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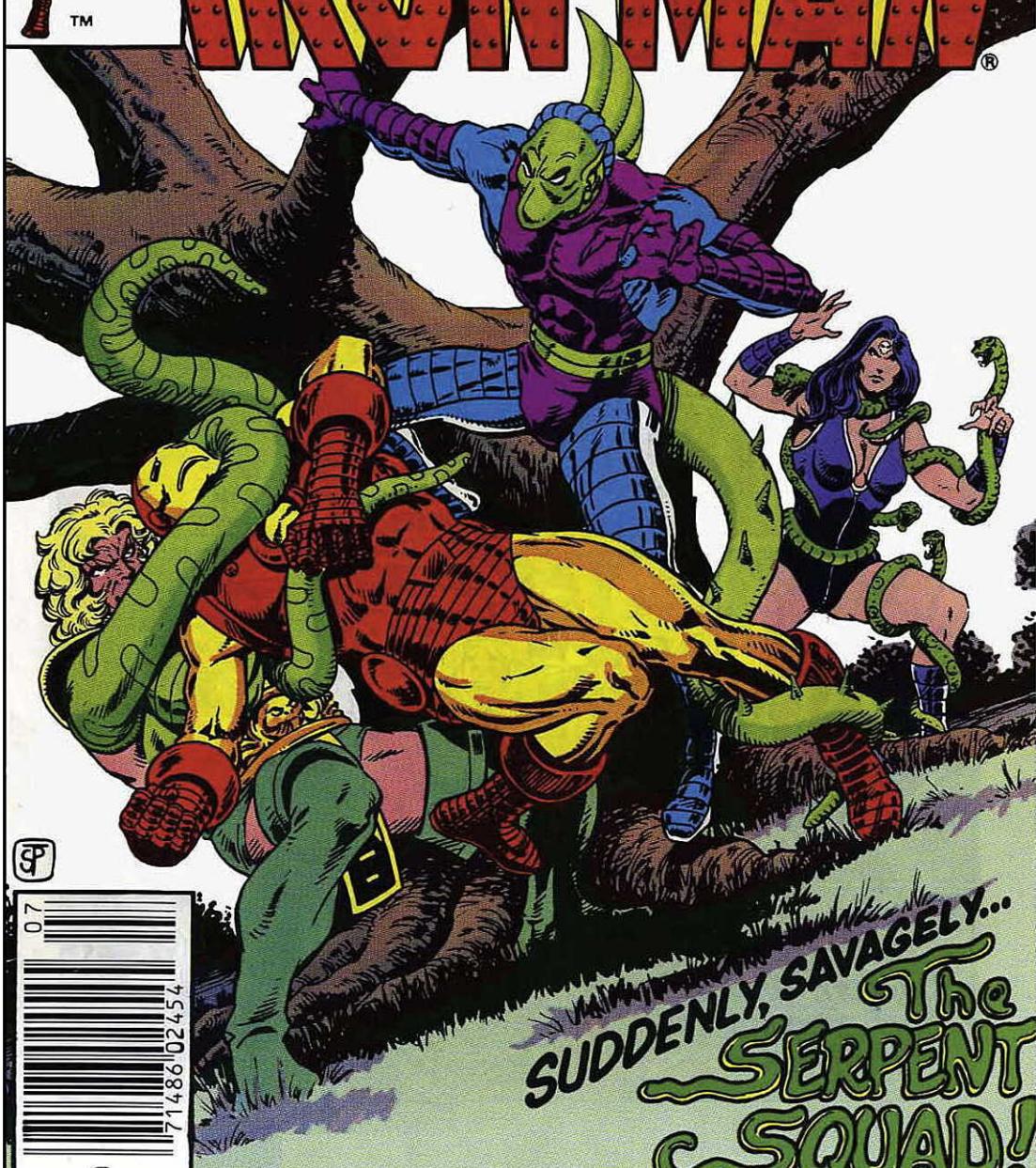
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THE INVINCIBLE

IRON MAN®



TM



SP



SUDDENLY, SAVAGELY...
The
SERPENT
SQUAD!

SCOTTIE

A Cracker Jack Story

OKAY, SCOTTIE! THE SCORE IS TIED, BASES LOADED, AND TWO OUTS! GET IN THERE AND SHOW 'EM WHAT YOU'RE MADE OF.

STRIKE ONE!

GULP! WHAT IF I STRIKE OUT?!??!

I'LL DO MY BEST, COACH.

STRIKE TWO!

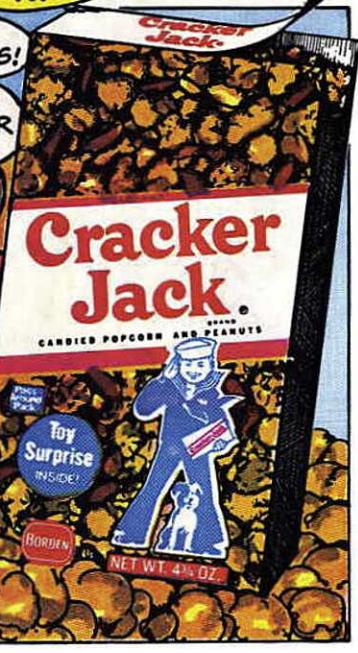
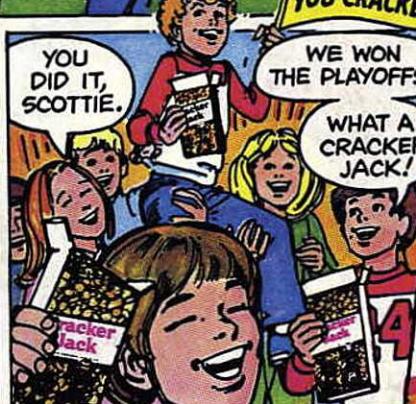
YOU CAN DO IT, SCOTTIE!

YOU'RE A CRACKER JACK.

ZOOM!

WHAP!

WHEN YOU'RE REALLY GOOD-THEY CALL YOU CRACKER JACK



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When millionaire industrialist Tony Stark, inventor extraordinaire, garbs himself in solar-charged, steel-mesh armor he becomes the world's greatest human fighting machine...

STAN LEE PRESENTS: THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN®

ACRY BEASTS

DON' MESS
WITH ME...

DO NOT MESS
AROUND WITH ME!
Y'HEAR...?

'CAUSE I'M TONY
STARK... THE IRON
MAN... AN' I CAN
WHIP ANYBODY--

--THIS IS THE
INVINCIBLE
IRON MAN
TALKIN'...!

NO CHANCE



Danny O'Neill
SCHIFTER

Steve Ditko
PENCILER

Don Green
INKER

Rick Parker
LETTERER

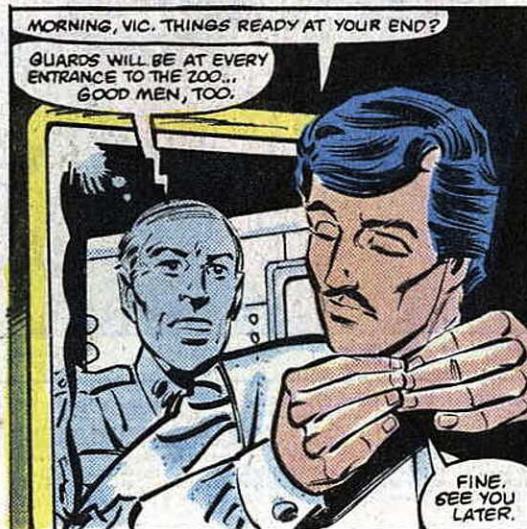
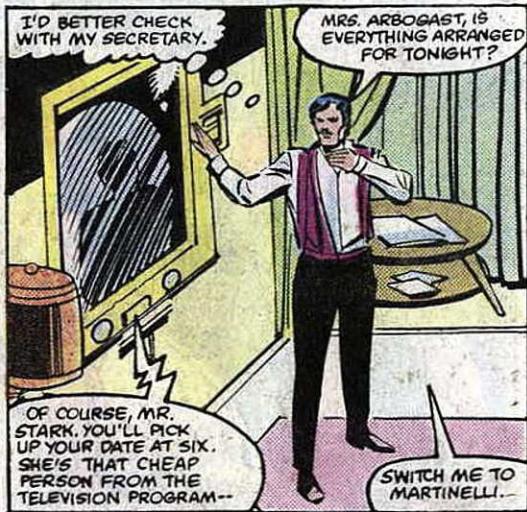
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WHAT, INDEED--?
ZOO GATE FOUR REPORTING...
NO PROBLEMS. STARK SHOULD
BE ALONG IN A COUPLE OF
MINUTES.

