



SwordquestTM

1



EARTHWORLD

TM

Come questing with bold siblings twain,
Prime thieves of ravaged Earth;
Next journey to the Fireworld,
Land of volcanoes' birth.
Waves without number—Water's realm—
But 'ware of evils there;
Last, ride the Air's winds heaven-high
To claim a prize most rare.



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SWORDQUEST

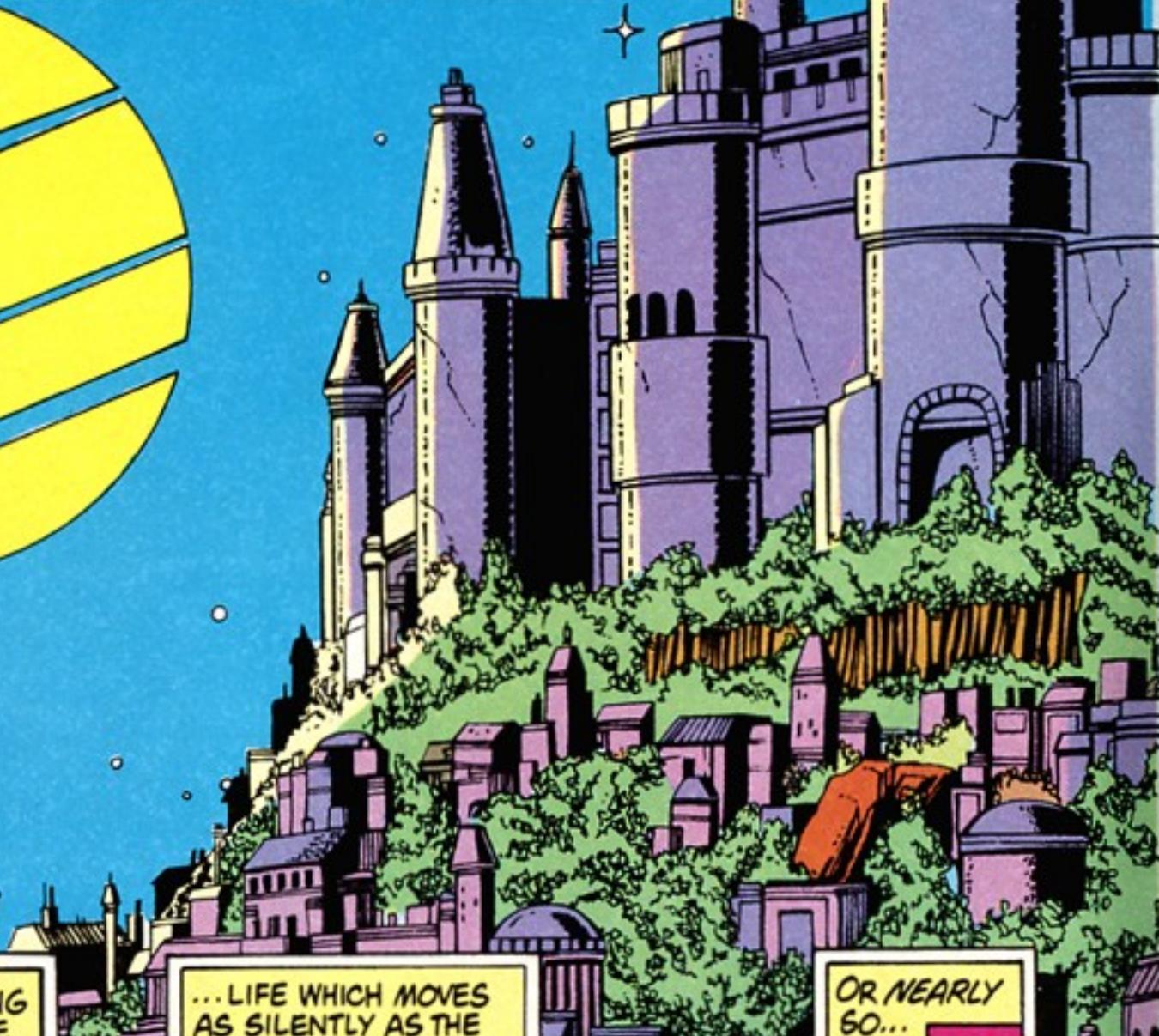
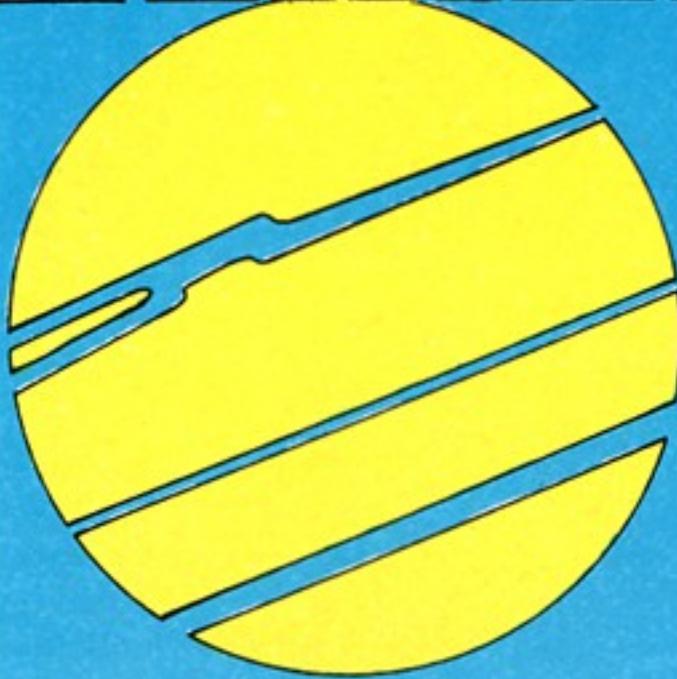
TM

*The ultimate
Search for
the ultimate
treasure!*



BOOK ONE

EARTHWORLD!



BUT THERE IS LIFE AMONG
THE ROOFTOPS OF THESE
HUDDLED BUILDINGS...



...LIFE WHICH MOVES
AS SILENTLY AS THE
SHADOWS THEMSELVES.



OR NEARLY
60...

SKATCH



MEN CALL IT DARKSPIRE CASTLE, THEY WHO DARE SPEAK OF IT AT ALL.

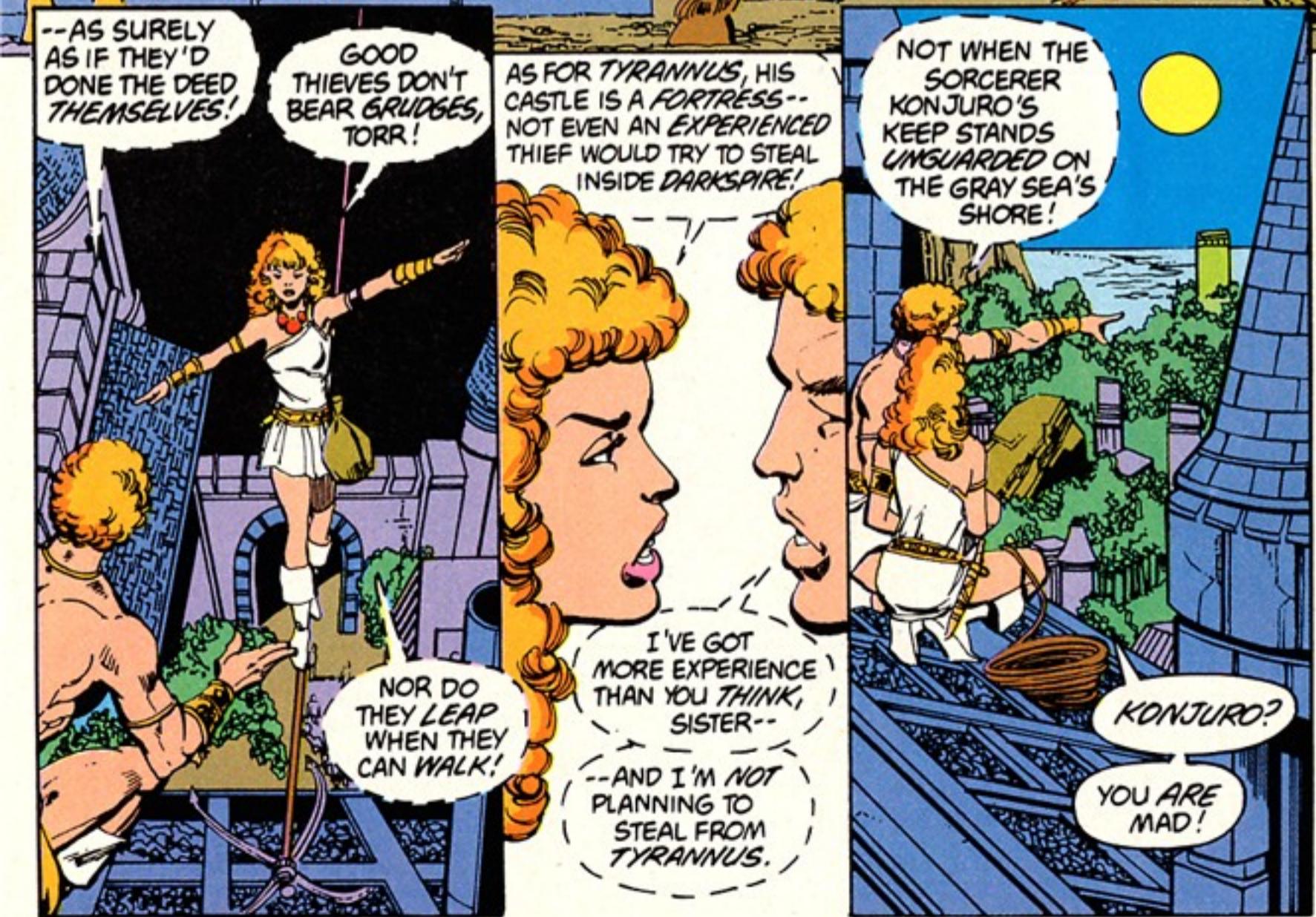
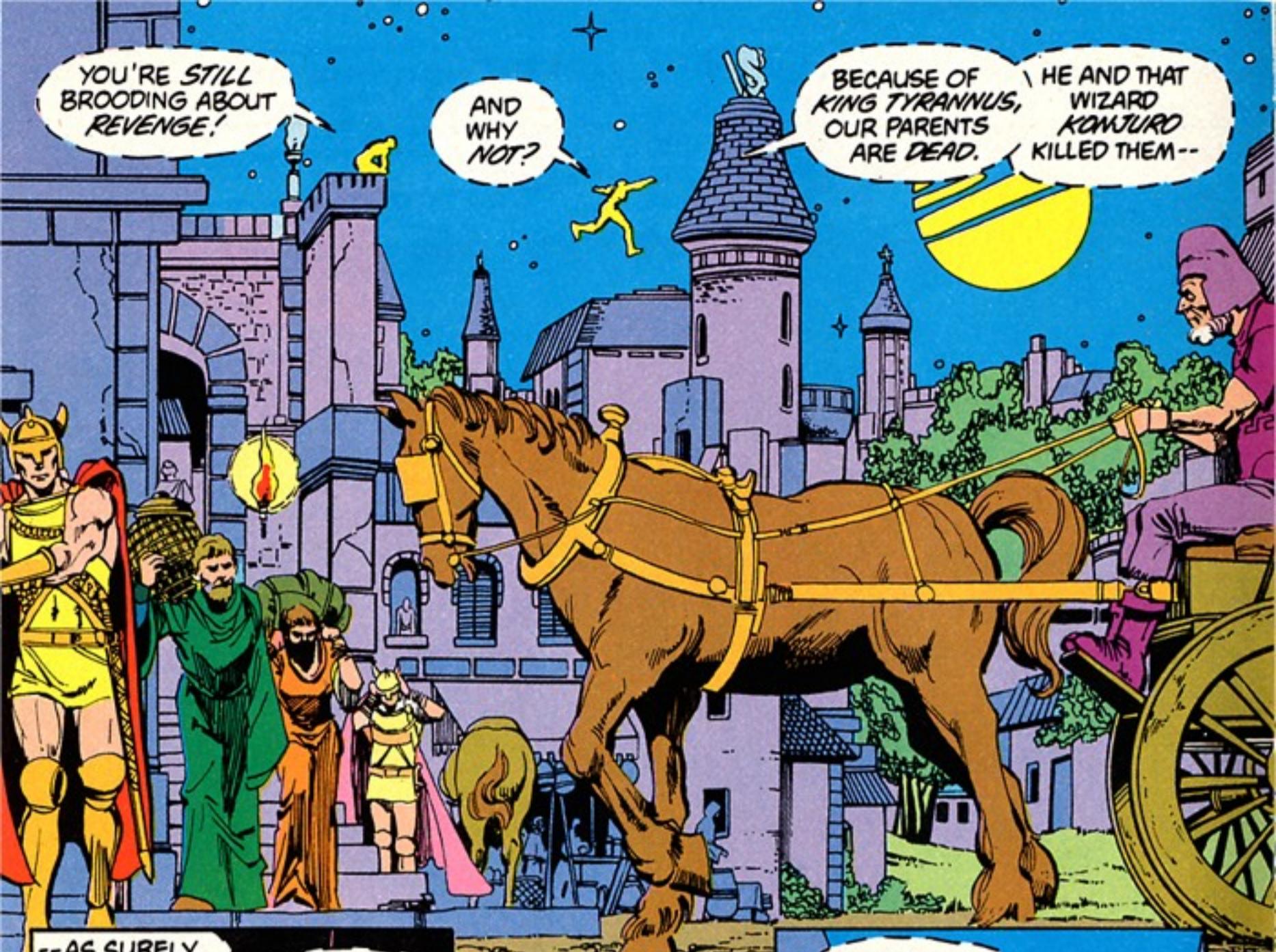
LIKE A GREAT BLACK SPIDER IT BROODS ATOP MOUNT MANDRAGOR, HIGH ABOVE THE MEDIEVAL CITY WHOSE LESSER BUILDINGS DOT THE THREE SEAWARD SIDES OF THE MASSIVE PEAK.

WHO ELSE,
DEAR
BROTHER?

I FOLLOWED
YOU AFTER
YOU SLIPPED
OUT OF OUR
ROOM.

I SHOULD
HAVE GUESSED
YOU'D COME
HERE.

A THIEF HAS BUT EATING
TO STEAL TO EAT, TARRA. / ISN'T ALL
YOUR MIND,
IS IT, TORR?



FOR AN INSTANT, THEIR EYES LOCK ON THAT LONELY TOWER...

...AND IT'S AS IF AN UNSUSPECTED DAM WERE OPENED IN THEIR HEARTS, FLOODING THEM WITH EMOTION, AS THEY RECALL THE STORY OF THEIR ORPHANING...

THEIR FATHER WAS A MIGHTY WARRIOR NAMED TARR, A FAITHFUL MARSHAL OF OLD KING REULLO'S ARMY...

...AND PROUD AS HE WAS OF HIS MANY VICTORIES ON THE BATTLEFIELD, HIS PROUDEST MOMENT CAME ON THE DAWN OF THE LAST DAY OF HIS FINAL CAMPAIGN...

SO THEY ARE.

WHAT SHALL WE NAME THEM, WIFE?

WELL, MY LORD, I'VE BEEN THINKING...



NOT LONG AFTER THE TWINS' BIRTH, THE OLD KING, REULLO, SICKENED AND DIED...

...AND SOME WOULD INSIST IT WAS NO NATURAL DEATH WHICH CLAIMED THAT BELOVED LIEGE.



BEFORE THE TURNING OF THE NEW MOON, LORD TARR AND HIS WIFE, LADY WYLA, WERE SUMMONED TO AN AUDIENCE WITH THE NEW KING, REULLO'S DARK-BROWED SON, TYRANNUS.

THEY WENT HAPPILY, BELIEVING THEIR NEWBORNS WERE TO RECEIVE THE KING'S BLESSING.



TYRANNUS, HOWEVER, HAD OTHER IDEAS...

SO THESE ARE YOUR WHELPS, EH, TARR?

TWO BLOND BABES, STILL PEWLING AND MEWLING.

MY LEIGE! I DON'T UNDERSTAND--!



DO YOU UNDERSTAND TREACHERY, TARR?

NOT TREACHERY HERE AND NOW, BUT TREACHERY TO COME?

TREACHERY AS YET UNBORN-- OR SHOULD I SAY, NEWBORN?



"LAST NIGHT, I RECEIVED
A WARNING, A PROPHECY,
IF YOU WILL, FROM A MAN
STEEPED IN THE WISDOM
OF DARK MAGIC!"

HIS WORDS:

"BEWARE THE CHILDREN
WITH HAIR OF GOLD--
TWO THEY ARE, BORN THE
SON AND DAUGHTER OF
A NOBLE WARRIOR!"

