

THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

ONE HOUR AGO:

THERE WAS A SUDDEN PARTING OF WATERS---FREEZING, BEFOULED WATERS--- AND **TRITON** ONCE MORE WALKED THE LAND---



**SOMETHING
IN HUMAN
THIS WAY COMES...**

STAN LEE
presents

ROY THOMAS AND NEAL ADAMS
WRITER AND ARTIST

TOM PALMER, INKER
SAM ROSEN, LETTERER

AND, SINCE THEN---



WHAT'S MORE, EVENTS ARE ABOUT TO GET EVEN HAIRIER---

FOR, WHETHER BY ACCIDENT OR BY CUNNING DESIGN---

-- THE SEA-SPAWNED INHUMAN IS ABOUT TO EMERGE---

-- IN THE SPANKING-NEW GARDEN BELONGING TO---

-- OR THOSE GIANT ROBOTS, HERE WITHIN?

THE AVENGERS!

BUT-- WHY THE TROOPS OUTSIDE THE WALL--

-- AND NOW TURNED AGAINST THE EMBATTLED AVENGERS, BY A MISGLIDED BUT INFLUENTIAL PATRIOT NAMED H. WARREN CRADDOCK--!

ALAS, THE WOUNDED TRITON CANNOT KNOW THAT HUMAN BEINGS INHABIT THOSE MASSIVE METAL SHELLS---

-- MANDROIDS, SPECIALLY TRAINED TO BATTLE SUPER-POWERED FOES IN THE NAME OF SHIELD---

PTHAP!

KRANG!

--- AND, SPEAKING OF THE RIGHT-HONORABLE HEAD OF THE NEWLY-CREATED ALIEN ACTIVITIES COMMISSION---



EXCELLENT!
IRON MAN IS DOWN...
AND EVEN THE SO-CALLED VISION SEEMS STUNNED!



COLONEL, YOUR MEN ARE TO BE **COMMENDED** FOR A JOB WELL DONE. I SHALL **PERSONALLY**...

DON'T PIN NO MEDALS ON 'EM JUST NOW.

THE AVENGERS ARE PROS -- THEY AIN'T LICKED YET!

THAT'S **DEFEATIST** TALK, FURY.

I'M SURE THE **PRESIDENT** WOULD BE QUITE **PERTURBED** TO HEAR --

WHAT IN..?
TWO OF MY THREE **MONITORS**--

--HAVE GONE **BLANK!**



CRADDOCK, DID ANYBODY EVER TELL YOU YER A **FIRST-CLASS PAIN-IN-THE-ASSIGNMENT?**

I'M DOIN' MY **JOB**, 'CAUSE THE AVENGERS ARE ACCUSED OF **MAYBE HELPIN' THE KREE**-- BUT THAT **DON'T MEAN--**

HEY NOW, WOULDJA LOOK AT THAT!

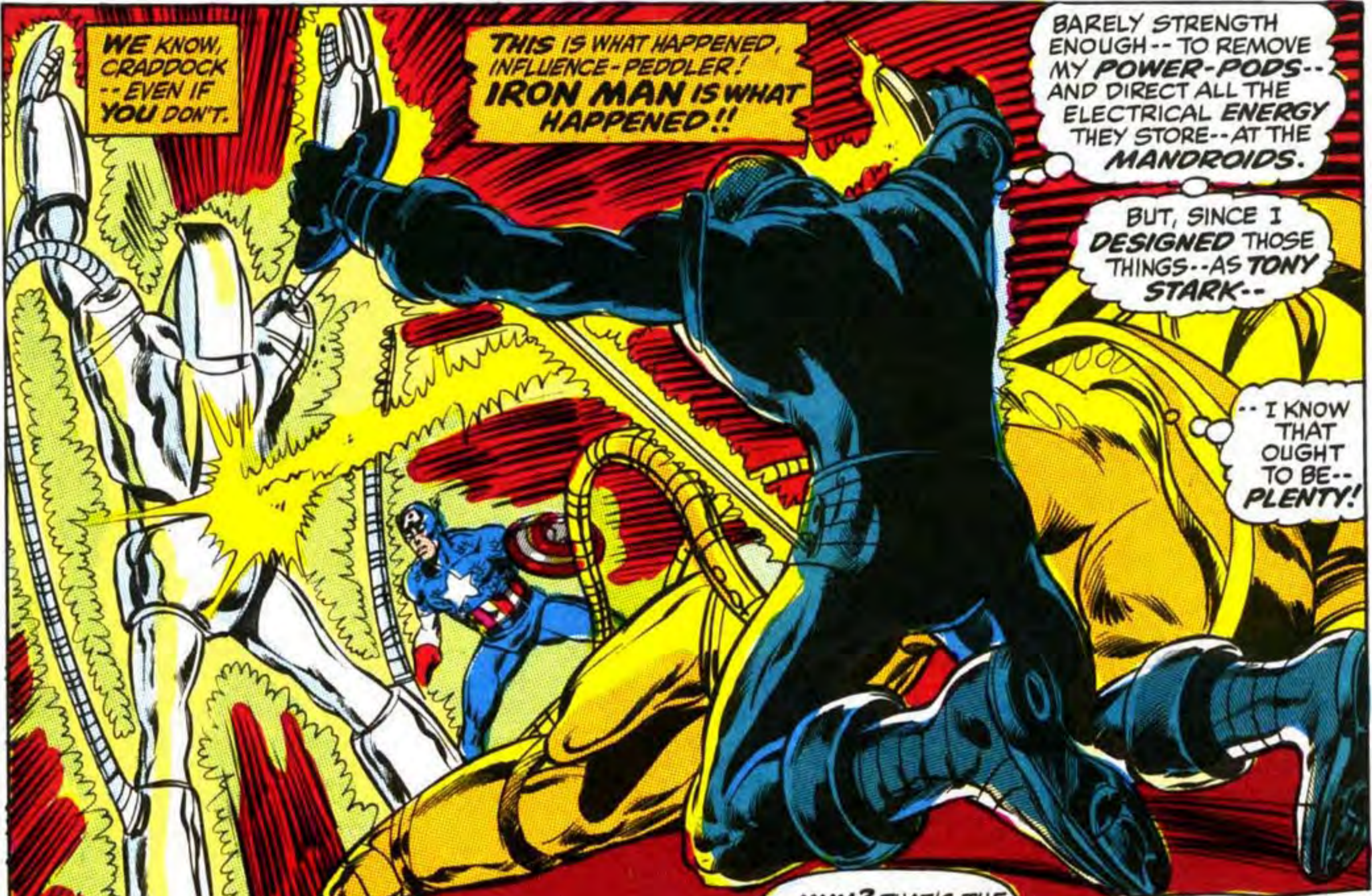


CONGRATS, CLYDE. NOW IF YA'LL JUST READ ME THE **NEXT LINE** ON THE **EYE-CHART**--

BUT-- WHAT HAPPENED, FURY? WHAT?



WHAT???



WE KNOW, CRADDOCK -- EVEN IF YOU DON'T.

THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED, INFLUENCE-PEDDLER! IRON MAN IS WHAT HAPPENED!!

BARELY STRENGTH ENOUGH -- TO REMOVE MY POWER-PODS -- AND DIRECT ALL THE ELECTRICAL ENERGY THEY STORE -- AT THE MANDROIDS.

BUT, SINCE I DESIGNED THOSE THINGS -- AS TONY STARK --

-- I KNOW THAT OUGHT TO BE -- PLENTY!

A VALIANT STRIKE, AVENGER!

YET, HOW DIDST THOU KNOW THE WAY TO STOP THE ROBOTS -- WITHOUT HARMING THE MEN INSIDE?

I KNEW, THOR! ISN'T THAT ENOUGH?

BESIDES -- LOOK!

HUH? THAT'S THE SECOND-HAND SUBMARINER CALLED TRITON!

