



MARVEL

DC

# ALL-STAR AVENGERS

BUSIEK • PÉREZ

3 OF 4

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BUSIEK • PEREZ WITH SMITH

MARVEL COMICS • DC COMICS

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NUMBER THREE

# JLA AVENGERS

BUSIEK • PÉREZ

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## A DANGEROUS GAME, A DESPERATE GAMBIT...

A POWERFUL AND DANGEROUS HUNTER STALKS REALITY.

**KRONA**, IMMORTAL SCIENTIST AND RENEGADE, SEEKS TO LEARN THE TRUTH OF ALL CREATION. HIS INVESTIGATIONS, HOWEVER, TEAR APART THE FABRIC OF UNIVERSES, DESTROYING THEM. CAST OUT OF HIS HOME REALITY, HE WANDERS THE MULTIVERSE, LEAVING DESTRUCTION IN HIS PATH.

IN ONE UNIVERSE, HE ENCOUNTERS THE **GRANDMASTER**, A COSMIC GAME-PLAYER WITH ENOUGH POWER TO CHECK HIM, IF ONLY TEMPORARILY. THE **GRANDMASTER** TELLS **KRONA** HE KNOWS OF A BEING THAT LIVED THROUGH THE CREATION OF HIS UNIVERSE AND KNOWS WHAT CAME BEFORE -- **GALACTUS**, DEVOURER OF WORLDS. **KRONA** AGREES TO PLAY A GAME. IF HE WINS, **GALACTUS**'S KNOWLEDGE WILL BE HIS -- EVEN IF HIS QUEST DESTROYS THE **GRANDMASTER**'S UNIVERSE. IF HE LOSES, HE WILL LEAVE IN PEACE.

THE **GRANDMASTER**, WORKING WITH **METRON** OF THE NEW GODS, MANIPULATES THE CHAMPIONS OF TWO WORLDS -- THE **AVENGERS**, FROM HIS OWN REALITY, AND THE **JLA**, FROM **KRONA**'S REALITY -- INTO A RACE TO RECOVER TWELVE ITEMS OF COSMIC POWER. **KRONA** SWAPS CHAMPIONS, HOWEVER, SO THE **AVENGERS** FIGHT FOR HIM, WHILE THE **JLA** FIGHT FOR THE **GRANDMASTER**.

DURING THE COMPETITION, EACH TEAM SEES THE OTHER'S WORLD, AND MEMBERS -- NOTABLY **SUPERMAN** AND **CAPTAIN AMERICA** -- REACT BADLY. **SUPERMAN** SEES THE **AVENGERS**' WORLD AS A SORRY SHAMBLES WHERE THE HEROES DON'T TRY HARD ENOUGH. **CAPTAIN AMERICA** SEES THE **JLA**'S WORLD AS A TOTALITARIAN STATE WHERE SUPER-HUMANS RULE.

IN ADDITION, **BATMAN** CONVINCES **CAPTAIN AMERICA** TO BREAK AWAY FROM THE COMPETITION AND SEEK THE TRUTH BEHIND IT. THEY DISCOVER THE EXISTENCE OF THE GAME, AND THE STAKES.

BETWEEN THEM, THEY ARRANGE FOR THE **JLA** TO WIN, SAFEGUARDING THE **AVENGERS**' UNIVERSE. BUT **KRONA** LASHES OUT, ATTACKING THE **GRANDMASTER**, SUMMONING **GALACTUS** AND BEGINNING TO WREST HIS SECRETS FROM HIM.

IT'S THEN THAT THE **GRANDMASTER** REVEALS HIS TRUE PURPOSE -- THE GAME WAS JUST A FEINT, TO ASSEMBLE THE ITEMS OF POWER UNDER **KRONA**'S NOSE. TAPPING INTO THEM, HE UNLEASHES THEIR POWER . . . AND EVERYTHING CHANGES...

DIRECT EDITION

a Beby Scan



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## PROLOGUE:

BEYOND ALL CONVENTIONAL TIME AND SPACE, THERE IS A WALL. A WALL THAT GUARDS UNIMAGINABLE POWER AND MYSTERY.

A WALL ENCRUSTED WITH THE GARGANTUAN HUSKS OF THOSE WHO HAVE SOUGHT TO PENETRATE IT, AND FAILED.

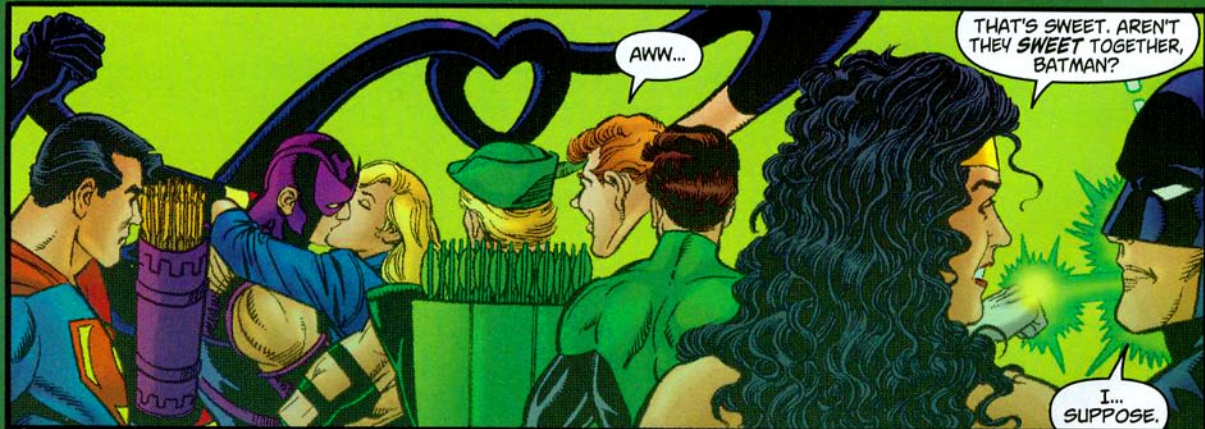
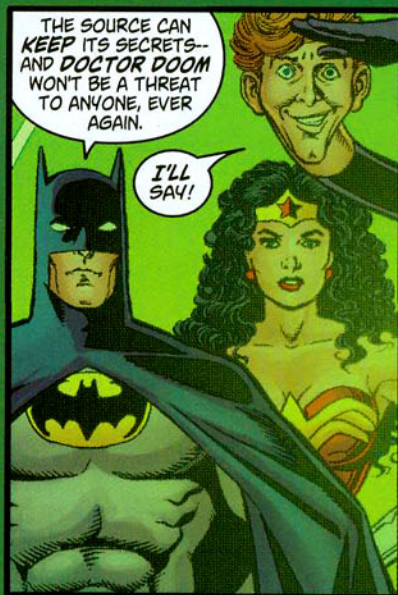
AND TODAY...

...ANOTHER STILL, UNMOVING FORM HAS JOINED THE SILENT GIANTS.

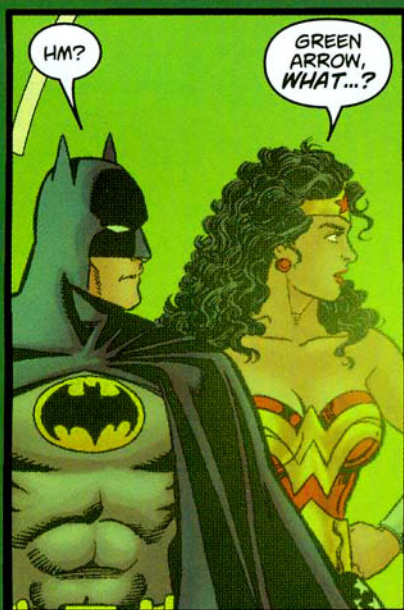
AND THAT, IT SEEMS, IS THAT.











HM?

GREEN  
ARROW,  
WHAT...?



HAWKMAN  
ISN'T  
EVEN *HERE*,  
OLLIE.



WHAT? NO,  
WHAT I MEANT TO  
SAY WAS--  
I WAS--I  
THOUGHT--

HONEY?



DON'T *WORRY* ABOUT IT,  
G.A. AFTER THAT ONE-  
IN-A-MILLION SHOT, YOU'RE  
ENTITLED TO ZONE OUT,  
IF YOU WANT.

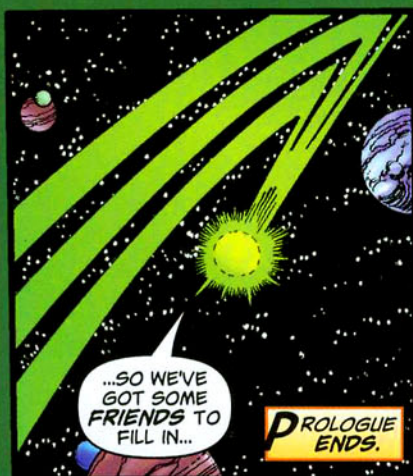
BUT WE'D  
BETTER HEAD  
BACK.



YOU *GOT* IT, BARRY.  
BACK TO THE JLA  
SATELLITE--*AND* THE  
INTERDIMENSIONAL  
COMMUNICATOR.

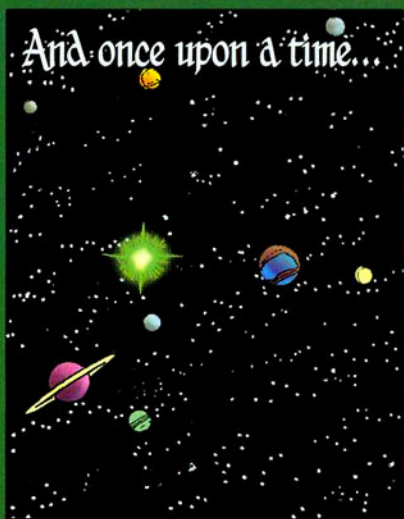


AFTER ALL,  
DR. DOOM'S  
NOT FROM *OUR*  
UNIVERSE...



...SO WE'VE  
GOT SOME  
FRIENDS TO  
FILL IN...

**P**ROLOGUE  
ENDS.



And once upon a time...





...there  
were two  
Universes.

