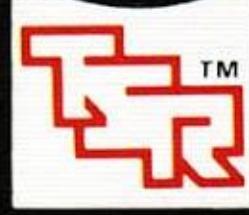




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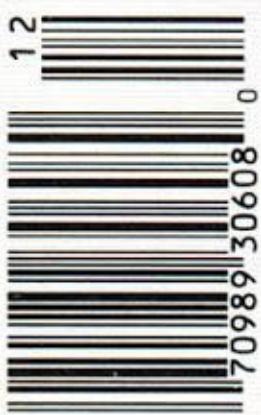


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SPELL  
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PART  
1 OF 4



# FOCUS

When people think about **Richard Wagner's** four-opera cycle, *The Ring of the Nibelung*, they think of The Ride of the Valkyries," perhaps the best known music from the grand tale. Come this fall, however, **Roy Thomas** and **Gil Kane** hope that people will start thinking of their adaptation of THE RING with as much awe.

Both Roy and Gil have had exceptional reverence for the operatic tale of gods and man. In fact, both have drawn inspiration from the source material over the years. Gil first encountered the themes in **Alex Raymond's** *Flash Gordon* comic strip story, "Tournaments of Mongo." "It had that bravura quality and universal appeal," Gil says while sitting in his California studio, putting the finishing touches to Book Three's art. "The story fulfilled all the aspects of heroic fantasy with power and sensuality."

"It wasn't until later that I learned Raymond took all that from Wagner. In the first serial, **Buster Crabbe** was transformed into the living epitome of **Siegfried**, with the dying of his brown hair blond and curling it. These stories are universally hailed and have inspired others, including **Al Williamson**, **Frank Frazetta**, and **Frederico Fellini**."

*The Ring* tells the tale of a struggle between Wotan, leader of the Asgardian gods, and the Frost Giants. To save the goddess Freis, Wotan uses all his power to obtain the Nibelung Gold and involves a mortal man, Siegfried. There is a sweeping scale to the opera that remains ripe for use in comics.

This is not the first time Wagner's opera cycle is being used in comic form—Roy adapted the core storyline for a run of *Thor* at Marvel a decade ago. The tale itself has evolved over the years, starting off as an Icelandic myth called *The Volsunga Saga* and this pagan myth was transformed over time into the legend of *The Nibelung*. It was then that Wagner took the various known elements of the story and crafted his opera. "This is much the same way that the Arthur story evolved," says Gil, who co-authored, such a tale, *Excalibur!*, with **John Jakes**.

Based on the success of First Comics' *Beowulf*, its editor, **Mike Gold**, thought the time had come to bring *The Ring* to comics. He proposed the idea to **Roy Thomas** shortly after arriving at DC. Roy then called **Gil Kane** about the book. "We've worked together for a long time," Gil says. "He knew my interest in the work and how I wanted very much to draw it."

*The Ring* has been an obsession; I planned for years to adapt it. I have been injecting aspects of the opera into what I was drawing. I feel my very own qualities are lyrical and operatic. *The Ring* ideally suits aspects of my personality.

"I've also read everything in the United States on *The Ring* and Wagner. I've not only been quite enchanted by the material, but I have been a scholar of it as well."

After being enthralled by Raymond's science fiction version of the tale, it was some time before Gil learned the identity of the source material. He was drawn to theater at one point, which led him to author **Eric Bentley** who wrote on heroic fantasy in the theater and thus Gil finally found Wagner and Siegfried.

Gil is certainly no stranger to heroic fantasy, having drawn in all genres from westerns (Johnny Thunder) to super-heroes (Green Lantern and The Atom) to sword and sorcery (Conan and his own creation, Blackmark). During his years in the business, Gil has been trying to mount his own interpretation of the material and

has satisfied himself with putting elements of the epic tale in his work. Now, he is working with noted fantasist **Roy Thomas**, also no stranger to heroic fantasy.

After Roy and Gil agreed to do the project it was just a matter of waiting until their schedules were open. Gil was all set to begin at one point—going so far as to complete two presentation paintings showing his visual interpretation of the material—but had to stop for three months to be the production designer for last season's *Superman* cartoon show.

"This is a strict interpretation of the opera," Gil notes. "It is not my own point of view. I am working within those constraints and am following Roy's view. Where possible, I am trying to marry the two points of view and put some emphasis on my ideas in the art."

The one frustrating element of the project has been his distance from the DC offices. "I wish I was there to meet with [Design Director] **Rich Bruning** personally, and talk over the entire package of the series. Also, I would want more time with **Andy Helfer**, the series editor], but I am happy with the designs I have seen. At least I will be painting all four covers."

Gil pencilled and inked the four **Prestige Format** issues in roughly one year. With this labor of love done, Gil is planning to do two new projects for DC in collaboration with writer **Howard Chaykin**.

Has Gil tired himself on *The Ring*? He emphatically says, "No." This reworking of the opera has not exhausted the potential. I could take the concepts inherent in the four operas and do fresh work on Wagner."

And, like Wagner's classic opera, Gil Kane contents himself to provide stirring entertainment for one and all.

—Robert Greenberger

[Note: THE RING is recommended for mature readers and contains nudity, which may be offensive to some.]

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A mysterious bat-man is murdering people in Gotham City . . . amidst rumors of human sacrifice. ◆►

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Orion goes to battle . . . against New Genesis and for Darkseid. ■►

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Drought ravages the tiny nation of Khagana. When food shipments disappear, The Phantom steps in to provide relief. ■►

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In Seattle, somebody's after Oliver Queen . . . and Travis Morgan gets caught in the crossfire. But say, what's The Warlord doing in Seattle? ■►

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It's all-out battle in the streets of Las Vegas. Will even the secrets of the silver shield be able to help Captain Atom? ●

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Power Girl undergoes a critical operation, with surgical help from Superman. Meanwhile, Elongated Man and Flash finally have it out. ●

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**MANSHAKA!**

I LIKE THE  
SOUND OF  
THAT WORD,  
ZOMIR!...

LIKE  
GOLD  
JANGLING  
IN MY  
PURSE--!

--THE GOLD  
THAT ABON DUUM  
HAS OFFERED FOR  
HIS PRETTY PRIZE!

I'VE SEEN  
MY SHARE  
OF BOUNTIES  
ON ESCAPED  
SLAVES  
BEFORE--

--BUT NEVER  
THE PRICE  
THIS ONE IS  
FETCHING!

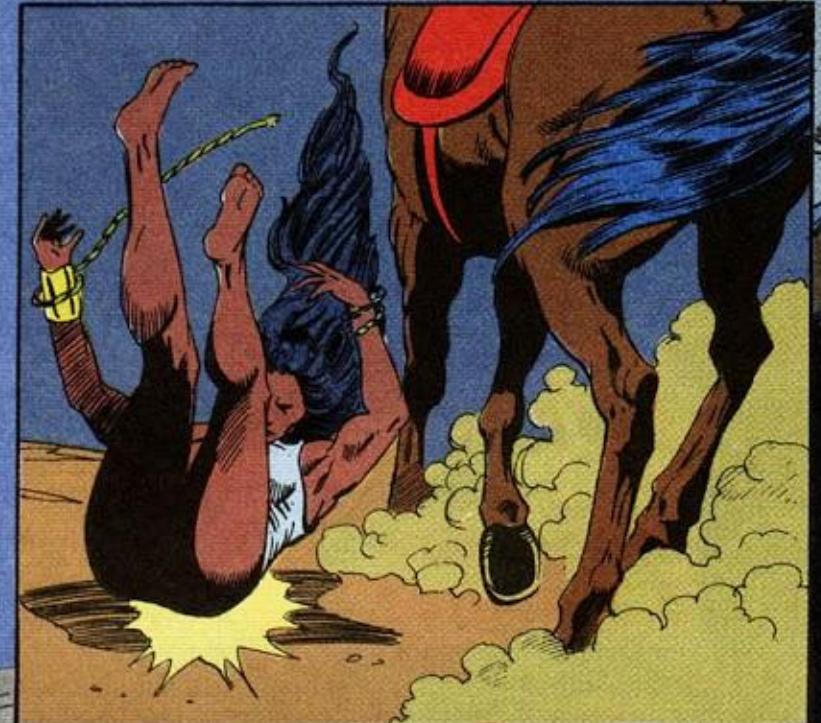
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G-5260

VAJRA  
VALMEYJAR  
IS NO MAN'S  
SLAVE! AND I'M  
NOT GOING  
BACK TO  
MANSHAKA!

