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LIES IN TERRIBLE AGONY?



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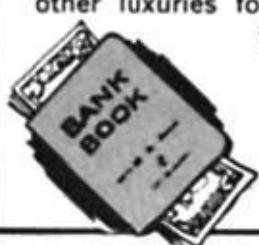
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**TO SAVE
HER MOTHER
FROM TERRIBLE
AGONY,
DIANA FIGHTS HER
LAST BATTLE...**



**...WITH
THE
GOD OF
WAR
HIMSELF!**

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DIANA,
DIANA
PRINCE--

RETURN

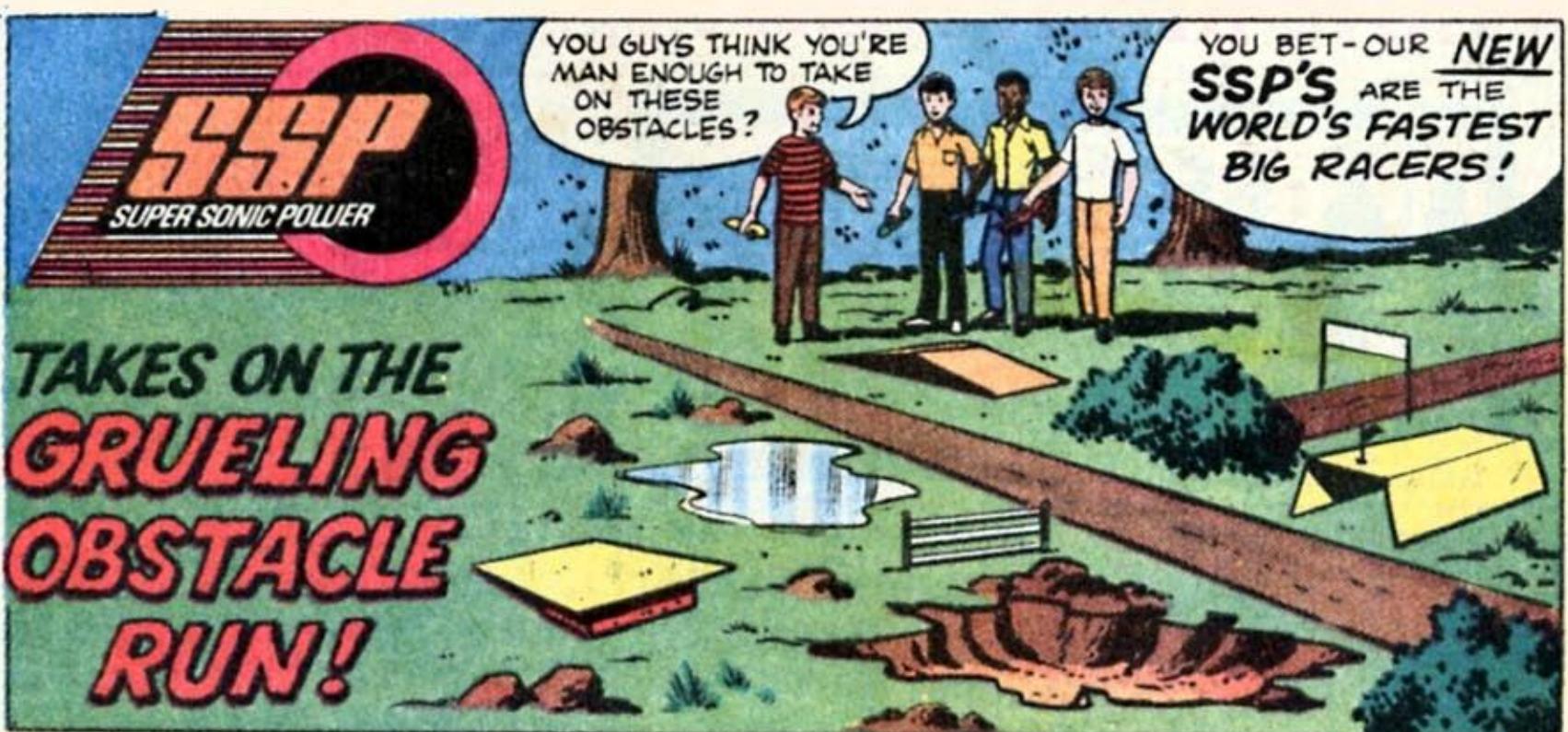


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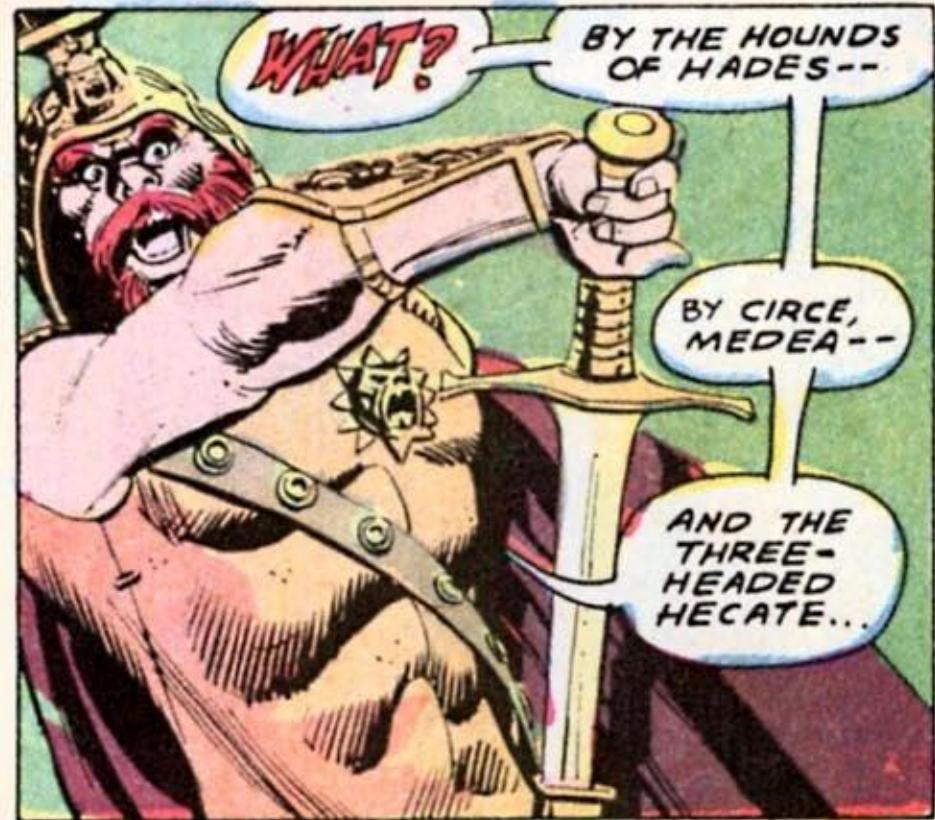
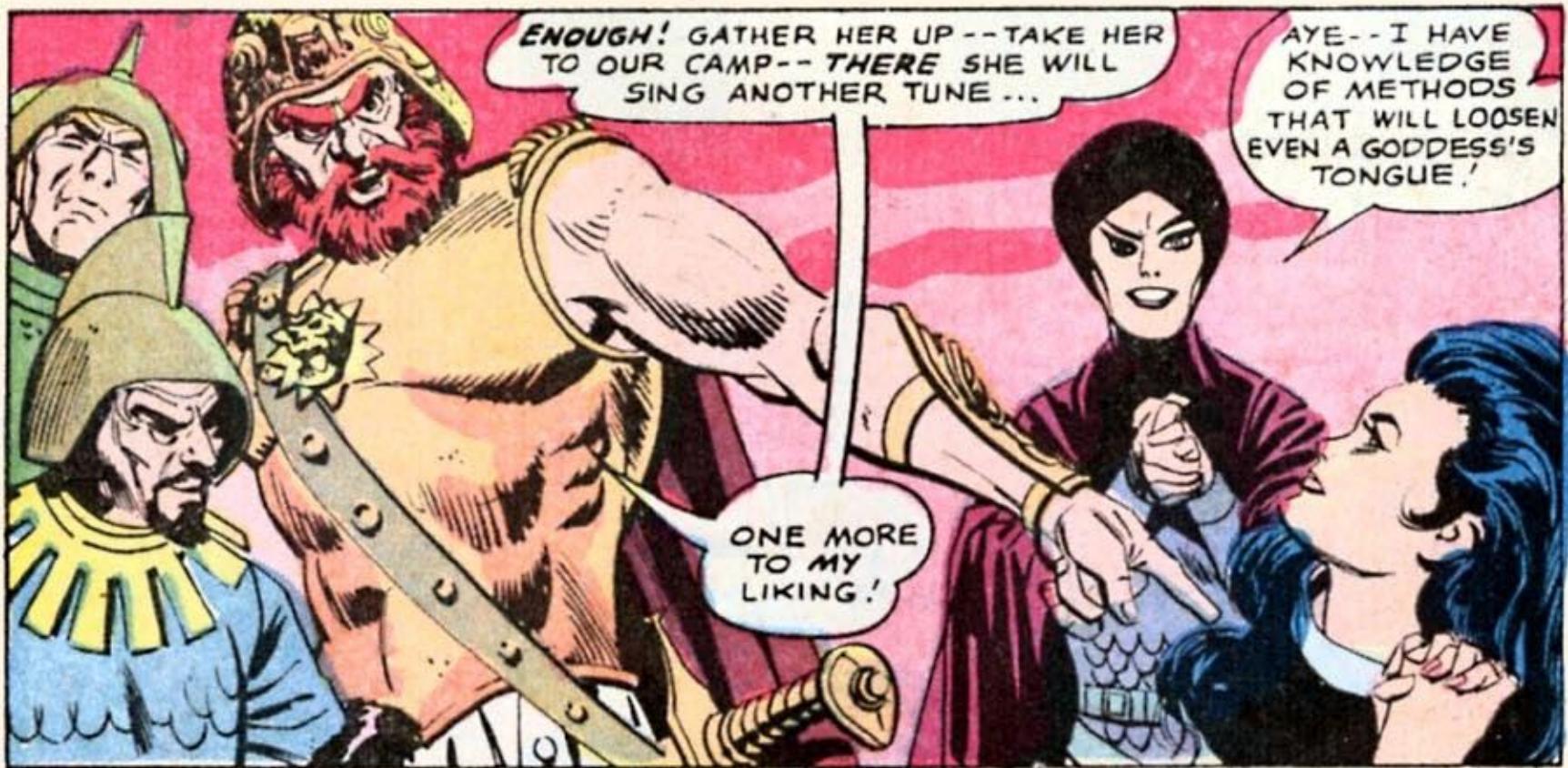
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THE MAIN ARMY WILL FOLLOW ME-- A HUNDRED WILL REMAIN TO GUARD MY MOTHER IN ATHENA'S TEMPLE!