BOOK  
THREE:

# STRANGE ADVENTURES

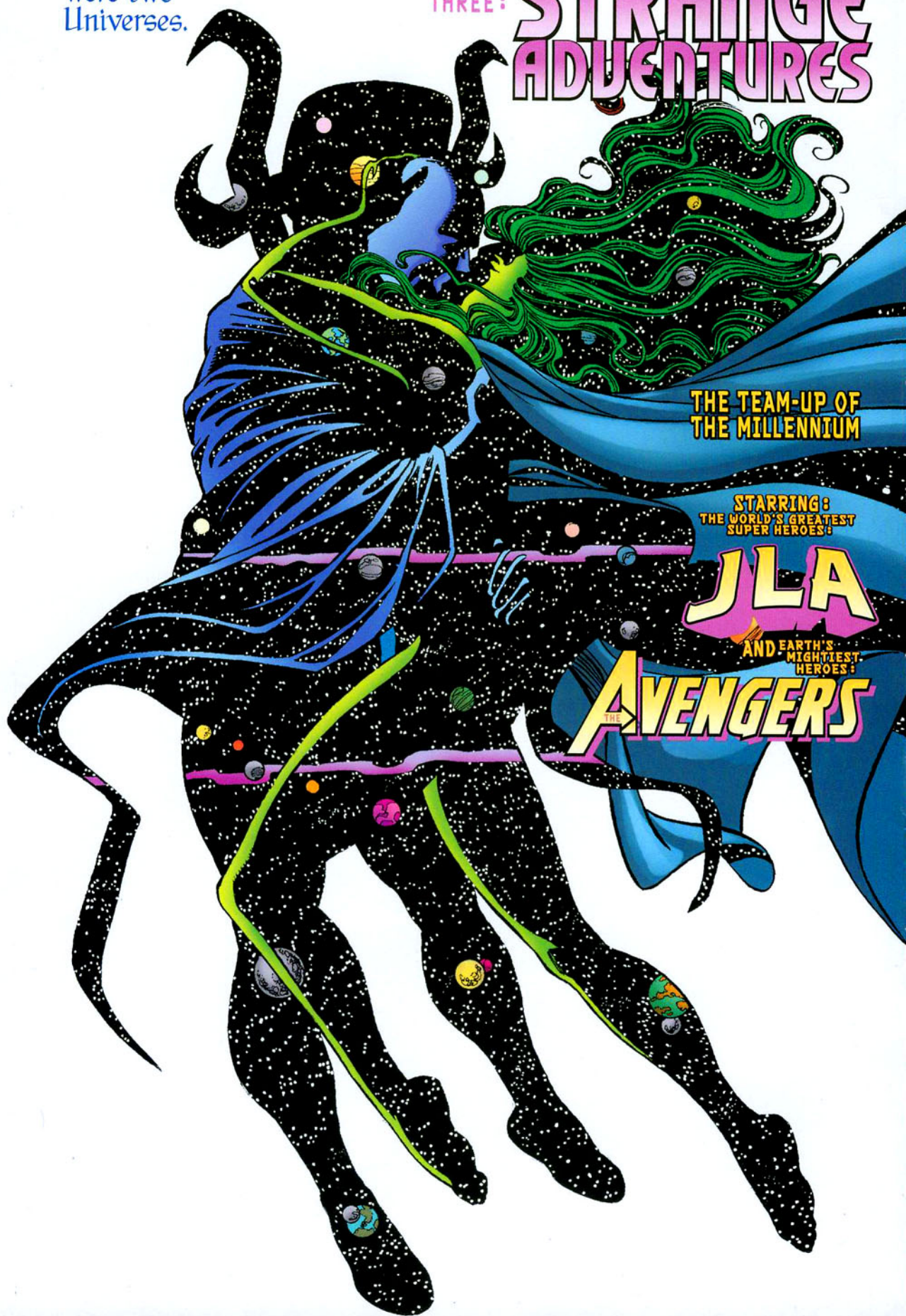
THE TEAM-UP OF  
THE MILLENNIUM

STARRING:  
THE WORLD'S GREATEST  
SUPER HEROES:

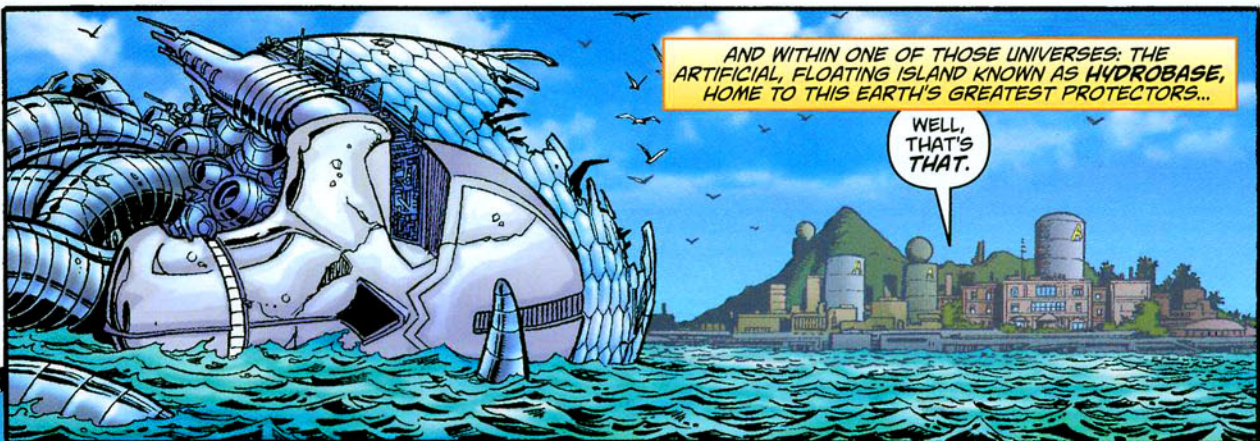
## JLA

AND EARTH'S  
MIGHTIEST  
HEROES:

## THE AVENGERS







AND WITHIN ONE OF THOSE UNIVERSES: THE ARTIFICIAL, FLOATING ISLAND KNOWN AS HYDROBASE, HOME TO THIS EARTH'S GREATEST PROTECTORS...

WELL, THAT'S THAT.



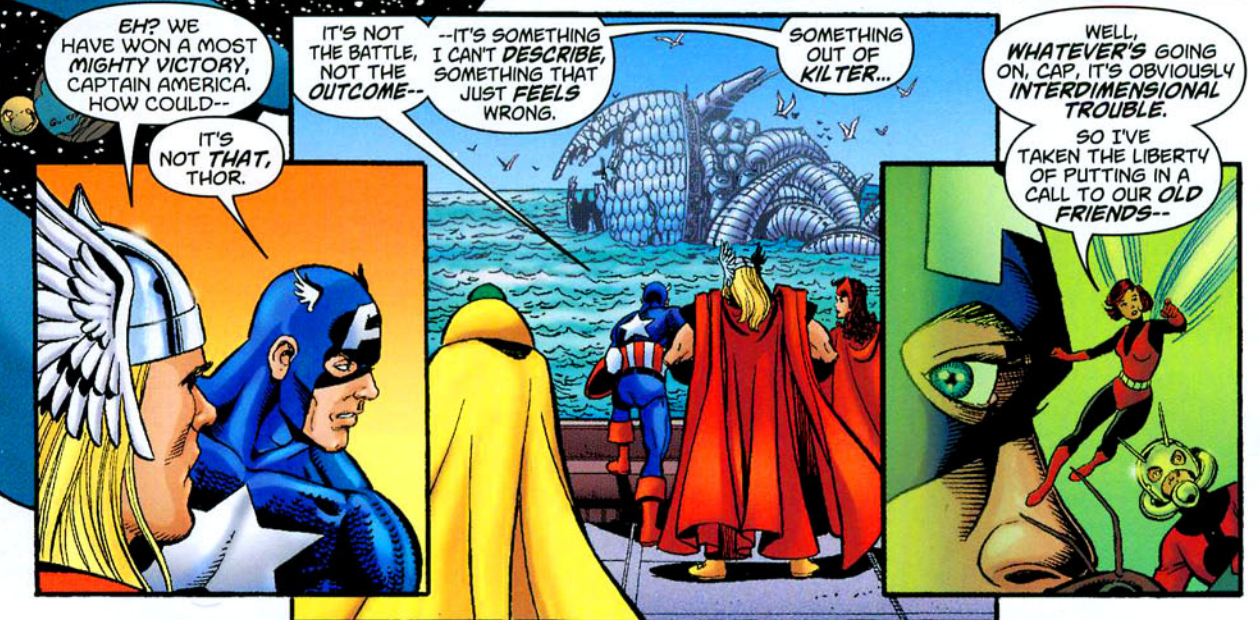
BRAINIAC WON'T BE TRYING TO ENSLAVE US AS HIS **FOOTSOLDIERS** AGAIN ANY TIME SOON, I'D BET.

AND I ASK YOU, IRON MAN--

-- IS THAT EXCEDRIN HEADACHE NUMBER **GOOGOLPLEX**, OR WHAT?

IT'S JUST HIS **SHIP**, BEAST.

I DON'T LIKE THIS.



EH? WE HAVE WON A MOST MIGHTY VICTORY, CAPTAIN AMERICA. HOW COULD--

IT'S NOT THAT, THOR.

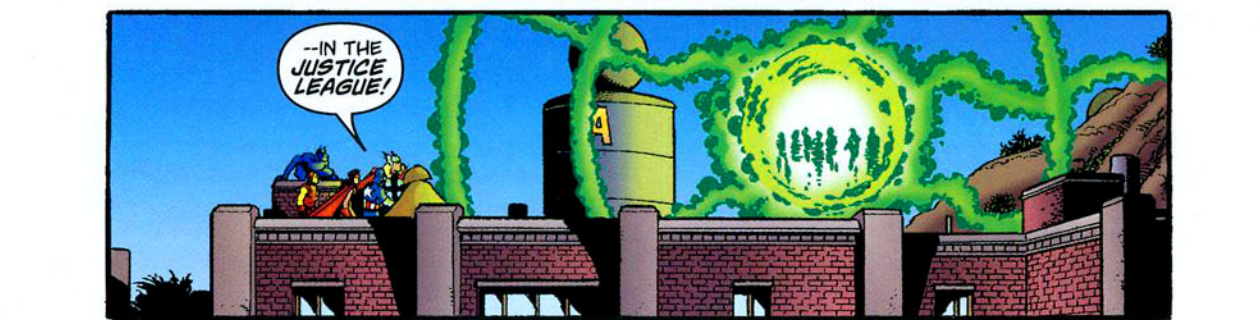
IT'S NOT THE BATTLE, NOT THE **OUTCOME**--

--IT'S SOMETHING I CAN'T **DESCRIBE**, SOMETHING THAT JUST **FEELS** WRONG.

SOMETHING OUT OF **KILTER**...

WELL, **WHATEVER'S** GOING ON, CAP, IT'S OBVIOUSLY **INTERDIMENSIONAL TROUBLE**.

SO I'VE TAKEN THE LIBERTY OF PUTTING IN A CALL TO OUR OLD **FRIENDS**--



--IN THE **JUSTICE LEAGUE!**





HEY, HANK! JAN!

THE WASP SAID THERE'S A PROBLEM WITH UNIVERSE-SHIFTING HERE ON EARTH-TWO, AVENGERS.

WE'VE HAD A LITTLE OF THAT OURSELVES, SO...



SO IT'S TIME TO PUT OUR HEADS TOGETHER AGAIN, HM?

ONE THING WRONG THOUGH, HAL--YOU'RE EARTH-TWO. WE'RE EARTH-ONE.

YEAH, YEAH...



GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, RALPH.

SUE SENDS HER BEST, YOU TWO--

--AND SUGGESTS WE SHOULD ALL GET TOGETHER SOON FOR CHINESE AND SOME MYSTERY-SOLVING!

UH, THAT LAST BIT WAS MY PART, NOT SUE'S.

WE COULD TELL...



HEY, OTHER HANK!

