

60c
U.K. 25p
CAN. 75c

326
DEC

MARVEL COMICS GROUP

APPROVED
BY THE
COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

©1982 MARVEL COMICS GROUP



THE
MIGHTY

THOR

THE *SCARLET SCARAB*--
RAIDING LOST ARTIFACTS...?



FLANNIGAN + ANDERSON '82



OVER THOR'S DEAD BODY!

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
PENCILER

JON D'AGOSTINO
INKER

JANICE CHIANG
LETTERER

GEORGE ROUSSOS
COLORIST

MARK GRUENWALD
EDITOR

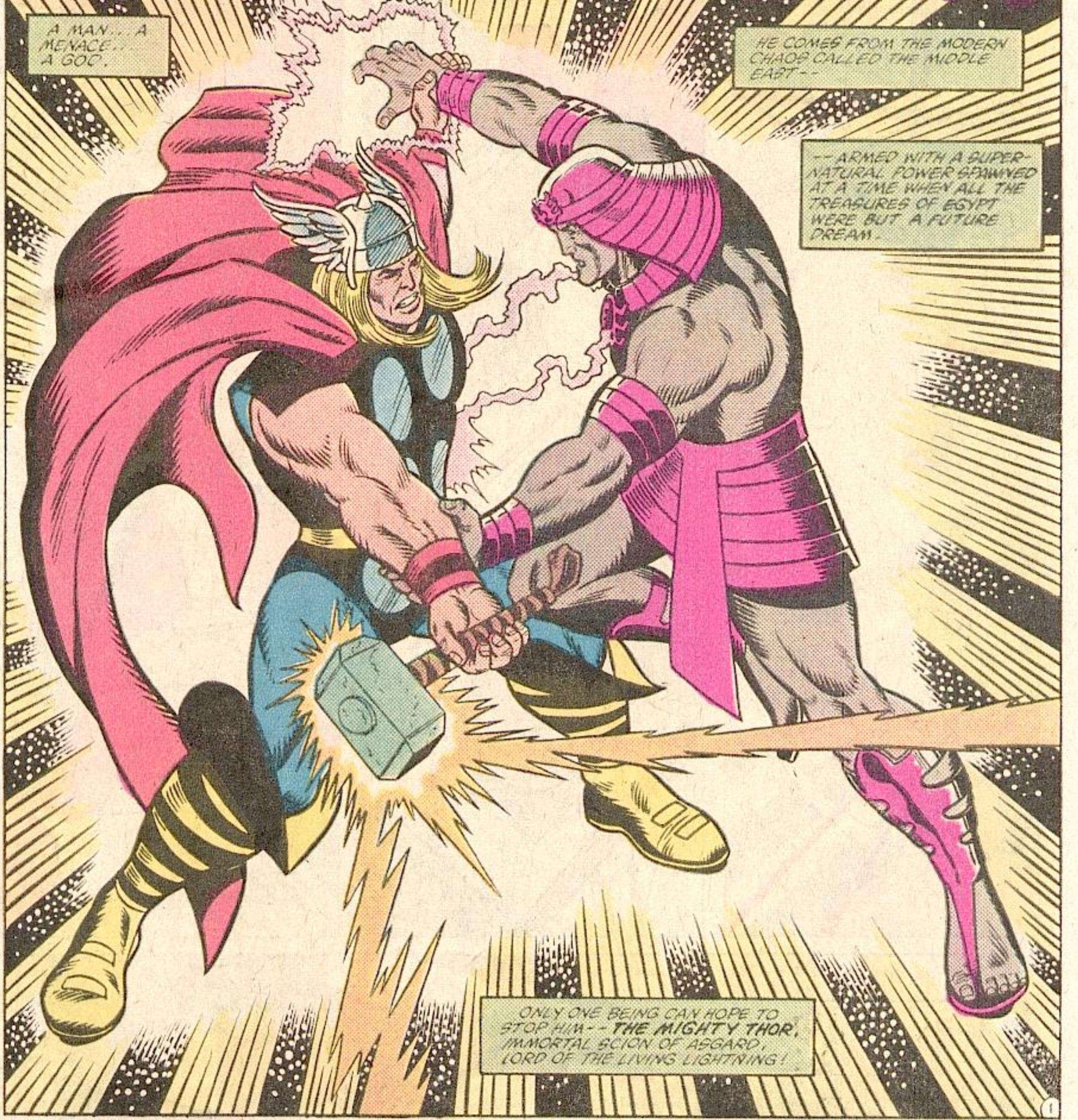
JIM SHOOTER
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

THE SCARAB STRIKES!

A MAN... A
MEYACE...
A GOD.

HE COMES FROM THE MODERN
CHAOS CALLED THE MIDDLE
EAST--

-- ARMED WITH A SUPER-
NATURAL POWER SPAWNED
AT A TIME WHEN ALL THE
TREASURES OF EGYPT
WERE BUT A FUTURE
DREAM.

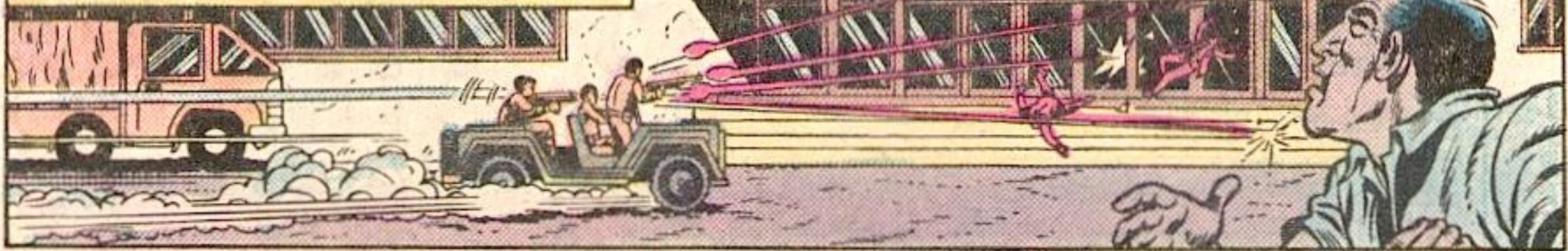


ONLY ONE BEING CAN HOPE TO
STOP HIM-- **THE MIGHTY THOR,**
IMMORTAL SCION OF ASGARD,
LORD OF THE LIVING LIGHTNING!

THOR® Vol. 1, No. 326, December, 1982. (U.S.P.S. 539-970) Published by MARVEL COMICS GROUP, James E. Galton, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. Michael Hobson, Vice-President, Publishing. Milton Schiffman, Vice-President, Production. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. Second Class postage paid at New York, NY and at additional mailing offices. Published monthly. Copyright © 1982 by Marvel Comics Group, a division of Cadence Industries Corporation. All rights reserved. Price 60¢ per copy in the U.S. and 75¢ in Canada. Subscription rate \$7.20 for 12 issues. Canada and Foreign, \$9.20. Printed in the U.S.A. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. THOR (including all prominent characters featured in the issue), and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are trademarks of the MARVEL COMICS GROUP. Postmaster: Send address changes to Subscription Dept., Marvel Comics Group, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016.

CAIRO, TWO O'CLOCK ON A SUN-DRENCHED AFTERNOON: A JEEP SCREECHES TO A HALT IN FRONT OF THE FAMED MUSEUM OF ANTIQUITIES.

AUTOMATIC WEAPONS CHATTER INDISCRIMINATELY...



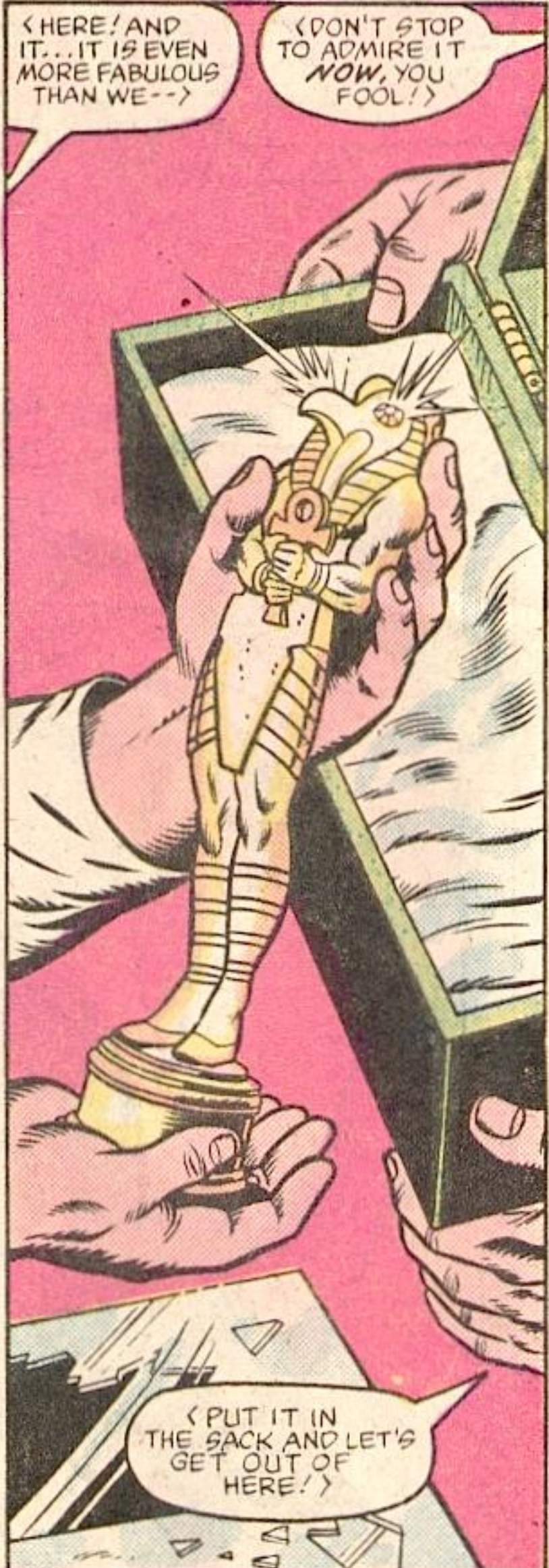
...AND THREE CRUEL-FACED MEN CUT A BLOODY PATH THROUGH THE PANIC.



<INSIDE -- QUICKLY -- BEFORE THE SOLDIERS COME!>



<WE GO STRAIGHT FOR THE EYE OF HORUS--AND WE STOP FOR NOTHING MORE, NOTHING LESS!>



<HERE! AND IT...IT IS EVEN MORE FABULOUS THAN WE-->

<DON'T STOP TO ADMIRE IT NOW, YOU FOOL!>

<PUT IT IN THE SACK AND LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!>

AND, LEAVING NINE BROKEN AND BLEEDING BODIES IN ITS WAKE, THE JEEP ROARS OFF.

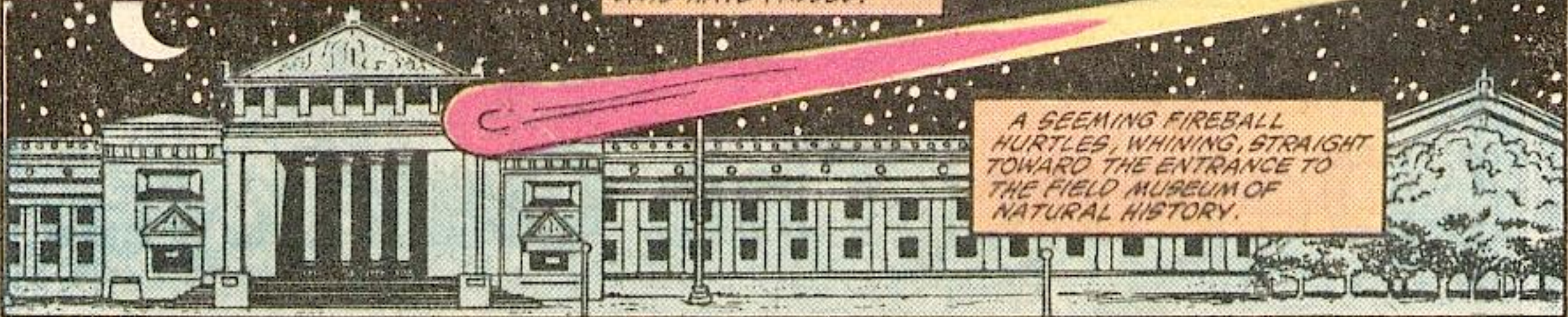


ITS ENGINE HAS IDLED IN THE DUSTY STREET FOR LESS THAN TWO MINUTES.

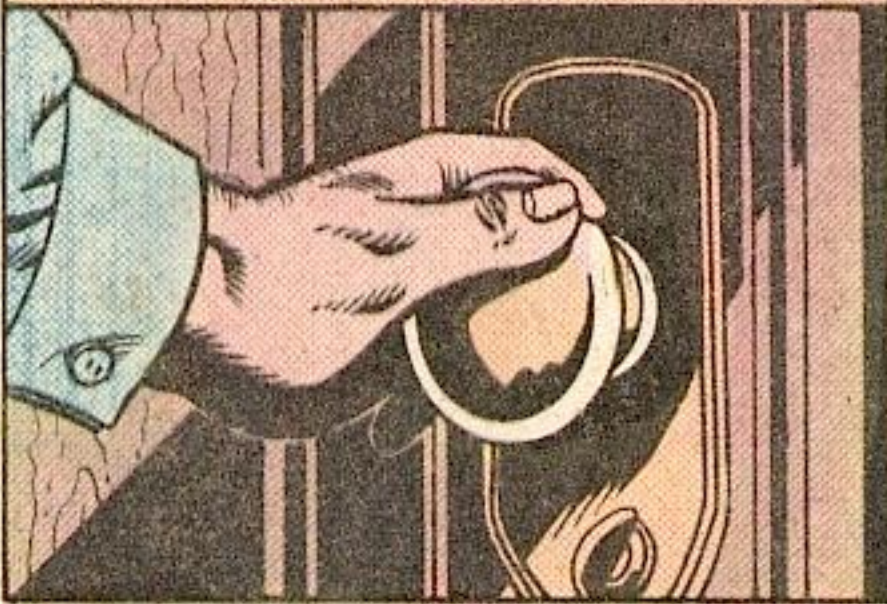
CHICAGO, ELEVEN O'CLOCK ON A STAR-WASHED NIGHT...

TWO WEEKS AND THREE DAYS HAVE PASSED.

