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THE AVENGERS

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**"TO
CONQUER
A
COLOSSUS!"**

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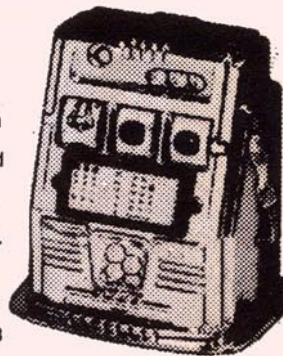
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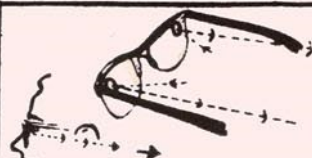
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THE MIGHTY AVENGERS!

TO CONQUER A COLOSSUS!

OUR INCREDIBLE INTER-STELLAR EPIC SO FAR:
IN THEIR VALIANT ATTEMPT TO RESCUE THE CAPTURED QUICKSILVER AND SCARLET WITCH IN THE LABYRINTHINE INTERIOR OF A FLYING SAUCER, THE AVENGERS AND THE LOVELY BLACK WIDOW HAVE BEEN OVERCOME BY IXAR, THE HORDES OF IXAR, THE INVINCIBLE!
(AND YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT TROUBLES!)

THESE TWO ARE THE LAST TO FALL! NOW, INDEED, IS OUR VICTORY COMPLETE!

OUR VICTORY FOR MIGHTY IXAR!

LET THEM JOIN THEIR FELLOW EARTHLINGS IN THE TRANSFERAL CAPSULES--AT ONCE!

HEED MY WORDS! THOUGH I BE BUT AN ULTROID LIKE YOURSELVES, I SPEAK FOR IXAR!

WE SHALL DO AS WE ARE COMMANDED!

FOR, SOON, THE COMBINED POWERS OF THE AVENGERS SHALL FLOW THRU OUR VEINS--AND THE COSMOS SHALL BE OURS!

AVENGERS ALL!

ELECTRIFYING EDITING BY STAN LEE

SCINTILLATING SCRIPTING BY ROY THOMAS

INVIGORATING ILLUSTRATING BY DON HECK

LANGUISHING LETTERING BY ARTIE SIMEK

NOW--TAKE THEM ALL TO THE ABILITY-ASSIMILATOR--WHERE THEIR MIGHT SHALL BE TRANSFERRED TO US!

IT'S ALMOST BEYOND BELIEF! A FLYING SAUCER--WITH A CREW OF RAY-BLASTING ANDROIDS--HAS COME TO EARTH FOR THE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF STEALING THE AVENGERS' SUPER-POWERS!

AND, WHAT'S MORE-- IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'LL PULL IT OFF! INSIDE THESE CAPSULES, WE CAN MOVE NO MUSCLES EXCEPT TO SPEAK!

WE OBEY, ULTRANA!

I DO NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT USE THE EARTHLINGS CAN BE TO US!

IF WE DEFEATED THEM, WHAT HAVE WE TO GAIN BY TAKING THEIR POWERS?

BUT, WE OVERWHELMED THEM BY SHEER WEIGHT OF NUMBERS...AND BY SEPARATING THEM!

THEN, EACH OF US SHALL BE EQUAL TO ALL THE AVENGERS--AND, OUR FORCES ARE LEGION!

MOMENTS LATER, THE CYLINDERS CONTAINING THE SIX HELPLESS AVENGERS ARE FASTENED INTO PLACE BEFORE A GIGANTIC, HUMMING COMPUTER...

IT IS DONE! ALREADY THE ASSIMILATOR BEGINS ITS VITAL TASK!

WITHIN ONE OF THIS PLANET'S HOURS, IT WILL HAVE SIPHONED OFF THEIR BASIC ENERGIES--AND THEN, IT SHALL BEGIN FEEDING THEM TO US!

WHAT OF THIS FEMALE EARTHLING, ULTRANA?

SHE IS NOT TRULY AN AVENGER-- AND NO SPECIAL CYLINDER HAS BEEN READIED FOR HER!

TAKE HER TO SECTOR FIVE-- TO BE DISPOSED OF LATER!

IT SHALL BE DONE!

THEN, AS THE SMIRKING "FEMALE" ULTROID STANDS MOCKINGLY BEFORE THEM, CAPTAIN AMERICA BREAKS THE AVENGERS' SILENCE...

YOU AND THAT COMPUTER-IZED BRAIN YOU CALL IXAR AREN'T THE FIRST TO TAKE ON THE AVENGERS, ULTRANA!

AND, YOU SHALL FAIL-- JUST AS THEY DID!

BRAVE WORDS, EARTHLING! SPEAK THEM WHILE YOU MAY--FOR, SOON, YOU WILL BE NOTHING BUT LIFELESS SHELLS!

THEN, AIDED BY YOUR OWN POWERS, HE SHALL CONTINUE HIS STRUGGLE FOR SUPREMACY IN THE GALAXY!

I DIDN'T KNOW THERE WAS A CONTEST GOIN' ON!

BUT, WE SHOULD'A GUESSED IT! SEEMS LIKE EVERYBODY'S TRYIN' TO CONQUER THE UNIVERSE THESE DAYS!

IF ONLY I COULD VIBRATE AT SUPER-SPEED...AND SHATTER THIS CYLINDER--!

A VAINGLORIOUS
HOPE, SWIFT-
FOOTED ONE! IXAR
HAS PREPARED FAR
TOO CAREFULLY
FOR SUCH AN
OCCURRENCE!

FOR, USING
INFORMATION HE
OBTAINED BY
PROBING THE MINDS
OF YOU AND THE
SCARLET WITCH, HE
CREATED A CYLINDER
SPECIFICALLY
DESIGNED FOR EACH
OF YOU!

IT'S TRUE! THE
HARDER I STRAIN
TO MOVE--TO
BREAK FREE--
THE STRONGER I
CAN SENSE THE
CAPSULE
CONFINING ME!

THEN--
WE'RE
DOOMED!
AND SO
IS THE
EARTH!

PAH! YOUR
PUNY MORTAL
MINDS STILL
CANNOT
CONCEIVE
OF THE FULL
SCOPE OF
IXAR'S
AMBITION!

TO HIM, YOUR
EARTH IS BUT
A STEPPING-
STONE--A
SINGLE PAWN
IN A GAME
WHICH SPANS
THE COSMOS
ITSELF!

LADY, YOU'VE
BEEN DOIN' A
LOT OF HORN-
BLOWIN' FOR
THAT SLANTY-
EYED
COMPUTER
BOSS OF
YOURS!

AS LONG AS
WE'LL BE CASHIN'
IN OUR CHIPS
ANYWAY, HOW'S
ABOUT GIVIN' US
THE LOWDOWN
ON WHERE HE
CAME FROM?

AND DON'T
TELL US
THE STORK
BROUGHT
'IM!

"VERY WELL, EARTHLING--YOU SHALL
HAVE YOUR WISH, SINCE IT IS YOUR
LAST! THE BEING CALLED IXAR WAS
ONCE A HUMAN--MUCH LIKE YOUR-
SELVES, BUT OF AN INFINITELY MORE
INTELLIGENT RACE..."

"TO TELL HOW HE
CAME TO EXIST IN
THE MACHINE-LINE
FORM WHICH YOU
HAVE BEHELD... IS
TO TELL THE STORY
OF A WAR BEGUN
WHEN YOUR TINY
WORLD WAS YOUNG..."

"FOR MILLENNIA, A THERMONUCLEAR
WAR OF COSMIC PROPORTIONS WAGED
BETWEEN THE ANCESTORS OF IXAR...
AND THE INHABITANTS OF A NEARBY
STAR SYSTEM..."

"FINALLY,
BOTH WORLDS
USED UP THEIR
ENORMOUS SUPPLIES
OF FISSIONABLE
MATERIAL... AND WERE
REDUCED TO
CARRYING ON THE
DEADLY POWER
STRUGGLE WITH
MORE BASIC
WEAPONS..."

"FINALLY, EXCEPT FOR THE TWO LEADERS, ALL HUMANS ON BOTH WORLDS HAD PERISHED--FOR, ONLY AN ARTIFICIAL BEING COULD HOPE TO SURVIVE SUCH PROLONGED, PITCHED COMBAT! THUS, IT BECAME ULTROID AGAINST ULTROID..."

ON! ONWARD FOR THE GREATER GLORY OF IXAR!

LET NOT A STONE STAND UNTURNED ON THE PLANET OF HIS ENEMY!

FTAK!

BOOM!

"AND THEN, A SHORT TIME AGO, CAME THE CLIMATIC BATTLE... AS THE ULTROIDS OF OUR FOE PENETRATED THE PALACE OF IXAR AND WERE DRIVEN OUT ONLY AFTER INFLECTING A HEAVY TOLL..."

BEHOLD... OUR OPPONENTS FALL BACK! WE HAVE WON THE BATTLE!

BUT, AT WHAT A PRICE! IT IS SAID THAT IXAR HIMSELF IS GRAVELY WOUNDED!

BRAK!

ZWAP!

IXAR MUST NOT DIE! HE IS THE LAST OF HIS RACE--THE RACE WE WERE CREATED TO PROTECT!

"HOWEVER, IXAR WAS DYING... AND THERE REMAINED OPEN TO HIM ONLY ONE POSSIBILITY FOR LIFE..."

CENTURIES AGO, MY ANCESTORS CONSTRUCTED A MACHINE--A MAMMOTH COMPUTER INTO WHICH A MAN'S VITAL ENERGIES--INDEED, HIS VERY LIFE ITSELF--COULD BE CHANNLED!

NOW--IN THE BRIEF TIME LEFT TO ME--YOU ULTROIDS MUST TRANSFER MY LIFE FORCE TO THE COMPUTER! THEN, IXAR SHALL BE... IMMORTAL!

IT SHALL BE AS YOU SAY, O IXAR!

THEN, WE MAY CARRY ON THE WAR AGAINST OUR ENEMY, FOREVER!

MORE MARVEL MASTERPIECES...



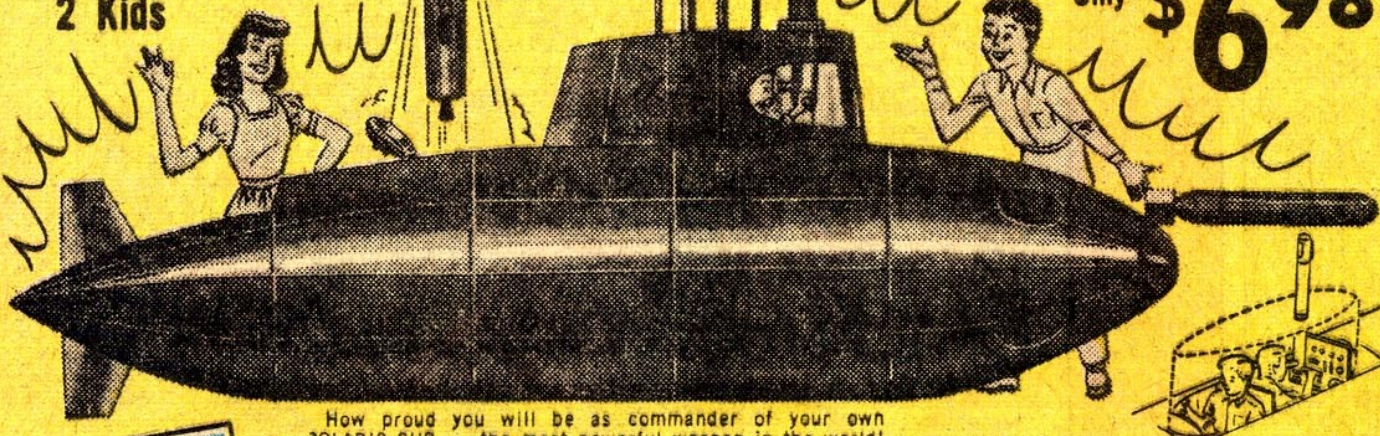
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a boy
12 or older

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"BUT, WHEN THE COMPLEX TRANSFERAL WAS COMPLETED, THE IMMORTAL MIND OF IXAR CONCEIVED A BOLD NEW PLAN..."

WE SHALL SEARCH THE GALAXY--UNTIL WE FIND A RACE OF HUMANS WHO POSSESS ABILITIES BEYOND THOSE I ENJOYED!

THEN, MY ULTROIDS SHALL BE GIVEN THOSE ABILITIES --AND THE INTERSTELLAR BALANCE OF POWER SHALL TIP IN IXAR'S FAVOR!

"FOR MANY OF YOUR YEARS, OUR QUEST WAS FRUITLESS! YET, ONE DAY, WE ENTERED THE SOLAR SYSTEM OF A MEDIUM-RANGE STAR--AND FOUND... YOUR PLANET EARTH!"

ACCORDING TO OUR INSTRUMENTS, THAT WORLD MAY CONTAIN HUMAN LIFE SIMILAR TO THAT WE ONCE SERVED!

YES--BUT, SO HAVE MANY OTHER WORLDS WHICH WE HAVE DISCOVERED...

