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BY PEREZ, MARRINAN & BLYBERG

OUR STORY SO FAR:

THE SEARCH FOR THE STOLEN LASSO OF HESTIA HAS LED DIANA TO EGYPT, IN PURSUIT OF THE THIEF, DR. BARBARA MINERVA, WHO SKULKS BY THE LIGHT OF THE FULL MOON AS THE BLOOD-HUNGRY CHEETAH.

HOWEVER, A MYSTERIOUS SANDSTORM HAS TRANSPORTED THE PRINCESS TO A STRANGE HIDDEN CITY, WHERE SHE FINDS HERSELF SURROUNDED BY THE BRANDISHED WEAPONRY OF A MIDDLE-EASTERN RACE OF WARRIOR-WOMEN...

...A RACE OF AMAZONS...

ARIAONA!

...WHO WANT TO KILL HER!

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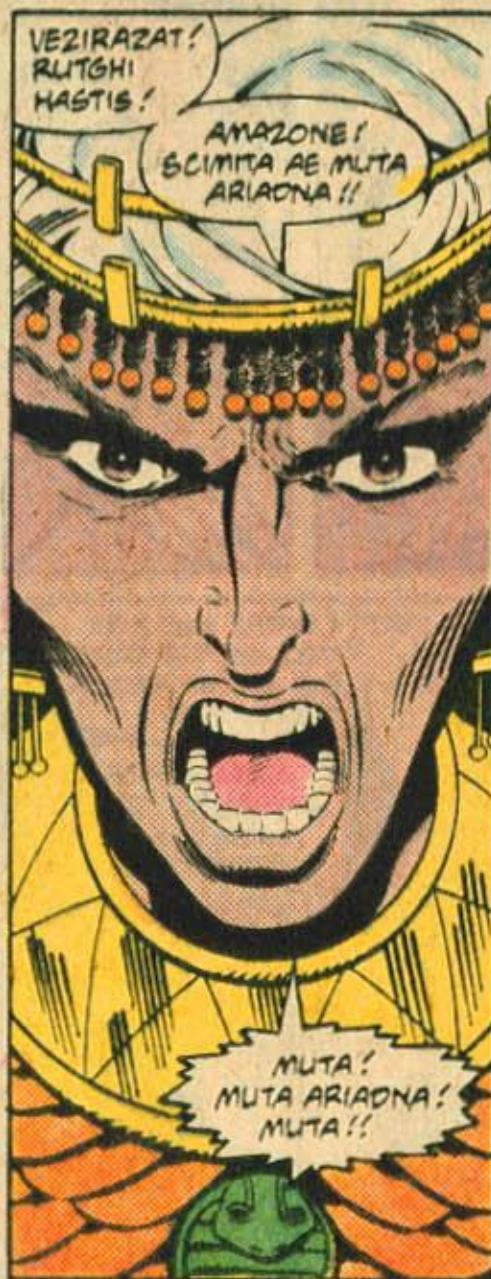
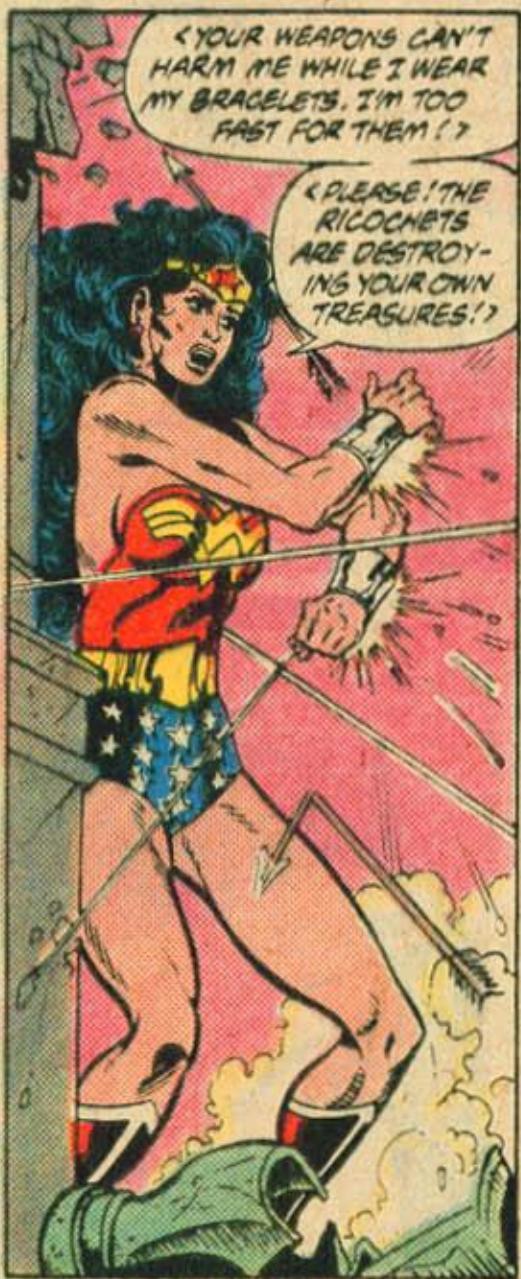
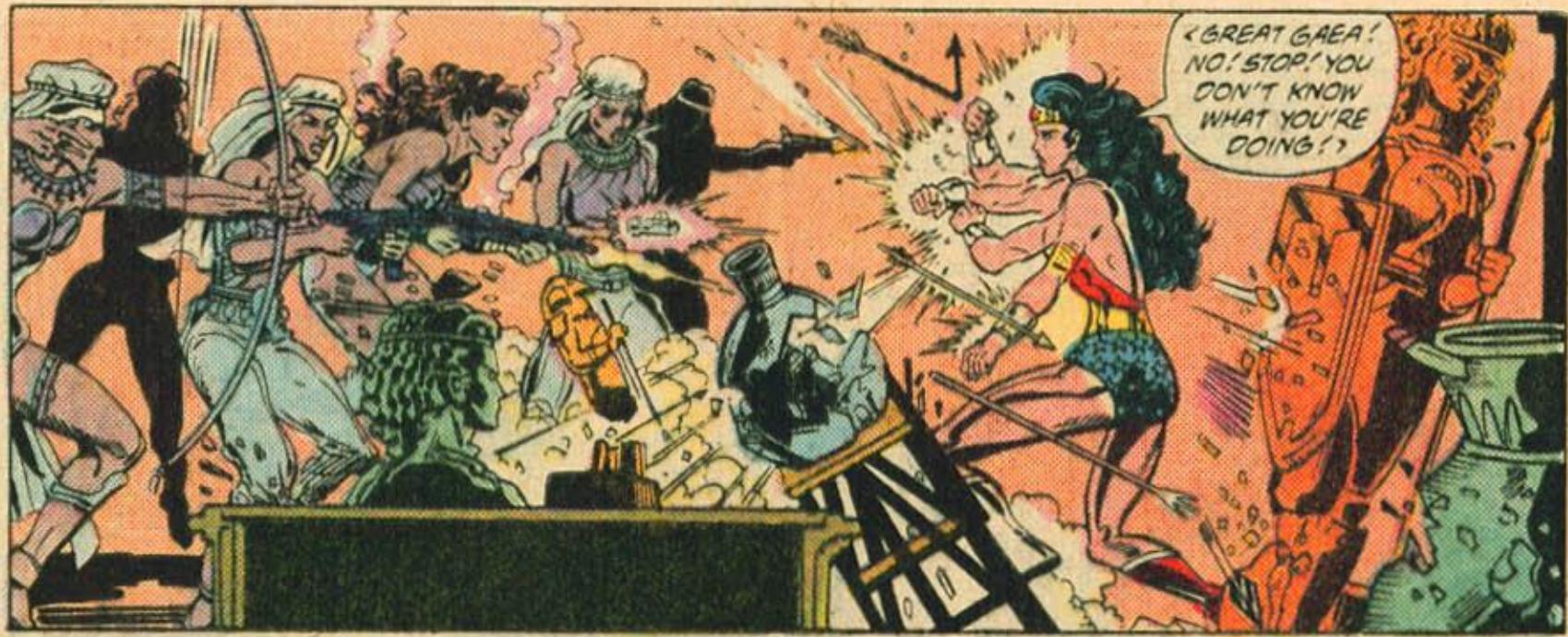
TO LIVE BY THE SWORD

