



BY
CONWAY, HELFER
& GARCIA LOPEZ

75¢
8

AUG. 84



ATARI FORCE™

BABE WANNA
GO HOME!

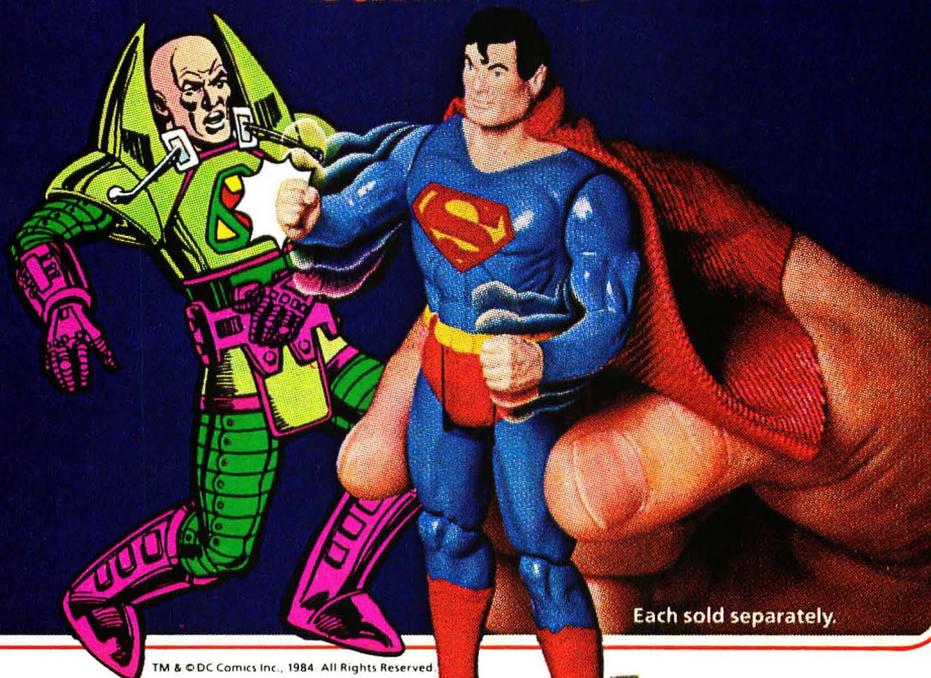


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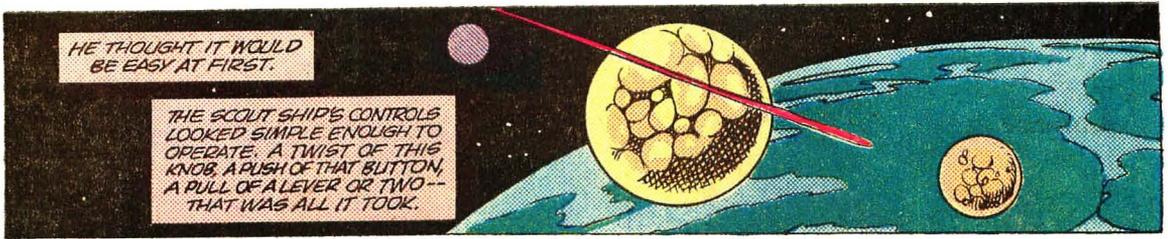
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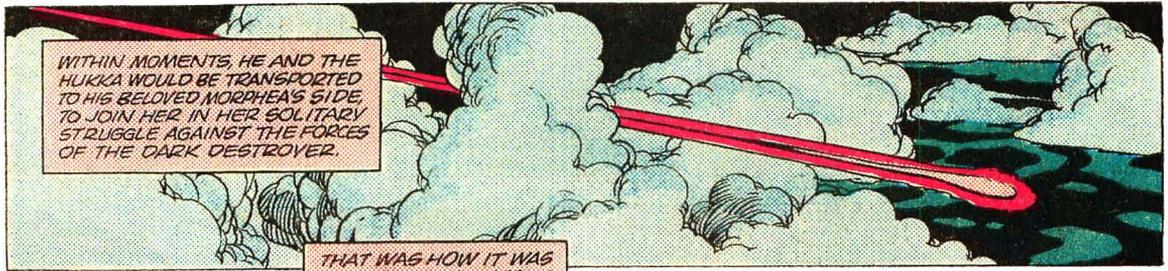
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HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE EASY AT FIRST.

THE SCOUT SHIP'S CONTROLS LOOKED SIMPLE ENOUGH TO OPERATE. A TWIST OF THIS KNOB, A PUSH OF THAT BUTTON, A PULL OF A LEVER OR TWO-- THAT WAS ALL IT TOOK.

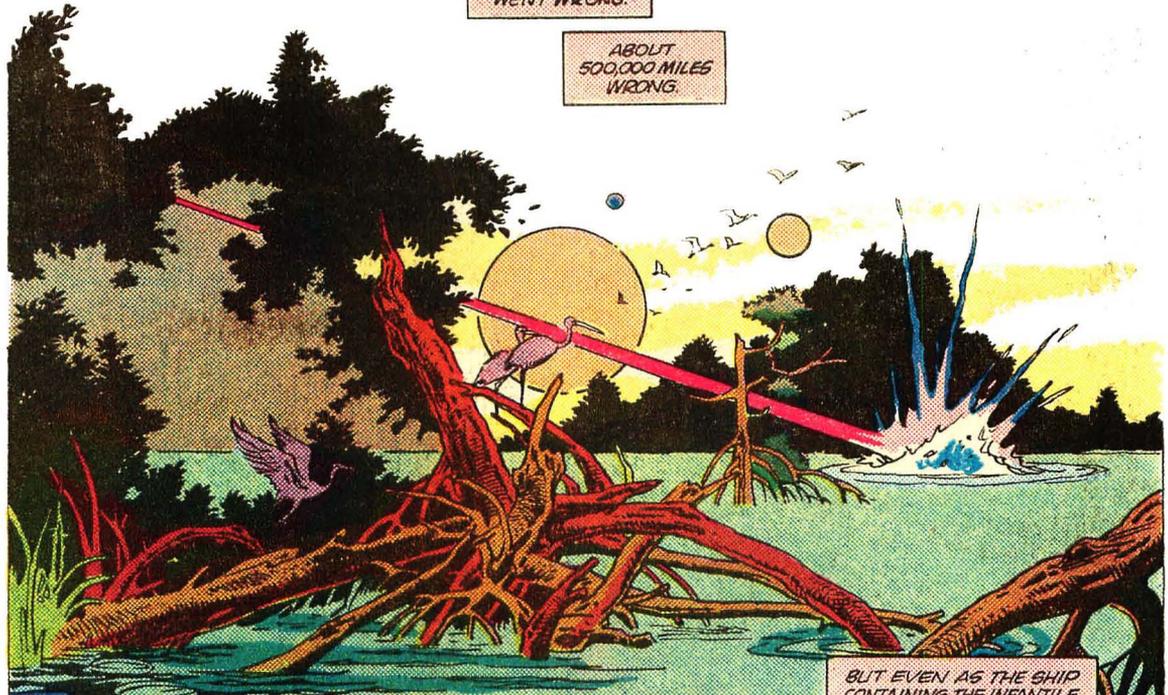


WITHIN MOMENTS, HE AND THE HUKKA WOULD BE TRANSPORTED TO HIS BELOVED MORPHEA'S SIDE TO JOIN HER IN HER SOLITARY STRUGGLE AGAINST THE FORCES OF THE DARK DESTROYER.

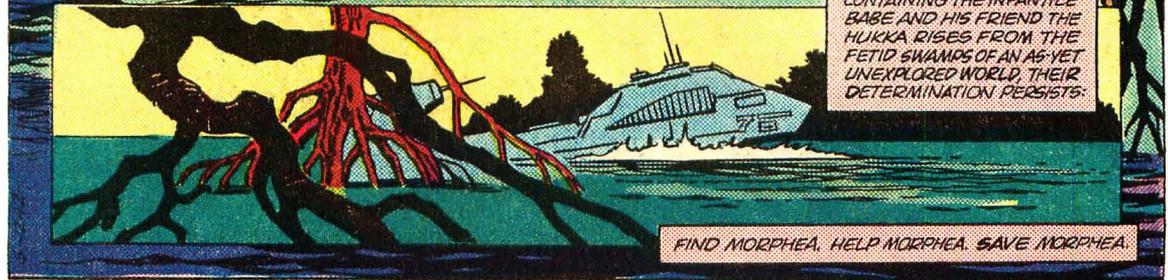
THAT WAS HOW IT WAS SUPPOSED TO HAPPEN.

BUT SOMETHING WENT WRONG.

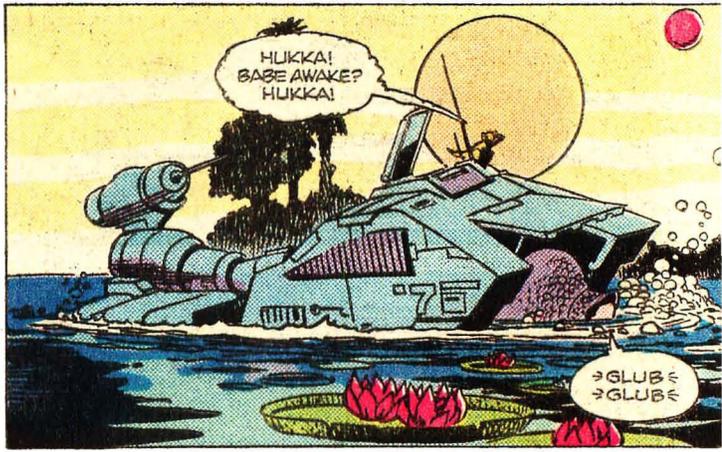
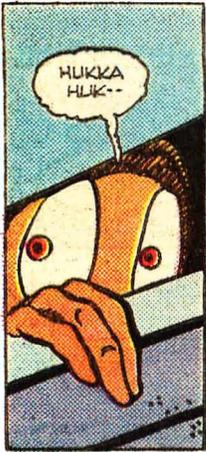
ABOUT 500,000 MILES WRONG.



BUT EVEN AS THE SHIP CONTAINING THE INFANTILE BABE AND HIS FRIEND THE HUKKA RISES FROM THE FETID SWAMPS OF AN AS-YET UNEXPLORED WORLD, THEIR DETERMINATION PERSISTS:

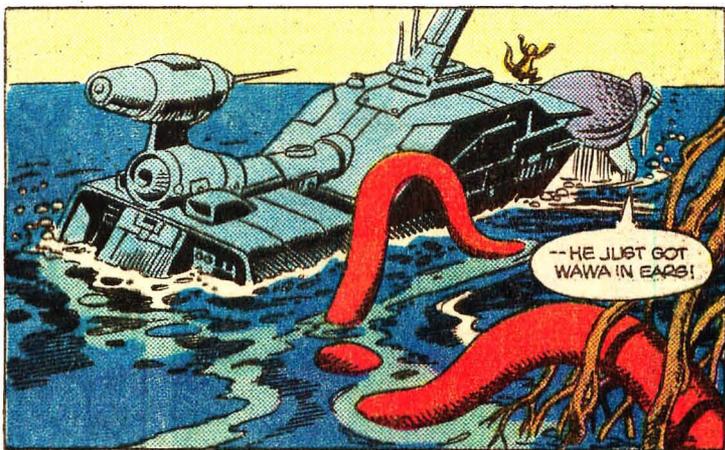


FIND MORPHEA. HELP MORPHEA. SAVE MORPHEA.

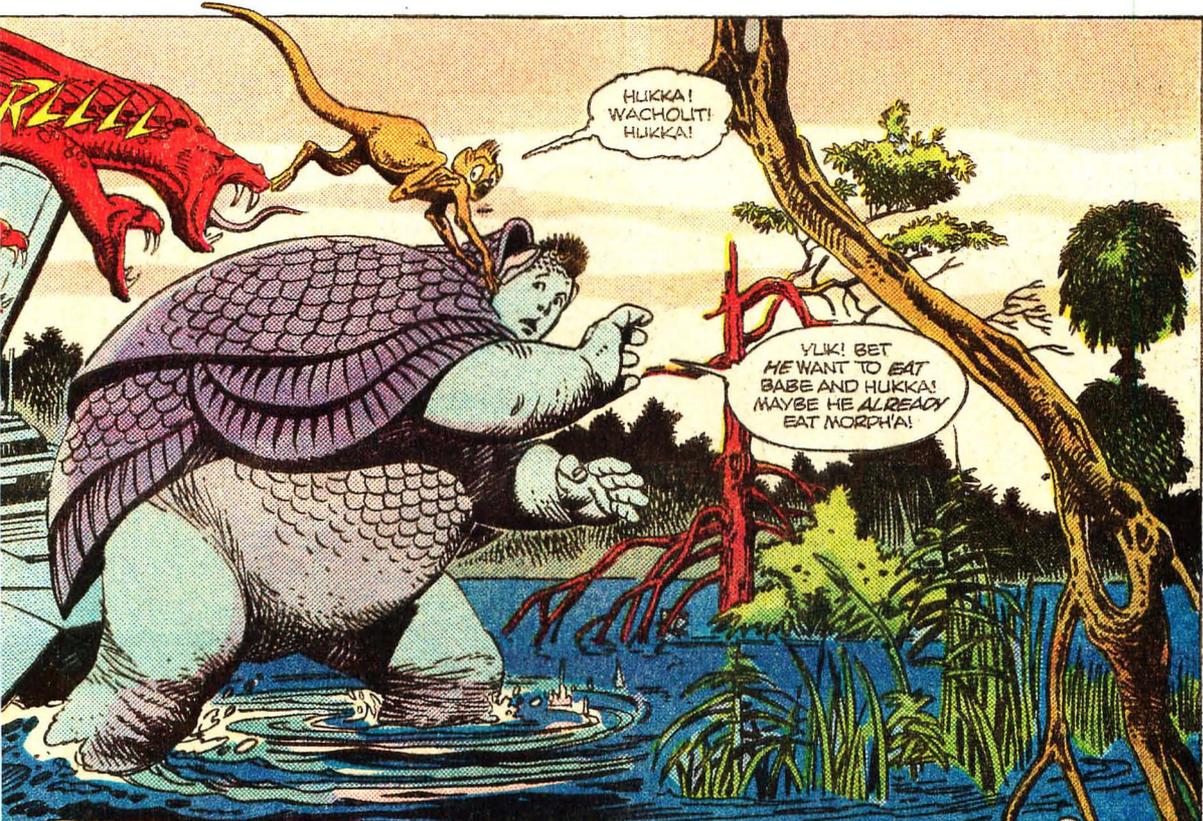




COUGH COUGH!
BABE OKAY, HUKKA--

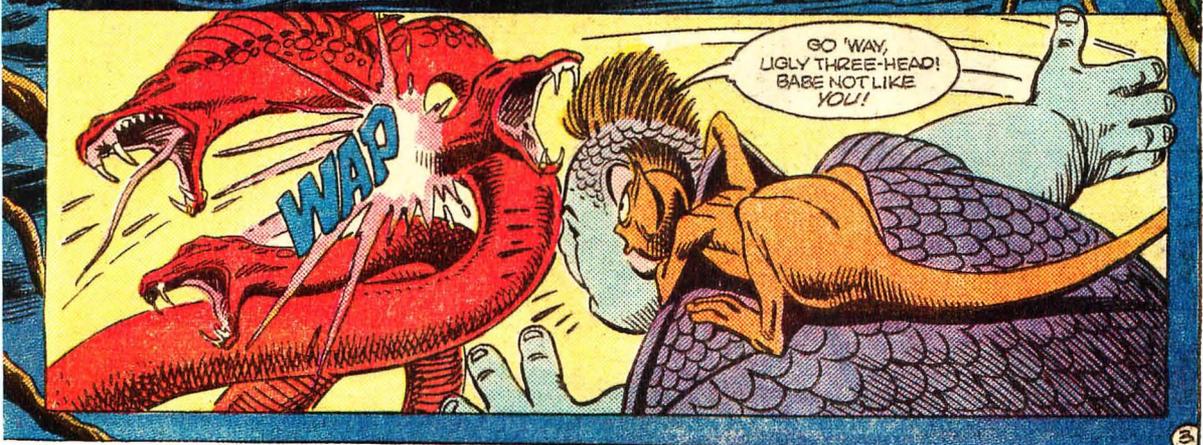


--HE JUST GOT
WAWA IN EARS!

