

AUG #310 50c

MARVEL® COMICS GROUP

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THE MIGHTY THOR™



THE MAELSTROM TO MEPHISTO!

When DR. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking-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!**

DOUG MOENCH KEITH POLLARD & GENE DAY JOE ROSEN GEORGE ROUSSOS JIM SALICRUP JIM SHOOTER
WRITER ARTISTS LETTERER COLORIST EDITOR EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

THE MAELSTROM TO MEPHISTO

IT BEGINS AS A STUDY IN CONTRAST BETWEEN THE MAJESTIC AND THE MUNDANE.

ABOVE--A GOLDEN-HAIRED GOD FROM ASGARD SOARING THROUGH THE SKIES...

AND BELOW--A COMMON MUGGING IN THE STREETS OF MANHATTAN...

IT WILL END WHEN THE MUNDANE IS SUPPLANTED BY THE DEMONIC, WITH A STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE STRONGEST CONTRASTS KNOWN TO MAN.



BUT FOR NOW, THE MUGGING IS EVIL ENOUGH...

LET GO O' THE PURSE, LADY!

NO! I JUST CASHED MY SOCIAL SECURITY CHECK! I NEED THAT MONEY TO EAT!



C'MON, MAN, WE GOT THE PURSE! LET'S GET OUTTA--

KABOOH!

WHAT THE--?!!



KNOW THIS, MORTALS--SHOULD YE PERSIST IN THY STORM OF VIOLENCE AGAINST YON INNOCENT WOMAN...

... THEN SO TOO SHALL I UNLEASH A STORM OF RETRIBUTION!



H-HOLY CRUD--!

IT... IT'S HIM--!

IT'S THOR!!



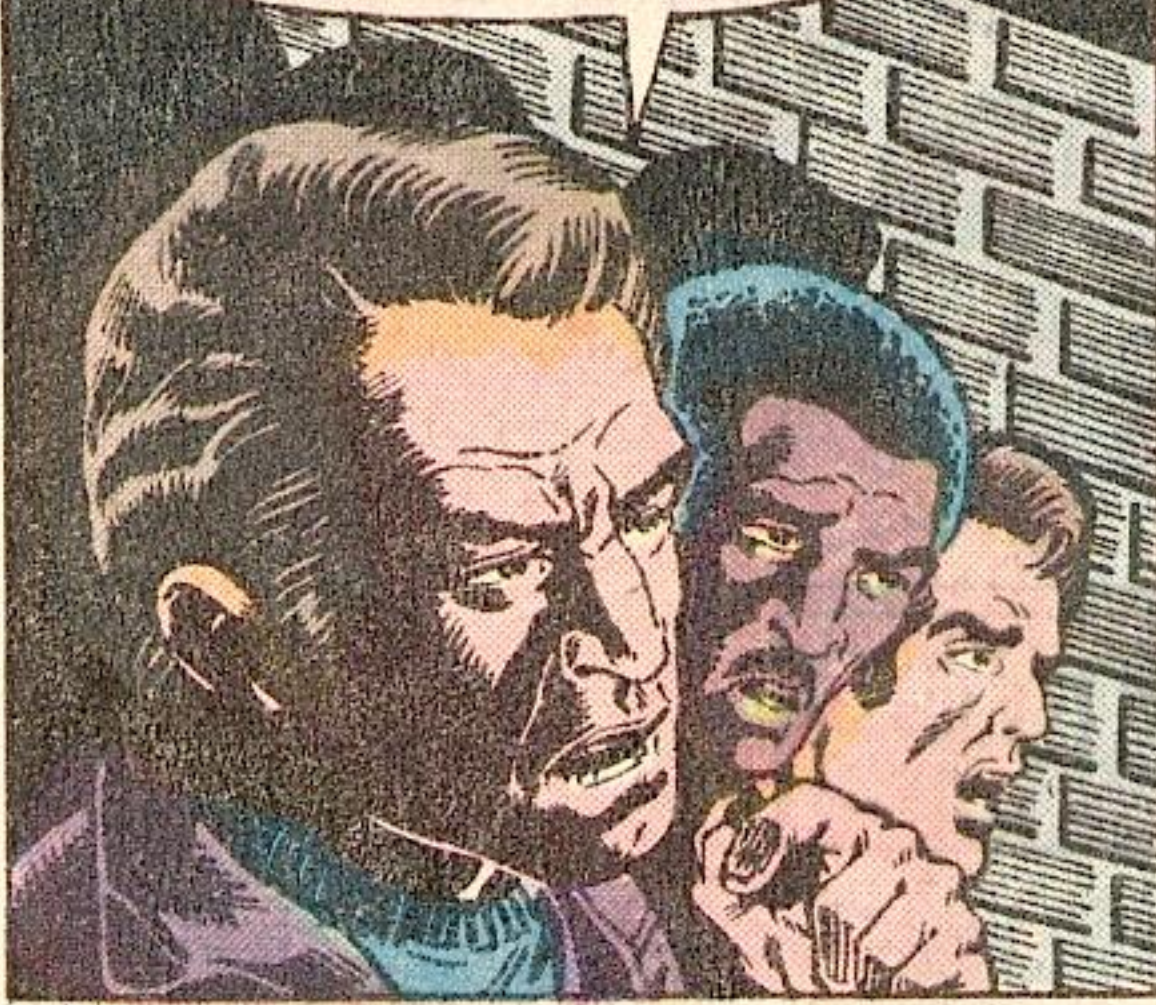
YOU FACE A GRAVE CHOICE AT THIS MOMENT-- PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT CHOICE OF ALL THY DAYS...



IT COULD PROVE TO BE THE TURNING POINT BETWEEN A LIFE OF NOBILITY AND AN EXISTENCE OF EVIL AND DEGRADATION...

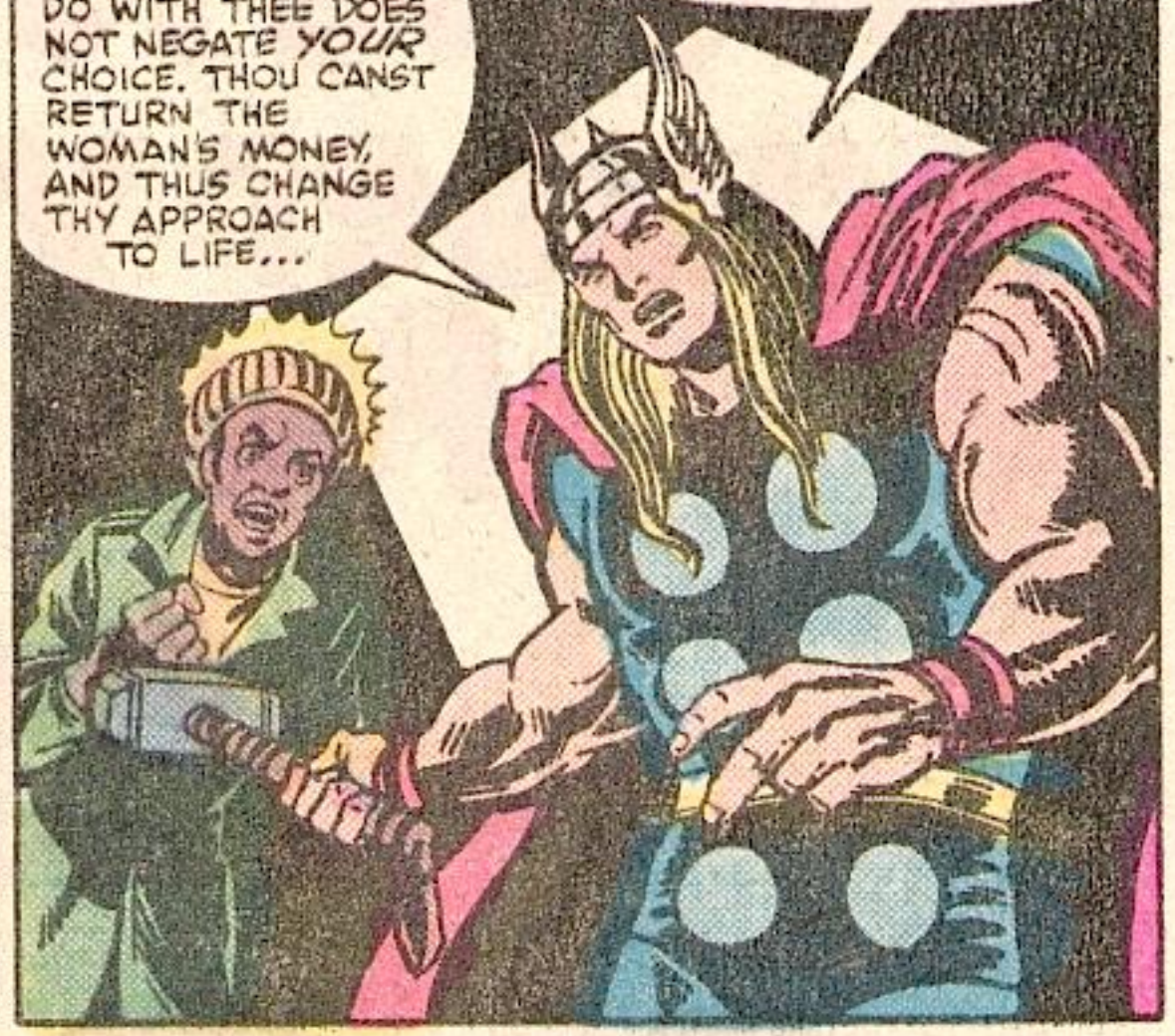
... JUST AS YOU HAVE ALREADY DEGRADED THIS HELPLESS WOMAN!

CHOICE--? Y'MEAN YA AIN'T GONNA CLOBBER US WITH THAT HAMMER-- AIN'T EVEN GONNA TAKE US IN TO THE COPS?



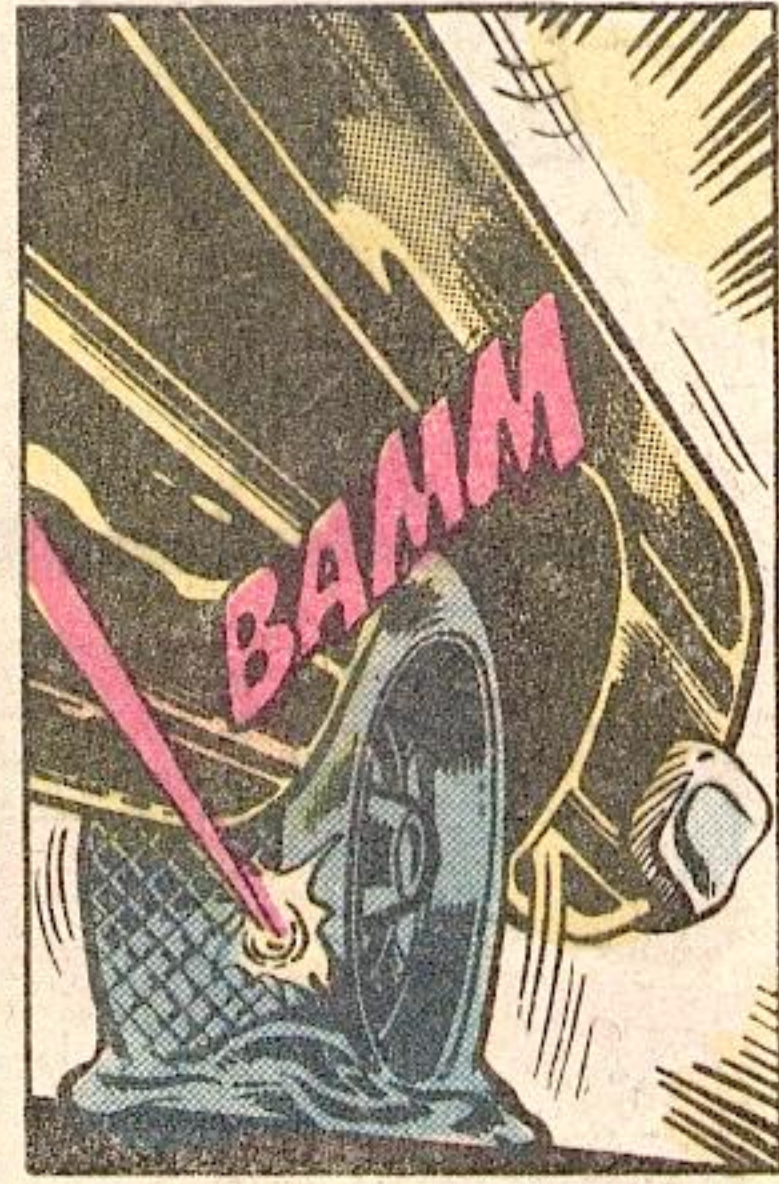
THE FACT THAT I FACE MY OWN CHOICE OF WHAT TO DO WITH THEE DOES NOT NEGATE YOUR CHOICE. THOU CANST RETURN THE WOMAN'S MONEY, AND THUS CHANGE THY APPROACH TO LIFE...

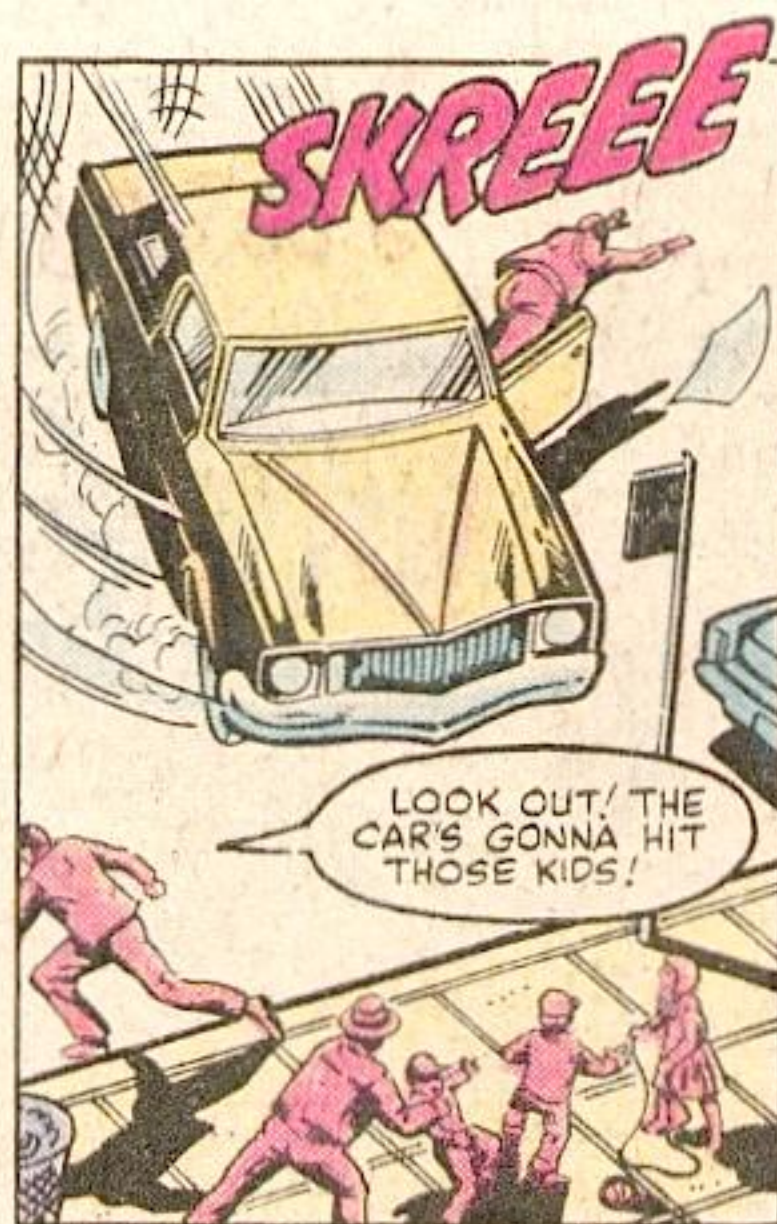
...OR YOU CAN GO ON AS YOU HAVE, AND SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES.