...OUR NEW PARTICLE ACCELERATOR, BARRY...

DOOM?

WHY THANK YOU, THOR!



HM. I DON'T... DON'T LIKE THIS...

LADIES, GENTLEMEN, WELCOME. I'M HAVING HORS D'OEUVRES PREPARED.



THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY, JARVIS. THIS IS BUSINESS, NOT PLEASURE.

HEY, RALPH!



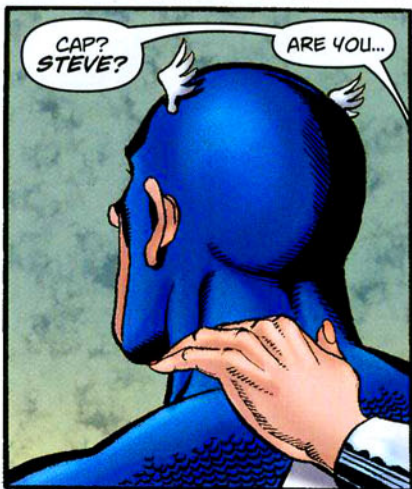
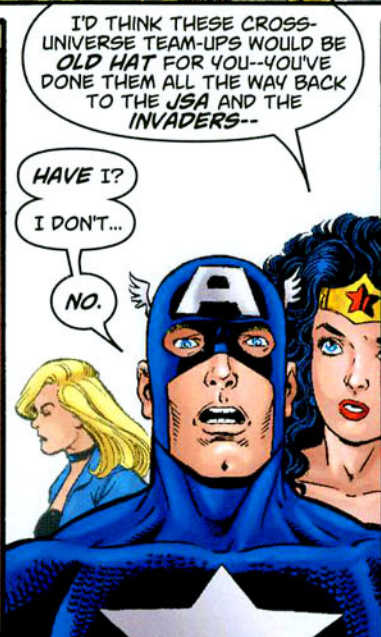
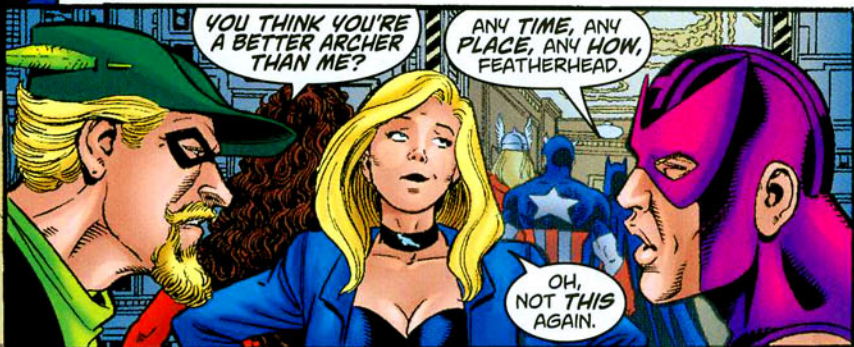
LOOK AT THAT. THE FATCAT EX-MUNITIONS DEALER'S HIRED THUG TAKES CHARGE, ORDERING THE HELP AROUND LIKE SLAVES...

WHAT?!

I HEAR YOU RIGHT, MOLDY ARROW? YOU GOT A PROBLEM WITH THE AVENGERS?

NO, NO...







WE  
SHOULDN'T BE AT  
HYDROBA--

HM?  
JAN?

UH, WE'RE NOT  
AT HYDROBASE,  
CAP. DON'T YOU  
REMEMBER?

OUR ANNUAL  
GET-TOGETHER  
WITH THE JLA IS  
AT THEIR  
SATELLITE  
THIS YEAR...

...AND RALPH  
AND I DECIDED  
WE SHOULD HAVE  
A LUAU  
THEME!

MATCH  
THAT,  
BEARDO!

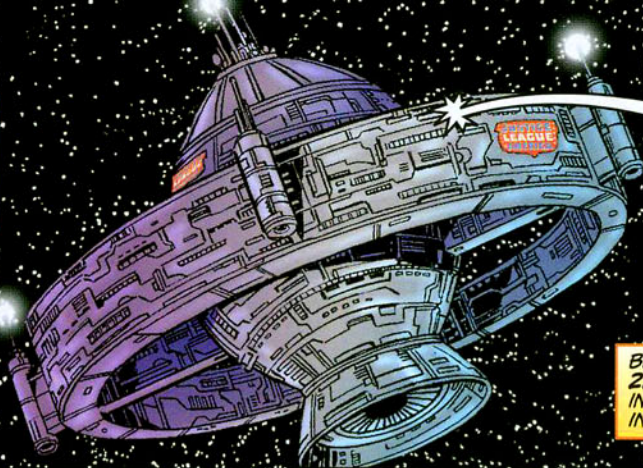
NO SWEAT,  
BLINDEYE!

TELL 'IM,  
RICKSTER!





CAPTAIN AMERICA  
SHAKES HIS HEAD.  
BLINKS HIS EYES.  
WASN'T HE JUST--  
SOMEWHERE ELSE?  
SOMEWHERE...



GO!

GO!

GO!

BUT NO. HE'S IN A SATELLITE,  
22,300 MILES ABOVE EARTH,  
IN GEOSYNCHRONOUS ORBIT.  
IN JLA HEADQUARTERS.



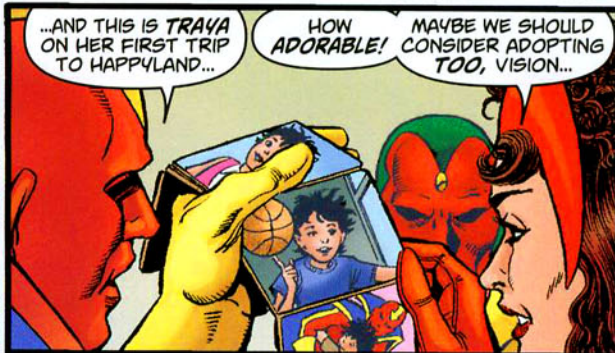
C'MON, SIMON, SHE  
WINS EVERY YEAR!  
FINISH UP--TIME FOR  
OUR ANNUAL PING PONG  
SUDDEN-DEATH  
GRUDGE MATCH!



RIGHT--SO AFTER SHE  
KICKS YOUR BUTT,  
AQUAMAN AND I WILL  
KICK IT ALL OVER  
AGAIN.

OH, YOU  
WISH!

NO  
FEET  
THIS YEAR,  
BEAST.



...AND THIS IS TRAYA  
ON HER FIRST TRIP  
TO HAPPYLAND...

HOW  
ADORABLE!

MAYBE WE SHOULD  
CONSIDER ADOPTING  
TOO, VISION...



MY WORD,  
MR. CARR!

AND THAT'S HOW  
YOU BLAZE THE  
PERFECT TERIYAKI-  
BURGER, DADDIO--  
IN A SNAP!

SEE, JARV--I TOLD  
YOU SNAPPER WAS AN  
OKAY JOE!

NO  
MATTER  
HOW HE  
TALKS!



GO! GO!  
GO!

AH-AH!  
HE'S  
FADING...



SO I  
REACH INTO  
THE HAT...NO  
RABBIT!



KEEP YOUR HANDS--  
AND YOUR INCREDIBLY  
DISGUSTING  
THOUGHTS--  
AWAY FROM ME,  
GARDNER!  
UNDERSTOOD?

I...  
OBEY...

GO!  
GO!

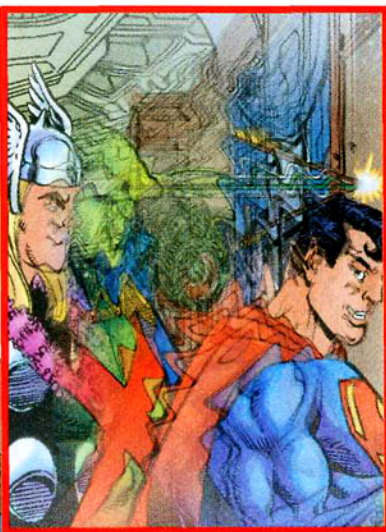


THY LEAGUE HATH  
MOUNTED AN  
ELABORATE FEAST  
INDEED, SUPERMAN.  
THOU MUST BE  
PLEASED.

WHO  
ARE YOU,  
THOR?

WHO  
ARE ANY OF  
YOU?











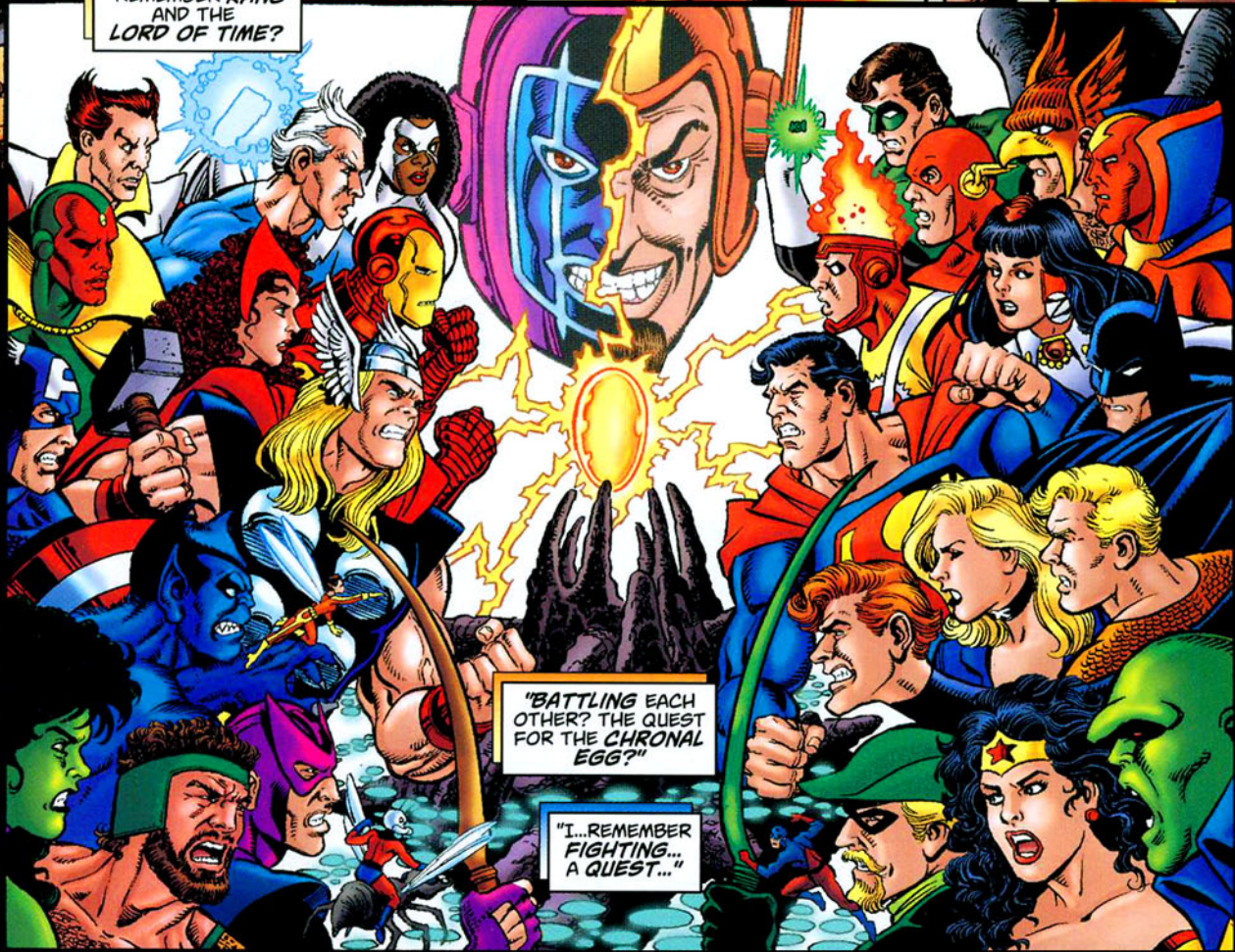


"REMEMBER WHEN  
THE GRIM REAPER  
AND THE KEY HAD  
THE SERPENT CROWN?"

