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WEIRD! EERIE! STARTLING!

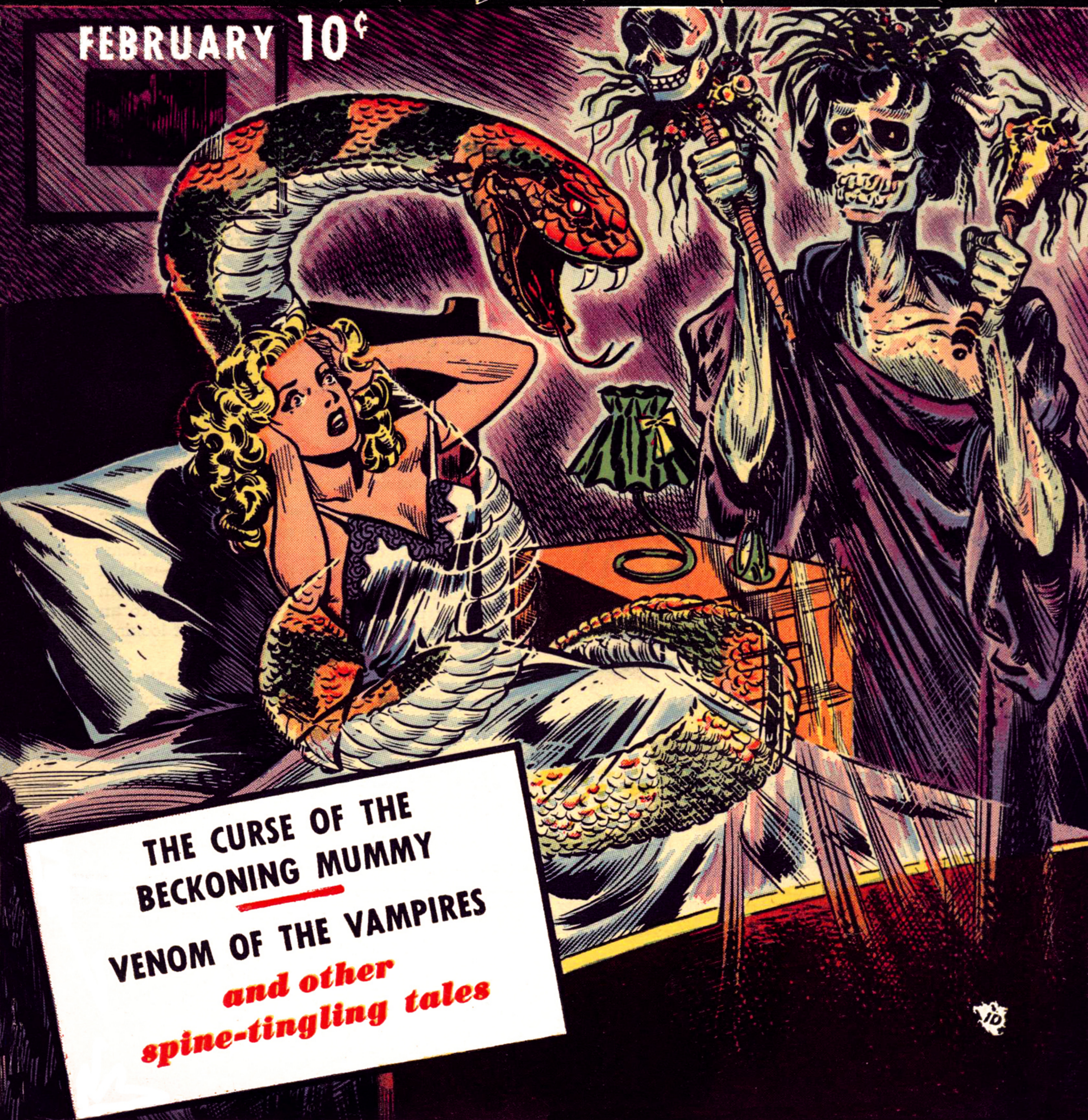
WEB

OF MYSTERY



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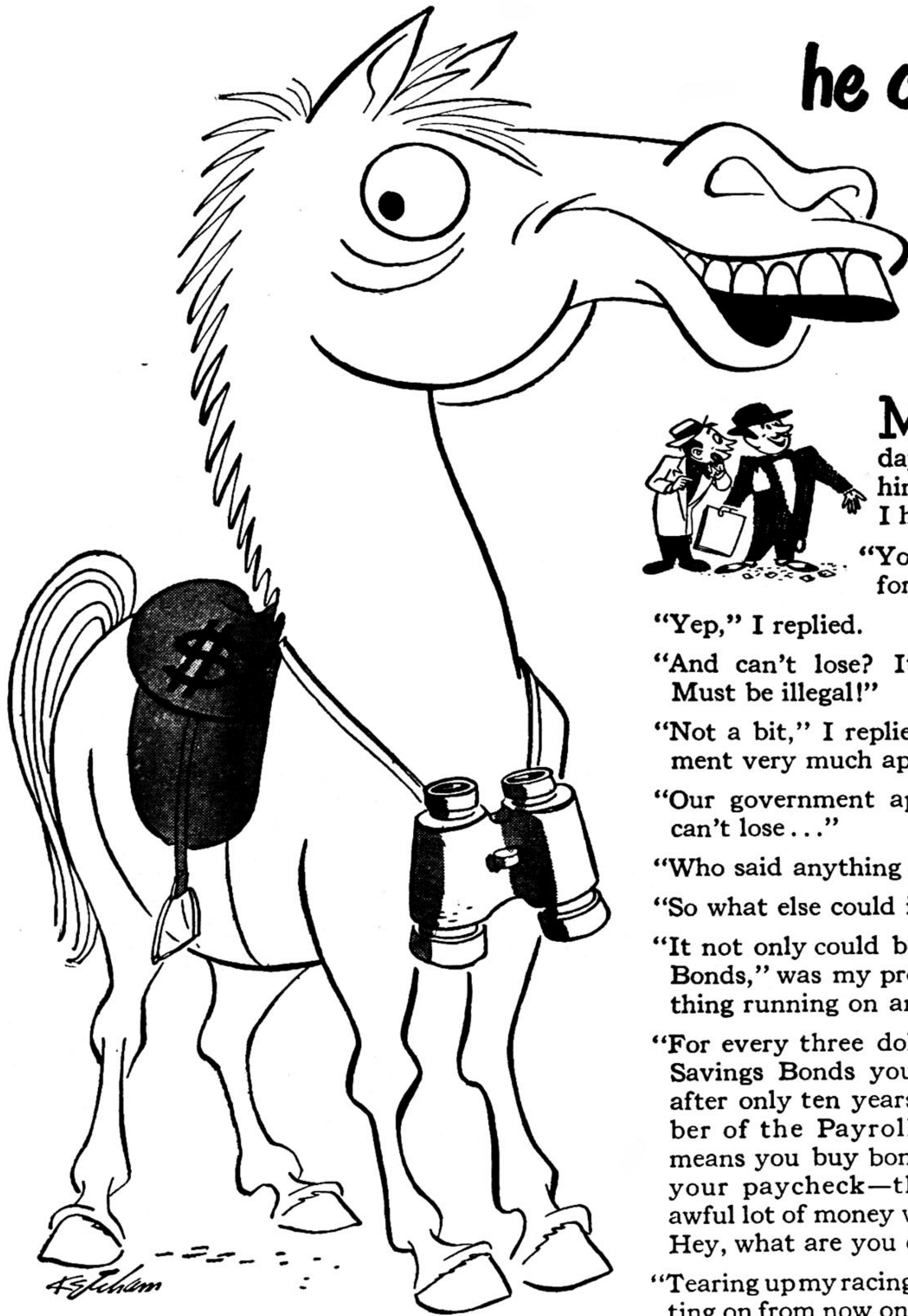


THE CURSE OF THE
BECKONING MUMMY
VENOM OF THE VAMPIRES
*and other
spine-tingling tales*

10

"There's no such animal,"

he cried!



MY FRIEND and I were picking the ponies one day when I started telling him about a *sure thing* I heard about.

"You say it pays four bucks for every three?" he asked.

"Yep," I replied.

"And can't lose? It *automatically* wins? Must be illegal!"

"Not a bit," I replied. "In fact, the government very much approves..."

"Our government approves of a horse who can't lose..."

"Who said anything about a horse?" I asked.

"So what else could it be but a horse...?"

"It not only could be—but is—U. S. Savings Bonds," was my prompt reply. "The surest thing running on any track today.

"For every three dollars you invest in U. S. Savings Bonds you get four dollars back after only ten years. And if you're a member of the Payroll Savings Plan—which means you buy bonds *automatically* from your paycheck—that can amount to an awful lot of money when you're not looking. Hey, what are you doing?"

"Tearing up my racing form! The horse I'm betting on from now on is U. S. Savings Bonds."

Automatic saving is sure saving—U.S. Savings Bonds



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The Case of the Beckoning Mummy

WELL, MY DARLING FIANCEE, HOW DO YOU LIKE EGYPT? YOU WON'T FIND ANY MORE COLORFUL SPOT THAN THE MARKET PLACE OF CAIRO!

IT'S WONDERFUL, DAMON... EVEN BETTER THAN YOU DESCRIBED! OH! LOOK AT THAT SIGN! LET'S GO IN AND HAVE OUR FORTUNES TOLD!

Fortune Teller

WHERE DOES THE DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN FACT AND FANCY EXIST? DID THE STRANGE OLD FORTUNE TELLER REALLY LIVE, OR WAS HE THE DISTURBED SPIRIT OF THE 8,000 YEAR OLD MUMMY OF KALI-DAHN? OR WAS THIS WEIRD EXPERIENCE MERELY A CONJURED-UP PHANTASM OF DR. DAMON KNIGHT'S BEWILDERED MIND? WHO IS THERE TO DETERMINE?

MY GOODNESS! THEY COULD CERTAINLY USE SOME LIGHT IN HERE!

WELCOME TO MY HUMBLE QUARTERS!

THE LADY FIRST, EFFENDI. I SEE A HAPPY AND FRUITFUL LIFE FOLLOWING A SEVERE SHOCK AND SUDDEN LOSS OF A DEAR ONE!

WHO--WHO WILL IT BE?

OF THIS I CANNOT SPEAK, DEAR LADY! I CAN TELL NO MORE. NOW, IF THE GENTLEMAN WILL BE SEATED, I SHALL PROCEED!



THE OLD FORTUNE TELLER BECAME GRAVE AS HE PEERED INTO THE TRANSPARENT SPHERE...

YOU HAVE COME TO EGYPT ON A MISSION OF EVIL... AND UNLESS YOU ABANDON THIS MISSION, IT WILL RESULT IN A HORRIFYING DEATH!

WHAT? WHY, THAT'S RIDICULOUS!



I'M AN ARCHAEOLOGIST! I'VE COME TO EGYPT FOR THE PURPOSE OF UN-EARTHING THE TOMB OF KING KALI-DAHN WHO DIED 8,000 YEARS AGO. WHAT HARM CAN THERE BE IN THAT?

WAIT! THAT RING! WHERE DID YOU GET IT?



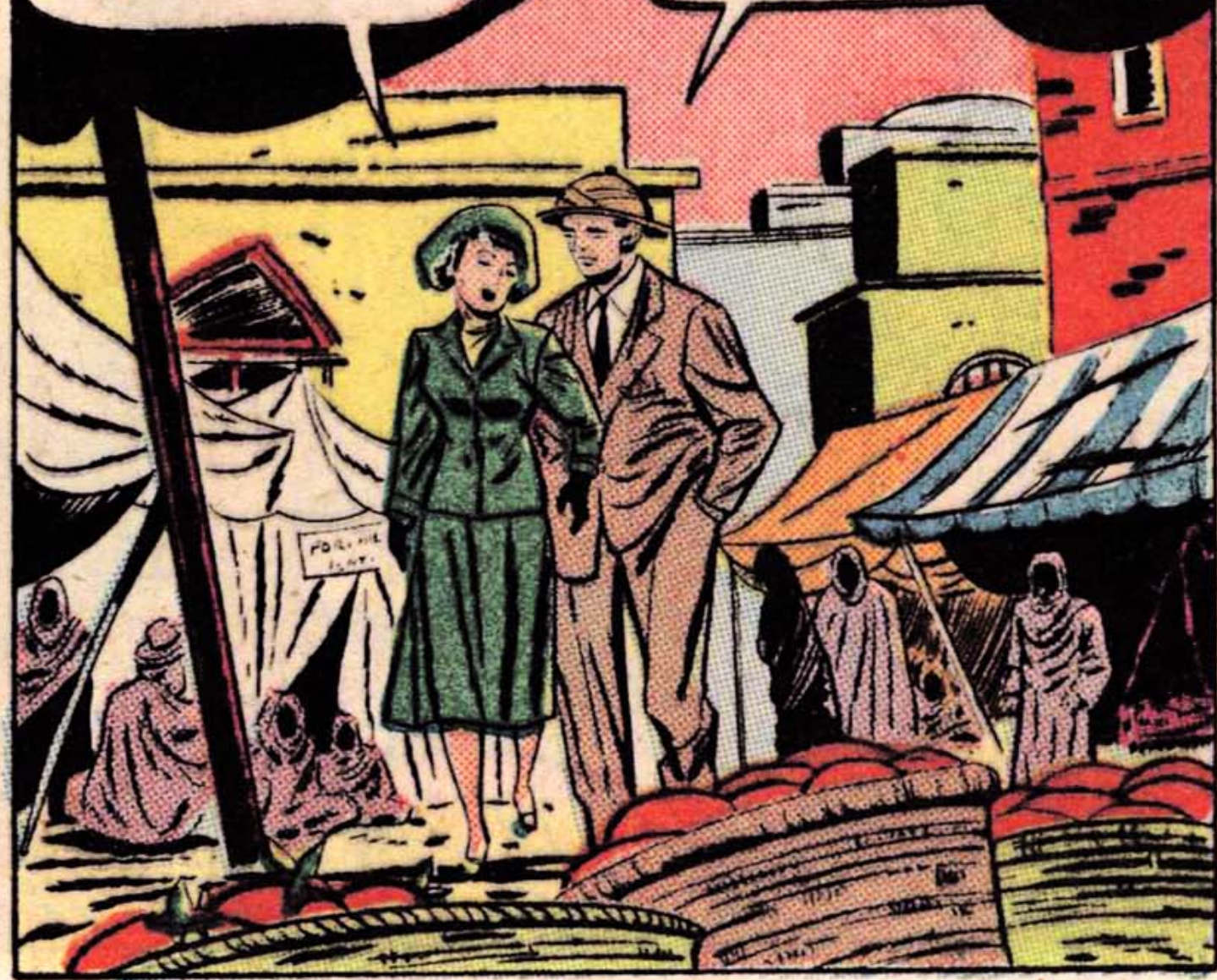
IT WAS TAKEN FROM THE TOMB OF THE SON OF KALI-DAHN ALMOST TEN YEARS AGO. LEGEND HAS IT THAT KALI-DAHN GAVE IT TO HIS SON FOR GOOD FORTUNE WHEN HE WOULD SUCCEED TO THE THRONE. WHY DO YOU ASK ABOUT IT?

I CANNOT TELL! AND NOW, YOU MUST GO.



I'M WORRIED, DAMON. THAT OLD MAN DIDN'T SOUND LIKE HE WAS JUST MAKING IT UP!

OH, BOSH, KAREN! WHAT HARM COULD AN 8,000 YEAR OLD RING POSSIBLY DO?



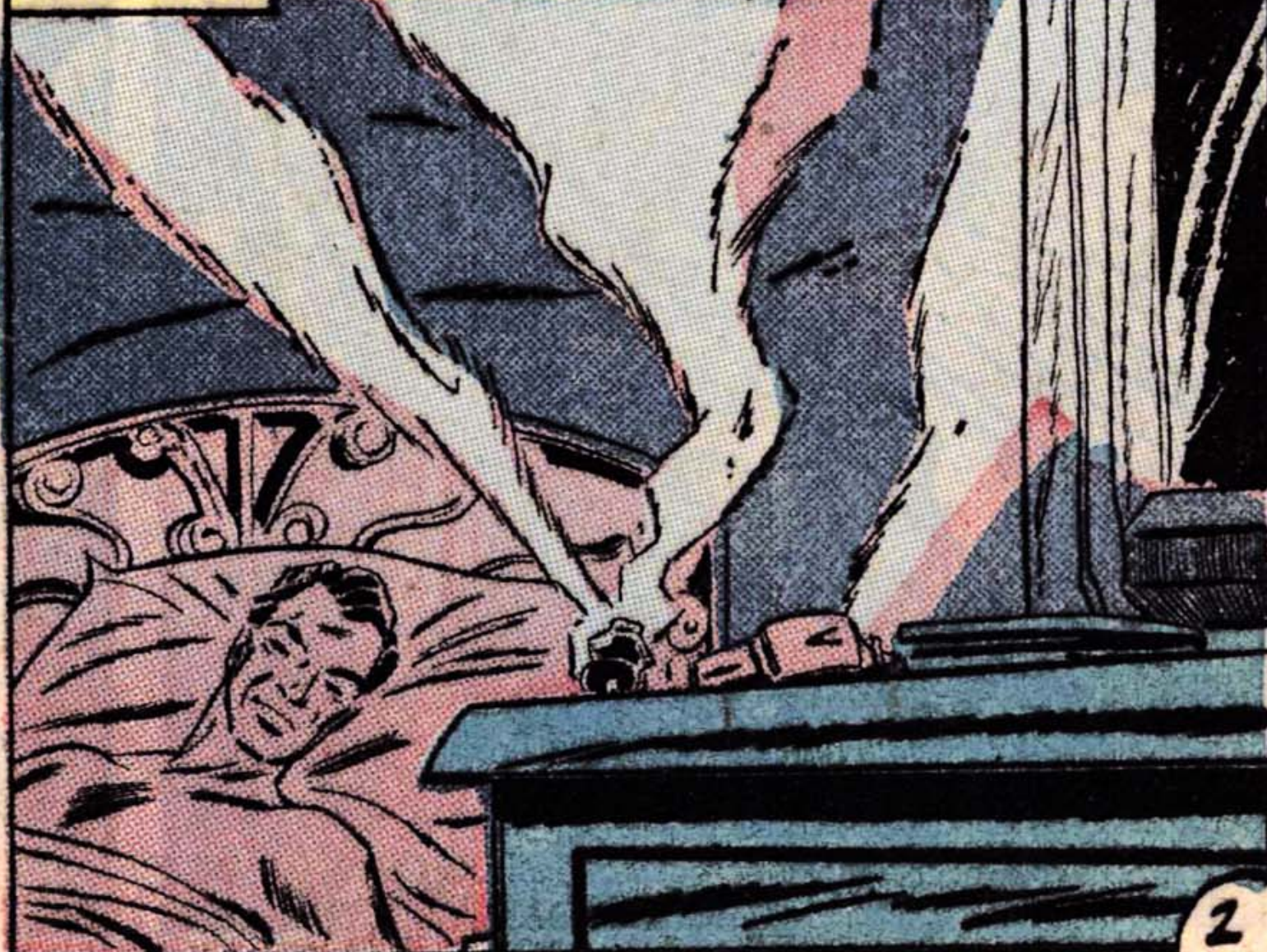
BACK AT THEIR HOTEL...

I STILL CAN'T SHAKE OFF A STRANGE FEELING OF FOREBODING!

YOU'RE TIRED. BETTER GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP! WE'VE A LOT OF WORK TOMORROW!



LATER, AFTER HE HAD FALLEN ASLEEP, A STRANGE PHENOMENON TOOK PLACE IN DAMON KNIGHT'S ROOM, AS THE ANCIENT RING TOOK ON A PHOSPHORESCENT GLOW...





... AWAKEN, DR. DAMON KNIGHT... AWAKEN AND HEED MY WARNING!

WHO'S THERE? WHO ARE YOU?



I'VE COME TO WARN YOU ONCE MORE, DR. KNIGHT. YOU MUST NOT DESECRATE THE TOMB OF KALI-DAHN... FOR THE PENALTY IS DEATH!

YOU! THE FORTUNE TELLER! THE RING! WHAT IS THE RING TO YOU?



THE RING WAS ONCE MINE! I GAVE IT TO MY SON! BUT NOW I MUST LEAVE! I FEEL THE PRESENCE OF AN INTRUDER!

HIS SON! BUT THAT WOULD MAKE HIM THE SPIRIT OF KALI-DAHN... BUT HE'S THE FORTUNE TELLER!



IN JUST AS WEIRD A MANNER AS IT APPEARED, THE APPARITION SUDDENLY TOOK FLIGHT...

DAMON! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? I HEARD VOICES!

OF COURSE I'M ALL RIGHT, KAREN. I JUST HAD A FUNNY DREAM. MUST'VE BEEN TALKING IN MY SLEEP.



BUT I HEARD TWO VOICES... NOT JUST YOURS ALONE! DAMON! WHAT'S THAT ON THE FLOOR?

ON THE FLOOR? WHERE?



MUMMY WRAPPINGS! I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT! HOW...?

DAMON! I'M FRIGHTENED! WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MEANS, DEAR... BUT YOU'D BETTER GO BACK TO YOUR ROOM AND GET SOME SLEEP. WE'RE HEADING FOR THE INTERIOR EARLY TOMORROW MORNING, AND THERE'S SOMEONE I MUST SEE BEFORE WE LEAVE.



RISING EARLY, DAMON VISITED THE MARKET PLACE AGAIN...

I'VE GOT TO KNOW WHAT'S BEHIND ALL THIS. AND ONLY THAT FORTUNE TELLER CAN TELL ME. THERE'S HIS TENT... BUT... THAT'S FUNNY! IT'S ALL CHANGED!



BUT I KNOW OF NO FORTUNE TELLER, EFFENDI. I HAVE OCCUPIED THIS SHOP FOR MANY YEARS AS MY FATHER DID BEFORE ME. PERHAPS I CAN INTEREST YOU IN SOME SHAWLS.

BUT I SAW HIM HERE... JUST YESTERDAY AFTERNOON!



HE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN JUST A FIGMENT OF MY IMAGINATION! KAREN WAS WITH ME. SHE SAW HIM, TOO! AND WHAT OF MY DREAM LAST NIGHT? OR WAS IT A DREAM?



LATE THAT AFTERNOON, MANY MILES IN THE INTERIOR...

DAMON! STOP UNLOADING! A BIG SANDSTORM IS BLOWING UP! GET EVERYONE INTO THE TENTS!

RIGHT, DR. DEMBROW!



IN A FEW MOMENTS, ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE EXPEDITION WERE SAFELY IN DAMON'S TENT...

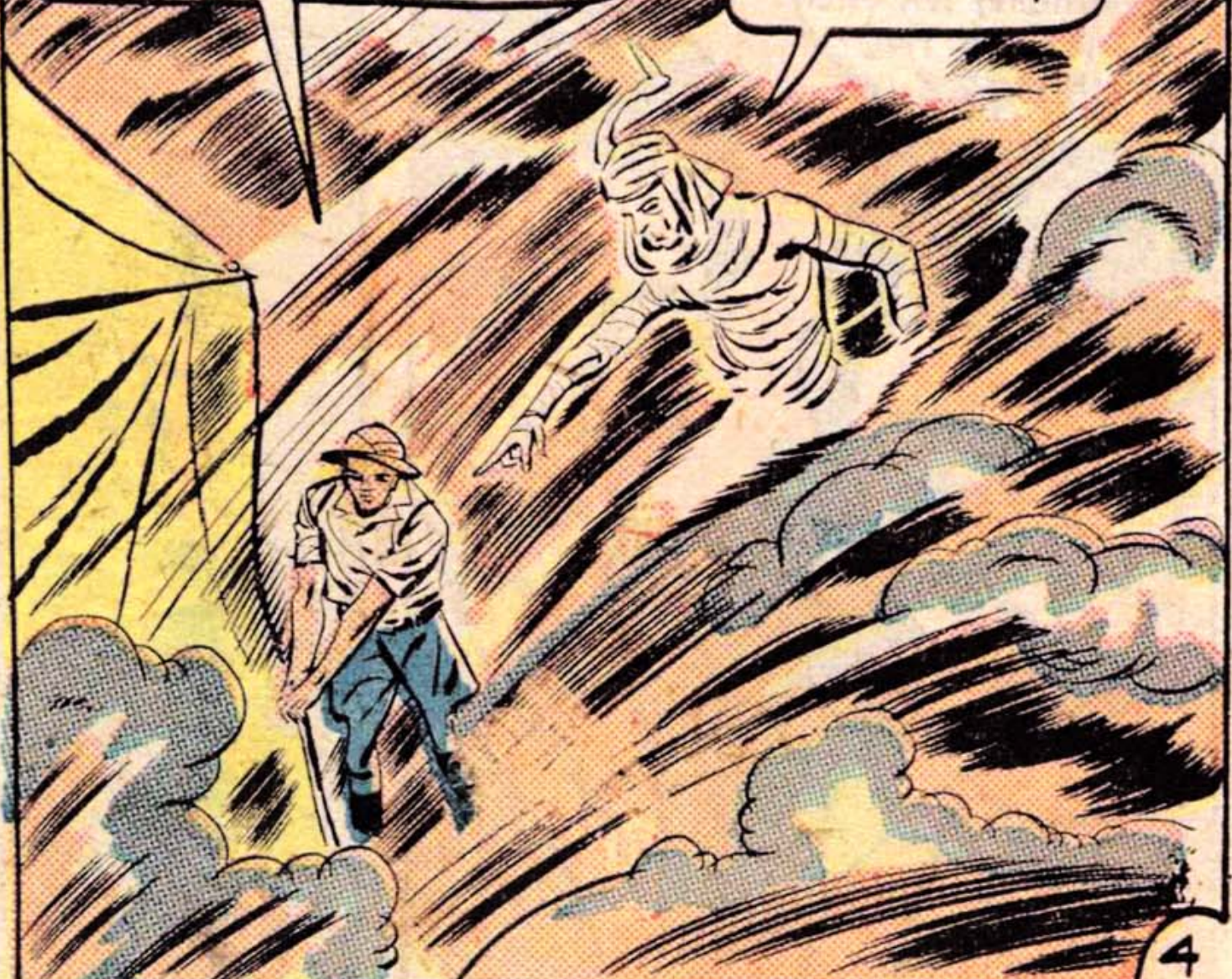
LOOK THERE! ONE OF THE MOORINGS MUST'VE COME LOOSE!

I'D BETTER GET OUT THERE AND FIX IT BEFORE THE WHOLE TENT BLOWS AWAY!



HANG IT! I CAN HARDLY SEE WHAT I'M DOING IN THIS SWIRLING SAND... WHA...?

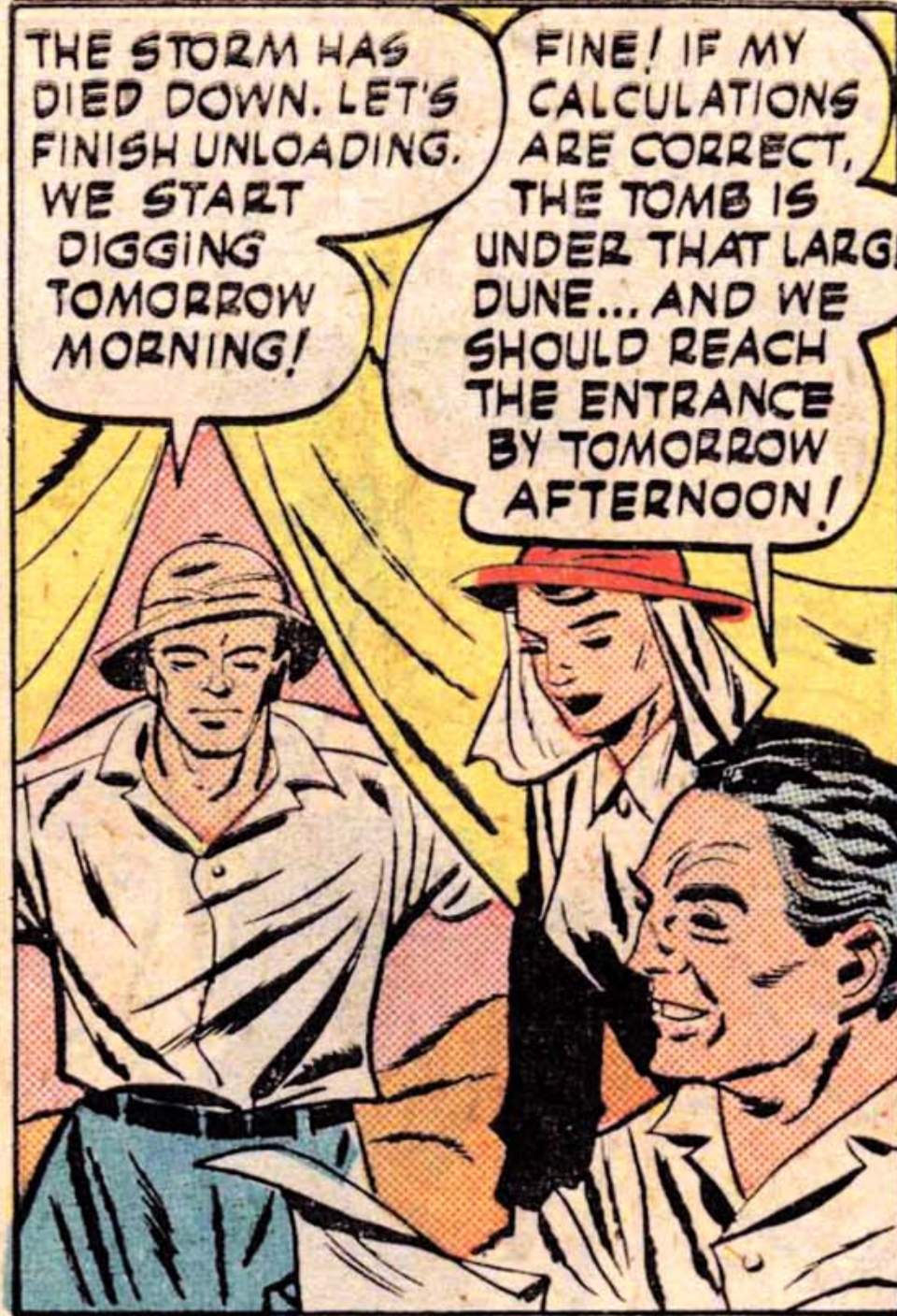
DR. KNIGHT... THIS IS MY LAST WARNING! YOU MUST LEAVE THIS PLACE!





I DON'T KNOW WHO OR WHAT YOU ARE, BUT I'M NOT LEAVING!

YOU MUST NOT DESECRATE THE TOMB OF KALI-DAHN! YOUR FATE LIES IN YOUR DECISION... YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED! NOW I GO!



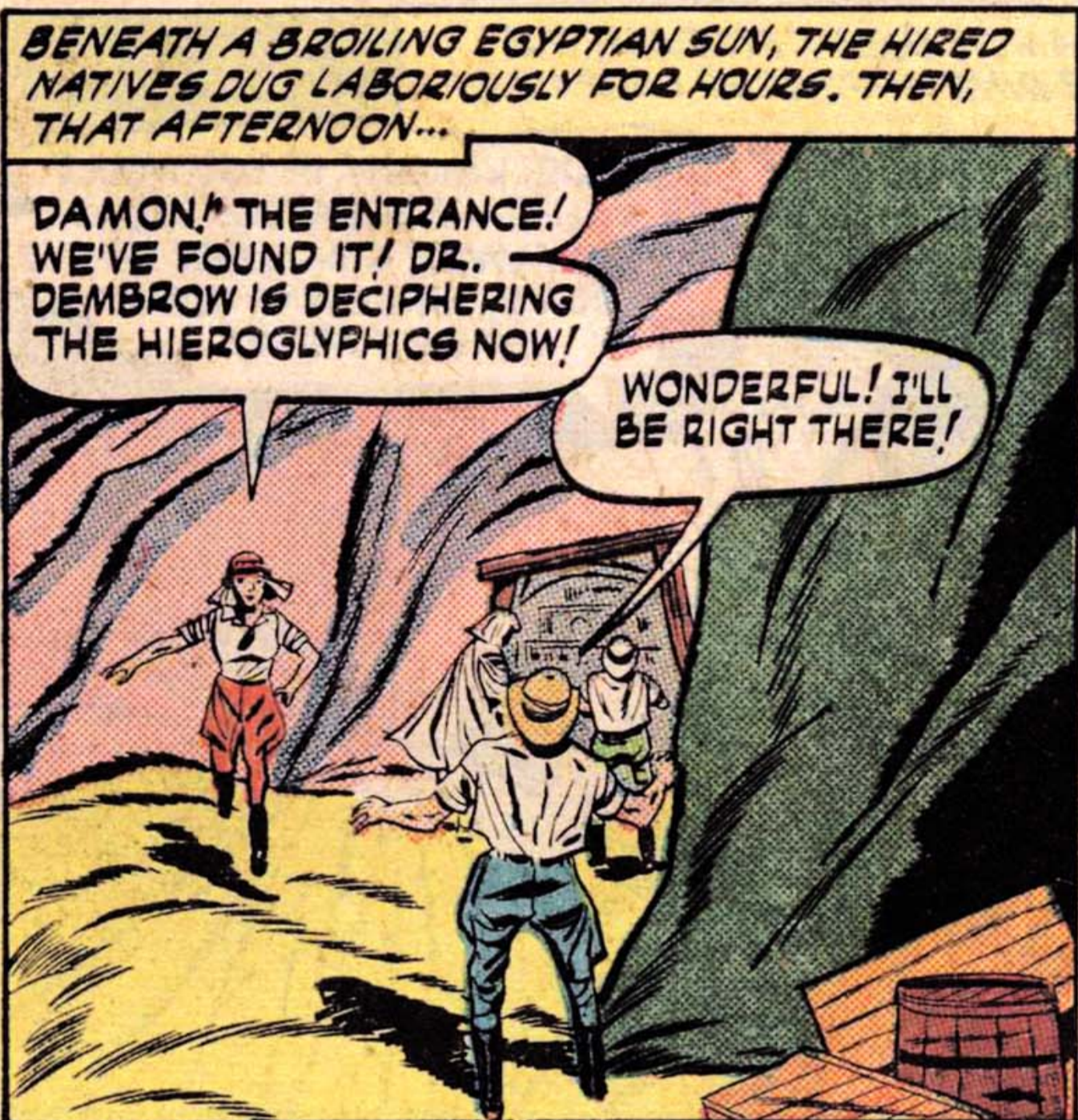
THE STORM HAS DIED DOWN. LET'S FINISH UNLOADING. WE START DIGGING TOMORROW MORNING!

FINE! IF MY CALCULATIONS ARE CORRECT, THE TOMB IS UNDER THAT LARGE DUNE... AND WE SHOULD REACH THE ENTRANCE BY TOMORROW AFTERNOON!



BUT EARLY THE NEXT MORNING, AS DAMON FINISHED DRESSING...

