

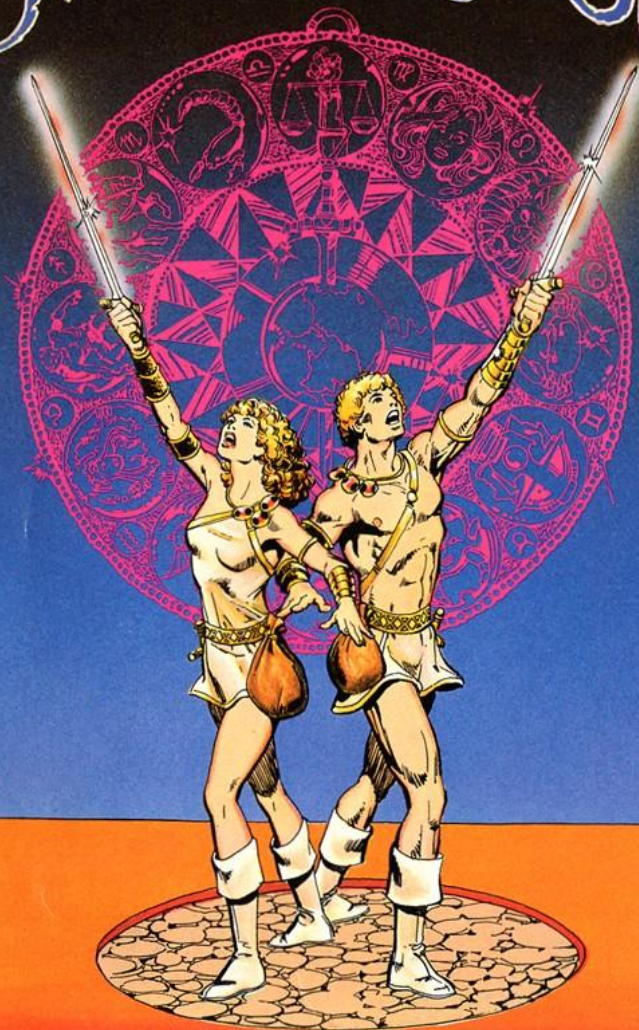


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1

Swordquest

TM



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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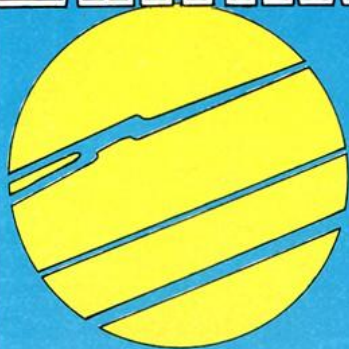
TM

*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
SO...

SKATTEH



TARRA--?



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

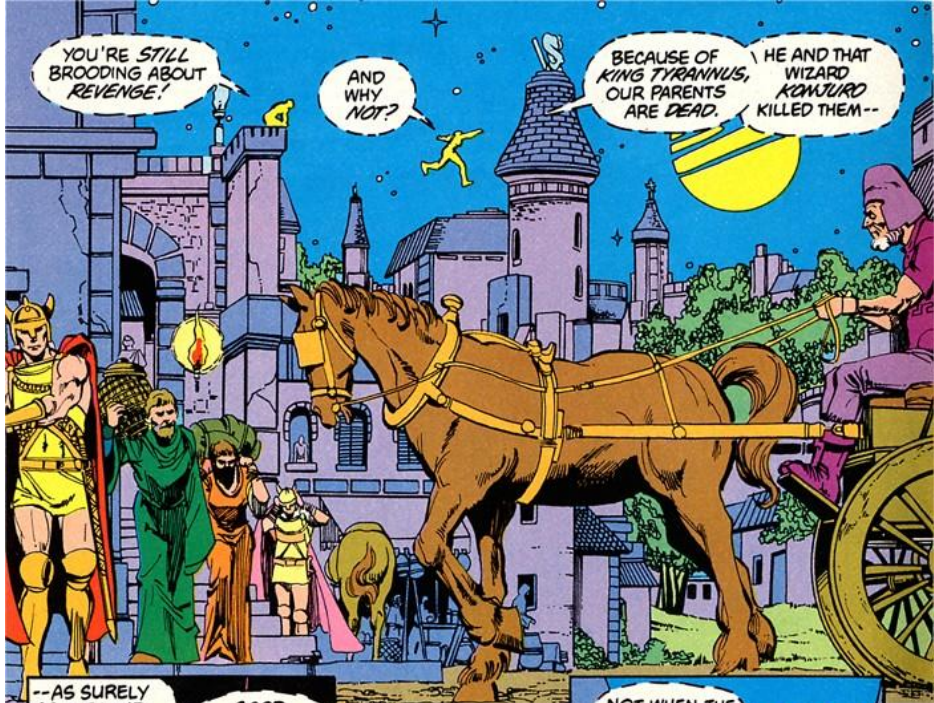
LIKE A GREAT BLACK SPIDER IT BROODS ATOP MOUNT MANDRAGON, HIGH ABOVE THE MEDIEVAL CITY WHOSE LESSER BUILDINGS DOT THE THREE SEAWARD SIDES OF THE MASSIVE PEAK.