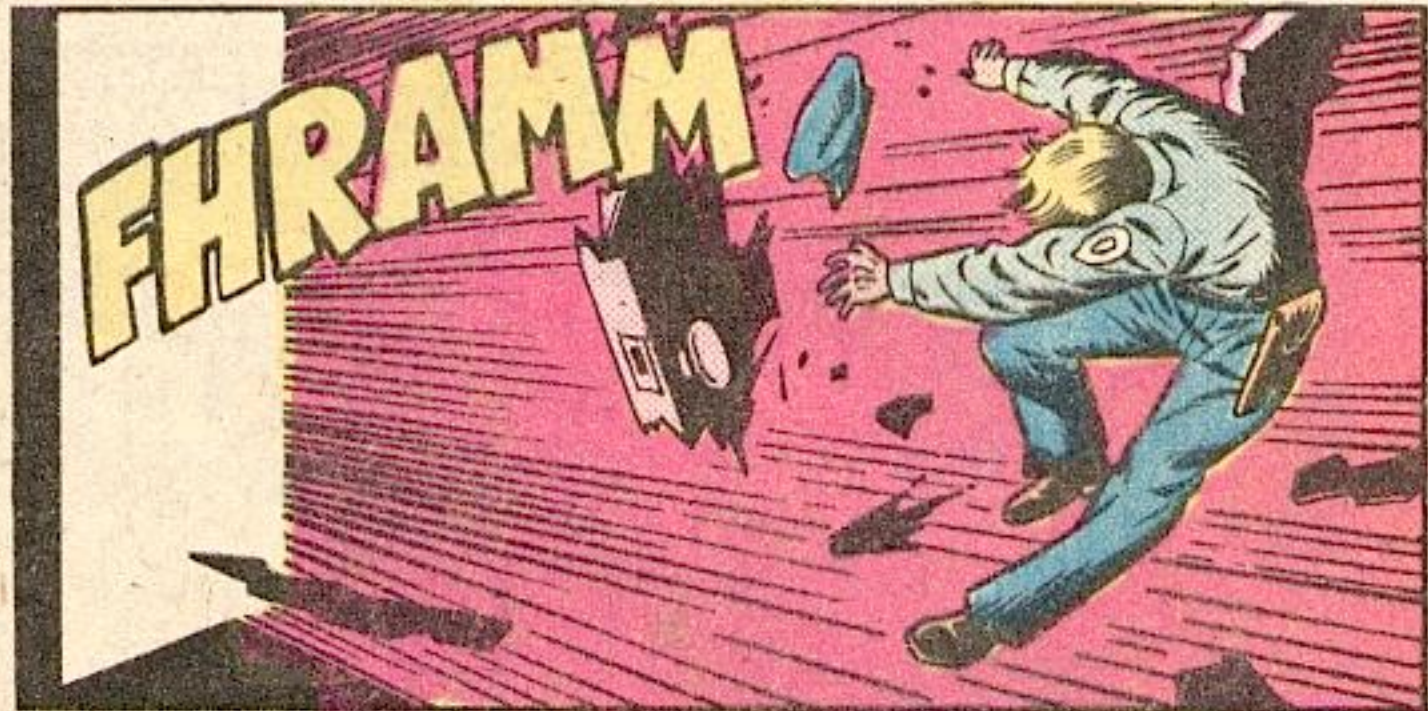
A SEEMING FIREBALL HURTTLES, WHINING, STRAIGHT TOWARD THE ENTRANCE TO THE FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY.



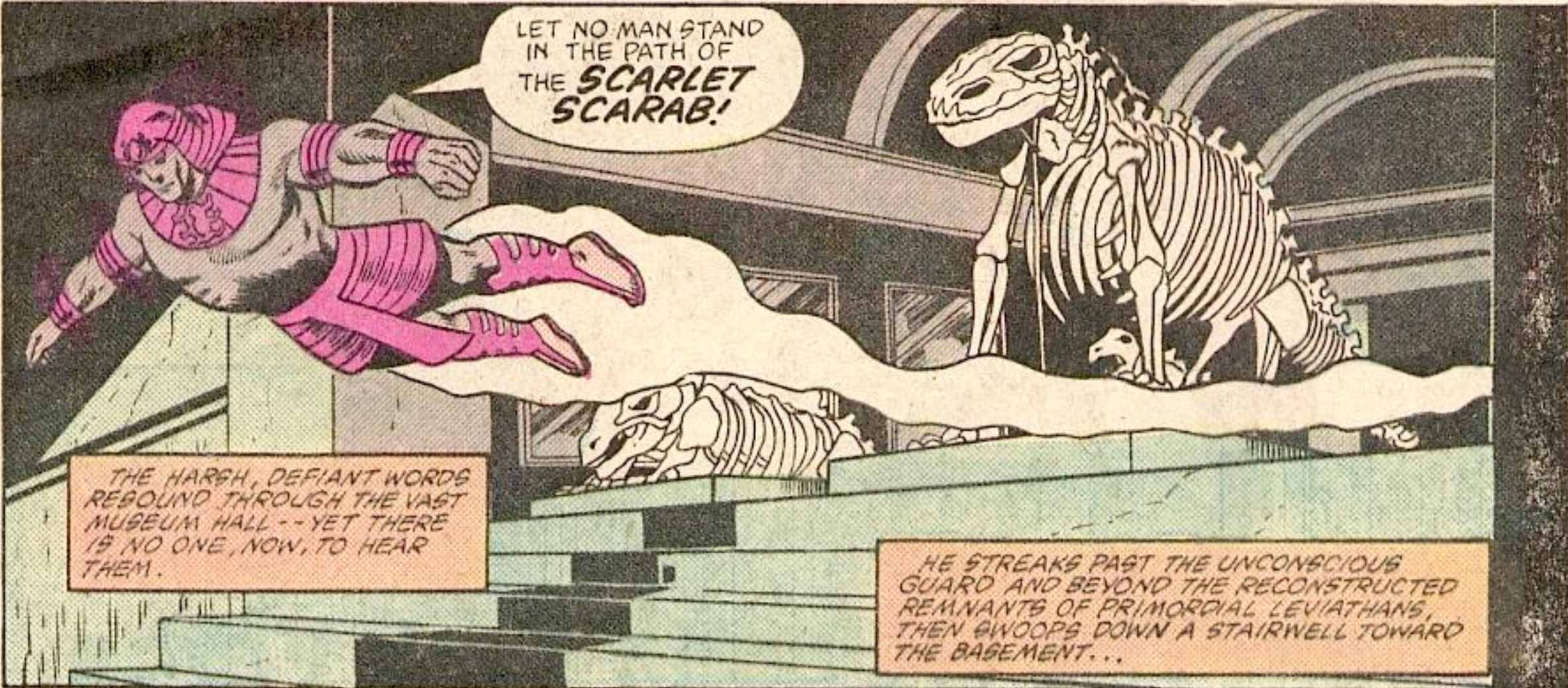
INSIDE, A SECURITY GUARD TESTS THE LOCKS ON HIS LATEST ROUND...



FHRAMM



LET NO MAN STAND IN THE PATH OF THE **SCARLET SCARAB!**



THE HARSH, DEFIANT WORDS REBOUND THROUGH THE VAST MUSEUM HALL -- YET THERE IS NO ONE, NOW, TO HEAR THEM.

HE STREAKS PAST THE UNCONSCIOUS GUARD AND BEYOND THE RECONSTRUCTED REMNANTS OF PRIMORDIAL LEVIATHANS, THEN SWOOPS DOWN A STAIRWELL TOWARD THE BASEMENT...

... AND ITS CACHE OF FABULOUS EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES.

HERE, THE STRANGELY GARBED FIGURE SWIFTLY SEARCHES EVERY EXHIBIT AND DISPLAY CASE IN THE HALL, HIS NARROWED EYES SCANNING MUMMY CASES, FUNERAL BARGES, LACHRYMAL VASES, POTTERY, JEWELRY, FURNITURE...



AND WHEN AT LAST HE HAS SEEN ALL...

IT IS NOT HERE!



... HIS RAGE SCARS THE MARBLED FLOOR.

EARLY THE NEXT MORNING ON MICHIGAN AVENUE'S "MAGNIFICENT MILE" LOCATION OF DR. DONALD BLAKE'S NEW MEDICAL OFFICES...



BLAKE HAS BEEN HERE SCARCELY A MONTH AND ALREADY THE NEWS SEEMS MONOTONOUS-- MORE TALK OF RENOVATING NAVY PIER, INCREASED BICKERING BETWEEN MAYOR BYRNE AND CITY COUNCIL, AND YET ANOTHER LOSS BY THE CUBS...

WAIT A MINUTE--WHAT'S THIS TUCKED AWAY ON AN INSIDE PAGE--SURELY DESERVING OF THE HEADLINE... HMM...



-SPORTS-
CUBS 7
K510

ANOTHER MUSEUM BREAK-IN, THIS TIME THE FIELD MUSEUM RIGHT HERE IN THE CITY...

... AND ONLY DAYS AFTER THE STILL UNEXPLAINED INVASION OF NEW YORK'S NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM.



"CURATORS AND AUTHORITIES ARE STILL CONDUCTING A CLOSE EXAMINATION, BUT THE ONLY APPARENT DAMAGE IS TO THE FLOOR AREA, AGAIN IN THE EGYPTIAN HALL..."

"... SIMILAR MINOR DAMAGE TO THE EGYPTIAN WING IN NEW YORK..."

"... AND AGAIN NOTHING SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN STOLEN OR--"

DR. BLAKE, IT'S TIME FOR YOUR FIRST PATIENT-- THE GENTLEMAN DOESN'T HAVE AN APPOINTMENT, BUT I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIT HIM IN BEFORE MRS. LEIBOWITZ ARRIVES...



FINE, MRS. BARCLAY-- SEND HIM IN.

JUST A LUMP ON THE NOGGIN, DOC-- NOTHING SERIOUS, I DON'T THINK, BUT THE MISSUS WANTED ME TO CHECK IT OUT.



WELL, YOU WERE BOTH RIGHT--IT'S ALWAYS WISE TO MAKE SURE, BUT IN THIS CASE I'D PRESCRIBE NOTHING STRONGER THAN ASPIRIN.

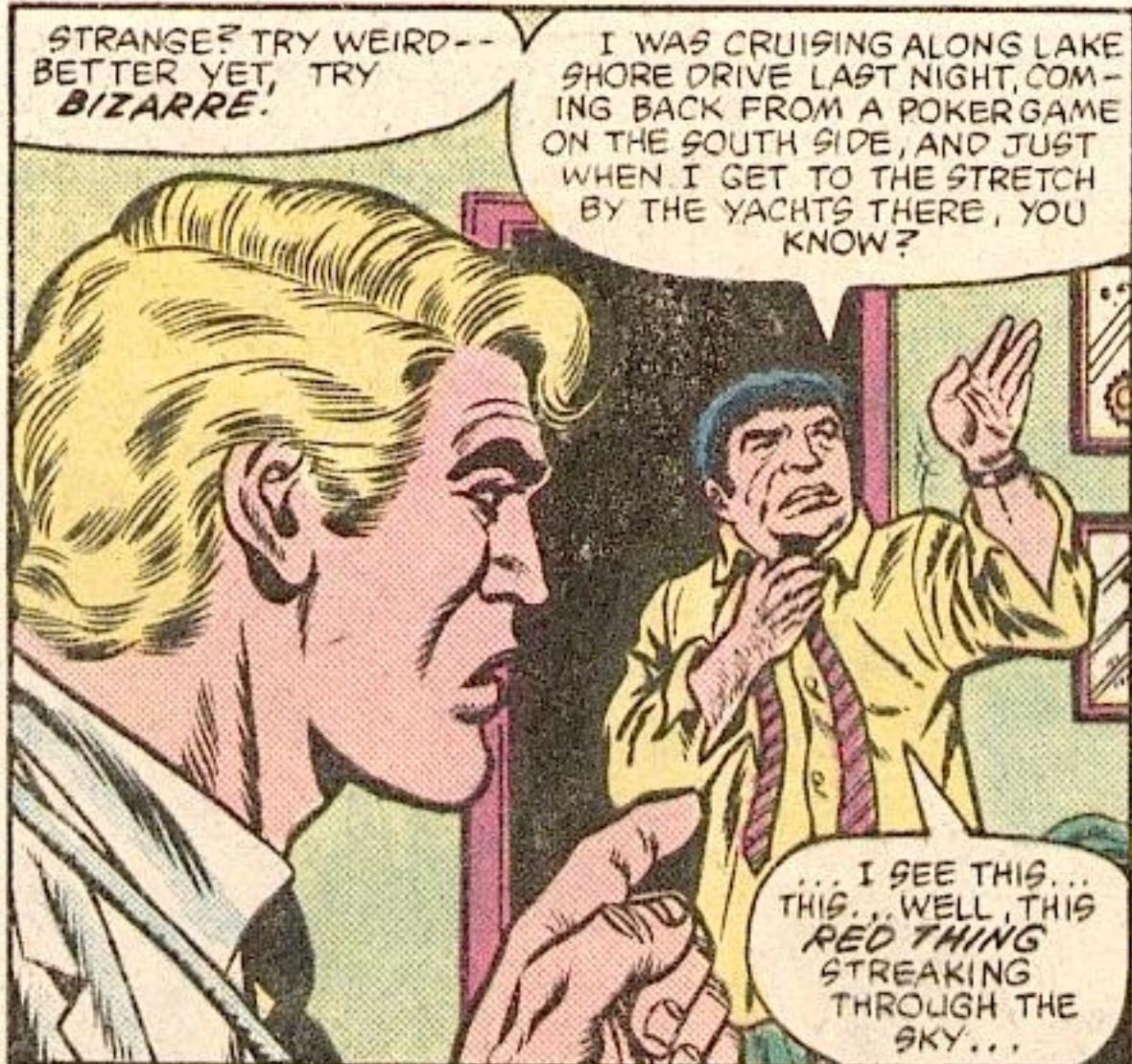
BY THE WAY, HOW DID IT HAPPEN?



I DON'T KNOW IF YOU'LL BELIEVE IT, DOC-- IN FACT, I'M NOT SURE IF I BELIEVE IT.

I HAD TO FLIP A COIN TO DECIDE IF I SHOULD COME SEE YOU OR GO TO A PSYCHIATRIST.

OH? SOMETHING STRANGE HAPPENED?



STRANGER? TRY WEIRD-- BETTER YET, TRY BIZARRE.

I WAS CRUISING ALONG LAKE SHORE DRIVE LAST NIGHT, COMING BACK FROM A POKER GAME ON THE SOUTH SIDE, AND JUST WHEN I GET TO THE STRETCH BY THE YACHTS THERE, YOU KNOW?

... I SEE THIS... THIS... WELL, THIS RED THING STREAKING THROUGH THE SKY...



... AND SO HELP ME, DOC, I COULDA SWORN IT WAS A MAN.

MADE ME SWERVE RIGHT UP ONTO THE CURB-- SMACKED INTO A POLE AND BOPPED MY HEAD ON THE STEERING WHEEL.

I SEE, WELL, MAYBE THE FANTASTIC FOUR ARE IN TOWN.



NAW-- I'VE SEEN PLENTY OF PICTURES OF THE HUMAN TORCH, BUT THIS GUY WASN'T LIKE THAT...

THIS GUY WAS... SCARY, ESPECIALLY THE WAY HE SEEMED SO DETERMINED, ZOOMING STRAIGHT FOR THE MUSEUM LIKE THAT.

THE MUSEUM?

UH, MRS. BARCLAY, GET ME DR. SHAWNA LYNDE ON THE PHONE, WOULD YOU?



SHAWNA? YES, I'M FINE-- BUT LET ME ASK YOU SOMETHING...