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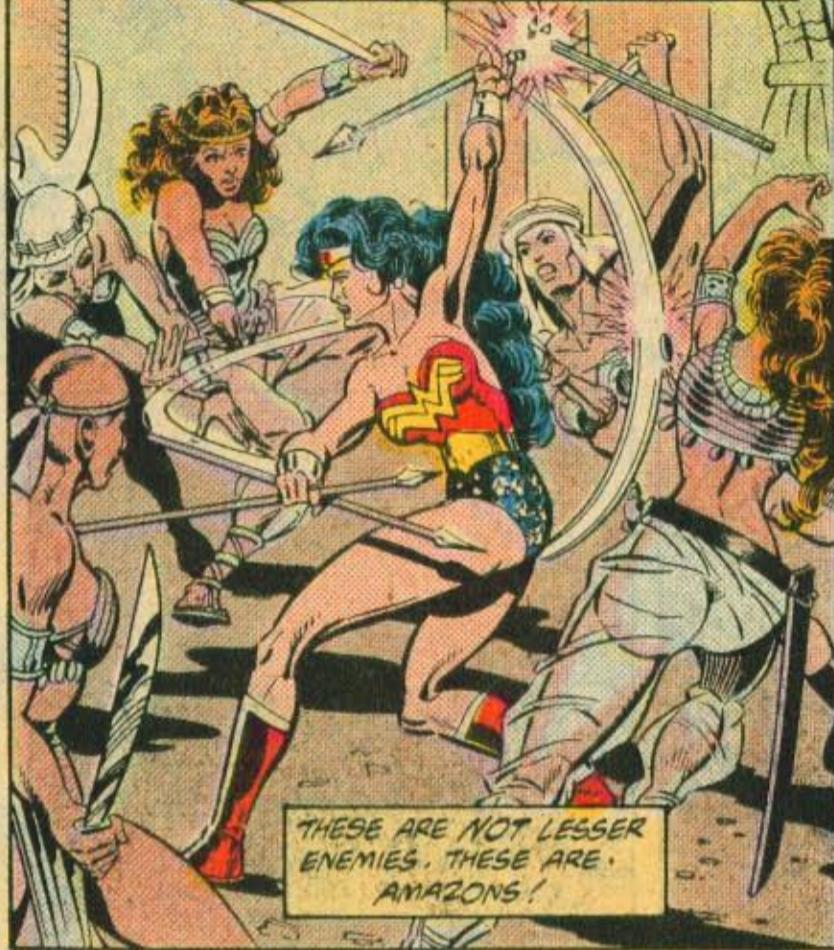
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BUT DIANA IS GIVEN NO CHOICE.
HER ENTREATIES FALL UPON DEAF
EARS AS THE BARRAGE OF STEEL
AND SINEW QUICKLY FALLS UPON HER.

