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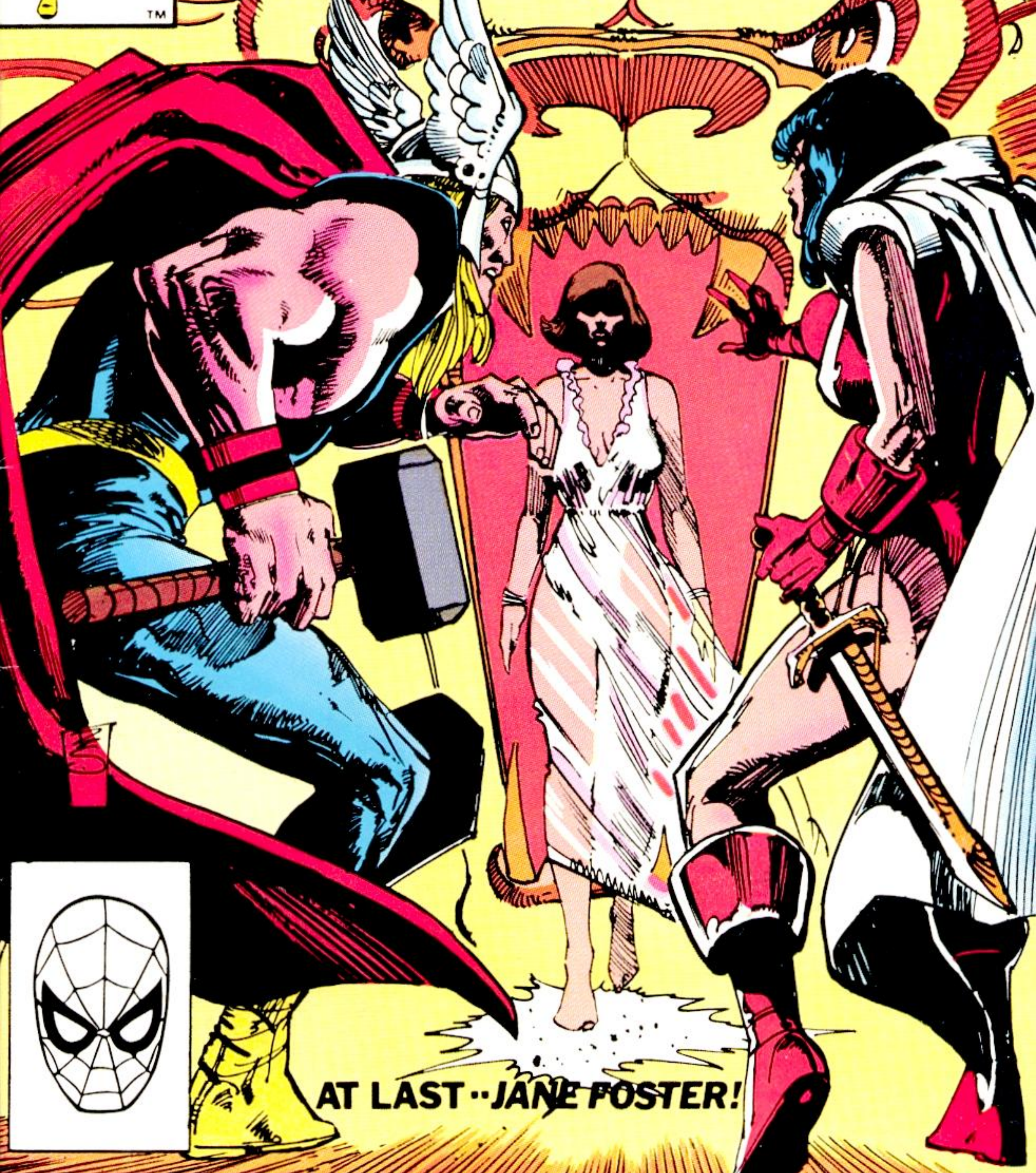
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THE MIGHTY THOR



AT LAST..JANE FOSTER!

RUNEQUEST'S END!

I DON'T UNDERSTAND---
WHAT'S HAPPENED?

I FEAR OUR
JOURNEY ACROSS
SPACE TO THE WORLD
OF KAMO THARNN
PROVES FUTILE,
KEITH KINCAID.

THY MORTAL LOVE,
JANE FOSTER, WHOSE
FORM WE SOUGHT TO
RELEASE FROM WITHIN
THE MYSTIC RUNESTAFF
IN MY GRASP, HATH
NOT APPEARED.

NAY, MY GODDESS
SIF, THOR PRINCE OF
ASGARD, SHALL NOT
RESIGN HIMSELF TO
FAILURE.

JANE FOSTER *MUST*
BE FOUND TO PROVE
THAT MY MORTAL
COUNTERPART, DONALD
BLAKE, DID NOT MURDER
HER AS HE HAS BEEN
ACCUSED.

COME,
COME---HA HA!
KAMO THARNN
WOULD POSSESS
HIS STAFF ONCE
MORE!



ALAN ZELENETZ
SCRIPTER

MARK BRIGHT
PENCILER

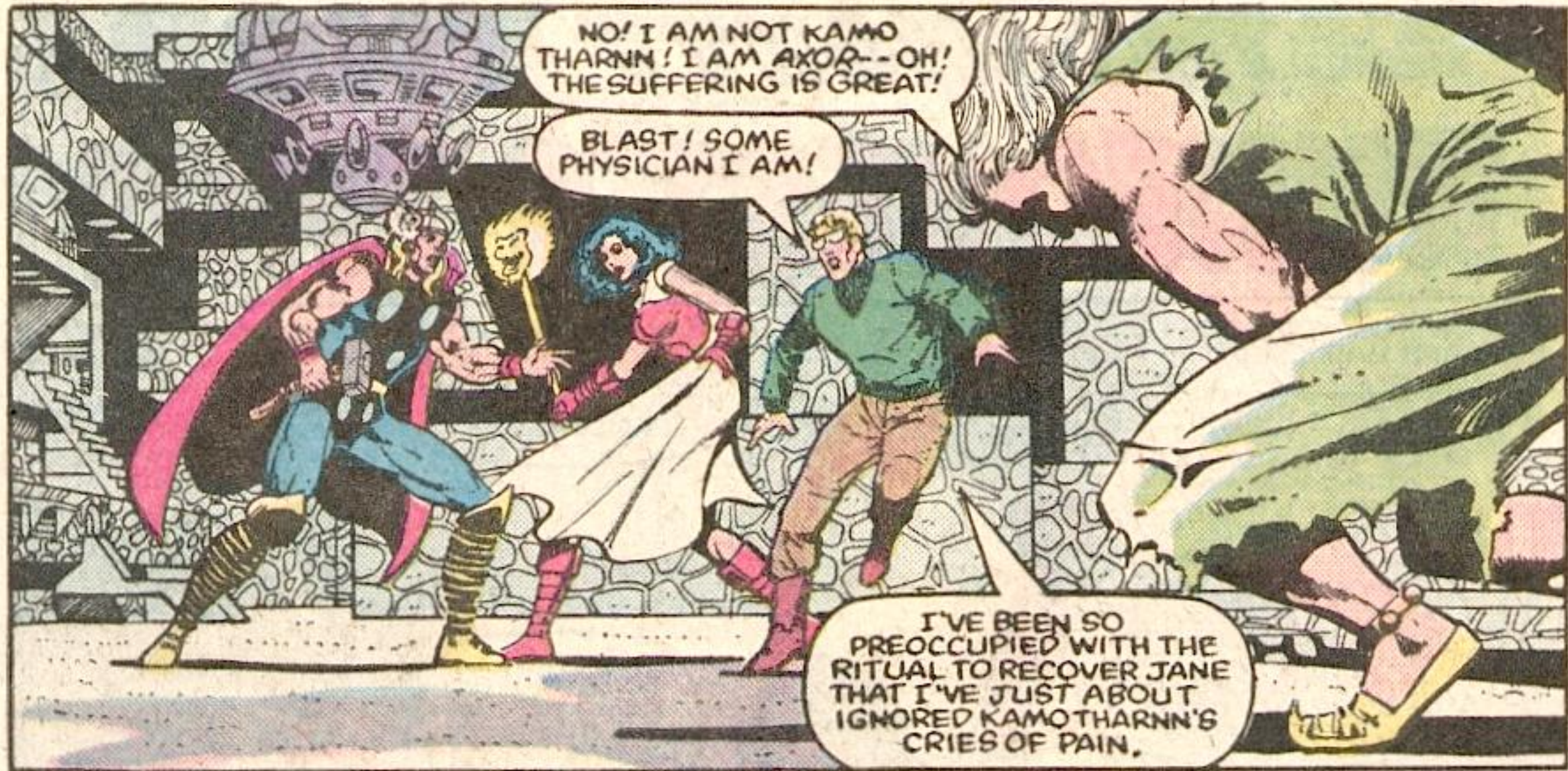
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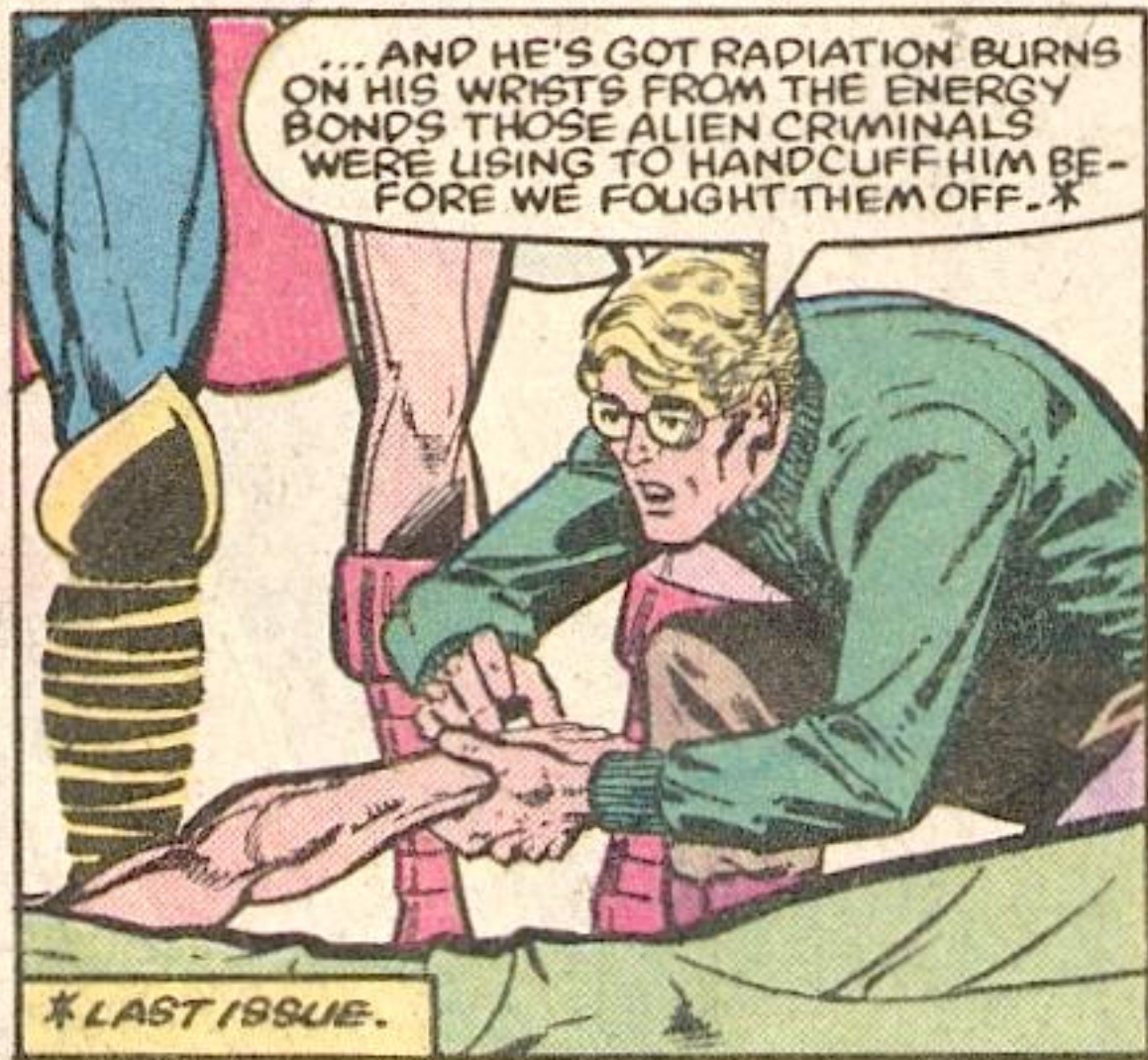
NO! I AM NOT KAMO THARNN! I AM AXOR-- OH! THE SUFFERING IS GREAT!

BLAST! SOME PHYSICIAN I AM!

I'VE BEEN SO PREOCCUPIED WITH THE RITUAL TO RECOVER JANE THAT I'VE JUST ABOUT IGNORED KAMOTHARNN'S CRIES OF PAIN.



THE MAN'S ILL. HIS RAVING'S A SIGN OF DELIRIUM...



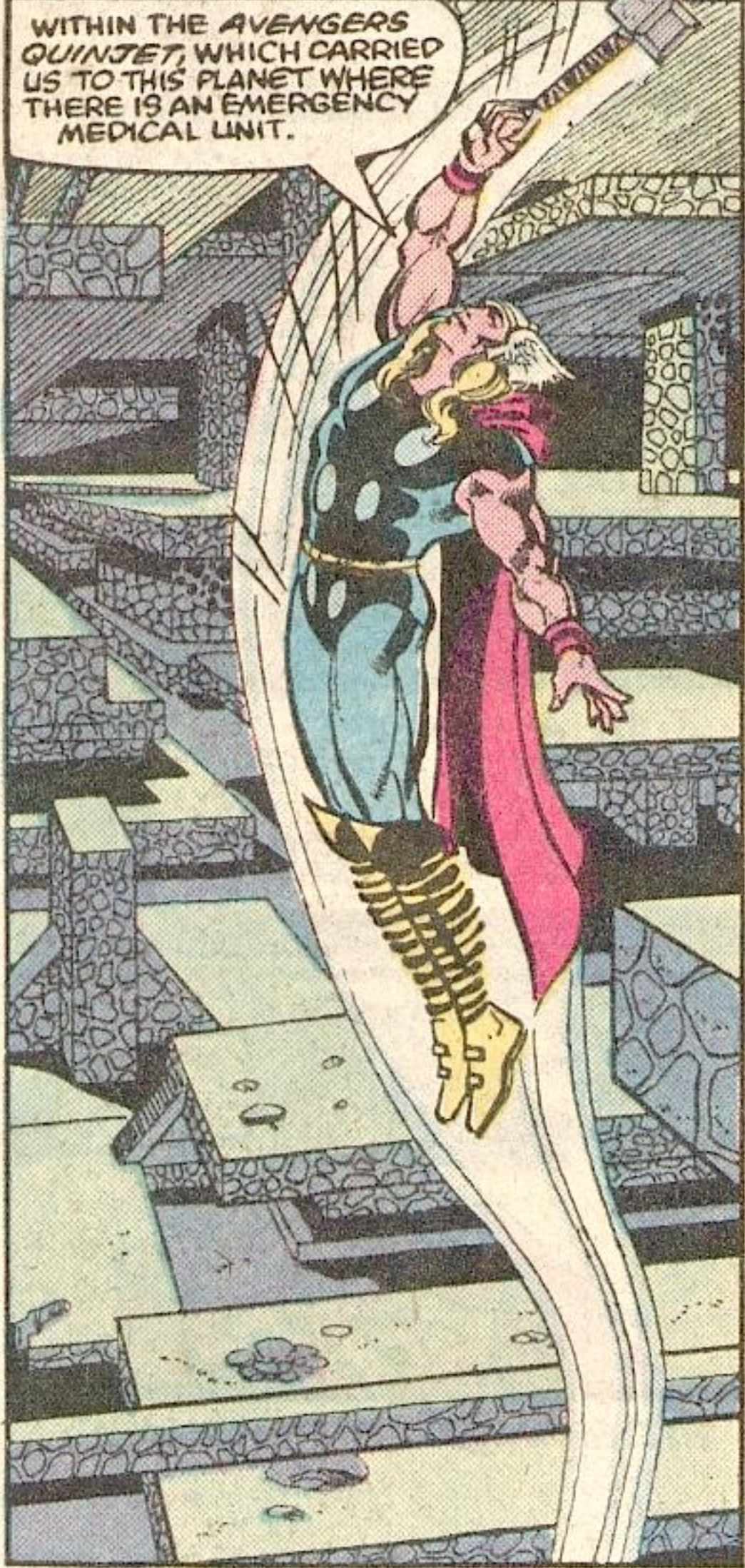
... AND HE'S GOT RADIATION BURNS ON HIS WRISTS FROM THE ENERGY BONDS THOSE ALIEN CRIMINALS WERE USING TO HANDCUFF HIM BEFORE WE FOUGHT THEM OFF. *

* LAST ISSUE.

