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THE MIGHTY THOR™



A MINUTE'S UP, THUNDER GOD!

YOUR HAMMER HAS
BECOME A **STICK!**

YOU HAVE BECOME
A **MORTAL!**

YOU HAVE FIVE HUNDRED FEET TO FALL!



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
Scripter

ALAN KUPPERBERG
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JIM MOONEY
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Editor-in-Chief

THERE IS ONLY ONE GYMNASIUM ON EARTH WHERE AN ASSGARDIAN THUNDER GOD CAN GET A DECENT WORK-OUT... AND IT'S LOCATED IN AVENGERS MANSION...

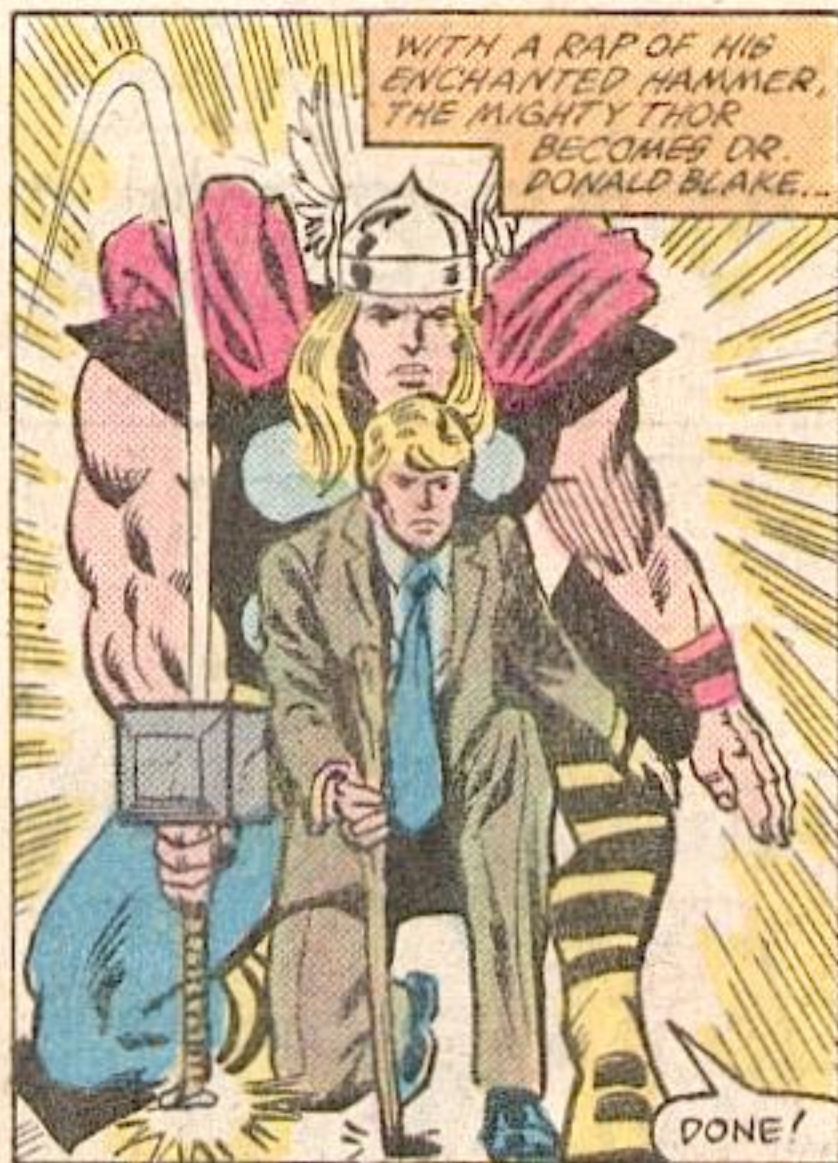
I KNOW NOT WHY, WASP, BUT AFTER OUR AVENGERS MEETINGS, THIS ALWAYS RELAXES ME.

HMPH! GIVE ME A SHOPPING SPREE AT SAKS ANY DAY-- THIS IS TOO MUCH LIKE WORK! STILL, I HATE TO SEE YOU HERE ALONE.

TWENTY POUNDS MAKE THEE HEAVE SO? MAYHAP THOU ART OUT OF SHAPE...

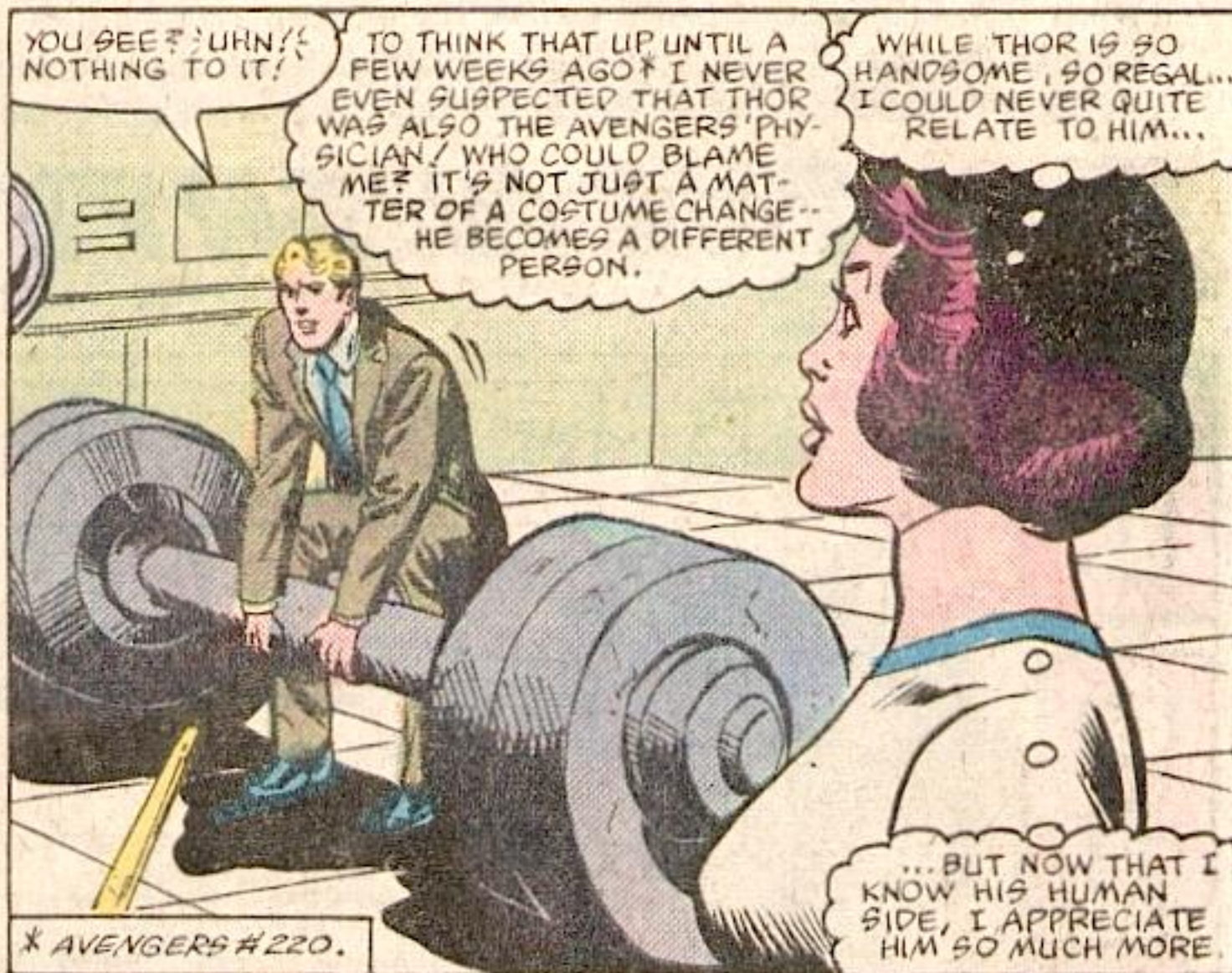
OH YEAH, GOLDEN BOY? I'D LIKE TO SEE DON BLAKE PRESS THAT THOUSAND-POUND WEIGHT!

G
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N



WITH A RAP OF HIS ENCHANTED HAMMER, THE MIGHTY THOR BECOMES DR. DONALD BLAKE...

DONE!



YOU SEE? UHN! NOTHING TO IT!

TO THINK THAT UP UNTIL A FEW WEEKS AGO I NEVER EVEN SUSPECTED THAT THOR WAS ALSO THE AVENGERS' PHYSICIAN! WHO COULD BLAME ME? IT'S NOT JUST A MATTER OF A COSTUME CHANGE-- HE BECOMES A DIFFERENT PERSON.

WHILE THOR IS SO HANDSOME, SO REGAL... I COULD NEVER QUITE RELATE TO HIM...

...BUT NOW THAT I KNOW HIS HUMAN SIDE, I APPRECIATE HIM SO MUCH MORE.

* AVENGERS #220.



SAY, HOW COME YOU'RE STILL SINGLE, DON? I MEAN, DON'T ALL THE NURSES STAND IN LINE FOR A DATE WITH DR. BLAKE--?

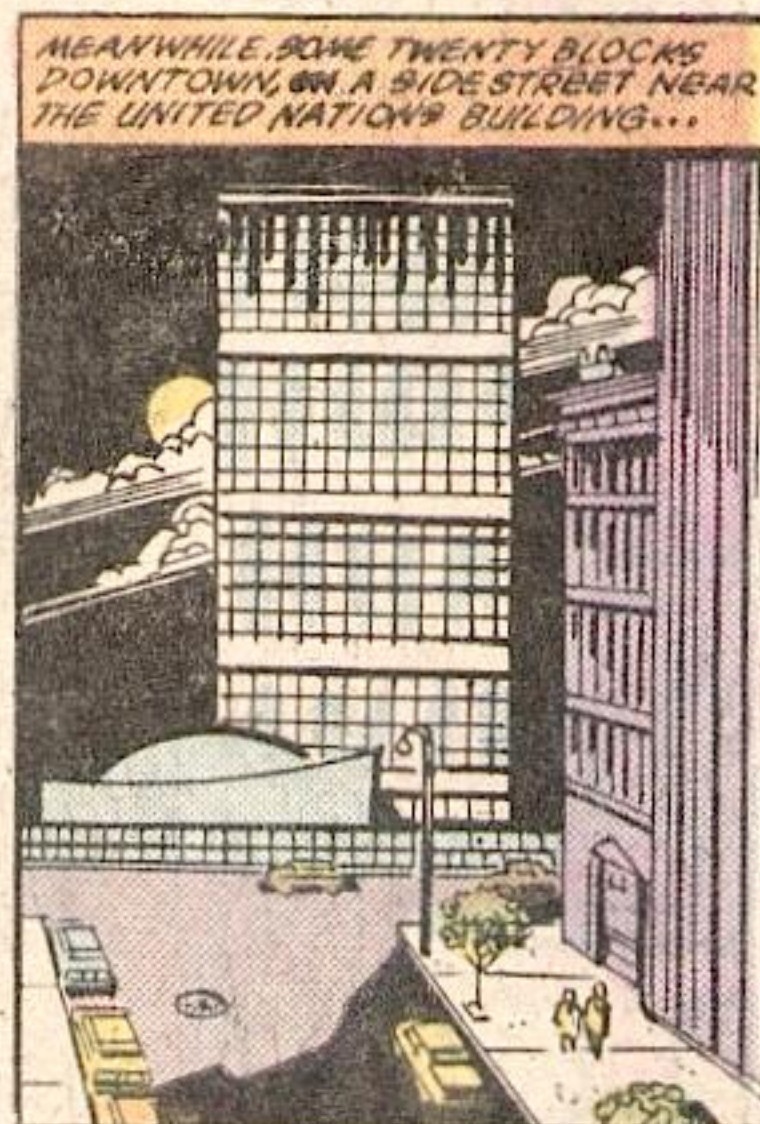
OOPS-- ME AND MY BIG MOUTH. SORRY, DON...

GUESS I'M HAVING TROUBLE READJUSTING TO THE SINGLES SCENE... DON'T KNOW WHAT MEN WANT IN A WOMAN OR EVEN WHAT I WANT IN A MAN...

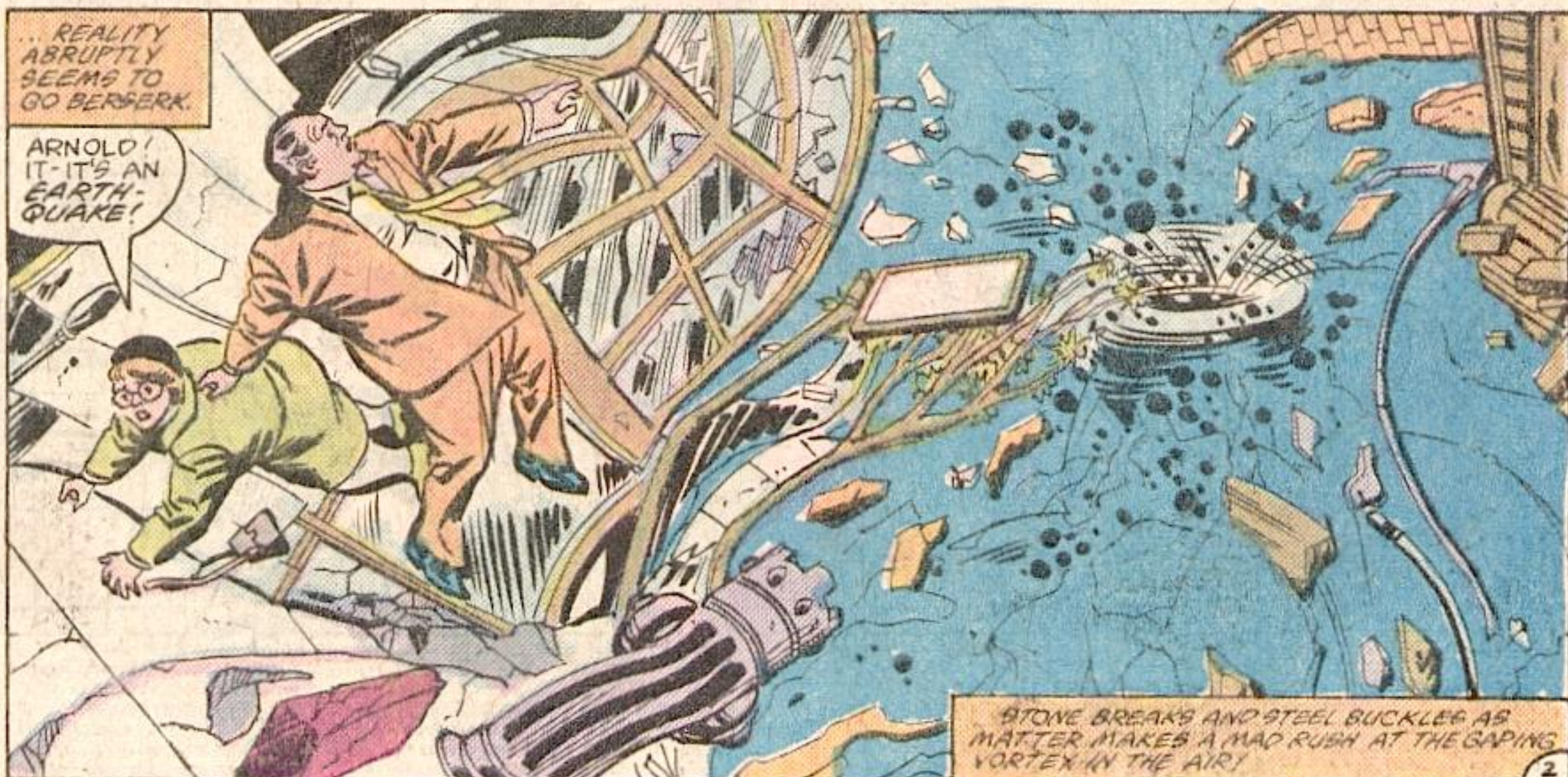


DO YOU HAVE TO BE GOING BACK TO CHICAGO... OR CAN WE TALK A WHILE, DON?

OF COURSE, JANET-- BUT ONLY IF WE CAN RUSTLE UP SOME HOT COCOA FIRST.



MEANWHILE, SOME TWENTY BLOCKS DOWNTOWN, ON A SIDE STREET NEAR THE UNITED NATIONS BUILDING...



... REALITY ABRUPTLY SEEMS TO GO BERSERK.

ARNOLD! IT'S AN EARTH-QUAKE!

STONE BREAKS AND STEEL BUCKLES AS MATTER MAKES A MAD RUSH AT THE GAPING VORTEX IN THE AIR!

NEARBY OBJECTS
SHOOT UP INTO THE
NIGHT SKY WEIGHT-
LESSLY...



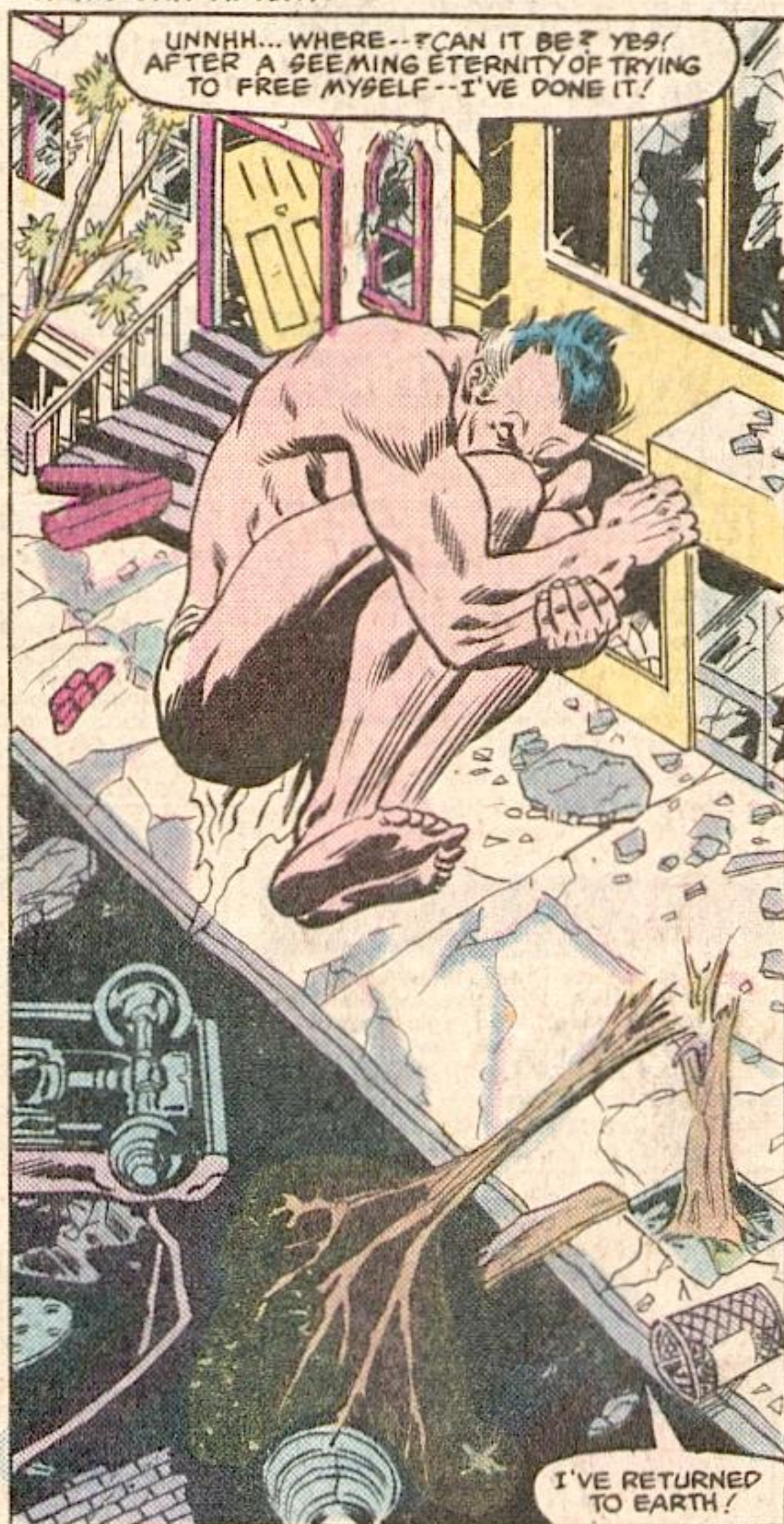
RUN,
HERMIONE--
RUN!