HELLO.

OH, HIYA, JANET. SAY, I THOUGHT
YOU WAS OUTTA TOWN WITH YOUR
SISTER.

GIVE ME A
KISS, BIG BOY.

HUH? WELL, UH-- I AIN'T SUP-
POSED TO SMOOCH ON DUTY,
BUT WHAT THE HEY--?

EH--



HE IS
DEAD.
COME.

THE LIGHTED BUILDING IS
WHERE THE CELEBRATION
IS TO OCCUR.

YES, BUT OUR
GOAL IS ELSE-
WHERE WITH-
IN THESE
WALLS.

AND AS THE NIGHT BREEZES CARRIES THE SCENT OF THE
INTRUDERS TO THE CAGES, THE BEASTS BEGIN TO GROWL
AND WHINE AND CRY...

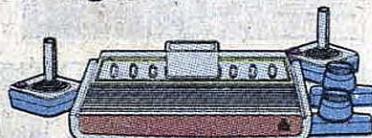


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SOMETIME,
LATER...

FUNNY NOBODY WAS ON DUTY AT THE GATE.
I'D BETTER PHONE MARTINELLI.

I'LL HAVE TO LEAVE YOU FOR A
FEW MINUTES, MS. CUDDLE.

CALL ME MUFFY...
EVERYBODY IN SHOW
BIZ DOES. 'COURSE
MY REAL NAME IS
MATILDA HICKEN-
LOOPER.



I WON'T TELL A
SOUL. I PROMISE.

I KNEW YOU WERE
THE TRUSTWORTHY
TYPE, TONY.

DRINK,
SIR?

AN EXCELLENT 25-YEAR-OLD- SCOTCH--

I'M SURE
IT IS...
EXCELLENT...

...BUT I'LL
PASS.

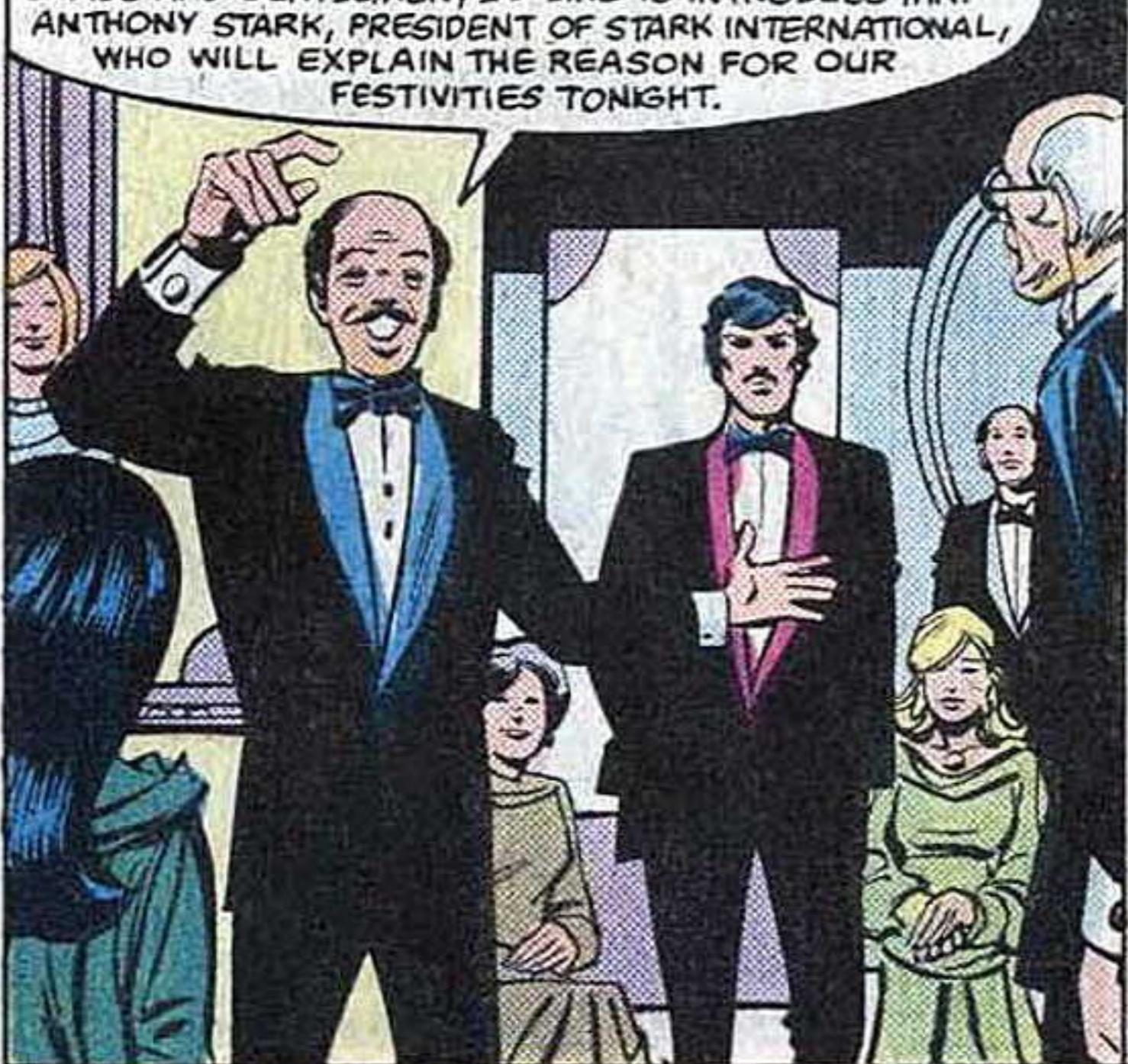
WELL, I WON'T. IN FACT,
I'LL DRINK TONY'S FOR HIM.

AND MINE...
AND ANYBODY
ELSE'S.

WONDERFUL. JUST
WHAT I NEED... A
LUSH.



LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, I'D LIKE TO INTRODUCE MR. ANTHONY STARK, PRESIDENT OF STARK INTERNATIONAL, WHO WILL EXPLAIN THE REASON FOR OUR FESTIVITIES TONIGHT.