I SAW A NEWS-PIC OF HIM AT THE U.N. ONCE -- BUT WHAT'S HE DOIN' HERE?

WHAT'S IT MATTER? HE'S BEEN WOUNDED.

STILL, HE STRIVES TO STAND ALONE -- TO SPEAK --!



FORGET MY VISIBLE WOUNDS, AVENGERS -- THEY ARE NOTHING!

IT IS THE SCARS WITHIN WHICH PAIN ME MOST -- THE LOSS OF KING -- OF KINSMEN -- OF COUNTRY.

IN TRUTH, I JOURNEYED HERE SEEKING THE FANTASTIC FOUR -- BUT DOCK-WORKERS ATTACKED ME, OUT OF FEAR -- THE SOLDIERS, AS WELL.

AND SO -- BY ACCIDENT OR BY MOCKING PLAN OF FATE -- IT IS YOU TO WHOM WE MUST PLEAD MY CAUSE!

THOU DOST SPEAK WELL, INHUMAN -- MASKING THE ANGUISH THOU NEEDS MUST FEEL.

TELL ON! THE AVENGERS ARE TURNED TO HEAR!



GOOD THING, TOO--- 'CAUSE I JUST HEARD ON MY TRANSISTOR THAT THE F.F.'S OUTTA TOWN.

THEN, YOU *MUST* HELP ME--- BEFORE SOME DEADLY WAR ERUPTS BETWEEN YOUR RACE AND MINE!

WE SAID WE WUZ ALL EARS, GREENIE--- SO START RAPPIN'!

AND PLEASE, IF YOU WILL-- SPARE US ALL BUT THE ESSENTIAL DETAILS.

HUH? THE ANDROID'S VOICE-- SO ICY-- LIKE HE COULDN'T CARE LESS ABOUT-- OH WELL---

THERE IS SO MUCH TO TELL ---AND YET SO LITTLE---



"WE ARE AN ALL-BUT-UNKNOWN RACE, WE INHUMANS WHO DWELL AMID THE FAR-OFF HIMALAYAS --- BUT EACH OF US IS BORN WITH A DIFFERENT SUPER-POWER--- AND OUR RIGHTFUL KING IS BLACK BOLT.

"RECENTLY, OUR MONARCH'S COUSIN MAXIMUS THE MAD GAINED THE MOST UNIQUE MENTAL POWER OF ALL---

"-- THEN SENT A MNEMONIC BEAM HALFWAY 'ROUND THE WORLD, TO WHERE BLACK BOLT SEARCHED INCOGNITO FOR THE BEST WAY TO APPRISE THE HUMAN RACE OF OUR EXISTENCE.

"NOW, SO FAR AS WE KNOW, OUR KING WALKS THE STREETS OF SAN FRANCISCO ALONE---

"-- WITH WHICH HE FIRST MADE HIMSELF RULER OF OUR GREAT REFUGE--

"-- HIS MEMORY FADED-- PERHAPS FOREVER!--"



THREE COMRADES AND I FLED OUR HIDDEN LAND TOGETHER--- BUT WE'VE NOT YET FOUND HIM---

HE SPEAKS TRUTH, FOR I MET HIS LOST COUSINS NOT LONG SINCE.*

THEN, I MOVE WE MAKE TRACKS FOR CALIFORNIA, AND--

AND I VOTE --NO!

VISION-- WHAT THE DEVIL--?

* THE FOREGOING EVENTS TOOK PLACE IN AMAZING ADVENTURES #5-8, --STAN.



HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN--

--THE INTER-STELLAR WAR BETWEEN KREE AND SKRULL?

WHAT OF CAPTAIN MARVEL, A MAN OF THE KREE IN EXILE HERE ON EARTH-- NOW CAPTURED BY HIS PEOPLE'S BITTER RIVALS?

FOR HIS SAKE, WE AVENGERS STAND ACCUSED OF BEING SYMPATHIZERS TO THE ALIENS WHO WALK THIS WORLD.

WHAT LIKEWISE OF WANDA AND PIETRO -- TWO AVENGERS WHO WERE ALSO CAPTURED?

EVEN NOW, A SKRULL VESSEL HAS DOUBTLESS WHISKED THE THREE OF THEM TO THE ANDROMEDA GALAXY--

--- WHILE WE STAND HERE-- DOING NOTHING!

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, ANDROID!

IF YOU'RE IMPLYING THE AVENGERS DON'T TAKE CARE OF THEIR OWN--

WHAT ELSE CAN I INFER? I MYSELF SAW THE INHUMANS CREATE A BOMB-PROOF DOME ABOVE THEIR MOUNTAIN REFUGE.

HEY NOW-- KEEP IT COOL, PEOPLE! MAYBE I'M A WEIRD ONE TO BE PLAYIN' PEACE-MAKER---

--- BUT WE WANNA HELP BOTH GROUPS-- AND BOTH OF YOU KNOW IT!

I-- APOLOGIZE, IRON MAN. IN SOME WAYS--- I AM ALL TOO HUMAN.

ONLY A FOOL WOULD ATTACK IT-- WHEN THOR'S HAMMER COULD CARRY US JUST AS EASILY TO THE STARS.

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S GONNA BE SEEING STARS, CHUM, WHEN---

FORGET IT. WE'RE ALL ON EDGE.

STILL, GOLIATH'S RIGHT---



-- SO, WHAT SAY WE SPLIT UP RIGHT NOW, AND BE ON OUR WAY?

VISION, YOUR COMPUTER-MIND IS BEST SUITED TO NAME THE TEAMS.

A LOGICAL CHOICE. YOU AND GOLIATH --- AND RICK-- CAN ACCOMPANY TRITON TO THE COAST--

--- WHILE THOR TRANSPORTS IRON MAN AND MYSELF INTO OUTER SPACE.