WHO ELSE, DEAR BROTHER?

I FOLLOWED YOU AFTER YOU SLIPPED OUT OF OUR ROOM.

I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED YOU'D COME HERE.

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



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 *UNGUARDED* ON THE GRAY SEA'S SHORE!

NOR DO THEY LEAP WHEN THEY CAN WALK!

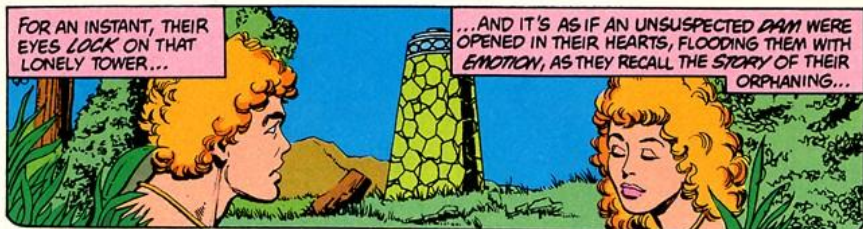
I'VE GOT MORE EXPERIENCE THAN YOU THINK, SISTER--

--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.



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

SO THEY ARE.

WHAT SHALL WE NAME THEM, WIFE?

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



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?

SUCH PROPHECY
IS MADNESS!

LET HIM
SHOW HIMSELF,
IF HE DARE!





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--



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.

ARE YOU FAITHFUL STILL?

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

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

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

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

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

MILORD TARR KILLED?

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

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

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 UN-
BELIEVING
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 "IMPREGNABLE" 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!



RAARR

MERCY
CLIFF
UP
AHEAD..



JUMP!

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--

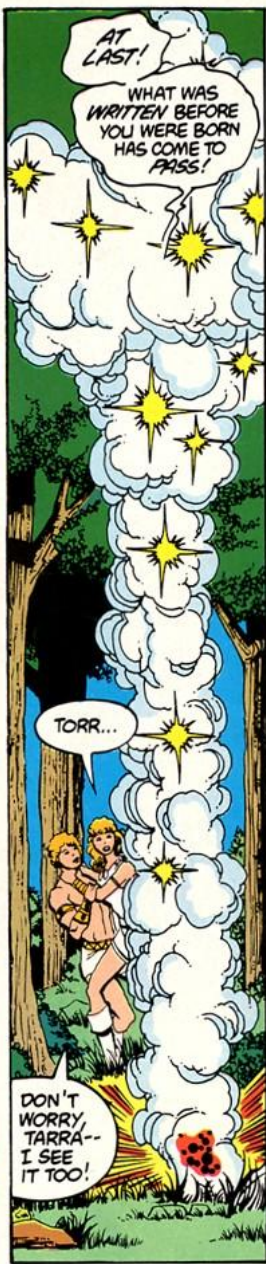
-- IS THAT YOUR
TRUE
TARGETS
OFTEN SLIP AWAY...

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

ARE YOU
ALL
RIGHT?

I'LL
LIVE.

KONJURO'S
DEMON...?





W-HO
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 KONZIRD
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
OBVIOUS!

FINDING
IT IS JUST A
PROCESS OF
ELIMINATION!

CHILD'S
PLAY!

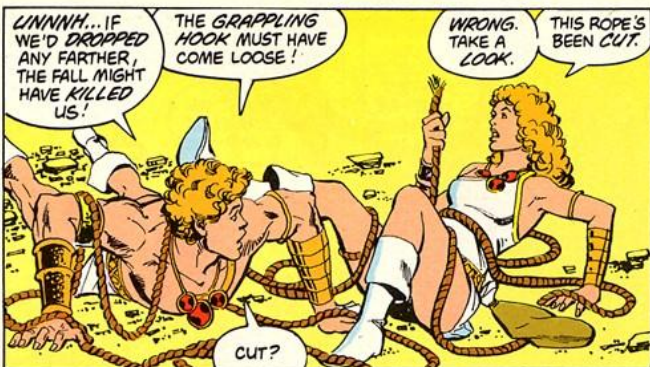
THINK YOU SO,
YELLOW-HAIRED
WHELP?

