

AVENGERS

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FEB



MARVEL
COMICS
GROUP

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COMICS
CODE
AUTHORITY

THE AVENGERS

WHETHER HE LIVES...
OR WHETHER HE DIES...
THE PANTHER
FIGHTS ALONE!!



THE
**SONS OF THE
SERPENT
STRIKE!**

Telegram-Marvel comics
(Avengers)

THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!®

THE STING OF THE SERPENT

WE WHO WEAR
THE SERPENT'S
ROBES ARE THE
DESTINED
MASTERS OF
AMERICA!

AS THE FIRST
SERPENT DROVE ADAM
AND EVE FROM
EDEN...SO SHALL
WE DRIVE FROM
THIS LAND THE
UNFIT...THE
FOREIGN-BORN
...THE INFERIOR!

WE ARE...
THE
SONS
OF THE
SERPENT!!

A SHOCK-FOLLOWS-SHOCK SAGA BY:
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NIGHT CLOAKS THE SECRET, SINISTER TABLEAU THAT YOU HAVE JUST WITNESSED! IN AFRICA, HOWEVER, A BLAZING SUN BEATS MERCILESSLY DOWN...AS A SLEEK AND SILVERY AIRCRAFT LUNGES INTO THE SKY...!

THEY CALL IT THE DARK CONTINENT... BUT NOW IT BLAZES WITH THE PULSING LIGHT OF KNOWLEDGE...OF SELF-AWARENESS!

YET, SOMEHOW, IT IS NO LONGER HOME TO...THE BLACK PANTHER!



LAND, BRIEF HOURS AFTERWARD...

THIS IS HOME NOW TO T'CHALLA, SON OF T'CHAKA!

A LAND OF COMPLEXITY AND CONTRAST...OF TRIUMPH AND OF SUDDEN TRAGEDY!

BUT, ABOVE ALL, A LAND AS RICH WITH BECKONING PROMISE AS ANY NEWBORN NATION!



LONG WEEKS HAVE PASSED SINCE I LAST BEHELD MY ADOPTED HOME-LAND!

STILL, I IMAGINE IT HAS CHANGED BUT LITTLE!



PERHAPS, KING OF ALL THE WAKANDAS... AND YET, SOME THINGS MAY HAVE CHANGED MORE THAN OTHERS...!



THERE MAY'VE BEEN PEOPLE IN THERE WHEN THAT BOMB BLEW!

GET THAT NO. 3 HOSE OVER THERE... ON THE DOUBLE!

YES, SIR!

...HERE'S WHAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR, CAPTAIN!

THE SIGN OF THE SERPENT! IT FIGURES!

...WE OF THIS PROGRAM DEMAND THAT AN INVESTIGATION BE MADE OF THE SO-CALLED SONS OF THE SERPENT!

UNTIL THEN, NO MAN...BLACK OR WHITE...WILL BE TRULY SAFE!

AND ESPECIALLY BLACK, MR. HALE!

THE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT BUREAU HAD ITS OFFICE IN THAT BUILDING!

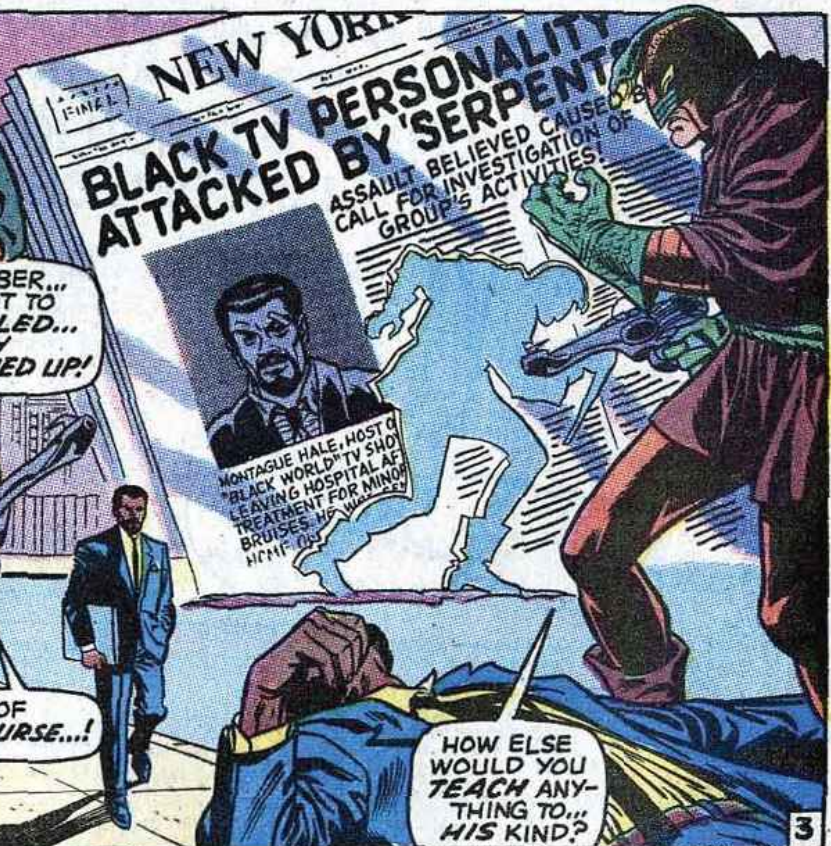
BOY, WON'T MONTAGUE HALE HAVE A FIELD-DAY ON HIS TALK-SHOW TONIGHT!