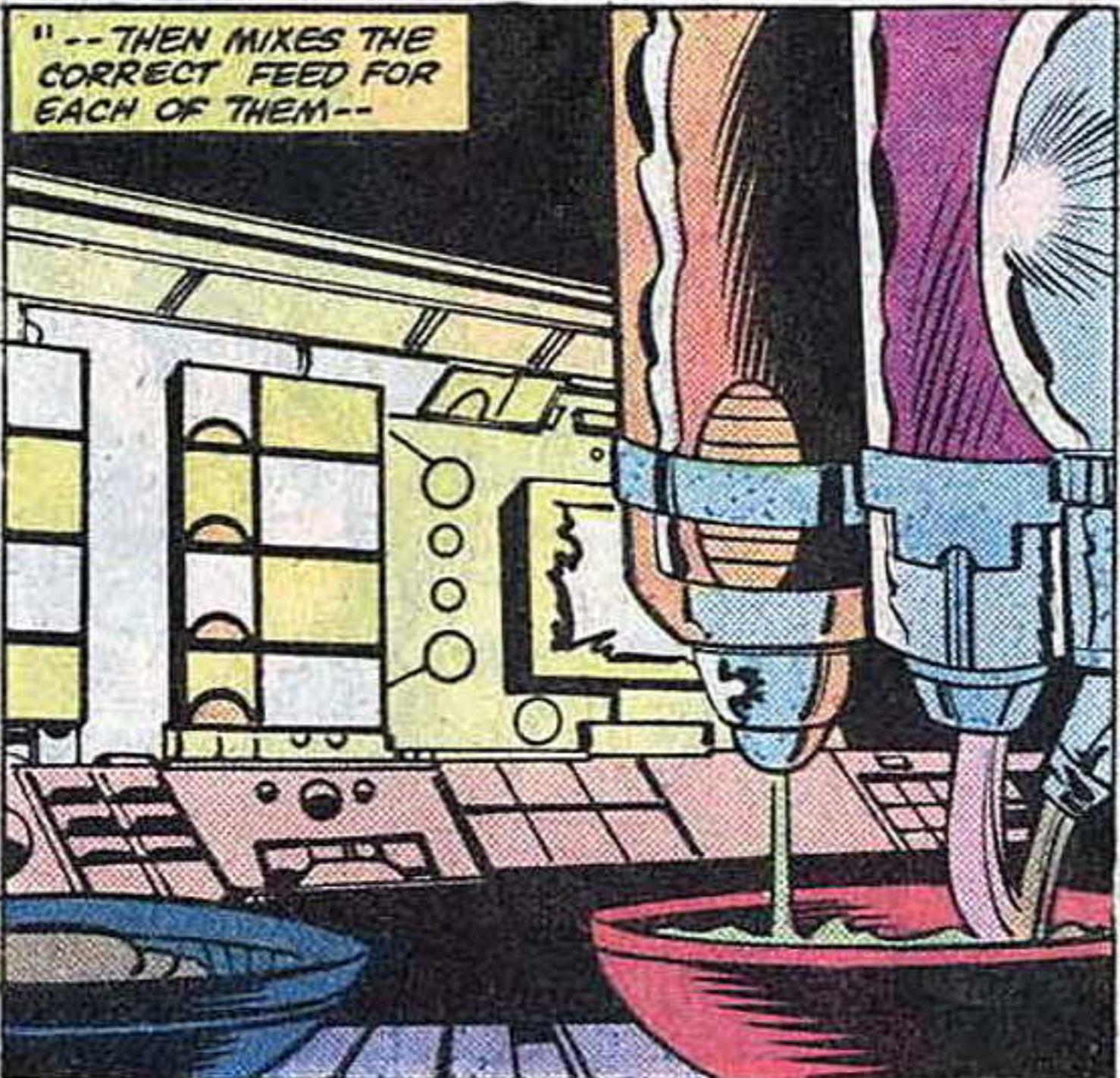


THANK YOU. AS MOST OF YOU KNOW, WE'RE CELEBRATING THE INSTALLATION OF A SYSTEM MY COMPANY DEVISED--

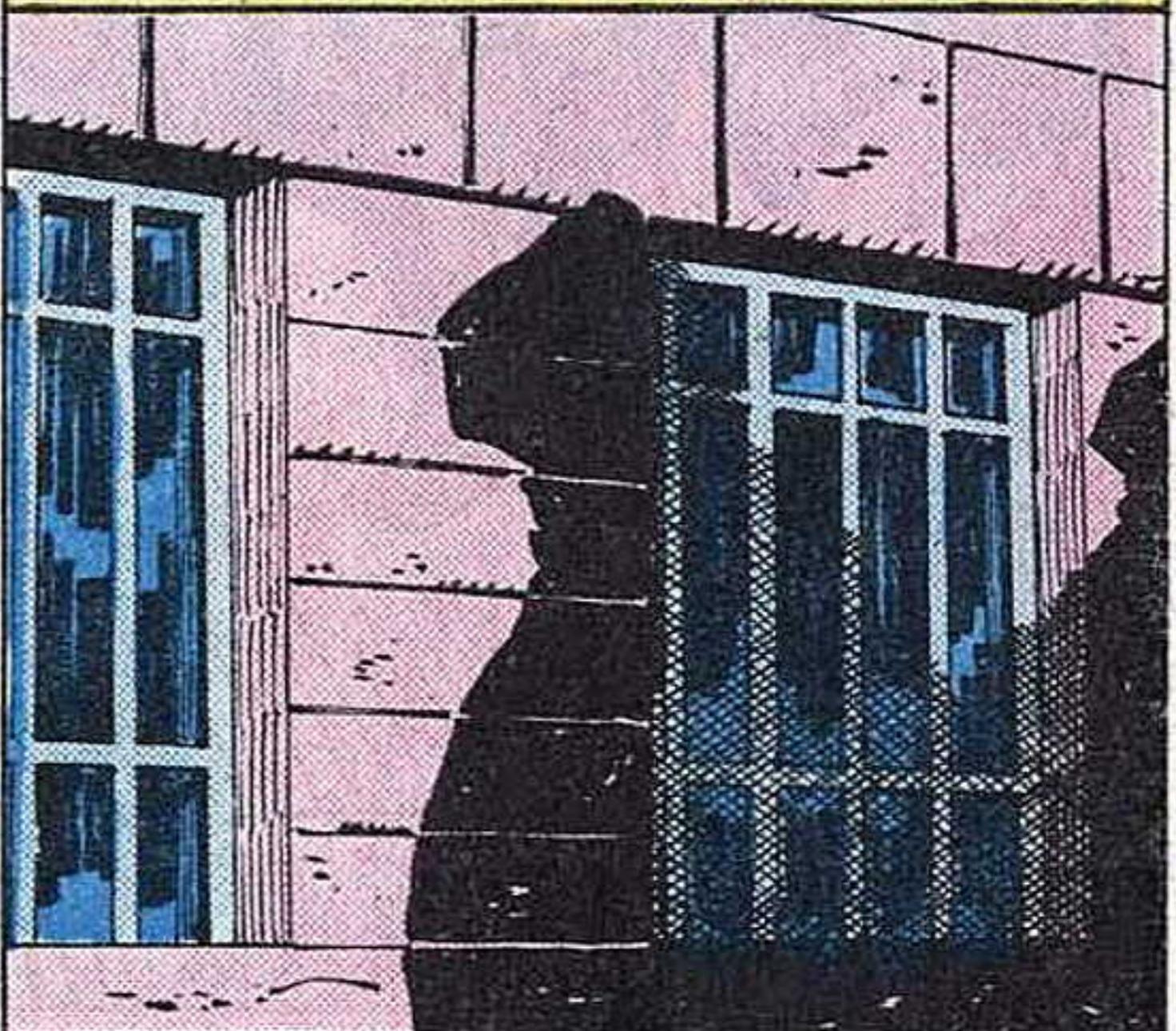
--A SYSTEM BUILT AROUND THIS GADGET HERE... A MICRO-COMPUTER SCANNER WHICH ACTUALLY "READS" THE ZOO ANIMALS' BODIES--



--THEN MIXES THE CORRECT FEED FOR EACH OF THEM--



--AND DELIVERS IT AUTOMATICALLY AND AT THE PRECISELY CORRECT TIME TO THE CAGES.



"IT ALSO MONITORS THE ENTIRE AREA FOR FIRES, INTRUSIONS AND DISTURBANCES AND SENDS AN ALARM TO A CENTRAL CONTROL ROOM."



ACTUALLY, THAT CONTROL ROOM WAS THE ONLY GLITCH IN THE WHOLE PROJECT... WE HAD TO CHANGE ITS LOCATION AT THE LAST MINUTE...



AT THAT MOMENT, THE THREE CLOAKED INTRUDERS REMOVE THEIR OUTER GARMENTS TO STAND REVEALED AS -- THE SERPENT SQUAD!

HEY, MAMBA -- THIS AIN'T THE CONTROL ROOM. IT'S AN EMPTY CHAMBER!



HMM... THE INFORMATION WE WERE GIVEN IS OBVIOUSLY INCORRECT, ANAONDA!

LOOKS LIKE WE'LL HAVE TO PROWL AROUND THE GROUNDS... FIND WHERE THEY MOVED THE CONTROLS!

RIGHT, BUT OUR EMPLOYER WOULD PREFER US NOT TO BE SPOTTED.



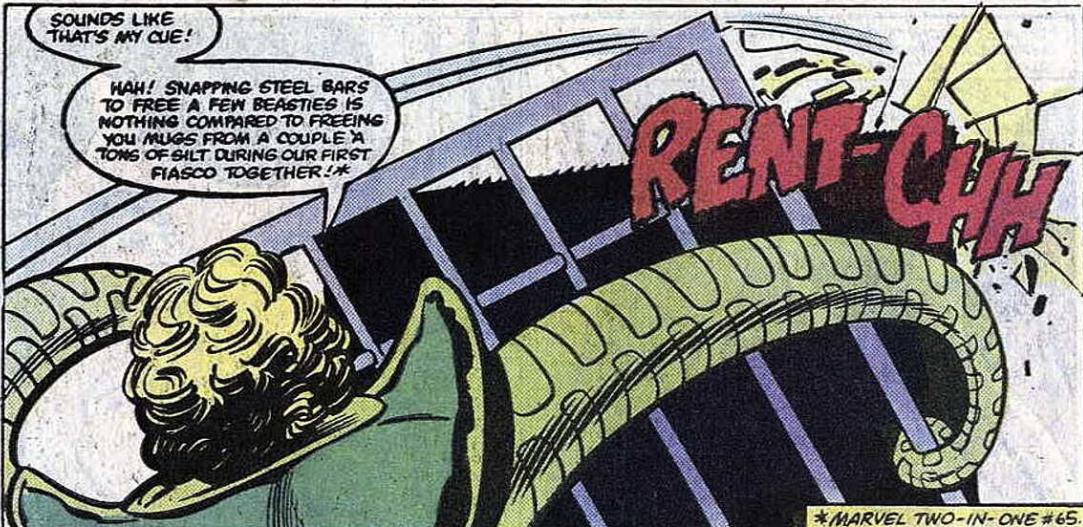
WE'LL NEED TO CREATE A DIVERSION.

