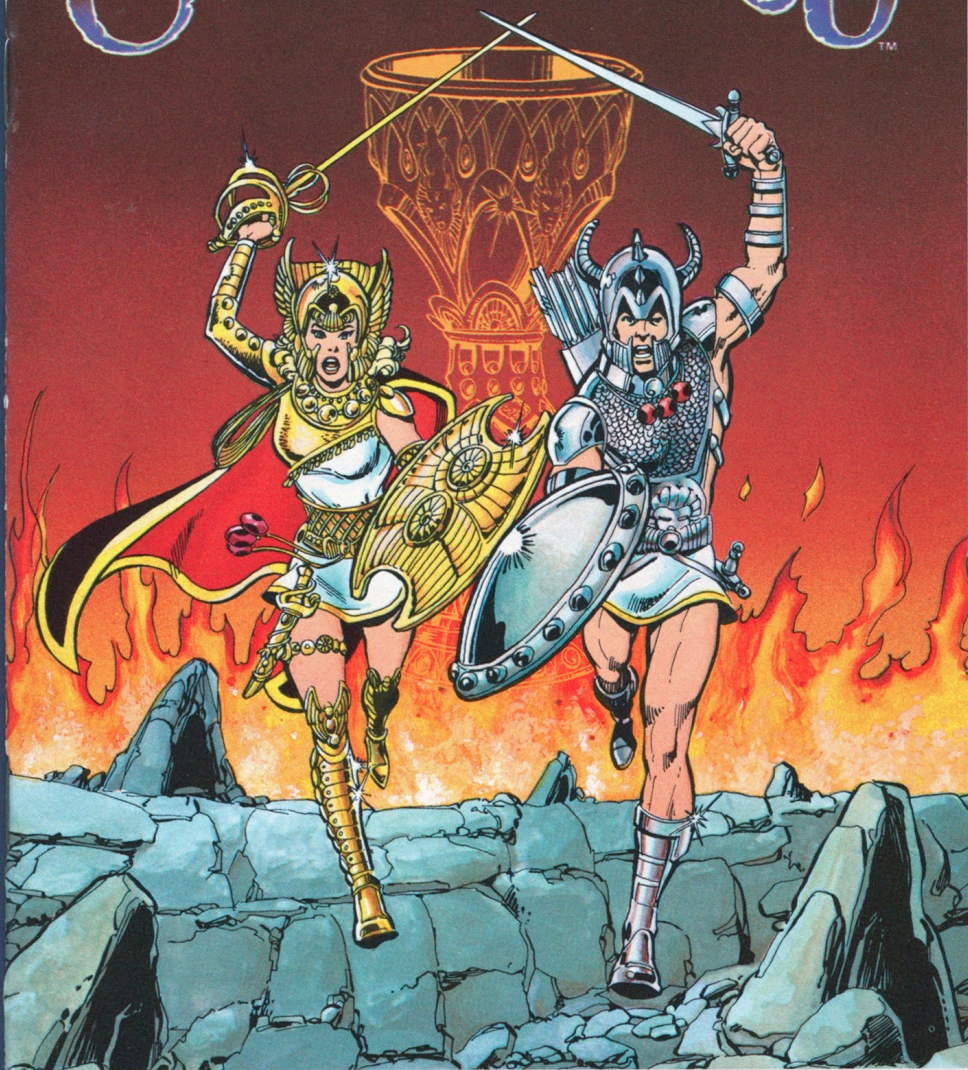




# Swordquest<sup>2</sup>





# FIREWORLD™

In Earthworld grim, these Twins have fought  
Twelve beasts of Zodiac birth,  
And mastered thieving as they sought  
For Sword of ultimate worth.

Through Fire world's flames they now do rage  
While Time its toll does add—  
To seven days? A year? An Age?  
Who knows, in a world gone mad?



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SO NATURALLY, BROTHER  
AND SISTER HAVE PLUNGED  
HEADLONG AFTER IT!\*

OUR GHOSTLY MENTORS  
CHALLENGED US TO ENTER  
THE SECOND WORLD THAT  
LIES BELOW--TO CLAIM  
BOTH THE SWORD AND  
OUR OWN DESTINIES!

WELL, WE'VE  
COME THIS FAR--  
AND BY THE GODS,  
WE WON'T STOP  
NOW!

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

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

THIS DOES ONE  
ENDING BECOME A  
SECOND BEGINNING.

AND IN HIS CASTLE  
KEEP HIGH ABOVE,  
THE MALEVOLENT  
WIZARD KON-JURO  
SMILES.

IT IS A SMILE  
WITHOUT  
HUMOR...A  
SMILE LIKE  
THE GRIN  
OF DEATH...

BOOK TWO

\* AS SEEN IN OUR COMPANION VOLUME  
"EARTHWORLD!"--SOLD WITH  
GAME ONE OF "SWORDQUEST."

# FireWorld!





...YET A SMILE THAT SWIFTLY FADES, WHEN--

WELL, KONJURO? HAVE YOU LOCATED THOSE TWO THIEVING WHELPS YET?

OF COURSE, MY LORD TYRANNUS. THE POWERS OF KONJURO ARE NOT LONG MOCKED...BY ANYONE.



IF THAT WRY COMMENT WAS MEANT FOR YOUR KING, WIZARD, BEST KEEP A CIVIL TONGUE IN YOUR HEAD.

WHERE ARE THEY? HAS YOUR DEMON DISPATCHED THEM YET?

ALAS, THEY ARE BEYOND THE REACH OF MY POWERS...FOR THE MOMENT, AT LEAST...

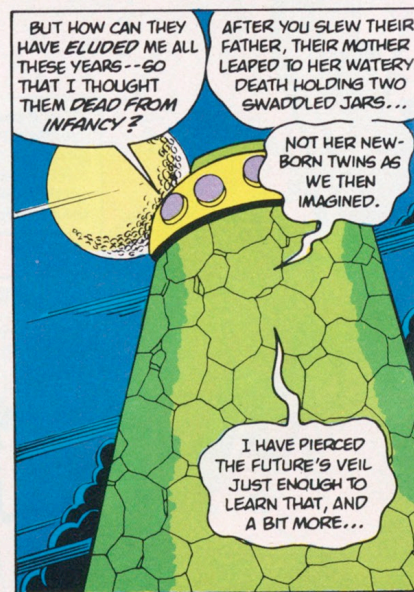


...IN THE PLACE CALLED FIREWORLD, WHICH LIES FAR BENEATH OUR VERY FEET!

AND IS IT AS YOU SAID?

ARE THEY INDEED THE GOLD-HAIRED ONES WHO, 'T WAS PROPHESED, WILL CLAIM MY VERY THRONE, WITH "A SWORD SHINING BRIGHTLY AS SUMMER'S SUN"?

AS YOU CLAIMED THEIR PARENTS' LIVES, AYE, MY KING.



BUT HOW CAN THEY HAVE ELUDED ME ALL THESE YEARS--SO THAT I THOUGHT THEM DEAD FROM INFANCY?

AFTER YOU SLEW THEIR FATHER, THEIR MOTHER LEAPED TO HER WATERY DEATH HOLDING TWO SWADDLED JARS...

NOT HER NEW-BORN TWINS AS WE THEN IMAGINED.

I HAVE PIERCED THE FUTURE'S VEIL JUST ENOUGH TO LEARN THAT, AND A BIT MORE...



"...FOR WHEN THEY STOLE NEAR MY TOWER THIS NIGHT, INTENT ON ROBBING ME, THEIR THOUGHTS OF VENGEANCE WERE STRONG...

"...SO STRONG THAT THEY HOVERED WRAITH-LIKE IN THE AIR, LONG ENOUGH FOR MY SPELL TO GATHER AND READ THEM, LIKE SO MANY TEA-LEAVES.

"THEY WERE THINKING OF THEIR WARRIOR-FATHER'S DEATH AT YOUR HANDS, AND OF THEIR OWN ORPHANING WHEN THEIR MOTHER SACRIFICED HERSELF FOR THEM..."



...AS WELL AS OF WHAT HAPPENED IN THE MONTHS AND YEARS WHICH FOLLOWED."

YOUNG TORR GROWS TALL AND TALL, EH?

NO TALLER THAN TARRA, HUSBAND.

THEY'RE TWINS, AFTER ALL.

MAY WE GO OUT AND PLAY NOW, FELECIA?



AH, IF ONLY YOU COULD, CHILD!

BUT NO ONE DARES WALK ABROAD IN THE SHADOW OF DARKSPIRE CASTLE, AFTER THE NIGHT-BELL HAS SOUNDED, AND--

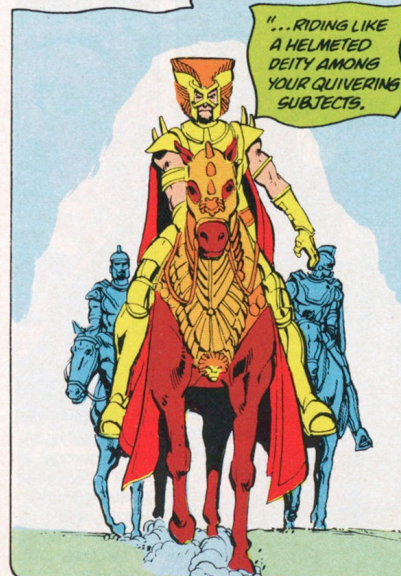
**BONG BONG**

LISTEN! IT TOLLS--AND ALL MUST OBEY THE CURFEW, THIS NIGHT AS EVERY NIGHT FOR FIVE YEARS NOW--!

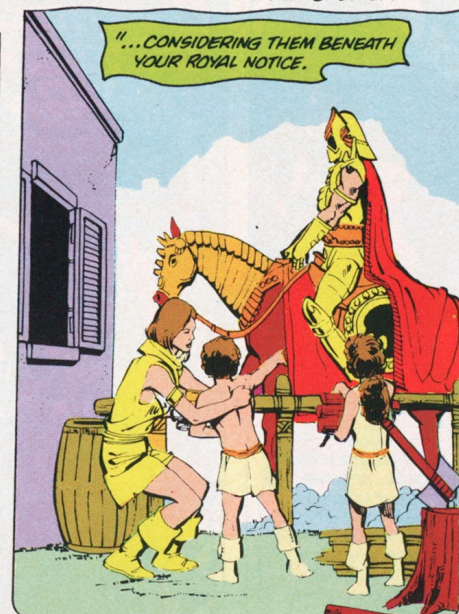




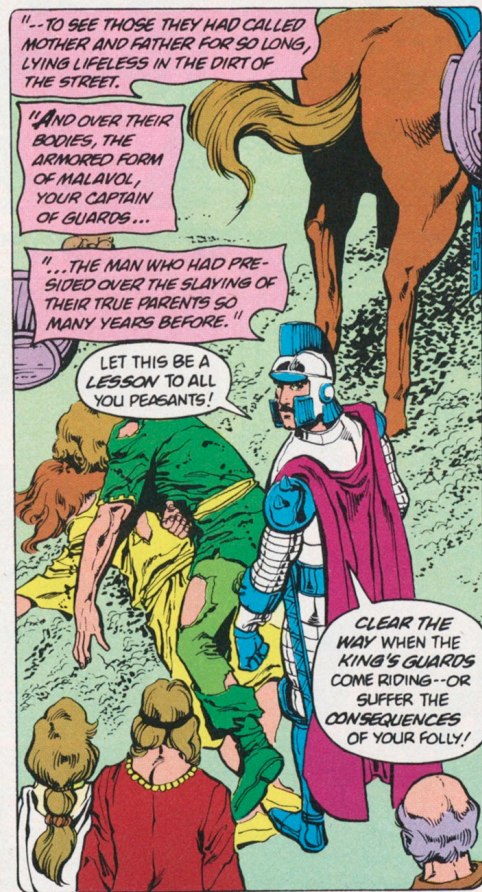
"AND SO, UNKNOWING, YOU HAVE REIGNED FOR NIGH A SCORE OF YEARS, THINKING YOURSELF SAFE FROM THE PROPHECY REVEALED TO ME IN A MAGICAL TRANCE..."



"HOW OFTEN YOU MUST HAVE PASSED CLOSE BY THOSE TWO DARK-HAIRED BRATS AS THEY GREW UP..."







