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EARTH'S MIGHTIEST HEROES!

the AVENGERS



THE MOST
BIZARRE
AVENGERS
EPIC EVER
TOLD!



ENTER...
MODRED
THE
MYSTIC!



And there came a day when Earth's mightiest heroes found themselves united against a common threat. On that day, the Avengers were born—to fight the foes no single super-hero could withstand!

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

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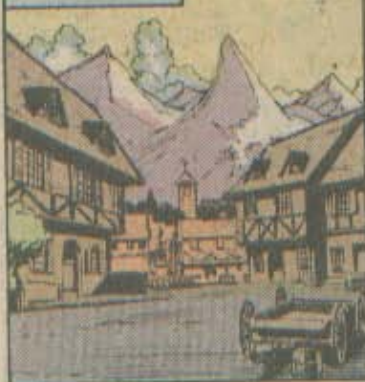
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HIGH ABOVE THE SUN-STREAKED VILLAGE OF EAST TRANSIA, A TOWERING FINGER OF STONE JUTS SKYWARD.



IT IS CALLED WUNDAGORE, AND IT HAS BECKONED FORTH TWO AVENGERS SEEKING ANSWERS OF THEIR PAST.



ONE, THE SCARLET WITCH REMAINS UNACCOUNTED FOR AT ITS PEAK--

-- WHILE THE OTHER, QUICK-SILVER, HAS MOST RECENTLY DISCOVERED A LOWER RIDGE, AN UNASSUMING COTTAGE--



...AND THAT COTTAGE'S VERY ASSUMING OCCUPANT.

WH-WHO ARE YOU? WHAT HAVE YOU--?



I'VE PROBABLY SAVED YOUR LIFE, PIETRO. AS THE ONE WHO BROUGHT YOU INTO THIS WORLD, I COULD DO NO LESS!



NOW DRINK THIS MILK SOUP WHILE IT'S HOT YOU'LL NEED STRENGTH FOR THE TASKS AHEAD



BUT...

1648

NIGHTS OF WUNDAGORE!

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HUSH, CHILD. JUST EAT AND LISTEN. FOR IF ANY OF US ARE TO SURVIVE THIS TIME OF EVIL, YOU MUST KNOW FULLY MY STORY--



--AND YOURS!

THE TALE BEGINS YEARS AGO, IN THE LABORATORY OF HE WHO WAS TO BE CALLED THE HIGH EVOLUTIONARY. I WAS ONE OF HIS FIRST PROJECTS, A COW WHICH HE EVOLVED TO HUMAN FORM AND NAMED... **GOVA!**



"I WAS TO CARE FOR THE CHILDREN OF HIS NEW MEN, FOR HE HAD MORE PRESSING MATTERS TO TEND TO. MATTERS THAT COINCIDED WITH THE UNEXPLAINED RETURN OF HIS ASSISTANT, JONATHAN DREW...



"... MATTERS THAT KEPT THE TWO MEN OCCUPIED IN THE TALL TOWERS OF WUNDAGORE THE NIGHT WHEN A VISITOR ARRIVED, ASKING SANCTUARY. HER NAME WAS MAGDA, A WOMAN HEAVY WITH CHILD--



--AND SORROW...

"SHE TOLD OF A HUSBAND WHO HAD GAINED STRANGE ABILITIES, POWERS THAT HAD SENT HIM RAVING WITH A DESIRE TO RULE THE WORLD. FEARFUL THAT HIS MADNESS WOULD CORRUPT THE CHILD, HE WASN'T EVEN AWARE SHE CARRIED, SHE HAD FLED.



"AND, HAVING HEARD OF WUNDAGORE, SHE SOUGHT ASYLUM HERE... AND WAS GRANTED IT.



"I CARED FOR HER MYSELF, AND OVER THE WEEKS WE BECAME VERY CLOSE.

"SO THAT WHEN THE TIME CAME TO MIDWIFE FOR HER, IT WAS MORE PRIVILEGE THAN DUTY I HELPED TO DELIVER TWIN INFANTS THAT NIGHT-- YOU, PIETRO, AND YOUR SISTER, WANDA--



"...WHOSE TINY FORM MOMENTARILY MIRRORED THE MYSTERIOUS LIGHTS THAT FILLED THE SKY THE NIGHT YOU WERE BORN...