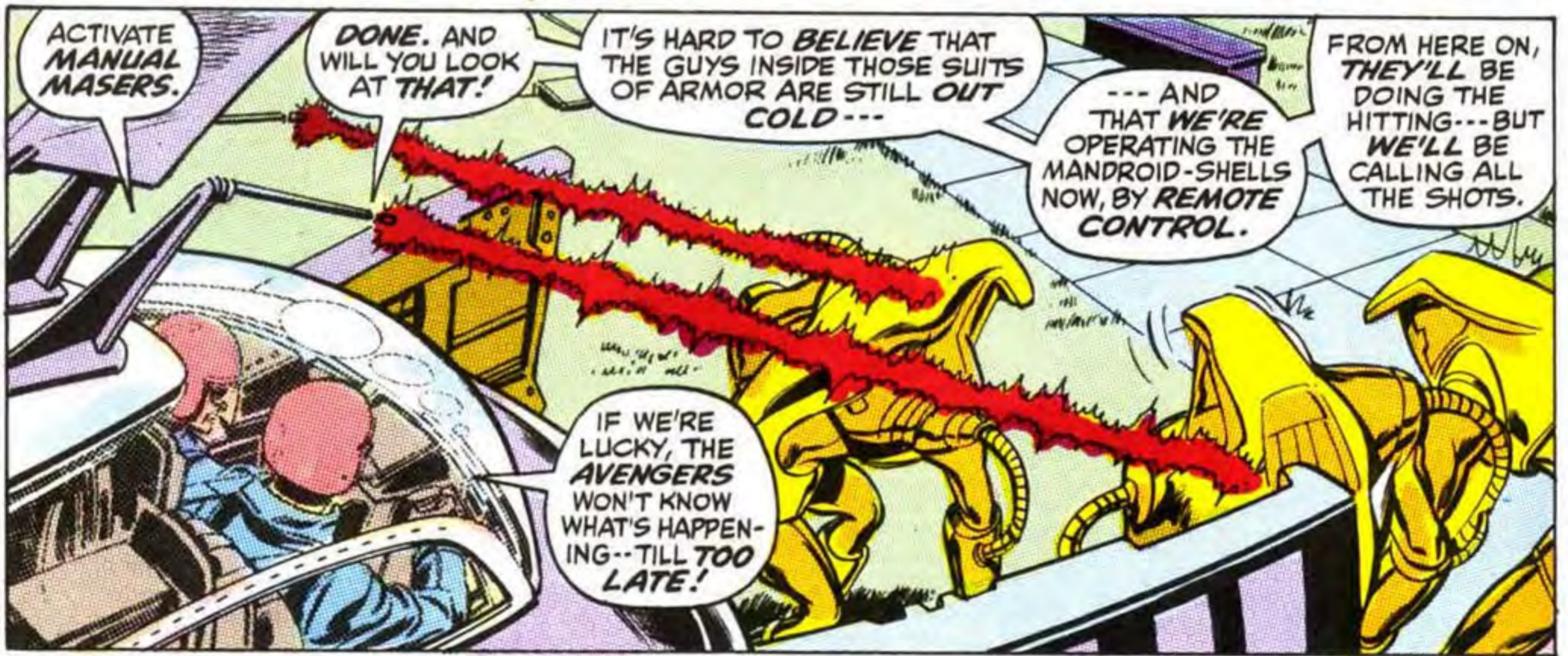


BUT NOW, FIRST THINGS FIRST---

FOR, IN THE 'COPTER WHICH BROUGHT THE MANDROIDS ONTO AVENGERS TERRITORY---

FIVE MINUTES--- AND OUR BOYS ARE STILL UNCONSCIOUS.

THEN IT'S TIME FOR CONTINGENCY PLAN R-M!



ACTIVATE MANUAL MASERS.

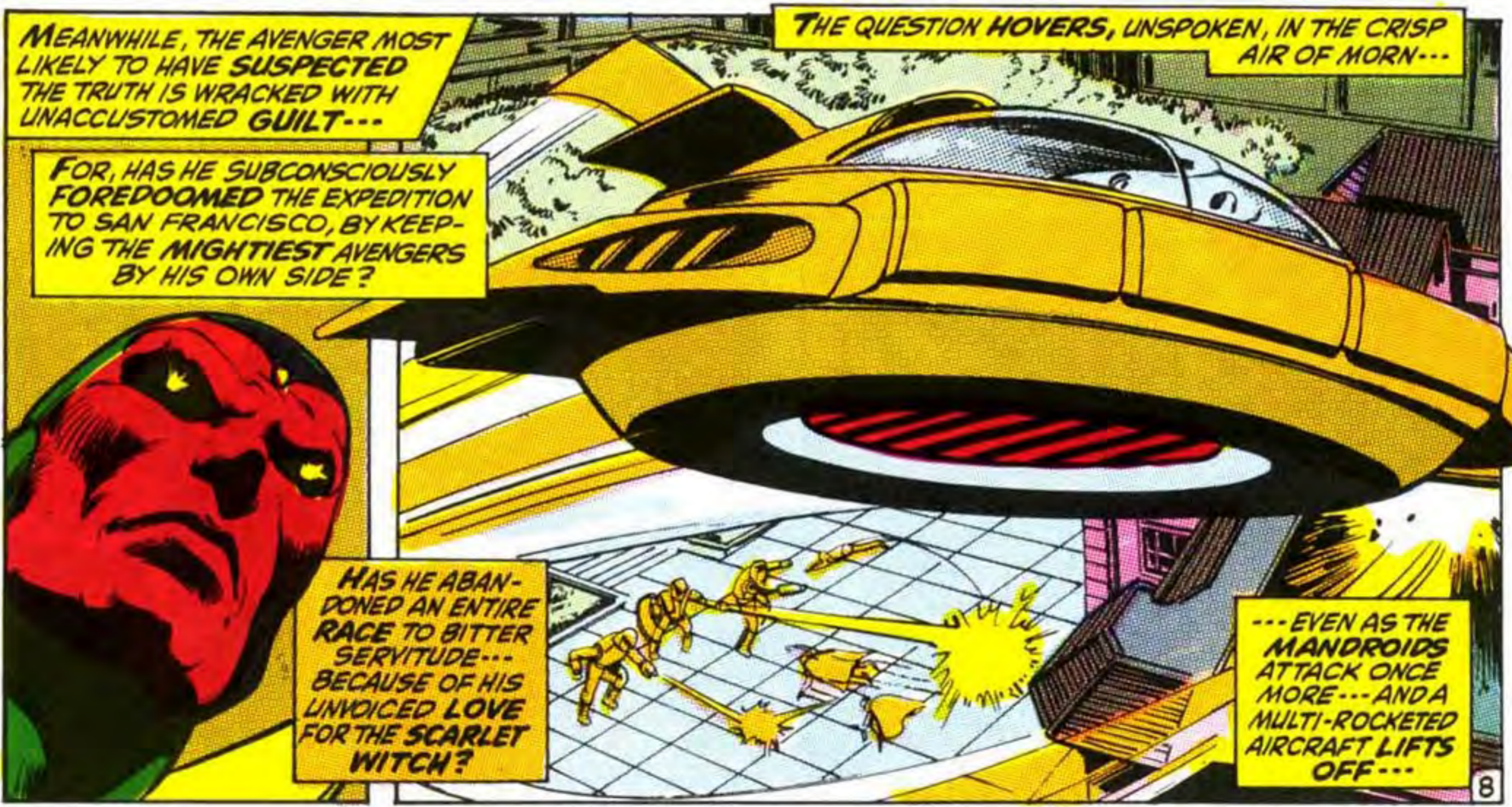
DONE. AND WILL YOU LOOK AT THAT!

IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE THAT THE GUYS INSIDE THOSE SUITS OF ARMOR ARE STILL OUT COLD ---

--- AND THAT WE'RE OPERATING THE MANDROID-SHELLS NOW, BY REMOTE CONTROL.

FROM HERE ON, THEY'LL BE DOING THE HITTING--- BUT WE'LL BE CALLING ALL THE SHOTS.

IF WE'RE LUCKY, THE AVENGERS WON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING-- TILL TOO LATE!



MEANWHILE, THE AVENGER MOST LIKELY TO HAVE SUSPECTED THE TRUTH IS WRACKED WITH UNACCUSTOMED GUILT---

THE QUESTION HOVERS, UNSPOKEN, IN THE CRISP AIR OF MORN---

FOR, HAS HE SUBCONSCIOUSLY FOREDOOMED THE EXPEDITION TO SAN FRANCISCO, BY KEEPING THE MIGHTIEST AVENGERS BY HIS OWN SIDE?

HAS HE ABANDONED AN ENTIRE RACE TO BITTER SERVITUDE--- BECAUSE OF HIS UNVOICED LOVE FOR THE SCARLET WITCH?

--- EVEN AS THE MANDROIDS ATTACK ONCE MORE--- AND A MULTI-ROCKETED AIRCRAFT LIFTS OFF---

SCENE SHIFT: SAN FRANCISCO, A SHORT TIME LATER ---



C'MON OUT, MASKED MAN! WE KNOW YOU AN' THE KID ARE IN THERE.

WE JUST WANTCHA TO HELP US GO ON A LOOT-IN' SPREE--- SAME AS YOU DID THEM BLACKS, A WHILE BACK.

