

DR. REED RICHARDS



BEN GRIMM



SUSAN STORM



JOHNNY STORM



Stan Lee & Jack Kirby

HERE THEY ARE...



V-372

WITH THE SUDDEN FURY OF A THUNDERBOLT, A FLARE IS SHOT INTO THE SKY OVER CENTRAL CITY! THREE AWESOME WORDS TAKE FORM AS IF BY MAGIC, AND A LEGEND IS BORN!!

ABOVE ALL THE HUBBUB AND EXCITEMENT, ONE STRANGE FIGURE HOLDS A STILL-SMOKING FLARE GUN! ONE STRANGE MAN WHO IS SOMEHOW **MORE** THAN JUST A MAN--FOR HE IS THE LEADER OF... THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

LOOK! IN THE SKY-- WHAT IN BLAZES DOES IT MEAN?

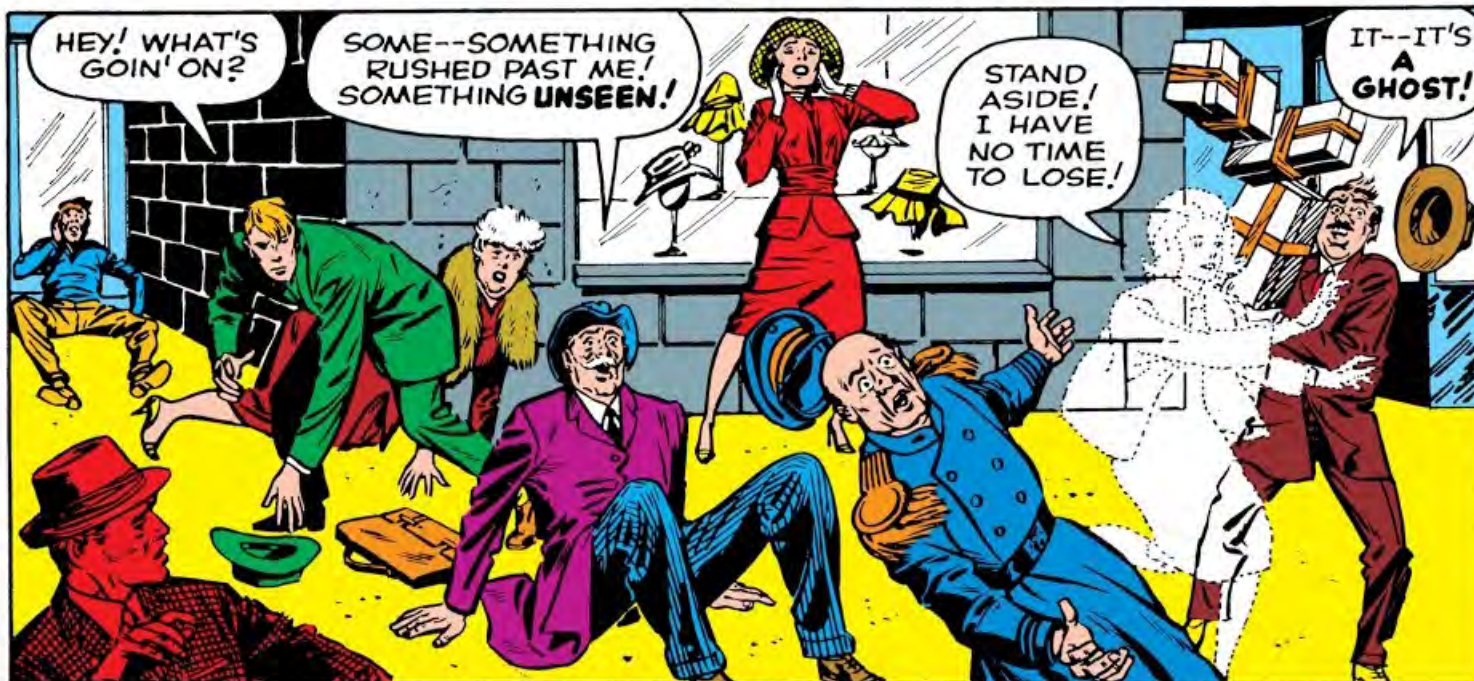
I DUNNO, BUT THE CROWDS ARE GETTIN' PANICKY!

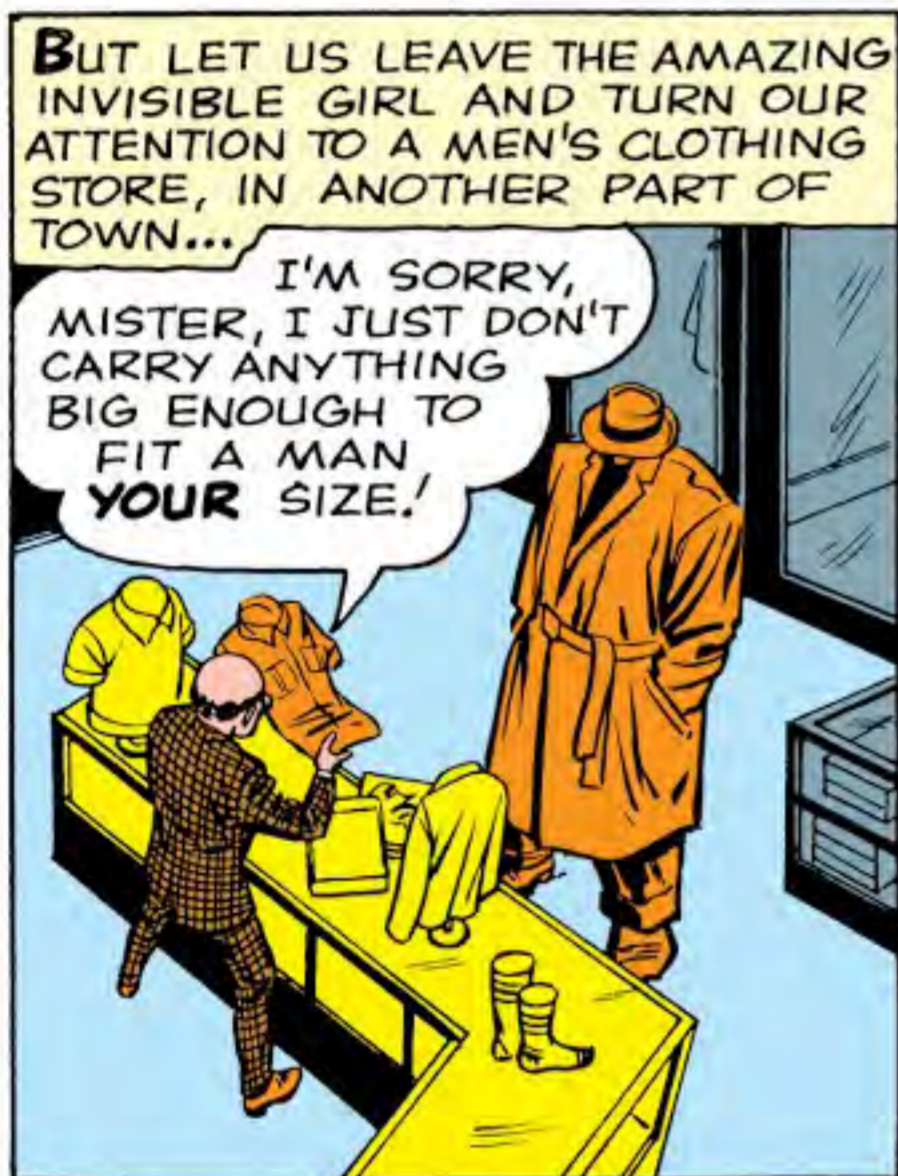
RUMORS ARE FLYIN' ABOUT AN ALIEN INVASION!

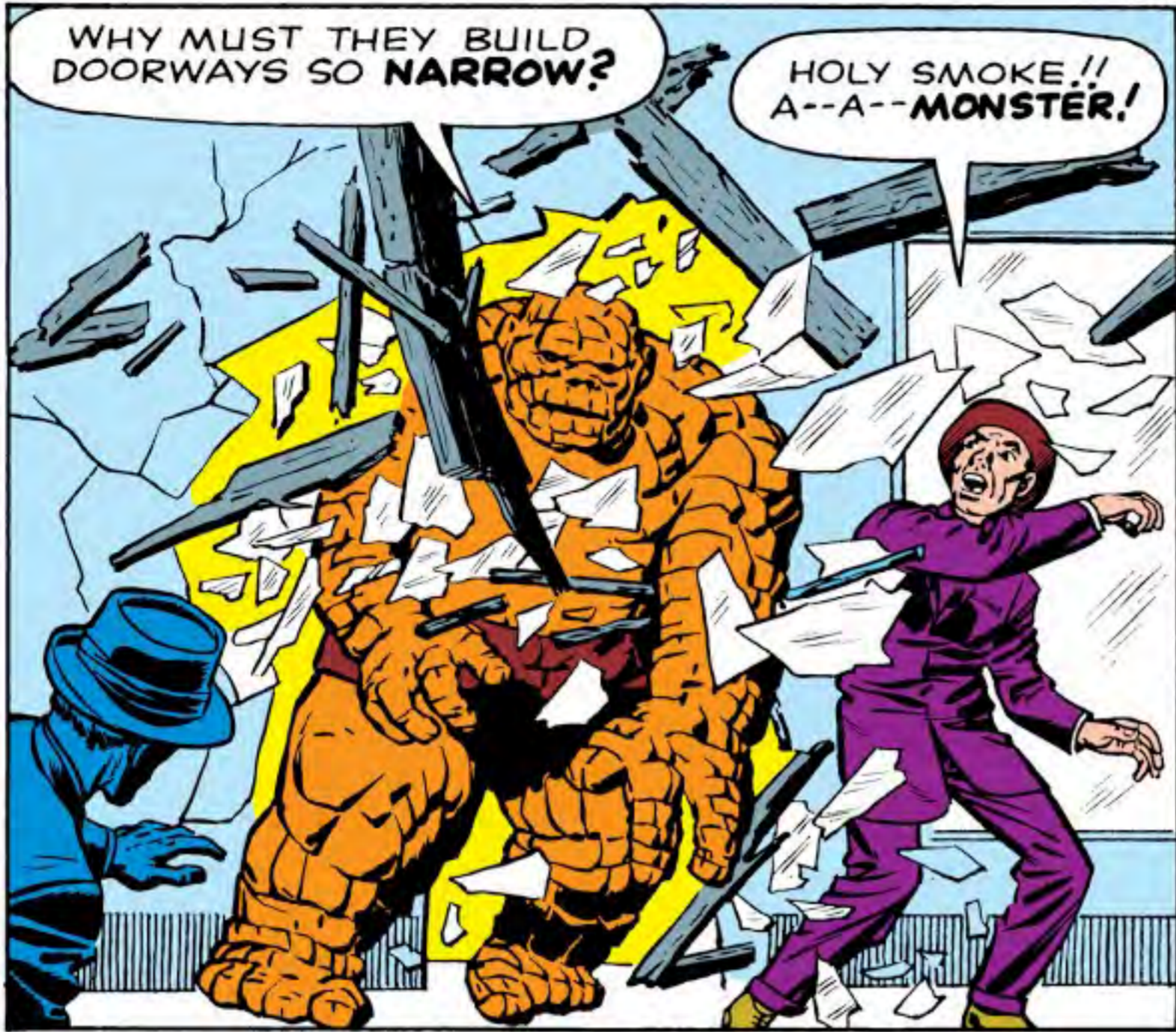


IT IS THE FIRST TIME I HAVE FOUND IT NECESSARY TO GIVE THE SIGNAL! I PRAY IT WILL BE THE **LAST!**









WHY MUST THEY BUILD DOORWAYS SO **NARROW?**

HOLY SMOKE!! A--A--**MONSTER!**



PETE, LOOK! WHAT'S **THAT?**

I DUNNO... BUT I AIN'T TAKIN' ANY **CHANCES** WITH IT!



HALT!! HALT OR I'LL SHOOT!!

OKAY, I **WARNED** YOU!



HIS FIRST SHOT MISSED BECAUSE HE WAS SO NERVOUS! BUT HE'LL NOT GET ANOTHER **CHANCE!**



DID YOU SEE **THAT?** HE RIPPED THE MANHOLE COVER OUT OF THE GROUND WITH HIS BARE HANDS!

IT'S **IMPOSSIBLE!**



I HAVE GONE FAR ENOUGH! I SHOULD BE UNDER MY DESTINATION BY NOW! BUT THERE IS NO MANHOLE ABOVE ME -- NO **OPENING!**



BAH! I CANNOT DELAY! I'LL **MAKE** AN OPENING!



WHAT IS THAT... RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME?? OH, NO... IT'S ALIVE!!

FOOL! DID YOU NOT SEE ME IN TIME?



IT'S A WALKING NIGHTMARE!! HELP!! HELP!!

LILY-LIVERED COWARDS!

IT AIN'T HUMAN! IT'S TOO BIG... TOO STRONG!! IT--IT'S A MARTIAN!

MINUTES LATER, THE POLICE RIOT SQUAD REACHES THE SCENE...



THERE'S NO ONE HERE!

STREET'S DESERTED!

THEN WHO PUT IN THAT DANGER CALL?

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO EXPLAIN IT, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING WEIRD HAPPENING IN CENTRAL CITY! THOSE WORDS IN THE SKY... THOSE SCATTERED REPORTS OF MONSTERS WALKING THE STREETS...



BUT WHAT DOES IT ADD UP TO, CHIEF? ...WHAT?

WHAT DOES IT ADD UP TO, INDEED? PERHAPS IF THE POLICE OFFICERS COULD WITNESS STILL ANOTHER SCENE IN A LOCAL SERVICE STATION, THEY WOULD FIND YET ANOTHER CLUE-- AS WILL WE!



WE GOT HER PURRIN' GENTLE AS A LAMB, JOHNNY!

GOOD! THAT'S THE WAY I LIKE HER!



THERE'S ONLY ONE THING IN THE WORLD THAT INTERESTS ME MORE THAN CARS!

