



BY
CONWAY, CAVALIERI,
AND EDUARDO BARRETO

75¢
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COMICS
CODE

CAS
AUTHORITY

ATARI FORCE

I AM **YOU**,
MARTIN CHAMPION--

--AND THIS UNIVERSE
ISN'T BIG ENOUGH
FOR **BOTH** OF US!

BARRETO and
GARCIA LOPEZ



70989 31116

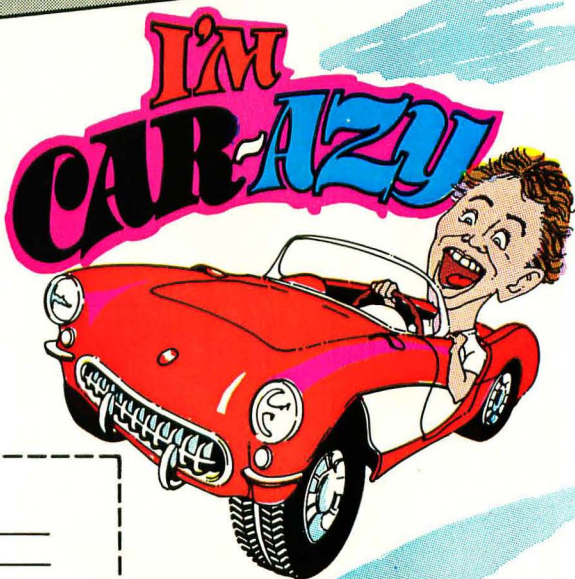
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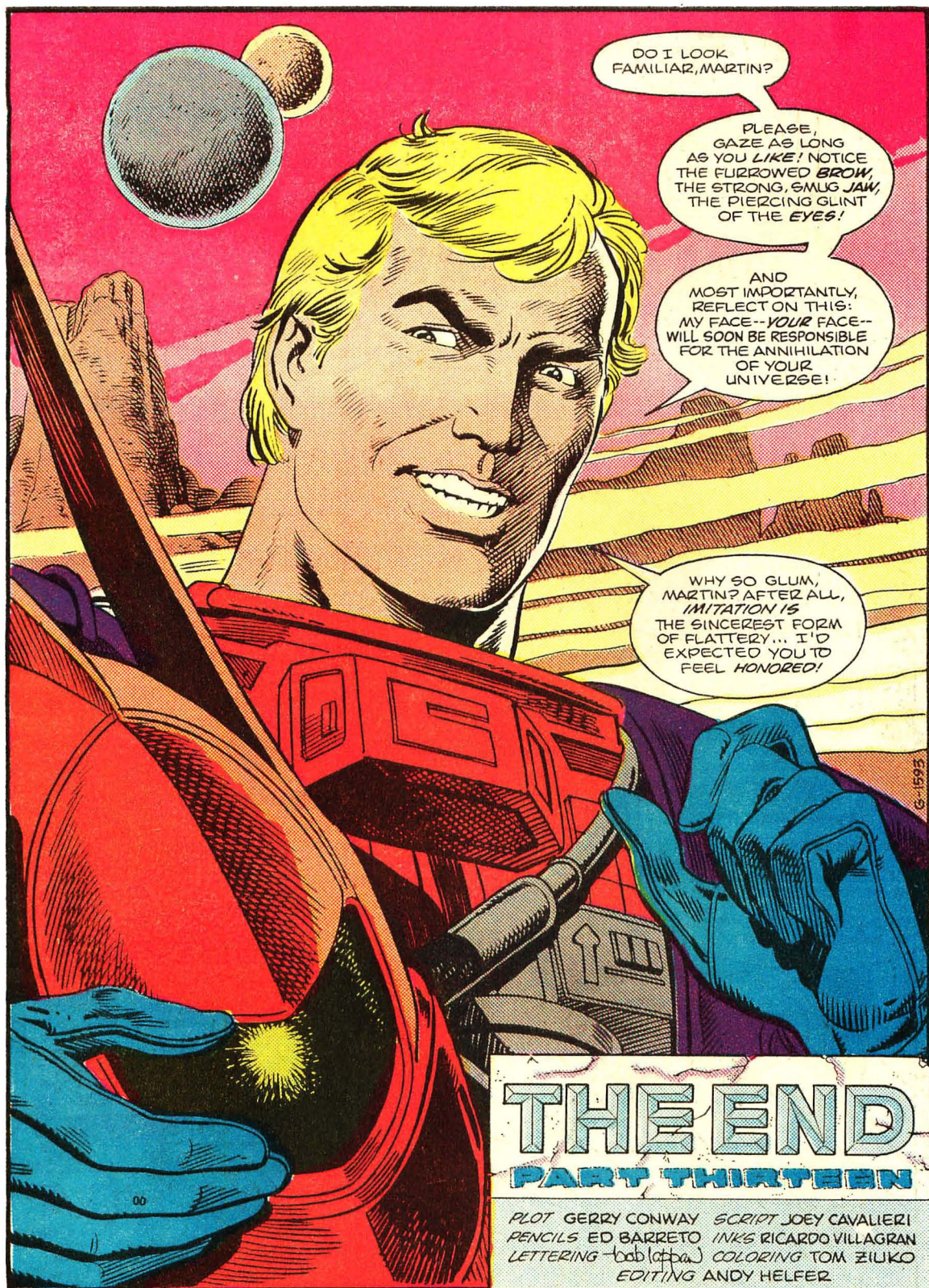
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DO I LOOK
FAMILIAR, MARTIN?

PLEASE,
GAZE AS LONG
AS YOU LIKE! NOTICE
THE FURROWED **BROW**,
THE STRONG, **SMUG JAW**,
THE **PIERCING GLINT**
OF THE **EYES**!

AND
MOST IMPORTANTLY,
REFLECT ON THIS:
MY FACE--**YOUR FACE**--
WILL SOON BE RESPONSIBLE
FOR THE ANNIHILATION
OF YOUR
UNIVERSE!

WHY SO GLUM,
MARTIN? AFTER ALL,
IMITATION IS
THE SINCEREST FORM
OF FLATTERY... I'D
EXPECTED YOU TO
FEEL **HONORED**!

THE END

PART THIRTEEN

PLOT GERRY CONWAY SCRIPT JOEY CAVALIERI
PENCILS ED BARRETO INKS RICARDO VILLAGRAN
LETTERING *(bob (off))* COLORING TOM ZILUKO
EDITING ANDY HELFER

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SEE,
MOR'PHA?
IT OKAY
NOW!

THAT MAN
LOOK LIKE MARTIN!
HE OUR FRIEND!

AH, BABE--
IF ONLY THIS ONE
COULD SHARE YOUR
SIMPLE LOGIC...OR
EQUALLY SIMPLE
PERCEPTIONS.

THAT--CREATURE--
IS NO FRIEND TO US.
RATHER, HE IS EVIL
PERSONIFIED!

I--I DON'T
BELIEVE IT! IT
ISN'T REAL!

IT
MUST BE
SOME KIND
OF--

--TRICK? DON'T
TRIVIALIZE MY
ACCOMPLISHMENTS!

WOULD YOU CONSIDER
THAT ANTI-MATTER BOMB
POISED BEHIND YOU TO BE
A MERE TRICK?

DO YOU BELIEVE
THE TRACTOR BEAM
THAT BROUGHT YOU HERE
TO BE A HOAX?

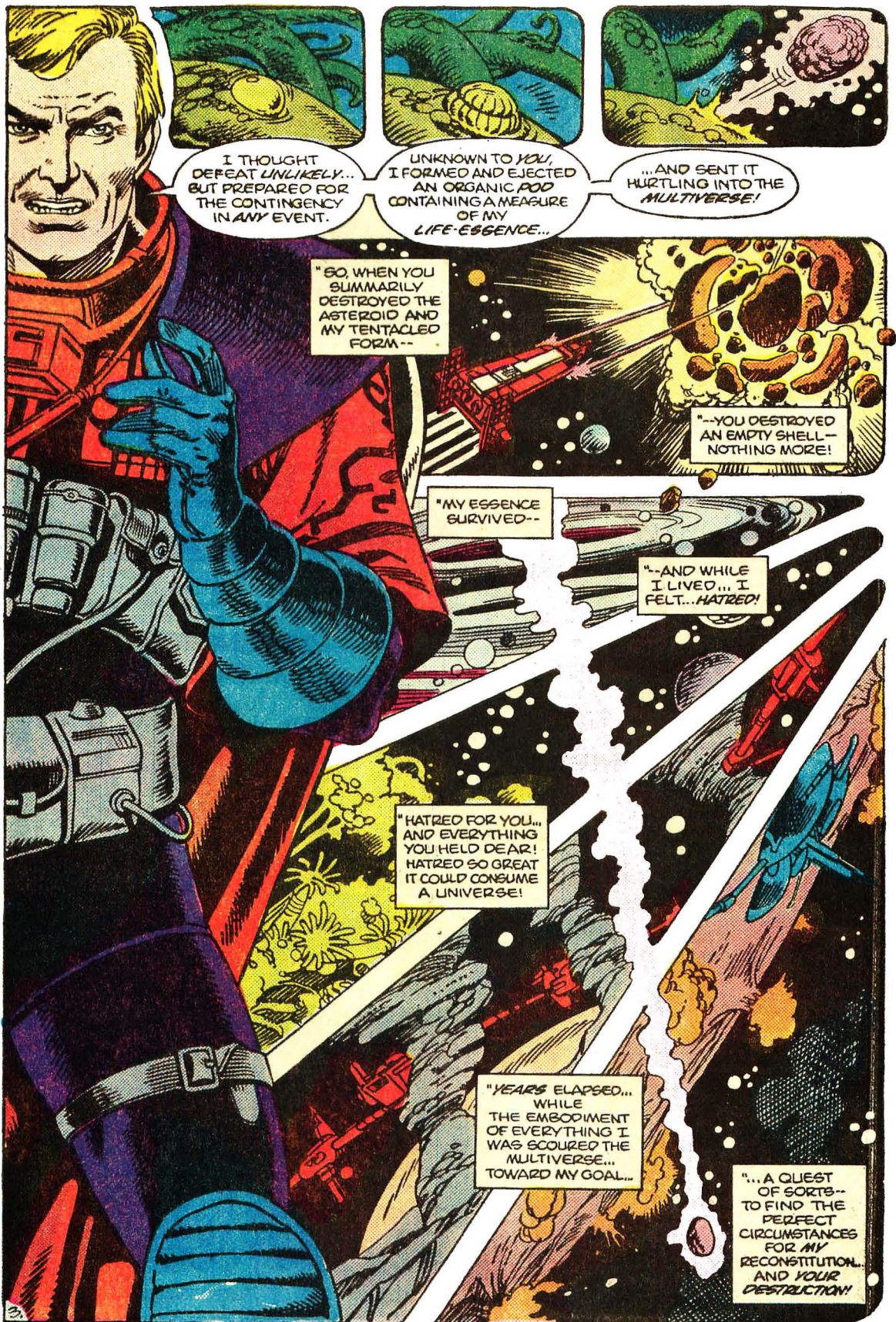
DEAR MARTIN. AT TIMES
YOU TRY MY PATIENCE.
OF COURSE YOU BELIEVE.
MY APPROPRIATION OF
YOUR COUNTESSANCE IS
AMONG THE MOST SIMPLE
OF MY ACCOMPLISHMENTS!

BUT IF YOU REFUSE
TO ACCEPT THE TRUTH,
PERHAPS AN EXPLANATION
IS IN ORDER...

"YOU RECALL, DON'T YOU,
ONE OF OUR LAST
ENCOUNTERS..."

"...IN THE DARK DAYS
WHEN SCANNER ONE
HOUSED THE FIRST
ATARI FORCE...AND
WAS BOUND TO FREE
AN ENTIRE GALAXY
FROM MY GRASP..."

"...DESPITE MY CONTROL OF
A HUNDRED STAR FIGHTERS
AMASSED IN MY DEFENSE!"



I THOUGHT
DEFEAT UNLIKELY...
BUT PREPARED FOR
THE CONTINGENCY
IN ANY EVENT.

UNKNOWN TO YOU,
I FORMED AND EJECTED
AN ORGANIC POD
CONTAINING A MEASURE
OF MY
LIFE-ESSENCE...

...AND SENT IT
HURTLING INTO THE
MULTIVERSE!

"SO WHEN YOU
SUMMARILY
DESTROYED THE
ASTEROID AND
MY TENTACLED
FORM--

"--YOU DESTROYED
AN EMPTY SHELL--
NOTHING MORE!

"MY ESSENCE
SURVIVED--

"--AND WHILE
I LIVED... I
FELT... HATRED!

"HATRED FOR YOU...
AND EVERYTHING
YOU HELD DEAR!
HATRED SO GREAT
IT COULD CONSUME
A UNIVERSE!

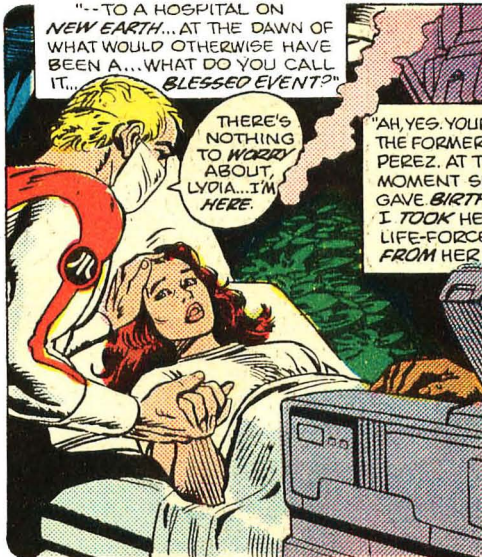
"YEARS ELAPSED...
WHILE
THE EMBODIMENT
OF EVERYTHING I
WAS SCOURED THE
MULTIVERSE...
TOWARD MY GOAL...