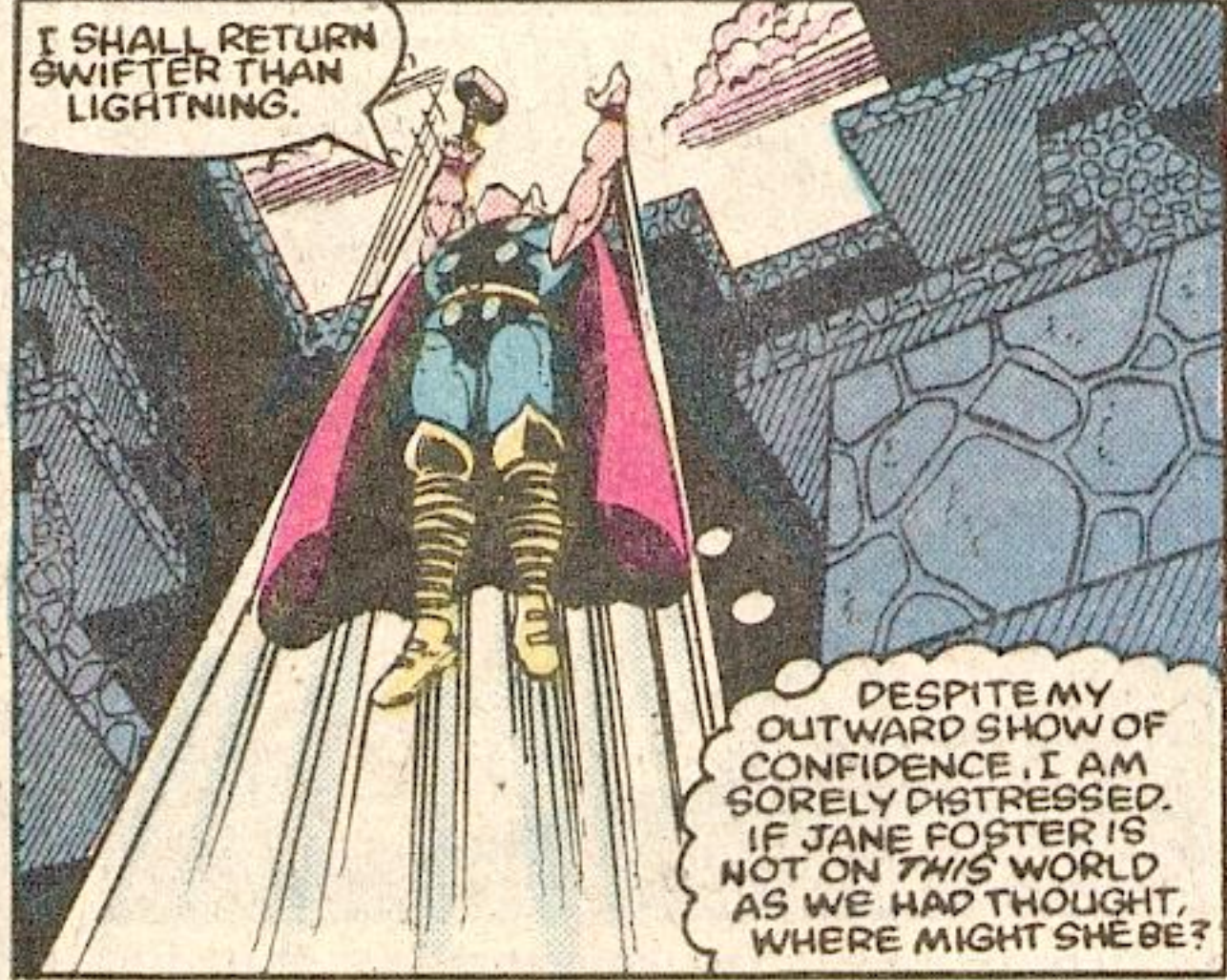


HE NEEDS IMMEDIATE TREATMENT.

THOR, WHERE DOST THOU FLY!?

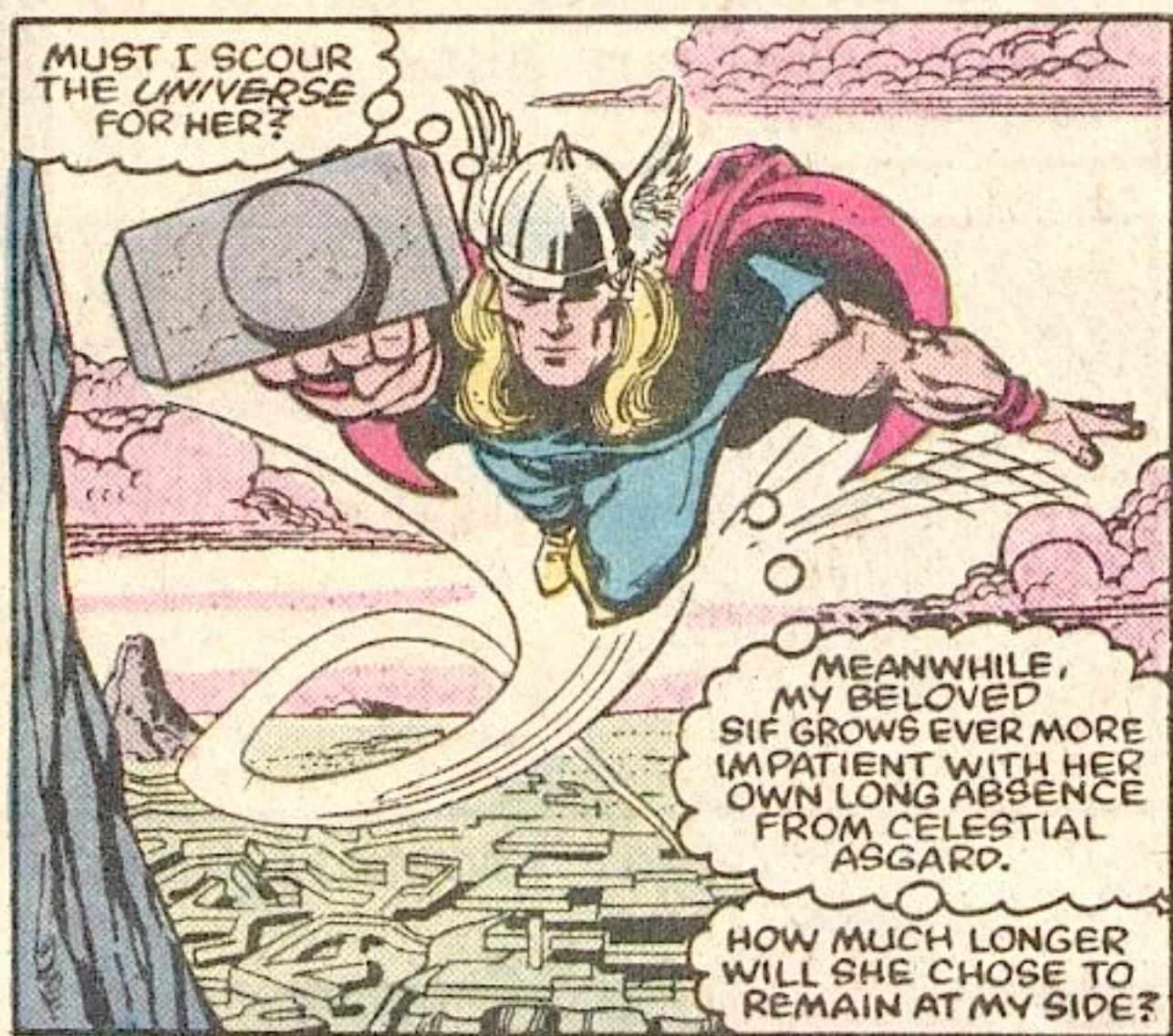


WITHIN THE AVENGERS QUINJET, WHICH CARRIED US TO THIS PLANET WHERE THERE IS AN EMERGENCY MEDICAL UNIT.



I SHALL RETURN SWIFTER THAN LIGHTNING.

DESPITE MY OUTWARD SHOW OF CONFIDENCE, I AM SORELY DISTRESSED. IF JANE FOSTER IS NOT ON THIS WORLD AS WE HAD THOUGHT, WHERE MIGHT SHE BE?



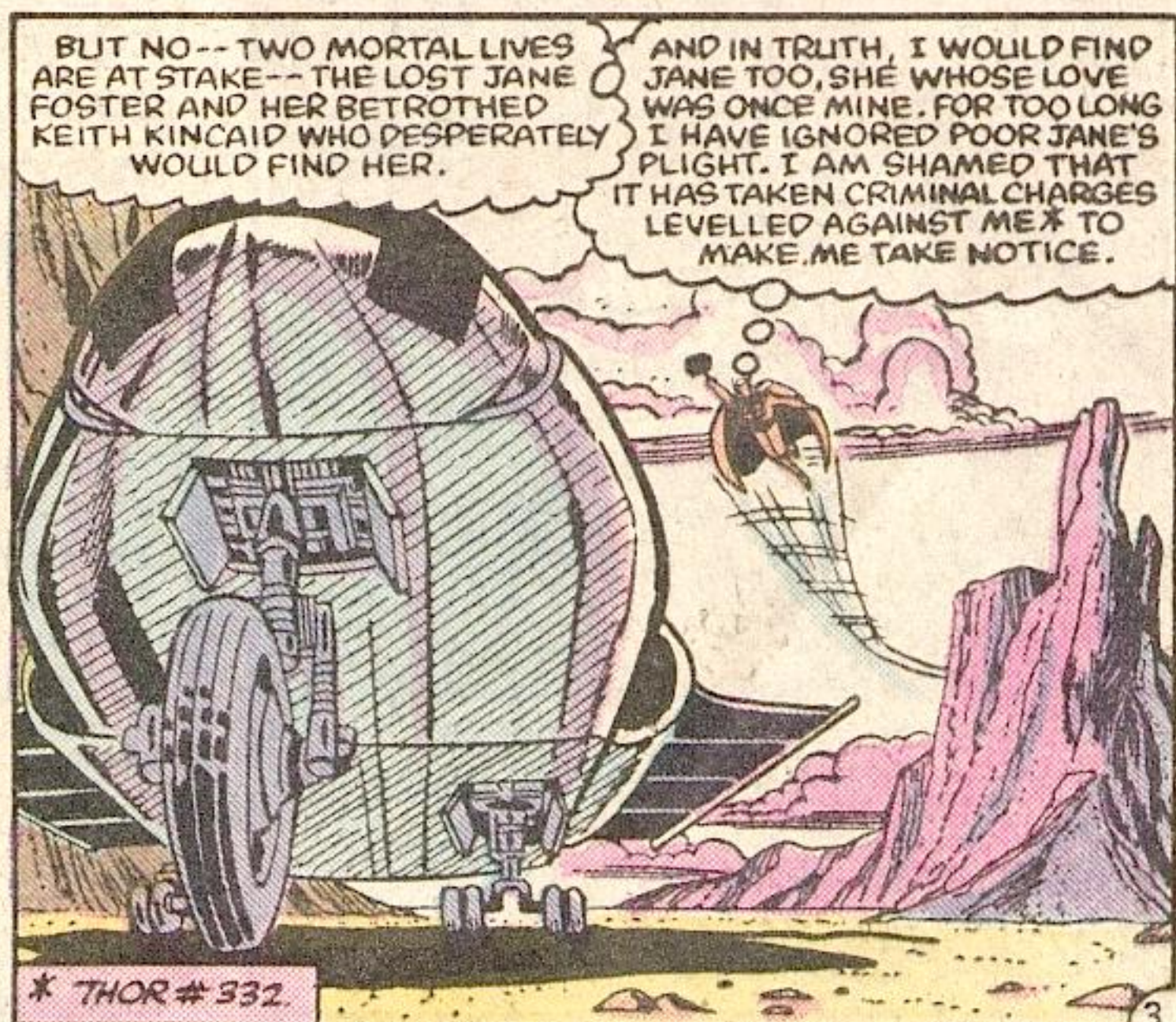
MUST I SCOUR THE UNIVERSE FOR HER?

MEANWHILE, MY BELOVED SIF GROWS EVER MORE IMPATIENT WITH HER OWN LONG ABSENCE FROM CELESTIAL ASGARD.

HOW MUCH LONGER WILL SHE CHOSE TO REMAIN AT MY SIDE?



PERHAPS 'TIS TIME TO SIMPLY ABANDON THE EARTHLY GUISE OF DONALD BLAKE AND FORSAKE THIS QUEST.



BUT NO-- TWO MORTAL LIVES ARE AT STAKE-- THE LOST JANE FOSTER AND HER BETROTHED KEITH KINCAID WHO DESPERATELY WOULD FIND HER.

AND IN TRUTH, I WOULD FIND JANE TOO, SHE WHOSE LOVE WAS ONCE MINE. FOR TOO LONG I HAVE IGNORED POOR JANE'S PLIGHT. I AM SHAMED THAT IT HAS TAKEN CRIMINAL CHARGES LEVELLED AGAINST ME TO MAKE ME TAKE NOTICE.



MEANWHILE...

HIS HEART IS HOLDING OUT--

INDEED-- HE APPEARS TO BE NIGH-IMMORTAL.

PERHAPS, SIF, BUT HE CAN SUFFER PAIN.

'TIS STRANGE, WHEN LAST I BATTLED HIM, HE WAS A SHREWD AND POWERFUL ADVERSARY, NOW HE SEEMS LOST IN MADNESS.



I'D FORGOTTEN, SIF, YOU'VE BEEN HERE ALREADY AND USED THE RUNESTAFF WITH SUCCESS ONCE BEFORE TO IMPART YOUR SPIRIT INTO JANE'S BODY.

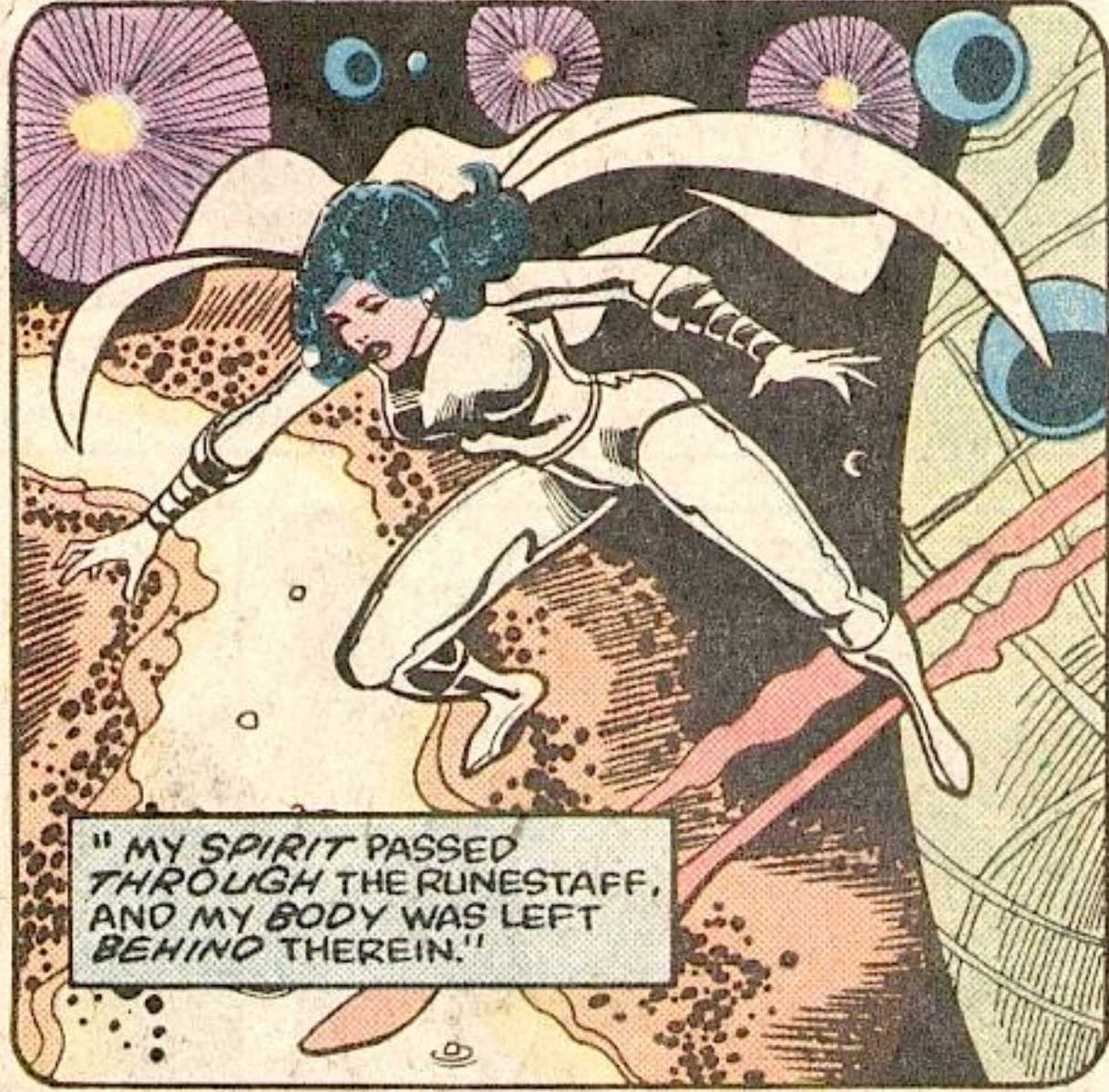
PERHAPS THERE'S A CLUE HERE-- WHERE DID YOUR BODY GO WHEN YOUR SPIRIT LEFT IT?



