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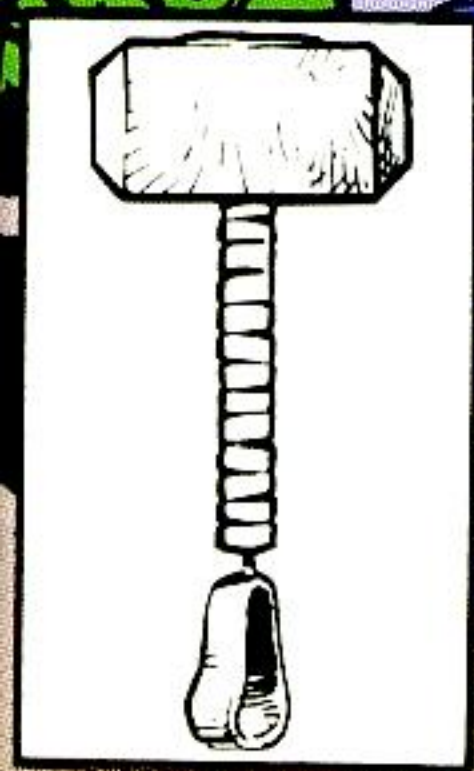


75¢
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367
MAY

the mighty

THOR[®]



STAN LEE
PRESENTS: the MIGHTY THOR[®]

THE HARVEST OF THE SEASONS

THIS IS NORNKEEP, THE CASTLE OF THE QUEEN KARNILLA IN THE LAND OF NORNHEIM.

SHE IS SAYING GOODBYE TO BALDER THE BRAVE, NOBLEST OF ALL THE GODS OF ASGARD.

HE HAS BEEN CALLED HOME TO ASSUME THE MANTLE OF LIEGE LORD OF THE GOLDEN REALM ITSELF.

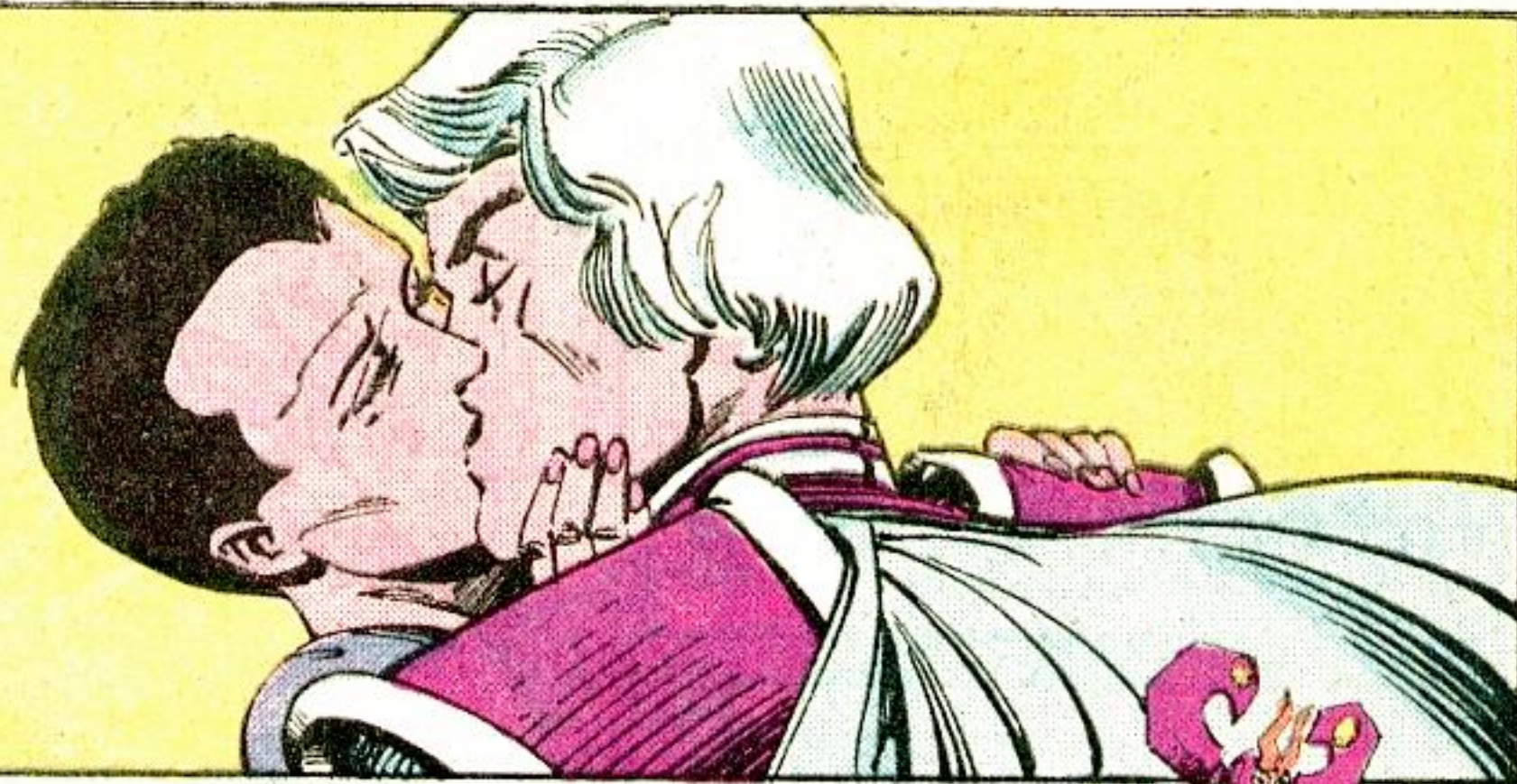
IF YOU LISTEN CLOSELY ENOUGH, YOU MAY BE ABLE TO HEAR THE SOUND OF A HEARTBREAK. OR TWO.

TAKE MY RING THAT BALDER MIGHT REMEMBER HIS KARNILLA AND KNOW THAT WHEREVER HE IS, HER HEART IS WITH HIM.

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NOW GO, MY LOVE, BEFORE I FORGET THAT I AM A QUEEN AND NOT A WOMAN.

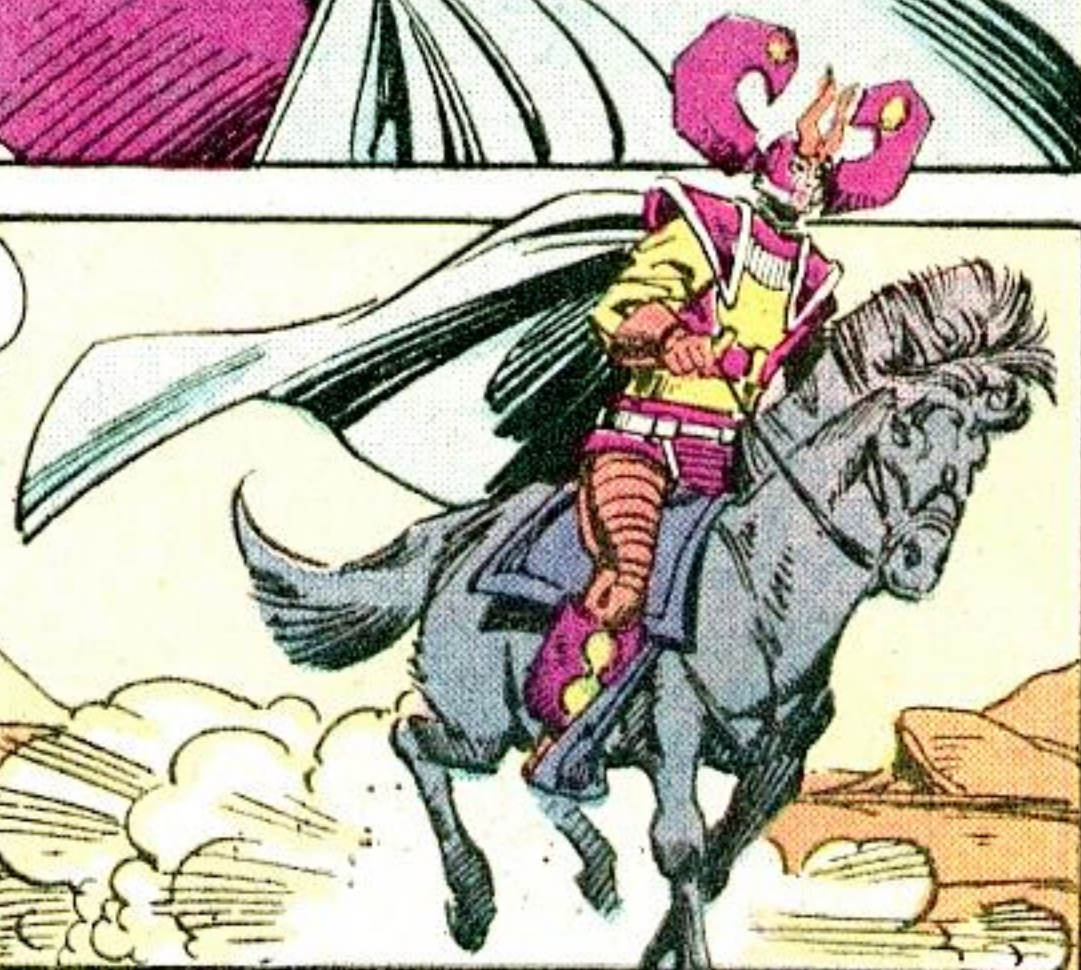


THOR, I MAY NEVER FORGIVE YOU FOR RENOUNCING THE THRONE IN BALDER'S FAVOR AND TAKING HIM AWAY FROM ME!

THE THRONE SHOULD HAVE BEEN THINE AND BALDER SHOULD HAVE BEEN MINE!

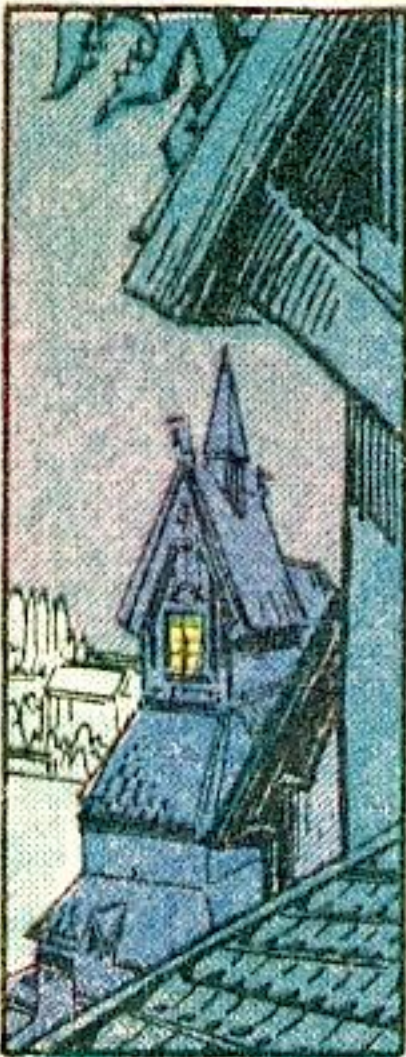


AND SAVE THE HOOFBEATS OF BALDER'S STEED, THERE IS NO SOUND AT ALL IN NORNREALM*.



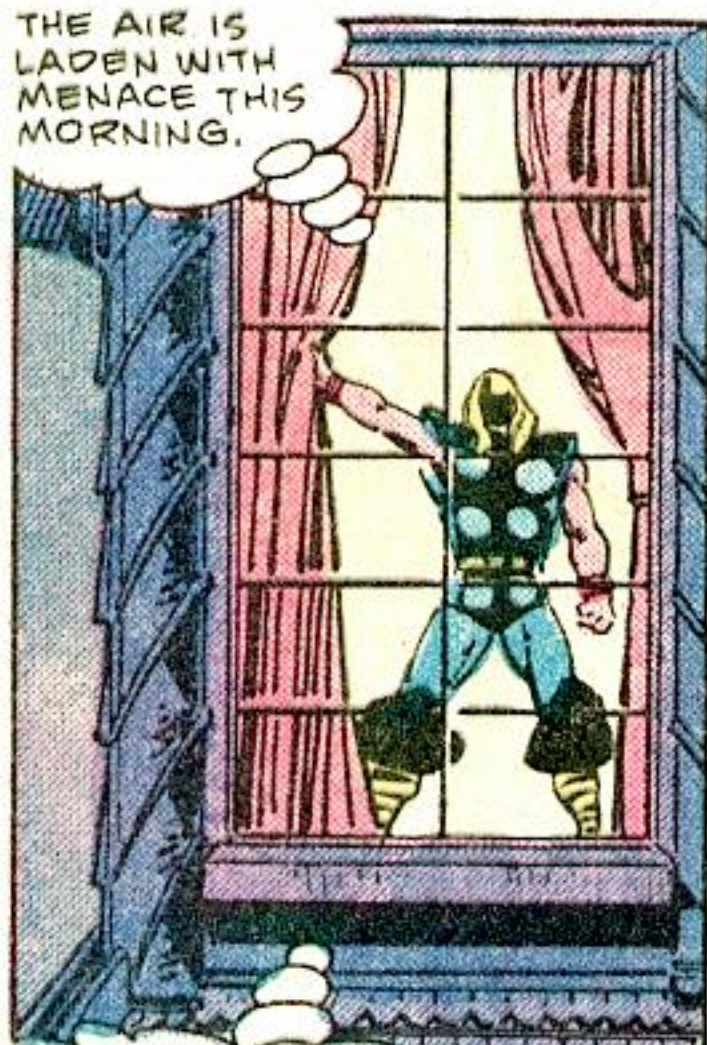
*YOU CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT THE ADVENTURES OF BALDER AND KARNILLA IN THE BALDER THE BRAVE LIMITED SERIES--RALPH "PLUGMASTER" MACCHIO!

MEANWHILE, AT THE END OF THE ROAD BALDER RIDES, STANDS THE CITY OF ASGAR, HOME OF THE NORSE GODS...



...WHERE IN HIS GREAT HALL OF BILSKIRNIR, THE GOD OF THUNDER REFLECTS UPON THE PAST AND PONDERES THE FUTURE.

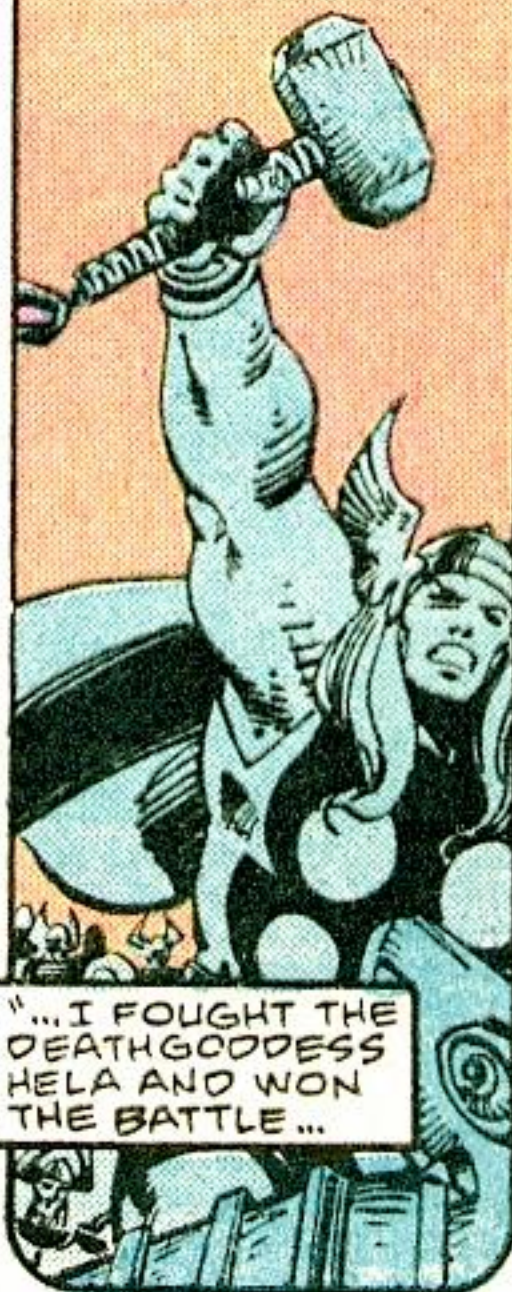
THE AIR IS LADEN WITH MENACE THIS MORNING.



IT FEELS ALMOST AS THOUGH ODIN HIMSELF WERE RIDING THE BLACK SKY UPON HIS EIGHT-LEGGED STEED, SLEIPNIR.

