

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **THE THING AND IRON FIST** TOGETHER!

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# A TALE OF TWO COUNTRIES!

IT'S A COLD DECEMBER AFTERNOON AT SHEA STADIUM, FLUSHING, NEW YORK, AND THE THIRTY-FIVE THOUSAND JETS FANS WHO GATHER THERE SHOUT HAPPILY TO KEEP THEMSELVES WARM. TWO OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED FANS HAPPEN TO INCLUDE BENJAMIN J. GRIMM AND ALICIA MASTERS.

LET'S SORT THROUGH ALL THE HOOPLA AND EAVESDROP ON THEIR CONVERSATION, SHALL WE?

YA SURE YA REALLY WANTED TA COME HERE, ALICIA? I MEAN, HOW INTERESTED ARE YA?

DARLING BEN, WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO LEARN JUST BEING WITH YOU IS ALL THAT IS IMPORTANT TO ME?

BESIDES, WHEN I WANT TO GO TO A CONCERT, YOU ALWAYS COME WITH ME. IT'S A FAIR TRADE.

TRACKING SENSORS ARE CORRECT. OUR TARGET IS THERE!



PREPARE THE ANESTHESIA RAY!

DONE! ARE YOU POSITIVE IT WILL WORK?



I GUARANTEE IT. THE THING WILL INSTANTLY BE RENDERED UNCONSCIOUS.

THEN THERE IS NO NEED TO WAIT ANY LONGER.

**BEGIN!**



YA KNOW SUMTHIN', KID. GALS LIKE YOU DO WONDERS FOR THE OL' MORALE.

'CAUSE SOMETIMES, JUS' SOMETIMES, I REMEMBER WHAT I AM, AN' I WANNA GO BURY MY HEAD WHERE I'LL NEVER SEE IT AGAI-- HUNH?!

HEY, LOOK! IT'S THE THING!

BEN! BEN! WHAT IS HAPPENING?



CABLE IS NOW IN PLACE. HOIST PROCEDURE UNDERWAY!



LOOK! UP THERE!

PLEASE SPEAK TO ME. SOMEONE TELL ME WHAT IS HAPPENING???



BEN? BEN?

**BEN!**



IT IS DONE!  
THE THING  
IS ABOARD  
OUR SHIP.

JUSTICE? DO YOU THINK GENERAL  
CHONGA CARES ONE WHIT FOR  
JUSTICE? HE'D CRUSH US ALL  
IF HE COULD.

HASN'T HE **ALREADY**  
STOLEN QUEEN SEN  
FROM US?

NO, WE DO WHAT **MUST**  
BE DONE--FOR OURSELVES  
... FOR OUR COUNTRY!  
**FOR OUR QUEEN!**  
AND NO ONE, NOT EVEN  
THIS ORANGE-SKINNED  
MONSTER, WILL STAND  
IN OUR WAY!

COME. IT  
IS TIME TO  
INFORM **THE**  
**DRAGON** OF  
OUR  
RESULTS.



BUT I'M  
STILL NOT  
SURE IT WAS  
THE **CORRECT**  
WAY TO DO  
THIS. WE COULD  
HAVE **SPOKEN**  
TO HIM  
FIRST...

WE **DID**, AND  
HE TURNED US  
**DOWN!** MUST WE  
**BEG** HIM LIKE  
PEASANTS? **NO!**

WE CAN  
**NOT** AFFORD  
FAILURE.