IS THERE ANY PLACE IN THE CITY, ASIDE FROM THE FIELD MUSEUM, WHERE EGYPTIAN ANTIQUITIES MIGHT BE STORED?

SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THE ORIENTAL MUSEUM ON THE SOUTH SIDE, DON-- IT SPECIALIZES IN EGYPTIAN RELICS.

WHY? WANT TO TAKE IT IN THIS SUNDAY?

AH, SURE, MAYBE WE CAN GO THERE TOGETHER SOME TIME...



... BUT RIGHT NOW, I'D RATHER VISIT THE PLACE ON MY OWN--

--AS THOR!

RAPPING HIS OAKEN WALKING STICK ON THE FLOOR, THE LAME PHYSICIAN TRANSFORMS INSTANTLY TO THE IMMORTAL GOD OF THUNDER...

... AND IS SOON SOARING SOUTHWARD OVER THE CITY.

THIS MAY BE BUT A FOOL'S MISSION--BUT 'TIS A PRECAUTION WORTH TAKING.

MOMENTS LATER, AT THE ORIENTAL MUSEUM...

FEE-YEW-- LOOKIT THE GOLDEN BOY!

YEAH--IT'S THOR!

'TIS A SMALLER PLACE THAN I IMAGINED-- BUT AS SHAWNA DID STATE, 'TIS AMPLY FILLED WITH EGYPTIAN ARTIFACTS...

IF THOU ART THE CURATOR, I WOULD SPEAK WITH THEE.

HUH? WHY, YOU... YOU'RE THOR!

O-O OF COURSE-- W-WE CAN TALK IN MY OFFICE-- IN THE B-BACK.

AND WHEN THE CURATOR'S INITIAL SHOCK HAS ABATED...

HAS ANYTHING STRANGE OCCURRED OF LATE?

AH... WELL, I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD...

OH, WHAT THE DEVIL-- WHY NOT? IF I CAN'T DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH AN AVENGER... THEN WITH WHOM CAN I DISCUSS IT?

I WAS APPROACHED YESTERDAY BY THREE MYSTERIOUS MEN-- APPARENTLY EGYPTIAN-- WHO TRIED TO SELL ME SOMETHING THEY PURPORTED TO BE PRICELESS... AND WHICH, THEY HINTED, MIGHT EVEN BE THE FABLED EYE OF HORUS.

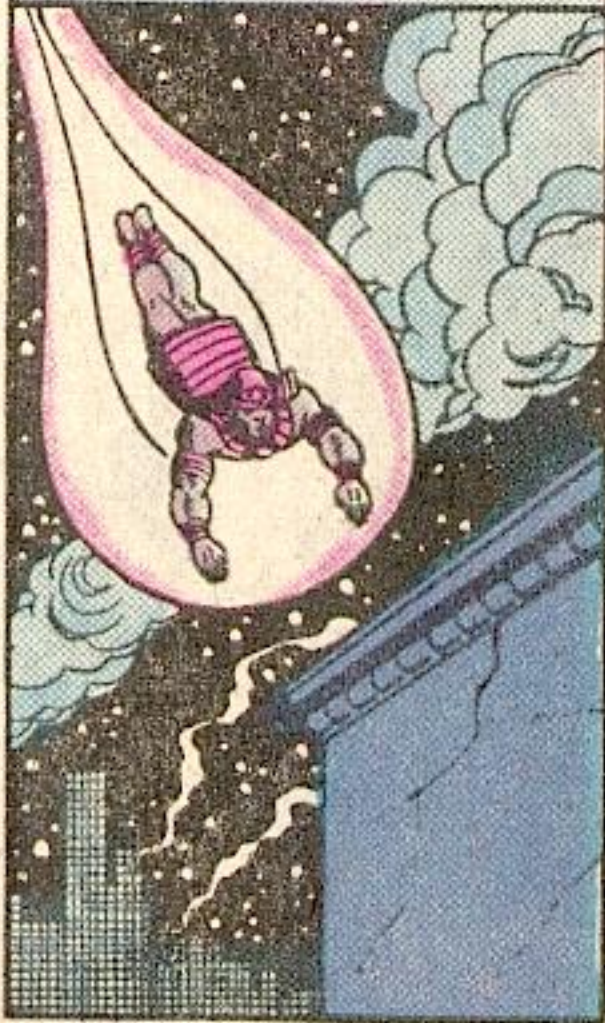
I NOTIFIED THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY.

THEN CLEARLY THERE BE VILLAINY AFOOT. WILT THOU GRANT THY COOPERATION IN A SCHEME TO STOP IT?

WELL, IF IT'S ANYTHING IRREGULAR, I'M NOT SURE I CAN--

HEAR ME OUT, MORTAL-- THEN MAKE THY DECISION...

NIGHT--AND A BIZARRE
SCARLET FIGURE SCREAMS
DOWN FROM THE SKY...



INSIDE THE ORIENTAL MUSEUM,
ALL IS HUSHED GLOOM.



THE DOORKNOB JIGGLES
AGAINST ITS LOCK--THEY
FALLS STILL FOR A BINGLE
MOMENT...

... BEFORE THE SCARLET SCARAB ENTERS BY MORE
EXPLOSIVE MEANS.

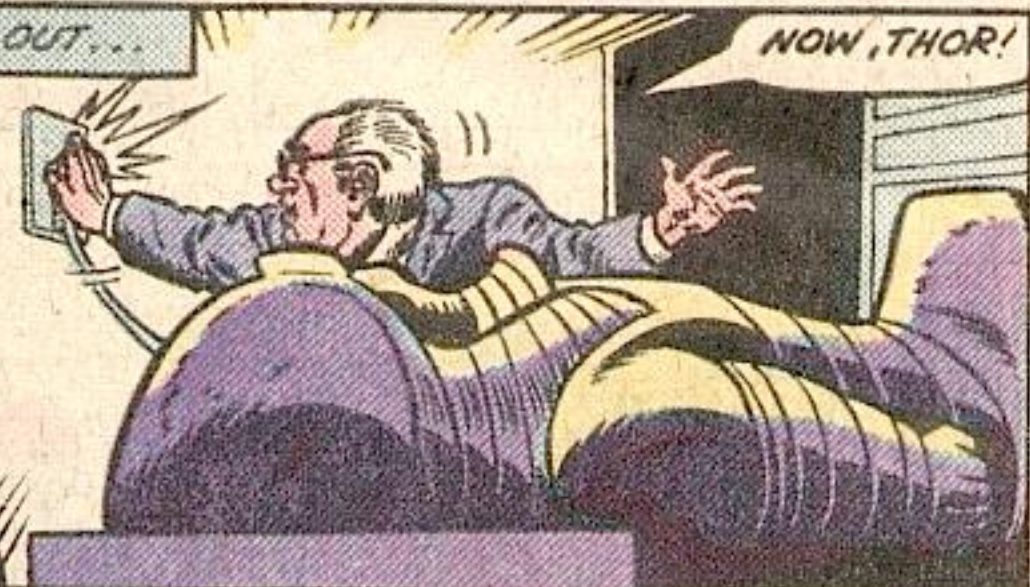


BUT EVEN BEFORE
ALL THE SPLINTERS
HIT THE FLOOR--

-- THE LIGHTS
BLAZE ON--



-- AND THE CURATOR CRIES OUT...



NOW, THOR!

STAND FAST, VILLAIN--THOU
HAST BEEN CAUGHT IN THE VERY
ACT OF ATTEMPTED THEFT!

WHO--?! THAT
AMERICAN SUPERHUMAN--
THOR! YOU DARE ACCUSE
ME OF THEFT?!



YOUR KIND HAS SYSTEMATICALLY
LOOTED THE TREASURES OF EGYPT
FOR CENTURIES--AND YOU DARE
CALL ME A THIEF?!

NOW
SEE HERE,
MISTER!

EVERY ITEM HAS BEEN ACQUIRED
LEGITIMATELY--WITH THE FULL
UNDERSTANDING, PERMISSION, AND
COOPERATION, OF THE EGYPTIAN
GOVERNMENT!



SILENCE! I AM NOT
NOW CONCERNED WITH
ANY OF THE RELICS ON
VIEW! I AM HERE FOR
ONE THING ONLY--



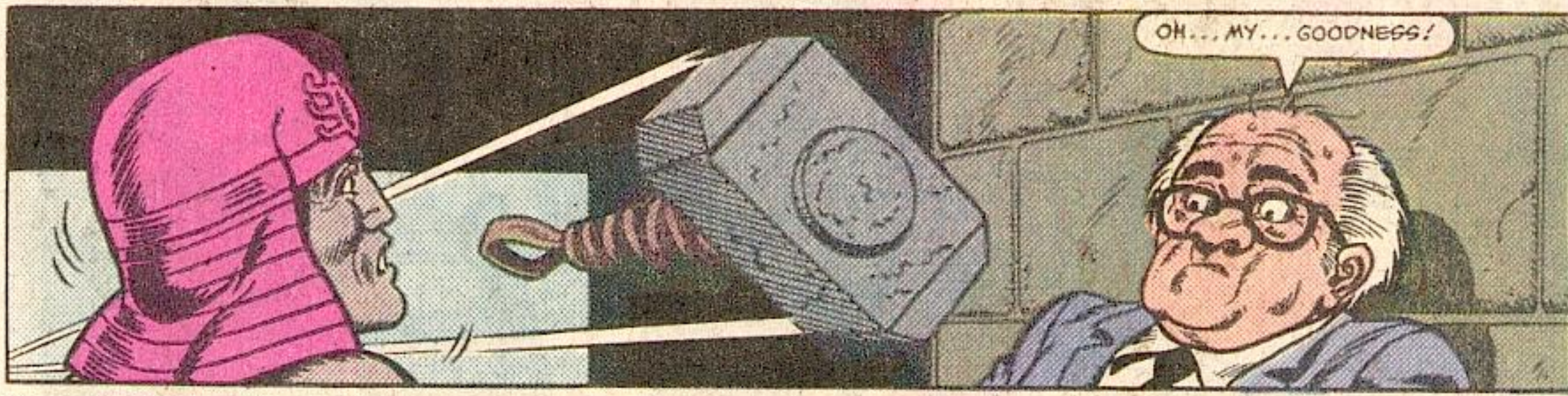
-- THE SACRED
AND PRICELESS
EYE OF HORUS!
WHERE IS IT,
BASE DEFILER
OF THE BLACK
LAND?

IT'S NOT HERE! I SWEAR IT!

LIAR!

I HAVE TRACKED THE THREE THIEVES FROM MY HOMETLAND TO THIS COUNTRY--AND NOW TO THIS VERY CITY! I KNOW THEY HAVE COME TO THIS MUSEUM! WHERE ARE THEY? WHERE IS THE STATUE?!

BE WARNED! THE MORTAL IS UNDER MY PROTECTION!



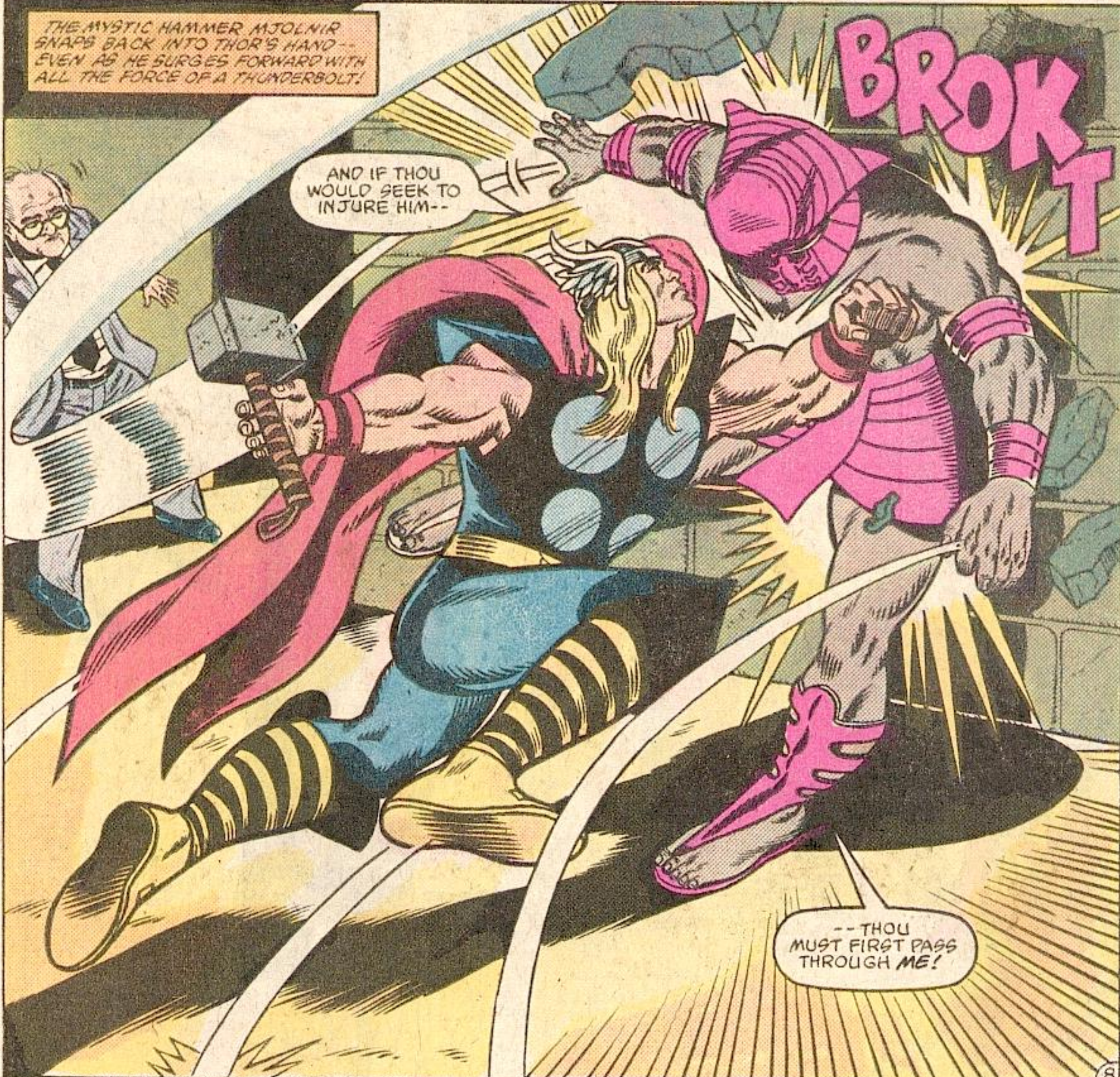
OH... MY... GOODNESS!

THE MYSTIC HAMMER MJOLNIR SNAPS BACK INTO THOR'S HAND--EVEN AS HE SURGES FORWARD WITH ALL THE FORCE OF A THUNDERBOLT!