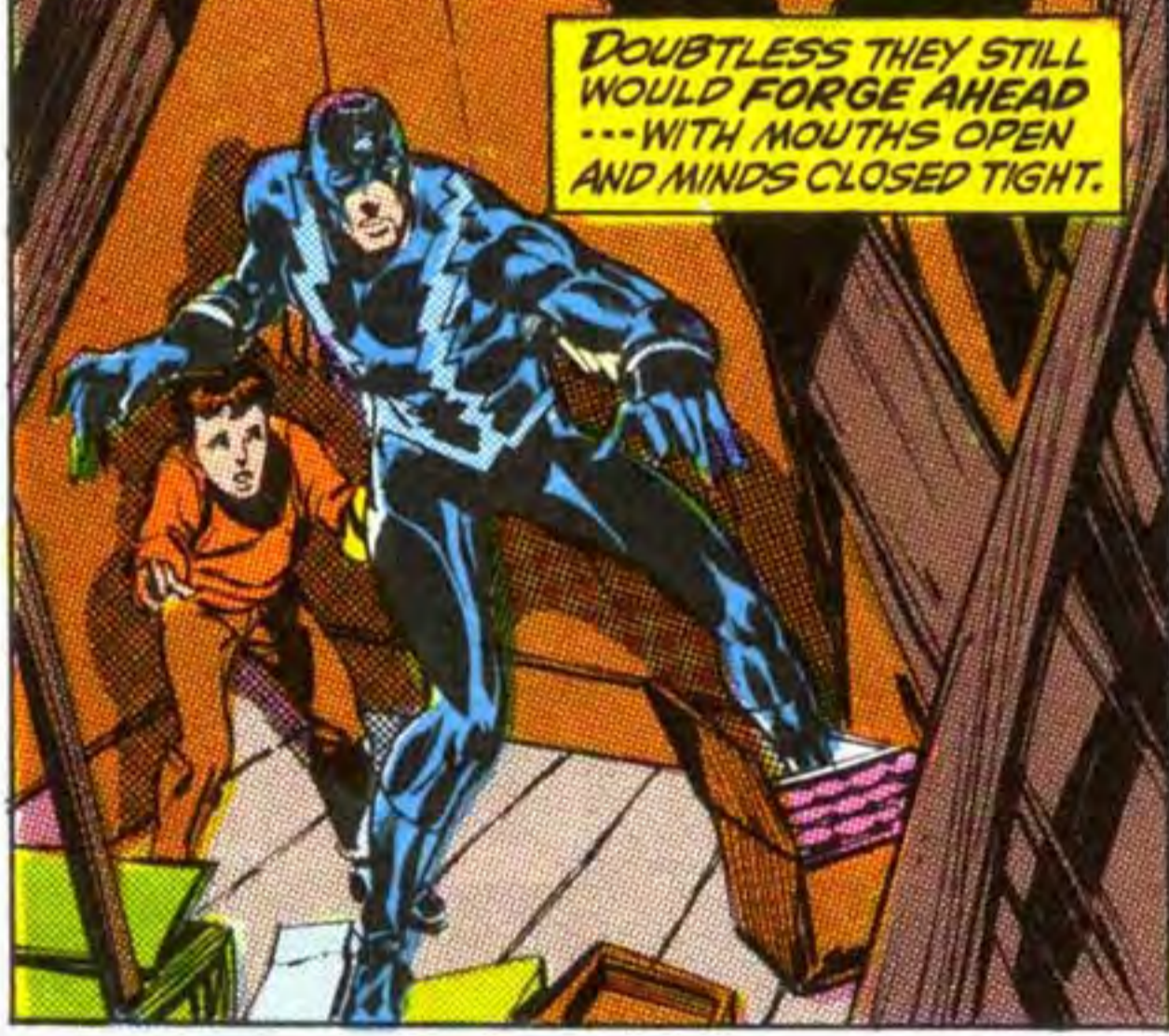
NO ANSWER? THEN WE'RE COMIN' IN.



YOU HEAR US IN THERE, DON'TCHA, CREEP?

WHAT WOULD SAY THESE YAPPING HUMAN JACKALS, IF THEY KNEW THEIR COSTUMED PREY CANNOT SO MUCH AS WHISPER-- LEST HE DEVASTATE BOTH HIS PURSUERS --- AND THE BOY JOEY---?

DOUBTLESS THEY STILL WOULD FORGE AHEAD --- WITH MOUTHS OPEN AND MINDS CLOSED TIGHT.



YET, IF A VOICE CANNOT BE RAISED IN STRIDENT PROTEST---



-- PERHAPS A VENGEFUL HAND CAN STILL BE RAISED--



--- IN THE CAUSE OF VIRTUOUS WRATH!



NOT BAD FOR A QUIET TYPE, CLYDE.

JUST HOPE YOU SHOW THE SAME KINDA HUSTLE WHEN WE TAKE ON THE COPS.



WE ARE GONNA TAKE ON THE COPS TOGETHER, AIN'T WE, MASKED MAN?

'CAUSE IF WE AIN'T, THIS KID'S GOT ABOUT ONE SECOND TO LIVE!



D-DON'T GIVE IN, BLACK BOLT---

I DON'T COUNT. IT'S YOU---

BUT, TO THIS PAIR OF EYES, BLAZING LIKE POOLS OF MOLTEN BLUE STEEL---



---EVERYONE MATTERS---EVEN A KID NAMED JOEY!--



HUH? CAPTAIN AMERICA!?

MAYBE YOU'D HAVE PREFERRED CAPTAIN MIDNIGHT?



ME, I DON'T CARE IF YOU UNION-SUIT SLOBS WANNA HOLD A CONVENTION.

IT'S FLUNG, FELLA.

I STILL GOT ALL THE HIGH CARDS--- SO FLING THAT SHIELD AWAY, BEFORE I---

NOW, DON'T HARM THE BOY.



WHO, ME? HURTA KID?

NOT UNLESS I GOT TO.



BUT YOU NOW--- THE GREAT CAP'N AMERICA-- YER SOMETHIN' ELSE AGAIN.

FACT IS, I THINK I'M JUST GONNA BLOW YER BRAINS OWWW



KRANG!

THE SHIELD--

IT... CAME BACK--!



THAT AIN'T THE ONLY THING, SON.

BLACK BOLT! THANK AGON YOU ARE SAFE.

YOU-- RECOGNIZE ME! THEN, YOUR MEMORY IS RETURNED, AS WELL.

GOOD! THEN RICK, GOLIATH, AND I CAN SCOOT BACK TO FUN CITY, BEFORE--



HEY-- WHY THE SALAAM BIT, LIKE HE WAS SOME KINDA ROYALTY?

SO HE IS, LAD--- RIGHT-FUL RULER OF ALL THE INHUMANS.

LET KREE BATTLE SKRULL FOR THE REST OF EARTH. WE WANT ONLY--

EH?



HE SIGNALS-- THAT WE TWO MUST RETURN TO OUR HIDDEN LAND AT ONCE!

I KNOW NOT WHY THIS SUDDEN DISTRESS--

-- BUT HE BEGS YOUR HELP, TOO -- IN A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH!

WELL -- WE'VE COME THIS FAR---



-- SEE YA, PAL.

IT WAS NICE HAVIN' A A FATHER AGAIN --- EVEN FOR A LITTLE WHILE.

HMMM--- I DON'T NEED A COURSE IN SIGN LINGO TO KNOW BLACK BOLT WANTS TO TAKE THE BOY ALONG.

THEN, BRING 'IM ABOARD.

MAIN THING IS, WE GOTTA GET MOVIN'...

-- I JUST WISH WE WAS JETTIN' OFF TO HELP WANDA AND THE GUYS, INSTEAD.



VTOOM!

SIX MEN: THEIR THOUGHTS AS WIDE A SPECTRUM AS THEIR AGES---



JOEY: FULL OF WONDER; A BOY WITH NO PAST--- AND WHAT FUTURE?

GOLIATH: HIS SUPERHERO LIFE NEAR AN END.

TRITON: ONE QUEST DOWN, A DARKER ONE TO GO.

RICK: RECALLING HIS ONETIME LINK WITH THE CAPTURED MAR-VELL.

CAP: TORN BETWEEN AVENGER LOYALTY, AND THE URGENT NEED HE SENSES IN THE MASKED INHUMAN.

AND BLACK BOLT? WHAT OF THIS MONARCH-IN-EXILE, WHOSE SILENT COMMANDS ALL OBEY---?

