DUNGEONS
&
DRAGONS
CLASSICS
2
VOLUME

DUNGEONS
&
DRAGONS
CLASSICS

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In This Volume:

Issue #9: 4
"Catspaw, Part 1: Night of the Moonpenguin"

Issue #10: 30
"Catspaw, Part 2: Of Mirt & Mind Flayers"

Issue #11: 56
"Catspaw, Part 3: All Hades Breaks Loose"

Issue #12: 82
"Catspaw, Part 4: Down In The Depths"

Issue #13: 108
"Shackles of the Past"

Issue #14: 134
"Shell Game"

Issue #15: 160
"Cat & Mouse"

Issue #16: 186
"The Last Betrayal"

Issue #17: 212
"The Ostus Legacy"

Issue #18: 238
"Day of the Darkening "

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9
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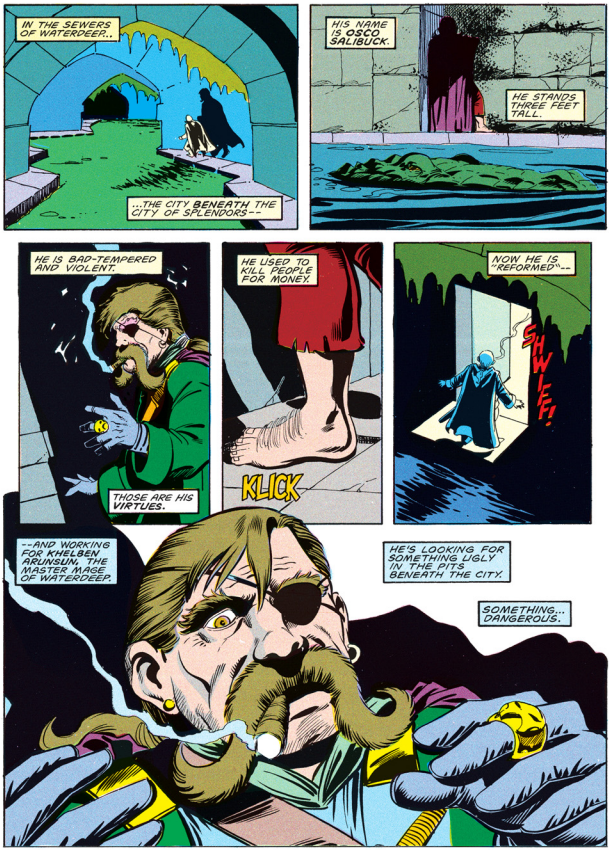
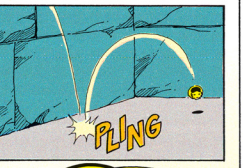

IN THE SEWERS OF WATERDEEP...
...THE CITY BENEATH THE CITY OF SPLENDORS--
HIS NAME IS OSCO SALIBUCK.
HE STANDS THREE FEET TALL.
HE IS BAD-TEMPERED AND VIOLENT.
THOSE ARE HIS VIRTUES.
HE USED TO KILL PEOPLE FOR MONEY.
KLICK
NOW HE IS "REFORMED"--
SHWIFT!
--AND WORKING FOR KHELBEN ARUNSUN, THE MASTER MAGE OF WATERDEEP.
HE'S LOOKING FOR SOMETHING UGLY IN THE PITS BENEATH THE CITY.
SOMETHING... DANGEROUS.

IT SEEMS HE FOUND IT.
CHEEEEWO



CATSPAW PART ONE

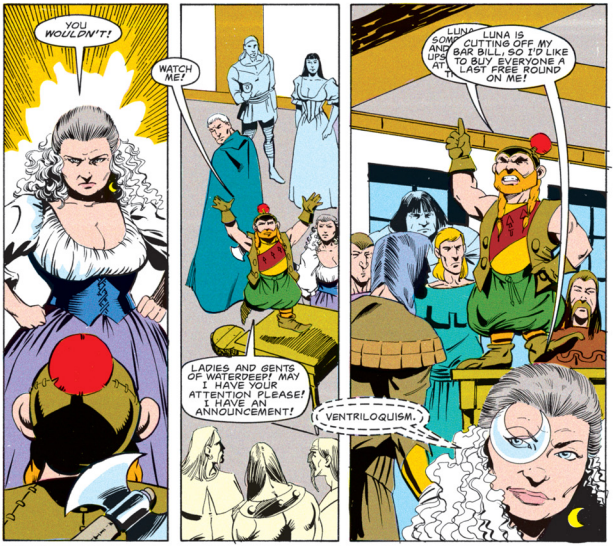
NIGHT OF THE MOONPENGUIN

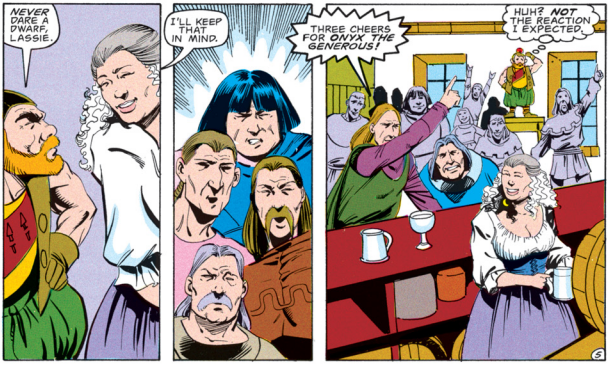
WRITER: JEFF GRUBB
ARTIST: JAN DUURSEMA
LETTERER: STEVE HAYNIE
COLORIST: GENE D'ANGELO
EDITOR: ELLIOT S. MAGGIN

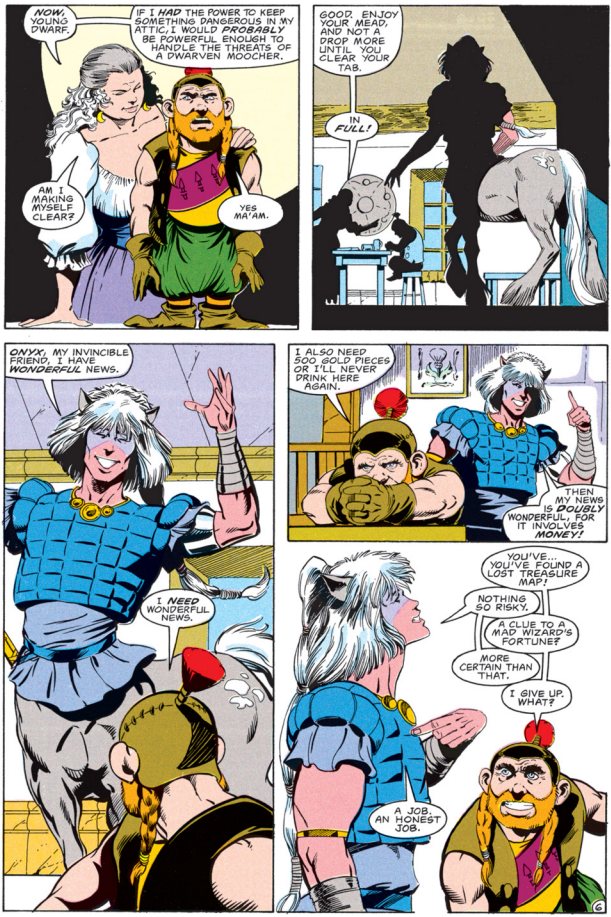
YOU'RE CUTTING IT OFF?
COMPLETELY.
YOUR BAR TAB HAS TOPPED FIVE HUNDRED GOLD LIONS--
--SOMETHING OF AN ACHIEVEMENT, EVEN BY WATERDEEP STANDARDS. CONGRATULATIONS.

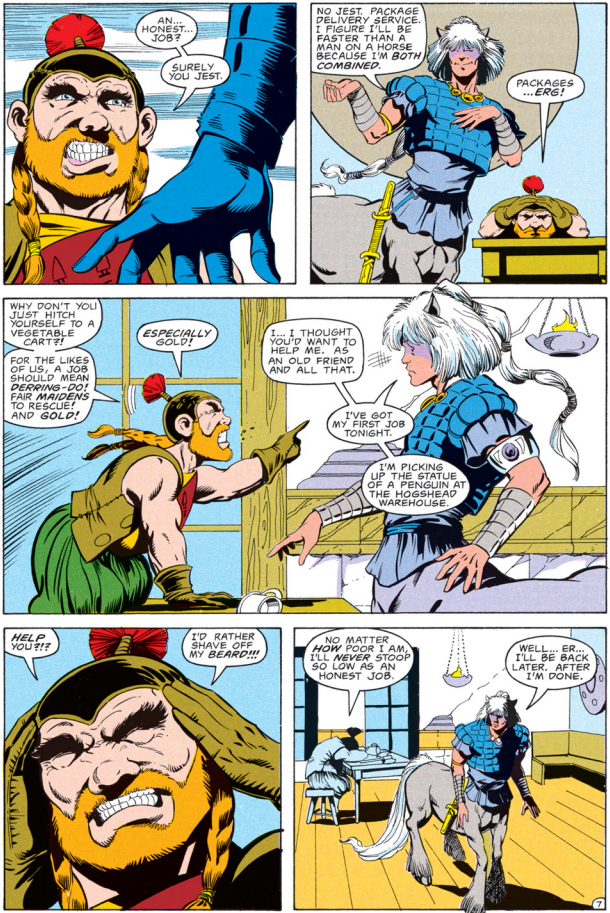
I'LL ADMIT I'VE BEEN A LITTLE GENEROUS, BUT SO HAVE VAJRA AND KYRI...
GENEROUS? SPENDTHRIFT!
BUYING ROUNDS FOR THE HOUSE WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE TWO COPPERS TO RUB TOGETHER.

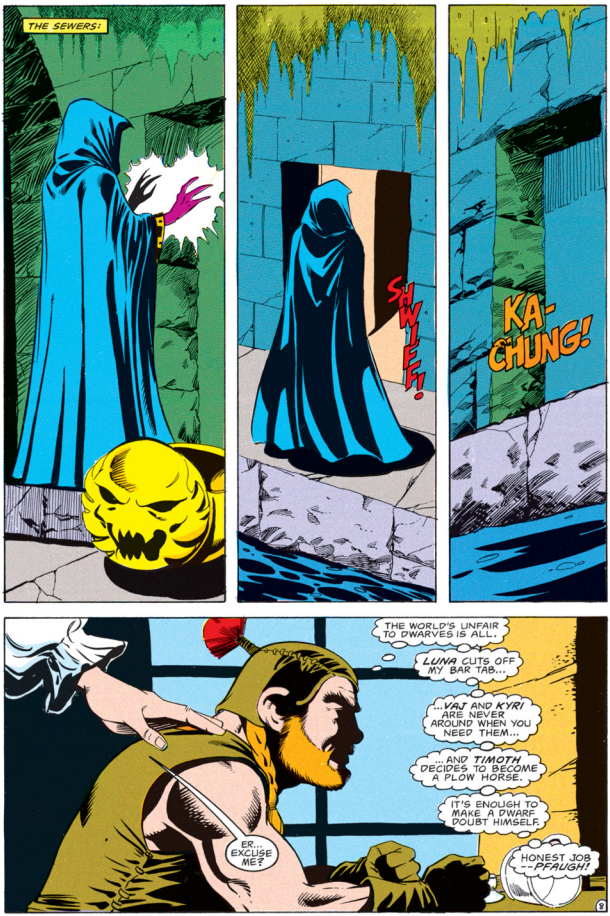
WELL, I THOUGHT I'D DESERVE A LITTLE MORE UNDERSTANDING ...!
AFTER ALL, I'M ONE OF THE FEW WHO KNOW THAT YOU HAVE SOMETHING VERY ODD IN YOUR ATTIC.
SOMETHING THE OTHER PATRONS MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN, EH?
4

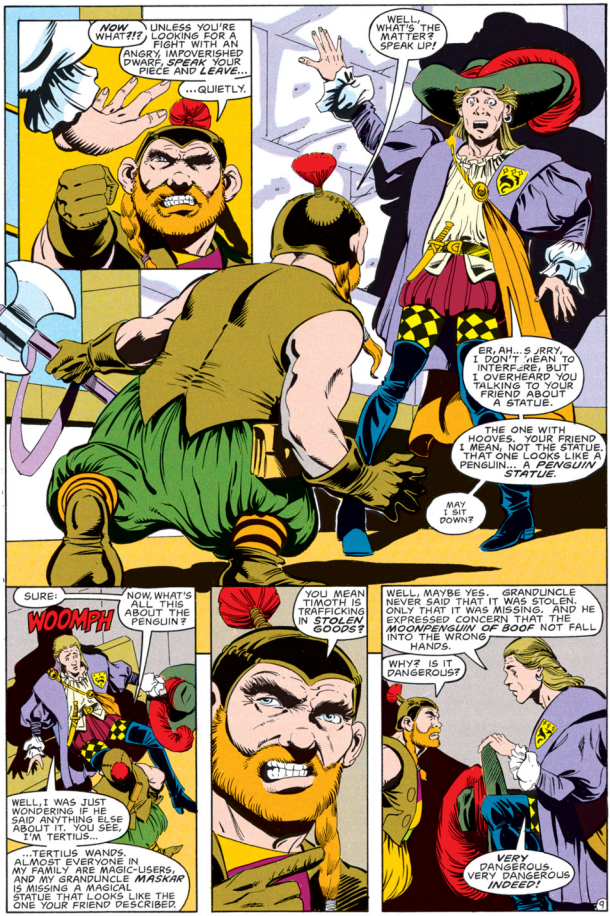

YOU WOULDN'T!
WATCH ME!
LADIES AND GENTS OF WATERDEEP! MAY I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION PLEASE! I HAVE AN ANNOUNCEMENT!
VENTRILOQUISM.
LUNA IS CUTTING OFF MY BAR BILL; SO I'D LIKE TO BUY EVERYONE A LAST FREE ROUND ON ME!

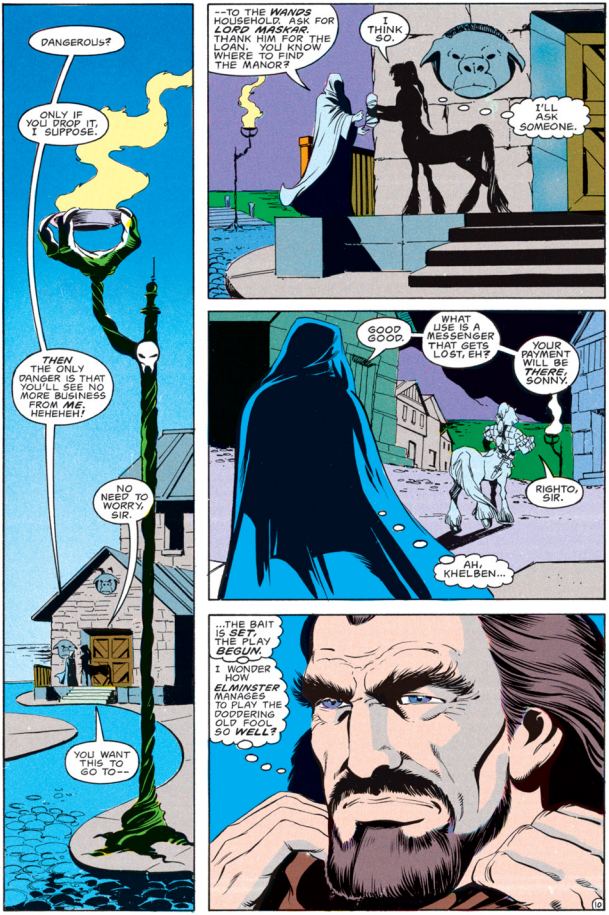

NEVER DARE A DWARF, LASSIE.
I'LL KEEP THAT IN MIND.
THREE CHEERS FOR ONYX THE GENEROUS!
HUH? NOT THE REACTION I EXPECTED.

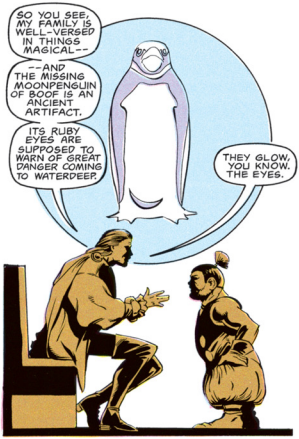

NOW, YOUNG DWARF,
IF I HAD THE POWER TO KEEP SOMETHING DANGEROUS IN MY ATTIC, I WOULD PROBABLY BE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO HANDLE THE THREATS OF A DWARVEN MOOCHER.
AM I MAKING MYSELF CLEAR?
YES MA'AM.
GOOD. ENJOY YOUR MEAD, AND NOT A DROP MORE UNTIL YOU CLEAR YOUR TAB.
IN FULL!
ONYX, MY INVINCIBLE FRIEND, I HAVE WONDERFUL NEWS.
I NEED WONDERFUL NEWS.
I ALSO NEED 500 GOLD PIECES OR I'LL NEVER DRINK HERE AGAIN.
THEN MY NEWS IS DOUBLY WONDERFUL, FOR IT INVOLVES MONEY!
YOU'VE... YOU'VE FOUND A LOST TREASURE MAP!
NOTHING SO RISKY.
A CLUE TO A MAD WIZARD'S FORTUNE?
MORE CERTAIN THAN THAT.
I GIVE UP. WHAT?
A JOB. AN HONEST JOB.
6


AN... HONEST... JOB?
SURELY YOU JEST.
NO JEST. PACKAGE DELIVERY SERVICE. I FIGURE I'LL BE FASTER THAN A MAN ON A HORSE BECAUSE I'M BOTH COMBINED.
PACKAGES ...ERG!
WHY DON'T YOU JUST HITCH YOURSELF TO A VEGETABLE CART?!
FOR THE LIKES OF US, A JOB SHOULD MEAN DERRING-DO! FAIR MAIDENS TO RESCUE! AND GOLD!
ESPECIALLY GOLD!
I... I THOUGHT YOU'D WANT TO HELP ME. AS AN OLD FRIEND AND ALL THAT.
I'VE GOT MY FIRST JOB TONIGHT.
I'M PICKING UP THE STATUE OF A PENGUIN AT THE HOGSHEAD WAREHOUSE
HELP YOU?!?
I'D RATHER SHAVE OFF MY BEARD!!!
NO MATTER HOW POOR I AM, I'LL NEVER STOOP SO LOW AS AN HONEST JOB.
WELL... ER... I'LL BE BACK LATER. AFTER I'M DONE.
7


THE SEWERS:
SHWIFF!
KA-CHUNG!
THE WORLD'S UNFAIR TO DWARVES IS ALL...
LUNA CUTS OFF MY BAR TAB...
...VAJ AND KYRI ARE NEVER AROUND WHEN YOU NEED THEM...
...AND TIMOTH DECIDES TO BECOME A PLOW HORSE.
IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE A DWARF DOUBT HIMSELF.
HONEST JOB---PFAUGH!
ER... EXCUSE ME?
9


NOW WHAT?!?
UNLESS YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A FIGHT WITH AN ANGRY, IMPOVERISHED DWARF, SPEAK YOUR PIECE AND LEAVE...
...QUIETLY.
WELL, WHAT'S THE MATTER? SPEAK UP!
ER, AH... SORRY, I DON'T MEAN TO INTERFERE, BUT I OVERHEARD YOU TALKING TO YOUR FRIEND ABOUT A STATUE.
THE ONE WITH HOOVES. YOUR FRIEND I MEAN, NOT THE STATUE. THAT ONE LOOKS LIKE A PENGUIN... A PENGUIN STATUE.
MAY I SIT DOWN?
SURE.
NOW, WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT THE PENGUIN?
WOOMPH
WELL, I WAS JUST WONDERING IF HE SAID ANYTHING ELSE ABOUT IT. YOU SEE, I'M TERTIUS...
...TERTIUS WANDS. ALMOST EVERYONE IN MY FAMILY ARE MAGIC-USERS, AND MY GRANDUNCLE MASKAR IS MISSING A MAGICAL STATUE THAT LOOKS LIKE THE ONE YOUR FRIEND DESCRIBED.
YOU MEAN TIMOTH IS TRAFFICKING IN STOLEN GOODS?
WELL, MAYBE YES... GRANDUNCLE NEVER SAID THAT IT WAS STOLEN. ONLY THAT IT WAS MISSING. AND HE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE MOONPENGUIN OF BOOF NOT FALL INTO THE WRONG HANDS.
WHY? IS IT DANGEROUS?
VERY DANGEROUS. VERY DANGEROUS INDEED!

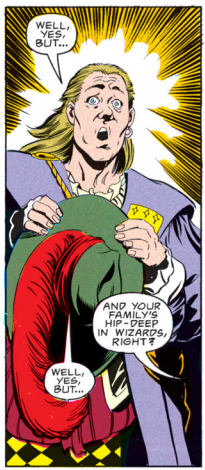

DANGEROUS?
ONLY IF YOU DROP IT, I SUPPOSE.
THEN THE ONLY DANGER IS THAT YOU'LL SEE NO MORE BUSINESS FROM ME. HEHEHEH!
NO NEED TO WORRY, SIR.
YOU WANT THIS TO GO TO--
--TO THE WANDS HOUSEHOLD. ASK FOR LORD MARAKAR. THANK HIM FOR THE LOAN. YOU KNOW WHERE TO FIND THE MANOR?
I THINK SO.
I'LL ASK SOMEONE.
GOOD GOOD.
WHAT USE IS A MESSENGER THAT GETS LOST, EH?
YOUR PAYMENT WILL BE THERE, SONNY.
RIGHTO, SIR.
AH, KHELBEN...
...THE BAIT IS SET. THE PLAY BEGUN.
I WONDER HOW ELMINSTER MANAGES TO PLAY THE DODDERING OLD FOOL SO WELL?
10

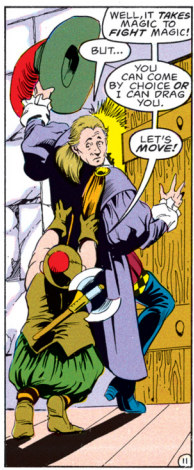

SO YOU SEE, MY FAMILY IS WELL-VERSED IN THINGS MAGICAL--
--AND THE MISSING MOONPENGUIN OF BOOF IS AN ANCIENT ARTIFACT.
ITS RUBY EYES ARE SUPPOSED TO WARN OF GREAT DANGER COMING TO WATERDEER.
THEY GLOW, YOU KNOW. THE EYES.

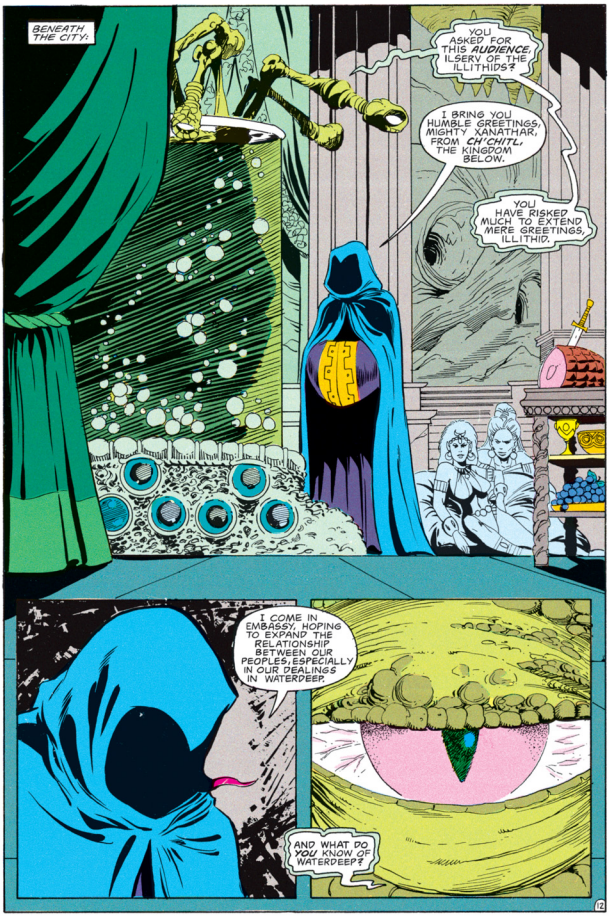
AND IT'S DANGEROUS?

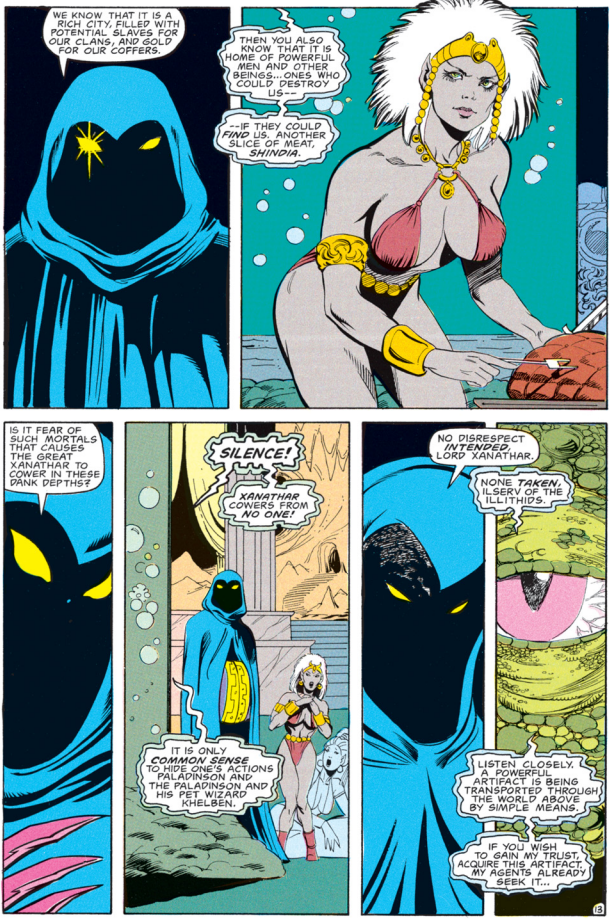
IN THE HANDS OF THE FOOLISH AND THE WEAK, OH YES.
WHAT BETTER DESCRIPTION THAN THAT FOR THAT HORSE-SHOED HYSEED OF A PARTNER!

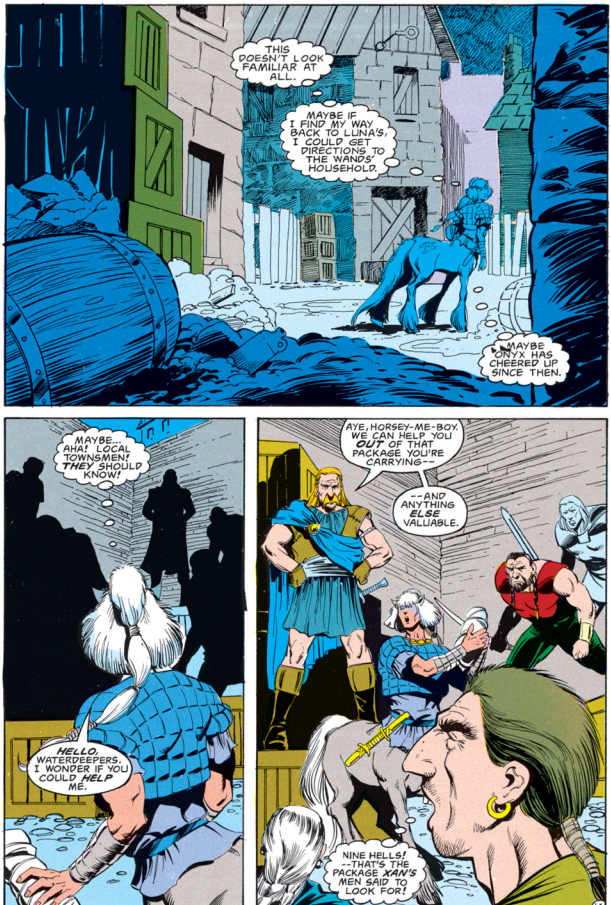
THERE'S NOTHING FOR IT, THEN, COME ON!
COME ON?
YES, YOU KNOW WHERE THE HOGSHEAD WAREHOUSE IS?

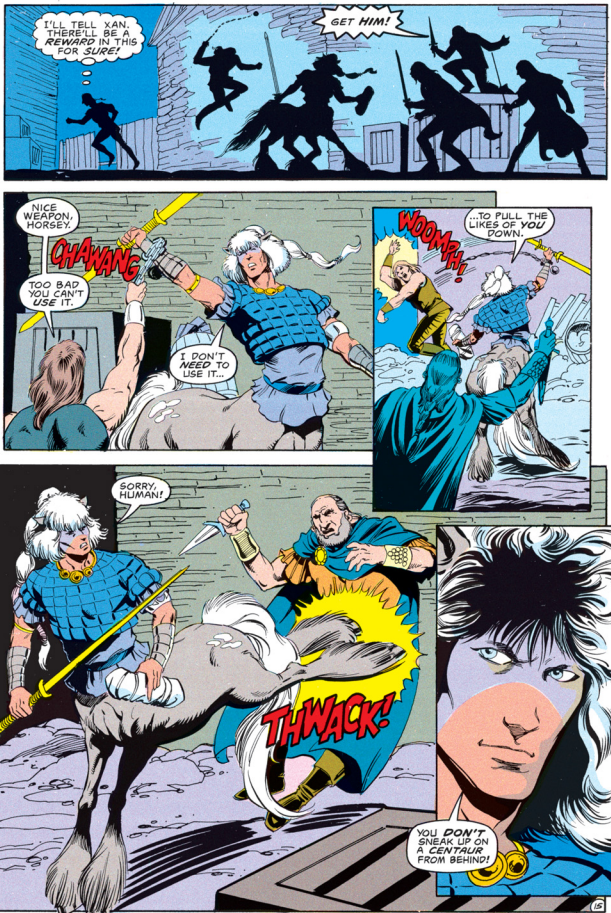

WELL, YES, BUT...
AND YOUR FAMILY'S HIP-DEEP IN WIZARDS, RIGHT?
WELL, YES, BUT...

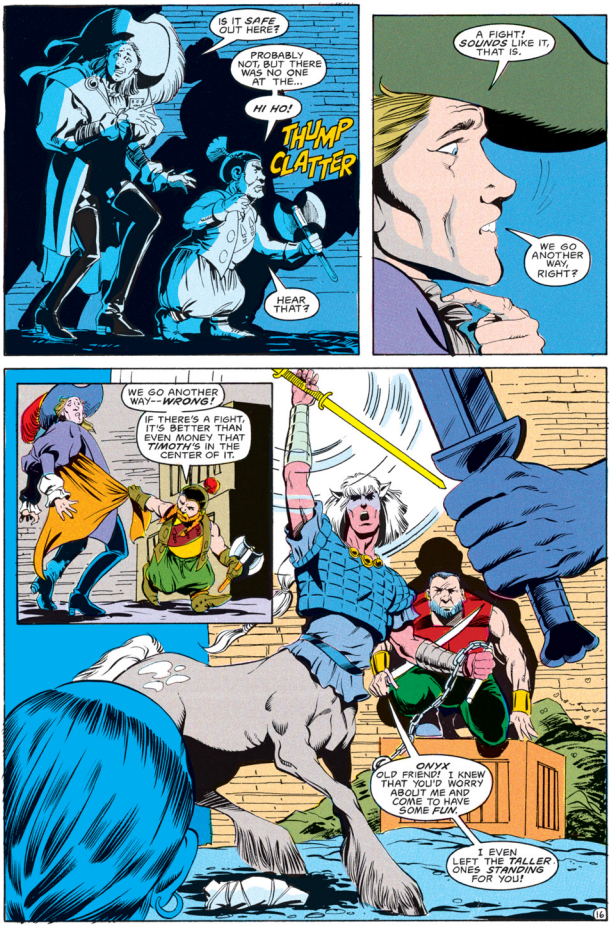

WELL, IT TAKES MAGIC TO FIGHT MAGIC!
BUT...
YOU CAN COME BY CHOICE OR I CAN DRAG YOU.
LET'S MOVE!
11

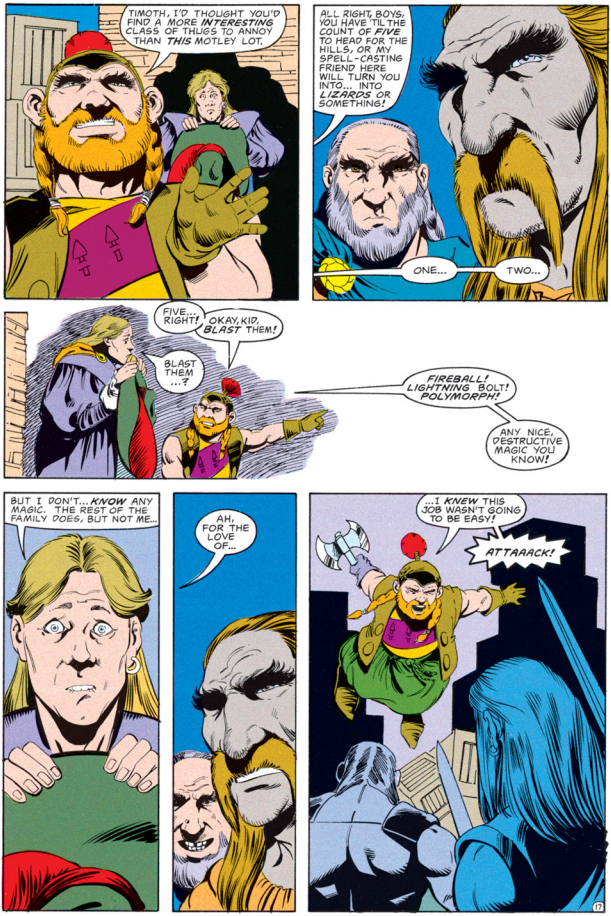

BENEATH THE CITY:
YOU ASKED FOR THIS AUDIENCE, ILSERY OF THE ILLITHIDS?
I BRING YOU HUMBLE GREETINGS, MIGHTY XANATHAR, FROM CH'CHTL, THE KINGDOM BELOW.
YOU HAVE RISKED MUCH TO EXTEND MERE GREETINGS, ILLITHID.
I COME IN EMBASSY, HOPING TO EXPAND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR PEOPLES, ESPECIALLY IN OUR DEALINGS IN WATERDEEP.
AND WHAT DO YOU KNOW OF WATERDEEP?
12


WE KNOW THAT IT IS A RICH CITY, FILLED WITH POTENTIAL SLAVES FOR OUR CLANS, AND GOLD FOR OUR COFFERS.
THEN YOU ALSO KNOW THAT IT IS HOME OF POWERFUL MEN AND OTHER BEINGS...ONES WHO COULD DESTROY US--
--IF THEY COULD FIND US. ANOTHER SLICE OF MEAT, SHINDIA.
IS IT FEAR OF SUCH MORTALS THAT CAUSES THE GREAT XANATHAR TO COWER IN THESE DANK DEPTHS?
SILENCE!
XANATHAR COWERS FROM NO ONE!
IT IS ONLY COMMON SENSE TO HIDE ONE'S ACTIONS FALADINSON AND THE PALADINSON AND HIS PET WIZARD KHELBEN.
NO DISRESPECT INTENDED, LORD XANATHAR.
NONE TAKEN, ILSERV OF THE ILLITHIDS.
LISTEN CLOSELY. A POWERFUL ARTIFACT IS BEING TRANSPORTED THROUGH THE WORLD ABOVE BY SIMPLE MEANS.
IF YOU WISH TO GAIN MY TRUST, ACQUIRE THIS ARTIFACT. MY AGENTS ALREADY SEEK IT...
13

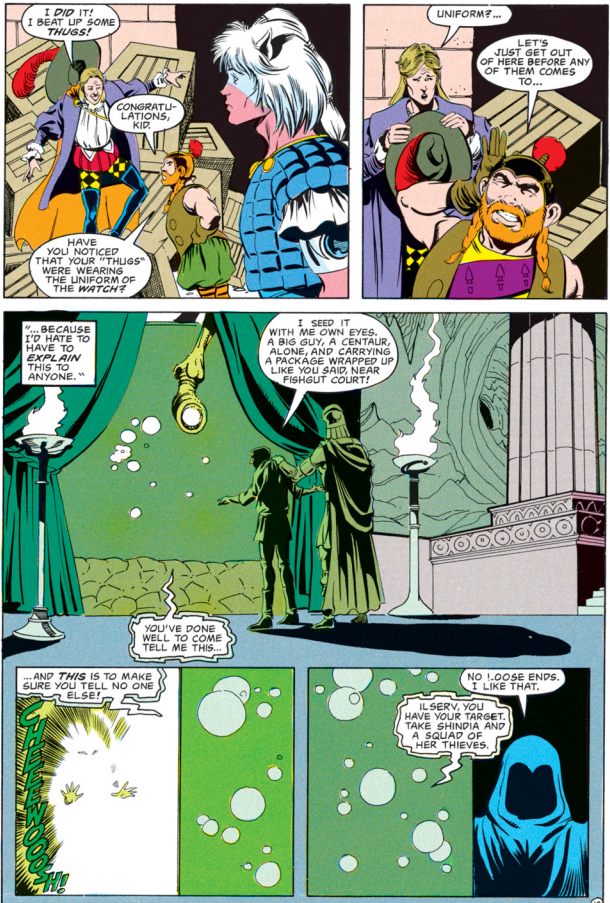

THIS DOESN'T LOOK FAMILIAR AT ALL.
MAYBE IF I FIND MY WAY BACK TO LUNA'S, I COULD GET DIRECTIONS TO THE WANDS' HOUSEHOLD.
MAYBE ONYX HAS CHEERED UP SINCE THEN.
MAYBE... AHA! LOCAL TOWNSMEN! THEY SHOULD KNOW!
HELLO, WATERDEEPERS. I WONDER IF YOU COULD HELP ME.
AYE, HORSEY-ME-BOY. WE CAN HELP YOU OUT OF THAT PACKAGE YOU'RE CARRYING--
--AND ANYTHING ELSE VALUABLE.
NINE HELLS! --THAT'S THE PACKAGE XAN'S MEN SAID TO LOOK FOR!
14

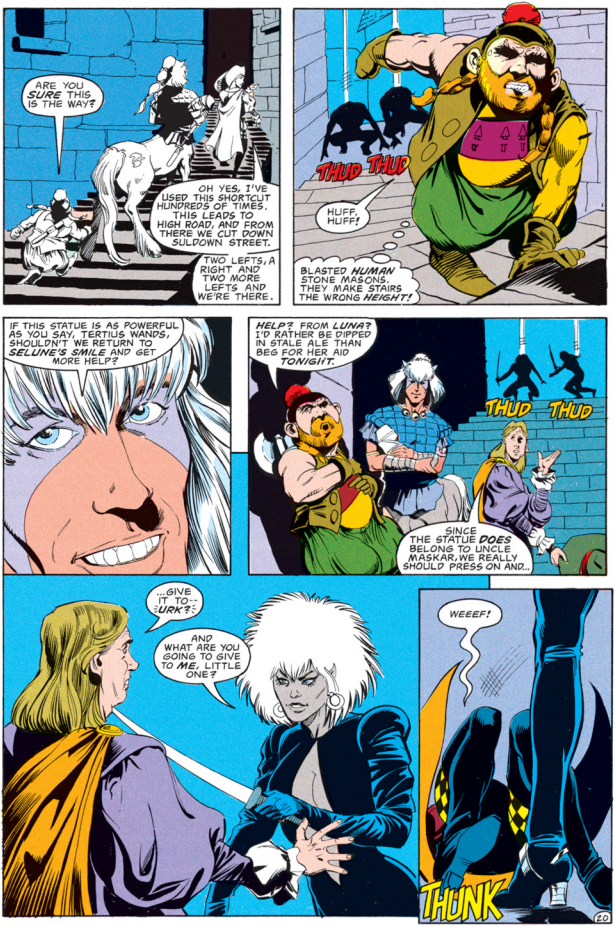

I'LL TELL XAN THERE'LL BE A REWARD IN THIS FOR SURE!
GET HIM!
NICE WEAPON, HORSEY.
CHAWANG
TOO BAD YOU CAN'T USE IT.
I DON'T NEED TO USE IT...
WOOMPH!
...TO PULL THE LIKES OF YOU DOWN.
SORRY, HUMAN!
THWACK!
YOU DON'T SNEAK UP ON A CENTAUR FROM BEHIND!
15

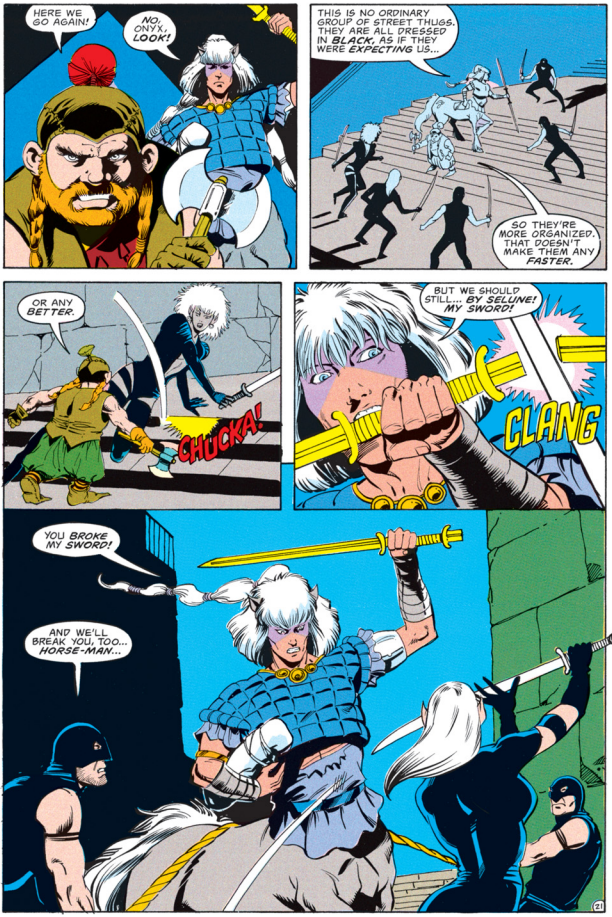

IS IT SAFE OUT HERE?
PROBABLY NOT, BUT THERE WAS NO ONE AT THE...
HI HO!
THUMP CLATTER
HEAR THAT?
A FIGHT! SOUNDS LIKE IT, THAT IS.
WE GO ANOTHER WAY, RIGHT?
WE GO ANOTHER WAY--WRONG!
IF THERE'S A FIGHT, IT'S BETTER THAN EVEN MONEY THAT TIMOTH'S IN THE CENTER OF IT.
ONYX OLD FRIEND! I KNEW THAT YOU'D WORRY ABOUT ME AND COME TO HAVE SOME FUN.
I EVEN LEFT THE TALLER ONES STANDING FOR YOU!
16

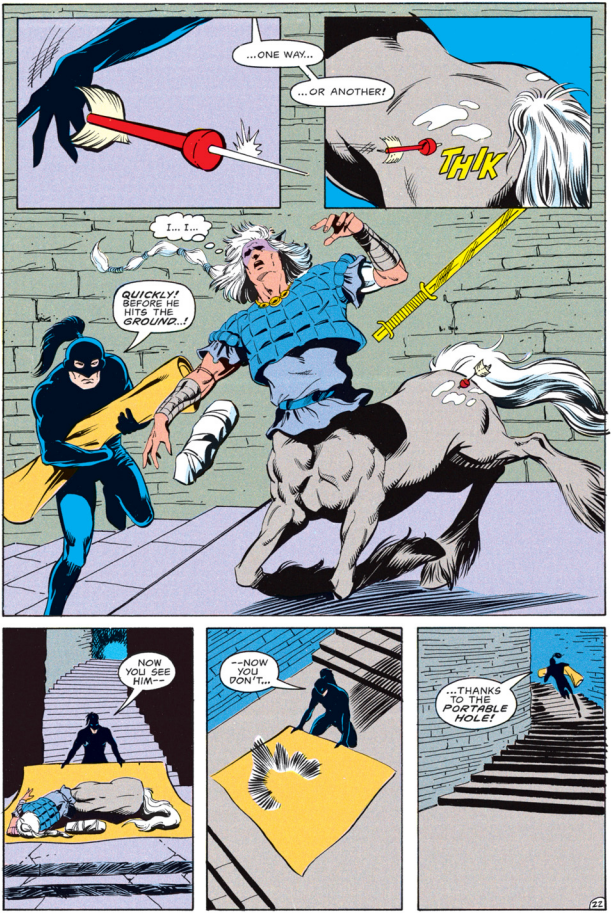

TIMOTH, I'D THOUGHT YOU'D FIND A MORE INTERESTING CLASS OF THUGS TO ANNOY THAN THIS MOTLEY LOT.
AL RIGHT, BOYS, YOU HAVE TIL THE COUNT OF FIVE TO HEAD FOR THE HILLS, OR MY SPELL-CASTING FRIEND HERE WILL TURN YOU INTO... INTO LIZARDS OR SOMETHING!
ONE...
TWO...
FIVE... RIGHT!
OKAY, KID, BLAST THEM!
BLAST THEM ...?
FIREBALL! LIGHTNING BOLT! POLYMORPH!
ANY NICE, DESTRUCTIVE MAGIC YOU KNOW!
BUT I DON'T... KNOW ANY MAGIC. THE REST OF THE FAMILY DOES, BUT NOT ME...
AH, FOR THE LOVE OF...
...I KNEW THIS JOB WASN'T GOING TO BE EASY!
ATTAAACK!
17

I KNEW YOU'D COME. I JUST KNEW IT!
CHUK!
STUFF AND NONSENSE!
I JUST KNEW YOU'D GET INTO TROUBLE IF I LEFT YOU ALONE FOR MORE THAN FIVE MINUTES...
I WAS RIGHT, OF COURSE!
OH MY STARS, THEY'RE FIGHTING, AND I'M USELESS!
WE COULD BE KILLED!
WAIT! ...THESE CRATES--!
IF I CAN JUST PUSH ON...
CREAK!
...YES!
WHAT'S ALL THIS NOISE. TH--
WOOOM!
ONYX! I DID IT! I HELPED OUT!
18


I DID IT! I BEAT UP SOME THUGS!
CONGRATULATIONS, KID.
HAVE YOU NOTICED THAT YOUR "THUGS" WERE WEARING THE LIVERY OF THE WATCH?
UNIFORM?...
LET'S JUST GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE ANY OF THEM COMES TO...
"...BECAUSE I'D HATE TO HAVE TO EXPLAIN THIS TO ANYONE."
I SEED IT WITH ME OWN EYES. A BIG GUY, A CENTAUR, ALONE, AND CARRYING A PACKAGE WRAPPED UP LIKE YOU SAID, NEAR FISHGUT COURT!
YOU'VE DONE WELL TO COME TELL ME THIS...
...AND THIS IS TO MAKE SURE YOU TELL NO ONE ELSE!
CHEEWOOSH!
NO LOOSE ENDS. I LIKE THAT.
IL'SERV, YOU HAVE YOUR TARGET. TAKE SHINDIA AND A SQUAD OF HER THIEVES.
19


ARE YOU SURE THIS IS THE WAY?
OH YES, I'VE USED THIS SHORTCUT HUNDREDS OF TIMES. THIS LEADS TO HIGH ROAD, AND FROM THERE WE CUT DOWN SULDOWN STREET.
TWO LEFTS, A RIGHT AND TWO MORE LEFTS AND WE'RE THERE.
THUD THUD
HUFF, HUFF!
BLASTED HUMAN STONE MASONS. THEY MAKE STAIRS THE WRONG HEIGHT!
IF THIS STATUE IS AS POWERFUL AS YOU SAY, TERTIUS WANDS, SHOULDN'T WE RETURN TO SELUNE'S SMILE AND GET MORE HELP?
HELP? FROM LUNA? I'D RATHER BE DIPPED IN STALE ALE THAN BEG FOR HER AID TONIGHT.
THUD THUD
SINCE THE STATUE DOES BELONG TO UNCLE MASKAR, WE REALLY SHOULD PRESS ON AND...
...GIVE IT TO... URK?
AND WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO GIVE TO ME, LITTLE ONE?
WEEEF!
THUNK
20

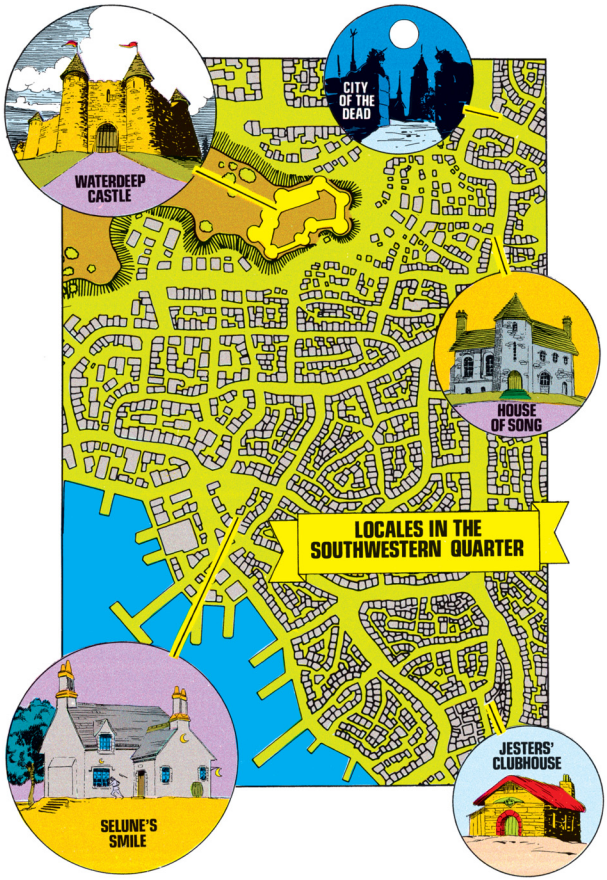

HERE WE GO AGAIN!
NO, ONYX. LOOK!
THIS IS NO ORDINARY GROUP OF STREET THUGS. THEY ARE ALL DRESSED IN BLACK, AS IF THEY WERE EXPECTING US...
SO THEY'RE MORE ORGANIZED. THAT DOESN'T MAKE THEM ANY FASTER.
OR ANY BETTER.
CHUCKA!
BUT WE SHOULD STILL... BY SELUNE! MY SWORD!
CLANG
YOU BROKE MY SWORD!
AND WE'LL BREAK YOU, TOO... HORSE-MAN...
21


...ONE WAY..
...OR ANOTHER!
THIK
I... I...
QUICKLY! BEFORE HE HITS THE GROUND..!
NOW YOU SEE HIM--
--NOW YOU DON'T...
...THANKS TO THE PORTABLE HOLE!
22

TWO OF MINE ARE DOWN, TIMOTH, AND THE DROW WOMAN HAS FLED.
THIS ONE'S OUT OF IT, TOO. HOW ARE YOU DOING WITH YOURS, TIMOTH?
TIMOTH --?
WHERE DID HE GO--
--NOW?!
OHHHHH ..HAVE I *MISSED* ANYTHING?
YOUR WHITE-HAIRED *FLAYMATE'S* RUN OFF, APPARENTLY WITH *TIMOTH* AND THE *STATUE!* WHAT'S *BECOME* OF THEM?
WORRY INSTEAD ABOUT YOUR *OWN* FATE, DWARF.
23

FOR NOW YOU FACE...
ILSERV THE MIND FLAYER!...
...AND MY PSIONIC BLAST WILL RIP YOUR BRAINS APART!
ARRRRRGHHH!!
CONTINUED NEXT MONTH!

WATERDEEP— *City of Splendors*



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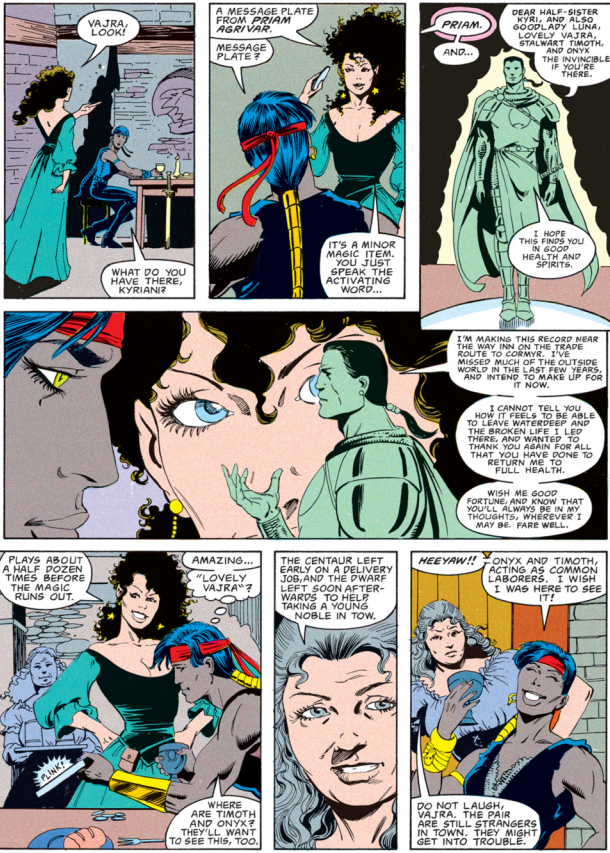
VAJRA, LOOK!
WHAT DO YOU HAVE THERE, KYRIAN?
A MESSAGE PLATE FROM PRIAM AGRIVAR.
MESSAGE PLATE?
IT'S A MINOR MAGIC ITEM. YOU JUST SPEAK THE ACTIVATING WORD...
PRIAM.
AND...
DEAR HALF-SISTER KYRI, AND ALSO GOODLADY LUNA, LOVELY VAJRA, STALWART TIMOTH, AND ONYX THE INVINCIBLE, IF YOU'RE THERE.
I HOPE THIS FINDS YOU IN GOOD HEALTH AND SPIRITS.
I'M MAKING THIS RECORD NEAR THE WAY INN ON THE TRADE ROUTE TO CORMYR. I'VE MISSED MUCH OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD IN THE LAST FEW YEARS, AND INTEND TO MAKE UP FOR IT NOW.
I CANNOT TELL YOU HOW IT FEELS TO BE ABLE TO LEAVE WATERDEEP AND THE BROKEN LIFE I LED THERE, AND WANTED TO THANK YOU AGAIN FOR ALL THAT YOU HAVE DONE TO RETURN ME TO FULL HEALTH.
WISH ME GOOD FORTUNE, AND KNOW THAT YOU'LL ALWAYS BE IN MY THOUGHTS, WHEREVER I MAY BE. FARE WELL.
PLAYS ABOUT A HALF DOZEN TIMES BEFORE THE MAGIC RUNS OUT.
PLINK!
AMAZING...
"LOVELY VAJRA"?
WHERE ARE TIMOTH AND ONYX? THEY'LL WANT TO SEE THIS, TOO.
THE CENTAUR LEFT EARLY ON A DELIVERY JOB, AND THE DWARF LEFT SOON AFTERWARDS TO HELP TAKING A YOUNG NOBLE IN TOW.
HEEYAW!!
ONYX AND TIMOTH, ACTING AS COMMON LABORERS. I WISH I WAS HERE TO SEE IT!
DO NOT LAUGH, VAJRA. THE PAIR ARE STILL STRANGERS IN TOWN. THEY MIGHT GET INTO TROUBLE.

