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NO. 309
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WITH SPECIAL GUEST-STAR: BLACK CANARY!
ALL YOUR POWER WILL NOT HELP YOU, AMAZON!
A MINUTE MORE-- AND MY LITTLE MONSTERS WILL CONQUER YOUR WORLD!
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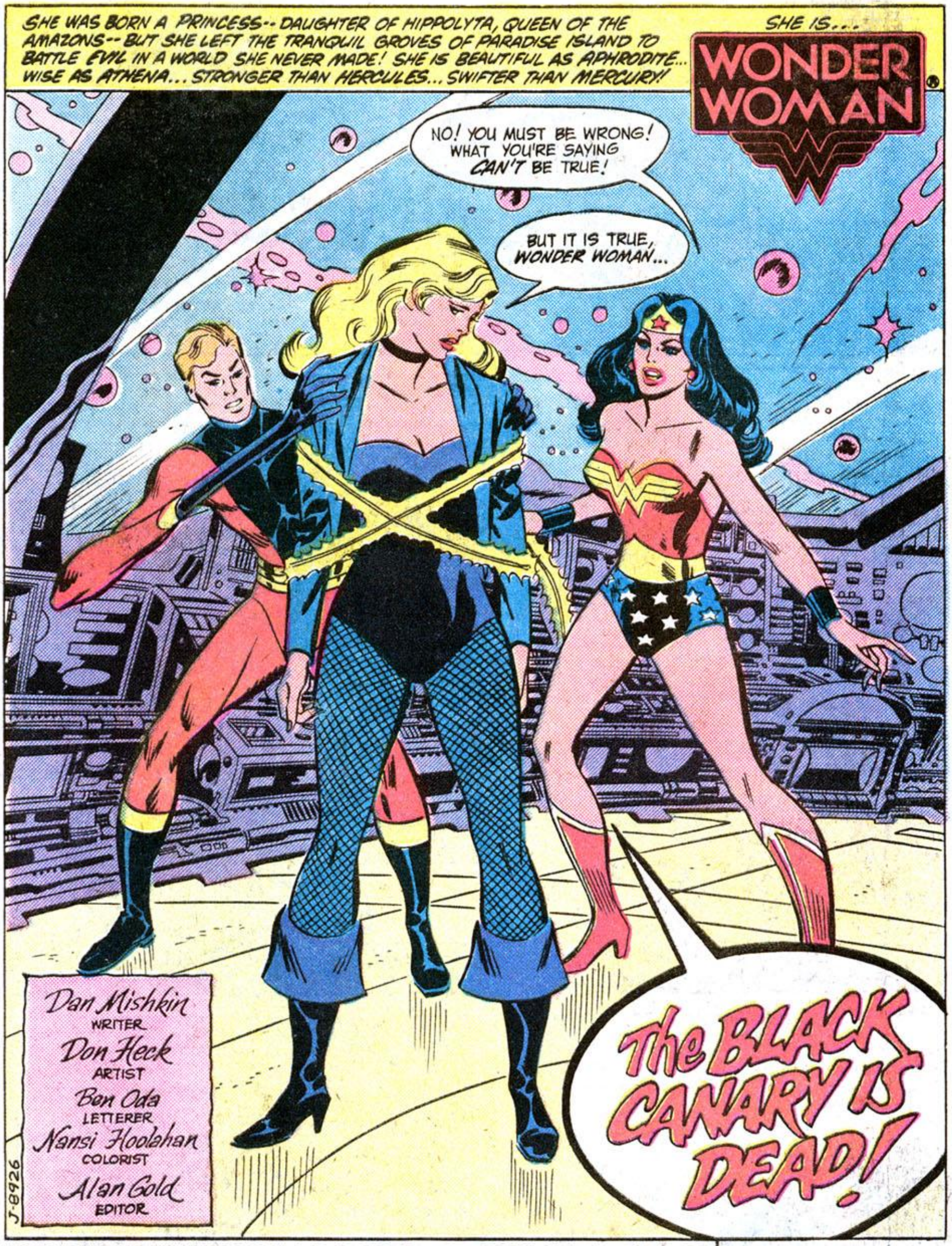

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I'VE ALREADY EXPLAINED IT TO BOTH OF YOU...
MY NAME IS ZENNA PERSIK -- I AM A GYPSY...
AND I WAS ON THE VERGE OF CAPTURING A NOTORIOUS NAZI WAR CRIMINAL --

-- WHEN THE BLACK CANARY CAME UPON THE SCENE AND, MISTAKING SCHLAGEL FOR MY VICTIM --

"-- FELLED ME WITH HER CANARY CRY!

"I WAS HELPLESS THEN BEFORE MY ENEMY AND HIS MONSTROUS UNDERLINGS...!

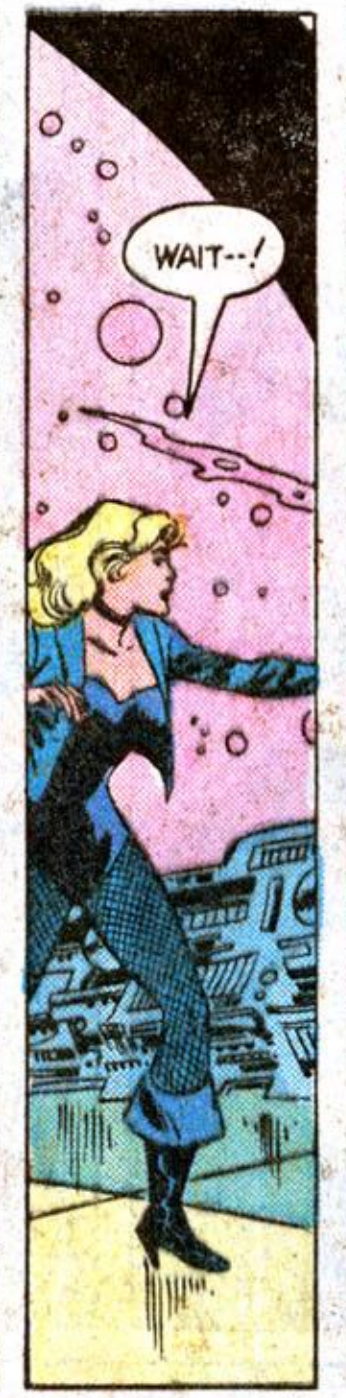
"TO SAVE MYSELF, I DREW UPON MY GYPSY LEGACY OF PSIONIC POWERS --
"-- AND SWITCHED MY MIND WITH THE CANARY'S!"

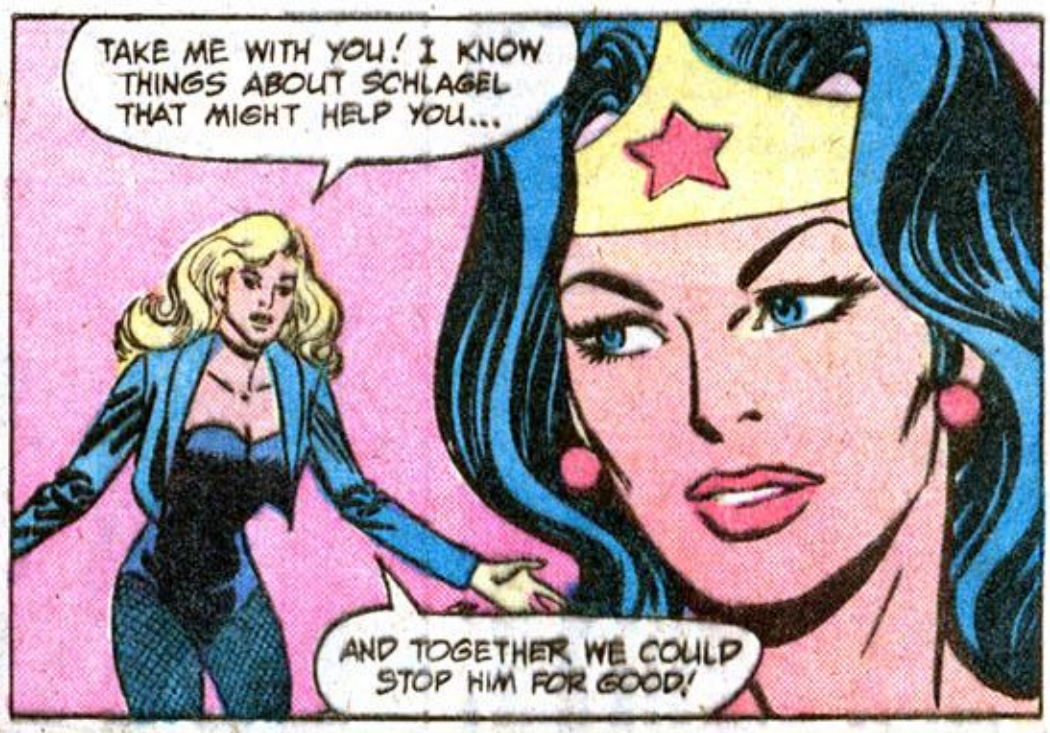
I LAST SAW HER BEING DRAGGED AWAY BY SCHLAGEL'S HELPERS!
THEN YOU DON'T KNOW FOR CERTAIN THAT SHE'S BEEN KILLED!

NOT FOR CERTAIN -- BUT I'VE SEEN WHAT HE DOES TO HIS PRISONERS!

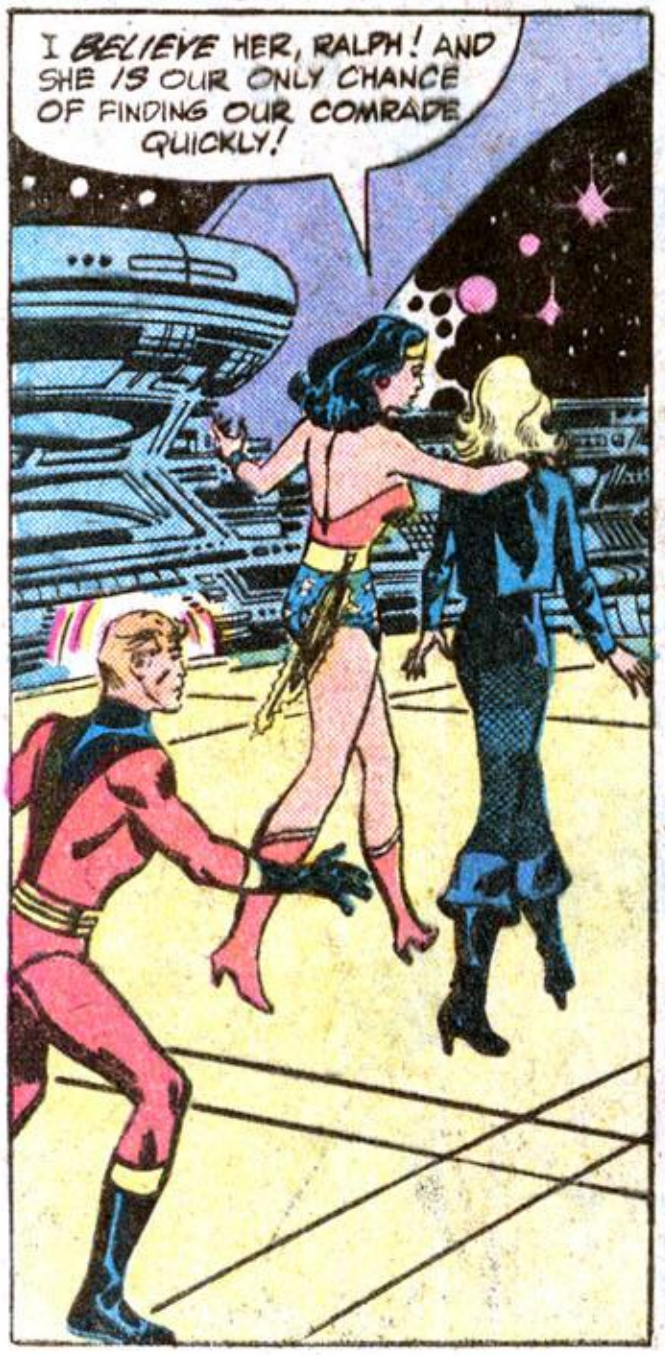
THE BLACK CANARY'S MORE RESOURCEFUL THAN THE AVERAGE PRISONER --
-- EVEN IN A STRANGE BODY...

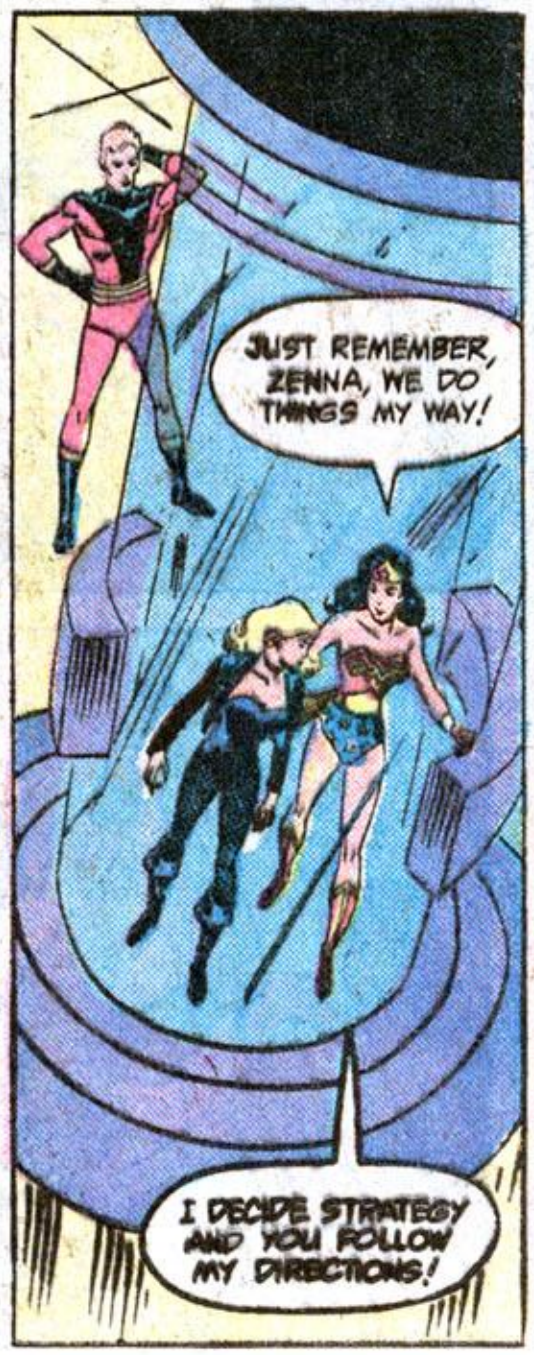
THERE'S STILL HOPE-- AND I'M GOING TO STAR CITY TO MAKE SURE THAT ISN'T IN VAIN!

