



®
**WONDER
WOMAN**

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BILL LOEBS
LEE MODER
ANDIE PARKS

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COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

WONDER WOMAN



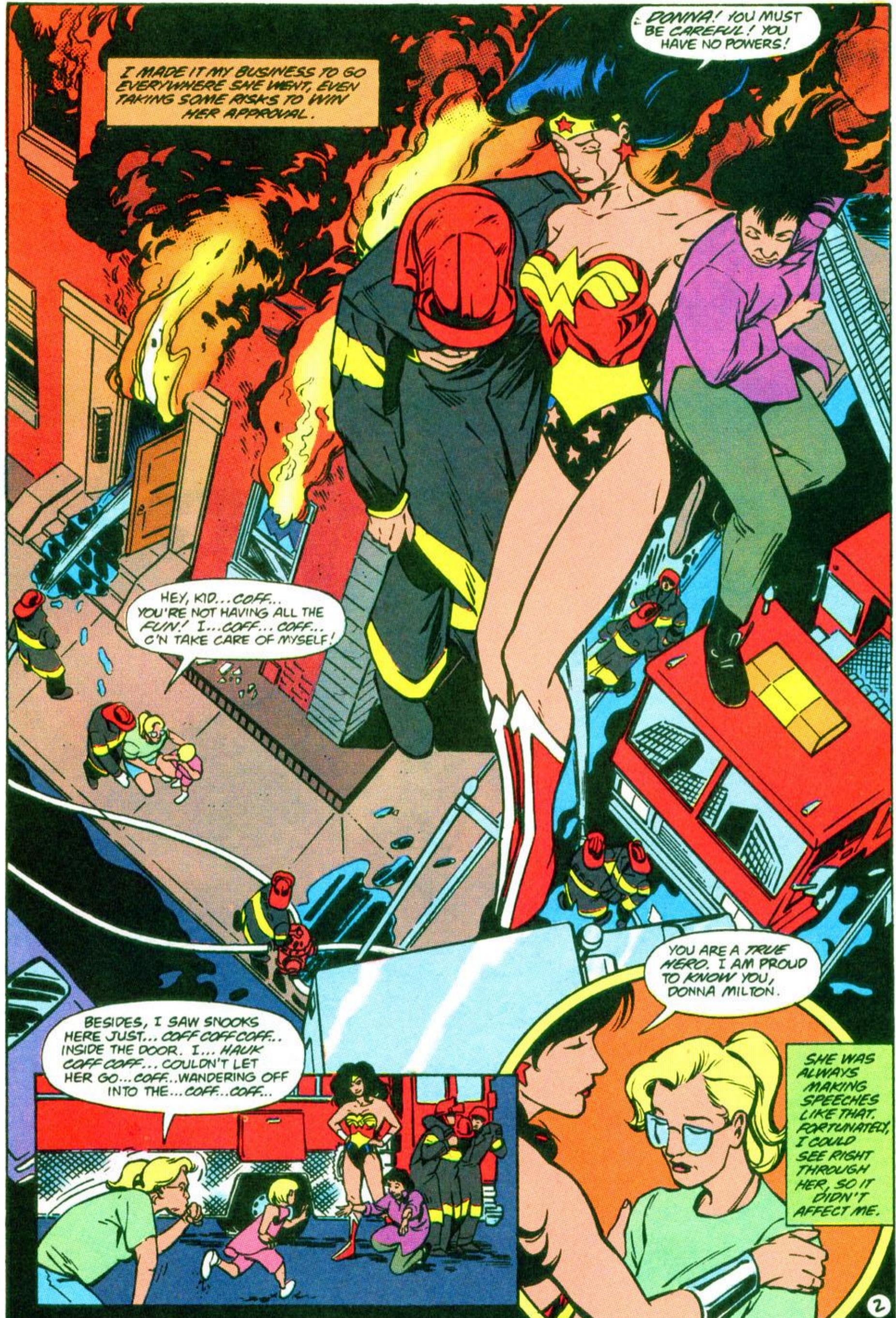
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I REMEMBER HOW DIFFICULT IT WAS TO LEAD DIANA INTO THE TRAP. AND HOW HARD SHE FOUGHT TO LIVE.

BUT I MOSTLY REMEMBER THE MONTHS BEFORE, AS I PREPARED THE GROUND FOR MY TREACHERY...

