

MARVEL®

A SCOTT ADAMS / MARVEL COMICS LIMITED SERIES

QUEST PROBE

FEATURING

THE

HUMAN TORCH

AND THE

THING

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by SCOTT ADAMS
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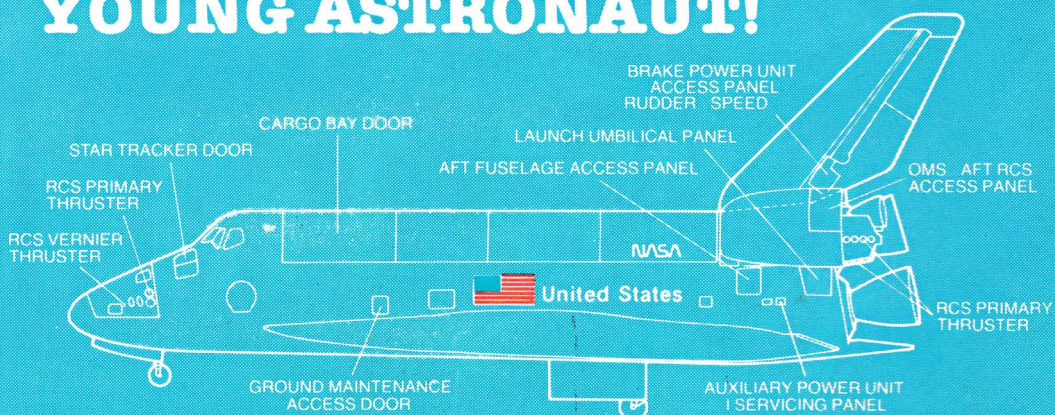


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QUESTPROBE!

Original concept by SCOTT ADAMS & JOHN BYRNE

FEATURING:
THE HUMAN TORCH AND THE THING!

SOME SAY THAT ONE'S HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS. IF SUCH IS THE CASE, THEN JOHNNY STORM'S HOME IS WHEREVER ALICIA MASTERS WALKS-- FOR THAT SIGHTLESS SCULPTRESS HAS RECENTLY WON THE YOUNG HERO'S HEART.

BUT HERE IN THE BAXTER BUILDING, LONG-TIME RESIDENCE OF THE FABLED FANTASTIC FOUR, JOHNNY FINDS THE WARMTH DRAWN FROM HIS LOVELY COMPANION QUICKLY FADING, AS IF LEECHED BY THE VERY DWELLING THAT HE ONCE CALLED... "HOME."

YOU KNOW, ALICIA, I NEVER REALIZED HOW MUCH THIS PLACE CAN FEEL LIKE... WELL... A TOMB.

*THIS STORY TAKES PLACE BEFORE THE BAXTER BUILDING'S DESTRUCTION IN FANTASTIC FOUR # 279 -- BOB.

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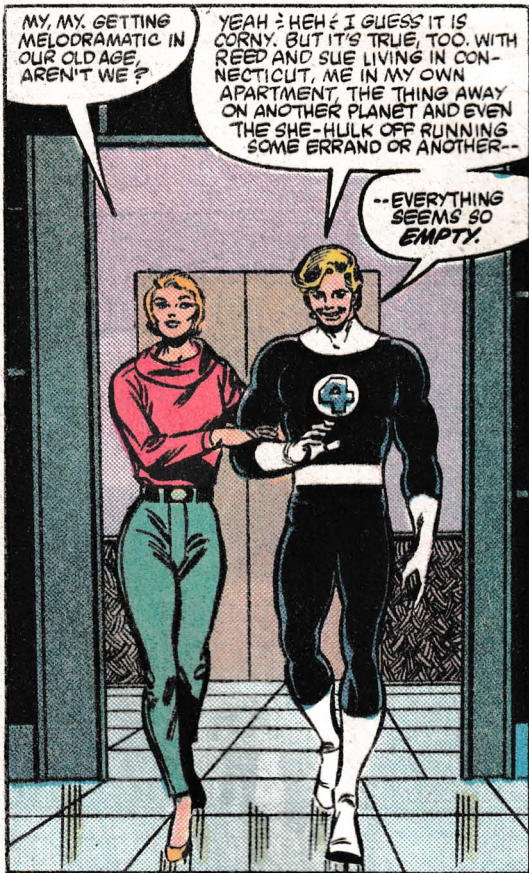
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MY, MY. GETTING MELODRAMATIC IN OUR OLD AGE, AREN'T WE?

YEAH ♪ HEH ♪ I GUESS IT IS CORNY. BUT IT'S TRUE, TOO. WITH REED AND SUE LIVING IN CONNECTICUT, ME IN MY OWN APARTMENT, THE THING AWAY ON ANOTHER PLANET AND EVEN THE SHE-HULK OFF RUNNING SOME ERRAND OR ANOTHER--

--EVERYTHING SEEMS SO EMPTY.



I MEAN, THE TOP FIVE FLOORS OF THIS BUILDING ARE COMPLETELY AUTOMATED, RUN BY COMPUTER.

ALL VITAL MECHANISMS ARE CAPABLE OF FUNCTIONING FOR UNLIMITED PERIODS WITHOUT INPUT FROM A SINGLE HUMAN BEING.

I USED TO THINK THAT WAS GREAT, BUT NOW...

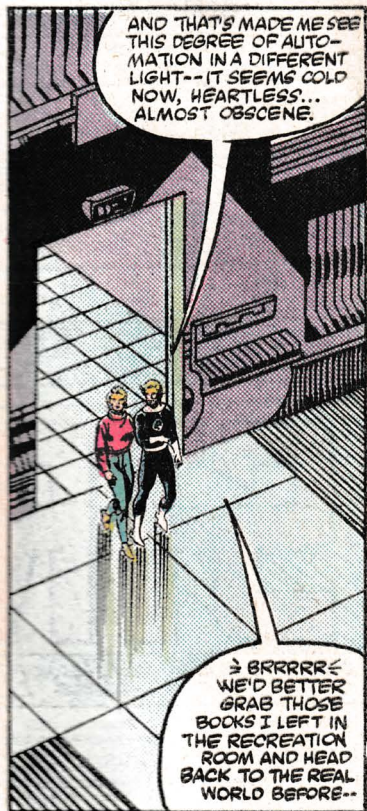


THERE! THERE'S AN EXAMPLE! I ALMOST REACHED OUT TO OPEN THE DOOR FOR US-- BUT THE DOORS IN FF HEADQUARTERS HAVE BEEN OPERATED BY AUTOMATED SENSORS FOR YEARS!

YOU'RE JUST GETTING FORGETFUL, JOHNNY.

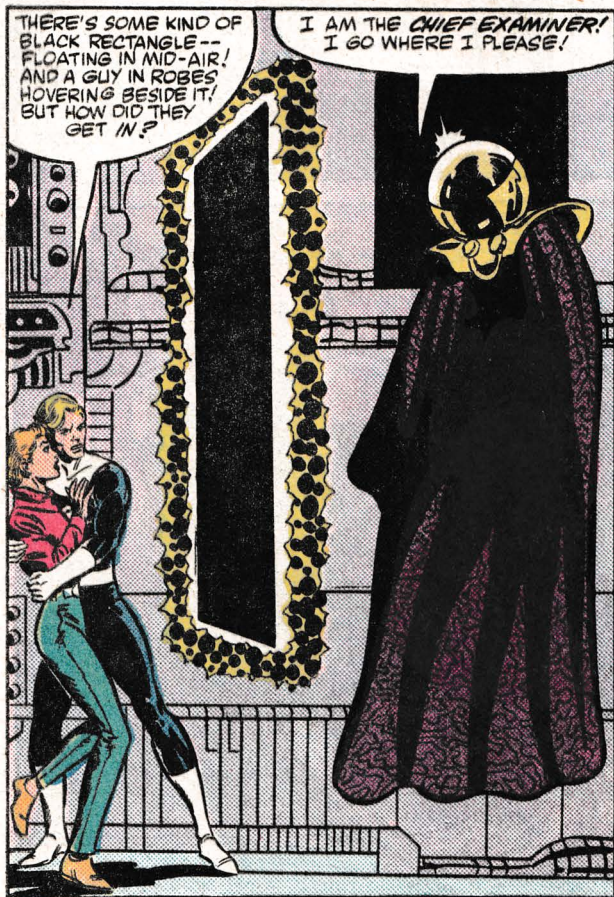
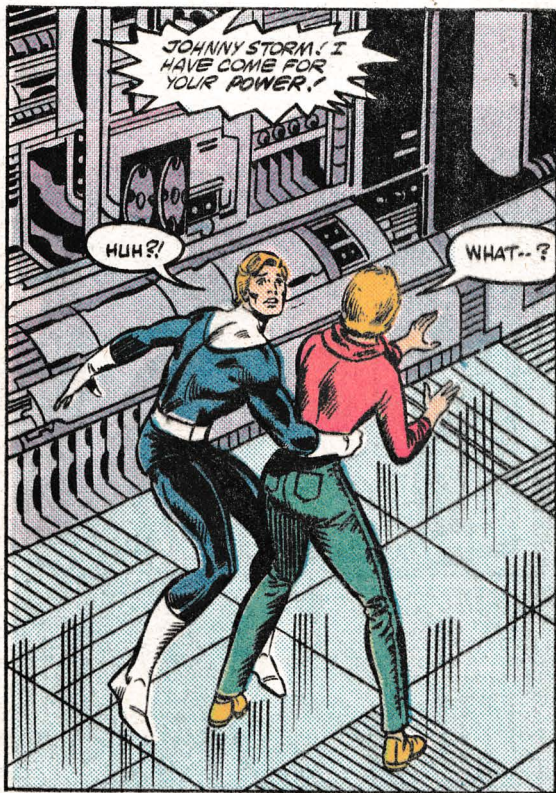


NO, I'M JUST STARTING TO REMEMBER. LIVING ON MY OWN-- AND KNOWING YOU, ALICIA-- HAS MADE ME MORE AWARE OF WHAT IT'S LIKE TO BE A NORMAL HUMAN BEING. TO SHARE THE NEEDS AND JOYS OF EVERYDAY PEOPLE.

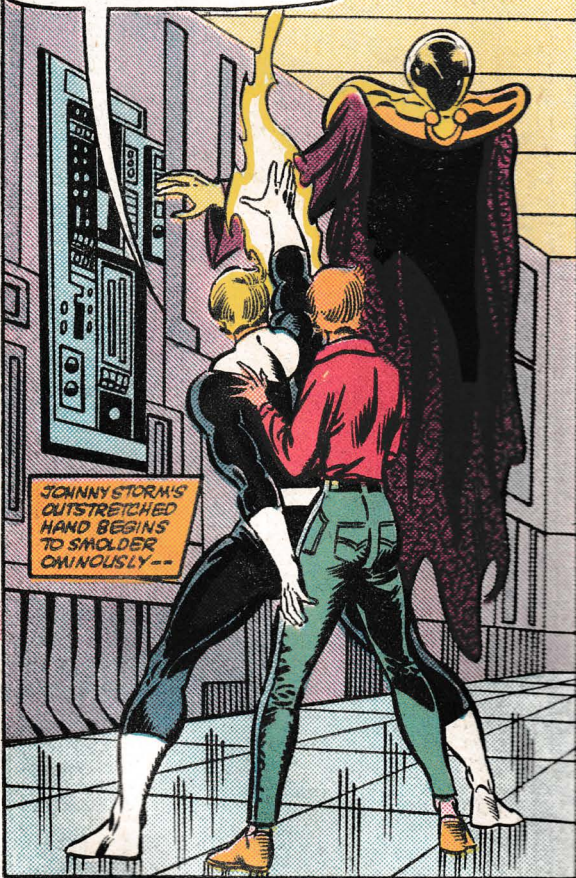


AND THAT'S MADE ME SEE THIS DEGREE OF AUTOMATION IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT-- IT SEEMS COLD NOW, HEARTLESS... ALMOST OBSCENE.

♪ BRRRRR ♪ WE'D BETTER GRAB THOSE BOOKS I LEFT IN THE RECREATION ROOM AND HEAD BACK TO THE REAL WORLD BEFORE--

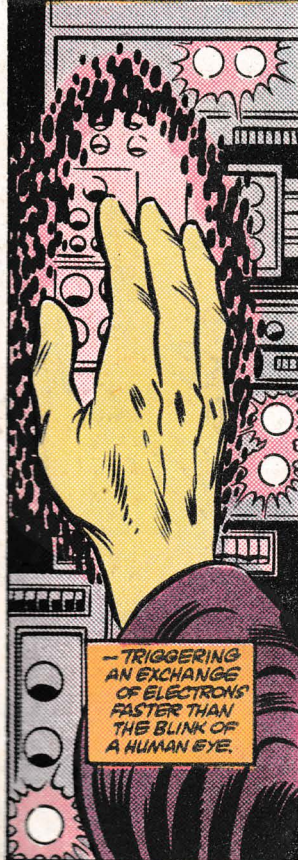


THIS GUY SOUNDS LIKE A LUNATIC, BUT IF HE'S SMART ENOUGH TO GET INTO FANTASTIC FOUR HQ, WE'D BETTER NOT TAKE ANY CHANCES!



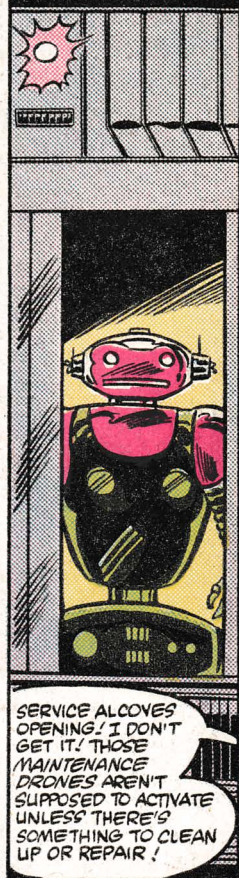
JOHNNY STORM'S OUTSTRETCHED HAND BEGINS TO SMOLDER OMINOUSLY--

--WHILE THE CHIEF EXAMINER'S HAND, DELICATE AND ETHEREAL, WART'S OUT TO TOUCH A NEARBY COMPUTERIZED CONTROL CONSOLE--



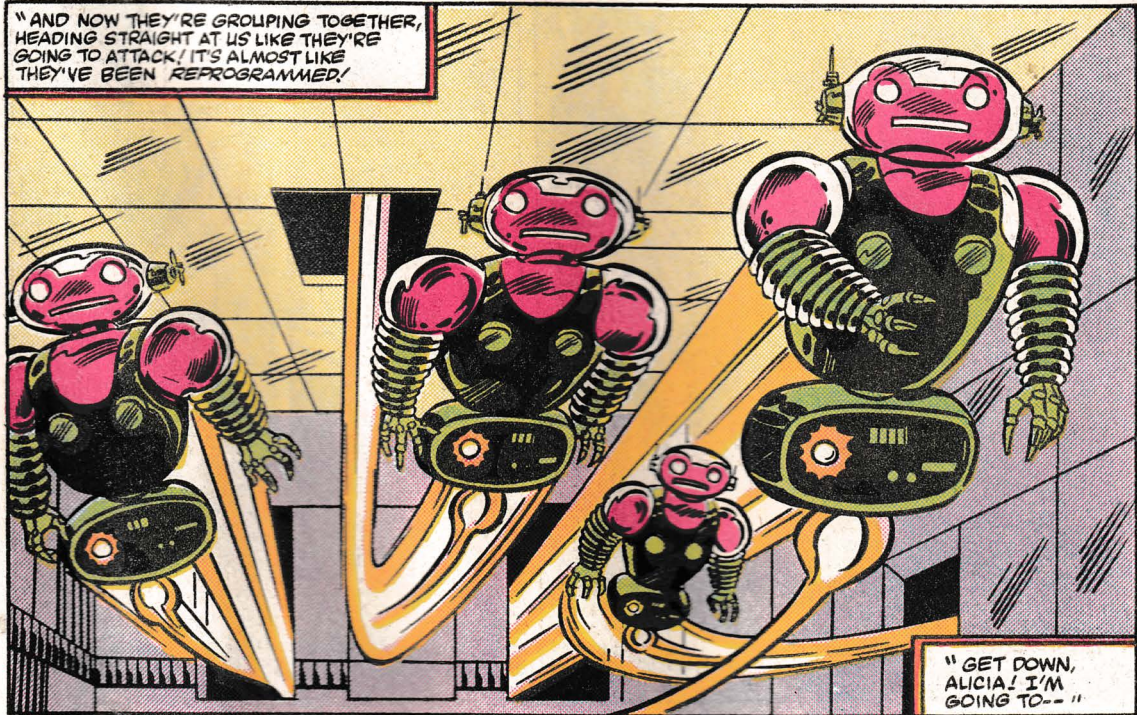
--TRIGGERING AN EXCHANGE OF ELECTRONS FASTER THAN THE BLINK OF A HUMAN EYE.