TROUBLE?
ONYX AND TIMOTH ARE TWO OF THE MOST INDOMITABLE WARRIORS I'VE EVER MET.
I FEEL SORRY FOR ANY "TROUBLE" THAT RUNS INTO THEM!
FOOL OF A DWARF!
SMRAAASH!
JEFF GRUBB
WRITER
JAN DUURSEMA
ARTIST
STEVE HAYNIE
LETTERER
MATT WEBB
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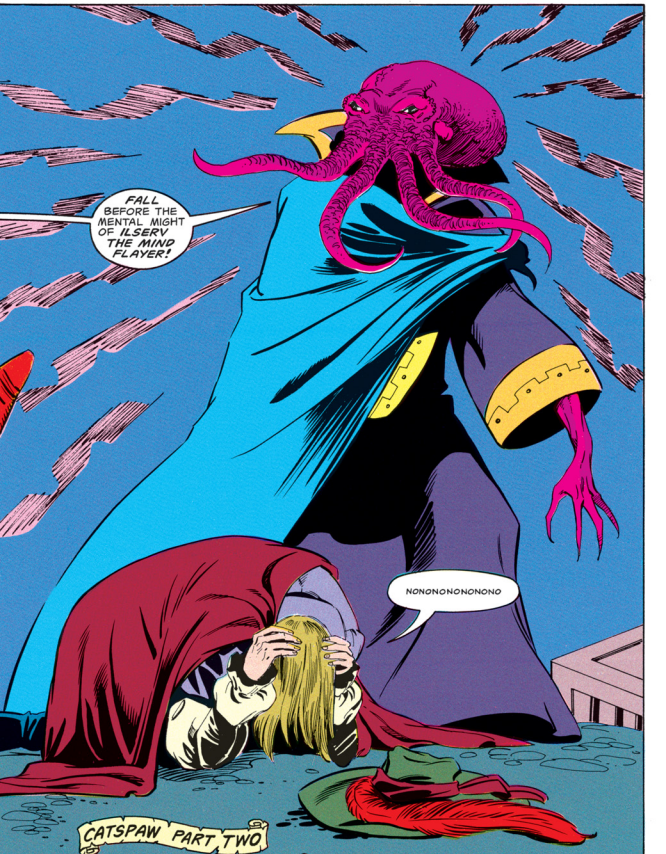
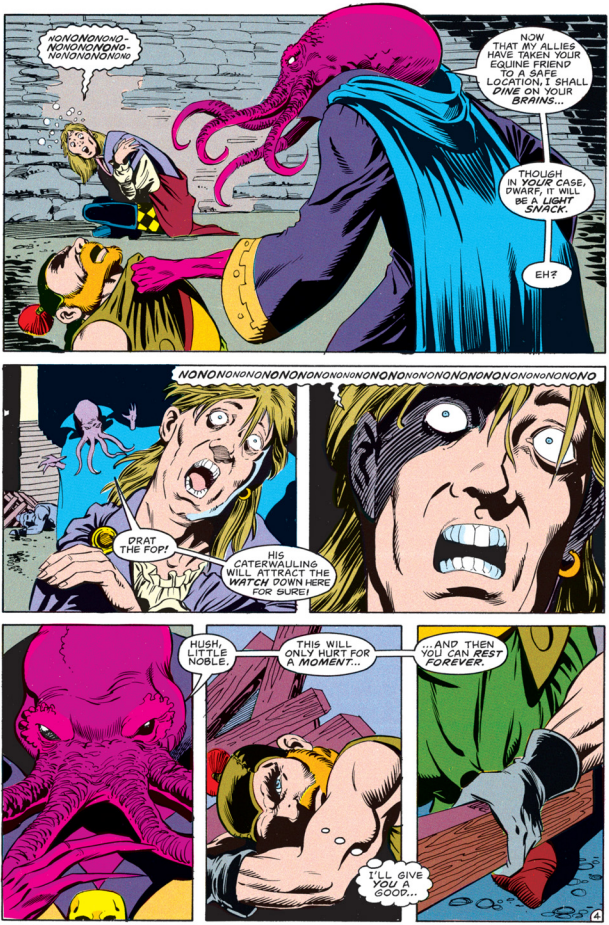
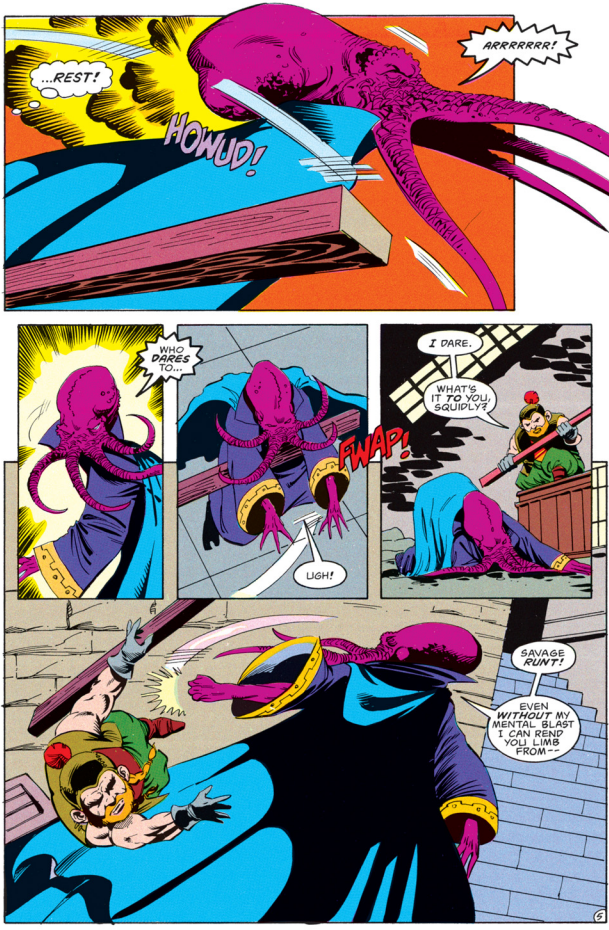
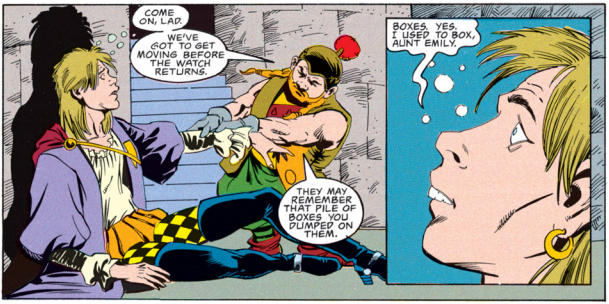

FALL BEFORE THE MENTAL MIGHT OF ILSERV THE MIND FLAYER!
NONONONONONONO
CATSPAW PART TWO
OF MIRT & MIND FLAYERS

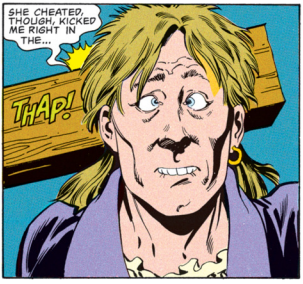

NONONONONO-NONONONONO-NONONONONO
NOW THAT MY ALLIES HAVE TAKEN YOUR EQUINE FRIEND TO A SAFE LOCATION, I SHALL DINE ON YOUR BRAINS...
THOUGH IN YOUR CASE, DWARF, IT WILL BE A LIGHT SNACK.
EH?
NONONONONONONONONONONONONONONONONONONONONONONONONONO
DRAT THE FOP!
HIS CATERWAULING WILL ATTRACT THE WATCH DOWN HERE FOR SURE!
HUSH, LITTLE NOBLE.
THIS WILL ONLY HURT FOR A MOMENT...
...AND THEN YOU CAN REST FOREVER.
I'LL GIVE YOU A GOOD...
4


...REST!
HOWUD!
ARRRRRRR!
WHO DARES TO...
FWAP!
UGH!
I DARE.
WHAT'S IT TO YOU, SQUIDLY?
SAVAGE RUNT!
EVEN WITHOUT MY MENTAL BLAST I CAN REND YOU LIMB FROM---

HARROOOOOT!
THE WATCH!
CURSE YOU TO LOLTH'S DOMAIN, DWARF!
I'LL DEAL WITH YOU AT A TIME AND PLACE...
...OF MY CHOOSING.
LOOK, CIVILAR!
IS THAT A...?
DON'T GAWK AT IT! GET IT BEFORE IT GETS...
...AWAY--
CURSE TYR AND TEMPUS!
SPREAD OUT.
THERE MUST BE A SECRET DOOR SOMEWHERE ALONG HERE.
SEND A RUNNER BACK TO HQ. FIND AN ELF OR A SPELL CASTER...
...AND CHECK THOSE TWO WITNESSES. THEY MAY KNOW SOMETHING.


COME ON, LAD.
WE'VE GOT TO GET MOVING BEFORE THE WATCH RETURNS.
THEY MAY REMEMBER THAT PILE OF BOXES YOU DUMPED ON THEM.
BOXES. YES. I USED TO BOX, AUNT EMILY.

I WAS TOP OF MY CLASS. HEAD OF MY FORM AND ALL THAT ROT. THEY WOULD COME FROM BLOCKS ABOUT TO WATCH ME BOX, AUNT EMILY, UNTIL THAT DAY SUZEE KORMALLIS BEAT ME UP...
I'M GOING TO HATE MYSELF FOR THIS, BUT...

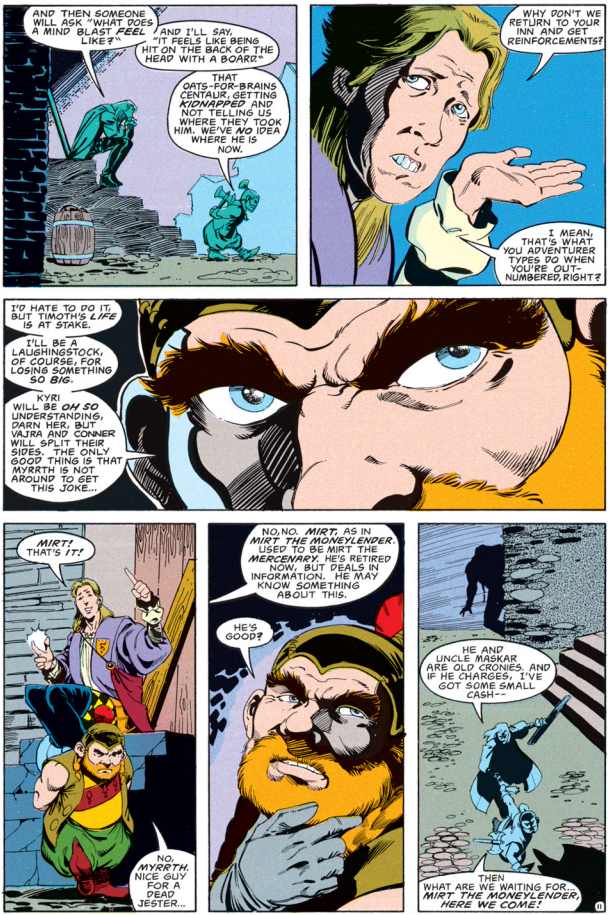

SHE CHEATED, THOUGH, KICKED ME RIGHT IN THE...
THAP!

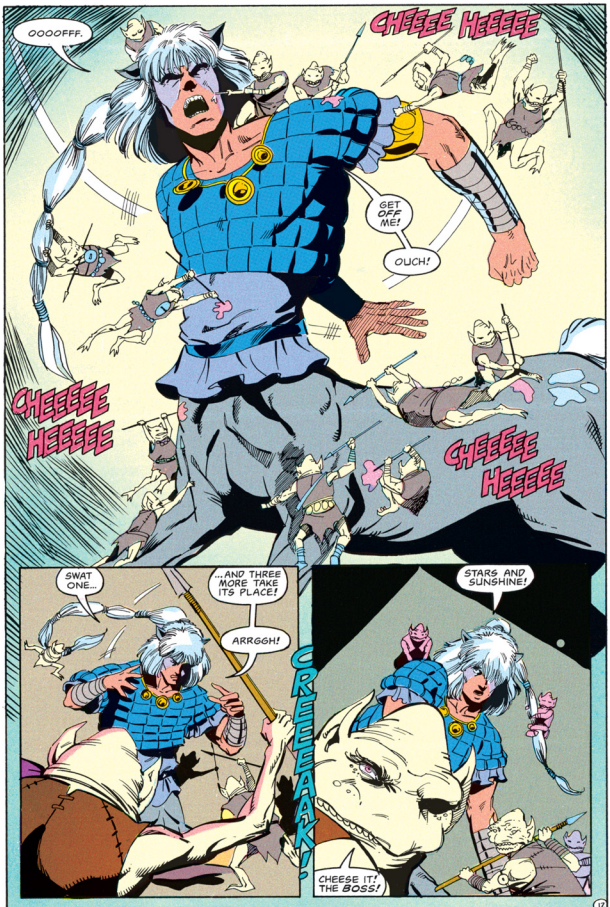
NO, I WAS WRONG, I DON'T HATE MYSELF AT ALL.
ONYX! ONYX!
WE WERE WALKING ALONG WITH TIMOTH, THEN THIS WOMAN ATTACKED, AND A MIND PLAYER, AND EVERYTHING WENT...
7

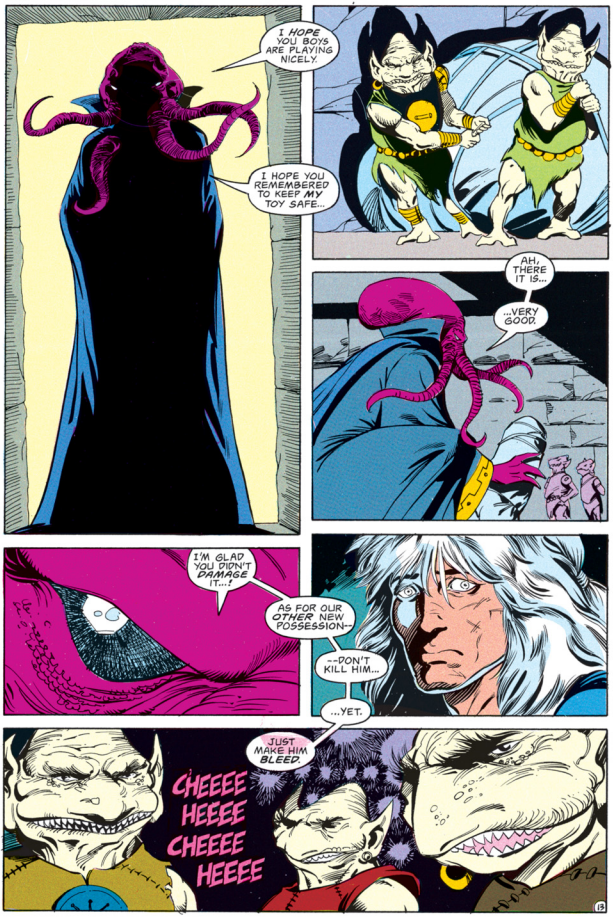
"...DARK!"
READY NOW?
ONE,
TWO
THREE!
UHHHHHHH!
FLACK!
GASP! ONYX!...
GASP! TERTIUS!...

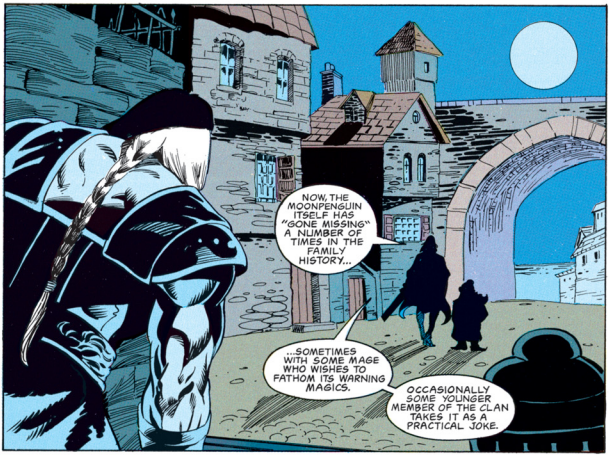
ANYBODY...?!?
RUSTLE RUSTLE
CHEEEE HEEEE
HELLO?
IS SOMEONE THERE?
CHEEEE HEEEE
AT LEAST THE MOONPENGUIN IS...
...SAFE?
FWIP
CHEEEE HEEEEE HEEEE
COWARDS!
WHOEVER YOU ARE, COME OUT OF THE DARK AND FIGHT LIKE...

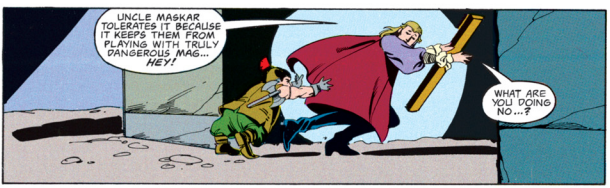
...MEN--?!
OOOOKKKAAAAYYYY!!
CHEEE HEEE
CHEEEE HEEEE
CHEEEE HEEEE
JINXIKINS!
CHEEEHEEECHEEEHEEECHEEEHEEEE
AND THERE'RE SO MANY OF THEM!
10


AND THEN SOMEONE WILL ASK "WHAT DOES A MIND BLAST FEEL LIKE?"
"AND I'LL SAY, "IT FEELS LIKE BEING HIT ON THE BACK OF THE HEAD WITH A BOARD."
THAT OATS-FOR-BRAINS CENTAUR, GETTING KIDNAPPED AND NOT TELLING US WHERE THEY TOOK HIM. WE'VE NO IDEA WHERE HE IS NOW.
WHY DON'T WE RETURN TO YOUR INN AND GET REINFORCEMENTS?
I MEAN, THAT'S WHAT YOU ADVENTURER TYPES DO WHEN YOU'RE OUT-NUMBERED, RIGHT?
I'D HATE TO DO IT, BUT TIMOTH'S LIFE IS AT STAKE.
I'LL BE A LAUGHINGSTOCK, OF COURSE, FOR LOSING SOMETHING SO BIG.
KYRI WILL BE OH SO UNDERSTANDING, DARN HER. BUT VAJRA AND CONNER WILL SPLIT THEIR SIDES. THE ONLY GOOD THING IS THAT MYRRTH IS NOT AROUND TO GET THIS JOKE...
MIRT! THAT'S IT!
NO, MYRRTH. NICE GUY FOR A DEAD JESTER...
NO, NO. MIRT. AS IN MIRT THE MONEYLENDER. USED TO BE MIRT THE MERCENARY. HE'S RETIRED NOW, BUT DEALS IN INFORMATION. HE MAY KNOW SOMETHING ABOUT THIS.
HE'S GOOD?
HE AND UNCLE MASKAR ARE OLD CRONIES, AND IF HE CHARGES, I'VE GOT SOME SMALL CASH--
THEN WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR. MIRT THE MONEYLENDER, HERE WE COME!
11


OOOOFFF.
CHEEEEE HEEEEE
GET OFF ME!
OUCH!
CHEEEEE HEEEEE
CHEEEEE HEEEEE
SWAT ONE...
...AND THREE MORE TAKE ITS PLACE!
ARRGGH!
CREEEAAK!
STARS AND SUNSHINE!
CHEESE IT! THE BOSS!
12

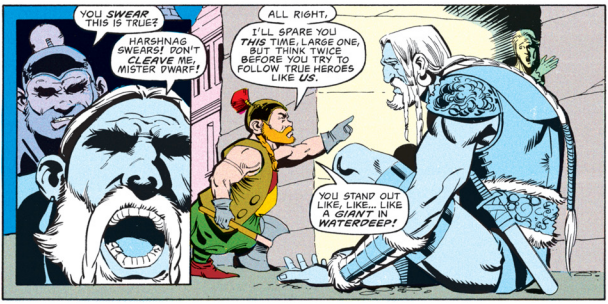

I HOPE YOU BOYS ARE PLAYING NICELY.
I HOPE YOU REMEMBERED TO KEEP MY TOY SAFE..
AH, THERE IT IS...
..VERY GOOD.
I'M GLAD YOU DIDN'T DAMAGE IT...!
AS FOR OUR OTHER NEW POSSESSION--
--DON'T KILL HIM...
...YET.
JUST MAKE HIM BLEED.
CHEEEE HEEEE CHEEEE HEEEE

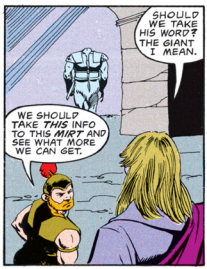

NOW, THE MOONPENGUIN ITSELF HAS "GONE MISSING" A NUMBER OF TIMES IN THE FAMILY HISTORY...
...SOMETIMES WITH SOME MAGE WHO WISHES TO FATHOM ITS WARNING MAGICS.
OCCASIONALLY SOME YOUNGER MEMBER OF THE CLAN TAKES IT AS A PRACTICAL JOKE.


UNCLE MASKAR TOLERATES IT BECAUSE IT KEEPS THEM FROM PLAYING WITH TRULY DANGEROUS MAG... HEY!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING NO...?

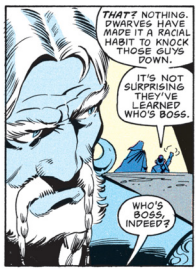
HUSH!
WE'RE BEING FOLLOWED!
FO...?
OHNONOTAGAIN...
HAND ME THAT BOARD, WILL YOU?
14

NOW LET'S FIND OUT WHO OUR PURSUER IS!
THOCK!
URK!
IT'S A...
...A GIANT! FROST BY THE LOOKS OF IT. SO TELL ME, GENTLE GIANT, ARE YOU WORKING WITH A MIND FLAYER I HAPPEN TO KNOW?
DUH, NO NO. HARSHNAG DON'T KNOW NUTHIN!
NOTHING! THEN I SHOULD JUST CLEAVE YOU HERE AND...
DUH, NO! I MEAN, HARSHNAG SEES YOU FIGHT UGLY BEAST. HARSHNAG SEES WHERE UGLY BEAST GO. TELL YOU WHERE HE WENT IF YOU PAYS ME!
I'LL PAY YOU, ALL RIGHT.
I'LL GIVE YOU A FREE SHAVE!
NO, NO! HARSHNAG TELL TRUTH! DON'T HURT HARSHNAG!
UGLY BEAST GO INTO ALLEY. USED MAGIC TO OPEN HOLE TO SEWER!
HARSHNAG SAW! PLEASE LET HARSHNAG GO!

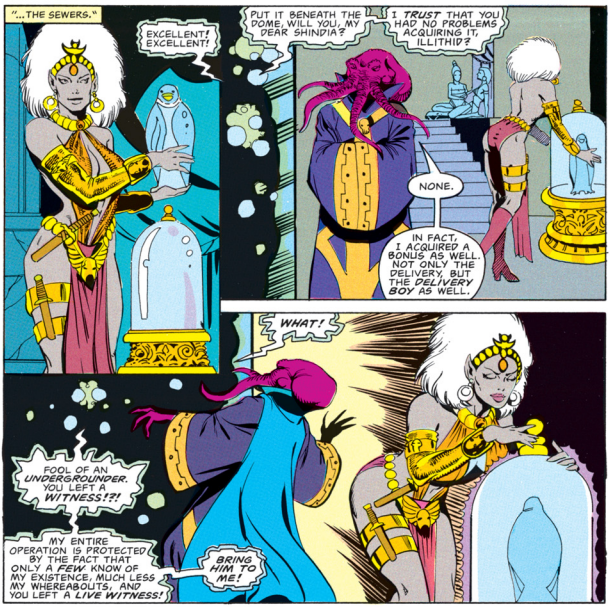

YOU SWEAR THIS IS TRUE?
HARSHNAG SWEARS! DON'T CLEAVE ME, MISTER DWARF!
ALL RIGHT,
I'LL SPARE YOU THIS TIME, LARGE ONE, BUT THINK TWICE BEFORE YOU TRY TO FOLLOW TRUE HEROES LIKE US.
YOU STAND OUT LIKE, LIKE... LIKE A GIANT IN WATERDEEP!

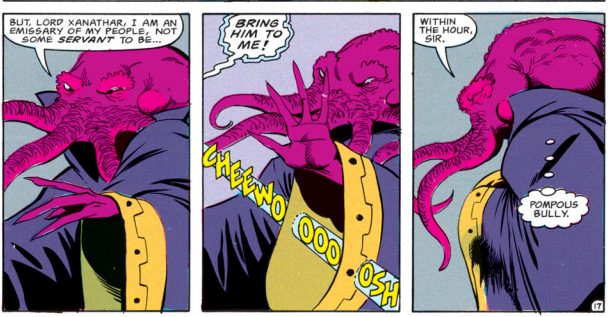

SHOULD WE TAKE HIS WORD? THE GIANT I MEAN.
WE SHOULD TAKE THIS INFO TO THIS MIRT AND SEE WHAT MORE WE CAN GET.

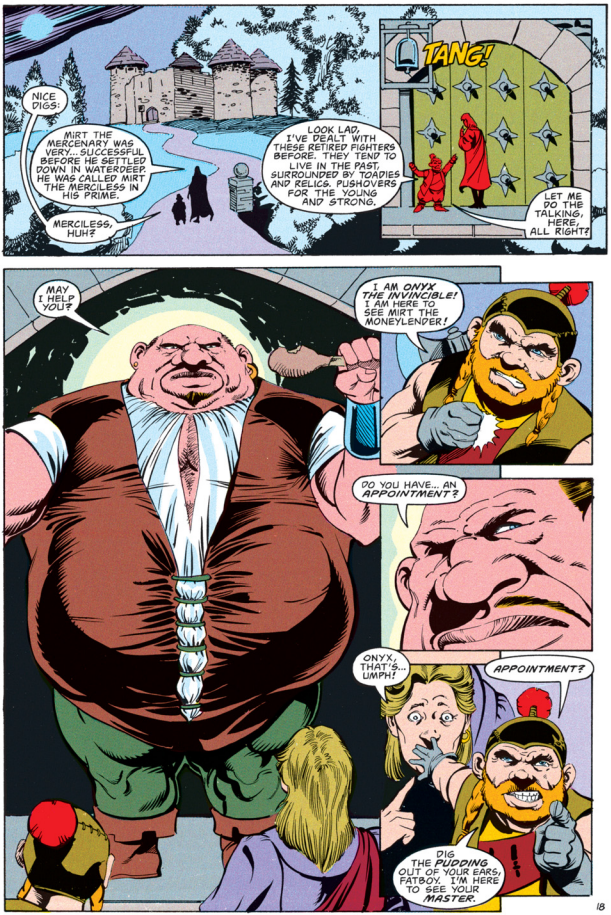
MIRT'S IT IS, THEN.
I'M VERY IMPRESSED WITH HOW YOU HANDLED THAT BRUTE.

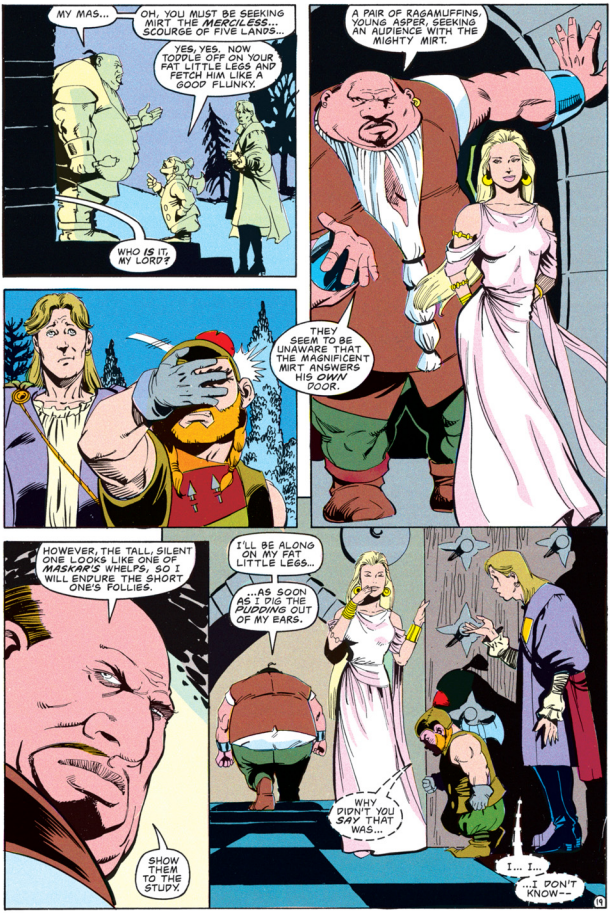

THAT? NOTHING. DWARVES HAVE MADE IT A RACIAL HABIT TO KNOCK THOSE GUYS DOWN.
IT'S NOT SURPRISING THEY'VE LEARNED WHO'S BOSS.
WHO'S BOSS, INDEED?

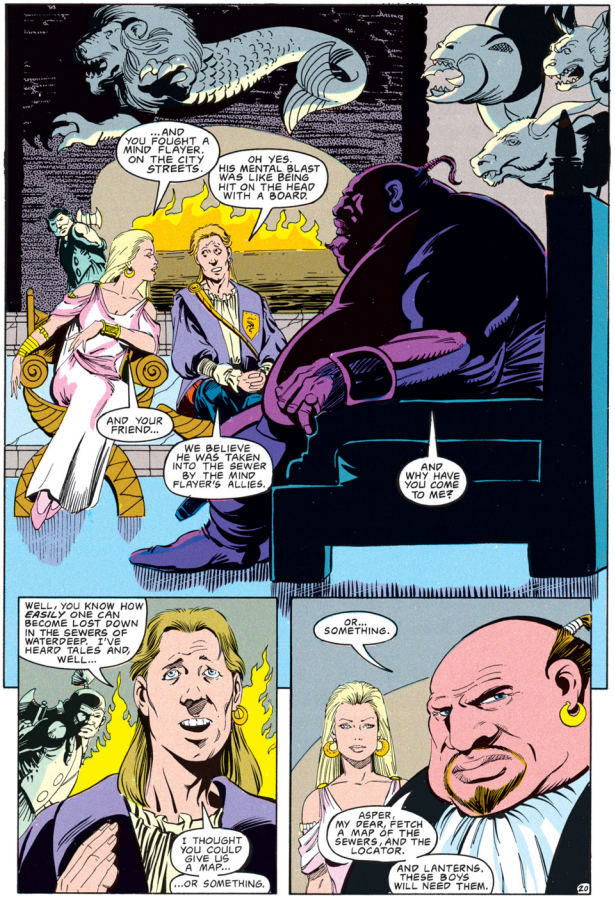
"PLEASE DON'T CLEAVE ME, MR. DWARF!"
IT IS TO LAUGH.
LAY OFF, JARDWIM.
IT GOT THE JOB DONE. YOU HEARD.
YEP. MIRT'S...
I'LL FOLLOW FROM HERE. YOU TELL LORD KHELBEN THAT THEY'RE MAKING FOR THE MONEYLENDER'S, BUT WILL BE SOON HEADING FOR...
16

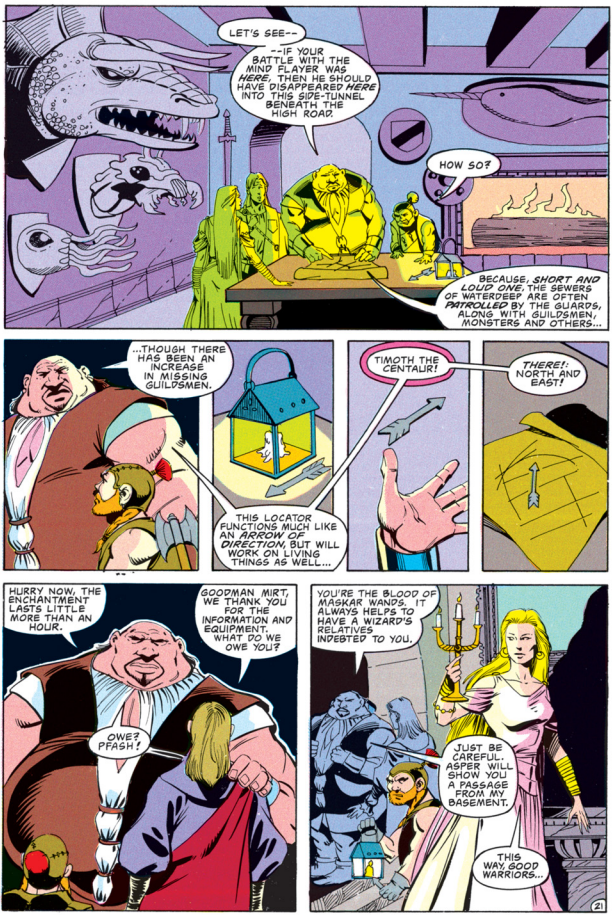

"...THE SEWERS."
EXCELLENT! EXCELLENT!
PUT IT BENEATH THE DOME, WILL YOU, MY DEAR SHINDIA?
I TRUST THAT YOU HAD NO PROBLEMS ACQUIRING IT, ILLITHID?
NONE.
IN FACT, I ACQUIRED A BONUS AS WELL. NOT ONLY THE DELIVERY, BUT THE DELIVERY BOY AS WELL.
WHAT!
FOOL OF AN UNDERGUNDER YOU LEFT A WITNESS!?!
MY ENTIRE OPERATION IS PROTECTED BY THE FACT THAT ONLY A FEW KNOW OF MY EXISTENCE, MUCH LESS MY WHEREABOUTS, AND YOU LEFT A LIVE WITNESS!
BRING HIM TO ME!

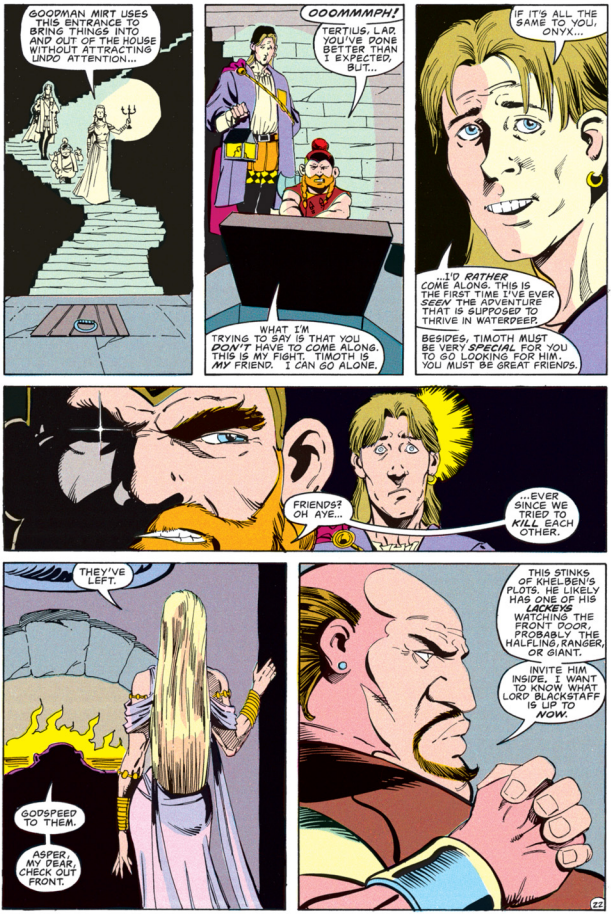

BUT, LORD XANATHAR, I AM AN EMISSARY OF MY PEOPLE. NOT SOME SERVANT TO BE...
BRING HIM TO ME!
CHEEWOOOOOSH
WITHIN THE HOUR, SIR.
POMPOUS BULLY.
17

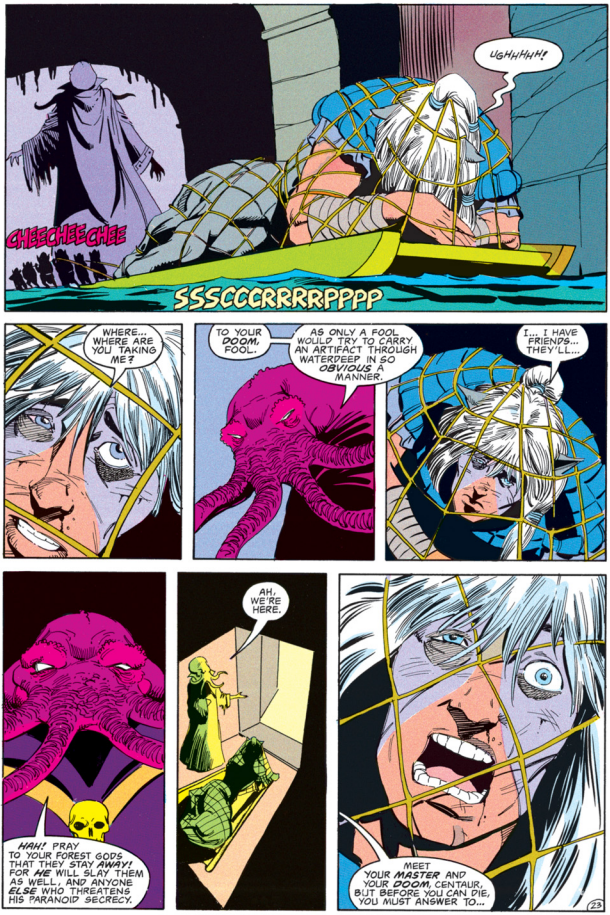

NICE DIGS.
MIRT THE MERCENARY WAS VERY... SUCCESSFUL BEFORE HE SETTLED DOWN IN WATERDEEP. HE WAS CALLED MIRT THE MERCILESS IN HIS PRIME.
MERCILESS, HUH?
LOOK LAD, I'VE DEALT WITH THESE RETIRED FIGHTERS BEFORE. THEY TEND TO LIVE IN THE PAST, SURROUNDED BY TOADIES AND RELICS. PUSHOVERS FOR THE YOUNG AND STRONG.
TANG!
LET ME DO THE TALKING, HERE, ALL RIGHT?
MAY I HELP YOU?
I AM ONYX THE INVINCIBLE! I AM HERE TO SEE MIRT THE MONEYLENDER!
DO YOU HAVE... AN APPOINTMENT?
ONYX, THAT'S... UMPH!
APPOINTMENT?
DIG THE PUDDING OUT OF YOUR EARS, FATBOY. I'M HERE TO SEE YOUR MASTER.
18


MY MAS...
OH, YOU MUST BE SEEKING MIRT THE MERCILESS... SCOURGE OF FIVE LANDS...
YES, YES. NOW TODDLE OFF ON YOUR FAT LITTLE LEGS AND FETCH HIM LIKE A GOOD FLUNKY.
WHO IS IT, MY LORD?
A PAIR OF RAGAMUFFINS, YOUNG ASPER, SEEKING AN AUDIENCE WITH THE MIGHTY MIRT.
THEY SEEM TO BE UNAWARE THAT THE MAGNIFICENT MIRT ANSWERS HIS OWN DOOR.
HOWEVER, THE TALL, SILENT ONE LOOKS LIKE ONE OF MASKAR'S WHELPS, SO I WILL ENDURE THE SHORT ONE'S FOLLIES.
SHOW THEM TO THE STUDY.
I'LL BE ALONG ON MY FAT LITTLE LEGS..
...AS SOON AS I DIG THE PUDDING OUT OF MY EARS.
WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY THAT WAS...
I... I...
...I DON'T KNOW--
19


...AND YOU FOUGHT A MIND FLAYER, ON THE CITY STREETS.
OH YES. HIS MENTAL BLAST WAS LIKE BEING HIT ON THE HEAD WITH A BOARD.
AND YOUR FRIEND...
WE BELIEVE HE WAS TAKEN INTO THE SEWER BY THE MIND FLAYER'S ALLIES.
AND WHY HAVE YOU COME TO ME?
WELL, YOU KNOW HOW *EASILY* ONE CAN BECOME LOST DOWN IN THE SEWERS OF WATERDEEP. I'VE HEARD TALES AND, WELL...
I THOUGHT YOU COULD GIVE US A MAP...
...OR SOMETHING.
OR... SOMETHING.
ASPER, MY DEAR, FETCH A MAP OF THE SEWERS, AND THE LOCATOR.
AND LANTERNS. THESE BOYS WILL NEED THEM.
20


LET'S SEE--
--IF YOUR BATTLE WITH THE MIND FLAYER WAS HERE, THEN HE SHOULD HAVE DISAPPEARED HERE INTO THIS SIDE-TUNNEL BENEATH THE HIGH ROAD.
HOW SO?
BECAUSE, SHORT AND LOUD ONE, THE SEWERS OF WATERDEEP ARE OFTEN PATROLLED BY THE GUARDS, ALONG WITH GUILDSMEN, MONSTERS AND OTHERS...
...THOUGH THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN MISSING GUILDSMEN.
THIS LOCATOR FUNCTIONS MUCH LIKE AN ARROW OF DIRECTION, BUT WILL WORK ON LIVING THINGS AS WELL...
TIMOTH THE CENTAUR!
THERE!: NORTH AND EAST!
HURRY NOW. THE ENCHANTMENT LASTS LITTLE MORE THAN AN HOUR.
GOODMAN MIRT, WE THANK YOU FOR THE INFORMATION AND EQUIPMENT. WHAT DO WE OWE YOU?
OWE? PFASH!
YOU'RE THE BLOOD OF MASKAR WANDS. IT ALWAYS HELPS TO HAVE A WIZARD'S RELATIVES INDEBTED TO YOU.
JUST BE CAREFUL. ASPER WILL SHOW YOU A PASSAGE FROM MY BASEMENT.
THIS WAY, GOOD WARRIORS...
21


GOODMAN MIRT USES THIS ENTRANCE TO BRING THINGS INTO AND OUT OF THE HOUSE WITHOUT ATTRACTING UNDO ATTENTION...
OOOMMMPH!
TERTIUS, LAD, YOU'VE DONE BETTER THAN I EXPECTED, BUT...
WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO COME ALONG. THIS IS MY FIGHT. TIMOTH IS MY FRIEND. I CAN GO ALONE.
IF IT'S ALL THE SAME TO YOU, ONYX...
...I'D RATHER COME ALONG. THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE EVER SEEN THE ADVENTURE THAT IS SUPPOSED TO THRIVE IN WATERDEEP.
BESIDES, TIMOTH MUST BE VERY SPECIAL FOR YOU TO GO LOOKING FOR HIM. YOU MUST BE GREAT FRIENDS.
FRIENDS? OH AYE...
...EVER SINCE WE TRIED TO KILL EACH OTHER.
THEY'VE LEFT.
GODSPEED TO THEM.
ASPER, MY DEAR, CHECK OUT FRONT.
THIS STINKS OF KHELBEN'S PLOTS. HE LIKELY HAS ONE OF HIS LACKEYS WATCHING THE FRONT DOOR, PROBABLY THE HALFLING, RANGER, OR GIANT.
INVITE HIM INSIDE. I WANT TO KNOW WHAT LORD BLACKSTAFF IS UP TO NOW.
22


UGHHHHH!
CHEECHEECHEE
SSSCCCRRRRPPPP
WHERE... WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?
TO YOUR DOOM, FOOL.
AS ONLY A FOOL WOULD TRY TO CARRY AN ARTIFACT THROUGH WATERDEEP IN SO OBVIOUS A MANNER.
I... I HAVE FRIENDS... THEY'LL...
HAH! PRAY TO YOUR FOREST GODS THAT THEY STAY AWAY! FOR ME WILL SLAY THEM AS WELL, AND ANYONE ELSE WHO THREATENS HIS PARANOID SECRECY.
AH, WE'RE HERE.
MEET YOUR MASTER AND YOUR DOOM, CENTAUR. BUT BEFORE YOU CAN DIE, YOU MUST ANSWER TO...
23

XANATHAR THE BEHOLDER--
--FUTURE MASTER OF WATERDEEP.
2A

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CATS-PAW QUARTET

I'M TELLING YOU, MONEYLENDER, I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE FUSS.
THE NAME, JARDWIM, IS MIRT, AS IN MIRT THE MERCILESS.
...AND YOUR SULKING PRESENCE OUTSIDE MY HOME IS PROOF ENOUGH THAT YOUR MASTER KHELBEN ARUNSUN IS PLAYING POWER GAMES AGAIN.
WHY IS THAT, PRAY TELL?
SO WHAT IF HIS LORDSHIP IS UP TO SOMETHING? HE ALWAYS HAS THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CITY AT HEART.
HIS INTERESTS DO NOT WORRY ME AS DOES HIS SUBTERFUGE. WHY DOESN'T HE DEAL DIRECTLY?
THE LAST TIME LORD KHELBEN FACED A PROBLEM DIRECTLY, THE RESULT WAS A TWENTY-FOOT-DEEP CRATER.
I HOPE HE CAN REFORM HIS METHODS NOW, BECAUSE OTHERWISE...

ALL HADES BREAKS LOOSE!

CATSPAW
PART THREE
JEFF GRUBB
WRITER
JAN DUURSEMA
ARTIST
STEVE HAYNIE
LETTERER
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COLORIST
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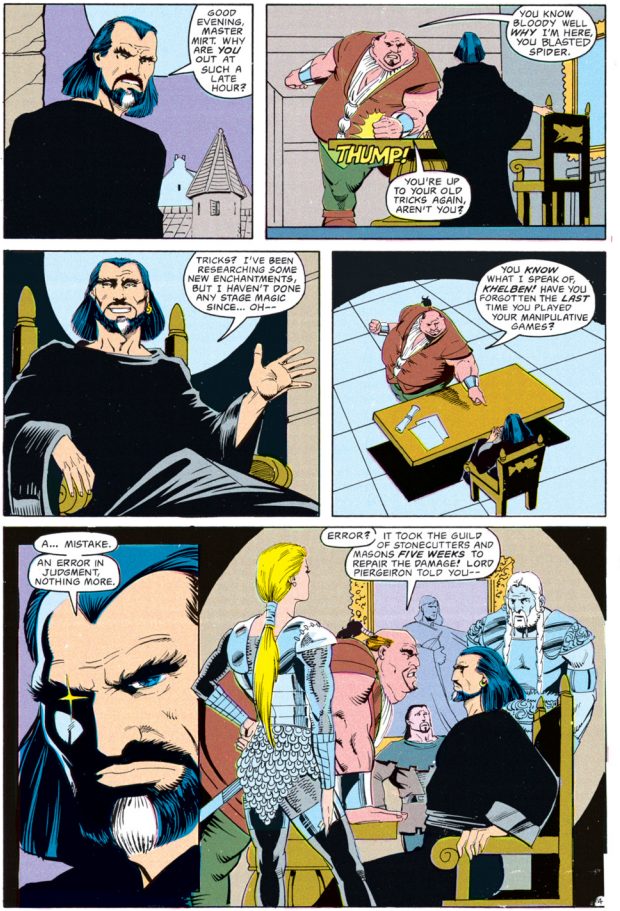
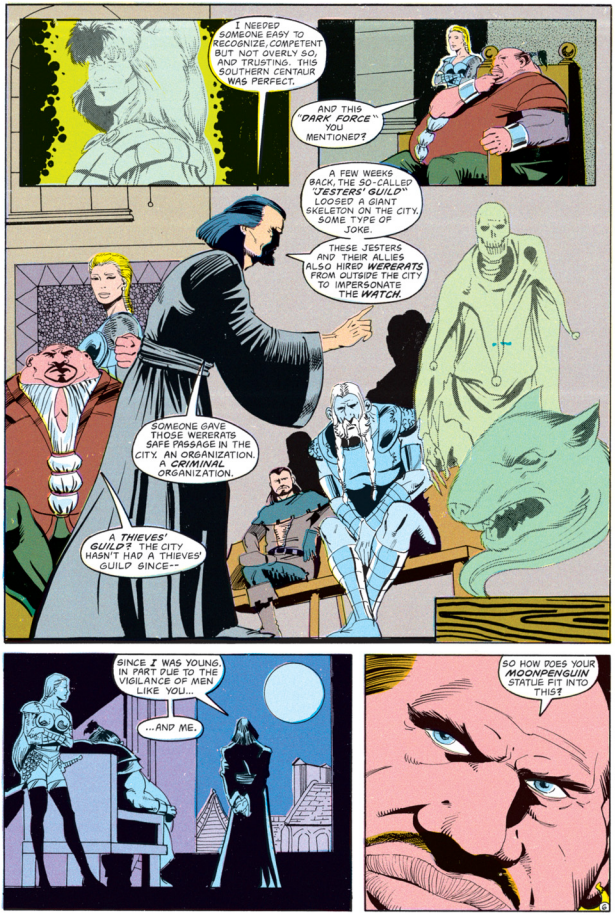
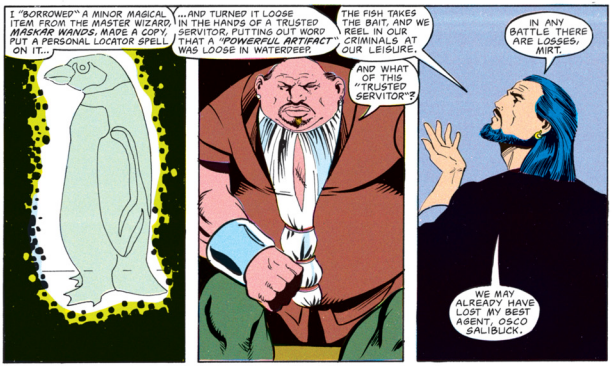
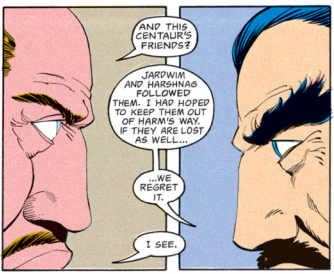

GOOD EVENING, MASTER MIRT. WHY ARE YOU OUT AT SUCH A LATE HOUR?
YOU KNOW BLOODY WELL WHY I'M HERE, YOU BLASTED SPIDER.
THUMP!
YOU'RE UP TO YOUR OLD TRICKS AGAIN, AREN'T YOU?
TRICKS? I'VE BEEN RESEARCHING SOME NEW ENCHANTMENTS, BUT I HAVEN'T DONE ANY STAGE MAGIC SINCE... OH--
YOU KNOW WHAT I SPEAK OF, KHELBEN! HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THE LAST TIME YOU PLAYED YOUR MANIPULATIVE GAMES?
A... MISTAKE.
AN ERROR IN JUDGMENT, NOTHING MORE.
ERROR? IT TOOK THE GUILD OF STONECUTTERS AND MASONS FIVE WEEKS TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE! LORD PIERGEIRON TOLD YOU--

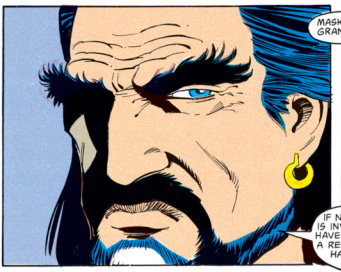
THE UNMASKED LORD OF WATERDEEP FORBADE ME TO ENGAGE IN NEEDLESS MACHINATIONS IN THE CITY.
I CAN ASSURE YOU THAT THIS IS MOST NEEDFUL.
THE ONLY NEED I SEE AT THE MOMENT...
..IS THAT LORD PIERGEIRON MAY NEED A NEW COURT WIZARD--
--ONE LESS PRONE TO DANGEROUS PRACTICES.
MIRT...
..WE'VE WORKED TOGETHER TOO MANY TIMES...
...TOO MANY TIMES FOR ME NOT TO RECOGNIZE YOUR SUBTLE PULL ON MY STRINGS. WHAT IS GOING ON, PUPPETEER?
ALL I HAVE DONE--
PHANTASMAL FORCE
--IS HIRE AN UNWITTING AGENT TO HELP ME LOCATE A DARK FORCE OPERATING IN WATERDEEP.

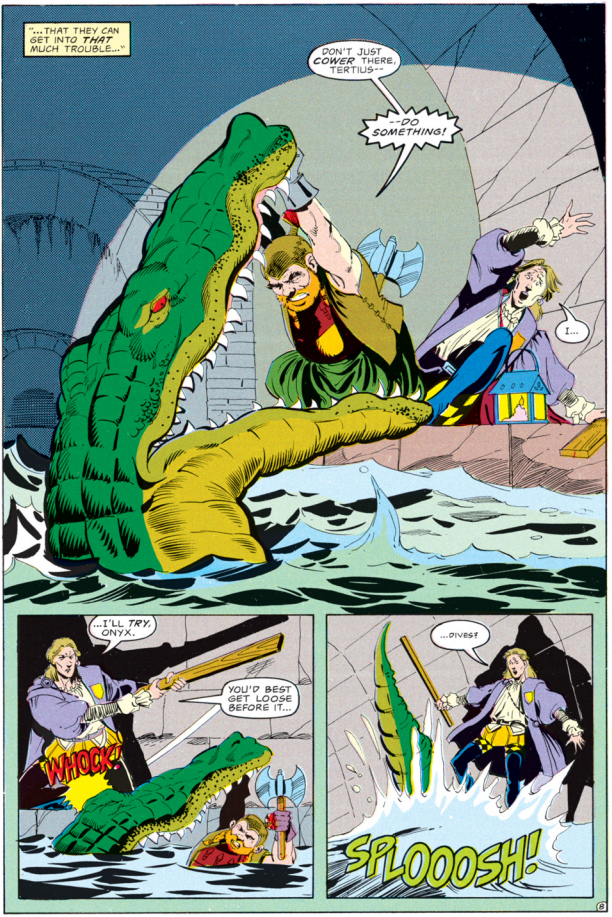

I NEEDED SOMEONE EASY TO RECOGNIZE, COMPETENT BUT NOT OVERLY SO, AND TRUSTING. THIS SOUTHERN CENTAUR WAS PERFECT.
AND THIS "DARK FORCE" YOU MENTIONED?
A FEW WEEKS BACK, THE SO-CALLED "JESTERS' GUILD" LOOSED A GIANT SKELETON ON THE CITY. SOME TYPE OF JOKE.
THESE JESTERS AND THEIR ALLIES ALSO HIRED WERERATS FROM OUTSIDE THE CITY TO IMPERSONATE THE WATCH.
SOMEONE GAVE THOSE WERERATS SAFE PASSAGE IN THE CITY. AN ORGANIZATION. A CRIMINAL ORGANIZATION.
A THIEVES' GUILD? THE CITY HASN'T HAD A THIEVES' GUILD SINCE--
SINCE I WAS YOUNG, IN PART DUE TO THE VIGILANCE OF MEN LIKE YOU...
...AND ME.
SO HOW DOES YOUR MOONPENGUIN STATUE FIT INTO THIS?