AND, NONE OF THEM THUS FAR HAD SPAWNED THE TYPE OF SUPER-BEING WHICH IXAR SEEKS!

THUS, AS THE FEMALE ULTROID CONCLUDES HER FANTASTIC NARRATIVE...

OUR SCANNER-BEAMS FOCUSED FIRST ON THE PAIR KNOWN AS QUICK-SILVER AND THE SCARLET WITCH--AND WE SOON LEARNED THEY WERE BUT TWO OF A GROUP OF SO-CALLED "SUPER-HEROES"!

IT WAS A SIMPLE MATTER FOR OUR ADVANCED SCIENCE TO BRING ABOUT YOUR DOWNFALL--BUT, BY ASSIMILATING ALL YOUR POWERS, WE SHALL BECOME IXAR'S INVINCIBLE LEGION!

THANKS FOR THE FAIRY TALE, LADY--

NOW, HOW ABOUT CLEARIN' OUT AND LETTING US DIE IN PEACE? OR, ARE YOU TRYING TO TALK US TO DEATH?

WE'VE GOT ONE LAST-DITCH CHANCE--BUT ONLY IF MOST OF THE ULTROIDS LEAVE! THEN--WAIT! WHAT'S THAT RUMBLING NOISE?

AND, AT THAT MOMENT, IN ANOTHER PART OF THE IMMENSE CRAFT...

SECONDS LATER, LEAVING BEHIND THE ENORMOUS SHELL WHICH HAD COVERED THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN VILLAGE, THE DISC-SHAPED SHIP DEPARTS FROM THE EARTH AS MYSTERIOUSLY AS IT HAD COME...

HOWEVER, IT TAKES WITH IT A HALF-DOZEN UNWILLING PASSENGERS--ONE OF WHOM HAS JUST HAD AN INSPIRATION...

I DON'T DARE SPEAK TO THE OTHERS--CAUSE I CAN'T TAKE A CHANCE ON IXAR OR ONE OF HIS ULTROID STOOGES HEARING ME!

BUT, IF THIS FANCY CYLINDER HASN'T DRAINED SO MUCH OF MY POWER THAT I CAN'T CONCENTRATE, WE MIGHT JUST HAVE A TRUMP CARD!

PREPARE FOR LIFT-OFF! OUR BUSINESS ON THIS PRIMITIVE GLOBE IS FINISHED--WE MUST BE UNDER WAY!

ACCORDING TO ULTRANA, THESE CYLINDERS WERE TREATED ACCORDING TO INFO GAINED FROM WANDA AND PIETRO!



BUT, THERE'S ONE LITTLE FACT THAT EVEN THOSE TWO DON'T KNOW...

WHICH IS-- THAT I RECENTLY REGAINED MY SIZE-CHANGING POWER!

IT WORKED! IT TAKES THAT ASSIMILATOR GADGET A WHILE TO WARM UP... WHICH GIVES US HALF A CHANCE!



THIS OXYGEN TUBING IS A TIGHT SQUEEZE --BUT, IT'LL BE WORTH IT IF I CAN TAKE OUR LONE REMAINING GUARD BY SURPRISE!

POOR JAN! USUALLY, THIS IS HER TRICK-- BUT, THE TUBE IN HER CYLINDER WAS COVERED BY A FINE SCREEN!

BUT, AT THE SAME INSTANT THAT HANK PYM EMERGES--ANT-SIZE-- FROM THE CONFINING CAPSULE...

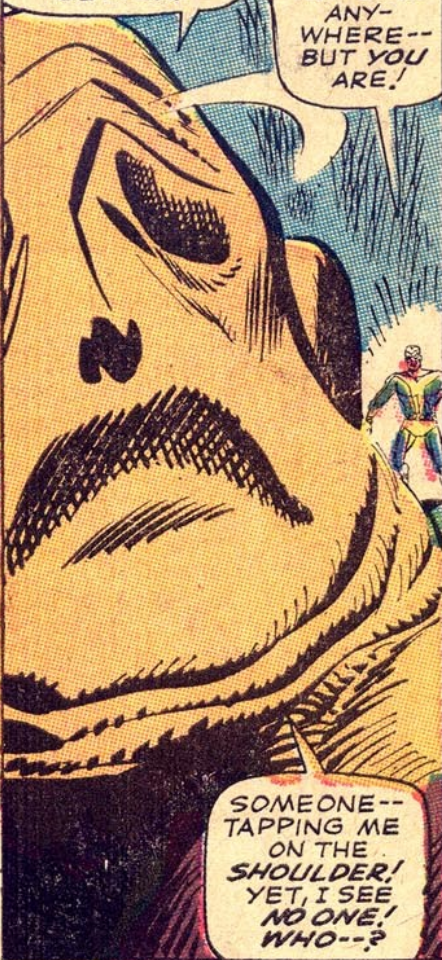


THE CAGE OF THE GIANT HUMAN-- IT IS EMPTY!

HE MUST HAVE ESCAPED! BUT-- HOW?? IT IS IMPOSSIBLE!

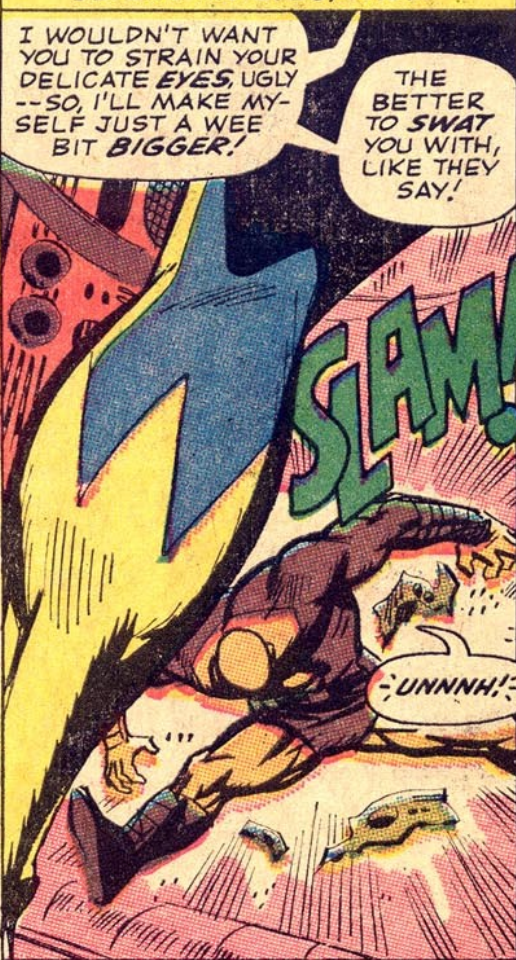
I MUST SOUND THE ALARM-- BEFORE HE CAN GET FAR--

NO NEED FOR THAT, CHUM! I'M NOT GOIN' ANYWHERE-- BUT YOU ARE!



SOMEONE-- TAPPING ME ON THE SHOULDER! YET, I SEE NO ONE! WHO--?

THE NEXT MOMENT, THE UNGAINLY ULTROID IS STARTLED, AS A 10-FOOT FIGURE SUDDENLY MATERIALIZES BEFORE HIS EYES, AND...



I WOULDN'T WANT YOU TO STRAIN YOUR DELICATE EYES, UGLY --SO, I'LL MAKE MYSELF JUST A WEE BIT BIGGER!

THE BETTER TO SWAT YOU WITH, LIKE THEY SAY!

SLAM!

UNNNH!

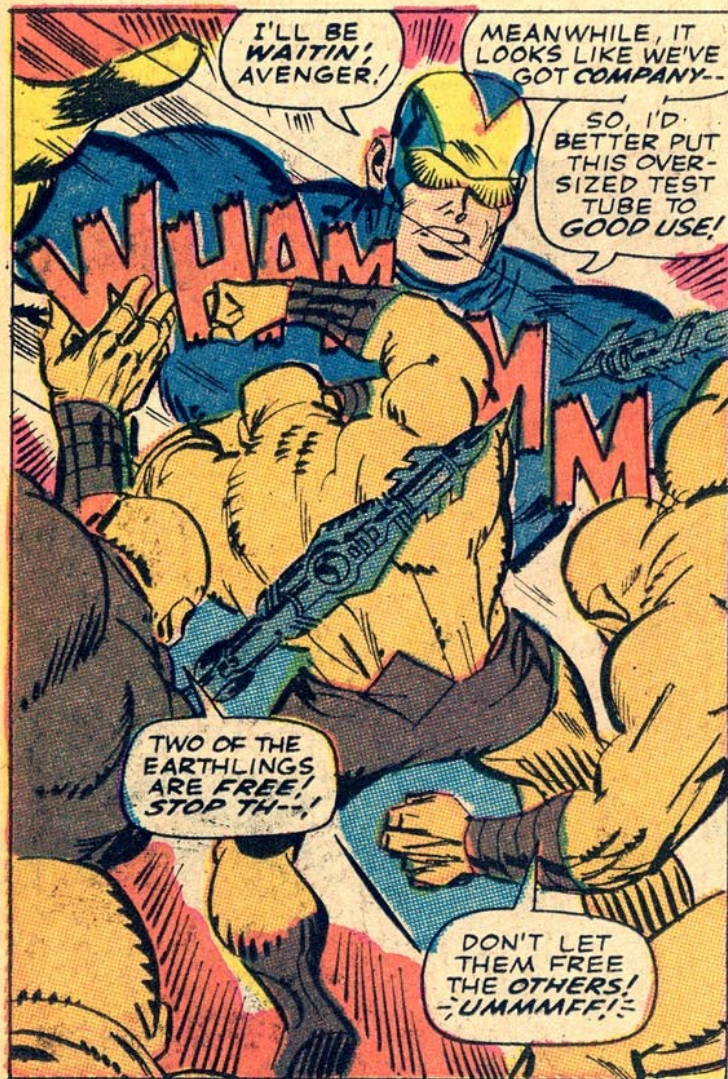
OKAY, CAP-- IT'S SHOW TIME!

C'MON OUT AND PLAY!



ALWAYS GLAD TO OBLIGE, BIG MAN! THANKS!

JUST LET ME PICK UP MY SHIELD OVER THERE, AND I'LL BE GOING!



THEN, USING HIS GARGANTUAN STRENGTH TO RIP SEVERAL LENGTHS OF METAL TUBING FROM THE SHATTERED CYLINDERS, HANK PYM GOES INTO ACTION, GOLIATH STYLE...

THIS SHOULD TAKE CARE OF MOST OF THE ULTROIDS, GROUP!

THEY'RE ALL WRAPPED UP FOR MAILING AS A CHRISTMAS PRESENT--FOR THE MUNSTERS!

HOLD IT, HANDSOME! HERE'S ONE YOU MISSED...

MAYBE ONE LONE ULTROID ISN'T MUCH OF A CATCH TO YOU, BIG MAN--BUT, IT'S QUITE A FEATHER IN MY LITTLE CAP!

AFTER ALL, IT TOOK ALMOST ALL OF MY WASP STINGS TO GET THRU THIS GORILLA'S HIDE!

JAN--LOOK OUT! BEHIND YOU--!

SEVERAL MORE ULTROIDS--HEADED STRAIGHT FOR YOU!

BUT, SUDDENLY, LIKE AN EMERALD FLASH OF LIGHTNING...

DO NOT FEAR FOR THE WASP'S SAFETY, GOLIATH!

FOR, QUICK-SILVER CAN REACH HER BEFORE HER ATTACKERS DO!

BWOK!

KWAN!

AHH--HOW GOOD TO KNOW THE SOUND OF COMBAT ONCE MORE!

SURRENDER, FELLOW ULTROIDS! WE HAVE NO CHANCE--!

THE NEXT SECOND, ASTONISHINGLY...

WE ARE YOURS TO COMMAND, EARTHLINGS! OBSERVE... WE THROW DOWN OUR WEAPONS!

CAREFUL, ALL OF YOU! THEY'RE GIVING UP TOO EASILY!

I SUSPECT A TRAP--!

FOR ONCE, MAN-MOUNTAIN, I'M WITH YOU! I'M KEEPIN' MY BLAST-ARROW'S HANDY!

EVEN ARTIFICIAL CREATURES KNOW WHEN THEY ARE DEFEATED!

YOU DO THAT, HAWKEYE! BUT, DON'T FIRE UNLESS ONE OF THEM STARTS SOMETHING!



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RELAX, CAP--THIS AINT SOME TRIGGER-HAPPY KID YOU'RE TALKIN' TO, IY'KNOW!

THIS IS OL' HAWKEYE, REMEMBER?

SORRY, PARTNER--I DIDN'T MEAN TO STEP ON YOUR TOES!

FORGET IT --I'M JUST WORRIED ABOUT TASHA! I GOTTA FIND OUT WHAT THESE ALIEN BOZOS DID WITH HER!



WE'LL ALL LOOK FOR HER, HAWKEYE --AS SOON AS WE TAKE CARE OF THE COMPUTERIZED MENACE CALLED IXAR!

