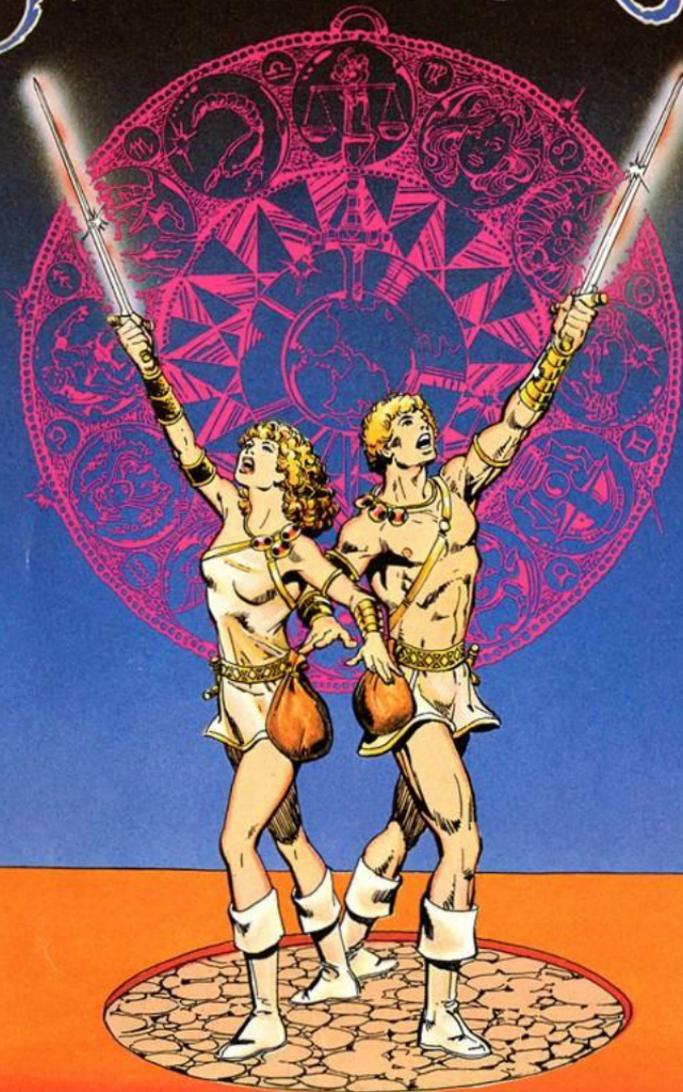


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1

# Swordquest



# EARTHWORLD™

Come questing with bold siblings twain,  
Prime thieves of ravaged Earth;  
Next journey to the Fireworld,  
Land of volcanoes' birth.  
Waves without number—Water's realm—  
But 'ware of evils there;  
Last, ride the Air's winds heaven-high  
To claim a prize most rare.



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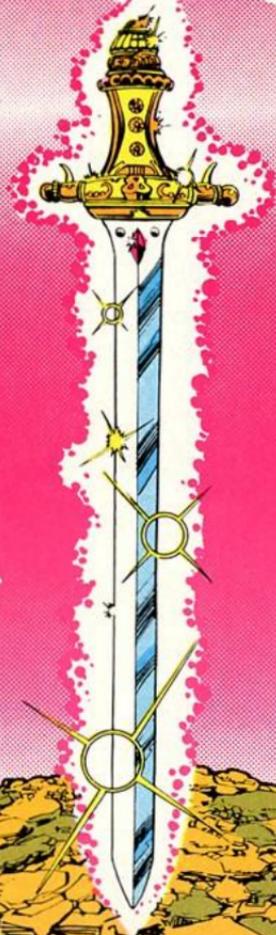
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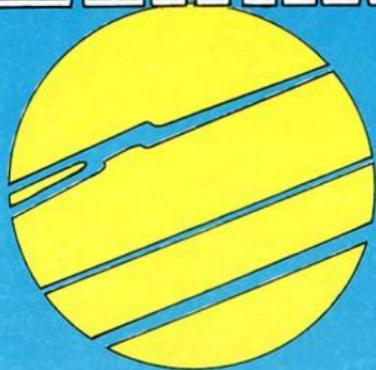
TM

*The ultimate  
Search for  
the ultimate  
treasure!*



BOOK ONE

# EARTHWORLD!



BUT THERE IS LIFE AMONG  
THE ROOFTOPS OF THESE  
HUDDLED BUILDINGS...



...LIFE WHICH MOVES  
AS SILENTLY AS THE  
SHADOWS THEMSELVES.



OR NEARLY  
60...

**SKATCH**



TARRA-?



MEN CALL IT DARKSPIRE CASTLE, THEY WHO DARE SPEAK OF IT AT ALL.

LIKE A GREAT BLACK SPIDER IT BROODS ATOP MOUNT MANDRAGOR, HIGH ABOVE THE MEDIEVAL CITY WHOSE LESSER BUILDINGS DOT THE THREE SEAWARD SIDES OF THE MASSIVE PEAK.

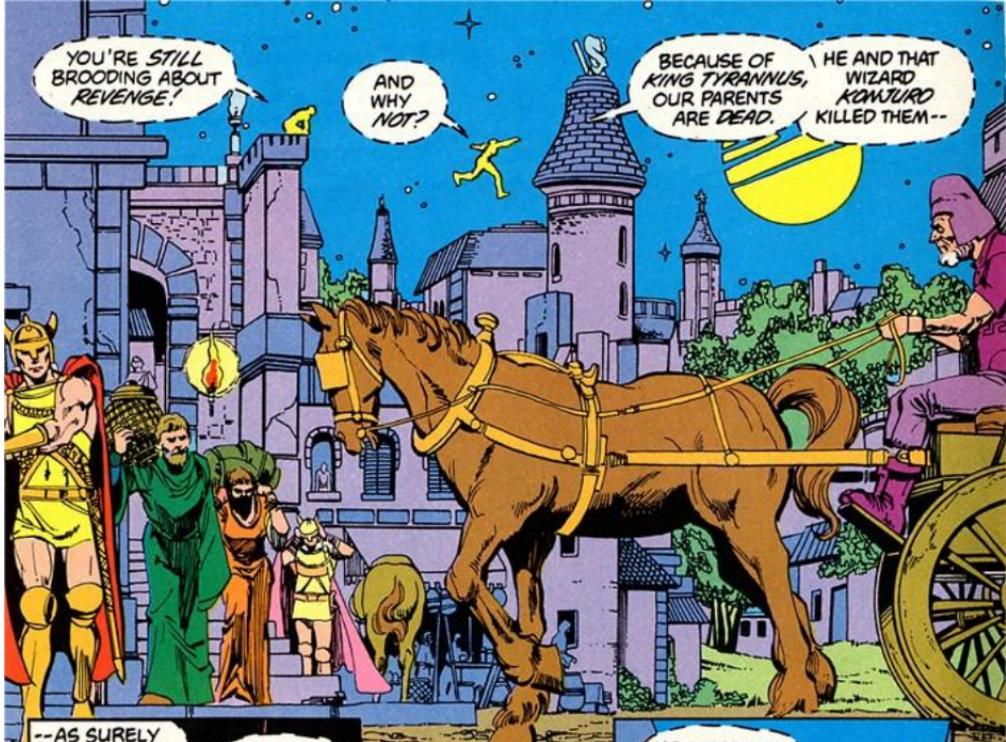
WHO ELSE, DEAR BROTHER?

I FOLLOWED YOU AFTER YOU SLIPPED OUT OF OUR ROOM.

A THIEF HAS TO EAT, TARRA. BUT EATING ISN'T ALL YOU'VE GOT ON YOUR MIND, IS IT, TORR?

I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED YOU'D COME HERE.





YOU'RE STILL BROODING ABOUT REVENGE!

