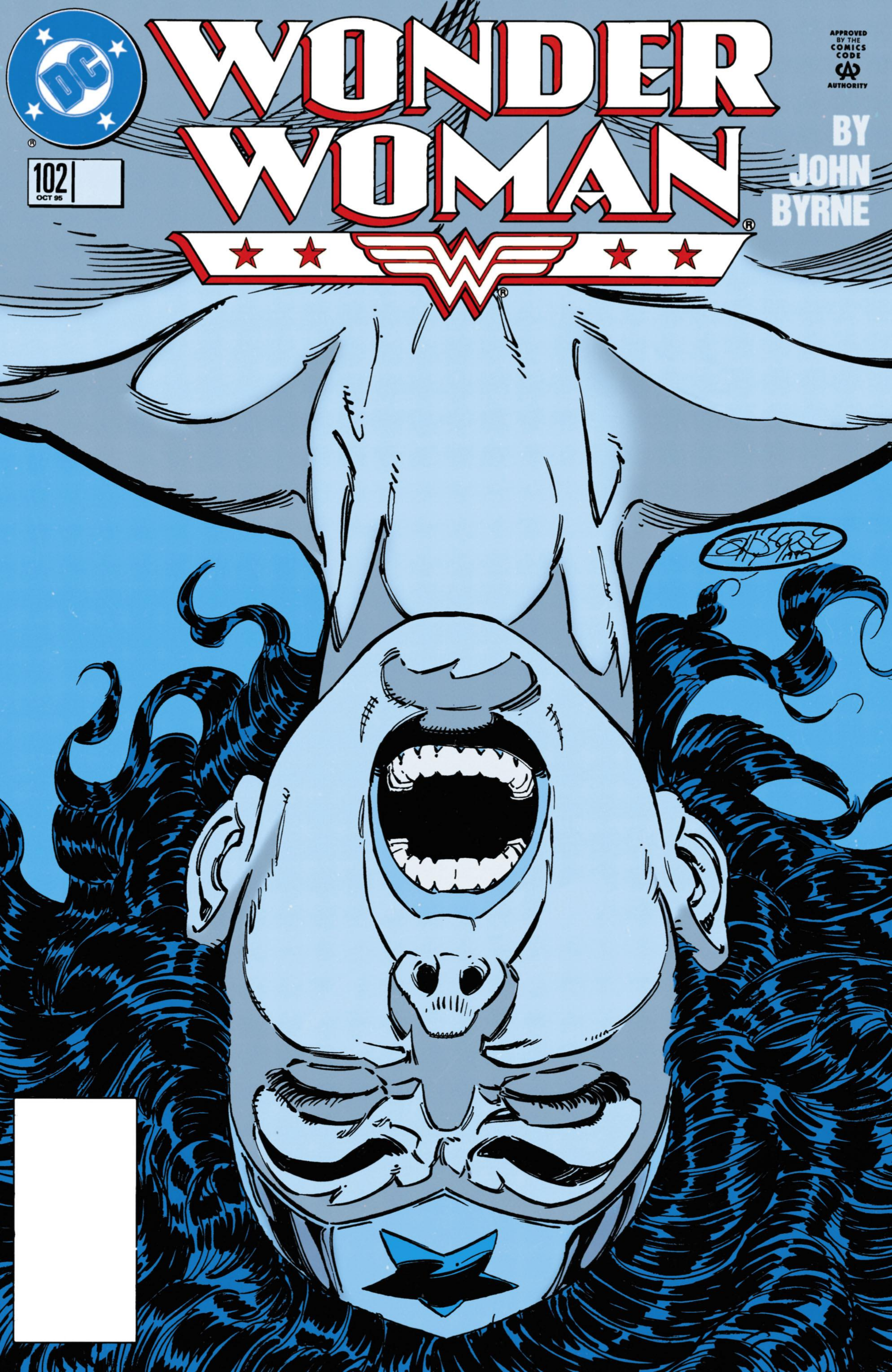
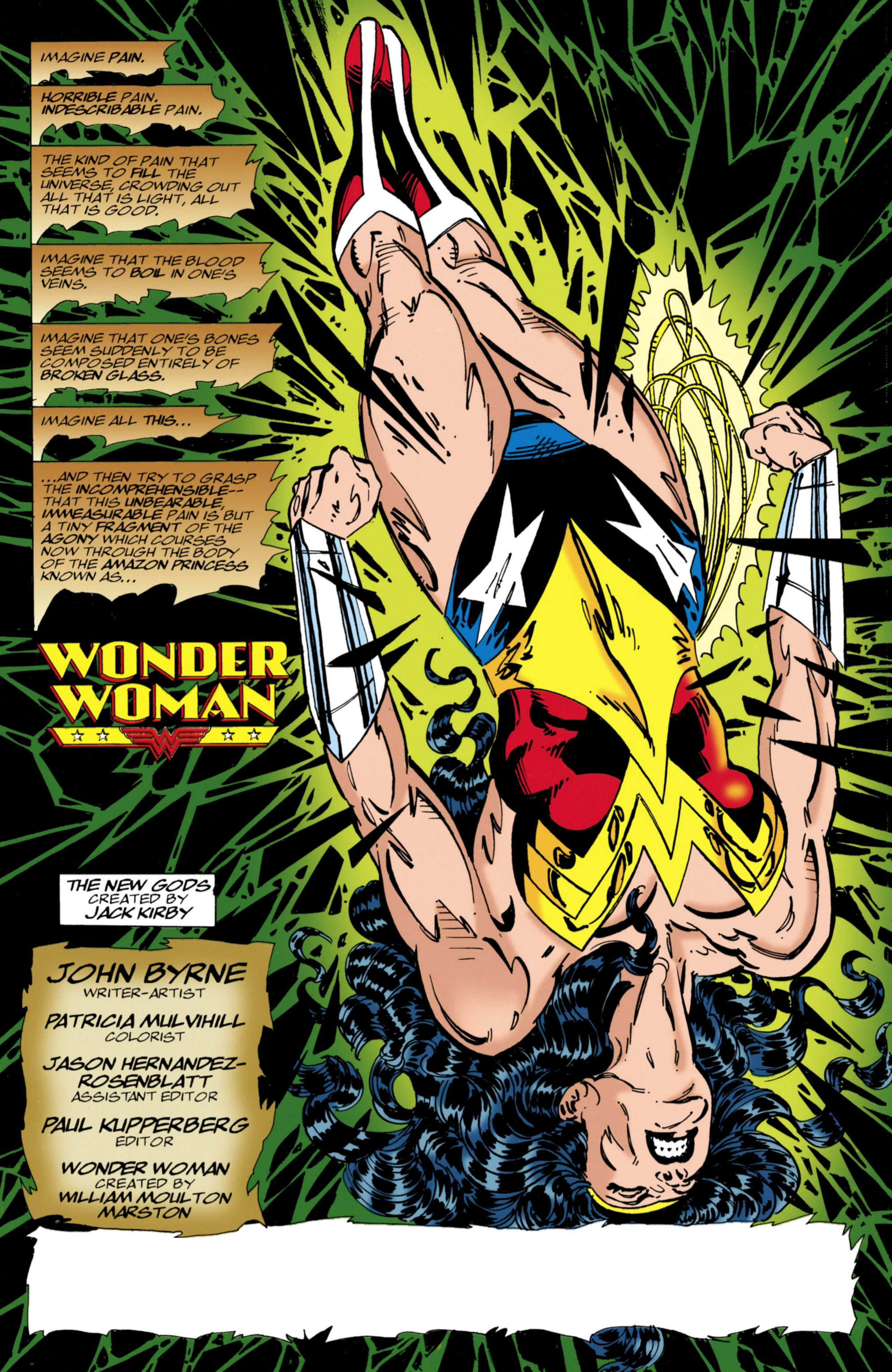