AS A RESULT OF WHICH...



SERVICE ALCOVES OPENING! I DON'T GET IT! THOSE MAINTENANCE DRONES AREN'T SUPPOSED TO ACTIVATE UNLESS THERE'S SOMETHING TO CLEAN UP OR REPAIR!

"AND NOW THEY'RE GROUPING TOGETHER, HEADING STRAIGHT AT US LIKE THEY'RE GOING TO ATTACK! IT'S ALMOST LIKE THEY'VE BEEN REPROGRAMMED!"



"GET DOWN, ALICIA! I'M GOING TO--"

THE A-MAZE-ING
OREO!

CHOCOLATE SANDWICH COOKIE



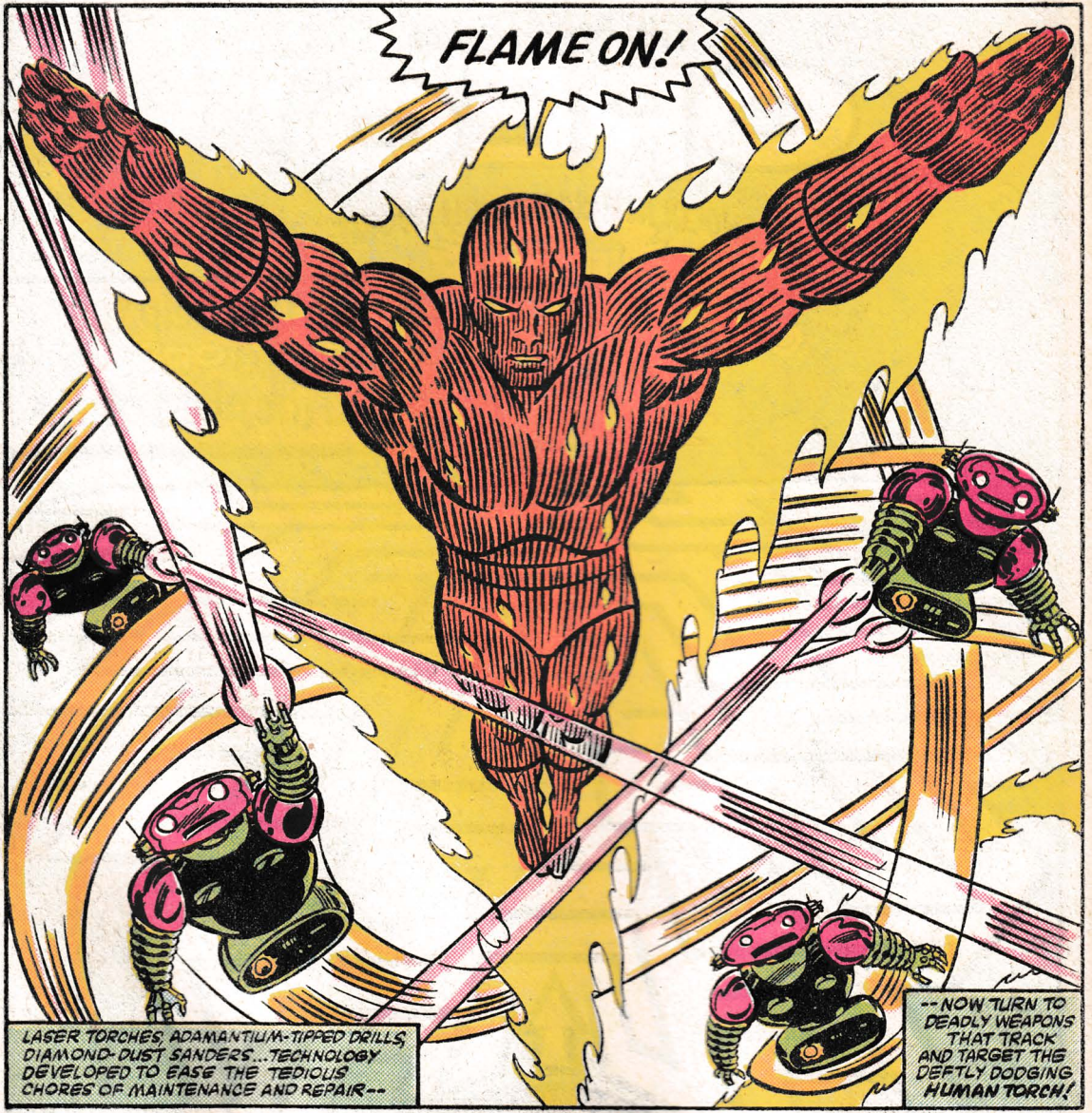
Can you help the
delicious **OREO** cookie
find the glass of milk?



Imagine all the fun you can have with **OREO** cookies!



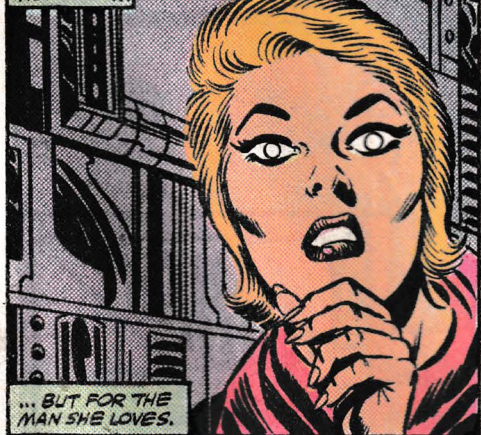
FLAME ON!



LASER TORCHES, ADAMANTIUM-TIPPED DRILLS, DIAMOND-DUST SANDERS... TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPED TO EASE THE TEDIIOUS CHORES OF MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR--

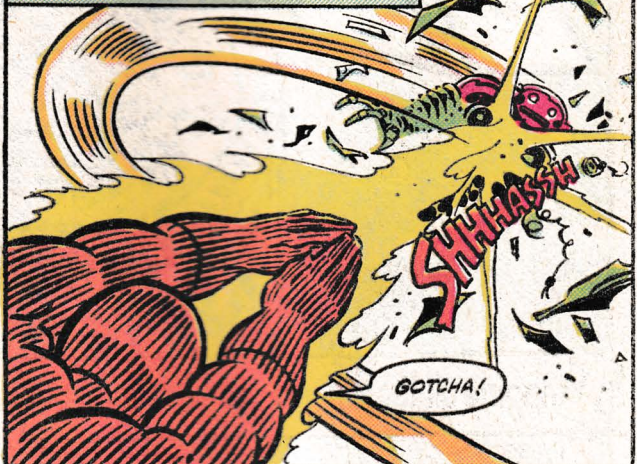
-- NOW TURN TO DEADLY WEAPONS THAT TRACK AND TARGET THE DEFTLY DODGING HUMAN TORCH!

WHILE NEARBY, ALICIA MASTERS COCKS HER HEAD THIS WAY, THEN THAT, FOLLOWING THE SOUNDS OF BATTLE, HER FACE A MASK OF FEAR. NOT FOR HERSELF...



... BUT FOR THE MAN SHE LOVES.

A MAN WHO CURRENTLY SHOWS LITTLE OF THAT FEAR FOR HIMSELF!



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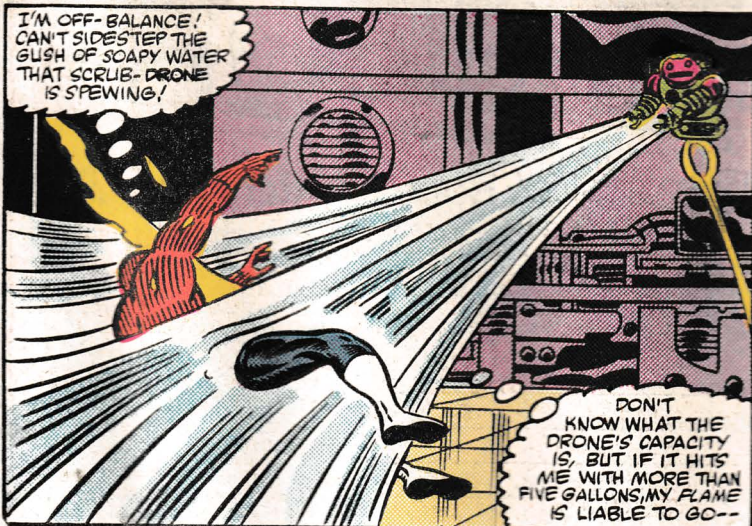
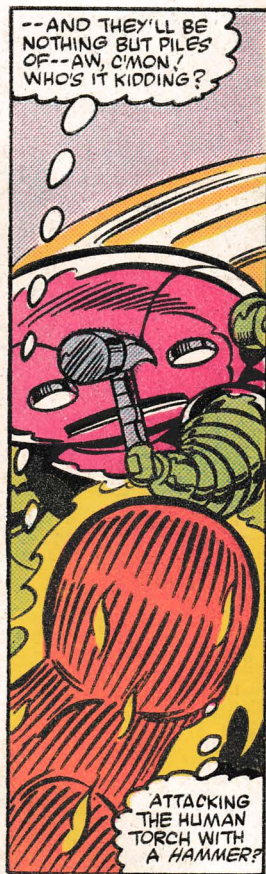
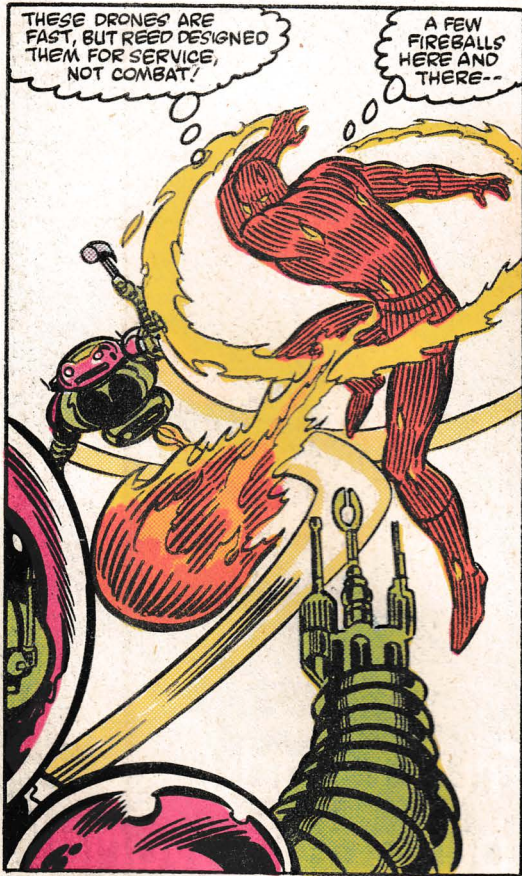
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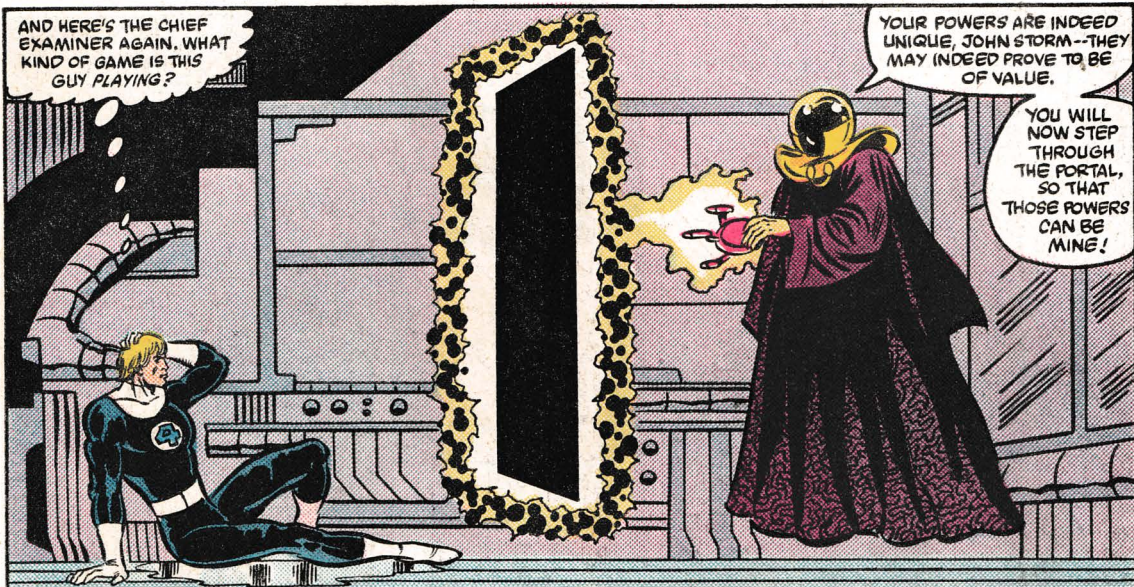
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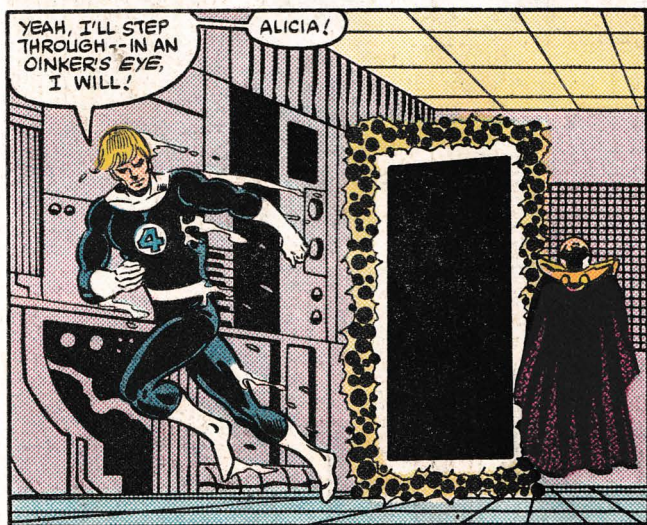




AND HERE'S THE CHIEF EXAMINER AGAIN. WHAT KIND OF GAME IS THIS GUY PLAYING?

YOUR POWERS ARE INDEED UNIQUE, JOHN STORM--THEY MAY INDEED PROVE TO BE OF VALUE.

YOU WILL NOW STEP THROUGH THE PORTAL, SO THAT THOSE POWERS CAN BE MINE!



YEAH, I'LL STEP THROUGH--IN AN OINKER'S EYE, I WILL!

ALICIA!



COME ON, WE'VE GOT TO GET TO THE FIFTH FLOOR, TO THE HANGARS! ONCE I'VE FLOWN YOU TO SAFETY IN A FANTASTICAR, I CAN GET THE REST OF THE FF AND--



--HEY! THE ELEVATOR DOOR ISN'T OPENING!

THAT IS BECAUSE I DO NOT WILL IT TO DO SO!

