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MARVEL® COMICS GROUP



THE MICRONAUTS

**BARON KARZA
RETURNS!**
NUFF SAID!



broderick

Space Glider. Marionette. Acroyear. Bug. Microtron. Biotron. They came from inner space—six champions sworn to free their beloved Microverse from the tyrannical rule of the evil Baron Karza!

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THE MICRONAUTS!

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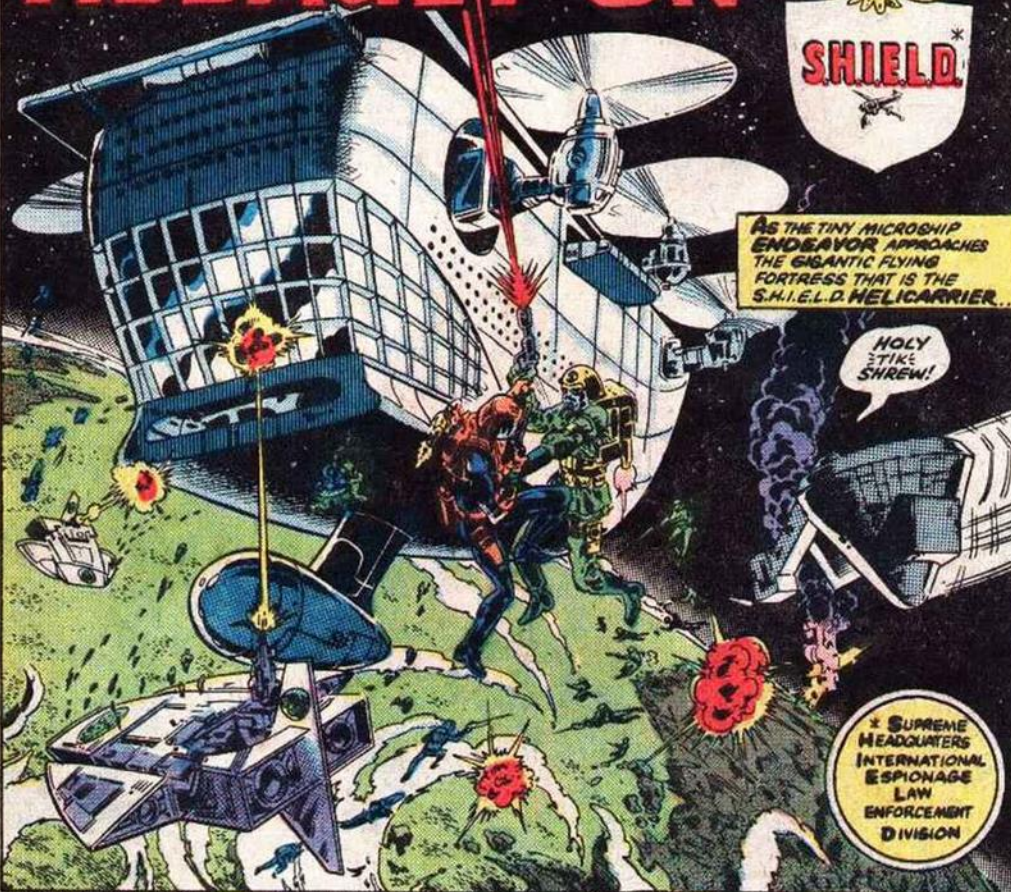
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HAVING LEARNED OF A MENACE OF SUCH MAGNITUDE THAT IT THREATENS BOTH THIS EARTH AND THEIR BELOVED MICROVERSE, THE SEVEN TINY ADVENTURERS CALLED MICRONAUTS RACE TO SAVE BOTH WORLDS, ONLY TO FIND THEMSELVES IN THE MIDST OF AN...

ASSAULT ON



MICRONAUTS® Vol. 1, No. 26, February, 1981 Issue. (U.S.P.S. 539-990) Published by MARVEL COMICS GROUP, James E. Galton, President, Stan Lee, Publisher, Milton Schiffman, Vice-President, Production. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 575 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10022. Controlled circulation postage paid at Sparta, Illinois. Published monthly. MICRONAUTS®, SPACE GLIDER®, BIOTRON®, MICROTRON®, ACROYEAR®, BARON KARZA®, GALACTIC WARRIOR®, LASERSONICS®, PHOBOS®, FORCE COMMANDER®, TIME TRAVELER®, HYDRO COPTER®, ASTRO STATION®, REPTO®, ANTRON®, NEON ORBITERTM, THORIUM ORBITERTM, STAR SEARCHERTM, BATTLE CRUISERTM, CENTARUSTM, and PHAROIDTM are trademarks of MEGO CORP. and the likenesses of the characters to which those names are applied are the property of MEGO CORP. and the trademarks and likenesses are used with the permission of MEGO CORP. MICRONAUTS® copyright © 1980 by MEGO CORP. All rights reserved. All other material © 1980 by Marvel Comics Group, a division of Cadence Industries Corporation. All rights reserved. Price 50¢ per copy in the U.S. and Canada. Subscription rate \$6.00 for 12 issues, Canada, \$7.00, Foreign, \$8.00. Printed in the U.S.A. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. Postmaster: Send address changes to Marvel Comics Group, 575 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022.

ON THE BRIDGE OF THE HOMEWORLD MICROSHIP ENDEAVOR...