IS HE RELIVING THE NIGHTMARE THAT BEGAN SO CASUALLY, WHEN HE AND THE USURPER MAXIMUS WERE BUT STRIPLINGS---

--THOSE HALCYON DAYS WHEN HIS BROTHER HAD BUT THE BARE BEGINNINGS OF HIS PRESENT MENTAL-POWER?

LE-ROJ!
I--I SLAPPED YOU.

BUT, I DID NOT MEAN---

WAS IT NOT ALMOST AMUSING, THIS ABILITY TO CONTROL A LESSER MIND, FOR THE MEREST MOMENT?

WHEN DID IT ALL BECOME SO GRIM? WAS IT NOT THAT FATEFUL EVENING BLACK BOLT STROLLED THRU A DESERTED PART OF THE GREAT REFUGE--

-- THAT VERY PLACE WHERE HE HAD SEEN A STRANGE LIGHT DESCEND, THRU THE IMPRISONING ENERGY-DOME ITSELF?

WHAT DID HE HEAR THEN? WAS IT NOT A WEIRDLY LIQUID VOICE---

--SPEAKING THE TONGUE OF THE INHUMANS, YET WITH ACCENTS WHICH HINTED OF FAR-FLUNG WORLDS, SINGING STAR-SYSTEMS---

THEN IT IS AGREED, MAXIMUS?

ONE DAY, WHEN YOU HAVE WRESTED THE THRONE AWAY FROM YOUR BROTHER---

--AND OUR MASTER RONAN HAS FINALLY GAINED CONTROL OF THE KREE GALAXY---

WHY, THEN SHALL WE BE ALLIES--- YOU KREE, AND WE INHUMANS.

FOR, YOUR RACE MUTATED MINE TO ITS PRESENT STAGE, EONS AGO---

-- SO IT IS QUITE FITTING THAT WE RULE THIS PLANET--AS YOUR VICE-REGENTS!

WHAT MADE THE YOUNG PRINCE RUSH FROM HIDING AT THAT INSTANT?

WAS IT THE SIGHT OF ALIENS, TREADING THE SOIL OF SACRED ATTILAN ITSELF?

OR WAS IT THE SIGHT OF MAXIMUS AMONG THEM--- MAXIMUS THE AMBITIOUS---

--- MAXIMUS THE TRAITOR ---?

AGENTS OF RONAN!
PREPARED TO EMBARK AT ONCE-- WITH YOUR SECRET WEAPON!

BLACK BOLT HAS DISCOVERED US-- AND THE TIME TO SLAY HIM IS NOT YET COME.

--- NOR COULD ANY SAVE BLACK BOLT, AND THE ROYAL FAMILY, HAVE MATCHED THEIR WILL-POWERS 'GAINST HIS---

HAH!

I CAN FEEL YOUR LOATHING, MY DEAR SIBLING --- BREAKING UPON ME LIKE SOME GREAT WAVE.

HOW YOU WOULD CURSE ME, IF YOUR VOICE WERE NOT A WEAPON BEYOND YOUR CONTROL!

RETURN TO YOUR GALAXY WITH MY PLEDGE---

-- AND I SHALL TEACH THIS SWINE THE PRICE OF INTRUSION!

THUS IT BEGAN -- THAT CLASH 'TWINX BROTHER AND BROTHER, WHICH WAS ONE DAY TO LAY A KING-DOM LOW---

DID NOT VILE MAXIMUS SPEAK THE TRUTH--- FOR, DID NOT THE PRINCE'S VERY TONGUE TREMBLE WITH WORDS HE DARED NOT UTTER--?

-- WORDS WHICH FOUND EXPRESSION-- IN OTHER WAYS --?

THOK!

YOU ARE-- TOO LATE, FOOL!

THE KREE-SHIP IS ALOFT!

WITH A MOMENT'S THOUGHT, WOULD BLACK BOLT NOT HAVE HELD HIS SILENCE-- LET EVEN THE HATEFUL ALIENS FLEE BACK TO THE STAR-STREWN FIRMAMENT?

WAS IT PERHAPS HE-- NOT MAXIMUS -- WHO WENT MAD AT THAT INSTANT--

-- AND FILLED THE EARTH AND SKY ALIKE WITH GREAT, SOUL-SHATTERING SOUND--?

YET, HOW COULD HE HAVE FORESEEN, IN THAT FIRST USE OF HIS FORBIDDEN POWER, THE RESPONSE OF AN ANGUISHED MAXIMUS---



-- HOW PREDICTED THE LASHING-OUT WITH FRENZIED, UN-DIRECTED MENTAL BEAMS---

--- WHICH PASSED LIKE THE SOUND-WAVES THEMSELVES THRU THE SIDES OF THE VIBRATION-TOSSED SAUCER---

IN THAT AWFUL MOMENT, DID NOT BLACK BOLT HIMSELF WISH TO FLEE, TO HIDE HIMSELF BEHIND A SHIELD OF SHEER INSANITY?

FOR, WERE NOT THOSE WHO WERE SLAIN BY THE PLUMMETING KREE-SHIP... THE VERY PARENTS WHO HAD BORNE THEM BOTH---

--- DAZING THE KREE-SPAWNED PILOT WITHIN---



WAS THAT NOT THE DAY, THE HOUR, WHEN MADNESS FILLED THE MIND OF MAXIMUS, BEHIND THOSE GLAZED AND TEARFUL EYES---



--- AND PAVING THE WAY FOR--- DIS-ASTER??

BUT, WHAT TIME IS THERE FOR GRIEF... IF KREE AND SKRULL BE NOW AT WAR ACROSS A MYRIAD OF WORLDS...

-- AND MAXIMUS... MAD MAXIMUS... MAKES READY TO HONOR HIS UNHOLY ALLIANCE..?



WHILE, BACK ON AMERICA'S EASTERN SHORES---

WELL MET, IRON MAN!
THOU HAST FELLED THE
TRIO OF MANDROIDS, NOR
HAST THOU HARMED THE
MEN WITHIN.

NO SWEAT,
THUNDER
GOD.

ZZKKT

TONY
STARK GAVE
ME A FEW
POINTERS ON
'EM, REMEMBER?

ZZKKT

BESIDES, IT'D BE
EMBARASSING IF
THE MIGHTY AVENGERS
HAD BEEN TROMPED
BY UNCONSCIOUS
MEN---

AMAZING. BUT NOW,
I'VE A REQUEST TO
MAKE. A CHANGE
OF--- MIND.

A NOBLE
COURSE,
FRIEND.

WHATEVER I SAID
BEFORE, I FEEL WE
MUST RESPOND TO
TRITON'S PLEA---
BEFORE WE SOAR
SPACEWARD---

-- IN SUITS
CONTROLLED,
NO DOUBT, FROM
THAT 'COPTER---
TILL I PULLED THE
PLUG ON THEM.