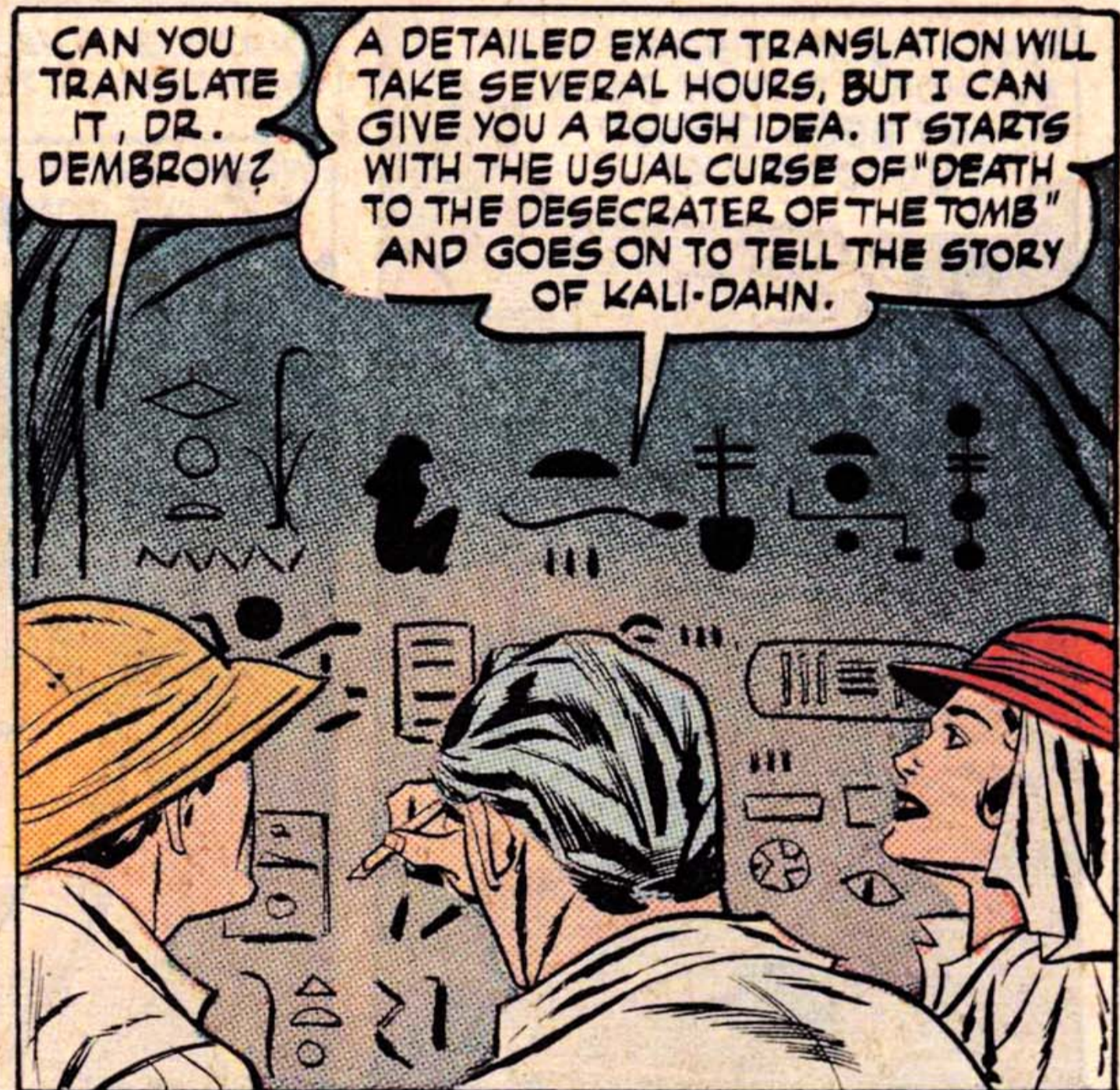
THAT'S STRANGE! I LEFT MY RING RIGHT HERE LAST NIGHT, AND NOW IT'S GONE! MUST'VE BEEN ONE OF THOSE THIEVING NATIVES! OH, WELL, GOOD RIDDANCE TO THE RING AND THAT BLASTED IMAGE!



BENEATH A BROILING EGYPTIAN SUN, THE HIRED NATIVES DUG LABORIOUSLY FOR HOURS. THEN, THAT AFTERNOON...

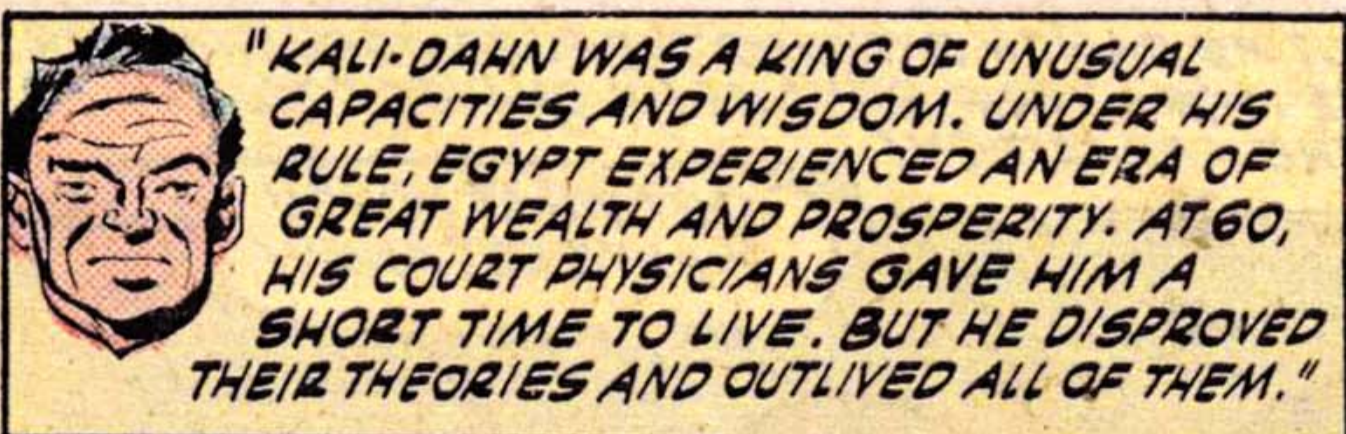
DAMON! THE ENTRANCE! WE'VE FOUND IT! DR. DEMBROW IS DECIPHERING THE HIEROGLYPHICS NOW!

WONDERFUL! I'LL BE RIGHT THERE!

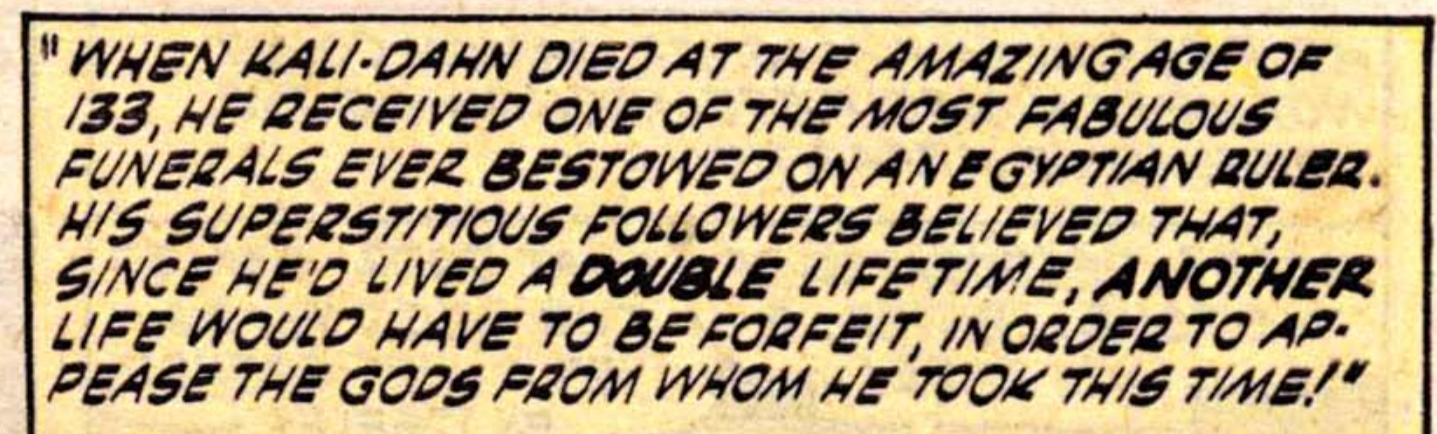


CAN YOU TRANSLATE IT, DR. DEMBROW?

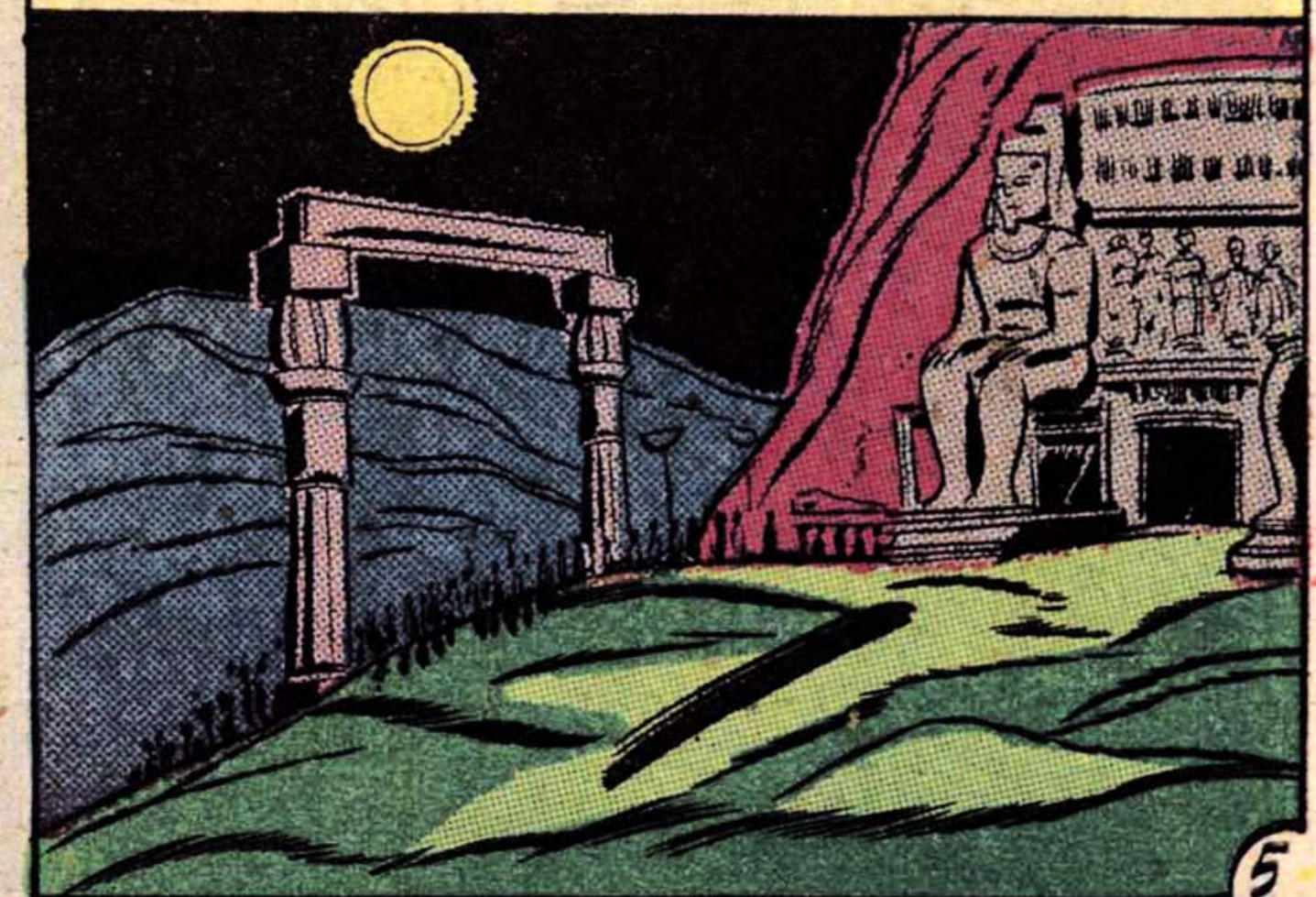
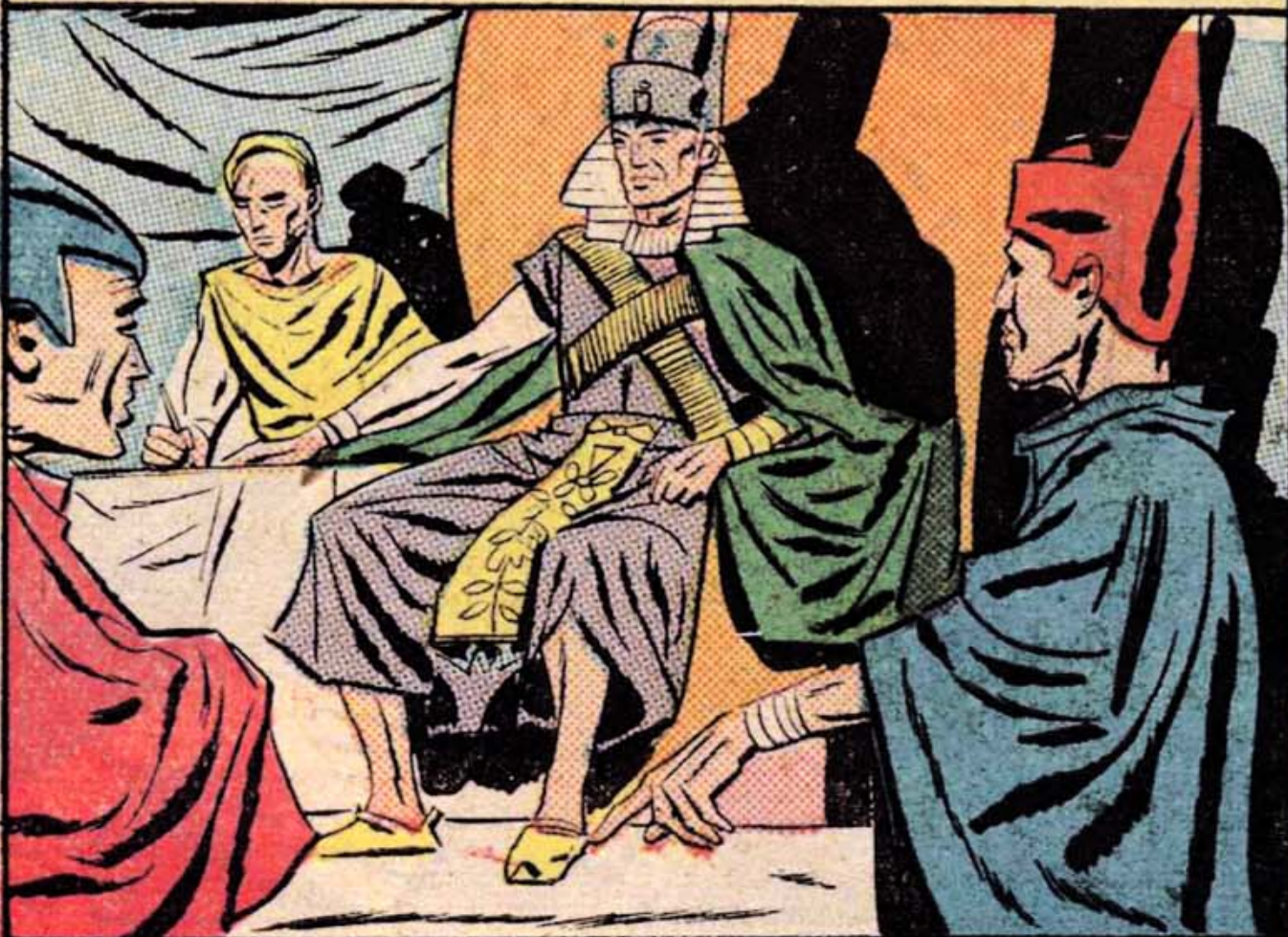
A DETAILED EXACT TRANSLATION WILL TAKE SEVERAL HOURS, BUT I CAN GIVE YOU A ROUGH IDEA. IT STARTS WITH THE USUAL CURSE OF "DEATH TO THE DESECRATER OF THE TOMB" AND GOES ON TO TELL THE STORY OF KALI-DAHN.



"KALI-DAHN WAS A KING OF UNUSUAL CAPACITIES AND WISDOM. UNDER HIS RULE, EGYPT EXPERIENCED AN ERA OF GREAT WEALTH AND PROSPERITY. AT 60, HIS COURT PHYSICIANS GAVE HIM A SHORT TIME TO LIVE. BUT HE DISPROVED THEIR THEORIES AND OUTLIVED ALL OF THEM."



"WHEN KALI-DAHN DIED AT THE AMAZING AGE OF 133, HE RECEIVED ONE OF THE MOST FABULOUS FUNERALS EVER BESTOWED ON AN EGYPTIAN RULER. HIS SUPERSTITIOUS FOLLOWERS BELIEVED THAT, SINCE HE'D LIVED A DOUBLE LIFETIME, ANOTHER LIFE WOULD HAVE TO BE FORFEIT, IN ORDER TO APPEASE THE GODS FROM WHOM HE TOOK THIS TIME!"





YOU MEAN A SACRIFICE? WHOSE LIFE WAS TAKEN?

NO ONE'S... YET! IT SAYS THAT THE LIFE OF THE FIRST PERSON TO DESECRATE THE TOMB WILL BE FORFEIT! DO YOU WANT THIS DOOR OPENED, DAMON?



YES! I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR THIS MOMENT!

GOOD! YOU MEN... OVER THERE! BRING THE TOOLS! WE'RE GOING TO REMOVE THE DOOR!



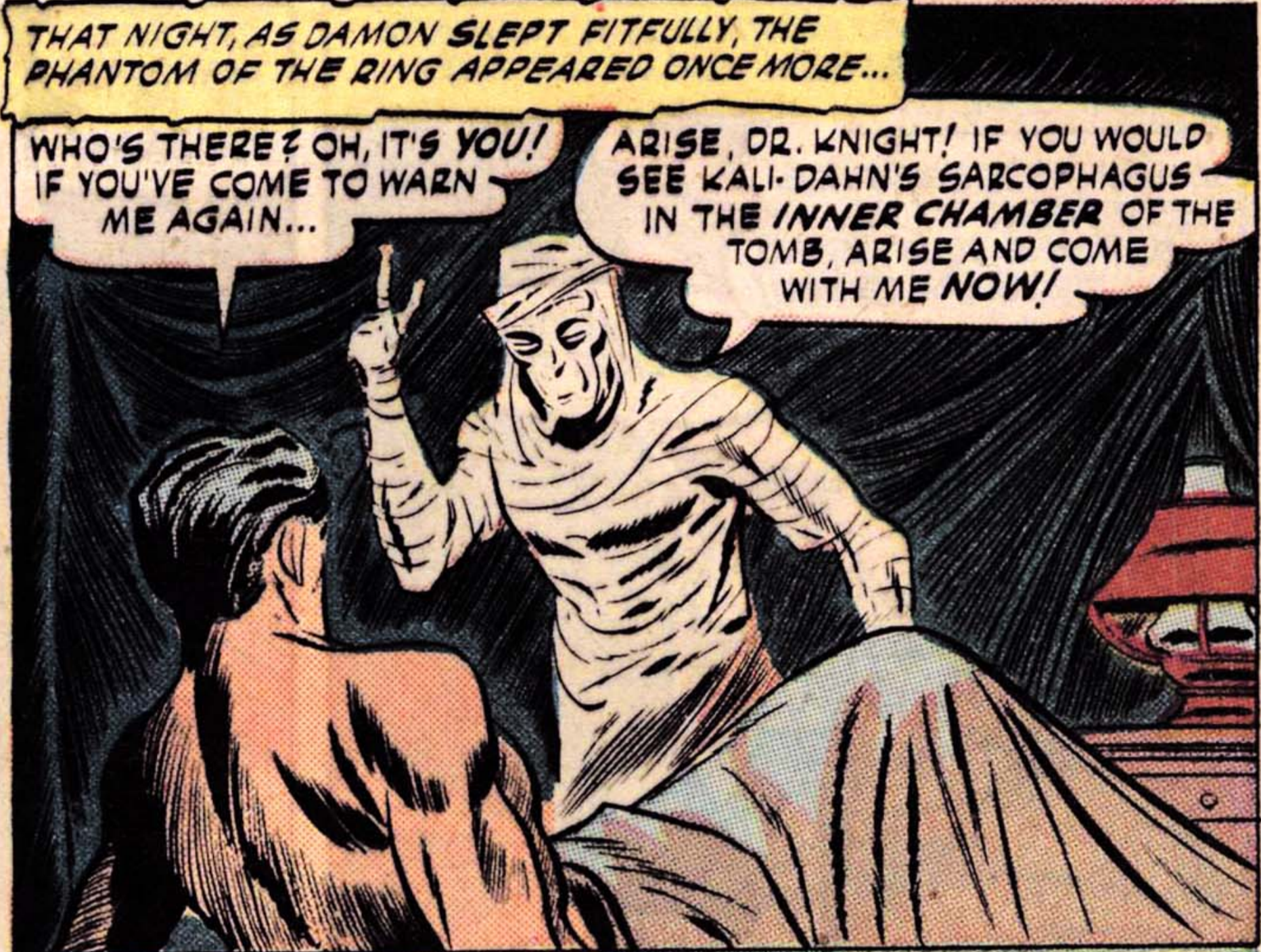
AFTER AN HOUR OF HEAVY WORK, THE MASSIVE SLAB WAS FINALLY REMOVED, REVEALING A DREARY CORRIDOR...

YOU'RE HEAD OF THIS EXPEDITION, DAMON. THE PRIVILEGE OF FIRST ENTRY IS YOURS!

LOOK THERE! WHAT'S THAT SHINY THING... ON THE FLOOR?



WHY... IT'S MY MISSING RING! BUT HOW...? THAT DOOR HASN'T BEEN OPENED IN 8,000 YEARS!



THAT NIGHT, AS DAMON SLEPT FITFULLY, THE PHANTOM OF THE RING APPEARED ONCE MORE...

WHO'S THERE? OH, IT'S YOU! IF YOU'VE COME TO WARN ME AGAIN...

ARISE, DR. KNIGHT! IF YOU WOULD SEE KALI-DAHN'S SARCOPHAGUS IN THE INNER CHAMBER OF THE TOMB, ARISE AND COME WITH ME NOW!



AS IF DRAWN BY A MAGNET, DAMON COULD NOT KEEP HIMSELF FROM FOLLOWING THE PERSUASIVE APPARITION...

ENTER, DESECRATER OF THE TOMB... ENTER, IF YOU DARE!

THAT DOOR-SEALED FOR 8,000 YEARS—YET IT JUST OPENED BY ITSELF!



BUT AS DAMON ENTERED THE FORBIDDEN CHAMBER, HE WAS HORRIFIED TO SEE A CHANGE OCCUR IN THE APPARITION!

OH! WHAT DO YOU WANT? GET AWAY!



THE DOOR! IT'S LOCKED! STAY AWAY! STAY AWAY FROM ME! AAGGGGHHH!



AND OUTSIDE... DR. DEMBROW! I HEARD A HORRIBLE SCREAM! WHAT WAS IT?

PROBABLY JUST ONE OF THOSE SUPERSTITIOUS NATIVES. GOOD THING IT DIDN'T WAKE DAMON! HE NEEDS REST. GO BACK TO BED AND FORGET IT!



THE NEXT MORNING...

DR. DEMBROW! I CAN'T FIND DAMON! HE'S NOT IN HIS TENT!

STRANGE! PERHAPS HE'S ALREADY ENTERED THE TOMB ALONE. LET'S GO SEE!



WELL, DAMON'S NOT IN HERE. THE SEALINGS ON THIS DOOR ARE INTACT AND HAVEN'T BEEN DISTURBED IN 8,000 YEARS!

I'M SO WORRIED, DR. DEMBROW. WHERE COULD HE BE?



AFTER MUCH CHIPPING AND CHISELING THE SEALINGS WERE BROKEN AND THE PARTY ENTERED THE FORBIDDEN INNER CHAMBER...

NOTICE, KAREN, HOW THE COOL DAMPNESS HAS KEPT THE SEALINGS UNCHANGED FOR 8,000 YEARS...

I KNOW THIS FLASH-LIGHT... IT'S DAMON'S!

BUT IT COULDN'T BE! THAT DOOR WAS SEALED!



AFTER SEVERAL AGONIZING MINUTES, DEMBROW FINALLY PRIED THE LID OFF THE SARCOPHAGUS, AND...

EEEEEE!

GREAT SCOTT! IT'S DAMON!

THESE ARE THE FACTS! THE CURSE OF KALI-DAHN HAD BEEN FULFILLED! RIDICULOUS, YOU SAY? MAYBE... BUT WHO IS THERE TO DETERMINE?

THE END

TRUE CREEPY TALES

#1

WE MAY LAUGH AT THE THOUGHT OF GHOSTS. THAT'S WHAT THE YOUNG SMITHS, WHO WERE SPENDING THEIR HONEYMOON IN MASSACHUSETTS, DID! THEY LAUGHED WHEN THEY HEARD THE "GHOST STORY" OF POONTOOSUC LAKE, AN INDIAN NAME MEANING "PLACE OF WINTER DEER"!

THE LEGEND SAYS THAT AN INDIAN BRAVE, WHILE PADDLING ACROSS THE LAKE TO MEET HIS SWEETHEART, WAS SLAIN BY A JEALOUS SUITOR! THE DISTRACTED MAIDEN FLUNG HERSELF INTO THE LAKE, FOLLOWING HER LOVER TO HIS WATERY GRAVE! EVEN TODAY, IT IS SAID, A SPECTRAL CANOE WITH A SHADOWY PADDLER IS SOMETIMES SEEN TO GLIDE OVER THE LAKE AT MIDNIGHT. IT IS THE FRENZIED LOVER SEARCHING FOR, BUT NEVER FINDING, THE DROWNED FORM OF HIS BETROTHED!

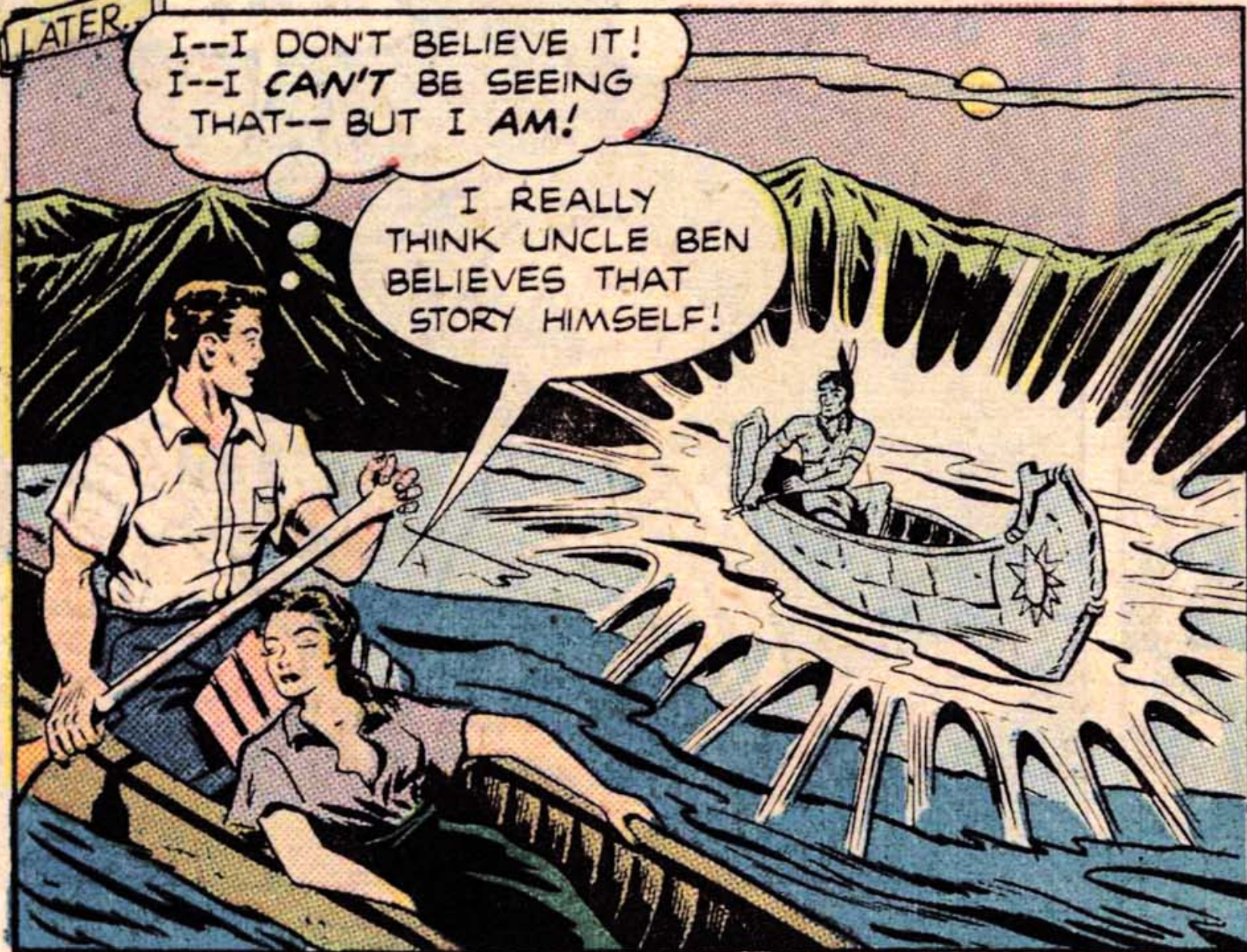


I WISH YOU TWO WOULDN'T GO CANOEING THIS TIME OF NIGHT!

IT'S MORE ROMANTIC THAN EVER AFTER THAT LEGEND YOU TOLD US, UNCLE BEN!

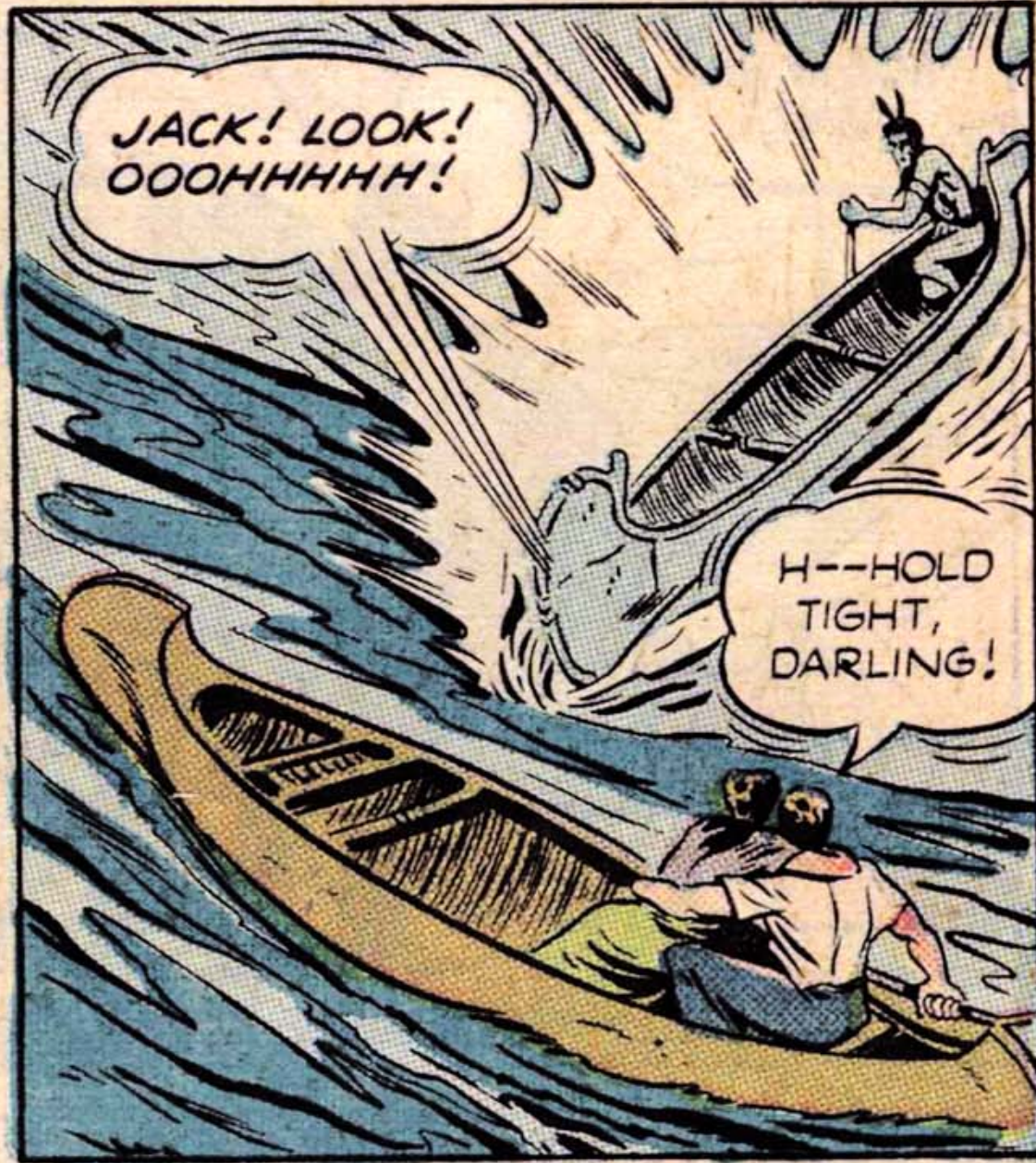


A LOT OF MIDNIGHT PADDLERS HAVE CAP-SIZED AND DROWNED WHEN THE WATER WAS THE SMOOTHEST! THOSE THAT WERE SAVED SAID THEY WERE TURNED OVER BY AN INDIAN'S CANOE!



LATER.
I--I DON'T BELIEVE IT! I--I CAN'T BE SEEING THAT-- BUT I AM!

I REALLY THINK UNCLE BEN BELIEVES THAT STORY HIMSELF!



