STEP THRU THE DOORWAY INTO NIGHTMARE WITH...
DC
MADAME XANADU™
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ISSUE # 1
FABULOUS FIRST ISSUE FEATURING A 25-PG. STEVE ENGLEHART-MARSHALL ROGERS BLOCKBUSTER!
PLUS: A BRAND-NEW BRIAN BOLLAND SCIENCE-FICTION SHOCKER!

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The first incarnation of the "playing card" in Europe was the Tarot Deck, or, simply, the Tarot. It originally formed the basis for our modern playing cards with its use of suits, trumps, suitless (or wild jokers), scat bidding, etc. The game is believed indigenous to Italy, where it is called **tarocchi**, but is widely based in France (**tarot** or **tarau**), Germany (**Tarok**) and throughout central Europe.

They were the first cards to feature pictures—and some truly beautiful illustrations adorned the ancient decks. Speculation about the Tarot has been nearly endless down through the ages—since history neglects to mention exactly **who** introduced the concept. It has been maintained, and not without some validity, that the deck coresponds symbolically with Dante's **Divine Comedy**.If this belief is true, we can set this down as a reasonable date ( 1300 A.D) for the Tarot's inception.

Cards, historically, have always been thought to possess supernatural qualities. The earliest playing cards—probably created by the Chinese—were utilized for both the fun of playing as well as for divination, or contact with some deity. Hindu cards had ten suits, corresponding to the ten incarnations of Vishnu, and a Saracen card game, introduced into Italy in the 14th Century was called **naib**—a word similar to **naipes**, the later Spanish designation for playing cards—and **naibi**, the Hebrew word for "sorcery".

The standard Tarot, divided into suits and numbered, holds 22 cards, lettered in Roman numerals I through XXI, while the 22nd card, unnumbered, is **le mat**, the fool (and precursor of the modern joker).

The suits were, at one time, designed in order that the Significator, or central card that signifies the person having the reading, would relate to their profession. A soldier, for example, would draw from the suit of Swords, while a stonemason would be signified by some other suit, perhaps Cups. But the Tarot is nothing if not adaptable, and it is currently held that the suits are related to complexion and hair color, from dark to blond.

Again, however, it is important to realize the awesome flexability of the Tarot. The French deck, for example, contains 52 cards, and some readings are done with anywhere from 11 to 14 cards. It is also possible to draw, from the same reading, conclusions so outrageously contradictory that your average fortune teller will even acknowledge that the "power" or ability of "discernment" lies not in the cards as such, but in the expert, and almost medium-like interpretation given them by a reputable "reader". For example, on the same reading, when interpretations are made by various fortune tellers, one might be told that they will: go on a long voyage over water; finally date that receptionist on the fourth floor; come to happiness over that success; come to grief over that same triumph; live in the sun for many years; and die, abruptly.

This is not to presume, at this point, to call Tarot readers such as **Madame Xanadu** charlatans—the idea of ending up in a Mason Jar in a dusty back room not being a good idea of a fun way to spend eternity. The theory is simply that there are those with special, innate "sensitivities"—just as mediums both mental and physical possess—that they can only utilize when given a focus. **Madame Xanadu's** power is as it appears, the Tarot is simply her physical means of utilizing it.

As far as the interpretation of a reading, in terms that will make sense when watching **Madame Xanadu** lay out her 10 or 11 card scenario, it goes like this:

The central card, as explained previously, is the **SIGNIFICATOR**, and is chosen by the reader. It is placed, face up, in the center, and will be labeled Card 1. Card 2 is placed directly over the significator, picture side down, literally hiding the **SIGNIFICATOR** from view. This card symbolizes the forces we must strive to overcome. Card 3 also lays atop the **SIGNIFICATOR**, face down, but it falls sideways, across the first two cards, and represents obstacles in the path of the individual signified. Card 4 sits above the first three, and is interpreted as the goals sought after yet not obtained —at this point. Card 5 is placed directly below the three center cards, in opposite orbit of Card 4. Card 5 represents those forces, literally, "beneath you"—anything from baser instincts to an evil force that will act as a prohibitive agent in the search for whatever answer is sought by the reading (the cards are not generally employed for something as vague as forcasting the future, but usually responds to some direct question, i.e., "will I take that trip to Germany this summer?" or something to that effect). Card 6 lays to the right of the **SIGNIFICATOR**, in an Eastern orbit, and is considered that which you are moving away from, just as Card 7, to the left of the **SIGNIFICATOR**, indicates that which you are moving toward. Cards 8, 9, 10 and 11 are placed in a row, to the right of Card 6, with Card 8 on the bottom indicating your attitude toward the question. Card 9 is placed directly above it, and signifies environment. Card 10 sits atop that, and symbolizes your hopes and fears, while the 11th Card is placed on the very top and is the Ultimate, or, what is all means.

For visual purposes, however, a ten card deck may often be used by **Madame Xanadu**, as in this issue's story. Because, in the 11 card set, the second card hides the **SIGNIFICATOR**, and owing to the fact that in the 11 card system, cards 2 and 3 mean just about the same thing, they can easily be combined to mean "obstacles to be overcome." Again, standardization and scientific exactitude is not something for which the Tarot is known.

Finally, it is of the utmost importance that one notes the position in which the cards fall. Each card has two sets of interpretations, depending upon whether it is placed normally or upside down—called "reversed." A reversed card possesses an entirely different construction than the same card in its regular position. The Hanged Man, for instance, when offerred in his standard placement can mean political success or any number of other interpretations. Yet should he appear reversed, the construction most often received is "things are not as they appear."

Perplexed? If so, just recall that the Tarot is merely a device, a focal point by which the trained reader may offer interpretation. And in the hands of someone such as **Madame Xanadu**, they can be magical, enchanting, beautiful—and deadly! Let the Significator beware!

—Bill Kunkel

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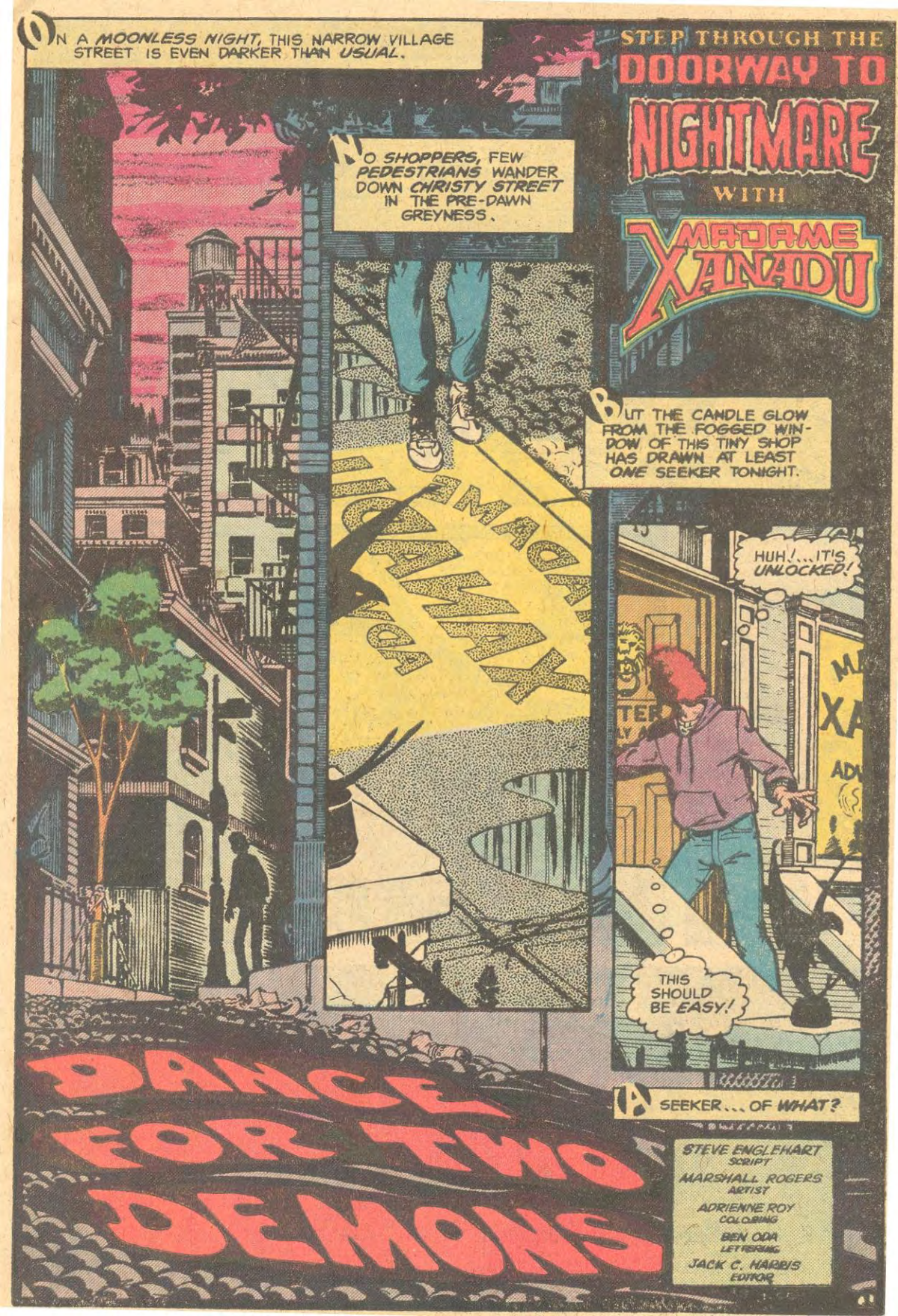
ON A MOONLESS NIGHT, THIS NARROW VILLAGE STREET IS EVEN DARKER THAN USUAL.
NO SHOPPERS, FEW PEDESTRIANS WANDER DOWN CHRISTY STREET IN THE PRE-DAWN GREYNESS.
BUT THE CANDLE GLOW FROM THE FOGGED WINDOW OF THIS TINY SHOP HAS DRAWN AT LEAST ONE SEEKER TONIGHT.
HUH!...IT'S UNLOCKED!
THIS SHOULD BE EASY!
A SEEKER... OF WHAT?
STEP THROUGH THE DOORWAY TO NIGHTMARE WITH MADAME XANADU
DANCE FOR TWO DEMONS
STEVE ENGLEHART SCRIPT
MARSHALL ROGERS ARTIST
ADRIENNE ROY COLORING
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AND, GOD, HOW I NEED IT EASY NOW!