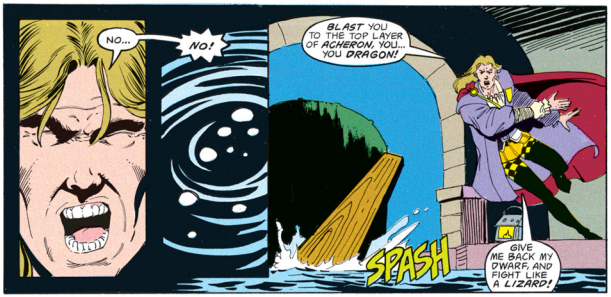

I "BORROWED" A MINOR MAGICAL ITEM FROM THE MASTER WIZARD, MASKAR WANDS. MADE A COPY, PUT A PERSONAL LOCATOR SPELL ON IT...
...AND TURNED IT LOOSE IN THE HANDS OF A TRUSTED SERVITOR. PUTTING OUT WORD THAT A "POWERFUL ARTIFACT" WAS LOOSE IN WATERDEEP.
THE FISH TAKES THE BAIT, AND WE REEL IN OUR CRIMINALS AT OUR LEISURE.
AND WHAT OF THIS "TRUSTED SERVITOR"?
IN ANY BATTLE THERE ARE LOSSES, MIRT.
WE MAY ALREADY HAVE LOST MY BEST AGENT, OSCO SALIBUCK.

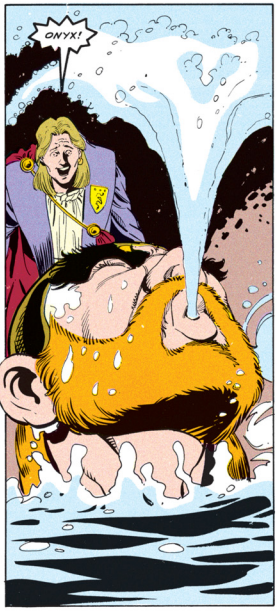

AND THIS CENTAUR'S FRIENDS?
JARDWIM AND HARSHNAG FOLLOWED THEM. I HAD HOPED TO KEEP THEM OUT OF HARM'S WAY. IF THEY ARE LOST AS WELL...
...WE REGRET IT.
I SEE.

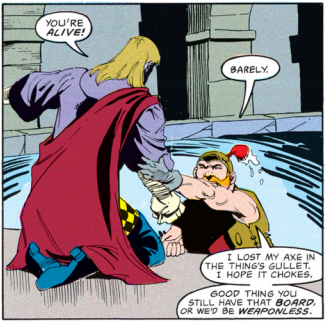
AND WHAT IF ONE OF YOUR "REGRETTABLES" IS THE GRAND-NEPHEW OF OLD MASKAR HIMSELF?--
--ARE YOU PREPARED TO TELL ANOTHER POWERFUL MAGE THAT YOU USED HIS BLOOD-KIN AS BAIT?
MASKAR'S GRAND--?
IF NOBLE BLOOD IS INVOLVED, WE'LL HAVE TO ASSEMBLE A RESCUE TEAM. IT HASN'T BEEN SO LONG...

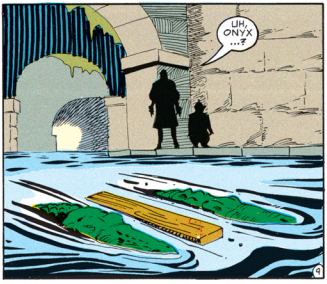


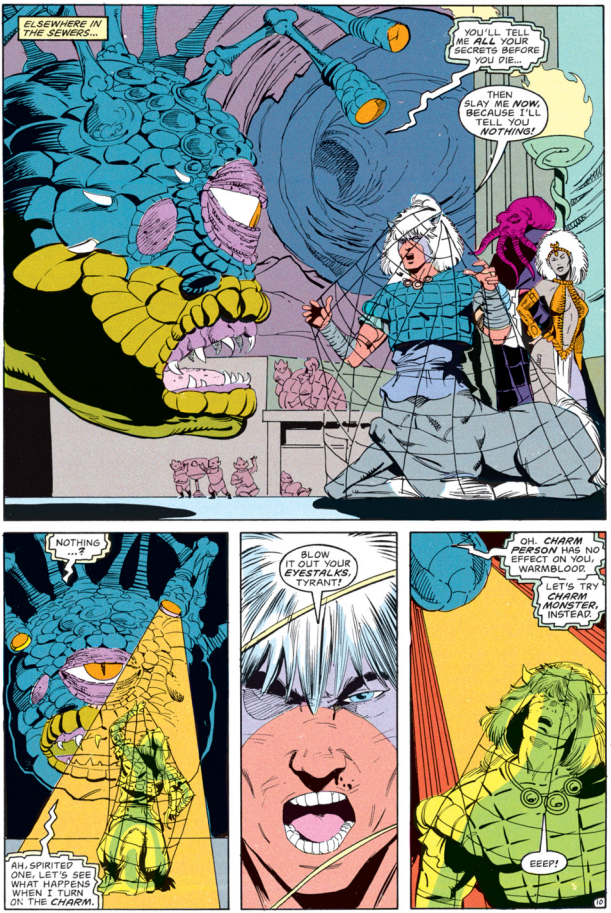

"...THAT THEY CAN GET INTO *THAT* MUCH TROUBLE..."
DON'T JUST *COWER* THERE, TERTUS--
--DO SOMETHING!
I...
...I'LL *TRY*, ONYX.
YOU'D BEST GET LOOSE BEFORE IT...
WHOCK!
...DIVES?
SPLOOOSH!

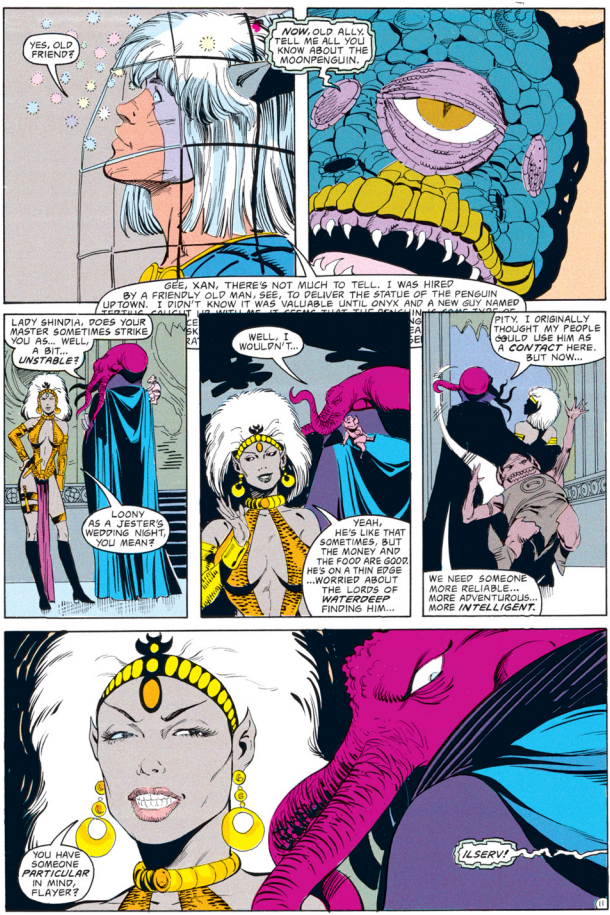

NO...
NO!
BLAST YOU TO THE TOP LAYER OF ACHERON, YOU... YOU DRAGON!
SPASH
GIVE ME BACK MY DWARF, AND FIGHT LIKE A LIZARD!

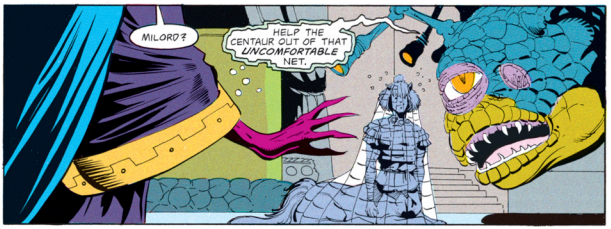

ONYX!


YOU'RE ALIVE!
BARELY.
I LOST MY AXE IN THE THING'S GULLET. I HOPE IT CHOKES.
GOOD THING YOU STILL HAVE THAT BOARD, OR WE'D BE WEAPONLESS.

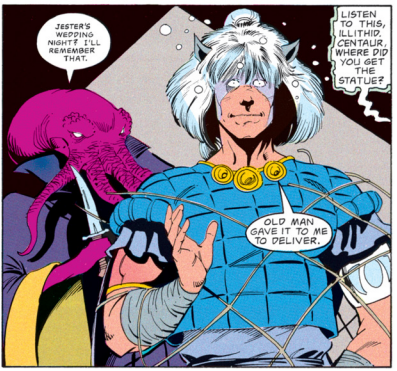

UH, ONYX ...?

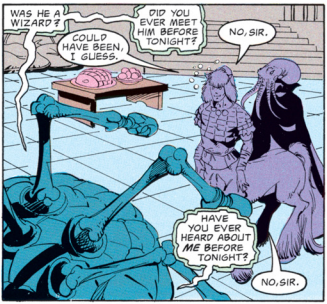

ELSEWHERE IN THE SEWERS...
YOU'LL TELL ME ALL YOUR SECRETS BEFORE YOU DIE...
THEN SLAY ME NOW, BECAUSE I'LL TELL YOU NOTHING!
NOTHING...?
AH, SPIRITED ONE, LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I TURN ON THE CHARM.
BLOW IT OUT YOUR EYESTALKS, TYRANT!
OH. CHARM PERSON HAS NO EFFECT ON YOU, WARMBLOOD.
LET'S TRY CHARM MONSTER, INSTEAD.
EEEP!
10

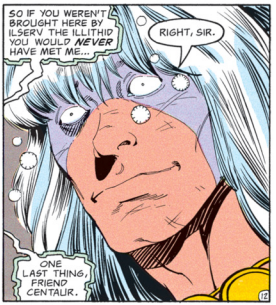

YES, OLD FRIEND?
NOW, OLD ALLY, TELL ME ALL YOU KNOW ABOUT THE MOONPENGUIN.
SEE, XAN, THERE'S NOT MUCH TO TELL. I WAS HIRED BY A FRIENDLY OLD MAN, SEE, TO DELIVER THE STATUE OF THE PENGUIN UPTOWN. I DIDN'T KNOW IT WAS VALUABLE UNTIL ONYX AND A NEW GUY NAMED
LADY SHINDIA, DOES YOUR MASTER SOMETIMES STRIKE YOU AS... WELL, A BIT... UNSTABLE?
LOONY AS A JESTER'S WEDDING NIGHT, YOU MEAN?
WELL, I WOULDN'T...
YEAH, HE'S LIKE THAT SOMETIMES, BUT THE MONEY AND THE FOOD ARE GOOD. HE'S ON A THIN EDGE ...WORRIED ABOUT THE LORDS OF WATERDEEP FINDING HIM...
PITY. I ORIGINALLY THOUGHT MY PEOPLE COULD USE HIM AS A CONTACT HERE. BUT NOW...
WE NEED SOMEONE MORE RELIABLE... MORE ADVENTUROUS... MORE INTELLIGENT.
YOU HAVE SOMEONE PARTICULAR IN MIND, FLAYER?
ILSERV!

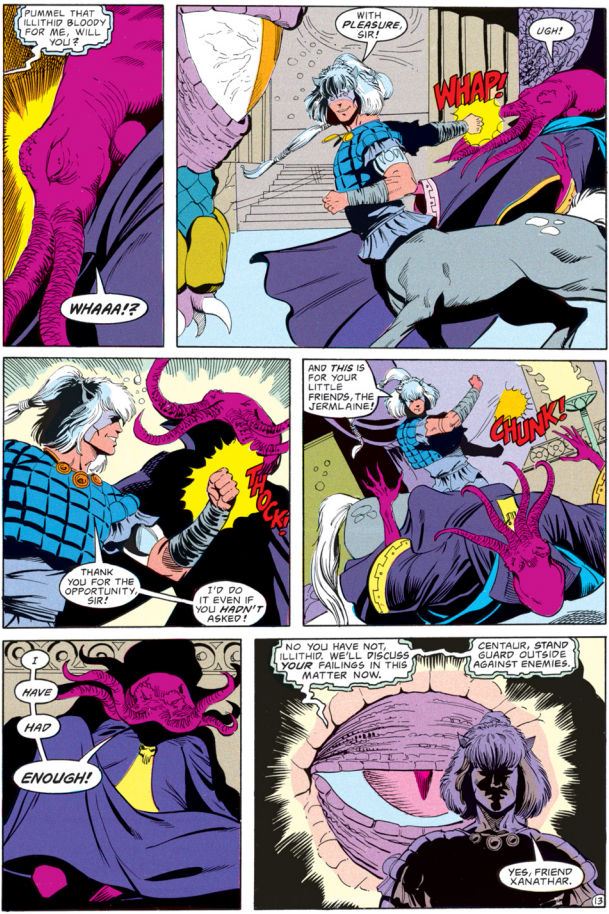

MILORD?
HELP THE CENTAUR OUT OF THAT UNCOMFORTABLE NET.

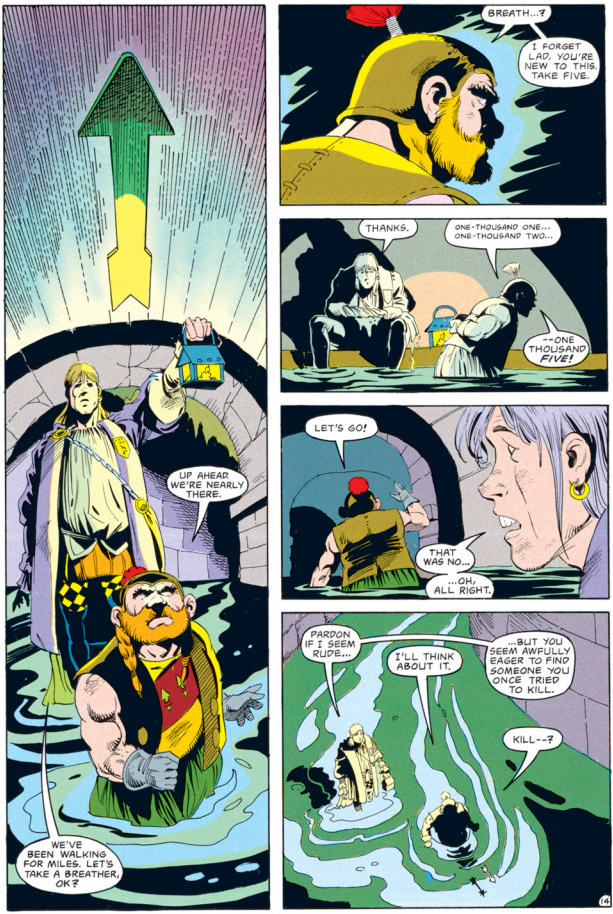
MILORD, I DON'T THINK...
DON'T ARGUE. JUST DO IT!

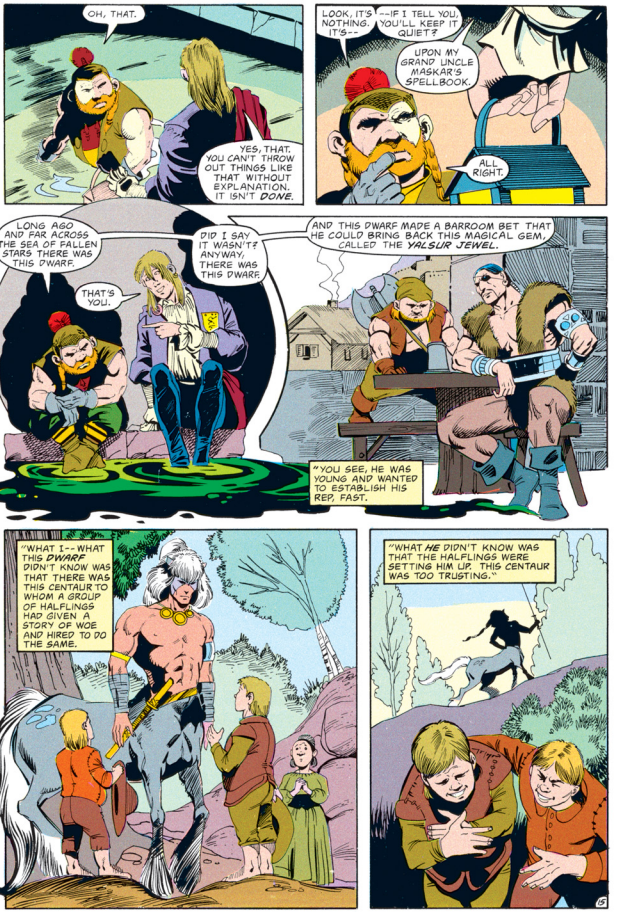

JESTER'S WEDDING NIGHT? I'LL REMEMBER THAT.
LISTEN TO THIS, ILLITHID. CENTAUR, WHERE DID YOU GET THE STATUE?
OLD MAN GAVE IT TO ME TO DELIVER.


WAS HE A WIZARD?
COULD HAVE BEEN, I GUESS.
DID YOU EVER MEET HIM BEFORE TONIGHT?
NO, SIR.
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD ABOUT ME BEFORE TONIGHT?
NO, SIR.

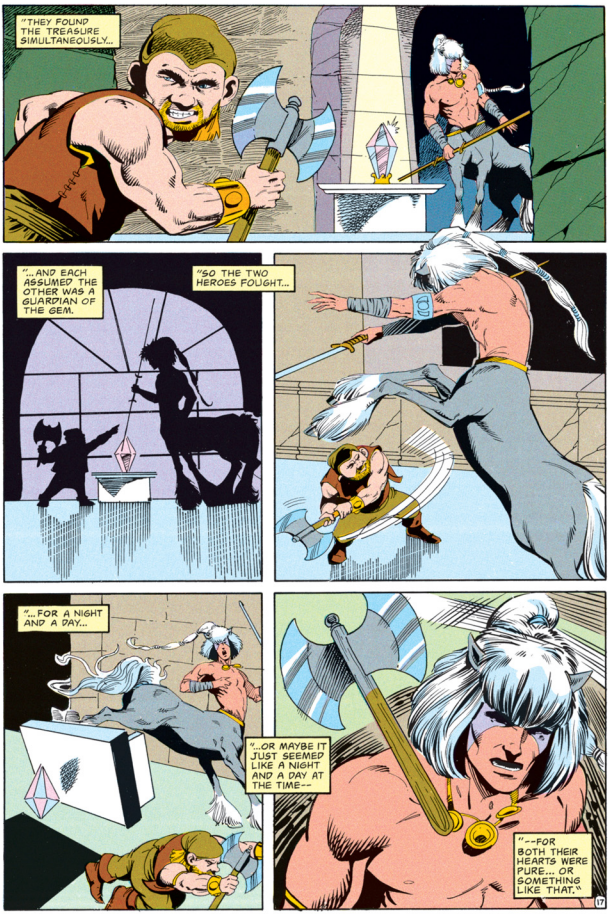

SO IF YOU WEREN'T BROUGHT HERE BY ILSERV THE ILLITHID YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE MET ME...
RIGHT, SIR.
ONE LAST THING, FRIEND CENTAUR.

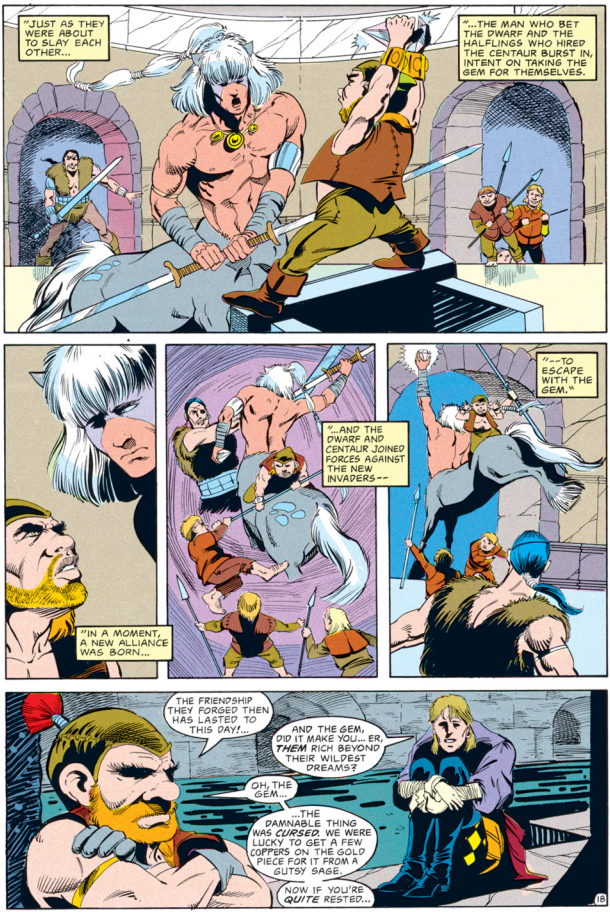

PUMMEL THAT ILLITHID BLOODY FOR ME, WILL YOU?
WHAAA!?
WITH PLEASURE, SIR!
WHAP!
UGH!
THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY, SIR!
I'D DO IT EVEN IF YOU HADN'T ASKED!
THWOCK!
AND THIS IS FOR YOUR LITTLE FRIENDS, THE JERMLAINE!
CHUNK!
I
HAVE
HAD
ENOUGH!
NO YOU HAVE NOT, ILLITHID. WE'LL DISCUSS YOUR FAILINGS IN THIS MATTER NOW.
CENTAUR, STAND GUARD OUTSIDE AGAINST ENEMIES.
YES, FRIEND XANATHAR.


WE'VE BEEN WALKING FOR MILES. LET'S TAKE A BREATHER, OK?
UP AHEAD. WE'RE NEARLY THERE.
BREATH...?
I FORGET LAD, YOU'RE NEW TO THIS. TAKE FIVE.
THANKS.
ONE-THOUSAND ONE... ONE-THOUSAND TWO...
--ONE THOUSAND FIVE!
LET'S GO!
"THAT WAS NO...
...OH, ALL RIGHT.
PARDON IF I SEEM RUDE...
I'LL THINK ABOUT IT.
...BUT YOU SEEM AWFULLY EAGER TO FIND SOMEONE YOU ONCE TRIED TO KILL.
KILL--?
14


OH, THAT.
YES, THAT. YOU CAN'T THROW OUT THINGS LIKE THAT WITHOUT EXPLANATION. IT ISN'T DONE.
LOOK, IT'S NOTHING. IT'S--
--IF I TELL YOU, YOU'LL KEEP IT QUIET?
UPON MY GRAND UNCLE MASKAR'S SPELLBOOK.
ALL RIGHT.
LONG AGO AND FAR ACROSS THE SEA OF FALLEN STARS THERE WAS THIS DWARF.
THAT'S YOU.
DID I SAY IT WASN'T? ANYWAY, THERE WAS THIS DWARF.
AND THIS DWARF MADE A BARROOM BET THAT HE COULD BRING BACK THIS MAGICAL GEM, CALLED THE YALSUR JEWEL.
"YOU SEE, HE WAS YOUNG AND WANTED TO ESTABLISH HIS REP, FAST.
"WHAT I--WHAT THIS DWARF DIDN'T KNOW WAS THAT THERE WAS THIS CENTAUR TO WHOM A GROUP OF HALFLINGS HAD GIVEN A STORY OF WOE AND HIRED TO DO THE SAME.
"WHAT HE DIDN'T KNOW WAS THAT THE HALFLINGS WERE SETTING HIM UP. THIS CENTAUR WAS TOO TRUSTING."

"NOW, BOTH THESE HEROES FOUGHT UNBEATABLE ODDS AS THEY MADE THEIR WAY TO THE TOWER HIDING THE YALSUR JEWEL...
"...AND THEY TRIUMPHED BECAUSE, WELL, BECAUSE THEY WERE HEROES. THAT'S WHAT HEROES DO.
"ANYWAY, THEY BOTH REACHED THE *TOWER OF YALSUR* AT THE SAME TIME, AND ENTERED FROM OPPOSITE SIDES."
16

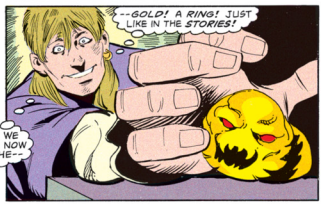

"THEY FOUND THE TREASURE SIMULTANEOUSLY...
"...AND EACH ASSUMED THE OTHER WAS A GUARDIAN OF THE GEM.
"SO THE TWO HEROES FOUGHT...
"...FOR A NIGHT AND A DAY...
"...OR MAYBE IT JUST SEEMED LIKE A NIGHT AND A DAY AT THE TIME--
"--FOR BOTH THEIR HEARTS WERE PURE... OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT."
17


"JUST AS THEY WERE ABOUT TO SLAY EACH OTHER...
DING!
"...THE MAN WHO BET THE DWARF AND THE HALFLINGS WHO HIRED THE CENTAUR BURST IN, INTENT ON TAKING THE GEM FOR THEMSELVES.
"IN A MOMENT, A NEW ALLIANCE WAS BORN...
"...AND THE DWARF AND CENTAUR JOINED FORCES AGAINST THE NEW INVADERS--
"--TO ESCAPE WITH THE GEM."
THE FRIENDSHIP THEY FORGED THEN HAS LASTED TO THIS DAY!...
AND THE GEM, DID IT MAKE YOU... ER, THEM RICH BEYOND THEIR WILDEST DREAMS?
OH, THE GEM...
...THE DAMNABLE THING WAS CURSED. WE WERE LUCKY TO GET A FEW COPPERS ON THE GOLD PIECE FOR IT FROM A GUTSY SAGE.
NOW IF YOU'RE QUITE RESTED...
18

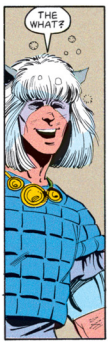
...LET'S FIND THAT CENTAUR.
GOLD AND GEMS AND ADVENTURE.
GOSH!
WE SHOULD BE ALMOST...

THERE!
TIMOTH!
ONYX!
"AND SO THE VALIANT WARRIORS WERE REUNITED..."

WHAT BRINGS YOU DOWN HERE?
LOOKING FOR YOU, YOU LAME-BRAINED OATER, REMEMBER?
ALL WE NEED NOW IS THE--


--GOLD! A RING! JUST LIKE IN THE STORIES!

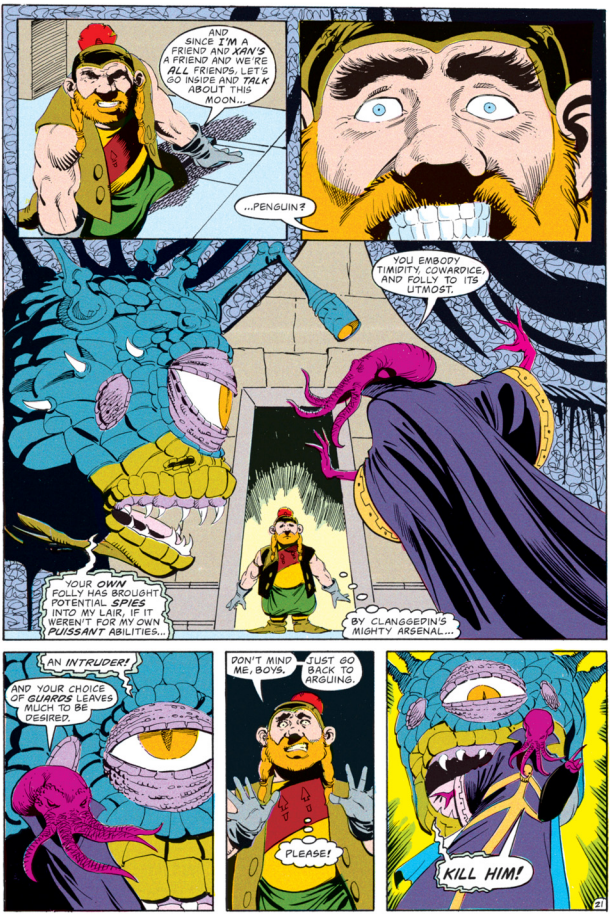
AND WHAT ABOUT THE MOONPENGUIN?


THE WHAT?

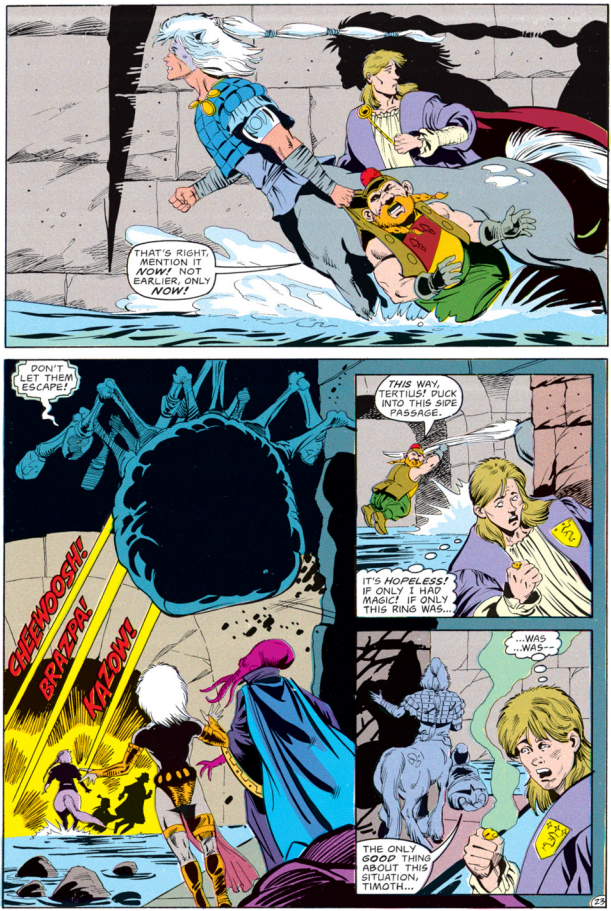
THE STATUE YOU WERE CARRYING.
OH, THAT.
I GUESS LORD XAN HAS IT.
LORD XAN?
YES. HE'S VERY NICE. HE LET ME BEAT UP A MIND FLAYER...
MIND?...

--AND THEN HE ASKED ME TO GUARD HIS DOOR FROM ENEMIES.

WE'D BEST HAVE A CHAT WITH YOUR LORD XAN.
WELL, YES, I MEAN...
NO! YOU CAN'T!
OOOFF!
HOW DARE YOU! ONYX IS YOUR FRIEND. HOW CAN YOU ACT THIS WAY TO HIM?
I'M SORRY, BUT XAN SAID...
WHO IS XAN THAT YOU TURN ON AN OLD FRIEND FOR HIM, EH?
KID, IT'S OK.
I JUST DIDN'T NOTICE IT BEFORE, IS ALL...
...CLUMSY LANGUAGE... FORMAL NAMES... STIFF ACTIONS...
--MORE ADDLE-PATED THAN USUAL.
IT LOOKS ALMOST LIKE ONE OF UNCLE MASKAR'S...
...CHARM SPELLS!
RIGHT, AND SINCE WE CAN'T BREAK IT, WE'LL HAVE TO GET AROUND IT.
FRIEND TIMOTH!
YES FRIEND ONYX?
WHAT DID THIS LORD XAN TELL YOU?
TO GUARD HIS DOOR FROM ENEMIES.
AND AM I AN ENEMY?
NO, YOU'RE MY FRIEND.
THEN YOU DON'T HAVE TO GUARD XAN'S DOOR FROM ANOTHER OF YOUR FRIENDS...
WELL... NO...
20


AND SINCE I'M A FRIEND AND XAN'S A FRIEND AND WE'RE ALL FRIENDS, LET'S GO INSIDE AND TALK ABOUT THIS MOON...
...PENGUIN?
YOU EMBODY TIMIDITY, COWARDICE, AND FOLLY TO ITS UTMOST.
YOUR OWN FOLLY HAS BROUGHT POTENTIAL SPIES INTO MY LAIR. IF IT WEREN'T FOR MY OWN PUISSANT ABILITIES...
BY CLANGGEDIN'S MIGHTY ARSENAL...
AN INTRUDER!
AND YOUR CHOICE OF GUARDS LEAVES MUCH TO BE DESIRED.
DON'T MIND ME, BOYS.
JUST GO BACK TO ARGUING.
PLEASE!
KILL HIM!
21

CHEEEWOOOSHH!
EVERYBODY!
STAND CLEAR!
WHAT?
OH, MY HEAD... WHAT HAPPENED ...I...
BY SKERRIT'S HOOVES!...
...ONYX! DON'T GO IN! XAN'S A BEHOLDER!
22


THAT'S RIGHT, MENTION IT NOW! NOT EARLIER, ONLY NOW!
DON'T LET THEM ESCAPE!
CHEEWOOSH!
BRAZZPA!
KAZOW!
THIS WAY, TERTIUS! DUCK INTO THIS SIDE PASSAGE.
IT'S HOPELESS! IF ONLY I HAD MAGIC! IF ONLY THIS RING WAS...
...WAS ...WAS--
THE ONLY GOOD THING ABOUT THIS SITUATION, TIMOTH...
23

...IS THAT IT CAN'T GET WORSE THAN THIS!
DEATH!
NEXT MONTH:
DEATH!
24

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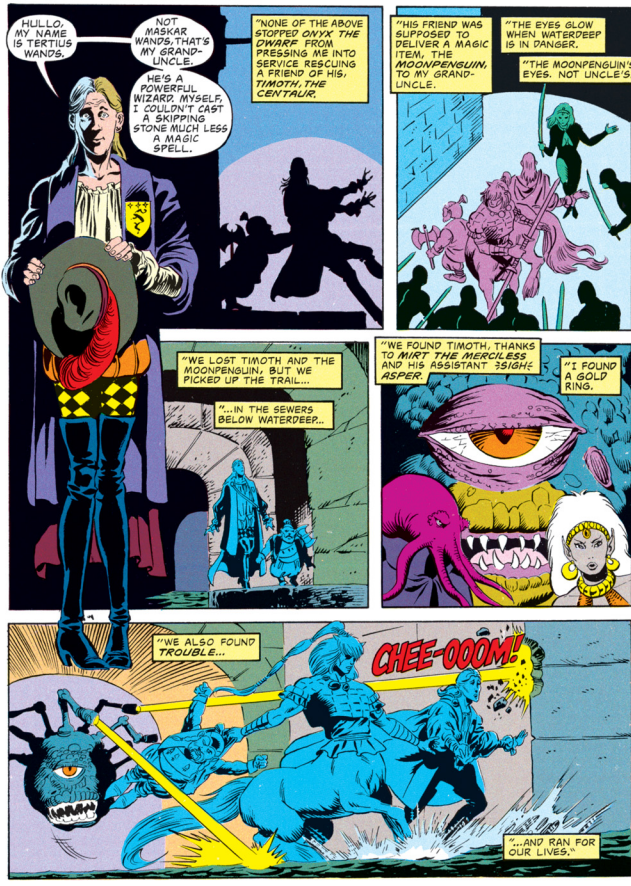
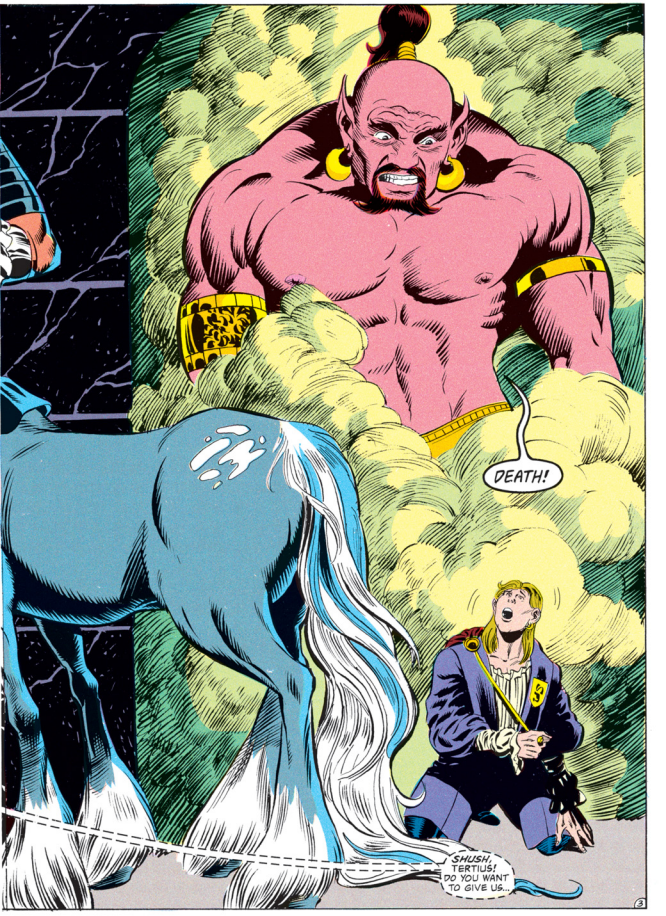
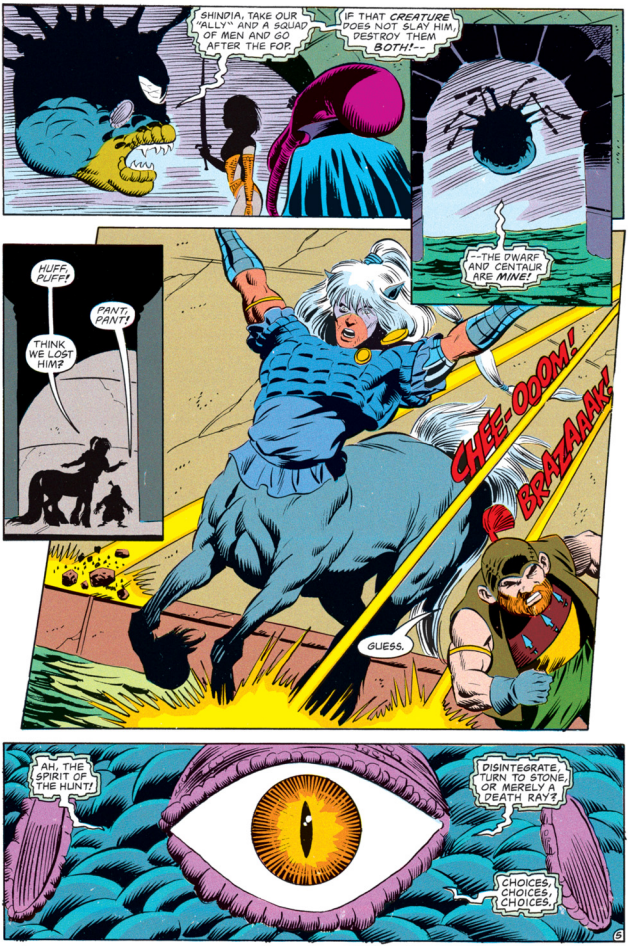
CATSPAW QUARTET
FINALE

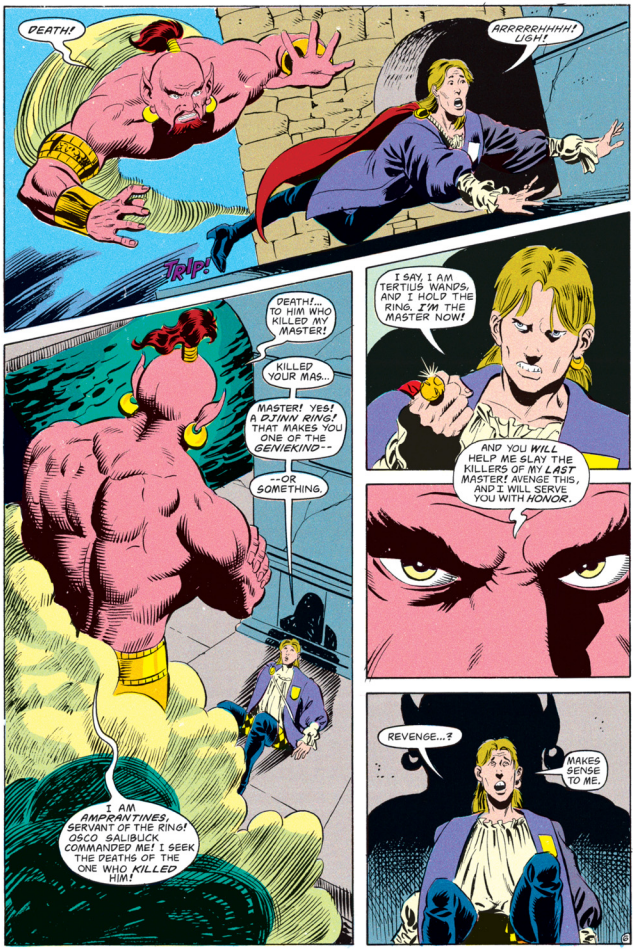

HULLO. MY NAME IS TERTIUS WANDS.
NOT MASKAR WANDS, THAT'S MY GRAND-UNCLE.
HE'S A POWERFUL WIZARD. MYSELF, I COULDN'T CAST A SKIPPING STONE MUCH LESS A MAGIC SPELL.
"NONE OF THE ABOVE STOPPED ONYX THE DWARF FROM PRESSING ME INTO SERVICE RESCUING A FRIEND OF HIS, TIMOTH, THE CENTAUR.
"HIS FRIEND WAS SUPPOSED TO DELIVER A MAGIC ITEM, THE MOONPENGUIN, TO MY GRAND-UNCLE.
"THE EYES GLOW WHEN WATERDEEP IS IN DANGER.
"THE MOONPENGUIN'S EYES. NOT UNCLE'S.
"WE LOST TIMOTH AND THE MOONPENGUIN, BUT WE PICKED UP THE TRAIL...
"...IN THE SEWERS BELOW WATERDEEP..
"WE FOUND TIMOTH, THANKS TO MIRT THE MERCILESS AND HIS ASSISTANT ZSIGHE ASPER.
"I FOUND A GOLD RING.
"WE ALSO FOUND TROUBLE...
CHEE-OOOM!
"...AND RAN FOR OUR LIVES."

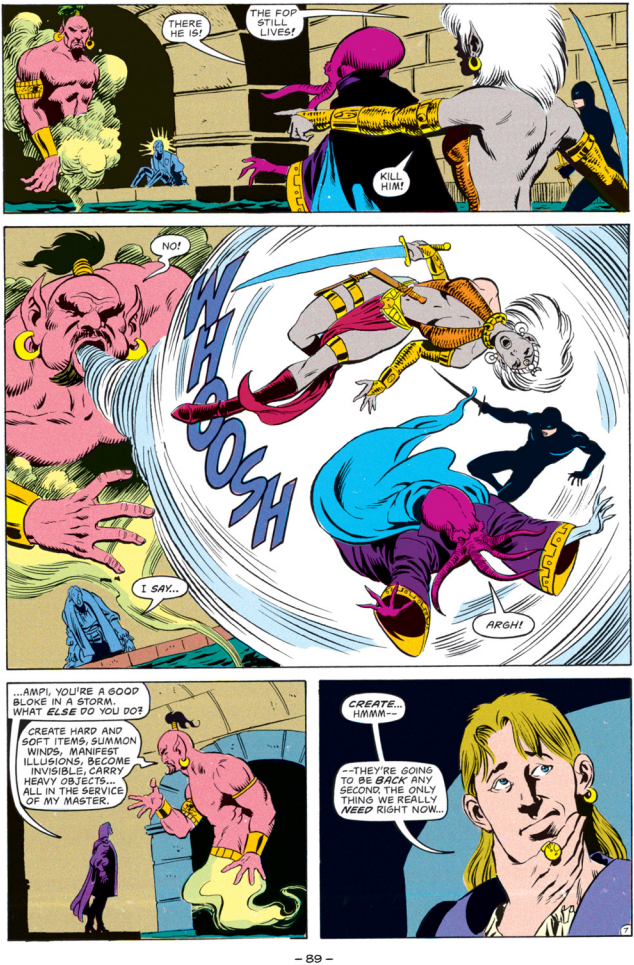
DOWN IN THE DEPTHS
CATSPAN QUARTET PART FOUR
"JUST WATCH..."
IF WE'RE VERY QUIET, THEY MAY PASS US BY.
JEFF GRUBB WRITER
JAN DUURSEMA PENCILLER
DAVE SIMONS INKER
STEVE HAYNIE LETTERER
MATT WEBB COLORIST
ELLIOT S. MAGGIN EDITOR


DEATH!
SHUSH, TERTIUS! DO YOU WANT TO GIVE US...

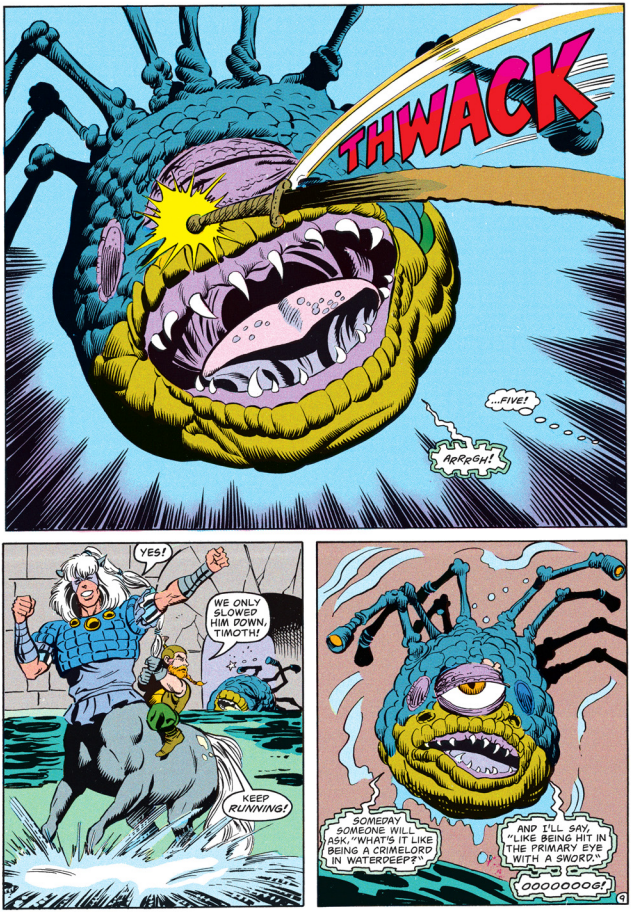
ARRRRRHHHHHH!
...AWAY?
DEATH!
ARRRRRHHHHHH!
WHY ME...?
THE INTRUDERS!
KILL THEM! KILL THEM ALL!
PLAN B?
PLAN B!
RUN FOR THE HILLS!
4

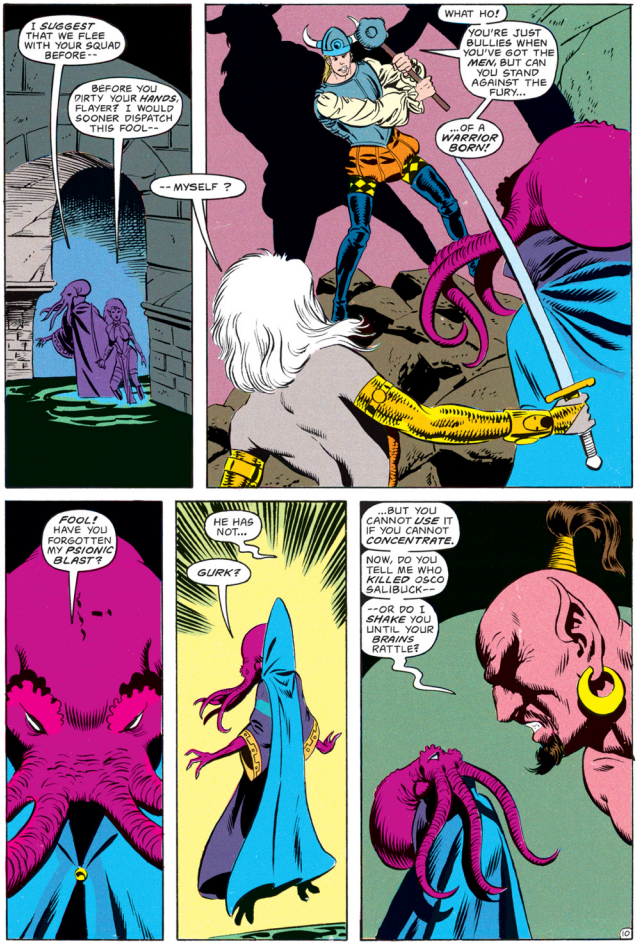

SHINDIA, TAKE OUR "ALLY" AND A SQUAD OF MEN AND GO AFTER THE FOR
IF THAT CREATURE DOES NOT SLAY HIM, DESTROY THEM BOTH!--
--THE DWARF AND CENTAUR ARE MINE!
HUFF, PUFF!
PANT, PANT!
THINK WE LOST HIM?
CHEE-OOOM!
BRAZAAAK!
GUESS.
AH, THE SPIRIT OF THE HUNT!
DISINTEGRATE, TURN TO STONE, OR MERELY A DEATH RAY?
CHOICES, CHOICES, CHOICES.
6


DEATH!
ARRRRRHHHH! UGH!
TRIP!
I SAY, I AM TERTIUS WANDS, AND I HOLD THE RING. I'M THE MASTER NOW!
DEATH!... TO HIM WHO KILLED MY MASTER!
KILLED YOUR MAS...
MASTER! YES! A DJINN RING! THAT MAKES YOU ONE OF THE GENIEKIND--
--OR SOMETHING.
AND YOU WILL HELP ME SLAY THE KILLERS OF MY LAST MASTER! AVENGE THIS, AND I WILL SERVE YOU WITH HONOR.
I AM AMPORTINES, SERVANT OF THE RING! OSCO SALIBUCK COMMANDED ME! I SEEK THE DEATHS OF THE ONE WHO KILLED HIM!
REVENGE...?
MAKES SENSE TO ME.

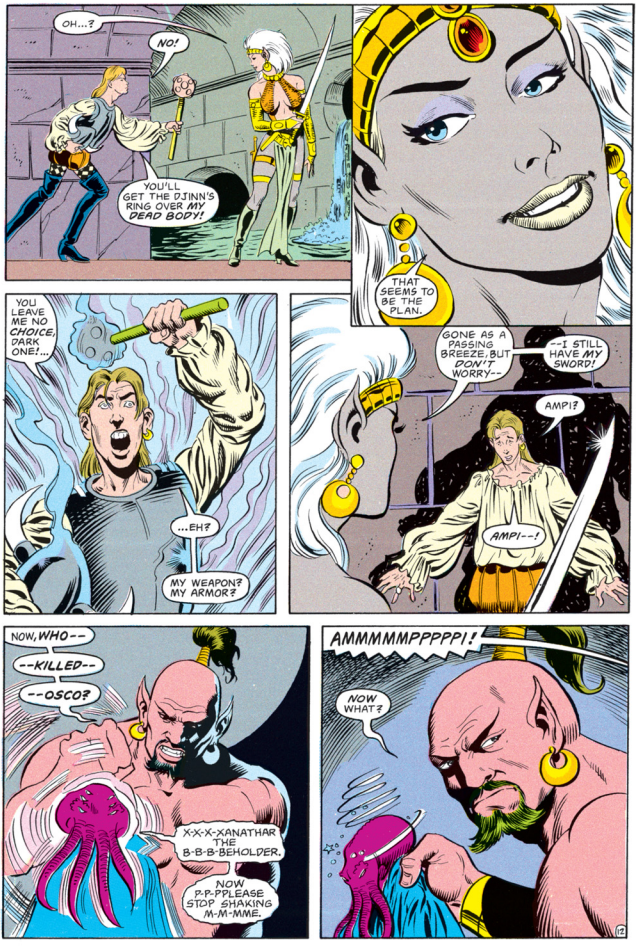

THERE HE IS!
THE FOP STILL LIVES!
KILL HIM!
NO!
WHOOSH
I SAY...
ARGH!
...AMP!, YOU'RE A GOOD BLOKE IN A STORM. WHAT ELSE DO YOU DO?
CREATE HARD AND SOFT ITEMS, SUMMON WINDS, MANIFEST ILLUSIONS, BECOME INVISIBLE, CARRY HEAVY OBJECTS... ALL IN THE SERVICE OF MY MASTER.
CREATE... HMMM--
--THEY'RE GOING TO BE BACK ANY SECOND, THE ONLY THING WE REALLY NEED RIGHT NOW...

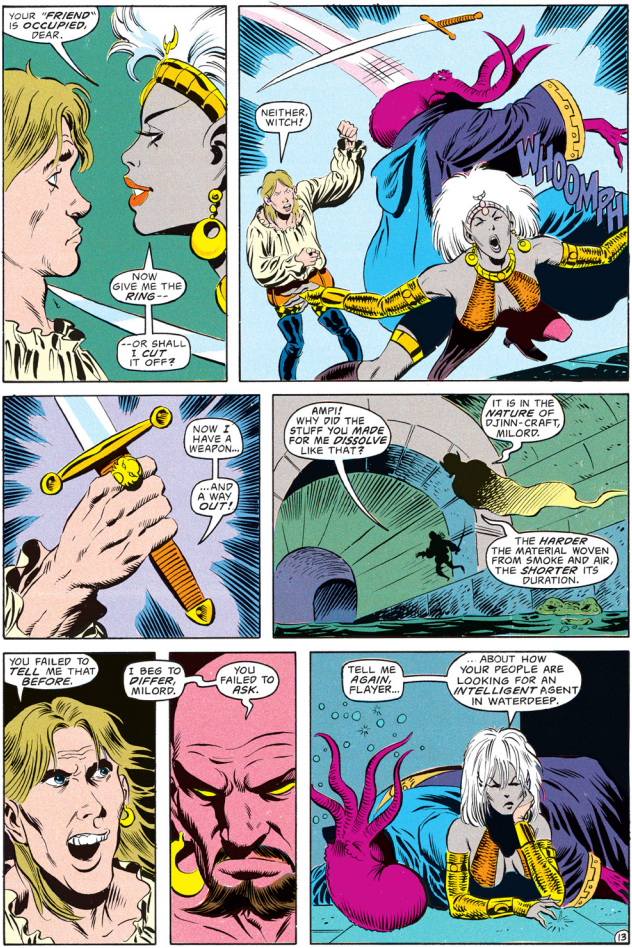
...IS WEAPONS!
EXCEPT FOR MY DARTS, WE DON'T HAVE A SINGLE DECENT WEAPON TO FIGHT THAT CREATURE WITH.
HOLD ON, ONYX. HERE'S A SWORD...
...AND IT'S RUSTED ALMOST CLEAN THROUGH. IT'LL SNAP ON THE FIRST BLOW.
FIRST BLOW, EH?
WELL, IF ONE SHOT IS ALL WE'LL GET--
--WE JUST MAKE IT COUNT.
ONE...
...TWO...