AT FIRST DIANA FIGHTS MERELY IN SELF-DEFENSE, BUT IT IS A MANEUVER THAT CAN ONLY BE RESERVED FOR A LESSER ENEMY.



DIANA'S AZURE
EYES MOISTEN
WITH PAIN AS
SHE CALLS
UPON THAT
FORCE...

TO WIELD
AGAINST THOSE
WHOM SHE
WOULD CALL
SISTERS.



< MY QUEEN, THAT
ARIADNA IS A
DEMON! I'VE
NEVER SEEN
ANYTHING
FIGHT LIKE
THAT. ? *

<MAYBE SHE WAS
TELLING THE TRUTH?
SHE SPOKE ABOUT
THE MYSCIRA. >



A RACE WHOSE FEROCITY
IN BATTLE IS THE STUFF
OF LEGENDS...

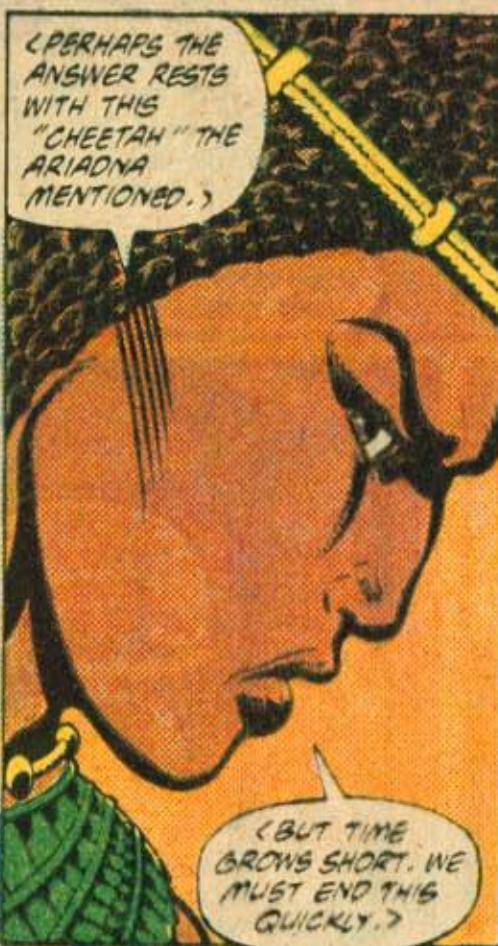


... WHO CAN ONLY BE
CONQUERED BY A FORCE
OF GREATER FEROCITY.

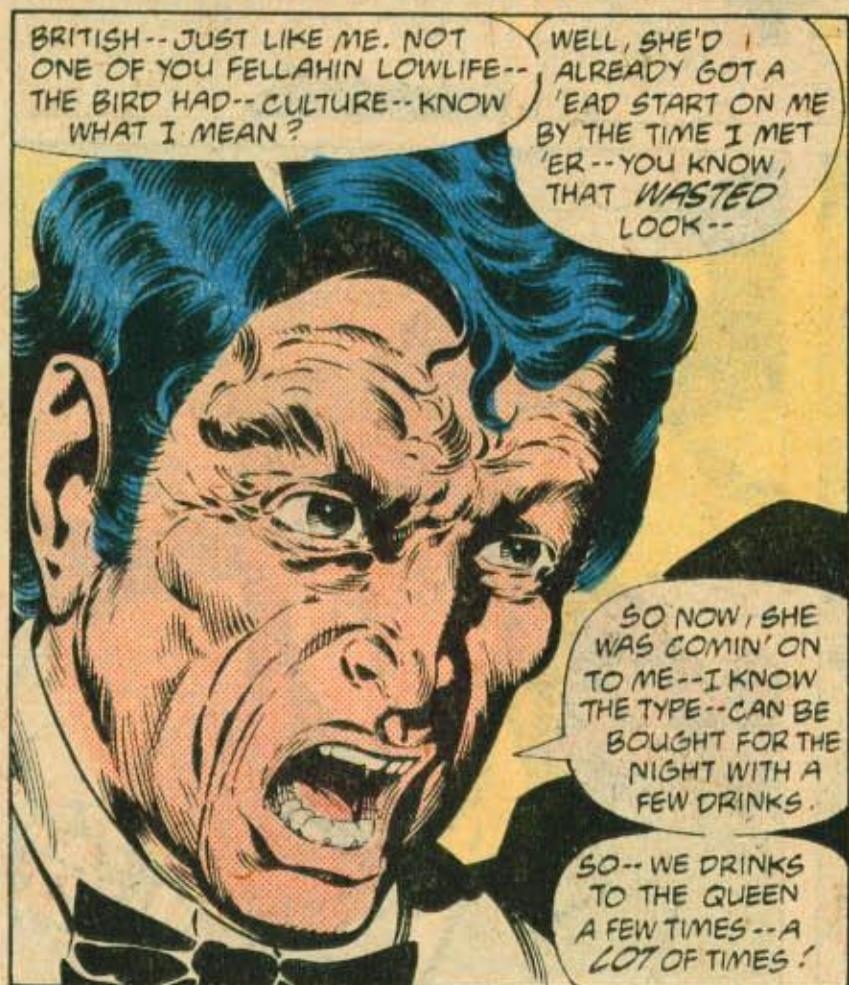
"< THAT INTERLOPER HAS COMMITTED THE ULTIMATE SACRILEGE...>



* TRANSLATED FROM THE MID-EAST AMAZON TONGUE -- KAREN









WHIMPERS IN THE
DARK. DEEP, GUTTURAL,
UNINTELLIGIBLE.

