

MARVEL[®]
25TH
ANNIVERSARY



© 1985 MARVEL COMICS GROUP
TM

75¢
U.K. 40p
CAN. 95c

375
JAN

the mighty THOR



STAN LEE PRESENTS **the MIGHTY THOR**

SHADOWS OF THE PAST

THE GOLDEN REALM OF ASGARD IS HOME TO THE MIGHTY NORSE GODS.

HERE THEY HAVE LIVED FOR CENTURIES IN THEIR SHINING HALLS...

...PLAYING THEIR GREAT GAMES, FIGHTING THEIR TERRIBLE FOES, AND SINGING THEIR JOYFUL SONGS.

BUT NOT ALL THE GOLDEN REALM GLOWS IN THE WARMTH OF FAIR-WHEEL, AS THE ELVES NAME THE SUN.

IN SOME DARK CORNERS, FAIR-WHEEL SELDOM SHINES AND IN THE HEART OF LOKI, FOUNDLING OF THE GODS, IT NEVER SHINES AT ALL.

BITTER IS THE GALL OF LOKI'S CUP.

WALT SIMONSON · SAL BUSCEMA · BOB PINAHA · BECTON & SCHEELE · RALPH MACCHIO · JIM SHOOTER
STORY ART LETTERS COLORS EDITING EDITING-IN-CHIEF

THOR · Vol. 1, No. 375, January, 1987. (ISSN 0274-533X) Published by MARVEL COMICS GROUP, James E. Galton, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. Michael Hobson, Group Vice-President. 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 © 1986 by Marvel Comics Group, a division of Cadence Industries Corporation. All rights reserved. Price 75c per copy in the U.S. and 95c in Canada. Subscription rate \$9.00 for 12 issues. Canada and Foreign, \$11.00. 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. MARVEL and THOR (including all prominent characters featured in this issue and the distinctive likenesses thereof) are trademarks of the MARVEL COMICS GROUP. POSTMASTER: SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO THOR, 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, 10TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016.

THWARTED AGAIN!
SHALL THIS
KINGDOM
NEVER BE
MINE?



I-- WHO
SAVED IT FROM
DESTRUCTION AT
THE HANDS OF
SURTUR!

I-- IN WHOSE VEINS
RUNS THE BLOOD OF THE
KINGS OF FROST GIANTS! I, WHO
AM THE ADOPTED SON OF
ODIN HIMSELF?

SMASSSKK!

EVEN THE
PATIENCE OF
LOKI IS NOT
WITHOUT
LIMIT!

THE THRONE WAS WITHIN
MY GRASP AT LAST UNTIL MY
ACCURSED STEPBROTHER,
THOR, INTERFERED *!



* A FEW ISSUES BACK,
LOYAL READERS

AT LEAST I AM NO
LONGER PLAGUED BY
THE LOVESICK MOONING
OF THE ENCHANTRESS'S
SISTER, LORELEI!



THE IRON
NERVES OF
LOKI CAN
ONLY
STAND
SO MUCH!

I SHOULD HAVE EFFECTED
HER REMOVAL EARLIER!
THE GARDEN WILL
BENEFIT MORE FROM
HER STATUESQUE
BEAUTY THAN
I...



...AND I
SHALL FINALLY
HAVE PEACE
AT HOME.

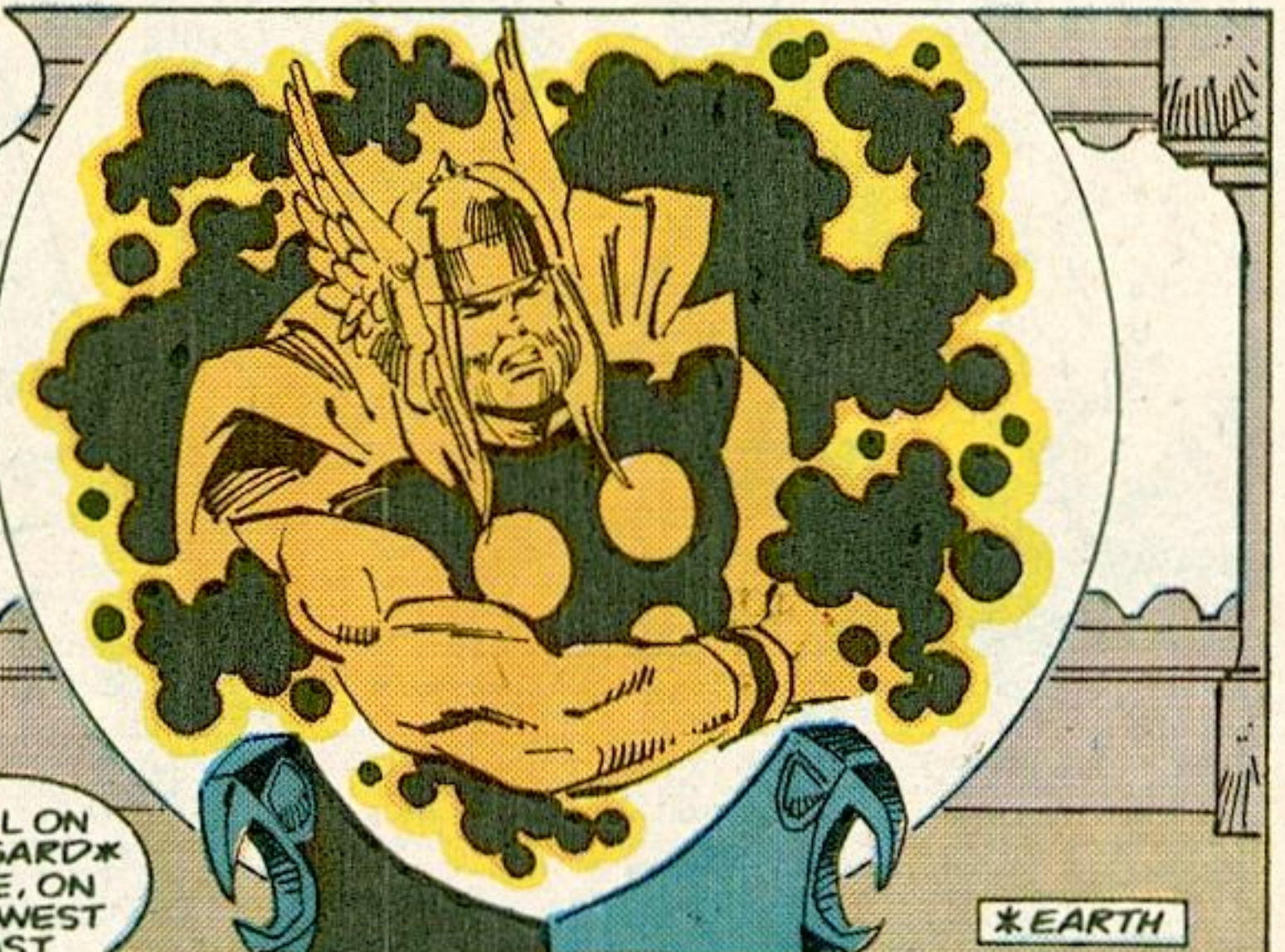
BUT
THERE IS
NO PEACE IN
MY SOUL!

AND UNTIL THE
PROBLEM OF
THOR IS FINALLY
RESOLVED,
THERE SHALL
BE NONE!

WHERE IS HE
NOW, THIS
BANE OF MY
EXISTENCE?



STILL ON
MIDGARD *
I SEE, ON
THE WEST
COAST.



* EARTH

"BUT WHAT'S THIS? WOUNDED AT LAST? I MUST HEAR HIS VOICE!"



THAT THEN IS MY FLIGHT, ANTHONY. AS LONG AS I CARRY THE CURSE OF THE DEATH GODDESS, HELA, MY BONES SHALL BE BRITTLE AND ONCE BROKEN, THEY SHALL NOT HEAL.

ALREADY MY BATTLE BENEATH THE STREETS OF NEW YORK AGAINST THE MARAUDERS* HATH BROKEN MY ARM.



NO ORDINARY REMEDY WILL SUFFICE. I HAVE COME TO YOU AS THE HOPE OF LAST RESORT!

*LAST ISSUE

YOU KNOW, THOR, THERE ARE TIMES WHEN, AS A 20TH CENTURY MAN, I'M NOT QUITE SURE HOW MUCH TO BELIEVE ABOUT ASGARD AND HER GODS.



BUT I KNOW A BROKEN ARM WHEN I SEE ONE.

WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO ABOUT IT?



HELP ME SPLINT IT IN SUCH A WAY AS TO PREVENT THE BROKEN BONES FROM SHIFTING.

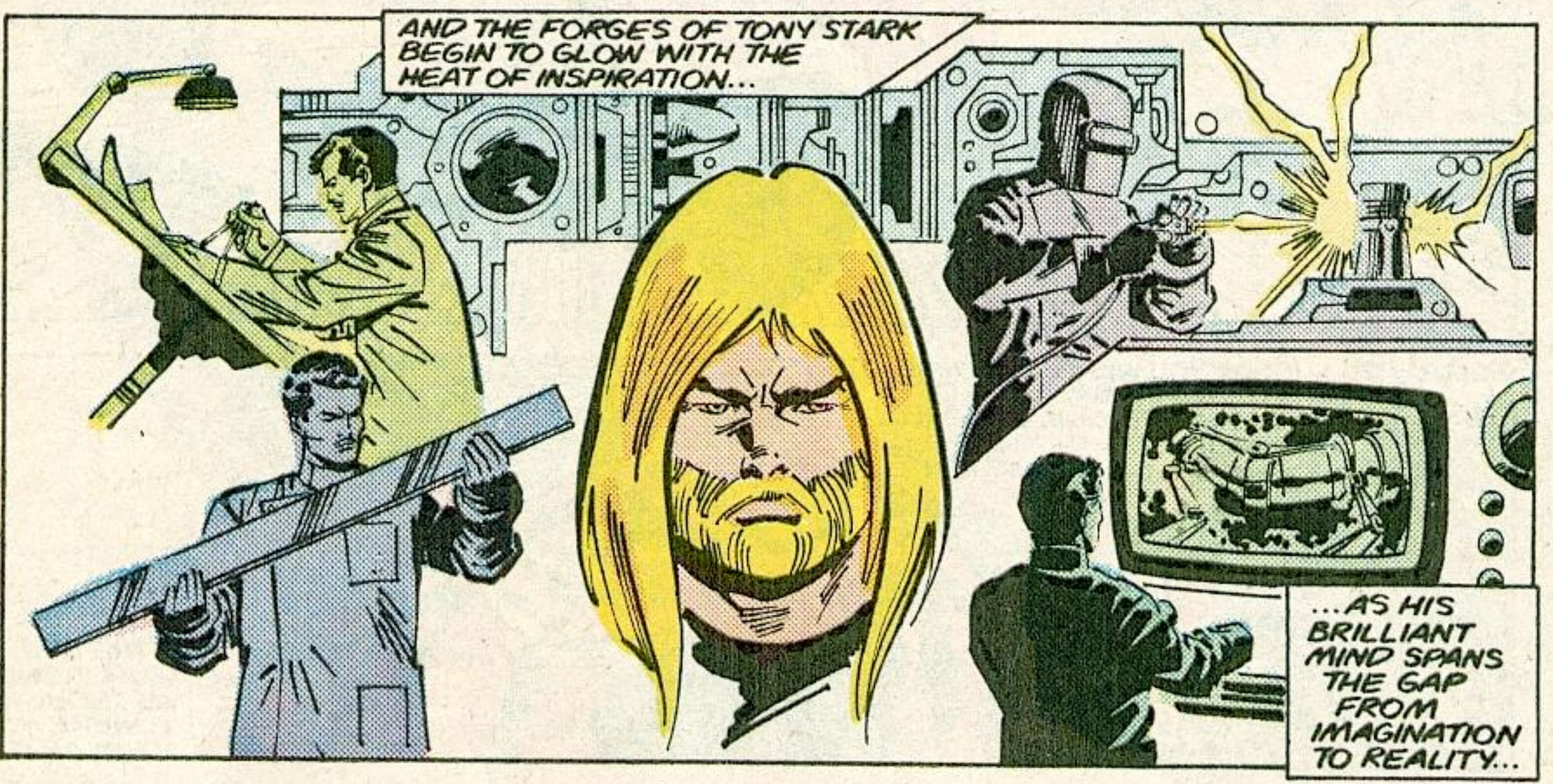
AND HELP ME REGAIN THE USE OF THE ARM.



A TALL ORDER. BUT I THINK MAYBE YOU'VE COME TO THE RIGHT GUY.

BODY ARMOR AND EXOSKELETONS ARE A SPECIALTY OF THE HOUSE!

AND THE FORGES OF TONY STARK BEGIN TO GLOW WITH THE HEAT OF INSPIRATION...



...AS HIS BRILLIANT MIND SPANS THE GAP FROM IMAGINATION TO REALITY...

...AND HIS THOUGHTS FIND FORM IN THE GLEAMING METALS AND ELECTRONICS THAT ARE THE HALLMARK OF HIS GENIUS.

OKAY, THOR. LET'S GIVE IT A SHOT.

THE ARMOR'S CIRCUITS ARE CONNECTED TO A SERIES OF FEEDBACK MICROCOMPUTERS...

...AND THE ENTIRE UNIT'S PROGRAMMED TO RESPOND TO MINUTE CHANGES IN ELECTRICAL CONDUCTIVITY OF THE NERVES.

IT SHOULD FUNCTION AS A VIRTUAL PART OF YOUR BODY... AND HOLD THE BONES MOTIONLESS WITHIN THE ARM.

A COUPLE OF FINAL ADJUSTMENTS...

THAT'S A DISCARDED PROTOTYPE OF MY CURRENT IRON MAN ARMOR.

MAYBE YOU'D LIKE TO--

...AND YOU'LL BE ALL SET.

BUT BEFORE YOU TEST IT IN THE FIELD, BETTER GIVE IT A SHOT HERE.

SAY NO MORE!



WELL?

SHOULD YOU WISH EMPLOYMENT IN THE DWARF SMITHIES OF ASGARD, ANTHONY, I SHOULD BE DELIGHTED TO WRITE YOUR RECOMMENDATION.

THE UNIT FUNCTIONS AS THOUGH IT WERE MY OWN ARM.

