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FOR WHOM THE BELLS TOLL...

BALDER THE BRAVE, WHO HAS BEEN CHOSEN TO RULE ASGARD, IS MISSING.

THOR HASN'T FOUND HIS FRIEND YET, BUT IN A MYSTERIOUS CASTLE-IN-THE-SKY IN A DISTANT CORNER OF ASGARD, HE HAS LOCATED SOME OTHER GOODIES.

WELCOME TO OUR HUMBLE ABODE, MY LORD. I AM CALLED UNN.

MY SISTERS, GERTHA AND KOSSI, AND I ARE MOST ANXIOUS TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE.

WE SELDOM GET VISITORS HERE IN THE CASTLE.

...AND NEVER SUCH A HANDSOME ONE.

WALTER SIMONSON WRITING SAL BUSCEMA PENCILING GEOFF ISHERWOOD INKING JOHN WORKMAN, JR. LETTERING MAX SCHEELE COLORING
RALPH MACCHIO -- EDITING JIM SHOOTER -- OVERSEEING

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YOUR GREAT HAMMER PROCLAIMS THAT YOU MUST BE THE SON OF NOBLE ODIN...

...NONE OTHER THAN THOR, THE THUNDER GOD HIMSELF!



WILL YOU NOT SET YOURSELF DOWN AT THE TABLE AND SHARE THIS SIMPLE REPAST?

THE WAY TO THE CASTLE IS LONG AND THOSE WHO TRAVEL HERE ARE USUALLY WEARY FROM THEIR JOURNEY.

MY THANKS, LOVELY LADIES. IN TRUTH, I AM SOMEWHAT FATIGUED.



THOUGH MY WEARINESS OWES LESS TO MY JOURNEY AND MORE TO THE FACT THAT I HAVE BUT LATELY WORN MY BELT OF STRENGTH.

UNN, A CUP FOR OUR TIRED GUEST.



BUT I AM NOT SO FATIGUED THAT I CANNOT SMELL THE SORCERY ABOUT THIS PLACE.

* THOR 363 -- Ralf the Brave

AND YON CUP FAIRLY REEKS OF IT.

MY THANKS, LADIES, BUT I QUENCHED MY THIRST BEFORE I ARRIVED.



BUT TELL ME, HAVE YOU SEEN OUGHT OF A NOBLE, SILVER-HAIRED WARRIOR? I SEEK NEWS OF --

BY THE GOLDEN SPIRES OF ASGARD!



WHAT AILS THIS CHAIR??!

IN ANOTHER MOMENT, I SHALL BE CRUSHED AGAINST THE STONE!

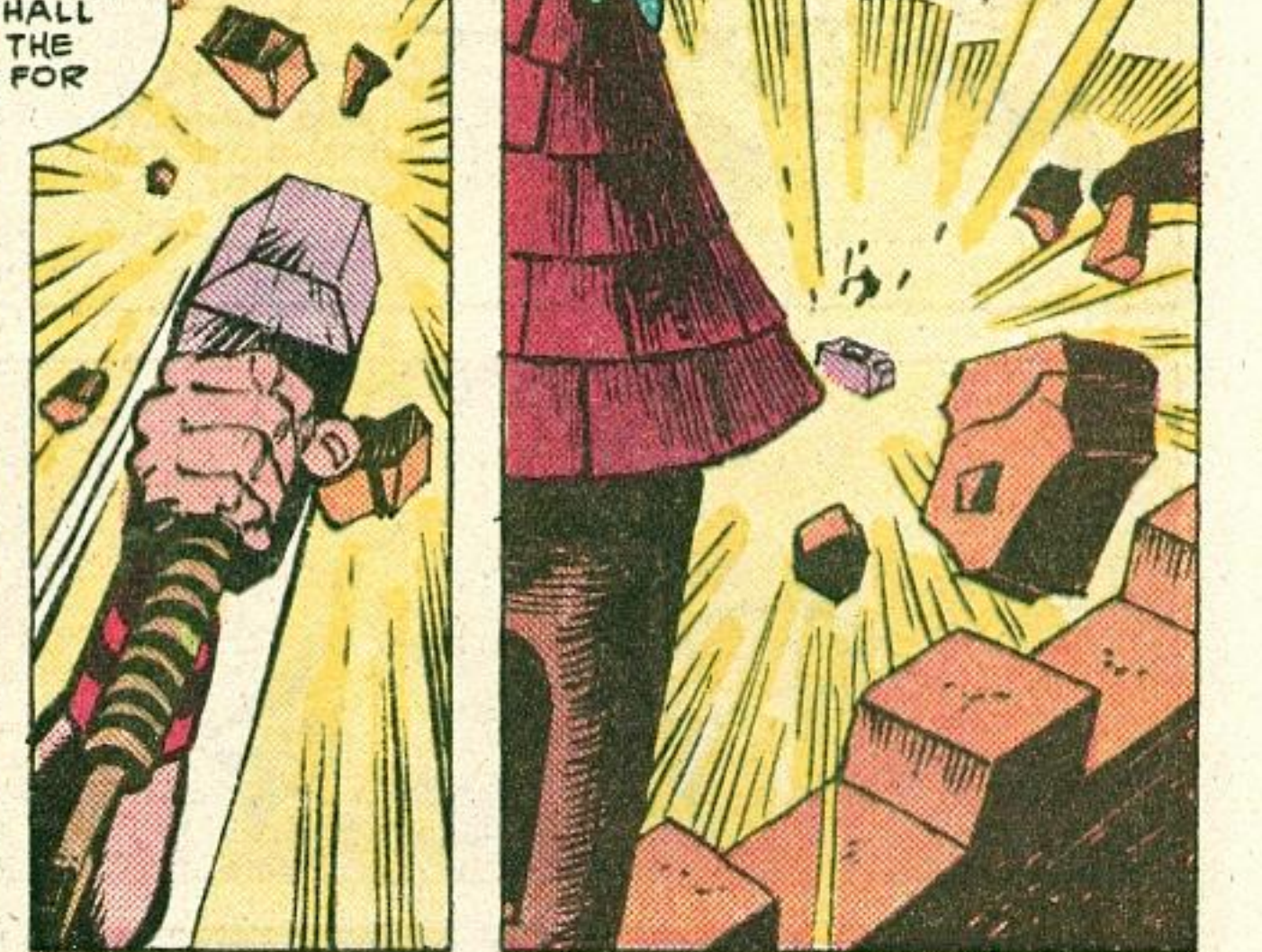


BUT I AM NO POWERLESS VICTIM DRUGGED WITH DRINK!

AND MJOLNIR, THE HAMMER OF THOR, SHALL GREET THE CEILING FOR ME!



BRANKKA THOOM!



AN UN-SEEMLY TRICK TO PLAY UPON A GUEST!

BUT I DEEM THAT TRICKS ARE THE BETTER PART OF THE FEAST IN THIS CASTLE!

NOW, MY LADIES, LET US SPEAK MORE PLAINLY.

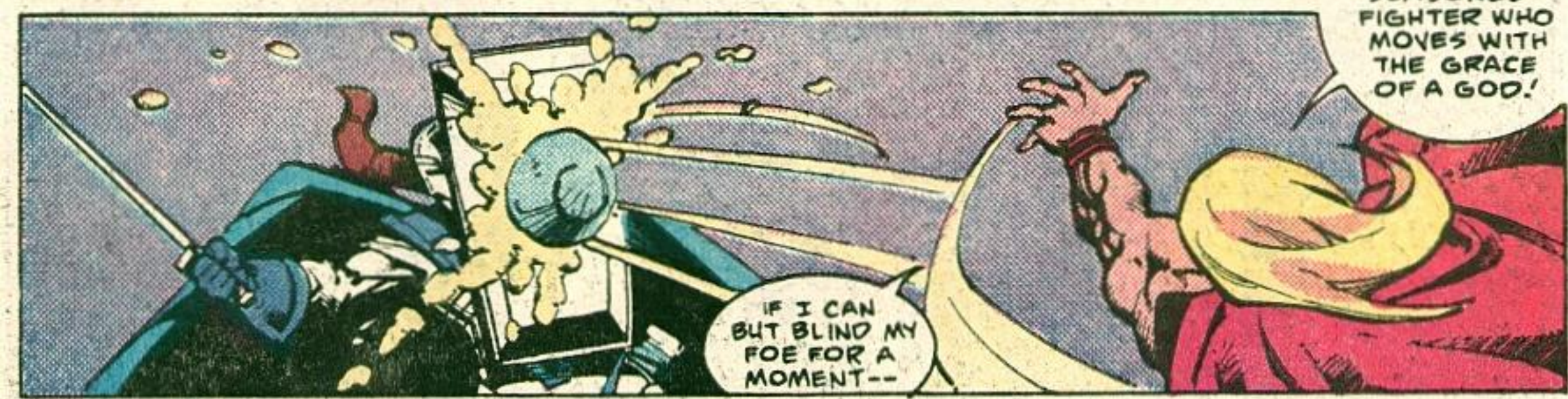
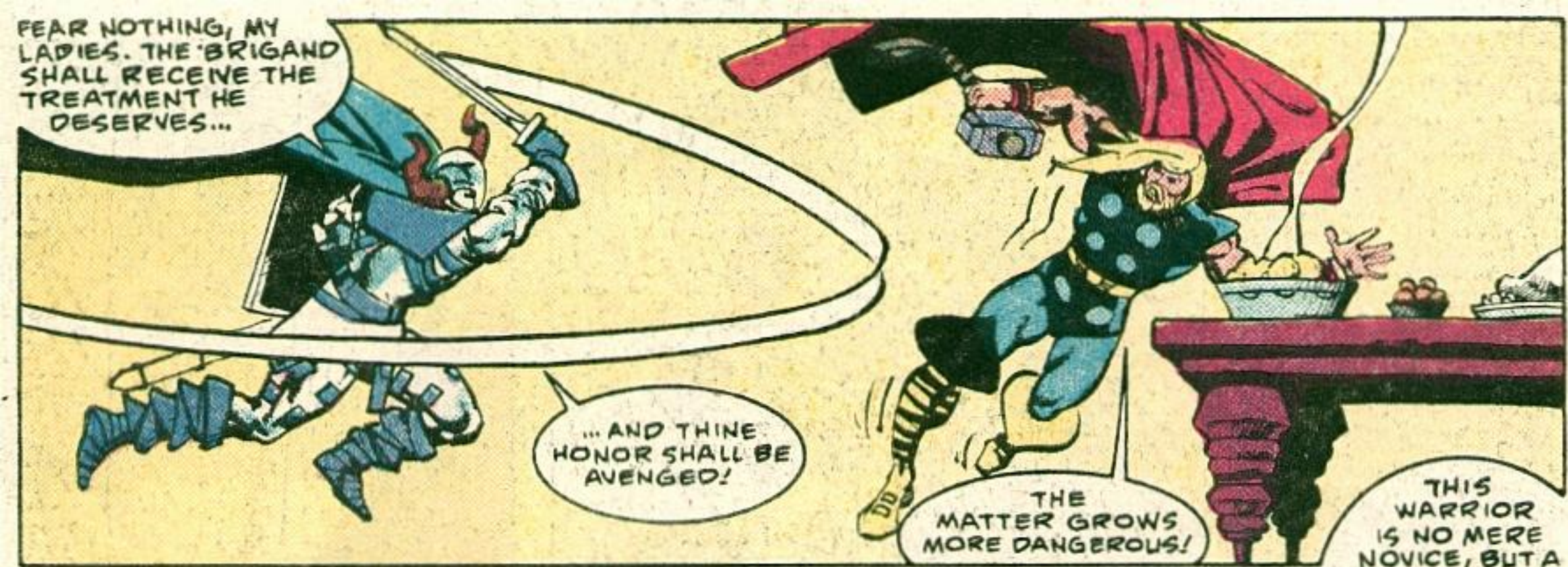
ANNAR! ANNAR! HELP! A MADMAN THREATENS US!



WHO DARES TO THREATEN THE LADIES OF ANNAR??



WHAT??!





BALDER, MY COMRADE!

HOW CAN I BREAK THE SPELL THAT BINDS YOU?