SMELLS FUNNY IN HERE--

--THAT INCENSE STUFF, I GUESS.

WEIRD PLACE LIKE THIS HAS GOTTA BE STOCKED WITH EVERYTHING!

I THOUGHT ALL THESE MUMBO-JUMBO DIVES HAD SUPPLIES!

LIKE RATS' FEET...

DAMN! WHERE...?

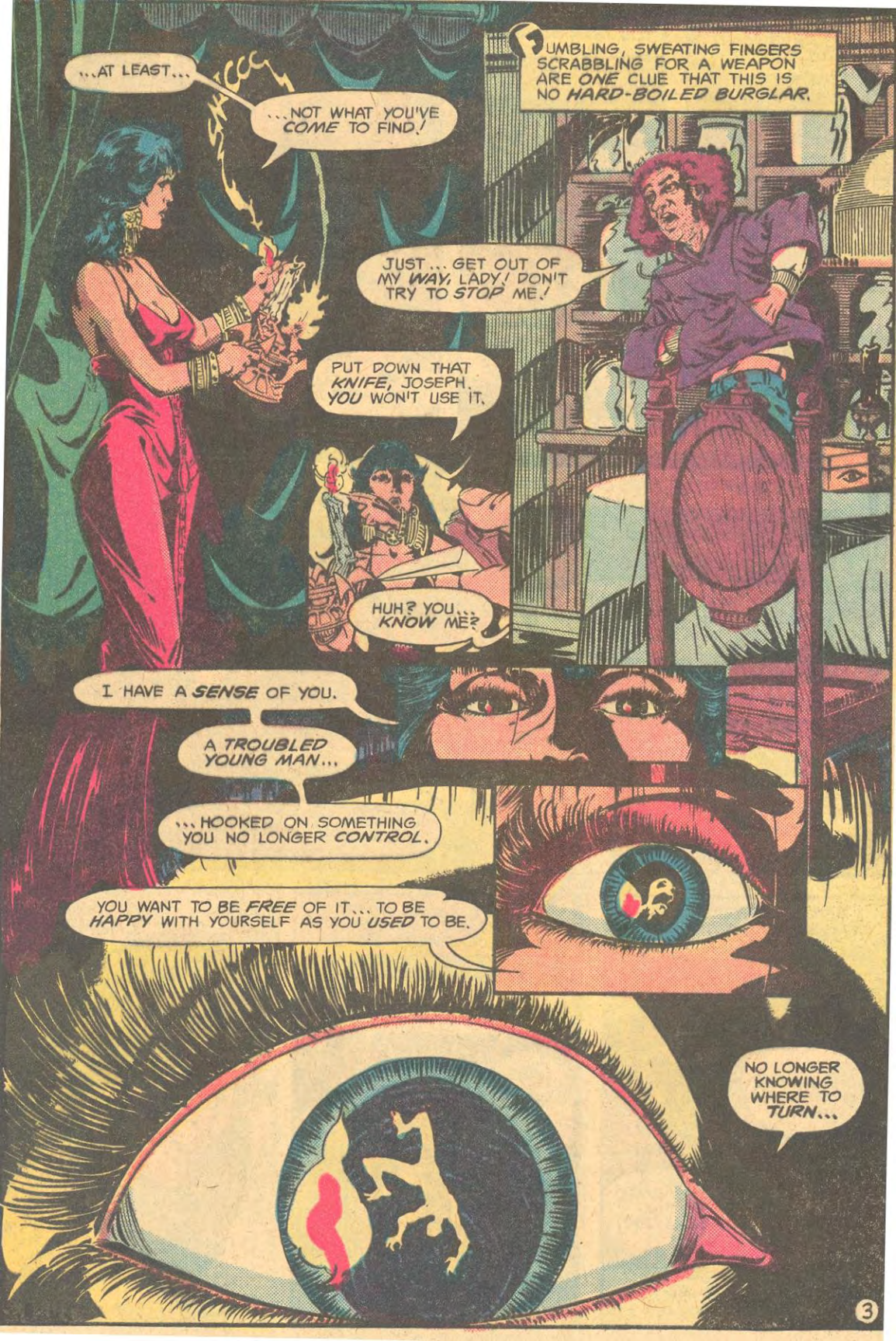
...SPIDER FUR, POWDERS...

YEAH...

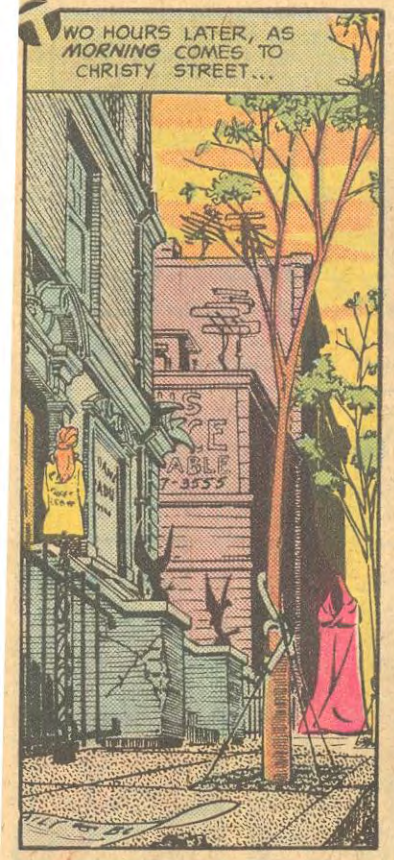
...POWDERS!

DOES SHE BLEND SO WELL WITH THE VELVET DRAPES, OR IS THE INTRUDER SO DISTRESSED HIS GLAZED EYES PASS RIGHT OVER THE BLACK-HAIRED BEAUTY WHO WATCHES HIM?

YOU'LL NOT FIND WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR HERE...


...AT LEAST...
...NOT WHAT YOU'VE COME TO FIND!
FUMBLING, SWEATING FINGERS SCRABBLING FOR A WEAPON ARE ONE CLUE THAT THIS IS NO HARD-BOILED BURGLAR.
JUST... GET OUT OF MY WAY, LADY! DON'T TRY TO STOP ME!
PUT DOWN THAT KNIFE, JOSEPH. YOU WON'T USE IT.
HUH? YOU... KNOW ME?
I HAVE A SENSE OF YOU.
A TROUBLED YOUNG MAN...
...HOOKED ON SOMETHING YOU NO LONGER CONTROL.
YOU WANT TO BE FREE OF IT... TO BE HAPPY WITH YOURSELF AS YOU USED TO BE.
NO LONGER KNOWING WHERE TO TURN...

...YOU'VE TURNED TO ME.
WHA...WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I DIDN'T COME HERE TO SEE YOU!
...HOW COULD YOU HELP ME?
HELPING OTHERS IS MY BUSINESS, JOSEPH...
...AND MY LIFE.
YOU DO WANT TO BE FREE OF...THE DRUGS?
OH GOD, YES!
IF ONLY THERE WERE A WAY...
THERE IS A WAY, AS YOU WELL KNOW. NOT FAR FROM HERE IS A CLINIC.
MY ADVICE TO YOU IS...
...SEEK COUNSEL WITH THE PROFESSIONALS WHO UNDERSTAND YOUR PROBLEM AND CAN HELP YOU OVERCOME IT.
A CLINIC? A CLINIC CAN'T HELP ME!
I NEED... I NEED SOMETHING MAGIC! YOU LOOK LIKE...
YOU FIND YOUR MAGIC IN DRUGS, JOSEPH.
IT IS TIME TO FIND REALITY:
HARD WORK... AND ITS REWARD...
AND SOMETHING IN HER MANNER CALMS THE YOUNG MAN ... AND CONVINCES HIM.
OKAY... I'LL GIVE IT A TRY. WHERE DO I GO?
COME, I'LL WALK THERE WITH YOU.
I--I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOUR NAME.
I AM...
...MADAME XANADU!
4