"WHEN THEY  
KIDNAPPED  
MANTIS AND  
ZATANNA--"

"--TRIED TO USE  
THEM AS SOME  
SORT OF KEY  
TO CELESTIAL  
POWER?"

"REMEMBER KANG  
AND THE  
LORD OF TIME?"



"BATTLING EACH  
OTHER? THE QUEST  
FOR THE CHRONAL  
EGG?"

"I...REMEMBER  
FIGHTING...  
A QUEST..."



BELOW, IN THE AVENGERS' COMM-ROOM.

WHATEVER'S GOING ON, IT'S NOT THE MASTERS OF EVIL.

THEY'RE STILL SECURE IN THE DIMENSIONAL VOID.

AND MOST OF OUR OTHER NOTEWORTHY ENEMIES ARE ACCOUNTED FOR....

BREETEEET BREETEEET BREETEEET BREETEEET B

HM?

IRON MAN!  
BATMAN!  
GET UP  
HERE--  
NOW!



WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S GOING--

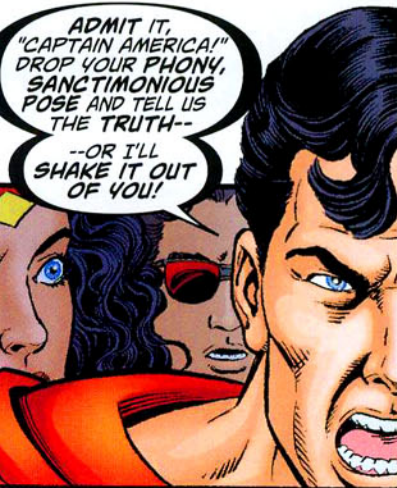
CAP--

IT'S YOU! YOU'RE THE WORST OF THEM! BENDING REALITY, FOULING THE AIR--

YOU'RE THE ONE!

ME?!

KAL...



ADMIT IT, "CAPTAIN AMERICA!" DROP YOUR PHONY, SANCTIMONIOUS POSE AND TELL US THE TRUTH--  
--OR I'LL SHAKE IT OUT OF YOU!



HUH? WHAT'S WITH THEM?

CAN'T WE ALL JUST GET ALONG?

OH BOY...



COME ON, THEN! DO YOUR WORST! YOU'RE JUST ONE MORE OVER-MUSCLED HIGH-AND-MIGHTY PRETTY BOY!

I'VE BEATEN DOZENS LIKE YOU IN MY TIME!



AND WITH AN IRRATIONAL  
SNARL, A VIOLENT HEAVE  
OF TWO PAIRS OF SHOULDERS,  
THEY SHRUG OFF THOSE  
RESTRAINING THEM--

I'LL--

YOU--

OH,  
GOD.

AND THEY COME TOGETHER  
IN A SOUNDLESS IMPACT--  
A CLAP OF SILENCE THAT  
OVERWHELMS THE SENSES--

--BLINDING,  
DEAFENING,  
NUMBING--

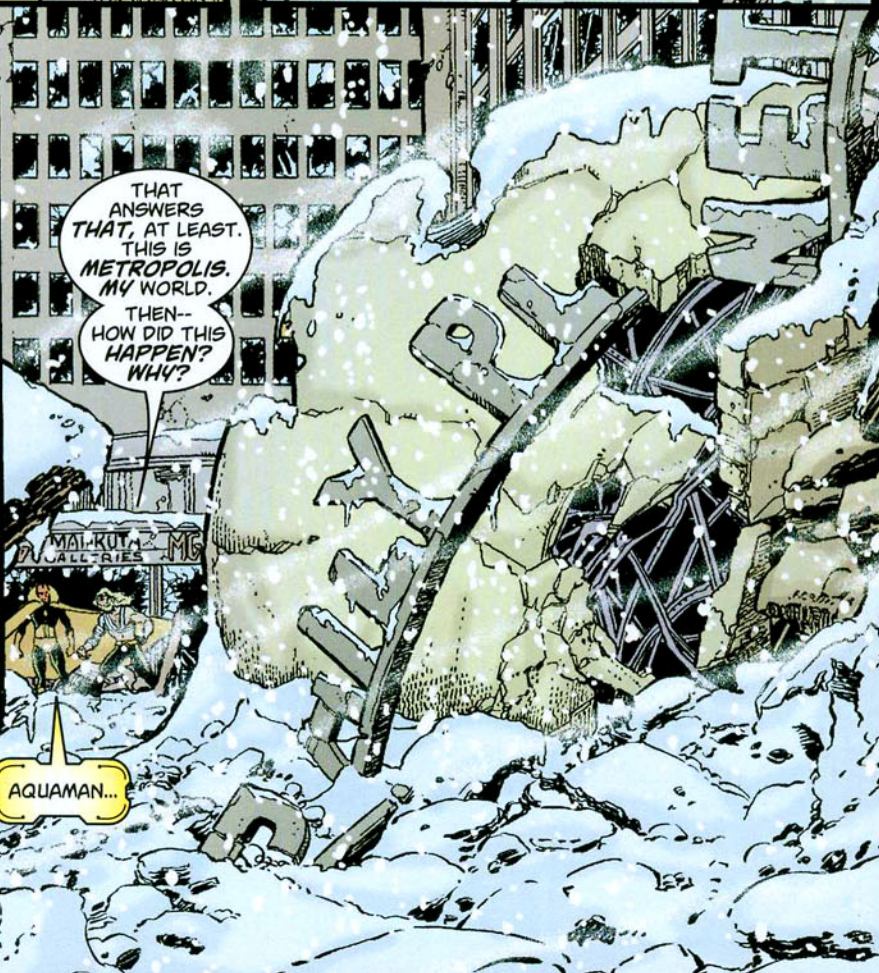
AND THEN  
EVERYTHING--

--GOES--













**TAKE COVER!**



THIS AIN'T YOUR WORLD, HEROES! NOT NO MORE!

THE MASTER SAID YOU'D TURN UP--

--AN' THE MASTER SAID YOU GOTTA DIE!



I HAVE INCREASED MY DENSITY TO SHIELD YOU FROM THEIR ATTACKS.

BUT WE ARE BADLY OUTNUMBERED. LOGIC WOULD SUGGEST WE RETREAT, BUT--

RUN?

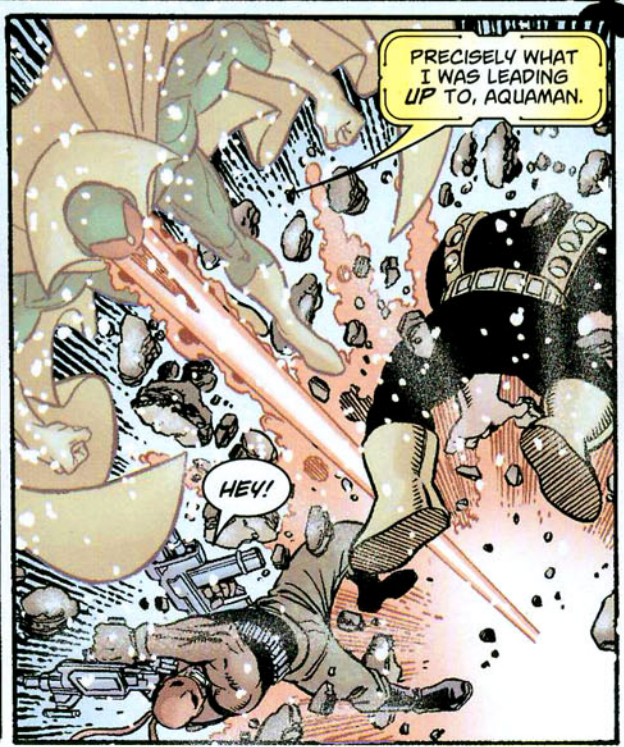


DO AS YOU LIKE, VISION-- BUT THE KING OF ATLANTIS DOES NOT RUN!

THESE MISCREANTS HAVE A MASTER--

UHH!

--AND I WANT THAT MASTER'S NAME!



PRECISELY WHAT I WAS LEADING UP TO, AQUAMAN.

HEY!





AND NOW, VILLAINS--

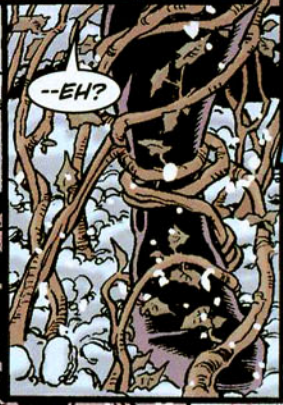


POISON IVY!

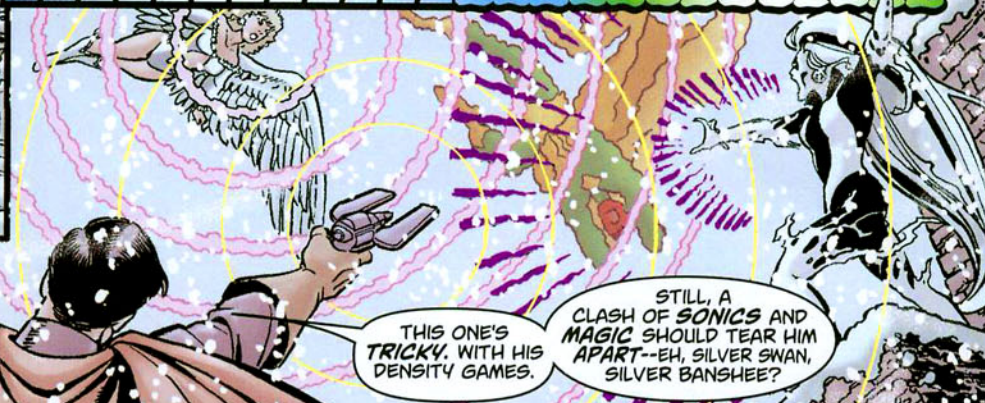


YOU REMEMBER ME, HOW SWEET.

DO YOU REMEMBER MY VINES? HOW TOUGH THEY ARE, HOW CONSTRICTING...?