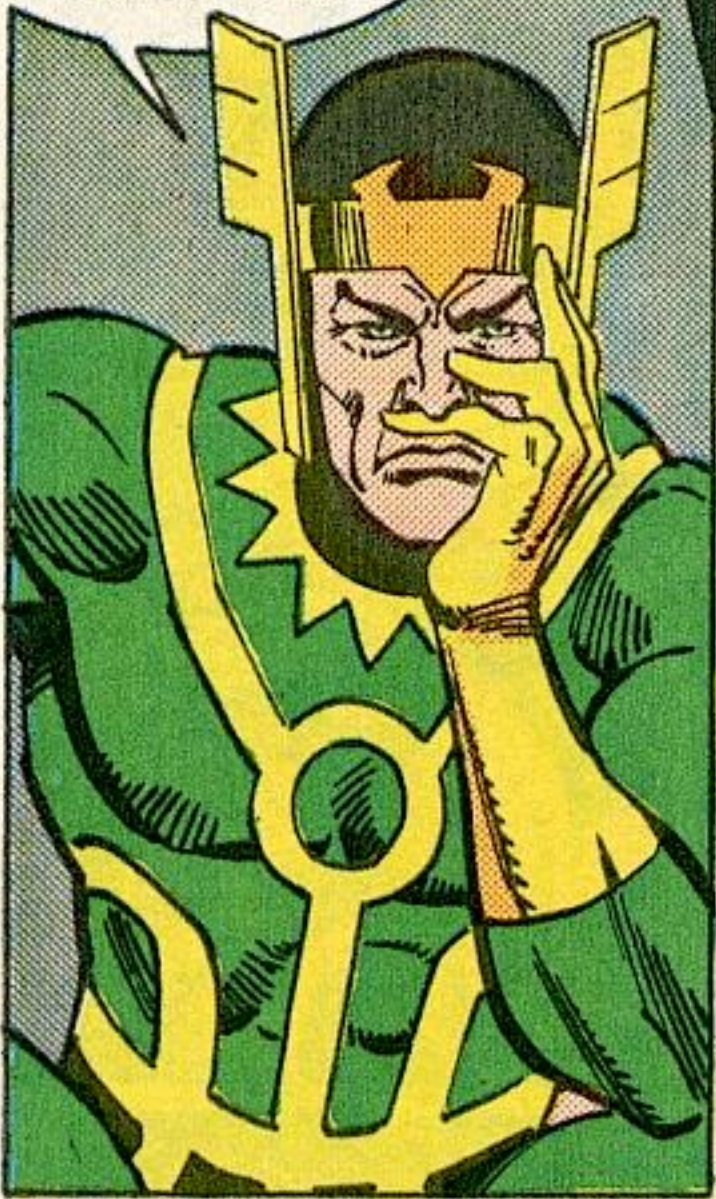
UNBELIEVABLE!



ONCE AGAIN, MY STEP BROTHER HAS OVERCOME AN INCREDIBLE HANDICAP WITH HIS USUAL COMBINATION OF SINGLE MINDEDNESS AND STUPIDITY!



WHO ELSE WOULD HAVE BEEN FOOLISH ENOUGH TO BELIEVE THAT SOMETHING LIKE THAT COULD EVEN HAVE BEEN ACCOMPLISHED?

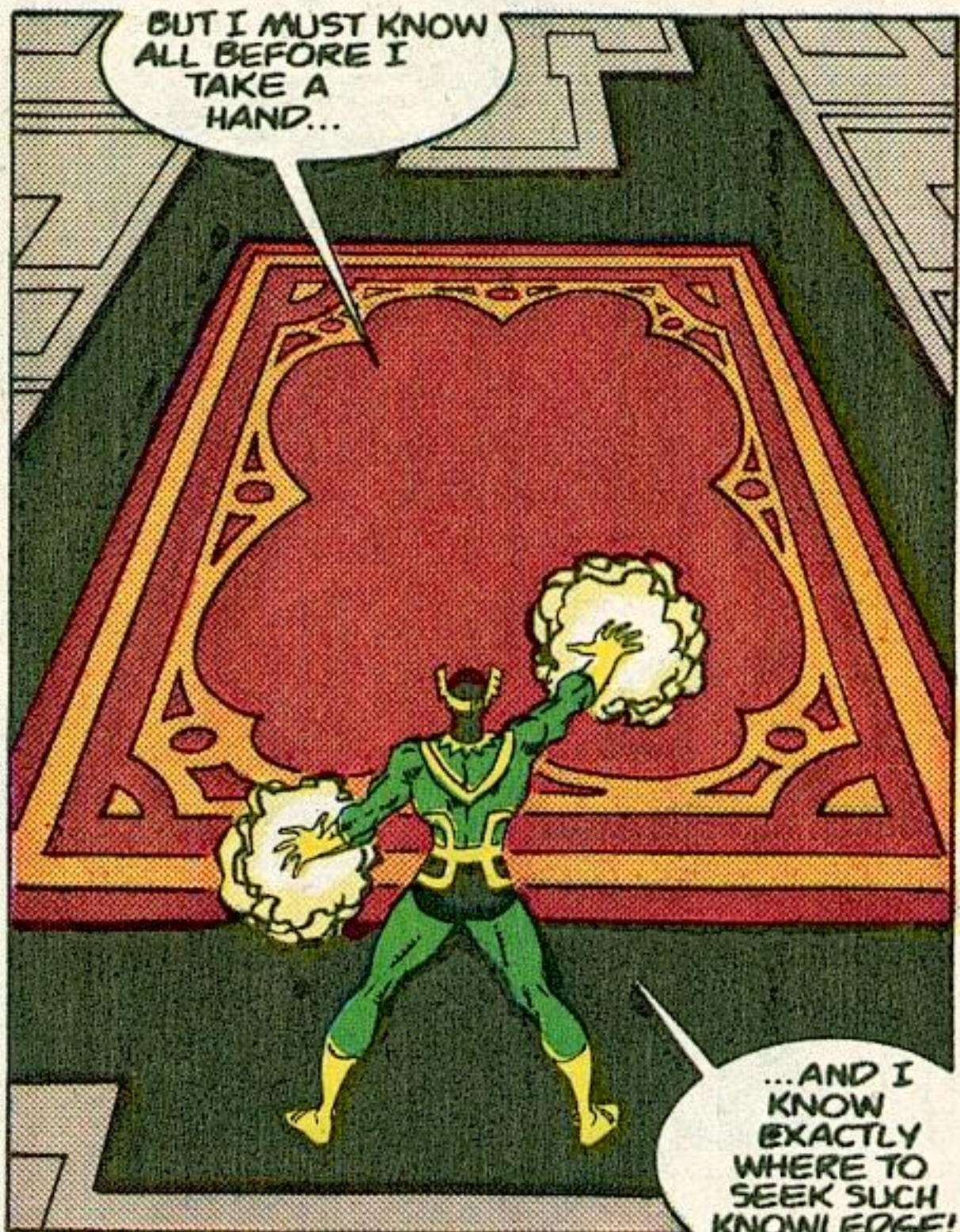


BUT THE TALE OF THE CURSE ITSELF IS MOST INTERESTING.



MUCH MORE MIGHT BE DONE WITH IT!

BUT I MUST KNOW ALL BEFORE I TAKE A HAND...



...AND I KNOW EXACTLY WHERE TO SEEK SUCH KNOWLEDGE!

LET THE PORTALS BETWEEN THE NINE WORLDS HEED THE WORDS OF LOKI!



THE PRINCE OF EVIL COMMANDS THE GATEWAY TO OPEN...

SSSSISSSKK



... THAT LOKI, THE LIVING, MAY ENTER THE REALM OF THE DEAD!



WHO DARES TO BREACH HELA'S DOMINION WITHOUT LEAVE, WHILE THE WARM BLOOD STILL COURSES THROUGH HIS BEATING HEART?



HELLO, FATHER. WOULD YOU LIKE A FATTED CALF?



THAT'S BETTER. HOW NICE THAT ONE'S CHILDREN REMEMBER EVEN AFTER SO LONG A TIME.



SURELY THERE SHOULD BE SOME OTHER GREETING BETWEEN US, CHILD?

OR HAVE THE YOUNG FINALLY FORSAKEN ALL THEIR FILIAL DUTIES IN THIS WRETCHED MODERN AGE?



'TIS FORTUNATE FOR YOU THAT I WOULD WELCOME YOU AT ALL. MY BROTHERS ARE NOT SO COMELY NOR SO GENTLE AS I.

A GIFT OF YOUR MOTHER'S HERITAGE, I FEAR. BLOOD WILL TELL.

YOU DO NOT LOVE MY STEPBROTHER IT SEEMS?

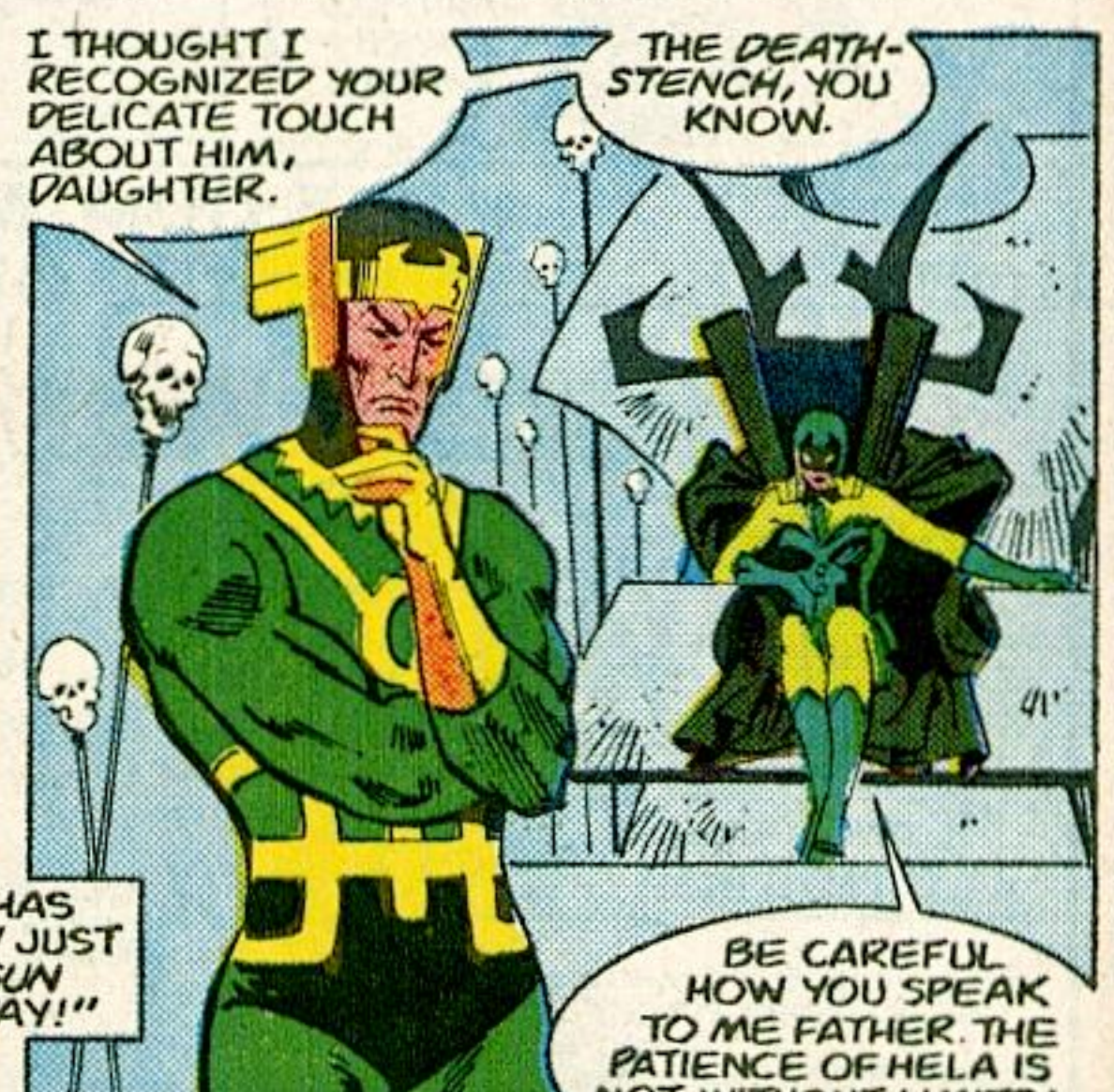
SPEAK NOT OF WRETCHED THOR TO ME!



"HE HUMILIATED ME BEFORE MY SUBJECTS, CARRIED OFF MY MORTAL PREY..."

"...AND EXPOSED MY SECRET SHAME BEFORE LIVING SOULS*!"

"HE HAS ONLY JUST BEGUN TO PAY!"



I THOUGHT I RECOGNIZED YOUR DELICATE TOUCH ABOUT HIM, DAUGHTER.

THE DEATH-STENCH, YOU KNOW.

BE CAREFUL HOW YOU SPEAK TO ME FATHER. THE PATIENCE OF HELA IS NOT WITHOUT LIMITS!

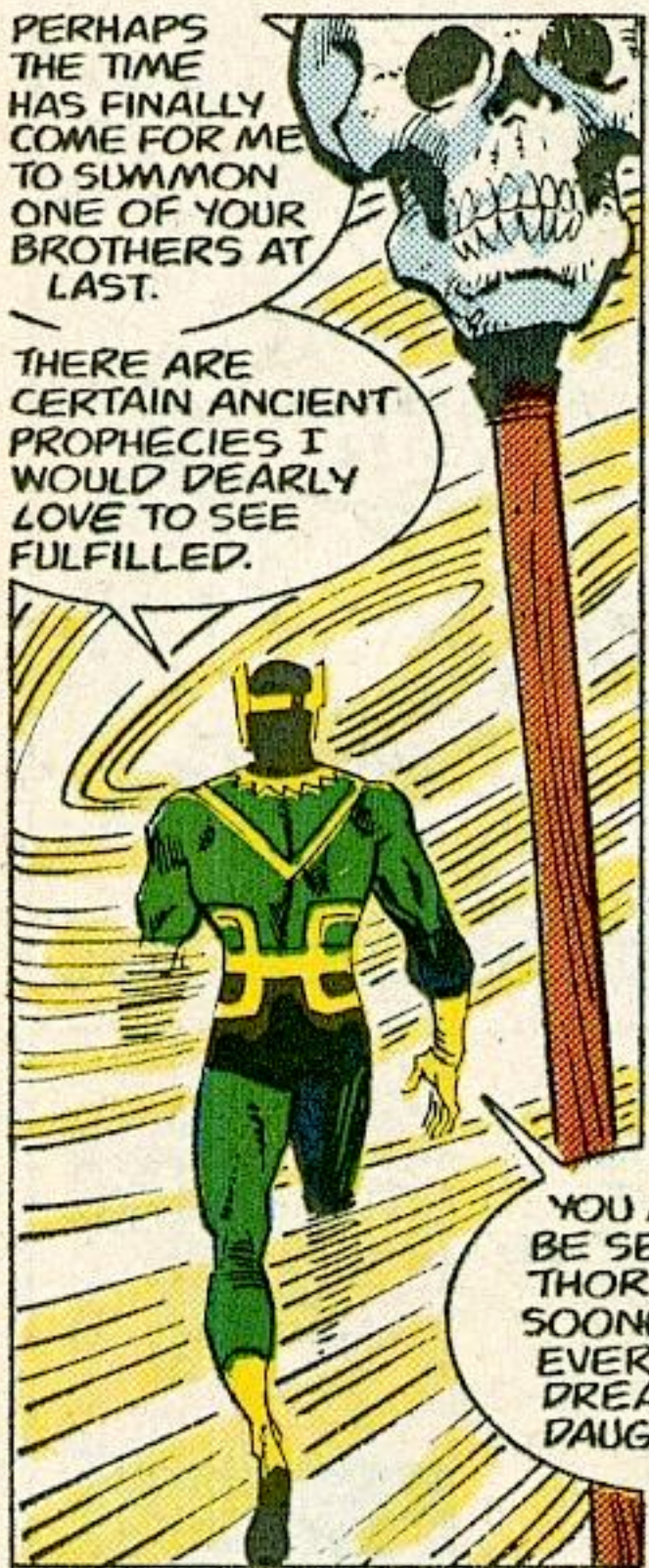


MY VERY WORDS.

WHEN IT WOULD BE SO MUCH MORE PROFITABLE FOR US TO JOIN FORCES?

AND WHAT WOULD YOU DO? SLAY YOUR FATHER?