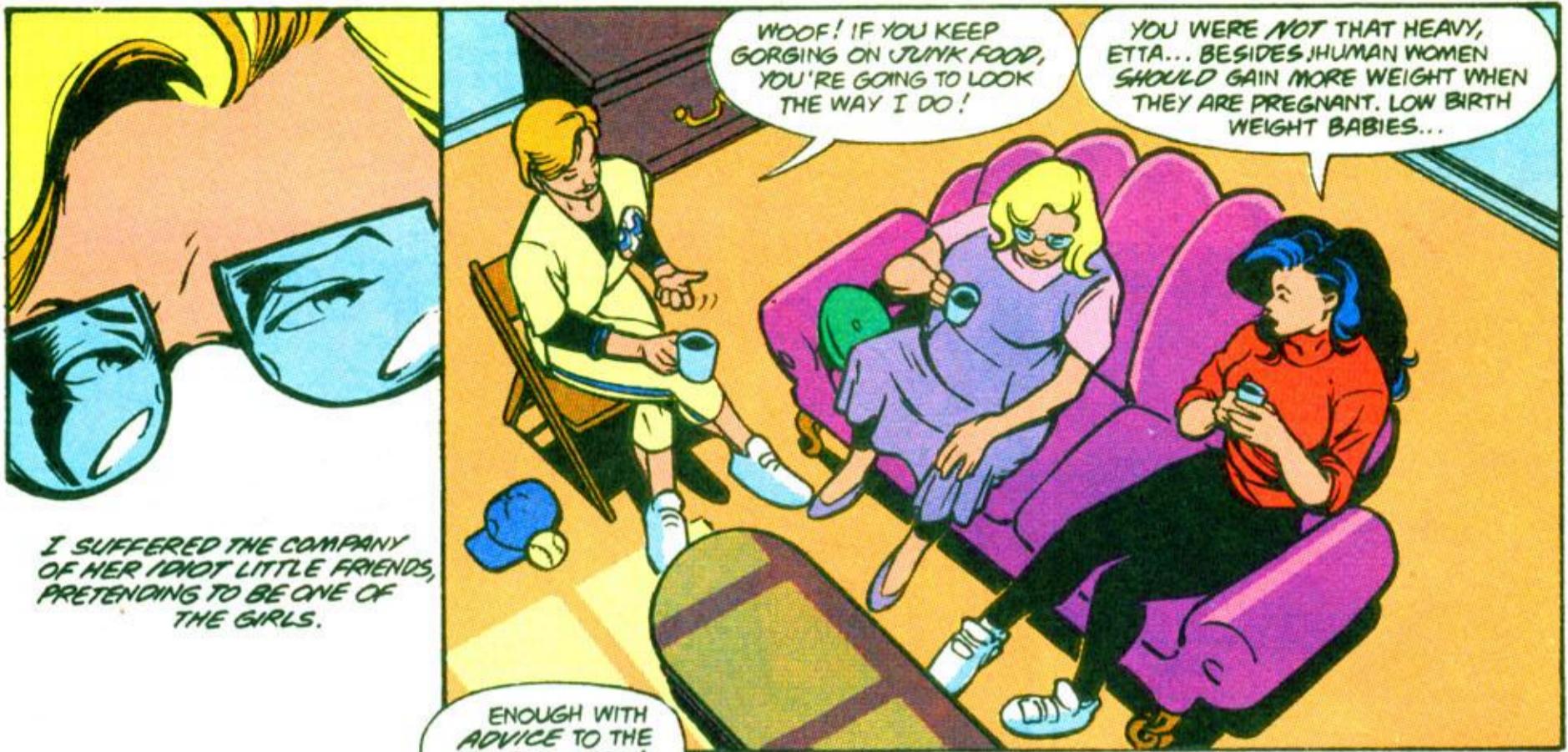




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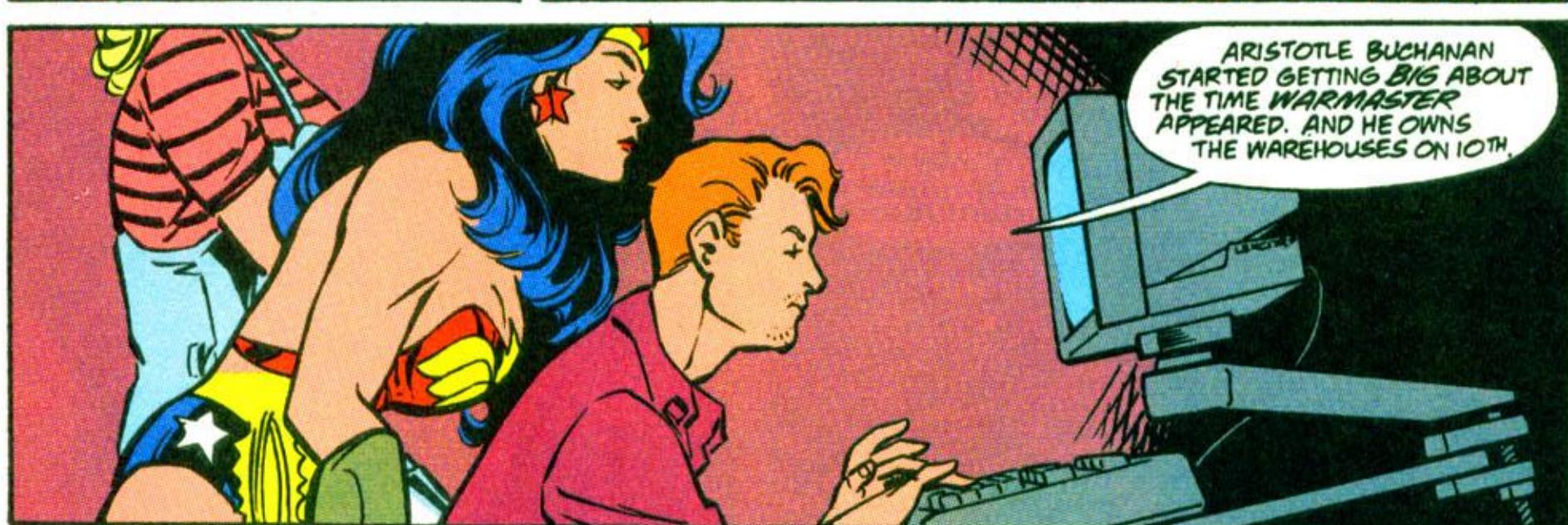
SO WHEN DIANA... WONDER WOMAN... BEGAN CLOSING IN ON HIM, I WAS THERE TO WARN HIM OF HER EVERY MOVE.

THE HIGH-TECH WEAPONS ARE EMANATING FROM THIS NEIGHBORHOOD, NEAR 10TH STREET. WHAT WE NEED IS A CONNECTION WITH S.T.A.R. LABS.

THREE TECHNICIANS AND ONE MANAGER FROM S.T.A.R. LABS LIVE IN THAT GENERAL AREA...

MAYFLY WROTE THE WORD "ARES" IN HER OWN BLOOD. IF THE GOD OF WAR IS INVOLVED...

NO "ARES," BUT HERE'S SOMETHING. A SMALL-TIME FENCE NAMED ARI BUCHANAN HAS BEEN MOVING UP IN THE LOCAL MOBS.



AND NOW, I'VE DONE MY WORK WELL. WORKING FROM THE INSIDE. I'VE DESTROYED WONDER WOMAN.

Ares Rising: The HUMAN MAZE

THE HUMAN HEART IS A MOST PECULIAR MAZE, WHICH, ONCE VENTURED INTO, LEADS TO ENDS UNDREAMT OF.
-- JANICE MIDDLETON, NOVELIST

WILLIAM
MESSNER-LOEBS
writer
LEE MODER
penciller
ANDE PARKS
and
AARON McCLELLAN
inker
JOHN COSTANZA
letterer
PATRICIA MULVIGHILL
colorist
RUBEN DIAZ
asst. editor
BRIAN AUGUSTYN
editor



SO... ARE YOU THE HUMAN DOG
WHO LETS THE WAR GOD KEEP
BLOODY DOMICILE WITHIN
HIS SHELL?

THAT WOULD
BE TELLING.
BUT, YES.

DO YOU KNOW
WHAT THIS IS?

THIS WAS HIDDEN IN THE
GUN THAT POOR FOOL TRIED TO
USE TO KILL THE INSPECTOR
A FEW WEEKS AGO.

IT CREATES A
SINGULARITY. DO
YOU KNOW WHAT
THESE ARE?

YOU
DID
THAT?

ONE CAN
ALWAYS SPEAK
THE TRUTH...
TO THE DEAD.



SHE WAS BADLY SHAKEN BY THAT, ALTHOUGH SHE DON'T SHOW IT. YOU COULD FEEL THE POWER RADIATING FROM HIM. THE POWER WAS WHAT I LOVED ABOUT HIM.

HE CAN DESTROY ANYTHING OR ANYONE! HE BREAKS OR BENDS OR KILLS ANYTHING IN HIS WAY. ALL THE WEAKLINGS ARE SWEPT ASIDE!

HE'LL BE KING IN THIS CITY AND I'LL BE HIS QUEEN!



