

THE GAZA STRIP -- ISRAELI-
OCCUPIED EGYPT -- EARLY 1973:

BENEATH THE
PALE SAHARA
MOON SIT
TWO LOVERS--

--IN CURIOUS
JUXTAPOSITION
TO A MACHINE
OF WAR.

IN WHISPERS, THEY TALK OF DOUBTS AND
TRUTHS, JOYS AND PAINS, UNAWARE--

--OF THE SINISTER SHADOW ABOUT TO
DESCEND UPON THEIR LIVES...

WHEN-- WHERE--
WILL IT END,
AVRAM? THE
FIGHTING, THE
BITTERNESS?

DAVIDA, IF I-- WAIT!
SOMETHING MOVING
BEHIND US!

WHY DOES
MAN PERSIST
IN KILLING--
WHEN THERE'S
SO MUCH
TO LIVE FOR?

BE STILL-- LET
IT SHOW ITSELF!
WE WILL BE
READY!

NO, BRAVE SOLDIER-- NO ONE COULD BE READY FOR A SIGHT AS TERRIFYING AS THIS--

Stan
Lee
PRESENTS:

the LIVING MUMMY!

A-- A MONSTER!
A THING OUT OF
HELL!

AVRAM--
ITS EYES!
LOOK AT ITS
EYES!

MAN OR
MONSTER-- THE
THING IS--

INSANE!

IT TOWERS ABOVE THE SHIFTING SANDS LIKE A TERROR OUT OF TIME. ITS CENTURIES-OLD FORM IS STIFFENED, LADEN WITH THE DUST OF AGES.

YET-- IT MOVES-- ITS CHEST RISES AND FALLS IN THE RHYTHM OF BREATHING--! THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT--

--IT LIVES!

IT WANTS TO KILL US, AVRAM! WHAT CAN WE DO?

SLOWLY-- DRAW YOUR PISTOL! WE WILL DO WHAT WE MUST.

THEY FIRE-- AND THE CRISP REPORTS SHATTER THE STILLNESS OF THE DESERT NIGHT!



IT'S FALTERING! FIRE AGAIN!

CAUGHT OFF-GUARD BY THESE STRANGE WEAPONS--AND BY THE IMPACT OF THE PELLETS THEY EXPEL-- THE MUMMY SWAYS-- TOTTERS--



--REGARDS WITH CURIOSITY THE DUST THEY RAISE FROM ITS FORM.

YET, IT STANDS UNHARMED!

FOR ITS FLESH IS MORE LIKE LIVING STONE-- HARDENED BY MILLENNIA OF INANIMACY--



--AS THE MALE SOLDIER SOON LEARNS... TO HIS SORROW.

AND NOW-- THE WOMAN.

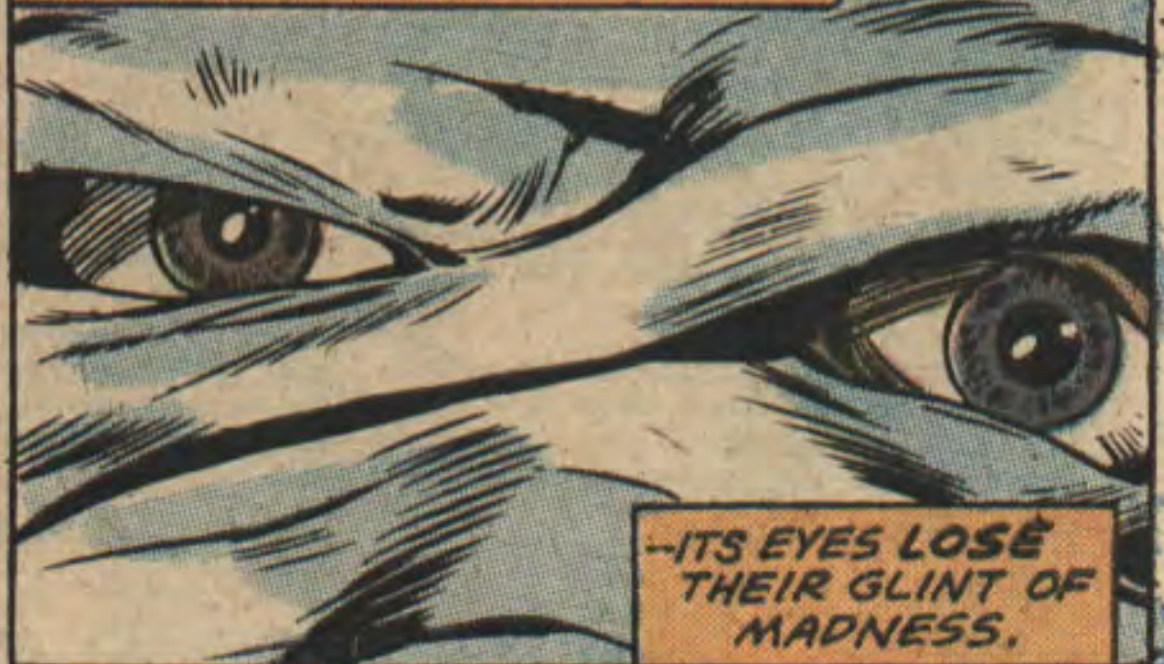


STIFFLY, IT TURNS--



--AND BENDS TO CRUSH THE LIFE FROM HER!

BUT IT STOPS-- AND AS IT LOOKS MORE CLOSELY ON HER FACE--



--ITS EYES LOSE THEIR GLINT OF MADNESS.

THERE IS BEAUTY IN THAT FACE-- AND IT--
HE?-- HAS NOT SEEN BEAUTY FOR MORE
THAN A MILLION DAYS.

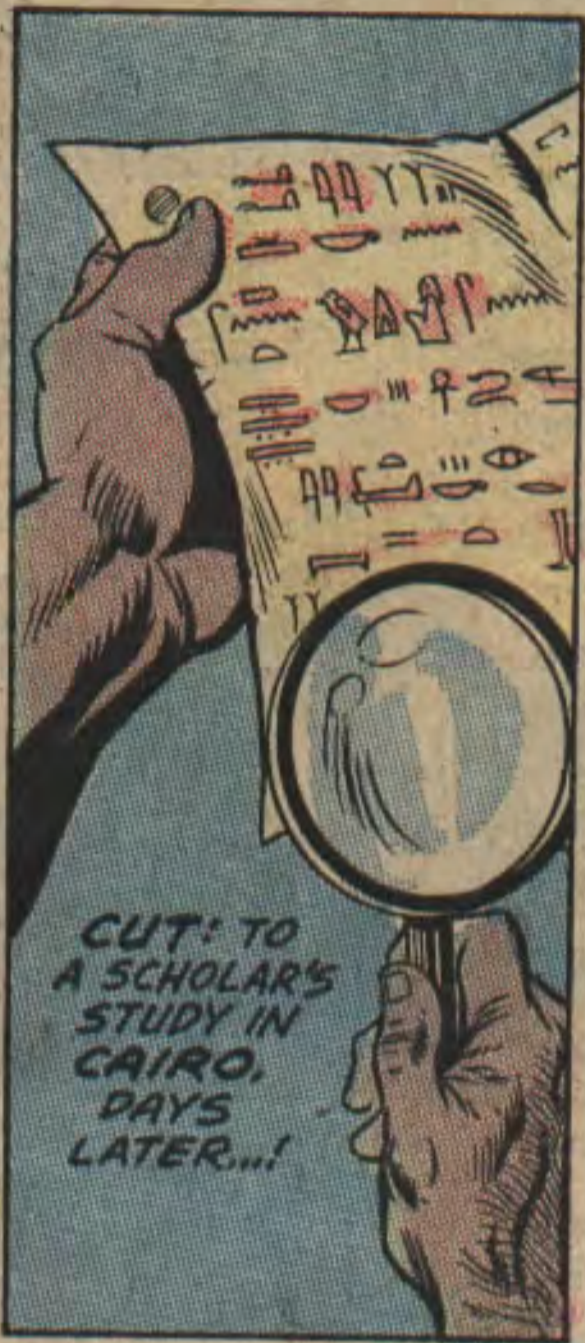
NOR CAN HE
BEAR TO DESTROY
IT.