YOUR CURSE UPON THOR WAS WORTHY OF MY CUNNING.



PERHAPS THE TIME HAS FINALLY COME FOR ME TO SUMMON ONE OF YOUR BROTHERS AT LAST.

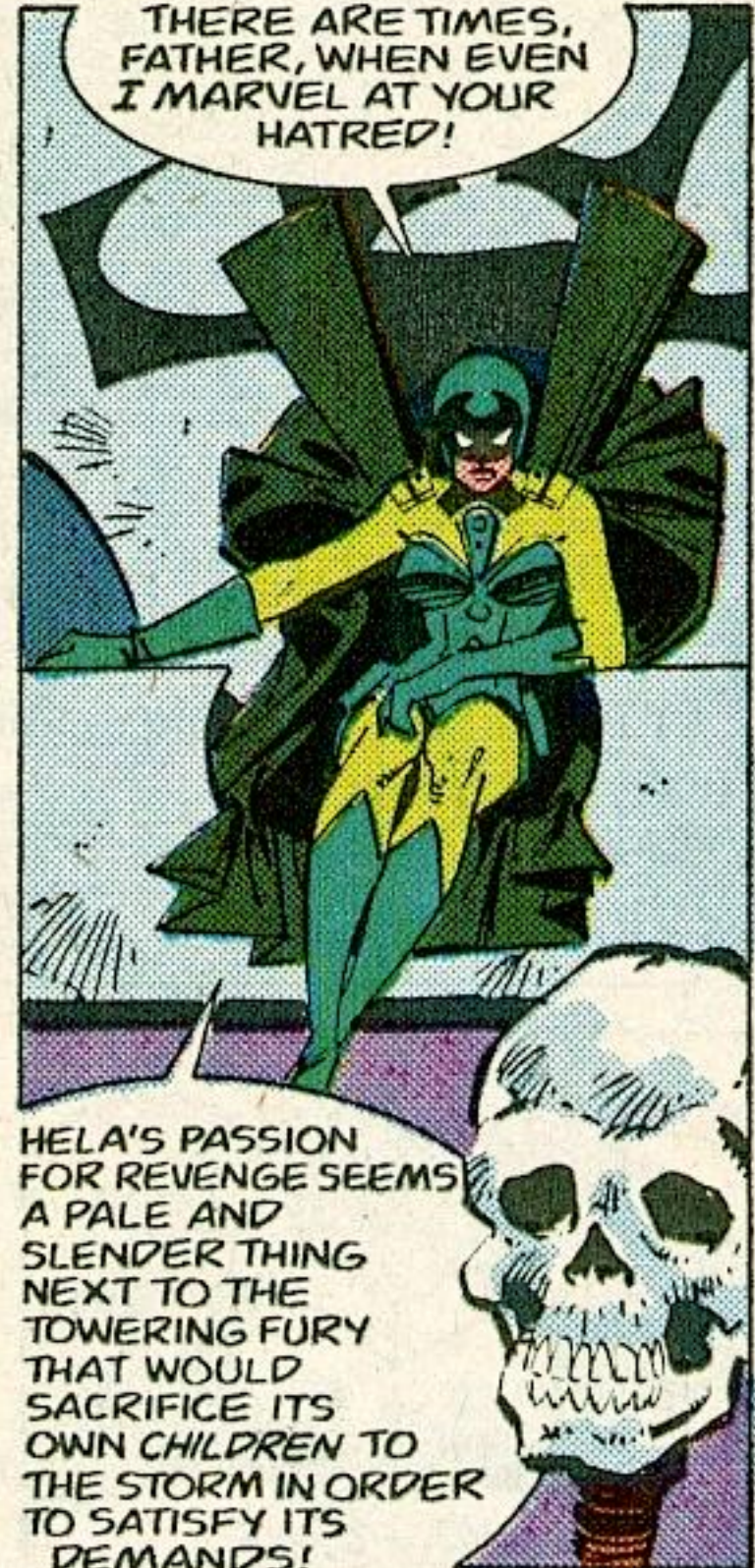
THERE ARE CERTAIN ANCIENT PROPHECIES I WOULD DEARLY LOVE TO SEE FULFILLED.

YOU MAY BE SEEING THOR MUCH SOONER THAN EVER YOU DREAMED, DAUGHTER.



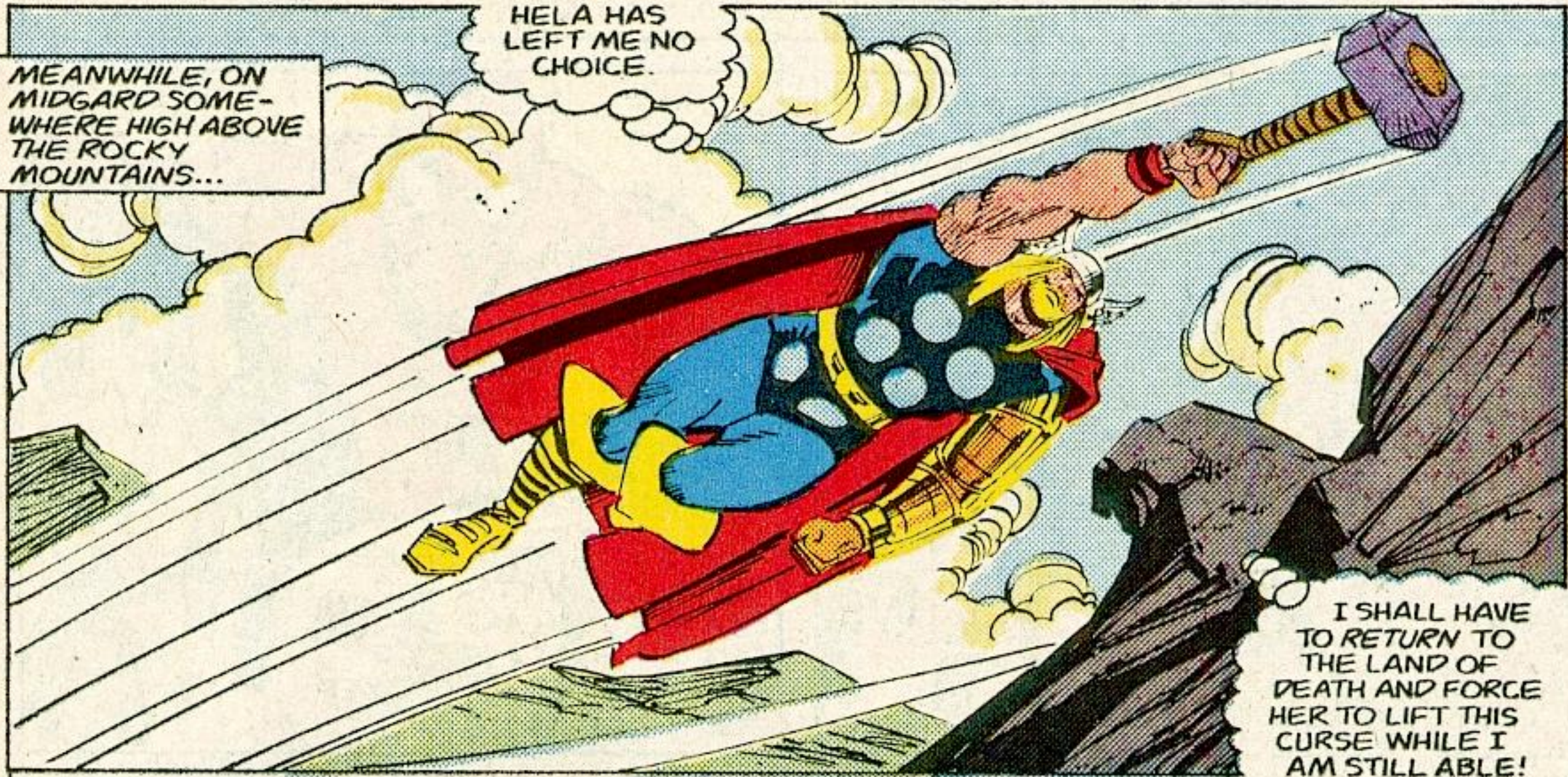
AND MY BROTHER?

HE WILL DO WHAT HE WAS BRED TO DO. FAREWELL.



THERE ARE TIMES, FATHER, WHEN EVEN I MARVEL AT YOUR HATRED!

HELA'S PASSION FOR REVENGE SEEMS A PALE AND SLENDER THING NEXT TO THE TOWERING FURY THAT WOULD SACRIFICE ITS OWN CHILDREN TO THE STORM IN ORDER TO SATISFY ITS DEMANDS!



MEANWHILE, ON MIDGARD SOMEWHERE HIGH ABOVE THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS...

HELA HAS LEFT ME NO CHOICE.

I SHALL HAVE TO RETURN TO THE LAND OF DEATH AND FORCE HER TO LIFT THIS CURSE WHILE I AM STILL ABLE!



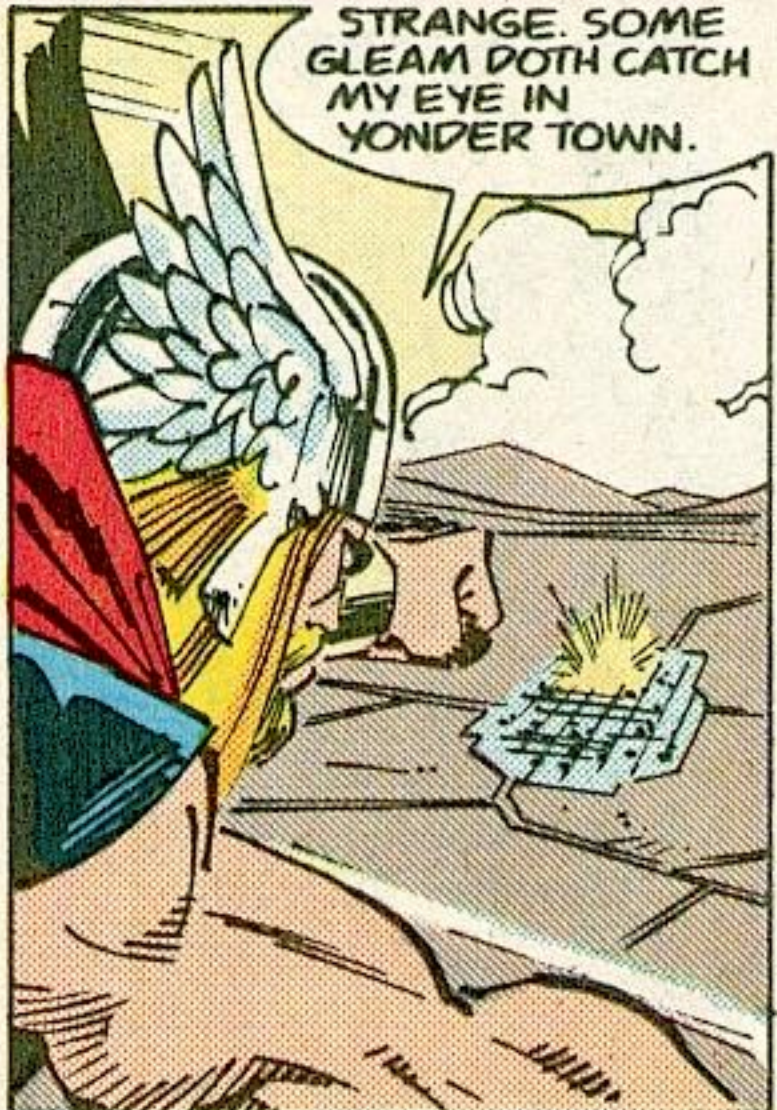
BUT FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE THUNDER GOD OF THE ANCIENT VIKINGS FEELS UNACCUSTOMED MISGIVINGS AT THE THOUGHT OF SUCH A CONTEST.

IS IT EVEN POSSIBLE THAT I COULD WIN WHEN EVERY BLOW MIGHT CRIPPLE ME FURTHER? YET WHAT CHOICE HAVE I? NONE!

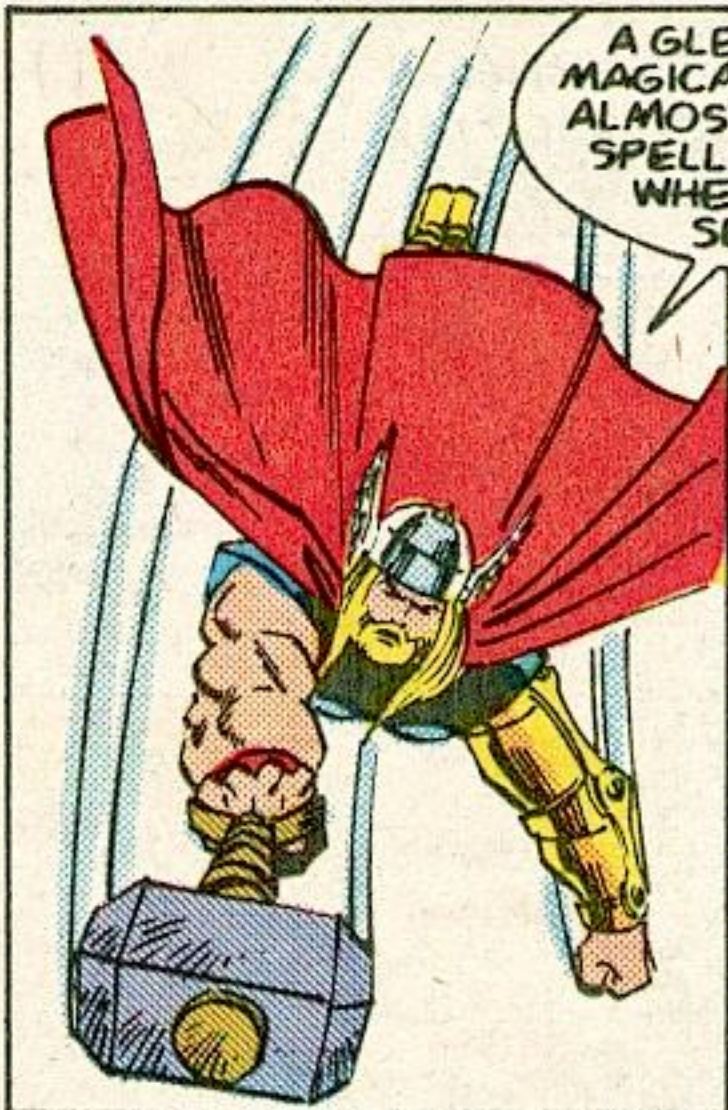


T'WOULD SEEM THAT THE GODDESS OF DEATH IS INTENT UPON DESTROYING ME.

AND THIS TIME, SHE MAY FINALLY HAVE SUCCEEDED!



STRANGE. SOME GLEAM DOETH CATCH MY EYE IN YONDER TOWN.