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




EVEN SUCH
A PAIR OF FOOLS
AS YOU!

SNIK!







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 *VIRGO*.
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.



WHULF...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!



OF
COURSE,
BOY!

I GET SO
FEW
VISITORS--

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

WHO ARE
YOU--WHAT
ARE YOU?



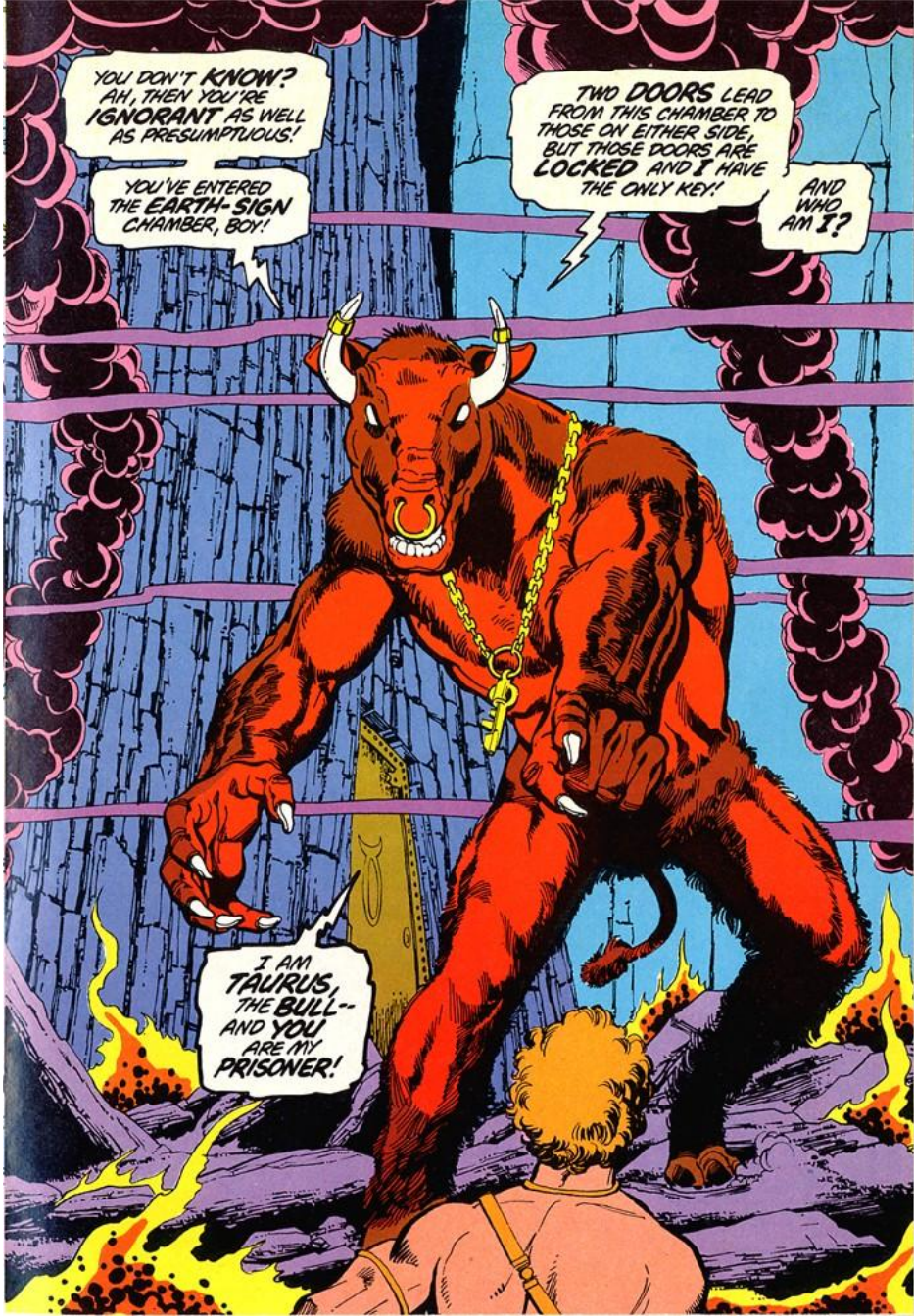
YOU DON'T **KNOW**?
AH, THEN YOU'RE
IGNORANT AS WELL
AS **PRESUMPTUOUS**!