"...A QUEST
OF SORTS--
TO FIND THE
PERFECT
CIRCUMSTANCES
FOR MY
RECONSTITUTION...
AND YOUR
DESTRUCTION!



"I SENSED THE GERM OF MY PLANS FOR REVENGE ON NEW EARTH."

"THE POD FINALLY RELEASED MY ESSENCE, WHICH STREAKED TOWARD ITS GOAL LIKE A RAVENOUS BEAST--"



"--TO A HOSPITAL ON NEW EARTH...AT THE DAWN OF WHAT WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN A...WHAT DO YOU CALL IT...*BLESSED EVENT?*"

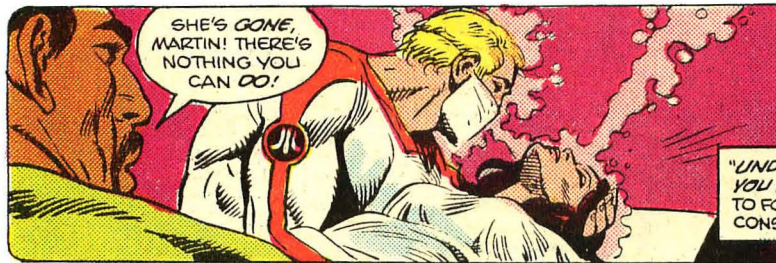
THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, LYDIA...I'M HERE.

"AH, YES. YOUR WIFE, THE FORMER LYDIA PEREZ. AT THE VERY MOMENT SHE GAVE BIRTH... I TOOK HER LIFE-FORCE FROM HER!"

"I HUNGERED...AND I FED."

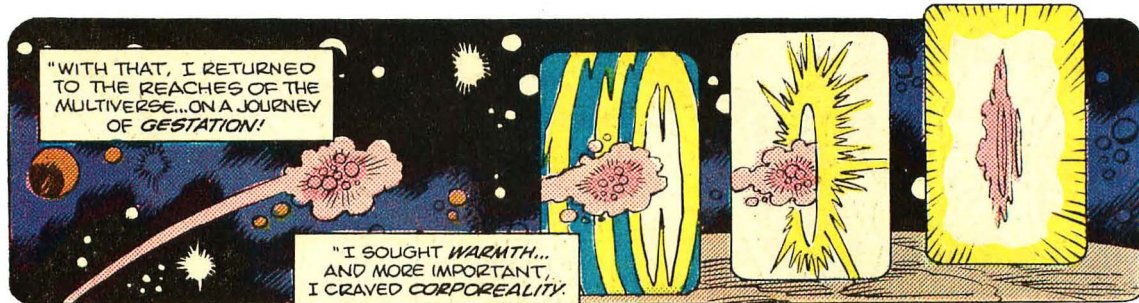


LYDIA!



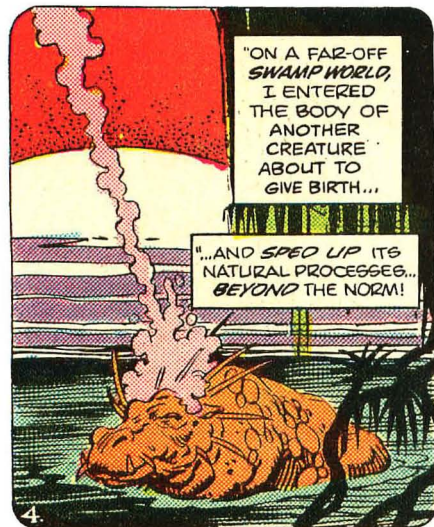
SHE'S GONE, MARTIN! THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO!

"UNDETECTED, I PASSED THROUGH YOU AS WELL, TAKING WHAT I NEEDED TO FORM A WHOLE ORGANISM, A FULL CONSCIOUSNESS, A FULL PERSONALITY."



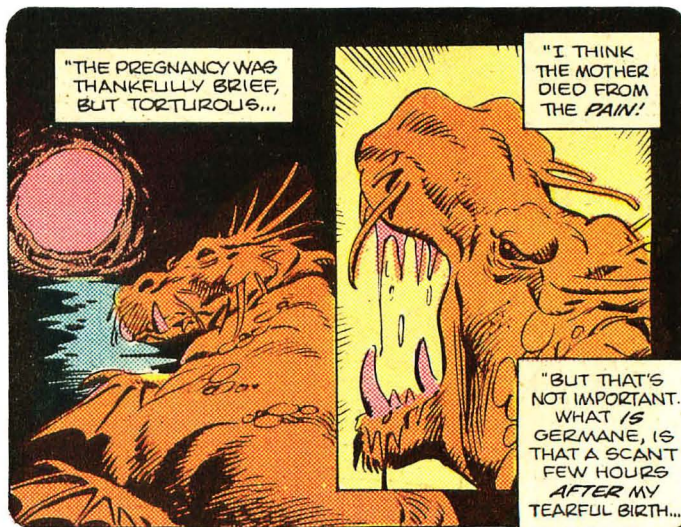
"WITH THAT, I RETURNED TO THE REACHES OF THE MULTIVERSE...ON A JOURNEY OF GESTATION!"

"I SOUGHT WARMTH... AND MORE IMPORTANT, I CRAVED CORPOREALITY."



"ON A FAR-OFF SWAMP WORLD, I ENTERED THE BODY OF ANOTHER CREATURE ABOUT TO GIVE BIRTH..."

"...AND *SPEED UP* ITS NATURAL PROCESSES... BEYOND THE NORM!"



"THE PREGNANCY WAS THANKFULLY BRIEF, BUT TORTUROUS..."

"I THINK THE MOTHER DIED FROM THE PAIN!"

"BUT THAT'S NOT IMPORTANT. WHAT IS GERMANE, IS THAT A SCANT FEW HOURS AFTER MY TEARFUL BIRTH..."

CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING

FIND YOUR WAY TO THE NEWTONS® TREASURE CHEST!!



DISCOVER FRUIT CHEWY NEWTONS COOKIES.

YOU FOUND IT!!



"...I
EMERGED!"



"I LIVED TO
WALK ONCE MORE
IN A BODY THAT
COULD HAVE BEEN
A SIMULACRUM
OF YOUR OWN
YOUNG FORM..."



"BUT FOR
ONE IMPORTANT
DISTINCTION..."



"...ONCE MORE,
I WIELDED...
THE POWER!"

WITHIN
THE YEAR, I GREW
TO MY PRESENT FORM...
BUT EVEN WHILE GROWING,
I BEGAN TO ASSEMBLE AN
ARMY... A PACK OF LINGUIST
MINDS I COULD ENTER
AND CONTROL!

THEY HAVE BEEN
INSTRUMENTAL IN ARRANGING
THIS SUBLIME SCENARIO...
STAGED ENTIRELY, OF COURSE,
FOR YOUR BENEFIT.

AS YOU CELEBRATED
MY DESTRUCTION SO MANY YEARS
AGO, I NOW WILL CELEBRATE YOURS,
MARTIN! I HAVE TAKEN YOUR
WIFE... AND YOUR IDENTITY.
NOW, YOU WILL FORFEIT
A UNIVERSE!

THIS IS CRAZY!
DESTROY A GALAXY
OVER SOME SHOOT-OUT
YOU HAD WITH HIM
TWENTY YEARS AGO?

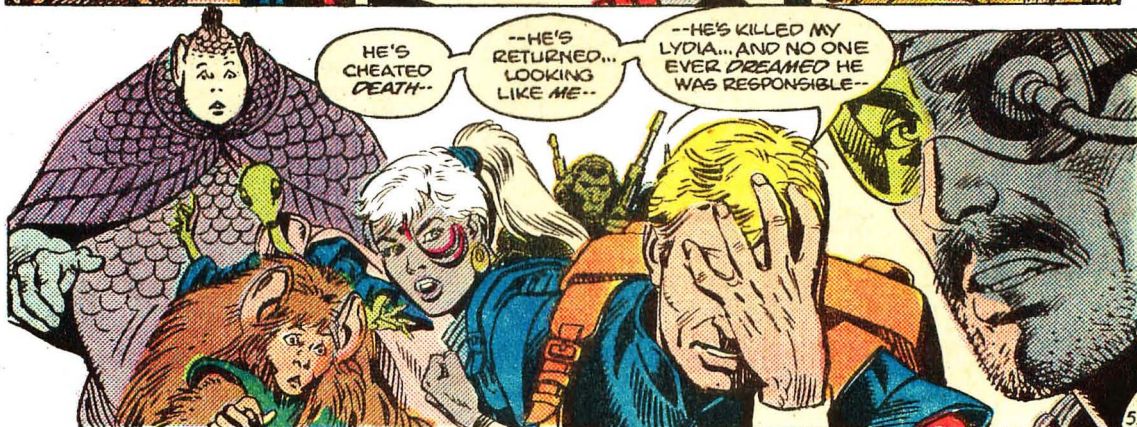
WE'VE
GOT TO
STOP
HIM!

HOW CAN WE?
HE CAN DO ANYTHING
HE WANTS!

HE'S
CHEATED
DEATH--

--HE'S
RETURNED...
LOOKING
LIKE ME--

--HE'S KILLED MY
LYDIA... AND NO ONE
EVER DREAMED HE
WAS RESPONSIBLE--





--AND NOW YOU'LL BLOW UP A HUNDRED THOUSAND STAR SYSTEMS!

YOU'RE A SLUG, DESTROYER-- NO MATTER WHAT FORM YOU TAKE! YOU HAVEN'T THE GUTS TO FIGHT ME MAN-TO-MAN...

...TO FIND OUT HOW A HUMAN BEING STANDS AGAINST YOU!

I DON'T EXPECT YOU TO STAND! I WANT YOU TO KNEEL.

KNEEL AND KISS THE FIRMAMENT--

--KNEEL AND WAIL AT THE SKY--

--FOR WHEN THAT ANTI-MATTER BOMB DETONATES... THEY WILL BOTH CEASE TO EXIST!

AN ENTIRE REALITY BLANKED OUT. ONLY THEN YOU'LL BE SATISFIED. ONLY THAT WILL BE ENOUGH.

"ENOUGH"? THAT'S ONLY THE BEGINNING! WITH THE MULTIVERSE DRIVE AT MY DISPOSAL, I CAN TRANSPORT MY LEGIONS OF LOYAL FOLLOWERS ACROSS INFINITE DIMENSIONS.

I AM A DESTROYER, MARTIN-- AND ONE UNIVERSE IS HARDLY ENOUGH TO QUELL MY APPETITE!

NOT ENOUGH? NOT EVEN AFTER THE LIVES OF EVERYONE I'VE EVER LOVED--

--EVER TOUCHED--EVER KNOWN--

--ARE SNUFFED LIKE SOME BOTHERSOME CANDLE? NOT ENOUGH?