"MAGDA WAS PLEASED WITH HER OFFSPRING AND YET IT SEEMED A PLEASURE TINGED WITH RESOLVE, THUS IT CAME AS LITTLE SHOCK WHEN, DAYS LATER--



"--I FOUND HER GONE, LEAVING ONLY A NOTE EXPRESSING FEAR THAT IF SHE REMAINED ALIVE, HER UNNAMED HUSBAND MIGHT FORCE KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR CHILDREN FROM HER.



"I TOOK THE CHILDREN TO MY LORD HIGH EVOLUTIONARY, HE WAS WEARY AS IF FROM SOME GREAT CONFLICT, BUT AGREED TO HELP.



"HE THUS SUMMONED A VISITING COUPLE FROM THE VILLAGE BELOW-- ROBERT AND MADELINE FRANK, WHO WERE THEMSELVES EXPECTING A CHILD. IT WAS MY LORD'S PLAN TO GIVE ALL THREE CHILDREN TO THE FRANKS.



"AND SO, I PERFORMED ONCE MORE AS MIDWIFE ONLY THIS TIME THE RESULTS WERE TRAGIC. THE CHILD WAS HORRID DEFORMED AND, THANKFULLY, STILLBORN.



"THE MOTHER SURVIVED THE RIGORS OF THAT TERRIBLE BIRTH BY ONLY MOMENTS.

"SEEING BUT ONE POSSIBILITY FOR GOOD IN THIS TRAGEDY, I OFFERED MAGDA'S TWINS TO ROBERT FRANK AS HIS OWN. BUT THE DEATH OF HIS WIFE WAS TOO GREAT A BURDEN--



"--AND HE FLED FROM WUNDAGOKE, THE SOBS OF HIS GRIEF CRACKING THE CHILL OF THE DARK BALKAN NIGHT...



"IT WAS THEN THAT THE HIGH EVOLUTIONARY TOOK A MORE DIRECT HAND. KNOWING OF A TRIBE OF GYPSIES CAMPED NEARBY, HE ORDERED ME TO FETCH THE CHILDREN..."



"... AND THEN, LIKE SOME MANIFESTING GOD, HE PLACED THEM IN THE CARE OF THE TRIBE'S SHAMAN, DJANGO MAXIMOFF AND HIS WIFE, WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO RAISE THE TWINS AS THEIR OWN."



"THE MAXIMOFFS, WHO HAD RECENTLY LOST THEIR OWN CHILDREN -- ANA AND MATEO -- COMPLIED."

"AND THAT'S THE LAST I SAW OF YOU UNTIL YOU CAME TUMBLING DOWN THE MOUNTAIN SOME HOURS AGO."



"THEN DJANGO IS THE MAN WHO RAISED ME IN MY YOUTH! THE STORY FITS! BUT..."

#LAST ISSUE -- ROG.

"... WHY IS IT SO HARD TO REMEMBER? WHY IS MY CHILDHOOD SO CLOUDY?"

"PERHAPS IT IS THE TRAUMA OF LOSS, MY DEAR. CAUSED BY YOUR BELIEF THAT YOUR FOSTER PARENTS HAD DIED!"



"I FELT THE SAME SENSE OF EMPTINESS WHEN WUNDAGORE LEFT FOR THE STARS, AND I ELECTED TO REMAIN BEHIND FOR PERSONAL REASONS."