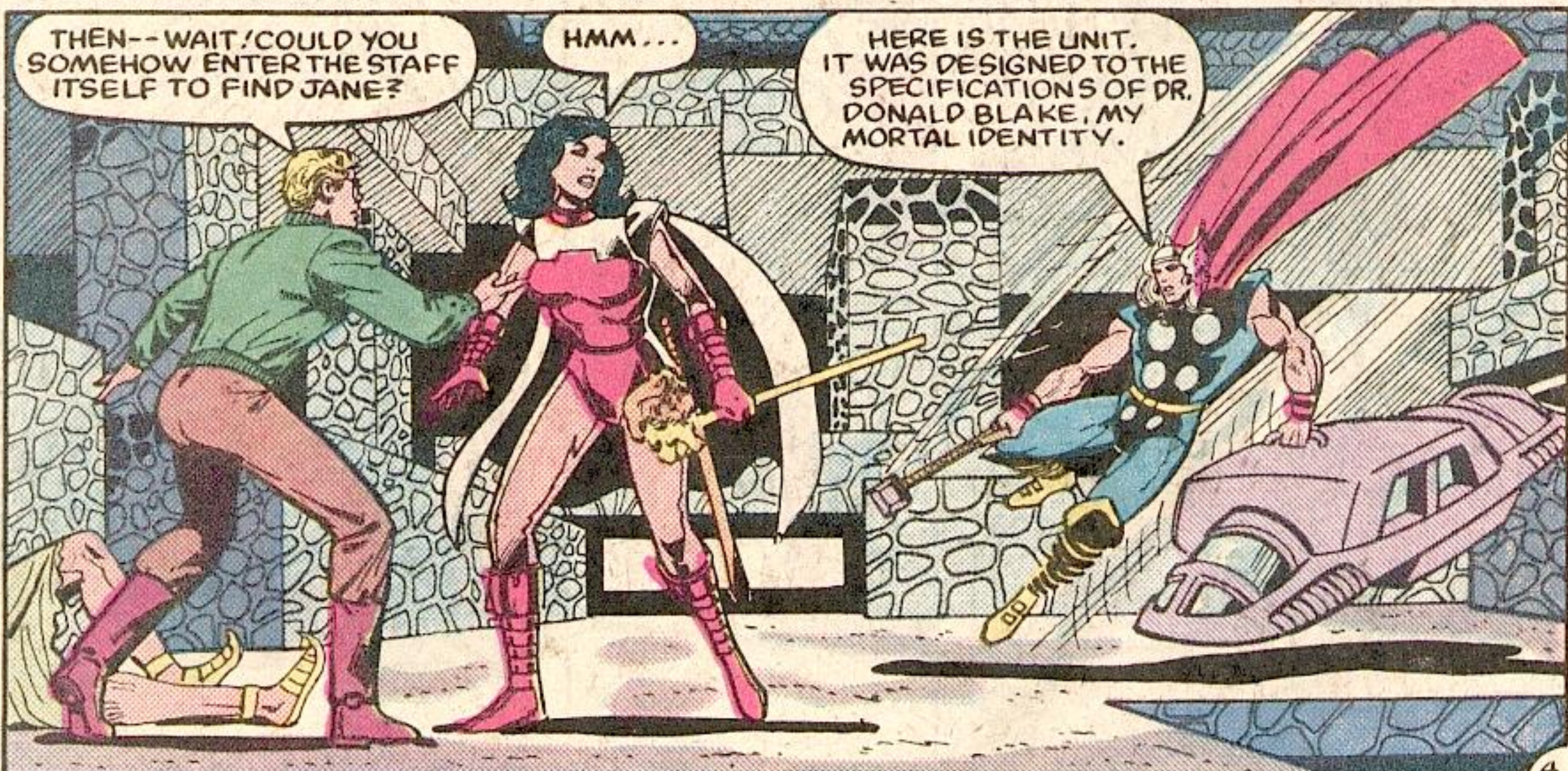
THE MEMORY IS DIM, BUT VAGUELY I RECALL A MOMENT...

"... JUST AS THE TRANSFORMATION BETWEEN MYSELF AND JANE FOSTER TOOK PLACE. *

* BACK IN THOR # 235.



" MY SPIRIT PASSED THROUGH THE RUNESTAFF, AND MY BODY WAS LEFT BEHIND THEREIN."



THEN-- WAIT! COULD YOU SOMEHOW ENTER THE STAFF ITSELF TO FIND JANE?

HMM...

HERE IS THE UNIT. IT WAS DESIGNED TO THE SPECIFICATIONS OF DR. DONALD BLAKE, MY MORTAL IDENTITY.

MY PRINCE, WHILE KEITH KINCAID DOTH TENDER CARE TO KAMO THARNN...

... THY WARRIOR GODDESS SHALL BYPASS SPACE TO ENTER THE RUNE-STAFF AND SEEK JANE FOSTER IN THAT MYSTIC REALM.

WITHIN THE STAFF!
OF COURSE!



BUT MAY, BELOVED, ALL-FATHER ODIN ALONE KNOWS WHAT PERILS MAY LURK WITHIN.

DID YOU NOT ONCE ALREADY SAVE JANE FOSTER'S LIFE, INFUSING HER FORM WITH YOUR SPIRIT? NOW I SHALL ASSAY HER RESCUE.



THEN WE GO TOGETHER, FOR SUCH IS MY WILL.

BUT WHAT OF KEITH KINCAID? MAY WE LEAVE A LONE MORTAL LINGUARD?

KAMO THARNN NEEDS THE MEDICAL ATTENTION, THUNDER GOD.



THE PLACE SEEMS PRETTY DESERTED, BUT, JUST IN CASE, THIS LASER-GUN I BORROWED FROM THE QUINJET OUGHT TO BE PROTECTION ENOUGH.



PLEASE... JUST FIND JANE FOR ME.

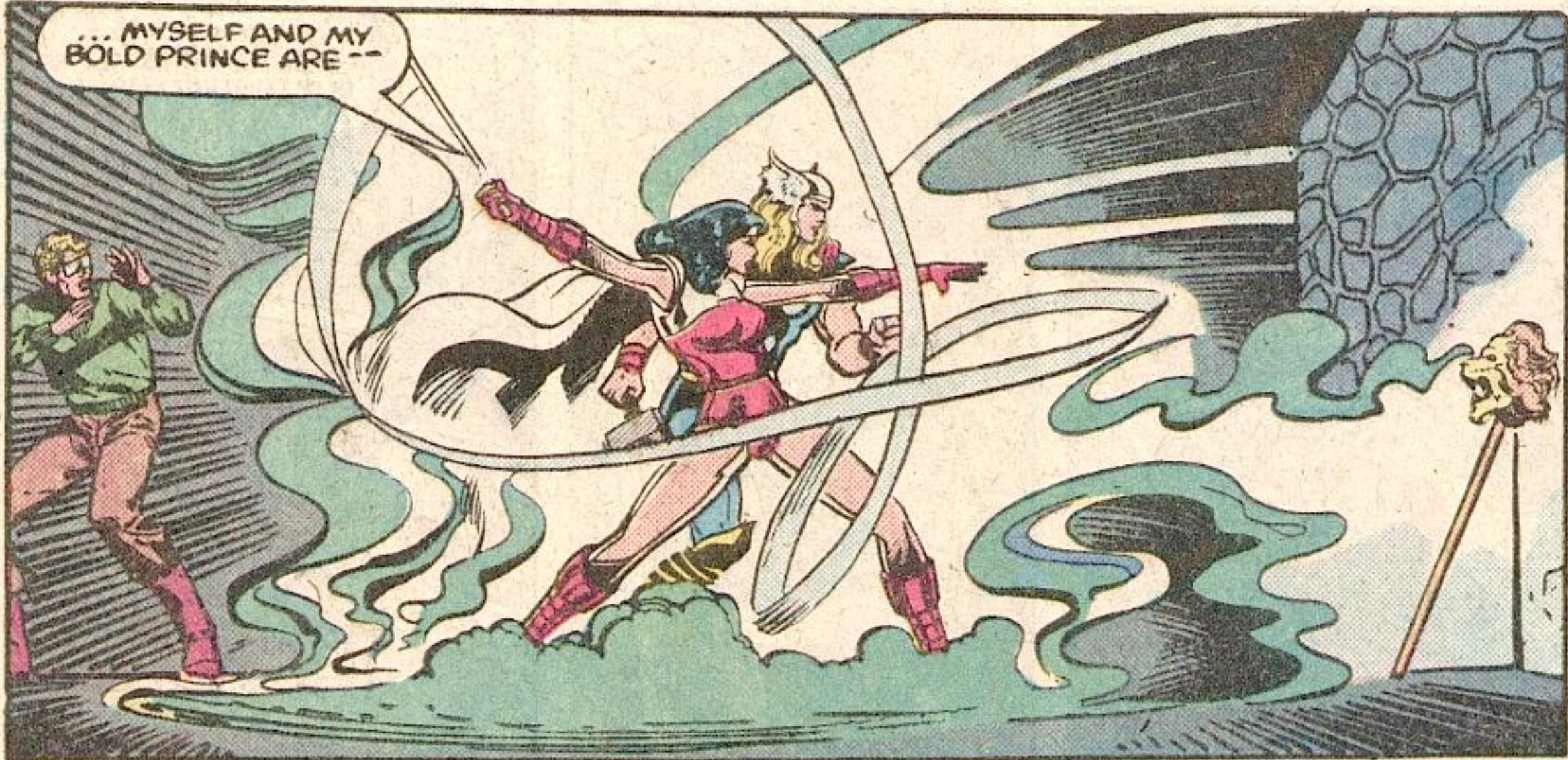
AYE, I PLACE THE RUNESTAFF THUS FIRMLY AGAINST THE WALL...



...AND BY THE POWERS ODIN INFUSED IN MY GLEAMING BLADE...



... MYSELF AND MY BOLD PRINCE ARE --



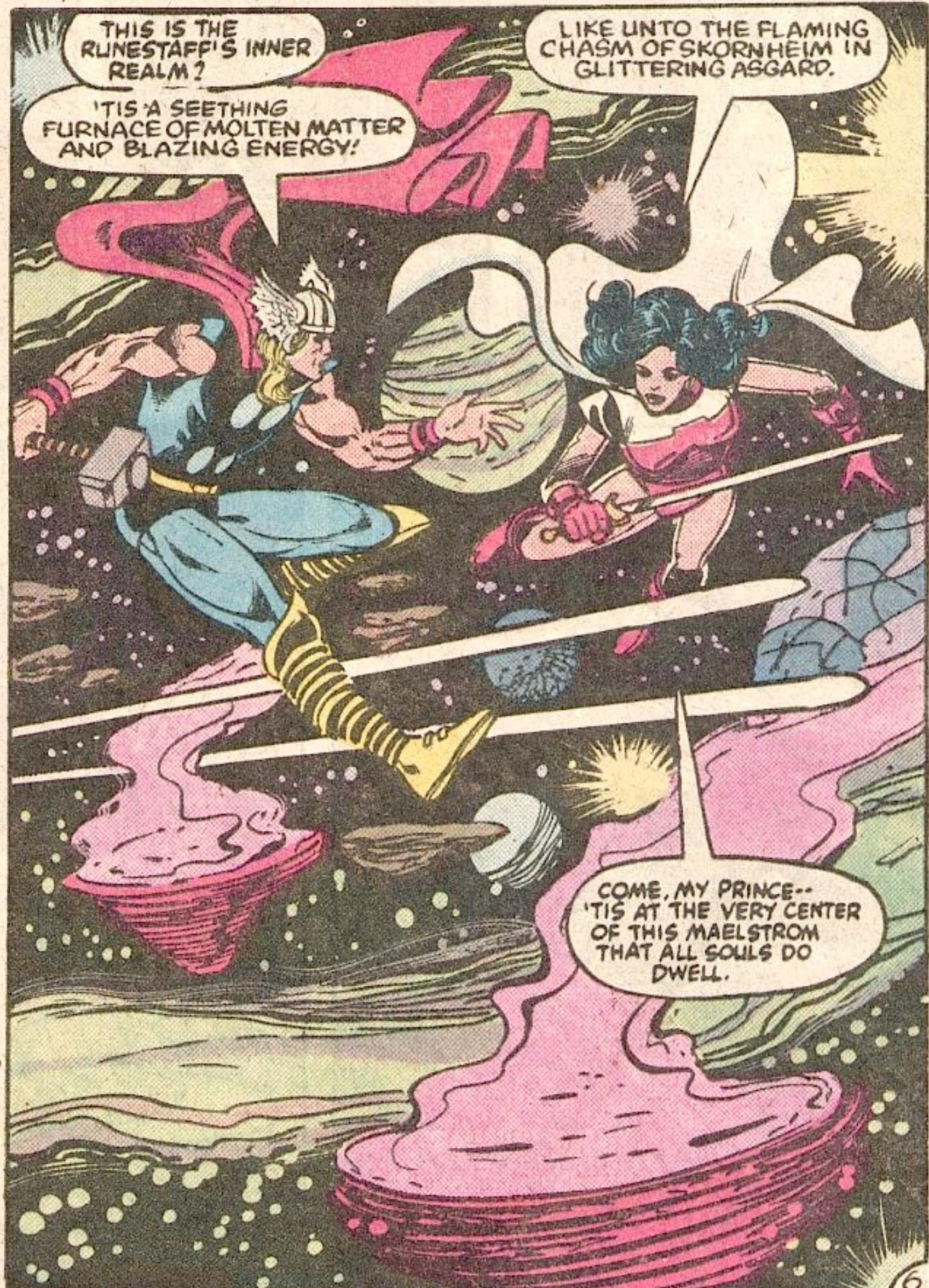
THIS IS THE RUNESTAFF'S INNER REALM?

'TIS A SEETHING FURNACE OF MOLTEN MATTER AND BLAZING ENERGY!

LIKE UNTO THE FLAMING CHASM OF SKORNHEIM IN GLITTERING ASGARD.



... GONE!



COME, MY PRINCE-- 'TIS AT THE VERY CENTER OF THIS MAELSTROM THAT ALL SOULS DO DWELL.



SIF -- MY MANTLE WILL GUARD THEE AGAINST THE TORRID HEAT --

BTU



BTU

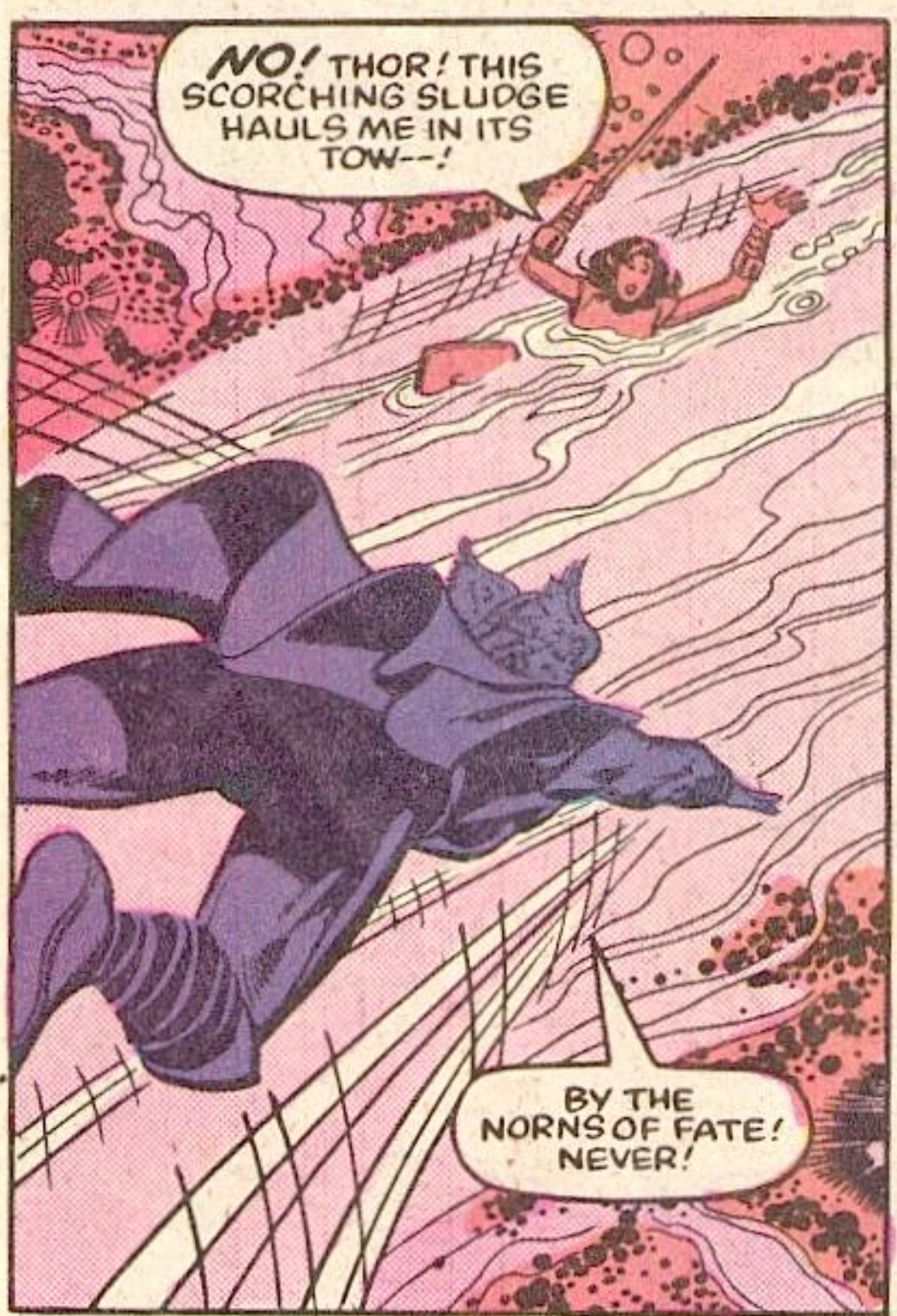
MY BLADE!

SOMETHING WRESTS IT FROM MY GRASP!



SIF -- HOLD!

AIEE! 'TIS LIKE A SEA OF FIERY LAVA, BUT THE HILT'S WITHIN MY FINGER'S GRASP --



NO! THOR! THIS SCORCHING SLUDGE HAULS ME IN ITS TOW --!

BY THE NORNS OF FATE! NEVER!



I AM NEAR, SIF. DO NOT GIVE IN TO THE PULL OF THE STREAM.

MY PRINCE, I CANNOT STRUGGLE FREE --!

AT THAT MOMENT, UNAWARE OF THE PLIGHT OF HIS GODLY COMPANIONS...