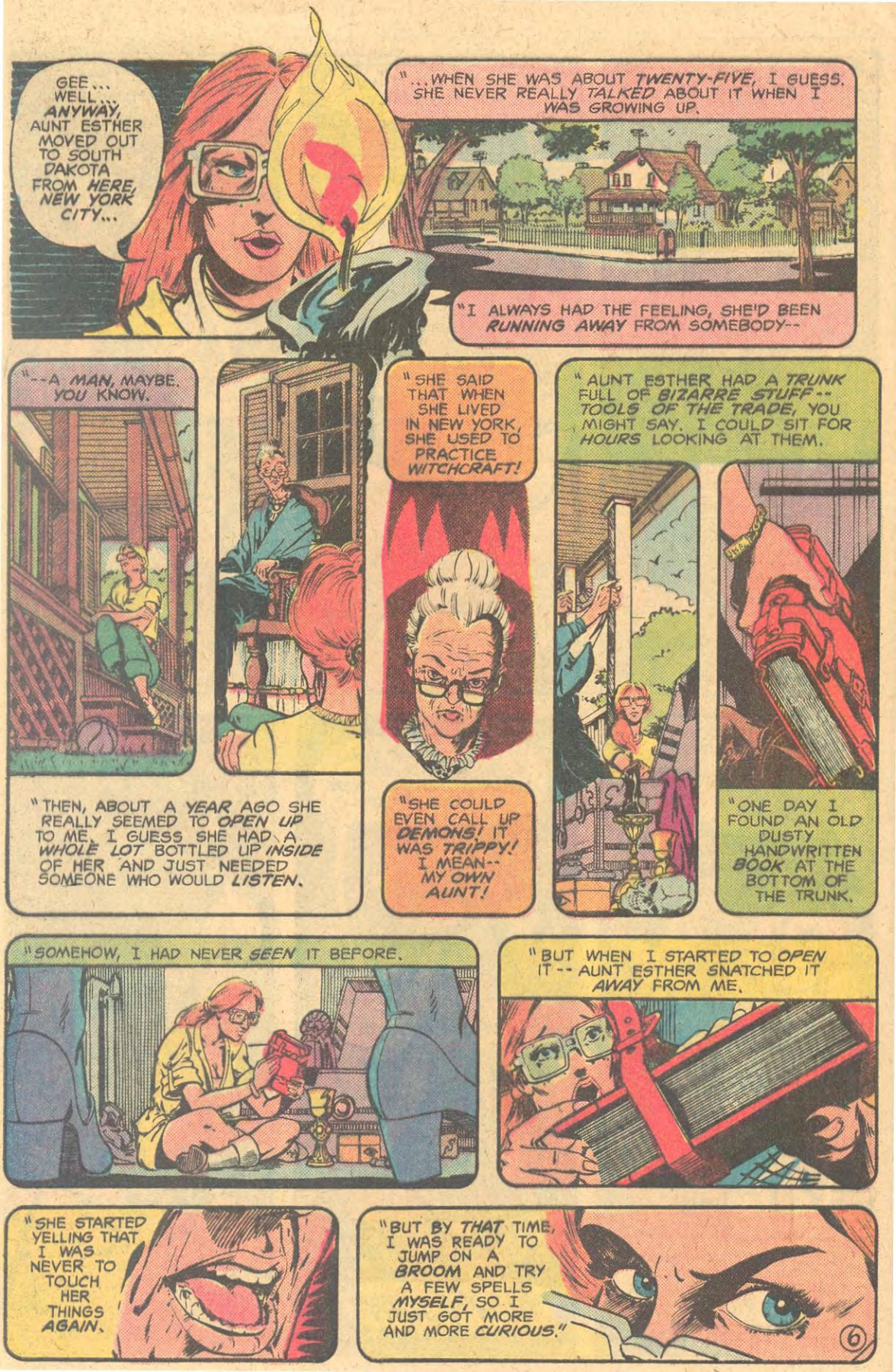

WO HOURS LATER, AS MORNING COMES TO CHRISTY STREET...

UH... HI! GEE, I HOPE I'M NOT TOO EARLY.
NOT AT ALL. I NEVER CLOSE.
ENTER
PLEASE COME IN.

NICE THINGS YOU'VE GOT HERE.
WITCH STUFF?
MERELY... DECORATIONS.

PLEASE... SIT DOWN. YOU HAVE QUESTIONS.
YES, AND I HOPE YOU CAN HELP.
MY NAME IS LAURA GRANT AND I'M JUST IN FROM SOUTH DAKOTA--MITCHELL, SOUTH DAKOTA.

I CAME TO SEE YOU BECAUSE MY AUNT ESTHER SAID SHE KNEW A MADAME XANADU...
... ABOUT FORTY YEARS AGO. BUT IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN YOU.
WAS IT YOUR MOTHER, MAYBE? AN AUNT?


GEE... WELL... ANYWAY, AUNT ESTHER MOVED OUT TO SOUTH DAKOTA FROM HERE, NEW YORK CITY...
"...WHEN SHE WAS ABOUT TWENTY-FIVE, I GUESS. SHE NEVER REALLY TALKED ABOUT IT WHEN I WAS GROWING UP.
"I ALWAYS HAD THE FEELING, SHE'D BEEN RUNNING AWAY FROM SOMEBODY--
"--A MAN, MAYBE. YOU KNOW.
"THEN, ABOUT A YEAR AGO SHE REALLY SEEMED TO OPEN UP TO ME. I GUESS SHE HAD A WHOLE LOT BOTTLED UP INSIDE OF HER AND JUST NEEDED SOMEONE WHO WOULD LISTEN.
"SHE SAID THAT WHEN SHE LIVED IN NEW YORK, SHE USED TO PRACTICE WITCHCRAFT!
"SHE COULD EVEN CALL UP DEMONS! IT WAS TRIPPY! I MEAN-- MY OWN AUNT!
"AUNT ESTHER HAD A TRUNK FULL OF BIZARRE STUFF-- TOOLS OF THE TRADE, YOU MIGHT SAY. I COULD SIT FOR HOURS LOOKING AT THEM.
"ONE DAY I FOUND AN OLD DUSTY HANDWRITTEN BOOK AT THE BOTTOM OF THE TRUNK.
"SOMEHOW, I HAD NEVER SEEN IT BEFORE.
"BUT WHEN I STARTED TO OPEN IT -- AUNT ESTHER SNATCHED IT AWAY FROM ME.
"SHE STARTED YELLING THAT I WAS NEVER TO TOUCH HER THINGS AGAIN.
"BUT BY THAT TIME, I WAS READY TO JUMP ON A BROOM AND TRY A FEW SPELLS MYSELF, SO I JUST GOT MORE AND MORE CURIOUS."
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"LATER, WHEN SHE WENT TO THE STORE, I SNEAKED INTO HER HOUSE AND TOOK THE BOOK.

"I KNOW THAT WASN'T TOO COOL, BUT I REALLY ONLY MEANT TO BORROW IT FOR A FEW DAYS. THEN, THAT NIGHT, SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENED! FIRE STARTED IN AUNT ESTHER'S HOUSE AND IT BURNED TO THE GROUND..."

...WITH HER IN IT!

AND HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT, LAURA?

FEEL? GEE, I DUNNO.

THAT'S LIFE, HUH?

DEATH IS WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE TO ME!

HEY, IT WAS AN ACCIDENT.

YOU'RE NOT TRYING TO BLAME ME-- FOR TAKING HER STUPID BOOK?

I THOUGHT YOU BELIEVED IN WITCHCRAFT.

DON'T YOU SEE A CONNECTION?

I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT WITCHCRAFT. THAT'S WHAT I CAME TO YOU FOR--

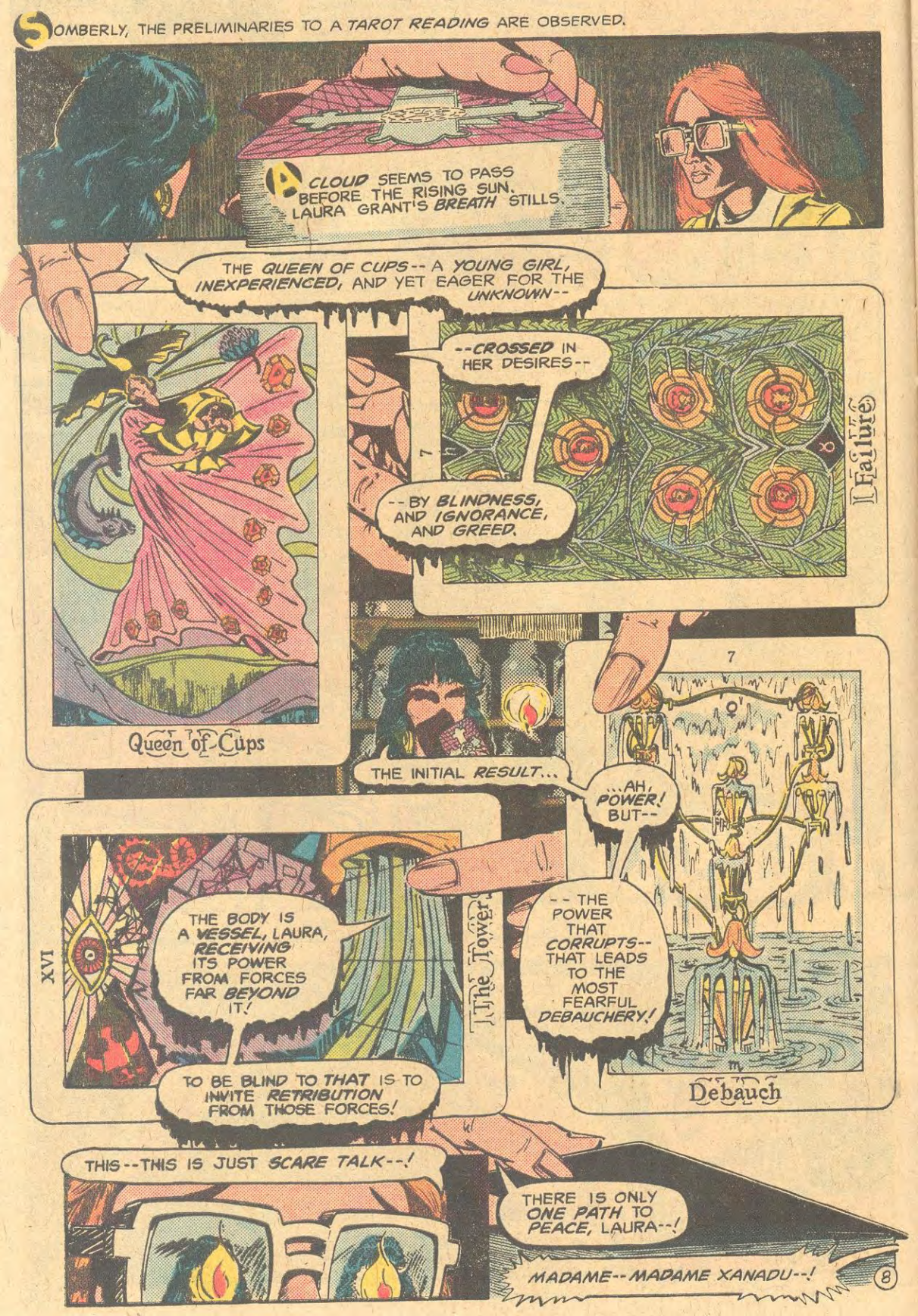
--TO FIND OUT.