--EH?

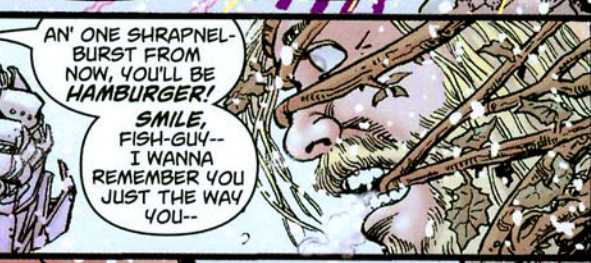


THIS ONE'S TRICKY, WITH HIS DENSITY GAMES.

STILL, A CLASH OF SONICS AND MAGIC SHOULD TEAR HIM APART--EH, SILVER SWAN, SILVER BANSHEE?

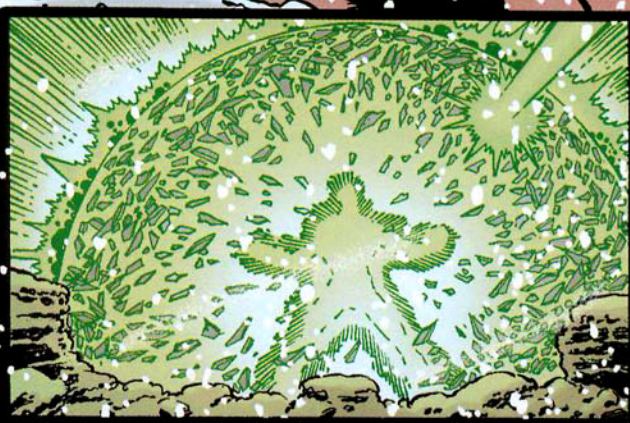


AW, LOOK! ALL TRUSSSED UP LIKE A PRIZE TURKEY!



AN' ONE SHRAPNEL-BURST FROM NOW, YOU'LL BE HAMBURGER!

SMILE, FISH-GUY-- I WANNA REMEMBER YOU JUST THE WAY YOU--



AHH!



UHH!

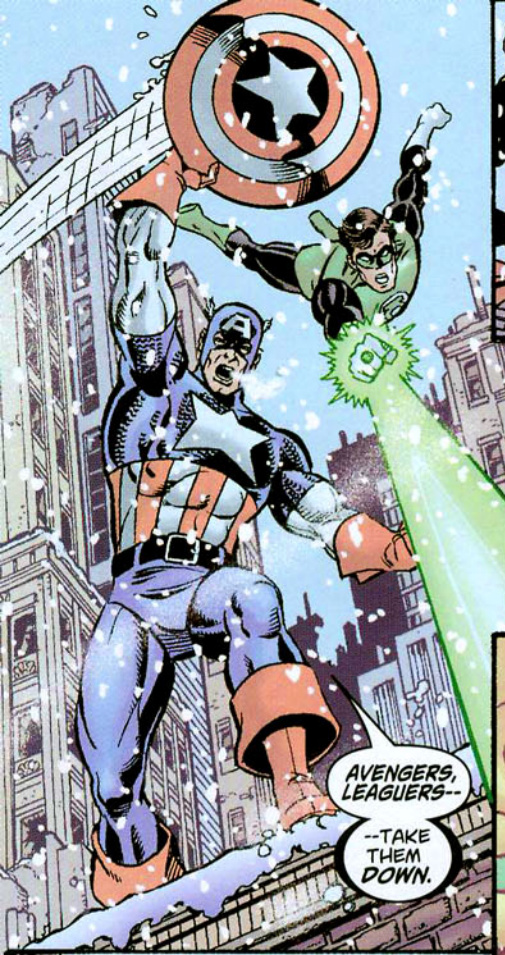


EH?

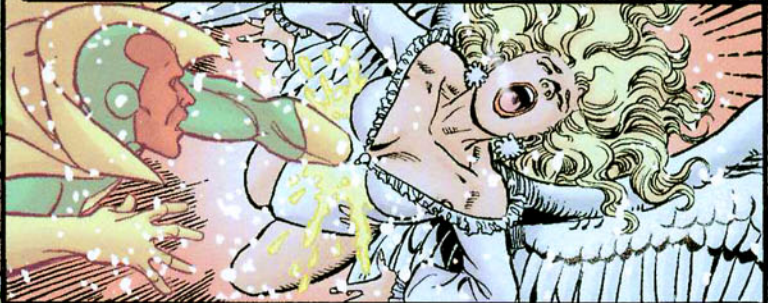
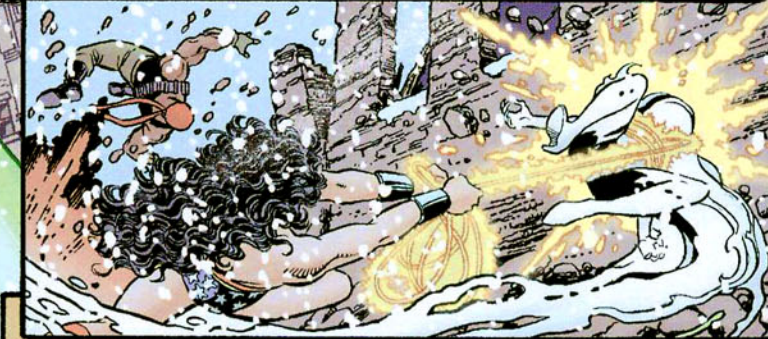
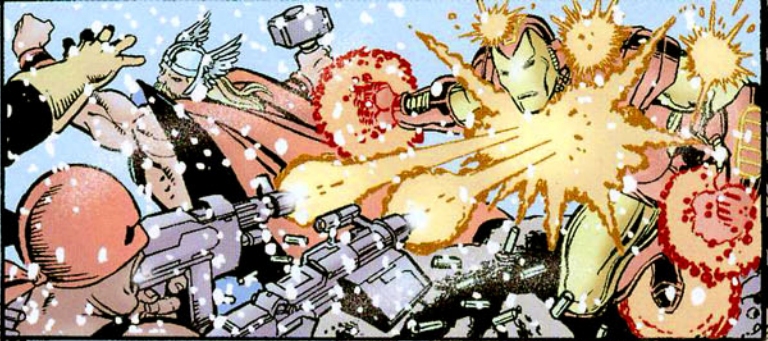


NNH!





AVENGERS,  
LEAGUERS--  
--TAKE  
THEM  
DOWN.



AND THEY  
DO.

GOOD TO SEE  
FRIENDLY FACES, HAL,  
BUT...AREN'T...AREN'T YOU...?

THE TRUTH,  
SONAR. MY LASSO  
COMPELS YOU.  
WHO IS YOUR  
MASTER?

WON'T...  
CAN'T...

MASTER...  
TRAPPED...HAD  
EVERYTHING IN  
HIS GRASP...

BUT HE'LL  
ESCAPE...  
ESCAPE...



I...DON'T  
KNOW. WE  
SHOULD GET  
BACK TO H.Q.,  
FIGURE THINGS...  
HUH?

THE MOON'S  
DAMAGED...  
BUT WHY DID I  
THINK OF THE  
MOON?

I DID, AS  
WELL...



KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN, IRON  
MAN, AND YOUR SENSORS  
DEPLOYED.

THEY ACT  
TRUSTWORTHY, BUT  
THERE'S STILL SOMETHING  
WRONG WITH THIS  
PLACE, SOMETHING  
ALIEN...



LEAVE OFF, AMAZON.  
I HAVE THE ANSWER. THEY  
ARE ALL TOUCHED  
BY POWER--THEIR  
MASTER'S, NO DOUBT.

MIGHTY  
MJOLNIR CAN  
SENSE THAT  
POWER--

--AND  
FOLLOW  
IT!



HMM. THE HEROES OF  
TWO WORLDS WOUND  
UP SCATTERED HERE,  
ACROSS METROPOLIS.  
I WONDER--



"--IS THE SAME TRUE  
AT HOME, ON THE  
AVENGERS' EARTH?"

MOVE,  
MOVE!

WITH THESE  
EARTHQUAKES,  
IF THIS FIRE  
ISN'T OUT IN  
MINUTES--!

GOOD.  
THEN ONE  
MORE TRIP  
SHOULD  
DO IT.

THERE'S A  
FIELD CLINIC  
TWO BLOCKS  
SOUTH, BATMAN!  
THEY CAN TAKE  
CARE OF--

ON IT, SUPERMAN!  
ONLY ONE  
MORE SET OF  
EVACUEES  
IN THIS  
BLOCK!

I SAW IT,  
GOLIATH. I'LL  
GET HER  
THERE.

I  
APPRECIATE...  
THAT THIS IS DELICATE  
WORK, SCARLET  
WITCH. BUT...IF YOU  
COULD BE...A LITTLE  
FASTER?

WE'LL  
BE CLEAR  
IN THREE  
SECONDS!  
TWO!

CAN'T  
UNDERSTAND IT--  
WHY AM I SUDDENLY  
SO SLOW?!

DOING MY  
BEST, MARTIAN  
MANHUNTER!

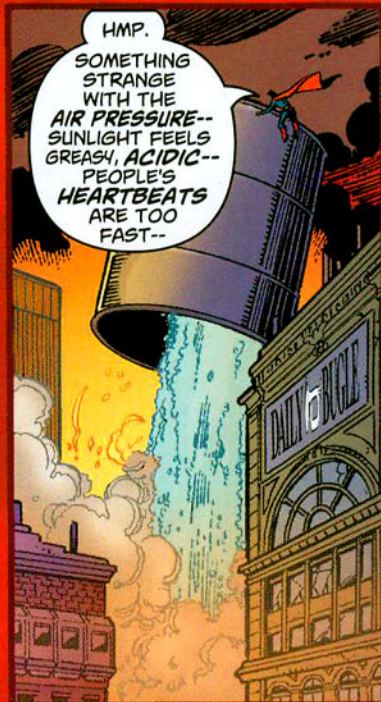




MY APOLOGIES.  
I HAVE A...PROBLEM  
WITH FIRE.

IT DIDN'T SHOW, J'ONN.  
AND WE GOT EVERYONE  
OUT. THAT'S WHAT  
COUNTS.

MY--MY  
LEGS--



HMP.  
SOMETHING  
STRANGE  
WITH THE  
AIR PRESSURE--  
SUNLIGHT FEELS  
GREASY, ACIDIC--  
PEOPLE'S  
HEARTBEATS  
ARE TOO  
FAST--



SUPERMAN!

YOU WANT  
SOMETHING,  
WASP?



UH...JUST THAT  
THERE'S GOT TO  
BE SOMEONE  
BEHIND THIS.  
THE QUAKES,  
THE FIRES--  
MANHATTAN'S  
BUILT ON  
BEDROCK.  
IF YOU'LL  
JOIN THE REST  
OF US...



FINE. WE'RE IN THE  
AVENGERS' WORLD. OUR  
MEMORIES ARE HAZY. BARRY  
IS THE FLASH, WHICH  
SEEMS ODD, BUT I'M  
NOT SURE WHY.