CANALS WHICH OVERFLOW,
SPILLING LIGHT HAPHAZARDLY
OVER THE PITCH. AND THE WALES.
OF MISERY CRASH LOUDLY
WITH EACH BURNISHED
CASCADE.

THE MOANS OF
TORMENT--SEEPING
ALONG CANALS OF
DIM LIGHT TRACKING
THROUGH THE SHADOWS.

THEY ARE
THE SIGHTS
AND SOUNDS
OF A CRUEL
AWAKENING.

DEAR GODS! THE LAST THING I
HOW LONG CAN REMEMBER IS
HAVE I BEEN UNCONSCIOUS?

QUEEN
ANAHID--
SPITTING
ON ME.

BUT
HOW...?

WAIT...
THOSE
ANGUISHED
GROANS...
THEY WEREN'T
JUST ECHOES IN
MY DREAMS...

THEY'RE
REAL!!

MY VISION--BLURRED...
BUT I CAN MAKE OUT
THE SHADOWS OF MEN,
CHAINED AND
PITIFUL...

...I HAVE
TO HELP
THEM.

UNNNHH.

AND--HERMES
HELP ME--I CAN'T
SPEAK!

MY
LEGS--ALL OF
ME--STILL SO
WEAK.

WHAT
DID THAT
VEXED QUEEN
DO TO ME?

SO, DIANA OF
THEMYSIRA, ALL
I HAVE HEARD
ABOUT YOU IS
TRUE.

ONLY
A TRUE
"WONDER
WOMAN"
COULD
HAVE
SURVIVED
THE KISS
OF THE
COBRA!

YES, PRINCESS, I KNOW WHO YOU ARE. UNLIKE MY IMPERIOUS QUEEN, I AM QUITE COGNIZANT OF THE MATTERS OF THE WORLD OUTSIDE.

AND, WHILE I DO SPEAK ENGLISH, I DO NOT EXPECT THIS TO BE TOO SCINTILLATING A DIALOGUE.



I AM KADESHA BANU, HIGH PRIESTESS, MASTER METHODOLOGIST AND SUPREME ALCHEMIST OF ALL BANA-MIGHDALL!



IT WAS I WHO DEVELOPED THE VENOM IN THE COBRA DART WHICH QUEEN ANAHID SPAT AT YOU.



SHE FULLY EXPECTED YOU TO DIE. WHEN YOU DIDN'T--THAT'S WHEN SHE SUMMONED ME.

IMAGINE MY SURPRISE WHEN I LEARNED WHO THIS VICIOUS ARIADNA SHE CAPTURED WAS.

WITH HER INDULGENCE, I HAD YOU BROUGHT HERE TO THE BREEDING STABLES, SO THAT I MAY-- STUDY YOU.



HMM. NO WOUND.

THE VENOM DOES SEEM TO HAVE IMPAIRED YOUR SENSES AND REFLEXES, THOUGH.

PERHAPS, IN TIME, YOUR INCREDIBLE STAMINA MIGHT HAVE EVEN DEFEATED THE TOXIN'S EFFECT.

I GUESS WE'LL NEVER KNOW.

SUCH A PITY. I KNOW YOU'RE NOT GUILTY OF THE SACRILEGE QUEEN ANAHID ACCUSES YOU OF.

BUT, SHE IS THE QUEEN...AND HER VERDICT IS FINAL.



MEANWHILE, IN
ANOTHER PART OF
THE MYSTERIOUS
AMAZON CITY, THE
MID-AFTERNOON
AIR STIRS WITH THE
CLAMOR OF
MACHINERY.

"WELL, ASSYRA,
IS THE ORDER
READY?"

"YES, MY
QUEEN!"

"I'M SURE COLONEL
HADAL WILL BE QUITE
PLEASSED WITH THE
ADVANCES WE'VE MADE
IN THE METAL
PIERCING SHELLS."

"THOSE HANDHELD
AUTOMATICS ALONE
WILL STOP THE MOST
PERSISTENT TANK."

"MOST OF THE
SHIPMENT HAS ALREADY
BEEN CRATED. ALL THAT
REMAINS IS FOR THE
DRAFTING OF THE
WARRIOR."

"MAY I ASK WHEN THAT WILL BE, MY
QUEEN? IT IS ALMOST TIME."

"I KNOW, ASSYRA. BUT
THAT ARIADNA HAS FORCED
US TO RECHART OUR
COURSE SOMEWHAT."

"THE INTERLOPER
MUST HAVE HAD AN
ACCOMPlice--ONE
POWERFUL ENOUGH
TO SLAY TWO OF OUR
BEST GUARDS..."