AND WHY NOT?

BECAUSE OF KING TYRANNUS, OUR PARENTS ARE DEAD.

HE AND THAT WIZARD KONJURO KILLED THEM--

--AS SURELY AS IF THEY'D DONE THE DEED THEMSELVES!

GOOD THIEVES DON'T BEAR GRUDGES, TORR!

AS FOR TYRANNUS, HIS CASTLE IS A FORTRESS-- NOT EVEN AN EXPERIENCED THIEF WOULD TRY TO STEAL INSIDE DARKSPIRE!

NOT WHEN THE SORCERER KONJURO'S KEEP STANDS UNSGUARDED ON THE GRAY SEA'S SHORE!

NOR DO THEY LEAP WHEN THEY CAN WALK!

I'VE GOT MORE EXPERIENCE THAN YOU THINK, SISTER--

--AND I'M NOT PLANNING TO STEAL FROM TYRANNUS.

KONJURO?

YOU ARE MAD!

FOR AN INSTANT, THEIR EYES LOCK ON THAT LONELY TOWER...

...AND IT'S AS IF AN UNSUSPECTED DAM WERE OPENED IN THEIR HEARTS, FLOODING THEM WITH EMOTION, AS THEY RECALL THE STORY OF THEIR ORPHANING...

THEIR FATHER WAS A MIGHTY WARRIOR NAMED *TARR*, A FAITHFUL MARSHAL OF OLD KING *REULLO*'S ARMY...

...AND PROUD AS HE WAS OF HIS MANY VICTORIES ON THE BATTLEFIELD, HIS *PROUDEST* MOMENT CAME ON THE DAWN OF THE LAST DAY OF HIS FINAL CAMPAIGN...

*TWO* SONS, MY LADY?

YOU'VE GIVEN ME *TWO* SONS TO CARRY FORTH MY NAME?

BETTER THAN THAT, MY LORD.

SO THEY ARE.

WHAT SHALL WE NAME THEM, WIFE?

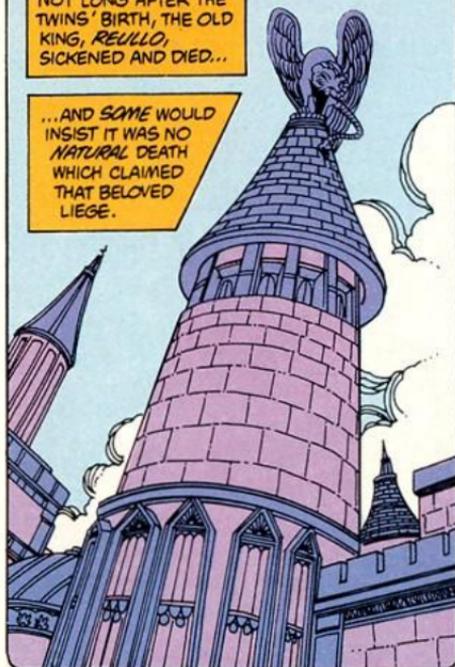
WELL, MY LORD, I'VE BEEN THINKING...

A SON AND A DAUGHTER, AS ALIKE AS TWO FLOWERS FROM THE SAME CUTTING!



NOT LONG AFTER THE TWINS' BIRTH, THE OLD KING, **REULLO**, SICKENED AND DIED...

...AND SOME WOULD INSIST IT WAS NO NATURAL DEATH WHICH CLAIMED THAT BELOVED LIEGE.



BEFORE THE TURNING OF THE NEW MOON, LORD **TARR** AND HIS WIFE, **LADY WYLA**, WERE SUMMONED TO AN AUDIENCE WITH THE NEW KING, **REULLO'S** DARK-BROWED SON, **TYRANNUS**.

THEY WENT **HAPPILY**, BELIEVING THEIR NEWBORNS WERE TO RECEIVE THE KING'S BLESSING.



**TYRANNUS**, HOWEVER, HAD OTHER IDEAS...

SO THESE ARE YOUR **WHELPS**, EH, **TARR**?

TWO BLOND BABES, STILL PEWLING AND MEWLING.

MY **LEISE!** I DON'T UNDERSTAND--!



DO YOU UNDERSTAND **TREACHERY**, **TARR**?

NOT **TREACHERY** HERE AND NOW, BUT **TREACHERY** TO COME?

**TREACHERY** AS YET **UNBORN**-- OR SHOULD I SAY, **NEWBORN**?



LAST NIGHT, I RECEIVED  
A WARNING, A PROPHECY,  
IF YOU WILL, FROM A MAN  
STEEPED IN THE WISDOM  
OF DARK MAGIC!

HIS WORDS:

"BEWARE THE CHILDREN  
WITH HAIR OF GOLD--  
TWO THEY ARE, BORN THE  
SON AND DAUGHTER OF  
A NOBLE WARRIOR."

"WHEN THOU ART OLD  
AND FEEBLE, THEY  
SHALL CLAIM THY  
THRONE, WITH A  
SWORD SHINING  
BRIGHTLY AS  
SUMMER'S SUN!"

WHAT  
WOULD YOU  
CALL THIS,  
TARR--

--IF NOT  
TREACHERY  
MOST FOUL!

YOUR MAJESTY  
CANNOT BE  
SERIOUS!

WHO  
SPEAKS  
THUS?

LET HIM  
SHOW HIMSELF,  
IF HE DARE!

SUCH PROPHECY  
IS MADNESS!



IN TIME PAST, MY FATHER WAS COUNSELED BY TWO MYSTIC MAGES--

--BUT SINCE THEY VANISHED FROM THE KEN OF MEN WHEN I WAS STILL A CHILD, I HAVE HAD TO TURN TO A MORE EARTHLY SOURCE OF WISDOM.

KONJURO, WIZARD OF SEA KEEP, STEP FORTH--

TELL THE LORD TARR WHAT YOU TOLD ME.

THE INFANTS MUST DIE.



**NO!**



THEN YOU SHALL DIE BESIDE THEM.

THE KING GAVE A SUBTLE SIGNAL--



--AND AT ONCE, THE CHAMBER SWARMED WITH ARMED MEN:

YOU LEAVE ME WITH BUT ONE THING TO SAY, YOUR MAJESTY...

**DEATH TO  
TYRANNUS!**

**DEATH TO  
THE KING!**

HE  
ALMOST  
REACHED  
THE  
THRONE.

ALMOST,  
BUT NOT  
QUITE!

**RUN,  
WYLA!**

FOR THE  
LOVE OF OUR  
CHILDREN--

**"--RUN!"**

WAS THERE EVER  
SUCH A BATTLE AS  
THIS?

ONE AGAINST A  
SCORE, AND THAT ONE  
ARMED WITH LITTLE MORE  
THAN A SWORD AND A  
NOBLE HEART?



WIZARD, DO  
SOMETHING!

OF ALL MY GUARDS,  
ONLY THESE COULD I  
TRUST WITH SUCH A  
DEED!

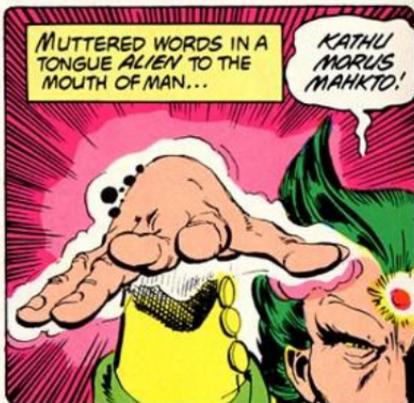
IF HE  
GETS  
PAST  
THEM--



HE  
SHALL  
NOT.

MUTTERED WORDS IN A  
TONGUE ALIEN TO THE  
MOUTH OF MAN...

KATHU  
MORUS  
MAHKTO!