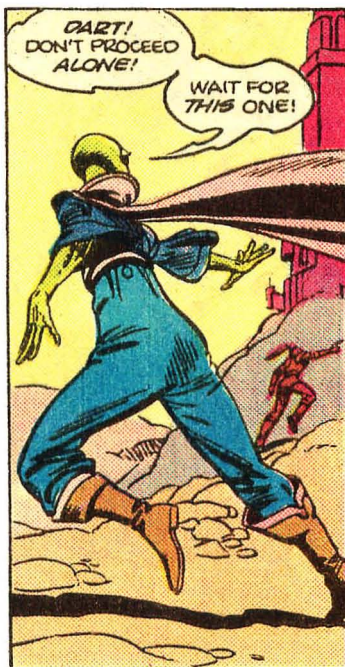
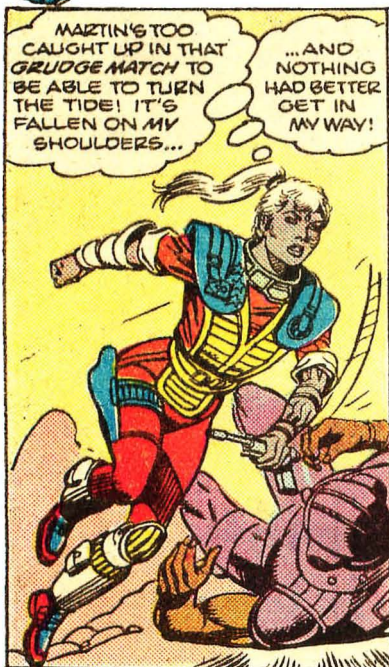
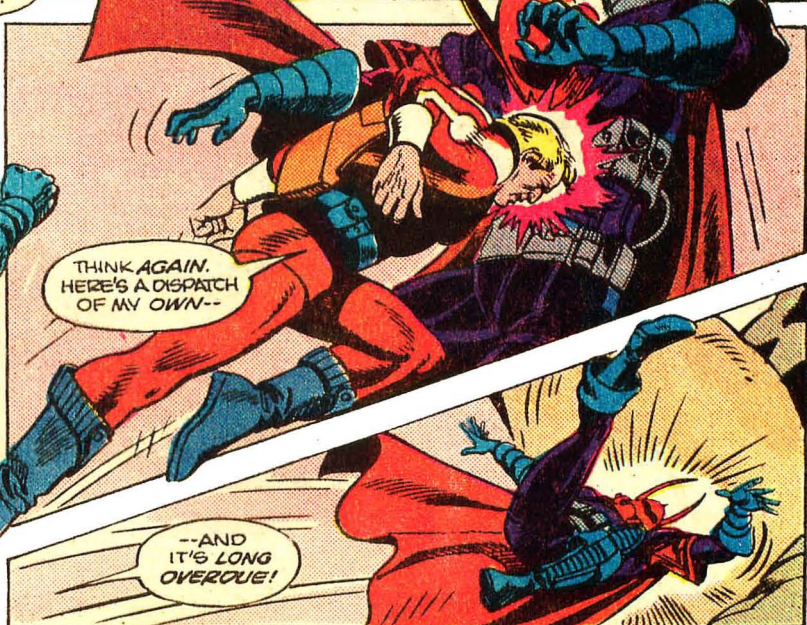
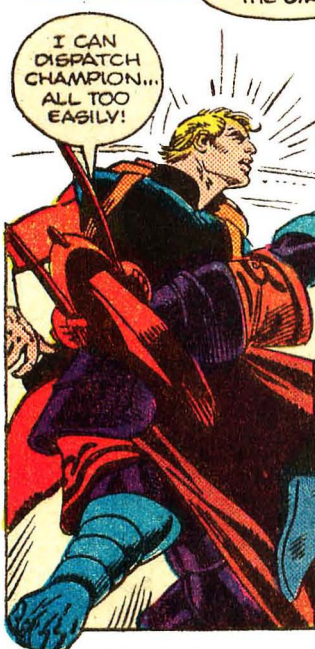
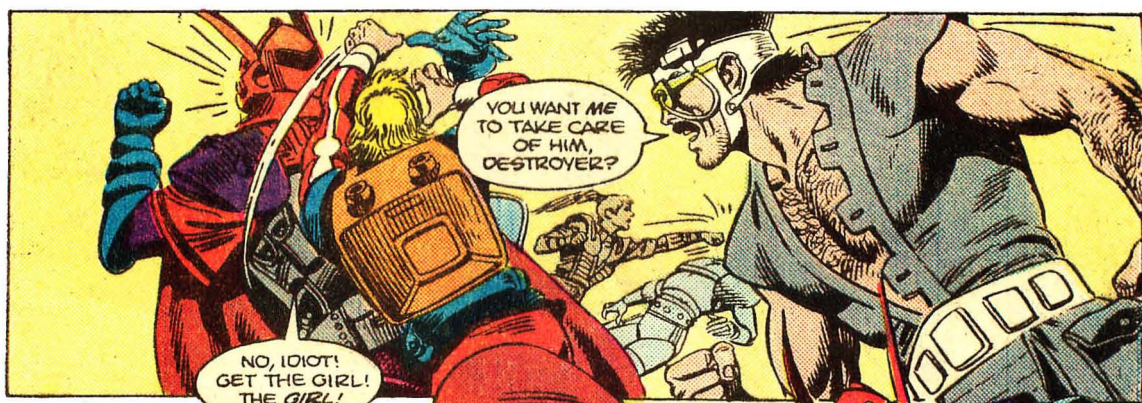


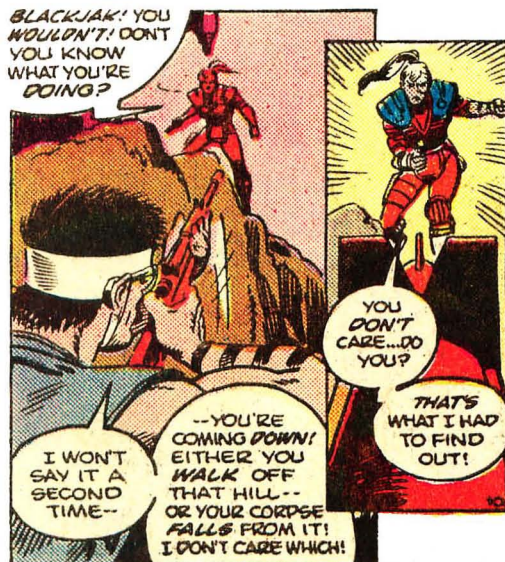
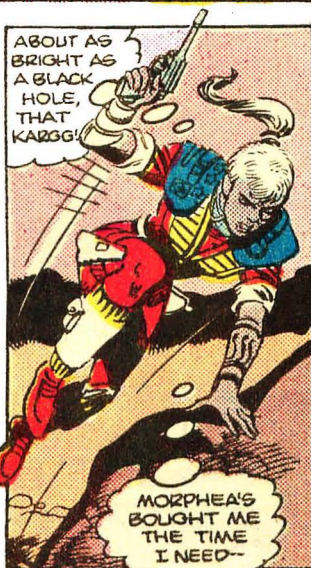
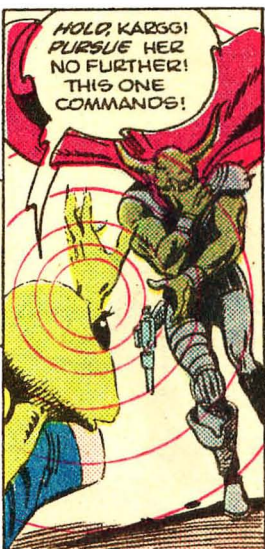
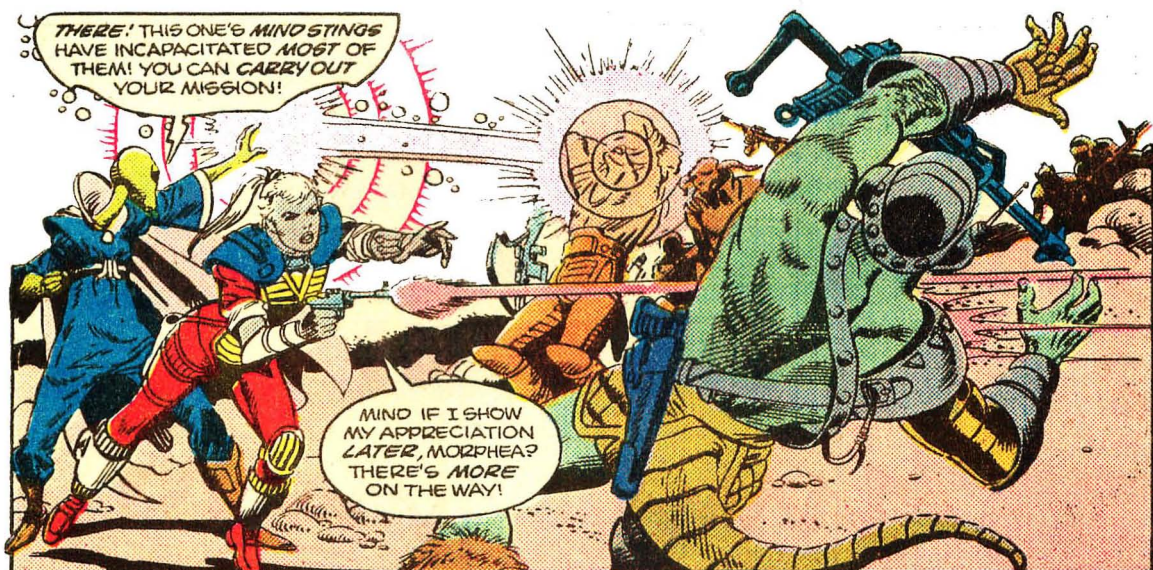
I DON'T KNOW WHAT LIMITS YOU'VE SET, DESTROYER... BUT I CAN TELL YOU THIS --

*I'VE HAD
ENOUGH!*

BARRETO
VILLAGRÁN







CONTINUED ON 2ND PAGE FOLLOWING.

**LOOK OUT WHEN
NEW BONKERS® FRUIT CANDY
HITS TOWN!**

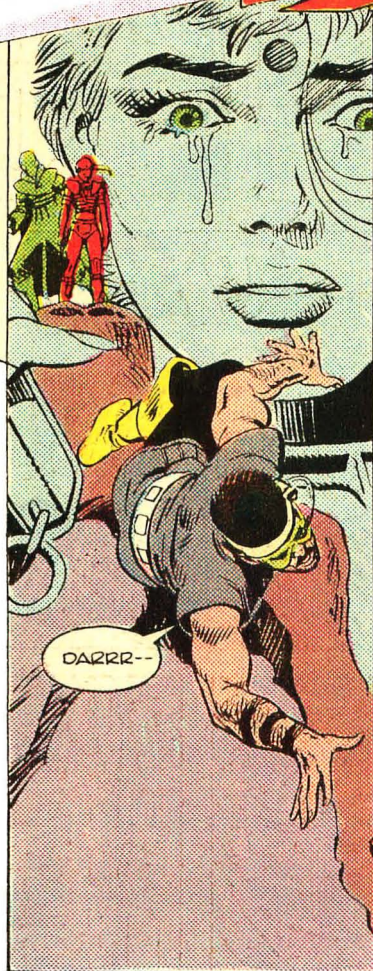
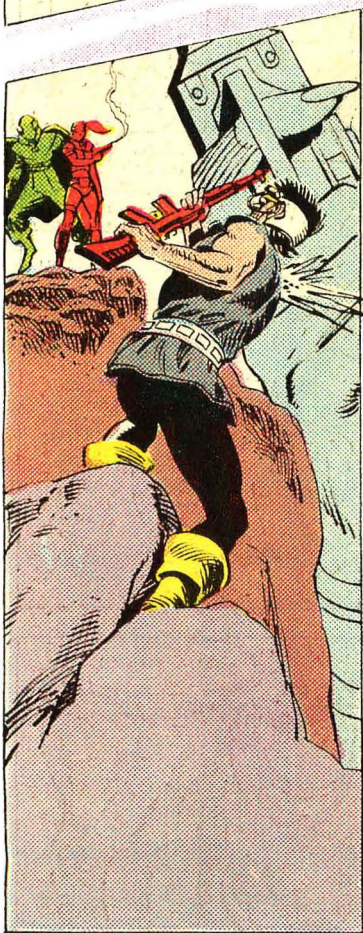
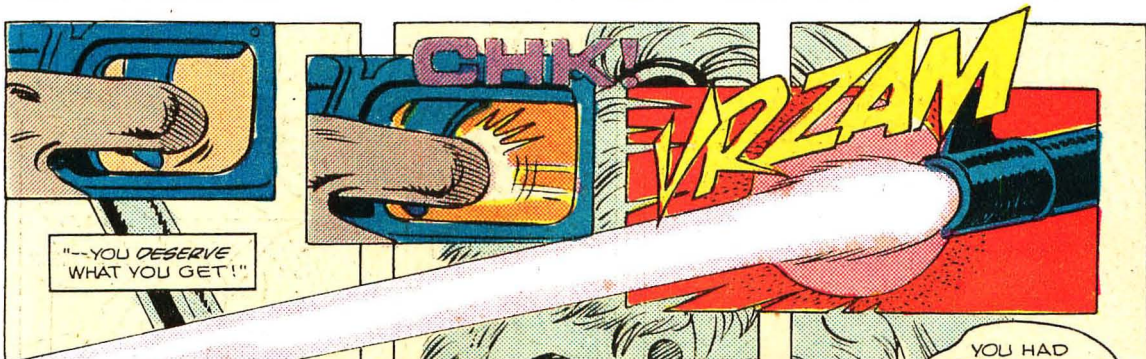


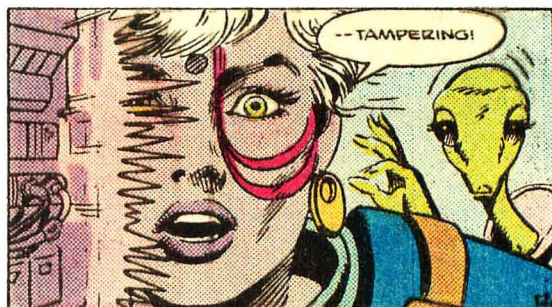
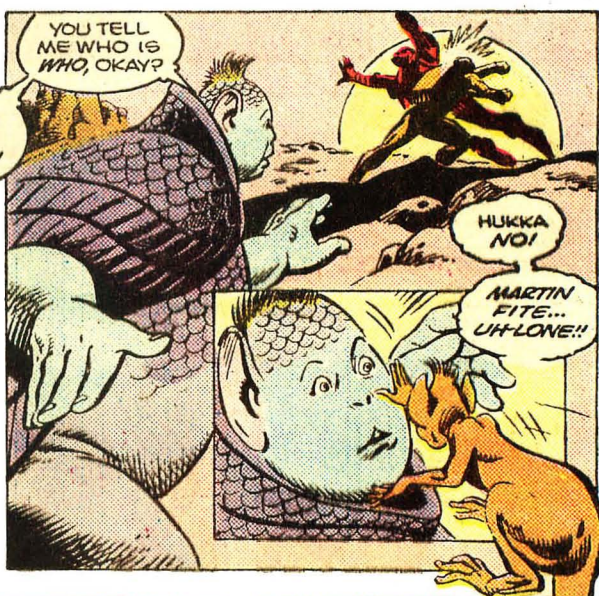
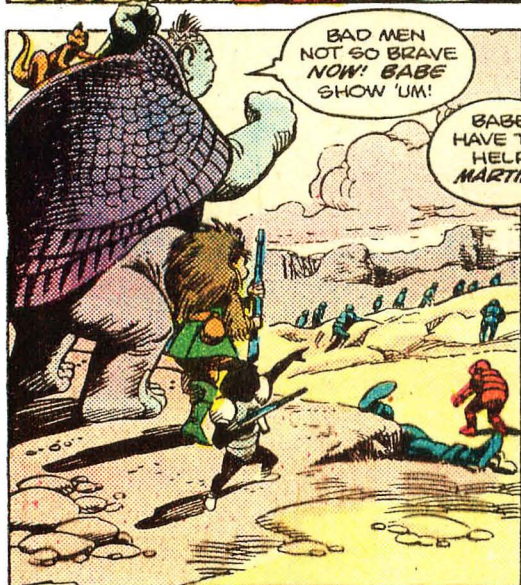
BONKS YOU OUT!