DC
WONDER WOMAN
102
OCT 95
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
BY JOHN BYRNE


IMAGINE PAIN.
HORRIBLE PAIN. INDESCRIBABLE PAIN.
THE KIND OF PAIN THAT SEEMS TO FILL THE UNIVERSE, CROWDING OUT ALL THAT IS LIGHT, ALL THAT IS GOOD.
IMAGINE THAT THE BLOOD SEEMS TO BOIL IN ONE'S VEINS.
IMAGINE THAT ONE'S BONES SEEM SUDDENLY TO BE COMPOSED ENTIRELY OF BROKEN GLASS.
IMAGINE ALL THIS...
...AND THEN TRY TO GRASP THE INCOMPREHENSIBLE-- THAT THIS UNBEARABLE, IMMEASURABLE PAIN IS BUT A TINY FRAGMENT OF THE AGONY WHICH COURSES NOW THROUGH THE BODY OF THE AMAZON PRINCESS KNOWN AS...
WONDER WOMAN
THE NEW GODS CREATED BY JACK KIRBY
JOHN BYRNE WRITER-ARTIST
PATRICIA MULVIHILL COLORIST
JASON HERNANDEZ-ROSENBLATT ASSISTANT EDITOR
PAUL KUPPERBERG EDITOR
WONDER WOMAN CREATED BY WILLIAM MOULTON MARSTON

SECOND GENESIS PART TWO

LEVEL THIRTEEN!

INCREDIBLE! NO MORTAL HAS EVEN GONE BEYOND LEVEL THREE--LET ALONE SURVIVED... RESISTED..!

BUT THEN, THIS IS NO MERE MORTAL, DESAAD. THIS IS DIANA.

AND SHE IS SO MUCH MORE THAN HUMAN.

YOU MISER-ABLE..!!

LET HER GO! IF IT'S INFORMA-TION YOU WANT, I KNOW AS MUCH ABOUT THIS CASE AS SHE DOES!

HOW NOBLE! YET, LIKE ALL HUMAN NOBILITY, TAINTED WITH FOOLISHNESS.

YOU HEARD DESAAD'S WORDS. WERE YOU NOW TO TAKE THE PLACE OF WONDER WOMAN ON THE RACK...

...YOU WOULD NOT SURVIVE EVEN A QUARTER OF WHAT SHE NOW ENDURES.

I'LL TAKE THAT CHANCE, CREEP.

HA HA HA HA!

SUCH FIRE! SUCH MISPLACED COURAGE!