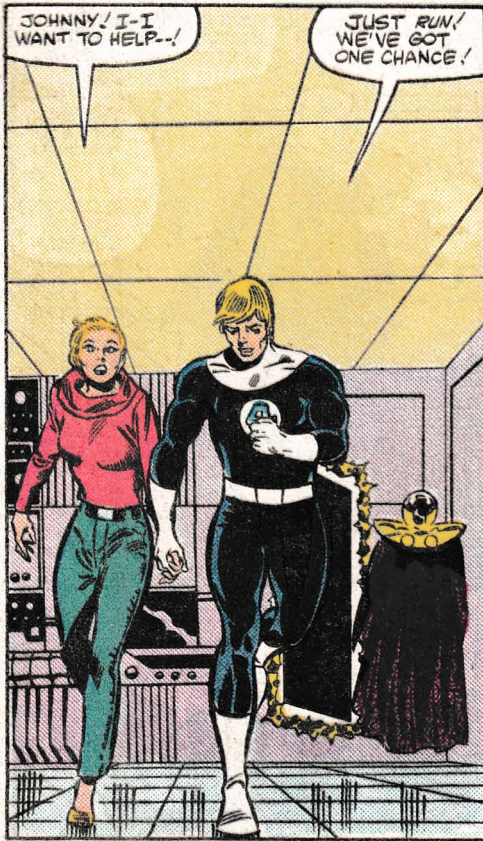


WHEN I REPROGRAMMED THE ALARM CIRCUITRY TO CEASE FUNCTIONING, I TOOK THE PRECAUTION OF CANCELING THE ELEVATOR PROGRAMMING AS WELL!



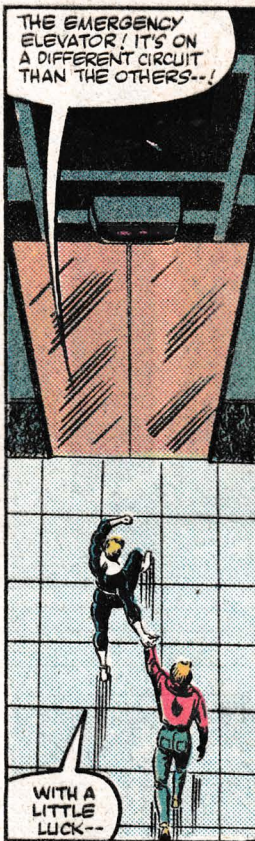
HOLY--! REED'S COMPUTERS ARE THE BEST-PROTECTED ELECTRONICS ON EARTH! IF THAT GUY CAN GET INTO THEM LIKE HE SAYS--

-- HE'S MORE DANGEROUS THAN I EVER IMAGINED!



JOHNNY! I-I WANT TO HELP--!

JUST RUN! WE'VE GOT ONE CHANCE!



THE EMERGENCY ELEVATOR! IT'S ON A DIFFERENT CIRCUIT THAN THE OTHERS--!

WITH A LITTLE LUCK--



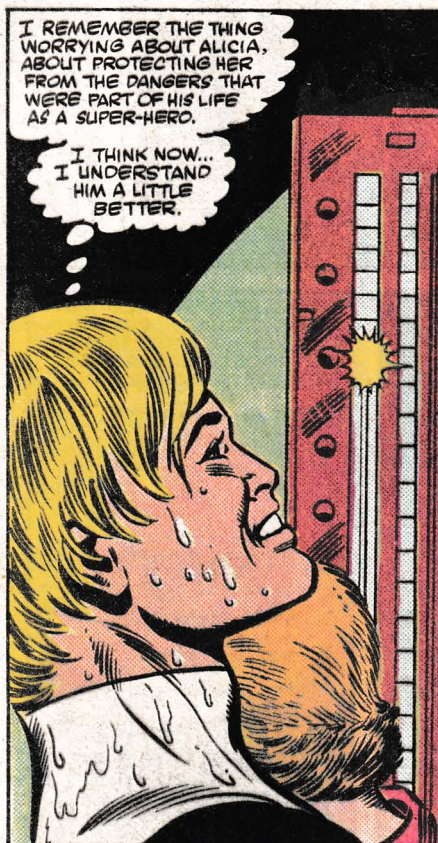
-- ALL RIGHT! IT'S WORKING! HURRY! WE HAVE TO GET TO THE HANGAR LEVEL BEFORE THAT EXAMINER GUY FIGURES OUT WHAT'S GOING ON!



AND, AS THE EMERGENCY ELEVATOR HUMS GENTLY UPWARD...

AUTOMATED DRONES, AUTOMATED ELEVATORS... THE WHOLE BLASTED BUILDING'S TURNED AGAINST US!

AND ALICIA-- SHE FEELS SO SOFT, SO VULNERABLE, AND UNLESS I DRY OUT FAST, I WON'T BE MUCH BETTER OFF!



I REMEMBER THE THING WORRYING ABOUT ALICIA, ABOUT PROTECTING HER FROM THE DANGERS THAT WERE PART OF HIS LIFE AS A SUPER-HERO.

I THINK NOW... I UNDERSTAND HIM A LITTLE BETTER.



MEANWHILE, AT THE GROUND FLOOR OF THE BAXTER BUILDING, JENNIFER WALTERS-- BETTER KNOWN AS BOTH THE SHE-HULK AND THE NEWEST MEMBER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR-- RETURNS FROM HER ERRANDS...

♫ CAAAALIFORNIA DREAMIN'... ♫

BAXTER



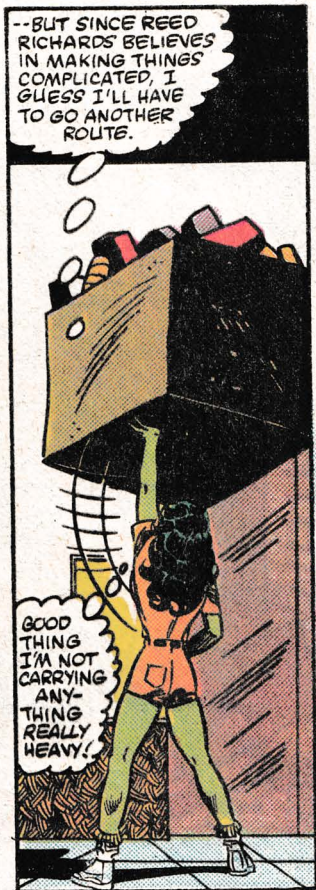
SAY, WAS THAT WOMAN GREEN? NAH, COULDN'T BE...

ON SUCH A WINTER'S DAAAAAY!



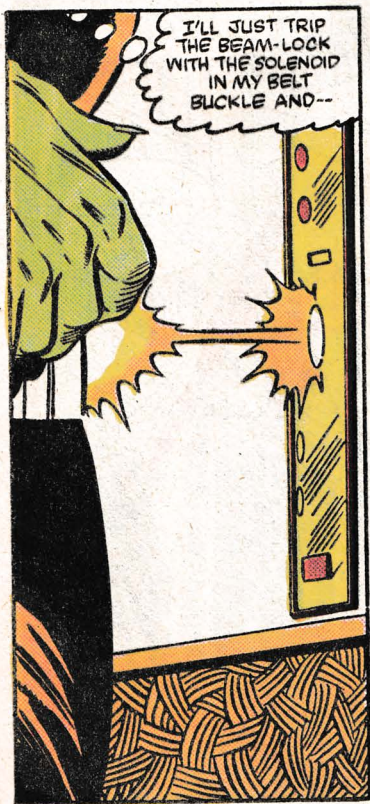
HMMM. PROBLEM NUMERO UNO -- HOW TO ACTIVATE THE FF'S PRIVATE ELEVATOR WHILE CARRYING A WEEK'S WORTH OF BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER!

IF THE CONTROLS HAD BUTTONS, I COULD JUST TAP ONE WITH AN ELBOW--



-- BUT SINCE REED RICHARDS BELIEVES IN MAKING THINGS COMPLICATED, I GUESS I'LL HAVE TO GO ANOTHER ROUTE.

GOOD THING I'M NOT CARRYING ANYTHING REALLY HEAVY!



I'LL JUST TRIP THE BEAM-LOCK WITH THE SOLENOID IN MY BELT BUCKLE AND--



-- HUH. THAT'S STRANGE. NOTHING HAPPENED. USUALLY THERE'S AT LEAST SOME WHIRRING, OR CLICKING SOUNDS, BUT--

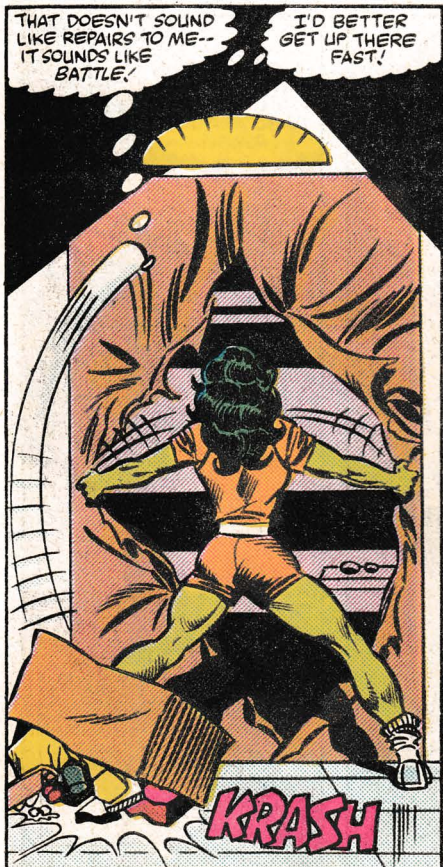


EXCUSE ME, MA'AM, BUT NONE OF THE ELEVATORS ARE WORKING. I THINK YOUR PEOPLE MUST BE MAKING REPAIRS OR SOMETHING.

OH?

YES, I'VE BEEN HEARING LOUD NOISES FROM THE PENTHOUSE FOR THE LAST TEN MINUTES OR SO--

-- LIKE WALLS WERE BEING TORN DOWN OR SOMETHING!



THAT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE REPAIRS TO ME-- IT SOUNDS LIKE BATTLE!

I'D BETTER GET UP THERE FAST!

KRASH



NUTS, AND THOSE EGGS WERE ON SPECIAL, TOO...!

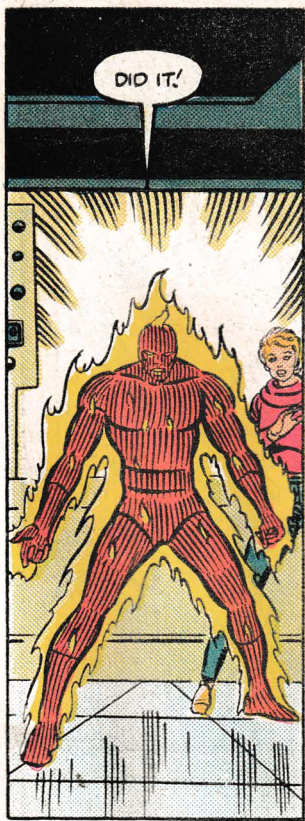


WHILE ABOVE...

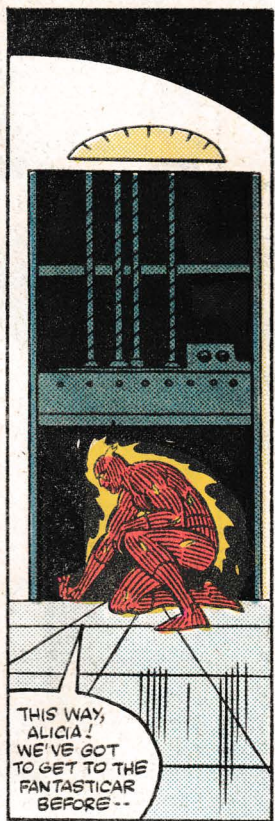
JOHNNY, WE'VE STOPPED!

YEAH, BUT BETWEEN FLOORS! THE CHIEF EXAMINER MUST BE ONTO US!

I JUST HOPE ENOUGH OF THAT SOAPY WATER HAS EVAPORATED FOR ME TO FLAME BACK ON! GOT ON CONCENTRATE...AND...AND...



DID IT!



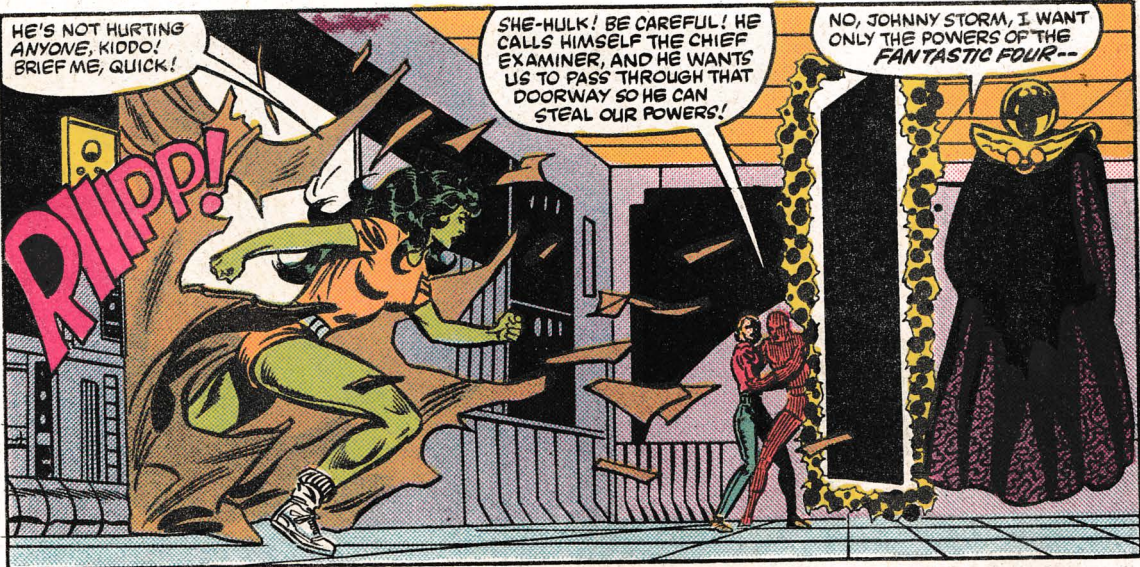
THIS WAY, ALICIA! WE'VE GOT TO GET TO THE FANTASTICAR BEFORE--



WILL YOU PASS THROUGH MY PORTAL NOW, JOHNNY STORM?

H-HOW DID WE GET HERE BEFORE US?

I DON'T KNOW, BABE, BUT I WON'T LET HIM HURT YOU!



HE'S NOT HURTING ANYONE, KIDDO! BRIEF ME, QUICK!

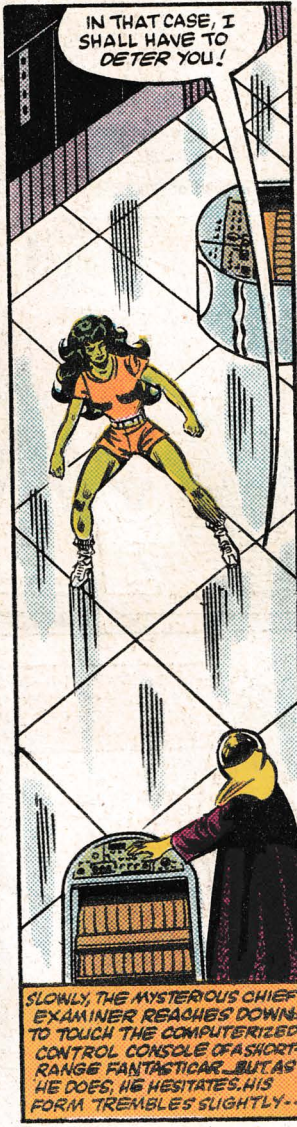
SHE-HULK! BE CAREFUL! HE CALLS HIMSELF THE CHIEF EXAMINER, AND HE WANTS US TO PASS THROUGH THAT DOORWAY SO HE CAN STEAL OUR POWERS!

NO, JOHNNY STORM, I WANT ONLY THE POWERS OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR--



--AND SINCE CONTACT WITH THIS STRUCTURE'S COMPUTERS HAS REVEALED THE LOCATIONS OF THE REST OF THAT TEAM, I HAVE NO INTEREST IN THIS LARGE GREEN WOMAN.