HERE HE COMES!

REMEMBER... HE'S NOT TO BE KILLED... ONLY ROUGHED UP!

OF COURSE...!



NEW YORK
A FREE PRESS
BLACK TV PERSONALITY ATTACKED BY 'SERPENTS'
ASSAULT BELIEVED CAUSED BY CALL FOR INVESTIGATION OF GROUP'S ACTIVITIES

MONTAGUE HALE, HOST OF "BLACK WORLD" TV SHOW LEAVING HOSPITAL AFTER TREATMENT FOR MINOR BRUISES. HE WAS SHOT 11-11-68

HOW ELSE WOULD YOU TEACH ANYTHING TO... HIS KIND?

HIS SPONSORS HAD WANTED **CONTROVERSY...** BUT NOT **THAT MUCH**, IT SEEMS... SO MONTAGUE HALE **LOST HIS TV FORUM...**

WNNT-TV PRESENTS THE DAN DUNN SHOW

THE DAN DUNN SHOW
SPECIAL GUEST TONIGHT
MR. MONTAGUE HALE

BUT, A RIVAL NETWORK HAD AN **EQUALLY CONTROVERSIAL LATE-NIGHT HOST...** THUS IT WAS **INEVITABLE** THAT THE TWO GIANTS WOULD MEET, AS MILLIONS OF **INSOMNIAC AMERICANS WATCHED...**

...NOW, MR. HALE, TELL US MORE ABOUT THIS **ALLEGED ASSAULT...** FROM WHICH YOU RECEIVED SUCH **MICROSCOPIC BRUISES!**

I'LL **IGNORE** THE IMPLI-CATIONS OF THAT, MR. DUNN...

...SINCE YOU'RE KNOWN TO BE THE FOREMOST **BIGOT** IN AMERICA TODAY!

STICKS AND STONES, MR. HALE!

MY ATTACKERS WERE **YOUR** KIND OF PEOPLE, DUNN...

THE **SCUM** OF TODAY'S SOCIETY... THE **SONS OF THE SERPENT!**

THERE'VE BEEN **HATE-GROUPS** IN THIS COUNTRY BEFORE, BUT NOTHING ON THE MASSIVE **SCALE** OF--

AFRAID I'LL HAVE TO **INTERRUPT**, MR. HALE!

WE HAVE A GUEST OF **SEPARATE BUT EQUAL** IMPORTANCE RIGHT NOW...

THEN, AS HALE WRITHED BENEATH THE CALCULATED INSULT... AND AS MILLIONS OF VIEWERS **CHOSE SIDES** BETWEEN THE TWO MEN DEPENDING UPON THEIR PREVIOUS PREJUDICES... **DAN DUNN DID HIS THING...**

...AND NOW, SOMETHING NEW ON THE **MUSIC HORIZON...**

MISS **MONICA LYNNE!**

You say we must part... But I can't tell my heart...

...And when the last dance is thru... And there's no one to turn to... You'll think about me...

THANK YOU!

THANK YOU!!!

WELCOME, MISS LYNNE... AND DON'T MIND MR. HALE'S SEEMING **INDIFFERENCE!**

HIS WOUNDS ONLY HURT WHEN HE **APPLAUDS!**

KLAP KLAP



BOY...DUNN'S REALLY GIVIN' IT TO THAT TROUBLE-MAKER... AND MORE POWER TO 'IM!

I'M NOT OFFENDED, MR. DUNN... I'M A SINGER, NOT A POLITICIAN!

I DON'T FEEL IT'S MY PLACE TO TELL PEOPLE WHAT TO BELIEVE!

IT'S GOOD IN THIS DAY AND AGE TO MEET PEOPLE WHO KNOW THEIR PLACE...DON'T YOU AGREE, MR. HALE?

NO COMMENT!

SHEESH! IF A CRUMB LIKE DUNN CAN TOP THE RATINGS...

A SHOW CALLED "SON OF HITLER" OUGHTTA BE A SMASH!

SOON, THE PROGRAM ENDED...

I'LL GIVE YOU A LIFT, IF YOU DON'T MIND, MISS LYNNE!