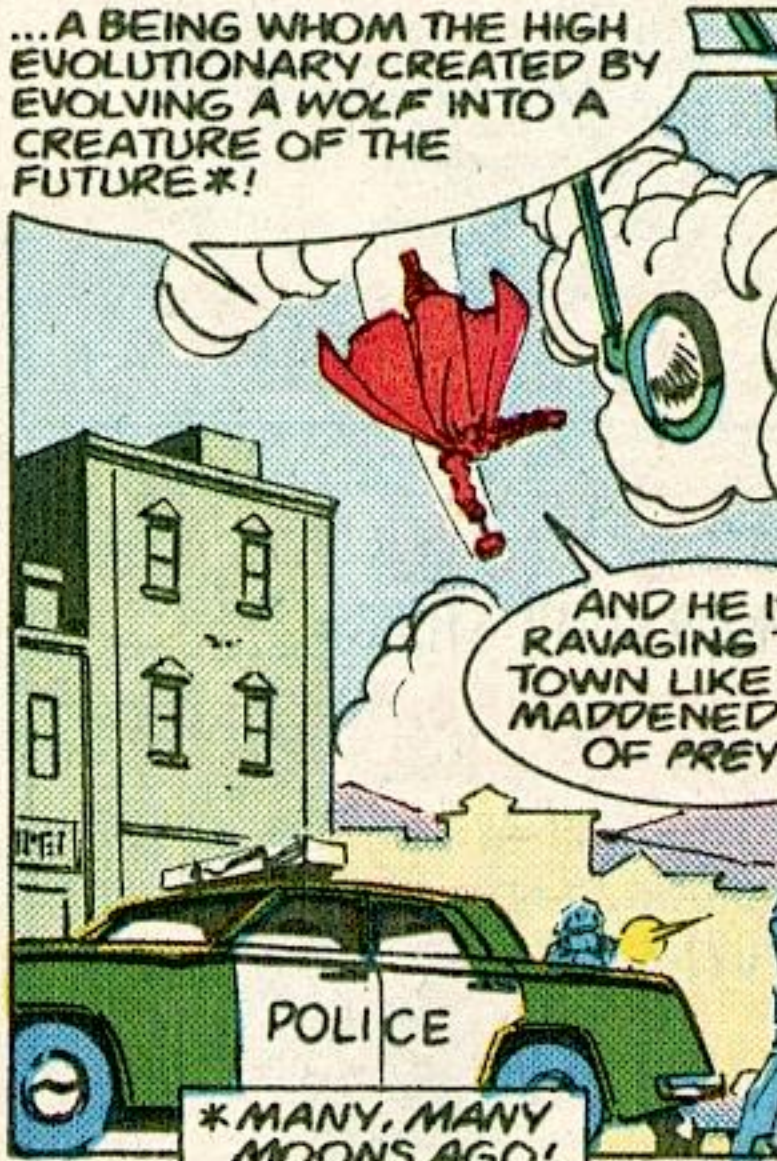


A GLEAM THAT HATH A MAGICAL AURA ABOUT IT, ALMOST AS THOUGH A SPELL HAD BEEN CAST WHERE I MIGHT SEE IT!



IT CANNOT BE!

'TIS THE MAN-BEAST, WHOM I ONCE FOUGHT IN THE FAR OFF LAND OF WUNDAGORE...



...A BEING WHOM THE HIGH EVOLUTIONARY CREATED BY EVOLVING A WOLF INTO A CREATURE OF THE FUTURE*!

AND HE IS RAVAGING THE TOWN LIKE A MADDENED BEAST OF PREY!

ORDINARY POLICE AND THEIR WEAPONS ARE USELESS AGAINST ONE OF HIS POWER AND SKILL!

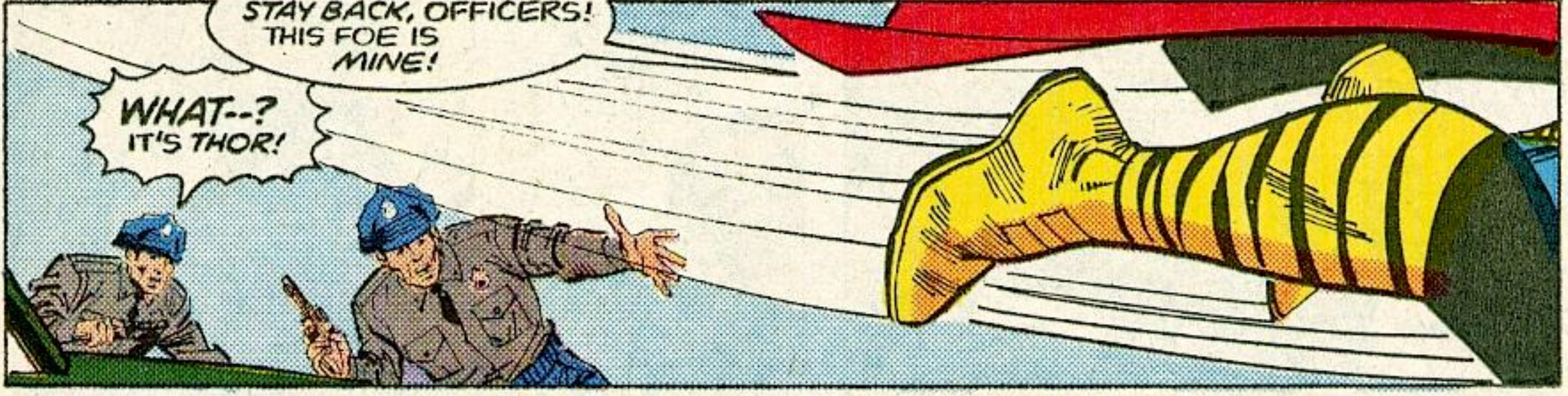


SHRARACK!

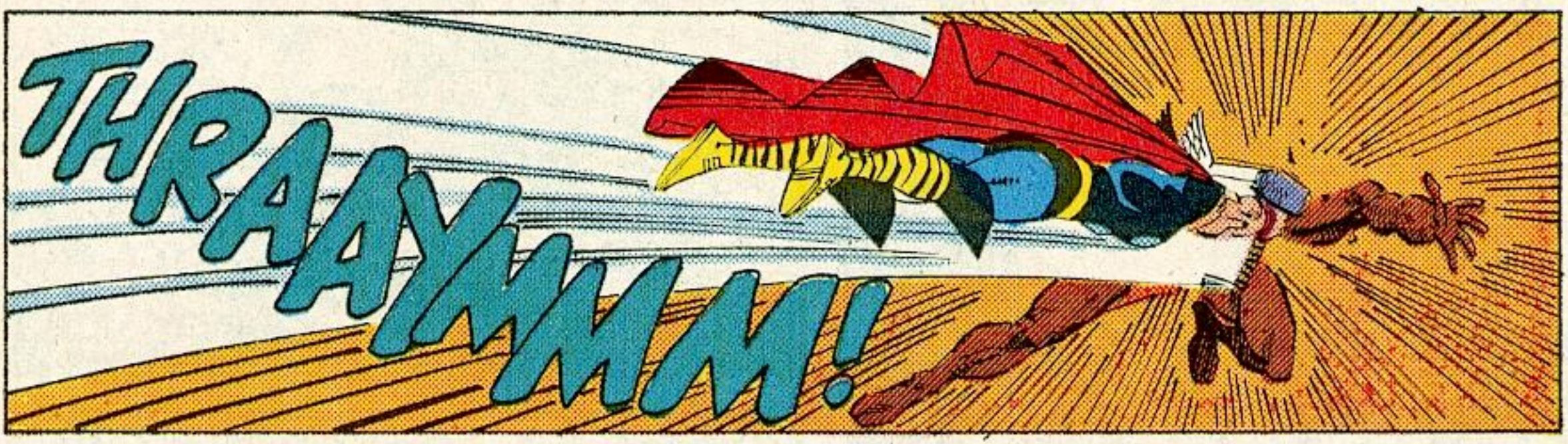
*MANY, MANY MOONS AGO!

STAY BACK, OFFICERS!
THIS FOE IS
MINE!

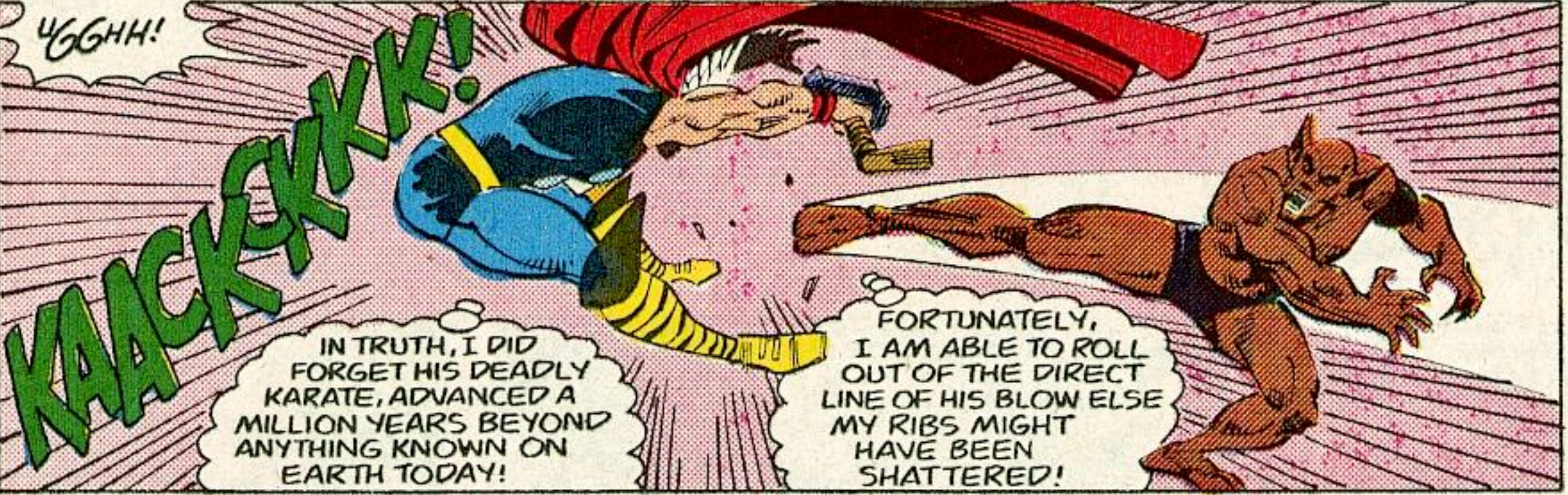
WHAT--?
IT'S THOR!



THRAAYMM!



UGGHH!



KACKK!

IN TRUTH, I DID
FORGET HIS DEADLY
KARATE, ADVANCED A
MILLION YEARS BEYOND
ANYTHING KNOWN ON
EARTH TODAY!

FORTUNATELY,
I AM ABLE TO ROLL
OUT OF THE DIRECT
LINE OF HIS BLOW ELSE
MY RIBS MIGHT
HAVE BEEN
SHATTERED!

HE SPEAKS NOT A WORD
BUT THE FERAL LIGHT
OF HATRED IN HIS
EYES TELLS
EVERYTHING!

HE HAS
RECOGNIZED
HIS ERSTWHILE
FOE!



IN THIS
BATTLE, THERE
SHALL BE NO
QUARTER!

WAHAHHHAMMM!



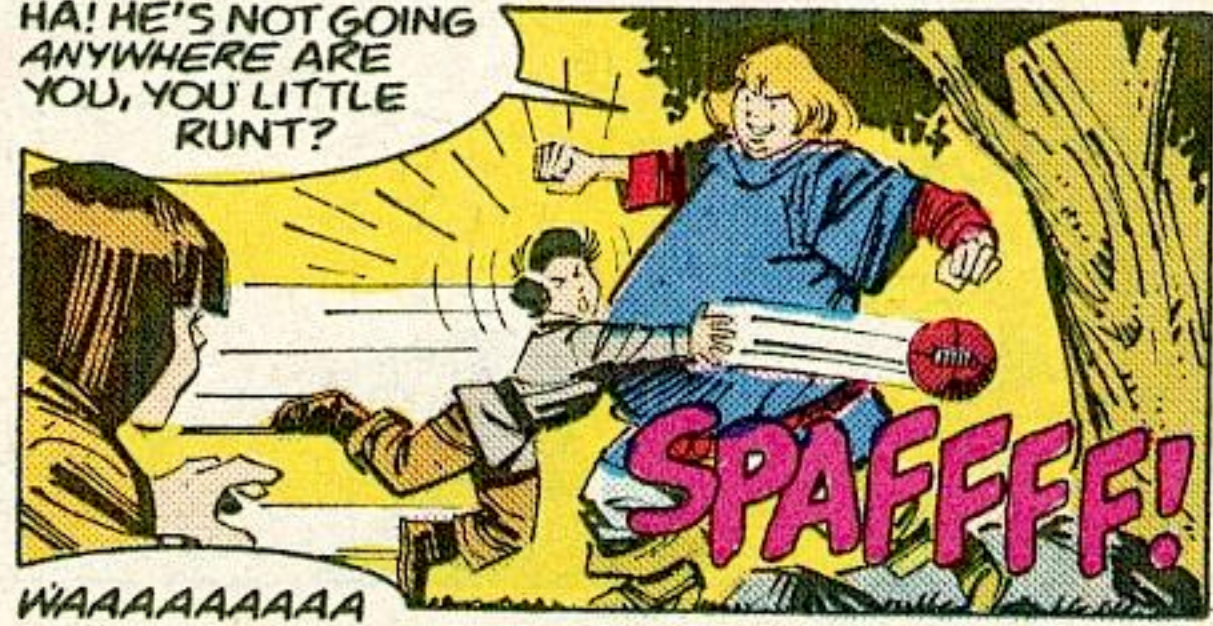
MEANWHILE, IN THE FIELDS OF ASGARD, WHERE THE CHILDREN OF VOLSTAGG ARE PLAYING WITH THEIR NEW FOSTER BROTHERS...

THEY GOT ME! RUN, KEVIN, RUN!

STOP HIM! DON'T LET HIM SCORE!



HA! HE'S NOT GOING ANYWHERE ARE YOU, YOU LITTLE RUNT?



WAAAAA

MICK, I DON'T WANT TO STAY HERE ANYMORE.

WHY DOESN'T SHE COME BACK?

I WANT TO GO HOME! I WANT MY MOMMY.



AH, THEY'RE JUST A COUPLE OF SISSIES. LET'S PLAY WITHOUT 'EM!

THEY'RE NOT SISSIES! THEY JUST MORTALS! THEY'RE NOT AS STRONG AS WE ARE!

YOU SHUT UP, THAKRAD!



BUT WHAT CAN WE DO, HILDY? WE CAN'T CHANGE WHAT WE ARE.

BUT THESE GUYS ARE TOO STRONG FOR US. WE CAN'T PLAY WITH THEM.

DON'T CRY, KEVIN. IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT.



WISE WORDS, LAD.

NO MORTAL CHILD OF MAN IN THESE DAYS CAN STAND AGAINST AN ASGARDIAN, STRENGTH FOR STRENGTH.

BUT 'TIS THE DUTY OF THE STRONG TO PROTECT THE WEAK...

...TO STRENGTHEN THEM THAT THEY TOO MAY BECOME STRONG.

AND THAT WE MAY ACCOMPLISH HERE.

THE STORYSPINNER AESOP TOLD HOW WHEN POTS OF CLAY AND BRASS COLLIDE, THE WEAKER MUST BE SHATTERED NO MATTER WHAT.





WOW! WHO ARE THEY?

IT'S FANDRAL, MICK! AND HOGUN!

CAN YOU REALLY HELP US, FANDRAL?



THE FOSTER SONS OF VOLSTAGG THE ENORMOUS ARE NO LESS THAN THE CHILDREN OF ALL THE WARRIORS THREE.

NOW COME, LITTLE ONE, AND DRY YOUR TEARS.

YOUR MOTHER IS GONE BEYOND ALL HOPE AND CARE AND YOU MUST STAND TOGETHER WITH YOUR BROTHER AGAINST THE WORLD.