AND SO THIS THING
FROM THE CRYPT
TURNS AWAY--
RESUMES HIS TREK
ACROSS THE ARID
WASTELAND--



--CERTAIN THAT
THE TWO
ISRAELIS ARE
NOT THE
ONES HE
SEEKS!



CUT: TO
A SCHOLAR'S
STUDY IN
CAIRO,
DAYS
LATER...!



FASCINATING!
UTTERLY
FASCINATING!

DOCTOR
SKARAB--?

HMM--? OH! RON!
JANICE! COME
IN-- SIT DOWN!

I BELIEVE, MY
ANTHROPOLOGIST
FRIENDS, WE HAVE
FOUND WHAT WE
SOUGHT!



THEN -- YOU'VE
FINISHED THE
TRANSLATION?

I HAVE
INDEED--
AND IT
SOLVES
BOTH
OUR LITTLE
MYSTERIES.

WE'VE LOCATED YOUR
MISSING AFRICAN TRIBE--
AND MY MISSING PHAROAH--
ON THE VERY SAME
PAPYRUS!

WELL,
TALK,
MAN--!





THE PAPYRUS DATES BACK TO A "LOST ERA" IN EGYPTIAN HISTORY-- A 200-YEAR PERIOD ABOUT WHICH WE KNEW ALMOST NOTHING-- UNTIL NOW.

APPARENTLY, THIS WAS A TIME OF GREAT EXPLORATION-- FORAYS INTO MANY OTHER LANDS-- UNDER THE REIGN OF PHARAOH AREM-SET.

ONE OF THOSE EXPEDITIONS NETTED EGYPT A NATION OF SLAVES-- AFRICANS KNOWN AS THE SWARILIS!

"LIKE THE HEBREWS, THEIR MAIN OCCUPATION WAS THE BUILDING OF MONUMENTS TO PHARAOH.



"AND ALSO LIKE THE HEBREWS, THEY HAD A DELIVERER-- THEIR WARRIOR-KING, N'KANTU, WHOM THE PAPYRUS DESCRIBES AS A 'GLEAMING EBONY GIANT.'



"N'KANTU'S STRENGTH MATCHED HIS SIZE.

"THUS, HIS LOT WAS THE HARDEST OF ALL.

"BUT THEY NEVER BROKE HIS SPIRIT. BY NIGHT, HE AND HIS PEOPLE PLOTTED REBELLION.



CAN THE AVENGER CALLED HAWKEYE TAKE ON THE DYNAMIC DEFENDERS?

"AND WHEN WORD OF IT REACHED PHARAOH, HE SUMMONED HIS PRIEST--!

YOU SEEM SORELY TROUBLED, GREAT ONE.

YES, NEPHRUS-- I AM.

ABOUT N'KANTU'S PLOTTING, NO DOUBT, IT SHOULD NOT BOTHER YOU SO, SIRE.

OH? AND WHY IS THIS? WHAT DO THE STARS SAY?

THAT YOUR TEMPLE SHALL BE COMPLETED--

-- THAT IT WILL STAND FOREVER AS PROOF OF YOUR GREATNESS.

I... SEE.

IT'S TRUE, I SUPPOSE. HOW COULD THEY REVOLT WITHOUT WEAPONS?

STILL-- WHEN THE TEMPLE IS FINISHED-- I'LL PUT THEM ALL TO DEATH.

A WISE DECISION, SIRE.

"THE STARS WERE PARTLY RIGHT-- AND PARTLY WRONG. THE TEMPLE WAS COMPLETED--

-- AS MUCH A MONUMENT TO GAUDINESS AS TO PHARAOH.

"AND WHEN THE LAST STONE WAS IN PLACE--

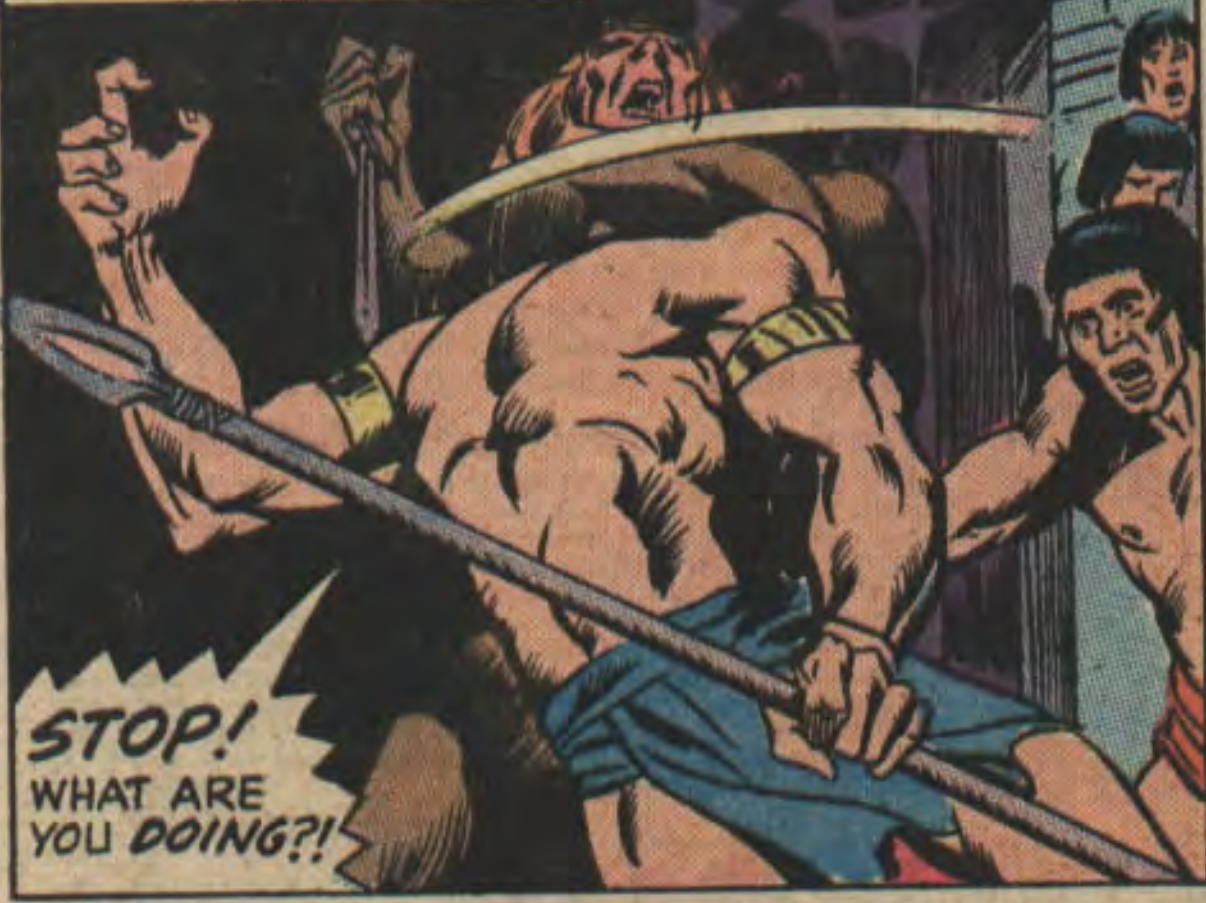
-- THE SLAVES WERE MARCHED INTO THE DUNGEONS-- THERE TO BE SLAUGHTERED BY PHARAOH'S GUARDS.