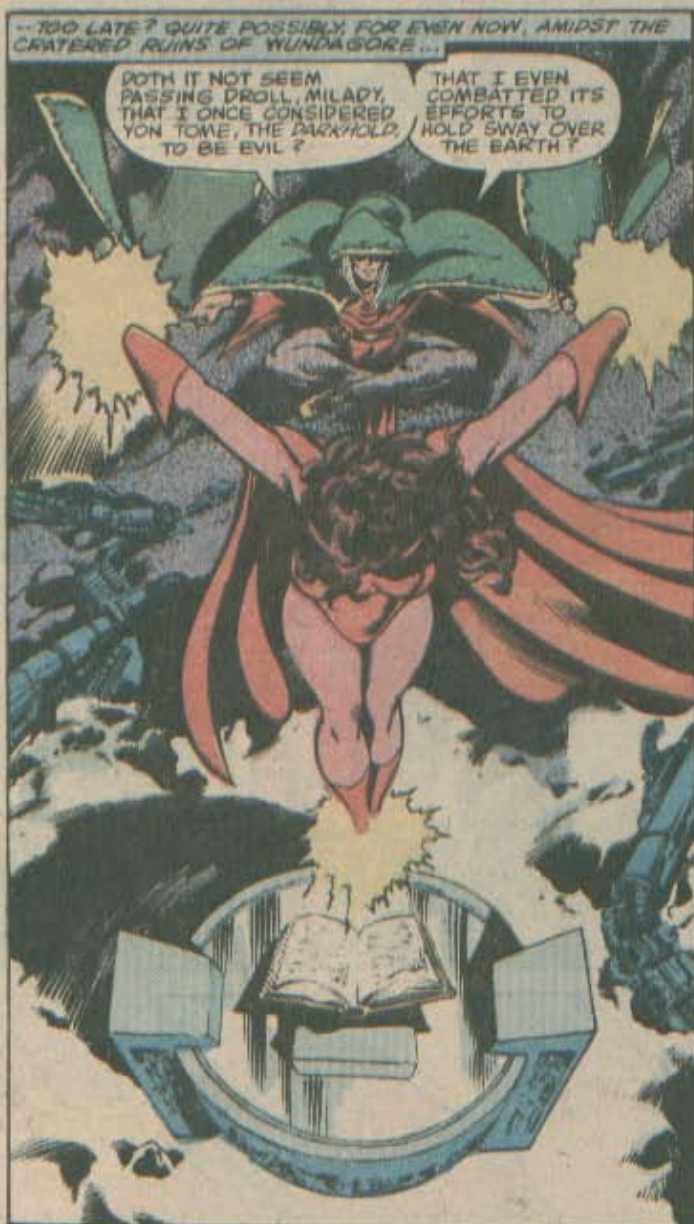
"BUT THAT'S NOT IMPORTANT WHAT MATTERS IS THAT NOW YOU KNOW ALL."



"ALL? BUT I STILL HAVEN'T A CLUE AS TO MY TRUE FATHER'S IDENTITY!"

"THEN TAKE MY WORD THAT YOU KNOW ENOUGH! PLEASE!"





NOT THAT HIS OWN POWER IS LACKING. MY MAGIC CAN'T EVEN WEAKEN HIS HOLDING SPELL.



BUT MY MUTANT HEX ABILITIES CAN SIDESTEP MAGIC BY ALTERING PROBABILITIES!



AND HOPEFULLY SET... ME...

...FREE!



WHA...? NAY!

FOUL MISCREANT! THOU HAST DEFAMED THE SACRED DARKHOLD!



THAT'S NOTHING, MODRED! AS SOON AS I GET TO MY FEET, I'M GOING TO DESTROY IT!

PIE! MAYHAPS THINE LIFE HATH BEEN DEEMED SACROSANCT BY THE MASTER--



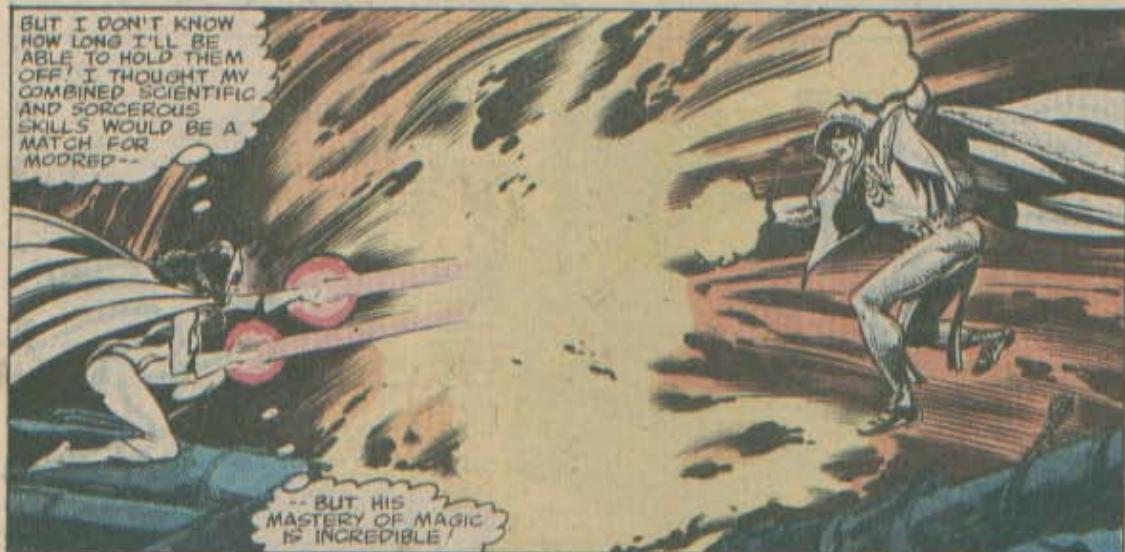
-- BUT NAUGHT IN HIS EDICTS FORBIDS THE ADMINISTRATION OF DISCIPLINE!