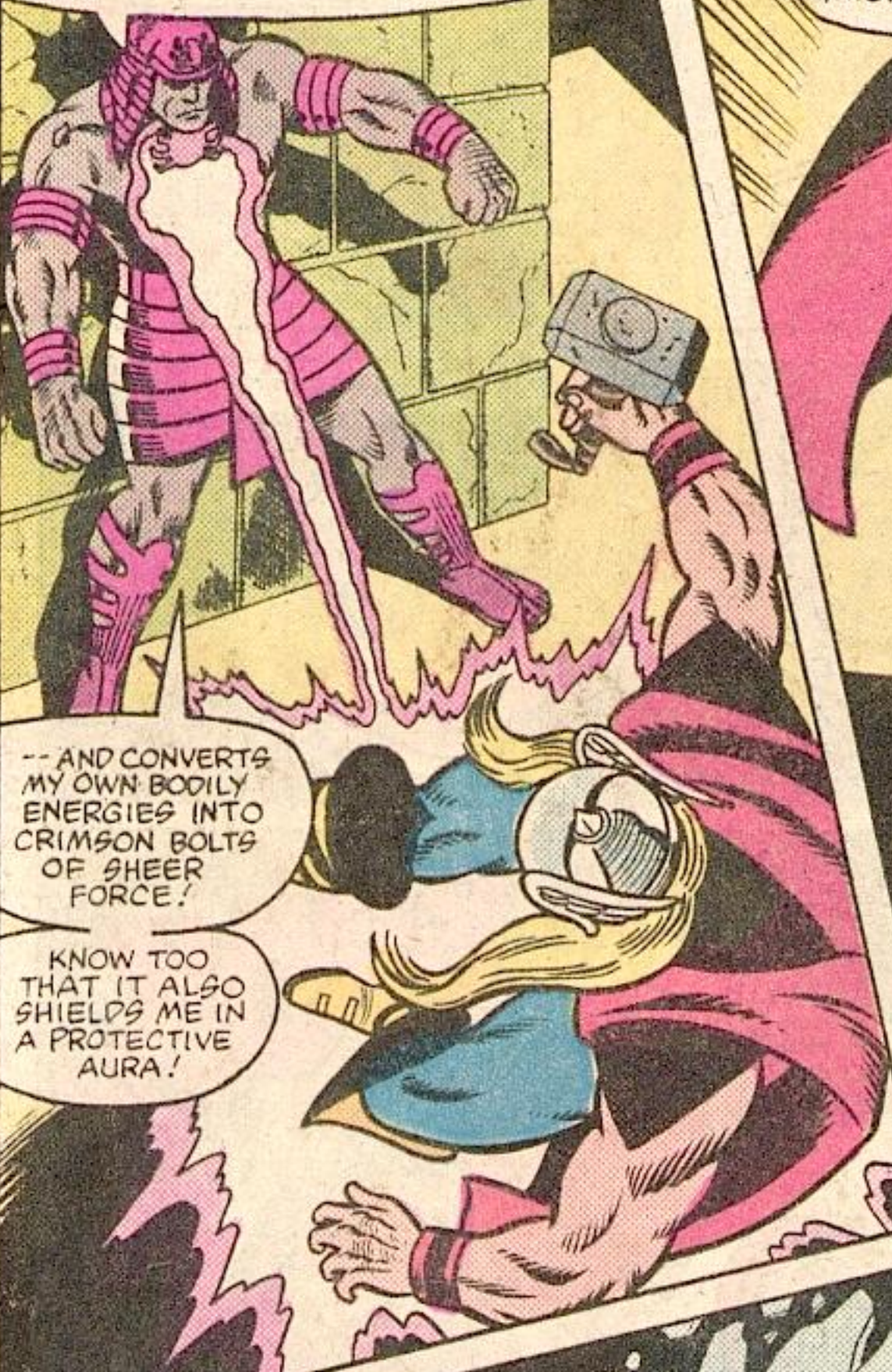
AND IF THOU WOULD SEEK TO INJURE HIM--

BROK T

-- THOU MUST FIRST PASS THROUGH ME!



AND YOU BE WARNED, THUNDERER!
THE RUBY SCARAB AROUND MY NECK
MULTIPLIES MY STRENGTH A
THOUSANDFOLD--



THEN IT SEEMS
THY POWERS ARE
MIGHTY INDEED--



-- AND CONVERTS
MY OWN BODILY
ENERGIES INTO
CRIMSON BOLTS
OF SHEER
FORCE!

KNOW TOO
THAT IT ALSO
SHIELDS ME IN
A PROTECTIVE
AURA!

--AND WHETHER
THOU ART TRUE
VILLAIN OR MERE
MISGUIDED
ZEALOT...

... OUR BATTLE
SHALL BE ONE TO
REMEMBER!



SKASH

STOP IT! YOU'RE
HARMING THE MUSEUM!
YOU'LL DESTROY EVERY-
THING!

**K
R
U
M
P**



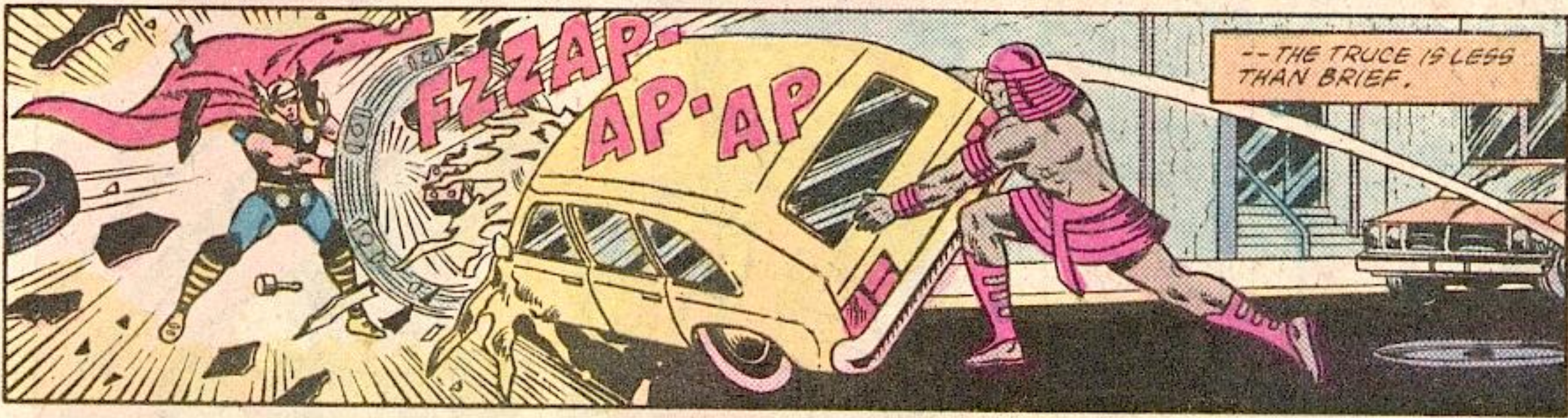
BOTH COMBATANTS IMMEDIATE-
LY HALT, CHASTENED BY THE
REPERCUSSIONS OF THEIR
FURY...



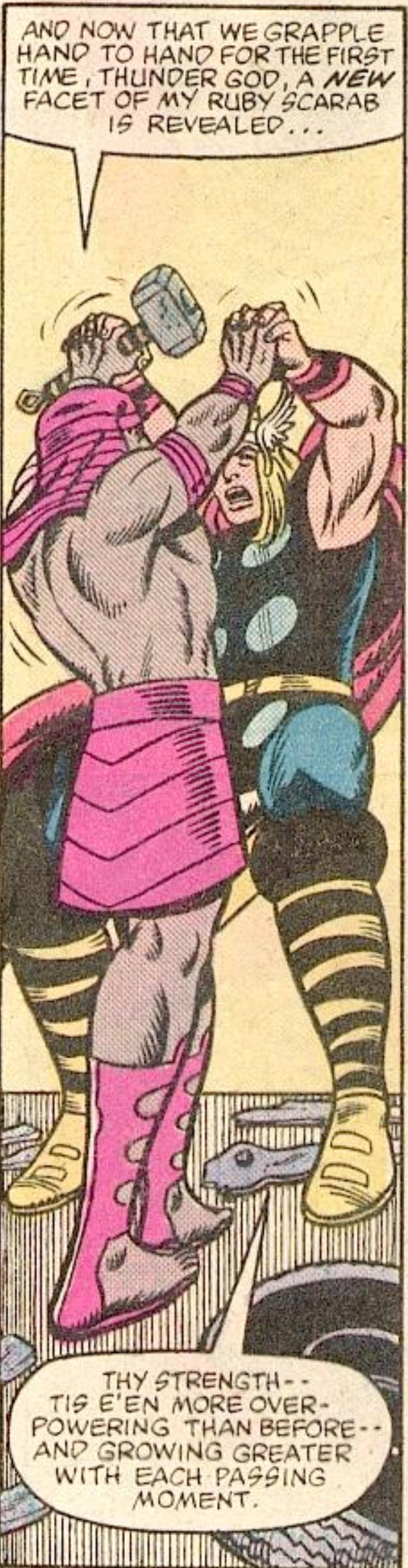
HOLD, SCARLET ONE! IF BATTLE WE MUST, THEN LET US DO SO OUTSIDE--WHERE NEITHER MORTAL NOR RELICS MAY SUFFER NEED-LESS INJURY.

VERY WELL, THUNDER MAN--OUTSIDE.

AND THOUGH THE SCARLET SCARAB IS DULY IMPRESSED BY THOR'S CONCERN--



-- THE TRUCE IS LESS THAN BRIEF.



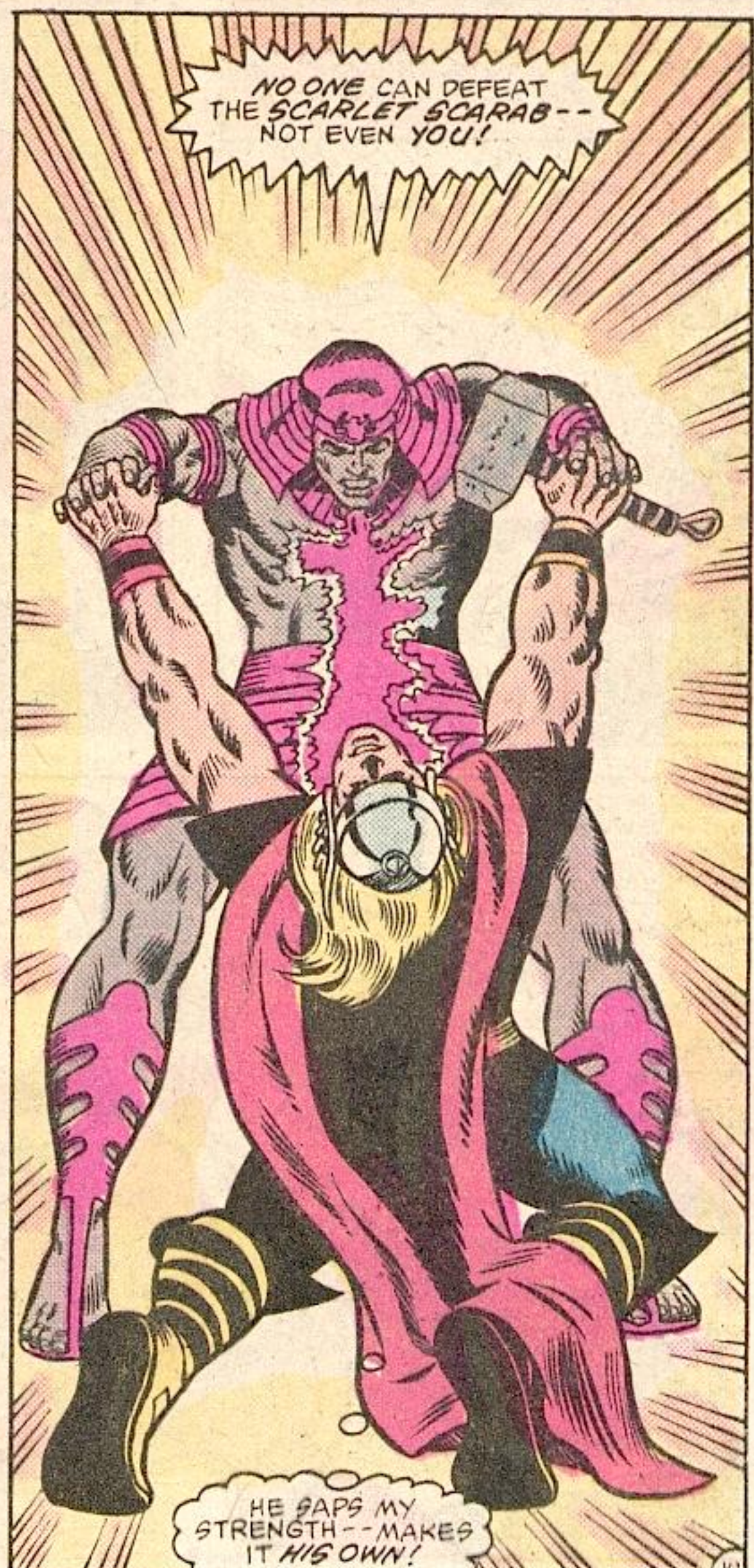
AND NOW THAT WE GRAPPLE HAND TO HAND FOR THE FIRST TIME, THUNDER GOD, A NEW FACET OF MY RUBY SCARAB IS REVEALED...

THY STRENGTH--TIS E'EN MORE OVER-POWERING THAN BEFORE--AND GROWING GREATER WITH EACH PASSING MOMENT.



INDEED--FOR THE RUBY ABSORBS THE POWER OF WHOSEVER OPPOSES ITS WEARER...

...FORCING YOU NOW TO FACE A SINGLE, STARK, INEVITABLE TRUTH...



NO ONE CAN DEFEAT THE SCARLET SCARAB--NOT EVEN YOU!

HE GAPS MY STRENGTH--MAKES IT HIS OWN!

BUT NOT FOR NOTHING HAS THE GOLDEN-HAIRED WARRIOR LONG BEEN HAILED AS MIGHTY...

NO, SCARLET ONE... I... I CANNOT PERMIT MYSELF TO FALL UNDER THY DOMINION...



EVEN AS HIS LAST RESERVES OF STRENGTH ARE SAPPED BY THE ARCANIC GEM, HE DEFILES THE INEVITABLE, STEELING HIMSELF FOR A LAST EXPENDITURE OF WILL...



AND WHILE YET A SINGLE BEAT REMAINS IN MY HEART..



... THOR SAYS THEE NAY!!

THOUGH HE HAS SHATTERED THE SCARAB'S POWER-SIPHONING GRIP, THOR KNOWS HE HAS MERELY EVADED DEFEAT. HE MUST SWIFTLY FOLLOW, WITH A FRESH ASSAULT OF HIS OWN, IF VICTORY IS TO BE HIS!

I NOW KNOW BETTER THAN TO GRAPPLE WITH THEE HAND TO HAND, SCARLET ONE! FROM THIS MOMENT ON, OUR BATTLE SHALL BE DECIDED BY --



IT IS TOO LATE, THUNDER GOD!



I HAVE ALREADY STOLEN TOO MUCH OF YOUR STRENGTH!