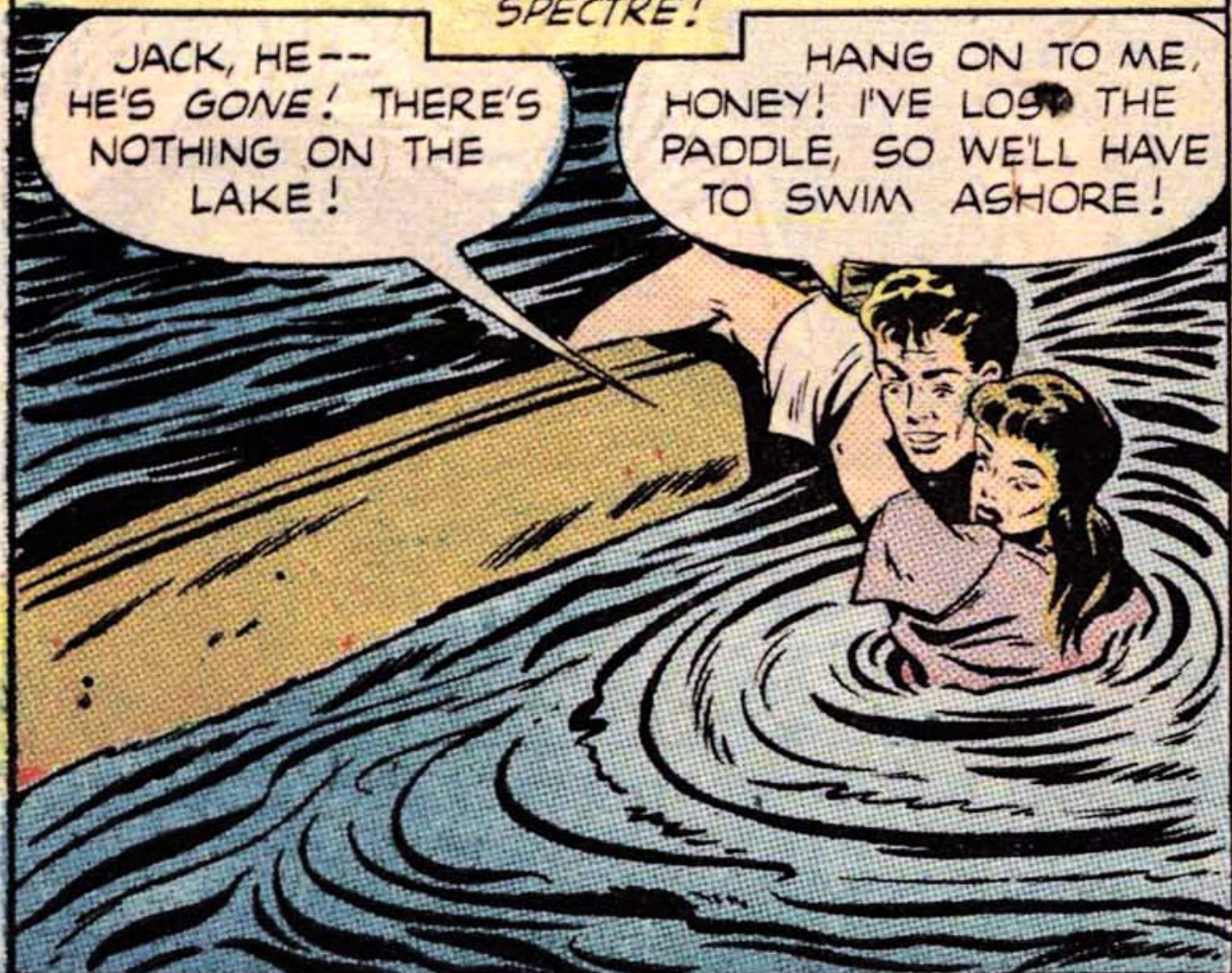
JACK! LOOK! OOOHHHHH!

H--HOLD TIGHT, DARLING!

SUDDENLY THERE WAS A CRASH AND THEIR CANOE CAPSIZED! JACK HELD ONTO HIS WIFE AND THEY BOTH CLUNG TO THE OVERTURNED CANOE! THE LAKE WAS SUDDENLY QUIET AND PEACEFUL, WITH NO SIGN OF THE SPECTRE!

JACK, HE-- HE'S GONE! THERE'S NOTHING ON THE LAKE!

HANG ON TO ME, HONEY! I'VE LOST THE PADDLE, SO WE'LL HAVE TO SWIM ASHORE!



THE YOUNG COUPLE MADE IT SAFELY TO SHORE...

WE--WE REALLY SAW IT, JACK! WE CAN'T BOTH BE "CRAZY"! BUT IT COULDN'T BE! SUCH THINGS DON'T REALLY HAPPEN!

IT HAPPENED ALL RIGHT!



DID IT HAPPEN, OR HAD UNCLE BEN'S STORY AFFECTED THE HONEYMOONERS' IMAGINATIONS MORE THAN THEY HAD REALIZED? YOU'LL HAVE TO ASK THE SMITHS OR GO TO LAKE POONTOOSUC YOURSELF AND FIND OUT!

The End

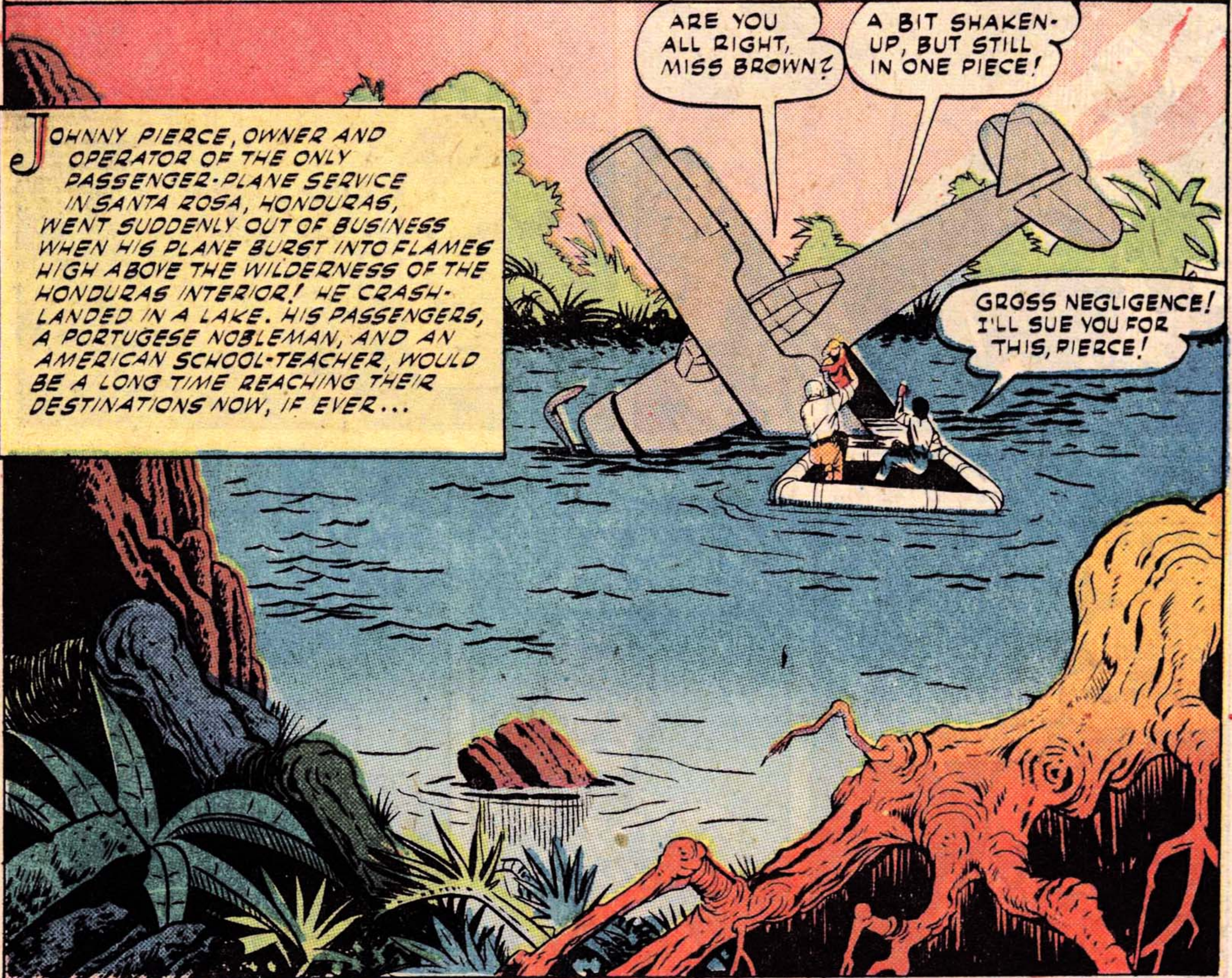
VENOM OF THE VAMPIRES

JOHNNY PIERCE, OWNER AND OPERATOR OF THE ONLY PASSENGER-PLANE SERVICE IN SANTA ROSA, HONDURAS, WENT SUDDENLY OUT OF BUSINESS WHEN HIS PLANE BURST INTO FLAMES HIGH ABOVE THE WILDERNESS OF THE HONDURAS INTERIOR! HE CRASH-LANDED IN A LAKE. HIS PASSENGERS, A PORTUGUESE NOBLEMAN, AND AN AMERICAN SCHOOL-TEACHER, WOULD BE A LONG TIME REACHING THEIR DESTINATIONS NOW, IF EVER...

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, MISS BROWN?

A BIT SHAKEN-UP, BUT STILL IN ONE PIECE!

GROSS NEGLIGENCE! I'LL SUE YOU FOR THIS, PIERCE!



BY JUPITER! YOU'LL PAY FOR THIS, YOU INCOMPETENT YOUNG FOOL! WHERE ARE WE, ANYWAY?

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE. YOU MIGHT AS WELL RELAX, COUNT VACRINI, OLD BOY — THE WORST IS YET TO COME!

FORTUNATELY FOR ELIZABETH BROWN AND COUNT VACRINI, THEIR PILOT WAS FAMILIAR WITH THE FLORA AND FAUNA OF THE REGION. HE PROVIDED EDIBLE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES, AND EVEN CHINCHONA BARK TO PREVENT MALARIA. BUT COULD THEY SURVIVE THE DANGERS THAT LURKED EVERYWHERE IN THE JUNGLE? THE VENOMOUS SERPENTS... THE MAN-EATING JAGUARS?

AFTER THREE DAYS OF TORTUROUS TRAVEL, THEY STUMBLED ON THE RUINS OF AN ANCIENT MAYAN CITY — AND A TRIBE OF INDIANS!

PUT THE ARTILLERY AWAY, FELLOWS. WE WANT TO BE FRIENDS. AMIGOS. CAN'T ANY OF YOU GUYS SPEAK ENGLISH, OR SPANISH?

ME SPEAK. ME GO. STAY WHITE-MAN VILLAGE LONG TIME. YOU COME SEE CHIEF. HE SAY WHAT DO.





SOON...

AMMO LOA GOOLA MUM! MANNA LOA AMMO LOBO!

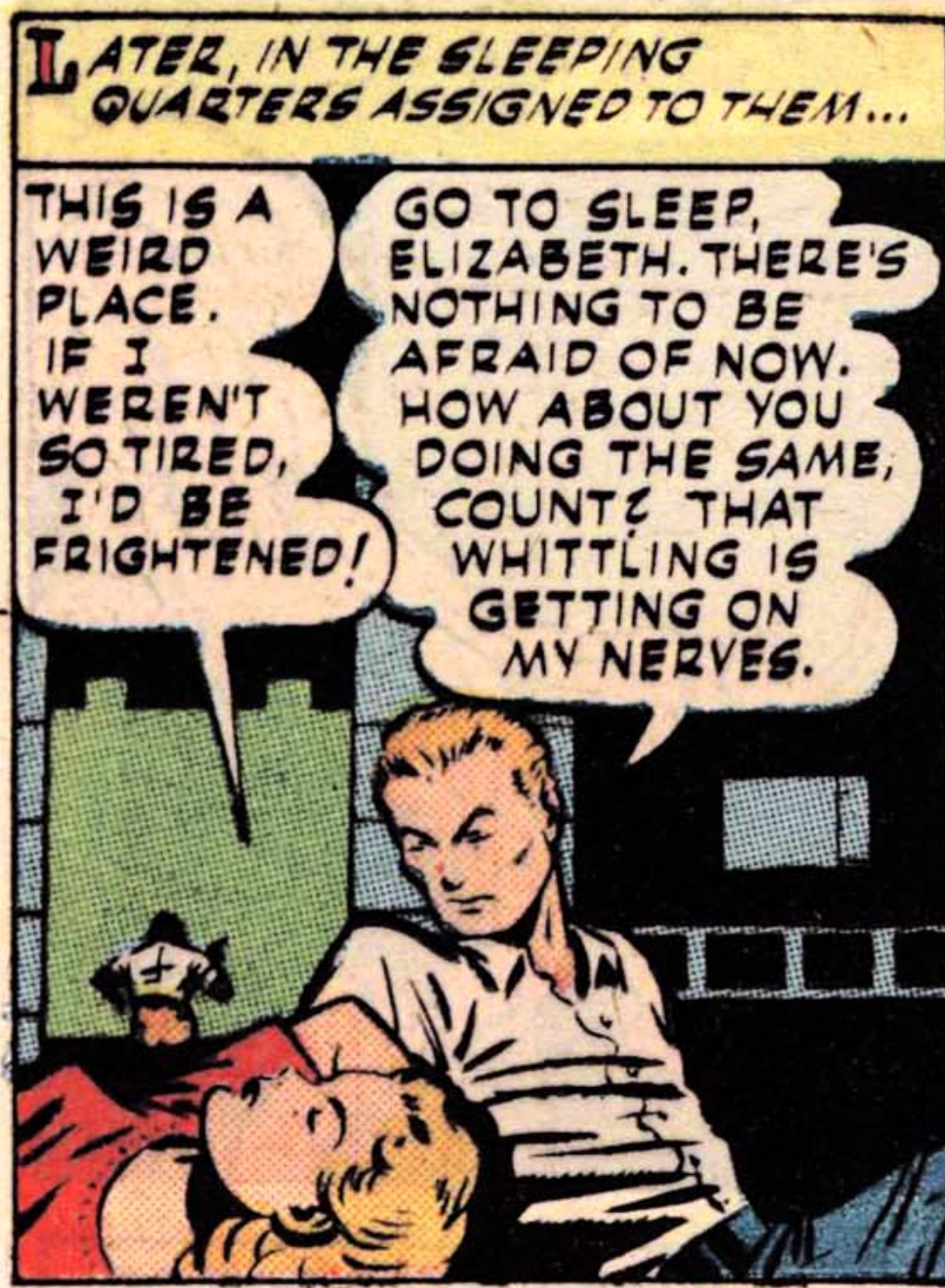
CHIEF SAY YOU STAY. EAT. SLEEP. SUN COME ME GO TAKE YOU WHITE-MAN VILLAGE.

GOOD! TELL HIM THANKS!



TALK ABOUT LUCK! NOT ONLY ARE WE ROOM-AND-BOARDED LIKE VISITING ROYALTY, BUT THE CHIEF'S EVEN FURNISHING US WITH A MAN TO SEE US BACK TO CIVILIZATION!

BAH! MORE LIKELY THAT HEATHEN WITCH-DOCTOR-CHIEF IS MERELY FATTENING US FOR THE KILL!



LATER, IN THE SLEEPING QUARTERS ASSIGNED TO THEM...

THIS IS A WEIRD PLACE. IF I WEREN'T SO TIRED, I'D BE FRIGHTENED!

GO TO SLEEP, ELIZABETH. THERE'S NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF NOW. HOW ABOUT YOU DOING THE SAME, COUNTZ THAT WHITTLING IS GETTING ON MY NERVES.



SUDDENLY...

GREAT GUNS! A BAT'S AT HER THROAT!



WHA...?

DON'T BE ALARMED! IT'S ONLY A VAMPIRE BAT - I'VE GOT IT OFF YOU NOW. YOU'RE IN NO DANGER.



IT WOULD REQUIRE A SIMULTANEOUS ATTACK BY A GREAT NUMBER OF THOSE LITTLE BATS TO KILL ANYONE.

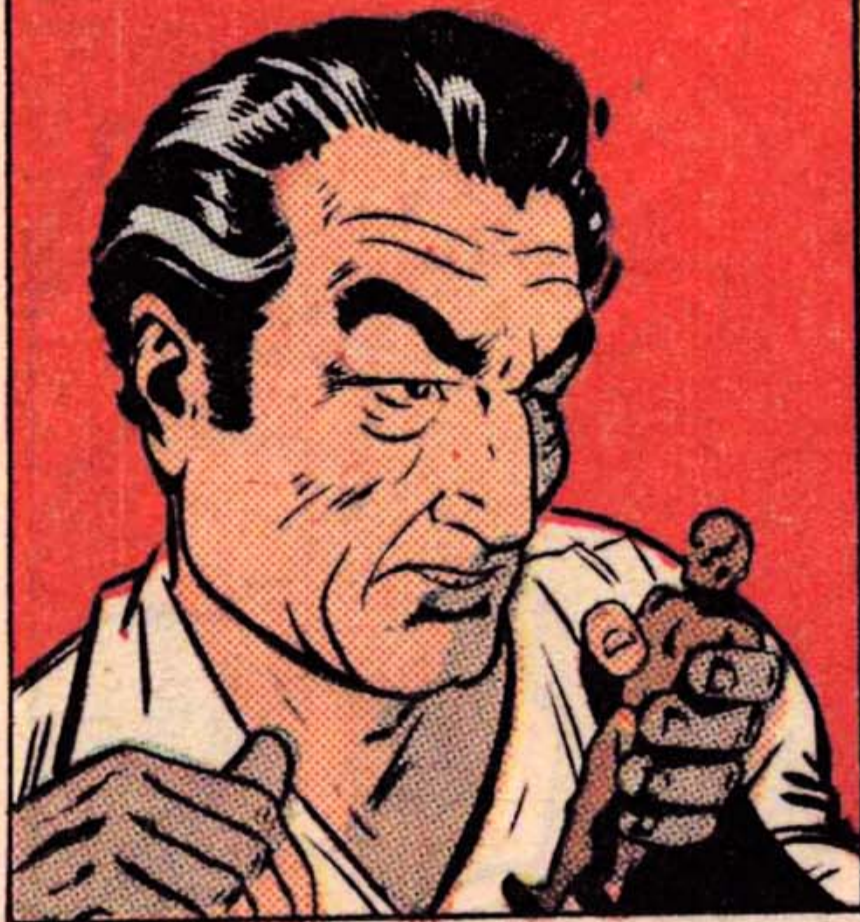
TALKING ABOUT VAMPIRES, THERE'S A FAMILY LEGEND THAT SOME OF MY ANCESTORS TURNED INTO VAMPIRES.



I DON'T BELIEVE IT, OF COURSE! BUT YET, WITCH-CRAFT HAS LONG BEEN A HOBBY OF MINE, AND WHEN ONE LEARNS HOW EFFECTIVE BLACK MAGIC CAN BE...

SHUT UP! CAN'T YOU SEE HOW FRIGHTENED THE GIRL IS? CUT OUT THAT KIND OF TALK!

HA! LOOK! I'VE CARVED AN EFFIGY. I AM IN POSSESSION OF STRANDS OF HAIR I SECRETLY REMOVED FROM THE WITCH-DOCTOR CHIEF! NOW WATCH...



THE HAIRS ARE ATTACHED. THE WOUND IS INFLECTED. COBBA-COBBA MENGO-ZENGO ABBA-ZAN! IT IS DONE! YOU CAN SCOFF, BUT IN THE MORNING YOU'RE GOING TO FIND THAT OUR WITCH-DOCTOR HAS RECEIVED A DOSE OF HIS OWN MEDICINE - HIS LEFT LEG WILL BE LAME!



THIS WILL SHUT YOU UP AND PUT YOU TO SLEEP!

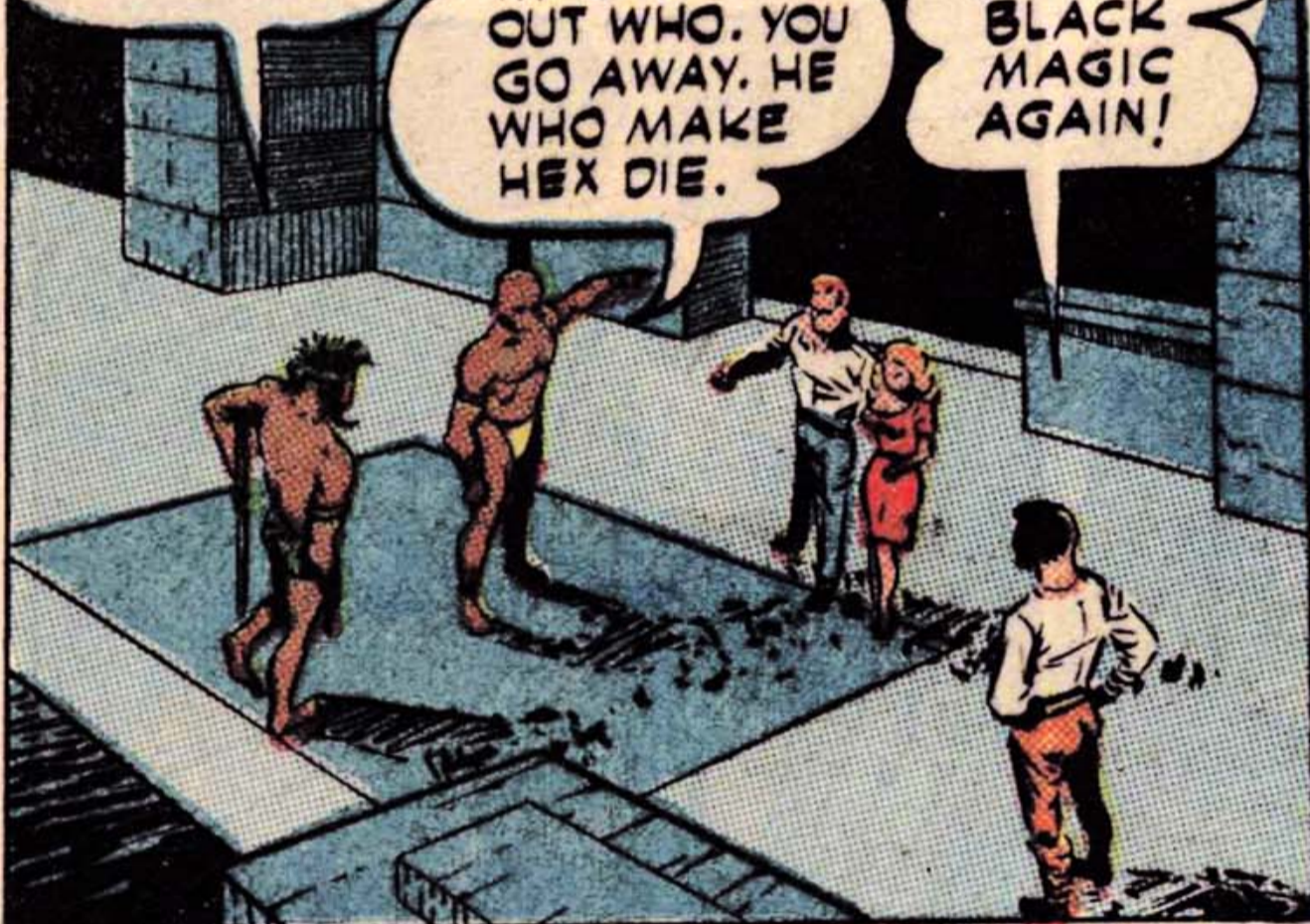


THE NEXT MORNING...

ALLO BEELO LOA MONGO. WALLA DOA LULUWANGO!

CHIEF SAY ONE YOU MAKE HEX ON HE. CHIEF SAY HE MAKE MAGIC FIND OUT WHO. YOU GO AWAY. HE WHO MAKE HEX DIE.

HA! I DARE SAY, PIERCE, YOU WON'T SCOFF AT BLACK MAGIC AGAIN!



LUCKY TO ESCAPE THE IRATE INDIANS ALIVE, THE TRIO PLUNGED INTO THE HOSTILE WILDERNESS, ON THEIR OWN AGAIN...

IF WE EVER GET BACK TO CIVILIZATION, COUNT VACRINI, I'M GOING TO CELEBRATE BY BEATING YOU TO A PULP!

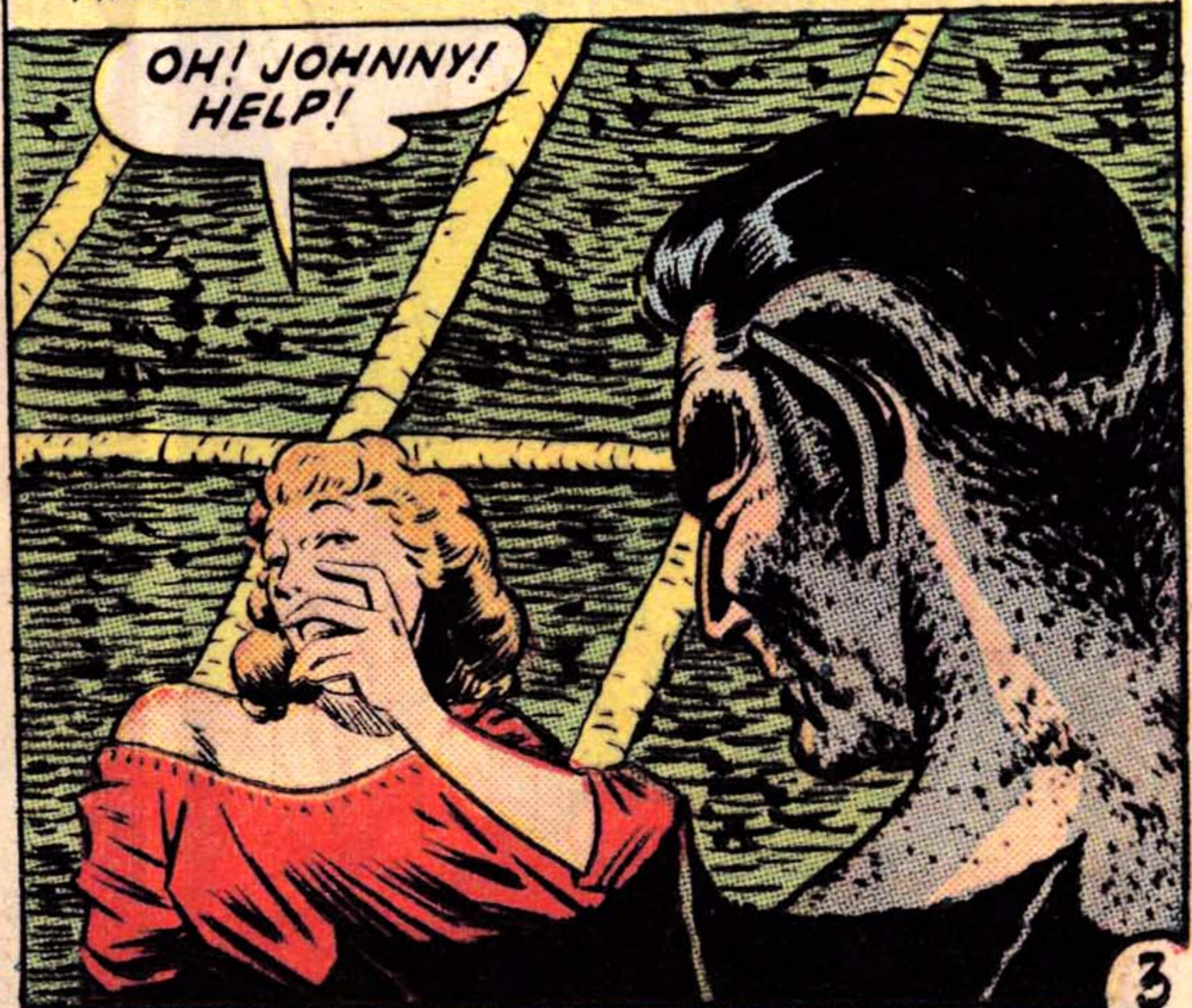
I SUGGEST YOU BE MORE CAREFUL, MR. PIERCE. I MIGHT MAKE YOU THE NEXT VICTIM OF MY WITCHCRAFT!



NIGHT FELL, AND THE THREE SLEPT. THEN, AT MIDNIGHT, A STRANGE AND HORRIBLE THING CREEPT ON THE CAMP...

THE THING MOVED IN SILENCE, BUT ELIZABETH AWOKE AND SAW IT, WARNED BY SOME SENSE APART FROM SOUND OR SMELL...

OH! JOHNNY! HELP!



I'LL DRINK YOUR BLOOD AFTER I'VE DRAINED HERS! IT'S AS FUTILE TO FLEE AS IT IS TO RESIST! I AM INVINCIBLE!

WHA...?

EEEEEEEE!



JOHNNY RETURNED TO THE ATTACK, ARMED NOW WITH A PRICKLY BRANCH HE'D PLUCKED FROM THE LEAN-TO...

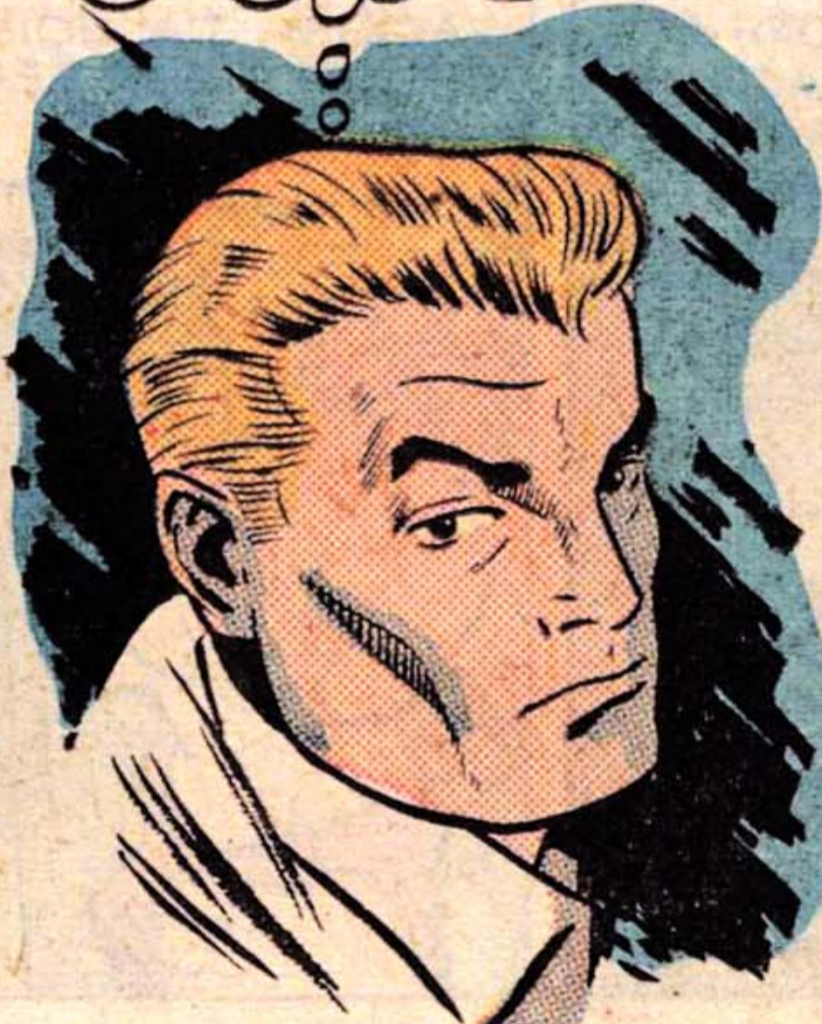
STOP! THAT BRANCH! TAKE IT AWAY! I CAN'T STAND IT!



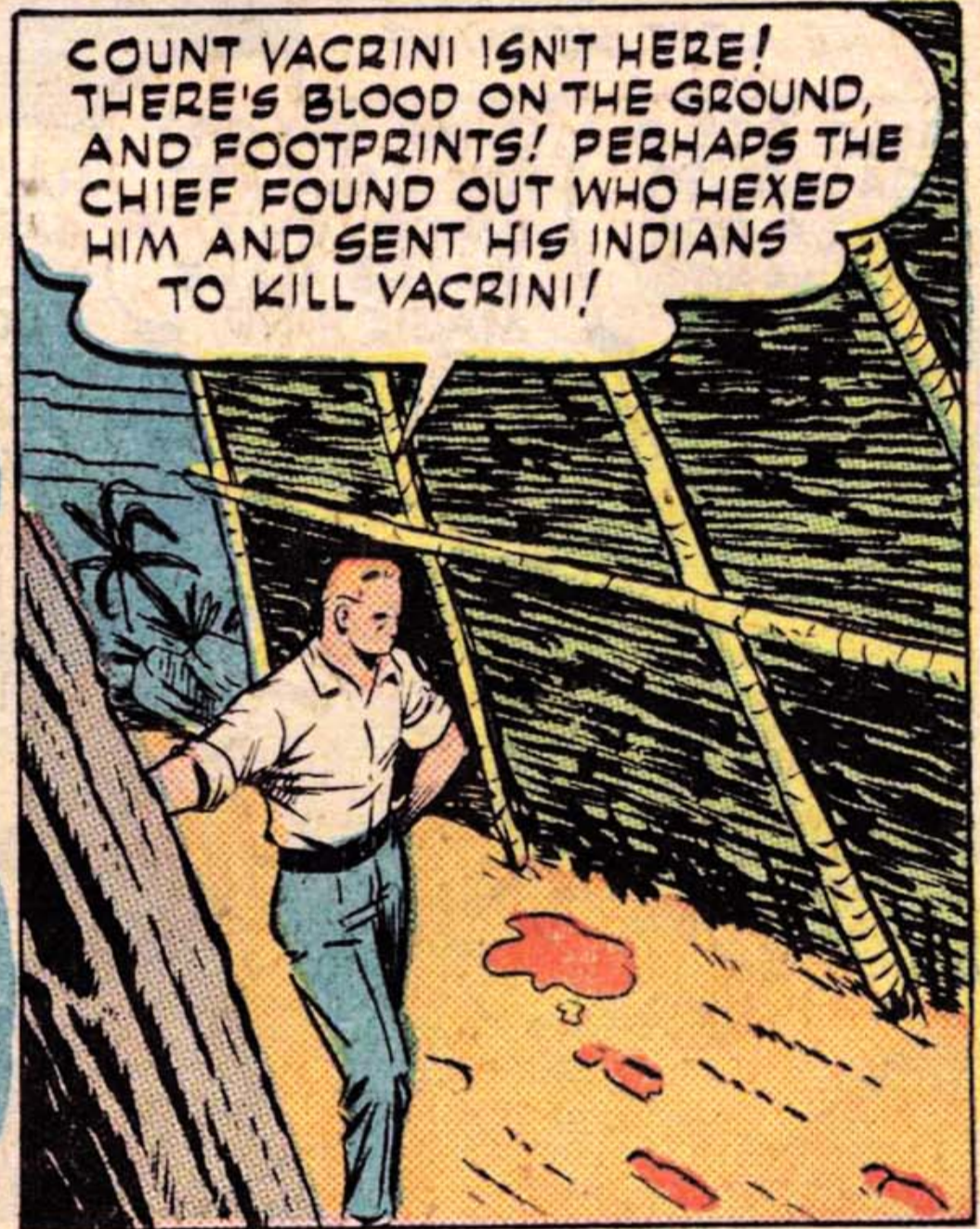
THAT ACCURSED PLANT! YOU'VE WON OUR FIRST ENCOUNTER, BUT I'LL GET YOU!



THAT VAMPIRE BEARS AN AMAZING RESEMBLANCE TO COUNT VACRINI! I WONDER...



COUNT VACRINI ISN'T HERE! THERE'S BLOOD ON THE GROUND, AND FOOTPRINTS! PERHAPS THE CHIEF FOUND OUT WHO HEXED HIM AND SENT HIS INDIANS TO KILL VACRINI!