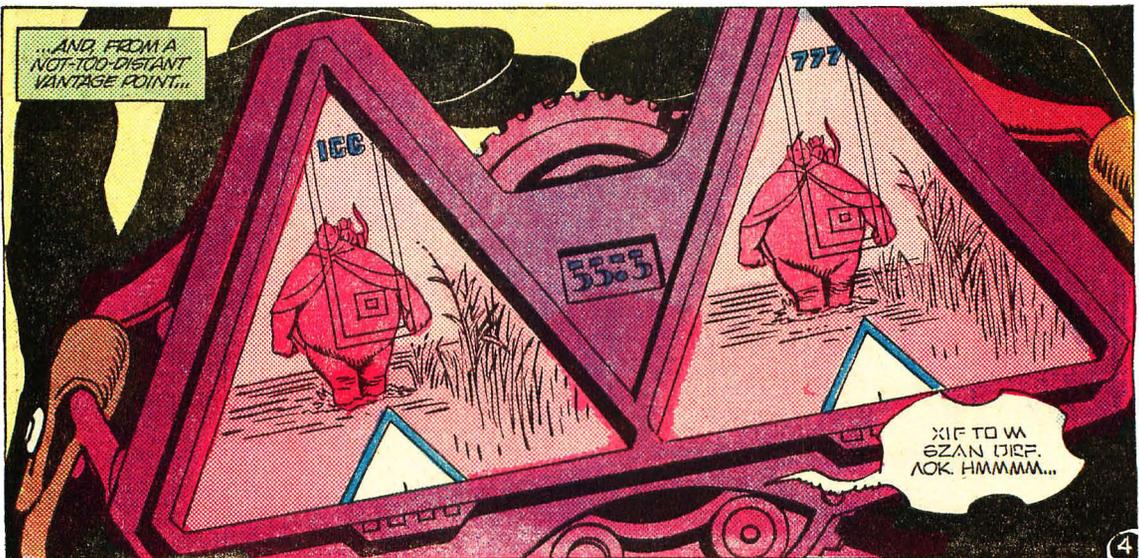
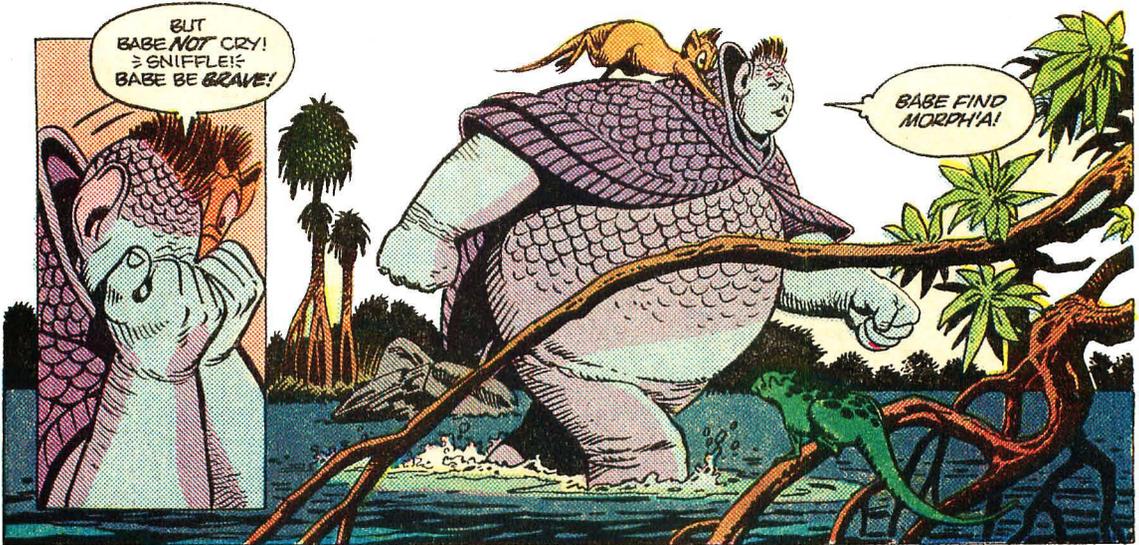
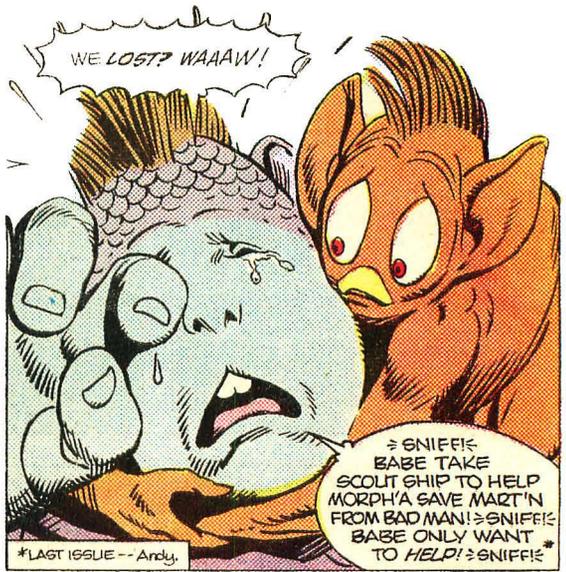
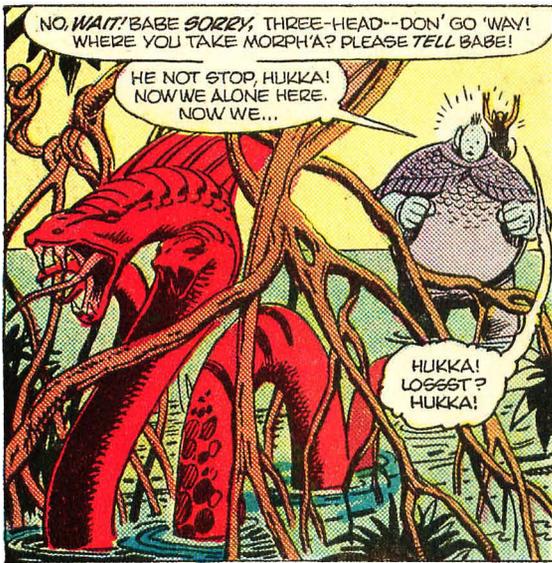


HUKKA!
WACHOLITI!
HUKKA!

VLIK! BET
HE WANT TO EAT
BABE AND HUKKA!
MAYBE HE ALREADY
EAT MORPHA!

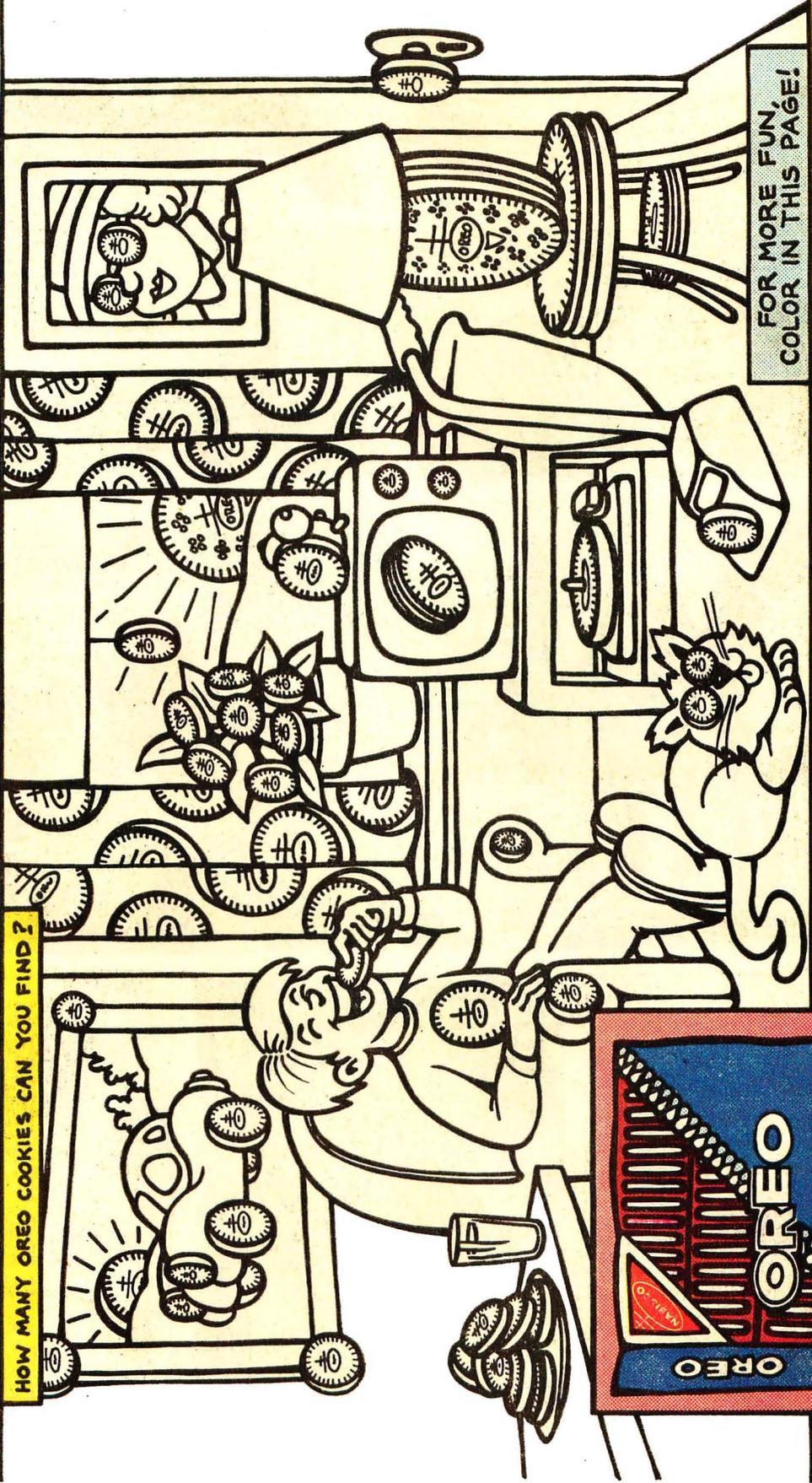


GO 'WAY,
UGLY THREE-HEAD!
BABE NOT LIKE
YOU!



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SCANNER ONE,
500,000 MILES
DISTANT.

THIS ONE'S HEART
IS
TORN WITH ANGUISH...

...WHERE IS BABE?
WHERE COULD HE HAVE
GONE? THE POOR CHILD
IS HELPLESS WITHOUT
THIS ONE'S GUIDANCE.
HE--

--HE'S PROBABLY
HAVING A BALL PLAYING WITH
THE HUKKA ON SOME PLANET-SIZED
SANDBOX, MORPHEA! RELAX AND
TAKE IT EASY. WE'LL PICK UP
THE SCOUT SHIP'S SIGNALS
BEFORE YOU KNOW IT,
AND THEN--

HELLO,
EVERYBODY!
HOW'S IT
--HAK--
GOING?

NO, PAKRAT!
I CAN'T JUST LIE IN BED
KNOWING I'M RESPONSIBLE
FOR THIS MESS! IF I HADN'T
BLUNDERED INTO THE DARK
DESTROYER'S TRAP IN THE
FIRST PLACE, MORPHEA
WOULDN'T HAVE HAD TO
LEAVE BABE BEHIND
TO SAVE ME!

MAYBE
SHE'S GOT
A POINT,
KID. LET'S
YOU'N/ME
GO HAVE
A NICE
HOT CLIP
OF--

CHRIS!
YOU KNOW YOU
SHOULDN'T BE UP
AND ABOUT! THIS ONE
SPECIFICALLY
TOLD
YOU TO STAY IN SICK
BAY! YOUR WOUNDS
NEED TIME TO
HEAL!

WITH MY PHASING ABILITIES,
FINDING HIM WOULD BE A SNAP--
BUT NOW I'M TOO WEAK
TO USE THEM!

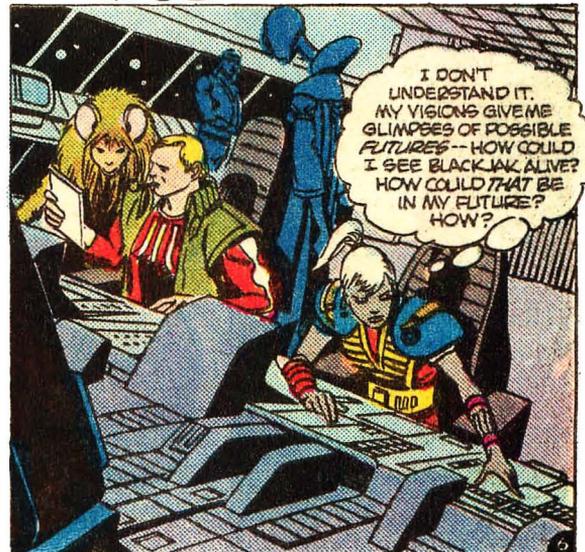
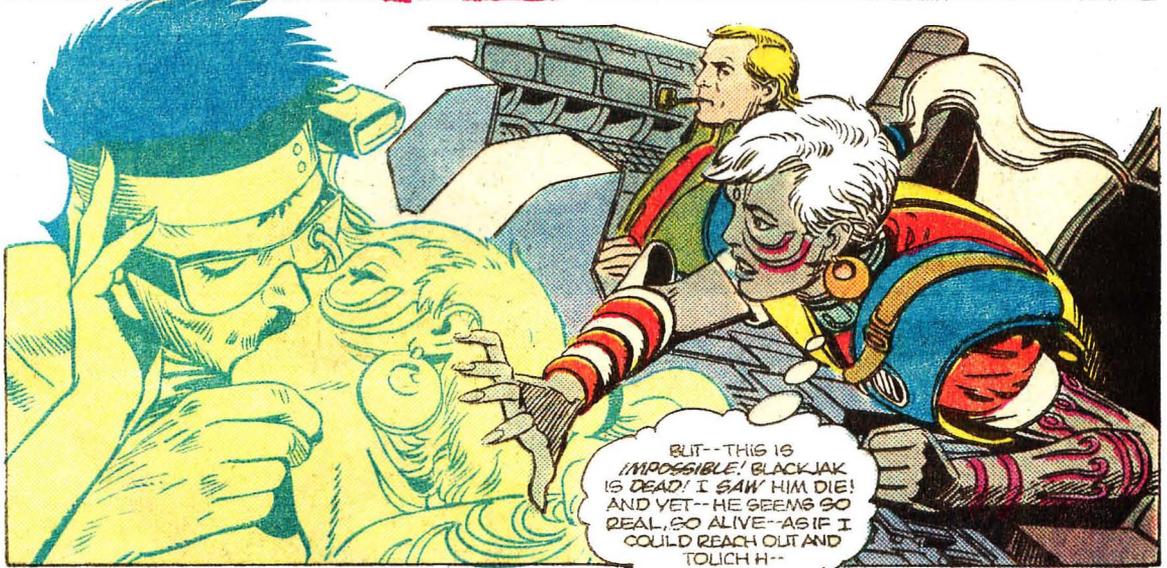
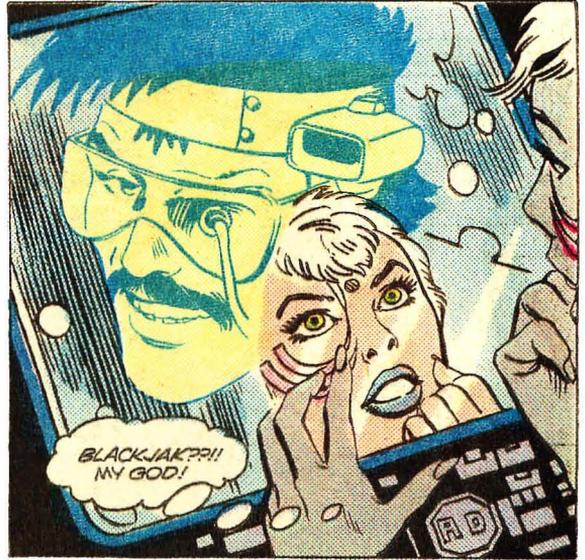
DAMN!