"HOW HORRIFIED AND SPEECHLESS THEY MUST HAVE BEEN, FOR AN ETERNAL MOMENT..."

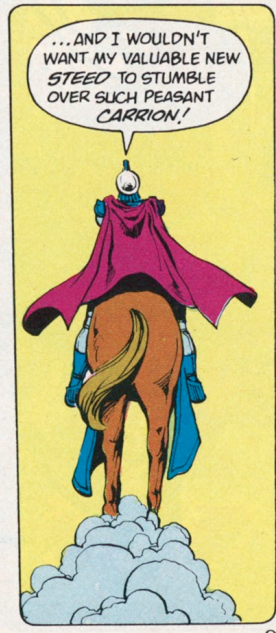
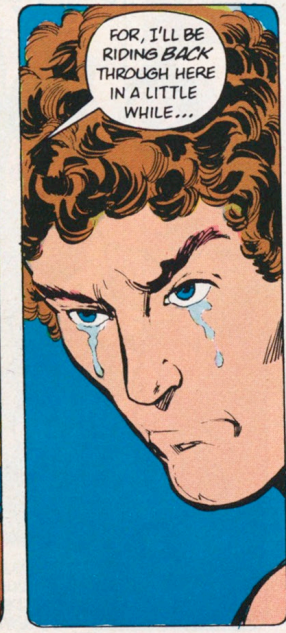
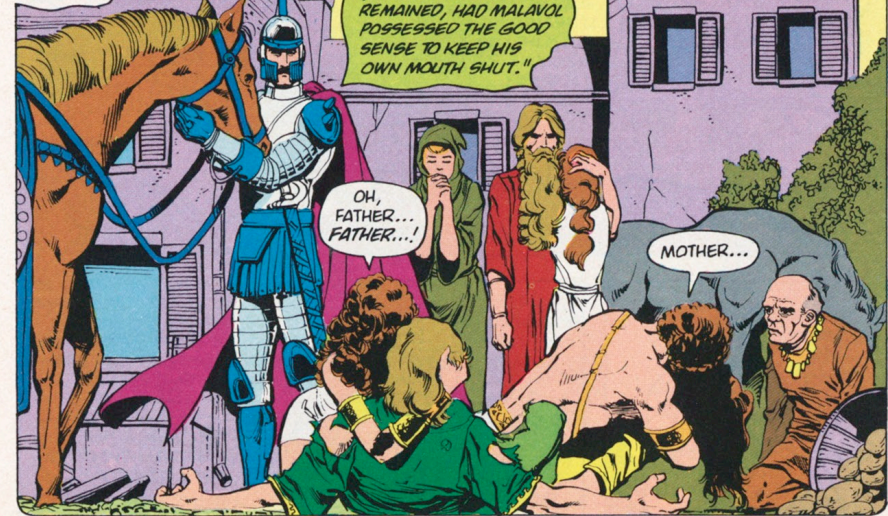
"...TORN BETWEEN WHAT THEY SAW, AND DESIRED TO DO..."



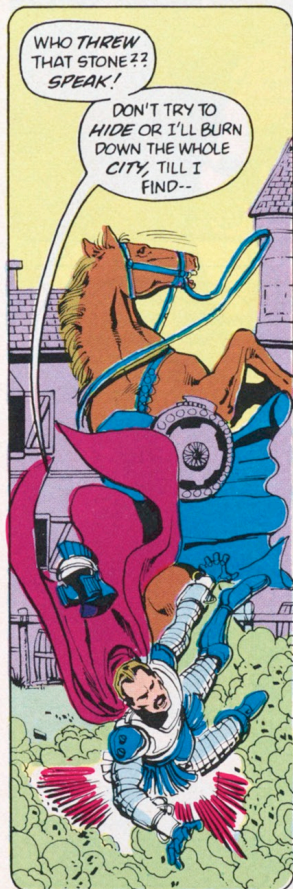
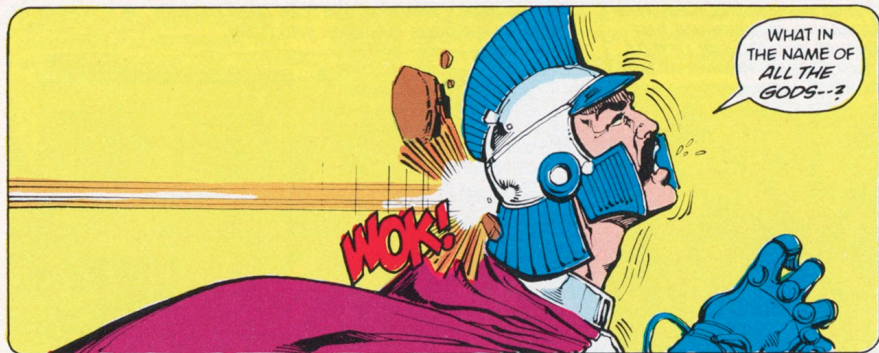
"...AND THE YEARS OF ADMONITION FROM THEIR FOSTER PARENTS TO KEEP HIDDEN, AND GIVE NO OFFENSE TO THE KING OR HIS MEN."

"YET SO INGRAINED IN THEM WERE THE HABITS OF OBEDIENCE THAT NEITHER BOY NOR GIRL LIFTED A HAND AGAINST MALAVOL AT THAT MOMENT..."

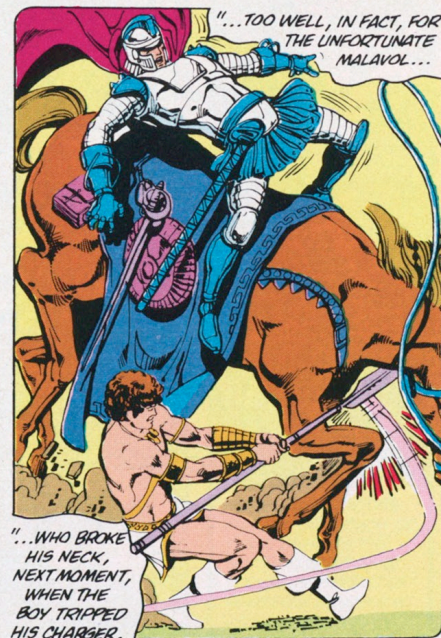
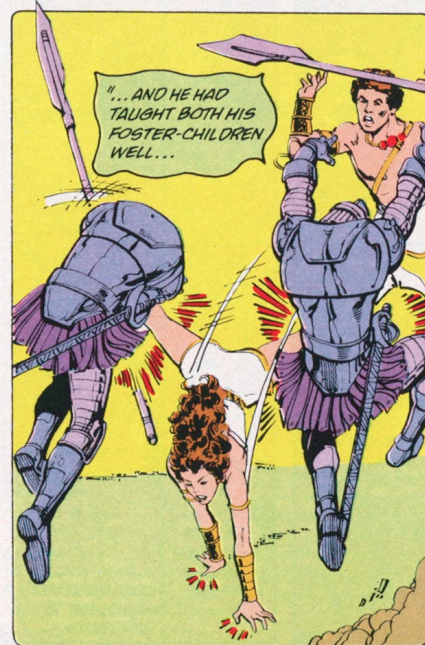
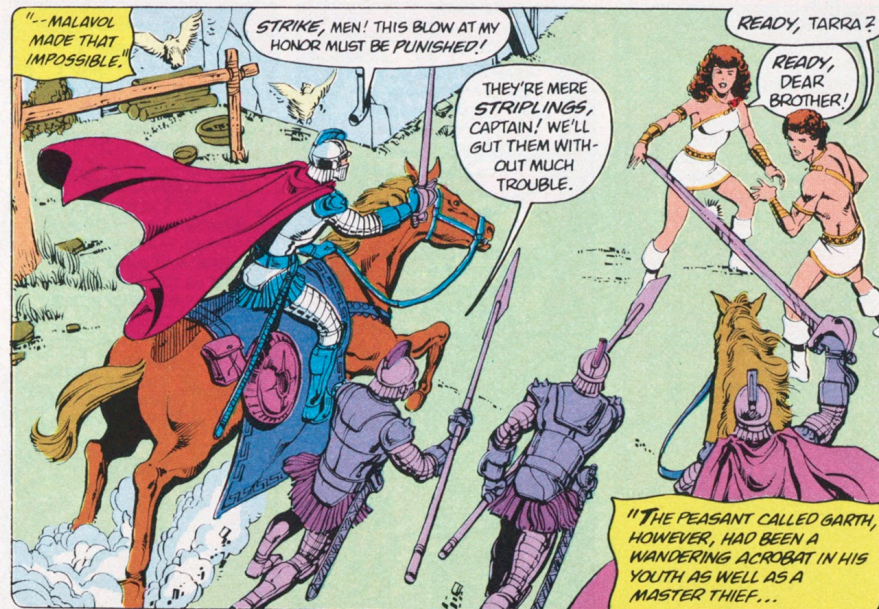
"...BUT MERELY EMBRACED THE POOR DEAD FIGURES, AS IF HOPING TO BREATHE PRECIOUS LIFE BACK INTO THEM."







"CONSIDER THE IRONY, MY KING: IF NOT FOR THIS PETTY INCIDENT, THE DISGUISED TWINS MIGHT HAVE LIVED ALL THEIR LIVES, WITHOUT STRIKING A BLOW IN VENGEANCE."





"FUGITIVES NOW, THE PAIR BECAME THIEVES... AND THUS CAME TO PASS WHERE WE NOW BEHOLD THEM, MY KING. THEY--!"

"THE FLAMES THEY PLUNGE THROUGH DO NOT SEEM TO HARM THEM. I MUST TALK WITH THEM, KONJURO!"

"AS YOU WISH, ROYAL TYRANNUS. SPEAK... AND THEY SHALL INSTANTLY HEAR."

HEED MY WORDS, YE POOR OFF-SPRING OF MY MOST FAITHFUL WARRIOR, MY MOST BELOVED FRIEND, TARR!

SISTER! THAT VOICE-- IT SEEMS TO COME FROM EVERYWHERE-- YET FROM INSIDE MY OWN BRAIN--!

I HEAR IT, TOO.

AND FROM THE WORDS IT SPEAKS -- THERE'S ONLY ONE MAN IT CAN BE--!

AYE, CHILDREN! I AM TYRANNUS-- AND I SPEAK TO YOU AS A FRIEND, WHO HAS SEEN THE FOLLY OF HIS WAYS.

KONJURO SAYS THAT IF YOU WILLINGLY SURRENDER YOUR OWN WILLS TO HIS, HE CAN DRAW YOU BACK FROM THE INFERNO INTO WHICH YOU HAVE RASHLY HURLED YOURSELVES.

DO SO, I PRAY YOU... FOR YOUR OWN SAKES!

TYRANNUS!

THE MAN WHO SLEW OUR TRUE FATHER-- --AND HOUNDED OUR MOTHER TO HER DEATH!

TOO TRUE, ALAS... BUT A MAN NOW VASTLY CHANGED AND REPENTANT, AND WILLING TO SHARE HIS THRONE WITH THOSE HE WRONGED IN HIS TRAGIC YOUTH!

DO NOT DOOM YOURSELVES WITH FOOLISH ACTIONS-- WHEN I OFFER YOU TWO-THIRDS OF A TRIPLE CROWN!

Y-YOU EXPECT US-- TO TRUST YOU!?

YOU--WHO, THEY SAY, MURDERED EVEN HIS OWN ROYAL FATHER?

WHAT MEANS THAT TO YOU, COMPARED TO THE RICHES AND POWER I WILL GRANT YOU?

THINK OF WHAT I OFFER-- COMPARED TO WHAT LIES BELOW, EVEN IF YOU SURVIVE YOUR FALL!

THINK, MY DEAR YOUNG FRIENDS-- THINK!

AND, BECAUSE THEY ARE ONLY HUMAN, AFTER ALL, TARRA AND TORR DO INDEED THINK-- AND THEY REMEMBER THIS NIGHT'S STRANGE DOINGS--

--THE ADVENTURE IN KONJURO'S LONELY TOWER, FROM WHICH THEY FLED, PURSUED BY A THING FROM BEYOND.