"WHEN THOU ART OLD
AND FEEBLE, THEY
SHALL CLAIM THY
THRONE, WITH A
SWORD SHINING
BRIGHTLY AS
SUMMER'S SUN!"

WHAT
WOULD YOU
CALL THIS,
TARR--

--IF NOT
TREACHERY
MOST FOUL!

YOUR MAJESTY
CANNOT BE
SERIOUS!
SUCH PROPHECY
IS MADNESS!

WHO
SPEAKS
THUS?

LET HIM
SHOW HIMSELF,
IF HE DARE!



IN TIME PAST, MY FATHER WAS COUNSELED BY TWO MYSTIC MAGES--

--BUT SINCE THEY VANISHED FROM THE KEN OF MEN WHEN I WAS STILL A CHILD, I HAVE HAD TO TURN TO A MORE EARTHLY SOURCE OF WISDOM.

KONJURO,
WIZARD OF SEA
KEEP, STEP FORTH--

TELL THE LORD TARR WHAT YOU TOLD ME.

THE INFANTS MUST DIE.



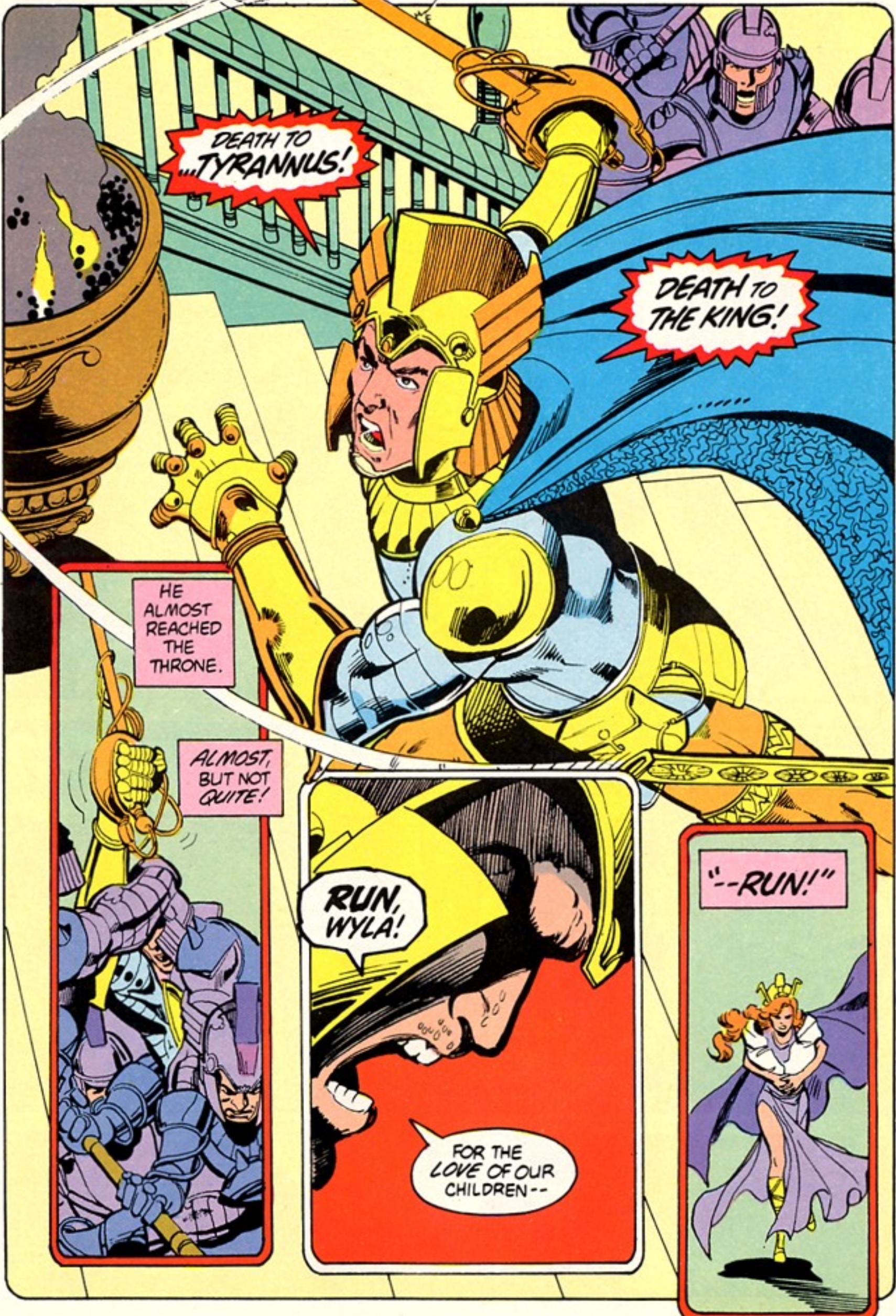
THEN YOU SHALL DIE BESIDE THEM.

THE KING GAVE A SUBTLE SIGNAL--

--AND AT ONCE, THE CHAMBER SWARMED WITH ARMED MEN:

YOU LEAVE ME WITH BUT ONE THING TO SAY, YOUR MAJESTY...





WAS THERE EVER
SUCH A BATTLE AS
THIS?

ONE AGAINST A
SCORE, AND THAT ONE
ARMED WITH LITTLE MORE
THAN A SWORD AND A
NOBLE HEART?



WIZARD, DO
SOMETHING!

OF ALL MY GUARDS,
ONLY THESE COULD I
TRUST WITH SUCH A
DEED!

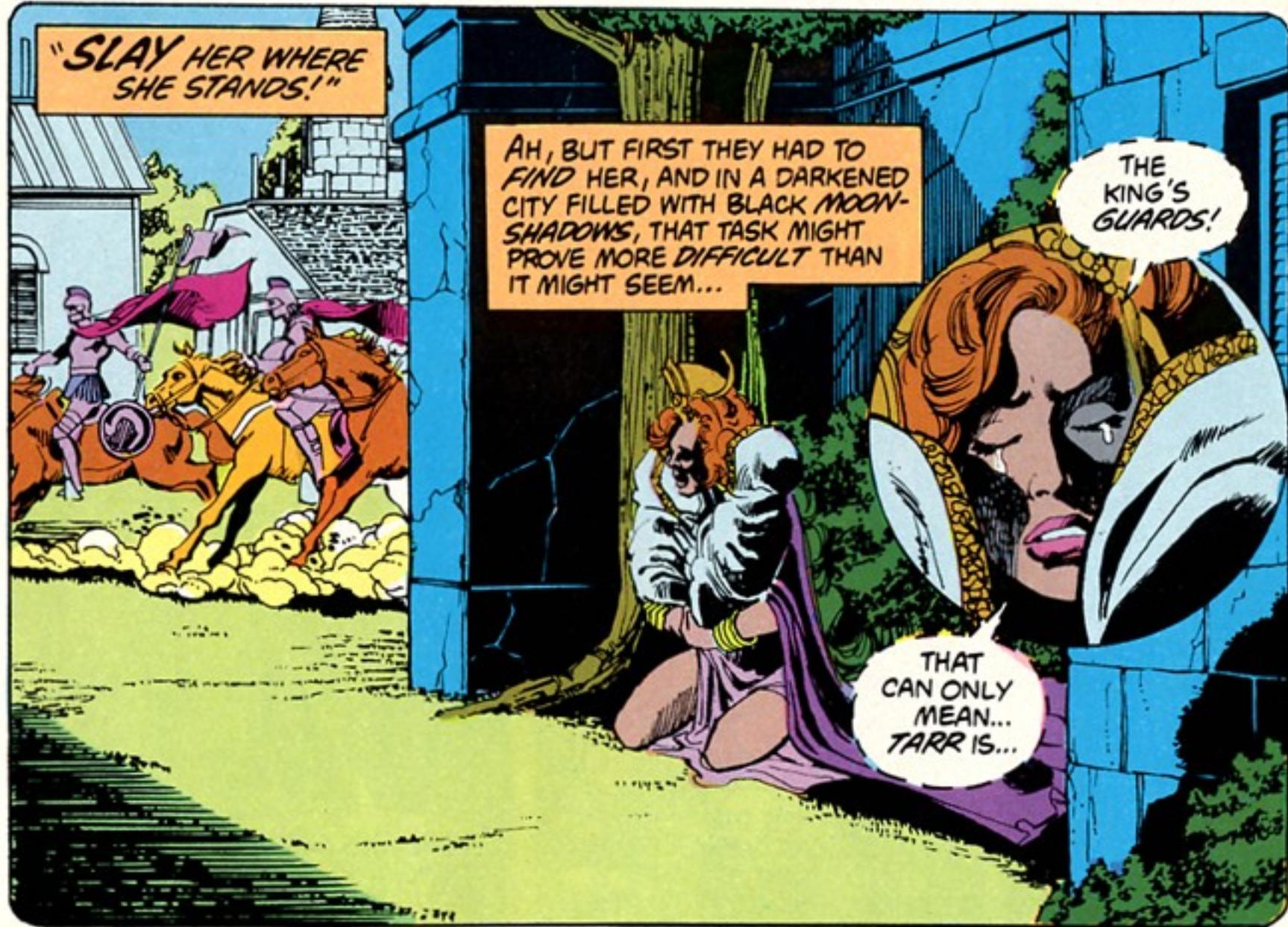
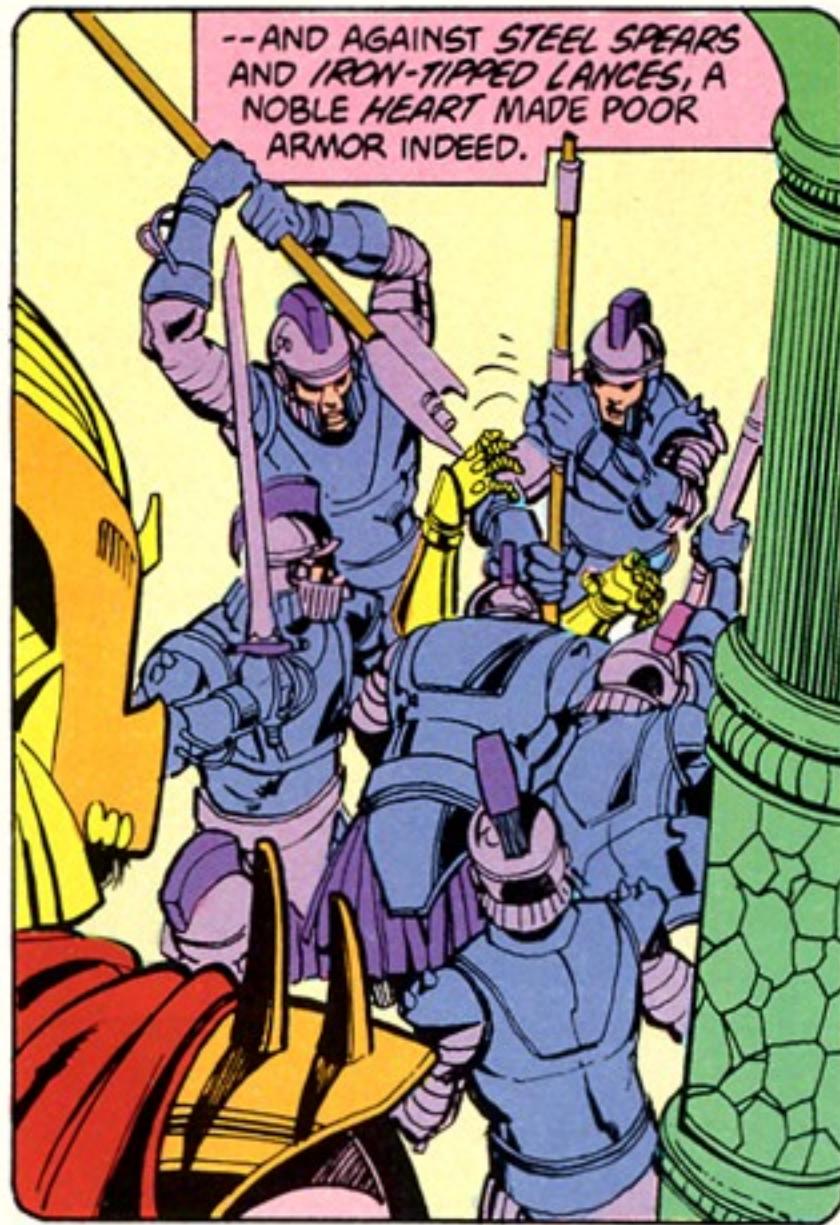
IF HE
GETS
PAST
THEM--



MUTTERED WORDS IN A
TONGUE ALIEN TO THE
MOUTH OF MAN...

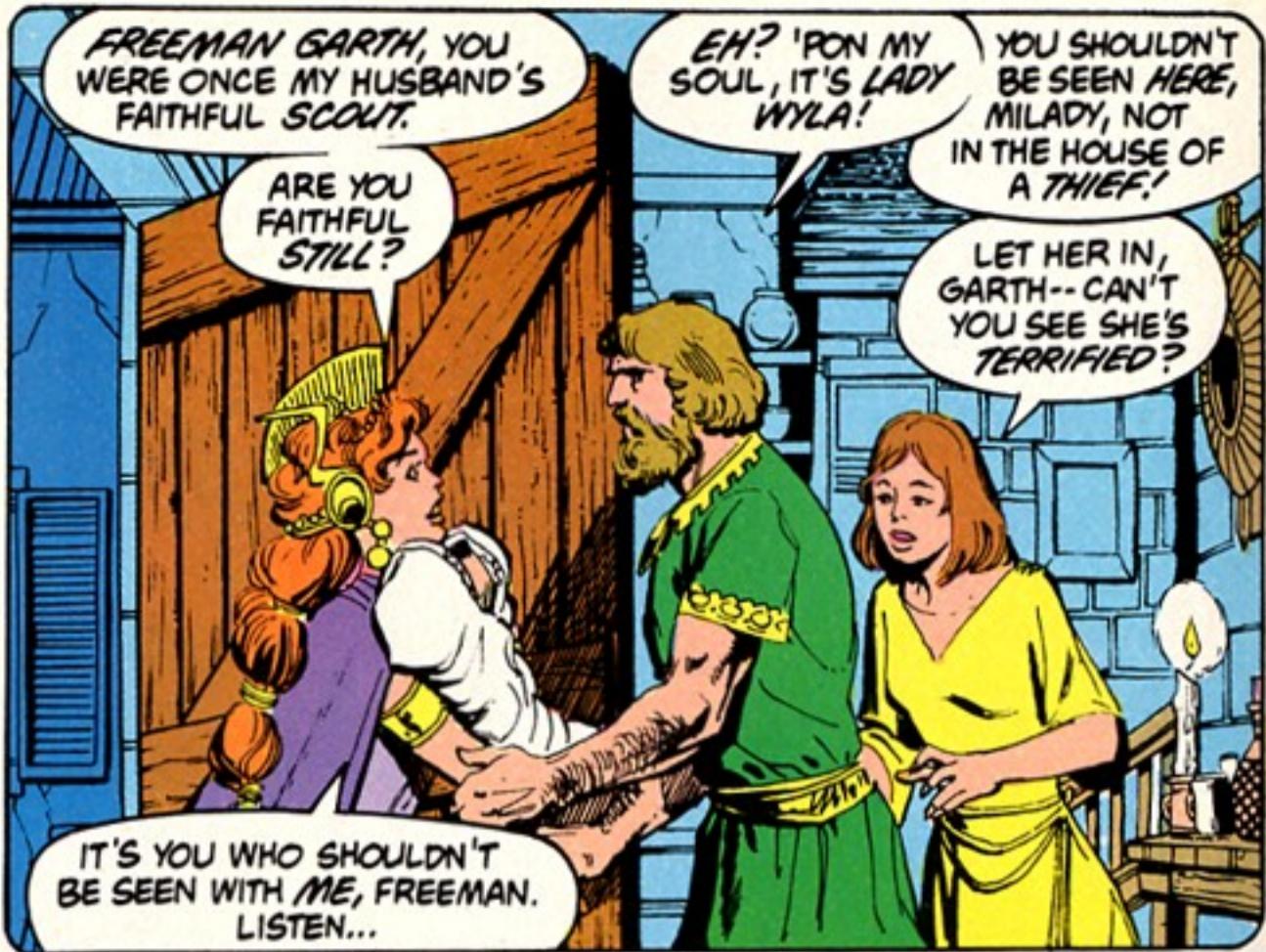
KATHU
MORUS
MAHKTO!