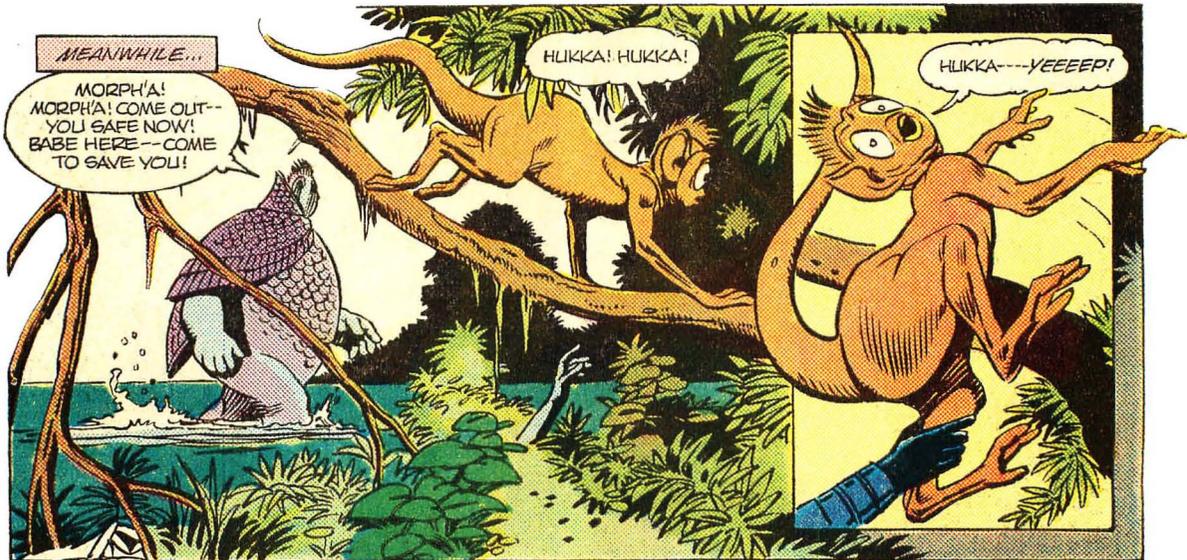
YEOW!

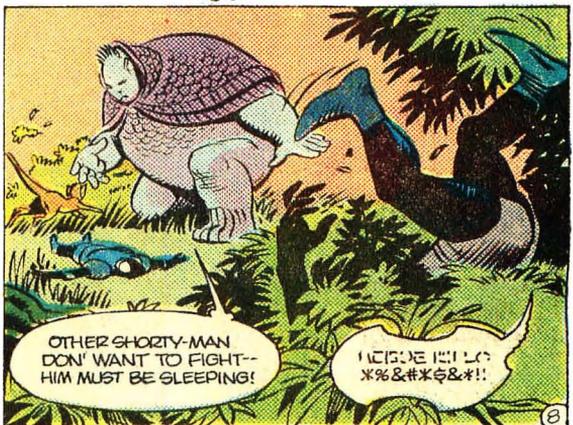
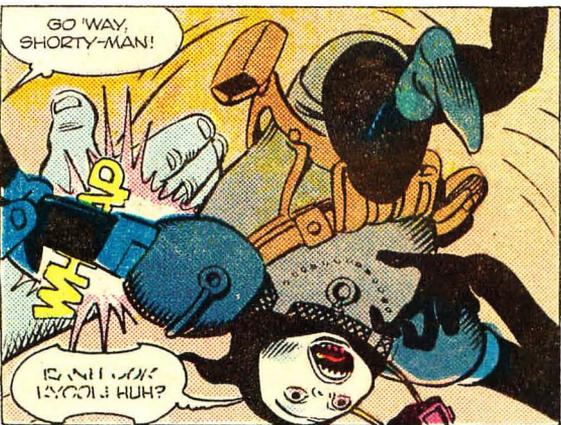
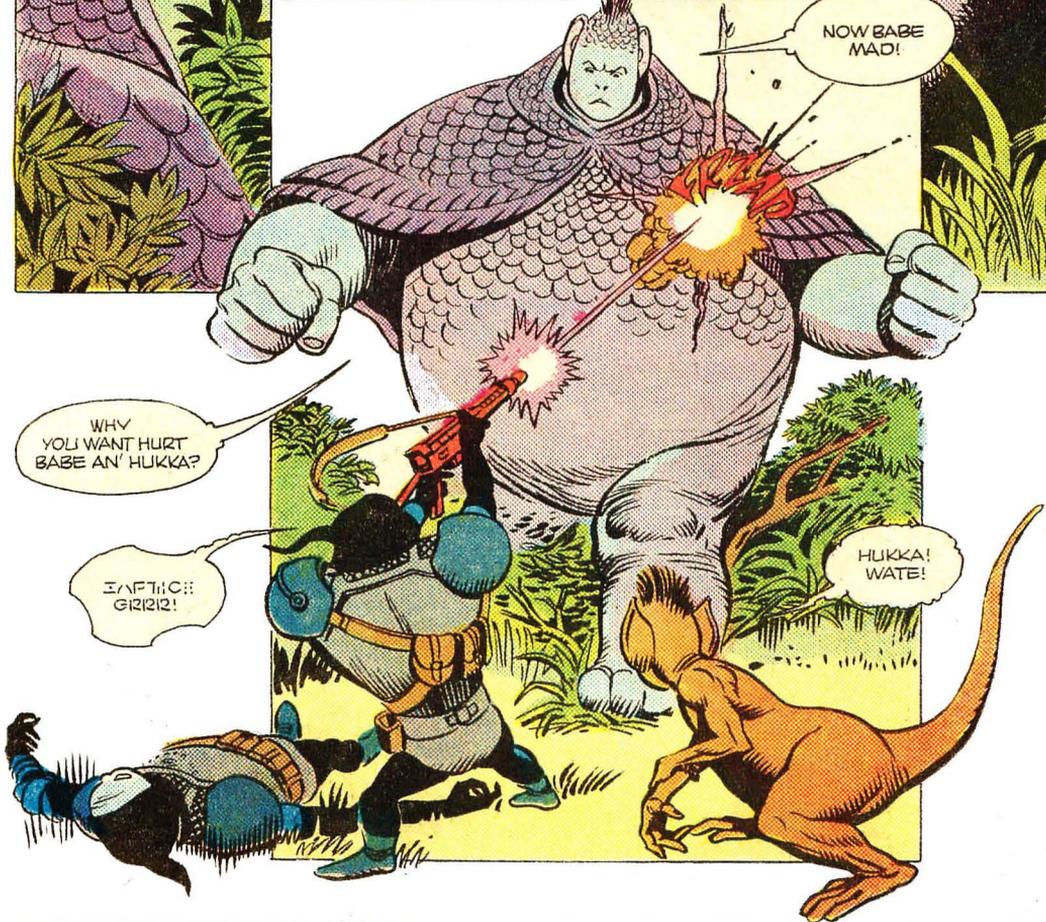
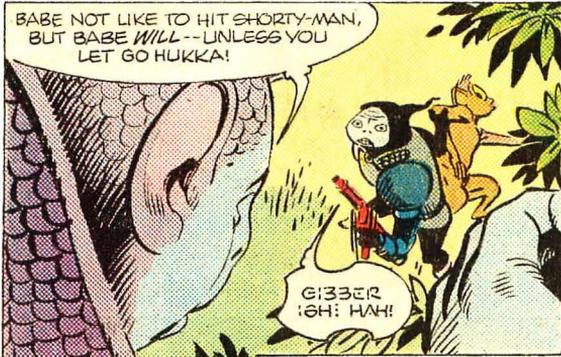
GEE,
I-LIH--BET
THAT HURTS,
HUH, KID?

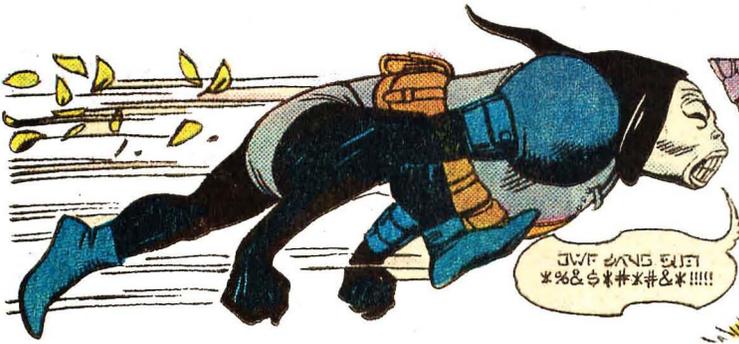
MORE THAN YOU KNOW,
PAKRAT--

--MORE
THAN YOU
KNOW.









JWF SHNS EJST
%&@##*#&*!!!!



YUP, HE
JUST SLEEPING.
THAT NICE.



NOT LIKE OTHER
SHORTY-MAN, ALWAYS
FIGHTING. NOPE.

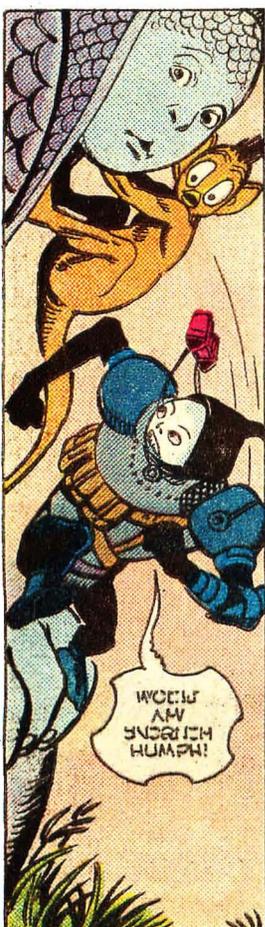


BABE
LIKE THIS
ONE, BABE--
EH?

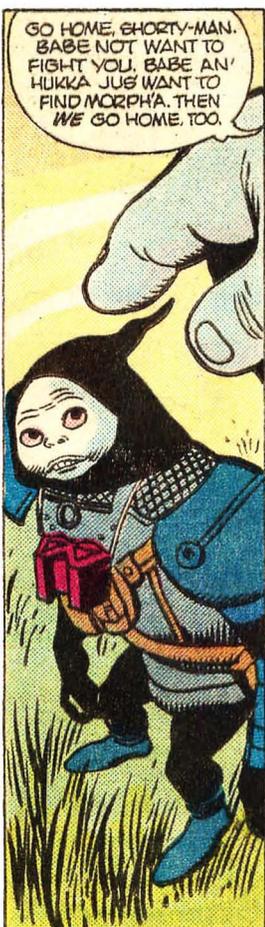


#*%@#*#*#&*!!!!

OH,
IT YOU
AGAIN.

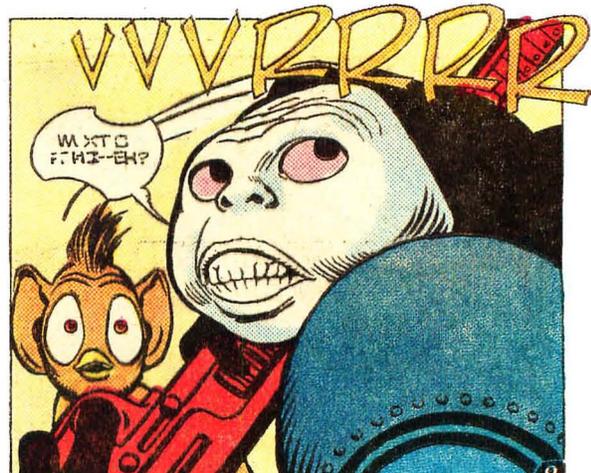
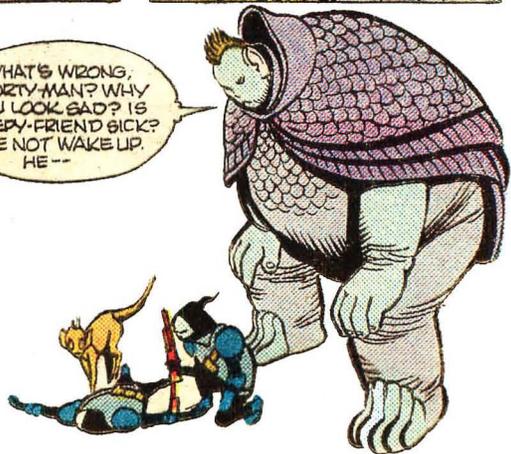


WOLF AM
SNOOZIE
HUMPH!