THEY REMEMBER THE GHOST-LIKE MENTORR WHO APPEARED, AND BADE THEM SEEK OUT THE SWORD OF ULTIMATE SORCERY--

--DOWN A DARK-YAWNING PIT WHICH LED DOWN TO THE PLACE CALLED EARTHWORLD.

IT WAS, THE MENTORS SAID, BUT THE FIRST OF FOUR WORLDS THE YOUNG THIEVES MUST FOLLOW IN PURSUIT OF WHATEVER DESTINY IS HELD IN STORE FOR THEM.



YET WHAT A WORLD IT TURNED OUT TO BE!

TWELVE SEPARATE AND INTERCONNECTED CHAMBERS, EACH LORDED OVER BY A LIVING INCARNATION OF A ZODIAC SYMBOL--

--WHO EITHER ATTACKED OR AIDED THE YOUTHFUL SIBLINGS ON THEIR QUEST FOR THE MYSTIC SWORD.

STILL TORR AND TARRA PERSEVERED-- AND EVENTUALLY TRIUMPHED--

--GAINING NOT THE SWORD, BUT AT LEAST THE ZODIACAL TALISMAN WITH IT--

--A TALISMAN WHICH HAD METAMORPHOSIZED, IN TURN, INTO TWIN SWORDS FOR TWIN ADVENTURERS!

SUCH ARE TORR'S AND TARRA'S THOUGHTS AS

WELL, MY YOUNG FRIENDS? HAVE YOU CONSIDERED MY GENEROUS OFFER?

AYE, TYRANNUS-- AND WE HURL IT BACK IN YOUR TEETH!

WE'LL MAKE NO DEALS WITH THE SLAYERS OF ALL THOSE WHO LOVED US!

FOR ONCE, BROTHER, YOU'RE NO MORE IMPETUOUS THAN I'D BE!

SO BE IT! BUT KNOW YOU THAT MY DEMONS SHALL DOG YOUR TRAIL, WHILE YOU SEEK THE SWORD OF ULTIMATE SORCERY--

--AND EVEN IF YOU FIND IT, IT WILL EVENTUALLY WIND UP IN MY ROYAL HANDS, WHERE IT BELONGS--

MY SPELL FADES AS THEY PASS FURTHER INTO THE WORLD BELOW, AND THEY CAN NO LONGER HEAR YOU.

CURSE THOSE INFERNAL MEDDLERS, MENTOR AND MENTARRA--MY FORMER COUNCILORS!

IT WAS THEY WHO FORGED THAT MAGICAL SWORD--

MILORD KING...

AND NOW, EVEN THOUGH THEY HAVE ENTERED AN ETHEREAL STATE, IT SEEMS THEY HOLD IT OVER YOUR HEAD, EH, MY KING?

GIVE UP NOT SO EASILY! THE WAY BEFORE THE YOUNG THIEVES IS LONG AND HARD... AND THEY MAY YET FALTER AND FAIL... AND DIE.

IF THEY DON'T, KONJURO, I DEPEND UPON YOU TO FIND STILL ANOTHER WAY TO REACH AND DESTROY THEM.

FOR IF I FALL BEFORE THEM AND THE SWORD-- SO SHALL YOU!

AS, NO LONGER WITHIN EVEN SORCEROUS EAR-SHOT OF THE USURPER OF DARKSPIRE...

BY THE GODS! THE FLAMES DON'T REALLY BURN US-- EVEN SLOW OUR FALL-- BUT IT SEEMS WE'VE BEEN DESCENDING FOREVER.

IT'S NO MERE LAND OF FLAME WE ENTER, TORR-- BUT OF WIZARDRY AND WONDER.

IN FACT, IT SEEMS OUR DOWNWARD PLUNGE IS ABOUT TO END--





--BUT I DON'T  
KNOW IF THAT'S  
A CAUSE FOR  
REJOICING OR  
DESPAIRING!

SHADES OF  
A THOUSAND  
SPIRITS!

GENTLE IF STIFLINGLY  
HOT WINDS SEEM TO  
BUOY THE STARTLED  
PAIR TO A FEATHER-  
SOFT LANDING...



--IN THE SCARLET WORLD CALLED--

**FIREWORLD!**  
AND NEVER WAS A  
PLACE MORE APTLY  
NAMED!

VOLCANOES--  
BLAZING GEYSERS  
--RIVERS OF LAVA--  
AS FAR AS THE  
EYE CAN SEE!



WE'LL PASS OUT  
FROM THIS TERRIBLE  
HEAT--UNLESS WE  
FIND A COOLER  
SPOT, AND  
QUICKLY.

WE'D BETTER TALK THIS  
OVER, AND FIGURE OUT  
WHICH DIRECTION  
WE SHOULD--

NO TIME  
FOR THAT!



THIS WAY LIES AS  
OPEN AS ANY!  
COME ON!

WAIT!  
THAT PATH  
LOOKS EVEN  
WORSE TO--

WILL YOU  
QUIT ARGUING,  
AND FOLLOW  
ME?



I WILL  
NOT!

YOU'RE CONSTANTLY  
ORDERING ME AROUND--  
AND I'M SICK AND TIRED  
OF IT, DO YOU HEAR ME?

I DON'T CLAIM TO  
KNOW WHICH WAY IS  
SAFER, OR COOLER,  
OR WHATEVER--



--BUT I'M GOING THIS  
WAY, AND YOU CAN DECIDE  
IF YOU WANT TO FOLLOW  
ME FOR A CHANGE!

TO BLAZES  
WITH YOU  
THEN!

I'LL GO  
MY OWN  
WAY!



YET, AS TARRA'S LITHE FORM VANISHES FROM VIEW...

NOW, WHAT MADE ME PICK A FIGHT WITH HER THAT WAY?

WELL, NOTHING TO BE DONE FOR IT NOW.



MY ONLY HOPE IS TO FIND THE SWORD, WHEREVER IT FELL--

--THEN USE IT TO FIND HER, AND GET US BOTH OUT OF HERE--



--BEFORE WE BOTH PERISH OF THIS HORRIBLE HEAT!

WELL, WELL, WELL...!



HERMINUS, OLD THIEF, IT SEEMS YOU WERE RIGHT TO FOLLOW THOSE TWO CUBS!

ONE OF THEM'S LIKELY TO FIND THE SWORD OF ULTIMATE SORCERY YOU'VE BEEN SEEKING FOR SO LONG.

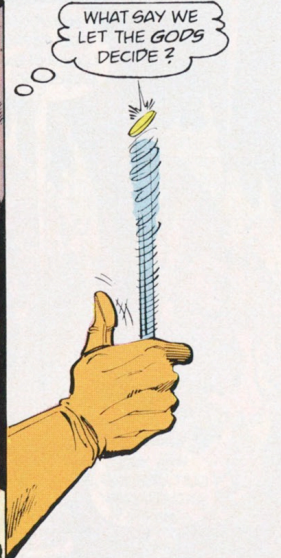


'Twill THEN BE NO TRICK FOR A PROFESSIONAL THIEF LIKE YOURSELF TO WREST IT FROM THOSE AMATEURS.

BUT...WHICH TO FOLLOW?



WHAT SAY WE LET THE GODS DECIDE?



SOON AFTERWARD, UPON THE LEFTWARD PATH CHOSEN BY THE HEADSTRONG TORR...

SO HOT--AND GETTING HOTTER EVERY MINUTE!

CAN'T SEE FAR ENOUGH AHEAD TO KNOW IF I TOOK THE RIGHT PATH OR NOT!

WE SHOULD'VE STUCK TOGETHER, NOT SEPARATED.

WHY DID I GET SO PUSHY WITH TARRA, ANYWAY?



TOO LATE NOW, THOUGH. MY WAY BACK IS ALREADY BLOCKED BY FIRE AND LAVA.

GOT TO KEEP GOING--FIND THE SWORD, AND THEN TARRA, BEFORE--

GODS! NOW THE FLAMES ARE SHOOTING UP BEFORE ME, AS WELL!

OH, MENTORS--WHERE ARE YOU, NOW THAT I REALLY NEED YOU??



YOU ARE CORRECT, TORR.

--BUT MENTOR MAY BE OF SMALL SERVICE TO YOU.

WAIT! I JUST REMEMBERED--THE ZODIACAL TALISMAN THAT WE RECEIVED ALONG WITH OUR BLADES!

WE KEPT THEM WHEN WE JUMPED, AND PERHAPS--



MENTARRA IS EVEN NOW APPEARING TO YOUR WANDERING SISTER--



I HAD NO IDEA I COULD SUMMON YOU--ONCE I REACHED FIREWORLD!





ONCE AND ONCE ONLY IN EACH OF THE **FOUR WORLDS** OF THE **ELEMENTS** CAN YOU CALL UPON US, LAD.

THIS IS THAT TIME. SPEAK!

C-CAN YOU TAKE ME TO THE SWORD-- OR TO TARRA?

THAT IS A WAY YOU MUST FIND FOR YOURSELF, ALAS.

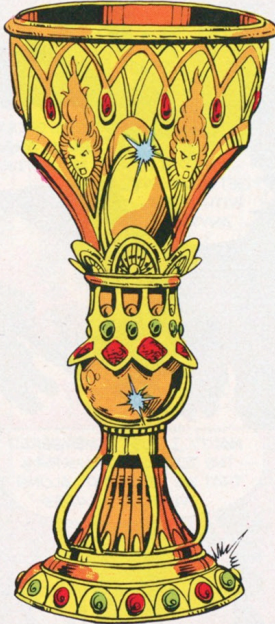
THEN SHOW ME SOMETHING COOL TO QUENCH MY THIRST, I BEG OF YOU... BEFORE I PERISH!

AH, NOW AT LEAST YOU HAVE ASKED THE PROPER QUESTION--WHICH ALONE IS HALF THE STRUGGLE TO FINDING THE ANSWER.

I SHALL SHOW YOU WHAT YOU ASK, TORR--

--AYE, AND SO VERY MUCH MORE--

--IN THE CHALICE OF LIGHT!



IT-IT'S TRULY A THING OF BEAUTY, MENTOR!

BUT WHERE IS IT? HOW CAN I REACH IT AND QUENCH MY THIRST--SO I CAN STAY ALIVE LONG ENOUGH TO FIND TARRA AND THE SWORD?

YOU WILL FIND IT WHEN YOU BECOME THE **MIGHTIEST WARRIOR** IN THIS WORLD--AND NOT BEFORE.

YET, IF AND WHEN YOU DRINK OF THE CHALICE OF LIGHT, NOT ONLY SHALL YOU KNOW NO MORE THIRST IN THIS FIERY PLACE--

--BUT YOU WILL BE IMMUNE TO HER FLAMES, AND THIS WILL CONQUER!

NOW, I MUST DEPART...!

HOLD IT! DON'T GO! I'M NOT THROUGH WITH--

BLAST! I SHOULD'VE KNOWN --NOBODY KEEPS MENTOR AROUND WHEN HE DECIDES IT'S TIME TO GO.

JUST SEEING THAT CHALICE GAVE ME STRENGTH--AND HOPE.

I'LL FIND IT--AND I'LL BECOME THE GREAT WARRIOR MENTOR SAID I MUST BE--

--FOR THE SAKE OF THE REVENGE WE SEEK--AND FOR TARRA!

MEANWHILE, HIS SISTER HAS LIKEWISE COMMUNICATED WITH THE FEMININE WRAITH MENTARRA, AND NOW--

THIS IS ONE TIME I WAS JUST AS STUPIDLY STUBBORN AS TORR.

I LET THE STIFLING HEAT IN THIS PLACE WARP MY JUDGMENT.

CAN'T GO THAT WAY --BUT MAYBE I'LL FIND RESPITE FROM THE HEAT IN THIS CAVE.

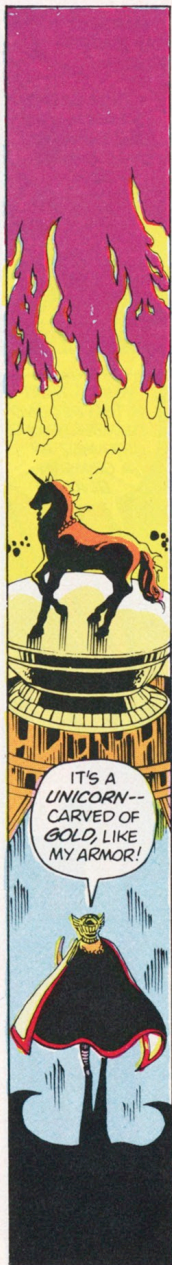
WH-WHAT--?