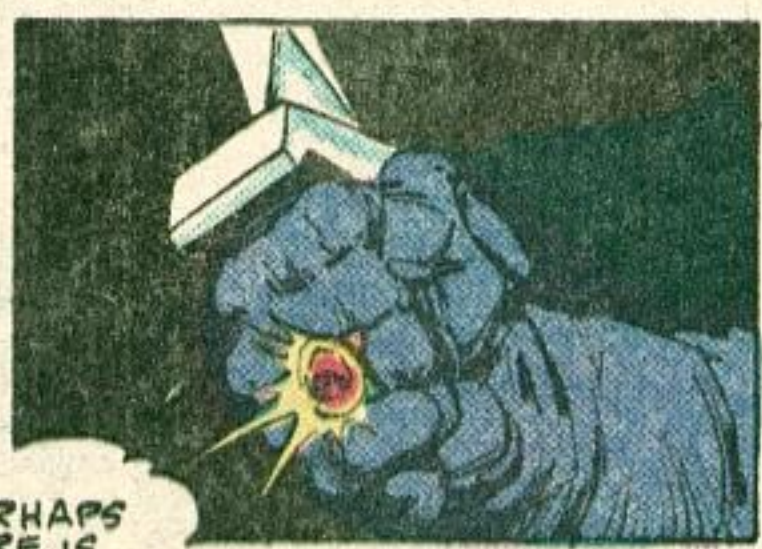
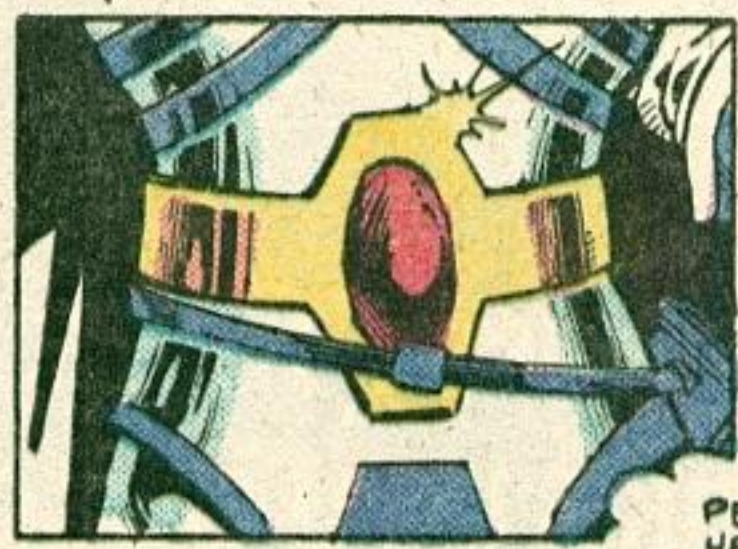
AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOW CAN I STOP YOU WHEN HERE IN ASGARD, YOU ARE IMMUNE TO ALL WEAPONS --EVEN MINE?

BALDER IS OURS, THUNDER GOD, BODY AND SOUL, AND WHEN THOR HESITATES...

...THE SHINING ONE WILL SLAY YOU!



BUT WHAT ARE THESE THAT BALDER WEARS?



PERHAPS HERE IS WHERE THE ANSWER LIES!



THREE WITCHES AND THREE TOKENS?



MIGHTY THOUGH I AM, I AM NO MATCH FOR BALDER'S SPEED...

...AND MY HANDS WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO WREST THESE TREASURES FROM HIM!



BUT THOUGH I BOW TO BALDER IN SPEED AND GRACE, I BOW TO NO ONE, FRIEND OR FOE, IN POWER!

COME FORTH, YOU LIGHTNING AND YOU THUNDER!

COME FORTH AND ANSWER THE SORCERIES OF THIS PLACE!

STRIKE THE
TOKENS HE
WEARS...

...AND STRIP
HIM OF THEIR
GLORY!

SZZAAACKKKT!

UGGH!

'TIS DONE! HE IS
FREED! AND I SHALL
HOLD THESE BEAUTIES
TILL WE SEE WHAT
POWERS THEY POSSESS!

BUT MAY
THE NORNS
STRIKE ME
DEAD IF I
HAVE HARMED
MY OLDEST
FRIEND!

BALDER,
ARE YOU ALL
RIGHT?

...PERCHANCE
I DREAM, FOR
I SEE A BEARD
WHERE FORMER-
LY I SAW A
CHIN.

THEN YOU ARE
INDEED AWAKE;
THE BEARD
IS NEW AND
IT IS REAL.

OH...
THOR,
IS THAT
YOU?

I FEEL...
AS THOUGH
I HAVE JUST
AWAKENED
AND YET...

I WILL
EXPLAIN
LATER,
AND YOU?

I REMEMBER
THIS CASTLE NOW.
AND THESE...
SORCERESSES!

THEY GAVE ME GIFTS OF THANKS
FOR SAVING THEIR LIVES*AND
CAUSED ME TO FORGET NOT
ONLY MY HONOR, BUT ALL
THAT I HOLD DEAR!

WHAT MANNER
OF CREATURES
ARE YOU THAT
YOU WOULD
STRIP A MAN
OF HIS
MEMORY...

...AND KEEP HIM A
PRISONER OF PLEASURE,
THOUGH HE KNEW IT
NOT?

*last issue,
folks! -- Raif



HANDSOME BALDER, BE NOT ANGRY WITH US.

WE HAVE LIVED HERE SO LONG ALONE AND LONELY THAT WE COULD NOT HELP BUT LOVE THEE.

IS THERE ANY WOMAN ANYWHERE WHO WOULD BLAME US FOR WANTING TO KEEP THE GIFT THAT THE GODS HAD SENT US?

WILL YOU NOT FORGIVE US FOR THE SAKE OF THE LOVE WE BEAR THEE?

WELL...



IN TRUTH, THE THREE OF YOU ARE PRETTIER THAN ANY MAIDS THOR HAS SEEN FOR ALL HIS ROAMING ACROSS THE NINE WORLDS.

THEN PERHAPS THERE IS STILL TIME TO WORK OUR WILL UPON THESE GODS.

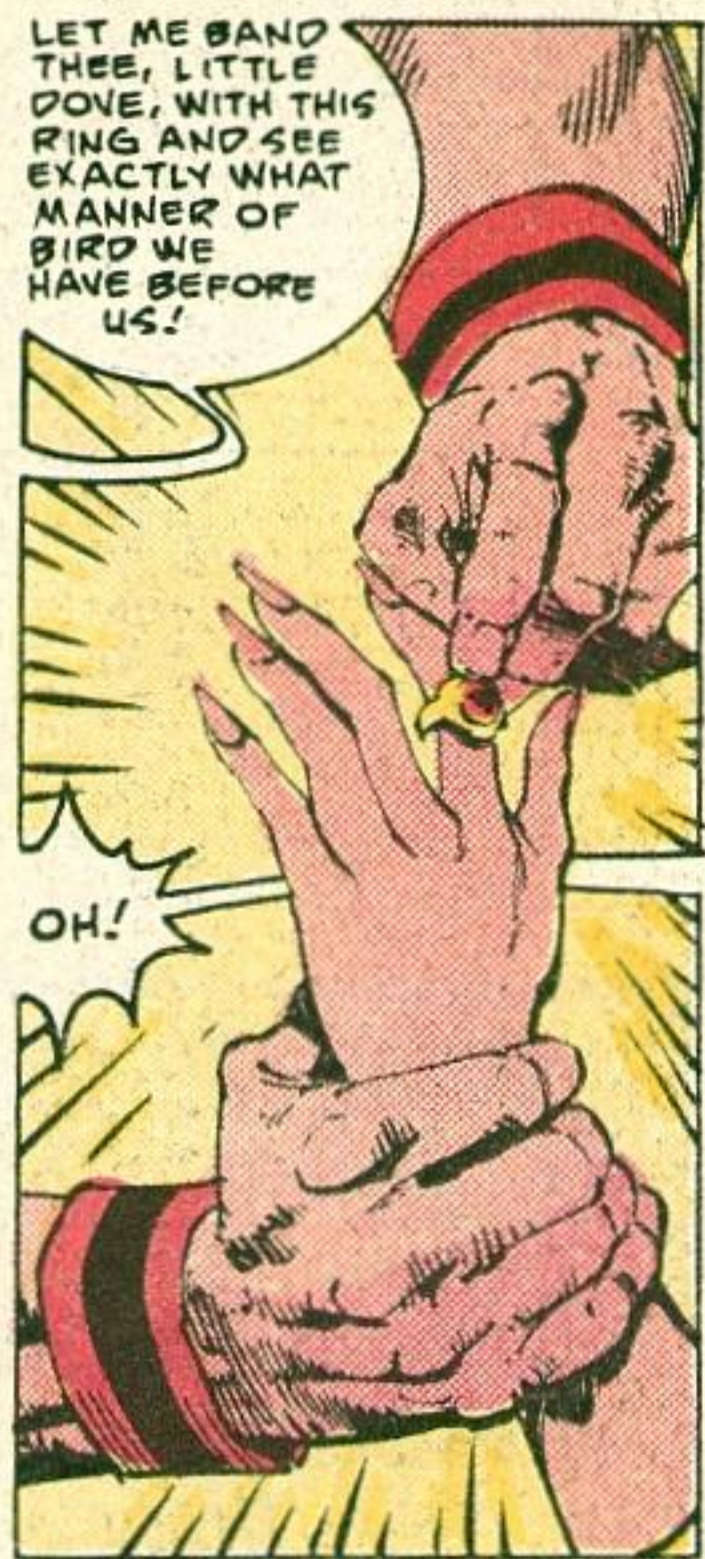
THOR, I WOULD BE GLAD IF I COULD BRING THEE PLEASURE, LORD.



GERTHA, THOU ART AS DELICATE AS THE DOVE THAT FLIES ACROSS THE MORNING MEADOWS.

BUT I LEARNED FROM A LADY NAMED LORELEI NEVER TO TRUST A DRINK OR AN APPEARANCE*!

*that was a while back, but Thor's memory is pretty good--how about yours? --Remembering Raifie



LET ME BAND THEE, LITTLE DOVE, WITH THIS RING AND SEE EXACTLY WHAT MANNER OF BIRD WE HAVE BEFORE US!

OH!



IF INDEED THERE IS MAGIC IN THIS RING, PERHAPS IT WILL DISRUPT THE SORCERIES OF THE LADIES!

GGAAAKKK!

WE ARE DISCOVERED! GERTHA HAS FORGOTTEN HERSELF AND RESUMES HER TRUE APPEARANCE!

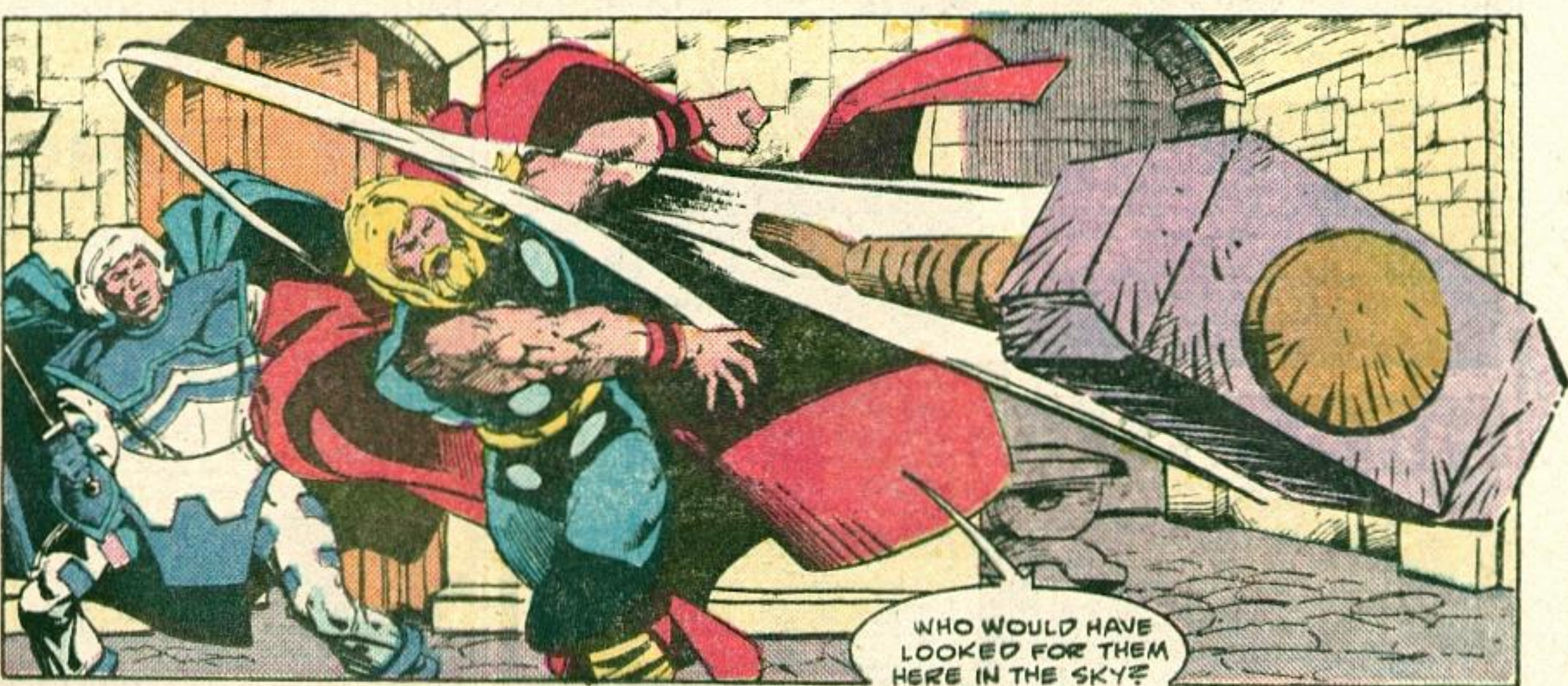


THEN LET THE GAME END NOW!