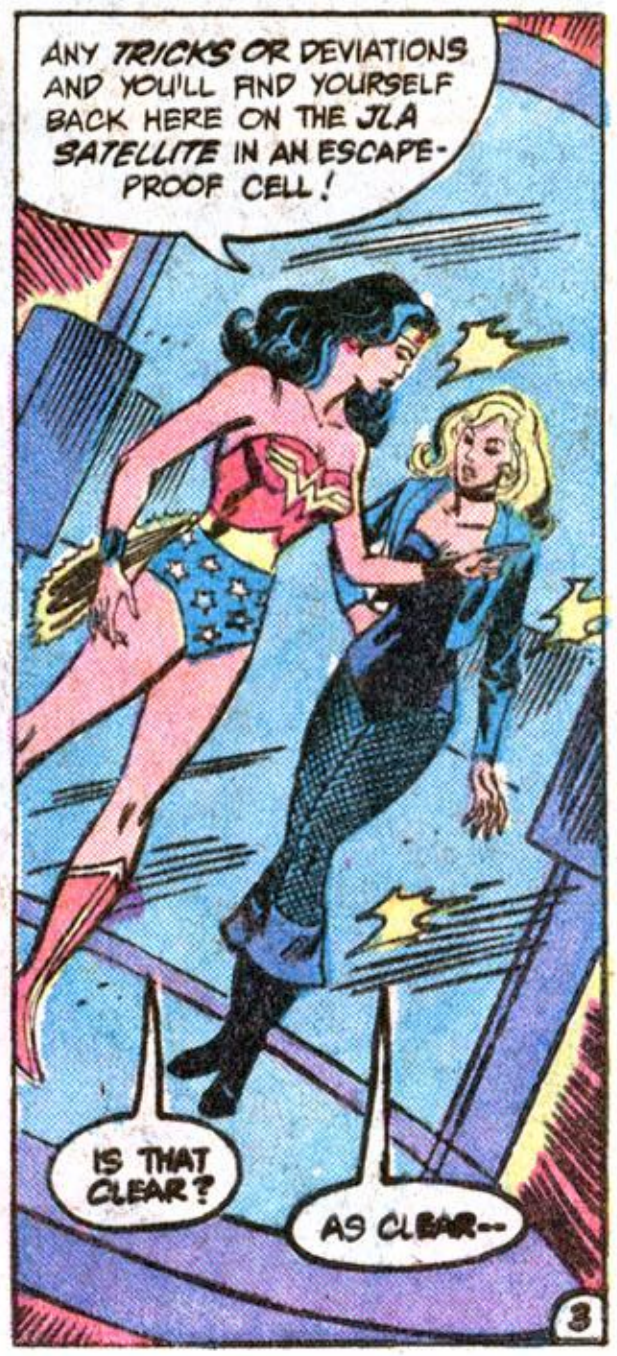

WAIT--!

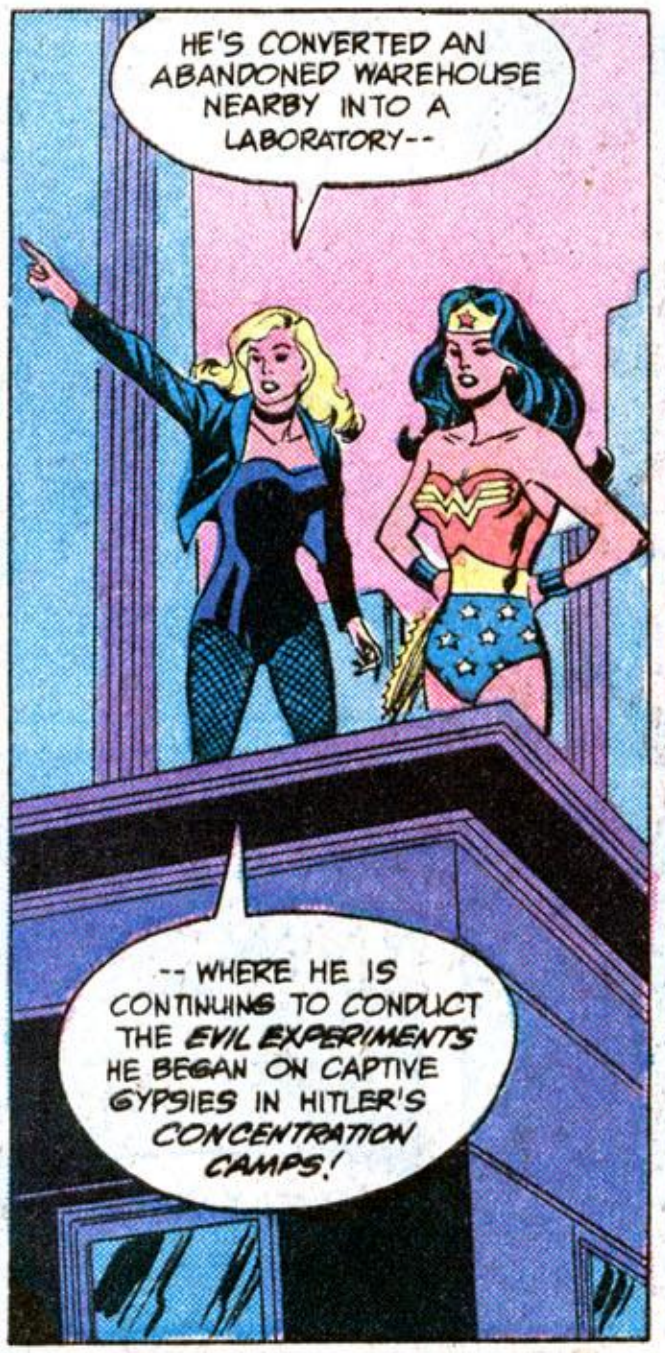

TAKE ME WITH YOU! I KNOW THINGS ABOUT SCHLAGEL THAT MIGHT HELP YOU...
AND TOGETHER WE COULD STOP HIM FOR GOOD!

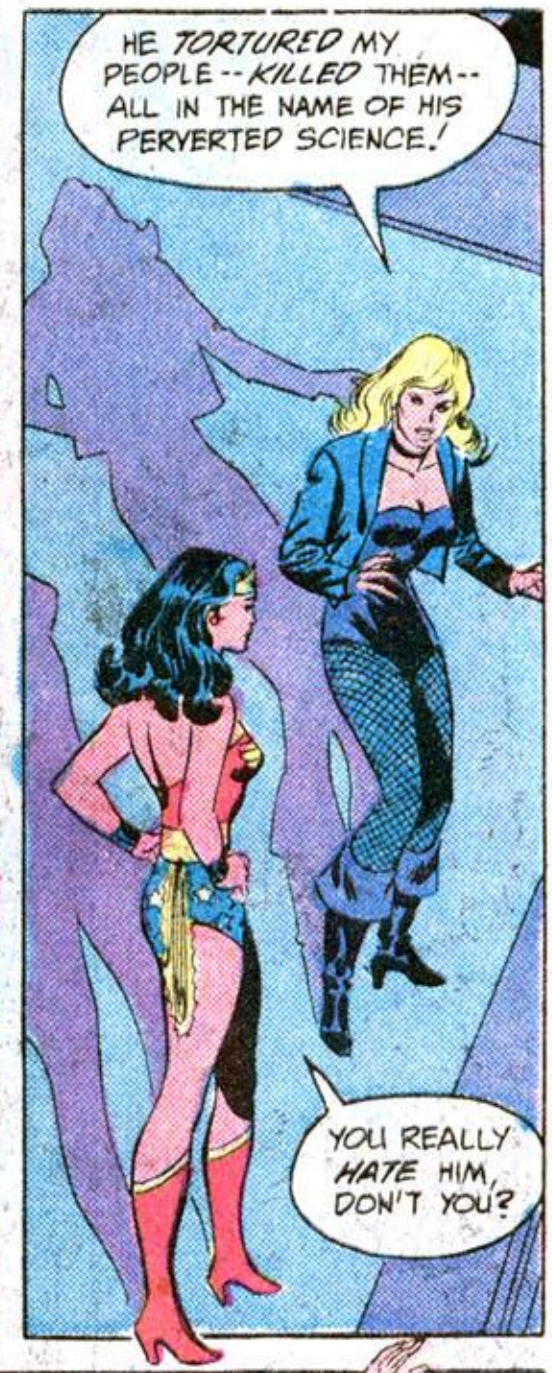
DON'T LISTEN TO HER, PRINCESS!
THE ONLY PART OF HER STORY THAT I'M BUYING IS THAT SHE LEFT THE CANARY FOR DEAD! SHE CAN'T BE TRUSTED!

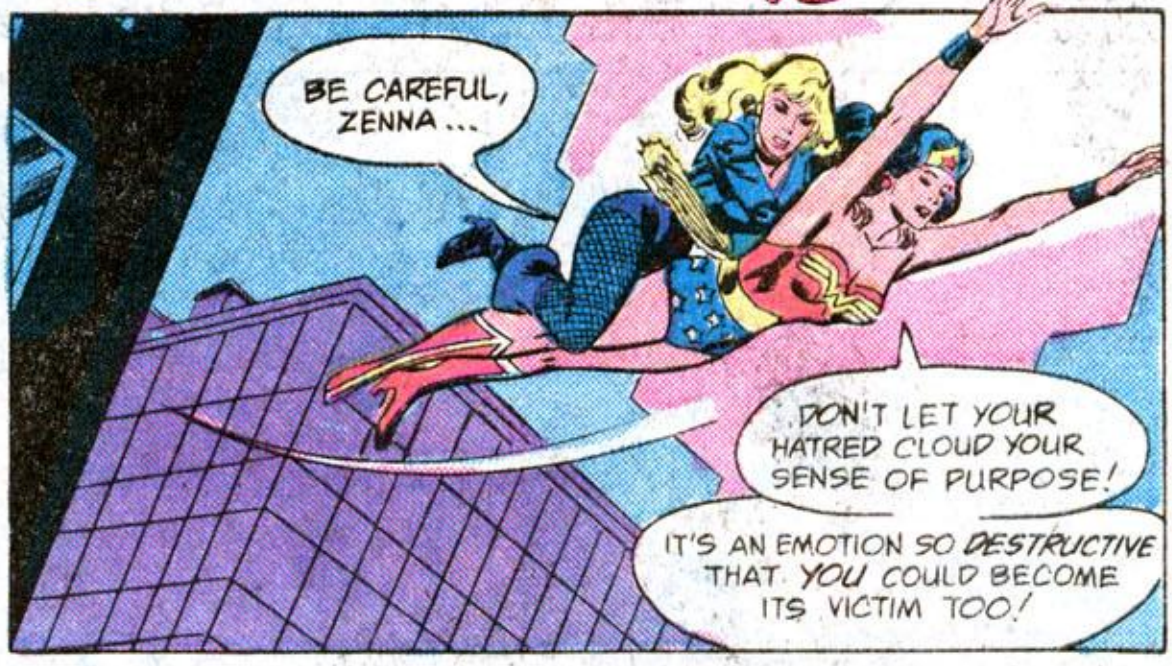

I BELIEVE HER, RALPH! AND SHE IS OUR ONLY CHANCE OF FINDING OUR COMRADE QUICKLY!

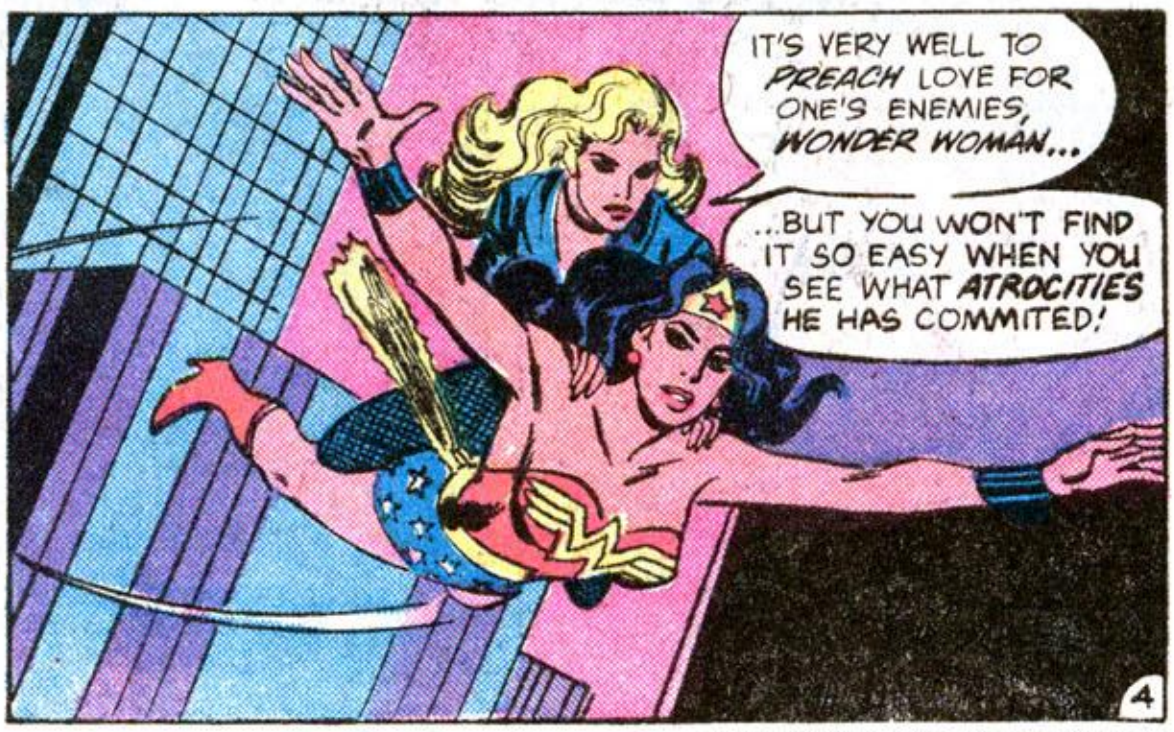

JUST REMEMBER, ZENNA, WE DO THINGS MY WAY!
I DECIDE STRATEGY AND YOU FOLLOW MY DIRECTIONS!