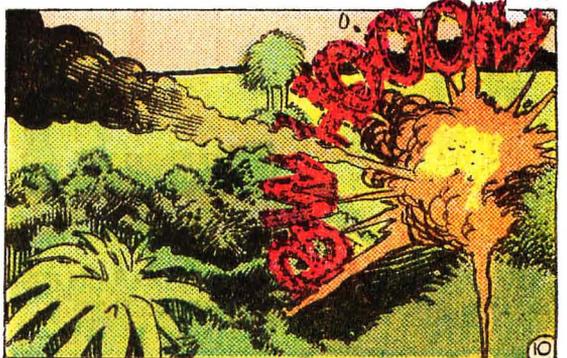
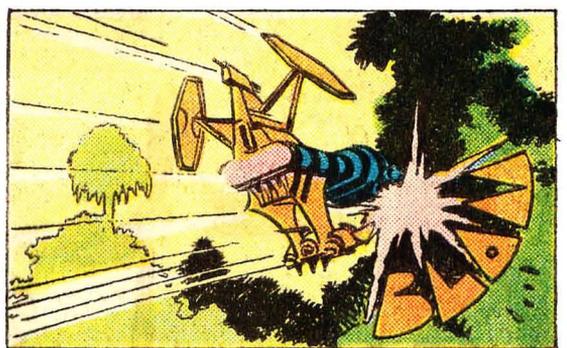
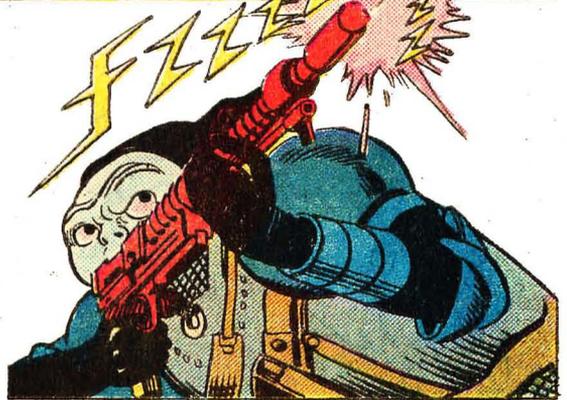
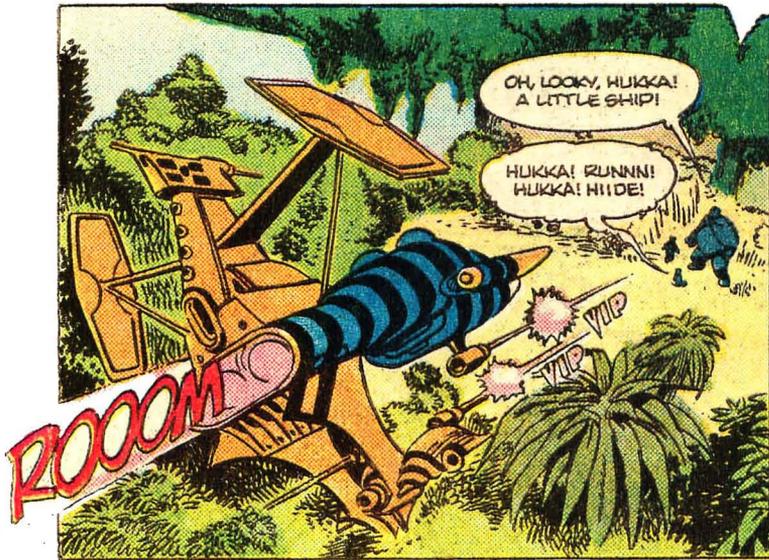


GO HOME, SHORTY-MAN.
BABE NOT WANT TO
FIGHT YOU, BABE AN'
HUKKA JUS WANT TO
FIND MORPH'A. THEN
WE GO HOME, TOO.

WHAT'S WRONG,
SHORTY-MAN? WHY
YOU LOOK SAD? IS
SLEEPY-FRIEND SICK?
HE NOT WAKE UP.
HE--



WUT O
F-THI-EH?



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STORES!

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WOW! SHORTY-MAN
GOOD SHOT! HE SAVE
BABE AN' HUKKA!
THANKS!

HEY! WAIT, SHORTY-MAN.
DON' GO 'WAY! DON' LEAVE
BABE AN' HUKKA ALONE!



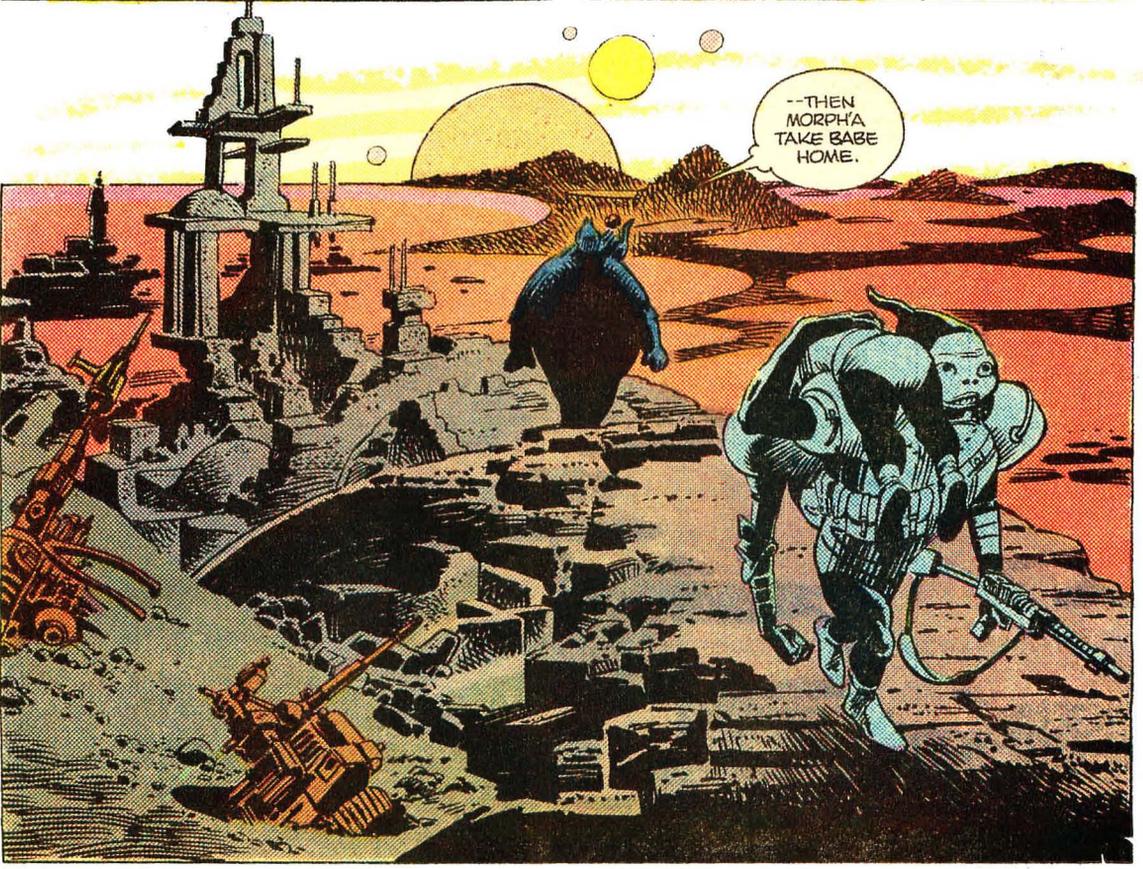
HUKKA!
WE GO TU?
HUKKA!

UH--SURE!
WE ALREADY
LOST
ANYWAY!

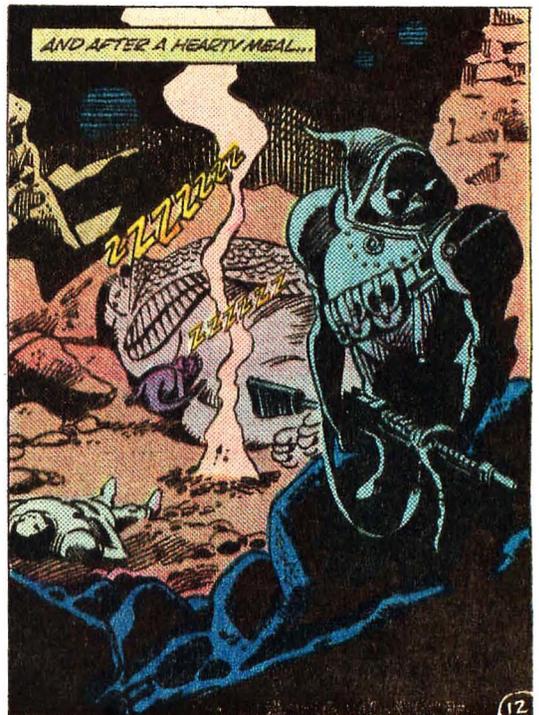
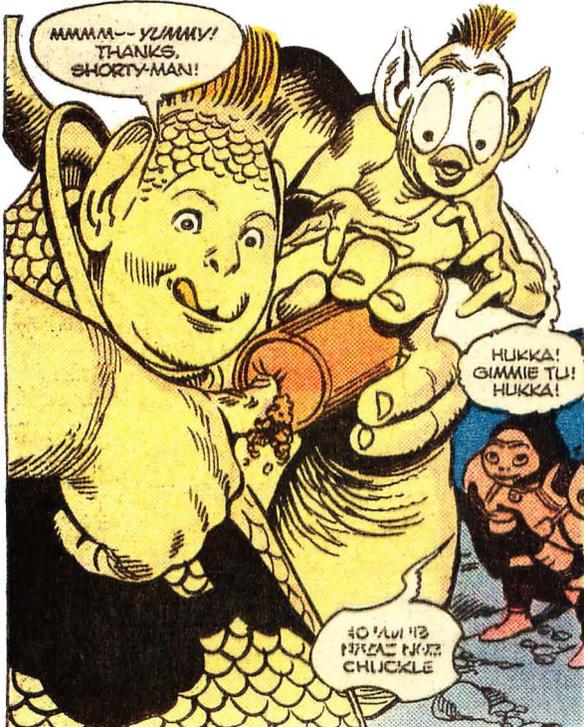
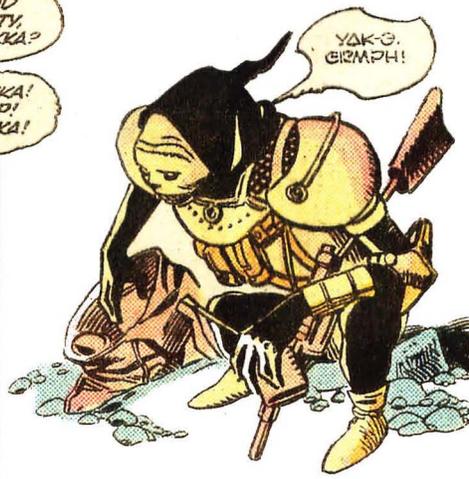


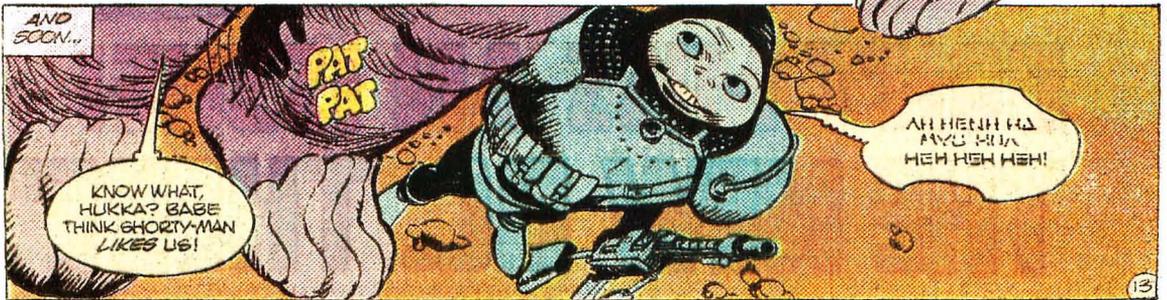
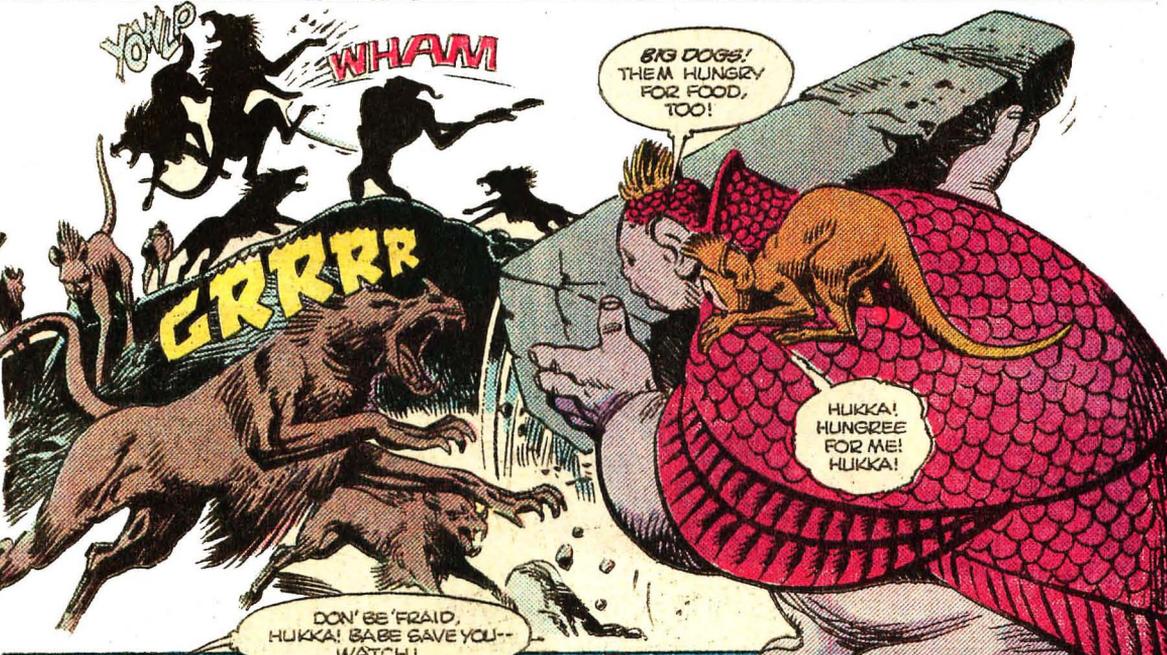
MAYBE HE TAKING
SICK SLEEPY-FRIEND TO
MORPH'A. SHE DOCTOR!
SHE MAKE HIM ALL
BETTER.

AND
THEN--

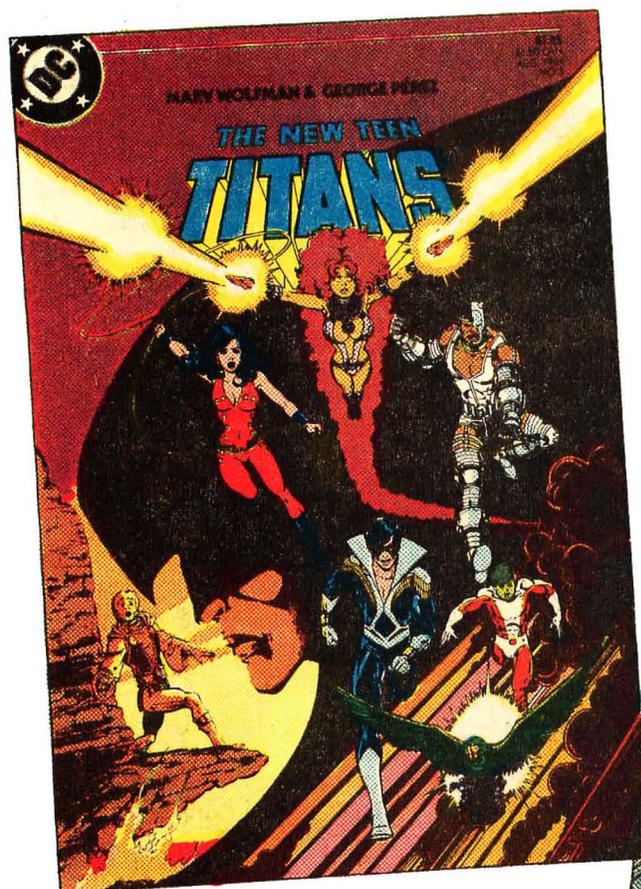


--THEN
MORPH'A
TAKE BABE
HOME.