WRITHE DEFILER!



WHEW! I BARELY STOPPED MODRED'S MYSTIC BOLTS IN TIME!





BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I'LL BE ABLE TO HOLD THEM OFF! I THOUGHT MY COMBINED SCIENTIFIC AND SORCEROUS SKILLS WOULD BE A MATCH FOR MODRED--

-- BUT HIS MASTERY OF MAGIC IS INCREDIBLE!



HAVE TO TAKE THE DEFENSIVE! CREATE A HEX SPHERE TO REPULE HIS ENERGY BOLTS!



THINE RESOURCEFULNESS DOETH BE ADMIRABLE, WOMAN--

-- BUT IT SHALL AVAIL THEE NAUGHT!



FOR MINE STRENGTH GOETH BEYOND THAT OF MERE MAGICKS AND SPELLS--

-- TO THE RAGING POWER OF THE ELEMENTS THEMSELVES!



A-ALL RIGHT! I BELIEVE YOU! J- JUST STOP! PLEASE--

STOP!

THOU DOST YIELD?



VERILY, I BE DISAPPOINTED I WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THOU TO BE A MORE DETERMINED OPPONENT.

I AM, MODRED. I JUST REALIZED THAT I CAN'T FIGHT YOU ON YOUR LEVEL, BUT THERE ARE OTHER LEVELS, LIKE FOR INSTANCE, WHAT THE MORTALS OF THIS WORLD CALL--



A ROUND-HOUSE LEFT!

THWACK!

THWACK!



I... I'VE NEVER KILLED BEFORE, BUT IF THAT MONSTER MODRED SERVES SHOULD PREVAIL, MILLIONS COULD DIE!

GOD FORGIVE ME...



MAYHAPS "HE" SHALL, WITCH? BUT THE DEMON OF THE DARKHOLD--

--SHALL NOT!



FOR THOU WERT CHOSEN AT BIRTH TO BE THE VESSEL, WOMAN! TO BE THE INSTRUMENT FOR THE MASTER'S SECOND RISING! AND THE TIME OF THAT RISING--

--BE NOW!



AND, A SHORT MOMENT AFTER "WOW", ON A FAMILIAR LEDGE...

BUT I MUST HURRY IN MY SEARCH FOR WANDA, BEFORE--

YOU HAVE MY GRATITUDE, BOVA, FOR TENDING MY WOUNDS, REPAIRING MY COSTUME...

...AND FOR ARMING ME WITH TRUTH!



DON'T TROUBLE YOURSELF, BROTHER-DEAR! I'VE FOUND YOU!

WAN--

--DA...?

OH MY!



I SHOULD KILL YOU, QUICKSILVER-- AND YOU, COW WOMAN! BUT IT SEEMS I'VE YET TO COMPLETELY CAST OFF MY DAMNABLE HUMAN COMPASSION!



THIS I SHALL LEAVE YOU WITH A WARNING, ONE AS INDISPUTABLE AS IT IS DIRE: GO--



--OR DIE!

SH-SHE'S RIGHT, PIETRO. YOU MUST LEAVE!



BUT THAT'S MY SISTER! I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S BEEN DONE TO HER, BUT BY GOD I'LL FIND OUT AND--!

NO! THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO ALONE! IF WANDA OR ANY OF US ARE TO BE SAVED, YOU MUST GET HELP QUICKLY!



THE ARGUMENT IS SHORT, THE FRUSTRATION IS GREAT, UNTIL AT LAST QUICKSILVER BOWS TO BOVINE LOGIC--



--SKIMMING DOWN THE SIDE OF WUNDAGORE MOUNTAIN LIKE AN EEL ON ICE, AND DARTING INTO THE SURROUNDING FOREST ON A HEADLONG JOURNEY TO--



--THE UNEXPECTED!

MATEO...?

WHA--? MR. MAXI-- DUANGO! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? THERE IS DANGER--!



