DC
WONDER WOMAN
106
FEB 96
BY JOHN BYRNE
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FAR BELOW THE GRAY GRIP OF WINTER HOLDS FAST ON THE URBAN SPRAWL OF GATEWAY CITY...
...BUT HERE, ABOVE THE CLOUDS, ABOVE THE GRIME OF THE CITY, THE AIR IS CLEAR AND SHARP AS A WARRIOR'S BLADE.
AND IT IS A WARRIOR WHO RIDES THE WIND, FEELING NOW A FREEDOM SHE REALIZES HAS ELUDED HER FOR SO LONG.
SHE HAS BEEN THROUGH THE FIRE, THROUGH TRAGEDY AND BETRAYAL, AND AS THE WISEST OF US TEACH, SHE HAD BEEN MADE STRONGER BY THE JOURNEY.
SHE HAS LOST FAMILY AND HOME, THE SHELTERING COMFORT OF HISTORY AND TRADITION...
...BUT SHE HAS GAINED SO MUCH MORE. SHE IS, NOW AND FOREVER...
WONDER WOMAN

LIFELINES

PART TWO

BUT EVEN WONDER WOMAN IS NOT COMPLETELY FREE OF MUNDANE RESPONSIBILITIES.

SHE DROPS FROM THE SKY STRAIGHT AND SURE AS A THUNDERBOLT FROM THE HAND OF ZEUS...

...AND THE CLOUDS BENEATH HER SEEM TO PART, TO SHOW THE CITY SPREAD LIKE A GIANT'S TOY IN THE WINTER MORNING.

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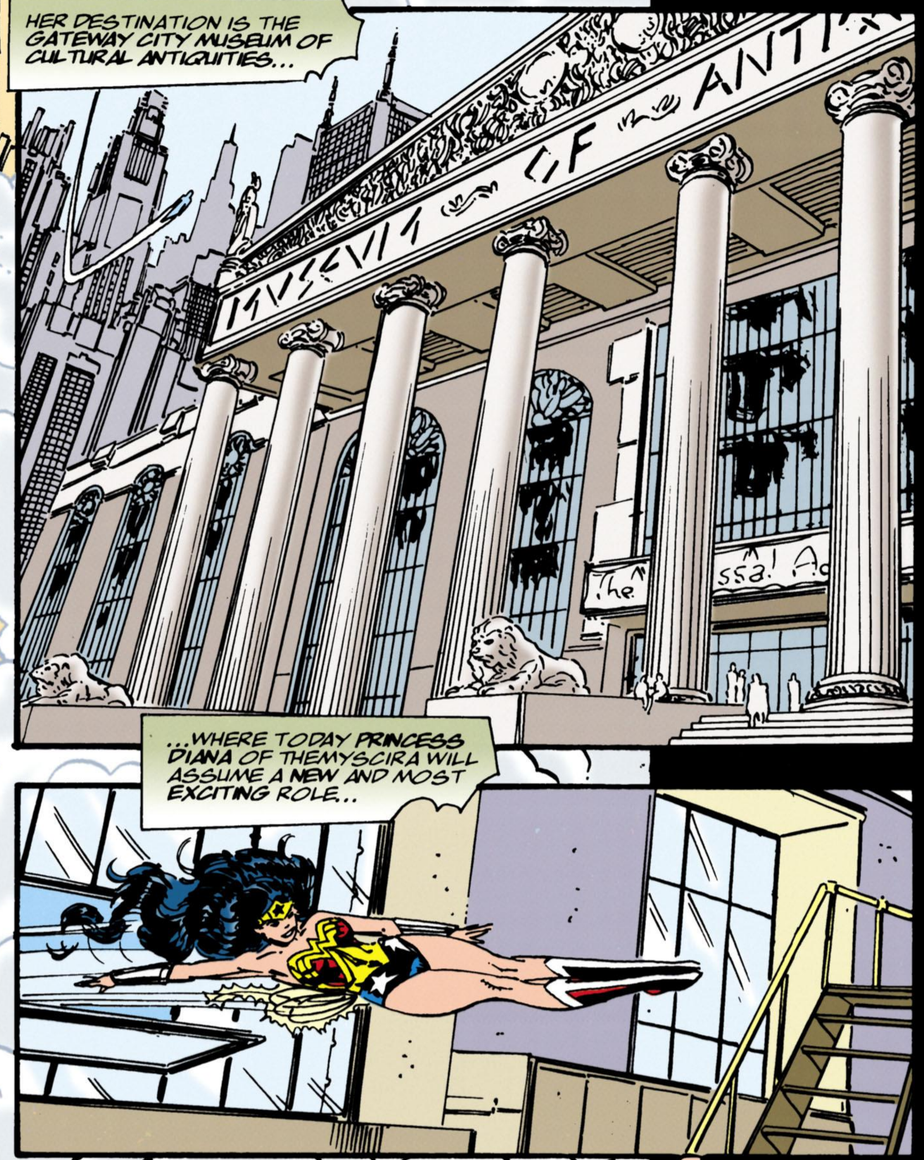
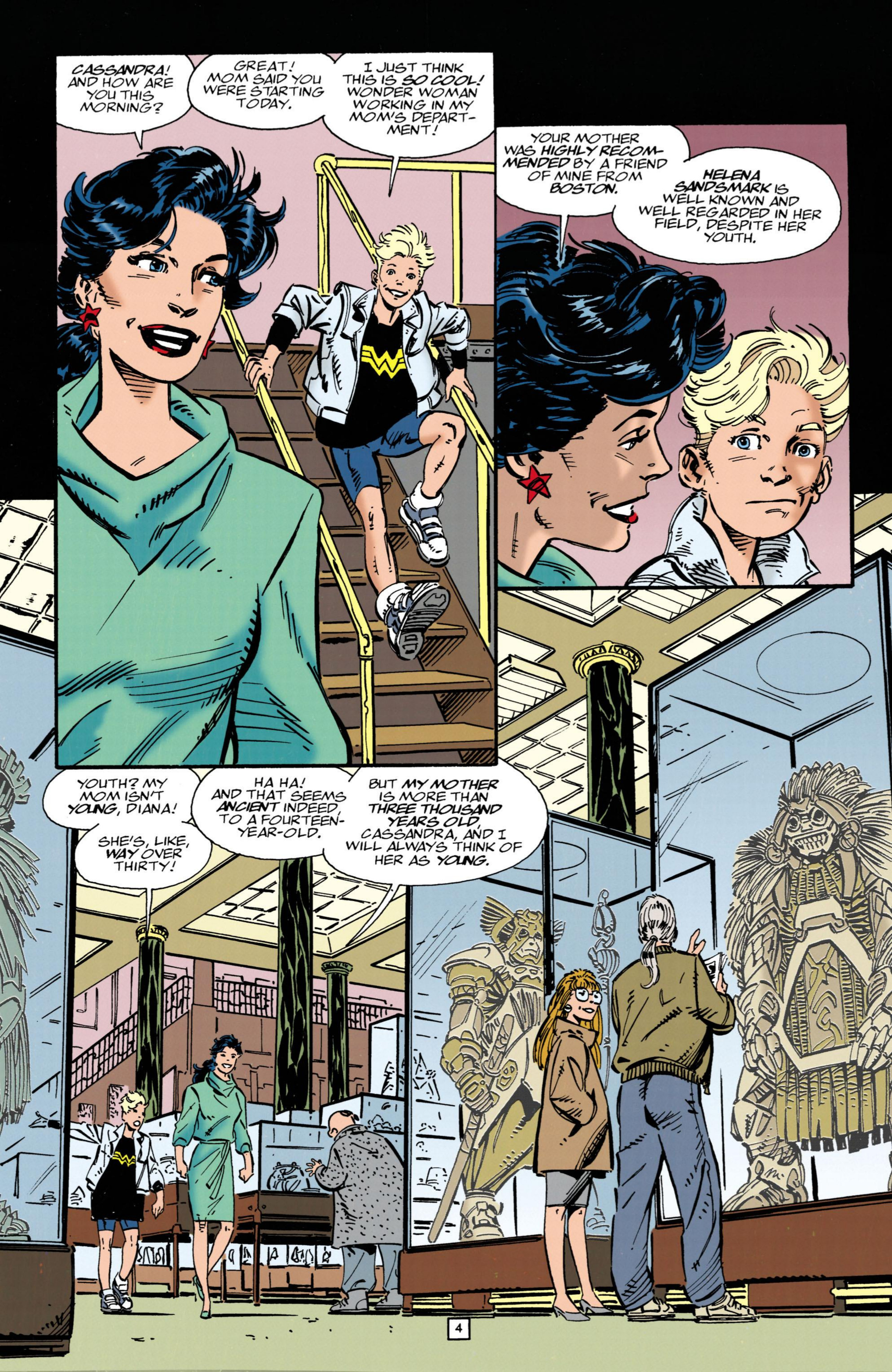
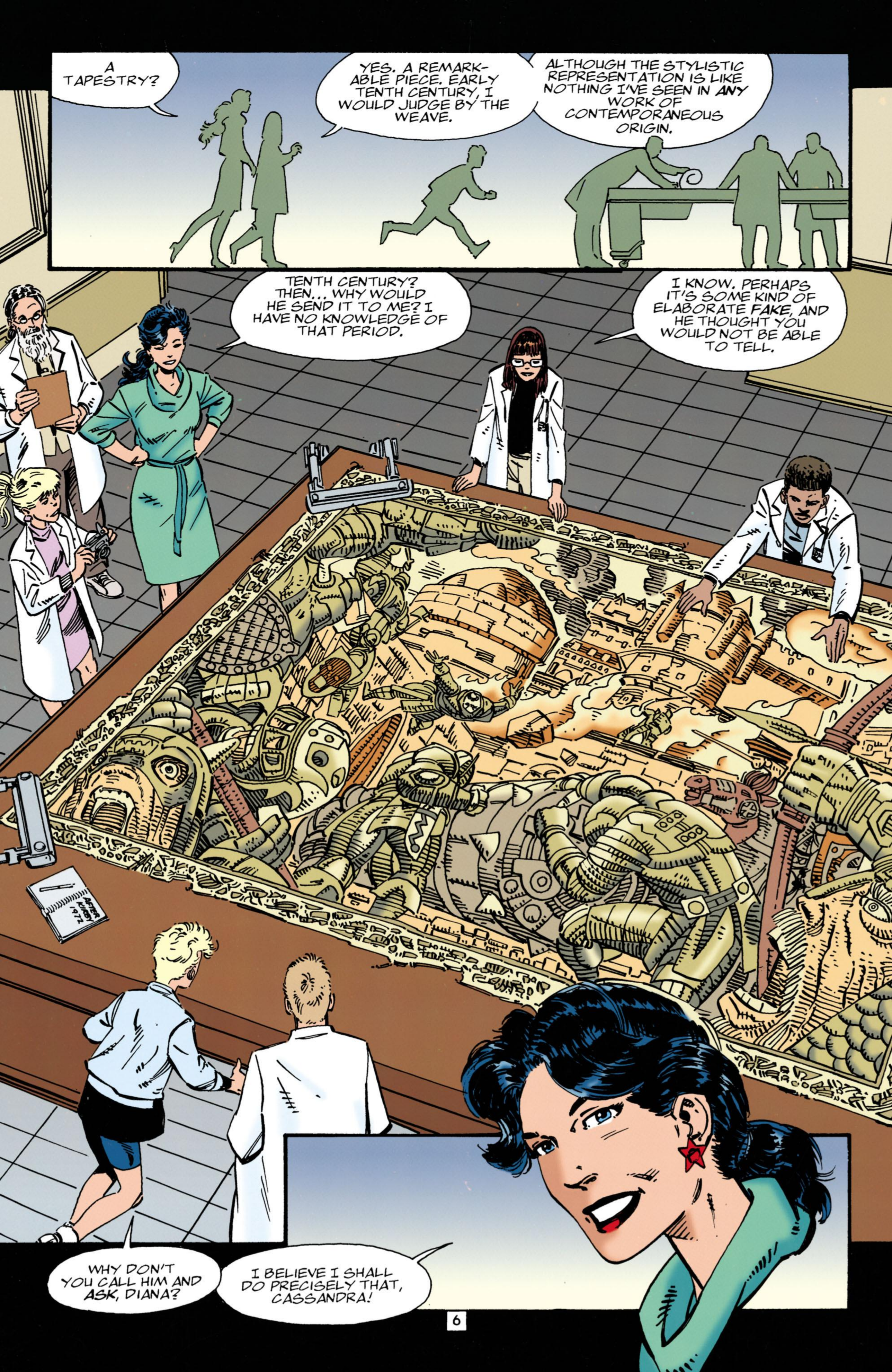