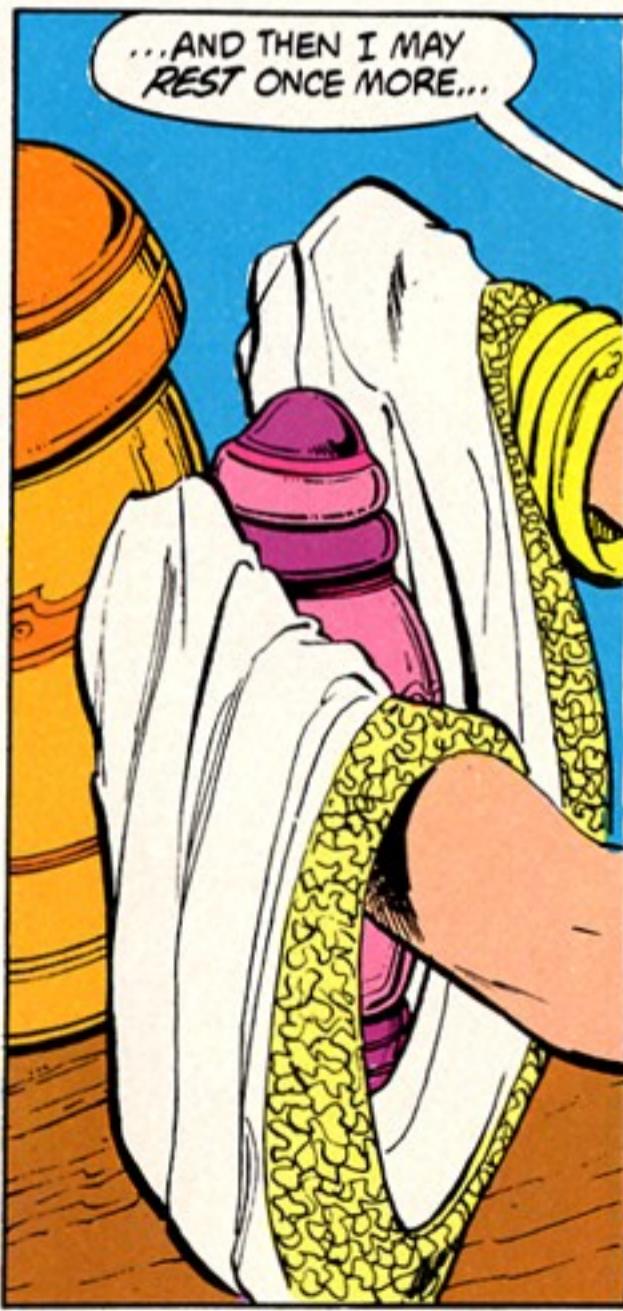
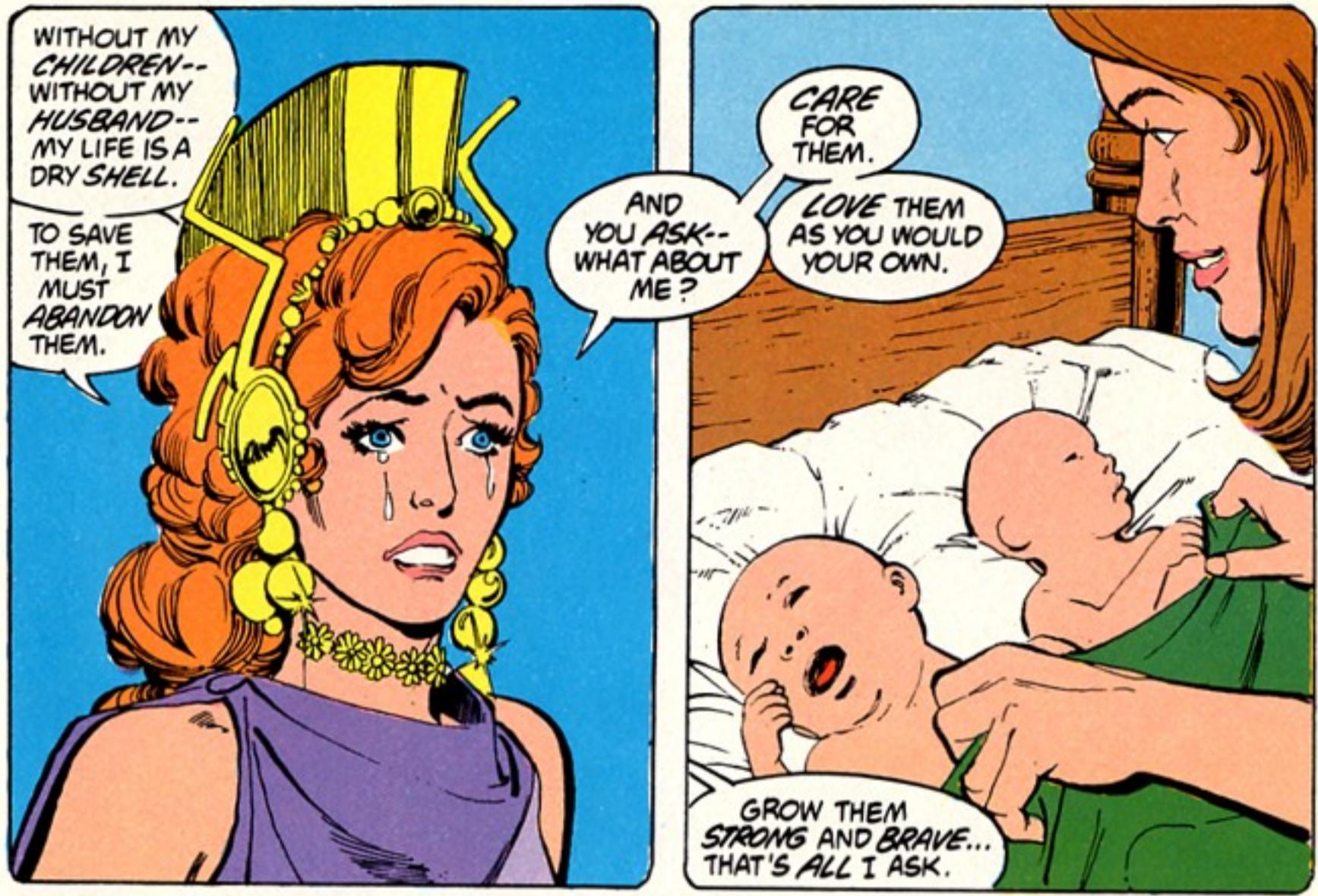


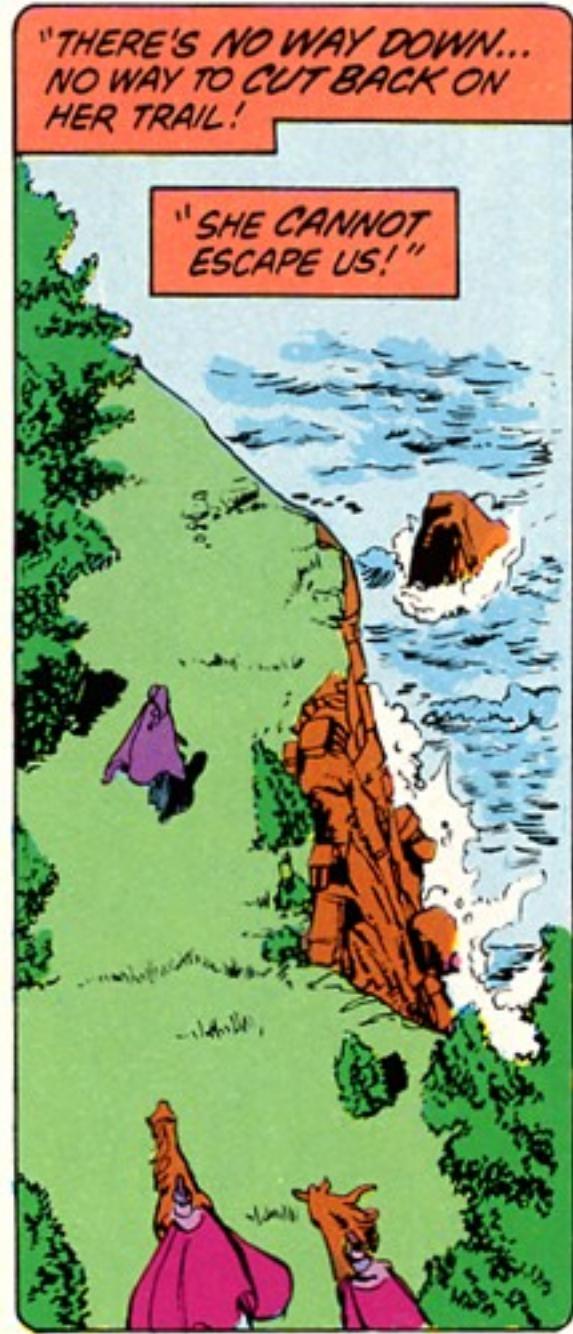
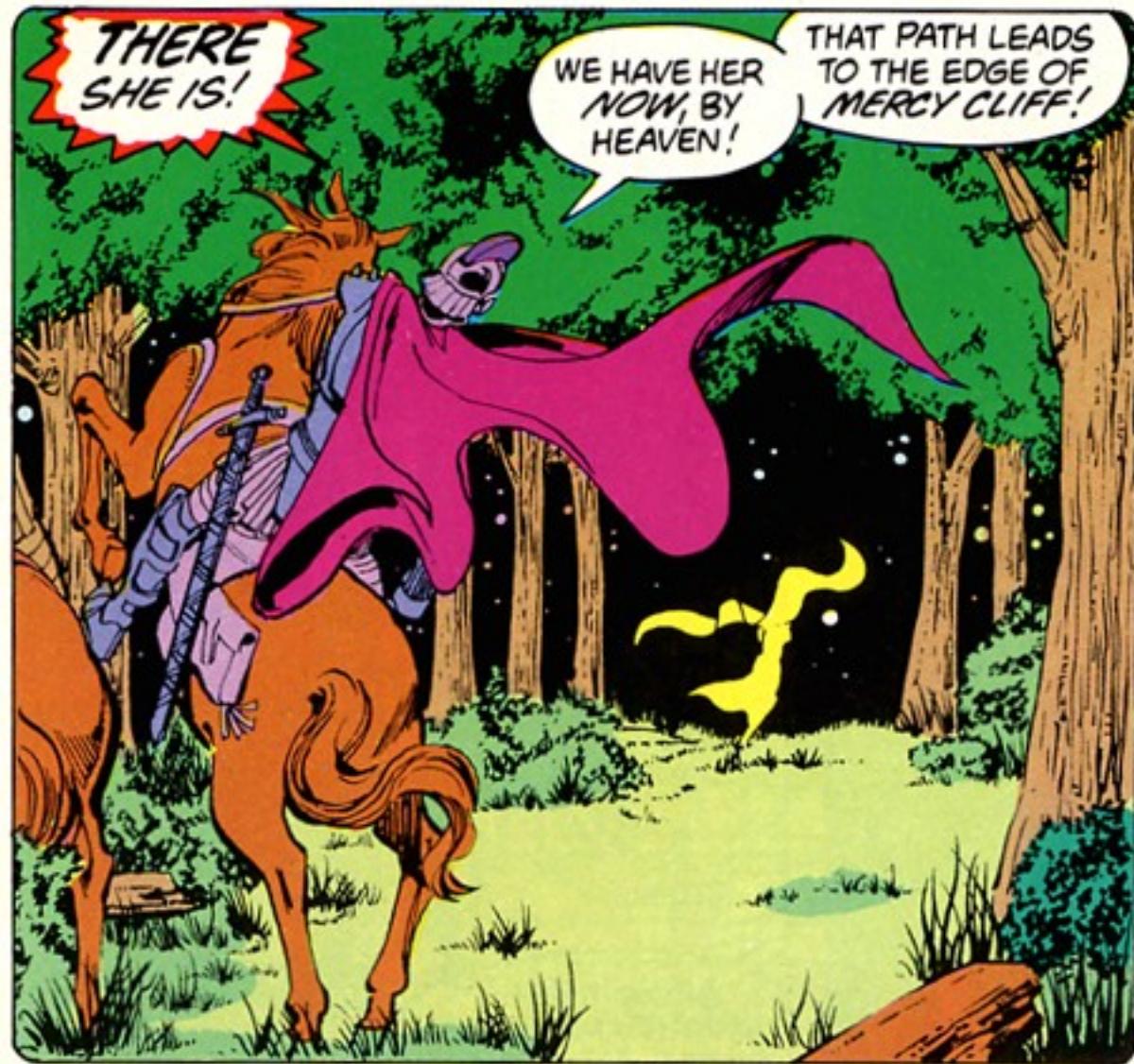


SHE CHOKED BACK A SOB; THIS WAS NO TIME FOR TEARS.

AS THE CHATTER OF HORSEHOoves BEAT A HUNTER'S MARCH ON THE COBBLES OF THE CITY, GROWING FAINT AND LOUD BY TURNS, SHE LET MEMORY GUIDE HER TO A SMALL HOUSE JUST INSIDE THE CITY'S WALLS...



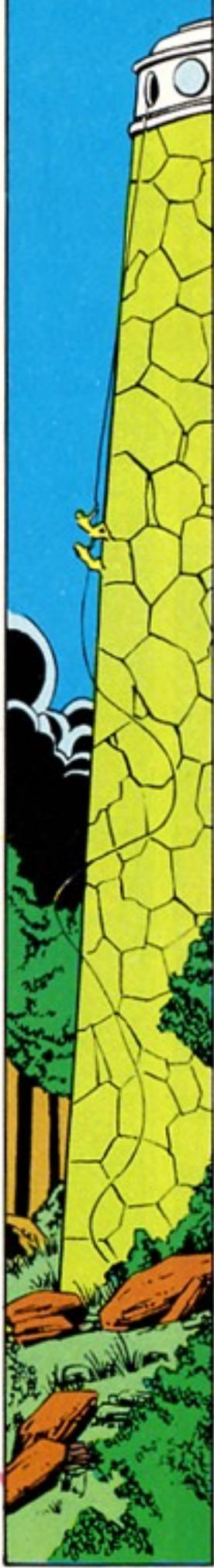




MOTHER AND CHILDREN WERE REPORTED DEAD, THEIR BODIES CLAIMED BY A GREEDY SEA.

SAFE, PROTECTED BY ANONYMITY THE TWINS GREW AND LEARNED; AND, BY A TWISTING OF FATE, BECAME THIEVES TO SURVIVE, WHEN THEIR FOSTER-PARENTS DIED...

...AND THEY TURN THEIR ATTENTION TO MORE IMMEDIATE CONCERNs, SUCH AS THE SCALING OF THE WIZARD'S "IMPERG-NABLE" TOWER...



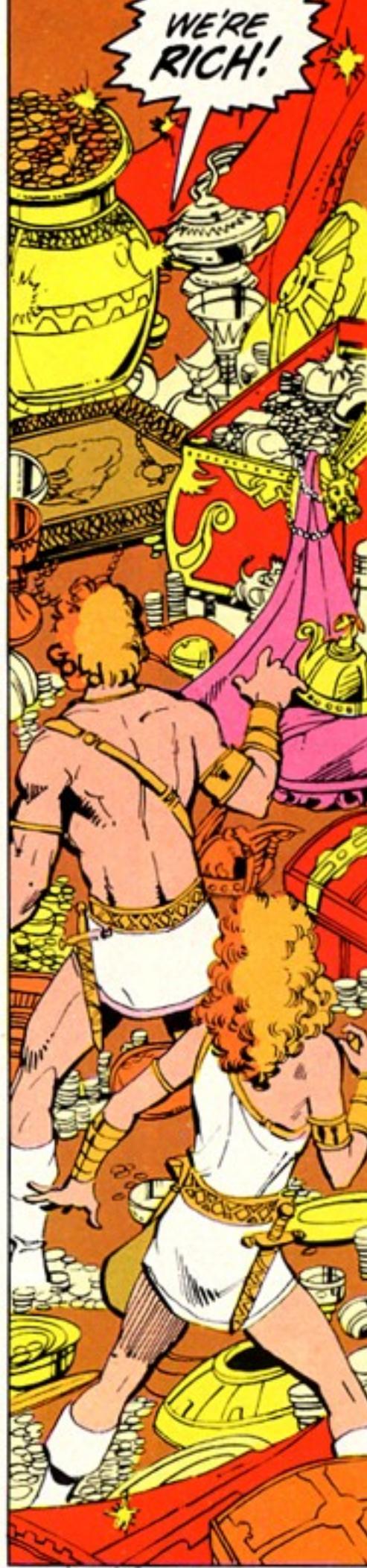
AN OPENING IN THE TOWER'S CROWN LEADS DOWN INTO A DARKNESS MADE LIGHTER BY A FAINT GLIMMERING...

PSST, TORR!
CAN YOU SEE ANYTHING?



...IT'S A TREASURE HOUSE!

THAT DARK WIZARD MUST HAVE COLLECTED A FORTUNE FROM THE KING FOR HIS COUNSELING ALL THESE YEARS!



WHY, THERE'S GOLD ENOUGH HERE TO BUY US A KINGDOM OF OUR OWN, IF WE WANTED...



NOW MEMORY FADES...



IT LOOMS OUT OF THE
STARRY SKY, AT FIRST SO
DISTANT IT SEEMS NO LARGER
THAN A SMALL BIRD...