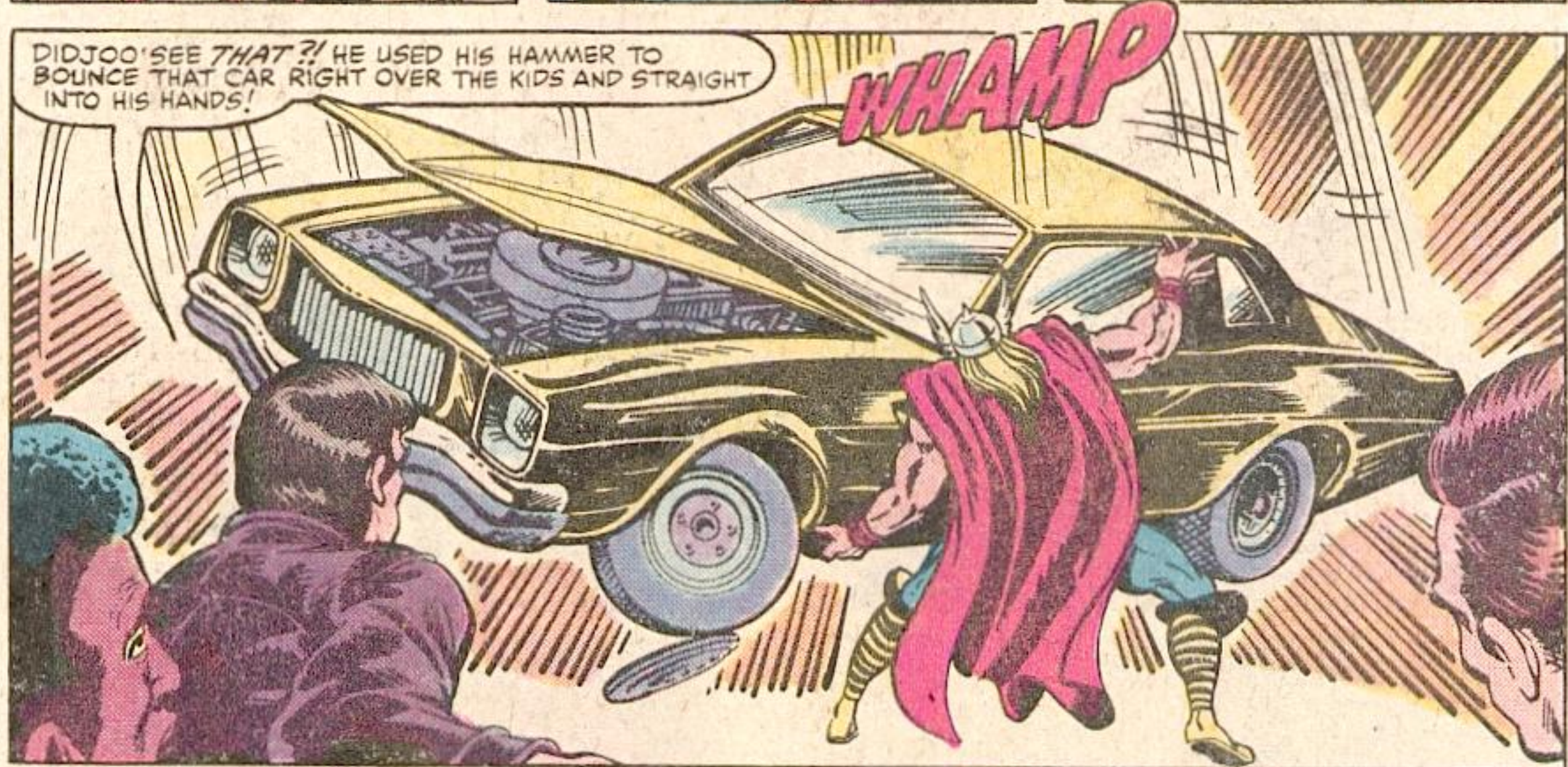
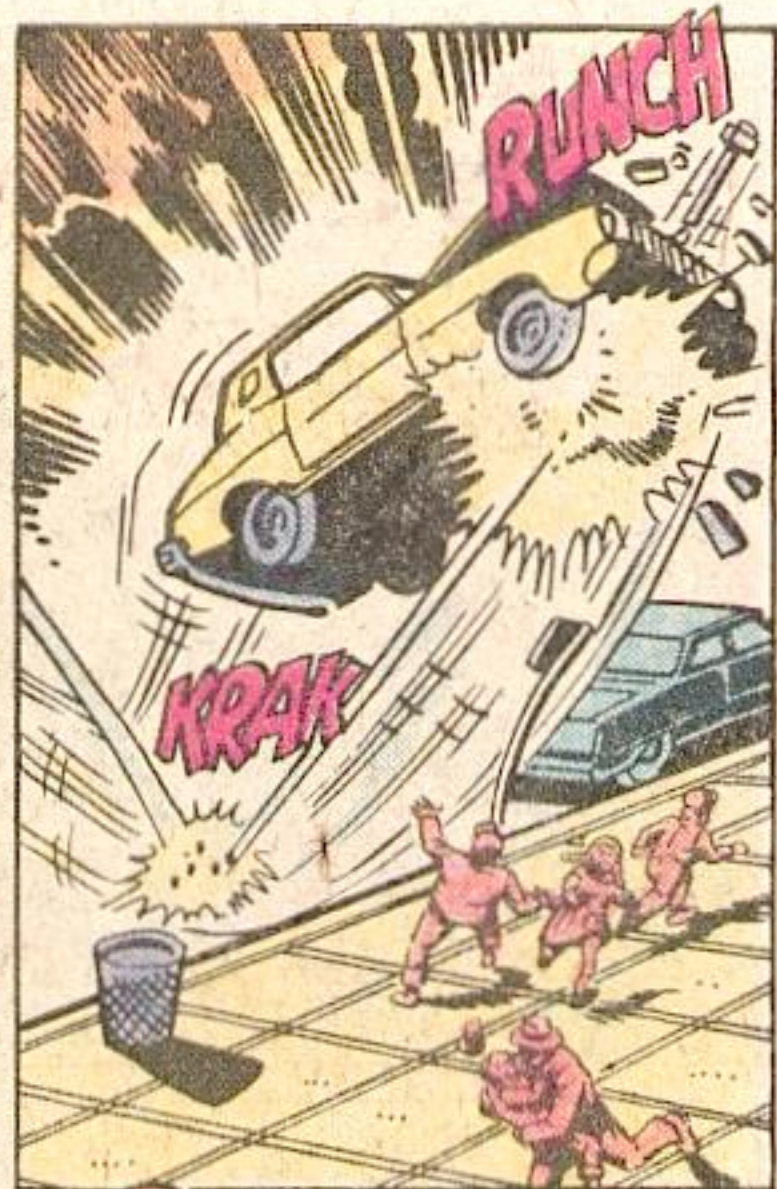
YEAH? WELL, IF WE GOT A CHOICE, THAT MEANS WE AIN'T NECESSARILY GONNA SUFFER NO CONSEQUENCES, RIGHT? SO--

BUT BEFORE THE LEADER OF THE YOUNG MUGGERS CAN GO ON...





LOOK OUT! THE CAR'S GONNA HIT THOSE KIDS!



DIDJOO' SEE THAT?! HE USED HIS HAMMER TO BOUNCE THAT CAR RIGHT OVER THE KIDS AND STRAIGHT INTO HIS HANDS!



YEAH-- AND NOW THE HAMMER'S COMIN' RIGHT BACK TO HIM!

I NEVER SEEN NOTHIN' LIKE IT!



NICE GOIN', THOR-- IF WE'D SEEN THOSE KIDS WE NEVER WOULD HAVE RISKED THE GUNFIRE...

YOU SAVED OUR LIVES, THOR! YOU REALLY ARE A HERO-- JUST LIKE THEY SAY!

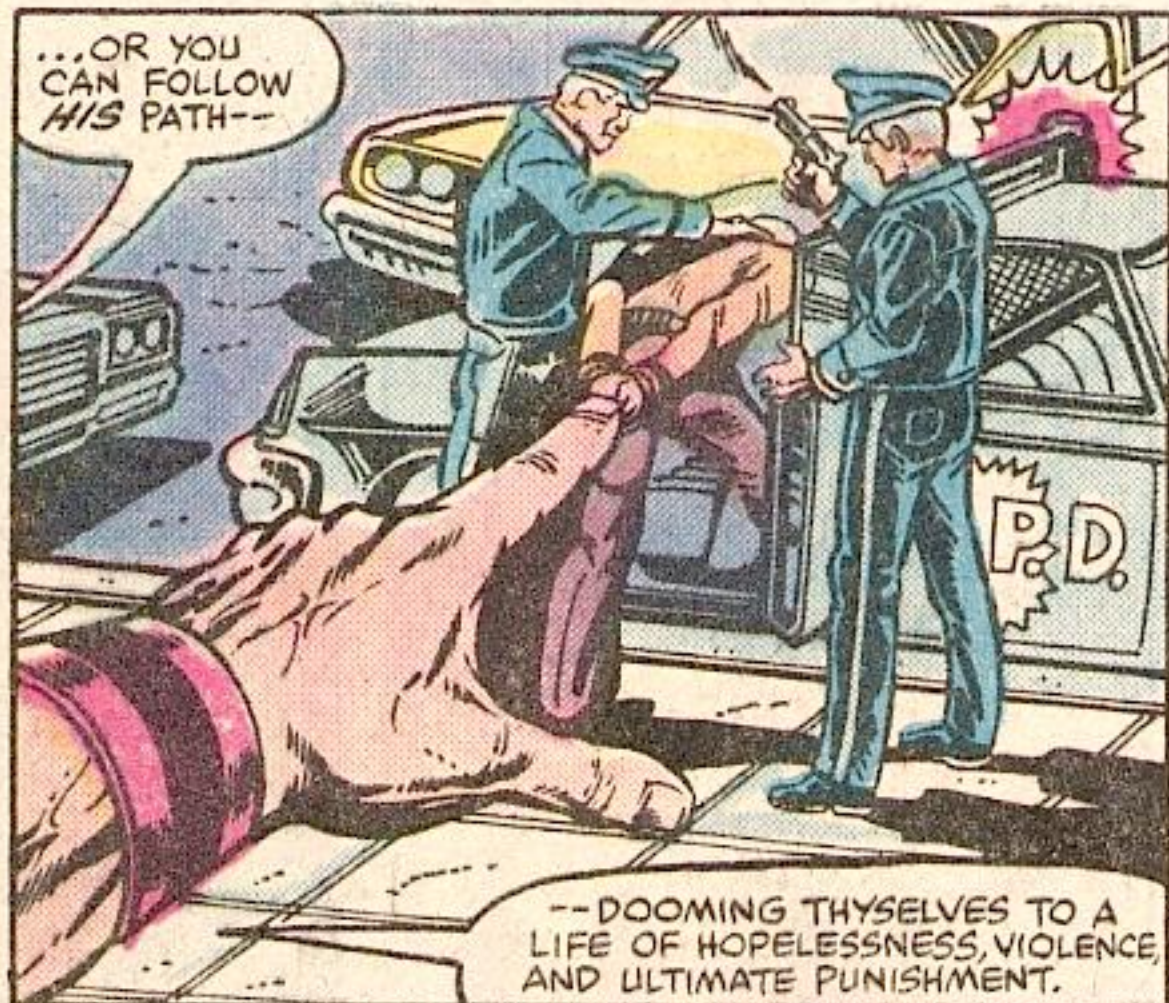
THOR SMILES BUT BRIEFLY...

...BEFORE TURNING A STERNER COUNTENANCE ON THE YOUNG MUGGERS...

THY CHOICE REMAINS, YOU CAN CHOOSE TO FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE, TAKING PRIDE IN THYSELF...



...OR YOU CAN FOLLOW HIS PATH--



--DOOMING THYSELVES TO A LIFE OF HOPELESSNESS, VIOLENCE, AND ULTIMATE PUNISHMENT.

CHOOSE.



I...WELL, I GUESS I...



HERE, LADY. I'M SORRY.



IF INDEED HEARTFELT, THY CHOICE IS MOST WISE.

AND, IN A WORLD BEYOND THE FARTHEST BORDER OF IMAGINATION YET CLOSER THAN THE NEAREST NIGHTMARE, MEPHISTO-- LORD OF THE DARK UNDERWORLD-- REACTS WITH DISPLEASURE...

NO! STILL THE THUNDER GOD INTERFERES WITH THE INNATE EVIL OF MANKIND, SEEKING TO GUIDE THEM TOWARD A GLORY WHICH IS NOT THEIR EARNED RIGHT!

WHILE MAN REMAINS A MERE EDUCATED SAVAGE, MY RANKS OF THE DAMNED ARE SWELLED TO OVERFLOWING...



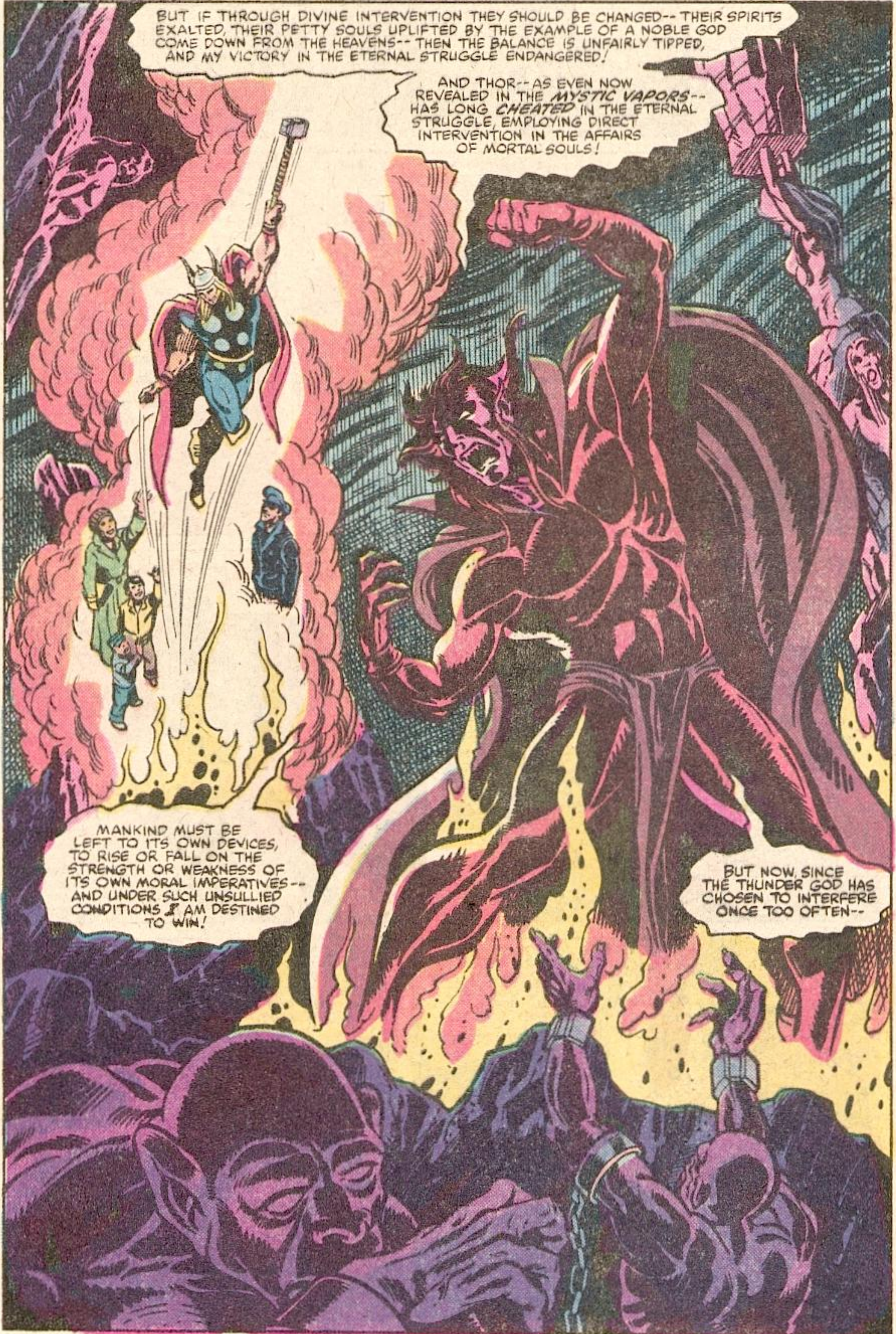
THUS, NOTHING MUST BE ALLOWED TO CHANGE THE UNTHINKING MASSES OF HUMANITY! FOR, SO LONG AS THEY REMAIN HOSTILE AND CONSUMED WITH GREED AND HATRED, THEN SO LONG SHALL THE FINAL VICTORY-- ON THE DAY OF ARMAGEDDON-- BE MINE!

BUT IF THROUGH DIVINE INTERVENTION THEY SHOULD BE CHANGED-- THEIR SPIRITS EXALTED, THEIR PETTY SOULS UPLIFTED BY THE EXAMPLE OF A NOBLE GOD COME DOWN FROM THE HEAVENS-- THEN THE BALANCE IS UNFAIRLY TIPPED, AND MY VICTORY IN THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE ENDANGERED!

AND THOR-- AS EVEN NOW REVEALED IN THE *MYSTIC VAPORS*-- HAS LONG *CHEATED* IN THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE, EMPLOYING DIRECT INTERVENTION IN THE AFFAIRS OF MORTAL SOULS!

MANKIND MUST BE LEFT TO ITS OWN DEVICES, TO RISE OR FALL ON THE STRENGTH OR WEAKNESS OF ITS OWN MORAL IMPERATIVES-- AND UNDER SUCH UNSULLIED CONDITIONS I AM DESTINED TO WIN!

BUT NOW, SINCE THE THUNDER GOD HAS CHOSEN TO INTERFERE ONCE TOO OFTEN--



"--THEN SO SHALL MEPHISTO, LORD OF EVIL, WORK HIS OWN WAYS OF INTERFERENCE!"