IT'S NOT REALLY A CAVE AT ALL--





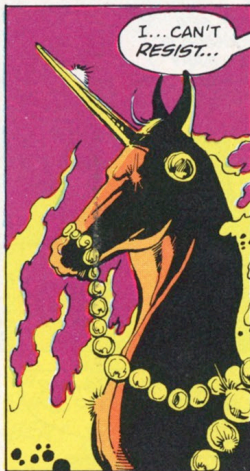




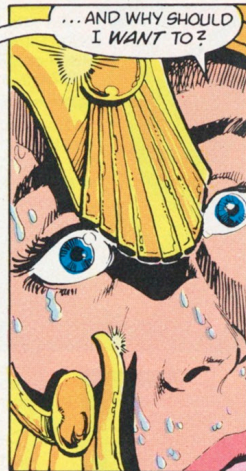
IT'S A  
UNICORN--  
CARVED OF  
GOLD, LIKE  
MY ARMOR!



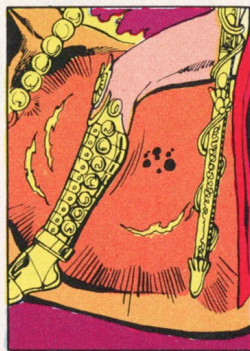
SOME-  
THING...  
DRAWS ME  
TOWARD  
IT...!



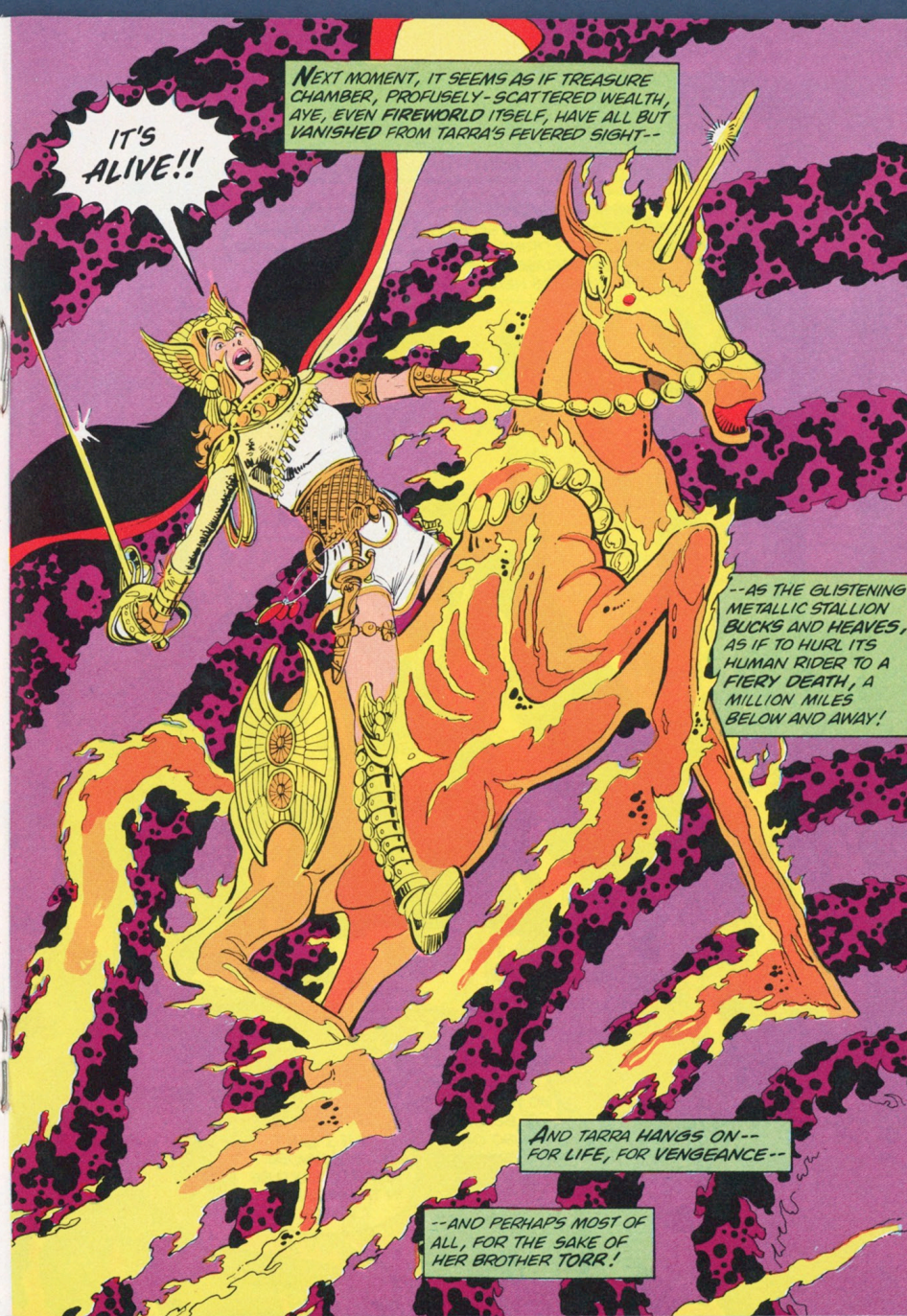
I... CAN'T  
RESIST...



... AND WHY SHOULD  
I WANT TO?



B-BY THE  
GODS--



IT'S  
ALIVE!!

NEXT MOMENT, IT SEEMS AS IF TREASURE  
CHAMBER, PROFUSELY-SCATTERED WEALTH,  
AYE, EVEN FIREWORLD ITSELF, HAVE ALL BUT  
VANISHED FROM TARRA'S FEVERED SIGHT--

--AS THE GLISTENING  
METALLIC STALLION  
BUCKS AND HEAVES,  
AS IF TO HURL ITS  
HUMAN RIDER TO A  
FIERY DEATH, A  
MILLION MILES  
BELOW AND AWAY!

AND TARRA HANGS ON--  
FOR LIFE, FOR VENGEANCE--

--AND PERHAPS MOST OF  
ALL, FOR THE SAKE OF  
HER BROTHER TORR!



MEANWHILE, USING THE WORDS OF MENTORR AS THE FOUNDATION OF HIS ACTIONS, TORR HIMSELF HAS WANDERED INTO YET ANOTHER OF THE STRANGE CIRCULAR CHAMBERS WHICH SEEM TO DOT THE CRIMSON FACE OF FIREWORLD...

WARLOCKS AND WIZARDS! I CAME SEEKING A CHALICE TO DRINK FROM-- PERHAPS REFUGE FROM THE NUMBING HEAT--

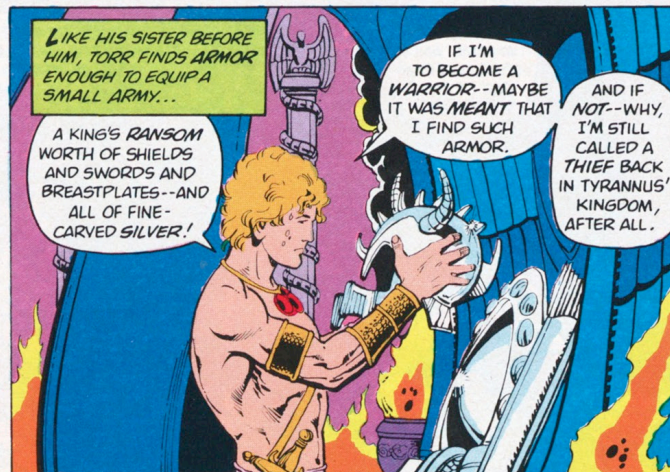
--AND I'VE FOUND A WEIRDLING ALTAR INSTEAD!

WELL, MIGHT AS WELL SEARCH IT BEFORE I GO ON.

BUT I CAN'T IMAGINE WHOSE ALTAR IT COULD BE IN THIS DEVILISH PLACE...



...FOR I'VE CERTAINLY SEEN NO ONE ABOUT!



LIKE HIS SISTER BEFORE HIM, TORR FINDS ARMOR ENOUGH TO EQUIP A SMALL ARMY...

A KING'S RANSOM WORTH OF SHIELDS AND SWORDS AND BREASTPLATES--AND ALL OF FINE-CARVED SILVER!

IF I'M TO BECOME A WARRIOR--MAYBE IT WAS MEANT THAT I FIND SUCH ARMOR.

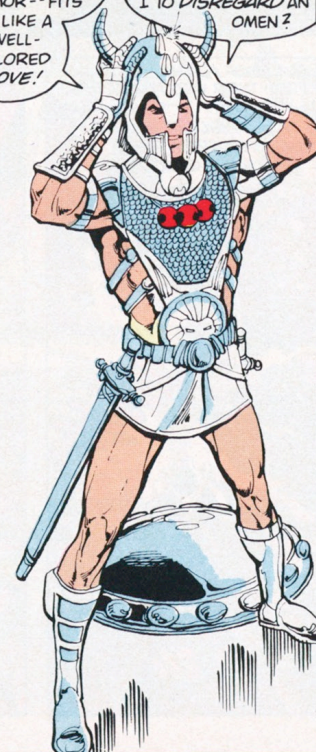
AND IF NOT--WHY, I'M STILL CALLED A THIEF BACK IN TYRANNUS' KINGDOM, AFTER ALL.

THIS HELMET-- INDEED, ALL THE ARMOR-- FITS ME LIKE A WELL-TAILORED GLOVE!

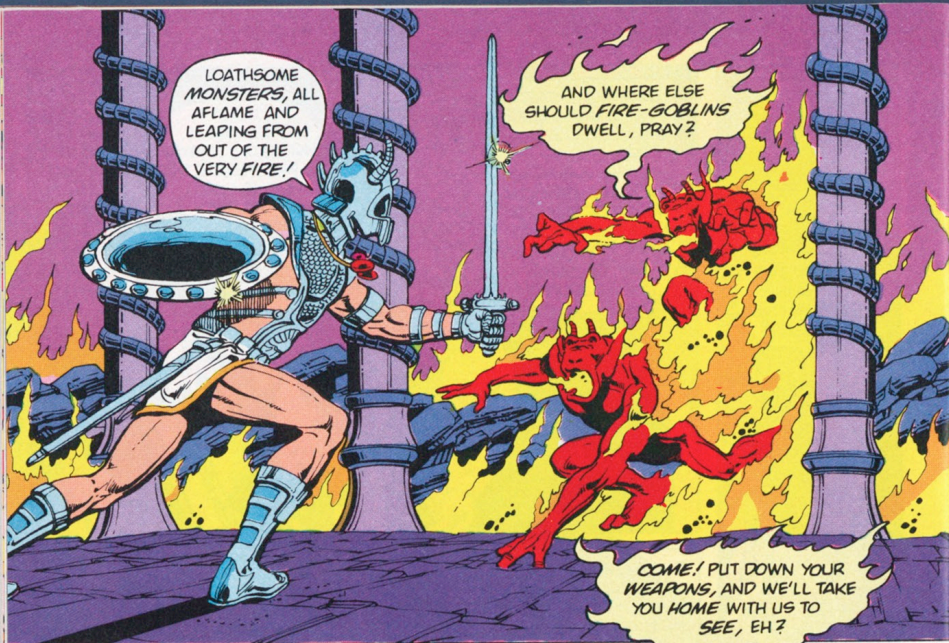
IT'S AN OMEN, ALL RIGHT--AND WHO AM I TO DISREGARD AN OMEN?

THE BOWS AND ARROWS I CAN DO WITHOUT-- THEY'RE THE WEAPONS OF COWARDS AND WEAKLINGS, BUT--

WHAT--?



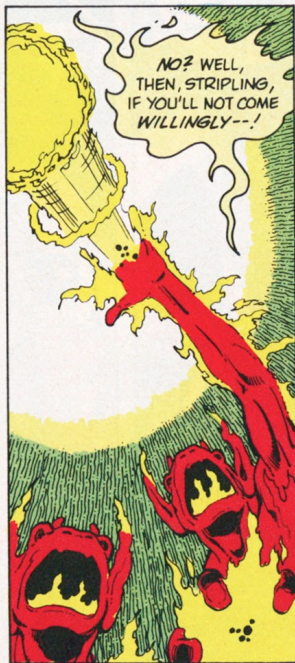




LOATHSOME MONSTERS, ALL AFLAME AND LEAPING FROM OUT OF THE VERY FIRE!