THE RUBY SCARAB AROUND MY NECK FILLS ME WITH YOUR OWN POWER-- A POWER WHICH CAN NEVER BE STIFLED!

FRAKT

YOU CANNOT HOPE TO CONQUER US BOTH!



THEN BY MY POWER AS GOD OF STORMS, I SHALL FACE BUT ONE OF THEE!

BLACK CLOUDS BOIL ABOVE THE THUNDER GOD'S HEAD...

LIGHTNING LICKS DOWN TO CARESS HIS UPHELD URU HAMMER...



THEN, ON HIS SILENT COMMAND, THE LIGHTNING ABRUPTLY FLARES FROM HAMMER'S METAL TO FOE'S NECK...

... AND THE RUBY SCARAB IS SUNDERED FROM ITS SETTING-- STRAIGHT INTO THOR'S HAND.

FSHOOM!

KZZAKT

BY MY BIRTH-RIGHT AS LORD OF THE LIVING LIGHTNING, I DO SEPARATE THEE FROM THE SOURCE OF THY POWER!

NO!!

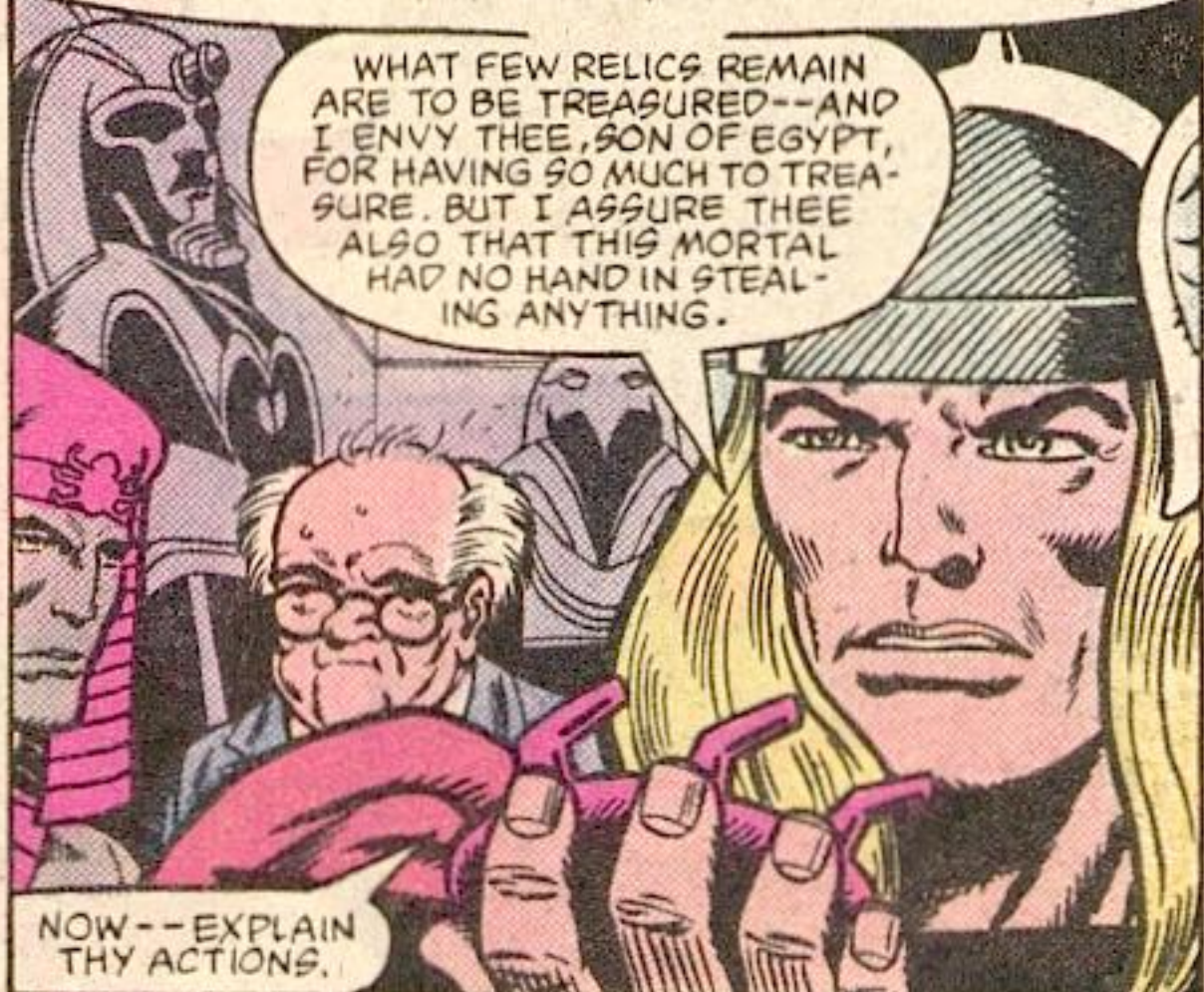
THE RUBY'S POWER IS NOW MINE, SCARLET ONE--AND OUR BATTLE--HAS ENDED.

ENDED? YOU CHOOSE NOT TO FINISH IT-- BY CRUSHING ME?



AYE, SO I CHOOSE. AS VICTOR, I COMMAND THEE TO ACCOMPANY ME INSIDE THE MUSEUM, WHERE THOU MIGHT LISTEN TO REASON...

I UNDERSTAND THY FEELINGS, SCARLET ONE. THE ARTIFACTS OF MY OWN PEOPLE, THE NORSE, WERE MADE MOSTLY OF WOOD, AND SO HAVE LARGELY DECAYED IN OUR HARSHER CLIMATE.



WHAT FEW RELICS REMAIN ARE TO BE TREASURED--AND I ENVY THEE, SON OF EGYPT, FOR HAVING SO MUCH TO TREASURE. BUT I ASSURE THEE ALSO THAT THIS MORTAL HAD NO HAND IN STEALING ANYTHING.

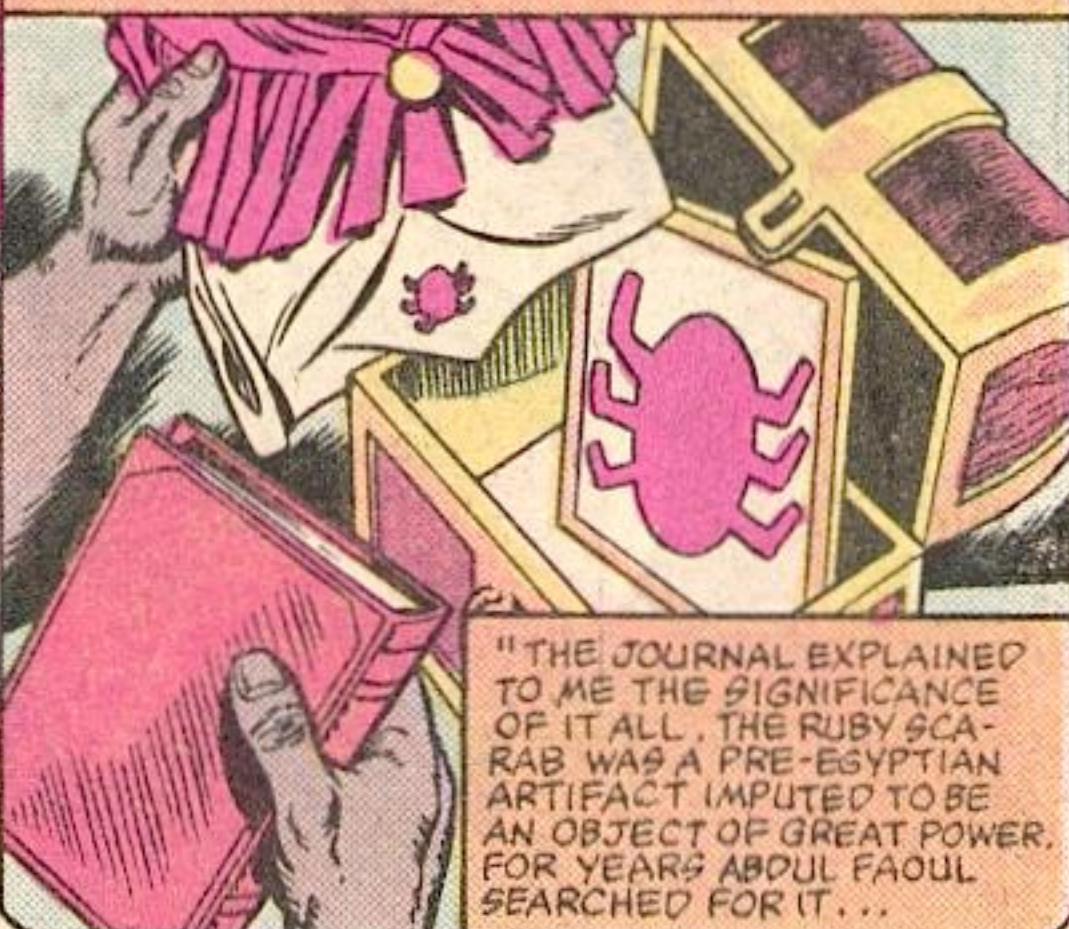
NOW--EXPLAIN THY ACTIONS.

"MY FATHER WAS DR. ABDUL FAOUL, ALSO AN ARCHEOLOGIST, AND AT HIS DEATHBED A DECADE AGO, I WAS PRESENTED WITH A GIFT...

"...A SMALL CASK TO BE OPENED AFTER HIS DEATH.

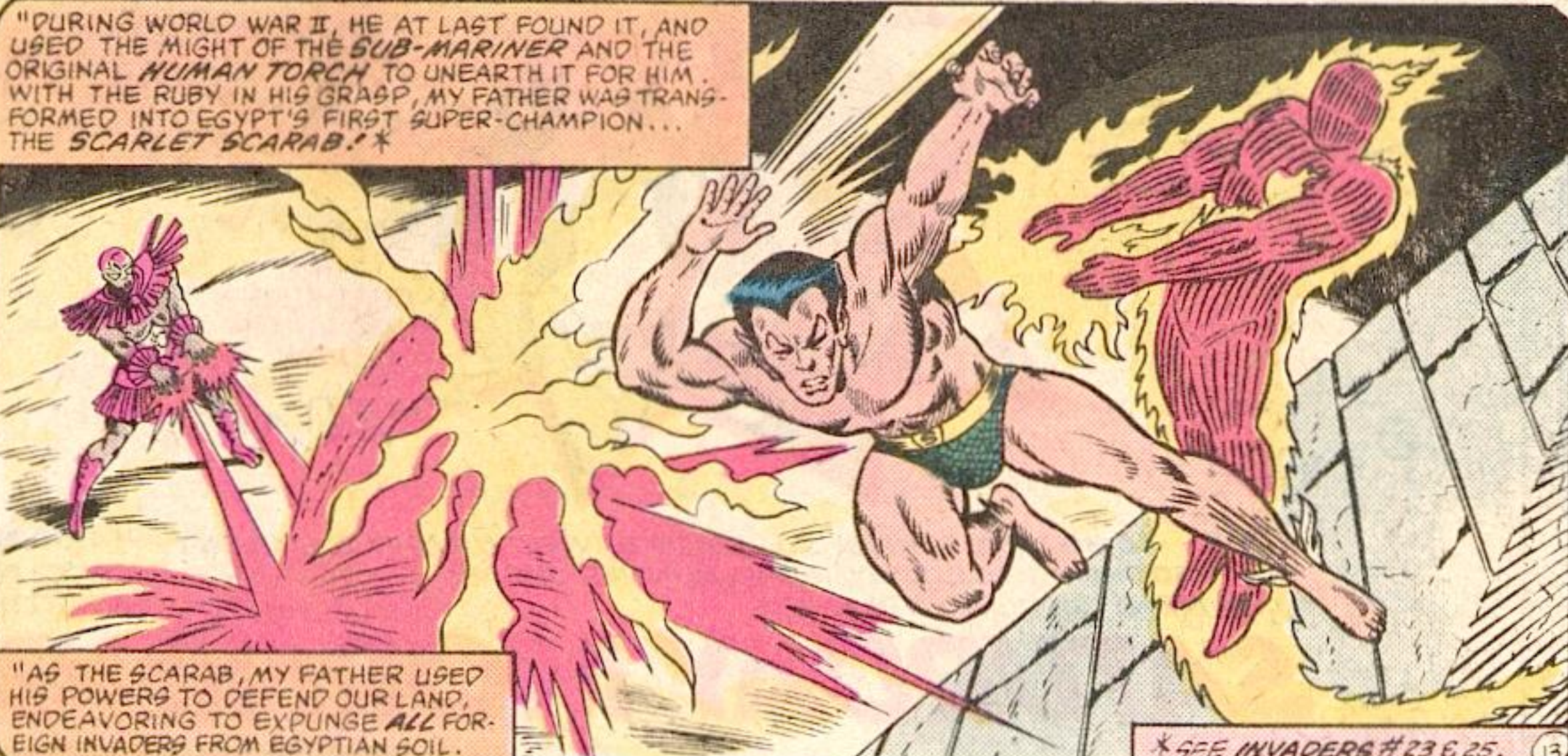


"OPEN IT I DID, AND INSIDE I DISCOVERED THREE THINGS-- MY FATHER'S JOURNAL, SOME STRANGE COLORFUL RAIMENT, AND A PHOTOGRAPH OF A RUBY SCARAB.



"THE JOURNAL EXPLAINED TO ME THE SIGNIFICANCE OF IT ALL. THE RUBY SCARAB WAS A PRE-EGYPTIAN ARTIFACT IMPUTED TO BE AN OBJECT OF GREAT POWER. FOR YEARS ABDUL FAOUL SEARCHED FOR IT...

"DURING WORLD WAR II, HE AT LAST FOUND IT, AND USED THE MIGHT OF THE SUB-MARINER AND THE ORIGINAL HUMAN TORCH TO UNEARTH IT FOR HIM. WITH THE RUBY IN HIS GRASP, MY FATHER WAS TRANSFORMED INTO EGYPT'S FIRST SUPER-CHAMPION... THE SCARLET SCARAB! *



"AS THE SCARAB, MY FATHER USED HIS POWERS TO DEFEND OUR LAND, ENDEAVORING TO EXPUNGE ALL FOREIGN INVADERS FROM EGYPTIAN SOIL.

*SEE INVADERS #23 & 25.

"BUT AFTER THE WAR, THE RUBY SCARAB MYSTERIOUSLY VANISHED AND MY FATHER WAS FORCED TO RETIRE. HE SPENT THE FINAL YEARS OF HIS LIFE SEARCHING FOR IT ANEW. IT HAD BECOME MY DUTY TO CONTINUE THE SEARCH-- FOR ONLY WITH THE POWERS OF THE SCARAB COULD I FULFILL MY FATHER'S LAST REQUEST-- TO BECOME A CHAMPION OF EGYPT AS HE HAD BEEN!"



"FOR YEARS, I SEARCHED, FOLLOWING ONE LEAD AFTER ANOTHER, TRAVELLING THROUGHOUT THE WORLD..."