NIGHT IN NEW YORK...

...AND A MOMENT OF CHOICE...

SO EASY...JUST BREAK THE GLASS...GRAB...AND RUN...

BUT IT'S WRONG! HOW CAN I--

GO AHEAD--DO IT! WHAT HAS LIFE EVER GIVEN YOU--?

WHAT HAVE YOU GAINED BY OBEYING PETTY LAWS CREATED BY MEN JUST AS FALLIBLE AS YOU?

THE INSURANCE WILL PAY FOR IT! YOU'LL BE HURTING NO ONE! THE OWNER OF THE JEWELRY STORE IS WEALTHY BEYOND IMAGINING! HE CAN SPARE IT!

AND FINALLY, POSSESSED BY EVIL YET COMPLETELY UNAWARE OF THE VOICE AT HIS SHOULDER--

KRASH

YES-- I'LL DO IT!

-- THE MAN FORSAKES ALL CONSCIENCE, AND FLEES FROM THE SHAME OF HIS OWN ACT.

BUT EVEN NOW, HE IS DEAF TO THE MANIACAL LAUGHTER SOUNDING ACCOMPANIMENT TO THE BURGLAR ALARM.

ELSEWHERE ON THE BLOCK, IN A TENEMENT BASEMENT...

SURE, I NEED THE INSURANCE MONEY, BUT WHAT IF SOME OF THE TENANTS DON'T GET OUT IN TIME? WHAT IF THEY BURN TO--

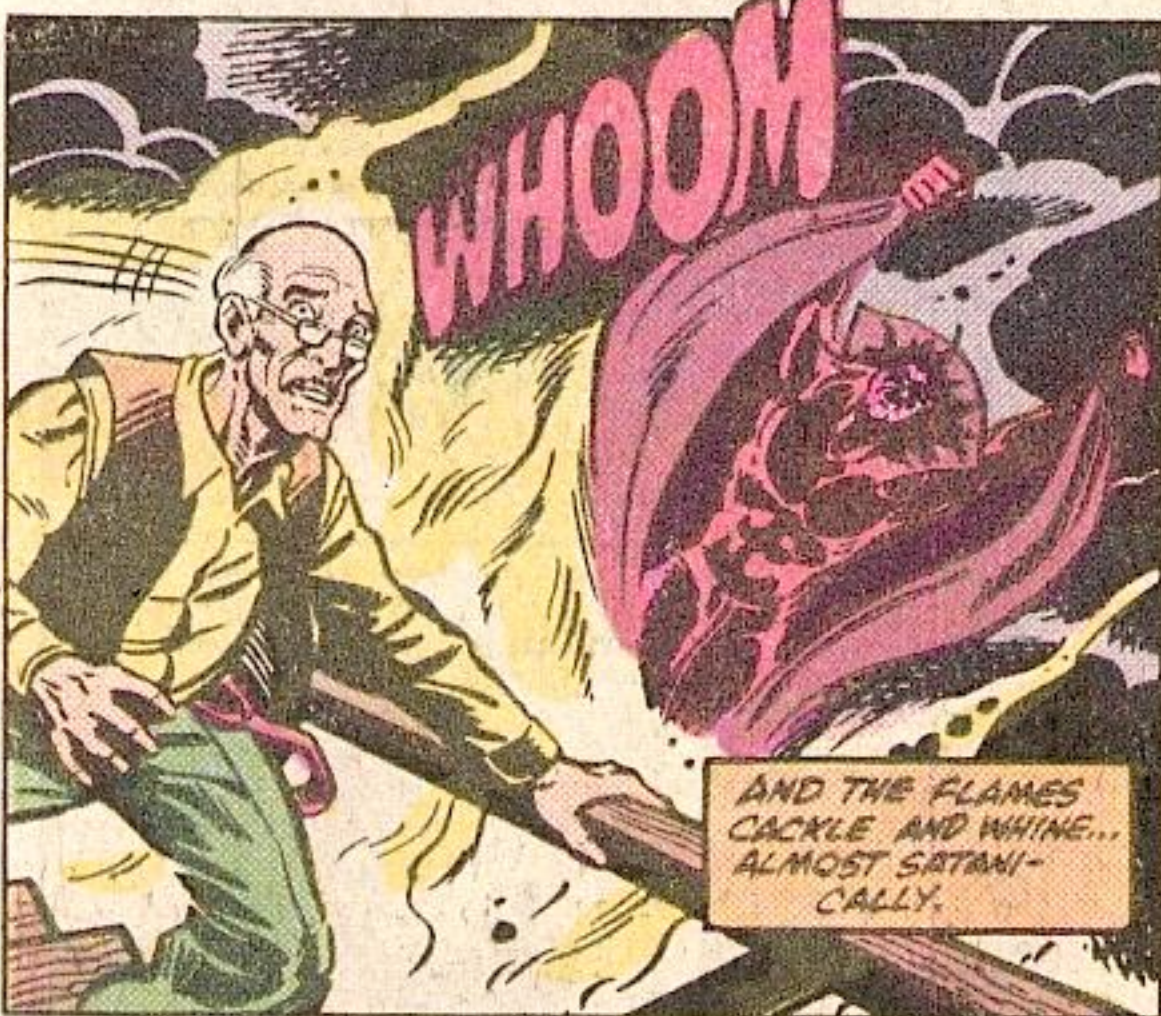
THEY DESERVE IT! IF THEY PAID THEIR RENTS, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO DO IT! IT'S THEIR OWN FAULT!

THEY'VE DESTROYED YOUR BUILDING, TURNED IT INTO A WRETCHED TENEMENT, DESTROYED PROPERTY VALUES, WIPED YOU OUT FINANCIALLY!

YOU DESERVE THE INSURANCE MONEY--

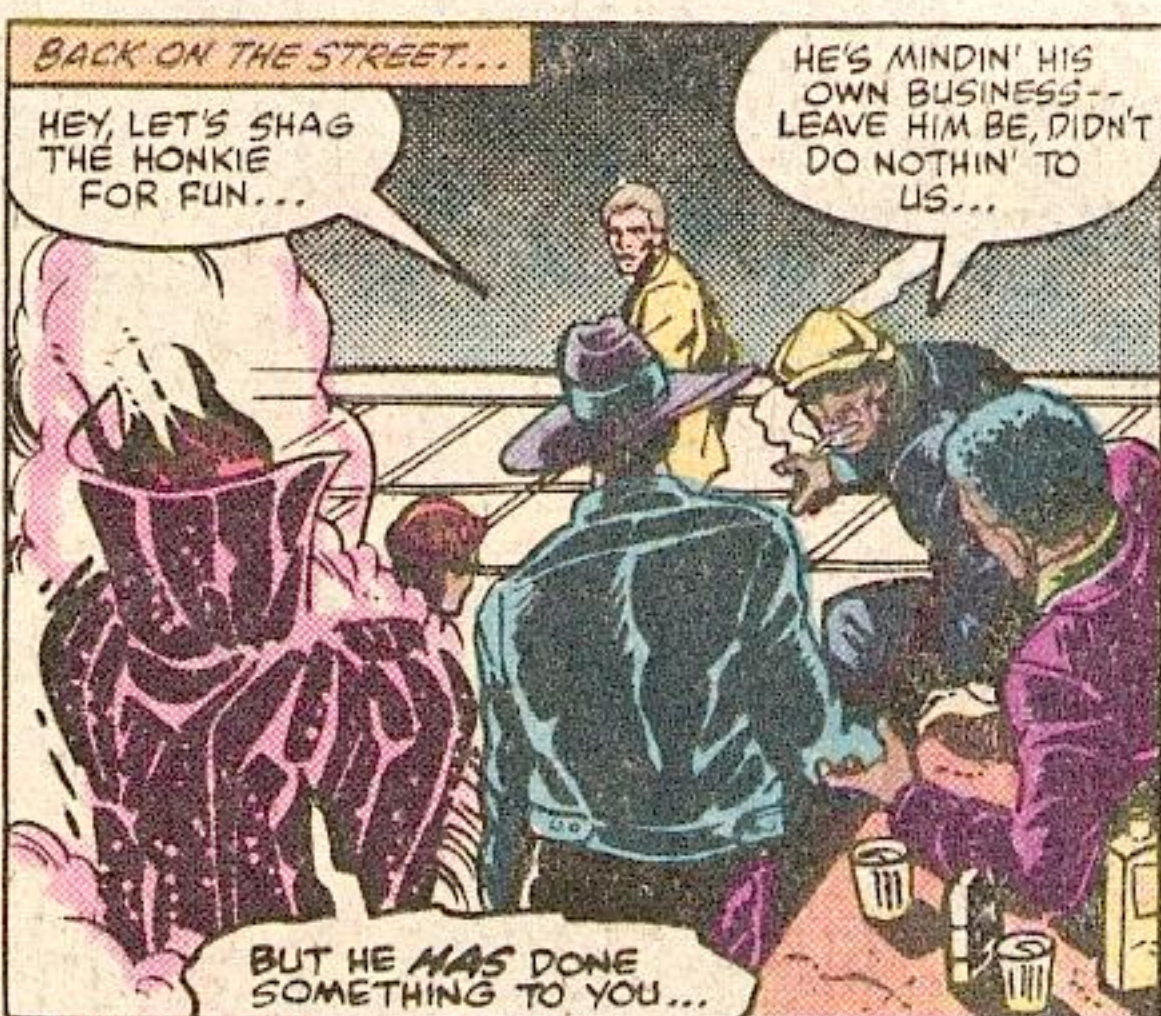
--AND THEY DESERVE TO BURN! DO IT!!

YES!



WHOOOM

AND THE FLAMES
CACKLE AND WHINE...
ALMOST SATANI-
CALLY.



BACK ON THE STREET...

HEY, LET'S SHAG
THE HONKIE
FOR FUN...

HE'S MINDIN' HIS
OWN BUSINESS--
LEAVE HIM BE, DIDN'T
DO NOTHIN' TO
US...

BUT HE *HAS* DONE
SOMETHING TO YOU...



HIS ENTIRE RACE HAS OPPRESSED
YOU -- LYNCHINGS, TERRORISM,
SLAVERY!

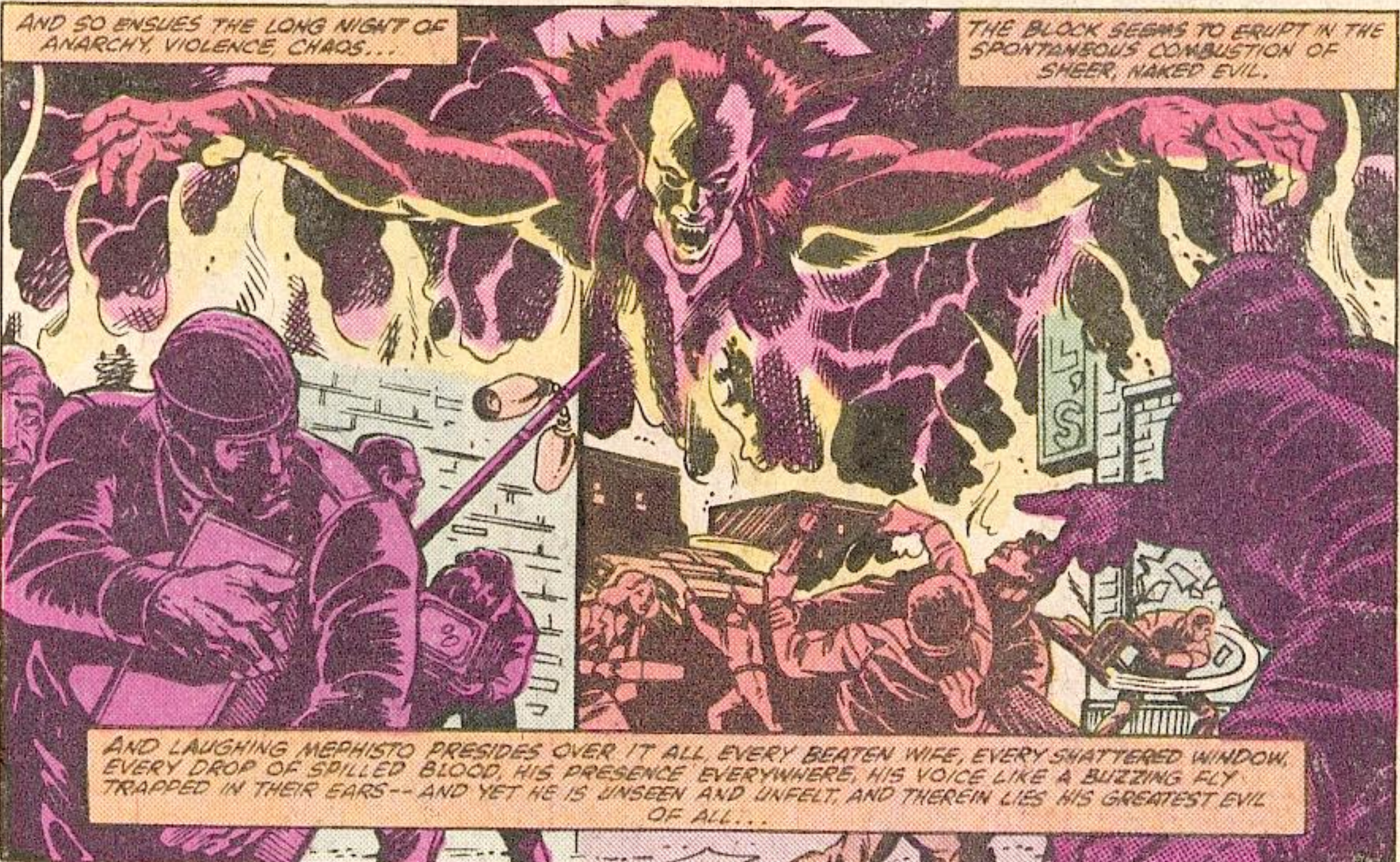


HIS RACE
HAS TURNED
YOU INTO
ANIMALS --



-- SPAT ON YOU, LAUGHED AT
YOU, TORN YOUR FAMILIES APART,
USED YOUR WOMEN AS CHATTEL!

GET HIM!
BEAT THE
HONKIE !!



AND SO ENSUES THE LONG NIGHT OF
ANARCHY, VIOLENCE, CHAOS...

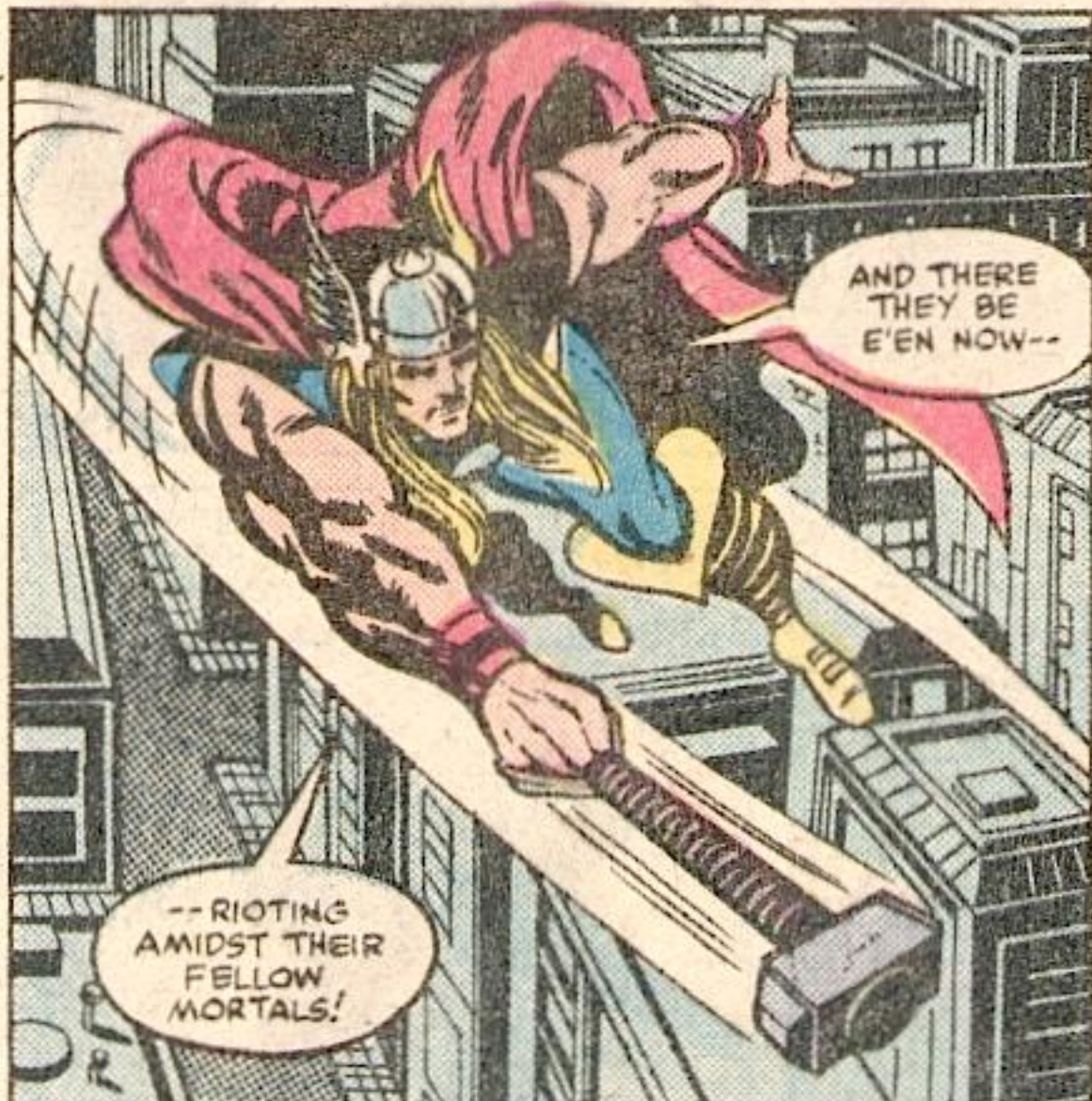
THE BLOCK SEEMS TO ERUPT IN THE
SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION OF
SHEER, NAKED EVIL.