THERE ARE SOME THINGS I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT!

THERE'S NO HARM IN TALKING, MR. HALE!



YOU'RE A GOOD SINGER, LADY...REAL GOOD...AND THAT'S WHY I WANTED TO TALK TO YOU!

A GIRL WITH YOUR FUTURE COULD DO A LOT...FOR THE RIGHT CAUSE!

I'VE GOT A CAUSE, FRIEND... HER NAME IS MONICA LYNNE!

YOU CAN'T MEAN THAT, GIRL!

AFTER WHAT THE ESTABLISHMENT'S DONE TO OUR PEOPLE... AFTER WHAT THE SONS OF THE SERPENT DID TO ME...!



YOU CAN LET ME OUT, MR. HALE... I'LL WALK FROM HERE!

NONE OF WHAT YOU'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT CONCERNS ME!



...THAT IS THE GIRL YOU WANT!

YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO!

YES, SUPREME SERPENT!

MONICA LYNNE



THEN
GO--

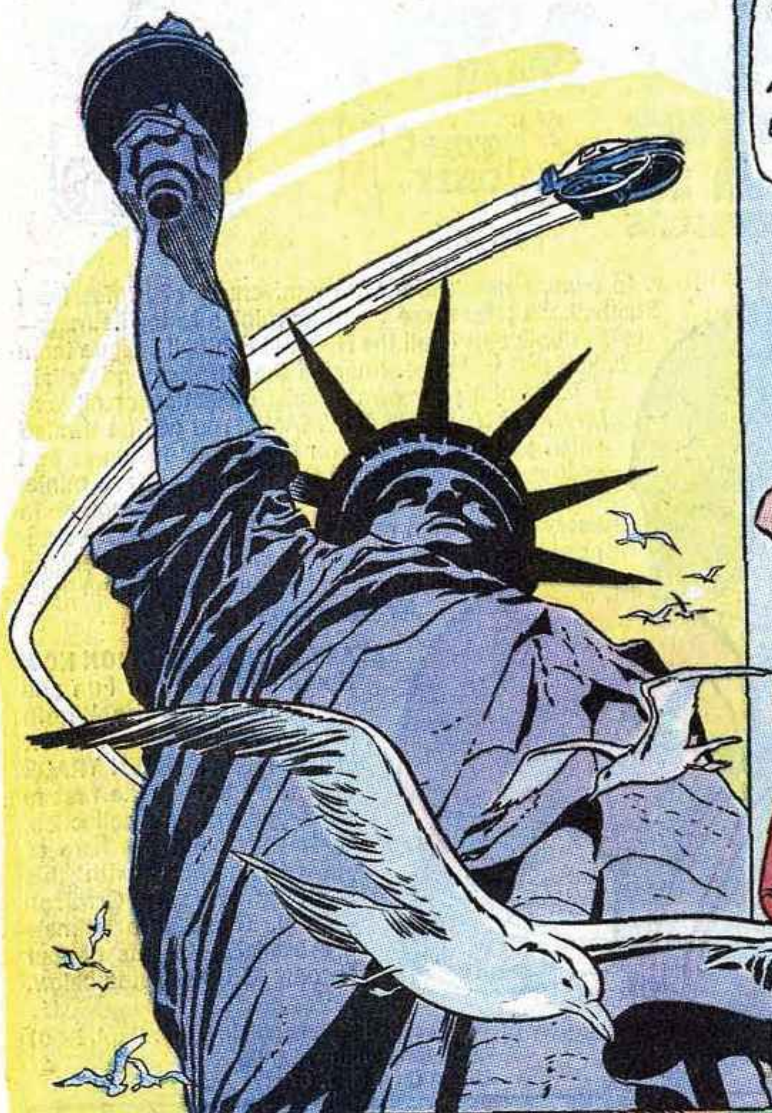
--AND MAKE THE
FIRST **BOLD STEP**
ON OUR MARCH
TOWARD...
CONQUEST!!

THEN, A SECRET SIGNAL
WAS GIVEN...A METALLIC
HATCHWAY WAS OPENED...
AND FROM WITHIN A
STRANGE, SERPENTINE
VESSEL, THERE POURED
FORTH INTO THE MURKY
WATERS A SPAWN AS
HATEFUL, AS EVIL AS THE
LEGIONS OF SATAN HIMSELF!



FOR, ONCE MORE,
THE SONS OF
THE SERPENT
WERE ABROAD
IN THE LAND....

AND THAT'S THE WAY THINGS STAND IN THE LAND OF THE FREE, T'CHALLA, AS YOU VEER YOUR GLEAMING FLAGSHIP THRU THE STARLESS, SHROUDED SKY...AS YOUR SLEEK PROW KNIVES PAST THE STATUE OF A LIBERTY WHICH IS EVER AN IDEAL... AND SOMETIMES A REALITY...!