SORRY WE HAVEN'T GOT TIME FOR A CELEBRATION--BUT, WELCOME BACK, WANDA AND PIETRO!

IT'S WONDERFUL TO BE BACK--UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES!

WANDA SPEAKS FOR US BOTH, STEVE! NOW, TRULY, THE AVENGERS ARE AT FULL FIGHTING STRENGTH ONCE AGAIN!



NUTS! WHILE YOU FIVE ARE HOLDIN' A CLASS REUNION, THE BLACK WIDOW MAY BE IN DANGER...OR WORSE!

TAKE CARE'A IXAR WITHOUT ME, WING-HEAD--I'M CUTTIN' OUT!

GO AHEAD, AVENGER! I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL!

PIETRO! WE, TOO, HAVE FORGOTTEN SOMEONE... SOMEONE WE MUST FREE FROM BONDAGE...



TRUE, MY SISTER! FOR, THE BURGO-MEISTER OF OUR VILLAGE IS STILL A CAPTIVE OF THE ALIEN!

THEN, PART OF WHAT YOUR IMITATOR TOLD US WAS TRUE, WANDA...

YES, CAPTAIN AMERICA! BUT, IT IS BEYOND YOUR PUNY POWER TO FREE HIM!

YOU'VE GOT A LOT TO LEARN ABOUT THE POWER OF THE AVENGERS, IXAR!



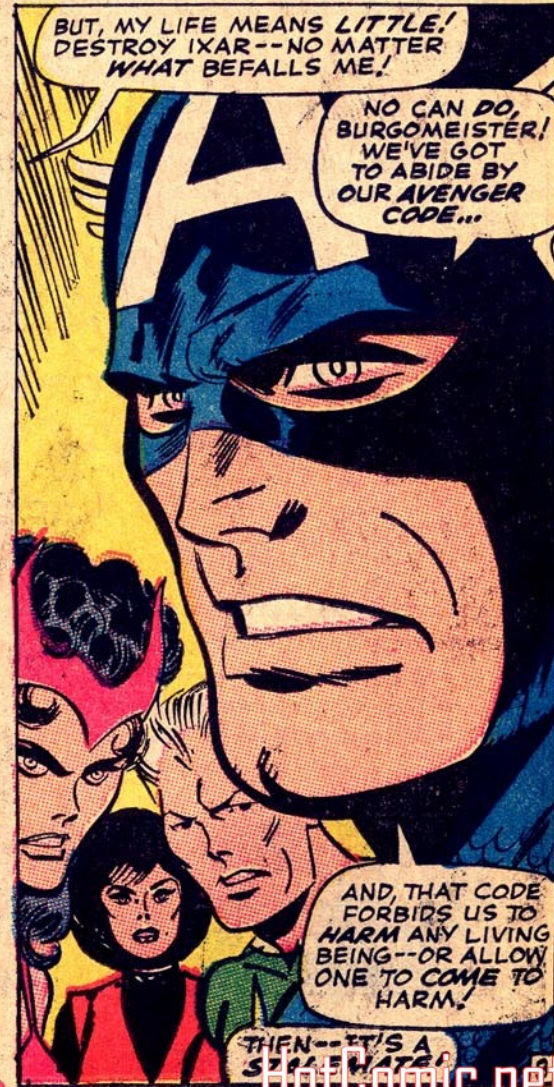
PERHAPS, MORTAL! YET, ALL YOUR FAMED MIGHT SHALL AVAIL YOU NAUGHT--UNLESS YOU ARE WILLING TO SEE THE HUMAN DIE!

FOR, IF YOU DO NOT SURRENDER, HE WILL BE... ELECTROCUTED!

WE'RE STYMIED, CAP! THAT MIND-TAPPING SET-UP MUST DOUBLE AS AN ELECTRIC CHAIR!

Y-YOU ARE RIGHT, GOLIATH! I SERVED IXAR FIRST AS A SOURCE OF INFORMATION...

AND NOW, HE USES ME AS A WEAPON--AGAINST YOU!



BUT, MY LIFE MEANS LITTLE! DESTROY IXAR--NO MATTER WHAT BEFALLS ME!

NO CAN DO, BURGOMEISTER! WE'VE GOT TO ABIDE BY OUR AVENGER CODE...

AND, THAT CODE FORBIDS US TO HARM ANY LIVING BEING--OR ALLOW ONE TO COME TO HARM!

THEN--IT'S A SPLIT SECOND!



A STALEMATE? YOU OVERESTIMATE YOURSELVES, AVENGERS!

I HAVE MERELY BEEN TOYING WITH YOU-- DELAYING YOU UNTIL THE MOMENT OF MY INEVITABLE VICTORY!

AND NOW, THAT TIME HAS COME! LOOK BEHIND YOU, EARTHLINGS!

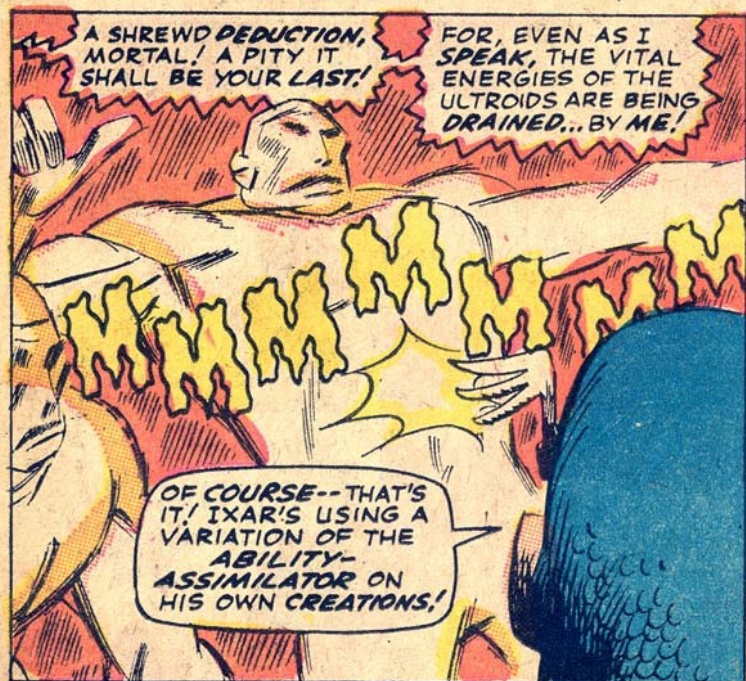
IT'S... INCREDIBLE! THE ULTROIDS-- THEY'RE... GLOWING!



NOT JUST GLOWING, WANDA! THEY'RE ALSO BECOMING TRANSPARENT-- FADING AWAY INTO NOTHINGNESS!

UNLESS I MISS MY GUESS, HANK, THEY'RE DOING A LOT MORE THAN THAT!

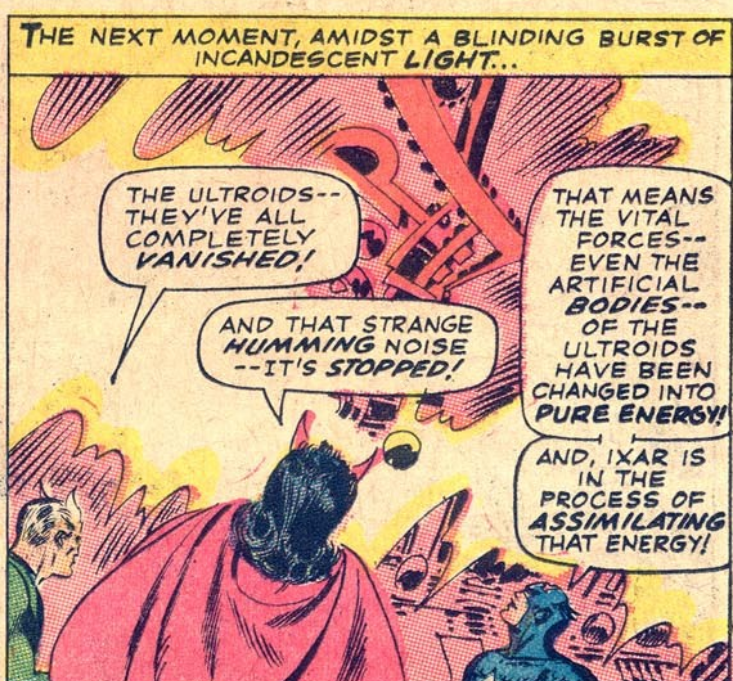
IT'S ALMOST AS IF... SOMETHING WERE ABSORBING THEIR VERY BEING!



A SHREWD DEDUCTION, MORTAL! A PITY IT SHALL BE YOUR LAST!

FOR, EVEN AS I SPEAK, THE VITAL ENERGIES OF THE ULTROIDS ARE BEING DRAINED... BY ME!

OF COURSE-- THAT'S IT! IXAR'S USING A VARIATION OF THE ABILITY-- ASSIMILATOR ON HIS OWN CREATIONS!



THE NEXT MOMENT, AMIDST A BLINDING BURST OF INCANDESCENT LIGHT...

THE ULTROIDS-- THEY'VE ALL COMPLETELY VANISHED!

AND THAT STRANGE HUMMING NOISE --IT'S STOPPED!

THAT MEANS THE VITAL FORCES-- EVEN THE ARTIFICIAL BODIES-- OF THE ULTROIDS HAVE BEEN CHANGED INTO PURE ENERGY!

AND, IXAR IS IN THE PROCESS OF ASSIMILATING THAT ENERGY!



THEN, BENEATH THEIR FEET, THE STARTLED AVENGERS SUDDENLY DETECT A SLIGHT TREMOR-- WHICH SWIFTLY GROWS TO MAMMOTH PROPORTIONS...

THE COMPUTER-- IXAR-- IS VIBRATING WITH SUCH INTENSITY THAT HE'S SHAKING THE ENTIRE SAUCER!

IF HE DOESN'T STOP-- THE ENTIRE SHIP MAY BE TORN APART BY HIS OWN MADDENED FURY!

BUT, EVEN AS QUICKSILVER UTTERS THOSE URGENT WORDS...

NOW, THAT LIVING COMPUTER'S GIVING OFF SPARKS! THE ABSORBING OF THE ULTROIDS MUST BE INCREASING HIS POWERS A THOUSANDFOLD!

YES--BUT, HE STILL PLANS TO ATTACK US! YET--HOW?

CERTAINLY, THERE'S NO WAY HE CAN THREATEN US DIRECTLY! THE AVENGERS CAN SURELY HANDLE A RAMPAGING COMPUTER--

WAIT! SOMETHING'S EMERGING FROM THE FRONT OF THE MACHINE-- SOMETHING... ENORMOUS!

AND, AS THE COSTUMED QUINTET STARE IN AWE--ALMOST IN DISBELIEF--A TRULY FORMIDABLE FIGURE APPEARS BEFORE THEM...

BEHOLD, AND CRINGE IN ABJECT FEAR, RASH MORTALS! FOR, NOT ALL OF YOU TOGETHER CAN STAND AGAINST ME, NOW THAT I HAVE ABSORBED THE POWER OF ALL THE ULTROIDS!

PREPARE TO FACE THE ONSLAUGHT OF **IXAR** THE INVINCIBLE!

STAND BACK, CAP! THAT GUY'S OVER FIFTEEN FEET TALL--AND THAT MAKES ME THE LOGICAL ONE TO TAKE 'IM!

STAY BACK, HANK! HE'S TOO BIG FOR EVEN YOU TO TACKLE ALONE!

REMEMBER, THIS BATTLE IS FOR KEEPS! IF WE LOSE IT--IT'S THE END OF THE AVENGERS!

THEN, LIKE THE RED-WHITE-AND-BLUE FIGHTING MACHINE THAT HE TRULY IS, CAPTAIN AMERICA SIGNALS THE ATTACK...

OKAY, PIETRO-- LET'S WHITTLE THAT BLUSTERING BEHEMOTH DOWN TO SIZE!

RIGHT YOU ARE, CAP! AFTER MONTHS OF INACTIVITY, IT'S GREAT TO BE BACK IN ACTION AGAIN!

PUT PLAN D INTO OPERATION!

IMPUDENT HUMAN--TO CHALLENGE THE UNSTOPPABLE POWER OF IXAR! I'LL SQUASH YOU LIKE A BUG! UNNNH!

TO STOP ME, YOU FIRST MUST BE ABLE TO CATCH ME--AND YOU'RE MUCH TOO SLOW TO DO THAT!

HE DOESN'T SEEM AS DANGEROUS AS CAP THOUGHT! PERHAPS I CAN TAKE CARE OF HIM MYSELF!

NEXT, GRASPING MORE SUPER-TENSILE WIRING FROM THE FLOOR, PIETRO MAKES HIS MOVE...

PIETRO-- DON'T TRY TO TACKLE HIM ALONE!

DO NOT FEAR, CAP-- HE'S NOT FAST ENOUGH TO CATCH... QUICKSILVER!

FOOL! DID YOU HOPE TO BEST ME AS EASILY AS YOU DID MY ULTROIDS?