...BUT AS IT RAPIDLY
CLOSES IN, ITS TRUE
SIZE BECOMES
APPARENT...

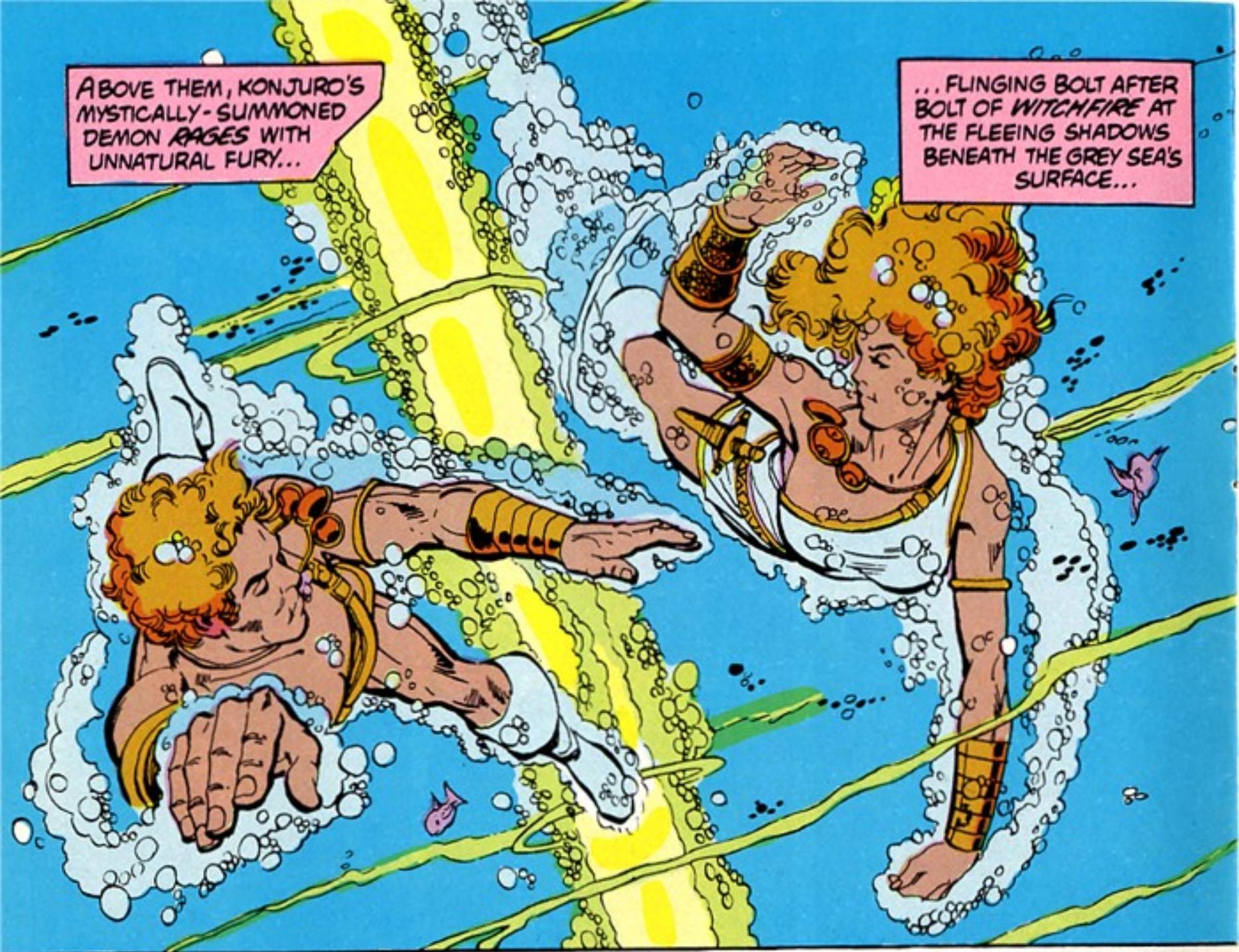


...AND TORR
NO LONGER QUESTIONS THE
WISDOM OF FLIGHT!



ABOVE THEM, KONJURO'S MYSTICALLY-SUMMONED DEMON RAGES WITH UNNATURAL FURY...

...FLINGING BOLT AFTER BOLT OF WITCHFIRE AT THE FLEEING SHADOWS BENEATH THE GREY SEA'S SURFACE...



BUT, THE TROUBLE WITH CHASING SHADOWS...

--IS THAT YOUR TRUE TARGETS OFTEN SLIP AWAY...

;GASP!... FEEL LIKE MY BRAIN'S ABOUT TO BURST...!

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I'LL LIVE.

KONJURO'S DEMON...?



HE'S STILL CIRCLING AROUND BETWEEN US AND THE MAINLAND.

BUT HE'S DRAWING CLOSER TO SHORE WITH EACH CIRCLE...

... ALMOST AS IF HE COULD SENSE OUR PRESENCE!

AT LEAST WE GOT SOMETHING OUT OF THIS FIASCO.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

AT LAST!

WHAT WAS WRITTEN BEFORE YOU WERE BORN HAS COME TO PASS!

THE WIZARD'S JEWEL!

THAT MUST BE HOW THE DEMON'S TRACKING US!

HE CAN SMELL THAT JEWEL!

OF ALL THE STUPID--

GET RID OF IT!

TORR! HAVE YOU LOST YOUR SENSES?

OH!

CHINN!

DON'T WORRY, TARRA-- I SEE IT TOO!



W-WHO
ARE
YOU?

WHAT
ARE YOU
GOING TO DO
TO US?



ONCE, WE HAD
HUMAN NAMES,
EVEN AS YOU.

BUT THAT WAS
BEFORE OUR
TRANSFIGURATION
TO A HIGHER
STAGE OF SENTIENT
LIFE.

YOU MAY CALL US
MENTORR AND MENTARRA,
AS DID KING RUELLO WHEN
WE WERE HIS MOST
RESPECTED COUNSELORS--
DECades past, before
THE BLACK WIZARD KONURO
DID IMPRISON US IN YONDER
SHATTERED JEWEL!

BUT IT IS
NOT OF THIS
WE WISH TO
SPEAK...

RATHER, WE WOULD
TELL YOU OF YOUR DESTINY--
A DESTINY THAT WILL TAKE
YOU ACROSS FOUR
WORLDS!



REVENGE!

YOU'RE
TALKING ABOUT
REVENGE AGAINST
TYRANNUS
AND THE
WIZARD!

SURMOUNTING
THESE CHALLENGES
WILL MAKE YOU
STRONGER, WISER,
MORE COURAGEOUS...

--AND IN THE
END, WILL GIVE
YOU YOUR
HEART'S
DESIRE!

A WORLD OF
EARTH SPIRITS...
A WORLD OF FIRE...
A WORLD OF WATER
SPRITES... AND
LAST, A WORLD OF
AIR!

ON EACH WORLD,
YOU WILL ENCOUNTER
A CHALLENGE--
PERHAPS MORE
THAN ONE!

THESE
ARE YOUR
WORDS,
NOT OURS.

TO ACHIEVE
YOUR GOAL,
YOU MUST BE
WILLING TO
LEARN WHAT
EACH WORLD CAN
TEACH YOU.

YOU MUST HAVE
OPEN MINDS,
AND YES, OPEN
HEARTS AS WELL.

YOU MUST PUT
ASIDE YOUR ANGER
AND YOUR HATE.

YOU MUST LEARN
TO THINK BEFORE
ACTING.

YOU MUST LEARN
TO JUDGE BEFORE
RESPONDING.

REMEMBER THIS--
THE MOST DIRECT
ROUTE IS NOT
NECESSARILY THE
CORRECT ONE.

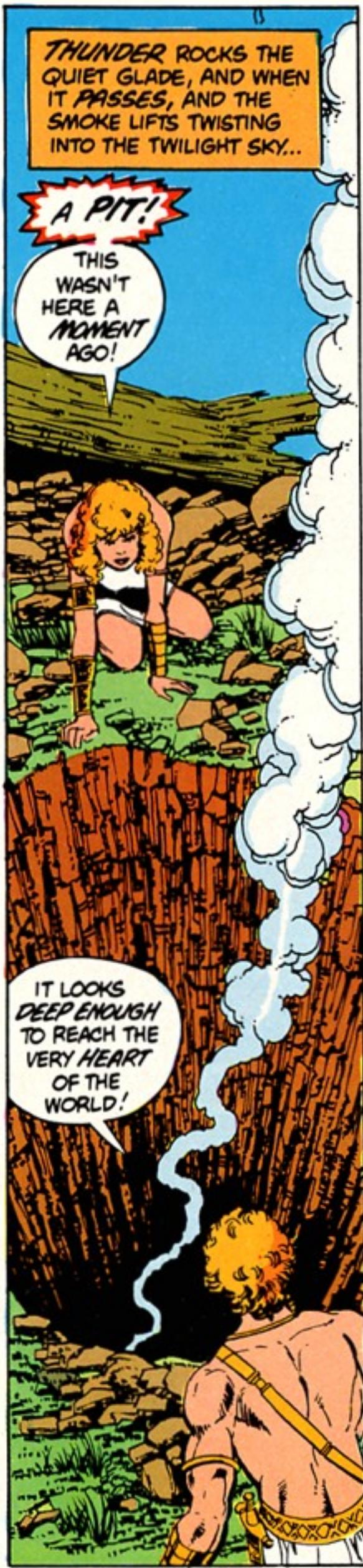
THE
GREATEST
WARRIOR
IS NOT
ALWAYS THE
STRONGEST.

NOW
OBSERVE THE
PRIZE THAT
AWAITS YOU--

--THE
SWORD
OF ULTIMATE
SORCERY!

THE
TALISMAN
OF THE PENULTIMATE
TRUTH!





WELL, FOR
ONE THING--
THAT!

THE SHAFT ENDS
OVER SOME KIND OF
CIRCULAR DOME--WITH
TWELVE CHAMBERS
AROUND THE OUTSIDE
RING!

THE SWORD
OF ULTIMATE
SORCERY MUST BE
IN ONE OF THOSE
CHAMBERS--THAT'S
OBVIOUS!

FINDING
IT IS JUST A
PROCESS OF
ELIMINATION!

CHILD'S
PLAY!

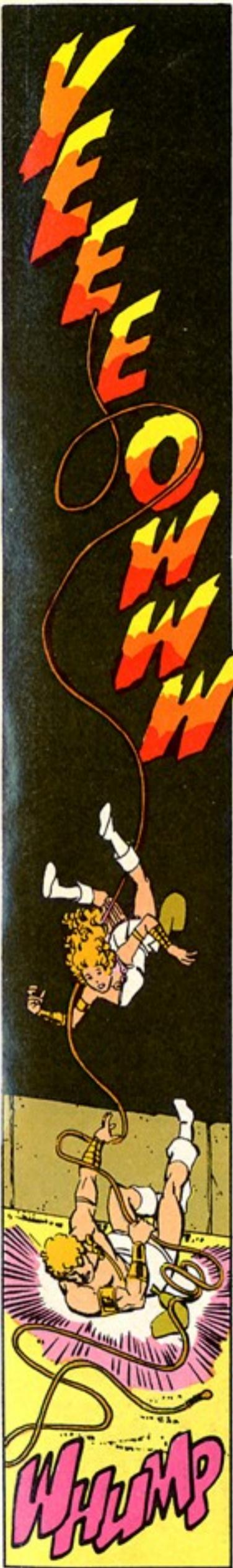
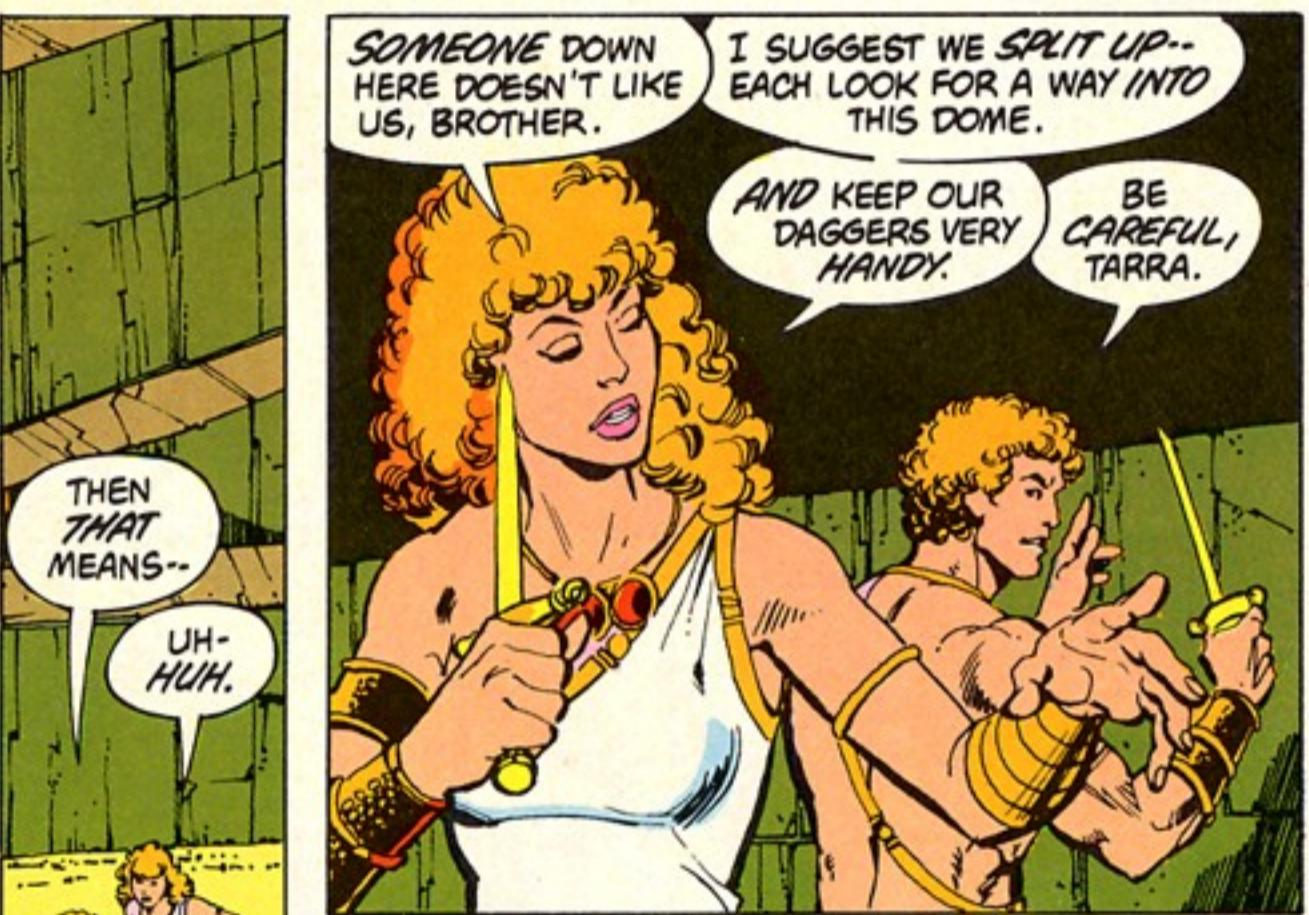
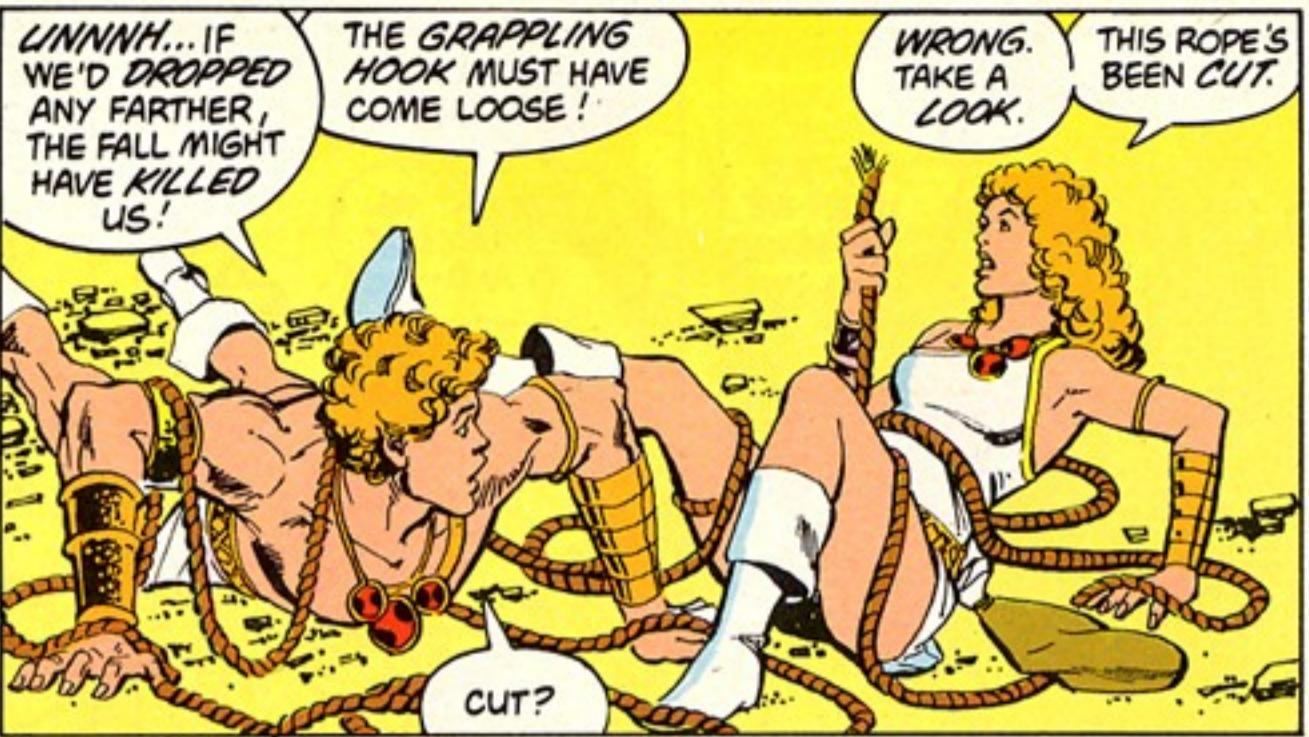
THINK YOU SO,
YELLOW-HAIRED
WHelp?