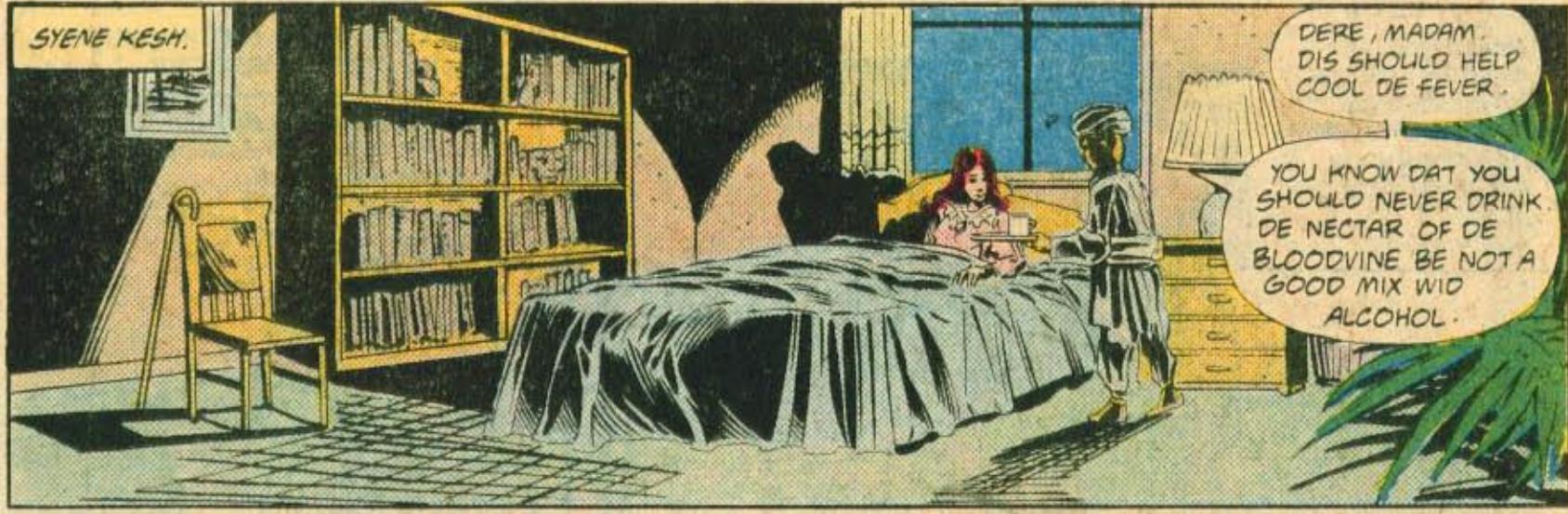
"...AND
SOMEHOW
CAPABLE OF
TRaversing THE
VALLEY OF THE
SANDSTORM WITHOUT
WARNING OR
INJURY."

"THE ONE WHO
MOST LIKELY NOW
POSSESSES OUR
HOLY TREASURE."

"KADESIA BANU
HAS HER METHODS
OF GLEANING
INFORMATION... I
HAVE MINE."

"CNEHEKA,
CALL OUT
MY ROYAL
ENTOURAGE."

"WE MUSTN'T
KEEP COL. HADAL
WAITING ANY
LONGER."



"TO THE MOST AMAZING CITY I HAD EVER SEEN."

"USUALLY, MY MEMORIES OF BEING THE CHEETAH ARE PRETTY HAZY, BUT THIS TIME IT ALL SEEMS SO CLEAR."

"MY SUBCONSCIOUS-- THE PART OF BARBARA MINERVA THAT STILL EXISTED-- MARVELLED AT THE MAGNIFICENCE OF IT ALL-- THE TREASURES--

"--I HAD TO HAVE THEM."

"BUT THE CHEETAH COMMANDED ME NOW-- AND IT WAS OBEDIING THE WILL OF THE LASSO."

"AS IF NEITHER I-- NOR THE CAT-- WERE ANY LONGER IN CONTROL."

"I MADE MY WAY INTO WHAT APPEARED TO BE THE MAIN MOSQUE."