"DISCOURAGED, I DECIDED TO RETURN TO THE VERY SITE WHERE MY FATHER HAD FOUND THE RUBY SCARAB. TO MY UTTER AMAZEMENT, THERE IT WAS AGAIN LYING ON THE PRECISE SPOT WHERE IT HAD BEEN FOUND FORTY YEARS EARLIER!"

"THE HIEROGLYPHS ON THE TOMB WALL WERE CRYPTIC, BUT SEEMED TO INDICATE THAT THE SCARAB WOULD SOMEHOW-- PERHAPS SUPERNATURALLY-- FIND ITS WAY BACK TO ITS PROPER RESTING PLACE."



"FASHIONING MYSELF A NEW COSTUME, I BECAME THE SECOND SCARLET SCARAB. WITH MY POWERS I SET FORTH TO BATTLE THOSE WHO WOULD PREY UPON MY PEOPLE OR ITS ANCIENT TREASURES!"

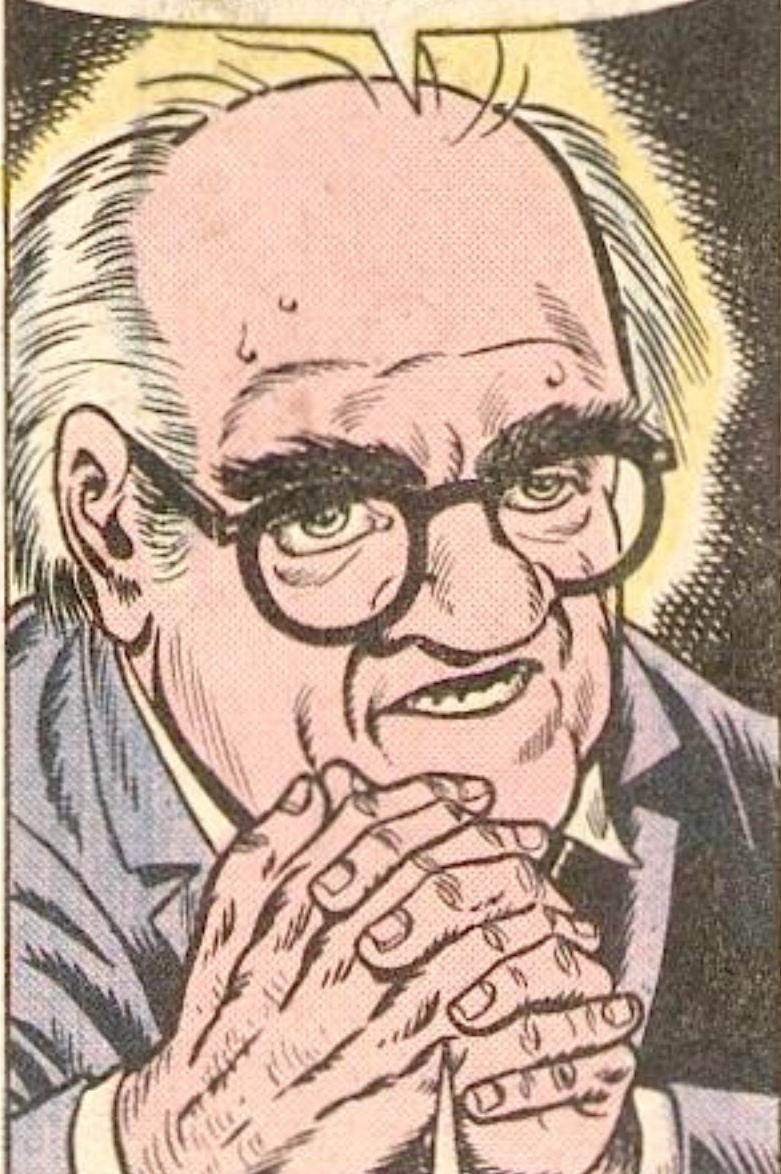
LIKE THE THREE MEN WHO OFFERED TO SELL ME A PRICELESS RELIC...



...WHICH THEY HINTED WAS THE EYE OF HORUS!"

I INFORMED THE POLICE AT ONCE-- AND THEY TOLD ME JUST THIS AFTERNOON THAT THEY THINK THEY KNOW WHERE THE THIEVES ARE LOCATED.

I'M SURE THEY NOTIFIED THE EGYPTIAN AUTHORITIES--AND EVEN THOUGH THEY MAY NOT ACCEPT YOU AS AN OFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF YOUR GOVERNMENT, I'M SURE THEY'D TRUST THOR.

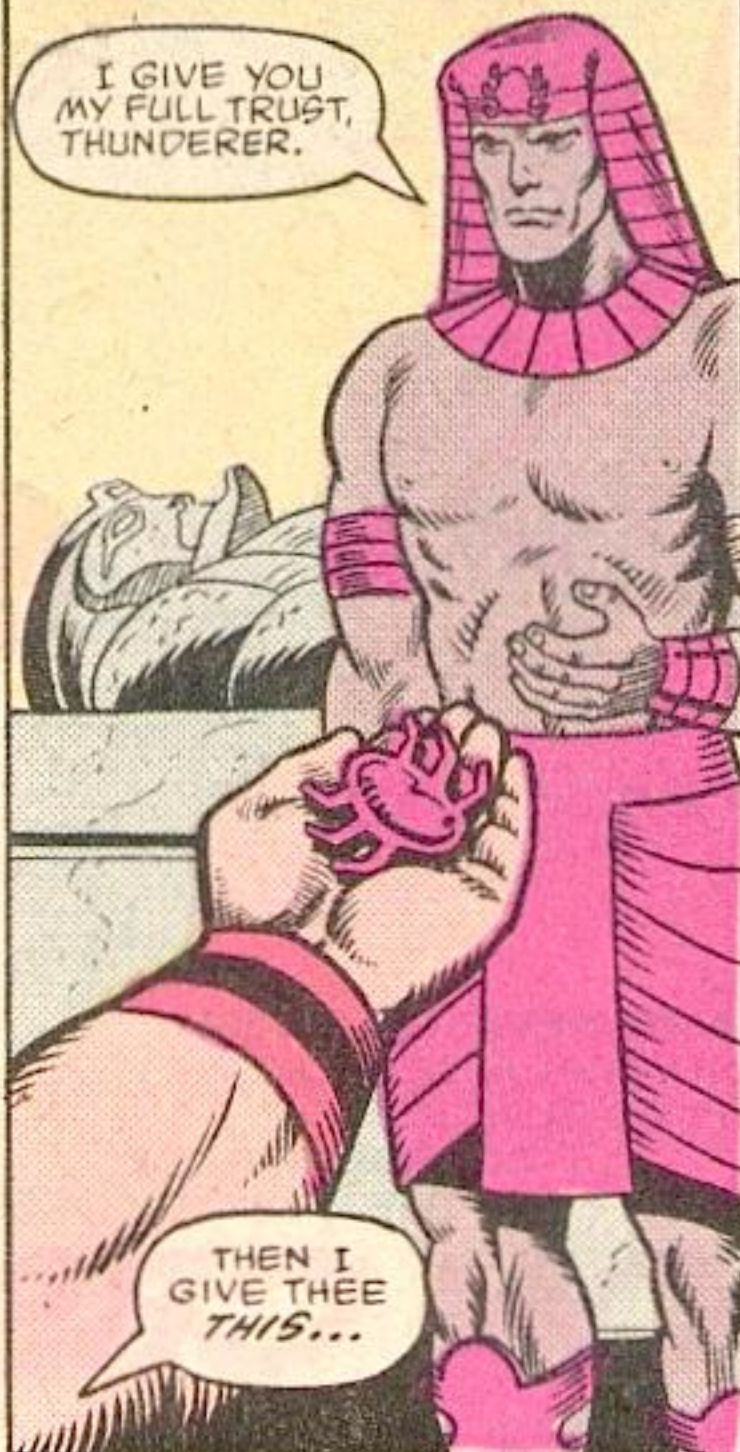


SO IF YOU TWO COULD JUST QUIT FIGHTING AND WORK TOGETHER...

AYE--IF THOU ART WILLING TO GIVE ME THY TRUST, SCARLET ONE,

YES, I BELIEVE YOU BOTH--AND SEE I WAS WRONG.

I GIVE YOU MY FULL TRUST, THUNDERER.



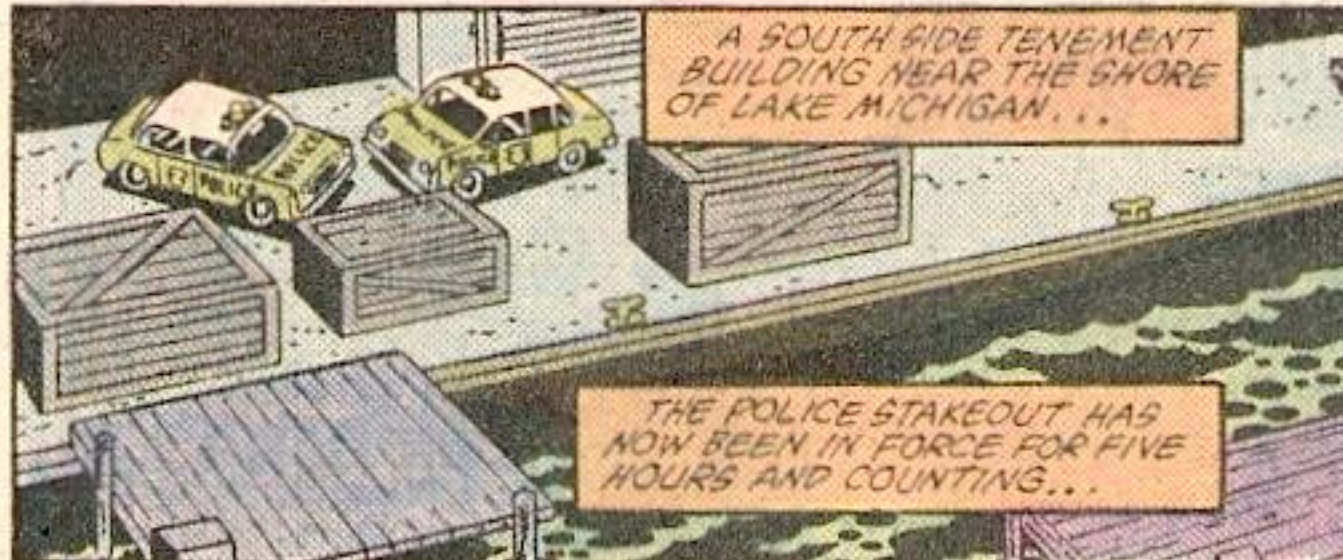
THEN I GIVE THEE THIS...

AND SO, AS ALLIES, THEY STREAK OFF INTO THE NIGHT...



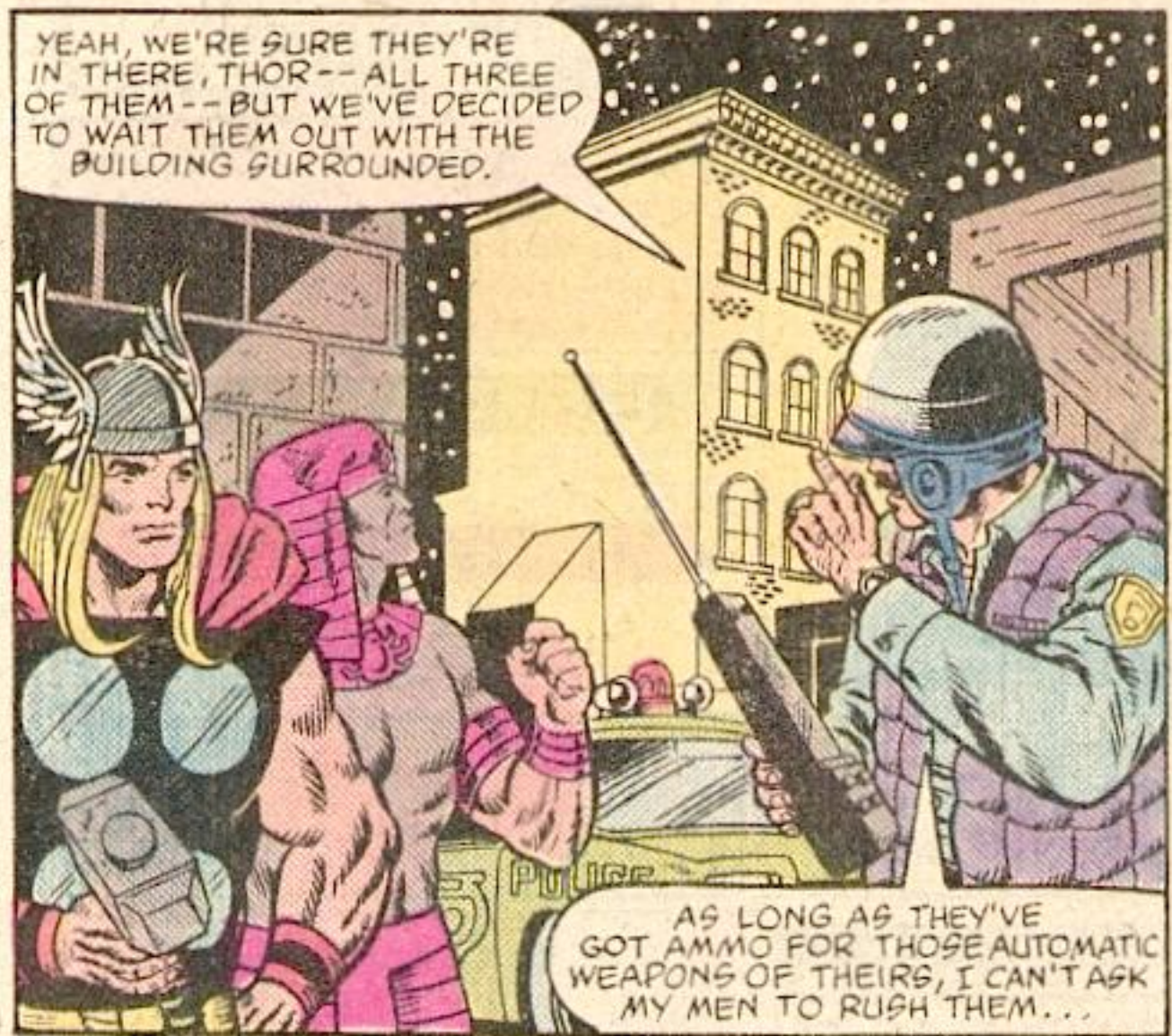
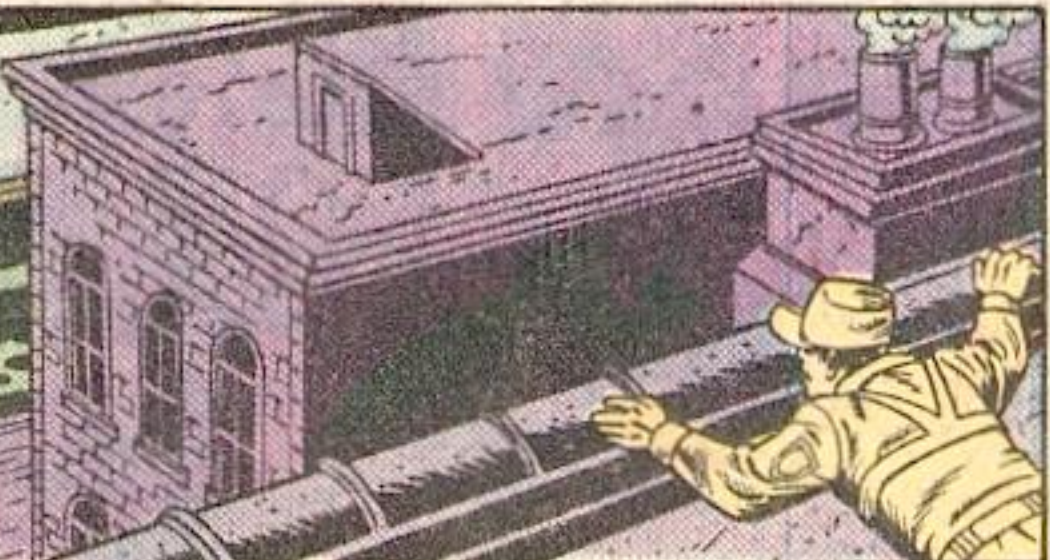
WOW.