WE HAVE A DEFINITE TIK-KNACK FOR SAILIN' INTO OTHER PEOPLE'S TIK-K WARS!

WHAT WE ARE WITNESSING IS BUT THE FIRST BATTLE IN A CONFLICT THAT MAY WELL EMBROIL BOTH OUR UNIVERSES, BUG.

I TELEPATHICALLY GLEANED AN EARLY WARNING OF OUR DANGER FROM THE DEFEATED MENTALLO--

MENTALLO DISCOVERED THAT THE ESPERS* HAD CONTACTED AN EVIL POWER IN OUR MICRO-VERSE WHICH WAS GROWING STRONG ENOUGH TO REACH OUT TO EARTH--

YEAH, AN THEY TIK-FRIED MENTALLO'S BRAINS LONG-DISTANCE FOR LETTIN' YOU WORRIE THE TIK-INFO OUTTA HIM!

--AND THIS INFORMATION WAS GREETED MOST EAGERLY BY MENTALLO'S MYSTERIOUS MASTERS!

* A GROUP OF EARTHLINGS EMPLOYED BY S.H.I.E.L.D. TO ENGAGE IN EXTRA-SENSORY PERCEPTION RESEARCH-- LOUISE.

STILL, WE DID ASCERTAIN THAT MENTALLO SERVED AN ORGANIZATION THAT CALLS ITSELF HYDRA...

LAST ISSUE--L.

...WHOSE EVIL EMBLEM
EMBLAZONS THE ARMOR
OF THE AGENTS ASSAULTING
THE HOVERING HELIFORT-
RESS HEADQUARTERS OF
S. H. I. E. L. D.

NOW,
COL.
FURY!
YOU DIE!
EH?

VREET!

WELL, IT
SURE WAS NICE OF
'EM TA T'KE GIVE US
A WAY TA TELL THE
GOOD GUYS FROM
THE T'KE BAD
GUYS!

EEYARGH!

THRILLING AT THE THOUGHT OF BATTLE,
THE EXUBERANT MICRONAUT, BUG,
FIRES ON HIS FIRST HYDRA AGENT
WITH HIS THORIUM BLASTER--

--LEAVING AN ASTOUNDED DIRECTOR
OF S. H. I. E. L. D. IN HIS WAKE AS THE
H. M. S. ENDEAVOR TURNS TOWARD THE
VAST HELICARRIER.

I JUST HAD MY FAT
PULLED OUTTA THE
FIRE BY ANOTHER
TINY SPACESHIP??!
AND THIS ONES NOT
ONLY IN GOOD SHAPE...
IT'S FRIENDLY!

WHOEVER THEY ARE AN'
WHATEVER THEY'RE DOIN'
HERE, I OWE 'EM--AN'
NICK FURY ALWAYS
PAYS HIS DEBTS!

HIGH ABOVE THE EARTH, THE GRIZZLED
VETERAN RETURNS TO THE TASK OF
REPELLING THE HYDRA ASSAULT.

IT SEEMS AN IMPOSSIBLE UNDER-
TAKING, GIVEN THE NUMBERS OF
THE FOE.

DESPITE OUR
LOSSES, WE HAVE
BREACHED THE
HELICARRIER'S
HULL!

NAIL HYDRA!
CUT OFF A
LIMB AND TWO
MORE SHALL
TAKE ITS PLACE!



AH Σ TIKE
SHADDUP!



GABE!
WHAT IS
THAT
THING?



I DON'T
KNOW-- BUT
IT'S TAKEN
THE HEAT
OFF OF US!



LET'S HIT
THOSE HYDRA
HATCHETMEN.
BOYS! FORWARD--
FOR S.H.I.E.L.D.!

AS GABE
JONES LEADS
HIS SQUAD OF
DEFENDERS
TO THE ATTACK--
NO ONE NOTICES
THE TINY
MICROSHIP
CAMOUFLAGED
IN THE SHADOWS
OVERHEAD.



WHY DO WE HIDE
WHEN THERE IS
A BATTLE TO BE
FOUGHT, COMMANDER?

WE DON'T HIDE, ACRO-
YEAR-- THE ENDEAVOR
DOES. I WANT MY SHIP
SAFE--



--WHILE WE SEEK OUT THE
S.H.I.E.L.D. ESPER UNIT VIA
OUR GLIDER WINGS, BIOTRON
AND MICROTRON, YOU STAY
WITH THE SHIP!

NATURALLY.

OH,
DRAT!

YA MEAN
WE GOTTA
 Σ TIKE FLY
AGAIN?!



OH Σ TIKE
SPIT!

IF YOU'D PRACTICE YOU
MIGHT GET THE HANG
OF IT, BUG!

LET'S GO,
MICRONAUTS!

HAILING FROM KALIKLAK, A WORLD WHERE THE ONLY INSECTIVORIDS THAT FLY ARE BORN WITH WINGS, BUG HAS AN INNATE DISLIKE OF BEING AIRBORNE...

PRACTICE SHE 3TIK3 SAYS! WHO'S MARIONETTE 3TIK3 KIDDIN'?! THESE WING-THINGS 3TIK3 HATE ME!

YEE 3TIK3 OWN! AN' THE FEELIN'S MUTUAL!