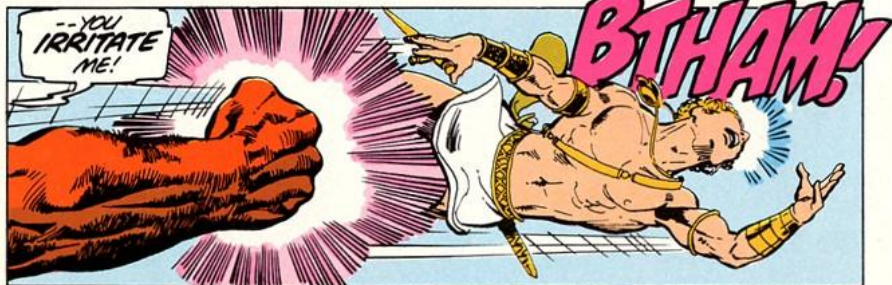
YOU'VE ENTERED
THE **EARTH-SIGN**
CHAMBER, BOY!

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
OUTPURSE...

...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--?

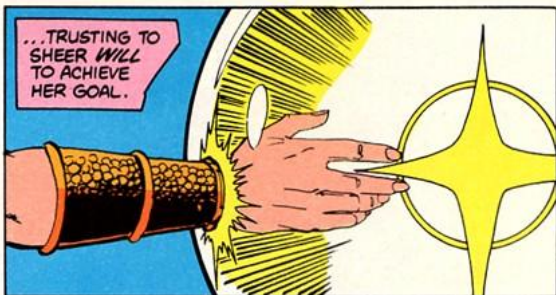
SOME
SIXTH
SENSE
FREEZES
HER HAND,
AS SHE
HEARS A
STRANGE
RUSTLE
BEHIND
HER--

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

HOT
BREATH
WARMS
HER
NECK.

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

...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.



SUCH
REACTIONS
ARE BEYOND
MY CONTROL.

BUT I AM
PLEASED THE
CONFRONTATION
WAS AVOIDED.

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

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



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



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--

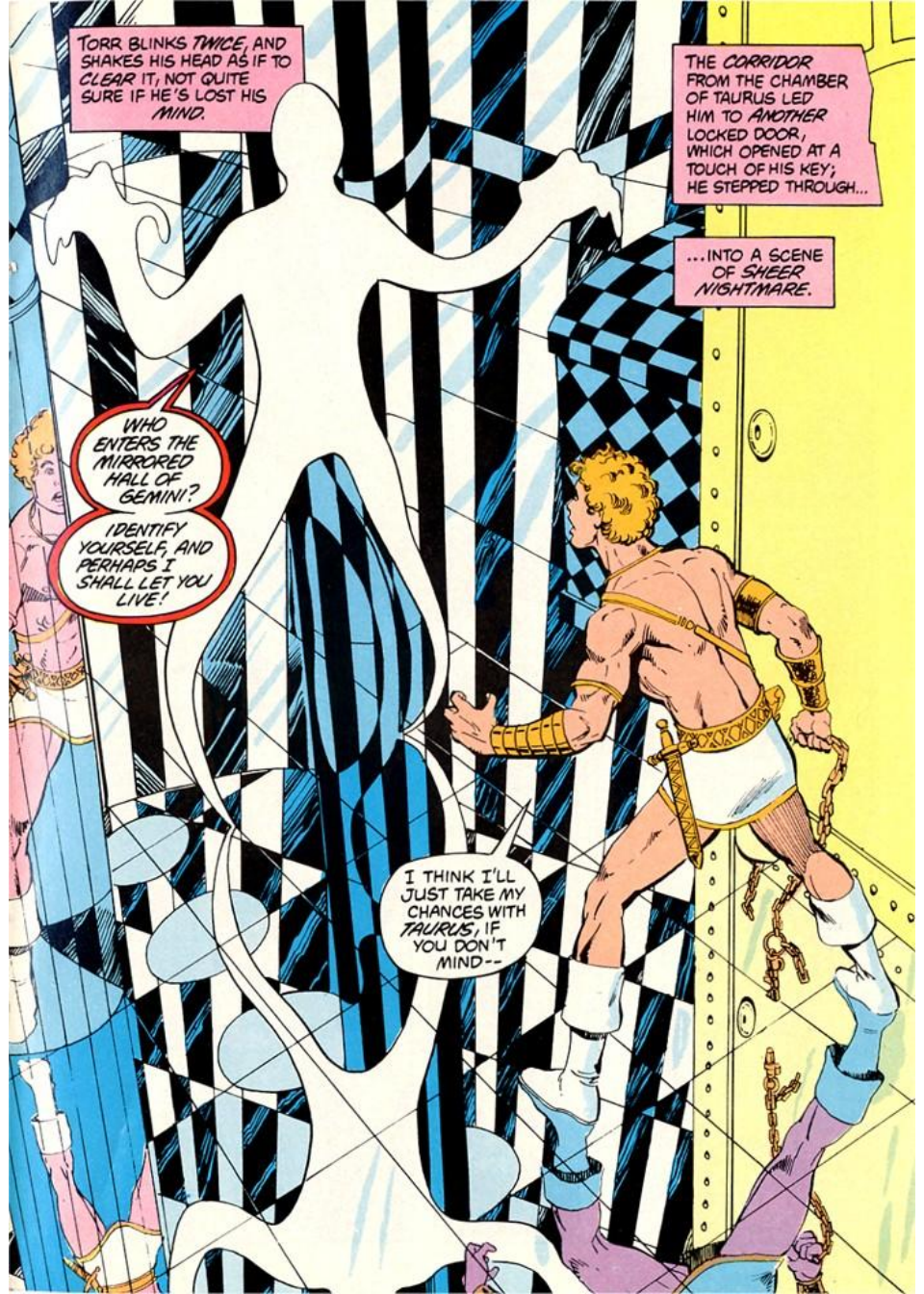
--OR
DIE!