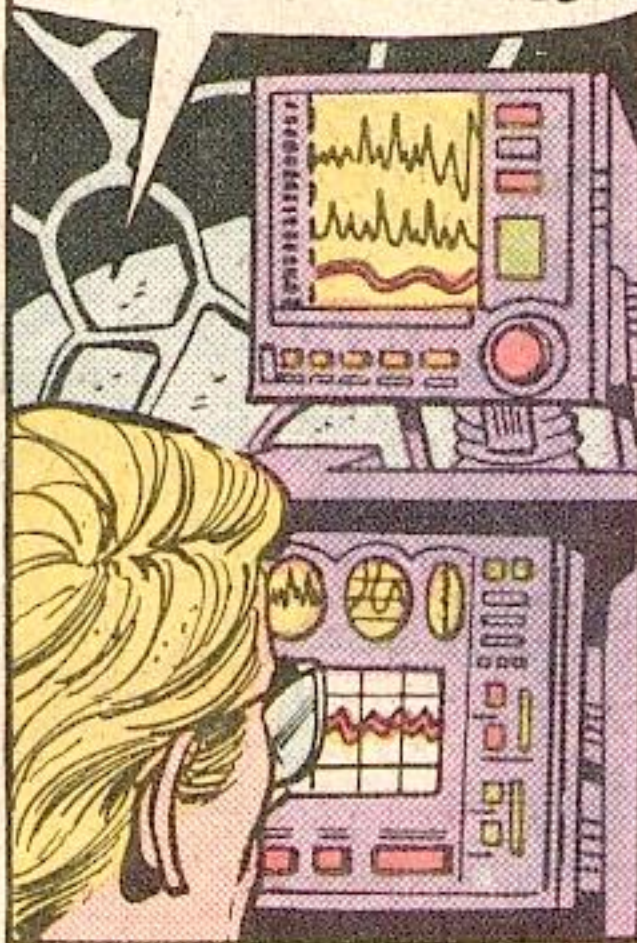
YOUR CONDITION'S GOT ME WORRIED, MISTER THARNN. YOUR VITAL SIGNS SEEM STABILIZED BUT YOU'RE DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO SLIPPING INTO A COMA.

AND FOR AN IMMORTAL THAT COULD LAST FOR EONS.



I'D BETTER JUST MONITOR THE EEG--

CHRISTMAS IN JULY! THE MACHINE'S RECORDING MULTIPLE BRAINWAVES.



HOW'S THAT POSSIBLE? THERE'D HAVE TO BE A HUNDRED OR MORE INDIVIDUALS HOOKED UP TO--



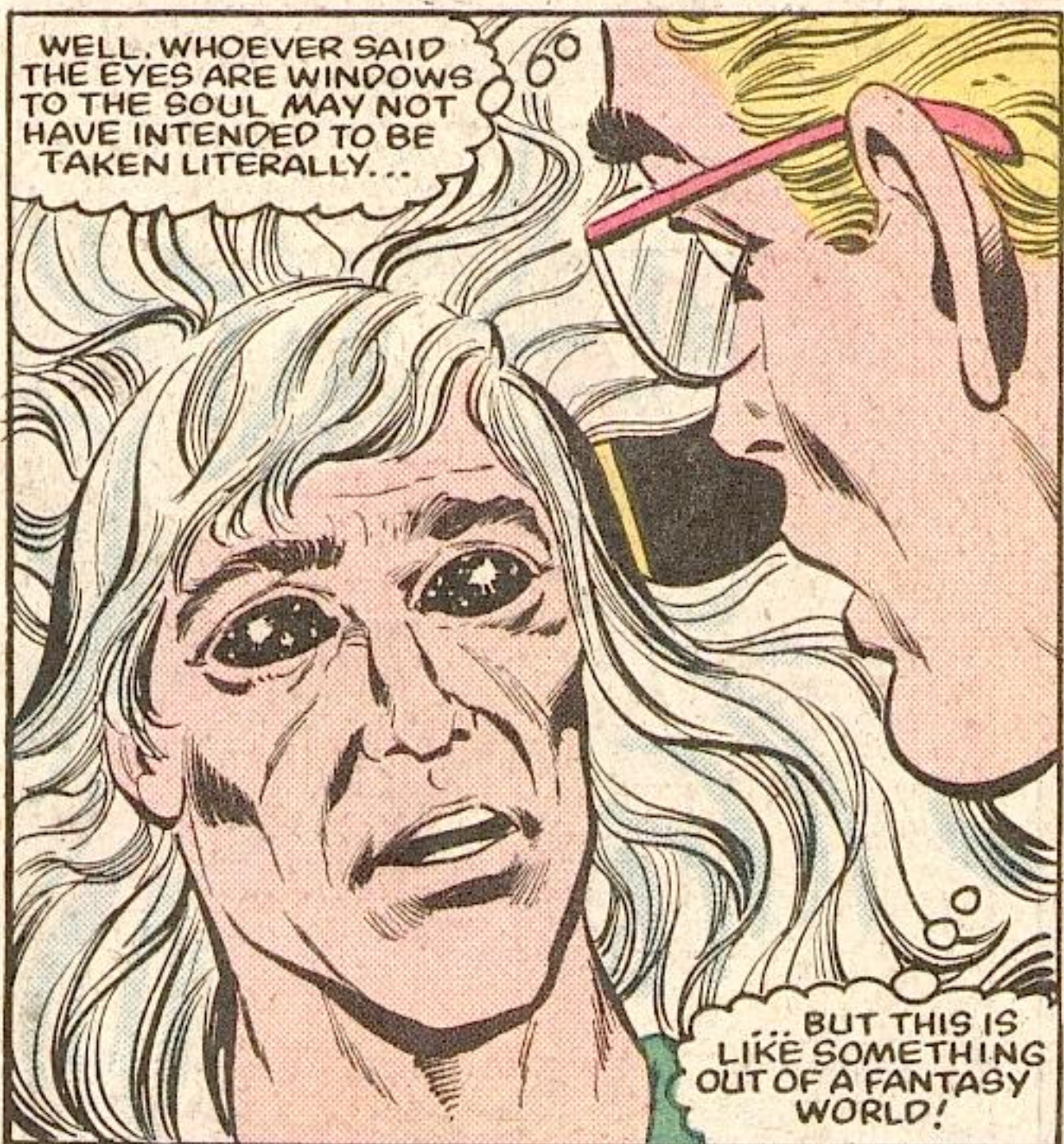
WAIT! SEVERAL TIMES IN HIS DELIRIUM KAMO THARNN SAID HE WAS NOT KAMO THARNN.



THEY'D LAUGH ME OUT OF THE MEDICAL ASSOCIATION FOR THIS, BUT I'M ALREADY KNEE-DEEP IN MYSTICISM AND MAGIC HERE...

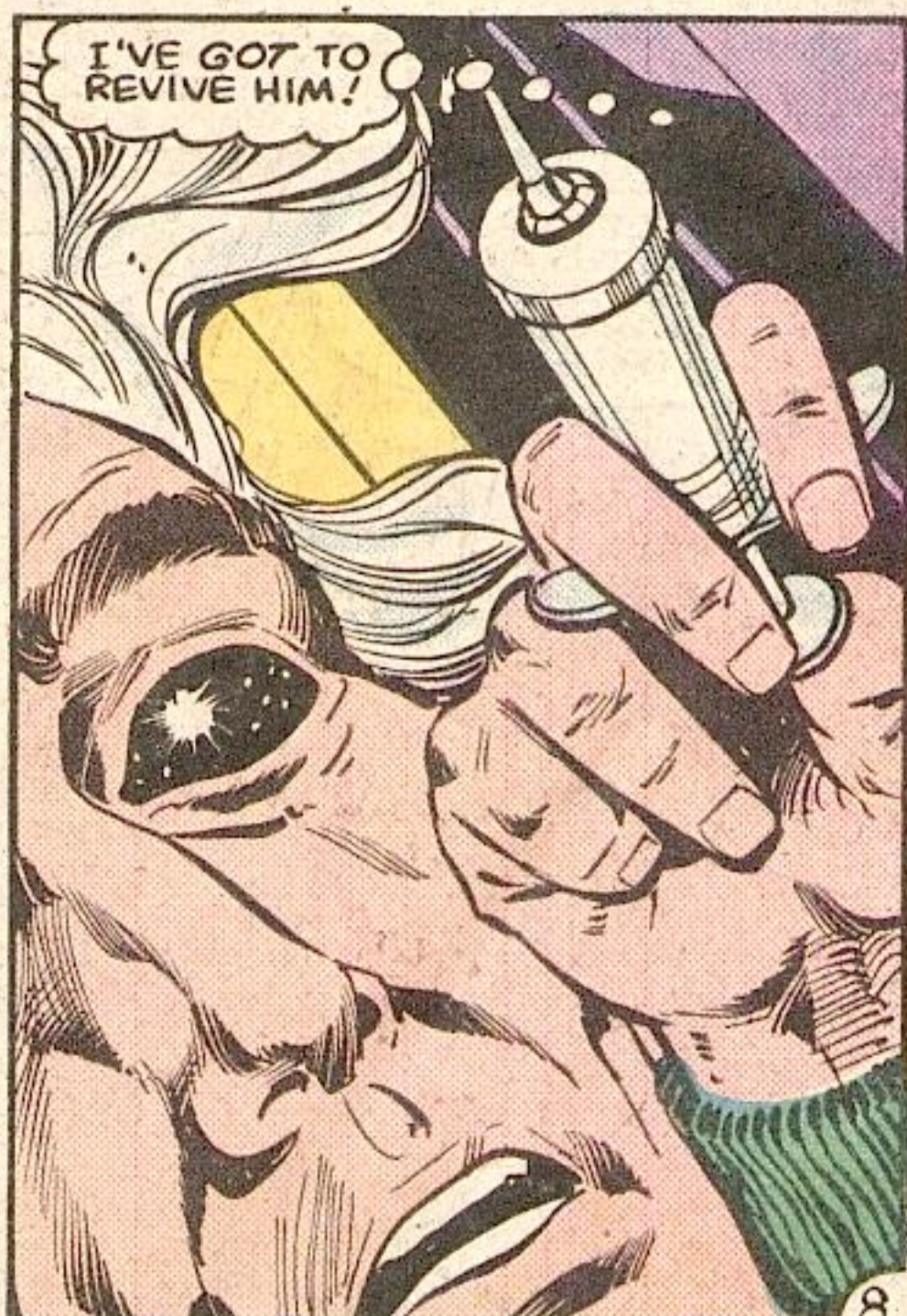
... AND I'VE GOT AN OFF-THE-WALL HUNCH THIS BODY IS HOSTING MORE THAN ONE BEING.

WELL, WHOEVER SAID THE EYES ARE WINDOWS TO THE SOUL MAY NOT HAVE INTENDED TO BE TAKEN LITERALLY...



... BUT THIS IS LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A FANTASY WORLD!

I'VE GOT TO REVIVE HIM!



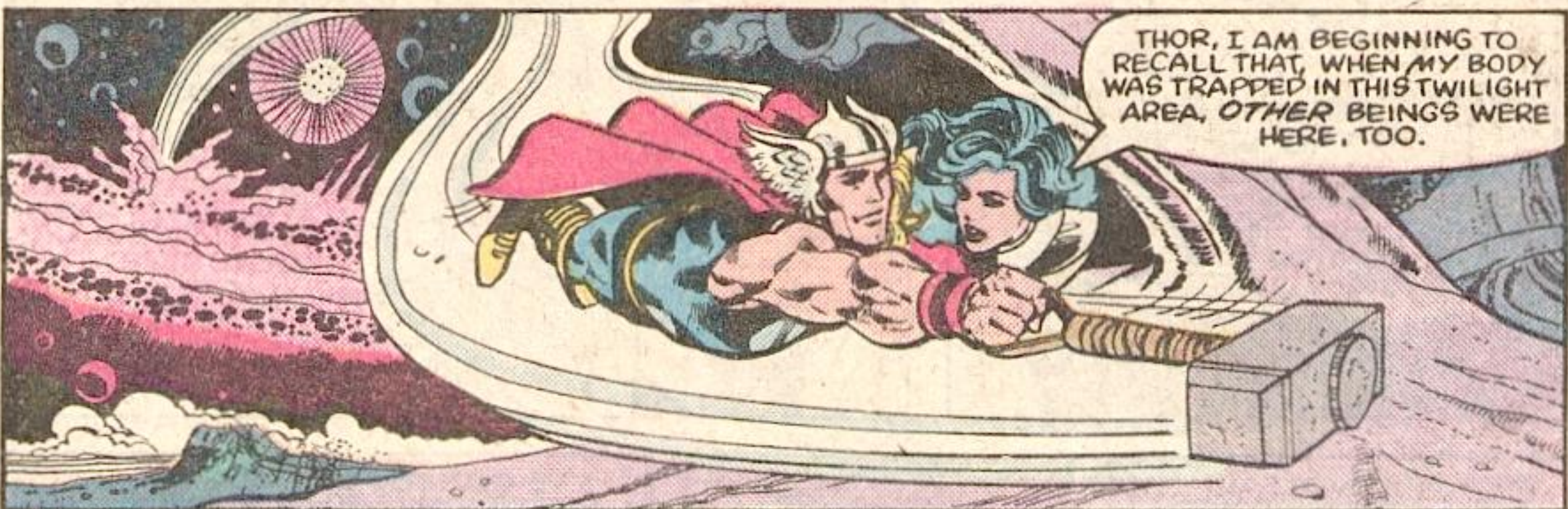
MEANWHILE...



HOLD FAST TO THY PRINCE'S EMBRACE, GODDESS, AND BY THE WHIRLWIND POWER OF ENCHANTED MJOLNIR...



... WE SHALL SOAR ABOVE THE MURKY FLOOD!



THOR, I AM BEGINNING TO RECALL THAT, WHEN MY BODY WAS TRAPPED IN THIS TWILIGHT AREA, OTHER BEINGS WERE HERE, TOO.