"HOWEVER, THAT'S NOT HOW IT TURNED OUT! SOMEHOW, N'KANTU HAD LEARNED WHAT WAS COMING--

"AND SO, WHEN THE DEATH PROCESSION REACHED A BLIND CORNER ON THE STAIRWAY...

DON'T ANSWER TILL YOU READ DEFENDERS #7-- SO BETTER GET IT QUICK! CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

"...ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE!"



STOP!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

"THE SLAVES HAD AMASSED AN ARSENAL OVER THE YEARS--AND NOW IT WAS PUT TO GOOD USE."



"N'KANTU LED HIS MEN OUT OF THE TEMPLE TO THE GATES OF THE PALACE ITSELF!"



"--AND ARAM-SET WAS WAITING!"

STOP! I COMMAND YOU TO SURRENDER!

YOUR LIVES WILL BE SPARED!



SAY YOUR PRAYERS TO OSIRIS!

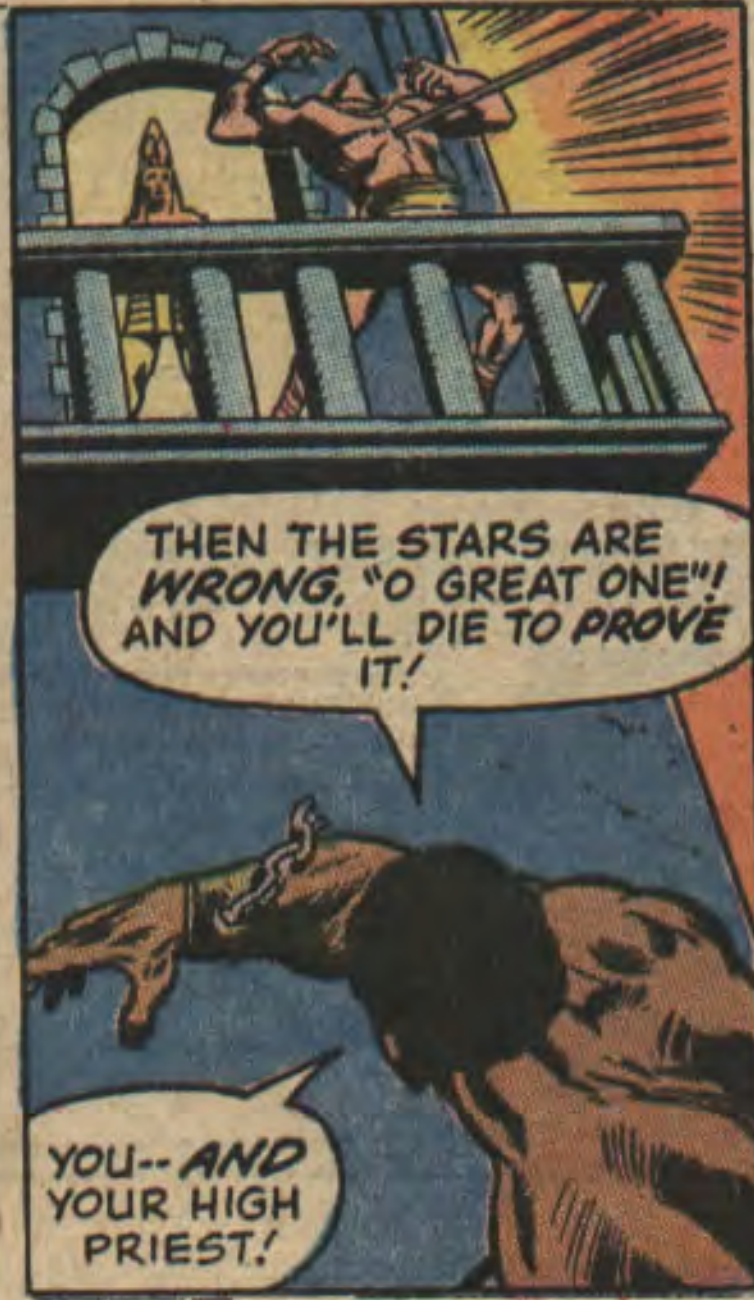
OUR LIVES AREN'T YOURS TO SPARE, PHAROAH--AS OF NOW!



FOOL! YOU DARE THREATEN MY LIFE?

THE STARS SAY I CANNOT BE BEATEN--

--THAT YOU MUST FAIL!



THEN THE STARS ARE WRONG, "O GREAT ONE"! AND YOU'LL DIE TO PROVE IT!

YOU-- AND YOUR HIGH PRIEST!



"BOLDLY, THE BLACK KING BARGED INSIDE--!"

I'VE LONGED FOR THIS MOMENT, NEPHRUS!

THE MOST UNLIKELY DUO OF VILLAINS EVER!



THEN-- I PRESUME YOU INTEND TO KILL ME?

AS NO MAN HAS EVER BEEN KILLED BEFORE-- SLOWLY --SO PAINFULLY--!

YOU'LL SUFFER-- AS MY PEOPLE HAVE SUFFERED!

"BUT EVEN AS N'KANTU SPOKE, NEPHUS DIPPED HIS FINGERTIPS IN A STRANGE POTION--



"--AND, WITH A FLICK OF HIS WRIST, SPRINKLED SEVERAL DROPS ON THE BLACK MAN'S FACE.

WH-- WHAT'S HAPPENING TO-- ME-- I--



YOU'RE PARALYZED, MY FRIEND!

AND A MAN WHO CANNOT MOVE CANNOT LEAD, MUCH LESS KILL!

GUARDS!



TAKE HIM TO THE EMBALMING ROOM BENEATH THE TEMPLE.

I HAVE A SPECIAL FATE PLANNED FOR OUR WARRIOR KING.



"THE PRIEST'S PLOT WAS BOTH INGENIOUS-- AND MADLY CRUEL...!"

"A PUNISHMENT WORSE BY FAR--

-- THAN ANY N'KANTU MIGHT HAVE CONCEIVED FOR HIM!

AND BRING ME THE RED FLUID VIAL.

ATTACH THE HOSES AND TUBES.



THIS FLUID, N'KANTU, WILL SOON REPLACE YOUR BLOOD.

BUT HAVE NO FEAR-- YOU WILL NOT DIE--!