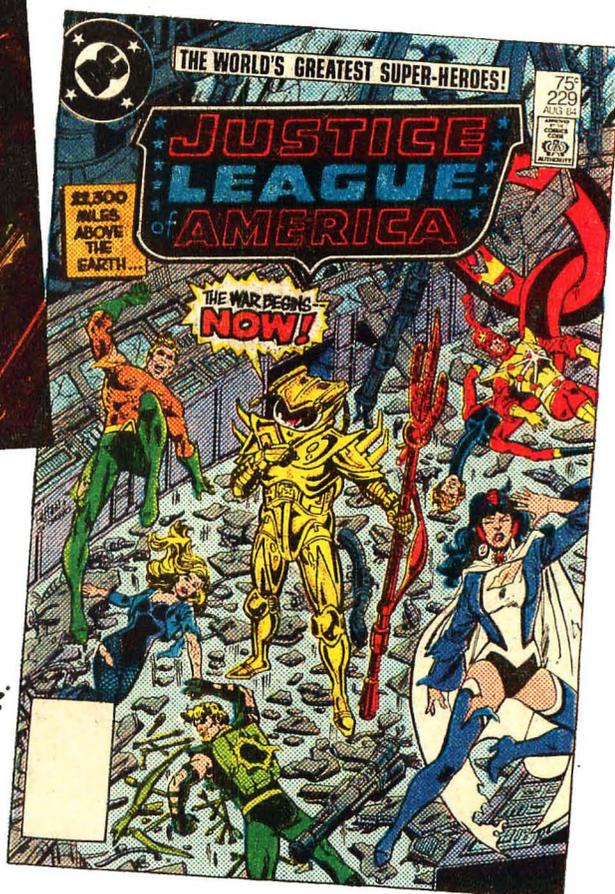




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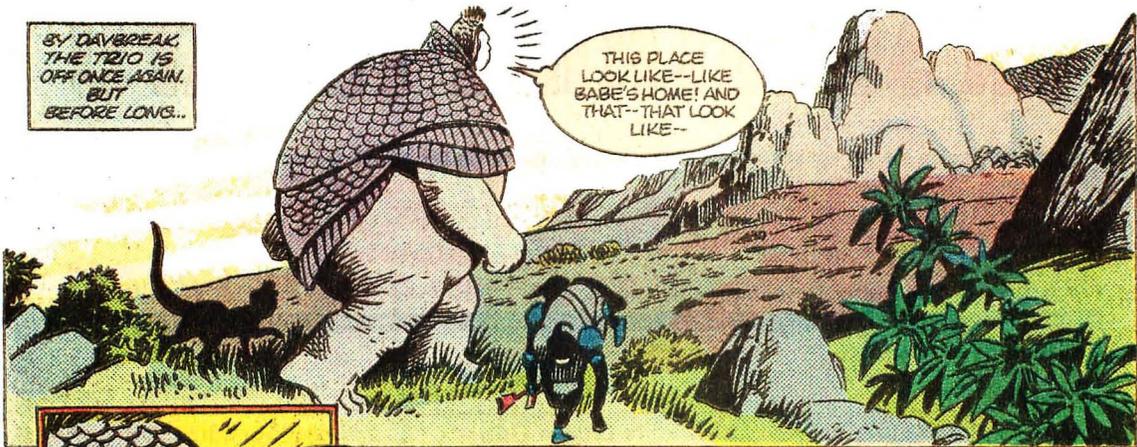
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BY DAWNBREAK
THE TRIO IS
OFF ONCE AGAIN.
BUT
BEFORE LONG...

THIS PLACE
LOOK LIKE--LIKE
BABE'S HOME! AND
THAT--THAT LOOK
LIKE--

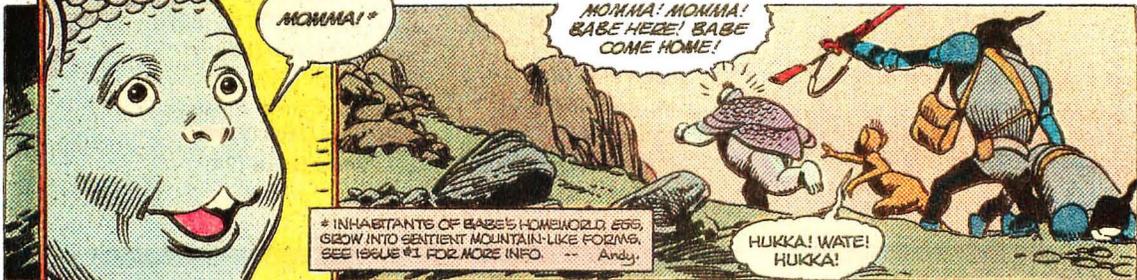


MOMMA!*

MOMMA! MOMMA!
BABE HERE! BABE
COME HOME!

* INHABITANTS OF BABE'S HOMEWORLD, EGG,
GROW INTO SENTIENT MOUNTAIN-LIKE FORMS.
SEE ISSUE #1 FOR MORE INFO. -- Andy.

HUKKA! WATE!
HUKKA!



BUT HIDDEN AMONG THE
MOUNTAIN'S CRAGGY WALLS
IS A RATHER INIGIOUS
WELCOMING COMMITTEE...

WIMDA TIVJAZEN,
WEM CROGEIGHT??

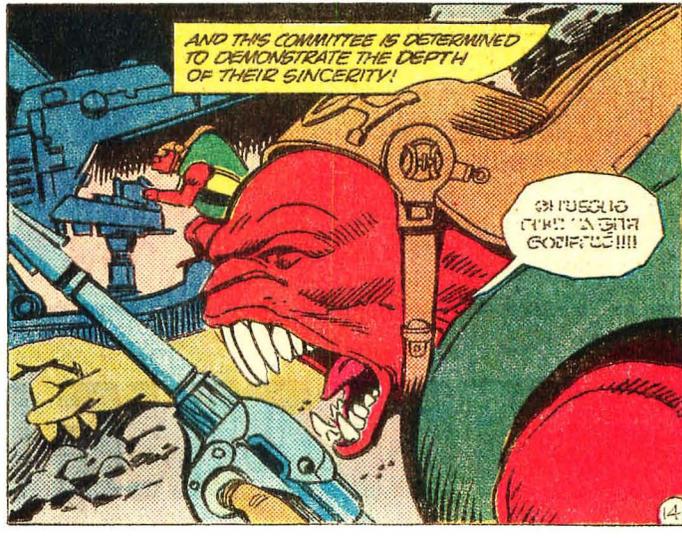
"OH JAY
GOD!!"

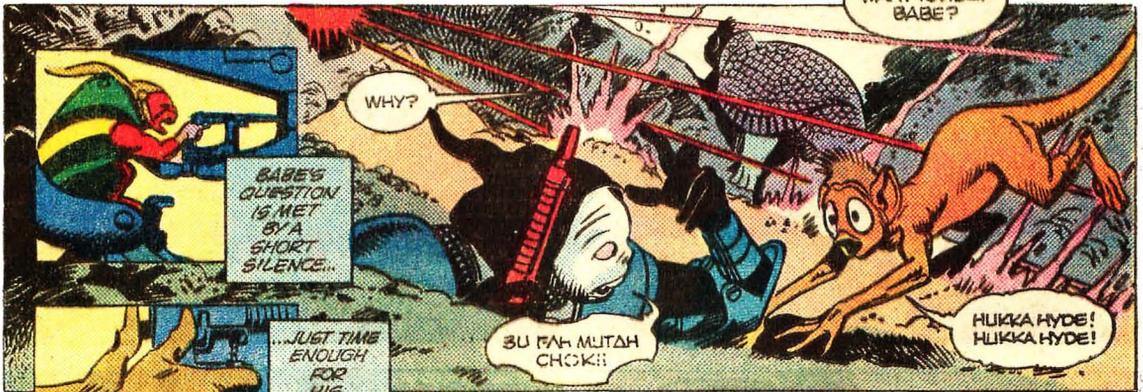
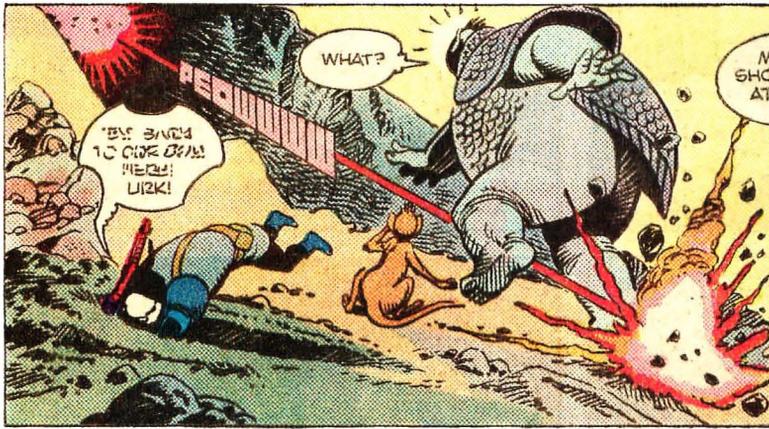


BABE
SO HAPPY
WE COULD
CRY!

AND THIS COMMITTEE IS DETERMINED
TO DEMONSTRATE THE DEPTH
OF THEIR SINCERITY!

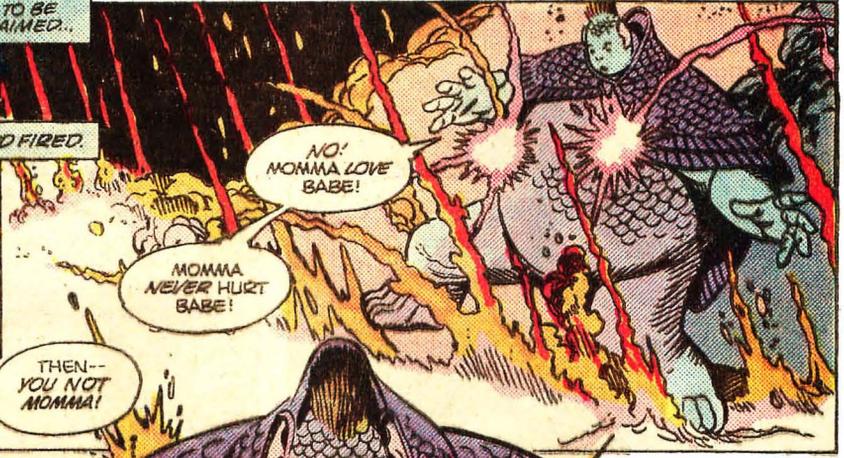
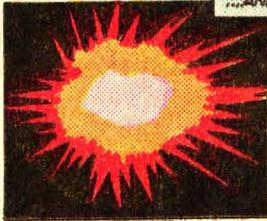
OH WEGUS
TUM! 'A SHU
GODPUS!!!!





...JUST TIME ENOUGH FOR HIS ANSWER TO BE AIMED...

...AND FIRED.



THEN-- YOU NOT MOMMA!





NOW BABE MAD!



PIN 35 MIT DA GULP!

HUKKA! DON' WORREE! BABE STRON'! HUKKA!



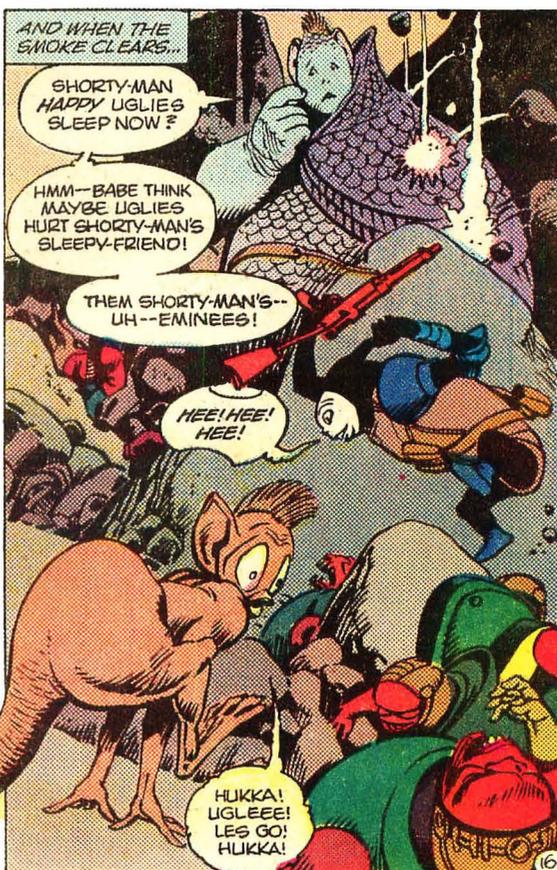
BABE SEE YOU NOW-- UGLY MANG WITH BIG GUN!



WELL, BABE TAKE GUN AWAY FROM UGLIES!



MAKE SURE THEM NOT HURT BABE AGAIN!



AND WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARS...

SHORTY-MAN HAPPY UGLIES SLEEP NOW?

HMM--BABE THINK MAYBE UGLIES HURT SHORTY-MAN'S SLEEPY-FRIEND!

THEM SHORTY-MAN'S-- UH--EMINEES!

HEE! HEE! HEE!

HUKKA! UGLEEE! LES GO! HUKKA!

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A boy and his alien

YOU'RE MORE SCARED THAN ME, AIN'T YOU? SOMEHOW THROUGH THAT RAY-BEAM OF YOURS, YOU LET ME FEEL HOW SCARED YOU ARE... AND... AND... AND SOMETHIN' ELSE YOU'RE FEELIN'... YOU'RE FEELIN' FAR FROM HOME... FAR FROM THINGS YOU KNOW AND GREW UP WITH...

...YOU'RE FEELIN'... ALONE!

YOU KNOW WHAT? I BET YOU'RE FROM OUTER SPACE, LOBT AND LOOKIN' FOR HOME!

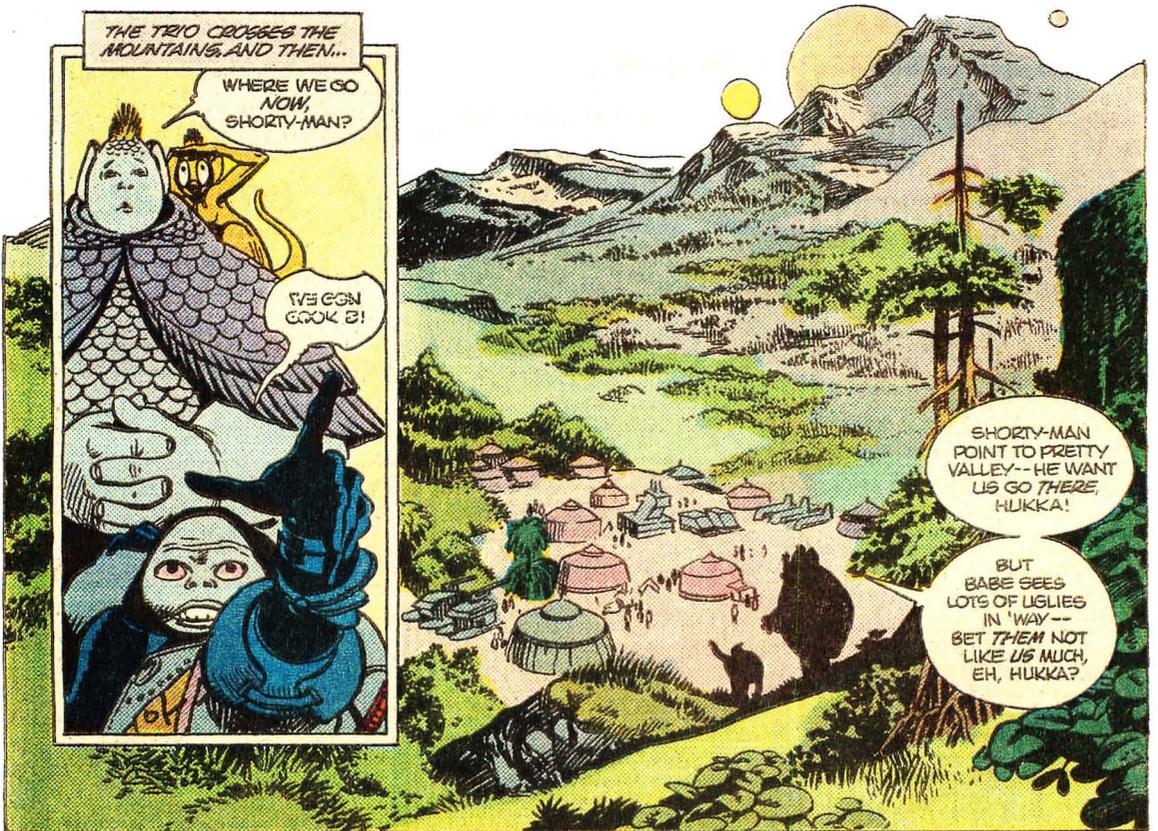
C'MON, MISTER SPACEMAN. YOU AND ME ARE GONNA LOOK FOR YOUR HOME TOGETHER!