ANY TRICKS OR DEVIATIONS AND YOU'LL FIND YOURSELF BACK HERE ON THE JLA SATELLITE IN AN ESCAPE-PROOF CELL!
IS THAT CLEAR?
AS CLEAR--









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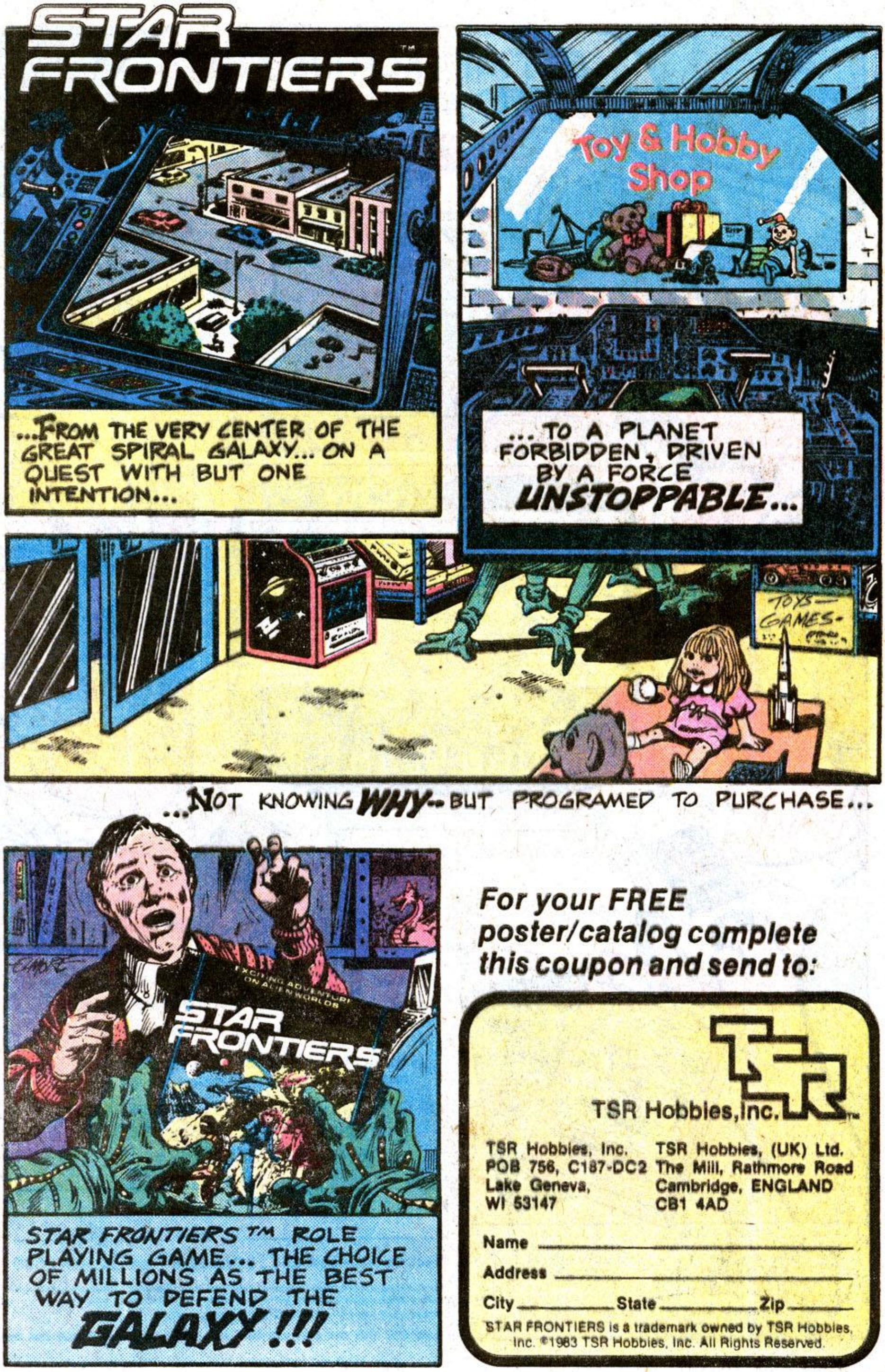

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NEARBY...
YOU HAD YOUR CHANCE, ZENNA -- YOU NEARLY ESCAPED! BUT YOU FAILED...
AND NOW, GYPSY WOMAN, YOU ARE DEAD!
HE STILL DOESN'T REALIZE THAT I'M NOT THIS ZENNA PERSON BUT THE BLACK CANARY!
IN THIS BODY I DON'T HAVE MY SONIC SCREAM --

BUT AT LEAST MY KNOWLEDGE OF THE MARTIAL ARTS IS STILL WITH ME!

HAD YOUR MENTAL ABILITIES NOT ALREADY MANIFESTED THEMSELVES, I COULD HAVE USED YOU, ZENNA...
YOU COME FROM VERY GOOD STOCK -- A FINE PEDIGREE -- AS DO THOSE URCHINS DOWN THERE!

THE HIGH COMMAND NEVER BELIEVED MY FINDINGS --
-- THAT YOU GYPSIES WERE GENETICALLY PREDISPOSED TOWARD UNUSUAL MENTAL POWERS!

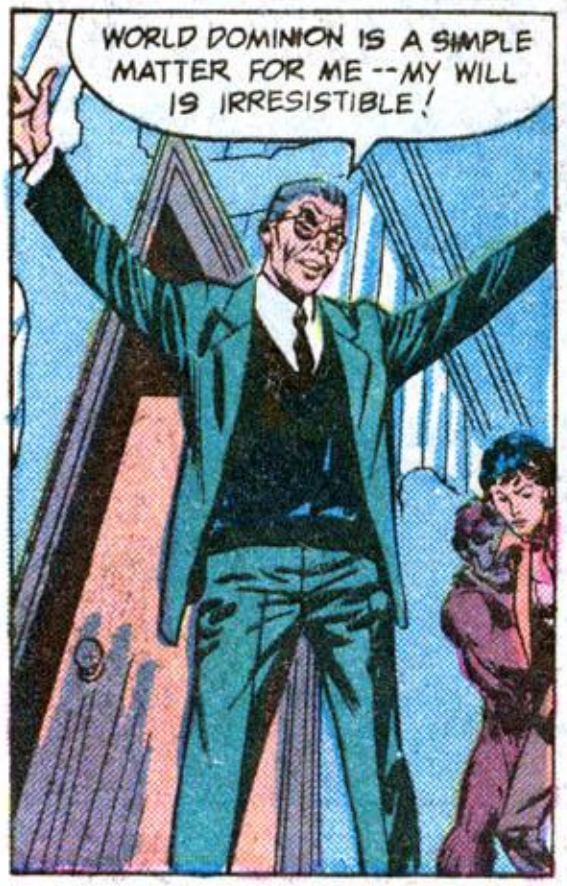
IT WAS MORE DIFFICULT AFTER THE WAR TO FIND SUBJECTS FOR MY STUDIES, BUT I PERSISTED!
AND THEN I DISCOVERED THE CHILDREN!

WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN?
THEIR ABILITIES WERE LATENT -- NO THREAT AT ALL TO ME --
-- BUT THEY PROVIDED A POOL OF VAST POTENTIAL FOR ME TO TAP!

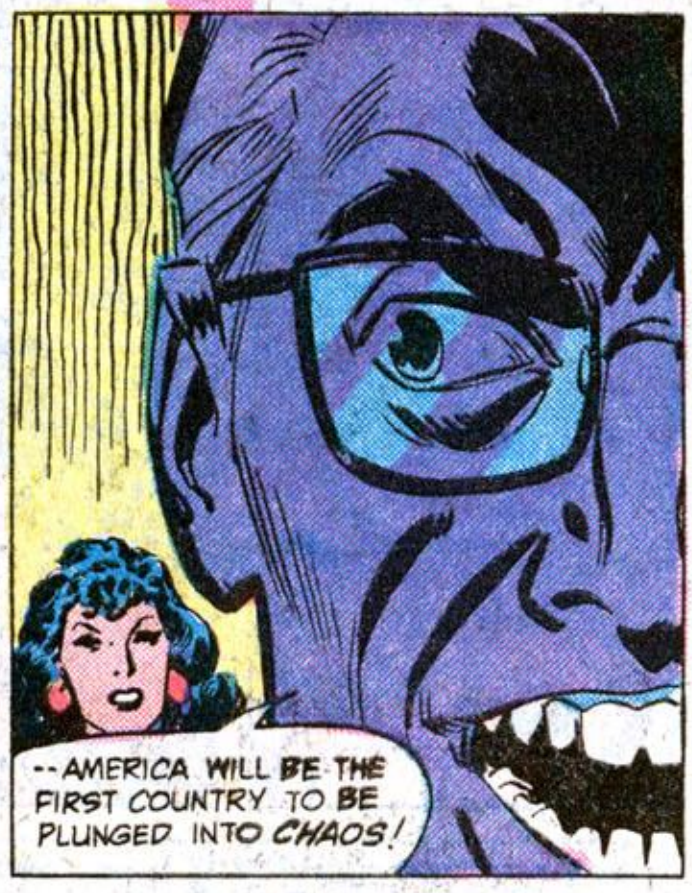
YOU ARE STILL AN INFERIOR RACE, DESPITE YOUR MENTAL DEVELOPMENT... YOU CALLED YOUR PSIONIC HERITAGE BLACK MAGIC!
AND IT WAS SIMPLICITY ITSELF TO GAIN CONTROL OF THESE CHILDREN --
-- AND SUPRESS THE ORDINARY PORTIONS OF THEIR MINDS!

THAT EXPLAINS HOW THIS WOMAN PERFORMED HER MIND SWITCH... AND WHY SHE WAS AFTER THIS MADMAN!
HE'S TURNED INNOCENT CHILDREN INTO MONSTERS AND MENTAL VEGETABLES TO FULFILL HIS PLANS!

NOW I HAVE HARNESSED ALL THEIR POWERS -- TELEKINESIS, EXTRASENSORY PERCEPTION -- WITH THE MACHINE THAT I'VE CREATED!


WORLD DOMINION IS A SIMPLE MATTER FOR ME -- MY WILL IS IRRESISTIBLE!

I HAVE ACCESS TO THE MOST CLOSELY GUARDED TOP SECRET INTELLIGENCE...
AND I WILL BE ABLE TO DISRUPT THE SPHERE OF COMMUNICATIONS, OF FINANCE, OF MILITARY MIGHT --

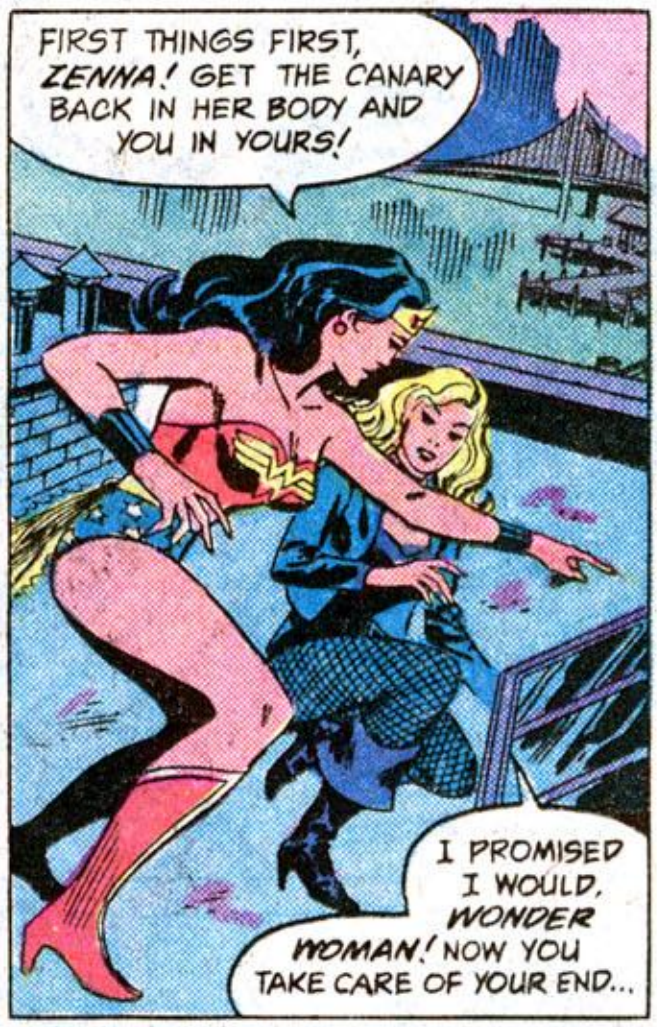

-- AMERICA WILL BE THE FIRST COUNTRY TO BE PLUNGED INTO CHAOS!

JUST AS HITLER SEIZED POWER WHEN GERMANY TEETERED, I SHALL MAKE MYSELF THE LEADER OF A NEW REICH!

MY FIRST BLOW AGAINST AMERICA'S DEFENSES WILL COME BEFORE THE SUN SETS IN THE WEST--
-- AND SHOCK HER MILITARY PLANNERS!

I'VE GOT TO BREAK FREE -- FIND A WAY TO STOP HIM! BUT --
WHAT'S THAT--?!

UP THERE IN THE SKYLIGHT!
IT--IT'S ME!

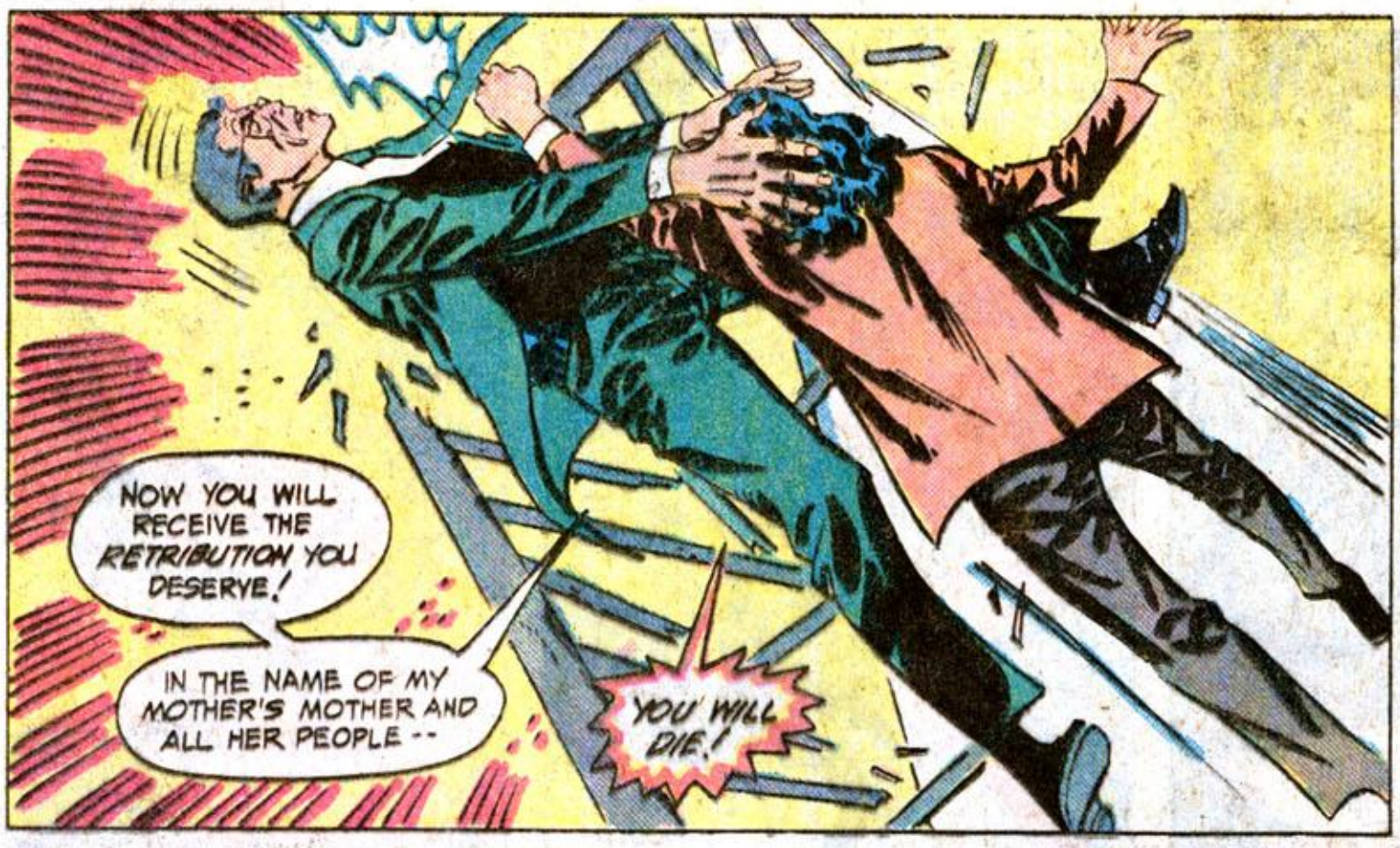

FIRST THINGS FIRST, ZENNA! GET THE CANARY BACK IN HER BODY AND YOU IN YOURS!
I PROMISED I WOULD, WONDER WOMAN! NOW YOU TAKE CARE OF YOUR END...