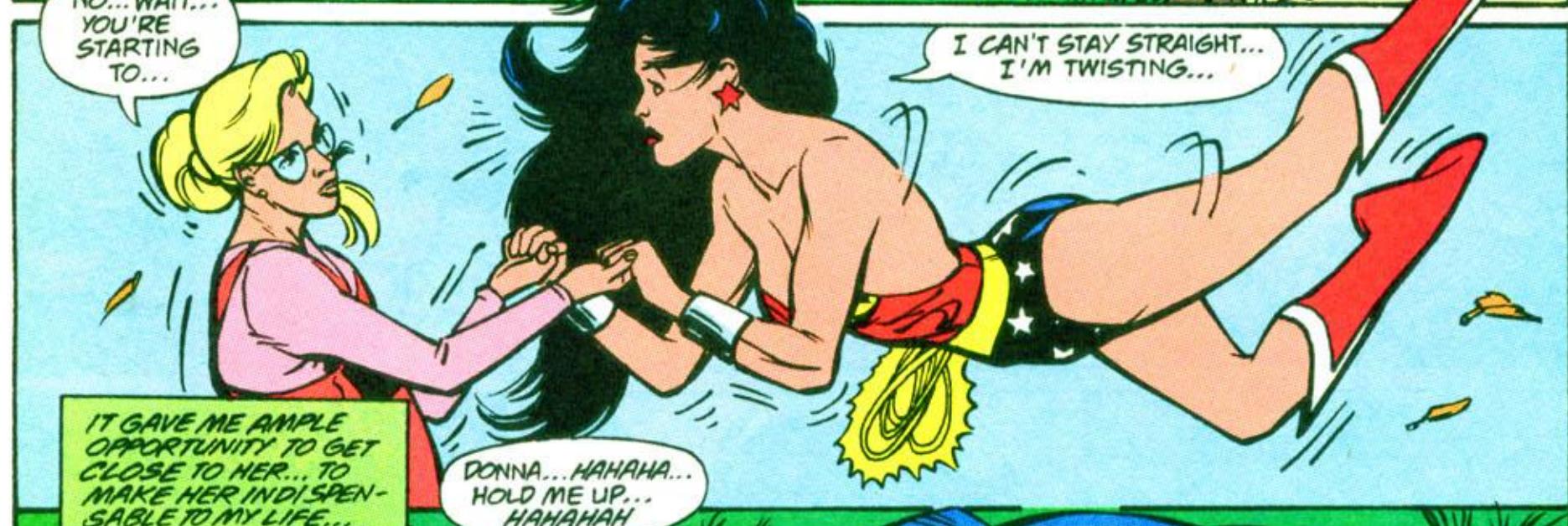
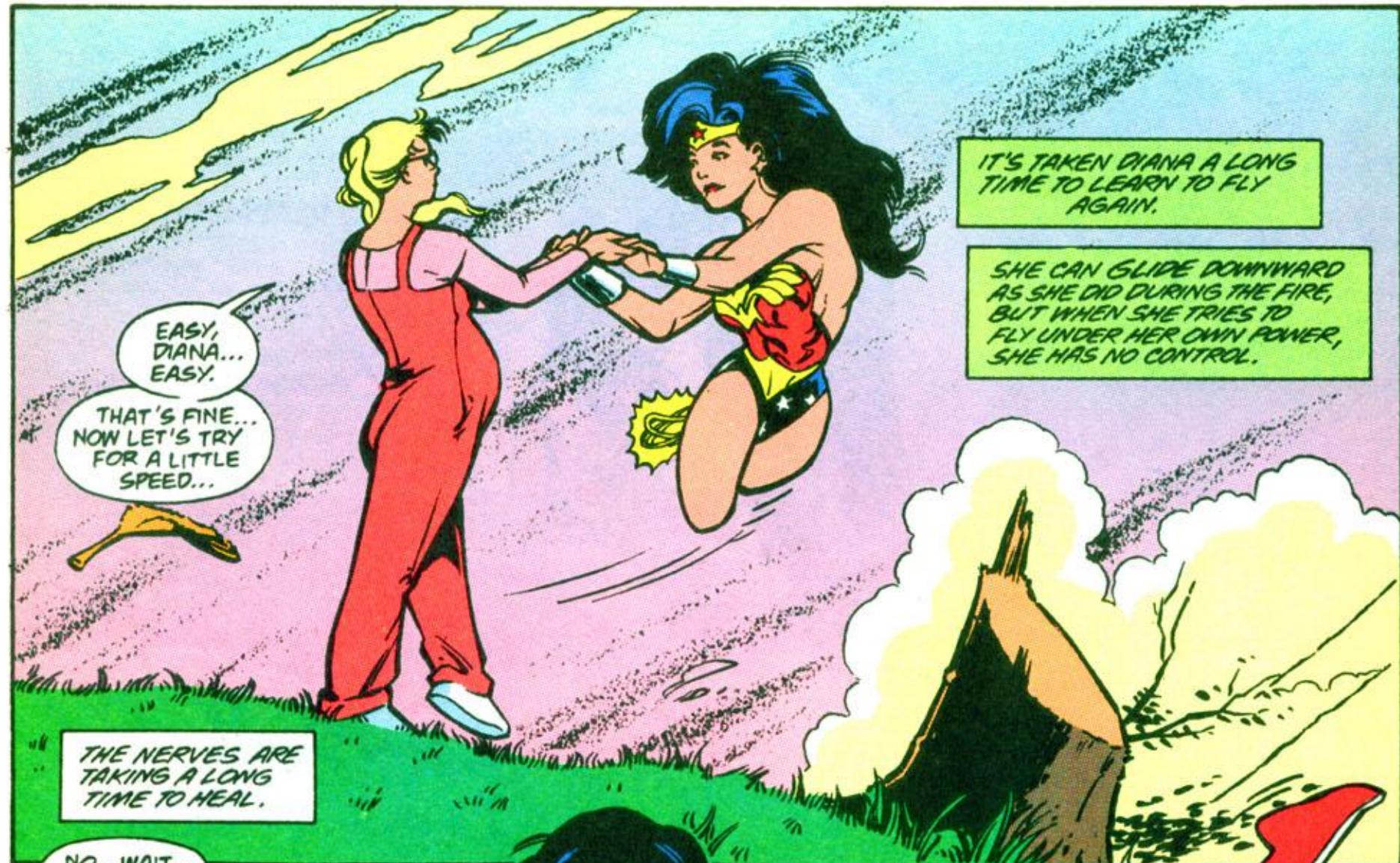
BUT ME AND I ARE EXACTLY THE SAME! WE GO AFTER WHAT WE WANT AND GOD HELP ANYONE WHO GETS IN OUR WAY!

I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN I WASN'T THE SAME AS OTHER PEOPLE... NOT "GOOD" ...NOT "NICE". ALL I HAD GOING FOR ME WAS AMBITION AND GREED.

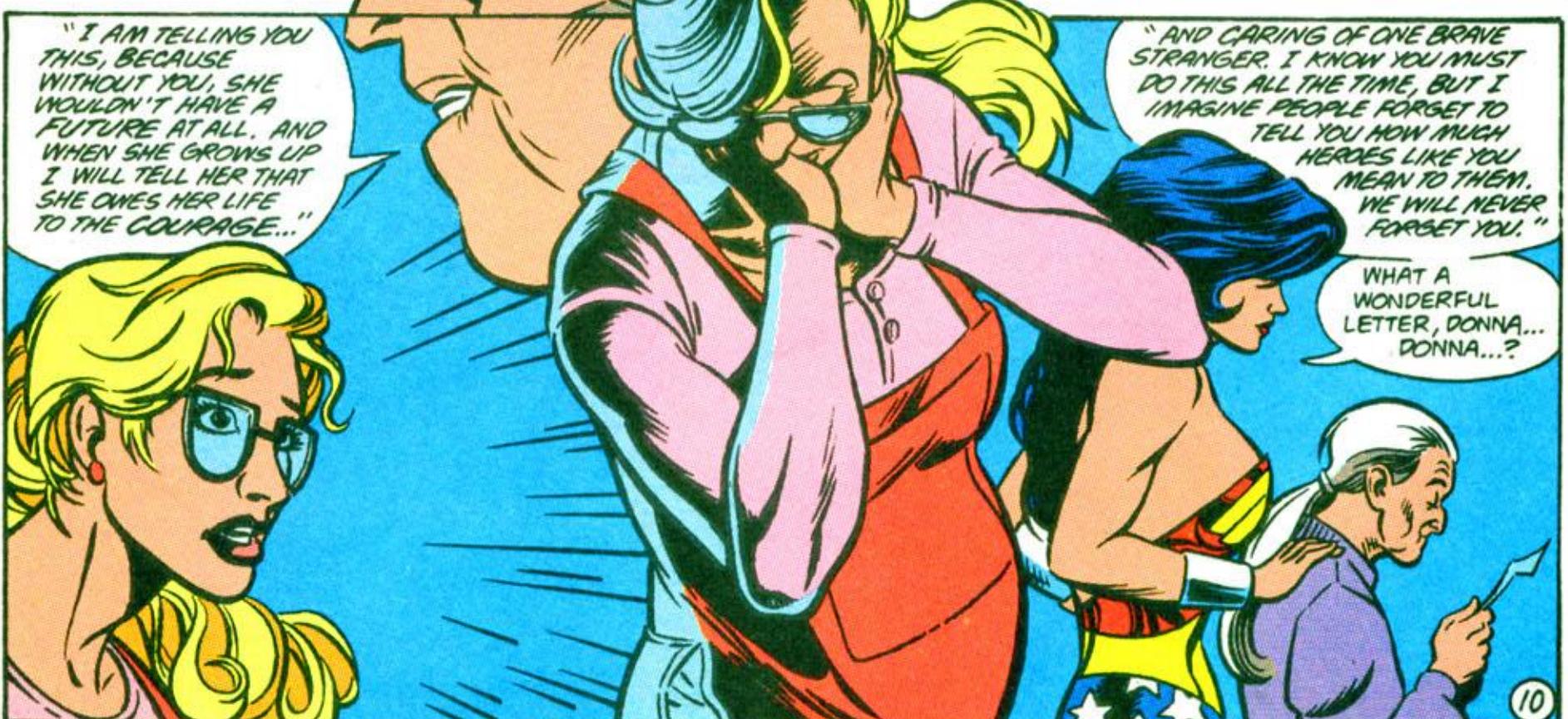
SKARRK-
CLK
EVERYTHING ELSE WAS EMPTY.