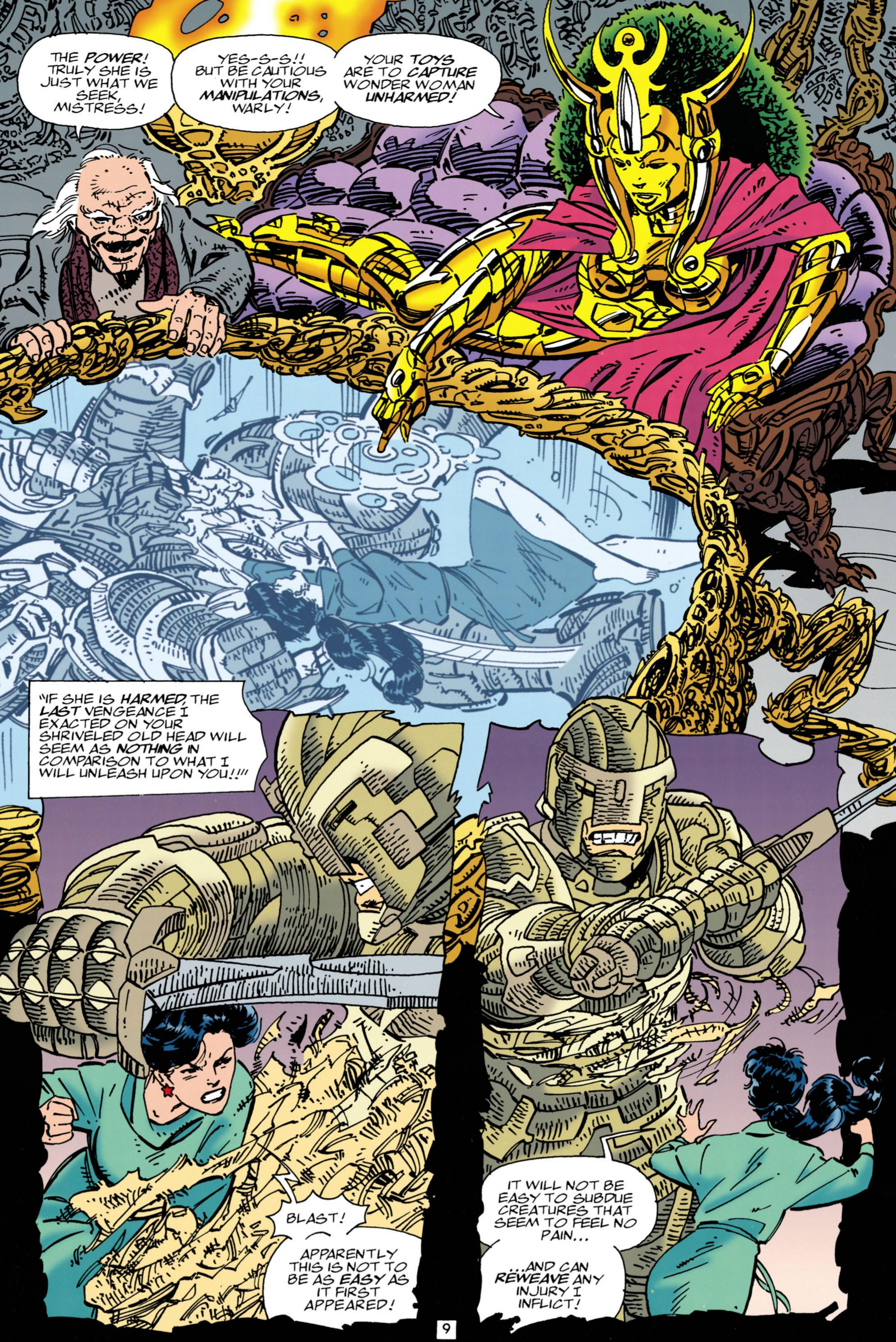

CASSANDRA! AND HOW ARE YOU THIS MORNING?
GREAT! MOM SAID YOU WERE STARTING TODAY.
I JUST THINK THIS IS SO COOL! WONDER WOMAN WORKING IN MY MOM'S DEPARTMENT!
YOUR MOTHER WAS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED BY A FRIEND OF MINE FROM BOSTON.
HELENA SANDSMARK IS WELL KNOWN AND WELL REGARDED IN HER FIELD, DESPITE HER YOUTH.
YOUTH? MY MOM ISN'T YOUNG, DIANA!
SHE'S, LIKE, WAY OVER THIRTY!
HA HA! AND THAT SEEMS ANCIENT INDEED, TO A FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD.
BUT MY MOTHER IS MORE THAN THREE THOUSAND YEARS OLD, CASSANDRA, AND I WILL ALWAYS THINK OF HER AS YOUNG.

SURE, BUT YOU AMAZONS ARE ALL IMMORTAL, RIGHT? I MEAN, YOU AND YOUR MOM ARE LIKE CONTEMPORARIES OR SOMETHING!
IN SOME WAYS. BUT NOT ALL AMAZONS ARE IMMORTAL, CASSANDRA. WE CAN BE KILLED IN BATTLE.
AND, I MYSELF GAVE UP...
DIANA! I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE HERE!
THE STRANGEST LITTLE MAN WAS HERE EARLIER, ASKING AFTER YOU!
STRANGE MAN? WHO WAS HE?
I'M NOT SURE, DIANA. HE LEFT THIS CARD.
I KNOW THE NAME FROM MY STUDENT DAYS, BUT HE HASN'T BEEN HEARD FROM IN YEARS.
HEY! YOU KNOW THE RULES, MILLER! NO SMOKING IN HERE!
PROFESSOR THEOPHILUS WARLY?
WHAT WOULD A PROFESSOR OF DEMONOLOGY WANT WITH ME?
WELL, HE LEFT A TAPESTRY HE SAID WOULD BE OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO YOU.
PROFESSOR THEOPHILUS WARLY DEMONOLOGIST 555-6198


A TAPESTRY?
YES. A REMARKABLE PIECE. EARLY TENTH CENTURY, I WOULD JUDGE BY THE WEAVE.
ALTHOUGH THE STYLISTIC REPRESENTATION IS LIKE NOTHING I'VE SEEN IN ANY WORK OF CONTEMPORANEOUS ORIGIN.
TENTH CENTURY? THEN... WHY WOULD HE SEND IT TO ME? I HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF THAT PERIOD.
I KNOW. PERHAPS IT'S SOME KIND OF ELABORATE FAKE, AND HE THOUGHT YOU WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO TELL.
AFTER KIRBY 1972
WHY DON'T YOU CALL HIM AND ASK, DIANA?
I BELIEVE I SHALL DO PRECISELY THAT, CASSANDRA!

HELLO?
OH, HELLO MY DEAR PRINCESS! YES, I DID INDEED CALL BY THE MUSEUM THIS MORNING. TELL ME, ARE YOU THERE NOW?
YES, I'M IN PROFESSOR SANDSMARK'S OFFICE.
I CONFESS TO SOME CONFUSION, DR. WARLY. MY EXPERIENCE OF YOUR FIELD OF EXPERTISE HAS BEEN... LIMITED. AND THE TAPESTRY...
AH, YES, THE TAPESTRY.
YOU HAVE EXAMINED THE PIECE, I TAKE IT?

TOUCHED IT..?
YES. IT IS QUITE BEAUTIFUL, BUT I'M AFRAID I KNOW NOTHING OF THAT PERIOD...
OF COURSE YOU DON'T, MY DEAR PRINCESS.
BUT THAT IS ONLY TO MY ADVANTAGE..."
HOLY COW!!
OH NO! NOT AGAIN!!!
LNGH!
THEIR STRENGTH IS INCREDIBLE!
GET BEHIND ME!


THE POWER! TRULY SHE IS JUST WHAT WE SEEK, MISTRESS!
YES-S-S!! BUT BE CAUTIOUS WITH YOUR MANIPULATIONS, WARLY!
YOUR TOYS ARE TO CAPTURE WONDER WOMAN UNHARMED!
"IF SHE IS HARMED, THE LAST VENGEANCE I EXACTED ON YOUR SHRIVELED OLD HEAD WILL SEEM AS NOTHING IN COMPARISON TO WHAT I WILL UNLEASH UPON YOU!!"
BLAST!
APPARENTLY THIS IS NOT TO BE AS EASY AS IT FIRST APPEARED!
IT WILL NOT BE EASY TO SUBDUE CREATURES THAT SEEM TO FEEL NO PAIN...
...AND CAN REWEAVE ANY INJURY I INFLICT!