YOU  
AVENGERS  
MAY HAVE  
SIMILAR  
CONCERNS.

WHAT  
NEXT?

SUPERMAN,  
THERE'S NO NEED  
TO BE SO--



AVENGERS--  
HELP US!

THIS  
DEVASTATION--  
IT'S BEEN  
DAYS!

WHAT  
CAUSED  
IT?

WORRIED  
ABOUT MY SISTER--  
CAN'T CALL THROUGH  
TO KEYSTONE--

WHEN  
WILL YOU  
FIX IT?

MARTIAN  
MANHUNTER--

FLASH--



SUPERMAN!  
YOU I RECOGNIZE,  
AT LEAST!

I AM FROM  
QURAC! I DRIVE A  
CAB HERE MANY  
YEARS!

THESE  
PEOPLE SAY MY  
HOMELAND DON'T  
EXIST, CALL ME  
CRAZY! TELL  
THEM!

WH--?



HMM. IF THERE'S NO QURAC  
IN YOUR WORLD, THEN  
SOME OF THESE PEOPLE  
ARE FROM MY WORLD.  
THEY'RE CROSSING  
OVER.

IF WE FIND  
THE EPICENTER  
OF THE QUAKES, WE  
MIGHT FIND THE MAN  
BEHIND THEM.



I'D DO A SPEED-SWEEP OF  
THE CITY, BUT MY POWERS SEEM  
TO BE FADING. I'LL REST  
FOR A MINUTE, SEE IF  
IT HELPS.

HEY,  
LOOK--

IT'S  
SNOWING.  
THAT'LL HELP  
WITH THE  
FIRES...





NO! NO, NOT THE SNOW! NOT THE SNOW!

WH--?

YOU DON'T KNOW--  
DON'T KNOW WHAT  
THE SNOW DOES!



LEAGUERS!  
AVENGERS!  
THE SKY!

IT'S  
STARTING!  
THE SNOW--  
IT BRINGS THE  
GHOSTS BACK!  
THE  
GHOSTS--



THE AIR GOES  
ELECTRIC.

THE WIND  
PICKS UP.

IT'S SUDDENLY COLDER,  
DARKER, AND THERE'S A  
MURMURING--A MURMURING  
THAT BUILDS, UNTIL--



HELP  
US!  
PLEASE--  
HELP US!

WH-WHAT--?!

THE  
GHOSTS! THE  
GHOSTS!

I-IT'S  
SUPERMAN!  
BUT HE'S  
ALL--

PLEASE--  
PLEASE!

YOU'RE  
HEROES!  
YOU GOTTA--  
GOTTA--



NO!

WHAT--  
BUT--

DON'T LET  
THEM TAKE ME!  
DON'T--DON'T  
LET--



THIS IS MADNESS! THESE  
PEOPLE--THEY'LL INJURE  
THEMSELVES!

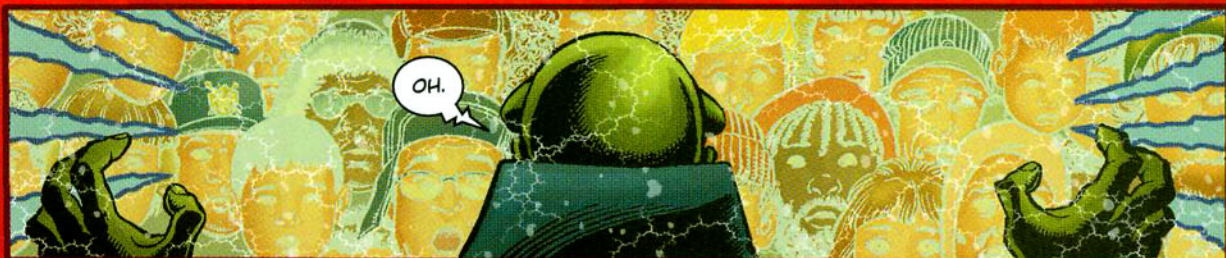
J'ONN--REACH  
OUT MENTALLY! SEE  
IF ANY OF THESE  
"GHOSTS" UNDERSTAND  
WHAT'S GOING ON  
HERE!



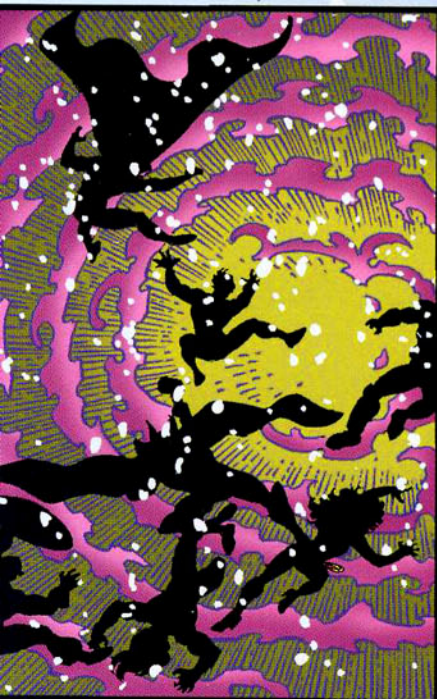
VERY  
WELL.

I...FEEL THEIR  
MINDS, BUT THEY  
ARE THIN...AS IF  
FAR AWAY,  
OR...OR...













SUPERMAN? FLASH? SCARLET WITCH? CAN YOU HEAR ME?



WE HEAR YOU, J'ONN. WHERE ARE YOU?



METROPOLIS.

IT IS THE STORMS THAT ARE CAUSING PEOPLE TO SWITCH WORLDS--CASTING THEM FROM ONE TO ANOTHER RANDOMLY.

BUT YOU MUST FOLLOW WHERE I LEAD. SWIFTLY.



HEY, I SAW THAT GUY! HE WAS A GHOST--TRIED TA DO SOMETHING TO MY BRAIN--

--RIGHT BEFORE IT GOT ALL HOT LIKE THIS!

LET'S GO, EVERYONE.



THE STORMS ARE INCREASING IN FREQUENCY AND IN VIOLENCE. THERE MAY NOT BE MUCH TIME LEFT.

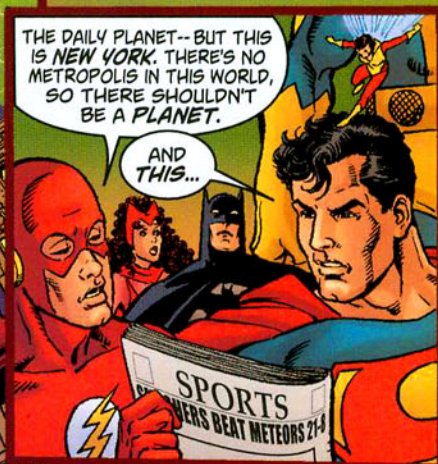
THEIR EFFECT IS INCREASING AS WELL--



WOW.

THAT DOESN'T LOOK GOOD. IF THE STORMS DID THIS...

HEY, LOOK!



THE DAILY PLANET-- BUT THIS IS NEW YORK. THERE'S NO METROPOLIS IN THIS WORLD, SO THERE SHOULDN'T BE A PLANET.

AND THIS...



...THIS MAKES NO SENSE!

SPIDER-MAN SPEAKS

An Interview by Clark Kent





THEY MOVE ON, ROUND A CORNER, AND--

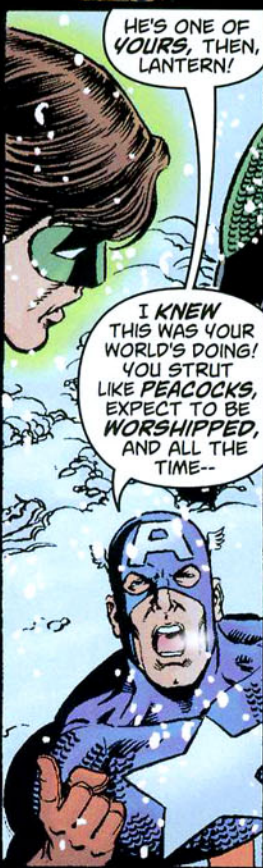
WHAT? THE OTHERS!

WE'VE FOUND THE RIFT! SOMEHOW, WE'RE LOOKING FROM WORLD TO WORLD! AND THAT FACE--THAT MUST BE THE MAN BEHIND IT!

BUT WHO--?

THE ENERGY SEETHES AND RIPPLES BEFORE THEM, THE FACE SEEMING TO GAZE AT THEM BALEFULLY, MOCKINGLY.

AND THEY FEEL A BUZZING IN THEIR HEADS--



HE'S ONE OF YOURS, THEN, LANTERN!

I KNEW THIS WAS YOUR WORLD'S DOING! YOU STRUT LIKE PEACOCKS, EXPECT TO BE WORSHIPPED, AND ALL THE TIME--



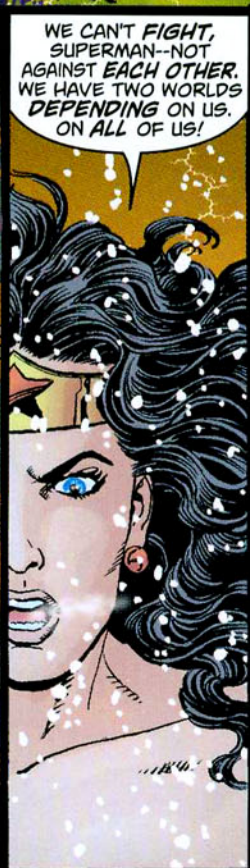
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, CAPTAIN. YOU HAVE NO BUSINESS CRITICIZING A BETTER MAN THAN YOU'LL EVER BE--WHEN YOU AND YOUR BAND OF FAILURES LET YOUR WORLD SINK TO SUCH A SORRY--

FAILURES?!



NO.

NO, WE ARE NOT GOING TO DO THIS AGAIN.



WE CAN'T FIGHT, SUPERMAN--NOT AGAINST EACH OTHER. WE HAVE TWO WORLDS DEPENDING ON US. ON ALL OF US!





BUT--

NOW THEY'RE GHOSTLY--  
INSUBSTANTIAL--

--A BUZZING THAT ALMOST  
SOUNDS LIKE LAUGHTER--

KRONA?!

KRONA IS  
THE MASTER?  
BUT--HE'S  
DEAD! HE'S  
BEEN DEAD  
FOR--

NO, HAL--  
I THINK...THINK I  
REMEMBER...

HAH!



SHE'S RIGHT, CAP.  
WE HAVE TO WORK  
TOGETHER. FIND  
THE ANSWER, FIND  
WHAT HAPPENED AND  
FIX IT--

--OR  
EVERYTHING  
WE CARE  
ABOUT WILL  
DIE.

I...  
YES. I'M  
SORRY.

KRONA...  
I REMEMBER,  
LIKE AQUAMAN...  
BEING SOMEWHERE  
ELSE...A VAST  
JUNGLE...

WHAT SONAR  
SAID...HIS MASTER  
HAD IT ALL IN HIS  
GRASP...BUT WAS  
TRAPPED?

WE...WE FOUGHT. ASSEMBLED  
ITEMS OF POWER. IT WAS A GAME...  
THE GRANDMASTER'S  
GAME.