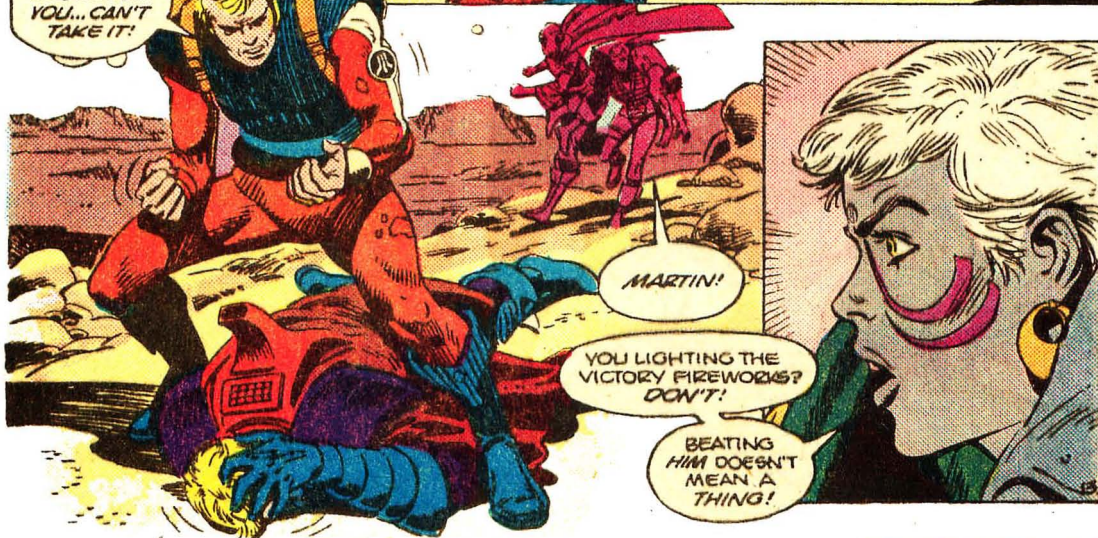
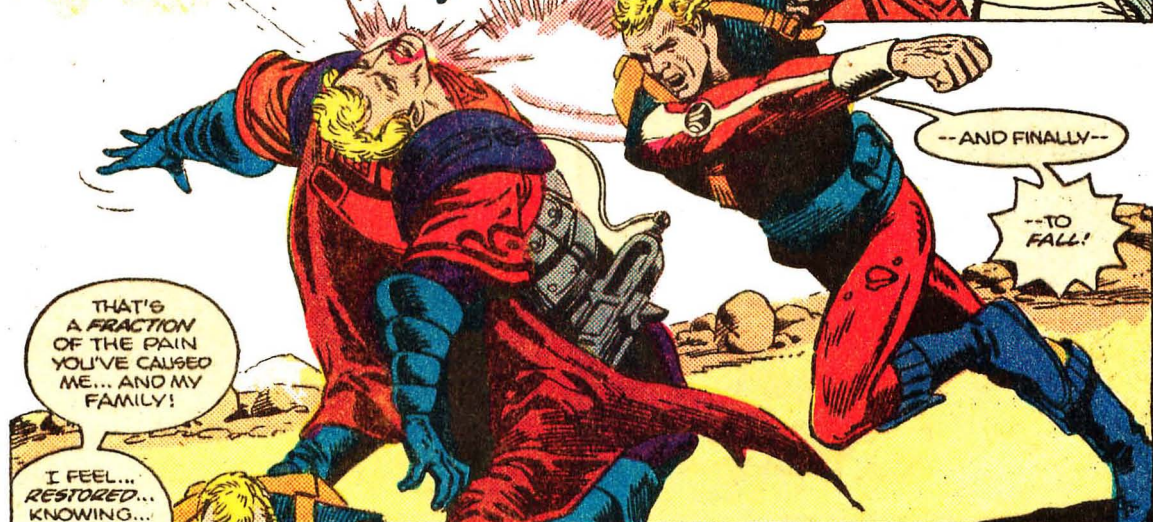


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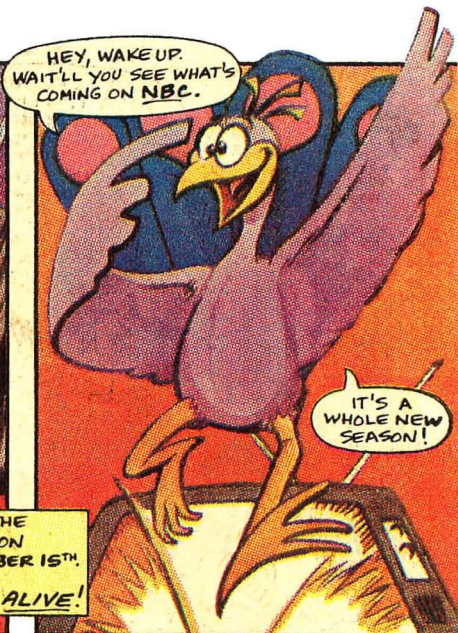




SATURDAY MORNING



CONSIDER, FOR A MOMENT, THE SURPRISE IN STORE FOR YOU ON SATURDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 15TH. AS YOU LAY SLEEPING YOUR TELEVISION SUDDENLY COMES ALIVE!

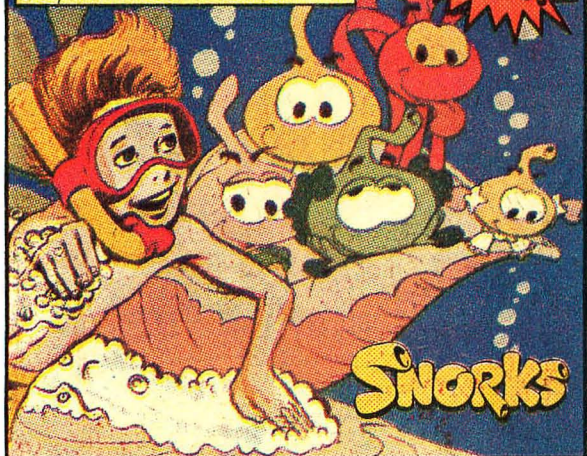


HEY, WAKE UP. WAIT'LL YOU SEE WHAT'S COMING ON NBC.

IT'S A WHOLE NEW SEASON!

FOR THE NEXT 1/2 HOUR YOU EXPLORE A FANTASTIC UNDERSEA WORLD WHERE YOU'LL UNCOVER INCREDIBLE CREATURES KNOWN ONLY AS THE **SNORKS**.

NEW SHOW!



SNORKS

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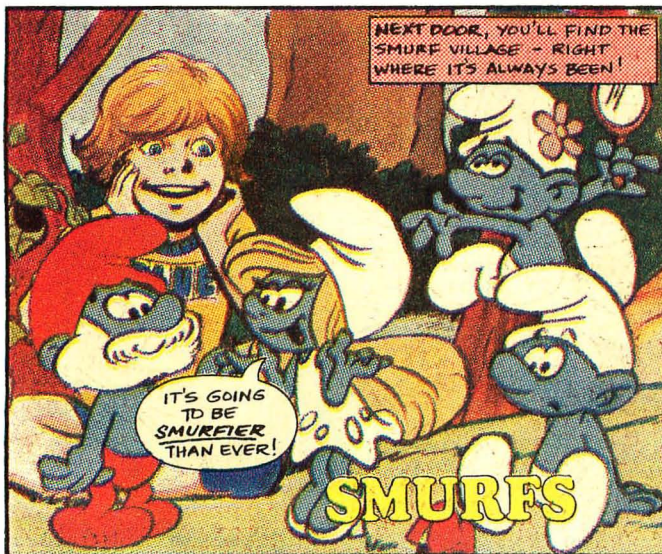
NEXT, YOU'LL SURFACE IN THE PINK PANTHER'S BACKYARD AND MEET HIS KIDS, PINKY AND PANKY, AND THEIR RIVALS - A PACK OF LIONS KNOWN AS "HOWL'S ANGELS".

NEW SHOW!



THE PINK PANTHER AND SONS

NEXT DOOR, YOU'LL FIND THE SMURF VILLAGE - RIGHT WHERE IT'S ALWAYS BEEN!



IT'S GOING TO BE SMURFIER THAN EVER!

SMURFS

©1984 Hanna-Barbera Productions, Inc. and Sepp International, S.A. Smurfs®

AS YOU LEAVE, ALVIN AND THE CHIPMUNKS WILL BE WAITING TO ROCK YOUR SOCKS OFF WITH THEIR VERSIONS OF HITS LIKE "BEAT IT" AND "GIRLS JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN".



Alvin & the Chipmunks

NEXT, **KIDD VIDEO** WILL TAKE YOU TO THE FLIP SIDE OF THE UNIVERSE WHERE THE MASTER PLAYER IS WAGING A BATTLE TO SAVE THE ENTIRE ROCK AND ROLL WORLD.

NEW SHOW!

KIDD VIDEO

©DIC and Saban Enterprises 1984

BEFORE YOU KNOW IT, MR. T WILL TAKE OVER.

PITY THE POOR FOOL WHO MESSES WITH THE CHANNEL CHANGER!

RIGHT, T!

MISTER T

©1984 Ruby-Spears Enterprises, Inc.

BY THE TIME HE'S DONE, YOU'LL BE GOING BANANAS WITH A REAL LIFE DRAMATIST NAMED ROXANNA BANANA.

NEW SHOW!

GOING BANANAS

©1984 Hanna-Barbera Productions, Inc.

THEN SPIDER-MAN AND HIS AMAZING FRIENDS WILL JOIN FORCES TO MAKE THE WHOLE WORLD SAFE FOR DEMOCRACY...SPECIALLY ON YOUR BLOCK!

SPIDER-MAN
AND HIS AMAZING FRIENDS

©1983 Marvel Comics Group, Inc.

AND FIVE TIMES DURING THE MORNING YOUR FAVORITE NBC STARS WILL GIVE YOU ONE TO GROW ON!

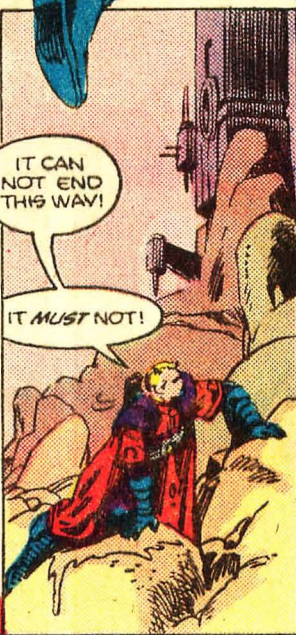
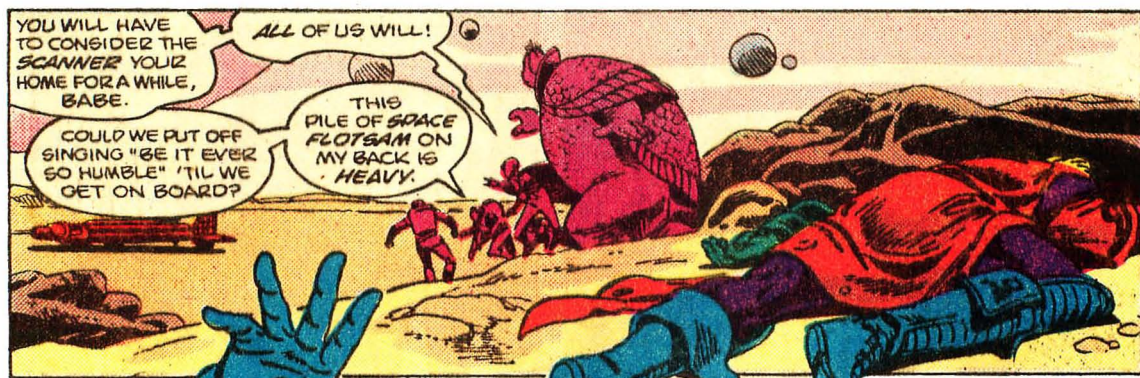
ONE TO GROW ON™