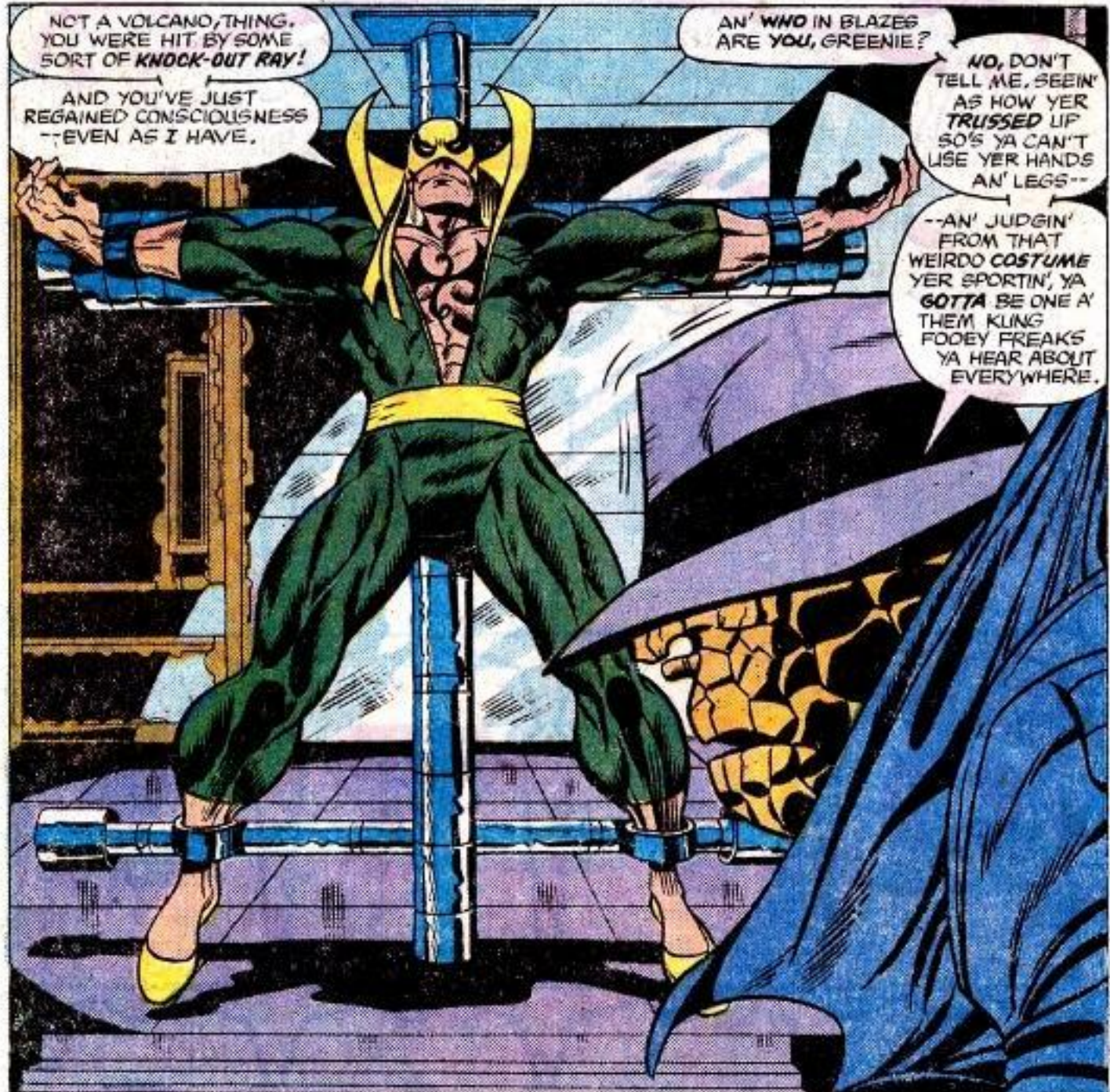
STILL, I DON'T LIKE WHAT  
WE DO, NOT EVEN IN THE  
NAME OF JUSTICE.

FOOTSTEPS ECHO IN THE ROOM, THEN FINALLY FADE INTO THE DIRIGIBLE'S CONSTANT DRONING. BEN GRIMM IS UNCONSCIOUS, BUT, AS THE MINUTES SLOWLY AND AGONIZINGLY TICK AWAY...

ALICI--W-WHAT  
HIT ME?

MY HEAD FEELS LIKE  
I STUCK IT INNA **BLAMED**  
VOLCANO!





NOT A VOLCANO, THING. YOU WERE HIT BY SOME SORT OF **KNOCK-OUT RAY!**

AND YOU'VE JUST REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS --EVEN AS I HAVE.