AND LAUGHING MEPHISTO PRESIDES OVER IT ALL, EVERY BEATEN WIFE, EVERY SHATTERED WINDOW,
EVERY DROP OF SPILLED BLOOD, HIS PRESENCE EVERYWHERE, HIS VOICE LIKE A BUZZING FLY
TRAPPED IN THEIR EARS -- AND YET HE IS UNSEEN AND UNFELT, AND THEREIN LIES HIS GREATEST EVIL
OF ALL...

YON FLAMES--!



-- RISING FROM THE SAME STREET WHERE I EARLIER CONFRONTED THE YOUTHS!



AND THERE THEY BE E'EN NOW--

-- RIOTING AMIDST THEIR FELLOW MORTALS!



WHAT MADNESS POSSESSES THEE?! YOU FACED THE CHOICE EARLIER, AND CHOSE RIGHTLY!



IT WAS YOUR CHOICE, CREEP-- NOT OURS!



EXCELLENT! THE MYSTIC VAPORS REVEAL THAT THOR HAS BEEN PUT ON THE DEFENSIVE!

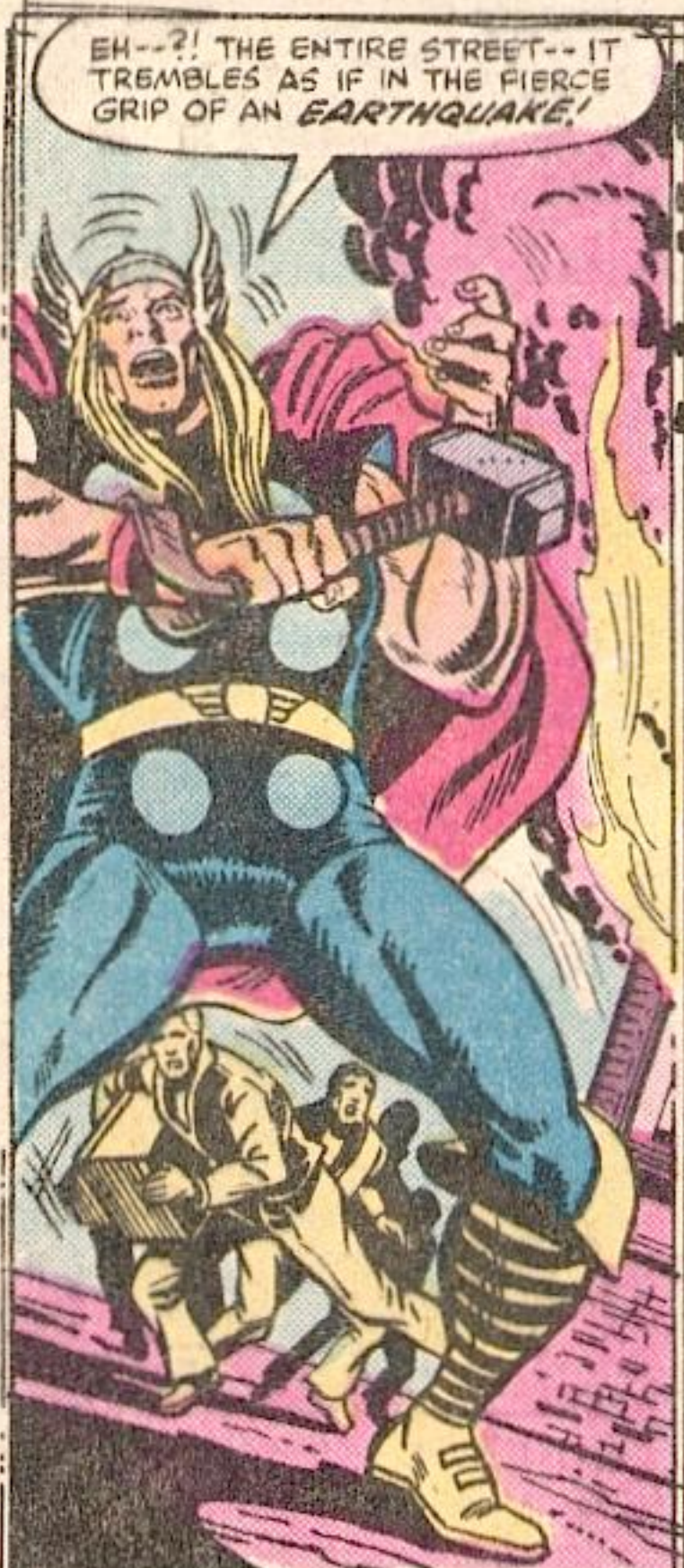


NOT ONLY HAVE I TIPPED THE SCALES BACK INTO BALANCE, BUT I AM NOW ON THE VERGE OF ACHIEVING MY TRUE GOAL--

--THE FINAL ELIMINATION OF THE THUNDER GOD HIMSELF!



AND SO... IT IS TIME TO BRING THE DRAMA TO ITS CONCLUDING ACT!

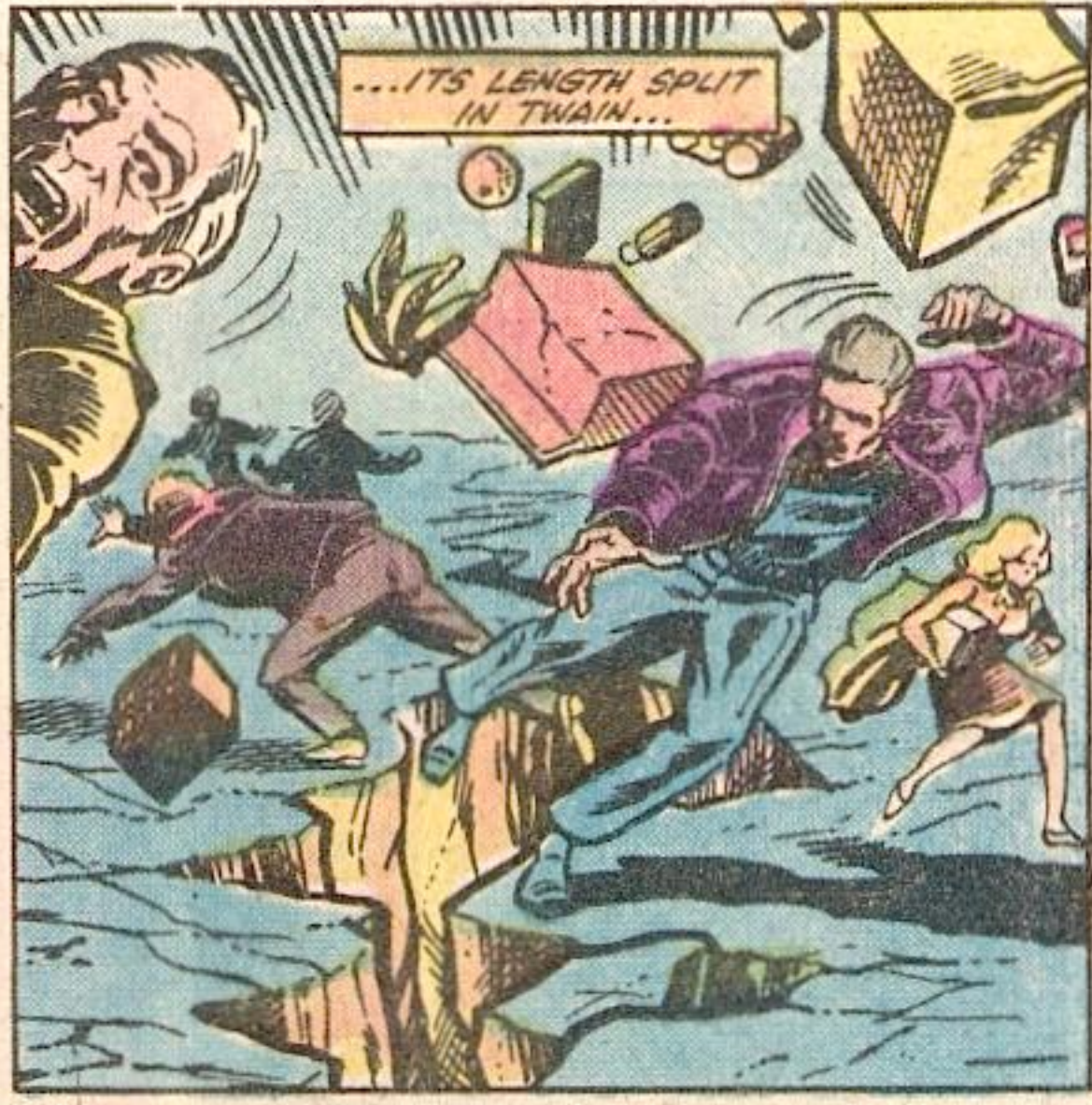


EH--?! THE ENTIRE STREET-- IT TREMBLES AS IF IN THE FIERCE GRIP OF AN EARTHQUAKE!

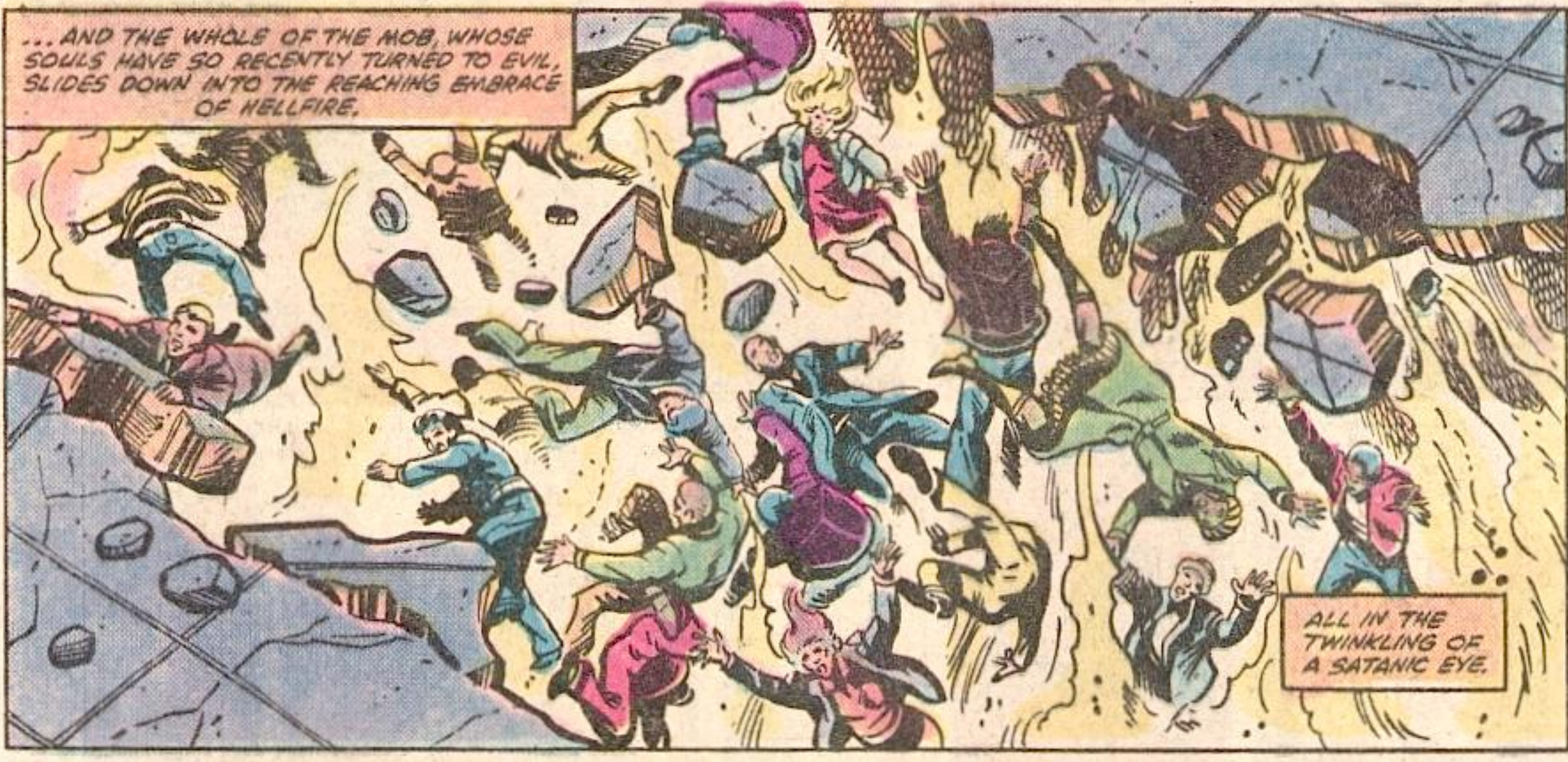


BY ODIN'S EYE-- 'TIS TRUE MADNESS INDEED!

NOW, THE STREET LITERALLY ERUPTS...



...ITS LENGTH SPLIT IN TWAIN...



... AND THE WHOLE OF THE MOB, WHOSE SOULS HAVE SO RECENTLY TURNED TO EVIL, SLIDES DOWN INTO THE REACHING EMBRACE OF HELLFIRE.

ALL IN THE TWINKLING OF A SATANIC EYE.

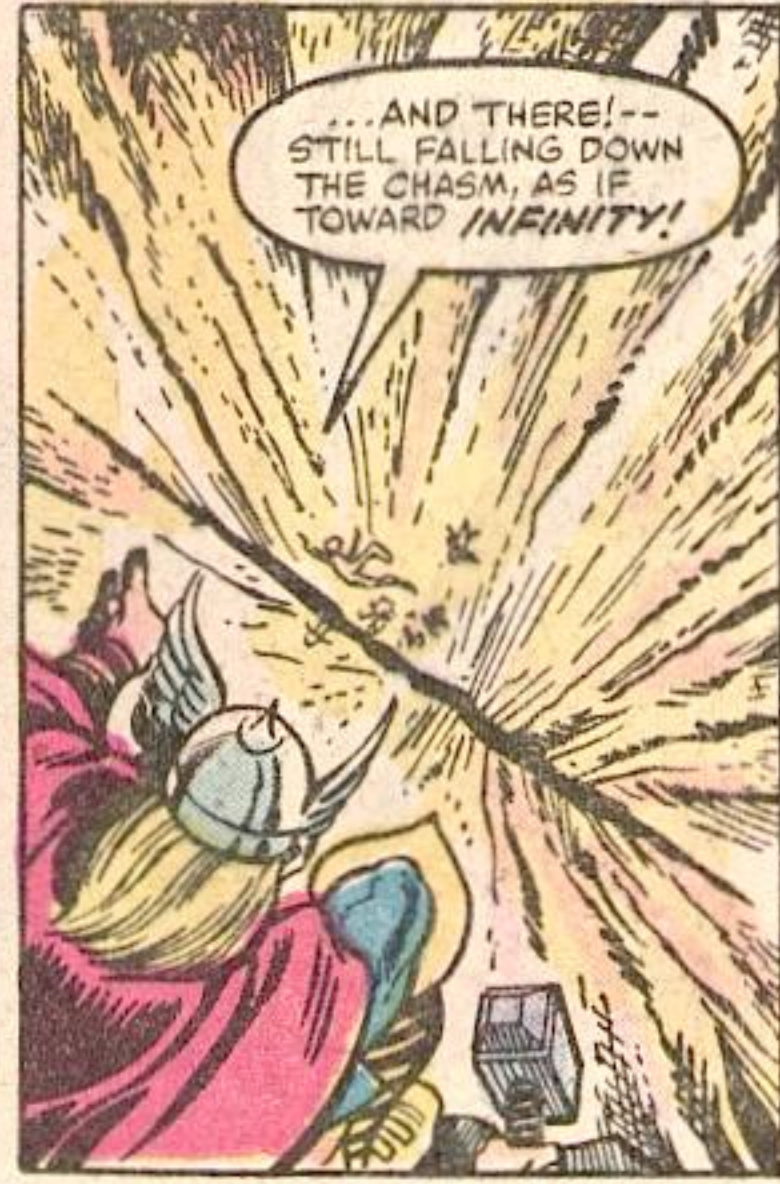


THEN, JUST AS QUICKLY-- IT ENDS.