JEMM

SON OF SATURN

by Greg Potter, Gene Colan and Klaus Janson

COMING SOON!



THE TRIO CROSSES THE MOUNTAINS, AND THEN...

WHERE WE GO NOW, SHORTY-MAN?

I'VE GON GOOK B!

SHORTY-MAN POINT TO PRETTY VALLEY-- HE WANT US GO THERE, HUKKA!

BUT BABE SEES LOTS OF UGLIES IN 'WAY-- BET THEM NOT LIKE US NAUCH, EH, HUKKA?



MEANWHILE, ABOARD SCANNER ONE...

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE FEELING NOW, MORPHEA--



--AND I'M SORRY, BUT I'M ALSO GLAD YOU CAME TO HELP ME. I WOULD HAVE DIED IF PSYKLOPS HAD TORTURED ME MUCH LONGER.

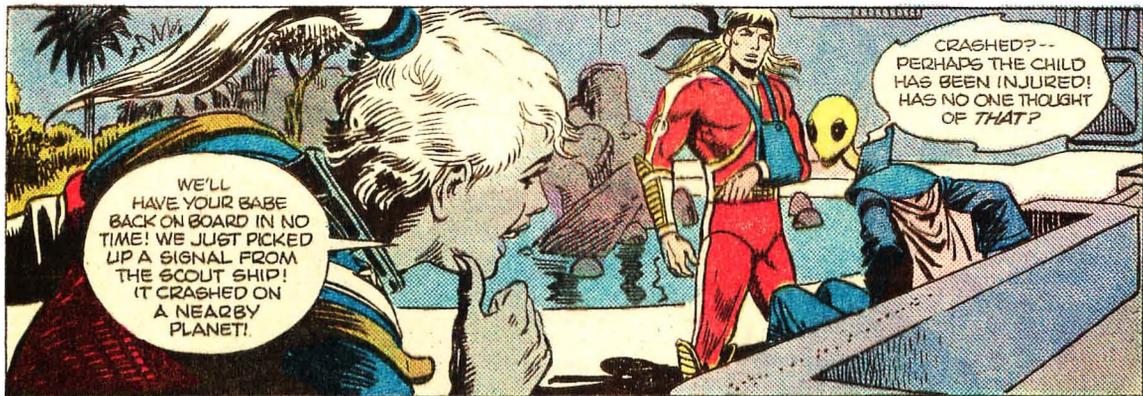


I GUESS WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS-- THANKS FOR MY LIFE.

OH, CHRISTOPHER, YOU DEAR, SWEET--

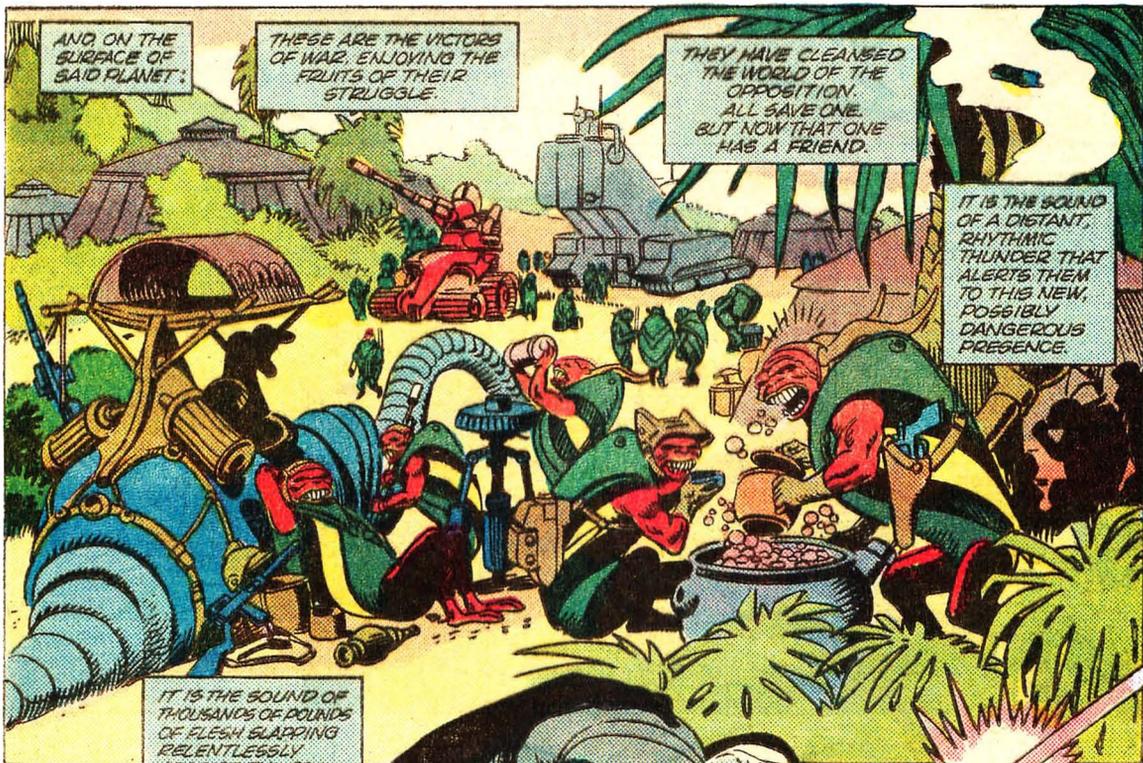


MORPHEA! TIME TO SMILE! I'VE GOT SOME GOOD NEWS-- FOR A CHANGE!



WE'LL HAVE YOUR BABE BACK ON BOARD IN NO TIME! WE JUST PICKED UP A SIGNAL FROM THE SCOUT SHIP! IT CRASHED ON A NEARBY PLANET!

CRASHED?-- PERHAPS THE CHILD HAS BEEN INJURED! HAS NO ONE THOUGHT OF THAT?



AND ON THE SURFACE OF SAID PLANET:

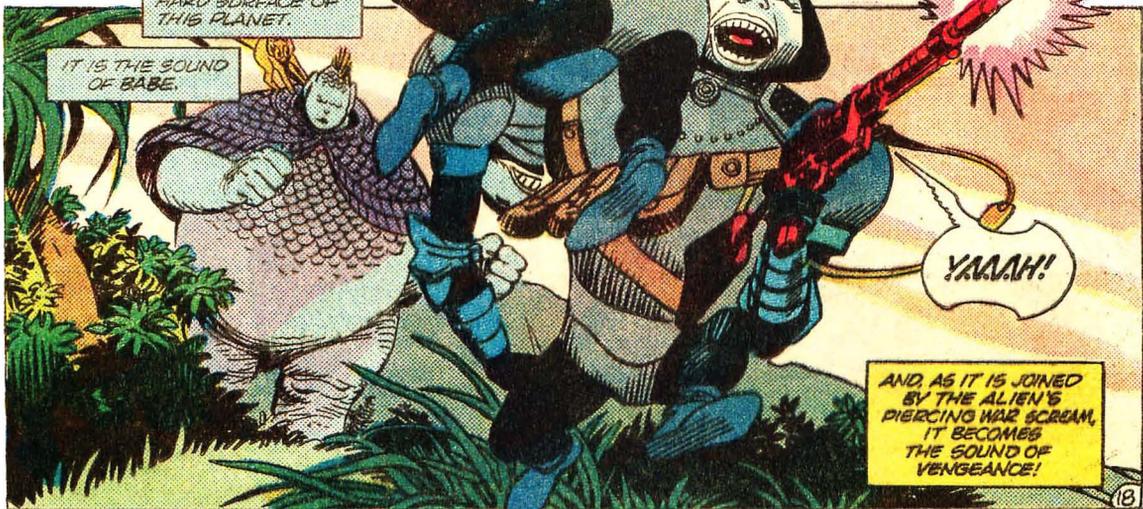
THESE ARE THE VICTORS OF WAR, ENJOYING THE FRUITS OF THEIR STRUGGLE

THEY HAVE CLEANSED THE WORLD OF THE OPPOSITION. ALL SAVE ONE. BUT NOW THAT ONE HAS A FRIEND.

IT IS THE SOUND OF A DISTANT, RHYTHMIC THUNDER THAT ALERTS THEM TO THIS NEW, POSSIBLY DANGEROUS PRESENCE.

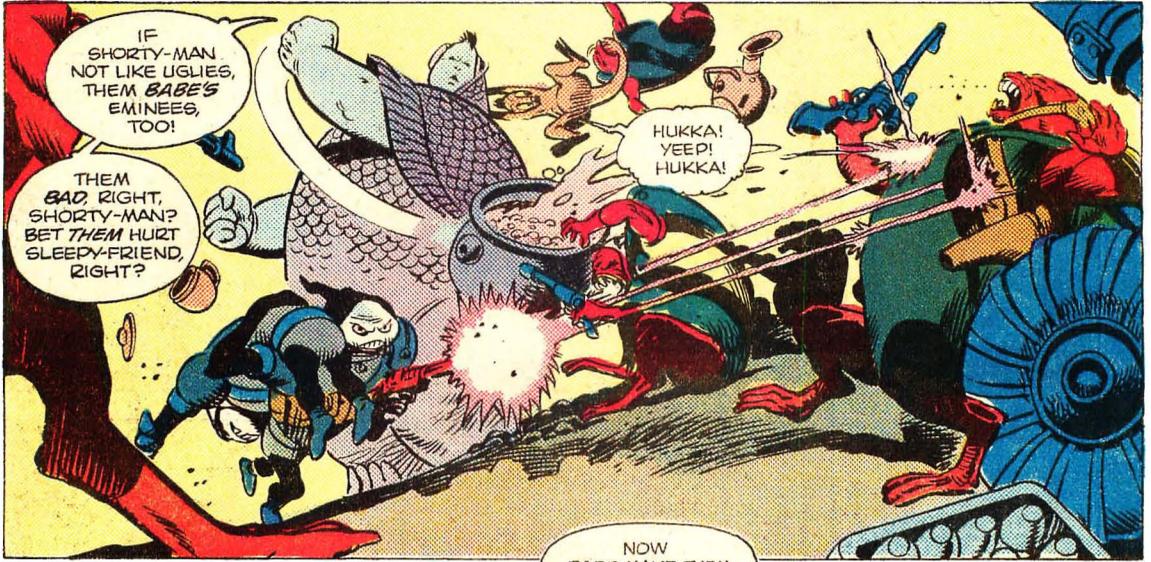
IT IS THE SOUND OF THOUSANDS OFOUNDS OF FLESH SLAPPING RELENTLESSLY AGAINST THE COOL HARD SURFACE OF THIS PLANET.

IT IS THE SOUND OF BABE.



YAAAAH!

AND, AS IT IS JOINED BY THE ALIEN'S PIERCING WAR SCREAM, IT BECOMES THE SOUND OF VENGEANCE!

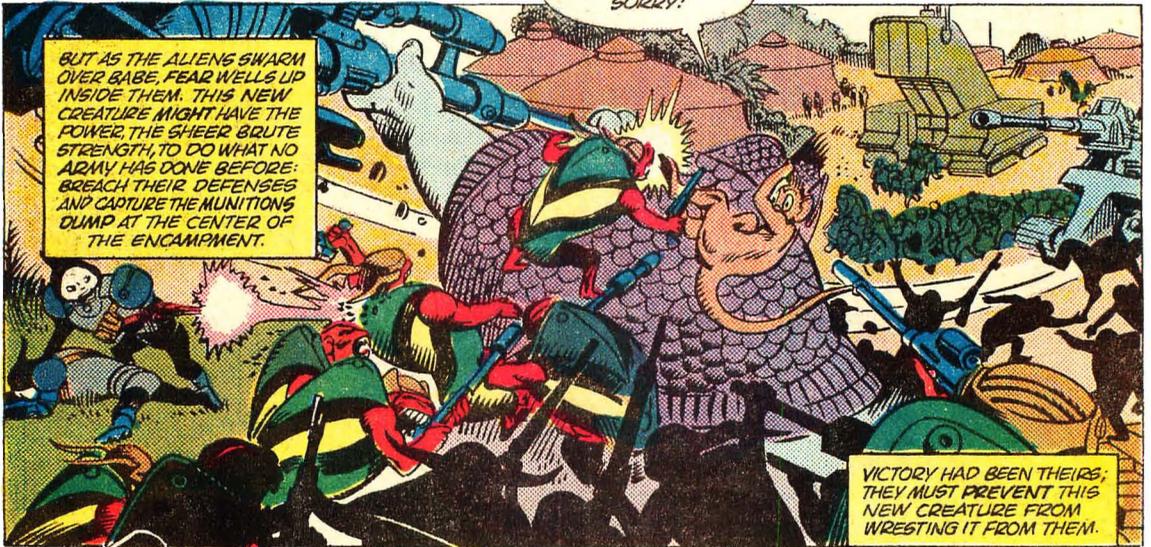


IF SHORTY-MAN NOT LIKE UGLIES, THEM BABE'S EMINES, TOO!

THEM BAD RIGHT, SHORTY-MAN? BET THEM HURT SLEEPY-FRIEND, RIGHT?

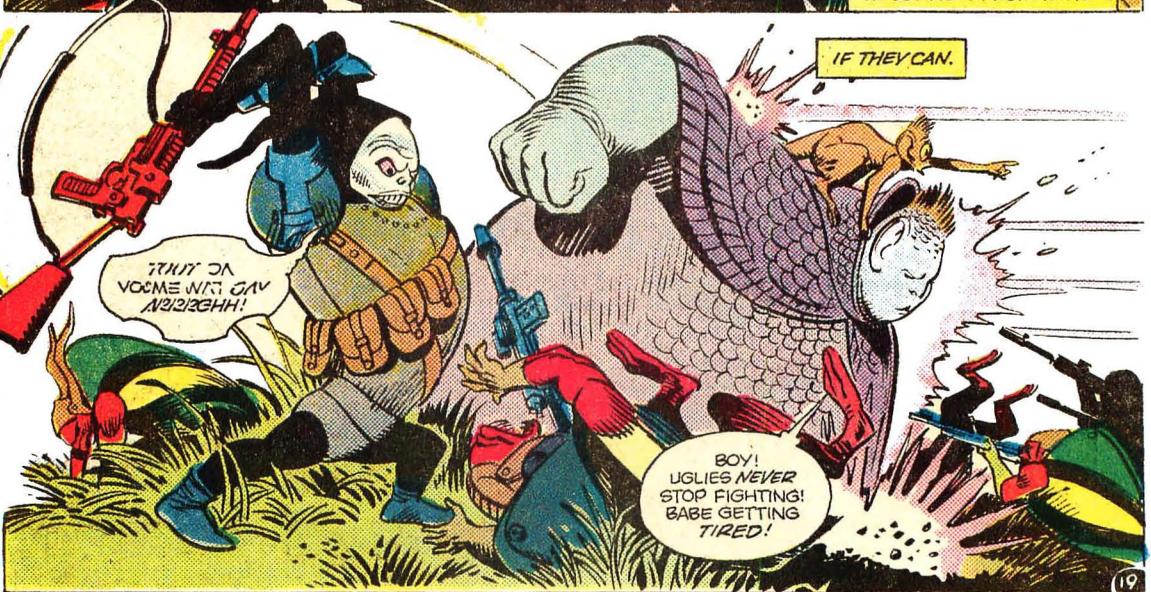
HUKKA! YEEP! HUKKA!