WE CAN'T WAIT ANY LONGER FOR THE PANTHER TO GET BACK FROM AFRICA, YJ!

WHY DON'TCHA STOP PLAYIN' CAPTAIN VIDEO...

...AN' FILL THE VISION HERE IN ON THIS SONS OF THE SERPENT CREW WE'RE LOOKIN' INTO?

YOU START WITHOUT ME, BIG MAN...

AND I'LL CHIME IN IF AND WHEN YOU RUN OUT OF BREATH!



IT HAPPENED BACK WHEN HANK WAS STUCK AT THIS TEN-FOOT HEIGHT...

...AND HIS ASSISTANT WAS A REAL RIGHT SOUL-BROTHER NAMED BILL FOSTER!

THE SERPENTS DIDN'T KNOW THAT THEY WERE BITIN' OFF MORE THAN THEY COULD CHEW...!

JUST A MINUTE, YOU!

THE SONS OF THE SERPENT!

YOU CAN'T STOP ME NOW, I'M NEEDED INSIDE...!

GET HIM!!

"IN FACT, THEY WERE SCARCELY
OUTTA SIGHT, WHEN--"



...AND THEY LEFT
THIS BEHIND!

I SAY WE GO
AFTER THEM...

I'LL BUY
THAT, BIG
FELLA!



"BUT, FOR THE MOMENT
ANYHOW, THOSE SLIMY SNAKES
WERE A STEP OR TWO AHEAD
OF US..."

WE ARE POWERFUL
ENOUGH TO
CHALLENGE THE
AVENGERS
THEMSELVES!

PUT PLAN K
INTO ACTION
...AT ONCE!



"THAT PLAN CALLED FOR
'EM TO CAPTURE ANY ONE
AVENGER...AND THAT ONE
TURNED OUT TO BE
CAPTAIN AMERICA!"

WE'VE
KNOCKED
ALL THE
FIGHT
OUT OF
HIM!

THEN, IT IS
TIME TO PUT
PHASE TWO
INTO
OPERATION!



"BUT, PHASE TWO DIDN'T
GO QUITE ACCORDIN' TO
SCHEDULE..."



"FINALLY, THOUGH, EVEN
CAP COULDN'T STAND UP
AGAINST ODDS OF
100-TO-1..."

WITH YOU AS
OUR PRISONER,
THE AVENGERS
ARE
HELPLESS!

WATCH...
AND
LEARN
WHAT I
HAVE IN
STORE
FOR THEM!



"LET ME TAKE OVER FROM THERE, CLINT! THE
NEXT STEP OF THE SERPENTS' PLAN WAS TO GIVE
US THEIR ULTIMATUM! WE WERE TO ANNOUNCE
THAT WE WERE JOINING THEM...THAT WE
FAVORED THEIR RACIST VIEWS...OR ELSE!"

DISOBEY THESE
EDICTS, AND
YOU SHALL
NEVER SEE
CAPTAIN
AMERICA
ALIVE AGAIN!

WHAT DO WE
DO NOW,
GOLIATH?

PLAY ALONG
WITH THEM...
FOR THE
Z TIME
BEING!



--SO, IN THE MOST START-
LING TURNABOUT OF THE
CENTURY, THE AVENGERS
HAVE REFUSED TO HELP
IN THE FIGHT AGAINST
THE SERPENTS....

WE HAVE
WON!

THE
ENTIRE
NATION
WILL
SOON BE
OURS!



"BUT, THE SUPREME SERPENT SPOKE TOO SOON... 'CAUSE THE AVENGERS SNEAKED ABOARD THEIR AIRSHIP, SPEAR-HEADED BY HAWKEYE..."

SPEEDO!

"...AND A BARE-CHESTED CAP MADE SHORT SHRIFT OF A WOULD-BE DOUBLE DRESSED IN HIS COSTUME..."

"THAT TIME, THE SUPREME SERPENT HIMSELF TURNED OUT TO BE NONE OTHER THAN GENERAL CHEN... A FOREIGN ENEMY OUT TO SET AMERICAN AGAINST AMERICAN..."

IF THERE WAS EVER AN UNDESIRABLE ALIEN, THIS CAT IS IT!

AND SO ENDS OUR LITTLE FLASHBACK FOR YOUR BENEFIT, VISION!

ANY QUESTIONS, AVENGER?

ONLY ONE, YELLOW JACKET...!

IF GENERAL CHEN HAS BEEN DEPORTED... THEN WHO IS THE NEW SUPREME SERPENT?

THAT'S ALMOST AS IMPORTANT, VISION, AS ANOTHER QUESTION...

"...NAMELY, WHERE WILL THE SERPENTS STRIKE NEXT?"

THERE'S THE GIRL WE'RE LOOKING FOR!