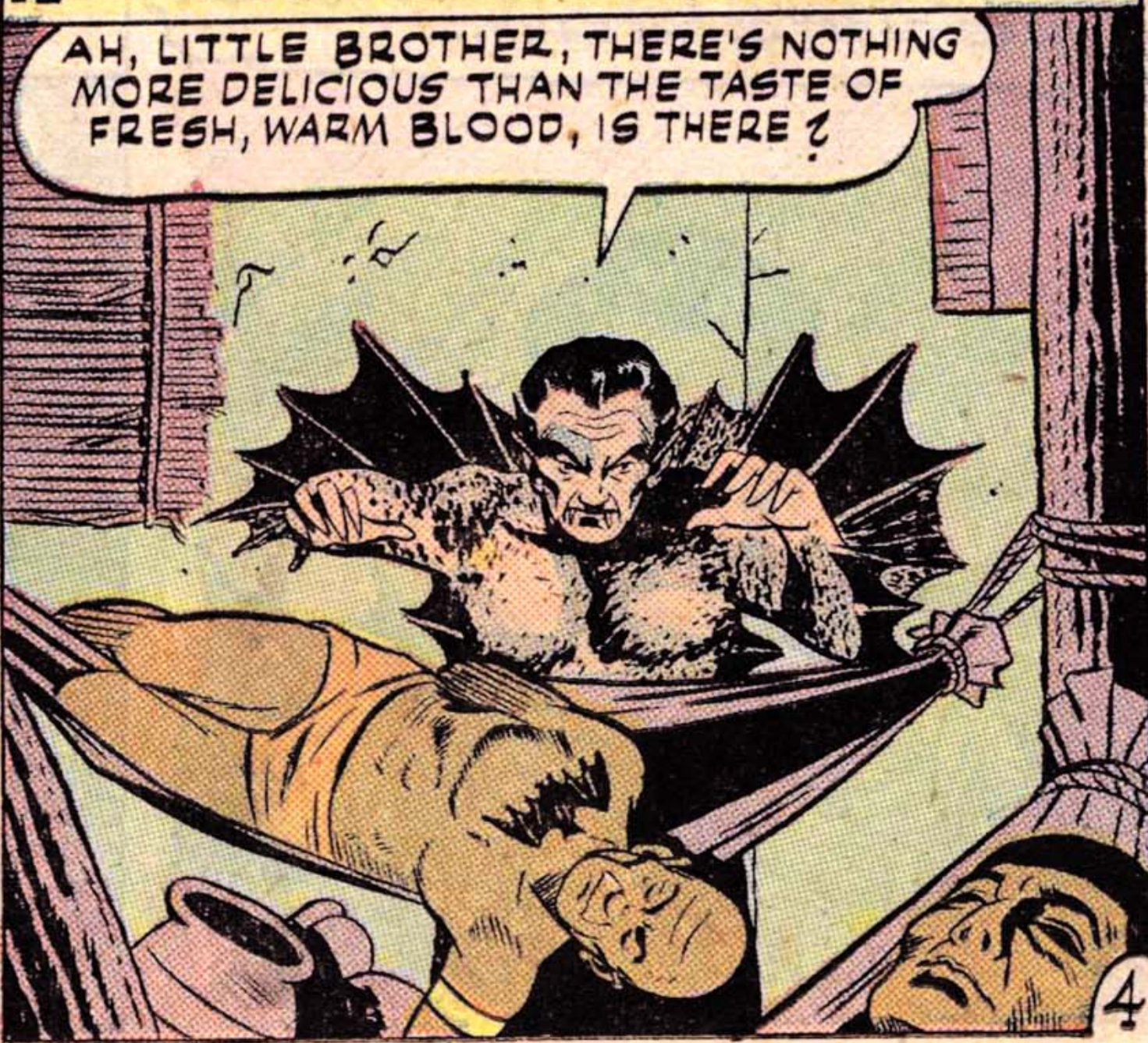


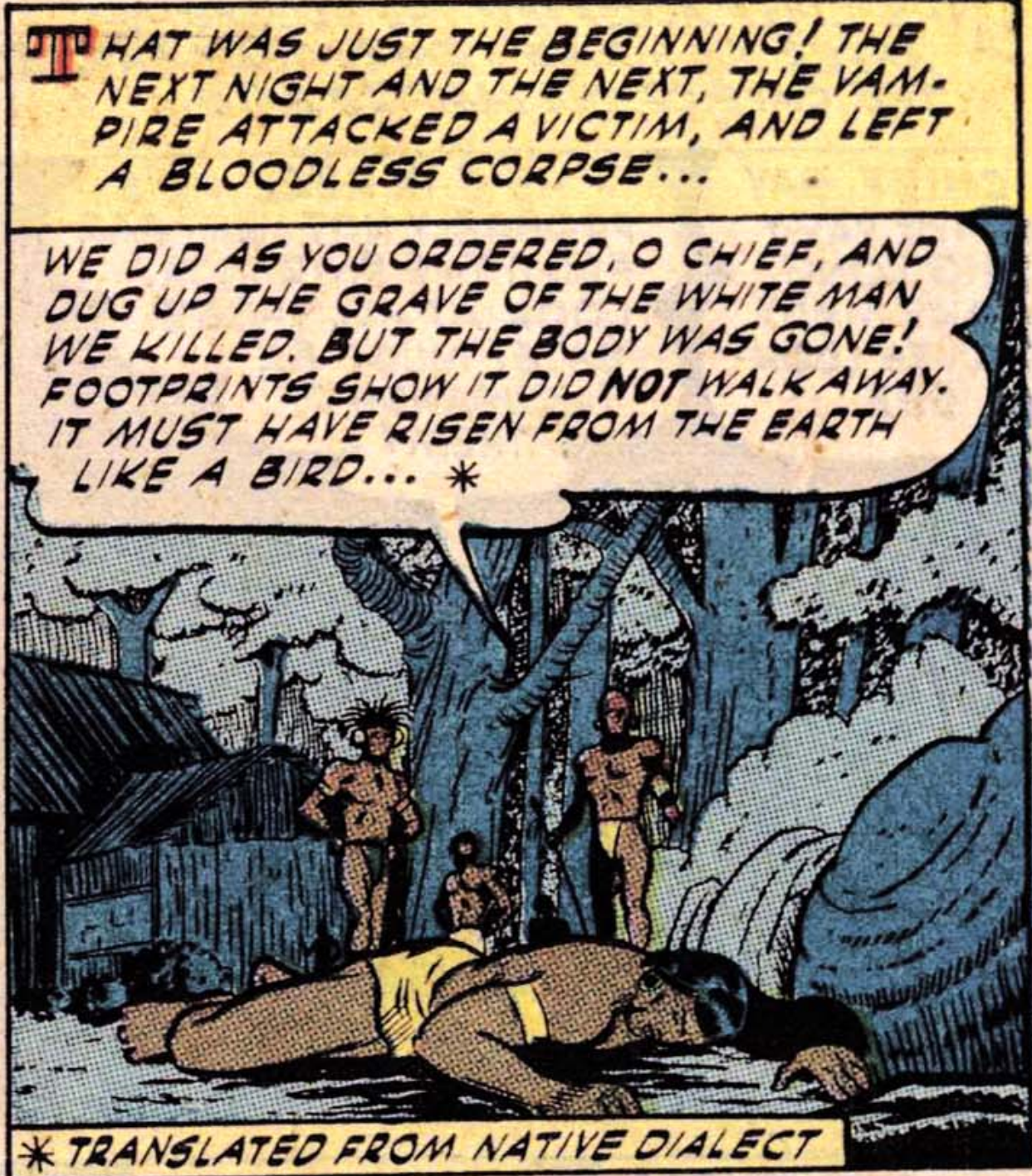
THIS BRANCH SAVED OUR LIVES, ELIZABETH! IT MUST BE SOME SORT OF WOLFSBANE - THE PLANT THAT'S SUPPOSED TO SCARE OFF VAMPIRES. FROM NOW ON WE KEEP A SUPPLY OF THIS WITH US!



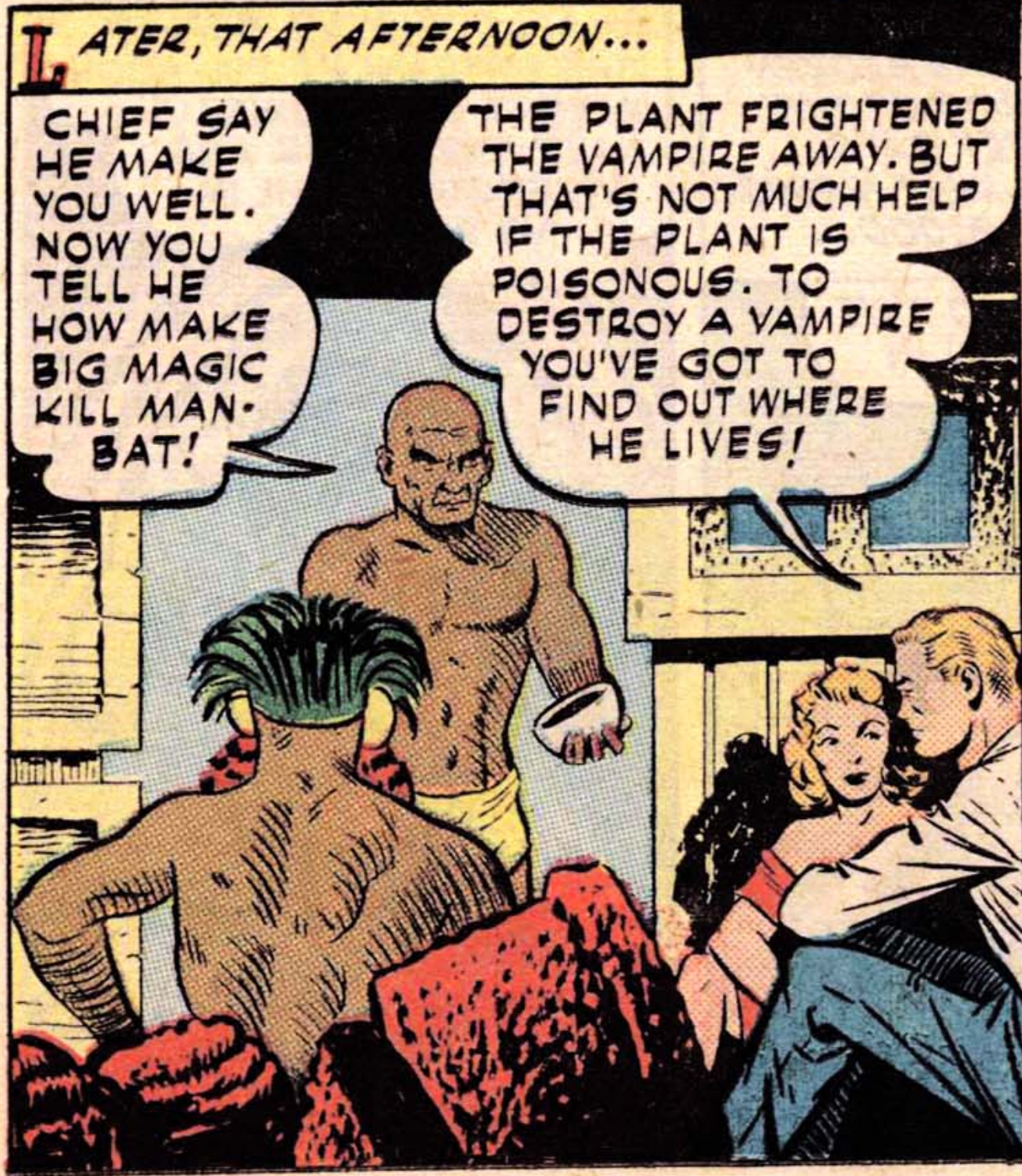
A FEW MINUTES LATER, AT THE INDIAN VILLAGE...

AH, LITTLE BROTHER, THERE'S NOTHING MORE DELICIOUS THAN THE TASTE OF FRESH, WARM BLOOD, IS THERE?





* TRANSLATED FROM NATIVE DIALECT



THE CHIEF ACCEPTED THE SUGGESTION, AND AFTER AN HOURS TRAVEL THEY ARRIVED AT THE CAVE OF THE VAMPIRE BATS...

CHIEF SAY CAVE VERY BIG LONG. TAKE MANY HOURS LOOK-SEE.

IF HE'S IN HERE, HE'S PROBABLY NOT VERY FAR FROM THE ENTRANCE. LOOK AT ALL THOSE BATS! MUST BE THOUSANDS OF THEM!



SUDDENLY...

EIIIIII! LOMBO!

GREAT GUNS! THERE HE IS!



MANALA LOMBO! MUM OOLA UNA LOA LOMBO?

CHIEF SAY WHAT DO NOW? ME KNOW WHAT DO... RUN!

EIIIIIIII!



AMANO MUDOODOO!

CHIEF SAY NO RUN. MUST KILL VAMPIRE OR VAMPIRE KILL US! CHIEF SAY WHITE MAN SPEAK NOW. TELL HOW KILL VAMPIRE WITH BELLY SWOLLEN WITH OUR BLOOD!

HMM... THE VAMPIRE'S BELLY WAS BLOATED... AND IF IT WAS WITH BLOOD, MAYBE THAT'S HOW HE CAN BE DESTROYED!



JOHNNY PIERCE INSTRUCTED THE INDIANS TO BLOCK THE CAVE OPENING. THEY WORKED FEVERISHLY TO ERECT A BARRIER...

THE SUN'S GOING DOWN! TELL THE MEN THEY'VE GOT TO WORK FASTER! IT'LL BE DARK SOON!

AMALAMU ZEN! WALLA LOA BOOLU!



A LITTLE LATER, THE SILENCE OF THE CAVE WAS BROKEN BY THE FLUTTERING OF TINY WINGS, AS HUNGRY BATS AWAKENED TO HUNT THROUGH THE NIGHT FOR BLOOD...

AHH-H... I'M GLAD THAT VAMPIRES DID RUN IN MY FAMILY!

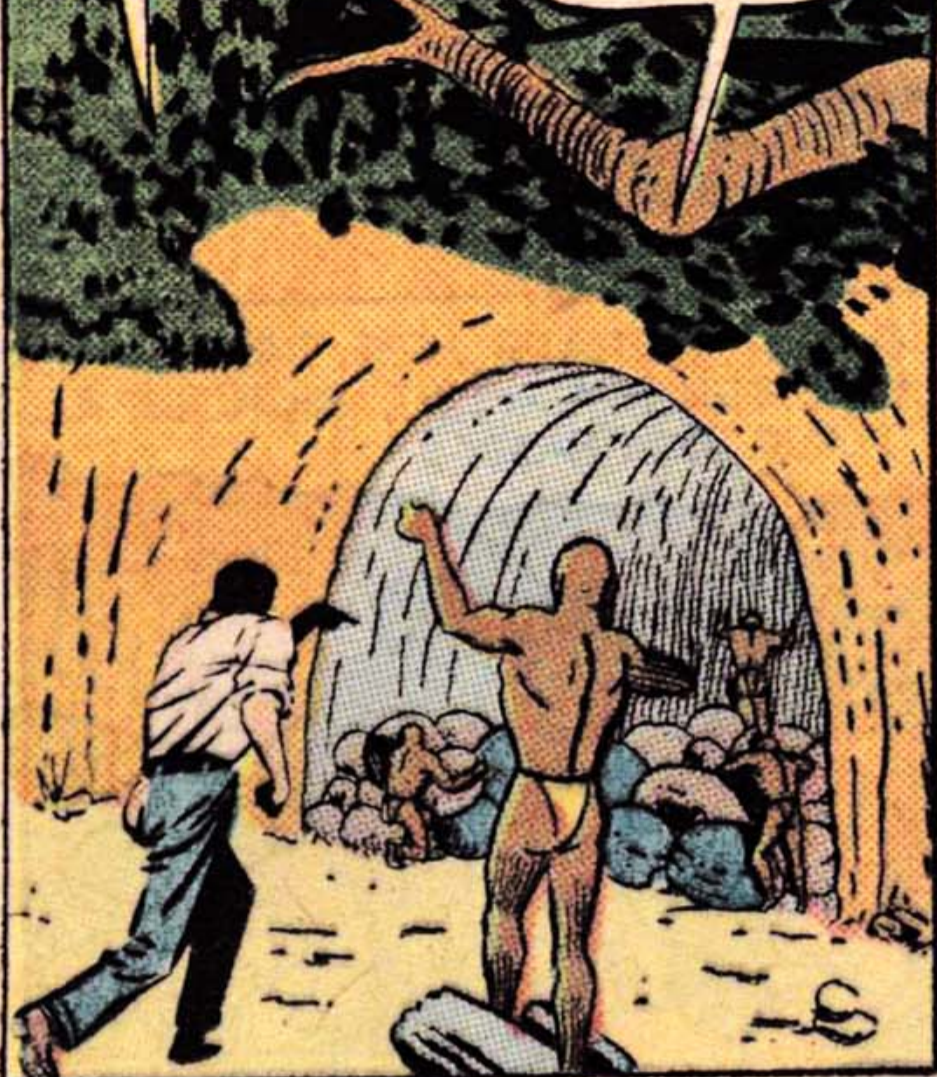


WHA...? THEY'VE SEALED THE ENTRANCE! I'LL SOON HAVE IT OPEN AGAIN! I HAVE THE POWER AND STRENGTH OF EVIL IN MY BODY!



TELL THEM THEY'VE GOT TO HOLD! IF HE GETS OUT, WE'RE LOST!

LOA WEEL!
LOA WEEL!



AS THE VAMPIRE STRUGGLED TO BREACH THE STONES AND BRANCHES SEALING THE CAVE ENTRANCE, HIS SKIN WAS RIPPED IN MANY PLACES AND A SMALL FLOW OF BLOOD BEGAN TO TRICKLE OUT...



FOOLS! DO THEY THINK THEY CAN KEEP ME FROM MY VICTIMS?

... AND AS THE VICIOUS LITTLE BATS SCENTED THE FLOWING BLOOD, THEY REACTED AS CREATURES SUDDENLY DEMENTED...

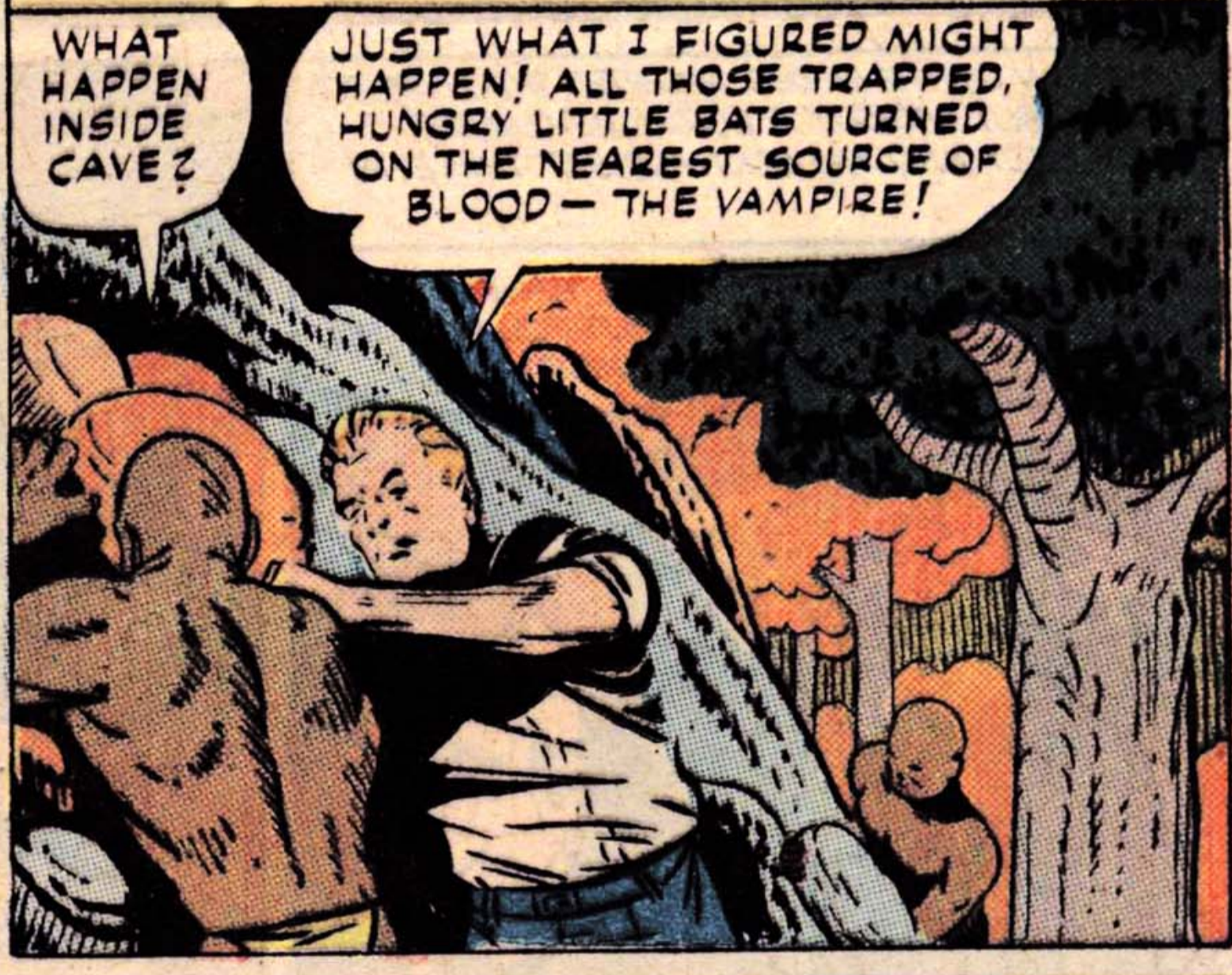


... AND BEFORE THE VAMPIRE COULD DISLODGE THE BARRIER, HE FOUND HIMSELF SUDDENLY ATTACKED BY HUNDREDS OF THE HUNGRY BATS!



ARGHHH! GET OFF, YOU LITTLE FIENDS!
OHHHHH!

FOR A LONG MOMENT HORRIFYING SCREAMS RENT THE AIR, AND THEN ALL WAS SUDDENLY SILENT...



WHAT HAPPEN INSIDE CAVE?

JUST WHAT I FIGURED MIGHT HAPPEN! ALL THOSE TRAPPED, HUNGRY LITTLE BATS TURNED ON THE NEAREST SOURCE OF BLOOD - THE VAMPIRE!

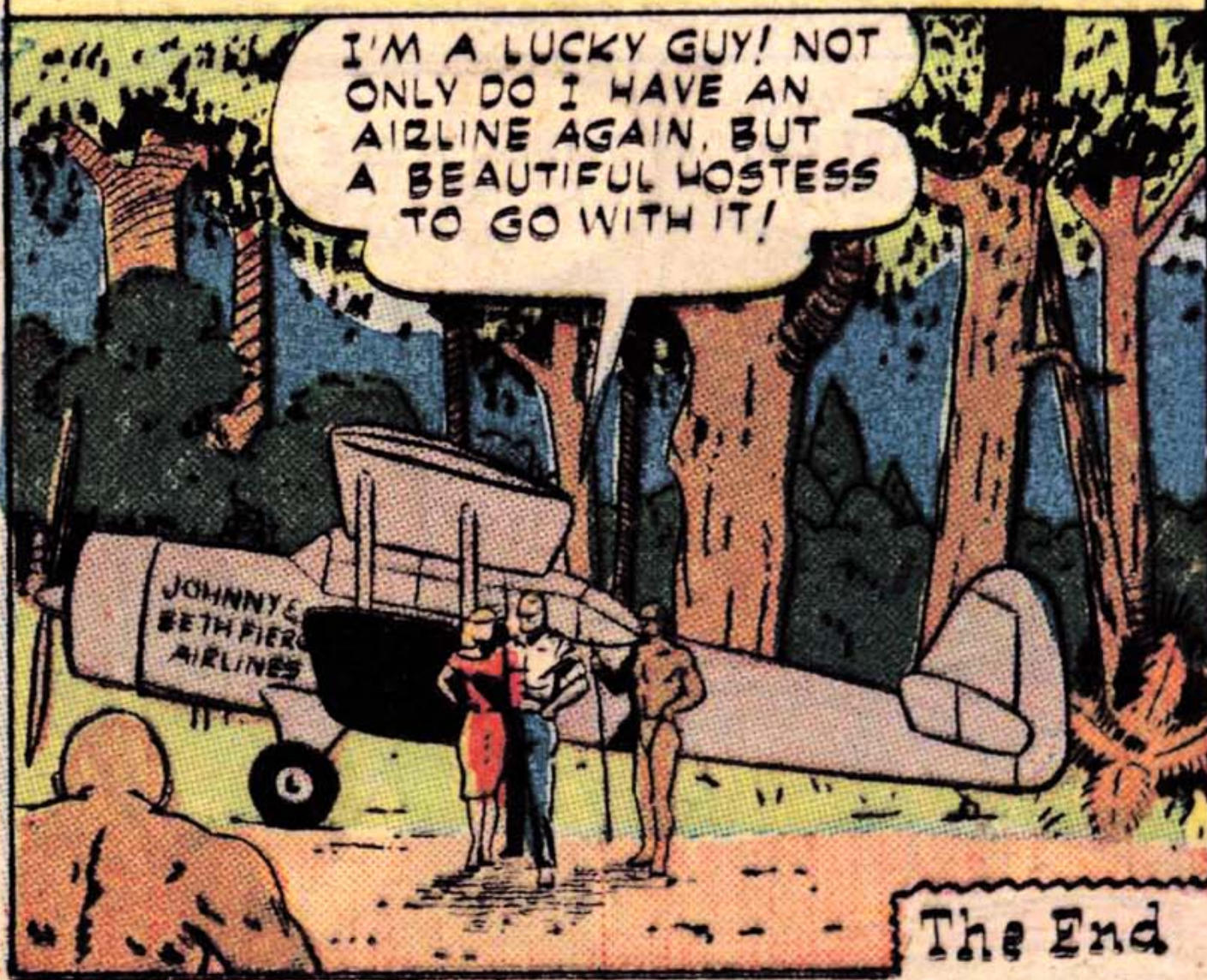
A LITTLE LATER...

THIS SOLVES THE VAMPIRE PROBLEM! TELL YOUR CHIEF THAT IF HE WANTS TO MAKE ONE HUNDRED PERCENT SURE, TO HAVE THIS THING DISECTED INTO A THOUSAND PIECES AND BURY EACH PIECE IN A DIFFERENT SPOT.

ME TELL. WHITE MAN SAVE TRIBE. WHITE MAN BIG GREAT WITCH-DOCTOR!



THE GRATEFUL INDIANS ESCORTED JOHNNY AND ELIZABETH BACK TO SANTA ROSA, WHERE THEY GOT MARRIED AND STARTED A PLANE TRANSPORTATION BUSINESS TOGETHER...



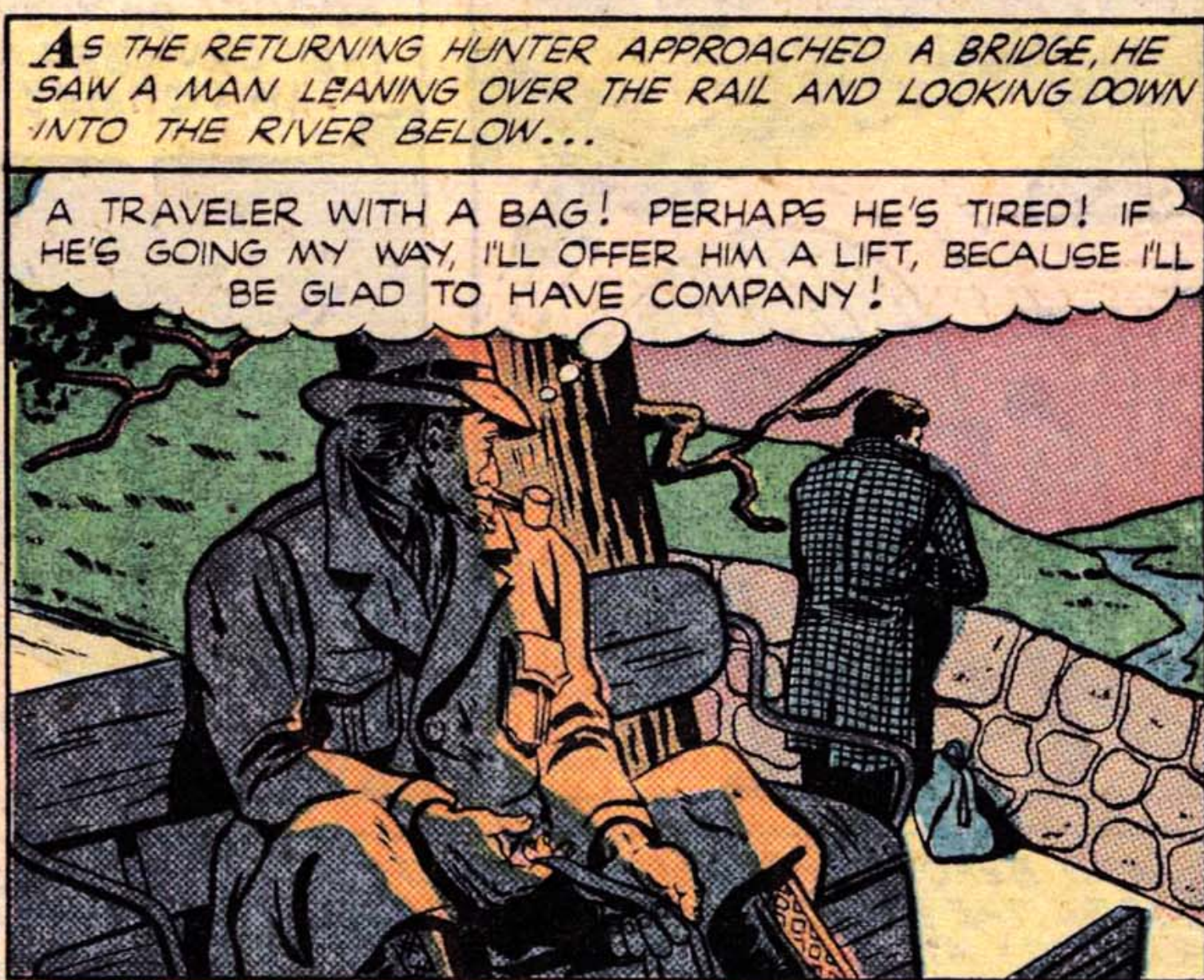
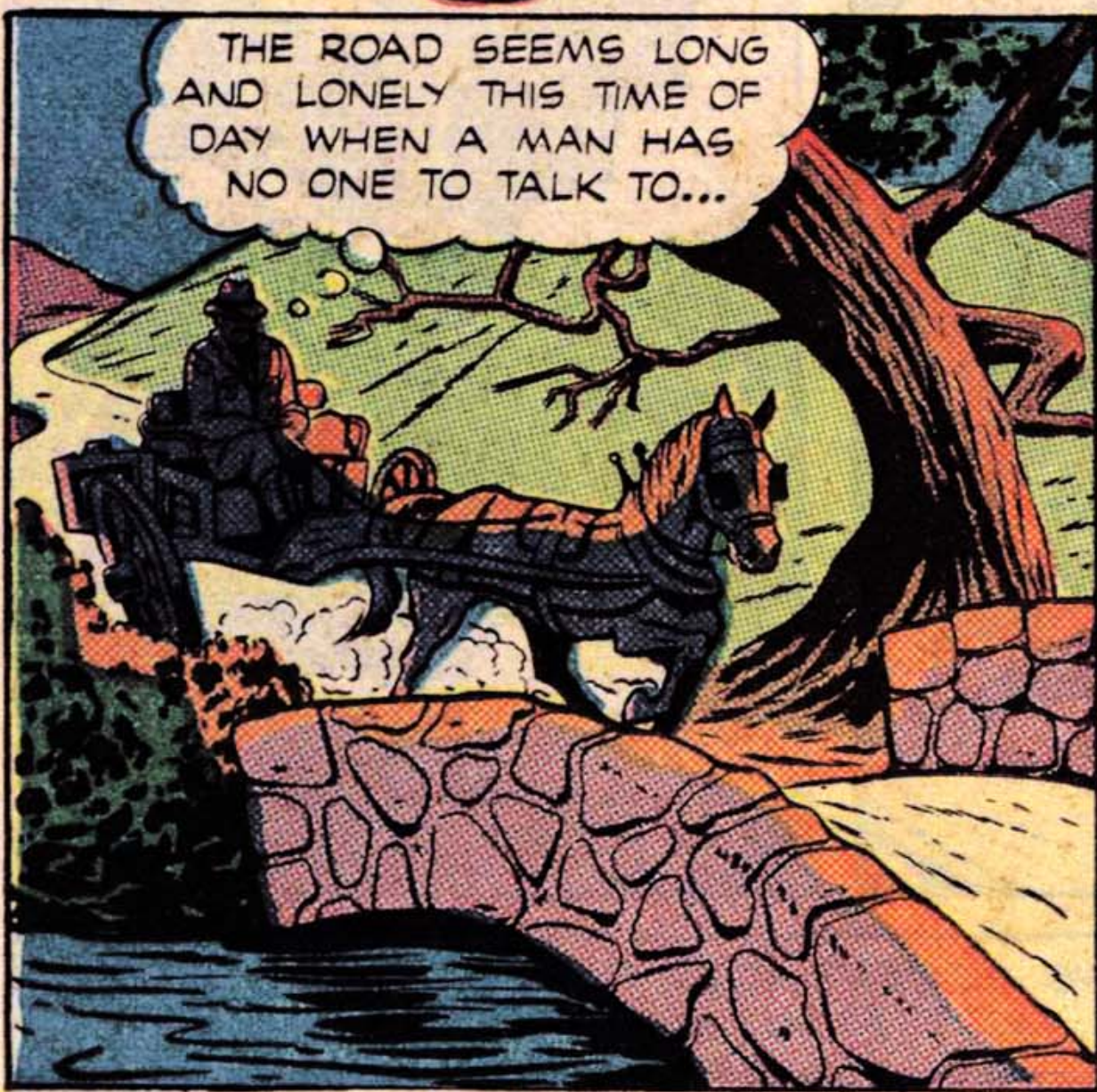
I'M A LUCKY GUY! NOT ONLY DO I HAVE AN AIRLINE AGAIN, BUT A BEAUTIFUL HOSTESS TO GO WITH IT!