--AND THEN, HE HAD  
NOT EVEN THE SWORD  
WITH WHICH TO  
DEFEND HIMSELF--





SHE CHOKED BACK A SOB; THIS WAS NO TIME FOR TEARS.

AS THE CHATTER OF HORSEHOOVES BEAT A HUNTER'S MARCH ON THE COBBLES OF THE CITY, GROWING FAINT AND LOUD BY TURNS, SHE LET MEMORY GUIDE HER TO A SMALL HOUSE JUST INSIDE THE CITY'S WALLS...



FREEMAN GARTH, YOU WERE ONCE MY HUSBAND'S FAITHFUL SCOUT.

EH? 'PON MY SOUL, IT'S LADY WYLA!

YOU SHOULDN'T BE SEEN HERE, MILADY, NOT IN THE HOUSE OF A THIEF!

ARE YOU FAITHFUL STILL?

LET HER IN, GARTH-- CAN'T YOU SEE SHE'S TERRIFIED?

IT'S YOU WHO SHOULDN'T BE SEEN WITH ME, FREEMAN. LISTEN...

WORDS TUMBLING OUT, AND NOW THE TEARS COULD NOT BE HELD BACK...

MILORD TARR KILLED?

STAY, MILADY, AND I'LL GET MY DAGGER--

I DON'T THINK SHE CAME HERE SEEKING THAT KIND OF HELP, HUSBAND.



IT'S THE CHILDREN... ISN'T IT, MILADY?

YES...



...WITH ME, THEY ARE MARKED FOR DEATH.

BUT IN YOUR HOUSE, RAISED AS YOUR SON AND DAUGHTER...

AYE, IT'S WORTH A TRY.

WE ALWAYS WANTED YOUNG 'UNS... BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU, MILADY?





**THERE SHE IS!**

WE HAVE HER NOW, BY HEAVEN!

THAT PATH LEADS TO THE EDGE OF MERCY CLIFF!

"THERE'S NO WAY DOWN... NO WAY TO CUT BACK ON HER TRAIL!"

"SHE CANNOT ESCAPE US!"



BUT, THERE IS MORE THAN ONE WAY TO ESCAPE DESPOTIC OPPRESSION, AS THE CAPTAIN OF TYRANNUS' PALACE GUARD SOON DISCOVERED TO HIS UNBELIEVING HORROR...

NAY, IT CANNOT BE!



... ONE ESCAPE, FOR THOSE WITH NOWHERE ELSE TO GO...



MOTHER AND CHILDREN WERE REPORTED DEAD; THEIR BODIES CLAIMED BY A GREEDY SEA.

SAFE, PROTECTED BY ANONYMITY THE TWINS GREW AND LEARNED; AND BY A TWISTING OF FATE, BECAME THIEVES TO SURVIVE, WHEN THEIR FOSTER-PARENTS DIED...



NOW  
MEMORY  
FADES...

...AND THEY TURN THEIR ATTENTION TO MORE IMMEDIATE CONCERNS, SUCH AS THE SCALING OF THE WIZARD'S "IMPRES-NABLE" TOWER...



AN OPENING IN THE TOWER'S CROWN LEADS DOWN INTO A DARKNESS MADE LIGHTER BY A FAINT GLIMMERING...

PSST, TORR!

CAN YOU SEE ANYTHING?



BRACE YOURSELF, SISTER...

...IT'S A TREASURE HOUSE!

THAT DARK WIZARD MUST HAVE COLLECTED A FORTUNE FROM THE KING FOR HIS COUNSELING ALL THESE YEARS!

WE'RE RICH!



WHY, THERE'S GOLD ENOUGH HERE TO BUY US A KINGDOM OF OUR OWN, IF WE WANTED...





IT LOOMS OUT OF THE STARRY SKY, AT FIRST SO DISTANT IT SEEMS NO LARGER THAN A SMALL BIRD...

...BUT AS IT RAPIDLY CLOSES IN, ITS TRUE SIZE BECOMES APPARENT...

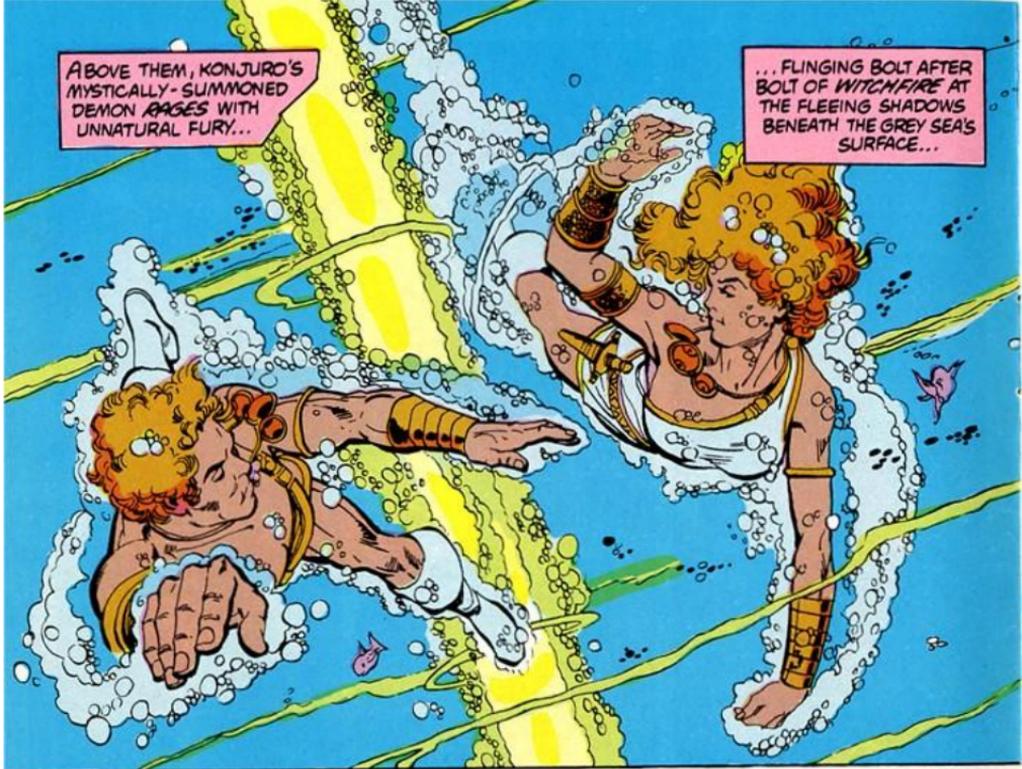


...AND TORR NO LONGER QUESTIONS THE WISDOM OF FLIGHT!



ABOVE THEM, KONJURO'S  
MYSTICALLY-SUMMONED  
DEMON RAGES WITH  
UNNATURAL FURY...

... FLINGING BOLT AFTER  
BOLT OF WITCHFIRE AT  
THE FLEEING SHADOWS  
BENEATH THE GREY SEA'S  
SURFACE...



BUT, THE TROUBLE  
WITH CHASING  
SHADOWS--



-- IS THAT YOUR  
TRUE TARGETS  
OFTEN SLIP AWAY...