HOLD IT,
SISTER...
AND WE
MAY LET
YOU LIVE!

MAYBE!

ON SECOND THOUGHT,
NOW THAT I GET A
GOOD LOOK AT YA...

MAYBE THERE'S
TOO MANY LIKE
YOU AROUND
ALREADY!

GET IT
OVER WITH,
LOUD-
MOUTH!

BUT IT IS ALREADY
TOO LATE FOR THE
THREE MASKED
ASSAILANTS... AS,
WITHOUT WARNING,
LIGHTNING STRIKES--
JET-BLACK LIGHTNING!

GET DOWN,
MISS!!

SP LAAKK!

LIKE A RAMPAGING JUNGLE JUGGERNAUT... LIKE THE SNARLING, SPITTING LEOPARD FOR WHICH HE IS NAMED... THE SON OF T'CHAKA ENTERS THE FRAY!!!

EVEN IF I DID NOT RECOGNIZE YOU SERPENTS FROM OLD NEWS ACCOUNTS...

SPROK!

...THE **BLACK PANTHER** KNOWS WELL THE SCENT OF EVIL!!

YOU'LL TALK OUT OF THE OTHER SIDE OF YOUR MASK, AVENGER...

...WHEN I GET MY **BLASTER** BACK AGAIN!

NOW, JUST **STAND STILL--** FOR ONE BRIEF **SECOND--**

--AND THAT'LL BE THE **LAST SECOND** YOU'LL EVER **KNOW!**

THE **POLICE!** MY GOD--

WHY DON'T THE **POLICE** COME?



THE POLICE
CAN'T HELP YOU,
LADY--AND
NEITHER CAN
THE PANTHER!

'CAUSE THAT
CREEP'S GONNA
FEEL THE
SERPENTS'
BITE--
RIGHT
NOW!!



NO!
NO!



NO NEED TO
WORRY
ABOUT ME,
MISS!

TO KILL A
BEAST OF
PREY, THEY
MUST FIRST
HIT HIM!



ONE OF THE
MASKED
HOODLUMS
IS DOWN--
THE VICTIM
OF HIS OWN
COMRADES!

NOW, I
MUST REACH
SHELTER...
FORM A NEW
PLAN OF
ATTACK!



HOLD STILL,
BLAST YOUR
HIDE!

NOBODY
COULD HIT
A HUMAN
JUMPING-
JACK
LIKE YOU!

THAT IS
WHAT I AM
COUNTING
ON,
ASSASSIN!

THERE! MY RETREAT HAS CONVINCED THE REMAINING TWO SERPENTS THAT I FEAR THEIR **BLASTERS!**

NOW, IF MY STUDIES IN **PSYCHOLOGY** SERVE ME ARIGHT...

THEY SHOULD FALL INTO MY **HANDS...LIKE RIPE COCONUTS!**

WE CAN'T GET AT HIM NOW, UNLESS WE TRACK HIM IN **DARKNESS!**

FORGET THAT LEAPFROG...AND DO WHAT WE CAME TO DO!

AND WE CAME FOR...**THE GIRL!**

YES... YOU CAME FOR **THE GIRL...**

--BUT I CAME FOR **YOU!!**

THOSE **BRAINLESS, BLITHERING DOLTS!**

THE **PANTHER!** HE'S BACK--!

DID THEY THINK THAT THE PANTHER WOULD **STAY** IN HIDING... QUAKING IN **FEAR** OF SUCH AS THEY?

STILL, WHAT THEY **THOUGHT** IS OF NO IMPORTANCE NOW!

WHAT MATTERS IS THAT THEIR IMPENDING **CAPTURE** PUTS OUR PLANS IN **JEOPARDY!**

AND SO--I KNOW WHAT I MUST **DO!**

THE NEXT MOMENT, SEVERAL MILES AWAY...

THE TWO **SERPENTS!** THEY'VE BEEN--**DESTROYED--!**

--BLASTED, SOMEHOW--BY SOME KIND OF **REMOTE CONTROL!**

THEN, THE HARSH
WAIL OF SIRENS...
THE SCREECH OF
ANGUISHED BRAKES...
AND, ECHOING THRU
THE NIGHT, A GIRL'S
FRIGHTENED
CRY...

FOR GOD'S SAKE-- **HELP!** OVER HERE...!!

TAKE IT **EASY**,
LADY...NO NEED
FOR **HYSTERIC**
NOW!

WE CAME
RUNNING
AS SOON AS
SOMEBODY
REPORTED
ALL THE
SHOOTING!

IT IS FORTUNATE THAT I **WITNESSED**
THE ATTACK, AS I LANDED AT
AVENGERS MANSION NEARBY!