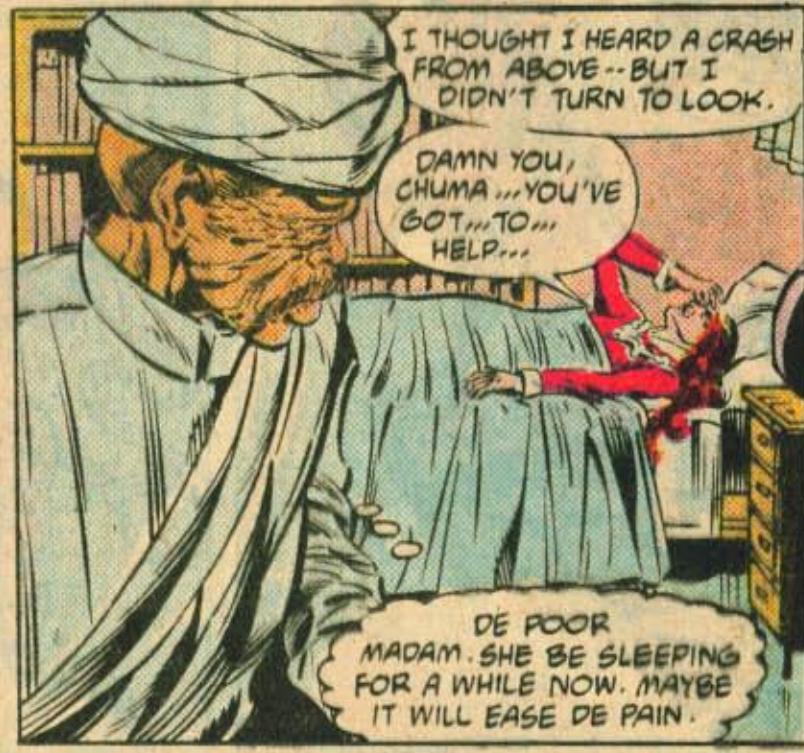
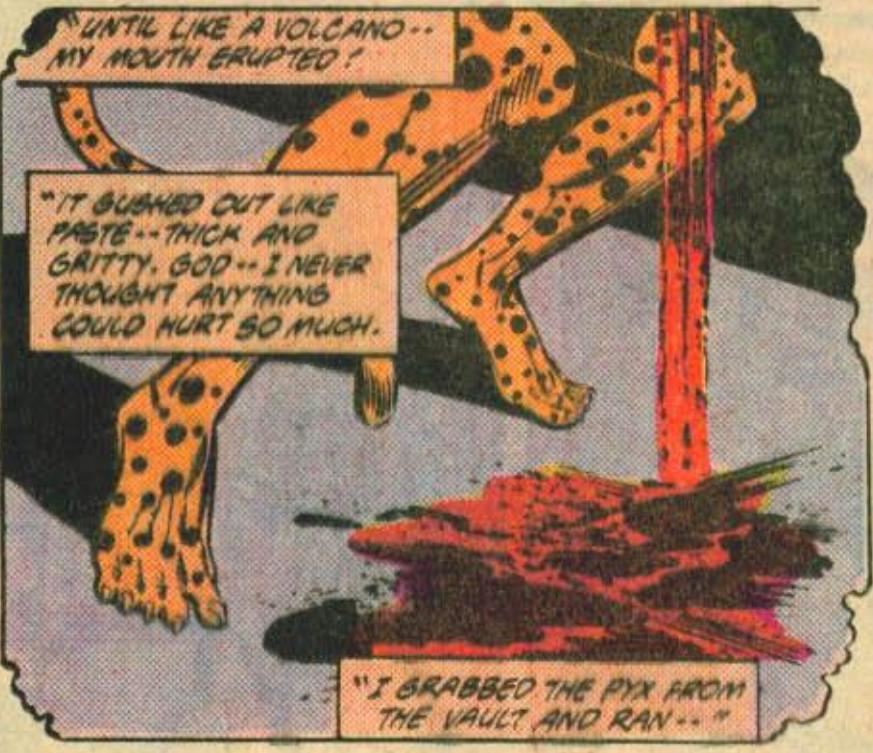
"I CAN REMEMBER FEELING TWinges EVEN THEN..."

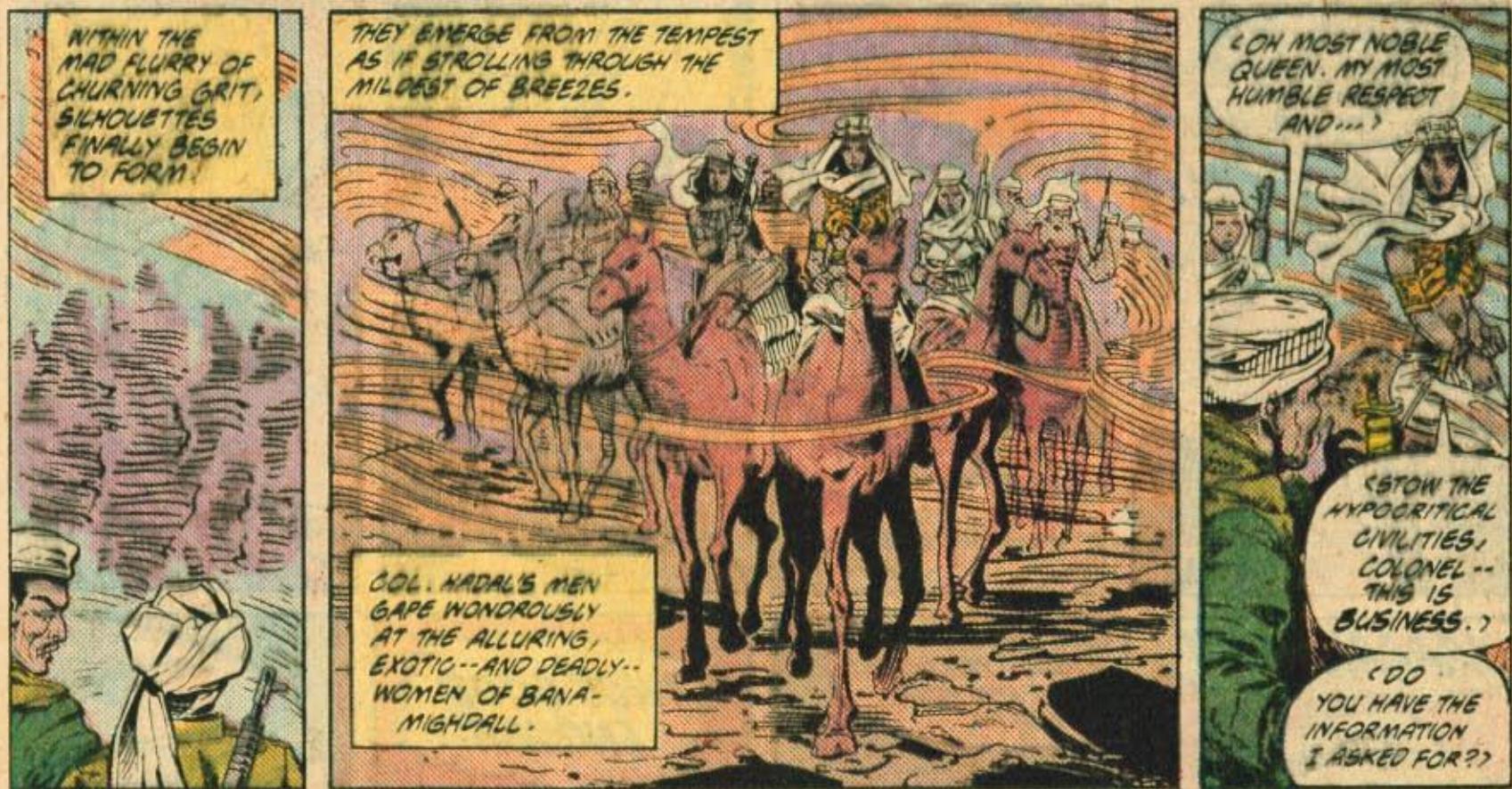
"BUT I HAD NO TIME TO CONSIDER THEM..."