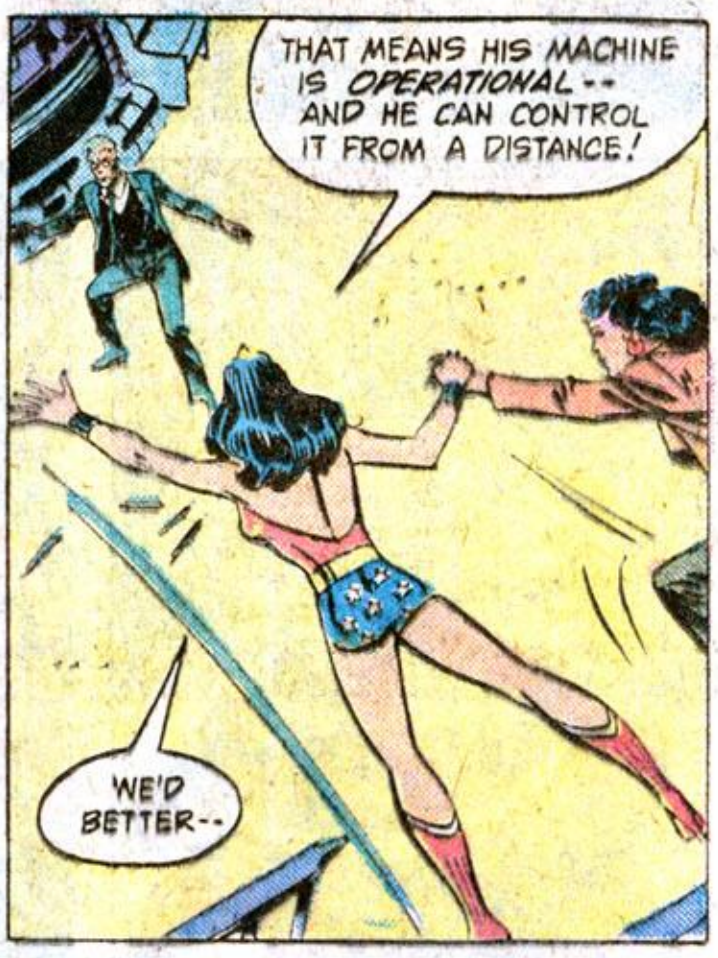
... AND RESCUE ME!

WONDER WOMAN! WHAT--?
I'LL HAVE TO TELL YOU ON THE RUN, DINAH... WE'VE GOT A JOB TO DO HERE!

THERE'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW THOUGH... THOSE MONSTERS ARE CHILDREN--
THEY'RE HIS VICTIMS!

NAZI BUTCHER!
YOU HAVE DEFILED THE GYPSY RACE FOR THE FINAL TIME!





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JUST REMEMBER THAT THEY'RE CHILDREN -- THEY'RE *BLAMELESS* FOR THEIR ACTIONS!

IF WE CAN STOP THEM WITHOUT *HARMING* THEM...

UNFORTUNATELY THEY WILL HAVE NO SUCH COMPUNCTIONS ABOUT BATTLING US!

STILL, MY *PYROKINETIC** ABILITIES WILL STOP SOME OF THEM SHORT!

* FIRE-CONTROLLING -- Alan.

AND MY *SONIC WHAMMY* WILL THROW SOME OTHERS FOR A LOOP!

YOUR POUNDING IS *FUTILE*, WOMAN! NOTHING SHORT OF AN EXPLOSION COULD DENT THAT SHIELD!

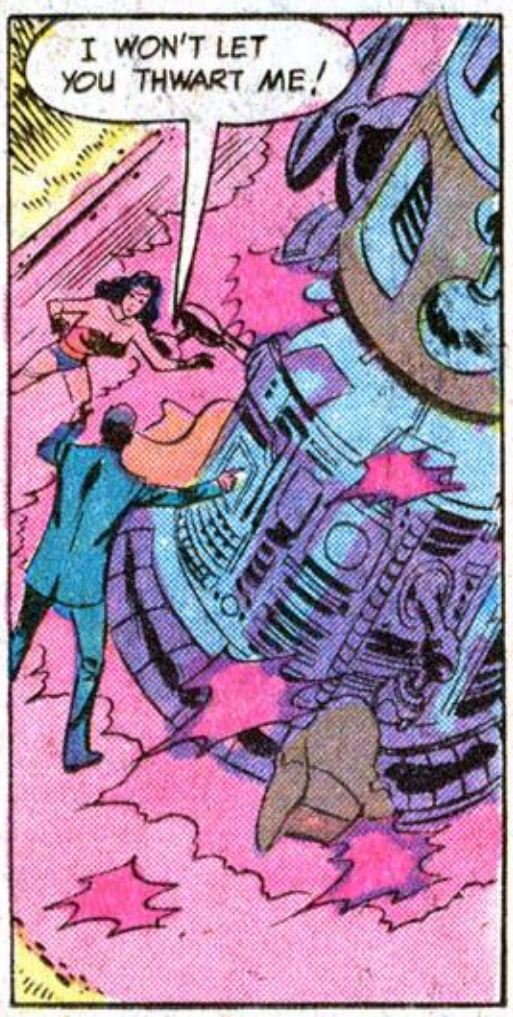
DON'T COUNT ME OUT YET, NAZI...

YOU'D BE AMAZED AT THE THINGS I'VE PUNCHED THROUGH IN MY TIME!
IT--IT IS IMPOSSIBLE!

THEY DON'T TEACH US THAT WORD ON PARADISE ISLAND!

THE BARRIER HAS RESEALED AROUND HER WRISTS! BUT SHE IS STILL--

COMING THROUGH, SCHLEGEL!


I WON'T LET YOU THWART ME!

NO! NOT NOW!

TOO LATE! HE'S GONE -- AND HE'S TAKEN WONDER WOMAN WITH HIM!

NOT WONDER WOMAN, DINAH -- JUST WONDER WOMAN'S FORM!
SHE'S TAKEN OVER MY BODY AND LEFT ME TRAPPED IN HERE!

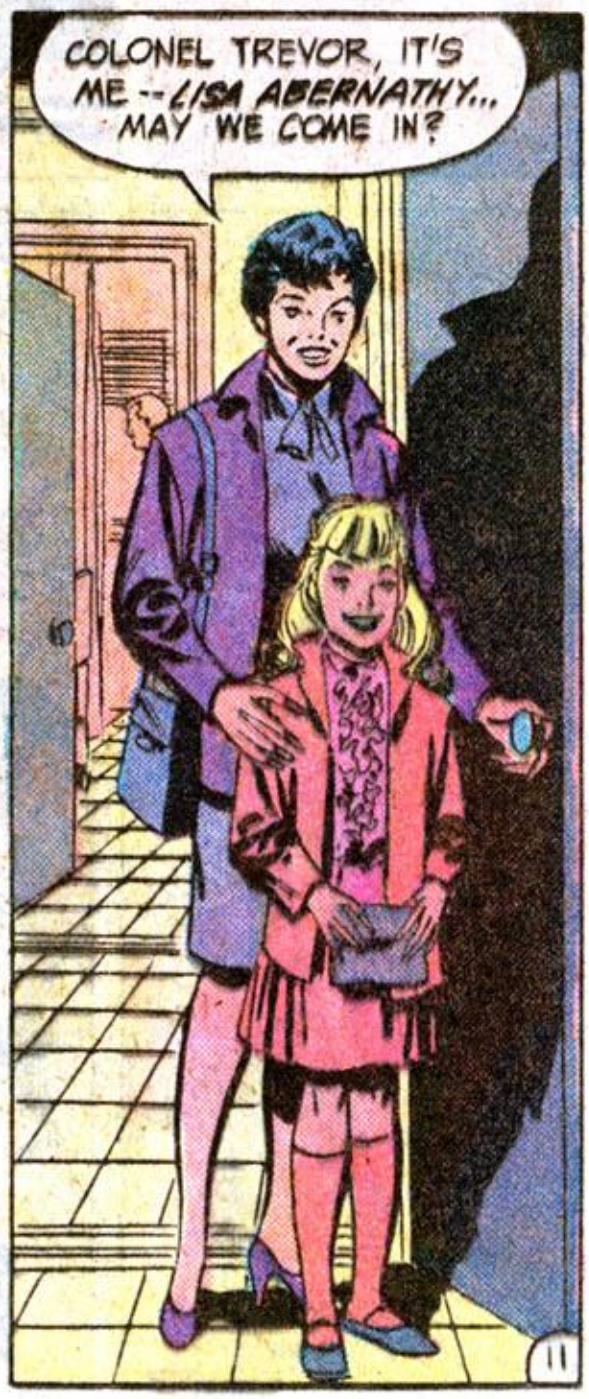
AND HUNDREDS OF MILES AWAY, AT WALTER REED ARMY MEDICAL CENTER IN WASHINGTON...
THAT'S RIGHT, ETTA, THEY RAN THE LAST TESTS THIS AFTERNOON -- IT LOOKS LIKE MY SHOULDER'LL BE GOOD AS NEW!*
*STEVE TREVOR WAS GRAVELY INJURED IN WW #306 -- Alan.

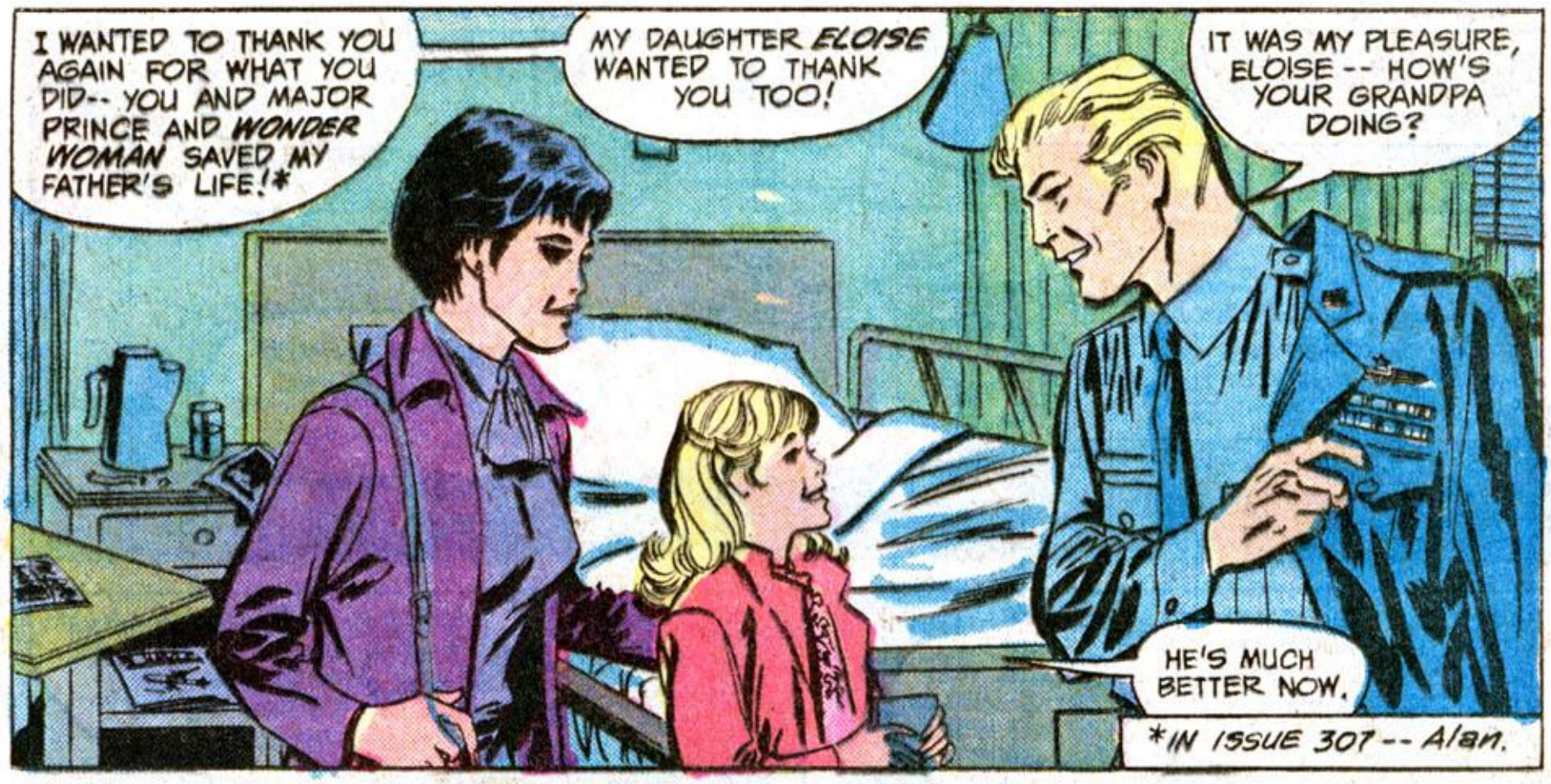
IS THAT ALL YOU'RE CALLING ABOUT OR ARE YOU TRYING TO IMPRESS ME WITH HOW LATE YOU'RE WORKING?
I'M GOING TO BE BACK AT THE PENTAGON TOMORROW, YOU KNOW.

I KNOW, BUT BEFORE THEN I WANTED TO TELL YOU -- PREPARE YOU...
SPIT IT OUT, LIEUTENANT!
THE GENERAL SENT MAJOR GRIGGS TO THE CARIBBEAN CONFERENCE INSTEAD OF YOU! I'M SURE IT WAS ONLY BECAUSE YOU WERE INJURED AND --

DARNELL COULD HAVE CALLED ME IF HE WAS WORRIED -- AND I'D HAVE TOLD HIM I JUST GOT A CLEAN BILL OF HEALTH FROM THE DOCS!
ANYWAY THE ASSIGNMENT COULD HAVE EASILY WAITED A COUPLE OF DAYS IF NECESSARY!

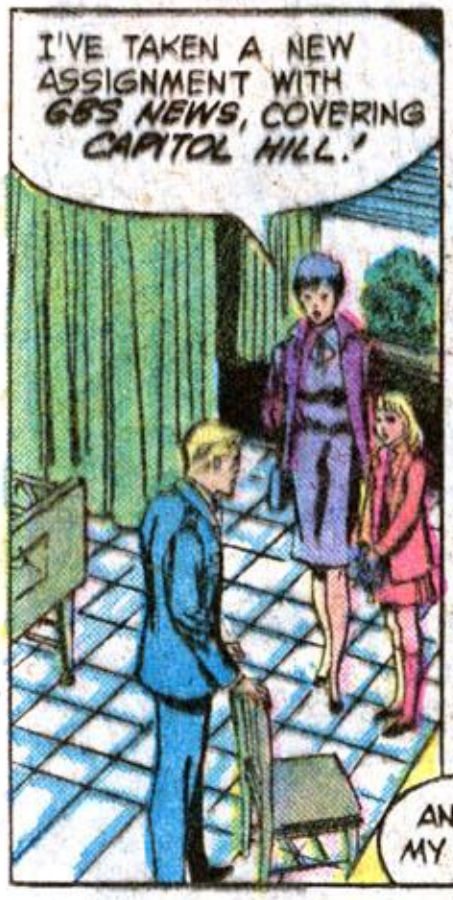
WHAT? NO, I'M NOT MAD AT YOU... YES, I WILL TALK TO HIM...
KNOK KNOK
LOOK, THERE'S SOMEONE AT THE DOOR... I'LL SEE YOU TOMORROW -- AND THANKS FOR CALLING.