YEAH? WHAT'S THAT, JOHNNY?



IMPOSSIBLE? INCREDIBLE? CALL IT WHAT YOU WILL, BUT THE FIGURE WHICH HAD BEEN JOHNNY STORM, SCANT SECONDS BEFORE, IS NOW A CAREENING HUMAN TORCH, FLASHING THRU THE SKIES ABOVE LIKE A FLAMING METEOR!



SECONDS LATER, THE MAYOR OF CENTRAL CITY ISSUES AN EMERGENCY ORDER...

CALL THE GOVERNOR! HAVE HIM ALERT THE NATIONAL GUARD!

MOVE, MAN!

Y-YES SIR!



AND BEFORE THE HOUR IS OUT, WASHINGTON HAS ALSO TAKEN IMMEDIATE ACTION!

RED DOG TO SQUADRON LEADER... ATTACK UNKNOWN FLAMING OBJECT OVER CENTRAL CITY...



FLAMING OBJECT? HUH! SOMEONE MUST HAVE FLIPPED HIS LID! OF ALL THE WILD GOOSE CHA-- HEY! WAIT!! WHAT'S THAT?



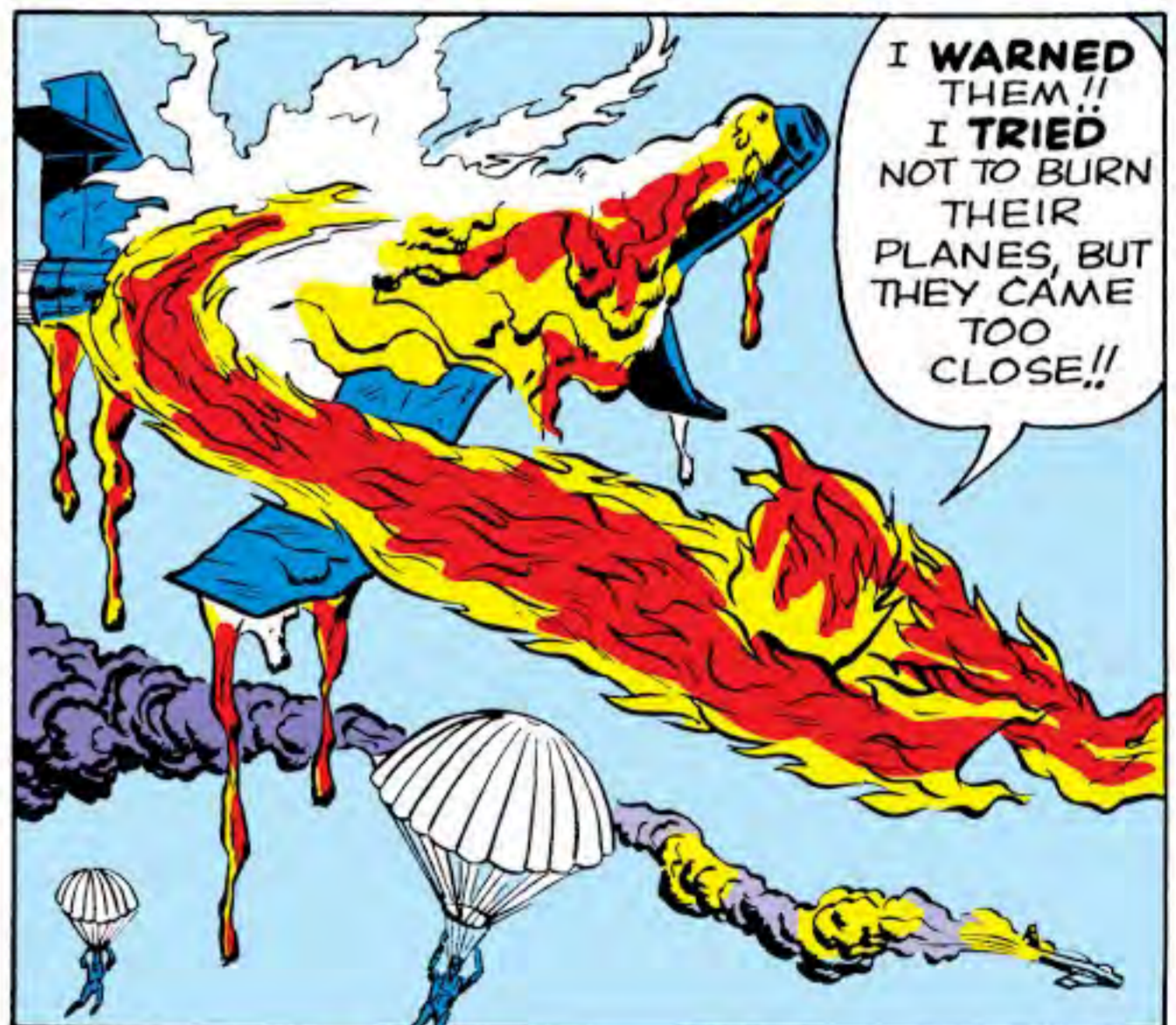
IT IS A FLAMING FLYING OBJECT! LET'S GET IT, GUYS!

NO! NO! STAY BACK! KEEP AWAY!

WHY WON'T THEY LISTEN?



I WARNED THEM!! I TRIED NOT TO BURN THEIR PLANES, BUT THEY CAME TOO CLOSE!!



AT LEAST THEY ALL PARACHUTED TO SAFETY!

THAT SOUND-- IN THE DISTANCE! IT LOOKS LIKE--

A HUNTER MISSILE! IT'S ZEROED IN ON ME! IT'S ATTRACTED TO MY FLAME!



I CAN'T ESCAPE IT... IT'S TOO FAST!! IT HAS A NUCLEAR WARHEAD... IF IT EXPLODES, I'M A GONER!



SUDDENLY, THE HUMAN TORCH'S FLAME BEGINS TO DIMINISH... AND, AS THE MISSILE IS ABOUT TO STRIKE HIM, TWO IMPOSSIBLY LONG ARMS REACH ABOVE THE ROOF-TOPS, AND...



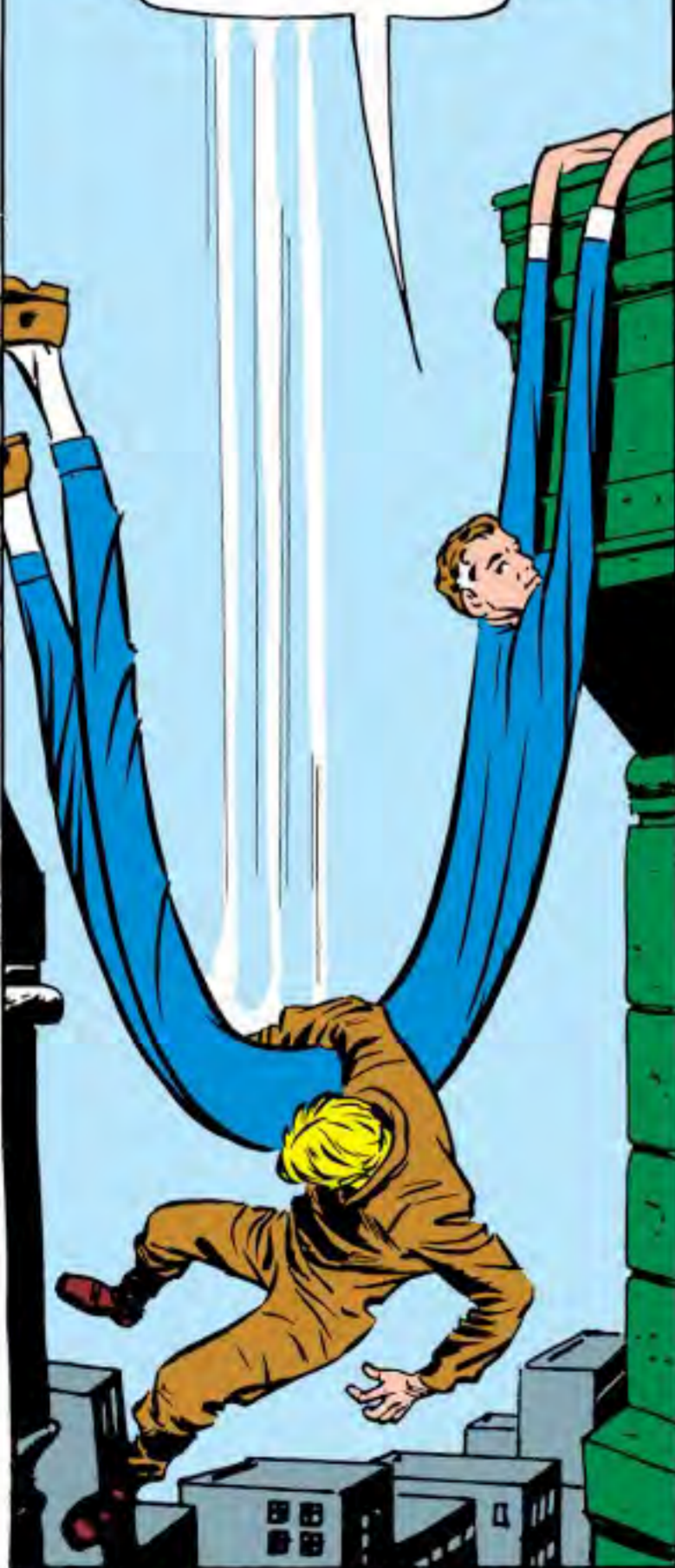
MOVING WITH DAZZLING SPEED, ONE OF THE INCREDIBLE ARMS HURLS THE MIGHTY MISSILE FAR FROM SHORE, WHERE IT EXPLODES HARMLESSLY OVER THE SEA!



BUT, AS THE FLYING BOY'S FLAME FLICKERS OUT ALTOGETHER, HE BEGINS TO PLUMMET TOWARD EARTH... TOWARD A CERTAIN DOOM!



GRAB ME, JOHNNY BOY!! THAT'S IT!!



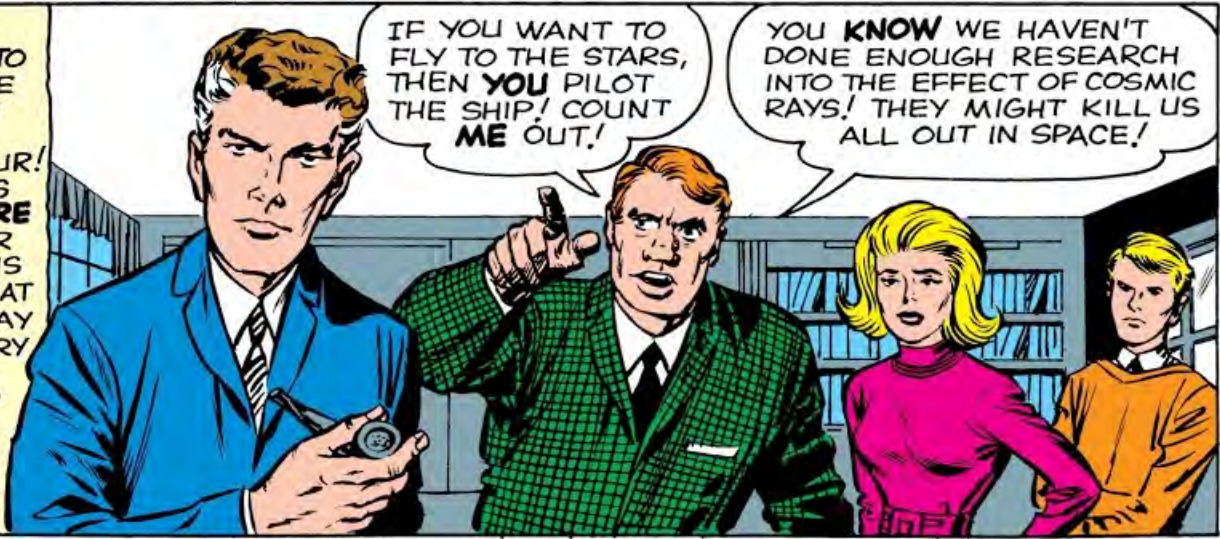
WHO IS THIS UNBELIEVABLE STRANGER WHO HAS SAVED THE HUMAN TORCH?



IN FACT, WHO ARE ALL FOUR OF THESE STRANGE AND ASTONISHING HUMANS? HOW DID THEY BECOME WHAT THEY ARE? WHAT MYSTIC QUIRK OF FATE BROUGHT THEM TOGETHER, TO FORM THE AWE-INSPIRING GROUP KNOWN AS THE FANTASTIC FOUR???



BUT, THERE IS TIME ENOUGH TO LEARN OF THE TASK WHICH FACES THE FANTASTIC FOUR! FIRST, LET US DISCOVER MORE ABOUT THEIR ORIGIN-- LET US GO BACK TO THAT MOMENTOUS DAY WHEN AN ANGRY BEN GRIMM CONFRONTED DR. REED RICHARDS...



IF YOU WANT TO FLY TO THE STARS, THEN **YOU** PILOT THE SHIP! COUNT **ME** OUT!

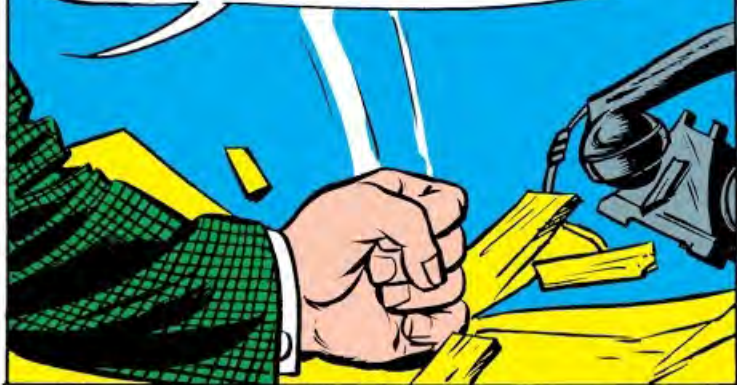
YOU KNOW WE HAVEN'T DONE ENOUGH RESEARCH INTO THE EFFECT OF COSMIC RAYS! THEY MIGHT KILL US ALL OUT IN SPACE!

