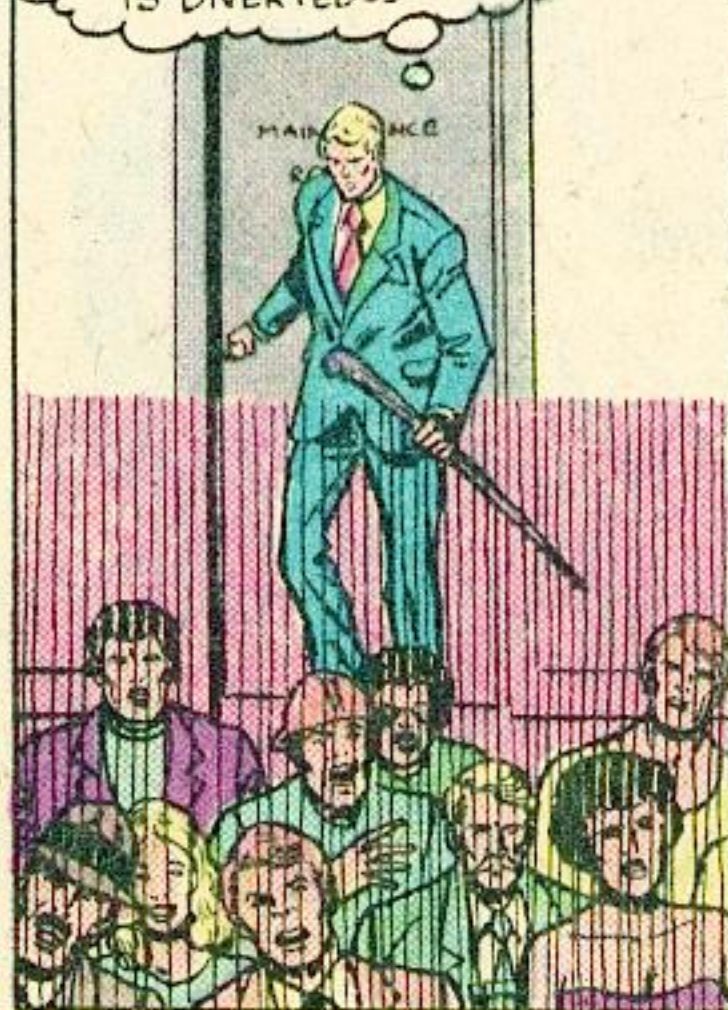


THE EMPTINESS OF YOUR PRECIOUS VAULT WILL ATTEST TO MY EXISTENCE, MUCH TO YOUR REGRET.

FAREWELL. YOU HAVE BEEN PRIVILEGED TO BE IMPRISONED BY LOCUS, THE GEOMETRIC MAN. I HAVE DECIDED UPON THAT NAME FOR LOCUS IS A FOCAL POINT FOR GEOMETRIC CONFIGURATION-- AND THAT IS WHAT I HAVE BECOME.



THERE'S VERY LITTLE DR. DON BLAKE CAN DO NOW. SO, WHILE THE CROWD'S ATTENTION IS DIVERTED--



--IT'S TIME TO BRING A CERTAIN NORSE GOD INTO THE FRAY.



WHILE OUTSIDE...



JUST DROP THE BAG AND DON'T MAKE ANY TROUBLE.

AHH, I NOTE THE LOCAL CONSTABULARY HAS BEEN CALLED. PLEASE DON'T REFER TO THIS IMPECCABLY CONCEIVED RECTANGLE AS A "BAG!" YOU DO LOCUS A GRAVE DISSERVICE.

AND NOW IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I SHOULD--



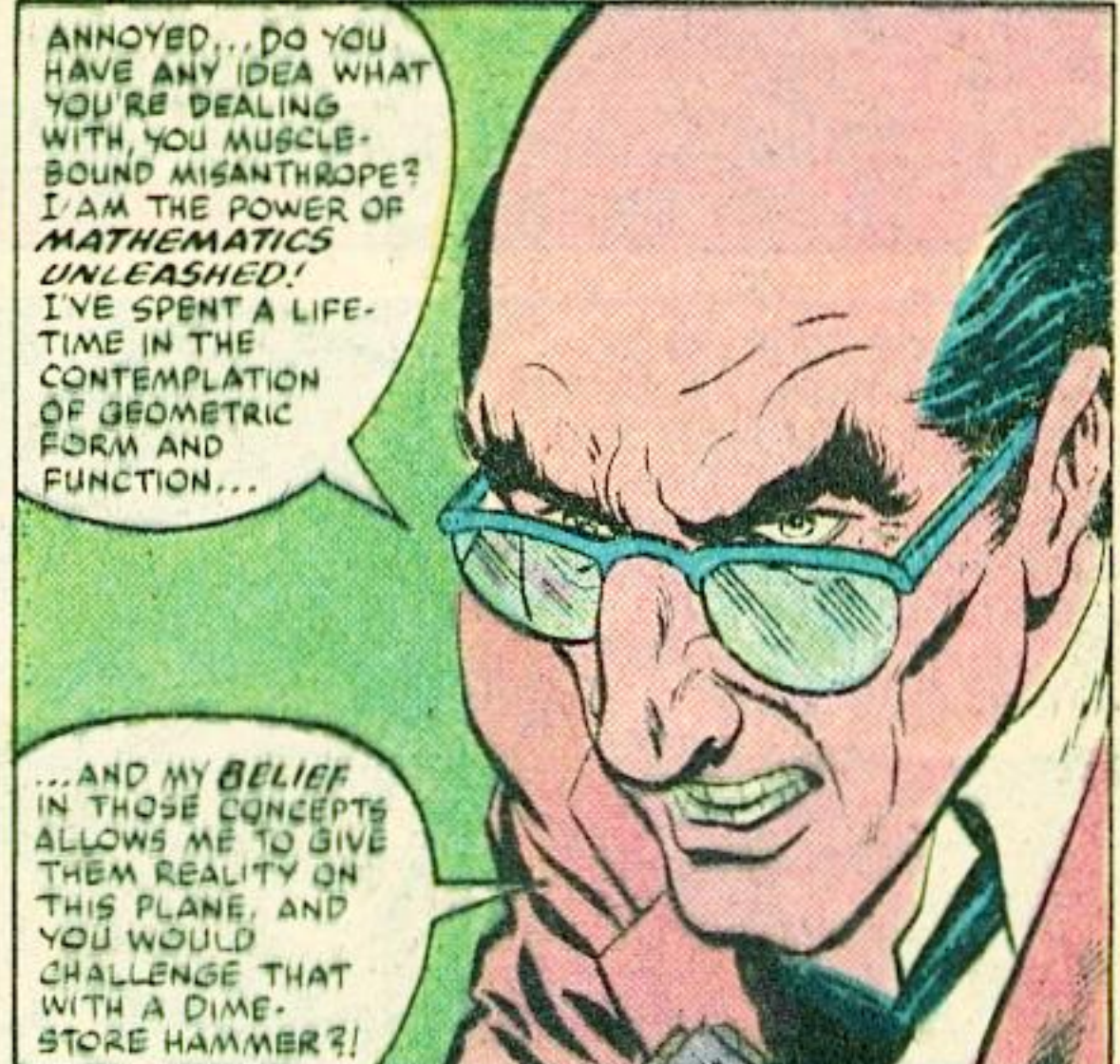
HOLD, MORTAL! YOU MUST PAY FOR THY CRIMINAL ACTS!

WHAT-- THOR?!



YOU'RE ONE OF THOSE SO-CALLED HEROES I'VE READ ABOUT... THE ONE WHOSE GIMMICK IS TO PRETEND YOU'RE SOME SORT OF MYTHOLOGICAL GOD, HOKUM! CLAPTRAP!