AND SO, A GIRL--WEARING THE ARMOR OF HER QUEEN MOTHER, LEADS HER ARMY OF AMAZONS FORWARD-- KNOWING IN HER HEART THAT THEY ARE MARCHING TO CERTAIN DEFEAT...



THERE, DIANA--THE MAIN HORDE REMAINS WAITING --

THESE LEGIONS ARE BEING SENT FIRST TO TEST OUR STRENGTH --

(12)

BUT-- WHAT IN HERA'S NAME ARE THEY?

NO-- HOW HORRIBLE!

(12)



CHING DOESN'T SEEM TO BE AFFECTED--BUT OF COURSE--HE CAN'T SEE THEM--HE'S BLIND!

THAT'S THE ANSWER!

AMAZONS! HOLD YOUR SHIELDS IN FRONT OF YOUR FACES! DON'T LOOK DIRECTLY AT THEM!



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ALL THROUGH THE
NIGHT, UNTIL ...

DIANA--IT
IS DAWN--

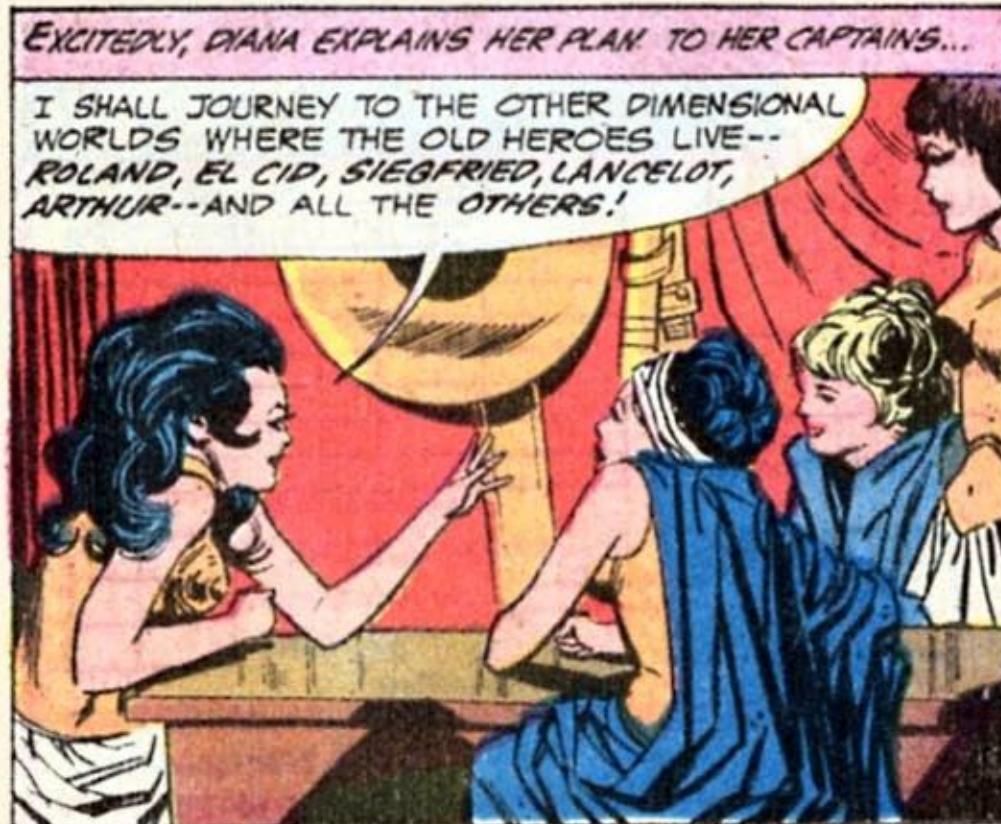
I KNOW...

...DAWN--AND
I STILL HAVEN'T
THOUGHT OF A
WAY OUT OF
OUR
PREDICAMENT...

HERE IS FOOD, DIANA. YOU MUST
EAT. YOU MUST KEEP UP
YOUR STRENGTH.

I'M NOT HUNGRY,
BUT YOU'RE
RIGHT...

YOU KNOW,
IF THIS WERE
ONE OF YOUR
INCREDIBLE
WESTERN
CINEMAS--
JUST ABOUT
NOW--THE
CAVALRY
WOULD
COME
CHARGING
OVER THE
HILL--AND
WE WOULD
BE SAVED.



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ARRIVING BEFORE CAMELOT, DIANA AND HER COMPANION ARE SURPRISED TO FIND THEMSELVES PART OF A LONG COLUMN MAKING ITS WAY THERE, TOO.



EAGERLY AND WITH HEARTS HIGH, THE TWO
JOIN THE COLORFUL THRONG, PASSING
THROUGH THE GATES OF THE FABLED
CAMELOT.



BUT SOON
THEIR MOOD
CHANGES--
FOR IN THE
EXCITEMENT
OF THE
TOURNAMENT--
NOBODY
PAYS ANY
ATTENTION
TO THEIR
PLEAS
FOR AN
AUDIENCE
WITH
ARTHUR...



A MID ANGRY CRIES OF DISBELIEF, DIANA PROUDLY STRIDES BETWEEN THE DUELISTS TOWARD ARTHUR, THE KING...

IS THE WENCH MAD?

HOW DARE SHE! THROW HER OFF THE FIELD!

WHO ARE YOU?

WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS?

WHOEVER SHE IS-- SHE'S A COMELY WENCH!

I AM DIANA,
DAUGHTER OF
HIPPOLYTA, QUEEN
OF THE AMAZONS.

I AM
HERE TO
ASK FOR
YOUR HELP..

YOUR HELP--AND
THE HELP OF THE
HEROES GATHERED
HERE FOR THIS
TOURNAMENT...

WHY?





CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

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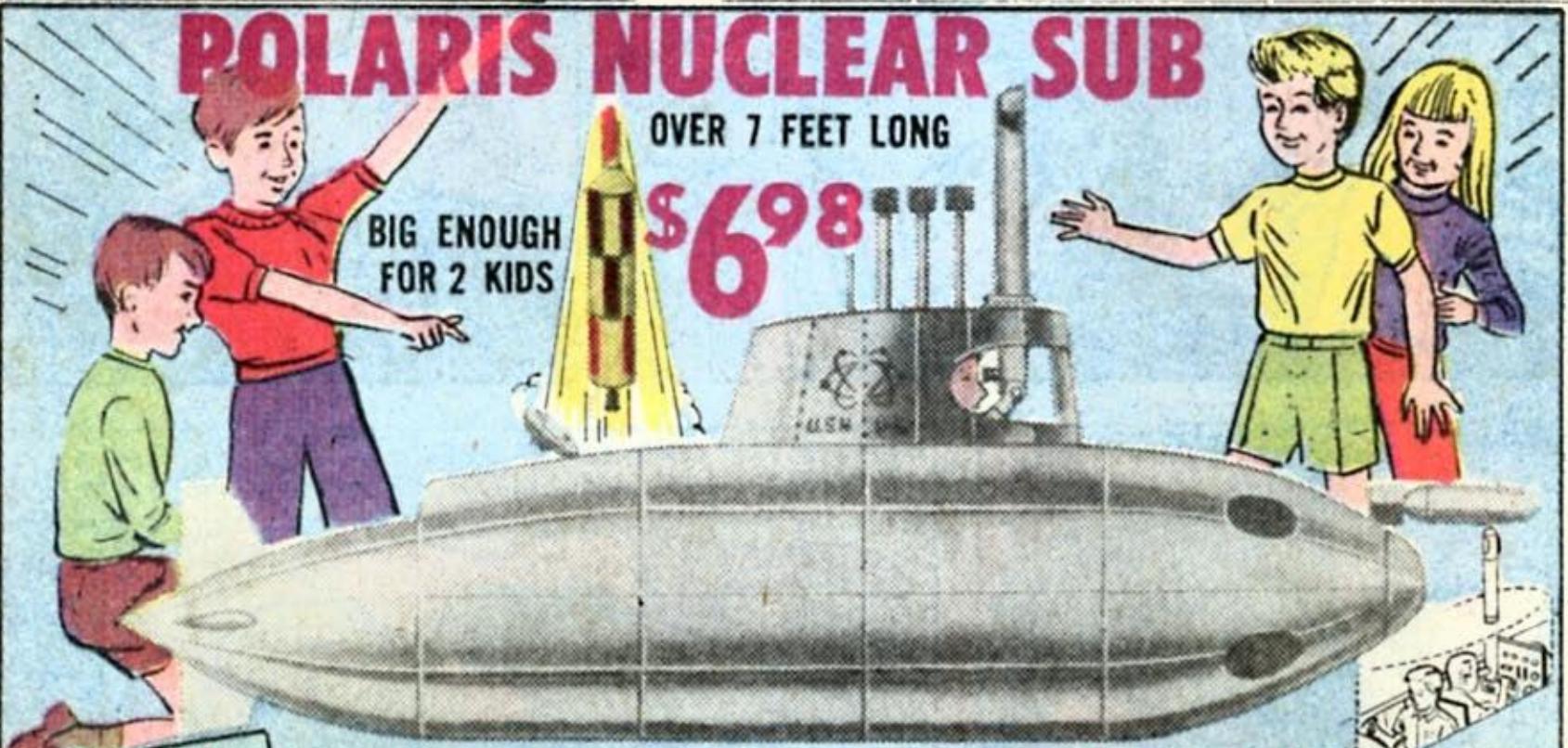
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A SHOCKED, STUNNED, DIANA STARES, DUMBFOUNDED--HARDLY BELIEVING HER EARS...