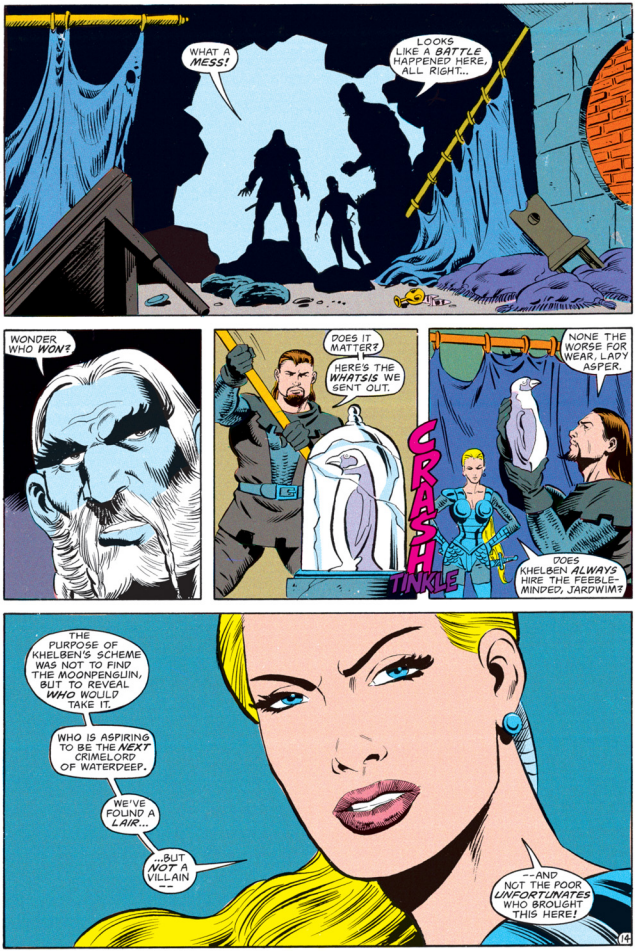

THWACK
...FIVE!
ARRGH!
YES!
WE ONLY SLOWED HIM DOWN, TIMOTH!
KEEP RUNNING!
SOMEDAY SOMEONE WILL ASK, "WHAT'S IT LIKE BEING A CRIMELORD IN WATERDEEP?"
AND I'LL SAY, "LIKE BEING HIT IN THE PRIMARY EYE WITH A SWORD."
OOOOOOOG!
9

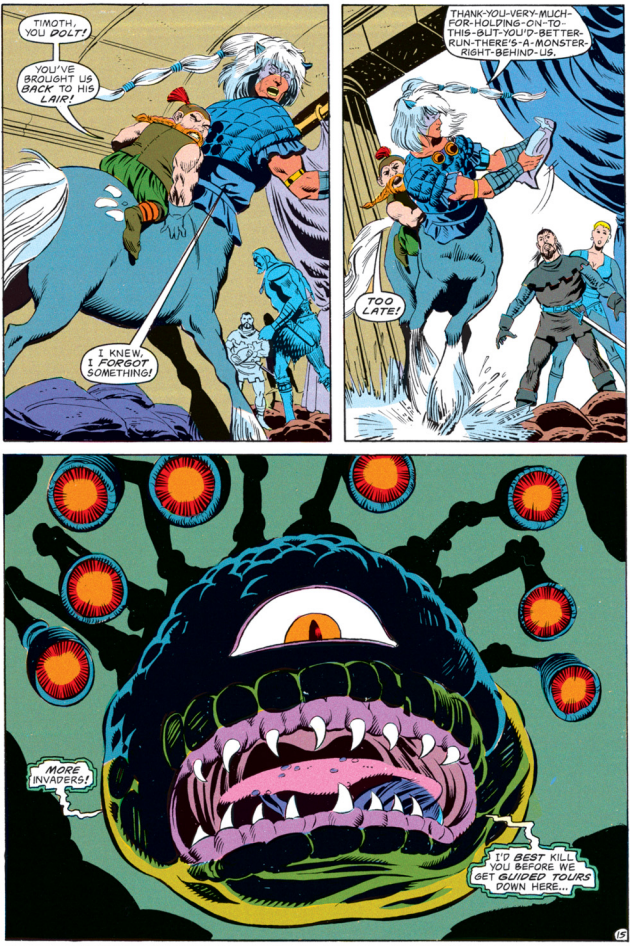

I SUGGEST THAT WE FLEE WITH YOUR SQUAD BEFORE--
BEFORE YOU DIRTY YOUR HANDS, FLAYER? I WOULD SOONER DISPATCH THIS FOOL--
--MYSELF ?
WHAT HO!
YOU'RE JUST BULLIES WHEN YOU'VE GOT THE MEN, BUT CAN YOU STAND AGAINST THE FURY...
...OF A WARRIOR BORN!
FOOL! HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN MY PSIONIC BLAST?
HE HAS NOT...
GURK?
...BUT YOU CANNOT USE IT IF YOU CANNOT CONCENTRATE.
NOW, DO YOU TELL ME WHO KILLED OSCO SALIBUCK--
--OR DO I SHAKE YOU UNTIL YOUR BRAINS RATTLE?

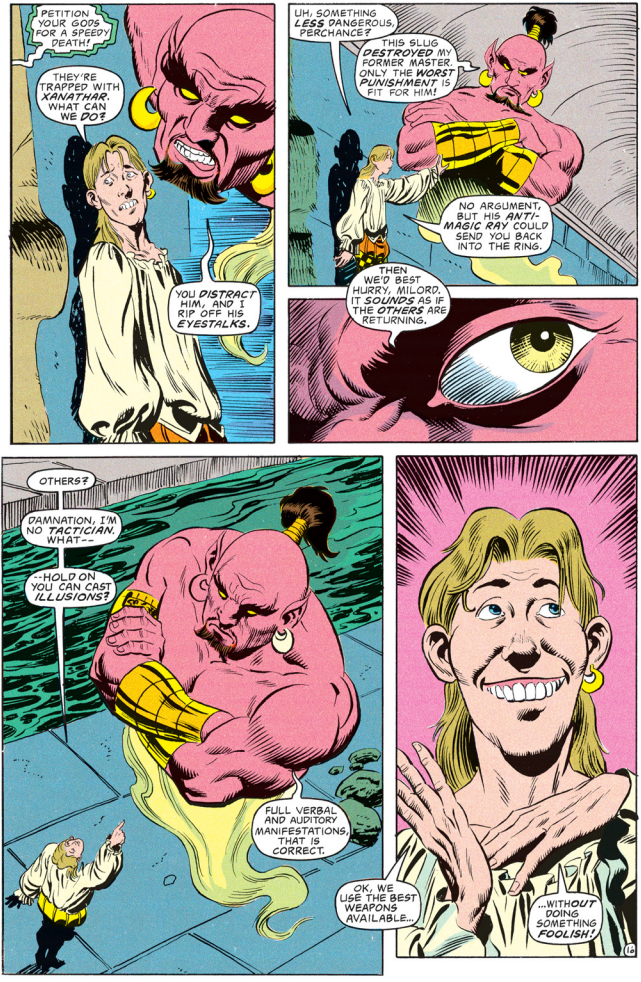
FLEE, FOUL MAIDEN..
SWIIISH!
... WHILE YOU STILL HAVE A...
...CHANCE?
WHOOO?!?!
THUMP!
YOU ARE SUCH A DEAR!
I REALLY REGRET HAVING TO KILL YOU!
SSSTOPPPP CH-CH-CHATTING AND K-K-KILL HIM!
TH-THE D-D-DJINN-NN IS CON-CONTROLLED-DD BY THE RING-G-G-G!


OH...?
NO!
YOU'LL GET THE DJINN'S RING OVER MY DEAD BODY!
THAT SEEMS TO BE THE PLAN.
YOU LEAVE ME NO CHOICE, DARK ONE!...
...EH?
MY WEAPON? MY ARMOR?
GONE AS A PASSING BREEZE. BUT DON'T WORRY--
--I STILL HAVE MY SWORD!
AMPI?
AMPI--!
NOW, WHO--
--KILLED--
--OSCO?
X-X-X-XANATHAR THE B-B-B-BEHOLDER.
NOW P-P-PLEASE STOP SHAKING M-M-MME.
AMMMMMPPPPP!
NOW WHAT?

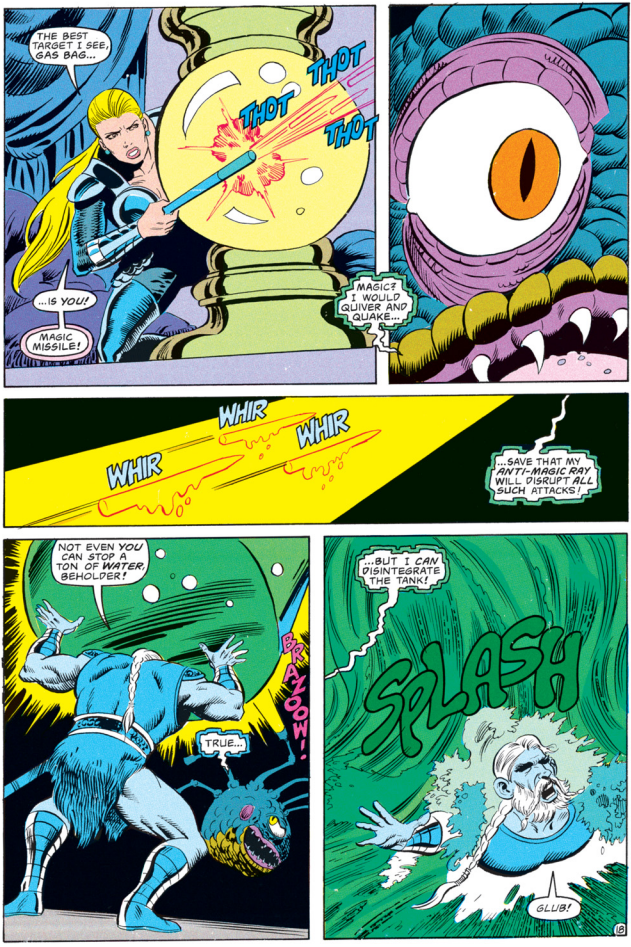

YOUR "FRIEND" IS OCCUPIED, DEAR.
NOW GIVE ME THE RING--
--OR SHALL I CUT IT OFF?
NEITHER, WITCH!
WHOOMPH
NOW I HAVE A WEAPON...
...AND A WAY OUT!
AMPI! WHY DID THE STUFF YOU MADE FOR ME DISSOLVE LIKE THAT?
IT IS IN THE NATURE OF DJINN-CRAFT, MILORD.
THE HARDER THE MATERIAL WOVEN FROM SMOKE AND AIR, THE SHORTER ITS DURATION.
YOU FAILED TO TELL ME THAT BEFORE.
I BEG TO DIFFER, MILORD.
YOU FAILED TO ASK.
TELL ME AGAIN, FLAYER...
.. ABOUT HOW YOUR PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR AN INTELLIGENT AGENT IN WATERDEEP.
13


WHAT A MESS!
LOOKS LIKE A BATTLE HAPPENED HERE, ALL RIGHT...
WONDER WHO WON?
DOES IT MATTER?
HERE'S THE WHATSIS WE SENT OUT.
CRASH
TINKLE
NONE THE WORSE FOR WEAR, LADY ASPER.
DOES KHELBEN ALWAYS HIRE THE FEEBLE-MINDED, JARDWIM?
THE PURPOSE OF KHELBEN'S SCHEME WAS NOT TO FIND THE MOONPENGUIN, BUT TO REVEAL WHO WOULD TAKE IT.
WHO IS ASPIRING TO BE THE NEXT CRIMELORD OF WATERDEEP.
WE'VE FOUND A LAIR...
...BUT NOT A VILLAIN --
--AND NOT THE POOR UNFORTUNATES WHO BROUGHT THIS HERE!
14

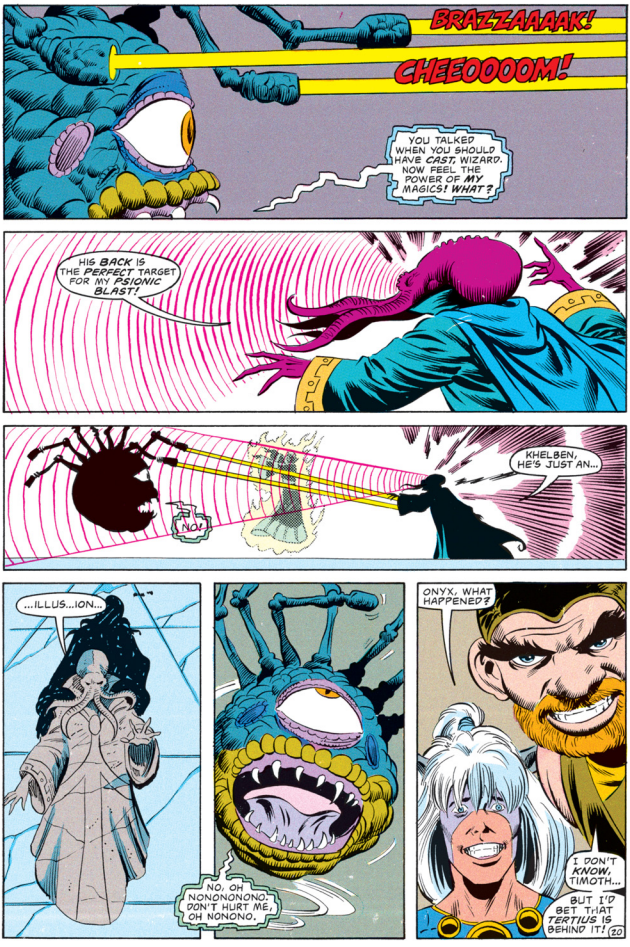

TIMOTH, YOU DOLT!
YOU'VE BROUGHT US BACK TO HIS LAIR!
I KNEW, I FORGOT SOMETHING!
THANK-YOU-VERY-MUCH-FOR-HOLDING-ON-TO-THIS-BUT-YOU'D-BETTER-RUN-THERE'S-A-MONSTER-RIGHT-BEHIND-US.
TOO LATE!
MORE INVADERS!
I'D BEST KILL YOU BEFORE WE GET GUIDED TOURS DOWN HERE...
15

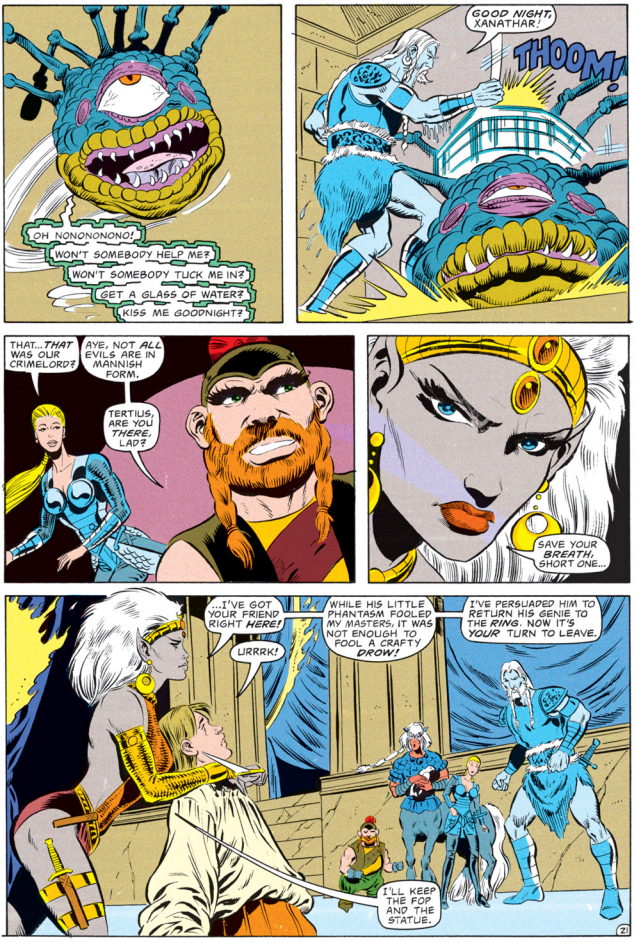

PETITION YOUR GODS FOR A SPEEDY DEATH!
THEY'RE TRAPPED WITH XANATHAR. WHAT CAN WE DO?
YOU DISTRACT HIM, AND I RIP OFF HIS EYESTALKS.
UH, SOMETHING LESS DANGEROUS, PERCHANCE?
THIS SLUG DESTROYED MY FORMER MASTER. ONLY THE WORST PUNISHMENT IS FIT FOR HIM!
NO ARGUMENT, BUT HIS ANTI-MAGIC RAY COULD SEND YOU BACK INTO THE RING.
THEN WE'D BEST HURRY, MILORD. IT SOUNDS AS IF THE OTHERS ARE RETURNING.
OTHERS?
DAMNATION, I'M NO TACTICIAN. WHAT--
--HOLD ON. YOU CAN CAST ILLUSIONS?
FULL VERBAL AND AUDITORY MANIFESTATIONS, THAT IS CORRECT.
OK, WE USE THE BEST WEAPONS AVAILABLE..
...WITHOUT DOING SOMETHING FOOLISH!
12

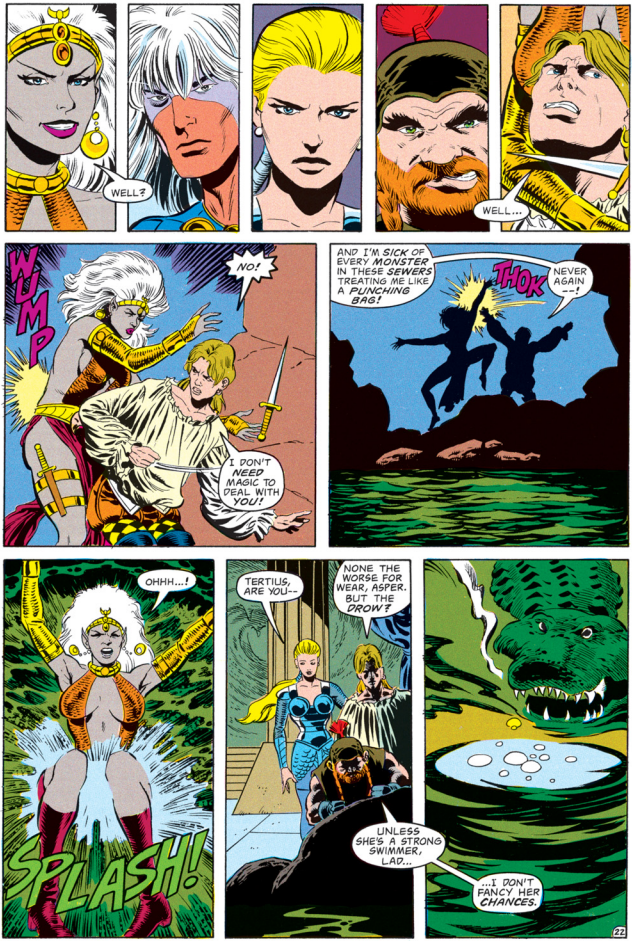
TIMOTH!
THIS IS THE MOST DAMN-FOOL THING YOU'VE EVER GOTTEN ME INTO!
CHEEWOOSH!
BARRRRAAACKK!
GEE, ONYX--
--SINCE THE EYES OF THE PENGUIN ARE SUPPOSED TO LIGHT UP AROUND DANGER...
...DOES THIS QUALIFY?
PAZZZOOOOW!
NO QUESTIONS!
THIS IS A TIME FOR BATTLE!
NO, FIGHTER.
CHEEEEWOOOSH!
THIS IS A TIME FOR EASY TARGETS!
17

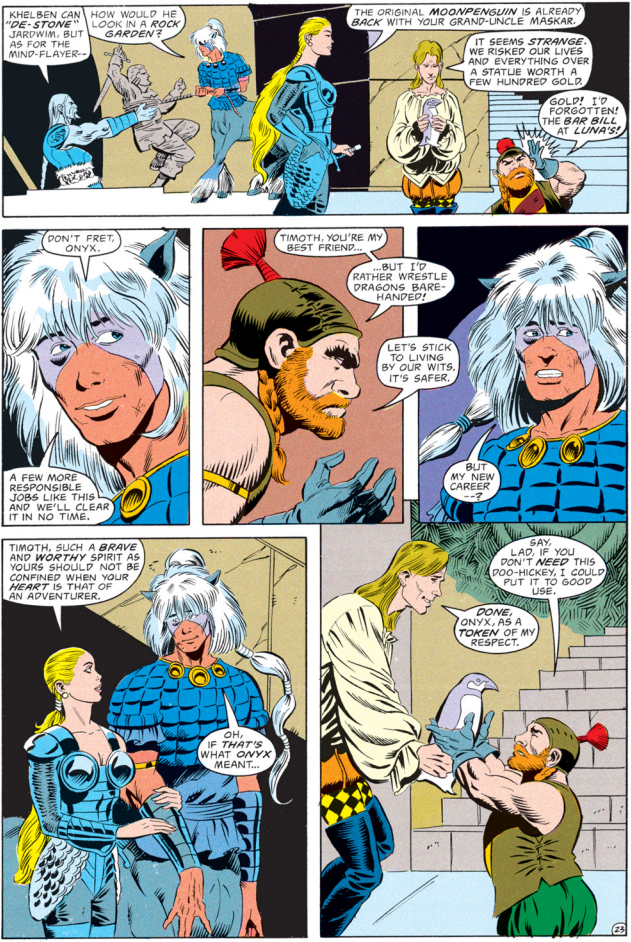

THE BEST TARGET I SEE, GAS BAG...
THOT
THOT
THOT
...IS YOU!
MAGIC MISSILE!
MAGIC? I WOULD QUIVER AND QUAKE...
WHIR
WHIR
WHIR
...SAVE THAT MY ANTI-MAGIC RAY WILL DISRUPT ALL SUCH ATTACKS!
NOT EVEN YOU CAN STOP A TON OF WATER, BEHOLDER!
BR-AZOOW!
TRUE...
...BUT I CAN DISINTEGRATE THE TANK!
SPLASH
GLUB!

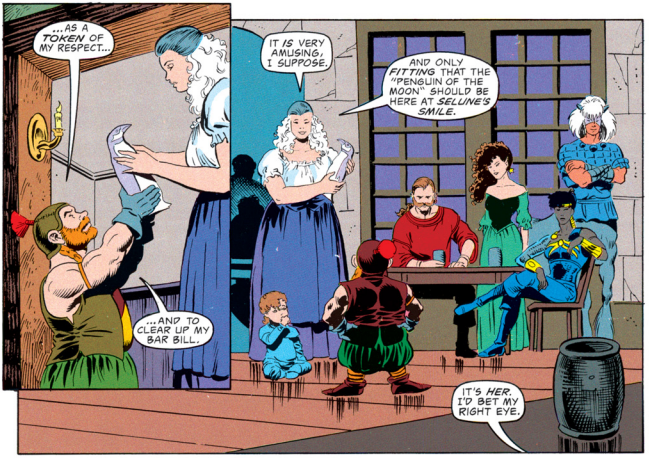
WE'RE GETTING SLAUGHTERED HERE!
YOU'VE GOT A PLAN?
YEAH, YOU HIT HIM HIGH, AND I'LL TRY TO ROLL UNDER HIM!
THAT'S SUICIDE!
IT'S SUICIDE TO STAY HERE!
READY, SET...
NO!
YOU HAVE MOCKED MY POWER LONG ENOUGH, TYRANT OF THE EYES.
NOW IT IS TIME TO FACE THE FINAL PIPER...
...AND PAY HIS FINAL PRICE!
WE'VE GOTTEN HERE JUST IN TIME, SHINDIA. IT'S KHELBEN HIMSELF! WHAT A CHANCE!
KHELBEN ...HERE? SOMETHING'S WRONG...
19

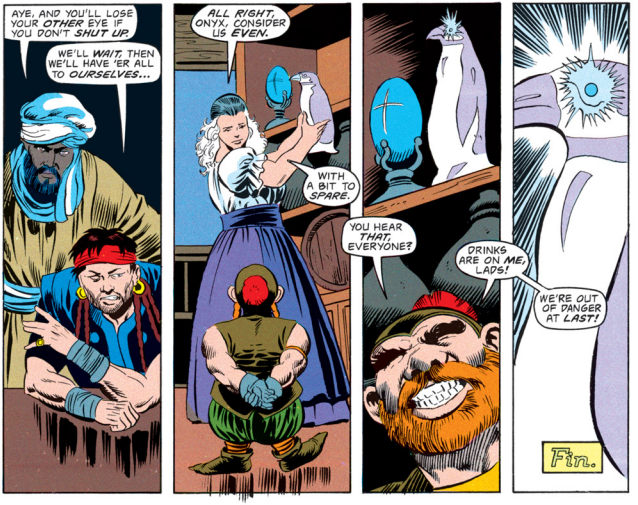

BRAZZAAAAK!
CHEEOOOOM!
YOU TALKED WHEN YOU SHOULD HAVE CAST, WIZARD. NOW FEEL THE POWER OF MY MAGICS! WHAT?
HIS BACK IS THE PERFECT TARGET FOR MY PSIONIC BLAST!
KHELBEN, HE'S JUST AN...
NO!
...ILLUS...ION...
NO, OH NONONONO. DON'T HURT ME, OH NONONO.
ONYX, WHAT HAPPENED?
I DON'T KNOW, TIMOTH...
BUT I'D BET THAT TERTIUS IS BEHIND IT!


OH NONONONONO!
WON'T SOMEBODY HELP ME?
WON'T SOMEBODY TUCK ME IN?
GET A GLASS OF WATER?
KISS ME GOODNIGHT?
GOOD NIGHT, XANATHAR!
THOOM!
THAT...THAT WAS OUR CRIMELORD?
AYE, NOT ALL EVILS ARE IN MANNISH FORM.
TERTIUS, ARE YOU THERE, LAD?
SAVE YOUR BREATH, SHORT ONE...
...I'VE GOT YOUR FRIEND RIGHT HERE!
URRRK!
WHILE HIS LITTLE PHANTASM FOOLED MY MASTERS, IT WAS NOT ENOUGH TO FOOL A CRAFTY DROW!
I'VE PERSUADED HIM TO RETURN HIS GENIE TO THE RING. NOW IT'S YOUR TURN TO LEAVE.
I'LL KEEP THE FOP AND THE STATUE.
21


WELL?
WELL...
WUMP
NO!
I DON'T NEED MAGIC TO DEAL WITH YOU!
AND I'M SICK OF EVERY MONSTER IN THESE SEWERS TREATING ME LIKE A PUNCHING BAG!
THOK
NEVER AGAIN --!
OHHH..!
SPLASH!
TERTIUS, ARE YOU--
NONE THE WORSE FOR WEAR, ASPER. BUT THE DROW?
UNLESS SHE'S A STRONG SWIMMER, LAD...
...I DON'T FANCY HER CHANCES.
22


KHELBEN CAN 'IDE-STONE' JARDWIN, BUT AS FOR THE MIND-FLAYER--
HOW WOULD HE LOOK IN A ROCK GARDEN?
THE ORIGINAL MOONPENGUIN IS ALREADY BACK WITH YOUR GRAND-UNCLE MASKAR.
IT SEEMS STRANGE: WE RISKED OUR LIVES AND EVERYTHING OVER A STATUE WORTH A FEW HUNDRED GOLD.
GOLD! I'D FORGOTTEN! THE BAR BILL AT LUNA'S!
DON'T FRET, ONYX.
A FEW MORE RESPONSIBLE JOBS LIKE THIS AND WE'LL CLEAR IT IN NO TIME.
TIMOTH, YOU'RE MY BEST FRIEND...
...BUT I'D RATHER WRESTLE DRAGONS BARE-HANDED!
LET'S STICK TO LIVING BY OUR WITS, IT'S SAFER.
BUT MY NEW CAREER --?
TIMOTH, SUCH A BRAVE AND WORTHY SPIRIT AS YOURS SHOULD NOT BE CONFINED WHEN YOUR HEART IS THAT OF AN ADVENTURER.
OH, IF THAT'S WHAT ONYX MEANT...
SAY, LAD, IF YOU DON'T NEED THIS DOO-HICKEY, I COULD PUT IT TO GOOD USE.
DONE, ONYX, AS A TOKEN OF MY RESPECT.
23


...AS A TOKEN OF MY RESPECT...
...AND TO CLEAR UP MY BAR BILL.
IT IS VERY AMUSING, I SUPPOSE.
AND ONLY FITTING THAT THE "PENGUIN OF THE MOON" SHOULD BE HERE AT SELUNE'S SMILE.
IT'S HER. I'D BET MY RIGHT EYE.


AYE, AND YOU'LL LOSE YOUR OTHER EYE IF YOU DON'T SHUT UP.
WE'LL WAIT, THEN WE'LL HAVE 'ER ALL TO OURSELVES...
ALL RIGHT, ONYX, CONSIDER US EVEN.
WITH A BIT TO SPARE.
YOU HEAR THAT, EVERYONE?
DRINKS ARE ON ME, LADS!
WE'RE OUT OF DANGER AT LAST!
Fin.

THE Advanced Dungeons & Dragons COMIC

FROM THE DUNGEON
By Jim Lowder

The Lords of Waterdeep

Waterdeep has one of the most unusual governments on the continent of Faerun (perhaps even on the entire planet of Toril). The city is ruled by a mysterious group called "the Lords of Waterdeep."

The first Lords came into being hundreds of years ago, when the city was first becoming a major trading port. At that time, Waterdeep's future was in question. Some of the city's residents, led by a warlord named Raurlor, wanted Waterdeep to become a major military power. Others wanted to see the port become a place where crafts would flourish, not armies.

A great wizard, Ahghairon, became the spokesman for those opposed to the warlord's plans. Though he presented a convincing argument in favor of a peaceful future and a majority of Waterdeep's population favored the mage's plan, Raurlor determined to pursue his dreams of conquest.

When no other options were left to him, Ahghairon killed Raurlor in a duel. When the conflict was over, the mage called all the people of the city together and declared himself the first Lord of Waterdeep. He promised that from that time on, the city would respect wisdom, not armed might.

To this end, Ahghairon gathered a few others of great wisdom to rule the city in secret. Unlike the mage, though, the other Lords never revealed their identities, wearing identical masks, helms, and robes in public. In addition, the Lords' helms made it impossible for mages to control their thoughts or read their minds.

At first, the populace of Waterdeep were suspicious of this new ruling body, and many wondered if they had traded one despot for another. But the Lords soon proved to be able leaders. Their laws were fair and their justice swift, so the city quickly accepted them.

The Lords of Waterdeep soon needed help in dealing with everyday matters in the city, so they established guilds. These professional unions were to watch over the various trades being practiced in Waterdeep. They did things like set standard rates for work and monitor craftsmen to make sure they were honest and skilled.

The guilds' power grew, however, and soon the guildmasters were scheming to bring about the downfall of the Lords. By the time Ahghairon died of old age, the guilds had discovered the identities of most of the Lords and assassinated them. Only two Lords escaped, and the guildmasters took over the city.

But the guildmasters quickly fell to fighting among themselves, and Waterdeep plunged into a six-year period of civil strife and bloodshed. When the Guild Wars ended, only two guildmasters remained.

One of the remaining Lords, a woodworker named Baeron, revealed his identity to Waterdeep's citizenry and promised to save the city from the bloody reign of the guildmasters. The Waterdhavians enthusiastically accepted the return of the Lords, and Baeron soon gathered a new group of secret rulers around him.

Baeron also formed a Lords' Court, over which twenty-six magistrates presided. These magistrates handled the mundane matters of city government, enabling the Lords to remain even more secretive. Because of this, most of Waterdeep's populace now only see a Lord in court. There, two masked Lords and the one publicly recognized Lord preside over the court's proceedings.

Sixteen Lords currently run Waterdeep, and Piergeiron "the Paladinson" is the Lords' only known member. The son of a famous adventurer, Piergeiron is also Waterdeep's chief diplomat, commander of the city's watch and army, and overmaster of the city's guilds. He is immensely popular in Waterdeep, and most residents think he is an ideal ruler and spokesman for their government.

Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun, Mirt the Moneylender, Larissa Neathal, and Texter are often spoken of as suspected Lords of Waterdeep and, in fact, all four are members of the secret government. Khelben and Mirt are quite involved in city affairs, and both men have been known to hire agents on the Lords' behalf to deal with Waterdeep's problems.

Larissa Neathal is a courtesan who plays the giggling, bubble-headed wench for most visiting envoys and diplomats. Using this guise, she gathers information for the Lords and tries to sway foreign dignitaries to the Lords' secret agenda.

Texter is also a commonly-suspected member of the body. He is a powerful paladin who is very active in the city's defense. Texter often leads patrols of Waterdeep's harbor and roads.

The other Lords keep their identities hidden, though many of them are well known citizens.

One of the most unusual members of Waterdeep's government is "Kitten." Few of the Lords even know her full name: Nymara "Kitten" Scheiron. Nymara is an entertainer and thief from the city's docks. Though she can disguise herself as a fine lady, she is more comfortable in "common" surroundings and prefers shouting matches to calm discussions. Nymara adds a flavor of practicality to many of the Lords' judgments. She is often in the company of Mirt and his old adventuring companion, Durnan.

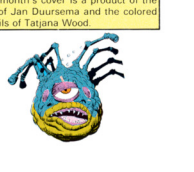
Durnan, a former fighter, runs an inn called the Yawning Portal and, as a Lord, works for justice and equality. Durnan, however, is not entirely happy with the justice the Lords mete out. Because laws constrain the Lords, a guilty man will sometimes go free on a technicality or a basically good man will be punished for a minor infraction.

To correct these "injustices," Durnan works with the Red Sashes, a group of vigilantes who think they are fighting against the Lords. Durnan uses this company to punish the guilty and reward the innocent, as well as to further the Lords' basic goals.

The other Lords are even more elusive, but they all work together to improve Waterdeep. The goal that Ahghairon set for the city when he founded the Lords—that the port should be a place for all peaceful races to live together—has yet to come to pass. With the Lords of Waterdeep constantly working for justice in the city, however, Ahghairon's dream comes closer to reality every day.

With next month's issue, we will be running your letters in at least one out of every two issues. So write. Unless someone comes up with a better suggestion, we will henceforth call this space, "From the Dungeon."

This month's cover is a product of the pen of Jan Duursema and the colored pencils of Tatjana Wood.



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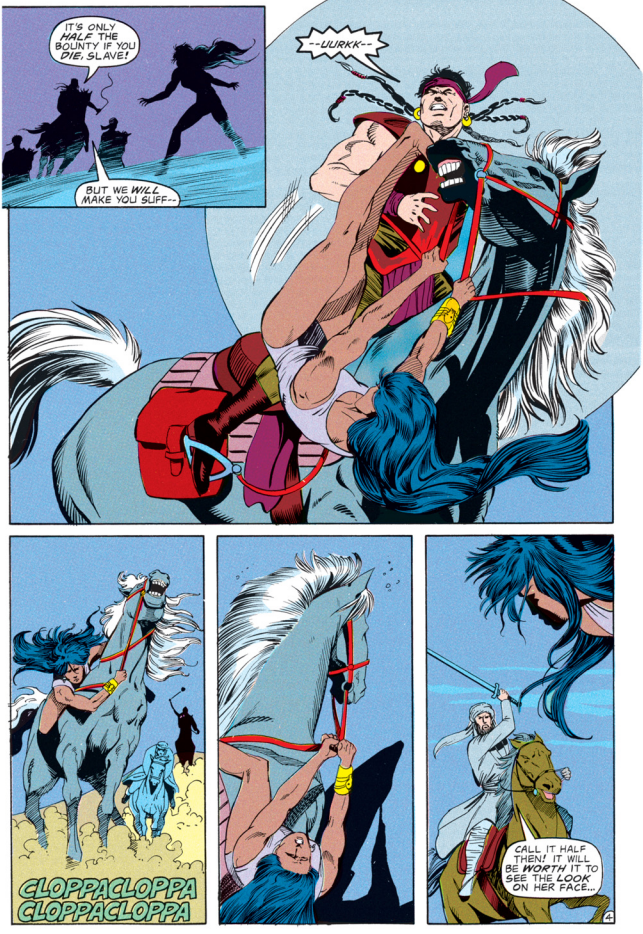
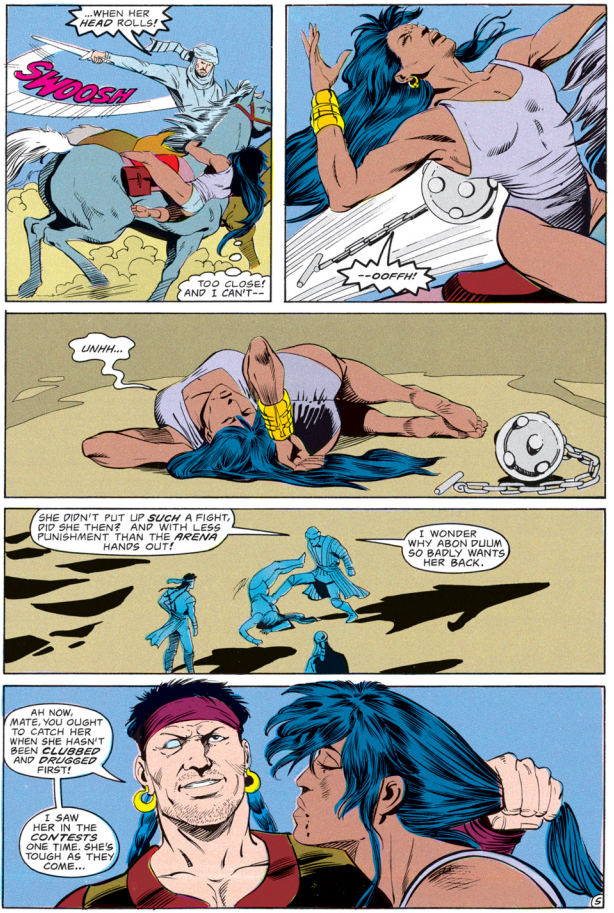
SPELL GAMES
PART 1 OF 4

MANSHAKA!
I LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT WORD, ZOMIR!...
LIKE GOLD JANGLING IN MY PURSE--!
--THE GOLD THAT ABON DUUM HAS OFFERED FOR HIS PRETTY PRIZE!
I'VE SEEN MY SHARE OF BOUNTIES ON ESCAPED SLAVES BEFORE--
--BUT NEVER THE PRICE THIS ONE IS FETCHING!

THE SLAVE ....!
SHE'S FREE!

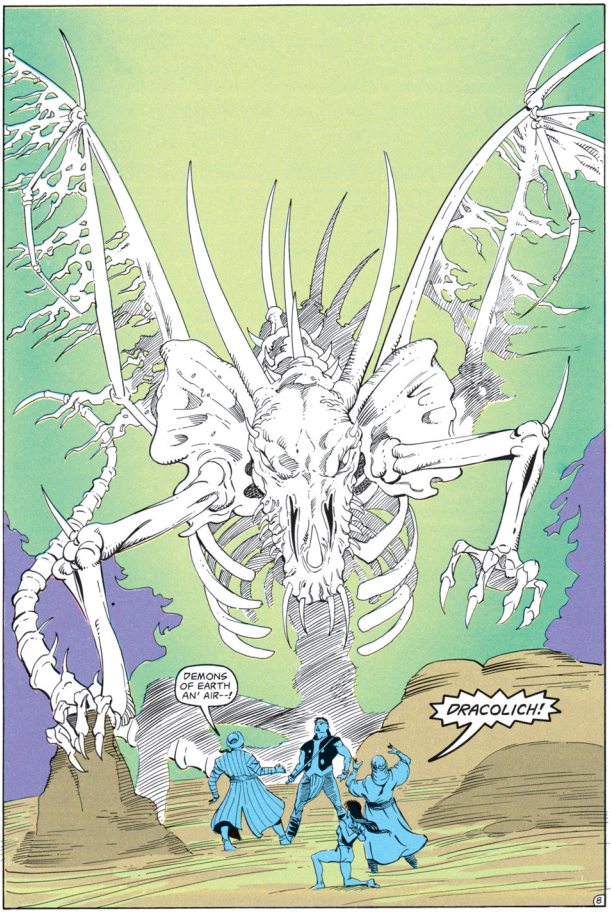
VAJRA VALMEYJAR IS NO MAN'S SLAVE! AND I'M NOT GOING BACK TO MANSHAKA!
KILL ME IF YOU CAN, YOU CALIMSHITE PIGS--
--BUT I WON'T DIE ALONE!
SHACKLES OF THE PAST
DAN MISHKIN WRITER
JAN DUURSEMA ARTIST
MATT WEBB COLORIST
STEVE HAYNIE LETTERER
ELLIOT S. MAGGIN EDITOR


IT'S ONLY HALF THE BOUNTY IF YOU DIE, SLAVE!
BUT WE WILL MAKE YOU SUFF--
--UURKK--
CLOPPACLOPPA CLOPPACLOPPA
CALL IT HALF THEN! IT WILL BE WORTH IT TO SEE THE LOOK ON HER FACE...

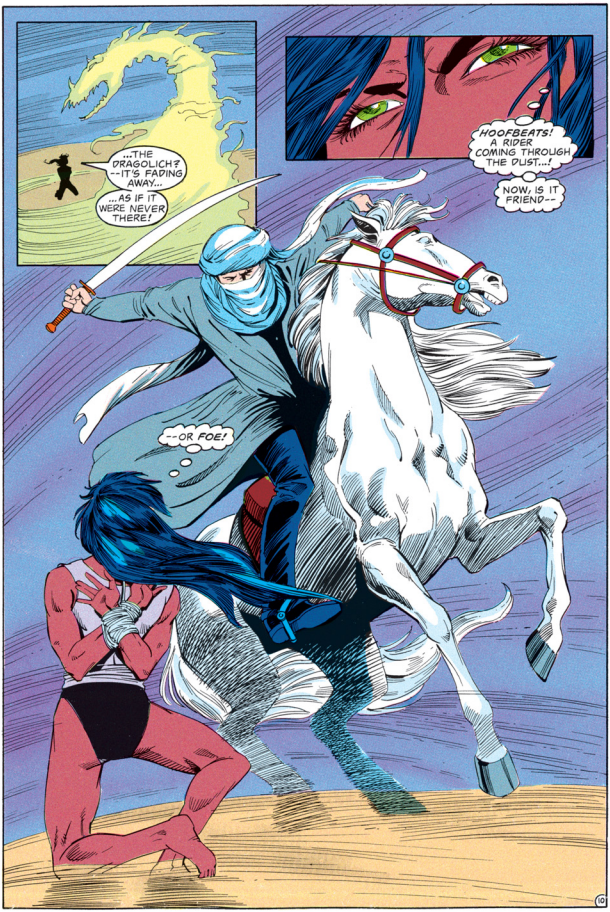

...WHEN HER HEAD ROLLS!
SWOOSH
TOO CLOSE! AND I CAN'T--
--OOFFH!
UNHH...
SHE DIDN'T PUT UP SUCH A FIGHT, DID SHE THEN? AND WITH LESS PUNISHMENT THAN THE ARENA HANDS OUT!
I WONDER WHY ABON DUUM SO BADLY WANTS HER BACK.
AH NOW, MATE, YOU OUGHT TO CATCH HER WHEN SHE HASN'T BEEN CLUBBED AND DRUGGED FIRST!
I SAW HER IN THE CONTESTS ONE TIME. SHE'S TOUGH AS THEY COME...

VAJ-RA!
VAJ-RA!
VAJ-RA!
VAJ-RA!
VAJRA!
VAJRA!
VAJRAAA!

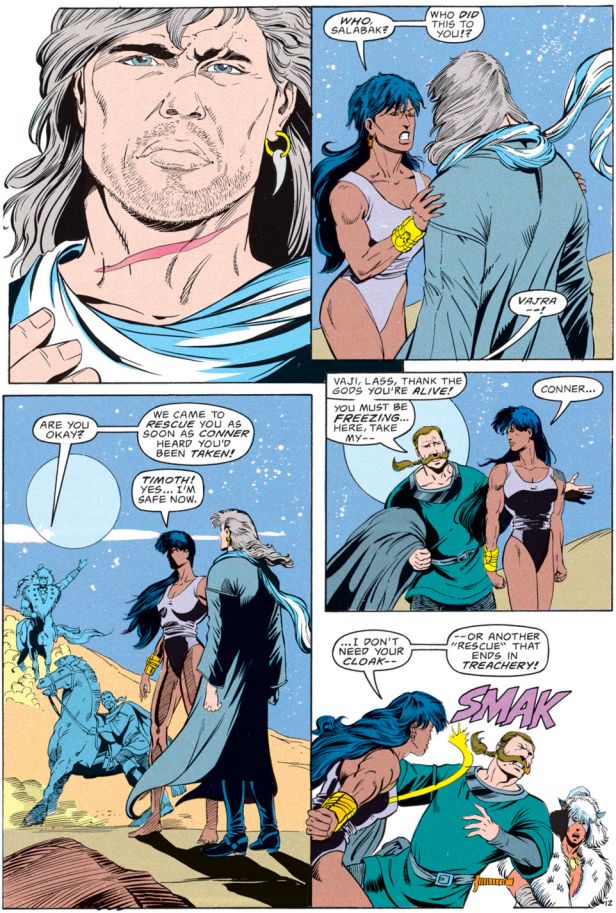
...AND SHE NEVER ONCE ANSWERED THE CHEERS OF THE CROWD.
ABON DUUM ALWAYS DID LIKE 'EM FEISTY!
OR SO I'VE HEARD.
YAGH!
WHAT'S THAT, SLAVE? TIGHTER, YOU SAY?
ABON DUUM TRIED TO BREAK MY SPIRIT ONCE.. AND HE FAILED!
HE SHALL ONLY FAIL AGAIN!
HEH HEH! LISTEN TO HER HIGHNESS!
SHE WON'T TALK SO PROUD AFTER SHES--
WHA-A--?!
RRUUMM


DEMONS OF EARTH AN' AIR--!
DRACOLICH!
8

WHERE'D IT COME FROM!?
HOW DO WE FIGHT A DRAGON--
--THAT EVEN DEATH COULDN'T STOP?!
FIGHT IT WE WILL! BETTER TO DIE HERE A FREE WOMAN...
...THAN BATTLE AS A SLAVE IN THE ARENA OF--
IYGH!
SHUK
GAHH!
NOW THIS...
...THIS IS AN INTERESTING TURN OF EVENTS.
BUT DID ONLY LUCK SPARE ME FROM THAT VOLLEY OF ARROWS?--
--OR DID THE ARCHER, WHEREVER HE IS, MEAN TO LEAVE ME TO THE MERCY OF...
9

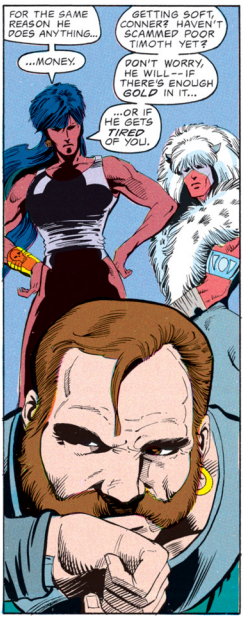

...THE DRAGOLICH? --IT'S FADING AWAY... ...AS IF IT WERE NEVER THERE!
HOOFBEATS! A RIDER COMING THROUGH THE DUST...!
NOW, IS IT FRIEND--
--OR FOE!

SNIK
I SUPPOSE THAT I SHOULD THANK YOU FOR MY FREEDOM--
--BUT EVEN A RESCUER CAN BE ANOTHER JAILER. THEY WEAR MANY FACES--
--AND YOU HAVEN'T SHOWN ME YOURS.
YOU'RE...
...SALABAK?!
SALABAK! I THOUGHT YOU WERE STILL IN MANSHAKA--OR DEAD! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
AND THAT MONSTROUS APPARITION...
...DID YOU CALL IT FORTH SOMEHOW, OR--
--OR...
...SALABAK...
...WHY DON'T YOU SPEAK TO ME?

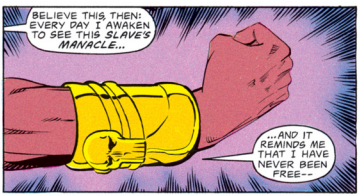

WHO, SALABAK?
WHO DID THIS TO YOU!?
VAJRA --!
VAJI, LASS, THANK THE GODS YOU'RE ALIVE!
CONNER...
YOU MUST BE FREEZING... HERE, TAKE MY--
ARE YOU OKAY?
WE CAME TO RESCUE YOU AS SOON AS CONNER HEARD YOU'D BEEN TAKEN!
TIMOTH! YES... I'M SAFE NOW.
...I DON'T NEED YOUR CLOAK--
--OR ANOTHER "RESCUE" THAT ENDS IN TREACHERY!
SMAK
12

FOR ALL I KNOW, YOU'RE THE ONE WHO *ARRANGED* MY CAPTURE IN THE *FIRST* PLACE!
YOU *KNEW* ABON DUUM HAD BOUNTY HUNTERS LOOKING FOR ME--
--AND DOUBTLESS YOU HAVE THE PRICE *TATTOOED* ON YOUR *HEART!*

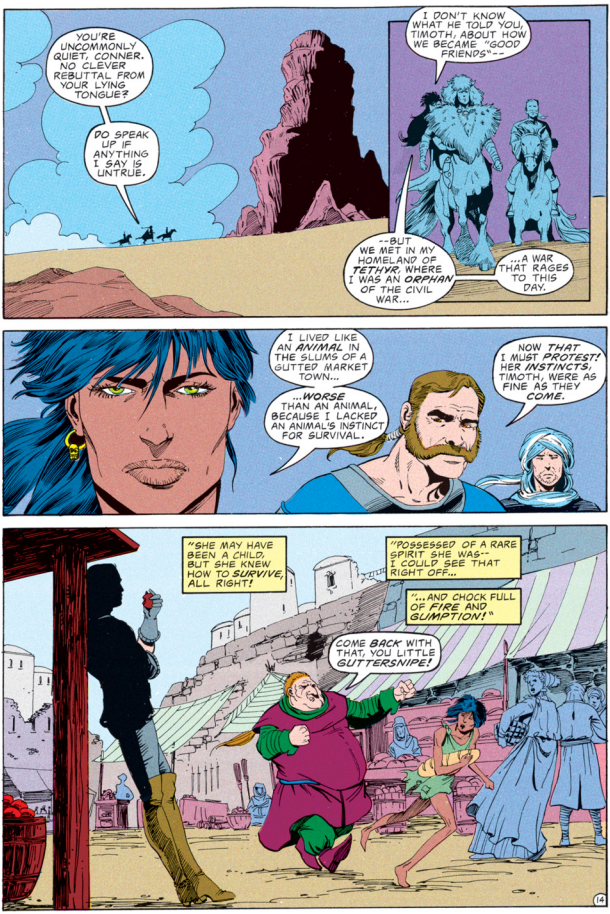
WHAT ARE YOU *TALKING* ABOUT, VAJRA? YOU AND CONNER ARE *GOOD FRIENDS!*
WHY WOULD HE EVER DO A THING LIKE *THAT?*

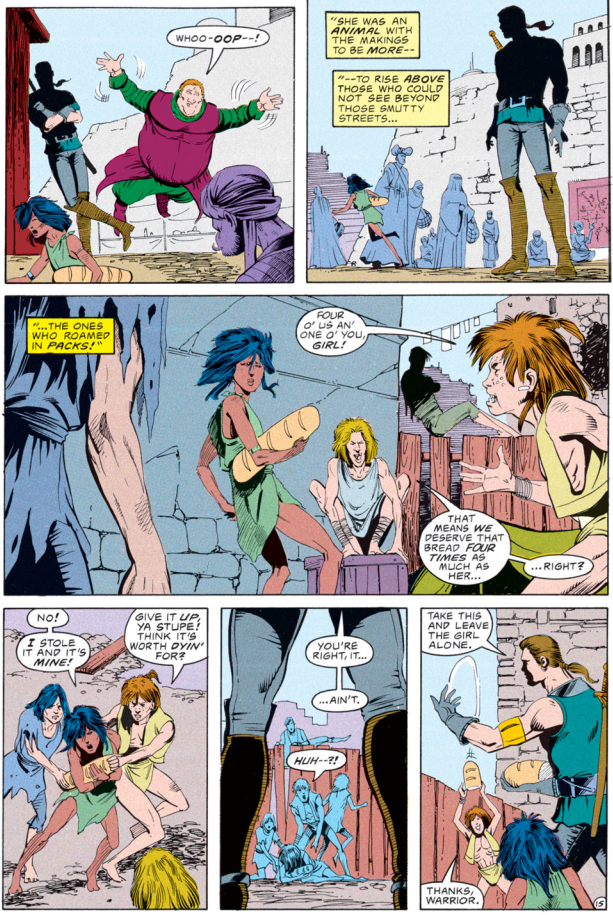

FOR THE SAME REASON HE DOES ANYTHING...
...MONEY.
GETTING SOFT, CONNER? HAVEN'T SCAMMED POOR TIMOTH YET?
DON'T WORRY, HE WILL--IF THERE'S ENOUGH *GOLD* IN IT...
...OR IF HE GETS *TIRED* OF YOU.

YOU'RE SWEET, TIMOTH EYESBRIGHT--BUT YOUR *INNOCENCE* WILL BE YOUR *UNDOING.*
YOU STILL DON'T BELIEVE CONNER SOLD ME OUT?
NO. OF COURSE NOT.