LISTEN, TALL, DARK AND BOUYANT, YOUR INFORMATION'S A BIT OUT OF DATE! I'M PART OF THE FF NOW! AND IF I HAVE TO PROVE IT BY BURSTING YOUR BUBBLE, THEN IT'LL BE MY PLEASURE!



IN THAT CASE, I SHALL HAVE TO DETER YOU!

SLOWLY, THE MYSTERIOUS CHIEF EXAMINER REACHES DOWN TO TOUCH THE COMPUTERIZED CONTROL CONSOLE OF A SHORT-RANGE FANTASTICAR... BUT AS HE DOES, HE HESITATES... HIS FORM TREMBLES SLIGHTLY--



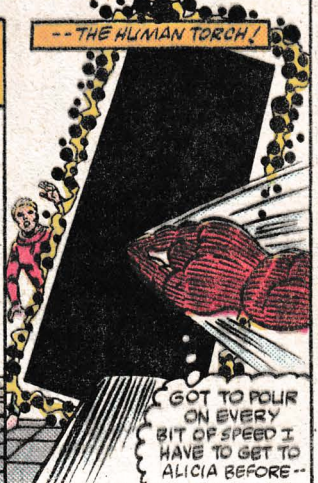
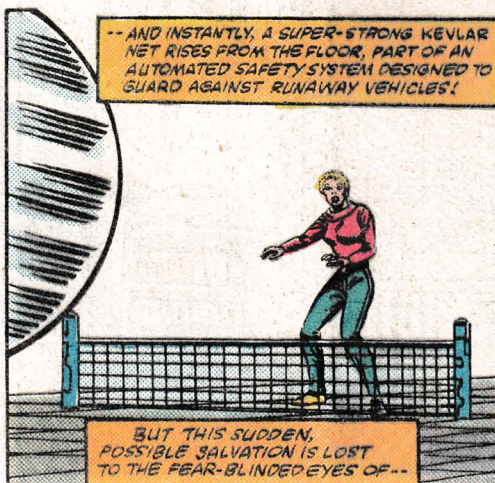
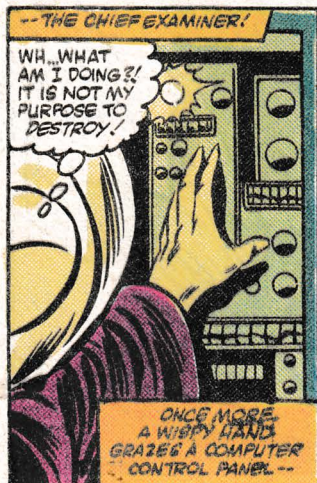
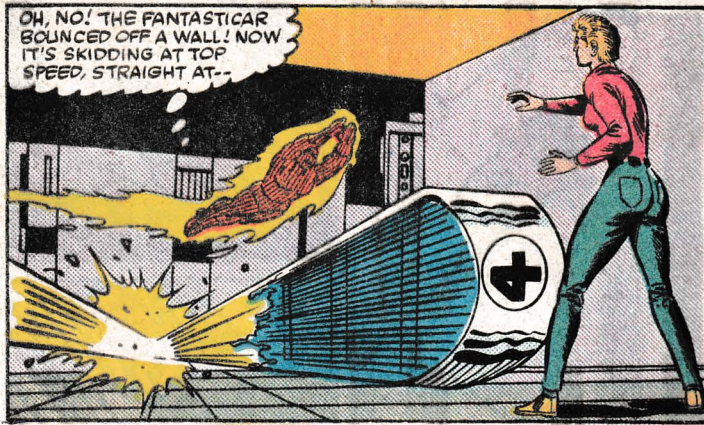
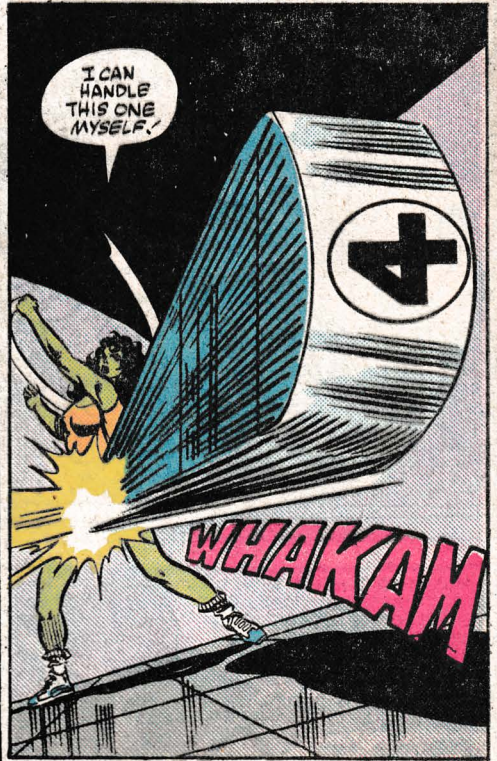
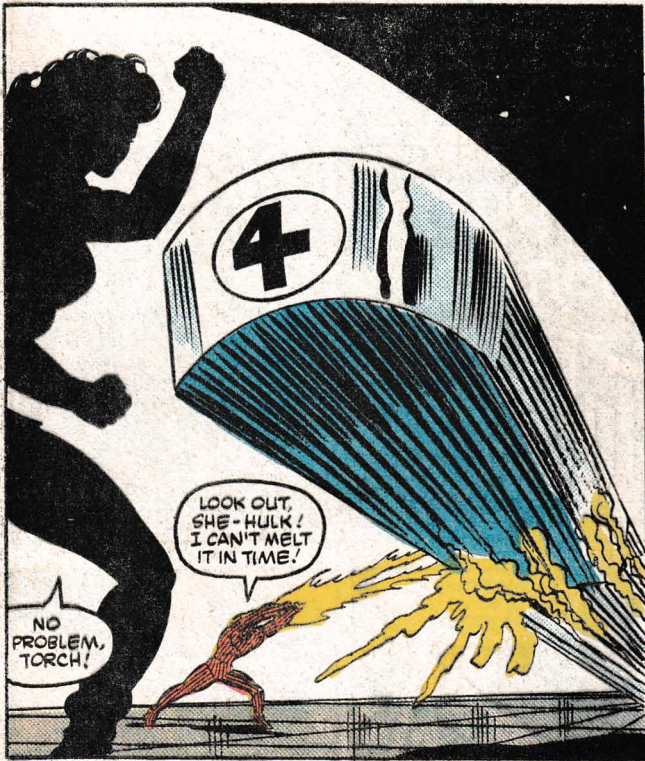
--AND HIS DEMEANOR CHANGES RADICALLY!

NO, I SHALL NOT DETER THIS INTRUDER! I SHALL--

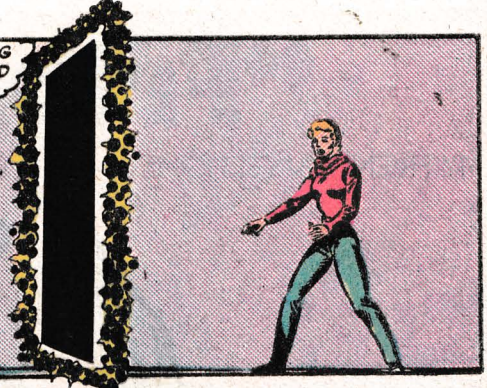
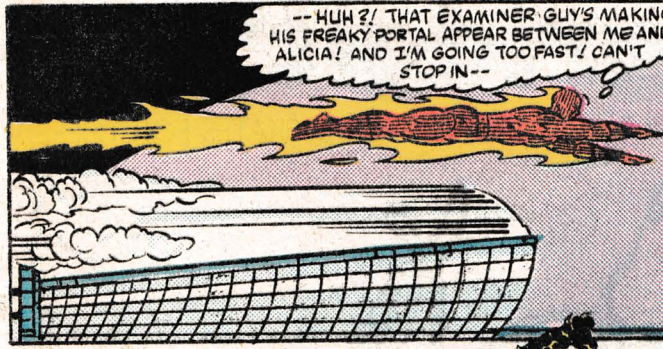


--KILL HER!

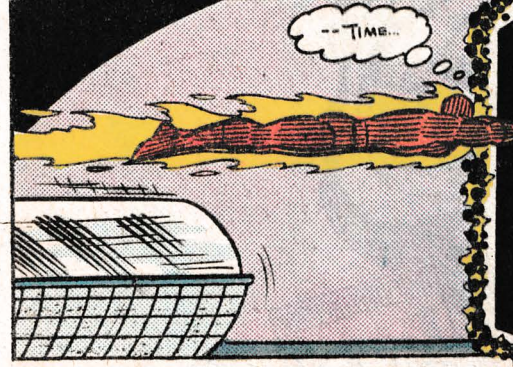
SHRRROOOOM!



-- HUH?! THAT EXAMINER GUY'S MAKING HIS FREAKY PORTAL APPEAR BETWEEN ME AND ALICIA! AND I'M GOING TOO FAST! CAN'T STOP IN--

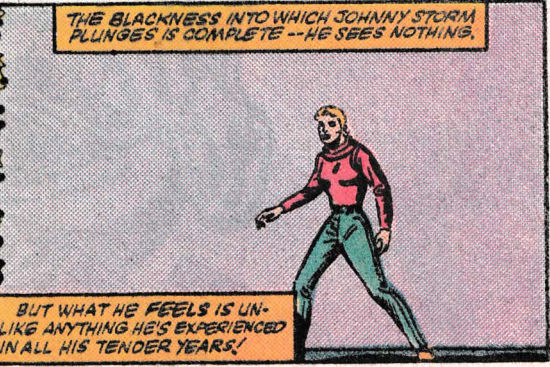


-- TIME--

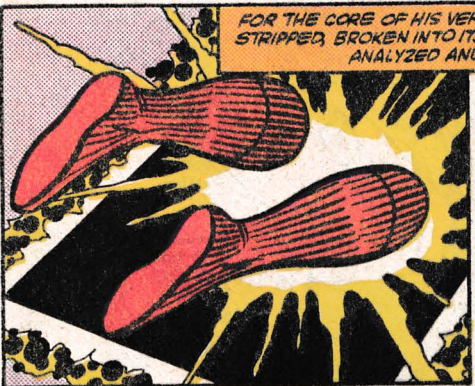


THE BLACKNESS INTO WHICH JOHNNY STORM PLUNGES IS COMPLETE -- HE SEES NOTHING.

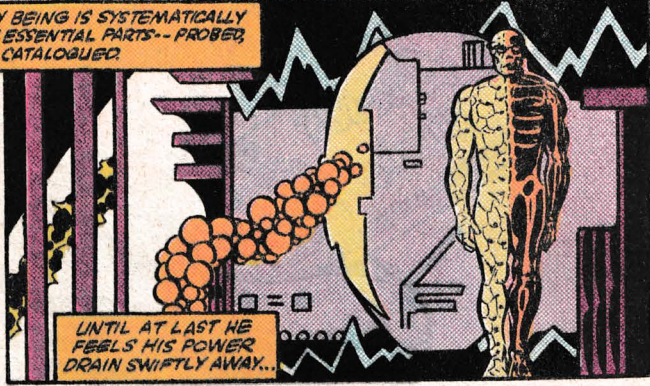
BUT WHAT HE FEELS IS UNLIKE ANYTHING HE'S EXPERIENCED IN ALL HIS TENDER YEARS!



FOR THE CORE OF HIS VERY BEING IS SYSTEMATICALLY STRIPPED, BROKEN INTO ITS ESSENTIAL PARTS-- PROBED, ANALYZED AND CATALOGUED.

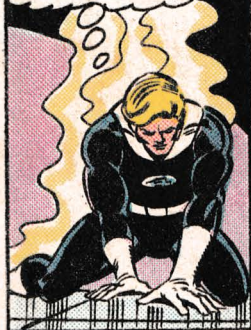


UNTIL AT LAST HE FEELS HIS POWER DRAIN SWIFTLY AWAY...

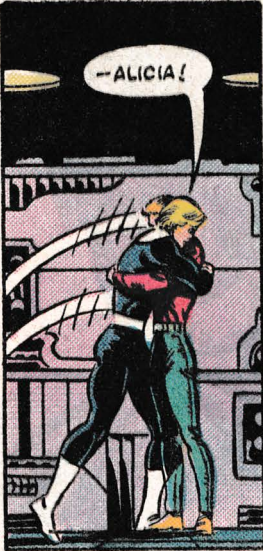


... AND HE TUMBLES WEAKENED, THOUGH APPARENTLY UNHARMED, FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE EBON GATEWAY!

STILL... IN ONE PIECE... AND I CAN FEEL MY POWER ALREADY RETURNING... BUT WHAT ABOUT--



--ALICIA!

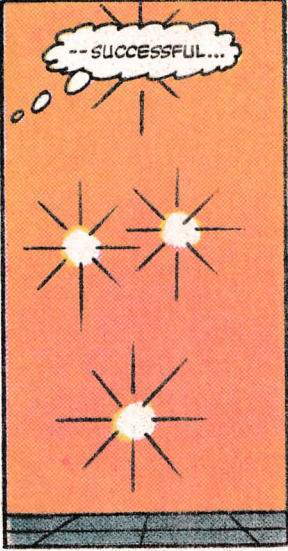


THE POWER OF THE HUMAN TORCH IS MINE, TO ADD TO THAT OF THE HULK AND SPIDER-MAN. * MY MISSION HAS BEEN --



* IN QUESTPROBE #'S 1 & 2 -- Bob.

--- SUCCESSFUL ---

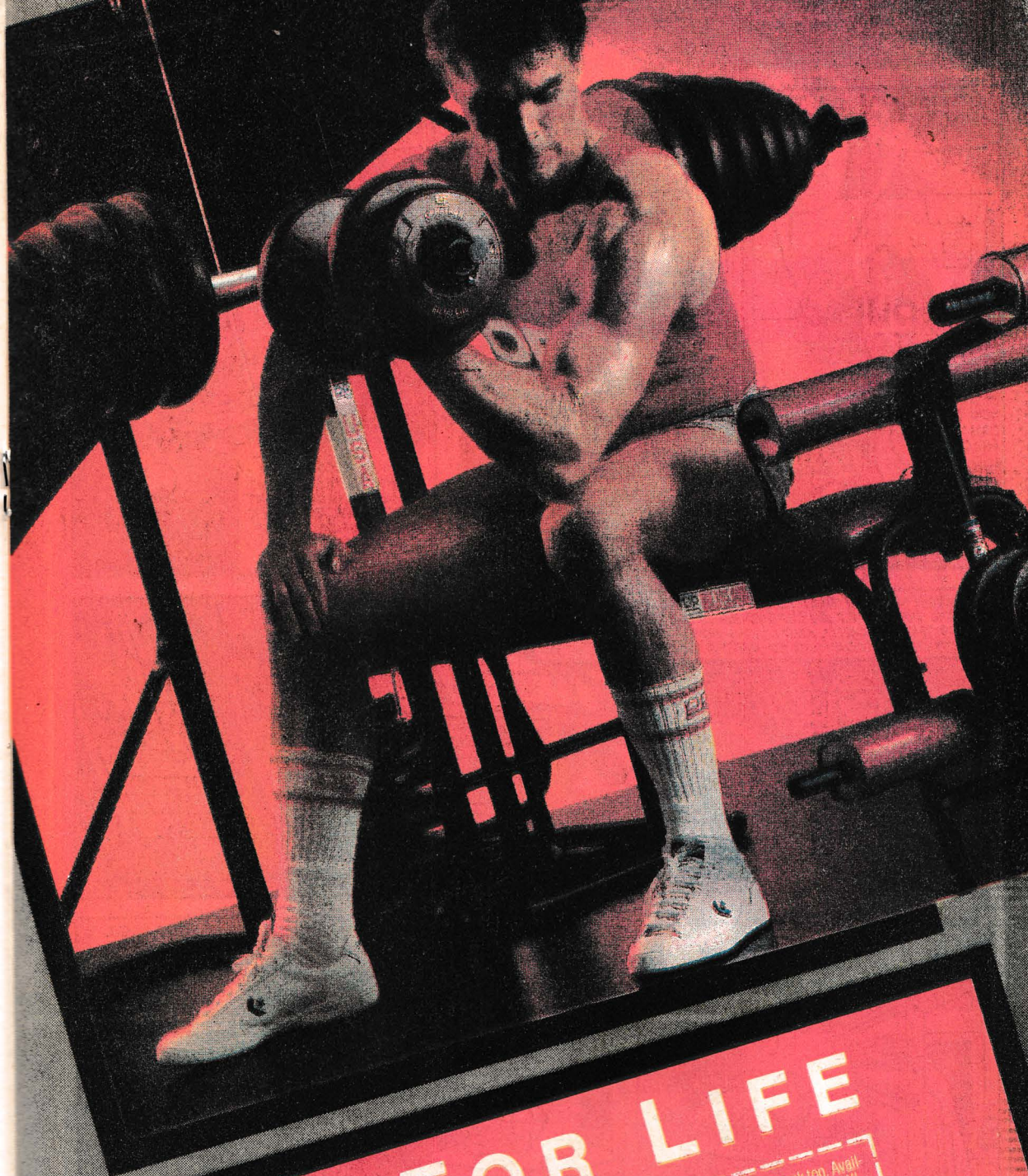


"Fribgridgit"

(MY FRIEND BACK HOME SAID HE'D TRADE ME HIS CLOUD SKATES FOR THESE.)