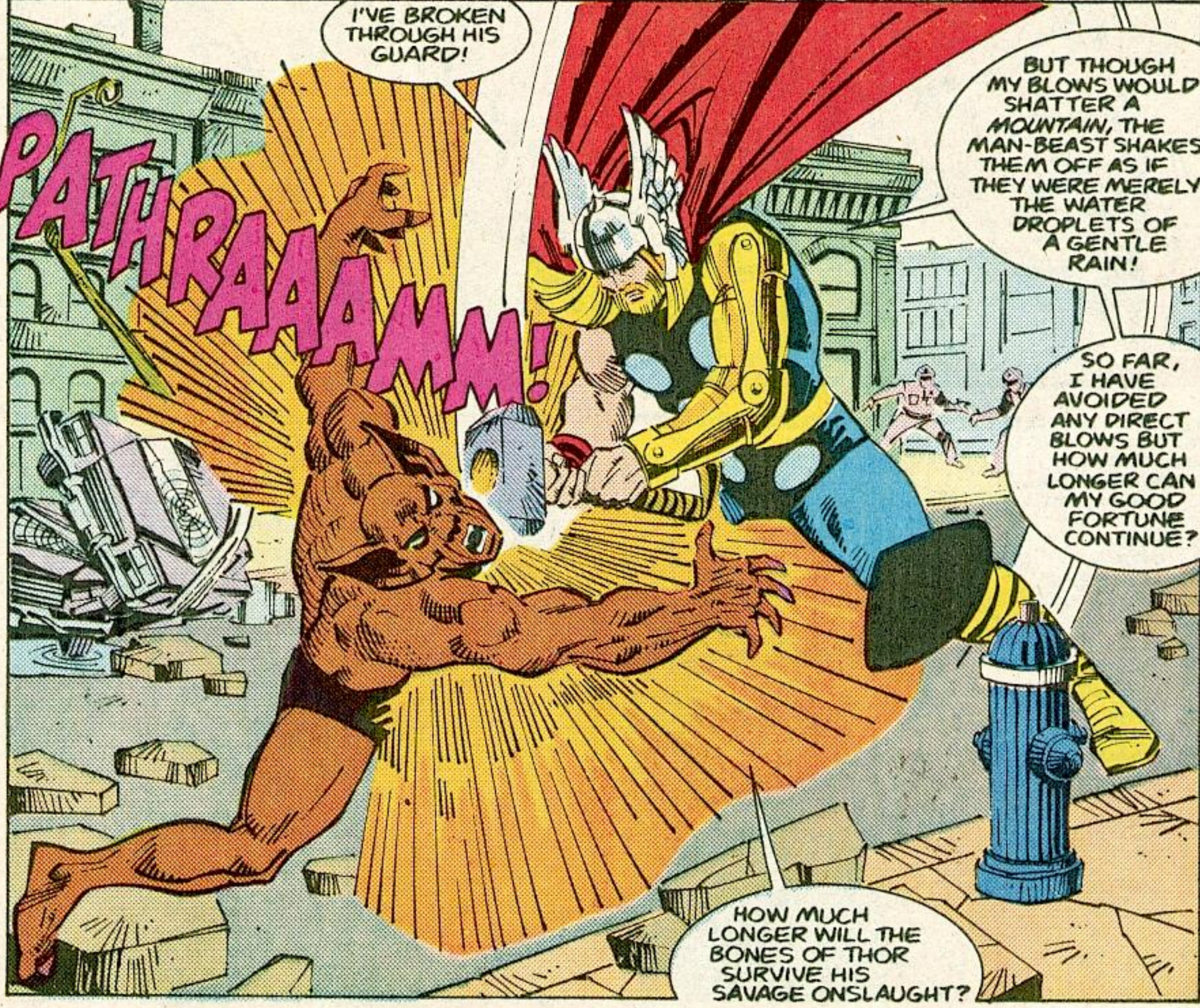
BUT YOU SHALL NOT STAND ALONE. IS HILDY NOT ALREADY A SISTER WHO WATCHES OUT FOR YOU?

IS THAKRAD NOT ALREADY A BROTHER LIKE MICK WHO TORTURES YOU UPON OCCASION?

AND BETWEEN MYSELF AND SILENT HOGUN HERE, WE MAY TEACH THE PAIR OF YOU A FEW TRICKS!

AND THEN, LET ASGARD'S FINEST BEWARE!

BUT AS THE MORTAL TWINS ARE CARRIED OFF, ON EARTH, THE RAGING BATTLE CONTINUES...



I'VE BROKEN THROUGH HIS GUARD!

PATHRAAAMM!

BUT THOUGH MY BLOWS WOULD SHATTER A MOUNTAIN, THE MAN-BEAST SHAKES THEM OFF AS IF THEY WERE MERELY THE WATER DROPLETS OF A GENTLE RAIN!

SO FAR, I HAVE AVOIDED ANY DIRECT BLOWS BUT HOW MUCH LONGER CAN MY GOOD FORTUNE CONTINUE?

HOW MUCH LONGER WILL THE BONES OF THOR SURVIVE HIS SAVAGE ONSLAUGHT?

KOGHGH!!

HE STAGGERS!
HAVE I AT LAST
STRUCK THE
DECISIVE
BLOW?



THRAWWMM!

HE FALLS!
THE VICTORY
IS MINE!



AND NOW I HAD BEST
ARRANGE FOR HIM TO BE
SECURED SAFELY IN
ORDER TO PREVENT
FURTHER MAYHEM.



HOW NOW?
THE VISAGE
OF THE
MAN-BEAST
BEGINS TO
SHIFT!

HIS VERY
FEATURES
FLOW LIKE
WATER!



'TIS NOT
THE MAN-
BEAST AT
ALL BUT
SOME
AGED
MORTAL!

AND THE
LAST SPARK
OF LIFE HAS
BUT THIS
MINUTE
FLED HIS
ANCIENT
BODY.



HEY, WAIT A MINUTE! I
RECOGNIZE THOSE CLOTHES!
AND THAT FACE! THAT'S
HOWIE BRIDGER,
THE MILKMAN!

BUT IT
CAN'T BE!
HOWIE'S ONLY
TWENTY-FOUR
YEARS OLD!

ARE YOU
CERTAIN,
OFFICER?

POSITIVE!
THAT'S HOWIE!
I... I THINK
I'M GONNA
BE SICK!



SOME EVIL IS AT
WORK HERE BEYOND
THE HAND OF
MAN!



THE
AVENGERS
MUST BE
NOTIFIED
AT ONCE!

FOR THIS IS
NO ACCIDENT OF
FATE BUT THE
DELIBERATE
INTRIGUE OF SOME
MALEVOLENT
WILL!

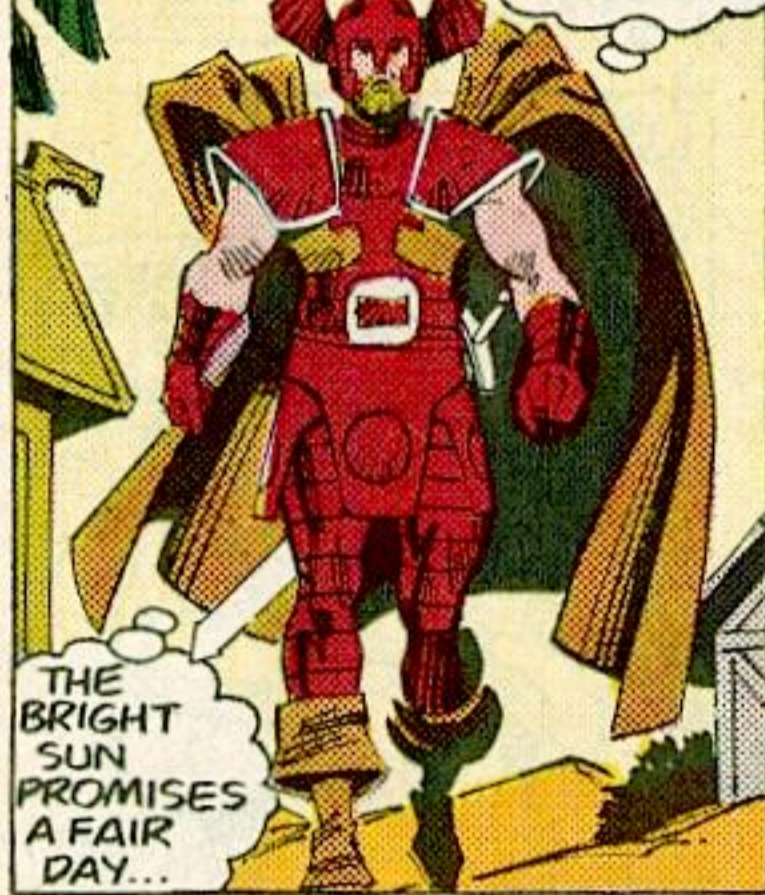
AND AS THOR SOARS ACROSS THE HIGH PLAINS HEADING FOR NEW YORK CITY...

...IN ASGARD ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE GOLDEN CITY...

WITH THE RAINBOW BRIDGE GONE, I NEED NO LONGER STAND VIGILANTLY GUARDING ITS THRESHOLD.



THUS I MAY WALK THE BEAUTIES OF THIS LAND WHERE ONCE I COULD ONLY WATCH THEM FROM AFAR.



THE BRIGHT SUN PROMISES A FAIR DAY...

...YET THE EVER WATCHFUL EYES OF HEIMDALL SPY CLOUDS OF MOURNING AND DESPAIR HANGING OVER ONE CORNER OF THE KINGDOM.

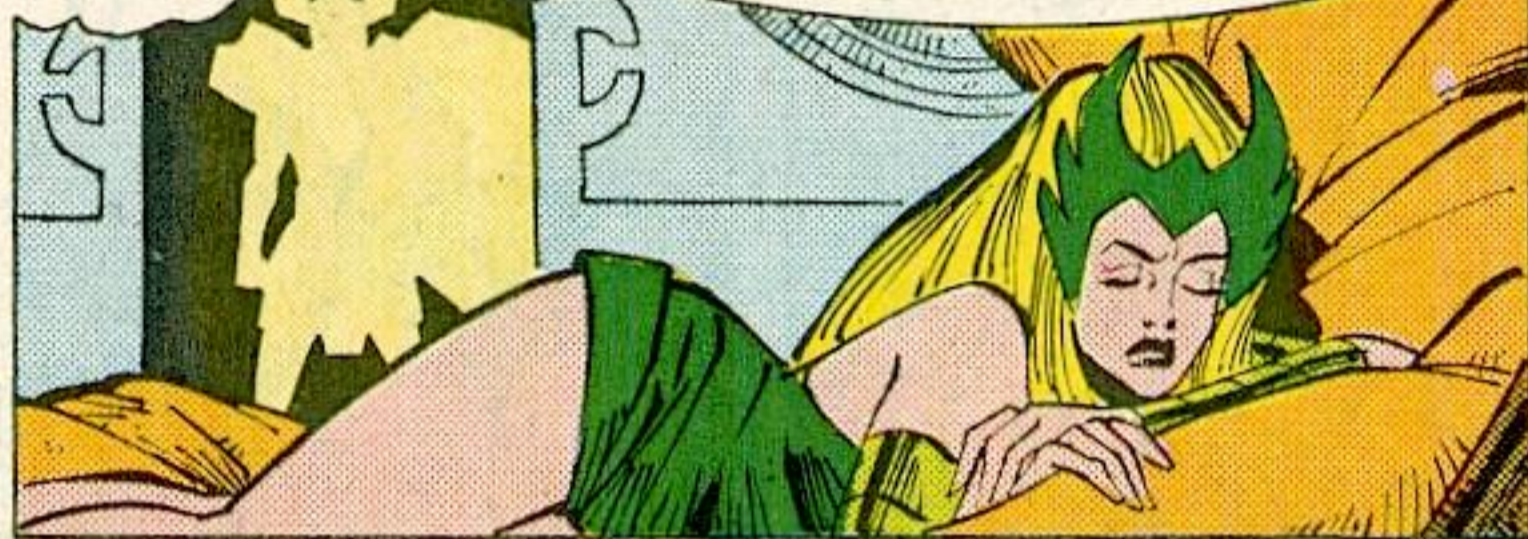


THE GLOOM WITHIN THIS ANCIENT DWELLING IS NEARLY PALPABLE.

AND HERE IS ITS SOURCE.



GREETINGS, AMORA. THE DAY IS YOUNG. SHOULD NOT THE ENCHANTRESS BE UP AND ABOUT HER BUSINESS?



YOUNG SWAINS WOULD SERENADE THEIR LOVERS THIS FINE MORNING AND HOW SHALL THEY SUCCEED IF THE ENCHANTRESS DOES NOT LEND HER GENTLE TOUCH TO THEIR SONGS?



GET OUT, HEIMDALL.



I AM IN NO MOOD FOR PLAYFUL BANTERING.

I SHOULD SAY NOT. YOU WEAR THE MANTLE OF TRAGEDY LIKE A SECOND SKIN.

BUT THE AIR WITHIN THIS HOUSE IS SO FOUL WITH WEeping AND ANGER...



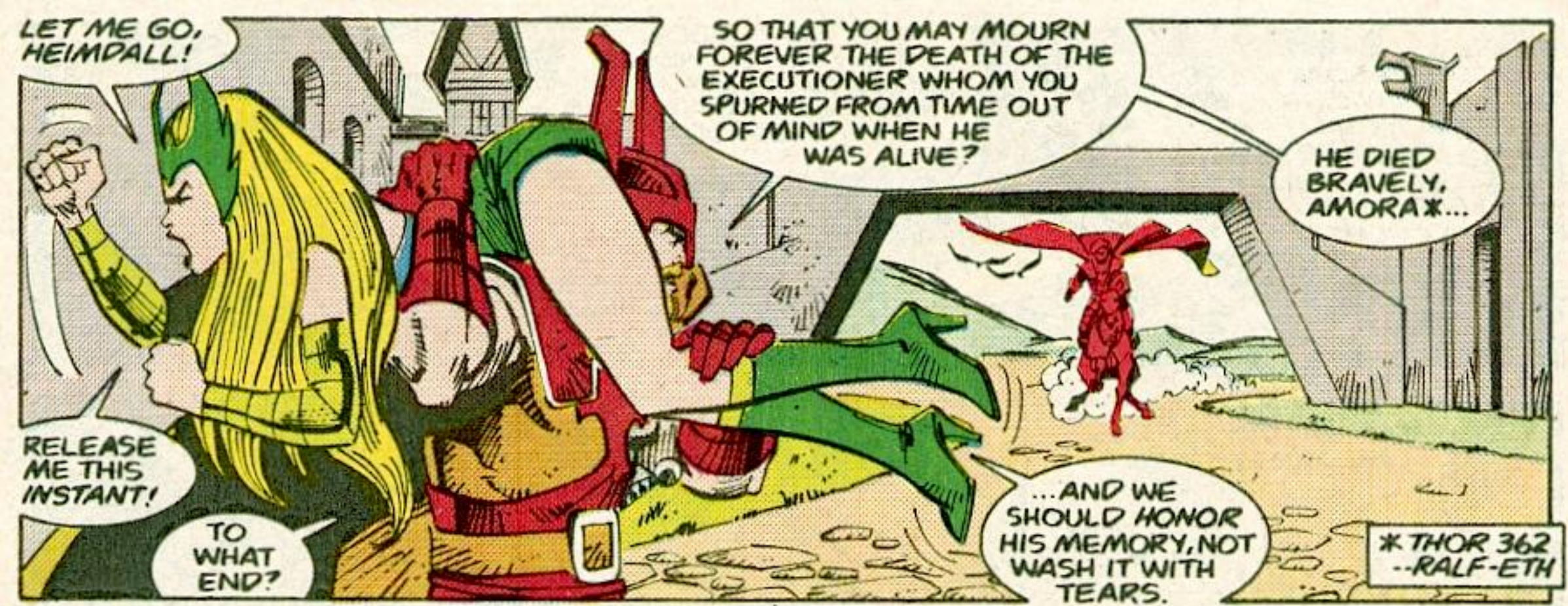
...THAT NO ONE WHO STAYS WITHIN COULD POSSIBLY BE HEALED.