THOU WOULD DO WELL TO CEASE THY BABBLE ERE I GROW ANNOYED!



ANNOYED... DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT YOU'RE DEALING WITH, YOU MUSCLE-BOUND MISANTHROPE? I AM THE POWER OF **MATHEMATICS UNLEASHED!** I'VE SPENT A LIFE-TIME IN THE CONTEMPLATION OF GEOMETRIC FORM AND FUNCTION...

...AND MY BELIEF IN THOSE CONCEPTS ALLOWS ME TO GIVE THEM REALITY ON THIS PLANE, AND YOU WOULD CHALLENGE THAT WITH A DIME-STORE HAMMER?!

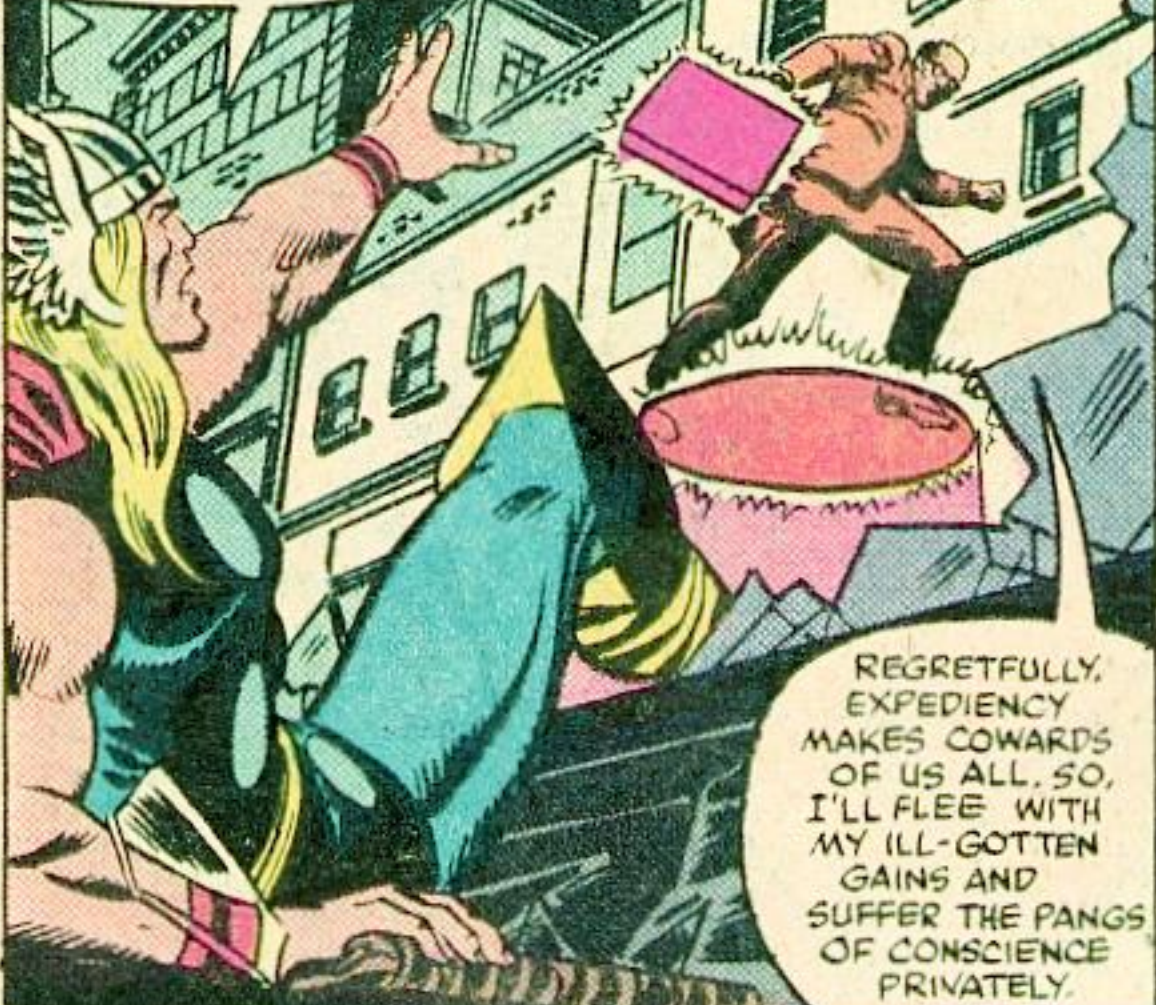


PERHAPS A SMALL DEMONSTRATION IS IN ORDER TO REINFORCE MY STATEMENTS.

WHOOOM!

UGGHH!

RETURN, LOCUS THY COWARDLY ATTACK HATH BUT SPARKED THE BATTLE-- NOT ENDED IT!



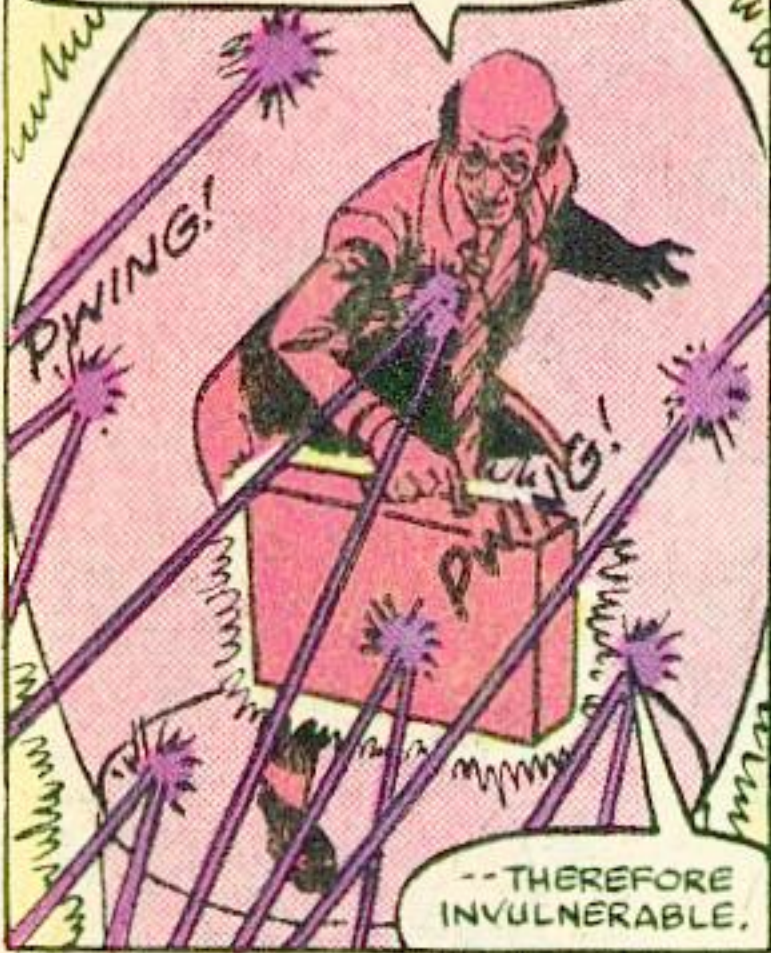
REGRETFULLY, EXPEDIENCY MAKES COWARDS OF US ALL, SO, I'LL FLEE WITH MY ILL-GOTTEN GAINS AND SUFFER THE PANGS OF CONSCIENCE PRIVATELY.

OPEN FIRE! HE'S TAKIN' OFF ON SOME KINDA RISING PLATFORM! BUT DON'T SHOOT TO KILL-- JUST BRING 'IM DOWN!