DEATH! DEATH TO THE ASSGARD- IANS!

COME, MY PRETTIES! LET USEMBRACE EACH OF YOU IN TURN!

TROLL HAGS! DEADLIEST OF THAT UNDER- GROUND RACE!



WHO WOULD HAVE LOOKED FOR THEM HERE IN THE SKY?



WHAT, BALDER? HAVE YOU LOST THE TASTE FOR MY KISSES WHEN ONCE YOU WERE SUCH AN ATTENTIVE LOVER?

QUICKLY, KOSSI! SLAY BALDER, AND I SHALL KILL THOR BEFORE HIS THRICE ACCURSED HAMMER RETURNS TO HIS HAND!



PERFIDIOUS DEMON!

ONLY THROUGH STEALTH AND MAGIC HAVE YOU WON YOUR VICTORIES...

... AND NOW YOU HAVE LOST BOTH!



COME CLOSER, UNN, AND TASTE MJOLNIR'S WRATH!

ANOTHER MOMENT, THUNDERER, AND YOU'LL JOIN YOUR FATHER IN OBLIVION!



YOU HAVE NOWHERE TO RUN, BALDER! THIS CASTLE WILL BE YOUR TOMB!

I AM SURPRISED TO FIND TROLL HAGS FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE EARTH LIVING AMIDST THE LIGHT OF THE SKY.



LIGHT IS USUALLY A TROLL'S BANE!

HAVE YOU SEEN THE SUN? CLOSE UP?

ARRRGGH!



WHAT??

IT HURTS!
IT HURTS!
UNN, MAKE
HIM STOP!!

YOU SHRINK
BEFORE THE LIGHT,
BUT DO NOT TURN TO
STONE AS DO YOUR
WEAKER COUSINS.



YOUR TROLL
MAGIC IS STRONG
INDEED!

AS IS YOURS, FRIEND
BALDER, FOR I HAVE
NEVER SEEN THIS TRICK
BEFORE!



BUT NOW IS THE MO-
MENT TO SETTLE
THESE DEMONS WHO
PREY UPON THE INNO-
CENT PASSERSBY.

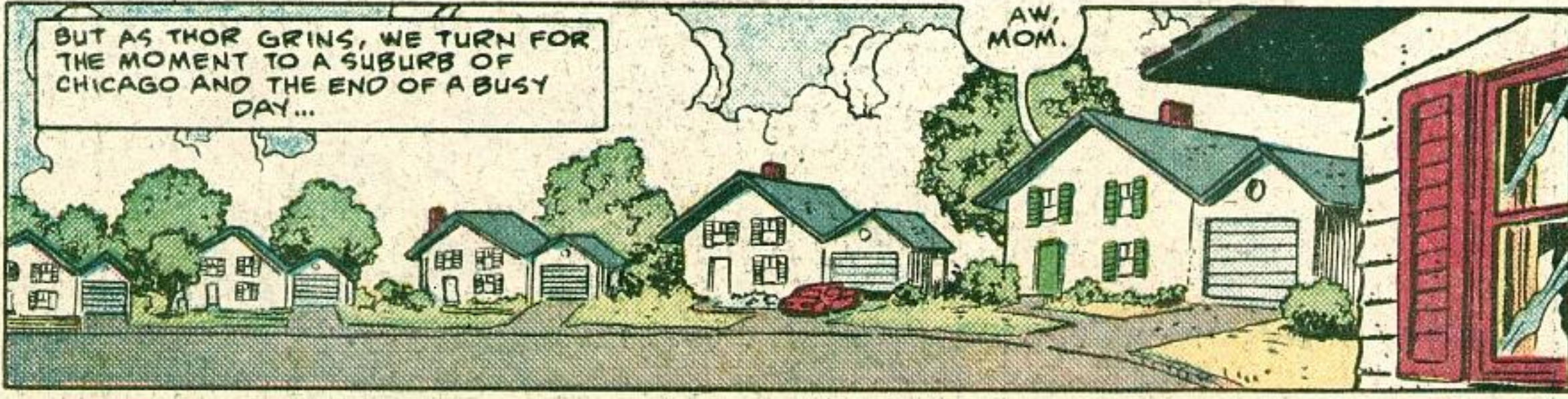


LET THE FLOOR
OF THE CASTLE BE
RENT ASUNDER!

THOOOCK!



UNN! HELP ME!
I CANNOT KEEP
MY BALANCE!
UNN!!



BUT AS THOR GRINS, WE TURN FOR THE MOMENT TO A SUBURB OF CHICAGO AND THE END OF A BUSY DAY...

AW, MOM.



I MEAN IT, YOU RASCALS GET IN HERE THIS MINUTE!

AND BE SURE YOU WASH UP BEFORE YOU COME TO THE TABLE!

WHAT WOULD YOUR DADDY THINK IF HE SAW THAT STUFF ALL OVER THE RUG?

AW, MOM, IT'S ALL JEFF'S STUFF!

I WANT THE FLOOR OF YOUR ROOM PICKED UP BEFORE YOU SIT DOWN TO SUPPER!



LIAR! BILL WAS PLAYING "AFRIKA KORPS" AGAIN!

I DON'T CARE WHOSE STUFF IT IS! IT BETTER ALL BE CLEANED UP BEFORE YOU EAT!



NICE KIDS YOU GOT THERE, RUBY.

WHATE?

REAL NICE.



GLAD TO SEE YA DONE OKAY FOR YOURSELF WHILE I WAS AWAY.

WHO...?

NOW, DON'T CLOSE THAT DOOR TOO FAST, RUBY! WE WOULDN'T WANNA STARTLE THE NEIGHBORS, WOULD WE?

WHO ARE YOU, MISTER? WHAT DO YOU WANT?

JUST A CHAT, FOR OLD TIME'S SAKE.



WHY DON'T YOU SEND THE KIDS TO THEIR ROOM, RUBY. THEY GOT SOME CLEANING UP TO DO, DON'T THEY?

YOU BOYS RUN ALONG AND STRAIGHTEN UP YOUR STUFF. SUPPER'LL BE READY DIRECTLY.

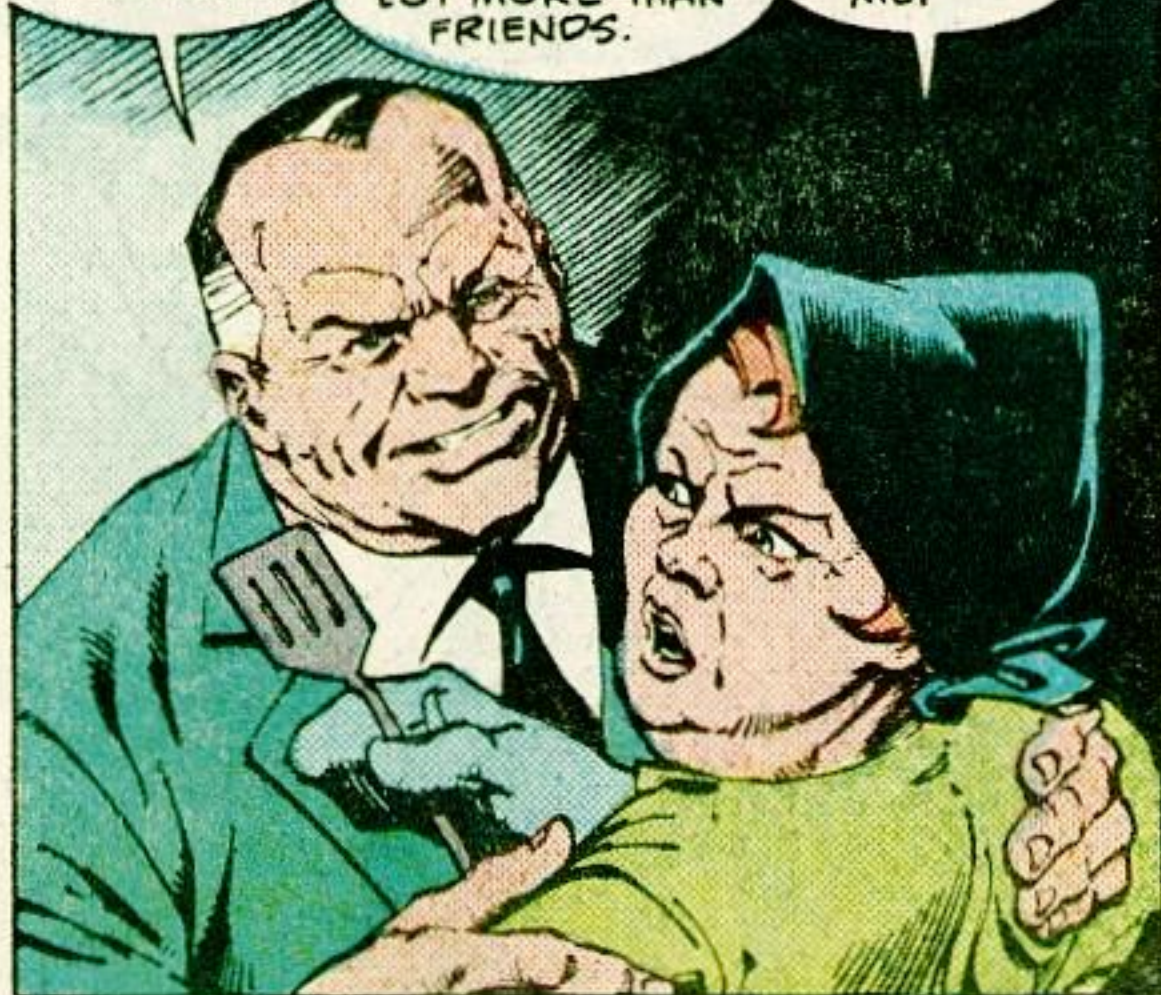
YOU'RE NOT VERY FRIENDLY, RUBY.



WE WAS MORE THAN FRIENDS ONCE, RUBY.

I THUG THATCHER 'N' YOU WAS A LOT MORE THAN FRIENDS.

GET YOUR HANDS OFF ME.



IF YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING TO SAY, SAY IT AND GET OUT...

SPAPP!

YA PUMB BROAD! I AIN'T TAKING NO LIP FROM MY EX-MOLL!

...OR I'M CALLING THE COPS!

YOU'RE CRAZY!



I DON'T BELIEVE IT! BUT I CAN SEE IT IN YER EYES!

YOU REALLY DON'T REMEMBER ME, DO YOU?



THIS IS MORE OF THOR'S DIRTY WORK!

HE RUINS MY LIFE, SENDS ME TO PRISON, AND TAKES AWAY MY GIRL'S MEMORY!



WELL, HE'S GONNA LIVE TO REGRET IT--

-- 'CAUSE I KNOW THE MAGIC WORDS-- JANE FOSTER!

AND YOU'RE GONNA HELP ME, HONEY, OR THOSE TWO BOYS OF YOURS WILL BE NEEDIN' IRON LUNGS!



MEANWHILE,
BELOW THE
CASTLE-IN-
THE-SKY...



'TIS TIME
WE WERE AWAY.
THE GOLDEN
REALM HAS
AWAITED HER
NEW RULER
LONG
ENOUGH.

AND HER
KING WOULD
NEVER HAVE
RETURNED, BUT
FOR THE SON
OF ODIN HIM-
SELF.

MY
THANKS,
THOR, AND MY
APOLO-
GIES.

I FEAR
MY VICTORY
OVER THE
FROST GIANTS
WAS TOO
HEADY A
BREW*.