BUT, WE'LL LEARN
NOTHING FROM
HER **ASSAILANTS!**

THEY ARE
DEAD...TWO
OF THEM AT
THE HANDS
OF THE ONE
THEY **SERVE!**

STILL, PANTHER,
MAYBE WE CAN
FIGURE OUT THE
REASON FOR THE
ATTACK!

ANY IDEA OF **WHY**
THE SERPENTS SHOULD
SINGLE YOU OUT, MISS...?

THE NAME
IS
**MONICA
LYNNE!**

AND MY
SKIN IS
REASON
ENOUGH...
FOR VERMIN
LIKE **THAT!**

WHAT I
WANT TO
KNOW IS,
WHERE WERE
THE **POLICE**
UNTIL THE
DANGER
WAS OVER?

DIDN'T YOU
WANT TO
DIRTY YOUR
HANDS...TO
RESCUE A
BLACK
GIRL?

WE DO OUR
BEST, LADY...
BUT WE CAN'T
BE **EVERY-**
WHERE
AT ONCE!

YOU'VE GOT TO
UNDERSTAND....!

PERHAPS I **DO** UNDERSTAND...
BETTER THAN YOU **WANT** ME TO!

EXCUSE ME,
PLEASE! I HAVE
TO **CALL** A MAN...
ABOUT A **CAUSE**...

THE NEXT EVENING, THE TOPIC OF CONVERSATION IN THE AVENGERS MANSION IS STILL VERY MUCH THE SONS OF THE SERPENT AND RELATED ITEMS....!

"I DON'T KNOW WHICH IS WORSE...THE SERPENTS THEMSELVES, OR TV SHOWS LIKE THE ONE YOU'VE DESCRIBED TO ME!"

BUT, IT'S TIME FOR DUNN'S SHOW AGAIN, AND I SUGGEST WE WATCH IT!

THE PAPER SAID HALE AND MONICA LYNNE WILL BE ON AGAIN TONIGHT... AND WE DON'T WANT TO MISS THE FIRE-WORKS!

A BIGOT LIKE DAN DUNN CAN BE THE TORCH TO ENFLAME AN ENTIRE NATION!

TO TELL THE TRUTH, T'CHALLA, I FOUND MONTAGUE HALE SOMETHING LESS THAN CIVIL!

Y'KNOW, LADY, I WONDER HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE SAYIN' THE SAME THING RIGHT NOW...FROM SCARSDALE TO SEATTLE!

ENOUGH, GOLIATH... ENOUGH TO MAKE WHAT IS SAID TONIGHT MATTER!

ENOUGH TO MAKE ME HOPE THAT BOTH SIDES REALIZE THEY HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES WHICH MATCH THEIR RIGHTS!

TUNE 'ER IN, JAN!

IT'S ALREADY SET FOR THE RIGHT CHANNEL, HUBBIE MINE...

...AS YOU'LL NOTICE WHEN YOU ALL STOP TALKING!

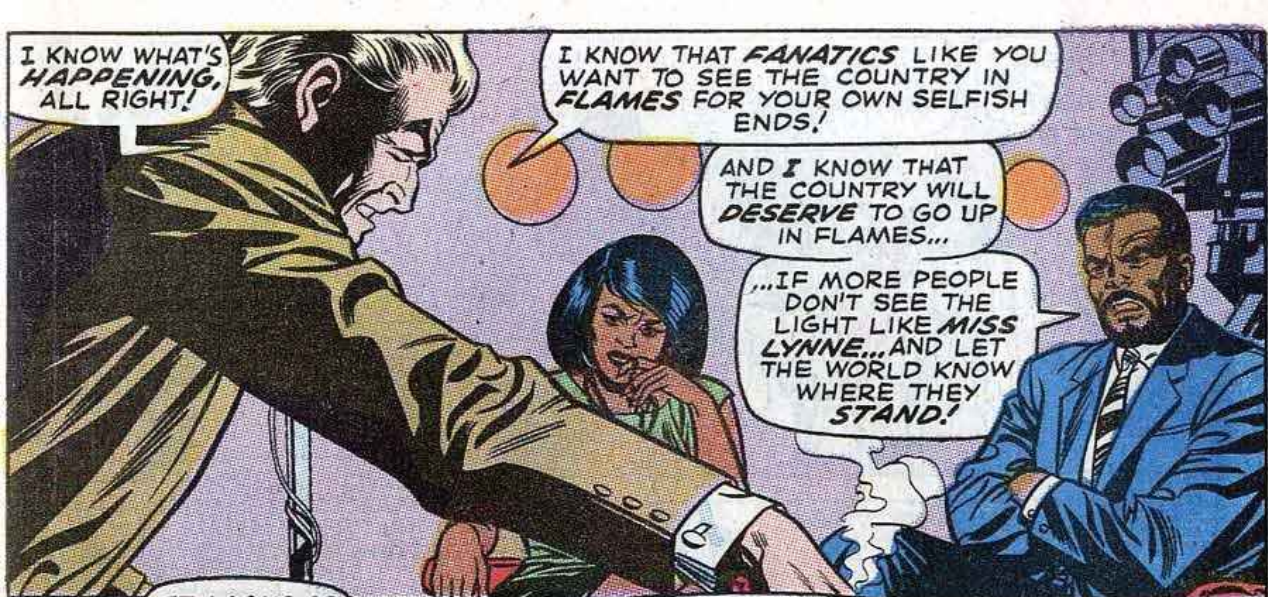
AND SOON, SILENCE SETTLES OVER COUNTLESS AMERICAN LIVING ROOMS...AS THE BIGGEST AUDIENCE SINCE THE MOON LANDING HEARS AN EXCHANGE OF EVEN MORE IMPORTANCE TO THE HOME OF THE BRAVE...!