THEN,
STAND YE
BACK,
AVENGERS
TWIN---

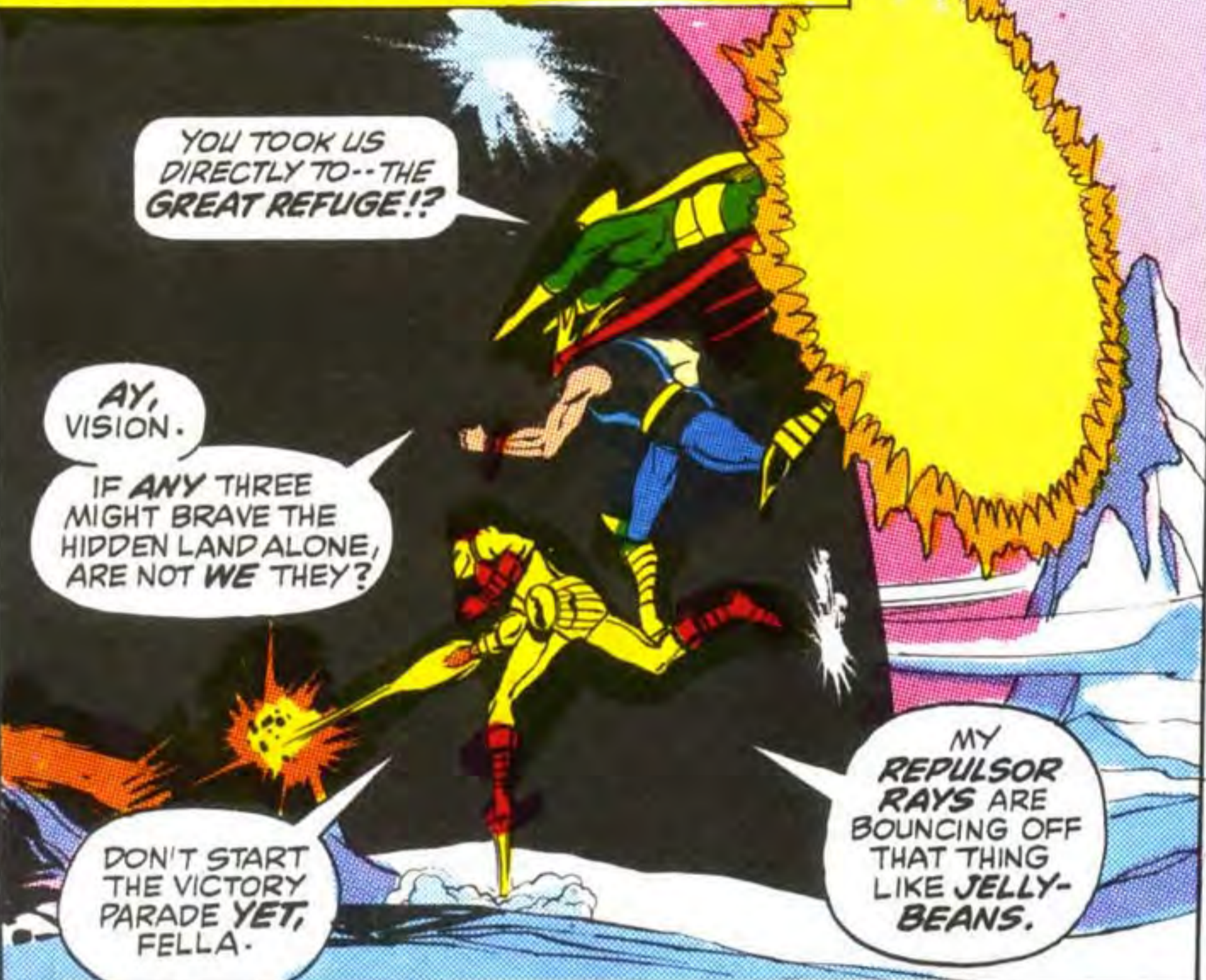
-- AND WHIRL,
MINE AWESOME
HAMMER---
WHIRL---

-- WHILE MYSTIC
MJOLNIR HATH
SHOWN US--- THE
WAY!

FOR, THE
SEA-BORN
INHUMAN HATH SHOWN
US THE WHEREABOUTS
OF HIS HIDDEN LAND---

THE MEREST MOMENT
OF MIND-WRENCHING
AGONY, SUCH AS
NONE SAVE ANDROID,
GOD, AND ARMORED
WARRIOR MIGHT
SURVIVE---

THEN, THE EMERGENCE--- HALF A WORLD AWAY---



YOU TOOK US DIRECTLY TO--THE GREAT REFUGE!?

AY, VISION.

IF ANY THREE MIGHT BRAVE THE HIDDEN LAND ALONE, ARE NOT WE THEY?

DON'T START THE VICTORY PARADE YET, FELLA.

MY REPULSOR RAYS ARE BOUNCING OFF THAT THING LIKE JELLY-BEANS.



WHILE MY POWERS OF INTANGIBILITY FARE NO BETTER.

THEN, GIVE ROOM ONCE MORE---



--- AND LEARN WHAT MALLET FORGED IN ASGARD MAY ACHIEVE!



BY ODIN'S BEARD! IT PASSETH THRU THE VERY FABRIC OF YON DARKSOME DOME---



--- AND NOW DOTH RETURN, LEAVING ALL UNSCATHED!



IN SOOTH, A LESSON IN HUMILITY HATH BEEN TAUGHT THIS DAY.

THERE BE LANDS WHERE E'EN IMMORTALS MUST TREAD AS NEWBORN BABES.

DON'T LET IT GET YOU DOWN, CURLY.

LOOKS LIKE HELP IS ON THE WAY.



--- I DON'T GET IT. IF YOU THREE CAN'T GET THRU, WHAT'S THE ODDS ON MISTER MUM HERE?

WE'LL LET YOU KNOW IN A MINUTE, BIG MAN.

MEANWHILE, EVERYBODY GET BACK. IF TRITON'S RIGHT, WE'RE IN FOR WALL-TO-WALL SOUND.

AS THOR DOTH KNOW, BETTER THAN MOST.

NEXT, AMID SNOW-PEAKED GRANDEUR:
A MOMENT OF PORTENTOUS
SILENCE---



---A WEIGHING OF
CHANCES, AND
OF EARTH'S
FATE---



AND NOW---
THE WORD---

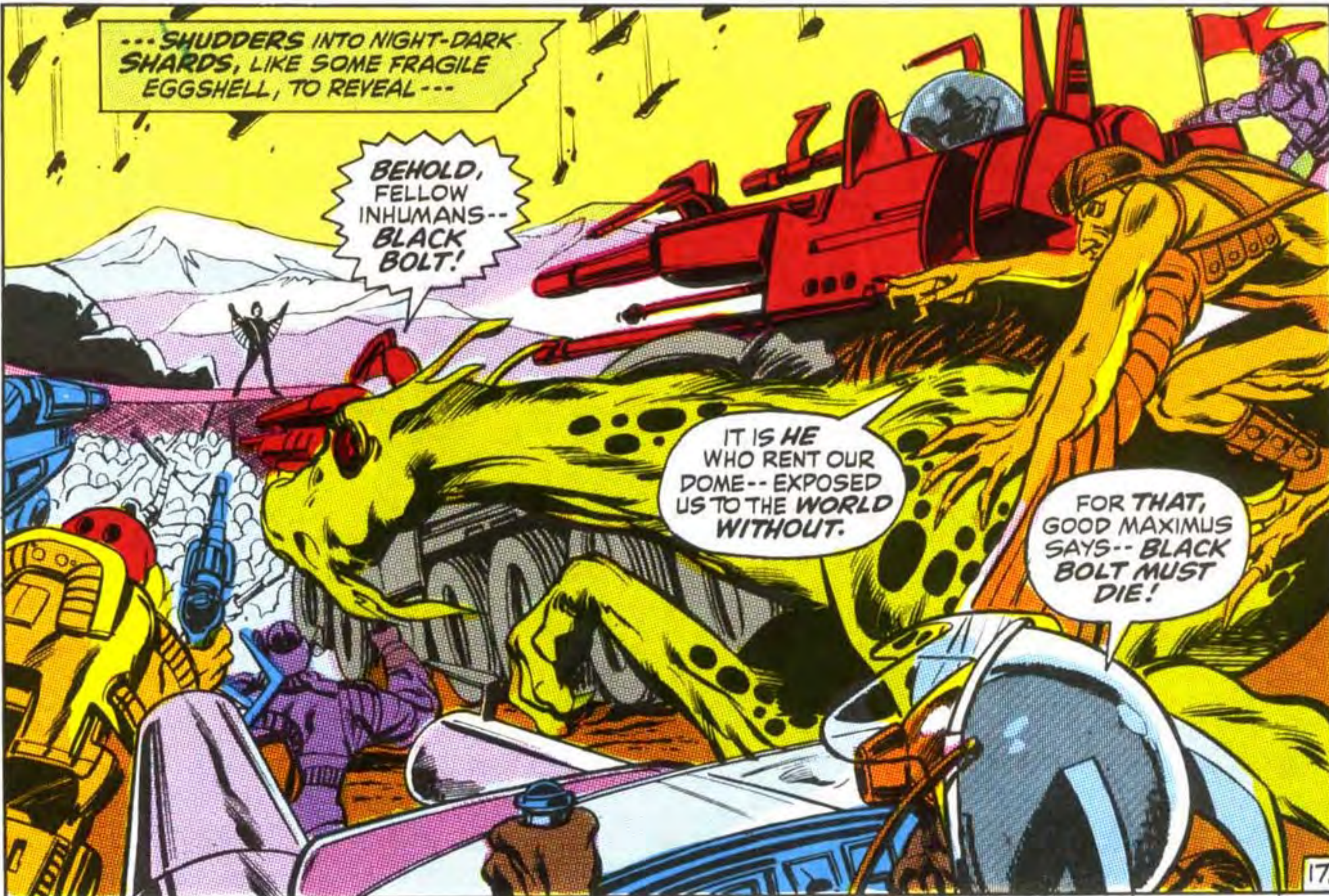
--- THE SINGLE
WHISPERED
SYLLABLE WHICH
GROWS INTO A
WHINE-- A SHOUT--
--AN INCESSANT,
WORLD-SHAKING
ROAR THAT MAKES
THE MOUNTAINS
TREMBLE---