BELIEVE THIS THEN: EVERY DAY I AWAKEN TO SEE THIS *SLAVE'S MANACLE...*
...AND IT REMINDS ME THAT I HAVE NEVER BEEN FREE--

--SINCE THE DARK DAY THAT *CONNER* SOLD ME INTO *SLAVERY* IN THE *ARENA OF BLOOD!*

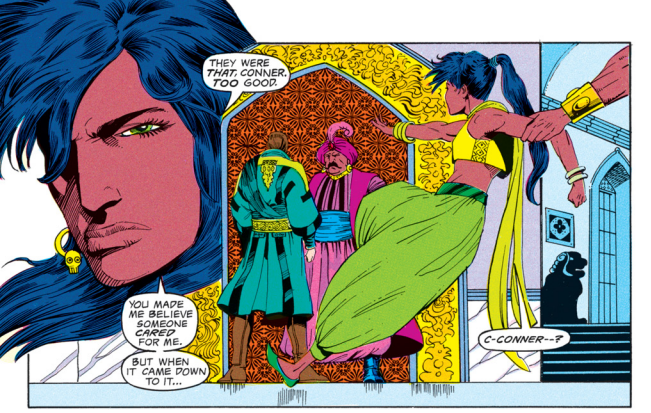

YOU'RE UNCOMMONLY QUIET, CONNER. NO CLEVER REBUTTAL FROM YOUR LYING TONGUE?
DO SPEAK UP IF ANYTHING I SAY IS UNTRUE.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE TOLD YOU, TIMOTH, ABOUT HOW WE BECAME "GOOD FRIENDS"--
--BUT WE MET IN MY HOMELAND OF TETHYR, WHERE I WAS AN ORPHAN OF THE CIVIL WAR...
...A WAR THAT RAGES TO THIS DAY.
I LIVED LIKE AN ANIMAL IN THE SLUMS OF A GUTTED MARKET TOWN...
...WORSE THAN AN ANIMAL, BECAUSE I LACKED AN ANIMAL'S INSTINCT FOR SURVIVAL.
NOW THAT I MUST PROTEST! HER INSTINCTS, TIMOTH, WERE AS FINE AS THEY COME.
"SHE MAY HAVE BEEN A CHILD, BUT SHE KNEW HOW TO SURVIVE, ALL RIGHT!
"POSSESSED OF A RARE SPIRIT SHE WAS-- I COULD SEE THAT RIGHT OFF...
"...AND CHOCK FULL OF FIRE AND GUMPTION!"
COME BACK WITH THAT, YOU LITTLE GUTTERSNIPE!
14


WHOO-OOP--!
"SHE WAS AN ANIMAL WITH THE MAKINGS TO BE MORE--
"--TO RISE ABOVE THOSE WHO COULD NOT SEE BEYOND THOSE SMUTTY STREETS...
"...THE ONES WHO ROAMED IN PACKS!"
FOUR O' US AN' ONE O' YOU, GIRL!
THAT MEANS WE DESERVE THAT BREAD FOUR TIMES AS MUCH AS HER...
...RIGHT?
NO! I STOLE IT AND IT'S MINE!
GIVE IT UP, YA STUPE! THINK IT'S WORTH DYIN' FOR?
YOU'RE RIGHT, IT...
...AIN'T.
HUH--?!
TAKE THIS AND LEAVE THE GIRL ALONE.
THANKS, WARRIOR.
15

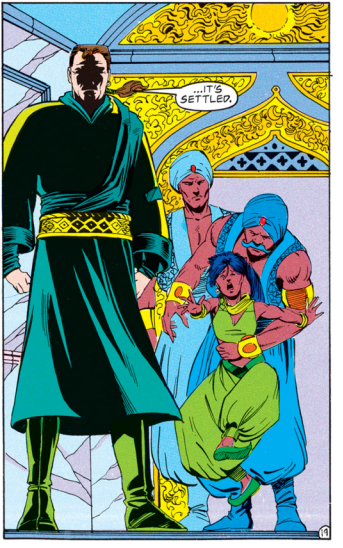
AS FOR YOU, GIRL, I--
WAP WAP WAP
DOG! VERMIN! PIG! MAGGOT!
THOSE ARE FINE THINGS TO CALL SOMEONE WHO'S JUST SAVED YOUR FOOLISH LIFE!
WHAT'S THE MATTER NOW!?
YOU GAVE AWAY HALF MY FOOD!!
HAHAHAHA! IS THAT IT THEN?
TELL YOU WHAT, GIRL-- I'LL BUY YOU THE BEST BREAKFAST YOU'VE EVER EATEN...
...JUST AS SOON AS YOU TELL ME YOUR NAME.
"THE ODD THING WAS THE WAY SHE PAUSED TO THINK IT OVER-- AS IF TO GIVE UP EVEN THIS MUCH OF HERSELF--
"--MIGHT NOT BE WORTH THE FOOD HER BELLY CRAVED.
"WHAT WAS SHE LOOKING AT WITH THOSE DEEP, DEEP EYES?"
I ASKED YOUR NAME, LASS.
"WHAT WAS SHE LOOKING FOR?"
VAJI.
10

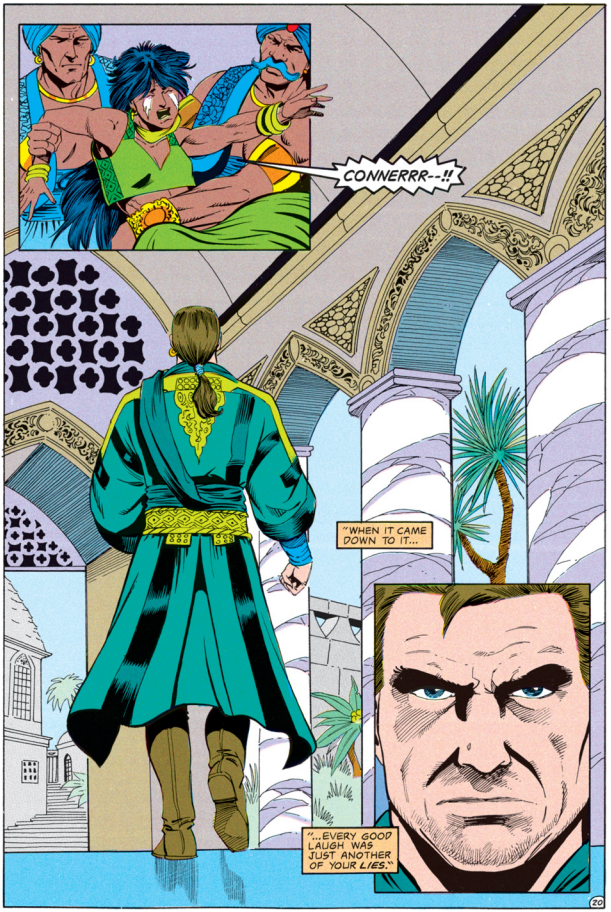
I DIDN'T GET ANOTHER WORD OUT OF HER FOR THREE DAYS.
I SOMETIMES THINK... SHE NEVER REALLY DID TALK TO ME...
...NOT ABOUT THE THINGS THAT TRULY MATTER.
ALL THAT EVER TRULY MATTERED TO HIM WAS HIS OWN SKIN.
AND ALL THAT MATTERS NOW IS THAT HE NEVER BETRAY ME AGAIN.
YOUR BETRAYER ...!
IS THAT THE ONLY WAY YOU THINK OF ME THESE DAYS, LASS?
"I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT AT LEAST RECALL WHO CLEANED YOU... FED YOU...
"...WHO TAUGHT YOU HOW TO BE A PROPER THIEF..."

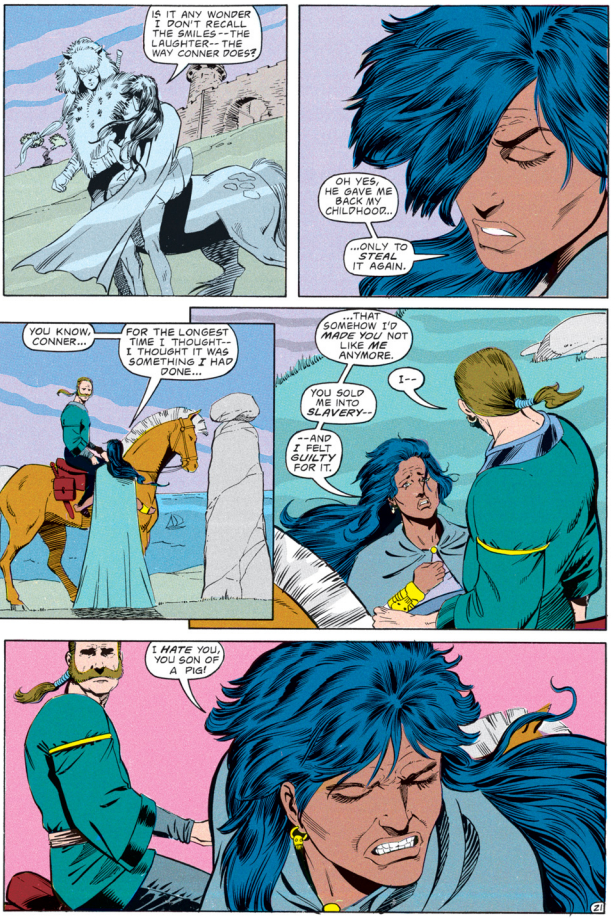
NO, NOT THAT ONE.
NO...
"...THE KIND OF THIEF WHOSE STRATEGIES DIDN'T RISE FROM THE PIT OF AN EMPTY STOMACH.
"I TAUGHT YOU THE ART OF THE COW.
"I TAUGHT YOU TO FIGHT WITH YOUR HEAD BEFORE YOU FLUNG YOUR FISTS!
"MOST OF ALL--YES, MOST OF ALL! DON'T LOOK AT ME THAT WAY!--
"--I TAUGHT YOU TO SMILE AGAIN, VAJRA.
"THOSE WERE GOOD DAYS, LASS."
19


THEY WERE THAT, CONNER, TOO GOOD.
YOU MADE ME BELIEVE SOMEONE CARED FOR ME.
BUT WHEN IT CAME DOWN TO IT...
C-CONNER--?

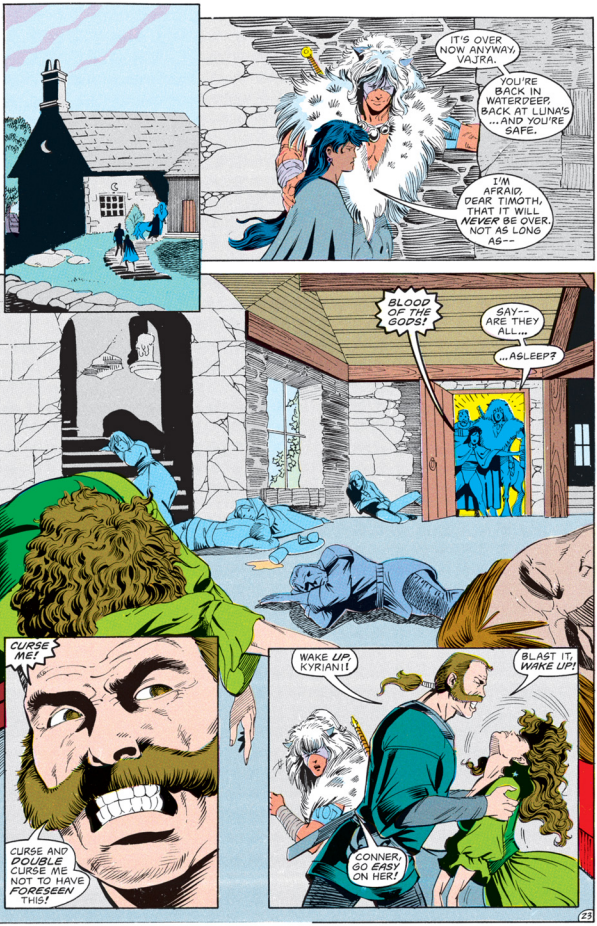
IT'S SETTLED THEN. YOU ARE FREE TO GO--WITH YOUR MONEY--IN EXCHANGE FOR THE GIRL.
YES, ABON DUUM ...

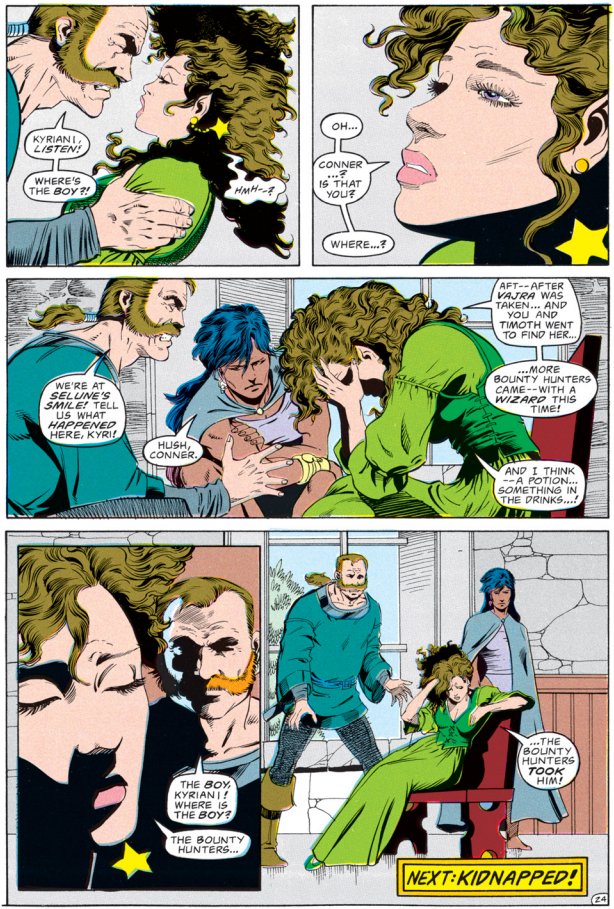

...IT'S SETTLED.


CONNERRR--!!
"WHEN IT CAME DOWN TO IT...
"...EVERY GOOD LAUGH WAS JUST ANOTHER OF YOUR LIES."
20


IS IT ANY WONDER I DON'T RECALL THE SMILES--THE LAUGHTER--THE WAY CONNER DOES?
OH YES, HE GAVE ME BACK MY CHILDHOOD...
...ONLY TO STEAL IT AGAIN.
YOU KNOW, CONNER...
FOR THE LONGEST TIME I THOUGHT--I THOUGHT IT WAS SOMETHING I HAD DONE...
...THAT SOMEHOW I'D MADE YOU NOT LIKE ME ANYMORE.
I--
YOU SOLD ME INTO SLAVERY--
--AND I FELT GUILTY FOR IT.
I HATE YOU, YOU SON OF A PIG!
21

WHAT...UH, WHAT WAS IT LIKE, VAJRA--TO BE A GLADIATOR IN THE ARENA?
YOU DON'T REALLY WANT TO KNOW, TIMOTH.
BUT YOUR FRIEND HERE--HE WAS A SLAVE TOO, RIGHT?
THE MANACLE...?
YOU MIGHT SAY I WAS LUCKY... FOR A SLAVE, IN THE ARENA I FOUND STEADFAST COMRADES AT LAST.
ALTHOUGH UNTIL SALABAK SAVED ME TODAY--
--I'D BELIEVED THEY MUST ALL BE DEAD.
22


IT'S OVER NOW ANYWAY, VAJRA.
YOU'RE BACK IN WATERDEEP, BACK AT LUNA'S ...AND YOU'RE SAFE.
I'M AFRAID, DEAR TIMOTH, THAT IT WILL *NEVER* BE OVER, NOT AS LONG AS--
BLOOD OF THE GODS!
SAY-- ARE THEY ALL...
...ASLEEP?
CURSE ME!
CURSE AND *DOUBLE* CURSE ME NOT TO HAVE *FORESEEN* THIS!
WAKE *UP*, KYRIAN!!
BLAST IT, *WAKE UP!*
CONNER, GO *EASY* ON HER!
23


KYRIAN! LISTEN!
WHERE'S THE BOY?!
HMM--?
OH...
CONNER...? IS THAT YOU?
WHERE...?
AFT--AFTER VAJRA WAS TAKEN... AND YOU AND TIMOTH WENT TO FIND HER...
...MORE BOUNTY HUNTERS CAME--WITH A WIZARD THIS TIME!
AND I THINK --A POTION... SOMETHING IN THE DRINKS...!
WE'RE AT SELUNE'S SMILE! TELL US WHAT HAPPENED HERE, KYRI!
HUSH, CONNER.
THE BOY, KYRIAN! WHERE IS THE BOY?
THE BOUNTY HUNTERS...
...THE BOUNTY HUNTERS TOOK HIM?
NEXT: KIDNAPPED!
24

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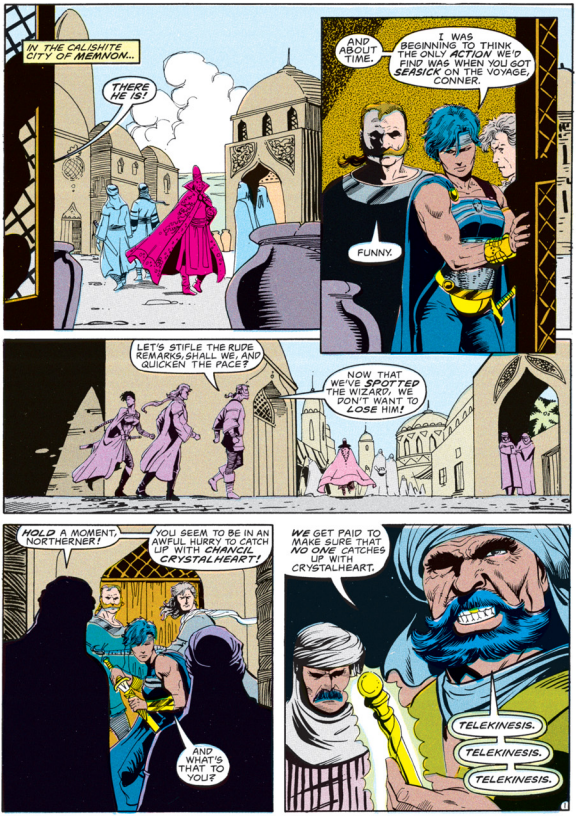
IN THE CALISHITE CITY OF MEMNON...
THERE HE IS!
AND ABOUT TIME.
I WAS BEGINNING TO THINK THE ONLY ACTION WE'D FIND WAS WHEN YOU GOT SEASICK ON THE VOYAGE, CONNER.
FUNNY.
LET'S STIFLE THE RUDE REMARKS, SHALL WE, AND QUICKEN THE PACE?
NOW THAT WE'VE SPOTTED THE WIZARD, WE DON'T WANT TO LOSE HIM!
HOLD A MOMENT, NORTHERNER!
YOU SEEM TO BE IN AN AWFUL HURRY TO CATCH UP WITH CHANCIL CRYSTALHEART!
AND WHAT'S THAT TO YOU?
WE GET PAID TO MAKE SURE THAT NO ONE CATCHES UP WITH CRYSTALHEART.
TELEKINESIS.
TELEKINESIS.
TELEKINESIS.

SHELL GAME
DAN MISHKIN
WRITER
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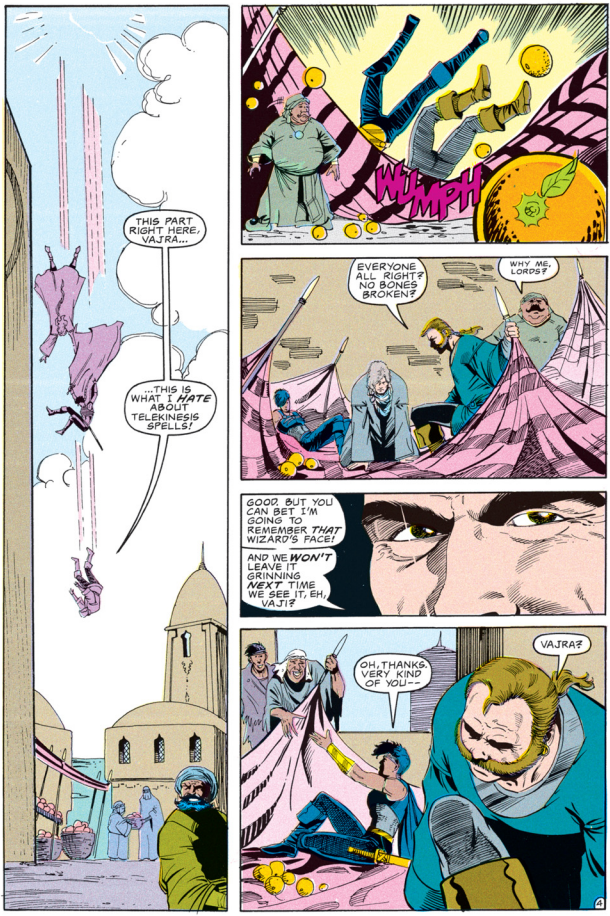
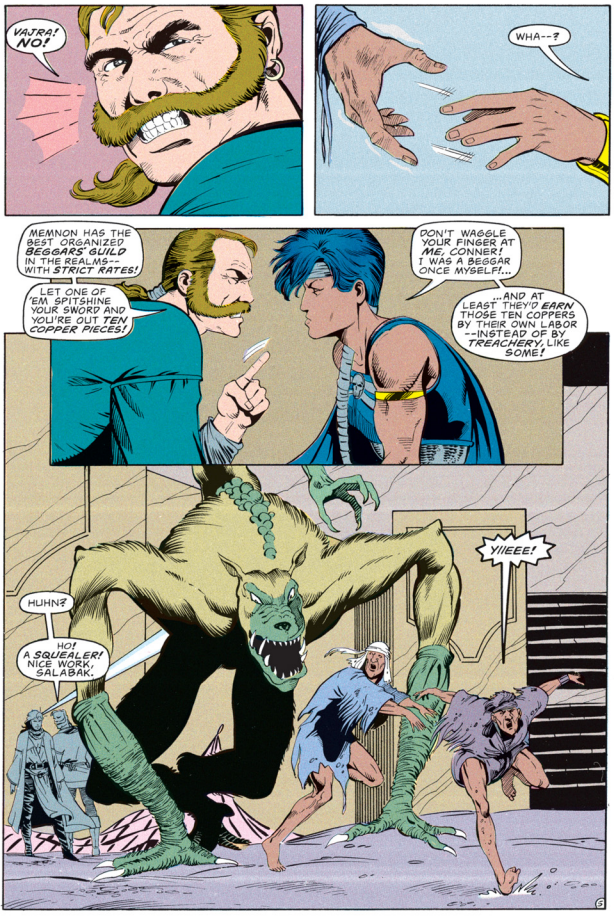
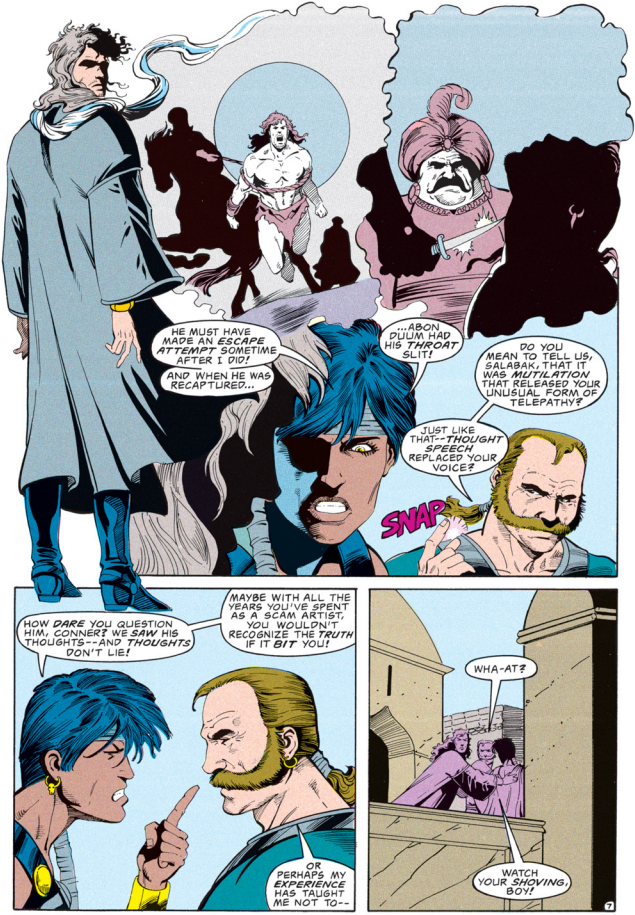
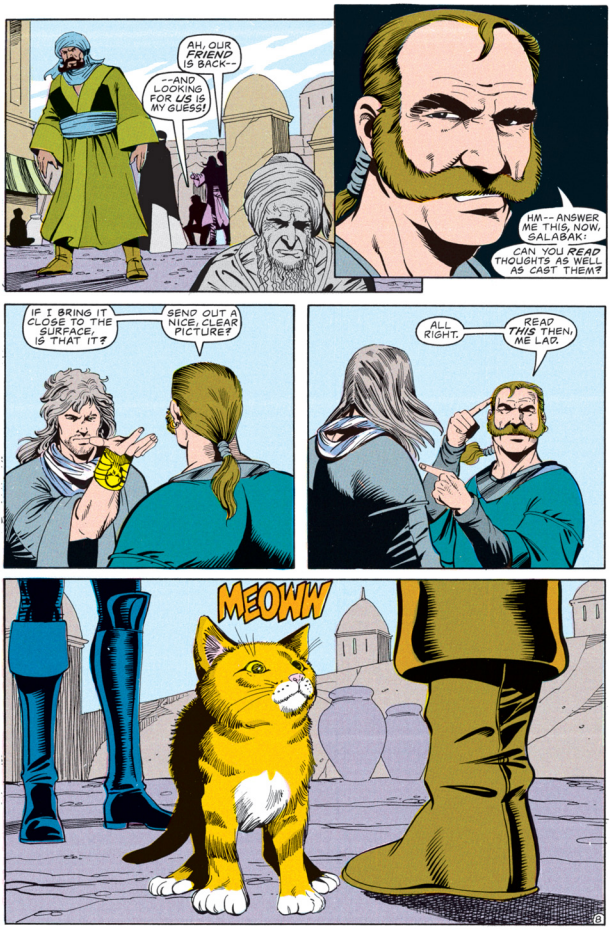
3

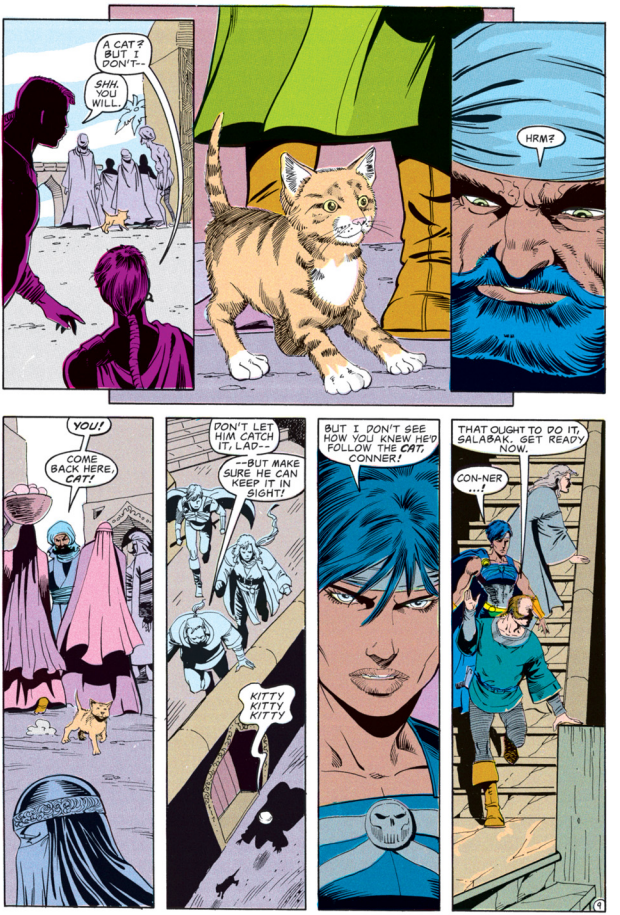

THIS PART RIGHT HERE, VAJRA...
...THIS IS WHAT I HATE ABOUT TELEKINESIS SPELLS!
WUMPH
EVERYONE ALL RIGHT? NO BONES BROKEN?
WHY ME, LORDS?
GOOD. BUT YOU CAN BET I'M GOING TO REMEMBER THAT WIZARD'S FACE!
AND WE WON'T LEAVE IT GRINNING NEXT TIME WE SEE IT, EH, VAJI?
OH, THANKS. VERY KIND OF YOU--
VAJRA?


VAJRA! NO!
WHA--?
MEMNON HAS THE BEST ORGANIZED BEGGARS' GUILD IN THE REALMS--WITH STRICT RATES!
LET ONE OF 'EM SPITSHINE YOUR SWORD AND YOU'RE OUT TEN COPPER PIECES!
DON'T WAGGLE YOUR FINGER AT ME, CONNER! I WAS A BEGGAR ONCE MYSELF!...
...AND AT LEAST THEY'D EARN THOSE TEN COPPERS BY THEIR OWN LABOR --INSTEAD OF BY TREACHERY, LIKE SOME!
YIIEEE!
HUHN?
HO! A SQUEALER! NICE WORK, SALABAK.

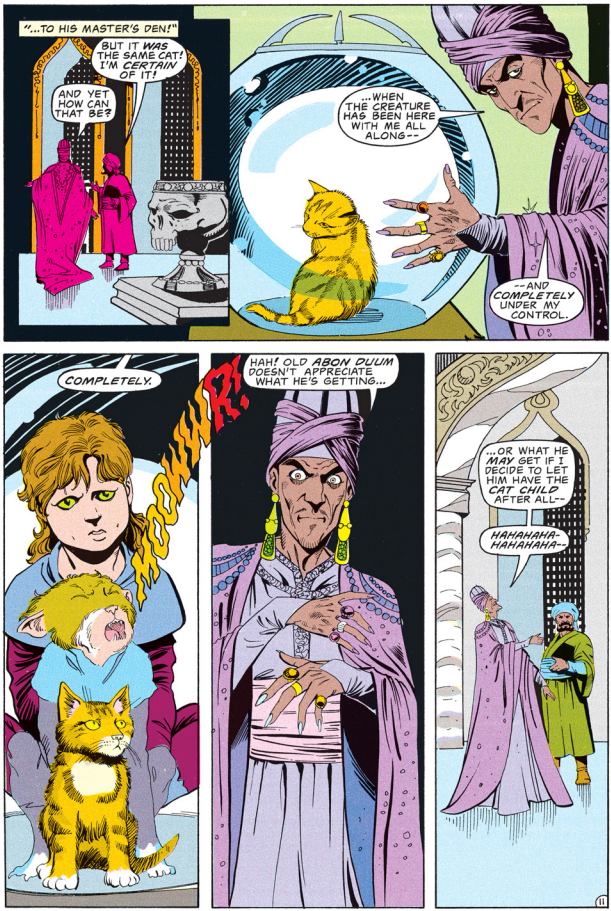
A BEGGARS' GUILD, EH, CONNER?
TELL ME SOMETHING. DO YOU REALLY KNOW ALL THESE INTERESTING FACTS YOU SEEM TO POSSESS--
--OR DO YOU MAKE THEM UP AS YOU GO ALONG?
TRAVEL THE REALMS AS LONG AS I HAVE, LASS, AND YOU DO PICK UP A FEW THINGS.
WHY, IN TETHYR, I PICKED UP YOU!
BUT YOUR FRIEND SALABAK HERE, WITH HIS THOUGHT-CASTING POWER...
...WHAT'S HIS STORY, I WONDER.
I CAN TELL YOU WHAT HE TOLD ME BACK WHEN WE WERE SLAVES TOGETHER--WHEN HE STILL COULD SPEAK.
"AND LOOK, HE'S MAKING THOUGHT PICTURES FOR US, TOO...
"...OF HOW HE WAS KIDNAPPED BY SLAVERS DURING HIS RITE OF PASSAGE--
"--AND ABON DUUM BILLED HIM AS THE SAVAGE OF THAR IN THE GLADITORIAL ARENA!"

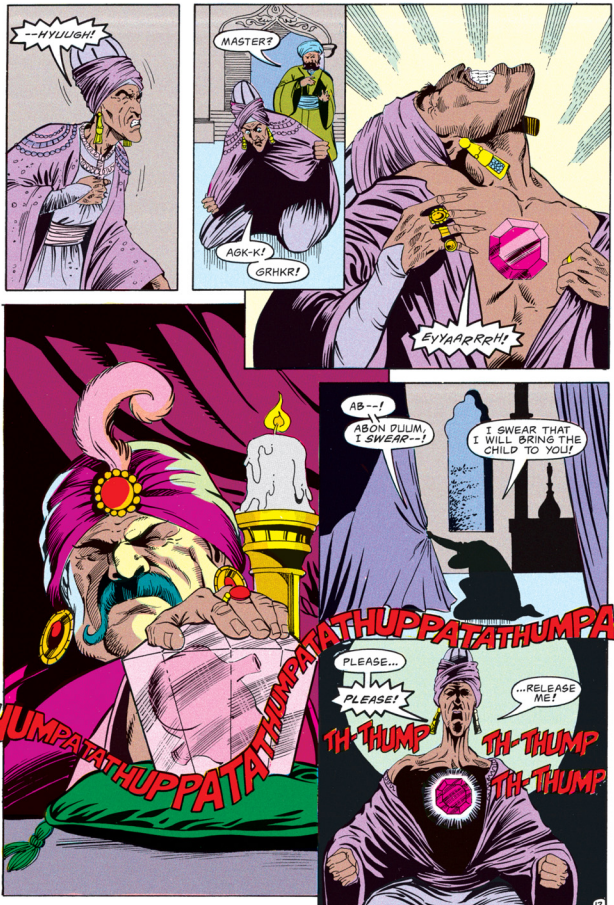

HE MUST HAVE MADE AN ESCAPE ATTEMPT SOMETIME AFTER I DID!
AND WHEN HE WAS RECAPTURED...
...ABON DUUM HAD HIS THROAT SLIT!
DO YOU MEAN TO TELL US, SALABAK, THAT IT WAS MUTILATION THAT RELEASED YOUR UNUSUAL FORM OF TELEPATHY?
JUST LIKE THAT--THOUGHT SPEECH REPLACED YOUR VOICE?
SNAP
HOW DARE YOU QUESTION HIM, CONNER? WE SAW HIS THOUGHTS--AND THOUGHTS DON'T LIE!
MAYBE WITH ALL THE YEARS YOU'VE SPENT AS A SCAM ARTIST, YOU WOULDN'T RECOGNIZE THE TRUTH IF IT BIT YOU!
OR PERHAPS MY EXPERIENCE HAS TAUGHT ME NOT TO--
WHA-AT?
WATCH YOUR SHOVING, BOY!
7


AH, OUR FRIEND IS BACK--
--AND LOOKING FOR US IS MY GUESS!
HM-- ANSWER ME THIS, NOW, SALABAK:
CAN YOU READ THOUGHTS AS WELL AS CAST THEM?
IF I BRING IT CLOSE TO THE SURFACE, IS THAT IT?
SEND OUT A NICE, CLEAR PICTURE?
ALL RIGHT.
READ THIS THEN, ME LAD.
MEOWW

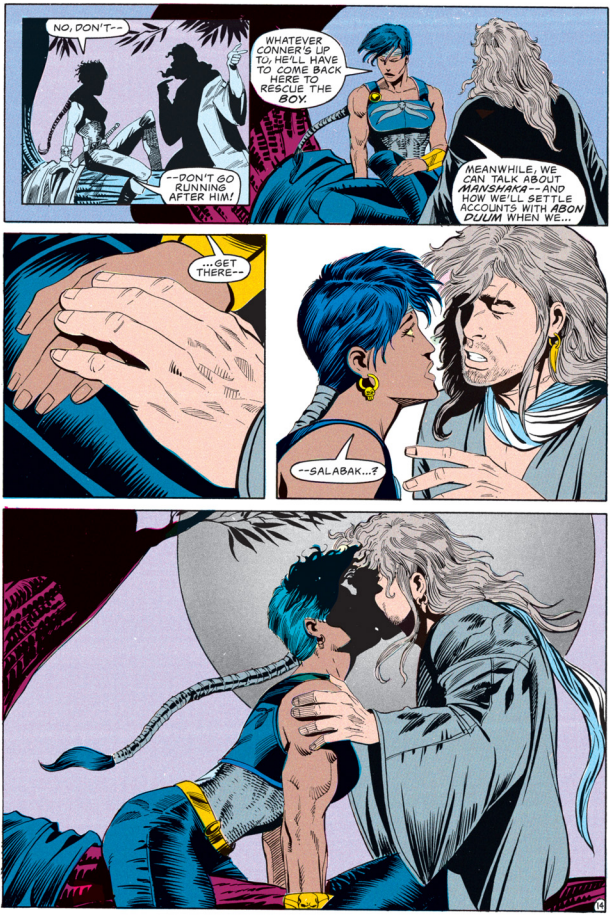

A CAT? BUT I DON'T--
SHH. YOU WILL.
HRM?
YOU!
COME BACK HERE, CAT!
DON'T LET HIM CATCH IT, LAD--
--BUT MAKE SURE HE CAN KEEP IT IN SIGHT!
KITTY KITTY KITTY
BUT I DON'T SEE HOW YOU KNEW HE'D FOLLOW THE CAT, CONNER!
THAT OUGHT TO DO IT, SALABAK. GET READY NOW.
CON-NER ...!

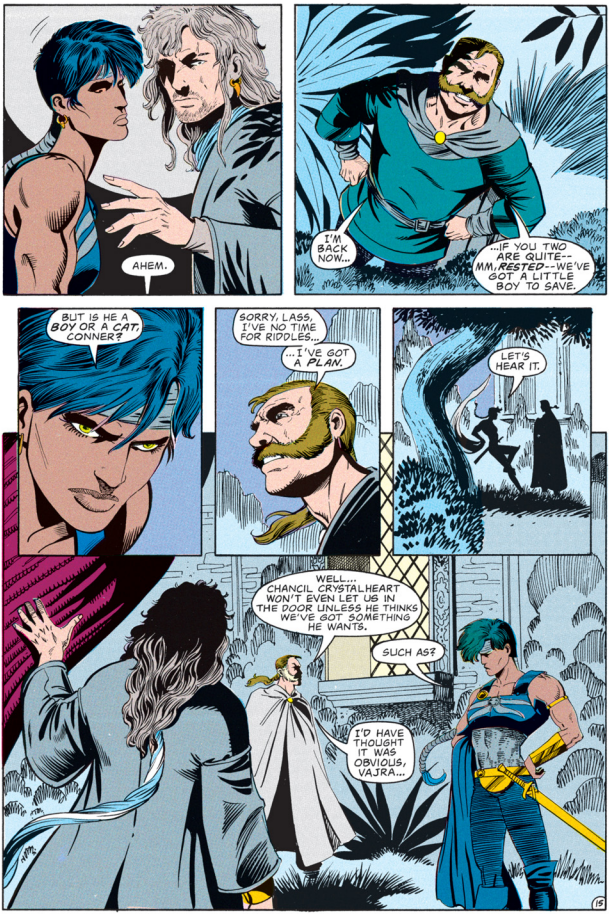
I'VE GOT YOU THIS TIME, LITTLE WERE-THING!
THAT TURN WILL TAKE YOU INTO A--
--BLIND...
...ALLEY?
HAHAHAHAHA --SPLENDID, SALABAK! A WINNING PERFORMANCE!
SHOULD WE GRAB HIM, CONNER?
NOO, NOT AT ALL, MY DEAR.
NOW THAT OUR FRIEND HAS SEEN THE KITTEN, HE'S SO THOROUGHLY CONFUSED THAT HE'LL BE TROTTING STRAIGHT BACK...
10


"...TO HIS MASTER'S DEN!"
BUT IT *WAS* THE SAME CAT! I'M *CERTAIN* OF IT!
AND YET HOW CAN THAT BE?
...WHEN THE CREATURE HAS BEEN HERE WITH ME ALL ALONG--
--AND *COMPLETELY* UNDER MY CONTROL.
COMPLETELY.
KOONKUR!
HAH! OLD *ABON DUUM* DOESN'T APPRECIATE WHAT HE'S GETTING...
...OR WHAT HE *MAY* GET IF I DECIDE TO LET HIM HAVE THE *CAT CHILD* AFTER ALL--
HAHAHAHA-HAHAHAHA--
11

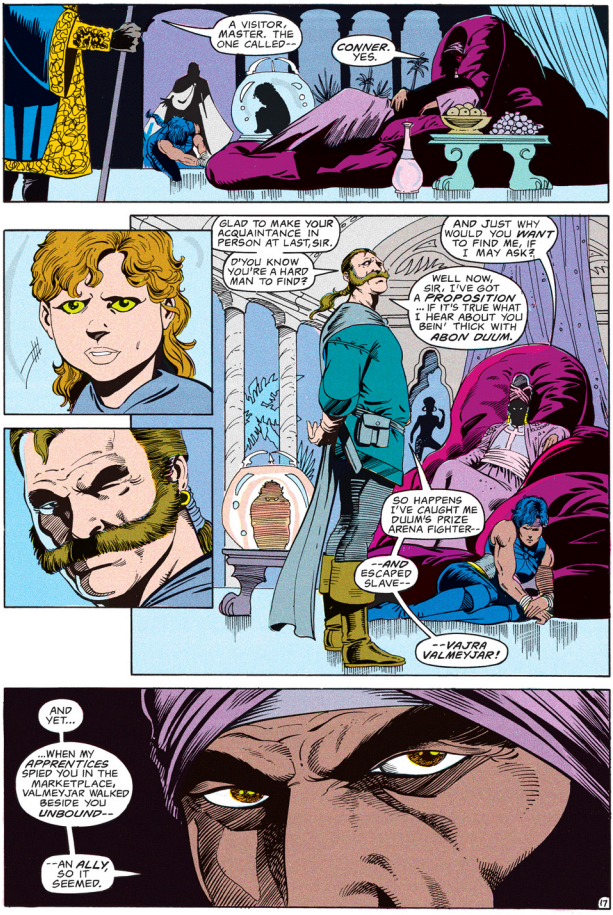

--HYUUGH!
MASTER?
AGK-K!
GRHKR!
EYYAARRGH!
AB--!
ABON DULM, I SWEAR--!
I SWEAR THAT I WILL BRING THE CHILD TO YOU!
THUMPATATHUPPATATHUMPATATHUPPATATHUMPAT
PLEASE...
PLEASE!
...RELEASE ME!
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
TH-THUMP
12

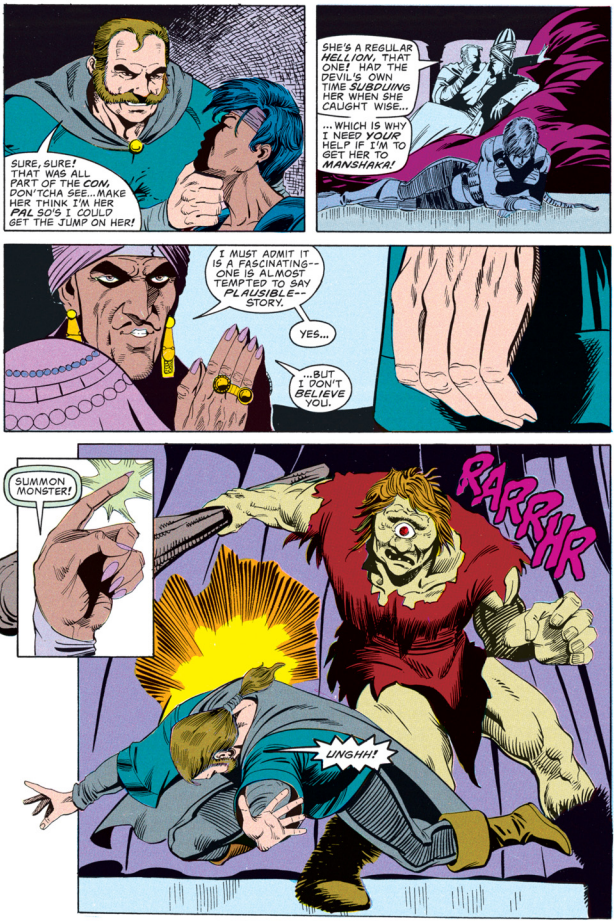
THE HAND OF ABON DUUM REACHES FAR--
--BUT THEN, NEITHER OF US NEEDS TO BE REMINDED OF THAT.
SAY, CONNER, AT LEAST WE KNOW NOW WHY THEY CALL THE WIZARD CRYSTAL-HEART! HE'S--
HUH?!
WHO'S THAT DOWN THERE WITH YOU?
HISSS!
WAIT!
NO, DON'T GO! DON'T--
D'YOU SEE WHAT YOU'VE DONE NOW, GIRL? YOU'VE FRIGHTENED HIM OFF!
BUT--
NOW, JUST SIT TIGHT AND DON'T DO ANYTHING UNTIL I GET BACK!


NO, DON'T--
--DON'T GO RUNNING AFTER HIM!
WHATEVER CONNER'S UP TO, HE'LL HAVE TO COME BACK HERE TO RESCUE THE BOY.
MEANWHILE, WE CAN TALK ABOUT MANSHAKA -- AND HOW WE'LL SETTLE ACCOUNTS WITH ABON DUUM WHEN WE...
...GET THERE--
--SALABAK...?
14

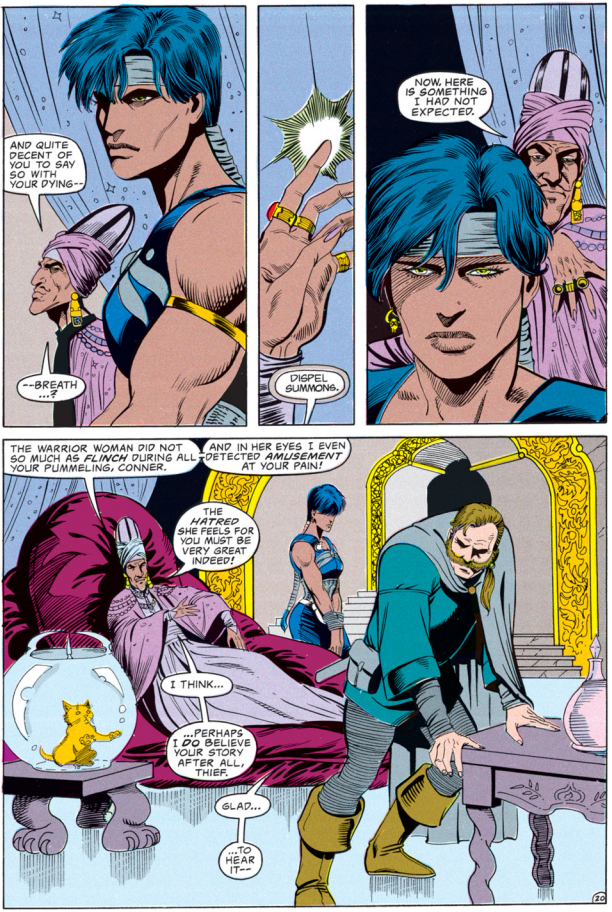

AHEM.
I'M BACK NOW...
...IF YOU TWO ARE QUITE-- MM. RESTED--WE'VE GOT A LITTLE BOY TO SAVE.
BUT IS HE A BOY OR A CAT, CONNER?
SORRY, LASS, I'VE NO TIME FOR RIDDLES...
...I'VE GOT A PLAN.
LET'S HEAR IT.
WELL.... CHANCIL CRYSTALHEART WON'T EVEN LET US IN THE DOOR UNLESS HE THINKS WE'VE GOT SOMETHING HE WANTS.
SUCH AS?
I'D HAVE THOUGHT IT WAS OBVIOUS, VAJRA...
15

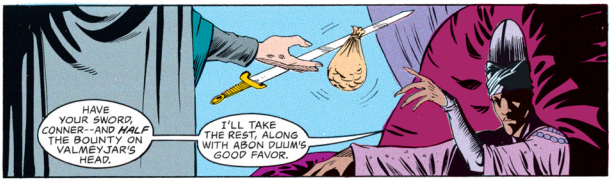
...YOU!
WHAT--?
CONNER, IF YOU REALLY THINK THAT I'M ABOUT TO PLAY THE SAP IN ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR OUTRAGEOUS SCAMS--
--YOU HAVEN'T BEEN PAYING VERY CLOSE ATTENTION!
YOU SOLD ME OUT ONCE. MAYBE MORE THAN ONCE, AND I'M NOT--
?
WHAT DO YOU WANT?!?
YOU KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT, VAJRA.
SALABAK UNDERSTANDS THAT THIS IS THE ONLY WAY.
WE NEED BAIT... AND YOU'RE IT.
OKAY. YOU'RE RIGHT. YOU'RE BOTH RIGHT...
...BUT I DON'T HAVE TO LIKE IT.
16


A VISITOR, MASTER. THE ONE CALLED--
CONNER. YES.
GLAD TO MAKE YOUR ACQUAINTANCE IN PERSON AT LAST, SIR.
D'YOU KNOW YOU'RE A HARD MAN TO FIND?
AND JUST WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO FIND ME, IF I MAY ASK?
WELL NOW, SIR, I'VE GOT A PROPOSITION ... IF IT'S TRUE WHAT I HEAR ABOUT YOU BEIN' THICK WITH ABON DUUM.
SO HAPPENS I'VE CAUGHT ME DUUM'S PRIZE ARENA FIGHTER--
--AND ESCAPED SLAVE--
--VAJRA VALMEYJAR!
AND YET...
...WHEN MY APPRENTICES SPIED YOU IN THE MARKETPLACE, VALMEYJAR WALKED BESIDE YOU UNBOUND--
--AN ALLY, SO IT SEEMED.
47

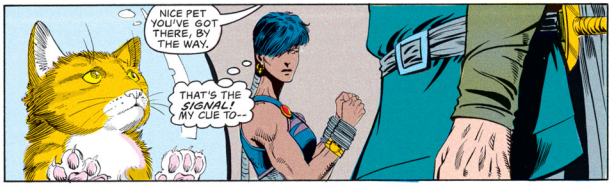

SURE, SURE! THAT WAS ALL PART OF THE *CON*. DON'TCHA SEE...MAKE HER THINK I'M HER *PAL* SO'S I COULD GET THE JUMP ON HER!
SHE'S A REGULAR *HELLION*, THAT *ONE*! HAD THE DEVIL'S OWN TIME *SUBDUING* HER WHEN SHE CAUGHT WISE...
...WHICH IS WHY I NEED *YOUR* HELP IF I'M TO GET HER TO *MANSHAKA!*
I MUST ADMIT IT IS A FASCINATING--ONE IS ALMOST TEMPTED TO SAY *PLAUSIBLE*--STORY.
YES...
...BUT I DON'T *BELIEVE* YOU.
SUMMON MONSTER!
RARRHR
UNGHH!

FWAMP
I THINK I'VE TAKEN ABOUT ENOUGH OF THAT, MONSTER!
TIME TO--
TELEKINESIS.
HUH --?
FAIR IS FAIR, THIEF -- THE CYCLOPSKIN HAS NO SWORD.
RIGHT.
OWW!
WOULDN'T WANT TO MAKE THE ODDS UNEVEN, WOULD WE? I CAN APPRECIATE THAT.
EXTREMELY--
--SPORTING--
--OF YOU...!
19


AND QUITE DECENT OF YOU TO SAY SO WITH YOUR DYING--
--BREATH ...?
DISPEL SUMMONS.
NOW, HERE IS SOMETHING I HAD NOT EXPECTED.
THE WARRIOR WOMAN DID NOT SO MUCH AS FLINCH DURING ALL YOUR PUMMELING, CONNER.
AND IN HER EYES I EVEN DETECTED AMUSEMENT AT YOUR PAIN!
THE HATRED SHE FEELS FOR YOU MUST BE VERY GREAT INDEED!
I THINK...
...PERHAPS I DO BELIEVE YOUR STORY AFTER ALL, THIEF.
GLAD...
...TO HEAR IT--
20


HAVE YOUR SWORD, CONNER--AND HALF THE BOUNTY ON VALMÉYJAR'S HEAD.
I'LL TAKE THE REST, ALONG WITH ABON-DUJIM'S GOOD FAVOR.

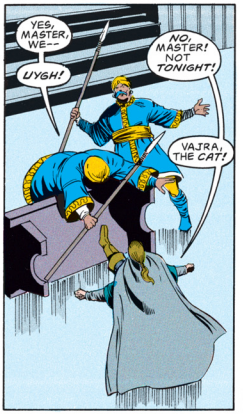
DON'T DAWDLE, MAN. THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO COUNT IT HERE.
YOU'VE BEEN AMPLY RECOMPENSED, I ASSURE YOU.
COULDN'T AGREE MORE.

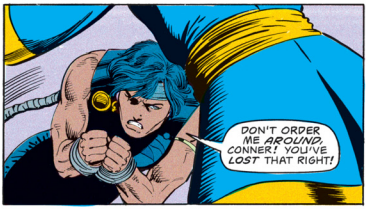

NICE PET YOU'VE GOT THERE, BY THE WAY.
THAT'S THE SIGNAL! MY CUE TO--

WHA--!?
I CAN'T GET FREE!

YOU TRICKED ME, CONNER!
--CONNER?

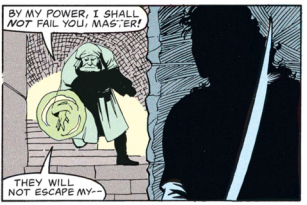
GET HIM!
21

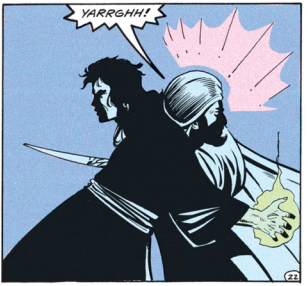

YES, MASTER, WE--
UYGH!
NO, MASTER! NOT TONIGHT!
VAJRA, THE CAT!

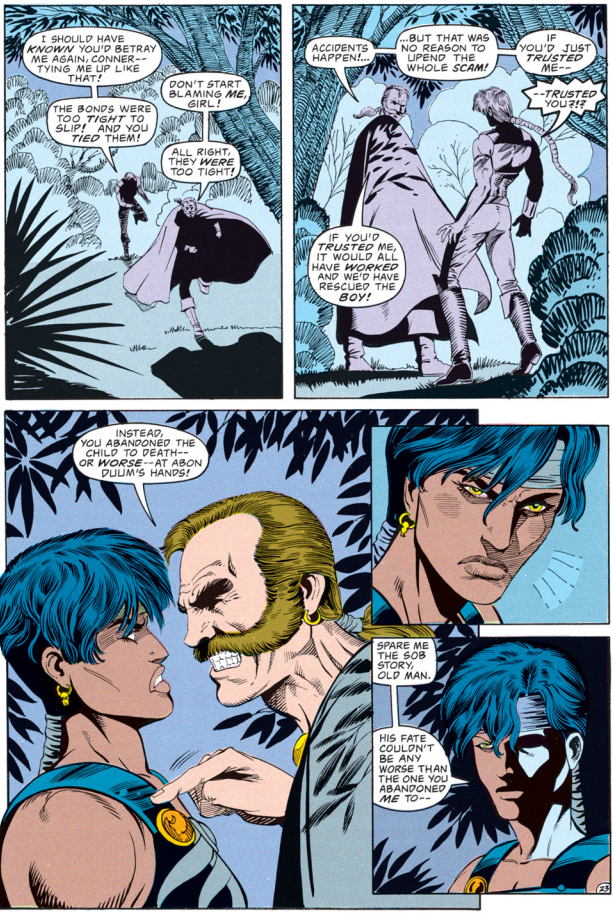

DON'T ORDER ME AROUND, CONNER! YOU'VE LOST THAT RIGHT!

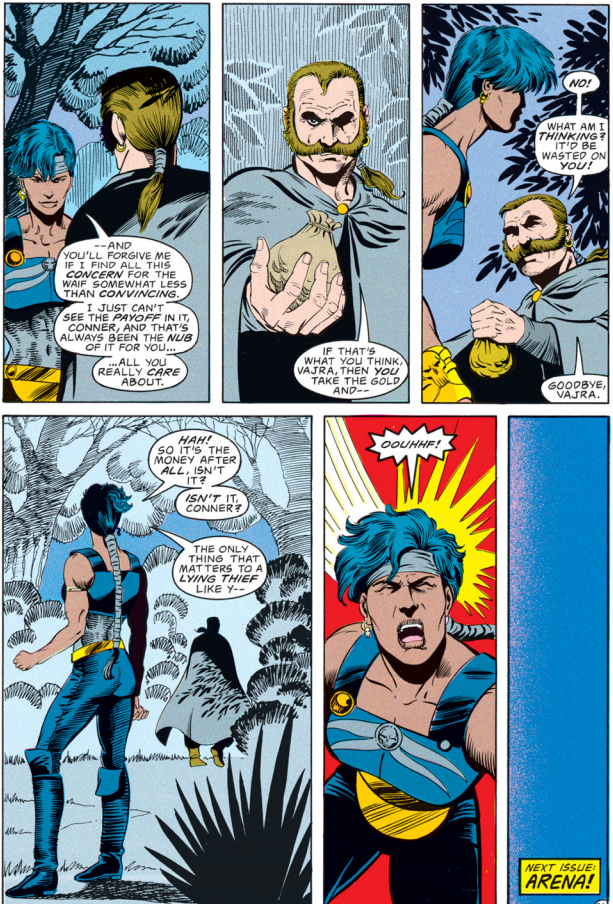
I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF!
OOF!