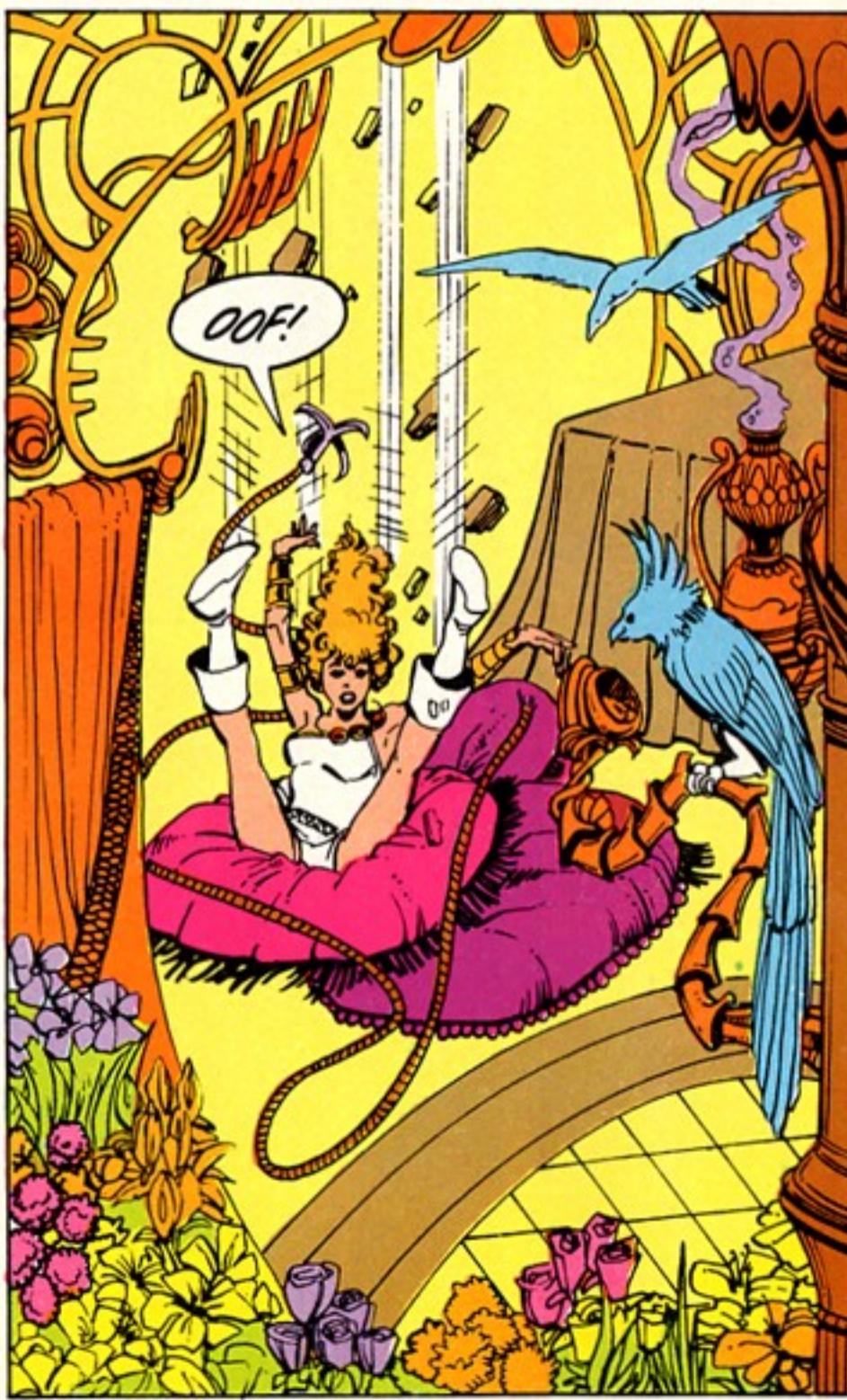
HERMINUS THE
THIEF HAS BEEN
TRYING TO FIND THAT
SWORD FOR ALMOST
TWELVE MOONS!

I'VE INVESTED TOO
MUCH TIME AND
PAIN IN THE SEARCH
TO WELCOME A PAIR
OF RIVALS!

EVEN SUCH
A PAIR OF FOOLS
AS YOU!

SHK!





ONLY THROUGH A CHAMBER
BELONGING TO AN EARTH SIGN
MAY YOU ENTER THIS MYSTIC
REALM OF OURS -- YOUR ENTRY
WAS SIMPLY MORE DRAMATIC
THAN MOST.

BUT, I SEE THAT I
HAVE STARTLED YOU...
AND THIS SHAMES
ME.

ORDINARILY, I
AM MOST DEMURE,
I ASSURE YOU.

PLEASE, BE AT EASE...
RELAX, AND LET THE
SOOTHING MUSIC OF
MY CHAMBER BE A BALM
FOR YOUR WEARY SOUL.

I AM VIRGO.
PLEASE CONSIDER
YOURSELF MY
GUEST.



YOU DON'T KNOW?
AH, THEN YOU'RE
IGNORANT AS WELL
AS PRESUMPTUOUS!

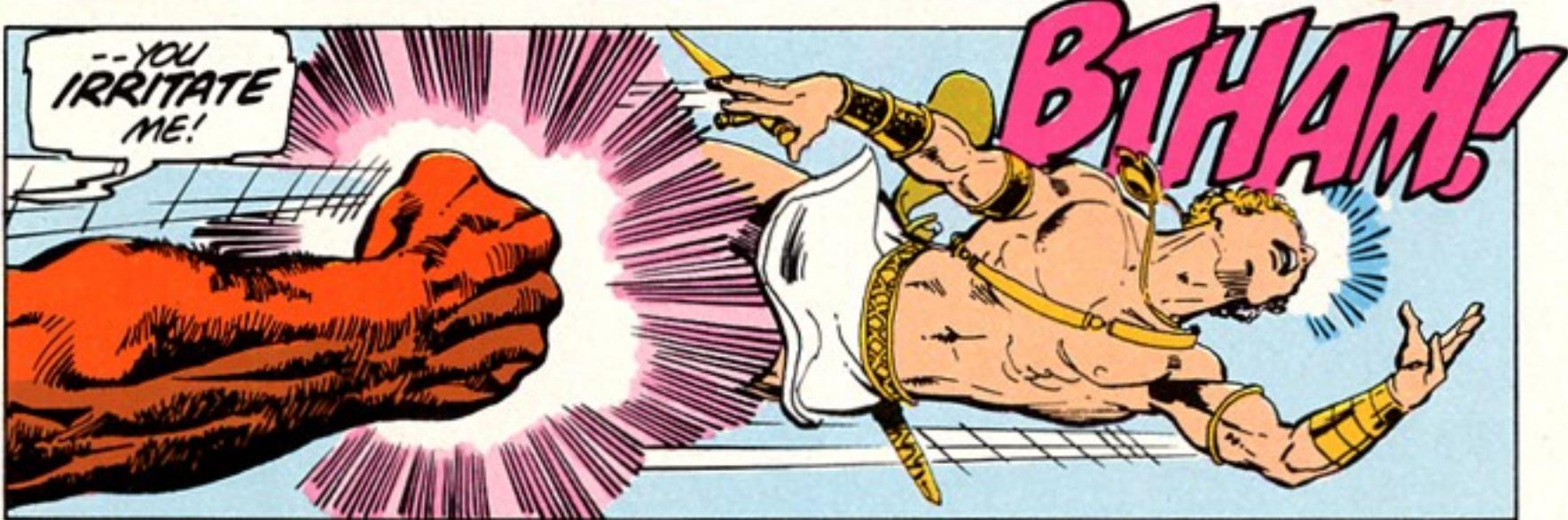
YOU'VE ENTERED
THE EARTH-SIGN
CHAMBER, BOY!

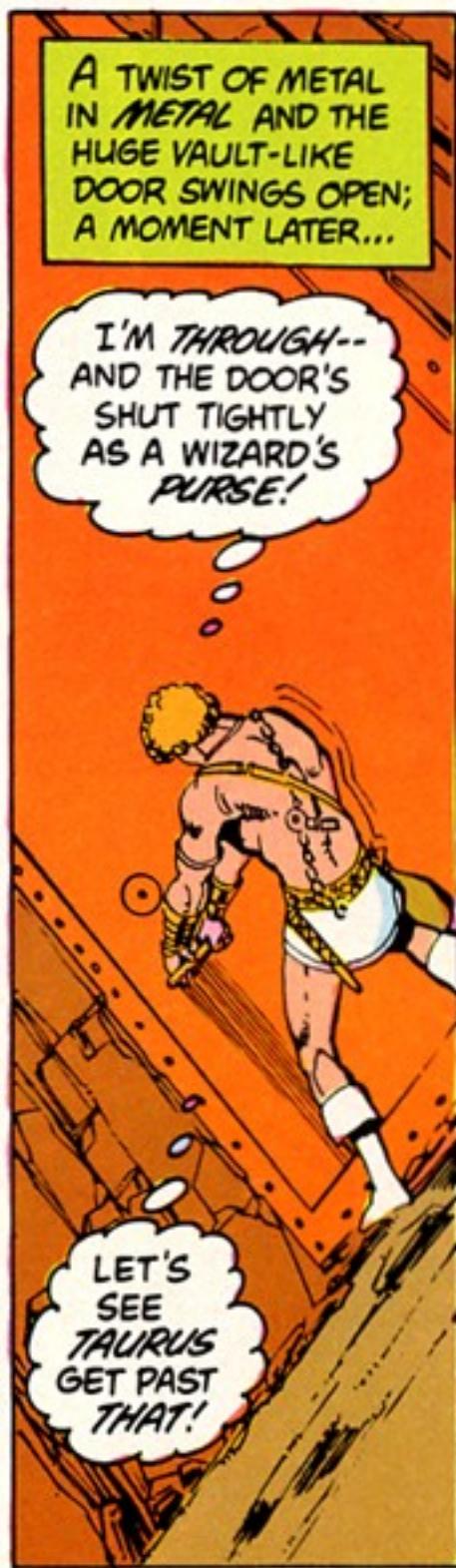
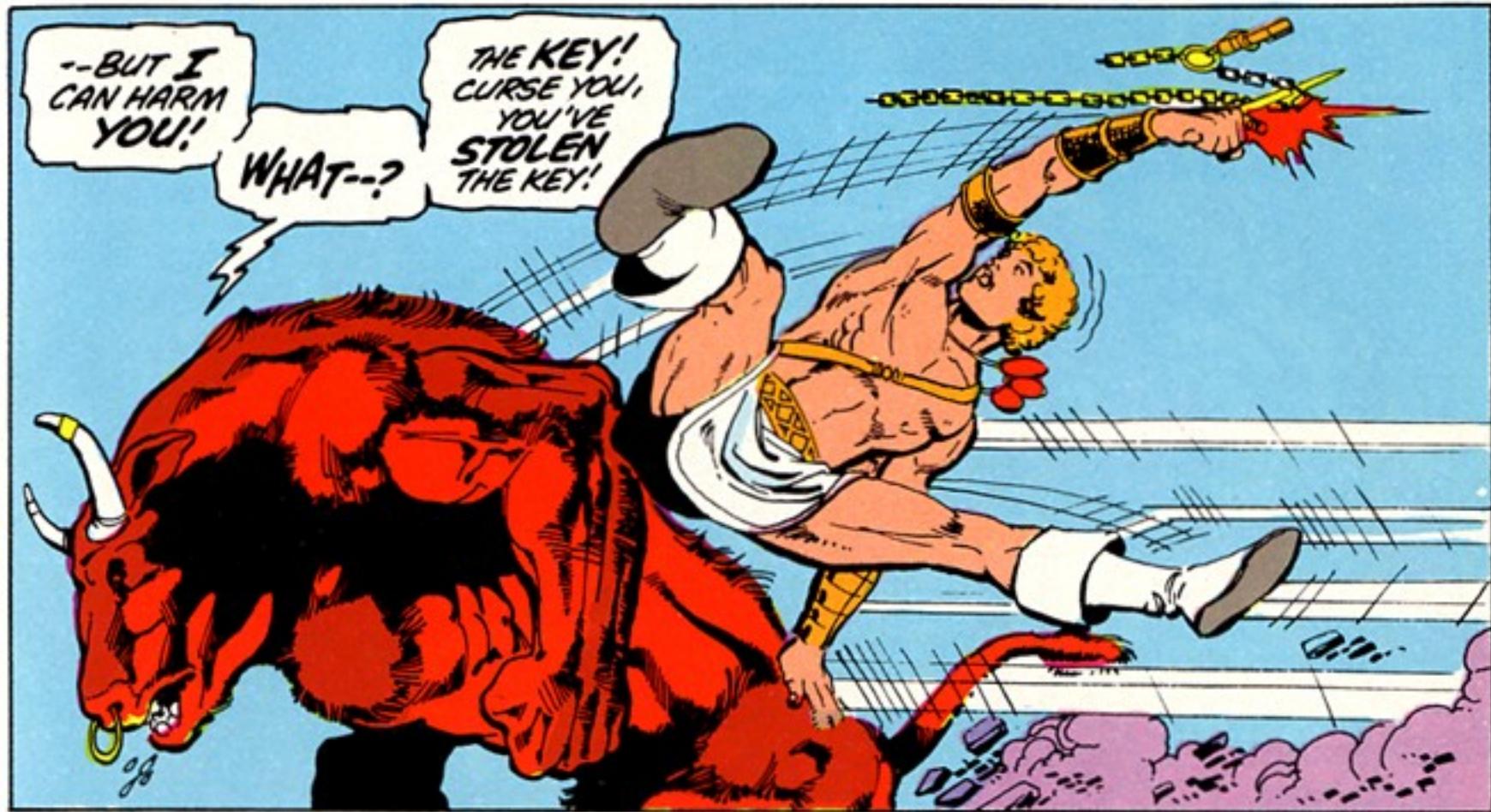
TWO DOORS LEAD
FROM THIS CHAMBER TO
THOSE ON EITHER SIDE,
BUT THOSE DOORS ARE
LOCKED AND I HAVE
THE ONLY KEY!

AND
WHO
AM I?

I AM
TAURUS,
THE BULL--
AND YOU
ARE MY
PRISONER!







IN THE CHAMBER
OF VIRGO...

SO... YOU SEEK
THE SWORD
OF ULTIMATE
SORCERY.

IT WAS WRITTEN THAT
ONE DAY YOU WOULD
COME-- YOU AND A
FAIR-HAIRED BOY,
WHO TOGETHER
WOULD FORGE A
GREAT DESTINY.

GODS...

BUT YOU WILL
NEED HELP-- A WAY
TO TRAVEL BETWEEN
THE ZODIACAL
CHAMBERS--

-- AND YOU
WILL FIND IT THERE,
IN THE STAR
OF PASSAGE!

IT'S
BEAUTIFUL.