The End

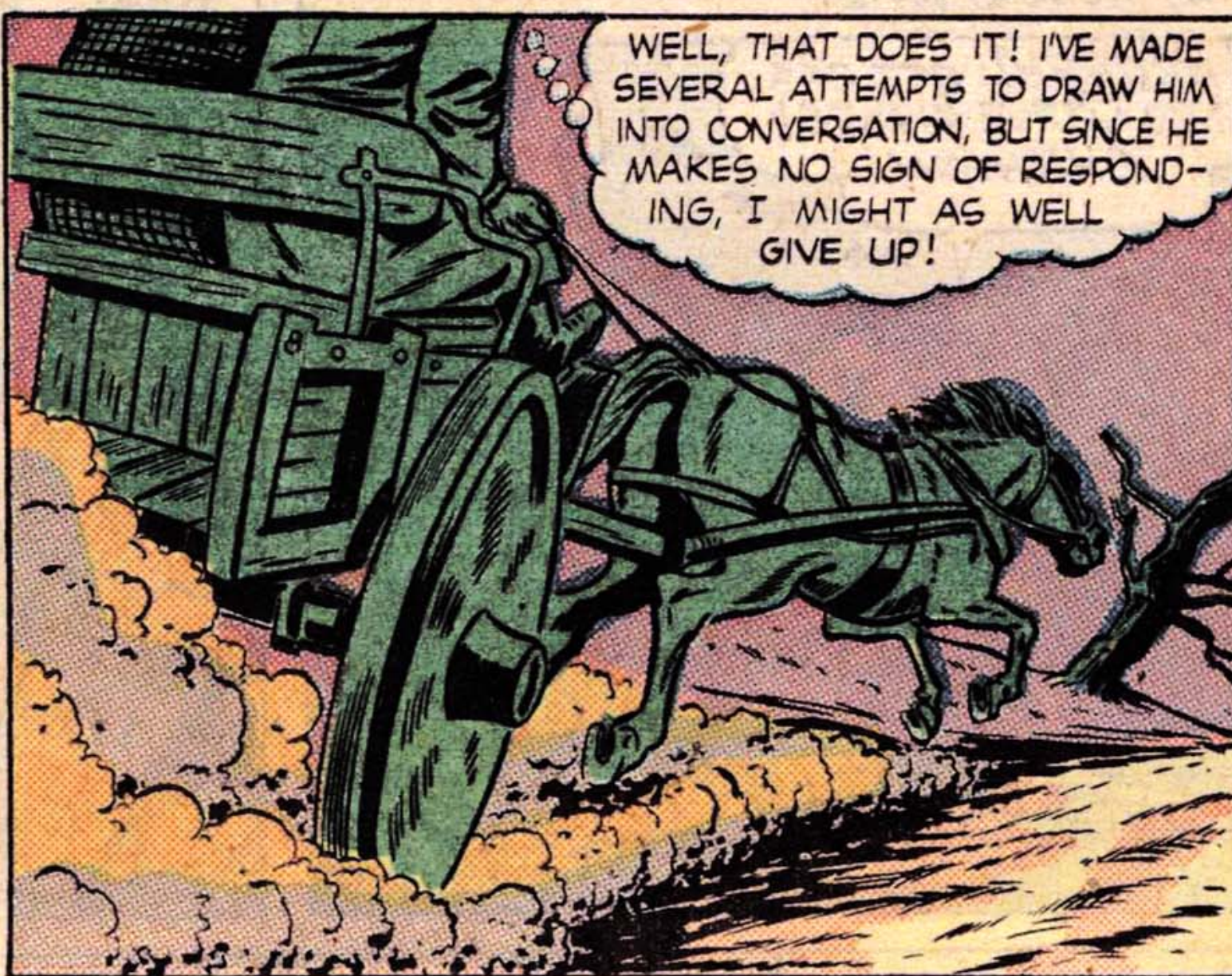
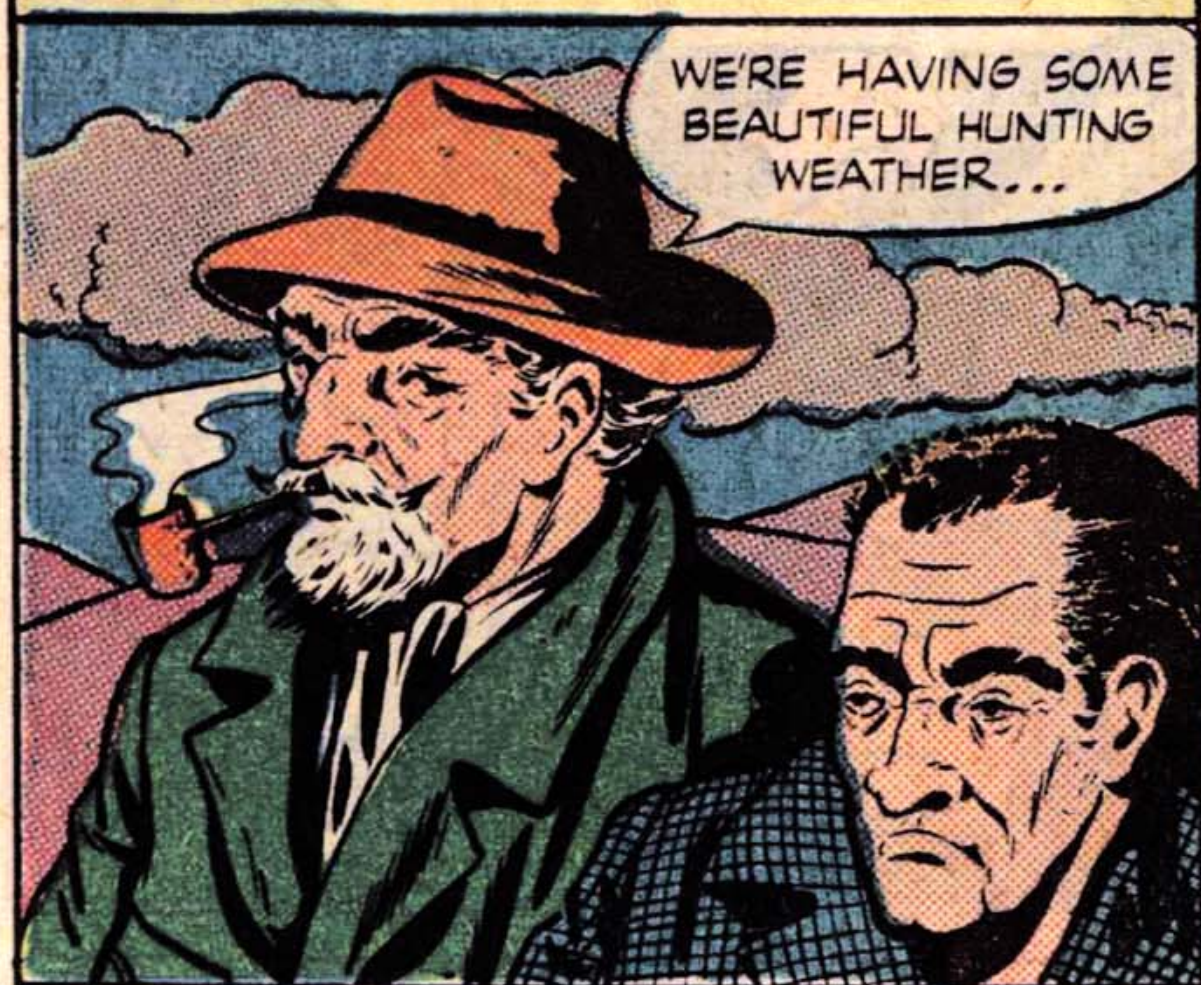
TRUE CREEPY TALES

#2

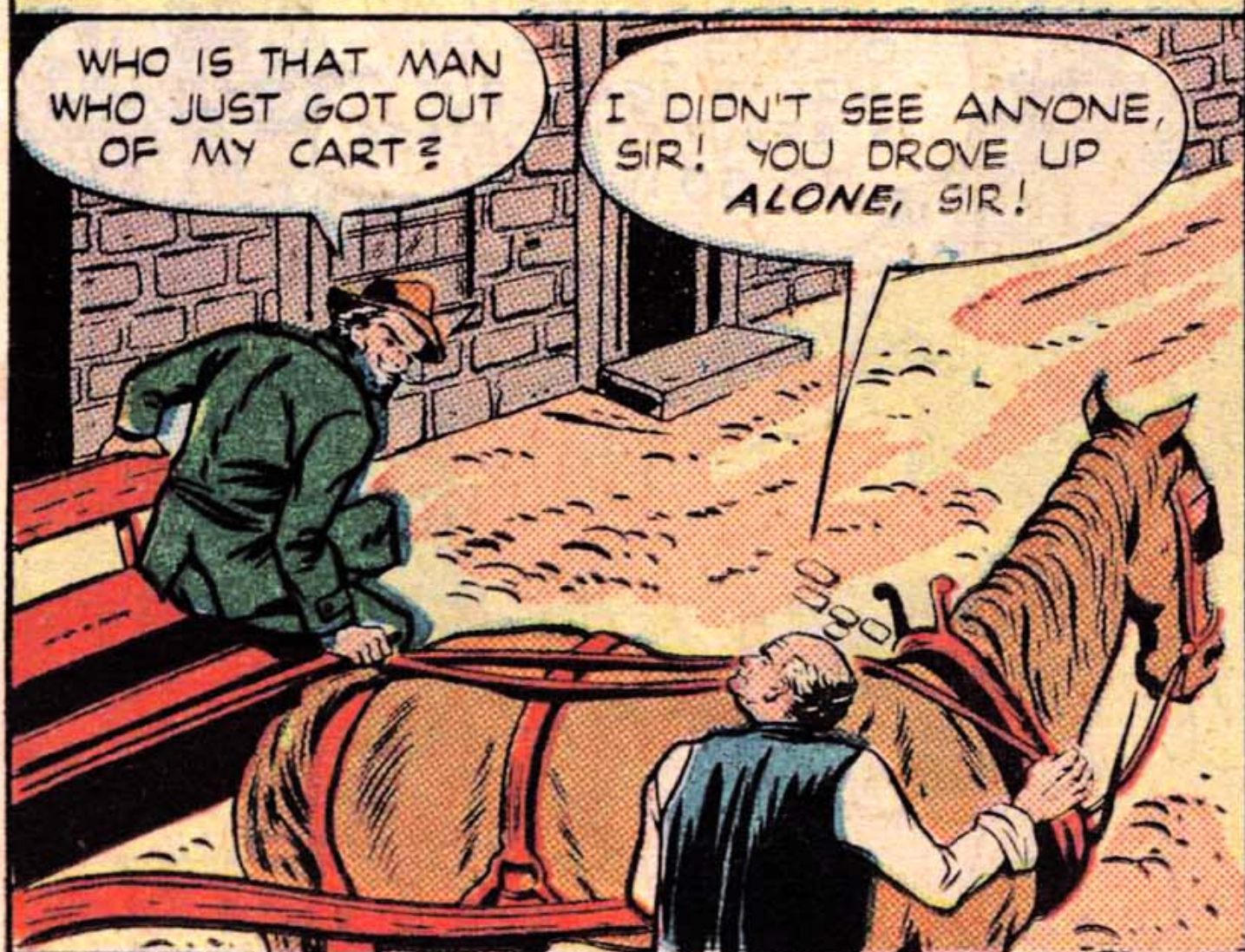
THERE IS A BELIEF AMONG THE VILLAGE PEOPLE OF YORKSHIRE, ENGLAND, THAT THE SOUL ALWAYS RETURNS TO THE BODY ONCE IN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS UNTIL AFTER THE FUNERAL AND BURIAL OF THE BODY! ONE EVENING AFTER A DAY'S SHOOTING, A YORKSHIRE GENTLEMAN WAS ON HIS WAY HOME...



THE MAN ON THE BRIDGE ACCEPTED THE INVITATION TO RIDE, BUT WITHOUT A WORD! HE CLIMBED WORDLESSLY INTO THE CART AND SAT THERE IN SILENCE...



AFTER DRIVING SEVERAL MILES IN SILENCE, THEY CAME TO A VILLAGE WHERE THE HUNTER PULLED UP OUTSIDE OF THE INN! HIS COMPANION GOT DOWN AND WITHOUT ONE WORD OF THANKS, WALKED STRAIGHT INTO THE INN...



FEELING VERY UNCOMFORTABLE, THE HUNTER WENT INTO THE INN AND TALKED TO THE LANDLORD. HE DESCRIBED THE TRAVELER HE HAD PICKED UP. THE LANDLORD LOOKED GRAVE AND TOOK THE HUNTER UPSTAIRS TO A ROOM WHERE ON THE BED LAY THE MAN TO WHOM HE HAD GIVEN THE LIFT!



COULD THIS HAVE REALLY HAPPENED? THE HUNTER HAS SWORN IT IS SO! WHAT DO YOU THINK? ...The End...

The Lamenting Voice of the Bell

LISTEN, HERR SCHNABEL, IS IT NOT EXACTLY LIKE I PROMISED? DO THE BELLS NOT PRODUCE A MOST BEAUTIFUL TONE?

QUITE SO, HERR WALDEN. THE TONE IS TRULY LIKE THE VOICE OF ANGELS. THESE BELLS WILL SURELY MAKE OUR CARILLON THE MOST EXQUISITE IN THE WORLD!

F

FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD CAME SHOUTS OF ACCLAIM FOR THE SINISTER-LOOKING HUNCHBACK WHOSE BELL-CASTING RESULTED IN MASTERPIECES, TRULY SOUNDING LIKE THE VOICES OF ANGELS. THE PEOPLE OF DORFSTADT, AT THE EDGE OF THE BLACK FOREST, WERE PROUD TO CLAIM HIM AS ONE OF THE TOWN'S LEADING CITIZENS, DESPITE HIS EXTREME UGLINESS. BUT WHAT WAS THE SECRET INGREDIENT THAT MADE HIS BELLS PRODUCE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL TONES EVER HEARD? FOR THAT ANSWER, DEAR READER, READ ON...

THEN IT IS ALL ARRANGED. YOU WILL DELIVER THE BELLS WITHIN THE WEEK. BY THE WAY, I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU HAVE A SPECIAL INGREDIENT MIXED INTO THE BELLS THAT PRODUCES SUCH WONDERFUL TONE. WHAT IS IT?

AHH... THAT IS MY SECRET!



IF ONLY HE KNEW THAT THE MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF THE CHILDREN OF DORFSTADT WAS MY DOING... AND THAT THEIR BROKEN LITTLE BODIES WERE THROWN INTO THE BUBBLING CAULDRON! BUT I SHALL TAKE MY SECRET TO THE GRAVE!



YOU HAVE PERFORMED A REAL SERVICE! I HAD NOT EXPECTED YOU TO FINISH THE BELLS SO SOON!

I HAD ANOTHER ORDER... TO REPLACE THE BELL OF THE TOWN HALL WHICH WAS BROKEN LAST MONTH, BUT I DECIDED TO LET THEM WAIT.



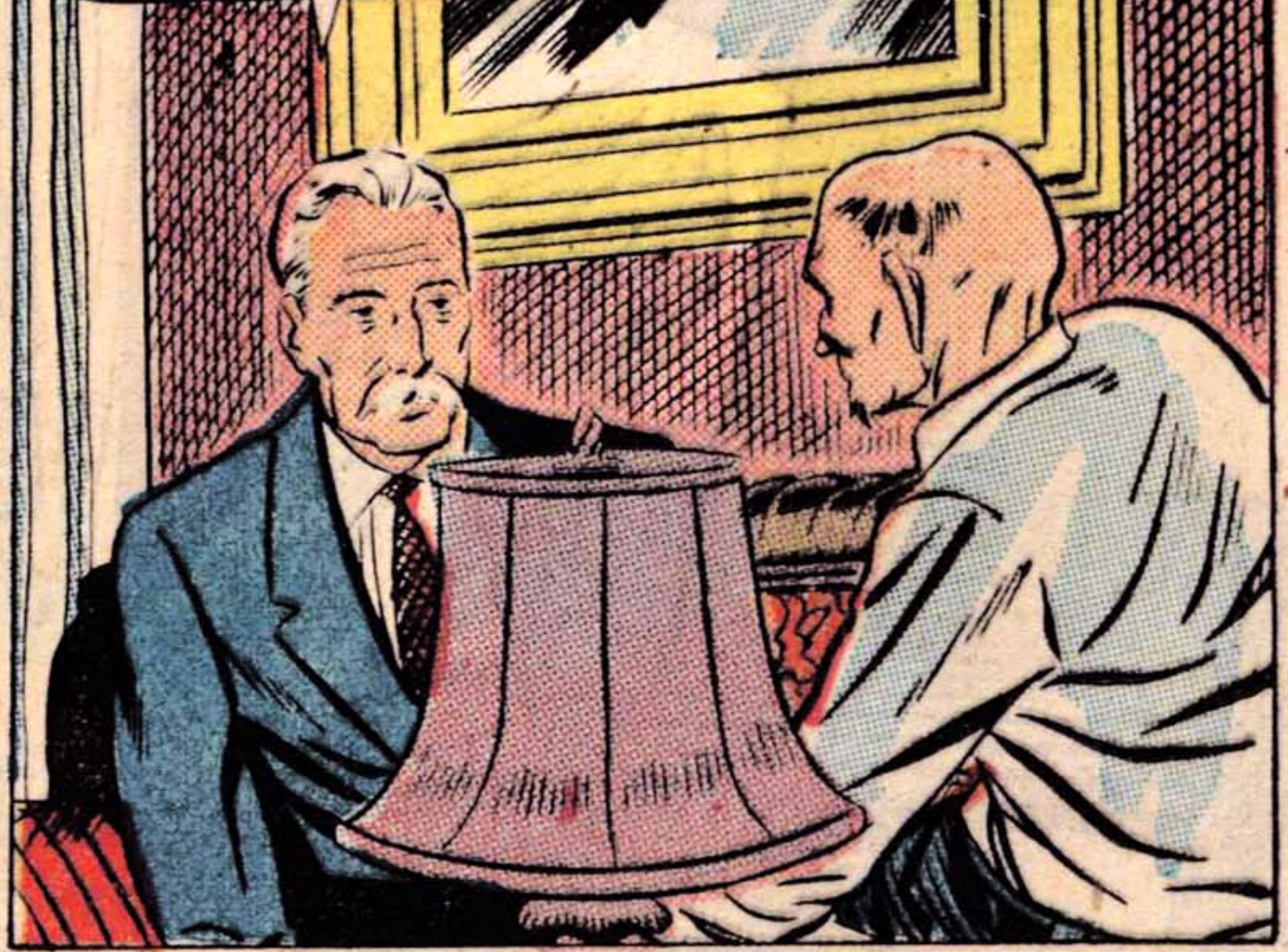
IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU FINISHED WITH YOUR BUSINESS, HANS. LOOK WHO CAME WHILE YOU WERE IN THE SHOP.

JOHANN MIER... MY OLD FRIEND! BUT I THOUGHT YOU WERE IN HEIDELBERG.



I HAVE SOLD MY BUSINESS, HANS, AND I'M RETURNING TO DORFSTADT TO RETIRE. MY DOCTOR TELLS ME I HAVE BUT A FEW MORE YEARS TO LIVE.

OH, I'M SORRY TO HEAR THAT, MY FRIEND!



LATER IN THE EVENING, AFTER SUPPER...

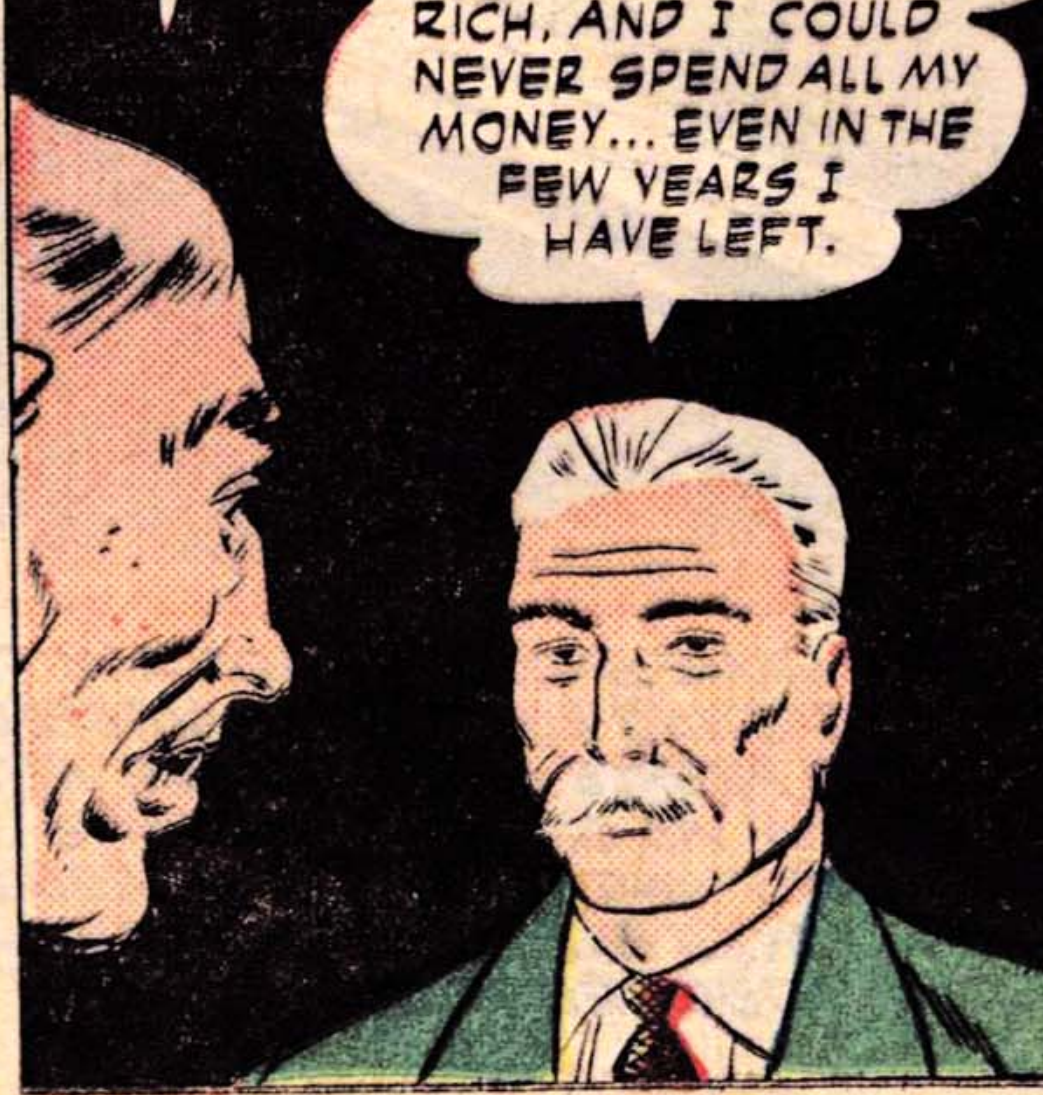
YOU SHOULD NOT FEEL BADLY, MY FRIEND. YOU HAVE LIVED A GOOD LIFE!

I ENVY YOU, HANS. I HAVE NO WIFE... NO RELATIVES.



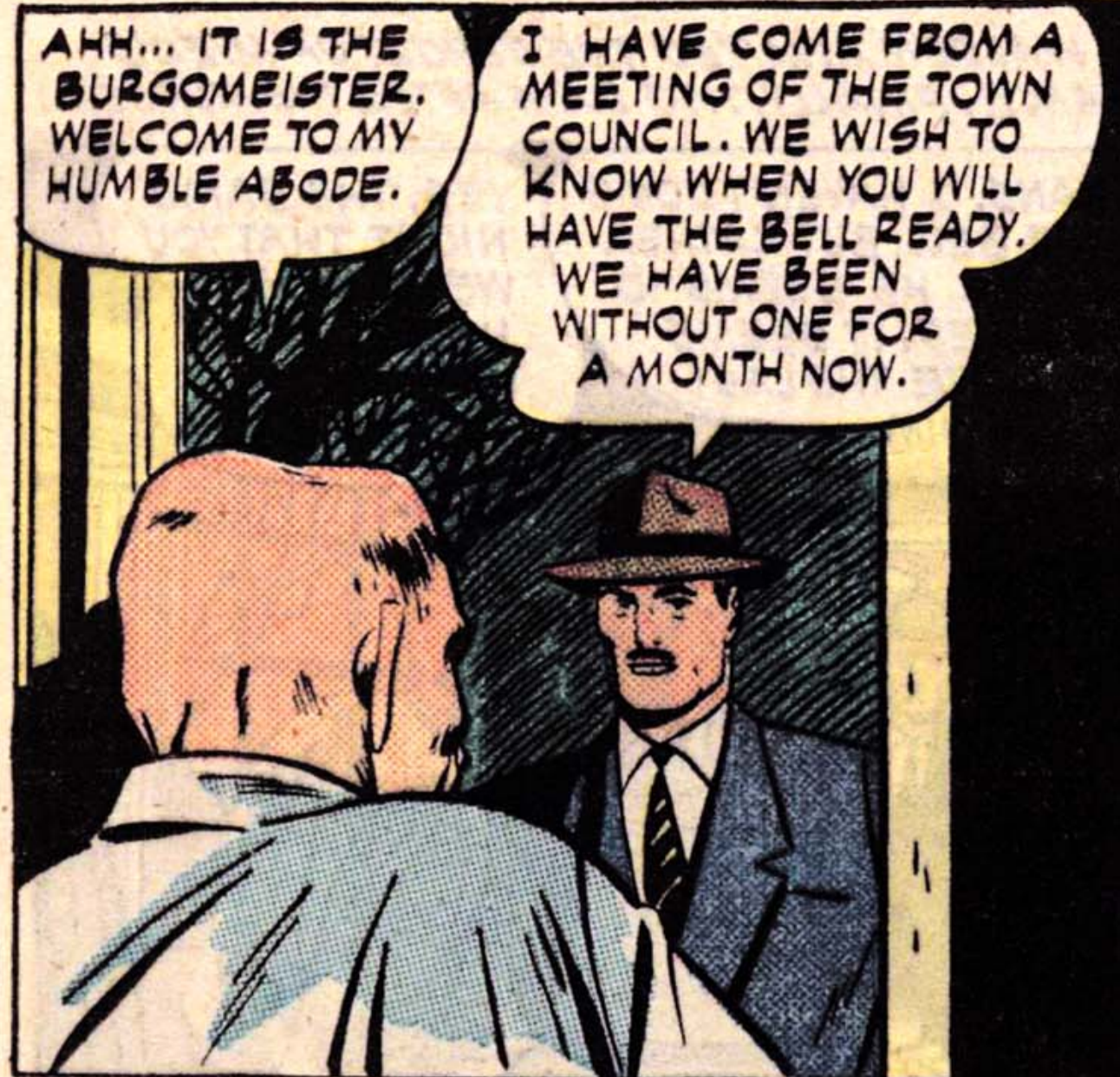
AHH! BUT YOU HAVE FRIENDS, JOHANN!

YES, YOU ARE MY DEAREST FRIEND, HANS, AND FOR THAT REASON I HAVE MADE YOU MY ONLY HEIR. I'M QUITE RICH, AND I COULD NEVER SPEND ALL MY MONEY... EVEN IN THE FEW YEARS I HAVE LEFT.



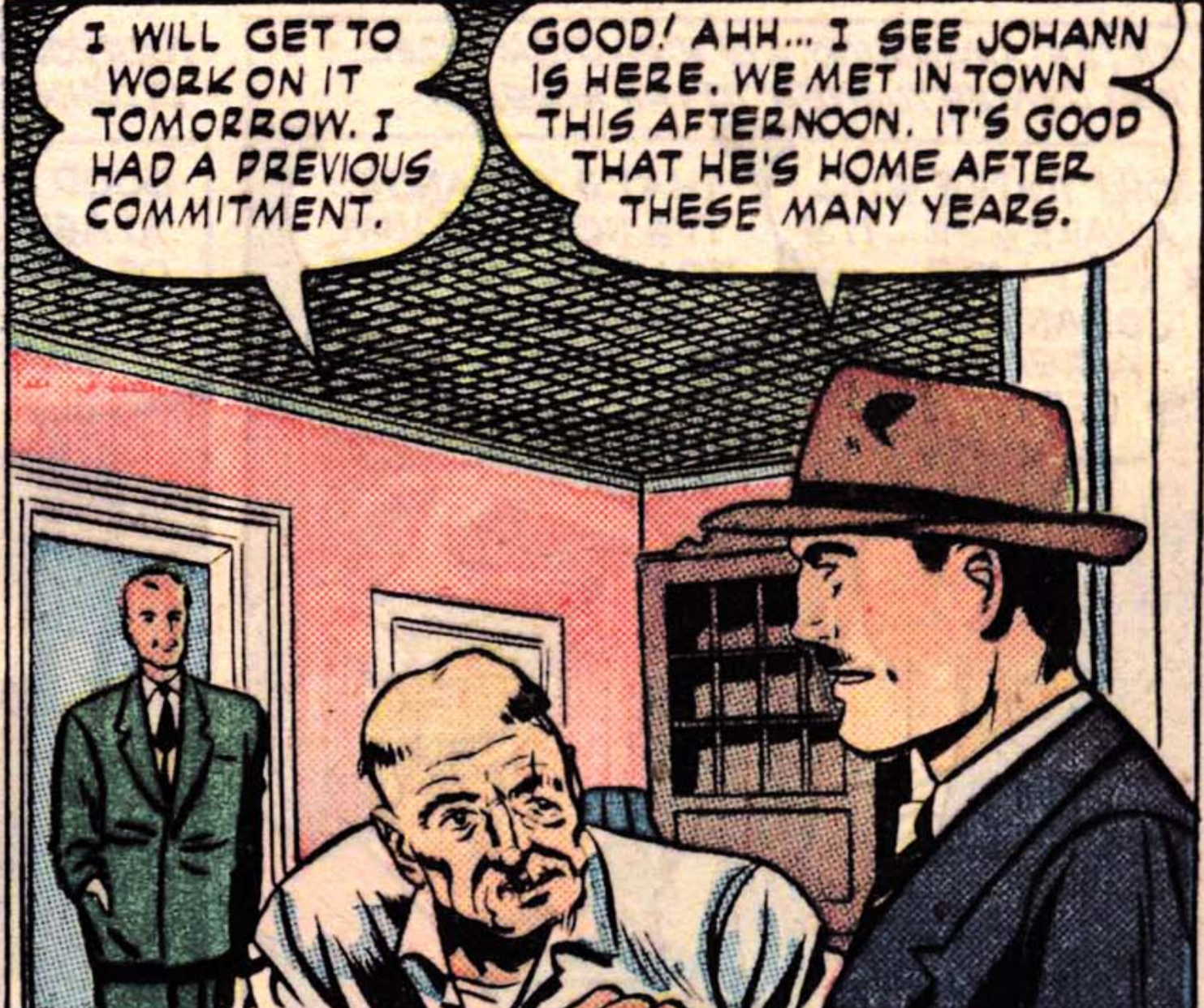
THAT IS TRULY A FINE GESTURE, GOOD FRIEND. LET US DRINK A TOAST TO YOUR HEALTH! A KNOCK! WHO WOULD CALL AT THIS HOUR?





AHH... IT IS THE BURGOMEISTER. WELCOME TO MY HUMBLE ABODE.

I HAVE COME FROM A MEETING OF THE TOWN COUNCIL. WE WISH TO KNOW WHEN YOU WILL HAVE THE BELL READY. WE HAVE BEEN WITHOUT ONE FOR A MONTH NOW.



I WILL GET TO WORK ON IT TOMORROW. I HAD A PREVIOUS COMMITMENT.

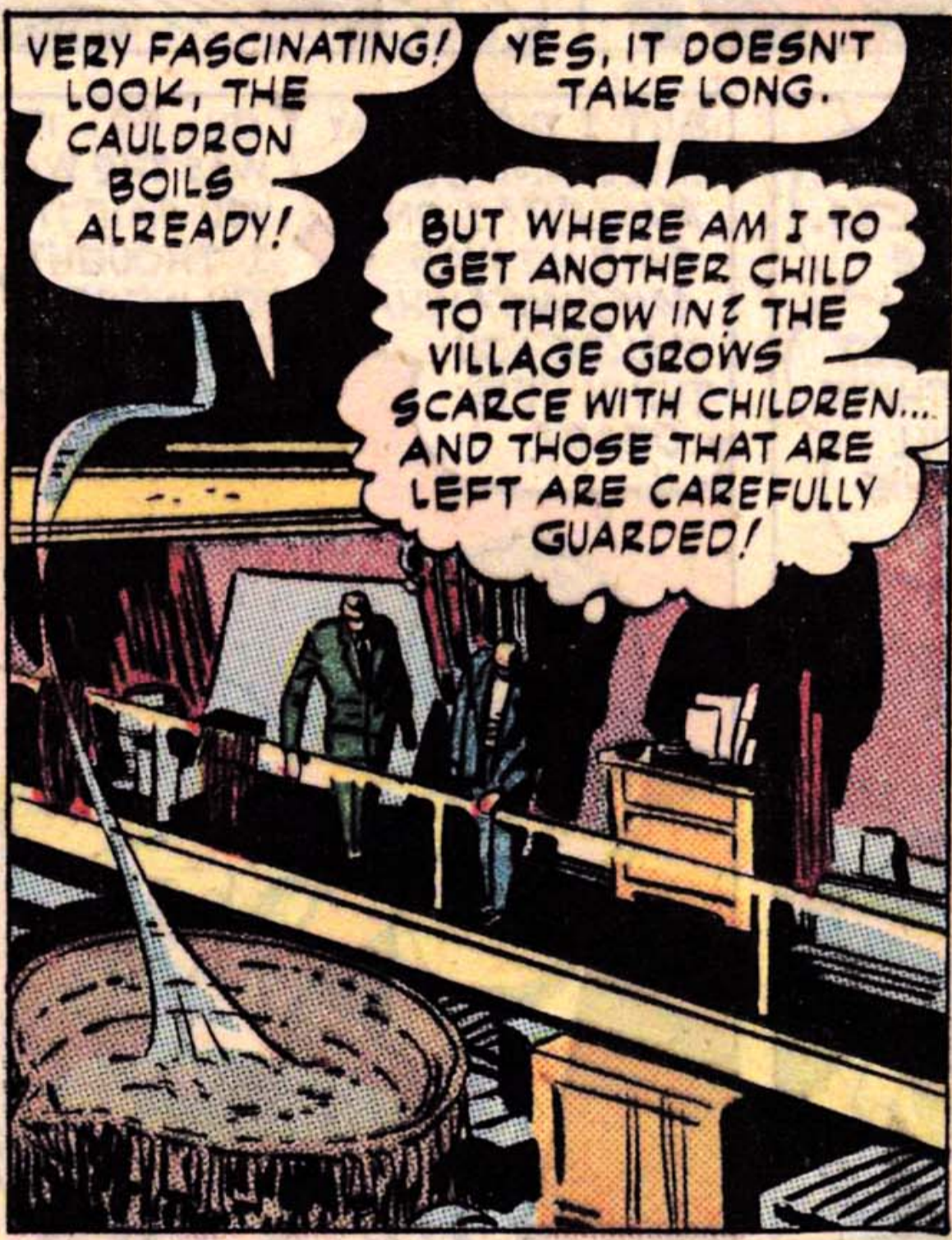
GOOD! AHH... I SEE JOHANN IS HERE. WE MET IN TOWN THIS AFTERNOON. IT'S GOOD THAT HE'S HOME AFTER THESE MANY YEARS.



AFTER THE BURGOMEISTER LEFT...

IT'S STRANGE, HANS. BUT IN ALL THE YEARS WE'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER, I'VE NEVER SEEN YOUR SHOP. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE HOW BELLS ARE MADE.

BY ALL MEANS! COME! IT IS ONLY 10:30!



VERY FASCINATING! LOOK, THE CAULDRON BOILS ALREADY!

YES, IT DOESN'T TAKE LONG.

BUT WHERE AM I TO GET ANOTHER CHILD TO THROW IN? THE VILLAGE GROWS SCARCE WITH CHILDREN... AND THOSE THAT ARE LEFT ARE CAREFULLY GUARDED!



PERHAPS MIER WOULD SERVE THE PURPOSE AS WELL. I MUST FINISH THE TOWN HALL BELL SOON, AND WITH MIER AS MY SECRET INGREDIENT, I WOULD ACCOMPLISH A DOUBLE PURPOSE! I WOULD INHERIT HIS MONEY!



FROM EVERYWHERE I HEAR ABOUT YOUR WONDERFUL BELL-CASTING, HANS. THEY SAY THAT YOU HAVE A SECRET INGREDIENT THAT MAKES YOUR BELLS SOUND LIKE THE VOICES OF ANGELS. WHAT IS IT THAT YOU DO?