THEN, KNOW YOU THAT IXAR HAS RESOURCES OTHER THAN MERE BRUTE STRENGTH!

-OOOF!- STEVE ROGERS WAS RIGHT! I WAS... OVER-EAGER!

IXAR HAS... STUNNED ME! SOME KIND OF... FORCE BLAST!

PIETRO! DON'T JUST STAND THERE, ALL OF YOU-- WE MUST HELP HIM!

AND, THE SCARLET WITCH SHALL BE THE FIRST TO STRIKE--WITH ONE OF MY STRONGEST HEXES!

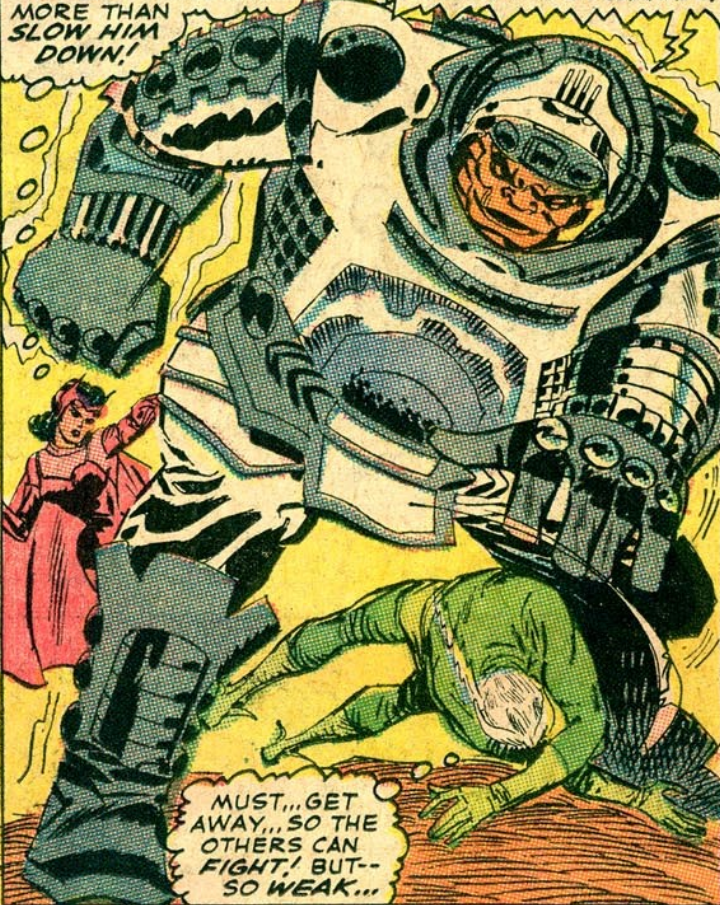
YOUR BROTHER ISN'T HURT BADLY, WANDA! LOOK-- HE'S STIRRING, EVEN NOW!

IXAR DOESN'T WANT TO HARM ANY OF US--HE'S STILL BENT ON CAPTURING US AND OBTAINING OUR POWERS!

QUICKSILVER SHOULDN'T HAVE TRIED TO CAPTURE HIM ALONE! THE NAME OF THIS GAME HAS TO BE TEAMWORK!

THE ALIEN'S STRENGTH--
WHICH MUST EQUAL THAT
OF ALL THE ULTROIDS
COMBINED--PREVENTS
MY HEX FROM DOING
MORE THAN
SLOW HIM
DOWN!

I WEARY OF PLAYING
GAMES WITH YOU EARTH-
LINGS! DESIST--OR
YOU'LL FORCE ME TO
DESTROY YOUR COMRADE!



MUST...GET
AWAY...SO THE
OTHERS CAN
FIGHT! BUT--
SO WEAK...

THE SCARLET WITCH IS
STRONGER--AND MORE
ALERT--THAN YOU
IMAGINE! BEHOLD HOW
I STOP YOUR FORCE
BOLT!



IT TOOK
THE LAST OF
MY HEX
POWER TO
PROTECT
MYSELF! BUT,
I MUSTN'T
LET IXAR
KNOW THAT!

STAND
ASIDE,
WANDA!
IT'S MY
INNING
NOW!!!

SUDDENLY, WITHOUT WARNING, THE GIANT FROM
SPACE TURNS AWAY FROM THE FALLEN
SPEEDSTER, AND...



NOW THAT YOUR
SPELL HAS SPENT
ITSELF, FEMALE, I
SHALL LET YOU KNOW
WHAT IT MEANS TO
ANGER THE
OMNIPOTENT IXAR!

I'VE BEEN STANDING ON
THE SIDELINES LONG
ENOUGH! NOW, IT'S TIME
TO SHOW WHAT GOLIATH
CAN DO--IF CAP DOESN'T
MIND!

NO COM-
PLAINTS!
SLUG
AWAY,
BIG FELLA!



NOW, I SEE THE
WISDOM OF CAPTAIN
AMERICA'S ORIGINAL
PLAN--TO ATTACK
THE CYCLOPEAN
IXAR AS A TEAM!

WHILE I LOOK TO MY
BROTHER, MY HEX POWER
WILL RETURN--AND WE'LL
ATTACK OUR ENEMY ANEW!



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Carl Koch was an 18 year old apprentice in a Chicago art studio when he enrolled. Today he prepares ads for such companies as General Motors and Firestone—has won five gold medals.

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PETER HELCK	ALBERT DORNE

AND, SPEAKING OF TEAMWORK, LET'S SHOOT IN REAL FAST FOR A CLOSE-UP OF OUR BOMBASTIC BADDIE, AS...

SOME SORT OF BLAST--STRUCK MY HEAD! IT MUST BE THE ONE KNOWN AS... THE WASP!

THAT WAS MY WASP'S STING, TWO-TON... AND I'M GLAD YOU NOTICED!

WHEN A GIRL'S ONLY A COUPLE OF INCHES TALL, SHE APPRECIATES ATTENTION FROM ANYBODY!

THEN, WHILE IXAR IS STILL OFF BALANCE...

UHHHN!

FLIPPI!

THANKS FOR THE ASSIST, HONEY!

IT GAVE ME A CHANCE TO GET JUST THE LEVERAGE I NEEDED... FOR THIS!

BUT, AS THE FLAILING COLOSSUS FALLS, HIS CLUTCHING HAND RIPS UP A SECTION OF FLOOR, AND...

YOU EARTHLINGS HAVE TRIED TO ENTANGLE ME IN WIRES SEVERAL TIMES DURING THIS FIGHT...

RRRIK!

NOW, IT IS ONLY FAIR THAT IXAR DOES LIKEWISE... TO THE MIGHTY GOLIATH!

MMMMEE! CAUGHT ME IN THOSE CABLES-- BEFORE I COULD DODGE!

HIS STRENGTH-- IT'S UNBELIEVABLE! HE'S TOSSING ME THRU THE AIR LIKE SO MUCH DEAD WEIGHT!

A MOMENT LATER, BEFORE THE STAGGERED STALWART HAS TIME TO REGAIN HIS LOST FOOTING, A TOTALLY UNEXPECTED THING OCCURS...

HOLY HANNAH! HE'S SENDING SOME KIND OF... ELECTRIC JUICE... THRU THE WIRES!

HE'S GENERATING IT-- WITH HIS OWN, MECHANIZED BODY! I'M... LOSING CONSCIOUSNESS--!

CORRECT, PUNY MORTAL! NOW, PERHAPS, YOU BEGIN TO REALIZE THE FULL, UNEQUALED POWER OF IXAR!

IMAGINE, THEN, WHAT POWER I SHALL HAVE-- WHEN THE ABILITIES OF THE AVENGERS ARE ADDED TO IT!



I'M GLAD YOU SAID THAT, IXAR...

FOR A MINUTE, I DIDN'T THINK YOU CARED!



CAPTAIN AMERICA'S SHIELD SEVERED THE CABLES BY WHICH I HELD THE GIANT AVENGER!

BUT, NO MATTER! FOR, I SHALL MERELY USE GOLIATH AS A WEAPON... AGAINST CAPTAIN AMERICA!

HE'S GOING TO PICK UP HANK--AND HURL HIM AT ME! GOT TO HEAD HIM OFF--!



WHAT--? YOUR SPEED RIVALS THAT OF THE ACCURSED QUICK-SILVER HIMSELF!

THANKS FOR THE LEFT-HANDED COMPLIMENT, UGLY!

BUT, TO TELL THE TRUTH, I'LL SETTLE FOR JUST BEING AS FAST AS I WAS TWENTY YEARS AGO!



BUT THEN--THE INEVITABLE COUNTERATTACK!

TAKE IT EASY THERE, BUSTER! THESE SHIELDS AREN'T EASY TO COME BY!

YOU MAKE LIGHT OF MY POWER TO BOLSTER YOUR FALTERING COURAGE, MORTAL! BUT, YOU ARE DOOMED TO DEFEAT!



FOR, HOW COULD ONE SO SMALL AS YOU HOPE TO STAND AGAINST--

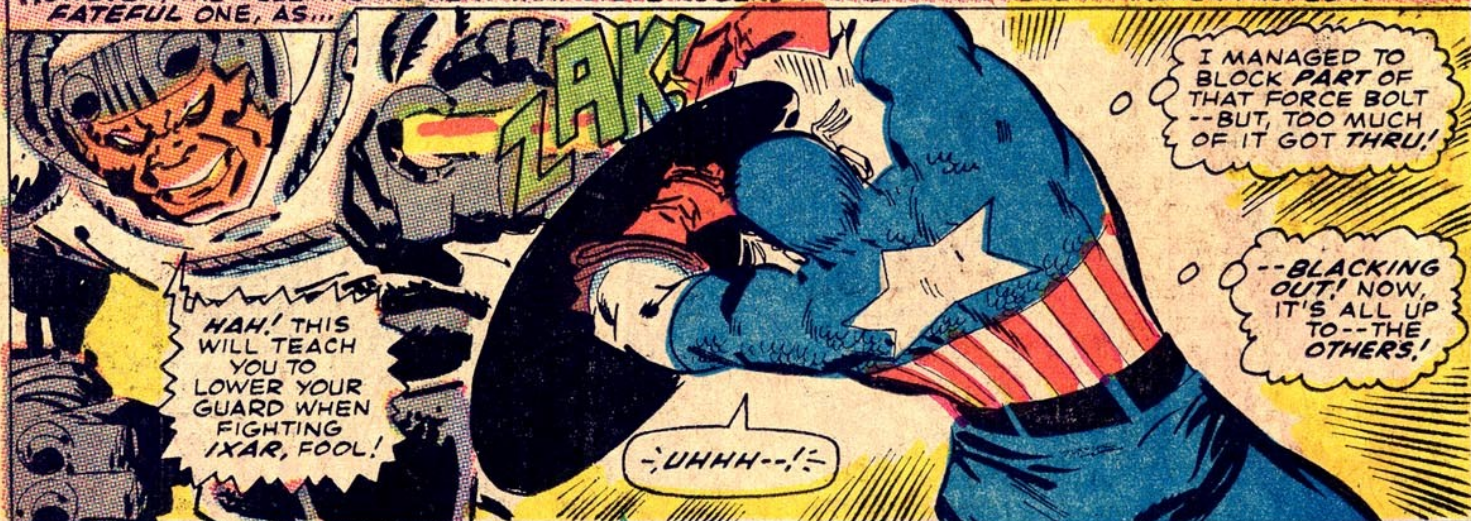
AAARRH!

WE'VE GOT AN OLD SAYING ON EARTH, IXAR--THE BIGGER THEY ARE, THE HARDER THEY FALL!

THIS BATTLE IS GOING NOWHERE! BUT, WE'RE GETTING WINDED--AND IXAR DOESN'T SEEM TO TIRE!

IF ONLY HAWKEYE WERE HERE WITH HIS BLAST ARROWS! I HOPE NOTHING'S HAPPENED TO HIM!

HOWEVER, THE FLEETING MOMENT THAT STEVE ROGERS THINKS OF THE ABSENT ARCHER PROVES A FATEFUL ONE, AS...



HAA! THIS WILL TEACH YOU TO LOWER YOUR GUARD WHEN FIGHTING IXAR, FOOL!

UHHH--!-

I MANAGED TO BLOCK PART OF THAT FORCE BOLT--BUT, TOO MUCH OF IT GOT THRU!

--BLACKING OUT! NOW, IT'S ALL UP TO--THE OTHERS!

AND, EVEN AS CAP FALLS, ONE OF THOSE OTHERS IS ON THE SCENE...



THE WASP ATTACKS AGAIN! TOO MANY OF HER STINGS--MIGHT DAMAGE THE ARMOR OF WHICH MY BODY IS COMPOSED!

THEREFORE, I MUST DISPOSE OF HER AT ONCE--BY MEANS OF AN ELECTRICAL CHARGE OF MEDIUM VOLTAGE!



AND, AS FATE WOULD HAVE IT, JANET VAN DYNE HAS JUST COME TO A MOMENTARY REST ON THE GIANT'S SHOULDER, WHEN...