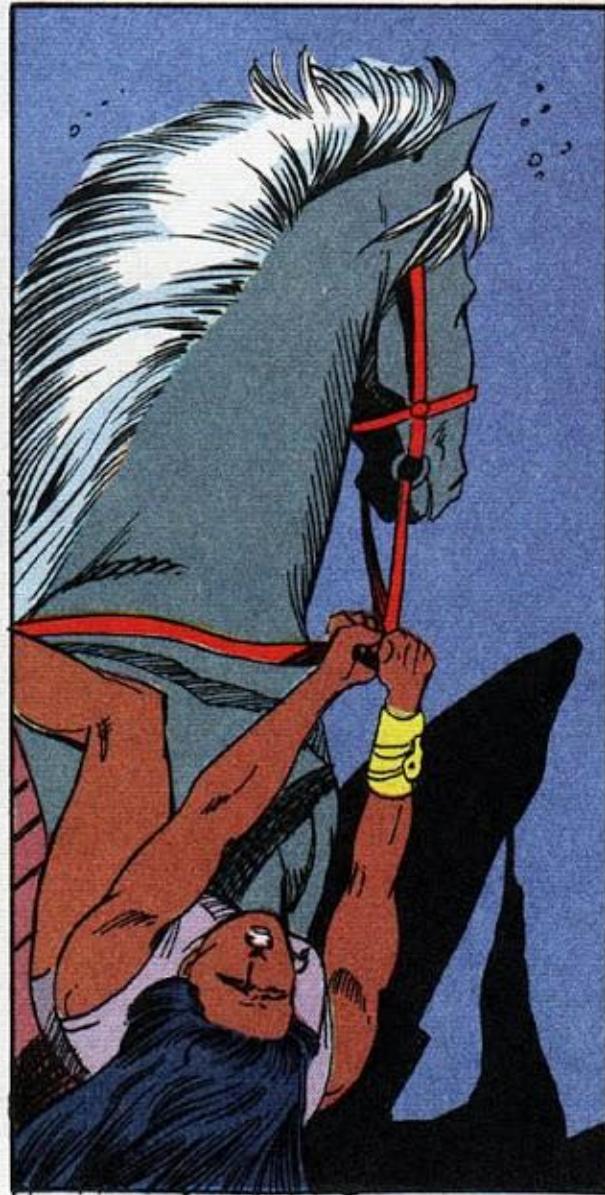
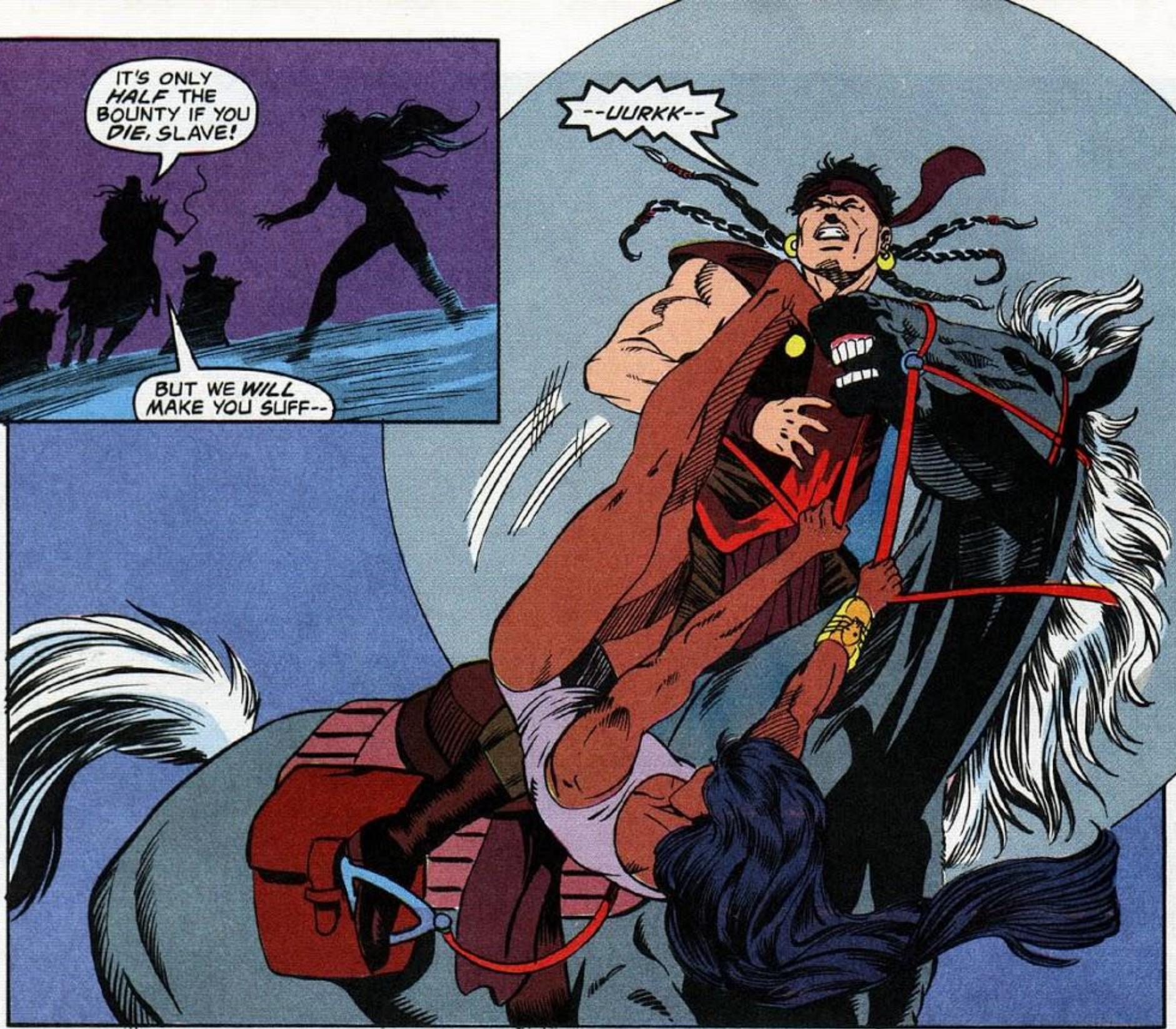
KILL ME IF  
YOU CAN, YOU  
CALIMSHITE  
PIGS--

--BUT I  
WON'T DIE  
ALONE!



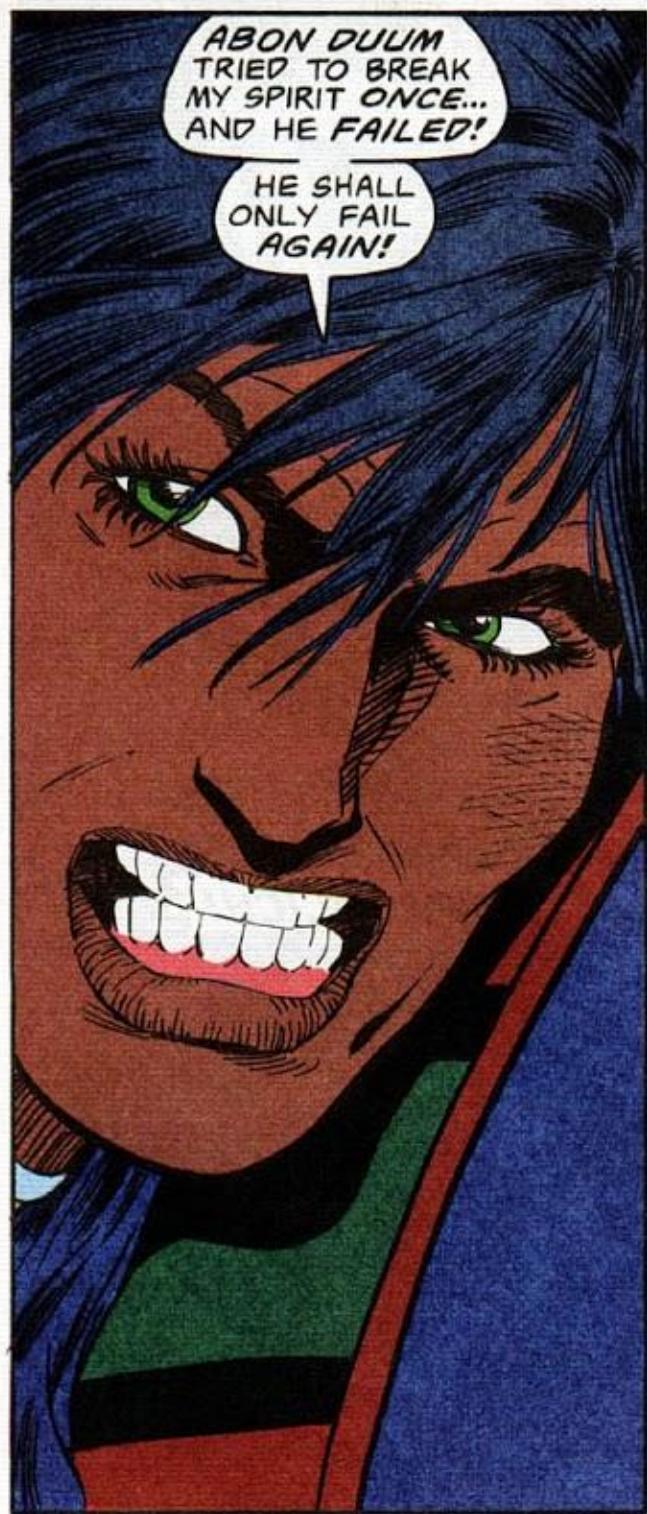
DAN MISHKIN  
WRITER  
STEVE MAYNIE  
LETTERER