ANGRILY SHE LASHES OUT...

MEAD!? GAMES!? YOU'RE NOT HEROES-- YOU'RE CHILDREN! YOU PLAY GAMES WHILE A WORLD BURNS!

YOU ARE A DISGRACE TO THE WORD HERO!



DISGRACE?! YOU CALL SIEGFRIED, SLAYER OF THE DRAGON FAFNER, A DISGRACE?

INSOLENT MINX-- YOU NEED A LESSON IN THE MANNER IN WHICH--

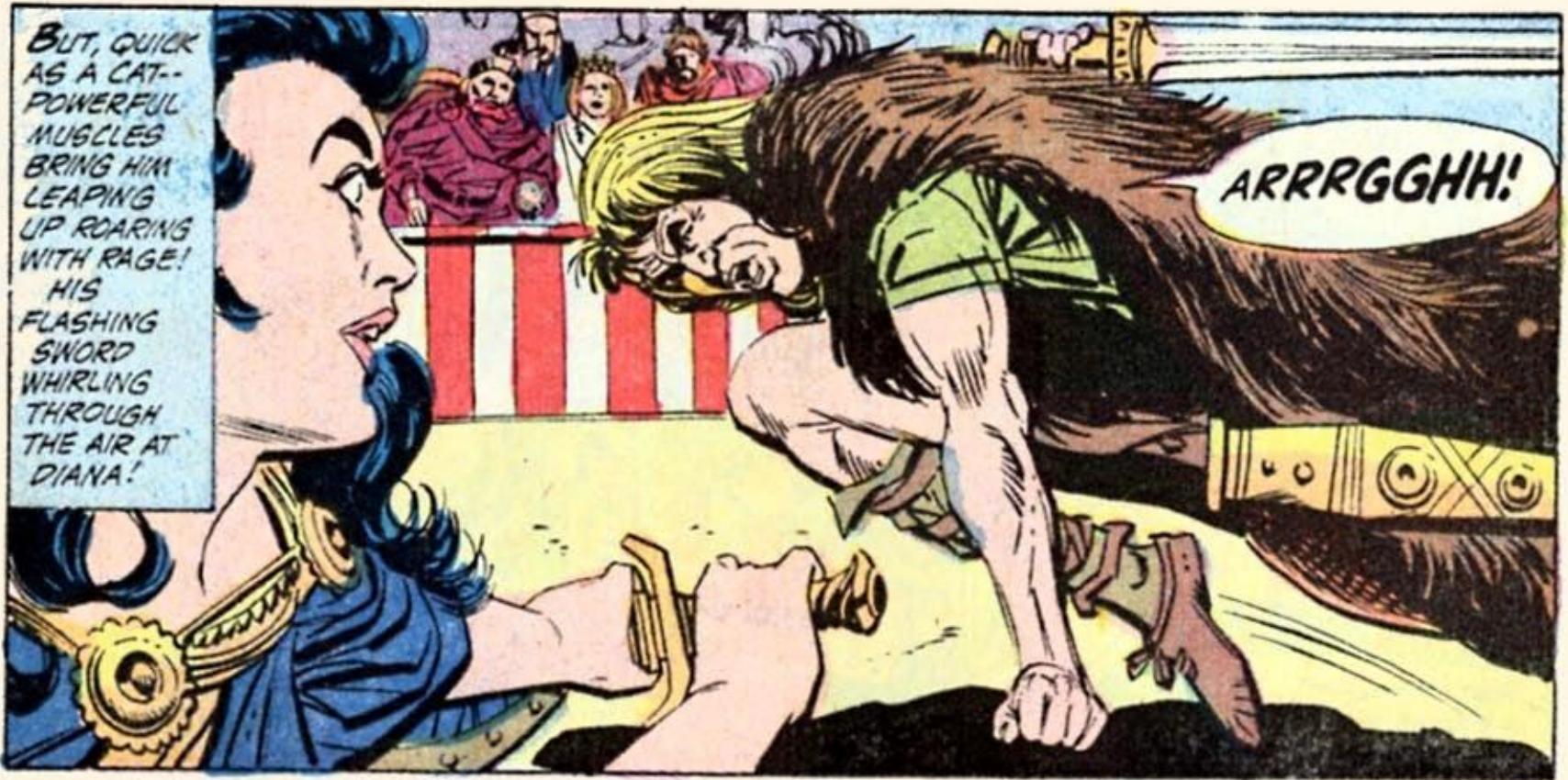
--YOU SPEAK TO A--



--HE--

BEFORE THE STARTLED SIEGFRIED CAN FINISH THE SENTENCE--HE IS FLYING THROUGH THE AIR--







A STRANGELY SILENT GROUP OF HEROES WATCH AS THREE PROUD FIGURES STALK OFF...



DIANA, TRY TO UNDERSTAND--AND FORGIVE THEM--THEY ARE BITTER. FOR CENTURIES THEY HAVE SEEN WAR AFTER WAR FOUGHT TO END WAR. TO THEM--THEIR SACRIFICES WERE IN VAIN!



I KNOW--I KNOW--
BUT WITHOUT THEM
WE ARE LOST, THEY
MUST UNDERSTAND--
IT IS THE MEN JUST
LIKE THEM--WHO
MUST AND DO
RISE AT EACH TIME
OF CRISIS TO
FIGHT FOR THE
RIGHT OF
THINGS...



THEY WON'T COME! THEY FEEL THAT
THEIR SACRIFICE, HEROIC, THOUGH IT
MAY HAVE BEEN--WAS ALSO
USELESS AND FUTILE!



THAT'S NOT TRUE!
THEY AREN'T AND
NEVER WERE
FUTILE! IT IS
BECAUSE OF
THEM AND THE
EXAMPLE THEY
AND OTHERS
LIKE THEM SET
TO MAKE IT A
BETTER WORLD
THAT WE DO
WHAT WE
DO NOW!



BUT ONLY
DIANA,
DRUSILLA
AND
BRUNHILDE,
LEADING
A LONG
LINE OF
VALKYRIES
MAKE THE
DIMENSIONAL
TRIP THAT
DAY...

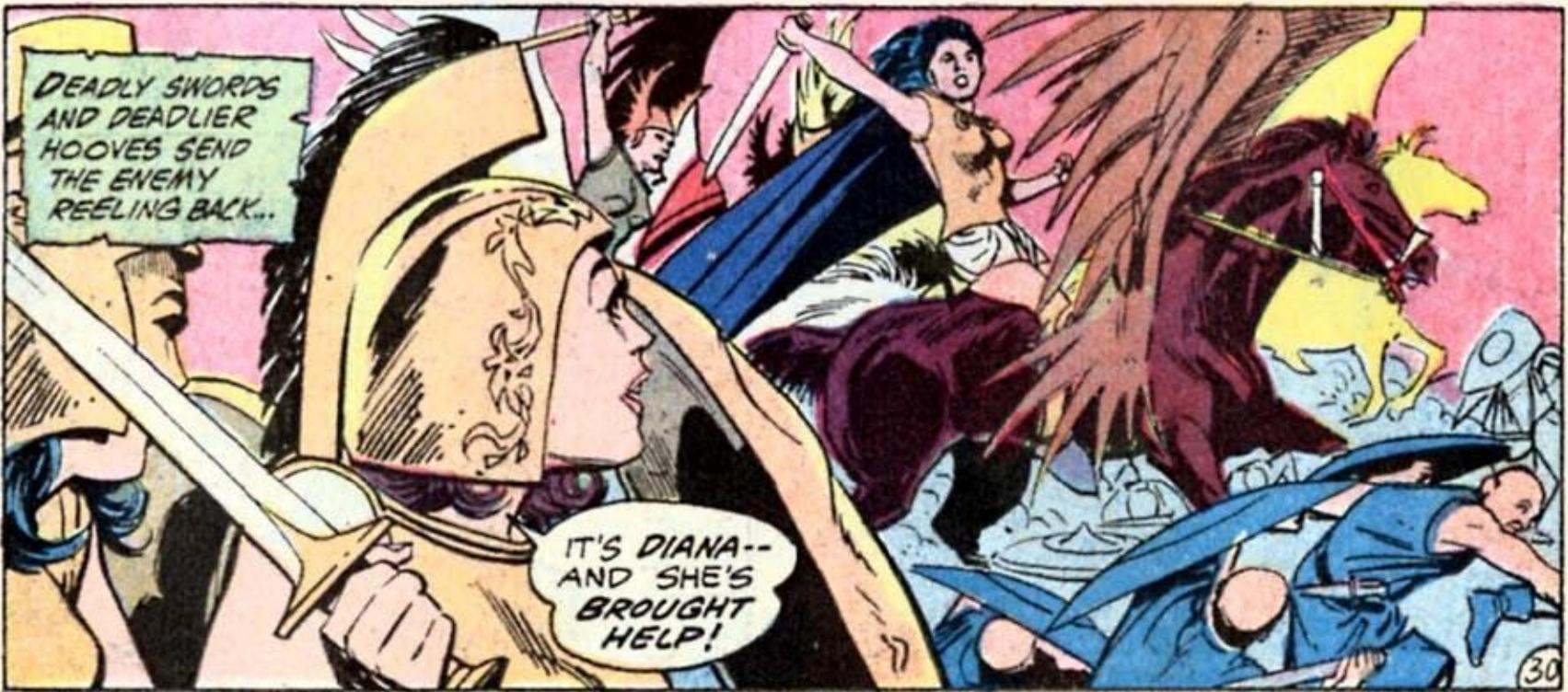


ARRIVING ON PARADISE ISLAND JUST IN TIME TO SEND THEIR FLYING HORSES CRASHING INTO AN ENEMY THRUST THAT HAD BREACHED THE AMAZON WALL OF SHIELDS...