OH, FEH! I CAME LOOKING FOR YOU, MY SON, AND DECIDED TO LINGER AWHILE IN THE FOREST.

IT'S SUCH A NICE FOREST, DON'T YOU THINK? WHY, IT WAS HERE THAT I FLED FROM THE NASTY VILLAGERS WHO BURNED OUR CAMP LONG AGO. THIS PLACE HAS ALWAYS MADE ME FEEL SO--



--SAFE...?

THE BRANCHES! THEY'RE ALIVE!



WHAT MADNESS IS THIS?
THE LIMBS ACT AS
SHACKLES!



HAVE TO UTILIZE
WHAT MARGIN OF
FREEDOM I HAVE LEFT!
MOVE MY BODY FAST
ENOUGH TO CREATE
FRICTION --



-- CAUSING
THE BRANCHES
TO SMOULDER
UNTIL THEY'RE
BRITTLE
ENOUGH --

-- TO
BREAK!



DON'T WORRY,
DJANGO! I'LL
HAVE YOU FREE
IN SECONDS!

NO! Y-YOU
MUSN'T
HARM THE
WOOD!



I- IT'S
SPECIAL!

AND IT
WAS SO
FRIENDLY
BEFORE! I...



I DON'T
UNDER-
STAND.

I'M SORRY,
DJANGO, BUT WE
HAVE TO FLEE!



THIS ATTACK WAS LIKELY
THE WORK OF AN ARCAIC
FORCE THAT NOW POSSESSED
WANDA! AND I DOUBT IT
WILL ALLOW US TO ESCAPE
WILLINGLY!

THE AWESOME TRUTH OF THAT STATEMENT IS QUICK TO BE MANIFEST, AS THE ONCE-DRY SKY ERUPTS WITH A STORM AS UNNATURAL AS IT IS IMMEDIATE! AND IT IS ONLY THE INHUMAN SPEED OF THE SILVER AVENGER THAT SAVES THE TWO INNOCENTS FROM A DEADLY RAIN OF FIRE, STONE AND WATER--



--AS THEY RACE OVER GROUND THAT CRACKS INTO GAPING CHASMS, AS IF THE VERY EARTH WOULD SWALLOW THEM WHOLE!



THAT'S THE POST OFFICE, MATEO. PERHAPS THEY'LL LET US USE THEIR TELEPHONE. I CERTAINLY HOPE SO.

IT'S THE ONLY ONE IN TOWN!



YOU IN THERE! OPEN THE DOOR!



I AM SORRY, MEIN HERR, BUT WE ARE CLOSED. THE STORM--!

PLEASE! I MUST USE YOUR PHONE! I HAVE TO MAKE AN EMERGENCY CALL TO--



--AVENGERS MANSION WHERE A SOLEMN, BROODING SYNTHOZOID SITS AT MONITOR DUTY--

-- PONDERING THOUGHTS NO HUMAN SAVE ONE COULD PROBABLY FATHOM THOUGHTS THAT ARE INTERRUPTED BY...

**BZZT
BZZT
BZZT**

THE PRIORITY FREQUENCY!



THE VISION SPEAKING! STATE YOUR IDENTITY, LOCATION AND SITUATION, PLEASE!

THIS IS QUICK-SILVER ROBOT!



I'M IN TRANSIA, JUST BELOW WUNDAGORE! AND MY SITUATION IS DESPERATE--

-- IN THE EXTREME!



WHILE IN ANOTHER PART OF THE MANSION...