IT'S A GUN. A VERY SPECIAL GUN. THE BULLETS ARE ROCKET-PROPELLED AND ARMOR-PIERCING EXPLOSIVE SHELLS.

I HAD IT MADE ESPECIALLY TO DESTROY META-HUMAN TISSUE! SO THAT I COULD DO THIS...!







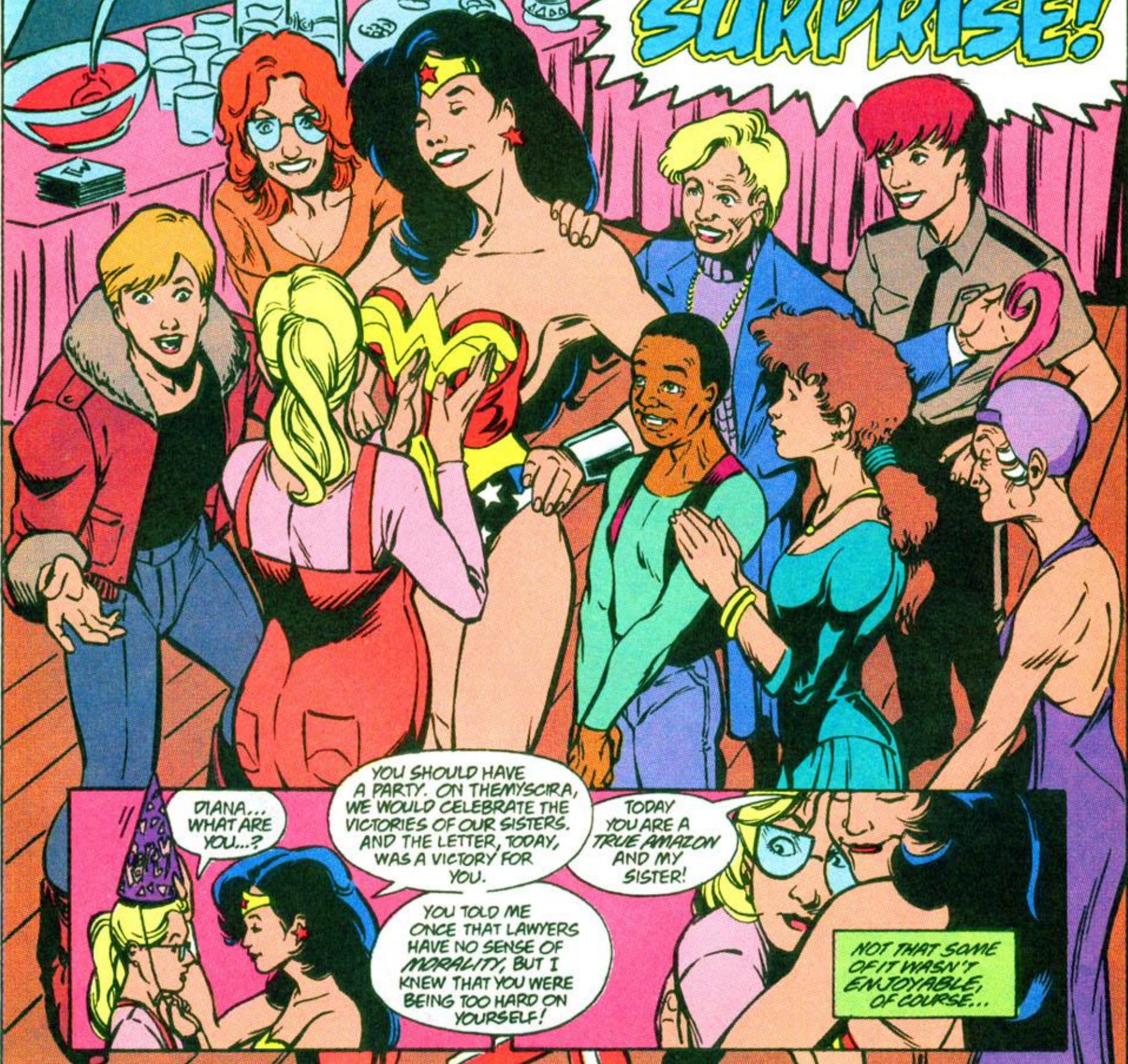
FRANKLY, I DON'T ENJOY THE COMPANY OF OTHER WOMEN. AND FRIENDSHIP SLOWS YOU DOWN. WHATEVER HAPPENED, I MANAGED TO KEEP IT IN PERSPECTIVE.

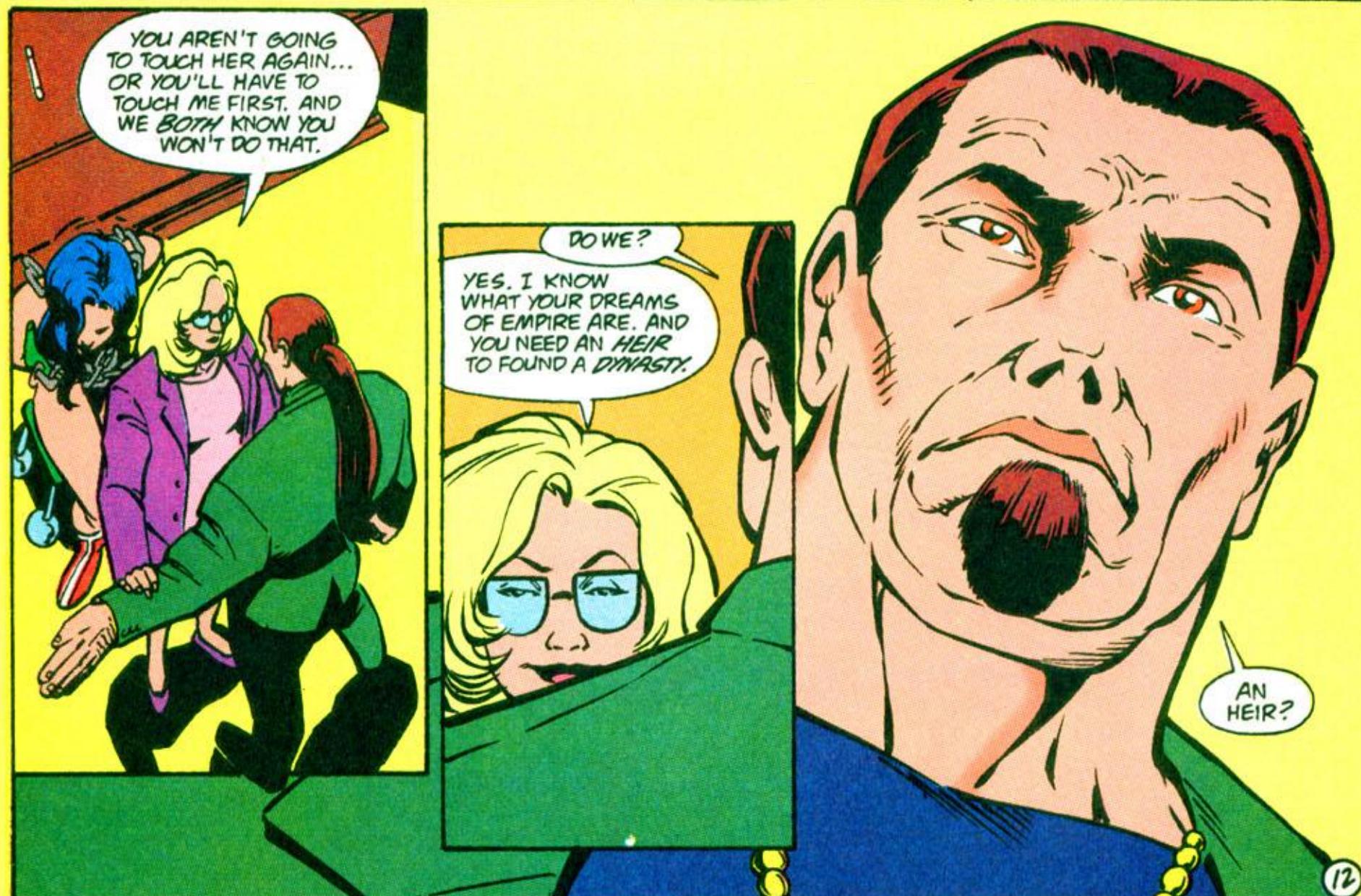
BUT, ETTA... I DON'T SEE WHY DIANA HAS TO MEET WITH ME NOW, TONIGHT, AND IN YOUR HANGAR, F'GOD'S SAKE!