CRASSH


BY MY POWER, I SHALL NOT FAIL YOU, MAS'ER!
THEY WILL NOT ESCAPE MY--


YARRGHH!
22


I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN YOU'D BETRAY ME AGAIN, CONNER-- TYING ME UP LIKE THAT!
DON'T START BLAMING ME, GIRL!
THE BONDS WERE TOO TIGHT TO SLIP, AND YOU TIED THEM!
ALL RIGHT, THEY WERE TOO TIGHT!
ACCIDENTS HAPPEN!..
..BUT THAT WAS NO REASON TO UPEND THE WHOLE SCAM!
IF YOU'D JUST TRUSTED ME--
--TRUSTED YOU?!?
IF YOU'D TRUSTED ME, IT WOULD ALL HAVE WORKED AND WE'D HAVE RESCUED THE BOY!
INSTEAD, YOU ABANDONED THE CHILD TO DEATH-- OR WORSE--AT ABON DUUM'S HANDS!
SPARE ME THE SOB STORY, OLD MAN.
HIS FATE COULDN'T BE ANY WORSE THAN THE ONE YOU ABANDONED ME TO--
23


--AND YOU'LL FORGIVE ME IF I FIND ALL THIS CONCERN FOR THE WAIF SOMEWHAT LESS THAN CONVINCING.
I JUST CAN'T SEE THE PAYOFF IN IT, CONNER, AND THAT'S ALWAYS BEEN THE NUB OF IT FOR YOU...
...ALL YOU REALLY CARE ABOUT.
IF THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK, VAJRA, THEN YOU TAKE THE GOLD AND--
NO!
WHAT AM I THINKING? IT'D BE WASTED ON YOU!
GOODBYE, VAJRA.
HAH! SO IT'S THE MONEY AFTER ALL, ISN'T IT?
ISN'T IT, CONNER?
THE ONLY THING THAT MATTERS TO A LYING THIEF LIKE Y--
OOUHHF!
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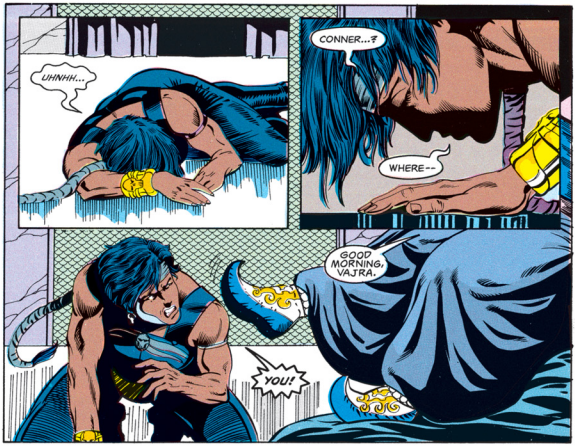
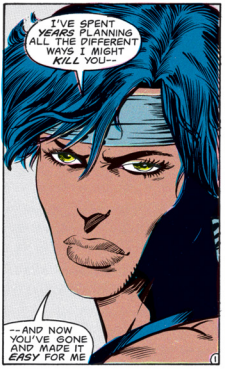

UHNHH...
CONNER...?
WHERE--
GOOD MORNING, VAJRA.
YOU!

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME, ABOM DUUM.
TOO LONG, MY DEAR. I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS MOMENT.
SO HAVE I, DOG...


I'VE SPENT YEARS PLANNING ALL THE DIFFERENT WAYS I MIGHT KILL YOU--
--AND NOW YOU'VE GONE AND MADE IT EASY FOR ME

OH, I WOULD NEVER DO THAT.
ATTACK.
HHRISSSSSS
DAN MISHKIN WRITER
JAN DUURSEMA ARTIST
STEVE HAYNIE LETTERER
MATT WEBB COLORIST
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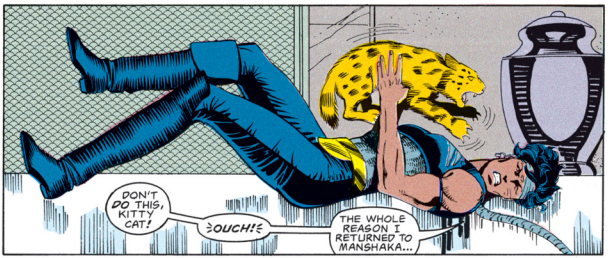
2

Cat & Mouse

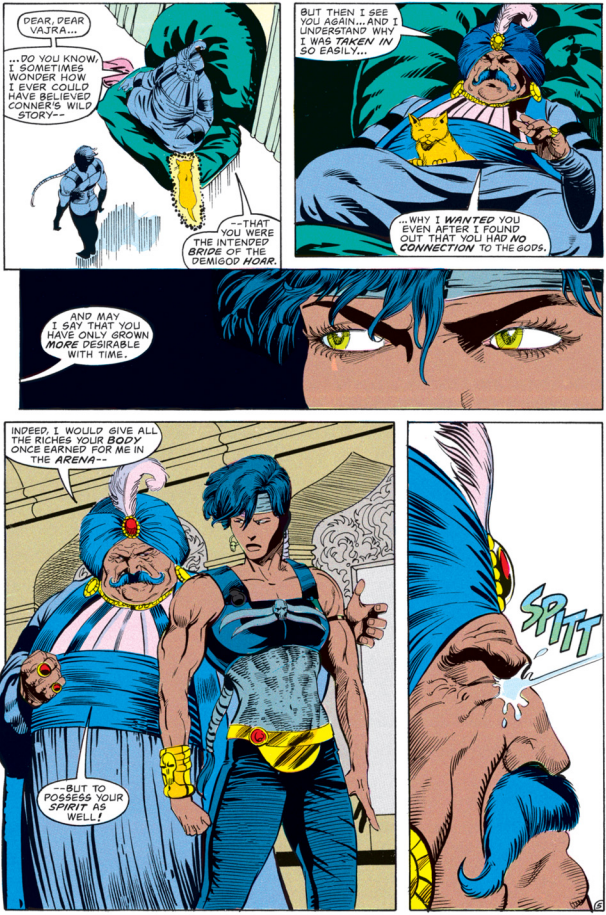

DON'T DO THIS, KITTY CAT!
}OUCH!{
THE WHOLE REASON I RETURNED TO MANSHAKA...

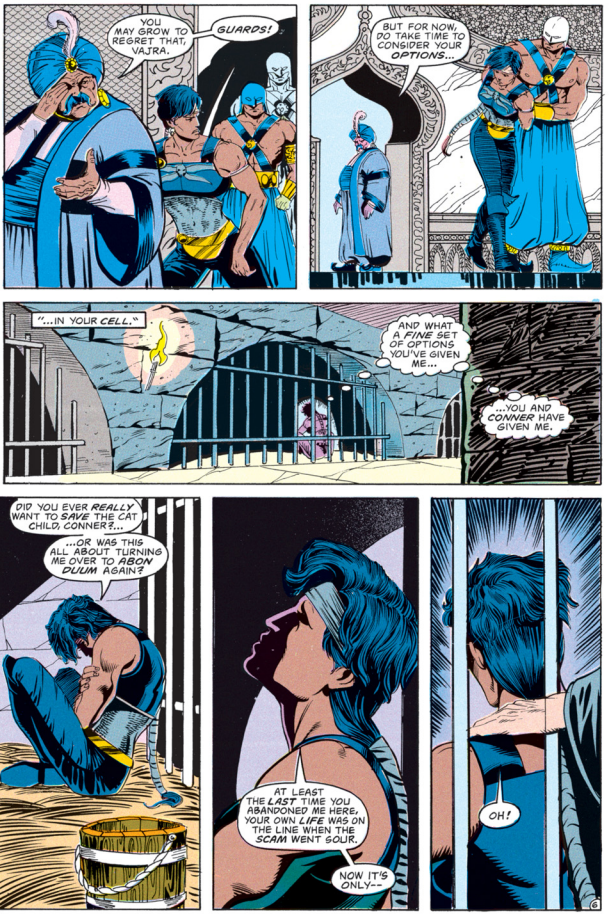
...WAS TO RESCUE YOU!

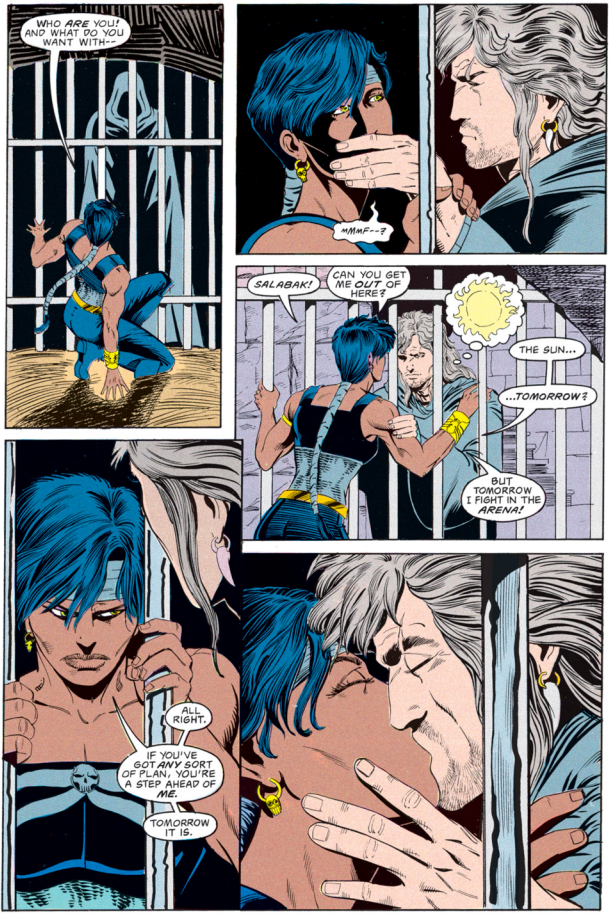
HRSSS
I DON'T WANT TO HURT YOU IF I DON'T HAVE TO!

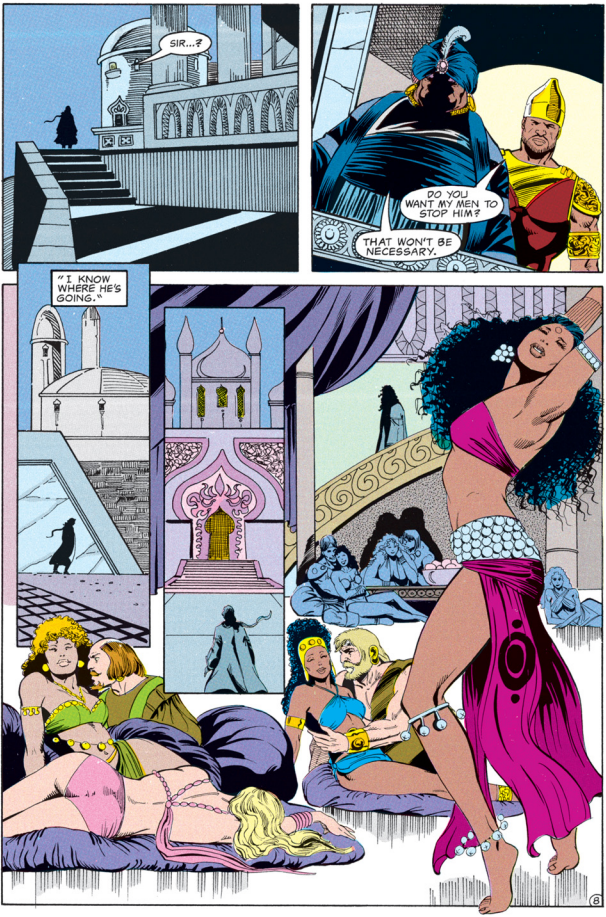
BUT THE CAT VERY MUCH WANTS TO HURT YOU, VAJRA.
HOWEVER...
OFF!
...HE WILL ONLY DO SO AT MY COMMAND.

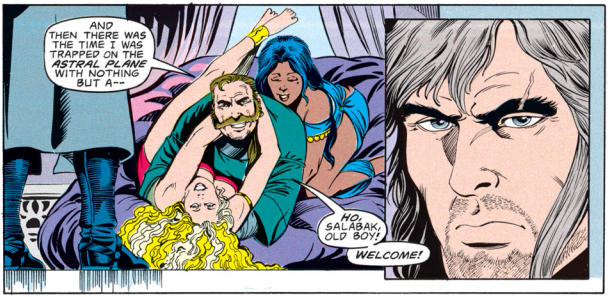
YOU REALLY ARE THE SCUM OF THE REALMS --- CORRUPTING THAT POOR CREATURE.
DEATH WOULDN'T EVEN BE NEAR THE PUNISHMENT YOU DESERVE!
4

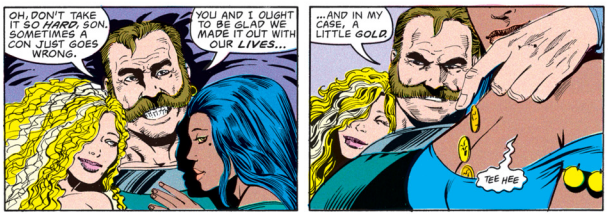

DEAR, DEAR VAJRA...
...DO YOU KNOW, I SOMETIMES WONDER HOW I EVER COULD HAVE BELIEVED CONNER'S WILD STORY--
---THAT YOU WERE THE INTENDED BRIDE OF THE DEMIGOD HOAR.
BUT THEN I SEE YOU AGAIN... AND I UNDERSTAND WHY I WAS TAKEN IN SO EASILY...
...WHY I WANTED YOU EVEN AFTER I FOUND OUT THAT YOU HAD NO CONNECTION TO THE GODS.
AND MAY I SAY THAT YOU HAVE ONLY GROWN MORE DESIRABLE WITH TIME.
INDEED, I WOULD GIVE ALL THE RICHES YOUR BODY ONCE EARNED FOR ME IN THE ARENA--
---BUT TO POSSESS YOUR SPIRIT AS WELL!
SPITT

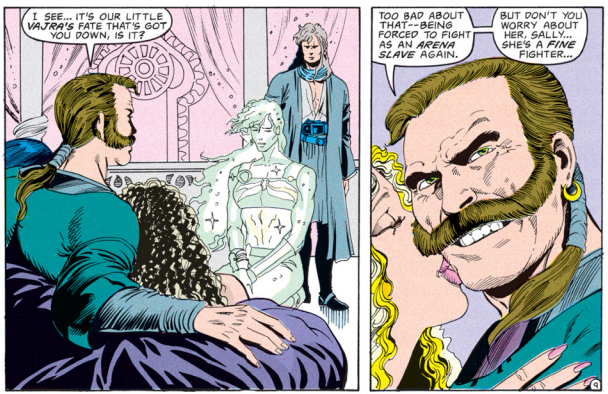

YOU MAY GROW TO REGRET THAT, VAJRA.
GUARDS!
BUT FOR NOW, DO TAKE TIME TO CONSIDER YOUR OPTIONS...
"...IN YOUR CELL."
AND WHAT A FINE SET OF OPTIONS YOU'VE GIVEN ME...
...YOU AND CONNER HAVE GIVEN ME.
DID YOU EVER REALLY WANT TO SAVE THE CAT CHILD, CONNER?...
...OR WAS THIS ALL ABOUT TURNING ME OVER TO ROCKY DUUM AGAIN?
AT LEAST THE LAST TIME YOU ABANDONED ME HERE, YOUR OWN LIFE WAS ON THE LINE WHEN THE SCAM WENT SOUR.
NOW IT'S ONLY--
OH!


WHO ARE YOU! AND WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH--
MMMF--?
SALABAK!
CAN YOU GET ME OUT OF HERE?
THE SUN...
...TOMORROW?
BUT TOMORROW I FIGHT IN THE ARENA!
ALL RIGHT.
IF YOU'VE GOT ANY SORT OF PLAN, YOU'RE A STEP AHEAD OF ME.
TOMORROW IT IS.

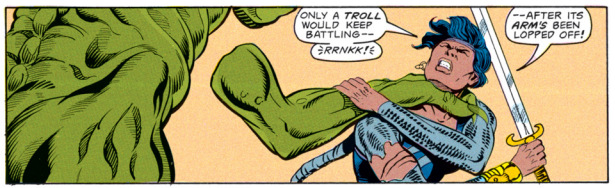

SIR...?
DO YOU WANT MY MEN TO STOP HIM?
THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY.
"I KNOW WHERE HE'S GOING."


AND THEN THERE WAS THE TIME I WAS TRAPPED ON THE ASTRAL PLANE WITH NOTHING BUT A--
HO, SALABAK, OLD BOY!
WELCOME!


OH, DON'T TAKE IT SO HARD, SON. SOMETIMES A CON JUST GOES WRONG.
YOU AND I OUGHT TO BE GLAD WE MADE IT OUT WITH OUR LIVES...
...AND IN MY CASE, A LITTLE GOLD.
TEE HEE


I SEE... IT'S OUR LITTLE VAJRA'S FATE THAT'S GOT YOU DOWN, IS IT?
TOO BAD ABOUT THAT--BEING FORCED TO FIGHT AS AN ARENA SLAVE AGAIN.
BUT DON'T YOU WORRY ABOUT HER, SALLY... SHE'S A FINE FIGHTER...

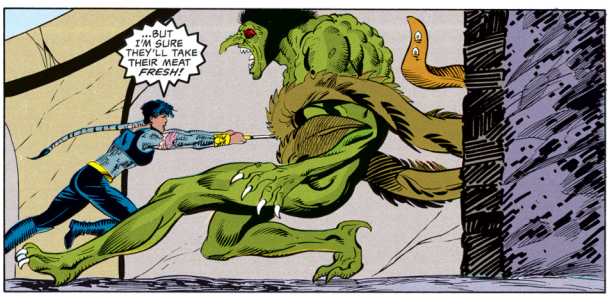
"...THE BEST!"
URGHK!
BLAST YOU, MONSTER! WHY DON'T YOU DIE?!


ONLY A TROLL WOULD KEEP BATTLING--
--AFTER ITS ARM'S BEEN LOPPED OFF!
ZRRNKKTE

RREOOHHRRG
IT APPEARS, ABON DUUM, THAT YOU'VE RETURNED THE FAMOUS VAJRA TO THE ARENA--
--ONLY TO HAVE HER PERISH IN HER FIRST BOUT!
NO, ALLAMON SORN --DON'T COUNT MY VAJRA OUT YET.

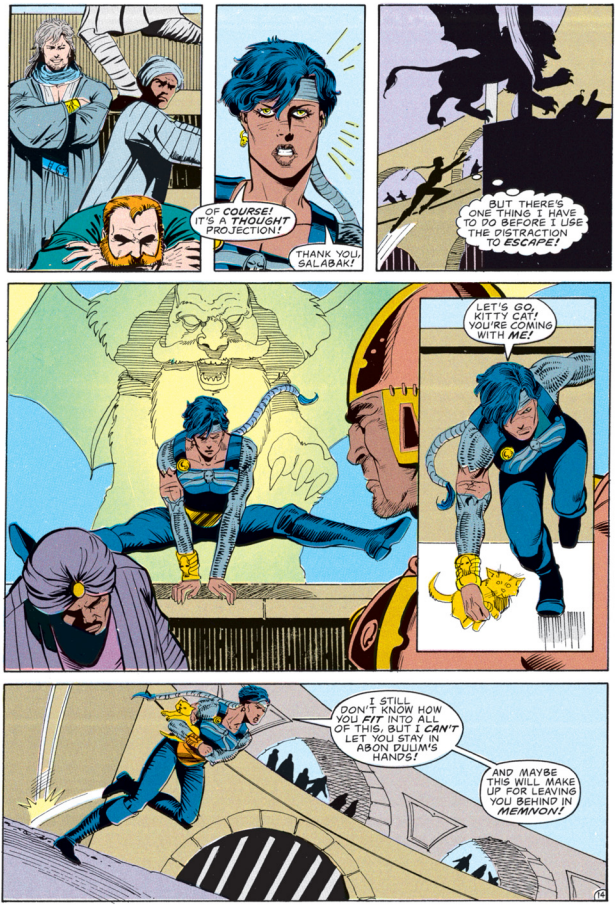
YEAARHHH!
SO YOU KNOW PAIN, EH? GOOD.
AND NOW--
--YOU SHALL KNOW FEAR!
SHUNK
PERHAPS YOU THOUGHT YOU'D LIVE FOREVER, TROLL.
OR DON'T YOU THINK AT ALL?
NO MATTER. DEATH HAS WAITED PATIENTLY, AS ALWAYS.
SOON THERE'LL BE NOTHING THAT REMAINS OF YOU--
--BUT THE MEMORY OF YOUR LOATHSOME STENCH!

YURRG?
THE OTYUGHS HAVEN'T HAD A DECENT MEAL ALL DAY!
CARRION'S WHAT THEY'RE WAITING FOR...

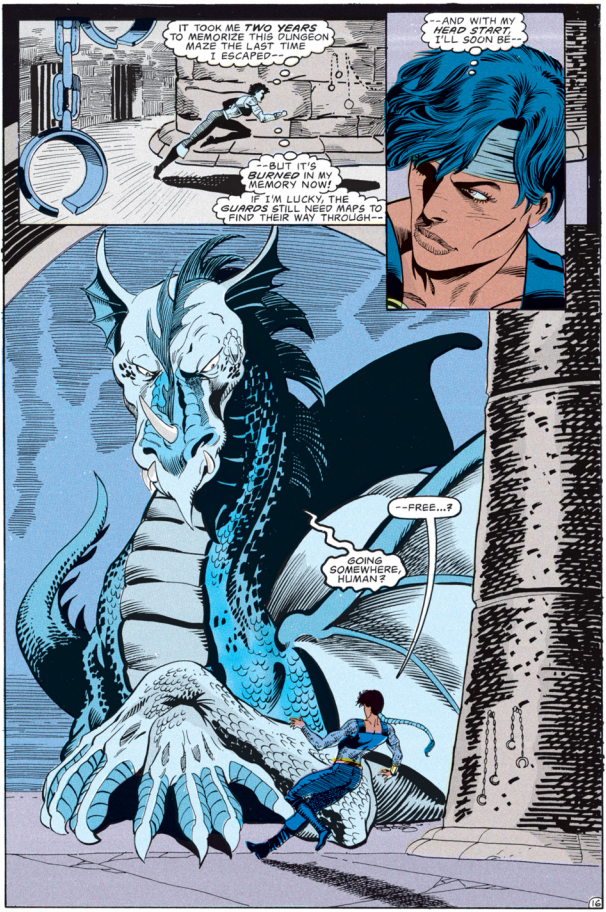

...BUT I'M SURE THEY'LL TAKE THEIR MEAT FRESH!

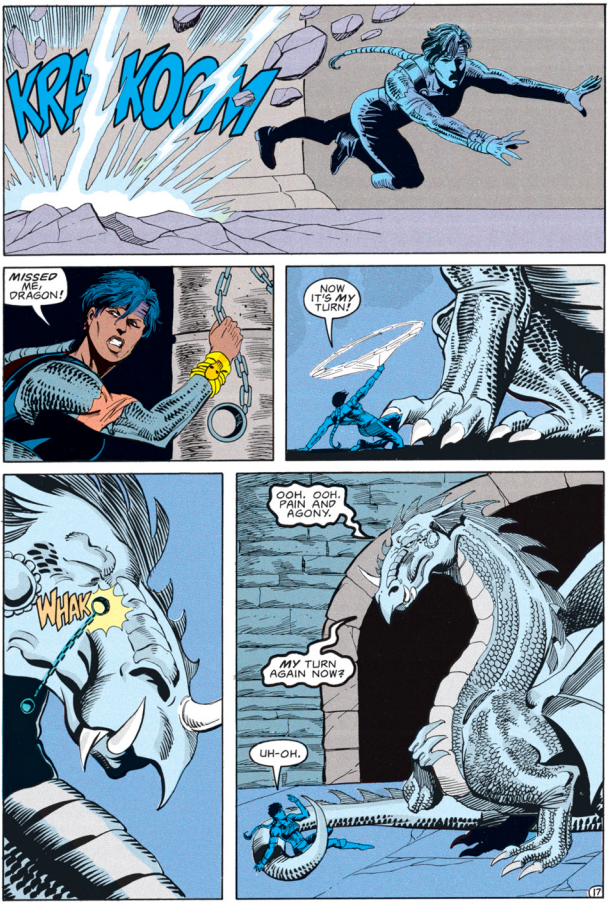
GYAAAA!
VAJ-RA!
VAJ-RA!
VAJ-RA!
12

SALABAK? HE CAN'T ANSWER, REMEMBER?
CONNER!
GOOD STRATEGY AGAINST THE TROLL, BY THE WAY... ALTHOUGH THE WORD IS THAT YOUR NEXT OPPONENT'S TOUGHER STILL.
AND YOU JUST COULDN'T RESIST BEING ON HAND TO SEE ME DIE, IS THAT IT?
VAT!! HOW COULD YOU SAY SUCH A THING?
MAYBE I'VE JUST COME TO--
HELP! GUARDS!
EEEEK!
A MANTICORE --?
BUT WHY IS IT ATTACKING DUUM?
13


OF COURSE! IT'S A THOUGHT PROJECTION!
THANK YOU, SALABAK!
BUT THERE'S ONE THING I HAVE TO DO BEFORE I USE THE DISTRACTION TO ESCAPE!
LET'S GO, KITTY CAT! YOU'RE COMING WITH ME!
I STILL DON'T KNOW HOW YOU FIT INTO ALL OF THIS, BUT I CAN'T LET YOU STAY IN ABON DULM'S HANDS!
AND MAYBE THIS WILL MAKE UP FOR LEAVING YOU BEHIND IN MEMNON!
14

HISSSSS
WHA-AT?!
WATCH IT, BUSTER! YOU ALMOST TOOK MY EYE OUT!
CAN'T YOU SEE I'M TRYING TO SAVE YOUR MISERABLE--
YIIKE!
STUPID! DUUM'S HOLD ON HIM IS TOO STRONG!
THAT'S ANOTHER SCORE WE'LL HAVE TO SETTLE!
BUT FOR THE MOMENT--
--THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO BUT FLEE!
SHE KNOWS THE TUNNELS TOO WELL, LORD DUUM! SHE'S SURE TO ELUDE US!
PERHAPS NOT.
THERE'VE BEEN SOME CHANGES SINCE VAJRA WAS HERE LAST.
15


IT TOOK ME TWO YEARS TO MEMORIZE THIS DUNGEON MAZE THE LAST TIME I ESCAPED--
--BUT IT'S BURNED IN MY MEMORY NOW! IF I'M LUCKY, THE GUARDS STILL NEED MAPS TO FIND THEIR WAY THROUGH--
--AND WITH MY HEAD START, I'LL SOON BE--
--FREE...?
GOING SOMEWHERE, HUMAN?


KRA KOOM
MISSED ME, DRAGON!
NOW IT'S MY TURN!
WHAK
OOH. OOH. PAIN AND AGONY.
MY TURN AGAIN NOW?
UH-OH.
17

RARRGHH!
WHO--?
RRR-RIP

BY THE GODS!

IT'S ANOTHER WERECAT!

THE WERECAT, VAJRA VALMEYJAR...
...THE CATLORD!
19

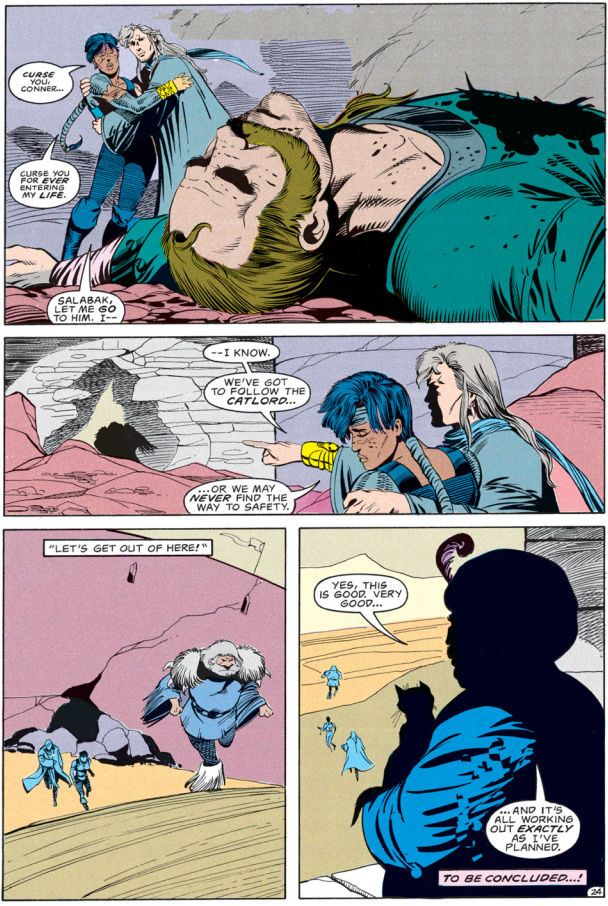
ATTACK!
NO! OFF ME, YOU BRAINLESS BEASTS!
KRAKA
OFF!
DOOM
FIND COVER AS FAST AS YOU CAN, WOMAN...
19

"...OR COVER WILL SURELY FIND YOU!"
CATLORD, SHHH!
SOMEONE COMES...
READY, NOW. I'LL STRIKE FIRST AND THEN YOU--
WAIT!
IT'S SALABAK...
...A FRIEND!
20

I COULDN'T HAVE MADE IT THIS FAR WITHOUT YOUR HELP--
--AND WE'RE ALMOST FREE AND CLEAR!
SEE, LASS?...
...I TOLD YOU IT WOULD ALL WORK OUT. YOU'VE GOT TO LEARN TO TRUST ME!
WHAT?!
YOU SHOW UP SMILING AND THAT'S SUPPOSED TO MAKE EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT?!
I DON'T WANT TO TRUST YOU, CONNER...
...I WANT TO KILL YOU!
NO!
WHA--WHAT ARE YOU--
THE PLEASURE OF KILLING CONNER WILL BE MINE!

YOU LIED TO ME, CONNER... YOU BETRAYED ME!
YOU SWORE YOU WOULDN'T LET THE CHILD FALL INTO ABON DULIM'S HANDS!
WHAP
HUNGHH!
CATLORD, LISTEN! IT-- IT'S NOT LIKE YOU THINK.
I... I'VE GOT A PLAN, SEE? IT'S SURE-FIRE! AND IT'LL GET THE BOY BACK TO YOU, I PROMISE!
B-BUT YOU HAVE TO GIVE ME ONE MORE DAY! ONE DAY TO--
NO.
NO MORE DAYS. NO MORE SCHEMES.
NO MORE LIES.
ROAWWRRR
ZZ

SALABAK...
YOU'VE GOT TO--
--HELP CONNER...
NO, DON'T--!
STAY BACK!
CONNERRR!


CURSE YOU, CONNER...
CURSE YOU FOR EVER ENTERING MY LIFE.
SALABAK, LET ME GO TO HIM. I--
--I KNOW.
WE'VE GOT TO FOLLOW THE CATLORD...
...OR WE MAY NEVER FIND THE WAY TO SAFETY.
"LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!"
YES, THIS IS GOOD. VERY GOOD...
...AND IT'S ALL WORKING OUT EXACTLY AS I'VE PLANNED.
TO BE CONCLUDED...!
24

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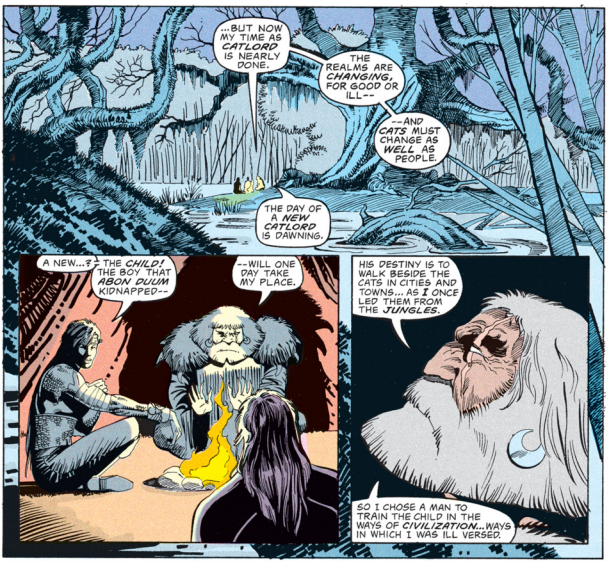
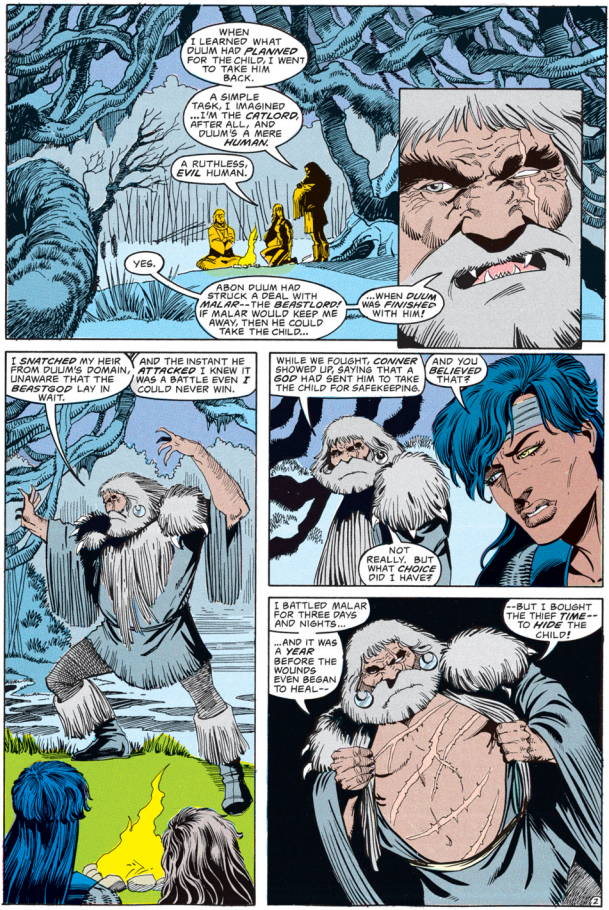
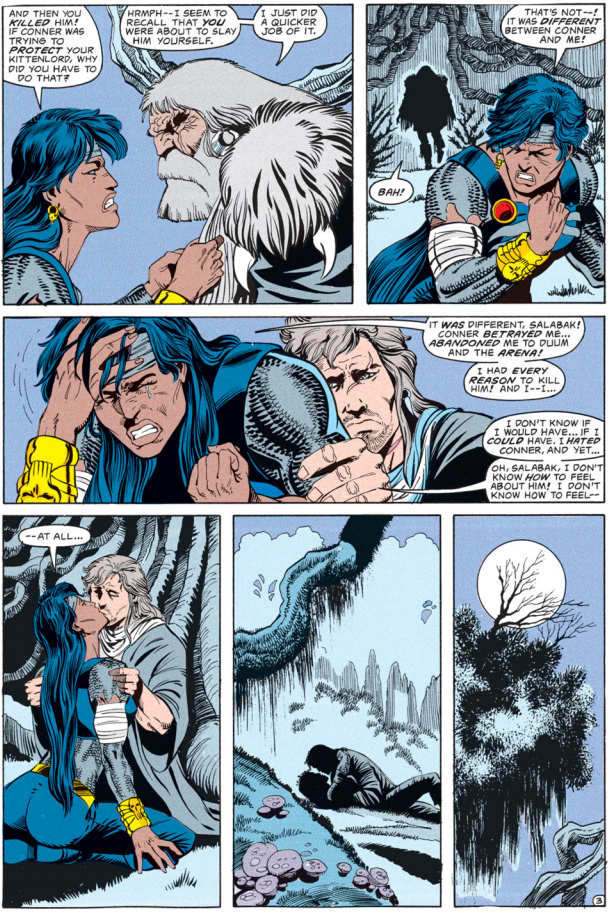

...BUT NOW MY TIME AS CATLORD IS NEARLY DONE.
THE REALMS ARE CHANGING, FOR GOOD OR ILL--
--AND CATS MUST CHANGE AS WELL AS PEOPLE.
THE DAY OF A NEW CATLORD IS DAWNING.
A NEW...?
THE CHILD! THE BOY THAT ABOW DUUM KIDNAPPED--
--WILL ONE DAY TAKE MY PLACE.
HIS DESTINY IS TO WALK BESIDE THE CATS IN CITIES AND TOWNS... AS I ONCE LED THEM FROM THE JUNGLES.
SO I CHOSE A MAN TO TRAIN THE CHILD IN THE WAYS OF CIVILIZATION...WAYS IN WHICH I WAS ILL VERSED.
YOU GAVE THE BOY TO CONNER.
I GAVE HIM OVER...
...TO ABOW DUUM.
WHAT?!
IT WAS... A MISTAKE.
I FOOLISHLY BELIEVED THAT CIVILIZATION AND RESPECTABILITY WERE ONE AND THE SAME.
AS I SAID, I WAS ILL VERSED.

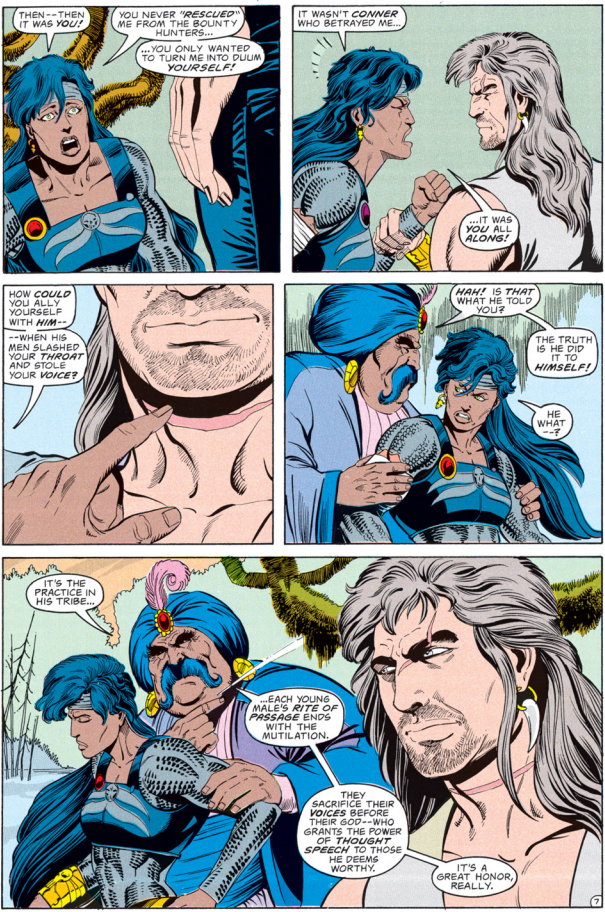

WHEN I LEARNED WHAT DUUM HAD PLANNED FOR THE CHILD, I WENT TO TAKE HIM BACK.
A SIMPLE TASK, I IMAGINED ...I'M THE GATLORD, AFTER ALL, AND DUUM'S A MERE HUMAN.
A RUTHLESS, EVIL HUMAN.
YES.
ABON DUUM HAD STRUCK A DEAL WITH MALAR--THE BEASTLORD! IF MALAR WOULD KEEP ME AWAY, THEN HE COULD TAKE THE CHILD...
...WHEN DUUM WAS FINISHED WITH HIM!
I SNATCHED MY HEIR FROM DUUM'S DOMAIN, UNAWARE THAT THE BEASTGOD LAY IN WAIT.
AND THE INSTANT HE ATTACKED I KNEW IT WAS A BATTLE EVEN I COULD NEVER WIN.
WHILE WE FOUGHT, CONNER SHOWED UP, SAYING THAT A GOD HAD SENT HIM TO TAKE THE CHILD FOR SAFEKEEPING.
AND YOU BELIEVED THAT?
NOT REALLY. BUT WHAT CHOICE DID I HAVE?
I BATTLED MALAR FOR THREE DAYS AND NIGHTS...
...AND IT WAS A YEAR BEFORE THE WOUNDS EVEN BEGAN TO HEAL--
--BUT I BOUGHT THE THIEF TIME--TO HIDE THE CHILD!

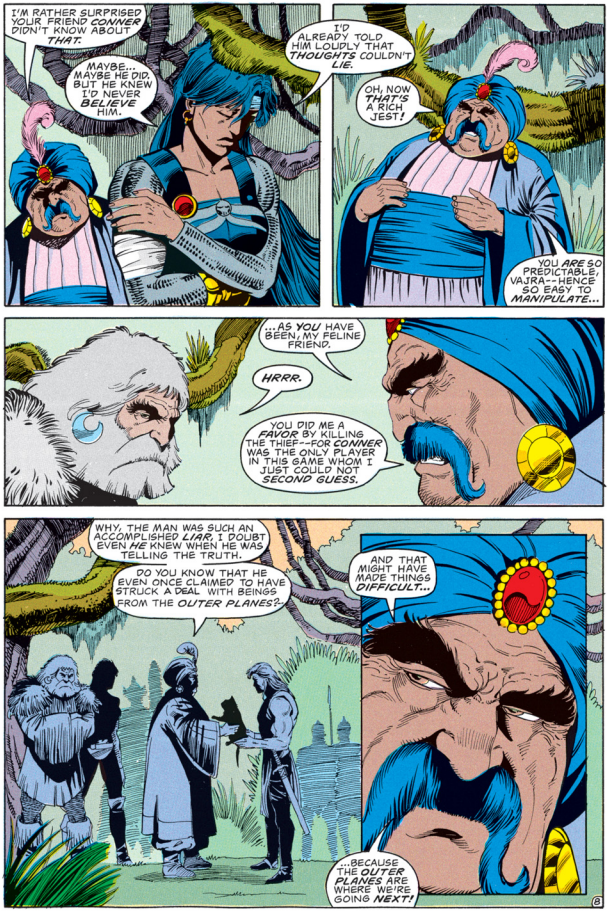

AND THEN YOU KILLED HIM! IF CONNER WAS TRYING TO PROTECT YOUR KITTENLORD, WHY DID YOU HAVE TO DO THAT?
HRMPH--I SEEM TO RECALL THAT YOU WERE ABOUT TO SLAY HIM YOURSELF.
I JUST DID A QUICKER JOB OF IT.
THAT'S NOT--! IT WAS DIFFERENT BETWEEN CONNER AND ME!
BAH!
IT WAS DIFFERENT, SALABAK! CONNER BETRAYED ME... ABANDONED ME TO DUUM AND THE ARENA!
I HAD EVERY REASON TO KILL HIM! AND I--I...
I DON'T KNOW IF I WOULD HAVE... IF I COULD HAVE. I HATED CONNER, AND YET...
OH, SALABAK, I DON'T KNOW HOW TO FEEL ABOUT HIM! I DON'T KNOW HOW TO FEEL--
--AT ALL...
3

MM?
SALABAK, DID YOU HEAR SOMETHING...?
SALABAK!?
HE'S RIGHT HERE, VAJRA.

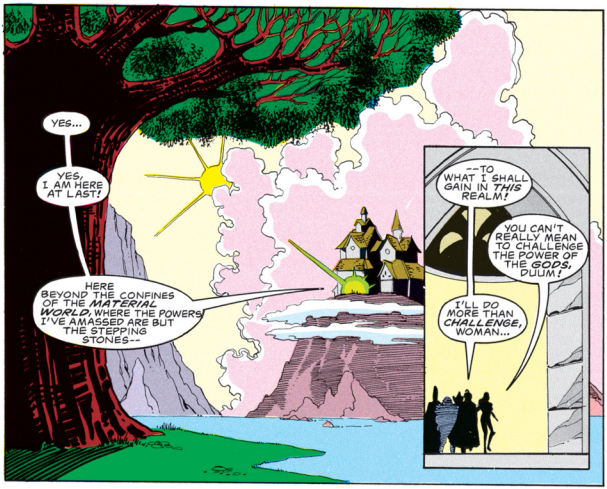
THE LAST BETRAYAL!
ABON DUUM!
DAN MISHKIN WRITER
JAN DUURSEMA ARTIST
STEVE HAYNIE LETTERER
MATT WEBB COLORIST
ELLIOT S. MAGGIN EDITOR
5

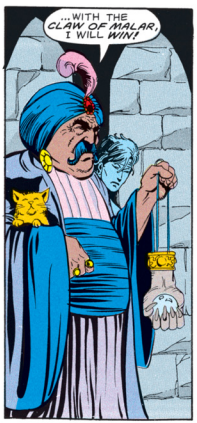
BARON DUUM! THE CATLORD!
RRRRRR?
I WOULDN'T ATTEMPT IT, OLD PUSS.
THE SLIGHTEST WRONG MOVE AND MY MAN WILL SKEWER THE KITTEN!
YOUR MAN...
...SALABAK?
6

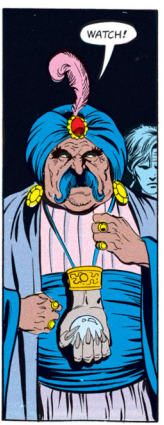

THEN--THEN IT WAS YOU!
YOU NEVER "RESCUED" ME FROM THE BOUNTY HUNTERS...
...YOU ONLY WANTED TO TURN ME INTO DUUM YOURSELF!
IT WASN'T CONNER WHO BETRAYED ME...
...IT WAS YOU ALL ALONG!
HOW COULD YOU ALLY YOURSELF WITH HIM--
--WHEN HIS MEN SLASHED YOUR THROAT AND STOLE YOUR VOICE?
HAH! IS THAT WHAT HE TOLD YOU?
THE TRUTH IS HE DID IT TO HIMSELF!
HE WHAT --?
IT'S THE PRACTICE IN HIS TRIBE...
...EACH YOUNG MALE'S RITE OF PASSAGE ENDS WITH THE MUTILATION.
THEY SACRIFICE THEIR VOICES BEFORE THEIR GOD--WHO GRANTS THE POWER OF THOUGHT-SPEECH TO THOSE HE DEEMS WORTHY.
IT'S A GREAT HONOR, REALLY.
7

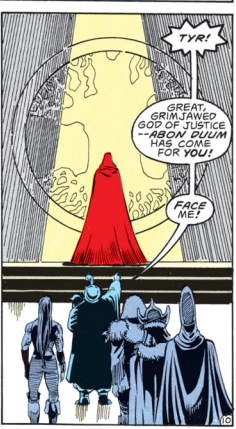

I'M RATHER SURPRISED YOUR FRIEND CONNER DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT THAT.
MAYBE... MAYBE HE DID, BUT HE KNEW I'D NEVER BELIEVE HIM.
I'D ALREADY TOLD HIM LOUDLY THAT THOUGHTS COULDN'T LIE.
OH, NOW THAT'S A RICH JEST!
YOU ARE SO PREDICTABLE, VAJRA--HENCE SO EASY TO MANIPULATE...
...AS YOU HAVE BEEN, MY FELINE FRIEND.
HRRR.
YOU DID ME A FAVOR BY KILLING THE THIEF--FOR CONNER WAS THE ONLY PLAYER IN THIS GAME WHOM I JUST COULD NOT SECOND GUESS.
WHY, THE MAN WAS SUCH AN ACCOMPLISHED LIAR, I DOUBT EVEN HE KNEW WHEN HE WAS TELLING THE TRUTH.
DO YOU KNOW THAT HE EVEN ONCE CLAIMED TO HAVE STRUCK A DEAL WITH BEINGS FROM THE OUTER PLANES?
AND THAT MIGHT HAVE MADE THINGS DIFFICULT...
...BECAUSE THE OUTER PLANES ARE WHERE WE'RE GOING NEXT!
8

YOU MUST BE JOKING ...IF YOU'RE NOT TOTALLY MAD!
I AM NEITHER, I ASSURE YOU.
MY INITIAL PLAN WAS TO WAIT UNTIL THE NEW CATLORD --GROWN UP UNDER MY CONTROL--WAS CAPABLE OF TAKING ME TO OTHER PLANES.
PUUURRRUURRR
BUT NOW, YOU SEE--
--I AM MASTER OF BOTH CATLORDS!
AND YOU, SIR, WILL DO EXACTLY AS I SAY ...IF YOU EVER WANT THE YOUNG LORD BACK.
I COMMAND YOU TO TRANSPORT US--
--TO THE OUTER PLANE OF GLADSHEIM!
9

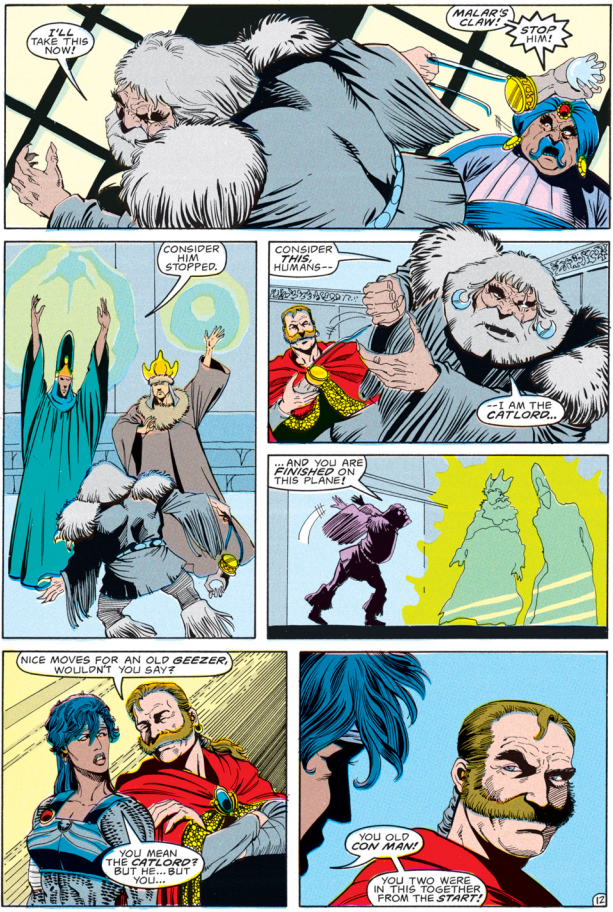

YES...
YES, I AM HERE AT LAST!
HERE BEYOND THE CONFINES OF THE MATERIAL WORLD, WHERE THE POWERS I'VE AMASSED ARE BUT THE STEPPING STONES--
--TO WHAT I SHALL GAIN IN THIS REALM!
YOU CAN'T REALLY MEAN TO CHALLENGE THE POWER OF THE GODS, DUUM!
I'LL DO MORE THAN CHALLENGE, WOMAN...


...WITH THE CLAW OF MALAR, I WILL WIN!


WATCH!

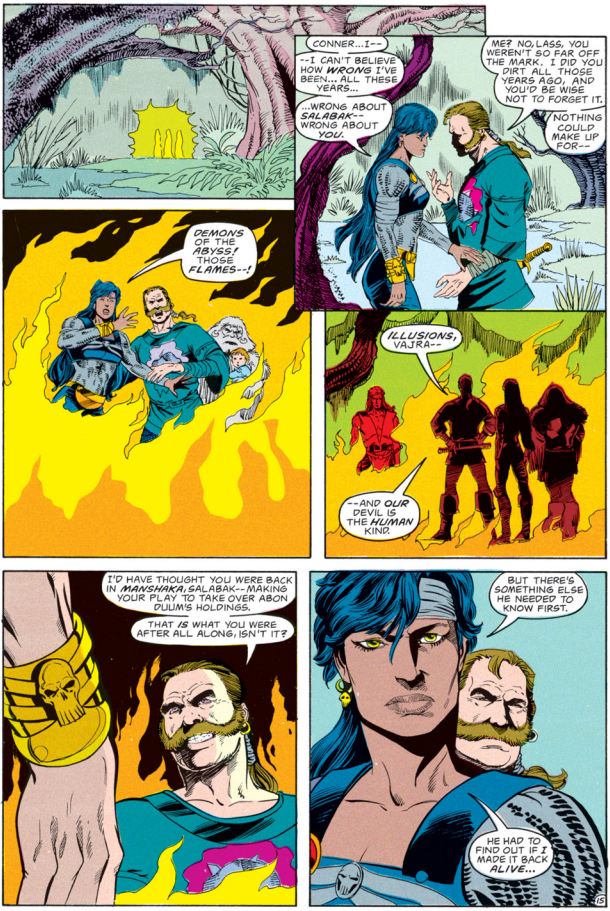

TYR!
GREAT, GRIMJAWED GOD OF JUSTICE --ABOW DUUM HAS COME FOR YOU!
FACE ME!

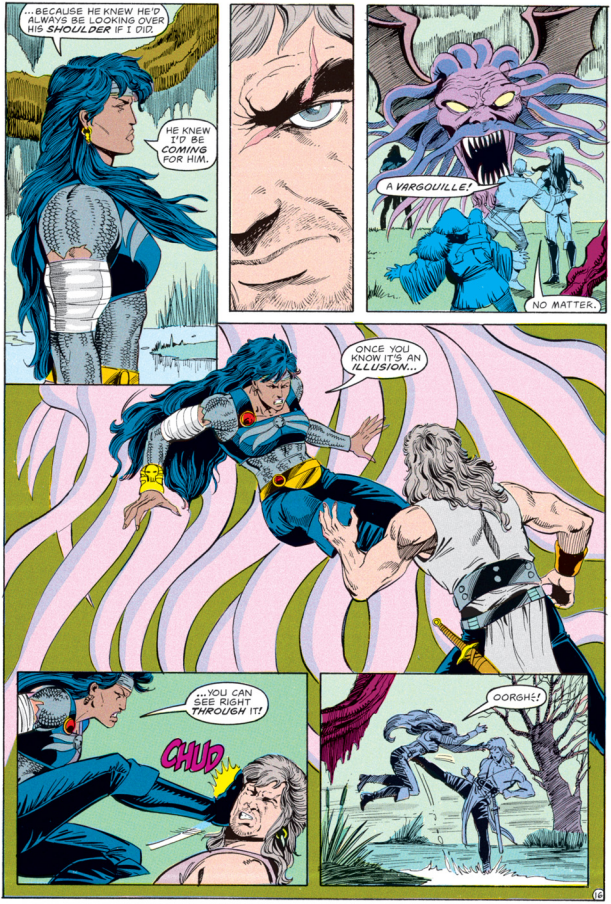
TURN, I SAY!
ALL RIGHT.
WHA--?! CONNER!?!
NO! YOU'RE DEAD!
YOU'RE ALIVE--!
HURRRR!