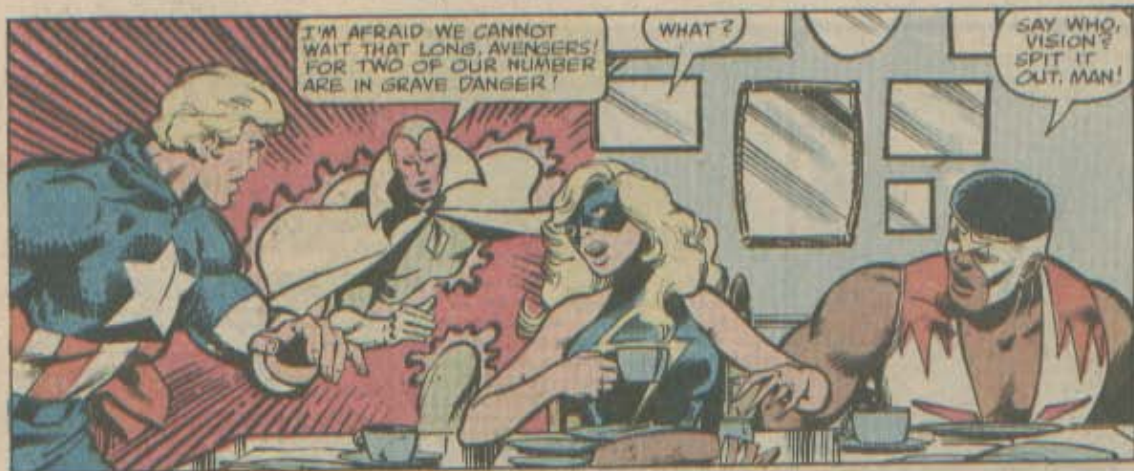
FUNNY HOW THE TABLE SEEMS EMPTY WITHOUT OL' SHELL-HEAD AROUND UM, NOT THAT I HAVE ANYTHING AGAINST YOU, CAP--!

I UNDERSTAND, BEAST. I WAS AS SHOCKED AS ANYONE WHEN IRON MAN KILLED THAT CARNELIAN OFFICIAL *



BUT THE POLICE BELIEVED HIS STORY ABOUT HIS ARMOR ACTING ON ITS OWN, AND SO DO I. MY STINT AS CHAIRMAN WILL BE TEMPORARY AT MOST, AND WHEN THE INVESTIGATION CLEARS IRON MAN--

* SEE IRON MAN # 124-125 FOR DETAILS -- R.



I'M AFRAID WE CANNOT WAIT THAT LONG, AVENGERS! FOR TWO OF OUR NUMBER ARE IN GRAVE DANGER!

WHAT?

SAY WHO, VISION? SPIT IT OUT, MAN!

QUICKSILVER JUST CALLED SAYING THAT WANDA HAS BEEN POSSESSED BY SOME PRETERNATURAL POWER--CAUSING HER TO WREAK ELEMENTAL DESTRUCTION OVER AN AREA OF MILES!

I'M SORRY, CAPTAIN AMERICA, BUT YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

WHAT I MEAN IS: (A) QUICKSILVER IS NOT CURRENTLY AN ACTIVE AVENGER--YOU'RE NOT REQUIRED TO ANSWER HIS SUMMONS.



ALL RIGHT, GROUP, DOUBLETIME TO THE QUINJET HANGAR! WE'RE ON OUR WAY TO--



SYRICH! WHAT DO YOU MEAN--?



(B) THERE'S NO PROOF THAT THE MENACE IN BULGARIA IS A THREAT TO U.S. SECURITY, AND (C)--



NOW WAIT JUST A MINUTE--!

--AND (C) ANOTHER INTERNATIONAL INCIDENT WE DON'T NEED!

WE'RE STILL TRYING TO PLACATE RUSSIA OVER THAT SHIELD INVASION LAST MONTH AND--

*IN IRON MAN #119-120--R.



--HEY! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

TO MAKE A PHONE CALL, MISTER! I'M AS PATRIOTIC AS THE NEXT MAN-- BUT ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!



SAY, GYRICH HOW'D YOU LIKE TO TAKE A LONG WALK-- ON YOUR FACE?

CUTE, BEAST. NOW, WHY DON'T YOU GO PLAY JOHNNY WEISSMULLER OR SOMETHI--



--EH?

PARDON ME, SIR. BUT THERE'S A CALL FOR YOU. IT APPEARS TO BE URGENT.

BLAST!



LOOK, I GAVE SPECIFIC ORDERS NOT TO BE DISTURBED! JUST WHO THE BLAZES DO YOU THINK YOU--



OH, I-I'M SORRY, SIR, I DIDN'T REALIZE...



THAT WAS THE J-AHEMS COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. HE'S REQUESTED THAT THE AVENGERS LEAVE ON A, UH, "GOOD-WILL TOUR" OF BULGARIA.

RIGHT AWAY.



...WHAT'S THAT? OH, O-OF COURSE I'LL TELL THEM.

YES, SIR. GOOD-BYE.

YOU CAN WIPE THAT SMIRK OFF YOUR FACE NOW, CAPTAIN.