DEADLY SWORDS
AND DEADLIER
HOOVES SEND
THE ENEMY REELING BACK...

IT'S DIANA--
AND SHE'S
BROUGHT
HELP!



WHAT SEEMED TO BE CERTAIN DEFEAT BECOMES VICTORY! AMAZON AND VALKYRIE DRIVE FORWARD AND THE ENEMY RETREAT BECOMES A RACE FOR LIFE!

HALT! REFORM LINES!

THEY ARE BEATEN!

FOR TODAY ANYWAY--



LONG INTO THE NIGHT--DIANA, AMAZON AND VALKYRIE TALK, PLAN--BUT EACH IN HER OWN HEART KNOWS THAT TOMORROW WOULD END IN DEFEAT AND DEATH!



LONG AFTER THE OTHERS ARE ASLEEP, DIANA SITS BY THE SIDE OF HER MOTHER'S BED...

MOTHER--WE HAVE DONE ALL WE CAN-- TOMORROW WE SHALL FIGHT AGAIN!

WE SHALL LOSE --BUT IN LOSING-- ARES SHALL LOSE, TOO--

FOR I SWEAR TO YOU, MOTHER-- HE SHALL NOT GET THE SECRET OF DIMENSIONAL TRAVEL FROM YOU--

I KNOW WHAT I MUST DO-- WHAT YOU WOULD WANT ME TO DO--

GOODBYE-- FORGIVE ME, MOTHER--



THE NEXT DAY--AT DAWN...

THEY ARE COMING--ARES IS SENDING ALL HIS LEGIONS
AGAINST US--GOOD LUCK TO YOU ALL--

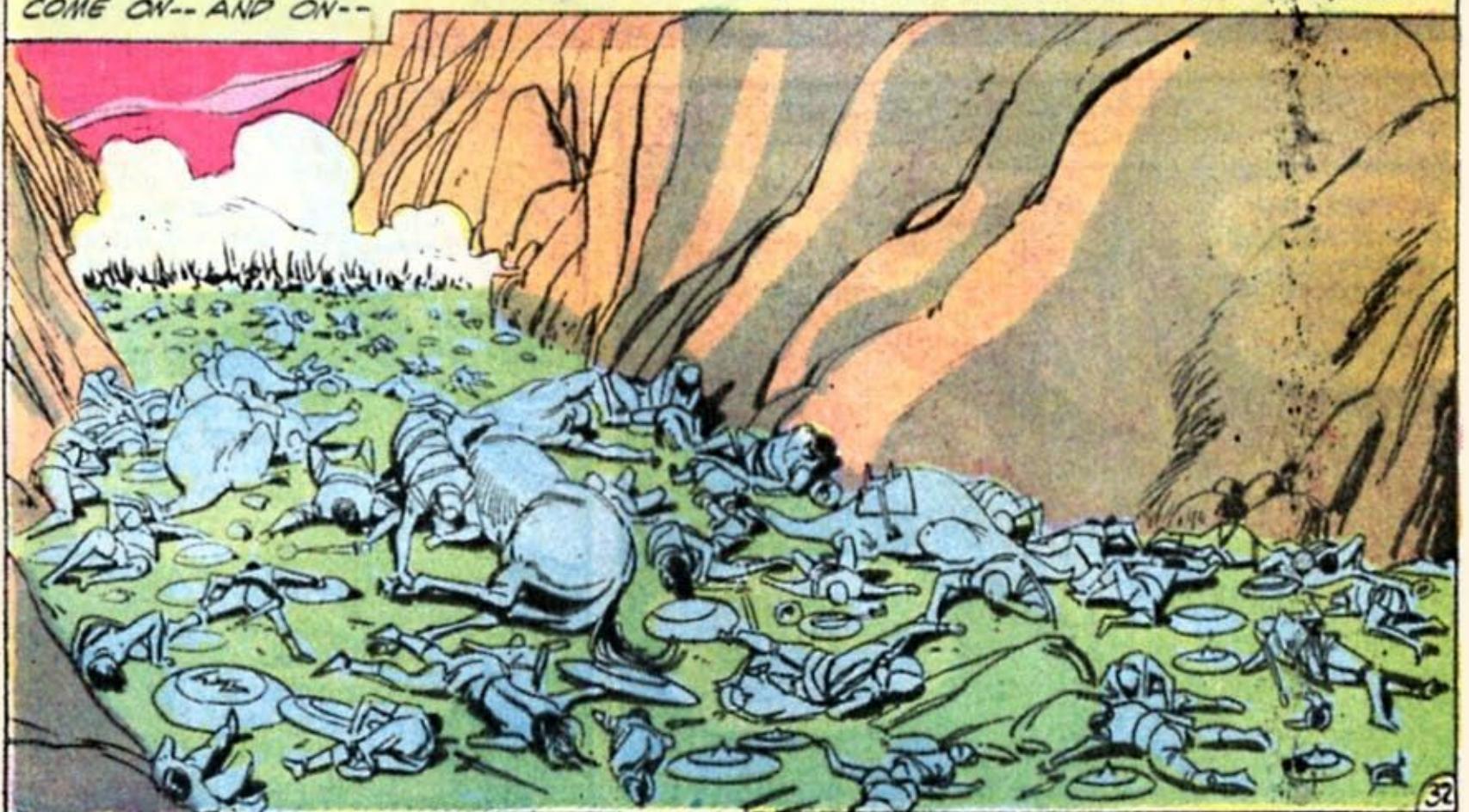


AS THE TIDE OF BEAST MEN, BARBARIANS AND ARES'S OWN HORDES SMASH AGAINST THE THIN LINE OF AMAZONS AND VALKYRIES, DIANA'S CRY RISES ABOVE THE CRASH OF BATTLE...

FIGHT WELL--AND IF WE MUST--DIE WELL!



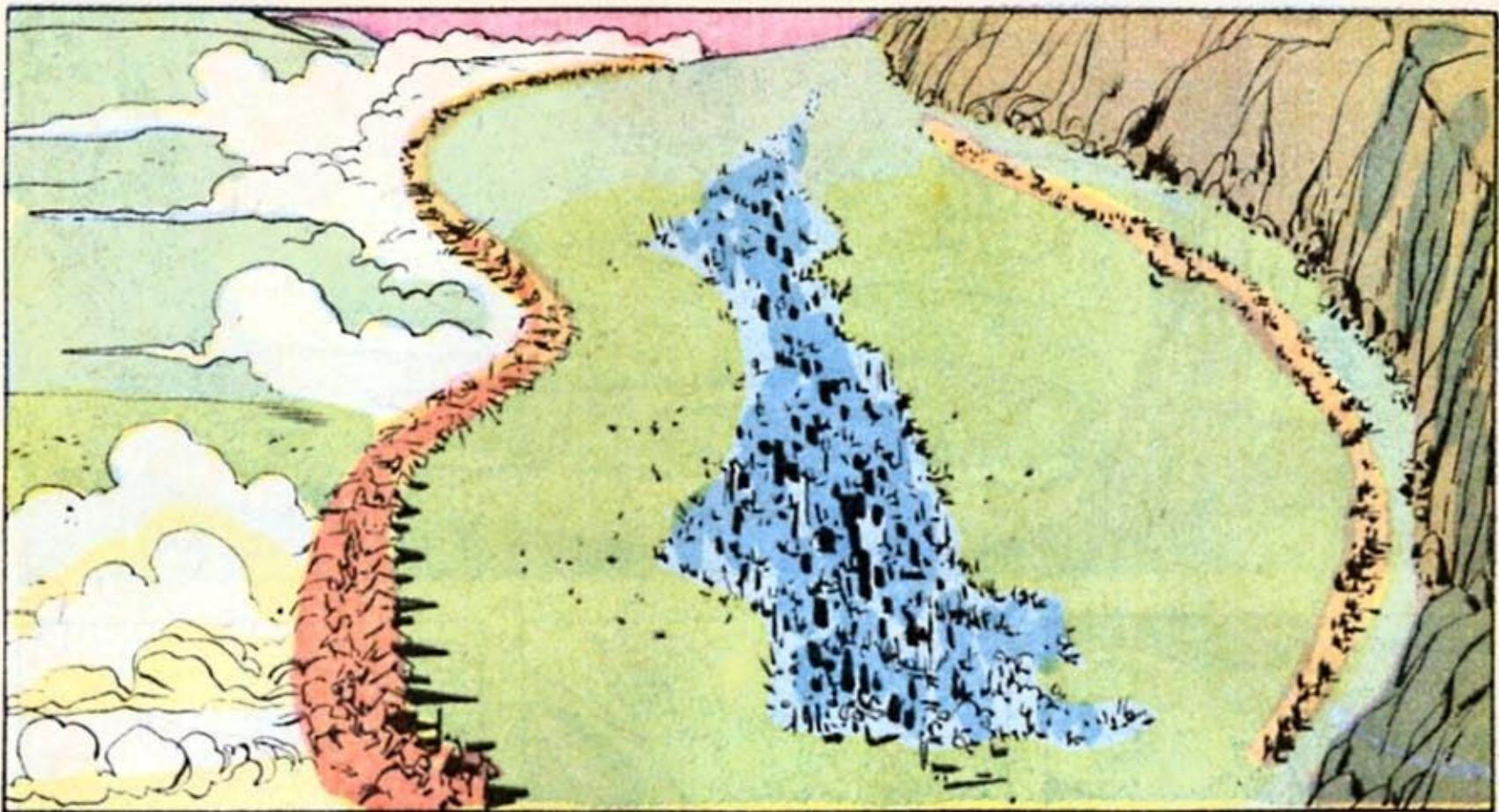
FOR EVERY ONE AMAZON OR VALKYRIE THAT FALLS, TEN OF THE ENEMY DIE--BUT STILL THEY
COME ON--AND ON--