SO MUCH HAS CHANGED SINCE MY FATHER VANISHED. OR PERHAPS EVERYTHING IS STILL THE SAME AND I HAVE CHANGED.

"FATHER ODIN WOULD HAVE BLESSED MY JOURNEY INTO HEL. THERE, TO SAVE THE SOULS OF A HANDFUL OF MORTALS...



"...I FOUGHT THE DEATHGODDESS HELA AND WON THE BATTLE..."

"...AT THE COST OF MY FACE*!"



"SURELY MY FATHER WOULD HAVE APPROVED."



BUT WOULD HE
HAVE LOOKED
WITH FAVOR UPON
MY LATEST
DECISION?

TO GIVE UP THE
GOLDEN THRONE
TO BALDER, THAT
I MIGHT STILL
WALK THE MEAN
STREETS OF
EARTH?

HAVE I BEEN
TRULY WISE OR
BETRAYED THE
HERITAGE OF
MY FATHER?

SO MANY
QUESTIONS.
SO FEW
ANSWERS.

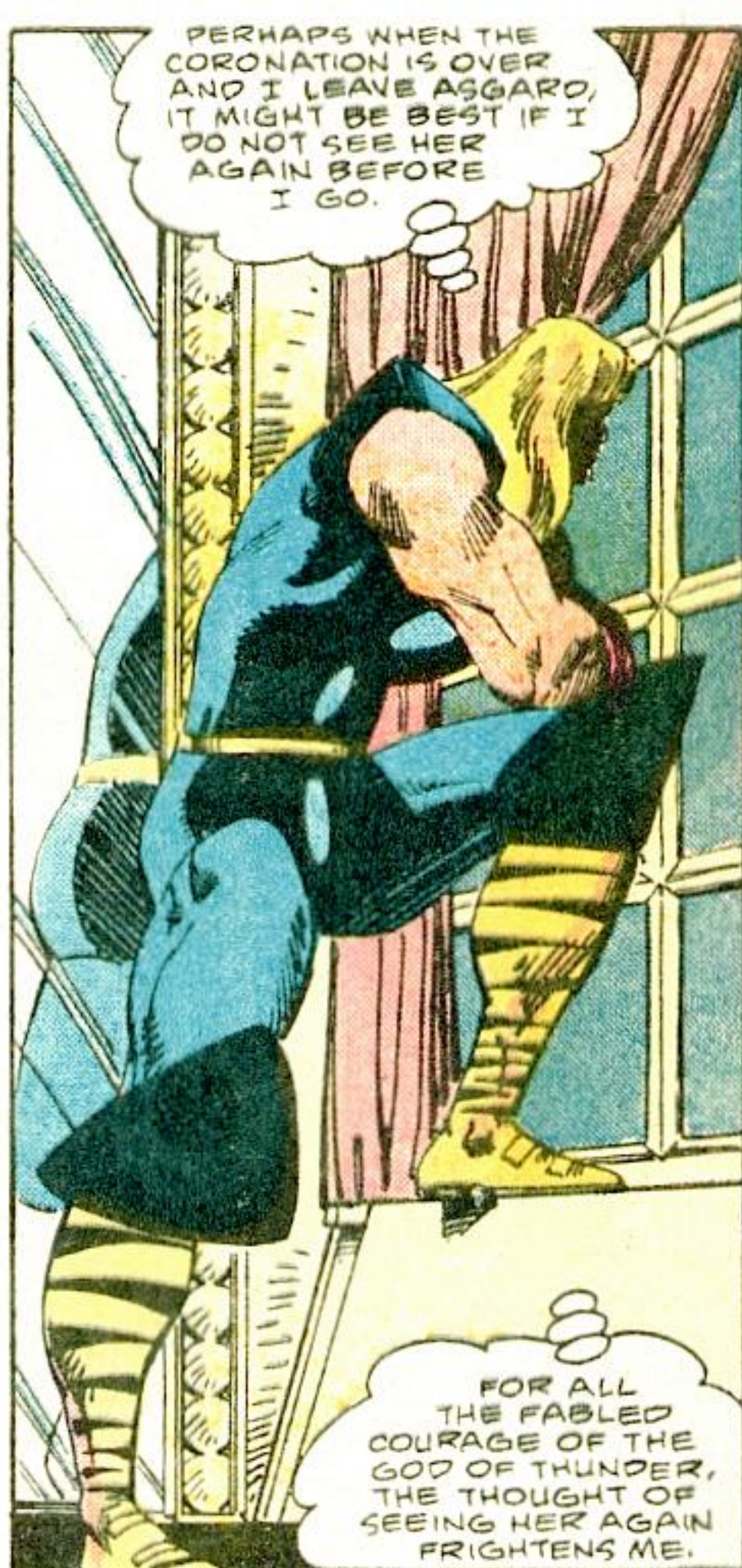


PERHAPS ONLY
THE LADY SIF
COULD TELL
ME.

I WHO
SHOULD HAVE
FALLEN ON MY
KNEES AND BEGGED
FORGIVENESS FOR
THE WRONG I
DID HER.

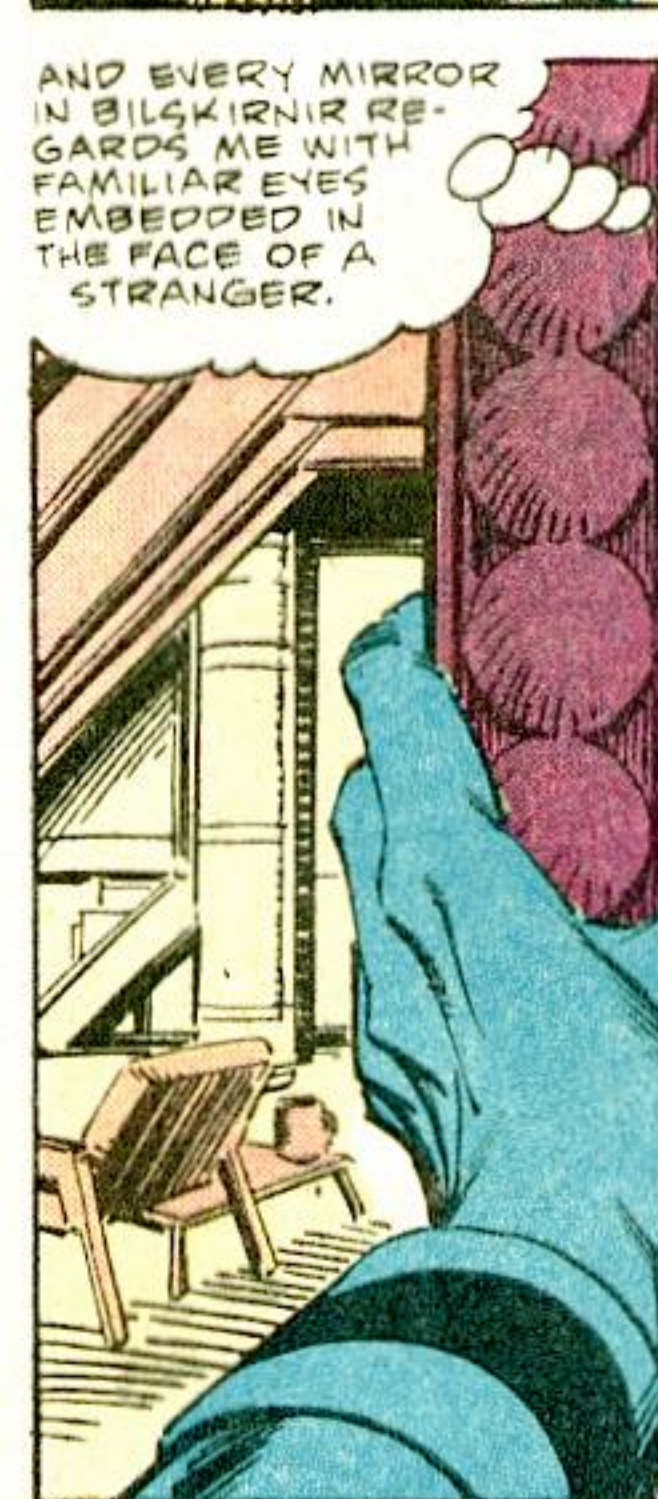
WOULD
SHE NOT
SEE BEYOND THE
FACE AND READ
MY HEART?

YET WHO
KNOWS WHAT
SHE WOULD READ
THERE? WHEN LAST
I SAW HER, I WAS
SHARP AND BITTER.



PERHAPS WHEN THE
CORONATION IS OVER
AND I LEAVE ASSGARD,
IT MIGHT BE BEST IF I
DO NOT SEE HER
AGAIN BEFORE
I GO.

FOR ALL
THE FABLED
COURAGE OF THE
GOD OF THUNDER,
THE THOUGHT OF
SEEING HER AGAIN
FRIGHTENS ME.



AND EVERY MIRROR
IN BILSKIRNIR RE-
GARDS ME WITH
FAMILIAR EYES
EMBEDDED IN
THE FACE OF A
STRANGER.



AFTER ALL THESE
YEARS, I BEGIN TO
RESEMBLE THE STORIED
THUNDER GOD OF
EARTHLY LEGEND.

AND YET, THOUGH
THE FACE IS DIFFER-
ENT, AM I NOT
STILL THE SAME
GOD?

ELSEWHERE IN ASGARD...



FORGIVE ME, MILADY, IF I HAVE SPOKEN OUT OF TURN.

BUT I MUST SPEAK AS MY HEART DICTATES NOW, FOR I MUST DEPART THIS LAND.

MY PEOPLE ARE FAR AWAY AND I SHALL RETURN TO THEM SOON.

I WOULD BE GLAD OF COMPANY, MORE GLAD THAN I CAN SAY.



'TIS SOMETHING I HAVE THOUGHT MUCH ABOUT ALREADY. PRAY, BILL, LET ME THINK A LITTLE LONGER.

AS YOU WISH, SIF. BUT I CANNOT WAIT FOREVER.

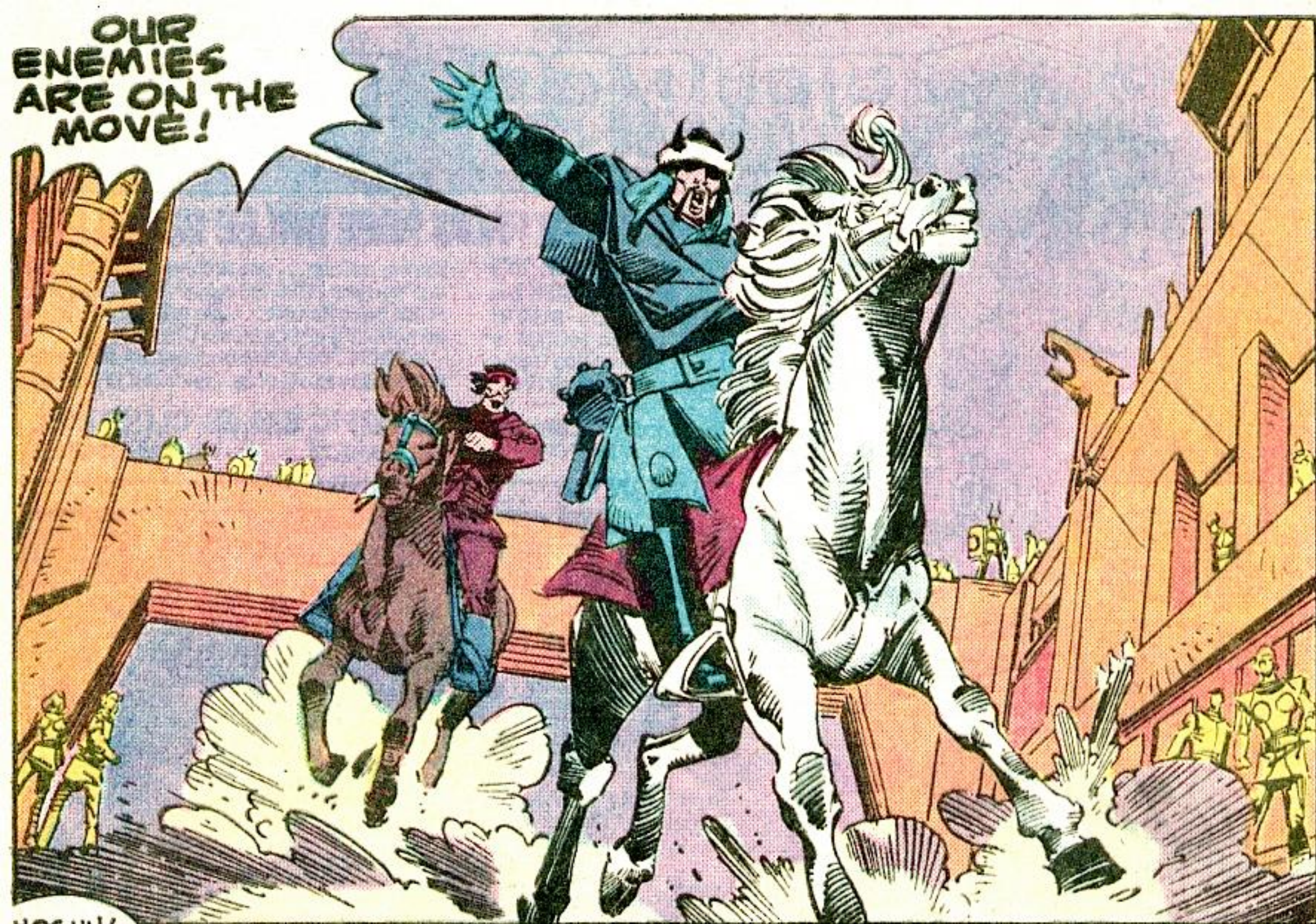
BUT WHAT CRY IS THIS I HEAR FROM THE BOULEVARD BELOW?

'TIS THE VOICE OF HOGUN THE GRIM!

AWAKE, YE SLEEPERS! ARISE, ASGARDIANS!



**OUR
ENEMIES
ARE ON THE
MOVE!**



**HOGUN!
WHAT
NEWS?**



**WE
HAVE
JUST
RIDDEN
THE LONG
ROAD
FROM
NORN-
HEIM,
THOR!**

**AGNAR
ACCOMPANIED BALDER
INTO THE LAND OF
THE FROST GIANTS TO
RESCUE QUEEN KARNILLA.**

**'TWOULD APPEAR THAT
THE GIANTS OF JOTUN-
HEIM ARE PREPARING
FOR WAR AGAINST
ASGARD!**

**AGNAR
HAS BROUGHT
THE WORD, AND
BALDER HAS NOT
YET RETURNED!**



**HEIMDALL,
DO YOU HEAR?**



**EVERY
WORD,
THOR.**

**THEN
HURRY
TO THE
HIGH SEAT
WHERE ODIN
USED TO
WATCH THE
WORKINGS
OF ALL
THE NINE
WORLDS!**

**TOO LONG
HAVE WE
NEGLECTED
IT! SIT THERE-
ON AND WITH
YOUR SHARP
EYES, SPY
OUT THE LAND
OF GIANTS!**

**SEEK THE
SIGHT OF
BALDER THE
BRAVE AND
BRING US WORD!**

THOR WEARS
THE MANTLE
OF COMMAND
WELL.

I WONDER
IF HE WAS NOT
TOO HASTY IN
GIVING UP THE
THRONE?

TO BOW
BEFORE ONE'S
FATHER IS
THE DUTY OF
EVERY SON.

TO BOW BEFORE
A FRIEND; THAT
IS SOMETIMES
DIFFICULT.

AT LAST
I HAVE
REACHED THE
HIGH SEAT!

NOW SHALL THE SHARP EYES
OF HEIMDALL PIERCE THE
VEIL BETWEEN THE WORLDS...

...TILL
BEYOND
ALL HORIZONS,
I SEE THE
GIANT KING-
DOM OF JOT-
UNHEIM!

BUT
WHAT IS
THIS?!!

"THE CASTLE OF UTGARD-
LOKI IS NO MORE THAN
MELTED ICE!