I'LL TAKE THIS NOW!
MALAR'S CLAW!
STOP HIM!
CONSIDER HIM STOPPED.
CONSIDER THIS, HUMANS--
--I AM THE CATLORD..
...AND YOU ARE FINISHED ON THIS PLANE!
NICE MOVES FOR AN OLD GEEZER, WOULDN'T YOU SAY?
YOU MEAN THE CATLORD? BUT HE..BUT YOU...
YOU OLD CON MAN!
YOU TWO WERE IN THIS TOGETHER, FROM THE START!
12

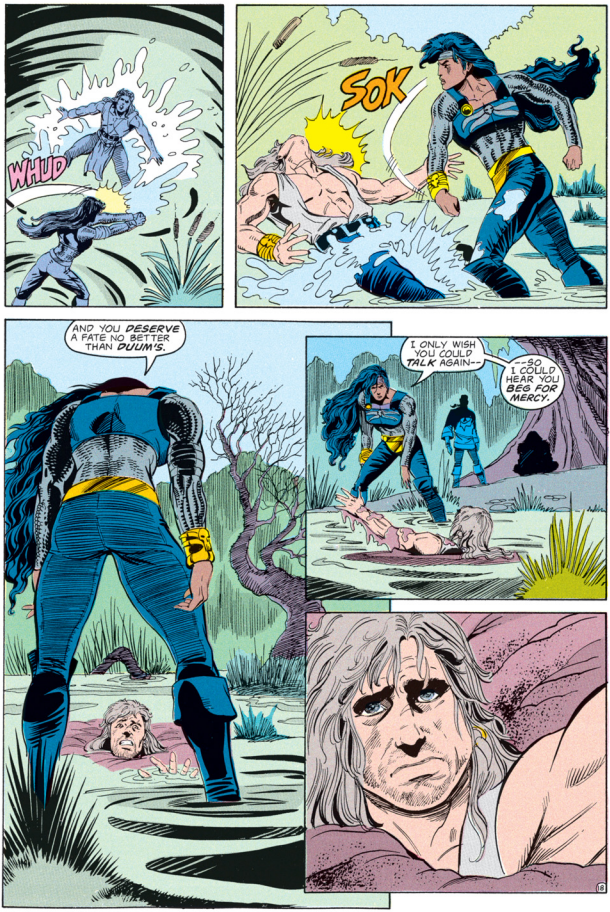
GAME'S UP, FAT BOY-- GIVE ME THE KITTY!
NEVER! I--
YES... YES, I WILL.
HSSSSS
LOOK OUT, CONNER!
DUUM'S TAKEN OVER THE KITTENLORD'S MIND! HE'LL TRY TO KILL YOU!
WHAP
NO...
POWP!
...I DON'T THINK SO. AFTER ALL WE'VE BEEN THROUGH, HE'D NEVER HURT HIS OLD PAL CONNER!
UGH! YOU'VE BEEN CHASING DOWN MICE AGAIN, HAVEN'T YOU?
LICK LICK

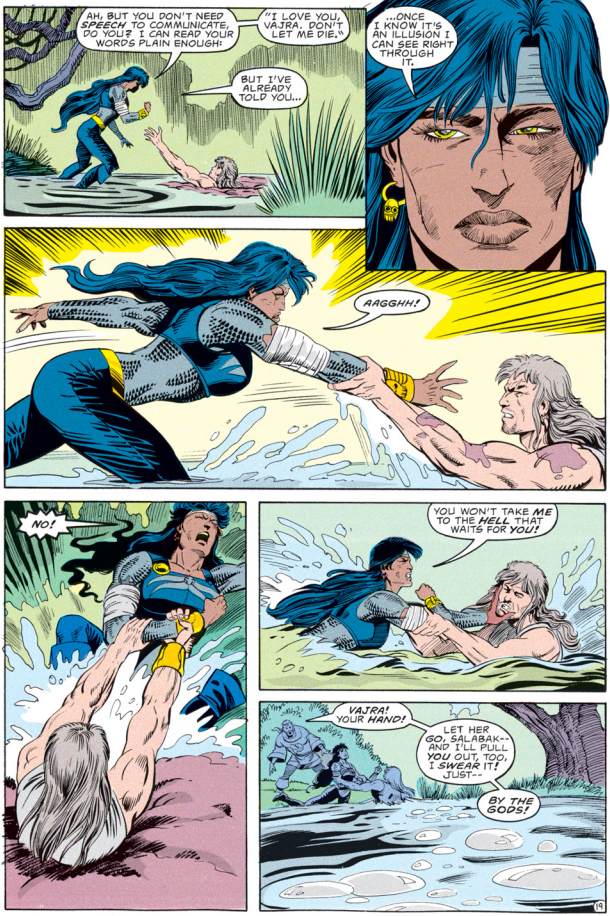
IT CAN'T END LIKE THIS! NOT HERE! NOT NOW!...
...I CAN STILL WIN IF I GET THE CLAW! I MUST GET--
THIS, MORTAL?
THERE YOU GO, CHIEF-- THE CLAW OF MALAR, JUST AS I PROMISED!
I GUESS THIS SQUARES US THEN, EH?
FOR THE PRESENT, CONNER...
...BUT REMEMBER THAT MY EYES ARE ALWAYS ON THE SCALE OF JUSTICE --
--AND TYR WILL BE WATCHING YOU!
14

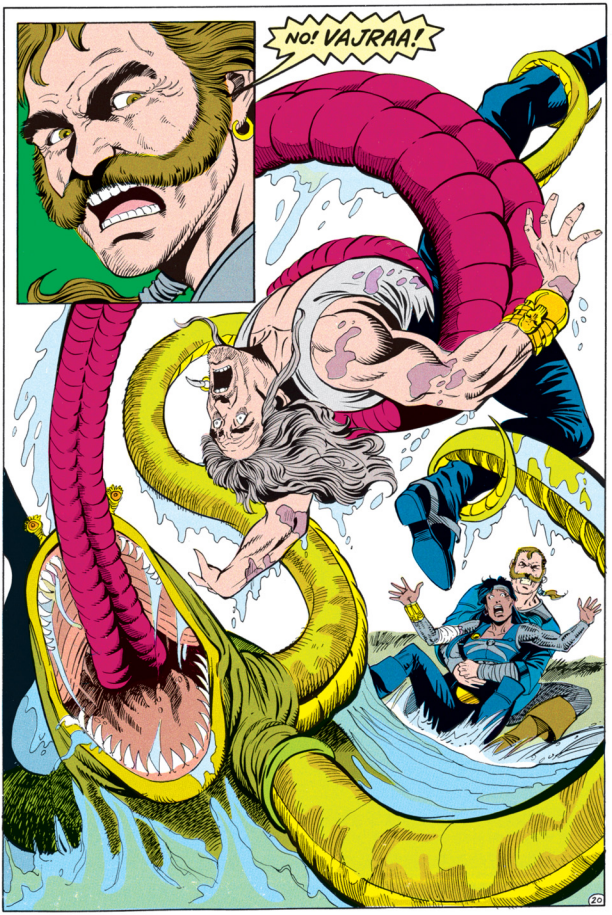

CONNER...I--
--I CAN'T BELIEVE HOW WRONG I'VE BEEN... ALL THESE YEARS...
...WRONG ABOUT SALABAK--WRONG ABOUT YOU.
ME? NO, LASS, YOU WEREN'T SO FAR OFF THE MARK. I DID YOU DIRT ALL THOSE YEARS AGO, AND YOU'D BE WISE NOT TO FORGET IT.
NOTHING COULD MAKE UP FOR--
DEMONS OF THE ABYSS! THOSE FLAMES--!
ILLUSIONS, VAJRA--
--AND OUR DEVIL IS THE HUMAN KIND.
I'D HAVE THOUGHT YOU WERE BACK IN MANSHAKA, SALABAK--MAKING YOUR PLAY TO TAKE OVER ABON OUUM'S HOLDINGS.
THAT IS WHAT YOU WERE AFTER ALL ALONG, ISN'T IT?
BUT THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE HE NEEDED TO KNOW FIRST.
HE HAD TO FIND OUT IF I MADE IT BACK ALIVE...

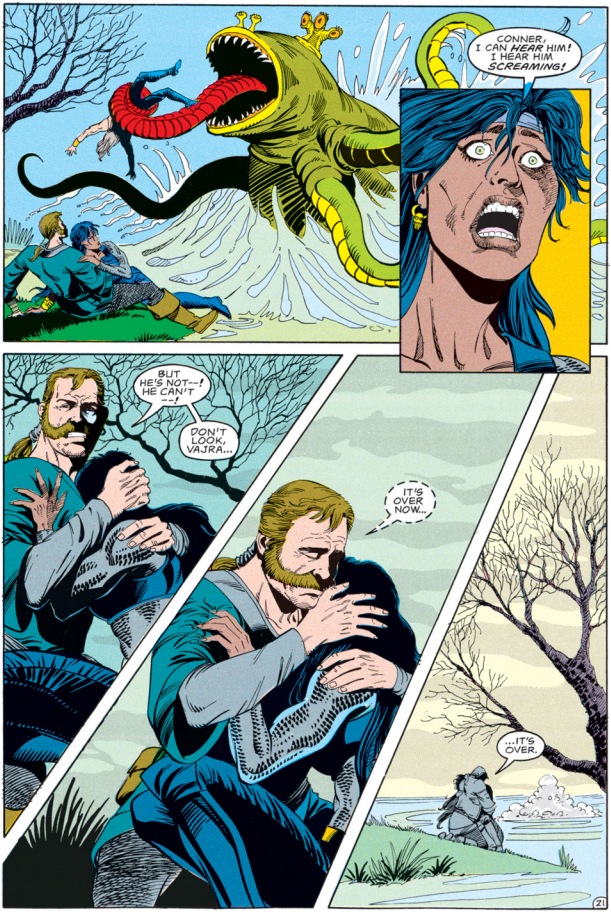

...BECAUSE HE KNEW HE'D ALWAYS BE LOOKING OVER HIS SHOULDER IF I DID.
HE KNEW I'D BE COMING FOR HIM.
A VARGOUILLE!
NO MATTER.
ONCE YOU KNOW IT'S AN ILLUSION...
...YOU CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH IT!
CHUD
OORGH!
15

CURSE YOU, SALABAK!
YOU WERE THERE! IN THE ARENA-- IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FEAR... THE STENCH OF DEATH!
ALL WE EVER TALKED ABOUT WAS HOW TO ESCAPE HIM! BUT NOW...
...YOU'VE BECOME HIM!
WHAK
17


WHUP
SOK
AND YOU DESERVE A FATE NO BETTER THAN DUUM'S.
I ONLY WISH YOU COULD TALK AGAIN--
--SO I COULD HEAR YOU BEG FOR MERCY!

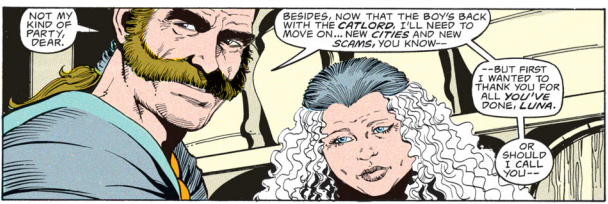

AH, BUT YOU DON'T NEED SPEECH TO COMMUNICATE, DO YOU? I CAN READ YOUR WORDS PLAIN ENOUGH!
"I LOVE YOU, VAJRA. DON'T LET ME DIE."
BUT I'VE ALREADY TOLD YOU...
...ONCE I KNOW IT'S AN ILLUSION I CAN SEE RIGHT THROUGH IT.
AAGGHH!
NO!
YOU WON'T TAKE ME TO THE HELL THAT WAITS FOR YOU!
VAJRA! YOUR HAND!
LET HER GO, SALABAK-- AND I'LL PULL YOU OUT, TOO, I SWEAR IT! JUST--
BY THE GODS!
16


NO! VAJRAA!
20

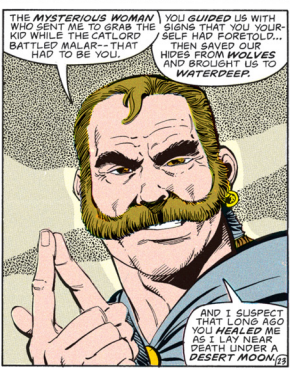

CONNER, I CAN HEAR HIM! I HEAR HIM SCREAMING!
BUT HE'S NOT--! HE CAN'T --!
DON'T LOOK, VAJRA...
IT'S OVER NOW...
...IT'S OVER.
21

I... I'M GLAD YOU CAME BACK FOR ME THIS TIME, CONNER.
THIS TIME, AND LAST TIME, GIRL.
WHAT--?! YOU MEAN...YEARS AGO--WHEN YOU... WHEN YOU...
"SOLD ME OUT," SAY IT, VAJRA--IT'S WHAT I DID.
I LET YOU BECOME ABON DUUM'S SLAVE IN EXCHANGE FOR MY OWN LIFE...
...BUT SIX MONTHS LATER I WAS BACK WITH A FOOLPROOF PLAN TO RESCUE YOU.
SOME PLAN... SOME FOOL.
DUUM'S MEN BEAT ME SENSELESS--LEFT ME FOR DEAD IN THE DESERT--
--BUT I DIDN'T DIE... AND I VOWED THAT DAY TO FREE YOU. I MADE MORE PLANS...
...EMPTY PLANS. EMPTY PROMISES. FROM A BROKEN, EMPTY-HEARTED FOOL..
BUT...YOU DID TRY TO SAVE ME, CONNER.
I NEVER KNEW.
YOU NEVER ASKED, VAJI.
22

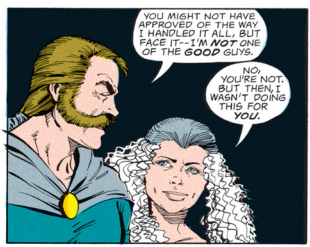
HIP HIP
HOORAY!
AREN'T YOU JOINING THE CELEBRATION, CONNER?

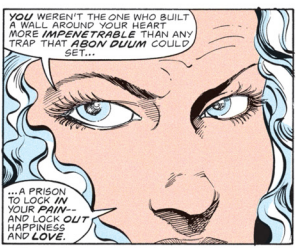

NOT MY KIND OF PARTY, DEAR.
BESIDES, NOW THAT THE BOY'S BACK WITH THE CATLORD, I'LL NEED TO MOVE ON... NEW CITIES AND NEW SCAMS, YOU KNOW--
--BUT FIRST, I WANTED TO THANK YOU FOR ALL YOU'VE DONE, LUNA.
OR SHOULD I CALL YOU--

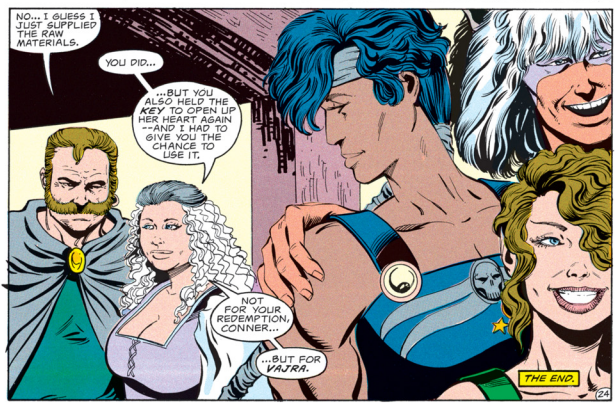
--SELUNE, GODDESS OF THE MOON.
WHY, CONNER, YOU'RE SUCH A FLATTERER.
NOT FLATTERY--FACT. I FIGURED OUT YOUR SECRET MONTHS AGO.


THE MYSTERIOUS WOMAN WHO SENT ME TO GRAB THE KID WHILE THE CATLORD BATTLED MALAR--THAT HAD TO BE YOU.
YOU GUIDED US WITH SIGNS THAT YOU YOURSELF HAD FORETOLD... THEN SAVED OUR HIDES FROM WOLVES AND BROUGHT US TO WATERDEEP.
AND I SUSPECT THAT LONG AGO YOU HEALED ME AS I LAY NEAR DEATH UNDER A DESERT MOON.

BUT YOU DID SOMETHING ELSE, LUNA--THE MOST IMPORTANT THING...
...YOU GAVE ME A CHANCE TO REDEEM MYSELF FOR WHAT I DID TO VAJRA.


YOU MIGHT NOT HAVE APPROVED OF THE WAY I HANDLED IT ALL, BUT FACE IT--I'M NOT ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS.
NO; YOU'RE NOT. BUT THEN, I WASN'T DOING THIS FOR YOU.


YOU WEREN'T THE ONE WHO BUILT A WALL AROUND YOUR HEART MORE IMPENETRABLE THAN ANY TRAP THAT ABON DUUM COULD SET...
...A PRISON TO LOCK IN YOUR PAIN--AND LOCK OUT HAPPINESS AND LOVE.


NO... I GUESS I JUST SUPPLIED THE RAW MATERIALS.
YOU DID...
...BUT YOU ALSO HELP THE KEY TO OPEN UP HER HEART AGAIN --AND I HAD TO GIVE YOU THE CHANCE TO USE IT.
NOT FOR YOUR REDEMPTION, CONNER...
...BUT FOR VAJRA.
THE END.
ZA

THE Advanced Dungeons & Dragons COMIC

FROM THE DUNGEON
by Jim Lowder

Calimshan and the city of Manshaka

Calimshan is a place of extreme opposites. The inhospitable Calim Desert dominates almost one quarter of the country's land, but its cities are opulent and comfortable. Strong legal codes with strict penalties determine the fates of criminals in Calimshan's more civilized areas, but desert raiders and powerful crime lords control large pockets of land, dealing their own brand of justice to those foolish enough to cross their paths.

Calimshan is, in shc:t, much like Tethyr, its neighbor to the north: a place of potentially fabulous adventure, but rife with terrible danger for the unwise.

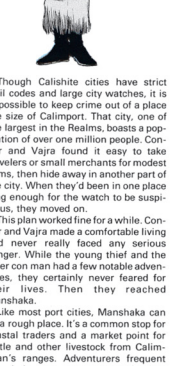
Money presents a great attraction for most of Calimshan's residents. The country is an important center for merchant activity in southeastern Faerun. Calishite traders are among the most prosperous on the world of Toril, as their vast, finely constructed cities proclaim.

Only one thing can even approach having the importance of money in Calishite society: magic. But typical Calishite merchants and viziers don't value magic in and of itself. Magic, like gold, is only worth what it can get you. Thus, you won't find many reclusive, research-oriented mages in Calimshan. Most wizards spend their days creating new time-saving devices or incantations. As you might expect, they are very well paid for their services. Through their magic, the rich merchants of Calimshan have become masters of leisure; nothing can take care of menial duties like a good spell.

But this wealthy country has a darker side. Visitors to Calimshan soon discover the incredible ethnocentricity that permeates society there. Travelers from highly civilized places like Cormyr or Waterdeep are often amazed to learn that native Calishites consider their homelands backward and barbaric. The Calishites, for their part, don't even try to mask their opinions of "crass foreigners."

Considering this attitude of superiority, it isn't surprising that Calishites favor slavery, too. Like magic, slaves help to maintain the typical merchant's standard of living. Since they condemn all non-Calishites as inferior, most Calishite citizens don't find it difficult to treat people like chattel. Many an unwary adventurer has found himself aboard a slave galley or in a mine in Calimshan as a result of crossing the wrong influential person.

This sums up Vajra Valmeyjar's experiences in Calimshan, too. After Conner rescued the young Vaji from the life of a beggar in a small Tethyrian market town, he trained her as a fighter and con artist. Together, Conner and Vajra traveled to Calimshan. In the major Calishite cities—Memmon, Teshburl, Calimport, and Keltar, they ran confidence games.



Though Calishite cities have strict civil codes and large city watches, it is impossible to keep crime out of a place the size of Calimport. That city, one of the largest in the Realms, boasts a population of over one million people. Conner and Vajra found it easy to take travelers or small merchants for modest sums, then hide away in another part of the city. When they'd been in one place long enough for the watch to be suspicious, they moved on.

This plan worked fine for a while. Conner and Vajra made a comfortable living and never really faced any serious danger. While the young thief and the older con man had a few notable adventures, they certainly never feared for their lives. Then they reached Manshaka.

Like most port cities, Manshaka can be a rough place. It's a common stop for coastal traders and a market point for cattle and other livestock from Calimshan's ranges. Adventurers frequent Manshaka, too, as many moneylenders do business there. It's easy to obtain the money to finance anything in Manshaka, though sometimes the lenders charge as much as 100% interest a month for risky ventures.

To Conner, Manshaka seemed to be the perfect place for confidence games. Unlike other Calishite cities, the legal codes in Manshaka were relatively lax, and Conner soon learned that the city watch was subject to bribery. The nominal ruler of the city was Vizier Artouk Fanzir, but he was really only one member of a self-interested twelve-man council who sometimes took care of the city's business.

Vizier Fanzir and the city council seemed more interested in maintaining the legendary Arena of Blood. In the arena, slaves and free warriors fought one another for immense purses. Combat was always to the death, and the city openly encouraged wagering at the arena. It was, after all, a major source of tax revenue.

Upon arriving in Manshaka, Conner and Vajra thought they had found a place where they could finally play a few big scams and perhaps even make enough money to relax for a little while. But Conner chose poorly when he targeted Abon Duum for a sting.

Duum is a crimelord whose landholdings stand outside Manshaka. When the con went bad, Conner had no choice but to give Vajra to Duum. Vajra, then only twelve, was a natural for the arena. It was in that terrible battleground that she honed her skills with various weapons and waited for the right time to escape.

Conner was busy during this time, too. Though many years passed before Vajra knew it, Conner had attempted to rescue her from Duum. (He'd left her with the criminal, planning from the start to help her to escape.) The rescue failed, of course, and Conner found himself on the receiving end of Duum's version of Calishite justice: beaten and left to die in the desert.

For more information on Calimshan, take a look at the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ game accessory, *Empires of the Sands,* by Scott Haring, and *The Halfling's Gem,* the third novel in R.A. Salvatore's exciting Icewind Dale Trilogy. Both published by TSR—of course.

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17
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RICK MAGYAR
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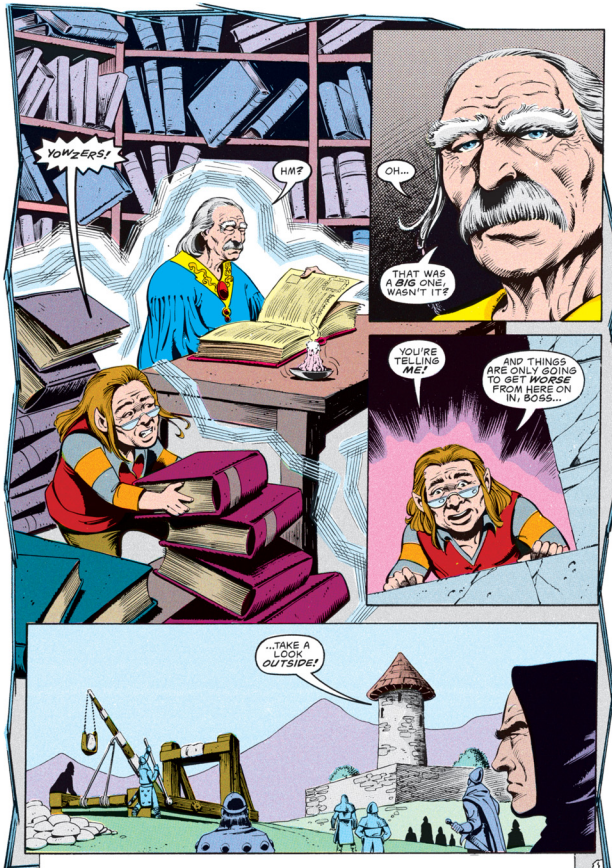
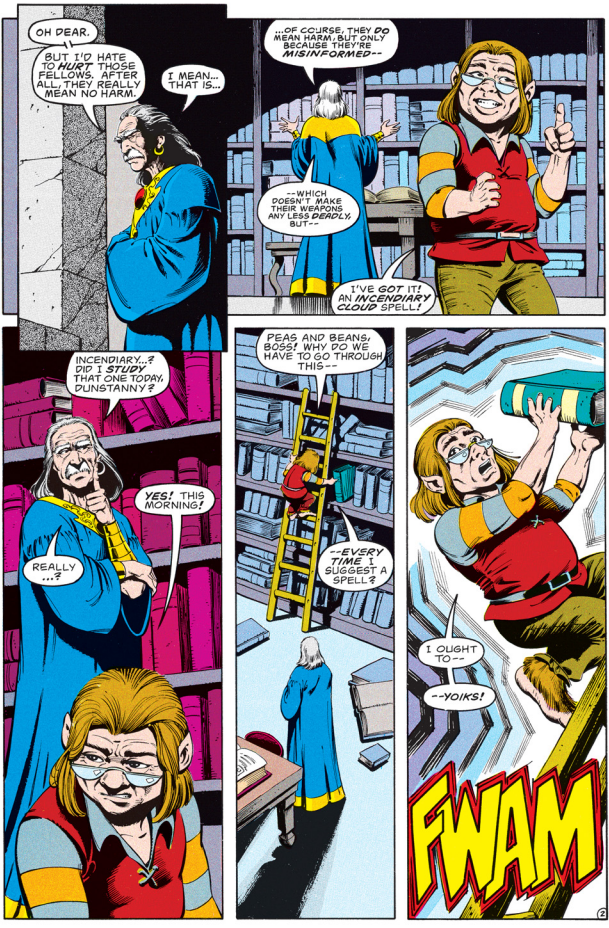
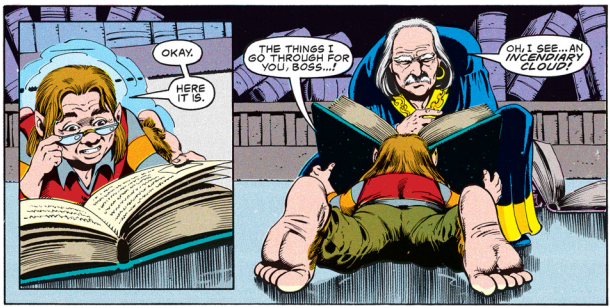
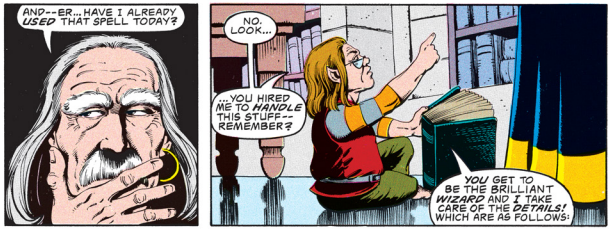
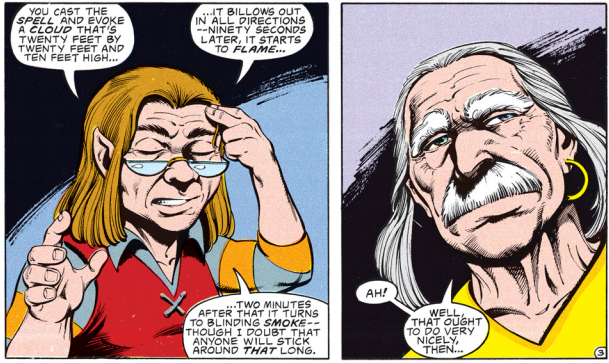
"The Ostus Legacy"
FIRST OF TWO PARTS


YOW'ZERS!
HM?
OH...
THAT WAS A BIG ONE, WASN'T IT?
YOU'RE TELLING ME!
AND THINGS ARE ONLY GOING TO GET WORSE FROM HERE ON IN, BOSS...
...TAKE A LOOK OUTSIDE!

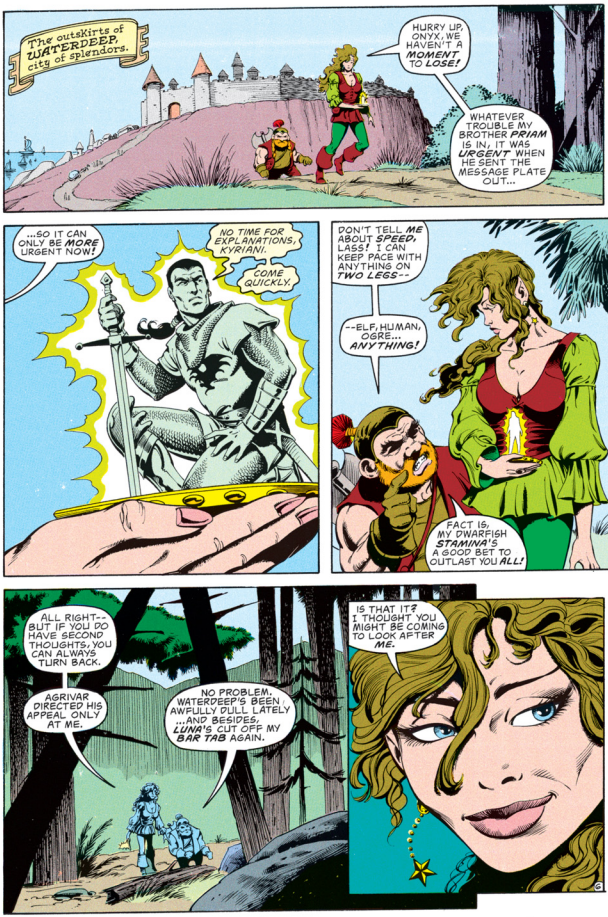

OH DEAR.
BUT I'D HATE TO HURT THOSE FELLOWS, AFTER ALL, THEY REALLY MEAN NO HARM.
I MEAN... THAT IS...
..OF CCURSE, THEY DO MEAN HARM, BUT ONLY BCAUSE THEY'RE MISINFORMED--
--WHICH DOESN'T MAKE THEIR WEAPONS ANY LESS DEADLY, BUT--
I'VE GOT IT! AN INCENDIARY CCOUP SPELL!
INCENDIARY..? DID I STUDY THAT ONE TODAY, DUNSTANNY?
YES! THIS MORNING!
REALLY ...?
PEAS AND BEANS, BOSS! WHY DO WE HAVE TO GO THROUGH THIS--
--EVERY TIME I SUGGEST A SPELL?
I OUGHT TO--
--YOIKS!
FWAM

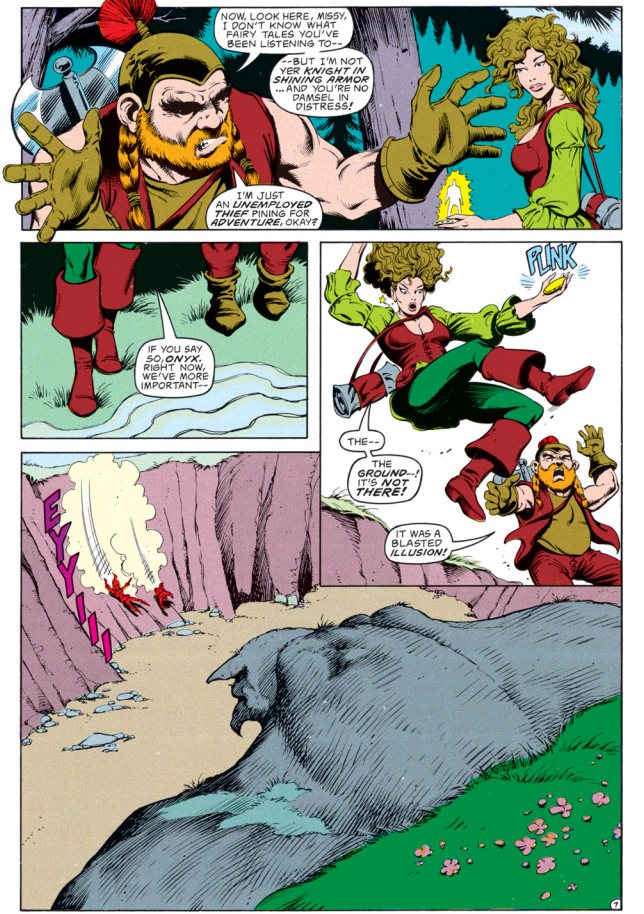

OKAY.
HERE IT IS.
THE THINGS I GO THROUGH FOR YOU, BOSS...!
OH, I SEE... AN *INCENDIARY CLOUD!*

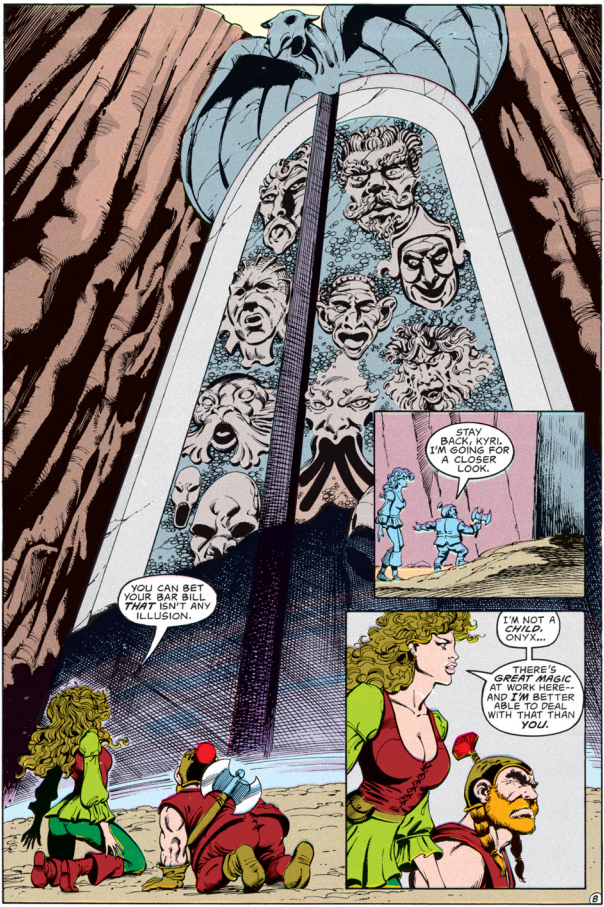

AND--ER... HAVE I ALREADY *USED* THAT SPELL TODAY?
NO. LOOK...
...YOU HIRED ME TO *HANDLE* THIS STUFF-- REMEMBER?
YOU GET TO BE THE BRILLIANT *WIZARD* AND I TAKE CARE OF THE *DETAILS!* WHICH ARE AS FOLLOWS:


YOU CAST THE *SPELL*, AND EVOKE A *CLOUD* THAT'S TWENTY FEET BY TWENTY FEET AND TEN FEET HIGH...
...IT BILLOWS OUT IN ALL DIRECTIONS --NINETY SECONDS LATER, IT STARTS TO *FLAME*...
...TWO MINUTES AFTER THAT IT TURNS TO BLINDING *SMOKE*-- THOUGH I DOUBT THAT ANYONE WILL STICK AROUND *THAT* LONG.
AH!
WELL, THAT OUGHT TO DO VERY NICELY, THEN...
3

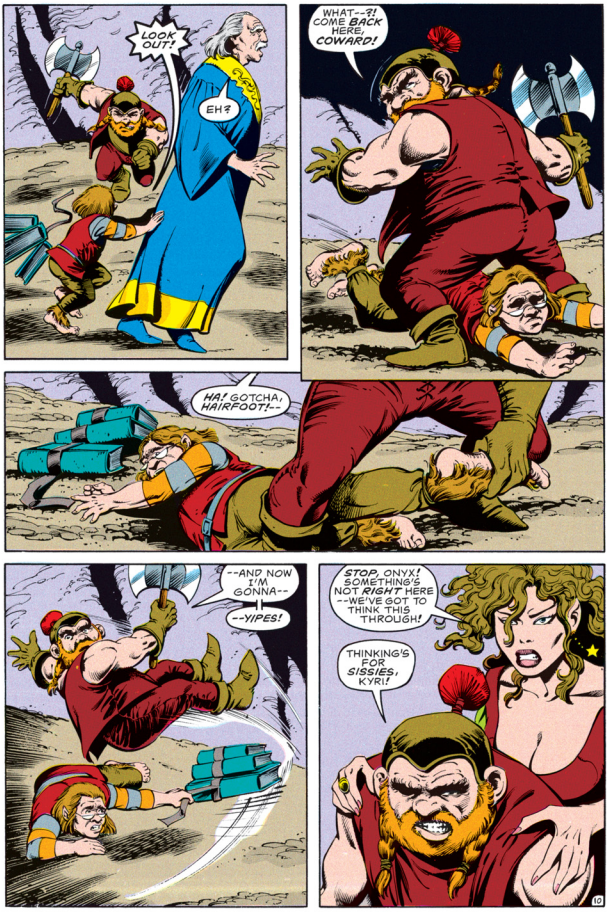
DAN MISHKIN	WRITER
JAN DUURSEMA	PENCILLER
RICK MAGYAR	INKER
STEVE HAYNIE	LETTERER
MATT WEBB	COLORIST
ELLIOT S. MAGGIN	EDITOR


The outskirts of WATERDEEP, city of splendors.
HURRY UP, ONYX, WE HAVEN'T A MOMENT TO LOSE!
WHATEVER TROUBLE MY BROTHER PRIAM IS IN, IT WAS URGENT WHEN HE SENT THE MESSAGE PLATE OUT...
...SO IT CAN ONLY BE MORE URGENT NOW!
NO TIME FOR EXPLANATIONS, KYRIAN!
COME QUICKLY.
DON'T TELL ME ABOUT SPEED, LASS! I CAN KEEP PACE WITH ANYTHING ON TWO LEGS--
--ELF, HUMAN, OGRE... ANYTHING!
FACT IS, MY DWARFISH STAMINA'S A GOOD BET TO OUTLAST YOU ALL!
ALL RIGHT--BUT IF YOU DO HAVE SECOND THOUGHTS, YOU CAN ALWAYS TURN BACK.
AGRIVAR DIRECTED HIS APPEAL ONLY AT ME.
NO PROBLEM. WATERDEEP'S BEEN AWFULLY DULL LATELY ...AND BESIDES, LUNA'S CUT OFF MY BAR TAB AGAIN.
IS THAT IT? I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE COMING TO LOOK AFTER ME.

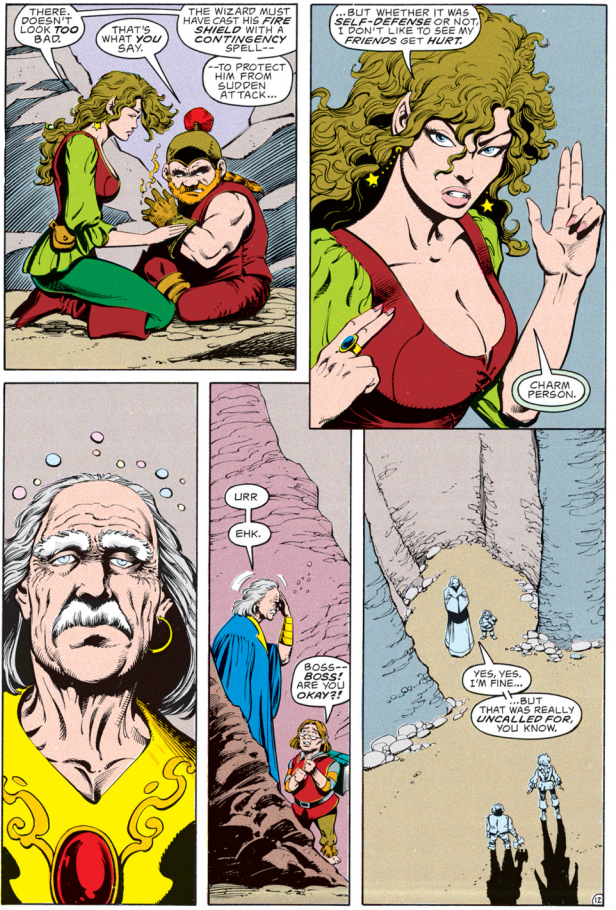

NOW, LOOK HERE, MISSY. I DON'T KNOW WHAT FAIRY TALES YOU'VE BEEN LISTENING TO--
--BUT I'M NOT YER KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR ...AND YOU'RE NO DAMSEL IN DISTRESS!
I'M JUST AN UNEMPLOYED THIEF PINING FOR ADVENTURE, OKAY?
IF YOU SAY SO, ONYX. RIGHT NOW, WE'VE MORE IMPORTANT--
PLINK
THE--
THE GROUND--! IT'S NOT THERE!
IT WAS A BLASTED ILLUSION!
EEYIII!
7

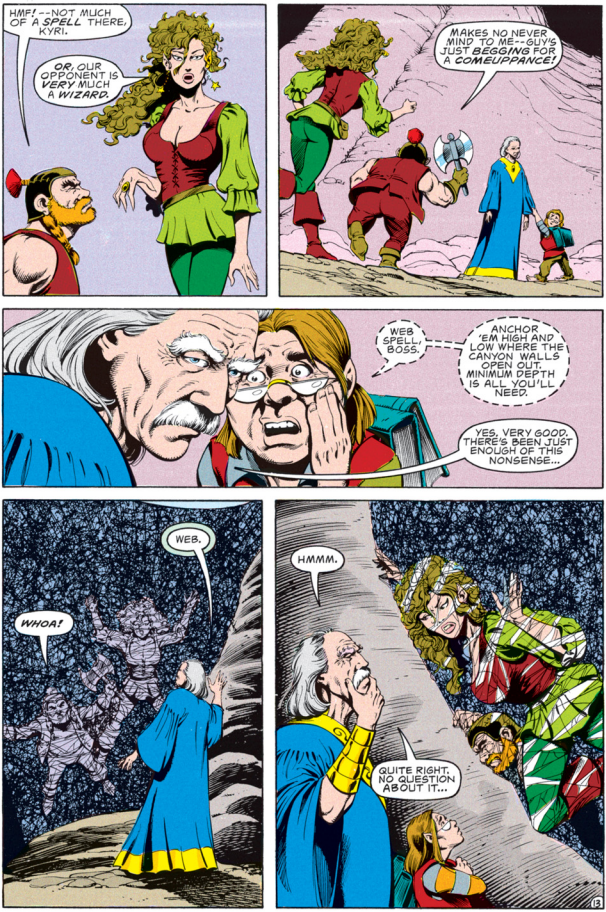

STAY BACK, KYRI. I'M GOING FOR A CLOSER LOOK.
YOU CAN BET YOUR BAR BILL *THAT* ISN'T ANY ILLUSION.
I'M NOT A *CHILD*, ONYX...
THERE'S *GREAT MAGIC* AT WORK HERE-- AND *I'M* BETTER ABLE TO DEAL WITH THAT THAN *YOU*.
8

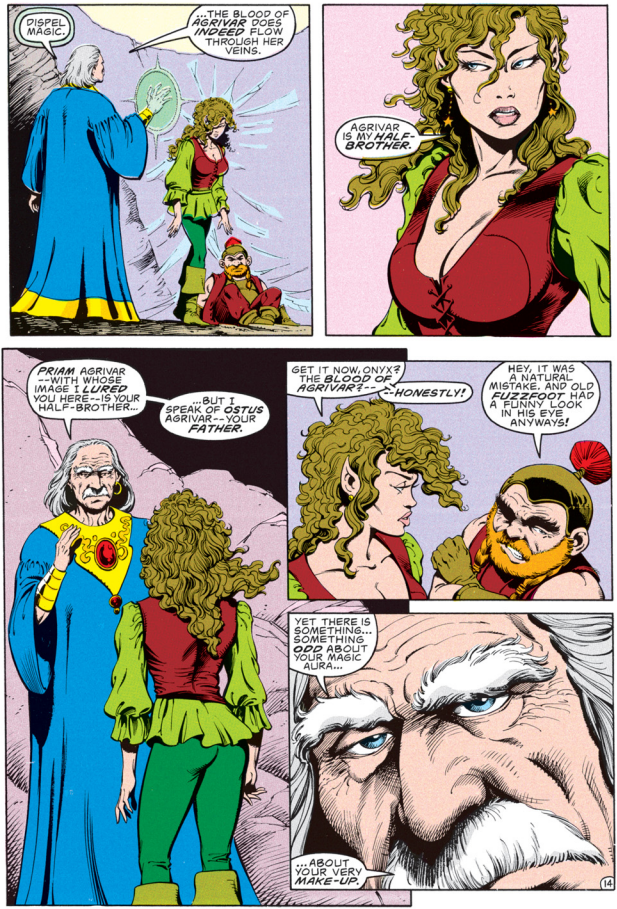
I --AHEM-- DO HOPE THAT YOU ARE CORRECT IN THAT ASSESSMENT, YOUNG LADY.
IS SHE THE ONE, BOSS? A LOOKER, HUH?
I HAVE FOUND AT LAST WHAT I'VE BEEN SEEKING, DUNSTANNY...
...THE BLOOD OF AGRIVAR!
NOW JUST A SECOND, MISTER!
AGRIVAR MAY HAVE BEEN A DRUNK AND A WUSS, BUT HIM AN' ME FOUGHT SIDE BY SIDE ONCE...
...AND ANYONE WHO'S SPILLED HIS BLOOD--
HEY, BOSS?
--IS GONNA ANSWER TO ONYX THE INVINCIBLE!

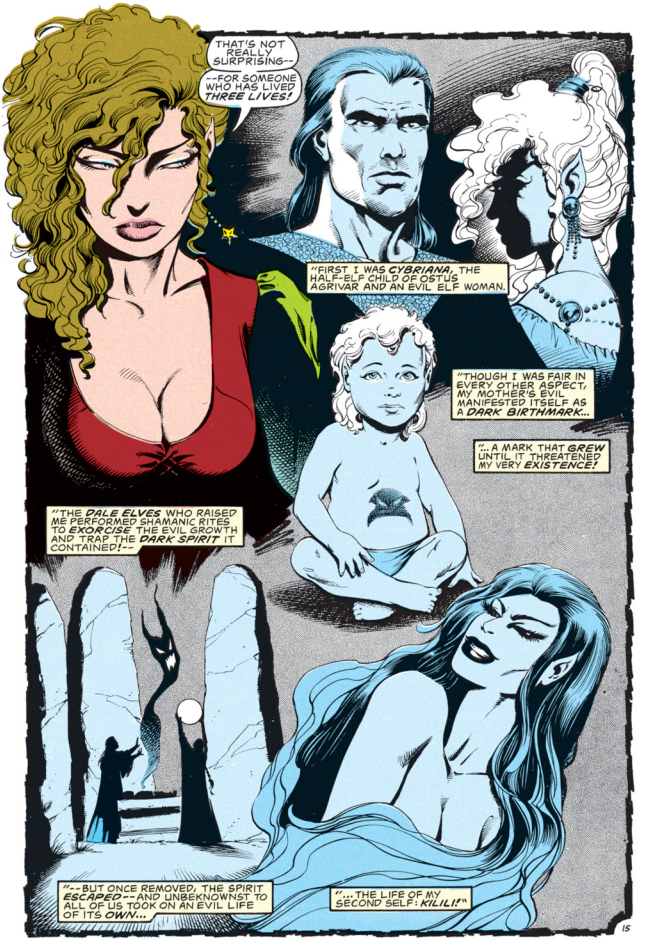

LOOK OUT!
EH?
WHAT--?! COME BACK HERE, COWARD!
HA! GOTCHA, HAIRFOOT!--
--AND NOW I'M GONNA--
--YIPES!
STOP, ONYX! SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT HERE --WE'VE GOT TO THINK THIS THROUGH!
THINKING'S FOR SISSIES, KYRI!
10

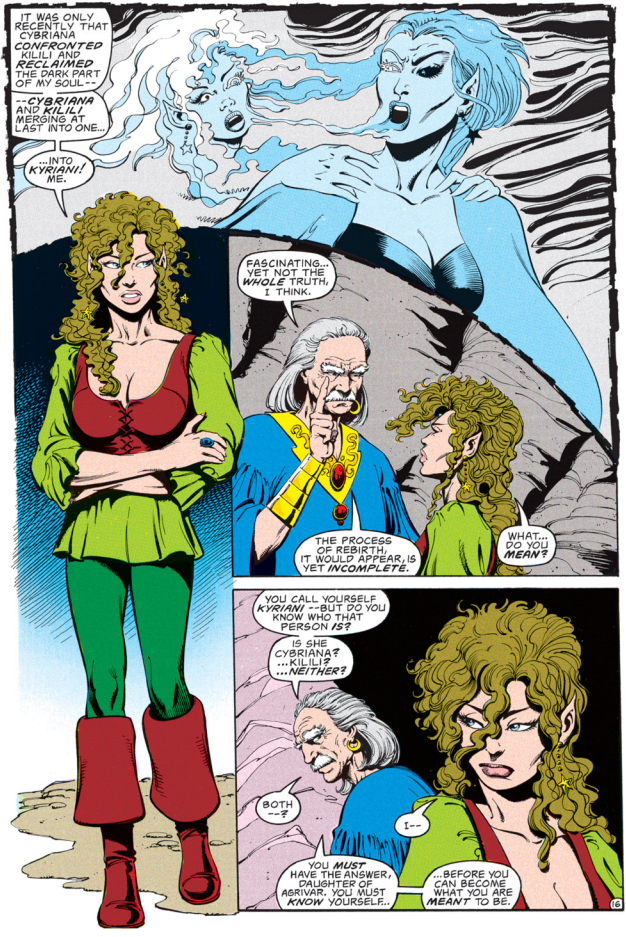
I GOT ME A WIZARD TO--
YEOWWTCH!
ONYX!
M-MY HAND--!

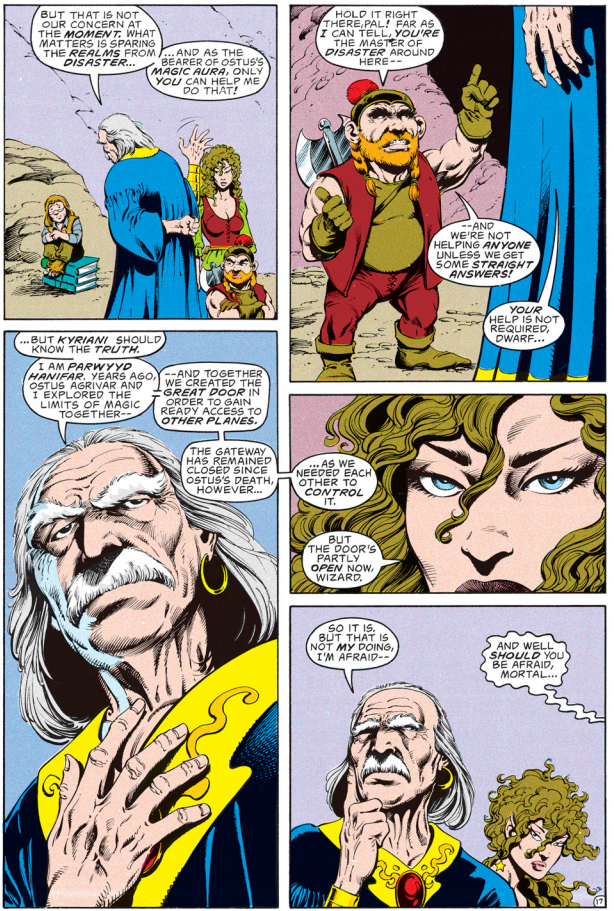

THERE. DOESN'T LOOK TOO BAD.
THAT'S WHAT YOU SAY.
THE WIZARD MUST HAVE CAST HIS FIRE SHIELD WITH A CONTINGENCY SPELL--
--TO PROTECT HIM FROM SUDDEN ATTACK...
...BUT WHETHER IT WAS SELF-DEFENSE OR NOT, I DON'T LIKE TO SEE MY FRIENDS GET HURT.
CHARM PERSON.
URR
EHK.
BOSS-- BOSS! ARE YOU OKAY?!
YES, YES. I'M FINE...
...BUT THAT WAS REALLY UNCALLED FOR, YOU KNOW.

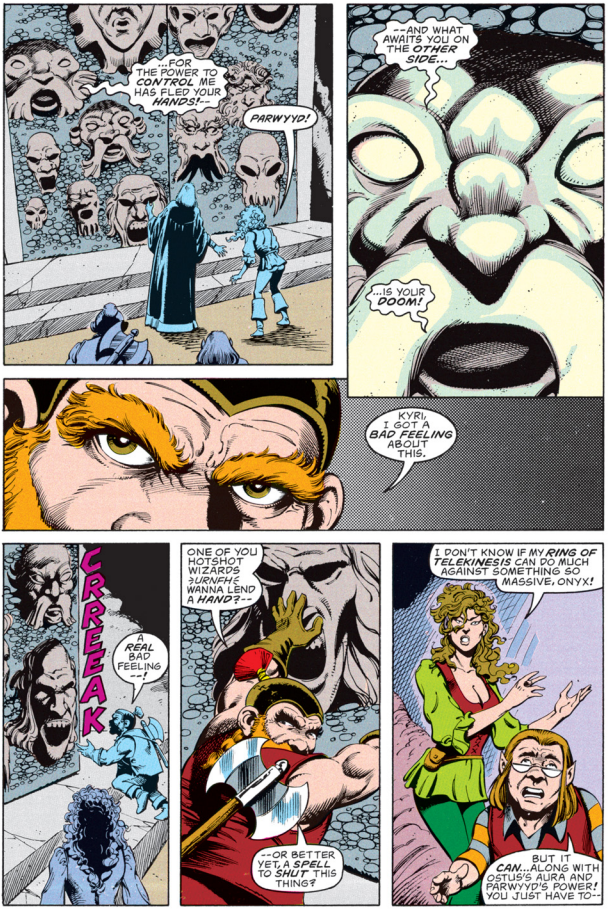

HMF! --NOT MUCH OF A SPELL THERE, KYRI.
OR, OUR OPPONENT IS VERY MUCH A WIZARD.
MAKES NO NEVER MIND TO ME--GUY'S JUST BEGGING FOR A COMEUPPANCE!
WEB SPELL, BOSS.
ANCHOR 'EM HIGH AND LOW WHERE THE CANYON WALLS OPEN OUT. MINIMUM DEPTH IS ALL YOU'LL NEED.
YES, VERY GOOD. THERE'S BEEN JUST ENOUGH OF THIS NONSENSE...
WEB.
WHOA!
HMMM.
QUITE RIGHT. NO QUESTION ABOUT IT...