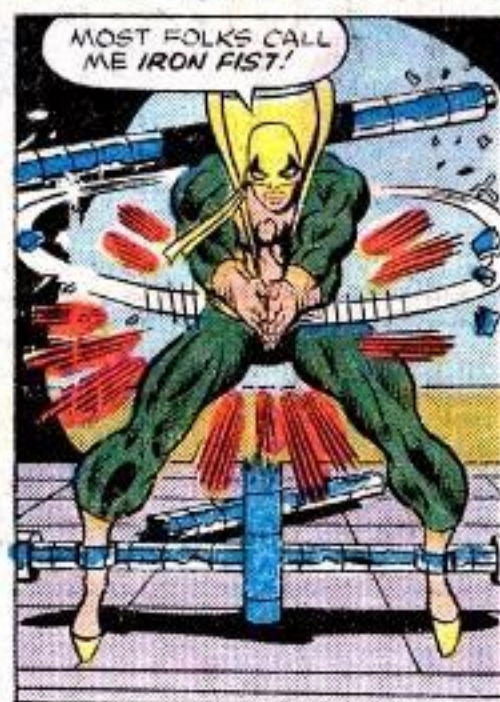
AN' WHO IN BLAZES ARE YOU, GREENIE?

NO, DON'T TELL ME, SEEMIN' AS HOW YER **TRUSSED UP** SO'S YA CAN'T USE YER HANDS AN' LEGS--

--AN' JUDGIN' FROM THAT WEIRDO **COSTUME** YER SPORTIN', YA GOTTA BE ONE A' THEM KLING FOOEY FREAKS YA HEAR ABOUT EVERYWHERE.



FAIRLY ACCURATE, THING. BUT I HAVE A NAME, IF YOU CARE TO USE IT.



MOST FOLKS CALL ME **IRON FIST!**



**IRON-FIST-- THE LIVING WEAPON!**

**CHOOM**



PRETTY IMPRESSIVE, GREENIE. NOW SEE IF YA CAN ALSO *PUSH* THAT LITTLE BUTTON THERE TA LET ME DOWN.

OR CAN YA ONLY USE THEM HANDS TA SMASH BRICKS?

HOLD ON A MOMENT, THING.



SHEESH! 'BOUT TIME. I WUZ STARTIN' TA GET AIR-SICK!

NOW, HOWZABOUT TELLIN' ME WHAT'S HOPPENIN' HERE?



I'M NOT ENTIRELY SURE, THING. OUR CAPTORS LEFT A FEW MINUTES BEFORE YOU REVIVED. THEY WENT UP FRONT.

THEN WHATAYA WAITIN' FER, GREENIE? C'MON! WE GOT US A FEW HEADS TA CLOBBER.



I'D WAIT AWHILE, THING. THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO STAGE A FIGHT.

AN' WHY NOT, FANCY-FIST? GOT COLD FEET?

'COURSE, THAT WOULDN'T SURPRISE ME, SEEIN' AS YER ONLY WEARIN' THEM DAINTY, SWEET LITTLE BOOTIES.

FIRSTLY TO GO AFTER THEM WOULD MEAN A FIGHT, AND OUR CAPTORS LOOK AS IF THEY CAN HOLD THEIR OWN.



SECONDLY, ANY LONG BATTLE WOULD DESTROY THIS SHIP, AND I SUGGEST YOU LOOK OUT THE WINDOW AND SEE WHAT'S BELOW.

FER CRYIN' OUT LOUD! THAT'S THE BLAMED OCEAN DOWN THERE!

YOU GET MY POINT, THING?

SHARP AN' CLEAR!

SUDDENLY THERE COMES A JOLTING SHUDDER, AND...



OH NO! WHAT'S HOPPENIN' NOW? FEELS LIKE THE WHOLE KIT 'N' KABOODLE'S TAKIN' OFF!

I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT, THING. IT LOOKS LIKE THE DIRIGIBLE WAS JUST CAMOUFLAGE -- FOR A JET CRAFT!