His friend will give anything to get the out-of-this-world peanut butter taste of Reese's Pieces. Aren't you glad you live where you can get them anywhere?



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AUTOMATION. IT ALMOST KILLED YOU!

BUT IT ALSO SAVED ME. AUTOMATION IS ONLY AS GOOD OR BAD AS THE WAY IT'S USER

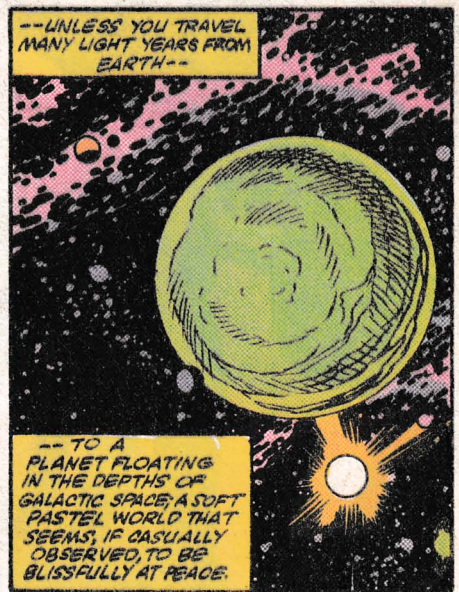
YOU TWO CAN TALK PHILOSOPHY--



-- BUT I'M STILL TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHO THAT CHIEF EXAMINER WAS! WHY DID HE WANT JOHNNY'S POWER?

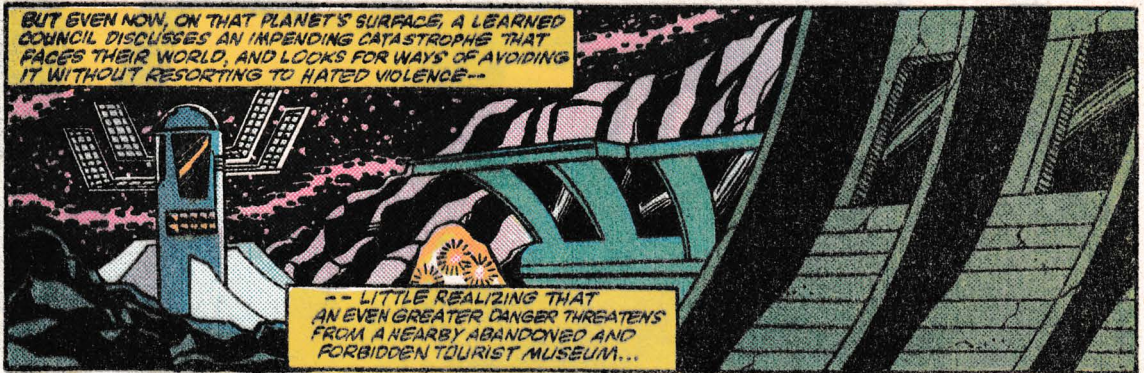
AND WHY DID HE TRY TO KILL ME AND THEN CHANGE HIS MIND?

QUESTIONS WHOSE ANSWERS YOU MAY NEVER KNOW, SHE-HULK--



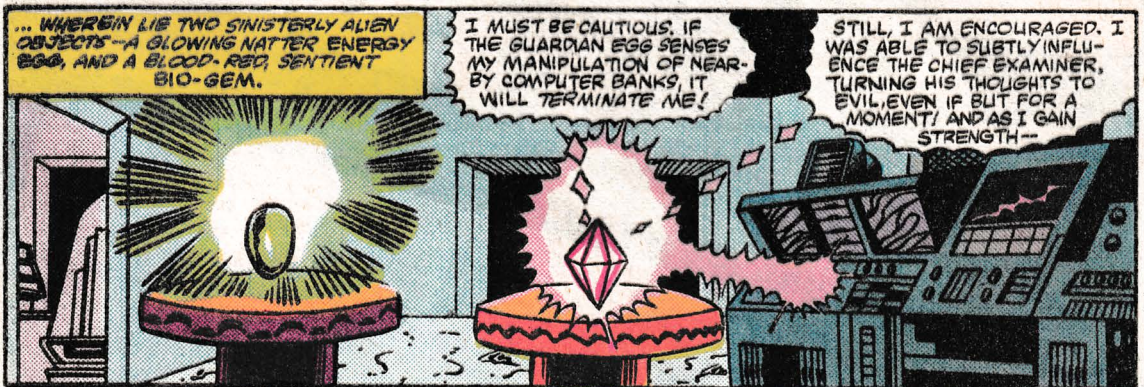
-- UNLESS YOU TRAVEL MANY LIGHT YEARS FROM EARTH--

-- TO A PLANET FLOATING IN THE DEPTHS OF GALACTIC SPACE; A SOFT PASTEL WORLD THAT SEEMS, IF CASUALLY OBSERVED, TO BE BLISSFULLY AT PEACE.



BUT EVEN NOW, ON THAT PLANET'S SURFACE, A LEARNED COUNCIL DISCUSSES AN IMPENDING CATASTROPHE THAT FACES THEIR WORLD, AND LOOKS FOR WAYS OF AVOIDING IT WITHOUT RESORTING TO HATED VIOLENCE--

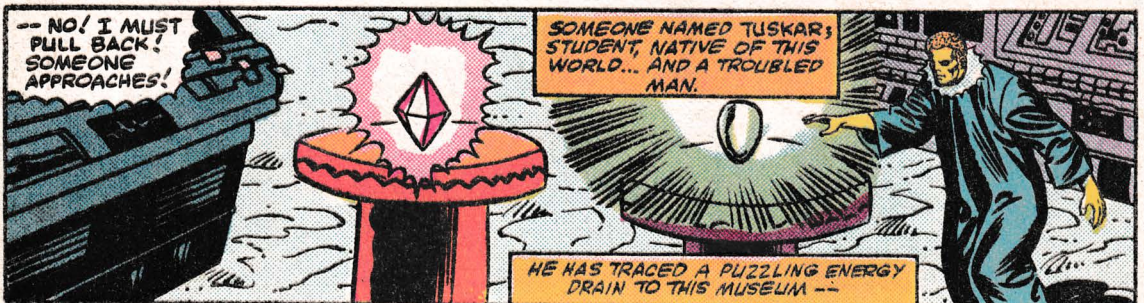
-- LITTLE REALIZING THAT AN EVEN GREATER DANGER THREATENS FROM A NEARBY ABANDONED AND FORBIDDEN TOURIST MUSEUM...



... WHEREIN LIE TWO SINISTERLY ALIEN OBJECTS-- A GLOWING MATTER ENERGY EGG, AND A BLOOD-RED, SENTIENT BIO-GEM.

I MUST BE CAUTIOUS. IF THE GUARDIAN EGG SENSES MY MANIPULATION OF NEAR-BY COMPUTER BANKS, IT WILL TERMINATE ME!

STILL, I AM ENCOURAGED. I WAS ABLE TO SUBTLY INFLUENCE THE CHIEF EXAMINER, TURNING HIS THOUGHTS TO EVIL, EVEN IF BUT FOR A MOMENT! AND AS I GAIN STRENGTH--

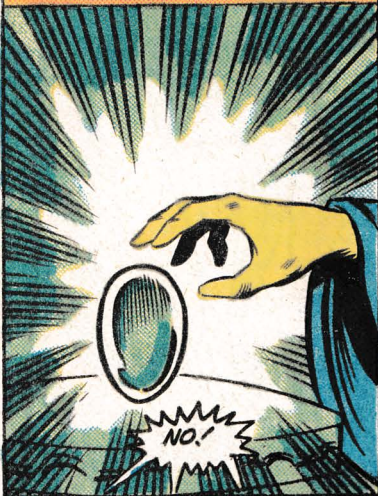


-- NO! I MUST PULL BACK! SOMEONE APPROACHES!

SOMEONE NAMED TUSKAR; STUDENT, NATIVE OF THIS WORLD... AND A TROUBLED MAN.

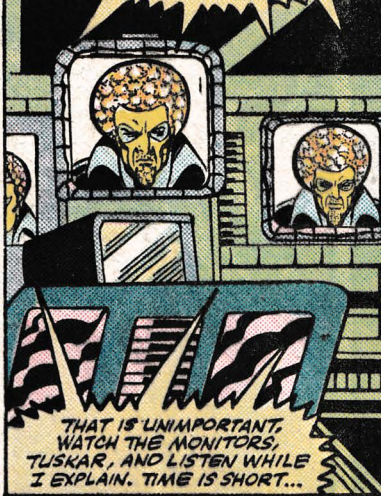
HE HAS TRACED A PUZZLING ENERGY DRAIN TO THIS MUSEUM --

-- AND NOW REACHES OUT TOWARDS THE NATTER EGG, CURIOSITY OPENING HIS HAND... UNTIL--



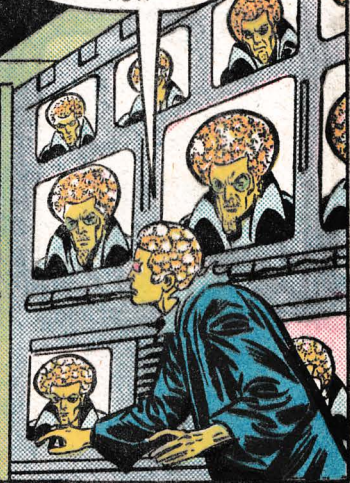
NO!

THE EGG WILL EXPLODE IF YOU TOUCH IT-- AND I NEED YOU ALIVE!

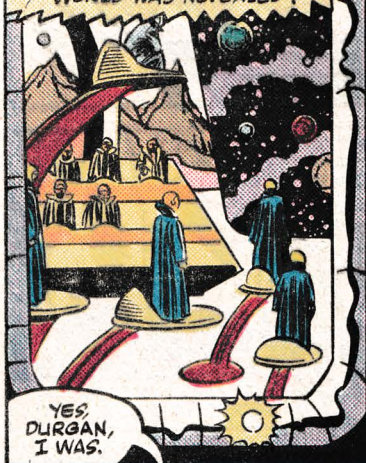


THAT IS UNIMPORTANT. WATCH THE MONITORS, TUSKAR, AND LISTEN WHILE I EXPLAIN. TIME IS SHORT...

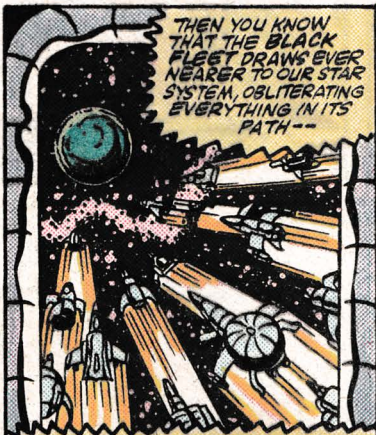
WHA-- DURGAN THE PHILOSOPHER! MY OLD TEACHER! BUT HOW--



YOU WERE AT THE COUNCIL MEETING, WERE YOU NOT? THE ONE WHERE THE DANGER TO OUR WORLD WAS REVEALED?



YES, DURGAN, I WAS.



THEN YOU KNOW THAT THE BLACK FLEET DRAWS EVER NEARER TO OUR STAR SYSTEM, OBLITERATING EVERYTHING IN ITS PATH--

--JUST AS YOU KNOW THAT CENTURIES OF PACIFISM DICTATE THAT WE MEET THIS THREAT WITH OPEN HANDS AND BOWED HEADS, THAT RESISTANCE IS EXPRESSLY FORBIDDEN BY OUR LAWS.

BUT I OPPOSED THIS DECREE, AND I ARGUED THAT IT IS BETTER TO DIE RESISTING THAN YIELD TO THE INVADERS' WILL.



SO I CREATED THE CHIEF EXAMINER!

EVEN AS WE SPEAK, HE IS THE AGENT THAT TRANSFORMS MY PHILOSOPHY INTO ACTION. HE ROAMS A DISTANT PLANET WHERE DWELL NUMEROUS HEROES' WITH ASTONISHING POWERS!



BY ANALYZATION AND REPLICATION, HE GATHERS THESE POWERS, POWERS THAT MIGHT ENABLE US TO SAVE OUR WORLD, IF ONLY WE USE THEM TO STAND AGAINST--

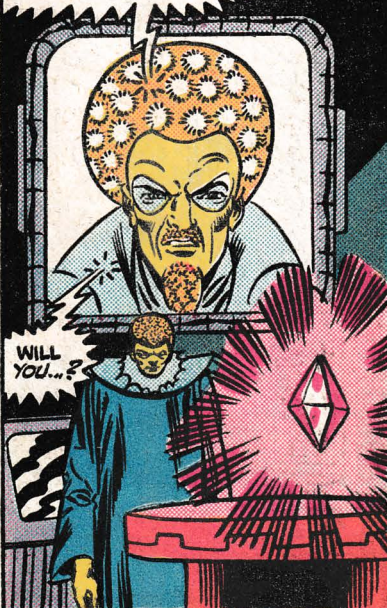


NO! I'LL LISTEN NO LONGER! YOU SPEAK HERESY! I MUST INFORM THE COUNCIL--



YOU MUST NOT INFORM THE COUNCIL! YOU ARE A KINDRED SPIRIT, TUSKAR, ELSE YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE SET FOOT IN THIS FORBIDDEN PLACE! I NEED YOU, MY FRIEND..

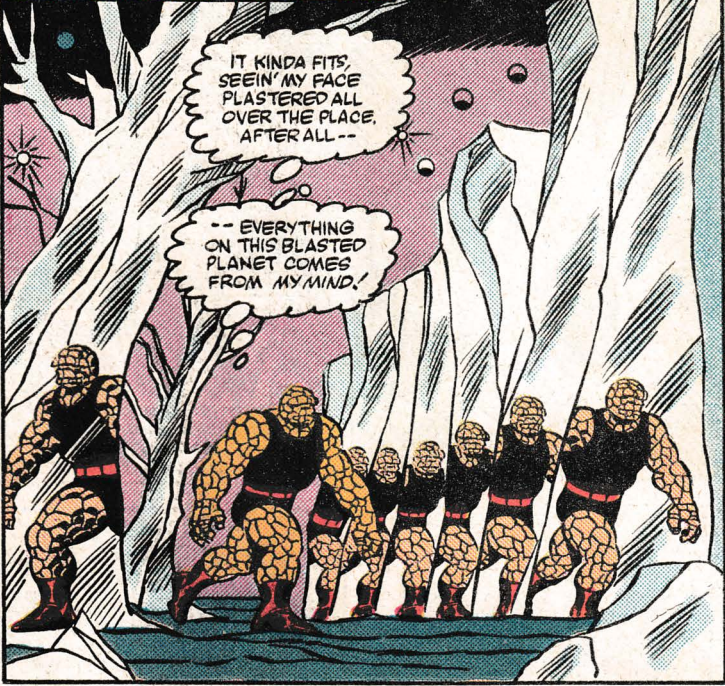
... FOR IN MY PRESENT FORM, I WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO SAVE OUR PLANET ALONE. WILL YOU HELP ME, TUSKAR?