QUITE THE OPPOSITE, YOU WILL LIVE ON FOREVER!

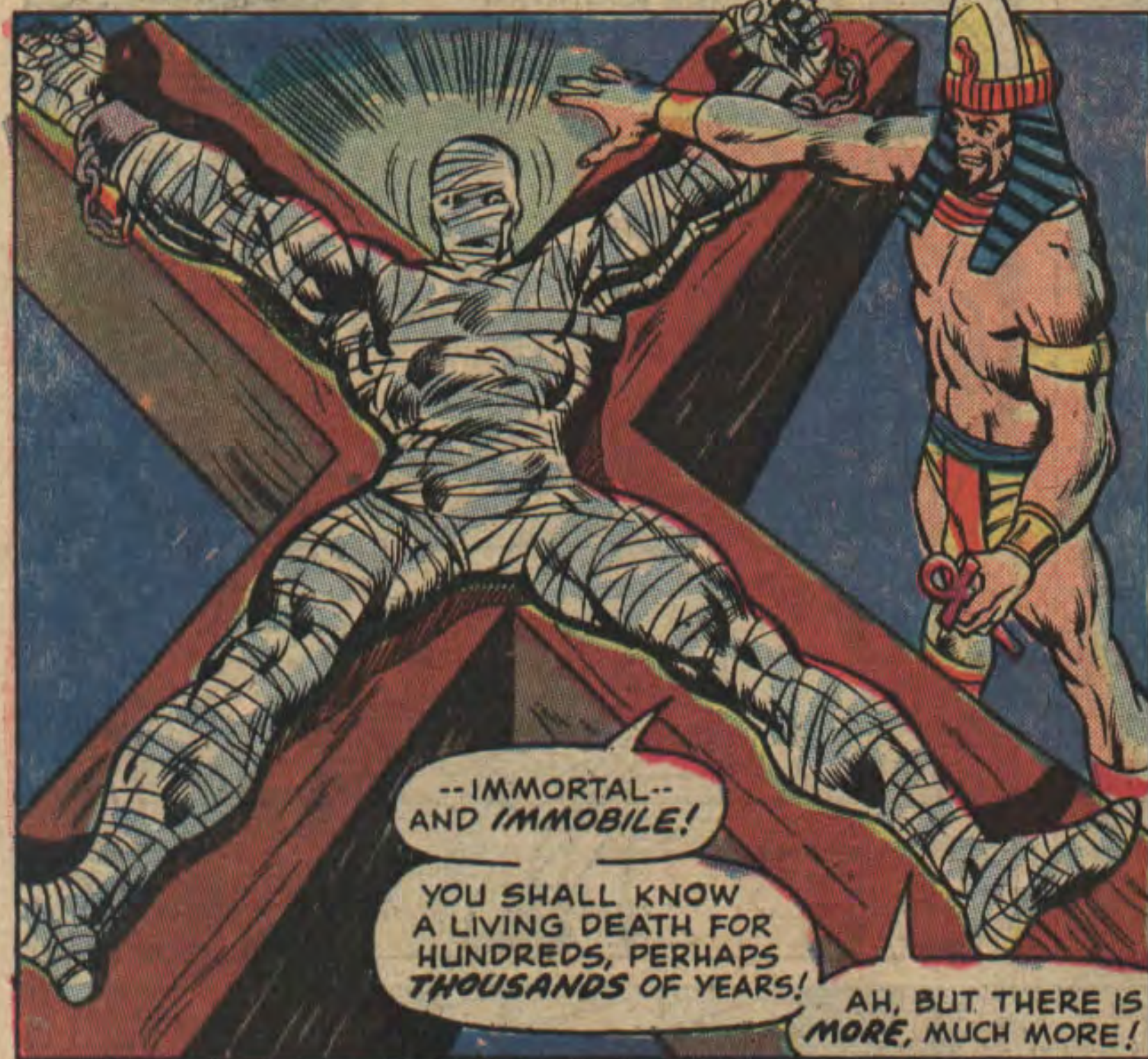


SO! I SEE YOU BEGIN TO APPRECIATE MY VENGEANCE--

-- ITS INFINITE SUBTLETY -- ITS ULTIMATE TORMENT!



YOU WILL LIVE-- IMPRISONED IN THESE WRAPPINGS-- UNABLE TO MOVE--



-- IMMORTAL -- AND IMMOBILE!

YOU SHALL KNOW A LIVING DEATH FOR HUNDREDS, PERHAPS THOUSANDS OF YEARS!

AH, BUT THERE IS MORE, MUCH MORE!



HERE-- IN THIS CASNET-- IS WHERE YOU WILL SPEND ALL YOUR DAYS!



ALONE-- WITH ONLY DARKNESS AS YOUR COMPANION!



GO, NOW--
QUELL THE
REVOLT--
WHILE I
OFFER
PRAYERS
OF THANKS
TO RA.

OUR PHARAOH IS
DEAD-- BUT EGYPT
LIVES ON!

AND I
OWE YOU
THANKS
ALSO,
N'KANTU.



AREM-SET
DIED WITHOUT
A SON--!

SO THIS DAY
BEGINS THE REIGN
OF NEPHRUS OVER
ALL EGYPT!

"AND NO SOONER HAD
THE PRIEST PRONOUNCED
THOSE WORDS THAN
THE EARTH BEGAN
TO TREMBLE BENEATH
HIM.



NO! THE
GODS
THEMSELVES
SEEK TO
DESTROY
ME!



WHY--?
WHAT
HAVE I
DONE TO
OFFEND?

"FOR A MOMENT, NEPHRUS STOOD
UNBELIEVING-- THEN HE RAN--



"--BARELY ESCAPING WITH HIS LIFE-- AS THE
CITY OF PHARAOHS CRUMBLLED INTO RUIN.

"THE SLAVES--
THOSE LEFT ALIVE--
ALSO FLED, NEVER
TO RETURN."

LOOK OUT, BEST RIDER! MAKE WAY FOR THE WITCH-WOMAN --



THE HISTORY ENDS THERE. AND APPARENTLY ALL OTHER RECORDS OF THAT TRAGIC TIME WERE DESTROYED.

SOUNDS MORE LIKE A FAIRY TALE THAN HISTORY.

OR LIKE AN OLD B-MOVIE PLOT!



PERHAPS... BUT IT DOES EXPLAIN THOSE ARTIFACTS YOU FOUND IN SOUTHERN AFRICA--

--POTTERY BEARING ANCIENT EGYPTIAN SYMBOLISM.



AND FOR ME, IT EXPLAINS A GREAT DEAL MORE. YOU SEE...

...I BELIEVE NEPHRUS WAS MY ANCESTOR.



YOUR WHAT? ARE YOU SERIOUS?

NOBODY CAN TRACE HIS LINEAGE BACK THAT FAR!

BUT MY INTEREST IN THIS GOES BEYOND GENEALOGY.



I CAN-- THROUGH A LINE OF EGYPTIAN SCIENTISTS AND ASTROLOGERS.



OH, YES... FAR BEYOND...!

SUPPOSE IT'S ALL TRUE.



SUPPOSE NEPHRUS HAD LEARNED THE SECRET OF IMMORTALITY! N'KANTU MIGHT STILL BE BURIED OUT THERE!

IF WE COULD FIND HIM-- REVIVE HIM--!