THE GROUND IS STILL ONCE MORE...



BUT THE MORTALS-- THEY ARE GONE-- SWALLOWED BY THIS GAPING RENT IN THE EARTH'S CRUST...



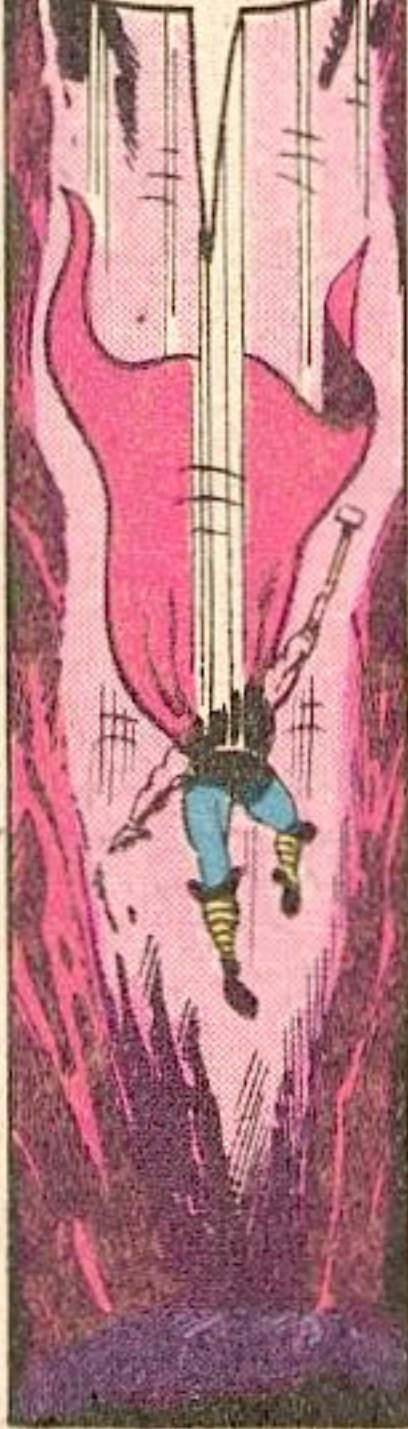
... AND THERE!-- STILL FALLING DOWN THE CHASM, AS IF TOWARD INFINITY!

I KNOW NOT WHAT HATH TRANSPIRED, BUT--AS THE POWER OF ASGARD IS MINE TO COMMAND--MY CHOICE IS CLEAR!



I MUST ENDEAVOR TO SAVE THE MORTAL SOULS OF THOSE WHO HAVE VANISHED!

TRUE, THEY HAD TURNED INTO SAVAGES--BERSERK MONSTERS--BUT SURELY SOME SUPERNATURAL AGENCY WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR TRANSFORMATION...



YES! THE PIT--IT DOETH END IN SOME SWIRLING SEA OF FIRE!

IT MUST BE THE CONSTRUCT OF SOME UNKNOWN MAGICK...



UNLESS...COULD THIS IN TRUTH BE THE NATURAL BLOOD OF THE EARTH ITSELF--



--THE MOLTEN MAGMA OF-TIMES SENT FORTH BY VOLCANOES? IF SO--



NO! THE MOLTEN FIRES HAVE DISAPPEARED! AND I... I AM SURROUNDED BY SOME UN-IMAGINABLE GULF OF UNREALITY...



...TRANSPORTED 'TWIXT DIMENSIONS AND SENT--

WHERE? WHERE AM I? WHAT IS THIS FOUL PLACE OF JAGGED ROCK AND SMOKING, STIFLING STYGIAN DEPTHS--?!



HADES, GOD OF THUNDER.

EH--?



YOU ARE IN HADES, LAND OF THE WOEFUL DAMNED, THE ETERNALLY DARK REALM OF--

MEPHISTO--?!!

YES, THUNDER GOD,
AND WITHIN THIS
REALM I RULE--
ALL OTHERS WHO
ENTER ARE LOST
FOREVER!

FOR I AM THE
POWER-- AND I AM
THE PLAN-- AND
MINE IS THE KINGDOM
OF NAKED EVIL! WE
MET ONCE BEFORE,
THUNDER GOD, AND
YOU THWARTED MY
PLAN TO ENSLAVE
YOU FOR ETERNITY..*

BUT WHY
HAST THOU
BROUGHT
ME HERE--?

YOU CANNOT
IMAGINE HOW MUCH
I LOOKED FORWARD
TO THIS **SECOND**
MEETING!

*IN THOR #204 & 205-- JIM.

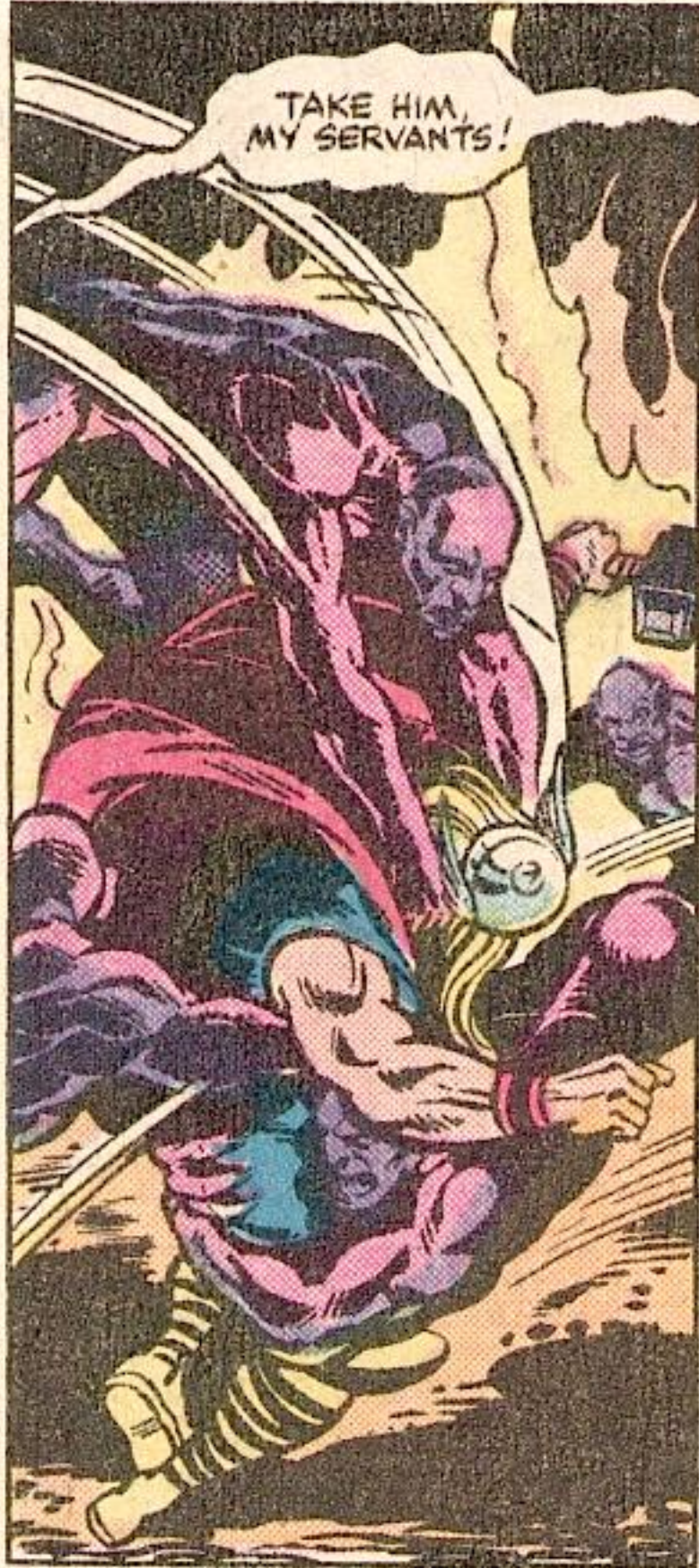
TO FLAUNT THE INNOCENT SOULS OF
THOSE SEIZED FROM THE STREET
ABOVE--? TO WITNESS THY ADDITION
OF THESE PALTRY FEW TO THY
LEGIONS OF THE DAMNED--?

NO, THUNDER GOD, NOT FOR THAT ALONE. MEPHISTO
MOVES IN DEVIIOUS WAYS, EARTH, THE ABUNDANT
SPAWNING GROUND FROM WHICH
I PEOPLE MY DOMAIN --

-- IS THREATENED
BY THE NOBILITY
YOU HAVE FORCED
UPON IT!

BY INTERVENING IN MORTAL AFFAIRS, YOU
HAVE CHEATED IN THE ETERNAL STRUGGLE!

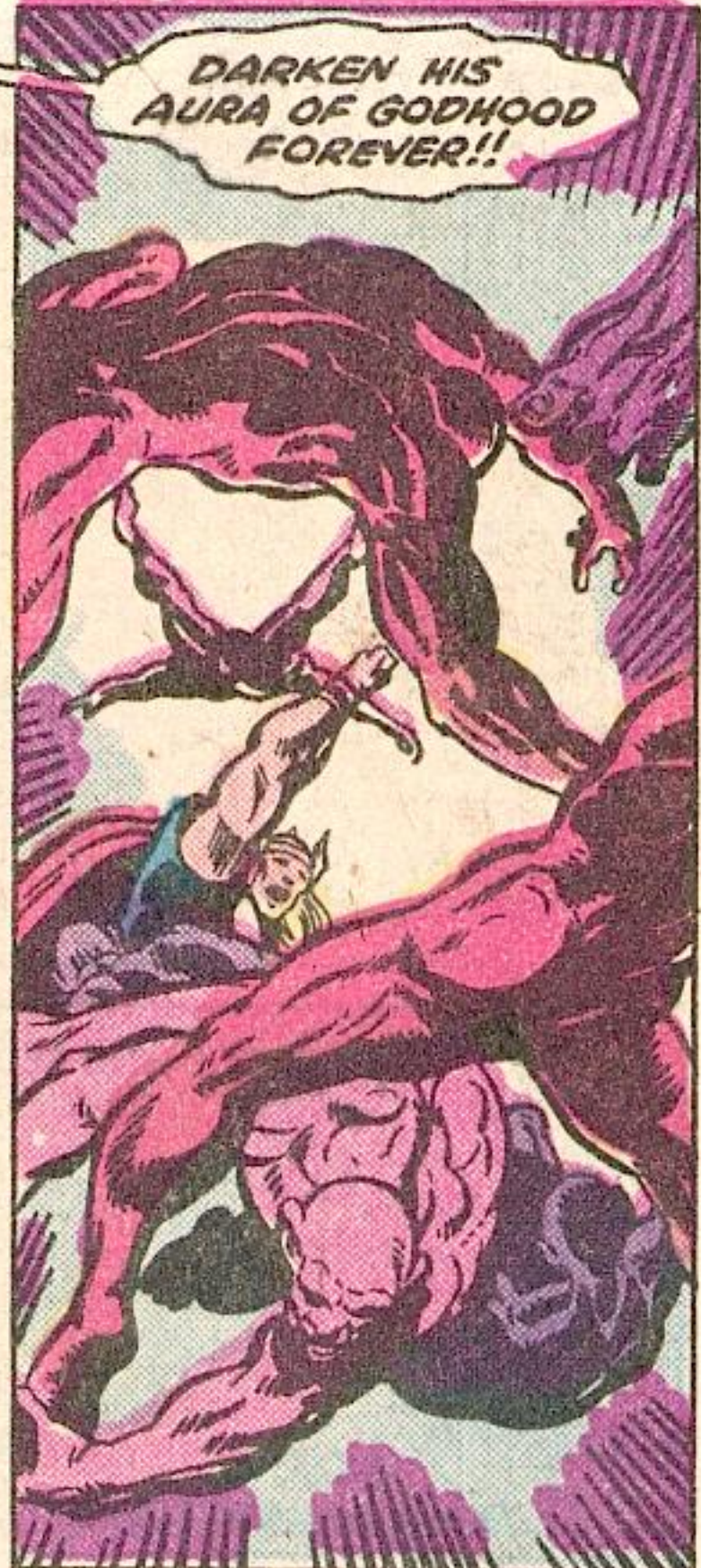
THUS, YOU MUST BE ELIMINATED
ONCE AND FOR ALL!



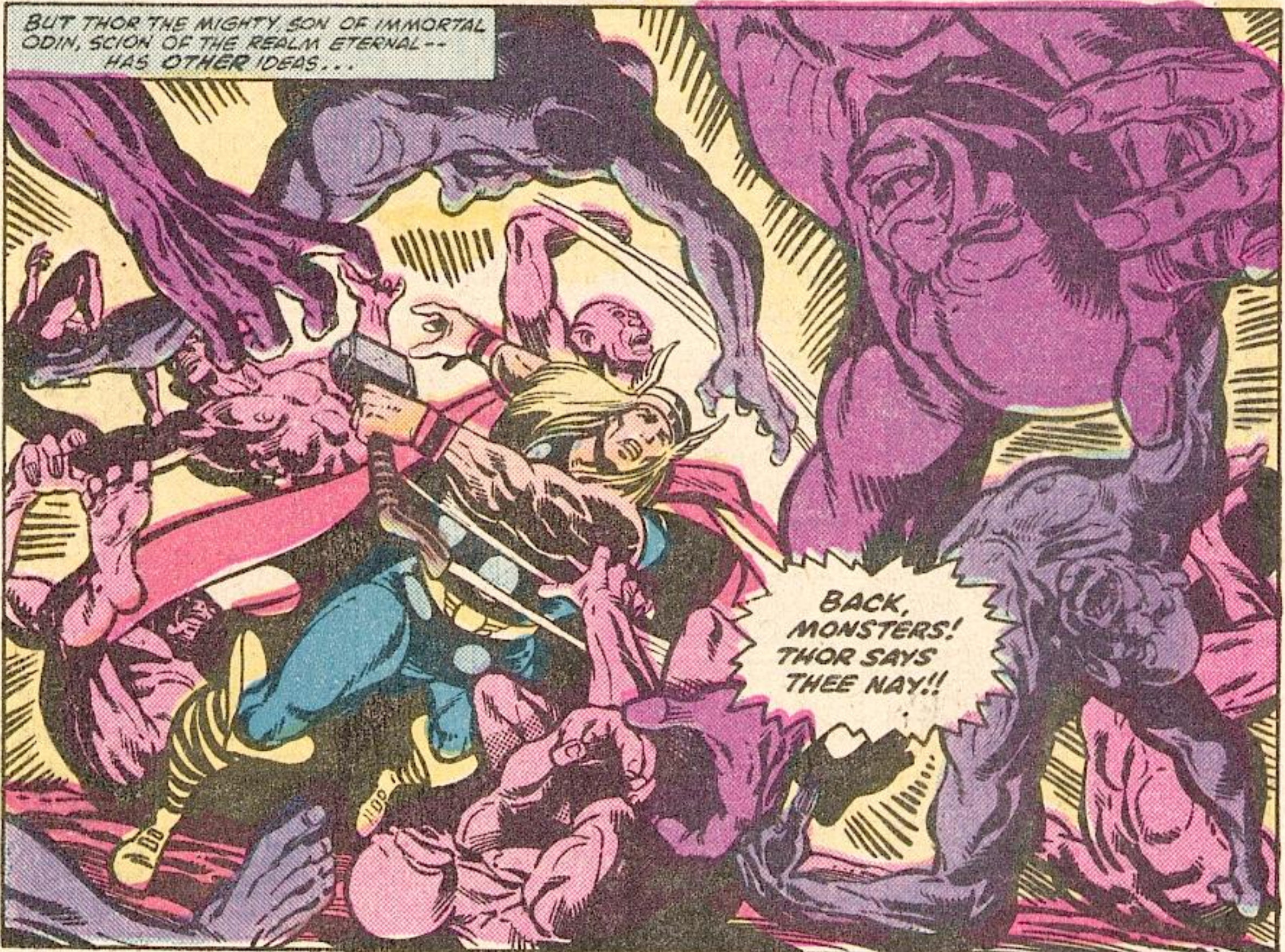
TAKE HIM,
MY SERVANTS!



SLAY
HIM!!