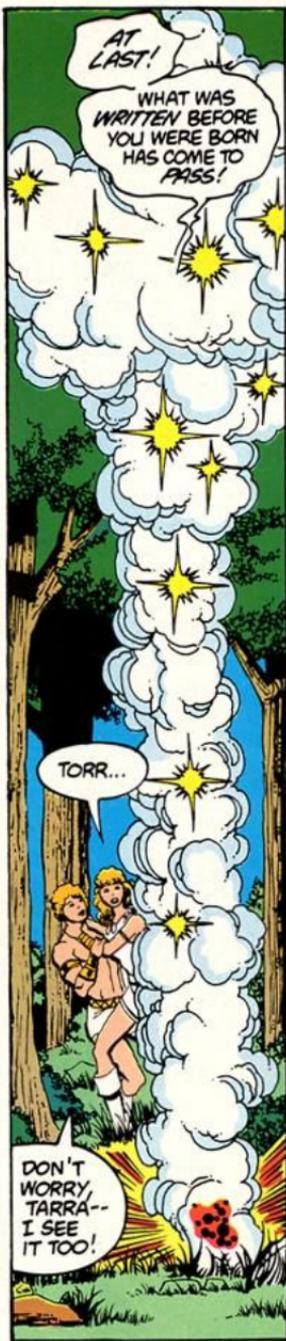


!GASP!... FEEL  
LIKE MY BRAIN'S  
ABOUT TO  
BURST...!

ARE YOU  
ALL  
RIGHT?

I'LL  
LIVE.

KONJURO'S  
DEMON...?



W-WHO  
ARE  
YOU?

WHAT  
ARE YOU  
GOING TO  
DO  
TO US?

ONCE, WE HAD  
HUMAN NAMES,  
EVEN AS YOU.

BUT THAT WAS  
BEFORE OUR  
TRANSFIGURATION  
TO A HIGHER  
STAGE OF SENTIENT  
LIFE.

YOU MAY CALL US  
MENTORR AND MENTARRA,  
AS DID KING RUELLO WHEN  
WE WERE HIS MOST  
RESPECTED COUNSELORS--  
DECADES PAST, BEFORE  
THE BLACK WIZARD KONJURO  
DID IMPRISON US IN YONDER  
SHATTERED JEWEL!

BUT IT IS  
NOT OF THIS  
WE WISH TO  
SPEAK...

RATHER, WE WOULD  
TELL YOU OF YOUR DESTINY--  
A DESTINY THAT WILL TAKE  
YOU ACROSS FOUR  
WORLDS!



**REVENGE!**

YOU'RE  
TALKING ABOUT  
REVENGE AGAINST  
TYRANNUS  
AND THE  
WIZARD!

SURMOUNTING  
THESE CHALLENGES  
WILL MAKE YOU  
STRONGER, WISER,  
MORE COURAGEOUS--

--AND IN THE  
END, WILL GIVE  
YOU YOUR  
HEART'S  
DESIRE!

A WORLD OF  
EARTH SPIRITS...  
A WORLD OF FIRE...  
A WORLD OF WATER  
SPRITES... AND  
LAST, A WORLD OF  
AIR!

ON EACH WORLD,  
YOU WILL ENCOUNTER  
A CHALLENGE--  
PERHAPS MORE  
THAN ONE!



THESE  
ARE YOUR  
WORDS,  
NOT OURS.

TO ACHIEVE  
YOUR GOAL,  
YOU MUST BE  
WILLING TO  
LEARN WHAT  
EACH WORLD CAN  
TEACH YOU.

YOU MUST HAVE  
OPEN MINDS,  
AND YES, OPEN  
HEARTS AS WELL.

YOU MUST PUT  
ASIDE YOUR ANGER  
AND YOUR HATE.

YOU MUST LEARN  
TO THINK BEFORE  
ACTING.

YOU MUST LEARN  
TO JUDGE BEFORE  
RESPONDING.

REMEMBER THIS--  
THE MOST DIRECT  
ROUTE IS NOT  
NECESSARILY THE  
CORRECT ONE.

THE  
GREATEST  
WARRIOR  
IS NOT  
ALWAYS THE  
STRONGEST.

NOW  
OBSERVE THE  
PRIZE THAT  
AWAITS YOU--

--THE  
SWORD  
OF ULTIMATE  
SORCERY!

THE  
TALISMAN  
OF THE PENULTIMATE  
TRUTH!



THUNDER ROCKS THE QUIET GLADE, AND WHEN IT PASSES, AND THE SMOKE LIFTS TWISTING INTO THE TWILIGHT SKY...

**A PIT!**

THIS WASN'T HERE A MOMENT AGO!

IT LOOKS DEEP ENOUGH TO REACH THE VERY HEART OF THE WORLD!

WISE WORDS, TORR, AND TRUER THAN YOU KNOW.

DESCEND, AND YOU WILL ENTER THE FIRST OF THE FOUR WORLDS YOU MUST CONQUER... EARTHWORLD!

OBSERVE... LEARN... AND TRIUMPH!

THEY'RE FADING AWAY!

LET THEM.

THEY'VE TOLD US ALL WE NEED TO KNOW.

HAVE THEY?

I WISH I WAS AS SURE AS YOU ARE, TORR.

WHAT ARE YOU AFRAID OF?

WELL, FOR  
ONE THING--  
THAT!

THE SHAFT ENDS  
OVER SOME KIND OF  
CIRCULAR DOME--WITH  
TWELVE CHAMBERS  
AROUND THE OUTSIDE  
RING!

THE SWORD  
OF ULTIMATE  
SORCERY MUST BE  
IN ONE OF THOSE  
CHAMBERS--THAT'S  
OBLIVIOUS!

FINDING  
IT IS JUST A  
PROCESS OF  
ELIMINATION!

CHILD'S  
PLAY!

THINK YOU SO,  
YELLOW-HAIRED  
WHELP?

HERMINUS THE  
THIEF HAS BEEN  
TRYING TO FIND THAT  
SWORD FOR ALMOST  
TWELVE MOONS!



EVEN SUCH  
A PAIR OF FOOLS  
AS YOU!

**SNIK!**

YEE  
OW  
OW  
OW  
OW  
WUMP





ONLY THROUGH A CHAMBER  
BELONGING TO AN *EARTH SIGN*  
MAY YOU ENTER THIS MYSTIC  
REALM OF OURS-- YOUR ENTRY  
WAS SIMPLY MORE *DRAMATIC*  
THAN MOST.

BUT, I SEE THAT I  
HAVE *STARTLED* YOU...  
AND THIS *SHAMES*  
ME.

ORDINARILY, I  
AM *MOST DEMURE*,  
I *ASSURE* YOU.

PLEASE, BE AT *EASE*...  
RELAX, AND LET THE  
SOOTHING *MUSIC* OF  
MY CHAMBER BE A BALM  
FOR YOUR WEARY *SOUL*.

I AM *VRGO*.  
PLEASE CONSIDER  
YOURSELF MY  
*GUEST*.

ELSEWHERE...

I'VE CIRCLED THIS HUGE DOME TWICE--

--AND THE ONLY THING EVEN APPROACHING A DOOR THAT I'VE FOUND IS THIS CREVICE.



WHUIF...IT'S A GOOD THING THIEVES DON'T EAT TOO REGULARLY...

...OR I'D NEVER MAKE IT THROUGH!



THERE! I'M IN!

NOW TO--

THUMP



THE CREVICE --IT SLAMMED SHUT BEHIND ME!



I GET SO FEW VISITORS--

--I LIKE TO MAKE SURE THAT THOSE WHO STUMBLE IN...STAY A WHILE!

WHO ARE YOU--WHAT ARE YOU?