OOOH!--USED UP MY LAST STING--AND, COULDN'T GET AWAY FROM IXAR... IN TIME--!

NOW, TO SEARCH OUT THE ONE CALLED HAWKEYE, AND--

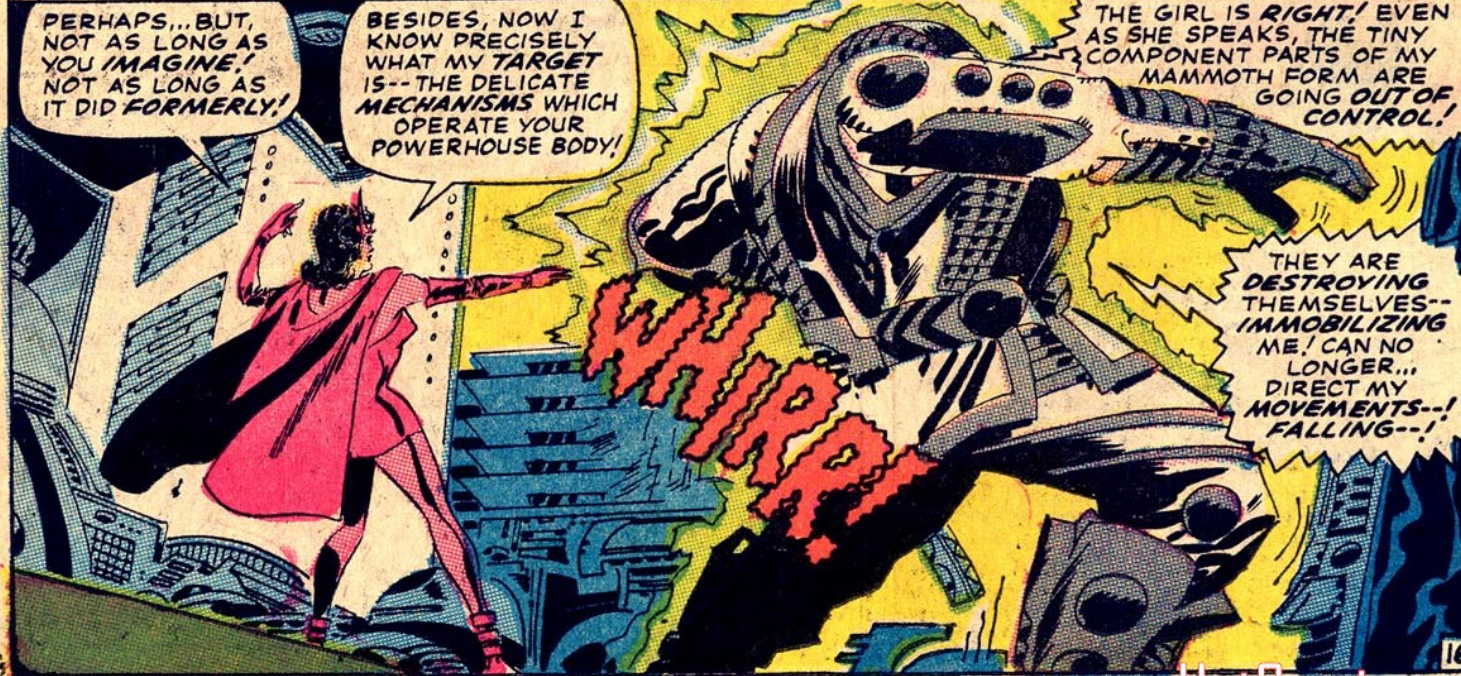


STOP, IXAR! HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN... THE SCARLET WITCH?

NO, WITLESS FEMALE... I DID NOT FORGET! BUT, YOU ARE NO THREAT TO ME WITHOUT YOUR HEX POWER! AND, I KNOW THAT IT TAKES MUCH TIME FOR YOU TO RESTORE IT AFTER UTILIZING IT FULLY!

PERHAPS...BUT, NOT AS LONG AS YOU IMAGINE! NOT AS LONG AS IT DID FORMERLY!

BESIDES, NOW I KNOW PRECISELY WHAT MY TARGET IS--THE DELICATE MECHANISMS WHICH OPERATE YOUR POWERHOUSE BODY!



THE GIRL IS RIGHT! EVEN AS SHE SPEAKS, THE TINY COMPONENT PARTS OF MY MAMMOTH FORM ARE GOING OUT OF CONTROL!

THEY ARE DESTROYING THEMSELVES--IMMOBILIZING ME! CAN NO LONGER... DIRECT MY MOVEMENTS--! FALLING--!

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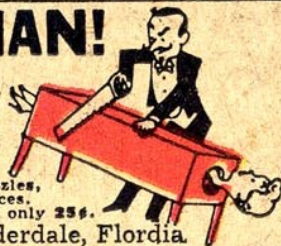


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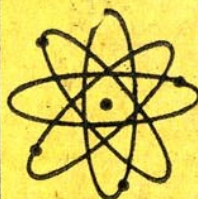
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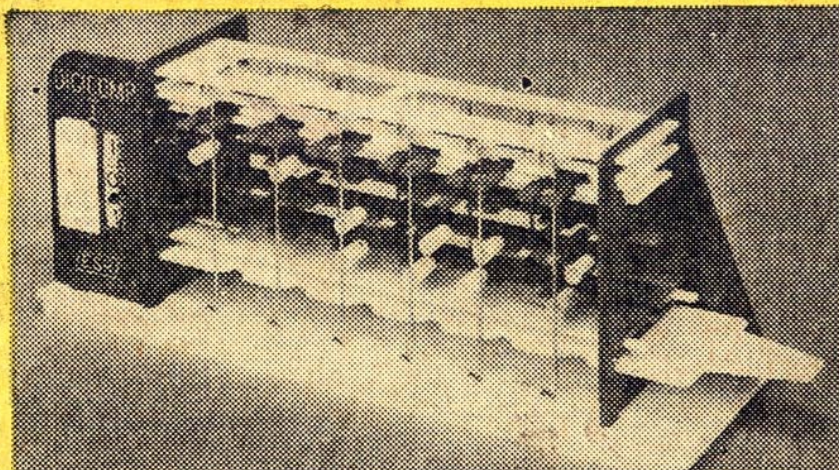
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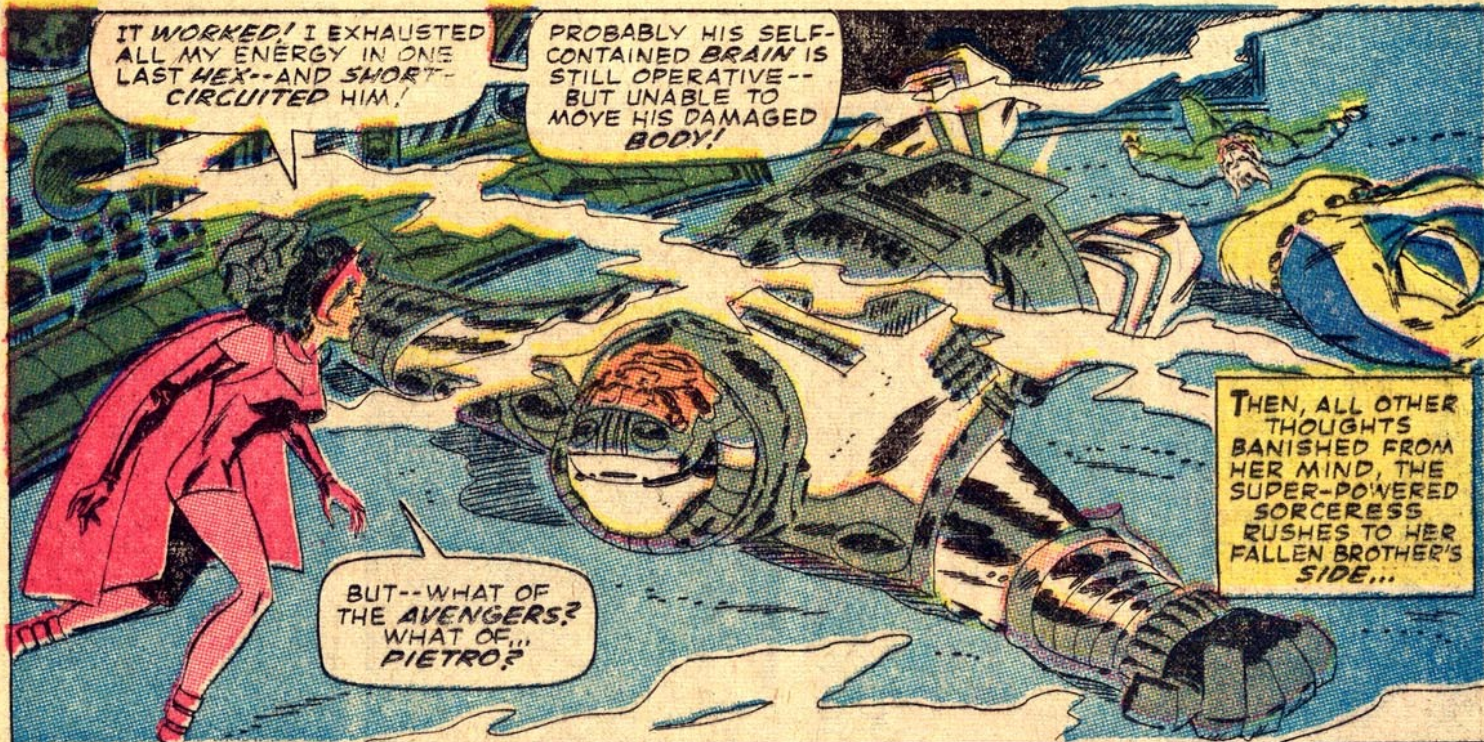
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IT WORKED! I EXHAUSTED ALL MY ENERGY IN ONE LAST HEX--AND SHORT-CIRCUITED HIM!

PROBABLY HIS SELF-CONTAINED BRAIN IS STILL OPERATIVE-- BUT UNABLE TO MOVE HIS DAMAGED BODY!

BUT--WHAT OF THE AVENGERS? WHAT OF... PIETRO?

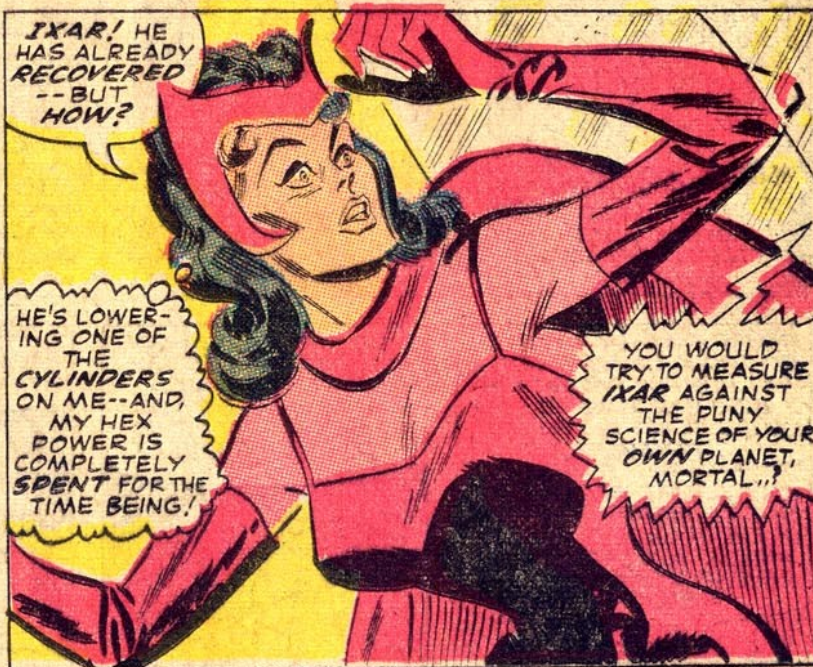
THEN, ALL OTHER THOUGHTS BANISHED FROM HER MIND, THE SUPER-POWERED SORCERESS RUSHES TO HER FALLEN BROTHER'S SIDE...



PIETRO---! HE'S SO STILL! CAN IT BE THAT FATE RESTORED HIS POWER-- ONLY TO DESTROY HIM--?

NO! IXAR MUST HAVE MERELY STUNNED HIM! HE MOVES--HE LIVES!