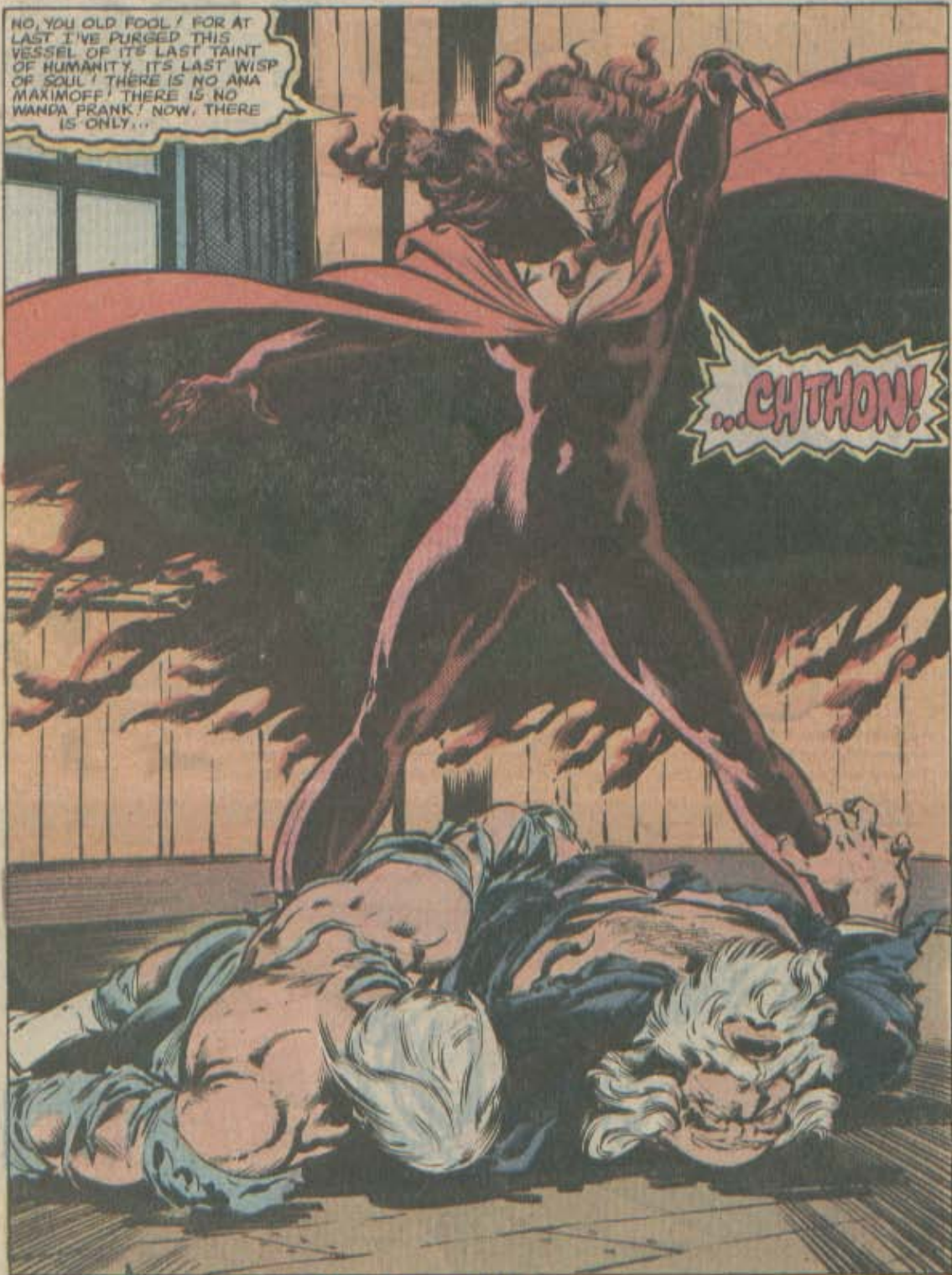
OKAY, THEN, EVERYONE TO THE HANGAR, ON THE DOUB-

AH-AH, NOT QUITE EVERYONE, CHAIRMAN.

THE VISION STAYS HERE!



NO, YOU OLD FOOL! FOR AT
LAST I'VE PURGED THIS
VESSEL OF ITS LAST TAIN
OF HUMANITY, ITS LAST WISP
OF SOUL! THERE IS NO ANA
MAXIMOFF! THERE IS NO
WANDA PRANK! NOW, THERE
IS ONLY...



...CHTHON!

NEXT
ISSUE: **THE CALL OF THE MOUNTAIN THING!**