COLONEL TREVOR, IT'S ME -- LISA ABERNATHY... MAY WE COME IN?


I WANTED TO THANK YOU AGAIN FOR WHAT YOU DID-- YOU AND MAJOR PRINCE AND WONDER WOMAN SAVED MY FATHER'S LIFE!*
MY DAUGHTER ELOISE WANTED TO THANK YOU TOO!
IT WAS MY PLEASURE, ELOISE -- HOW'S YOUR GRANDPA DOING?
HE'S MUCH BETTER NOW.
*IN ISSUE 307 -- Alan.

COLONEL, IS IT TRUE THAT YOU'RE A FRIEND OF WONDER WOMAN'S?
YES IT IS.
DO YOU THINK THAT YOU COULD INTRODUCE ME?

I'M CERTAIN I COULD ARRANGE SOMETHING... HOW LONG BEFORE YOU TWO GO BACK TO EUROPE?
WE'RE NOT GOING, ACTUALLY...


I'VE TAKEN A NEW ASSIGNMENT WITH CBS NEWS, COVERING CAPITOL HILL!

AND WE'LL BE LIVING WITH MY DAD IN GEORGETOWN.

THEN YOU'LL DEFINITELY BE MEETING WONDER WOMAN, ELOISE...
DIANA PRINCE AND ETTA CANDY -- YOUR GRANDPA'S TENANTS -- ARE FRIENDS OF HERS TOO!
OH BOY!

THE SUN HAS NOT YET SET OVER THIS PART OF THE PACIFIC, WHOSE NAME MEANS "PEACEFUL"--

--BUT WHOSE TIDES ARE NOW A SETTING FOR TURMOIL OF AN UNPRECEDENTED KIND...

I THANK *HERA* THAT THE *ROBOT PLANE* STILL RESPONDS TO MY MENTAL COMMANDS!

WITHOUT IT WE COULD NEVER HAVE MADE IT IN TIME TO STOP SCHLAGEL, AFTER DELIVERING THOSE POOR CHILDREN TO THE AUTHORITIES!

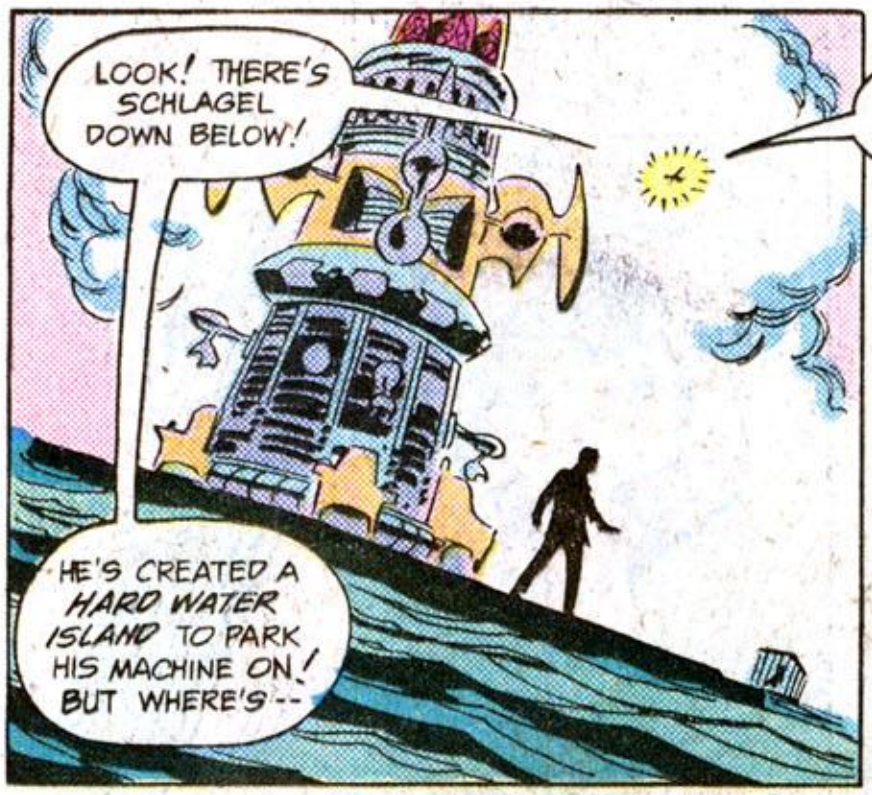
BUT ARE YOU POSITIVE WE'LL FIND HIM HERE, *WONDER WOMAN?*

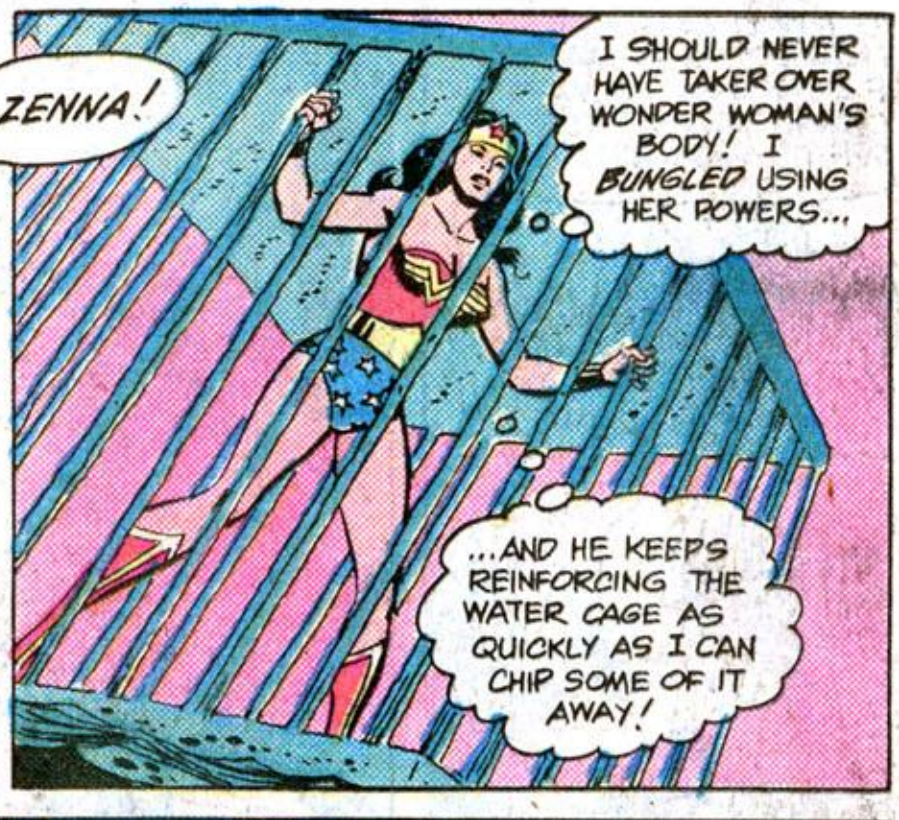
IT'S THE ONLY THING HE COULD HAVE BEEN REFERRING TO WHEN HE SAID HE'D *SHOCK* THE MILITARY BEFORE THE DAY WAS THROUGH!

DON'T FORGET THAT AS *DIANA PRINCE* I'M PRIVY TO THE AIR FORCE'S MOST HIGHLY CLASSIFIED *STRATEGIC SECRETS...*

...ONE OF WHICH IS THE PLAN FOR A NEW *MISSILE DEFENSE SHIELD* TO DEFEND AGAINST ENEMY ATTACK!

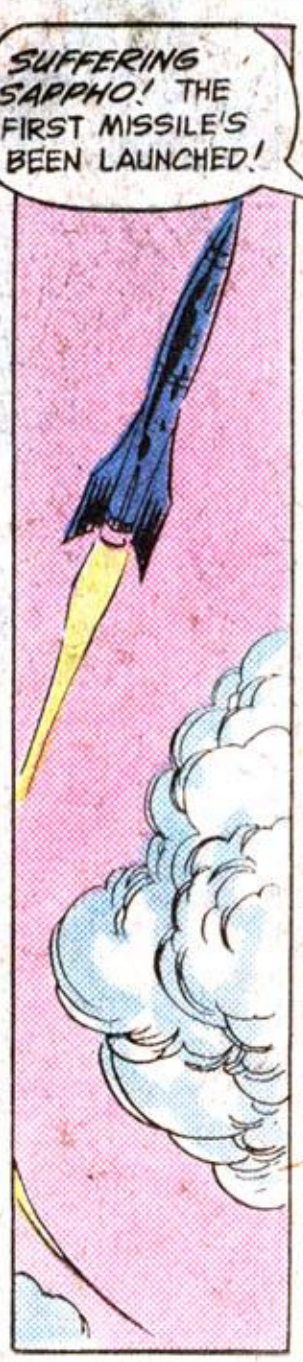
TODAY MARKS THE FIRST FIELD TEST TO SEE WHETHER THE SHIELD CAN ACTUALLY *DISINTEGRATE INCOMING MISSILES!*


LOOK! THERE'S SCHLAGEL DOWN BELOW!
HE'S CREATED A HARD WATER ISLAND TO PARK HIS MACHINE ON! BUT WHERE'S --

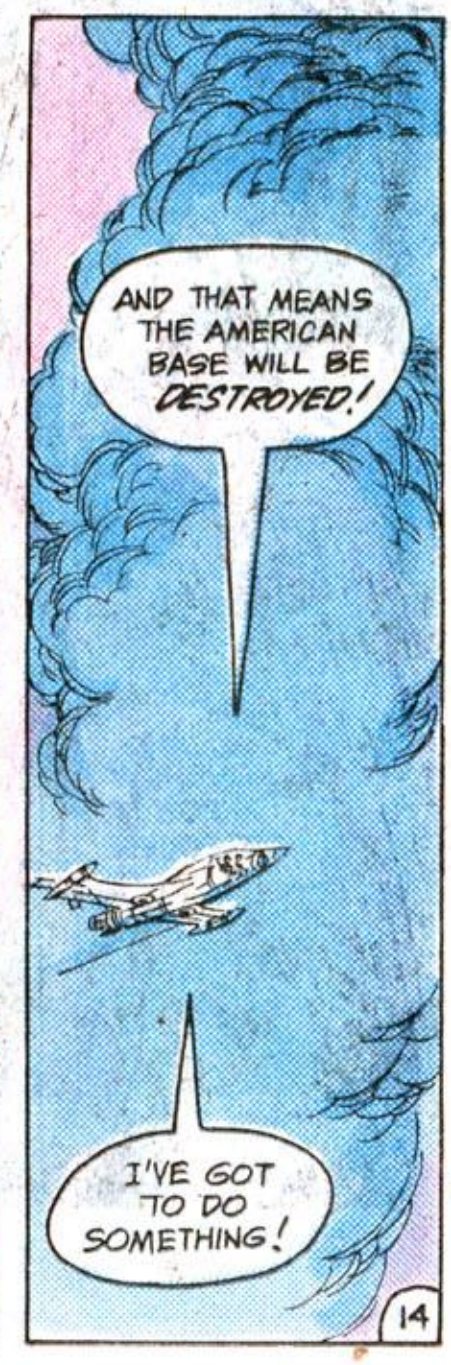

ZENNA!
I SHOULD NEVER HAVE TAKER OVER WONDER WOMAN'S BODY! I BUNGLED USING HER POWERS...
...AND HE KEEPS REINFORCING THE WATER CAGE AS QUICKLY AS I CAN CHIP SOME OF IT AWAY!

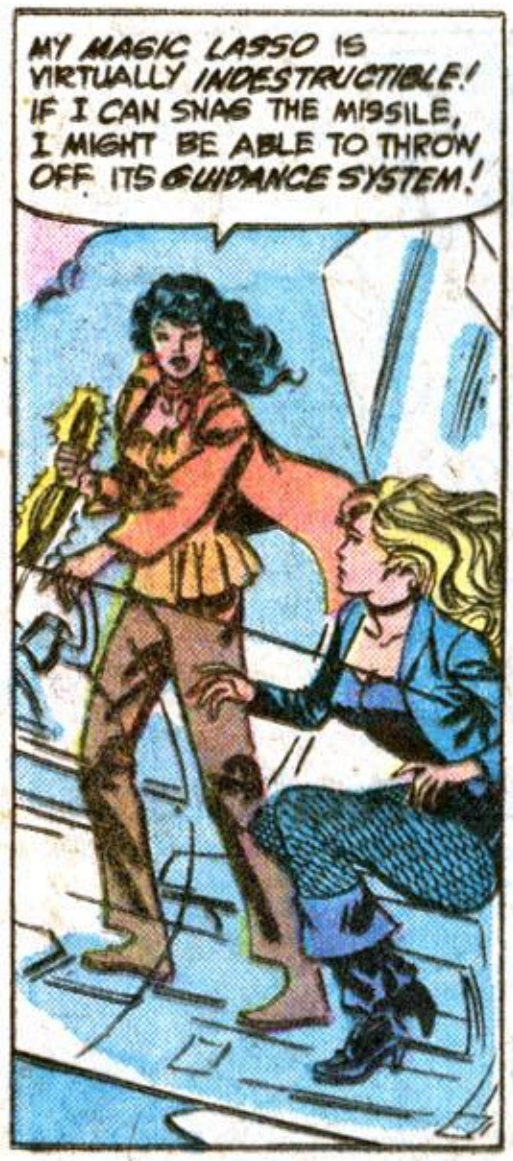
JUST WONDERFUL! SHE'S LET HERSELF GET CAPTURED!
WE'RE AS BAD OFF AS WE WERE BEFORE!
I HATE TO SAY THIS, BUT I'M AFRAID IT'S EVEN WORSE!

THE MACHINE IS GLOWING ALL OF A SUDDEN! IT'S --


SUFFERING SAPPHO! THE FIRST MISSILE'S BEEN LAUNCHED!

SCHLAGEL'S GOING TO CAUSE THE SHIELD TO FAIL...


AND THAT MEANS THE AMERICAN BASE WILL BE DESTROYED!
I'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING!