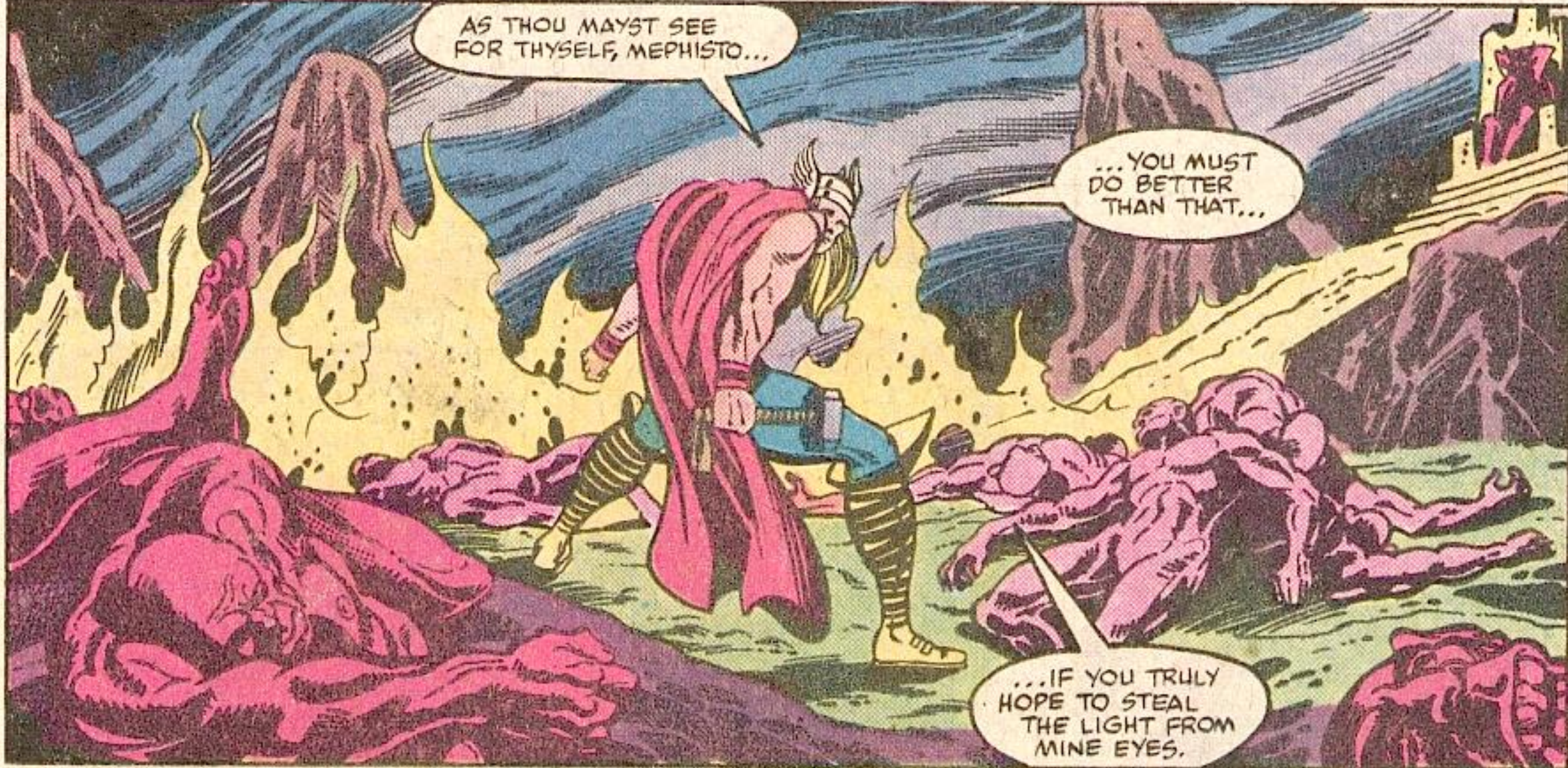


DARKEN HIS
AURA OF GODHOOD
FOREVER!!



BUT THOR THE MIGHTY SON OF IMMORTAL
ODIN, SCION OF THE REALM ETERNAL --
HAS OTHER IDEAS...

BACK,
MONSTERS!
THOR SAYS
THEE NAY!!



AS THOU MAYST SEE FOR THYSELF, MEPHISTO...

... YOU MUST DO BETTER THAN THAT...

... IF YOU TRULY HOPE TO STEAL THE LIGHT FROM MINE EYES.



BUT OF COURSE, THE FIGHT WAS A MERE DIVERSION, STAGED PURELY FOR ITS AMUSEMENT VALUE. IT WAS OBVIOUS FROM THE START...

... THAT MY PUNY SERVANTS WOULD INEVITABLY FAIL AGAINST YOUR PRODIGIOUS MIGHT.



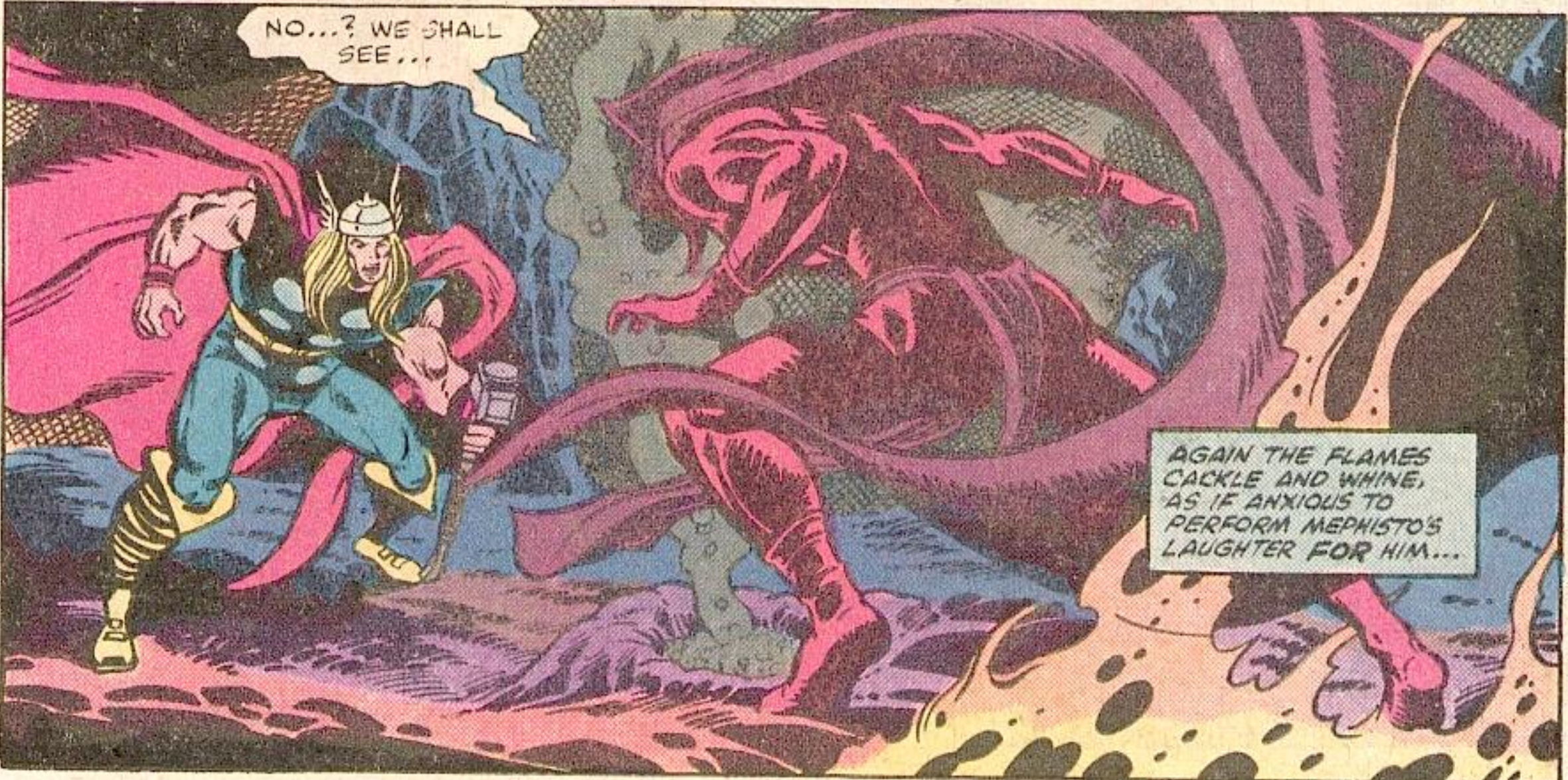
YOU SEE, THUNDER GOD, I KNEW ALL ALONG THAT THE REAL BATTLE WOULD BE --

-- BETWEEN US.



I WARN THEE, MEPHISTO! KNOW THAT THOR THE MIGHTY IS BORN OF ASGARD AND POSSESSED OF IMMORTAL BLOOD...

THOU MAYST NEVER SLAY ME, DEVIL!



NO...? WE SHALL SEE...

AGAIN THE FLAMES CACKLE AND WHINE, AS IF ANXIOUS TO PERFORM MEPHISTO'S LAUGHTER FOR HIM...

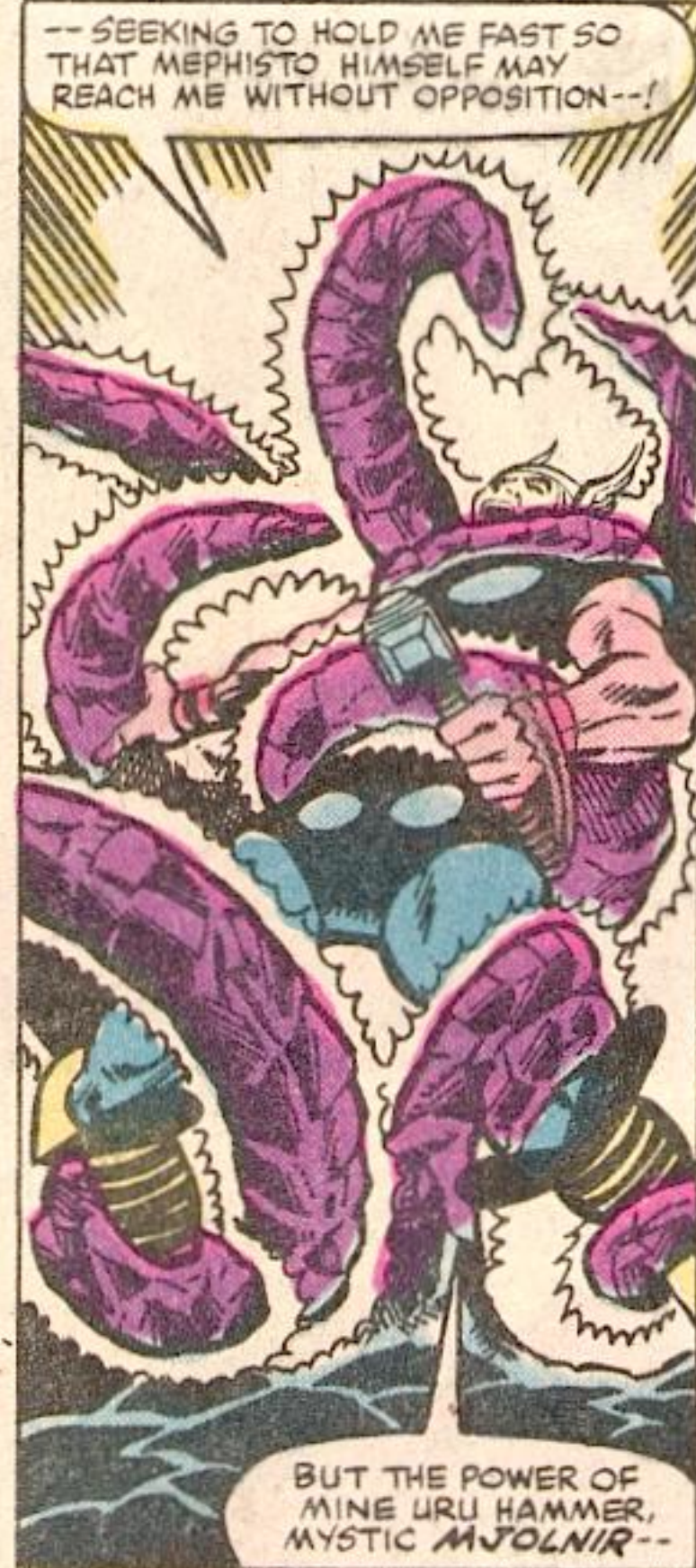
AND THE ROCK FLOOR, TOO, IS SWIFT TO RISE TO ITS MASTER'S BIDDING...



IT GRASPS ME--!



-- LIKE LIVING SERPENTS--



-- SEEKING TO HOLD ME FAST SO THAT MEPHISTO HIMSELF MAY REACH ME WITHOUT OPPOSITION--!

BUT THE POWER OF MINE URU HAMMER, MYSTIC MJOLNIR--



-- CANNOT BE STIFLED BY ANY AGENCY!

SHOOON!



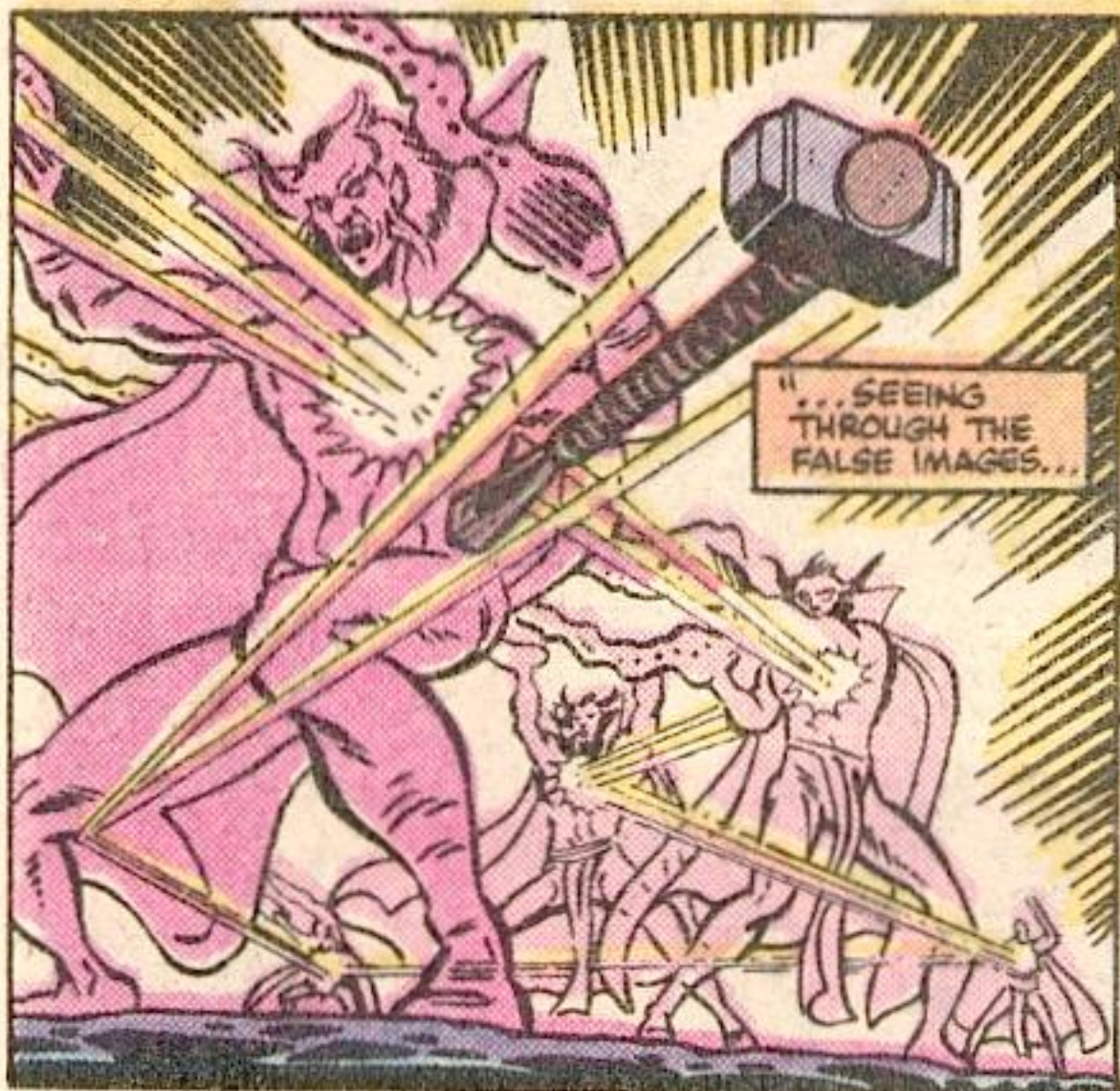
NOR, FOR LONG, CAN THE STRENGTH OF MINE OWN SINEWS BE THWARTED!

FRAKT FRAKT

NOW, MEPHISTO, LET THE BATTLE TRULY BE STAGED BETWEEN ME AND THEE ALONE... WITHOUT THE AID OF EXTERNAL FORCES...



VERY WELL, THUNDER GOD, IF YOU CAN FIND ME... AND ME ALONE!



BUT NOW, PERHAPS YOU WILL ALSO CONCEDE A CERTAIN MEASURE OF CHAGRIN...

...AT THE EXTENT OF MY POWERS!!