THE ZOO-BEASTS THEMSELVES WILL PROVIDE IT.

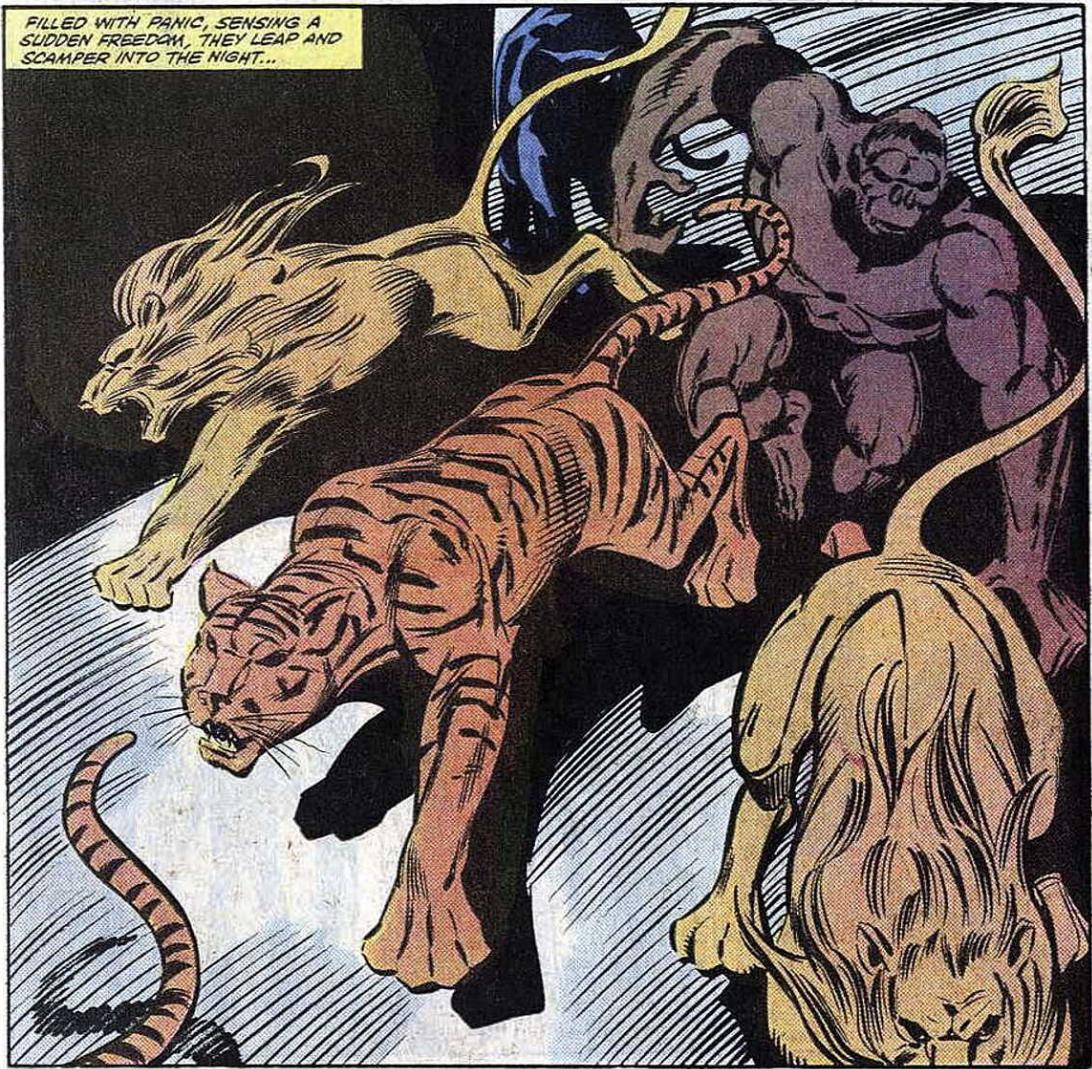


SOUNDS LIKE THAT'S MY CUE!

HAH! SNAPPING STEEL BARS TO FREE A FEW BEASTIES IS NOTHING COMPARED TO FREEING YOU MUGS FROM A COUPLE A TONS OF SILT DURING OUR FIRST FIASCO TOGETHER! *



FILLED WITH PANIC, SENSING A SUDDEN FREEDOM, THEY LEAP AND SCAMPER INTO THE NIGHT...



NOW WE CAN
CONTINUE OUR
SEARCH.

DO YOU SUPPOSE THEY
WILL ATTACK A HUMAN?

WE
CAN ONLY
HOPE!

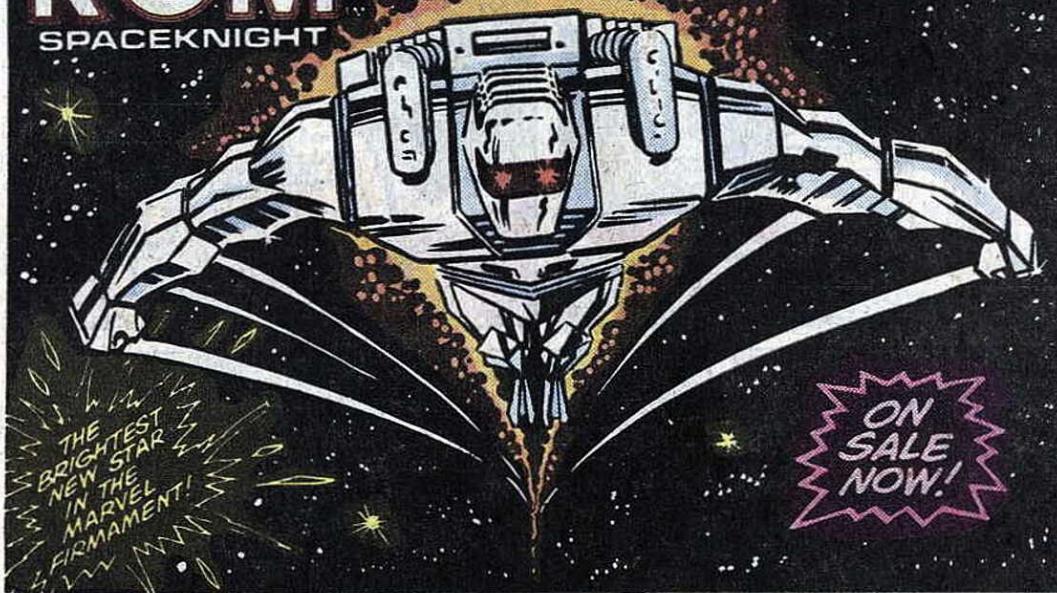




HE STRIKES FROM
OUTER SPACE--

--AND NOTHING
CAN STOP HIM!

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Have Jumping Disc contests. See whose disc jumps highest... or first. Or, play elimination with the first disc to jump being "out". Have tournaments.



Put on magic shows. Set your Jumping Disc down. Wave your hand over it and say the magic words. Wow! It jumps high in the air. You catch it and show that it has changed colors. What a trick! (Directions on how to do it are included.)

Send today and get double discs!

If you hurry, Willy Wonka will send you TWO Magic Discs... one red... one blue... here's all you have to do!

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P.O. Box 123, Bethalto, IL 62010.
(Please print)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____



WHAT'S THAT FUNNY NOISE?

THE ALARM. THE VIDEO MONITORS SHOW SOMETHING'S WRONG --



BEEP BEEP BEEP

-- TO PUT IT MILDLY, HALF THE ANIMALS IN THE ZOO ARE RUNNING LOOSE.

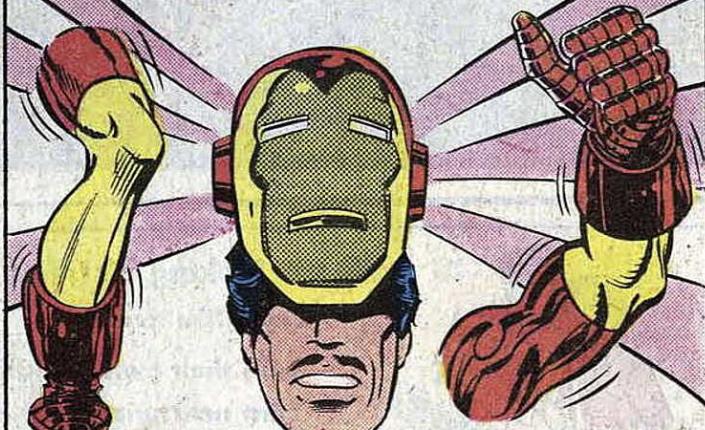


GONNA CALL THE DOGCATCHER?