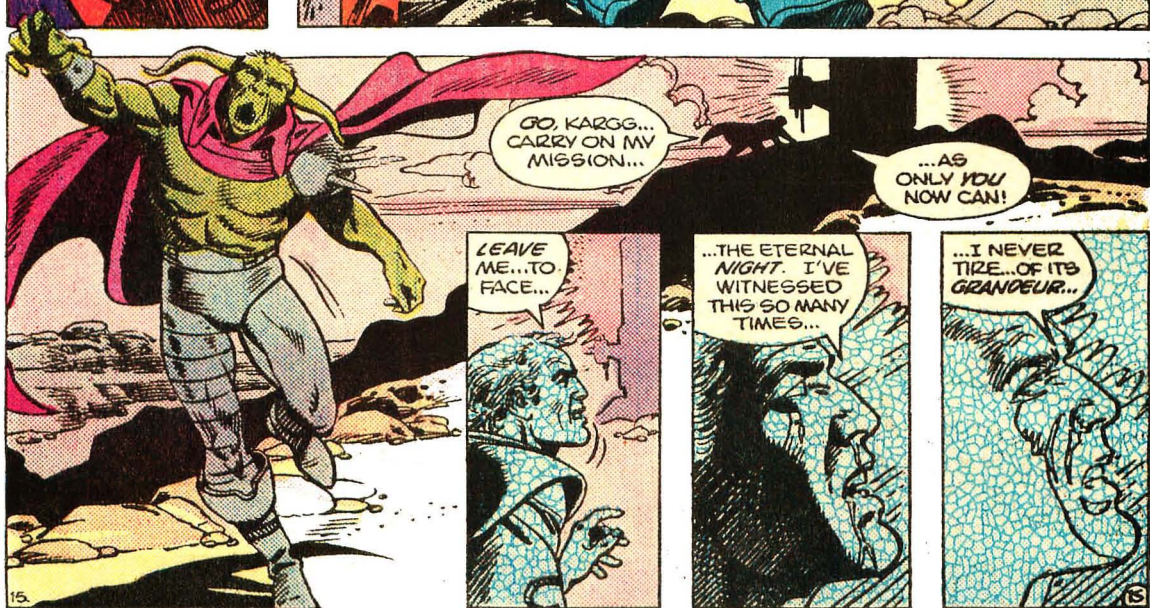
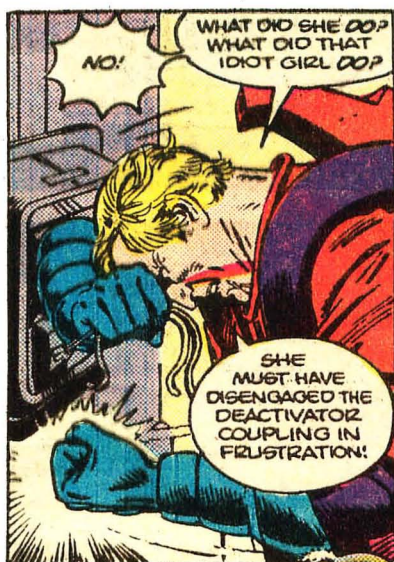
IT ALL BEGINS SEPTEMBER 15TH ON NBC, SO...

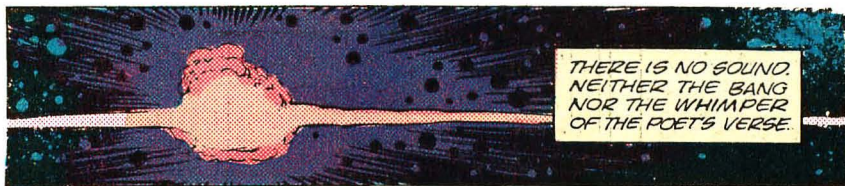
LET'S ALL

BE THERE

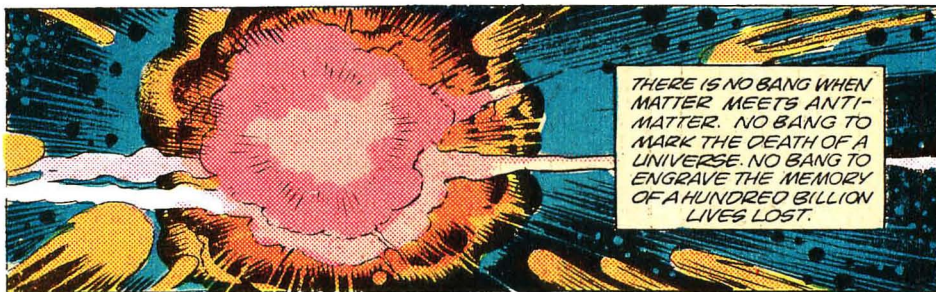
NBC logo



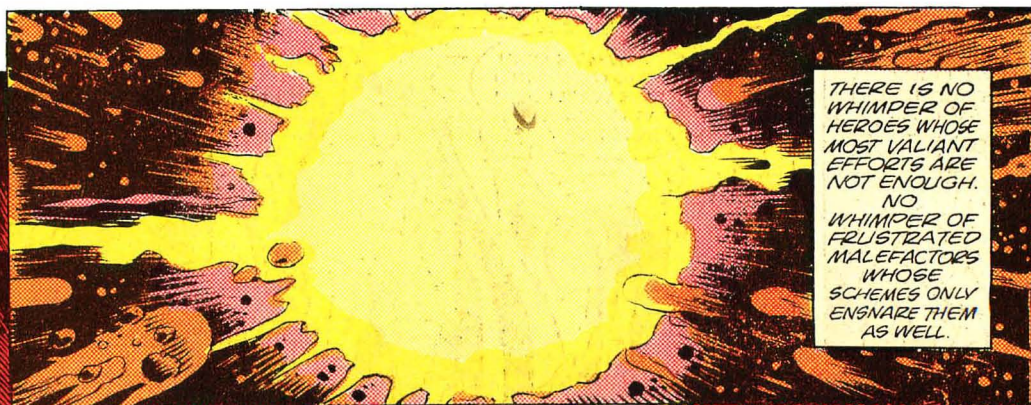




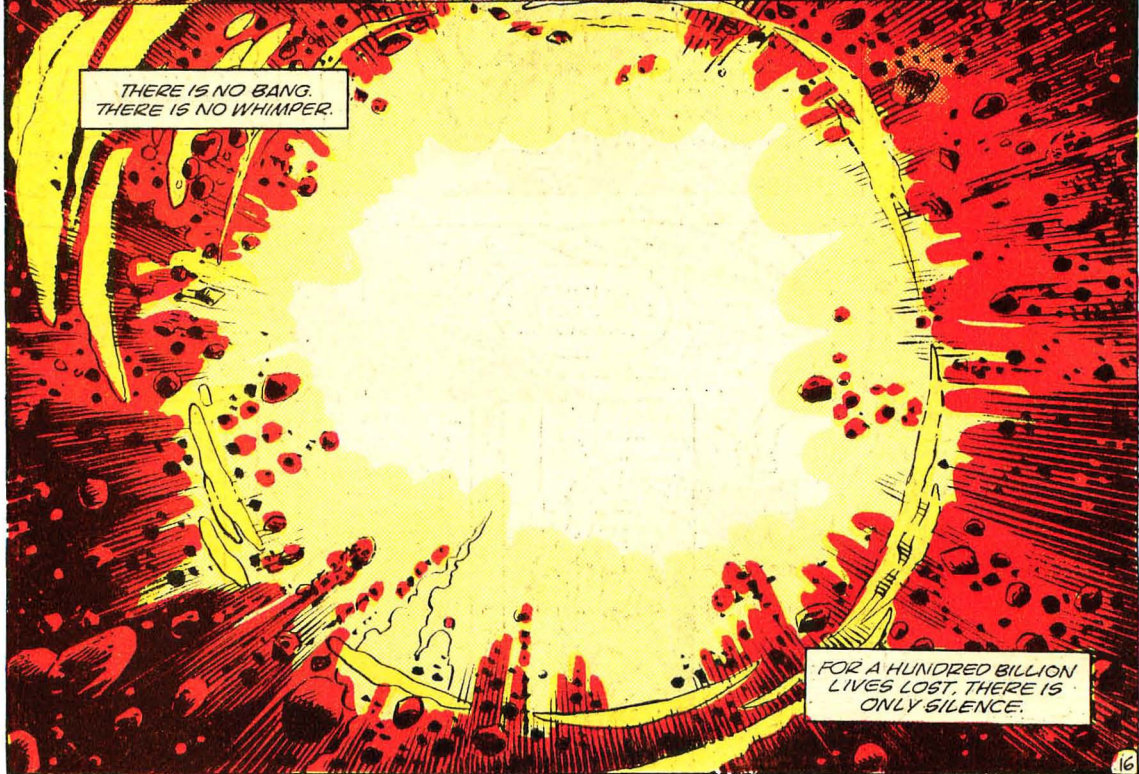
THERE IS NO SOUND.
NEITHER THE BANG
NOR THE WHIMPER
OF THE POET'S VERSE.



THERE IS NO BANG WHEN
MATTER MEETS ANTI-
MATTER. NO BANG TO
MARK THE DEATH OF A
UNIVERSE. NO BANG TO
ENGRAVE THE MEMORY
OF A HUNDRED BILLION
LIVES LOST.



THERE IS NO
WHIMPER OF
HEROES WHOSE
MOST VALIANT
EFFORTS ARE
NOT ENOUGH.
NO
WHIMPER OF
FRUSTRATED
MALEFACTORS
WHOSE
SCHEMES ONLY
ENSNARE THEM
AS WELL.



THERE IS NO BANG.
THERE IS NO WHIMPER.

FOR A HUNDRED BILLION
LIVES LOST, THERE IS
ONLY SILENCE.



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FORCE FEEDBACK

L-1837

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IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Being a comic book editor is not easy. It might be the most fun job a person can have, but it's not easy. Especially difficult is informing a book's loyal readers that a change in the creative team is about to occur. We did that last issue.

Hold onto your seats. We're about to do it again.

This is Gerry Conway's final issue of ATARI FORCE. Deadline pressure on his other books (FIRESTORM, JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA, and SUN DEVILS) simply made the additional work needed on ATARI FORCE impossible to perform. It wasn't an easy choice for Gerry to make, but something had to give, and ATARI FORCE was the one. We (and we're sure we speak for all of you out there too) have tremendously enjoyed Gerry's work on ATARI FORCE. It's been at turns hilarious, heartbreaking, electrifying, and just about every other laudatory adjective we can think of. His contribution will be missed.

That's the bad news. And now, on a more POSITIVE note...

Beginning next issue, MIKE BARON will take over the scripting chores on ATARI FORCE. Mike's work is already familiar to many of you—he is the creator of both NEXUS and THE BADGER, two of the most original (read: outrageous) comics to come down the pike in quite a while. Mike was our first

choice for permanent writer of ATARI FORCE, and with good reason: his work has always evidenced a shrewd ability to contrast the ridiculous with the sublime—his noble characters are constantly interacting with some of the universe's more wacked-out denizens—and both are handled believably and effectively. And when you've got characters like Dart and Martin Champion living next door to Pakrat and Babe—well... you get the point.

And so did Mike. After reading all the back issues of ATARI FORCE, Mike immediately understood why he was the writer for the job, and accepted the offer. It's a special pleasure for us to have Mike on our creative team, because we truly believe he has the talent and imagination to take the ATARI FORCE to even greater heights of glory. We've been having some pretty strange plot conferences in the past few weeks, and you're gonna love seeing the things Mike's cooked up.

Joining Mike is Ed Barreto, whose first job appears this issue. We hope you're as excited by Ed's work as we are. He seems to get better with every page. We gave you the rundown on him last issue, so we won't repeat ourselves, okay?

Moving along: you may note that there's no Pakrat back-up story this issue. We've done some last-minute story-shifting and dropped in another simply adorable Hukka feature by Paul

Kupperberg, Dave Manak, and Keith Giffen. Next time we'll have an untold tale of Babe's childhood as told by writer Dave Manak (he's pretty multitalented, no?) and Klaus Janson. After that—a three part Pakrat story by Andy Helfer (ye olde letter col writer/editor), Mike Chen, and Joe DelBeato.

So here's the creative schedule: Mike Baron, Ed Barreto, and Ricardo Villagran (whaddaya know? He's back!) for the next five issues of ATARI FORCE. After that, Mike will continue writing as José Luis García López returns to pick up artistic chores once again.

Finally, it has occurred to us that these lengthy editorials/status reports tend to eat into valuable letter column space. We're sorry that we haven't been printing as many letters as we'd like but feel very strongly that you readers have a right to know what's going on here. From the piles of heartfelt correspondence we get each month, we know you all care about the future of ATARI FORCE as much as we do, and we believe these announcements are appreciated. We're all committed to making ATARI FORCE better than ever before, and we're hoping you'll continue to support us in the future.

Next issue we'll return to our regular scheduled letter column. Until then...



Dear ATARI FORCE FOLKS,

This letter is to be filed in the "fanatics for Blackjak Supporters" file. I realize that I'm in for a couple of surprises in the next few months, but as long as Blackjak's not out of the comic, you can go ahead and surprise the dickens out of me. Did you hear that? As long as Blackjak's NOT out of the comic, I said.

I ADORE Blackjak! I love the relationship between him and Dart. It's unique! It's exciting! It's REAL! There's room in this relationship for sparks! Adventure! These people can fight and make up, lose and find one another, and it will be INTERESTING, as opposed to 90% of comic book love affairs. They bring out the... hidden parts of each other.

My pre-teen male friends love Blackjak! They want to grow up to be like him! He's strong! Brave! Clever! Funny! and KIND!

My teenage female friends love Blackjak! He's handsome! Outrageous! Sexy! Smart! Caring!

In fairness, I must confess that we also all like all the rest of the ATARI FORCE characters, for various reasons. We also like the stories, art, scripting, etc. But this is a Blackjak fan letter. I mean, even though part of what makes him so wonderful is what he does for Dart. And another part is going to be the conflicts with Tempest! And Martin Champion! And Pakrat! And the adventures they are all going to get into in the next hundred years that ATARI FORCE is going to be the world's most popular comic book, that is, as long as Blackjak remains in the book, which, I may perhaps have already mentioned, would be much appreciated by...