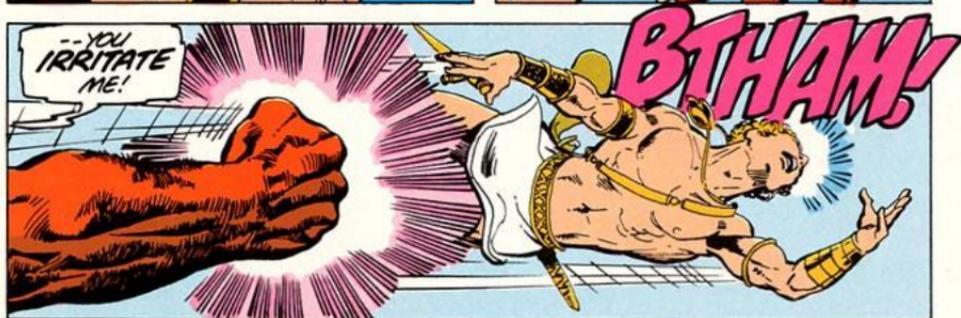
**YOU DON'T KNOW?  
AH, THEN YOU'RE  
IGNORANT AS WELL  
AS PRESUMPTUOUS!**

**YOU'VE ENTERED  
THE EARTH-SIGN  
CHAMBER, BOY!**

**TWO DOORS LEAD  
FROM THIS CHAMBER TO  
THOSE ON EITHER SIDE,  
BUT THOSE DOORS ARE  
LOCKED AND I HAVE  
THE ONLY KEY!**

**AND  
WHO  
AM I?!**

**I AM  
TAURUS,  
THE BULL--  
AND YOU  
ARE MY  
PRISONER!**





--BUT I CAN HARM YOU!

WHAT--?

THE KEY! CURSE YOU, YOU'VE STOLEN THE KEY!



HIS CHARGE IS CARRYING HIM CLEAR ACROSS THE CHAMBER!

HAVE TO UNLOCK THIS DOOR BEFORE HE CAN TURN ABOUT--!



A TWIST OF METAL IN METAL AND THE HUGE VAULT-LIKE DOOR SWINGS OPEN; A MOMENT LATER...

I'M THROUGH-- AND THE DOOR'S SHUT TIGHTLY AS A WIZARD'S PURSE!

LET'S SEE TAURUS GET PAST THAT!



STRANGE CORRIDOR...IT SEEMS TO BE MOVING PAST FASTER THAN I'M RUNNING!

ANOTHER DOOR UP AHEAD...

WILL I FIND THE SWORD IN THERE?



THE ONLY THING YOU'LL FIND IN THERE, YOU YOUNG CUTPURSE...

...IS A SPEEDY DEATH!

IN THE CHAMBER  
OF VIRGO...

SO... YOU SEEK  
THE SWORD  
OF ULTIMATE  
SORCERY.

IT WAS WRITTEN THAT  
ONE DAY YOU WOULD  
COME-- YOU AND A  
FAIR-HAIRED BOY,  
WHO TOGETHER  
WOULD FORGE A  
GREAT DESTINY.

GODS...

BUT YOU WILL  
NEED HELP-- A WAY  
TO TRAVEL BETWEEN  
THE ZODIACAL  
CHAMBERS--

-- AND YOU  
WILL FIND IT THERE,  
IN THE STAR  
OF PASSAGE!

IT'S  
BEAUTIFUL.

BUT HOW  
CAN I GET IT  
OUT OF THAT  
GLOBE?

PERHAPS  
BREAK THE  
GLASS  
WITH MY  
DAGGER--?

SOME  
SIXTH  
SENSE  
FREEZES  
HER HAND,  
AS SHE  
HEARS A  
STRANGE  
RUSTLE  
BEHIND  
HER--

-- LIKE THE LEATHERY  
WHISPER OF INHUMAN  
WINGS...

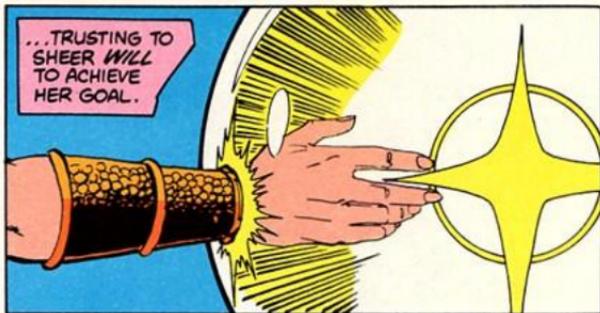
HOT  
BREATH  
WARMS  
HER  
NECK.

PART OF HER  
SCREAMS A  
WARNING--  
"USE THE  
DAGGER!  
DEFEND  
YOURSELF!"



BUT A GENTLER  
ASPECT OF HER  
SOUL REBELS, AND  
THRUSTS BLADE  
BACK INTO SHEATH...

...TRUSTING TO  
SHEER WILL  
TO ACHIEVE  
HER GOAL.



GOOD.

YOU'VE PASSED  
THE FIRST  
TEST.

VIRGO! BUT I  
THOUGHT YOU'D  
BECOME SOME KIND  
OF--OF MONSTER!

WAS THAT AN  
ILLUSION?



NO, CHILD. I SIMPLY RESPONDED  
TO POTENTIAL VIOLENCE.

HAD YOU PERSISTED, I MIGHT  
HAVE KILLED YOU--OR YOU  
MIGHT HAVE KILLED ME.

NOW LET  
THE STAR  
TAKE YOU  
WHERE IT  
WILL...

... AND  
MAY THE  
LORDS OF  
THE  
ZODIAC  
KEEP YOU  
SAFE!



SUCH REACTIONS  
ARE BEYOND  
MY CONTROL.

BUT I AM  
PLEASED THE  
CONFRONTATION  
WAS AVOIDED.



A MOMENT OF BLINDING LIGHT AND, WHEN IT FADES, TARRA FINDS HERSELF IN A SWEET-SMELLING GARDEN...

... LISTENING TO THE MUSIC OF A VERY STRANGE PIPER INDEED.

AH, A VISITOR. HOW DELIGHTFUL.

COME PLAY WITH CAPRICORN, MY DEAR.

PLAY WITH ME--

--OR DIE!

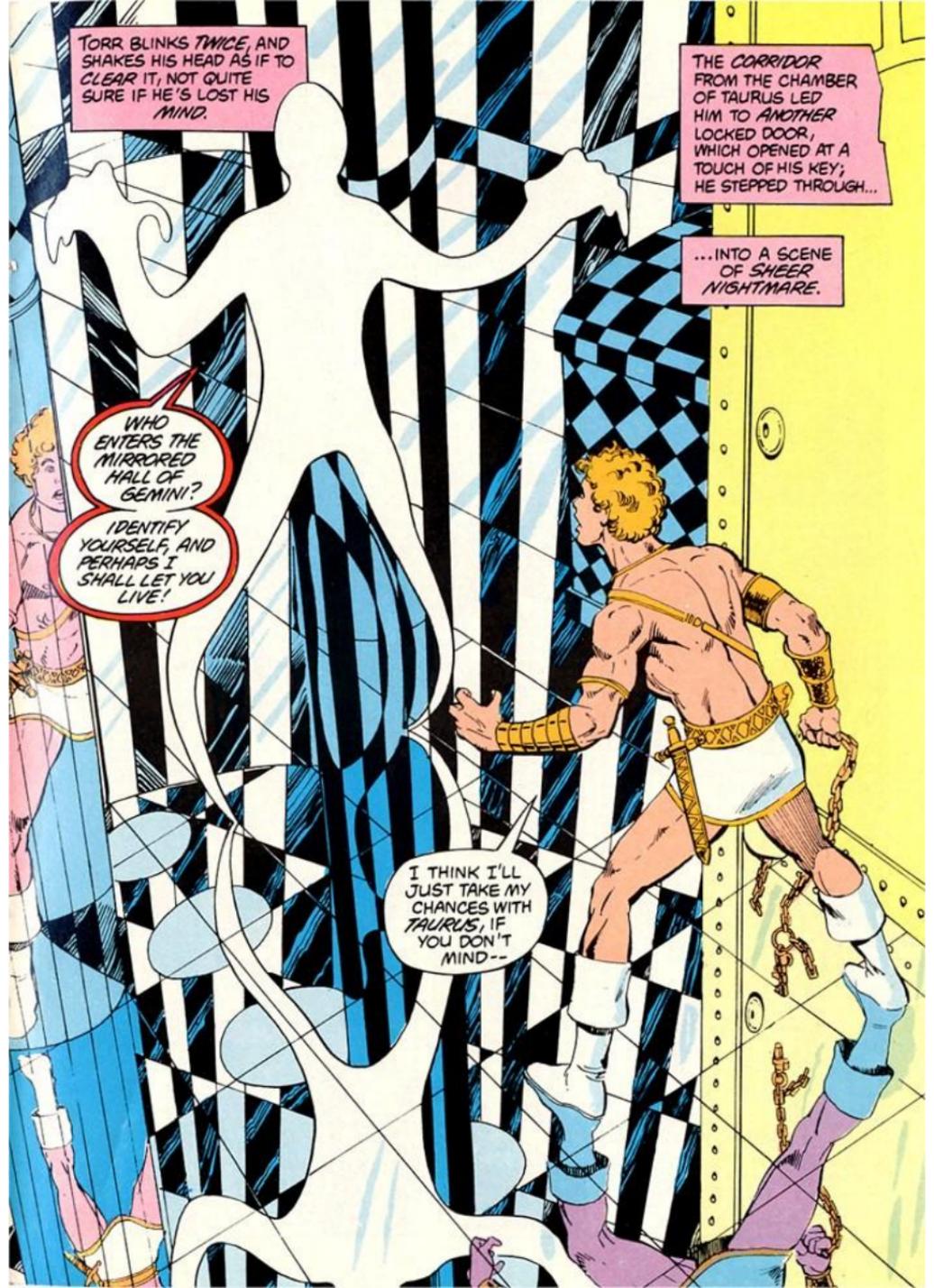
NO THANKS, GOAT.