BEN, WE'VE **GOT** TO TAKE THAT CHANCE... UNLESS WE WANT THE COMMIES TO BEAT US TO IT!

I-- I NEVER THOUGHT THAT **YOU** WOULD BE A COWARD!



A COWARD!! NOBODY CALLS ME A COWARD! GET THE SHIP! I'LL FLY HER NO MATTER **WHAT** HAPPENS!!



AND SO, LED BY A DETERMINED DR. REED RICHARDS, THE LITTLE GROUP SPED TOWARD THE SPACEPORT ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN!



SUSAN, BEN AND I **KNOW** WHAT WE'RE DOING... BUT YOU--AND JOHNNY...

DON'T SAY IT, REED! I'M YOUR FIANCEE! WHERE **YOU** GO, I GO!

AND I'M TAGGIN' ALONG WITH SIS--SO IT'S SETTLED!



NO TIME TO WAIT FOR OFFICIAL CLEARANCE! CONDITIONS ARE RIGHT TONIGHT! **LET'S GO!**

BEFORE THE GUARD CAN STOP THEM, THE MIGHTY SHIP WHICH REED RICHARDS HAD SPENT YEARS CONSTRUCTING IS SOARING INTO THE HEAVENS...TOWARDS OUTER SPACE!



SHE'S BEHAVING LIKE A BABY! EVERYTHING IS PERFECT!

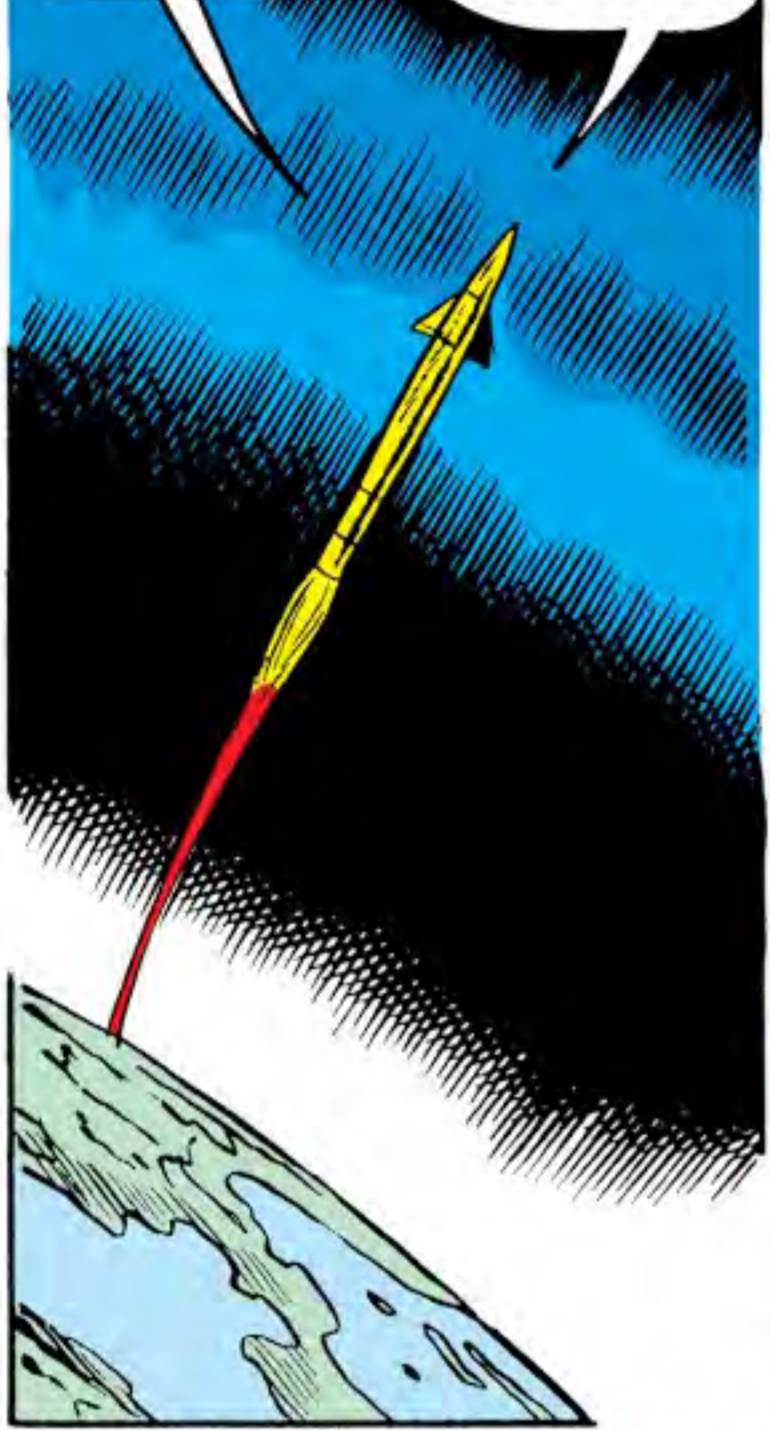


YEAH, EXCEPT THE COSMIC RAYS! NO ONE KNOWS WHAT **THEY'LL** DO...

HIGHER AND HIGHER, LIKE A SILVER BULLET, ROARS THE SLEEK SPACE CRAFT...

WE HAD TO DO IT!! WE HAD TO BE THE FIRST!

BUT WE'RE REACHING THE COSMIC STORM AREA... HANG ON!



RAK TAC TAC TAC TAC

HEAR THAT?? IT'S THE COSMIC RAYS!! I-I WARNED YOU ABOUT 'EM!!



THEY'RE PENETRATING THE SHIP!! OUR SHIELDING ISN'T STRONG ENOUGH!

BUT I DON'T FEEL ANYTHING!

NATURALLY! THEY'RE ONLY RAYS OF LIGHT! YOU CAN'T FEEL 'EM-- BUT THEY'LL AFFECT YOU JUST THE SAME!



MY HEAD!! IT--IT'S POUNDING AS THOUGH IT'S ABOUT TO BURST!!

BEN WAS RIGHT!! WE SHOULD HAVE WAITED... SHOULD HAVE GOTTEN HEAVIER SHIELDING!



JOHNNY! WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S HAPPENING TO YOU?

I DON'T KNOW, SIS! MY BODY FEELS HOT-- LIKE IT'S ON FIRE!! I-I FEEL LIKE I'M BURNING UP!!



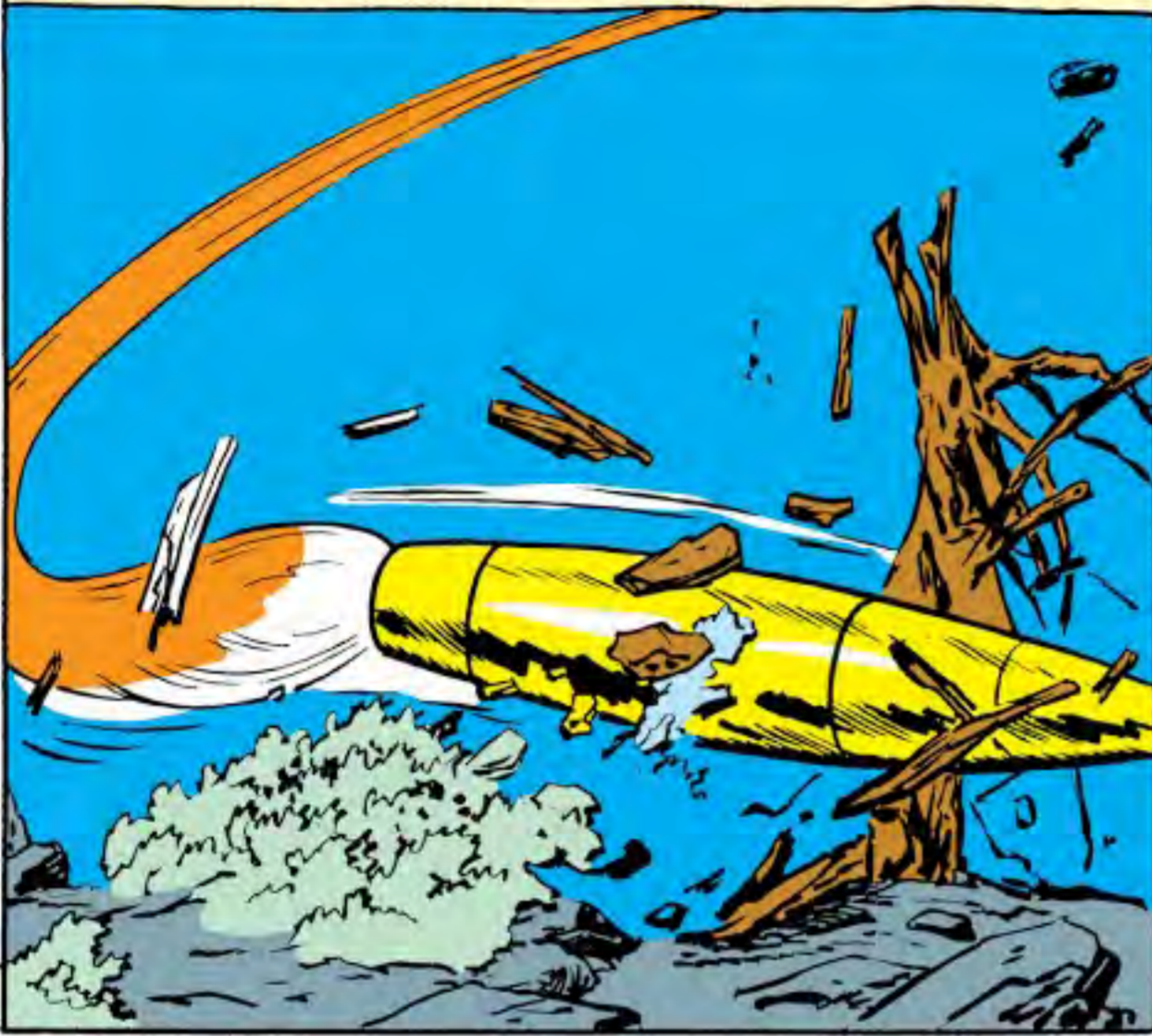
UGH!! LISTEN TO ME...

... SOMEBODY ELSE TAKE THE CONTROLS... I CAN'T HANDLE THE SHIP ANY MORE! MY-- MY ARMS ARE HEAVY-- TOO HEAVY-- CAN'T MOVE-- TOO HEAVY-- GOT TO LIE DOWN-- CAN'T MOVE!!



BEN!

AT THAT MOMENT, THE POWERFUL SHIP'S AUTOMATIC PILOT TOOK OVER, AND MANAGED TO RETURN THE SLEEK ROCKET SAFELY TO EARTH, IN A ROUGH, BUT NON-FATAL LANDING!



I--I'M GRATEFUL WE'RE ALL ALIVE!! IT WAS MIGHTY CLOSE!

BUT, REED...WE FAILED!! AFTER ALL YOUR WORK... YOUR DEDICATION... WE FAILED!



BAH! WHAT'D YOU EXPECT?

BUT WE'RE **STILL** NOT COMPLETELY SAFE! WE STILL HAVE TO SEE WHETHER THE COSMIC RAYS **AFFECTED** US IN ANY WAY!

OH, REED... I FEEL SO STRANGE!



SUSAN! LOOK AT SUSAN!!

WHAT'S WRONG?



YOU'RE **GASP** FADING AWAY!!

OH, NO!! NO!!

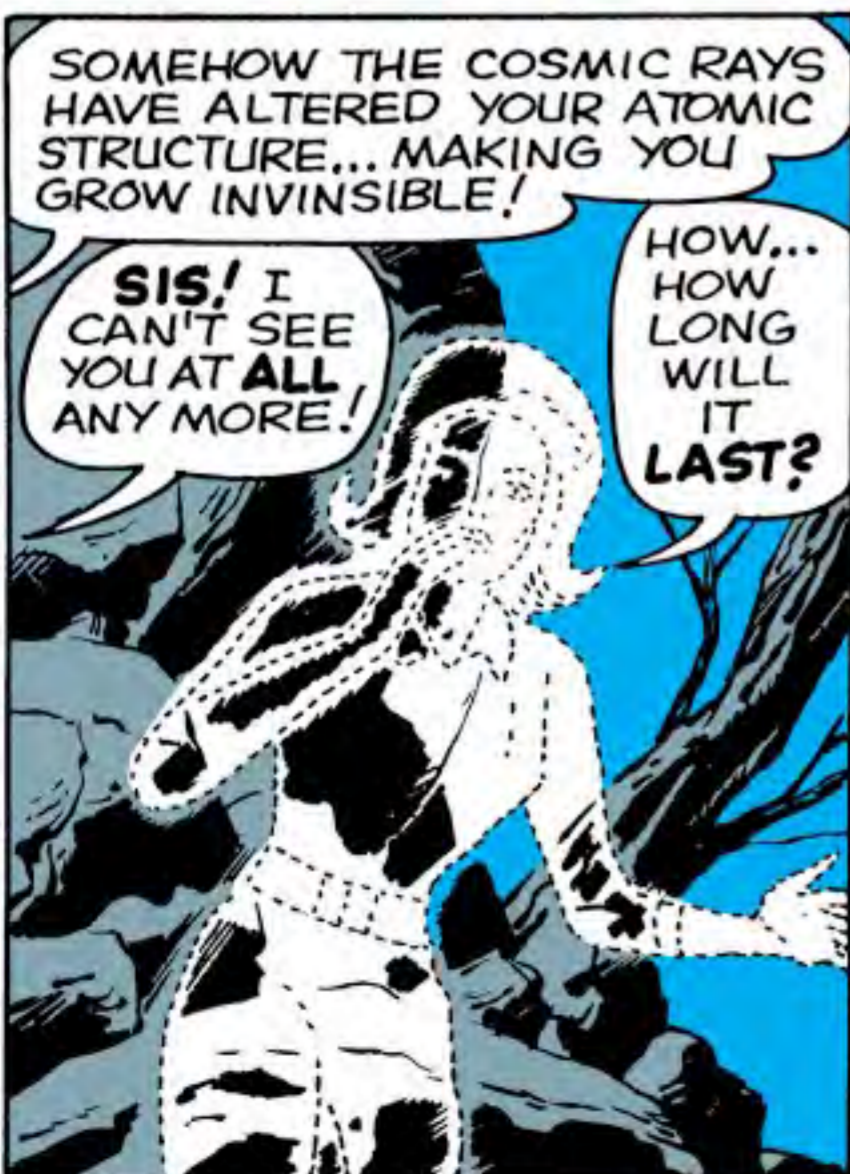
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE!