LOOK-- HE'S FORMING SOMETHING ELSE OUTTA THIN AIR-- A CIRCLE OR SOMETHIN'!

A PARABOLIC BARRIER TO BE EXACT, IGNORAMUS... ONE BROUGHT INTO BEING BY THE POWER OF MY MIND-- BACKED BY MY WILL--



-- THEREFORE INVULNERABLE.

HOLD YOUR FIRE! OUR BULLETS ARE BOUNCIN' BACK AT US! WE'VE ALREADY WINGED ONE MAN, AND WE COULD HIT A BYSTANDER!



HIS MEEK APPEARANCE HATH DISTRACTED ME-- LEAVING ME OPEN FOR THE INITIAL BLOW.



BUT NO LONGER SHALL THOR RESTRAIN HIS WRATH!

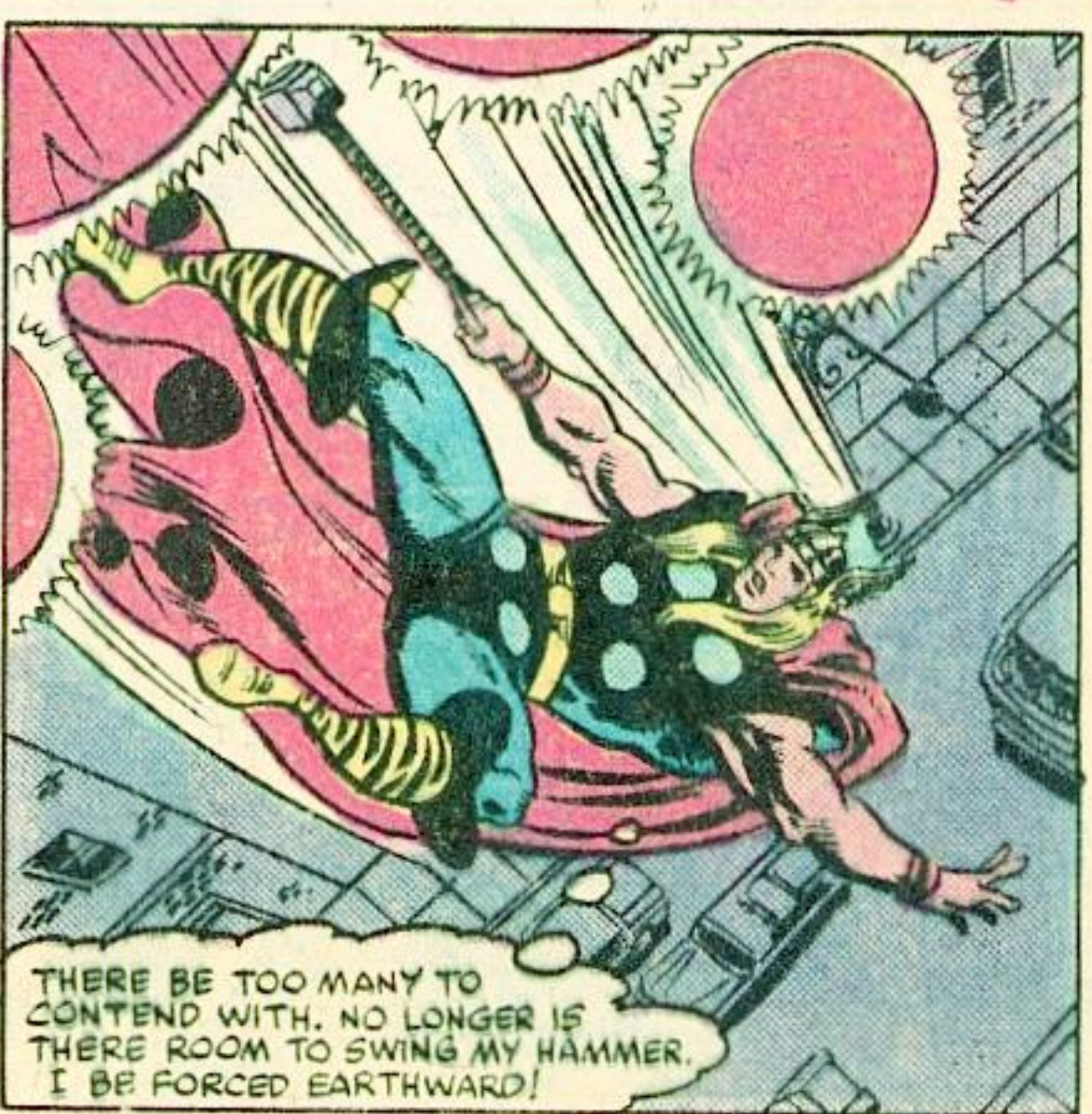
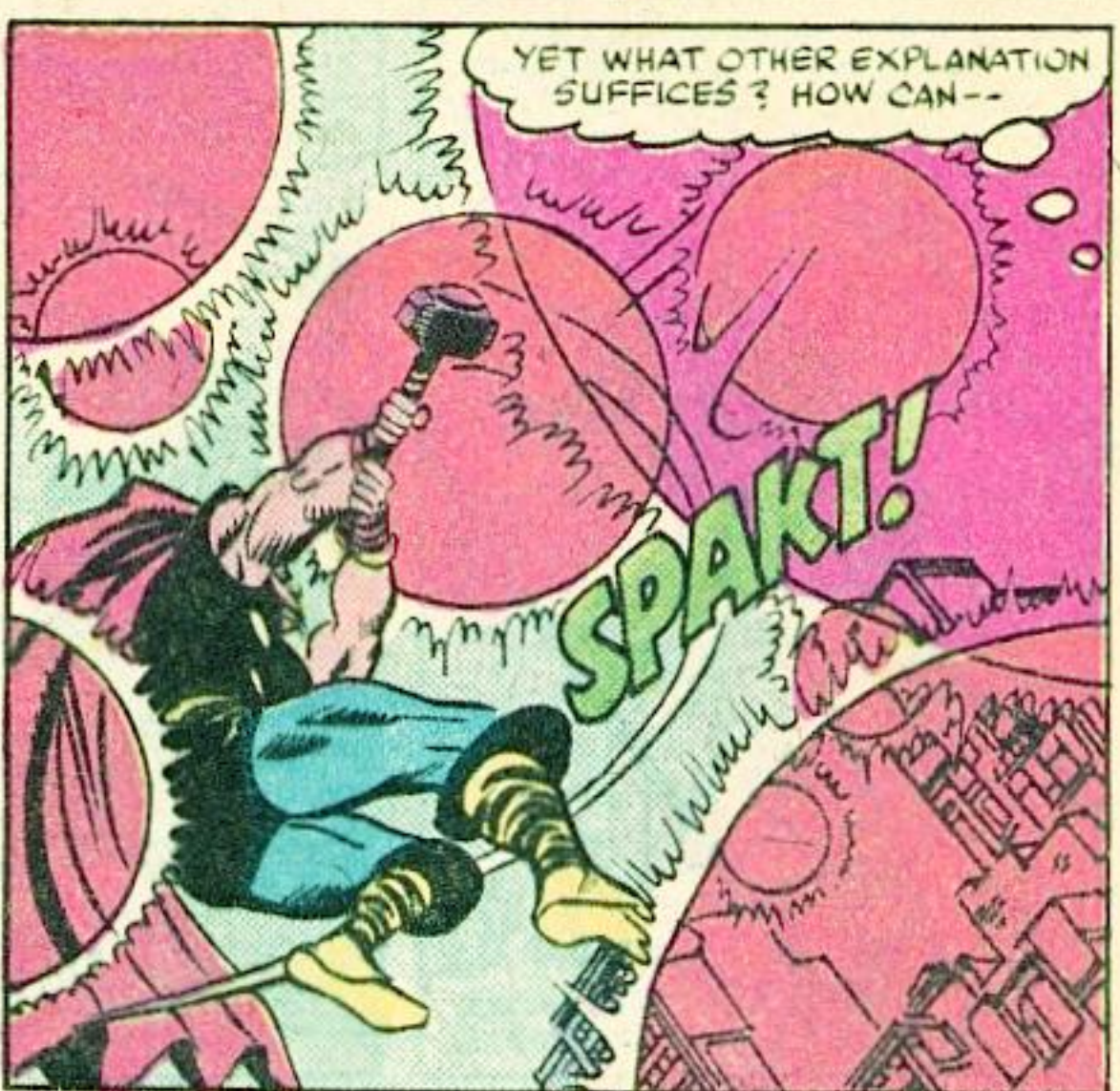
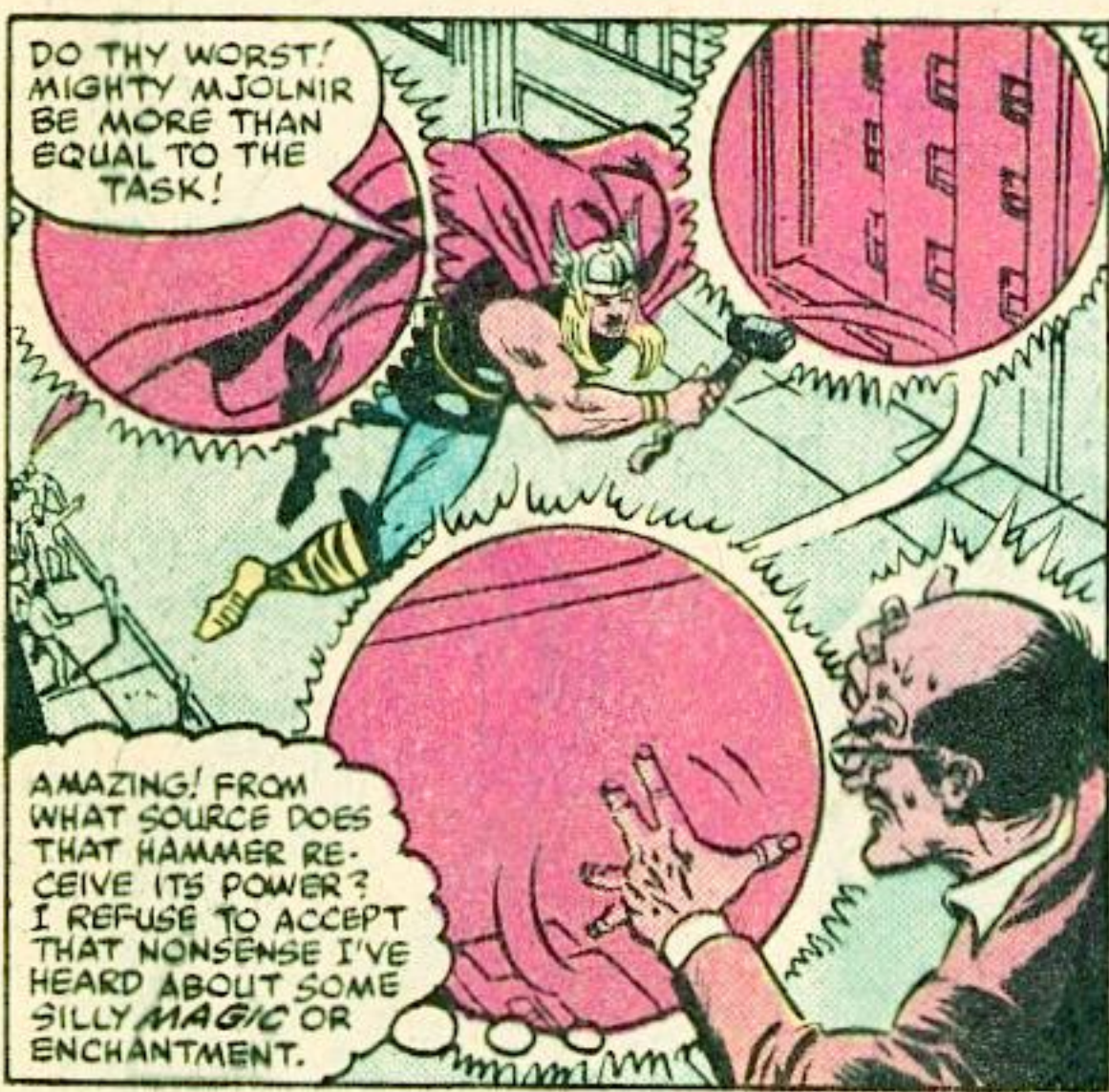
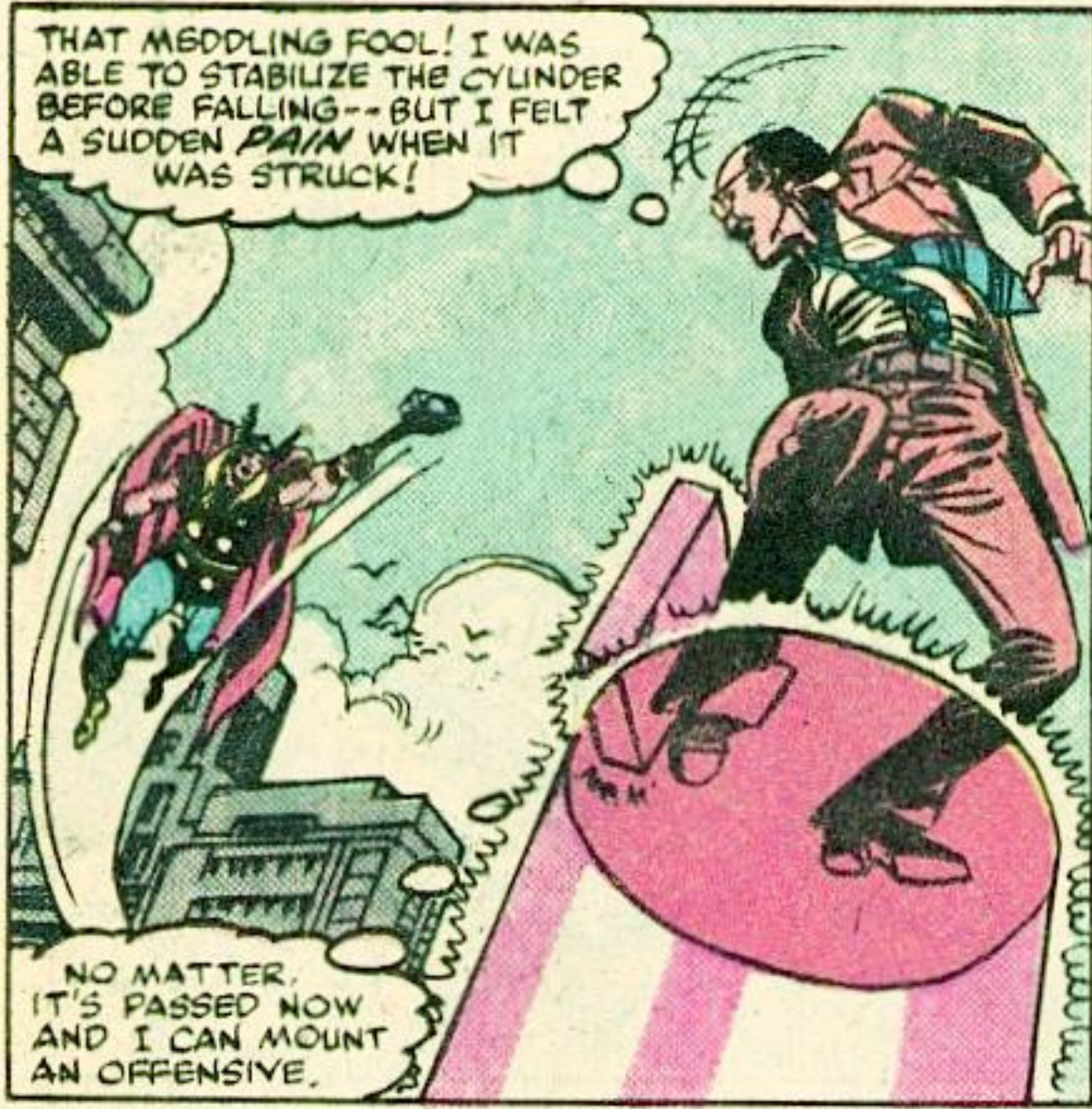
NOW SHALL LOCUS BE LAID LOW AND HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR HIS DEEDS!