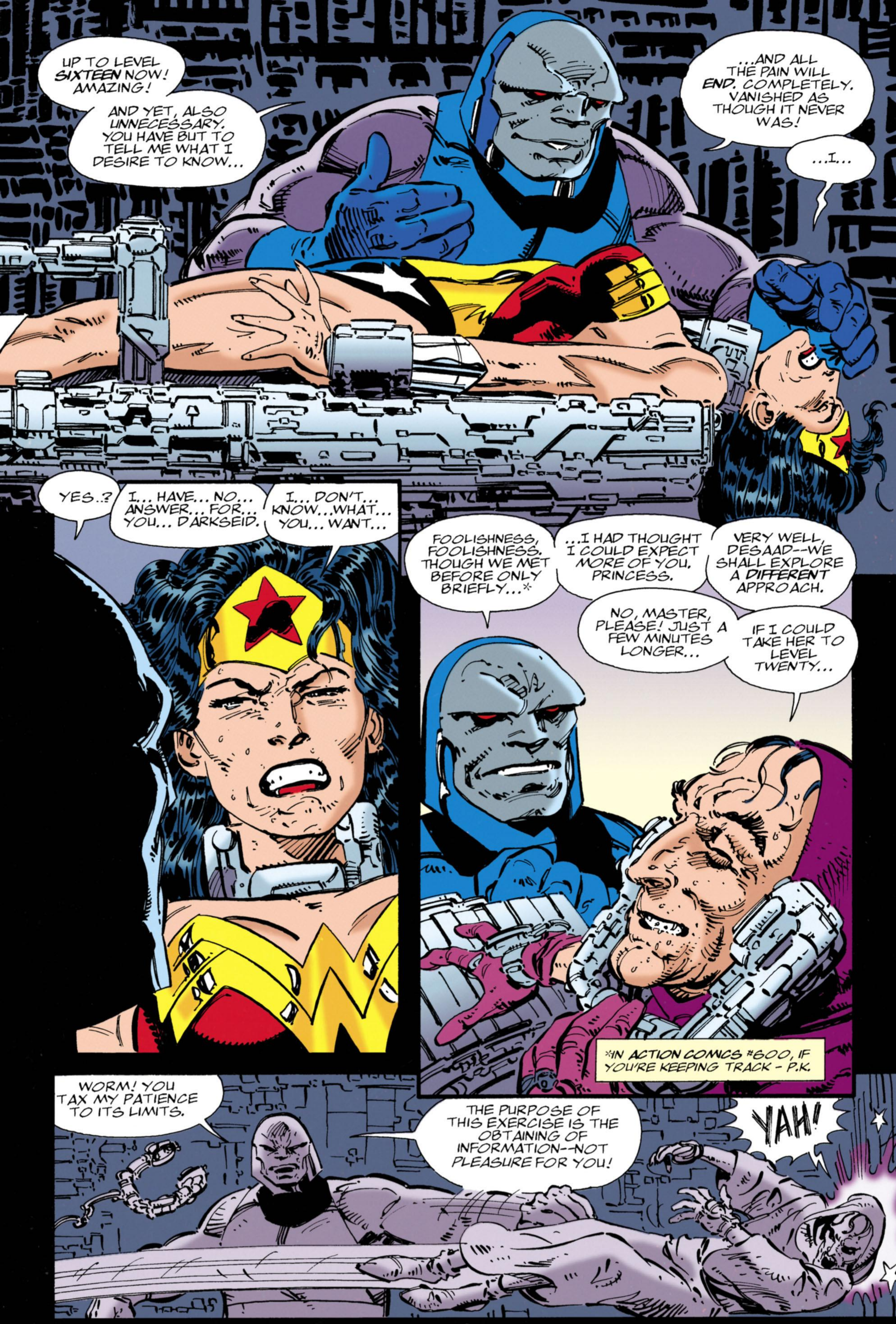
HAVE A CARE, EARTHLING! NO ONE MAY ADDRESS GREAT DARKSEID IN SUCH A FASHION!

KRAK

NO, NO, TROOPER!

THE GNAT AMUSES ME. LET HIM BE...

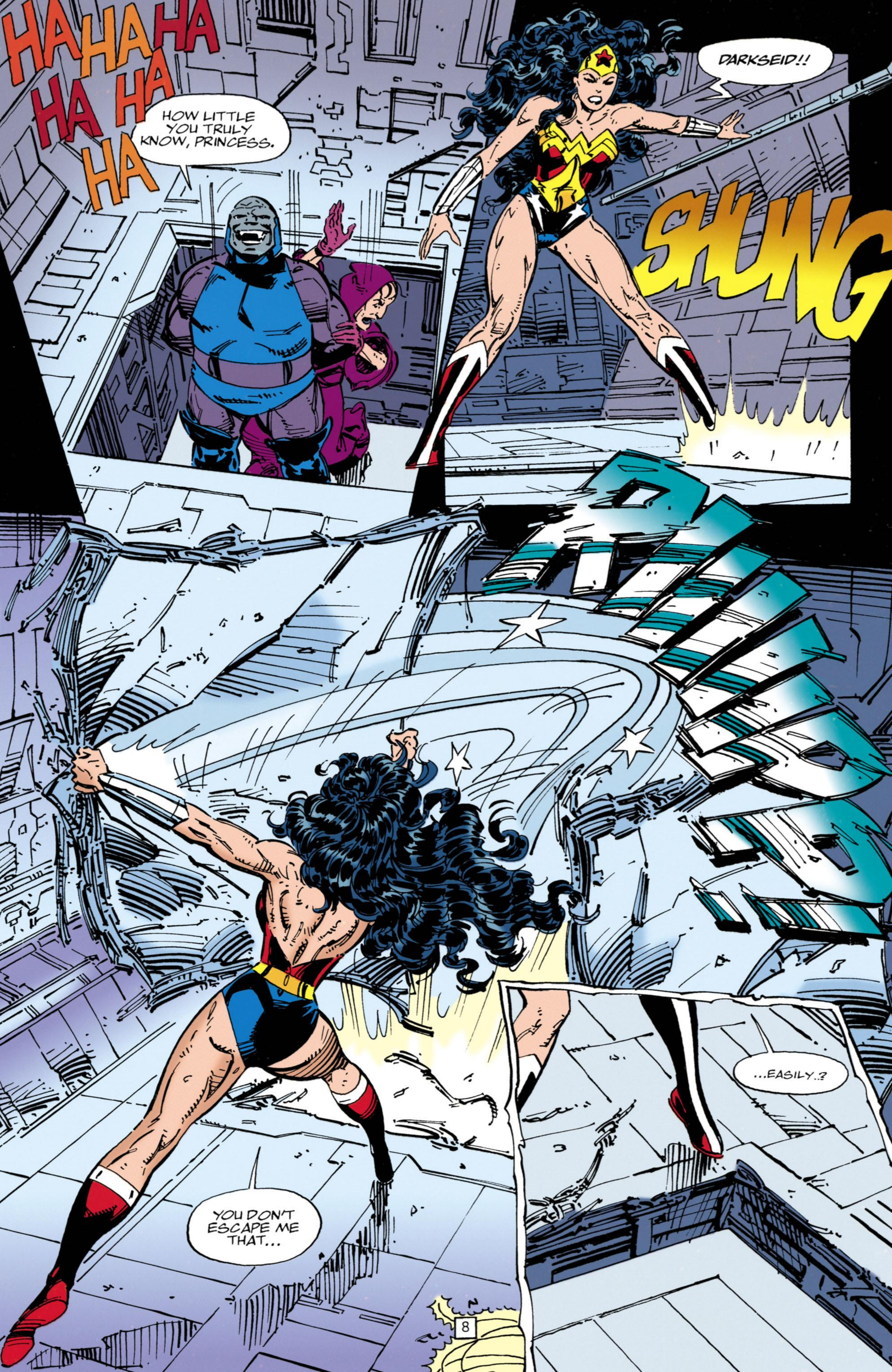
...FOR THE PRESENT.