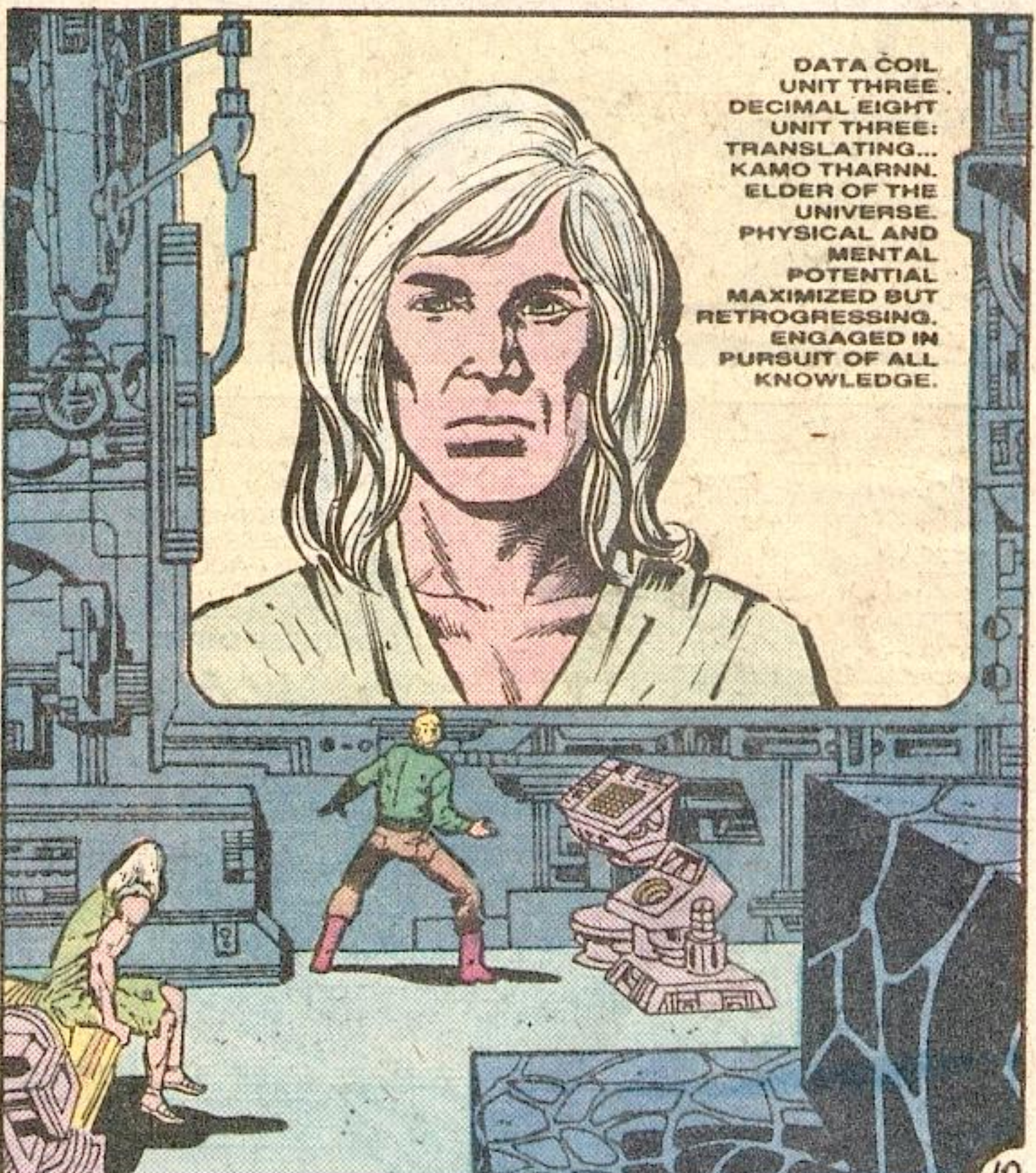
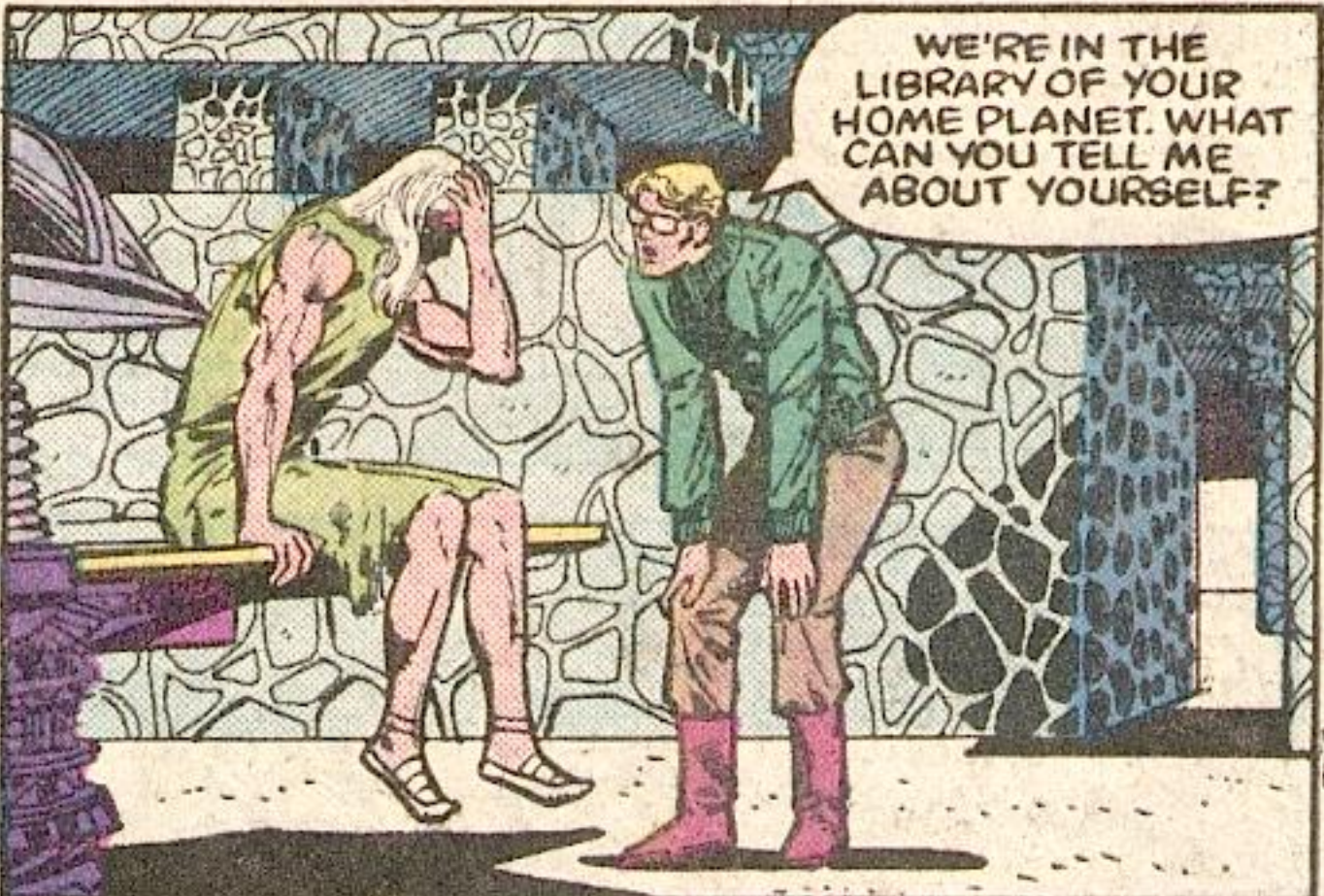
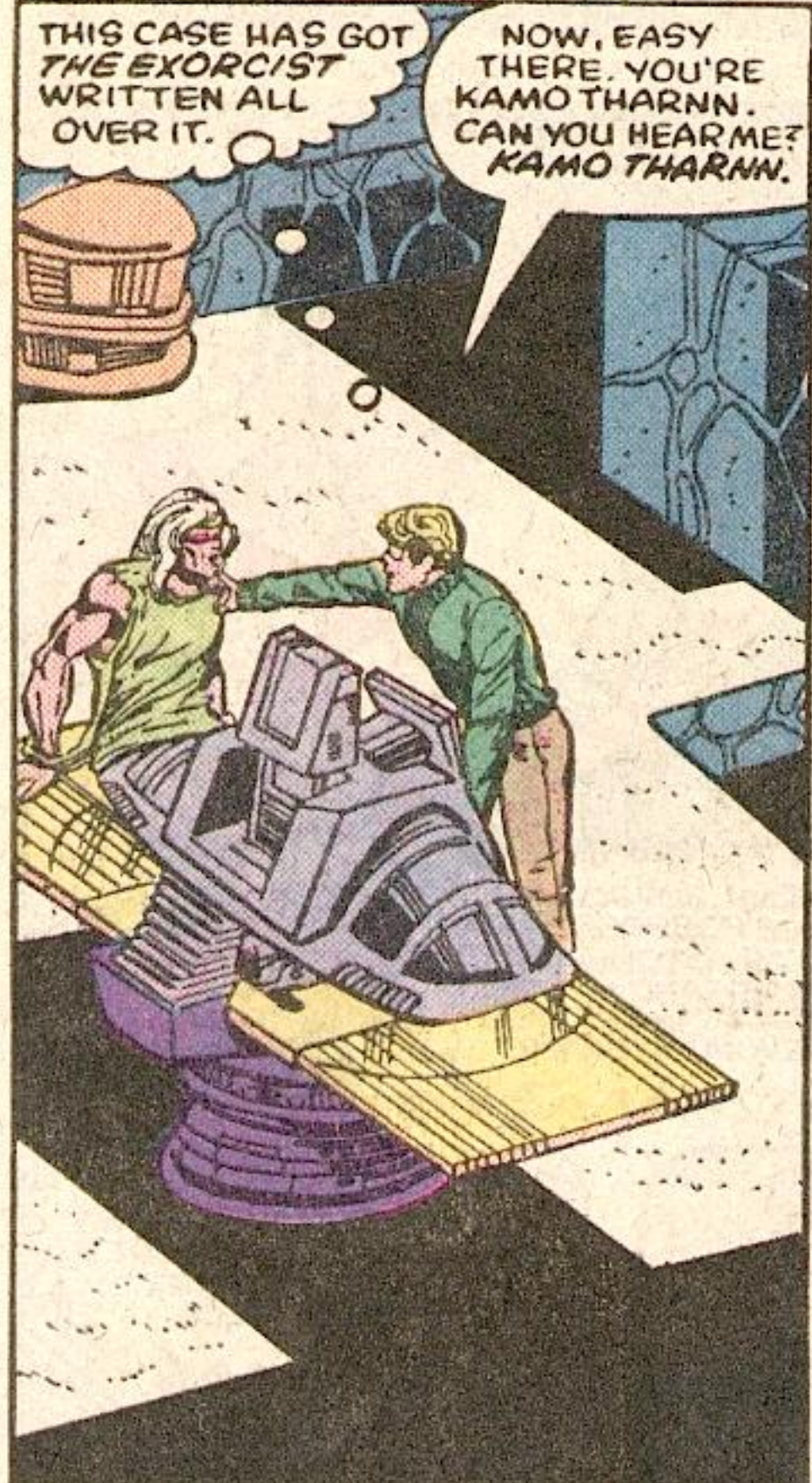
AYE, BUT THESE BLACK DEPTHS APPEAR BOUNDLESS, SIF. WE MUST PROBE FARTHER AND EVEN FARTHER...



BACK IN THE MASTER LIBRARY OF KAMO THARNN...

KODABAK GROSGUMBEET DUN TUMBLA NARCRUSTA GROGADA MANDO!

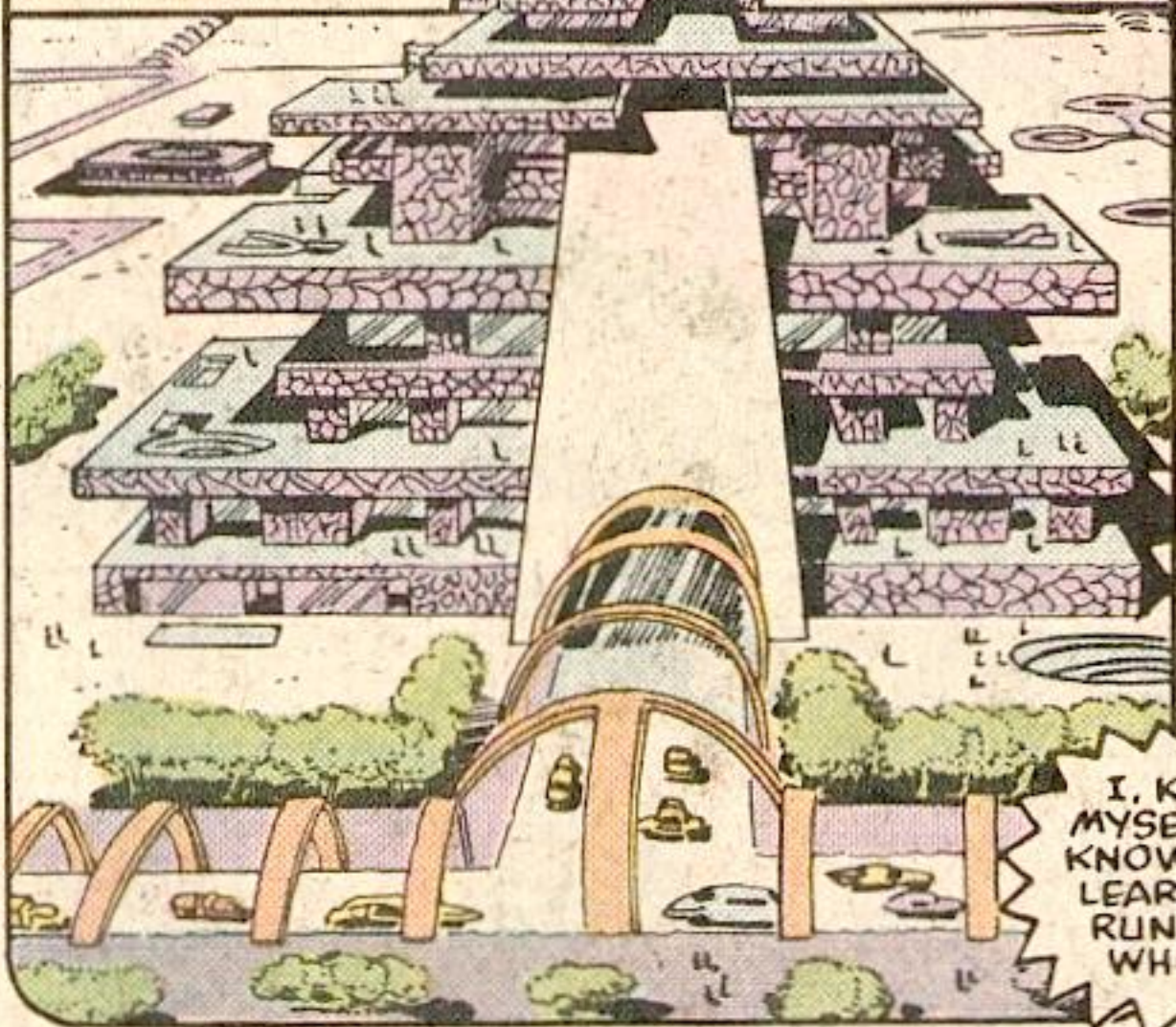
IT'S UNCANNY-- THAT MUST BE AT LEAST THE FIFTH DISTINCT PERSONALITY HE'S MANIFESTED IN THE LAST FEW MINUTES.



HIS ADOPTED PLANET RUS LONG SERVED AS AN INTER STELLAR ACADEMY WITHIN THE LOCAL GALAXY.

MASTER LIBRARY HOUSES MOST COMPLETE BANK OF DATA COILS WITHIN THE GALACTIC SYSTEM.

CONFIDENTIAL AUTOBIO CLEARANCE 3.8.3

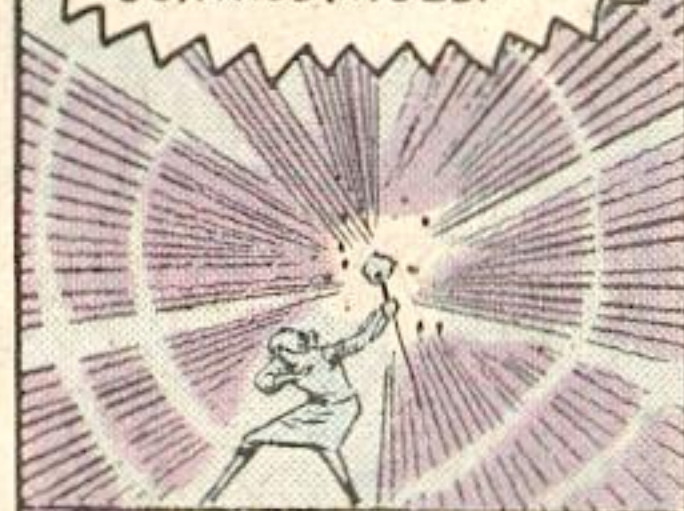


I, KAMO THARNN, SUPPOSING MYSELF TO HAVE POSSESSED ALL KNOWLEDGE, WAS ASTONISHED TO LEARN OF AN ALIEN AND MYSTIC RUNESTAFF, THE POWERS OF WHICH LAY BEYOND MY GRASP.

WHEN MY EARNEST PLEA FOR KNOWLEDGE OF ITS USE FELL ON DEAF EARS, BLOOD WAS SPILLED.



I NOW ADMIT TO THE INEXCUSABLE CRIME BUT SO ZEALOUS WAS MY QUEST FOR OMNISCIENCE THAT I COULD NOT CONTROL MYSELF.



YET SIN FOLLOWED UPON SIN. HAVING SLAIN THE MASTER, I HAD NO ONE TO EXPLAIN THE MYSTERIOUS PROPERTIES BOTH PHYSICAL AND MYSTICAL, OF THE UNIQUE STAFF.

MY OWN EXPERIMENTATION PROVED RECKLESS. MY FELLOW SCHOLARS, THE FACULTY OF MY ACADEMY, WERE TRAPPED WITHIN THE RUNESTAFF WHEN ONE DAY I CONJURED IMPROPERLY...



... AND I, MYSELF,
WAS CAST INTO THE WELL
OF BLINDNESS.

THE RUNESTAFF WAS
LATER STOLEN FROM ME BY
THE EARTH-GODS HERCULES
AND SIF. BUT IT WAS RETURNED
TO ME, AND I ATTEMPTED
AGAIN TO--

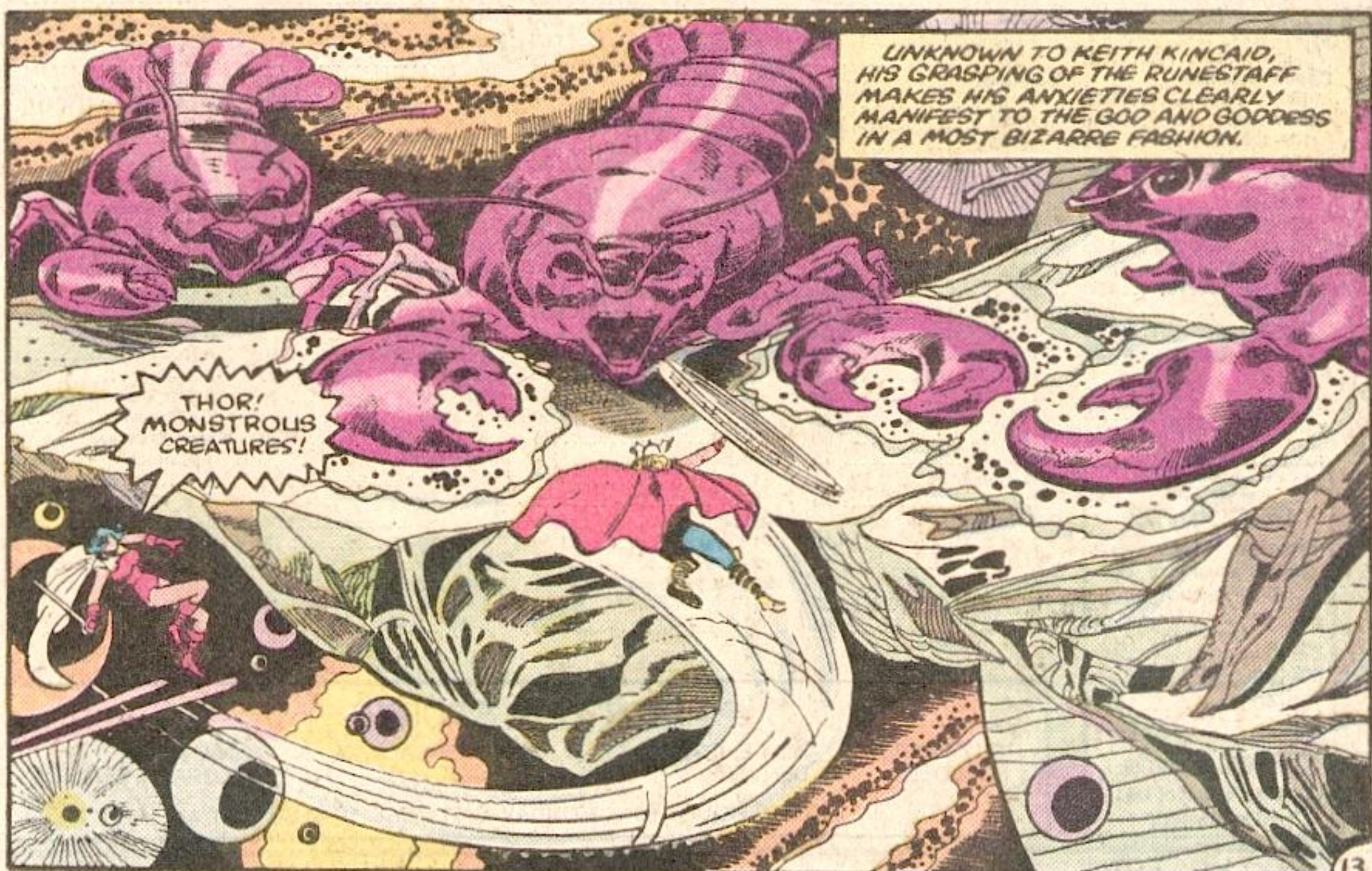
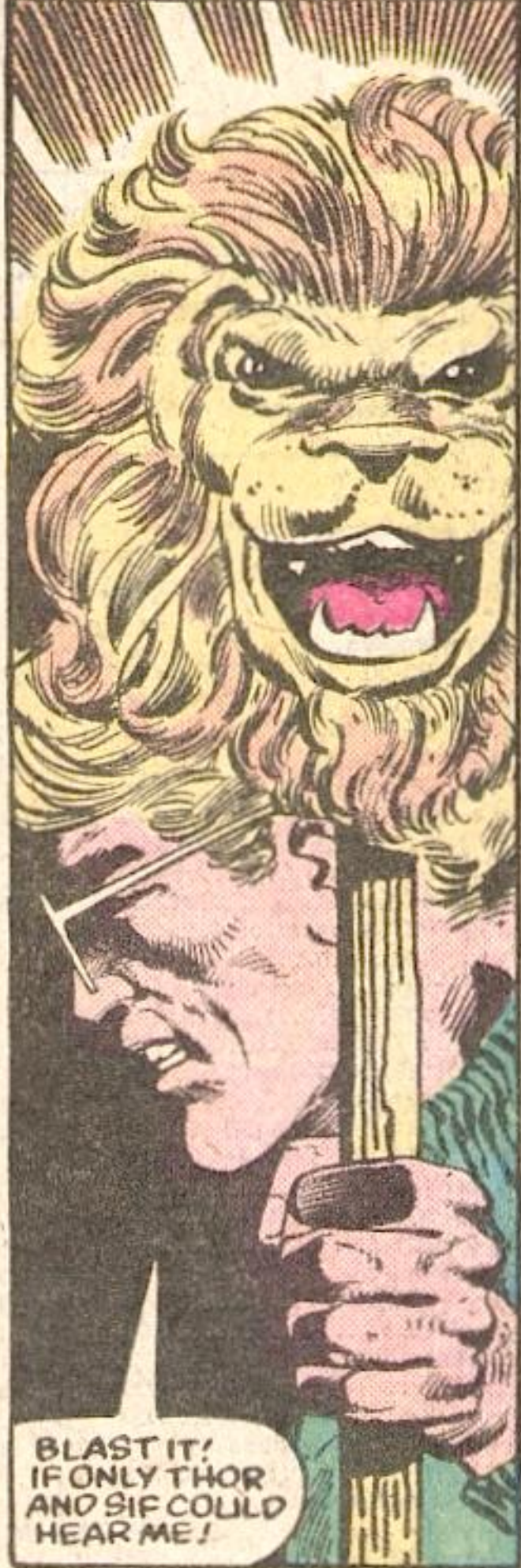
I WAS PHILOSOPHER
SUPREME OF THE PLANET
QUINTAR, NOT THARNN.
I-- ALLAXIS!