NOW BABE MAKE THEM SORRY!



BUT AS THE ALIENS SWARM OVER BABE, FEAR WELLS UP INSIDE THEM. THIS NEW CREATURE MIGHT HAVE THE POWER, THE SHEER BRUTE STRENGTH, TO DO WHAT NO ARMY HAS DONE BEFORE: BREACH THEIR DEFENSES AND CAPTURE THE MUNITIONS DUMP AT THE CENTER OF THE ENCAMPMENT.

VICTORY HAD BEEN THEIRS; THEY MUST PREVENT THIS NEW CREATURE FROM WRESTING IT FROM THEM.



IF THEY CAN.

THUT DA VOOME WIR GAV ABZEGHH!

BOY! UGLIES NEVER STOP FIGHTING! BABE GETTING TIRED!

AND, AS THE BATTLE
ESCALATES...

UGLIES ALL OVER--
TOO MANY TO FIGHT! BABE
THINK MAYBE IT TIME US
GO 'WAY NOW!

HUKKA!
WATE!
HUKKA!

BUT
BABE SLEEDY!
BABE WANT--

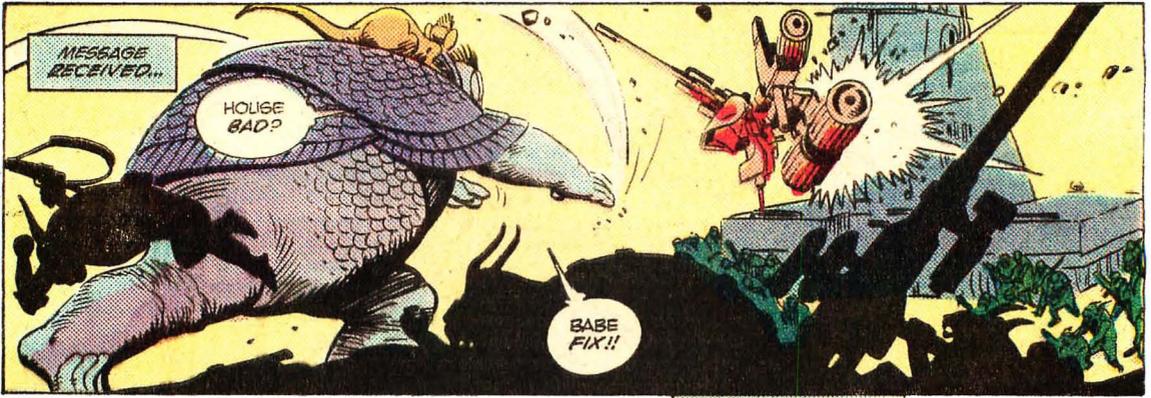
HEY, HUKKA!
WHY SHORTY-MAN
POINT TO FUNNY
HOUSE?

GHIC
DO WIAK
A DUE WA...

BAD

IT IS BUT A SINGLE WORD, WHOSE
TRUE MEANING COULD ONLY BE
INFERRED FROM BABE'S LIMITED
VOCABULARY. IT LAY FILED AWAY
IN THE ALIEN'S BRAIN, READY
TO BE USED AT AN
APPROPRIATE TIME.

NOW IS THAT TIME.

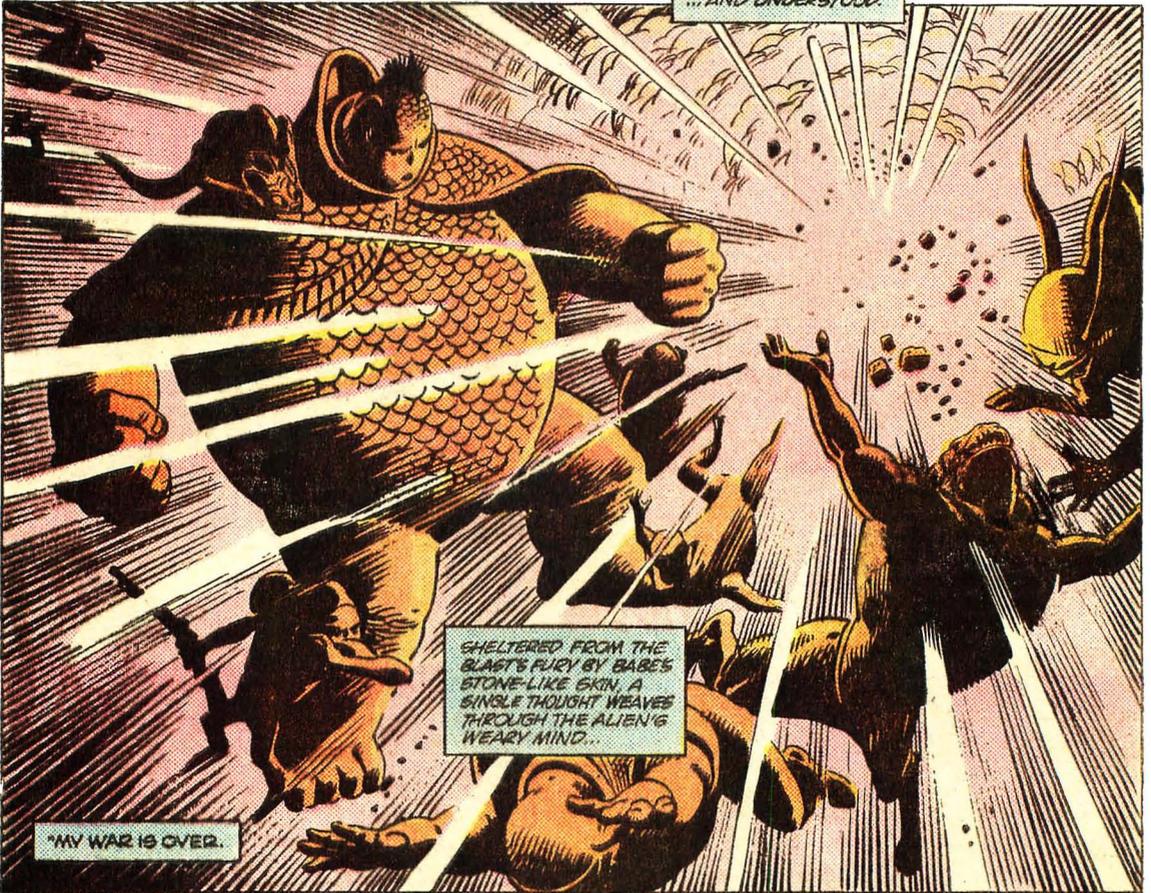


MESSAGE RECEIVED...

HOUJIE BAD?

BABE FIX!!

... AND UNDERSTOOD.



SHELTERED FROM THE BLAST'S FURY BY BABE'S STONE-LIKE SKIN, A SINGLE THOUGHT WEAVES THROUGH THE ALIEN'S WEARY MIND...

"MY WAR IS OVER.



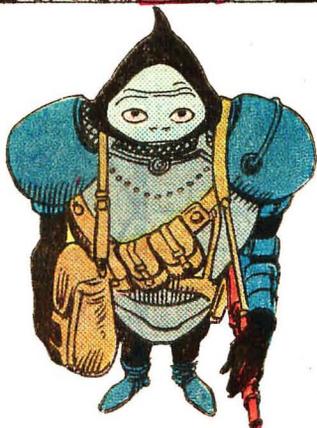
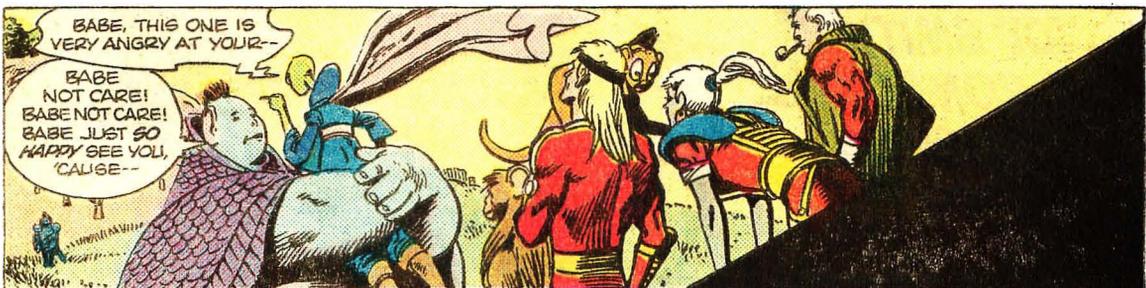
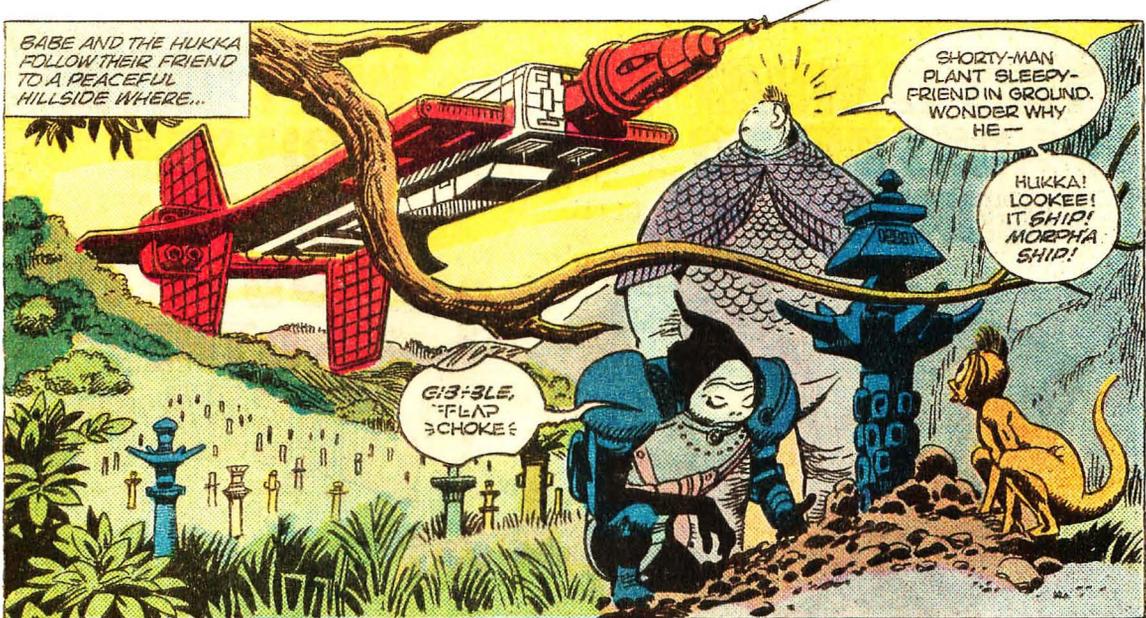
"NOW IS THE TIME FOR MOURNING.

"NOW IS THE TIME TO BURY THE DEAD."



WOW. BABE DO THAT?

HUKKA!
SHORTIE GO!
WE GO TU!
HUKKA!



**THIS IS WHAT THE
PSIONS DID TO
TIGORR!**

**WAIT UNTIL
YOU SEE
WHAT THEY
DO TO THE
OTHER
OMEGA MEN**

**NOW
BY DOUG
MOENCH,
TOD SMITH
& ROMEO
TANGHAL!**

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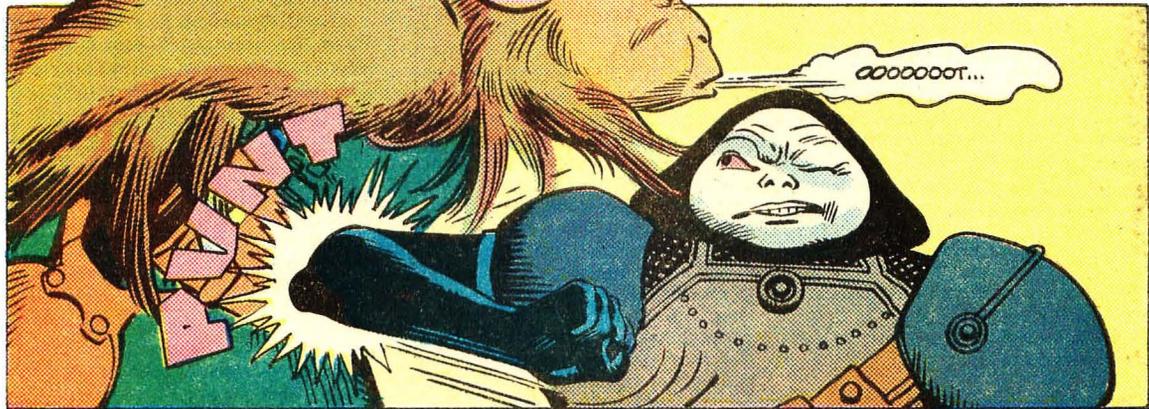
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FORCE FEEDBACK

L-1684

You might have noticed an additional writing credit in the olde credit box this time around—fella by the name of Andy Helfer, who just so happens to be ATARI FORCE editor and compiler of this letter column (usually at 4:00 A.M. the night AFTER it's due). Well, due to pressing deadlines, Gerry Conway had to pass on dialoguing this issue (but we PROMISE, he'll be back next time), bequeathing ME the honor of scripting the story you've probably just read. I seldom actually write comics, but I don't think there's a single writer in the business who would pass up the opportunity to match his or her own words to José Luis García López' magnificent pictures—I certainly wouldn't.

So I didn't. But I had help and guidance along the way, so I'd like to thank those involved: Dick Giordano, who gave me the go-ahead and checked out the pages as I'd written them; Len Wein, for editing the material and giving me more than a couple of invaluable writing tips along the way; and finally, Gerry Conway, for suggesting, encouraging, and making me feel like I could do it.

It wasn't easy. But it WAS fun. Hope you like it.

But enough of this. Let's get on to the business of letters...

Dear Atari Force,

You've got a winner with this series, but...

Please have it turn out that Blackjak isn't really dead. I'll wait, I just need hope. In two issues I became attached to him, even if he does look like a member of the STARJAMMERS in another certain "universe."

Please, please! They were a wonderful couple!

Muriel Hykes-Bailey
RD #1, BOX 170-B
ALLENWOOD, PA 17810

(Okay, okay, already! You want Blackjak back, you got him—or DO you? Check out next issue to find out!)

Dear Atari Crew:

When ATARI FORCE #1 hit the stands, I dismissed it as the umpteenth toy-spinoff ray, or worse, yet another opportunist marketing tie-in, as in the SMURF and PAC-MAN kid-vid shows. But by the time #4 came out, I'd heard all sorts of ecstatic praise for this title coming from respected fellow collectors. I gave in and bought a back issue

(#1). I've read through #6 now.

Boy, was I ever wrong! AF blows both the X-MEN and the MICRONAUTS clear out of the Multiversal. Not only is the artwork rich and imaginative, but the characterizations and their attendant development rival even that of the TEEN TITANS. Not liking either Martin or Chris Champion at first, I've grown to appreciate them quite a bit. Pakrat is stupendous, a sort of werewolf-wolverine-catburglar hybrid. Morphea opens up the scenario's quasi-philosophical angle in addition to her becoming uncharacteristically drawn to Babe and Martin marry and adopt Babe. I'd love to see Chris' nonplussed reaction to his new step-brother and step-mother! Dart...ah, Dart! Here we have an amazingly compiled mutation of clichés that somehow gels into a fresh entity that soars over any non-cliché extant.