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.

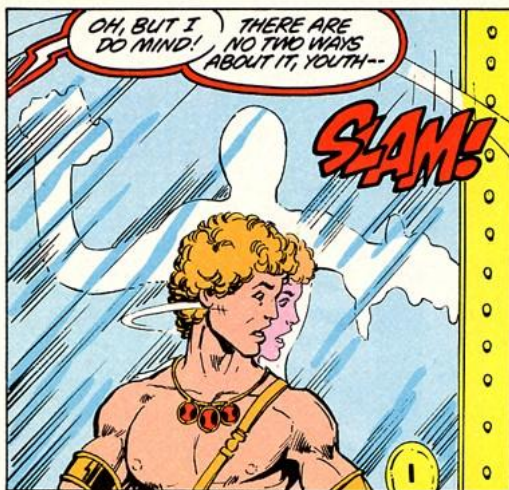
THE CORRIDOR
FROM THE CHAMBER
OF TAURUS LED
HIM TO ANOTHER
LOCKED DOOR,
WHICH OPENED AT A
TOUCH OF HIS KEY;
HE STEPPED THROUGH...

...INTO A SCENE
OF SHEER
NIGHTMARE.

WHO
ENTERS THE
MIRRORED
HALL OF
GEMINI?

IDENTIFY
YOURSELF, AND
PERHAPS I
SHALL LET YOU
LIVE!

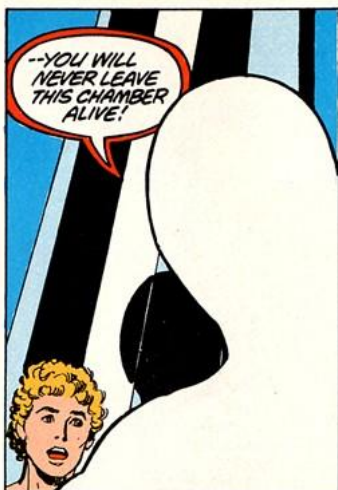
I THINK I'LL
JUST TAKE MY
CHANCES WITH
TAURUS, IF
YOU DON'T
MIND--



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--

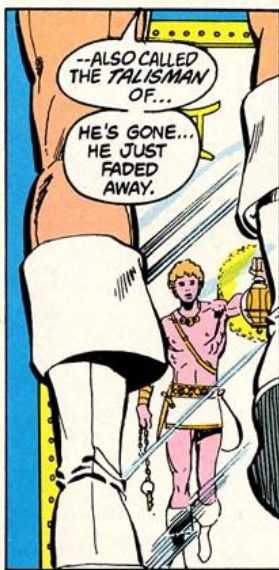
EH?