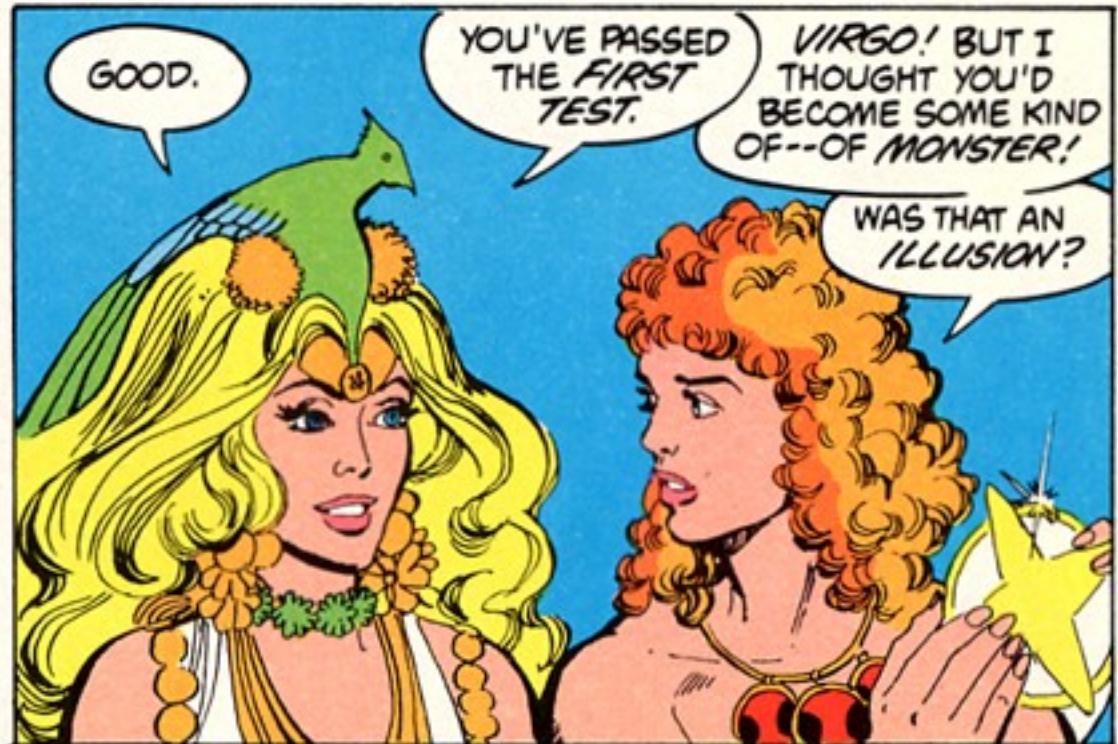
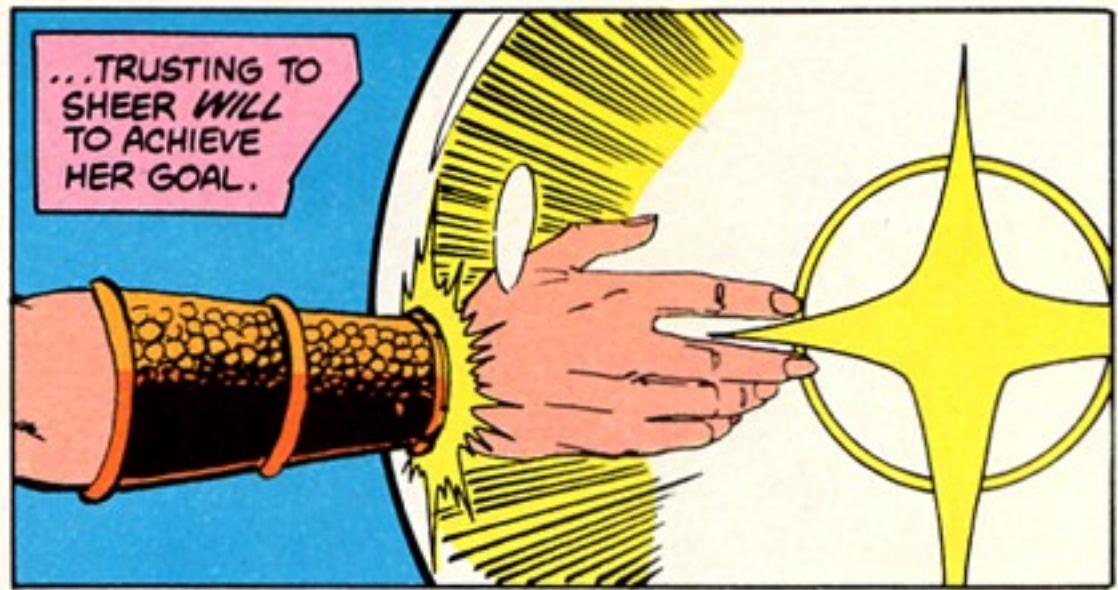
BUT HOW
CAN I GET IT
OUT OF THAT
GLOBE?

PERHAPS
BREAK THE
GLASS
WITH MY
DAGGER--?

SOME
SIXTH
SENSE
FREEZES
HER HAND,
AS SHE
HEARS A
STRANGE
RUSTLE
BEHIND HER--

-- LIKE THE LEATHERY
WHISPER OF INHUMAN
WINGS...





A MOMENT OF BLINDING
LIGHT AND, WHEN IT
FADES, TARRA FINDS
HERSELF IN A SWEET-
SMELLING GARDEN...

...LISTENING TO THE
MUSIC OF A VERY
STRANGE PIPER INDEED.

AH, A
VISITOR.
HOW
DELIGHTFUL.

COME
PLAY WITH
CAPRICORN,
MY DEAR.

PLAY
WITH ME--
--OR
DIE!

NO THANKS,
GOAT.
I'M
LOOKING
FOR MY
BROTHER, AND
I CAN'T STOP
TO PLAY UNTIL I--

SHORT-SHORT

--FIND
HIM...



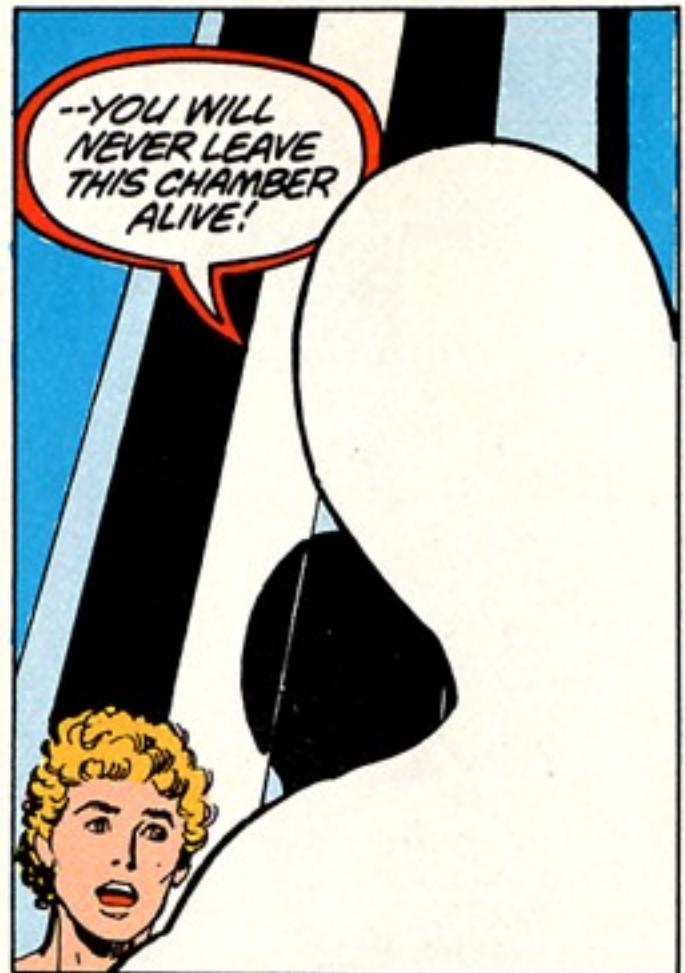
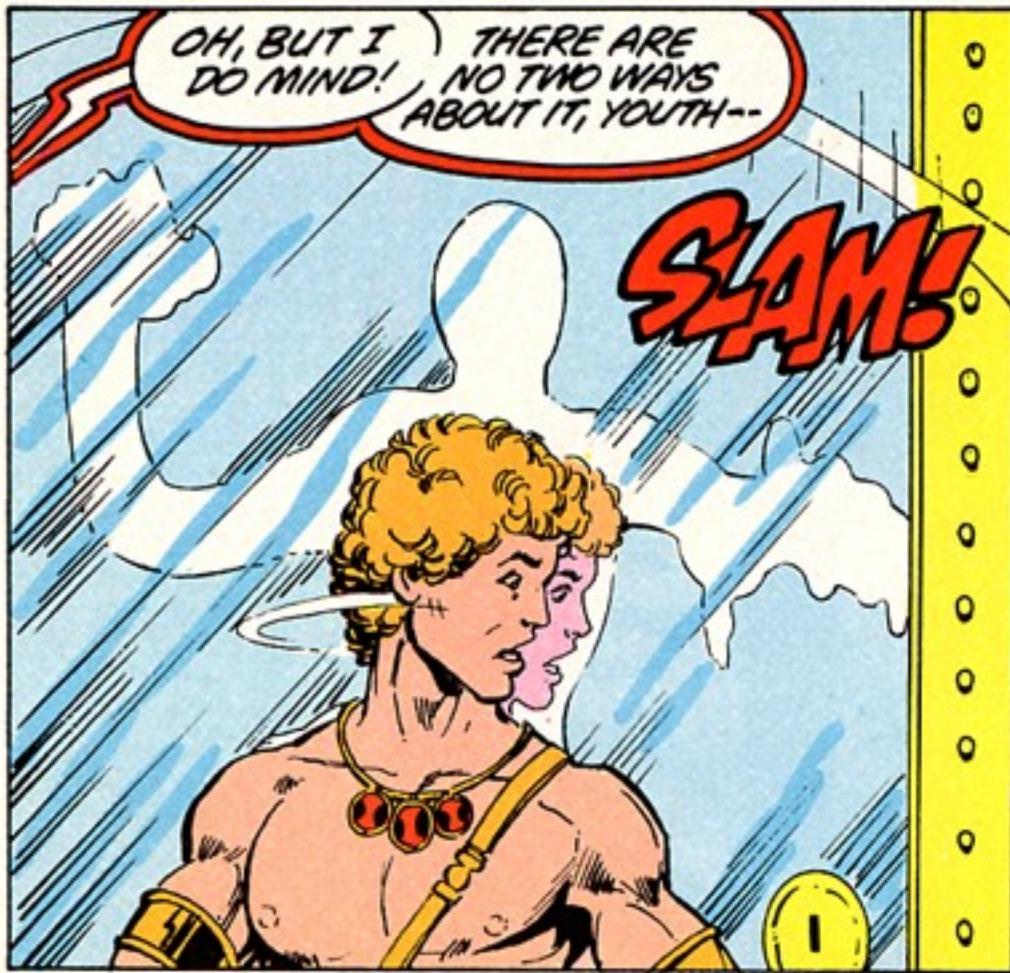
TORR BLINKS TWICE, AND SHAKES HIS HEAD AS IF TO CLEAR IT, NOT QUITE SURE IF HE'S LOST HIS MIND.

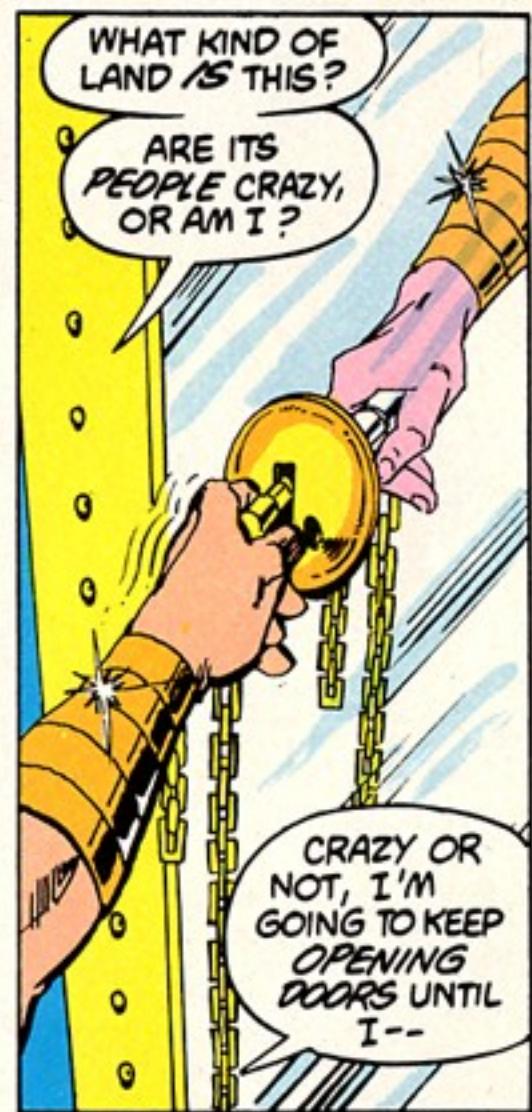
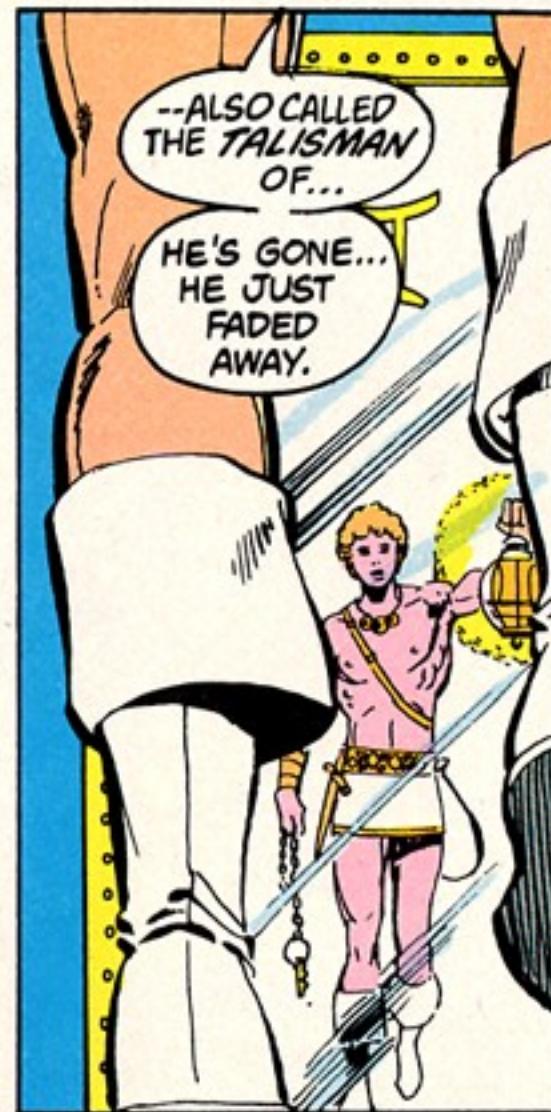
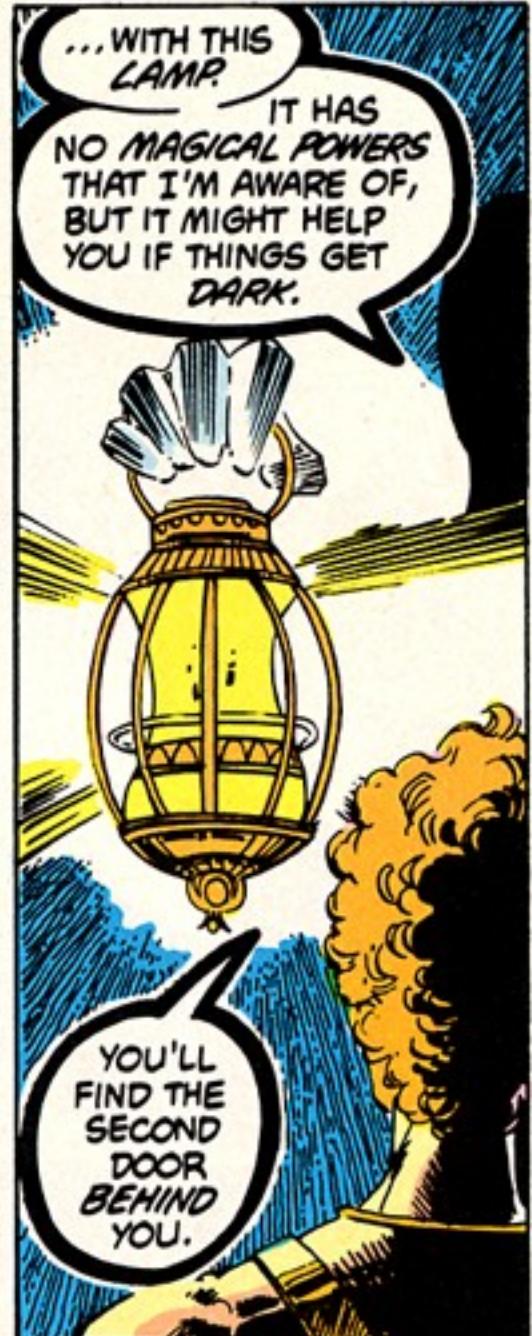
THE CORRIDOR FROM THE CHAMBER OF TAURUS LED HIM TO ANOTHER LOCKED DOOR, WHICH OPENED AT A TOUCH OF HIS KEY; HE STEPPED THROUGH...