I'M LOOKING FOR MY BROTHER, AND I CAN'T STOP TO PLAY UNTIL I--

# SHORT-SHORT

--FIND HIM...





TORR BLINKS TWICE, AND SHAKES HIS HEAD AS IF TO CLEAR IT, NOT QUITE SURE IF HE'S LOST HIS MIND.

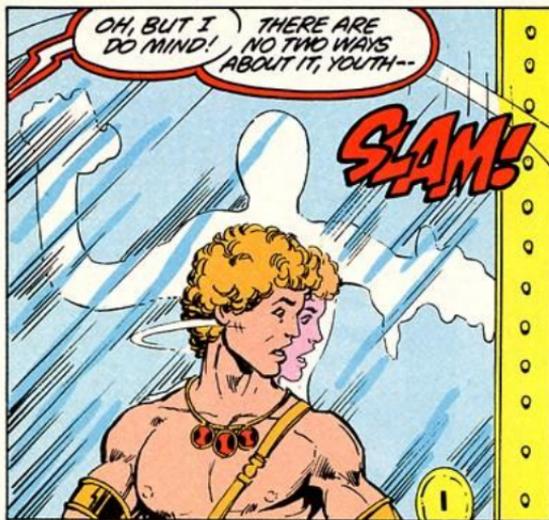
THE CORRIDOR FROM THE CHAMBER OF TAURUS LED HIM TO ANOTHER LOCKED DOOR, WHICH OPENED AT A TOUCH OF HIS KEY; HE STEPPED THROUGH...

...INTO A SCENE OF SHEER NIGHTMARE.

WHO ENTERS THE MIRRORED HALL OF GEMINI?

IDENTIFY YOURSELF, AND PERHAPS I SHALL LET YOU LIVE!

I THINK I'LL JUST TAKE MY CHANCES WITH TAURUS, IF YOU DON'T MIND--



OH, BUT I DO MIND! THERE ARE NO TWO WAYS ABOUT IT, YOUTH--

**SLAM!**



--YOU WILL NEVER LEAVE THIS CHAMBER ALIVE!



THERE IS A FLICKER OF SHADOW IN THE MIRROR BEHIND THE BIZARRE WHITE CREATURE, BUT TORR HAS ONLY A GLIMPSE OF IT BEFORE GEMINI ATTACKS--

IF I'VE LEARNED ONE THING ABOUT THIS MAD LAND--

--IT'S THAT EVERY CHAMBER IN IT HAS TWO DOORS!



YOU MAY HAVE SEALED ONE--

**CRASH**



--BUT IF I CAN JUST REACH THE OTHER--

EH?



FORGIVE ME.

I'M AFRAID I MUST HAVE MADE A TERRIBLE FIRST IMPRESSION.

HE ALWAYS DOES, YOU KNOW.

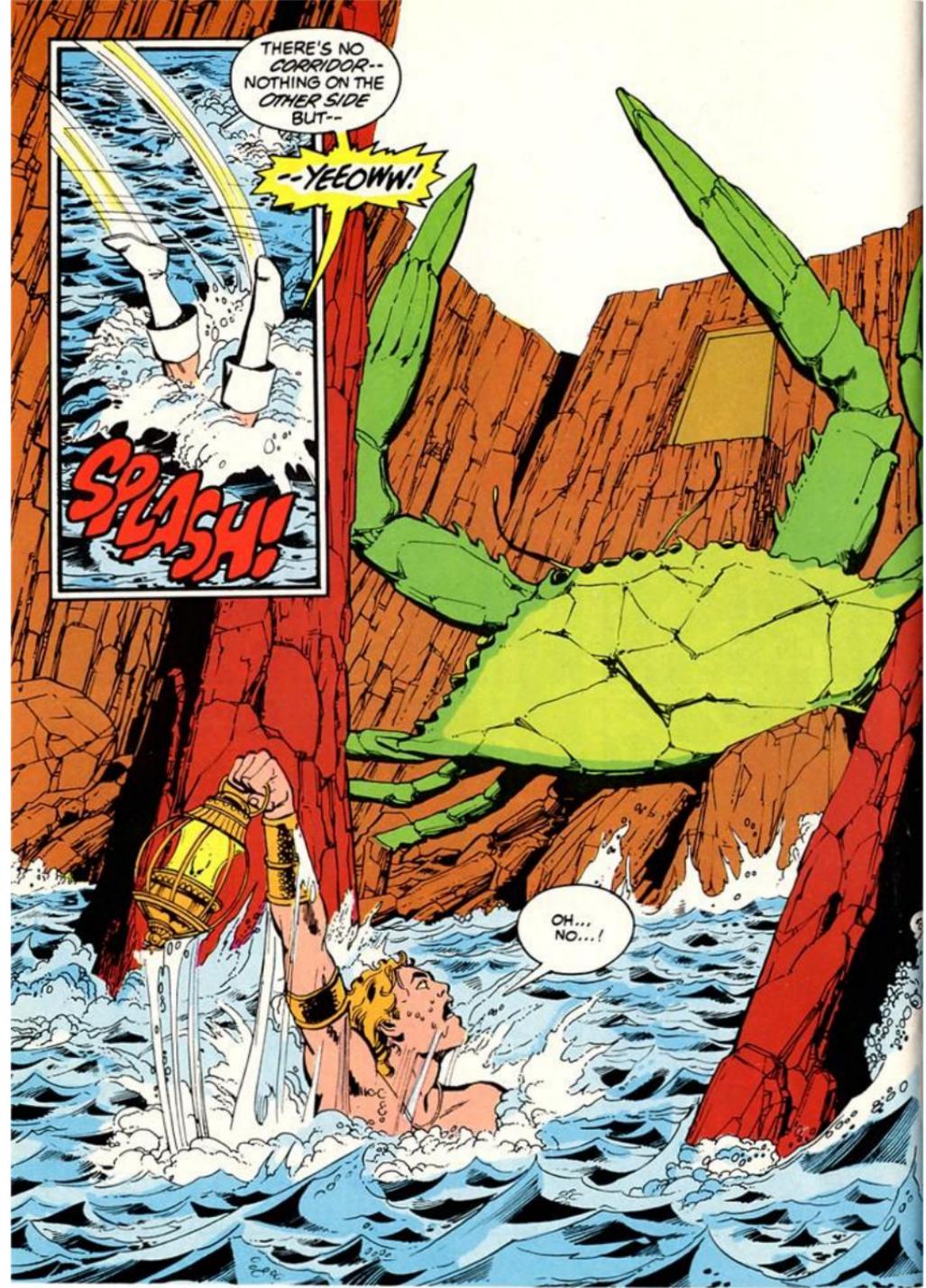


THERE'S NO  
CORRIDOR--  
NOTHING ON THE  
OTHER SIDE  
BUT--

--YEEOWW!