FORGIVE
ME.

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

HE
ALWAYS
DOES, YOU
KNOW.

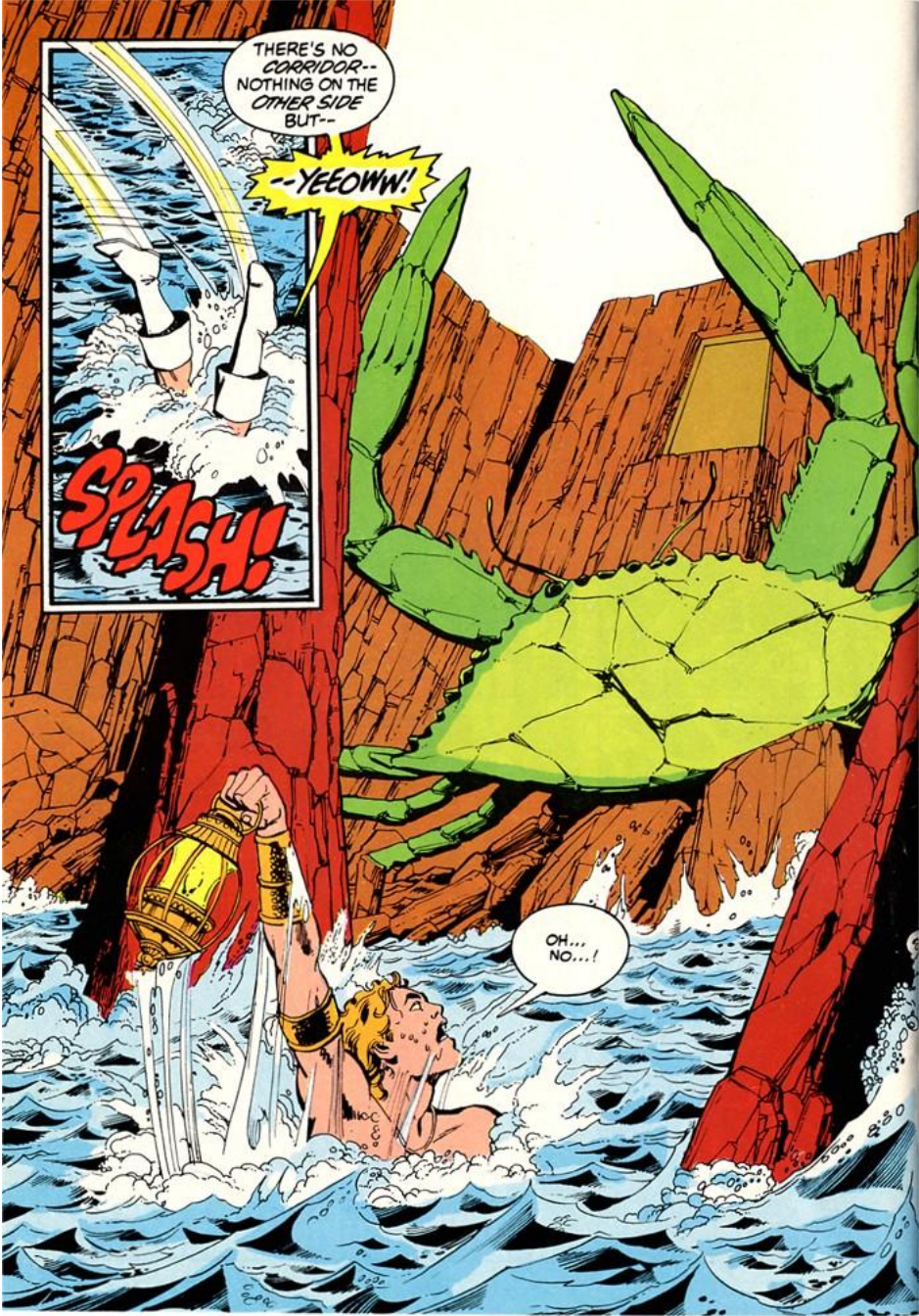


THERE'S NO
CORRIDOR--
NOTHING ON THE
OTHER SIDE
BUT--

--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!

ULP!

THE MINOTAUR
LIED!

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

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?

AYE, BRAVE
SAGITTARIUS--
THE VIXEN
CALLED TARRA!

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

BE SWIFT, BEFORE
SHE CAN VANISH
AGAIN--!