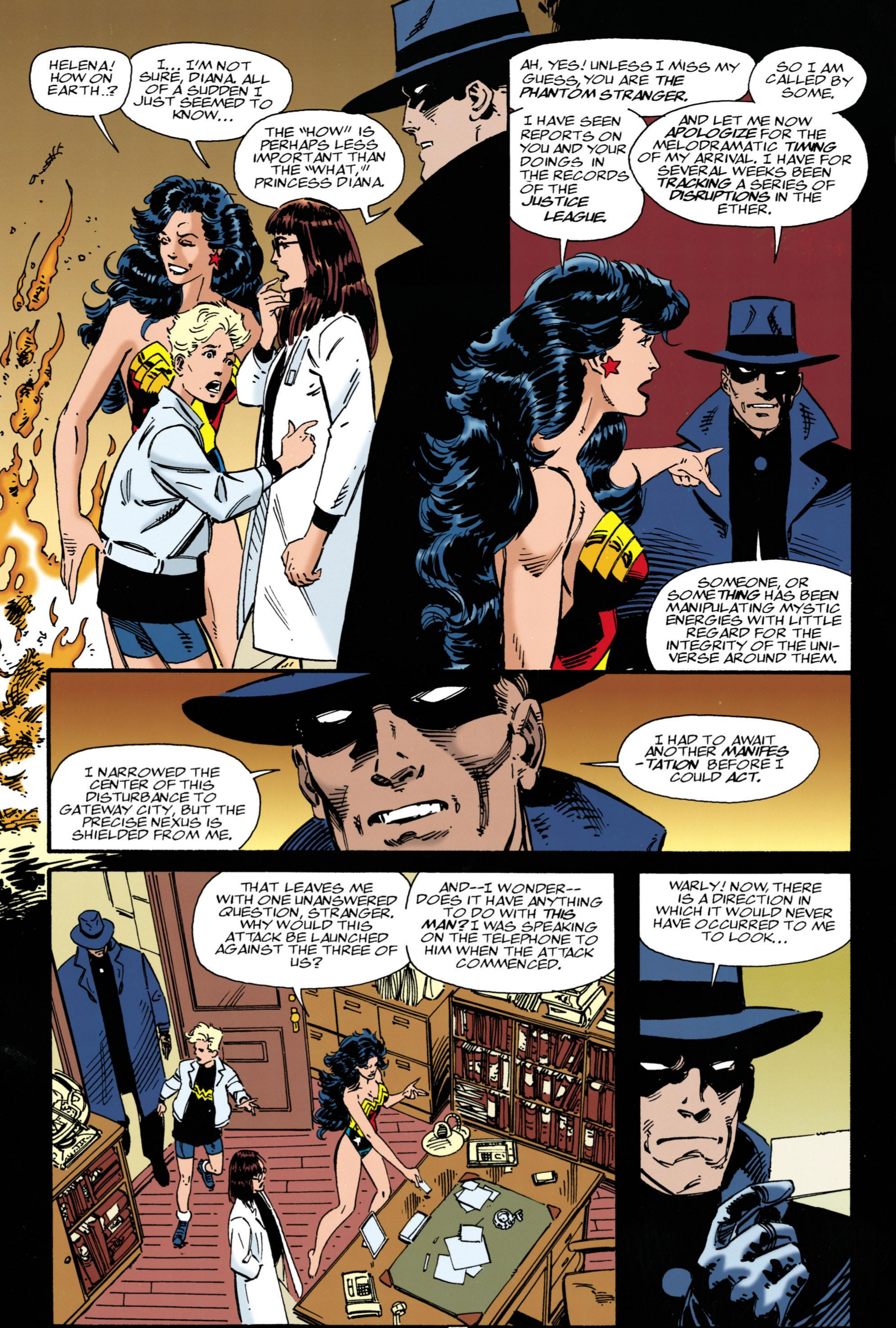
WHAT THE HECK IS ALL THAT NOISE BACK THERE?
IS THERE SOME KIND OF SHOW ON AT THE MUSEUM TODAY?
INFORMATION
THERE'S NOTHING ON THE CALENDAR. I CAN'T IMAGINE...
TRASH
THAT'S WONDER WOMAN!!
EEEK!!!
GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE!!
THERE IS NO NEED TO BE ALARMED.

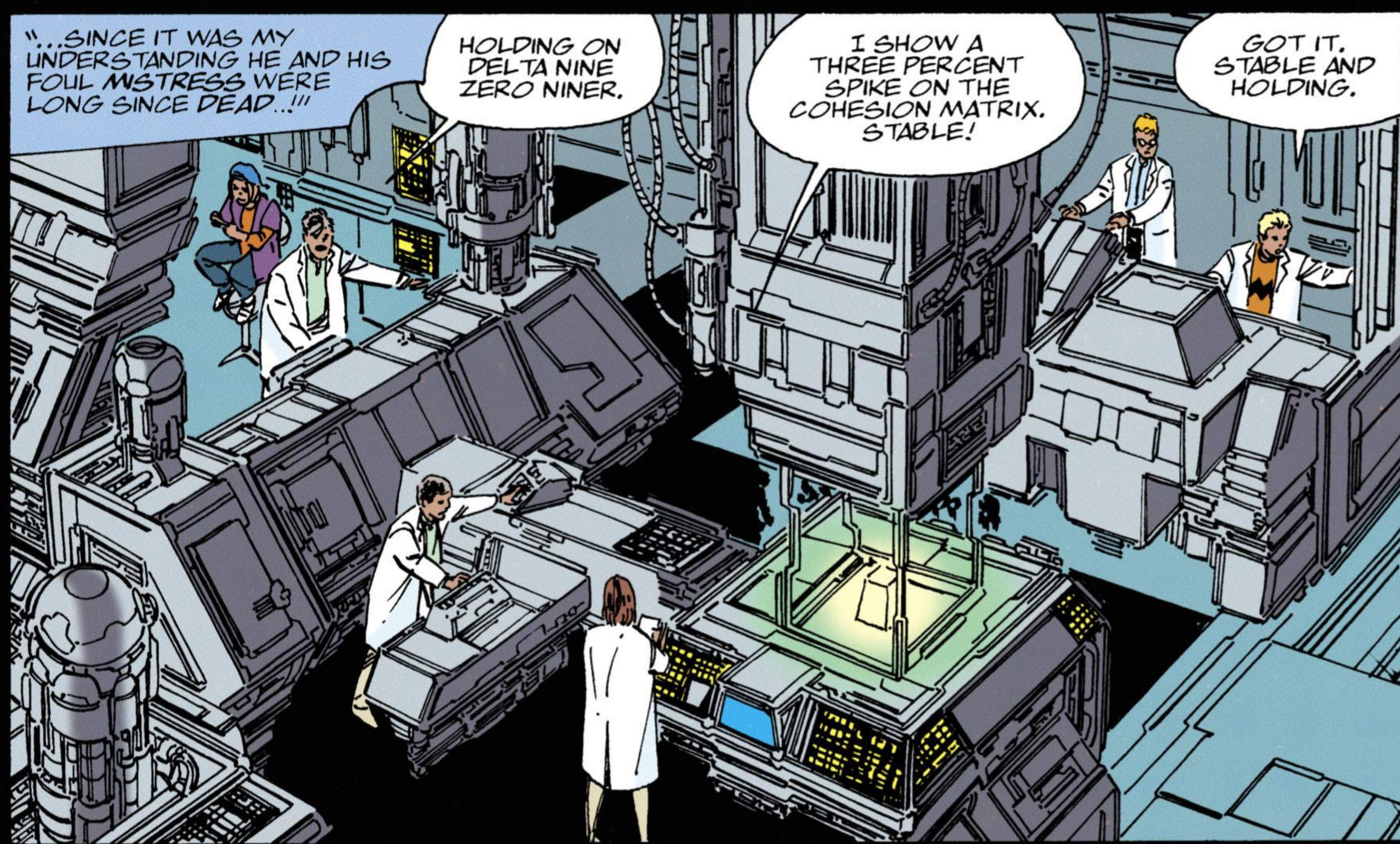
THESE THINGS EACH HAVE THE STRENGTH OF A DOZEN MEN!