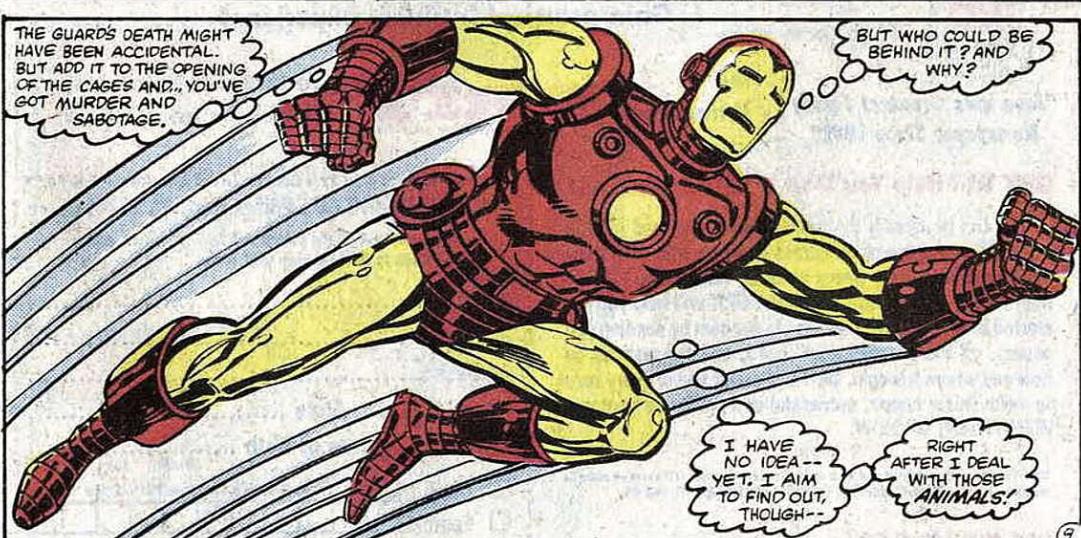
NO. SOMEONE ELSE.

ALONE IN AN ANTECHAMBER, ANTHONY STARK OPENS HIS ATTACHE CASE AND REMOVES A SUIT OF GLEAMING METALLIC GARMENTS... THE WEAPON-LADEN ARMOR OF THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN!



THE GUARD'S DEATH MIGHT HAVE BEEN ACCIDENTAL. BUT ADD IT TO THE OPENING OF THE CAGES AND.. YOU'VE GOT MURDER AND SABOTAGE.

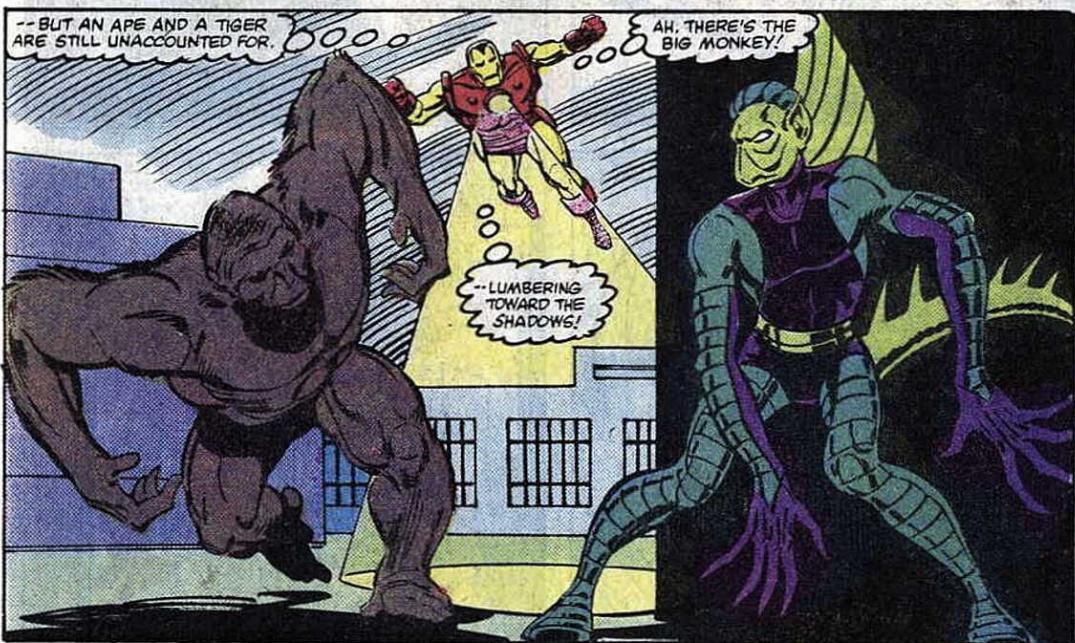
BUT WHO COULD BE BEHIND IT? AND WHY?

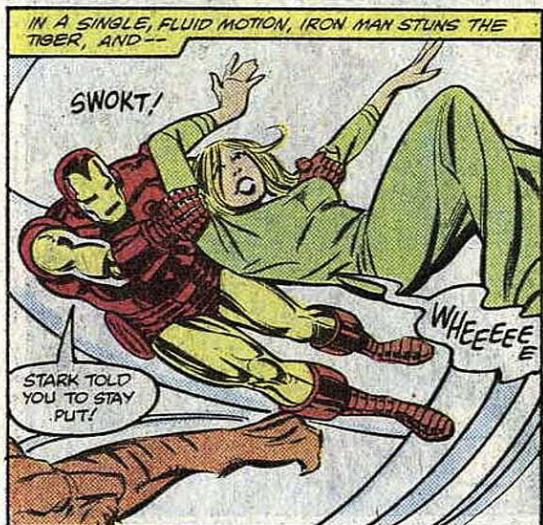


I HAVE NO IDEA -- YET. I AIM TO FIND OUT, THOUGH--

RIGHT AFTER I DEAL WITH THOSE ANIMALS!







THE WEIRD KIND... A GUY AN' TWO GALS WHO'VE SOMEHOW GAINED THE POWERS OF SNAKES.. CALL THEMSELVES THE SERPENT SQUAD!



MUTATED SNAKE-MEN... THAT WOULD EXPLAIN THE ANIMALS' PANIC!

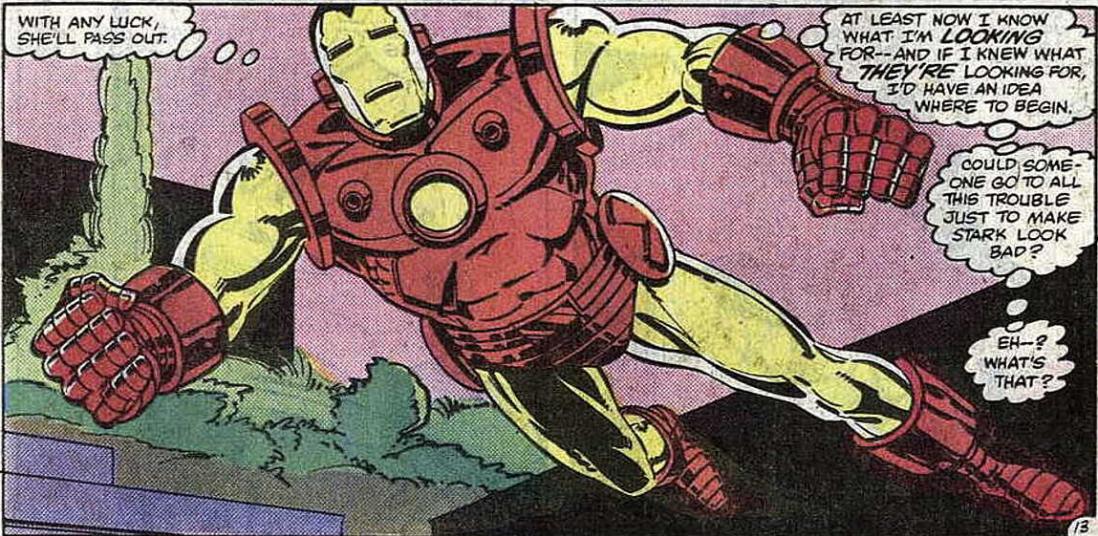


BUT IT DOESN'T EXPLAIN WHAT THEY WANT!