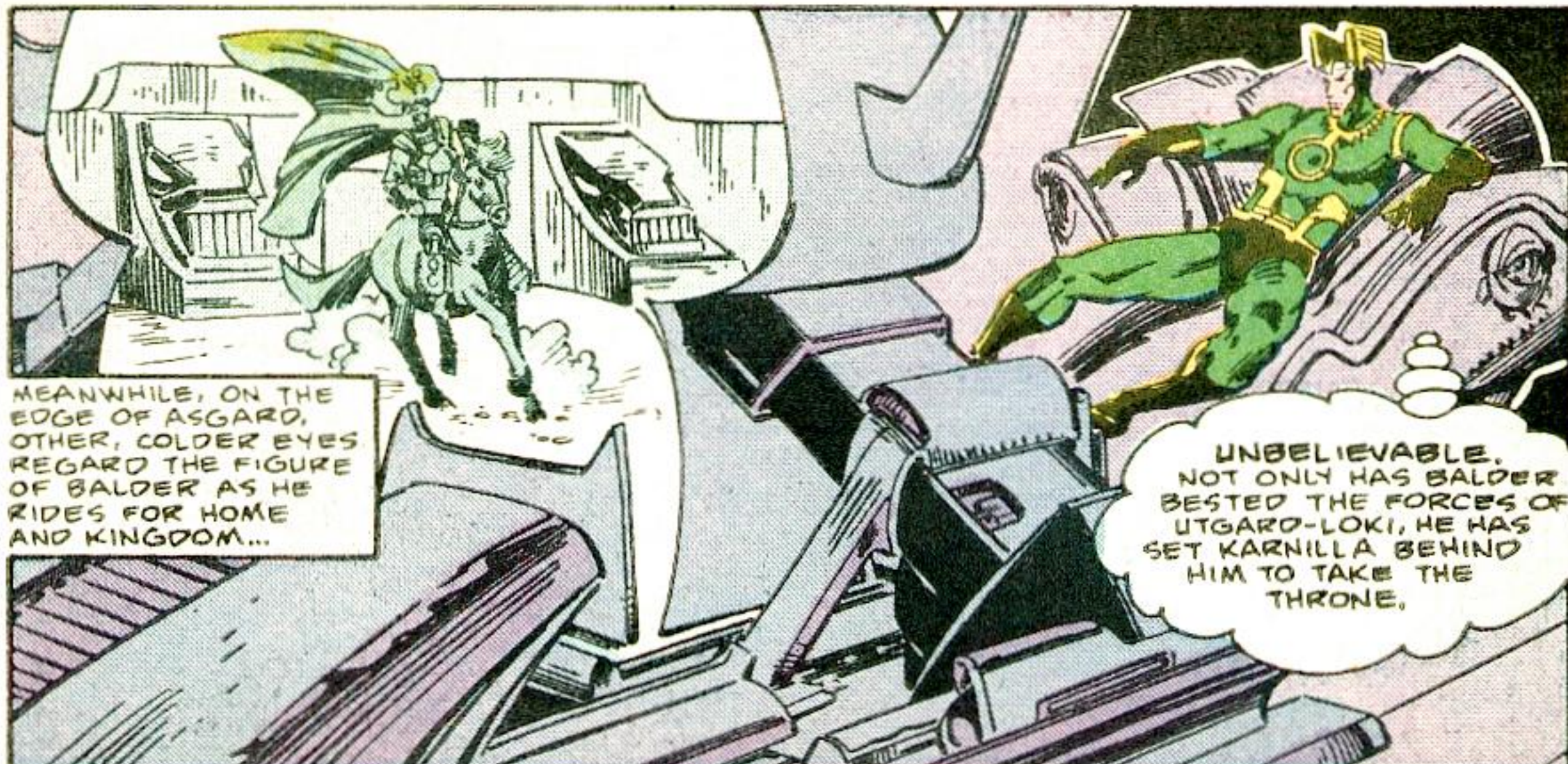
"AND THE GIANTS THEM-
SELVES! THEY ARE
ONLY TINY SHADOWS OF
THEIR FORMER GREAT-
NESS, SHRUNK TO THE
SIZE OF DOLLS!"

"AND FAR AWAY THROUGH
THE GATES OF NORNHEIM
RIDES BALDER THE
BRAVE ON THE ROAD
TO ASGARD!"

"SHINING BALDER HAS
TRIUMPHED OVER OUR
ENEMIES.

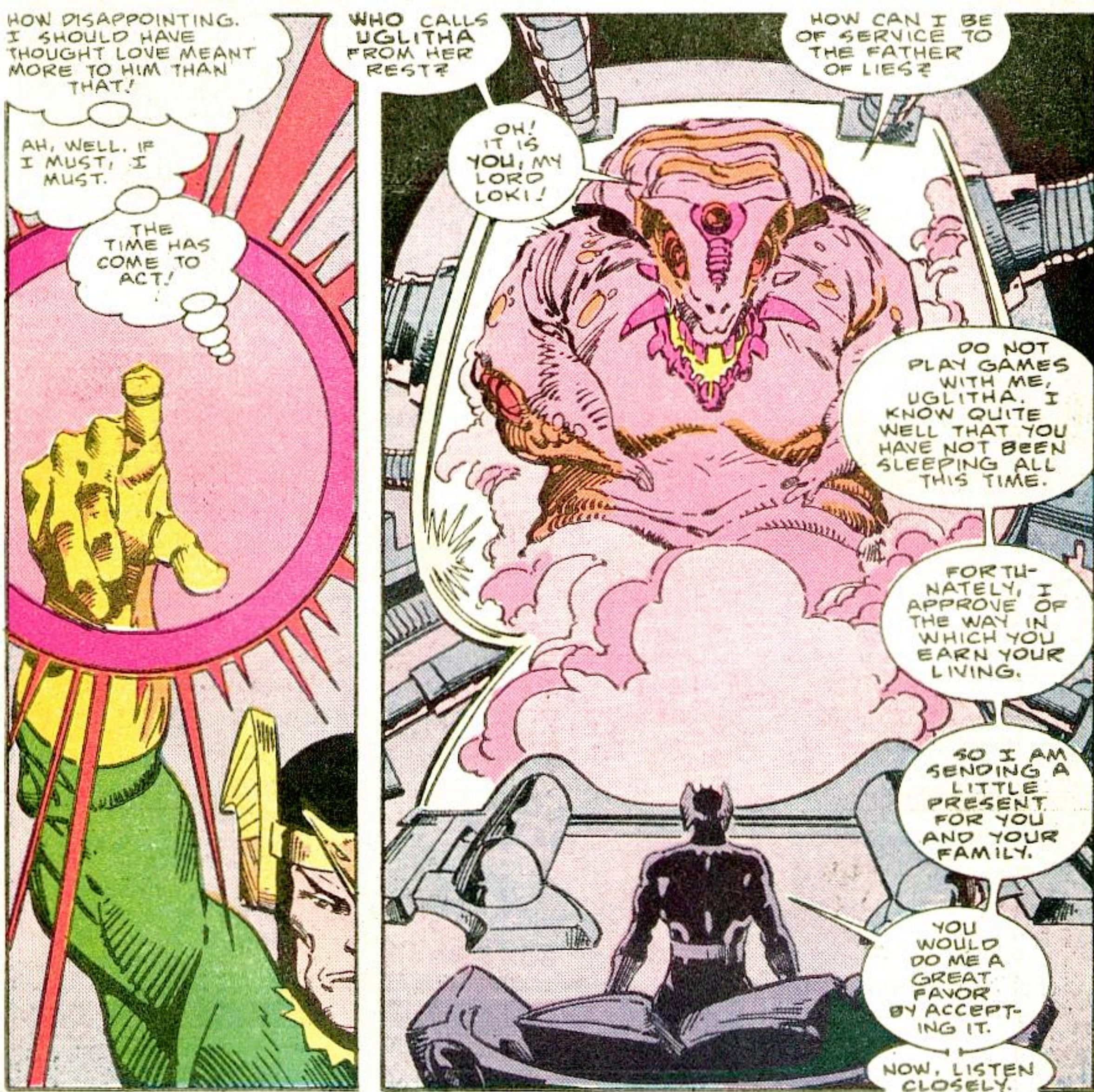
"THE BRAVE ONE MAY IN-
DEED BE AS WORTHY AS
THOR OF RULING THE
REALM!"

"ODIN GRANT THAT
TWO SUCH CHAMPIONS
CAN REMAIN FRIENDS
WHEN THERE IS A
KINGSHIP BETWEEN
THEM THAT THEY CAN
NOT SHARE!"



MEANWHILE, ON THE EDGE OF ASGARD, OTHER, COLDER EYES REGARD THE FIGURE OF BALDER AS HE RIDES FOR HOME AND KINGDOM...

UNBELIEVABLE. NOT ONLY HAS BALDER BESTED THE FORCES OF UTGARD-LOKI, HE HAS SET KARNILLA BEHIND HIM TO TAKE THE THRONE.



HOW DISAPPOINTING. I SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT LOVE MEANT MORE TO HIM THAN THAT!

WHO CALLS UGLITHA FROM HER REST?

HOW CAN I BE OF SERVICE TO THE FATHER OF LIES?

AH, WELL. IF I MUST, I MUST.

THE TIME HAS COME TO ACT!

OH! IT IS YOU, MY LORD LOKI!

DO NOT PLAY GAMES WITH ME, UGLITHA. I KNOW QUITE WELL THAT YOU HAVE NOT BEEN SLEEPING ALL THIS TIME.

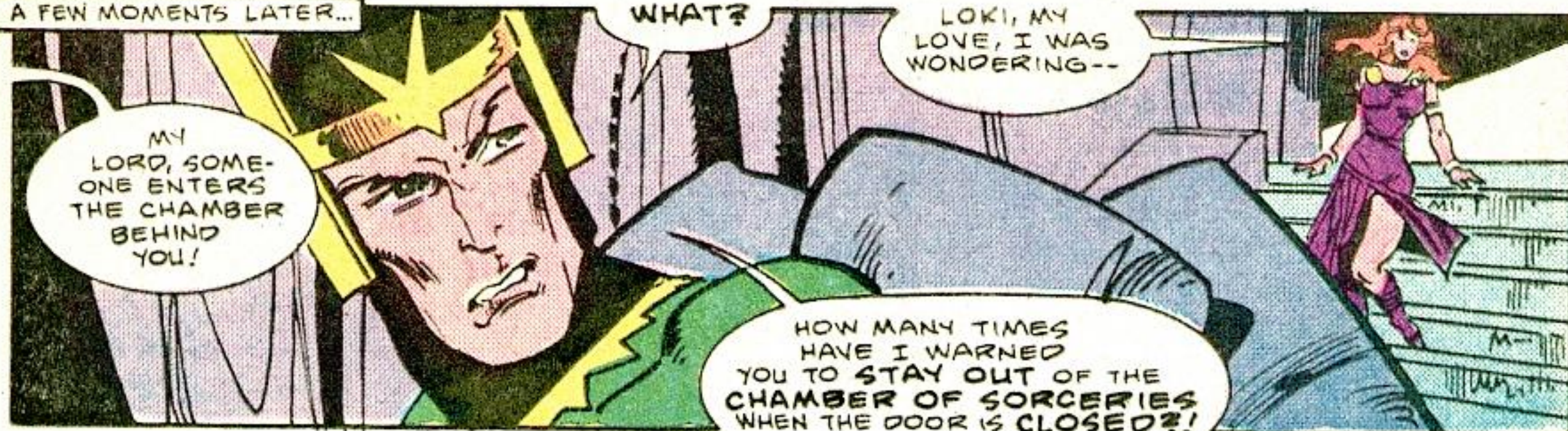
FORTUNATELY, I APPROVE OF THE WAY IN WHICH YOU EARN YOUR LIVING.

SO I AM SENDING A LITTLE PRESENT FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.

YOU WOULD DO ME A GREAT FAVOR BY ACCEPTING IT.

NOW, LISTEN CLOSELY.

A FEW MOMENTS LATER...



MY LORD, SOMEONE ENTERS THE CHAMBER BEHIND YOU!

WHAT?

LOKI, MY LOVE, I WAS WONDERING--

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I WARNED YOU TO STAY OUT OF THE CHAMBER OF SORCERIES WHEN THE DOOR IS CLOSED?!

LEARN THIS AND LEARN IT WELL, LORELEI!

IF YOU DISPLEASE ME AGAIN, YOU SHALL SUFFER FOR IT!

OH NO, MY LORD!

NOW, MAKE YOURSELF USEFUL FOR A CHANGE, INSTEAD OF MERELY ORNAMENTAL!

AND BRING ME SOMETHING TO DRINK...

...NOW!



sob
sob
sob

COME, COME, THIS WILL NEVER DO, MY DEAR. WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE PROBLEM?

IT...IT'S LOKI. I LOVE HIM SO AND HE TREATS ME AS IF I WERE A SERVING MAID.

THAT'S NEVER HAPPENED BEFORE AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.

I...THINK HE'S GETTING BORED WITH ME!

YOU'RE IN LUCK, MY DEAR. I HAVE THE VERY REMEDY FOR YOUR PROBLEM.

YOU... YOU DO?

MOST CERTAINLY. AS YOU MAY KNOW, THE ELVES AND FAERIES OF BRITAIN WERE CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH THE LEGENDARY FIGURES OF KING ARTHUR AND HIS ROUND TABLE.

AND I HAVE WITH ME HERE A SMALL CORDIAL OF THE VERY LOVE POTION OVER WHICH ISOLDE AND TRISTAN SWORE THEIR ETERNAL FEALTY.

A FEW DROPS OF THIS IN YOUR LOVER'S DRINK, AND HE'LL THINK OF NO ONE ELSE AGAIN!

OH, BUT--

NO, NO! DON'T THANK ME NOW. THE LOOK OF HAPPINESS I SHALL SEE IN YOUR EYES WILL BE THANKS ENOUGH!

SHORTLY...



YOU CERTAINLY TOOK LONG ENOUGH, LORELEI.

HERE, MY LORD LOKI.

I THINK PERHAPS WE OUGHT TO TALK ABOUT YOUR FUTURE IN THE LIFE OF LOKI.



BUT FIRST A TOAST! YOU CERTAINLY HAVE BEEN THE MOST BEAUTIFUL CREATURE TO GRACE THIS HALL IN MANY A YEAR.

MORE'S THE PITY THAT WE MUST SOON TERMINATE OUR ARRANGEMENT.

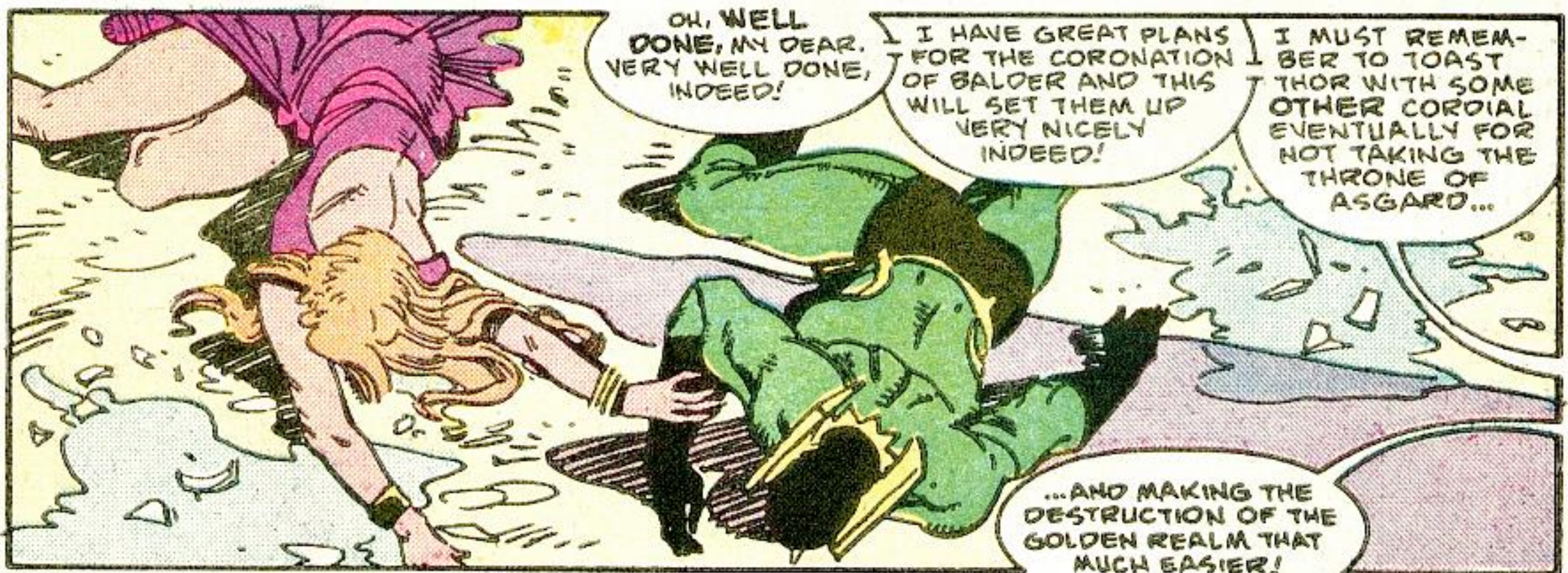
THEN I HAVE OBTAINED THE CORDIAL JUST IN TIME. I WONDER HOW LONG BEFORE IT TAKES EFFECT?