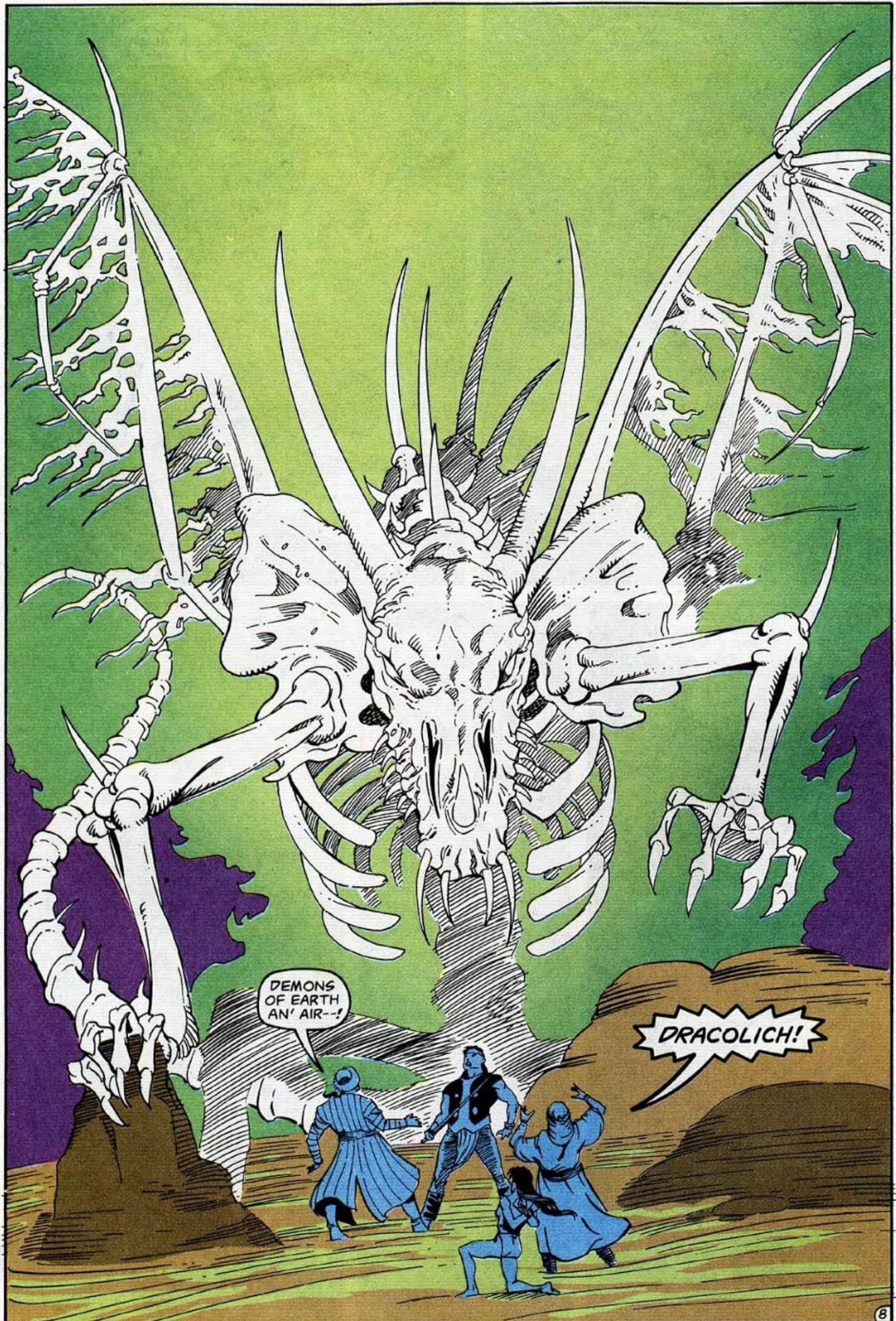
JAN DUURSEMA  
ARTIST  
MATT WEBB  
COLORIST  
ELLIOT S. MAGGIN  
EDITOR





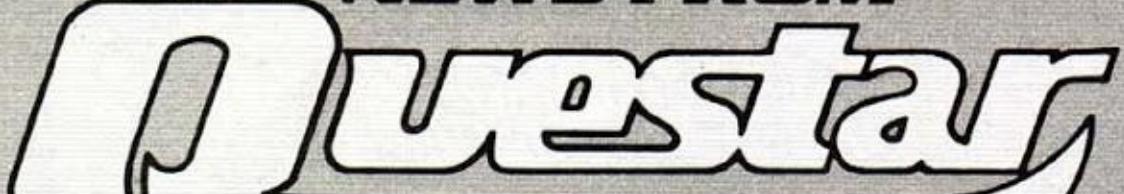






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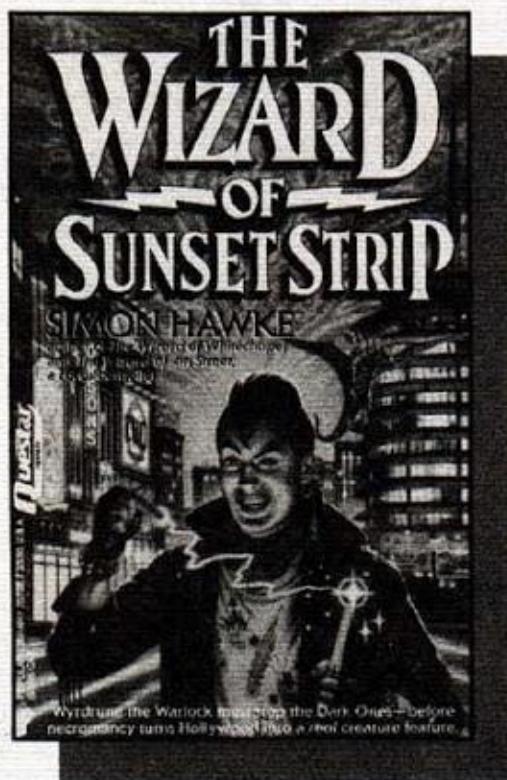


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From the glitz of Hollywood movie sets where mysterious shadows leave footprints in the ground, these unlikely heroes must find a way to stop the murders. But when movie magic is done with *real* magic and a relentless evil is in on the trick, it won't be easy to keep fantasyland from



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**A WORD FROM**  
**Brian Thomsen**



I've just finished reading a wonderful new book by Simon Hawke called *The Wizard of Rue Morgue*. I know this month's book is **THE WIZARD OF SUNSET STRIP** (and it is undeniably a winner), but I read that one months ago.

You see, as an editor, I always have to read one year ahead. What I'm reading in manuscript now will appear in book form next year. In a

## **Also this month: A New STARWOLVES Novel!**

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sense, all of publishing is science fictional—because we are always working in the future. Our 1989 is your 1990.