EVEN MY GODS-GIVEN POWER MAY NOT BE ENOUGH TO VANQUISH *ALL* OF THEM!

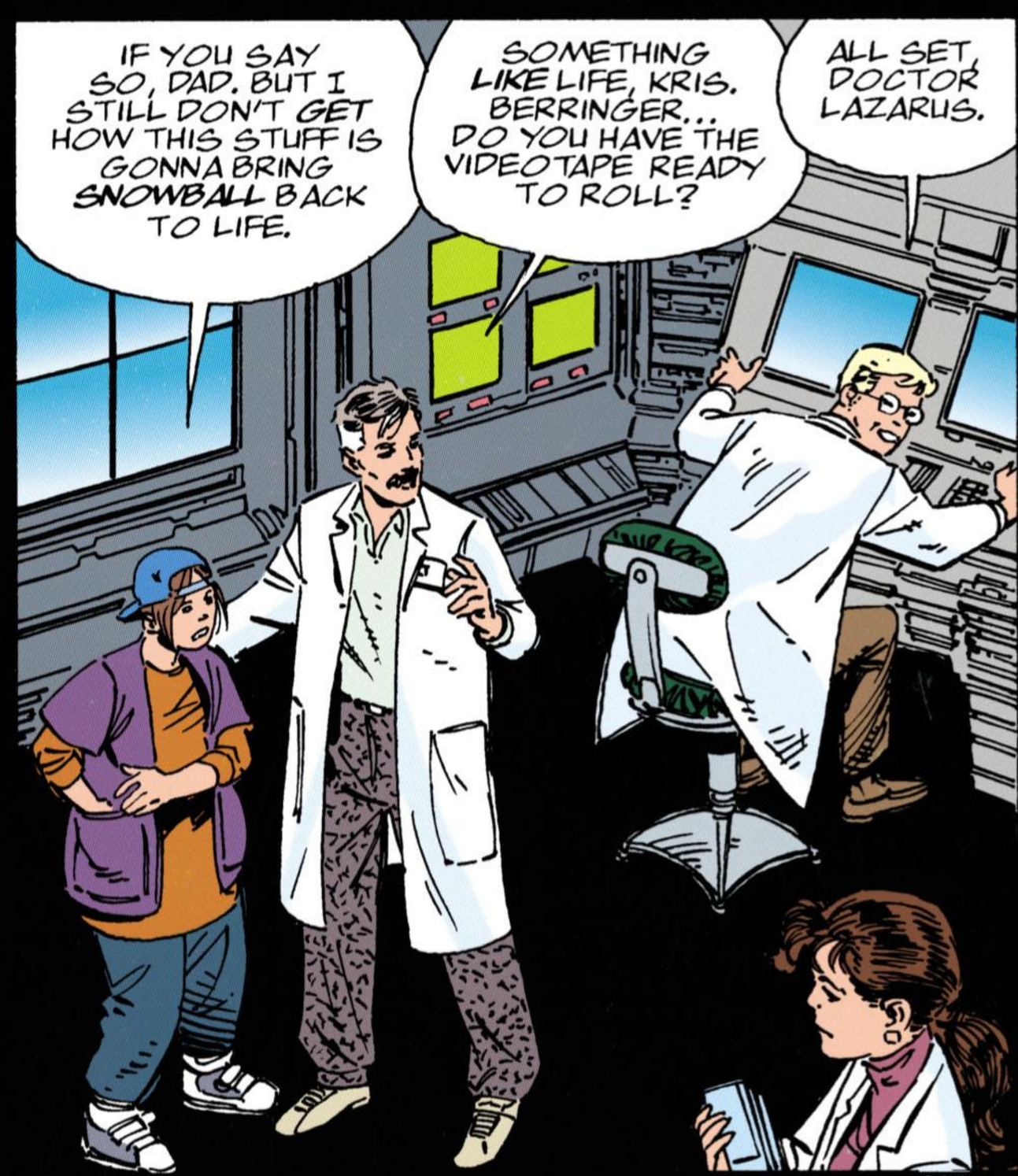
DIANA...
MOM??
MOM!! WHERE ARE YOU GOING!?!
THAT'S PROFESSOR SANDSMARK!
HEY, PROF! WHAT'S GOIN' ON OUT THERE?
MILLER!
GEEZ, PROF! I PUT OUT MY CIGARETTE..!!

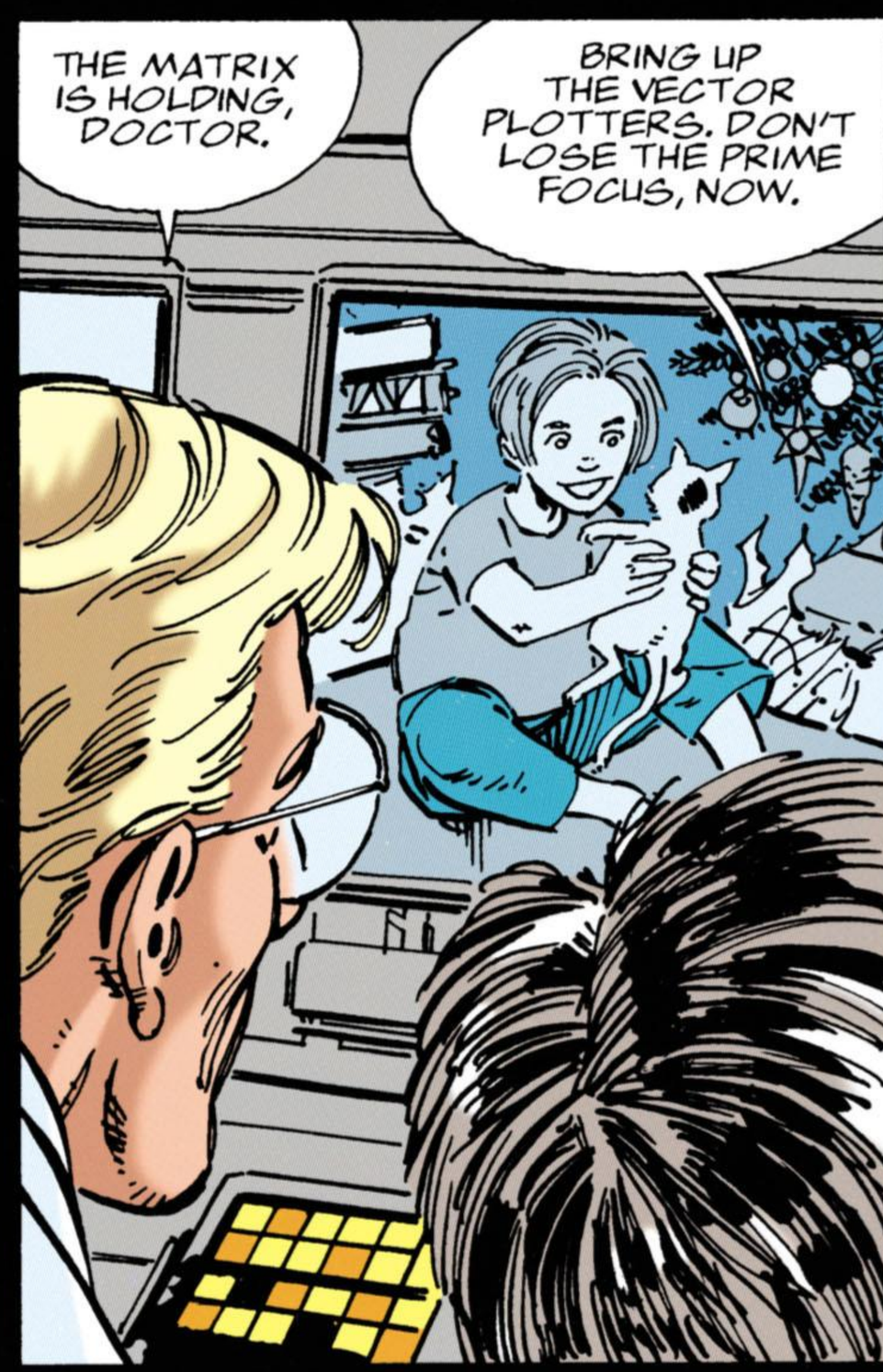
ZEUS AND ATHENA HELP ME!
I CANNOT HOLD THEM OFF MUCH LONGER!
YOU WON'T HAVE TO, DIANA!
THIS SHOULD DO THE TRICK!
MOM!!
WOW!