BIOTRON AND MICROTON MONITOR THE MICROHAULTS' PROGRESS FROM THE ENDEAVOR'S BRIDGE...

BUG SEEMS TO BE HAVING HIS USUAL DIFFICULTIES.

IT FIGURES!

AWRIGHT! JUST GOTTA 3TIK3 STAY STRAIGHT--!

FW AP

THAT DOES IT! THAT 3TIK3 DOES IT!

S'LONG 3TIK3 WING-THINGS!

WHAT'S THE POINT A FLYIN' WHEN YERS 3TIK3 TRULY'S GOT THE NATCHERL ABILITY TA 3TIK3 CLING TA ANY SURFACE?

THERE AIN'T NO 3TIK3 POINT! AH, WHAT THE HECK-- YA CAN'T 3TIK3 COURT-MARTIAL A VOLUNTEER!

HEY! WHUZZAT INSIDE THIS 3TIK3 CHAMBER ??

HOLY 3TIK3 SHREW!!!

WHATEVER BUG SEES WILL HAVE TO AWAIT REVELATION...



FOR BUG'S FELLOW MICRO-NAUTS HAVE ENCOUNTERED YET ANOTHER OBSTACLE IN THEIR PATH TO THE S.H.I.E.L.D. ESPER UNIT.

HYDRA AGENTS!

THEY'RE SEEKING THE SAME THING WE ARE, ACRO-YEAR!

YOU'RE READING THEIR MINDS, ARCTURUS?

YES, MARI-- AND THE MINDS OF THOSE S.H.I.E.L.D. AGENTS LYING IN WAIT FOR THEM!



LOOK! LITTLE FLYING PEOPLE--!

ARE YOU CRAZY? STAY ON THE ALERT FOR--!

ARGHH! S.H.I.E.L.D. AMBUSH!!



LIKE SHOOTIN' FISH IN A BARREL!

WHATEVER IT WAS THAT FLEW PAST THOSE HYDRA GOONS DIVERTED THEIR ATTENTION FROM US!



DUM DUM DUGAN GIVES CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE.

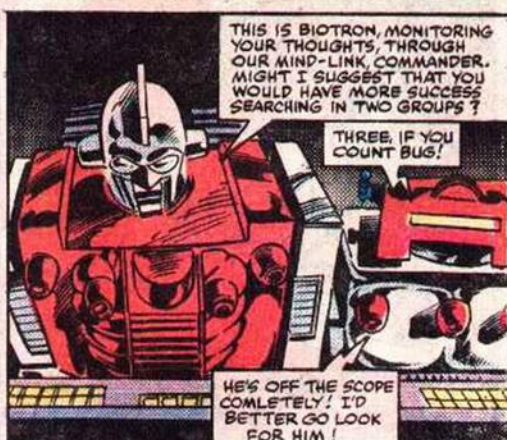
YEAH-- FURY TOLD ME THE HELICARRIER'D BEEN INVADIED BY LIVIN' LASER-PACKIN' LEPRECHAUNS! NOW I BELIEVE HIM!

I JUST HOPE THEY LIVE LONG ENOUGH FOR US TO ASK 'EM SOME QUESTIONS!



COMMANDER, YOU ARE USING YOUR NEWFOUND TELEPATHIC ABILITIES TO VECTOR IN ON OUR DESTINATION?

I'M TRYING, BUT THE ESPER UNIT HAS PSIONICALLY SHIELDED ITSELF FROM MY PROBING, ACROYEAR!



THIS IS BIOTRON, MONITORING YOUR THOUGHTS, THROUGH OUR MIND-LINK, COMMANDER. MIGHT I SUGGEST THAT YOU WOULD HAVE MORE SUCCESS SEARCHING IN TWO GROUPS?

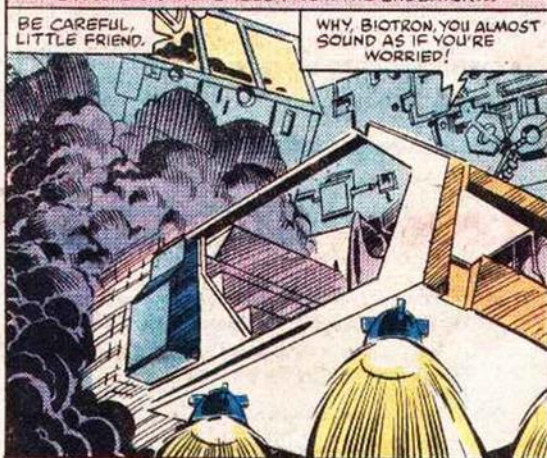
THREE, IF YOU COUNT BUG!

HE'S OFF THE SCOPE COMPLETELY! I'D BETTER GO LOOK FOR HIM!

PILOTED BY THE LITTLE ROBOD, MICROTRON, THE ASTRO-STATION DISENGAGES FROM THE ENDEAVOR...

BE CAREFUL, LITTLE FRIEND.

WHY, BIOTRON, YOU ALMOST SOUND AS IF YOU'RE WORRIED!