...AND THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO ME LAST NIGHT...

...BECAUSE MY SKIN IS BLACK, IN A COUNTRY THAT WANTS TO KEEP ITSELF LILY-WHITE!

NOW, NOW, MISS LYNNE...YOU CAN'T BE CERTAIN THAT ATTACK WAS RACIALLY INSTIGATED!

OPEN YOUR EYES, DUNN! SURELY EVEN A REACTIONARY LIKE YOU CAN SEE WHAT'S GOING ON!



I KNOW WHAT'S **HAPPENING**, ALL RIGHT!

I KNOW THAT **FANATICS** LIKE YOU WANT TO SEE THE COUNTRY IN **FLAMES** FOR YOUR OWN SELFISH ENDS!

AND I KNOW THAT THE COUNTRY WILL **DESERVE** TO GO UP IN FLAMES...

...IF MORE PEOPLE DON'T SEE THE LIGHT LIKE **MISS LYNNE**... AND LET THE WORLD KNOW WHERE THEY **STAND!**



IT LOOKS AS IF **MONICA LYNNE'S SAFETY** IS BECOMING A **CAUSE CELEBRE!**

BUT, ALL I SEE IS THAT THE SERPENTS ARE TRYING TO DO **INDIRECTLY** THIS TIME...

IF THINGS AREN'T **COOLED OFF...**

...WHAT THEY **COULDN'T** DO LAST TIME BY **SHEER BRUTE FORCE!**

MAYBE YOU CAN BE COLD AND ANALYTICAL ABOUT IT, VISION...

...**HALF OF AMERICA** MAY SOON BE AT THE OTHER **HALF'S THROAT!**



THOSE ARE MY PEOPLE THAT THE SERPENTS HAVE BEEN **BEATING... KILLING!**

AND I CLAIM MY RIGHT TO TAKE THEM... **ALONE!**

MAYBE SO... BUT THE **AVENGERS** TIED THE SERPENTS' TAILS ONCE **BEFORE...**

AND I VOTE WE DO IT **AGAIN!**

NO!!
HUN? I'D THINK THAT YOU, MORE THAN ANY OF US...

THEN, WE SHALL
STAND ASIDE...FOR
THE MOMENT!

AGREED! YOU'VE GOT
24 HOURS ON YOUR
OWN, PANTHER! AFTER
THAT...

THANKS,
AVENGERS!

I GET
THE
PICTURE!

BUT, CAN YOU
GET THE
SERPENTS,
T'CHALLA...?

WHILE, AT THE TV STUDIO...

WANT TO DRIVE ME HOME
AGAIN, MR. HALE?

IT'S TIME
WE
DISCUSSED
A FEW
THINGS!

MY
PLEASURE,
GIRL!

AND, I ACCEPT
YOUR CHALLENGE
TO APPEAR AGAIN
TOMORROW NIGHT,
DUNN!

GLAD TO HEAR
IT, HALE!

I WON'T REST
TILL I'VE SHOWN
YOU UP COAST
TO COAST...
FOR THE POWER-
MAD MENACE
YOU REALLY ARE!

SOON, NEAR CENTRAL PARK...

...NO LURKING SERPENTS
TONIGHT, ANYWAY!

STILL, I CAN'T GET
OVER THE FEELING
I'M BEING WATCHED!

YOU ARE, MISS
LYNNE...BY THE
BLACK PANTHER!

YOU!

LISTEN
CAREFULLY,
PLEASE...
I HAVEN'T
MUCH
TIME!

DON'T
GO
ON TV
TOMORROW
...I'M ASK-
ING YOU
AS A
SOUL
BROTHER!

SOUL BR...?
THEN YOU...

WHY HAVEN'T YOU
LET ANYONE KNOW
THIS BEFORE?

I THOUGHT IT
WAS ENOUGH
TO BE JUST A
MAN!