HEY, I DON'T TRY TO EXPLAIN AMAZON LOGIC! SHE SAYS BRING, I BRING....!

WELCOME THE HEROINE

SURPRISE!





YES, AN HEIR.
I AM CARRYING
YOUR CHILD.

YOU TOLD ME YOU
HAD FAKE THIS
PREGNANCY... TO
WIN SYMPATHY.

AND YOU
BELIEVED
ME.

I KNEW YOU WOULDN'T
CHECK... AND YOU'D BE RELUCTANT
TO GIVE ME THIS MUCH POWER
OVER YOU. SO I WANTED TO WAIT
UNTIL THERE WAS NOTHING
YOU COULD DO.

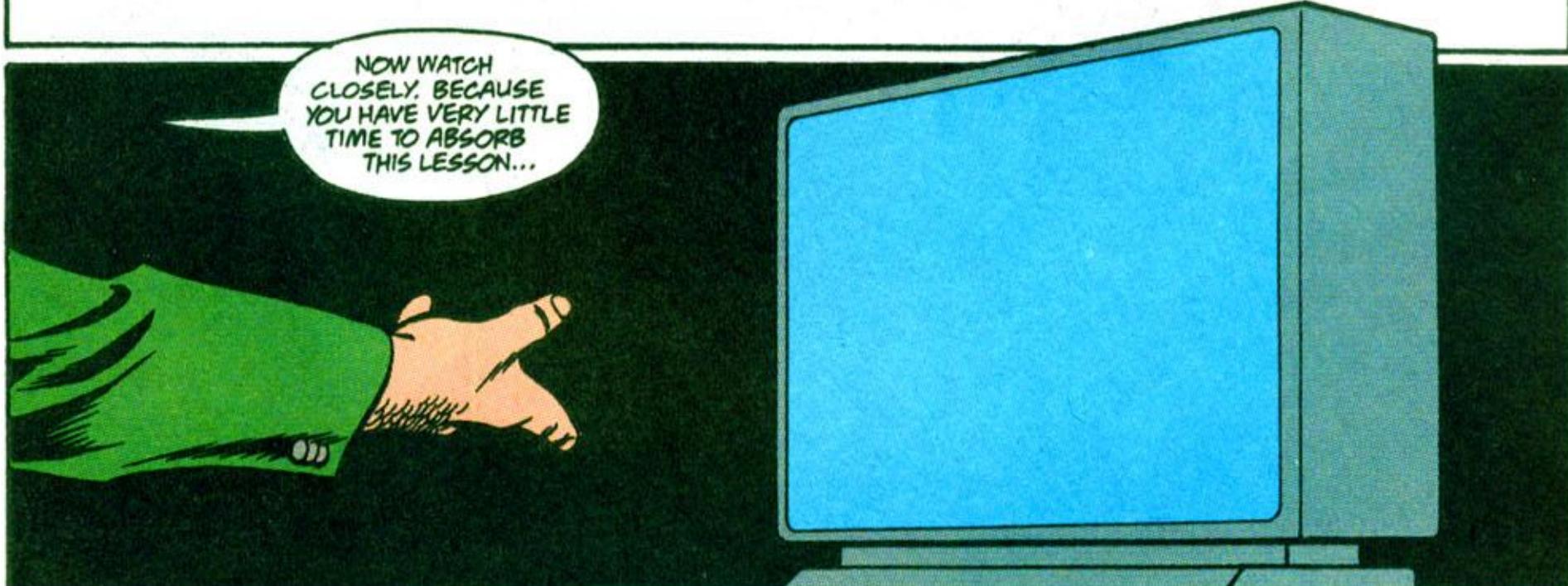
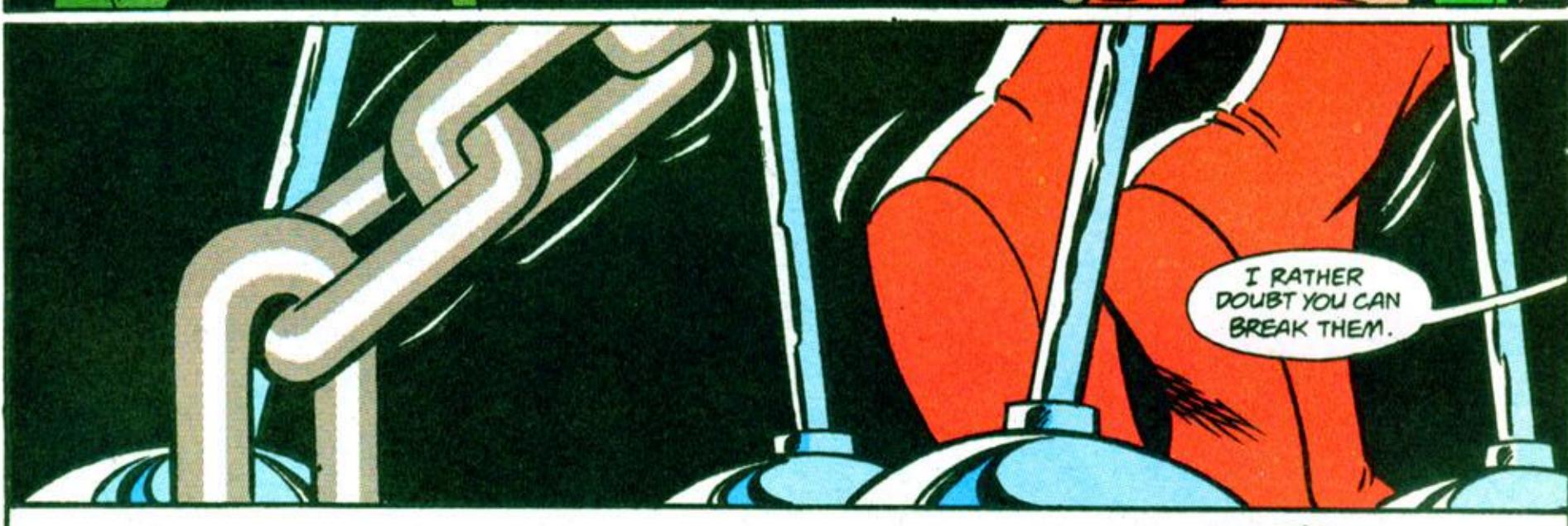
YOU SEE, ARES, WE'RE FULL
PARTNERS NOW. AND PARTNERS
DON'T IGNORE ONE ANOTHER'S
ADVICE.

INTERESTING.

FOOL.

BWHHUNK





THESE WATERY TUNNELS HAVE BEEN USED FOR SMUGGLING SINCE BEFORE JOHN HANCOCK'S MEN USED THEM. BUT IT TOOK MY GENIUS TO UNCOVER THEM AGAIN.

EVERY DAY A FLOOD OF WEAPONS AND NARCOTICS ENTERS BOSTON, TURNING IT INTO A STEWING POWDER KEG!

THIS IS THE SCENE JUST BENEATH US. THERE ARE ENOUGH WEAPONS HERE TO START SEVERAL WARS!

WHEN THE BATTLE STARTS, NOTHING WILL BE ABLE TO STOP IT. BOSTON WILL BURN... LIKE KINDLING.



AND AFTER
BOSTON, THEN
WHAT?