UP TO LEVEL SIXTEEN NOW! AMAZING!
AND YET, ALSO UNNECESSARY. YOU HAVE BUT TO TELL ME WHAT I DESIRE TO KNOW...
...AND ALL THE PAIN WILL END. COMPLETELY. VANISHED AS THOUGH IT NEVER WAS!
...I...
YES..?
I... HAVE... NO... ANSWER... FOR... YOU... DARKSEID.
I... DON'T... KNOW...WHAT... YOU... WANT...
FOOLISHNESS, FOOLISHNESS. THOUGH WE MET BEFORE ONLY BRIEFLY...*
...I HAD THOUGHT I COULD EXPECT MORE OF YOU, PRINCESS.
VERY WELL, DESAAD--WE SHALL EXPLORE A DIFFERENT APPROACH.
NO, MASTER, PLEASE! JUST A FEW MINUTES LONGER...
IF I COULD TAKE HER TO LEVEL TWENTY...
*IN ACTION COMICS #600, IF YOU'RE KEEPING TRACK - P.K.
WORM! YOU TAX MY PATIENCE TO ITS LIMITS.
THE PURPOSE OF THIS EXERCISE IS THE OBTAINING OF INFORMATION--NOT PLEASURE FOR YOU!
YAH!

THOUGH OUR GALLANT YOUNG MORTAL COULD NOT, AS I HAVE SAID, SURVIVE THE RIGORS OF THIS MACHINE BEYOND A MOST FUNDAMENTAL SETTING...
...LET US SEE HOW THE FEMALE RESPONDS WHEN IT IS SOMEONE ELSE'S PAIN WHICH SHE MUST CHOOSE TO PROLONG.
BUT HAVE A CARE, TROOPERS. I SUSPECT WE HAVE TAPPED ONLY A SMALL PART OF WONDER WOMAN'S POWER...
WHUMP
HOW VERY PERCEPTIVE OF YOU, DARKSEID.

YOUR MACHINE IS VERY NASTY, DESAAD...
...BUT I AM A WARRIOR OF THEMYSCIRA.
I AM TRAINED TO ACCEPT PAIN AS A NATURAL CONSEQUENCE OF BATTLE.

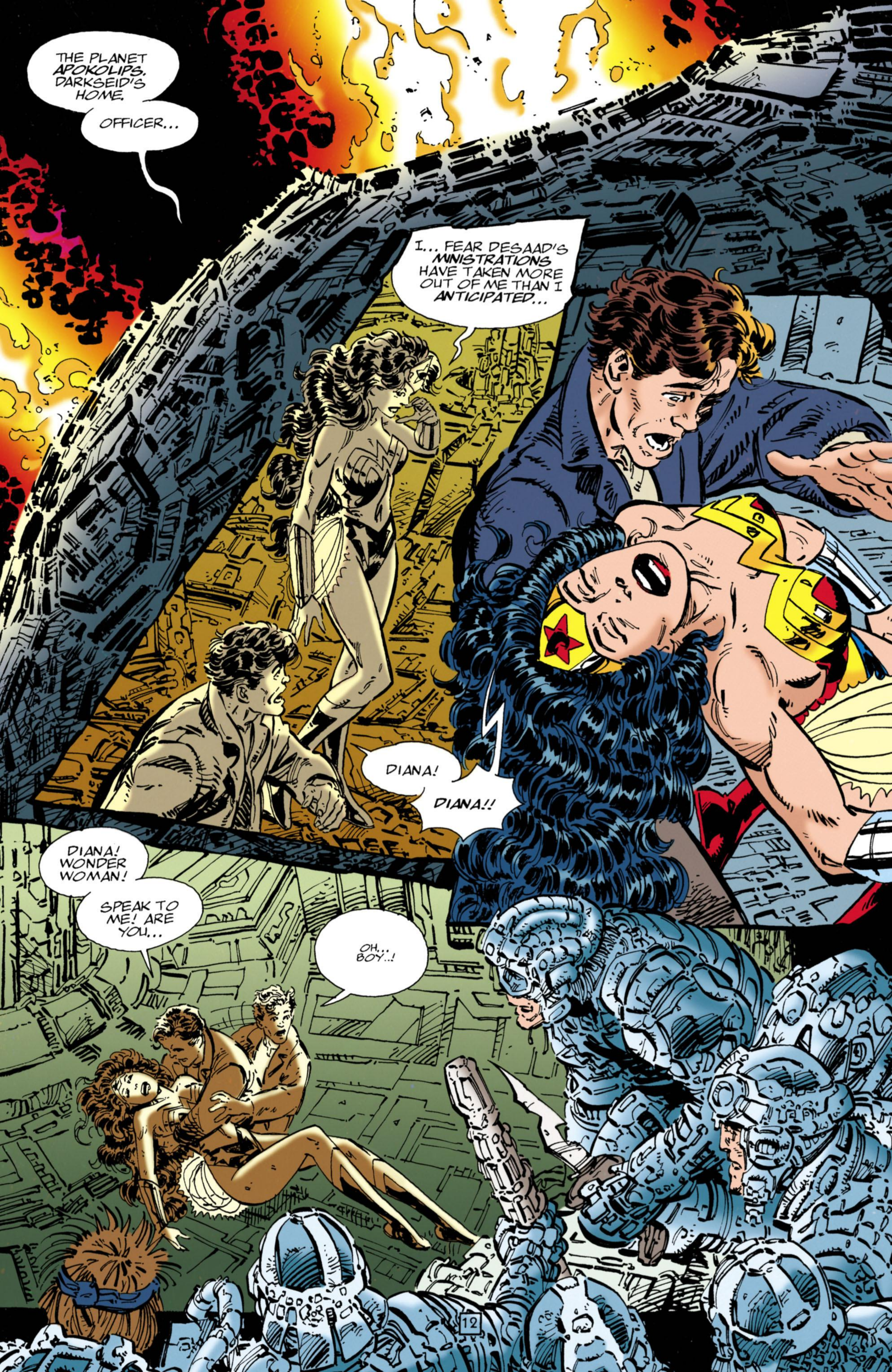
NOW, SPARE YOUR LEGIONS UNNECESSARY CASUALTIES, DARKSEID...
...AND QUIT THIS PLACE!
WHATEVER KNOWLEDGE IT IS YOU SEEK...
...YOU SHALL NOT FIND IT HERE IN GATEWAY CITY.
GATEWAY CITY?