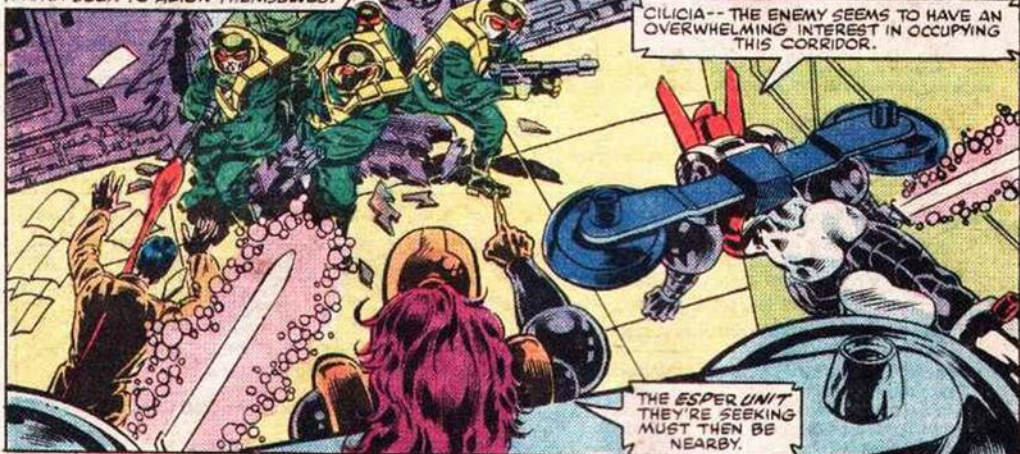


I AM, COMMANDER RANN'S SUDDENLY HEIGHTENED TELEPATHIC ABILITIES COULD ONLY STEM FROM THE ENIGMA FORCE...

...THE POWER THAT PROTECTS THE MICROVERSE, ONLY APPEARING IN TIMES OF GATHERING DARKNESS. IF THE ENIGMA FORCE STIRS NOW, IT MEANS THE DANGER MUST BE GREATER THAN WE DARE DREAM.

THE ROBOD HELMSMAN HAS REASON TO FEAR--

--FOR IT IS WITH THAT EVIL, AWAKENING IN THE DEPTHS OF THE S.H.I.E.L.D. HELICARRIER, THAT THE HORDES OF HYDRA SEEK TO ALIGN THEMSELVES!



CILICIA-- THE ENEMY SEEMS TO HAVE AN OVERWHELMING INTEREST IN OCCUPYING THIS CORRIDOR.

THE ESPER UNIT THEY'RE SEEKING MUST THEN BE NEARBY.



LET US CLEAR A PATH, MILADY.



AYE, MILORD.

S-SOMETHING IS TEARING UP THE FLOOR BEFORE US--?!



THE BESIEGED S.H.I.E.L.D. AGENTS ARE STUNNED...

HYDRA'S BEEN STOPPED!

BY LITTLE WARRIORS!

GREETINGS, EARTH ALLIES.

ELSEWHERE, BUG HAS MADE AN EXCITING DISCOVERY...



A 3-TIK MICROVERSE MORGUE FULLA DEAD ACROYEARS, AN 3-TIK SHATTERED MICRO-SHIPS!



QUITE A 3-TIK COLLECTION! LOOKS LIKE S.H.I.E.L.D.'S PICKED UP WHERE PROFESSOR PROMETHEUS LEFT 3-TIK OFF! *

*PHILLIP PROMETHEUS, WHOSE ATTEMPTS TO SEEK KNOWLEDGE OF THE MICROVERSE WERE CHRONICLED IN MICRONAUTS #5-8-- LOUISE.



I'M NORMALLY AN EASYGOIN' KINDA 3-TIK INSECTIVORID, BUT I'VE HAD IT WITH THE WAY THE EARTHERS STALK US, SHOOT AT US --

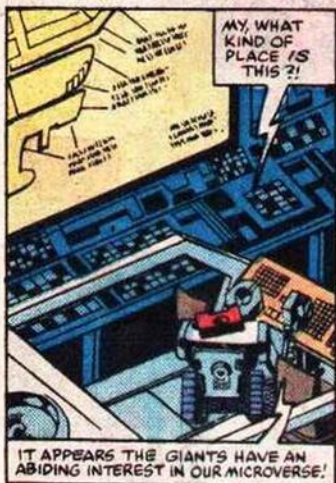
--AN' 3-TIK STUDY US LIKE WE WERE NO MORE THAN 3-TIK STINKIN' SPECIMENS!

AIN'T THESE 3-TIK HUMANS EVER HEARD OF HUMAN DECENCY?!

AIMING CAREFULLY, THE IRATE BUG FIRES AND...



THAT'S MR. BUG'S ROCKET-LANCE! HE MUST BE IN HERE!



MY, WHAT KIND OF PLACE IS THIS?!

IT APPEARS THE GIANTS HAVE AN ABIDING INTEREST IN OUR MICROVERSE!



EH? SOMETHING'S DROPPED TO THE DECK OF THE ASTRO-STATION BEHIND ME!



EEEK!

RELAX 3-TIK MUNCHKIN!

I'VE FOUND US A 3-TIK FRIEND!

MEET DAGON, ACROYEAR WARRIOR!

OH, MY!





THE S.H.I.E.L.D. ESPERS, DARLING-- TRAINED TELEPATHS WHOSE HEIGHTENED MENTAL ABILITIES HAVE MADE THEM SUSCEPTIBLE TO SEIZURE BY A MORE POWERFUL MIND-FORCE WITHIN THE MICROVERSE!