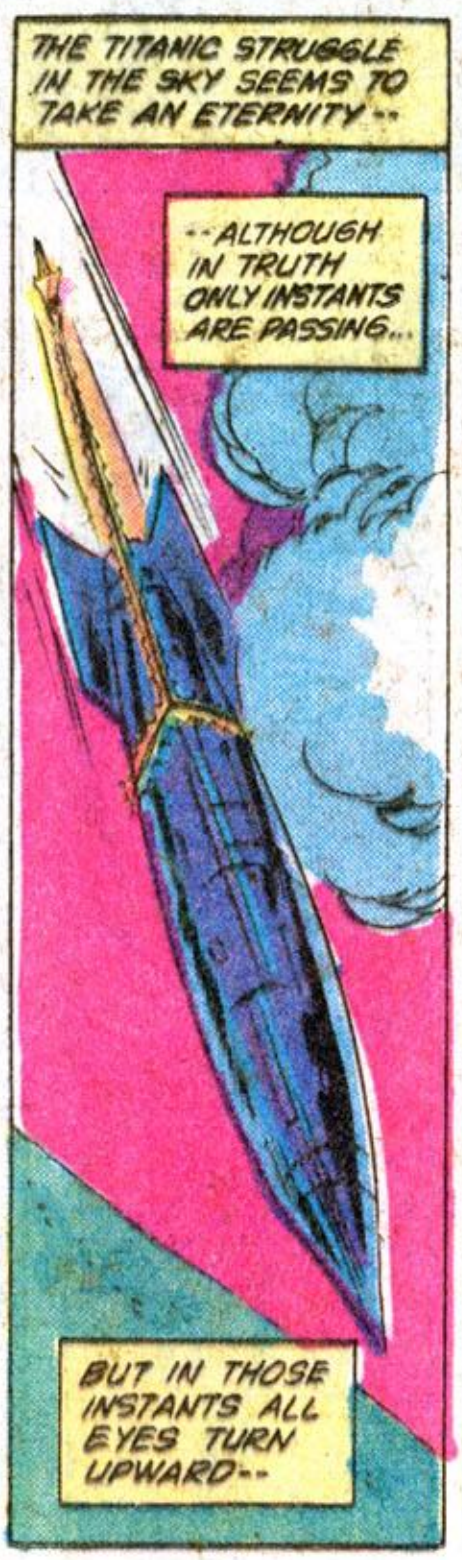

MY MAGIC LASSO IS VIRTUALLY INDESTRUCTIBLE! IF I CAN SNAG THE MISSILE, I MIGHT BE ABLE TO THROW OFF ITS GUIDANCE SYSTEM!

NO, WONDER WOMAN! YOU CAN'T! NOT IN A NORMAL BODY!
I MUST, DINAH... IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO AVERT DISASTER!

DON'T WORRY, THE ROBOT PLANE WILL LAND YOU SAFELY!
AND IF ARTEMIS WILL ONLY GUIDE MY AIM...

GOT IT!

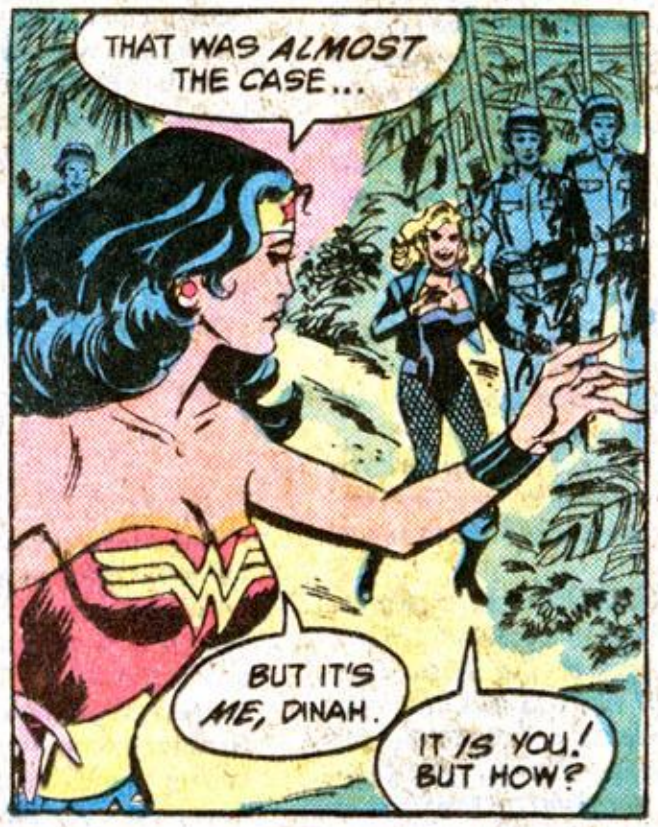
NOW THE QUESTION IS WHETHER I CAN HOLD IT...
...AND SOMEHOW THROW IT OFF COURSE!

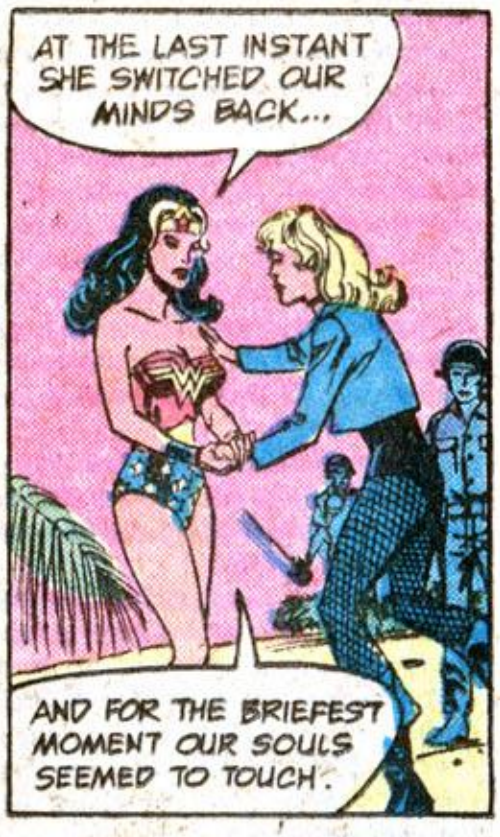

THE TITANIC STRUGGLE IN THE SKY SEEMS TO TAKE AN ETERNITY--
--ALTHOUGH IN TRUTH ONLY INSTANTS ARE PASSING...
BUT IN THOSE INSTANTS ALL EYES TURN UPWARD--

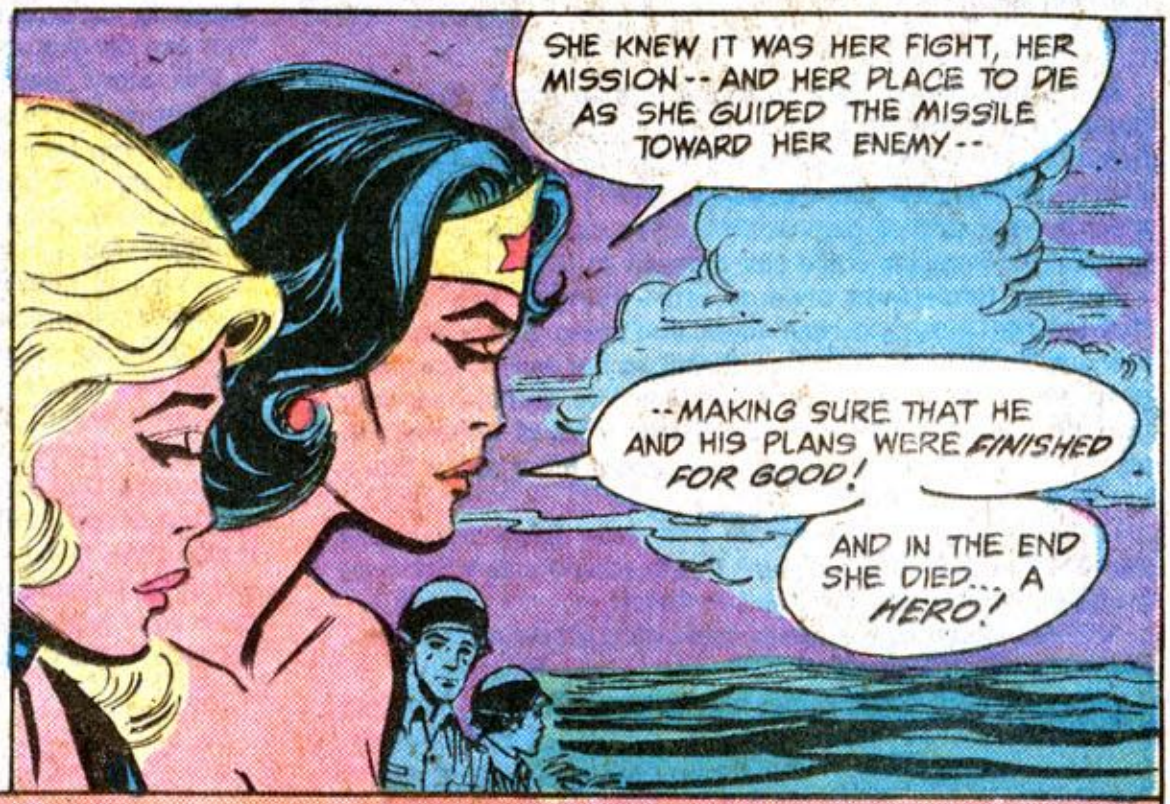
--AT THE SIGHT OF A HERO'S EXEMPLARY EFFORT...

...OF A COURAGEOUS COMRADE'S SELFLESS SACRIFICE...

...OF AN UNGODLY HARBINGER OF DEATH TURNING...
...TURNING...







NEXT: A TALE FROM THE AMAZONS' *PAST* PREFIGURES A BIG DECISION FOR *WONDER WOMAN'S FUTURE!* WITH A *SPECIAL GUEST ARTIST* AS NEW DEVELOPMENTS TAKE SHAPE FOR THE *PRINCESS OF POWER!* *BE HERE THEN!*

Wonder Words

L-1444

DC COMICS, INC.
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My, oh my!

A month has sneaked past us already since Ernie Colon picked up his pole and went fishing. Wasn't that quick!

Ordinarily, when you step into a new job, no sooner have you sharpened your pencils and learned how to get an outside line on the phone than you're buried up to the wishbone in last month's headaches. Just this once, however, everyone can hold in those sympathetic tears. The fact is, I've stepped into a pretty cozy situation.

Dan Mishkin has been working up and refining his ideas for this comic feature for quite some time. I had hardly warmed my seat before he punched up a year's worth of plot ideas on his word processor. And Don Heck is an old hand at delineating the doings of the amazing Amazon in a bright, exciting style. They know what they want to achieve with this series—a fresh, fast-moving comic, filled with adventure and grown-up emotion—and they're impatient to prove they can top themselves with every new issue.

The Huntress, too, I've found in very able hands. Joey Cavalieri has a strange, exciting storyline plotted out, and Tim Burgard, though a newcomer to the series, has been turning in some outstanding, deeply atmospheric work.

Anyway. All this has been a long-winded way of saying hello.

I'm the new kid on the block, trying to make friends. Write to me, please—and don't forget Dan and Don and Joey and Tim. Tell us how we're doing. Let us know what you'd like to see in the months ahead.

I've spent a good part of the past month reading letters, letters, and more letters, getting ready for this column. I wish I could print and respond to a dozen of the best. But, unfortunately, my space for WONDER WORDS this month is limited, so I'm only able to include selections from letters on issues #305 and 306. Just for this issue, I'm going to keep mum, to give as much space as possible to the letters themselves.

So...

Re issue #305: *Terrific!* Diana Prince looks the most beautiful I've seen her look in a long time. And not just beautiful, but—deep—interesting—*unblurred.* And I like the idea of her two personae—Di and Wonder Woman—"mixing" more in ways outside just her thought processes, as when she kicked Etta to safety while still dressed as Di.

And the tenderness towards Etta—trying to help her be *through* with putting herself down, and trying to help her have reasons for doing so, helping her spiff up her self-image... and good old never-changing Etta managing to bumble her way through life and never losing her standards of rightness in spite of her rotten self-image! How about more about Etta's family and background?

I'm with Stephen Gawronski that new, fresh characters should be added—but I do think Diana should marry Steve as Wonder Woman, and tell him her secret.

And yes, I love the mythology, and unlike Madeline Watson, I LOVE Diana's origin story!

Why not have river goddesses and sprites on Paradise Island? And please take away the Island's bleak look. I believe you've tried to create an "uncartoony" aura of mystery, and in some ways it does come off, but it's very sterile-seeming...

But anyway, keep up the fine work. I realize you cannot please EVERYONE!

Dorothy Joyce
Douglaston, NY

* * *

What I liked most about WONDER WOMAN #305 was the *Huntress* story, and that because of the element of *bizarreness* that was so foremost in "STRAITJACKET!" what with Milo and his companions... Only complaint is with Huntress' costume. While it may be nice to *look* at, it's no more practical for fighting purposes than Red Sonja's wardrobe... which brings back a conversation I had with a woman who makes comic-book-type costumes for people to wear at conventions, particularly one comment she made about artists... that as far as costumes go, they should be required to design and sew an outfit they have in mind before they *draw* anything. Batgirl's cowl was an example... murder.

R. Babb
Huntington, WV

* * *

It was with some reluctance that I was going to welcome Don Heck to these pages. Well, I am reluctant no more. His first outing in #306 showed me the crisp, fresh style Don can display in his work.

Dan's story, "Secrets and Suspicions" had more emotion than past issues. It was nice to see Diana show her temper for a change. Clearly this story had some heart to it.

The Huntress tale was also very good and I congratulate Joey Cavalieri on an evenly paced, enjoyable script.

I am not without some constructive criticism:

Nansi Hoolahan's colors on both features and Mike Hernandez's art on the Huntress left something to be desired. Nansi's colors are simply too dull and Mike makes the Huntress costume nothing short of a bathing suit. I realize she didn't have her cape on, but it really shouldn't look that skimpy. Mike DeCarlo had a more appropriate version. Where did he go to?

Also, I liked this issue's logo as well as the picturesque covers lately—they're beginning to look collectable.

See ya in thirty!

Chris Sullivan
Parsippany, NJ

* * *

Dan Mishkin's work on this comic has been very rewarding, but with "Secrets and Suspicions" my gratitude has tripled as he is really giving us story worthy of the Number One Super Heroine, with more depth, plot, sub-plots, realism and characterization. There was quite a bit packed into these sixteen pages, and I really felt that I got my story's worth. Senator Abernathy has long been underused in this comic, as is true of most of the supporting cast except Steve. This man now has depth, background and a basis to grow from. The spy aspect is not only a timely subject and relevant, but an issue that can carry story and controversy.

The story was great reading full of excitement and adventure, and like Diana I was beginning to think that Steve was turning heartless on us. The truth really enhanced his character, and probably brought his and Di's relationship much closer. The return of Aegeus was a complete surprise and provided a novel twist to the main storyline. I would say that he has nothing to do with the Abernathy story but is Circe's latest attack on Wonder Woman. Whatever, I know that I am going to enjoy it.

Don Heck's debut here was fantastic! Gene Colan is a very masterful artist, but in my opinion he used too many large panels per story so that often I felt short-changed from getting a full story. Don's more conservative approach of many panels and use of story-telling through them is by far preferred by me. It also gives Don a chance to show off his style and his strong use of facial expressions. Very welcome aboard, Don, and I am sure your work here will bring a renewed interest in both WONDER WOMAN and your work.

Kent A. Phenis
Indianapolis, IN

* * *

That's all for now. Next issue we have a guest penciller— Dan's cooked up a story that's more than a little special and definitely a change of pace. With issue #311, Don returns as artist of an offbeat story. Dan will be tying up some loose threads—and loosening a couple just a little more.

Till next issue...