OHhhh!

GAKK!

KRASSH



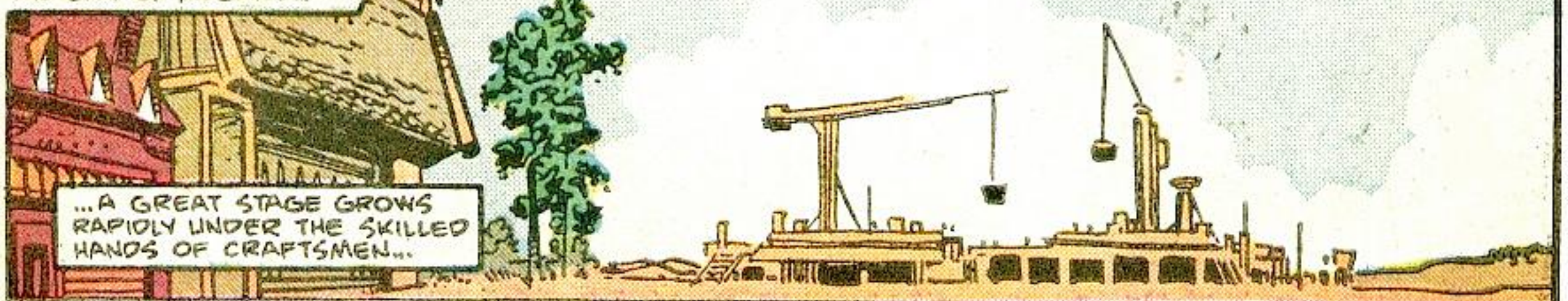
OH, WELL DONE, MY DEAR. VERY WELL DONE, INDEED!

I HAVE GREAT PLANS FOR THE CORONATION OF BALDER AND THIS WILL SET THEM UP VERY NICELY INDEED!

I MUST REMEMBER TO TOAST THOR WITH SOME OTHER CORDIAL EVENTUALLY FOR NOT TAKING THE THRONE OF ASGARD...

...AND MAKING THE DESTRUCTION OF THE GOLDEN REALM THAT MUCH EASIER!

MEANWHILE, JUST OUTSIDE THE CITY OF ASGARD...



...A GREAT STAGE GROWS RAPIDLY UNDER THE SKILLED HANDS OF CRAFTSMEN...

...AS THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE COMING CORONATION
CATCH FIRE.

ANOTHER
VESSEL OF
MORTAR,
LARRSON.

WE NEED
TO CHECK ON
THAT SHIPMENT
OF SEASONED
OAK FROM
THE TROLL
WOODS.

AND
BRING ALONG
A CASK OF
MEAD WHEN
YOU COME
BACK.

SLACK
OFF THE
LINE
THERE!

AND BELOW
THE GREAT
STAGE...

IT IS
A PITY
THE NEWS
ABOUT
THE FROST
GIANTS
WAS ONLY
A FALSE
ALARM...

GUARDING A
CONSTRUCTION
SITE IS HARDLY
A FIT OCCU-
PATION FOR
A WARRIOR.

WHO
IN THE
NINE WORLDS
WOULD
WANT TO HARM
BALDER THE
BRAVE?

WHAT--?!

IN THE SHADOWS! SOME
DARKER SHADE THAT SEEKS
TO AVOID THE LIGHT!

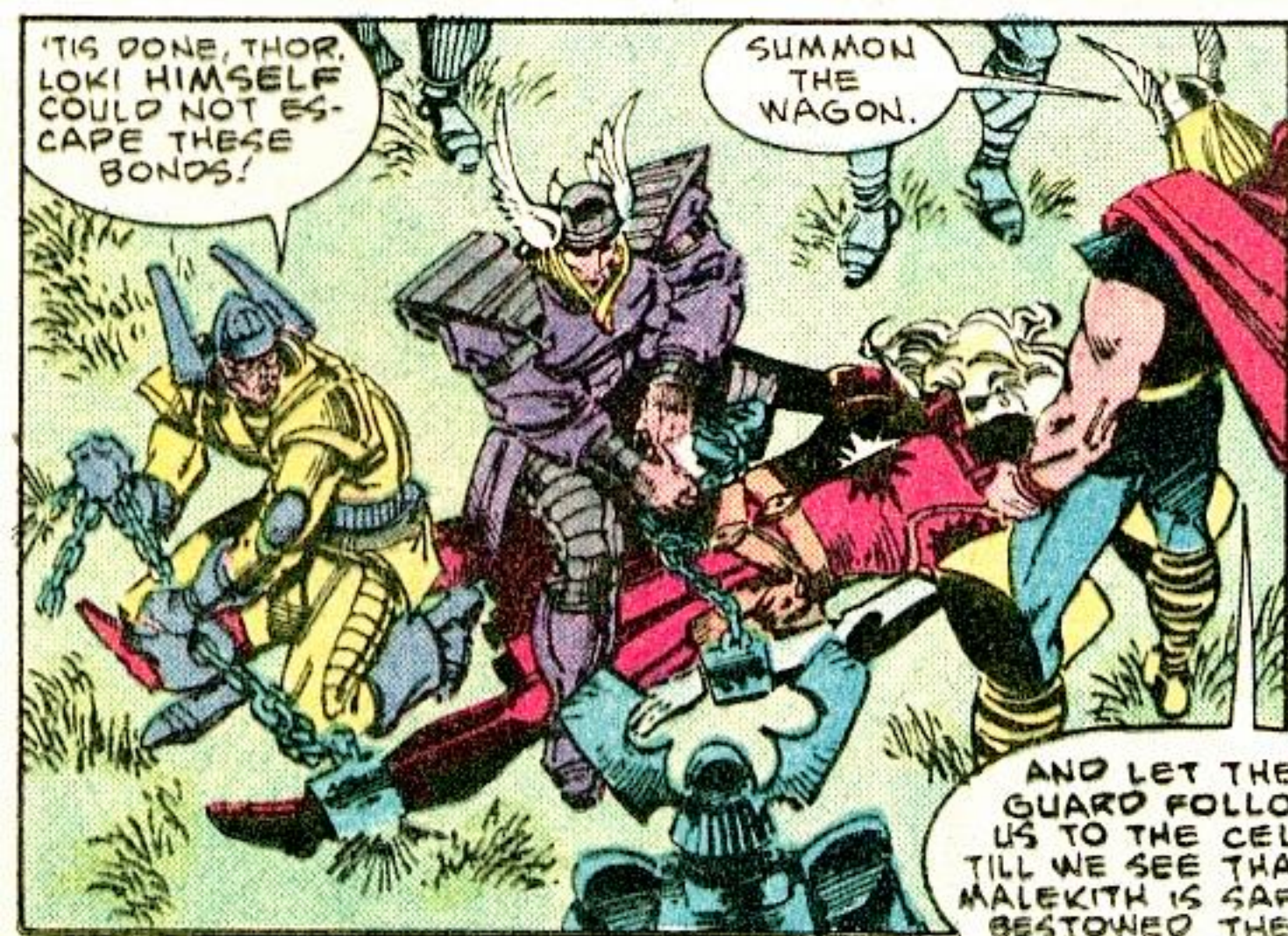
HOLD
THERE!

SWISSSSH!

KLUCKNCK!!



*AS THOSE WHO HAVE READ THORS 345/348 ALREADY KNOW!



MEANWHILE, AT THE GATES OF THE GOLDEN CITY...

HOSKULD,
LOOK
YOU AT THE
HORIZON!

A RIDER!
A RIDER
APPROACHES!

SOUND
THE ALERT
AND OPEN
THE GATES!

'TIS BALDER,
THE BRAVE!
THE LIEGE LORD
OF ASGARD HATH
RETURNED FROM
NORNREALM!

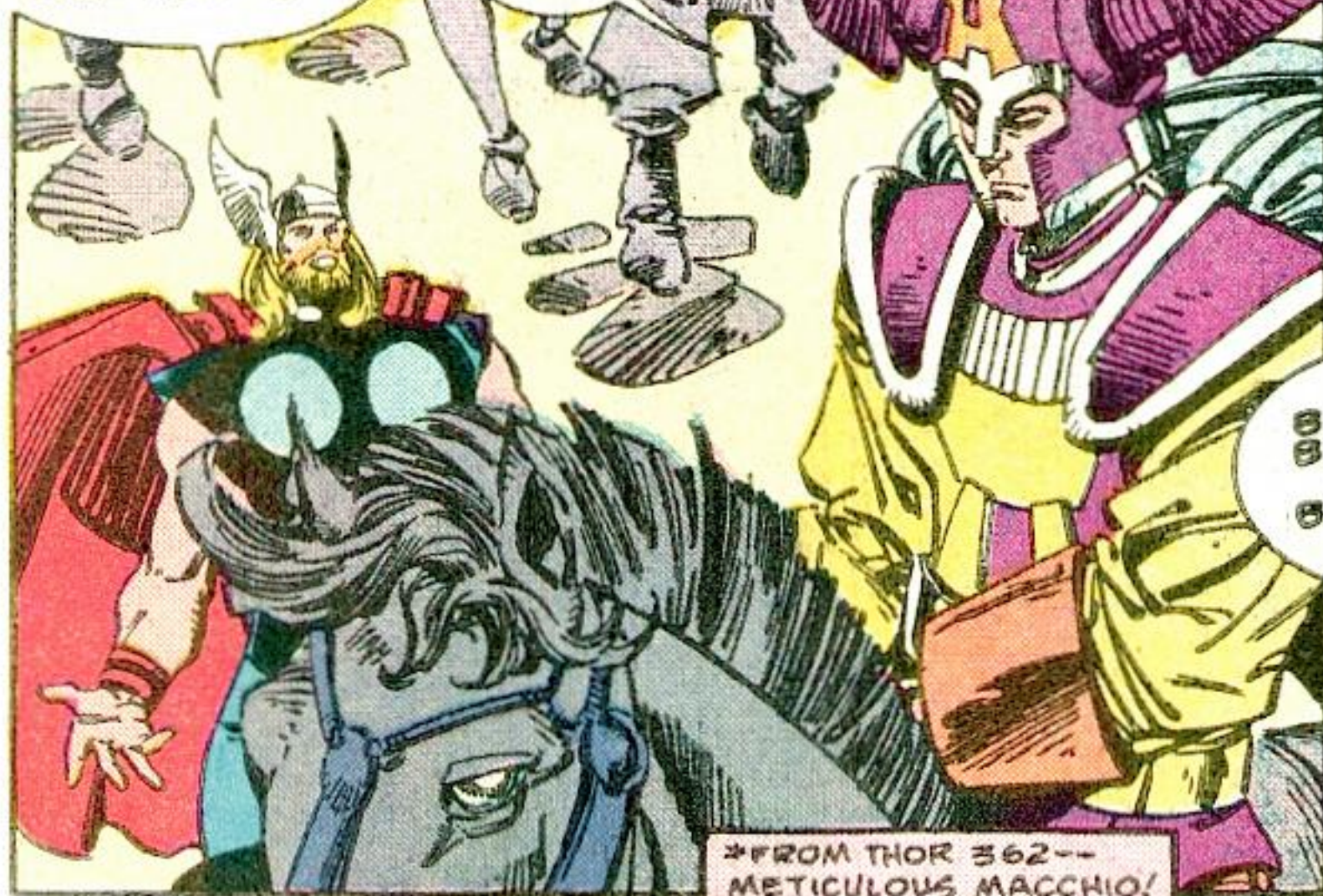
HAIL,
BRAVE
ONE!

THOR! THIS
WAS YOUR
DOING, I'LL
WARRANT!

BALDER, MY
FRIEND, I FEAR
SO. WELCOME
HOME! 'TIS GOOD
TO SEE THY OPEN
FACE AGAIN!

WHAT SAY WE
HAVE THAT DRINK
TO SKURGE AND
TOAST HIS MEMORY
TOGETHER*?

WELL...

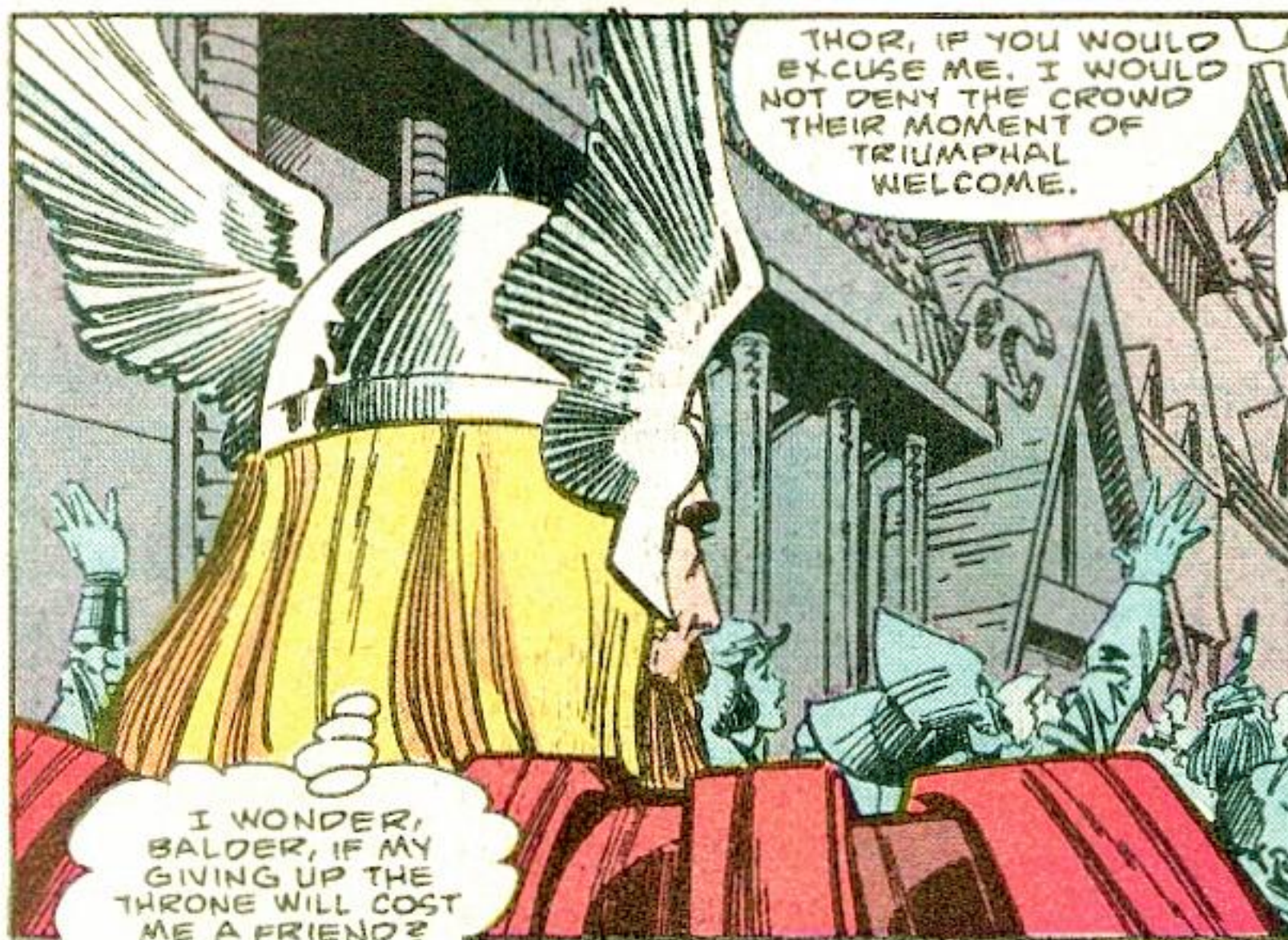


*FROM THOR 362--
METICULOUS MACCHIO!

BALDER!
BALDER!
THE
BRAVE!

ALL HAIL
THE NEW
LORD OF
ASGARD!

PRAISE
THE
SHINING
ONE!



THOR, IF YOU WOULD
EXCUSE ME, I WOULD
NOT DENY THE CROWD
THEIR MOMENT OF
TRIUMPHAL
WELCOME.

LET US HAVE
THAT DRINK
ANOTHER TIME,
WHEN THIS IS
OVER.

I WONDER,
BALDER, IF MY
GIVING UP THE
THRONE WILL COST
ME A FRIEND?

AND A SHORT WAY AWAY IN A GREAT HALL IN THE SOUTHERN
QUARTER OF THE CITY...