HELENA! HOW ON EARTH..?
I... I'M NOT SURE, DIANA. ALL OF A SUDDEN I JUST SEEMED TO KNOW...
THE "HOW" IS PERHAPS LESS IMPORTANT THAN THE "WHAT," PRINCESS DIANA.
AH, YES! UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS, YOU ARE THE PHANTOM STRANGER.
SO I AM CALLED BY SOME.
I HAVE SEEN REPORTS ON YOU AND YOUR DOINGS IN THE RECORDS OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE.
AND LET ME NOW APOLOGIZE FOR THE MELODRAMATIC TIMING OF MY ARRIVAL. I HAVE FOR SEVERAL WEEKS BEEN TRACKING A SERIES OF DISRUPTIONS IN THE ETHER.
SOMEONE, OR SOMETHING HAS BEEN MANIPULATING MYSTIC ENERGIES WITH LITTLE REGARD FOR THE INTEGRITY OF THE UNI-VERSE AROUND THEM.
I NARROWED THE CENTER OF THIS DISTURBANCE TO GATEWAY CITY, BUT THE PRECISE NEXUS IS SHIELDED FROM ME.
I HAD TO AWAIT ANOTHER MANIFES-TATION BEFORE I COULD ACT.
THAT LEAVES ME WITH ONE UNANSWERED QUESTION, STRANGER. WHY WOULD THIS ATTACK BE LAUNCHED AGAINST THE THREE OF US?
AND--I WONDER--DOES IT HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH THIS MAN? I WAS SPEAKING ON THE TELEPHONE TO HIM WHEN THE ATTACK COMMENCED.
WARLY! NOW, THERE IS A DIRECTION IN WHICH IT WOULD NEVER HAVE OCCURRED TO ME TO LOOK...


"...SINCE IT WAS MY UNDERSTANDING HE AND HIS FOUL MISTRESS WERE LONG SINCE DEAD..!"
HOLDING ON DELTA NINE ZERO NINER.
I SHOW A THREE PERCENT SPIKE ON THE COHESION MATRIX. STABLE!
GOT IT. STABLE AND HOLDING.

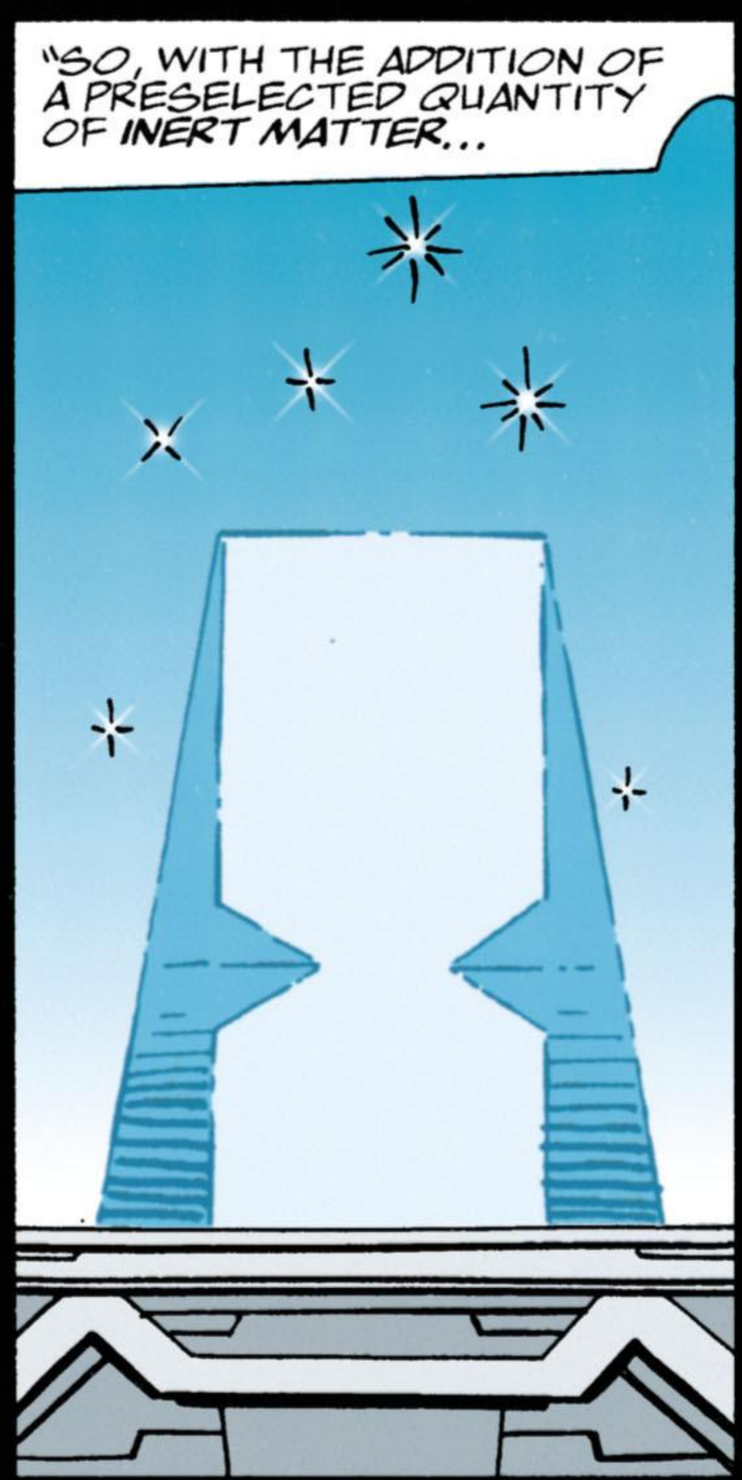
STAND BY ON STATION NINE. PREPARE THE INTERFACE FOR CRYSTALLIZATION.
COME ON, KRIS! THIS IS THE BIG MOMENT! PAY ATTENTION!


IF YOU SAY SO, DAD. BUT I STILL DON'T GET HOW THIS STUFF IS GONNA BRING SNOWBALL BACK TO LIFE.
SOMETHING LIKE LIFE, KRIS. BERRINGER... DO YOU HAVE THE VIDEOTAPE READY TO ROLL?
ALL SET, DOCTOR LAZARUS.