SOMEHOW THE COSMIC RAYS HAVE ALTERED YOUR ATOMIC STRUCTURE... MAKING YOU GROW INVISIBLE!

SIS! I CAN'T SEE YOU AT ALL ANY MORE!

HOW... HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?



THERE'S NO WAY OF **KNOWING**!!

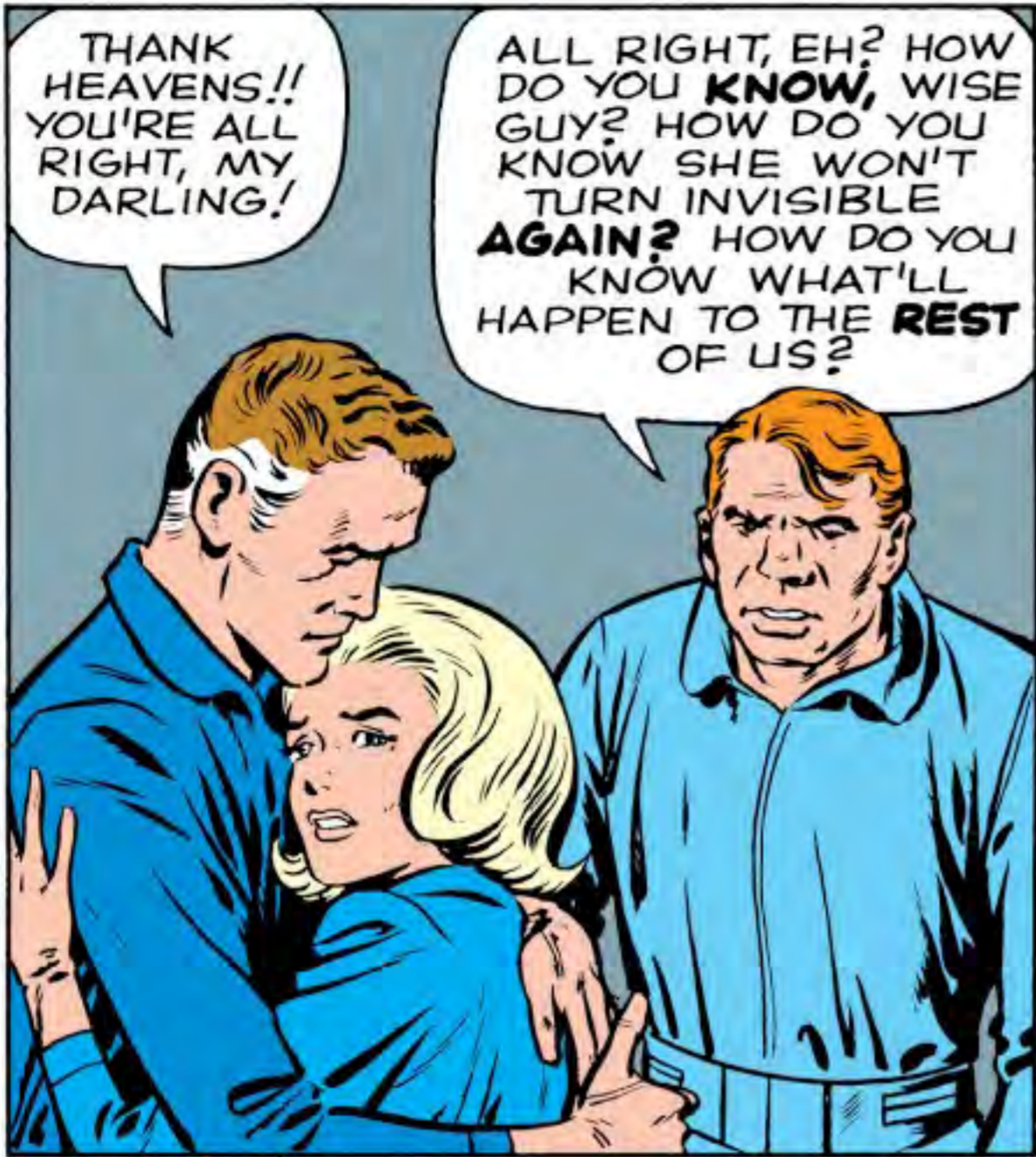
WHA--WHAT IF SHE NEVER GETS VISIBLE AGAIN??



LOOK!! I **SEE** HER!

I'M **MYSELF** AGAIN! IT HAPPENED SO SUDDENLY... ALL BY ITSELF!





YOU'VE TURNED INTO **MONSTERS...** BOTH OF YOU!! IT'S THOSE RAYS! THOSE TERRIBLE COSMIC RAYS!

NOW I KNOW WHY I'VE BEEN FEELING SO WARM! LOOK AT **ME!!** THEY'VE AFFECTED ME, TOO! WHEN I GET EXCITED I CAN FEEL MY BODY BEGIN TO BLAZE!

I'M LIGHTER THAN AIR!! I CAN **FLY!!** LOOK... I CAN **FLY!!**

MINUTES LATER, JOHNNY STORM'S FLAME SUBSIDED AND HE LANDED NEAR THE OTHER THREE! SILENTLY THEY WATCHED THE SMALL FIRE HE HAD STARTED IN THE UNDERBRUSH BURN ITSELF OUT!! SILENTLY THEY WERE EACH OCCUPIED WITH THEIR OWN STARTLING THOUGHTS!

WE'VE **CHANGED!** ALL OF US! WE'RE **MORE** THAN JUST HUMAN!

LISTEN TO ME, **ALL** OF YOU! THAT MEANS **YOU** TOO, BEN! TOGETHER WE HAVE MORE POWER THAN ANY HUMANS HAVE EVER POSSESSED!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO MAKE A SPEECH, BIG SHOT! WE UNDERSTAND! WE'VE GOTTA **USE** THAT POWER TO HELP MANKIND, RIGHT?

RIGHT, BEN, RIGHT!

I'M CALLING MYSELF **THE HUMAN TORCH--** AND I'M WITH YOU ALL THE WAY!

SAME GOES FOR ME... **THE INVISIBLE GIRL!**

THERE'S ONLY **ONE** STILL MISSING... **BEN!!**

I AIN'T BEN ANYMORE-- I'M WHAT SUSAN CALLED ME-- **THE THING!!**

AND I'LL CALL MYSELF... **MISTER FANTASTIC!!**

AND SO WAS BORN "THE FANTASTIC FOUR!!" AND FROM THAT MOMENT ON, THE WORLD WOULD NEVER AGAIN BE THE SAME!!

THE FANTASTIC FOUR MEET THE MOLE MAN!



AND NOW, HAVING MET OUR FOUR AMAZING CHARACTERS, LET US RESUME OUR TALE...

I CALLED YOU TOGETHER BECAUSE I HAVE SOME PICTURES TO SHOW YOU!

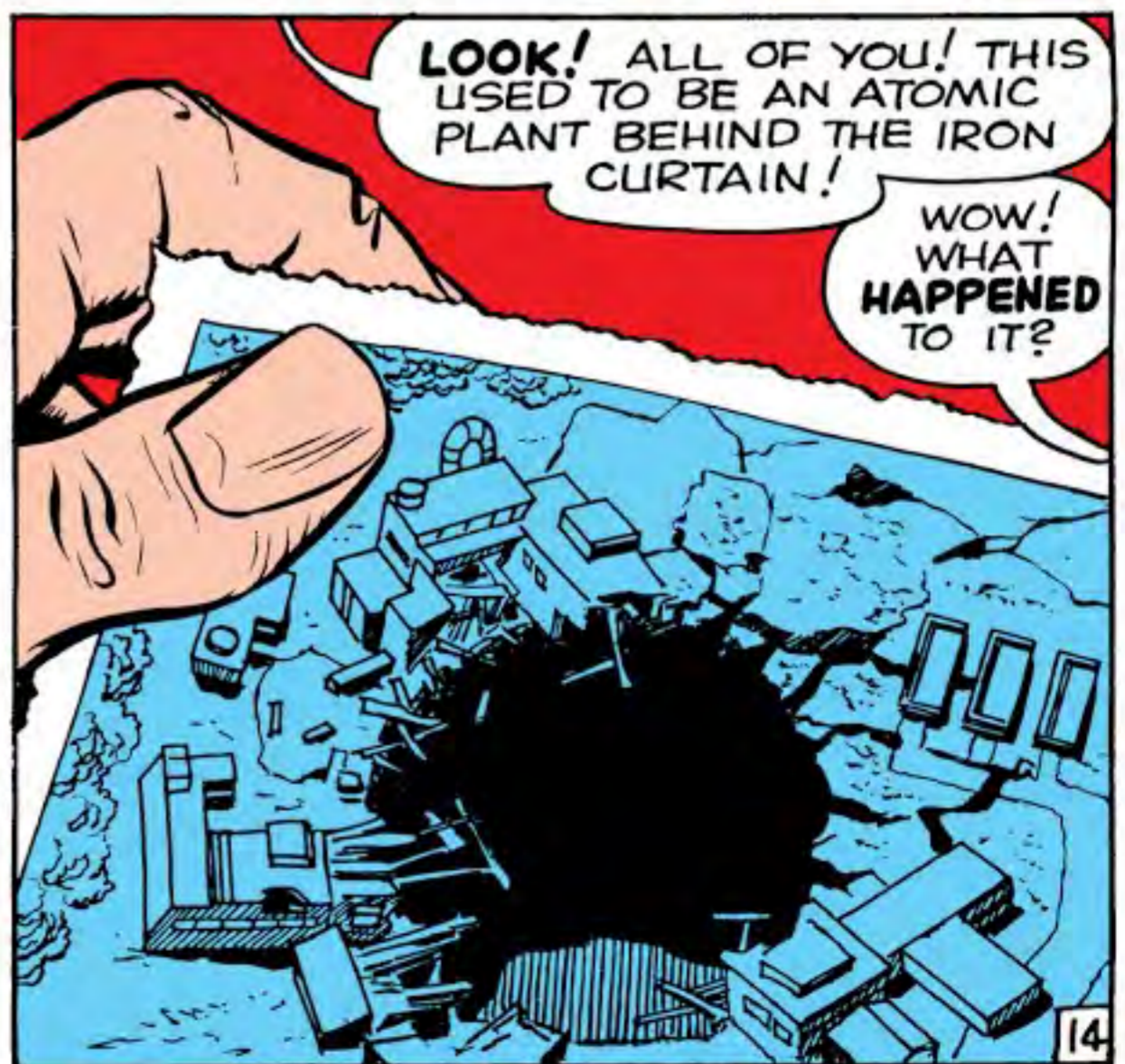
PICTURES?