Alan Gold

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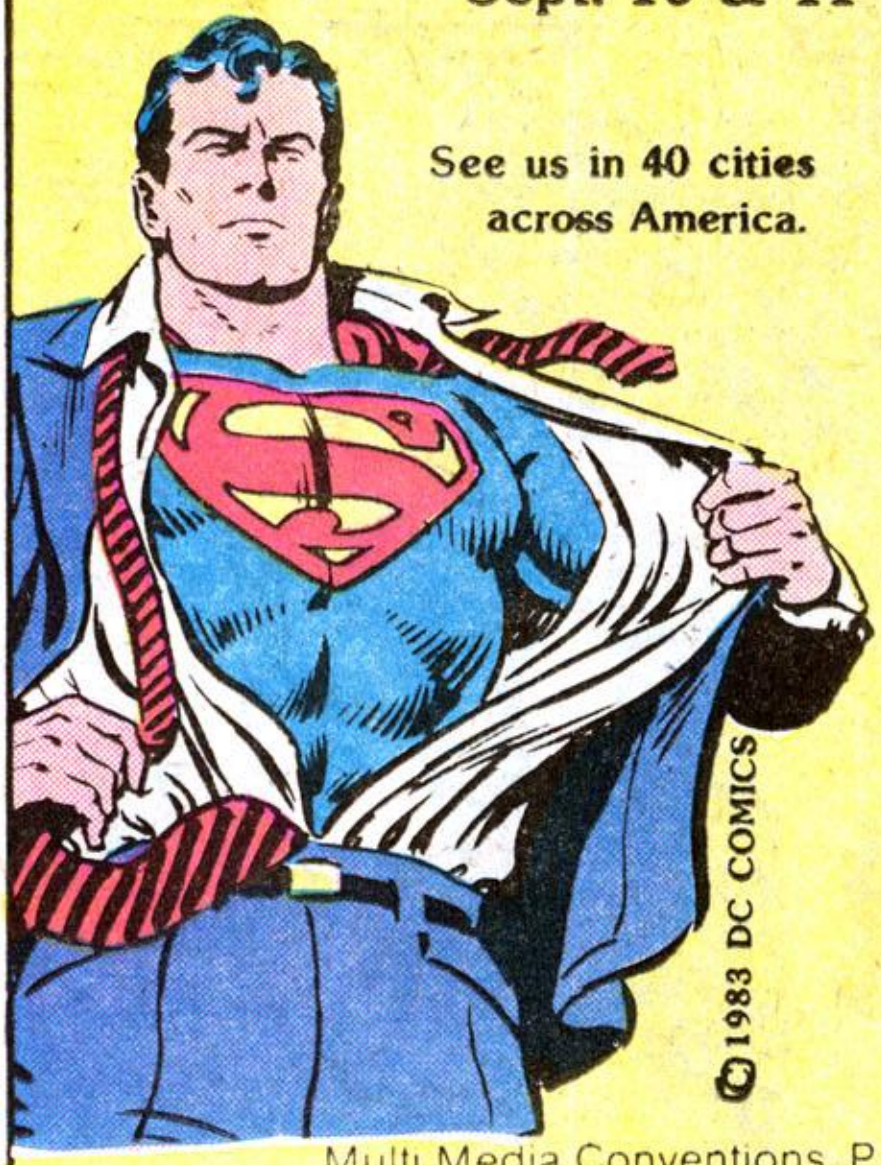

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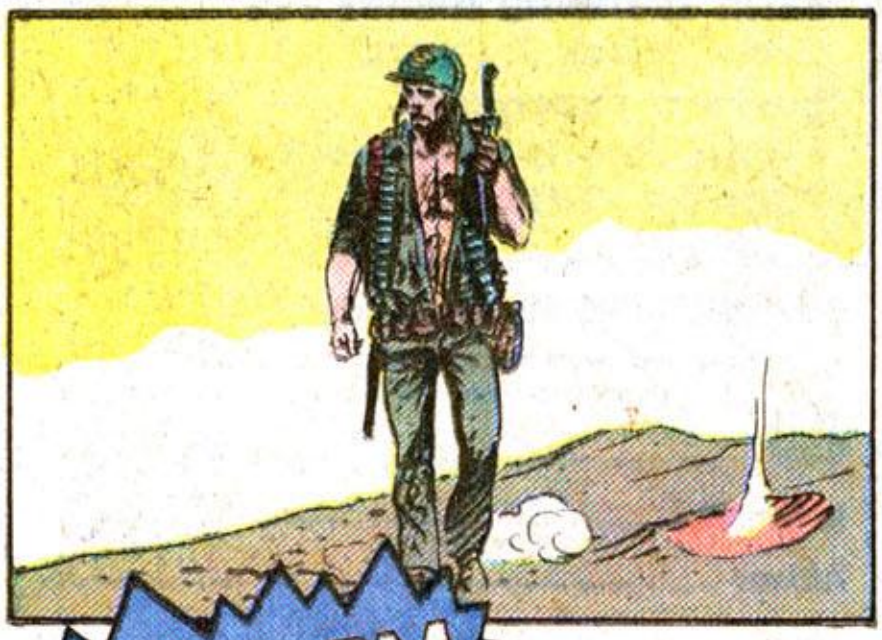

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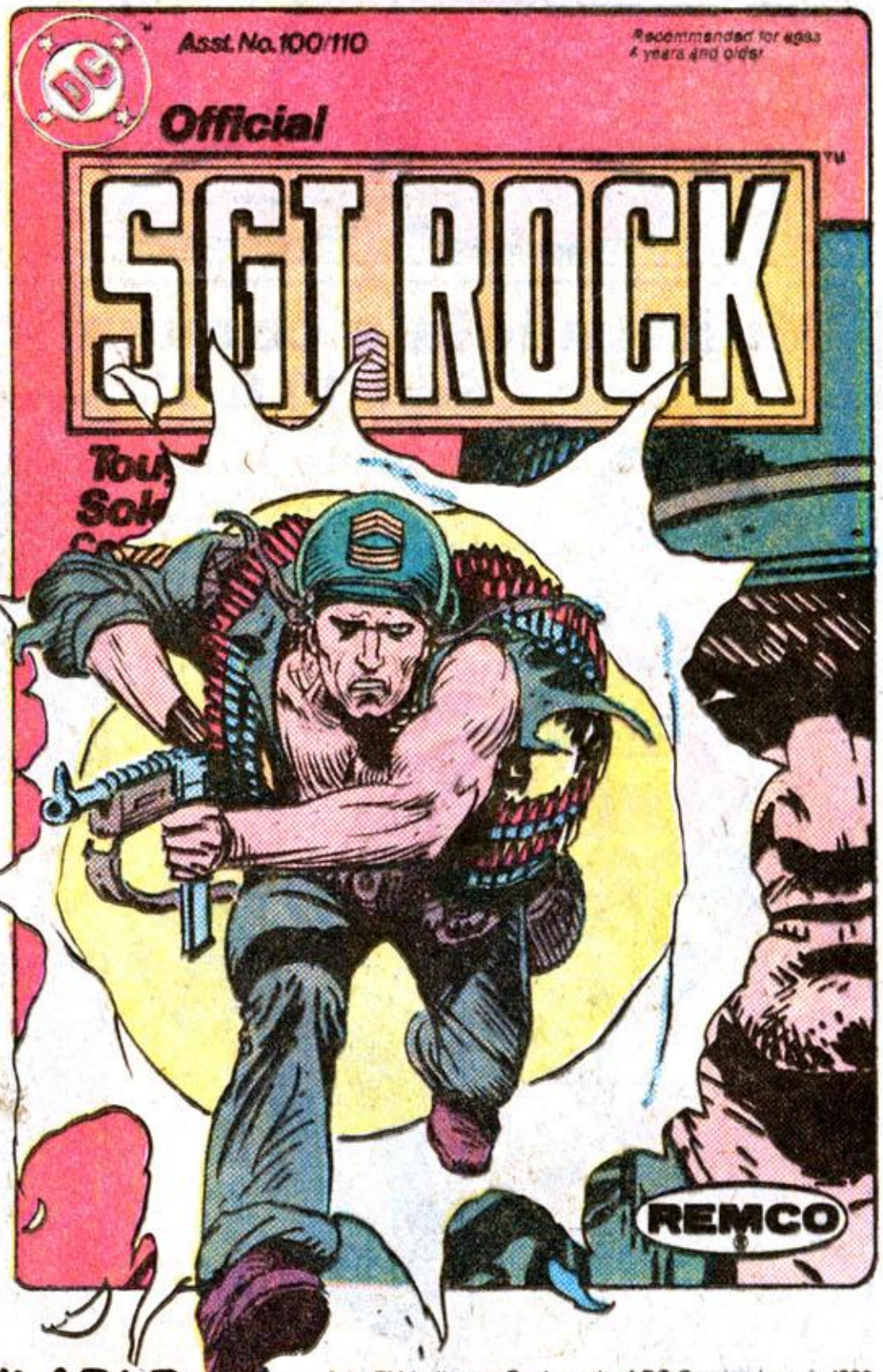

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ERBIE!
ERBIE!
ERBIE?
ERBIE?
ERBIE?
HERBIE?
POLITE OF YOU TO USE MY REAL NAME.
BUT YOU MIGHT AS WELL CALL ME WHAT EVERYONE ELSE DOES...
THE EARTH-WORM!
YOU-- YOU GAVE ME A START THERE!
THAT WAS THE GENERAL IDEA.
THE DELIVERY WENT OFF AS PLANNED. I SEE YOU'RE NOT CARRYING ANY MONEY FOR ME. NOTHING WENT WRONG, I HOPE!
AHH, AS A MATTER OF FACT ... WE LOST THE MONEY... AND THE MERCHANDISE!
PLOOP
Y'SEE...THE GUYS HAD A RUN-IN WITH THE HUNTRESS!
YOU PROB'LY DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE HUNTRESS ...YOU PROB'LY DONT GET OUT OF HERE MUCH...
OH, I GET OUT...
I'M THE MEMBER OF THIS ORGANIZATION WHO OBTAINS THE MERCHANDISE...
WACK! WACK! WACK!
AND WHEN YOU GO AND LOSE IT ON ME...

CONTINUED ON 3RD PAGE FOLLOWING.

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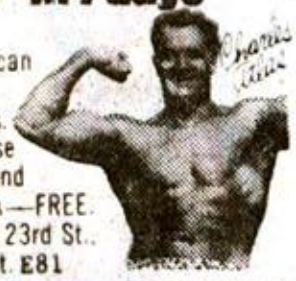

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MEANWHILE...

"I have a vision.

A vision of comics being all that they can be... "

These are the opening lines of a speech I delivered at eight or ten major conventions during 1982. The lines were intended to segue into the major thrust of the address; that the comic industry's need for new talent would prevent my vision from ever becoming a reality unless a program was initiated by the major publishers to encourage the entry of new talent into the field.

But my speech never clearly delineated my vision, its origins, or its development and I'd like to do that now.

So I will.

I can't remember exactly how old I was. I was in bed. I was sickly as a child and spent lots of time in bed. Since I am an only child and my father worked and my mother had her chores, I spent a good many hours finding ways to occupy myself. My parents, bless 'em, knew how difficult it was for me and did everything they could to keep me comfortable. My father brought something home for me each night, something to help me while away the lonesome hours. This particular night he brought home a comic book... **Famous Funnies** to be exact... my first comic book ever. "Here you are, Dickie. Now you can read the funnies every day, not just on Sunday." I picked up the magazine he'd tossed on the bed, flipped through the pages, mesmerized... and I haven't been the same since!

I can't tell you why those early comics affected me the way they did, but I was hooked and immediately became an avid reader. Soon I was writing and drawing my own comics, (sometimes on brown paper bags that my mother brought groceries home in.) to pass the time between issues of my favorites. I remember, in particular, drawing "The Little King", a popular Sunday comic strip of the time, and my parents beaming proudly at my "talent". I really didn't need much encouragement. I'd made up my mind that reading or drawing comics was fun and I would do both for as long as I could. Perhaps for the rest of my life. I was then seven years old.

Jump ahead five/six years. I'm in elementary school now, not so sickly anymore, lots of friends, getting into sports... baseball mostly. Still an avid reader (**Batman** wipes me out. Can't wait for the next issue... especially if the Joker is the villain.), still drawing my own comics, which now tend to be adaptations of stories from the pulp magazines of the time, mostly sport stories. Each day when school ends, I buy a package of Drakes' cupcakes (3 to a package), trudge home and with a glass of milk, the radio turned on to Captain Midnight or Jack Armstrong, I spend the time waiting for my parents to come home from work reading my latest stack of comics. A major event in my life at that time was discovering that a classmate of mine, Pat Bove shared my unbridled enthusiasm for reading comics (though he didn't draw them), bought his comics at a mysterious "other" store, seemed to be able to produce hugh stacks of them, seemingly at will and they were almost all titles that I couldn't get at my store and we started trading. Now I could read two or three comics for every one I bought. **Bliss!** Thank you, Pat Bove, wherever you are!

Graduated elementary school having already made a career choice. A vocational high school in the New York City system, **The School of Industrial Art**, offered courses in cartooning as well as all the other commercial arts. It also required its students to take all the necessary academic subjects needed to enter college, so my school day was quite long and there was a 45 minute subway ride in either direction to make the day longer. I think this is where my 4 A.M. rising time started. I worked hard. I loved it. I learned my craft. (Talent is a good start, but you **do** need training!)

My high school years and my first year of working were uneventful, in the main. But the early fifties saw the emergence of **EC Comics**, and a new standard was set. I was knocked out of my socks by those comics. Here were stories that were literate, exciting, revolved around themes or messages that readers could relate to. They were well illustrated, beautifully colored, and, in my mind, all other comics paled by comparison. More than all this, you could feel that the creative people cared about their material, the editors (comics giants, Al Feldstein and Harvey Kurtzman) put their individual stamps on the books that they edited and publisher Bill Gaines supplied his support, direction and whatever else was needed to make it happen. The end result was a stunning line of comics that were fun to read and demanded that you care about them and their creators, who were given great visibility by the publisher and the editors.