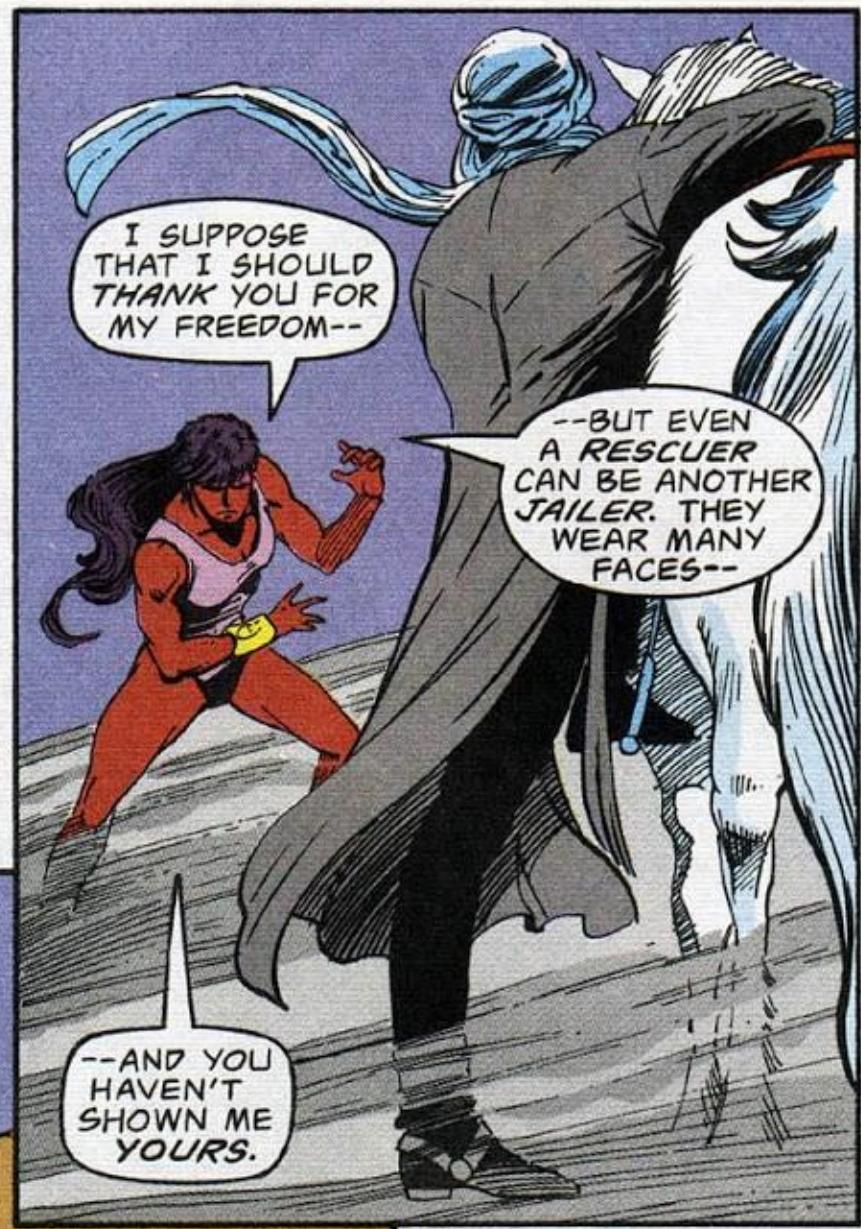
However, working so far ahead definitely has its advantages: I always have a sneak peek at Simon Hawke's next magical adventure.

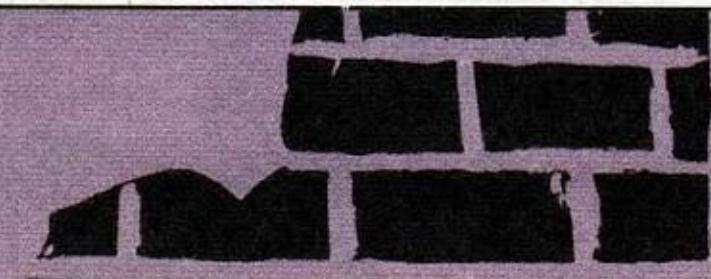
When you see me around, ask me for a glimpse into Questar's future.