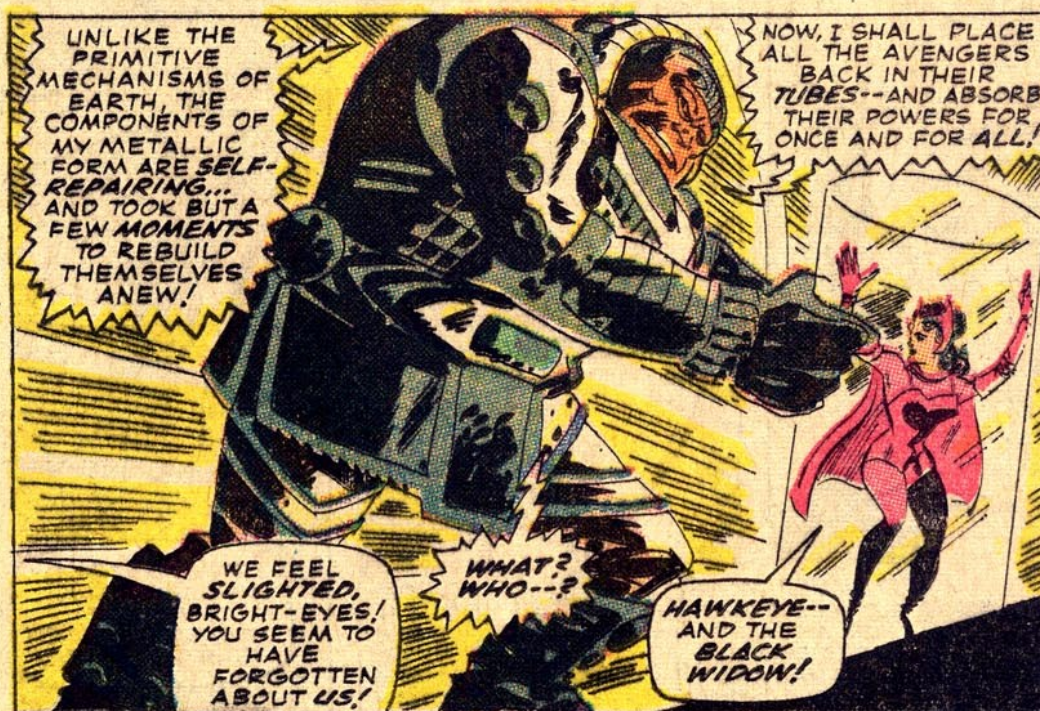
THEY ALL LIVE, FEMALE-- BUT NOT FOR LONG!



IXAR! HE HAS ALREADY RECOVERED --BUT HOW?

HE'S LOWERING ONE OF THE CYLINDERS ON ME--AND, MY HEX POWER IS COMPLETELY SPENT FOR THE TIME BEING!

YOU WOULD TRY TO MEASURE IXAR AGAINST THE PUNY SCIENCE OF YOUR OWN PLANET, MORTAL!!



UNLIKE THE PRIMITIVE MECHANISMS OF EARTH, THE COMPONENTS OF MY METALLIC FORM ARE SELF-REPAIRING... AND TOOK BUT A FEW MOMENTS TO REBUILD THEMSELVES ANEW!

NOW, I SHALL PLACE ALL THE AVENGERS BACK IN THEIR TUBES--AND ABSORB THEIR POWERS FOR ONCE AND FOR ALL!

WE FEEL SLIGHTED, BRIGHT-EYES! YOU SEEM TO HAVE FORGOTTEN ABOUT US!

WHAT? WHO--?

HAWKEYE-- AND THE BLACK WIDOW!



YOU KNOW IT, LADY! AS LONG AS ONE AVENGER IS FREE, NO TWO-LEGGED SEWING-MACHINE IS DOIN' ANYTHING TO THE REST OF 'EM!

YOU DARE CHALLENGE ME--YOU, WHO ARE THE WEAKEST OF ALL?

YOU REALLY KNOW HOW TO HURT A GUY, DON'TCHA?

YOU HAVE **COURAGE**, EARTHLING! BUT, YOU WASTE IT IN A **USELESS GESTURE!**



I INTENDED TO SEEK YOU OUT LAST OF ALL--BUT, NOW I SHALL DISPOSE OF YOU AND THE FEMALE FIRST!

THEN, STOP YAKKIN' AND START DISPOSIN', MISTER!

FOOL! DO YOU THINK THAT ONE OF YOUR FEEBLE SHAFTS WILL STOP ME AS IT DID ONE LONE ULTROID?



MAYBE NOT--IF I AIMED AT YOU...



BUT, I GOT A BETTER PLACE TO AIM MY BLAST ARROWS, SUNBEAM--AND ONE OF 'EM IS RIGHT AT THE **BURGO-MEISTER**, HERE!



WHAT ARE YOU DOING--?

WHY DO YOU AIM YOUR WEAPON AT ME? I AM, BUT A CAPTIVE--LIKE YOUR FELLOW AVENGERS!

I THINK DIFFERENT, MISTER! AND, IF YOU DON'T CALL OFF THAT WALKIN' PIN-BALL MACHINE BY THE TIME I COUNT THREE, WE'LL FIND OUT WHO'S RIGHT!

HAWKEYE--STOP! HAVE YOU GONE MAD?



YOU SPEAK AS IF THE **BURGO-MEISTER**--WERE IXAR HIMSELF!

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I DO THINK, LADY! WHILE I WAS HUNTIN' FOR NATASHA, I ALSO HAD TIME TO DO A LITTLE PLAIN AN' FANCY THINKIN'!

ANYWAY, IF I WAS **WRONG**, THAT OVERGROWN HUNK O' TIN HULKIN' OVER ME WOULD ALREADY HAVE HAD **POLISHED ME OFF**, WOULDN'T HE?



NOW, WHAT SAY WE GET DOWN TO CASES, WHISKERS? DOES THAT ROBOT PLAY DEAD--OR DO YOU?

I DO NOT KNOW HOW YOU **FATHOMED** MY SECRET, MORTAL... BUT IT WILL DO YOU **NO GOOD**! IF I DIE, YOU DIE AS WELL!



IT WOULD TAKE BUT AN **INSTANT** FOR MY GIANT ULTROID TO AIM A LETHAL RAY-BLAST AT YOU!

THAT'S THE BREAKS OF THE **AVENGIN' GAME**, SUNBEAM! EITHER WAY, I TAKE YOU **WITH ME!**



ALL I KNOW IS, OL' TWO-TON HERE ISN'T IN POSITION TO STOP MY **BLAST ARROW** BEFORE IT FINISHES YOU!

SO, HOW ABOUT IT? DO WE PLAY "LET'S MAKE A DEAL", OR--

FOOL! YOU HAD ALMOST WON YOUR DESPERATE LITTLE GAMBIT--UNTIL YOU MENTIONED THE **AVENGERS!**



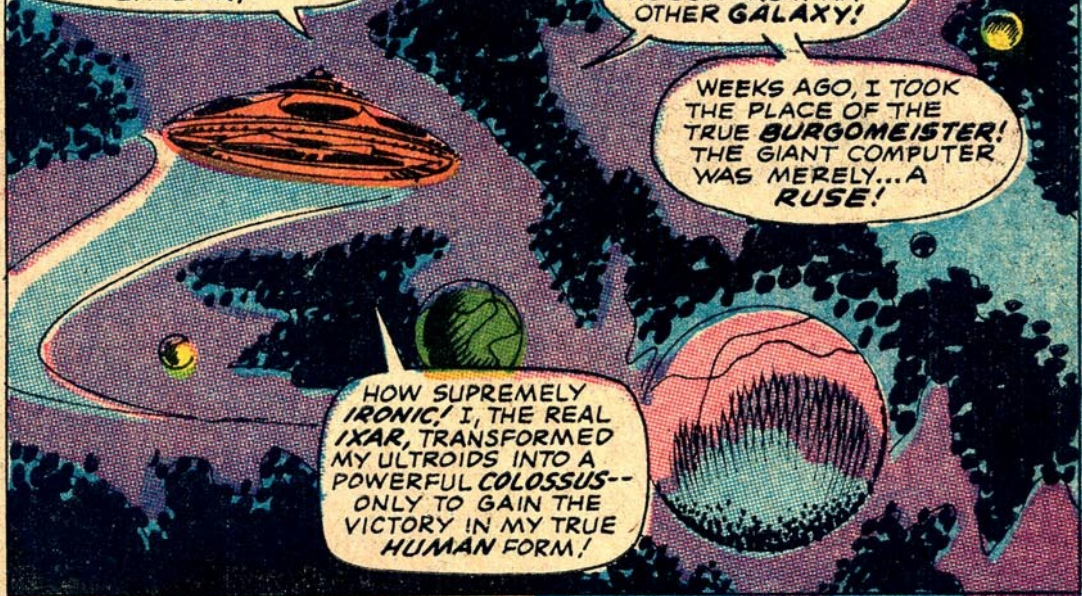
I DON'T GETCHA, CHARLIE! TALK FAST--MY **TRIGGER FINGER'S** STARTIN' TO ITCH!

BAH! YOU FRIGHTEN ME NO LONGER, EARTHLING! NOW I REALIZE YOU ARE STILL FULLY AT MY MERCY!



HUH? HOW IN BLUE BLAZES DO YOU FIGURE THAT?

VERY SIMPLE, MY FOOLISH FRIEND! WHEN YOU SPOKE OF THE AVENGERS JUST NOW, YOU REMINDED ME OF THE CODE YOU MENTIONED EARLIER!



YOU HAVE SWORN AN OATH NOT TO TAKE HUMAN LIFE--AND, I AM HUMAN, EVEN THOUGH FROM ANOTHER GALAXY!

WEEKS AGO, I TOOK THE PLACE OF THE TRUE BURGOMEISTER! THE GIANT COMPUTER WAS MERELY... A RUSE!

HOW SUPREMELY IRONIC! I, THE REAL IXAR, TRANSFORMED MY ULTROIDS INTO A POWERFUL COLOSSUS-- ONLY TO GAIN THE VICTORY IN MY TRUE HUMAN FORM!

SO, AVENGER --EITHER PUT THAT TOY AWAY --OR VIOLATE THE OATH WHICH SEEMS SO SACRED TO YOU!

IXAR, IF I WAS EVER TEMPTED TO BREAK THAT OATH, THIS IS THE TIME!

BUT--IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE HOLDIN' ALL THE ACES!



OF COURSE! THAT IS WHY IT IS MY DESTINY TO ONE DAY RULE THE COSMOS!

HOLD! BEFORE YOU CONQUER THE UNIVERSE, EVIL ONE, YOU MUST FIRST DEAL WITH... THE BLACK WIDOW!



TASHA! YOU SET YOUR WIDOW'S BITE ...ON LETHAL CHARGE!

YES, HAWKEYE--AND NOW I AM AIMING IT DIRECTLY AT IXAR-- UNLESS HE SURRENDERS!



YOU ARE BLUFFING --JUST AS HE WAS!

THINK WHAT YOU WISH, IXAR...

BUT REMEMBER-- I AM BOUND BY NO AVENGERS' OATH!



WAIT, NATASHA! NO MATTER WHO HE IS... OR WHAT HE'S DONE--YOU CAN'T KILL HIM!

I HAVE NO CHOICE, MY DARLING...



IF WE ARE ALL TO DIE, THEN I SHALL MAKE CERTAIN THAT IXAR DOES NOT LIVE TO BOAST OF HIS VICTORY!

BUT, MY PATIENCE GROWS SHORT! SURRENDER AT ONCE--OR YOUR MAD QUEST FOR POWER SHALL END... IN DEATH!



I... DON'T BELIEVE YOU, I...

LOOK INTO MY EYES, IXAR! LOOK DEEP INTO THE EYES OF THE BLACK WIDOW!

ARE THESE THE EYES OF ONE WHO DEALS IN EMPTY WORDS... AND IDLE THREATS?



SO, MAKE YOUR DECISION... AT ONCE!

AND, WHILE THE FATE OF THE AVENGERS HANGS IN THE BALANCE, WE RETURN VISUALLY TO EARTH... TO THE TINY CENTRAL EUROPEAN VILLAGE OF TRANSIA...

THUS, WHEN THE SAUCER DEPARTED, ALL OF US CAME OUT OF HIDING-- AND RETURNED TO OUR HOMES!

BUT, THE BURGO-MEISTER OF OUR TOWN... MUST HAVE BEEN CAPTURED BY WHOEVER PILOTED THE STRANGE CRAFT!

YOU SAY A FLYING SAUCER ENGULFED YOUR ENTIRE VILLAGE... THEN SIMPLY WENT AWAY, LEAVING IT INTACT?

YOUR TALE IS TOO INCREDIBLE! IF YOU CANNOT FURNISH MORE PROOF...

THEN, SUDDENLY...

MMMMM
THERE IS YOUR PROOF, CAPTAIN! THE SAUCER-- IT IS RETURNING! BUT... WHY?

MON DIEU! IT IS COMING TO EARTH A SHORT DISTANCE OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE!

WE MUST APPROACH IT... AND BE READY FOR ANYTHING!

BUT, IT IS HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT ANY OF THE AMAZED BY-STANDERS ARE FULLY PREPARED FOR THE SIGHT THAT GREET'S THEIR STARTLED EYES ONLY MOMENTS LATER, WHEN...

LOOK! IT IS THE POWERFUL AMERICANS KNOWN AS... THE AVENGERS! IS THE SAUCER... THEIRS?

NOT QUITE! YOU MIGHT SAY WE... HITCHED A RIDE!

THAT'LL HOLD 'EM, WING-HEAD! THEY WOULDN'T BELIEVE THE TRUTH ANYWAY!