THAT SETTLES IT-- I AM GOING TO WRITE A BOOK ABOUT MY EXPERIENCES AS CURATOR OF THIS MUSEUM!



A SOUTH SIDE TENEMENT BUILDING NEAR THE SHORE OF LAKE MICHIGAN...

THE POLICE STAKEOUT HAS NOW BEEN IN FORCE FOR FIVE HOURS AND COUNTING...



YEAH, WE'RE SURE THEY'RE IN THERE, THOR-- ALL THREE OF THEM-- BUT WE'VE DECIDED TO WAIT THEM OUT WITH THE BUILDING SURROUNDED.

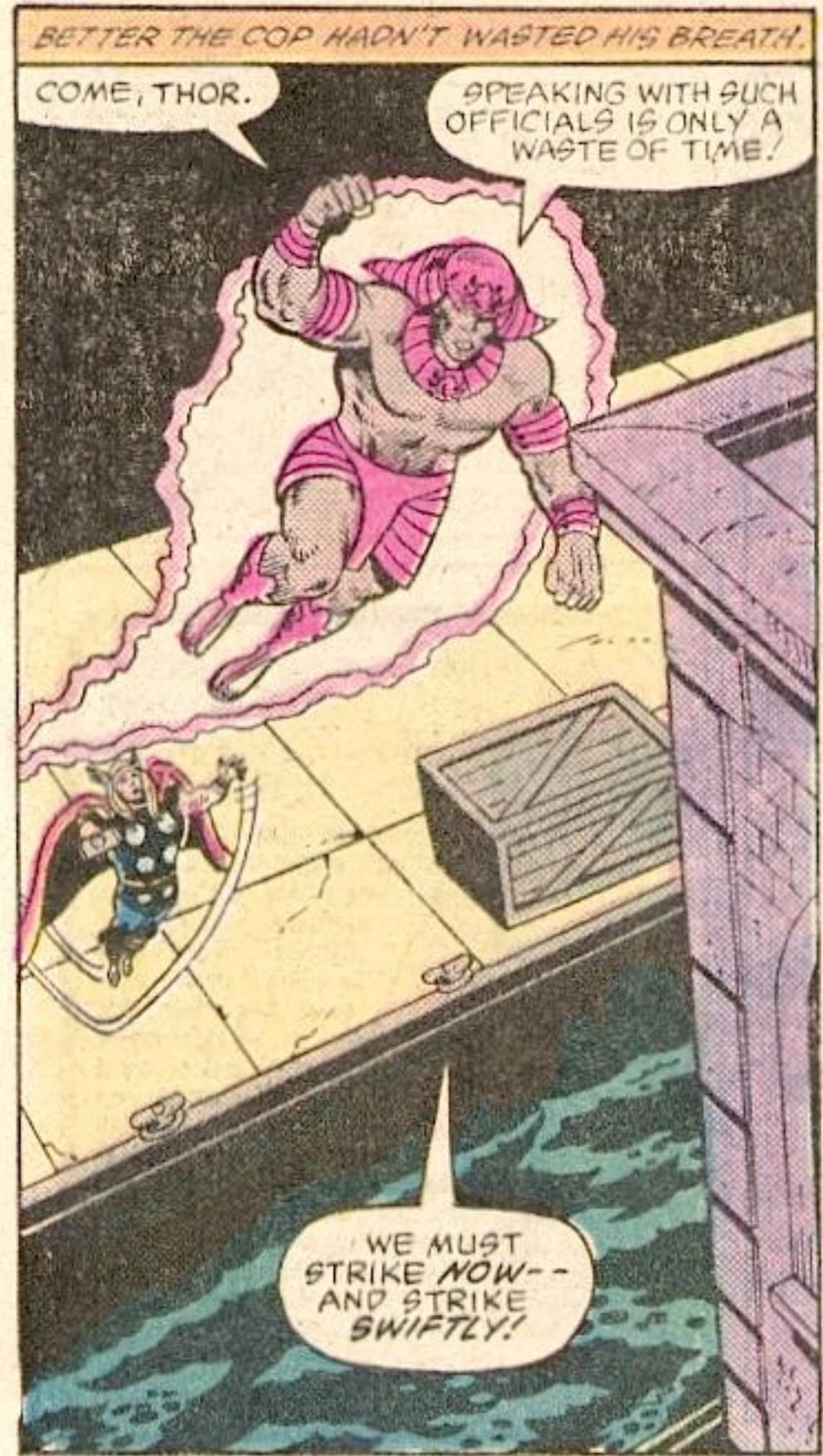
AS LONG AS THEY'VE GOT AMMO FOR THOSE AUTOMATIC WEAPONS OF THEIRS, I CAN'T ASK MY MEN TO RUSH THEM...



THOU NEED ASK NOTHING OF THY MEN-- FOR WE SHALL DO IT.

WHAT?! NOW WAIT JUST A MINUTE, BUSTER!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S PROMPTED YOU TO SUDDENLY ADOPT MY CITY FOR YOUR DO-GOODER ACT, BUT YOU CAN'T JUST GO BARGING AND BLUNDERING INTO A SITUATION LIKE--



BETTER THE COP HADN'T WASTED HIS BREATH.

COME, THOR.

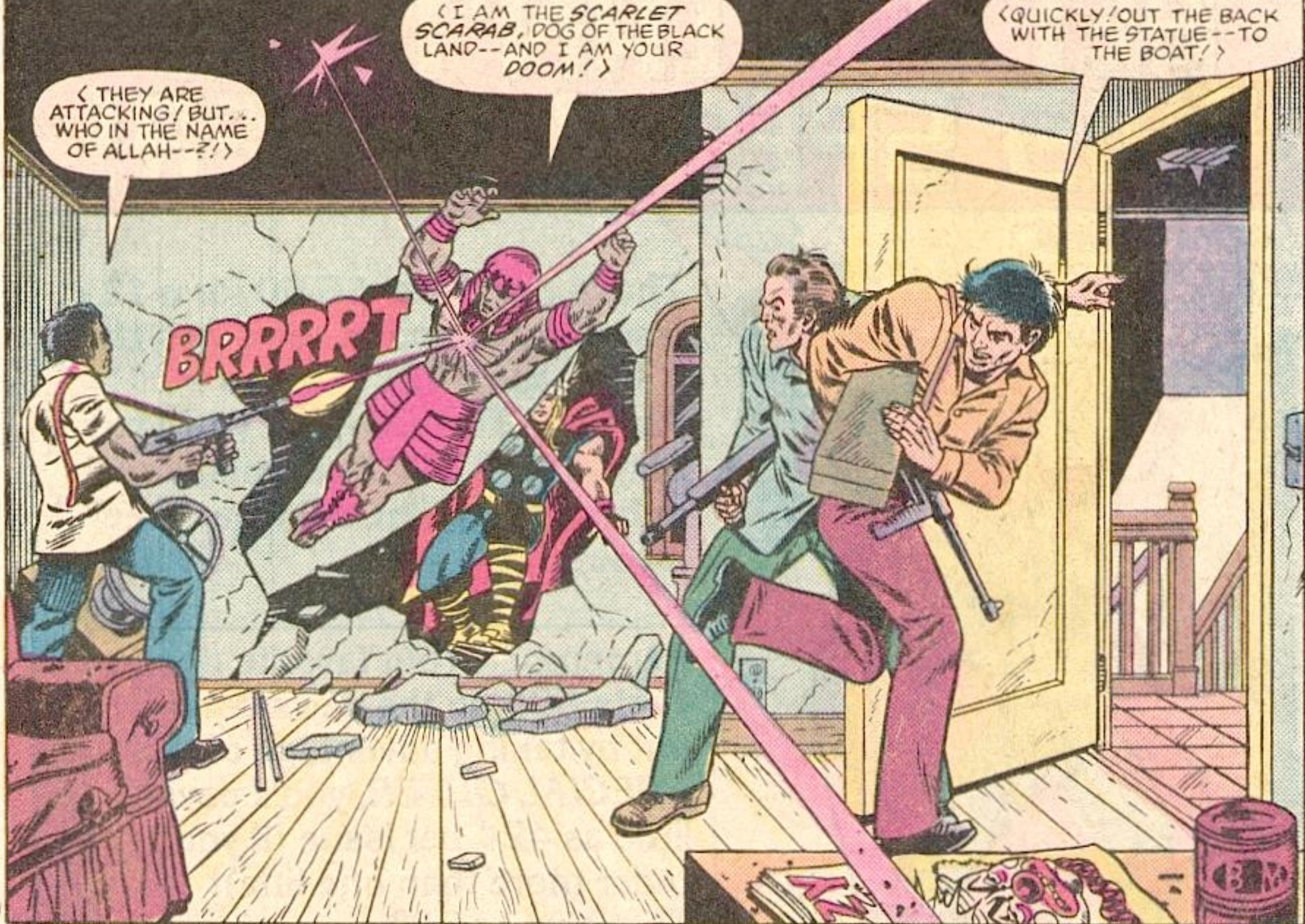
SPEAKING WITH SUCH OFFICIALS IS ONLY A WASTE OF TIME!

WE MUST STRIKE NOW-- AND STRIKE SWIFTLY!



BRU-KOOM

-- BEFORE THEY HAVE A CHANCE TO DISPOSE OF THE STATUE!





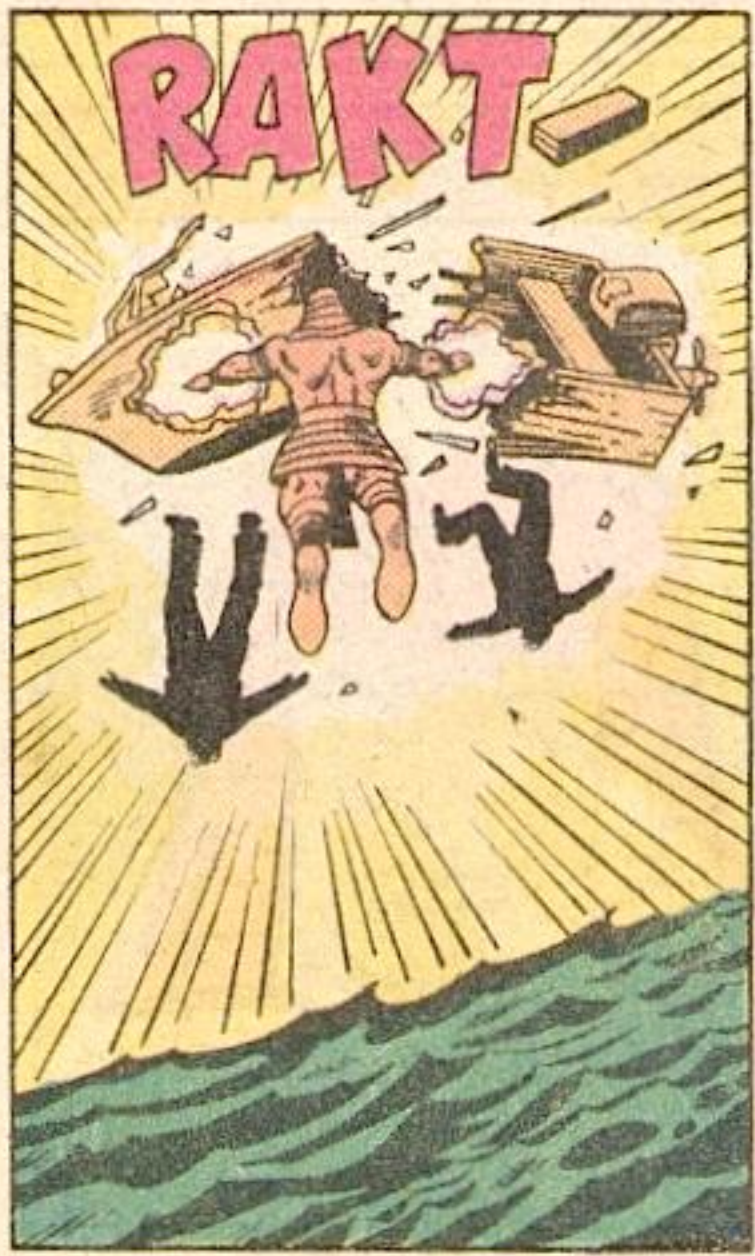
SHALL I HALT THEIR FLIGHT, THUNDER MAN, OR--

NAY, SCARLET ONE...



MY URU HAMMER MJOLNIR IS WELL-SUITED FOR SUCH TASKS.