...THERE TO
WILDLY ORBIT
A BRILLIANT
POINT OF
LIGHT.



THE WHITE HOLE GROWS
IN SIZE, SPINNING THE
LOOSE MATTER AROUND IT
IN A FRENZIED DANCE. THEN,
SUDDENLY, IT EXPLODES--

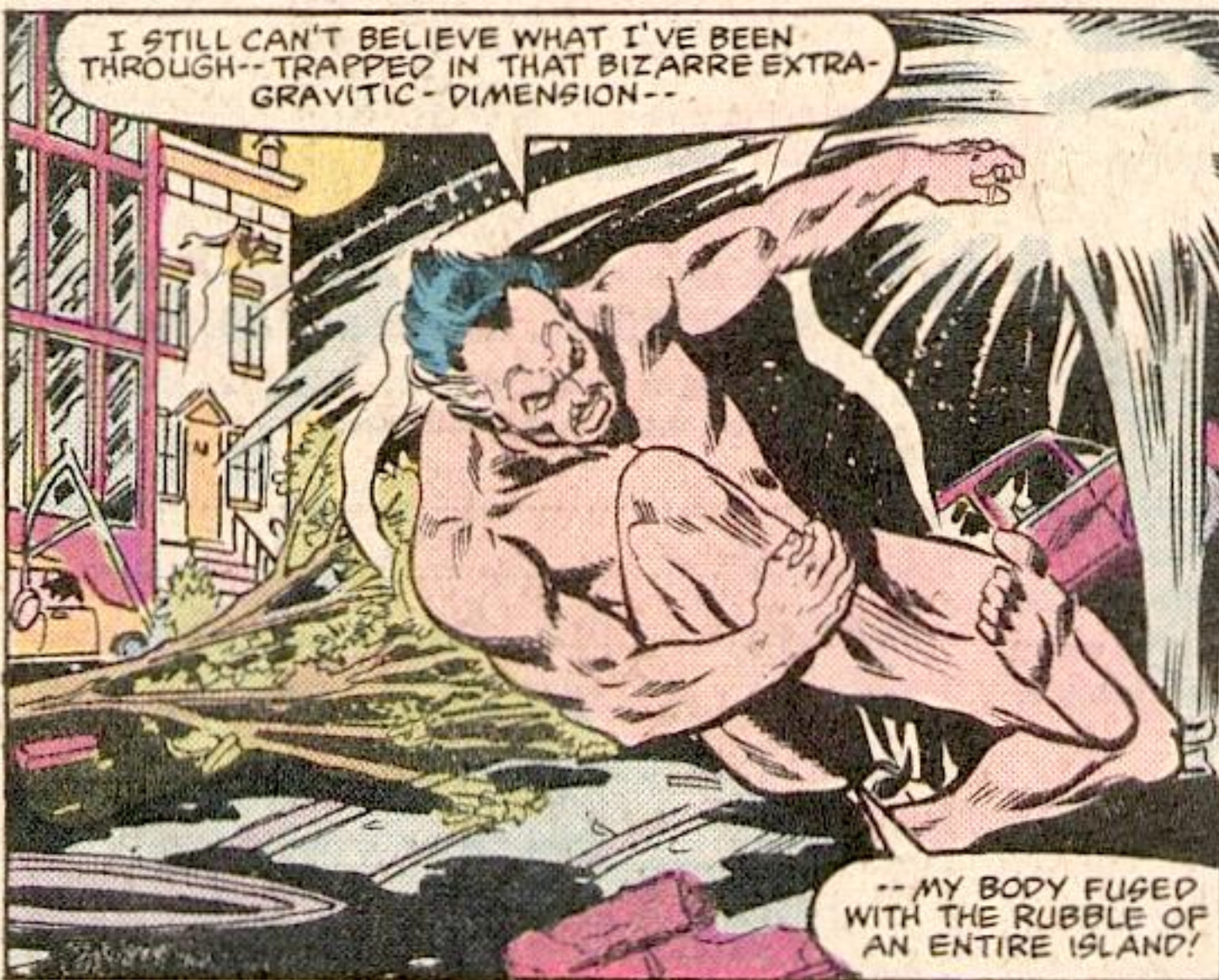
--AND A STRANGE BEING IS BORN INTO THE CHAOS
OF HIS OWN ADVENT.



UNHHH... WHERE--? CAN IT BE? YES!
AFTER A SEEMING ETERNITY OF TRYING
TO FREE MYSELF--I'VE DONE IT!

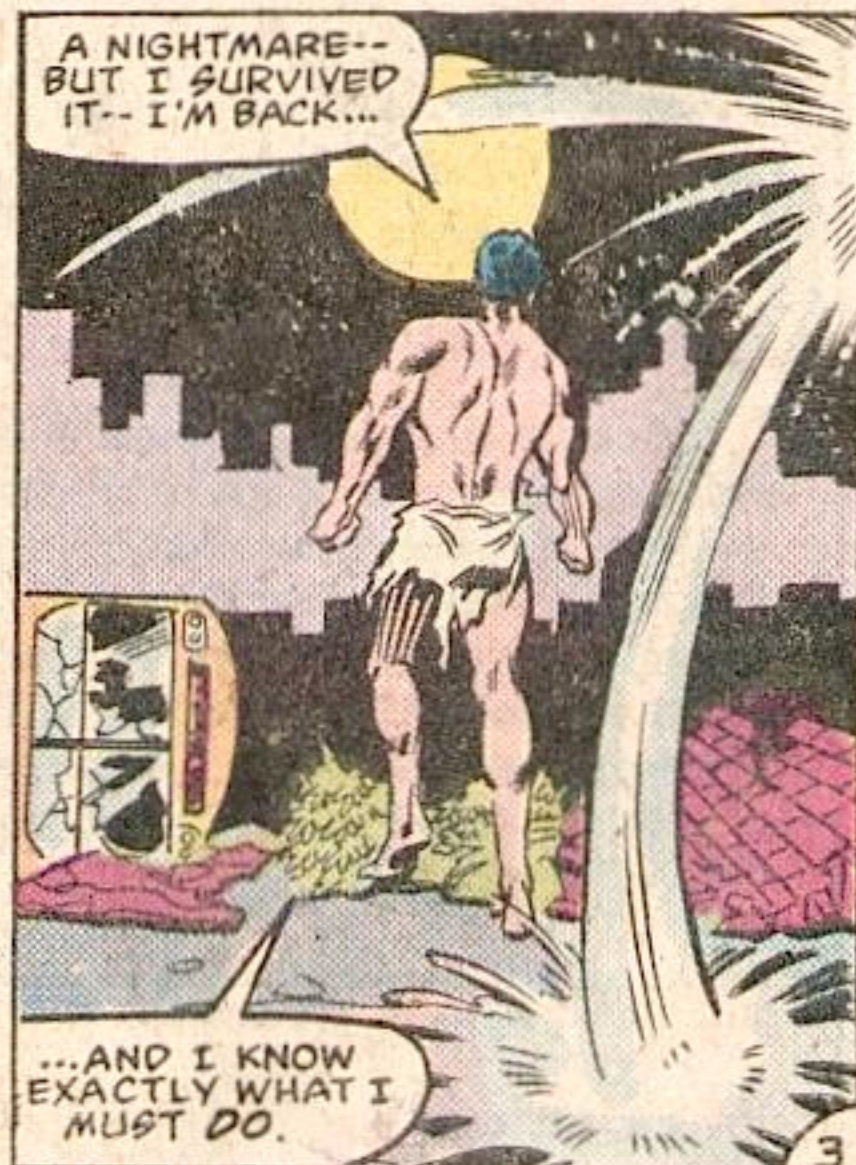
I'VE RETURNED
TO EARTH!

I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT I'VE BEEN
THROUGH--TRAPPED IN THAT BIZARRE EXTRA-
GRAVITIC-DIMENSION--



--MY BODY FUSED
WITH THE RUBBLE OF
AN ENTIRE ISLAND!

A NIGHTMARE--
BUT I SURVIVED
IT-- I'M BACK...



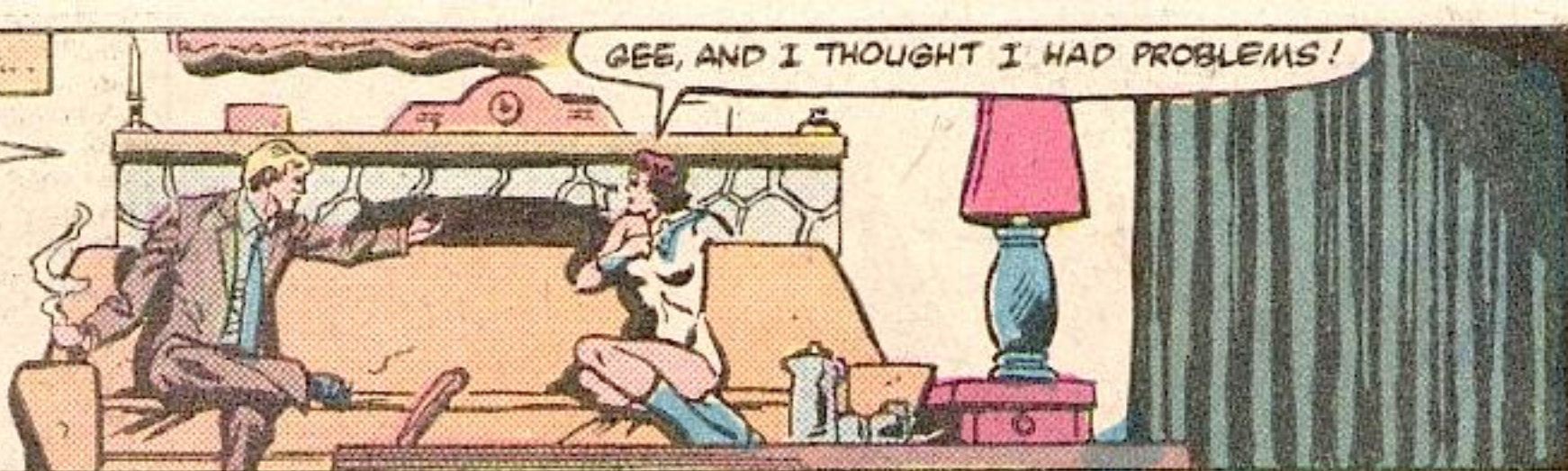
...AND I KNOW
EXACTLY WHAT I
MUST DO.

FIVE CUPS OF COCOA LATER...

AND THOUGH I KNOW DON BLAKE IS A FALSE PERSONA CREATED BY ODIN, WHEN I'M HIM, HE SEEMS JUST AS REAL AS THOR!

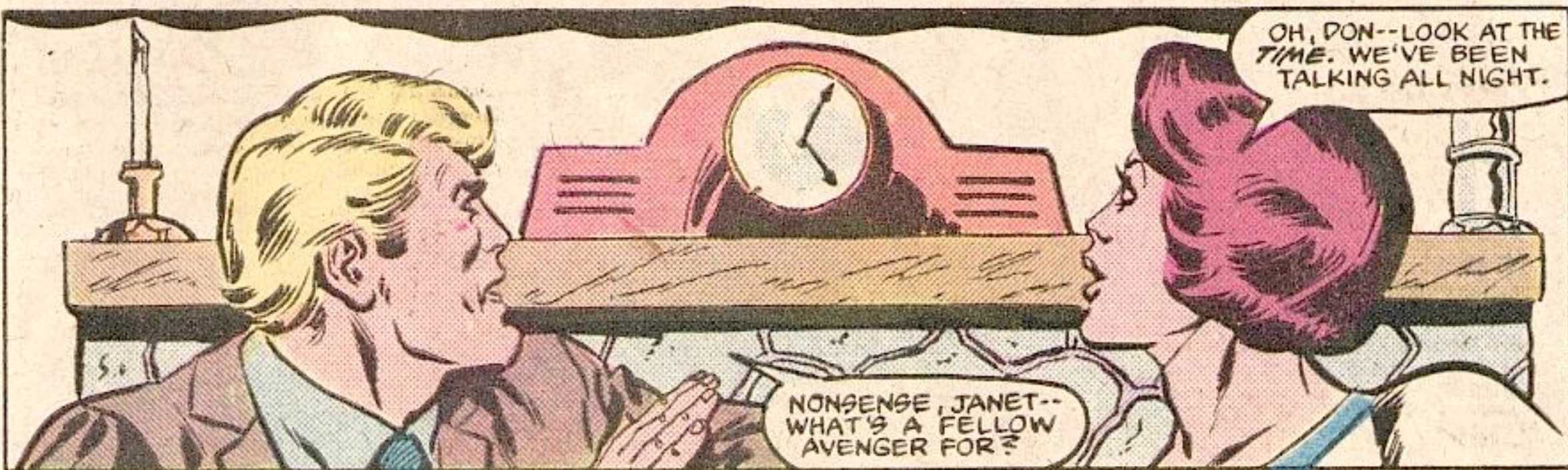
IT'S TAKEN ME A WHILE TO COME TO GRIPS WITH MY COMPULSION TO LIVE AS A MORTAL.

GEE, AND I THOUGHT I HAD PROBLEMS!

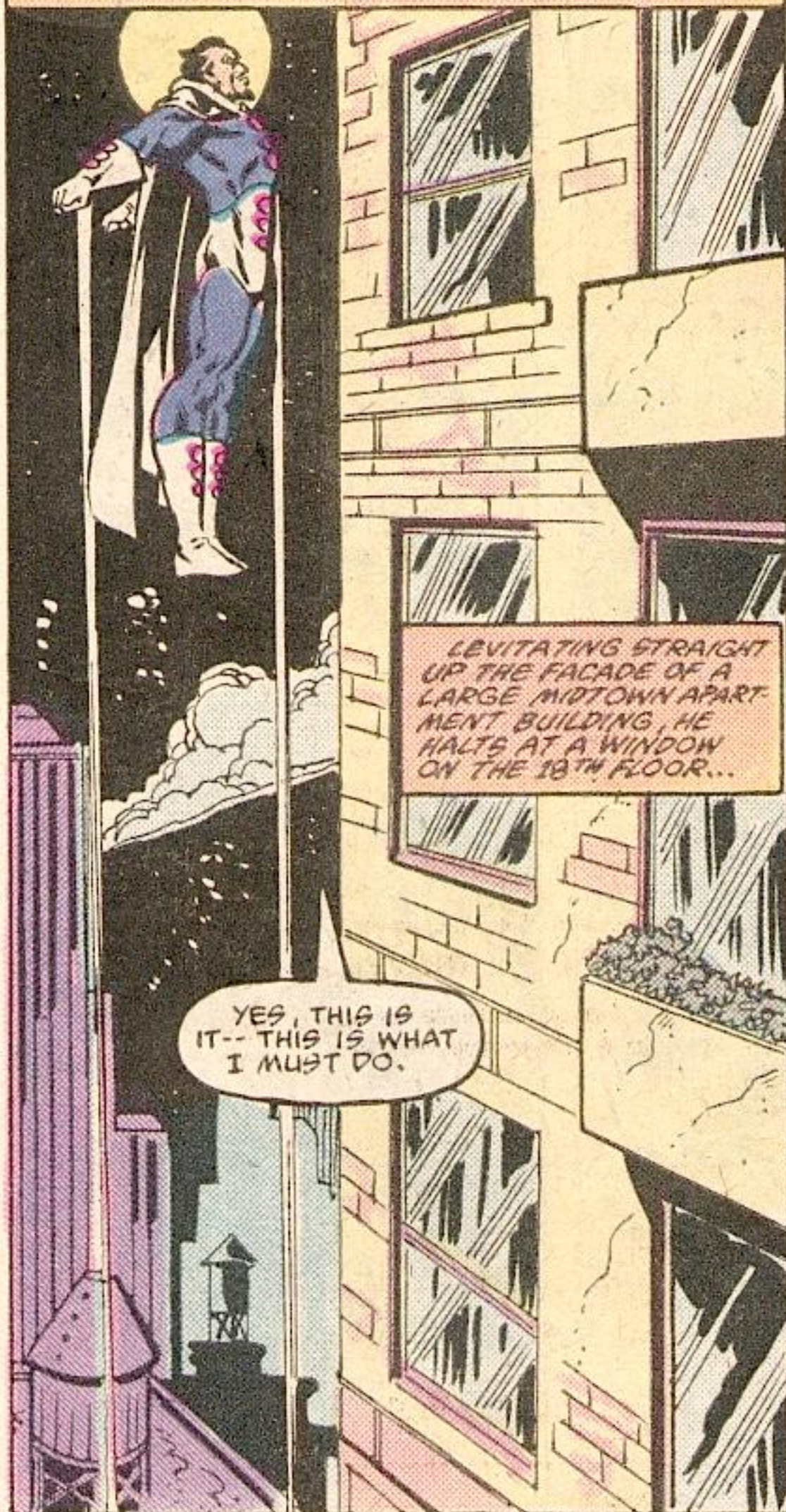


OH, DON--LOOK AT THE TIME. WE'VE BEEN TALKING ALL NIGHT.

NONSENSE, JANET--WHAT'S A FELLOW AVENGER FOR?



MEANWHILE, A NEWLY--AND STRIKINGLY--GARBED FIGURE DEFIES GRAVITY WITH LESS EFFORT THAN A SNOWFLAKE.



LEVITATING STRAIGHT UP THE FACADE OF A LARGE MIDTOWN APARTMENT BUILDING, HE HALTS AT A WINDOW ON THE 18TH FLOOR...

YES, THIS IS IT-- THIS IS WHAT I MUST DO.

... AND BLOWS AWAY BOTH WINDOW AND WALL WITH A SINGLE GRAVITIC SHOCKWAVE.



WHAT--? YOU!!

YES, JUDY PARKS, ME-- **GRAVITON**, LORD OF THE ELEMENTAL FORCE!