Sheila Stone/age 25
ARCATA, CA

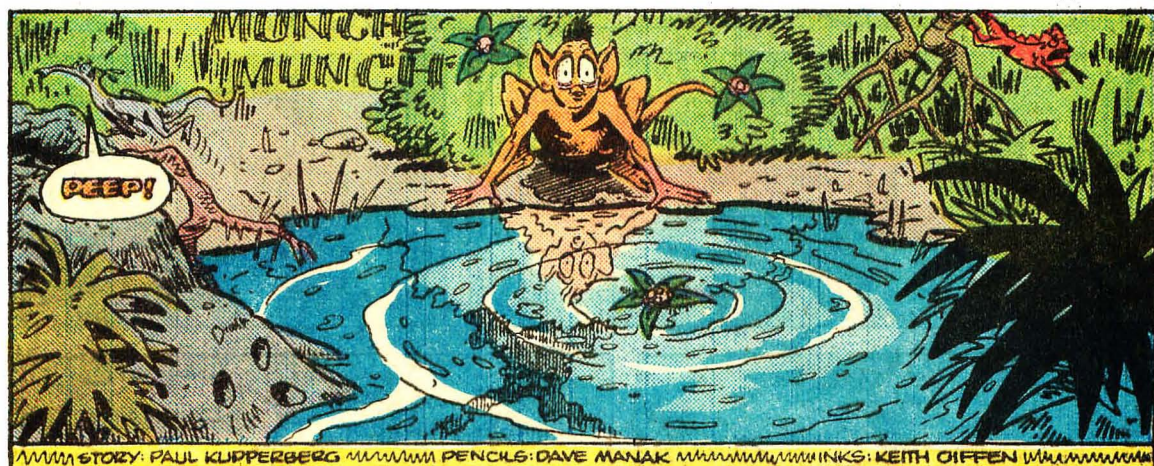
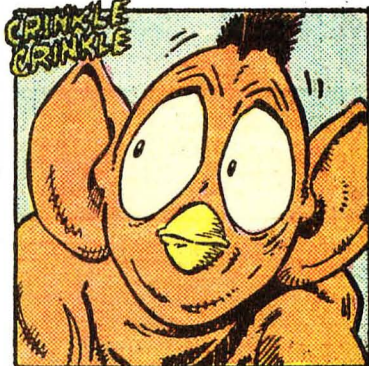
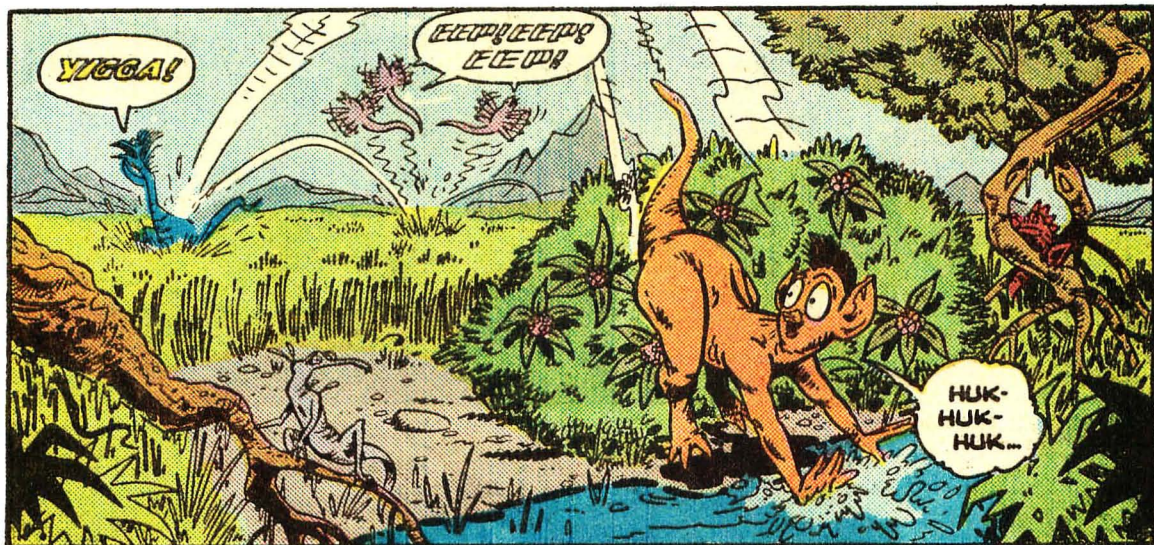
(Gee, er—uh—Susan—we don't quite know what to say. Blackjak doesn't seem to be much of a—er—ROLE MODEL anymore, at least not after all that's happened in the last few issues.

He's not even very nice. Kinda pathetic. But HEY! He's still in the book, right? And you promised to keep on reading, right? Should we put you down for a subscription?)

NEXT ISSUE: Mike Baron's first issue is a goodie—but after this issue's conclusion, you might be inclined to think it would consist of 16 BLANK pages! But nooooo! To say ANYTHING would spoil SOME wild plot twist, so we'll just whet your appetite with the title. It's called "LOST IN THE MULTIVERSE," and that's just for starters! ALSO: you'll see the newborn BABE in a fanciful pre-ATARI FORCE story illustrated by Klaus Janson. Stay with us, folks—we're having FUN!

—Andy Helfer

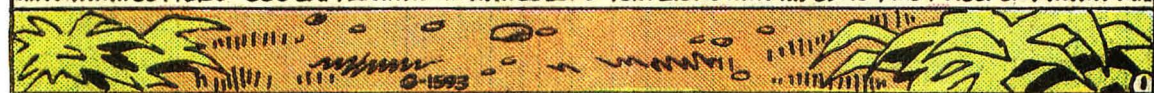


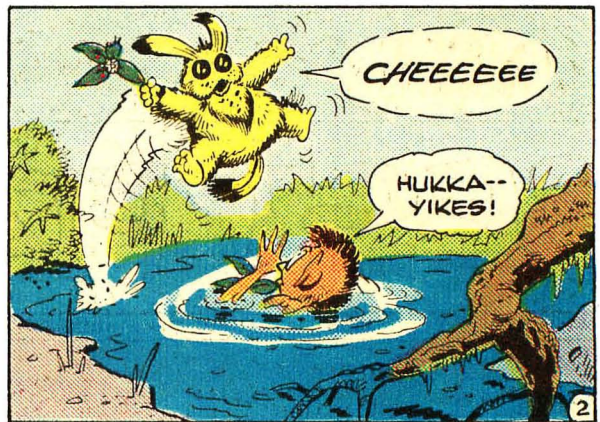
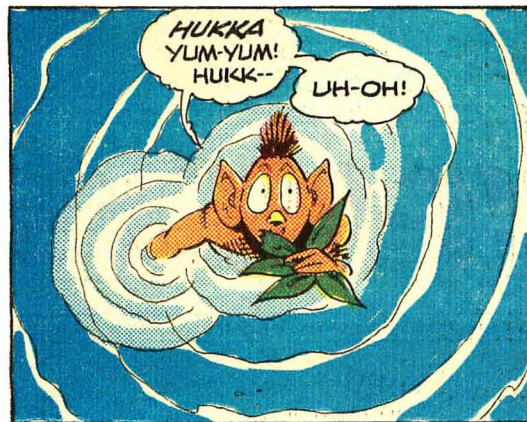
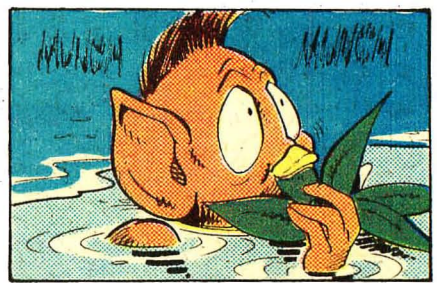
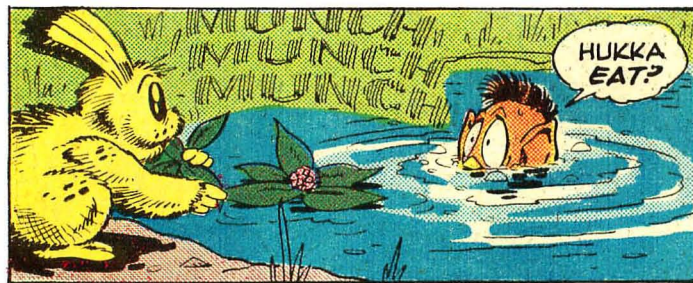
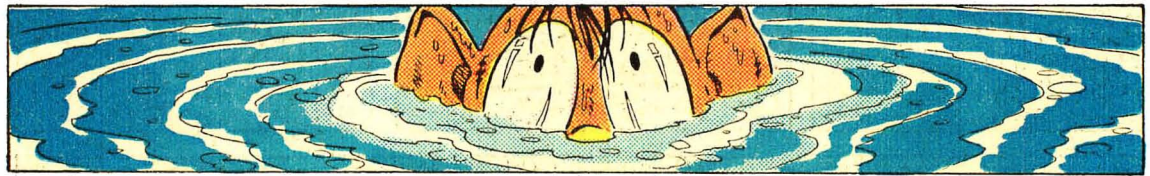
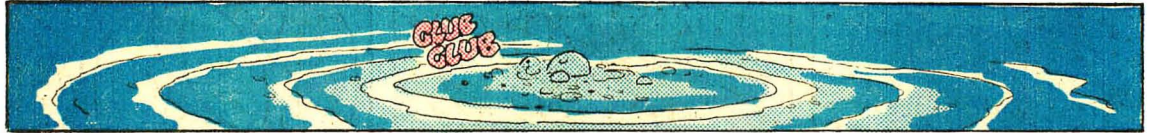
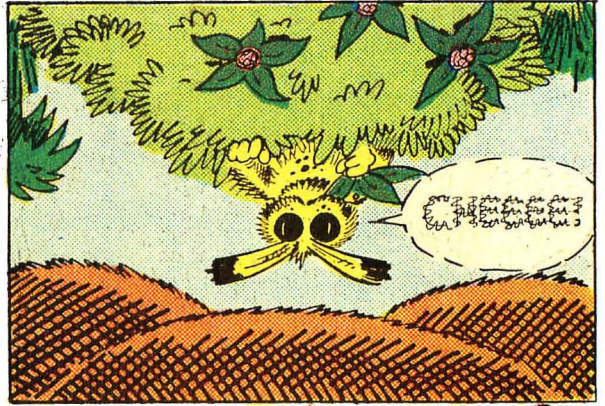