BUT WHO WOULD BE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO MENTALLY BREACH THE SPACEWALL SEPARATING OUR TWO UNIVERSES--?!

OH, ARCTURUS--
NO!!



I'VE PRAYED WITH ALL MY HEART IT ISN'T SO, MARI-- BUT WHAT OTHER ANSWER IS THERE?!

MY LOVE, LOOK! THOSE HORRIBLE TWISTING TENTACLES WRITHING OUT OF THE ENERGY-HOLE IN SPACE ITSELF!



THEY'RE PSIONIC SIPHONS, MARI-- DRAWING POWER FROM THE S.H.I.E.L.D. ESPERS WHO NO LONGER POSSESS WILLS OF THEIR OWN WITH WHICH TO RESIST!

IT'S UP TO US TO CLOSE THE MIND-BREACH IN THE SPACE-WALL!

VREET

THE HIGH WHINE OF COMMANDER RANN'S LASER-SONIC PISTOL FILLS THE BLOWING CHAMBER--

--BUT, EVEN AS HE DESTROYS THE MACHINERY ATTUNED TO THE ESPER TELEPATH'S BRAINWAVES, HE COMES TO THE SINKING REALIZATION THAT THE ENEMY HAS ALREADY FORGED A BRAIN-WAVE BRIDGE TO EARTH VIA THE MINDS OF THE HELPLESS S.H.I.E.L.D. ESPERS.



YOU ARE TOO LATE, COMMANDER... FAR TOO LATE!

OUR TELEPATHIC MIND-LINK IS FUNCTIONING, COMMANDER... I 'HEAR' YOU, FEAR NOT...

...HELP IS ON THE WAY.

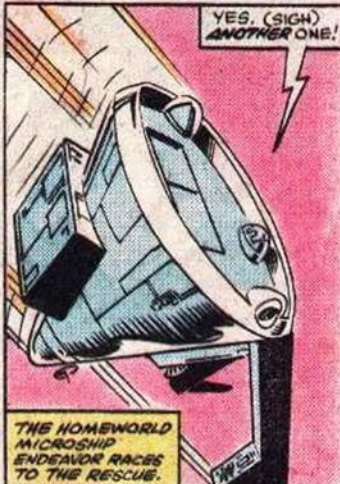


BUG, WILL YOUR NEW-FOUND FRIEND FIGHT BESIDE US? I WILL.



'COURSE HE'LL FIGHT! HE'S AN ACRO-YEAR, AIN'T HE?

YES. (SIGH) ANOTHER ONE!



THE HOMEWORLD MICROSHIP ENDANGERED RACES TO THE RESCUE.

MEANWHILE, IN THE S.H.I.E.L.D. HELICARRIER CHAMBER HOUSING THE ESPER UNIT...

ARCTURUS, YOU *KNOW*--AND YOU TRIED TO HIDE THE TRUTH FROM THE REST OF US ??!

ALREADY I DETECT HIS EVIL ENERGY FORCE, CORRUPTING EVERY *MIND* IT TOUCHES, DEFILEING ANY *BODY* HE CHOOSES TO INHABIT!



YOU MAY HAVE CAUSE TO REMEMBER THOSE WORDS, MY DEAR PRINCESS MARI!

THE MONSTER PROTECTS HIS *HOST-MIND* WITH A PSYCHIC SHIELD! MY BLASTS HAVE NO EFFECT!

OF COURSE! UNTIL I COULD PHYSICALLY TRANSMIT MYSELF THROUGH THE SPACEWALL. I NEEDED A *HUMAN MIND* TO ACT AS A RECEIVER THROUGH WHICH TO MANIFEST MY POWER-- ENOUGH PSYCHIC POWER TO BREACH THE SPACEWALL AND PHYSICALLY RETURN TO EARTH! I NEEDED THESE *HUMAN MINDS*.





NOW, HOWEVER, THERE IS
NO LONGER ANY NEED
FOR SUCH CLINGS-
GO-BETWEENS!

WE WERE TOO
LATE! WE COULDN'T
STOP HIM! HE'S
HERE! HE'S HERE!

YOU
FORGET
YOUR DUTIES
AS A HOST,
COMMANDER
RANN! SURELY
ETIQUETTE DI-
CTATES THAT
YOU SAY:
WELCOME TO
EARTH, BARON
KARZA!

BEFORE RANN
CAN REACT, BARON
KARZA BREACHES
THE SPACEWALL
AND TEARS THE
SECRETS OF THE
ENIGMA FORCE
FROM THE COM-
MANDER'S REELING
BRAIN.

THE CHAMBER STINKS OF SULPHUR,
AND THE COMMANDER'S SCREAM SIGNALS
THE COMING OF... ARMAGEDDON!

THE SOUND OF KARZA'S LAUGHTER EXPLODES FROM BEHIND HIS RAVEN-BLACK HELM LIKE THE HARSH RASPING OF STEEL UPON STEEL.

WHY, YOU SEEM TO BE IN MORTAL AGONY, COMMANDER RANN! CAN IT BE THAT YOU FIND HAVING YOUR ENERGY ESSENCE TORN FROM YOU AS UNPLEASANT AS I FOUND HAVING MINE TORN FROM ME?!

ARCTURUS,
FIGHT HIM!