YOU SHALL SOON SEE!



BOIL, MIER... BOIL! NOW YOU KNOW MY SECRET INGREDIENT! AND I HAVE YOUR FORTUNE! BUT I MUST PRETEND TO KNOW NOTHING... TO AVOID SUSPICION! I SHALL WAIT UNTIL YOUR DISAPPEARANCE IS REPORTED! HA! HA!

AFTER FINISHING HIS FIENDISH WORK, WALDEN RETURNED TO THE HOUSE...



OH! YOU'RE STILL AWAKE? ER... IT'S VERY LATE. JOHANN HAS ALREADY LEFT.

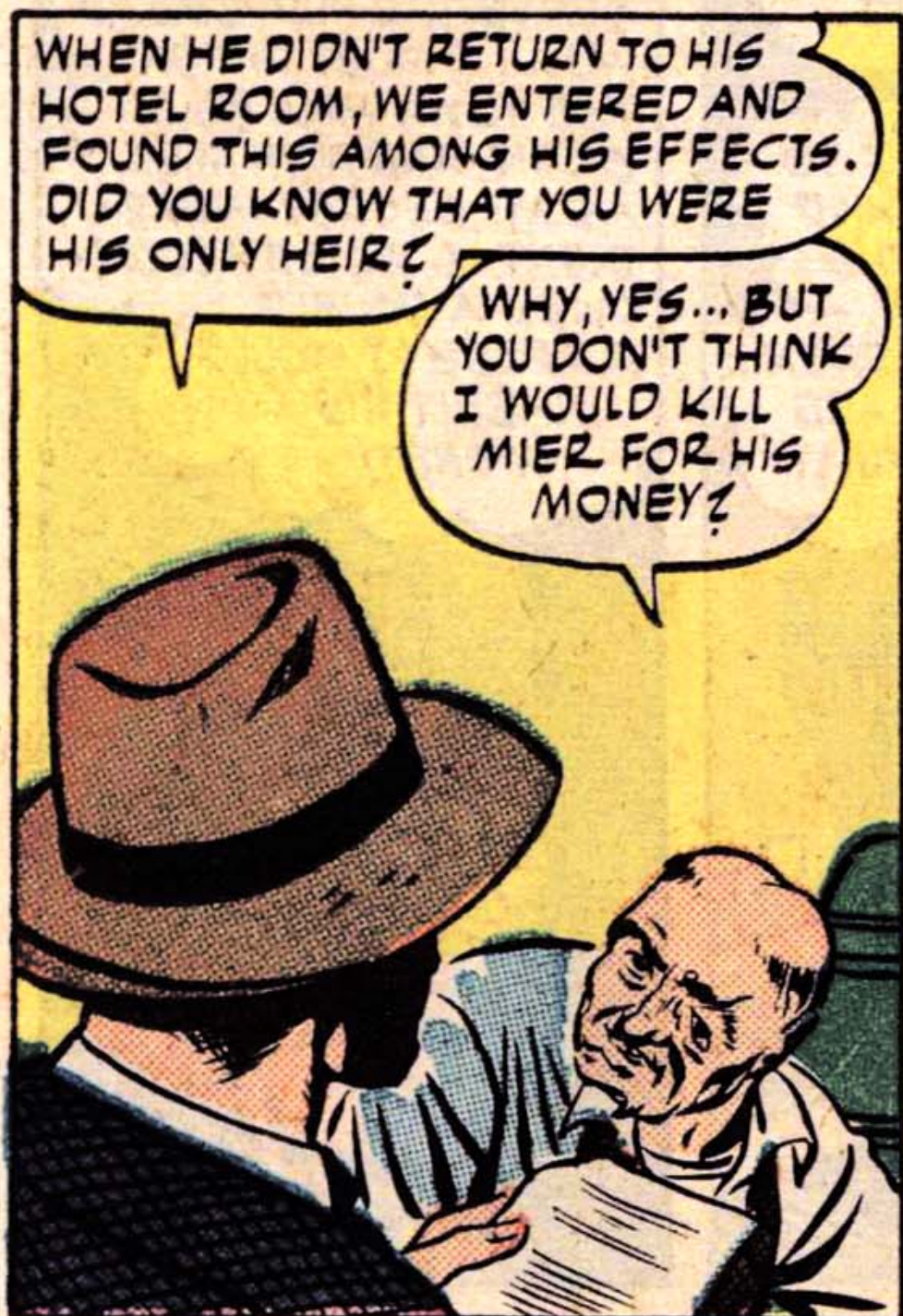
THAT'S STRANGE. IT'S NOT LIKE HIM TO LEAVE WITHOUT SAYING GOOD NIGHT.

NERVOUSLY, WALDEN AWAITED THE REPORT OF MIER'S DISAPPEARANCE. FINALLY, TWO DAYS AFTER THE MURDER...



GOOD DAY, HANS. I HAVEN'T COME TO ASK OF THE BELL, BUT RATHER OF JOHANN MIER. HE SEEMS TO HAVE DISAPPEARED. IT SEEMS THAT YOU WERE THE LAST TO SEE HIM.

YES, THE SAME NIGHT THAT YOU WERE AT MY HOUSE. BUT HE LEFT SOON AFTER YOU.



WHEN HE DIDN'T RETURN TO HIS HOTEL ROOM, WE ENTERED AND FOUND THIS AMONG HIS EFFECTS. DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU WERE HIS ONLY HEIR?

WHY, YES... BUT YOU DON'T THINK I WOULD KILL MIER FOR HIS MONEY?



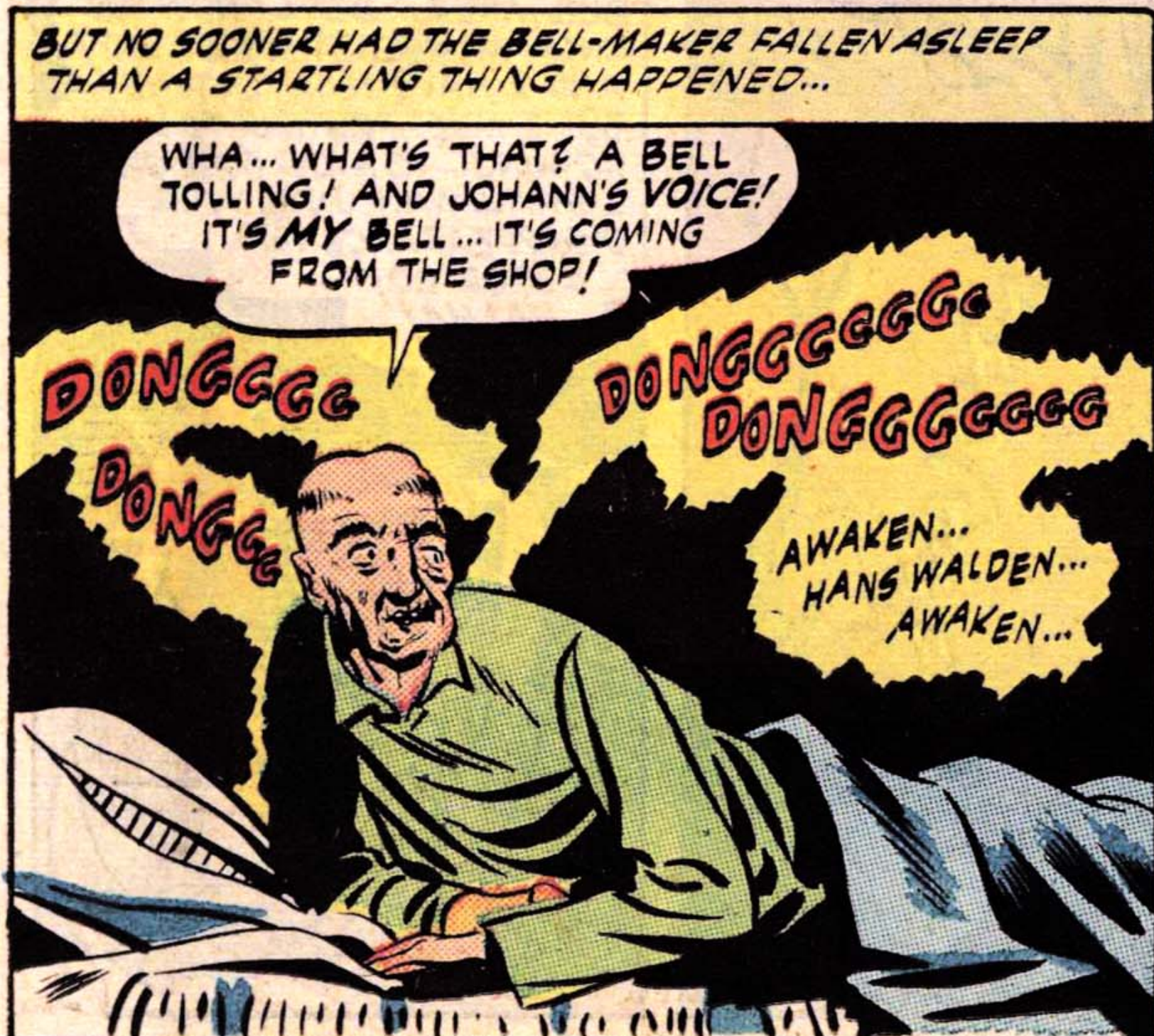
BUT I DIDN'T SAY MIER HAD BEEN KILLED! I ONLY SAID HE WAS MISSING! WHAT MAKES YOU THINK HE'S DEAD?

OH... ER... IT WAS THE WAY YOU SAID IT. I THOUGHT YOU WERE SUGGESTING...



THAT NIGHT, AFTER FINISHING THE CASTING OF THE BELL, WALDEN RETIRED...

I ALMOST MADE A DANGEROUS SLIP TODAY... BUT I DON'T THINK THE BURGO-MEISTER SUSPECTS ANYTHING. YES... I'M PERFECTLY SAFE!



BUT NO SOONER HAD THE BELL-MAKER FALLEN ASLEEP THAN A STARTLING THING HAPPENED...

WHA... WHAT'S THAT? A BELL TOLLING! AND JOHANN'S VOICE! IT'S MY BELL... IT'S COMING FROM THE SHOP!

DONGGGGGG
DONGGGGGGG
DONGGGGGGG

AWAKEN...
HANS WALDEN...
AWAKEN...



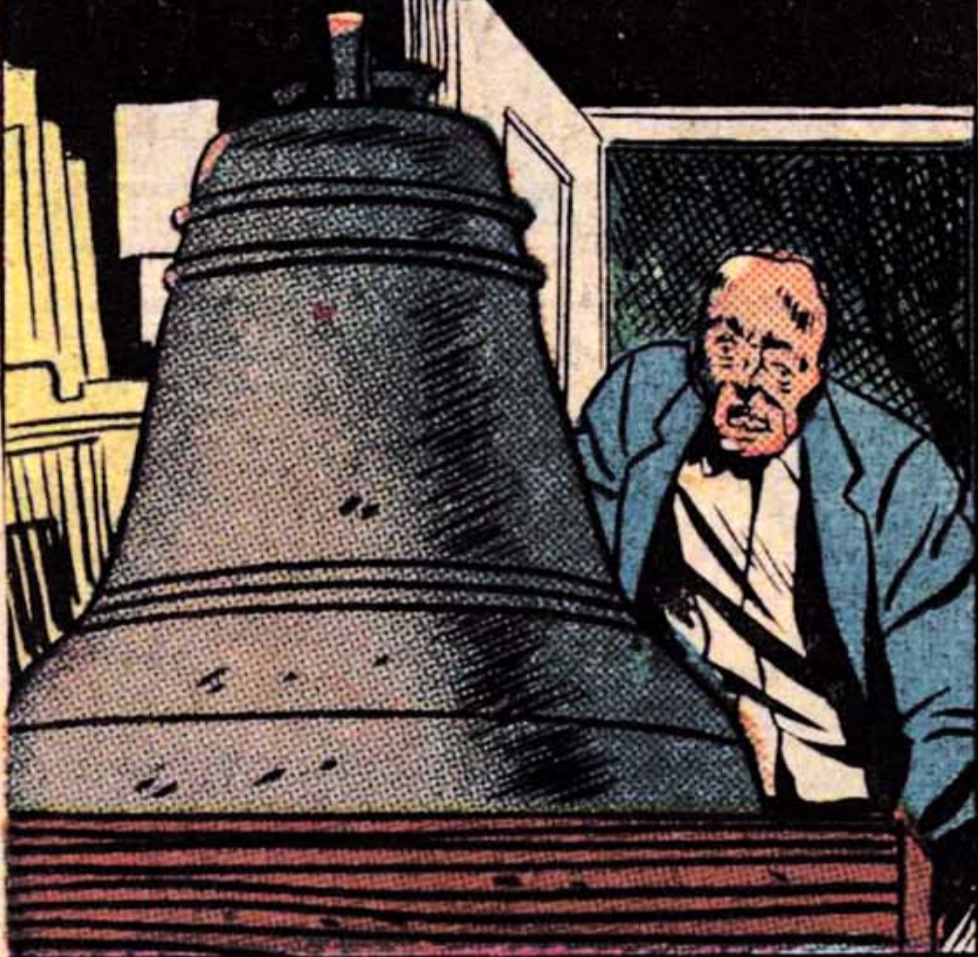
THIS CANNOT BE! SOMEONE IN THE SHOP IS RINGING THE BELL... BUT THAT VOICE...

DONGGGG
DONGGGG

AWAKEN...
HANS WALDEN...

NO ONE IS HERE... BUT IT CAN'T BE! THE BELL IS TOLLING BY ITSELF! STOP! DO YOU HEAR ME? STOP TOLLING! DO YOU WANT THEM TO FIND ME OUT?

DONGGGGG
DONGGGGG



IT'S STOPPED. BUT HOW COULD IT RING BY ITSELF? WAIT... THAT VOICE... IT'S JOHANN'S VOICE!

YOU WILL KNOW NO REST TILL I AM AVENGED, HANS WALDEN. I SHALL TOLL EVERY NIGHT AT 11:00, THE EXACT HOUR THAT YOU KILLED ME, UNTIL YOU ADMIT YOUR GUILT!



NO... NO! IT CAN'T BE! JOHANN IS DEAD... I'M IMAGINING IT ALL! THAT'S IT... I'M IMAGINING IT ALL!



THE NEXT DAY, ON AN IMPULSE, WALDEN DECIDED TO LOOK INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF COLLECTING HIS INHERITANCE...

JOHANN MIER WAS MY DEAREST FRIEND. I'M SURE HE MUST BE DEAD. HE WOULD NOT JUST VANISH WITHOUT TELLING ME WHERE HE WAS GOING. AND I THINK I SHOULD BE GIVEN THE MONEY!

MIER MAY VERY WELL BE DEAD... BUT WE NEED PROOF FIRST!



YOU SEE, WITHOUT PROOF, WE MUST ASSUME HE IS STILL ALIVE. ACCORDING TO GERMAN LAW, A MAN CANNOT BE CONSIDERED DEAD UNTIL TEN YEARS AFTER HIS DISAPPEARANCE... AND IT TAKES THAT LONG FOR HIS HEIRS TO COLLECT HIS MONEY!

WHAT?!



TEN YEARS! I'M TRAPPED. I CANNOT TELL THEM, AND THEY WON'T GIVE ME THE MONEY... WAIT! WHAT'S THAT? THE BELL AGAIN!

DONGGGGG
DONGGGGG



I WON'T GO OUT... I WON'T LISTEN TO IT! I'LL SHUT OUT THE SOUND! OHH... HOW TERRIBLE IT SOUNDS! IT'S NOT LIKE THE OTHER BELLS! IT'S PIERCING MY EAR DRUMS!





HANS WALDEN... I WILL HAUNT YOUR EVERY HOUR TILL YOU CONFESS YOUR SINS!

DONGGGGGGG

DONGGGGGGG

DONGGG
DONGGG

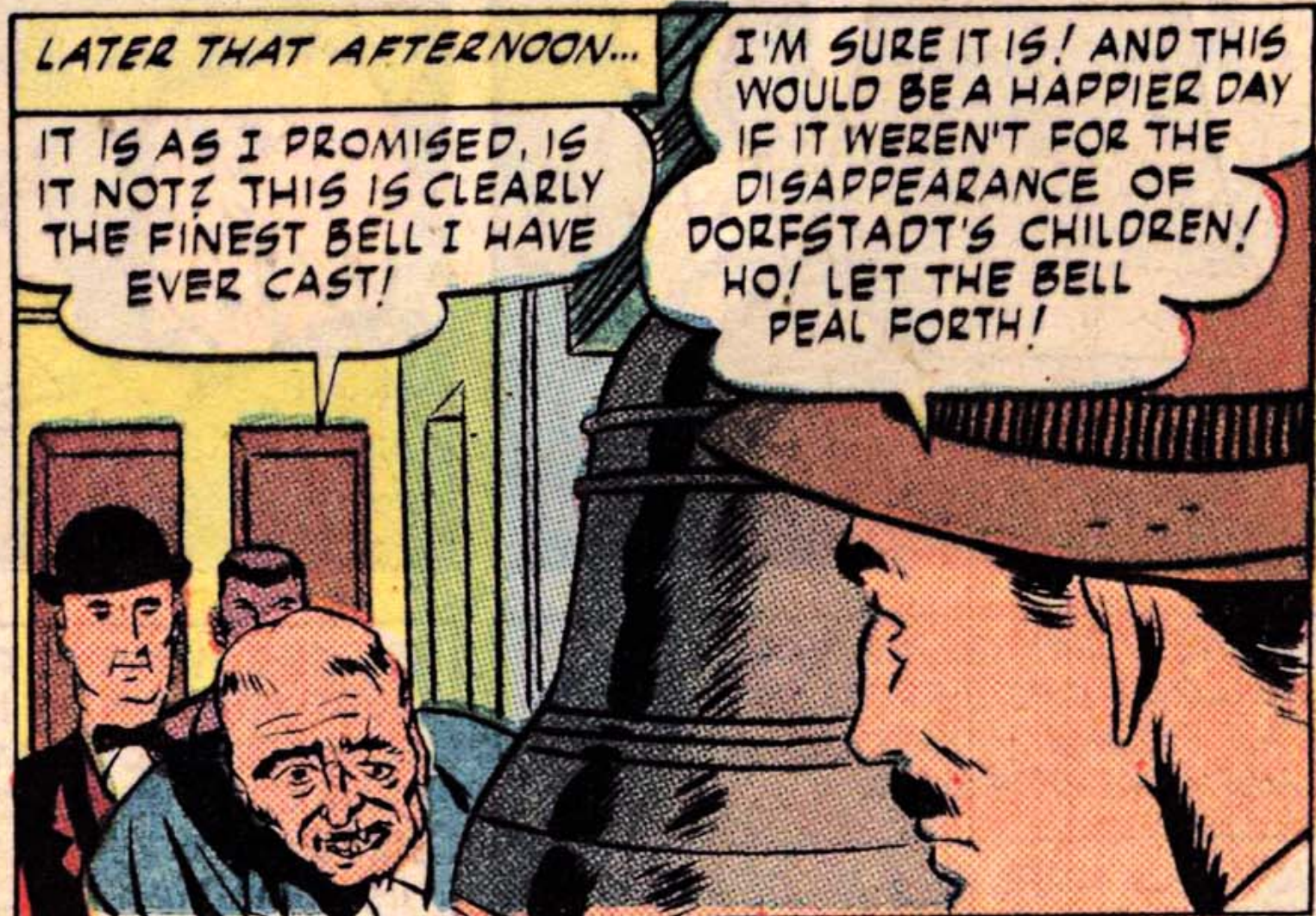
NO! STOP THE BELL FROM TOLLING! MY HEAD IS SPLITTING!



THE NEXT DAY, WALDEN RESOLVED ON A PLAN...

I'LL RID MYSELF OF YOU! I'LL FINISH UP THE BELL AND HAVE IT PLACED IN THE TOWN HALL.

IT WILL DO NO GOOD! YOU CANNOT ESCAPE MY VENGEANCE!



LATER THAT AFTERNOON...

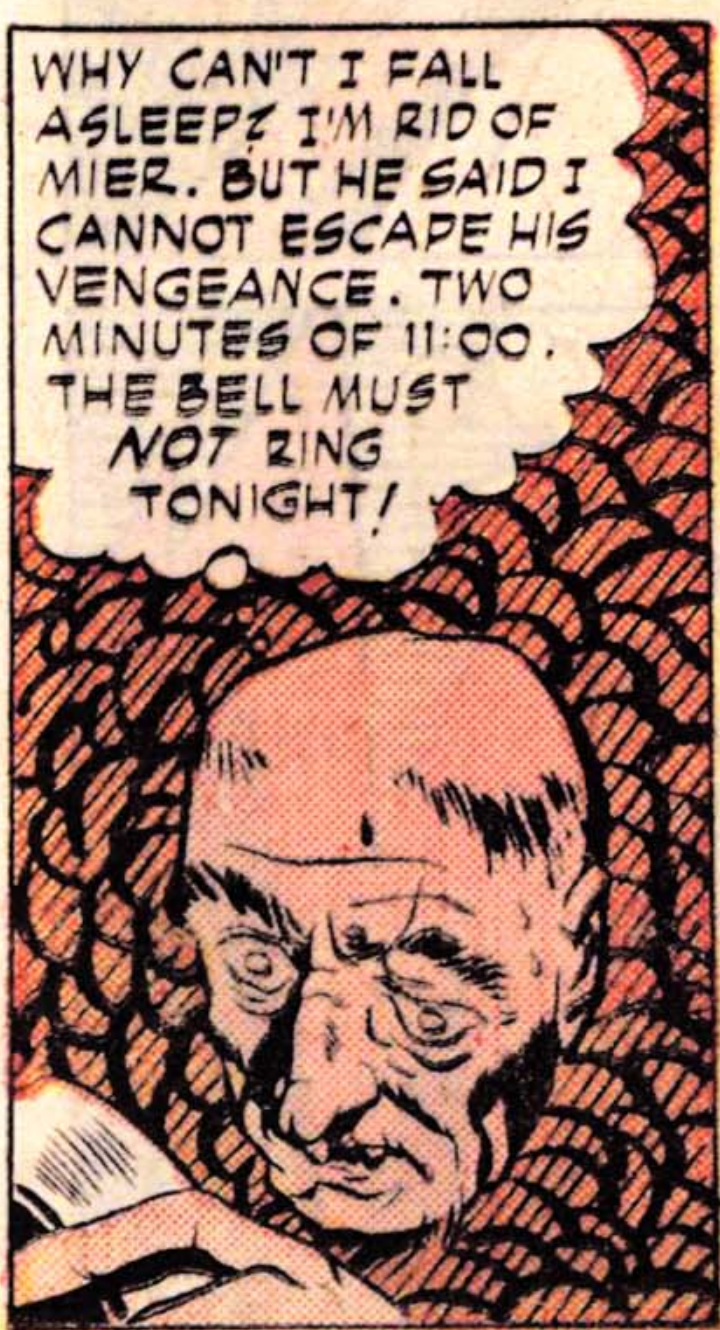
IT IS AS I PROMISED, IS IT NOT? THIS IS CLEARLY THE FINEST BELL I HAVE EVER CAST!

I'M SURE IT IS! AND THIS WOULD BE A HAPPIER DAY IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE DISAPPEARANCE OF DORFSTADT'S CHILDREN! HO! LET THE BELL PEAL FORTH!

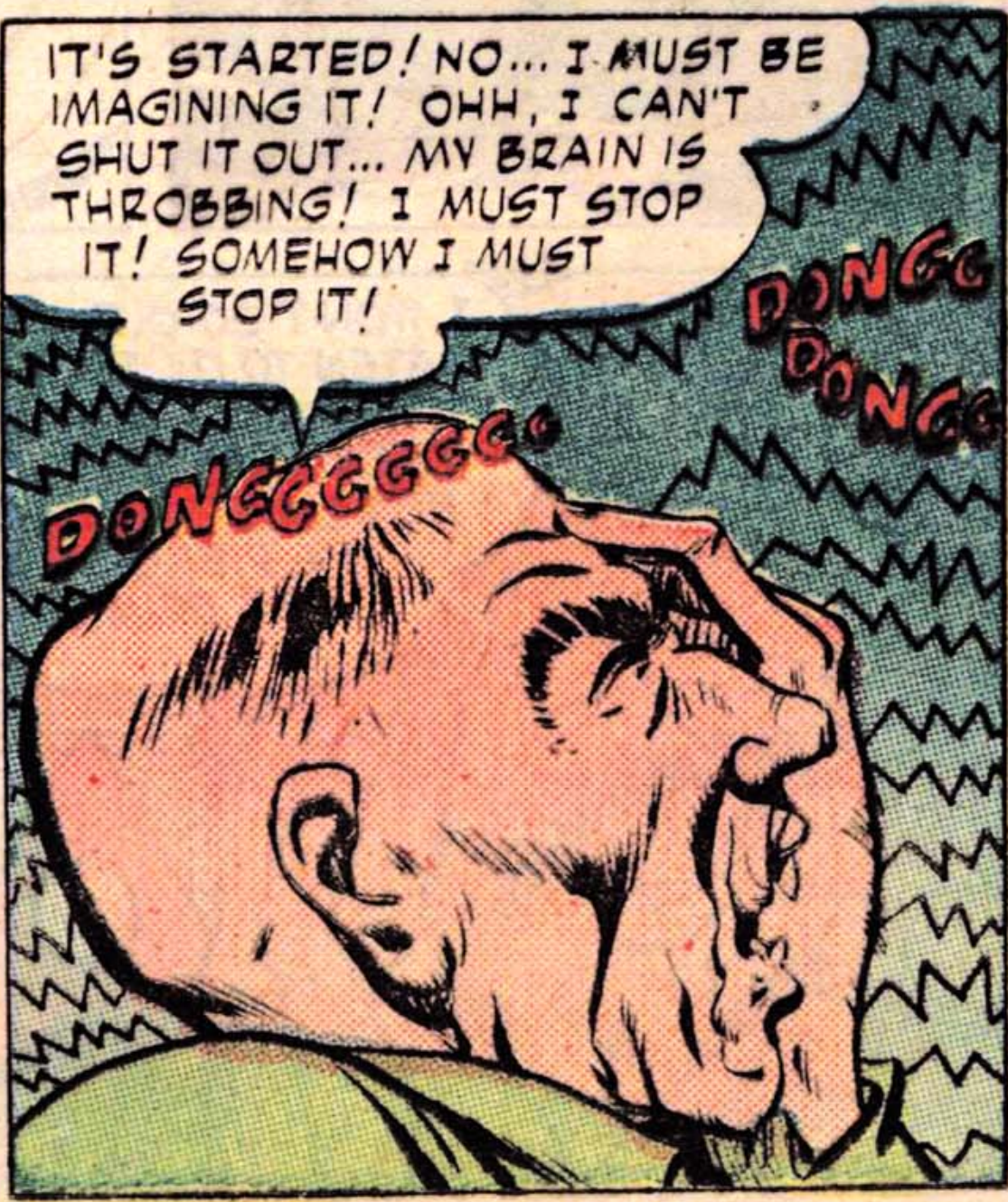


NO! THE BELL MUST NOT BE RUNG EXCEPT WHEN NECESSARY! RECALL! LEGEND DECREES THAT THE BELL IS ONLY TO BE TOLLED FOR A PROCLAMATION OR WHEN AN INJUSTICE HAS BEEN DONE!

VERY TRUE. DO NOT LET THE BELL PEAL!



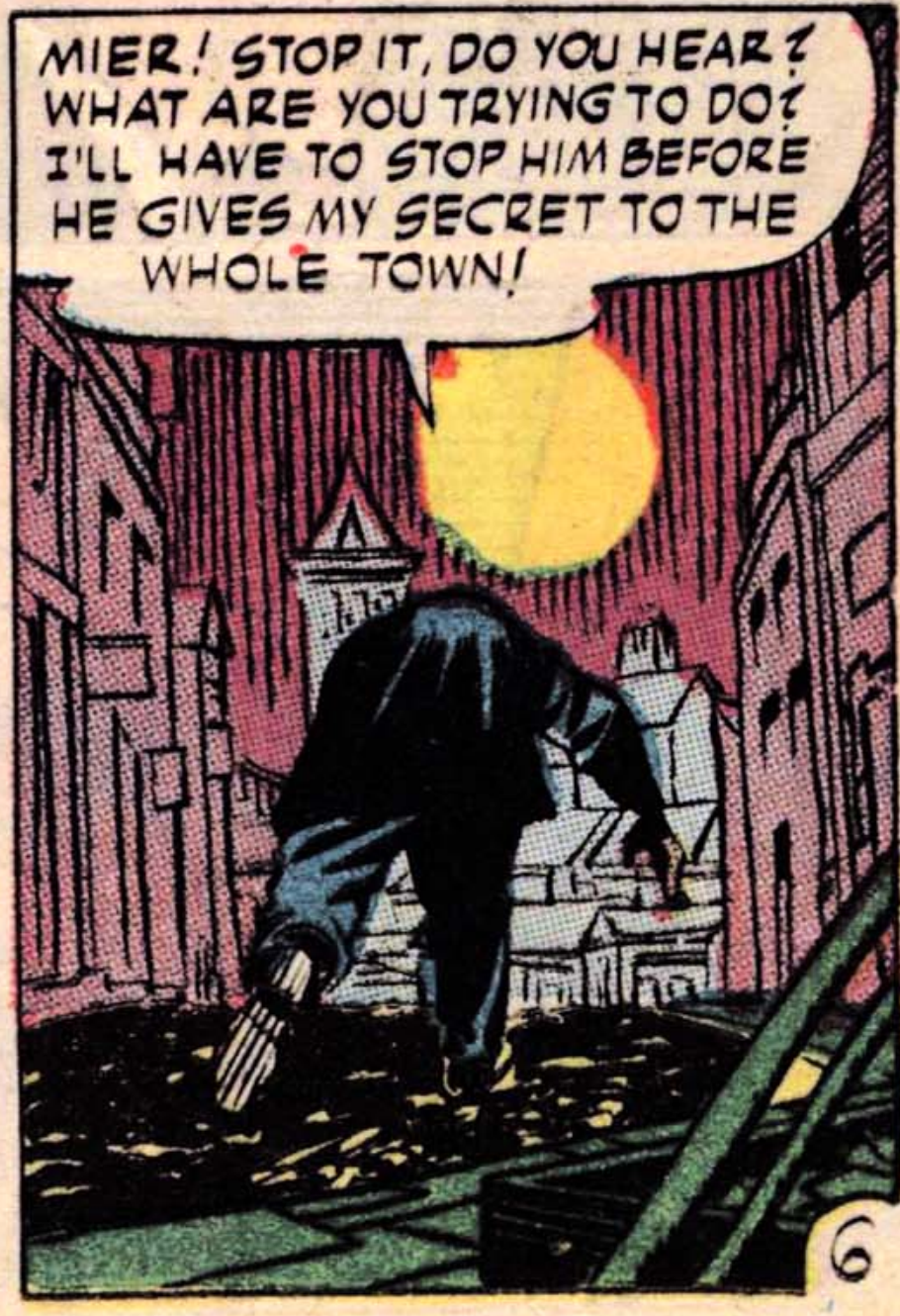
WHY CAN'T I FALL ASLEEP? I'M RID OF MIER. BUT HE SAID I CANNOT ESCAPE HIS VENGEANCE. TWO MINUTES OF 11:00. THE BELL MUST NOT RING TONIGHT!



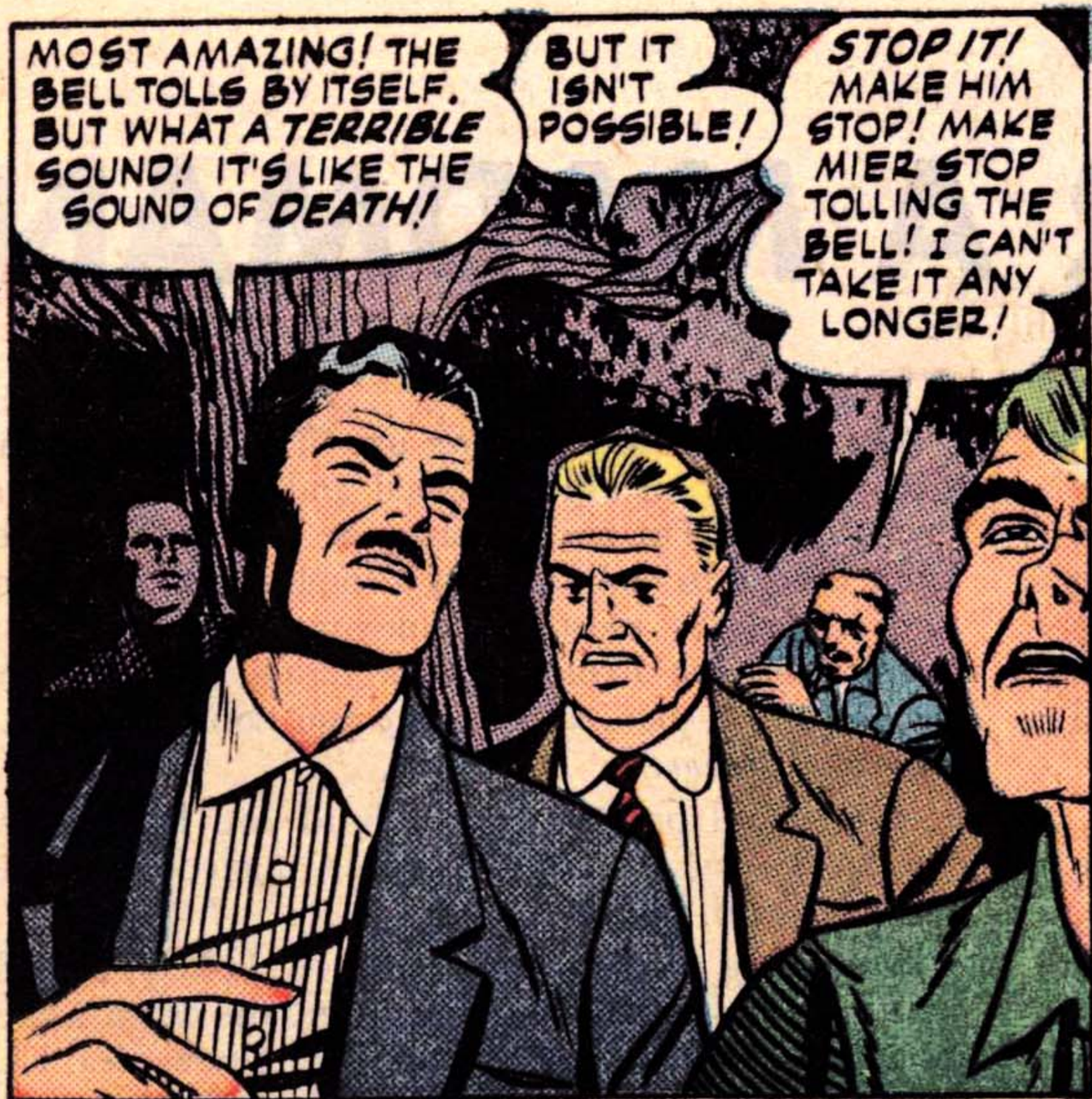
IT'S STARTED! NO... I MUST BE IMAGINING IT! OHH, I CAN'T SHUT IT OUT... MY BRAIN IS THROBBING! I MUST STOP IT! SOMEHOW I MUST STOP IT!