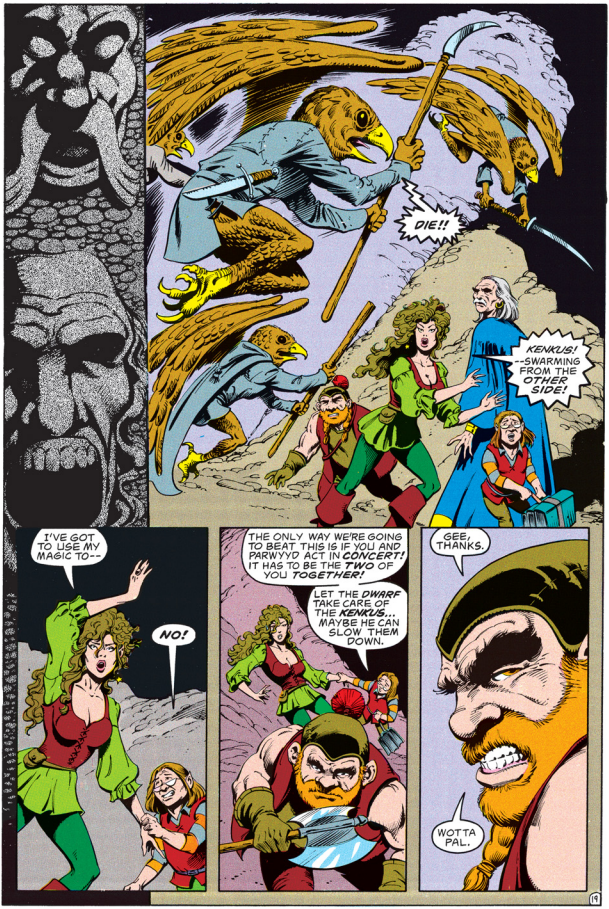

DISPEL MAGIC.
...THE BLOOD OF AGRIVAR DOES INDEED FLOW THROUGH HER VEINS.
AGRIVAR IS MY HALF-BROTHER.
PRIAM AGRIVAR --WITH WHOSE IMAGE I LURED YOU HERE--IS YOUR HALF-BROTHER...
...BUT I SPEAK OF OSTUS AGRIVAR--YOUR FATHER.
GET IT NOW, ONYX? THE BLOOD OF AGRIVAR?--
--HONESTLY!
HEY, IT WAS A NATURAL MISTAKE, AND OLD FUZZBOOD HAD A FUNNY LOOK IN HIS EYE ANYWAYS!
YET THERE IS SOMETHING... SOMETHING ODD ABOUT YOUR MAGIC AURA...
...ABOUT YOUR VERY MAKE-UP.
14

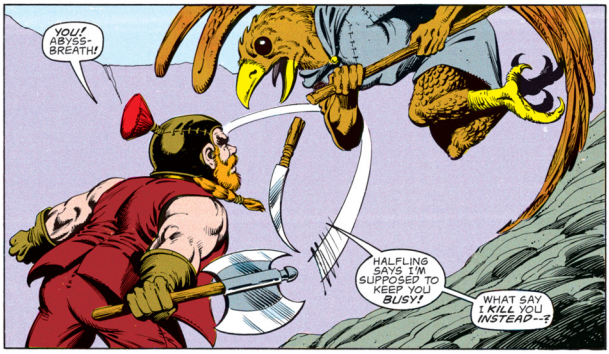

THAT'S NOT REALLY SURPRISING--
--FOR SOMEONE WHO HAS LIVED THREE LIVES!
"FIRST, I WAS CYBRIANA, THE HALF-ELF CHILD OF OSTUS AGRIVAR AND AN EVIL ELF WOMAN.
"THOUGH I WAS FAIR IN EVERY OTHER ASPECT, MY MOTHER'S EVIL MANIFESTED ITSELF AS A DARK BIRTHMARK...
"...A MARK THAT GREW UNTIL IT THREATENED MY VERY EXISTENCE!
"THE DALE ELVES WHO RAISED ME PERFORMED SHAMANIC RITES TO EXORCISE THE EVIL GROWTH AND TRAP THE DARK SPIRIT IT CONTAINED!--
"--BUT ONCE REMOVED, THE SPIRIT ESCAPED--AND UNBEKNOWNST TO ALL OF US TOOK ON AN EVIL LIFE OF ITS OWN...
"...THE LIFE OF MY SECOND SELF: KILILI!"
15

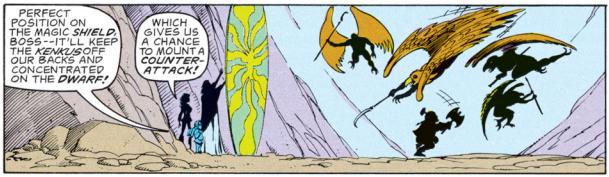

IT WAS ONLY RECENTLY THAT CYBRIANA CONFRONTED KILILI AND RECLAIMED THE DARK PART OF MY SOUL--
--CYBRIANA AND KILILI MERGING AT LAST INTO ONE...
...INTO KYRIANI! ME.
FASCINATING... YET NOT THE WHOLE TRUTH, I THINK.
THE PROCESS OF REBIRTH, IT WOULD APPEAR, IS YET INCOMPLETE.
WHAT... DO YOU MEAN?
YOU CALL YOURSELF KYRIANI --BUT DO YOU KNOW WHO THAT PERSON IS?
IS SHE CYBRIANA? ...KILILI? ...NEITHER?
BOTH --?
I--
YOU MUST HAVE THE ANSWER, DAUGHTER OF AGRIVAR. YOU MUST KNOW YOURSELF..
..BEFORE YOU CAN BECOME WHAT YOU ARE MEANT TO BE.
16

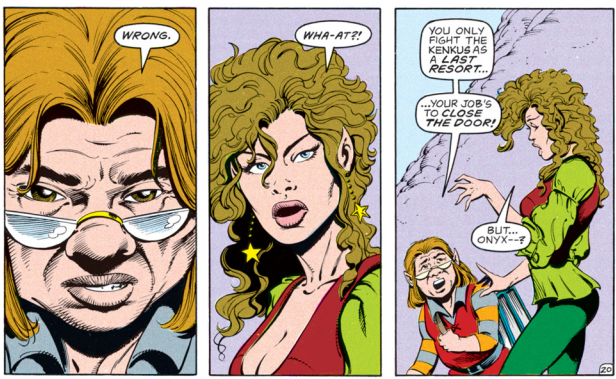

BUT THAT IS NOT OUR CONCERN AT THE MOMENT. WHAT MATTERS IS SPARING THE REALMS FROM DISASTER...
...AND AS THE BEARER OF OSTUS'S MAGIC AURA, ONLY YOU CAN HELP ME DO THAT!
HOLD IT RIGHT THERE, PAL! FAR AS I CAN TELL, YOU'RE THE MASTER OF DISASTER AROUND HERE--
--AND WE'RE NOT HELPING ANYONE UNLESS WE GET SOME STRAIGHT ANSWERS!
YOUR HELP IS NOT REQUIRED, DWARF...
...BUT KYRIAN! SHOULD KNOW THE TRUTH.
I AM PARWYYD HANIFAR. YEARS AGO, OSTUS AGRIVAR AND I EXPLORED THE LIMITS OF MAGIC TOGETHER--
--AND TOGETHER WE CREATED THE GREAT DOOR IN ORDER TO GAIN READY ACCESS TO OTHER PLANES.
THE GATEWAY HAS REMAINED CLOSED SINCE OSTUS'S DEATH, HOWEVER...
...AS WE NEEDED EACH OTHER TO CONTROL IT.
BUT THE DOOR'S PARTLY OPEN NOW, WIZARD.
SO IT IS. BUT THAT IS NOT MY DOING, I'M AFRAID--
AND WELL SHOULD YOU BE AFRAID, MORTAL...
17


...FOR THE POWER TO CONTROL ME HAS FLED YOUR HANDS!--
PARWYYD!
--AND WHAT AWAITS YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE...
...IS YOUR DOOM!
KYRI, I GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS.
CRREEAK
REAL BAD FEELING --!
ONE OF YOU HOTSHOT WIZARDS ƷURNHƐ WANNA LEND A HAND?--
--OR BETTER YET, A SPELL TO SHUT THIS THING?
I DON'T KNOW IF MY RING OF TELEKINESIS CAN DO MUCH AGAINST SOMETHING SO MASSIVE, ONYX!
BUT IT CAN...ALONG WITH OSTUS'S AURA AND PARWYYD'S POWER! YOU JUST HAVE TO--


DIE!!
KENKUS! --SWARMING FROM THE OTHER SIDE!
I'VE GOT TO USE MY MAGIC TO--
NO!
THE ONLY WAY WE'RE GOING TO BEAT THIS IS IF YOU AND PARWYYD ACT IN CONCERT! IT HAS TO BE THE TWO OF YOU TOGETHER!
LET THE DWARF TAKE CARE OF THE KENKUS... MAYBE HE CAN SLOW THEM DOWN.
GEE, THANKS.
WOTTA PAL.
19

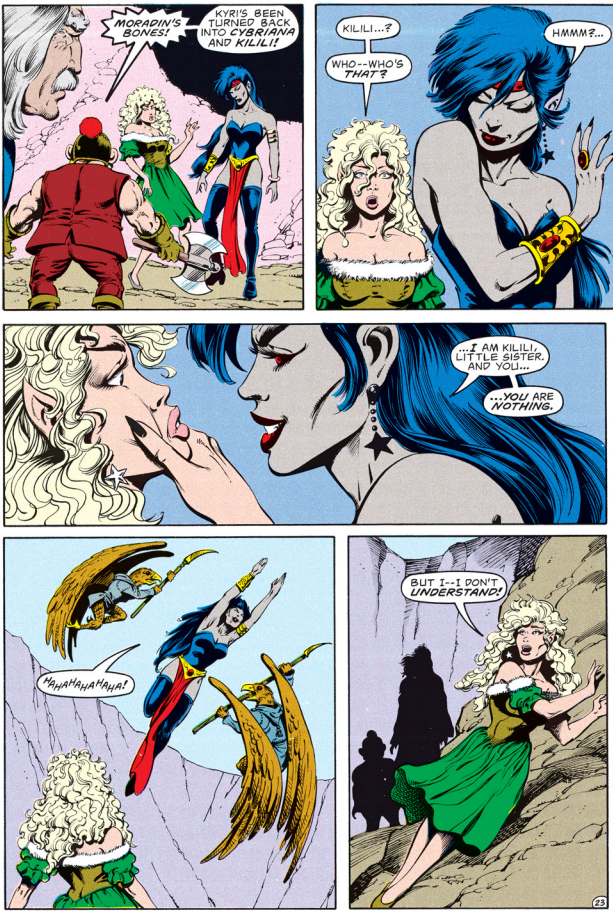

YOU! ABYSS-BREATH!
HALFLING SAYS I'M SUPPOSED TO KEEP YOU BUSY!
WHAT SAY I KILL YOU INSTEAD--?

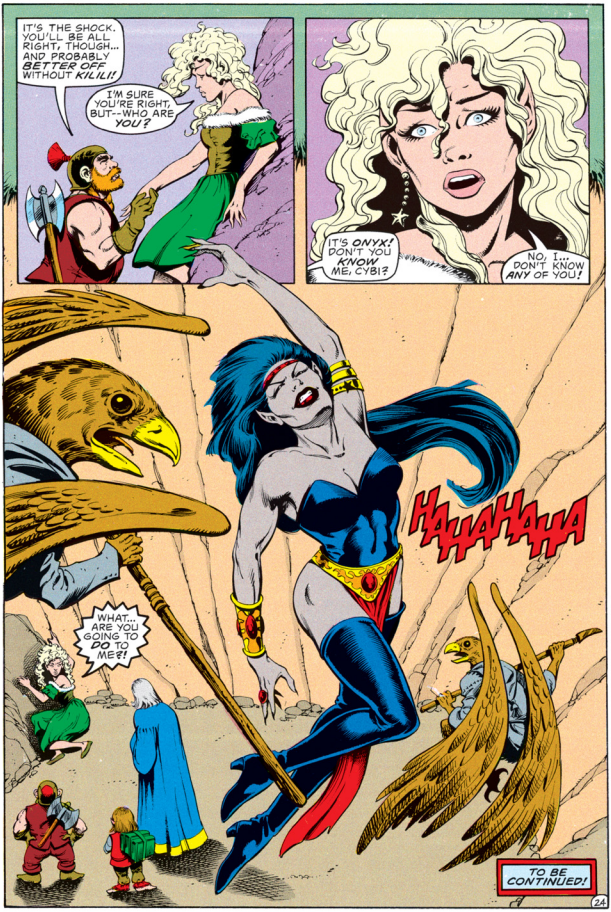

PERFECT POSITION ON THE MAGIC SHIELD, BOSS--IT'LL KEEP THE KENKUSOFF OUR BACKS AND CONCENTRATED ON THE DWARF!
WHICH GIVES US A CHANCE TO MOUNT A COUNTER-ATTACK!


WRONG.
WHA-AT?!
YOU ONLY FIGHT THE KENKUS AS A LAST RESORT...
...YOUR JOB'S TO CLOSE THE DOOR!
BUT... ONYX--?
20

UH-OH! HURLING A LIGHTNING SPELL!
FAST--
--AND DEADLY!
THIS ISN'T GETTING ME ANYWHERE! GOTTA COME UP WITH A PLAN TO--
}SNIF{ }SNIF{
WHAT THE--?
HELLS...
NO.
I SAID I WON'T DO IT AND I MEANT IT! I'M NOT GOING TO HELP SHUT THE DOOR UNTIL YOU HELP ONYX!
BUT THAT'LL JUST WASTE PARVYD'S POWER! HE CAN'T!...

I MUST.
BUT... BOSS!
KYRIANI'S FULL COOPERATION IS ESSENTIAL TO OUR SUCCESS. TO GAIN IT, I MUST SHOW HER WE ARE ON THE SAME SIDE.
CONSERVE YOUR POWER, CHILD OF OSTUS. I WILL DO THIS ALONE.
A SPELL PLEASE, DUNSTANNY?
NO!
I WILL NOT ALLOW IT!
YIIKES!
KYRIANI! ...BEWARE!
AAAAAA
22


MORADIN'S BONES!
KYRI'S BEEN TURNED BACK INTO CYBRIANA AND KILILI!
KILILI...?
WHO--WHO'S THAT?
HMMM?...
...I AM KILILI, LITTLE SISTER. AND YOU...
...YOU ARE NOTHING.
HAHAHAHAHA!
BUT I--I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
23


IT'S THE SHOCK. YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT, THOUGH... AND PROBABLY BETTER OFF WITHOUT KILIL!!
I'M SURE YOU'RE RIGHT, BUT--WHO ARE YOU?
IT'S ONYX! DON'T YOU KNOW ME, CYB!?
NO, I... DON'T KNOW ANY OF YOU!
HAHAHAHA
WHAT... ARE YOU GOING TO DO TO ME?!
TO BE CONTINUED!
24

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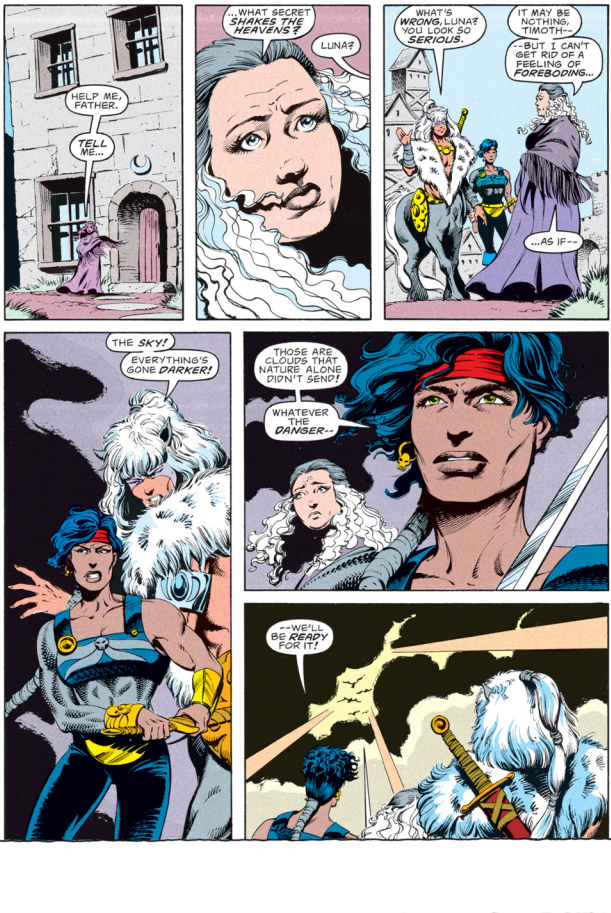
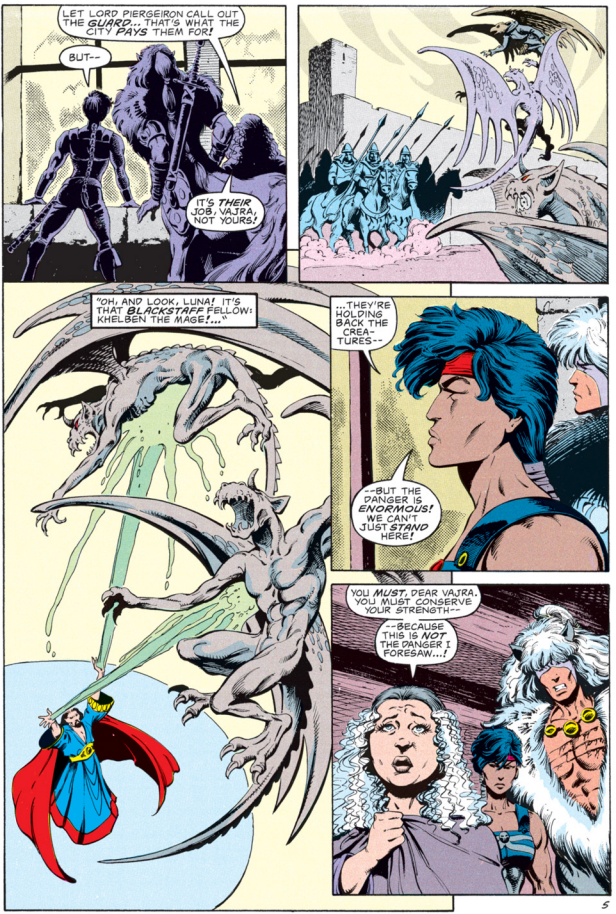
CONCLUSION


HELP ME, FATHER.
TELL ME...
...WHAT SECRET SHAKES THE HEAVENS?
LUNA?
WHAT'S WRONG, LUNA? YOU LOOK SO SERIOUS.
IT MAY BE NOTHING, TIMOTH--
--BUT I CAN'T GET RID OF A FEELING OF FOREBODING...
...AS IF--
THE SKY!
EVERYTHING'S GONE DARKER!
THOSE ARE CLOUDS THAT NATURE ALONE DIDN'T SEND!
WHATEVER THE DANGER--
--WE'LL BE READY FOR IT!

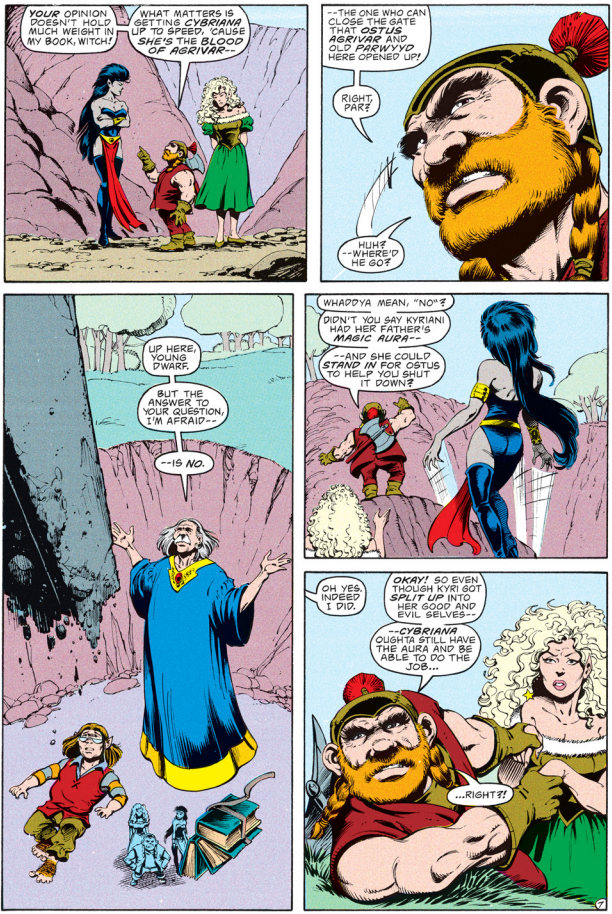
DAY OF THE
DARKENING

DAN MISHKIN WRITER
JAN DUURSEMA PENCILLER
RICK MAGYAR INKER
STEVE HAYNIE LETTERER
MATT WEBB COLORIST
ELLIOT S. MAGGIN EDITOR

LET'S SEE YOU FLY, GARGOYLE--!
--WITH YOUR WINGS IN TATTERS!
OR YOUR KENKU BLOOD SPILLED ON THE STREET!
ARGHN!
TIMOTH!
I-I'M ALL RIGHT, VAJRA.
BUT THERE ARE SO MANY OF THEM!
YOU TWO CAN'T HOLD OFF THE ENTIRE HORDE!
COME BACK IN THE INN! NOW!
4


LET LORD PIERGEIRON CALL OUT THE GUARD... THAT'S WHAT THE CITY PAYS THEM FOR!
BUT--
IT'S THEIR JOB, VAJRA, NOT YOURS!
"OH, AND LOOK, LUNA! IT'S THAT BLACKSTAFF FELLOW: KHELBEN THE MAGE!..."
...THEY'RE HOLDING BACK THE CREATURES--
--BUT THE DANGER IS ENORMOUS! WE CAN'T JUST STAND HERE!
YOU MUST, DEAR VAJRA. YOU MUST CONSERVE YOUR STRENGTH--
--BECAUSE THIS IS NOT THE DANGER I FORESAW...!
5

AS OUTSIDE THE CITY OF SPLENDORS...
KKRARSHK
SWELL. NOW THE DOOR'S TAKING OFF ON ITS OWN!
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?
IT MEANS THE POWER FROM THE OTHER SIDE IS GAINING MORE CONTROL.
THEN HOW COME THERE AREN'T ANY MORE MONSTERS CRASHING THROUGH?
BECAUSE EVEN THOUGH THE GATE IS HERE, THE INTERDIMENSIONAL WORMHOLE IT UNLOCKS--
--CAN POKE OUT ANYWHERE!..
...WHICH IT'S PROBABLY DOING, NOW, SOMEWHERE ELSE IN THE REALMS!
DELICIOUS! A WORLD IN CHAOS!
MY KIND OF PLACE!


YOUR OPINION DOESN'T HOLD MUCH WEIGHT IN MY BOOK, WITCH!
WHAT MATTERS IS GETTING CYBRIANA UP TO SPEED, 'CAUSE SHE'S THE BLOOD OF AGRIVAR--
--THE ONE WHO CAN CLOSE THE GATE THAT OSTUS AGRIVAR AND OLD PARWYD HERE OPENED UP!
RIGHT, PAR?
HUH? --WHERE'D HE GO?
UP HERE, YOUNG DWARF.
BUT THE ANSWER TO YOUR QUESTION, I'M AFRAID--
--IS NO.
WHADDYA MEAN, "NO"?
DIDN'T YOU SAY KYRIANI HAD HER FATHER'S MAGIC AURA--
--AND SHE COULD STAND IN FOR OSTUS TO HELP YOU SHUT IT DOWN?
OH YES, INDEED I DID.
OKAY! SO EVEN THOUGH KYRI GOT SPLIT UP INTO HER GOOD AND EVIL SELVES--
--CYBRIANA OUGHTA STILL HAVE THE AURA AND BE ABLE TO DO THE JOB...
...RIGHT?!
7

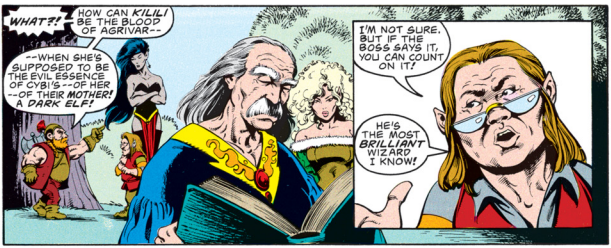
BUT CYBRIANA MIGHT NOT HAVE ENOUGH POWER ANYMORE.
NO NO, DUNSTANNY. IT'S NOT THAT SHE HASN'T THE POWER. SHE DOESN'T HAVE OSTUS' AURA...
...KILILI'S GOT THAT NOW!
POWER...
...IS MINE!!

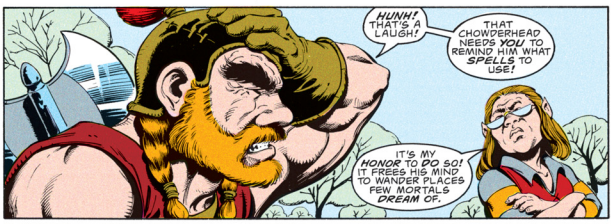
AND ME THANK YOU, LORD BANE...
FOR GRANTING POWER!

FOR YEARS--FOR MILLENNIA--WISH IT BE, ME SO!!
NOW GO TO MATERIAL PLANE, ME!! MAKE HAVOC THERE!!
SO GLORY GIFT, AND LORD OF TYRANNY ASKS NOTHING FOR IT!!

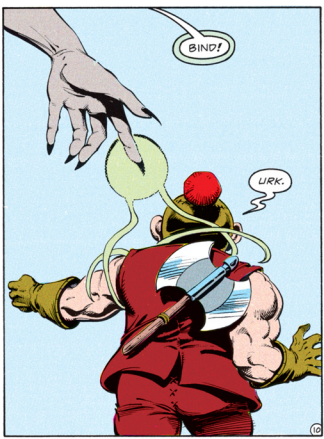
ME WONDER WHY...
...BUT WHY WONDER, ME?

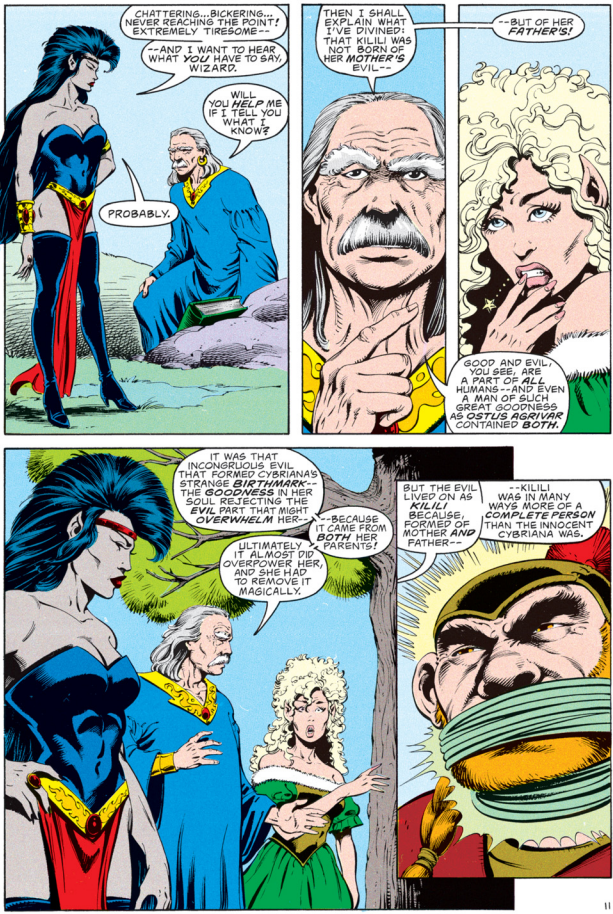
POWER ...IS MINE!!
HEE HEE HEE
TKH KHEEY


WHAT?!
HOW CAN KILLI BE THE BLOOD OF AGRIVAR--
--WHEN SHE'S SUPPOSED TO BE THE EVIL ESSENCE OF CYB!S---OF HER --OF THEIR MOTHER! A DARK ELF!
I'M NOT SURE. BUT IF THE BOSS SAYS IT, YOU CAN COUNT ON IT!
HE'S THE MOST BRILLIANT WIZARD I KNOW!

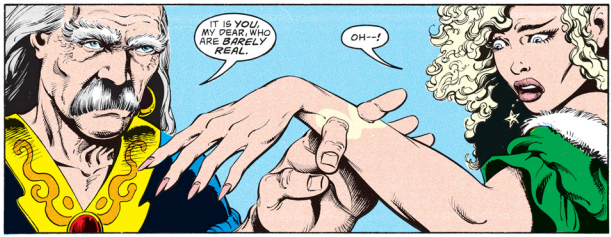

HUNH! THAT'S A LAUGH!
THAT CHOWDERHEAD NEEDS YOU TO REMIND HIM WHAT SPELLS TO USE!
IT'S MY HONOR TO DO SO! IT FREES HIS MIND TO WANDER PLACES FEW MORTALS DREAM OF.

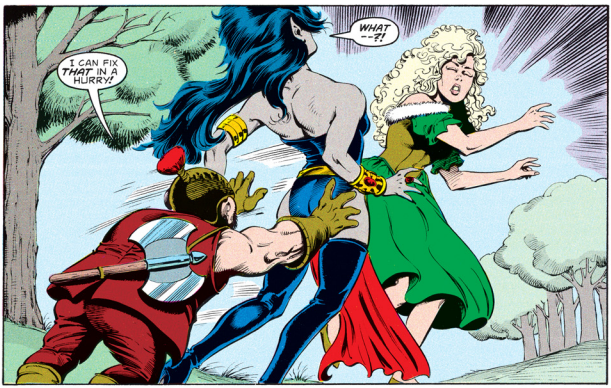
YEAH-- I CAN SEE WHERE DREAMIN' WOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM FOR HIM!
WAKE UP, OLD COOT! I--
SNAP SNAP

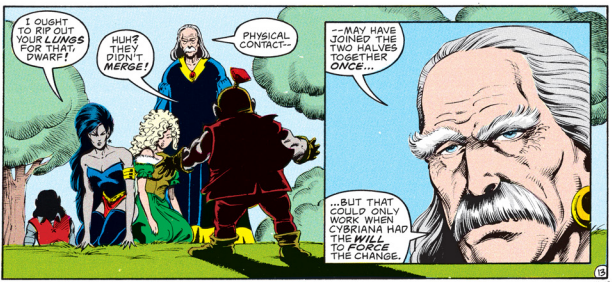

BIND!
URK.

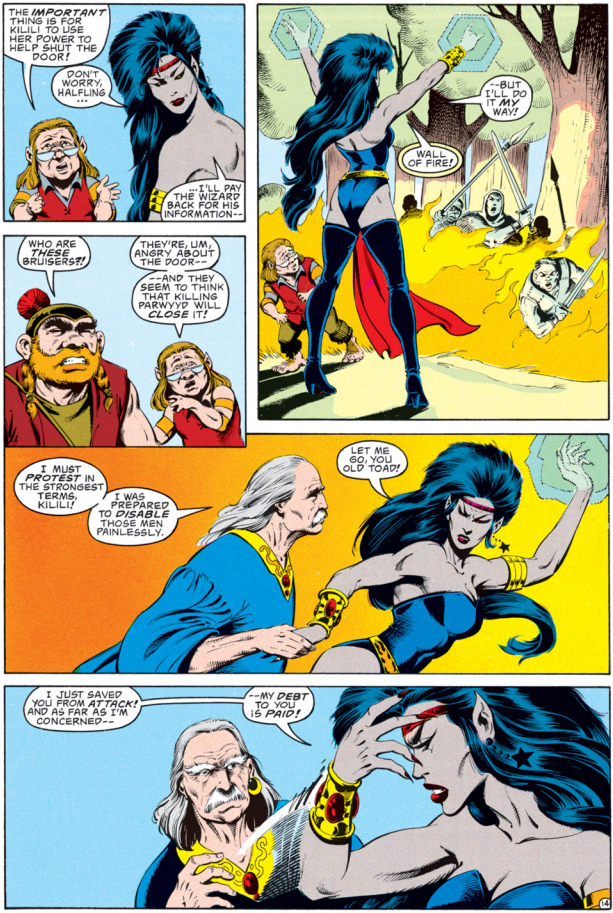

CHATTERING...BICKERING... NEVER REACHING THE POINT! EXTREMELY TIRESOME--
--AND I WANT TO HEAR WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY, WIZARD.
WILL YOU HELP ME IF I TELL YOU WHAT I KNOW?
PROBABLY.
THEN I SHALL EXPLAIN WHAT I'VE DIVINED: THAT KILILI WAS NOT BORN OF HER MOTHER'S EVIL--
--BUT OF HER FATHER'S!
GOOD AND EVIL, YOU SEE, ARE A PART OF ALL HUMANS--AND EVEN A MAN OF SUCH GREAT GOODNESS AS OSTUS AGRIVAR CONTAINED BOTH.
IT WAS THAT INCONGRUOUS EVIL THAT FORMED CYBRIANA'S STRANGE BIRTHMARK--THE GOODNESS IN HER SOUL REJECTING THE EVIL PART THAT MIGHT OVERWHELM HER--
--BECAUSE IT CAME FROM BOTH HER PARENTS!
ULTIMATELY IT ALMOST DID OVERPOWER HER, AND SHE HAD TO REMOVE IT MAGICALLY.
BUT THE EVIL LIVED ON AS KILILI BECAUSE, FORMED OF MOTHER AND FATHER--
--KILILI WAS IN MANY WAYS MORE OF A COMPLETE PERSON THAN THE INNOCENT CYBRIANA WAS.

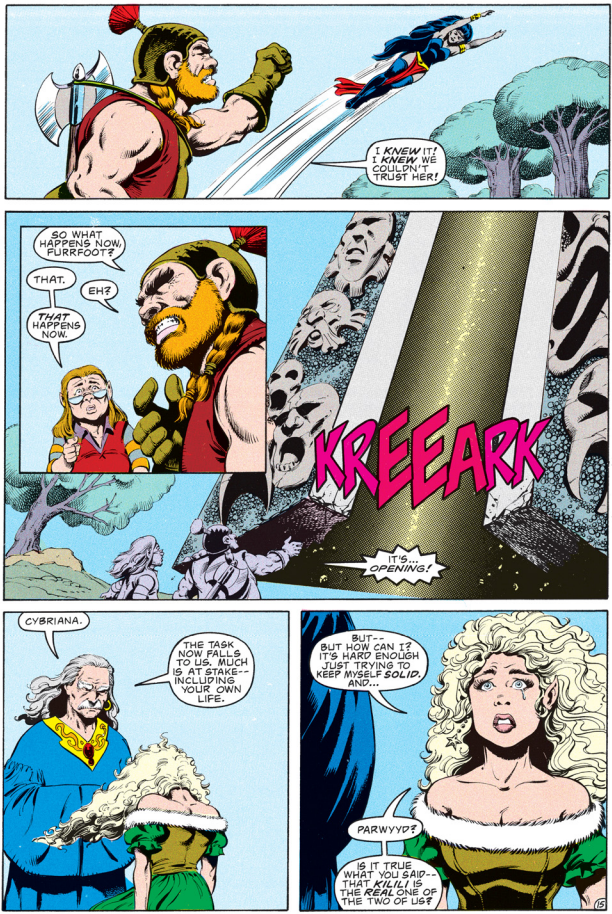
NO! THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT!
I'M THE REAL ONE--NOT THAT UGLY... DEFORMITY --COME TO LIFE!
YOU STILL REFUSE TO ACCEPT THE TRUTH--THE REALITY OF KILILI.
EVEN WHEN THE TWO PARTS MERGED INTO ONE BEING--INTO THE KYRIANI WHO WAS MEANT TO BE--YOU REFUSED TO ACCEPT YOUR BIRTHRIGHT OF EVIL.
MERGED? BUT I NEVER--!
THAT IS WHY KYRIANI SEEMED INCOMPLETE TO MY SENSES.
IT IS WHY SHE COULD SPLIT APART AGAIN...
...AND WHY, ONCE SPLIT, KILILI TOOK THE FAR GREATER SHARE OF KNOWLEDGE FROM HER THREE PREVIOUS INCARNATIONS.
CYBRIANA DEAR, YOU CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER YOUR OWN PAST.
YOU DON'T REMEMBER HOW YOU FACED KILILI BEFORE AND BECAME KYRIANI ...DON'T REMEMBER YOUR FRIENDSHIP WITH ONYX THE DWARF.
12

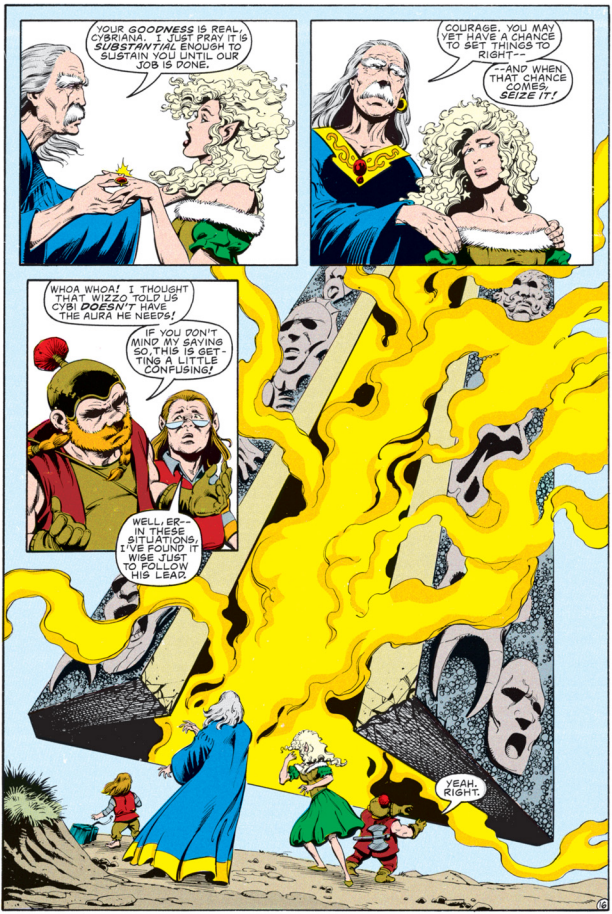

IT IS YOU, MY DEAR, WHO ARE BARELY REAL.
OH--!

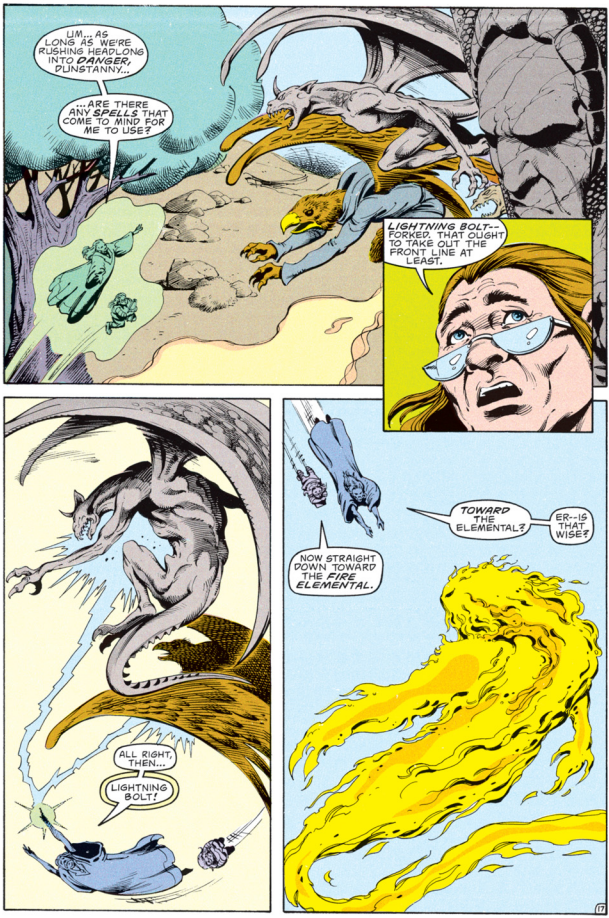

I CAN FIX THAT IN A HURRY!
WHAT --?!

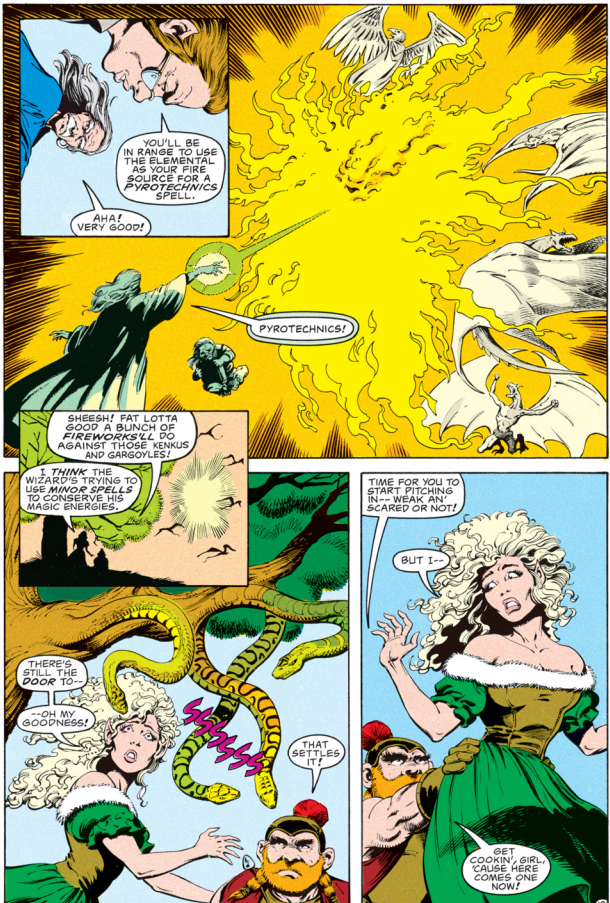

I OUGHT TO RIP OUT YOUR LUNGS FOR THAT, DWARF!
HUH? THEY DIDN'T MERGE!
PHYSICAL CONTACT--
--MAY HAVE JOINED THE TWO HALVES TOGETHER ONCE...
...BUT THAT COULD ONLY WORK WHEN CYBRIANA HAD THE WILL TO FORCE THE CHANGE.
13

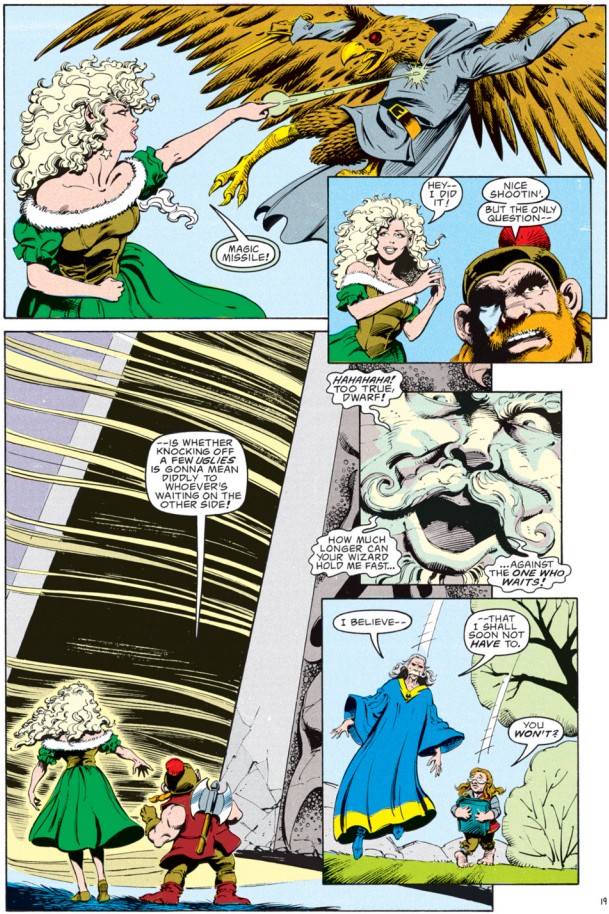

THE IMPORTANT THING IS FOR KILLI TO USE HER POWER TO HELP SHUT THE DOOR!
DON'T WORRY, HALFLING ...
--I'LL PAY THE WIZARD BACK FOR HIS INFORMATION--
--BUT I'LL DO IT MY WAY!
WALL OF FIRE!
WHO ARE THESE BRUISERS?!
THEY'RE, UM, ANGRY ABOUT THE DOOR--
--AND THEY SEEM TO THINK THAT KILLING PARWYYD WILL CLOSE IT!
I MUST PROTEST IN THE STRONGEST TERMS, KILLI!
I WAS PREPARED TO DISABLE THOSE MEN PAINLESSLY.
LET ME GO, YOU OLD TOAD!
I JUST SAVED YOU FROM ATTACK! AND AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED--
--MY DEBT TO YOU IS PAID!
14

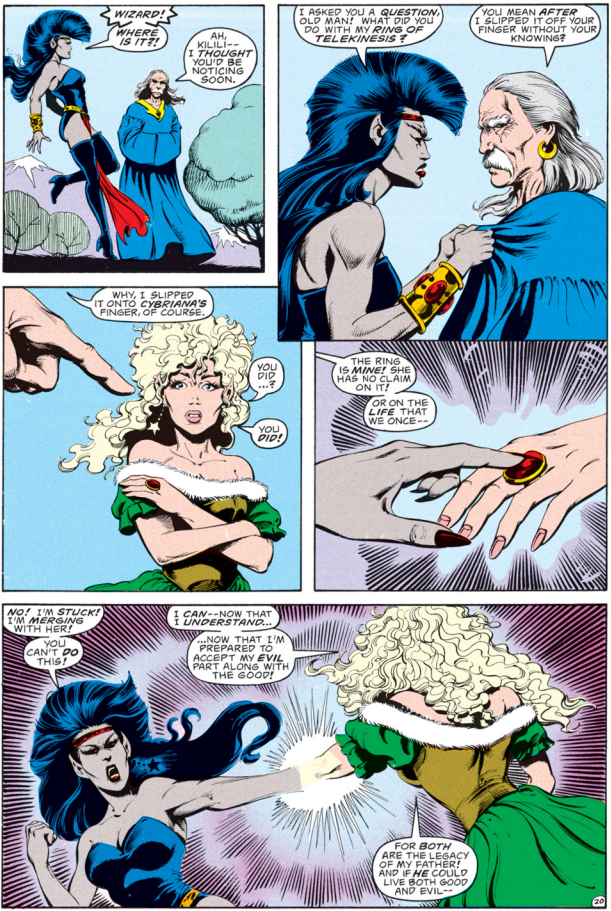

I KNEW IT! I KNEW WE COULDN'T TRUST HER!
SO WHAT HAPPENS NOW, FURRFOOT?
THAT.
EH?
THAT HAPPENS NOW.
KREEARK
IT'S... OPENING!
CYBRIANA.
THE TASK NOW FALLS TO US. MUCH IS AT STAKE-- INCLUDING YOUR OWN LIFE.
BUT-- BUT HOW CAN I? IT'S HARD ENOUGH JUST TRYING TO KEEP MYSELF SOLID. AND...
PARWYYD?
IS IT TRUE WHAT YOU SAID-- THAT KYLIE IS THE REAL ONE OF THE TWO OF US?
15


YOUR GOODNESS IS REAL, CYBRIANA. I JUST PRAY IT IS SUBSTANTIAL ENOUGH TO SUSTAIN YOU UNTIL OUR JOB IS DONE.
COURAGE. YOU MAY YET HAVE A CHANCE TO SET THINGS TO RIGHT--
--AND WHEN THAT CHANCE COMES, SEIZE IT!
WHOA WHOA! I THOUGHT THAT WIZZO TOLD US CYB! DOESN'T HAVE THE AURA HE NEEDS!
IF YOU DON'T MIND MY SAYING SO, THIS IS GETTING A LITTLE CONFUSING!
WELL, ER-- IN THESE SITUATIONS, I'VE FOUND IT WISE JUST TO FOLLOW HIS LEAD.
YEAH. RIGHT.
6

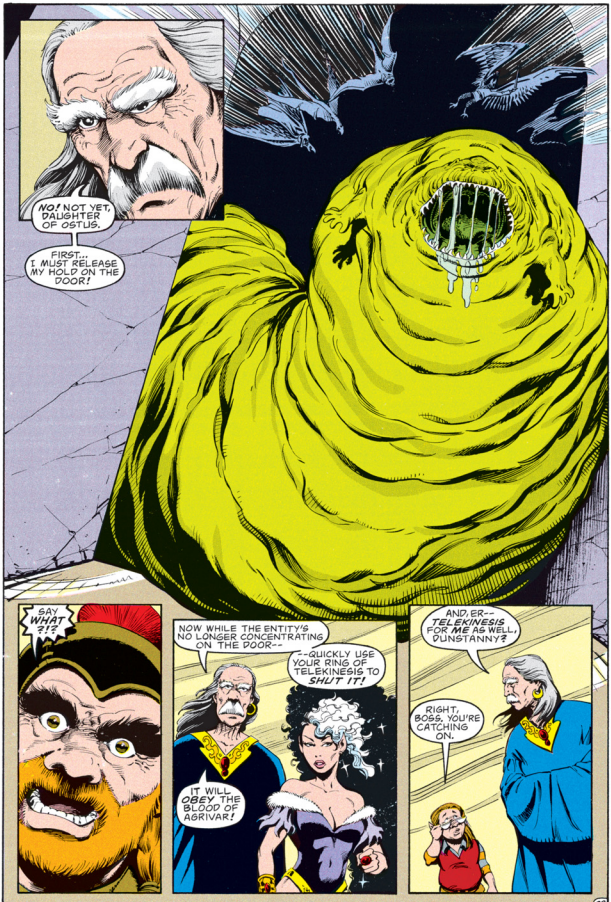

UM... AS LONG AS WE'RE RUSHING HEADLONG INTO DANGER, DUNSTANNY...
...ARE THERE ANY SPELLS THAT COME TO MIND FOR ME TO USE?
LIGHTNING BOLT--FORKED. THAT OUGHT TO TAKE OUT THE FRONT LINE AT LEAST.
ALL RIGHT, THEN...
LIGHTNING BOLT!
NOW STRAIGHT DOWN TOWARD THE FIRE ELEMENTAL.
TOWARD THE ELEMENTAL?
ER--IS THAT WISE?
17


YOU'LL BE IN RANGE TO USE THE ELEMENTAL AS YOUR FIRE SOURCE FOR A PYROTECHNICS SPELL.
AHA! VERY GOOD!
PYROTECHNICS!
SHEESH! FAT LOTTA GOOD A BUNCH OF FIREWORKS'LL DO AGAINST THOSE KENKUS AND GARGOYLES!
I THINK THE WIZARD'S TRYING TO USE MINOR SPELLS TO CONSERVE HIS MAGIC ENERGIES.
THERE'S STILL THE DOOR TO--
--OH MY GOODNESS!
THAT SETTLES IT!
TIME FOR YOU TO START PITCHING IN-- WEAK AN' SCARED OR NOT!
BUT I--
GET COOKIN', GIRL, 'CAUSE HERE COMES ONE NOW!
18

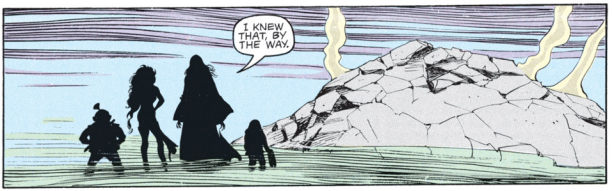

MAGIC MISSILE!
HEY-- I DID IT!
NICE SHOOTIN'. BUT THE ONLY QUESTION--
--IS WHETHER KNOCKING OFF A FEW *UGLIES* IS GONNA MEAN PIDDLY TO WHOEVER'S WAITING ON THE OTHER SIDE!
HAHAHAHA! TOO TRUE, DWARF!
HOW MUCH LONGER CAN YOUR WIZARD HOLD ME FAST...
...AGAINST THE *ONE WHO WAITS!*
I BELIEVE--
--THAT I SHALL SOON NOT *HAVE* TO.
YOU *WON'T?*

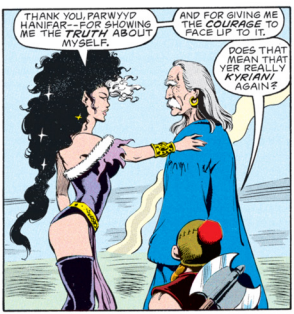

WIZARD! WHERE IS IT?!
AH, KILILI-- I THOUGHT YOU'D BE NOTICING SOON.
I ASKED YOU A QUESTION, OLD MAN! WHAT DID YOU DO WITH MY RINGS OF TELEKINESIS?
YOU MEAN AFTER I SLIPPED IT OFF YOUR FINGER WITHOUT YOUR KNOWING?
WHY, I SLIPPED IT ONTO CYBRIANA'S FINGER, OF COURSE.
YOU DID ...?
YOU DID!
THE RING IS MINE! SHE HAS NO CLAIM ON IT!
OR ON THE LIFE THAT WE ONCE--
NO! I'M STUCK! I'M MERGING WITH HER!
YOU CAN'T DO THIS!
I CAN--NOW THAT I UNDERSTAND...
...NOW THAT I'M PREPARED TO ACCEPT MY EVIL PART ALONG WITH THE GOOD!
FOR BOTH ARE THE LEGACY OF MY FATHER! AND IF HE COULD LIVE BOTH GOOD AND EVIL--
20

--THEN SO...
...CAN I!
KYRIANI!?
IF YOU'RE QUITE FINISHED--
--DO YOU THINK WE CAN HAVE A LITTLE HELP HERE?
OF COURSE, I CAN USE MY MAGIC TO--

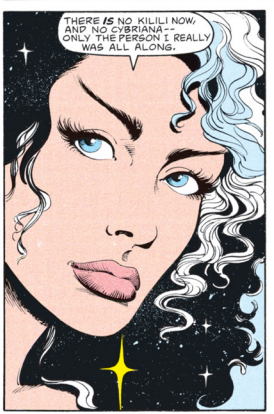

NO! NOT YET, DAUGHTER OF OSTUS.
FIRST... I MUST RELEASE MY HOLD ON THE DOOR!
SAY WHAT ?!?
NOW WHILE THE ENTITY'S NO LONGER CONCENTRATING ON THE DOOR--
--QUICKLY USE YOUR RING OF TELEKINESIS TO SHUT IT!
IT WILL OBEY THE BLOOD OF AGRIVAR!
AND, ER-- TELEKINESIS FOR ME AS WELL, DUNSTANNY?
RIGHT, BOSS. YOU'RE CATCHING ON.
22

GLYRAARRGHHH!!
DISINTEGRATE, BOSS! NOW'S YOUR CHANCE!
YES.
DISINTEGRATE!
23


I KNEW, THAT, BY THE WAY,


THANK YOU, PAR'WYYD HANIFAR--FOR SHOWING ME THE *TRUTH* ABOUT MYSELF.
AND FOR GIVING ME THE *COURAGE* TO FACE UP TO IT.
DOES THAT MEAN THAT YER REALLY *KYRIAN!* AGAIN?

YES, ONYX --BUT NOT *QUITE* THE KYRIANI YOU KNEW.
IN FACT... I FEEL IN A WAY THAT I'M KYRIANI FOR THE *FIRST TIME!*
OH YEAH...? AND WHAT ABOUT *KLILI?* WHAT ABOUT THE *EVIL?*


THERE *IS* NO KLILI NOW, AND NO CYBRIANA--ONLY THE PERSON I REALLY WAS ALL ALONG.

THAT PERSON CONTAINS GOOD AND EVIL BOTH, AND THE POWER TO *CHOOSE BETWEEN THEM*...THE ABILITY TO *MAKE MY OWN DESTINY* AT LAST...
...WHATEVER THAT DESTINY MIGHT BE--
THE END.

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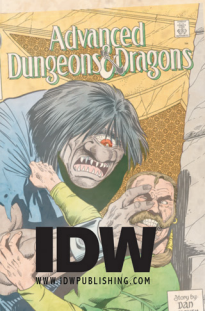

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