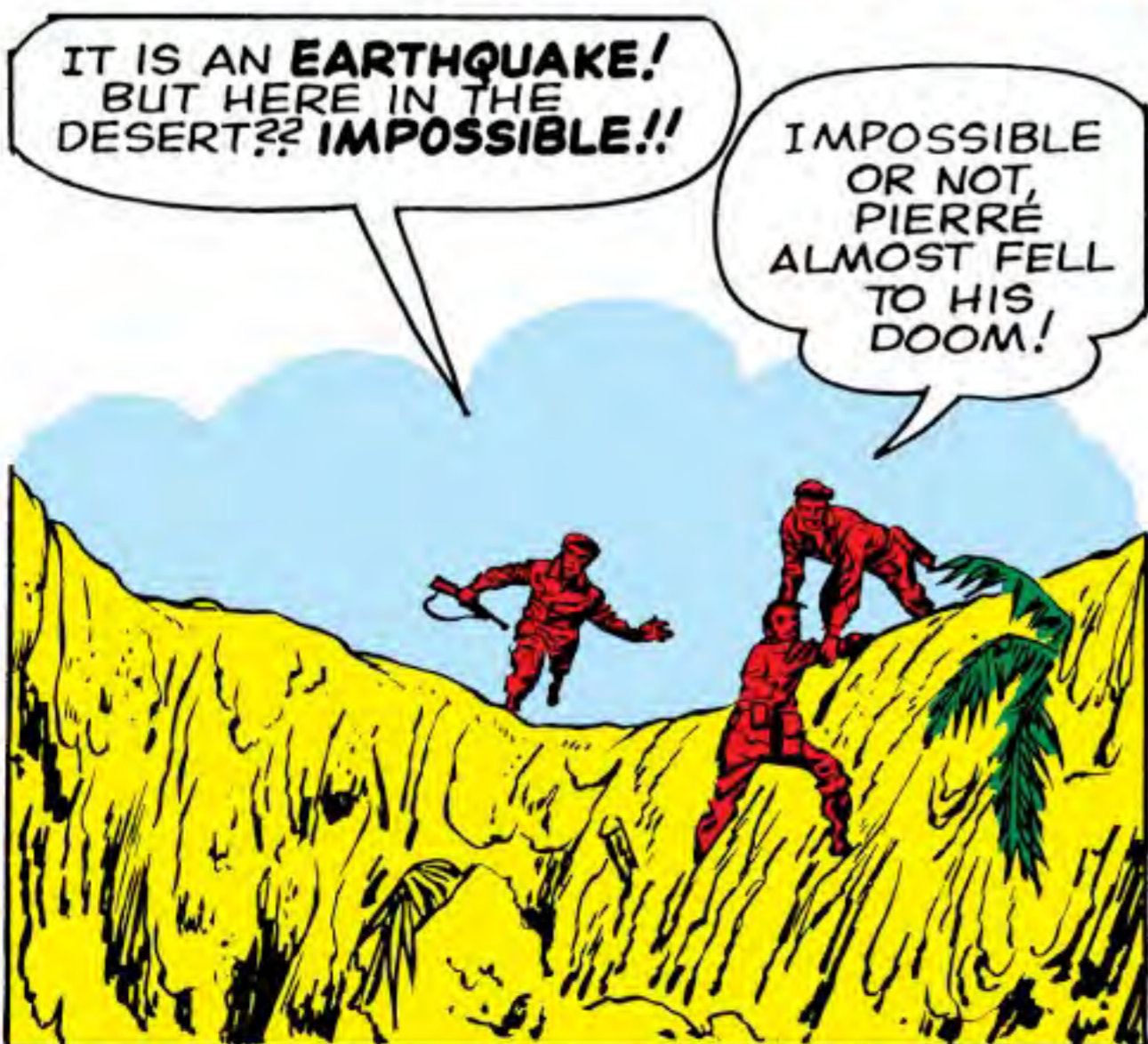
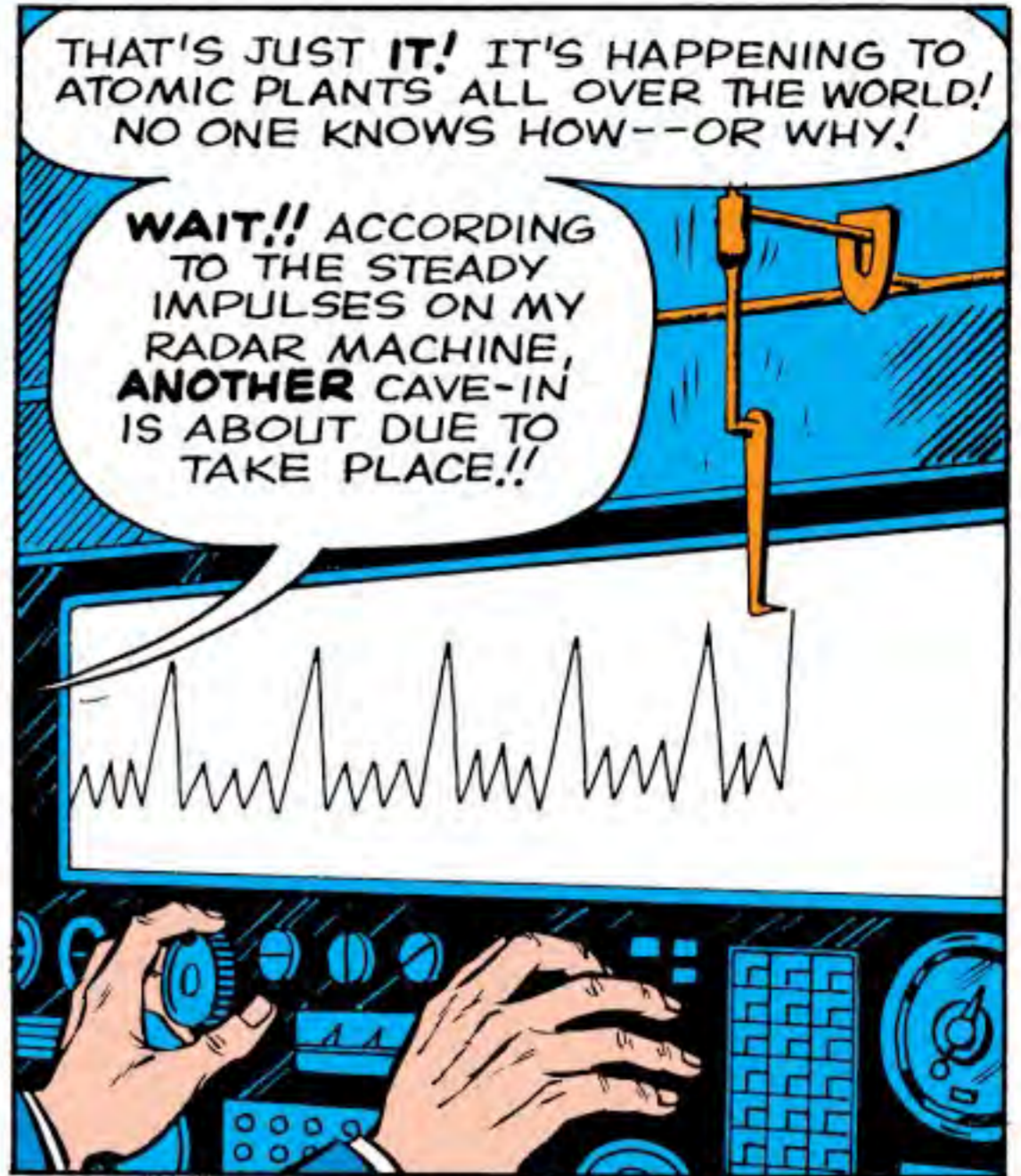
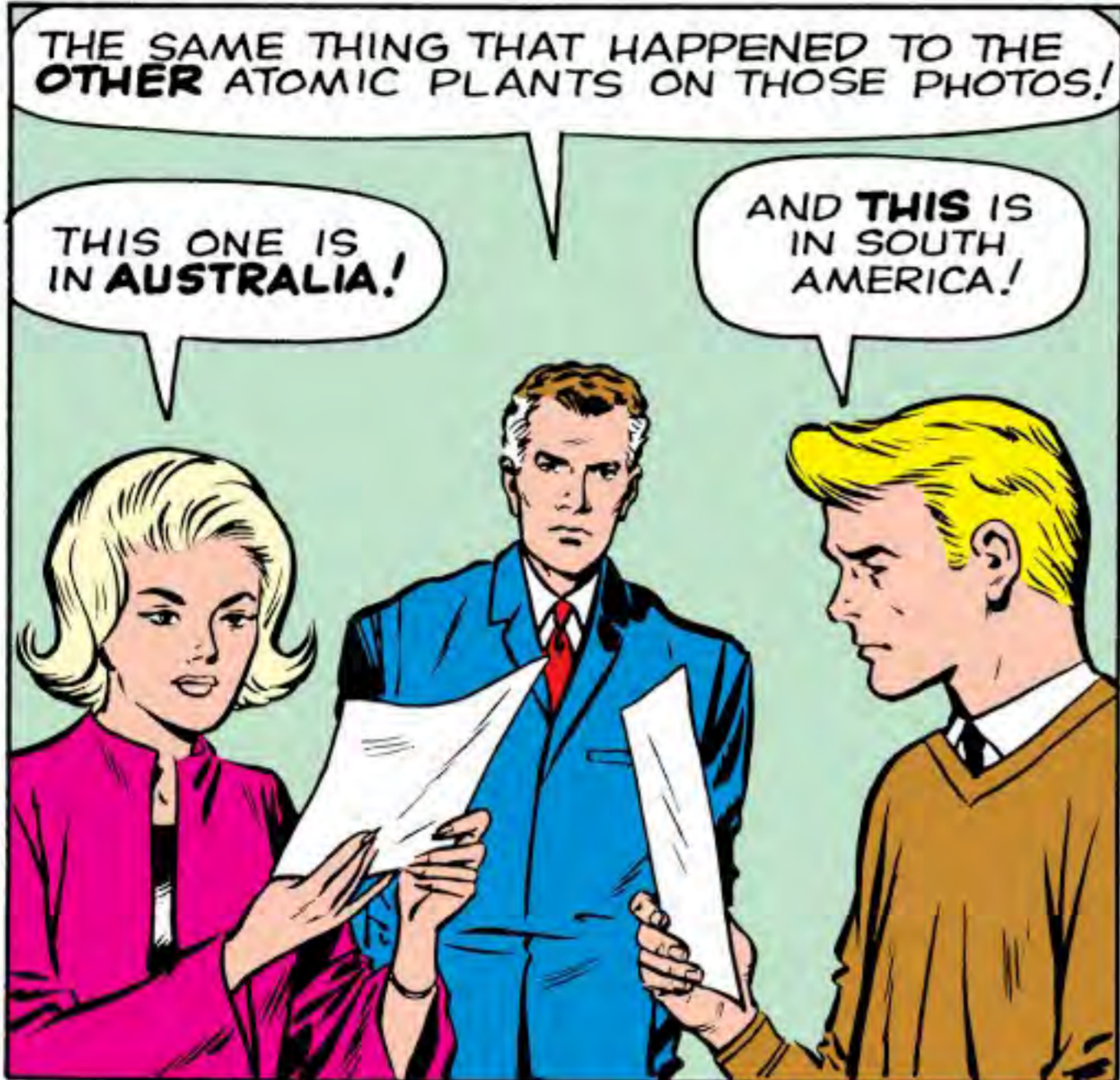
WHAT ARE THEY... PIN-UPS?



LOOK! ALL OF YOU! THIS USED TO BE AN ATOMIC PLANT BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN!

WOW! WHAT HAPPENED TO IT?







THE ENTIRE INSTALLATION!! IT--IT IS CAVING IN!

RRROOMM

BUT THE WORST IS YET TO COME!! FOR, LESS THAN THIRTY SECONDS LATER...

IN THE NAME OF HEAVEN!!

WHAT IS **THAT?**



WHAT INDEED?? IT IS A GIGANTIC PAIR OF CLAWS, THE LIKE OF WHICH HAVE NEVER BEEN SEEN ON EARTH, OR ON ANY PLANET IN THE UNIVERSE!! IT IS UNBELIEVABLE... MIND STAGGERING... BUT **REAL!**

ARTILLERY!! BRING THE ARTILLERY!! HURRY! HURRY!



ARTILLERY! OF WHAT USE IS ARTILLERY AGAINST A CREATURE WHOSE HIDE IS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO DIG ITS WAY UP THRU COUTLESS TONS OF ROCK-HARD EARTH??



ARTILLERY! OF WHAT USE IS ARTILLERY AGAINST A MONSTER WHO CAN CRUSH A HEAVY TANK WITH ONE HAND??

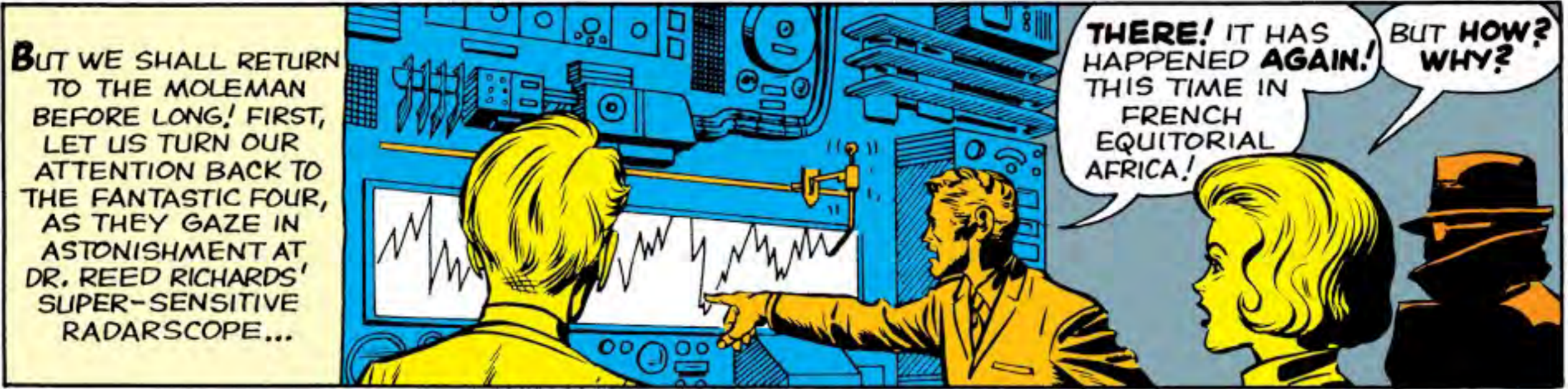


BUT, JUST AS IT SEEMS THAT NOTHING IN THE WORLD WILL HALT THE NIGHTMARE MENACE, THE SHRILL SOUND OF A COMMANDING VOICE IS HEARD... AND THE GOLIATH STOPS IN ITS TRACKS!

ENOUGH! RETURN TO EARTH'S CORE! OUR MISSION HERE IS FINISHED! **GO!!**



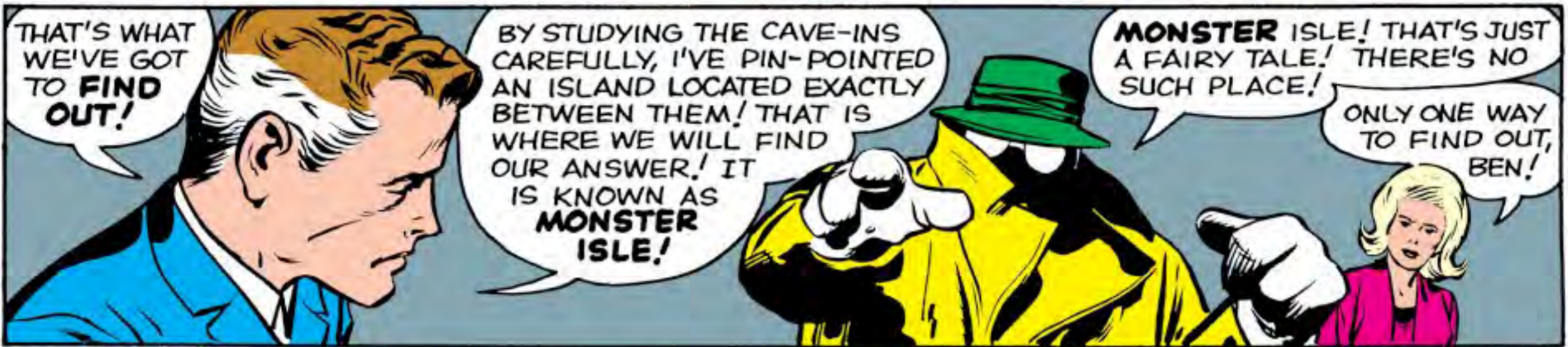
FOR EVEN SUCH A MONSTER HEEDS ITS MASTER! A MASTER KNOWN AS... **THE MOLEMAN!!**



BUT WE SHALL RETURN TO THE MOLEMAN BEFORE LONG! FIRST, LET US TURN OUR ATTENTION BACK TO THE FANTASTIC FOUR, AS THEY GAZE IN ASTONISHMENT AT DR. REED RICHARDS' SUPER-SENSITIVE RADARSCOPE...