AND WHERE ELSE SHOULD FIRE-GOBLINS DWELL, PRAY?

COME! PUT DOWN YOUR WEAPONS, AND WE'LL TAKE YOU HOME WITH US TO SEE, EH?



NO? WELL, THEN, STRIPLING, IF YOU'LL NOT COME WILLINGLY--!



BALLS OF FLAME-- LEAPING FROM THEIR VERY FINGERTIPS!

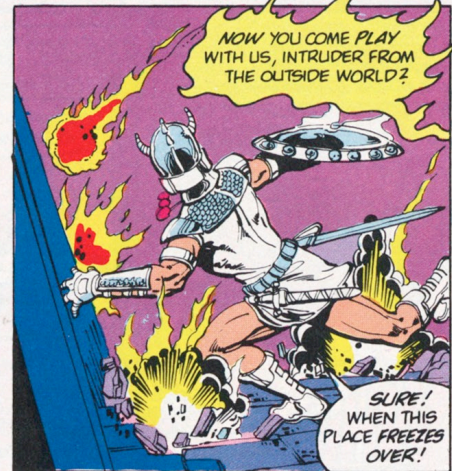
ONLY MY SILVER SHIELD SAVES ME FROM THEM, EVEN FOR THE MOMENT--



--AND MY SWORD--

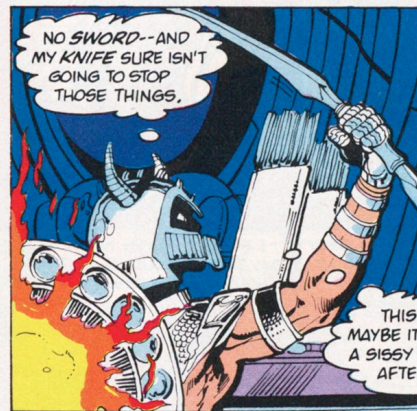


IT MELTED AT THEIR TOUCH-- LIKE AN ICICLE UNDER THE SUMMER SUN!



NOW YOU COME PLAY WITH US, INTRUDER FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD?

SURE! WHEN THIS PLACE FREEZES OVER!



NO SWORD--AND MY KNIFE SURE ISN'T GOING TO STOP THOSE THINGS.

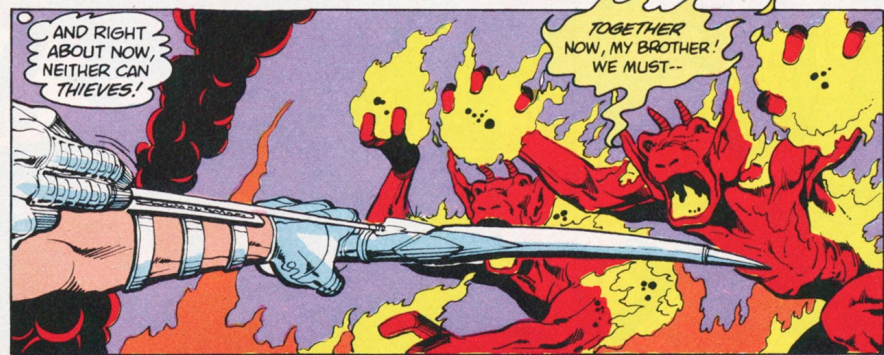


BUT--THE ARROWHEADS ARE ALL MADE OF-- ICE!

THEY'LL PROBABLY TURN TO STEAM LONG BEFORE THEY HIT THOSE GOBLINS.

OH, WELL... BEGGARS CAN'T BE CHOOSERS...

THIS BOW-- MAYBE IT'S NOT SUCH A SISSY WEAPON, AFTER ALL!



AND RIGHT ABOUT NOW, NEITHER CAN THIEVES!

TOGETHER NOW, MY BROTHER! WE MUST--



THE FIRE-GOBLINS CRY IS CUT OFF IN MID-SHOUT, HOWEVER, AS--TO TORR'S GREAT SHOCK--THE ICE-ARROW STRIKES HOME--

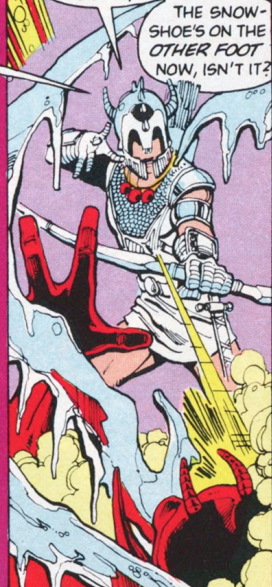
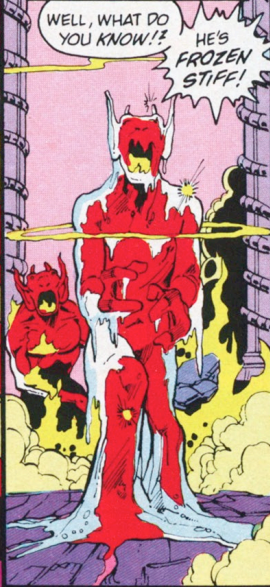
AND WHEN CLOUDS OF STEAM AND SMOKE HAVE BLOWN AWAY--

WELL, WHAT DO YOU KNOW!!?

HE'S FROZEN STIFF!

ALL RIGHT--YOU FUGITIVES FROM A FIREPLACE--COME AHEAD!

THE SNOW-SHOE'S ON THE OTHER FOOT NOW, ISN'T IT?



GOOD! THEY'RE ALL FLEEING--THOSE WHO STILL CAN, ANYWAY.

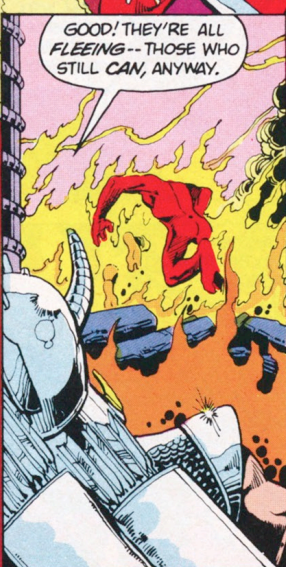
I DIDN'T CARE MUCH FOR ICING YOU DOWN, OLD BUDDY, BUT YOU OUGHT TO BE MORE HOSPITABLE TO STRANGERS.

YOU'LL PROBABLY MELT BACK TO NORMAL IN A LITTLE WHILE--

I WILL SAY THIS, THOUGH--

--EVEN WHEN YOUR MOUTH'S AS DRY AS THE DESERT, VICTORY STILL TASTES SWEET!

--BUT I WON'T BE HERE TO SEE IT.

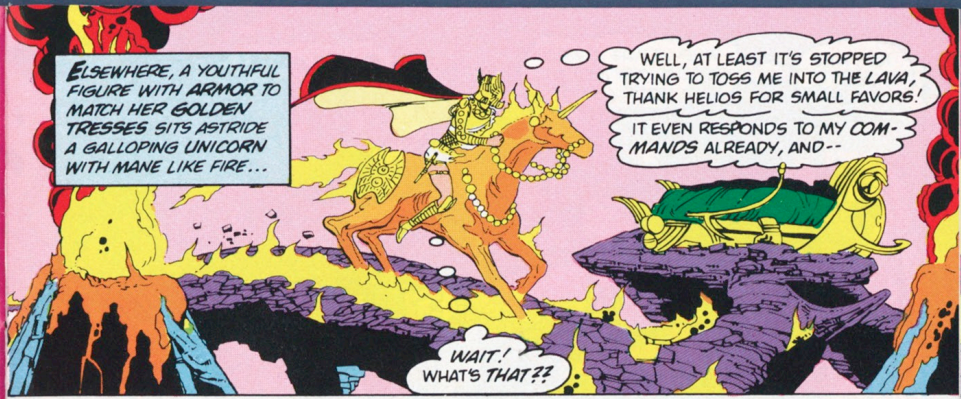


ELSEWHERE, A YOUTHFUL FIGURE WITH ARMOR TO MATCH HER GOLDEN TRESSSES SITS ASTRIDE A GALLOPING UNICORN WITH MANE LIKE FIRE...

WELL, AT LEAST IT'S STOPPED TRYING TO TOSS ME INTO THE LAVA, THANK HELOS FOR SMALL FAVORS!

IT EVEN RESPONDS TO MY COMMANDS ALREADY, AND--

WAIT! WHAT'S THAT??



IS IT JUST THAT OVERWHELMING HEAT GETTING TO ME--BAKING ME INSIDE THIS ARMOR--

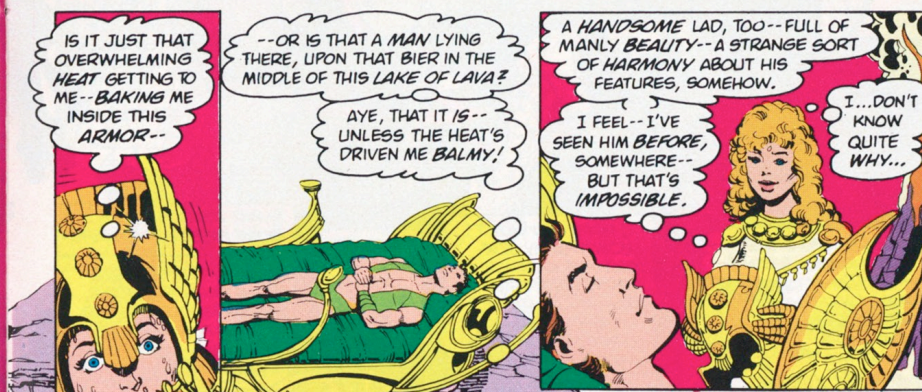
--OR IS THAT A MAN LYING THERE, UPON THAT BIER IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS LAKE OF LAVA?

AYE, THAT IT IS--UNLESS THE HEAT'S DRIVEN ME BALMY!

A HANDSOME LAD, TOO--FULL OF MANLY BEAUTY--A STRANGE SORT OF HARMONY ABOUT HIS FEATURES, SOMEHOW.

I FEEL--I'VE SEEN HIM BEFORE, SOMEWHERE--BUT THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE.

I...DON'T KNOW QUITE WHY...



...BUT I CAN'T RESIST KISSING HIM.

AH! HE'S WAKING UP!

I HOPE HE WON'T MIND THAT I--

MIND, LASS?!

RESIST? NAY--I WANT TO KISS HIM!





NAY, WHY SHOULD I MIND--

--WHEN IT WAS I WHO PUT THE VERY IDEA INTO YOUR MIND??

BY THE GODS!

THE MAN I KISSED-- HE'S TURNED INTO SOME KIND OF TENTACLED MONSTER--

--IF HE WAS EVER TRULY HUMAN AT ALL!

I HOPE YOU WON'T OBJECT TO MY BORROWING YOUR HORNEDED STEED, DEAR CHILD.

SOMEHOW, YOU DON'T LOOK AS IF YOU'LL BE NEEDING HIM AGAIN.

HERMINUS!

THEN, THE MASTER THIEF IS GONE--

BUT I SEEK THE SWORD OF ULTIMATE SORCERY, TOO, YOU KNOW!

HERE'S WHERE I FIND OUT IF THIS FANCY SWORD I TRADED MY OLD ONE FOR IS GOOD FOR ANYTHING BESIDES SHOW!

--AND TARRA HAS FAR MORE PRESSING CONCERNS:

CAN'T-- GET FREE! CHOKING ME-- I CAN'T--

HOLD! WHAT'S THAT MOVEMENT OVER THERE-- NEAR MY MOUNT?

APPARENTLY NOT!

THE OCTOPOID'S STRENGTH! MY OWN'S LIKE A CHILD'S BESIDE IT!

IT'S DRAWING ME TOWARD IT-- INTO ITS GAPING MAW!

MY SHIELD-- IT'S MY ONLY CHANCE!

IT'S HUGE JAWS CRUSHED THE SHIELD-- SHATTERED IT-- BUT THE JAGGED EDGES ARE HURTING ITS SOFT INSIDES!