ONLY YOU'RE NOT THE PERSON I THOUGHT YOU WERE. I THINK I MADE A MISTAKE.

SIT DOWN, PLEASE.

THE CARDS NEVER MAKE MISTAKES. LET US CONSULT THEM ABOUT YOUR DILEMMA.

FOOL


SOMBERLY, THE PRELIMINARIES TO A TAROT READING ARE OBSERVED.
A CLOUD SEEMS TO PASS BEFORE THE RISING SUN. LAURA GRANT'S BREATH STILLS.
THE QUEEN OF CUPS -- A YOUNG GIRL, INEXPERIENCED, AND YET EAGER FOR THE UNKNOWN --
Queen of Cups
--CROSSED IN HER DESIRES --
-- BY BLINDNESS, AND IGNORANCE, AND GREED.
Failure
THE INITIAL RESULT...
...AH, POWER! BUT --
-- THE POWER THAT CORRUPTS -- THAT LEADS TO THE MOST FEARFUL DEBAUCHERY!
Debauch
XVI
THE BODY IS A VESSEL, LAURA, RECEIVING ITS POWER FROM FORCES FAR BEYOND IT!
TO BE BLIND TO THAT IS TO INVITE RETRIBUTION FROM THOSE FORCES!
The Tower
THIS -- THIS IS JUST SCARE TALK --!
THERE IS ONLY ONE PATH TO PEACE, LAURA --!
MADAME -- MADAME XANADU --!

MADAME XANADU! YOU GOTTA HELP ME! THAT CLINIC PLACE IS... IS NO GOOD!
THEY THINK I CAN STOP JUST LIKE THAT.

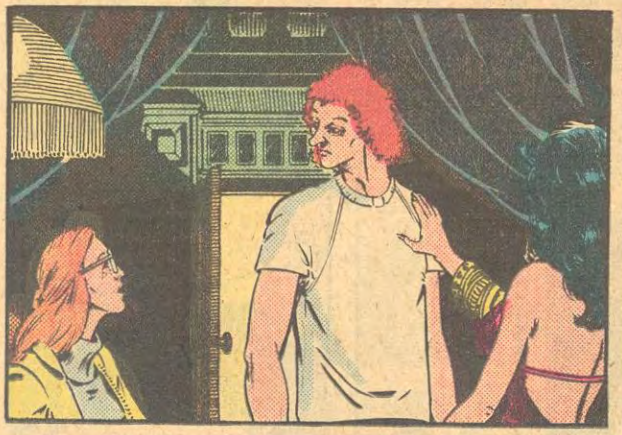
DON'T YOU... ISN'T THERE SOMETHING YOU CAN GIVE ME?
JOSEPH, SURELY YOU HAVEN'T TRIED VERY HARD. THESE THINGS TAKE TIME.
B-BUT I NEED SOMETHING NOW!
HAVE YOU ASKED FOR A TEMPORARY SUBSTITUTE? THEIR PROGRAM DOES PROVIDE FOR IT.

HAVE YOU COME TO TERMS WITH THE REALITY OF YOUR PLIGHT?

UH... NO... WELL, I JUST GOT ANTSY!

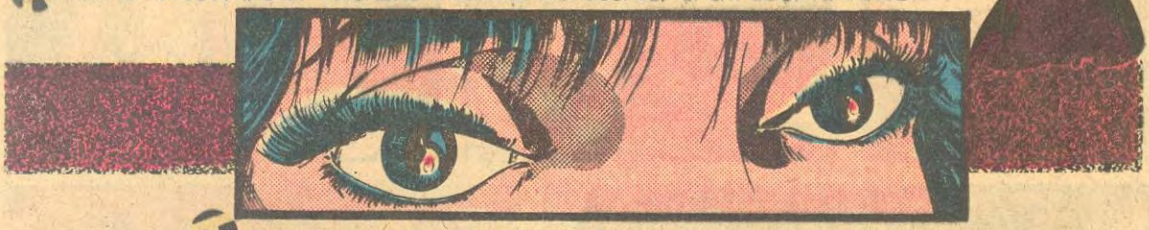
GO BACK, JOSEPH. I'LL STOP BY TO SEE YOU WITHIN A FEW DAYS.
OKAY... OKAY. I JUST GOTTA RELAX.

YOU--YOU GENTLE ME, LADY. YOU REALLY DO.



I'M GOING, TOO. YOU DON'T "GENTLE" ME, WITH ALL YOUR DOWN VIBES.
CLICK
LAURA, WILL YOU LEAVE ME THE BOOK? IT WAS NOT MEANT FOR YOU.

A HINT OF *DISCOMFORT* FLICKERS ACROSS THE USUALLY CALM COUNTENANCE.



THE ALMOND *EYES* ARE *TROUBLED*.

HOWEVER, TWO MORNINGS LATER...
HELLO, I'D LIKE TO SPEAK WITH JOSEPH GREENE, PLEASE!
I'M SORRY, MISS. MR. GREENE LEFT US YESTERDAY...
...IN THE COMPANY OF HIS SISTER.
HE HAS NO SISTER.
NO SISTER? HOW DO...
CLICK
MADAME XANADU GLIDES DETERMINEDLY TO ANOTHER SMALL STREET IN THE VILLAGE.
MMM... A LOVELY ONE. MY PENTHOUSE IS JUST A FEW DOORS AWAY, FREDDY.
YEAH, WHOO! LET'S GET IT ON!

THREE'S COMPANY, AND I'M A COMPANY MAN.!
STEP ASIDE.!

HEY, I CAN DIG IT. JUST YOU 'N' ME, HUH?
YOU PICKED RIGHT, BABY. I GOT SOME TRICKS THAT'LL MAKE YOU...

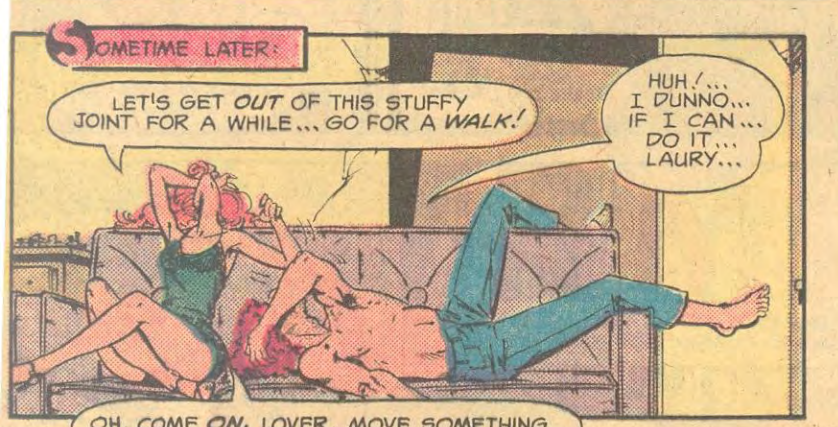
I'M NOT INTERESTED!
RIDICULOUS! YOU'LL BE AT THE COSTUME PARTY TONIGHT, WON'T YOU? AND TONIGHT'S A LONG WAYS AWAY--!

FORGET HER, HAROLD!
CHECK THIS OUT!
OOWEE, SWEET STUFF!

LET'S SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT, LOVER-BOYS!
FLESH POTS IN THE CITY THERE ARE, BUT THIS IS NOT NORMALLY ONE OF THEM.

I WONDER...

BRRING
WELL... HI THERE, LADY X. WHAT'S COOKIN'?
I'D LIKE TO SPEAK TO JOSEPH, LAURA.
I THOUGHT YOU WANTED TO GET WELL, JOSEPH.
OOOOH... LAURA AND ME HAVE GOT EVERYTHING WORKED OUT FINE...
...JUST FINE... SO-O-O-O FINE. MMMMMM.
NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, MADAME. AS THEY SAY, "LOVE CONQUERS ALL."
...OR "LOVE MAKES THE WORLD GO ROUND."... AND THE WORLD SURE IS GOIN' AROUND!
HAW! HAW!
THUMP THUMP THUMP
MAKE NOT A MOCKERY OF LOVE!
I SHALL SEE YOU AGAIN!
HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAH
HEHHEHHEHHEHHEHHEH
13




OH, COME ON, LOVER. MOVE SOMETHING ELSE FOR A CHANGE!