DONGGG
DONGGG

DONGGGGGGG



MIER! STOP IT, DO YOU HEAR? WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO? I'LL HAVE TO STOP HIM BEFORE HE GIVES MY SECRET TO THE WHOLE TOWN!



MOST AMAZING! THE BELL TOLLS BY ITSELF. BUT WHAT A TERRIBLE SOUND! IT'S LIKE THE SOUND OF DEATH!

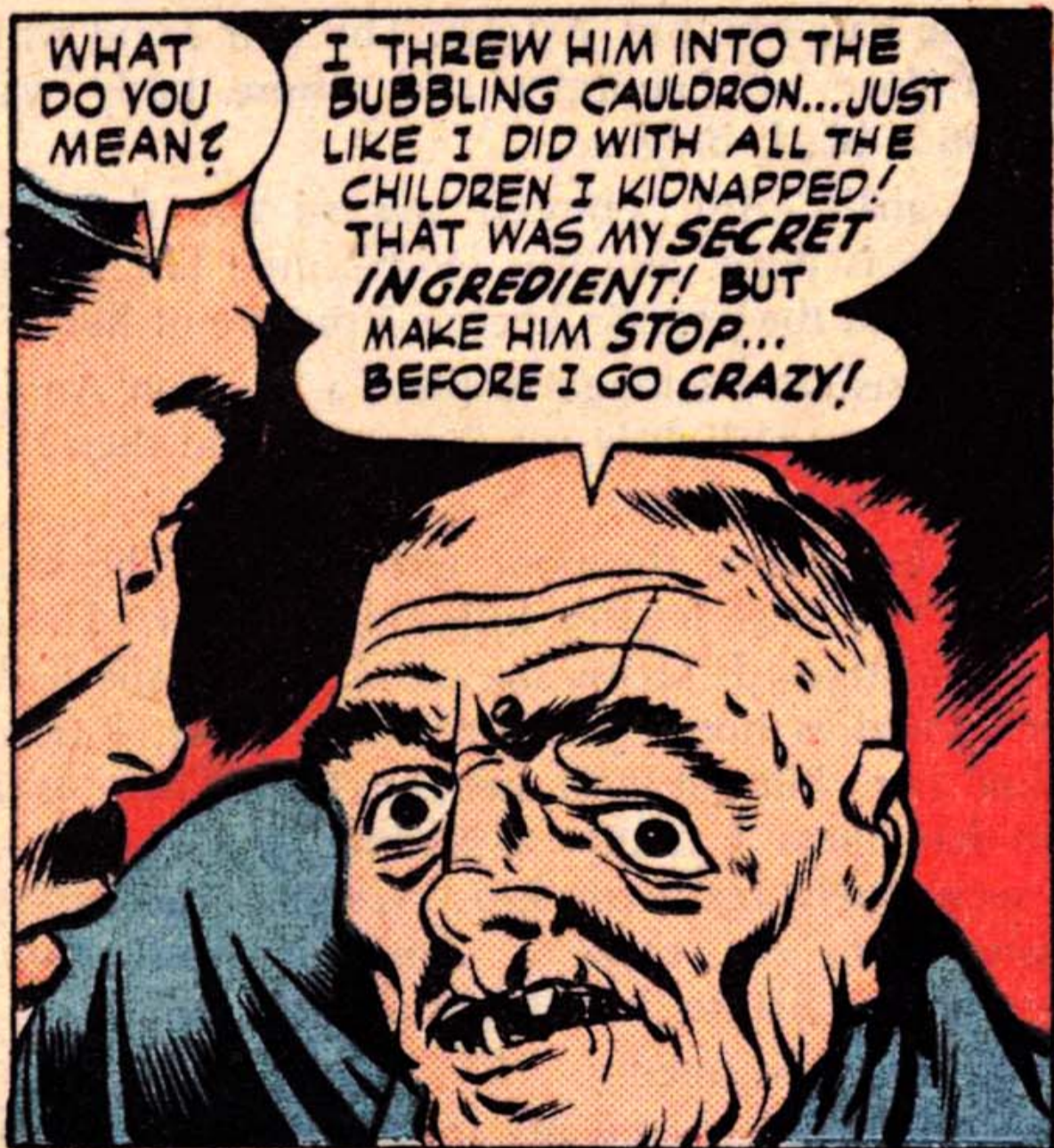
BUT IT ISN'T POSSIBLE!

STOP IT! MAKE HIM STOP! MAKE MIER STOP TOLLING THE BELL! I CAN'T TAKE IT ANY LONGER!



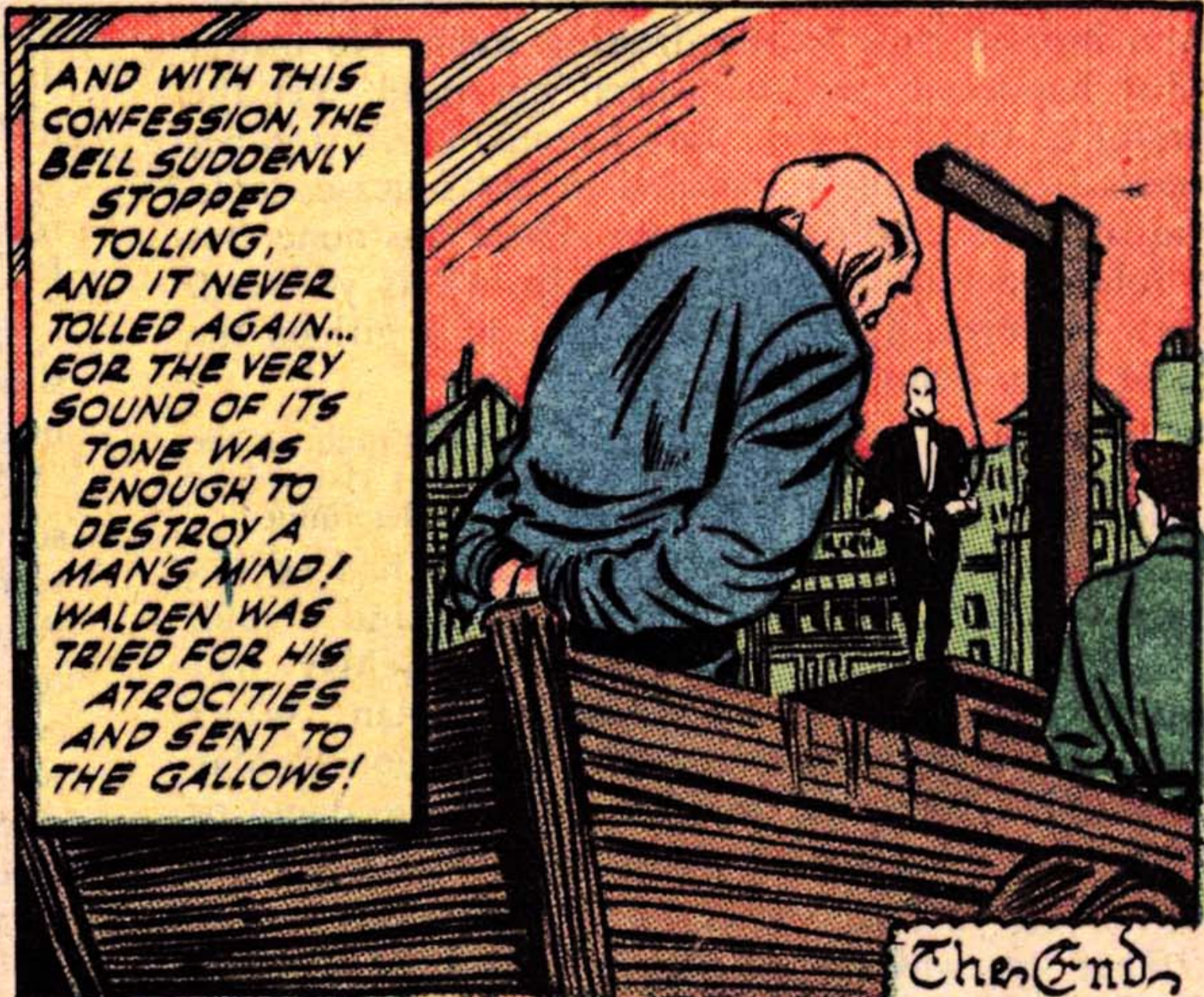
MIER? WHAT HAS HE GOT TO DO WITH THE BELL TOLLING BY ITSELF? WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

IT'S MIER! HE'S DOING IT! HE'S IN THE BELL!



WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

I THREW HIM INTO THE BUBBLING CAULDRON... JUST LIKE I DID WITH ALL THE CHILDREN I KIDNAPPED! THAT WAS MY SECRET INGREDIENT! BUT MAKE HIM STOP... BEFORE I GO CRAZY!



AND WITH THIS CONFESSION, THE BELL SUDDENLY STOPPED TOLLING, AND IT NEVER TOLLED AGAIN... FOR THE VERY SOUND OF ITS TONE WAS ENOUGH TO DESTROY A MAN'S MIND! WALDEN WAS TRIED FOR HIS ATROCITIES AND SENT TO THE GALLOWES!

The End

SUR-PRIZE CONTEST

- 1ST PRIZE** • \$ **15⁰⁰**
- 2ND PRIZE** • • \$ **5⁰⁰**
- 3RD PRIZE** • • • \$ **3⁰⁰**
- 4TH PRIZE** • • • • \$ **2⁰⁰**

WIN A CASH PRIZE FOR JUST A SHORT LETTER OF NOT MORE THAN 150 WORDS TELLING US WHICH STORY YOU LIKE BEST, 2ND BEST, 3RD BEST, AND WHY. ALSO WHICH OTHER MAGAZINES YOU READ REGULARLY.

SEND IT TO US POSTMARKED NO LATER THAN JANUARY 15, 1951, ALONG WITH YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS AND AGE. IN CASE OF A TIE DUPLICATE PRIZES WILL BE AWARDED. **DO IT NOW!! HURRY!!**

CREEPY STORIES — 23 WEST 47 ST. N.Y. 19, N.Y.C.

MODEL FOR A MADMAN

Wild, horrible emotions surged through her mind. She was a prisoner and in the next room a girl—lay dead! Or was she dead? Ann summoned every ounce of courage she possessed, tiptoed into the small room and slowly approached the figure on the bed. Very carefully she reached out until her finger-tips touched the girl's face. Then she hurriedly drew her hand away. The flesh was cold as ice.

This girl was stone dead.

Ann's eyes widened in sheer horror. Fascinated, they swept the dead girl's body until she saw a bluish mark on the left ankle. There were two more around each wrist. What did they mean? Why was this dead girl here?

LeMay coughed somewhere out in the corridor. Ann hurried back to the dressing room. No matter what happened, she must keep her head. Yet the horror of the dead girl's face haunted her, made her hands tremble. She rummaged in her suitcase, looking for some kind of a weapon. There was none, but a folded newspaper, which she hadn't as yet read, drew her eyes. There was a picture of a girl on the front page. Below it was a concise story.

Myrtle Barnes, convicted murderess, died last night in the electric chair. Early this morning her body was claimed by some relative whose exact identity was never determined.

The story went on in detail, but Ann had no desire to read further. She was trembling and a cold, unaccountable lethargy gripped her. LeMay had claimed the body of an executed woman. Why? Ann's mind answered the unspoken question. LeMay painted only portraits of women who were dying or dead. He needed models—dead models—from which to work.

That was why his art was acclaimed for its grim detail. That was why Cleopatra had aroused such attention. His Mata Hari so terribly real. LeMay had painted well, loyal to the last agonizing expression on the face of history's famous women.

Ann took a firm grip on her nerves. She parted the curtains and walked out into the studio itself. LeMay was nowhere in sight. Ann listened, heard no sound of his feet and moved quietly toward the shielded corner of the room. She parted the curtains and dropped them again with a gasp of terror.

There was a half finished portrait behind the curtain—a portrait and the set upon which the model had posed. The picture depicted a blonde woman, strapped in an electric chair with each minute line of her terror laden face brought out as if by magic.

Ann sensed, rather than heard LeMay's presence in the room behind her. She spun around, one hand near her throat, her eyes alight in horror. But LeMay was quietly seated in a chair, studying a book.

He spoke without looking up. "I'm sorry you saw that, my dear. It isn't finished and I doubt that it ever shall be. For once I was quite in error. You see, for a woman to really portray a combination of beauty and terror, she must be something of a martyr, a heroine, against a colorful background. Take this for instance." He glanced up. "Are you familiar with *Le Morte d'Arthur*?"

Ann could only shake her head and look vainly for an avenue of escape. LeMay quoted from the book he held.

Something in Ann's mind clicked. LeMay, a madman with only a passion for painting the death scenes of famous women, had contrived for a new idea. Her clothes—those of King Arthur's time! She was to be Elaine, the Fair Maid of Astolat. The Fair Maid who died for love of Launcelot and whose body was placed on a black barge.

"That girl"—Ann pointed toward the dressing room. "She is dead. She was electrocuted last night. I—I read it in the papers. There's a picture of her—"

LeMay was close enough to place a hand on Ann's shoulder. It rested lightly for a moment and then the fingers clamped tightly.

"But I have done the poor girl a favor," he said suavely. "She was legally killed last night. There were no relatives. It seems she murdered all she had. Potter's Field is not a pleasant place to lie. I tried to paint her, but—it will not succeed. There is a certain harshness I cannot overcome. But in you—with such finely textured skin, eyes that can betray exquisite pain. Ah, there is something else again. You—shall be Elaine, Fair Maid of Astolat."

"No," Ann screamed.

"But think," he waved his arm, "a barge, covered in somber black with a bier upon which lies the body of Elaine, dressed in white. Her features utterly composed for she died a willing, calm death for love of Launcelot. It will be a sensation, I tell you, greater than Cleopatra. You have seen that portrait, my dear?"

Ann tried to speak, but her tongue remained frozen to the roof of her mouth.

"Come," he took her arm in a grip that made her wince. They walked through two big rooms and into a third that was inky black. LeMay left her for a moment and Ann had an urge to flee; to run for the highest part of the house if no doors were open; no windows capable of being smashed. But it would gain her nothing. If she remained cool, there might be a chance.

LeMay struck a match and its yellow glow showed up the room as hung in dismal black velvet. The only piece of furniture was a small ebony table upon

which rested two pewter cocktail glasses. LeMay pulled a cord and a section of the drapery parted. Set in a wall recess about five feet deep were tall candelabras standing beside a full length portrait. LeMay touched the candle wicks with the match and slowly the gruesome portrait came in relief.

It was a masterpiece—but more of horror than art, although the art was astounding in itself. The central figure was a dark-haired woman, in the throes of death included by an asp which still squirmed in one hand. It was lifelike to an astonishing degree. Ann could almost hear the moans from the lips of the dying Cleopatra.

"I have been offered a fortune for it," LeMay boasted. "But sell—ah, never. Like the portrait I shall do of you—as Elaine, my dear. It will be greater than this for hers was a death of peace."

He walked over to the small table and picked up the cocktail glasses. Ann took one in a hand almost too palsied to grip it. Some of the liquor spilled over the rim and ran down her forearm.

LeMay said: "To Elaine!"

Ann didn't drink. She backed away slowly and LeMay followed her. With a savage bellow he emptied his glass and hurled it from him.

"You're going to kill me," Ann cried. "You'll kill me as you killed those others. That's why they are so vivid. Your models are real. The corpses you paint are real corpses."

"So then," LeMay said very softly, "is it not fitting that an artist so great as I should select my own type of model? What is life when your portrait shall exist into eternity? What is death compared to such honor, such glory? And it will not be hard — I promise you. For Elaine must look calm and serene in death. Come. Drink the cocktail and we'll discuss this."

Ann was whiter than the dress she wore. But the glass in her hand was steady now. Faced with certain death she collected her spinning wits.

"First," she spoke quietly, "let me see the Cleopatra again—I must be certain."

He bowed with an exaggerated grin of triumph on his face. Ann walked slowly toward the portrait. Unless she could think of an avenue for escape she was doomed. Somehow, LeMay had to be distracted and the villagers summoned. But how? The candles flickered as Ann brushed against them. She peered steadily up at the great canvas and repressed the shudder that stole over her.

Suddenly she spun around. "You—murderer," she cried. "You—who murder to gain your models. The girl who posed for Cleopatra—where did you find her? In an agency, as you found me. But that girl was my sister. My sister, do you hear me? I swore I'd kill the man who murdered her."

LeMay backed away. Ann hurled the cocktail at him. He ducked and gave vent to a screech of fear. Before he could advance on her or even watch her actions, Ann pulled the velvet drapes in front of the portrait, pulled them so that one burning candle's flame licked at the dry material. Then she raced past LeMay.

He was after her in a flash, roaring now in open lunacy. She hurled every article she could find at him, screamed her condemnation of him for a killer.

But he was not to be outdone now. Cleverly he maneuvered so that she was trapped. He advanced slowly.

"Fool—you shall die anyway. But you only make it difficult. The cocktail would have been easy. I must be careful not to mark your white throat. And it must be quick, lest a spasm of agony cross your face. Elaine died peacefully. There is no escape now. No escape!"

"Behind you," Ann screamed. "Fire! The Cleopatra is afire."

LeMay whirled and his mad screech rose above the slowly growing sound of licking flames. He hurled himself into the room, emerged a second later only to cover his face and plunge back into the inferno.

Ann raced to the front door. It was locked by several bolts. She pulled them back while her heart pounded furiously. Then she had the door open. A gust of cool, fresh air surged through the house. . . .

They found her staggering down the driveway. Two men helped her into a car. One wore a sheriff's badge. Fire apparatus streaked by heading for the house.

Ann told her story, but the skepticism she had expected didn't occur. The sheriff said, "We suspected something like that. In the morning we were going up there. He stole the body of that executed woman."

"He was mad," Ann said in a tired voice. "He tried to gain fame and couldn't succeed until his warped mind fell on the idea of painting models so horribly true to life or death. It worked and he became famous. It inspired him to paint other such portraits."

"And the girl was really your sister—the one you said posed for that picture?"

Ann shook her head. "No. When I realized LeMay was mad, I hit upon that idea to confuse him, to occupy his disordered mind. I didn't want him to see me set fire to the drapes. I knew he'd forget me and risk his life to get the Cleopatra. . . ."

Ann gave a little sigh and her eyes closed. The sheriff put a brawny, fatherly arm about her.

"I'm thinking," he told the driver of the car, "that LeMay will do his next painting in the deepest part of hell. Look at that house go!"

THE END

GHOST SHIP OF THE CARIBBEAN

WHEN BILL JOHNSON AND HIS BRIDE, ANNE, SET OUT ON THEIR HONEYMOON, THEY PLANNED A LEISURELY CRUISE THROUGH THE FLORIDA KEYS, BUT UNPREDICTABLE FATE INTERVENED IN THE FORM OF A SUDDEN TROPICAL HURRICANE AND THE EVENTS WHICH THEN TOOK PLACE WERE SO STRANGE AND BIZARRE THAT FEW PEOPLE WILL BELIEVE...EVEN BILL AND ANNE SOMETIMES THINK OF IT AS ONLY AN EVIL DREAM...UNTIL THEY REMEMBER THE PEARLS...BUT HERE ARE THE FACTS AS THEY HAPPENED! JUDGE FOR YOURSELF!

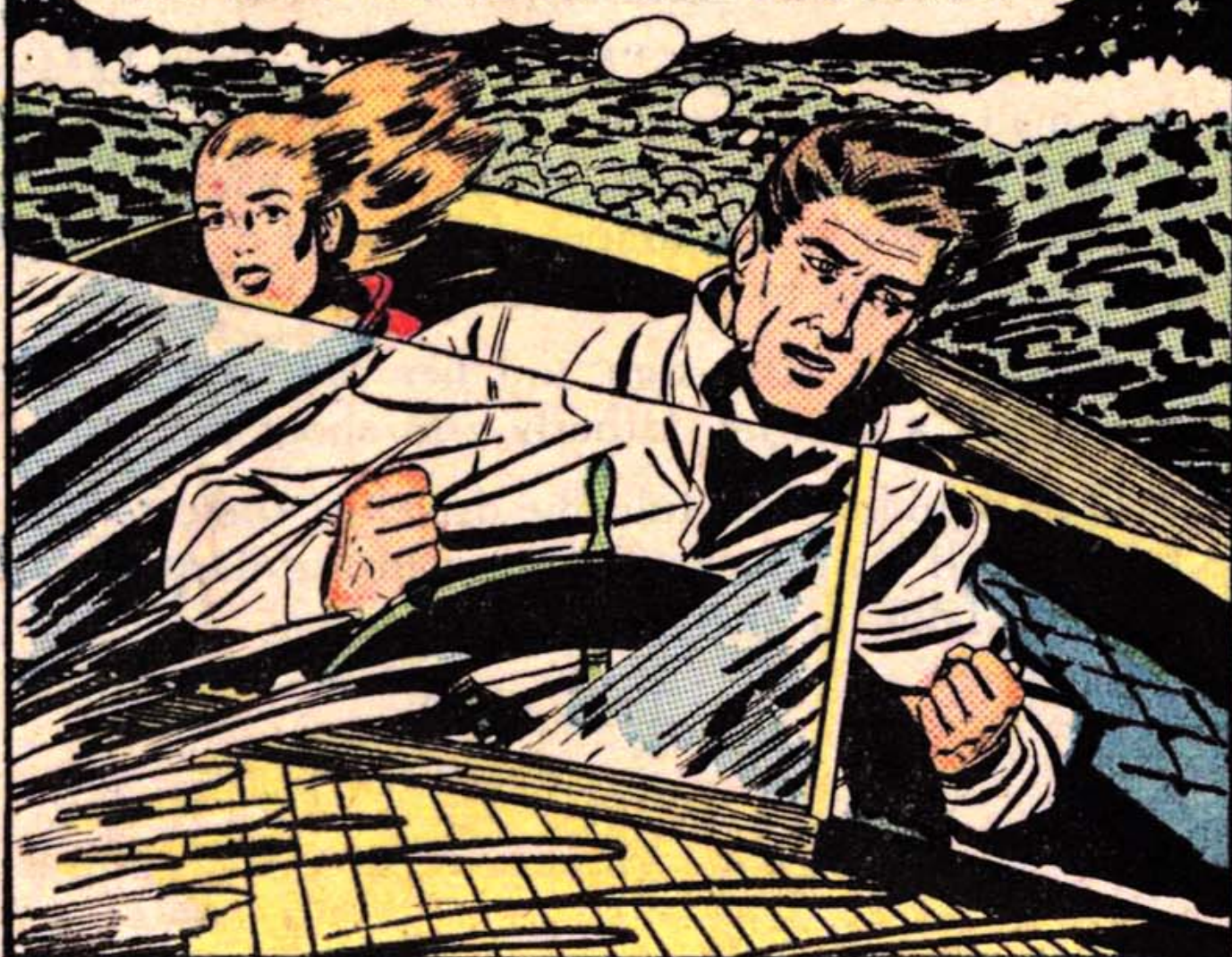


OH, BILL, (COUGH) HELP ME!

HOLD ON TIGHT, ANNE, OR YOU'LL BE SWEEPED OVERBOARD!

THE FIERCE WINDS DROVE SALT SPRAY LIKE HAIL INTO THEIR FACES, AND THE GIANT WAVES THREATENED TO CAPSIZE THE LAUNCH AT EVERY INSTANT...

I'VE GOT TO KEEP THIS THING HEADED INTO THE WIND OR WE'RE LOST FOR SURE!



BUT AFTER NUMBING HOURS OF STRUGGLE, THEY ENTERED THE "EYE" OF THE STORM--THE EERIE CALM AT THE CENTER OF THE RAGING HURRICANE AND THERE A STRANGE SIGHT MET THEIR EYES...

THANK GOODNESS WE'RE OUT OF THAT FOR A WHILE! OH, LOOK, BILL! A SHIP!

THAT'S ODD! IT LOOKS AT LEAST A HUNDRED YEARS OLD! LET'S GET A CLOSER LOOK!



AS THEY NEARED THE FORLORN HULK, THEY COULD SEE MORE CLEARLY ITS TATTERED SAILS AND WORM-EATEN, ROTTING TIMBERS...



WHY, THERE CAN'T BE ANYONE ABOARD! IT'S A DERELICT!



COME ON, ANNE! I'M GOING TO HAVE A LOOK! WHO KNOWS HOW MANY YEARS THIS SHIP HAS BEEN DRIFTING? I'M GOING TO FIND OUT WHAT HAPPENED TO THE CREW!

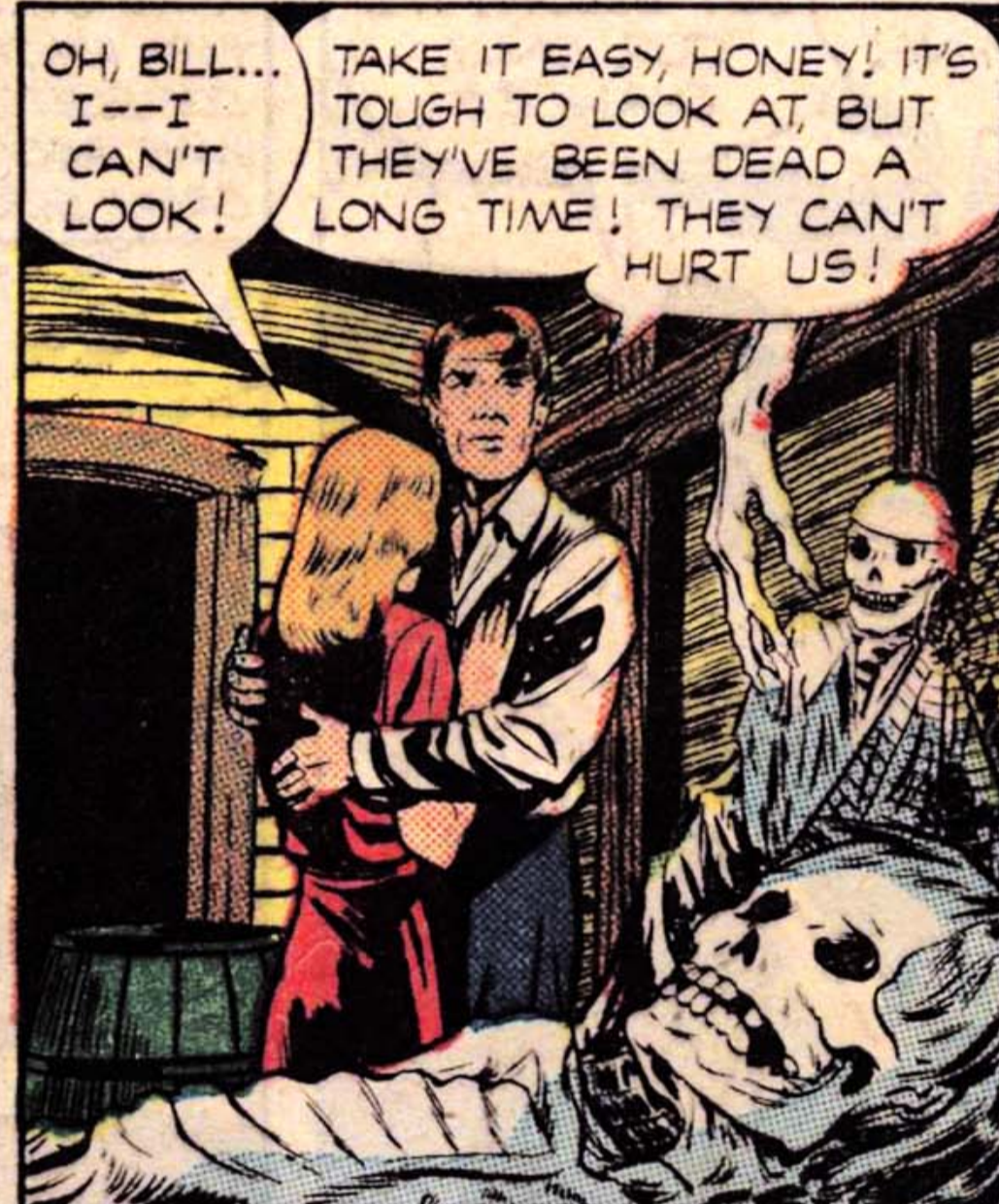
I--I'M AFRAID, BILL! IT'S SO...SO GHOSTLY! BESIDES, IT DOESN'T LOOK SAFE!

NONSENSE! I'LL BET THIS SHIP HAS WEATHERED MANY A STORM BEFORE THIS ONE! COME ON BELOW! THERE'S NOTHING MUCH HERE ON DECK!



W-WELL...BE SURE YOU TIE OUR BOAT GOOD AND TIGHT!

BELOW DECK, IN THE CREW'S QUARTERS, A GHASTLY SIGHT AWAITED THEM!



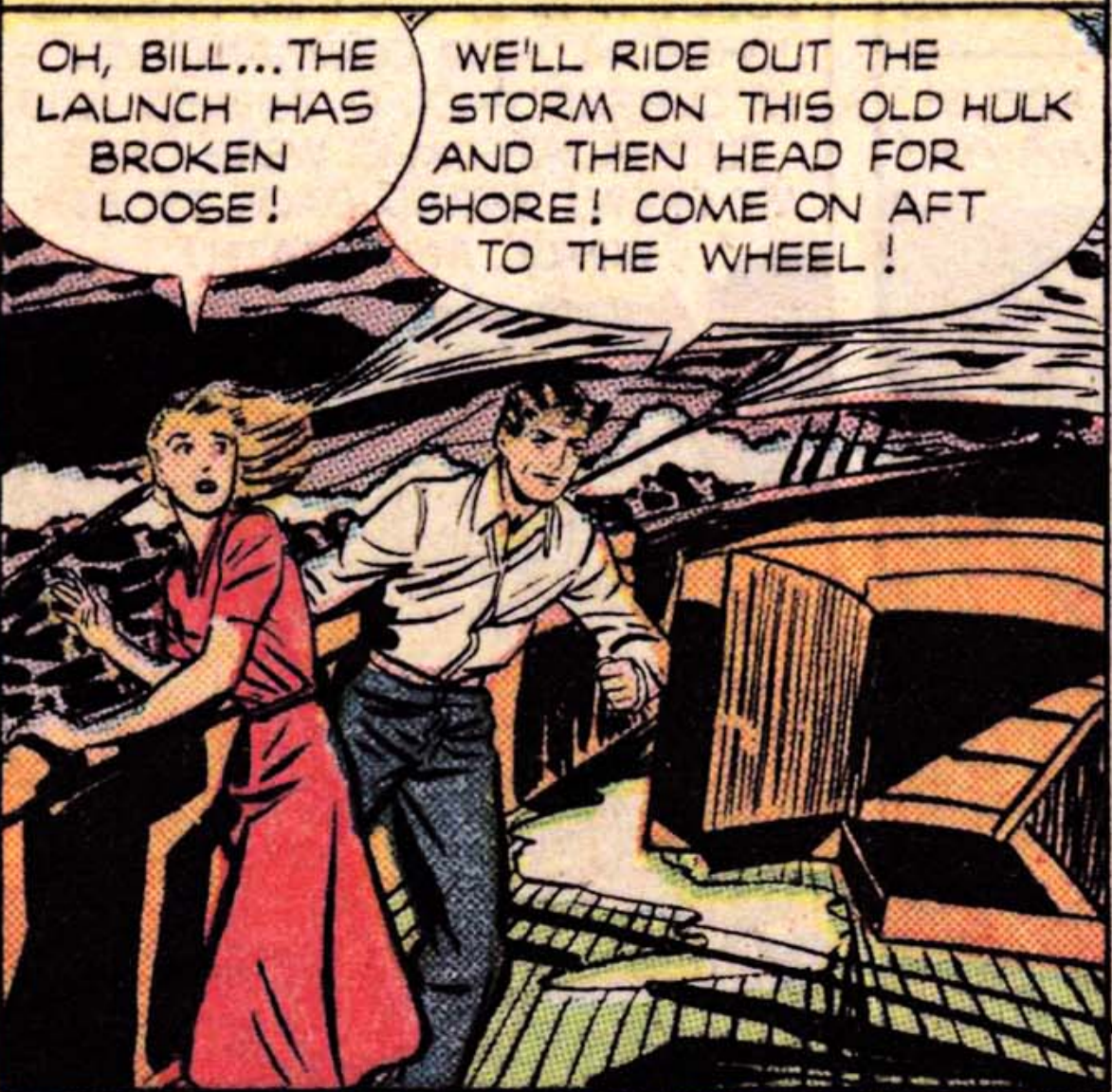
OH, BILL... I--I CAN'T LOOK!

TAKE IT EASY, HONEY! IT'S TOUGH TO LOOK AT, BUT THEY'VE BEEN DEAD A LONG TIME! THEY CAN'T HURT US!

LOOK AT THIS OLD LOG BOOK! IT SAYS THIS SHIP IS THE BRIG "FEARLESS" OUT OF PROVINCE-TOWN, CAPTAIN PHINEAS JOHNSON, MASTER! ANNE, MY GREAT GRANDFATHER'S NAME WAS PHINEAS AND HE WAS LOST AT SEA! DO YOU SUPPOSE...?



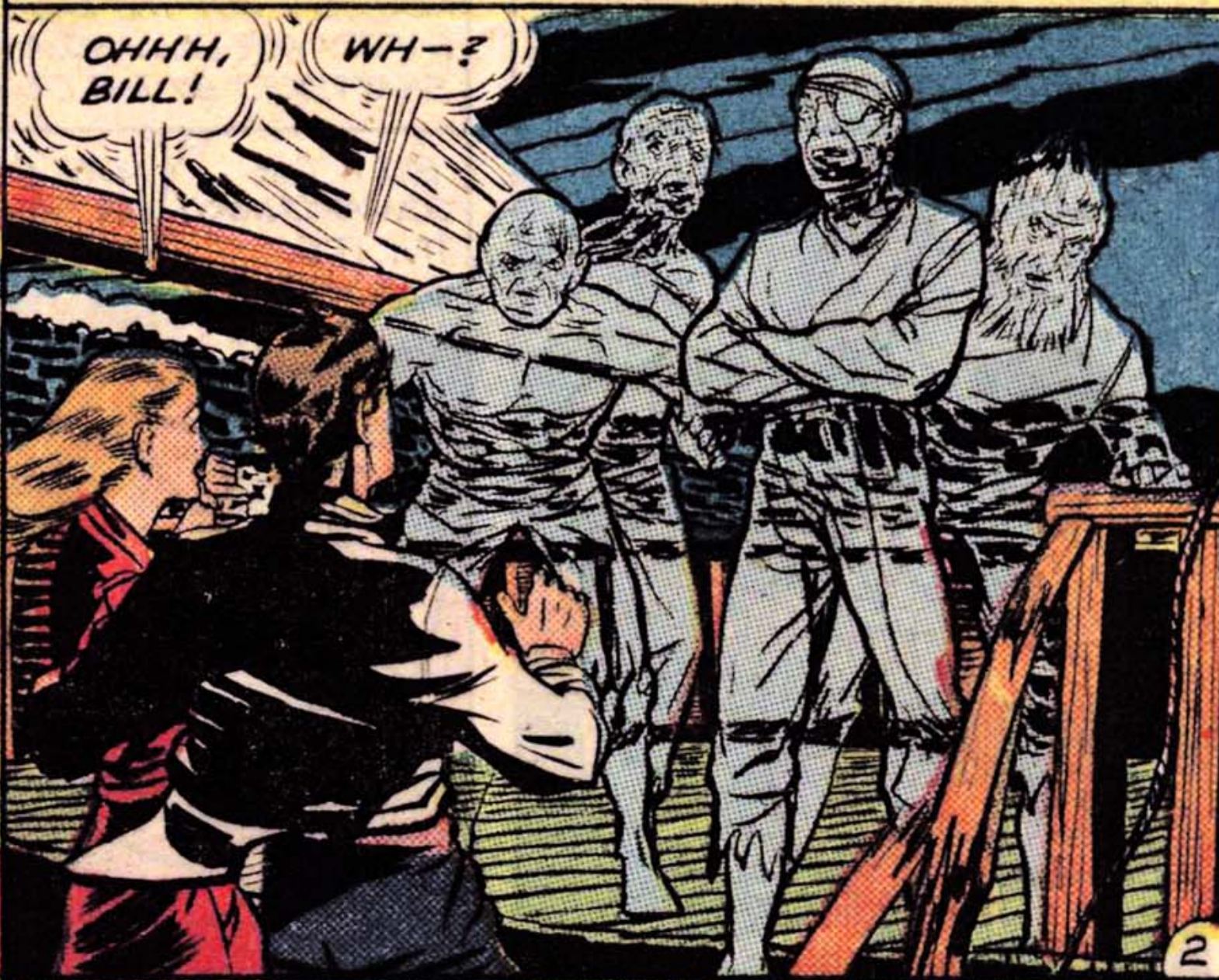
AT THAT INSTANT, THE CENTER OF THE STORM PASSED, AND THE RAGING HURRICANE ENGULFED THE SHIP IN ALL ITS FURY! THE FRIGHTENED COUPLE RAN OUT ON DECK!