"IN THE CENTER OF THE TEMPLE I WAS GREETED BY A HOSTILE-LOOKING WELCOMING COMMITTEE..."

"CHUMA-- THEY LOOKED LIKE AMAZONS!"

"THEY DIDN'T STAND A CHANCE. EVERYTHING TURNED RED. MY CLAWS TORE OUT THEIR THROATS BEFORE THEY COULD EVEN SOUND AN ALARM."







YOUR FOOL'S INDISCRETION HAS JUST UPPED MY PRICE, COLONEL.?

(CALL IT--A PENALTY.?)

ANY OBJECTIONS, COLONEL??

(NO, QUEEN ANAHID.)

HALF MY TROOPS PRESENT NOW IN EXCHANGE FOR FIFTY OF YOUR INVINCIBLE AMAZON WARRIOR LATER--?

(IT SEEMS... MOST FAIR.)

(MY WARRIORS WILL TAKE HALF YOUR MEN BACK WITH US TO BANA-MIGHDALL.?)

(I'M SURE THAT SOME OF THEM MAY PROVE DECENT BEGETTERS.?)

(NO! WE'VE HEARD WHAT THEY DO TO MEN THERE! WE WON'T GO!)

HOWEVER, THE WOMEN OF BANA-MIGHDALL DO NOT TAKE REJECTION LIGHTLY.

IT IS AN INSULT PUNISHABLE ONLY BY DEATH!

(YOU SHOULD CONTROL YOUR SOLDIERS BETTER, COL. HADAL.)

(LET THE LEDGERS SHOW THAT THE CRAVEN SHEEP WE HAD TO SLAUGHTER ARE TO BE DEDUCTED FROM THE COLONEL'S SHARE.)

(RIGHT, COLONEL??)

(IF THESE ARE EXAMPLES OF YOUR PRIME SPECIMENS, THEN MY QUEEN HAS SURELY GOTTEN THE LESSER OF THIS DEAL.)

(RIGHT.)

THE BREEDING
STABLES OF
BANA-MIGHDALL,
SOME TIME
LATER.

«WELL, NOW, HOW IS
OUR PRIZE PRISONER
DOING?»

«SHE HAS
BEEN QUIET, HIGH
PRIESTESS.»

«I DON'T DOUBT
IT, CONSIDERING
THE AMOUNT
OF MILD
COBRA
VENOM I'VE
PUMPED INTO HER TO
FACILITATE MY
EXAMINATIONS.»



«YES, WELL, THE
QUEEN AND I HAVEN'T ALWAYS
SEEN EYE TO EYE ON MATTERS
OF SCIENCE.»

«BUT, IT MAY
ALL BE MOOT
ANYWAY.»



«MY NEXT
EXAMINATION WILL
BE THE FINAL ONE.»
«WE MUST PREPARE
THE SUBJECT FOR
VIVISECTION.»

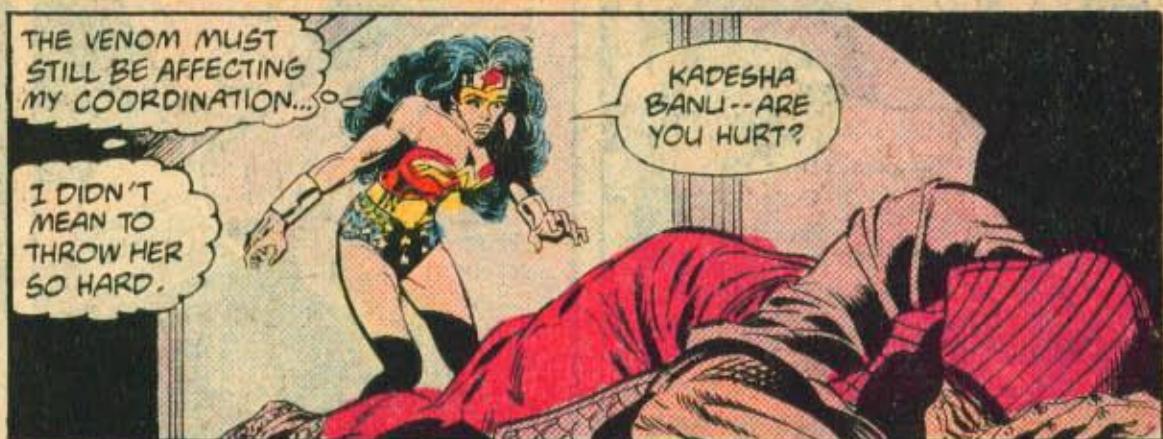
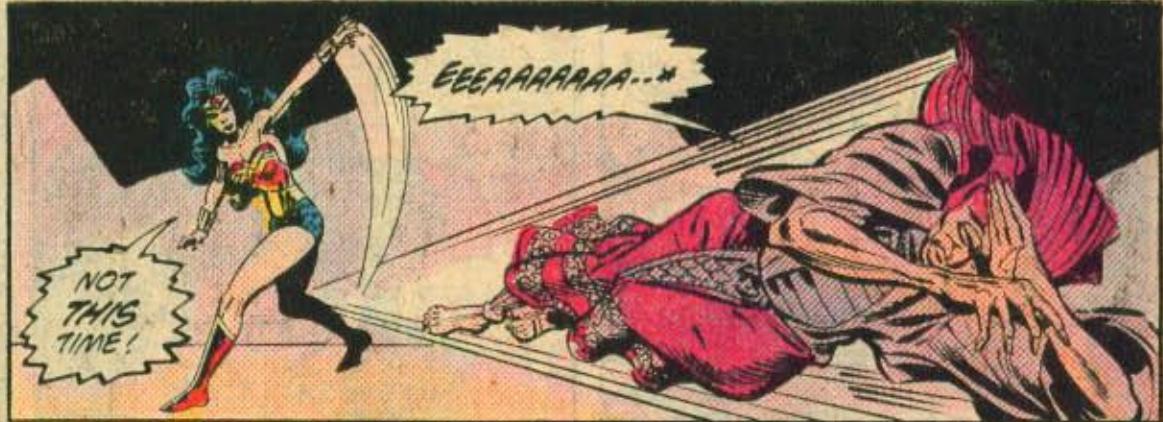
WHILE DEEP WITHIN
THE STABLES' DARK
RECESSES, THE
PRINCESS OF
THEMYSCIRA STRUGGLES
DESPERATELY BACK TO
CONSCIOUSNESS.