CAN THEY BE BLAMED? WHO WOULD BELIEVE THAT A SIMPLE BURGO-MEISTER WAS A CREATURE FROM ANOTHER STAR?

BUT--WHAT OF OUR BELOVED BURGOMEISTER? WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM?

I CAN ONLY TELL YOU THAT HE IS... NO MORE! BUT, LET IT BE SAID THAT HE DIED... A HERO!

IT'S BETTER THIS WAY! HOW COULD THEY UNDERSTAND THAT THE MAN WHO GOVERNED THEM... WAS REPLACED BY A SPYING ALIEN?

LET IT GO! THE ALIENS HAVE PROMISED THAT THEY SHALL NEVER AGAIN COME TO OUR PLANET!

BUT, YOU STILL HAVEN'T TOLD US, HAWKEYE, HOW YOU AND NATASHA GOT IXAR TO SURRENDER WHILE WE WERE UNCONSCIOUS!

LET'S JUST SAY WE APPEALED TO HIS BETTER NATURE, HANK!

CAN'T TELL HIM HOW 'TASHA SAVED US-- NOT IF I WANT HER TO BECOME AN AVENGER!

BUT, LEST ANY MAGNANIMOUS MARVELITES FEEL ANY UNDUE PANGS OF PITY FOR THE IRASCIBLE IXAR, LET'S TAKE A FINAL PEEK INSIDE THE DEPARTING SAUCER...

THE AVENGERS HAVE SAVED THEIR WORLD-- AND UNDONE A PLAN IT TOOK YEARS TO DEVELOP!

YET, I FEEL NO RANCOR TOWARDS THEM! FOR, THERE ARE OTHER WORLDS-- OTHER GALAXIES-- WHERE I MAY DISCOVER WEAPONS TO USE IN MY NEVER-ENDING STRUGGLE!

AND, IF IT TAKES A LIFETIME, FIND THEM I SHALL!

WHILE, ON THE TINY SPHERE ALREADY RECEDING INTO THE VOID OF SPACE, EACH OF THE AVENGERS IS LOST IN HIS OWN THOUGHTS...

HOW MUST IT FEEL TO BE THE LAST OF YOUR KIND-- ALONE IN A WORLD WHERE YOU DON'T BELONG?

CAN IT BE EVEN LONELIER THAN TO LIVE FOREVER BEHIND THE COLORFUL MASK OF... CAPTAIN AMERICA?

THE AVENGERS-- REUNITED AT LAST! NOW, WHAT CAN POSSIBLY HAPPEN TO MAR OUR HAPPINESS?

DON'T WORRY, LADY-- FATE WILL THINK OF SOMETHING!

IT ALWAYS DOES!

NEXT: HERCULES!

NOTE: OUR LETTERS SECTION APPEARS AFTER THE NEXT PAGE



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NUTTY NOTES AND NONSENSICAL NAME-DROPPING, FEATURING NATURALLY NON-ESSENTIAL NEWS OF THE NATION'S TOP NON-ENTITIES!

ITEM: Boy, are we frustrated! Our printer just called to say he has to have this Bullpen Bulletin page on the presses by tonight! And this is the week our Marvel Super-Heroes TV show goes on the air—which means we won't receive your letters of comment for another few days! Therefore, we can't print a summary of all your opulent opinions until our next B.B. page! Although we may manage to squeeze a mention or two in some of our Letters Pages—'cause they go to the printer a few days later. Anyway, by next ish we'll have everything all straightened out (at least, as straightened out as WE can ever have things!)—so, till then, let's go on to our other items of earth-shaking unconcern—

ITEM: The big talk around the Bullpen these days concerns Marvel-ous MARIE SEVERIN, who's just taken over the illustrating chores on the Doc Strange strip. The mirthful Miss Severin has been keeping us in stitches for years with the hilarious cartoons she whips up whenever no one's looking—but it never occurred to us (or to her) that she could also draw a sensational serious strip—never, that is, until Our Leader asked her to take a whack at Doc Strange, because WILD BILL EVERETT wanted to devote himself full time to his beloved Sub-Mariner. Well, the rest is history. This gal is gonna be one of the greatest! (We're not sure about the greatest *what*—but why be picky?) And to anticipate your question, the answer is "yes"—she's the sister of talented JOHN SEVERIN, who illustrated our Agent of Shield strip about a year ago. Anyway, we know you'll enjoy watching her achieve real Marvel stardom as the months go by—and, take it from us—it couldn't happen to a nicer gal!

ITEM: We'll award a pocket-sized, portable, ten-transistor no-prize to any True Believer who can name a feature in any comics magazine which has had more artists handling it than the happy-go-lucky Hulk! We can name at least six stalwarts who've tackled the illustrating chores in just the past few years—and knowing how *blechhh* our memories are, we're sure that you can name a lot more! However, it's just barely possible that we've come up with the perfect choice for ol' Green Skin in the person of GIL (Sugar) KANE! We're not really sure what makes his version of everybody's favorite monster so appealing, unless it could be those gamma ray treatments we've been forcing him to undergo! Anyway, we're trying to chain him to the drawing board, and if we succeed, it seems as though ol' Torn Pants will have his own steady artist at last!

ITEM: Unless we figure out what to do about it real fast, it looks like the FANTASTIC FOUR are gonna have the biggest cast of characters in super-hero history! What with the six most famous Inhumans now being free—not counting their dog, Lockjaw—and the Silver Surfer still making the scene, as well as the Black Panther, Wyatt Wingfoot, the Wizard, Sandman, Alicia—and don't forget the original four members of the F.F.—or the ever-delightful

Doc Doom—all we can say is: Hooo boy! (And, imagine if we had to feature the Yancy Street Gang regularly, too!—There are dozens of 'em!) Now do you see why poor Stan and Jack even have trouble remembering their own names sometimes?

ITEM: Who says this isn't the Marvel Age of Rapid Advancement? Didja notice that RASCALLY ROY THOMAS is now scripting four features each month? (And, it seems like only yesterday that SMILIN' STAN was telling him what all those little buttons on the typewriter were there for!) Hard-working Roy is busily putting words in the mouths of The X-MEN, SGT. FURY, the AVENGERS, and S.H.I.E.L.D.! But, here's the payoff—Roy was originally supposed to lighten the work load for poor Smiley; but now that the Rascally One is so busy, we hadda hire another budding Shakespeare to take the pressure off him! So, let's hear it for GARY FRIEDRICH, whom we snatched away from an editorial job on a Midwest newspaper to help bring culture and enlightenment (Marvel style!) to all you Keepers of the Flame!—Pretty soon, we'll haveta start issuing score cards so you'll know who's who—and then maybe you'll be able to tell us!

ITEM: We just hadda mention it on the Bullpen page—lest any card-carrying MMMS'er overlook the newest Marvel title amidst the multitudinous mélange of mundane mags currently flooding the nation's newsstands. Yep, for those of you who have already discovered it, we're blowing our own horn about... THE GHOST RIDER, latest addition to our liltin' Western lineup. So, those of you who flip for KID COLT OUTLAW... THE RAWHIDE KID... and THE TWO GUN KID... can now add another title to that lustrous list of saddle-sore sagas! (We do publish the three Western titles listed above, don't we? It would be kinda embarrassing if one of 'em belonged to Brand Echh! Oh well—!)

ITEM: Before we forget, we wanna wish you the best of everything for this holiday season. May you have good luck, good health, and a good sense of humor—if you do, everything else will take care of itself! So stay happy, and be good to each other. Who knows? It could become contagious! —'Nuff said!



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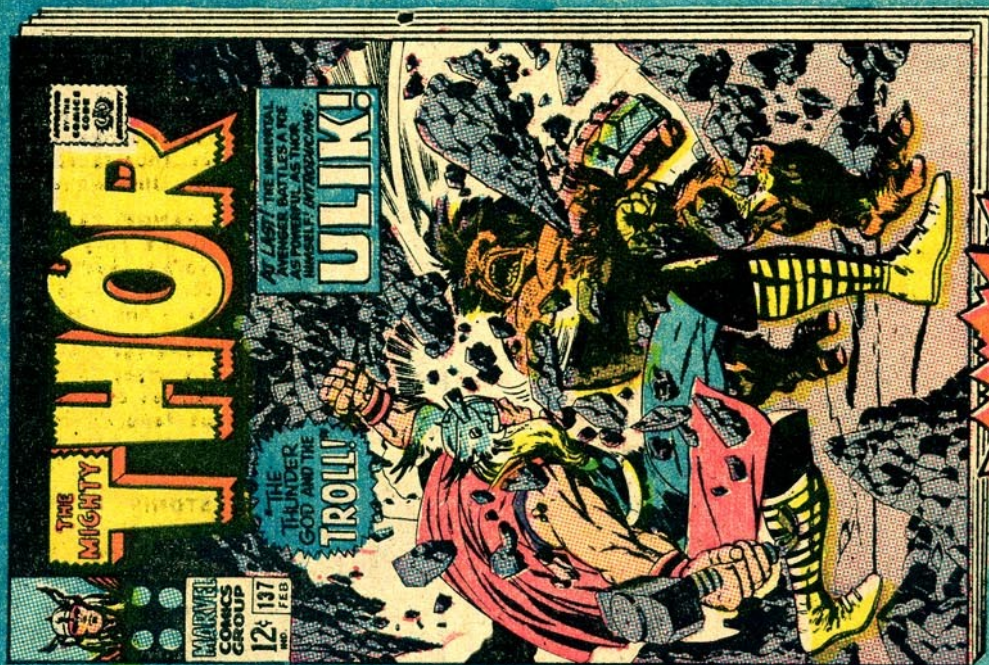
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Dear Stan, Roy, and Don,

I have an idea for the Avengers that would make them more realistic, exciting, and probably more popular. Why not change their lineup every month? Let more guys join, like Spidey, Daredevil, and the Hulk, and have a different assortment of super-heroes each month. This will give the other heroes a rest and time to catch up on personal affairs, and make your mag more realistic. When you feature the same super-heroes each month, it reduces the realism, and also makes your stories seem monotonous. If there were such a team in real life, it is improbable that all those heroes would be on hand all the time whenever a case for the Avengers popped up. Things just don't happen that way. So I suggest that you take all your super-heroes, juggle them up, and turn out a different Avengers' lineup each month. It would be a comic mag first and I'm sure it would make for thrilling stories. And after you've done this for a while, you can ask your fans to tell you which assortment of super-heroes they liked best, and form a permanent team again! How about it?

Jack Kelleher, 37 S. 17th Ave.
Coatesville, Pa. 19320

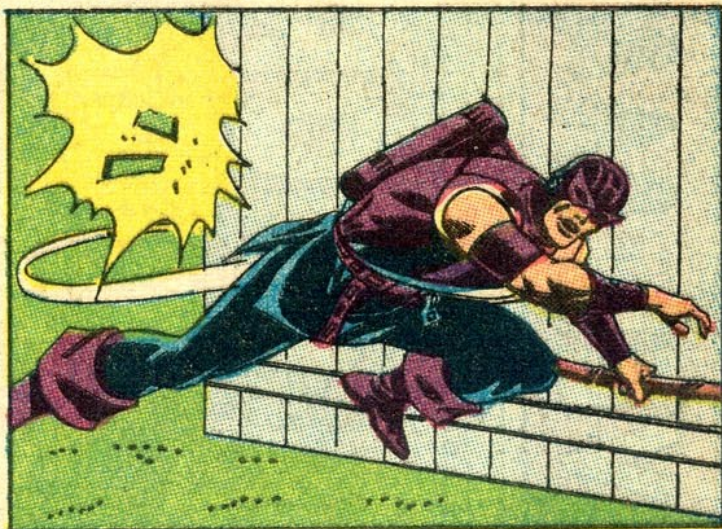
Okay with us, Jackie boy—but, it sounds as though we'd end up being right back where we started from! However, as all True Believers know, this is verily the Marvel Age of Vox Populi, so we'll see how your swingin' suggestion grabs the rest of our rollickin' readers out there in the twilight zone! (In other words, we're putting our decision off for a few months in our usual cowardly fashion!)

Dear Stan, Roy, and Don,

I'm sure that you were pleased by the friendly letter from Mr. Chaffee in AVENGERS #33, as it's always nice to get a pat on the back from an academic type. But if his characterization of you as "Gunga Din to the great unwashed" was praise, it was also condescension (besides, what's that make me?). The Stan Lee that we all know should have jumped on him for underrating Marvel and the Marvel breed of reader! Instead, your subdued reply ended with the first period I've ever seen you use! Do I detect an insidious indication of cringing deference in your reaction to the academic world's tardy recognition of your excellence? Those well-intentioned scholars who feel that, by tracing the great themes of Shakespeare, Dostoevsky, and Mann in your masterful mags, they have done you a frantic favor, must be made to realize that, in reality, the stature of Shakespeare, Dostoevsky, and Mann lies in that uncanny intuitive genius which somehow enabled them to anticipate you! So face front, editorial tiger, and don't let any English teachers scare you; then, well into the twenty-first century, those of us who were privileged to see the Marvel Age of Comics will exclaim with Bill Wordsworth: "Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, / But to be young was very heaven!" (Who says this isn't the Marvel Age of Quality Quotations?!)
John Pepper (Univ. of Toronto)
Box 17, 50 St. Joseph, Toronto 5, Ont., Canada

Johnny, any reply we might scribble in response to your lavishly generous accolade would merely be gild-

ing the lily! We're pleased, proud, and immensely flattered by your extravagant praise—and, we hope we're deserving of even a minute fraction of it! As for our exhibiting "cringing deference" to the academic world, we certainly hope your analysis isn't an accurate one. We don't think we're the cringing or the deferring type, but we must admit that we do have a monumental respect for things academic—and have never thought it amusing to deride the intellectual community. We figure most die-hard Marvelites are really with it, which is the reason we never have, and never will, write down to our frantic ones! And now, if anyone wants to buy a used soapbox cheap, let us know—!