*Balder the Limited Series
has details. -- Limited Ralf

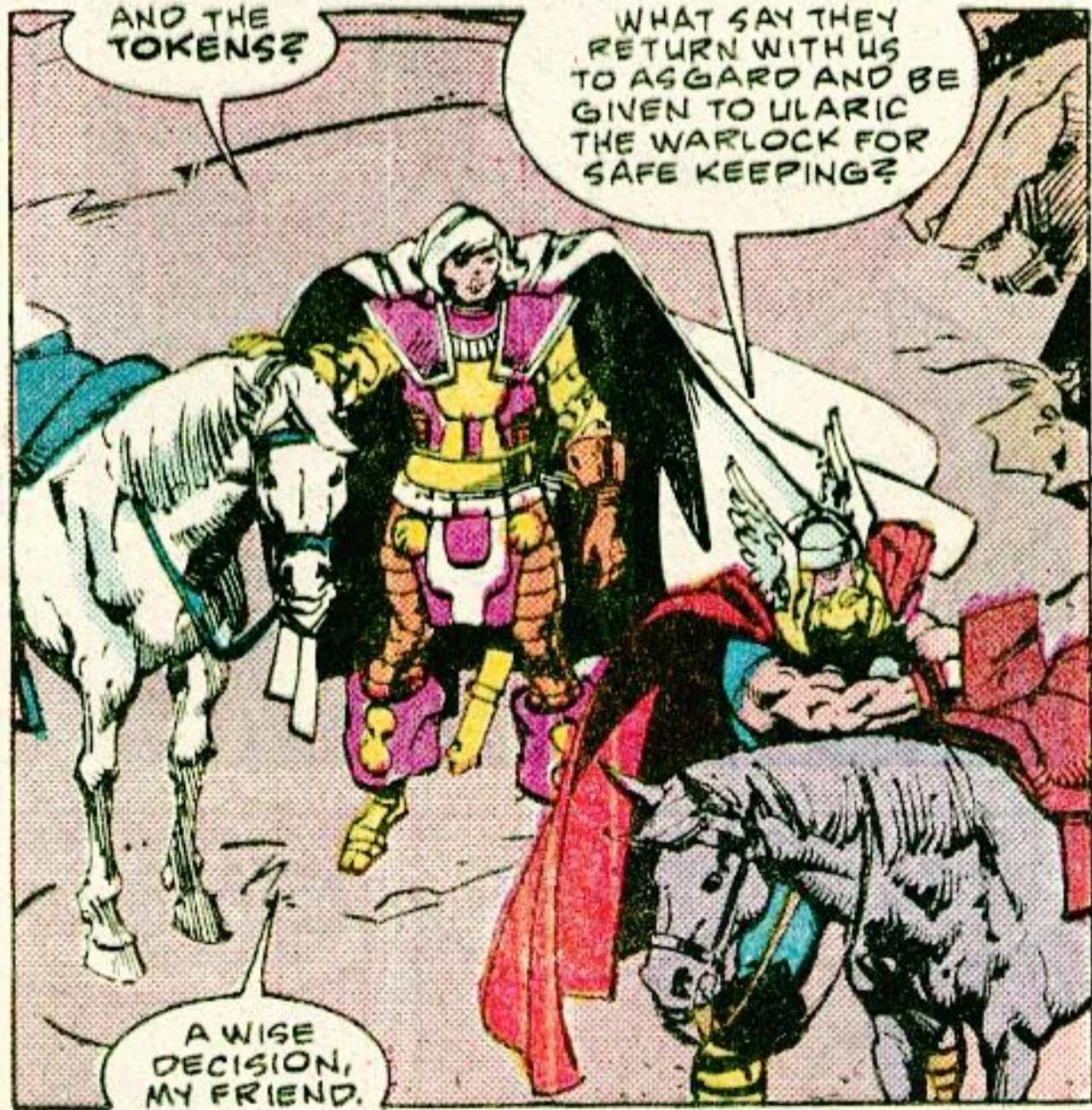
I SHOULD NEVER
HAVE SOUGHT ONE
LAST ADVENTURE.

'TIS NO LESS
THAN ANYONE
ABOUT TO TAKE
UP THE SCHACKLES
OF GOVERNMENT
MIGHT HAVE DONE,
BALDER.



AND THE
TOKENS?

WHAT SAY THEY
RETURN WITH US
TO ASSGARD AND BE
GIVEN TO ULARIC
THE WARLOCK FOR
SAFE KEEPING?



A WISE
DECISION,
MY FRIEND.

LET US DELAY OUR
DEPARTURE NO LONGER,
BUT TAKE TO THE OPEN
ROAD IN HASTE.

I PRAY YOU,
NOBLE SIRs...

...STAY
THY GOING
BUT A
MOMENT
LONGER.





'TIS THE OLD PEDDLER WOMAN WHOSE WILES BROUGHT US TO THIS CASTLE ORIGINALLY!

YOU'LL FIND NO VICTIMS TO GLOAT OVER THIS TIME, MOTHER.

THE TROLL MAGIC IS UN-DONE.

NOT ALL OF IT, GOOD SIR. FOR I AM AS MUCH A VICTIM OF IT AS YOU YOURSELVES.

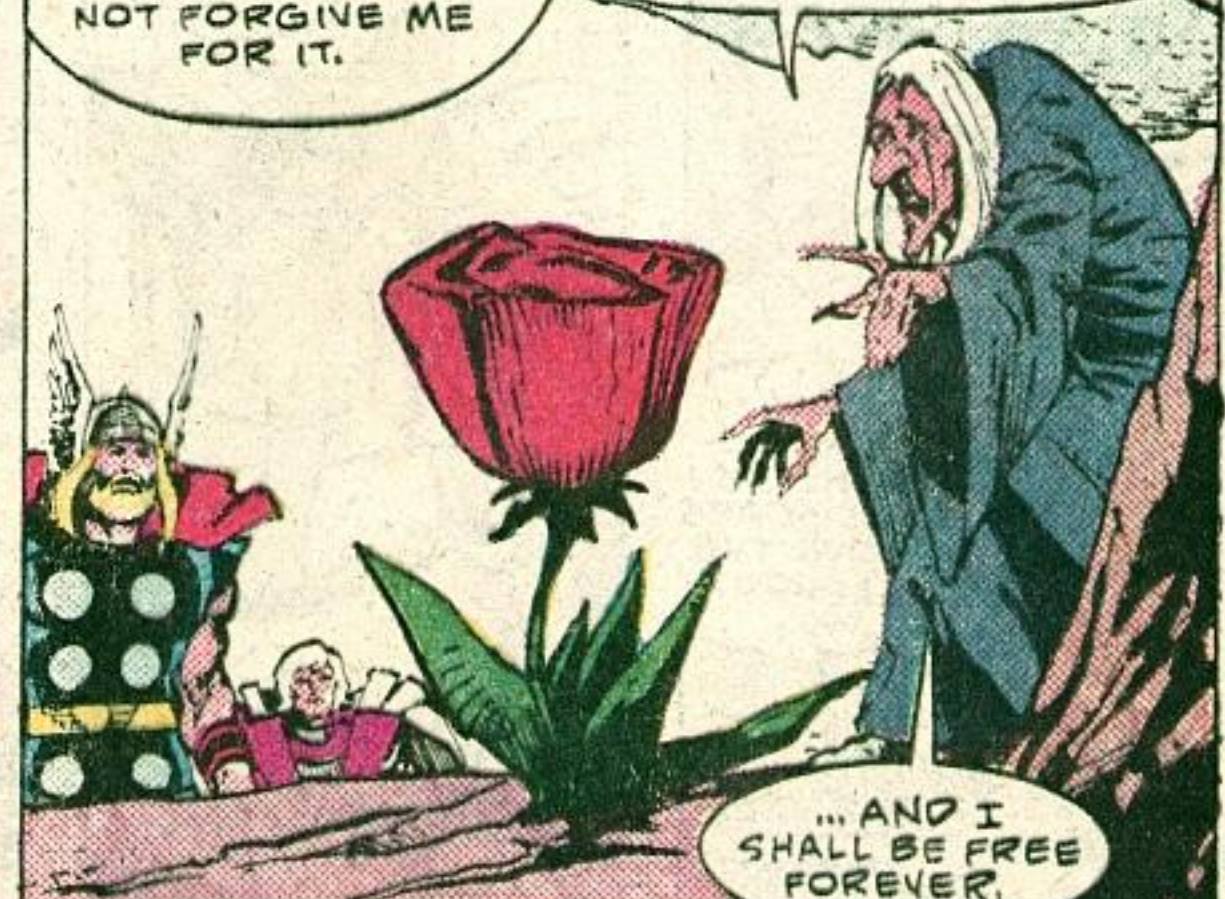


LONG HAVE I AWAITED DELIVERANCE, BUT BOUND AS I WAS TO THE TROLL HAGS, I COULD NOT SPEAK.

I COULD ONLY SEND BRAVE MEN TO THEIR DOOM AND STAND MUTE.

FOR ONCE I WAS AS FAIR AS THE FALSE FORMS OF THE TROLL HAGS AND THEY COULD NOT FORGIVE ME FOR IT.

BUT THEY ARE NO MORE, AND IF YOU BUT PLUCK YONDER FLOWER, THE FINAL SPELL SHALL BE BROKEN...



... AND I SHALL BE FREE FOREVER.



MORE SORCERY, I'LL WARRANT...

BALDER, STAND YOU BACK. THY LIFE HAS ALREADY BEEN AT HAZARD ENOUGH FOR ONE ADVENTURE.

PTHIP!



OHH! OHH! OHH!

I AM MYSELF AT LAST! OH, MY GRACIOUS LORDS, I THANK THEE BOTH.

WOULD THAT I COULD EMBRACE THEE TOGETHER TO EXPRESS THE JOY IN MY SOUL!



MY LORD THOR, MAY I NOT RETURN TO ASGARD WITH YOU AND THE LORD BALDER?

MY HOME IS LONG SINCE VANISHED AND I HAVE NO WHERE TO TURN.



WELL...

I HAVE JUST HAD A VERY INTERESTING THOUGHT.



THE CASTLE-IN-THE-SKY STILL SOARS ABOVE THE CLOUDS.

PLEASE, MY LORD.

COULD THIS MEAN THAT PERHAPS THE FINAL SPELL OF TROLL MAGIC HAS YET TO BE UNDONE AFTER ALL?



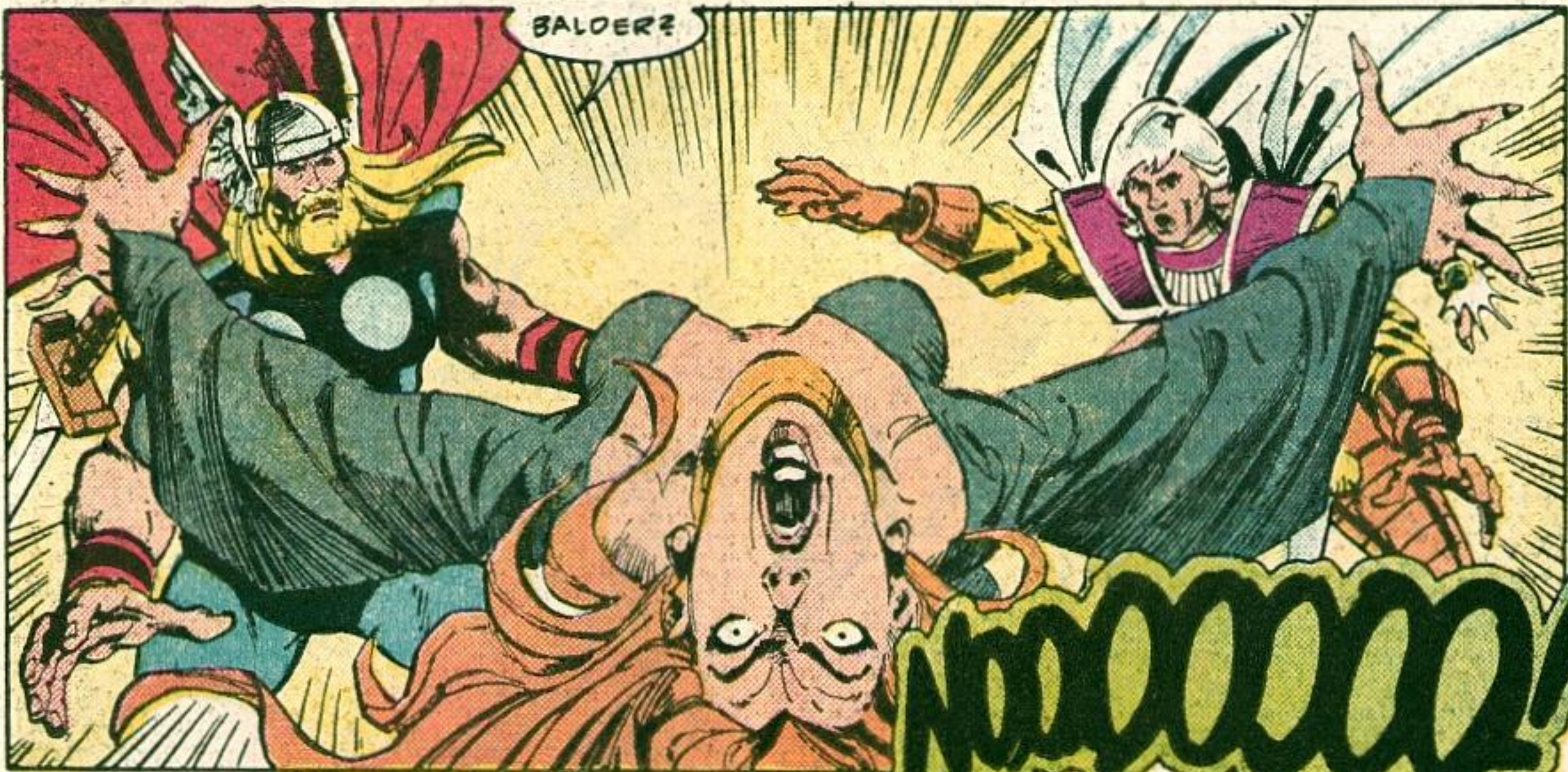
I WOULD BE NO TROUBLE.



AND THIS COULD BE IT!