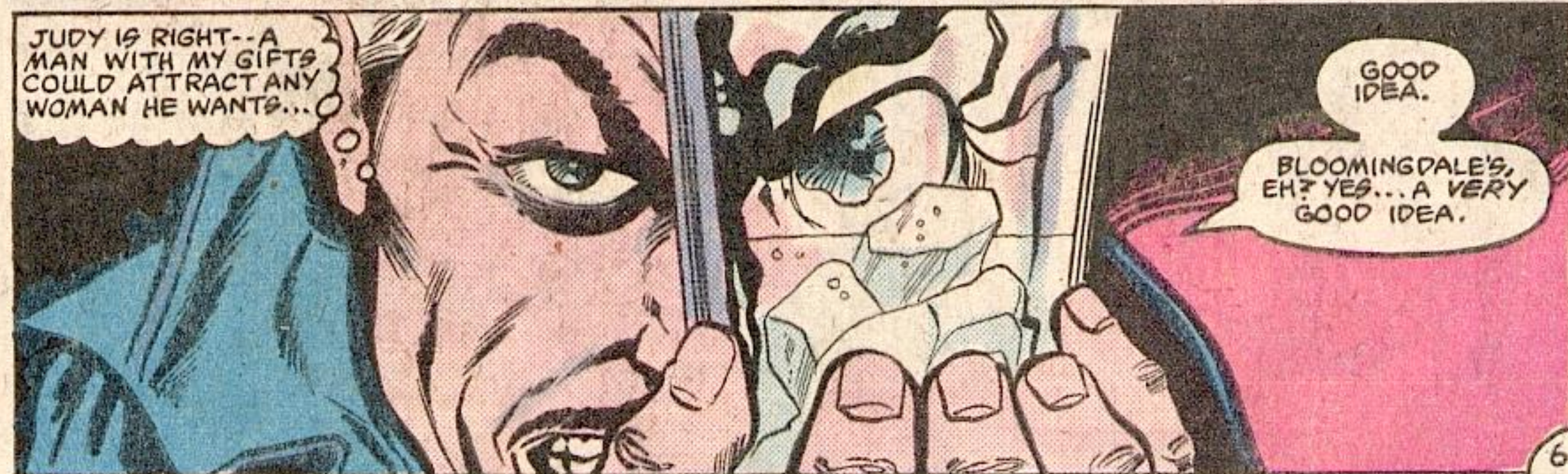
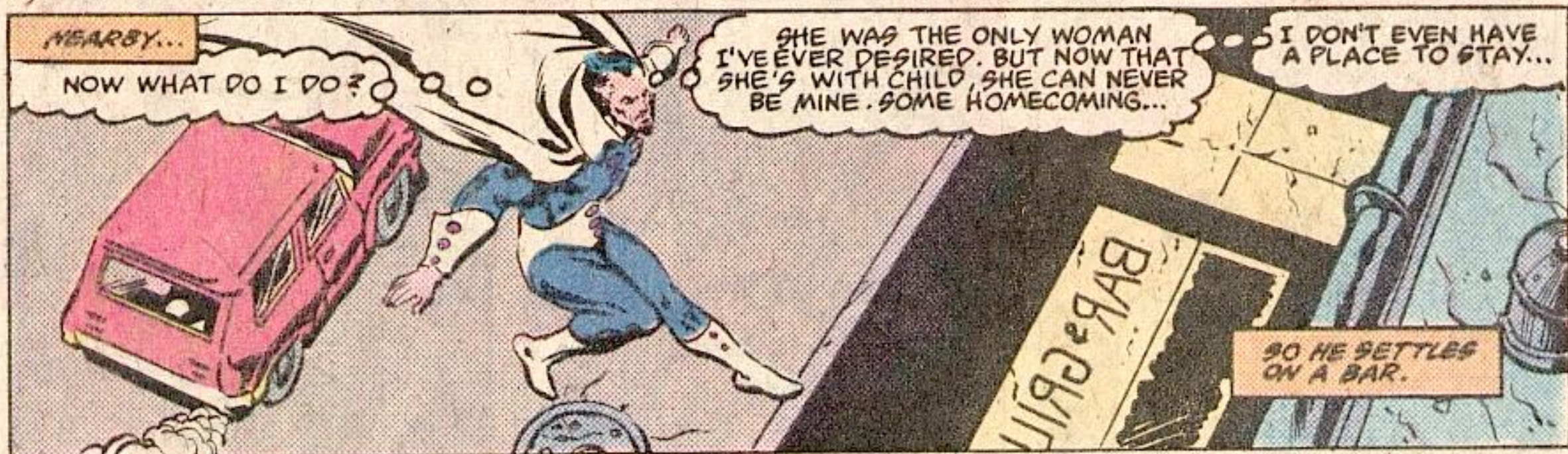
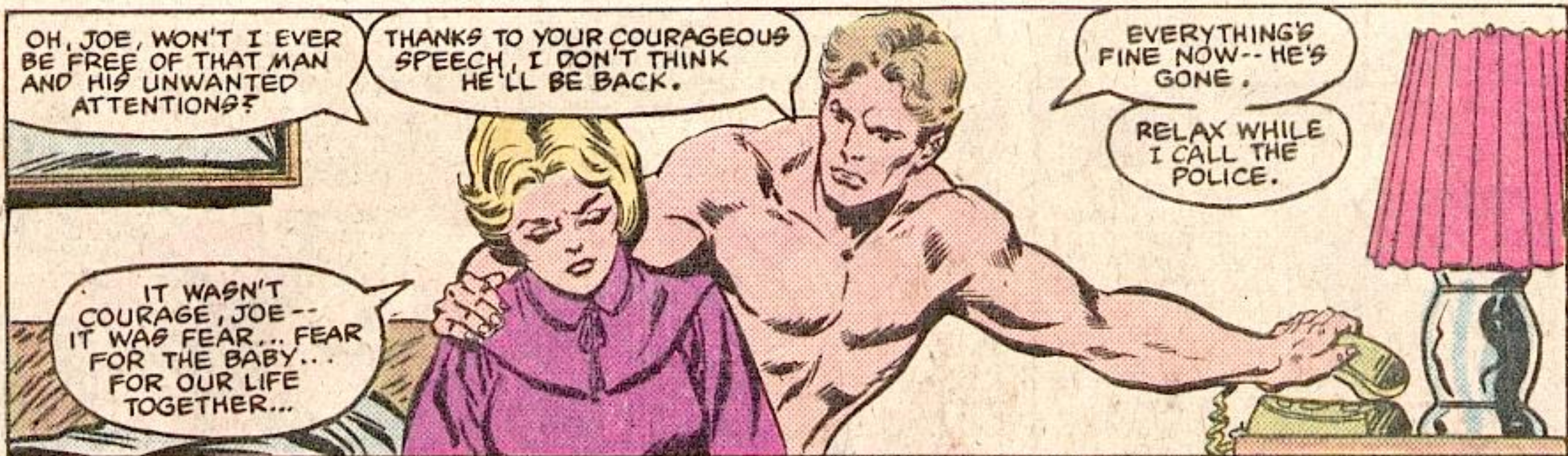
BUT... BUT WE HEARD YOU WERE DEAD!

YES-- AND I BET YOU'D LIKE THAT, JOE-- WOULDN'T YOU?

EVER SINCE YOU WORKED FOR ME AT THE RESEARCH LAB, YOU'VE BEEN JEALOUS OF ME, OF MY AUTHORITY--MY POWER!







THE SUN FINDS AVENGERS MANSION...

FEELING BETTER NOW, JAN?

AFTER AN ALL-NIGHTER LIKE THAT, DON I OUGHT TO BE-- AND IF YOU CHARGED BY THE HOUR LIKE A SHRINK, I'D HAVE TO FORGET SPREES AT BLOOMINGDALE'S FOR A MONTH.

OFF TO CHICAGO NOW?

YES--JUST AS SOON AS I TAP MY TRUSTY WALKING STICK AND BECOME MY... AH... OTHER SELF.

THUS, THE LAME PHYSICIAN DISAPPEARS IN A FLASHING ROAR OF THUNDER AND LIGHTNING--

--REPLACED BY THE MIGHTY THOR, LORD OF STORMS AND IMMORTAL SCION OF ASSGARD!

I'D BETTER HURRY, THOR, OR I'LL BE LATE FOR MY BUSINESS APPOINTMENT-- ESPECIALLY SINCE I'LL HAVE TO STOP ON THE WAY TO BUY EYELID-PROPS.

BUT I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW-- UNDER ALL THAT SCRUMPTIOUS BRAWN OF YOURS, THERE LURKS ANOTHER LIVING DOLL WHOSE ONLY FLAW IS BEING A TAD SKINNY.

THANKS, FOR THE CHAT, FRIEND.

MEANWHILE, NOT SO MANY BLOCKS DISTANT, THE RATHER DISTURBED ENTITY KNOWN AS GRAVITON STALKS HIS HUNTING GROUNDS...

ANK

THERE IT IS--JUST AS THE BARTENDER SAID...

ONE WAY

DON'T WALK

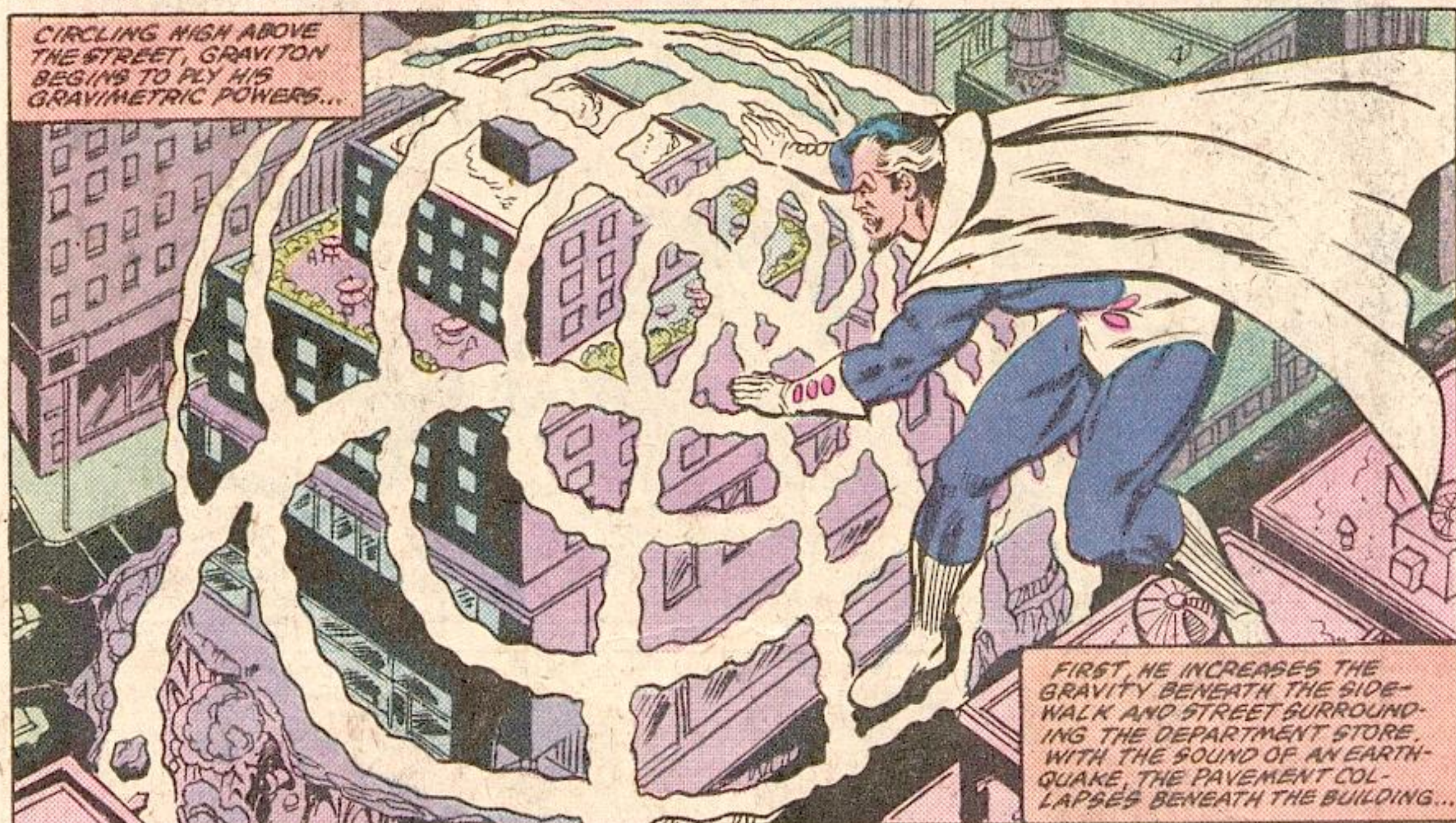
BLOOMINGDALE'S

SLUCKING HIS STOLEN OVERCOAT, THE GRAVITY MASTER MAKES A BEELINE FOR HIS FASHIONABLE TARGET...



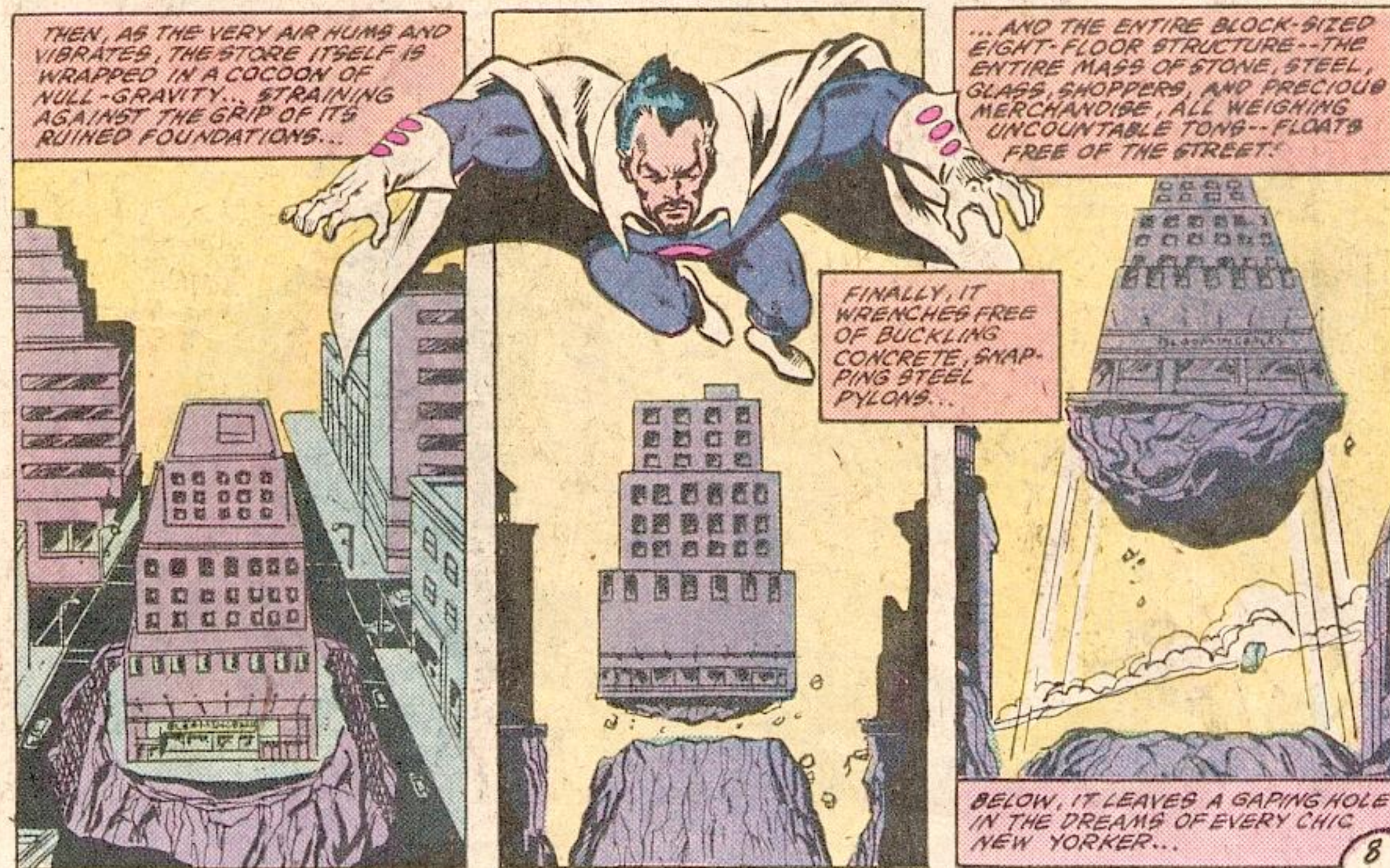
YEAH-- AND HE AIN'T EVEN ONE OF THE AVENGERS OR FANTASTIC FOUR!

CIRCLING HIGH ABOVE THE STREET, GRAVITON BEGINS TO FLY HIS GRAVIMETRIC POWERS...



FIRST, HE INCREASES THE GRAVITY BENEATH THE SIDEWALK AND STREET SURROUNDING THE DEPARTMENT STORE, WITH THE SOUND OF AN EARTHQUAKE, THE PAVEMENT COLLAPSES BENEATH THE BUILDING...

THEN, AS THE VERY AIR HUMS AND VIBRATES, THE STORE ITSELF IS WRAPPED IN A COCOON OF NULL-GRAVITY... STRAINING AGAINST THE GRIP OF ITS RUINED FOUNDATIONS...



...AND THE ENTIRE BLOCK-SIZED EIGHT-FLOOR STRUCTURE--THE ENTIRE MASS OF STONE, STEEL, GLASS, SHOPPERS, AND PRECIOUS MERCHANDISE, ALL WEIGHING UNCOUNTABLE TONS--FLOATS FREE OF THE STREET!

FINALLY, IT WRENCHES FREE OF BUCKLING CONCRETE, SNAPPING STEEL PYLONS...

BELOW, IT LEAVES A GAPING HOLE IN THE DREAMS OF EVERY CHIC NEW YORKER...

THEN, AS GRAVITON ENTERS HIS AIRBORNE PRIZE...

HELP! I... I'M HAVING A NIGHTMARE! EVERYTHING IS FLOATING AROUND IN MID-AIR--AND... AND MY STOMACH!



I KNOW WHAT YA MEAN, DEARIE-- I PRAYED TO LOSE WEIGHT LAST NIGHT, BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS!

DEFTLY THREADING HIS WAY THROUGH THE FREE-FALL CHAOS, GRAVITON REACHES THE MANAGER'S OFFICE...



OUT OF MY WAY, FOOL! I MUST USE THE STORE'S INTERCOM!

HEAR ME, SHOPPERS! I AM GRAVITON-- AND I HAVE JUST SKYJACKED THIS STORE FOR THE PURPOSE OF FINDING A SUITABLE CONSORT!

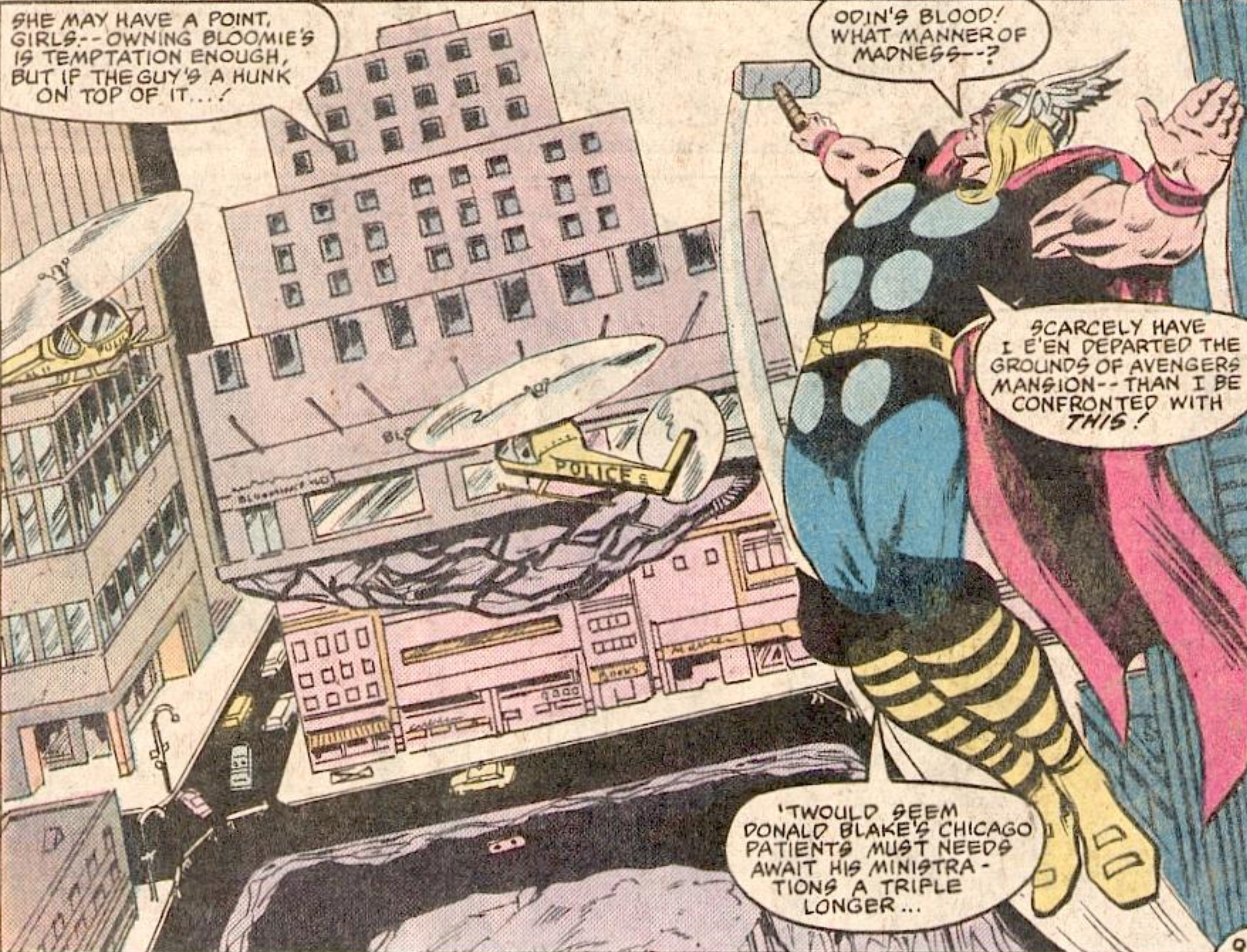
BESIDES BEING WEDDED TO A MAN OF AWESOME POWER, THE WOMAN I CHOOSE WILL RECEIVE AS DOWRY-- THIS VERY STORE!

WHOEVER HE IS, HE MUST BE INSANE!