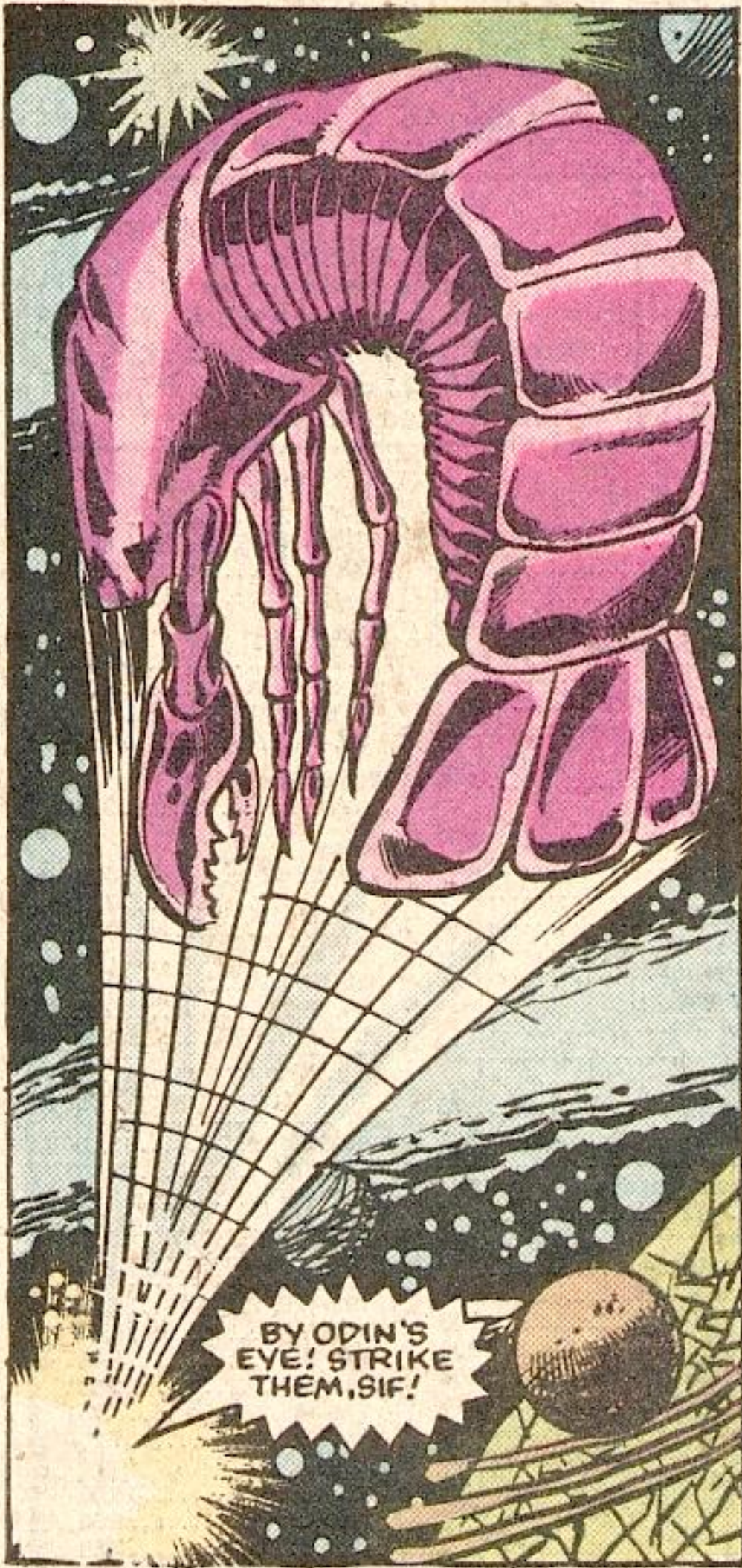
DATA COIL
3.8.3 PRESS
REINTEGRATION

WAIT, KAMO
THARNN MUST
HAVE SOMEHOW
ABSORBED THE
SPIRITS FROM
WITHIN THE
RUNESTAFF INTO
HIS OWN BODY.

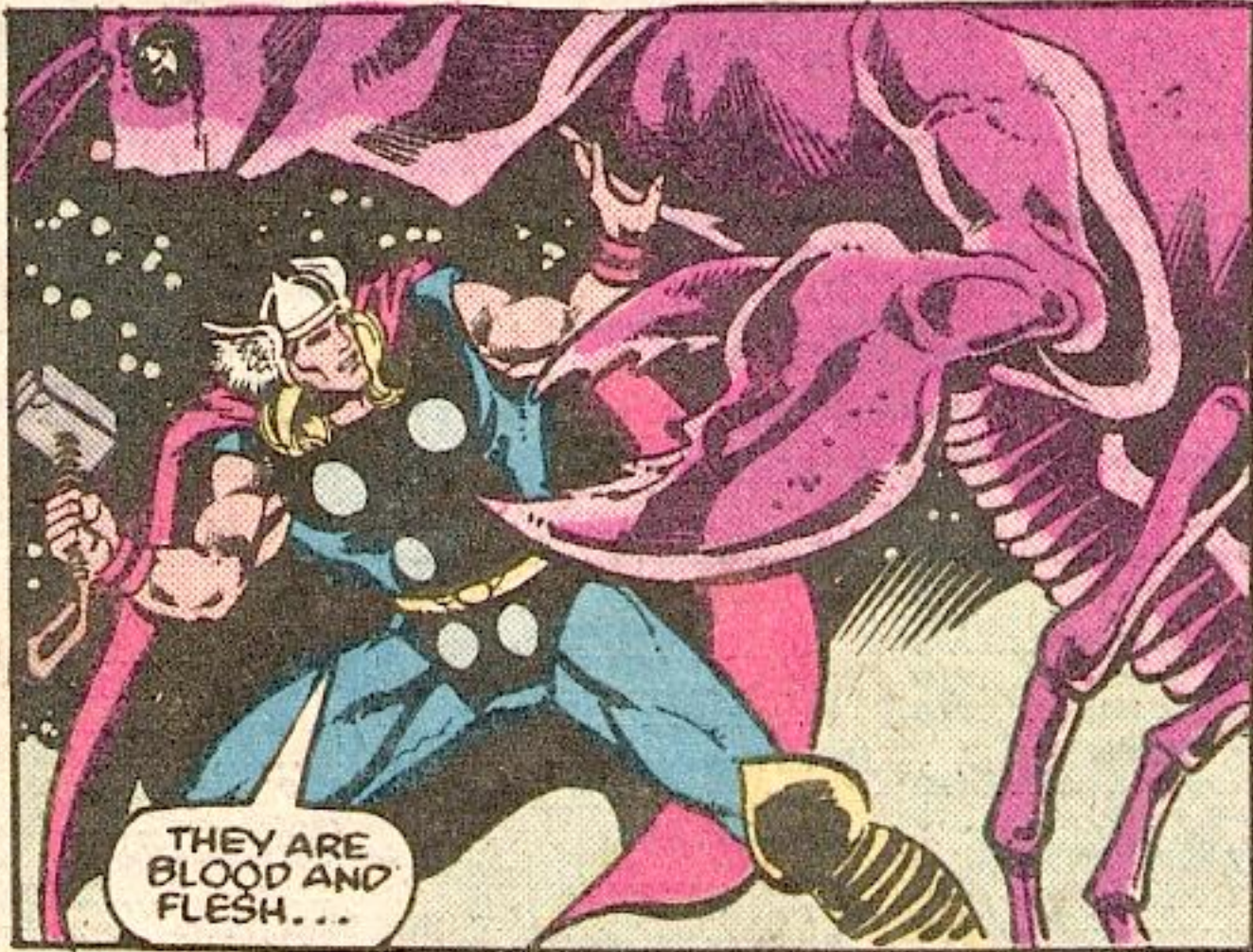
AND THAT MEANS
JANE'S WITHIN HIM AND
NOT THE STAFF!

THOR AND SIF
HAVE GOT TO GET
BACK HERE TO HELP
ME-- BUT HOW DO I
SUMMON THEM?





BY ODIN'S EYE! STRIKE THEM, SIF!



THEY ARE BLOOD AND FLESH...



... AND ABLE TO BE SLAIN!



OR THEMSELVES SLAY, MY PRINCE! IT NEARLY STRUCK YOU-- BUT THIS IS THE LAST OF THEM!

THOU ART SWORD MAIDEN SUPREME, INDEED, GODDESS.



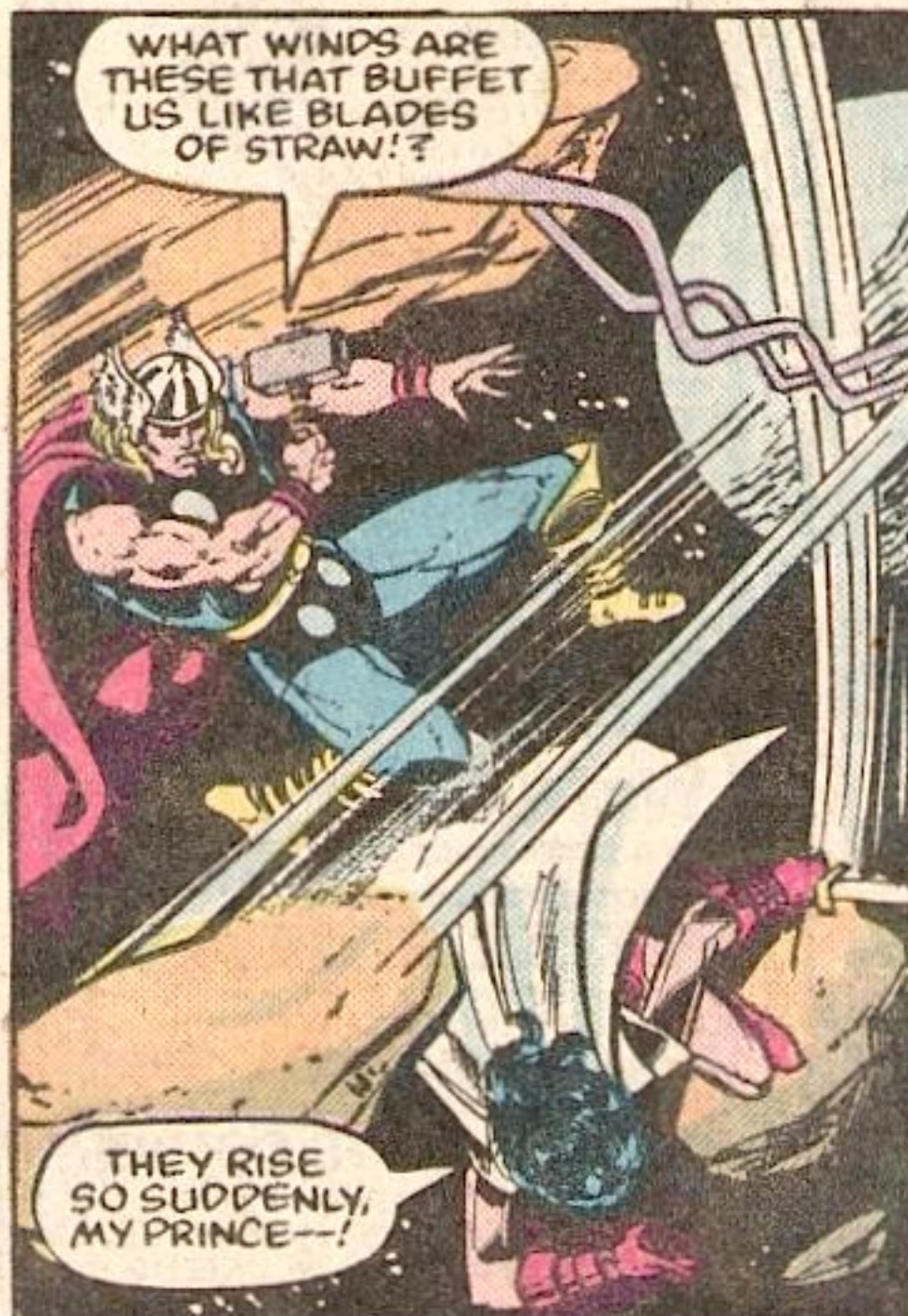
AND PERHAPS, IN TRUTH, THOU ART TOO GLORIOUS TO RESIDE CONTENTEDLY ON MIDGARD.

THIS IS RIDICULOUS!
AFTER ALL THESE
YEARS, I'M FINALLY
CLOSE TO RECOVER-
ING JANE AND I'M
HELPLESS!

THOR,
SIF,
PLEASE--
COME
OUT!



WHAT WINDS ARE
THESE THAT BUFFET
US LIKE BLADES
OF STRAW!?



THEY RISE
SO SUDDENLY,
MY PRINCE--!

MAYBE IF I RAP THIS
STAFF LIKE THOR DID
TO HIS HAMMER WHEN
HE TRANSFORMED TO
DONALD BLAKE BEFORE
MY EYES.*

NO GOOD.



*SEE LAST ISSUE.

WHAT CAN
IT BE-- WAVE
UPON WAVE,
ROLLS OVER
US, AND WE ARE
POWERLESS
TO RESIST?



WHOA THERE! GET HOLD OF YOURSELF,
KINCAID-- LET'S APPROACH THIS
SITUATION LOGICALLY LIKE A
PROFESSIONAL!



I WANT TO COMMUNICATE
WITH THOR AND SIF-- GET
THEM TO REAPPEAR... WELL,
MAYBE ALL I CAN DO IS WAIT
AND LET THEM REAPPEAR
WHEN THEY'RE GOOD AND
READY.

FINALLY...

MY PRINCE-- IT IS SO
CALM. WE MUST HAVE
REACHED THE VERY CENTER
OF THIS INNER WORLD!



THEN WE HAVE
FAILED AGAIN! JANE
FOSTER IS NOWHERE
TO BE FOUND.

SIF-- USE YOUR DIMENSION-CLEAVING
SWORD TO RETURN US TO THARNN'S WORLD.
THERE IS NOTHING FOR US HERE.



AYE, BELOVED!

THEN...

KEITH KINCAID... I AM AFRAID THAT--!

BOY, YOU TWO GODS ARE THE ANSWER TO A PRAYER!

LISTEN-- IF A SOMEWHAT UNORTHODOX DIAGNOSIS CAN BE TRUSTED...



I THINK... JANE MAY BE TRAPPED, BODY AND SOUL--ALONG WITH A HOST OF OTHERS--WITHIN THE FORM OF KAMO THARNN.

THAT WOULD EXPLAIN THE ABSENCE OF BEINGS WITHIN THE STAFF.