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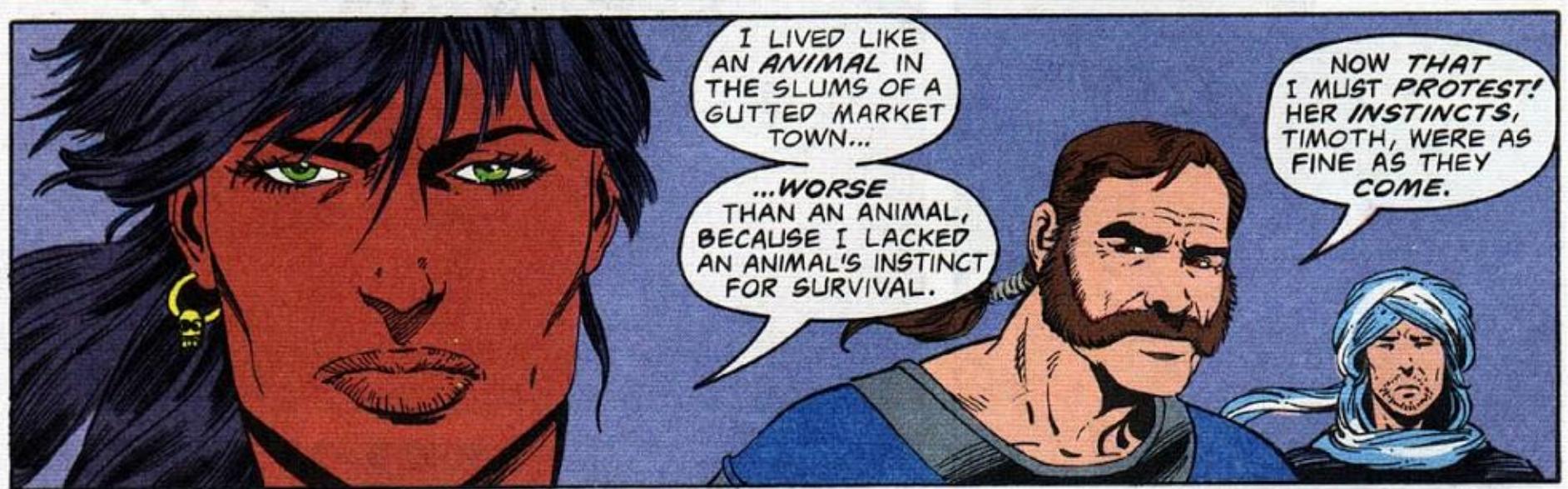
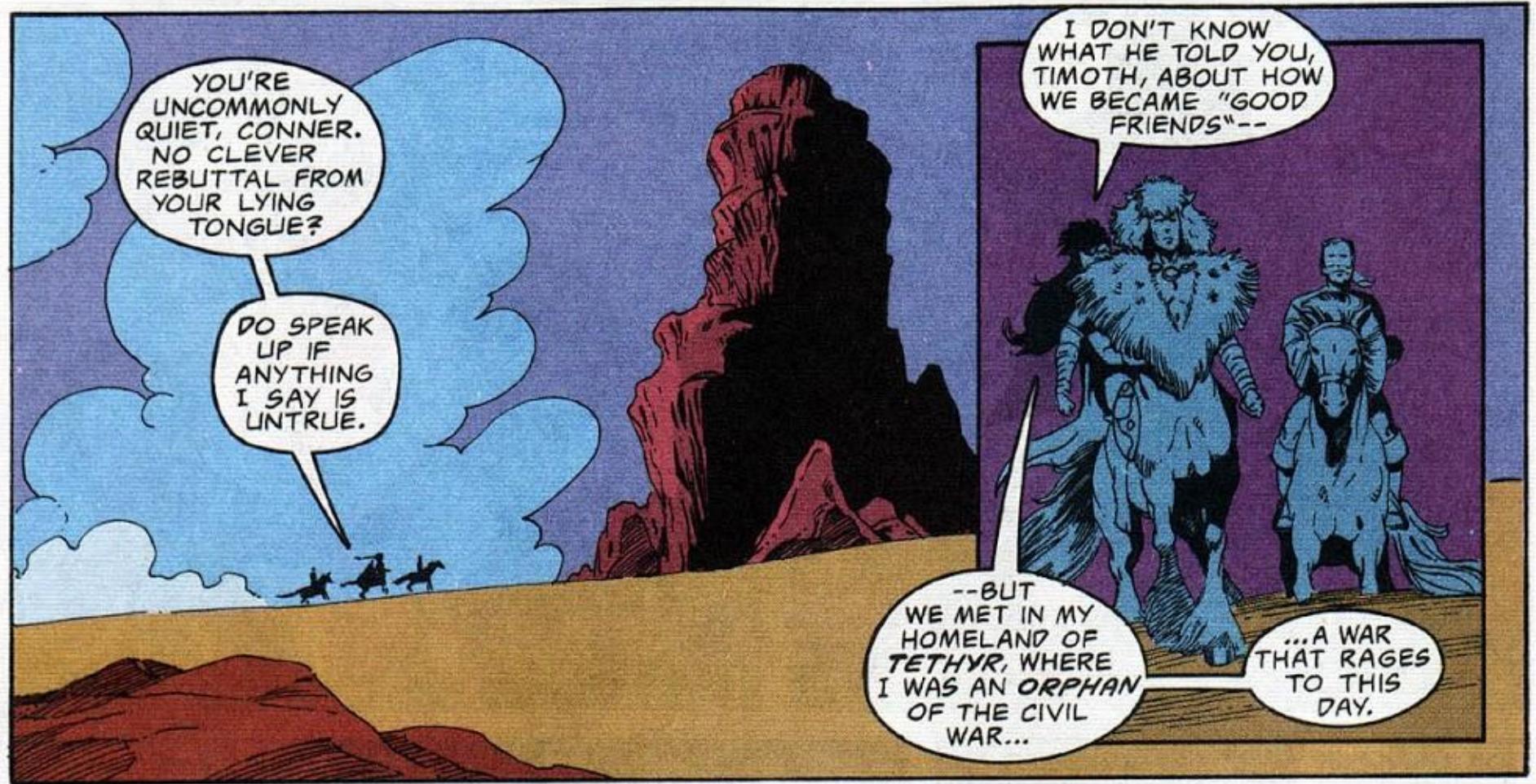
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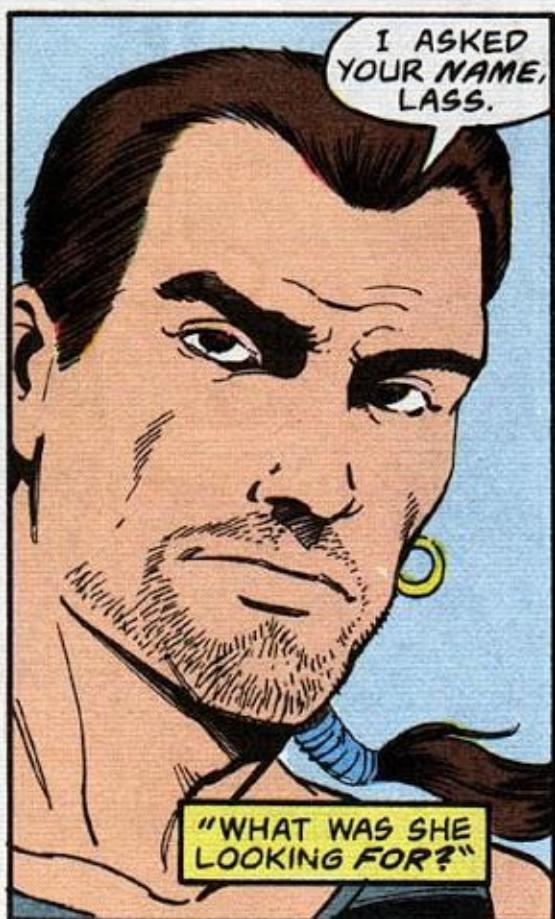
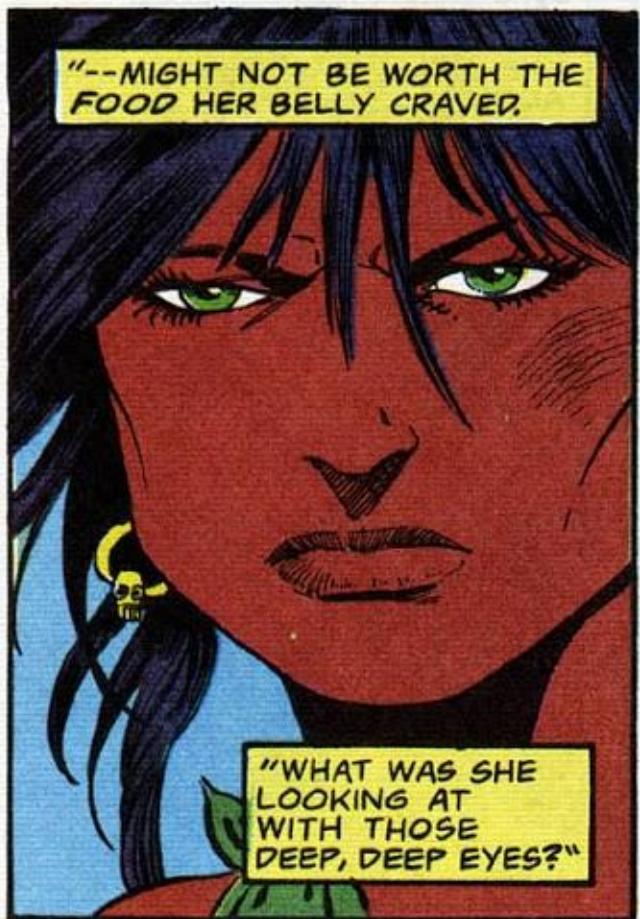












I DIDN'T GET  
ANOTHER WORD  
OUT OF HER FOR  
THREE DAYS.

I SOMETIMES  
THINK... SHE NEVER  
REALLY DID  
TALK TO ME...

...NOT ABOUT  
THE THINGS  
THAT TRULY  
MATTER.

ALL THAT  
EVER TRULY  
MATTERED  
TO HIM WAS  
HIS OWN  
SKIN.

AND ALL  
THAT MATTERS  
NOW IS THAT  
HE NEVER  
BETRAY ME  
AGAIN.

YOUR  
BETRAYER  
....

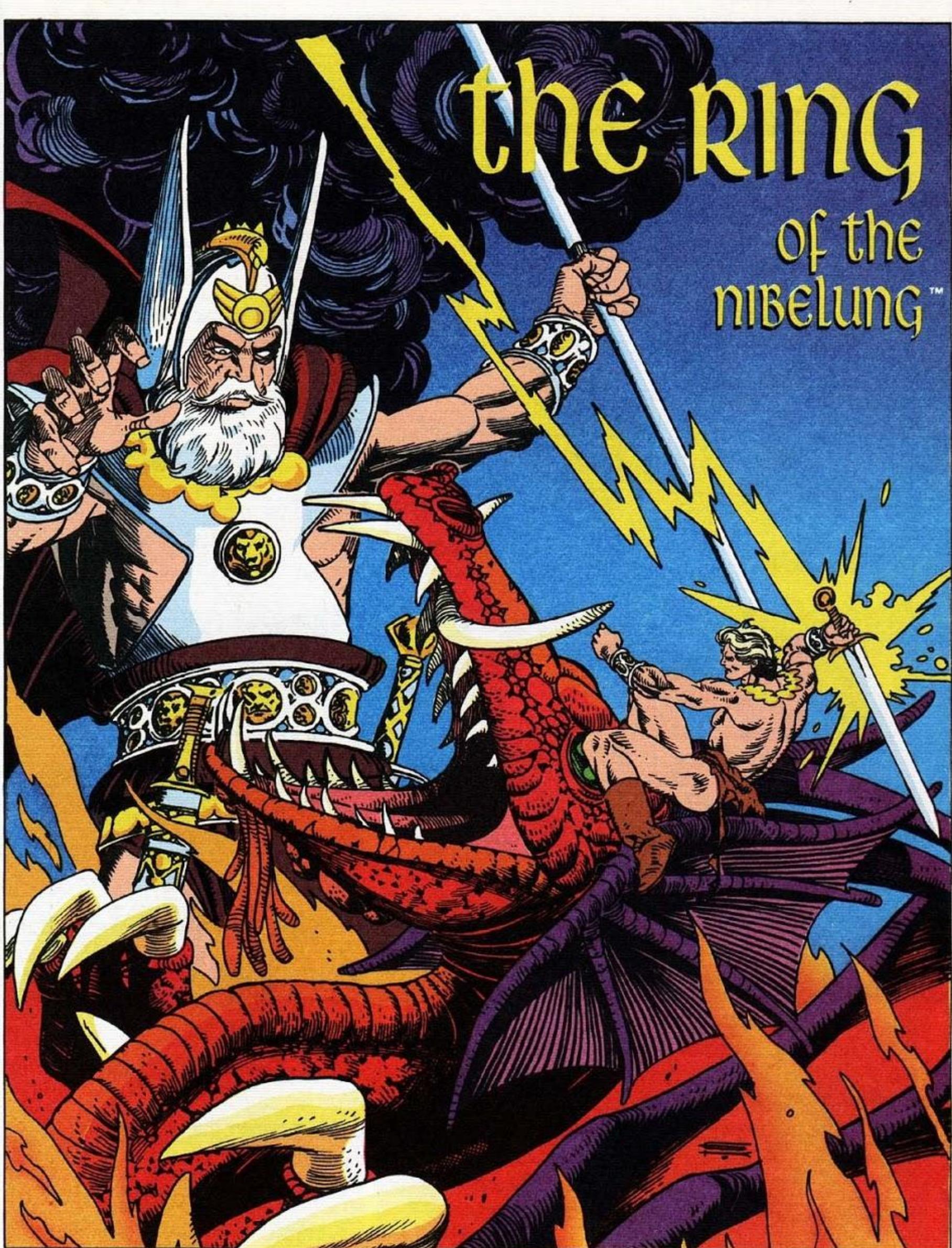
IS THAT  
THE ONLY WAY  
YOU THINK  
OF ME THESE  
DAYS, LASS?