**SPLASH!**

OH...  
NO...!



ELSEWHERE...

SO AMUSING, HE OFFERED ME SOME ADVICE AND HELP WHEN HE REALIZED WHO I WAS--

-- TELLING ME TO TAKE THIS CORRIDOR TO THE CHAMBER ON HIS LEFT, WHERE HE SAID TORR WOULD BE WAITING FOR ME!

TORR!  
IT'S TARRA!

I'VE GOT A SURPRISE FOR YOU--

WHAT AN ODD CREATURE TAURUS IS... APPARENTLY, TORR BESTED HIM, AND TAURUS FOUND THAT AMUSING!

IS THAT SO, LITTLE GIRL?

AND ARIES HAS A SURPRISE FOR YOU, TOO!

THE MINOTAUR LIED!

HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE-- BEFORE ARIES CAN REACH ME TO--

ULP!

IN HER HAND, THE STAR GLOWS, AS IF SENSING HER DISTRESS, AND BETWEEN ONE BREATH AND THE NEXT--

-- SHE FINDS HERSELF  
TRANSPORTED, OUT OF  
THE FIRE AND INTO THE  
FURNACE...

GODS OF  
MY MOTHER!

HERMINUS,  
WHO IS THIS  
BOLD  
INTRUDER?

IS IT ONE OF  
THE THIEVES  
YOU WARNED  
ME ABOUT?

AVE, BRAVE  
SAGITTARIUS--  
THE VIXEN  
CALLED TARRA!

SEE? SHE'S STOLEN  
THE STAR OF  
PASSAGE FROM  
SWEET VIRGO!

BE SWIFT,  
BEFORE  
SHE CAN VANISH  
AGAIN--!

TWOK!

OHH!!

GOOD SHOOTING,  
BRAVE WARRIOR!

HA!  
SHE  
DROPPED  
THE  
STAR!

NOW'S MY CHANCE,  
WHILE THAT THICK-  
SKULLED CENTAUR  
KEEPS HER PINNED  
DOWN--!

THE  
STAR!

NO!



AND, ELSEWHERE...

I MUST ADMIT, GOOD FRIEND CRAB-- YOU GAVE ME QUITE A FRIGHT BACK THERE!

NOT MY INTENTION.

AM PEACEFUL, IF NOT ATTACKED.

THOUGH NOT ALWAYS TRUE, IF STAR-SIGNS ARE AWRY.

GO AND BE WELL, YOUNG WARRIOR... AND KNOW YOU HAVE FRIEND IN CANCER.



I'M BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND.

WAR-CRAFT MAY BE USELESS IN THIS LAND, WHERE FOES CAN BECOME FRIENDS AND FRIENDS CAN TURN INTO FOES!

I BETTER WARN TARRA!

IF I CAN FIND HER!

YET ANOTHER DOOR OPENS TO THE MAGIC KEY'S TOUCH, BUT WHEN TORR STEPS THROUGH INTO THE CHAMBER BEYOND--

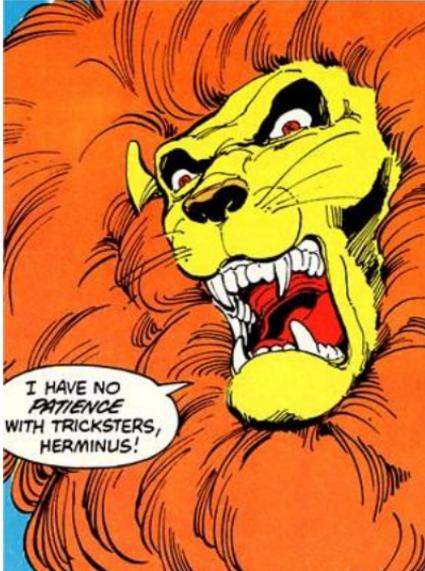
--HE IS GREETED BY A ROAR OF UNBRIDLED FURY!

THIEF AND TRESPASSER!

HERMINUS WARNED ME THAT YOU WOULD COME, BEARING STOLEN TREASURES AND SPOUTING LIES!

WATCH HIM CAREFULLY, KING LED--

HE'S A TRICKY ONE, HE IS!



I HAVE NO PATIENCE WITH TRICKSTERS, HERMINUS!



NO PATIENCE AT ALL!

RARRR

SCRASH!



YOU!

I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU DID THIS-- BUT YOU'RE GOING TO TELL HIM YOU LIED!

AT THIS POINT, YOU WHELP, I DOUBT HE'D BELIEVE ME!

OOF!



THAT THING MUST BE IMPORTANT IF YOU--

UH-OH!

ROWRR

DOLT! YOU MADE ME DROP THE STAR--!



TWO HANDS REACH, BUT ONE REACHES FASTER--



--AND IN A FLASH OF BLINDING LIGHT, BOTH THIEVES ARE--

GONE!

HALF A BREATH  
LATER...

TARRA!

**TWEHLINK**

TORR, GET  
AWAY!  
SAGITTARIUS  
WON'T LISTEN  
TO REASON!

HE THINKS  
WE'RE  
BANDITS!

I'M  
FINDING  
YOUR  
RANGE,  
WENCH!

TARRA'S GETTING  
WINDED-- SHE CAN'T  
KEEP DODGING AND, AS  
LONG AS THAT ARMED  
CENTAUR IS BETWEEN US,  
I CAN'T REACH HER TO  
HELP!

WAIT-- MAYBE I CAN  
BLIND HIM BY TOSSING  
THIS CLOAK OVER HIS--

SIMULTANEOUSLY...

NO SIGN OF  
TORR-- HE  
MUST HAVE  
ESCAPED!

HUH?

AT LEAST ONE  
OF US WILL  
SURVIVE!

THIS  
IS IT...

... GODS HELP  
ME, I CAN'T RUN  
ANY FURTHER!

NOW  
I HAVE  
YOU!



YES, BUT  
CAN YOU  
KEEP  
HER?

NA-A-YYY!

SOMEONE'S  
MOUNTED  
ME-- SOME-  
ONE I CANNOT  
SEE!



SO... THE LUCKY  
BRAT FOUND THE  
CLOAK OF  
INVISIBILITY!

I'VE FOUND  
SOMETHING JUST  
AS USEFUL--  
THE SHOES OF  
STEALTH!



WEARING THESE, I  
CAN BE SEEN-- BUT  
NOT HEARD!

THAT GIVES ME  
THE CHANCE I  
NEED TO SLIP  
AWAY...

... AND  
RETURN TO THIEVE  
ANOTHER  
DAY!



SEEN OR UNSEEN, --AND  
MY ATTACKER HAS WEIGHT-- WHAT  
CAN BE THROWN! WEIGHT

BROTHER...?

NO TIME TO  
EXPLAIN,  
TARRA!

YOU'RE NEAR  
ENOUGH NOW!



QUICK,  
GRAB THE  
STAR,  
AND LET'S  
GET--



--OUT  
OF HERE?

SOMETHING HAPPENED  
WHEN WE TOUCHED  
THE STAR TOGETHER!