...INTO A SCENE OF SHEER NIGHTMARE.

WHO ENTERS THE MIRRORED HALL OF GEMINI?
IDENTIFY YOURSELF, AND PERHAPS I SHALL LET YOU LIVE!

I THINK I'LL JUST TAKE MY CHANCES WITH TAURUS, IF YOU DON'T MIND--



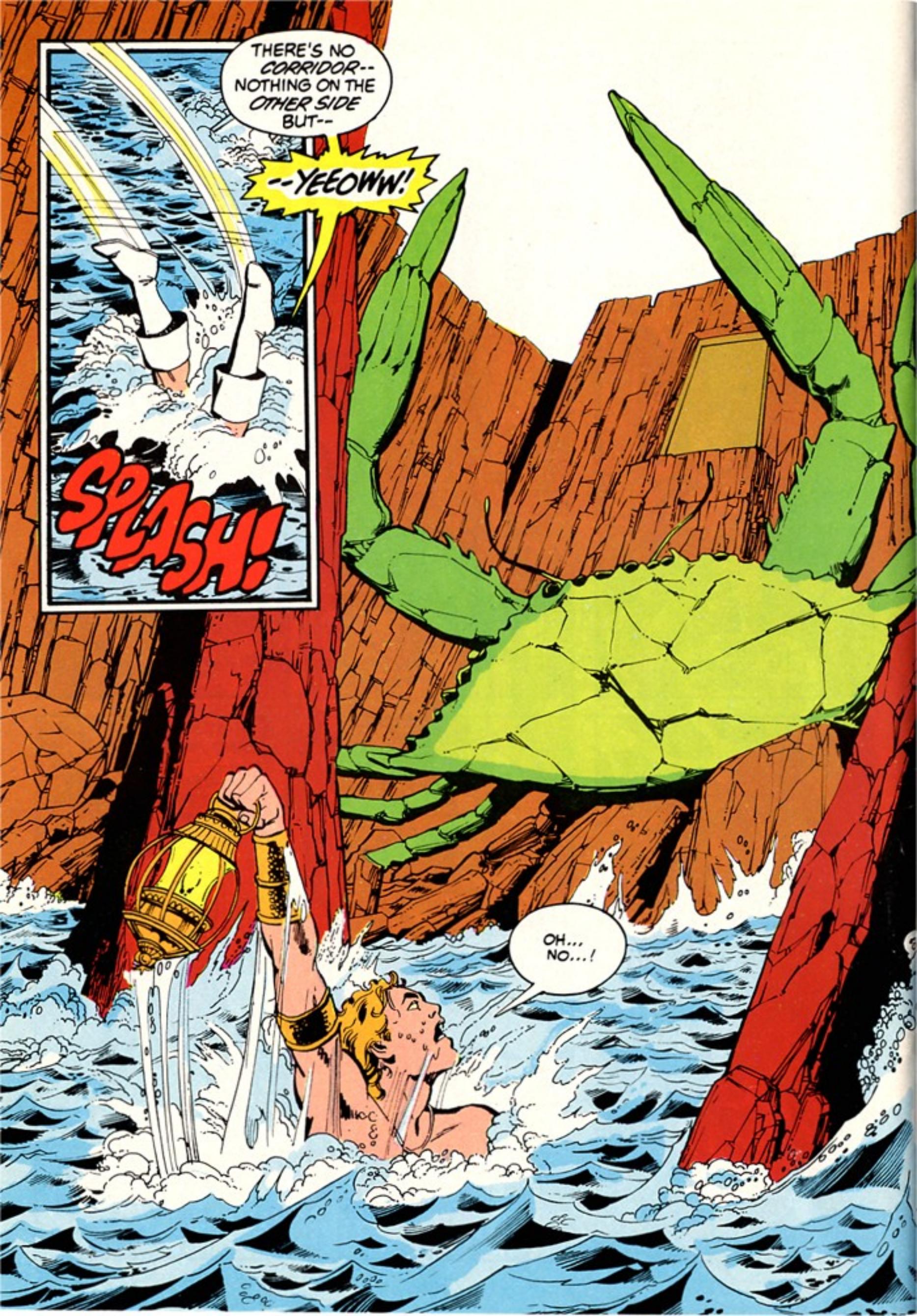


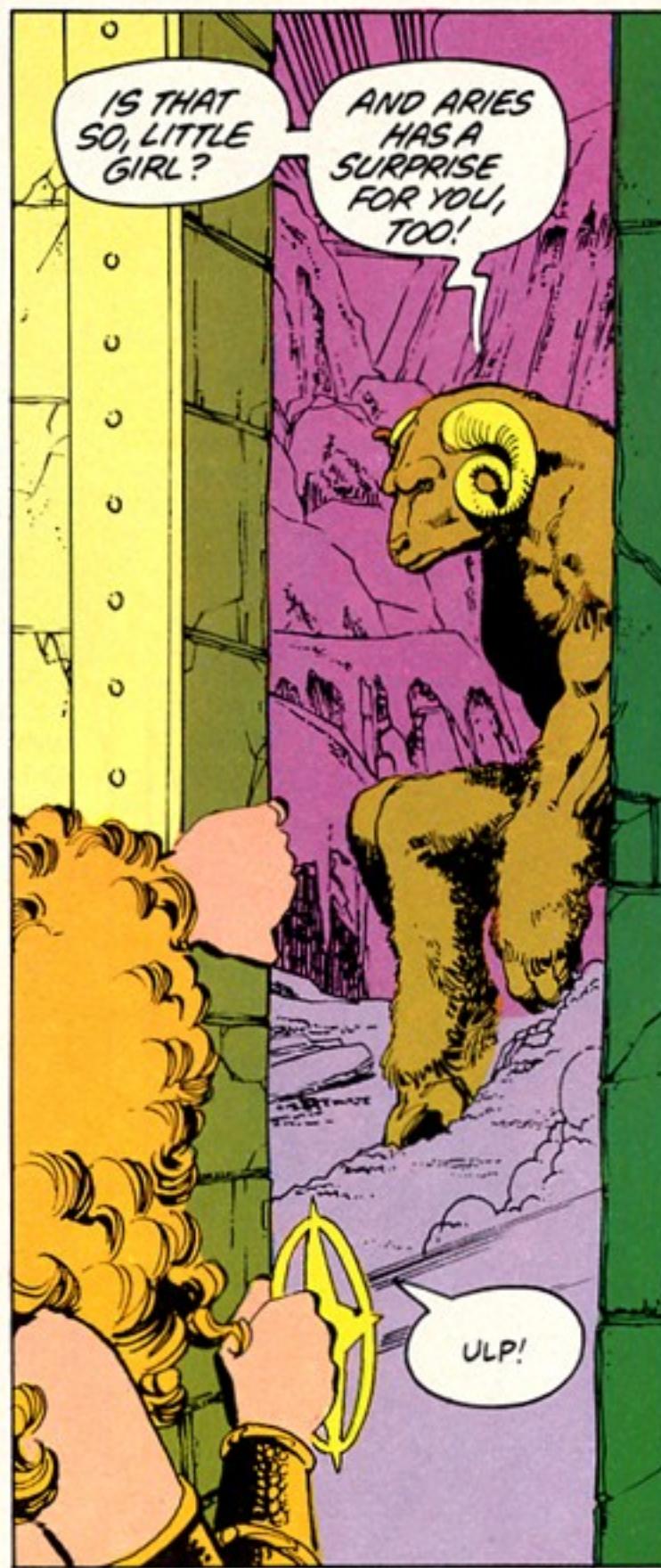
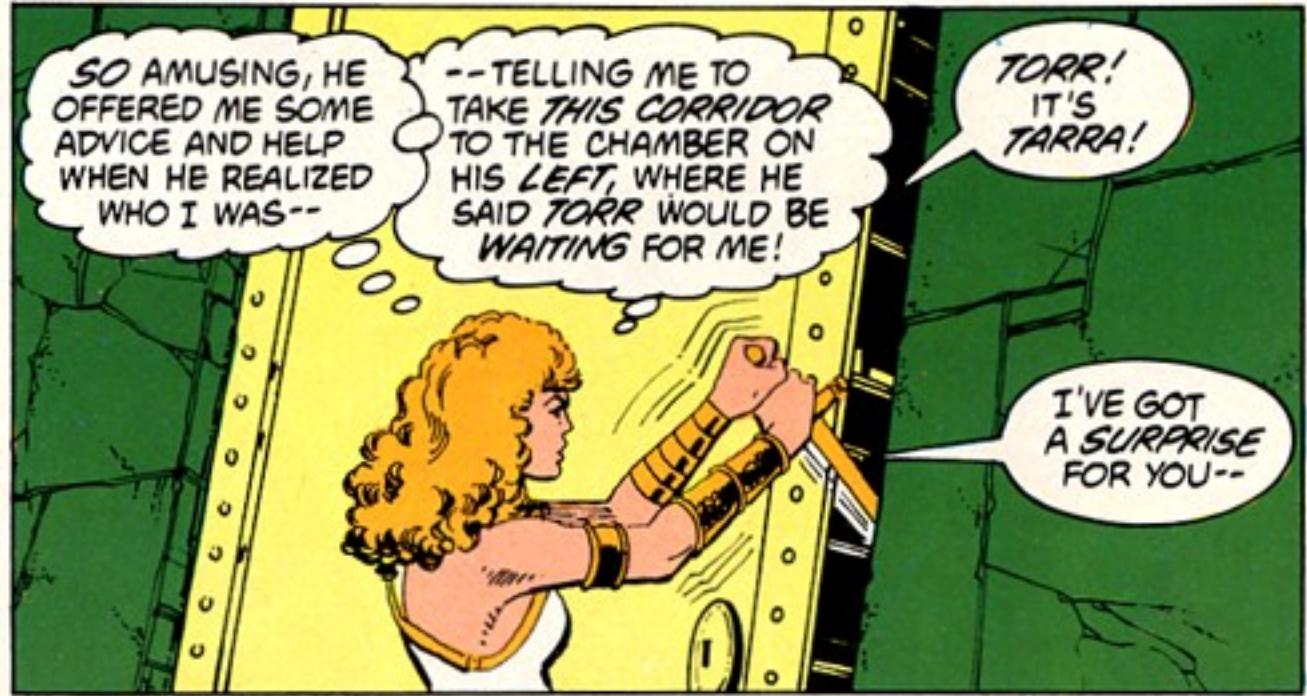
THERE'S NO
CORRIDOR--
NOTHING ON THE
OTHER SIDE
BUT--

--YEEOWW!

SPLASH!

OH...
NO...!





-- SHE FINDS HERSELF
TRANSPORTED OUT OF
THE FIRE AND INTO THE
FURNACE...

HERMINUS,
WHO IS THIS
BOLD
INTRUDER?

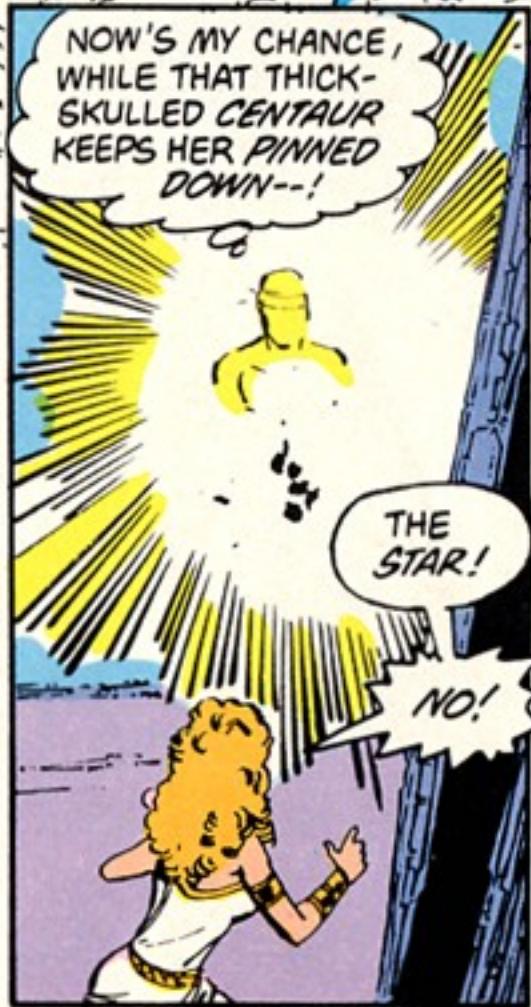
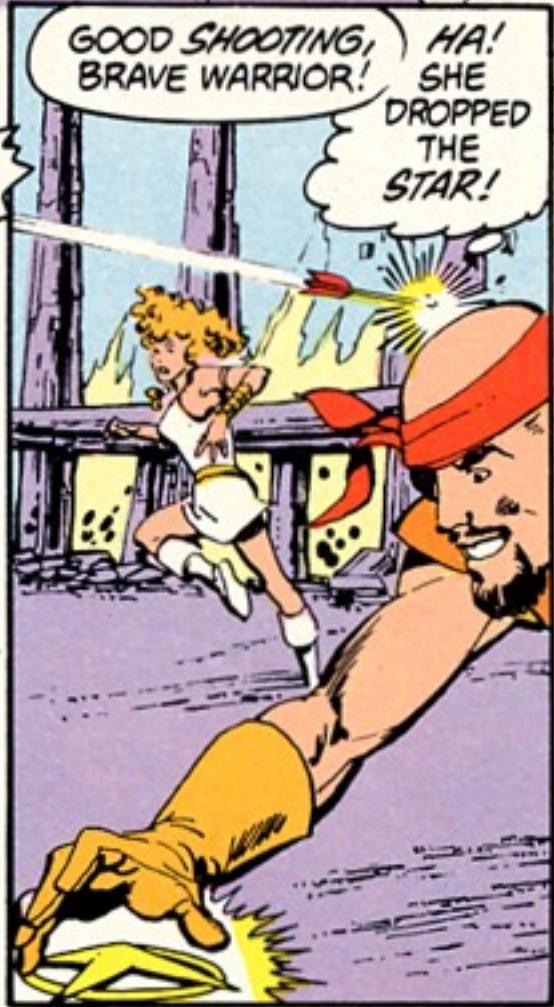
IS IT ONE OF
THE THIEVES
YOU WARNED
ME ABOUT?

GODS OF
MY MOTHER!

AYE, BRAVE
SAGITTARIUS--
THE VIXEN
CALLED TARRA!

SEE? SHE'S STOLEN
THE STAR OF
PASSAGE FROM
SWEET VIRGO!

BE SWIFT, BEFORE
SHE CAN VANISH
AGAIN--!



AND, ELSEWHERE...

I MUST ADMIT, GOOD FRIEND CRAB-- YOU GAVE ME QUITE A FRIGHT BACK THERE!

NOT MY INTENTION.

AM PEACEFUL,
IF NOT
ATTACKED.

THOUGH NOT
ALWAYS TRUE,
IF STAR-SIGNS
ARE AWRY.

GO AND BE
WELL, YOUNG
WARRIOR... AND
KNOW YOU HAVE
FRIEND IN CANCER.

I'M BEGINNING
TO UNDER-
STAND.

WAR-CRAFT
MAY BE USELESS
IN THIS LAND,
WHERE FOES
CAN BECOME
FRIENDS AND
FRIENDS CAN
TURN INTO
FOES!

YET ANOTHER
DOOR OPENS TO
THE MAGIC KEY'S
TOUCH, BUT
WHEN TORR STEPS
THROUGH INTO THE
CHAMBER
BEYOND--

--HE IS GREETED
BY A ROAR OF
UNBRIDLED
FURY:

THIEF AND
TRESPASSER!

HERMINUS WARNED
ME THAT YOU WOULD
COME, BEARING
STOLEN TREASURES
AND SPOUTING LIES!

I BETTER
WARN TARRA!

IF I CAN
FIND HER!

WATCH HIM
CAREFULLY,
KING LEO--

HE'S A
TRICKY
ONE,
HE IS!



YOU!

I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU DID THIS--
BUT YOU'RE GOING TO TELL HIM YOU LIED!