BEFORE DRAWING ANY CONCLUSIONS, MAYBE WE SHOULD SEE WHAT HE LOOKS LIKE FIRST...

SHE MAY HAVE A POINT, GIRLS-- OWNING BLOOMIE'S IS TEMPTATION ENOUGH, BUT IF THE GUY'S A HUNK ON TOP OF IT...



ODIN'S BLOOD! WHAT MANNER OF MADNESS--?

SCARCELY HAVE I E'EN DEPARTED THE GROUNDS OF AVENGERS MANSION-- THAN I BE CONFRONTED WITH THIS!

'TWOULD SEEM DONALD BLAKE'S CHICAGO PATIENTS MUST NEEDS AWAIT HIS MINISTRATIONS A TRIPLE LONGER...

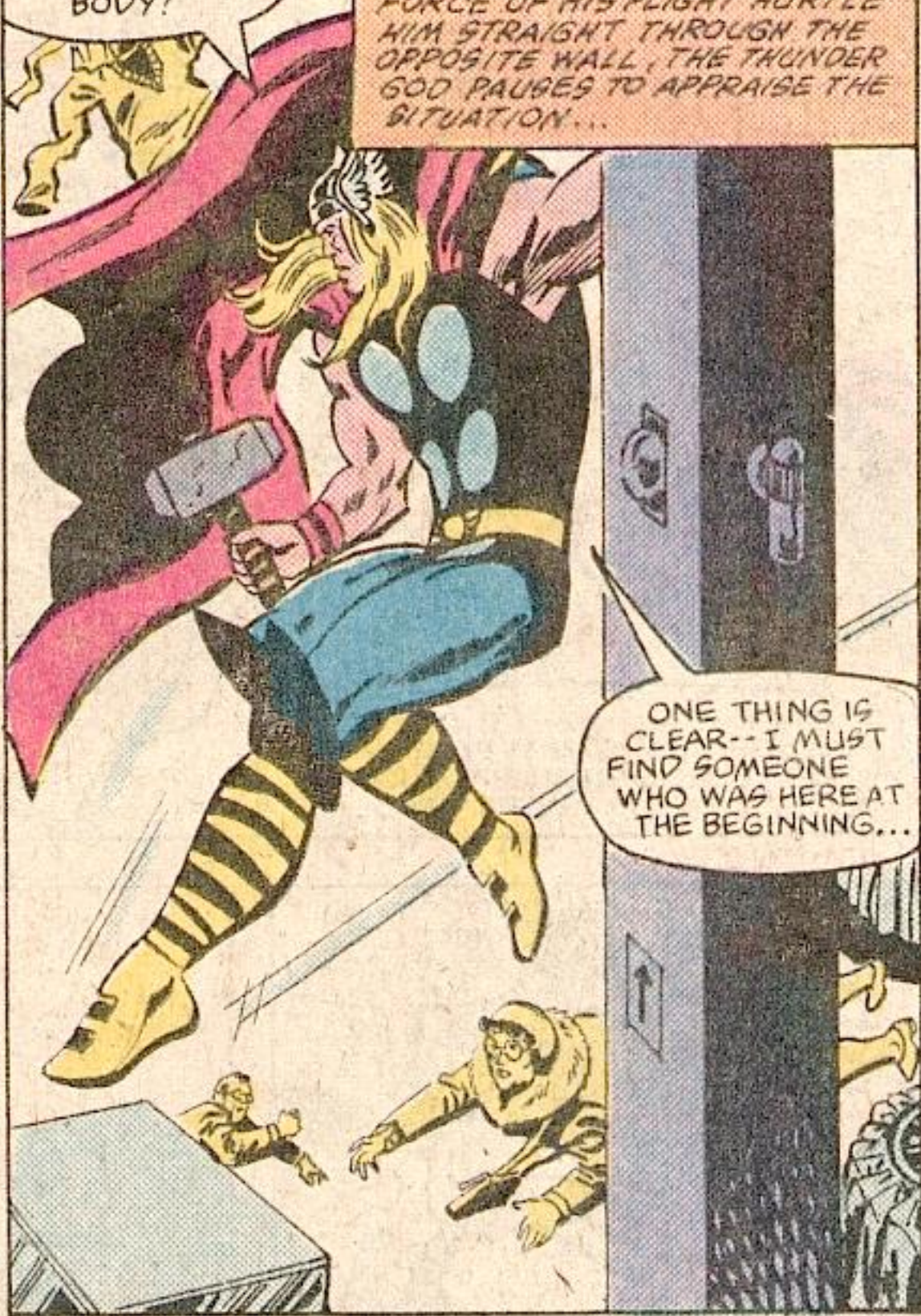
AND SO, GUIDED BY THE POWER OF HIS ENCHANTED URU HAMMER Mjolnir, THOR STREAKS INTO THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE LEVITATING BUILDING -- ONLY TO DISCOVER...



BY ALL THE GODS OF ASGARD-- 'TIS MADNESS INDEED!

EVERYTHING IN THE STORE IS WEIGHTLESS!

-- INCLUDING E'EN MINE OWN BODY!



HOOKING A PILLAR TO HALT HIMSELF, LEST THE UNIMPEDED FORCE OF HIS FLIGHT HURTLE HIM STRAIGHT THROUGH THE OPPOSITE WALL, THE THUNDER GOD PAUSES TO APPRAISE THE SITUATION...

ONE THING IS CLEAR-- I MUST FIND SOMEONE WHO WAS HERE AT THE BEGINNING...

STRUGGLE NOT, WOMAN-- 'TWILL DO THEE NO GOOD IN THIS ABSENCE OF GRAVITY! NOW TELL ME-- WHAT TRANSPIRES HERE?

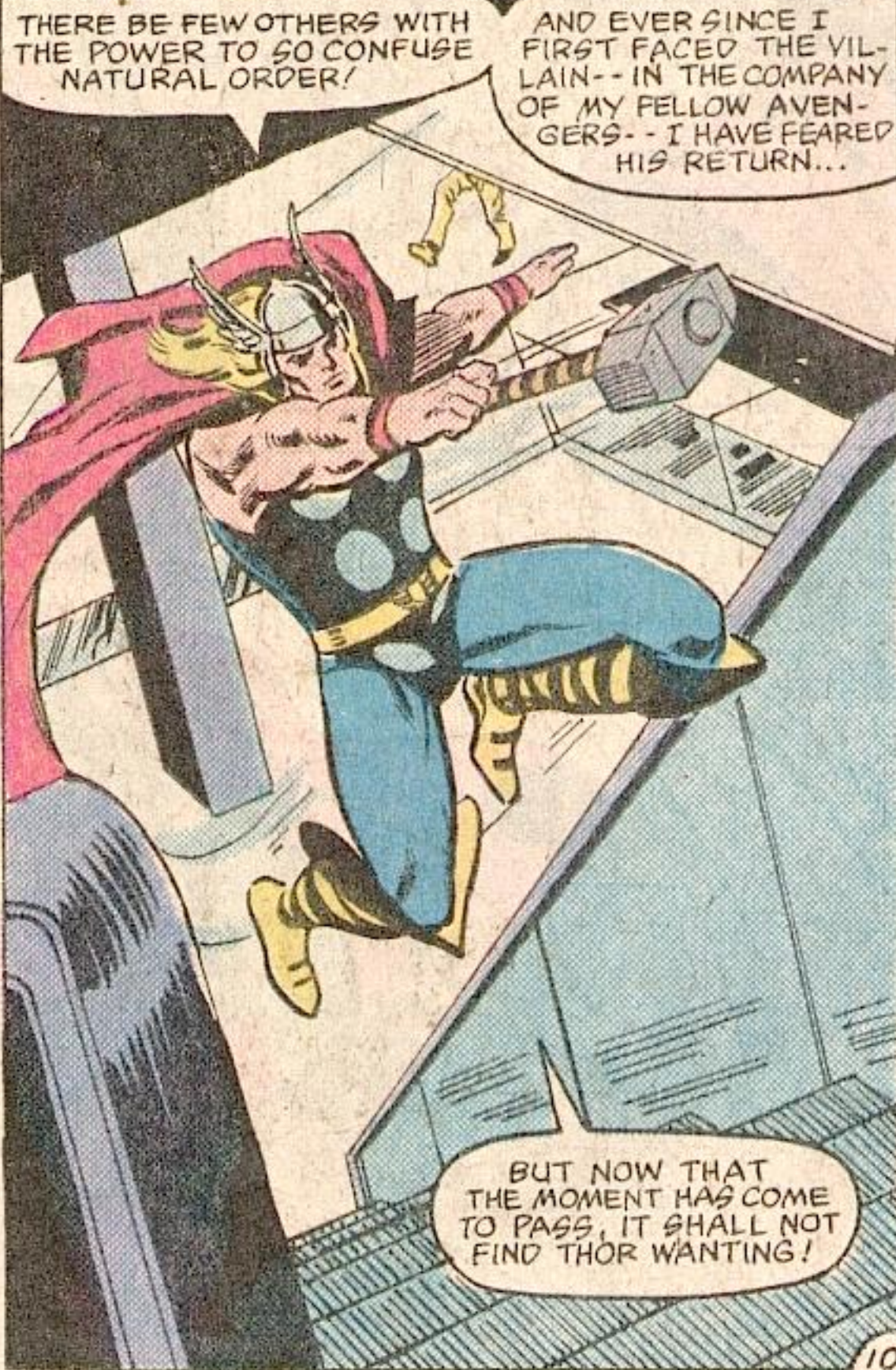


THOR! THANK HEAVEN IT'S YOU! SOME NUT CALLING HIMSELF "GRAVITON" IS ON THE TOP FLOOR HOLDING A BEAUTY PAGEANT OR SOMETHING...

...SAYS HE'S GOING TO CLAIM THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN IN THE STORE!

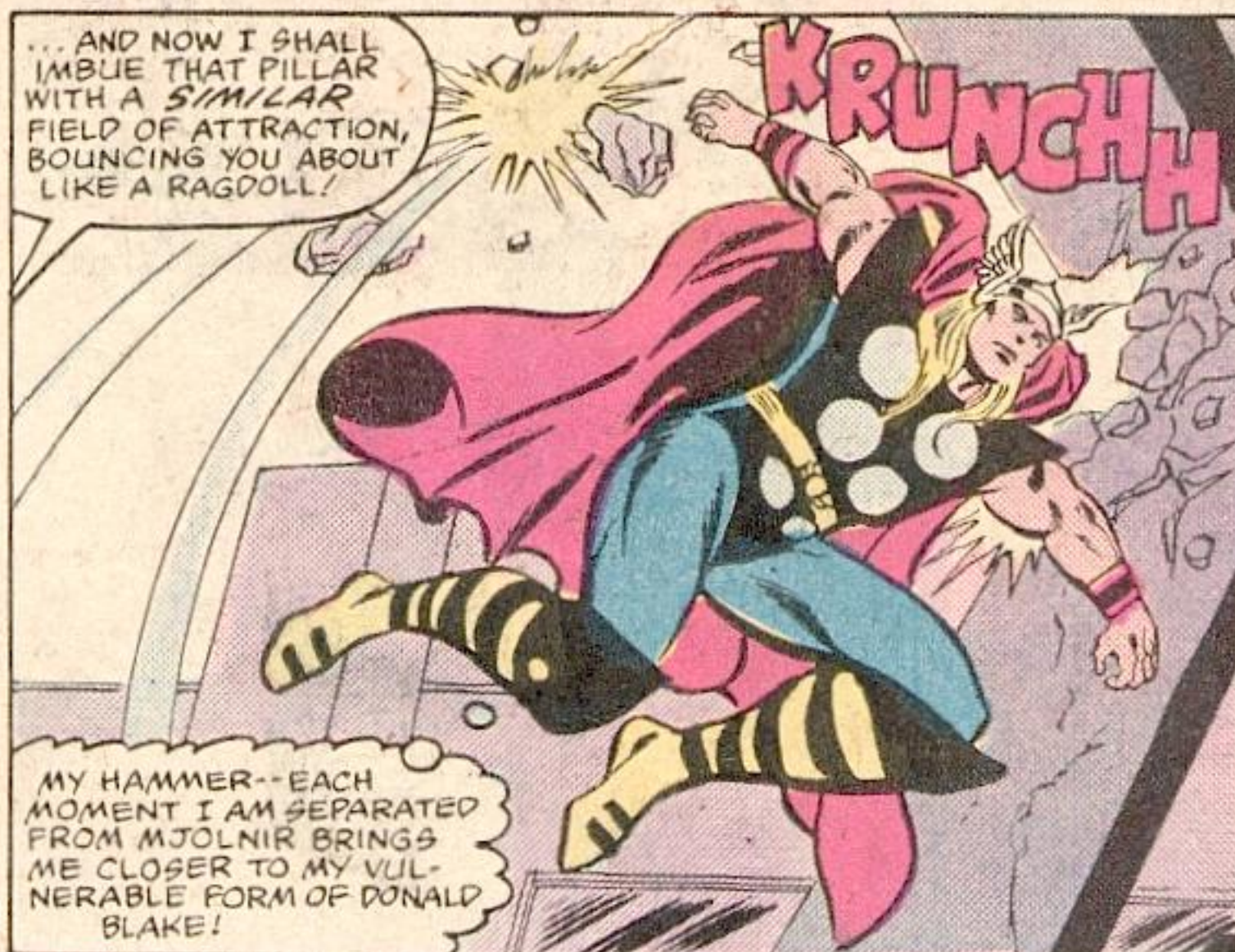
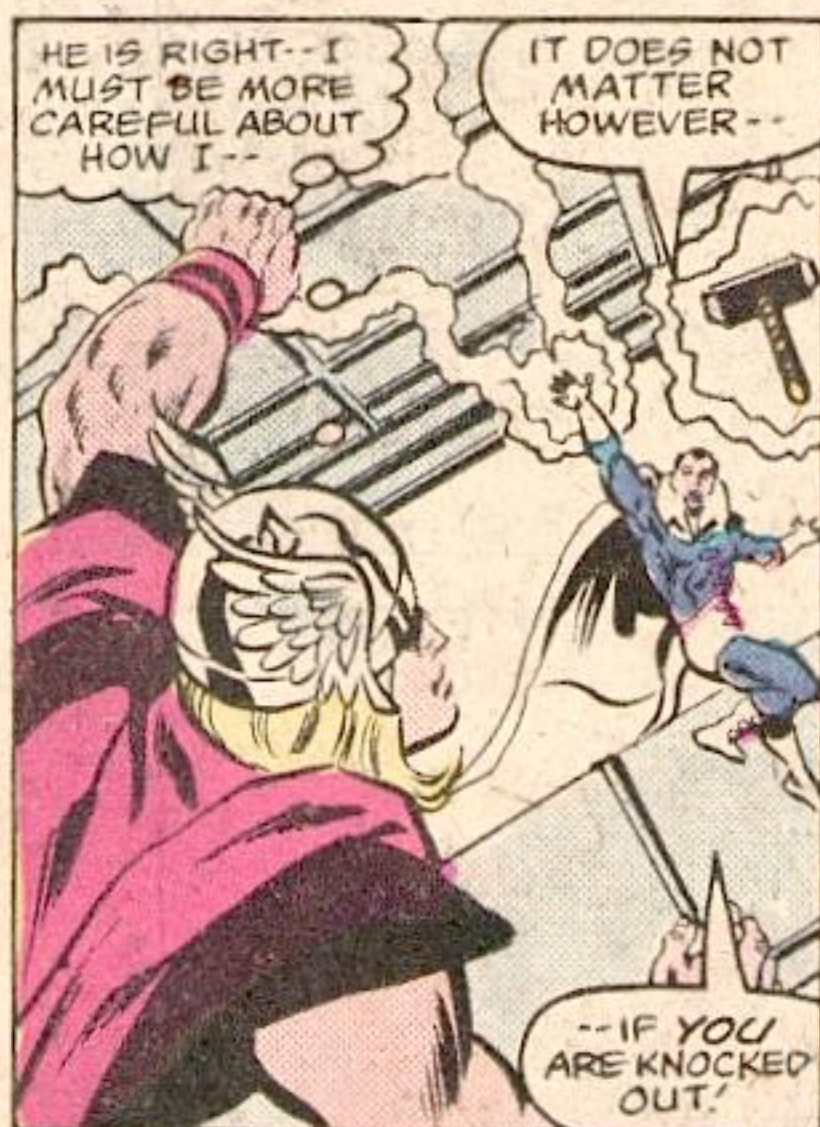
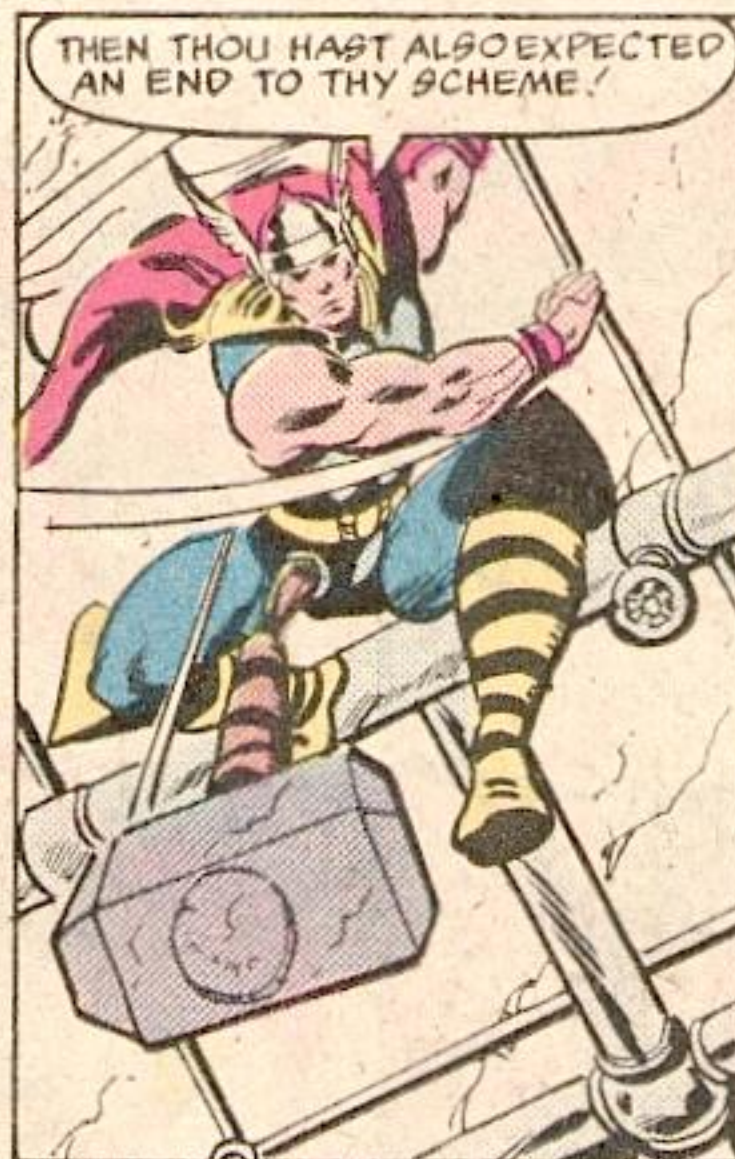
AYE-- I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED IT WOULD BE GRAVITON....!

THERE BE FEW OTHERS WITH THE POWER TO SO CONFUSE NATURAL ORDER!



AND EVER SINCE I FIRST FACED THE VIL-LAIN-- IN THE COMPANY OF MY FELLOW AVEN-GERS-- I HAVE FEARED HIS RETURN...