THAT'S
ALL I CAN
STAND; I
CAN'T STAND
ANY MORE!

KRAK!
SPLAKK!
THUDD!



KA-POW!



YOU MAY HAVE THE BEST RIGHT HOOK OF ANY OF US, HILDY...

...BUT YOU ARE A GIRL AND YOU STILL HAVE TO WEAR A DRESS TO THE CORONATION.

AND WE DON'T! SO THERE! HA!

MAYBE SO, EINAR, BUT I CAN LICK ANY MAN IN THE HOUSE!

SO IF YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING ELSE TO SAY, JUST SAY IT!



I AM CERTAIN, HILDY, THAT YOUR ARGUMENTS HAVE PERSUADED THEM THAT IF THEY FOUND IT NECESSARY TO WEAR DRESSES, THEY WOULD NOT HESITATE.

URK!

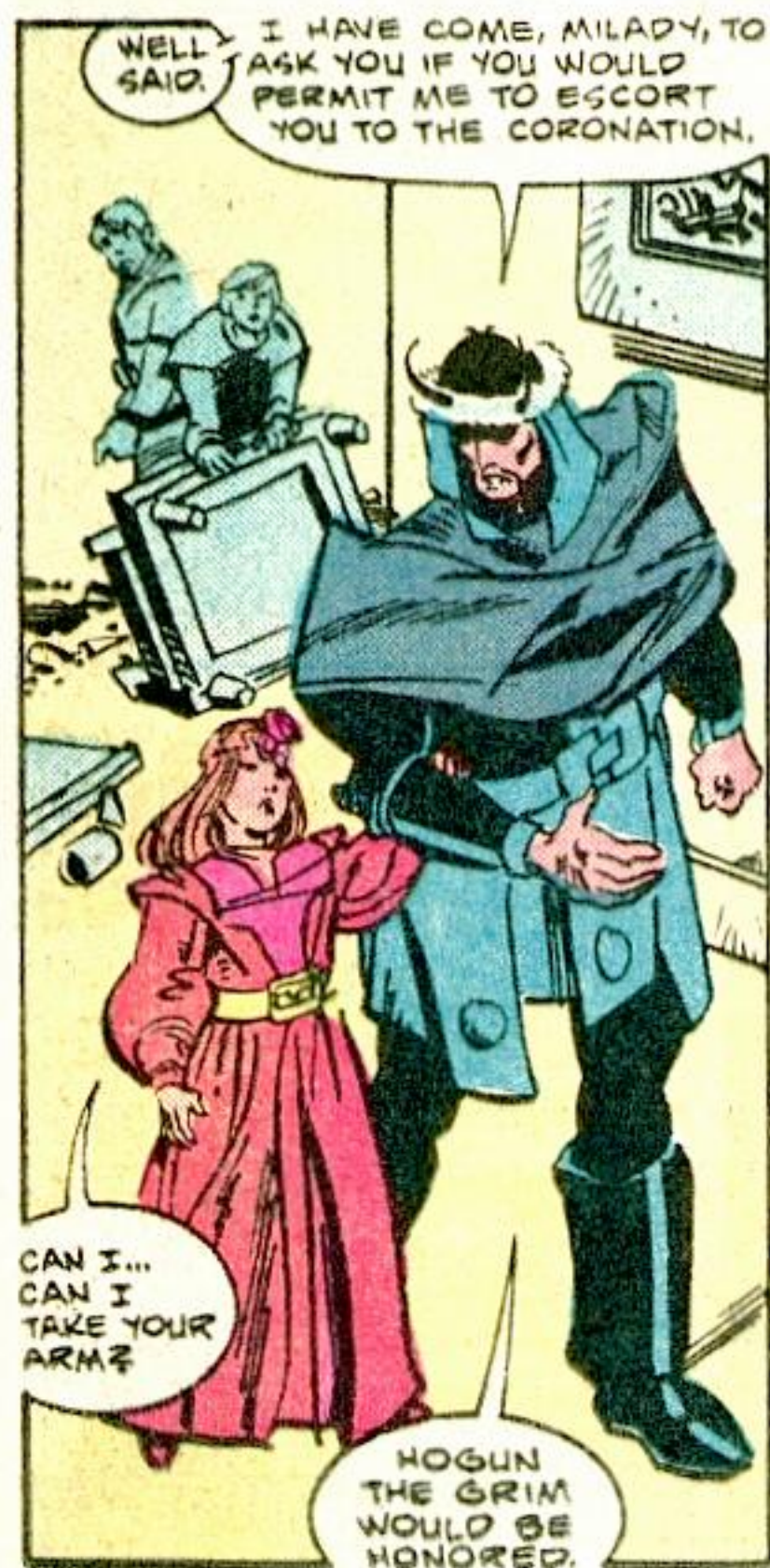


IS THAT NOT SO, GENTLEMEN?

OH...OH, SURE!

YESSIR!

WHAT SIZE?



WELL SAID. I HAVE COME, MILADY, TO ASK YOU IF YOU WOULD PERMIT ME TO ESCORT YOU TO THE CORONATION.

CAN I... CAN I TAKE YOUR ARM?

HOGUN THE GRIM WOULD BE HONORED.



OH, BROTHER.

WHAT HO, BELOW! PREPARE THYSELVES, MY LITTLE GREMLINS!

'TIS TIME FOR THE VOLSTAGG CLAN TO DEPART.



OMIGOSH! HERE COME THE FOLKS! QUICK! GET THIS PLACE STRAIGHTENED UP FAST!

AND MOMENTS LATER...

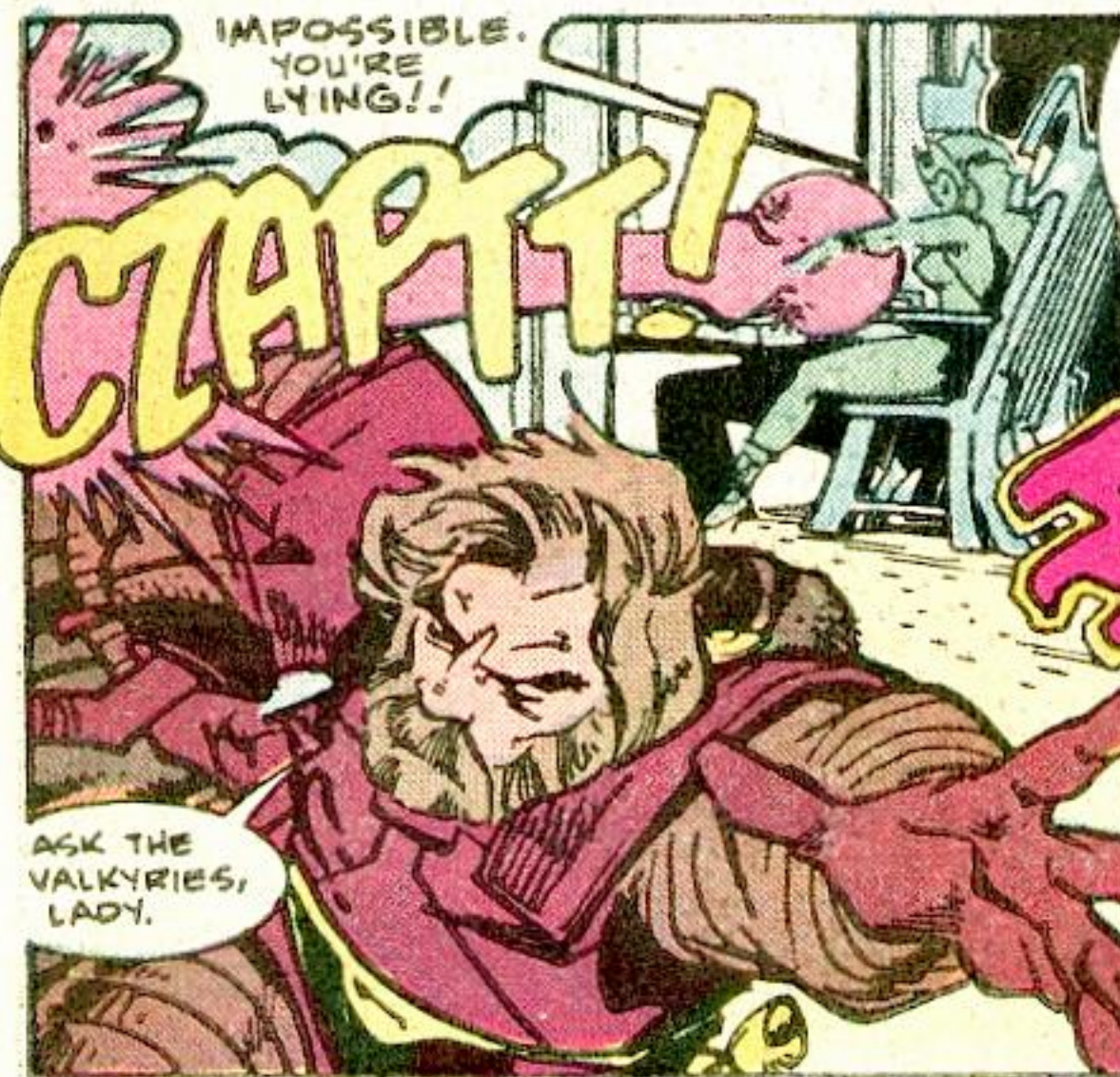
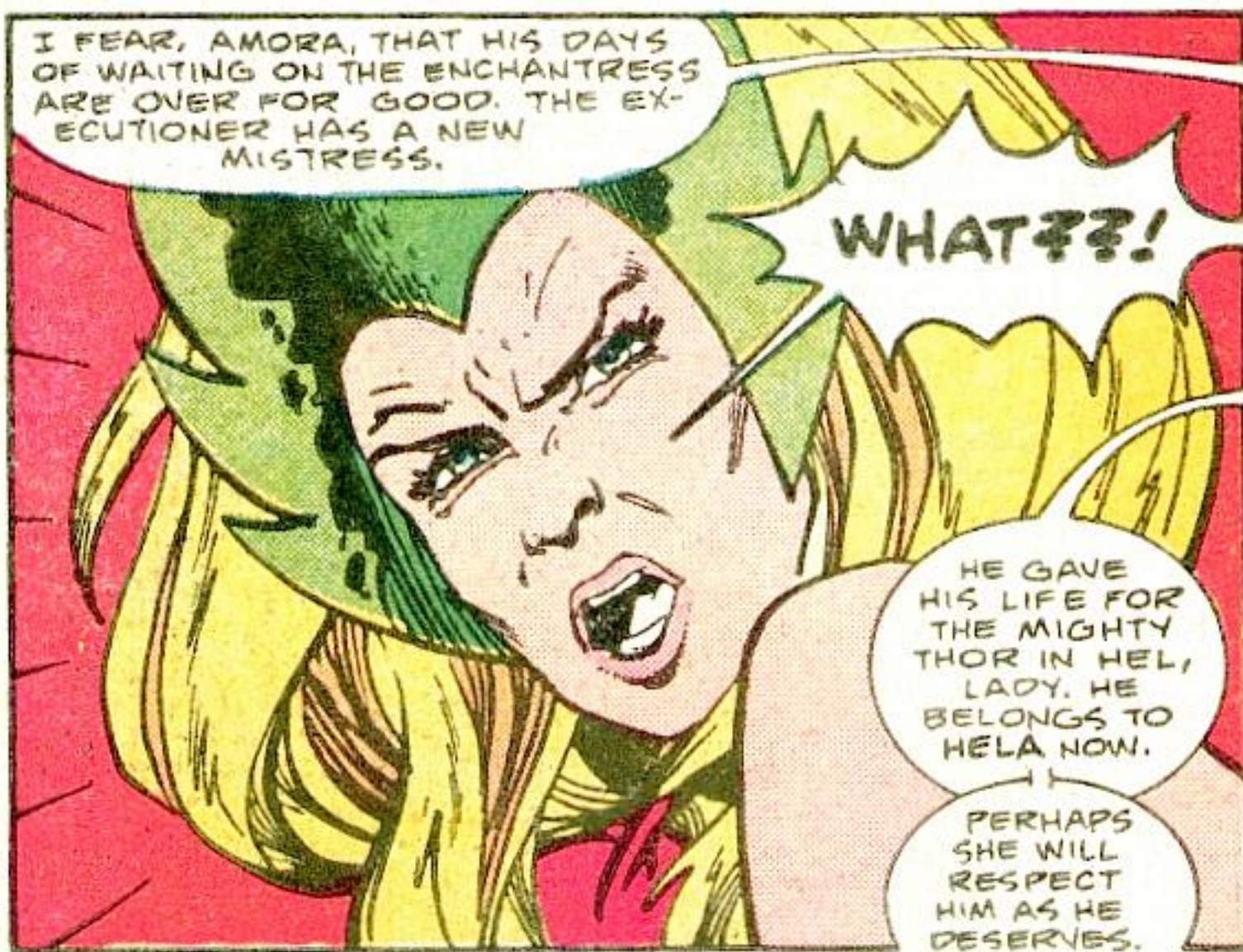
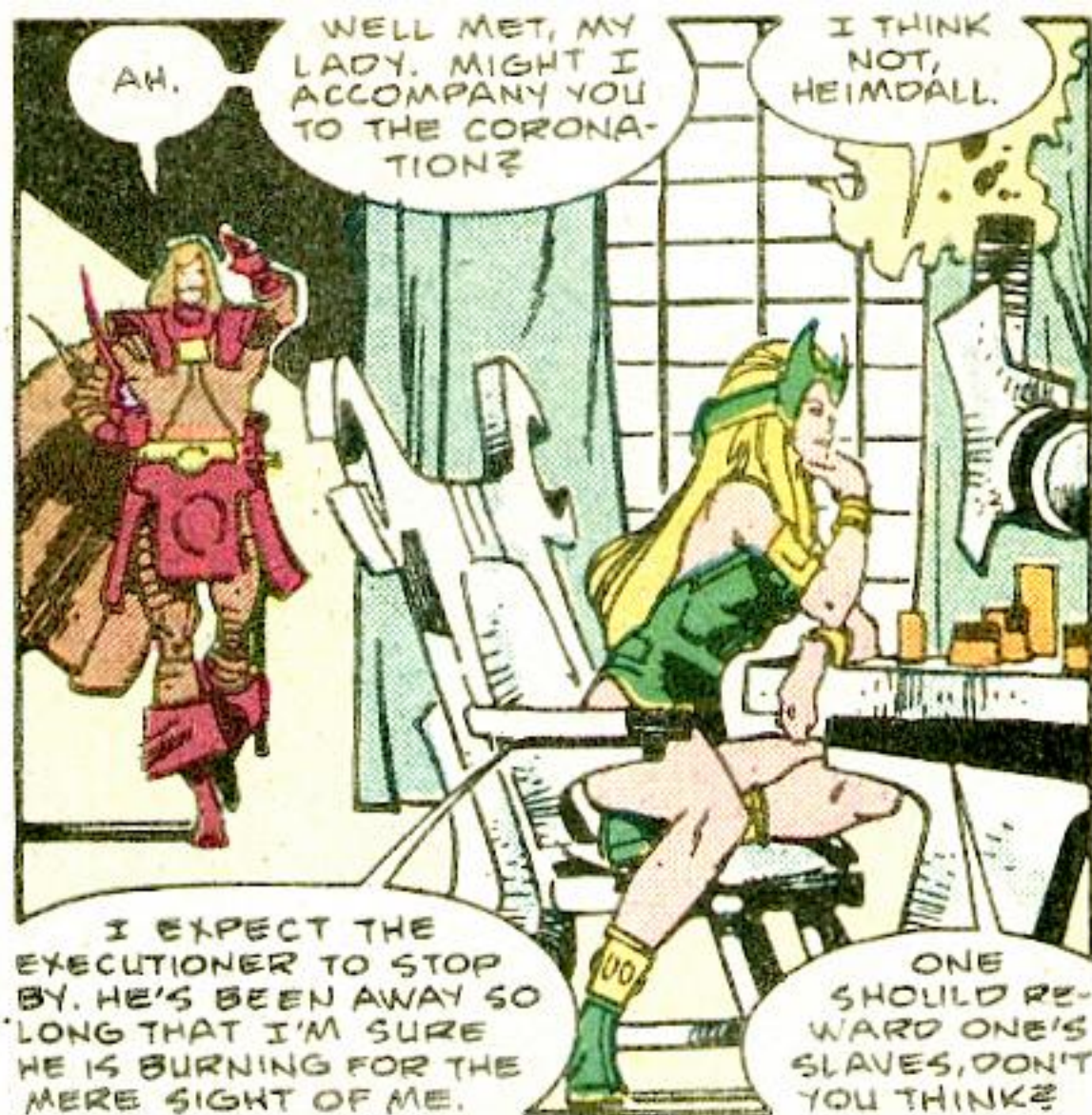
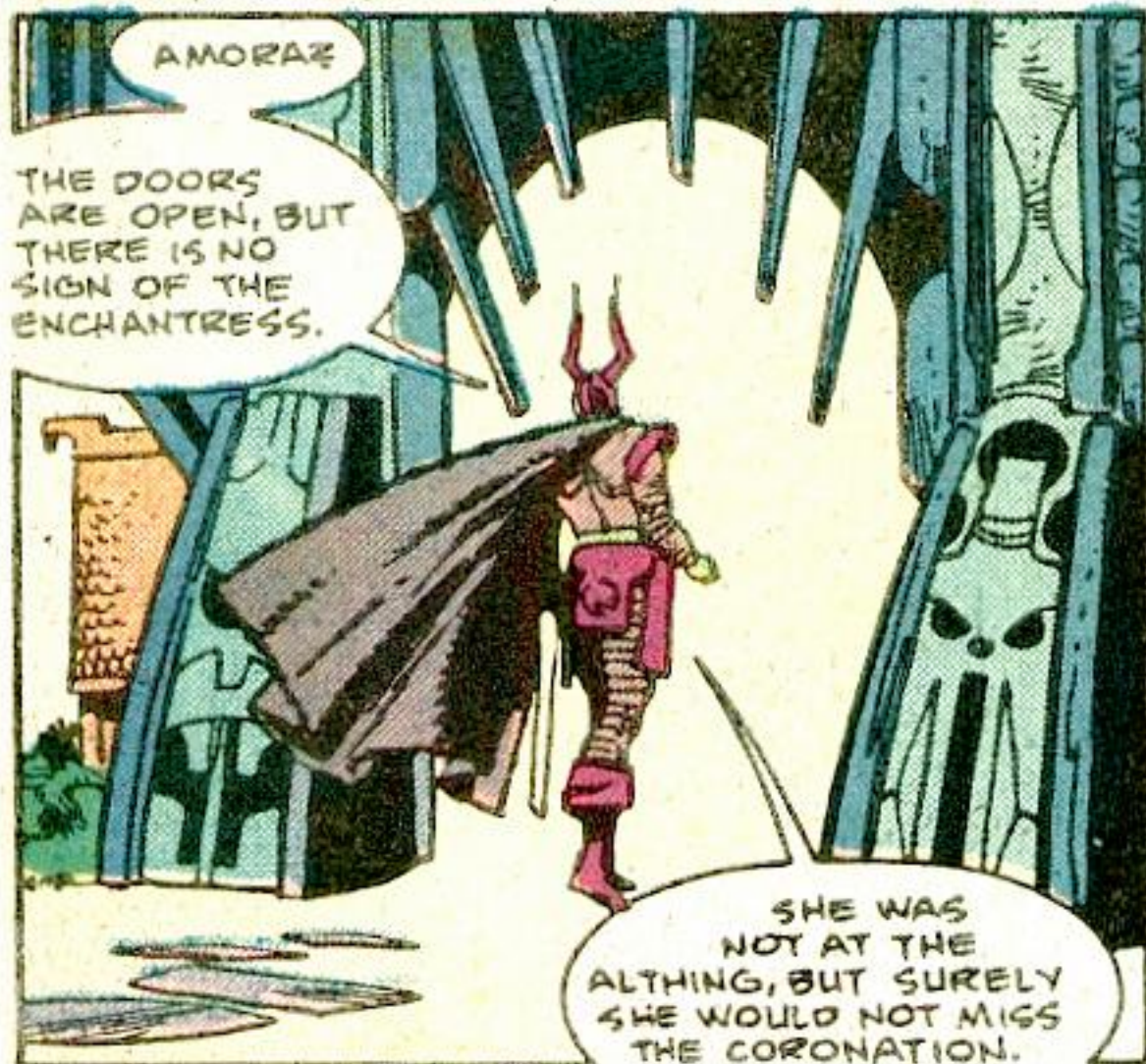
AH, GUORUN,
DEAR HEART, THERE IS
NO JOY LIKE THAT OF
HAVING A TROOP OF WELL-
BEHAVED, WELL BROUGHT
UP CHILDREN...