--- TILL THE GREAT BLACK
DOME--- AYE, THAT SELFSAME
DEMI-GLOBE WHICH WITHSTOOD
AND ABSORBED A SKRULL-SENT
NUCLEAR BLAST---

--- SHUDDERS INTO NIGHT-DARK
SHARDS, LIKE SOME FRAGILE
EGGSHELL, TO REVEAL ---

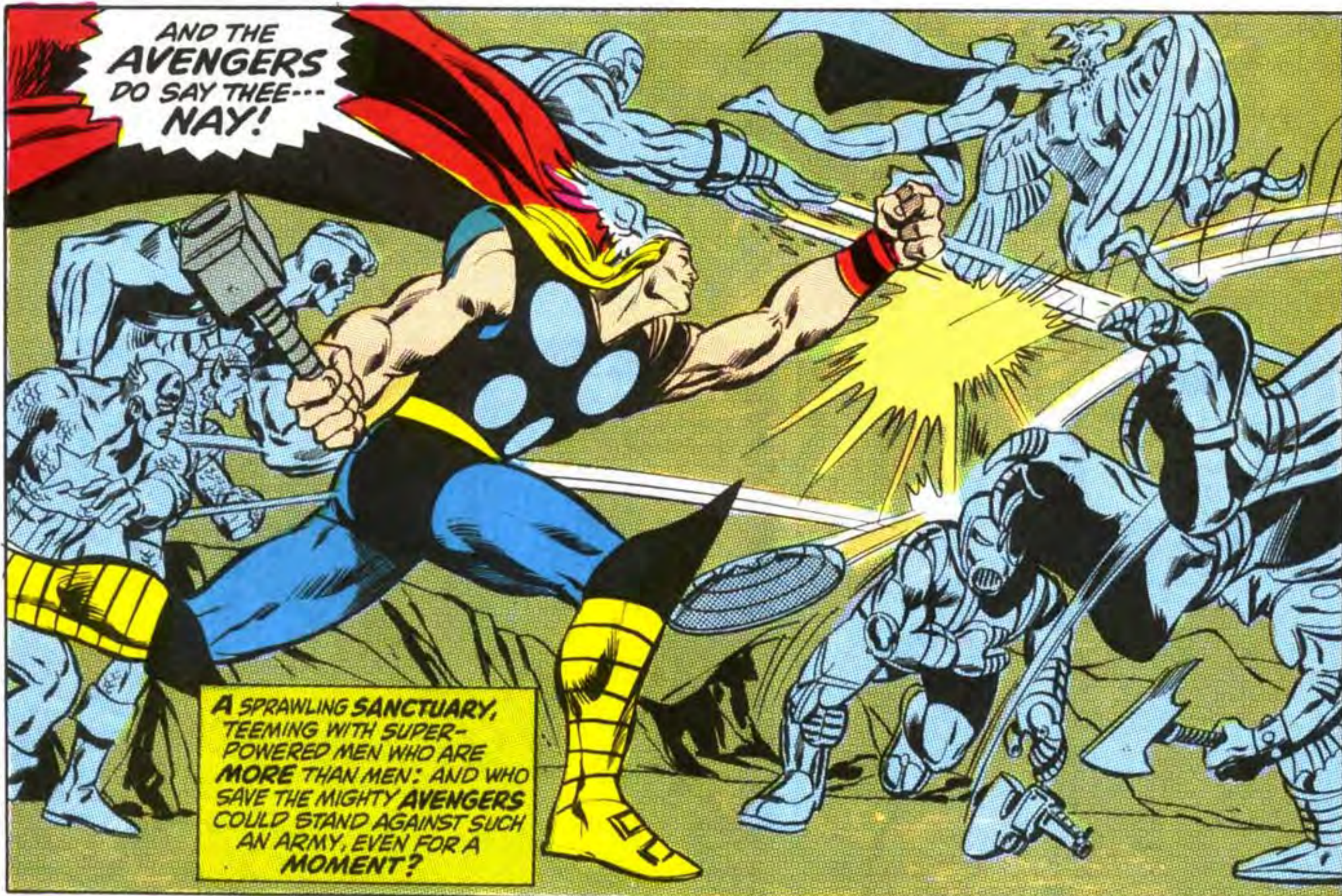
BEHOLD,
FELLOW
INHUMANS--
BLACK
BOLT!



IT IS HE
WHO RENT OUR
DOME-- EXPOSED
US TO THE WORLD
WITHOUT.

FOR THAT,
GOOD MAXIMUS
SAYS-- BLACK
BOLT MUST
DIE!

AND THE
AVENGERS
DO SAY THEE---
NAY!



A SPRAWLING SANCTUARY,
TEEMING WITH SUPER-
POWERED MEN WHO ARE
MORE THAN MEN: AND WHO
SAVE THE MIGHTY AVENGERS
COULD STAND AGAINST SUCH
AN ARMY, EVEN FOR A
MOMENT?

YET, THAT MOMENT
PROVES MORE
THAN ENOUGH---

FOR,
ALMOST AT
ONCE, BLACK
BOLT'S MEREST
WHISPER FILLS
THE GREAT REFUGE,
LIKE THUNDER
FROM ON
HIGH--

**HEAR ME,
O MY PEOPLE!
I AM BLACK BOLT,
YOUR RIGHTFUL RULER!
LAY DOWN YOUR WEAPONS,
AND
OBEY!**



LIKE MELTING DEW IN
THE MORN, MAXIMUS'
SPELL FALLS FROM
MIGHTY SHOULDERS--

AND WHERE REMEMBRANCE
COMES A-RUNNING--

-- CAN RETRIBUTION BE FAR BEHIND --?

MAXIMUS HAS QUARTERED MEN OF THE KREE IN THE PALACE ROYAL!

--ERE LONG, INHUMAN, WE FEW KREE WHO COULD BE SPARED FROM INTERSTELLAR BATTLE WOULD HAVE FORGED YOUR PEOPLE INTO AN EARTH-SECURING ARMY.

BUT NOW, THEY REVOLT. ALREADY, THEY STORM THE LOWER LEVELS OF THIS CITADEL.

WELL, HAVE NO CARE, FOOL.

THEY'LL GET NO FURTHER.

DOWN WITH MAXIMUS! DEATH TO THE INVADERS!

I HAVE SEALED OFF THE STAIRS WITH NEGATIVE ENERGY.

AY--- BUT NOT THE WALLS ABOUT YOU, MADMAN!

SKKATTCCH!

THEY SMASH THRU OUR UPPER RAMPARTS. YET, NONE OF THE FLYING INHUMANS COULD HAVE---

SORRY WE'RE FRESH OUTTA CALLIN' CARDS, TROOPS.