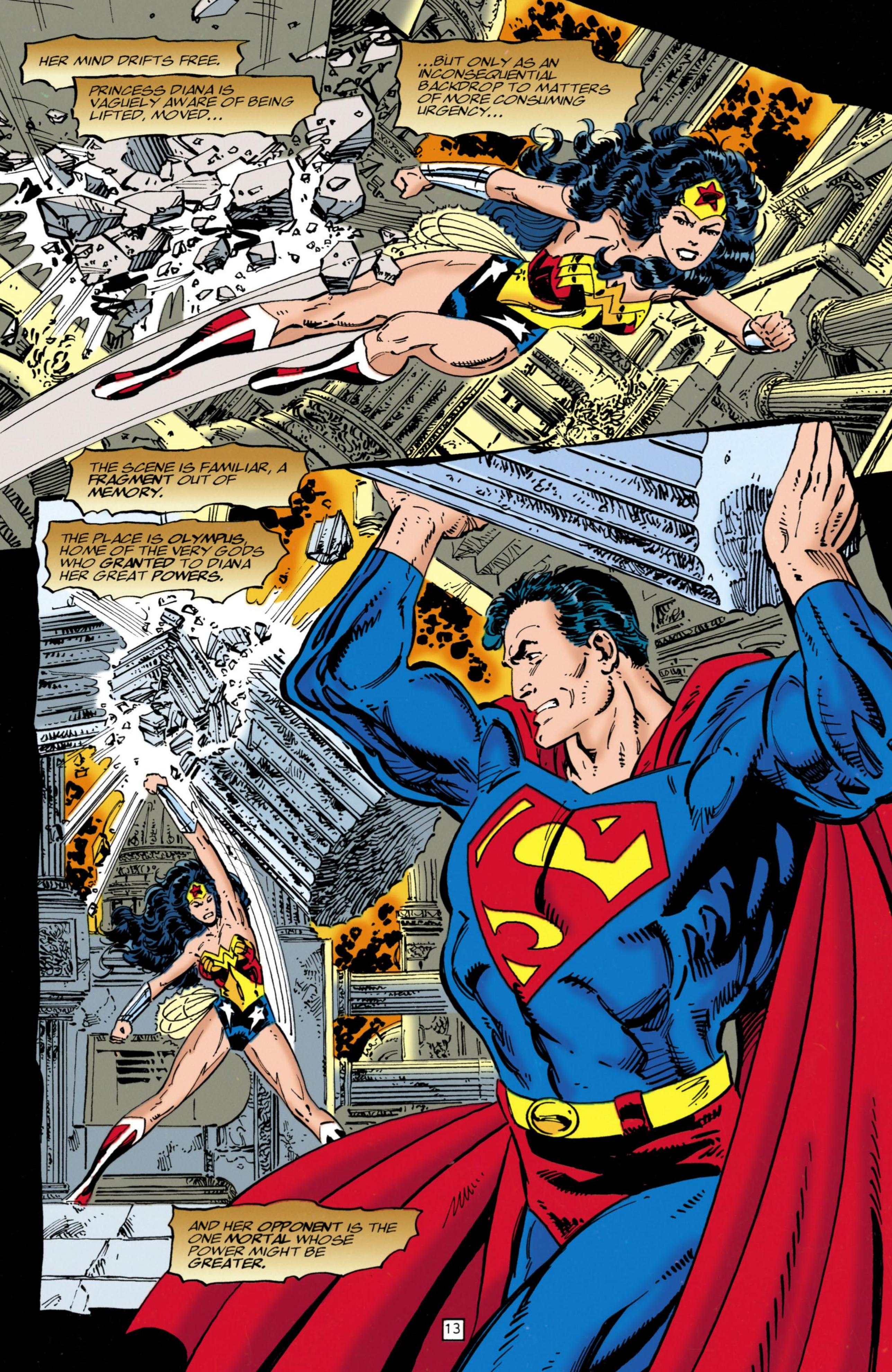

HA HA HA HA HA HA
HOW LITTLE YOU TRULY KNOW, PRINCESS.
DARKSEID!!
SHUNG
YOU DON'T ESCAPE ME THAT...
...EASILY..?
8

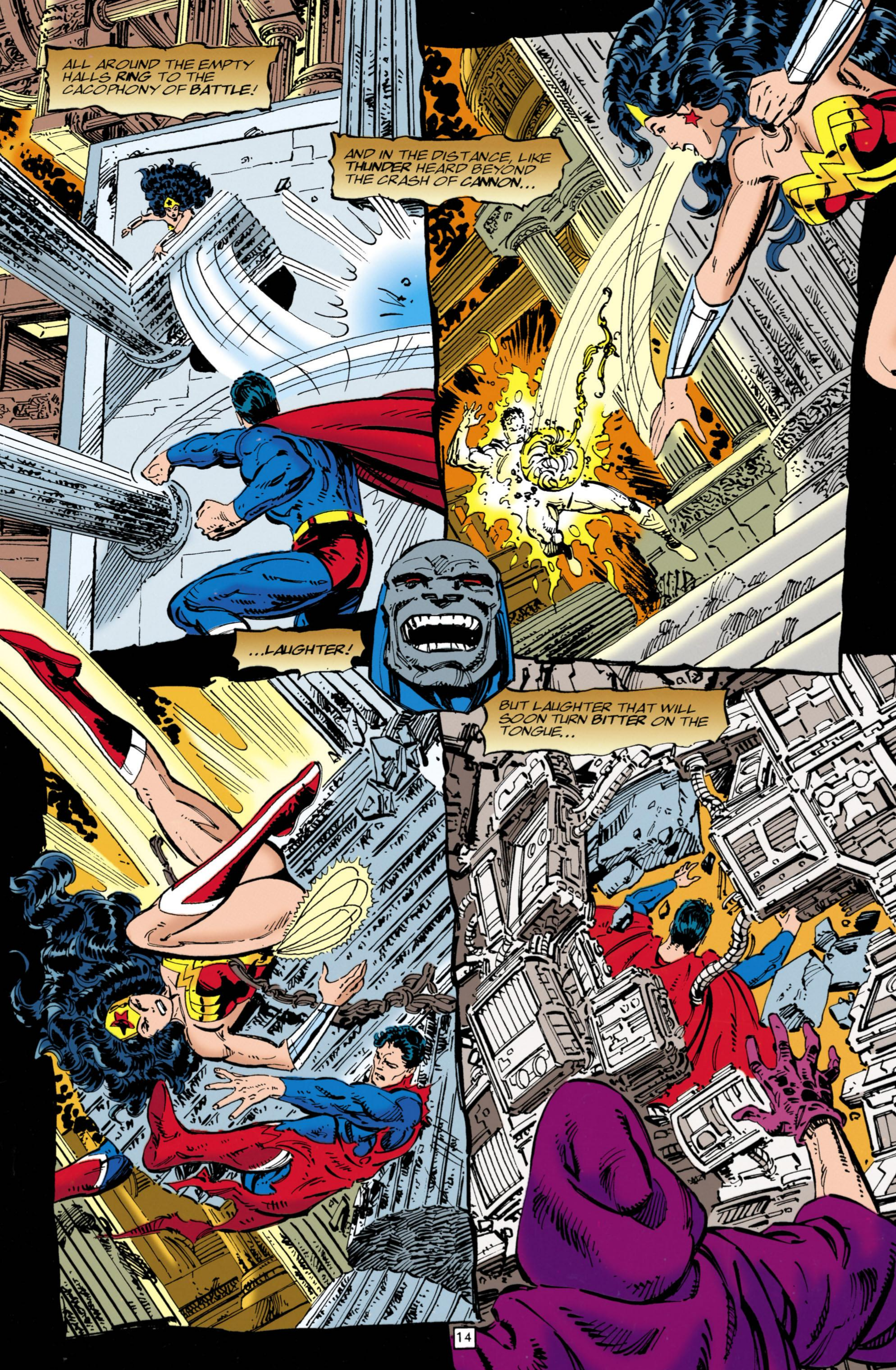
BLAST!
DARKSEID HAS PLANNED HIS ESCAPE WELL!
DONE!
HEY! AS LONG AS YOU'RE IN THE MOOD FOR TEARING THINGS APART...
...HOW ABOUT THESE CHAINS..?
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
RIGHT AS RAIN. BUT... WHAT ABOUT YOU?

YOU WERE PRETTY DETERMINED NOT TO LET ON TO STONE-FACE AND HIS PALS...
...BUT I COULD TELL THAT GIZMO WAS REALLY DOING A NUMBER ON YOU.
TRUE. I WOULD BE HARD PRESSED TO RECALL A TIME WHEN I HAVE EXPERIENCED ANY-THING WORSE.
STILL... THE TIME FOR CONSIDERATION OF SUCH THINGS LIES IN THE FUTURE.
FOR NOW... IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT WE FIND A WAY TO THE SURFACE.
RAKK!!
I DID NOT AT ALL CARE FOR DARKSEID'S REACTION WHEN I SAID HE WOULD FIND NOTHING IN GATEWAY CITY.
THERE MAY BE LAYERS TO OUR PREDICAMENT THAT WE DO NOT EVEN SUSPECT.