STAR LINERS
CROSSING

THE COUNTRY... THE
WORLD, YOU SAY? AH,
LITTLE AMAZON, YOU
MAKE ME BLUSH!

CAN YOU IMAGINE
HOW PRECARIOUS
A STATE THAT
WORLD IS NOW IN?
OLD ENEMIES FACE
EACH OTHER IN AN
IDEOLOGICAL VACUUM.
A SINGLE STRONG
BLOW COULD...

SKKKRAAKK

SKKKRRRRRAAAKKKK

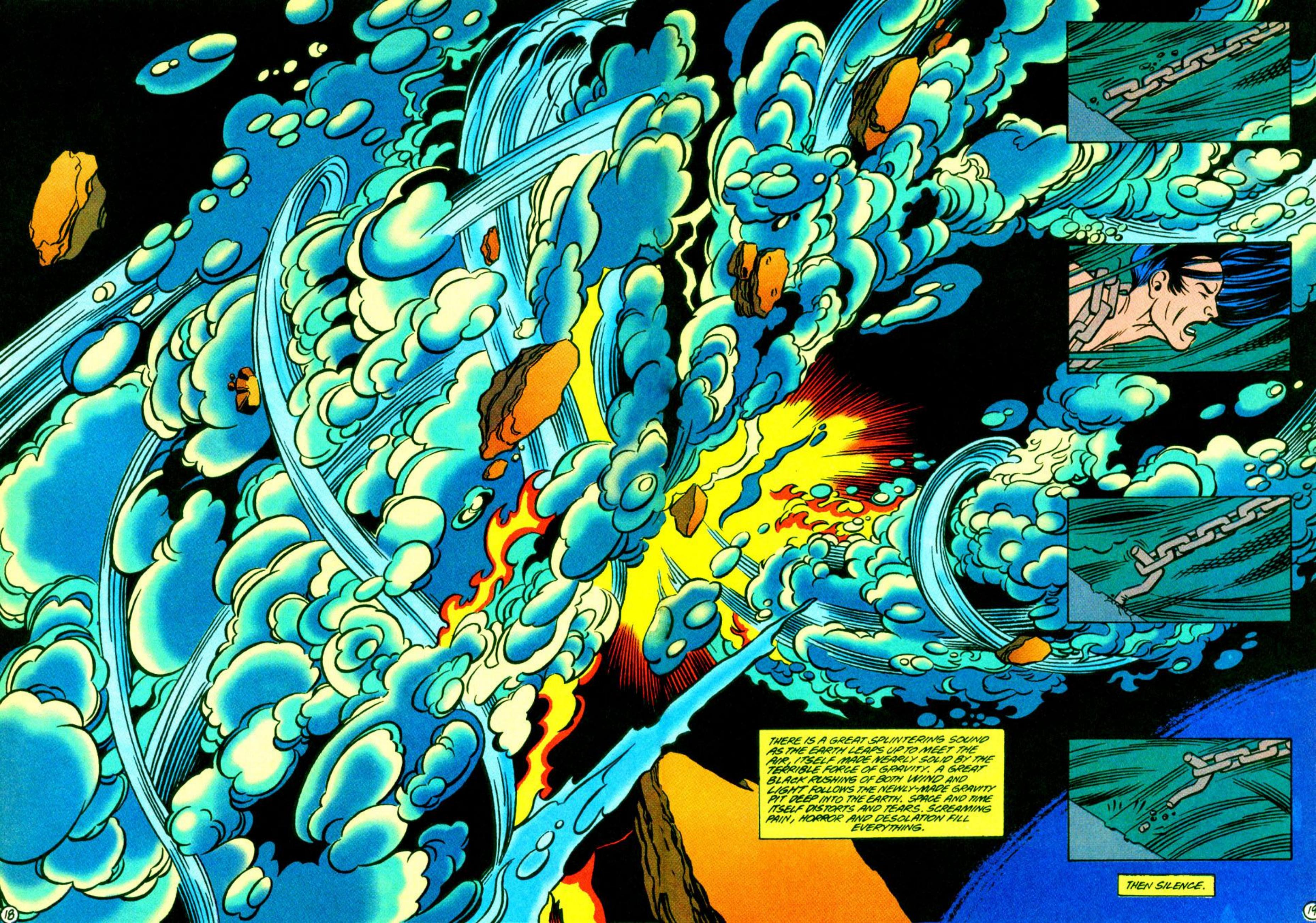
YOU'VE ACTUALLY BROKEN
THE SEAL. I SEEM TO ALWAYS
BE UNDERESTIMATING
YOU. I THINK IT'S TIME
TO END THIS...

DO... YOU KNOW... WHAT
THIS... IS... COFF...
ARES...?

ARES...

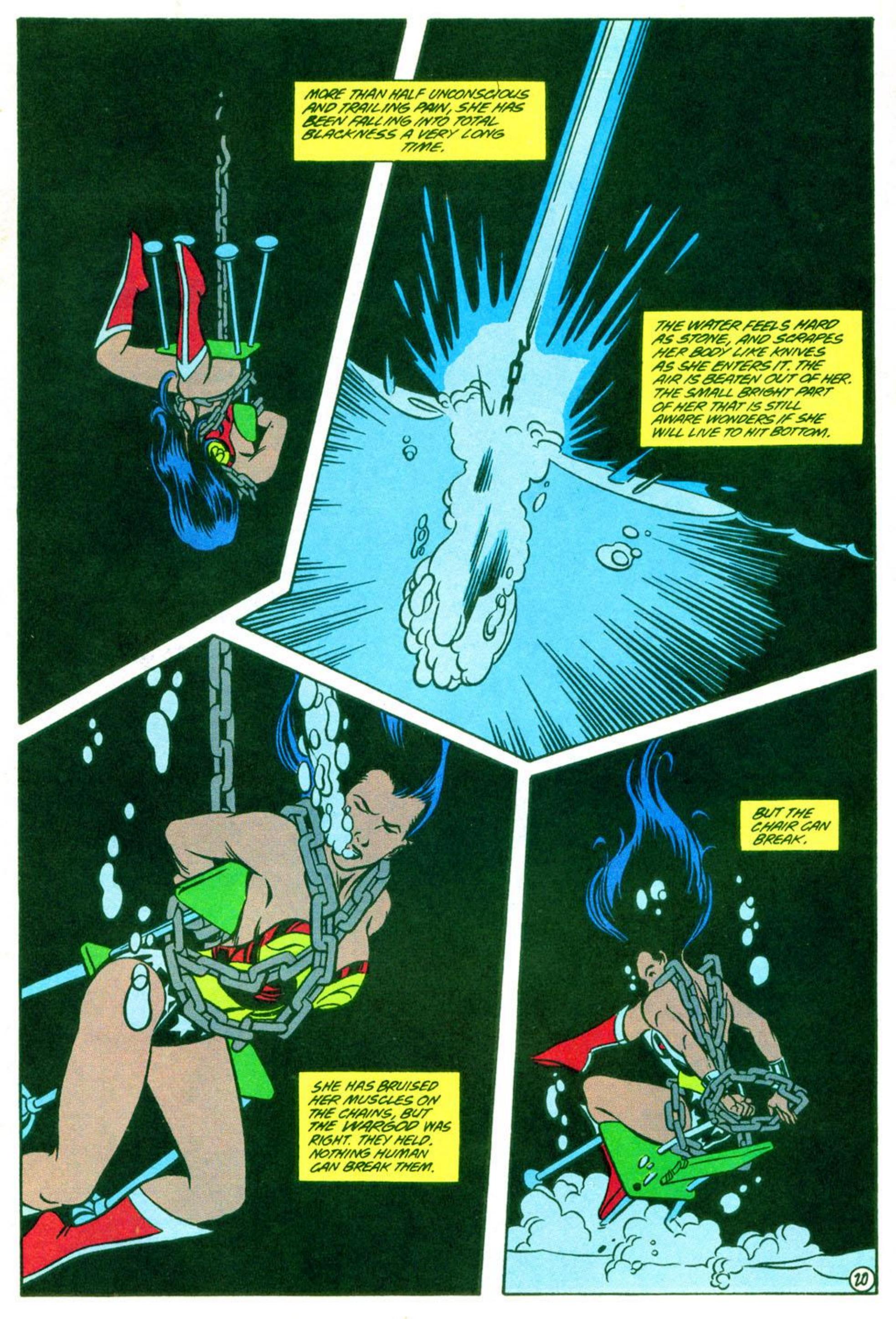
NO! YOU'LL
KILL US ALL...!
I'LL...