OH!!

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...

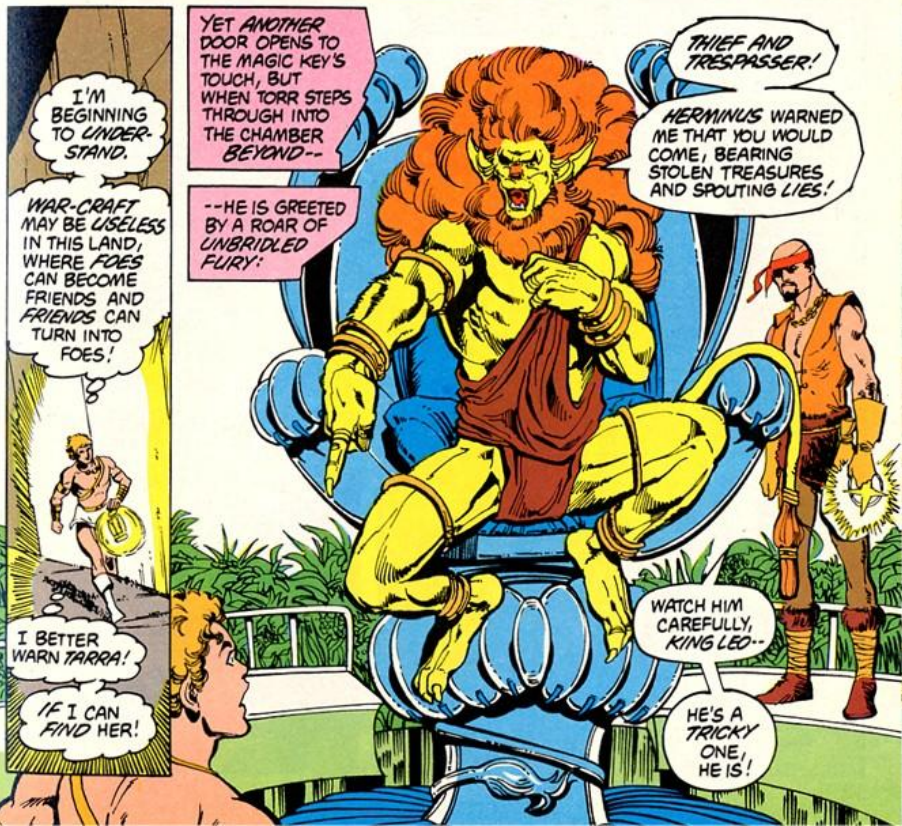
I MUST ADMIT, GOOD FRIEND CRAB-- YOU GAVE ME QUITE A FRIGHT BACK THERE!

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 UNDER-
STAND.

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 LEO--

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!

DOLT!
YOU MADE
ME DROP
THE
STAR--!



THAT THING MUST BE
IMPORTANT IF YOU--

UH-
OH!

ROWRR



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--

HUH?

SIMULTANEOUSLY...

NO SIGN OF
TORR-- HE
MUST HAVE
ESCAPED!

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 WHAT
MY ATTACKER HAS WEIGHT--
CAN BE THROWN!

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--

--THINGS?

NOW, SOMETHING
INEXPLICABLE
OCCURS...

WHERE THERE
WAS ONE
BLADE, THERE
NOW ARE THREE;
THE ORIGINAL...
AND TWO
OTHERS.

THE METAL
FEELS WARM
TO THEIR
TOUCH... WARM,
AND SOMEHOW
ALIVE.

TORR,
SOMETHING'S
HAPPENING!


SOMETHING,
INDEED...

FZOOO OOM!

THE FIRST SWORD--
IT'S BURNING A HOLE
THROUGH THAT ALTAR--
INTO THE GROUND
BELOW!

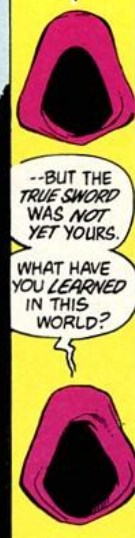


QUICKLY!
DON'T LET
IT--



YOU CANNOT
LOSE THAT
WHICH YOU
NEVER
POSSESSED,
CHILD.

SWORDS
YOU NOW
HAVE--



--BUT THE
TRUE SWORD
WAS NOT
YET YOURS.


WHAT HAVE
YOU LEARNED
IN THIS
WORLD?



--FALL!



OH, TORR--
WE'VE
LOST IT!