THERE! IT HAS HAPPENED AGAIN! THIS TIME IN FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA!

BUT HOW? WHY?

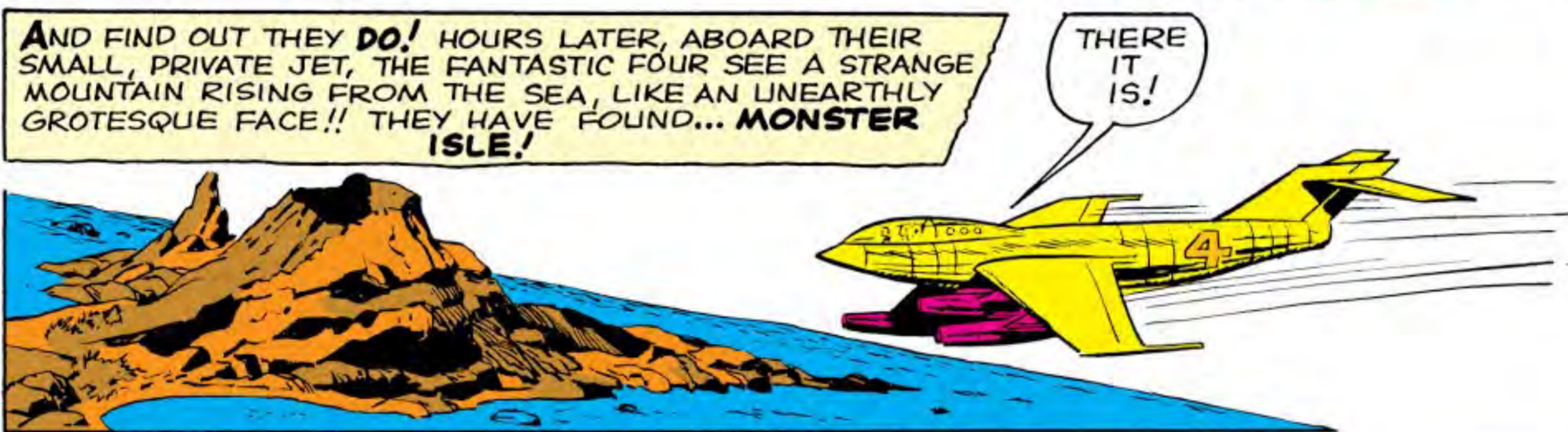


THAT'S WHAT WE'VE GOT TO FIND OUT!

BY STUDYING THE CAVE-INS CAREFULLY, I'VE PIN-POINTED AN ISLAND LOCATED EXACTLY BETWEEN THEM! THAT IS WHERE WE WILL FIND OUR ANSWER! IT IS KNOWN AS MONSTER ISLE!

MONSTER ISLE! THAT'S JUST A FAIRY TALE! THERE'S NO SUCH PLACE!

ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT, BEN!



AND FIND OUT THEY DO! HOURS LATER, ABOARD THEIR SMALL, PRIVATE JET, THE FANTASTIC FOUR SEE A STRANGE MOUNTAIN RISING FROM THE SEA, LIKE AN UNEARTHLY GROTESQUE FACE!! THEY HAVE FOUND... MONSTER ISLE!

THERE IT IS!



LITTLE DREAMING WHAT AWAITS THEM, THEY CLIMB TO THE TOP OF THE FORBIDDING PEAK...

IF THIS IS JUST A WILD GOOSE CHASE, MISTER, I'LL MAKE SURE YOU LIVE TO REGRET IT!

SAVE YOUR BREATH FOR THE CLIMB, GRUESOME!



HOLD IT!! I HEAR SOMETHING!!

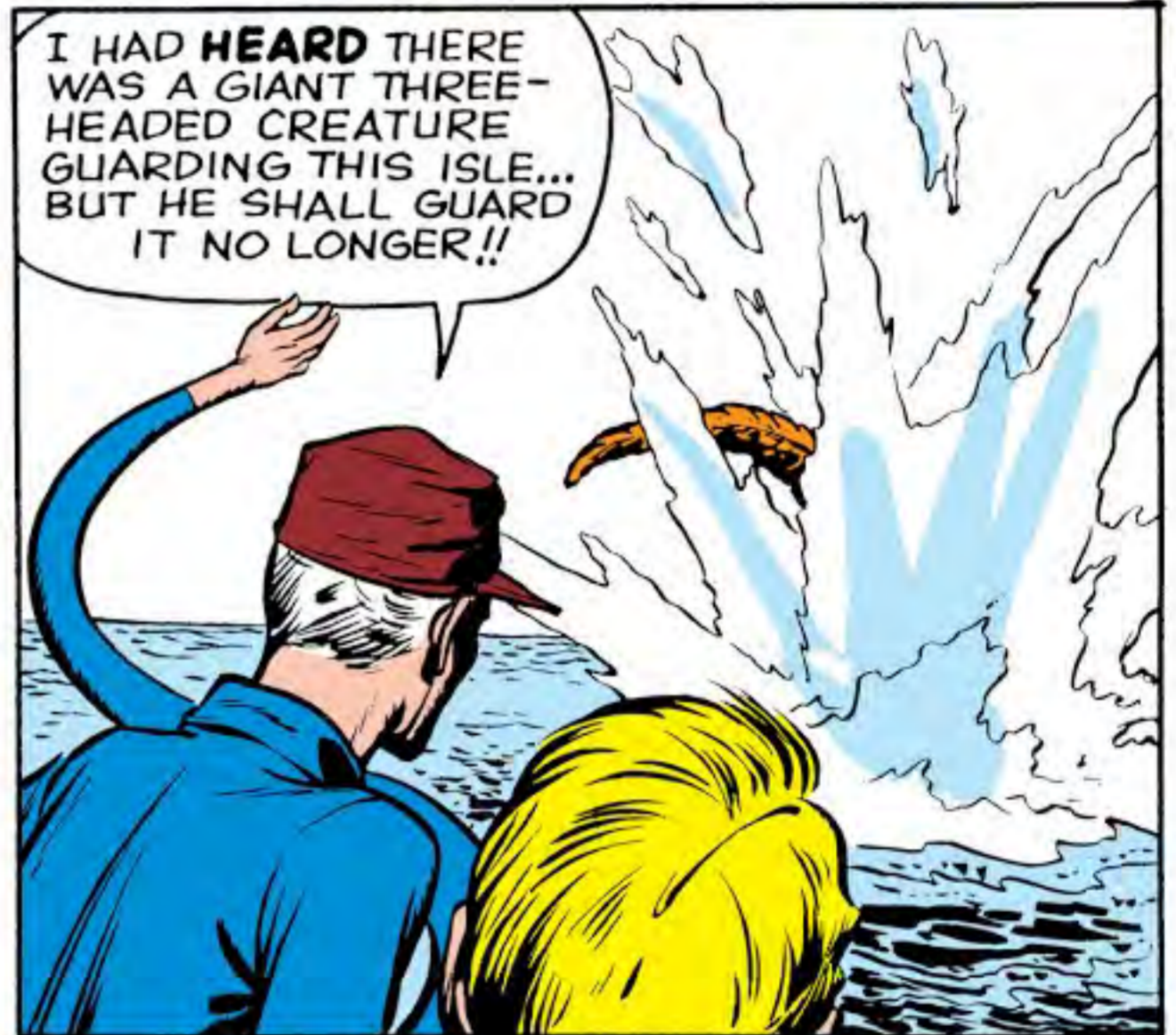
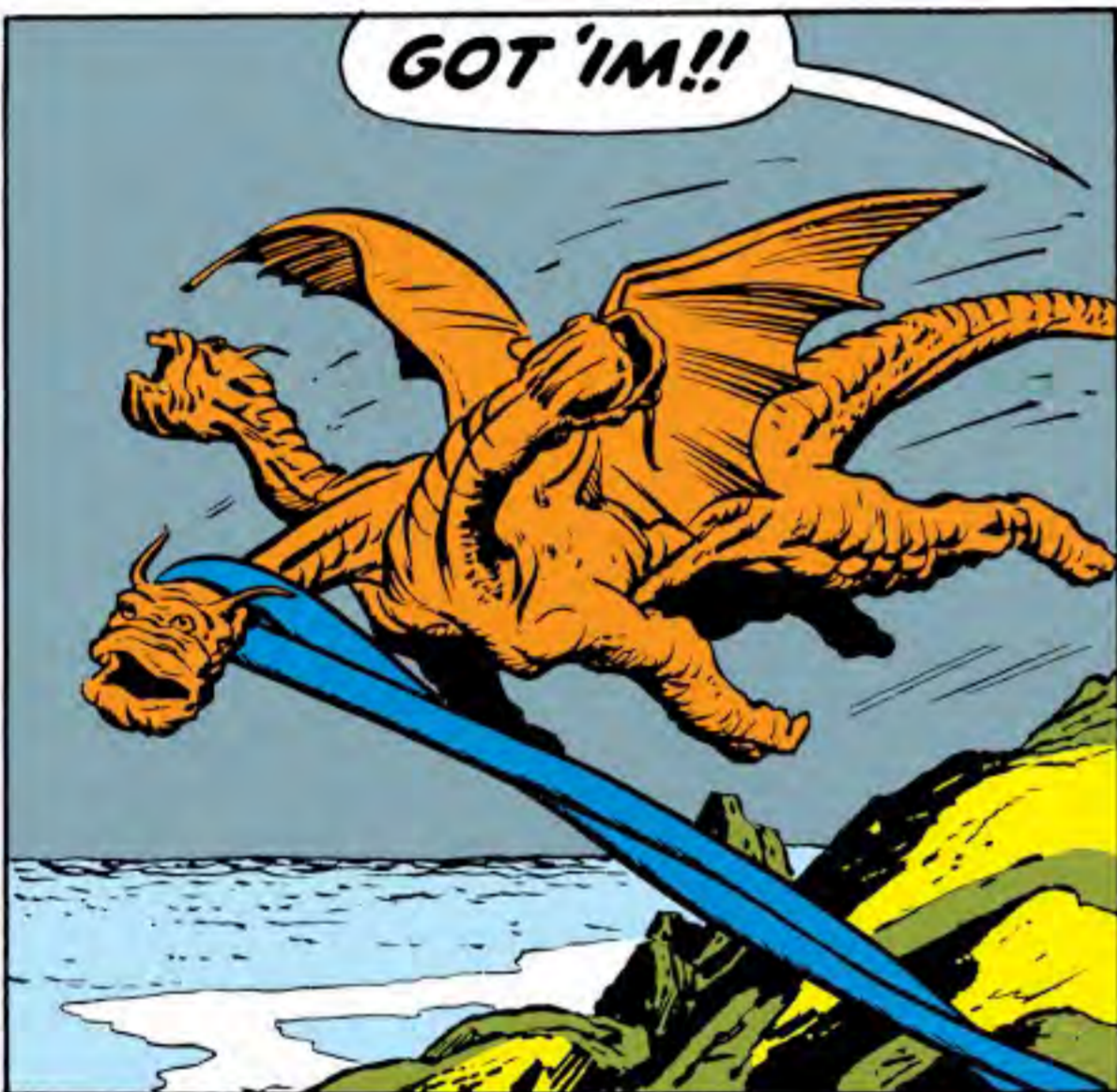
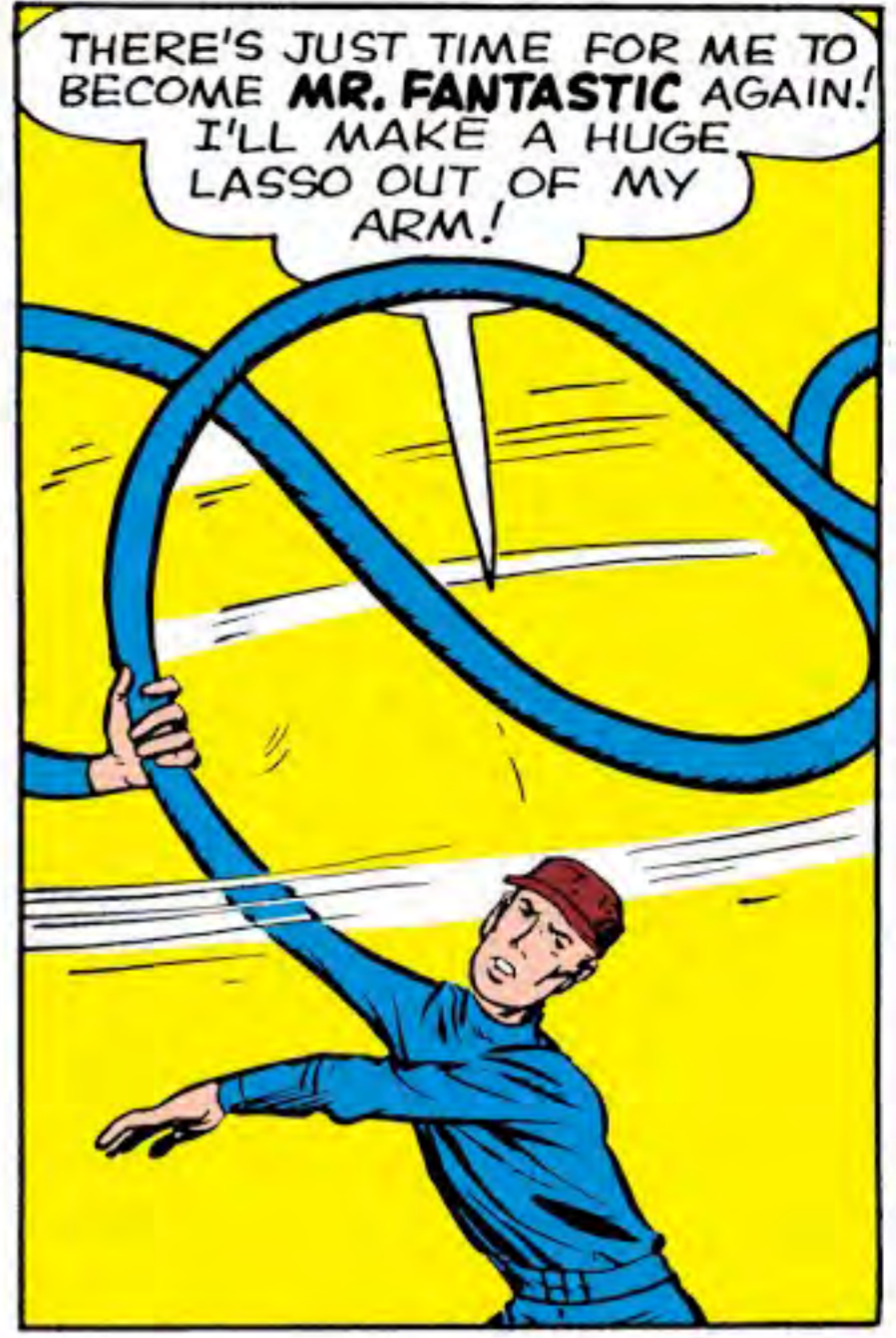
IT'S COMING FROM BELOW!