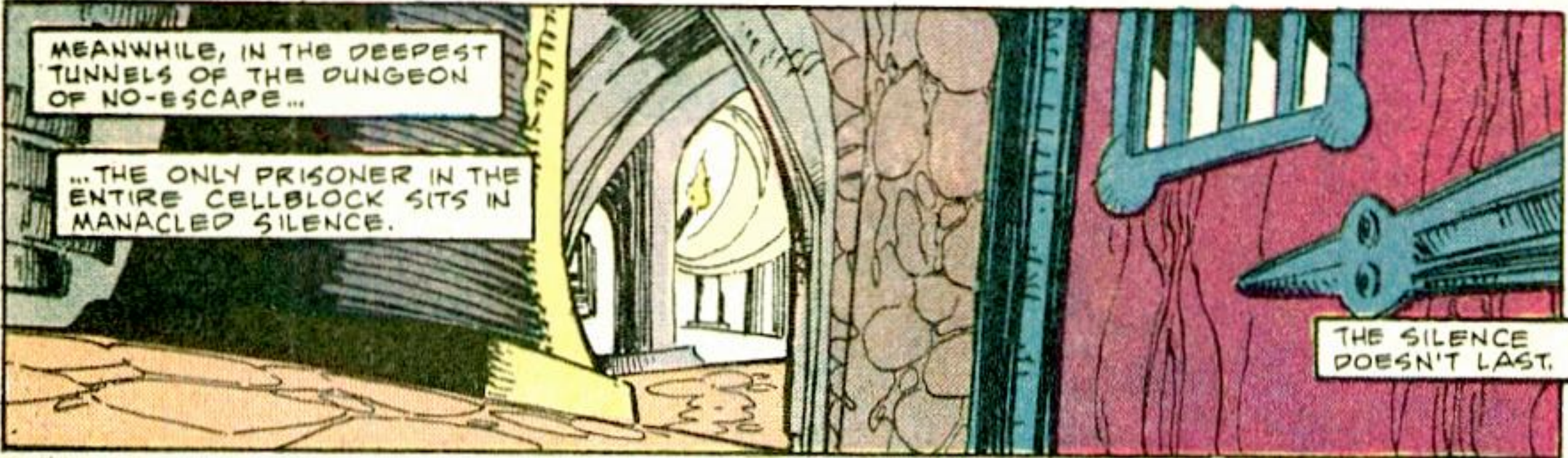
...EXCEPT
PERHAPS THAT OF
ESCORTING THE
VERY FLOWER OF
ALL ASGARDOIAN
WOMANHOOD,

FLATTERER.



ELSEWHERE, AS THE CROWDS BEGIN TO GATHER AT THE GREAT STAGE FOR THE CEREMONY...





MEANWHILE, IN THE DEEPEST TUNNELS OF THE DUNGEON OF NO-ESCAPE...

...THE ONLY PRISONER IN THE ENTIRE CELLBLOCK SITS IN MANACLED SILENCE.

THE SILENCE DOESN'T LAST.

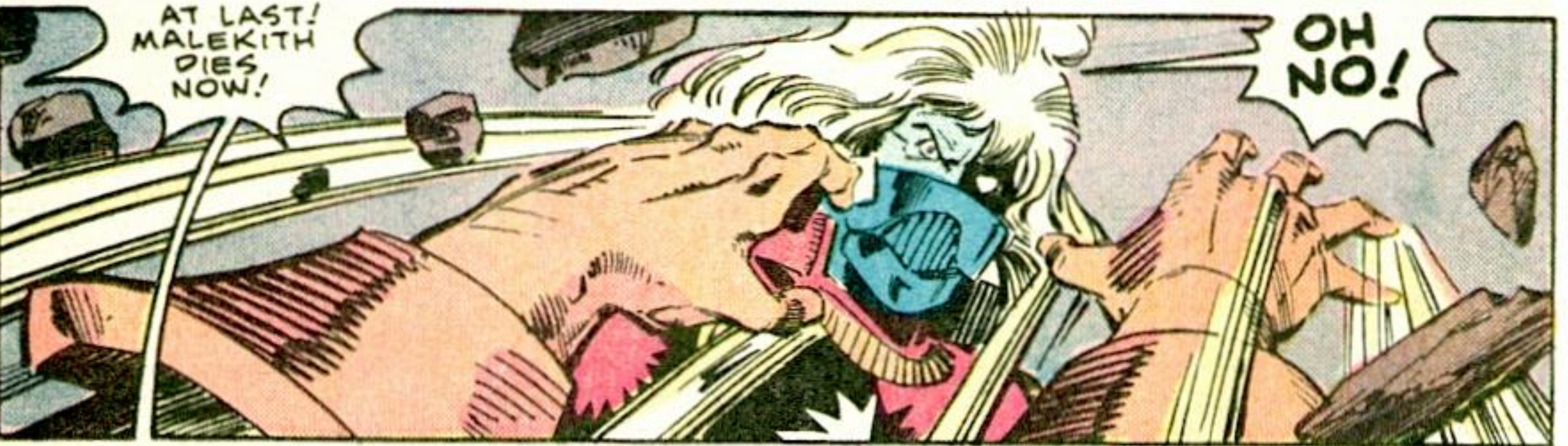
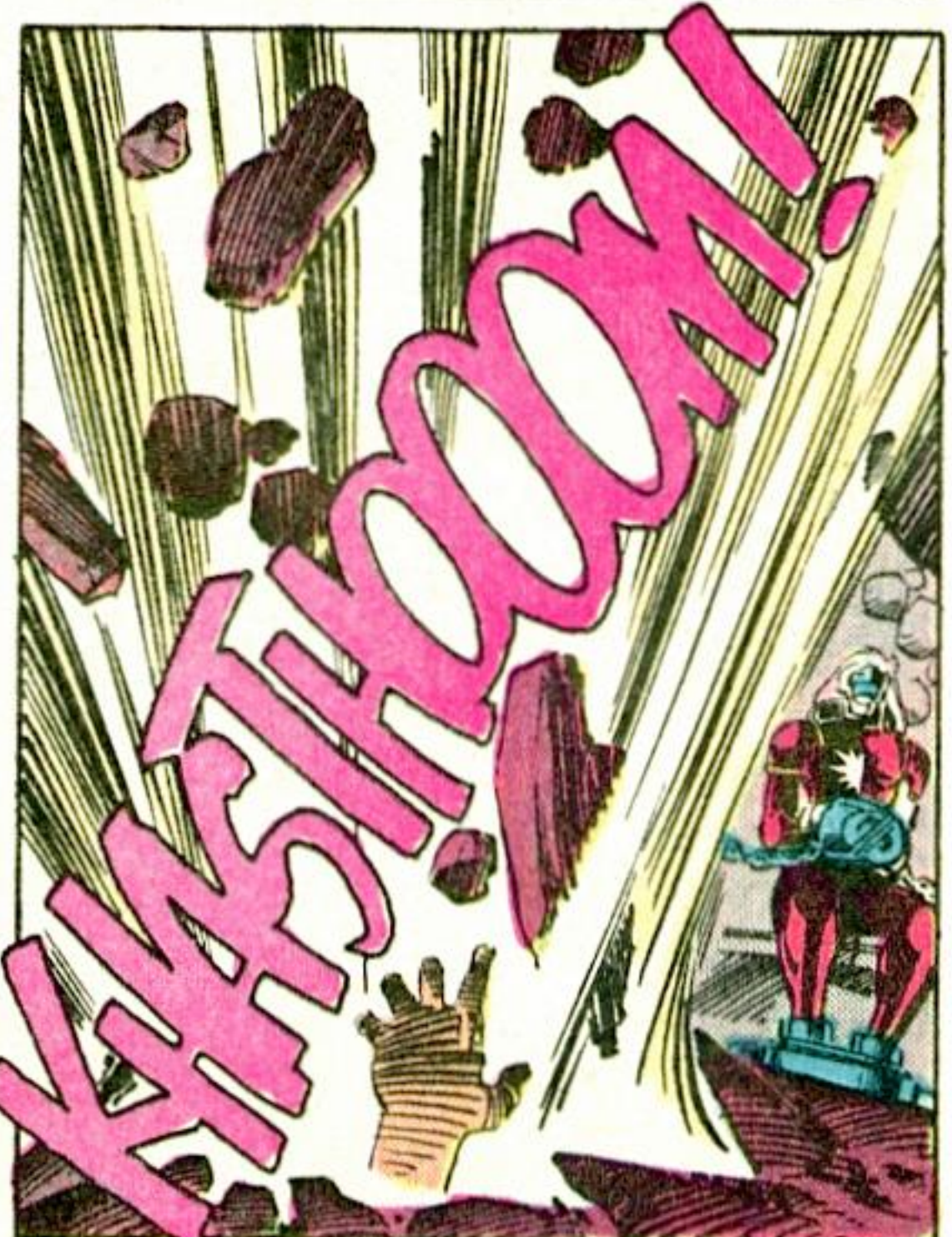


THE BONDS PREVENT ME FROM USING MAGICAL GESTURES.

AND THOUGH I CAN SPEAK THROUGH THE GRILLWORK OF MY GAG, NO SORCEROUS WORDS PENETRATE ITS BLOCKING FIELD.



WHAT?



AT LAST! MALEKITH DIES NOW!

OH NO!

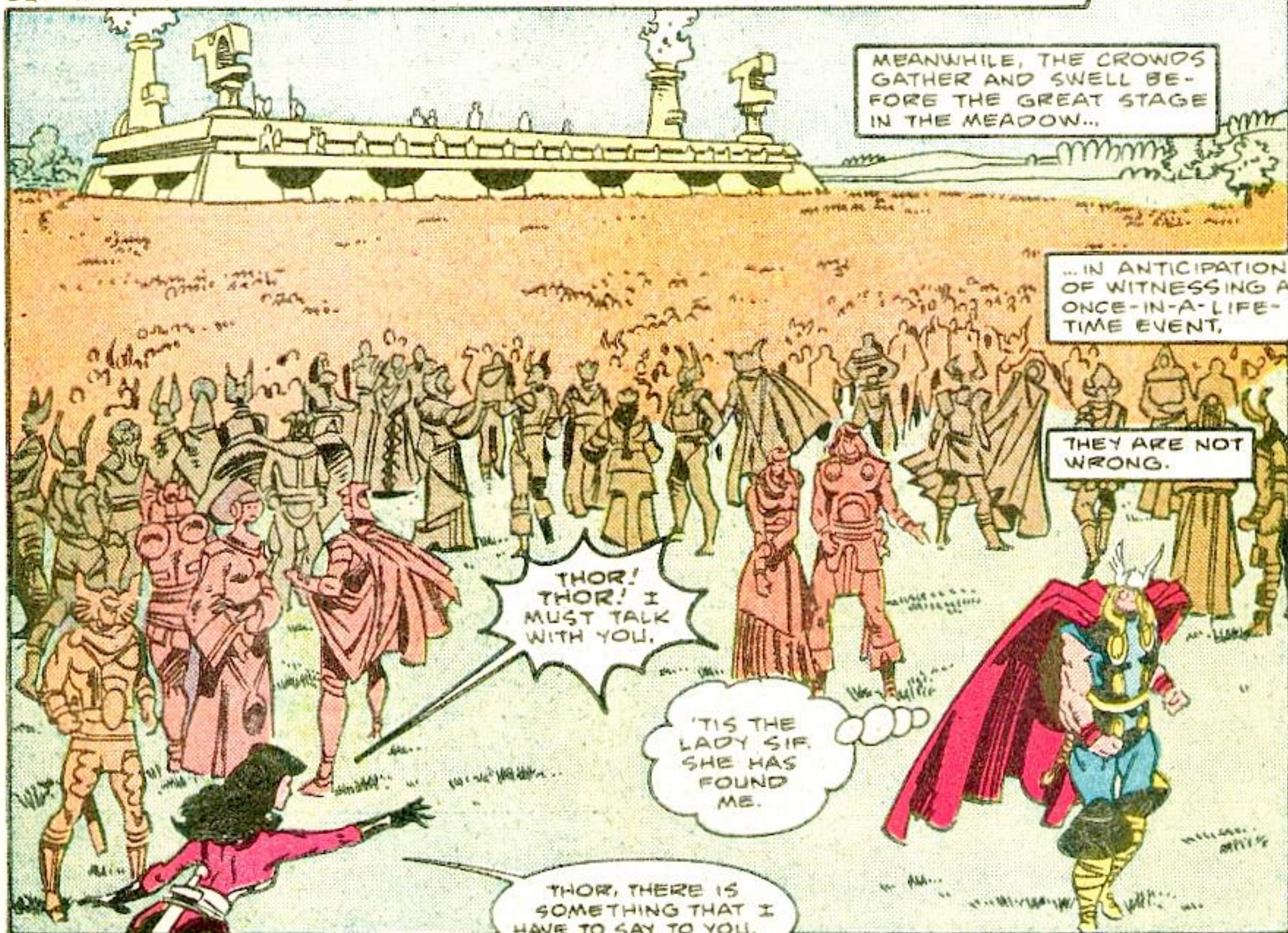


DIE! DIE! DIE!