WILL YOU...?

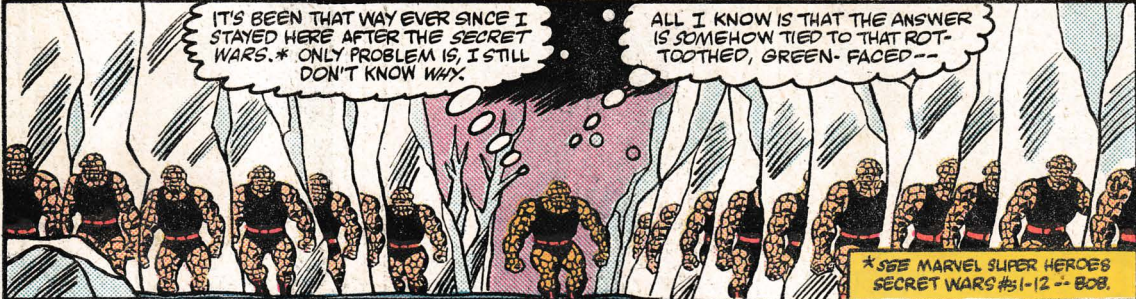
THE YOUNG STUDENT HESITATES, FISTS CLINCHED, FIGHTING AN INNER BATTLE... WHILE NEARBY THE PULSING BIO-GEN WATCHES, AND WAITS.

MEANWHILE, FAR AWAY ON A WORLD MADE FROM PIECES OF MANY WORLDS, BEN GRIMM-- THE THING-- WANDERS THROUGH A VALLEY OF MIRRORED GLASS...



IT KINDA FITS, SEEN MY FACE PLASTERED ALL OVER THE PLACE, AFTER ALL--

-- EVERYTHING ON THIS BLASTED PLANET COMES FROM MY MIND!



IT'S BEEN THAT WAY EVER SINCE I STAYED HERE AFTER THE SECRET WARS.* ONLY PROBLEM IS, I STILL DON'T KNOW WHY.

ALL I KNOW IS THAT THE ANSWER IS SOMEHOW TIED TO THAT ROT-TOOTHED, GREEN-FACED--

*SEE MARVEL SUPER HEROES SECRET WARS #s 1-12 -- BOB.



-- WIZARD? *

THERE HE IS! GOTTA GRAB 'IM BEFORE HE--

*THIS STORY TAKES PLACE AFTER THE THING # 17 -- BOB.



-- WHOOP! JOKER PULLED A QUICK FADE!

SORTA LIKE A POLITICIAN AFTER ELECTION DAY!

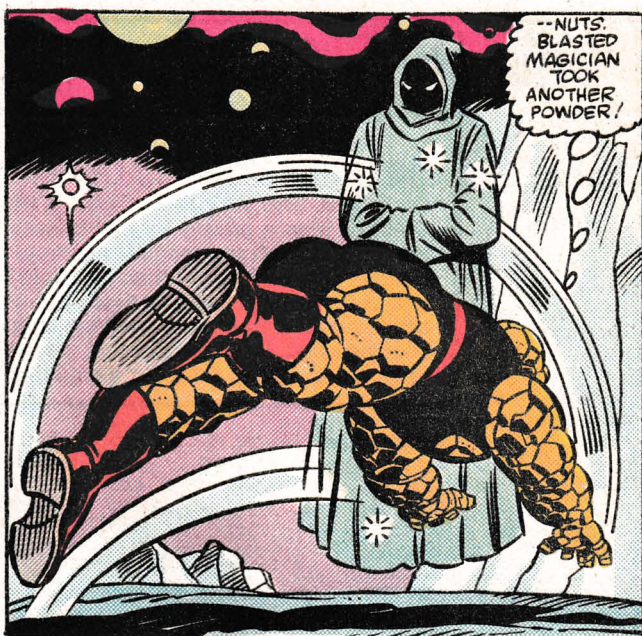


AN' NOW HE'S OVER THERE!

> SHEESH! =< MAYBE IF I ASKED 'IM REAL NICE, HE'D CONJURE ME UP SOME ASPIRIN!



NAH, I GOT OTHER THINGS
TA ASK THAT JERK-- LIKE WHY
HE'S BEEN THROWIN' ROAD-
BLOCKS IN MY WAY FER THE
LAST FEW WEEKS, ALMOST
LIKE HE WAS TESTIN' ME
OR--



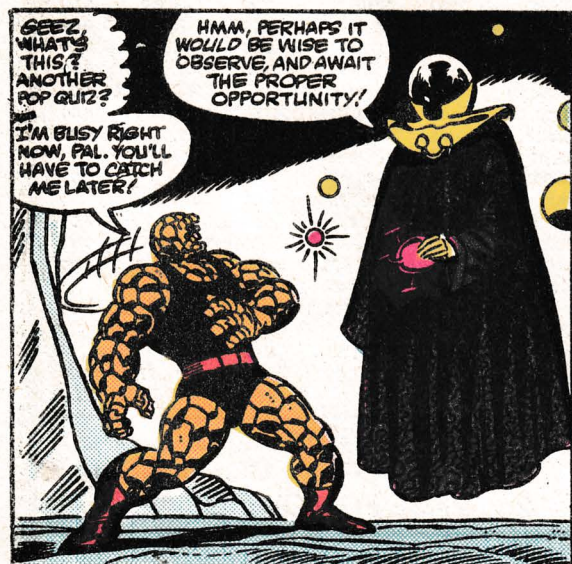
--NUTS!
BLASTED
MAGICIAN
TOOK
ANOTHER
POWDER!



AN' NOW HE'S GLARIN' AT ME
FROM WALLS THAT SHOULD SHOW
MY REFLECTION.

IF THERE'S ONE THING THIS
GUY AIN'T, IT'S PREDICTAB--

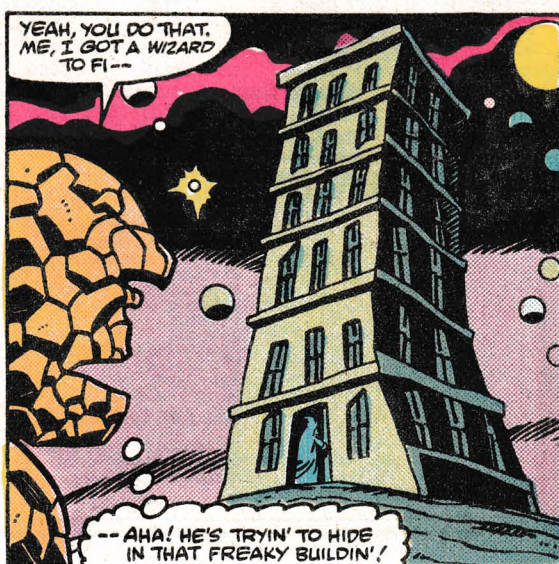
BENJAMIN
GRIMM!
I WANT YOUR
POWER!



GEEZ,
WHAT'S
THIS?
ANOTHER
POP QUIZ?

I'M BUSY RIGHT
NOW, PAL. YOU'LL
HAVE TO CATCH
ME LATER!

HMM, PERHAPS IT
WOULD BE WISE TO
OBSERVE, AND AWAIT
THE PROPER
OPPORTUNITY!



YEAH, YOU DO THAT.
ME, I GOT A WIZARD
TO FI--

--AHA! HE'S TRYIN' TO HIDE
IN THAT FREAKY BUILDIN'!

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DID I SAY "FREAKY"? THIS PLACE LOOKS LIKE SOMETHIN' SALVADOR DALI MIGHTA DESIGNED AFTER A BAD DAY!



OR BETTER YET, A BAD NIGHT--



--MARE?

THE DOOR! IT'S DISAPPEARIN'!



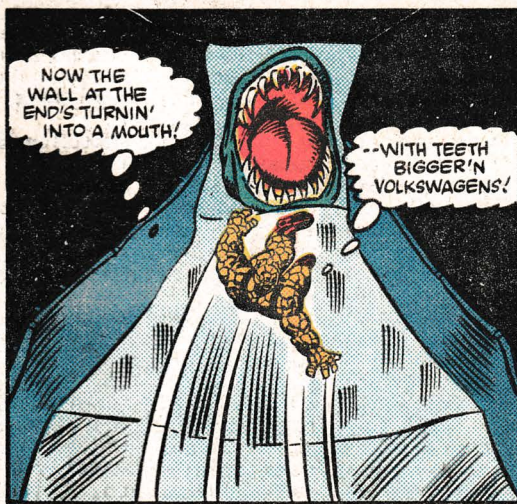
NO MATTER. I AIN'T FINISHED IN HERE, ANYWAY.

STRANGE, THOUGH. THIS JOINT ALMOST SEEMS... FAMILIAR SOMEHOW. LIKE I'VE BEEN HERE BEFO--



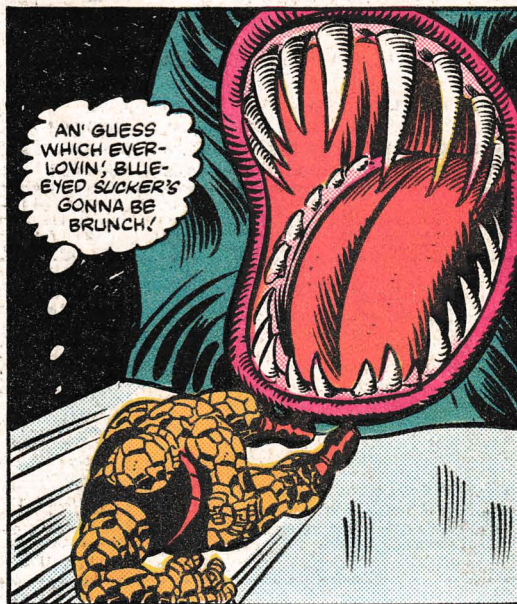
--WHOA! STEPS SUDDENLY SNAPPED FLUSH, TURNIN' THE STAIRWAY INTO A SLIDE!

AN' I'M STARTIN' TO SLIDE UP INSTEAD O' DOWN.



NOW THE WALL AT THE END'S TURNIN' INTO A MOUTH!

--WITH TEETH BIGGER'N VOLKSWAGENS!

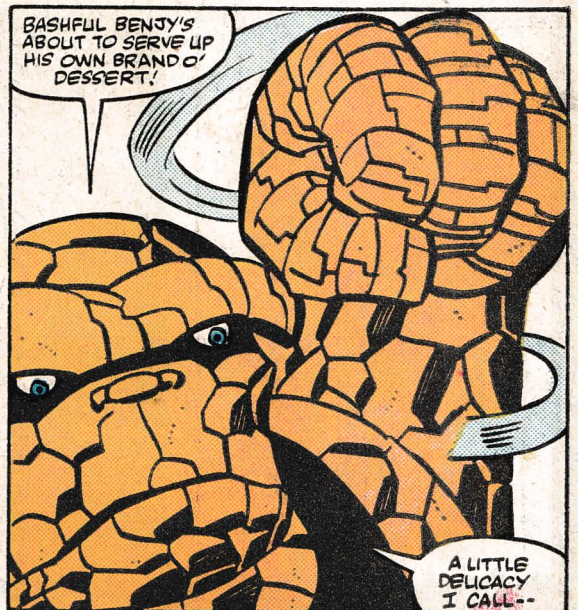


AN' GUESS WHICH EVER-LOVIN', BLUE-EYED SUCKER'S GONNA BE BRUNCH!



HEY, WHADYA THINK I AM, A KING-SIZED 'CERT?

BACK OFF, TIRE-BREATH!

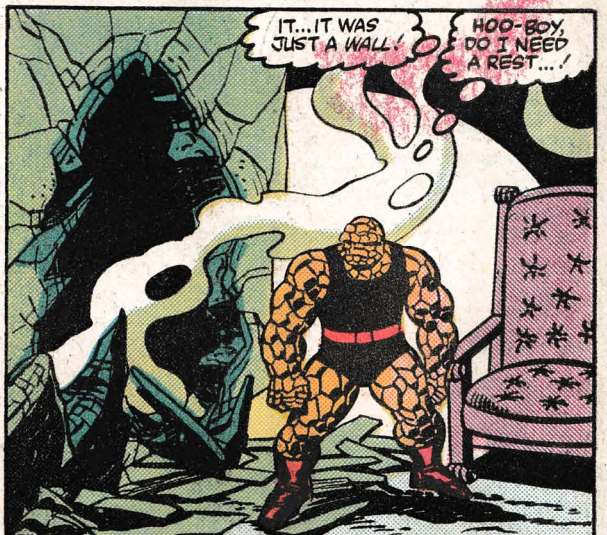


BASHFUL BENJY'S ABOUT TO SERVE UP HIS OWN BRAND O' DESSERT!

A LITTLE DELICACY I CALL--

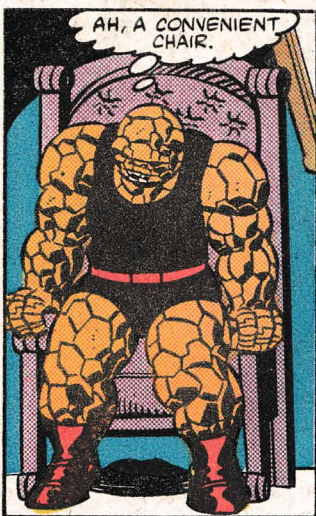


--CLOBBERIN' TIME!

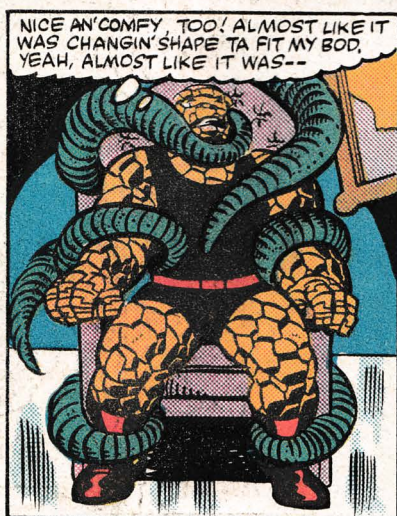


IT...IT WAS JUST A WALL!

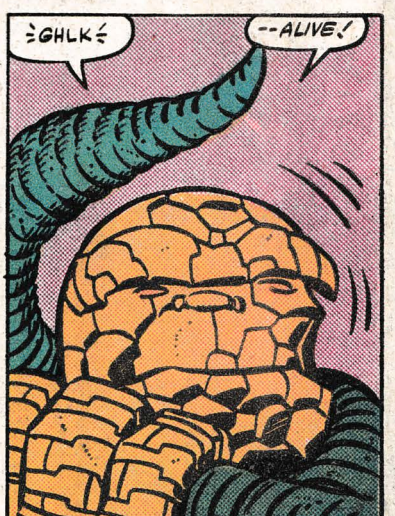
HOO-BOY, DO I NEED A REST...!



AH, A CONVENIENT CHAIR.



NICE AN' COMFY, TOO! ALMOST LIKE IT WAS CHANGIN' SHAPE TA FIT MY BOD, YEAH, ALMOST LIKE IT WAS--



GHK!

--ALIVE!