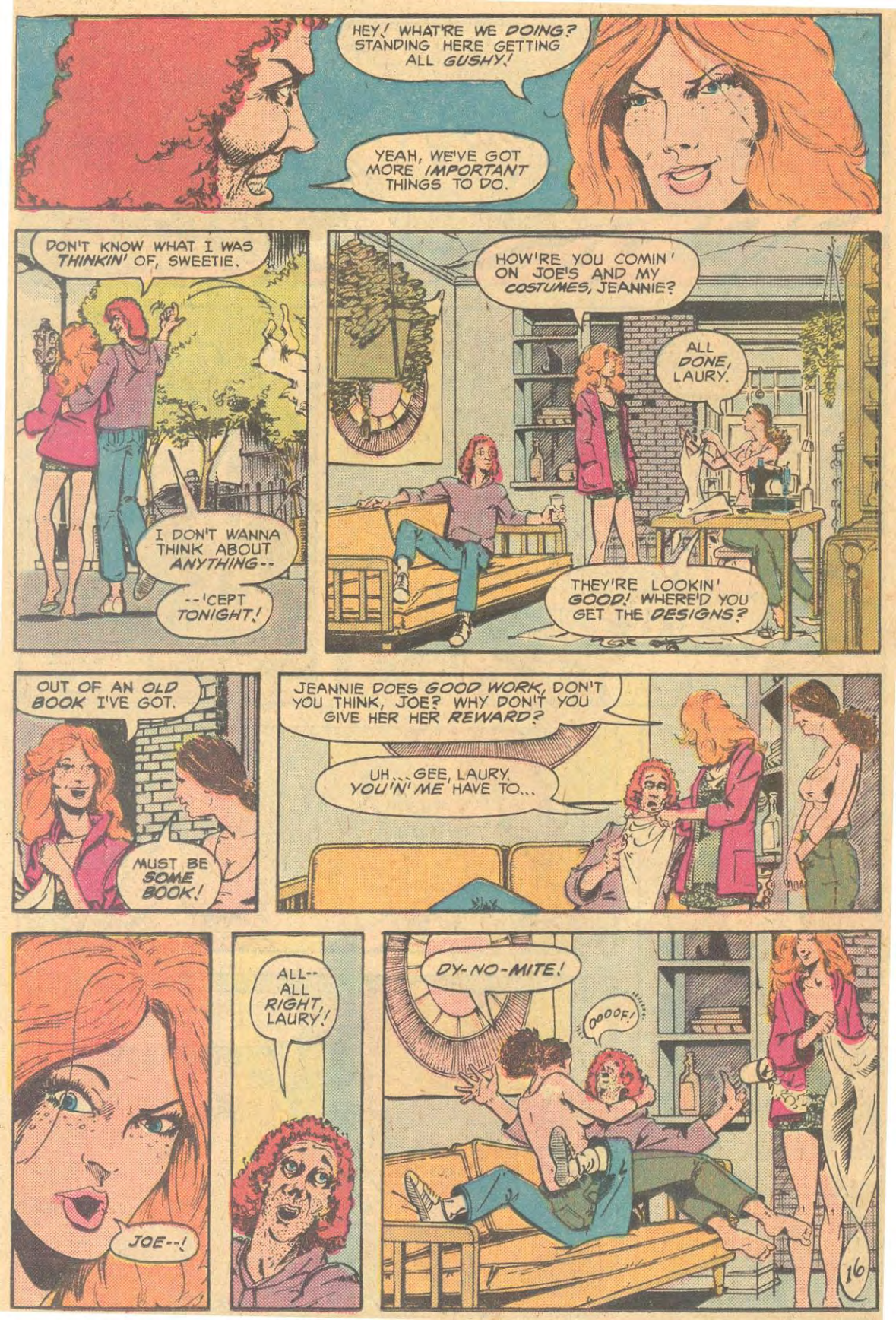
IT'S KIND OF NICE TO SEE A FEW TREES AGAIN. WISH NEW YORK HAD MORE OF THEM.

THAT'S ONE THING I MISS ABOUT SOUTH DAKOTA.

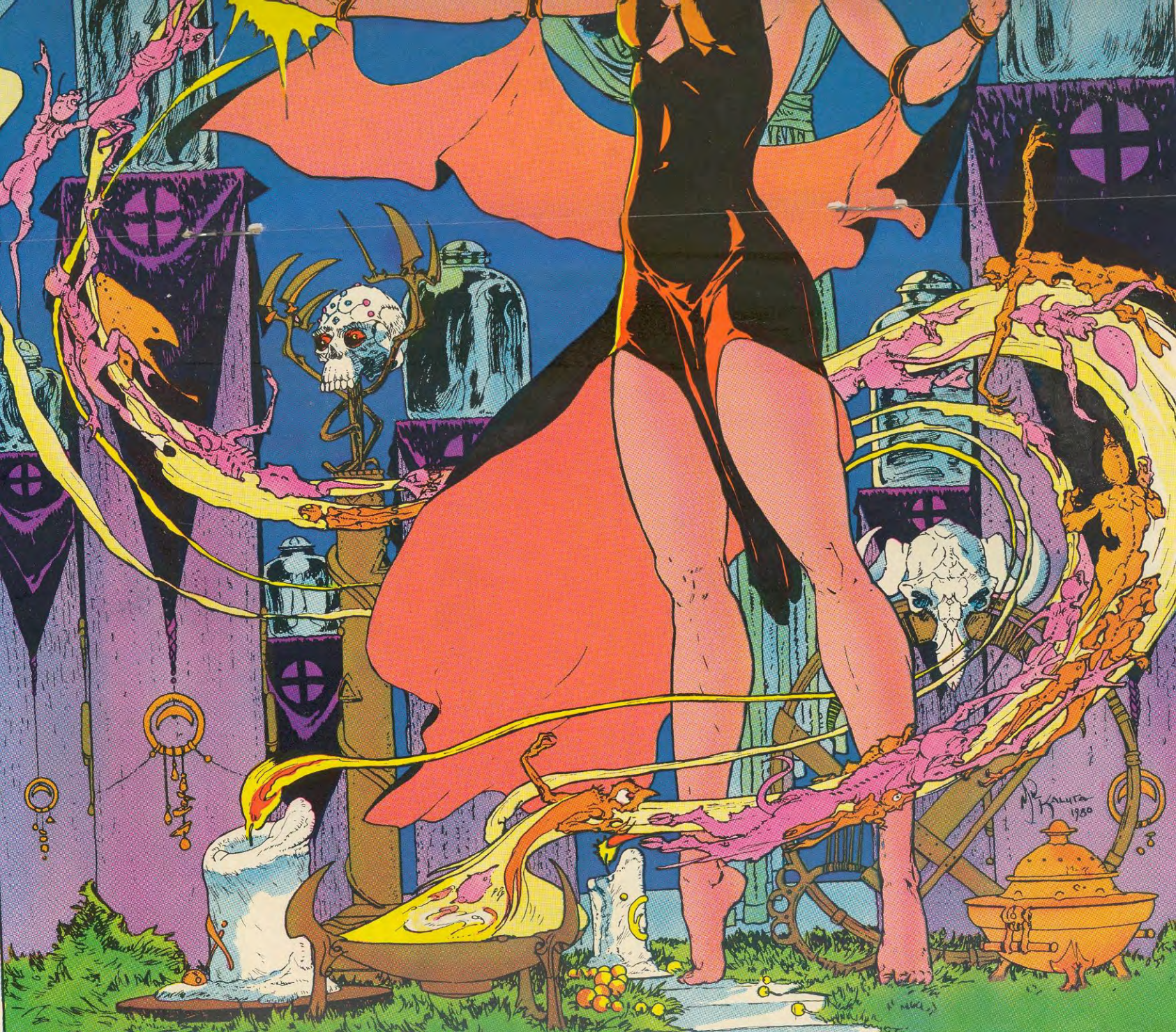
UMM... HONEYSUCKLE. I'VE ALWAYS LOVED THE SMELL OF HONEYSUCKLE.

REALLY BRINGS BACK MEMORIES. MAKES ME SAD, IN A WAY.