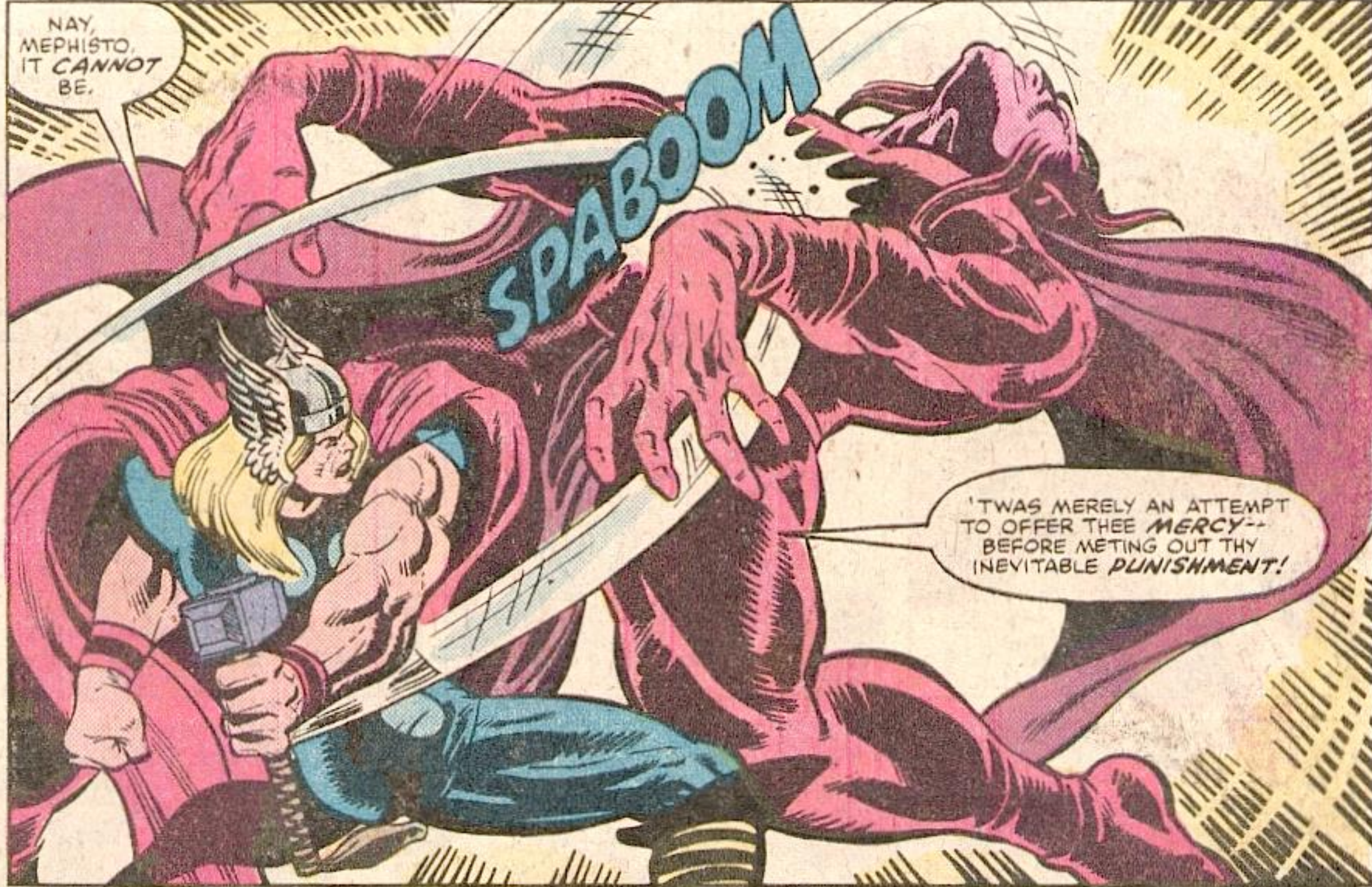
NAY, DEMONSPAWN! I WARN THEE AGAIN...

THOU CANST NOT END THE LIFE OF A GOD-- WHATEVER SIZE YOU CHOOSE TO ASSUME!



NO--? AND IS THAT WHY YOU ANSWER MY ATTACK WITH MERE WORDS--?!

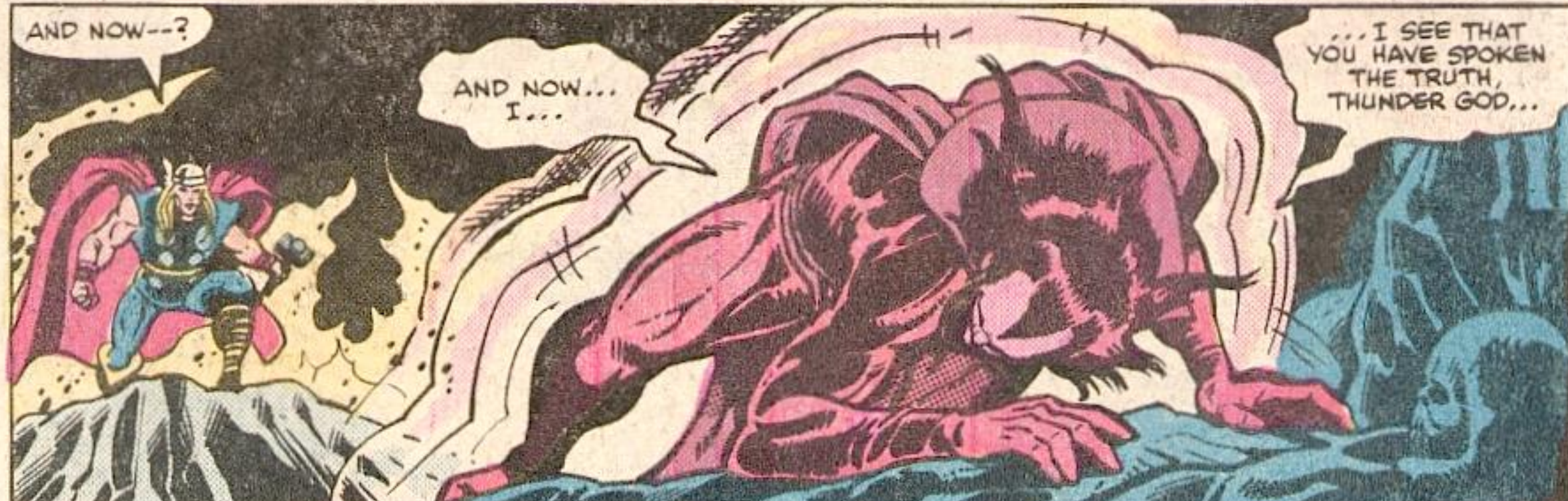
OR CAN IT BE THAT YOU ARE IN TRUTH POWERLESS AGAINST THE FULL DIMENSIONS OF MY EVIL--?!



NAY, MEPHISTO, IT CANNOT BE.

SPABOOM

'T WAS MERELY AN ATTEMPT TO OFFER THEE *MERCY*-- BEFORE METING OUT THY INEVITABLE *PUNISHMENT!*



AND NOW--?

AND NOW... I...

... I SEE THAT YOU HAVE SPOKEN THE TRUTH, THUNDER GOD...

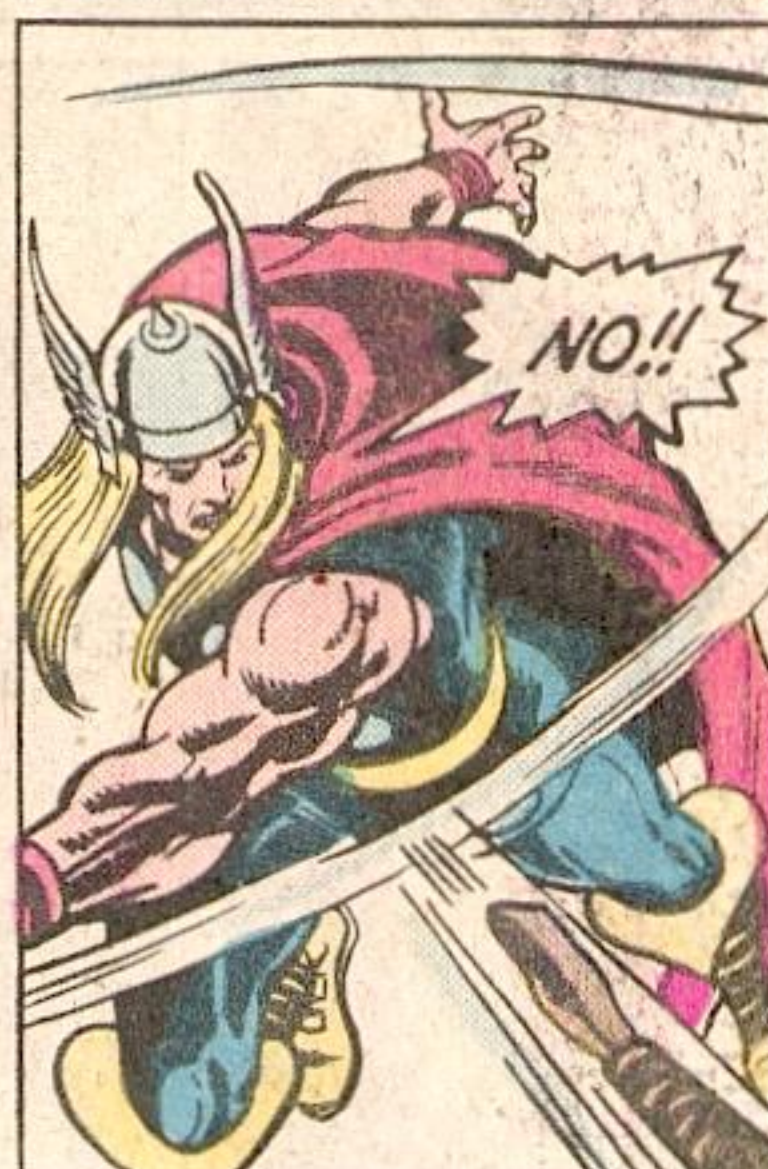


YOU CANNOT BE SLAIN BY MY HAND...

... AT LEAST NOT AS YOU ARE NOW...



AND SO... I WILL INSTEAD SLAY THE SOULS OF THOSE I HAVE STOLEN FROM THE STREET ABOVE!



NO!!



A PITY YOU DID NOT AGAIN WILL YOUR HAMMER--

KRUMP

--TO SEE THROUGH MY FALSE IMAGE!



SEIZE THE HAMMER! HOLD IT!

AND THE HANDS REACH FROM THEIR PRISON OF ROCK TO OBEY...



NOW, THUNDER GOD, COMMAND THE HAMMER TO RETURN TO YOUR GRASP IF YOU DARE-- BUT KNOW THAT IT WILL RIP ASUNDER THE ROCK WHICH BINDS THEIR TRAPPED SOULS TO LIFE!



NO! I WILL GO TO THE HAMMER MYSELF--!

WILL YOU--?



EVEN THROUGH A WALL OF RAGING HELLFIRE?!

I SAID I CANNOT SLAY YOU AS YOU ARE-- BUT THE MYSTIC VAPORS HAVE SHOWN ME WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU ARE DEPRIVED OF THE HAMMER FOR MORE THAN 60 SECONDS...



NO! MUST FIGHT THROUGH THE FLAMES--

--ELSE I WILL REVERT TO MORTAL FORM!



I MUST HAVE THE HAMMER BACK--!



MUST REACH IT BEFORE--



NO! TOO LATE! THE 60 SECONDS HAVE EXPIRED-- I'VE TRANSFORMED TO THE MORTAL DR. DONALD BLAKE--!

AND THE HAMMER HAS REVERTED TO BLAKE'S WALKING STICK!



INDEED, PITIFUL THUNDER GOD-- AND NOW YOU CAN BE SLAIN BY MY HAND!

GROVEL!



BEG AT MY FEET!

NO! RELEASE THEM! YOU KNOW YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO THEM--THEY WERE CLAIMED BEFORE THEIR TIME!



RELEASE THEM, MEPHISTO-- AND CLAIM ME IN THEIR PLACE! I OFFER MYSELF IN EXCHANGE FOR THEIR SOULS!

A JOKE IN THE FACE OF DEATH?! YOU OFFER ONE SOUL FOR SO MANY--?!



BESIDES, YOU ARE ALREADY MINE, YOU AND ALL THE REST, AS WELL AS MANY OF THOSE STILL ABOVE...

...NOW THAT YOUR INFLUENCE HAS BEEN REMOVED FROM THEIR LIVES!



THE LEADER OF THE YOUNG PURSE-SNATCHERS HAS WATCHED THE ENTIRE STRUGGLE, HEARD BLAKE'S OFFER OF SACRIFICE... AND NOW, MOLTEN TEARS WELL FROM HIS EYES...

CAN'T LET IT BE... NOT AFTER ALL HE'S DONE-- TRIED TO DO-- FOR ALL OF US!



I'VE GOT TO FIGHT THE OTHERS...



...HARDER... WITH ALL MY STRENGTH...



...UNTIL I CAN RIP THE STICK FREE!



THOR! I MIGHTA STUMBLED A BIT UP THERE, BUT I MADE THE CHOICE, MAN--

--AND I'M GONNA STICK TO IT!



HERE-- SHOW HIM WHO'S BOSS AS FAR AS WE'RE CONCERNED!

WHAT?!!

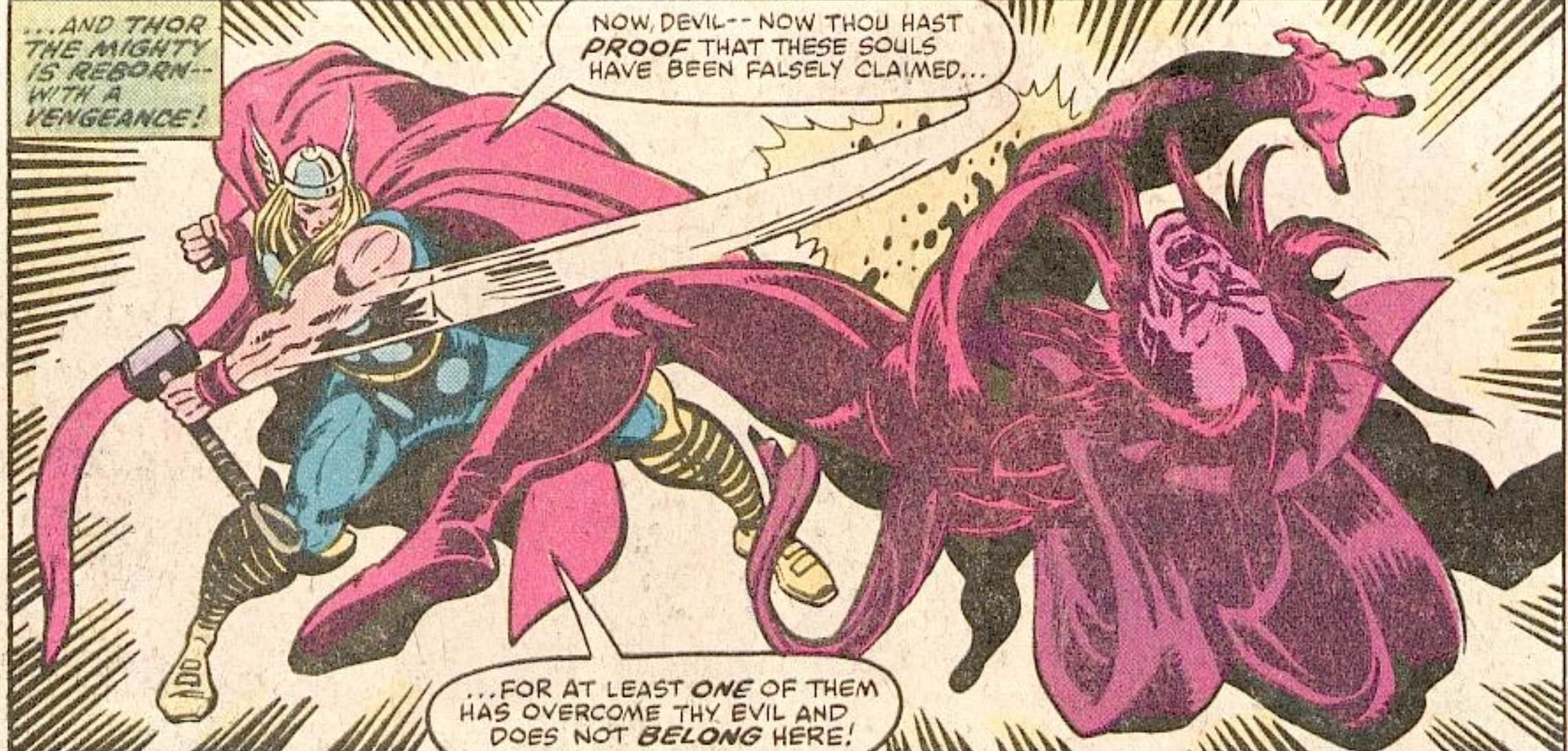


BLAKE INSTANTLY SLAMS THE STICK DOWN, STRIKING BRIMSTONE...

BOOM BOOM

...AND THOR
THE MIGHTY
IS REBORN--
WITH A
VENGEANCE!

NOW, DEVIL-- NOW THOU HAST
PROOF THAT THESE SOULS
HAVE BEEN FALSELY CLAIMED...