THE MATRIX IS HOLDING, DOCTOR.
BRING UP THE VECTOR PLOTTERS. DON'T LOSE THE PRIME FOCUS, NOW.

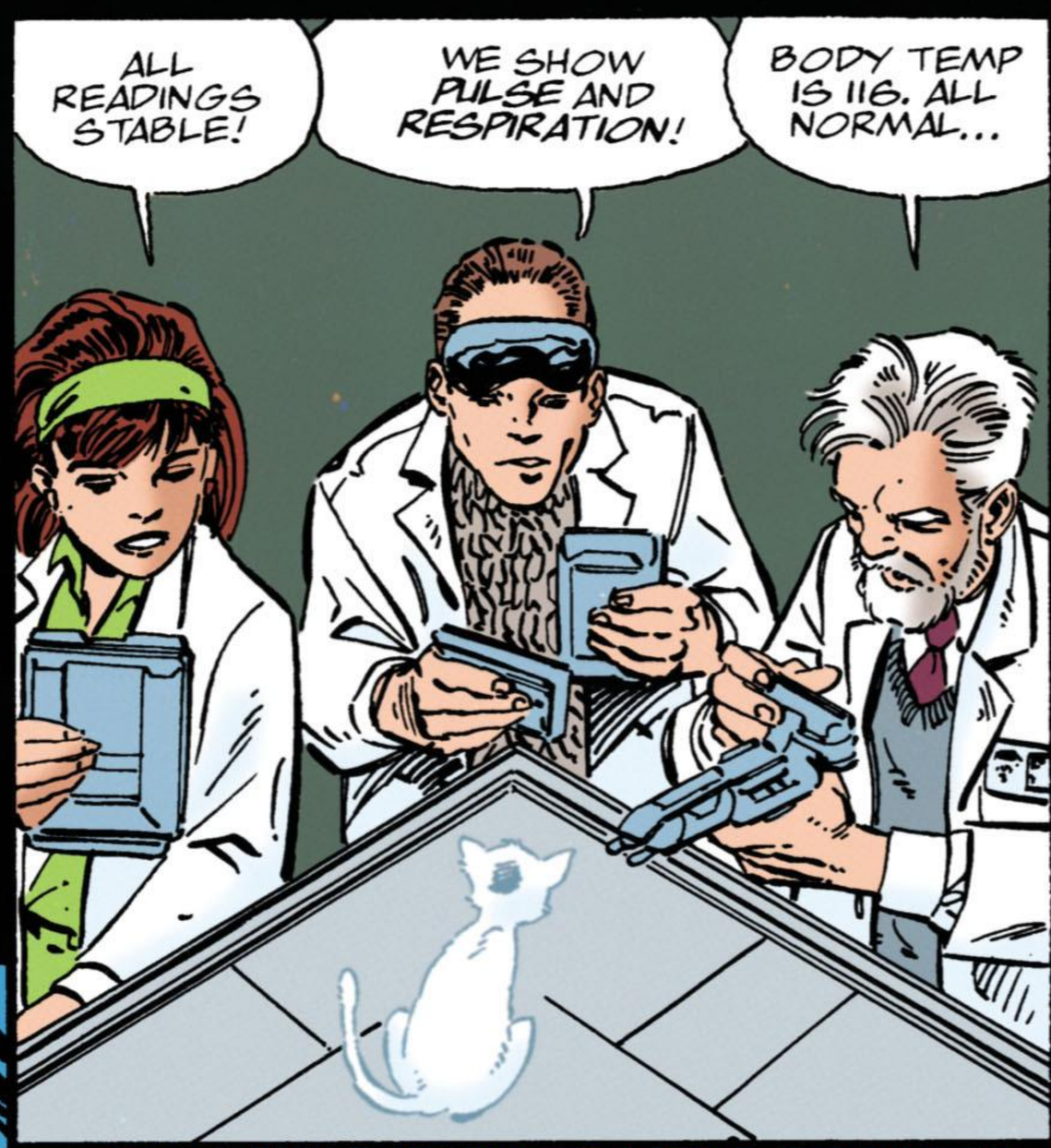
IT ALL HAS TO DO WITH THE PREVIOUSLY UNTAPPED NATURE OF VIDEO TECHNOLOGY, KRIS.
ALTHOUGH THAT IMAGE ON THE SCREEN APPEARS TO BE A FLAT, TWO-DIMENSIONAL REPRESENTATION OF THE REAL WORLD...
...IN FACT THE PROCESS BY WHICH THE IMAGE IS ENCODED ONTO THE TAPE ACTUALLY CAPTURES AN ELECTRON MODEL OF THE REAL THING.

UNTIL NOW, OF COURSE, THERE HAS BEEN NO WAY TO ACCESS THAT 3-D IMAGE WITH CONVENTIONAL PLAYBACK EQUIPMENT.
BUT MY VIRTUAL REANIMATOR SCANS ACROSS THE IMAGERY AT THE QUANTUM LEVEL.


"SO, WITH THE ADDITION OF A PRESELECTED QUANTITY OF INERT MATTER...

"...WE ARE ABLE TO USE THAT QUANTUM IMAGE MATRIX...

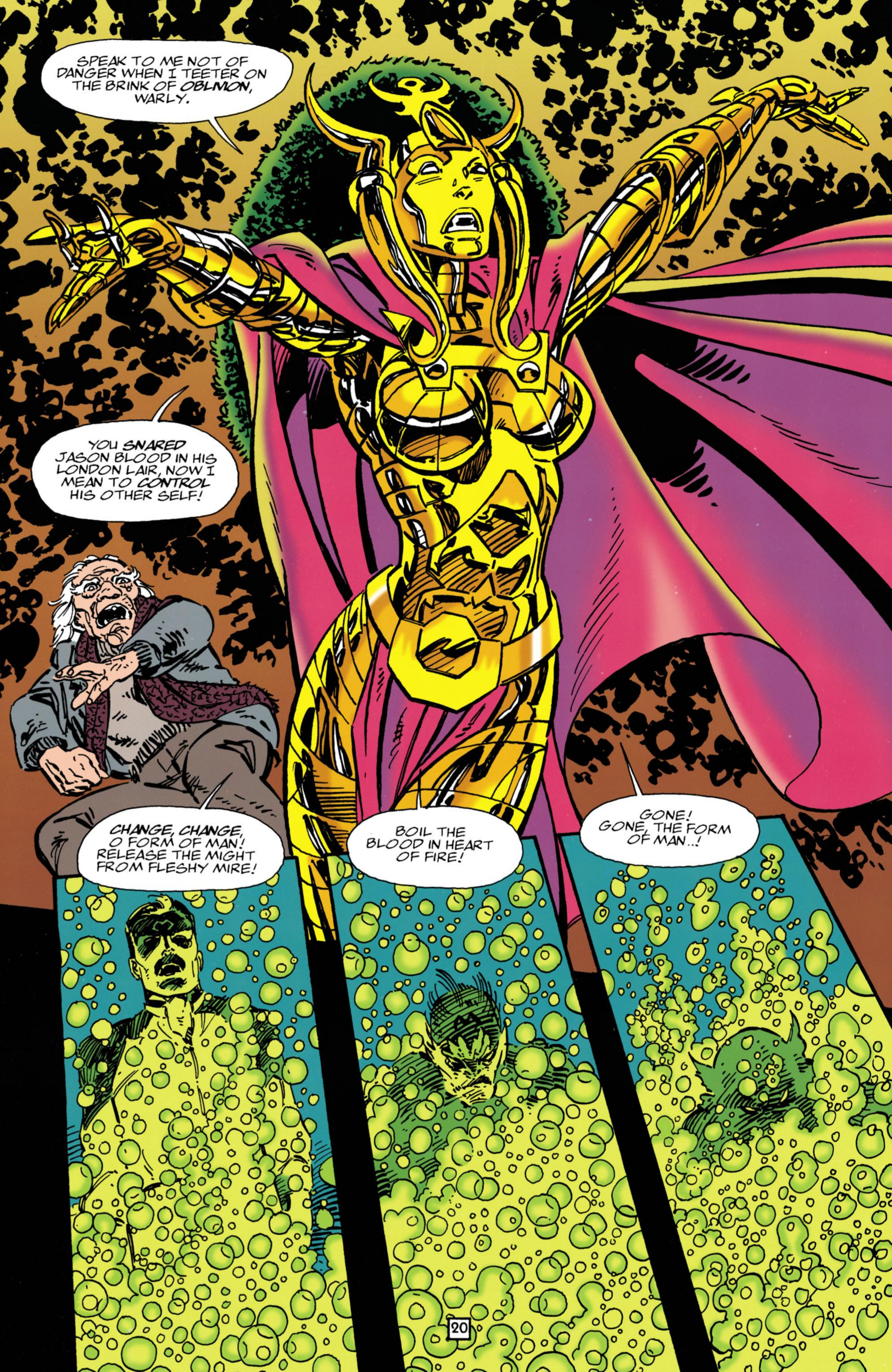
"...TO GENERATE A FULLY REALIZED VIRTUAL CLONE OF SNOWBALL!"