SPARE ME YOUR--

--WHAT! HIS HAMMER-- IT MUST HAVE STRUCK MY RISING CYLINDER-- UPSETTING IT!





THE PAIN--SUBSIDING.

PERHAPS YOU WOULD CARE TO AGAIN EQUATE YOUR HAMMER'S WORTH WITH THE CHALLENGE BEFORE IT. IT SHOULD PROVE MORE AMUSING THE SECOND TIME.

NOW THOU DOST SCOFF AT ME, VILLAIN?!

HAVE AT THEE!

EXCELLENT. I'D HOPED TO SEPARATE YOU FROM THIS CARPENTER'S TOOL WHICH SEEMS SO MUCH A PART OF YOUR STRENGTH.

NOW THAT YOU'VE RELEASED THE ARCHAIC THING AGAIN-- A FAST-FORMING POLYHEDRON PLACED AROUND IT...

...AS WELL AS ONE ENCASEING ITS OWNER, SHOULD MAKE THE SEPARATION COMPLETE AND PERMANENT.

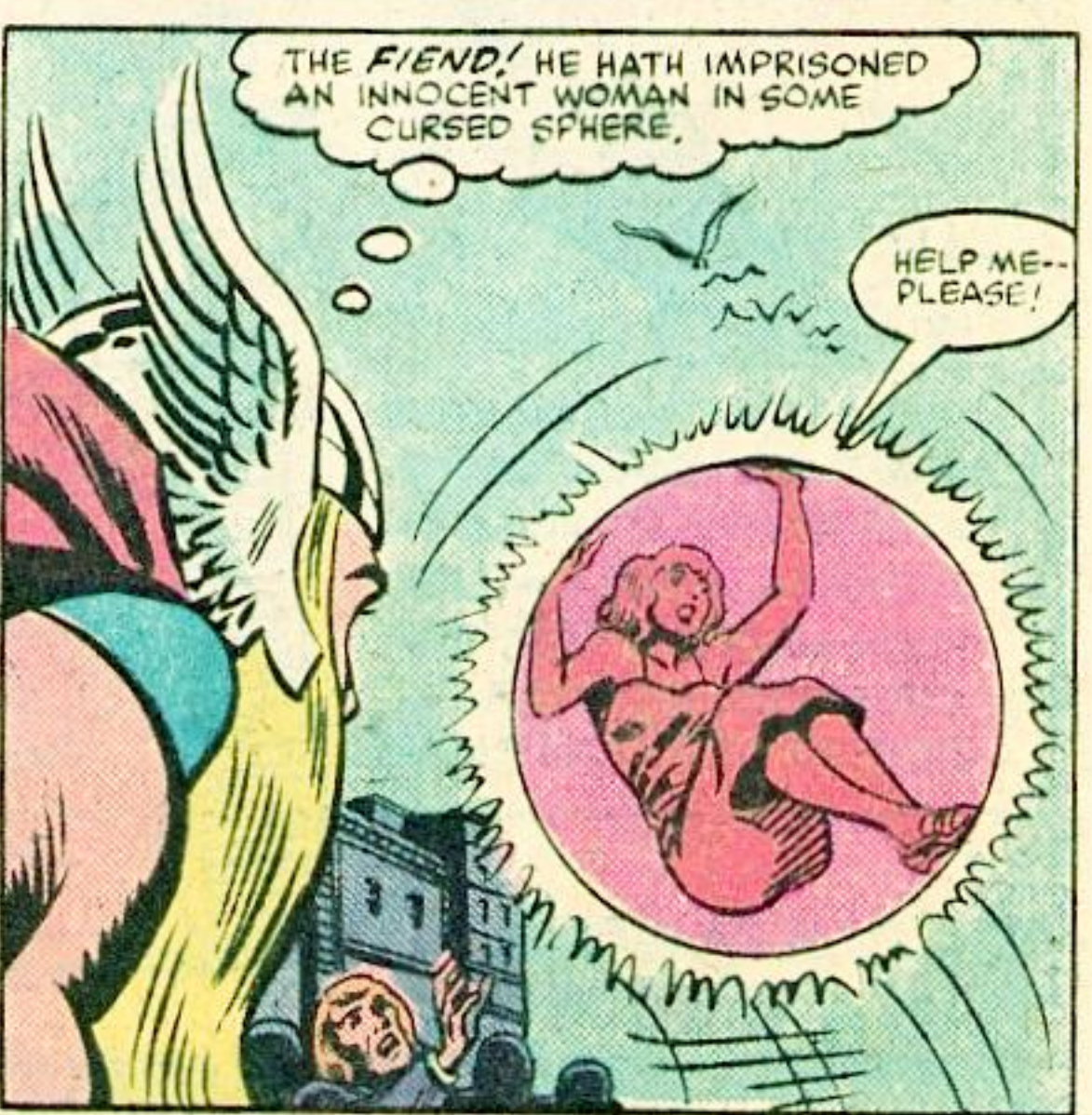
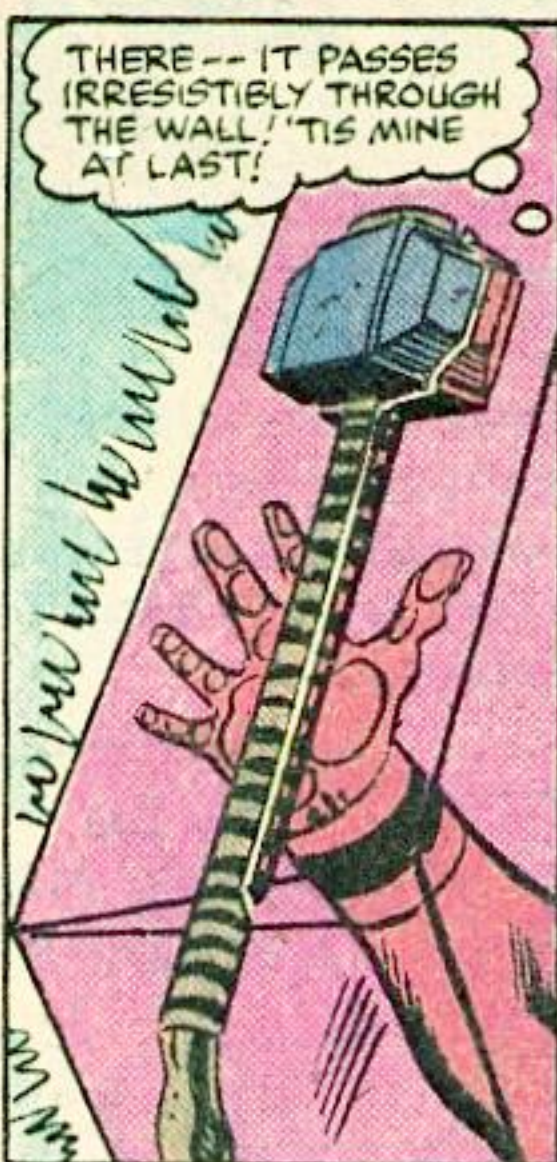
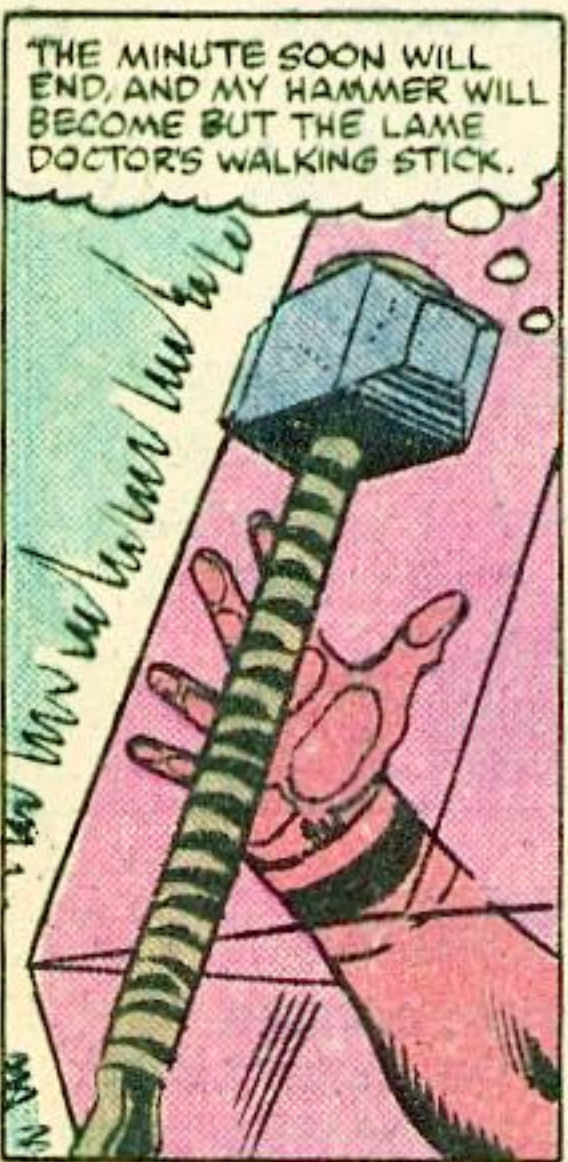
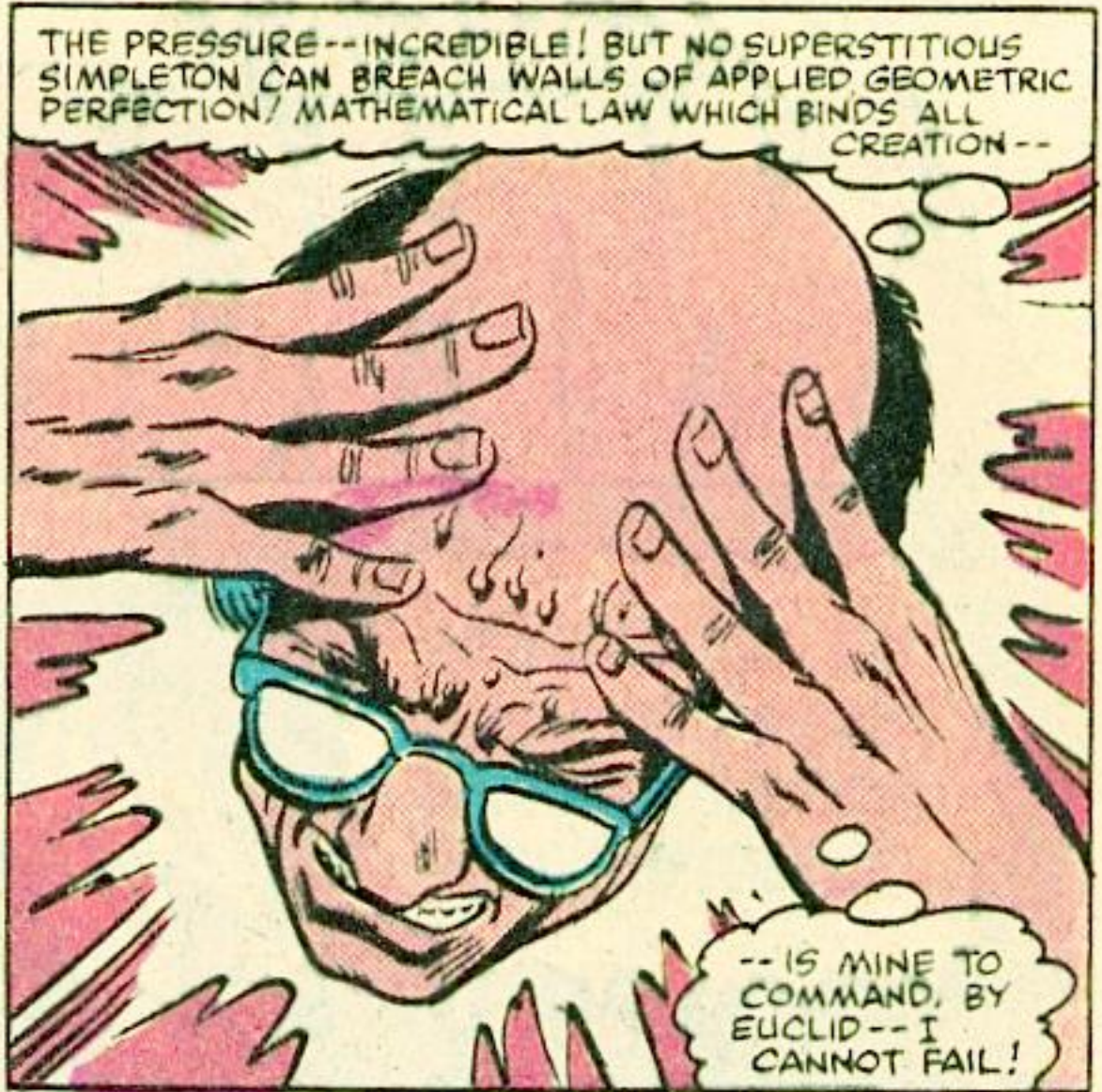
NEVER! 'TIS DECREED THAT THE HAMMER OF THOR MUST EVER RETURN TO HIS HAND WHATEVER THE OBSTACLES BARRING ITS PATH.

THEN I SHALL CREATE ADDITIONAL OBSTRUCTIONS TO ENSURE THE DOWNFALL OF YOUR SILLY "DECREE."