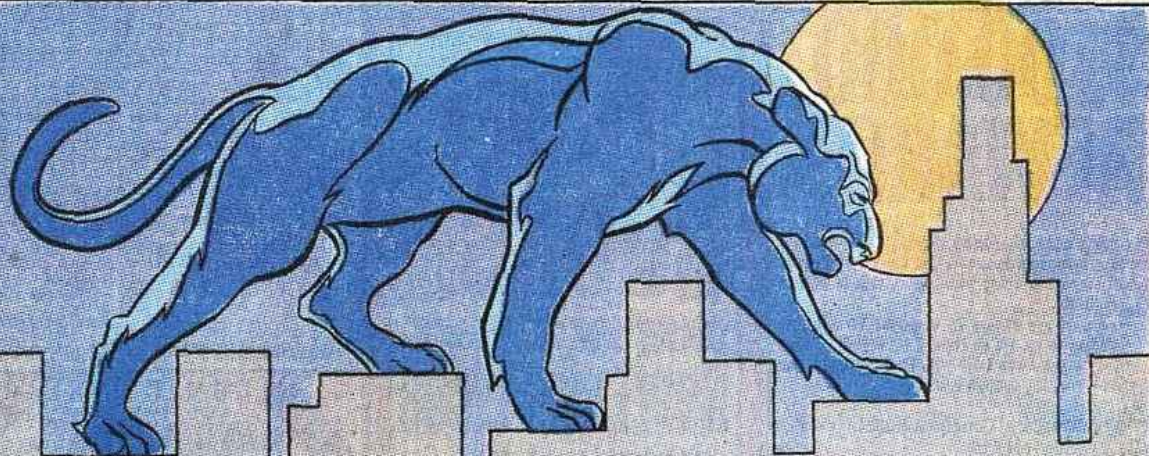
BUT NOW,
I KNOW
IT'S TIME
TO STAND
UP
AND BE
COUNTED!

AND, THAT IS JUST WHAT
THE BLACK PANTHER
INTENDS TO DO!

BUT, I'LL DO
IT MY WAY...
NOT YOURS...
NOT MONTAGUE
HALE'S!

GOODBYE,
MISS
LYNNE...!

THEN, AMIDST THE SHADES AND SHADOWS OF THE NIGHT, THE **BLACK PANTHER** STALKS THE CITY ONCE MORE...UNTIL HE FINDS THE LURKING PREY HE SEEKS...!



18
CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

I THOUGHT I MIGHT FIND A SERPENT SKULKING AROUND THIS ABANDONED DOCK... AND I DID!

BUT, PRECISELY WHAT THEY ARE UP TO...

...I CAN LEARN ONLY BY TAKING HIS PLACE!

WAIT! I HEAR SOMEONE CALLING FROM BELOW ME...!

MOVE IT, SIMMONS!

THE SUPREME SERPENT AWAITS!

COMING...!

OUR LEADER REPORTS THAT OUR CAREFULLY-LAID PLANS ARE NEAR FRUITION!

ONLY ONE ELEMENT IS MISSING... BUT THAT WILL SOON BE SUPPLIED!

AND, WHEN THE SON OF T'CHAKA LEARNS WHAT IT IS MY FRIENDS...

I SHALL RELAY IT TO THE AVENGERS, AND THE SERPENTS SHALL BE SMASHED ONCE AGAIN!

BUT, EVEN AS THE PANTHER SO MUSES, THE STREAKING SHIP SUDDENLY BANKS...

AND DIVES HEADLONG INTO THE ICY WATERS BELOW...

MY SIGNAL DEVICE MAY NOT WORK, BENEATH THE SURFACE!

STILL, MUCH MAY BE ACCOMPLISHED BY ONE MAN... WITH THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE ON HIS SIDE!

HALT, YOU THREE!

IDENTIFY YOURSELF... BY SPEAKING THE SERPENT OATH!

"WE WHO WEAR THE SERPENT'S ROBES ARE THE DESTINED MASTERS OF AMERICA...!"

I'LL DO THE SECOND PART!

"AS THE FIRST SERPENT DROVE ADAM AND EVE FROM EDEN..."

WELL, SIMMONS? YOU TAKE IT FROM THERE!

SIMMONS?



CAT
GOT YOUR
TONGUE,
SIMMONS?



I KNEW
IT! YOU'RE
NOT
SIMMONS!

ATTENTION,
MY FELLOW
SERPENTS....!



THIS IS THE
SUPREME
SERPENT
SPEAKING!

I TOLD
YOU THAT
ONLY ONE ELEMENT
WAS NEEDED TO
COMPLETE OUR
PREPARATIONS
FOR A POWER
TAKE-OVER!

AND NOW,
THAT FINAL
ELEMENT HAS
UNWITTINGLY
WALKED INTO
OUR VERY
HANDS!

GENTLEMEN,
MAY I PRESENT...
THE
**BLACK
PANTHER!!**

NEXT: POWER PLAY!