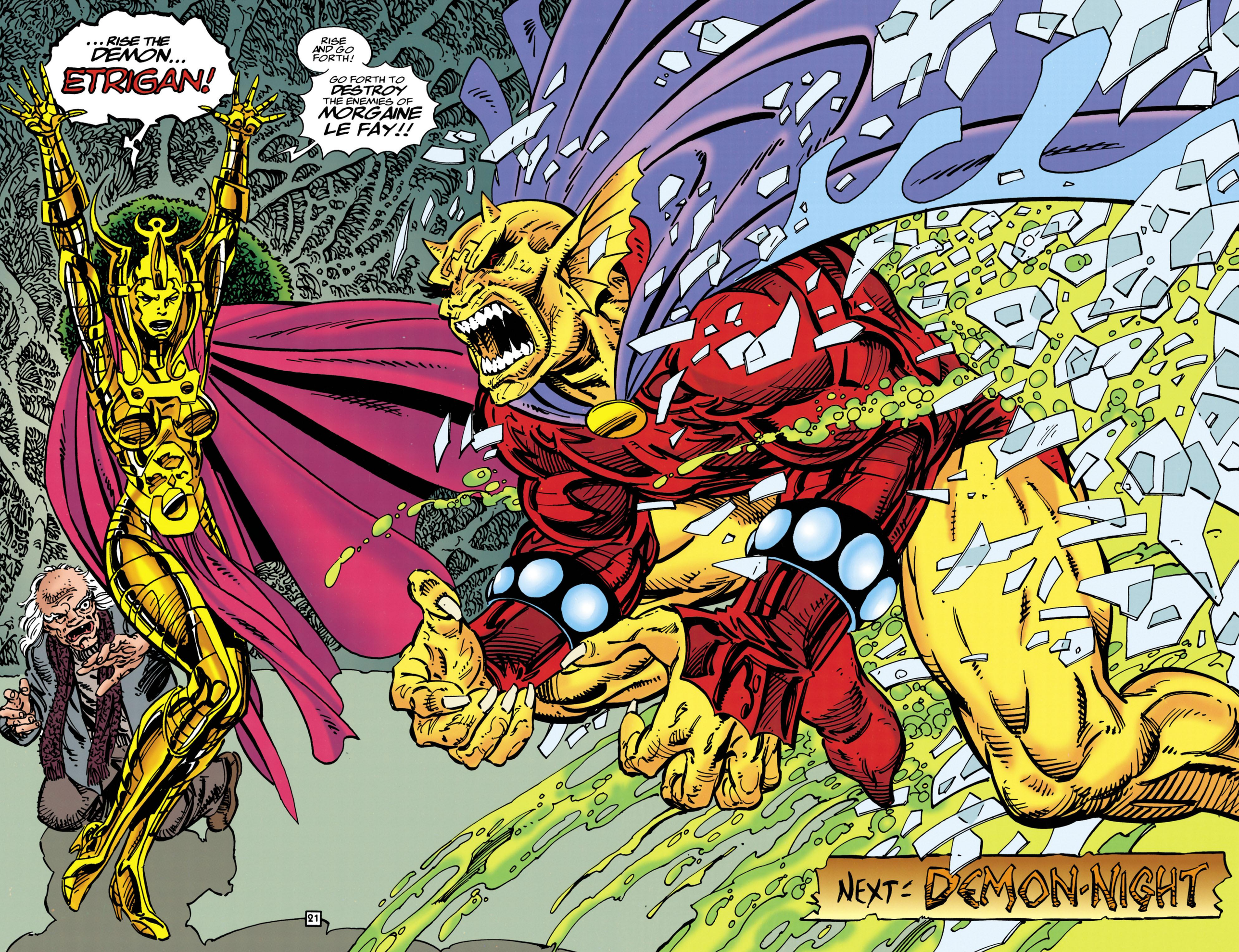

ALL READINGS STABLE!
WE SHOW PULSE AND RESPIRATION!
BODY TEMP IS 116. ALL NORMAL...

IT'S HIM! IT REALLY IS SNOW...

THE... MATRIX IS... UNSTABLE!
THE INERT... MATERIAL... COULDN'T HOLD THE...
KRIS!!
KRIS, WHERE ARE YOU??
KRIS!!
"BLAST...!!

AM I NEVER TO BE FREE OF MEDDLERS???
THIS DOES NOT BODE WELL, MISTRESS. NO ONE HAS EVER PROPERLY GAUGED THE POWER OF THE PHANTOM STRANGER.
TRUE, HE HAS BEEN A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH FOR YEARS WITHOUT NUMBER...
...AND MANY WHO THOUGHT THEMSELVES HIS BETTER LEARNED OTHERWISE TOO LATE TO SAVE THEMSELVES.
STILL...
...WE HAVE AT OUR DISPOSAL ANOTHER WHOSE FULL POWER HAS NEVER BEEN MEASURED.
MISTRESS... NO! IT IS TOO DANGEROUS!
SILENCE!!


SPEAK TO ME NOT OF DANGER WHEN I TEETER ON THE BRINK OF OBLIVION, WARLY.
YOU SNARED JASON BLOOD IN HIS LONDON LAIR, NOW I MEAN TO CONTROL HIS OTHER SELF!
CHANGE, CHANGE, O FORM OF MAN! RELEASE THE MIGHT FROM FLESHY MIRE!
BOIL THE BLOOD IN HEART OF FIRE!
GONE! GONE, THE FORM OF MAN...!


...RISE THE DEMON... ETRIGAN!
RISE AND GO FORTH!
GO FORTH TO DESTROY THE ENEMIES OF MORGAINE LE FAY!!
NEXT: DEMON-NIGHT