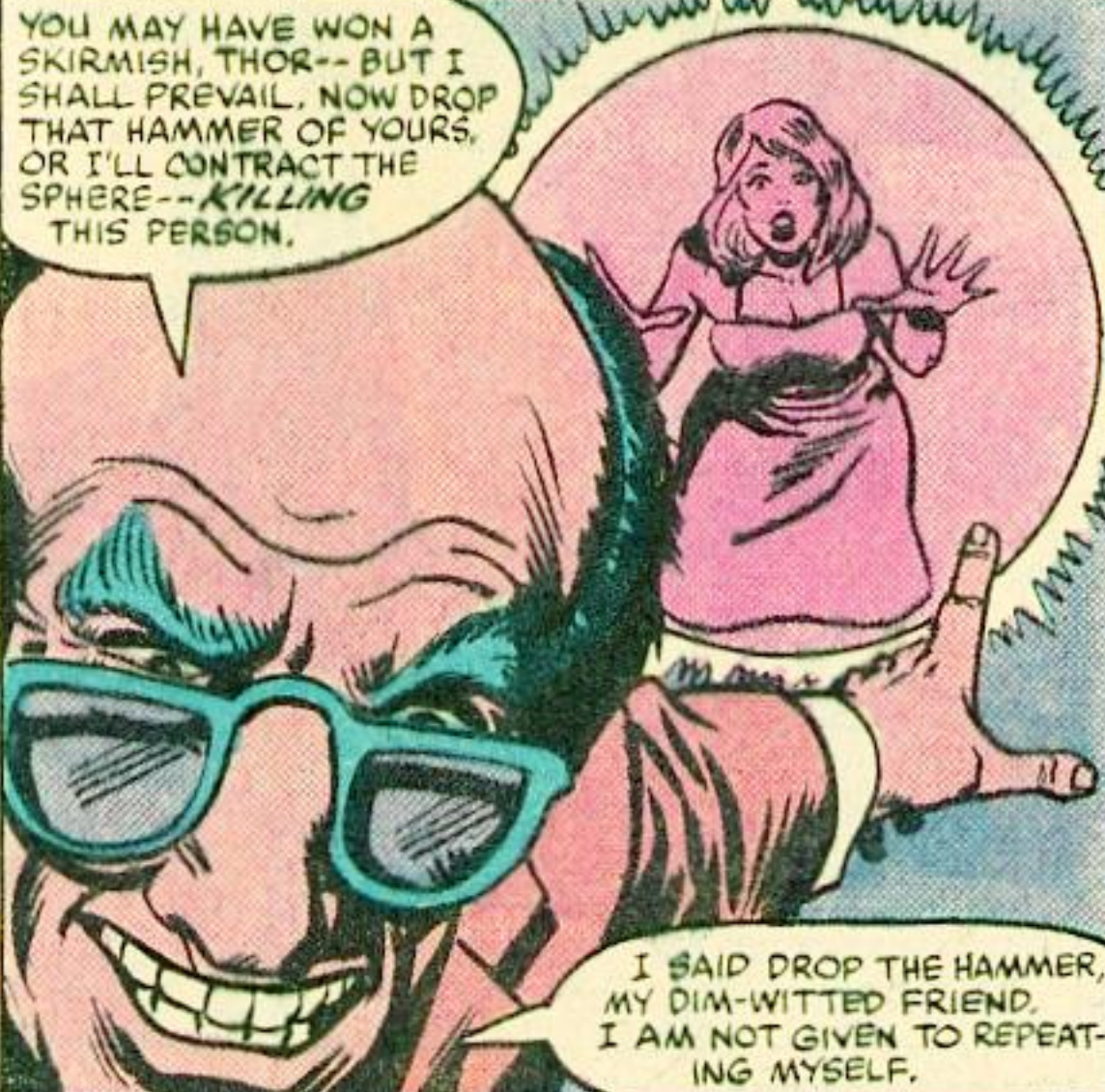
IT'S NOT WORKING! THE HAMMER'S RETURN IS TOO SWIFT-- AND THE PAIN'S COMING BACK WITH EACH BARRIER BROKEN.

I MUST DISSIPATE THESE NON-ESSENTIALS AND CONCENTRATE FULLY ON MAINTAINING THE POLYHEDRON SURROUNDING THOR.

MJOLNIR... IT MUST BE IN MY HAND BRE SIXTY SECONDS HATH ELAPSED-- ELSE I ASSUME THE MORTAL IDENTITY OF DON BLAKE... AND HELPLESSNESS.



YOU MAY HAVE WON A SKIRMISH, THOR-- BUT I SHALL PREVAIL. NOW DROP THAT HAMMER OF YOURS, OR I'LL CONTRACT THE SPHERE--*KILLING* THIS PERSON.



I SAID DROP THE HAMMER, MY DIM-WITTED FRIEND. I AM NOT GIVEN TO REPEATING MYSELF.

THERE BE NO CHOICE, I DARE NOT RISK A RESCUE FROM THIS DISTANCE.



VERY WELL, MADMAN, THOR SHALL ACCEDE TO THY DEMAND. MY HAMMER BE PLACED 'PON THE GROUND. BUT BE WARNED... THERE BE FORCES AT WORK WITHIN IT BEYOND THY KEN.



AND I INTEND TO DISCOVER *PRECISELY* WHAT THOSE FORCES ARE! BUT FIRST, I MUST HAVE THE MALLET IN MY POSSESSION.

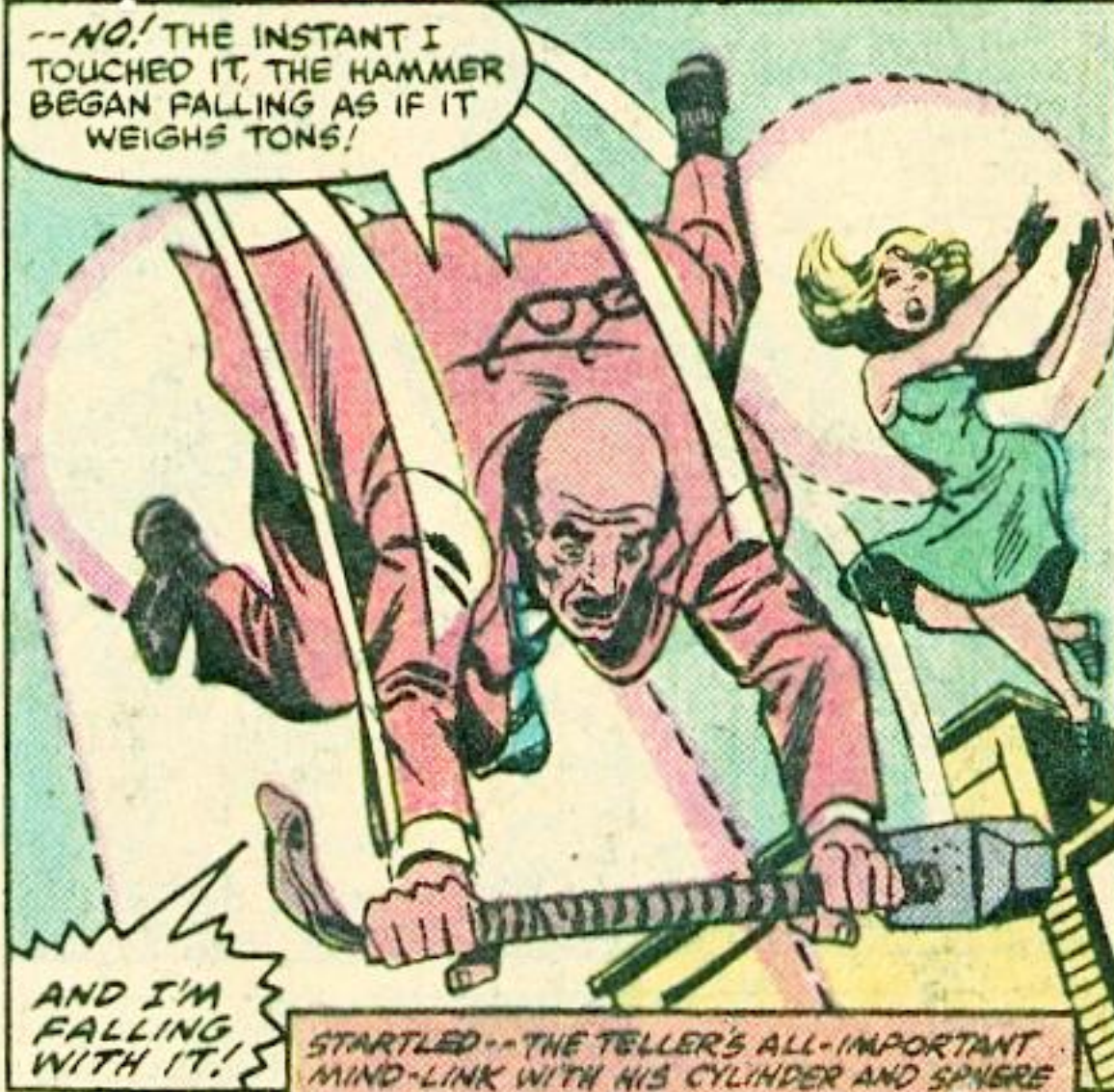


YOU STROVE MIGHTILY TO ENSURE THE HAMMER WAS IN YOUR HAND.