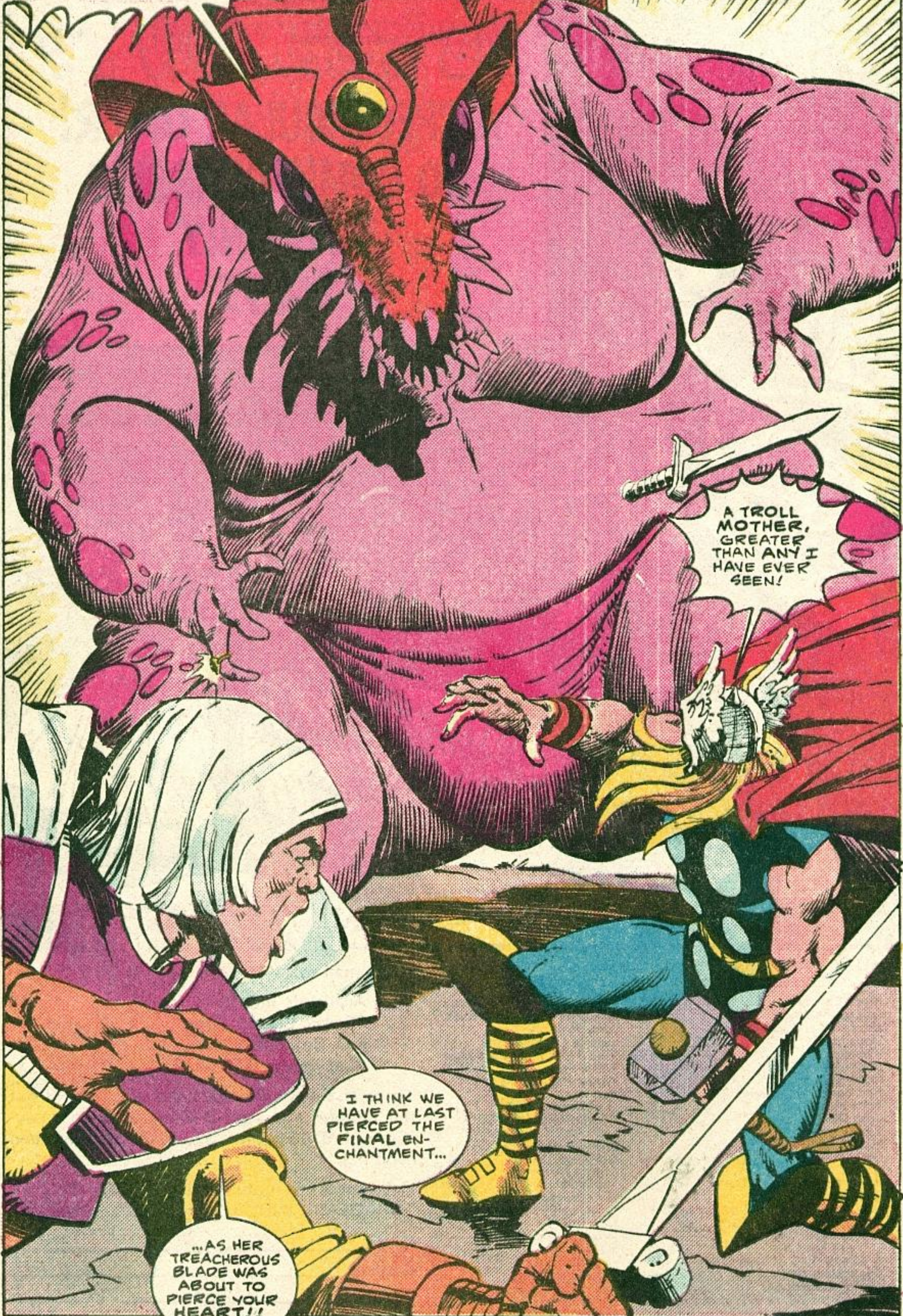


BALDER?



WOOOOOOO!

GARRRRGH!



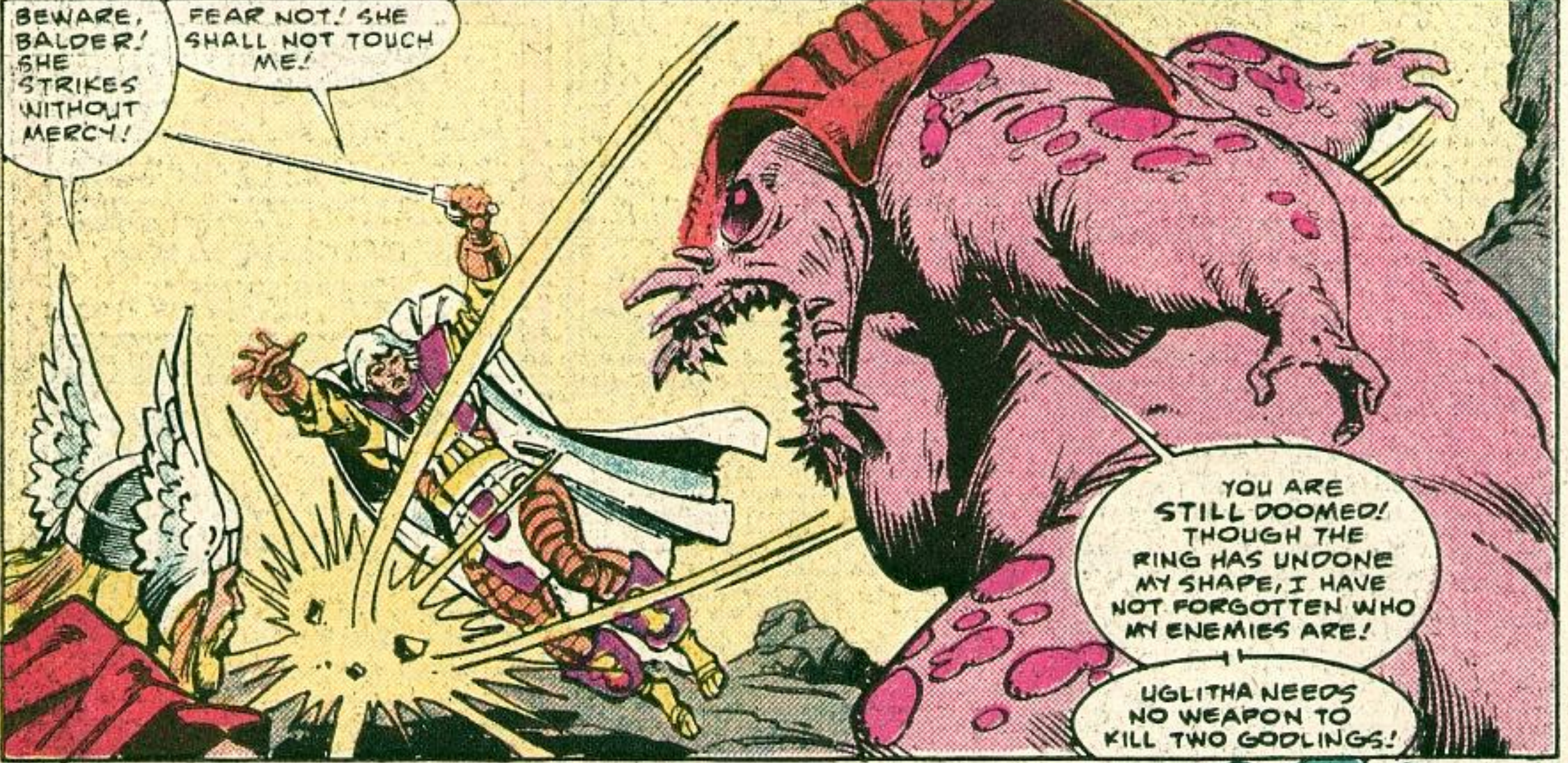
A TROLL MOTHER, GREATER THAN ANY I HAVE EVER SEEN!

I THINK WE HAVE AT LAST PIERCED THE FINAL ENCHANTMENT...

...AS HER TREACHEROUS BLADE WAS ABOUT TO PIERCE YOUR HEART!!

BEWARE, BALDER! SHE STRIKES WITHOUT MERCY!

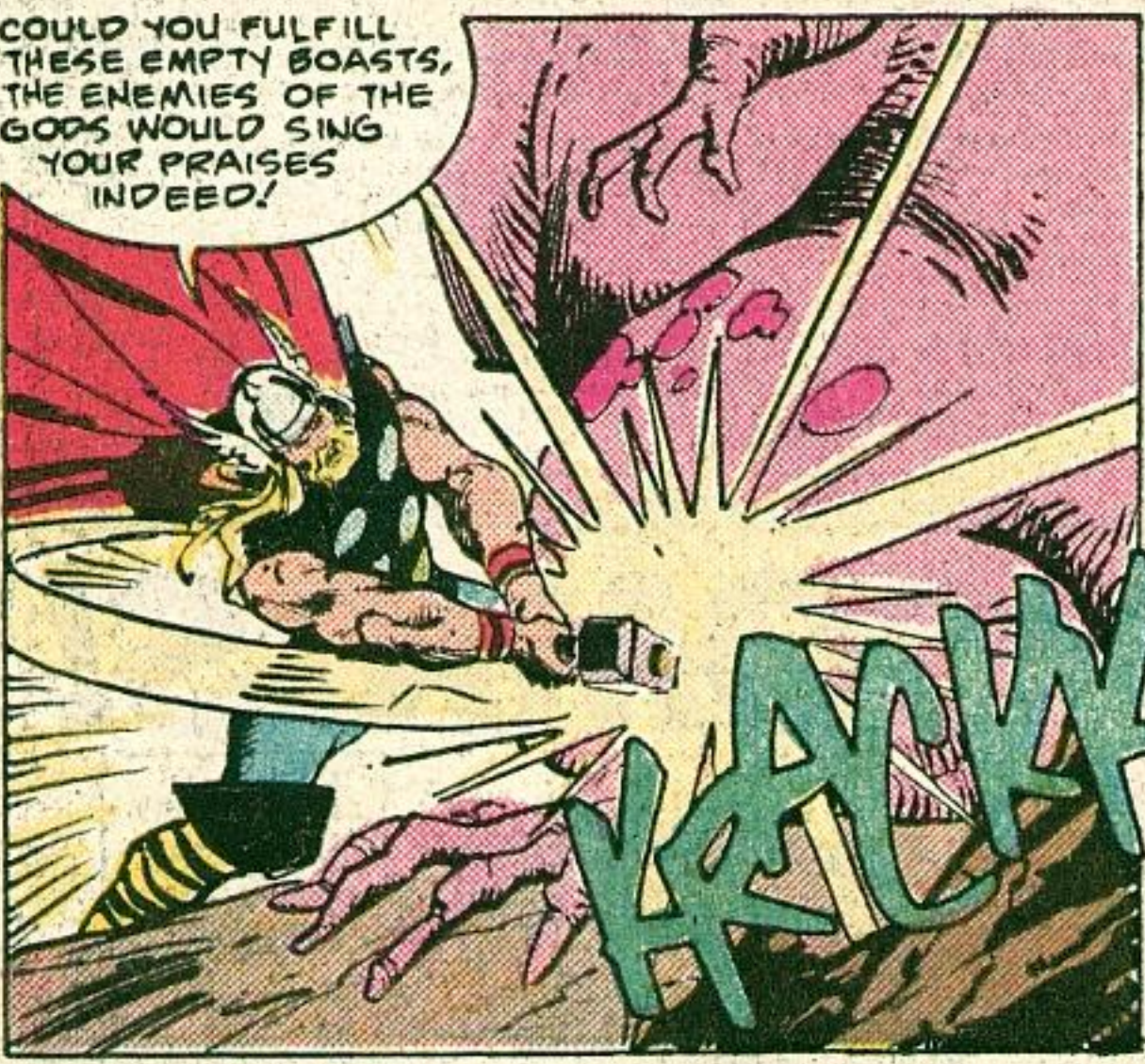
FEAR NOT! SHE SHALL NOT TOUCH ME!