YES... IT IS AS I FEARED.
WE ARE ON APOKOLIPS!
APOKO- WHICH..??
THE AIR IS THICK WITH THE BLACK ASH OF THE FIREPITS.
THEIR HEAT IS A GREAT STEEL FIST, SUDDENLY CLOSED ABOUT THE CHEST, CRUSHING BREATH FROM THE LUNGS.
ALL AROUND, THE BROKEN, BLASTED FACE OF THE PLANET CREAKS AND MOANS, AS IF THE ANCIENT ROCK ITSELF FEELS THE PAIN OF UNCOUNTED GENERATIONS OF SUFFERING.


THE PLANET APOKOLIPS. DARKSEID'S HOME.
OFFICER...
I... FEAR DESAAD'S MINISTRATIONS HAVE TAKEN MORE OUT OF ME THAN I ANTICIPATED...
DIANA!
DIANA!!
DIANA! WONDER WOMAN!
SPEAK TO ME! ARE YOU...
OH... BOY..!


HER MIND DRIFTS FREE.
PRINCESS DIANA IS VAGUELY AWARE OF BEING LIFTED, MOVED...
...BUT ONLY AS AN INCONSEQUENTIAL BACKDROP TO MATTERS OF MORE CONSUMING URGENCY...
THE SCENE IS FAMILIAR, A FRAGMENT OUT OF MEMORY.
THE PLACE IS OLYMPUS, HOME OF THE VERY GODS WHO GRANTED TO DIANA HER GREAT POWERS.
AND HER OPPONENT IS THE ONE MORTAL WHOSE POWER MIGHT BE GREATER.


ALL AROUND THE EMPTY HALLS RING TO THE CACOPHONY OF BATTLE!
AND IN THE DISTANCE, LIKE THUNDER HEARD BEYOND THE CRASH OF CANNON...
...LAUGHTER!
BUT LAUGHTER THAT WILL SOON TURN BITTER ON THE TONGUE...

WELL, WELL! LOOKS LIKE IT WORKED, DIANA!
YES, SUPERMAN! OUR MOCK BATTLE HAS BROUGHT US RIGHT TO DARKSEID'S LAIR!
MOCK BATTLE..??
YES, DARKSEID! YOU TIPPED YOUR HAND TOO SOON!
SUPERMAN AND I GUESSED THAT...
WHAT..?!?
THE PATTERN CHANGES.
SUPERMAN!
DESAAD!
THE MEMORY SHIFTS, THE FRAGMENTS BLUR AND FLOW...
THAT WHICH WAS, IS NOT...
AND THAT WHICH CANNOT BE...

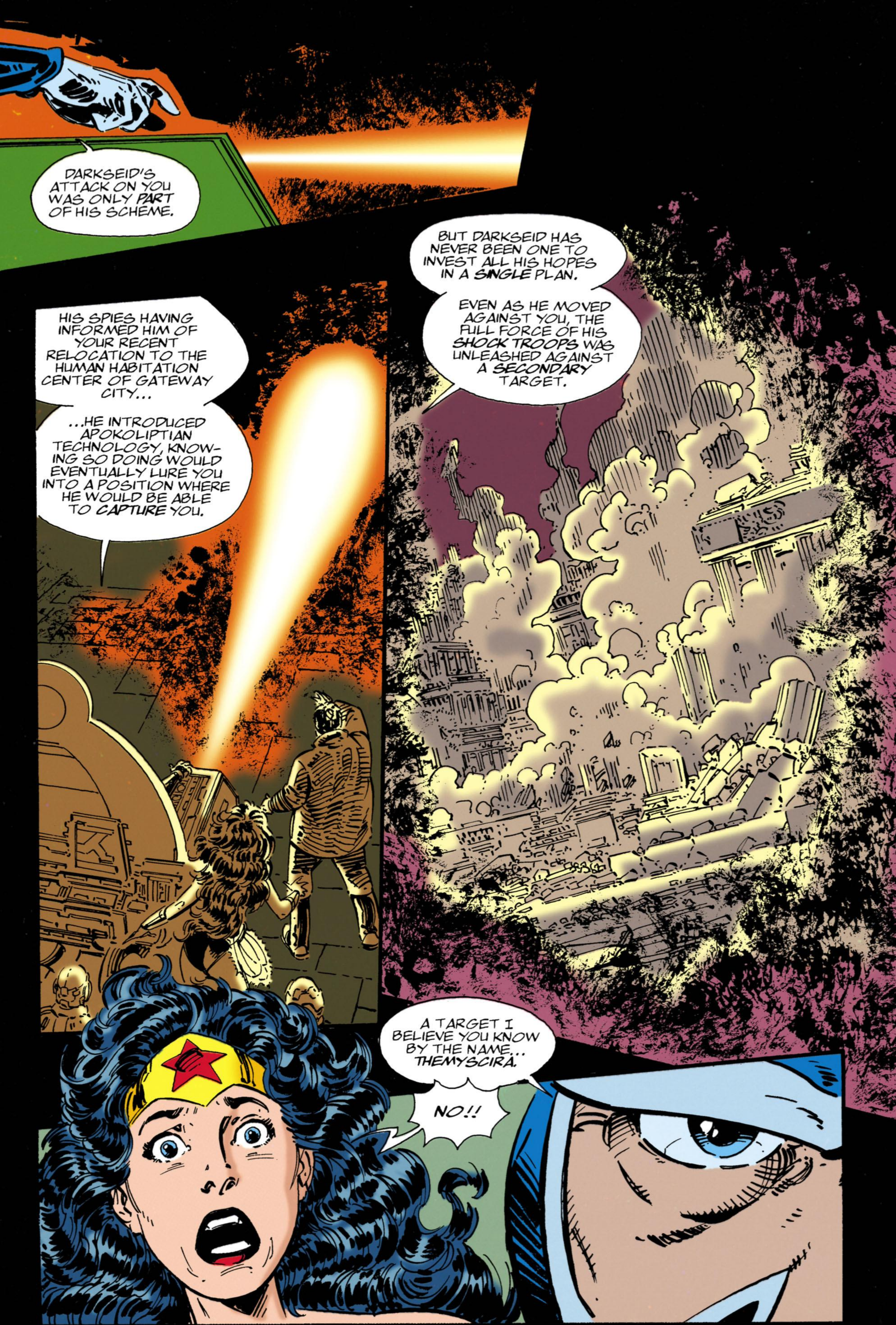
...BECOMES AN ALL-CONSUMING REALITY.
NO!!
WONDER WOMAN!
TAKE IT EASY! TAKE IT EASY!
EVERY-THING IS OKAY.