LOOK!! THOSE EYES...



SUDDENLY, A LIVING THREE-HEADED NIGHTMARE HURLS ITSELF AT THEM FROM OVER THE EDGE OF THE PEAK OF MONSTER ISLE!



FINALLY, THE AMAZING DUO
FLOAT DOWN TO THE
BOTTOM OF THE PIT...



IT'S PITCH
DARK!! WHAT
SORT OF
PLACE CAN
IT BE?

REED!
I
FEEL
SOME-
THING!

IT'S A
TRAP DOOR
IN THE
WALL!



IT'S
MOVING!

THAT LIGHT!!
WHERE DID IT
COME FROM!



IT'S
BLINDING!
I CAN'T
SEE!

I-I'M
BLACKING
OUT!

IT MIGHT BE MINUTES, OR HOURS LATER,
WHEN THE TWO MEN REGAIN THEIR SENSES
ONLY TO FIND THEMSELVES GARBED IN STRANGE,
ADHESIVE-TYPE SUITS WHICH PROTECT THEM
FROM THE BLINDING, UNEARTHLY GLOW!



MY HEAD!!

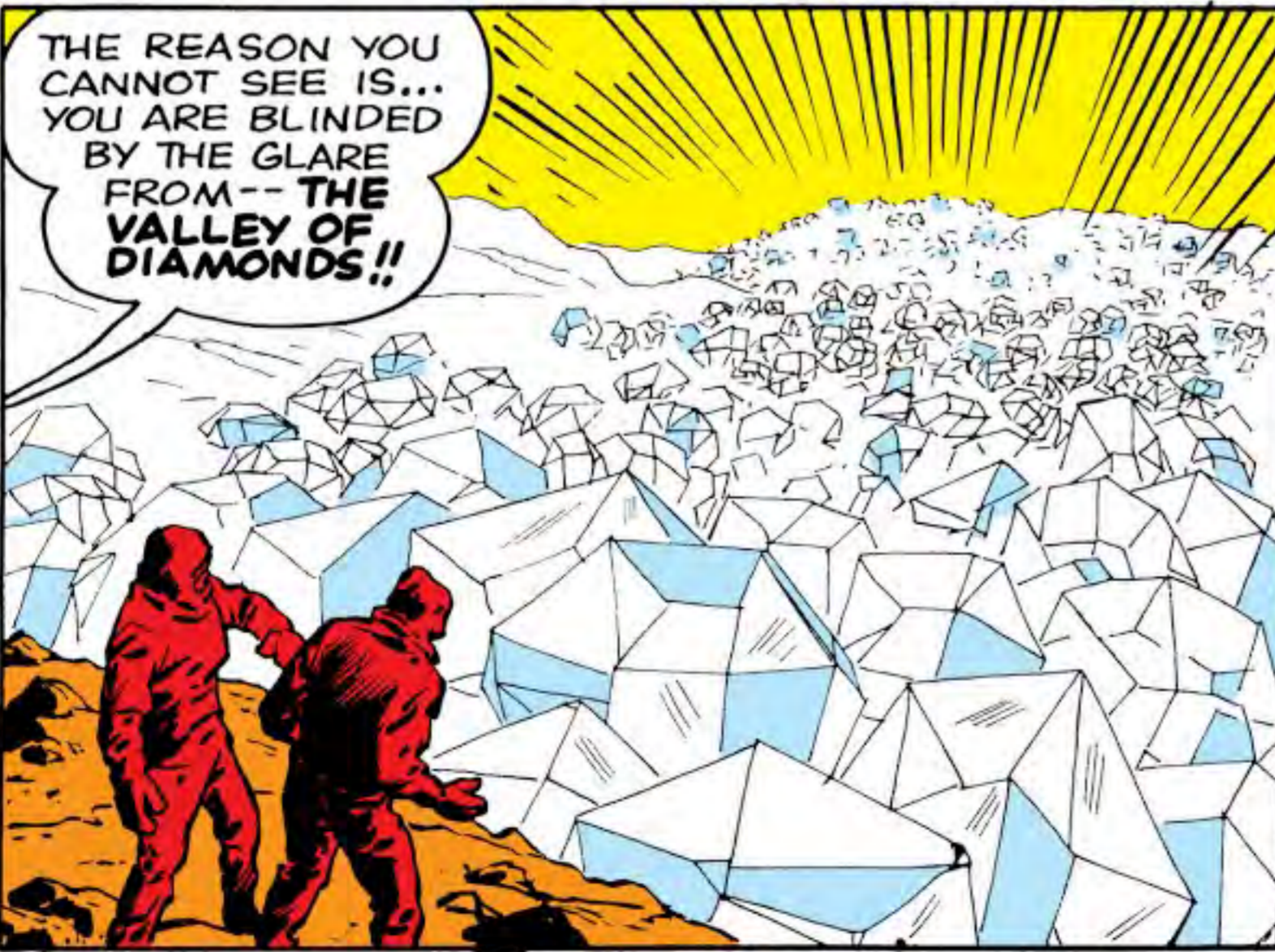
THE LIGHT--IT ACTUALLY
CAUSED US TO LOSE
CONSCIOUSNESS!
BUT HOW DID WE
GET INTO THESE
SUITS?



SO, YOU HAVE
RECOVERED,
HAVE YOU!! IT
IS ABOUT
TIME!!

WHO--WHO
ARE YOU?
I CAN'T
SEE...

AND WHERE
ARE WE?



THE REASON YOU
CANNOT SEE IS...
YOU ARE BLINDED
BY THE GLARE
FROM-- THE
VALLEY OF
DIAMONDS!!



--AND AS
FOR ME-- I
AM THE
MOLEMAN!!

THE MOLEMAN'S SECRET!

BEFORE WE WITNESS THE BREATH-TAKING CONCLUSION OF OUR AMAZING TALE, LET US GATHER TOGETHER ALL THE LOOSE ENDS! LET US RETURN TO THE TWO MEMBERS OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR WHO DID NOT FALL BELOW DURING THE CAVE-IN...

REED... AND JOHNNY... GOT TO FIND THEM!!

WAIT! THAT NOISE-- BEHIND ME!! WHAT--??



BUT OTHER EARS ALSO HEAR THE MENACING SOUNDS... AND OTHER EYES BEHOLD THE FRIGHTENING SIGHT...



THE EYES OF... **THE THING!!**



DUCK, SUE! OUT OF THE WAY!

LET ME HANDLE 'IM!



THE SECOND GIGANTIC GUARDIAN OF MONSTER ISLE IS POWERFUL BEYOND BELIEF... BUT HE IS FIGHTING AN ENEMY WHOSE EVERY ATOM HAS BEEN CHARGED WITH COSMIC RAYS... AN ENEMY WHO **CAN'T BE STOPPED!**



YOU'VE DONE IT, BEN!
YOU'VE BEATEN HIM!



WHAT DID YOU **EXPECT??**

I'M **THE THING,**
AIN'T I??



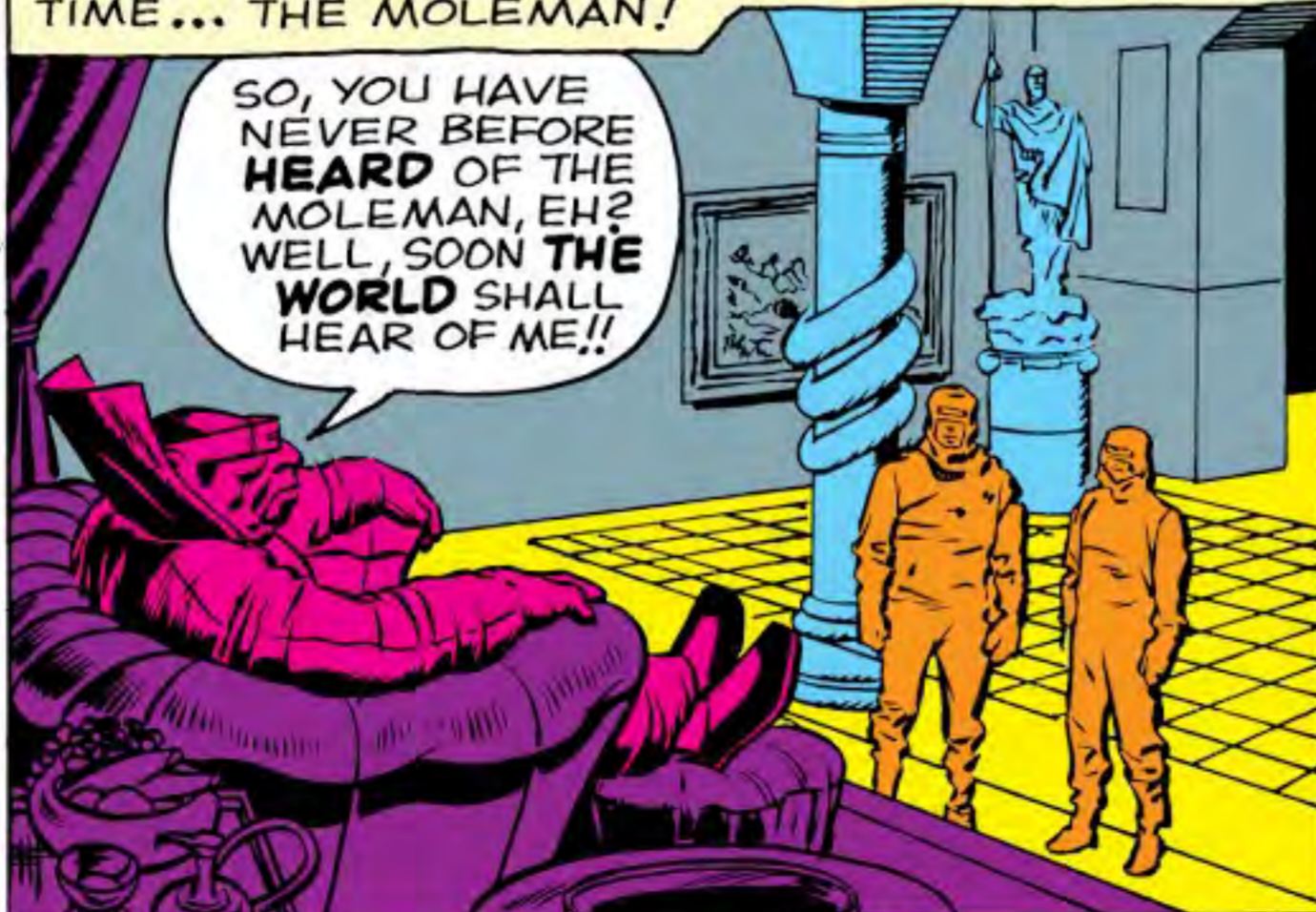
NOW LET'S GO
AND FIND THAT
SKINNY, LOUD-
MOUTHED
BOY-FRIEND OF
YOURS!

OH, BEN--IF ONLY YOU
COULD STOP HATING
REED FOR WHAT
HAPPENED TO YOU!



AND WHAT OF REED RICHARDS? AND SUE'S BROTHER, JOHNNY? WE AGAIN DESCEND TO THE DEPTHS OF MONSTER ISLE WHERE WE FIND THEM CONFRONTED BY THE STRANGEST MENACE OF ALL TIME... THE MOLEMAN!

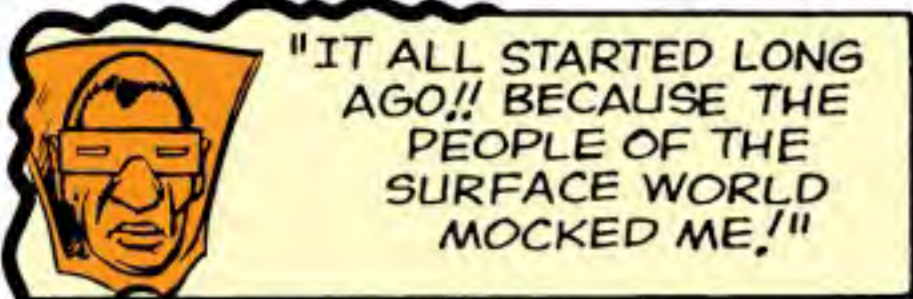
SO, YOU HAVE
NEVER BEFORE
HEARD OF THE
MOLEMAN, EH?
WELL, SOON **THE**
WORLD SHALL
HEAR OF ME!!



FOR SOON, THE
MOLEMAN WILL
HAVE THE ENTIRE
WORLD IN HIS
POWER!

HOW DID YOU
GET HERE?
WHAT **IS** THIS
PLACE?