BOUM!
BOUM!
BOUM!
BOUM!

NOT ME! IT'S BALDER! BALDER'S THE ONE YOU WANT!

BUT THE SOUND OF THE DESPERATE SCREAMS DO NOT CARRY BEYOND THE CELL.



MEANWHILE, THE CROWDS GATHER AND SWELL BEFORE THE GREAT STAGE IN THE MEADOW...

...IN ANTICIPATION OF WITNESSING A ONCE-IN-A-LIFE-TIME EVENT.

THEY ARE NOT WRONG.

THOR!
THOR! I
MUST TALK
WITH YOU.

'TIS THE
LADY SIF.
SHE HAS
FOUND ME.

THOR, THERE IS
SOMETHING THAT I
HAVE TO SAY TO YOU.

LADY, BEFORE
YOU SPEAK, I
BEG YOU HEAR
ME OUT.

WHEN LAST
WE SPOKE
BEFORE MY
JOURNEY INTO HEL,
I ASKED YOU TO
FORGIVE ME
FOR HAVING
STRUCK YOU.

*THOR 359

I DID NOT CON-
SIDER WHAT I WAS
ASKING OF A
PROUD WARRIOR
MAID.

BUT DURING
MY SOJOURN IN
THE LAND OF THE
DEAD, I WIT-
NESSED SOME-
THING OF THE
UNDYING NATURE
OF TRUE LOVE.

I SAW
THERE RE-
VEALED
LOVE'S UN-
SELFISH
QUALITY
WHICH I
HAD
FORGOT.

AND I
WAS FILLED
WITH WONDER
THAT LOVE
SHOULD SUR-
VIVE IN THAT
DESOLATE
PLACE.

LADY SIF, I BEG
YOU TO FORGIVE
ME, AND IF YOU
CANNOT FIND IT
IN YOUR HEART
NOW...

...I WILL
WAIT TILL
THE END OF TIME
TO RECEIVE IT.

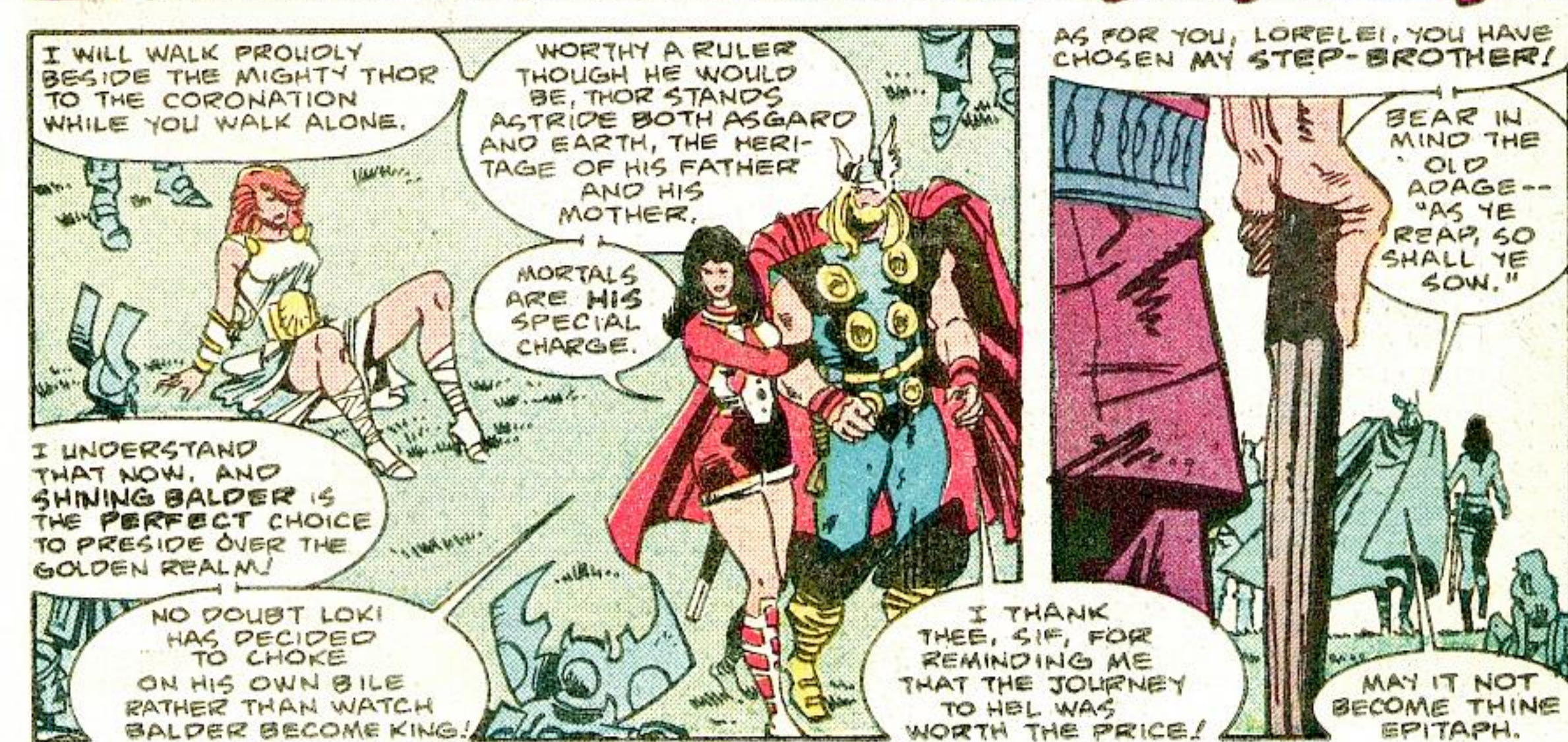
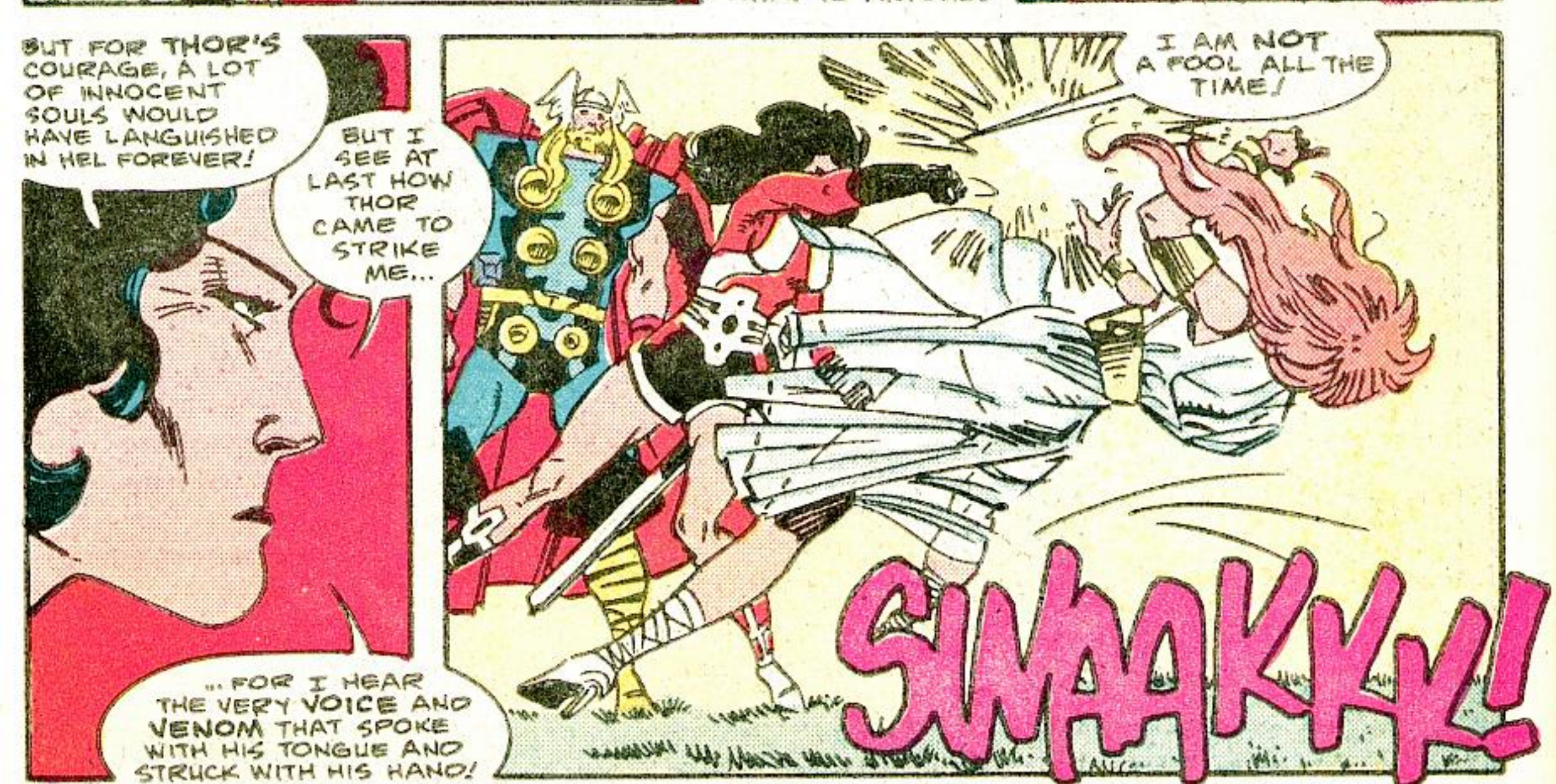
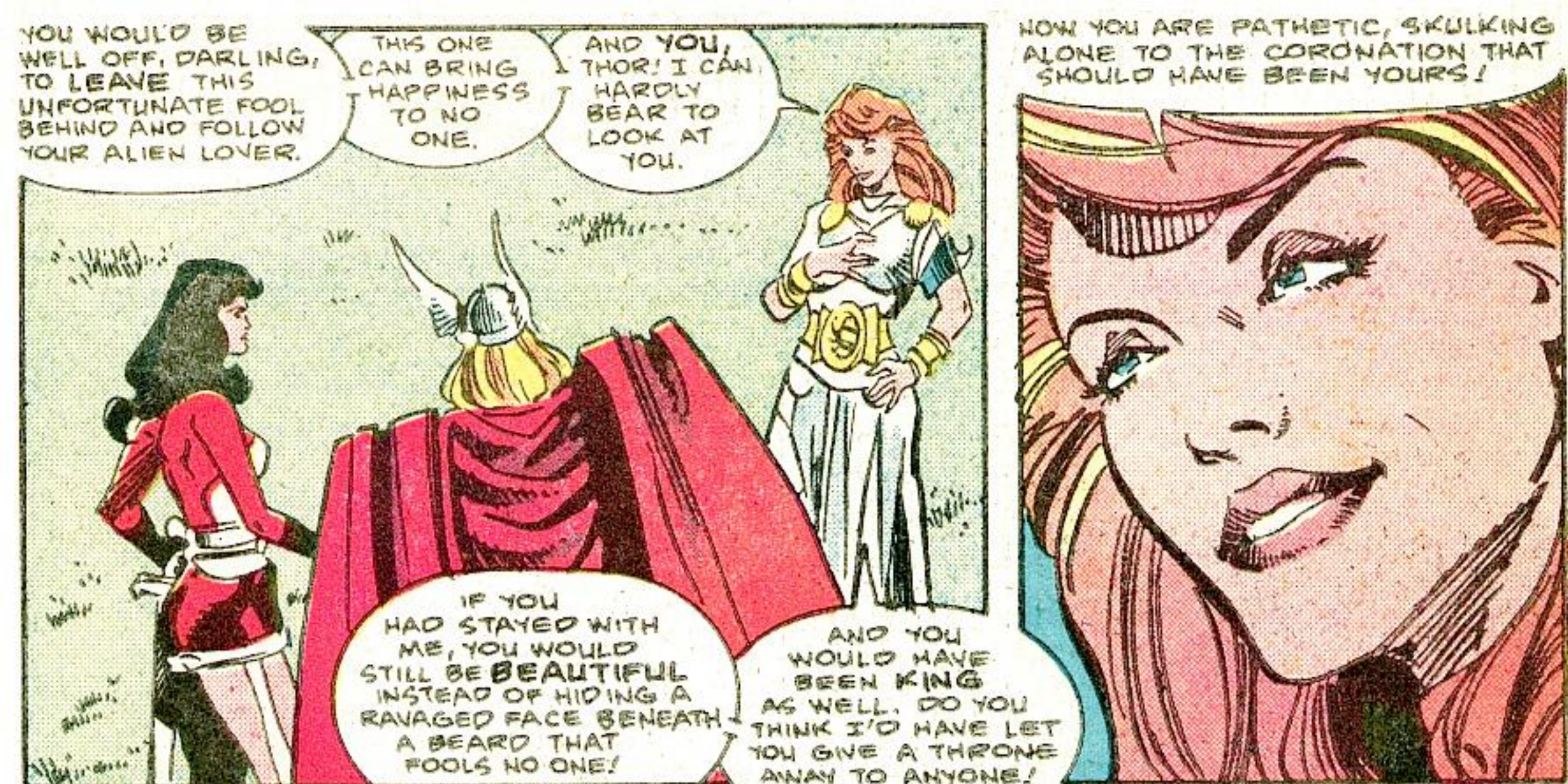
THOR, I...
I HARDLY
KNOW WHAT
TO SAY.

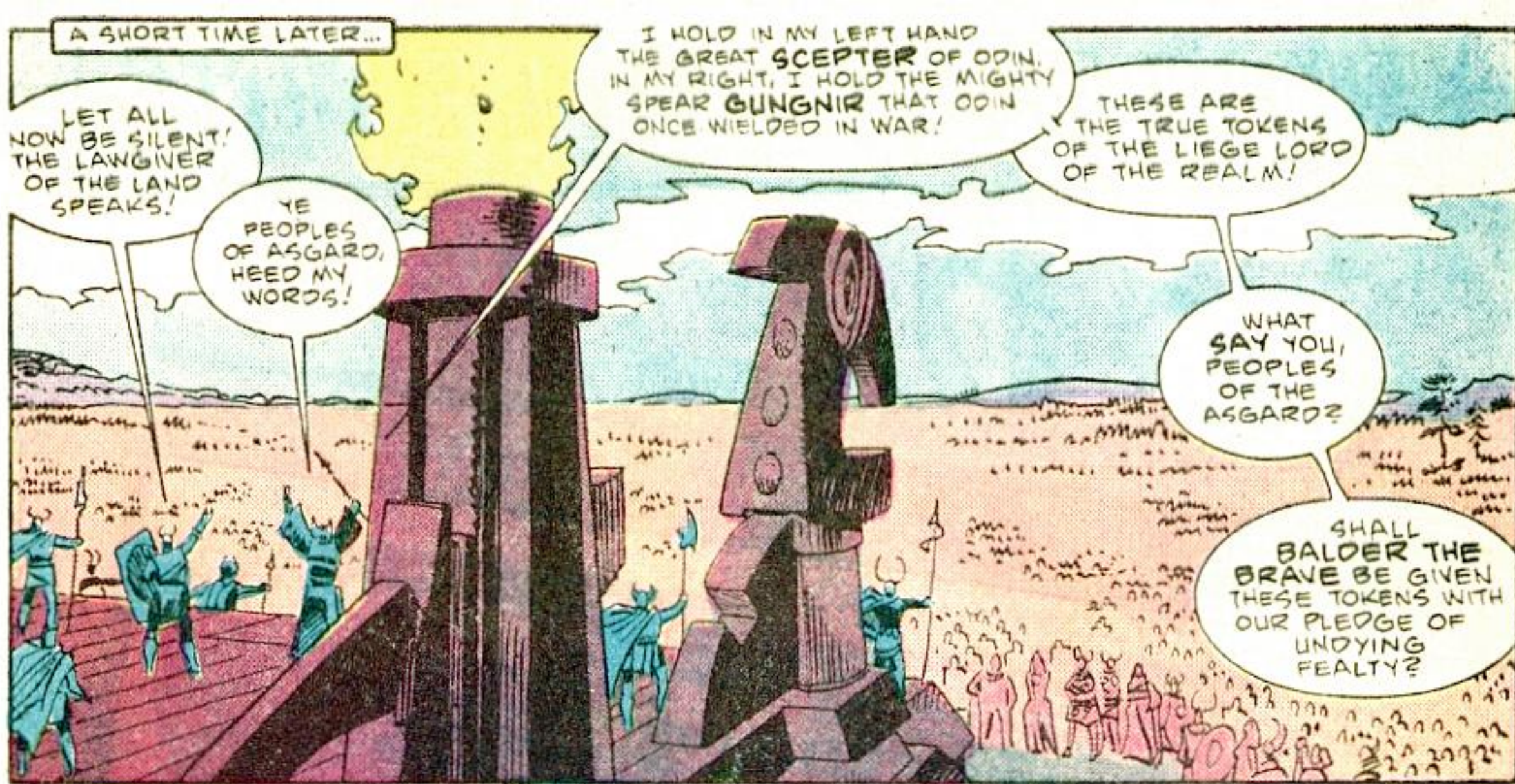
HOW CAN I TELL
HIM THAT I HAVE
DECIDED TO
LEAVE ASGARD
WITH BETA RAY
BILL AND JOURNEY
TO THE STARS.