BUT, MAYBE THIS LITTLE WAR-WHOOP WILL CLUE YOU IN --!

"AVENGERS ASSEMBLE!"

YOUR EPITHETS MEAN NOTHING TO A MAN OF THE KREE---

--- EXCEPT AS WE SHALL HAVE THEM INSCRIBED ON THE RECORDS OF OUR CONQUESTS!



THEN JUST BE SURE YOU SPELL OUR NAMES RIGHT, CHROME-DOME!

THANKS, RICK-BABY!

KRANG!



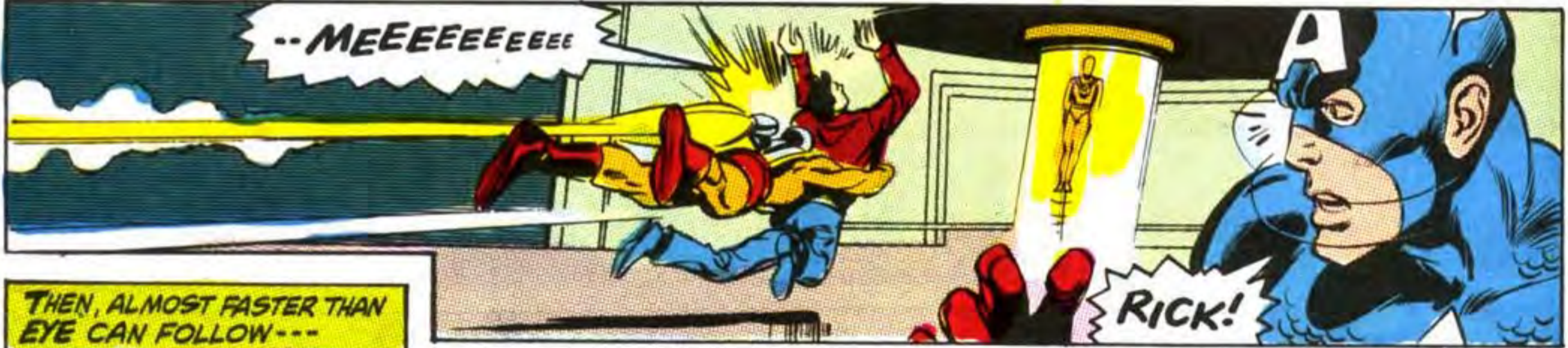
-- SO, IF YOU'LL PARDON MY BACK--

YEAH-- SURE. FROM HERE ON IN, IT'S MOPPING-UP TIME.

FOR THAT, YOU SURE DON'T NEED---

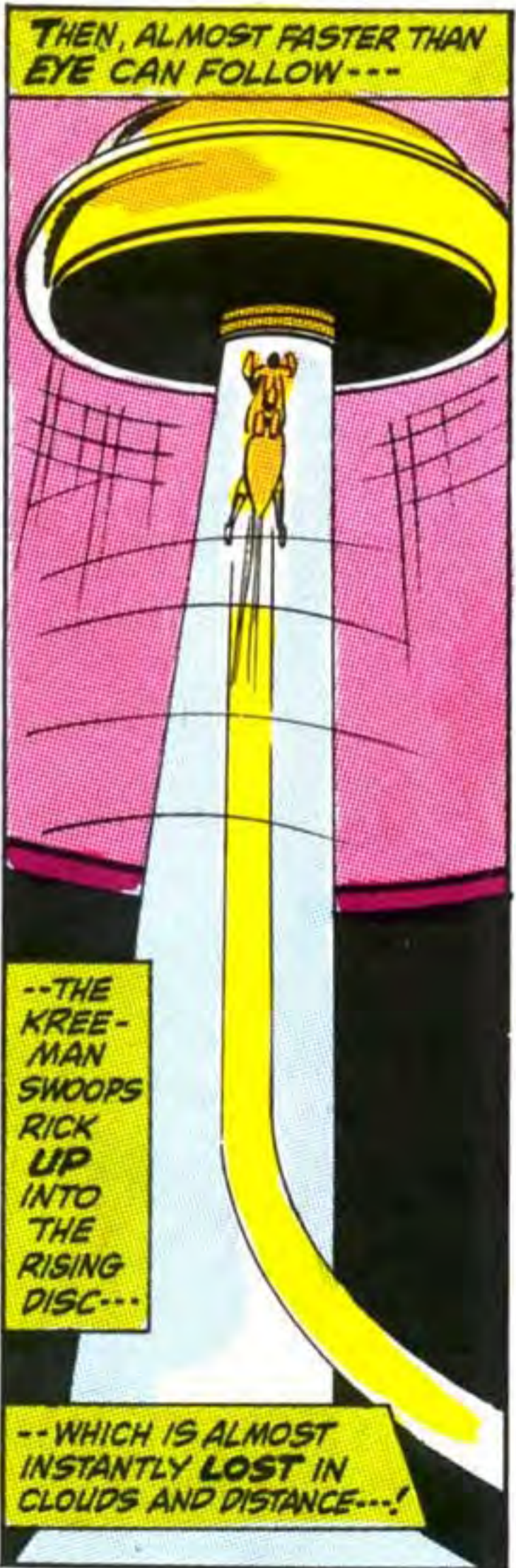
LOOKS LIKE WHEN CAPTAIN AMERICA TRAINS A PARTNER-- THEY STAY TRAINED.

BUT, I'M ALREADY RUNNIN' WAY OVER-TIME ON MY LAST SWIG OF GROWTH SERUM--



-- MEEEEEEEEEE

RICK!



THEN, ALMOST FASTER THAN EYE CAN FOLLOW---

--THE KREE-MAN SWOOPS RICK UP INTO THE RISING DISC---

-- WHICH IS ALMOST INSTANTLY LOST IN CLOUDS AND DISTANCE---!



WHILE, AMID THE WRECKAGE THAT ONCE WAS A PALACE---

BEHOLD, BLACK BOLT. MAXIMUS IS HELPLESS-- RETURNED IN THE SHOCK OF DEFEAT TO HIS STATE OF MADNESS.

SMILE, COUSIN. IS IT NOT REASON FOR REJOICING?



SMILES, TRITON? NAY-- NO SMILES FOR BLACK BOLT THIS DAY---

-- NOT WHEN MEMORY TAUNTS HIM WITH THE KNOWLEDGE THAT 'T WAS HE WHO FIRST DID DRIVE HIS BROTHER MAD---

FOR BLACK BOLT, THERE IS BUT THE JOURNEY BACK TO AMERICA---



BUT, THOUGH HIS HANDS MAY TELL THE STORY--- HIS LIPS SHALL KNOW NO SMILE.

-- TO TELL HIS EMBATTLED COUSINS THAT THEIR HIDDEN LAND IS FREE ONCE MORE---



AND MEANWHILE, WHAT OF THE OTHERS?

WHAT OF WANDA AND PIETRO-- HOSTAGES IN THE REMOTE SKRULL GALAXY--

-- HOSTAGES AGAINST THAT HOUR WHEN MARVELL DESTROYS THE PLANET THAT GAVE HIM BIRTH?

WHAT OF THE ENIGMATIC ENTITY ON THE HOME-WORLD OF THE KREE-- THE CAPTIVE, YET UNSHAKEN INTELLIGENCE SUPREME--?



THE PLAYERS ARE ALL IN PLACE.

LET THE FINAL PHASE BEGIN!

AND, MOST OF ALL, WHAT OF THOSE AVENGERS WHO YET REMAIN ON EARTH-- THEIR SYMBOL, A GLOVED FIST RAISED DEFIANTLY TOWARD THE HEAVENS--?

WE'RE COMING FOR YOU-- KREE AND SKRULLS ALIKE!

AND NOTHING CAN STAY OUR HAND FROM VENGEANCE -- NOTHING BUT DEATH!



NEXT ISSUE: A DAY OF RECKONING!