"I THOUGHT YOU  
MIGHT AT LEAST  
RECALL WHO  
CLEANED YOU...  
FED YOU..."

"...WHO TAUGHT  
YOU HOW TO  
BE A PROPER  
THIEF..."



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NO, NOT THAT ONE.

NO...

"...THE KIND OF THIEF WHOSE STRATEGIES DIDN'T RISE FROM THE PIT OF AN EMPTY STOMACH."



"I TAUGHT YOU THE ART OF THE CON."

"I TAUGHT YOU TO FIGHT WITH YOUR HEAD BEFORE YOU FLING YOUR FISTS!"

"MOST OF ALL--YES, MOST OF ALL! DON'T LOOK AT ME THAT WAY!--



"--I TAUGHT YOU TO SMILE AGAIN, VAJRA."



"THOSE WERE GOOD DAYS, LASS."





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**—Robert M. Overstreet**

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WHAT...UH,  
WHAT WAS IT  
LIKE, VAJRA--TO BE  
A GLADIATOR IN  
THE ARENA?

YOU DON'T  
REALLY WANT  
TO KNOW, TIMOTH.

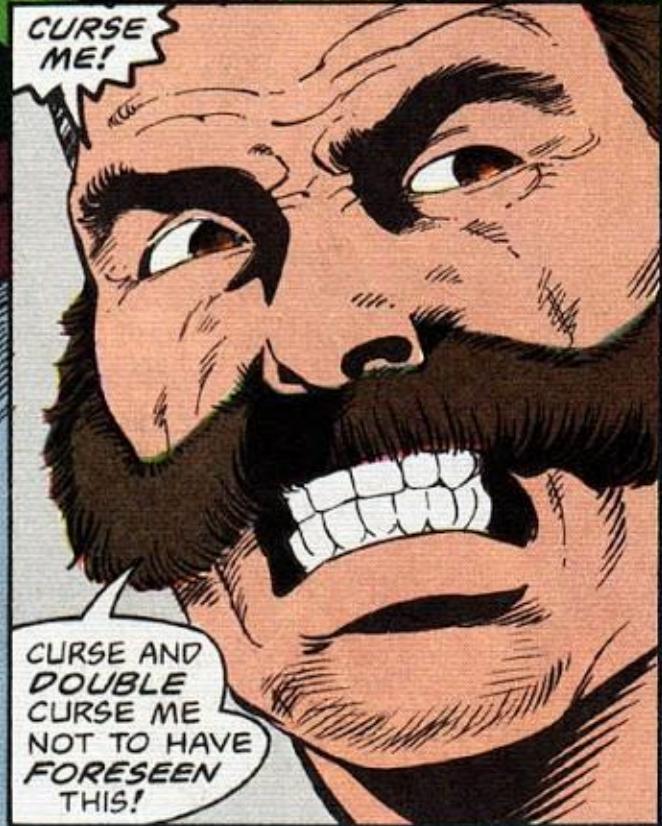
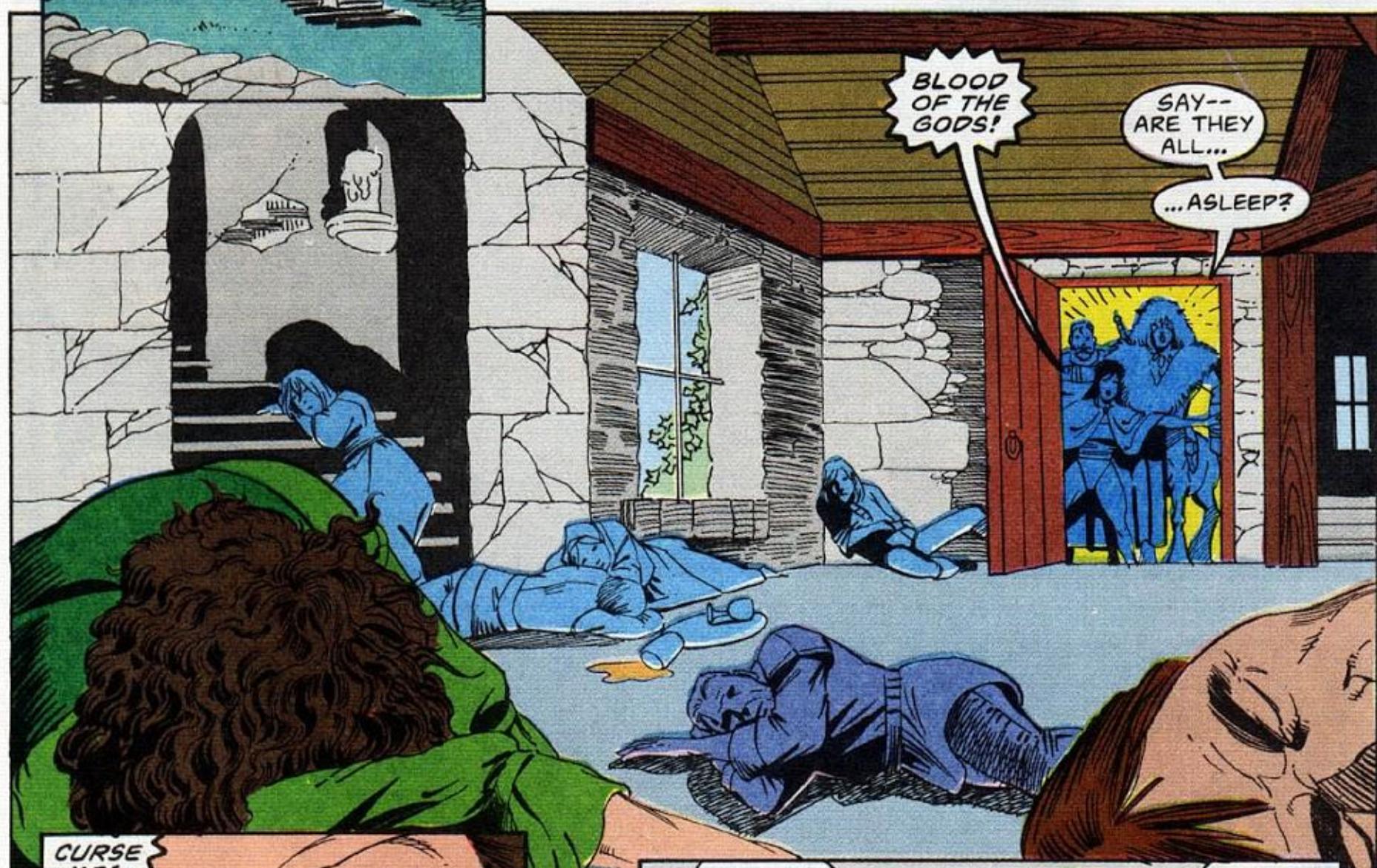
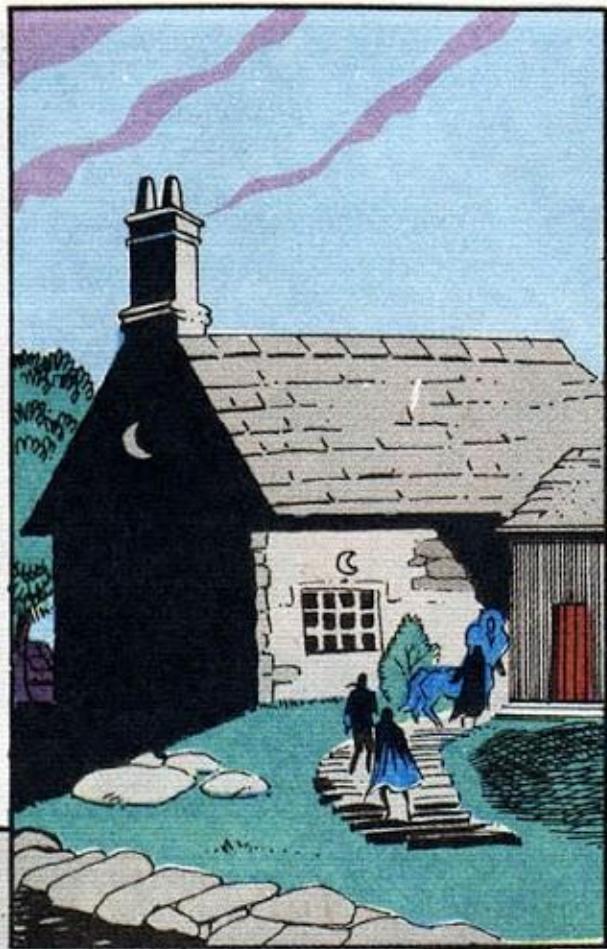
BUT YOUR  
FRIEND HERE  
--HE WAS A  
SLAVE TOO,  
RIGHT?