HEY!!
SCREE
WHY DON'TCHA WATCH WHERE YOU'RE GOING! LOUSY DRIVER!
CHEER LEADERS
DON'T MAKE A SCENE, JOE!
COME ON, POOCH. ARE YA HURT, HUH?
ATTA BOY! IT'S O.K. NOW.
I HAD A PUPPY ONCE, NAMED RALPH. A COCKER SPANIEL...
LAURY... DO YOU THINK WE...
DON'T SAY IT, JOE. DON'T EVEN THINK IT!
IT'S TOO LATE NOW.
15


HEY! WHAT'RE WE DOING? STANDING HERE GETTING ALL GUSHY!
YEAH, WE'VE GOT MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO.
DON'T KNOW WHAT I WAS THINKIN' OF, SWEETIE.
I DON'T WANNA THINK ABOUT ANYTHING--
--'CEPT TONIGHT!
HOW'RE YOU COMIN' ON JOE'S AND MY COSTUMES, JEANNIE?
ALL DONE, LAURY.
THEY'RE LOOKIN' GOOD! WHERE'D YOU GET THE DESIGNS?
OUT OF AN OLD BOOK I'VE GOT.
MUST BE SOME BOOK!
JEANNIE DOES GOOD WORK, DON'T YOU THINK, JOE? WHY DON'T YOU GIVE HER HER REWARD?
UH...GEE, LAURY. YOU'N' ME HAVE TO...
JOE--!
ALL-- ALL RIGHT, LAURY!
DY-NO-MITE!
OOOOF!
16

MADAME
XANADU
™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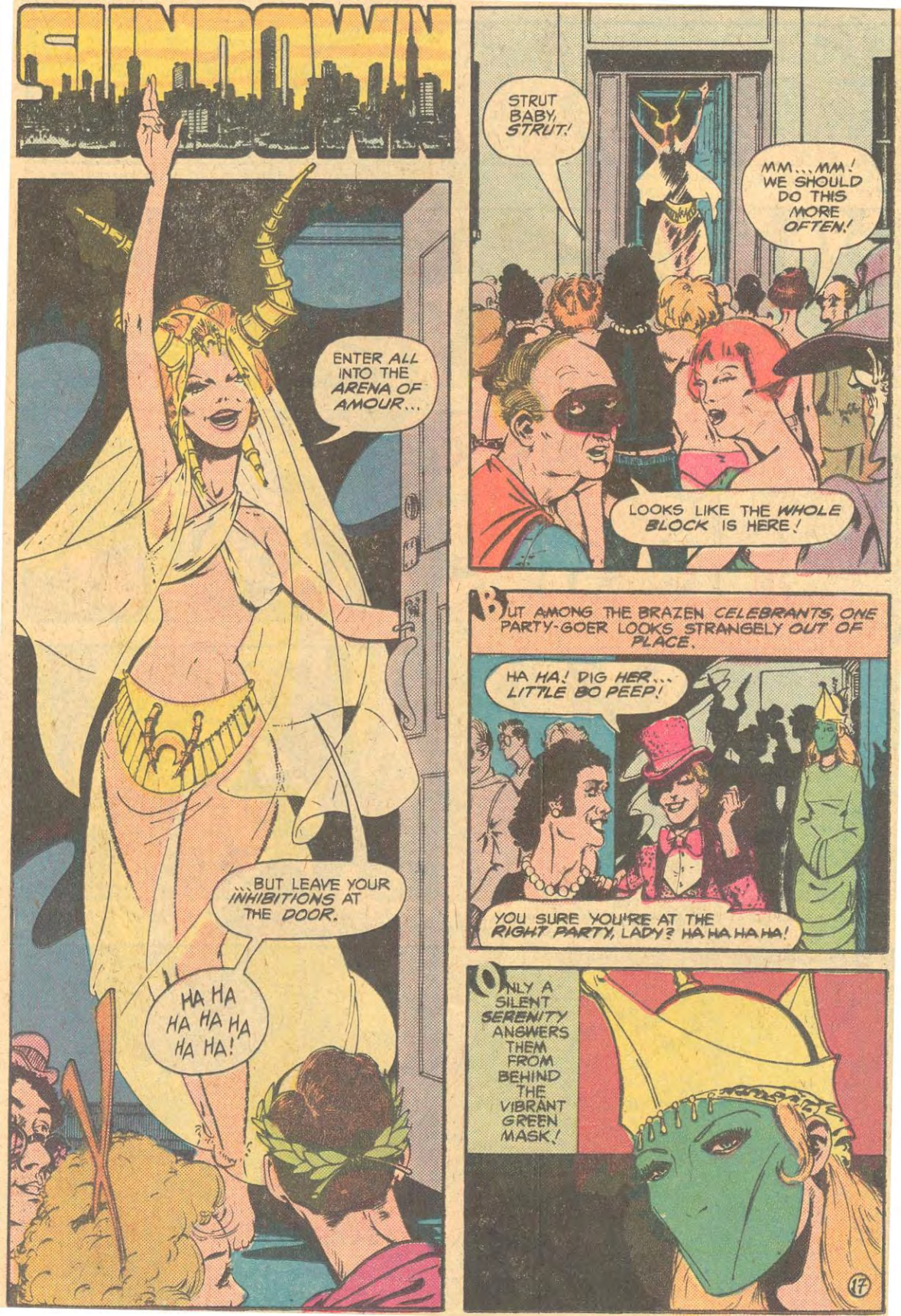
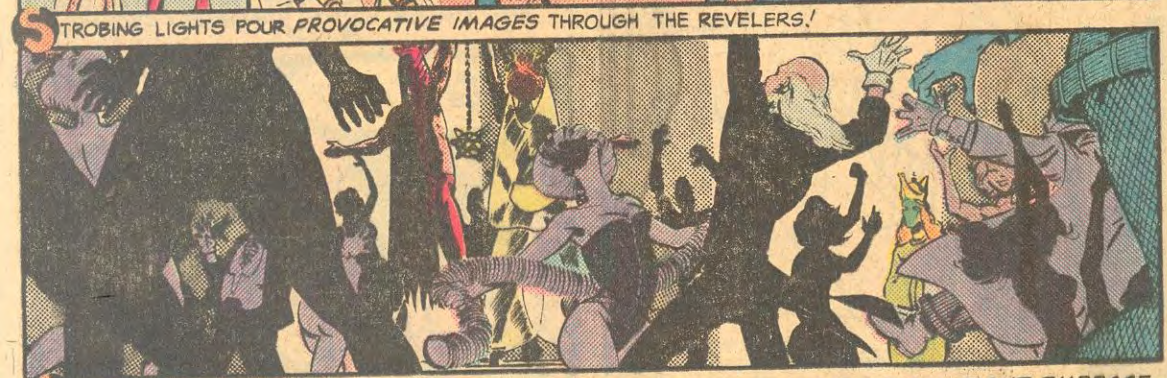

SUNDOWN
ENTER ALL INTO THE ARENA OF AMOUR...
...BUT LEAVE YOUR INHIBITIONS AT THE DOOR.
HA HA HA HA HA HA HA!
STRUT BABY, STRUT!
MM...MM! WE SHOULD DO THIS MORE OFTEN!
LOOKS LIKE THE WHOLE BLOCK IS HERE!
BUT AMONG THE BRAZEN CELEBRANTS, ONE PARTY-GOER LOOKS STRANGELY OUT OF PLACE.
HA HA! DIG HER... LITTLE BO PEEP!
YOU SURE YOU'RE AT THE RIGHT PARTY, LADY? HA HA HA HA HA!
ONLY A SILENT SERENITY ANSWERS THEM FROM BEHIND THE VIBRANT GREEN MASK!
17

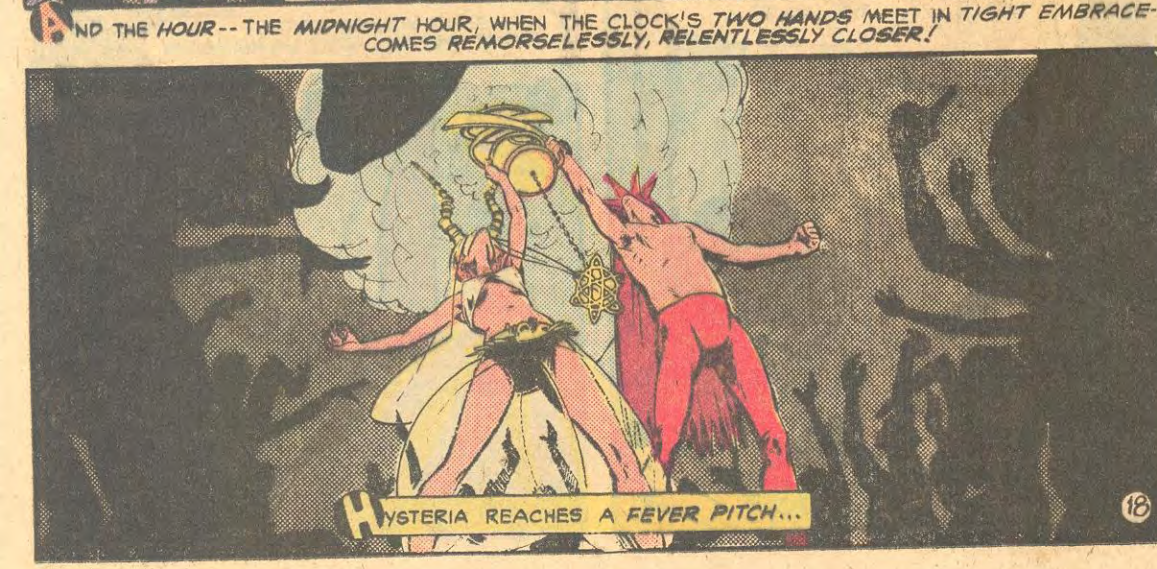
A WEDGE OF *EVIL* DRIVES DEEPER AND DEEPER AS THE FRENZIED DANCERS *TWIRL* AND *TANTALIZE* TO THE THROBBING MUSIC! THEIR ENERGY SPIRALS *HIGHER*...

... *HIGHER* ... *HIGHER*, *BEGGING* FOR THAT *EXPLOSIVE RELEASE!*

STROBING LIGHTS POUR *PROVOCATIVE IMAGES* THROUGH THE REVELERS!