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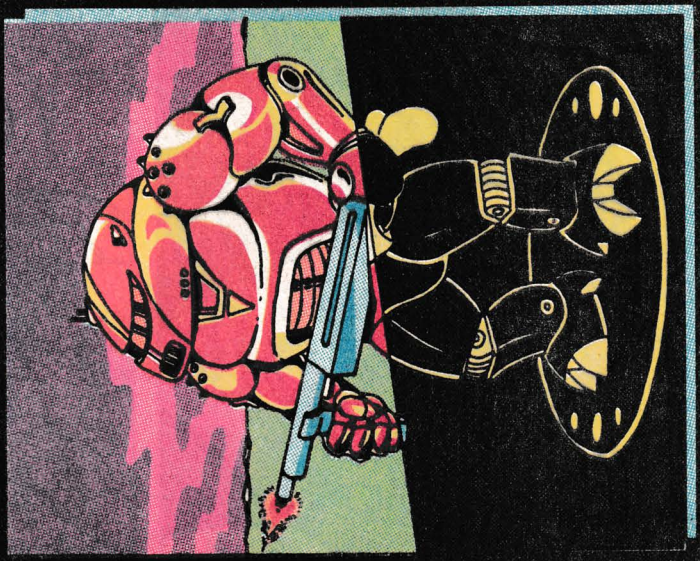
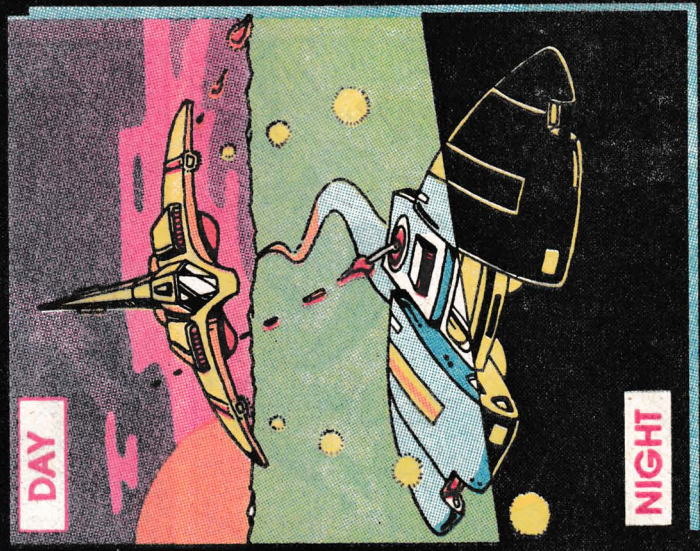
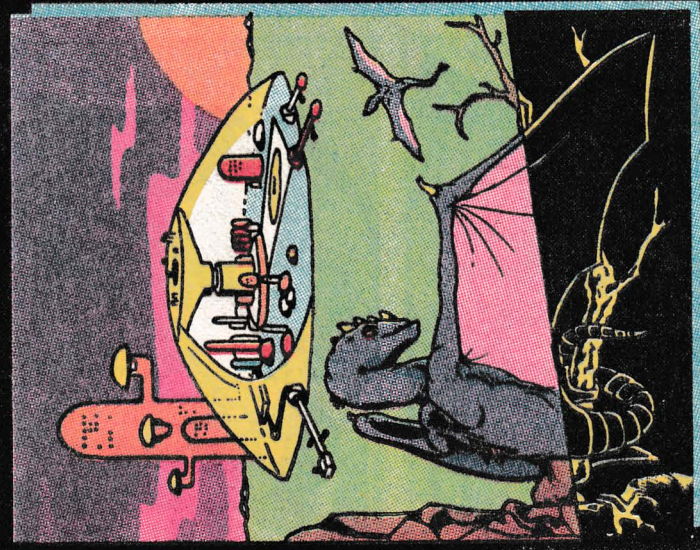
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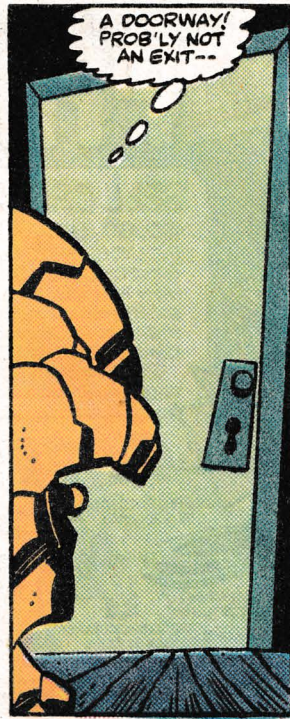
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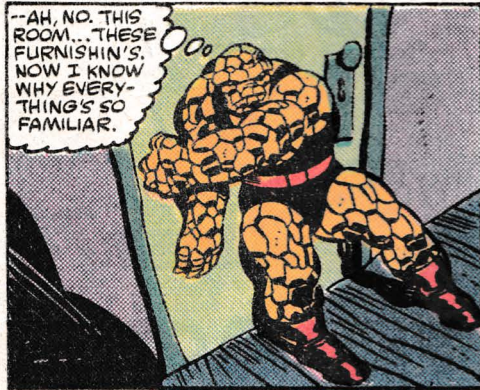
KEE-RIPES! THIS WHOLE PLACE IS TRYIN' TA KILL ME!



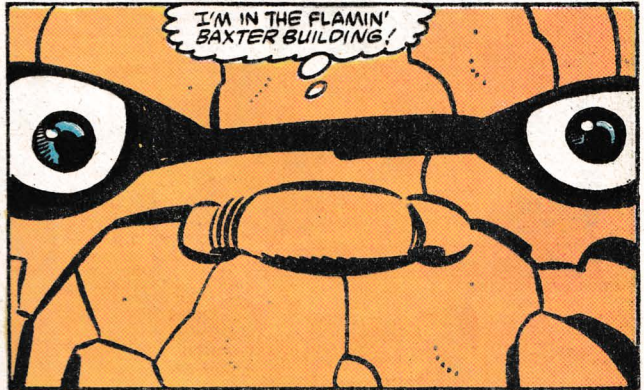
A DOORWAY! PROB'LY NOT AN EXIT--



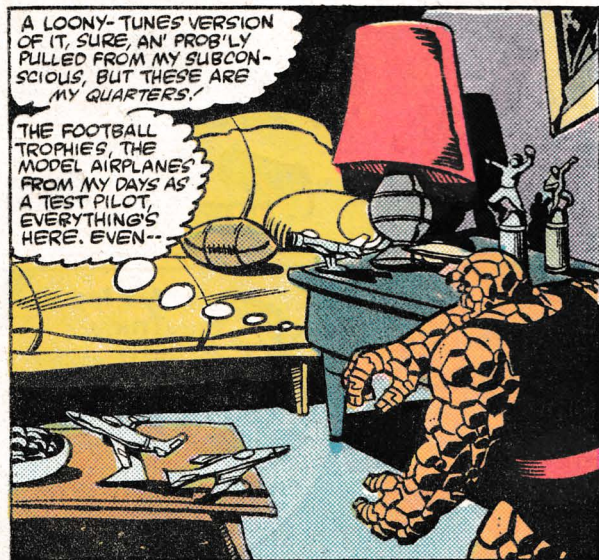
-- BUT MAYBE IT'LL LEAD ME TO SOME PLACE WHERE I CAN CATCH MY BREATH, TRY TO GET A LINE ON WHAT THE HECK IS GOIN' --



--AH, NO. THIS ROOM... THESE FURNISHIN'S. NOW I KNOW WHY EVERYTHING'S SO FAMILIAR.

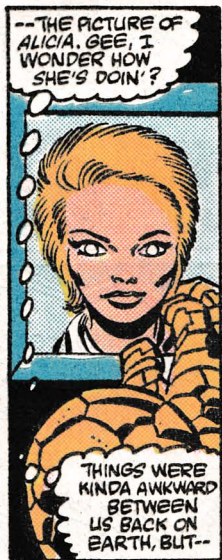


I'M IN THE FLAMIN' BAXTER BUILDING!



A LOONY-TUNES VERSION OF IT, SURE, AN' PROB'LY PULLED FROM MY SUBCONSCIOUS, BUT THESE ARE MY QUARTERS!

THE FOOTBALL TROPHIES, THE MODEL AIRPLANES FROM MY DAYS AS A TEST PILOT, EVERYTHING'S HERE. EVEN--



--THE PICTURE OF ALICIA. GEE, I WONDER HOW SHE'S DOIN'?

THINGS WERE KINDA AWKWARD BETWEEN US BACK ON EARTH, BUT--



--HUH?! H-HER FACE! IT'S CHANGIN'! TWISTIN' UP! A-ALMOST LIKE SHE WAS GETTIN' READY TO--

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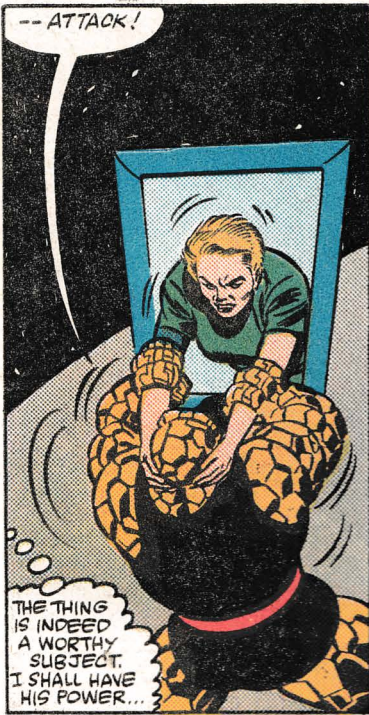
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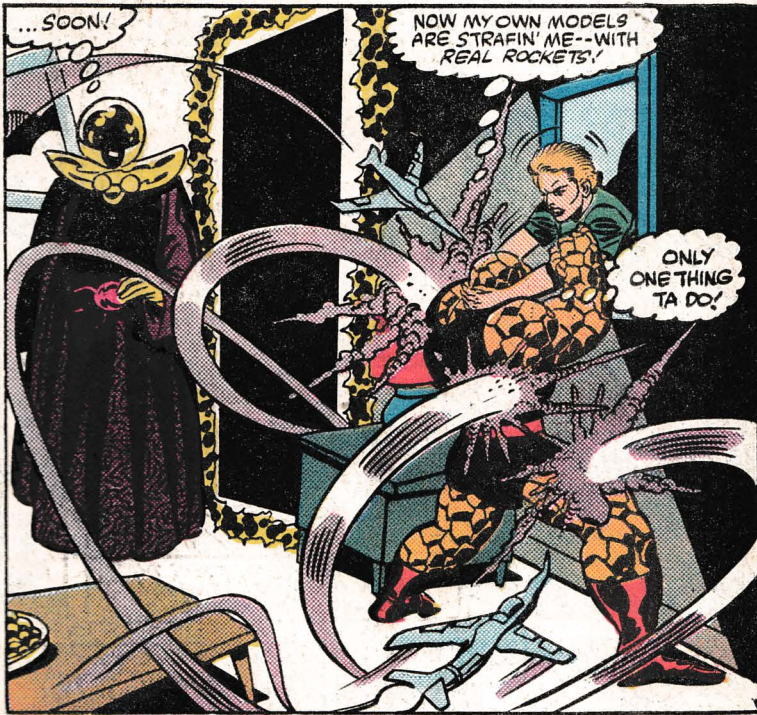
She or another CAPTAIN "O" operator is waiting to rush your name, address and ZIP CODE to us.

*PLEASE... operators can take name and address only... CANNOT answer questions.



-- ATTACK!

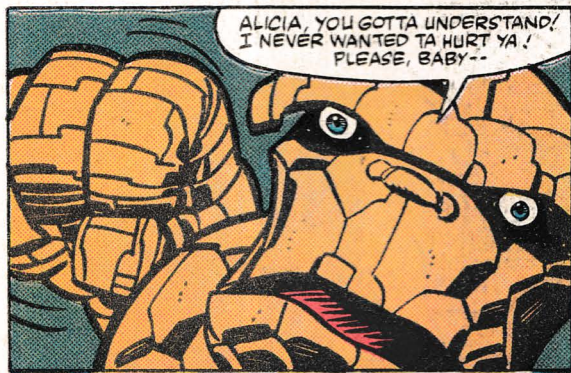
THE THING IS INDEED A WORTHY SUBJECT. I SHALL HAVE HIS POWER...



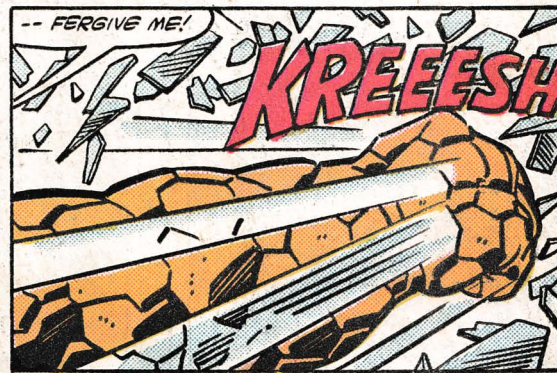
... SOON!

NOW MY OWN MODELS ARE STRAFIN' ME-- WITH REAL ROCKETS!

ONLY ONE THING TA DO!



ALICIA, YOU GOTTA UNDERSTAND! I NEVER WANTED TA HURT YA! PLEASE, BABY--



-- FERGIVE ME!

KREEESH

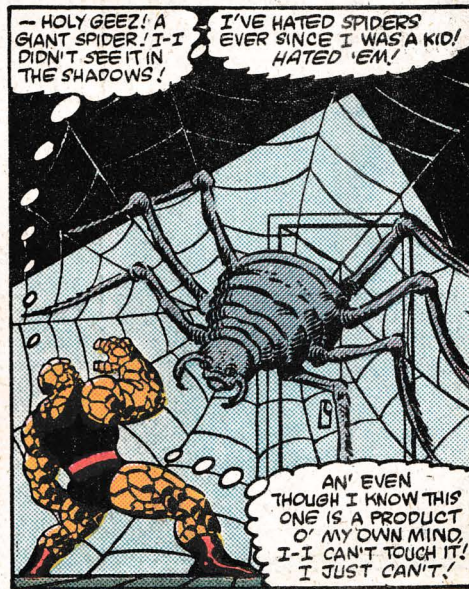


THIS PLACE IS NUTS! I GOTTA GET OUTTA HERE!



EVEN IF I HAFTA SMASH THROUGH EVERY WALL IN THE JOINT TO-- WAITA-MINUT! I SEE LIGHT!