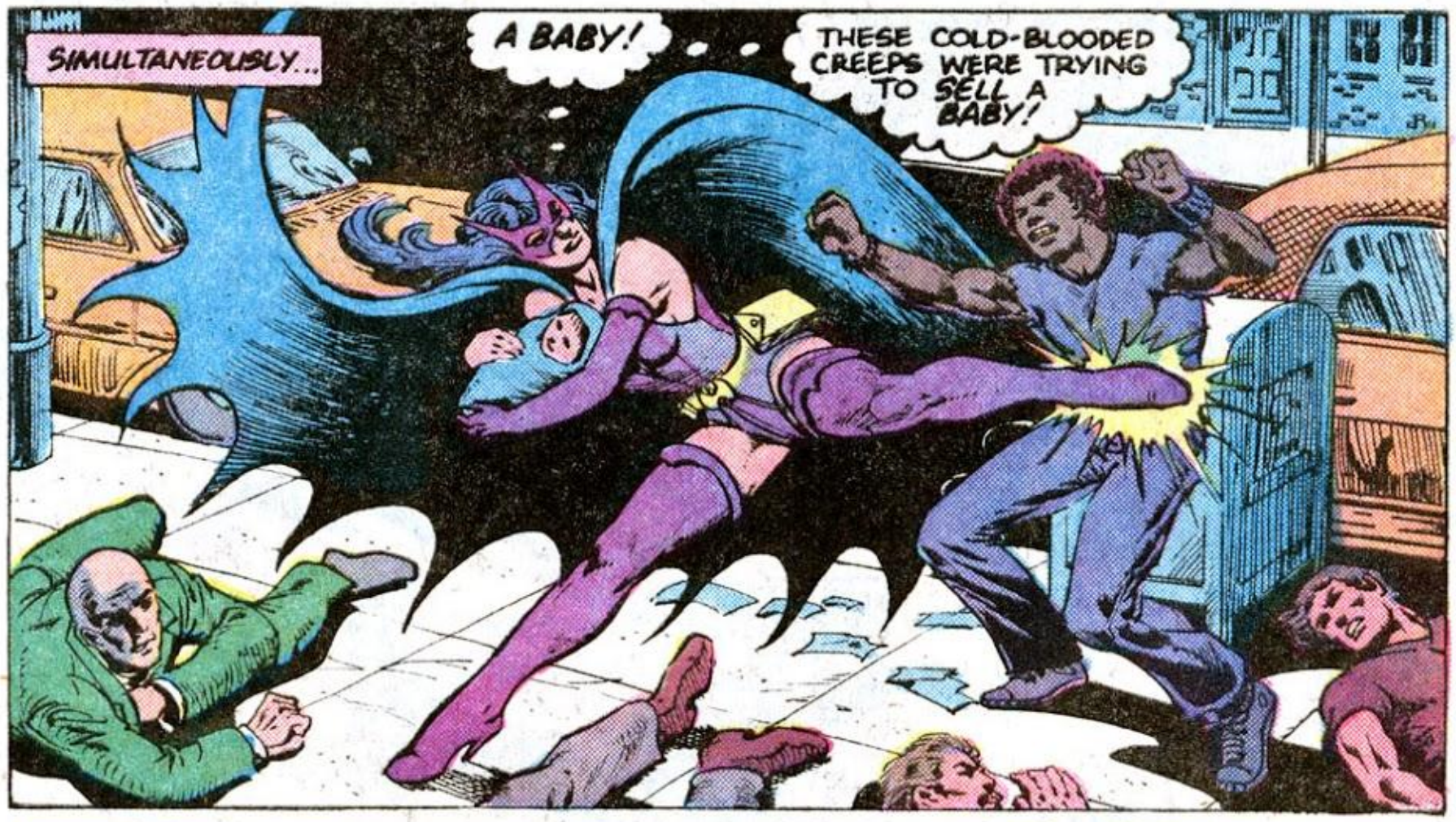
This early vision of what comics can be still fires me today. I don't mean that I intend to copy EC Comics... Today's tastes have changed... but I do want to publish a line of DC Comics that will have the same overwhelming level of creative energy, that will have people working together who care about their material, each other, their reader and comics in general. Creators who work toward a common goal for love of the work and a desire to entertain and please an audience... as well as themselves... creators who feel that they can make such a total commitment and not feel "it's just a job" to produce a line of comics that make a special statement... **their** statement. In short, a line of comics **I** can read to recapture the excitement of a time, not **too** long ago, when comics were all they could be.

Maybe it won't happen this year... maybe it won't happen in the next five years... maybe it won't happen ever!

But it won't be because I haven't tried. You **see**, I have a vision.

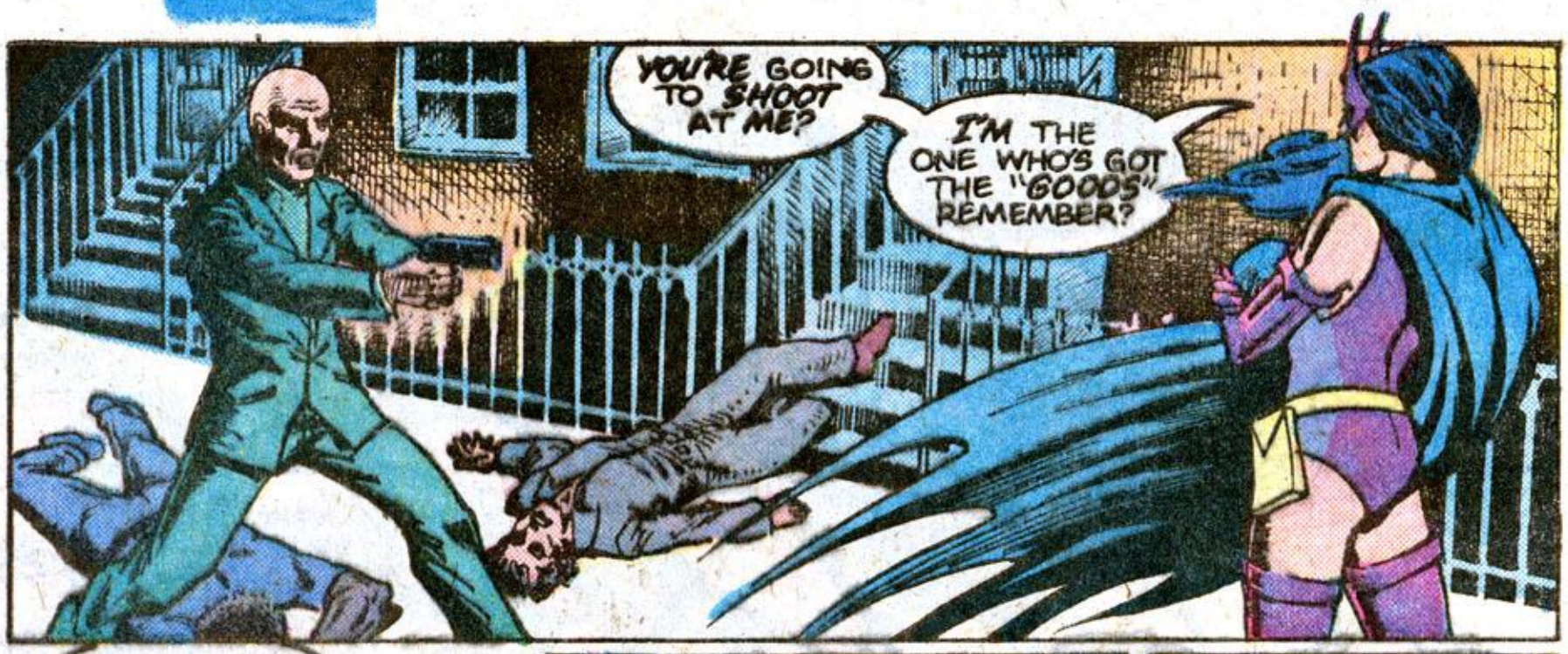
Thank you and Good Afternoon.

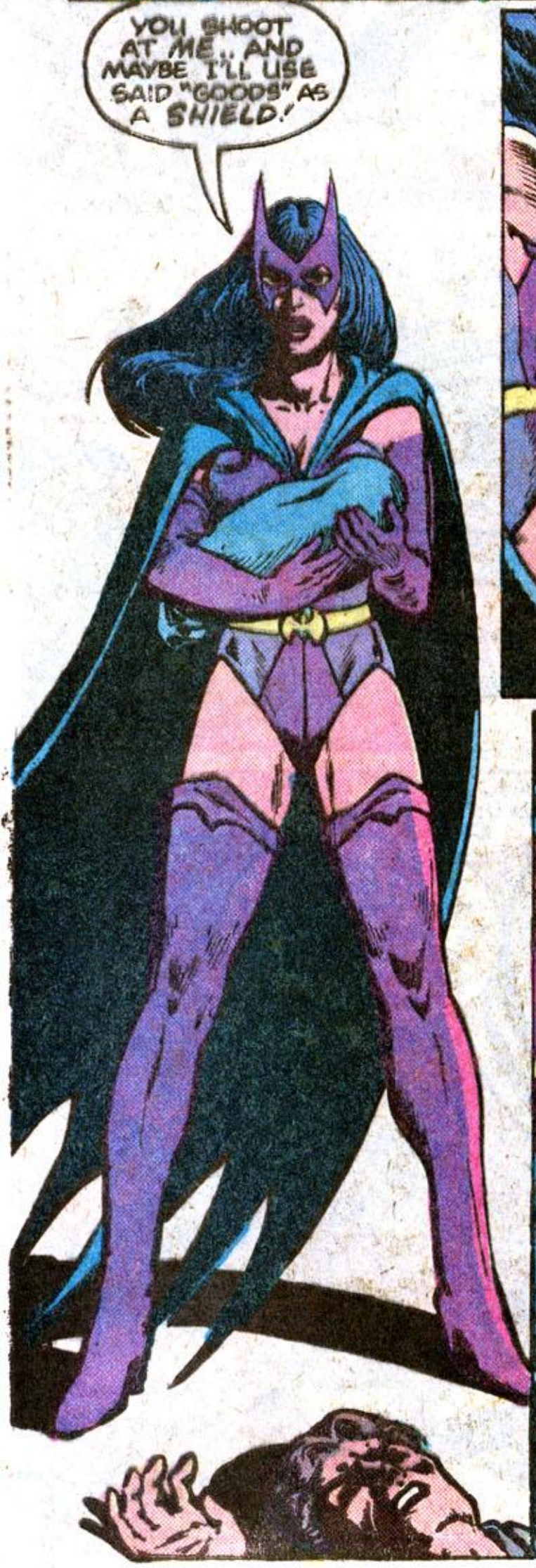
Dick


SIMULTANEOUSLY...
A BABY!
THESE COLD-BLOODED CREEPS WERE TRYING TO SELL A BABY!

BUT WHOSE BABY IS THIS?
AND HOW DID THOSE ANIMALS GET THEIR CLAWS INTO THIS KID?

THE BUYERS HAVE FLED --AND MOST OF THE SELLERS ARE TOO CLOSE TO COMATOSE FOR CONVERSATION!
ALL RIGHT, LADY! GIVE OVER!
WE WORKED TOO LONG ON THIS OPERATION TO HAVE A CHICLET LIKE YOU WALK OFF WITH THE GOODS!
SO GIVE!


YOU'RE GOING TO SHOOT AT ME?
I'M THE ONE WHO'S GOT THE "GOODS" REMEMBER?


YOU SHOOT AT ME... AND MAYBE I'LL USE SAID "GOODS" AS A SHIELD!

I'M BETTING THE KID'S NO GOOD TO YOU... IF YOU DELIVER IT D.O.A.!
AND I'M BETTING YOU'D STOP A BULLET YOURSELF...BEFORE YOU'D LET AN INNOCENT KID DIE!

GIVE IT OVER, HONEY! YOU'RE NOT FOOLING ANYBODY!

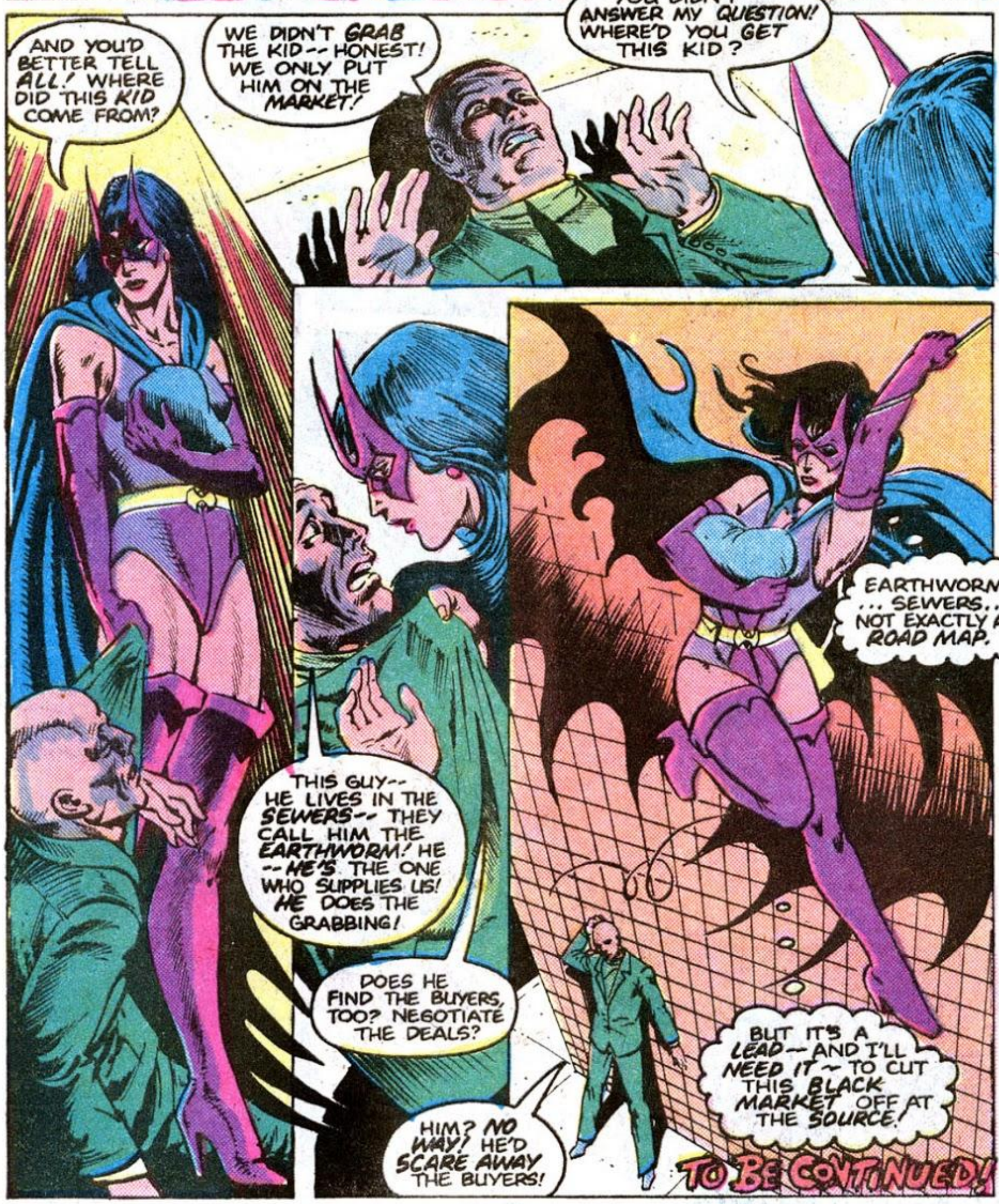
IF YOU WANT IT SO BADLY... COME AND GET IT!

YOU HEARD ME ...COME AND GET IT!

THAT'S MORE LIKE IT!
NOW HAND IT OVER NICE AND SLOW...OR YOU'LL END UP WITH A NEW HAIR-DO...A PERMANENT!
WHATEVER YOU SAY, GENIUS...
JUST KEEP WATCHING THE HAND WITH THE BABY...
THAT'S THE WAY, BABY!
...AND PAY NO ATTENTION TO MY OTHER HAND!
THAT WAS A SMART MOVE!
NOT SMART ENOUGH TO KEEP YOU ALIVE, THOUGH!
BYE-BYE, BEAUTIFUL!
YOWW WHERE--WHERE'D THAT COME FROM??

I'LL NEVER TELL! BESIDES...

...IT'S YOUR TURN TO DO THE TELLING!


AND YOU'D BETTER TELL ALL! WHERE DID THIS KID COME FROM?
WE DIDN'T GRAB THE KID -- HONEST! WE ONLY PUT HIM ON THE MARKET!
YOU DIDN'T ANSWER MY QUESTION! WHERE'D YOU GET THIS KID?
THIS GUY -- HE LIVES IN THE SEWERS -- THEY CALL HIM THE EARTHWORM! HE -- HE'S THE ONE WHO SUPPLIES US! HE DOES THE GRABBING!
DOES HE FIND THE BUYERS, TOO? NEGOTIATE THE DEALS?
HIM? NO WAY! HE'D SCARE AWAY THE BUYERS!
EARTHWORM ... SEWERS... NOT EXACTLY A ROAD MAP.
BUT IT'S A LEAD -- AND I'LL NEED IT -- TO CUT THIS BLACK MARKET OFF AT THE SOURCE!
TO BE CONTINUED!

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–Boston Orb

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