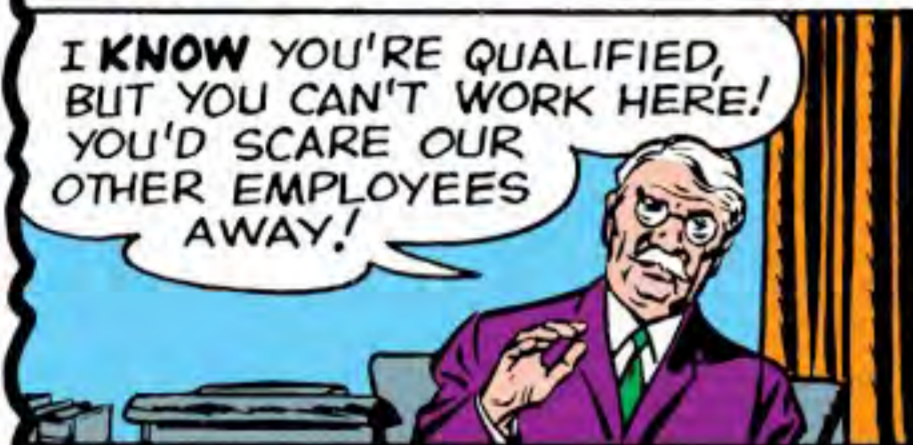




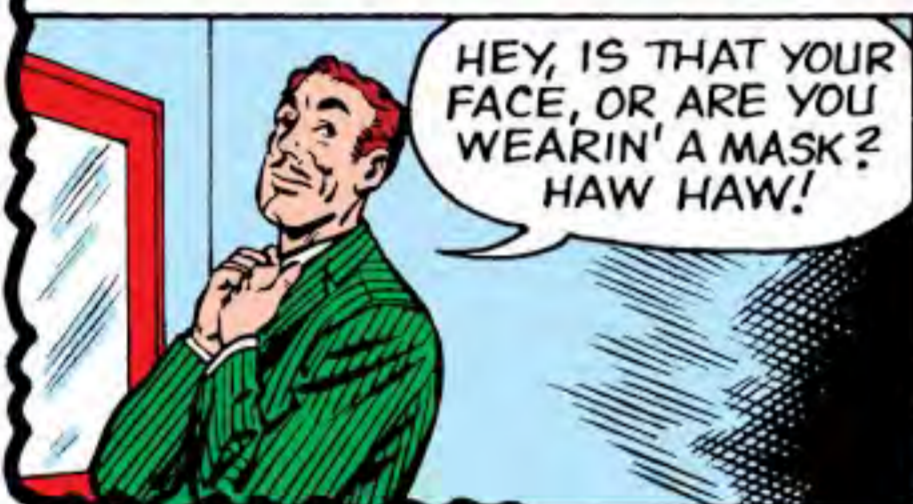
"IT ALL STARTED LONG AGO!! BECAUSE THE PEOPLE OF THE SURFACE WORLD MOCKED ME!!"



WHAT? **ME** GO OUT WITH **YOU**? DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH!



I **KNOW** YOU'RE QUALIFIED, BUT YOU CAN'T WORK HERE! YOU'D SCARE OUR OTHER EMPLOYEES AWAY!



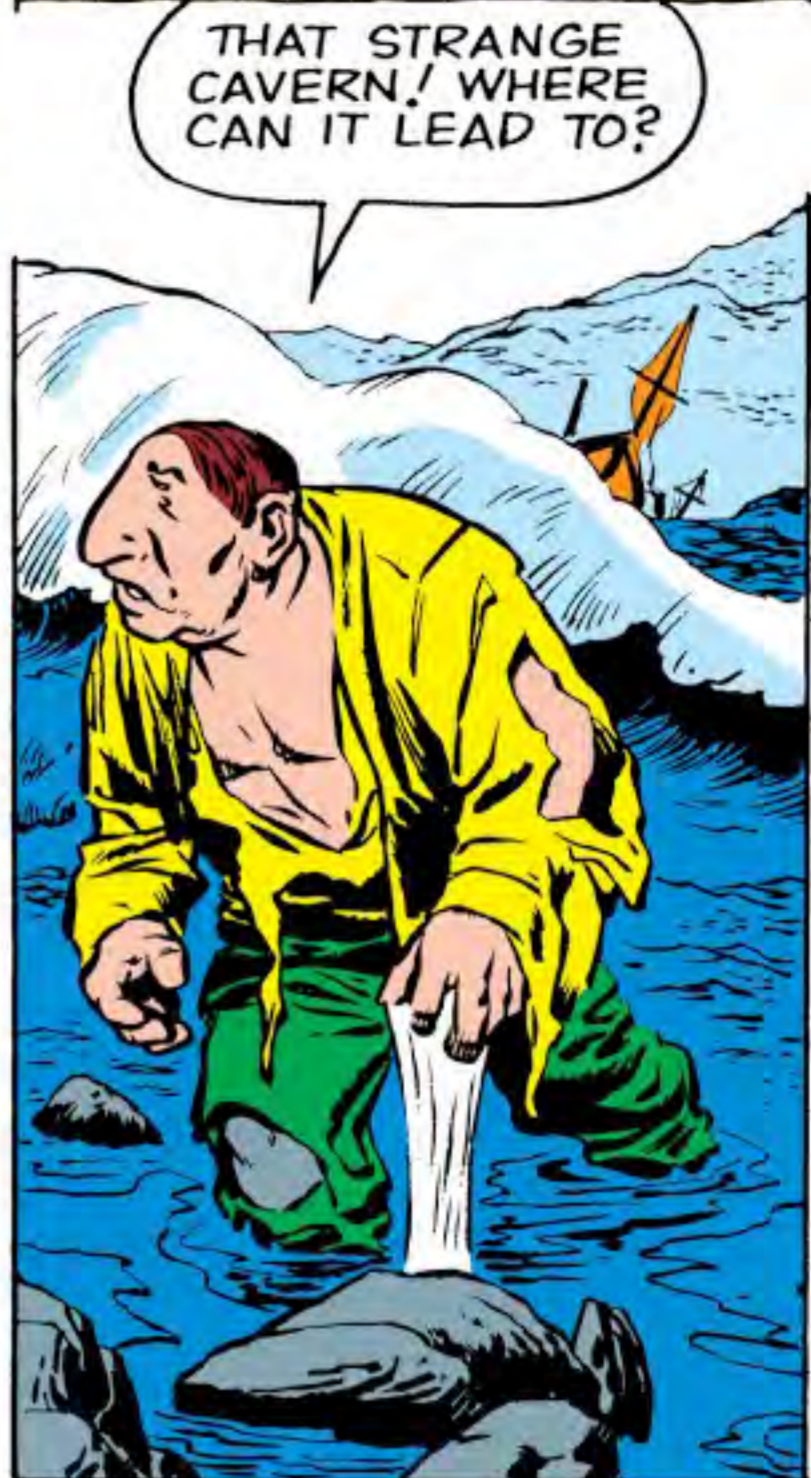
HEY, IS THAT YOUR FACE, OR ARE YOU WEARIN' A MASK? HAW HAW!

"FINALLY, I COULD STAND IT NO LONGER! I DECIDED TO STRIKE OUT ALONE... TO SEARCH FOR A NEW WORLD ... THE LEGENDARY LAND AT THE CENTER OF THE EARTH! A WORLD WHERE **I** COULD BE KING! MY TRAVELS TOOK ME ALL OVER THE GLOBE..."



EVEN THIS LONELINESS IS BETTER THAN THE CRUELTY OF MY FELLOW MEN!

"AND THEN, JUST WHEN I HAD ALMOST ABANDONED HOPE... WHEN MY LITTLE SKIFF HAD BEEN WASHED ASHORE HERE ON MONSTER ISLE, **I FOUND IT!!**"



THAT STRANGE CAVERN! WHERE CAN IT LEAD TO?

"I SOON **SAW** WHERE IT LED... IT LED TO THE LAND OF MY DREAMS..."



DOWN THERE... BELOW-- **I'VE FOUND IT!!** IT'S EARTH'S CENTER!

"BUT IN THE DREAD SILENCE OF THAT HUGE CAVERN, THE SUDDEN SHOCK OF MY LOUD OUTCRY CAUSED A VIOLENT AVALANCHE, AND..."



"... WHEN IT WAS OVER, I HAD SOMEHOW MIRACULOUSLY SURVIVED THE FALL... BUT, DUE TO THE IMPACT OF THE CRASH, I HAD LOST MOST OF MY SIGHT! YES, I HAD FOUND THE CENTER OF EARTH-- BUT I WAS **STRANDED** HERE... LIKE A HUMAN MOLE!!"



THAT WAS TO BE THE LAST OF MY MISFORTUNES! MY LUCK BEGAN TO TURN IN MY FAVOR! I MASTERED THE CREATURES DOWN HERE-- MADE THEM DO MY BIDDING-- AND WITH THEIR HELP, I CARVED OUT AN UNDERGROUND EMPIRE!

A NOTE OF MADNESS CREEPS INTO THE MOLE'S VOICE AS HE SPEAKS OF HIS POWER! AND THEN, HE MAKES HIS FIRST FATAL MISTAKE...

I CONQUERED EVERYTHING ABOUT ME! I EVEN LEARNED TO SENSE THINGS IN THE DARK--LIKE A MOLE! HERE, I'LL SHOW YOU! TRY TO STRIKE ME WITH THAT POLE! TRY IT, I SAY!!

HAH! I SENSED THAT BLOW COMING! NOTHING CAN TAKE ME BY SURPRISE! AND, I HAVE DEVELOPED OTHER SENSES TOO, LIKE THOSE OF THE BAT--

I POSSESS A NATURAL RADAR SENSE... A WARNING SYSTEM WHICH ENABLES ME TO EVADE WHATEVER DANGER STRIKES AT ME!

COMPARED TO THE MOLE-MAN, YOU ARE SLOW... CLUMSY!! HAH HAH!!

SEE HOW EASILY I DEFEAT YOU... OR ANY OTHERS WHO TRY TO DEFY ME!

NOW, BEFORE I SLAY YOU ALL, BEHOLD MY MASTER PLAN! SEE THIS MAP OF MY UNDERGROUND EMPIRE! EACH TUNNEL LEADS TO A MAJOR CITY! AS SOON AS I HAVE WRECKED EVERY ATOMIC PLANT, EVERY SOURCE OF EARTHLY POWER, MY MIGHTY MOLE CREATURES WILL ATTACK AND DESTROY EVERYTHING THAT LIVES ABOVE THE SURFACE!

AND NOW, AT MY SIGNAL, THOSE CREATURES OF DARKNESS, MY DENIZENS OF EARTH'S CENTER, SHALL DISPOSE OF ALL OF YOU WITLESS INTRUDERS!

WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT, MOLE!!

THE THING!!



TOO LATE, FOOL! THE DIE IS CAST! THERE IS NO TURNING BACK!!

THING!! LOOK OUT... BEHIND YOU!

BONG!
BONG!

HEARING THE MOLE'S SIGNAL, THE LARGEST AND MOST DEADLY OF HIS UNDERGROUND CREATURES PONDEROUSLY RAISES ITSELF INTO THE ROOM... ITS BRAINLESS RAGE DIRECTED AT THE FOUR ASTONISHED HUMANS!



AND THEN, THE FANTASTIC FOUR FLY INTO BLAZING ACTION...

LOOK OUT, REED! I'M GONNA BURN MY WAY OUTTA THIS MONKEY SUIT!



GOOD BOY, TORCH!



STAND ASIDE, GANG! IT'S GONNA GET MIGHTY WARM AROUND HERE!



BACK AND FORTH, BUZZING AROUND THE MONSTER'S HEAD LIKE A HORNET, FLIES THE HUMAN TORCH, AS THE GIGANTIC CREATURE VAINLY TRIES TO GRASP HIS FIERY FOE!



REED! THE MOLE MAN! HE'S ESCAPING!

NOT IF I CAN HELP IT, SUE!



AND HELP IT I CAN!

MOVING LIKE A WELL-OILED FIGHTING MACHINE, THE FANTASTIC FOUR, WITH THE DEADLY MOLEMAN IN THEIR GRASP, RACE FOR THE SURFACE... BUT THEN THEIR EVIL ANTAGONIST SEIZES THE SIGNAL CORD AGAIN, AND...



YOU HAVEN'T WON YET! EVEN YOU CAN'T DEFEAT ALL OF MY UNDER-EARTH HORDE!

HURRY, REED... HURRY!

CAN'T YOU EVEN HOLD ON TO ONE LITTLE GUY?

AND THEN THEY COME... LIKE FIGMENTS OF A MAD NIGHTMARE... ROARING, RUNNING, SNARLING... THE MOLEMAN'S ENTIRE ARMY OF UNDERGROUND GARGOYLES!!



BUT THEY HADN'T COUNTED ON THE UNBELIEVABLE POWER OF THE HUMAN TORCH! FLYING BETWEEN HIS FANTASTIC ALLIES, AND THE PURSUING HORDE, HE BLAZES A FIERY SWATH WHICH MELTS THE SOFT EARTH...



THIS WILL CAUSE A ROCKSLIDE, SEALING US OFF FROM THOSE CREATURES!

WE DID IT... WE'RE FREE!! AND THE ENTRANCE TO THE MOLEMAN'S EMPIRE IS SEALED FOREVER!



MOMENTS LATER...

BUT WHERE IS THE MOLEMAN?

I LEFT HIM BEHIND--HE'LL NEVER TROUBLE ANYONE AGAIN!



AND THE WORDS OF MR. FANTASTIC ARE INDEED PROPHETIC... AS, SECONDS LATER...

HE'S DESTROYED THE ENTIRE ISLE! HE'S SEALED HIMSELF BELOW--FOREVER!



IT'S BEST THAT WAY! THERE WAS NO PLACE FOR HIM IN OUR WORLD... PERHAPS HE'LL FIND PEACE DOWN THERE... I HOPE SO!

I JUST HOPE WE HAVE SEEN THE LAST OF HIM!



BUT, WHETHER WE'VE SEEN THE LAST OF THE MOLEMAN OR NOT, WE WILL SEE MUCH MORE OF THE MOST AMAZING QUARTET IN HISTORY, IN THE NEXT GREAT ISSUE OF-- THE FANTASTIC FOUR!! DON'T MISS IT!!