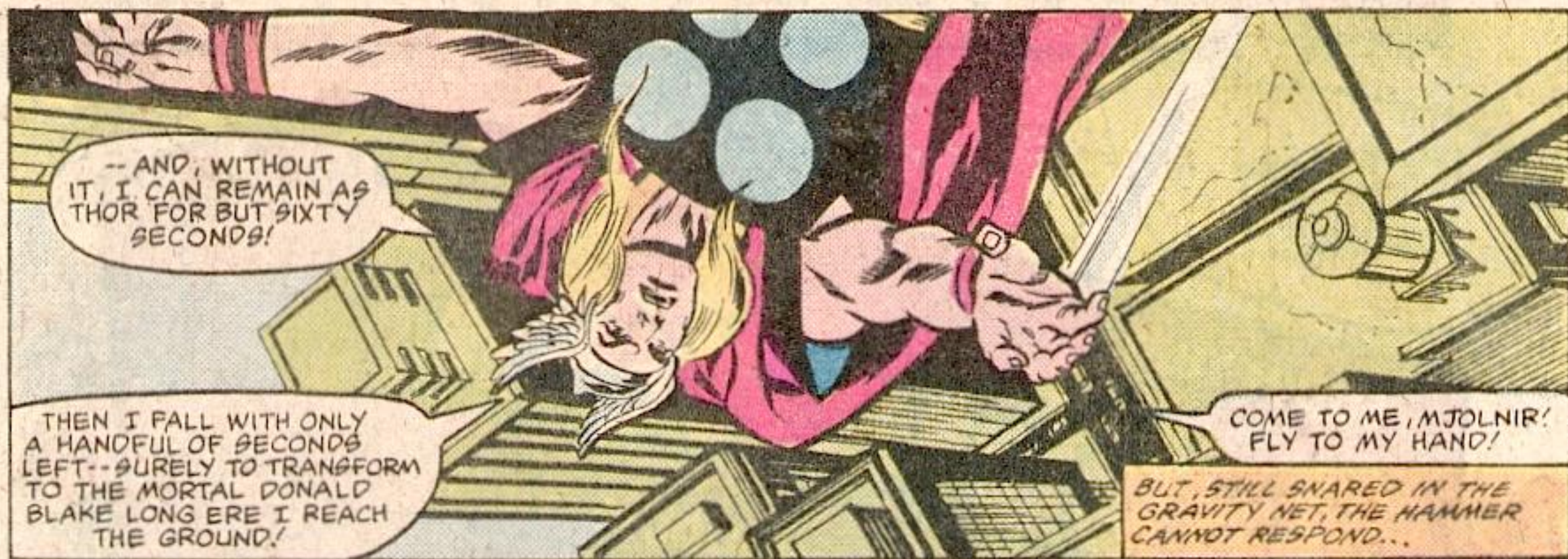
BUT NOW THAT THE MOMENT HAS COME TO PASS, IT SHALL NOT FIND THOR WANTING!





-- FOR THE OUTER WALL!

I'M OUTSIDE WITHOUT MINE URU HAMMER...!



-- AND, WITHOUT IT, I CAN REMAIN AS THOR FOR BUT SIXTY SECONDS!

THEN I FALL WITH ONLY A HANDFUL OF SECONDS LEFT--SURELY TO TRANSFORM TO THE MORTAL DONALD BLAKE LONG ERE I REACH THE GROUND!

COME TO ME, MJOLNIR! FLY TO MY HAND!

BUT, STILL SNARED IN THE GRAVITY NET, THE HAMMER CANNOT RESPOND...



... UNTIL GRAVITON RELEASES THE SNARE, WITH A MIND TO INSPECT HIS NEW PRIZE...

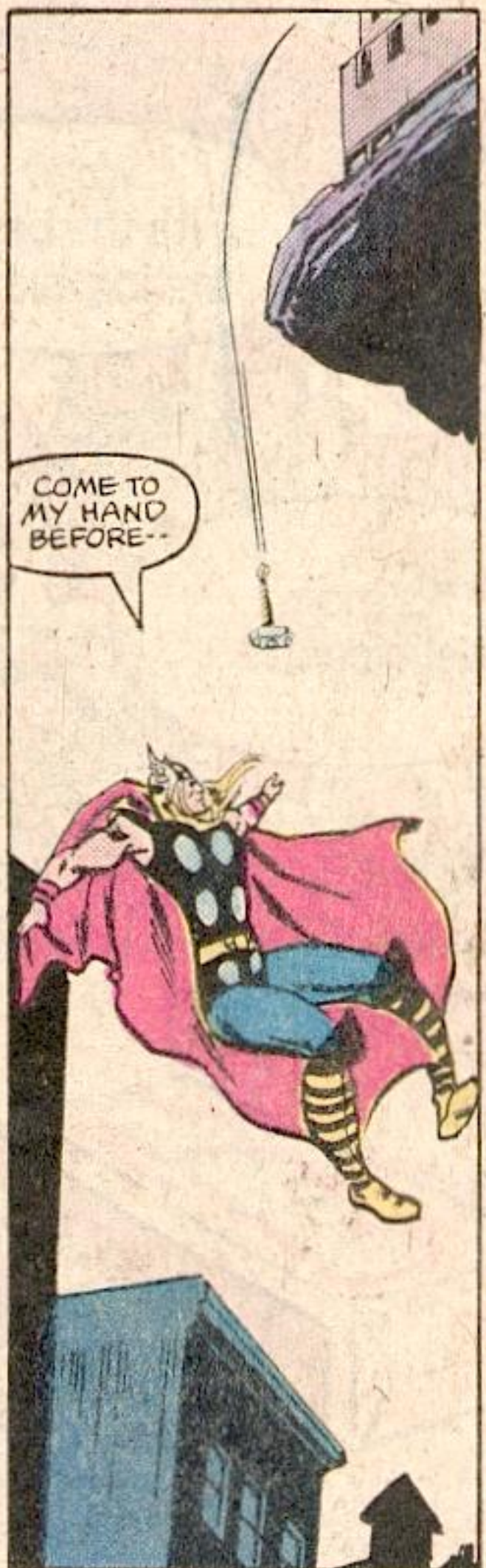
NOW, LET'S SEE WHAT THIS TOY CAN--

WHAT? IT'S FLYING AWAY FROM ME--OUT THE HOLE IN THE WALL!



COME TO ME, MJOLNIR!

FASTER!



COME TO MY HAND BEFORE--



THE TIME EXPIRES.

NO! THE HAMMER'S TURNED INTO MY WALKING STICK!

BUT MAYBE THERE'S STILL A CHANCE-- IF I CAN REACH IT...

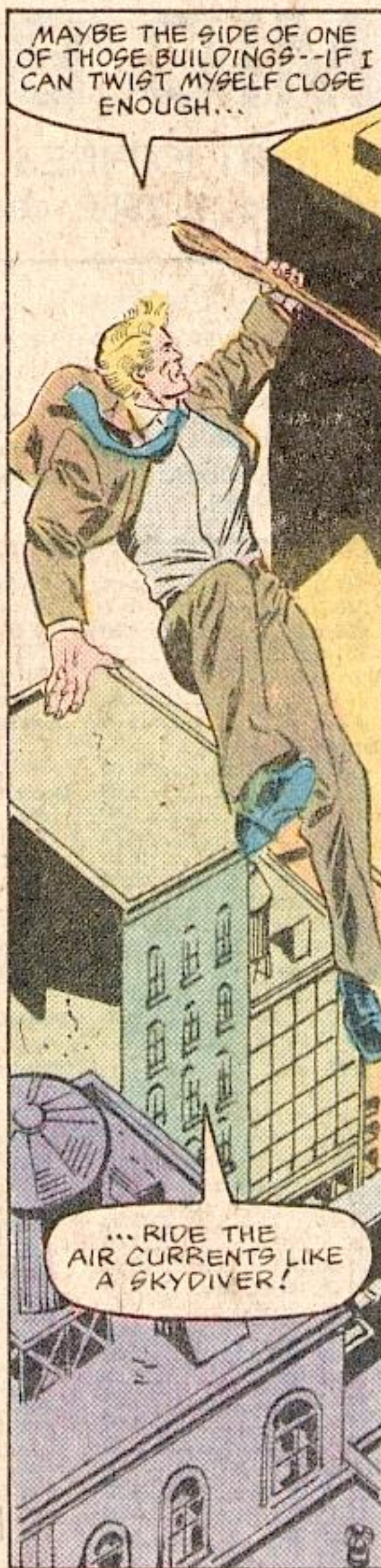


... IF I CAN JUST PLUCK IT OUT OF THE AIR...

YES!

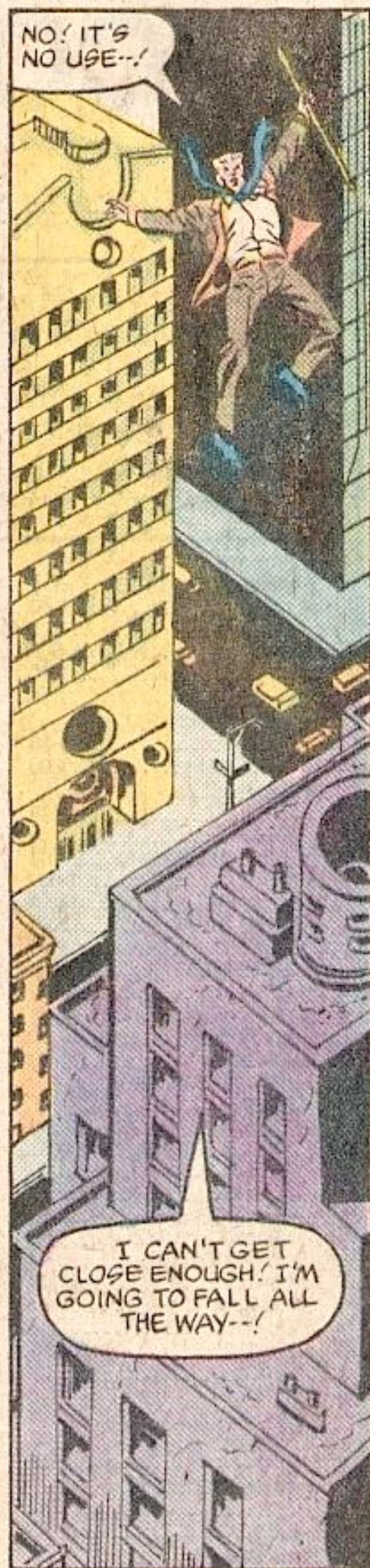


NOW--I'VE GOT TO STRIKE IT AGAIN...AND BECOME THOR BEFORE I REACH THE GROUND!



MAYBE THE SIDE OF ONE OF THOSE BUILDINGS--IF I CAN TWIST MYSELF CLOSE ENOUGH...

... RIDE THE AIR CURRENTS LIKE A SKYDIVER!

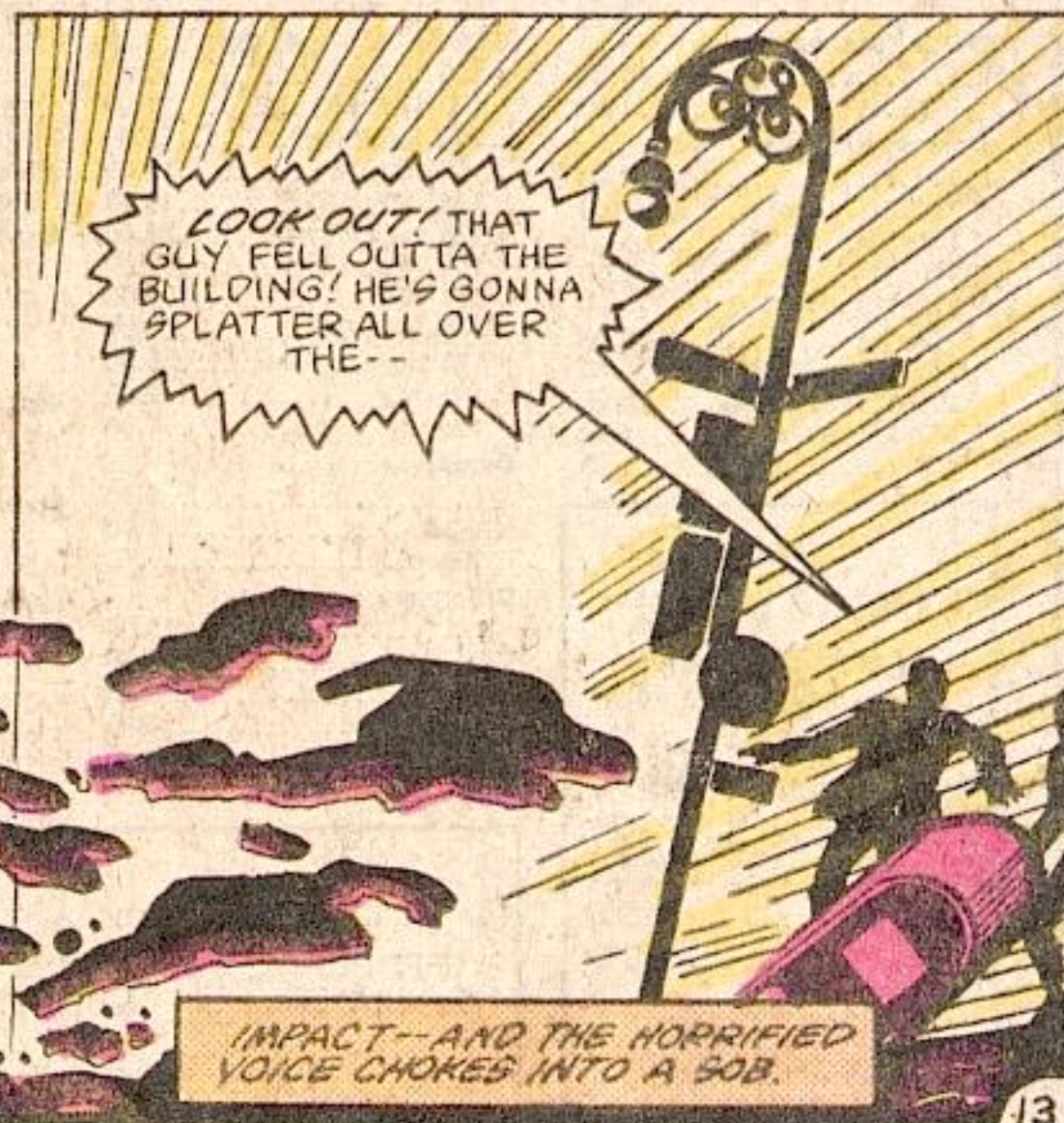


NO! IT'S NO USE--!

I CAN'T GET CLOSE ENOUGH! I'M GOING TO FALL ALL THE WAY--!

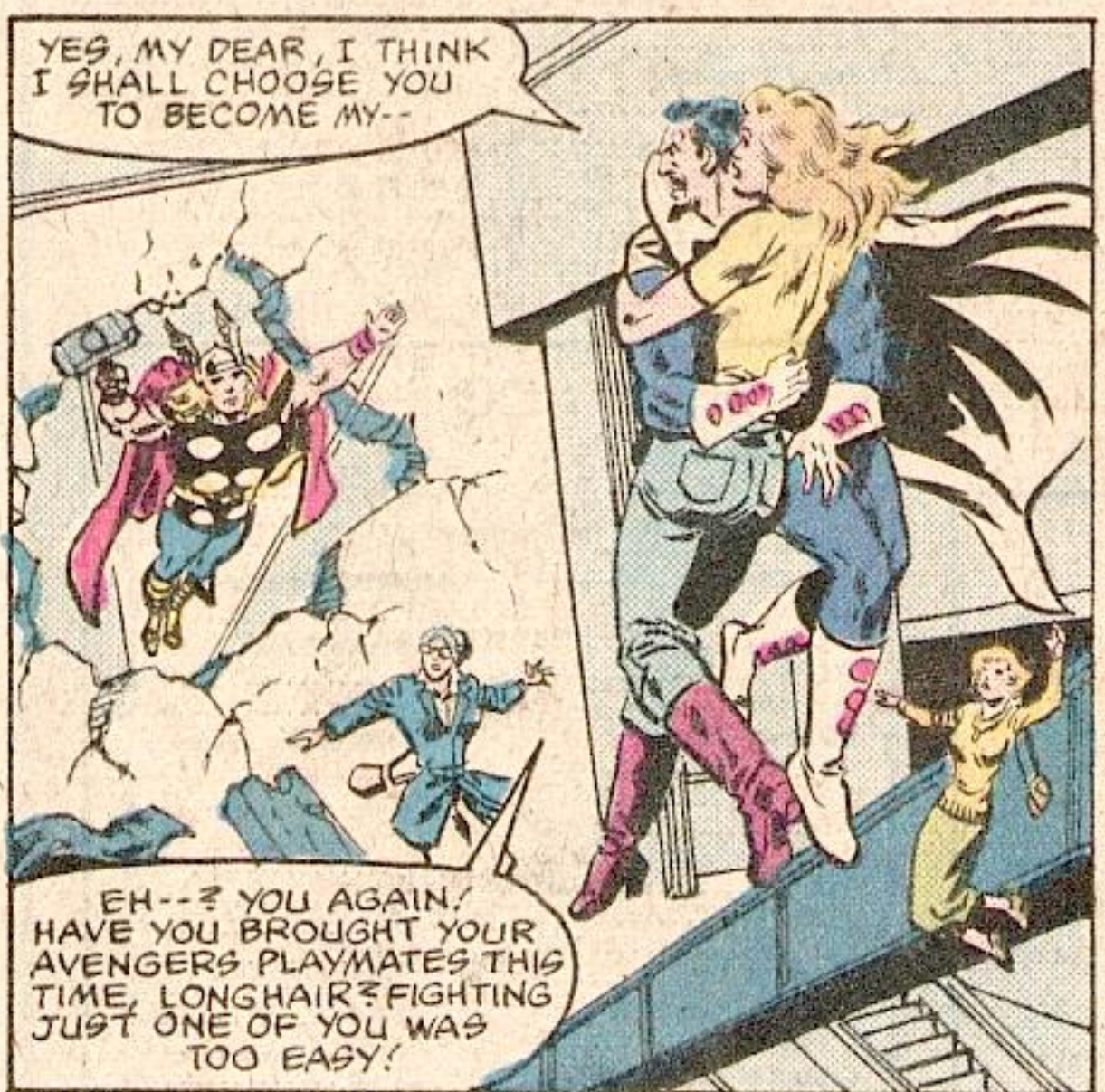
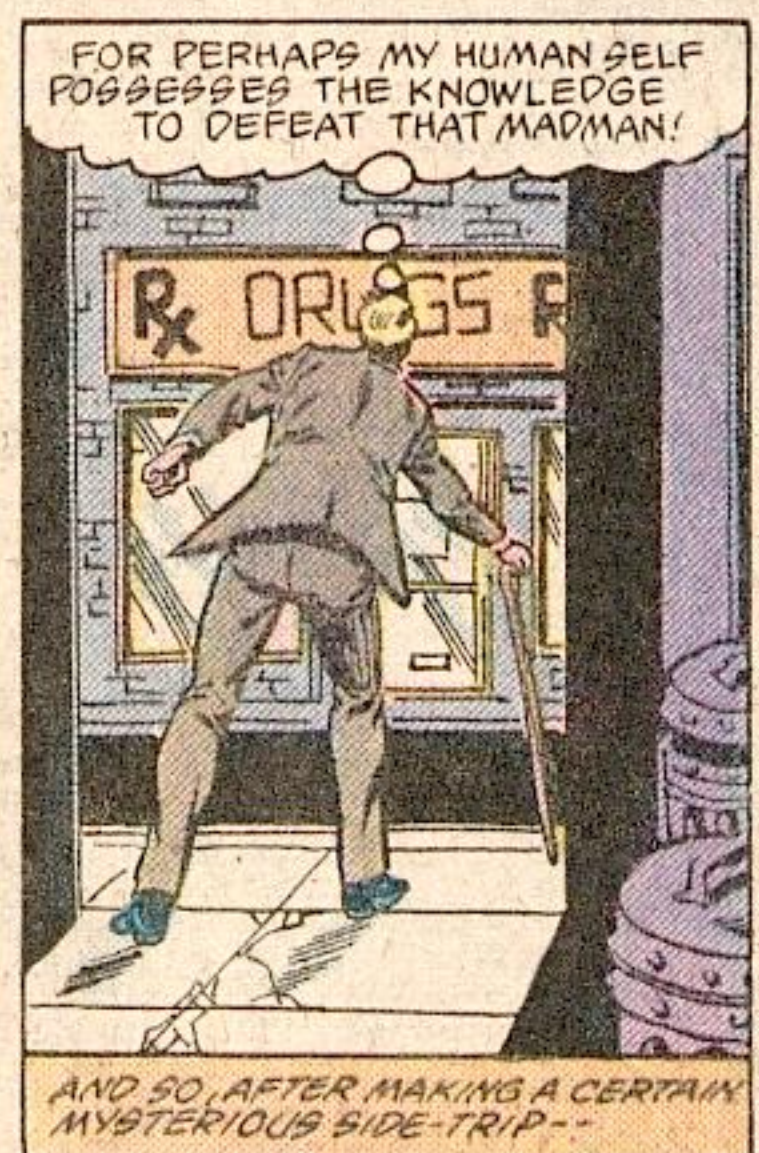
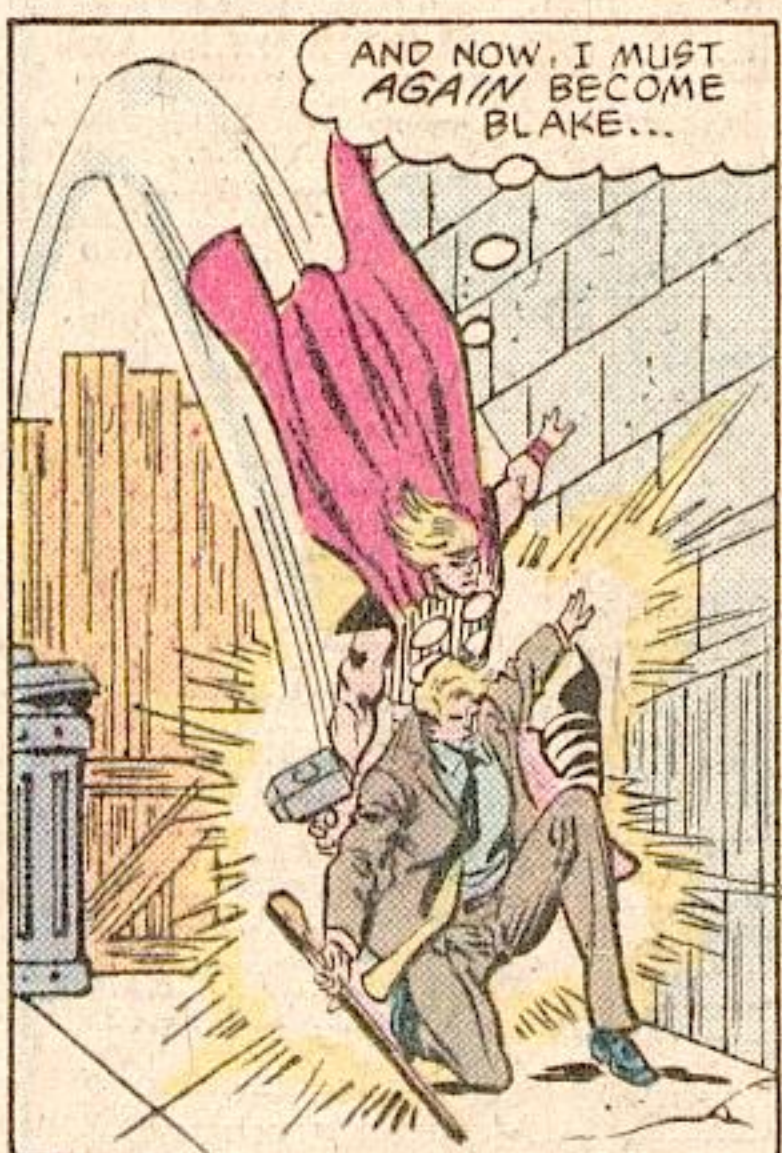