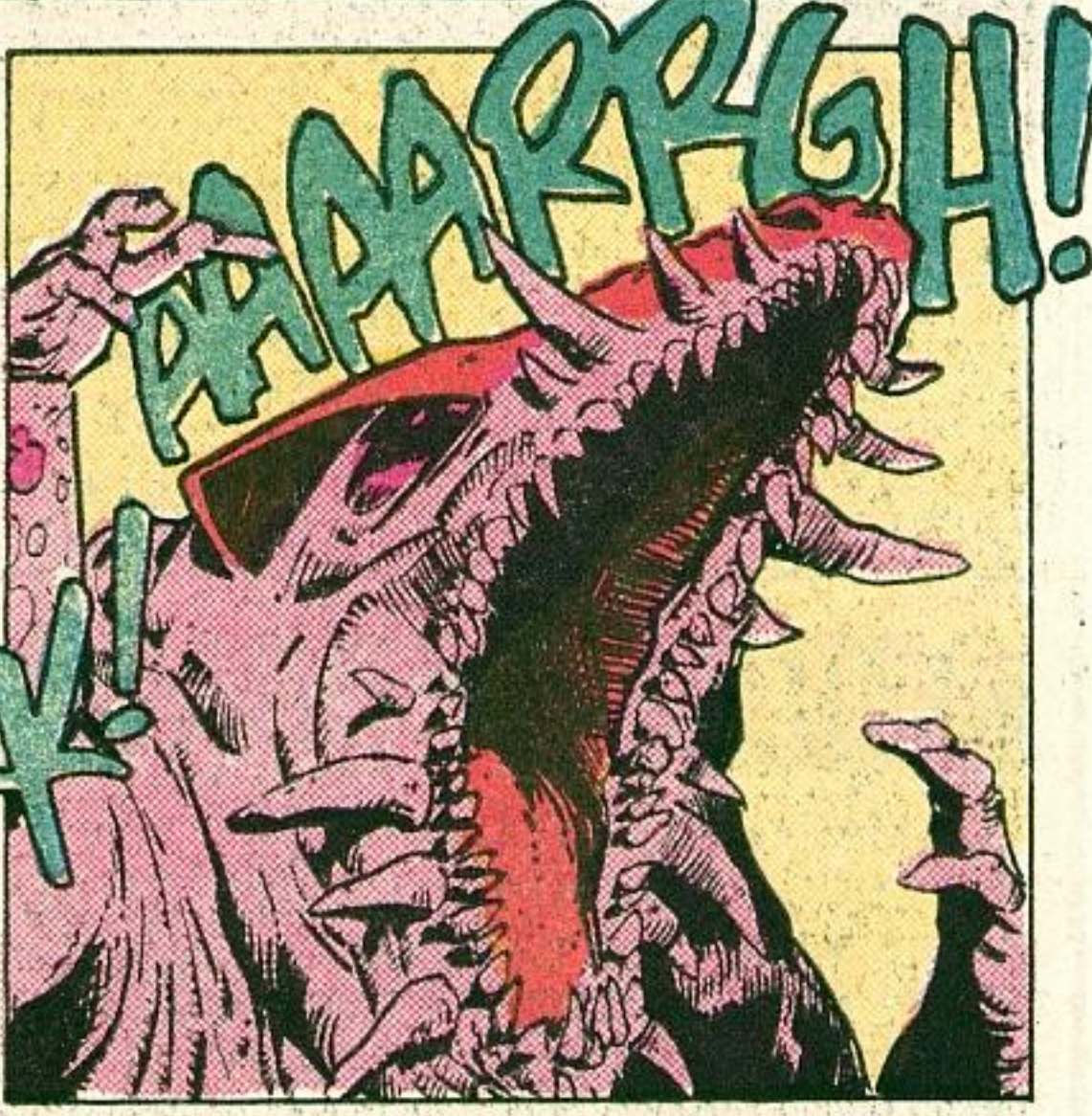
YOU ARE STILL DOOMED! THOUGH THE RING HAS UNDONE MY SHAPE, I HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN WHO MY ENEMIES ARE!

UGLITHA NEEDS NO WEAPON TO KILL TWO GODLINGS!

COULD YOU FULFILL THESE EMPTY BOASTS, THE ENEMIES OF THE GODS WOULD SING YOUR PRAISES INDEED!



KRACKKK!



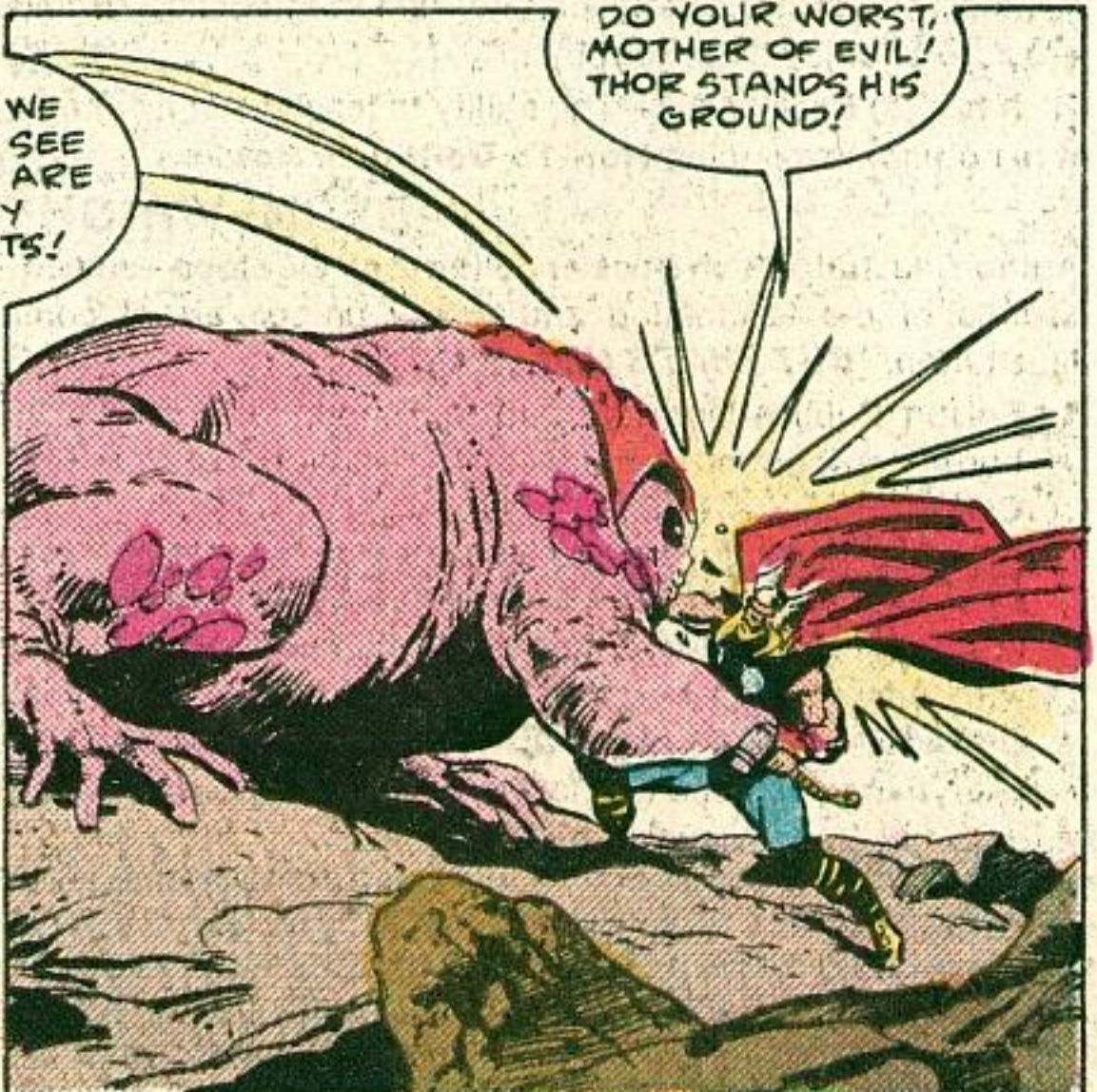
AAAAARRGH!

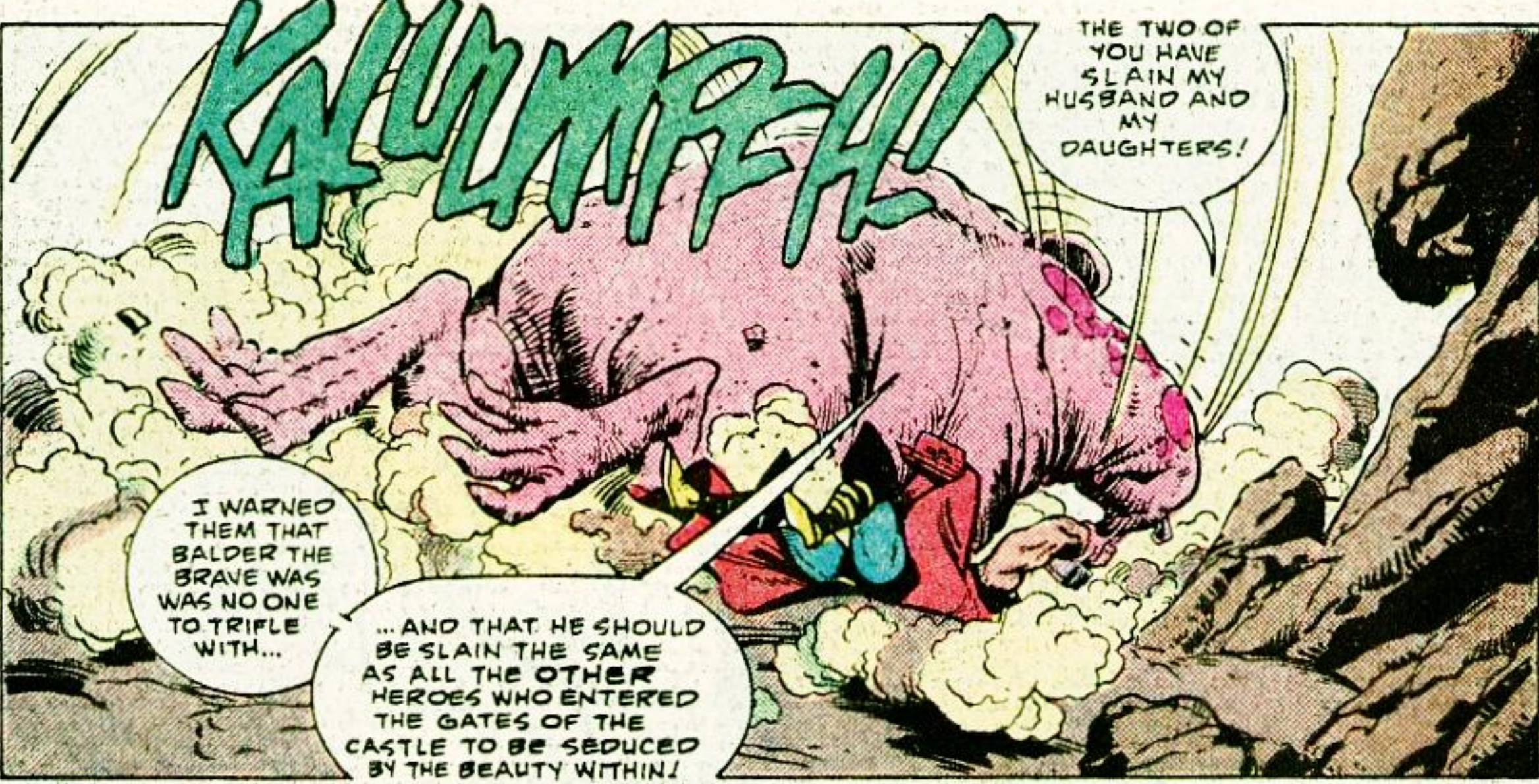


I SHALL SHATTER YOUR BONES AND SUCK THE MARROW DRY, WRETCHED AS-GARDIAN!

AND WE SHALL SEE IF MINE ARE EMPTY BOASTS!

DO YOUR WORST, MOTHER OF EVIL! THOR STANDS HIS GROUND!