THE  
MANACLE...?

YOU  
MIGHT SAY I WAS  
LUCKY...FOR A SLAVE.  
IN THE ARENA I FOUND  
STEADFAST COMRADES  
AT LAST.

ALTHOUGH  
UNTIL SALABAK  
SAVED ME TODAY--

--I'D  
BELIEVED THEY  
MUST ALL BE  
DEAD.

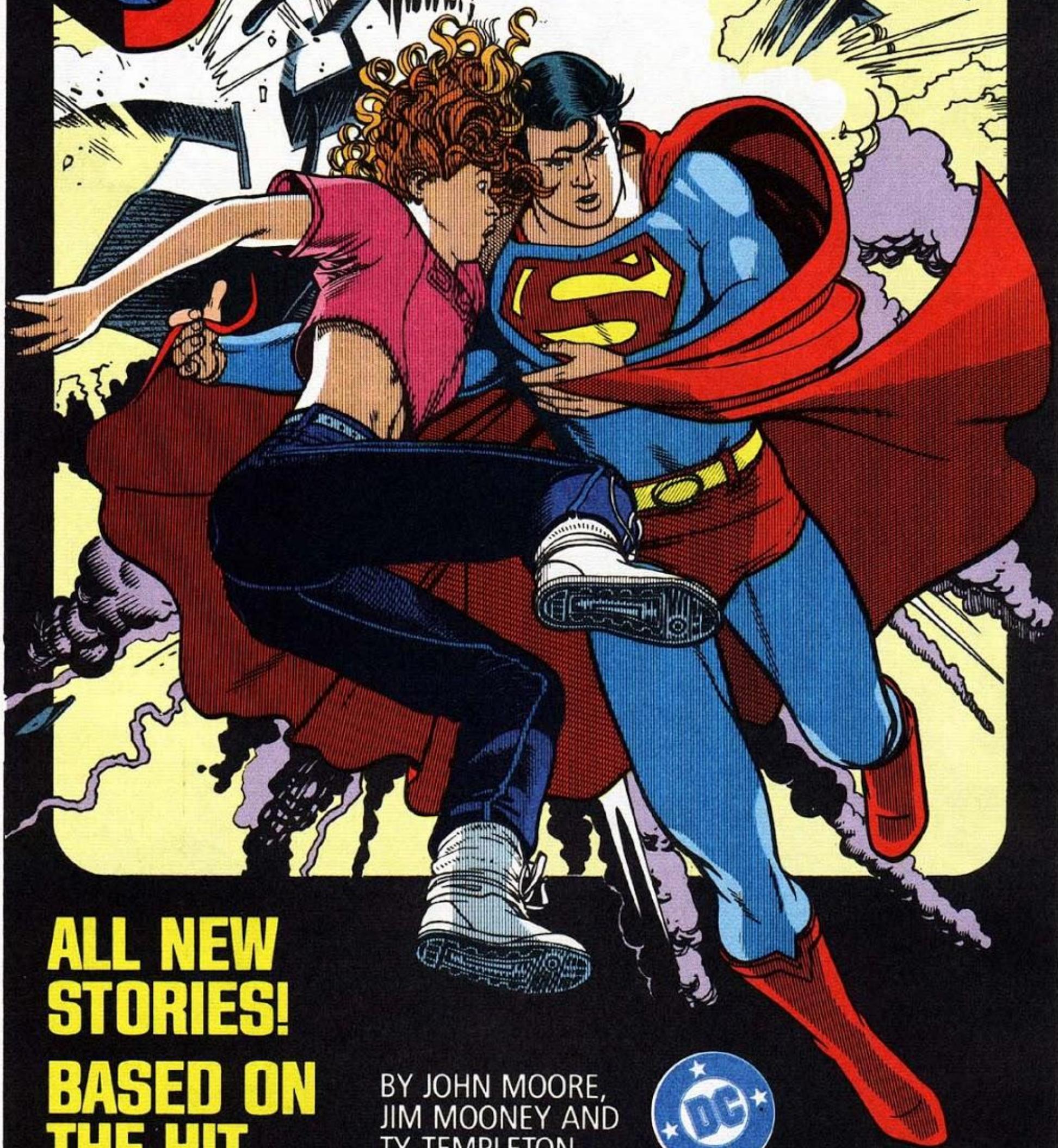




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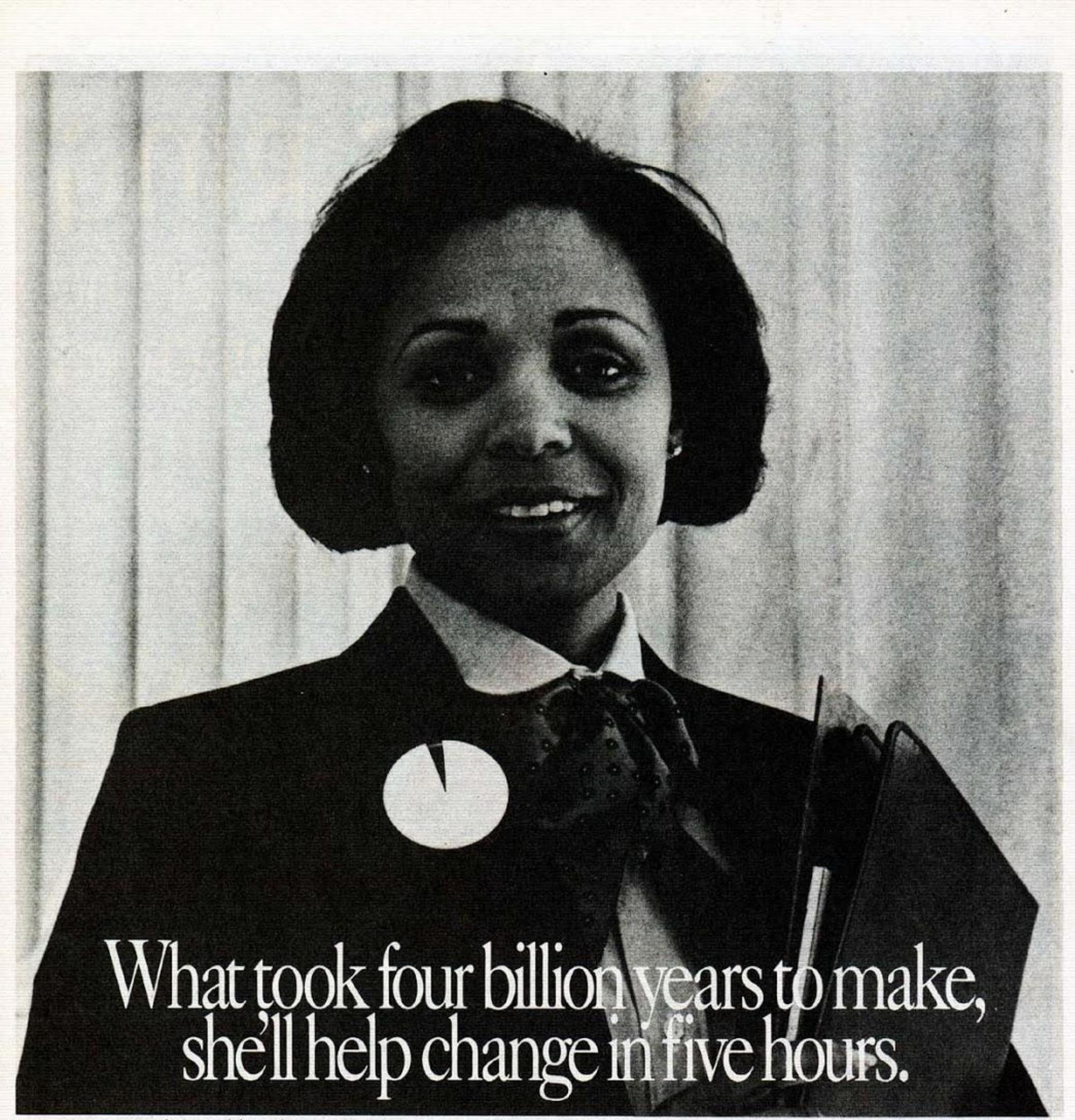
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It's the world we live in.