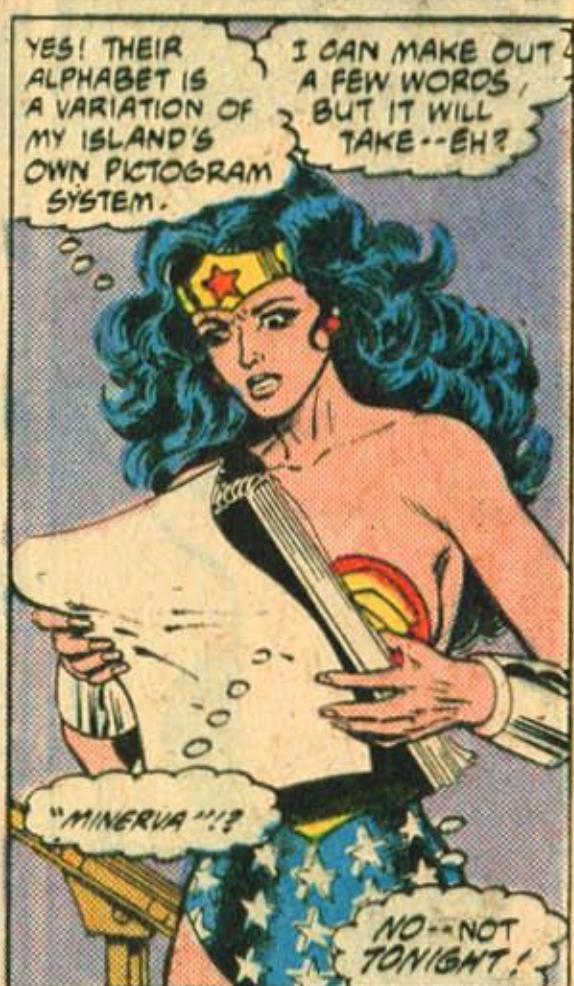
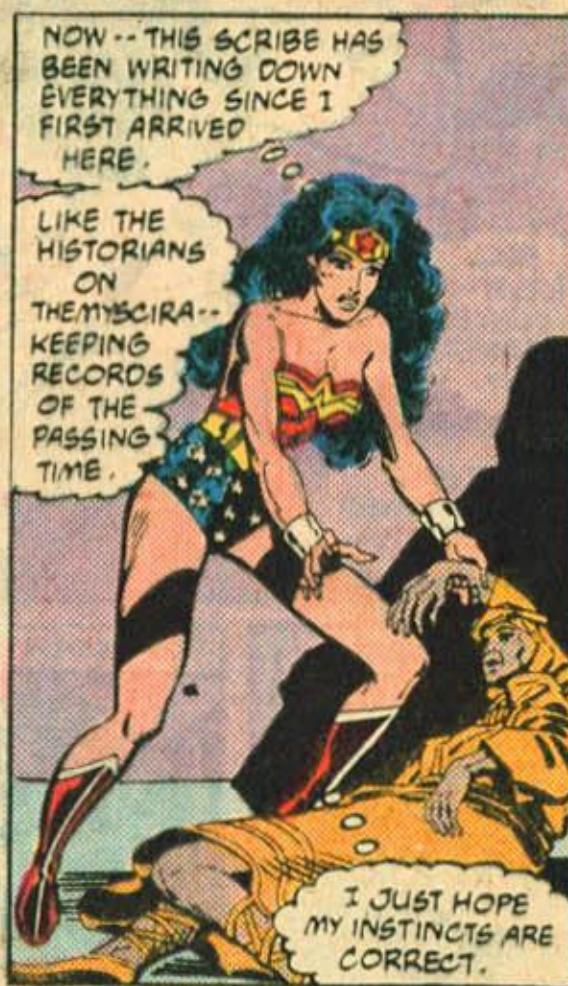






THE WIZENED FACE OF THE HIGH PRIESTESS PLUCKERS AS SHE INHALES SHARPLY.





NEXT ISSUE: SAVAGE MOON