MS. CUDDLE... DO NOT LEAVE THIS ROOM--I MEAN IT!

I WON'T.. I'M VERY HAPPY HERE.



WITH ANY LUCK,
SHE'LL PASS OUT.

AT LEAST NOW I KNOW WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR--AND IF I KNEW WHAT THEY'RE LOOKING FOR, I'D HAVE AN IDEA WHERE TO BEGIN.

COULD SOMEONE GO TO ALL THIS TROUBLE JUST TO MAKE STARK LOOK BAD?

EH--?
WHAT'S THAT?

I THOUGHT I SAW
SOMETHING... GUESS NOT.

QUICKLY INTO THE
DARKNESS...

WE HAVE FOUND
THE CONTROL ROOM...
BUT THE DOOR
IS LOCKED.

ADDER...
YOUR CLAWS.

CRICCH

THATABOY, YOU MAY NOT SAY MUCH, BUT
YOU AND THE ACID IN YOUR FINGERTIPS
COME IN HANDY ONCE IN A WHILE.

INSIDE...

RAN OUTTA BOOZE... LUCKY I
BROUGHT A 'MERGENCY SUPPLY...
I JUST LOVE PARTIES.

LOVELY
LIL' FLASH...

HEY...
LEGO!

AT LAST... HERE
IS WHAT WE
SEEK.

THE
COMPUTER--

--AND THE
MICROSCANNER
WHICH MAKES
IT WORK

WHAT A FOOL
STARK MUST BE...



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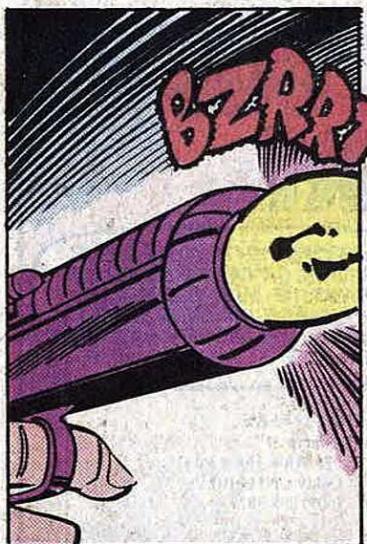
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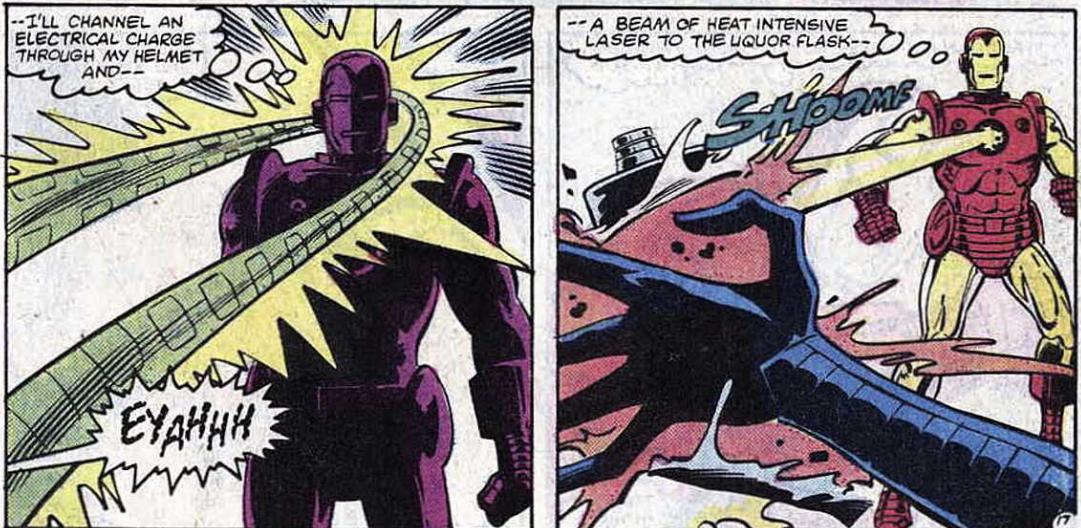
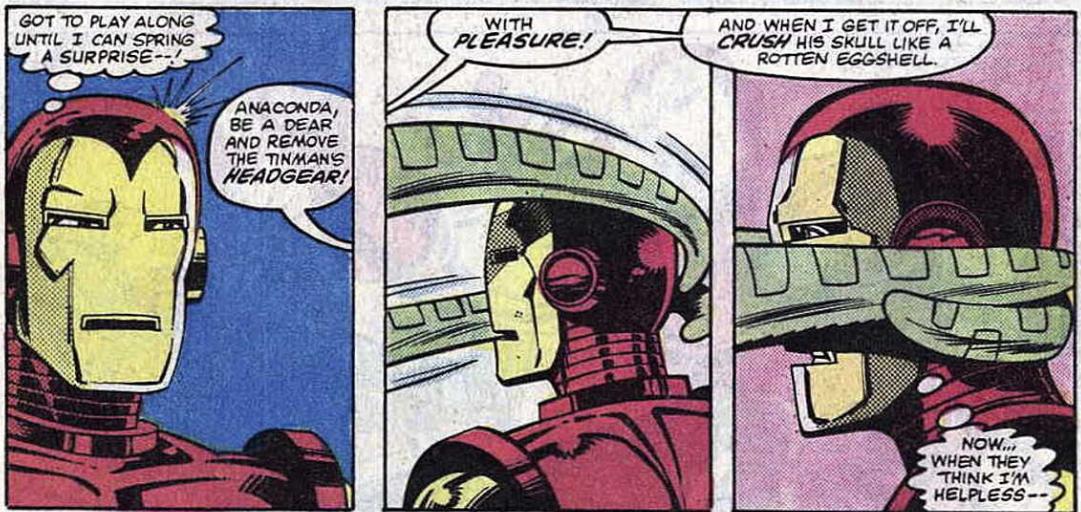
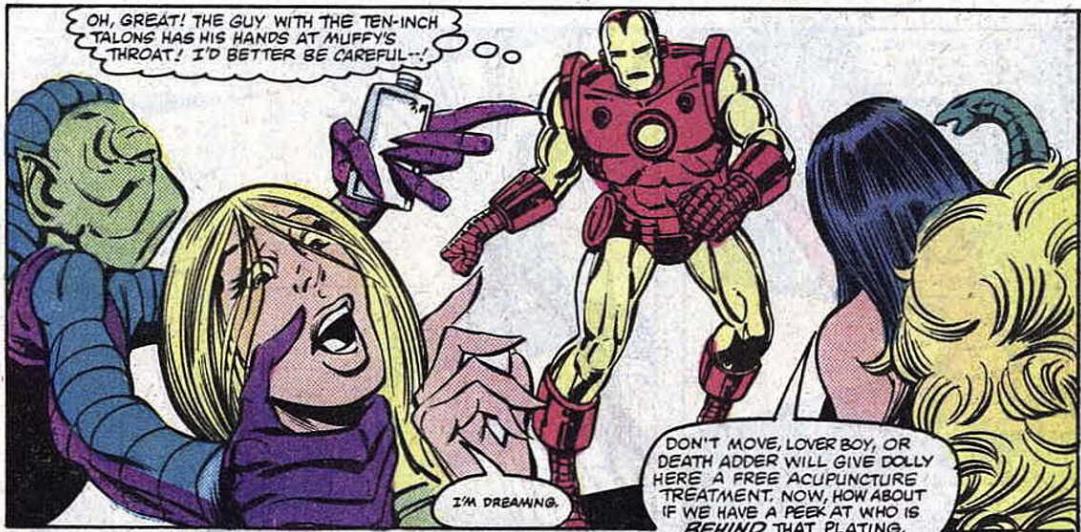
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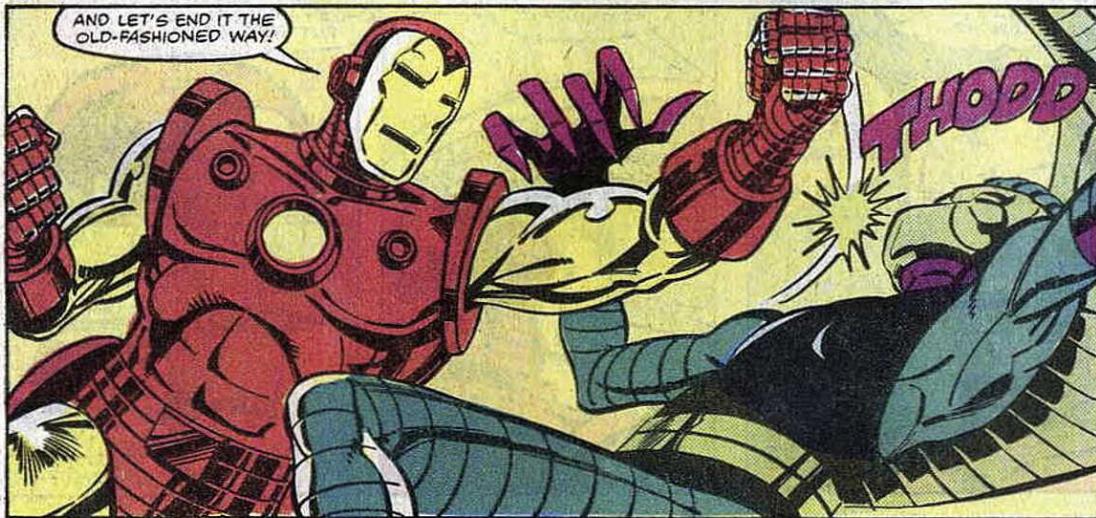
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...AND
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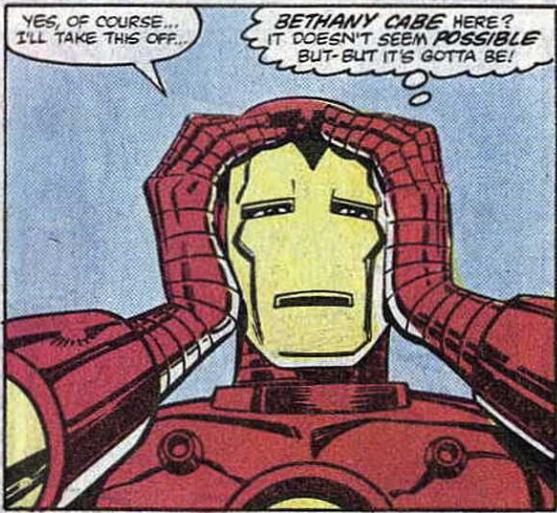
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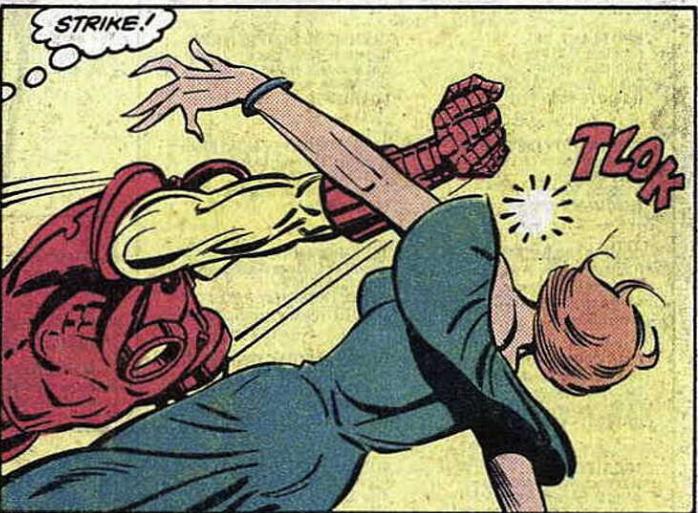
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BULLPEN BULLETINS