HOW
TOUCHING.
HOW
ROMANTIC.

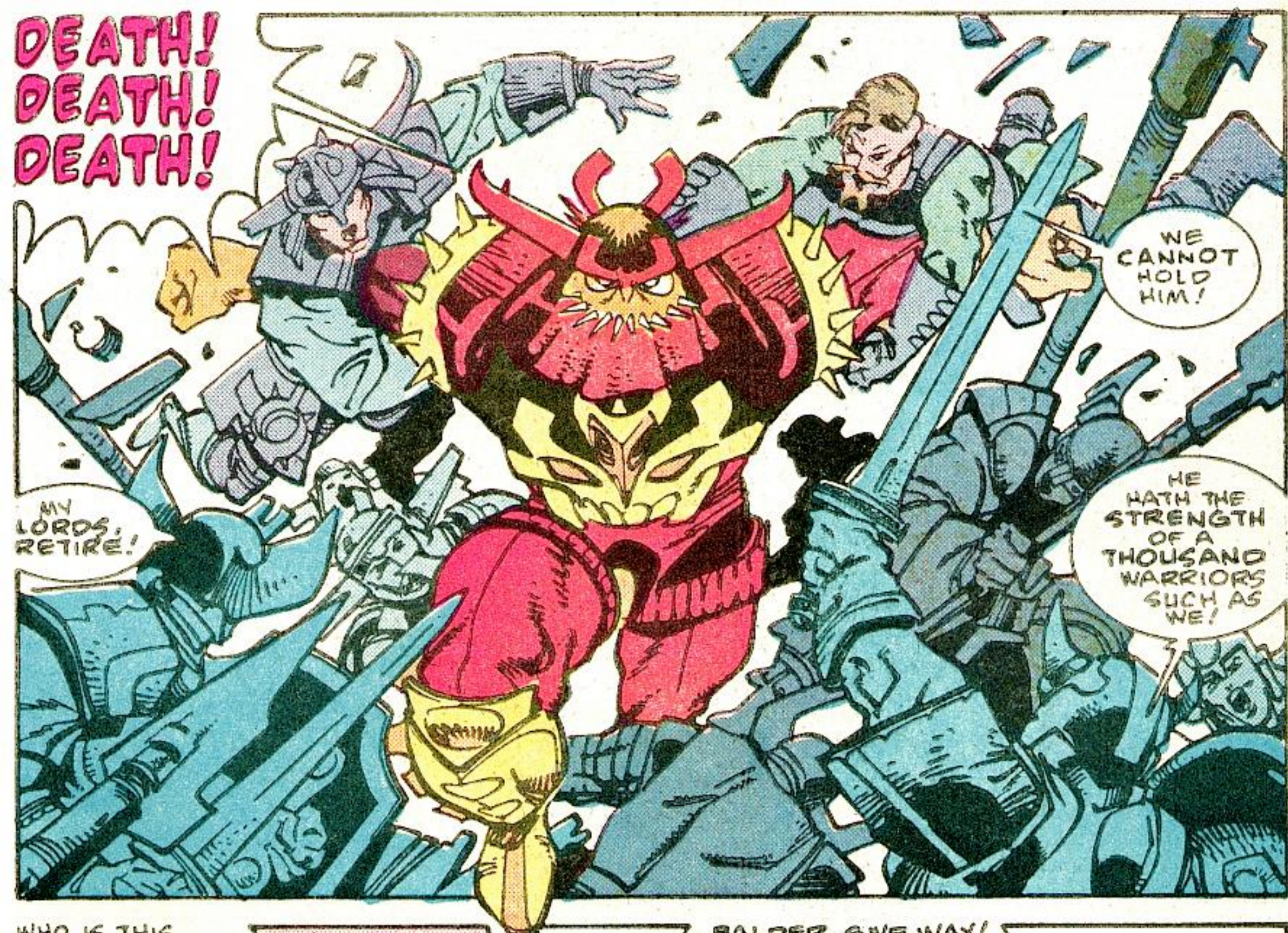
I LOOK
FOR LOKI AND
FIND THIS
TENDER SCENE
INSTEAD.

LORELEI!





DEATH!
DEATH!
DEATH!

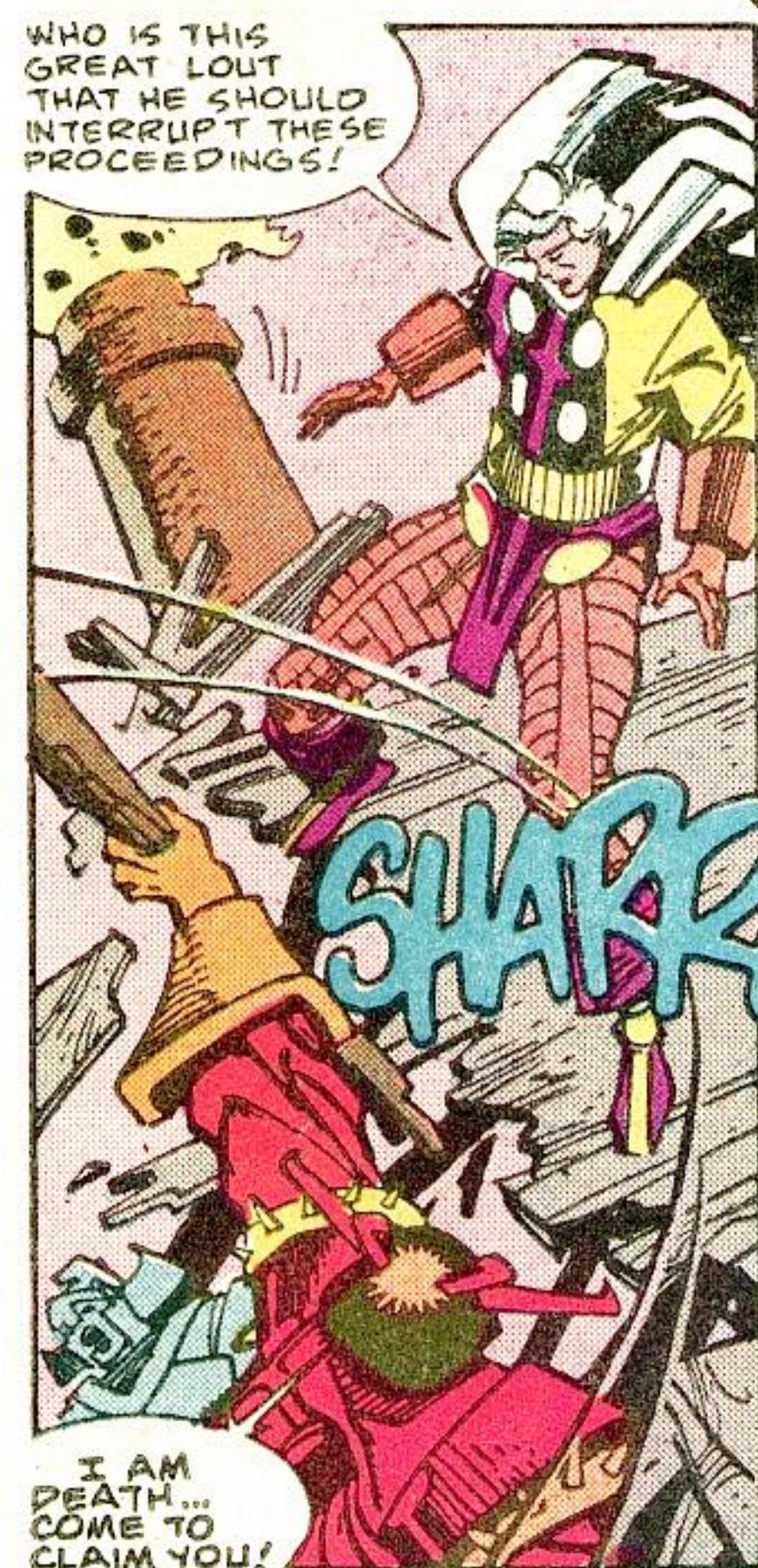


WE
CANNOT
HOLD
HIM!

HE
HATH
THE
STRENGTH
OF A
THOUSAND
WARRIORS
SUCH AS
WE!

MY
LORDS,
RETIRE!

WHO IS THIS
GREAT LOOT
THAT HE SHOULD
INTERRUPT THESE
PROCEEDINGS!



SHARRAUK!

I AM
DEATH...
COME TO
CLAIM YOU!

BALDER, GIVE WAY!
'TIS NONE OTHER THAN
KURSE, THE INCARNATION
OF DESTRUCTION
ABSOLUTE, WHOM THE
BEYONDER SENT
TO HEL*!

HE HATH
RETURNED!

AGNAR,
TO MY
SIDE!

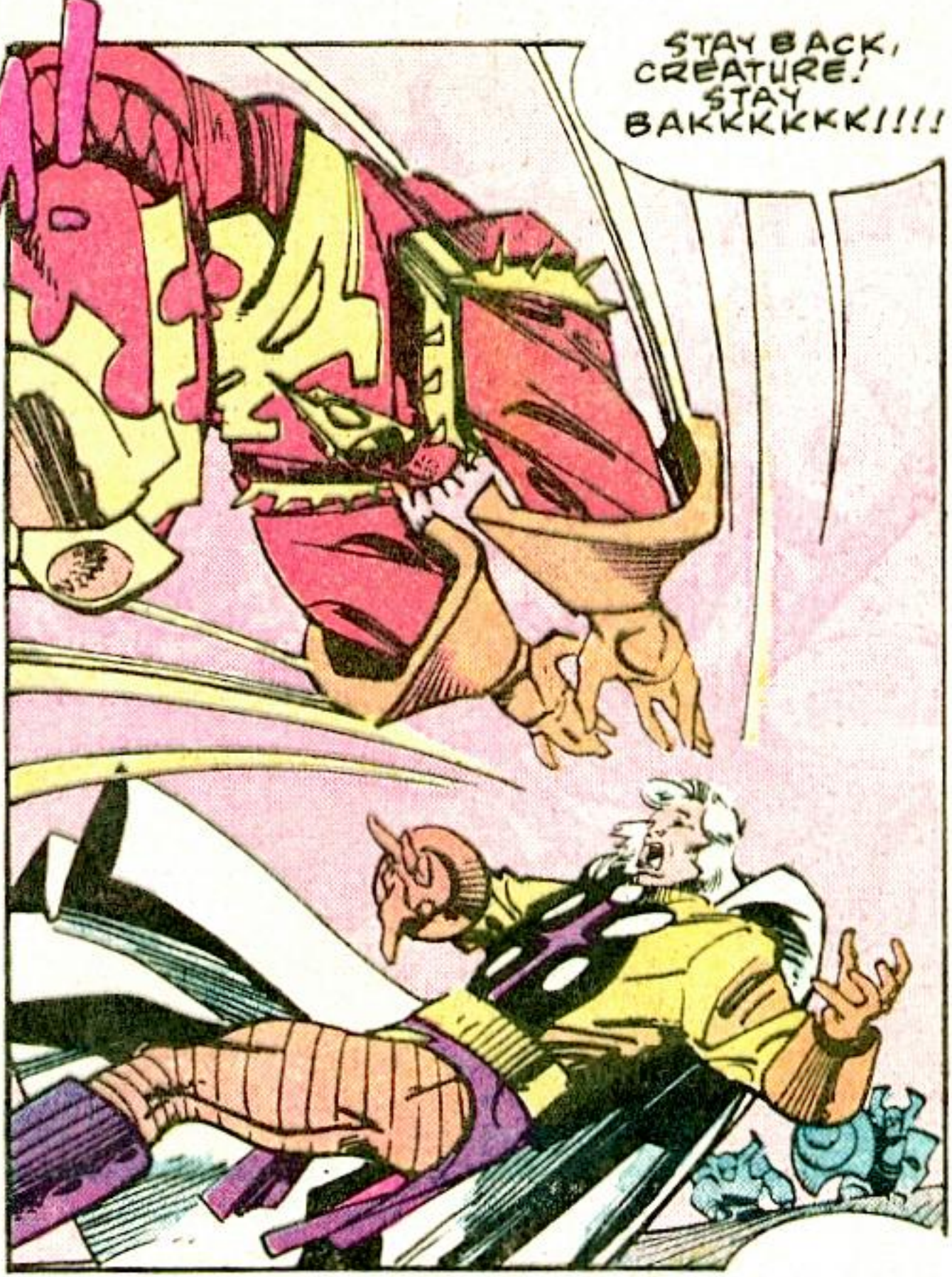


STAY BACK,
KURSE! THOR
PLEDGES HIS
LIFE TO STAND
BETWEEN THEE
AND THY PREY!

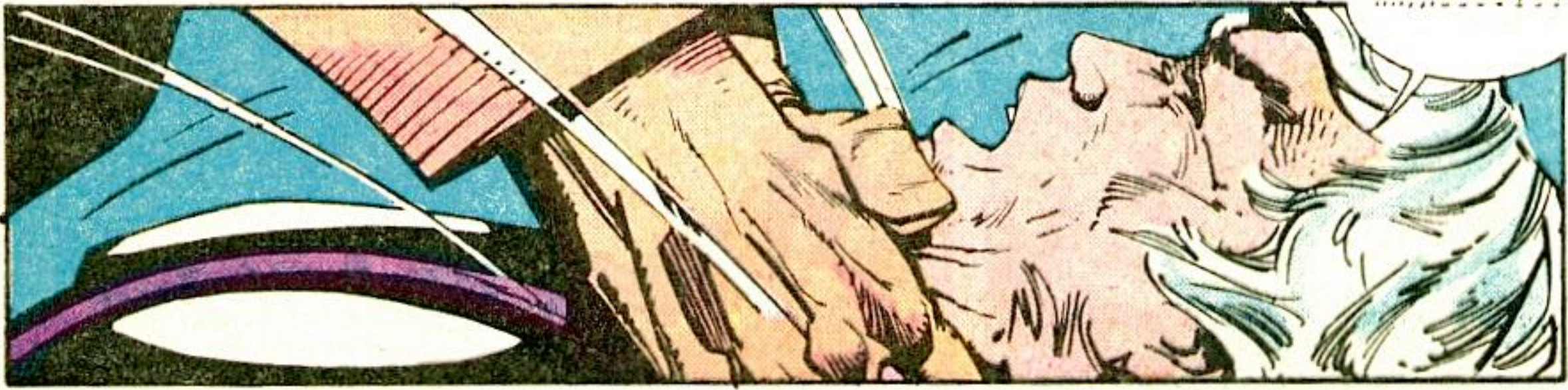


KATHOOOUMMM!

WITHOUT A WORD, HE SHATTERS THE PLATFORM BENEATH MY FEET! I CANNOT KEEP MY BALANCE!



STAY BACK, CREATURE! STAY BAKKKKKK!!!!



SNAPP



BALDER MY LORD!

WOULD THAT MY LIVING EYES HAD BEEN TORN FROM MY FACE 'ERE I HAD SEEN THIS SIGHT!

BALDER THE BRAVE IS DEAD!

NEXT ISSUE: **THE EYE OF THE BEHOLDER!**

NOBODY DIES NEXT ISSUE (WELL, ALMOST NOBODY), BUT NOBODY COMES BACK TO LIFE, EITHER! BE HERE!