Dear Stan, Roy, and Don,

I must congratulate you on ruining a terrific magazine. I have every issue of the AVENGERS and I can truthfully say that you have been steadily declining since #16. Until now, you have never been worse. The new so-called Avengers are lousy. Hawkeye and the Scarlet Witch are useless. Let Hawkeye and the Black Widow go spin a little web somewhere and not come back. Scarlet Witch, Pietro, the Black Panther, and Ka-Zar ought to form their own group and guest star here and there, according to their popularity. Bring back Giant-Man (not this crummy Goliath), Thor, Iron Man, and, especially, the ramblin' Hulk — with some brains, of course. Then you will have a team, not a mob of stupid lunkheads, running around like the fools they are and getting in each other's way. By the way, your mags are tops here, so keep up the good work!

Darryl James, R.R. #4
Vernon, B. C., Canada

What good work? You just got thru roasting us over the coals and making us feel like Brand Echh rejects—and then you say our mags are tops there! Tell us something, Dar—what do we have to do in order to become unpopular? Ah well—we may not understand you, but so what? Most of the time we can't even understand ourselves! Face front, fearless one! You're just confusing enough to be a true Marvelite!

Dear Stan, Roy, and Don,

I can think of no way to describe AVENGERS #33 except as you said on the title page — "This issue is sure to become one of the most talked-about collectors' items in the annals of comicophilia!" I have been reading comics for seven years, and since reading my first Marvel, I've not even opened another brand! You put other comics to shame with your superior stories, your stupendous artwork, and your stony villains and super-heroes. I am pretty sure that even the paper on which you print is different from that used by other brands! Now that you know how much I like your books, I will start with my comments. I am disappointed in the last six issues of the AVENGERS since there has not been one full-page fight scene. Though you use these full-pagers quite extensively in all your other mags, I'm sorry that you do not use them more in the Avengers. I'm also grieved because you are marring your fight scenes with such sounds as "thwock", "bop", and "thump". As these sounds are entirely unnecessary, I am sure you would have a better mag without them. I live and breathe for the unmarred fight scene. Are you going to admit the Black Widow to the Avengers? I hope so. May Marvel endure until Irving Forbush takes to reading Brand Echh!

Wesley Cooper, 75 Ayrault St.
Providence, R. I.

Reading 'em? We thought he *worked* for 'em! Anyway, we're willing to admit the Black Widow into the Avengers—in fact, we'd admit that chick anywhere—but naturally the decision is up to our costumed cohorts. However, we're all shook up about your comments concerning our somewhat sublime sound effects. Obviously, you seem to think they're the type of things the world can easily live without! Of course, as far as we're concerned, any story without a few "Thwocks", "Spats", or "Btooms" in it just isn't literature! So now, we put it directly to the ribald ranks of Avengerophiles—should our sparklin' sound effects be summarily shelved? (Answer "yes" if you wanna break our tender little hearts!)

Dear Stan, Roy, and Don,

In America everybody is entitled to express his own opinion, and I would like to express mine. Some fan wrote that these young stars, the New Avengers, could never reach the heights of glory of the Old Avengers. Ha! What a laugh — the Old Avengers fought super-villains whose only incentive was greed, money, or revenge. In issues #32 and #33 the New Avengers fought non-super-villains who were far more of a threat than all the super-powered villains put together. Their total aim was the destruction of freedom and democracy for men of all races. The New Avengers defeated them, and, in my opinion, defending freedom is the height of glory. The AVENGERS is now my favorite mag and always will be, with such great stories as this one. Also, Goliath's speech reached into my soul and made me proud to be an American.

David Sizemore, Box 261
Clyde, N. C.

And who can ask for anything more than that, David? It seems the controversy concerning the New vs. the Old Avengers will continue to rage as long as we have a couple of readers left. One of these days, if we can ever get ol' Curlylocks out of Asgard, and find a way to give Shell-Head a little breathing spell, we'll try to reunite the old gang again—in fact, we might even toss in our Jolly Green Giant, just for kicks. Then, all of Marveldom will have a chance to compare the old and the new once again—while your batty, beleaguered Bullpen runs for the hills!

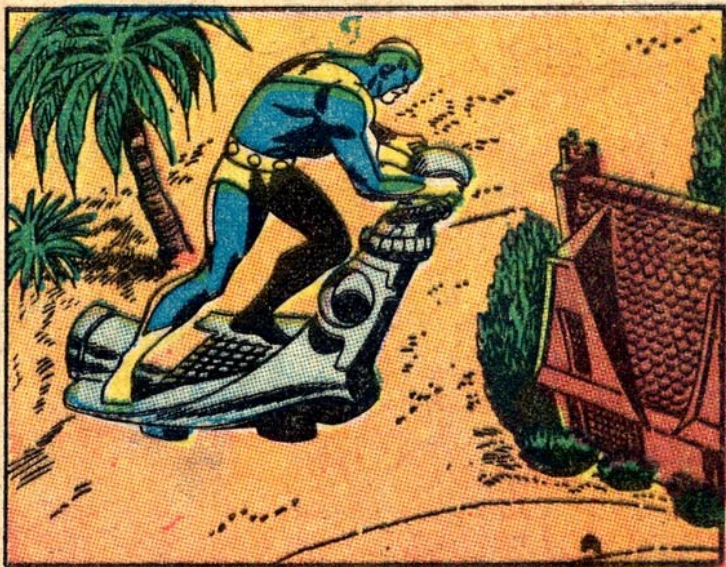
Dear Stan, Roy, and Don,

In issue #34 you asked for somebody who'd come to the aid of Captain America. Well, you've found him. Just because Cap killed Zemo is no reason to retire him — it's all the more reason to keep him on the team. If he could finally get rid of the insidious Zemo, couldn't he defeat other criminals? This is only a small reason to keep Cap on the team. I'm a teenager and am very proud of our heritage. A lot of teenagers say that patriotism is corny and only for squares. Well, where would we be without that corn? What if Washington had said, "It's too cold to

go boat riding" — or if Nathan Hale had said, "I wish I hadn't done this"? — I say we need patriotism pounded into us, and Cap is just the one to do the pounding!

Steve Neff, 1305 E. 83rd
Kansas City, Mo.

Steeverino, you're a riot! We can see a new craze sweeping the country, thanks to you! We'll call it "What if —?" (Like our little "Hopelessness is . . ." gimmick in the current ish of DAREDEVIL!) So let's hear it, tigers—send in your "What if—?s" as fast as you dream 'em up, and we'll print the best ones as soon as we can. (We just thought of a silly one ourselves—What if Captain America had said, "Sorry, wearing a mask might muss my hair"?—Or, "Who wants to carry a heavy ol' shield?")



Dear Stan, Roy, and Don,

I have written you to comment about your constant reference to my cousin, Irving Forbush, in your magazines. All the attention he's been getting in your mags lately has been giving his already swelled head a nauseating boost. Irving was thinking of running for president when he got older, but after his rise to fame in your mags, he has decided that the only position worthy of his "great and venerated self" will be the absolute ruler of all the known universe. This isn't so bad, but he has determined to make adorable Artie Simek his chief assistant in all matters pertaining to world-saving and super-villain fighting. It's not that Artie wouldn't make a good super-hero — on the contrary, he would be so good that all the other super-heroes would be put out of business, and you, Stan, would be out of a job. So, with this thought in mind, I beg you — stop Irving before it's too late!

Seymour Forbush, c/o Larry Cummings,
R.D. #2, Oil City, Pa.

If such a letter appeared in any other mag, we'd be inclined to suspect its sincerity. But obviously no AVENGERS fan would ever be guilty of a put-on! Therefore, since Stingy Stan is all shook-up at the thought of losing his job, we'll do our best to restrain Irrepressible Irv—although it does seem a shame to deprive Adorable Artie of his one big chance! But, as crafty ol' Kang used to say—"You can't win 'em all!" (As a matter of fact, as far as we can remember, poor Kang never won any—but who are we to split hairs?)

NEXT ISH: If it can happen, it does happen in AVENGERS #38! The Black Widow cuts out on everybody's favorite bow-slinger—and Captain America does the same! The evil Enchantress returns with a plan sinister enough to straighten out Honest Irv's curly locks! And, most astonishing of all—Hercules, the peerless Prince of Power, shows up on the Avengers' doorstep for one of the most furiously frenetic free-for-alls in the history of literature! In short, there are enough dynamic developments in our next incredible ish to keep Brand Echh's copying machines busy for a year! 'Nuff said, Marvelite?

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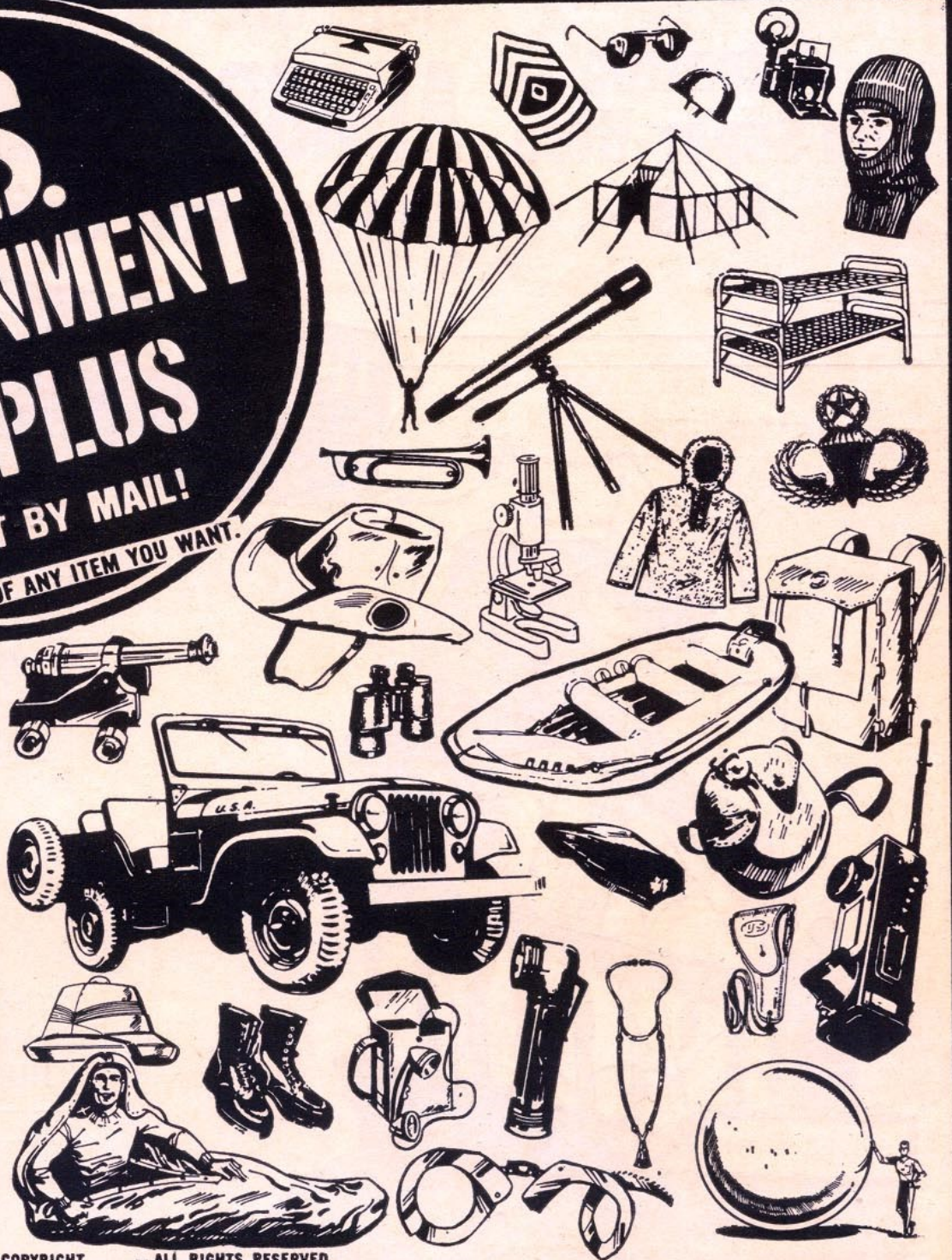
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