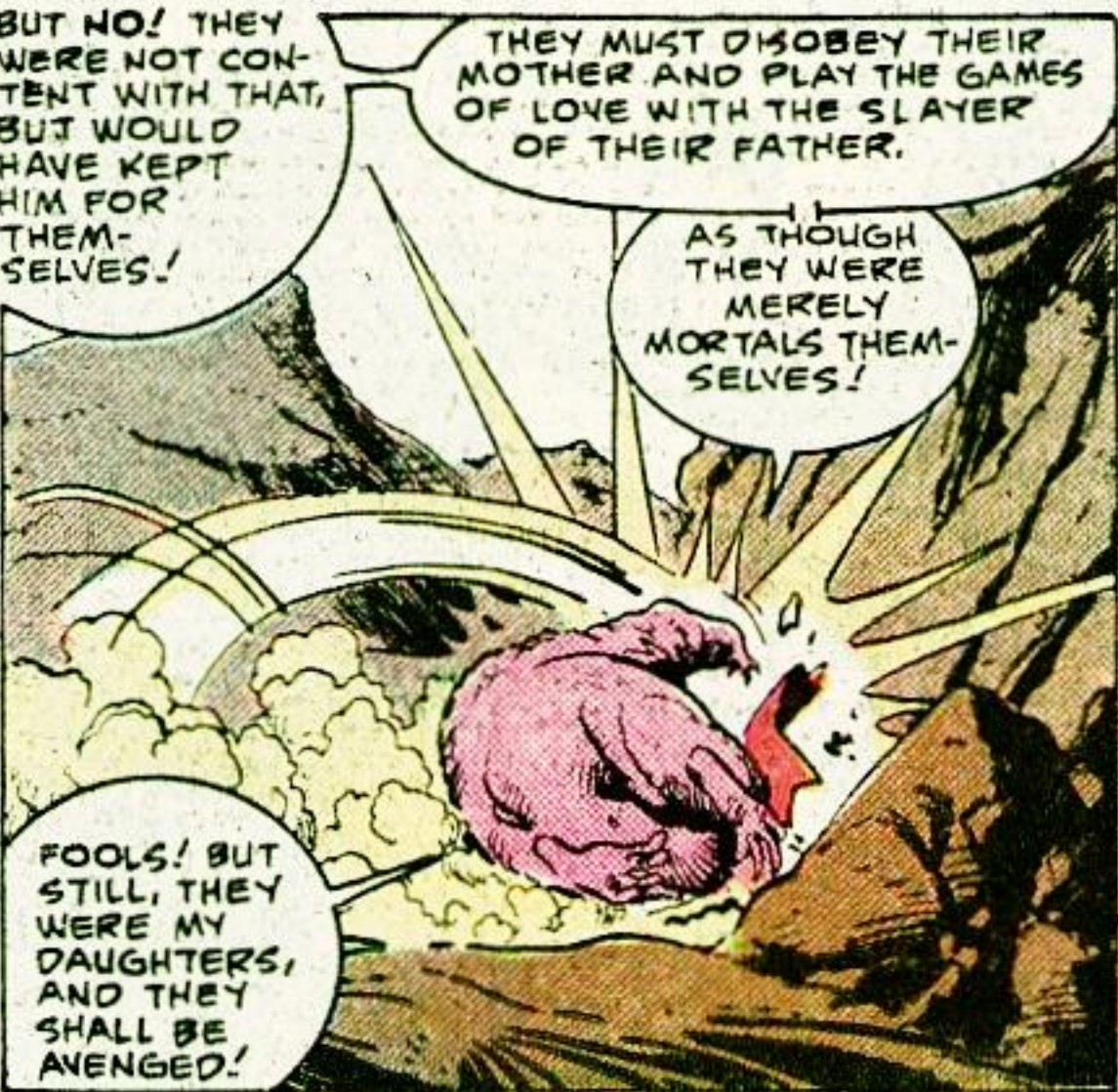




I WARNED THEM THAT BALDER THE BRAVE WAS NO ONE TO TRIFLE WITH...

... AND THAT HE SHOULD BE SLAIN THE SAME AS ALL THE OTHER HEROES WHO ENTERED THE GATES OF THE CASTLE TO BE SEDUCED BY THE BEAUTY WITHIN!

THE TWO OF YOU HAVE SLAIN MY HUSBAND AND MY DAUGHTERS!



BUT NO! THEY WERE NOT CONTENT WITH THAT, BUT WOULD HAVE KEPT HIM FOR THEMSELVES!

THEY MUST DISOBEY THEIR MOTHER AND PLAY THE GAMES OF LOVE WITH THE SLAYER OF THEIR FATHER.

AS THOUGH THEY WERE MERELY MORTALS THEMSELVES!

FOOLS! BUT STILL, THEY WERE MY DAUGHTERS, AND THEY SHALL BE AVENGED!



FIRST YOU AND THEN BALDER SHALL FALL BEFORE A MOTHER'S FURY.

HER GREAT BULK PINS MY ARMS!

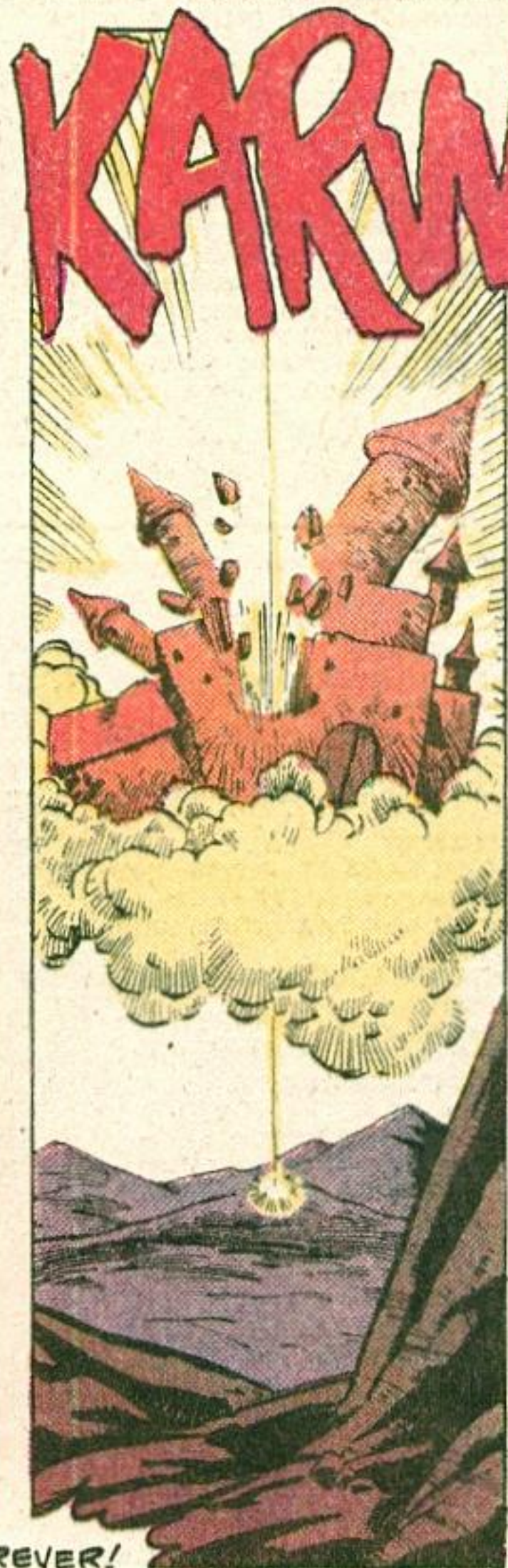
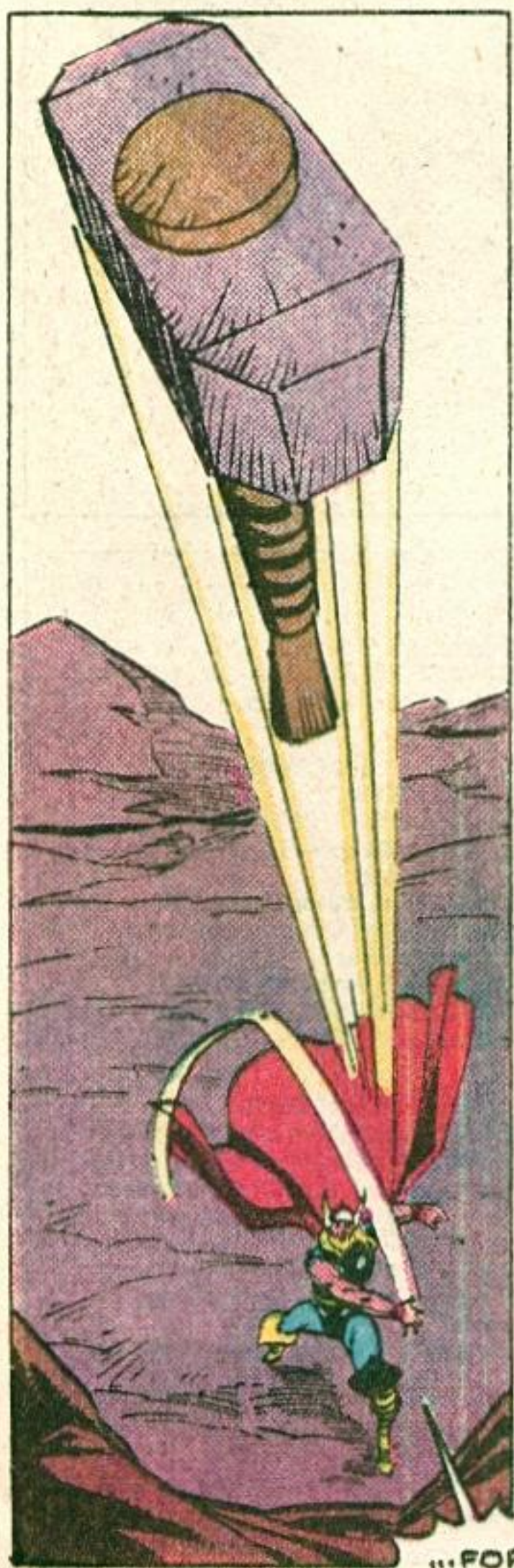


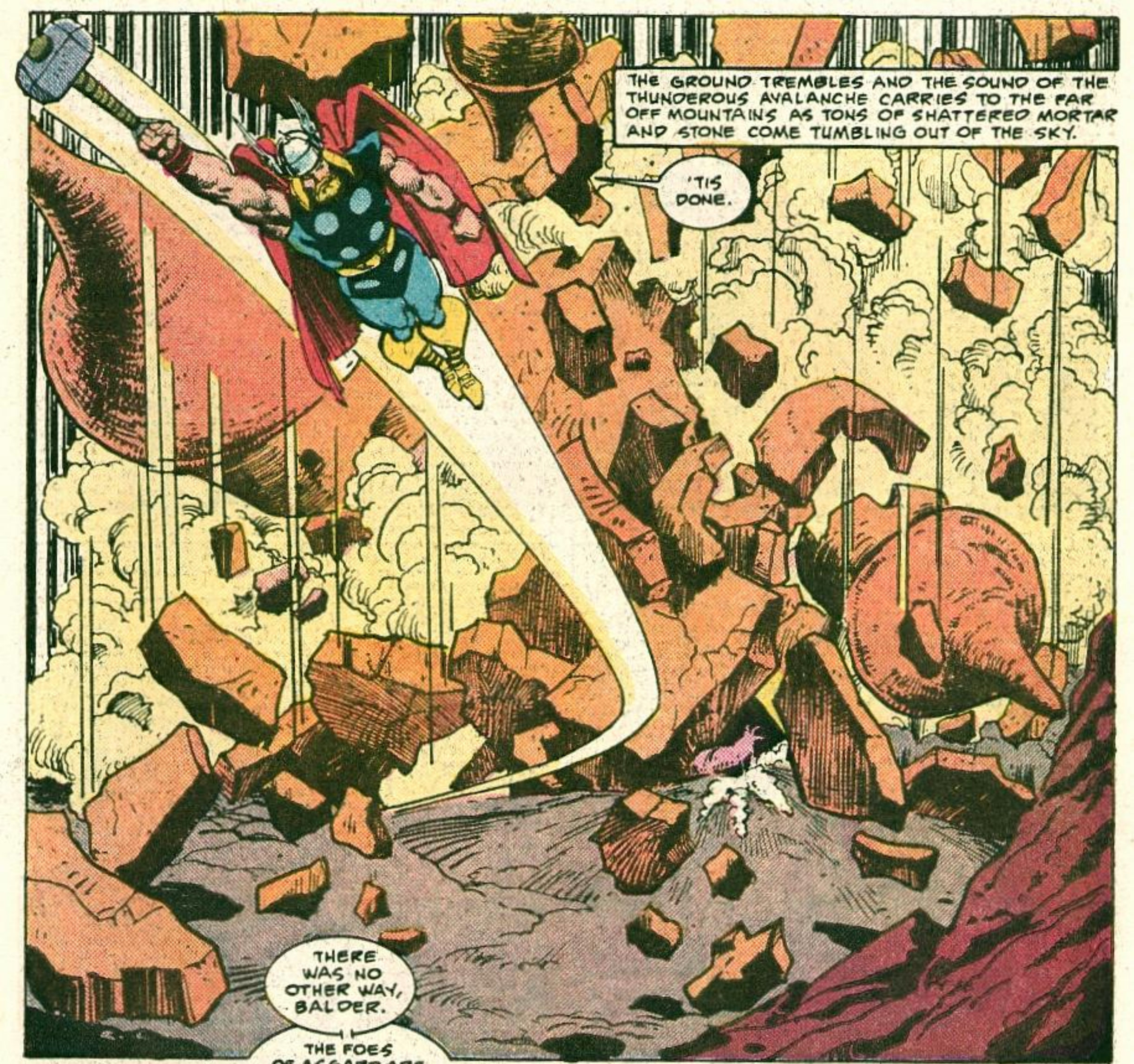
I MUST GIRD MYSELF FOR THE SUPREME EFFORT BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!

NOW YOU DIE, THUNDERER!



MY EYES! THAT BURNING LIGHT!





THE GROUND TREMBLES AND THE SOUND OF THE THUNDEROUS AVALANCHE CARRIES TO THE FAR OFF MOUNTAINS AS TONS OF SHATTERED MORTAR AND STONE COME TUMBLING OUT OF THE SKY.

'TIS DONE.

THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY, BALDER.

THE FOES OF ASGARD ARE AS IMPLACABLE AS THE MARCH OF TIME.