THEN LET US TARRY NO MORE. I SHALL USE THE RUNESTAFF ON KAMO THARNN--

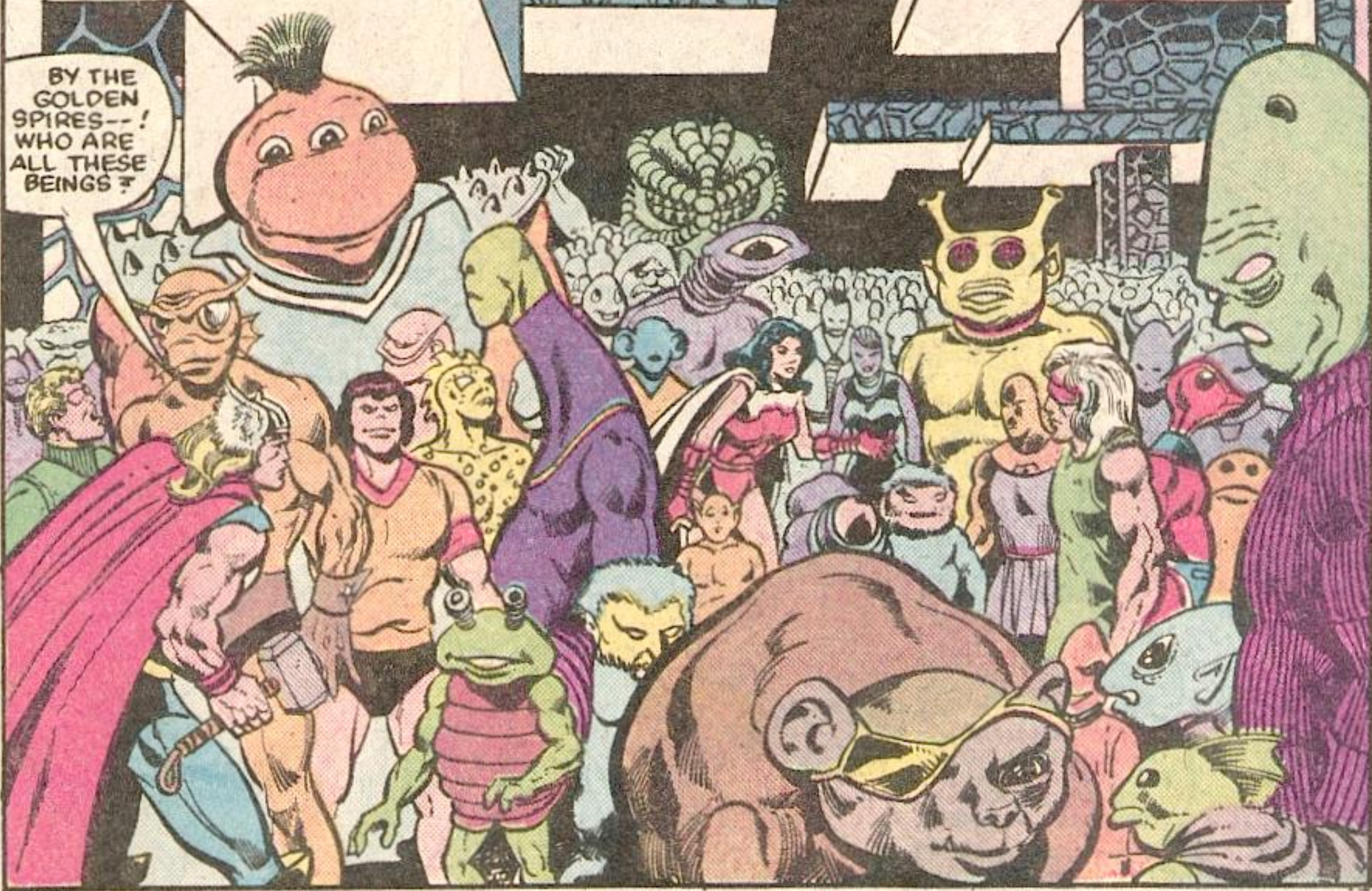
--AND RELEASE THE BEINGS WITHIN.

FLAASH



THERE IS A MOMENT OF BLINDNESS... BUT WHEN THE QUARTET REGAIN THEIR SIGHT, THEY FIND THEMSELVES IN THE MIDST OF A SEA OF ALIEN ENTITIES.

BY THE GOLDEN SPIRES---! WHO ARE ALL THESE BEINGS?



UH, I LEARNED THAT DURING HIS EXPERIMENTATION WITH THE RUNE-STAFF, KAMO THARNN ACCIDENTALLY TRAPPED THESE -- UH -- PEOPLE WITHIN THE STAFF...



... THEN AFTERWARDS ABSORBED THEM INTO HIS OWN BODY FROM THAT VERY STAFF.

JANE'S GOT TO BE HERE AMONG THEM!

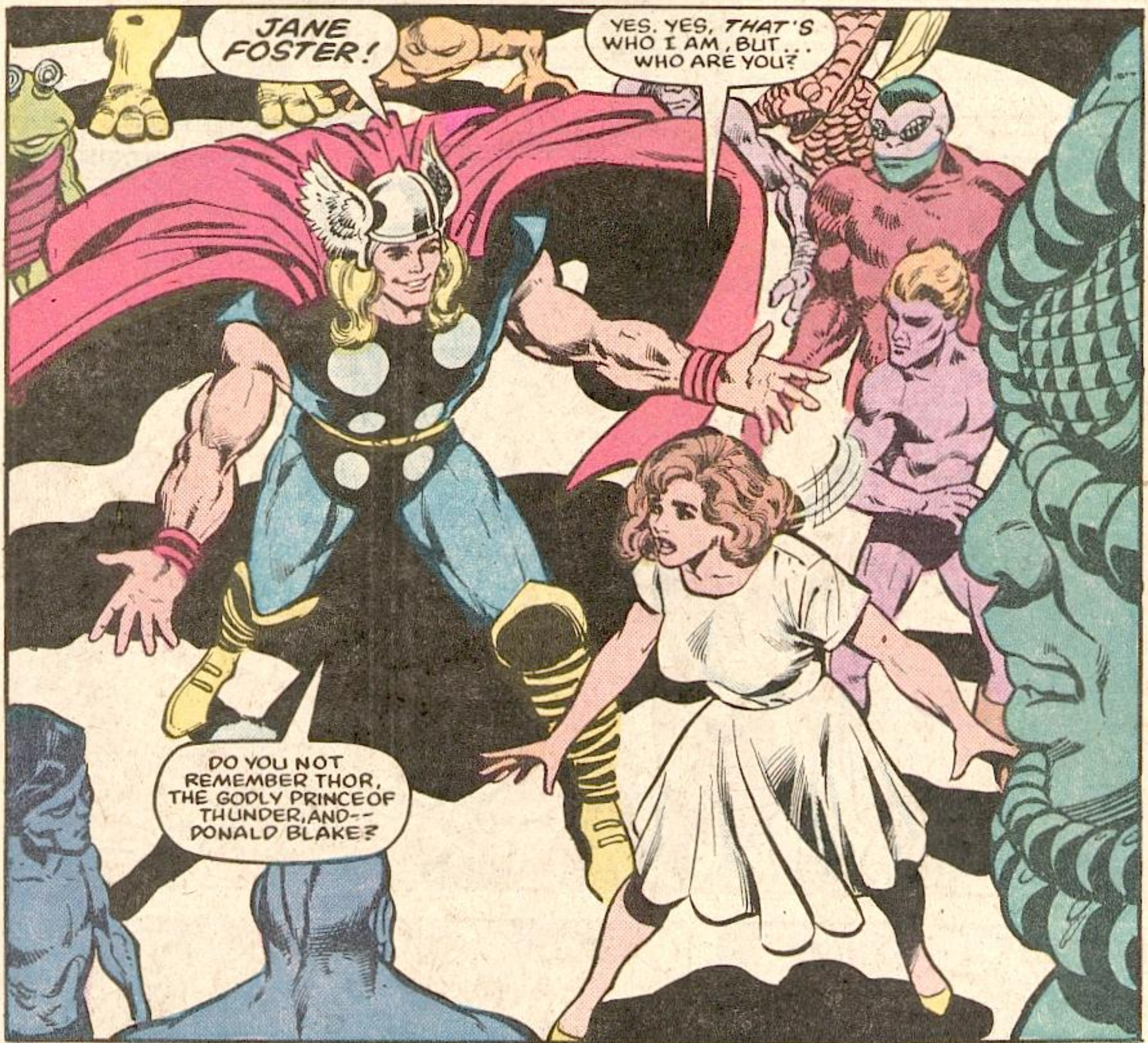


JANE POSTER, WHERE ART THOU?

I PRAY OUR QUEST ENDS AT LAST THIS HOUR.



OH... WHERE... AM I?





JANE, IT'S ME-- KEITH.

KEITH--?



I'M ALL CONFUSED. I CAN'T REMEMBER ANYTHING SINCE -- SINCE--



BE PATIENT OF HER DAZE, FRIEND. JANE FOSTER HAS ENDURED AN EXPERIENCE UNLIKE ANY OTHER.



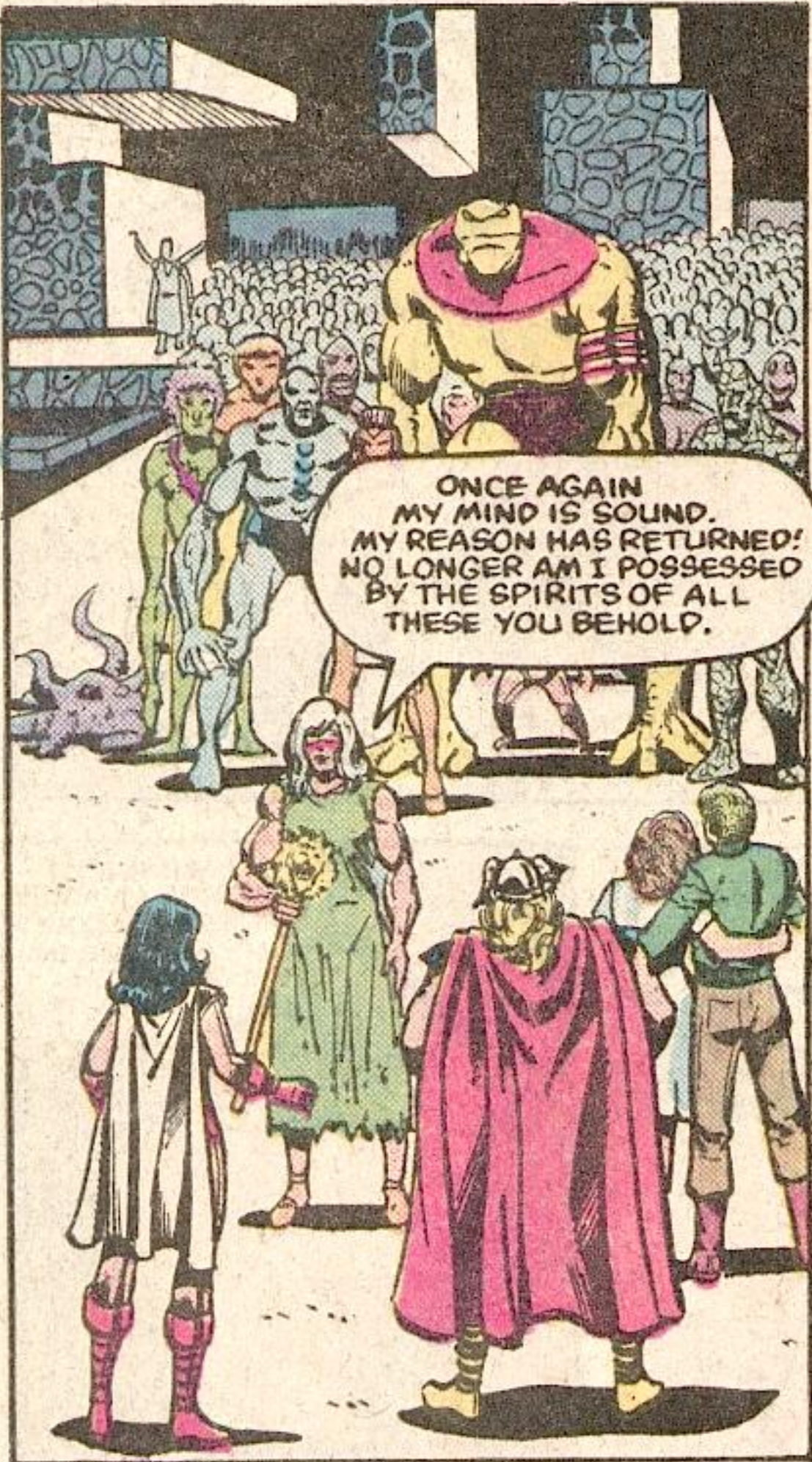
MY PRINCE IGNORES MY VERY PRESENCE. COULD HE STILL BE IN LOVE WITH THE MORTAL?

YES, KEITH--



-- KEITH KINCAID, IT ALL COMES BACK TO ME. WHERE HAVE I BEEN, SO LONG AWAY FROM EVERYONE AND EVERYTHING?

THUNDER GOD!



ONCE AGAIN MY MIND IS SOUND. MY REASON HAS RETURNED! NO LONGER AM I POSSESSED BY THE SPIRITS OF ALL THESE YOU BEHOLD.



"I RECALL IT ALL PERFECTLY NOW! YOU, SIF, HAD TAKEN THE STAFF AWAY FROM ME AGAINST MY WILL..."

"IT WAS LOST FOR SUCH TIME UNTIL I WAS ABLE TO REMEMBER THE RITUAL OF RETRIEVAL."

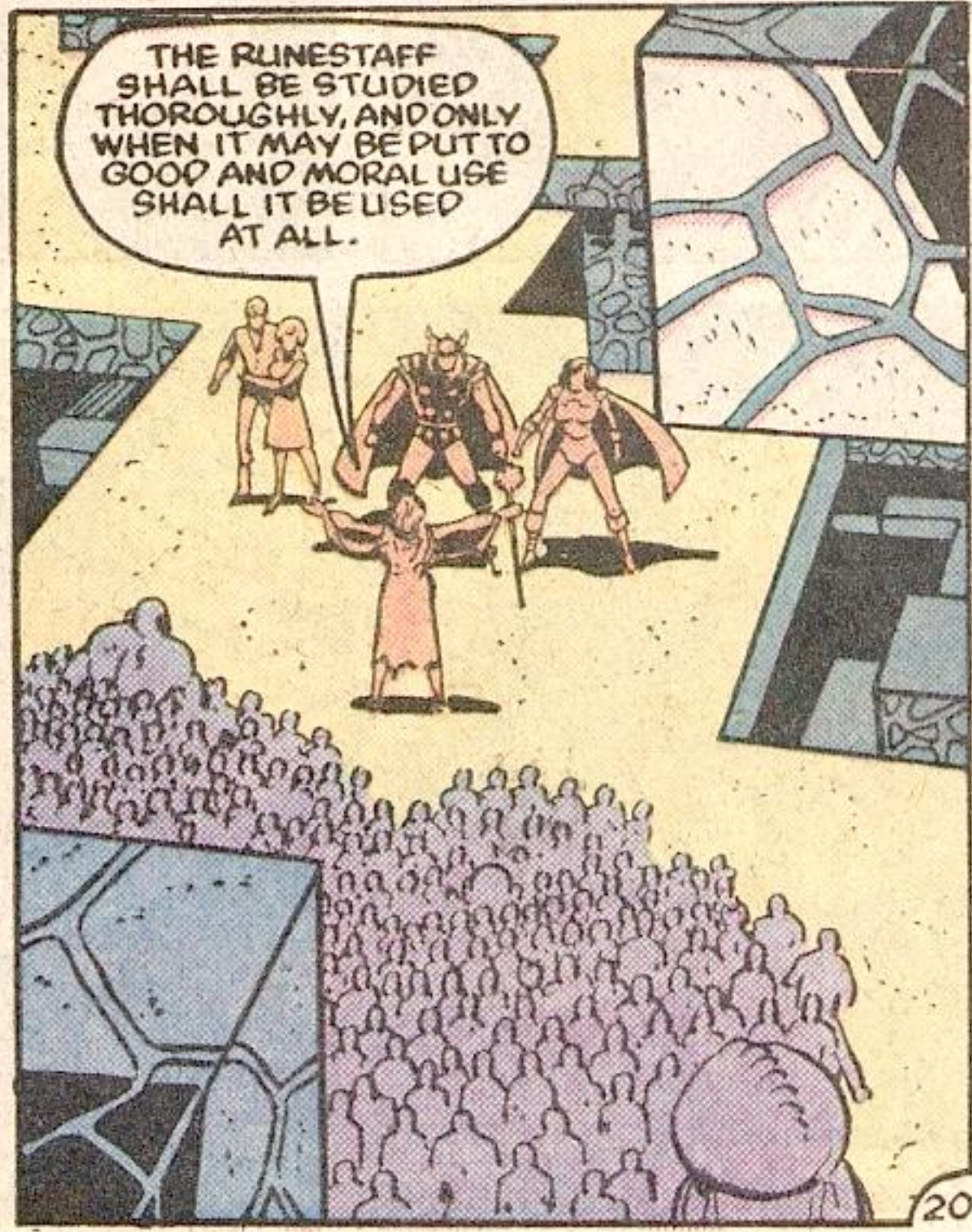


"I ATTEMPTED AGAIN TO MASTER ITS POWERS, BUT ONLY SUCCEEDED IN TRANSFERRING THE SOULS TRAPPED THEREIN INTO MY OWN BODY!"



YOU HAVE FREED ME AT LAST-- MY INTELLIGENCE IS ONCE MORE RETURNED, FREE OF THE CONSTANT CLATTER OF OTHER ALIEN MINDS!