<ALLAH PRESERVE US! A PILLAR OF WATER--RAISING OUR BOAT INTO THE AIR, AND-->

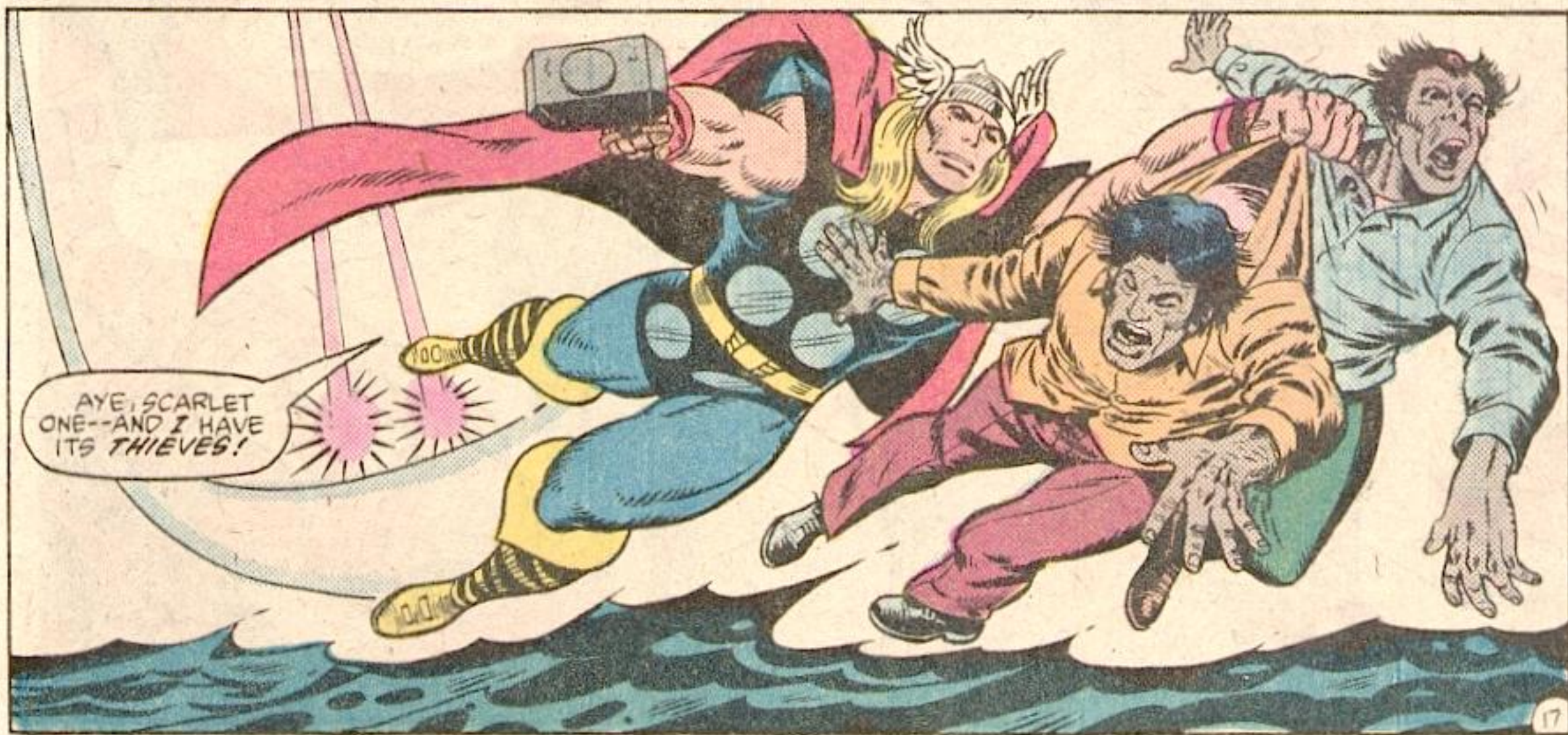


RAKT



IT IS SAFE, AMERICAN--

-- I HAVE THE EYE OF HORUS!



AYE, SCARLET ONE--AND I HAVE ITS THIEVES!

MOMENTS LATER, ON THE ROOFTOP...



YOU UNDERSTAND, THUNDERER, THAT I WANT THEM AS WELL AS THE STATUE-- TO BE RETURNED TO EGYPT FOR PUNISHMENT.

NAY-- UNDER THE MORTAL'S LAWS, THEY MUST REMAIN HERE TO STAND TRIAL BEFORE THEY MAY BE EXTRADITED TO EGYPT...

... AND THE EYE OF HORUS MUST STAY, AS WELL, AS EVIDENCE.



NEVER! THE STATUE GOES BACK TO EGYPT WHERE IT BELONGS-- IMMEDIATELY!

THEN WE MUST EITHER FIGHT AGAIN-- OR SETTLE FOR THE PRIZE EACH HAS IN HAND.



THE SCARAB CONSIDERS THIS WITH NARROWED EYES...

YOU HAVE PROVEN WORTHY OF TRUST, THUNDER MAN. DO YOU GIVE YOUR WORD THAT THE THIEVES WILL BE RETURNED AFTER THEIR TRIAL... EVEN WITHOUT THE "EVIDENCE"?

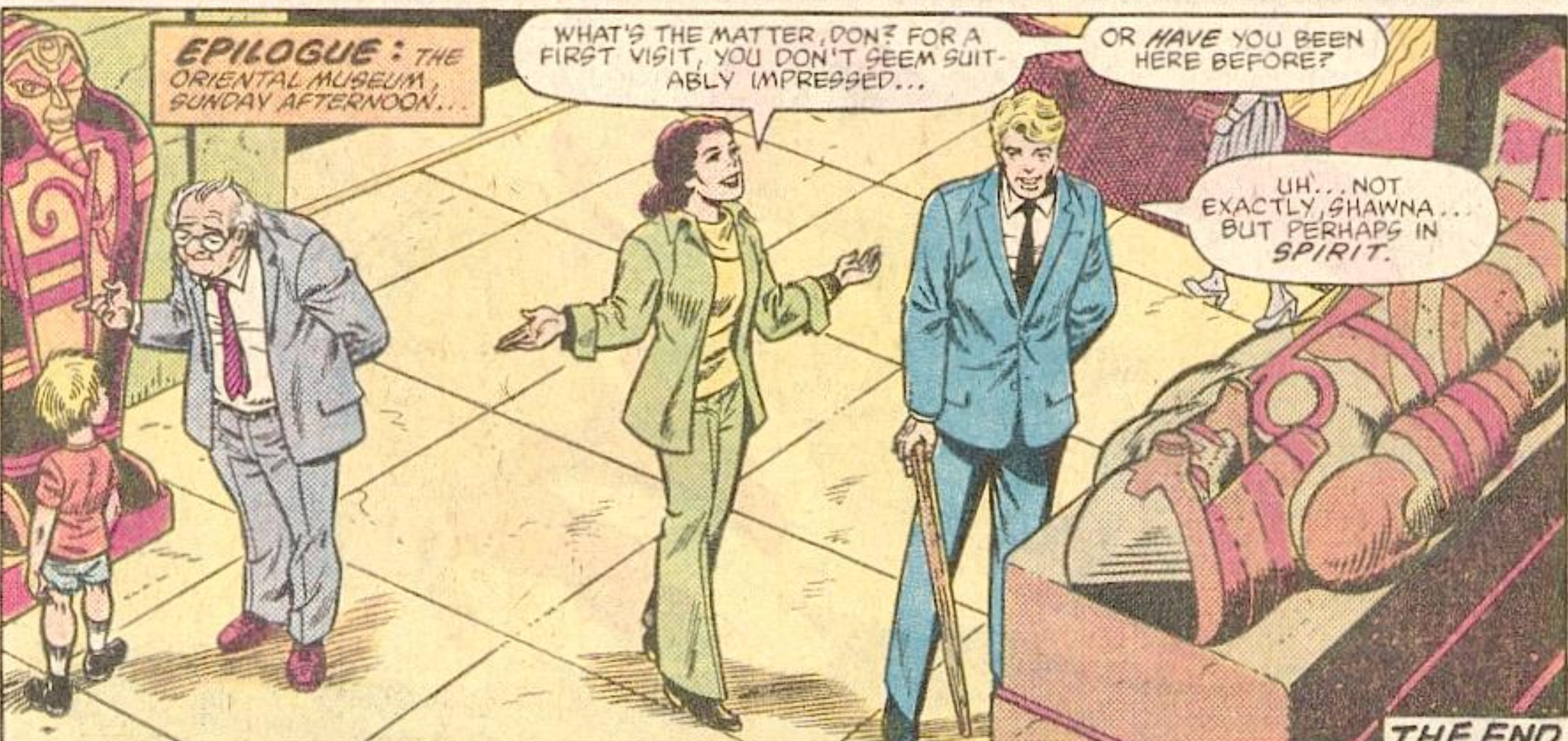
AYE-- MY OWN TESTIMONY WILL BE ENOUGH TO PROVE THEM GUILTY.



THEN IT IS DONE-- WE EACH SETTLE FOR WHAT WE HAVE.

... WHICH NOW INCLUDES A MUTUAL RESPECT.

AYE, SCARLET ONE... AYE.



EPILOGUE: THE ORIENTAL MUSEUM, SUNDAY AFTERNOON...

WHAT'S THE MATTER, DON? FOR A FIRST VISIT, YOU DON'T SEEM SUITABLY IMPRESSED...

OR HAVE YOU BEEN HERE BEFORE?

UH... NOT EXACTLY, SHAWNA... BUT PERHAPS IN SPIRIT.

THE END

TALES OF ASGARD, HOME OF THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS™

AND IT CAME TO PASS THAT THE GODDESS IDUNN, KEEPER OF THE GOLDEN APPLES OF IMMORTALITY, WAS HELD HOSTAGE BY THE GATHERED FORCES OF EVIL LED BY LOKI AND TYR...

EVEN THOUGH ENRIEGED IN THE PALACE ROYAL, SOME GODS THERE WERE WHO BRIDLED AT THE INJUSTICE AND EFFRONTERY...

CHIEF AMONG THEM WAS BALDER.



HEAR ME, LORD ODIN, THOUGH I HAVE FORSWORN THE WAY OF THE SWORD, I WISH TO LEAD A FORAY AGAINST YON VILLAINS, AND TO PLUCK IDUNN FROM THEIR VERY GRASP!

AYE, BALDER, 'TIS MY OWN WISH AS WELL -- BUT WAIT THOU UNTIL FULL DARKNESS, WHEN THY CHANCES FOR SUCCESS BE MANTLED IN PROTECTION.

AND SO, UNDER THE COVER OF DEEP ASGARDIAN NIGHT, BALDER SLIPS FROM THE PALACE WITH A SMALL FORCE AT HIS HEELS...



AHEAD -- THEY DO FEAST AND CAROUSE IN THE VERY STREET, EXPECTING NONE OF WHAT WE SHALL OFFER.

WITH NEITHER TYR NOR LOKI IN SIGHT, ODIN'S FORCES STRIKE...



AYE, GODDESS -- BUT FORGET NOT VOLSTAGG, LEAST WE NEVER HEAR THE END OF IT!

BALDER -- FANDRAL -- HOGUN!

DOUG BOENCH
SCRIPTER
ALAN KUPPERBERG JOHN TARTAGLIONE
PENCILER INKER
JANICE CHANG DON WARFIELD
LETTERER COLORIST

THE RESCUE

THE BATTLE IS SHORT BUT FIERCE -- WITH COURAGE AND SURPRISE ULTIMATELY TURNING THE TIDE.



DIDST THOU SEE ME STOUTLY SUNDER THY CAGE, FAIR IDUNN?

THOU DIDST MERELY FALL UPON IT, VAST VOLSTAGG.

STAY THY HARSH WORDS, GRIM HOGUN...

'T WAS A SEEMLY MISSION ON ALL ACCOUNTS, ACCOMPLISHED WITH MINIMUM OF VIOLENCE.



TYR! THE GODDESS HATH BEEN RESCUED-- AND STOLEN BACK TO THE PALACE!

WHAT?! THEN 'TIS THAT FOOL LOKI'S DOING! HE WAS TO GUARD IDUNN-- AND INSTEAD HE HATH DISAPPEARED!

STILL, WHAT MATTER IF I WAS WRONG ABOUT MY FATHER ODIN? WHAT MATTER IF HE DOES NOT DESERVE THIS SIEGE AND ULTIMATE DEFEAT?

WHERE IS HE?!

'TIS MY ONLY CHANCE TO SUCCEED WHERE IN THE PAST I HAVE EVER FAILED...



I AM HERE, WAR-GOD.

THY NEGLIGENCE HAS COST US THE GODDESS IDUNN-- AND HAS RESTORED HER TO BALDER AND ODIN IN THE PALACE!

AYE-- BUT WHERE WERE YOU WHEN IT MATTERED?

IT MATTERS NOT, TYR. WE STILL HAVE HER GOLDEN APPLES-- ALL SAVE THOSE WHICH WE STORED IN THE GULLET OF THE SERPENT OF MIDGARD.

AYE... TRUE ENOUGH... BY THE TIME THIS SIEGE ENDS, WE SHALL STILL BE THE VICTORS.



EAT, LOKI-- WE MUST MAINTAIN OUR STRENGTH WHILE THOSE IN THE PALACE STARVE.

AYE... STARVE AND GRADUALLY AGE TOWARD A GOAL WHICH NO GOD HATH EVER BEFORE ATTAINED...

MORTAL DEATH.

EVEN AS THE RESCUE PARTY RETURNS, ODIN AND THE OTHER GODS HAVE BEEN WATCHING AND LISTENING FROM THE PALACE BALCONY...

LIARS AND DECEIVERS LOKI AND TYR MAY BE, BUT THEIR WORDS DO THIS TIME RING TRULY. ERE LONG WE SHALL WEAKEN... AND BECOME EASY PREY FOR THEM...

WHICH IS WHY I SAY WE MUST ACT NOW!

THE FORCES OF VILLAINY BE ALWAYS WEAK IN THE END!

AYE! UNLEASH US IN A FULL ASSAULT, ALL-FATHER-- TO CRUSH THE CRAVEN DOGS AND RECOVER THE GOLDEN APPLES!

BALDER SPEAKS THE WISDOM OF PLAIN TRUTH!

NAY, NOT WITH THE WISDOM OF TRUTH, FANDRAL-- BUT WITH THE BLIND HEART OF COURAGE.

NEVER WOULD I SHIRK FROM BATTLE-- WHEN THE CAUSE BE JUST, AND MORE THAN A PATH TO RUIN.

BUT FIGHTING NOW BE A LOST CAUSE-- WE MUST INSTEAD ESCAPE THE PALACE, AND STEEL OURSELVES FOR A LATER BATTLE STAGE ON OUR OWN TERMS.

BUT THEY'LL SIMPLY HUNT US DOWN FROM ONE END OF ASGARD TO THE OTHER-- AS WE STEADILY AGE AND WEAKEN WITH EACH STEP OF THE FLIGHT! WHERE CAN WE GO--?

TO MIDGARD -- WHERE THOR CAN AID US! IF ANY GOD CAN DEFEAT THE GATHERED FORCES OF TYR AND LOKI--

BUT 'TIS UNHEARD OF, SIF! THE GODS FLEEING ASGARD--! NEVER COULD WE--

I SHALL BE THE JUDGE OF THAT...

... AFTER FIRST CONSULTING WITH THE ORACLE NIMIR. 3

THIS IS THE GRAVE QUESTION PUT TO MIMIR, THE ALL-KNOWING WELL OF FIRE...

AYE, ON MIDGARD THOU SHALT AGAIN BE TRUE GODS... AT LEAST IN CONTRAST TO THE MORTAL INHABITANTS THEREON...

AND THEREON THOU WILT HAVE NO NEED TO EAT OF THE GOLDEN APPLES--JUST AS THOR HAS NO NEED FOR THEM ON THE LOWER REALM.

THEN, ALL-FATHER...?

SO BE IT!

BUT BY YMIR'S ICY BEARD--WHEN THIS DEBACLE IS ENDED, HOW TYR AND LOKI SHALL PAY, AND PAY IN GRIEVOUS WAGES, FOR FORCING THIS IGNO-MINIOUS FLIGHT UPON US!

NOW STAND YE BACK--AS I PREPARE THE WAY!

NEXT: THE CONCLUSION OF THE "SERPENT OF MIDGARD" SAGA-- IN A FULL 22-PAGE EPIC...

TO EARTH--AND THOR!