ALIVE! IN WHAT WE'D CALL SUSPENDED ANIMATION!

DOC, YOU'VE BEEN WORKING TOO HARD.



YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT A MAN 3,000 YEARS OLD! AND EVEN IF HE WERE STILL ALIVE--

--AFTER CENTURIES OF JUST LAYING THERE, UNABLE TO MOVE, WITH HIS MIND STILL FUNCTIONING--



"--HE'D BE TOTALLY INSANE BY NOW. COMPLETELY, LITTERLY MAD!"

HE IS THAT ...AND MORE.

HE IS A HUNTER-- A STALKER OF PREY!

HE IS A MAN OBSESSED.



FOR WHEN THE WIND-TOSSED SANDS AT LAST UNCOVERED HIS CASKET...



...WHEN FRESH AIR ENTERED ITS TIME-ERODED CRACKS...

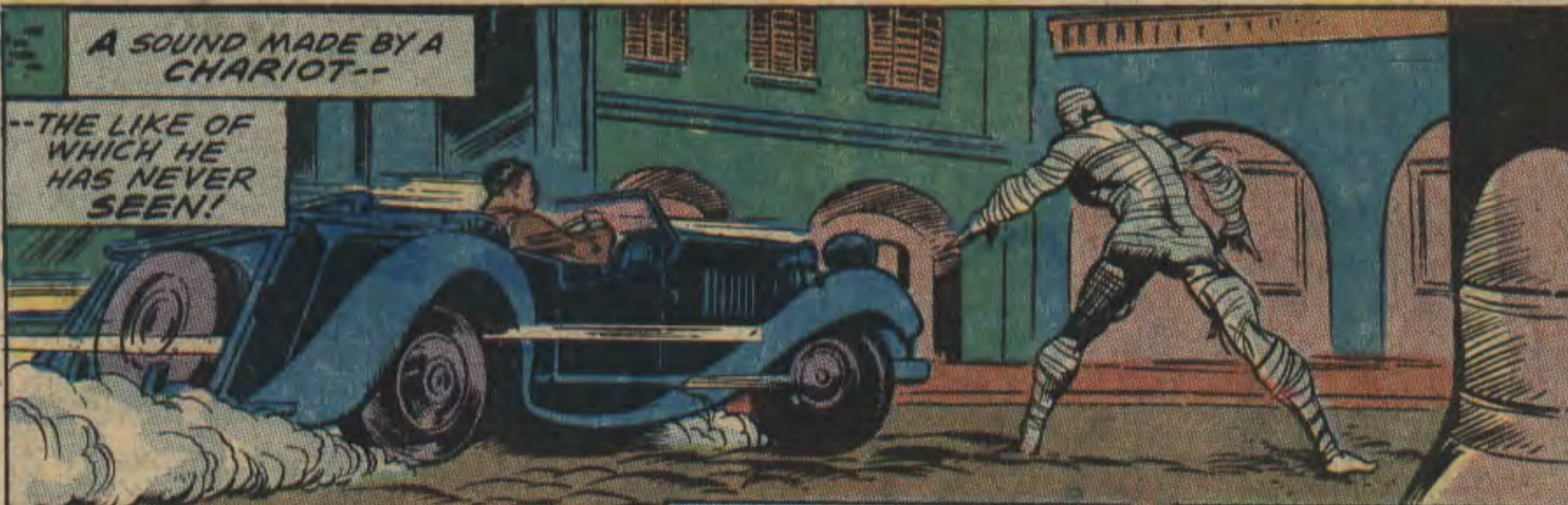
...WHEN HE LEARNED HE COULD MOVE AGAIN, HE-- WAIT!



A ROARING SOUND ASSAILS HIS EARS!

A SOUND MADE BY A CHARIOT--

--THE LIKE OF WHICH HE HAS NEVER SEEN!



SOME FORCE BEYOND MERE REASON HAS DRAWN HIM TO THIS CITY-- DRAWN HIM IN SEARCH OF NEPHRUS--AND VENGEANCE.

BUT NOW, FACED WITH THIS HURTLING METAL DEMON, HE HALTS--STRICKEN WITH FEAR.

AND THAT SAME EMOTION IS ETCHED ON THE FACE OF THE "CHARIOTEER"--!

ALLAH!



WHICH PERHAPS EXPLAINS WHY HE DOES NOT STOP.



CAN IT BE, HE WONDERS, THAT ALL MEN FEAR HIM--FEAR HIS RAGE?

IF THE COLLECTIVE COUNTENANCE OF THESE CITIZENS IS AN INDICATOR -- THEN YES.

I--I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! LOOK AT HIS STRENGTH!

BUT -- WHAT IS HE?

QUIET! THEY'RE SAYING SOMETHING!



THESE FILMS WERE TAKEN ONE HOUR AGO ON THE CITY'S SOUTH SIDE.

THE SO-CALLED MUMMY LEFT THE SCENE CARRYING THIS MAN, POSSIBLY AS A HOSTAGE.

IT HAS NOT BEEN SIGHTED SINCE, AND CITIZENS ARE ADVISED NOT TO LEAVE THEIR HOMES OR OFFICES.

IT MUST BE A JOKE OF SOME KIND!



OF COURSE! SUCH THINGS DON'T OCCUR IN THE WORLD!

POVERTY... WAR... STARVATION... THOSE ARE OUR MONSTERS.

MOUNTAIN OF MOHAMMED--!