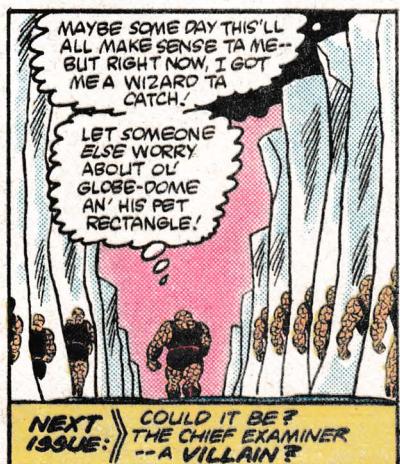
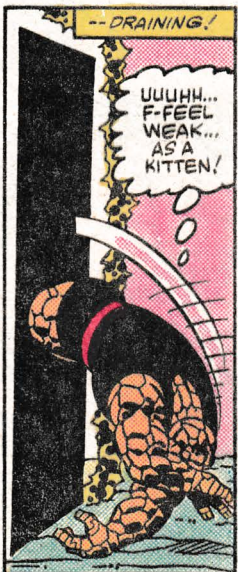
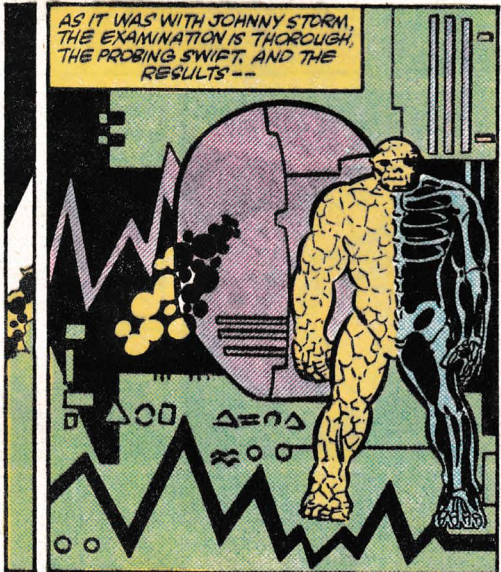
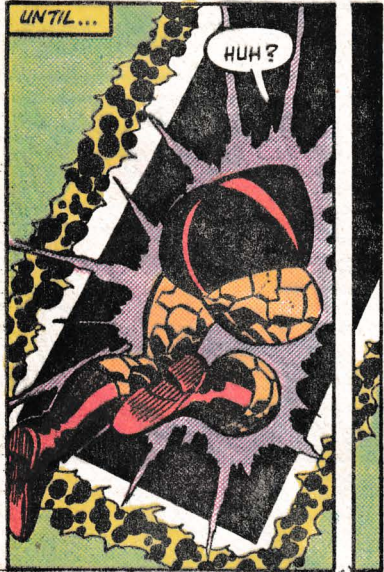
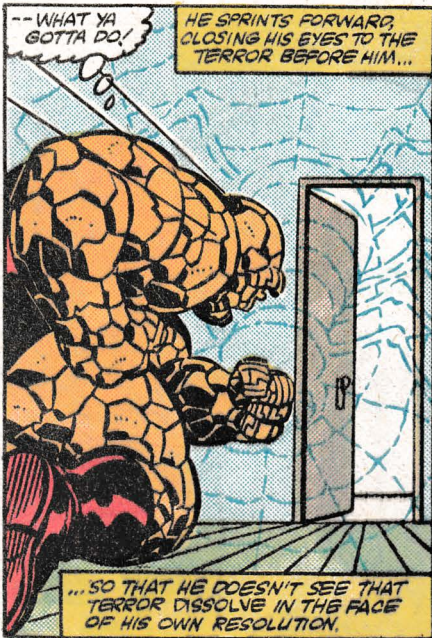
IT'S A DOOR TO THE OUTSIDE! ALL I GOTTA DO IS--



-- HOLY GEEZ! A GIANT SPIDER! I-I DIDN'T SEE IT IN THE SHADOWS!

I'VE HATED SPIDERS EVER SINCE I WAS A KID! HATED 'EM!

AN' EVEN THOUGH I KNOW THIS ONE IS A PRODUCT O' MY OWN MIND, I-I CAN'T TOUGH IT! I JUST CAN'T!



QUESTPROBE QUESTIONS

BOB BUDIANSKY: editor

BOBBIE CHASE: assistant editor

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, New York 10016

Letters may also be addressed to:

ASK SCOTT, 155 Sabal Palm Drive, Longwood, FL 32779

(If you don't wish for your address to be printed, please tell us.)

Dear Scott,

QUESTPROBE is a great comic. First the Hulk, then Spider-Man and now the FF. What a line-up. Putting it on a computer is just another brilliant idea. However, I have a Commodore Vic-20, and I would really like to get it on tape for the Vic-20. Keep up the good work. I'm looking forward to the next issues of QUESTPROBE.

Danny Bertinato
Gloucester, Ontario

QUESTPROBE requires a computer with a minimum of 16k of memory to run. The standard Vic-20 has only 5k of memory. Since very few people ever get the memory expansion to 16k for the Vic-20, I doubt we will ever put QUESTPROBE on the Vic-20. Sorry.

Dear Awesome, Terrific Scott Adams,

I can't tell you how much I love the QUESTPROBE maxi-series! I've only recently gotten into computers, but I have been collecting comics for about two years. Here's a list of the super heroes I think should appear in the QUESTPROBE series: X-Men, Thor, Rom, Doctor Strange, Iceman, Juggernaut, Alpha Flight and Magneto. Thanks for a great series and keep up the good work! Please tell me which one of these is going to appear in upcoming issues of QUESTPROBE.

Russel Charette
Clovio, CA

Only time will tell, Russel.

Dear Scott,

I think QUESTPROBE is the best thing since sliced bread! After reading issue #2, I immediately called Adventure International (your company) and ordered the games for both issues 1 and 2! To my disappointment, the games were not out yet, but they told me HULK would be out in early January, '85 and SPIDER-MAN sometime in later January. I can't wait!! And I'm going to keep ordering the games for each issue as long as the stars of the issue are good (this qualifies just about everyone).

Now for the suggestions (by the way, the comic is superb). I would like to see another Spidey issue and the X-Men also. I would like to see Alpha Flight and Thor, plus Defenders, Avengers, Iron Man and maybe Power Pack.

Scott, thanks for your time. I will be on the lookout for the upcoming issues. 'Til then, may the Eye of the Vishanti watch over you and protect you (which reminds me, I wouldn't mind seeing Doctor Strange in an issue).

Scott Friedman
Medford Lakes, NJ

As you already know, Scott, the QUESTPROBE games #1 and #2 were released just around the '84 Christmas season. I hope you enjoyed them! I originally told you that Commodore was going to be

the one to bring the games to market. Commodore, however, decided they were no longer interested in marketing software for other than their own computers. So, unless something changes again, we here at Adventure International will be once again publishing the versions of Questprobe for the different computers, and we hope to have them out concurrent with the comic book release dates! At this time the following different computer formats are being made: Commodore disk & tape C64; Disk Plus/4; Tape C16, Atari 800 and 800xl Disk, IBM disk PC and PCjr, Apple 2 (all models) Disk.

Dear Scott,

I live in a very small town where there are no stores that feature computers. How can I get any of your games? There are larger



cities nearby, but my mom won't drive me to them just to get a game. I love comics and computers. What should I do?

André Diemunsch
Shelby, MT

You can call our toll-free order line and order them direct from us: (800) 327-7172.

Dear Marvel,

I think #2 of QUESTPROBE was the best comic I've read! I would like to see in the future X-Men, Captain America, Daredevil, Sub-Mariner, Avengers and Defenders.

Mark Rawlings
Xenia, OH

Scott,

I missed the first issue of the QUESTPROBE comic and wonder if I can obtain it through either you or Marvel.

Charles Rylee
Rosharon, TX

Neither Marvel nor Adventure International have any back issues for sale. But there are many many fine comic book dealers who do sell back issues, many of which are advertised in Marvel Comics.

Dear Scott,

Thanks for a great comic! The combination of computer and comic is a great idea. Why not let QUESTPROBE be a continuing comic book instead of a limited series?

Tommy Tucker
Harwood, MD

Marvel's planning on only the limited series for now, Tommy, but if we keep getting such great mail, who knows what might happen?

Dear Marvel,

I am enjoying the QUESTPROBE series very much. If I have read correctly, the Bio-Gem is a legendary evil that was broken down into many small gems, each gem enslaved by a Matter Energy Egg. The thing that gets me is that when anyone or anything gets near the gem the energy egg blows it off the planet it's on. Why wouldn't the previous race have just used the Matter Energy Egg to destroy the Bio-Gem completely in the first place?

Jeff House
Carol Stream, ILL.

Good question, Jeff, and one that's going to be explained very soon. So all we can say now is, keep reading!

Dear Mr. Adams,

When exactly does each QUESTPROBE game come out? And will I have to get all twelve games to fully understand all the mysteries provided?

Tony Wolf
Rockville Center, NY

Each game can be enjoyed on its own, Tony. But each game is also equipped with a password, if you win. All of the passwords connect to give you an extra surprise in the last game.

Dear Scott,

I think that the idea of combining comic books and computers is an ingenious one. In your letter column of QUESTPROBE #2 I saw a list of computers the QUESTPROBE software will run on. I was wondering if the QUESTPROBE software will run on the TRS 80 Color Computer 2 on tape?

Cary Davis
Moncks Corner, SC

Not at this time, Cary. If we come out with anything on the color computer it will probably be disk-based.

Dear Questprobers,

Is the device used to block Spider-Man's spider sense on the market?

James Gardipee
Salem, OR

We haven't seen it in any of the stores recently, James, but if you're really keen on finding one, we can give you Mysterio's phone number. Keep in touch!

Remember, if you have a QUESTPROBE letter, send it to: Ask Scott, 155 Sabal Palm Drive, Longwood, Florida 32750.

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BULLPEN BULLETINS

"A Non-Radioactive Reply To Jim Shooter"

Greetings, patrons of the comic arts! Bob Layton here. Most of you dedicated Marvel readers probably know me from my stint on *Iron Man* (with David Michelinie), or from my contribution as writer / artist on the two successful Hercules Limited Series. Or, perhaps, you've heard tell of me in this very column. You see, for years now in this column, you've been treated to Jim's constant harassment of me. He has accused me of being a radioactive nuclear terrorist clone — he has informed the general public that I am, in truth, a xerox-replicated entity — he created the bogus organization B.L.A.D.D.E.R.S. (Bob Layton Anti-Defamation and Defense Elite Revenge Squad) which, while ineptly "defending" me, actually caused me further embarrassment — and to make matters worse, in Mark Gruenwald's question of the month feature, he casts aspersions on my relationship with the Law-Enforcement authorities! But the last straw was when he tried to get rid of me in the fraudulent "Win a Dream Date with Bob Layton Contest!" (I wound up with twin Rumanian sisters who had moustaches thicker than Stan Lee's! I didn't even know anyone in Rumania read Marvel Comics!)

Well, I've had it, Big Guy! Now — the gloves are off! Let me tell you readers a few intimate details about my pal, my close personal friend — Jim Shooter!

"Not Fit For Print"

Okay, Jim — I know there are certain facts about your personal life you'd rather I

not mention. Fair enough! After all, you are the official representative of the largest, most successful comics company in the world and you deserve the respect that comes with that position. So I've decided not to mention the time I talked you into

CENSORED

Don't worry, Jim, I wouldn't dream of saying a thing about any of that stuff.

"Mr. Marvel Vs. The Media"

Jim, in my opinion, gets a bad break from the fan press. They call him "opinionated," "stubborn" and "thick-headed" — and they even say a few things that aren't true! But soon, Marvel readers will be able to discover the whole story about his relationship with the fan press in Jim's soon-to-be-released autobiography entitled — "I'm Okay ... You're Scum!"

"Better Homes and Garbage"

Jim Shooter is a man of many talents. One of them, however, is not housekeeping. On more than one occasion, I've visited Jim at his "Luxury Condo" in midtown Manhattan. His home can best be described like this: Imagine a four hundred foot tall bag lady. Then, imagine her bag tearing, the contents of which lands indiscriminately around the whereabouts of our Editor in Chief. Jim remains unaffected by all the clutter, being consumed by the dedication to his job. When I visited him last April, I exclaimed, "Aren't you ever going to clean up this place?" Jim replied, "Why bother? My mother is coming to visit in July. She'll tidy it up!"

"We're very proud of our Editor in Chief!"

Well ... I feel so much better, having gotten this off my chest. And despite his little

faults, he's been the best friend any radioactive terrorist could ask for. I only hope that, now, we can bury the hatchet and get on with being two and a half of the most creative urbanites in the comics industry. "What do you say, Big Guy?"

BOB LAYTON

"Now back to Jim Shooter"

Thank you, Bob. And now, it's my great pleasure to announce — *The Mighty Marvel "Take a Radioactive Terrorist Xerox Replicant to Lunch in Rumania Contest!"* Details in next month's *Bullpen Bulletins*.

Shooter



CHECKLIST

- THE THING #29
- DAREDEVIL #224
- NEW MUTANTS #33
- WEB OF SPIDER-MAN #8
- WEST COAST AVENGERS #2 — Continuing the cross-over with *Vision and Scarlet Witch!*
- CLOAK AND DAGGER #3
- RED SONJA: THE MOVIE (Limited Series) #1 — Beginning the official Marvel adaptation by LOUISE SIMONSON and MARY WILSHIRE!
- RAWHIDE KID (Limited Series) #4
- SQUADRON SUPREME (Limited Series) #3
- QUESTPROBE (Limited Series) #3 — Featuring the Thing and the Human Torch in the latest adventure in the SCOTT ADAMS computer game series!
- CONAN THE KING #31
- LIFE OF CAPTAIN MARVEL (Limited Series) #4 — Reprinting the late Captain's life, as told by JIM STARLIN.
- AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #270
- CAPTAIN AMERICA #311
- POWER PACK #16
- MICRONAUTS #14
- ALPHA FLIGHT #28 — Not only is this a *Secret Wars II* issue, it's also a startling cross-over with *Incredible Hulk #313!*
- INDIANA JONES #32
- DAZLER #40 — A *Secret Wars II* cross-over!
- RED SONJA #11 — The comic!
- LONGSHOT (Limited Series) #3
- VISION AND SCARLET WITCH (Limited Series) #2 — Concluding the cross-over with the *West Coast Avengers!*
- AVENGERS ANNUAL #14 — The Skrulls are lurking in this cross-over with the *FF Annual #14!*
- INCREDIBLE HULK #313 — This is it! The ultimate cross-over with *Alpha Flight #28!*
- AVENGERS #261 — Will the Beyonder

- become an Avenger in this *Secret Wars II* cross-over?
- CONAN THE BARBARIAN #176
- MARVEL TALES #181 — Reprinting "Birth of a Hero," by STAN LEE and JOHN ROMITA, SR., from *Amazing Spider-Man #42*.
- ROM #72 — A *Secret Wars II* cross-over!
- X-MEN #199
- MOON KNIGHT #5
- POWER MAN / IRON FIST #120
- SOLOMON KANE (Limited Series) #2
- BALDER THE BRAVE (Limited Series) #1 — From the pages of *Thor* and into his own series!
- G.I. JOE #41
- NIGHTCRAWLER (Limited Series) #1 — The adventures of that world famous X-Man, as told by DAVE COCKRUM!
- ETERNALS (Limited Series) #2
- FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL #19 — The Skrulls aren't the only villains in this cross-over with the *Avengers Annual #14!*
- PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #108
- DEFENDERS #149
- FANTASTIC FOUR #284 — With the last appearance of the Invisible Girl!
- STAR WARS #101
- THOR #361
- TRANSFORMERS #10
- SECRET WARS II (Limited Series) #5 — The Beyonder plunges into the dark side of humanity, and the world trembles! Featuring Doctor Strange, the Thing, Fantastic Four, and the East and West Coast Avengers!
- IRON MAN #200 — Special double-sized anniversary issue that answers the question, "Who will wear the armor?"
- AMAZING SPIDER-MAN ANNUAL #19 — You won't believe what happens when Mary Jane is suspected of being Spider-Man!
- THE OFFICIAL MARVEL INDEX TO THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #8 — Everything you need to know to be an expert on

- Amazing Spider-Man #175-199!
- DOCTOR WHO #14
- EPIC COMICS
- DREADSTAR AND COMPANY #5
- MOONSHADOW (Limited Series) #4
- SWORDS OF THE SWASHBUCKLERS #3 — Mutiny!
- GROO THE WANDERER #9
- BLACK DRAGON (Limited Series) #5
- THE ONE (Limited Series) #2 — One meets the Other!
- ELFQUEST #4
- COYOTE #14
- EPIC ILLUSTRATED #32 — "The Cerebus Portfolio" by DAVE SIM, plus more graphic adventures by BYRNE & AUSTIN, GOODWIN & GELDOFF, BRYANT & KIMBALL, WHEATLEY and CONRAD!
- STAR COMICS
- PLANET TERRY #8 — Prisoners on Alphatraz!
- PETER PORKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-HAM #4
- EWOKS #4 — Trapped in the castle of the Ice Witch!
- WALLY THE WIZARD #8
- ROYAL ROY #4 — Engaged to Lorna Loo! Yuk!
- MUPPET BABIES #4
- GETALONG GANG #4 — Meet Wellington Wombat — the most dangerous kid in Green Meadow!
- MARVEL MAGAZINES
- MARVEL AGE #32
- MARVEL FANFARE #23 — The end of the Iron Man adventure written by MCKENZIE, painted by STEACY!
- SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #117
- SAVAGE TALES #1 — It's back and more savage than ever!
- GRAPHIC NOVEL
- GN #18: SHE-HULK — Romance with Wyatt Wingfoot, action with SHIELD! By JOHN BYRNE, inked by KIM DeMULDER.

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