CLKT



THERE IS A GREAT SPLINTERING SOUND AS THE EARTH LEAPS UP TO MEET THE AIR, ITSELF MADE NEARLY SOLID BY THE TERRIBLE FORCE OF GRAVITY. A GREAT BLACK RUSHING OF BOTH WIND AND LIGHT FOLLOWS THE NEWLY-MADE GRAVITY PIT DEEP INTO THE EARTH. SPACE AND TIME ITSELF DISTORTS AND TEARS. SCREAMING PAIN, HORROR AND DESOLATION FILL EVERYTHING.

THEN SILENCE.



MORE THAN HALF UNCONSCIOUS AND TRAILING PAIN, SHE HAS BEEN FALLING INTO TOTAL BLACKNESS A VERY LONG TIME.

THE WATER FEELS HARD AS STONE, AND SCRAPES HER BODY LIKE KNIVES AS SHE ENTERS IT. THE AIR IS BEATEN OUT OF HER. THE SMALL BRIGHT PART OF HER THAT IS STILL AWARE WONDERS IF SHE WILL LIVE TO HIT BOTTOM.

SHE HAS BRUISED HER MUSCLES ON THE CHAINS, BUT THE WARGOD WAS RIGHT. THEY HELD. NOTHING HUMAN CAN BREAK THEM.

BUT THE CHAIR CAN BREAK.

HOW DEEP WAS
SHE? WHERE WAS
SHE? WAS THERE
ANY AIR TO FIND...?

YES!

THERE WAS BREATH IN HER BODY
AND HER LIMBS WORKED. NONE
OF THE PAIN WAS OVERWHELMING.
SHE HAD SURVIVED. BUT THE
BOMB...?

DIANA...?

DONNA...?
ARE YOU
THERE...?

HURTSS...
IT HURTS,
DIANA...

YOU SURVIVED!
WE CAN GET OUT OF
HERE! FIRST I'LL...

DIANA...
THE BABY'S
COMING... I
CAN'T HOLD
IT BACK...

IT'S SO DARK... SO COLD.
AND THERE'S ONLY WATER...
EVERWHERE...! THE BABY WILL...
DIE, DIANA... WE'LL ALL...
DIE...

IT'S... ALL RIGHT.
WE'LL HANDLE THIS...
SOMEHOW...

TO BE CONTINUED!

WONDER WOMAN



Dear Mr. Diaz and Mr. Augustyn,

The very first Wonder Woman story I ever read was George Pérez's classic "Who Killed Mindy Meyer" story in issue #13. I kept reading for a few more months after that but I soon grew weary of the unbelievable fantasy plotlines, whiny supporting characters and heavy-handed moralizing that crept into the stories from time to time. I quit reading the comic after issue forty-something.

Now, years later, I'm back. Why? William Messner-Loebs. He is quite simply one of the best writers in the business. He's not simply taking up where Pérez left off, he's restructuring WONDER WOMAN for the long haul.

Issue #80 is by far the best issue so far. Ares Buchanan and Donna Milton are the best bad guys this side of an Elmore Leonard novel. Keep the mythology and rampaging Greek gods to a minimum. I find the world of grifters, sleazy P.I.'s, slackers, wise guys and hit men so much more interesting. Princess Diana is out of her element and this will keep her hopping. These situations will break the cool and regal disposition she's maintained for all these years, and challenge her, physically and mentally. She will realize that good intentions aren't enough, and order in life is an illusion. At least, I hope this is the direction you are taking. Diana needs some chaos and confusion in her life. It is the lifeblood of all good drama. Now if you can just figure out a way to get rid of Etta Candy...

Sincerely,
Bryan English
Rock Island, WA

Um... yeah, sure, that's exactly the direction we're taking. Really!

Seriously, your points are dead on with most of the realizations we made in trying to figure how to handle Diana's adventures. It wasn't easy; there have been almost as many "definitive" takes on Wonder Woman as there have been writers and artists assigned to the book. We've seen the "everything I ever learned in my Bullfinch's Mythology" approach, the "put her in a pants suit like Mrs. Peel" approach, the perennially favorite "what the heck, let's just treat her like every male super-hero" approach and too many others to count. Believe me, it's tough.

Former WW editor Tom Peyer had the overwhelming good sense (and a nudge or two from chess master Mark Waid) to hire Bill Loeks to write the book a year or so back, and that still stands as one of the best decisions ever made on this book —

almost enough to make up for WAR OF THE GODS, even. Betwixt us all, dropping Diana into a realistic world of contrasts and violence and moral ambivalence still seems like a good idea. And when the next set of creators arrives to define the new definitive Wonder Woman, we'll bow to them.



Dear Wondrous People,

I should preface this letter by informing you that I am one of the many people who have been reading WONDER WOMAN for a long time (since 1976; 15 or so years), yet I've never bothered to write. I incorrectly assumed that the Amazon princess would live through everything. I must say that "Crisis" was an awful shock. I'm writing primarily in response to Mr. Diaz's "Pérez Complex" observation and to expound upon my tremendous appreciation of Mr. Loebs. May I call him William?

No one can deny the fabulous work that George Pérez did in resurrecting our favorite heroine. Under his hand, Diana breathed, flourished and fulfilled most of the potential in the character that was always to be accessed. Mentally, physically and (most important) spiritually, she was beautiful. Ultimately, however, Diana lacked two important qualities brought to the character by Mr. Loebs's charming, concise and thoughtful stories: humor and humanity.

One of the reasons cited for the failure of the Superman/Wonder Woman romance was that Superman viewed Diana as "a sort of goddess" (though we all know the real reason, as stated in the SUPERMAN Annual #11, is that it would be too predictable) and "way out of (his) league." Pérez's Diana was the near epitome of perfection — a being relegated to remaining a stranger in our culture by the very nature of her "perfection." Mr. Loebs has delicately drawn us to a Diana who participates in our culture in some of the most fundamental respects — humor, 9-5 work, apartment-hunting and furnishing, kind-hearted cynicism, mundanity. To these elements of our culture she brings her unique perspective while continuing to fight the bad folk, defend her ideals, help the needy and maintain her faith. No wonder she's called Wonder Woman.

I will forever feel indebted to George Pérez for so fantastically rebirthing my favorite comics character of all time and fulfilling so much of

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her wonderful potential. Mr. Marston would be proud. Similarly, I think Mr. Marston would be equally proud of Mr. Loebs for helping Diana enjoy human culture, enjoy interaction with that culture, and understand (mostly) the people with whom she interacts.

Mr. Loebs (William, Bill, whichever...), I hope you hang around.

Frank Smith
Atlanta, GA

Like I said, Bill (I can call him that, you probably can too) is the best thing ever to happen to this book. I'm glad everyone seems to be coming around to the right way of thinking. If he's lucky, they may even name a complex after him someday.



Dear Wonder Team,

After reading the letter column in WONDER WOMAN #80, I felt that I had to write to you. I've only been reading WONDER WOMAN for the last year or so and I've enjoyed every issue. I've realized that, despite your terrific stories and wonderful artwork, WONDER WOMAN isn't very popular. It does seem as if the Punishers of the comic-book world are getting the most attention, doesn't it? I've decided to follow the advice you gave in #80. People don't read WONDER WOMAN because they won't give it a chance. I'm going to recommend the book to my friends. I doubt they'll be disappointed.