KRONA LOST...  
WE SAW TO THAT.  
BUT HE WOULDN'T ABIDE  
BY THE RULES. HE  
SUMMONED GALACTUS...  
ATTACKED HIM.

THE  
GRANDMASTER...DID  
SOMETHING...



HM?

WH--?

THE  
GROUND--!





THE CRACKED  
PAVEMENT  
CONVULSES  
BENEATH THEM--  
THE AIR GOES HOT,  
THEN COLD--

--AND THE  
RIFT ERUPTS  
UPWARD WITH  
A DEAFENING  
ROAR--A ROAR  
OF RAGE, OF  
YEARNING--

WHAT  
IN--?



ARE YOU  
ALL RIGHT,  
SCARLET  
WITCH?

OH!  
YOU'RE  
BACK!  
BUT--

THAT FACE--  
IT'S CAUSING THIS  
SOMEHOW! LOOK  
AT THE SKY!



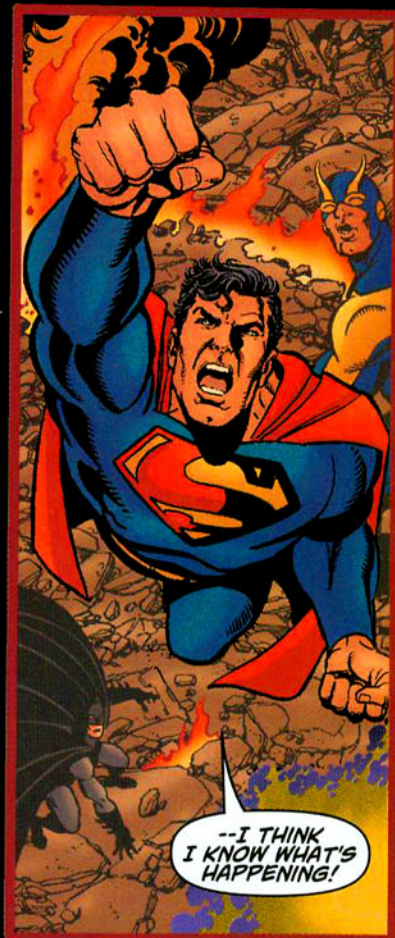
THE  
STORM--IT'S  
STARTING  
AGAIN!

AND THE  
GROUND SHAKES--  
STRONGER THAN  
E'ER BEFORE!



OH,  
NO.

I  
THINK--



--I THINK  
I KNOW WHAT'S  
HAPPENING!



FOLLOW  
HIM,  
IRON MAN!

AND STAY  
RADIO-LINKED--  
I WANT TO KNOW  
ANYTHING YOU  
FIND OUT, THE  
MINUTE YOU  
DO!

YOU  
GOT IT,  
CAP!





AS I FEARED, IT'S NOT JUST HAPPENING LOCALLY.

AND IT'S NOT A ONE-TO-ONE MATCH, EITHER--YOUR NEW YORK ISN'T "GHOSTING" OUR NEW YORK--

--GOTHAM'S EMERGING THOUSANDS OF MILES FROM WHERE IT SHOULD BE--

AND NOW IT'S EXPANDING, GOING WORLDWIDE. JERUSALEM, INDIA--

--VLATAVA, JAPAN, BHUTAN--

--PLACES I DON'T EVEN RECOGNIZE--MERGING WITHOUT RHYME OR REASON--

ACTUALLY, THERE MAY BE A REASON.

TELEMETRY AND OTHER SCANS ARE WILDLY VARIANT--OUR "EARTHS" ARE DIFFERENT SIZES, DIFFERENT DENSITIES, HAVE DIFFERENT MAGNETIC FIELDS--

ATMOSPHERE COMPOSITION, BACKGROUND RADIATIONS--EVEN OUR PHYSICAL LAWS MAY NOT QUITE LINE UP.

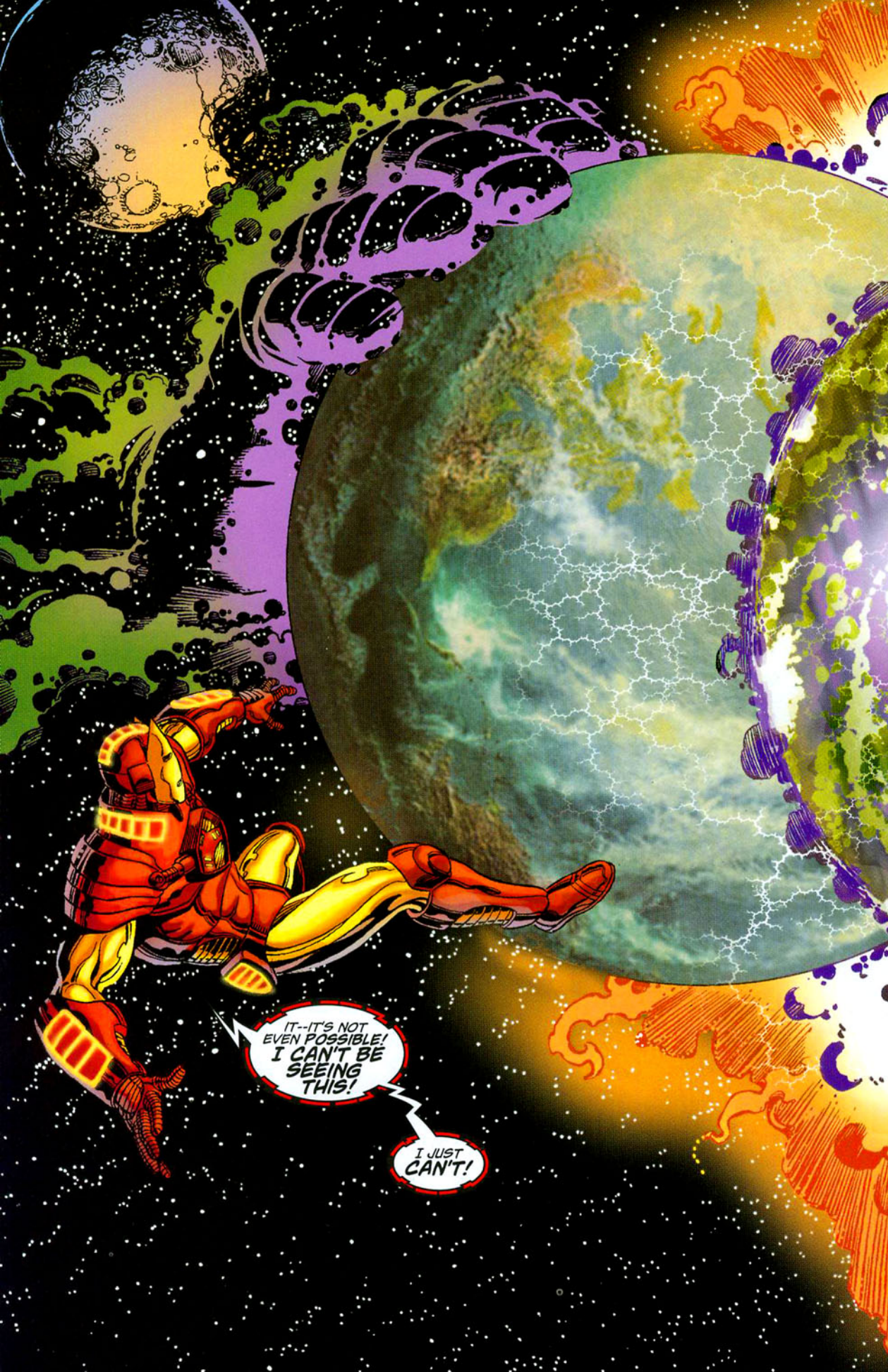
WAIT--THE RIFT-ENERGY! IT'S SLOWING--PAUSING--

THEN MAYBE WE CAN SEE--

H-HUH? IT CAN'T-- I DON'T BELIEVE IT--!

I...I FEARED AS MUCH...











CHAOS MAGIC AND  
EMERALD ENERGY  
LANCE HEAVENWARD--  
THE BUZZ BECOMES  
AN ANGRY HOWL--

--AND GREEN LANTERN AND THE  
SCARLET WITCH FIND A FORCE  
IN THEIR MINDS--ASSAILING  
THEM, OVERPOWERING THEM--



THEY  
REACH  
OUT--



--TAPPING  
THEIR  
TEAMMATES  
WILLS--



--THEIR  
POWER--



--THEIR  
SOULS!



THEY GIVE  
WILLINGLY--  
EVERYTHING  
THEY HAVE--



--UNTIL--







HERE IS A SHARP CRACK, THEN A ROLLING THUNDER ACROSS CLEARING SKIES.

AND NORTHWARD, AT A LANDMARK SITE ON FIFTH AVENUE--



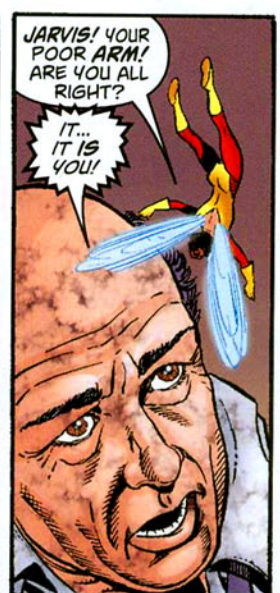
--THE LEAGUE GO?

NO, NOT OVER, BUT--

QUAKES HAVE CEASED, AT LEAST FOR--

HM?

AM I... HEARING THINGS? OR...



JARVIS! YOUR POOR ARM! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

IT... IT IS YOU!



MADAME WASP, MADAME WANDA, SIRS--I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE BACK! I NEVER DOUBTED YOU'D RETURN-- NEVER DOUBTED IT FOR A MOMENT!

YOUR STEADFASTNESS, JARVIS, IS ONE OF THE CERTAINITIES OF THE UNIVERSE.

BUT--WAS THERE SOME TROUBLE HERE?

SOME STRUCTURAL DAMAGE FROM THE EARTHQUAKES. A LITTLE ATTEMPTED LOOTING. NOTHING I WAS UNABLE TO COPE WITH.

I HAVE BEEN USING OUR FOOD STORES TO SUPPLY LOCAL SOUP KITCHENS. I HOPE THAT WAS ALL RIGHT...



IT WAS EXACTLY RIGHT, BUT TELL ME--DO THE BASEMENT LABS HAVE POWER?

YES. MISTER STARK'S EMERGENCY GENERATORS HAVE BEEN FUNCTIONING PERFECTLY.



GOOD.

THEN I'LL ASK YOU TO GET THE COFFEE STARTED, OLD FRIEND...