In Dart, we finally have a heroine that embodies all the best of human virtues (and some not-so-good ones). She is sharp and blunt (think about it) and cannily resourceful, but she is also loving and supportive. She can out-match nearly all comers in stealth, ferocity, and cunning, and yet, is straightforward and nurturing with her comrades. Dart is also gorgeous, and has the best costume in the book! I can't wait to see ALL her tattoos. "Hukka, Hukka," indeed!

The Dark Destroyer, unlike Dart, seems to have been awarded the worst getup. He's a nasty sort, all right, but is in need of a more ominous appearance. I suppose deeds outweigh image in this case, though. I predict that Dart will ultimately save the day by channeling her power through Morphea to reveal a most distasteful future for the Dark Destroyer. Maybe he'll see a vision of himself being led in irons to a tailor or something. Only time and Gerry Conway will tell.

Till Pakrat plays pattycake with Babe, I'm a reader for life.

Steven Feldman
222 DOUGLAS AVE.
PROVIDENCE, RI 02908

(Sorry, Steve, but most of your speculations about the future of the ATARI FORCE are simply not in the cards. Still, we thought they were amusing enough to at least see print here. At least you can console yourself with the thought that SOMEWHERE in the Multiverse your scenario might one day be a reality!

But seriously, your swing from skepticism to fanaticism for the ATARI

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FORCE is a fairly common one. Time and again we receive letters from readers who simply couldn't believe what they were missing. It seems that once readers check out an issue, they're hooked. And those of you who've hopped aboard after the first issues and are a bit confused about exactly what's going on with the FORCE shouldn't miss our next issue, which recaps much of what has gone before, both in this magazine and in the original ATARI FORCE's mini-comic series.)

Dear Friends:

ATARI FORCE has finally begun to mesh. The basis of any good story is interaction between dissimilar entities. Until issue #5 and #6 only somewhat similar forces met, therefore, no real conflict. Pakrat was mostly off to himself, the other members of ATARI FORCE had limited interaction, and the Dark Destroyer had made no direct contact.

Now things have changed. First of all, the Force has begun to work as a team, shelving personal conflicts to accomplish a goal. By page 7, Gerry has shown us each character as an individual, while keeping all involved within arm's reach of each other. And yet, we still get to glimpse previously unseen sides of the characters. Morphea's anger; Martin listening, letting reason rule. And when Babe fell in the water...dare I say it? (Yeah!).. Pakrat looked like a drowned rat! Finally, the laughter acted as a unifying force.

An aside about Pakrat: Although I still think he's silly looking, and by himself, only slightly interesting, when blended into the rest of the Atari Force, magical things happen. He complements the group, and the group complements him. There's great interaction here.

Moving along, Tempest's unique fighting abilities took on a very eerie aspect with the black background used. The words *disorienting* or *frightening* might be appropriate to describe the feelings I got when reading it. When one considers the advantages Chris' powers give him in a fight, it becomes evident how powerful the Dark Destroyer must be to have defeated him so easily.

The rest of the book speaks for itself, so rather than continue, let me just say—good work. You have entertained me.

Dennis K. Catucci
20 BARRINGTON ST.
WESTBURY, NY 11590

(Thanks for your observations, Dennis. As you can see, Gerry and José are not merely presenting fully formed characters, but are instead slowly unveiling them to readers. The "unseen sides" you talk about include this new display of Tempest's powers, which raise him from the mire of "teleportational heroes" so common in comics today. And you'll continue to see new and unexpected developments in each Force member each and every issue.)

Dear Atari Folk:

After reading every issue of ATARI FORCE available, I've still got a couple of questions for you:

1) When we were first introduced to Dart, I determined her powers were purely precognitive, which held true until issue #5, in which you showed us her "psychic image." What is the true extent of her powers?

2) How did other sentient races in the New Earth dimension react to the humans' migration there?

3) What has happened to the people left on "Old Earth"?

4) Do many ships have a "Multiverse Drive" as Rident's does?

5) Could you reprint the original ATARI FORCE mini-comics as a mini-series for those of us who missed it?

Keep up the good work.

Kevin Lawson
56 APPLEWOOD LANE
GETYVILLE, NY 14068

(Kevin, your questions deal with a bunch of subjects we intend to explore in future issues, so we'll deal with them one by one, and try not to tip you off to upcoming stories too much. We wouldn't want to spoil it for you!

1) Obviously, Dart's powers extend beyond precognition. But how extensive are they? And does her particular genetic similarity to Tempest have anything to do with these additional abilities? Remember, both characters have gained powers because of their parents' repeated exposure to the Multiverse. Think about it.

2) As detailed in ATARI FORCE mini-comic #5, the aliens actually held a meeting of their interplanetary council to approve Martin Champion's request to relocate there. Although we're sure that pockets of anti-human racists still exist, for the most part everything is well... copacetic!

3) Old Earth is still around, just waiting to be rediscovered—as soon as our crew has a minute to spare!

4) At the time the ATARI FORCE takes place, there's little need for Multiverse exploration, since mankind has already found a new home, and few ships containing multiverse drives are still operational.

5) We'd love to! We're just looking for the right time, right place, and right format!

Dear Gerry and José,

I just read ATARI FORCE #6, and I feel

compelled to write and compliment you both (and all the others there, of course, through you) on the achievement you are accomplishing. That may sound very verbose, but I am a firm believer that achievement takes time...it isn't something you do, but rather something you continue to do.

I look at ATARI FORCE that way. I fall into the category of those unfortunate folks who never read those game-cartridge "comicettes" on the Force, and this series' six-issue run has been one long discovery for me. And I think the book's purposefully set up to accentuate that ensemble-feeling of discovery (and at this point, let me include a fervent prayer that I'm not one of those poor dummies who gets his letter printed just so you can reply with a tart "Oh, yeah? That's what you think! We're actually making all this up only seconds before the deadline!" Gulp!)...the characters are deepened even as they are explored, so that we, the readers, are left with our curiosities continuously whetted.

Issue #6 is a perfect example of this, and of much more. As an aside, I should begin with a peal of praise for José's fantastic cover; in a medium that virtually requires an appealing first impression, José seems to have mastered the knack. The framing of this cover was truly gripping.

As to the issue itself, the best compliment I can give it is to call it true science fiction. All the elements are there: the luring glimpses of weird, futuristic technology, the slight, tastefully done element of physical super-abilities, the multifaceted nature of the plot's unfolding, all the elements of Asimov, Herbert, and Bradbury. That's the real achievement here: you people are creating science fiction. Ignore the names: that they come from a source you didn't invent is irrelevant, the science fiction is all yours. I'm grateful that you chose to present it in this genre. There just isn't enough of this kind of stuff anymore.

I'll be watching in the future, be assured. Please keep up the great work. And don't be dismayed from the somewhat gloomy prospects for a good plot line beyond the present one.

Sincerely,
Thomas Paoli
University of Iowa

(While we're genuinely flattered by your comparisons to the greats of science fiction literature, we hope we're not sounding immodest (us? NEVER!) when we say—we're glad you noticed! And, no, you won't get any tart replies from us—Gerry and José knew from the start of the series exactly how the characters would shape up, and very consciously decided that the best way to reveal these incredibly rich characters would be to do it slowly. We've taken our time so far, and this issue has been a breather of sorts, but starting next time the action REALLY picks up as the Force begins their journey towards the final confrontation with the Dark Destroyer!

But there's a flip side to your feelings about the ATARI FORCE. Thomas, as the

letter below attests:)

Dear A-Team (so to speak),

Though this series has so far been reasonably good, that aspect has begun to become overshadowed with a feeling of frustration. In fact, I would say that so far, this series has been more akin to a good prelude to a comic book series than it has to a comic book series. For instance, here we are at the end of #5 and the Atari Force has just been formed (and informally at that). What's more, the adversary who appears destined to be the major one of the first segment and who has been in the background since #1 has also just appeared, though his identity, purpose, etc. are still not known. I guess that, in a way, your treatment is realistic, since events don't proceed at a nice measured pace; events are sometimes obscure, and good teams aren't always quickly or logically formed. But it is, as I say, frustrating—but interesting enough so far for me to stick around for a while longer.

One thing that your prolonged "prelude" has allowed you to do is to establish each of the individual characters as an interesting and distinctive character in his/her own right. (More frustration: The team has good building blocks, but we still haven't seen the team.) I hope that you will focus somewhat on the process and problems of molding the individuals into a team. While good individuals are desired components for a team, it takes more than just a good selection of talented members to make a good team. It takes training, experience, and, importantly, cooperation. Individuals must learn when and how to give the team precedence over their own thoughts and feelings. Many team books largely fail to come to grips with the whole issue of the team as an entity or a process. Hopefully, you will try to rise and meet this challenge.

Yours truly,
"T.M. Maple"

(As far as your frustrations with the ATARI FORCE thus far, T.M., we hope that the next few issues help to alleviate them. But even you concede that there are many GOOD reasons for structuring our story the way we have. The blocks HAVE come together, as you've no doubt seen in our last few issues, but we're still discovering HOW the characters work with one another. Whether or not they shape up as a group in the manner you suggest remains to be seen. That's all for now.)

NEXT ISSUE: A weakened Tempest manages to return to New Earth on a personal fact-finding mission to learn all the things his father never told him about the Dark Destroyer. Also—more on the funny little alien introduced in this issue, the provocative return of Professor Venture, and another surprise or two that'll REALLY knock your socks off! Be there—or don't say we didn't tell you so!

—Andy Helfer

MEANWHILE

I don't know how warm it is where you are today, but the good ol' summertime comes early this year for comics. Comic conventions usually don't start till late June with the really important ones usually slated for July to mid-August. This year they've been moved up so that, for example, the San Diego convention will take place the last weekend in June, and Chicago the first weekend in July. Others are slated from late August on. Why? The Olympics, of course. We're starting our summer early, too—but for a different reason. Summer is the traditional time for publishing Annuals, and in the past we've pretty much honored that tradition, but our schedule for Annuals in 1984 has been expanded (14 Annuals; count 'em, 14). We have two movie specials we're sure you'd like to read and a 48-page **SWORD OF THE ATOM SPECIAL** to round out the list. So much to do—so we're starting earlier this year. Matter of fact, if all went according to plan, the aforementioned **SWORD OF THE ATOM SPECIAL** was released sometime in early April, and the **TEEN TITANS ANNUAL** (#3) should be out right now (on sale April 26th).

A quick look at the following list of annuals and specials will give you a bit of time to plan your summer comics buying. Have fun... and have a good summer.

FIRESTORM ANNUAL

#2 1984 48 Pages Mando
\$1.25 in U.S.A.

Gerry Conway—Writer
Rafael Kayanan—Penciller
Rodin Rodriguez—Inker
Triumph of the 2000 Committee—fate of Firehawk's father, Senator Walter Reilly—and the showdown game between Bradley High and Molloy.
On sale August 23

ALL-STAR SQUADRON ANNUAL

#3 1984 48 Pages Mando
\$1.25 in U.S.A.

Roy Thomas—Writer
Giordano/Hoberg/Pérez/
Nodell/Buckler/Infantino/
Boring/Newton/Howell—Artists
The Justice Society vs. the menace that time forgot.
On sale June 14th

ARAK ANNUAL

#1 1984 48 Pages Mando
\$1.25 in the U.S.A.

Roy Thomas—Writer
Randall/Gonzales/Colón/
Alcala/Forton—Artists
Battle to the death with the Serpent Lord.

On sale July 12th

SGT. ROCK ANNUAL

#4 1984 48 Pages Mando
\$1.25 in the U.S.A.

Cover—J. Kubert
Title—*A Candle in the Wind*
Writer—Kanigher
Artist—Redondo
Sgt. Rock confronts the Iron Major.
On sale May 17th

WARLORD ANNUAL

#3 1984 48 Pages Mando
\$1.25 in the U.S.A.

Cover—Jurgens/DeCarlo
Title—*Full Circle*
Writer—C. Burkett
Pencils—D. Jurgens
Inks—M. DeCarlo
Morgan is thrown back in time to ancient Atlantis. Events taking place in this issue bring this titanic 12-part series to an exciting conclusion.
On sale June 28th

TEEN TITANS ANNUAL

#3 1984 48 Pages Mando
\$1.25 in the U.S.A.

Cover—G. Pérez (Painting)
Title—*Finale*
Writer—M. Wolfman
Pencils—Pérez
Inks—Giordano/DeCarlo
Last chapter of the Terra/Terminator story. Brings to a conclusion the story line started 2 years ago.
On sale April 26th

OMEGA MEN ANNUAL

#1 1984 48 Pages Deluxe format
\$2.00 in the U.S.A.

Cover—Smith/Tanghal
Title—*The Fight for Harpis' Wings*
Writer—D. Moench
Pencils—T. Smith
Inks—R. Tanghal
Harpis wins back her wings.
On sale August 23rd

AMETHYST ANNUAL

#1 1984 48 Pages Mando
\$1.25 in the U.S.A.
Cover—E. Colón

Writers—Mishkin/Cohn

Layouts—Ric Estrada

Finishes—E. Colón

Amy unleashes a terrible danger into the Gemworld and Amethyst must come to the rescue.

On sale June 14th

JLA ANNUAL

#2 1984 48 Pages Mando
\$1.25 in the U.S.A.

Cover—Patton/Giordano

Writer—Gerry Conway

Artist—Chuck Patton

All the new characters and new JLA headquarters will appear for the first time.

On sale July 19th

LEGION ANNUAL

#3 1984 48 Pages Deluxe format
\$2.00 in the U.S.A.

Cover—K. Giffen/L. Mahlstedt

Title—*Mordru is Back!!!*

Writer—Levitz

Artists—Swan/Tanghal

Is Darkseid's curse Mordru's freedom or Saturn Girl's child?

On sale July 5th

BATMAN ANNUAL

#9 1984 48 Pages Mando
\$1.25 in the U.S.A.

Title—*The Four Faces of Batman*

Writer—M. Barr

Artists—to be determined

4 stories by 4 different artists. Each

story is about a different facet of

Batman's character: Avenger, the

detective, the child, the man.

On sale July 26th

SUPERMAN ANNUAL

#10 1984 48 Pages Mando
\$1.25 in the U.S.A.

Cover—Barreto

Title—*The Day the Cheering Stopped*

Writer—Maggin

Pencils—Swan

Inks—Anderson

King Kosmos conjures up a sinister

scheme to discredit Superman and

thereby gain the adulation of his

subjects—the people of Earth.

SUPERGIRL MOVIE SPECIAL

48 Pages Mando
\$1.25 in the U.S.A.

Adaptation—J. Cavaliere

Artist—G. Morrow

On sale July 5th

DC PRESENTS ANNUAL

#3 1984 48 Pages Mando
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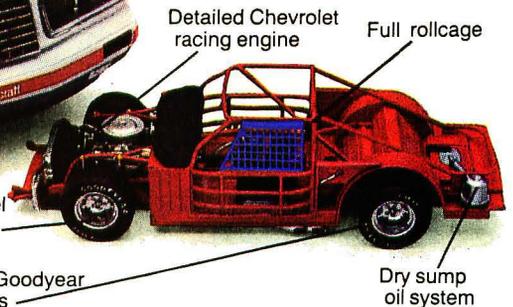
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