YAAARRRG

I--I DID IT!

IT'S SCUTTLING BACK INTO THE MOLTEN LAVA WHERE IT MUST LIVE!

IF ITS PAIN HADN'T DISTRACTED IT-- IT WOULD HAVE TAKEN ME WITH IT!

THE MONSTER MUST HAVE READ MY MIND SOMEHOW-- USED AN IMAGE OF MANLY BEAUTY BURIED THERE-- TO LURE ME.

WELL, I SURVIVED ITS ATTACK-- JUST BARELY--

--BUT I LOST MY UNICORN-- MY WEAPONS-- EVERYTHING!

STILL GO HOT-- AND WEARIER THAN EVER-- BUT I CAN'T GO ON WITHOUT A SWORD.

MUST GO BACK TO THE CHAMBER OF SPLENDOR-- FOR MY OLD ONE--

--AND IF IT ISN'T THERE-- I'M IN DEEP TROUBLE!



AS, ON ANOTHER OF THE MYRIAD  
ROCK-BRIDGES WHICH FORM THE  
SOLE ROADWAYS OF FIREWORLD...

SO! I THOUGHT YOU TWO  
FIRE-GOBLINS HAD ALL GONE  
SKITTERING BACK INTO THE  
LAVA POOL.

TOO SCARED EVEN  
FOR THAT, HUH?

WELL, YOU'RE GOING  
TO WISH YOU'D TAKEN  
A SWAN DIVE INTO  
THE LAVA--

WHEN THIS ICE  
ARROW TURNS YOU  
BOTH INTO SO  
MUCH UGLY  
SCULPTURE!

PLEASE--  
P-DON'T HURT  
US, MASTER!

WE JUST  
W-WANTED TO  
PROTECT  
OUR L-LAND!

P-PLEASE--!

OH, THANK YOU,  
MASTER! WE--

NOW DON'T GET  
MAUDLIN ON ME,  
OR I'M LIABLE TO  
CHANGE MY  
MIND.

GET AWAY  
FROM THERE!  
YOU WANT TO  
SET MY BOOTS  
ON FIRE?

DON'T KNOW WHY I SHOWED  
YOU GUYS ANY MERCY--  
UNLESS IT'S BECAUSE  
I'M NOT USED TO  
WINNING FIGHTS.

IF YOU REALLY  
WANT TO SHOW  
ME SOME  
GRATITUDE--

--YOU CAN POINT  
ME TO MY SISTER  
TARRA--OR THE  
CHALICE OF LIGHT--

--OR JUST  
A PLAIN  
DRINK  
OF--

EH--?

WATER!

BY THE GODS, THIS  
FEELS GOOD--AND  
COOL! IT'S NOT THE  
CHALICE OF LIGHT,  
BUT IT'LL DO.

JUST HOPE TARRA'S  
FOUND SOMEPLACE  
LIKE IT! IF ANYTHING'S  
HAPPENED TO HER--!

DO YOU  
ALWAYS TALK  
TO YOURSELF  
THIS WAY,  
BOY?

YOU!?

I KNOW YOU! YOU'RE  
THAT THIEF CALLED  
HERMINUS!

YOU TRIED TO GET  
MY SISTER AND ME  
KILLED-- BACK IN  
EARTHWORLD.

GET DOWN OFF  
THAT FANCY HORSE,  
AND I'LL--

AFTER ALL, IN CASE  
YOU DIDN'T KNOW,  
I'VE BEEN SEEKING  
THE SWORD OF  
ULTIMATE SORcery  
A LOT LONGER THAN  
YOU TWO HAVE.

AND, THOUGH  
I'LL ADMIT I  
WOULDN'T MIND  
QUENCHING MY  
CONSIDERABLE  
THIRST AT THAT  
FOUNTAIN--

MAYBE YOU  
GUYS ARE MY  
GOOD- LUCK CHARM  
AFTER ALL, AND--

NOW WHERE'D  
THEY GO? OH WELL,  
LIVE AND LET LIVE,  
I ALWAYS SAY.

I'VE  
REALLY  
NO TIME,  
BOY.

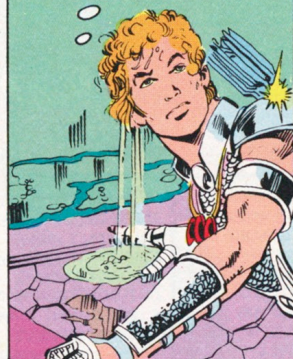


--BUT I DON'T THINK I'LL SETTLE TILL I FIND THE SAME CHALICE YOU'RE LOOKING FOR!

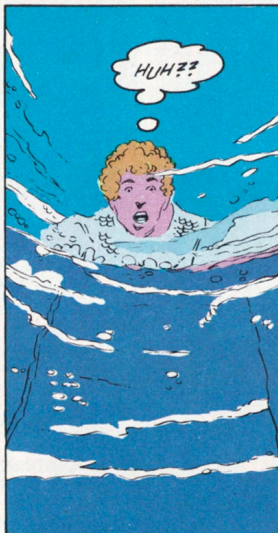
WAIT! HOW'D YOU LATCH ONTO--A UNICORN THAT FLIES?

THAT GUY'D STEAL THE COINS OFF A DEAD MAN'S EYES!

NICE-LOOKING UNICORN, THOUGH. WISH I HAD--



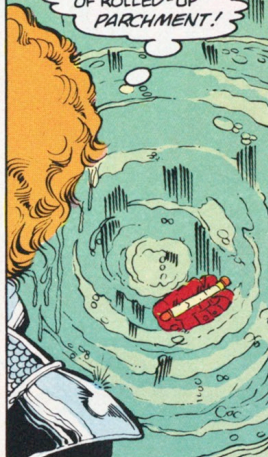
HUH??



WE MASTER THIEVES DON'T DIVULGE OUR SECRETS TO RANK AMATEURS, BOY.

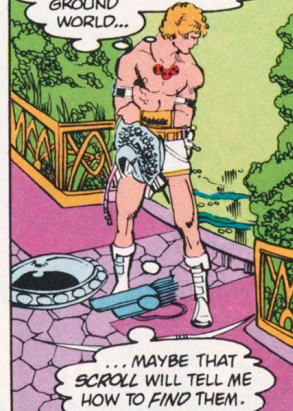
FARE YOU WELL!

THERE'S SOMETHING AT THE BOTTOM OF THE FOUNTAIN--SOME KIND OF ROLLED-UP PARCHMENT!

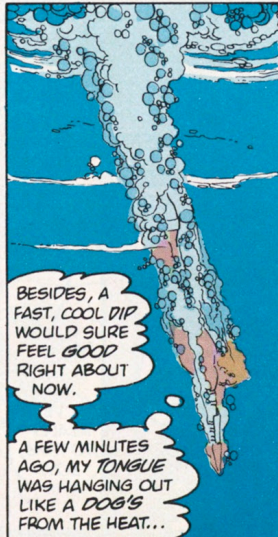


DON'T LIKE WASTING TIME WHEN I MIGHT BE LOOKING FOR TARRA OR THE SWORD.

BUT WHO KNOWS? THE WAY THINGS GO IN THIS UNDERGROUND WORLD...

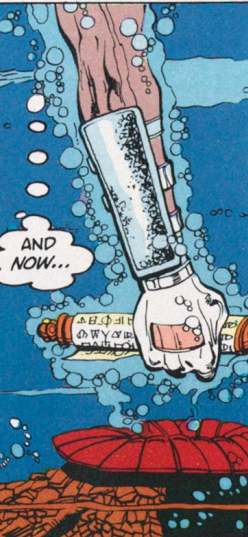


...MAYBE THAT SCROLL WILL TELL ME HOW TO FIND THEM.



BESIDES, A FAST, COOL DIP WOULD SURE FEEL GOOD RIGHT ABOUT NOW.

A FEW MINUTES AGO, MY TONGUE WAS HANGING OUT LIKE A DOG'S FROM THE HEAT...



AND NOW...

OH NO!

SOME KIND OF GIGANTIC REPTILE--IT MUST'VE BEEN LYING IN WAIT BENEATH THE FOUNTAIN FLOOR!

IT'S GOT MY LEG--PULLING ME DOWN--!





IN THE MEAN-TIME, TORR'S GOLD-HAIRED TWIN HAS RETRIEVED A SECOND OUT-FITTING FROM THE CHAMBER OF SPLENDOR, AND...

SPEAK OF THE DEVIL!

THERE'S A FULL SUIT OF ARMOR-- HANGING ON THAT BLAZING TREE--

--AND IT LOOKS AS IF IT WOULD FIT ME PERFECTLY!

NO! WHAT IN THE NAME OF THIS TERRIBLE HEAT AM I THINKING OF?

NOW I GET IT! THIS PLACE JUST THROWS ONE TEMPTATION AFTER ANOTHER AT YOU-- LIKE THE "SLEEPING PRINCE" BEFORE, AND NOW THIS--

--TAKING IMAGES FROM MY MIND, AND USING THEM TO DISARM ME!

THINGS SHOULD GO A BIT MORE SMOOTHLY FROM HERE ON.

MAYBE I COULD JUST--

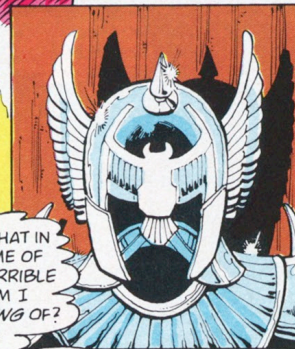
THIS TIME, I CHOOSE MY WEAPONS FOR STURDINESS, NOT SHEEN.

TOO BAD THERE WASN'T A SECOND SUIT OF ARMOR LYING AROUND, BUT-- BY THE GODS!

I'D TAKE OFF THIS BIT OF ARMOR, AND THEN BE TOTALLY UNPROTECTED IF--

OWWWWW

THAT BLAST OF HEAT! WH-WHERE'D IT COME FROM??



SKRAWWWK

I HAD TO ASK!?

THIS PLACE NEVER GIVES UP, DOES IT?

UNICORNS-- HYPNOTIC OCTOPOIDS-- AND NOW THIS FIRE-HAWK!

WELL, AT LEAST THIS ARMOR'S PROTECTING ME BETTER THAN THE OTHER DID--

--BUT THAT LAST PASS BY THE HAWK-- LEFT ME SO FAINT-- FROM IT'S SHEER, UNRELENTING HEAT!

ANOTHER ONE LIKE IT-- AND I'M DONE FOR--

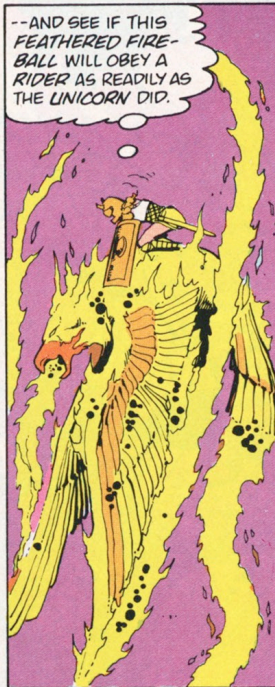






--UNLESS I TAKE THE BULL BY THE HORNS--

OR, IN THIS CASE, THE BIRD BY THE BEAK--



--AND SEE IF THIS FEATHERED FIRE-BALL WILL OBEY A RIDER AS READILY AS THE UNICORN DID.



WELL, WHAT DO YOU KNOW? IT DOES!

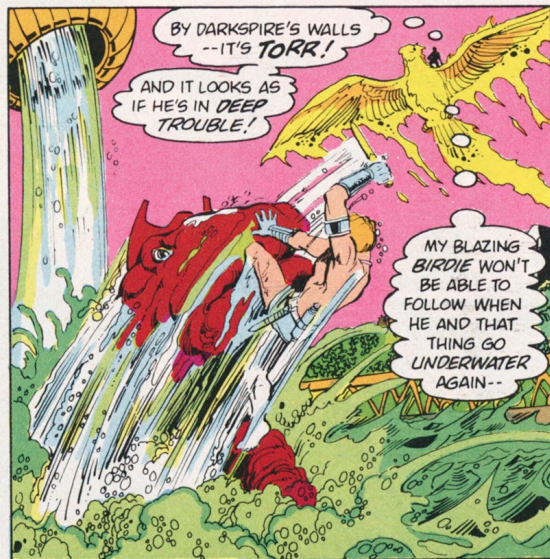
MAYBE I AM ON MY WAY TO BECOMING THE WARRIOR MENTARRA TALKED ABOUT, AFTER ALL!