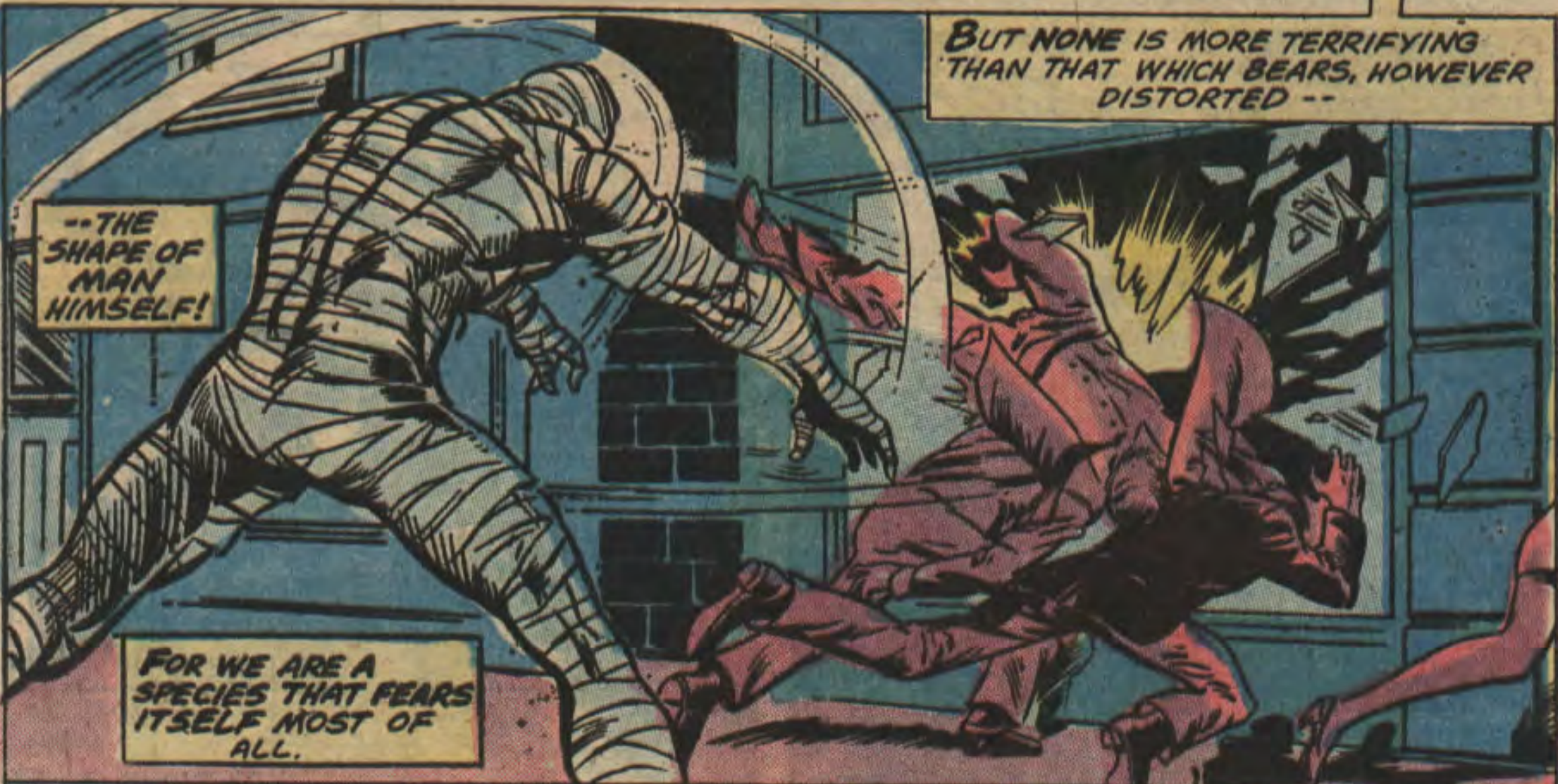
MONSTERS COME IN AS MANY SHAPES AS FEAR ITSELF.



BUT NONE IS MORE TERRIFYING THAN THAT WHICH BEARS, HOWEVER DISTORTED --

--THE SHAPE OF MAN HIMSELF!

FOR WE ARE A SPECIES THAT FEARS ITSELF MOST OF ALL.



AND IF YOU REQUIRE FURTHER PROOF...

RON! JANICE! IT'S HAPPENED! N'KANTU HAS RETURNED!

HE'S ALIVE-- STALKING THE STREETS!

THE TV NEWS IS FILLED WITH IT!

DOC, TAKE IT EASY ARE YOU SURE?

THIS IS AN AWFULLY STRANGE COINCIDENCE, ISN'T IT?

CALL IT WHAT YOU WILL.

HE MUST BE STOPPED!

BY US? WHAT CAN WE DO?

ANSWER THAT ONE, DOC!

ONLY WE KNOW WHO HE IS-- WHAT HE MAY WANT!

PERHAPS WE CAN CALM HIM-- END HIS RAMPAGE-- IF WE CAN FIND HIM!

AND SO THE THREE DEPART--

--JUST AS THE OBJECT OF THEIR SEARCH ARRIVES--!

COINCIDENCE AGAIN-- OR CALCULATION? NONE CAN SAY FOR CERTAIN.

BUT N'KANTU'S IMPULSE HAS BROUGHT HIM HERE--

AND THAT SAME IMPULSE BIDS THAT HE ENTER--!

SO, HE DOES.

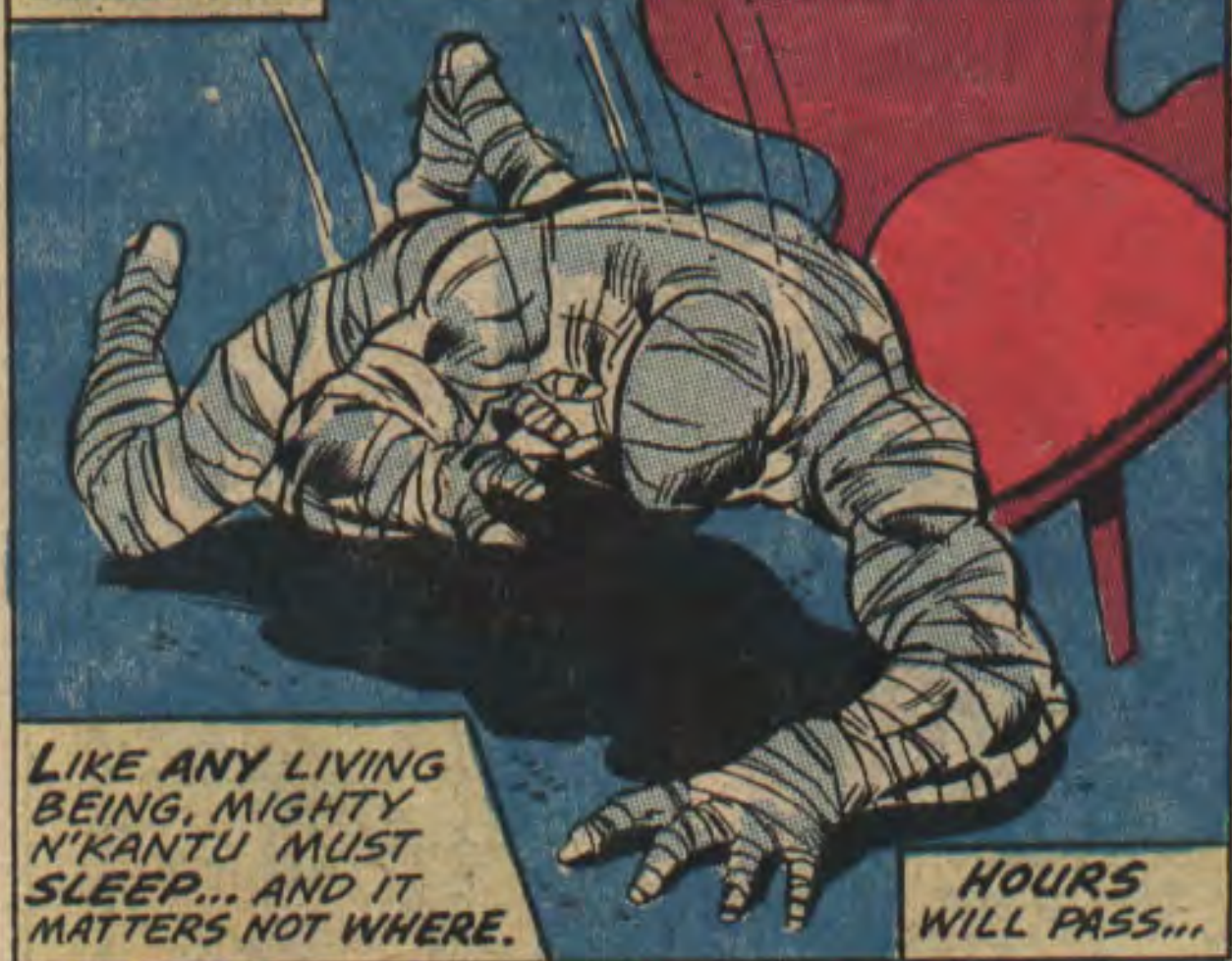
HE IS UNAWARE OF SKARAB'S HASTY EXIT-- SURPRISED TO FIND NO ONE WAITING--!