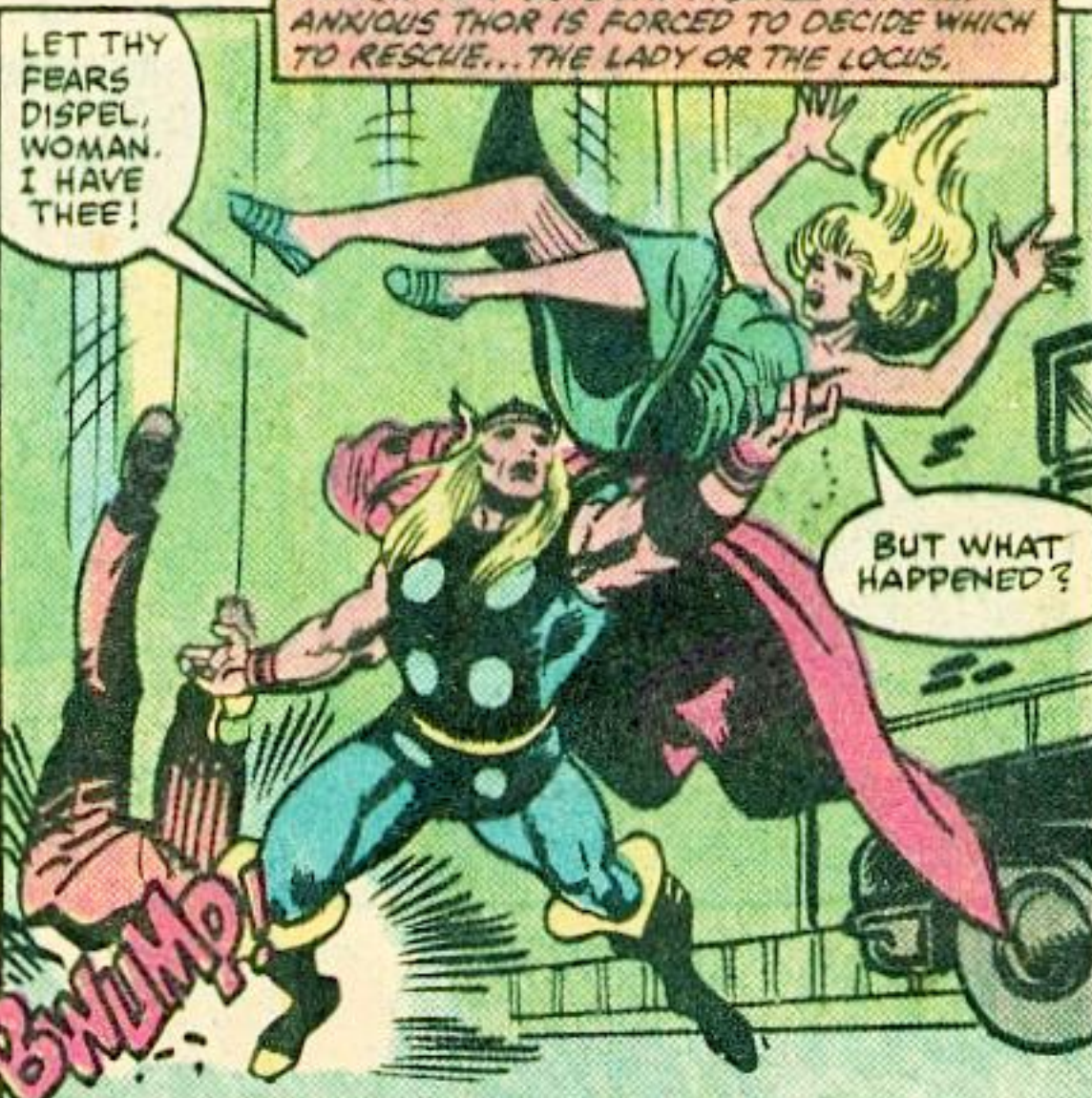
HOLDING IT MUST HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH ITS POWER. AND NOW THAT I'VE GRASPED IT-- I'LL ANALYZE ITS *SECRET*... PUT IT UNDER MY CON--

--NO! THE INSTANT I TOUCHED IT, THE HAMMER BEGAN FALLING AS IF IT WEIGHS TONS!



AND I'M FALLING WITH IT!

STARTLED-- THE TELLER'S ALL-IMPORTANT MIND-LINK WITH HIS CYLINDER AND SPHERE VANISH. AND AS BOTH FIGURES TOPPLE, AN ANXIOUS THOR IS FORCED TO DECIDE WHICH TO RESCUE... THE LADY OR THE LOCUS.



LET THY FEARS DISPEL, WOMAN. I HAVE THEE!

BUT WHAT HAPPENED?

LOCUS WAS UNAWARE OF THE REST OF MJOLNIR'S ODIN-SPAWNED ENCHANTMENT... ALTHOUGH MY HAMMER MAY BE LIFTED BY MIND CONSTRUCTS OR MACHINES--

-- NO LIVING BEING MAY HEFT IT BY STRENGTH OF ARM SAVE THOR HIMSELF. 'TIS AS MUCH PART OF MY HAMMER'S MAGIC AS ITS INEVITABLE RETURN TO ITS MASTER WHEN THROWN.

LOCUS' FAILURE TO ACCEPT SOMETHING BEYOND REASON OR COMPUTATION WAS HIS UNDOING.

NOW STAND YE BACK, FOR THERE BE ONE FINAL DEED BEFORE ME.

YOU HEARD THE MAN. KEEP OUT OF HIS WAY.

LOCUS WAS HURT IN HIS FALL, AND THOUGH HE IS ENEMY TO THOR-- STILL SHALL HE RECEIVE AID FOR HIS INJURIES.

MOMENTS LATER...

HOLD IT, PAL, WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU--

I'M A MEDICAL DOCTOR-- SUMMONED BY THOR TO ASSIST THAT MAN OVER THERE.

ALL RIGHT. GOWAN THROUGH.

HOW'S HE LOOK, DOC?

WELL, HE'S GOT A BROKEN COLLARBONE, AND HIS PUPIL DILATION INDICATES A SLIGHT CONCUSSION, BUT HE'LL MAKE IT.

HERE COMES THE AMBULANCE. THEY'LL TAKE IT FROM HERE. YOU CAN RIDE WITH THEM TO THE HOSPITAL IF YOU LIKE.

OKAY. LET'S PUT HIM ON THE STRETCHER.

SO, THOR'S RESPONSIBILITY TO HUMANITY IN THIS MATTER IS NOW OVER, WHILE DR. BLAKE'S TASK AS A HEALER OF MEN...

...HAS ONLY BEGUN.

NEXT: THE MIRACLE OF STORMS!