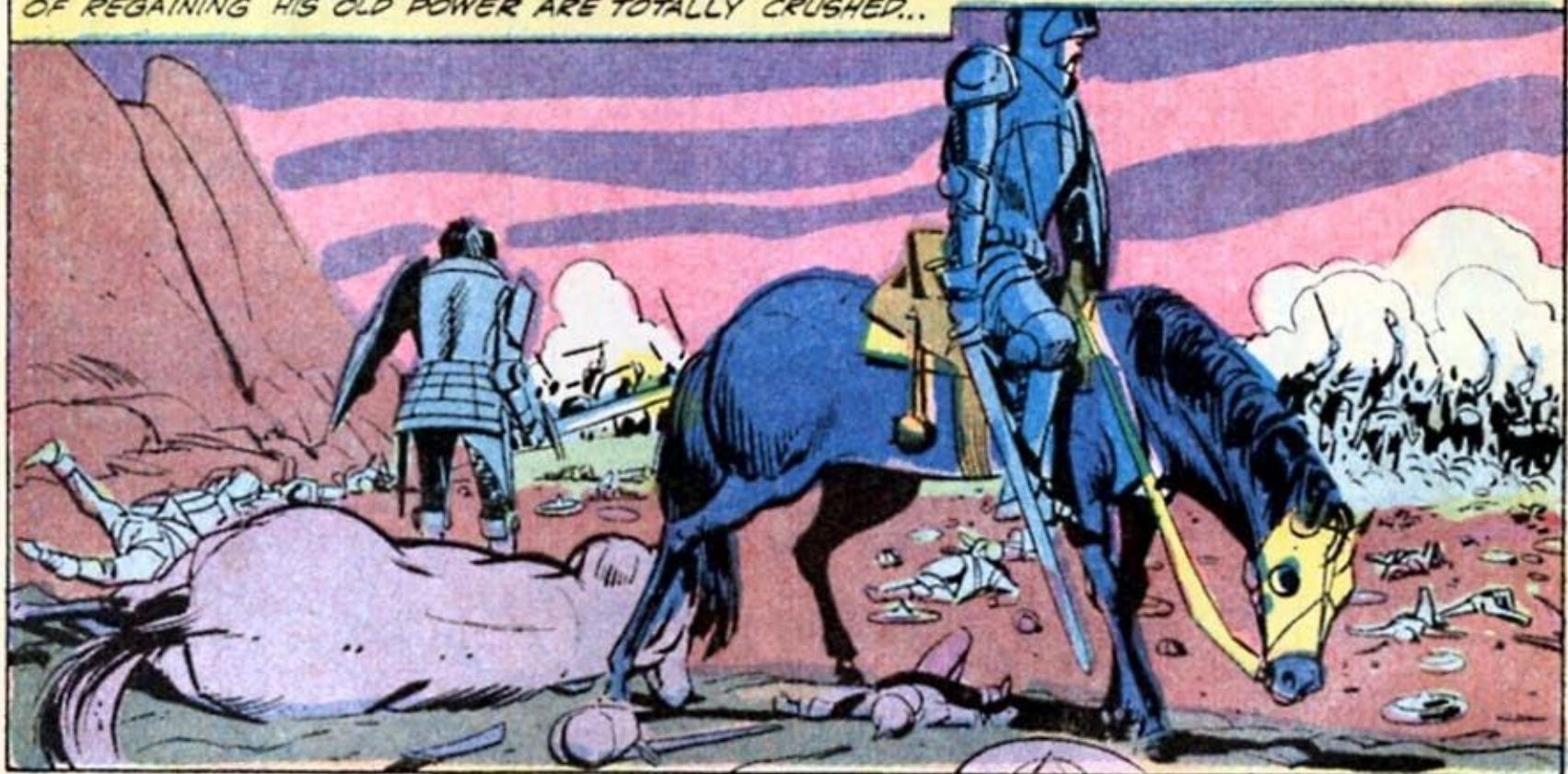
AND ON--
DRIVEN EVER
BACKWARD,
UNTIL THEY
CANNOT RETREAT
ANOTHER FOOT,
DIANA AND HER
REMAINING
AMAZONS AND
VALKYRIES
PREPARE FOR
THE LAST--
AND FOR
THEM THE
FINAL
CHARGE!



CAUGHT BETWEEN THE STEEL JAWS OF THE AMAZONS AND VALKYRIES LED BY DIANA AND THE ARMORED JUGGERNAUT OF ROLAND--THE ARMY OF ARES IS CAUGHT IN A TERRIBLE TRAP OF NO ESCAPE!

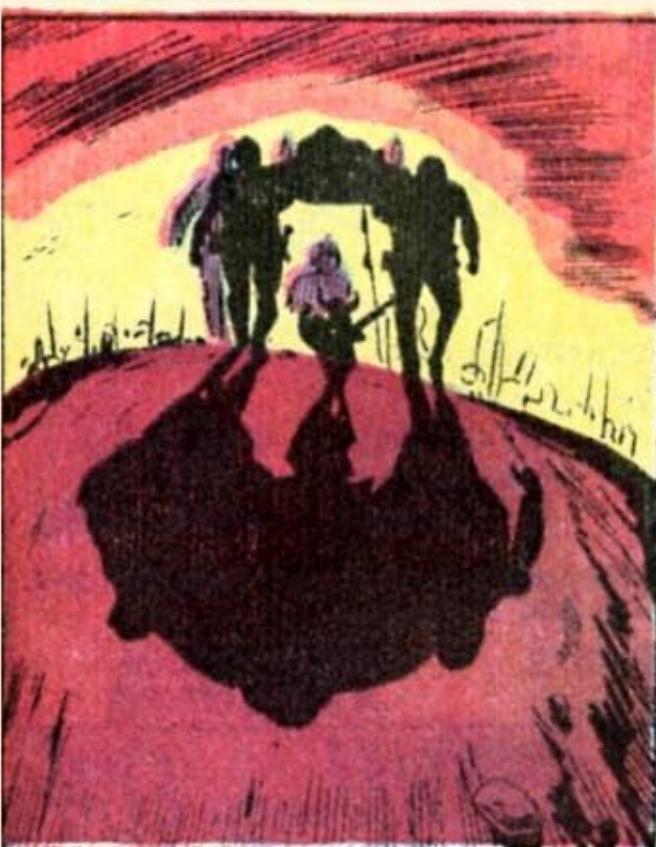


THE INEVITABLE END NOW COMES SWIFTLY. DOOM OVERTAKES ARES'S ARMY AND HIS HOPES OF REGAINING HIS OLD POWER ARE TOTALLY CRUSHED...