IT'S THAT TIME AGAIN...

Hello, I'm back again. Ordinarily, in this space, I regale you with alleged wit, provide you with behind-the-scenes personal glimpses of the Marvel Bullpen, announce the news, and pontificate from my perch as Editor-in-Chief. But this time, I'm going to devote the entire column to answering the question I've been asked a couple of thousand times recently: "Since I don't have a Comics Specialty Shop near my home, how can I buy MOON KNIGHT, THE MICRO-NAUTS, KA-ZAR and Marvel's other Direct Exclusives?"

Well, I checked with Ed Shukin, our Vice President of Circulation, who referred me to Mike Friedrich, our Direct Sales Manager, who said that anyone having trouble getting Marvel's non-newsstand publications should get in touch with the Direct Distributor nearest him. The following is a list of those Distributors:

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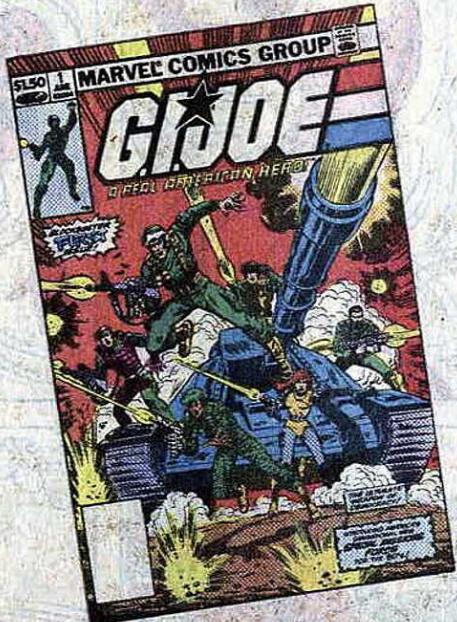
Got that? Okay. And if they can't help you, write to me here at 575 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10022. I'm always here.

HAPPY TRAILS TO YOU...

. . . because it's five forty-five here and I'm off to celebrate with Frank Miller and Denys Cowan their birthdays (January 27th and 30th, respectively). A bunch of us Bullpenners are having a dinner bash at D'Angelo's and I don't want to be late for the linguini!

Till next month,

Jim Shooter



THE HYPE BOX

INCREDIBLE HULK #273 — With all the new special projects and hoop-hah events happening around here, we sometimes forget about what a great job BILL MANTLO and SAL BUSCEMA do every month on this漫威 comic mag. We shouldn't — and we hope you don't either. It's still a fine example of consistently exciting super hero storytelling.

CONAN #136 — Big JOHN BUSCEMA is back — and how!

MASTER OF KUNG FU #114 — For this one, writer DOUG MOENCH sequestered himself in the library, researching ancient Chinese legends, and he's come up with a chillingly authentic story. See for yourself.

THE MIGHTY MARVEL CHECKLIST

- MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE #89 — The Thing and the Human Torch
- KING CONAN #11
- DAZZLER #17 — guest-starring the Angel!
- KA-ZAR #16
- DENNIS THE MENACE #9
- DAREDEVIL #184
- TEAM AMERICA #2
- AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #230
- CAPTAIN AMERICA #271
- THOR #321
- MICRONAUTS #43
- GHOST RIDER #70
- MOON KNIGHT #21
- G. L. JOE #1
- INCREDIBLE HULK #273
- ROM #32
- AVENGERS #221
- MARVEL SUPER HERO CONTEST OF CHAMPIONS (Limited Series) #2
- POWER MAN/IRON FIST #83
- MARVEL TALES #141 — Re-printing Amazing Spider-Man #4 by Lee and Ditko.
- CONAN #136
- X-MEN #159 — penciled — this month only — by BILL SIENKIEWICZ
- FANTASTIC FOUR #244
- IRON MAN #160
- PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #68
- DEFENDERS #109
- STAR WARS #61
- MASTER OF KUNG FU #114
- MARVEL TEAM-UP #119 — Spider-Man and the Gargoyle. Pencils by KERRY GAMMILL

MARVEL MAGAZINES

- CRAZY #57
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MARK GRUENWALD
EDITOR
MICHAEL CARLIN
ASSISTANT EDITOR

A MEMO FROM... MARK!

Hello, friends!

If you're the observant type, you may have already noticed a new name in the editor's space on both the splash and on this very page. Yes, that's the one—Mark Gruenwald. Now where have you seen that name before, you might ask? Give up? Okay, for the past four frantic years I've been assistant editor to a handful of Marvel's finest editors, including Tom DeFalco, Dennis O'Neil, and Jim Shooter. I've also been known to script a title or two in my spare time, and recently have taken pencil in hand to do story layouts. So one day, Big Jim came up to me and said, "I've just gotten the go-ahead to add a sixth editor to Marvel's editorial stable. How would you like to be him?" After Jim picked me up off the floor, I managed to stammer, "Sure!" Imagine that, I thought, the wild-eyed whiz kid from Wisconsin an editor for the biggest comic book company in the world!

And so here I am, the spanking-new editor of a star-studded line of Marvel's finest comics. Namely, Earth's mightiest super-team, THE AVENGERS... the sentinel of liberty, CAPTAIN AMERICA... the ultimate techno-warrior, IRON MAN... the god of thunder, THOR... the avenging angel of the night, SPIDER WOMAN... and last but not least, that excursion into the unknown, WHAT IF!