NOW WE'RE REALLY STUCK WITH THIS MESS. WHATEVER THIS MESS IS, ANYWAYS.

GOT ANY IDEAS, FANCY-FIST?

I BELIEVE SO. THING, I SAW OUR CAPTORS JUST BEFORE THEY LEFT THIS ROOM, AND I THINK THEY WERE THE SAME ONES WHO APPROACHED ME A FEW WEEKS AGO ABOUT TRAINING THEIR COUNTRY'S ARMY FOR WAR.



I TURNED THEM DOWN, OF COURSE.

YER NOT JES' PUTTIN' ME ON, ARE YA, GREENIE? SAME CREEPOLAS TRIED TA ENLIST ME, TOO.

I BOUNCED 'EM OUTTA THE BAXTER BUILDING 'FORE THEY COULD SAY "JACKIE ROBINSON!"



ONE THING THIS THING AIN'T INTERESTED IN, IS GETTIN' MIXED UP WITH POLITICS!

HECK, THE ONLY CLOWN I LIKED IN LAST MONTH'S ELECTION WAS HOWARD THE DUCK --AN' EVEN HE WAS A QUACK!

IF I RECALL, THOSE MEN CAME FROM KAIWANN, AN ISLAND OFF MANCHURIA WHICH HAS TWO WARRING COUNTRIES.



I DIDN'T WANT TO GET INVOLVED HELPING ONE SIDE AGAINST THE OTHER.

YEAH! THEY WANTED ME TA GIVE 'EM SOME A' STRETCHO'S SUPER-WEAPONS. "FERGET IT!" I SAID!

BUT I KINDA GUESS THEY DIDN'T TAKE "NO" FOR AN ANSWER, WHICH IS WHY WE'RE HERE NOW.

ONLY THEY AIN'T KEEPIN' ME LOCKED UP ANY LONGER. 'CAUSE AS OF RIGHT NOW--



--THE THING IS BUSTIN' LOOOOAAARGHHHHH!

WHAAA?

THEY OPENED THE BOMB-BAY DOORS!



YA KNOW SUMTHIN' GREENIE? YA SOUND JUST LIKE REED.

AN' YA KNOW SUMTHIN' ELSE? I DON'T LIKE IT WHEN HE TELLS ME TA SHUT UP AN' LISSSEN, EITHER.

DURING THE PAST WEEKS WE WERE FORCED TO TRAIN OUR OWN ARMIES BECAUSE YOU TWO REFUSED AID.

BUT NOW--IRON FIST! YOU ARE THE GREAT-EST MARTIAL ARTIST OF THEM ALL. IF OUR TRAINED WARRIORS CAN DEFEAT YOU, GENERAL CHONGA'S FORCES WILL BE HELPLESS AGAINST US.

AND YOU, BEN GRIMM-- YOU ARE AN UNSTOPPABLE MONSTER. BUT IF WE CAN STOP YOU, CHONGA WILL EASILY FALL.

HE CALLED ME A MONSTER! ME? BASHFUL BENJAMIN GRIMM, THE 'EVER-LOVIN', BLUE-EYED, IDOL A' MILLIONS. ME--A MONSTER?

WAIT'LL I GET MY MITTS ON THOSE MUGS.

YOU'LL HAVE YOUR CHANCE NOW, GRIMM. THEY'RE HERE!

HERE WHERE? I DON'T SEE NO ONE!

THEN WHO THREW THAT JA-DAGNA? MOVE!

**KRUNCH**

I SEE IT NOW, FANCY-FIST, AND YOU DON'T HAFTA TELL ME TWICE!

SHEESH! THEY MISSED ME WITH THIS JOE DIMAGGIO WHATCHAMACALLIT. CAN'T SAY MUCH FOR THEIR AIM.

IT'S A JA-DAGNA-- AN AMERICAN INDIAN WAR CLUB. AND I DON'T BELIEVE THEY MISSED.

THAT WAS INTENDED AS A WARNING.

YA DON'T SAY, GREENIE? SO WHERE'S THE FOLLOW-UP?



AS IF THE THING'S QUESTION WAS THE SIGNAL FOR ACTION...