SURELY YOU JEST, PRINCESS MARI! THE ONLY TIME YOUR BE-LOVED COMMANDER EVER SUCCESSFULLY OPPOSED ME--

--WAS WHEN HE DREW UPON THE SECRETS OF THE ENIGMA FORCE LOCKED DEEP WITHIN HIS SUBCONSCIOUS MIND TO SUMMON FORTH THE TIME TRAVELER!

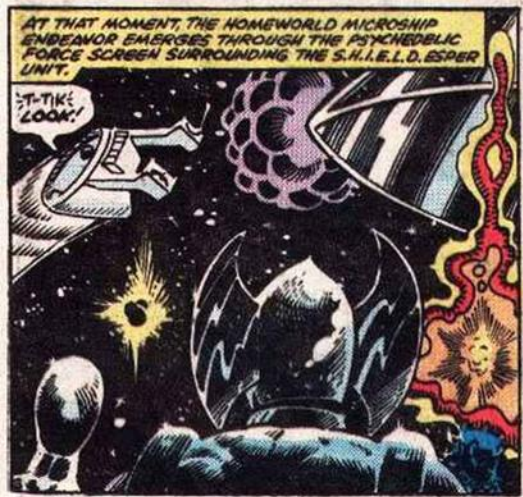
THIS TIME THE SUDDENNESS OF MY ATTACK HAS ENABLED ME TO MIND-BIND THE ENIGMA FORCE!

THIS TIME NO TIME TRAVELER WILL APPEAR TO SAFEGUARD THE MICROVERSE, NO CAPTAIN UNIVERSE* WILL MATERIALIZE TO CHAMPION THE RACES OF EARTH! THIS TIME BARON KARZA WILL CONQUER TWO UNIVERSES!

YOU'RE FORGETTING ABOUT S.H.I.E.L.D., YOU MINIATURE MANIAC!

RIGHT! YOU CAUGHT US BY SURPRISE ONCE, WHILE WE WERE IN AN ESP "RECEIVING STATE"!--

*KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED FOR CAPTAIN UNIVERSE'S NEW ADVENTURES IN MARVEL SPOTLIGHT-- LOUISE.



AH, THE REST OF THE MICRONAUTS
ARRIVE! I HAVE ALLOWED YOU TO
PENETRATE THE FORCE SCREEN THAT
SURROUNDS THE ESPER UNIT, SINCE
I WISH ALL OF YOU PRESENT!

HOW LONG I LANGUISHED,
IMPRISONED IN THE ATOMIC
FIRES AT HOMEWORLD'S CORE,
ENUMERATING THE WAYS IN
WHICH I WOULD EFFECT
YOUR DEATHS!

MONSTER! NO! YOU'VE
SLAIN THE WOMAN I
LOVE... TORN THE ENIGMA
FORCE FROM ME!

I WON'T
LET YOU
DESTROY MY
FRIENDS!

YOU DID NOT
LET ME
FINISH,
COMMANDER!

--I KNOW THAT, AT PRESENT, I
CAN CAUSE YOU EVEN GREATER
PAIN BY ALLOWING YOU TO LIVE...
HELPLESS WITNESS TO MY
DOMINATION OF BOTH EARTH
AND THE MICROVERSE!

ALL IS IN READINESS,
BARON. HYDRA
AWAITS US.

I AM
AWARE
OF THAT,
SHAITAN.

WHILE IT IS TRUE
THAT YOUR DEATHS
ARE MY MOST
FERVENT DESIRE--

FAREWELL, MICRONAUTS! OUR FINAL
ENCOUNTER SHALL TAKE PLACE AT
A TIME OF MY CHOOSING!

LAUGHING AGAIN, KARZA TELEPORTS
HIMSELF AND HIS RETINUES AWAY.

WITH THE VANISHMENT OF THE MICROVERSE/AN MASTER OF MENACE, THE PSYCHEDELIC FORCE SCREEN SURROUNDING THE ESPER UNIT BREAKS DOWN, ADMITTING NICK FURY AND HIS AGENTS OF S.H.I.E.L.D.!

YA CAN TAKE OFF YER SCRAMBLE HELMETS NOW WITHOUT LOSIN' YER MARBLES, BOYS! THE FORCE SCREEN'S GONE!

COMMANDER, ARE YOU S-TIKES OKAY?

THE PRINCESS! I DON'T SEE THE PRINCESS MARI!

PEACE, LITTLE ONE. IN BATTLE, SOME MUST FALL.

OH, NO! NO!

FOR A MAN WHO'S HAD HIS HEART AND SOUL TORN OUT OF HIM, BUG, I'M JUST FINE.

AWRIGHT, WE'VE KNOWN ABOUT YER MICROVERSE FOR QUITE AWHILE, EVEN SENT THE FANTASTIC FOUR TA RECONNOITER--

--THOUGH THEY WERE LESS THAN COOPERATIVE.

*MICRONAUTS #15-17- LOUISE.

SO TELL ME ABOUT THIS KARZA JOKER WE HEARD HIS FAREWELL SPEECH, BUT DO WE REALLY HAVETA WORRY ABOUT A SIX-INCH HIGH HITLER?

YOU DO IF YOU WISH TO SAVE YOUR WORLD, COL. FURY.