AND HEALING IS WHAT YOU WANT.

COME. JOIN ME AND WE WILL WALK TOGETHER THIS BRIGHT DAY!



HEIMDALL!!



LET ME GO, HEIMDALL!

SO THAT YOU MAY MOURN FOREVER THE DEATH OF THE EXECUTIONER WHOM YOU SPURNED FROM TIME OUT OF MIND WHEN HE WAS ALIVE?

HE DIED BRAVELY, AMORA*

RELEASE ME THIS INSTANT!

TO WHAT END?

...AND WE SHOULD HONOR HIS MEMORY, NOT WASH IT WITH TEARS.

* THOR 362
--RALF-ETH



GREETINGS, BALDER. DO MY EYES DECEIVE ME OR DO I SEE TWO RAVENS IN THY TRAIN TODAY?

THE RAVENS OF ODIN HAVE BEEN RESTORED, HEIMDALL, THANKS TO WYRD*.

* LAST ISSUE

A DEED ONLY THE NOBLE BALDER COULD HAVE ACCOMPLISHED.



SAY RATHER A FORTUNATE HAPPENSTANCE. MAY I ASK WHAT IS GOING ON HERE?

THE ENCHANTRESS HAS NOT YET FORGIVEN HERSELF FOR THE DEATH OF SKURGE, MY LORD.



I HAVE TAKEN IT UPON MYSELF TO GRANT HER THAT FORGIVENESS.

I SEE, AMORA, MAY I BE OF SOME ASSISTANCE HERE?



no.

THEN, HEIMDALL, AS SOON AS YOU ARE ABLE, JOIN ME IN THE GREAT HALL...



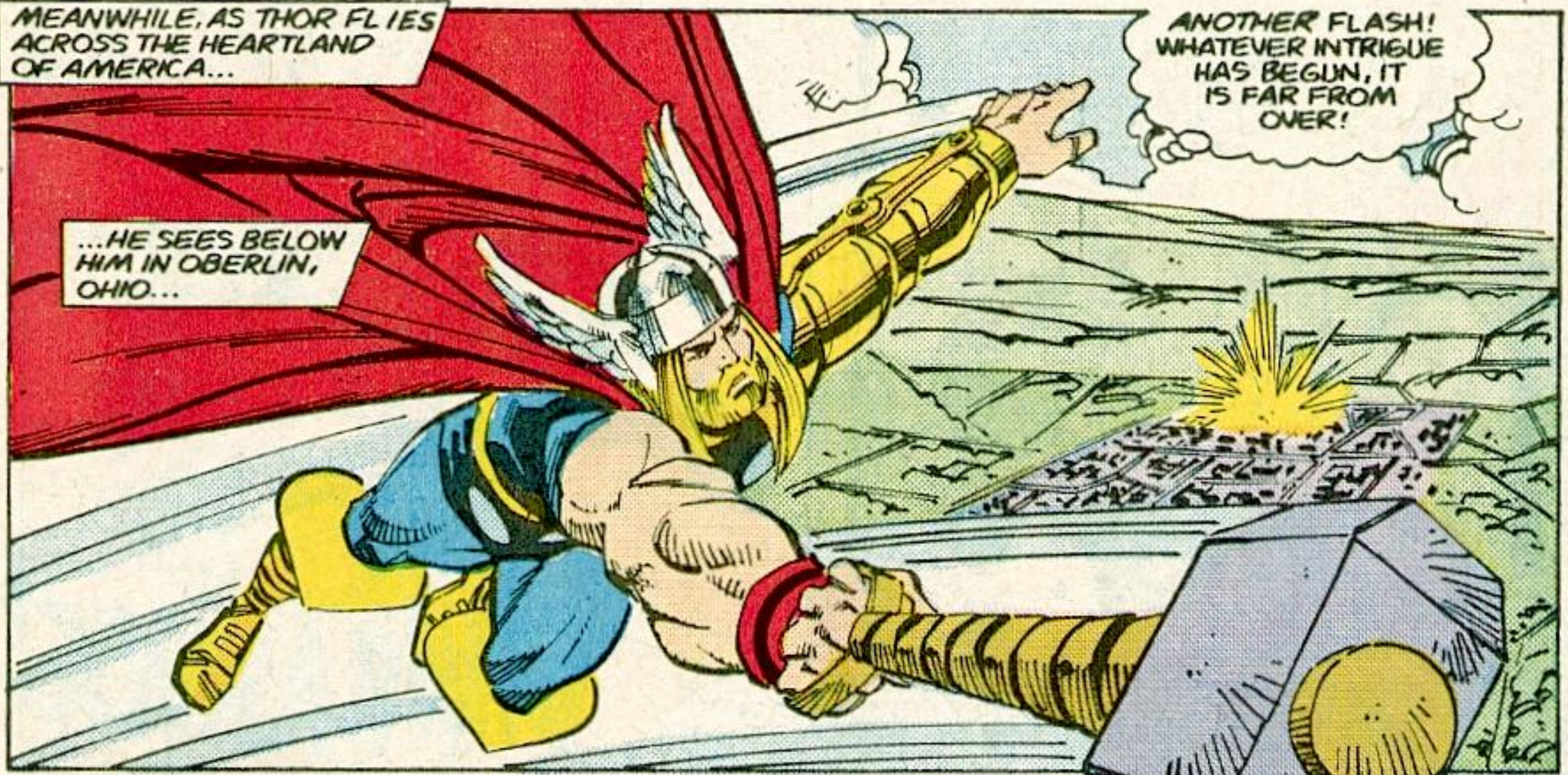
...AND WE SHALL MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SHEATHING OF THE GREAT SWORD OF SURTUR.

I TAKE IT THAT THE SCABBARD IS FINISHED AND 'TIS TIME TO FINISH THE JOB.

MEANWHILE, AS THOR FLIES ACROSS THE HEARTLAND OF AMERICA...

ANOTHER FLASH! WHATEVER INTRIGUE HAS BEGUN, IT IS FAR FROM OVER!

...HE SEES BELOW HIM IN OBERLIN, OHIO...



AND THIS TIME, I AM CERTAIN OF WHAT I SHALL FIND!

MY FEARS ARE MADE FLESH!

ANOTHER OF THOR'S FORMER FOES HAS RETURNED! BUT IS HE REAL OR IS THIS ANOTHER POWERFUL ILLUSION?

KEERASSSHH!



WHERE ARE YA, GOLDILOCKS?

I'M WAITIN' FER YA!

THAT, MY STENTORIAN FOE, REMAINS TO BE SEEN!

WE GOTTA SCORE TA SETTLE AND TODAY, I'M GONNA SETTLE IT ONCE 'N' FER ALL!!



THOR!!



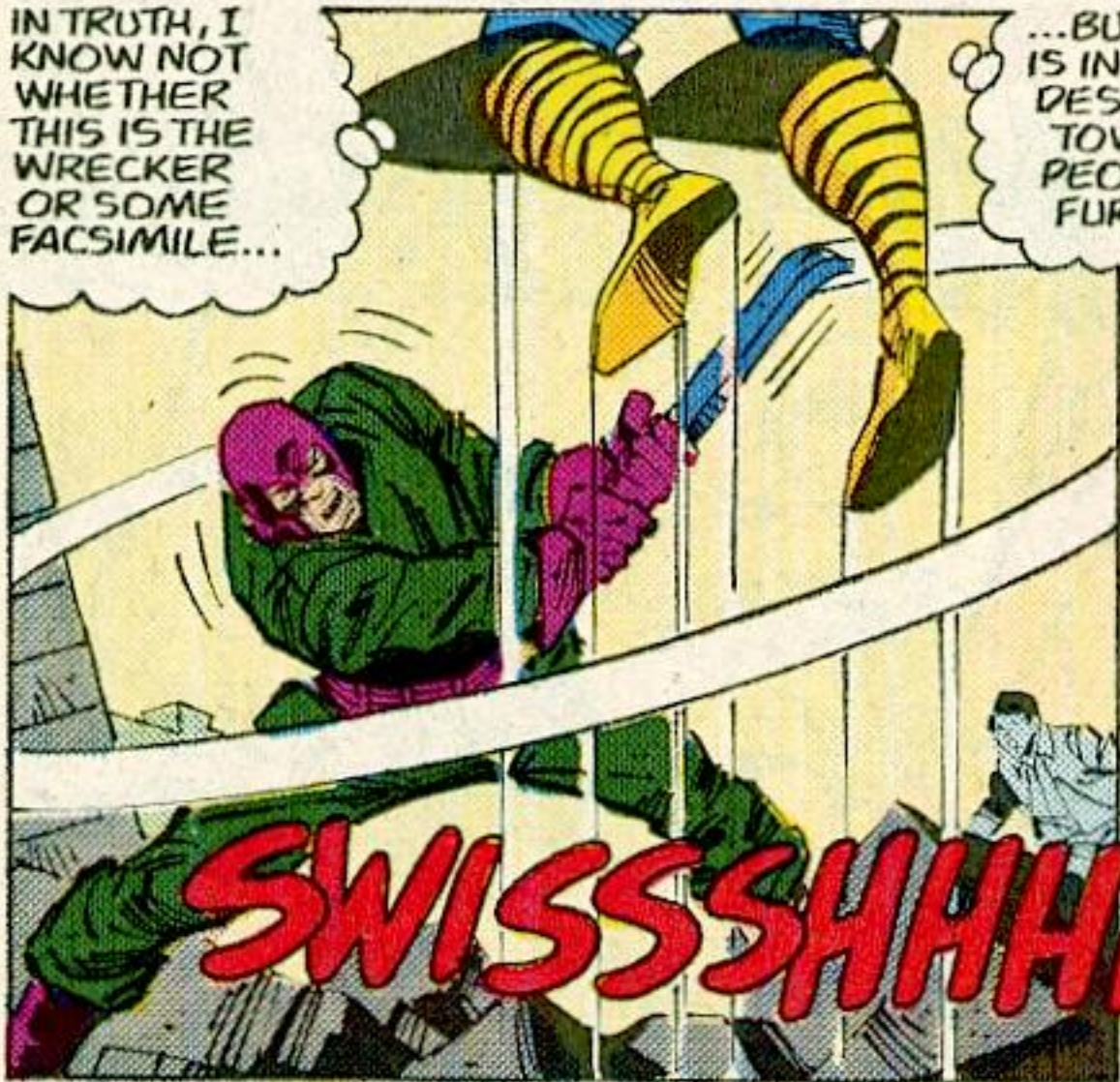
USE ALL THE BIG WORDS YA WANT TO, PAL! THEY DON'T MEAN NOthin' WHEN THE CHIPS ARE DOWN!

IN THE END, ONLY POWER COUNTS! AND THE WRECKER'S GOT PLENTY TA SPARE!



THE POWER OF THE WRECKER MAY OR MAY NOT BE THINE, VILLAIN, BUT THE POWER OF THOR IS THE POWER OF TRUTH AND NAUGHT SHALL OVERCOME IT!

BHWRRANNGG!



IN TRUTH, I KNOW NOT WHETHER THIS IS THE WRECKER OR SOME FACSIMILE...

...BUT AS LONG AS HE IS INTENT UPON MY DESTRUCTION, THE TOWN AND HER PEOPLE MAY ESCAPE FURTHER DAMAGE.

SWISSSHHHH!



YA BLASTED JUMPIN' BEAN! IF YA WON'T STAND STILL 'N' FIGHT LIKE A MAN, I'LL MAKE YA COME TO ME!



HEY, BUSTER! HOW 'BOUT A CLOSER LOOK AT MY WRECKIN' BAR?

OH NO!! GET AWAY FROM ME! GET AWAY!



THOUGH I AM NOT CERTAIN WHAT I AM FIGHTING HERE, I CANNOT PERMIT HARM TO COME TO THOSE I AM SWORN TO PROTECT!

HOLD THY HAND, BASE VILLAIN, AGAINST THOSE SO MUCH WEAKER THAN THEE!



THOR STRIKES IN THE NAME OF JUSTICE!

UGGGH!

BAKHWRRAAM!



HA! I KNEW YA WOULDN'T BE ABLE TO LEMME KILL THAT WIMP!

BUT THAT'S IT, GOLDDILOCKS! THE GLOVES ARE OFF! I BEEN TAKIN' IT TOO EASY ON YA. NOW I'M GONNA REALLY BEAR DOWN!

SHHHHINN!



I CANNOT TELL IF MY FOE IS TRULY THE WRECKER OR NOT!

HE SPEAKS WITH THE SAME TONGUE, BATTLES WITH THE SAME FURY, AS MY FOE OF OLD!

AND I CANNOT AVOID HIM FOREVER!



HE COMES CLOSER AND CLOSER WITH EACH SUCCEEDING BLOW AND HIS NEXT SHALL SURELY STRIKE ME IF I AM NOT QUICK ENOUGH!

THHUNNKK!



KOGHGHH!!

OH NO! HIS FEATURES TURN WAXEN AND HE STAGGERS BACK!



WRECKER!

COUGHH!
KOUGHHH!
GAHAACKKKK!



'TIS HAPPENING AGAIN!

KKKKKK!



ANOTHER DEADLY ILLUSION!