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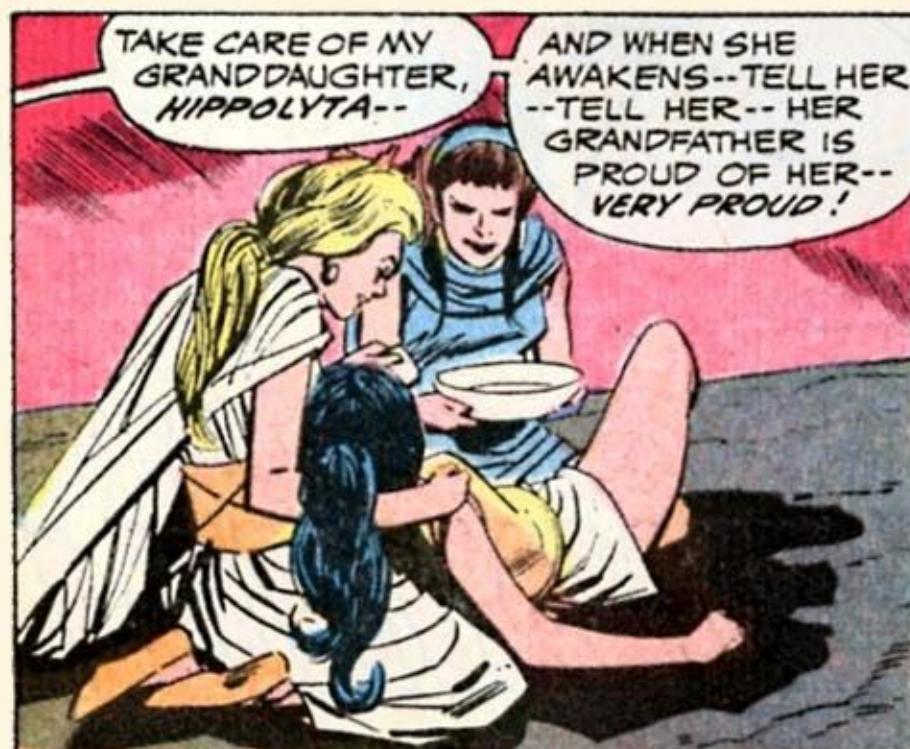
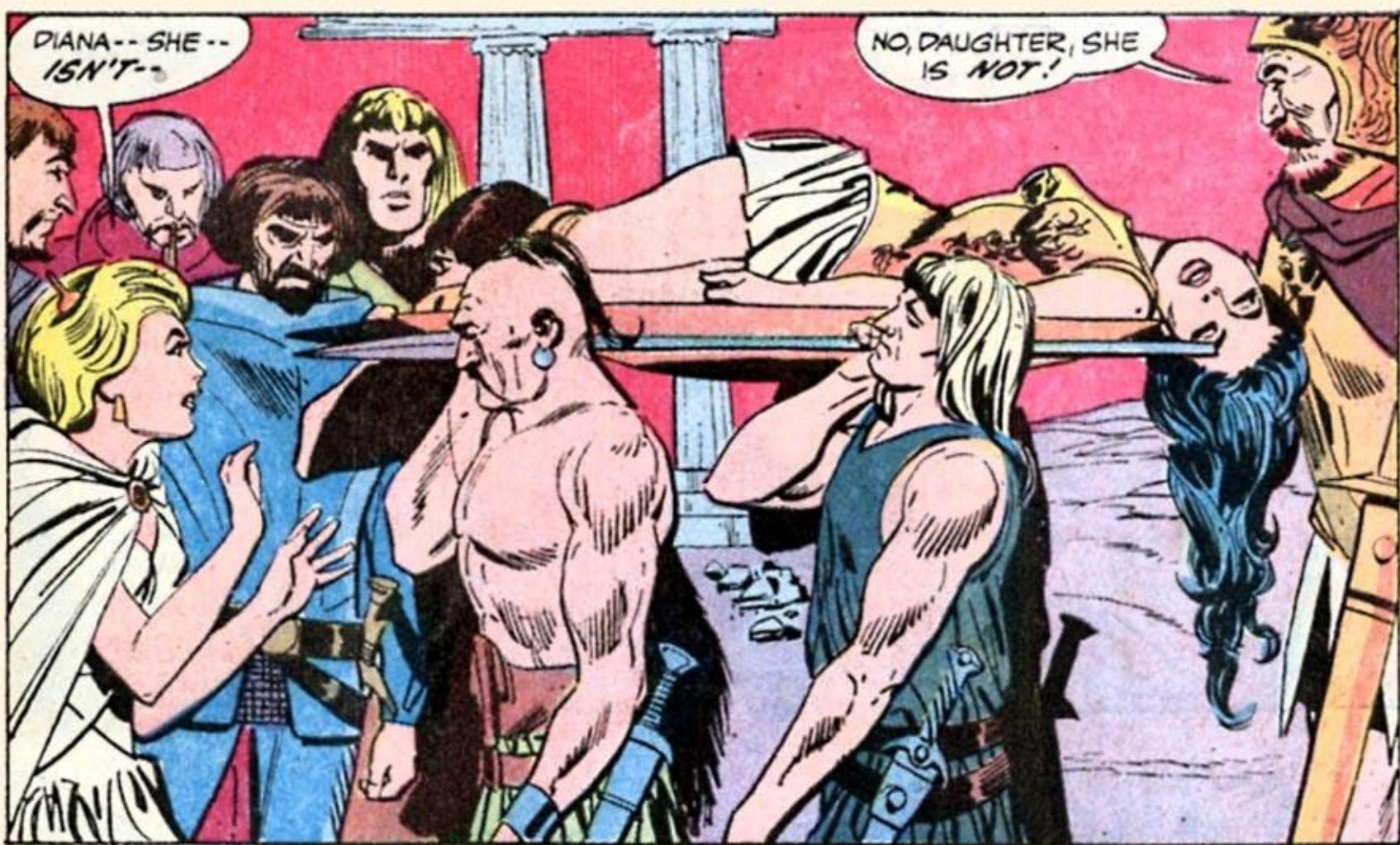
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Dear Editor:

Wonder Woman #194 was certainly a change of pace story. Even though not the most original, it was a rousing good Wonder Woman tale. Since nothing about Diana's life is normal I wasn't surprised to read that even on her vacations she finds the usual intrigue, adventure, and—yes, even romance! Imagine the spot Diana would have been in had Fabiola not appeared in time. Seeing Diana do battle in her wedding dress was well worth the price of the book. This new Wonder Woman is consistently entertaining, enjoyable and just plain good reading. She is what making comics is all about.

Now for the suggestion made by Dennis Rule. I think it would be a mistake to put Diana back into costume. The old Wonder Woman is gone whom the readers have trouble identifying with. She is Diana Prince, a lovely and talented heroine whom readers have no trouble identifying with. Diana Prince is relevant to today's society. The costumed super hero is almost out of place. He doesn't belong in a now society fighting invaders from space, etc. The real hero or heroine is an ordinary person who fights crime, pollution, etc.

Of course, Diana really isn't ordinary in the usual sense of the word. She is a fantastic person. She is well blessed with beauty, brains and a profound sense of justice. She is all out to help the common, ordinary man, woman, or child who needs her. In order to do this Diana needs to operate freely and easily. A costume would be cumbersome, gaudy—and it would call attention to herself. With all Diana Prince has going for her she definitely doesn't need a costume. It would only be a reminder of the bygone days of the old Wonder Woman—and the less said or thought about her the better.

Sincerely,
Shirley A. Gorman
Hereford, Texas

Dear Editor:

"The Prisoner" (WW 194) was some kind of fantastic. T. S. Eliot once said something to the effect that a good poet should not borrow things, but should steal them and make them his own. Well, Mike Sekowsky stepped into the *Prisoner of Zenda* so smoothly that it was sheer poetry.

I am very happy that there is a magazine with the elasticity to be able to do an off-beat story like this with no complicated assumptions on the reader's part. Indeed, this seems to be the keynote of the new Wonder Woman—elasticity. She can go from swords and sorcery to Hong Kong intrigue to modern New York City, all plausibly, all within the framework author Sekowsky has established. Even her lack of fixed costume adds to this. The sole retention of virginal white allows for much variation, from swash-buckling outfits to Chinese peasant fashions. In a word, bravo!

There are things I dislike, of course. I don't like the idea of Diana Prince being a boutique owner; being a merchant just doesn't fit in with her mobile life-style. I'd like to see her as sort of a female Paladin, a very selective private eye-ess. And although I dig the S & S stories, and the I Ching oriental pieces, I dislike the 'today'-type episodes. Indeed, I think the Morgana, Them, and last issue's Angela piece have been the low points of the series. In comparison with the other issues, they seem juvenile and uninteresting. I also consider Cathy a superfluous character, who detracts from the maturity of the

magazine. My advice would be, then, to get rid of the whole New York set-up, forget the Petruccis, Cathy, and the Boutique, and set up a new premise for Diana as a private detective extraordinaire.

But I am by no means dissatisfied with the magazine as it is now constituted, just so long as you continue to mix in some healthy doses of sword and sorcery and espionage. By the way, I can't help noticing how easily Diana and I Ching could be tied in with Deadman and his Hong Kong assassins . . . (that's a hint, Neal, that's a hint.)

In closing, I plead that you keep Diana out of the superhero game. Earth-1 doesn't need two Black Canaries. And congratulations, again, on the fine job you've done on this once-dismal magazine.

Excelsior.
Juan Cole
Sterling, Va.

Dear Editor:

In issue number 196, the Origin of WW was absolutely fantastic! I really enjoyed it even though I had read some old WW's. I like the way she is today, a lot better than the old one—especially when something like "Target For Today" appears. This one is outstanding; it seems almost real. WOW! What a cover! It's something that really catches the eyes.

Your fan,
Dale Peterson
Jacksonville, Fla.

Dear Mr. Sekowsky:

I hate to say it, but Wonder Woman #196 was a total disaster! The lead story was the worst thing about it—saving the ambassador from Koronia from being assassinated is neither interesting nor novel. True, Diana had lots of action, but the plot just didn't hold one's attention for very long. Koronia—so what? And the shades of old spy movies were hanging around like crazy.

I also think the "Origin of Wonder Woman" was a poor choice. The narrative sequences were like passages from a second-rate textbook: these are comics we're dealing with, not Master's theses. If this was Wonder Woman's debut in comics, the story should have been a lot more interesting.

Also, I don't think it's wise to give Diana her Lieutenant's commission again. She won't be as free to go on various adventures—and, for heaven's sake, she doesn't need an army, not this girl!

Grey Brewster
Centereach, New York

Dear Editor:

The new Wonder Woman and the old Wonder Woman are the same—yet different. "Target For Today" was a fantastic tale that brought Diana into the real world. I hope she has more adventures like this.

The vintage Wonder Woman was a vivid reminder of the Golden Age, and the reappearance of the Cheetah gives me an idea. I'm sure that some of Diana's most recent enemies—Angle Man, Mouse-Man and others of that ilk—have not forgotten her. I hope that you can bring some of them back.