RIGHT INTO THE CRUMBLING STEEL AND CONCRETE-LINED CAVITY WHICH WAS ONCE BLOOMINGDALE'S FOUNDATION!



LOOK OUT! THAT GUY FELL OUTTA THE BUILDING! HE'S GONNA SPLATTER ALL OVER THE--

IMPACT--AND THE HORRIFIED VOICE CHOKES INTO A SOB.



THAT MAY WELL BE, MY LOVELY, BUT IN TIME YOU *SHALL* COME TO BE MINE-- JUST AS THIS ENTIRE STORE IS NOW MINE!



THEN THOU ART TRULY BEYOND REASON--AND I AM DUTY-BOUND TO BATTLE THEE!



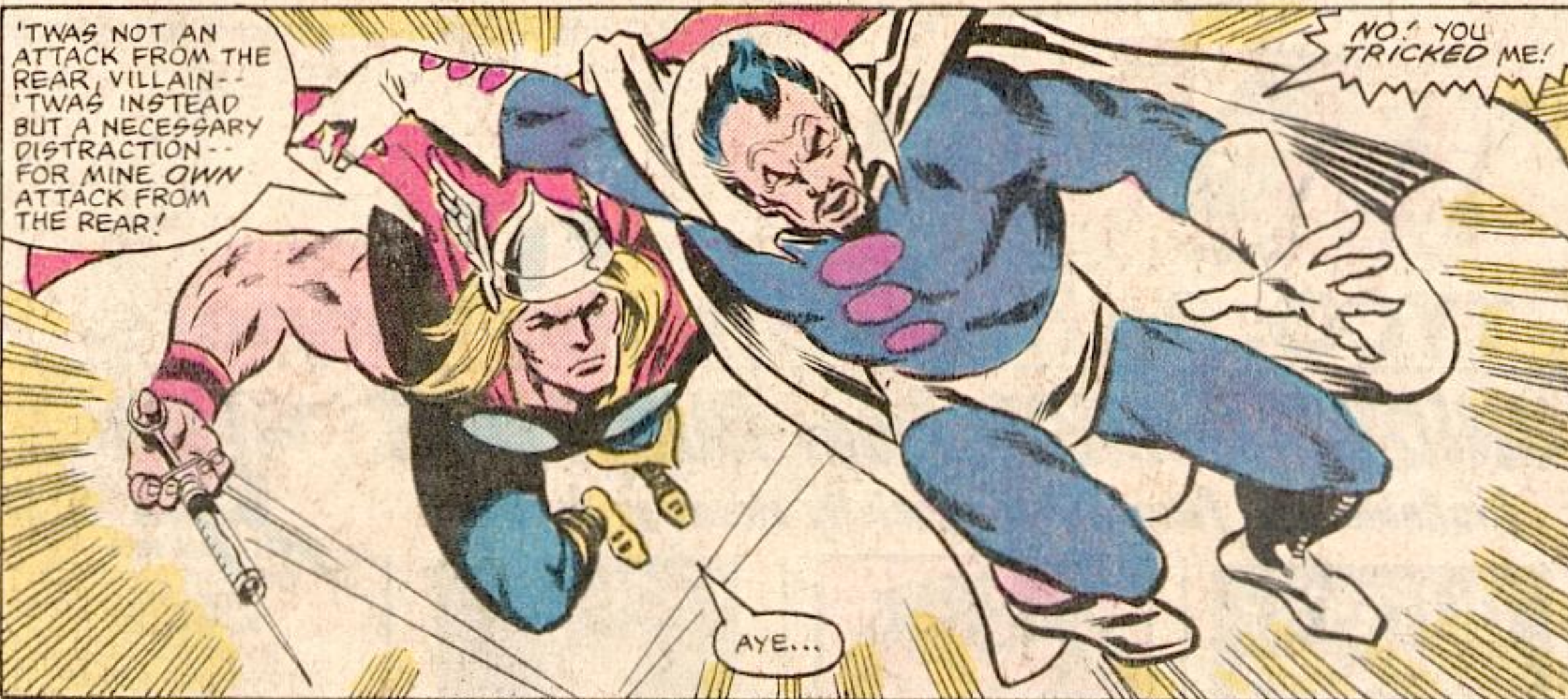
HAH! THE OLDEST TRICK IN THE BOOK-- FLINGING YOUR HAMMER AWAY FROM ME, HOPING I WON'T NOTICE...

... AS IT CIRCLES AROUND TO STRIKE ME FROM BEHIND!



BUT AS GRAVITON TURNS HIS ATTENTION TO THE HAMMER, THOR LAUNCHES HIMSELF FROM AN ANCHORING PILLAR...

'T WAS NOT AN ATTACK FROM THE REAR, VILLAIN-- 'T WAS INSTEAD BUT A NECESSARY DISTRACTION-- FOR MINE OWN ATTACK FROM THE REAR!



NO! YOU TRICKED ME!

AYE...

OWTCH! WHAT DID YOU--?

... AND NOW I HAVE INJECTED THEE WITH A QUANTITY OF SODIUM PEN-TATHOL! IN SOME TWO MINUTES THOU WILT BE UNCONSCIOUS, AND IF THIS BUILDING--WHICH I HAVE EVACUATED SAVE FOR US-- IS STILL IN THE AIR AT THAT TIME, IT WILL FALL...



... KILLING THEE AND THY WOMEN.

YOU... YOU'RE BLUFFING, THOR... BUT I... GETTING DIZZY... NO... CAN'T GIVE IN TO YOU... BUT I... I'M GOING TO PASS OUT...



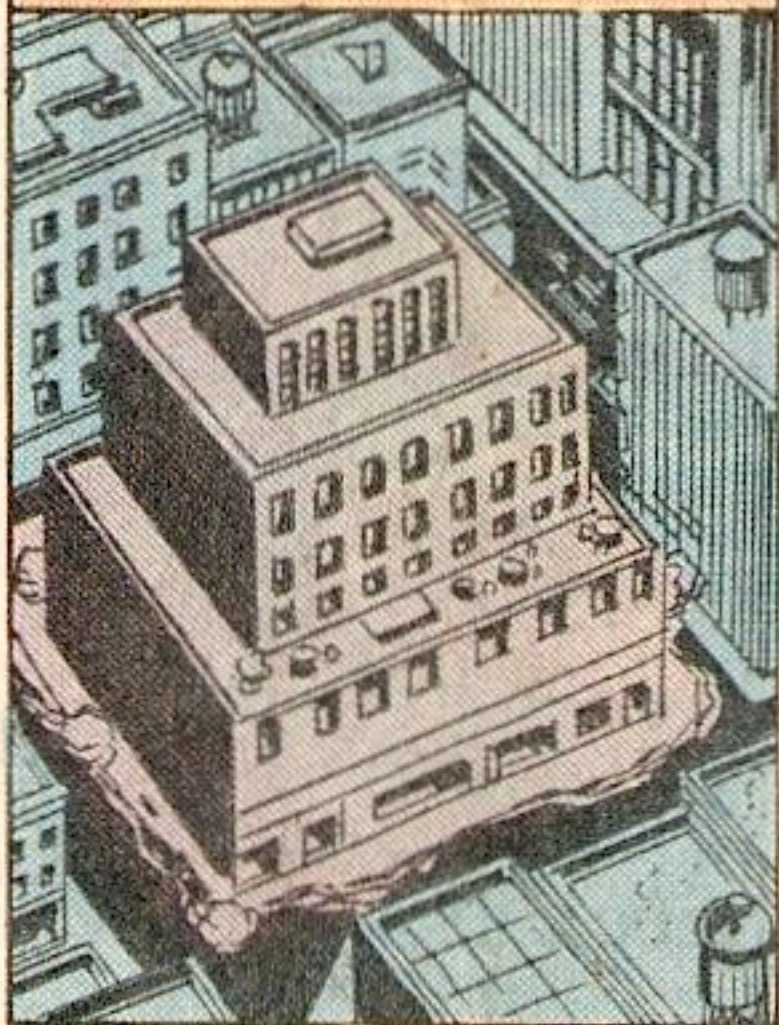
PLEASE, GRAVITON--GET THE BUILDING DOWN! DON'T LET US DIE!

THE SHOWDOWN OF WILLS ENSUES FOR LONG, TENSE MOMENTS... AND THEN--



THE BUILDING! IT'S COMING DOWN-- SLOWLY!

THERE IS A SLIGHT QUAKE AS THE STORE RESETTLES UNEASILY ON ITS FOUNDATIONS...



... AND INSIDE--MANY BRUISES AND MUCH SHATTERED MERCHANDISE, AS THE NORMAL LAWS OF GRAVITY AGAIN HOLD SWAY.



CURSE YOU, THOR! I... I'D HAVE BEATEN YOU IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR YOUR TRICKERY!

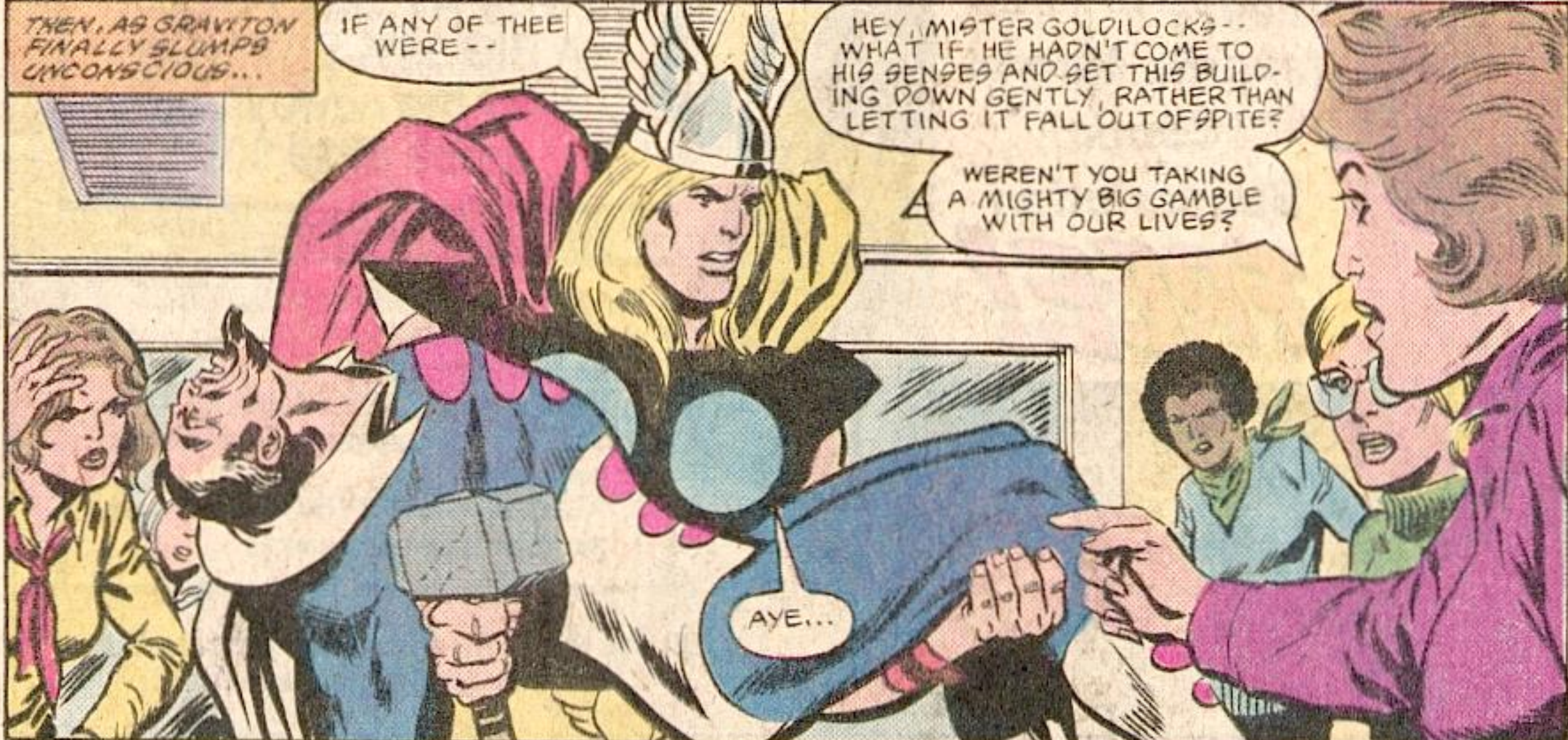
AYE--AND IF IT HAD NOT BEEN FOR THE COOPERATION BETWEEN THOR AND DONALD BLAKE,

THEN, AS GRAVITON FINALLY SLUMPS UNCONSCIOUS...

IF ANY OF THEE WERE--

HEY, MISTER GOLDLOCKS-- WHAT IF HE HADN'T COME TO HIS SENSES AND SET THIS BUILDING DOWN GENTLY, RATHER THAN LETTING IT FALL OUT OF SPITE?

WEREN'T YOU TAKING A MIGHTY BIG GAMBLE WITH OUR LIVES?



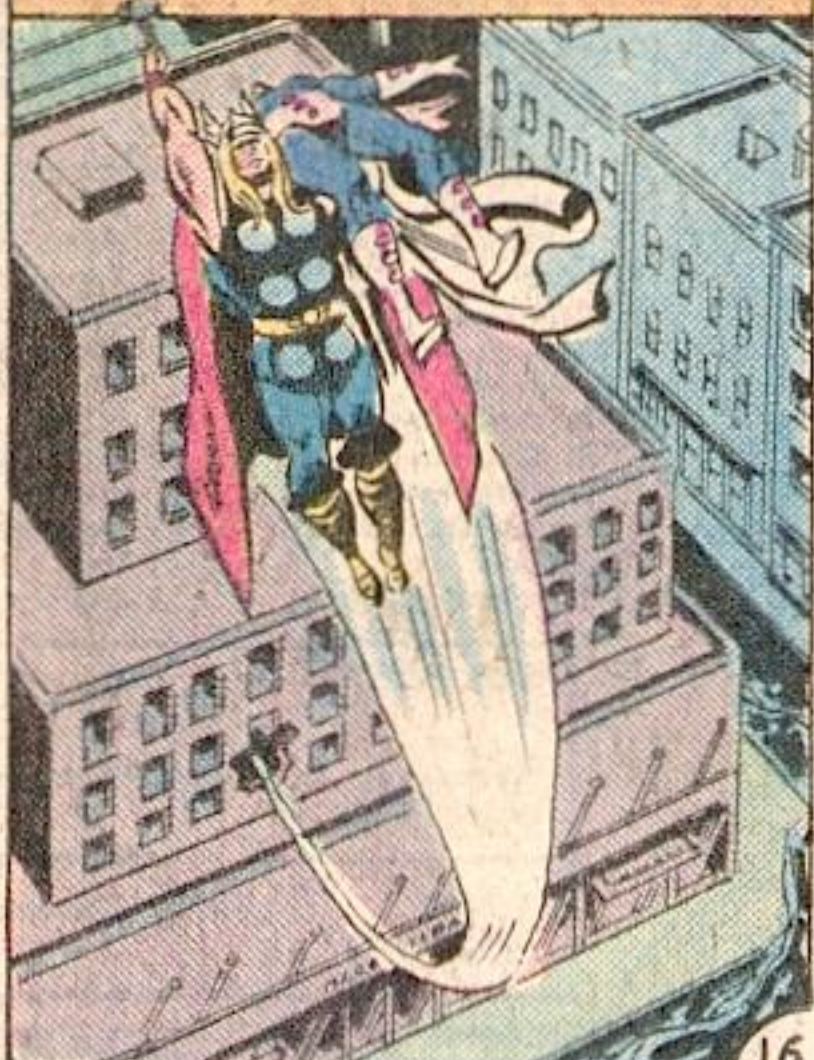
AYE...

HAT IS WHY I BROUGHT A SECOND INJECTION--OF STIMULANT--TO COUNTERACT THE OTHER DRUG'S EFFECTS HAD GRAVITON DEEMED THE SACRIFICE WORTHWHILE.