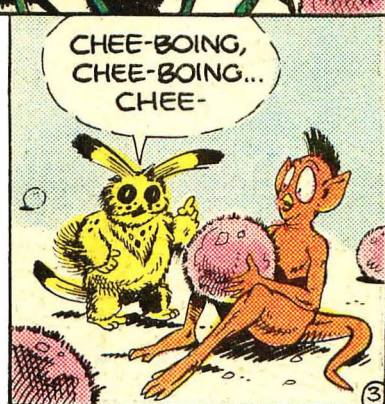
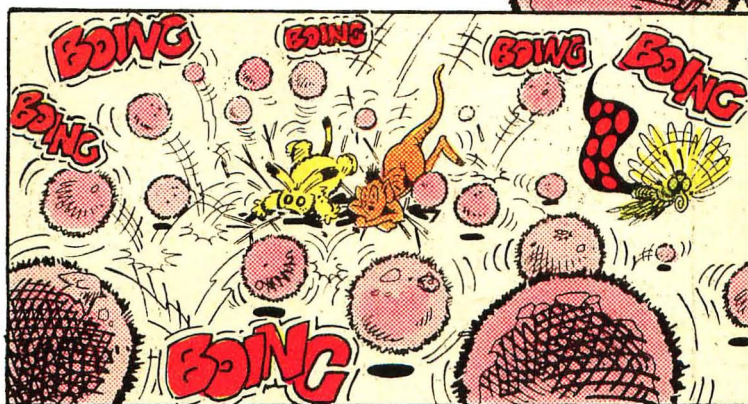
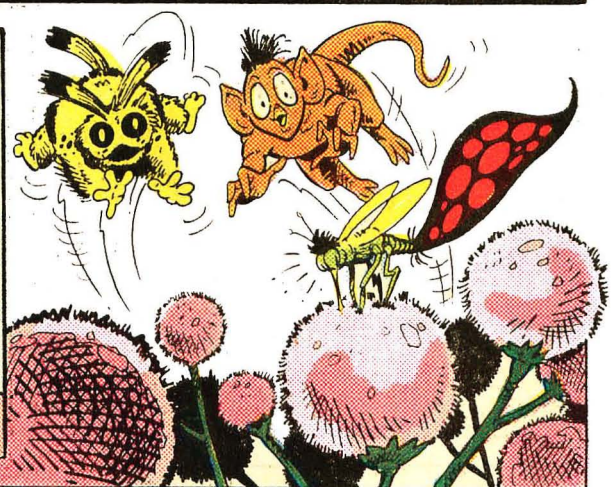
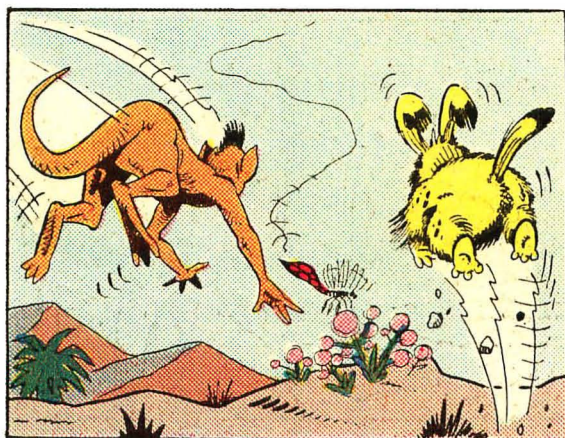
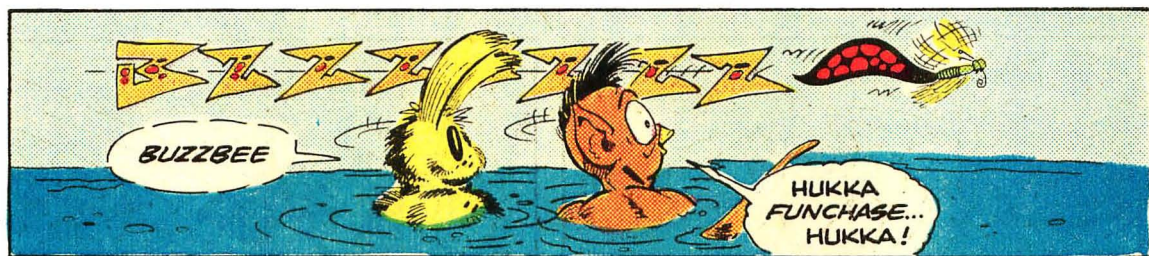
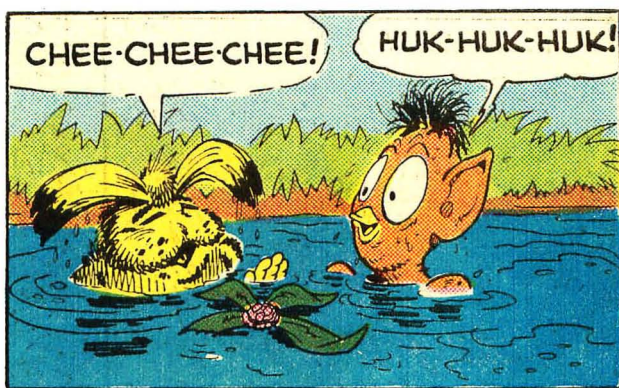
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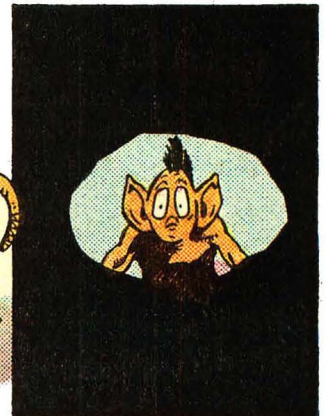
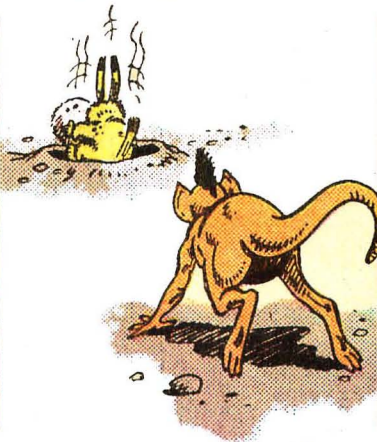
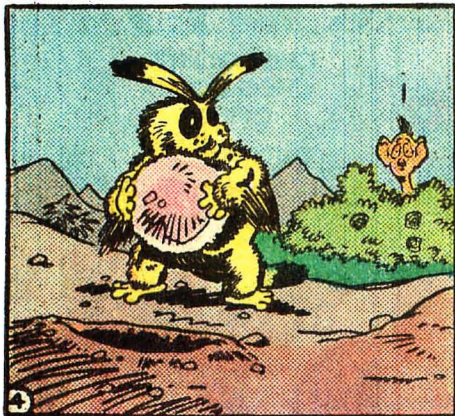
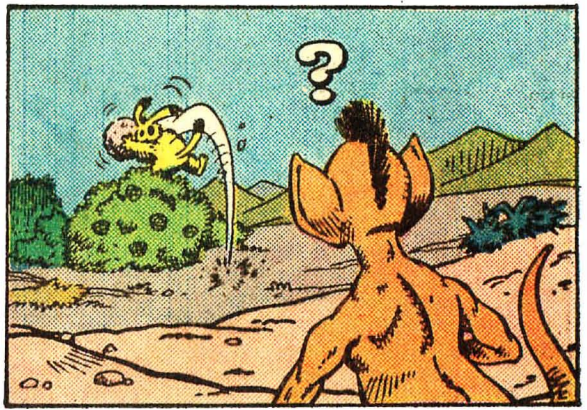
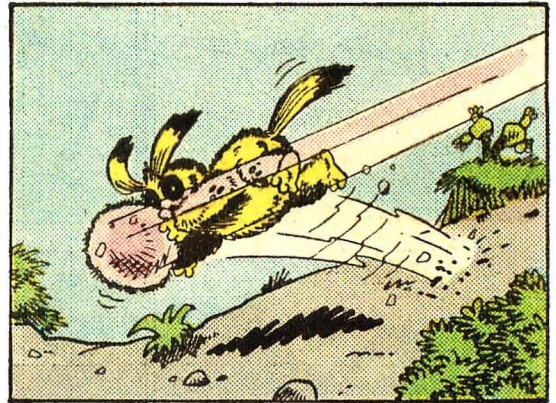
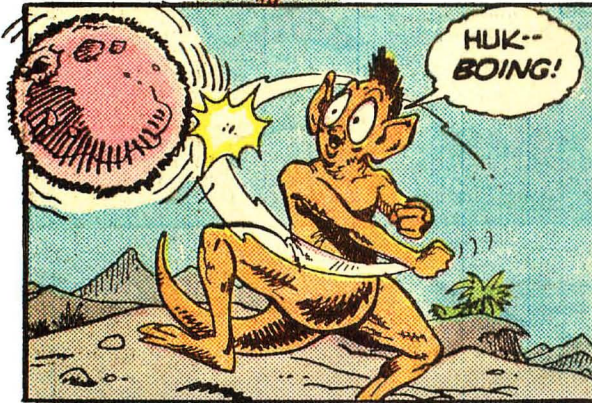
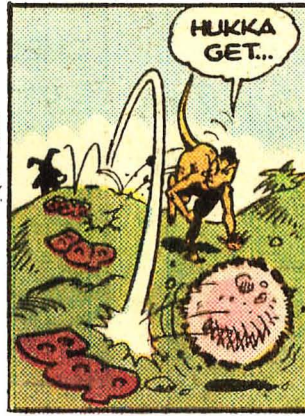
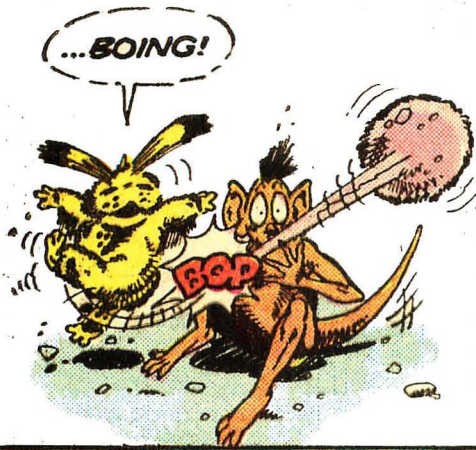
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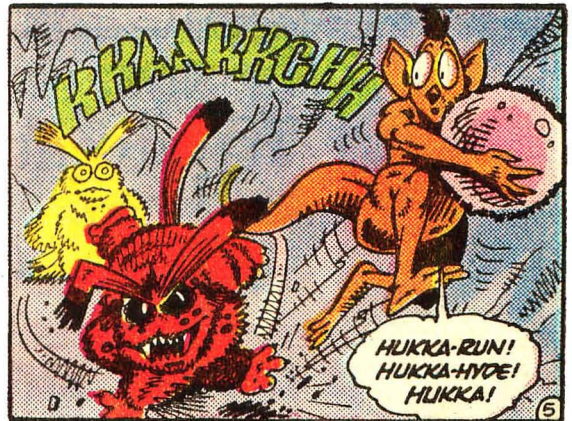
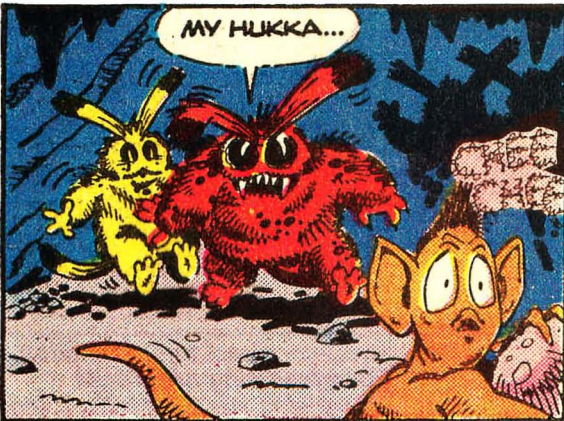
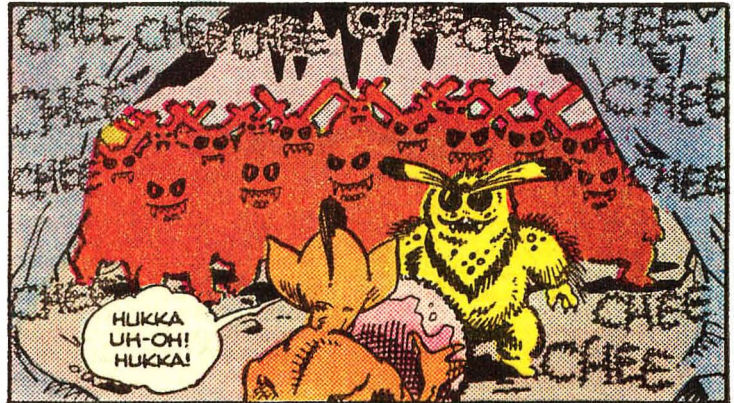
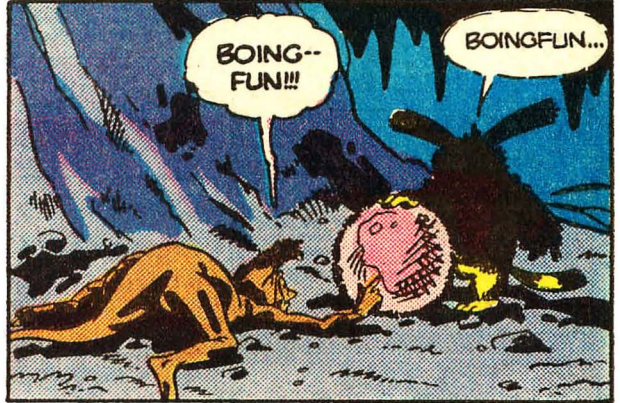
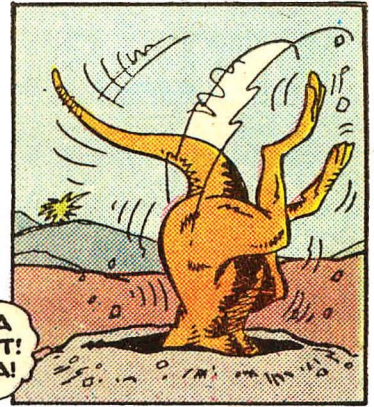
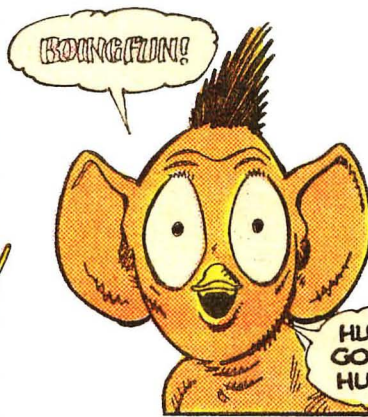
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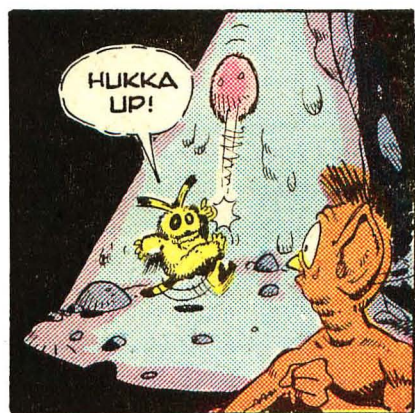
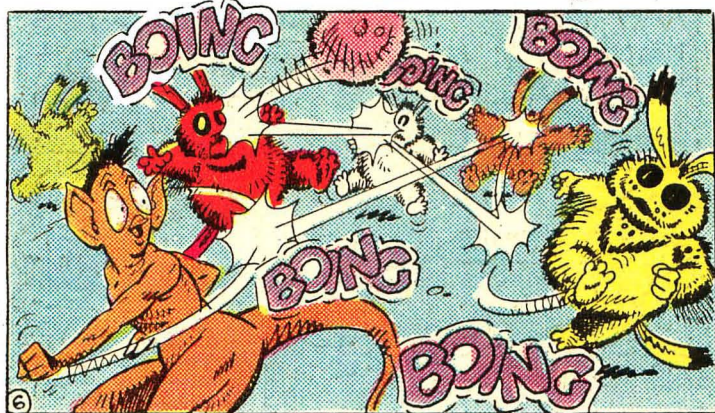
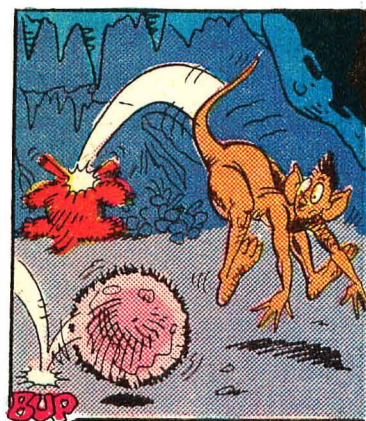
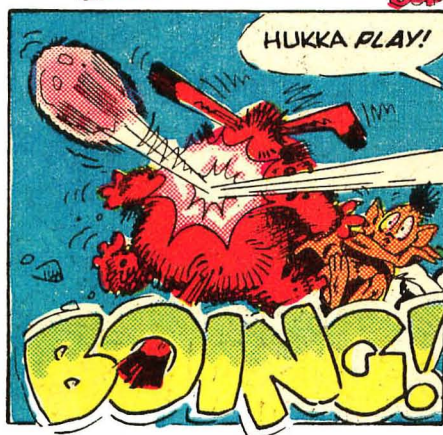
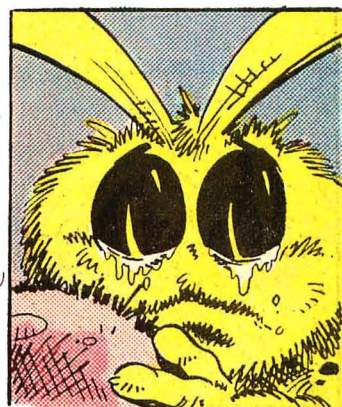
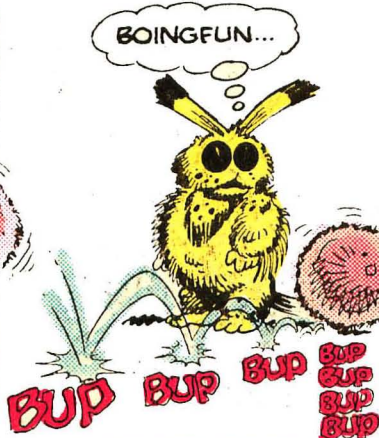
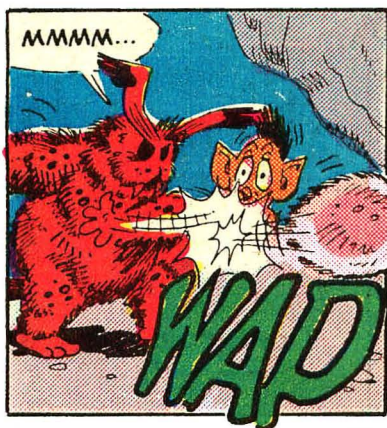
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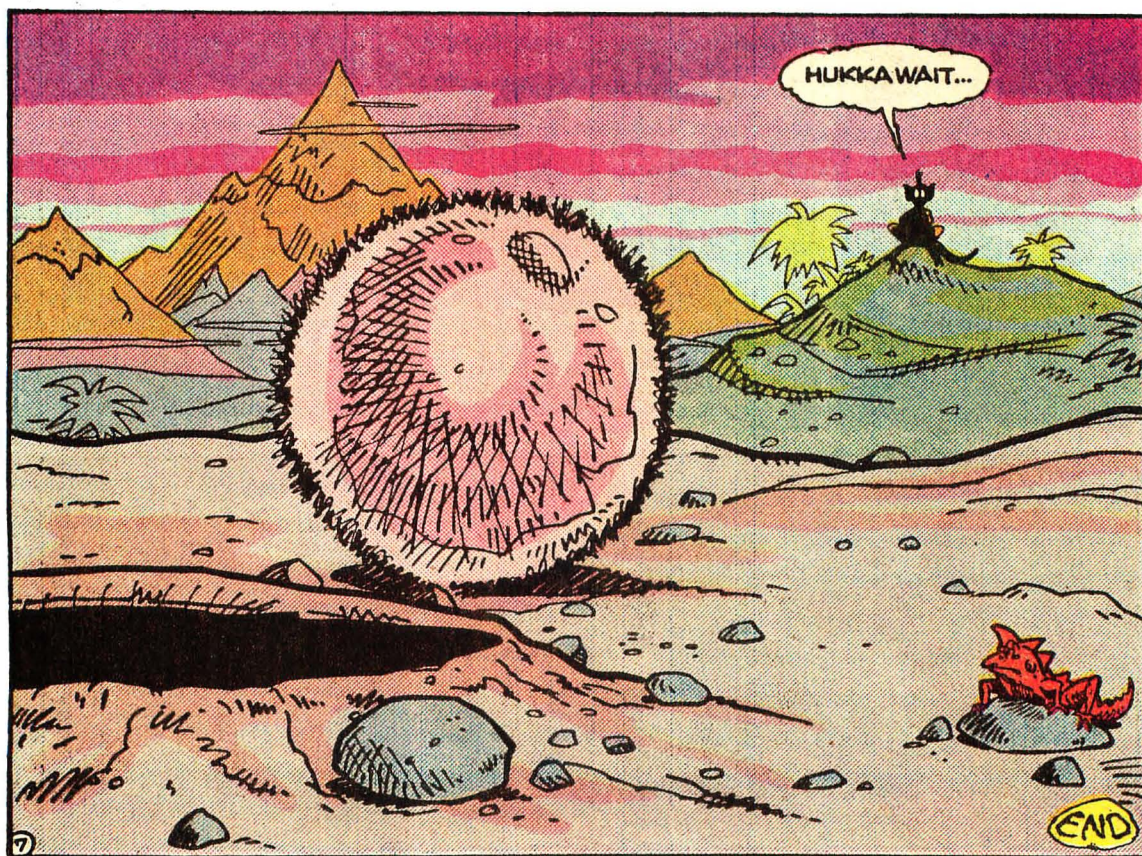
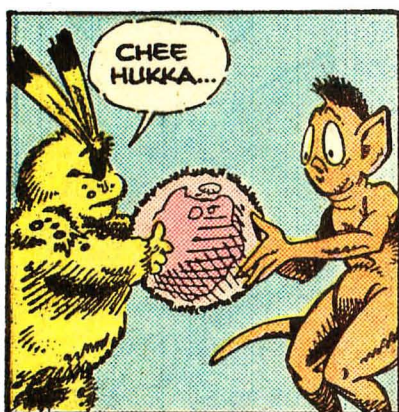
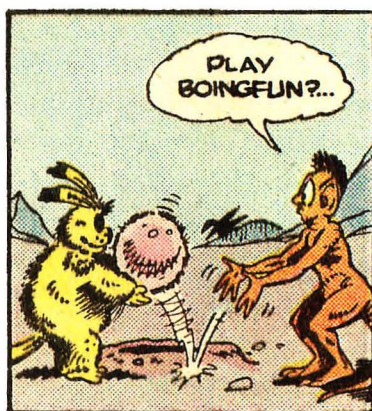
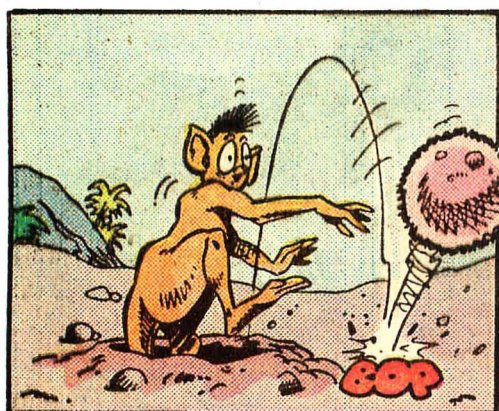