Jerry Wilson
Omaha, Nebraska

Dear Editor:

First, let me say that Diana has undergone the best change in the comic world. Since then, I haven't missed an issue!

Second, "Them" was a fabulous story.

Third, the visits to Paradise Island were great. Let's see more.

Fourth, your stories, though sometimes continued, are separated so there is not so much suffering waiting for the next mag.

So please keep up the good work. I'm sure you'll reach issue #200 with success.

Michel Patinande
Gatineau, Quebec
Canada

Dear Editor:

Wonder Woman #196 was . . . great! Magnificent! Fabulous! "Target for Today" was a good story. It had a wild plot and excellent artwork.

But as I said before, please get her out of white clothes. White isn't a very bright color. And get her out of those fringed boots!

Now let me go to my favorite spot in the comic—Wonder Woman's origin. I *adore* reading old comics; I love the primitive artwork and the melodramatic dialogue. Thank you! For me, reading it was a real treat. One question: why did W.W. have a skirt on? I thought it was a bathing suit.

Louise Goldman
Wottartford, Conn.

Dear Editor:

Although I cannot say I dislike Diana, I feel you should not divorce her so fully from her past life as Wonder Woman. Diana scarcely ever thinks about it, or remembers . . . It is as though she is a whole new character, so that WW #180 might have been #1 instead. Killing off Steve Trevor was the best thing you could have done, but if Diana did love him as much as she did, she should think of him occasionally.

Now, Mr. Editor, I am not insensitive to the burden that is put on you by editing the magazines you do. I can understand that in the process of scripting various heroines and heroes simultaneously, you can find yourself short of the time needed to inject those little things which would add so much reality. Perhaps the artists are unimaginative? Maybe you have sometimes wanted to spend a few months on one character alone, because you would like to put everything you have into turning out a sensational epic. I have the temerity to offer a suggestion for a plot . . .

While the non-super Diana may be the basis of this magazine, why not try a series of issues featuring a change, mainly the restoration of some of her powers through a stormy and unstable series of 5-10 issues. In the beginning, you might offer one of the following:

1.) The Wonder Woman of Earth-2, hitherto ignored in the W.W. comic of the sixties, hears from some JLA members of Diana's plight, and, taking pity on her other self, is able to secure from her Paradise Island an extra pair of "bracelets of submission" and magic lasso. She brings them over to Diana, and a sensational scene could ensue if the script ran thus: Diana encounters an adversary who proves too much for her to handle, and at the brink of defeat, and at the end of the issue, Wonder Woman of Earth-2 makes her appearance for the first time, zooming in to the rescue in her plane. At the end, no explanation of the amazing appearance of this mysterious Wonder Woman is given, forcing the stunned reader to endure agony for two months and certainly to get the next issue, which opens up with Wonder Woman in the midst of a battle, perhaps alongside some JSA members. For 3 pages or so, it looks as if she is the feature . . . then, the battle over, she hears of Diana's plight—see? It's like a flashback—let the reader figure out what's going on. Soon she crosses over, and finds Diana in this battle for her life—and then we are where we left off. The bracelets and lasso could also combine to give her all or some of the strength and speed of old.

2.) A second possibility would involve a deep commitment on your part, sir, to the development of Diana's personality. Usually the only way that a DC character is given a personality, is when he is made arrogant, or something else departing extremely from the norm. How about Diana Prince? And this might be how:

So far all of DC's heroes are goody-goody clear through. If one were to become different, not because of a knock on the head (Superman), but because of what is actually inside him/her, would it not be exciting? Suppose the next time Diana visits Paradise Island, she remembers the past enough to become embittered, and steals the bracelets and lasso. She returns to earth, hoping no-one will notice, and in any case will try to keep her possession of these a secret. Queen Hippolyte does find out about the theft, but will not suspect her daughter. Eventually Diana may slip—maybe she rejoins the JLA, and when the news spreads that Wonder Woman is back, some feedback to her mother ensues. Although it is hateful to her, the queen must send warriors to retrieve Diana. Diana might convince her JLA friends to help her fight them, by inventing a story, although perhaps this is making her too ruthless. Revolutionary? Yes!—but also exciting, and, probably, circulation-raising.

All in all, these plots might form the basis for said 5-10 issues, if you spread the main plot out, so that Diana may still have some adventures while negotiating the greater whole. It could be a landmark chapter in Wonder Woman's career.

Even if my ideas do not gain favor with you, Editor, sir, may I venture opinions on other matters:

1.) Don't isolate Diana from the rest of DC in her own magazine. Have guest stars—please!—Batman or Black Canary might be best suited—or WW of Earth-2, of course.

2.) Obviously, Diana fights more female villains than other crime-fighters—this is not right as it is unrealistic and takes away from the mag. Perhaps you have compunctions against a guy slugging a cute chick in your mags—don't, any more than is realistic.

3.) In the matter of a costume—if Diana did have a regular costume but did not wear it all the time, this would be best, I think. An excellent basic design for a costume is the green shift on the cover of WW #179.

4.) Please, please stop drawing covers before stories. Issue #184, 192, 194, and 195 bear witness to the terrible things that sometimes result, the last because all was revealed to the reader before he even started the story.

5.) How about Diana's striking up a friendship with Clark Kent? It seems natural to do, and might be interesting.

Well, what do you think?

Hopefully,
Eric Flesch
Wyckoff, N.J.

Dear Readers:

As we hand over the editorship of *Wonder Woman* to Denny O'Neil, we would like to thank you once again for your constant interest and encouragement. Even when you disagree with our ideas or condemn a story for being one thing or another, your main concern is for Diana—her image, her vision, her dream. Like you, we feel that Wonder Woman is one of the greatest super-beings, a truly mythic figure, and one that must endure.

We are not printing answers to your suggestions about costuming, story lines and the like, as the next issue of *Wonder Woman* will show you much more clearly the direction the magazine will be taking. Let's keep it a surprise until then.