**NOW!**

DEATH TO THE FOOLS!

FOR OUR COUNTRY!  
FOR OUR QUEEN!

YEAH, I GUESS IT WUZ JUST A WARNIN'--

--'CAUSE NOW--  
HERE COMES  
THE PEANUT  
GALLERY!

CAREFUL, GRIMM,  
THOSE SWORDS  
ARE TIPPED  
WITH DEADLY  
POISON.

**POK**

REALLY, GREENIE? I'M  
**SHAKIN'** IN MY BOOTS  
FROM WORRY.

SEE HOW I'M SO  
HELPLESSLY  
FRIGHTENED?

YOU TWO  
WILL NOW  
DIE!

AND KONGA  
WILL BE YOUR  
KILLER!

**KAI-YAHH!**

AN'A "KAI-YAHH"  
RIGHT BACK  
ATCHA, "KING"  
KONGA!

**SWOK!**

THEY'RE ALL DOWN,  
BUT WE HAVEN'T  
LEARNED ANYTHING.

DON'T WORRY  
IT, SMILEY.  
WE'LL WAIT  
HERE 'TIL  
ONE A' THEM  
BOZOS COMES  
TO.

THEN I'LL JUST  
INTERROGATE  
'EM, THING  
STYLE.



YOUR PLAN IS NOT WORKING, PRINCE DRAGON. YOUR WARRIORS WERE DEFEATED TOO EASILY. HOW DO YOU THINK THEY'LL DO AGAINST GENERAL CHONSA?

IT WILL WORK OUT, GRACIOUS ONE. IT MUST.

IN THAT, YOU ARE CORRECT. THE PENALTY FOR FAILURE WILL BE A MOST BLOOD-THIRSTY WAR.

I REALIZE THAT, GRACIOUS ONE. I REALIZE THAT, INDEED.

NOW THEN, LET US RETURN TO THE STARS OF THIS STORY, ALREADY IN PROGRESS...

SO, AS YA WUZ ABOUT TA SAY--BEFORE I BEGIN SQUISHIN' YOUR HEAD...?

...THE TEMPLE... GO TO THE TEMPLE AT THE RIDGE OF FOUR HELLS.



THE TREK ACROSS LAND AND SWAMP IS LONG AND ARDUOUS, FRAUGHT WITH DANGER AND MENACE. BUT, AS THEY SAY, ALL GOOD THINGS MUST COME TO AN END, AND SO, AT LONG LAST--

THAT'S IT, GRIMM--THE TEMPLE AT THE RIDGE OF FOUR HELLS!

SCREWIEST LOOKIN' BURGER KING I'VE EVER SEEN!

THANKS BUCKETS, CREEP. WE'LL JUST CHECK OUT THAT LITTLE DIG AN' SEE IF YER TELLIN' THE TRUTH.

'CAUSE IF YER LYIN', WE'LL BE BACK.

C'MON, GREENIE. WE GOT US A LITTLE WALKIN' TA DO.



YOU THOROUGHLY FRIGHTENED THAT MAN, GRIMM.

AWWWW, I WOULDN'T A' REALLY SQUOOSHED 'IM. LEIST NOT TOO HARD.



'SIDES, WE GOT THE INFO WE NEEDED. RIGHT?



I MEAN, HOW'RE THEY GONNA GET ANY CUSTOMERS IF THERE'S NO WAY TA CROSS THEM BUBBLIN' VOLCANOES?

IT'S YER BALL-GAME, FANCY-FIST. GOT ANY BRIGHT IDEAS?



I LATCHED ON TO THIS VINE AFTER OUR LITTLE FALL FROM THE JET-- JUST FOR THIS SORT OF EMERGENCY.



YA MUSTA BEEN A **BOY SCOUT**, GREENIE.. ALWAYS PREPARED!



BUT IF YA THINK YER GONNA GET ME TA TIGHTROPE THAT ITTY-BITTY STRING, YA GOT ANOTHER THING COMIN'!



THEN STAY BEHIND. I WANT TO GET INTO THAT TEMPLE.