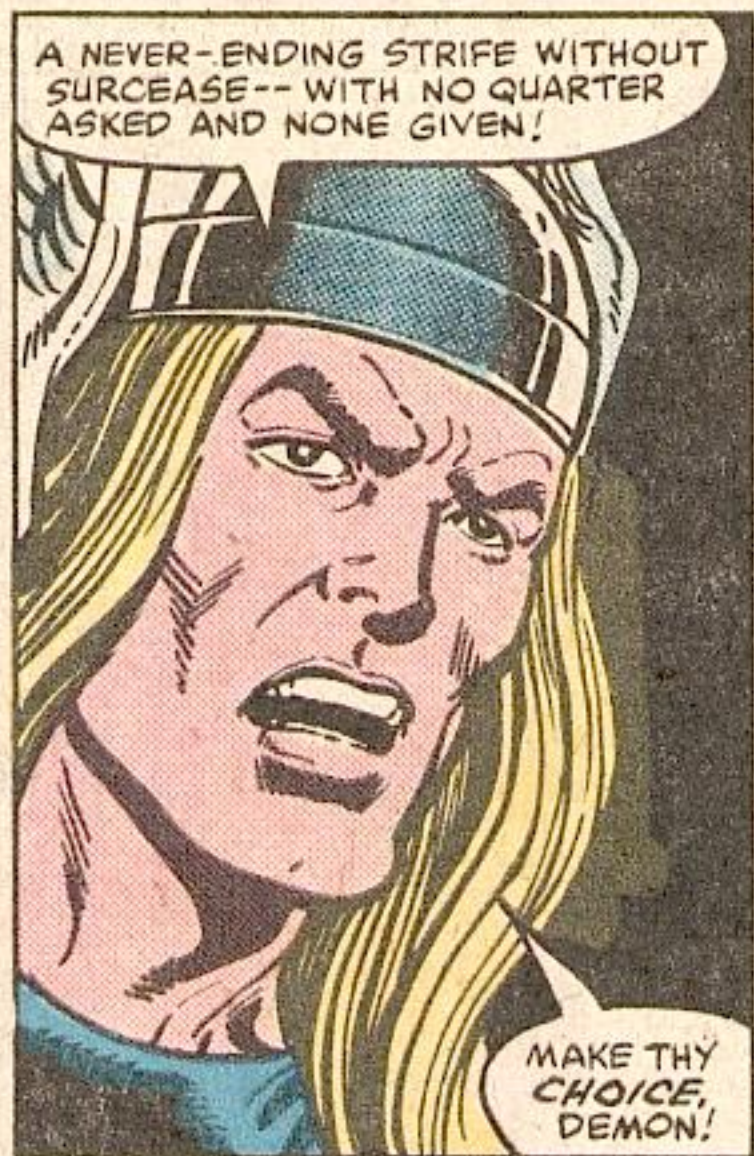


...FOR AT LEAST **ONE** OF THEM
HAS OVERCOME THY EVIL AND
DOES NOT **BELONG** HERE!



BEFORE YOU STRAIN MY PATIENCE
TO ITS END, RELEASE YON
INNOCENTS--

--OR WE SHALL
DO BATTLE, THOU
AND I, THROUGHOUT
ALL ETERNITY!



A NEVER-ENDING STRIFE WITHOUT
SURCEASE-- WITH NO QUARTER
ASKED AND NONE GIVEN!

MAKE THY
CHOICE,
DEMON!



I... I--

AND DENY IF THOU WILT THE **LIE** OF
MY UNFAIR INTERFERENCE-- FOR THOU
HAST LONG INTERFERED IN THE WAYS
OF MAN **THYSELF**--



--OFFERING UNENDING
TEMPTATION, EXTENDING
THE LURE OF EVIL LIKE
A BARBED HOOK CON-
CEALED IN A MORSEL
OF SWEETNESS!

WE ARE TWO OF A
KIND, THOU AND I, YET
EVER OPPOSED AS NIGHT
OPPOSES DAY!



SO WHAT SAY THEE?
DO WE OPPOSE ONE
ANOTHER RIGHT
HERE-- **FOREVER**?!

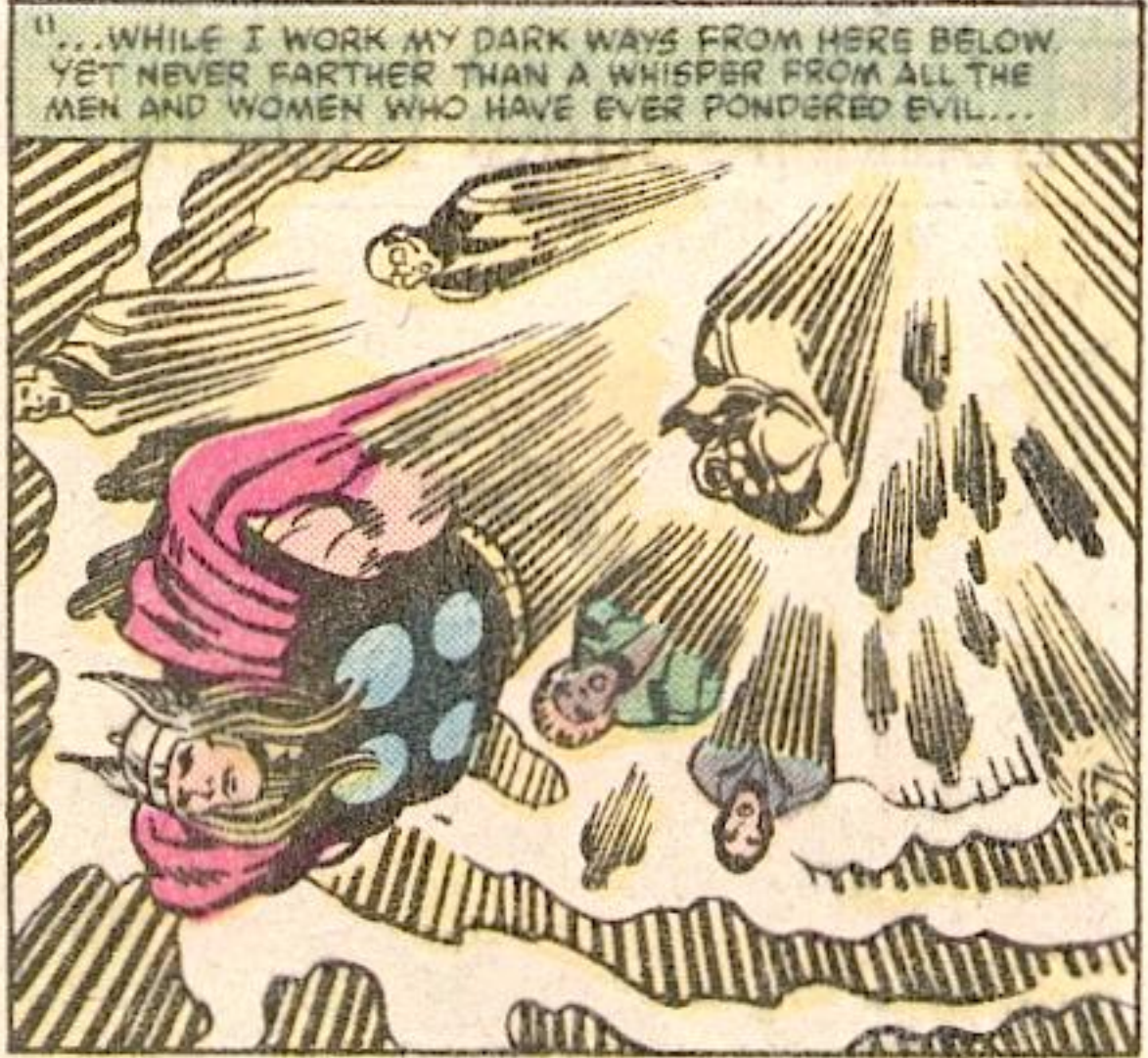
NO, THUNDER GOD... IT HAS
ENDED. THOUGH I MAY BE
DEFEATED, AS YOU HAVE
PROVEN THIS DARK DAY--
LIKE YOU, I MAY NEVER BE
SLAIN MYSELF, MY EVIL
NEVER TRULY VANQUISHED...

AND SO IT
MUST END... IN
STALEMATE.

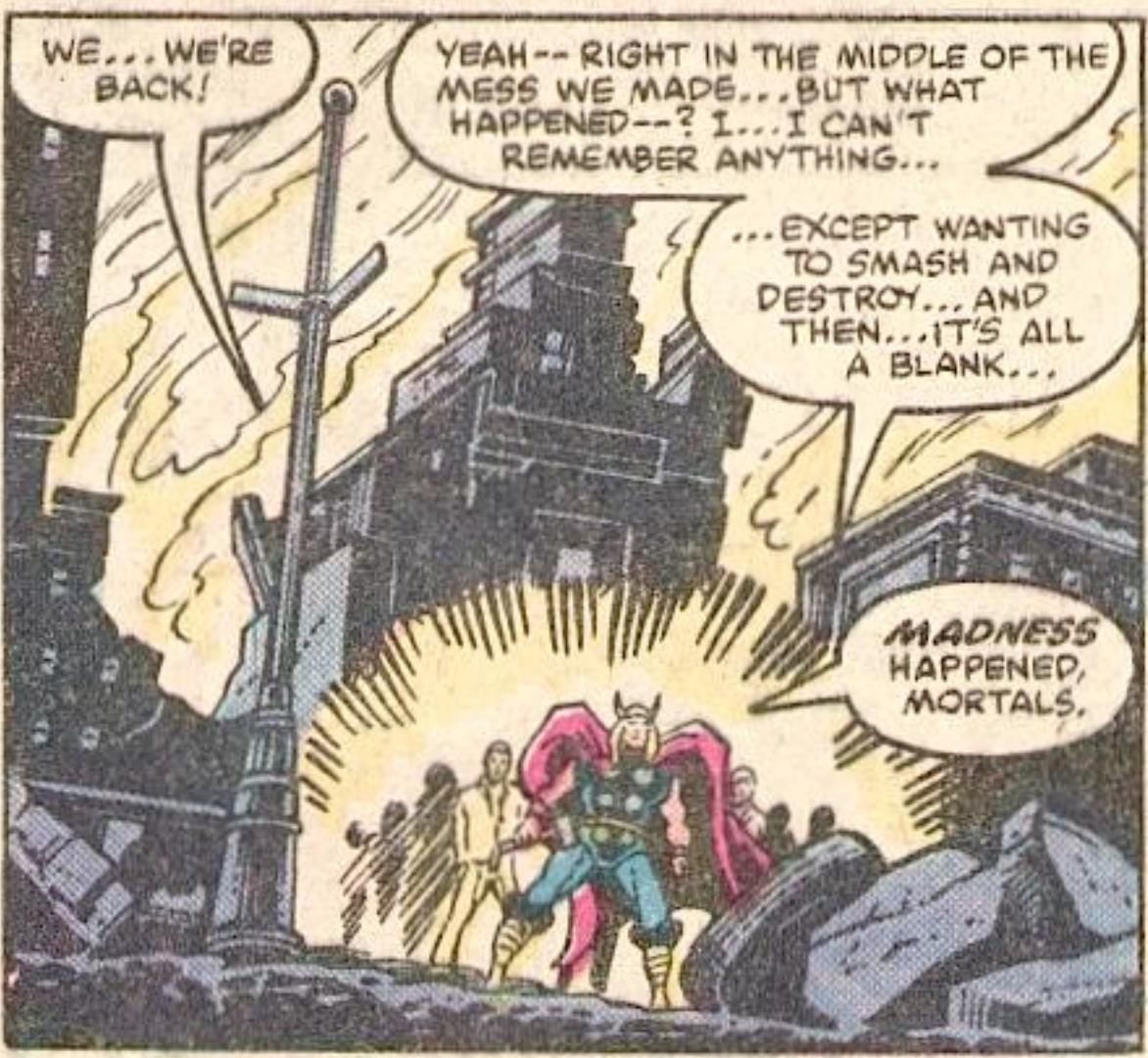


SO BEGONE, THUNDER GOD -- AND TAKE WITH YOU THESE SOULS I HAVE WRONGFULLY SEIZED!

WORK YOUR NOBLE WAYS UPON THE WOEFUL, DESPERATE MILLIONS OF EARTH...



"...WHILE I WORK MY DARK WAYS FROM HERE BELOW YET NEVER FARTHER THAN A WHISPER FROM ALL THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE EVER PONDERED EVIL..."



WE... WE'RE BACK!

YEAH-- RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MESS WE MADE... BUT WHAT HAPPENED--? I... I CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING...

...EXCEPT WANTING TO SMASH AND DESTROY... AND THEN... IT'S ALL A BLANK...

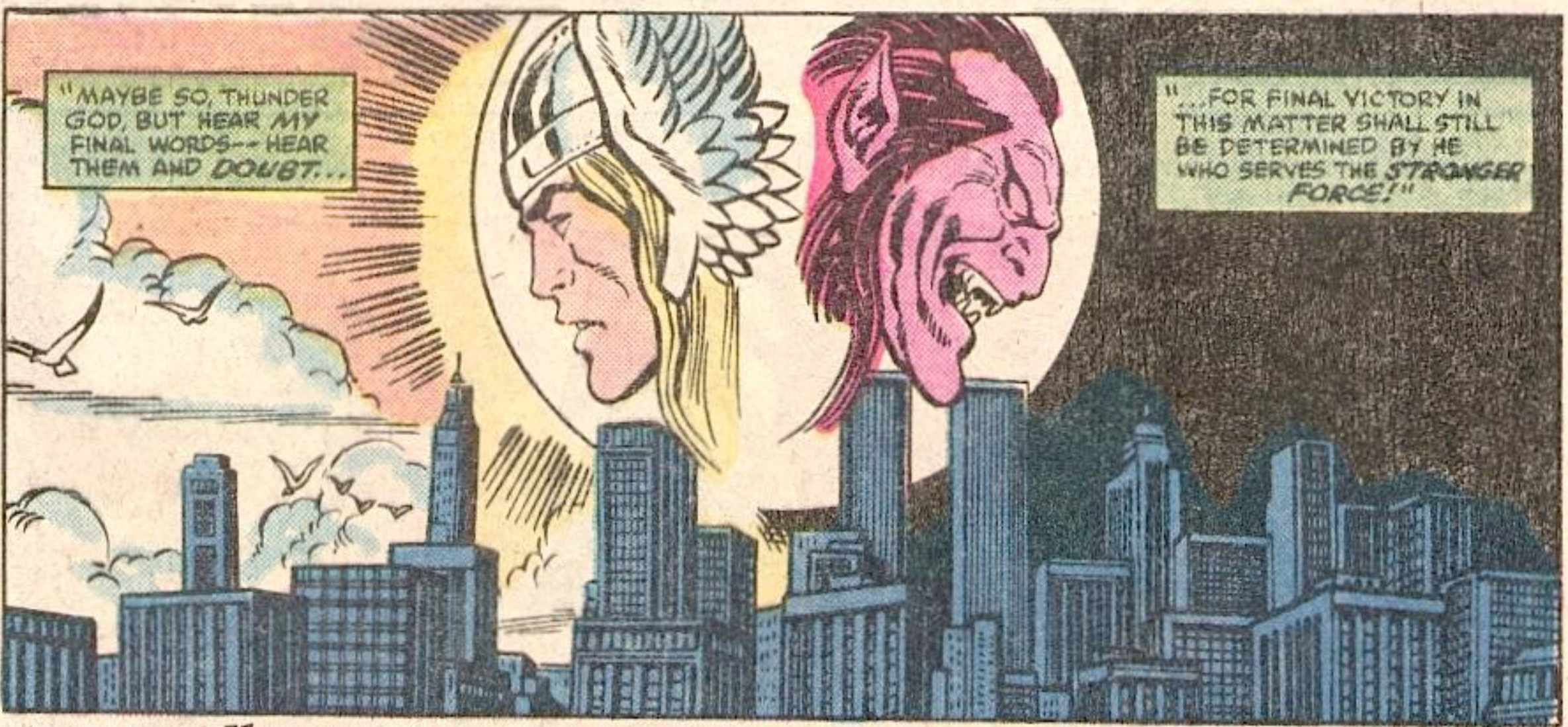
MADNESS HAPPENED, MORTALS.



YEAH, WE *MUSTA* GONE CRAZY SOMEHOW... AND THERE SURE IS A LOT OF CLEANIN' UP TO DO...

YOU SAID IT-- AND MAYBE THE BEST WAY TO START IS BY EACH OF US CLEANIN' UP OUR OWN ACT.

WELL SAID, MORTAL... WELL SAID.



"MAYBE SO, THUNDER GOD, BUT HEAR MY FINAL WORDS-- HEAR THEM AND DOUBT..."

"...FOR FINAL VICTORY IN THIS MATTER SHALL STILL BE DETERMINED BY HE WHO SERVES THE STRONGER FORCE!"

NEXT: "GRIEF MORE THAN A GOD MAY BEAR" PLUS AN ALL-NEW TALES OF ASGARD EPIC!