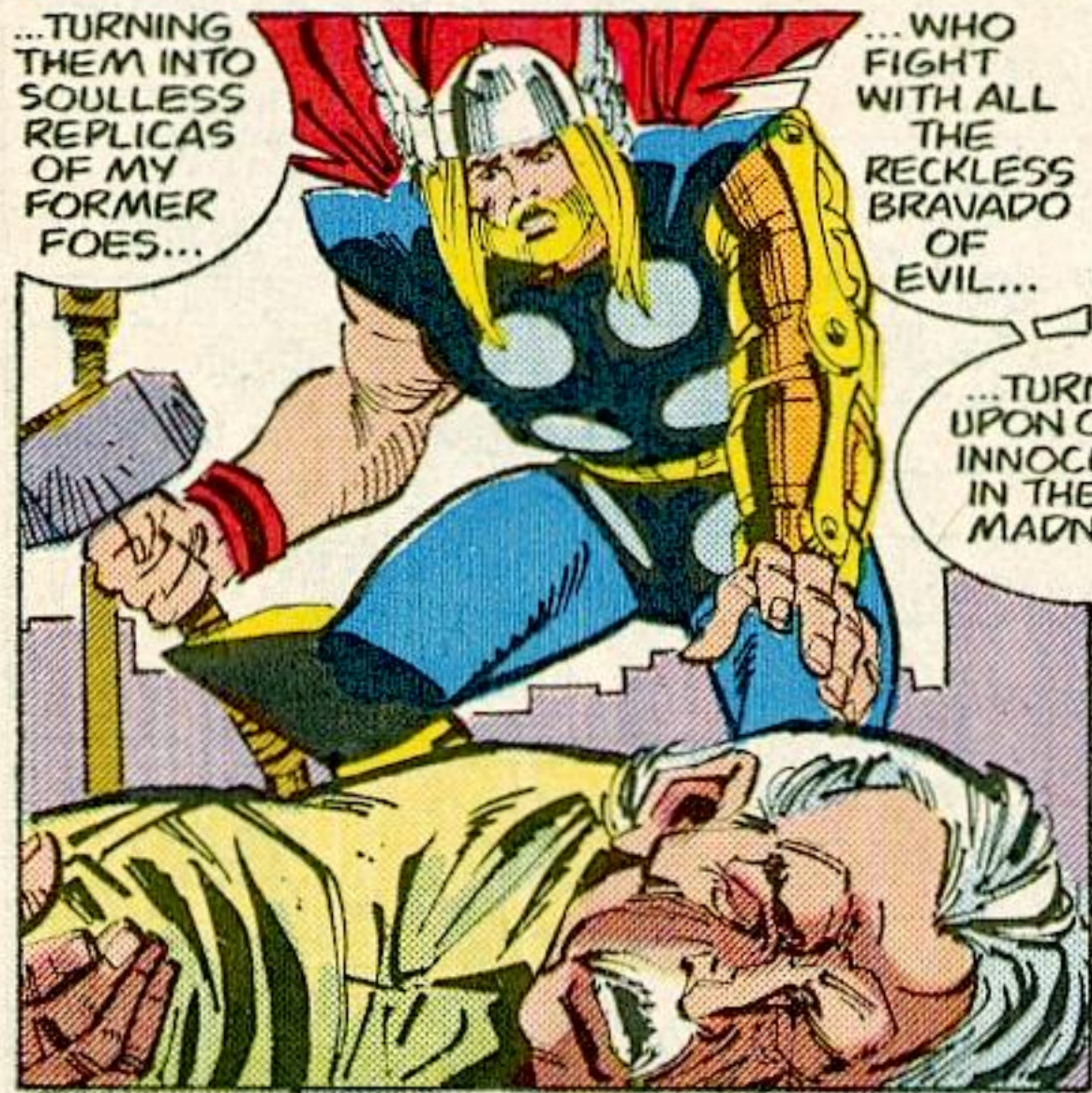


HIS HAIR TURNS WHITE BEFORE MY VERY EYES EVEN AS HIS BREATH CEASES...



ANOTHER MORTAL ROBBED OF LIFE!

SOMEHOW, THE VITAL FORCE OF THESE MEN IS BEING RESTRUCTURED...



...TURNING THEM INTO SOULLESS REPLICAS OF MY FORMER FOES...

...WHO FIGHT WITH ALL THE RECKLESS BRAVADO OF EVIL...

...TURNING UPON OTHER INNOCENTS IN THEIR MADNESS...



...UNTIL THEY BURN THEMSELVES OUT AND DIE!

HOW CAN I SAVE THEM FROM THEMSELVES?

WHO WOULD DO SUCH A TERRIBLE DEED? AND WHY?

THE ANSWER IS AS FAR AWAY AS JOTUNHEIM, HOME OF THE TERRIBLE FROST GIANTS, THE TRADITIONAL ENEMIES OF THE NORSE GODS.

THIS THEN IS MY PROPOSITION. IN A VERY SHORT TIME, THOR WILL NO LONGER BE IN A POSITION TO ASSIST THE ASGARDIANS IN ANY WAY.

HERE, A COLLOQUY IS UNDERWAY, BUT THOUGH THE GIANTS HAVE GATHERED TO HEAR THE WORDS OF ONE ORDINARY-SIZED INDIVIDUAL...

... 'TIS HE WHO IS THE GIANT AMONG THEM AND THEY WHO ARE THE LILLIPUTIANS!

AND WHEN THAT TIME COMES, THE HAMMER OF THOR SHALL FALL SILENT AND THE GODS' STRONGEST DEFENDER SHALL BE HELPLESS.

IN THE MEANTIME, I HAVE SOMETHING IN MIND THAT WILL KEEP THE ASGARDIANS OCCUPIED FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

THE WATCH IN ASGARD WILL WEAKEN, EVENTUALLY FAIL ALTOGETHER, AND WHEN THAT HAPPENS, SHE WILL FALL BEFORE THE MIGHT OF HER UNITED ENEMIES.

UNDER UTGARD-LOKI, YOU THOUGHT TO DESTROY THE GOLDEN REALM. UNDER LOKI, YOU WILL SUCCEED!

MAYBE YOU'RE GIANT BORN, LOKI, BUT YOU'RE ASGARDIAN BRED. YOU EXPECT US TO TRUST YOU?

NOT ESPECIALLY. BUT I WILL PROVIDE TWO EARNESTS OF MY GOOD FAITH THAT SHOULD CONVINCE YOU.



YOU HUDDLE IN THE SNOW, SHRUNKEN SHADOWS OF YOUR FORMER PRIDE AND GLORY BECAUSE OF THE POWER OF BALDER THE BRAVE.

THE FOLK OF UTGARD-LOKI WERE REDUCED TO THE SIZE OF RODENTS*.

THIS IS MY PROMISE. SWEAR FEALTY TO ME AND I WILL RESTORE YOU TO YOUR RIGHTFUL SIZE.

I WILL SWATHE JOTUNHEIM IN PERPETUAL SNOW AND ICE THAT WILL BLIND THE EVEN SHARP EYES OF HEIMDALL.

NOT A LIVING SOUL SHALL KNOW OF YOUR RECOVERY TILL IT IS TOO LATE!



* details were related in the Balder the Brave limited series!

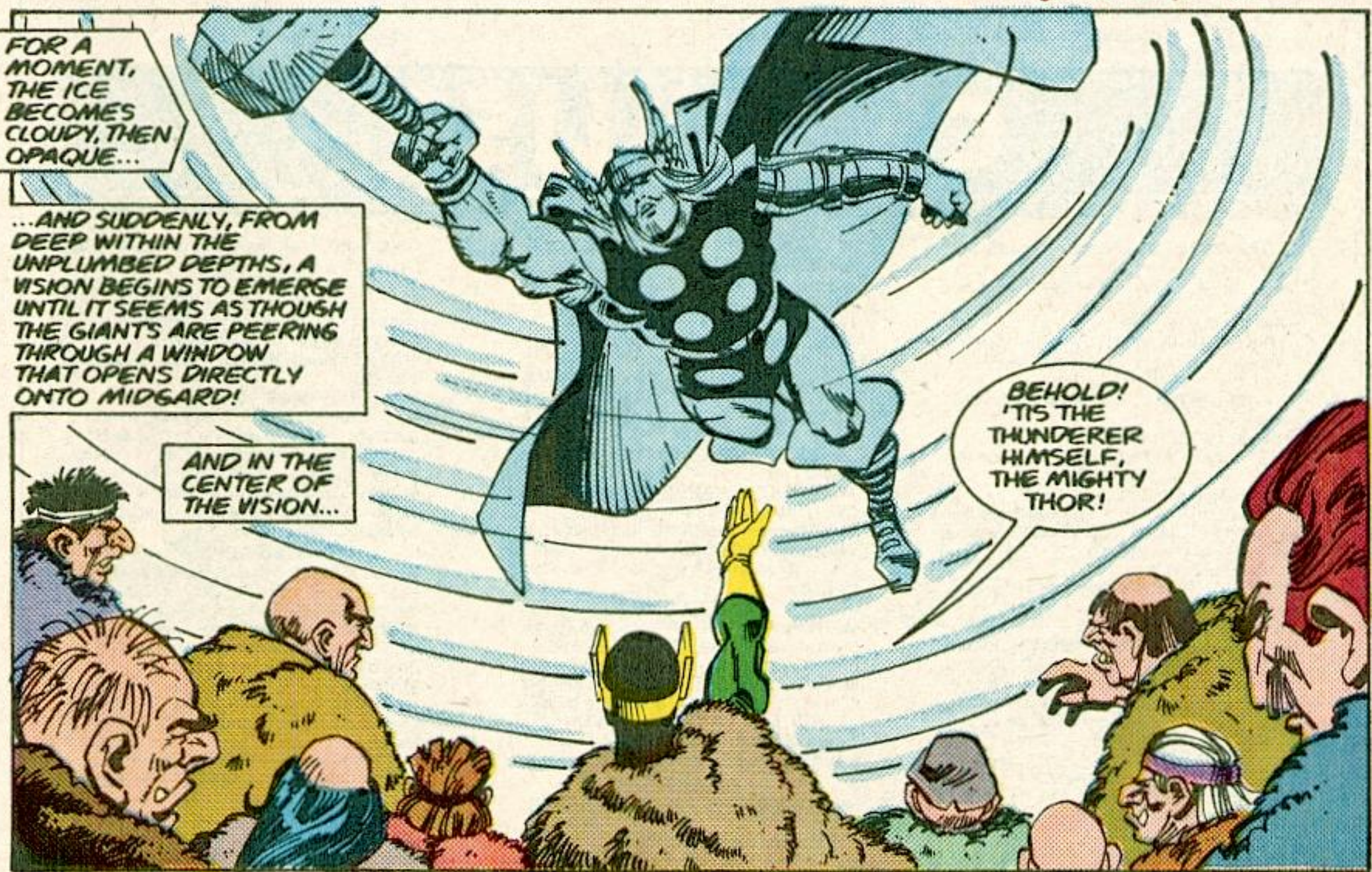
HMMMMM AND WON'T THE ASGARDIANS HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT THAT?



I SEE YOUR BRAINS HAVE BEEN REDUCED CORRESPONDINGLY WITH YOUR SIZE.

THIS IS NO ORDINARY ROCK CRYSTAL BUT AN ENSORCELED FRAGMENT FROM A CRYSTAL OF VISION!

BEHOLD IT'S POWER WHEN IT IS THROWN INTO THE ICY LAKE BEHIND US.

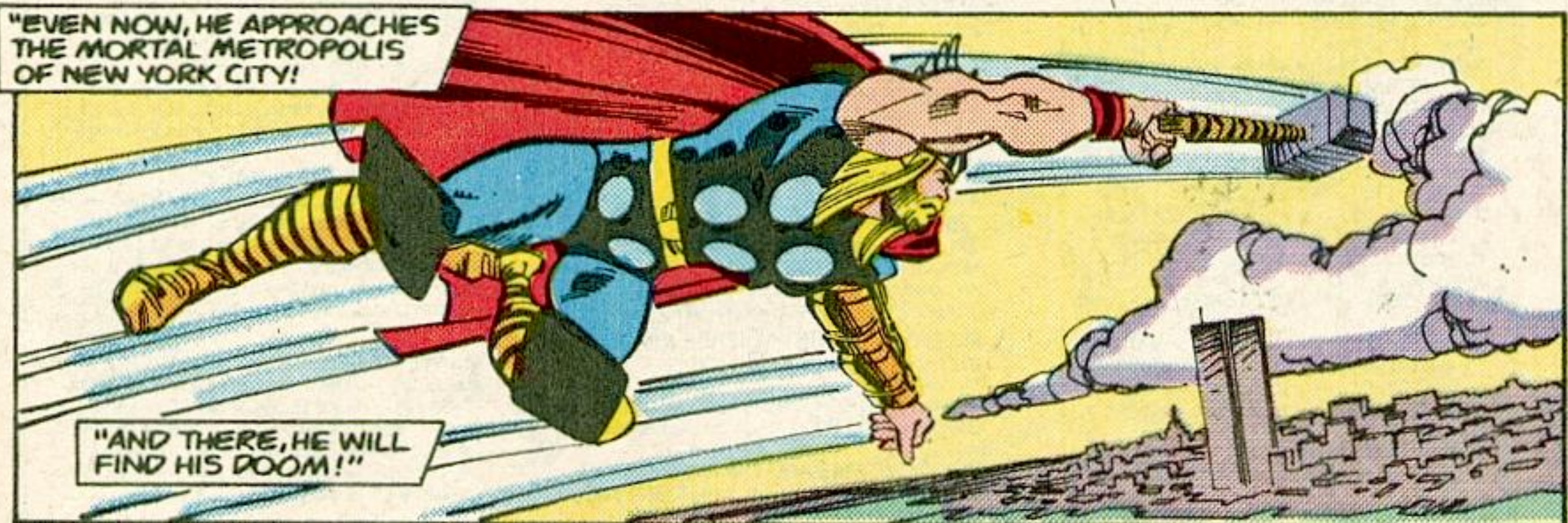


FOR A MOMENT, THE ICE BECOMES CLOUDY, THEN OPAQUE...

...AND SUDDENLY, FROM DEEP WITHIN THE UNPLUMBED DEPTHS, A VISION BEGINS TO EMERGE UNTIL IT SEEMS AS THOUGH THE GIANTS ARE PEERING THROUGH A WINDOW THAT OPENS DIRECTLY ONTO MIDGARD!

AND IN THE CENTER OF THE VISION...

BEHOLD! 'TIS THE THUNDERER HIMSELF, THE MIGHTY THOR!



"EVEN NOW, HE APPROACHES THE MORTAL METROPOLIS OF NEW YORK CITY!"

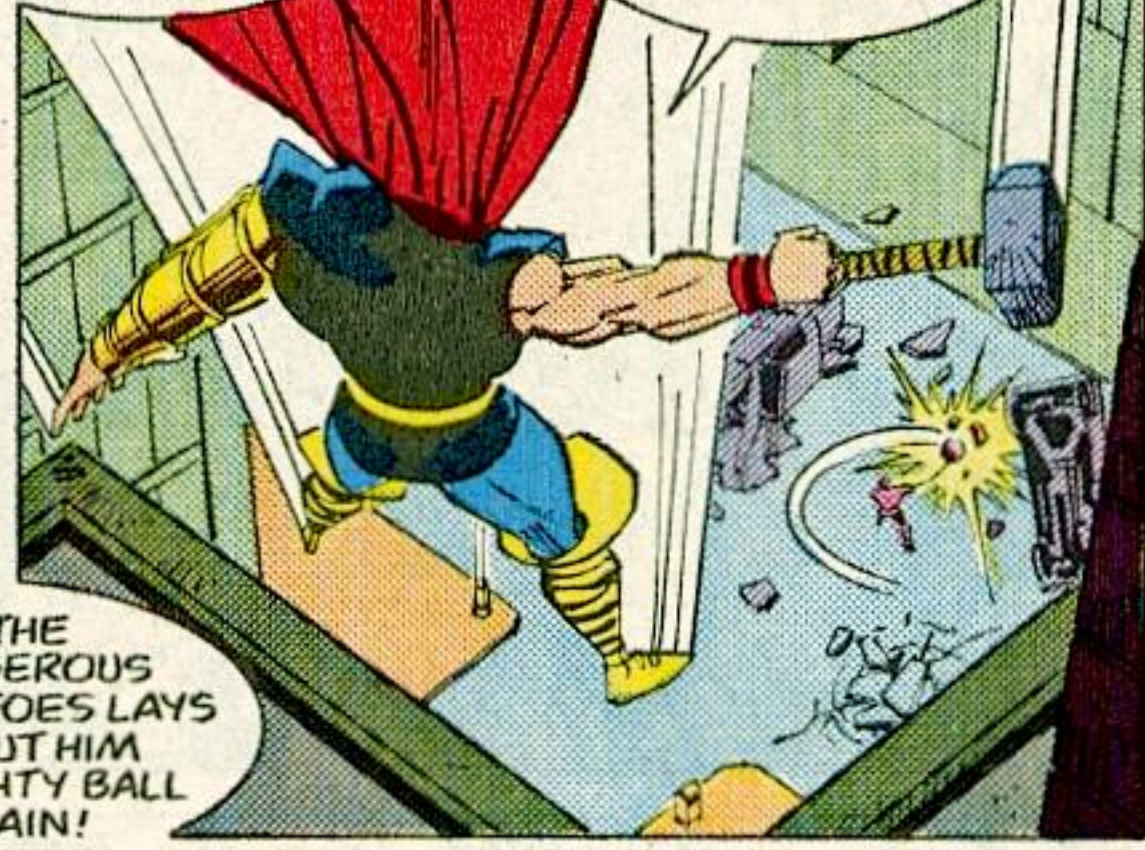
"AND THERE, HE WILL FIND HIS DOOM!"