HEY! I WAS JUST KIDD--



#@XX!!@!  
AWRIGHT!  
AWRIGHT! I'M COMIN'!

SHEESH!  
CAN'T YOU KLING FOEDERS TAKE A JOKE?



NOT WHEN LIVES DEPEND ON IT, GRIMM. THE MARTIAL ARTS IS MORE THAN SIMPLY FIGHTING TECHNIQUES..IT'S SPIRITUAL GROWTH AS WELL AS PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT.

YOU MUST CLEAR YOUR MIND OF ALL EXTRANEIOUS MATTERS-- TO FOCUS YOUR ENERGIES INTO ONE CLEAR FORCE. SURVIVAL DEPENDS ON MENTAL DISCIPLINE.

OKAY! SO YER NOT ALL WOODY ALLENS! I GET THE PICTURE (AN' I THOUGHT REED NEVER STOPPED YAKKIN' AWAY!).



WE'RE HERE. NOW ONLY THIS OAKEN DOOR KEEPS US FROM THE TEMPLE.



JUST THAT LITTLE TOOTHPICK, FANCY-FIST?

LET'S HUFF, AN' LET'S PUFF, AN' WE'LL BLOW THE DOOR DOWN!

**K ROOM**



NICE FOOT- WORK. YA LEARN THAT STEP AT ARTHUR MURRAY'S?

UH OH! I THINK THEY KNEW WE WUZ COMIN'!

AN' I BET THEY STILL DIDN'T BAKE US A CAKE!

S'KARI THE BLIND SWORDSMAN IS THE FIRST TO STEP FORWARD. IRON FIST LASHES OUT...

...BUT THE WARRIOR'S SENSITIVE HEARING WARNS HIM MOMENTS BEFORE IMPACT...



SWORD STILL IN HAND, S'KARI RISES QUICKLY, THEN SWINGS HIS BLAZING SWORD WITH EYE-BLURRING SPEED.

SWORD STILL IN HAND, S'KARI RISES QUICKLY, THEN SWINGS HIS BLAZING SWORD WITH EYE-BLURRING SPEED.



BUT TO NO AVAL.



NOW IT IS TIME FOR MONGO THE MERCILESS.

YOU DEFEATED OUR WARRIORS IN THE FOREST--



--BUT NO MAN CAN STOP MONGO.

WHA? I DIDN'T SEE THAT!



NOW, MONSTER, YOU ARE READY FOR THE FINAL THRUST!



WHILE...

PUT DOWN THAT SWORD, WARRIOR!

WHAT? YOU BLOCK MY ARM WITH YOURS! I-I CAN NOT MOVE IT!

FOR NOTHING CAN MOVE AN ARM THAT HAS BECOME LIKE UNTO A THING OF IRON.





AND... FINAL THRUST MY AUNT PETUNIA!

IF ANY-ONE GETS A LAST CLOBBER, BALDY--

--IT'S THE EVER-LOVIN' THING!



CEASE! LET THE BATTLING END!

THIS HAS ALL BEEN A TERRIBLE, TERRIBLE MISTAKE.



EASY FER YOU TA SAY, BUSTER-- AFTER WE'VE ALMOST MOPPED UP THE PLACE WITH YA!

PLEASE... LISTEN TO ME. LEARN THE REASONS FOR OUR ACTIONS.

YOU SEE, OUR COUNTRY HAS BEEN AT WAR WITH OUR NEIGHBOR FOR CENTURIES. AND NOW, WE HAVE FINALLY ARRANGED PEACE BETWEEN OUR LANDS.

HUHN? I THOUGHT-?



PLEASE... LISTEN A MOMENT MORE. OUR QUEEN SEN IS TO MARRY THEIR EMPEROR--WHOM THEY CALL "THE GRACIOUS ONE!"

IF SHE ISN'T RECOVERED IN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, OUR TWO COUNTRIES WILL BE PLUNGED INTO A FINAL, DESPERATE WAR WHICH WILL DESTROY US BOTH.