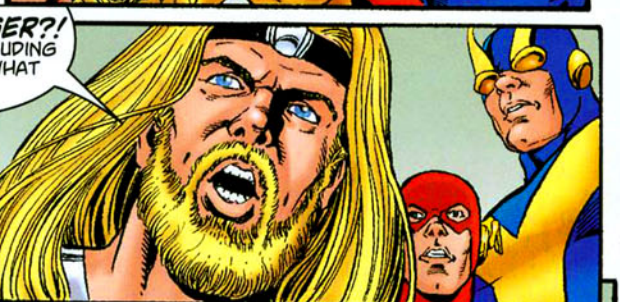
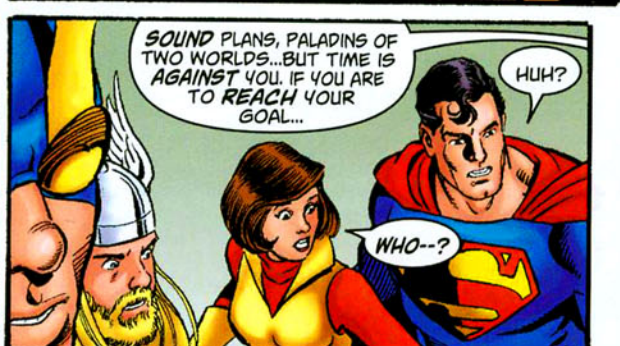
"...BECAUSE I THINK WE'RE ABOUT TO HAVE COMPANY."

YOU WERE RIGHT, CAP.











BUT NOT HEARING, CAPTAIN AMERICA. EVEN NOW, THE SANDS OF TIME RUN SWIFTLY.

JUST FOLLOW ME. IF YOU WOULD FOLLOW...

...A STRANGER.

THAT DOORWAY-- BUT--THE MAIN REFRIGERATION UNIT IS BEHIND--

IT'S OKAY, JARVIS.

LET'S GO.



WHAT IS THIS PLACE? WHERE ARE WE?

STAY ON THE PATH, DOCTOR PYM.

SHOULD YOU STRAY FROM IT, YOU WILL NEVER FIND YOUR WAY BACK...

...NOR WILL ANY WHO KNOW YOU EVER SEE YOUR FACE AGAIN.







THIS IS--  
MY SENSORS--  
HAYWIRE--

TRUST ME, IRON MAN--

--THOSE OF US WHO HAVE TO RELY ON BIOLOGICAL SENSES AREN'T ANY BETTER OFF.



I WONDER, BARRY,

IF REALITY'S CHANGING AROUND US, HOW DO WE KNOW ANYTHING? ARE WE EVEN HERE? ARE WE WHO WE'RE SUPPOSED TO BE?

SORRY, HAL-- BUT THAT'S WAY TOO METAPHYSICAL FOR AN IOWA BOY LIKE ME. LET'S JUST DO THE JOB--

--AND GO HOME TO OUR LOVED ONES.



AND NOW, JUSTICE LEAGUE, AVENGERS--



NOW, NOTHING, STRANGER!

IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO TELL US WHERE WE'RE GOING, WHAT WE'RE DOING-- OR NOBODY GOES A STEP FURTHER!



DO AS YOU WISH, BATMAN. IN ANY EVENT...



THE GRANDMASTER!

...WE ARE HERE.

BUT-- HE'S WOUNDED-- SO STILL--!

IS HE--?

N-NO... CAPTAIN AMERICA... I LIVE, BUT... BARELY...

I HAVE MADE... A MOST GRIEVOUS... ERROR...

I DIDN'T... EXPECT KRONA... SO RUTHLESS. HE LEFT ME... FOR DEAD... ATTACKED GALACTUS. I CALLED ON... POWER OF ARTIFACTS...







"...USED IT...TO BIND  
UNIVERSES TOGETHER..."



"...TRAPPED KRONA  
AT JUNCTURE POINT...  
BETWEEN THEM."



I GAMBLERD...KRONA  
WOULD NOT...**DESTROY**  
UNIVERSES...IF **HIS FATE**...  
TIED TO THEM AS  
WELL.

BUT...UNIVERSES  
FUNDAMENTALLY  
**INCOMPATIBLE**...  
NATURES TOO...  
DIFFERENT...



SOME OF  
YOU...AFFECTED...SO  
STRONGLY **ATTUNED**  
TO YOUR TRUE  
REALITIES...

...**SENSING**  
CHANGES...  
MAKING  
YOU **EDGY**,  
UNEASY...

MEMORIES...  
FIGHTING TO **SURFACE**...  
STRAIN...CAUSED  
DISRUPTIONS...



BUT THE  
PROBLEM'S  
GETTING  
**WORSE--**

YES. UNIVERSES...**OVERLOADING**  
ONE ANOTHER. EACH...COMPLETE  
UNTO ITSELF...BUT FORCED TOGETHER...  
BUILDING TO DANGEROUS...  
**CRITICAL MASS.**

AND IT...IS  
KRONA...MAKING  
IT HAPPEN.



WORSE, KRONA IS...  
**ACCELERATING**...  
PROCESS.

HE STOLE...  
**KNOWLEDGE** FROM  
GALACTUS...KNOWS  
GALACTUS...  
**SURVIVED BIG  
BANG**...



HE PLANS TO...**REPEAT**  
PROCESS. HE WILL...BRING  
WORLDS TOGETHER, LET  
THEM...**ANNIHILATE** EACH  
OTHER, CAUSING NEW  
BIG BANG...

...ONE HE CAN  
**EXPERIENCE**, IF HE  
SURVIVES...LEARN ITS  
SECRETS.

UNFORTUNATELY,  
KRONA...ONLY TOO  
WILLING TO **RISK ALL**  
TO LEARN TRUTH...  
ALWAYS...HAS  
BEEN.



CAN'T YOU JUST--  
**SEPARATE** THE  
UNIVERSES  
AGAIN?

YOU  
BROUGHT  
THEM  
**TOGETHER**,  
AFTER  
ALL.





I...AM  
SORRY. I  
TRIED...

BUT...  
TOO WOUNDED...  
TOO WEAK. POWER  
FADING...

HEY--  
WHERE'D THE  
STRANGER  
GO?

KRONA...IS  
CENTER. KRONA...  
BOTH KEY AND  
LOCK...

IT IS KRONA...  
WHO KEEPS WORLDS  
BOUND TOGETHER...AND  
WHO ASSAYS THEIR...  
DESTRUCTION. KRONA...  
MUST BE FACED.

KRONA...MUST  
BE DEFEATED,  
AND PROPER ORDER...  
RESTORED.



WELL, OF  
COURSE  
WE'LL--

WAIT.



WAIT A MINUTE.  
WE'VE BEEN CHARGING  
AROUND BLIND FOR  
LONG ENOUGH.  
WE NEED TO KNOW  
MORE.

REALITY AS WE KNOW IT  
IS WRONG--I CAN FEEL  
IT. BUT WE DON'T KNOW  
WHAT'S RIGHT.

SO TELL  
US--



OUR TWO UNIVERSES,  
UNAFFECTED BY THIS  
BOND. WHAT ARE THEY  
REALLY LIKE? WHAT  
ARE WE SAVING?



JUST WHAT IS THE  
"PROPER ORDER"  
YOU WANT US TO  
RESTORE?



AHH.

WISE...  
WISE OF YOU...  
TO ASK.



HERE. I  
WILL...SHOW YOU.  
SHOW YOU  
TRUTH...

...AND  
YOU...SHALL  
DECIDE.



A LIGHT  
FLARES--  
BEHIND  
THEIR  
EYES--





--AND THEIR MINDS  
ARE SUDDENLY FILLED--

--WITH A CASCADE  
OF IMAGES,  
SOUNDS, EVENTS--

IN THE SPAN OF A FEW  
HEARTBEATS, THEY  
WITNESS YEARS--



--OF TRIUMPH  
AND TRAGEDY,  
GLORY AND PAIN--

THEY SEE EVIL  
THWARTED, SEE  
NATIONS FALL--

--SEE ENEMIES  
PROSPER,  
FRIENDS DIE--

--SEE HOPE  
DASHED, AND  
HOPE REBORN--

--SEE LOVE  
AND ANGER  
AND SACRIFICE  
AND TERROR--

AND STILL IT  
COMES, STILL  
IT COMES--

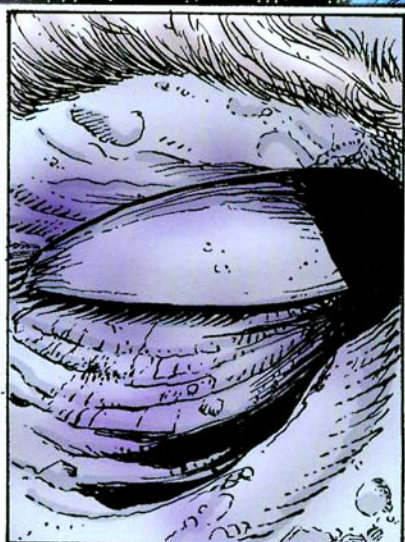
















THEN--  
WE DECIDE.



I THINK  
HE **KNEW**--IT  
WOULDN'T BE UP  
TO HIM ANY MORE.  
BUT THOSE  
**WORLDS**--  
WHAT WE  
**SAW**--



I THINK WE  
KNOW--WE WON'T  
ALL **LIVE** TO RETIRE.  
IF THAT'S WHAT IT  
**TAKES**--



WE **DID**  
LEAVE LEGACIES--  
BUT--BUT WHAT  
I **DID**--



LOOK, HAL,  
WE DON'T EVEN  
KNOW IF DEFEATING  
KRONA WILL **FIX**  
THINGS.  
MAYBE  
THERE'S **ANOTHER**  
WAY.



OH, JAN--  
IF THERE  
**IS**--

I'D DO ANYTHING TO  
MAKE WHAT WE SAW--TO  
MAKE IT **NOT HAPPEN**.  
JUST A BAD DREAM, A  
**NIGHTMARE**--

I KNOW,  
HANK. I  
KNOW.



IF WE **STABILIZE** THE  
WORLDS THE WAY THEY  
ARE--**SEPARATE** THE  
UNIVERSES, REBUILD  
FROM THERE--



OH,  
GOD,  
**YES!**

I COULD TAKE **DYING**--  
MADNESS, DISFIGUREMENT,  
**ANYTHING!** BUT...BUT I  
SAW **CHILDREN!** I SAW  
OUR **CHILDREN!**  
AND I **LOST** THEM...

THERE  
**MUST** BE  
ANOTHER  
WAY! **MUST**  
BE...



I KNOW, WANDA,  
I **KNOW**. I SAW MYSELF  
GO MAD. MURDER  
FRIENDS.

BUT THERE  
**ISN'T** ANOTHER  
WAY. AND WE **ALL**  
KNOW IT.



THERE ARE MILLIONS, MAYBE  
**BILLIONS**, DEAD OR DYING  
IN THE WORLDS AS THEY ARE. CAN  
WE CHOOSE **THEIR** DEATHS,  
BECAUSE THEY'RE EASIER  
TO **BEAR**?

THE REALITY  
WE SAW--IT'S THE  
**TRUTH**. GOOD, BAD,  
LOVE, PAIN--IT'S  
**REAL**.

IT'S THE ONE WE'RE  
PLEGDED TO **PROTECT**. NOT...  
NOT TO PLAY **GOD** WITH.



THEN...  
...ARE WE  
**AGREED**?







END of BOOK THREE



# NEXT: THE BRAVE & THE BOLD

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