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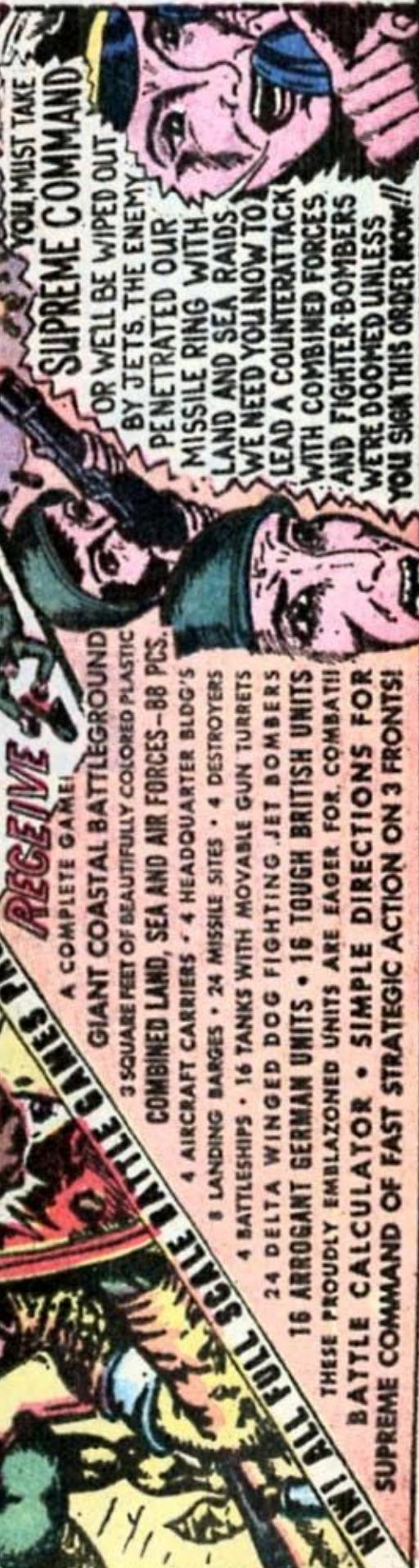
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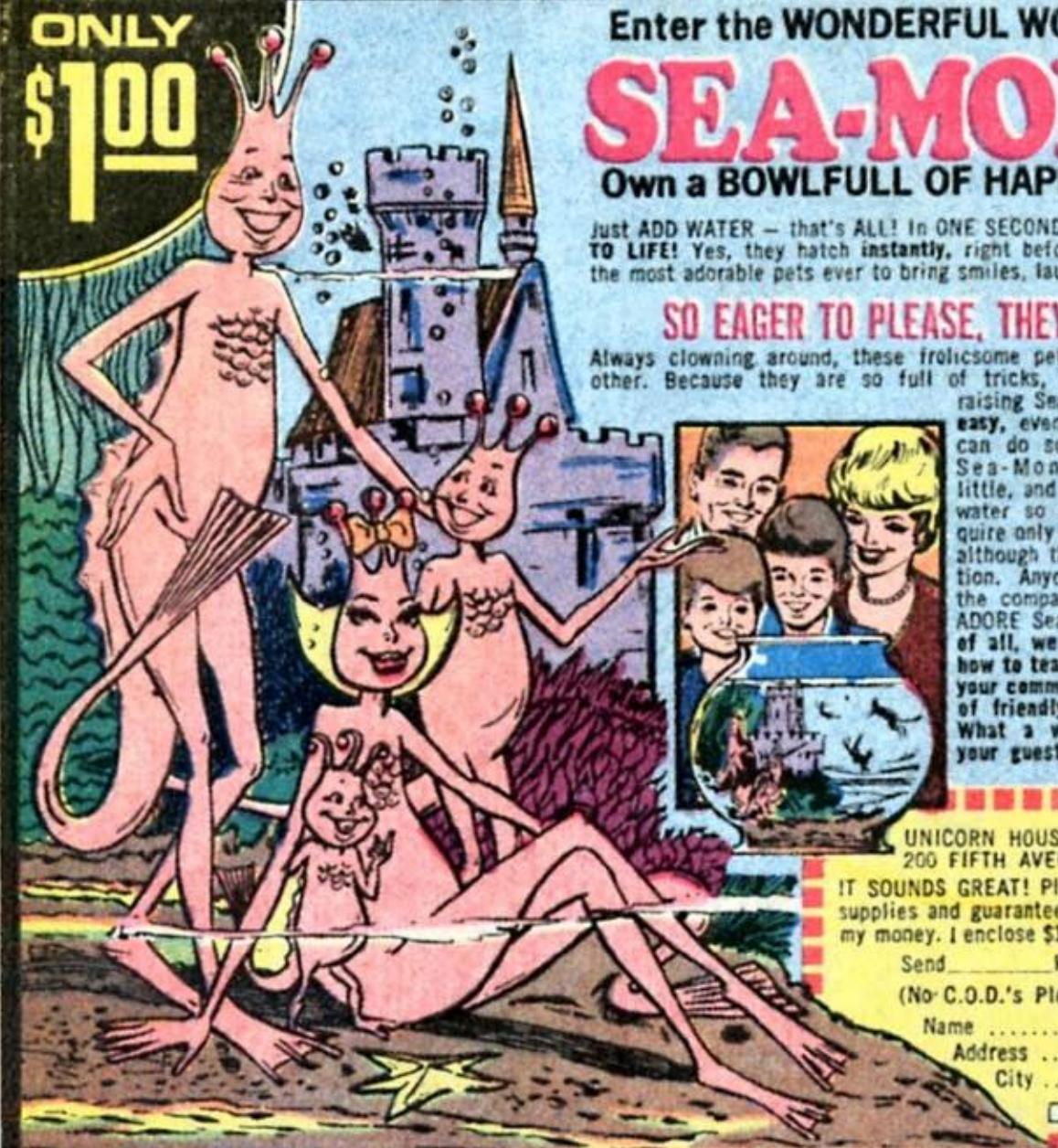
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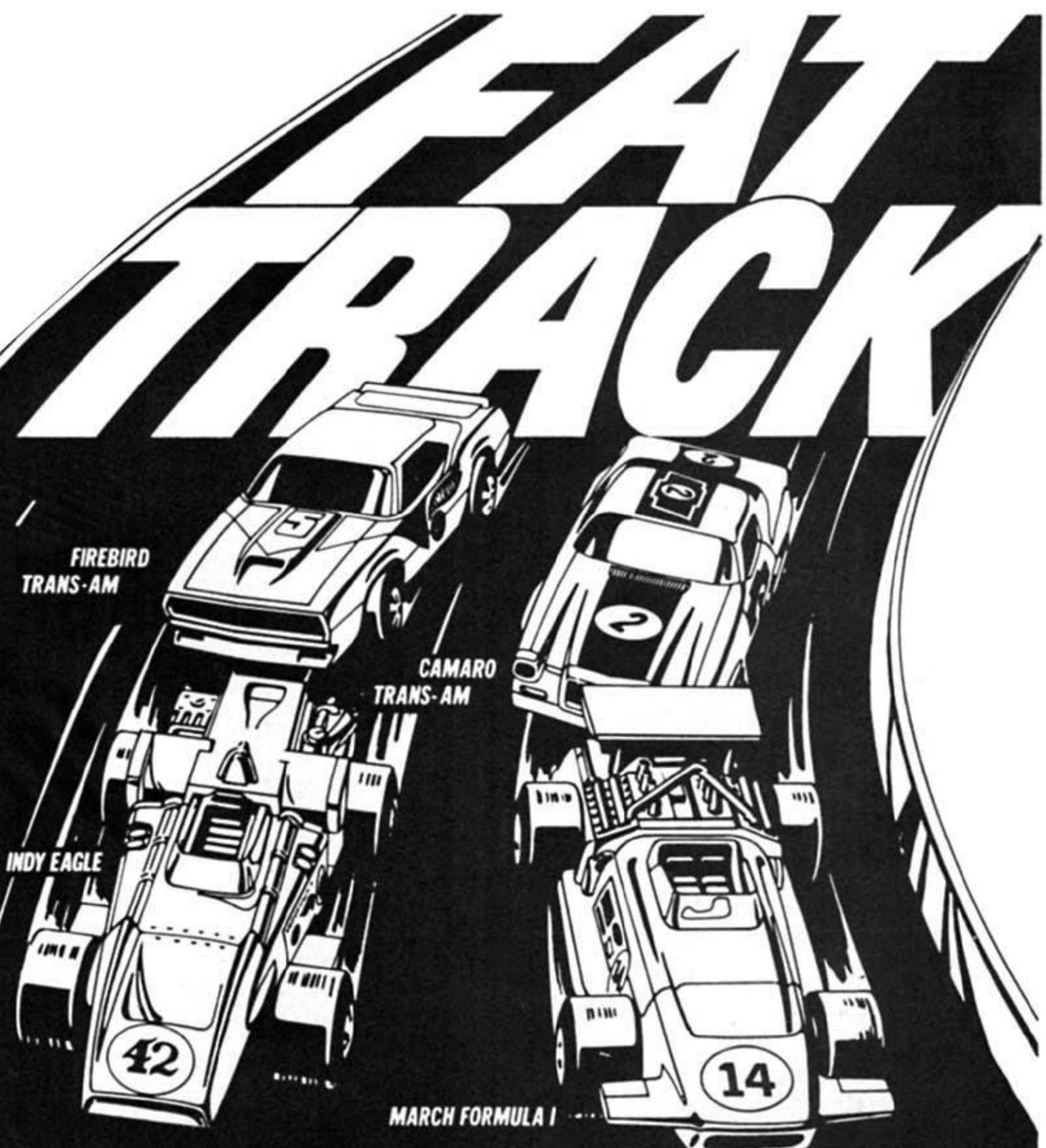
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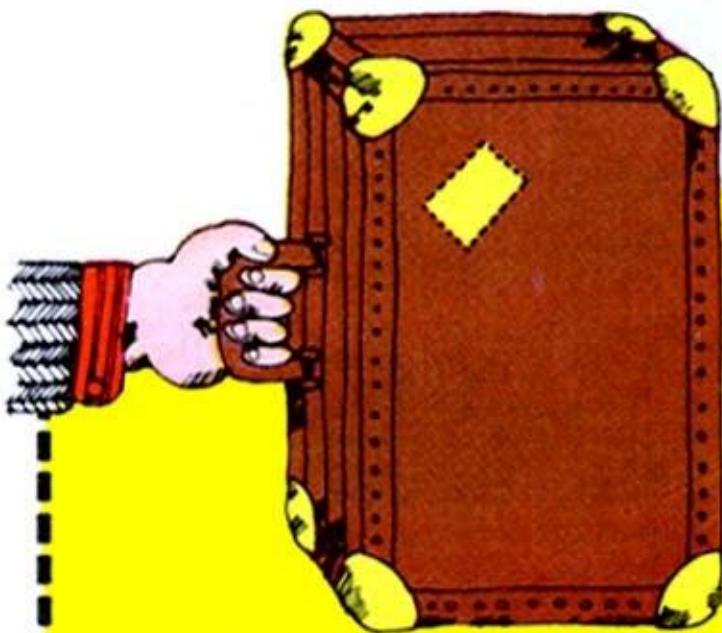
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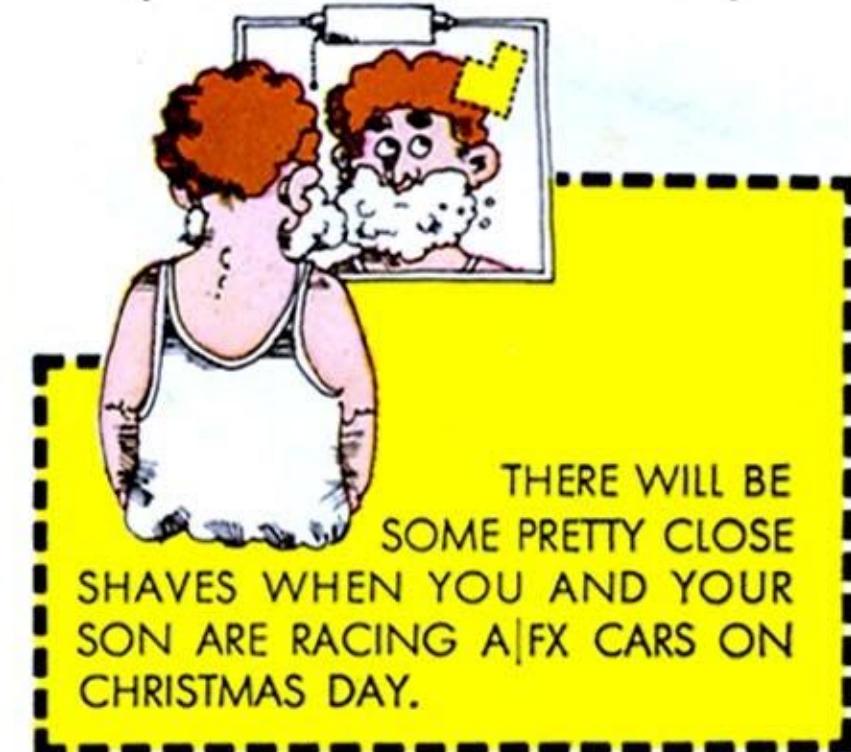
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