BUT OUR HIGHEST GENERAL--CHONGA--REBELLED AT THE IDEA. HE WANTED WAR, AND HE KIDNAPPED OUR LOVELY QUEEN.

CHONGA TOOK OUR ARMY WITH HIM. WE HAVE NO ONE BUT A MERE HANDFUL OF WARRIORS. HE HAD TO RECRUIT YOU. BUT YOU TURNED US DOWN, AND WE... WE RESORTED TO KIDNAPPING YOU.



SHEESH! WHY DIDN'T YA SAY THAT IN THE FIRST PLACE? WE'D BEEN GLAD TA HELP YA IF WE KNEW WHY.

IF WORD LEAKED OUT, WE FEARED CHONGA WOULD KILL QUEEN SEN.

SO, WHADDAYA WAITIN' FER? LEAD US TA CHOP SUEY!



AND... HIS ARMY IS CAMPED AT THE BOTTOM OF THIS CRATER WHICH LEADS IN TO A HOLLOWED-OUT INTERIOR. BUT HE OUTHUMBERS US-- ONE HUNDRED TO ONE, ARE YOU SURE...?

FRIEND, BUTTON YER MOUTH, AND LET'S--



-- JUMP!

C'MON, YA MEATBALLS!  
YA GOTTA MOVE,  
FASTER!



CAN'T GIVE THE BOZOS HERE  
TOO MUCH WARNIN', OR WE'LL  
BLOW OUR SURPRISE!

IT'S TOO  
LATE,  
GRIMM!

WHADDAYA  
MEAN,  
GREENIE?



OH?



IT'S GENERAL CHONGA--  
LEADING HIS TROOPS!



THESE ARE THE CREEPS YER SCARED 'A?  
C'MON! THESE FEATHERWEIGHTS COULDN'T  
EVEN TAKE ON LAVERNE AN' SHIRLEY!

SPONG



IRON FIST MOVES WITH THE SPEED AND AGILITY  
TAUGHT HIM IN THE ANCIENT, MYSTIC CITY OF  
KI'UN-LUN...

...AND EVEN  
THESE UN-  
BEATABLE  
WARRIORS FALL  
BEFORE THE  
POWER WHICH  
MAKES HIM THE  
MOST FINELY-  
HONED MARTIAL  
ARTS MASTER  
IN THE WORLD.

SOX



FOR OUR QUEEN! S'KARI,  
STRIKE FOR OUR QUEEN!

MY SWORD AND  
I ARE WITH YOU,  
MONGO!



WHITZAT? HEY! WHUT'S GOIN' ON HERE ANYWAY?

I THOUGHT WE WUZ RESCUIN' THE QUEEN FER SOME GUY FROM THE OTHER COUNTRY, AN' NOW YOU TWO ARE SMOOCHIN' LIKE YOU WUZ LOVE-BIRDS IN HEAT!

WE ARE IN LOVE, MY FRIEND, AND WE WERE TO BE MARRIED.

BUT THEN THE GRACIOUS ONE DEMANDED MY LOVE'S HAND IN TURN FOR PEACE.

AND I AM QUEEN OF ALL OUR PEOPLE. I HAD TO SACRIFICE MY OWN HAPPINESS FOR THEM.

I-I COULD NOT ALLOW MORE WAR AND SUFFERING.

GENERAL CHONGA IS TAKEN AWAY AND PLACED IN CUSTODY, AND SO, LATER...

AH, I SEE PRINCE DRAGON IS TRUE TO HIS WORD, MY DEAR QUEEN SEN. YOU HAVE COME HERE FOR OUR WEDDING.

I AM HERE... FOR PEACE, GRACIOUS ONE. I AM HERE.

YA MEAN THAT OLD GEEZER'S GONNA BE HER ONE AN' ONLY.

SHEESH! TALK ABOUT SACRIFICE.

MY FRIEND, SOMETIMES WE MUST ALL MAKE SACRIFICES--

--EVEN IF THAT SACRIFICE MUST BE THE FRAGILE EMOTION CALLED LOVE.

HUHN?

NEXT ISSUE: **NICK FURY!** NUFF SAID?