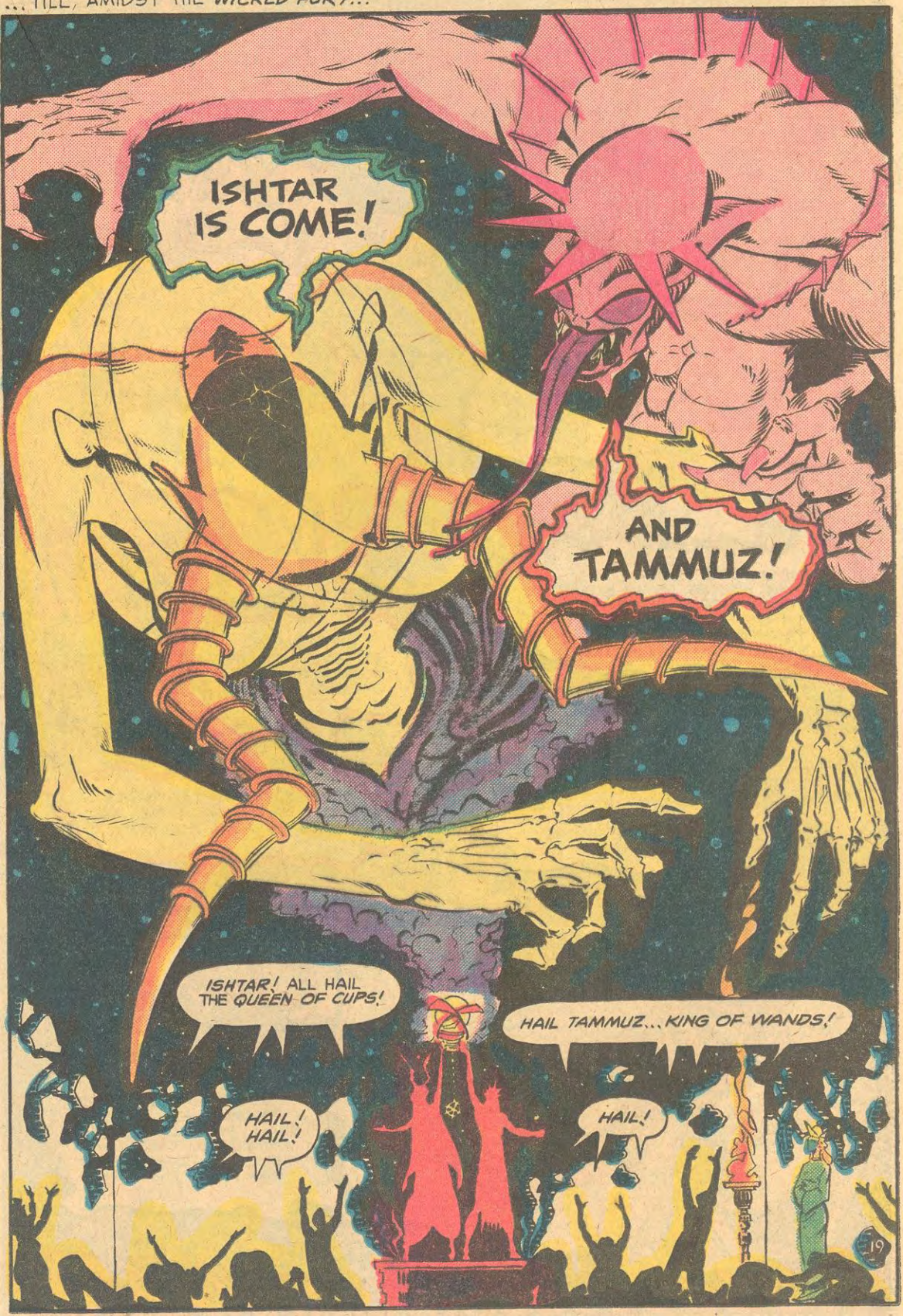


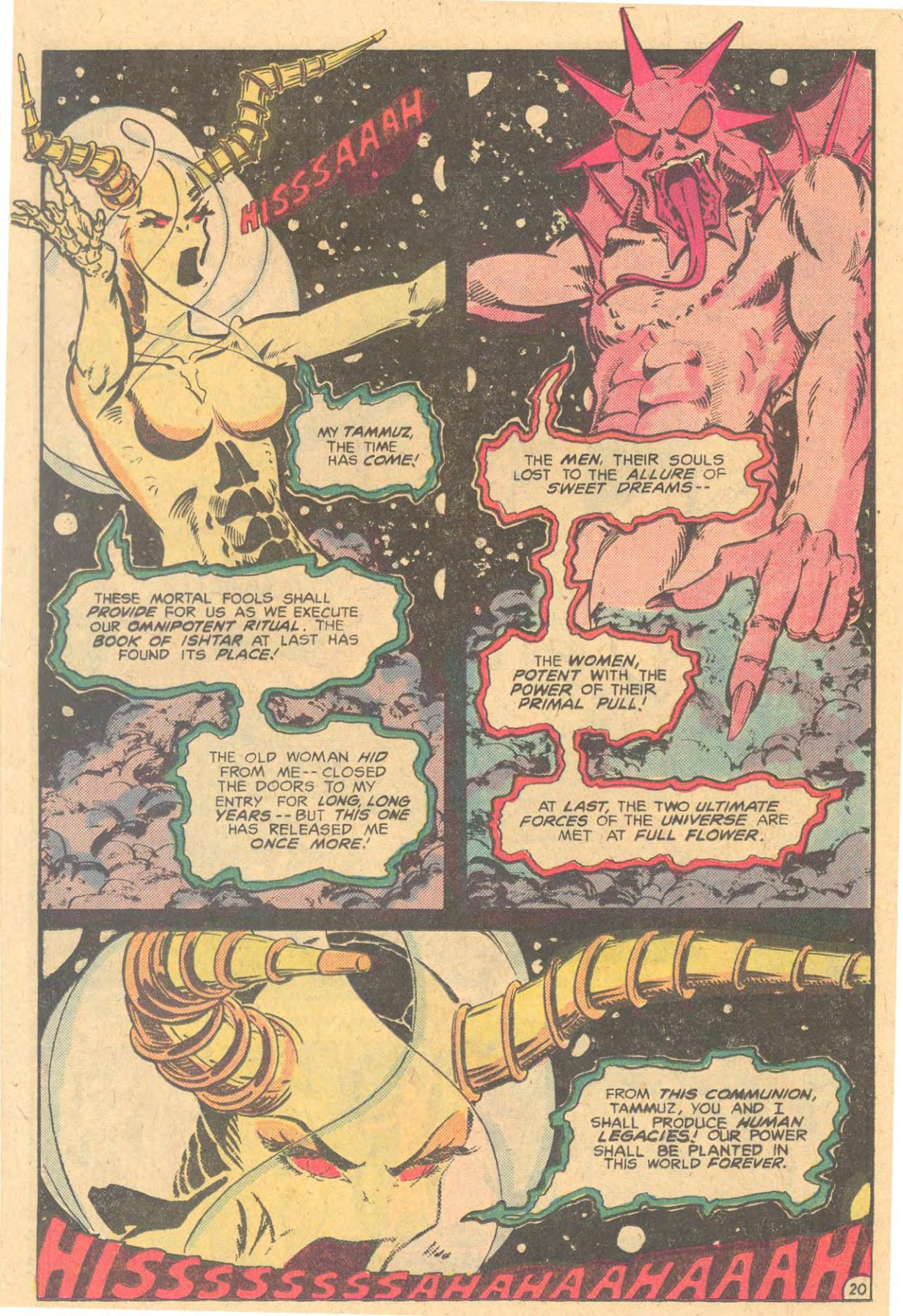
AND THE *HOUR*--THE *MIDNIGHT* HOUR, WHEN THE CLOCK'S *TWO HANDS* MEET IN *TIGHT EMBRACE*--COMES *REMORSELESSLY, RELENTLESSLY CLOSER!*



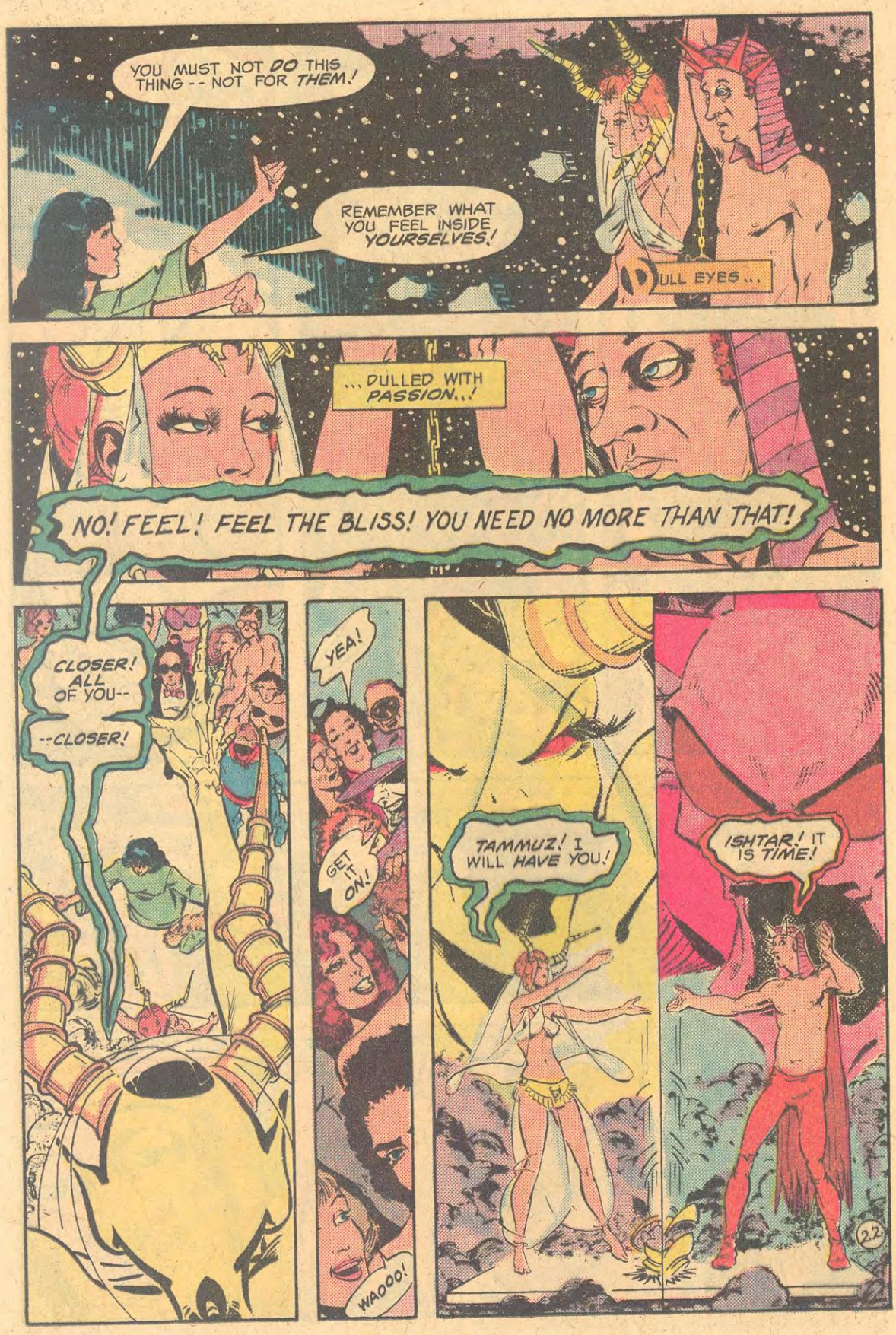
HYSTERIA REACHES A *FEVER PITCH*...