I VOW THIS PLANET SHALL BE REBUILT TO SERVE ITS ORIGINAL PURPOSE AS CENTER AND ACADEMY FOR GATHERING AND DISSEMINATING THE COMBINED KNOWLEDGE OF ALL THE GALAXY.



THE RUNESTAFF SHALL BE STUDIED THOROUGHLY, AND ONLY WHEN IT MAY BE PUT TO GOOD AND MORAL USE SHALL IT BE USED AT ALL.

THEN THE TIME HAS COME FOR US TO BID FAREWELL.

THIS DAY, KAMO THARNN, WE HAVE RECOVERED A LOST FRIEND AND MADE A NEW FRIEND OF AN ERSTWHILE FOE.



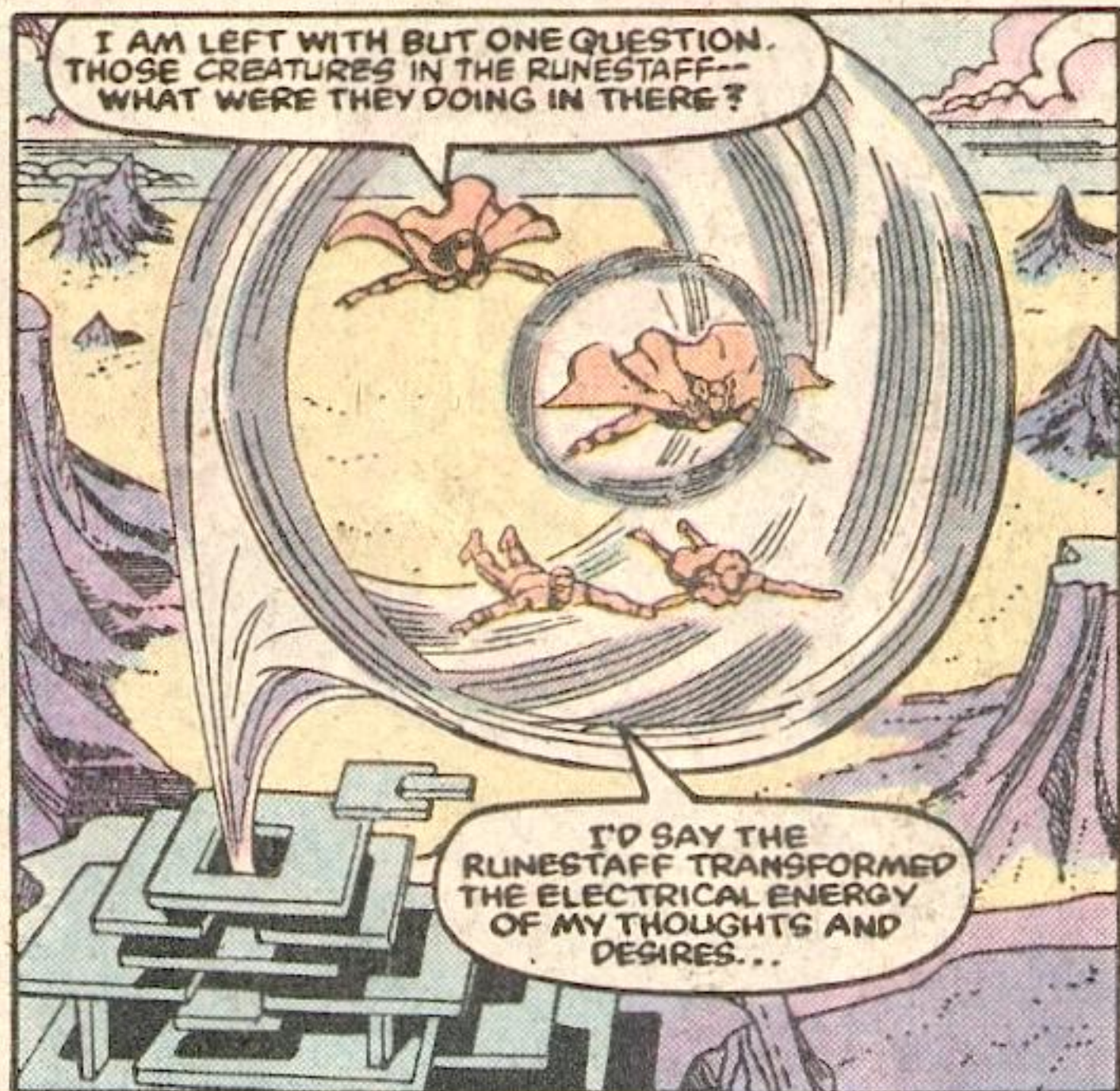
IT HAS BEEN INDEED A NOBLE AND MERITORIOUS VENTURE.

AND NOW MY HAMMER'S VORTEX CARRIES US TO THE QUINJET.



FAREWELL.

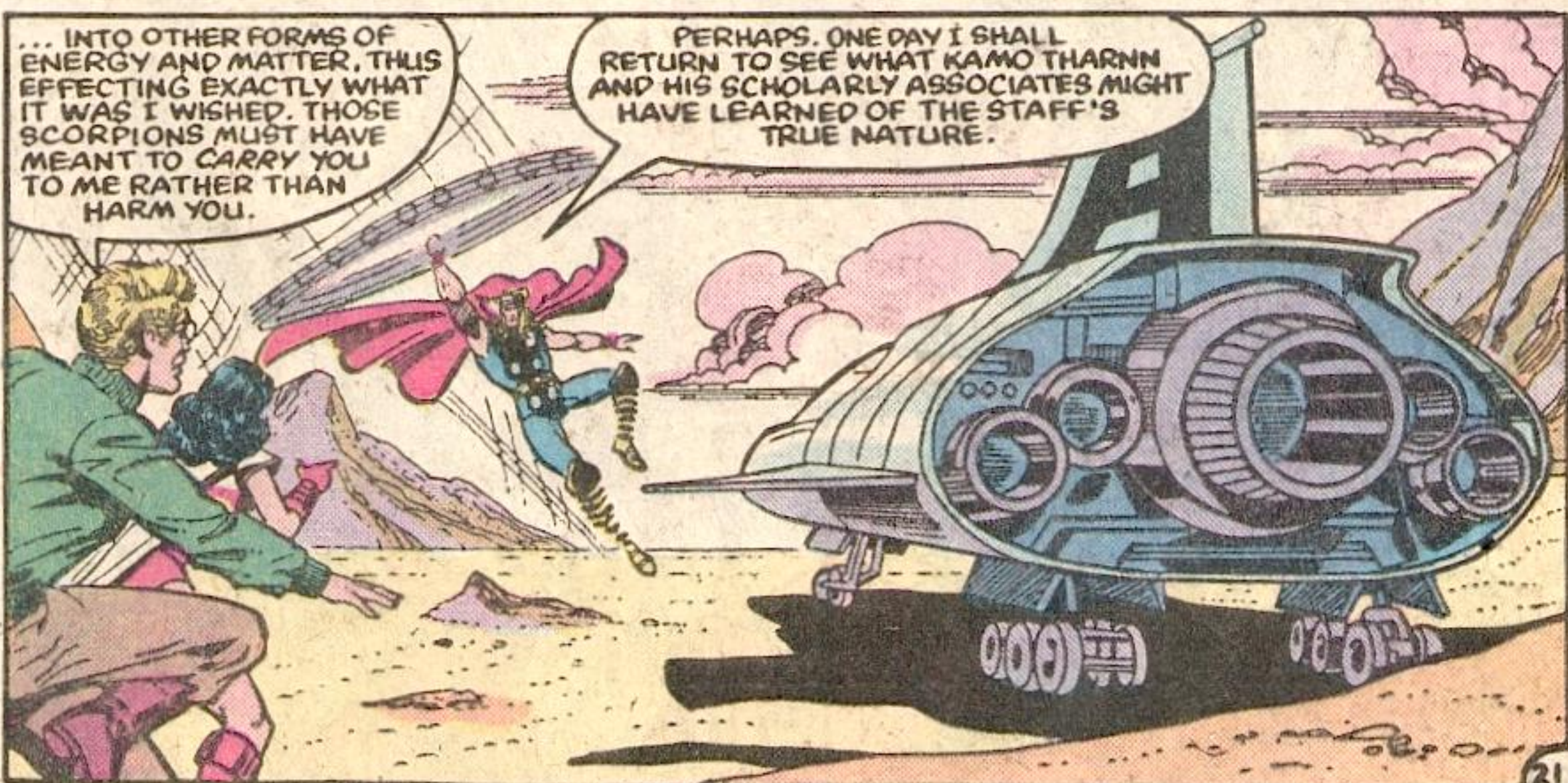
I AM LEFT WITH BUT ONE QUESTION. THOSE CREATURES IN THE RUNESTAFF-- WHAT WERE THEY DOING IN THERE?



I'D SAY THE RUNESTAFF TRANSFORMED THE ELECTRICAL ENERGY OF MY THOUGHTS AND DESIRES...

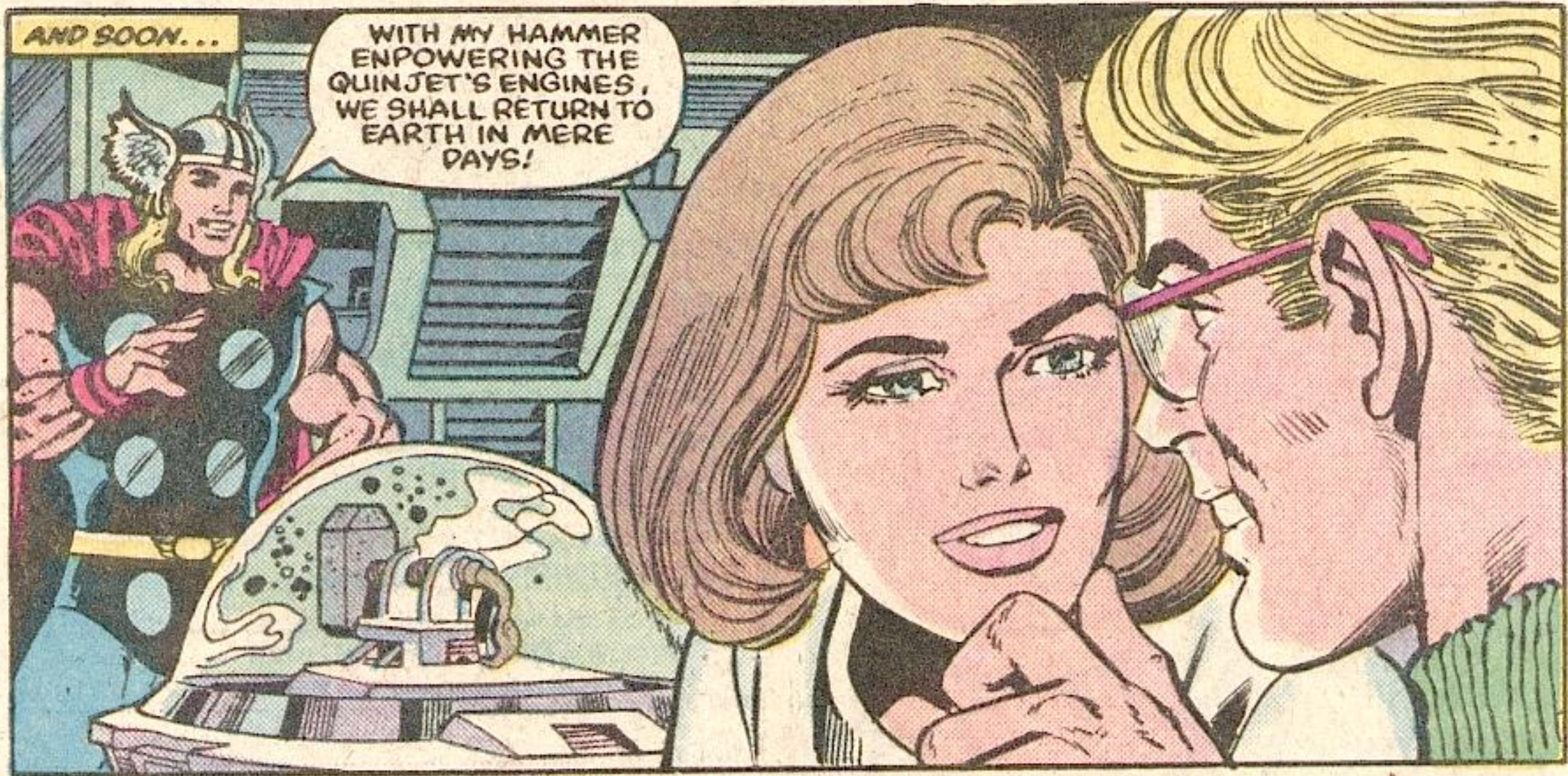
... INTO OTHER FORMS OF ENERGY AND MATTER, THUS EFFECTING EXACTLY WHAT IT WAS I WISHED. THOSE SCORPIONS MUST HAVE MEANT TO CARRY YOU TO ME RATHER THAN HARM YOU.

PERHAPS. ONE DAY I SHALL RETURN TO SEE WHAT KAMO THARNN AND HIS SCHOLARLY ASSOCIATES MIGHT HAVE LEARNED OF THE STAFF'S TRUE NATURE.



AND SOON...

WITH MY HAMMER ENPOWERING THE QUINJET'S ENGINES, WE SHALL RETURN TO EARTH IN MERE DAYS!



I DO NOT RECALL WHEN LAST I SAW THOR SMILE. THE FINDING OF JANE FOSTER HATH PLEASSED HIM IMMENSELY!

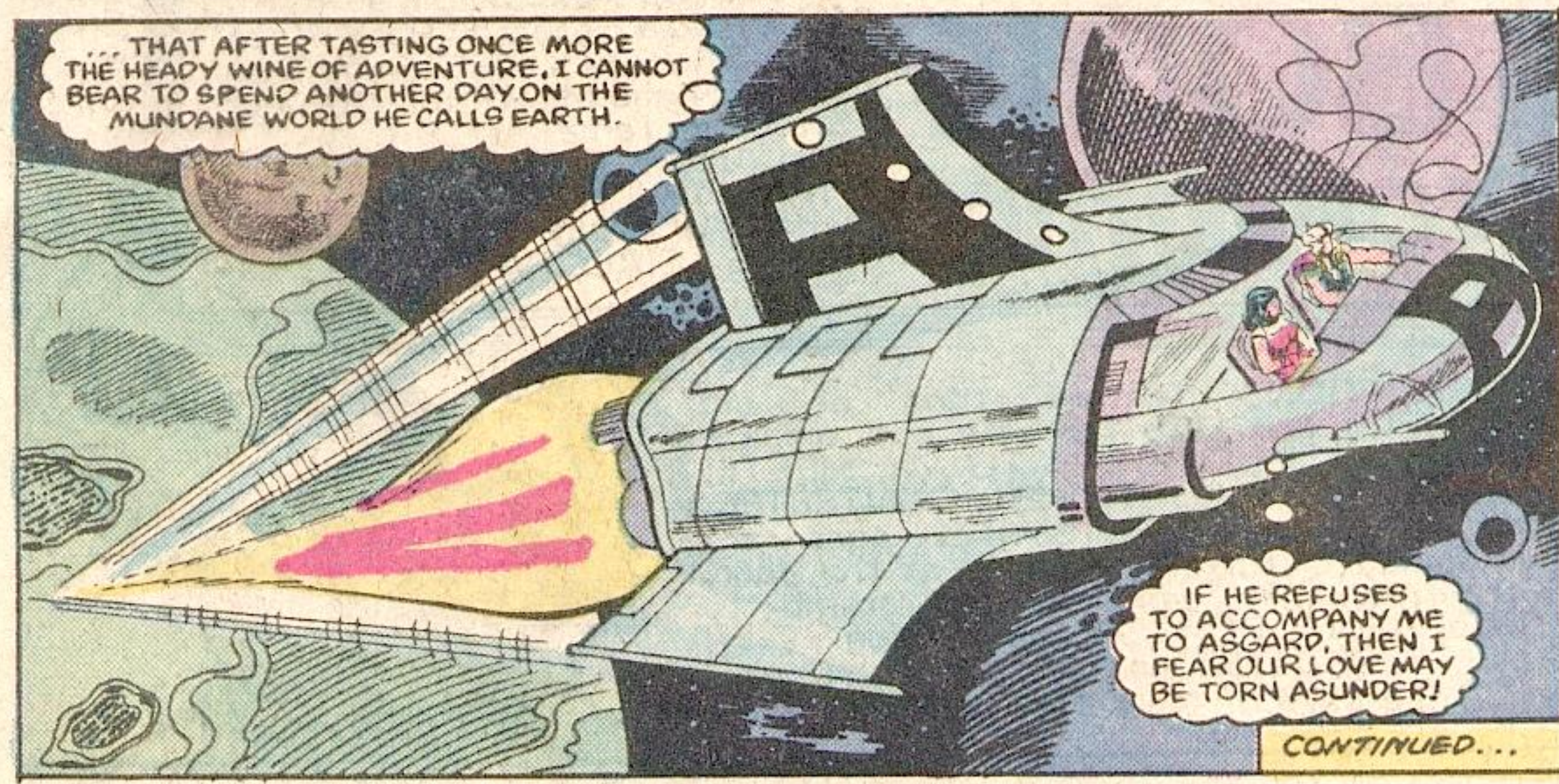
ALL HAS ENDED WELL, INDEED.



BUT ALL DOETH NOT END WELL. FOR SOON I MUST TELL MY GALLANT THOR...



... THAT AFTER TASTING ONCE MORE THE HEADY WINE OF ADVENTURE, I CANNOT BEAR TO SPEND ANOTHER DAY ON THE MUNDANE WORLD HE CALLS EARTH.



IF HE REPUSES TO ACCOMPANY ME TO ASGARD, THEN I FEAR OUR LOVE MAY BE TORN ASUNDER!

CONTINUED...