NEPHRUS--?

THERE COMES NO ANSWER, AND A FEELING OF WEARINESS GROWS WITHIN HIM.

THE HUNT IS OVER-- BUT WHERE IS THE QUARRY?

TOO LONG HAS HE BATTLED THE WILDERNESS AND THE CITY THIS DAY--AND FATIGUE OVERCOMES HIM.



LIKE ANY LIVING BEING, MIGHTY N'KANTU MUST SLEEP... AND IT MATTERS NOT WHERE.

HOURS WILL PASS...

... BEFORE SKARAB AND HIS RETINUE RETURN.



BUT WHEN THEY DO, THEY ARE AWE-STRUCK!

HE'S BEEN HERE! WHO ELSE COULD'VE DONE THIS?



BUT-- WHY?

SEARCH THE PLACE! SEE IF HE TOOK ANYTHING!

BUT THE SEARCH ENDS ABRUPTLY, AS--



OH!!

RON! DR. SKARAB! LOOK!

CHRISTMAS! LOOK AT HIM! HE MUST BE EIGHT FEET TALL!



I-- I DON'T UNDERSTAND! IS HE DEAD?

DID HE COME HERE TO DIE?

I TEND TO DOUBT THAT, MY DEAR.

RON! SEE IF HE'S BREATHING!



HE IS-- AND FROM THE RHYTHM--

--I'D GUESS HE'S FAST ASLEEP!



THEN THIS MAY BE OUR ONLY CHANCE.

A PITY... BUT IT HAS TO BE DONE.

WE CAN'T LET HIM OUT OF HERE ALIVE.



HE'S FAR TOO DANGEROUS--!

WHAT? ARE YOU CRAZY? YOU CAN'T--!



I CAN-- AND I MUST! FOR OUR SALES--

--AND ALL EGYPT'S! N'KANTU MUST DIE!

DIE!!

NO! THE BULLETS-- DON'T-- HARM HIM!



NEPHRUS--!

SAVE-- ME--!



ALLAH-- HAVE MERCY--! IT WANTS ME...

...TO CURE IT!



NEPHRUS-- SAVE-- ME--!

RUN-- BOTH OF YOU! IT'S INSANE! IT THINKS I'M NEPHRUS!

IT'S SPEAKING ANCIENT EGYPTIAN-- BEGGING ME MAKE HIM HUMAN AGAIN!

WHY? WHY DOES HE THINK YOU CAN DO THAT?

GOOD LORD-- WHO CARES? JUST MOVE!

THAT THING COULD KILL US!

MOMENTS LATER--

THERE IT IS, CHIEF! THAT PHONE CALL WAS RIGHT!



YOU MEN KNOW WHAT TO DO-- WE WANT IT IN CLOSE RANGE!

WE'RE READY, SIR.



JANICE! COME ON, WOMAN! HE'S ALMOST ON TOP OF US!



JUST A FEW STEPS MORE--

NOW!

OH, NO! NO! WHAT ARE THEY DOING TO HIM?

WHY CAN'T THEY LET HIM ALONE-- TRY TO HELP HIM?



TEAR GAS--!

--ANOTHER WEAPON THIS MAN FROM THE PAST HAS NEVER BEFORE ENCOUNTERED!



A WEAPON PERHAPS MORE CRUEL--

--THAN EVEN THE SLAVERS' WHIPS--

--BECAUSE IT PLAYS HAVOC WITH THE PSYCHE-- RIPS THE MASKS FROM GUT EMOTIONS --

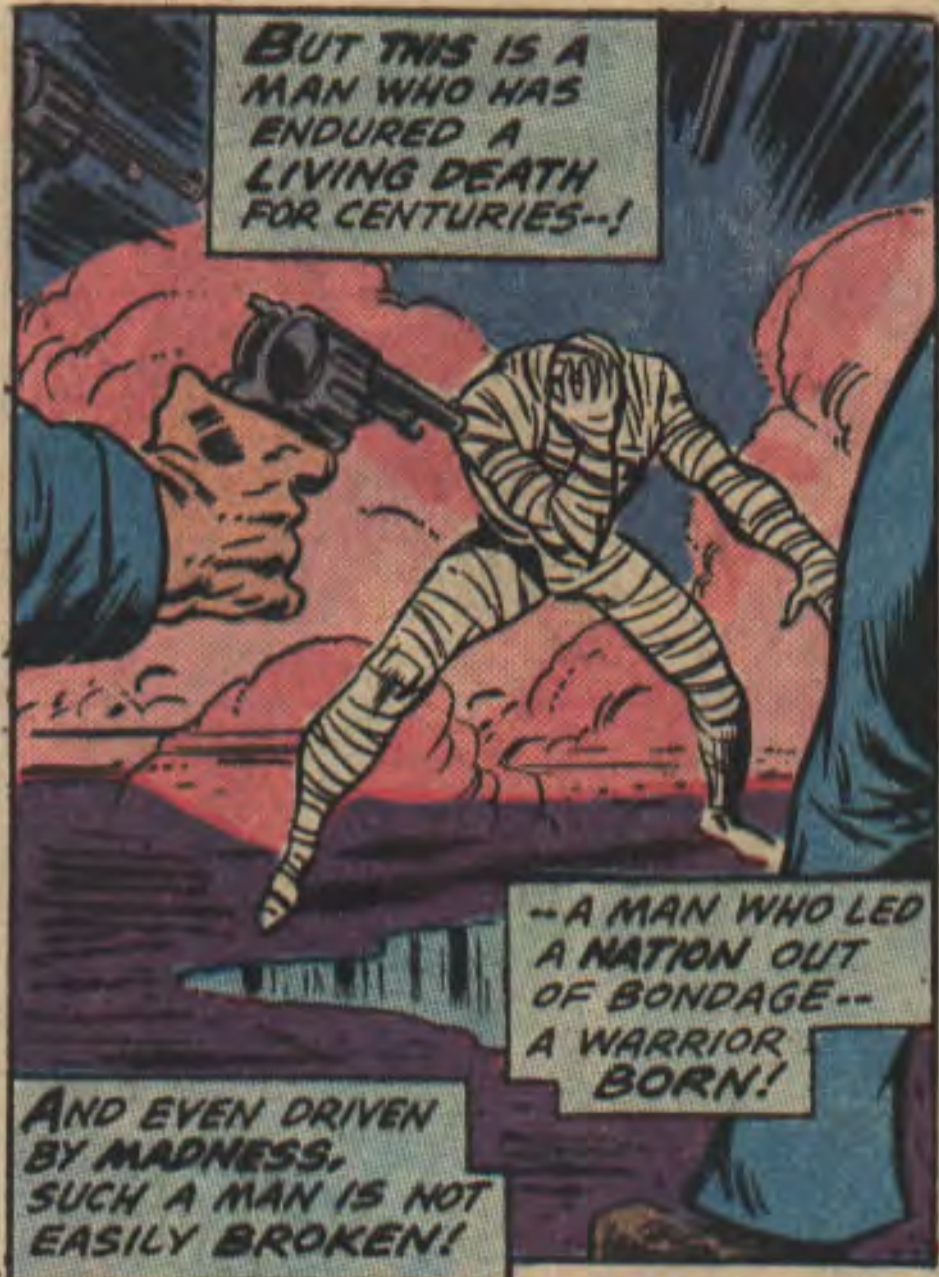


--AND LETS THE PAIN WITHIN SHOW THROUGH!