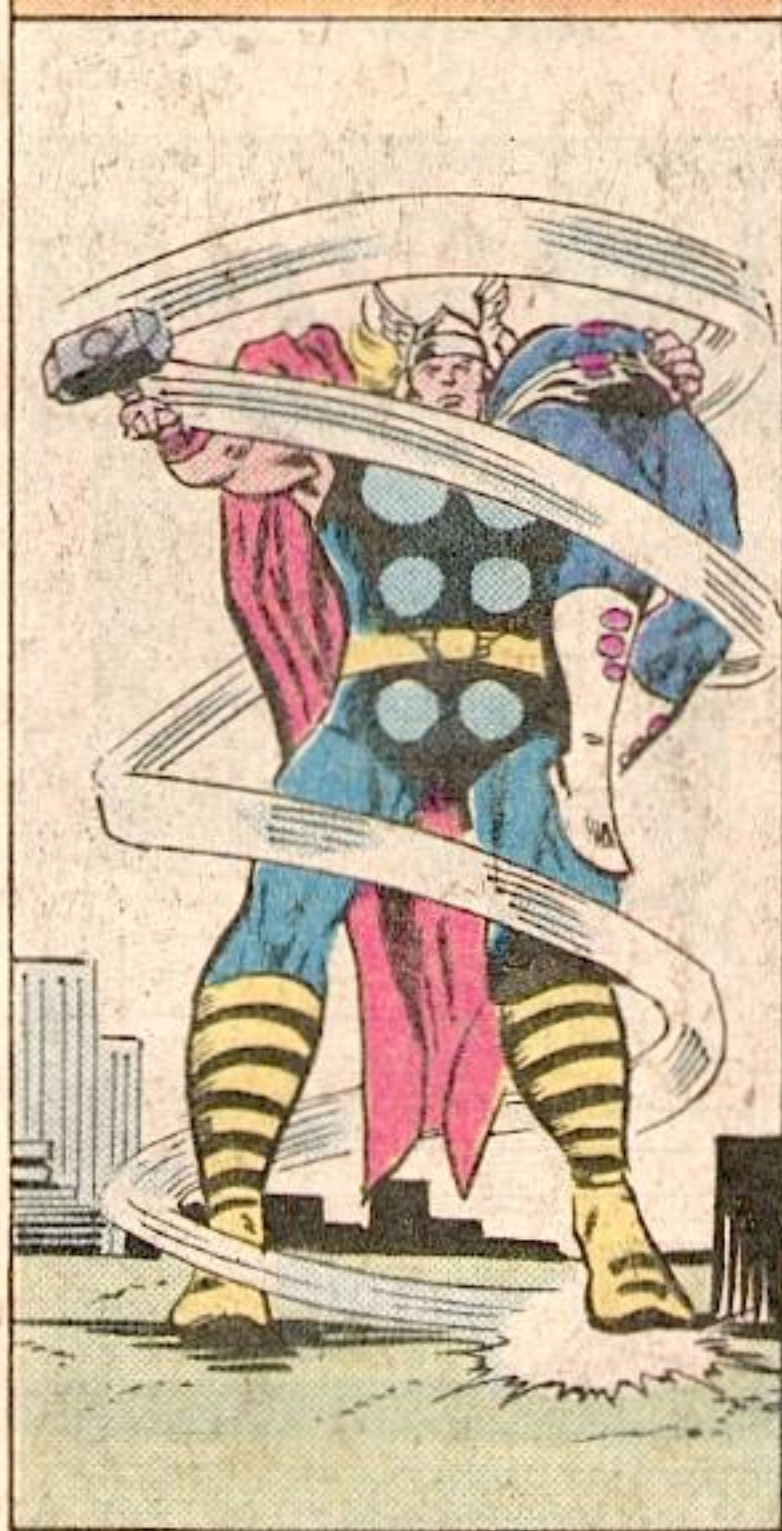
HOLDING THIS AS A LAST RESORT, I WAS EVEN ABLE TO MISLEAD HIM ABOUT HAVING EVACUATED THE REST OF THE STORE.



AND WITH THAT, THOR TAKES HIS LEAVE OF THE DISTAFF SHOPPERS...



ON THE ROOF, WHIRLING MJOLNIR IN COMPLEX ARABESQUES OF ENCHANTMENT--



-- THE THUNDER GOD QUICKLY CREATES A DIMENSIONAL VORTEX--



-- THROUGH WHICH HE AND HIS VILLAINOUS CHARGE ARE TRANSPORTED INTO THE VOID OF INTERSTELLAR SPACE--



WITH THEE HERE, GRAVITON, THOU SHALT HAVE NO MATTER TO EXERT THY POWER UPON!

AS LONG AS THY GRAVITATIONAL POWERS ARE USELESS, MIDGARD WILL BE SAFE FROM THY DEPREDATIONS.



ANOTHER HAMMER-WROUGHT VORTEX--

-- AND THOR REAPPEARS ON THE ROOF OF BLOOMINGDALE'S...

YON SHOPPERS WILL HAVE MUCH TO SPEAK OF IN THE WEEKS TO COME, BUT SINCE THEY ARE SAFE AND SOUND...



'TIS TIME TO RETURN AT LAST TO CHICAGO...

AND THE NEXT TIME THE WASP SHOULD ASK, I WILL KNOW FOR CERTAIN...



HEFTING A THOUSAND POUNDS IS PREFERABLE, BY FAR, TO A SHOPPING SPREE AT BLOOMINGDALE'S.

AND THE THUNDER GOD SMILES, ARCING WEST.

NEXT ISSUE: **DARKOTH THE DEATH-DEMON!**

TALES OF ASGARD, HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS™

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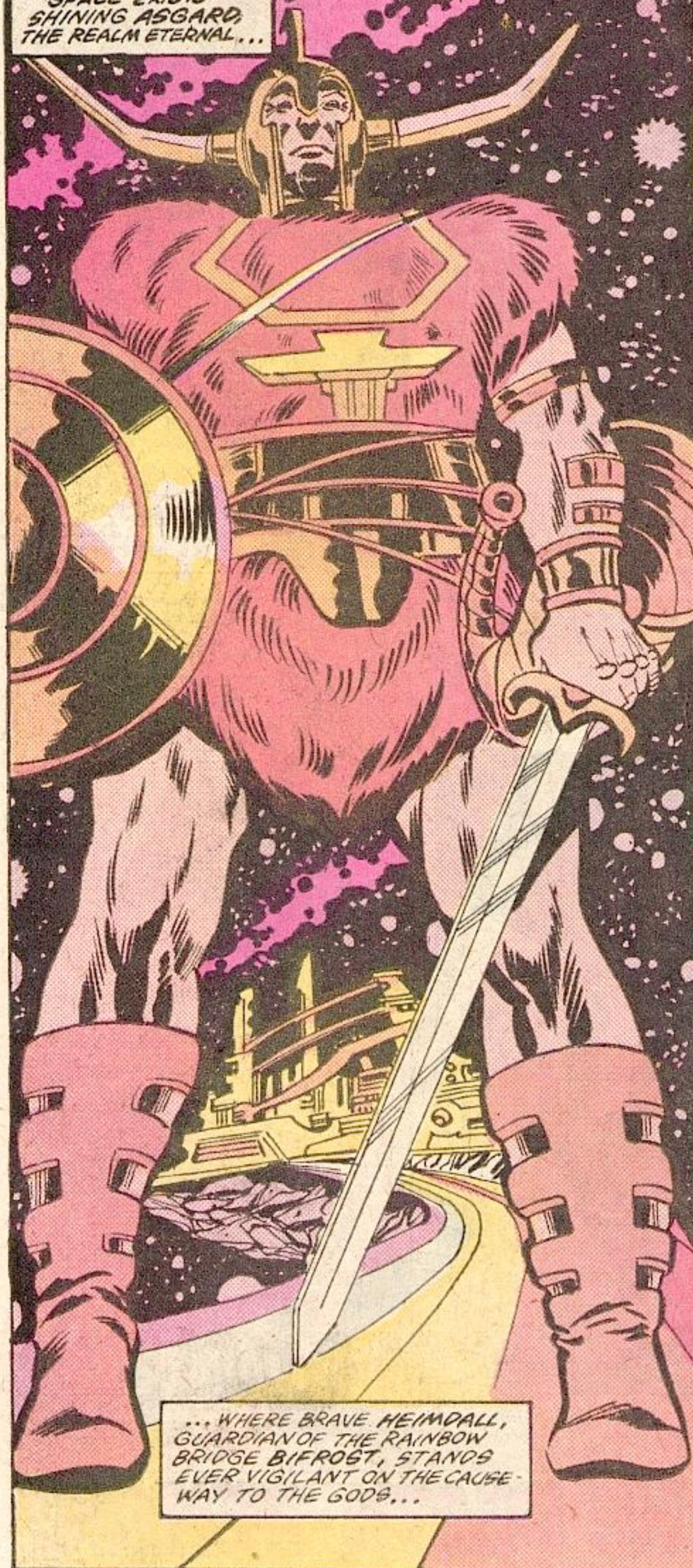
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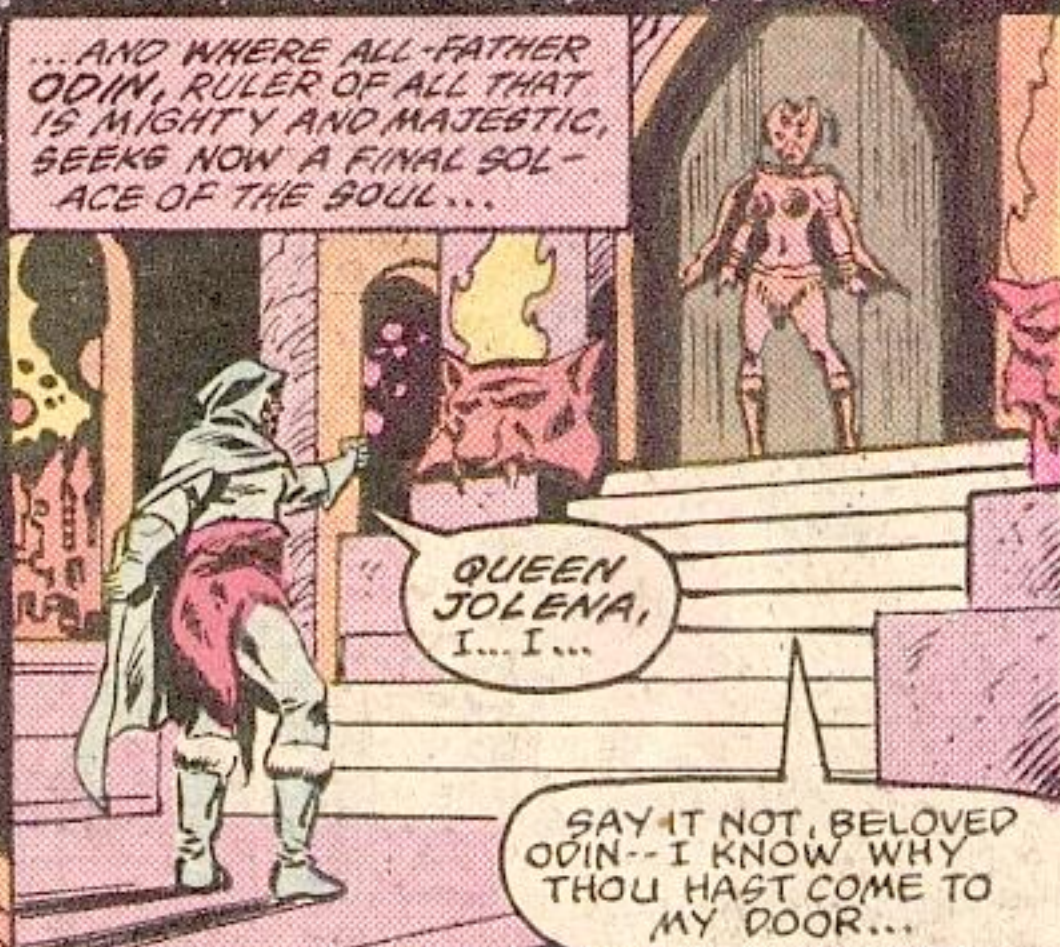
A GATHERING OF EVIL

BEYOND KNOWN
SPACE EXISTS
SHINING ASGARD,
THE REALM ETERNAL...



... WHERE BRAVE HEIMDALL,
GUARDIAN OF THE RAINBOW
BRIDGE BIFROST, STANDS
EVER VIGILANT ON THE CAUSE-
WAY TO THE GODS...

... AND WHERE ALL-FATHER
ODIN, RULER OF ALL THAT
IS MIGHTY AND MAJESTIC,
SEEKS NOW A FINAL SOL-
ACE OF THE SOUL...



QUEEN
JOLENA,
I... I...

SAY IT NOT, BELOVED
ODIN-- I KNOW WHY
THOU HAST COME TO
MY DOOR...

... AND WOULD THAT OUR LOVE-- A LOVE
WHICH COULD WELL SHAKE THE STARS FROM
THEIR DESTINY-- WERE NOT SO TRAGICALLY
DOOMED.



AYE, MY
BEAUTIFUL
JOLENA...

... BUT DOOMED
OUR LOVE IS--
AND DOOMED IT
MUST FOREVER
REMAIN!

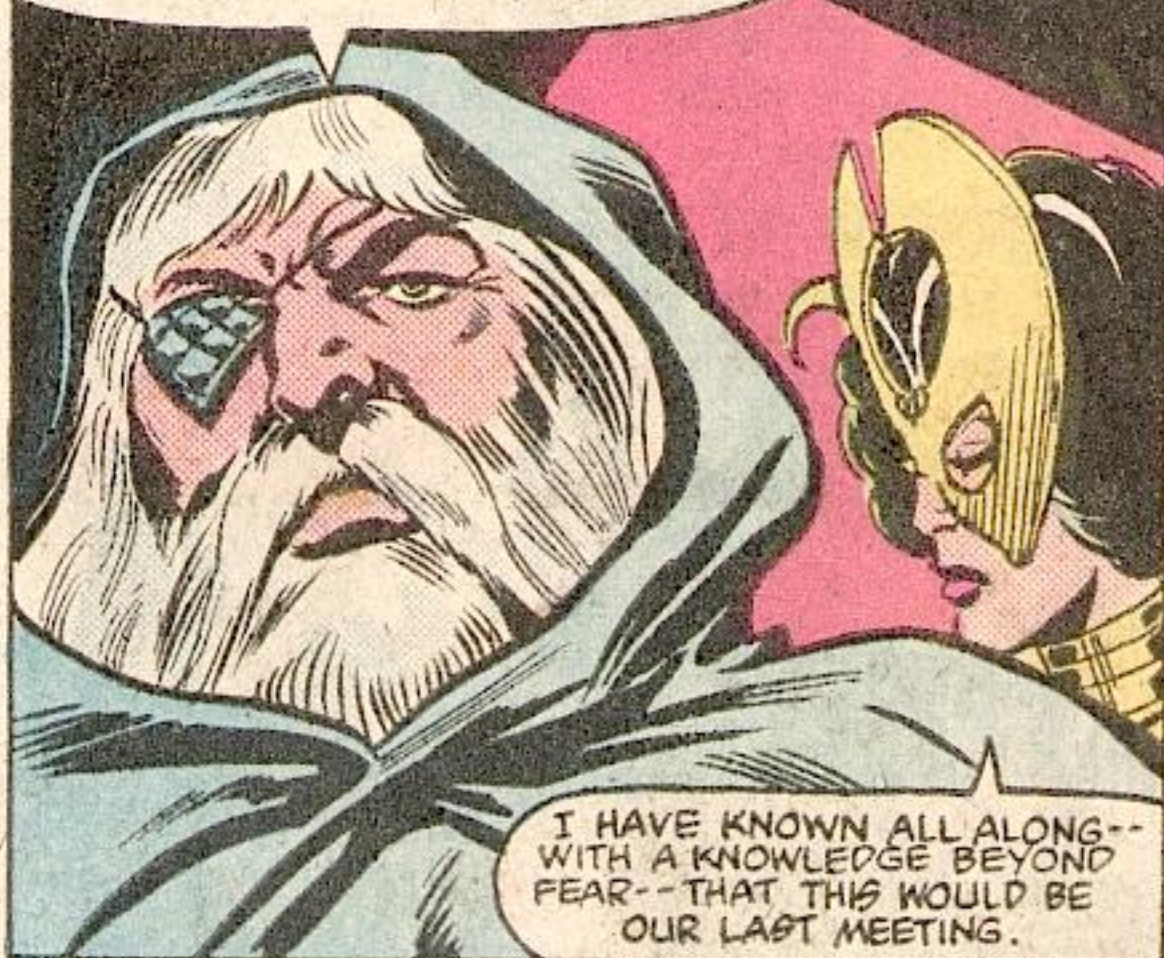
I AM WED TO FRIGGA NOW...
AND NO MATTER HOW STRONG
WAS THE LOVE WHICH BOUND
US IN THE PAST-- *



-- WE MUST BOTH FIND
THE GREATER STRENGTH
TO BREAK IT!

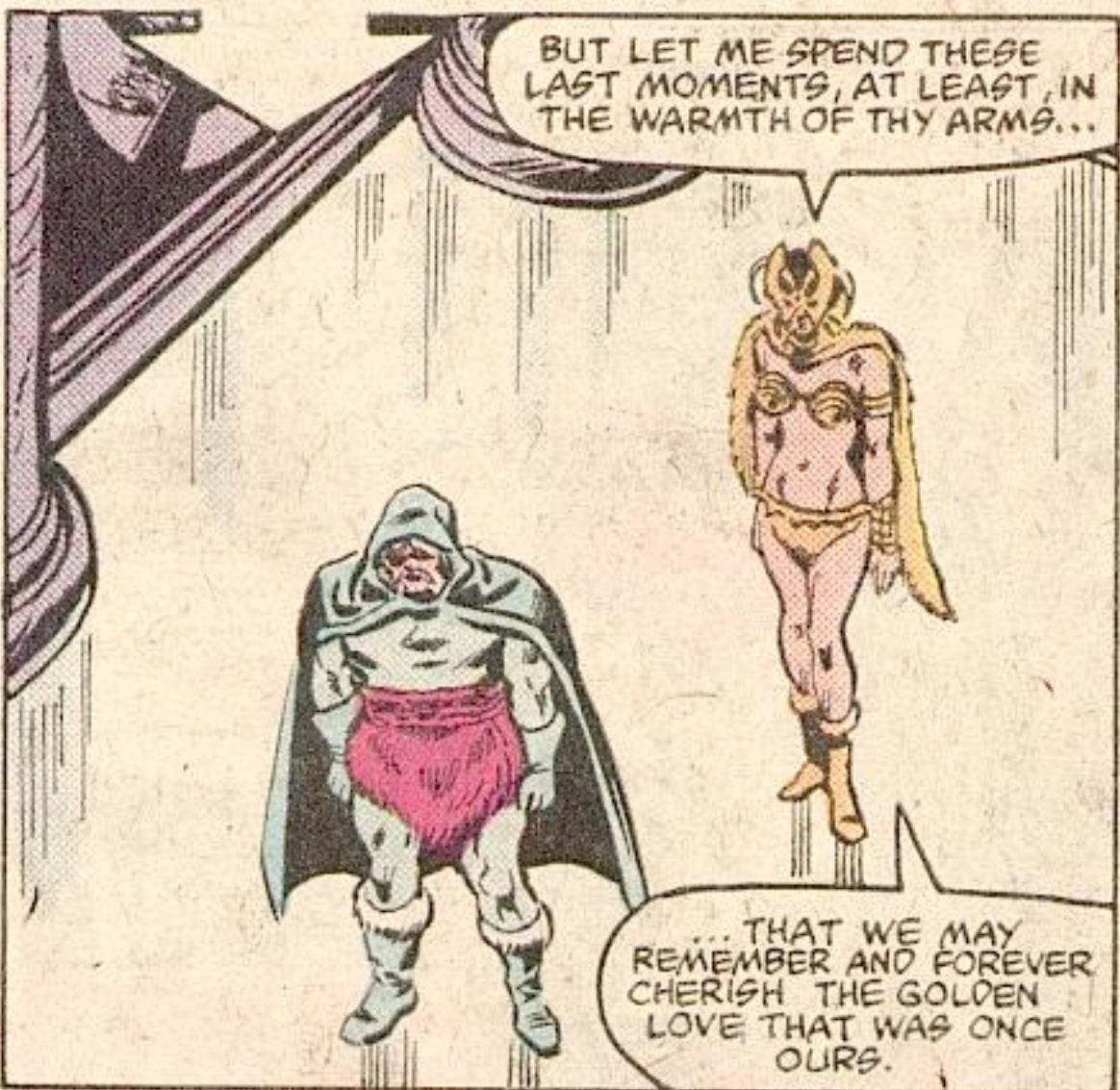
* AS REVEALED IN
THOR #322.

IN TRUTH, I STILL LOVE THEE, JOLENA,
BUT FOR THE GOOD OF ASGARD--AND
FOR THE GOOD OF FRIGGA'S HONOR--
THESE MUST BE THE LAST MOMENTS
SHARED BETWEEN US...



I HAVE KNOWN ALL ALONG--
WITH A KNOWLEDGE BEYOND
FEAR--THAT THIS WOULD BE
OUR LAST MEETING.

BUT LET ME SPEND THESE
LAST MOMENTS, AT LEAST, IN
THE WARMTH OF THY ARMS...



... THAT WE MAY
REMEMBER AND FOREVER
CHERISH THE GOLDEN
LOVE THAT WAS ONCE
OURS.

NOT A SINGLE MURMURED
WORD IS HEARD THROUGH
THE THICK PANE OF
JOLENA'S WINDOW, YET
THIS FINAL EMBRACE IS
GREEDILY SPIED BY
DEVILISH LOKI...