KARZA STOLE THE ALL-POWERFUL ENIGMA FORCE FROM MY MIND. FAIL TO STOP HIM BEFORE HE LEARNS TO USE IT--

--AND YOU WILL LOSE, EARTH AS SURELY AS I LOST... MARIONETTE.

THE MICROVERSE--A SUB-ATOMIC SOLAR SYSTEM, SEPARATED FROM OUR REALITY BY A BARRIER CALLED THE SPACEWALL! HERE MOLECULAR WORLDS WHIRL IN MAD PROFUSION! HERE A RITIOUS RANGE OF RACES LIVE OUT THEIR LIVES! WATCHING OVER ALL STANDS A STRANGE GUARDIAN--**TIME TRAVELER**--A DWELLER IN DREAMS, EMISSARY OF THE ENIGMA FORCE WHO, IT IS SAID, APPEARS IN TIMES OF GATHERING DARKNESS TO LEAD MEN BACK TO THE LIGHT!

TALES OF THE MICROVERSE!

ALL IS DARKNESS NOW-- THERE IS NO LIGHT-- NO SOOTHING VOICE-- NO GUARDIAN ANGEL OF THE MICROVERSE!

THE **TIME TRAVELERS** HAVE BEEN BOUND TO **BARON KARZA'S** MIND FORCE. THE **ENIGMA FORCE** ITSELF IS IN PERIL!

BUT ALL MICRONAUT **MARIONETTE** KNOWS, AS HER WORLD WHIRLS AROUND HER IS THAT **BARON KARZA** LIVES... AND THAT THE FUTURE HAS NEVER LOOKED SO GRIM!



REDUCED TO ATOMS, THAT'S WHAT KARZA SAID!

FINDING SOLID GROUND BENEATH HER AT LAST, THE PRINCESS MARI OPENS HER EYES AND LOOKS OUT OVER A NIGHTMARISH LANDSCAPE.

WHERE IN THE MICROVERSE AM I? ON MY OWN PLANET HOME-WORLD, OR ON SOME SEPSIS FORSAKEN ASTEROID...?!

WAIT! THAT ARMOR LYING BY THE EDGE OF THAT BURN-BLACKENED CRATER--!

IT'S THE **FORCE COMMANDER'S** ARMOR, WORN BY MY BROTHER, **PRINCE ARGON!** HE... HE MUST HAVE CONTESTED KARZA'S RESURRECTION... AND FALLEN IN BATTLE!

FOR THE S.H.I.E.L.D. ESPERS IT MEANT A HORRIBLE DEATH!



BUT CAN KARZA HAVE GUESSED THAT, FOR ME, IT MEANT SHRINKING BACK TO SUB-ATOMIC SIZE--



--BREACHING THE SPACEWALL--

--AND RETURNING TO THE MICROVERSE?



HER ANGUISHED CRY IS OVERHEARD BY A SQUAD OF OSTRICH-RIDING DEMONS.

'TIS THE PRINCESS MARI-- ARGON'S SISTER! SOMEHOW SHE'S RETURNED TO THE MICROVERSE! BUT WHEN? AND HOW? AND WHY?

WE WILL LEARN THAT SOON ENOUGH, SLUG, AND WE WILL HAVE TO TELL HER THE TRUTH ABOUT HER BROTHER'S FATE!



THAT THE MAN WHO WAS HER BROTHER AND MY LOVER HAS BECOME A **HOST BODY** FOR BARON KARZA? SPARE HER THAT, AT LEAST, UNTIL WE REACH THE ROYAL CITY!

OH, ARGON! ARGON!



THE SPIRES OF THE ROYAL CITY RISE SERENE AND SPARKLING INTO THE OCHER SKIES OVER HOMEWORLD'S FIRST ZONE.

THERE, THOUGH THE PLANET'S TWIN SUNS SHINE DOWN AS USUAL, THE MOOD IS ONE OF DARK DESPAIR!

IN THE ROYAL PALACE, 48 HATS AFTER MARIONETTE'S RETURN TO HOMEWORLD, AN AUGUST ASSEMBLAGE GATHERS TO DISCUSS THE FUTURE.

THANK YOU, MEMBERS OF THE PLANETARY COUNCIL, FOR HASTENING TO HOMEWORLD ON SUCH SHORT NOTICE. I'M AFRAID KING ARGON WILL NOT SIT AMONG US...

WE KNOW WHAT HAS TRANSPIRED, SISTER OF ARGON. ALL OF B'ZZK EXTENDS ITS SYMPATHY.

AS DOES 3TIKE KALIKLAK, DEAR MARI.

SHOULD NOT SLUG, AS ARGON'S BETROTHED AND HOMEWORLD'S FUTURE QUEEN, ADDRESS THE COUNCIL?

I YIELD TO MARI, HEREDITARY QUEEN OF HOMEWORLD, FOR SHE KNOWS BEST THE DANGER THREATENING US ALL.

NEED!

SPEAK THEN, PRINCESS! TELL US WHAT YOU KNOW OF THE REVIVAL OF BARON KARZA!

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL, THE DANGER IS INDEED GREAT! BARON KARZA, HAVING MIND-MERGED HIS ENERGY ESSENCE WITH THE BODY OF MY BROTHER, HAS JOURNEYED THROUGH THE SPACEWALL TO EARTH!