THE EVER-LOVIN' BLUE-EYED TUNNG TACKLES THE INCREDIBLE WOLKI!

BUT THIS IS A MAN WHO HAS ENDURED A LIVING DEATH FOR CENTURIES--!



--A MAN WHO LED A NATION OUT OF BONDAGE-- A WARRIOR BORN!

AND EVEN DRIVEN BY MADNESS, SUCH A MAN IS NOT EASILY BROKEN!

HE'S STAGGERING-- BUT HE'S STILL COMING!



FIRE!!

HE HAS GROWN ACCUSTOMED TO THE STING OF THESE TINY METAL PELLETS-- HE NO LONGER FEARS THEM--!



AND SO HE TAKES THE OFFENSIVE--!



IS IT NEPHRUS'S CHEMICALS, ALTERED OVER THE AGES, THAT GIVE HIM THIS HELLISH STRENGTH?

OR DOES IT COME FROM THE MAN HIMSELF-- FROM HIS WILL TO LIVE AGAIN?

AND DOES IT MATTER--?

FOR HE ONLY PARTLY UNDERSTANDS THE WEAPON HE NOW WIELDS! THE WOOD-- THAT IS BASIC-- ELEMENTAL--!

BUT THESE STRANGE, CRACKLING METAL SNAKES--!



THE WAY THEY SIZZLE AND SPARK IN MERE WATER--!

HE'S NEVER SEEN ELECTRICITY!! IF HE STEPS THE WRONG WAY--



--HE'LL DIE!

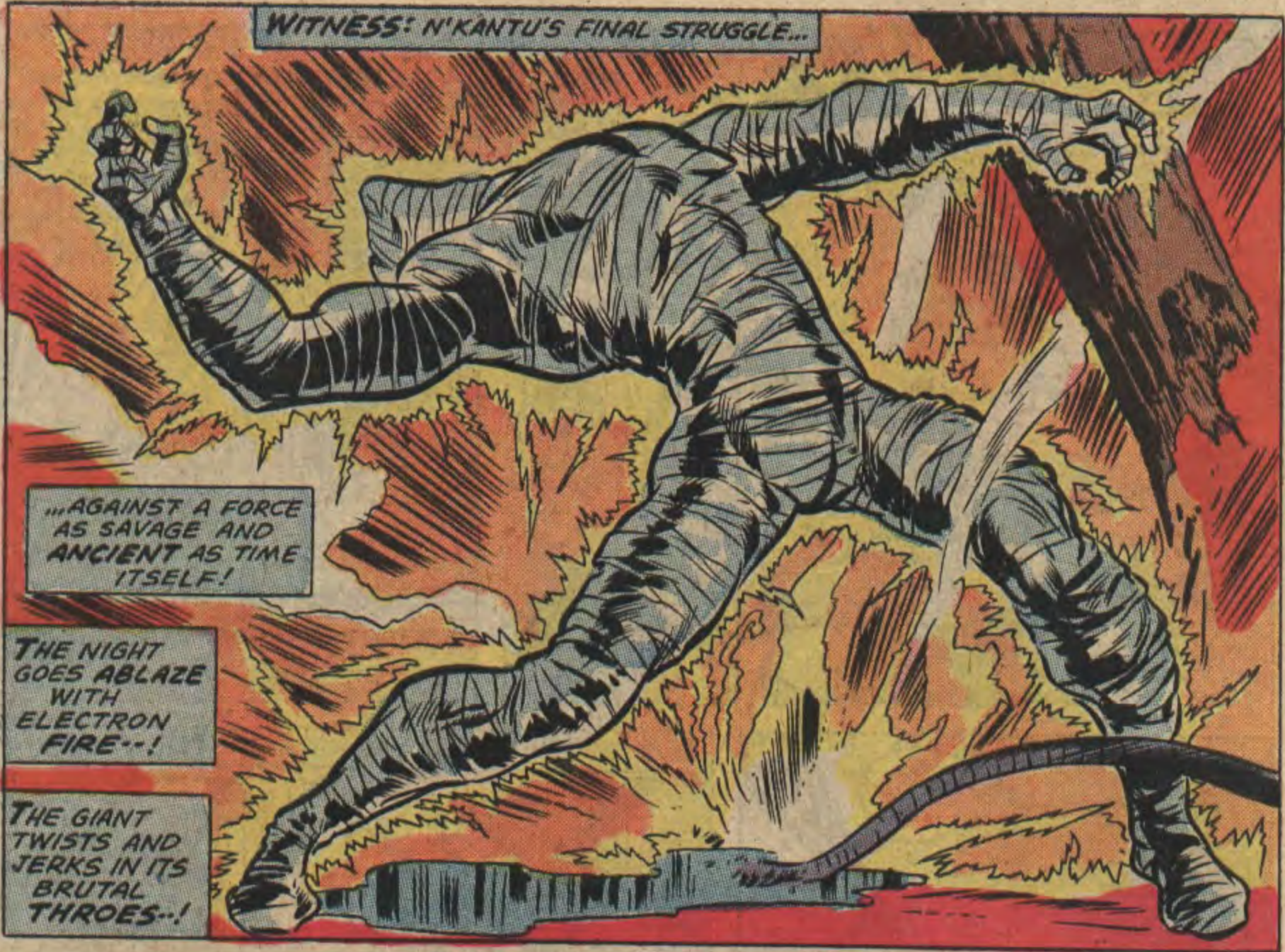
HE CAN'T-- HE MUSTN'T I CAN SAVE HIM!



LET ME GO! I CAN TALK TO HIM-- I CAN--

OH!!!

WITNESS: N'KANTU'S FINAL STRUGGLE...



...AGAINST A FORCE AS SAVAGE AND ANCIENT AS TIME ITSELF!

THE NIGHT GOES ABLAZE WITH ELECTRON FIRE--!

THE GIANT TWISTS AND JERKS IN ITS BRUTAL THROES--!

THEN, AS SUDDENLY AS THEY BEGAN, THE PYROTECHNICS FLICKER AND FADE-- AND N'KANTU FALLS!

LOOK! HE'S FOLDING UP LIKE A CARDBOARD DOLL! WE'VE GOT HIM!

OFFICER-- WAIT! I'M DR. SKARAB-- THE ARCHAEOLOGIST!

I'VE STUDIED THIS... CREATURE!



THE POLICEMAN PAUSES-- AND HEARS WORDS THAT MAKE HIM SHUDDER--!

I REALIZE THIS SOUNDS IMPOSSIBLE-- BUT HE MAY NOT BE DEAD!

WHA--? BUT LOOK AT HIM! HE'S TOO HOT EVEN TO TOUCH!



I KNOW-- BUT YOU MUSTN'T THINK OF HIM AS HUMAN!

I BEG YOU-- GIVE HIM TO ME FOR STUDY BEFORE YOU-- DISPOSE OF HIM!

DUMBLY, THE OFFICER NODS...

...AS HE WATCHES THE MUMMY'S SMOULDERING FORM...

...AND PRAYS IT WILL NEVER LIVE AGAIN!