I'm glad you haven't changed Diana's character toward a darker side in order to make her more popular. I'm also happy that you haven't resorted to publishing copies with glow-in-the-dark, multicolored, holographic covers to boost sales. A book should be bought for its quality. After all, the wrapping isn't important. Of course, I realize I'm lecturing to the converted. I want to let you know that for as long as you keep up with enjoyable stories, you'll have me as one of your readers.

By the way, I think the artwork in WW #80 was terrific. It was really unique.

With respect and love,
Anderson Lam
Chicago, IL

I sense a trend here... everyone agrees with me. Do you realize how rare that is? But, to judge by the marketplace — and by what really, really sells — a whole lot of people do care very much about the packaging and don't care a whit about stories. Go figure.

Dear Brian,

Last week my typewriter's solenoid self-destructed, this week my borrowed computer dumped files on me and refused to print, and today my car's battery was dead than blonde jokes at a feminist rally. I had to borrow the passenger side of a neighbor's car just to get to the comics store for *WONDER WOMAN* #80.

Good thing it was worth it. Did I mention it was raining?

Sometimes Bill's writing is sort of like...oh, I don't know: maybe a fresh pineapple. A deceptive surface, a bit prickly, but then...then, when you get inside, you find a wonderfully succulent feast. He doesn't write down to readers by relying on the obvious; he makes you dig, dissect, decipher — and the rewards far exceed the effort. After the first reading I was prepared to dislike this issue; shoot! Diana was hardly in it at all. After the second, I'm convinced this is the most exciting, mature storyline Bill's done in the book.

Mayfly, as corrupt as she was, was no match for that nasty Donna Milton, who has now earned my Black Widow in Training award. Ares' child in her womb or not, Donna should know that kings have a penchant for undoing their makers, should they become...inexpedient.

As Diana apparently has. "Force didn't work...time to try guilt..." To what end? Surely Donna and Ares don't expect Diana to conveniently suicide...or do they? Mayfly emphatically did. Diana's been battered physically and psychologically—she may indeed be ripe for the Donna/Ares machinations, aided by Ares' magical gadgets.

We know that Diana abhors betrayal, particularly sister/sister. When she finally discovers Donna's duplicity, somebody's going to catch hell. Do we get to see just where Diana's limits lie, and will you push her beyond them into some uncontrollable eruption? That would be special. I can't wait to see how this thing unfolds.

If you plan to pummel Diana's emotions and exploit her vulnerabilities, then maybe this would be the perfect time to introduce romance into her life. As, perhaps, her confidence and self-reliance are systematically undermined by Donna and Ares, she may, finally, need to share her immense burdens with a sympathetic someone(s) she trusts, and whom she knows cares for her. After all, Etta's been inundating her with innuendoes. Oh, gee, Ed and Micah spring to mind as viable candidates.

I guess Diana wasn't as badly injured as I deduced from #79, as she'll be helping Hoppy go after her back child support (Micah/Ed). I appreciate tremendously Bill's exposure of real social issues. Though the delinquent dad may be true in this case — and it's a tragically frequent scenario (Ed/Micah)—I hope somewhere that it's balanced with the observation that it's not always the father who defaults. Diana could use some help here, I'll wager (Micah/Ed).

I do have several questions, though: what happened to poor Flash? Linda needs to know. After a week has passed, why is Etta still wearing the same clothes? And the reference to Bialya's government top-

pling: I kind of thought that happened when the country was nuked in *DEATHSTROKE*. [No—that was Qurac.] Just who is paying the monstrous hospital bill Diana's accrued? She certainly can't. Perhaps Max Lord and the JLA could underwrite it. Personally, I think the city of Boston should establish a contingency fund, perhaps partially paid for by private donations; after all, Diana risks her life for her city and its citizens regularly and, unlike New York, obviously the super community of choice, she's the only bona fide super-hero Boston can claim. Think she'd go for it, quid pro quo (Ed/Micah)?

Congratulations to Brian Bolland on winning the Eisner for his gorgeous covers here and for *ANIMAL MAN*; to you, Brian, on the birth of Allison Marie; and to Bill, for his and Sam Kieth's excellent series *The Maxx*.

For those who haven't read the Bantam book *THE FURTHER ADVENTURES OF WONDER WOMAN* — go get it. It's nice to see Diana in prose. And, as you stated in #80, Dan Vado's writing in JLA has energized that book. He's obviously done his homework on Diana.

I've been practicing daily with my compound bow. I'll let you know when I can shoot down the barrel of a submachine gun at several hundred yards...don't hold your breath (Micah/Ed).

Alas, one other way Bill's stories are like that allegorical pineapple: you finish them and you're hungry for more (Ed/Micah).

By the way, do you believe in the power of subliminals?

Bon appetit,
Nancy Champion
Manassas, VA

Subliminals? Nah... Micah and Ed... no way.

Funny thing about getting romance into Diana's life, but we keep not getting to it, somehow. Life and other adventures keep getting in the way — sort of like real life.



Dear Mr. Augustyn,

Thirty years ago my father brought home something that profoundly affected my life. My dad, to cheer up my ailing brother, brought home a comic book. Usually we weren't allowed to read frivolous entertainment, but Pete, after all, was ill. That comic book was a *FLASH* comic and I'm sorry to say I don't recall what issue it was. We were so captivated by the exploits of the fastest man alive that we picked up any comic that featured the Flash. This led us straight to the *JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA*. From the *JUSTICE LEAGUE* we came to know Green Lantern, Aquaman, Wonder Woman, Batman and Superman. But like a lot of comic-book fans, we left DC in the mid-sixties for the magic that Stan Lee was creating over at Marvel. We knew Stan really cared about the characters and the readers. That feeling came through in his stories.

I have noticed a disturbing trend in comics that has caused me to reevaluate my book selection. I do not care for the excessive amount of violence

and mayhem that has been creeping into comic books. It seems that if a comic doesn't feature a villain who is not a sociopathic murderer, or sadistic serial killer, it won't catch the interest of the new "adult" audience. And it's not just the antagonist either. Last year, I suffered through most of the convoluted "Maximum Carnage" storyline in *Spider-Man*. I have decided that I can no longer afford to support, either in principle or monetarily, a comic book that would use sixteen issues to promote and glamorize such a vile character as Venom (and they gave him his own book!). It's not just *Spider-Man*. I cannot, and will not, buy any comic just for the sake of my collection any longer. The only control we readers have is with our wallets and our letters.

After I pared my reading selections to include only those comics that remembered how to tell a story, I discovered something amazing. I found that I was buying the *SUPERMAN* titles, *FLASH*, *GREEN LANTERN*, *JUSTICE LEAGUE* and *WONDER WOMAN*. Except for Now Comics' *Green Hornet*, the comics I'm reading and enjoying today are the ones I started with thirty years ago. That same caring for the characters and readers that came through during the early days at Marvel, I feel coming from DC today.

A good comic should tell a good story. It should not just be a vehicle to promote big-name artists. Intelligent and intelligible stories should take precedence over multicovers and hologram inserts. Mr. Augustyn, you and your staff should be commended for the remarkable job of producing high-quality work month after month. At *WONDER WOMAN*, William Messner-Loebs has demonstrated that thoughtful, compelling stories are still possible in this age of blood-thirsty, gun-toting anti-heroes. I can only hope that this phase the industry is going through will pass.

I realize this letter is long, but after thirty years I think I'm entitled to be long-winded. Thanks for bringing this fan back home.

Sincerely,
Jim Elliot
Carlsbad, CA

You know, except for the fact that I'm almost certain that this is me on this side of the lettercol, I'd swear that was me, over there, writing this letter—that and the fact that I've never been to Carlsbad, California.

Great letter, and we're more than proud to be responsible for such a good percentage of your current favorite reading fare. Thanks for a great letter, Jim.

★ NEXT ISSUE ★

Everything goes KABOOM and things will never be the same for any of our characters. I know you hear that a lot, but you know I wouldn't show you. Miss it and you'll be kicking yourselves for years. Trust me.

— Brian Augustyn
hype-master in residence