Aiding and abetting me in my never-ending war against deadlines is Michael Carlin, whose Page O'Stuff you might have caught if you read Marvel's humor mag CRAZY. (And if you don't, give it a try. That is, unless you've got something against laughing!) Michael and I are glad to be here to help the Avengers and friends, and we expect to take the books under our auspices to daring new heights in this, the third decade of the Marvel Age of Comics.

Join us, won't you?

MARK

Dear People,

IRON MAN #156 was a mind-bender. I feel the Mauler should make only one more appearance. Why? Well, since Stark International now has the taped developments of the suit, Iron Man will be able to discern weaknesses and slap the Mauler down. Afterwards, deprived of the suit, Mr. Doyle could be a headache to other heroes, even de-suited. As for "intergalactic adventures"—I wait with a worm on my tongue (bailed breath)!

Mark Carter

171 Wallace Avenue S.
Welland, Ontario
Canada

If you're "fishing" for answers as to what's coming up in future issues of IRON MAN, Mark, you'll just have to be patient. We will tantalize you just a bit, though, with a tip that a brand-new mastermind is waiting in the wings to give ol' Shellhead a hard time, courtesy of diabolical Denny O'Neil. Keep watching!

Dear Sirs,

As a born-again comic book reader, I found IRON MAN #156 fantastic. Though it's the first comic I've read in over two

years, and granted I'm no expert on comic-book formats, it progressed nicely and held my attention entirely. The last two pages were as any novel should be: suspenseful and, I must rather sheepishly admit, I thought Rhodey was going to get wasted by the Mauler. As long as I'm on the subject of the Mauler, I sure hope we see him some more—more as a semi-hero who works with the goodguys only when it suits (so to speak) his needs.

Nils Rothfusz
Glencoe, MN 55336

Gentlemen:

Question: If Stark International has tape #49A, will Iron Man improve his boot jets (since the Mauler's jets propelled him much faster)?

Scott Crum
15 Sunset Drive
Milford, MA 01757

Good question, Scott—since Tony Stark is always upgrading and improving his Iron Man armor, it's a good bet.

Dear Dave and all the gang:

I am sorry to see Bob Layton leave IRON MAN. He and John Romita, Jr. formed one of the best teams around. He will be missed. While I'm at it, I would like to thank everybody from Jim Shooter on down for putting out Marvel Comics. I mean, you guys don't have to do this—like, you could be politicians, carpenters, businessmen, etc.—but instead you produce Marvel Comics. Just the fact that you publish HULK, X-MEN, DAZZLER, IRON MAN and so on each and every month makes a merry Marvelite merry.

Daryl White
575 Tramway
Albuquerque, NM 87123

Aw shucks, Daryl, but thanks! But, you know, we couldn't help thinking about your example. The ramifications are incredible! What if the whole blamed bullpen were otherwise employed—what if everything were reversed? Can you imagine it: Ronald Reagan presents THE INVINCIBLE IRON MAN by "Tip" O'Neil, Ted Kennedy and Ralph Nader. And a State of the Union televised address by President Shooter. Whew!

Dear Jim, John and Dave:

I really think the Mauler was great in IRON MAN #156. I'd like to see Shellhead get a rematch with the Mauler. He deserves a chance to do better against such a foe. I also like Matt Dunn's idea in the letters page about a bi-monthly Ant-Man back-up feature in this mag. Finally, I want Beth to come back. She's one of the best supporting characters the book ever had.

Dave Osberg
4532 Hillsboro Avenue
New Hope, MN 55428

Dear David:

"The Mauler Mandate" (in #156) was great. The artwork by Bob Layton and Al Milgrom on the cover, and John Romita, Jr. and Pablo Marcos on the inside, was fine. I was glad that the mysterious redhead was from Rhodey's past and not Tony Stark's, for a change. It was wild to see that, despite the fact of his being in prison, Mr. Cord is causing problems for Stark Interna-

tional. It was refreshing to see a foe who could give Iron Man a run for his money. And Iron Man's ability to survive showed how experience will out, no matter how big or small the foe he goes up against. It's more interesting, too, that the Mauler escaped—I can't wait to see the outcome of a rematch.

Charles David Haskell
15 W 139th Street
New York, NY 10037

David,

Is there any chance of seeing the Jack of Hearts, the Guardsman, and the Wraith again? Think what type of team they'd make, if the astonishing Ant-Man was added to their ranks. In fact, now that I think of it, why not write Giant-Man into the series, too, since he is out at Stark-West? (Incidentally, these are just suggestions. You guys are doing fantastic without me, but I think such an expanded plot-line would be interesting.)

Mike Sopp
438 W 32
Erie, PA 16508

Just one question, Mike. What about Iron Man? You didn't say anything about the Golden Avenger!

Dear Iron Men:

All right! IRON MAN has never been so great! I really love the great stories, and I am really impressed with the fabulous artwork of John Romita, Jr. David Michelinie does an amazing job as a scribe, continuing to crank out fantastic stories month after month. How do you do it, Dave? My only request is that you put in some more of your trademarked tiny bits of humor. They help to lighten up the mood. And, as long as I'm requesting, let's see the return of the Death Squad from IRON MAN #72. Face it, guys, it would be an awesome fight! Since that issue, the Meltier has destroyed Iron Man twice, and Blacklash almost killed the Golden Avenger, too. With these two heavies, plus their old pal, the Man-Bull (called now, I believe, the Minotaur), our hero would have a real battle on his hands. Well, what else can I ask, except: bring back the Mandarin, Firebrand, Sunfire, and even Bob Layton! Make Mine Marvel!

Andrew Krepela
6102 138th Street SE
Everett, WA 98204

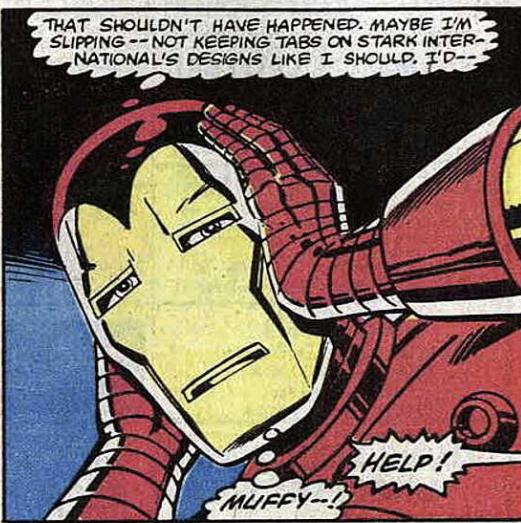
Bob Layton?! Let's take it a step farther, Andy: can you imagine what would happen if we teamed HIM up with the Mandarin (not to mention the aforementioned Firebrand and Sunfire)? After all, he has unique abilities, like the power to blot Iron Man out with ink—or even to erase him entirely! The possibilities are...well...downright silly, if we do say so ourselves. Which brings us to the end of another letters page, and we'll leave you with a decidedly non-frivolous bit of advice: If you like action, drama and high adventure, don't miss next month's mini-masterpiece, featuring a guest appearance by a certain crescent crusader!

BENEATH THE ALLOY, FLESH AND BLOOD...
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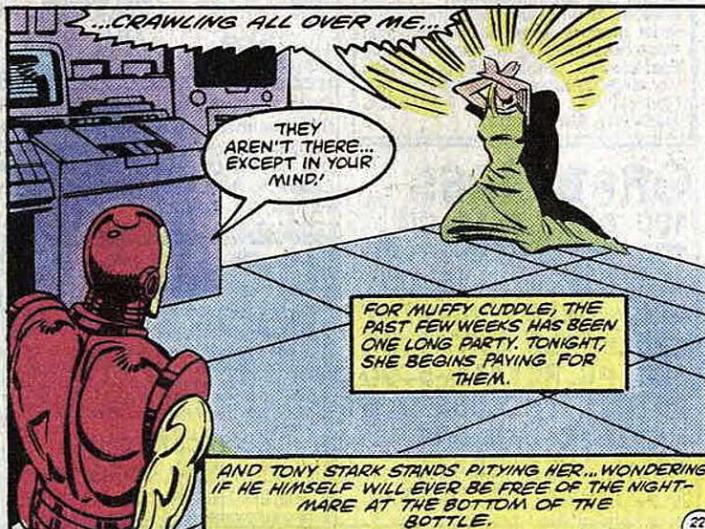


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