THIS ISN'T ONE  
OF THE ZODIACAL  
CHAMBERS!

TORR,  
LOOK UP  
THERE!

WE'VE MADE  
IT TO THE CENTRAL  
CHAMBER!

THAT'S IT--  
THAT'S WHAT  
WE'VE BEEN  
SEEKING--

--THE SWORD  
OF ULTIMATE  
SORCERY!

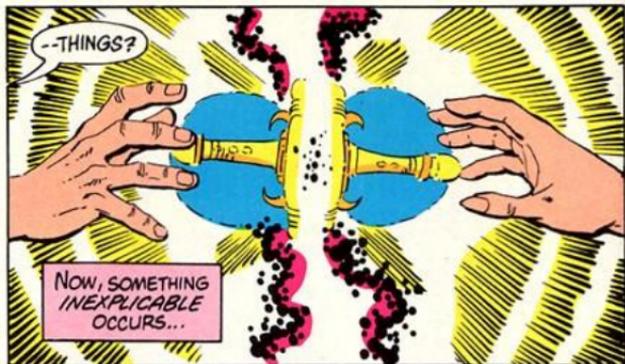
**AWE TAKES THEIR BREATHS AWAY.**

AS IF FORGED IN THE FIRES OF THE SUN, THE SWORD GLOWS WITH UNEARTHLY GLORY, SENDING A LANCE OF PURE ENERGY DOWN TO THE MARBLE BENEATH ITS POINT.

THAT ZODIAC DISC! WE SAW IT BEFORE, WHEN OUR MENTORS SHOWED US THE SWORD!

TOR-- I JUST REALIZED--

--WHAT IF THE SWORD AND THE TALISMAN OF WHICH THEY SPOKE ARE TWO SEPARATE--



QUICKLY!  
DON'T LET  
IT--

YOU CANNOT  
LOSE THAT  
WHICH YOU  
NEVER  
POSSESSED,  
CHILD.

SWORDS  
YOU NOW  
HAVE--

THEN YOU  
HAVE  
LEARNED  
WELL, AND  
HAVE BECOME  
WISE  
SEEKERS  
AS WELL AS  
SKILLFUL  
THIEVES.

IT TOO  
WILL  
CHALLENGE  
YOUR WITS,  
AND YOUR  
SKILL.

WILL  
YOU  
MEET  
THAT  
CHALLENGE?

BELOW LIES  
THE SECOND  
WORLD YOU  
MUST FACE,  
AS YOU  
CLAIM YOUR  
DESTINY.

WE'VE  
COME  
THIS FAR,  
MENTORR!

--FALL!

OH, TORR--  
WE'VE  
LOST IT!

--BUT THE  
TRUE SWORD  
WAS NOT  
YET YOURS.

WHAT HAVE  
YOU LEARNED  
IN THIS  
WORLD?

BY THE  
GODS, WE  
WON'T  
STOP NOW!

THAT BATTLES  
AREN'T ALWAYS  
WON BY  
VIOLENCE!

AND NEITHER  
WILL MERMINUS,  
FOOL--

--EVEN IF IT  
MEANS FOLLOWING  
TO THE VERY  
GATES OF HADES!

AND SO IT ENDS,  
WITH ANOTHER  
BEGINNING.

TORR, YOU MAY  
THINK I'M MAD,  
UNDER THE  
CIRCUMSTANCES,  
BUT A CHILL  
JUST RAN DOWN  
MY SPINE--

--AS IF,  
SOMEHOW,  
SOMEWHERE,  
WE WERE BEING  
WATCHED!

IN HIS  
CASTLE  
KEEP, THE  
WIZARD  
KONJURO  
SMILES.

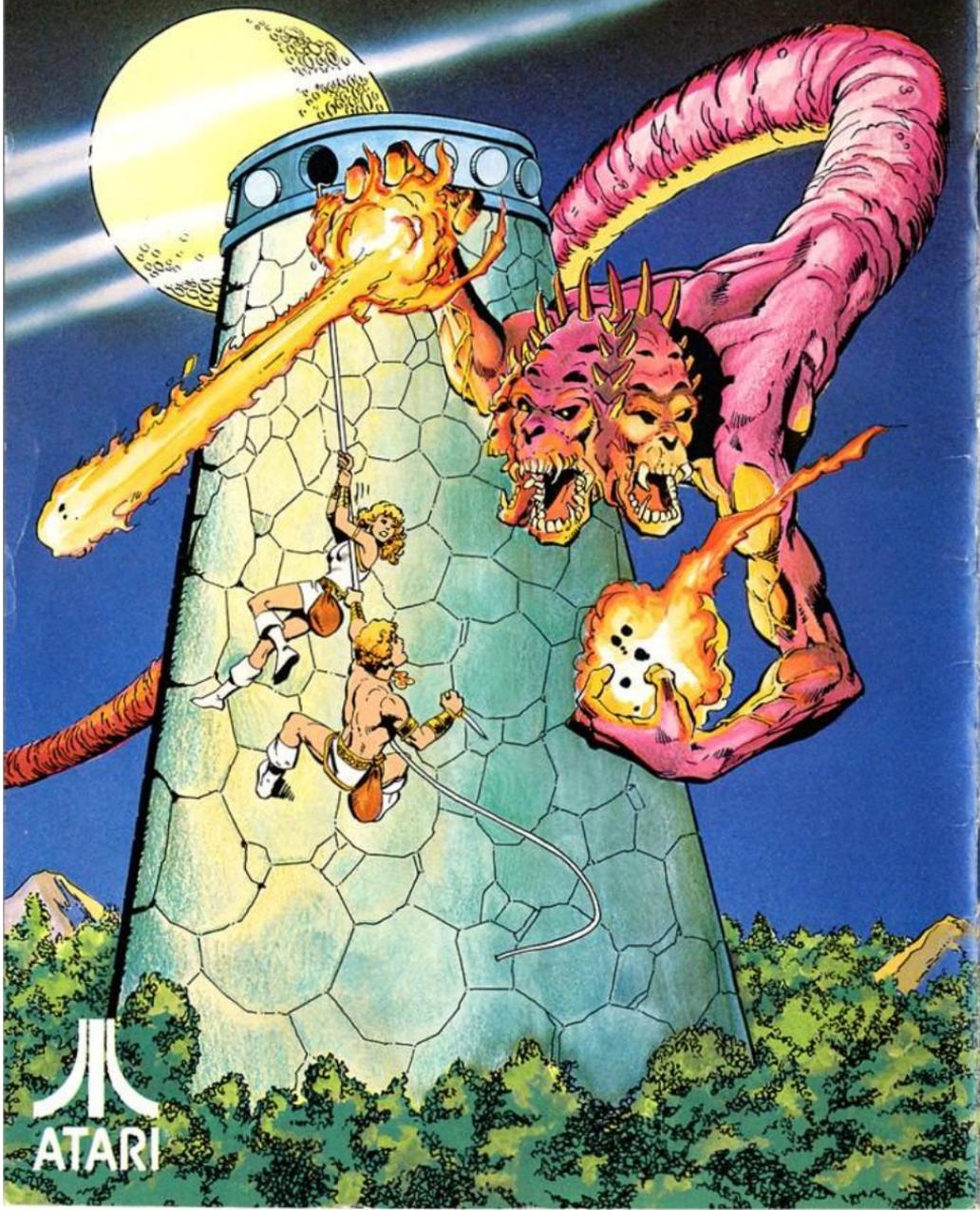
IT IS A  
SMILE  
WITHOUT  
HUMOR...

...A SMILE  
LIKE  
THE GRIN OF  
DEATH!

TO BE CONTINUED -- IN **SWORDEQUEST** BOOK TWO: **FIREWORLD!**



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ATARI