WELL... SORT OF OKAY, ANYWAY.
GREETINGS, PRINCESS DIANA. I REGRET THAT WE DO NOT MEET AGAIN UNDER MORE PLEASANT CIRCUMSTANCES.
METRON!
WHAT BRINGS YOU SO FAR FROM THE SAFETY OF NEW GENESIS?
AS EVER, PRINCESS, I AM DRAWN BY KNOWLEDGE. THERE LIES WITHIN MY REACH THE ANSWER TO AN ANCIENT PUZZLE.
BUT AN ANSWER I FEAR YOU WILL NOT WISH TO LEARN.
I RECALL NOW YOUR HABIT OF SPEAKING IN RIDDLES, GODLING.
IF YOU HAVE LIGHT TO SHED UPON THIS MATTER, DO SO, AND QUICKLY.
WHAT I CHOOSE TO REVEAL, I REVEAL IN MY OWN DUE TIME, PRINCESS.
BUT KNOW THIS, FOR A BEGINNING: EVERYTHING YOU BELIEVE IS BASED ON LIES.

"MORE YEARS AGO THAN ANY MAN CAN NUMBER, THE OLD GODS UNLEASHED UPON THEMSELVES A TERRIBLE RAGNAROK.
"OUT OF THAT DESTRUCTION WAS BORN TWO WORLDS...
"TWO NEW HOMES, TO TWO NEW RACES OF GODS.
"ONE, THE BRIGHT AND BEAUTIFUL WORLD OF NEW GENESIS.
"THE OTHER, DARK AND BLEAK APOKOLIPS.
"BUT WHAT REMAINED UNKNOWN FOR CENTURIES...
"...WAS THAT THE SAME POWER WHICH BIRTHED THOSE SISTER WORLDS...
"...SPILLED OUT IN ALL DIRECTIONS INTO A UNIVERSE ALL UNAWARES.

"AND SOME OF IT, AFTER EONS JOURNEYING THROUGH THE ETERNAL VOID OF SPACE...
"STRUCK A CLUSTER OF ISLANDS THEN NO MORE THAN SAVAGE OUTCROPPINGS FROM THE HOSTILE SEA.
"...STRUCK A SMALL AND INSIGNIFICANT WORLD ONE DAY TO WEAR THE NAME EARTH.
"AND PLACED WITHIN THOSE ROCKS, THOSE SHORES A SHIMMERING NEXUS OF DIVINITY.
"A SEED WHICH WOULD, IN THE LONG PASSAGE OF YEARS, BEAR A MOST REMARKABLE FRUIT..."
NO! YOU SPEAK BLASPHEMY, METRON!
DO I?
YOU CALL ME "GODLING," PRINCESS, YET THOSE BEINGS WHOM YOU HAVE WORSHIPPED ALL YOUR LIFE ARE MERE SHADOWS OF MY POWER.
OF THE POWER OF THE LEAST OF NEW GENESIS.

YET IN THAT SHADOW LIES POWER, AND IT IS THAT POWER WHICH DARKSEID CRAVES.
ONCE BEFORE HE TRIED TO SNARE IT FOR HIMSELF, ONLY TO BE THWARTED BY YOURSELF AND SUPERMAN.
AND NOW, AS THEN, THE GODS HAVE CHOSEN TO ABSENT THEMSELVES.
DARKSEID BROUGHT YOU HERE BECAUSE HE HOPED TO LEARN FROM YOU THEIR PRESENT LOCATION.
WAIT A MINUTE! LET ME GET THIS STRAIGHT.
THIS IS THE GREEK GODS YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT HERE?
ZEUS. APOLLO. PAN...
THE SAME, EARTHLING.
THEY WERE BORN OF GENERATIONS OF HUMANS LIKE YOURSELF--BUT GENERATIONS STEEPED IN THE POWER OF MY LONG LOST FOREBEARS.
WHAT ARROGANCE IS THIS, THAT YOU WOULD CLAIM THE GODS OF OLYMPUS AS MERE OFFSHOOTS OF YOUR OWN POWER?
NO ARROGANCE, DIANA.
BUT BIDE A WHILE. THERE IS MORE TO THE TALE I HAVE TO TELL.


DARKSEID'S ATTACK ON YOU WAS ONLY PART OF HIS SCHEME.
BUT DARKSEID HAS NEVER BEEN ONE TO INVEST ALL HIS HOPES IN A SINGLE PLAN.
EVEN AS HE MOVED AGAINST YOU, THE FULL FORCE OF HIS SHOCK TROOPS WAS UNLEASHED AGAINST A SECONDARY TARGET.
HIS SPIES HAVING INFORMED HIM OF YOUR RECENT RELOCATION TO THE HUMAN HABITATION CENTER OF GATEWAY CITY...
...HE INTRODUCED APOKOLIPTIAN TECHNOLOGY, KNOWING SO DOING WOULD EVENTUALLY LURE YOU INTO A POSITION WHERE HE WOULD BE ABLE TO CAPTURE YOU.
A TARGET I BELIEVE YOU KNOW BY THE NAME... THEMYSCIRA.
NO!!

PARADISE ISLAND HAS BEEN DESTROYED!!