BEST THING IS-- FROM UP HERE, MAYBE I CAN CATCH A GLIMPSE OF TORR, IF HE'S--



HUH? THOSE WEIRD LITTLE CREATURES BELOW--GESTURING FRANTICALLY AT ME, AS IF THEY'RE TRYING TO TELL ME SOMETHING!

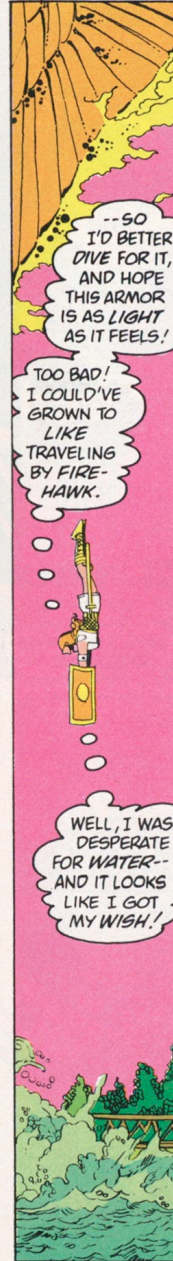
BETTER TAKE A LOOK OVER WHERE THEY'RE--



BY DARKSPIRE'S WALLS --IT'S TORR!

AND IT LOOKS AS IF HE'S IN DEEP TROUBLE!

MY BLAZING BIRDIE WON'T BE ABLE TO FOLLOW WHEN HE AND THAT THING GO UNDERWATER AGAIN--



--SO I'D BETTER DIVE FOR IT, AND HOPE THIS ARMOR IS AS LIGHT AS IT FEELS!

TOO BAD! I COULD'VE GROWN TO LIKE TRAVELING BY FIRE-HAWK.

WELL, I WAS DESPERATE FOR WATER--AND IT LOOKS LIKE I GOT MY WISH!



UNLESS THIS IS ANOTHER OF FIREWORLD'S EERIE ILLUSIONS!

BUT NO! THE OTHER IMAGES SHOWED ME THINGS I WANTED TO SEE--

--NOT THINGS LIKE TORR IN DANGER!

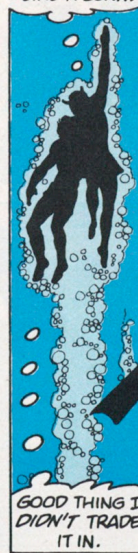
GOT TO MAKE THAT LIZARD, OR WHATEVER IT IS, LET GO OF TORR!



NOTHING LIKE THE DIRECT APPROACH!

GRONK

THIS ARMOR'S LIGHT, ALL RIGHT! I'M POPPING UP LIKE A CORK.



GOOD THING I DIDN'T TRADE IT IN.

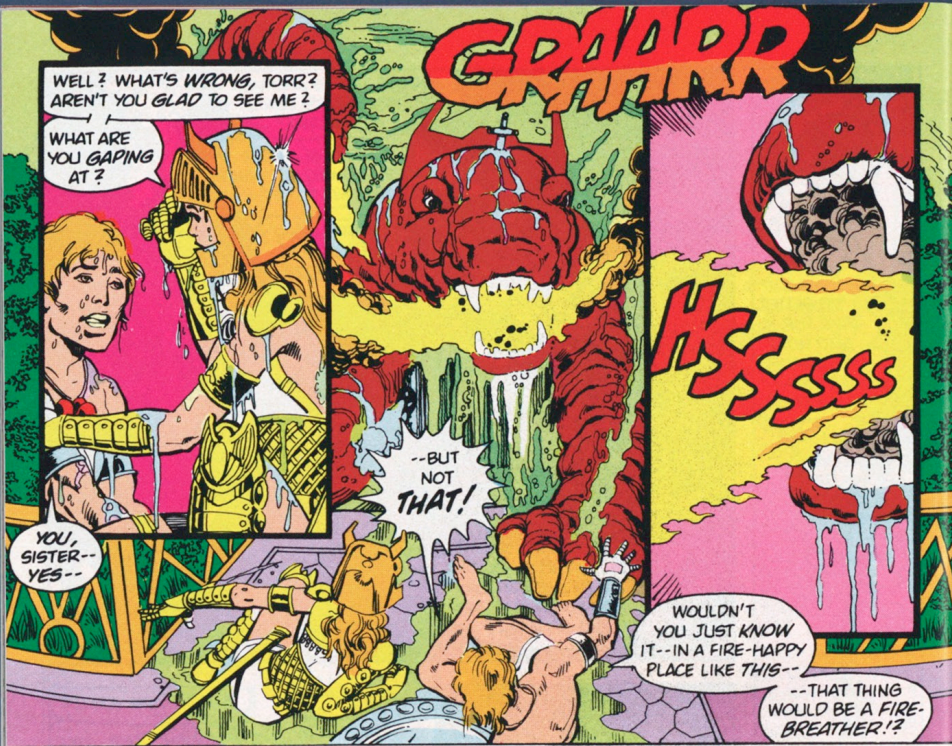


TORR--ARE YOU--?

I WON'T FEEL-LIKE GOING SWIMMING --FOR A WHILE-- BUT OTHERWISE--

SAME OLD BROTHER-OF-MINE, ALL RIGHT--THANK THE GODS!





WELL? WHAT'S WRONG, TORR?  
AREN'T YOU GLAD TO SEE ME?

WHAT ARE  
YOU GAPING  
AT?

--BUT  
NOT  
THAT!

YOU,  
SISTER--  
YES--

WOULDN'T  
YOU JUST KNOW  
IT--IN A FIRE-HAPPY  
PLACE LIKE THIS--

--THAT THING  
WOULD BE A FIRE-  
BREATHER!?



TORR!  
WILL YOUR  
SHIELD--?

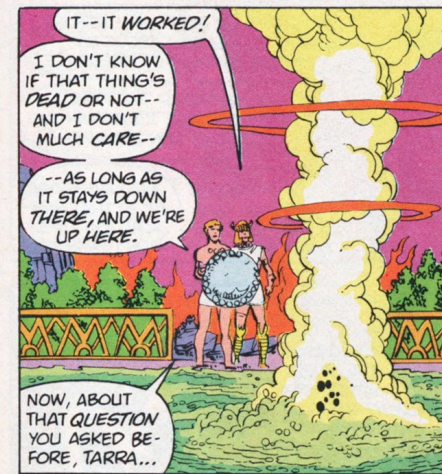
I DON'T KNOW!

BUT OUR ONLY  
HOPE--IS TO FIGHT  
FIRE--WITH FIRE--



--AND  
PRAY!

FR00OSH!

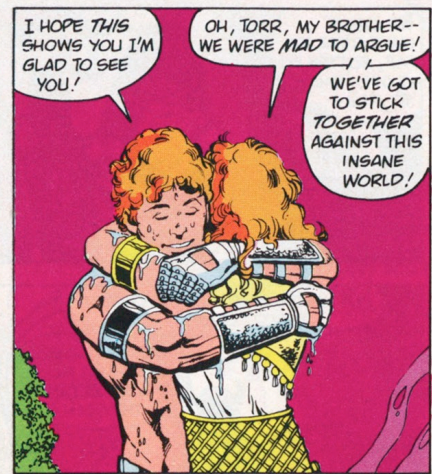


IT--IT WORKED!

I DON'T KNOW  
IF THAT THING'S  
DEAD OR NOT--  
AND I DON'T  
MUCH CARE--

--AS LONG AS  
IT STAYS DOWN  
THERE, AND WE'RE  
UP HERE.

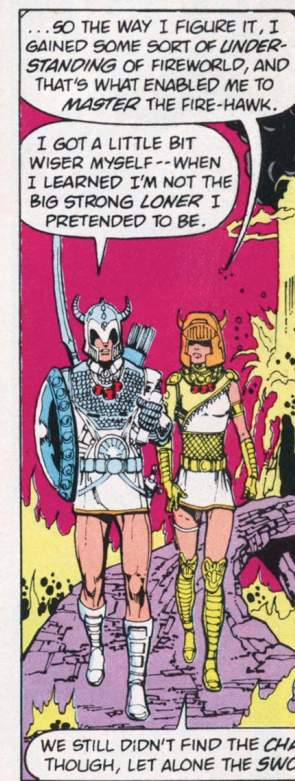
NOW, ABOUT  
THAT QUESTION  
YOU ASKED BE-  
FORE, TARRA...



I HOPE THIS  
SHOWS YOU I'M  
GLAD TO SEE  
YOU!

OH, TORR, MY BROTHER--  
WE WERE MAD TO ARGUE!

WE'VE GOT  
TO STICK  
TOGETHER  
AGAINST THIS  
INSANE  
WORLD!



...SO THE WAY I FIGURE IT, I  
GAINED SOME SORT OF UNDER-  
STANDING OF FIREWORLD, AND  
THAT'S WHAT ENABLED ME TO  
MASTER THE FIRE-HAWK.

I GOT A LITTLE BIT  
WISER MYSELF--WHEN  
I LEARNED I'M NOT THE  
BIG STRONG LONER I  
PRETENDED TO BE.



AND IF THIS  
GATEWAY IS ANY  
EVIDENCE--I'M  
NOT SURE WE'RE  
GOING TO!

IT'S LIKE A  
ROARING FURNACE--  
THE GREATEST INFERNO  
WE'VE ENCOUNTERED  
YET!

BUT NOW THAT  
OUR PATHS HAVE  
JOINED--OUR GOAL  
MUST BE JUST  
BEYOND IT! IT  
MUST!

WE STILL DIDN'T FIND THE CHALICE,  
THOUGH, LET ALONE THE SWORD...





WE CAN'T HAVE COME SO FAR, GOTTEN SO CLOSE--ONLY TO FAIL--

--CAN WE?

YOU DIDN'T LET ME FINISH BEFORE, TORR-- TELLING YOU ABOUT MY UNDERSTANDING OF FIREWORLD.

I MASTERED THE FIRE-HAWK BECAUSE I'D BEATEN THE OCTOPOID, DON'T YOU SEE?

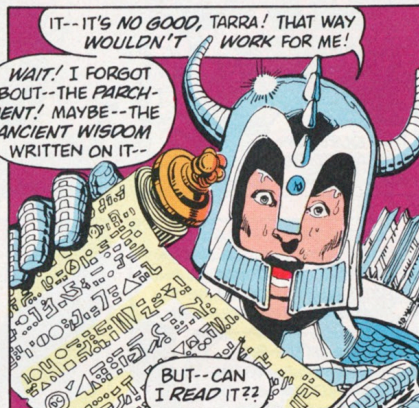
CONQUER ONE ASPECT OF THIS WORLD--AND YOU CONQUER IT ALL! I'D HAVE STOOD UP TO THAT DRAGON, TOO--IF I HADN'T PANICKED.



BUT WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH--  
TARRA! STOP!

NO! THE FLAMES CAN'T HURT ME--IF I DON'T BELIEVE THEY CAN!

FOLLOW ME, TORR! HURRY!



IT--IT'S NO GOOD, TARRA! THAT WAY WOULDN'T WORK FOR ME!

WAIT! I FORGOT ABOUT--THE PARCHMENT! MAYBE--THE ANCIENT WISDOM WRITTEN ON IT--

BUT--CAN I READ IT??



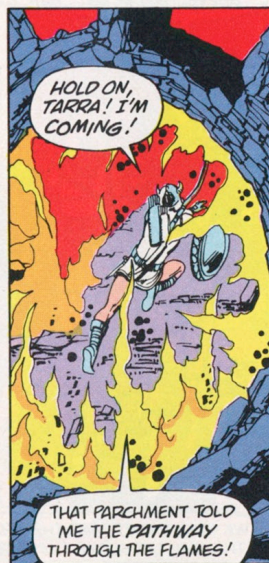
TORR'S RIGHT! HE COULDN'T HAVE COME WITH ME.

HE'D HAVE BEEN BURNED--EVEN IF I'M NOT.