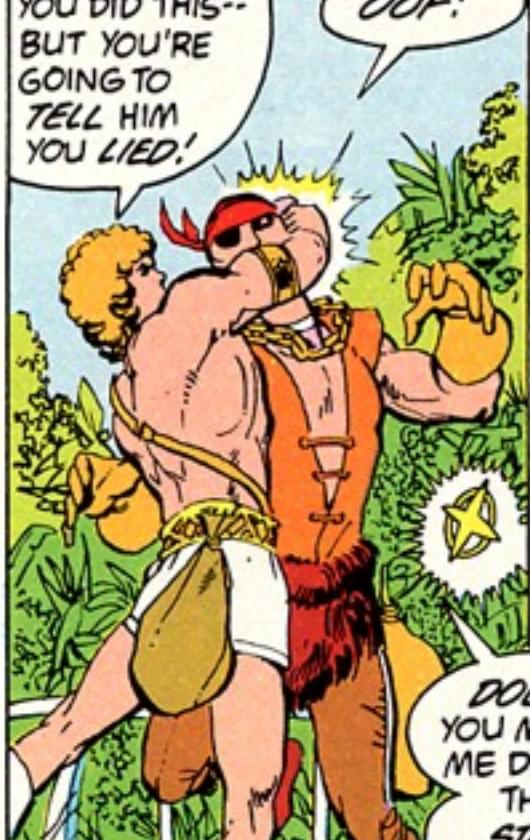
AT THIS POINT,
YOU WHELP, I DOUBT HE'D BELIEVE ME!

OOF!

THAT THING MUST BE IMPORTANT IF YOU--

UH-OH!

ROAR



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HALF A BREATH
LATER...

TWCHUNK

TARRA!

TORR, GET
AWAY!
SAGITTARIUS
WON'T LISTEN
TO REASON!

HE THINKS
WE'RE
BANDITS!

I'M
FINDING
YOUR
RANGE,
WENCH!

TARRA'S GETTING
WINDED-- SHE CAN'T
KEEP DOGGING AND, AS
LONG AS THAT ARMED
CENTAUR IS BETWEEN US,
I CAN'T REACH HER TO
HELP!

WAIT-- MAYBE I CAN
BLIND HIM BY TOSSING
THIS CLOAK
OVER HIS--

SIMULTANEOUSLY...

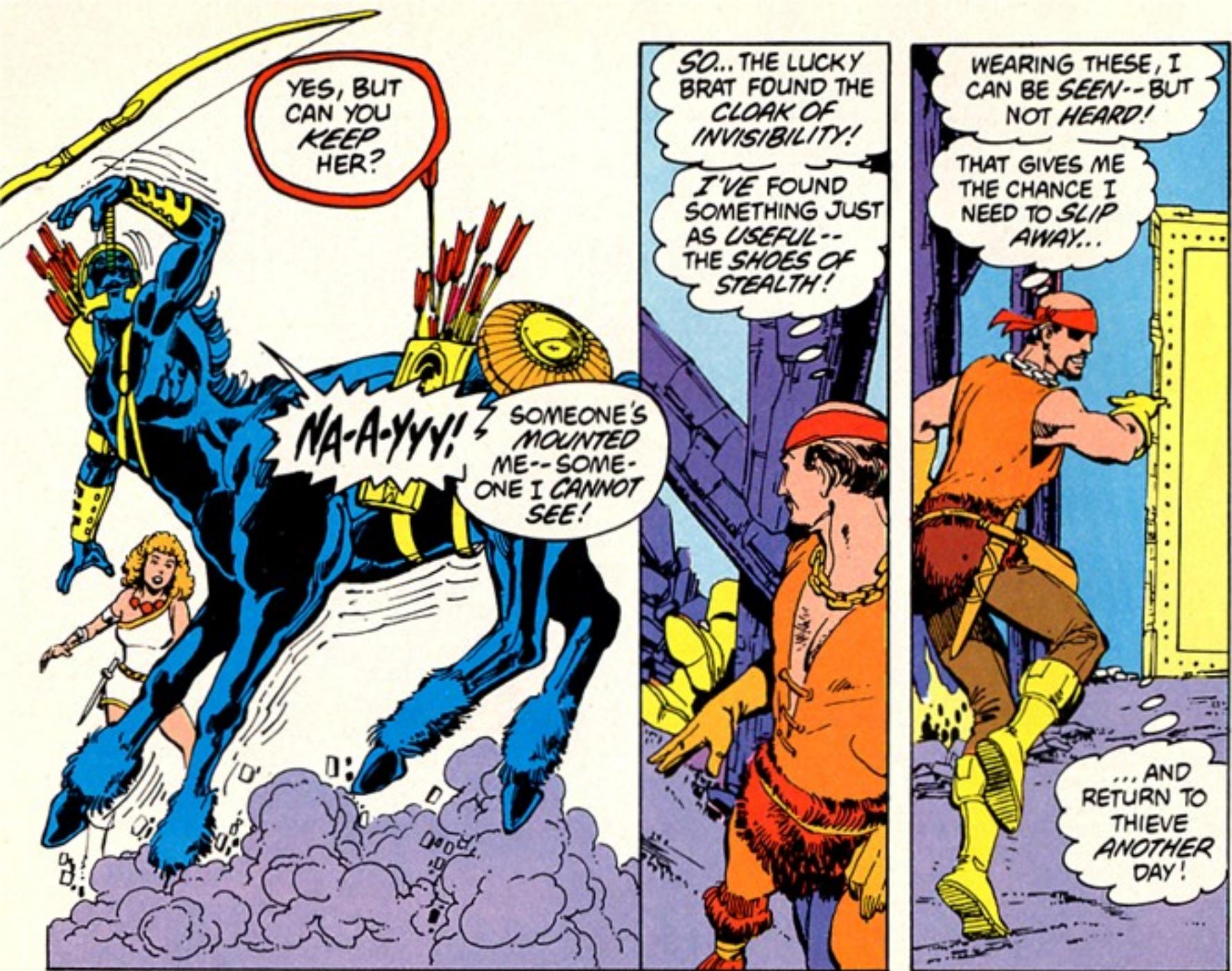
NO SIGN OF
TORR-- HE
MUST HAVE
ESCAPED!

AT LEAST ONE
OF US WILL
SURVIVE!

THIS
IS IT...

...GODS HELP
ME, I CAN'T RUN
ANY FURTHER!

NOW
I HAVE
YOU!



--OUT OF HERE?

SOMETHING HAPPENED
WHEN WE TOUCHED
THE STAR TOGETHER!

THIS ISN'T ONE
OF THE ZODIACAL
CHAMBERS!

TORR,
LOOK UP
THERE!

WE'VE MADE
IT TO THE CENTRAL
CHAMBER!

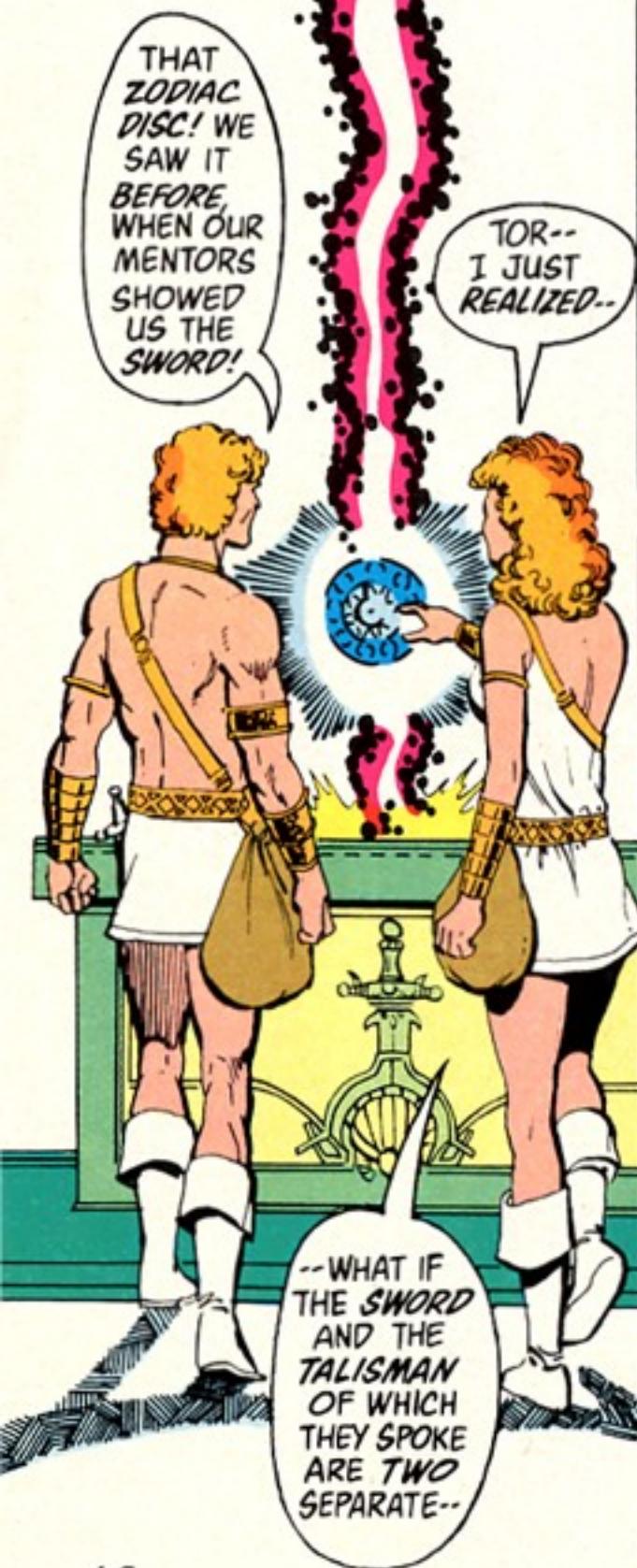
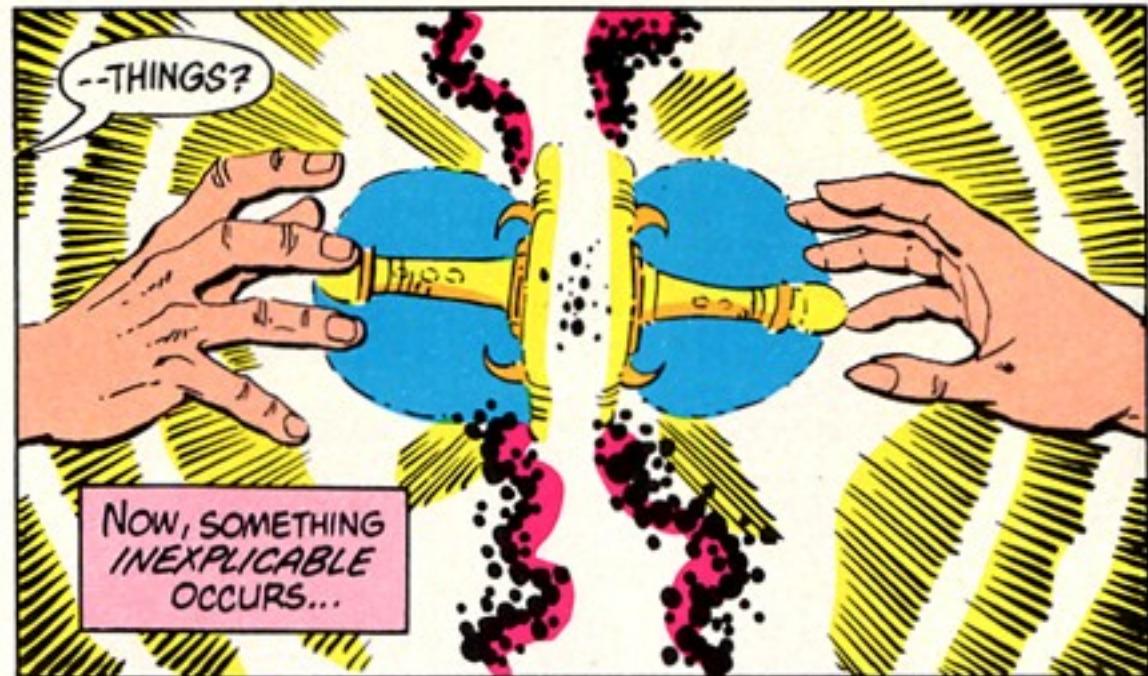
THAT'S IT--
THAT'S WHAT
WE'VE BEEN
SEEKING--

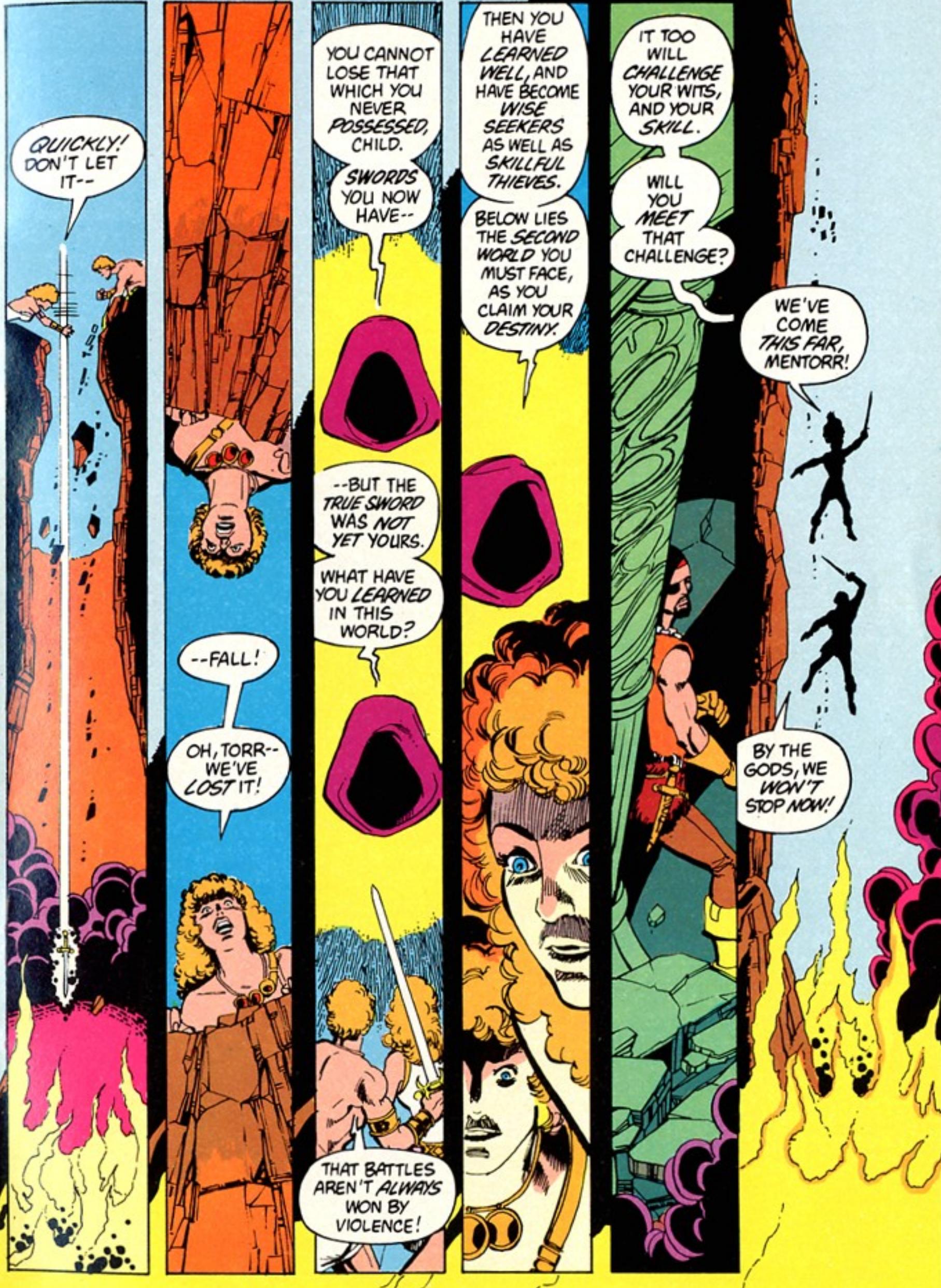
--THE SWORD
OF ULTIMATE
SORCERY!

AWE TAKES THEIR BREATHS AWAY.

AS IF FORGED IN THE FIRES OF THE SUN, THE SWORD GLOWS WITH UNEARTHLY GLORY, SENDING A LANCE OF PURE ENERGY DOWN TO THE MARBLE BEHIND ITS POINT.

THAT ZODIAC DISC! WE SAW IT BEFORE, WHEN OUR MENTORS SHOWED US THE SWORD!





AND NEITHER
WILL HERMINUS,
FOOL--

--EVEN IF IT
MEANS FOLLOWING
TO THE VERY
GATES OF HADES!

AND SO IT ENDS,
WITH ANOTHER
BEGINNING.

TORR, YOU MAY
THINK I'M MAD,
UNDER THE
CIRCUMSTANCES,
BUT A CHILL
JUST RAN DOWN
MY SPINE--

--AS IF,
SOMEHOW,
SOMEWHERE,
WE WERE BEING
WATCHED!

IN HIS
CASTLE
KEEP, THE
WIZARD
KONJURO
SMILES.

IT IS A
SMILE
WITHOUT
HUMOR...

...A SMILE LIKE
THE GRIN OF
DEATH!

TO BE CONTINUED -- IN **SWORDQUEST..** BOOK
TWO: **FIREWORLD!**



CO19251



ATARI