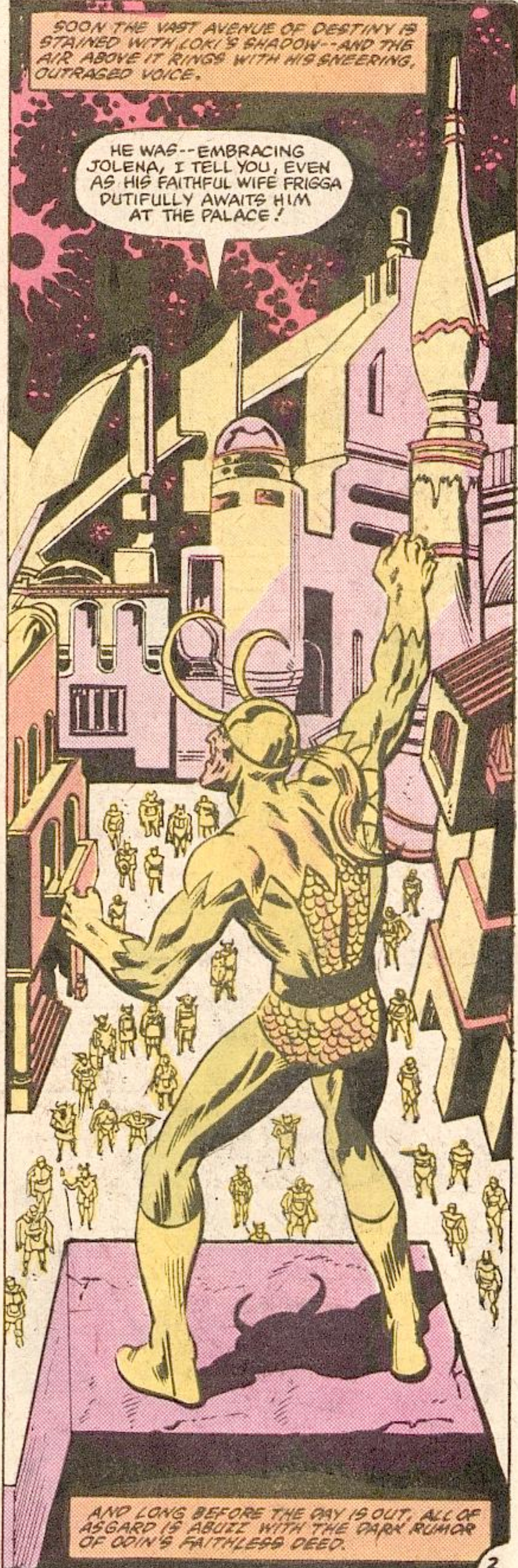
AND SO, I NOW HAVE
EVIDENCE OF MY FATHER
ODIN'S INFIDELITY--



--AND THUS THE MEANS,
AT LAST, TO PAY HIM
BACK FOR THE PUNISH-
MENT I'VE SUFFERED AT
HIS HANDS.

SOON THE VAST AVENUE OF DESTINY IS
STAINED WITH LOKI'S SHADOW--AND THE
AIR ABOVE IT RINGS WITH HIS SNEERING,
OUTRAGED VOICE.

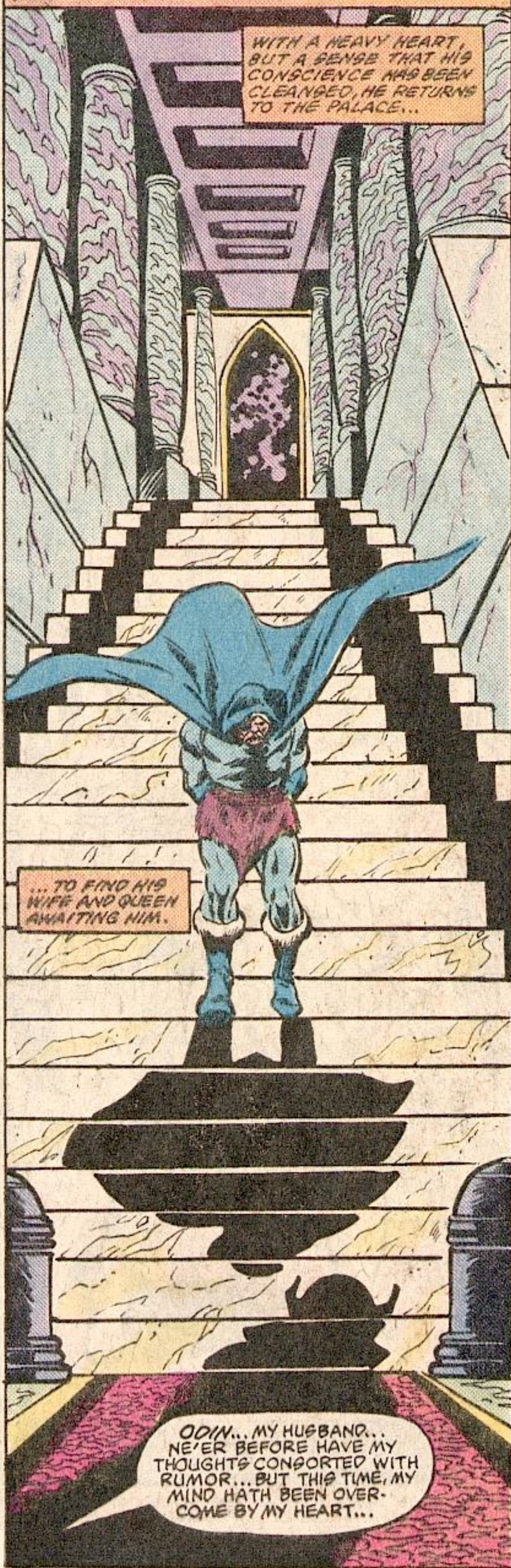
HE WAS--EMBRACING
JOLENA, I TELL YOU, EVEN
AS HIS FAITHFUL WIFE FRIGGA
DUTIFULLY AWAITS HIM
AT THE PALACE!



AND LONG BEFORE THE DAY IS OUT, ALL OF
ASGARD IS ABUZZ WITH THE DARK RUMOR
OF ODIN'S FAITHLESS DEED.

AS DUSKS FALLS OVER THE GLEAMING SPIRES OF THE FABLED REALM, IT MIRRORS THE MELANCHOLY MOOD OF THE ALL-FATHER'S SOUL...

WITH A HEAVY HEART, BUT A SENSE THAT HIS CONSCIENCE HAS BEEN CLEANSSED, HE RETURNS TO THE PALACE...



... TO FIND HIS WIFE AND QUEEN AWAITING HIM.

ODIN... MY HUSBAND... NE'ER BEFORE HAVE MY THOUGHTS CONGORTED WITH RUMOR... BUT THIS TIME, MY MIND HATH BEEN OVER-COME BY MY HEART...

PLEASE... TELL ME BUT ONE THING... IS IT TRUE?

AND FRIGGA'S COUNTENANCE, RATHER THAN ACCUSING, IS MARRED BY A TREMBLING GHOST OF FEAR.



AYE, MY WIFE, 'TIS TRUE... BUT 'TIS NOT WHAT THY HEART FEARS.

VISIT JOLENA I DID, BUT FOR THE FINAL TIME...

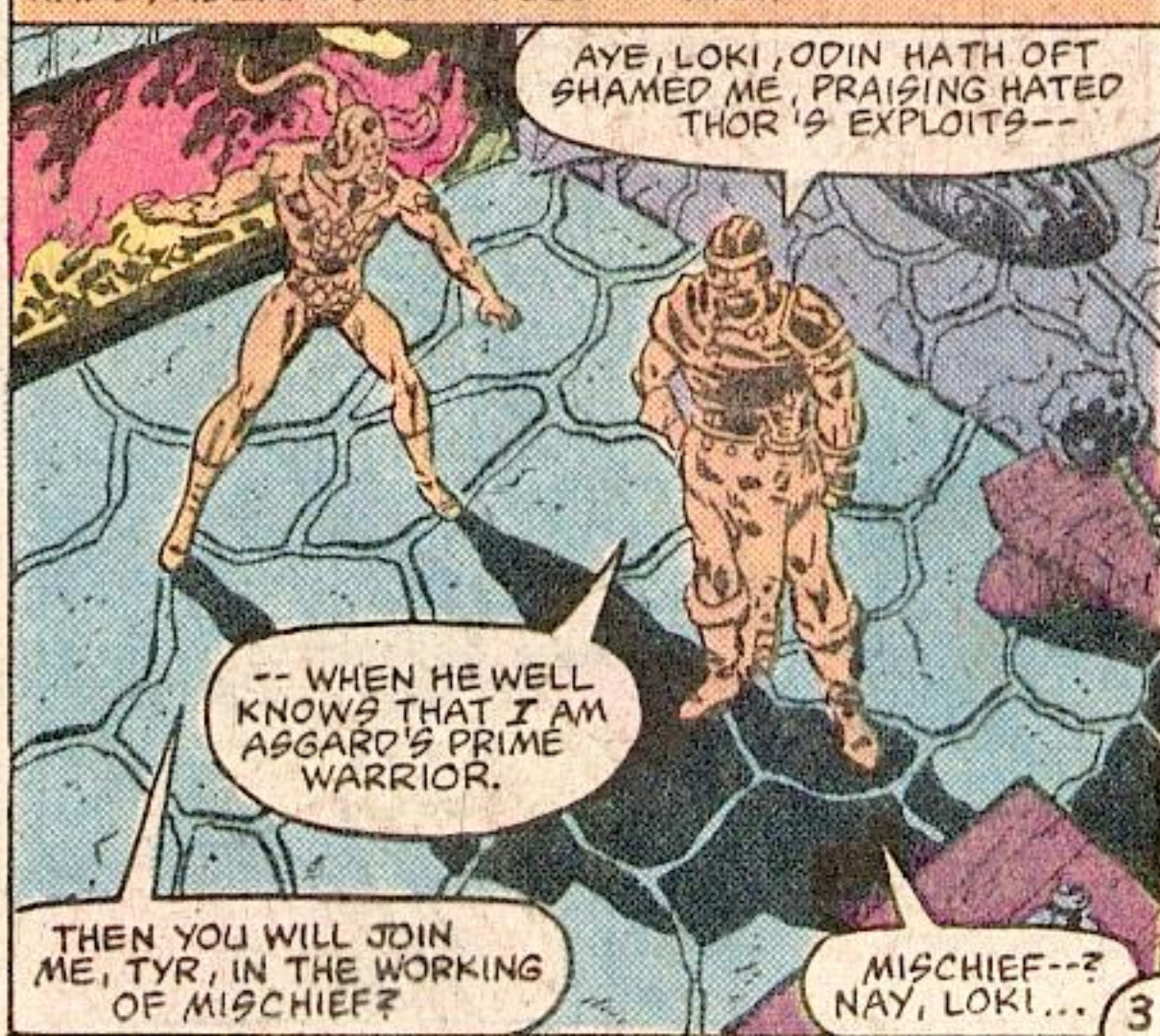
... TO BID FAREWELL TO A LOVE WHICH CAN NO LONGER BE...



THOU ART NOW MINE ONLY TRUE LOVE, FRIGGA--NOW AND FOREVER.

AND RELIEF IS A FLOOD WELLING FROM HER HEART...

... EVEN AS LOKI CONSPIRES WITH TYR, OF THE SINGLE HAND, ASGARD'S GRIM GOD OF WAR.



AYE, LOKI, ODIN HATH OFT SHAMED ME, PRAISING HATED THOR'S EXPLOITS--

-- WHEN HE WELL KNOWS THAT I AM ASGARD'S PRIME WARRIOR.

THEN YOU WILL JOIN ME, TYR, IN THE WORKING OF MISCHIEF?

MISCHIEF--? NAY, LOKI...

... BUT JOIN THEE I SHALL, IN THE VERY TOPPLING OF ODIN FROM HIS THRONE! AYE-- ASGARD HAS LONG NEEDED NEW AND FIRMER LEADERSHIP!

YOU... YOU WOULD DARE EVEN *SUGGEST* SUCH A THING--?!

BESIDES, EVEN IF WE DARED, HOW COULD WE... HOW *MIGHT* WE SUCCESSFULLY OPPOSE HIS VAST POWER?



THE FOREMOST GODS WILL REMAIN LOYAL TO HIM, YES, BUT SENTIMENT AMONG THE COMMON GODS ALREADY RUNS COUNTER TO HIM...

THEY WILL HARDLY RALLY 'ROUND HIM NOW THAT HE HATH SHAMED HIS WIFE!



AND IF WE COULD GATHER ALL OF ODIN'S ENEMIES, PAST AND PRESENT--THE STORM GIANTS, FIRE-DEMONS, HELA, KARNILLA, EVEN THE SERPENT OF MIDGARD!

A FIERY GLEAM OF FASCINATION LIGHTS LOKI'S EYES, MOMENTARILY CONQUERING HIS DOUBTS-- BUT THEN...



NO. EVEN WITH SUCH AN ARMY MASSED ON OUR SIDE... ODIN AND HIS FAVORED GODS ARE SIMPLY TOO POWERFUL.

MY CURSED HALF-BROTHER THOR ALONE--

BAH! THERE IS A WAY!



WHAT?

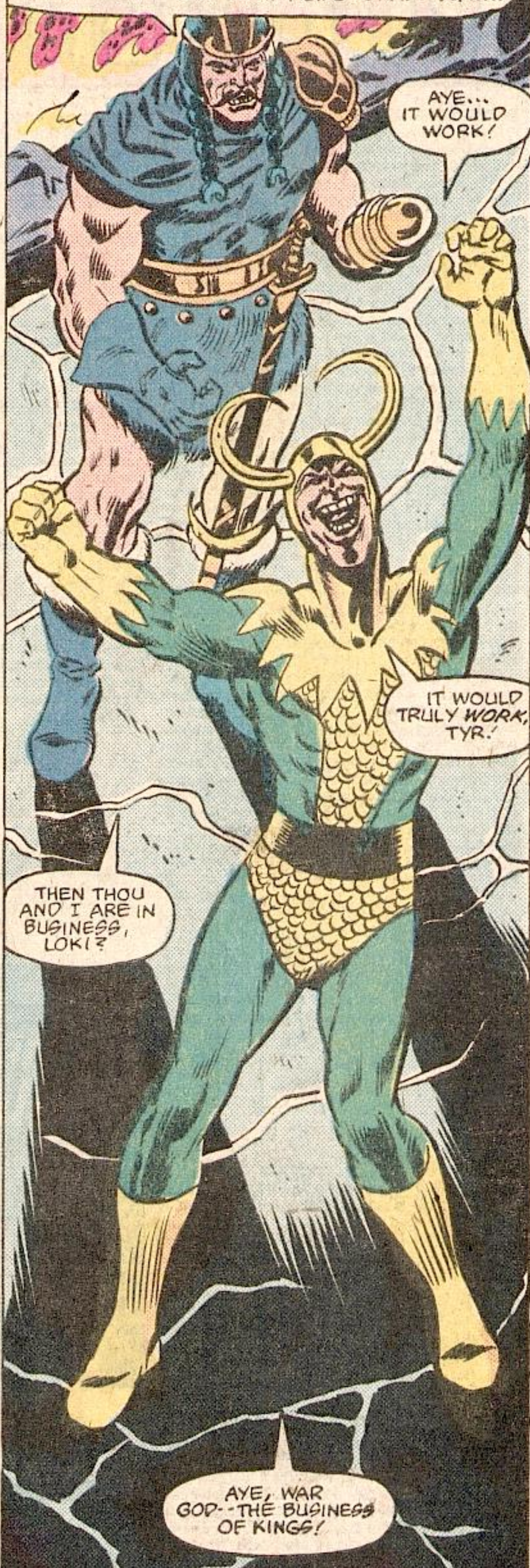
THE GOLDEN APPLES OF THE GODDESS IDUN! WITHOUT THEM, EVERY GOD WOULD LOSE HIS IMMORTALITY-- AND BEGIN AGING TOWARD DEATH!

AYE... IT WOULD WORK!

IT WOULD TRULY WORK, TYR!

THEN THOU AND I ARE IN BUSINESS, LOKI?

AYE, WAR GOD--THE BUSINESS OF KINGS!



AND THE HALL ECHOES, LONG AND LOUDLY, WITH THE SOUND OF MAD LAUGHTER.

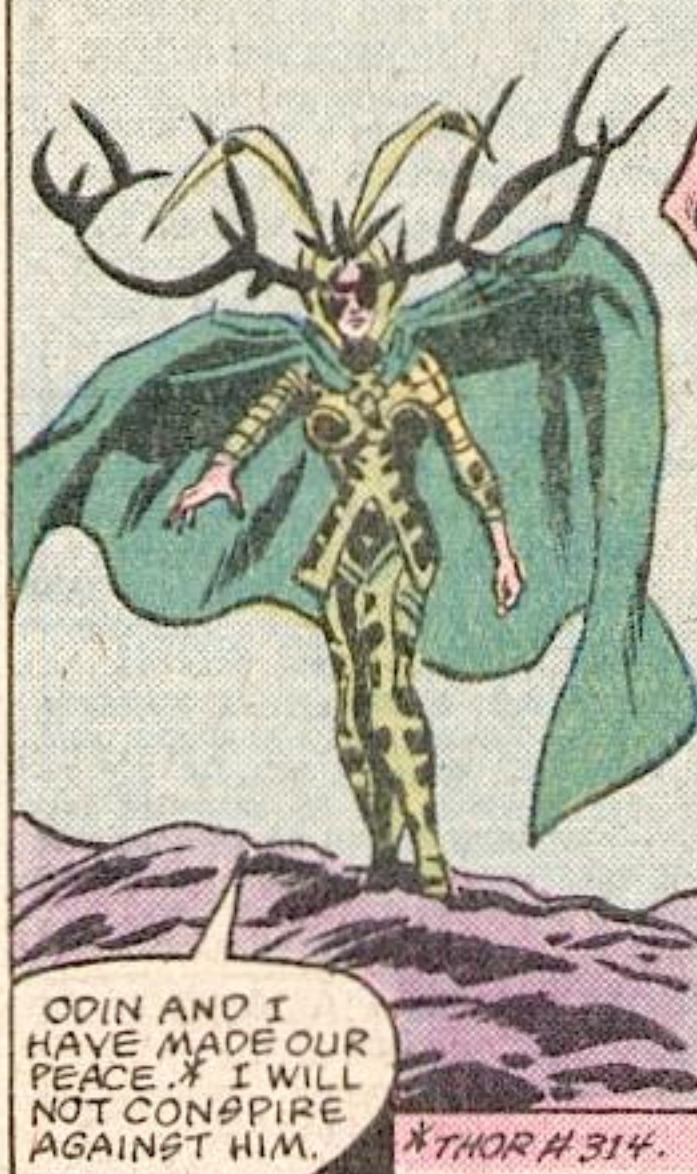
IT BEGINS WITH THE FEAR-SOME STORM GIANTS...



AYE, LITTLE GODS, WE HAVE LOATHED ODIN SINCE THE DAWN OF TIME!

WE SHALL JOIN YOUR RANKS--AND IF WE WIN, WE MAY EVEN SPARE YOUR LIVES.

HELA IS NEXT, IN HER DARK DOMAIN OF NIFLEHEIM...



ODIN AND I HAVE MADE OUR PEACE. * I WILL NOT CONSPIRE AGAINST HIM.

*THOR #314.



BAH! WE DO NOT NEED YOU, DEATH-GODDESS! AGGARD WILL BE OURS--AND THEN YOU WILL WISH YOU HAD THROWN IN WITH US!

HOWEVER, THE ELEMENTAL SONS OF SURTUR READILY AGREE TO BECOME ALLIES...



...AS DOES KARNILLA, QUEEN OF THE NORNS...



AYE, FOR RECENT INSULTS I WOULD REPAY BOTH ODIN AND BALDER...

I SHALL SPEAK TO THE THREE NORNS WHO DWELL IN MY LAND. PERHAPS I CAN EVEN TEMPT FATE!

FINALLY, IN THE HINTERLANDS, WHERE THE WOLFING WARRIORS HAVE RECENTLY SUFFERED DEFEAT AT ODIN'S HANDS...



THEN IF YOU ARE WITH US, FELLOW WARRIORS--

--LET ODIN'S THRONE TREMBLE UNDER OUR MARCH!

THE GOLDEN APPLES OF IMMORTALITY!

Next