BY THE BEARD OF MY FATHER, ANOTHER FLASH OF LIGHT, THIS TIME FROM THE LOWER TIP OF MANHATTAN!

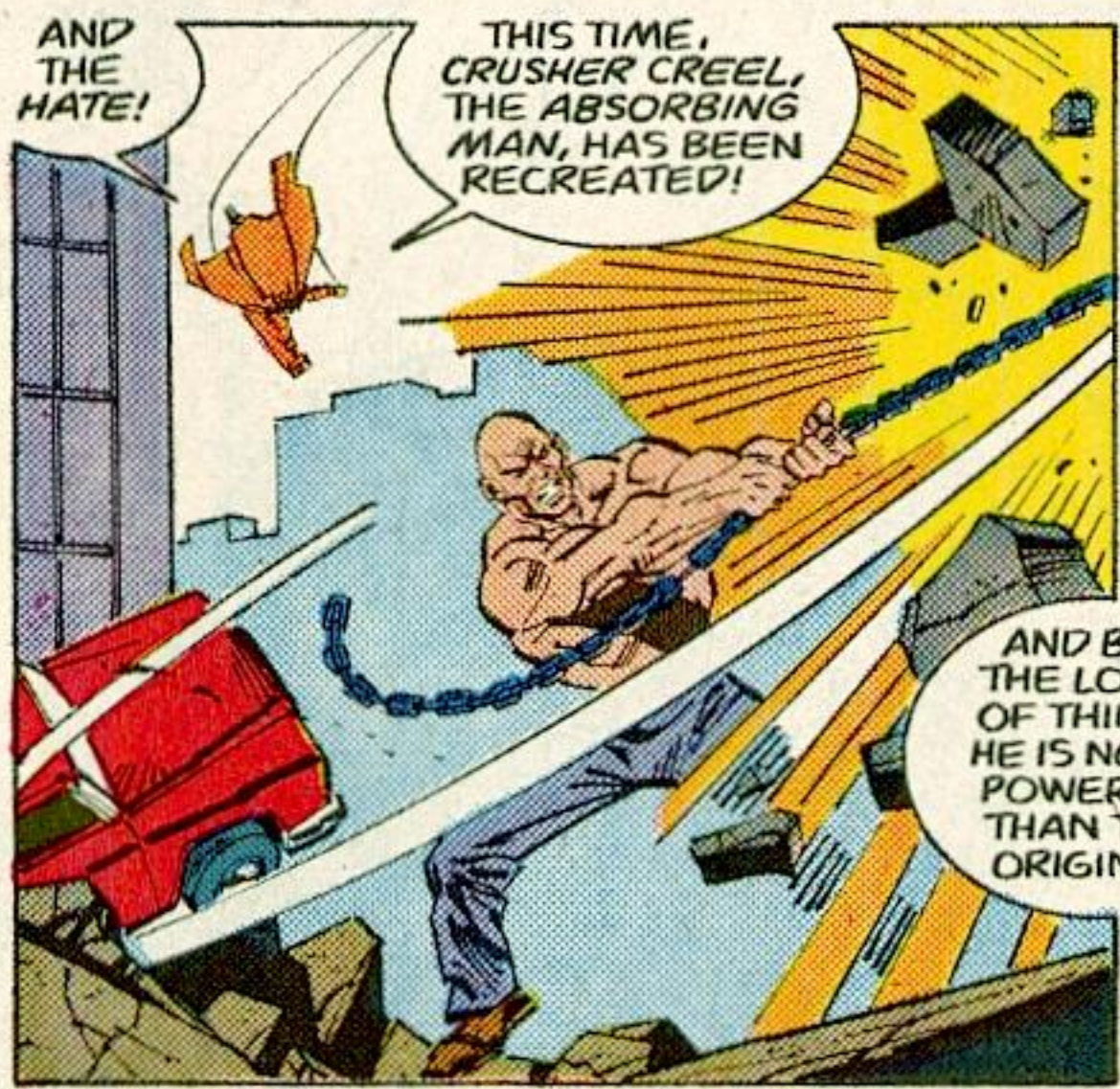
BUT THIS TIME, THE UNBELIEVABLE IS ALREADY A FAMILIAR SIGHT!

YET ANOTHER MORTAL IS CAUGHT WITHIN THE MONSTROUS EVIL AND NOW I AM CERTAIN OF THE SPELL'S AUTHOR!

FOR THIS BEAST WAS THE CREATION OF MY STEPBROTHER, LOKI, AND ONLY HE WOULD HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE AND POWER TO DO THESE DEEDS!



ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS OF ALL MY FOES LAYS WASTE ABOUT HIM WITH A MIGHTY BALL AND CHAIN!

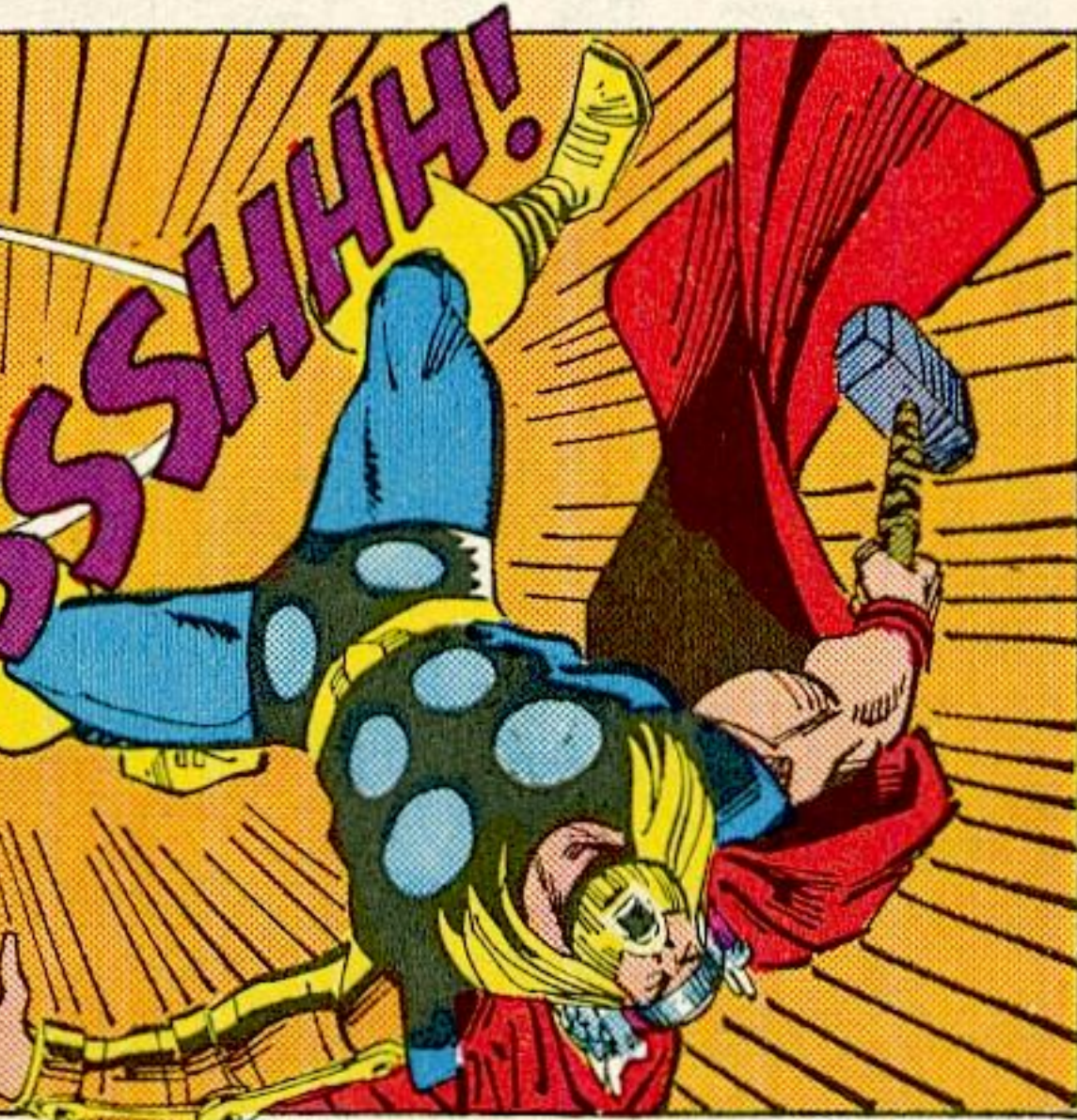


AND THE HATE!

THIS TIME, CRUSHER CREEL, THE ABSORBING MAN, HAS BEEN RECREATED!

YOU! I SHOULDA KNOWN YOU WERE THE ONE!

AND BY THE LOOK OF THINGS, HE IS NO LESS POWERFUL THAN THE ORIGINAL!



WELL, HERE'S MUD IN YER EYE, THUNDER GOD!

YER GONNA BE SORRY YOU EVER SAW ME AGAIN!

SCKRASSSHHHH!

BEHOLD, MY FRIENDS. THE GREATEST JEST OF ALL.

MY BROTHER, THE NOBLE THOR, IS FACE TO FACE WITH THE GREATEST OF HIS MORTAL FOES.

HE GUESSES NOW THAT I HAVE CREATED REPLICAS FROM ORDINARY MORTALS TO BEDEVIL HIM.

SO HE IS FACED WITH HIS GREATEST DILEMMA AS HE AWAITS THE ATTACK OF CRUSHER CREEL!

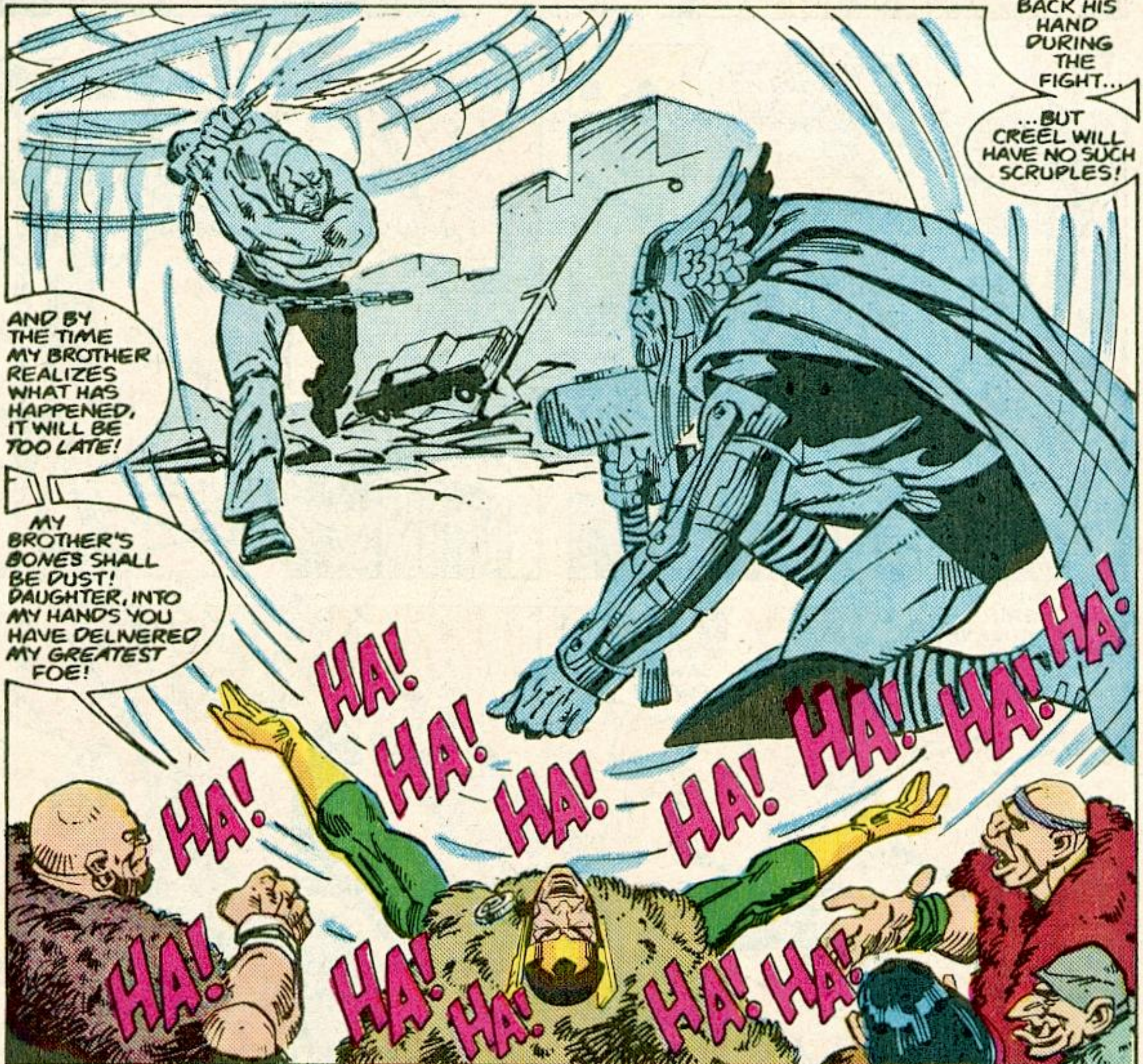
...BUT THE GENUINE ARTICLE ITSELF!

HOW CAN HE AVOID THE PUNISHING BLOWS OF CREEL'S SAVAGE ATTACK AND YET SAVE THE MORTAL WITHIN THE DISGUISE?

HE SCARCELY DREAMS THAT THE RAGING DREADNOUGHT BEFORE HIM IS NOT MERELY A SHADOW OF THE ABSORBING MAN...

THUS, HE WILL HOLD BACK HIS HAND DURING THE FIGHT...

...BUT CREEL WILL HAVE NO SUCH SCRUPLES!



AND BY THE TIME MY BROTHER REALIZES WHAT HAS HAPPENED, IT WILL BE TOO LATE!

MY BROTHER'S BONES SHALL BE DUST! DAUGHTER, INTO MY HANDS YOU HAVE DELIVERED MY GREATEST FOE!

HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!

NEXT ISSUE: **THOR VS CRUSHER CREEL, THE ABSORBING MAN!**

IT'S THOR'S GREATEST FIGHT, THOR'S GREATEST TRIUMPH, AND IN THE END, THOR'S GREATEST DISASTER! ASHES TO ASHES, DUST TO DUST!! BE HERE!