THAT BATTLES
AREN'T ALWAYS
WON BY
VIOLENCE!



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

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



IT TOO
WILL
CHALLENGE
YOUR WITS,
AND YOUR
SKILL.

WILL
YOU
MEET
THAT
CHALLENGE?



WE'VE
COME
THIS FAR,
MENTORR!



BY THE
GODS, WE
WON'T
STOP NOW!

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.

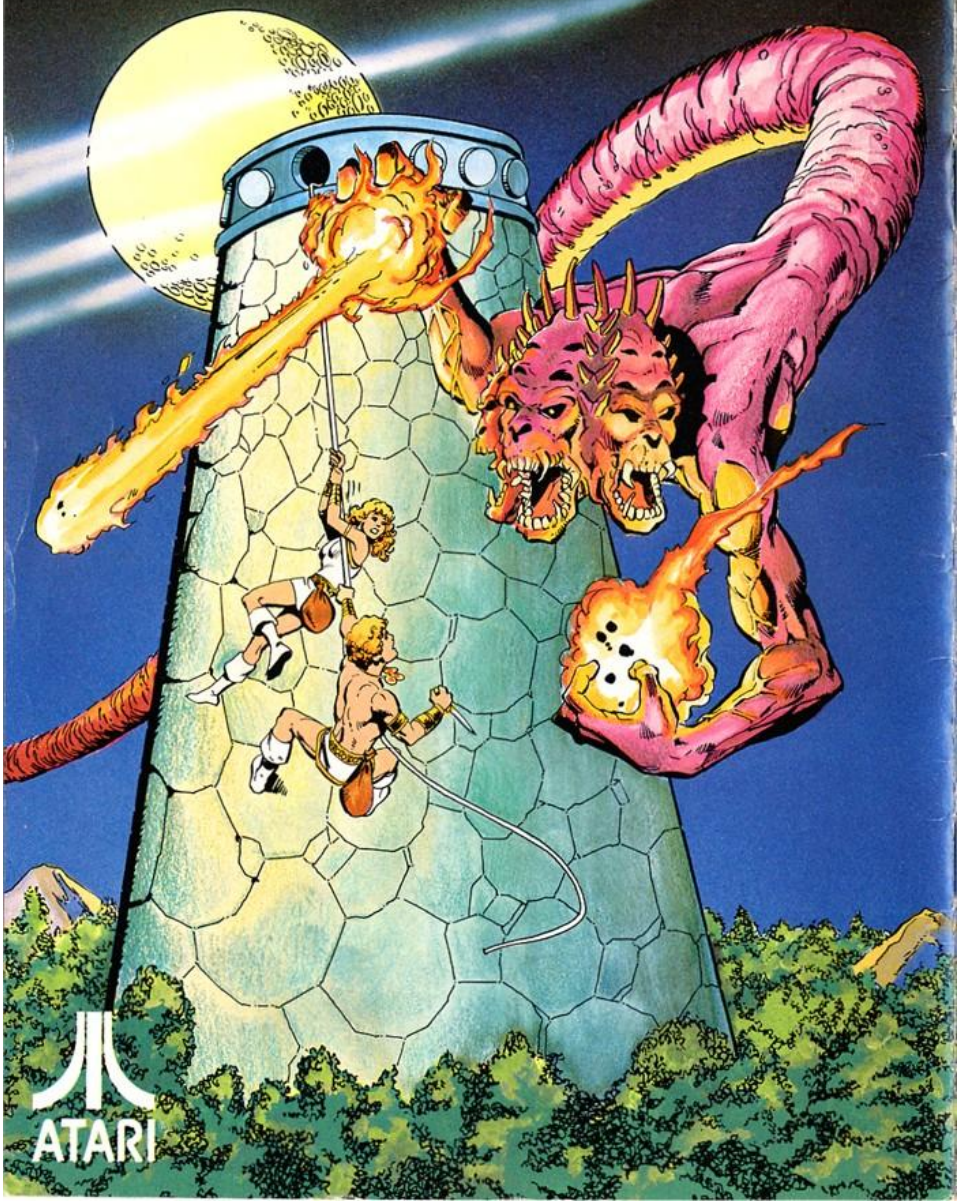
IT IS A
SMILE
WITHOUT
HUMOR...

...A SMILE LIKE
THE GRIN OF
DEATH!

TO BE CONTINUED -- IN **SWORDQUEST**.. BOOK TWO: **FIREWORLD!**



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