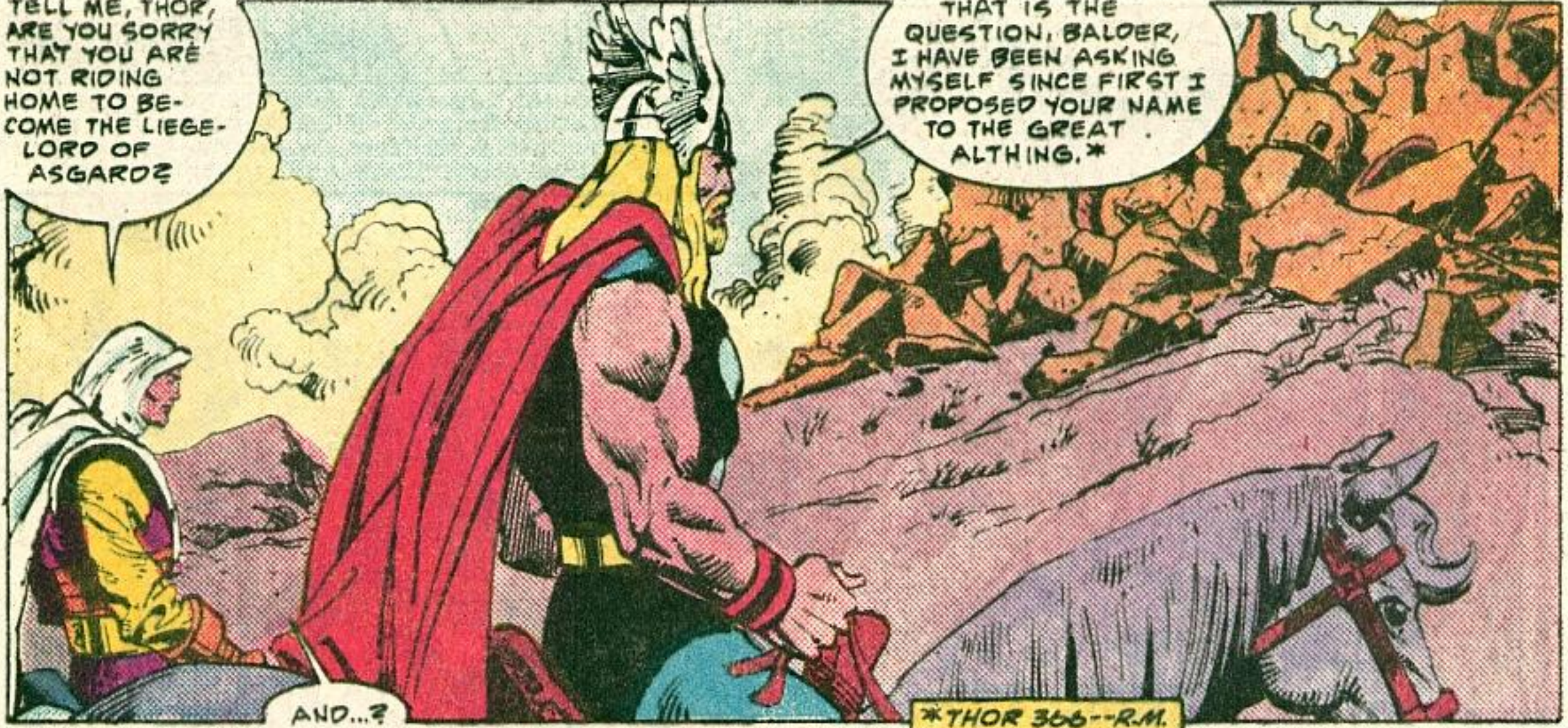
I KNOW, THOR.

WOULD THAT IT WERE NOT SO, BUT SO IT HAS EVER BEEN, SO IT SHALL EVER BE.



TELL ME, THOR, ARE YOU SORRY THAT YOU ARE NOT RIDING HOME TO BECOME THE LIEGE-LORD OF ASGARD?

THAT IS THE QUESTION, BALDER, I HAVE BEEN ASKING MYSELF SINCE FIRST I PROPOSED YOUR NAME TO THE GREAT ALTHING.*



AND...?

*THOR 366--R.M.

IF I HAD TAKEN THE THRONE, I WOULD HAVE HAD TO HAVE GIVEN UP ADVENTURES SUCH AS THIS.



I DOUBT IF I COULD HAVE STOOD IT!

I RODE WIDE-EYED INTO THE HONEY TRAP OF THE CASTLE BECAUSE I WAS SORRY TO GIVE UP SUCH THINGS.

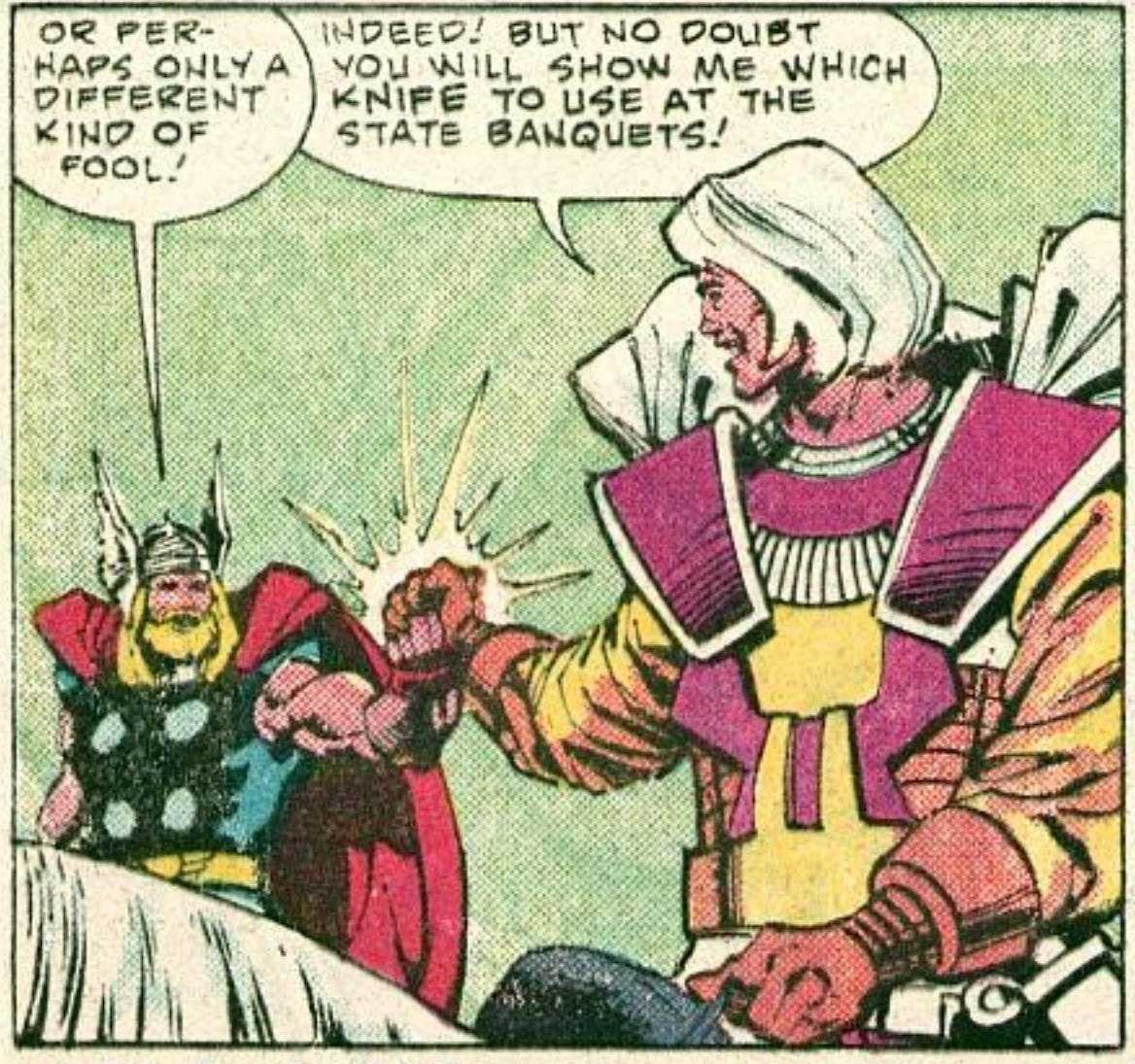
I MIGHT MAKE LESS OF A FOOL OF MYSELF.

BUT AFTER THIS, I THINK PERHAPS BEING KING WOULD NOT BE A BAD IDEA.



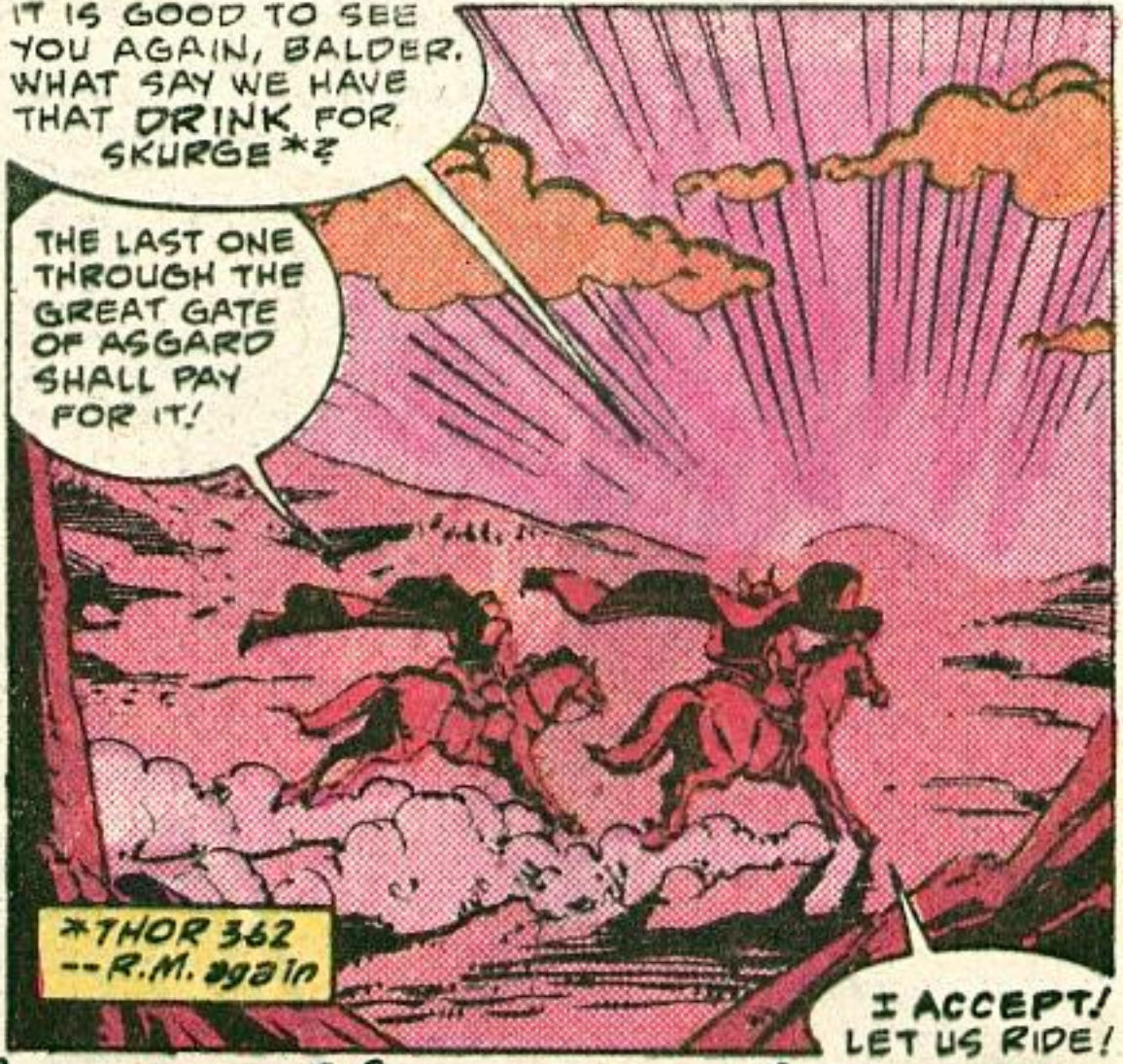
OR PERHAPS ONLY A DIFFERENT KIND OF FOOL!

INDEED! BUT NO DOUBT YOU WILL SHOW ME WHICH KNIFE TO USE AT THE STATE BANQUETS!



IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, BALDER. WHAT SAY WE HAVE THAT DRINK FOR SKURGE*?

THE LAST ONE THROUGH THE GREAT GATE OF ASGARD SHALL PAY FOR IT!



*THOR 362 --R.M. 2931n

I ACCEPT! LET US RIDE!

NEXT ISSUE: THOR RETURNS TO EARTH AND THERE'S A NEW MARSHALL IN NEW YORK AS JUSTICE PEACE HITS TOWN! AND JANE FOSTER?

The Gentleman's Name is **ZANIAC!!!!!!**