IS THAT NOT WHERE SPARTAK'S KING ACROYEAR NOW SOJOURNS?

YES, AMBASSADOR-- A WORLD OF GIANTS WHERE KARZA HAS ALLIED HIMSELF WITH AN EVIL ORGANIZATION KNOWN AS **HYDRA**!

MARI YIELDS TO QUEEN ESMERA...

WE HAVE FELT **TIK**! A RESURGENCE OF EVIL ON KALIKLAK, WHERE THE WARLIKE **KRONOS** AND **PHOBOS** RACES HAVE RECENTLY **TIK**! DEFIED MY IMPERIAL EDICTS FROM THE **TIK**! GREAT NEST!

THEY SERVED KARZA **TIK**! BEFORE-- I FEAR THEY SHALL **TIK**! DO SO AGAIN!

PHAROID IS THE NEXT TO SPEAK...

THE QUEEN OF KALIKLAK IS NOT ALONE IN RECOGNIZING THE FIRST SIGNS OF IMPENDING WAR. IN AEGYPTA, ON HOMEWORLD'S SANDZONE, THE **CENTAURI** HAVE BECOME OPENLY AGGRESSIVE!

TRADITIONAL COWARDS, THEY NOW ACTUALLY DEFEY MY PEACE-KEEPING DESERT DEMON PATROLS!

YESSS! **NEEP**! EVEN ON THE OUTER FRINGES, WE **KNIGHTS OF NEEP** HAVE **NEEP**! BEEN FORCED INTO ARMED ENCOUNTERS WITH **NEEP**! THE BAT-WINGED SHIPS OF THE **LOBROS** AND **REPTO** RACES!

IT IS NOT **NEEP**! GOOD! NOT **NEEP**! GOOD!

TO WHICH I CAN ONLY ADD THAT WHICH IS ALREADY KNOWN.



ON SPARTAK, A STRANGE GROUP OF FACELESS PRIESTS INVADDED THE SACRED TEMPLE OF THE ROCK AND RESURRECTED THE SLAIN PRINCE SHAITAN, ALBINO BROTHER OF MY LORD, KING ACROYEAR.

THIS, THEN, IS WHAT MUST HAVE HAPPENED: BARON KARZA KNEW HIS DEFEAT WAS IMMINENT AT THE HANDS OF COMMANDER RANN WIELDING THE ENIGMA FORCE AND KING ACROYEAR IMBUED WITH THE WORLD-MIND, THE SOUL OF THE LIVING PLANET SPARTAK...*

...SO HE FLED IN THE FACE OF DESTRUCTION, SENDING HIS ENERY ESSENCE INTO THE ATOMIC FIRES AT THE CORE OF HOME-WORLD! THERE, WHILE ALL THOUGHT HIM DEAD, HE SET THE MACHINERY OF HIS RESURRECTION IN MOTION!

FIRST, THOSE RACES SUBSERVIENT TO HIM HAD TO REARM THEMSELVES. THEN ARGON, WHO HAD RECEIVED A POSTOPERATIVE SUGGESTION WHILE A PRISONER IN KARZA'S BODY BANKS, HAD TO SERVE AS A HOST-BODY!

LASTLY, THE ENIGMA FORCE HAD TO BE BOUND SO IT COULD NOT OPPOSE KARZA AGAIN!

*MICRONAUTS '11
-- LOUISE.



THEREIN LIES OUR ONLY HOPE OF DEFEATING KARZA!

THOUGH HE ASSAULTED COMMANDER RANN AND SAYS HE STOLE THE ENIGMA FORCE, THE TIME TRAVELERS EXIST ALSO AS INDEPENDENT ENTITIES OUTSIDE OF THE COMMANDER'S MIND.

IN TIMES PAST, THE ROYAL FAMILY COULD ALWAYS SUMMON THEM BY ALERTING THEIR SHADOW PRIESTS!



GRIM-FACED, PRINCESS MARI ACTIVATES A COMMUNICATIONS LINKUP TO THE TEMPLE OF THE ENIGMA FORCE.

THE SHADOW PRIESTS WERE SO NAMED BECAUSE WHILE THE TIME TRAVELERS ARE FILLED WITH THE LIGHT OF THE ENIGMA FORCE, THE PRIESTS THEMSELVES ARE MERE SERVANTS OF THE LIGHT... SHADOWS CAST BY A GREATER GLORY!

DALLAN AND
SEPSIS...
LOOK!

STILL, IF THAT LIGHT IS SNUFFED OUT, THEN THE SHADOWS ALSO CEASE TO EXIST.

GREETINGS,
CITIZENS OF
THE MICROVERSE!
AS YOU CAN SEE,
THE ENIGMA
FORCE IS
MINE!

GRIEVE NOT
FOR THE TIME
TRAVELERS,
BUT RATHER FOR
YOURSELVES --
FOR SOON YOU
WILL JOIN THEM
IN BONDAGE!

CURSE
YOU
KARZA!

I MUST RETURN TO THE
NEST, THERE TO
ARM MY
INSECTIVORIDS
FOR BATTLE!

HAHAHAHA
HA

WITH KARZA IN
COMMAND OF THE
ENIGMA FORCE, IT
MAY WELL BE THE
LAST WAR ANY
OF US WILL EVER
FIGHT.

NEXT MONTH:
TO SNARE
MEN'S SOULS!