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MEANWHILE...

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA VS THE AVENGERS THE DEATH OF A DREAM

BY DICK GIORDANO

PART I: TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

If you've read *Marvel Age* #19, Oct., you'll know what this column is about. If you haven't read it, I suggest you try to get a copy and read, in particular, *Marvel's* version of the events behind the JLA/Avengers team-up controversy.

One dictionary definition holds that **truth** is: "Conformity to fact or reality." Let's explore the **truths** revealed, and, more telling, the **truths not** revealed, in the *Marvel Age* report.

First, I am mildly curious as to why no one is willing to take credit for writing the *Marvel Age* article. It is the only non-Marvel news piece in the magazine that does not carry a byline. You'll notice my byline at the top of this column, so at least you'll know who is responsible for all that is printed here.

I am a bit more curious as to why *Marvel's* writer (whoever he/she was) quoted so liberally from my letter of May 26th to Jim Shooter without including the portion containing an apology and an assessment of the realities of producing this book:

"The motivation for the events was weak. I agreed with you and we set about to fix the plot. When we thought we had it de-bugged, Len called you with an outline of the changes, to which you responded positively, saying you felt the changes would work. Len reported that conversation to me with the request from you that a new written plot be submitted. I thought this request to be logical but largely a formality and ordered George Perez to start drawing before the new plot was typed. In doing so, I had no intention of ignoring your wishes. I understood your conversation with Len to be a tacit approval of our modifications and desired only to keep the project moving. I have since apologized to you for this seeming breach of protocol and

trust that this unintentional mistake is not one of the reasons for your rejection.

Yes, there still remain some questions left unanswered in the plot, but no more or less than are left unanswered in most plots. More often than not, these questions are resolved while the work is in progress, and I'm sure that you'll agree the levels of skill possessed by George Perez, Roy Thomas, Len Wein, and myself are sufficient to resolve these plot "holes" to everyone's satisfaction, and I would surely submit the material in its subsequent more finished stages and welcome your input at that time."

[And at the conclusion of that same letter:] "The storyline makes sense to me and everyone else here and our contract stipulates that 'Marvel and DC shall jointly agree on mutually acceptable modifications,' and I can hardly agree with your modifications if I don't know what they are.

Perhaps we should just put this back in the hands of Mark and Len and George and Roy and trust that these seasoned pros, three of whom have worked well for both companies, won't embarrass themselves or DC and *Marvel*. Whichever way you choose to go, I respectfully request that you respond as quickly as possible. **TIMES-A-WASTIN'!**

Warmest Personal Regards,
Dick Giordano
Vice President-Executive Editor"

Little matter that the quotes from that letter, chosen by *Marvel*, did not accurately reflect my intent in writing it; little matter that the first two pages of their story contain numerous inaccuracies and distortions; little matter I am portrayed as having no interest in the quality of the plot **rather** than as the person who suggested that the best way to quality was to trust a creative team who individually had made commitment to quality in all that they had previously undertaken. Working together, they could do no less. What does matter is that I accepted the responsibility for all the mistakes made up to that time, apologized for them, and urged that we put aside the past and, in a show of

mutual cooperation, move forward, quickly. I hoped that by so doing we could dispel the perceptions, common at the time, that **JLA/AVENGERS** was becoming a political football rather than a long-awaited comic.

Jim Shooter responded with a list of his specific problems with the script. It took him twenty or so days to produce the list ... not a very long time, given the work load of the editor-in-chief of the country's largest comic book publisher. Immediately upon receipt of Jim's list, I forwarded copies of it, all the versions of the plots written to that date, and George Perez's twenty pages of pencils, to Roy Thomas in California. I gave him a week to digest the material (Roy was slated to write only the dialogue and was not directly involved in the plot up until that time), then after several phone calls between Roy and myself to discuss the plot's specific needs and Jim's objections, Roy rewrote the plot. He delivered the completed draft to our offices on July 28th. It took Roy little more than a month to complete and deliver this final (fourth all told!) version of the script. Not a long time, either ... given the circumstances.

This is where the real problem began. The events from this time forward are the basis for the complaints registered by, and here I quote from the *Marvel Age* article, "people connected with the project" in "interviews for various fanzines that give the misimpression that *Marvel* is responsible for deliberately delaying the project." Remember, Roy Thomas was one of those so interviewed and he wasn't directly involved in the project until well after the delays and problems caused by my errors. It is also relevant to note that Roy and all who gave those interviews agreed in print that I committed errors in judgment in the early going. It was the later events that caused their ire, and it is those later events that the *Marvel Age* article ignores or glosses over, and it is those later events that I wish to detail now.

On July 28th, a copy of Roy's plot was hand-delivered to *Marvel*. A second copy was delivered to George Perez during the next week. No word was received from anyone at *Marvel*, not even an acknowledgment of its receipt. Since both companies were planning to attend the San Diego convention in force on August 4th, I paid no particular note to the lack of communication. We were busy getting everything done so we could go to San Diego (and beyond!), and I presumed *Marvel* was too. When we all reached San Diego, I approached Jim and asked if he had read the script. He said he hadn't, but that he had it with him and would try to read it while he was there. I pointed out to him that it would be advantageous if he did so, since we had a rare opportunity during that four-day weekend convention.

To be concluded in next **Meanwhile...** column.

GOTTA-GET-A-GRIT!



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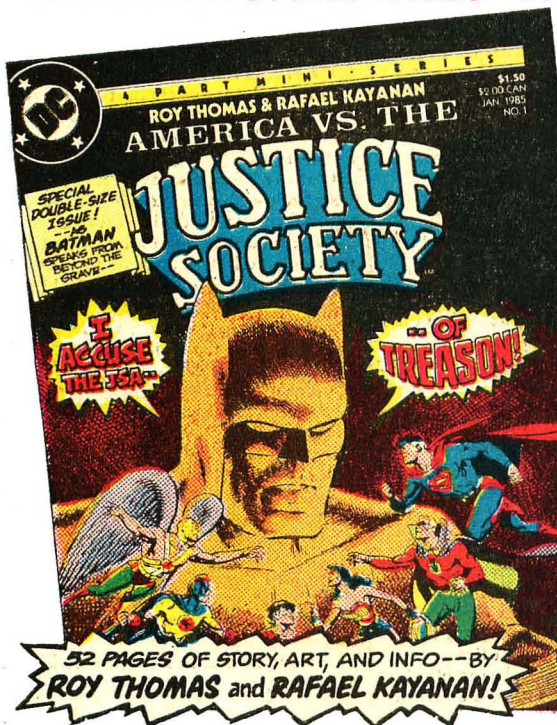
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