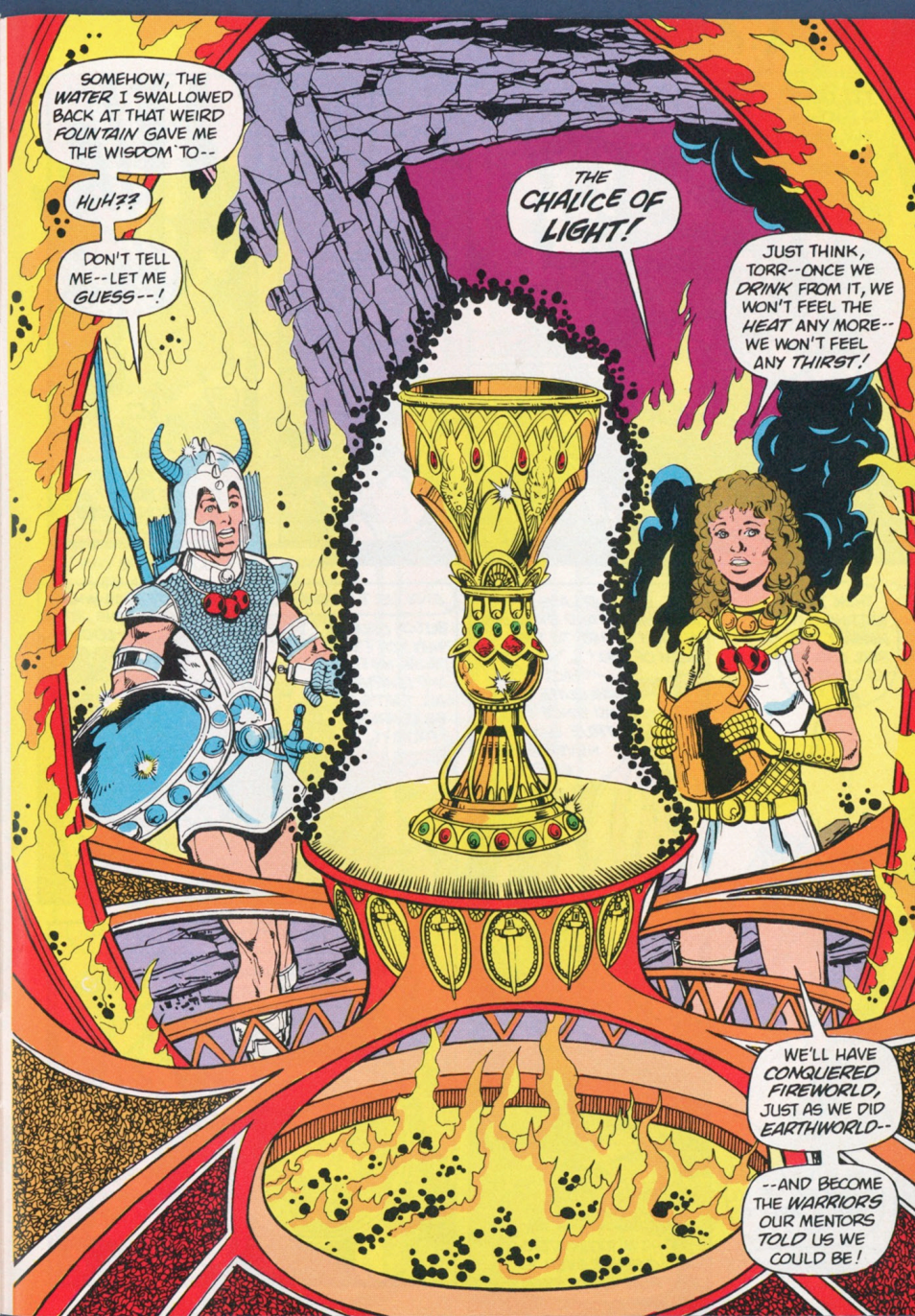
MUST GO ON--FIND OUT WHAT'S AT THE END OF OUR JOURNEY!

THEN I'LL GO BACK FOR TORR, AND--



HOLD ON, TARRA! I'M COMING!

THAT PARCHMENT TOLD ME THE PATHWAY THROUGH THE FLAMES!



SOMEHOW, THE WATER I SWALLOWED BACK AT THAT WEIRD FOUNTAIN GAVE ME THE WISDOM TO--

HUH??

DON'T TELL ME--LET ME GUESS--!

THE CHALICE OF LIGHT!

JUST THINK, TORR--ONCE WE DRINK FROM IT, WE WON'T FEEL THE HEAT ANY MORE-- WE WON'T FEEL ANY THIRST!

WE'LL HAVE CONQUERED FIREWORLD, JUST AS WE DID EARTHWORLD--

--AND BECOME THE WARRIORS OUR MENTORS TOLD US WE COULD BE!



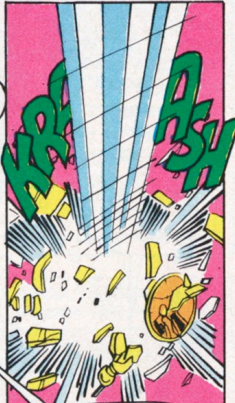


I'LL DRINK TO THAT--A NICE LONG GULP OF WATER!

YES, AND ALL WITHOUT SLAYING ANYBODY TO GET TO IT, TOO!

AS A MATTER OF FACT--SO WILL I!

HUH? WHO--?



THE CHALICE-- IT SHATTERED INTO A MILLION PIECES!

THEN I'M BETTING--IT WASN'T THE REAL CHALICE OF LIGHT AT ALL!

AYE, LAD AND LASS-- HERMINUS, AND DRINKING A JOLLY TOAST TO THE BOTH OF YOU!

FACT IS, I WAS QUITE THIRSTY, AND SINCE THIS TRUE CHALICE NEVER GETS EMPTY--



--I'M TOO WATER-LOGGED EVEN TO RUN FROM YOU!

AH, BUT YOU ARE A PERCEPTIVE WENCH, AREN'T YOU?

IT'S HERMINUS!

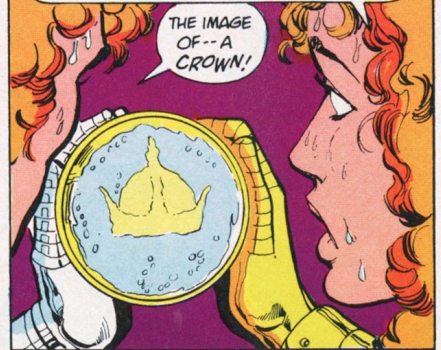
GIVE US THAT CHALICE, THIEF! THIS IS WHAT HE MEANS, TORR. LOOK!

BUT OF COURSE! WHY NOT? I'VE DRUNK MY FILL... AND LEARNED ALL THAT'S TO BE LEARNED FROM IT.



THERE--ON THE BOTTOM OF THE CHALICE--

THE IMAGE OF--A CROWN!



THAT IT IS, MY HEARTIES! A CROWN THAT WAITS FOR ME-- IN THE THIRD WORLD WHERE HIDES THE SWORD OF ULTIMATE SORCERY!

HE'S GETTING AWAY-- ON THAT WEIRD UNICORN!



LET HIM.

AFTER ALL, WE'VE GOT THE CHALICE, RIGHT?

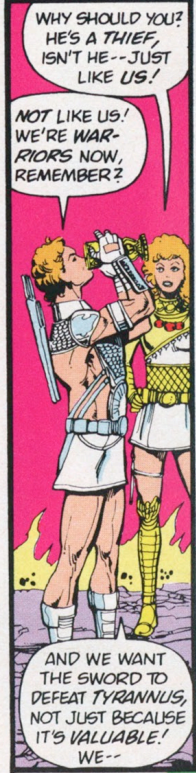
AND IF WHAT HAPPENED IN EARTHWORLD WAS ANY CLUE, IT SHOULD BE THE KEY TO OUR NEXT DESTINATION.

I GUESS SO... BUT I DON'T TRUST THAT HERMINUS!



WHY SHOULD YOU? HE'S A THIEF, ISN'T HE--JUST LIKE US!

NOT LIKE US! WE'RE WARRIORS NOW, REMEMBER?



TARRA! SOMETHING'S HAPPENING-- TO THE CHALICE!

IT'S GETTING BIGGER-- RIGHT BEFORE OUR EYES!

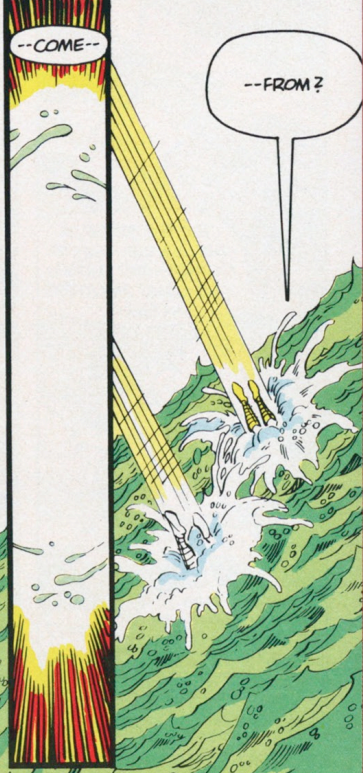


HUH? WHERE'D ALL THIS WATER--



--COME--

--FROM?







TORR! NOW I UNDERSTAND! WE'RE INSIDE THE CHALICE!

THE CHALICE ITSELF--WAS THE GATEWAY TO THE THIRD WORLD!

BUT THE SIDES OF THE CHALICE--THEY'RE FADING--AND THERE'S NO LAND ANYWHERE IN SIGHT!

WHERE IS THIS THIRD WORLD--WITH IT'S CROWN, AND THE SWORD OF ULTIMATE SORCERY?

WHERE??



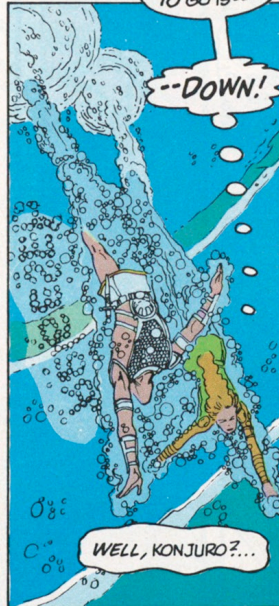
DON'T YOU SEE, BROTHER? IF THE FIRST WORLD WAS INSIDE THE EARTH--AND THE SECOND WAS RINGED IN FIRE--

OF COURSE! A WORLD FOR EACH OF THE PRIMAL ELEMENTS!

--THEN THIS WORLD IS ALL WATER!

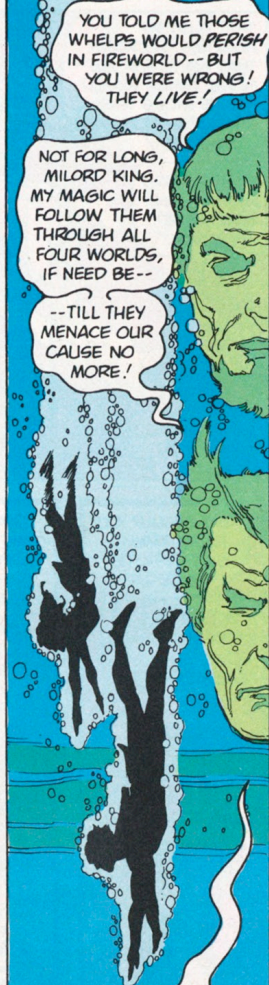
AND IF WE CAN'T GO BACK UP--OR EVEN SIDEWAYS--

RIGHT! THEN THE ONLY WAY TO GO IS--



--DOWN!

WELL, KONJURO?...



YOU TOLD ME THOSE WHELPS WOULD PERISH IN FIREWORLD--BUT YOU WERE WRONG! THEY LIVE!

NOT FOR LONG, MILORD KING. MY MAGIC WILL FOLLOW THEM THROUGH ALL FOUR WORLDS, IF NEED BE--

--TILL THEY MENACE OUR CAUSE NO MORE!

I ASSURE YOU, THE GOLD-TRESSED YOUNG THIEVES NAMED TORR AND TARRA SHALL FIND THEIR FINAL DOOM IN...

**WATERWORLD!**

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