...TILL, AMIDST THE *WICKED FURY*...




HISSSAAAH
MY TAMMUZ, THE TIME HAS COME!
THESE MORTAL FOOLS SHALL PROVIDE FOR US AS WE EXECUTE OUR OMNIPOTENT RITUAL. THE BOOK OF ISHTAR AT LAST HAS FOUND ITS PLACE!
THE OLD WOMAN HID FROM ME-- CLOSED THE DOORS TO MY ENTRY FOR LONG, LONG YEARS -- BUT THIS ONE HAS RELEASED ME ONCE MORE!
THE MEN, THEIR SOULS LOST TO THE ALLURE OF SWEET DREAMS--
THE WOMEN, POTENT WITH THE POWER OF THEIR PRIMAL PULL!
AT LAST, THE TWO ULTIMATE FORCES OF THE UNIVERSE ARE MET AT FULL FLOWER.
FROM THIS COMMUNION, TAMMUZ, YOU AND I SHALL PRODUCE HUMAN LEGACIES! OUR POWER SHALL BE PLANTED IN THIS WORLD FOREVER.
HISSSSSSSSSAHAHAAHAAAH!

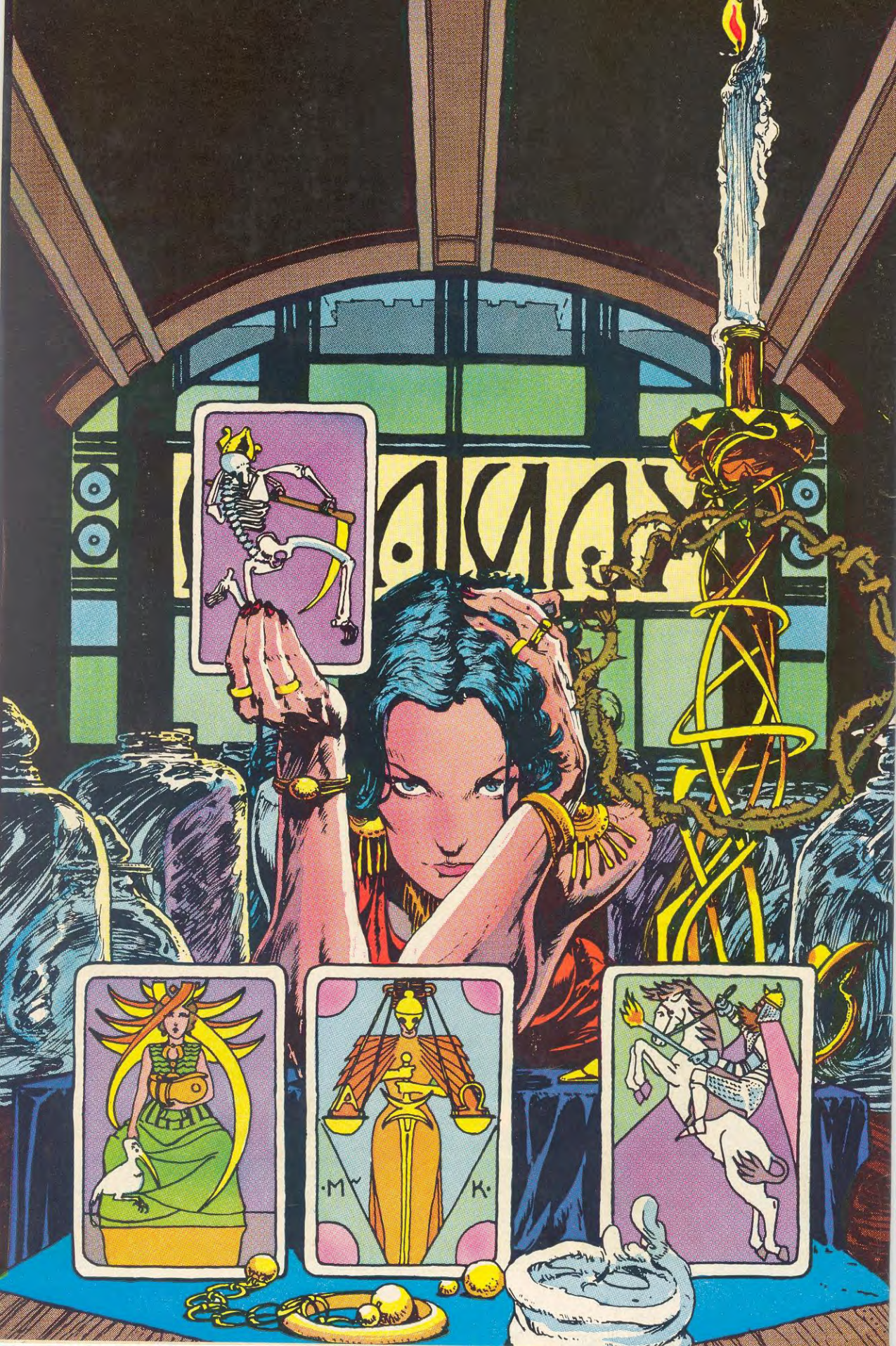
STOP!
AAH! XANADU! YOU CANNOT STOP ME!
PERHAPS NOT... BUT THEY CAN!
STOP HER!
DESTROY HER!
BUT MADAME XANADU SWEEPS A HAND THROUGH THE AIR BEFORE HER, AND...
WE CAN GO NO FURTHER!
LAURA! JOSEPH! LOOK AT ME!
DULL EYES TURN CONFUSEDLY TOWARD HER URGENT VOICE...


YOU MUST NOT DO THIS THING -- NOT FOR THEM!
REMEMBER WHAT YOU FEEL INSIDE YOURSELVES!
ULL EYES...
...DULLED WITH PASSION...!
NO! FEEL! FEEL THE BLISS! YOU NEED NO MORE THAN THAT!
CLOSER! ALL OF YOU--
--CLOSER!
YEA!
GET IT ON!
WAOOO!
TAMMUZ! I WILL HAVE YOU!
ISHTAR! IT IS TIME!

WAIT!
WHA--?
RARF RARF
PUPPY--?
IN HIS MOUTH-- HONEYSUCKLE!
NOW LOOK AT EACH OTHER! WHAT DO YOU SEE IN THOSE EYES?
WHAT DO YOU FEEL?
DO NOT LOOK TO OTHERS FOR YOUR MAGIC! LOOK TO YOURSELVES-- YOURSELVES ALONE!
JOSEPH--
LAURA--
23

I LOVE YOU!
NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOON
...AND WITH THOSE THREE SIMPLE WORDS...
I LOVE YOU.
24

EPILOGUE
HELLO, LAURA AND JOSEPH. HOW ARE YOU BOTH?
WELL, I FEEL LIKE RIP VAN WINKLE JUST WAKING UP FROM A LONG SLEEP--BUT IT'S PROBABLY JUST AS WELL. I DON'T REALLY WANT TO REMEMBER KICKING THE HABIT.
IT'S FUNNY, BUT I FEEL JUST AS FOGGY AS JOE DOES.
I'VE BEEN TAKING CARE OF HIM CONSTANTLY, AND...
--AND YOU'VE BEEN CAUGHT UP IN YOURSELVES, TO THE EXCLUSION OF ALL OTHER THOUGHTS. IT HAPPENS THAT WAY--
--WITH LOVE.
YEAH... I GUESS THAT'S RIGHT.
ANYWAY, I WANTED TO BRING YOU SOMETHING, MADAME XANADU. I DON'T THINK I'M READY TO USE MY AUNT'S BOOK AND I WANT YOU TO HAVE IT.
THANK YOU, LAURA. YOU'VE MADE THE RIGHT DECISION--ON ALL COUNTS.
GOOD LUCK TO YOU BOTH!
ENTER FREELY AND UNAFRAID
NEVER THE END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