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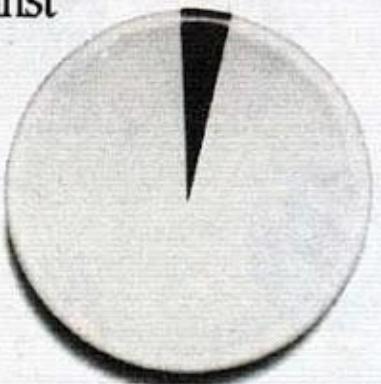
If we all gave just five hours a week as a volunteer, it would be like mobilizing a force of more than 20 million full-time workers.

And if we all gave just five percent of our incomes, we could generate more than \$175 billion. Think of the progress we could make with that sort of money and effort.

In our community. The environment. The arts. Education. The fight against hunger. Or any of the causes we really care about.

Have you looked closely at your own giving and volunteer work? Isn't there room to do just a little more?

Because it's your world. And after four billion years, it needs your help.



# HO! HO! HO!

# HO-NOT

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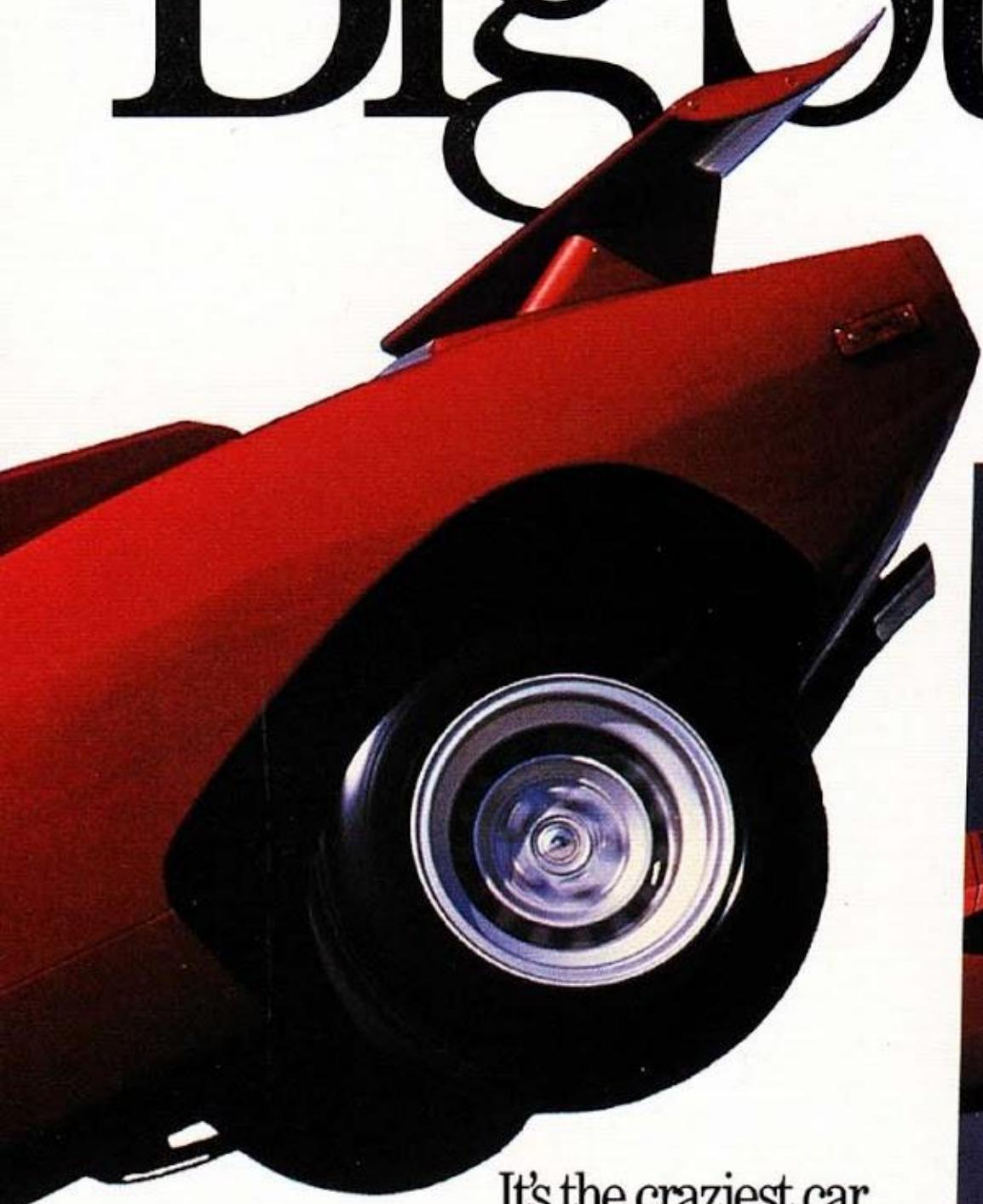
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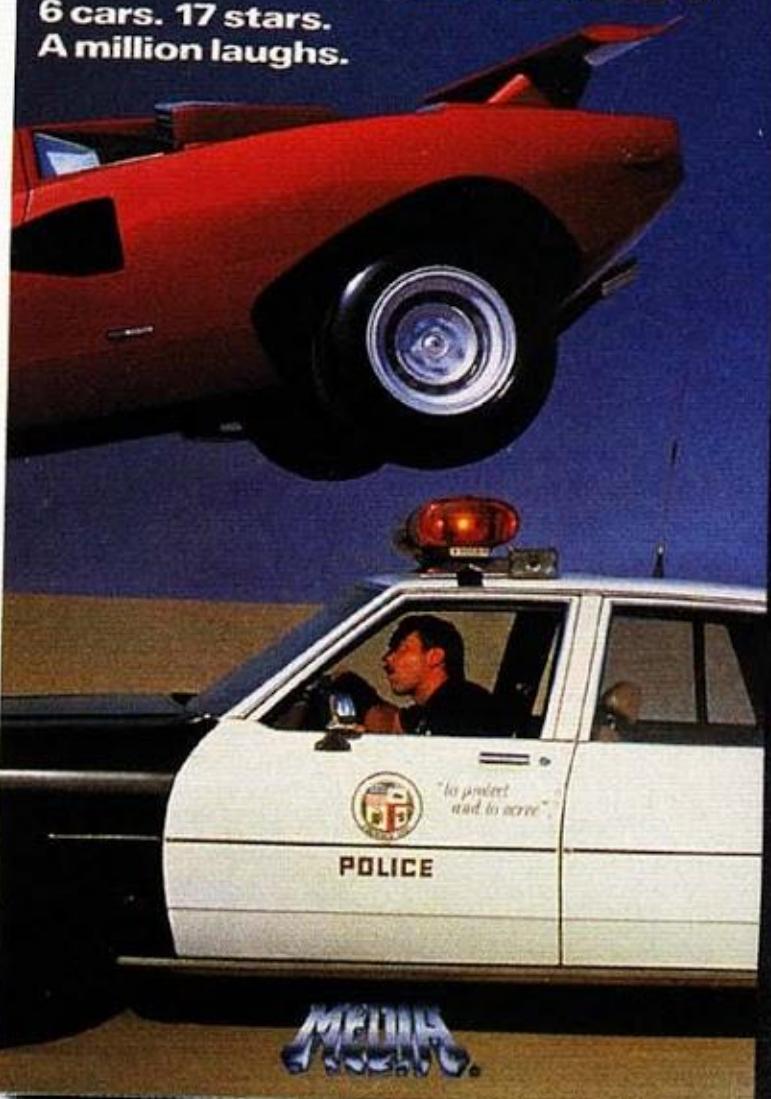
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