OH, BILL...THE LAUNCH HAS BROKEN LOOSE!

WE'LL RIDE OUT THE STORM ON THIS OLD HULK AND THEN HEAD FOR SHORE! COME ON AFT TO THE WHEEL!

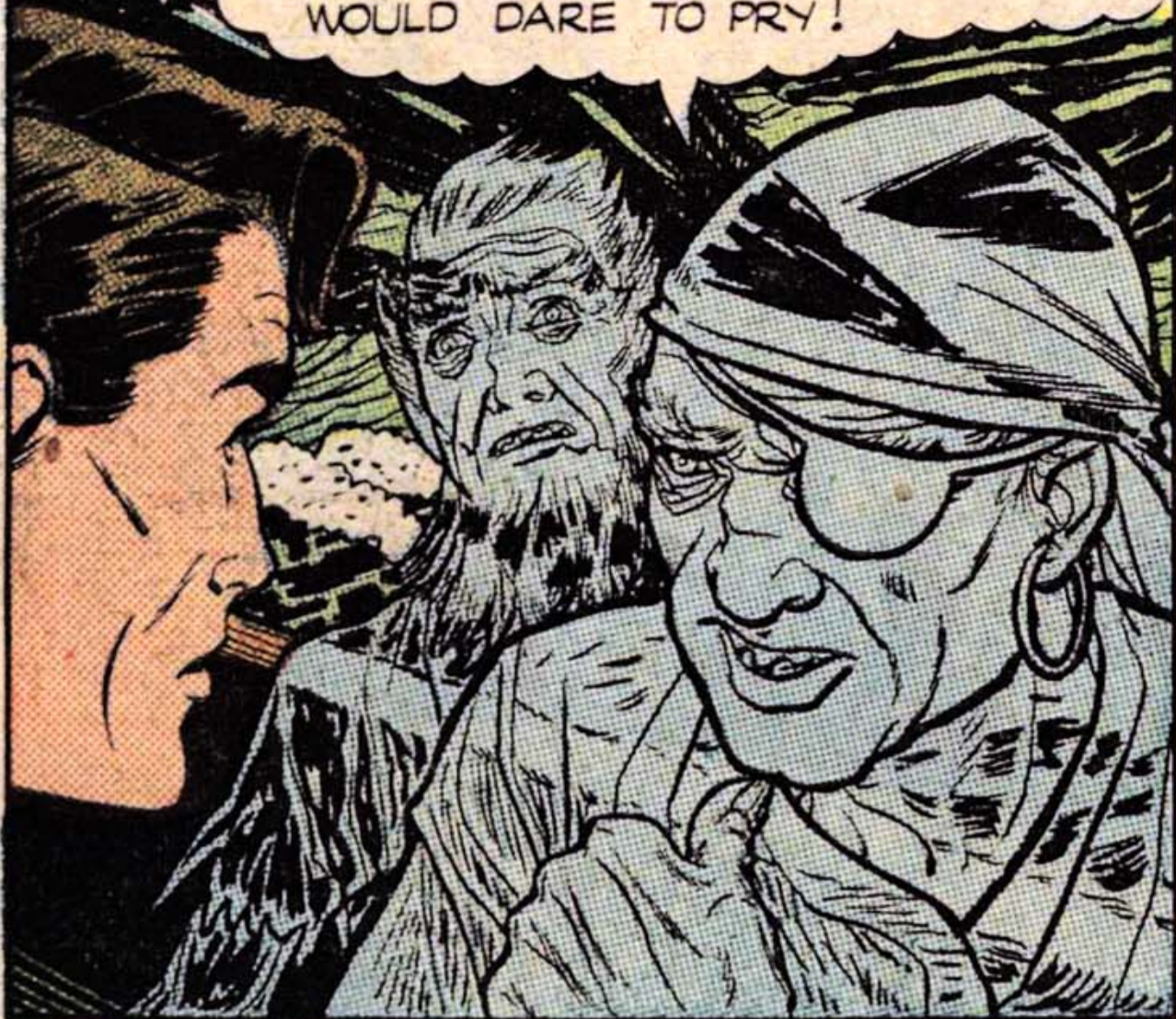
BUT THE WORST WAS YET TO COME! FOR, AS THEY NEARED THE STERN OF THE DERELICT...



OHHH, BILL!

WH--?

WHO... W-WHAT ARE YOU?
 WE ARE THE **DEAD!** AYE, THE DEAD WHO ONCE MANNED THIS SHIP OF MYSTERY! WE ARE DOOMED TO SAIL ON ETERNALLY, GUARDING ITS FATEFUL SECRET FROM ALL FOOLISH MORTALS WHO WOULD DARE TO PRY!



FOR A HUNDRED LONG YEARS SINCE A PLAGUE CUT SHORT OUR LIVES, WE HAVE DRIFTED WITH WIND AND TIDE! THIS DERELICT HOLDS THE DREADFUL SECRET OF OUR SINFUL PAST WHICH MORTAL MAN MUST NOT DISCOVER!



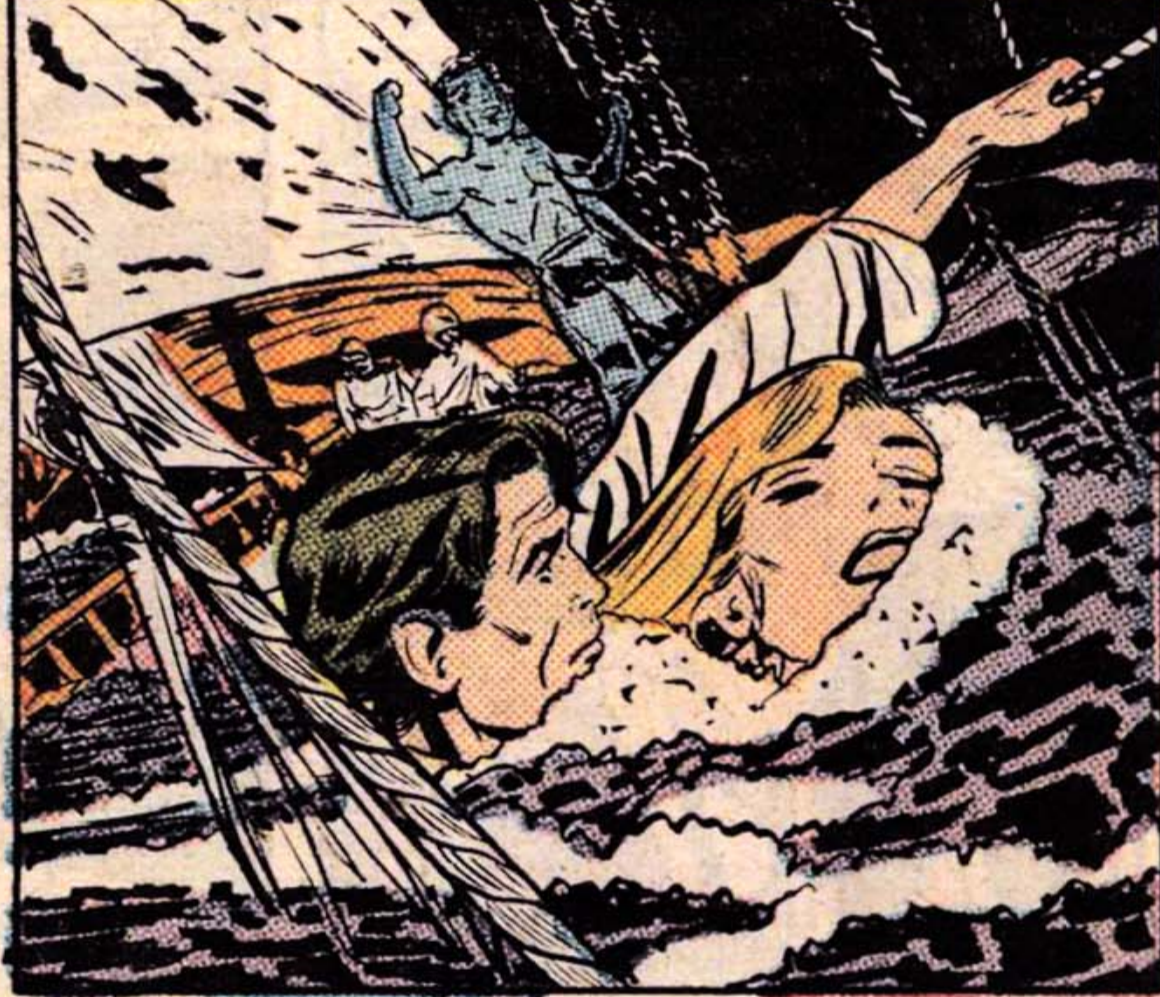
RISE, YE ROARING WINDS, AND MOUNTAINOUS SEAS! PLUCK THESE FRAIL HUMANS FROM OUR HOME AND BLEACH THEIR BONES ON SOME DISTANT REEF!

BILL... **HELP!** I'M SLIPPING!

GRAB MY ARM! WE'VE GOT TO GET BELOW! IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE!



SLIPPING, SLIDING THROUGH THE GREEN WAVES WHICH LASHED ACROSS THE DECK, BILL AND ANNE STRUGGLED TO REACH THE COMPANIONWAY WHICH LED BELOW DECK! HALF THE TIME COMPLETELY SUBMERGED, THEIR PROGRESS WAS AGONIZINGLY SLOW, AS THE GHOSTLY CREW SCREECHED IN FIENDISH GLEE...



SUDDENLY, ABOVE THE ROAR OF THE STORM BILL HEARD A RENDING CRASH! HE LOOKED UP JUST IN TIME TO SEE A HUGE SPAR HURLING DOWN AT THEM!

LOOK OUT, ANNE!

OHHH!



THE SHIP SHUDDERED AND LURCHED SICKENINGLY, THEN SLOWLY RIGHTED HERSELF! BUT THE LAST HOPE OF SAFETY FOR BILL AND ANNE WAS SHATTERED BY THE CRASHING SPAR!

BILL! THE COMPANIONWAY! IT... IT'S **BLOCKED!**

NOW, **DIE,** FOOLS! HA HA HA HA HA!



BUT AT THAT INSTANT A MIGHTY VOICE BELLOWED ABOVE THE STORM...

AVAST THERE, YE MUTINOUS DOGS! IT IS I, CAPTAIN PHINEAS JOHNSON, WHO COMMAND YE! YE CURSED PACK O' THIEVES AND CUTTHROATS WHO WERE ONCE MY CREW! STAND BACK, OR BEWARE MY WRATH!



THE STARTLED CREW SULLENLY WITHDREW, MUTTERING CURSES AND LEERING EVILLY, BUT THE GHOST OF CAPTAIN PHINEAS PAID THEM NO HEED...

HAVE NO FEAR, BILL JOHNSON! IT IS I, YOUR GREAT GRANDFATHER PHINEAS! I HAVE RETURNED FROM AN UNEASY GRAVE TO WREAK MY VENGEANCE ON THIS CREW OF MURDEROUS ROGUES!

THEN IT'S TRUE! THIS WAS YOUR SHIP! THE ONE THAT DISAPPEARED SO LONG AGO WITH ALL HANDS!



"AYE, LAD! IN THOSE DAYS THE BRIG 'FEARLESS' WAS A TRIM CRAFT, UNLIKE THE HULK YE SEE NOW! I WAS PROUD TO BE HER SKIPPER AS WE DROPPED ANCHOR IN THE HARBOR AT PORTOBELLO WITH A CARGO OF MAINE TIMBER!"



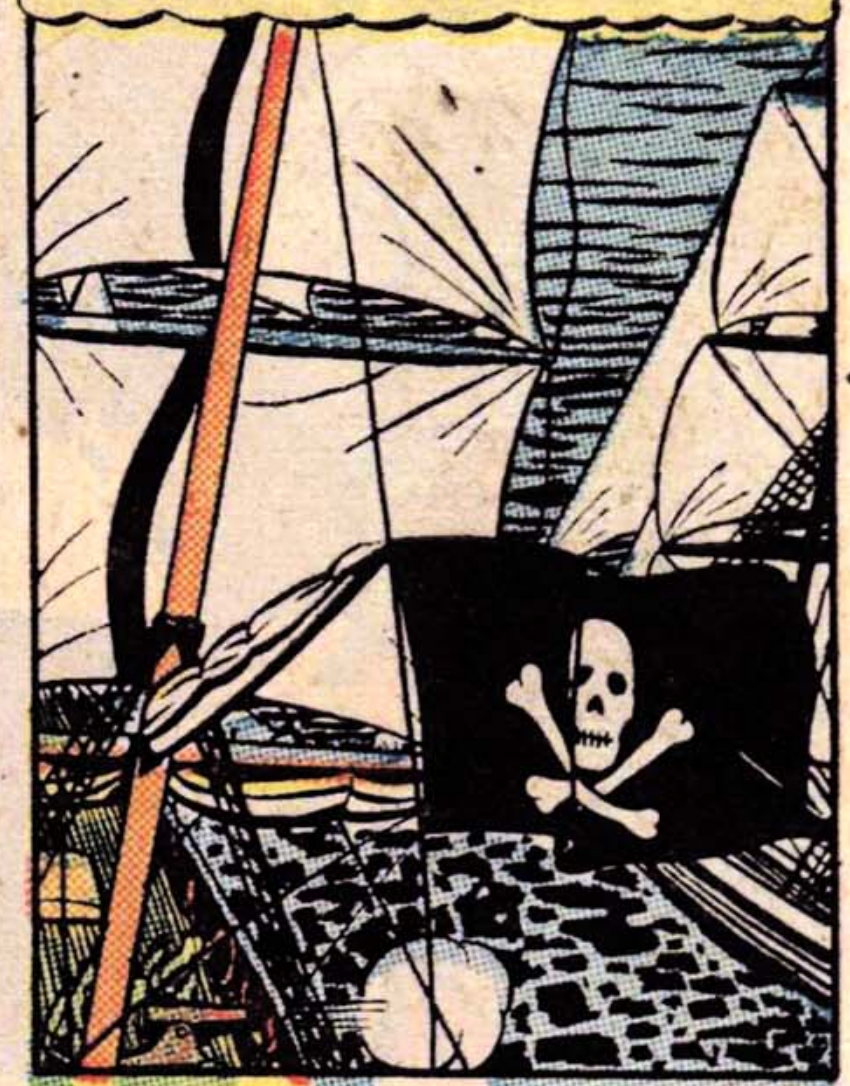
"TRADE WAS GOOD, AND AFTER A FORTNIGHT WE WEIGHED ANCHOR WITH A FORTUNE IN PEARLS ABOARD! BUT MY SCURVY CREW, LED BY BLACK TOM LORD PLOTTED TO GET THOSE PEARLS!"



"THE DOGS MUTINIED AND TOOK MY SHIP! THEY MURDERED THE ONLY TWO LOYAL HANDS AND MAROONED ME ON A DESOLATE ISLAND!"



"THEY HAD THE PEARLS THEN, BUT THEY WERE AFRAID TO RETURN TO PORT, SO THEY HOISTED THE BLACK FLAG AND SET TO PREYING ON THE HONEST MERCHANTMEN!"



"BUT THEY WEREN'T TO LAST FOR LONG! FOR UNBEKNOWN TO THEM THE WATER CASKS WERE CONTAMINATED WITH SOME DREAD DISEASE, WHICH CAUSED THEM HIGH FEVER AND GREAT PAINS!"



"AND BEFORE LONG THERE WAS NO LIFE ABOARD THE 'FEARLESS' SAVE RATS! BLACK TOM AND HIS BLOODY GANG CAME TO A DREADFUL AND DESERVED END! FROM THAT DAY TO THIS, THE BRIG HAS DRIFTED... UNDIRECTED BY HUMAN HAND..."



THESE ARE THE RESTLESS SPIRITS OF BLACK TOM AND HIS CREW OF SCOUNDRELS. THE PEARLS FOR WHICH THEY BARGAINED WITH THE DEVIL REMAIN HID IN THE HOLD! COME NOW WITH YOUR BRIDE AND RECLAIM THE WEALTH THAT IS RIGHTFULLY YOURS!



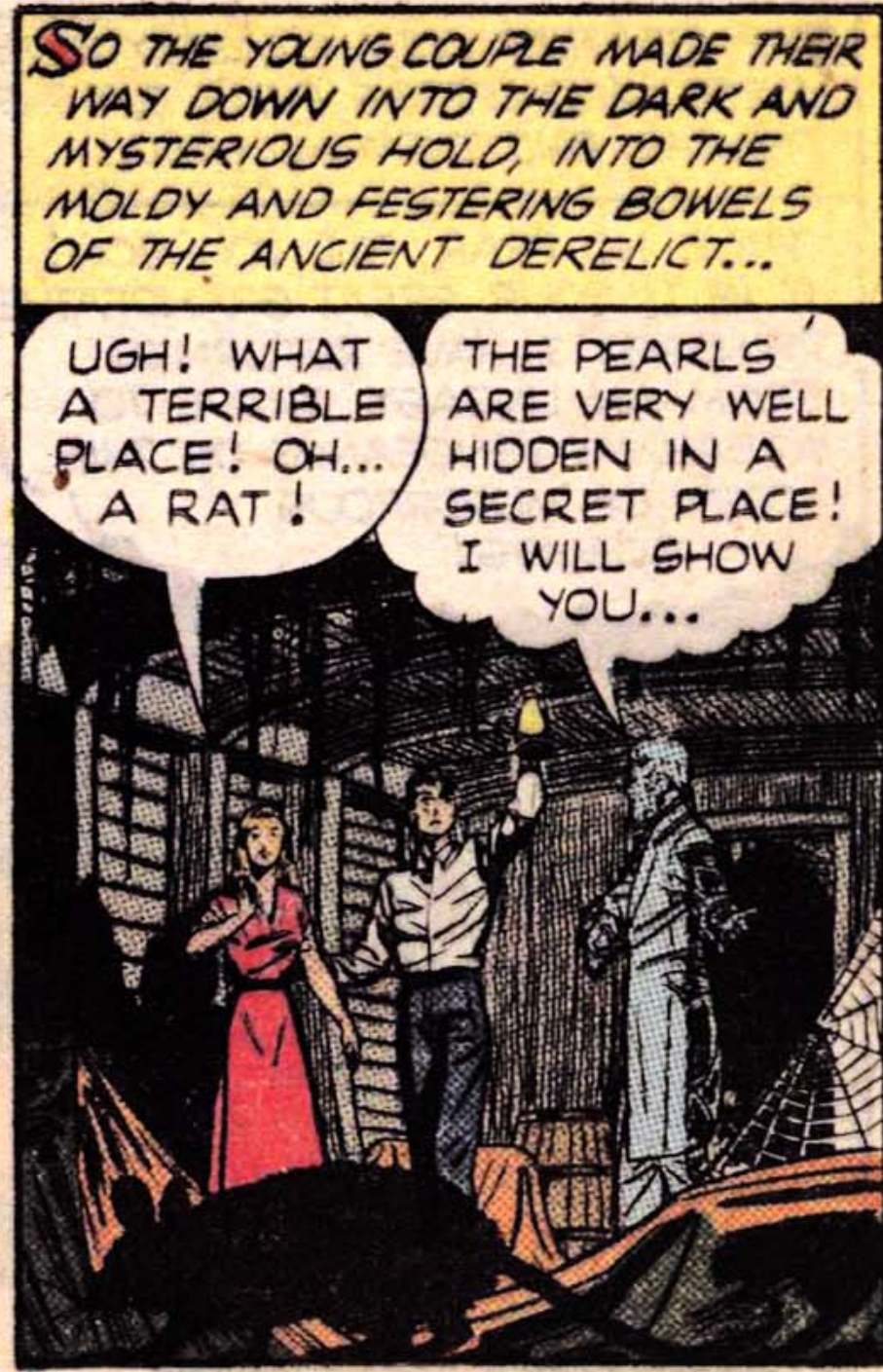


COME ON, HONEY!

BILL, I DON'T LIKE THE WAY THE GHOST CREW IS MUTTERING! I'M AFRAID THEY'RE UP TO SOMETHING!



THEY SEEM TO BE AFRAID OF CAPTAIN PHINEAS' GHOST! HE CAN HANDLE THEM!

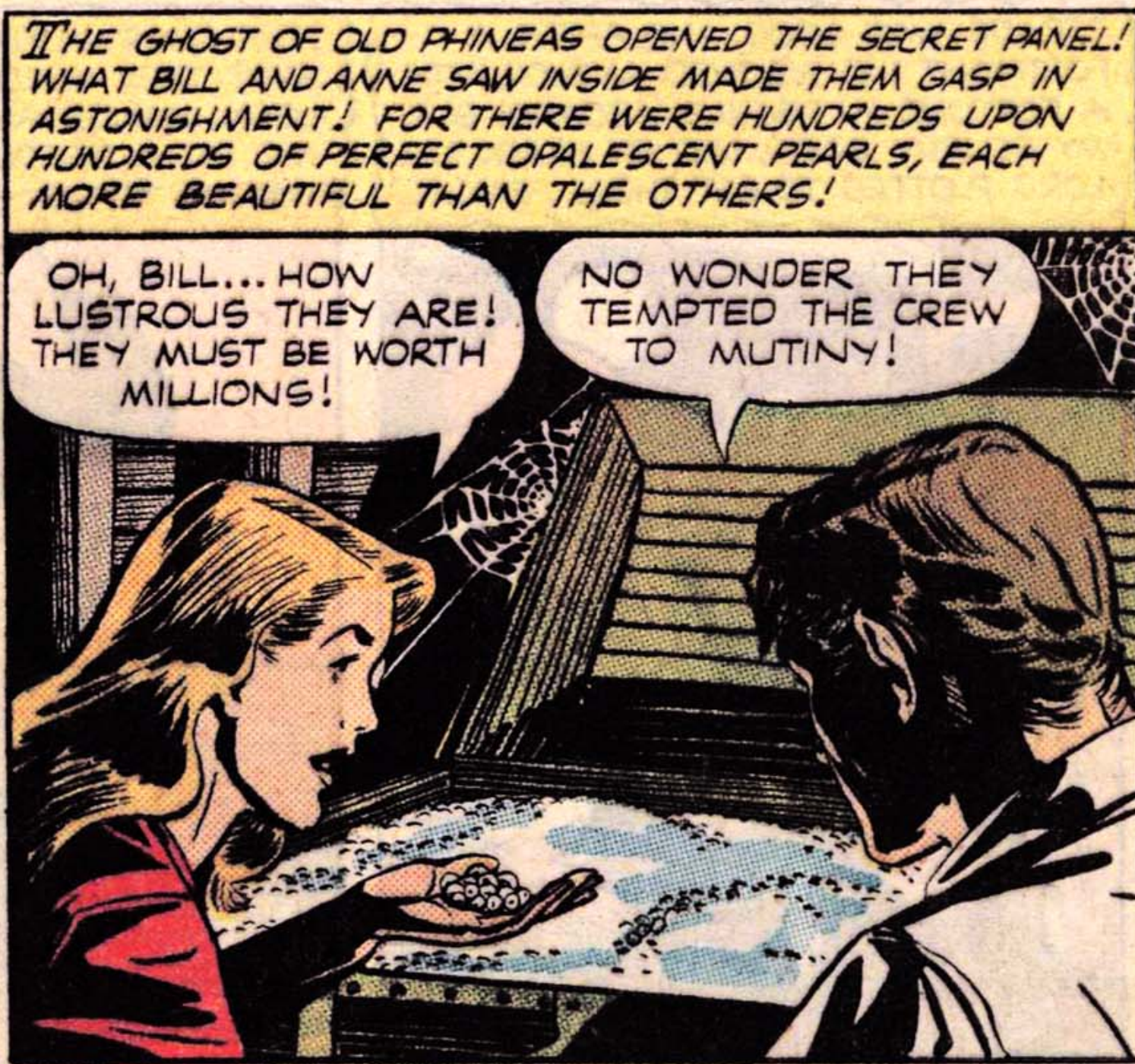


UGH! WHAT A TERRIBLE PLACE! OH... A RAT!

THE PEARLS ARE VERY WELL HIDDEN IN A SECRET PLACE! I WILL SHOW YOU...



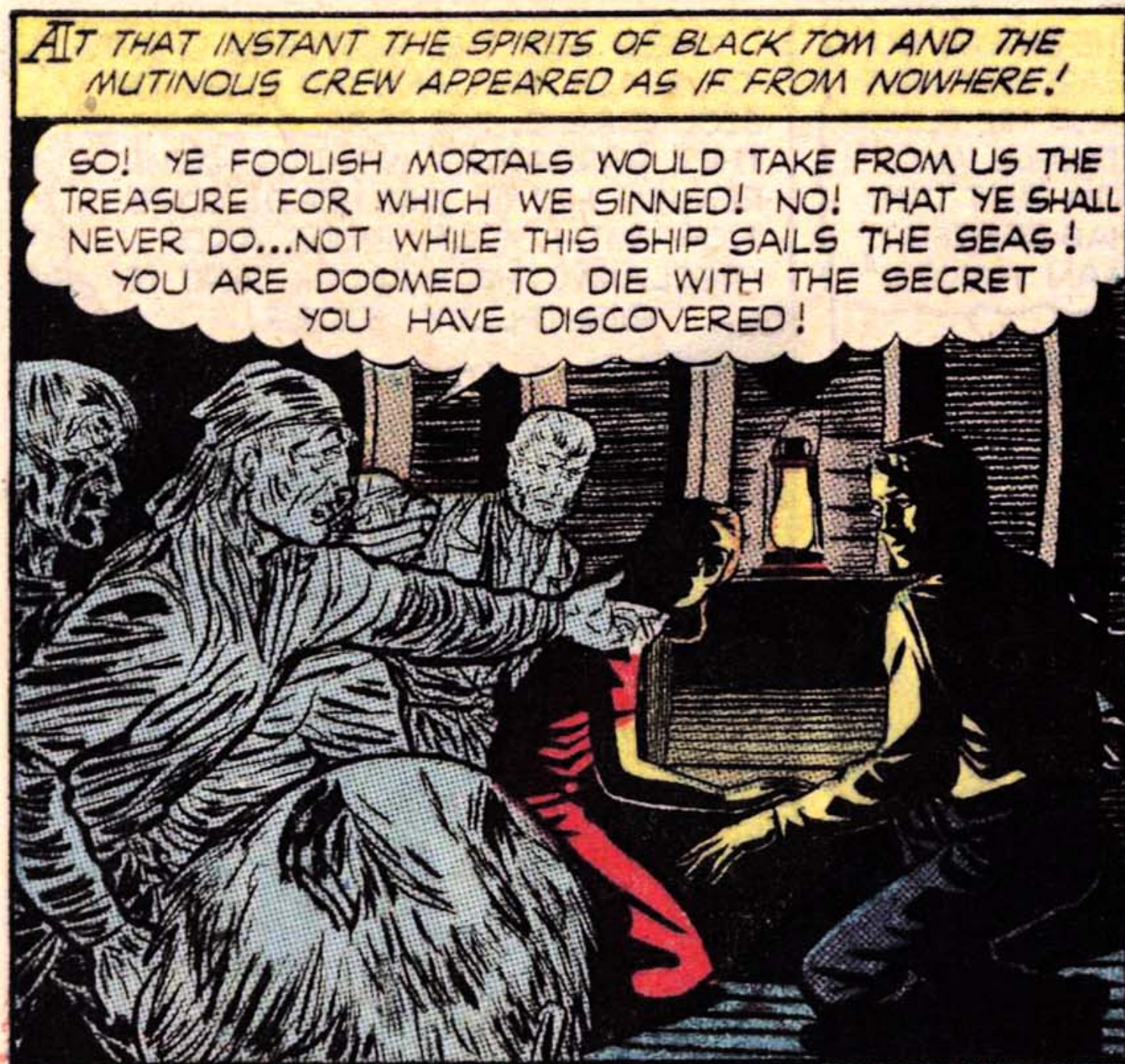
FIRST, I SLIDE OPEN THIS SECRET WALL PANEL...



THE GHOST OF OLD PHINEAS OPENED THE SECRET PANEL! WHAT BILL AND ANNE SAW INSIDE MADE THEM GASP IN ASTONISHMENT! FOR THERE WERE HUNDREDS UPON HUNDREDS OF PERFECT OPALESCENT PEARLS, EACH MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN THE OTHERS!

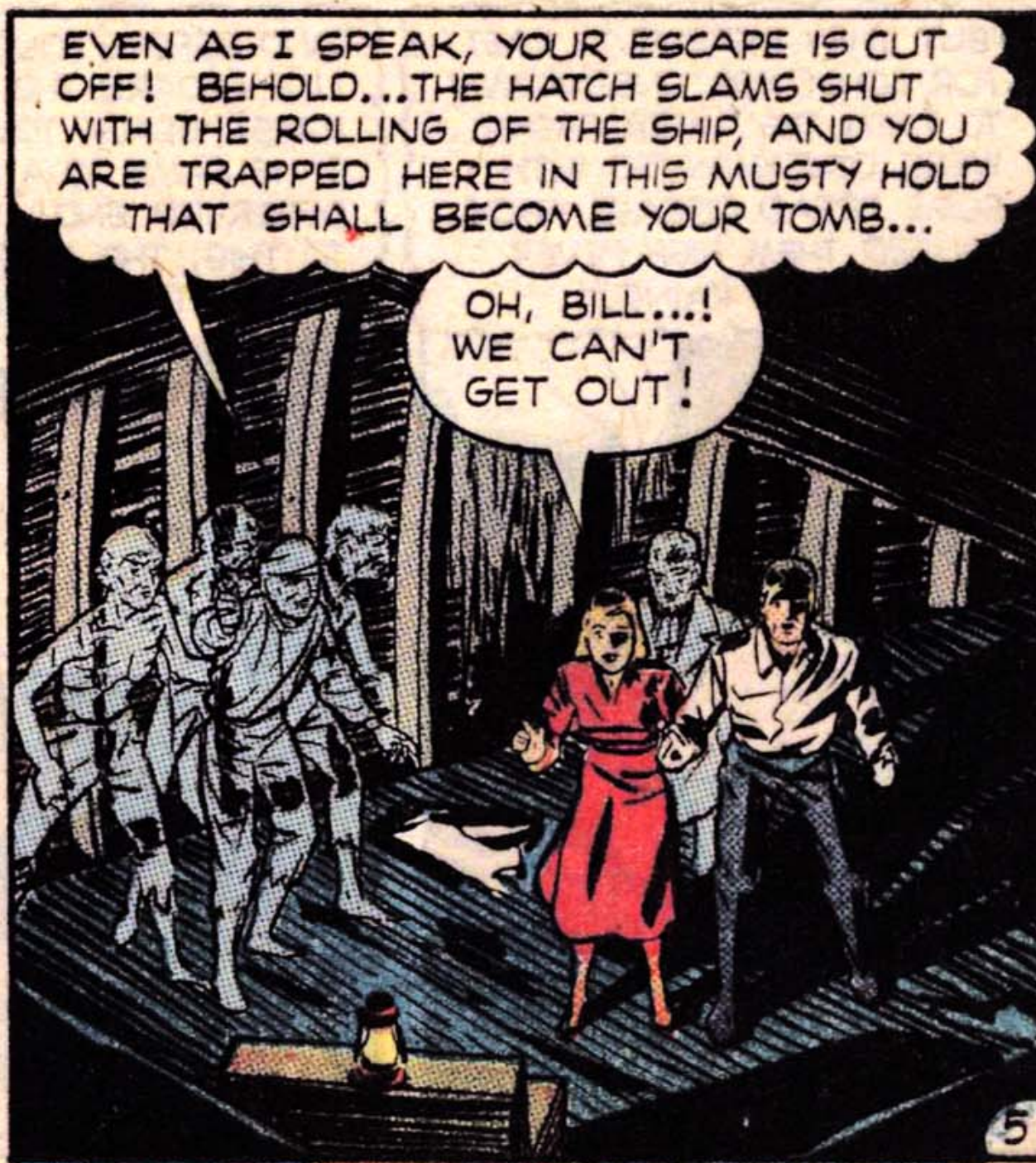
OH, BILL... HOW LUSTROUS THEY ARE! THEY MUST BE WORTH MILLIONS!

NO WONDER THEY TEMPTED THE CREW TO MUTINY!



AT THAT INSTANT THE SPIRITS OF BLACK TOM AND THE MUTINOUS CREW APPEARED AS IF FROM NOWHERE!

SO! YE FOOLISH MORTALS WOULD TAKE FROM US THE TREASURE FOR WHICH WE SINNED! NO! THAT YE SHALL NEVER DO...NOT WHILE THIS SHIP SAILS THE SEAS! YOU ARE DOOMED TO DIE WITH THE SECRET YOU HAVE DISCOVERED!



EVEN AS I SPEAK, YOUR ESCAPE IS CUT OFF! BEHOLD...THE HATCH SLAMS SHUT WITH THE ROLLING OF THE SHIP, AND YOU ARE TRAPPED HERE IN THIS MUSTY HOLD THAT SHALL BECOME YOUR TOMB...

OH, BILL...! WE CAN'T GET OUT!

THERE IS NO WAY OUT! YOU HAVE TWO CHOICES...EITHER DIE A LINGERING DEATH OF THIRST, OR...DRINK! YES, DRINK THE POLUTION THAT CAUSED OUR DEATHS! ONE THING IS SURE...YOUR BONES WILL CRUMBLE TO DUST IN THE SPIDERY SLIME OF THE BILGES!



YOU ARE MISTAKEN, BLACK TOM LORD! YE SHALL NOT FOIL ME A SECOND TIME! THE HOUR OF MY REVENGE IS AT HAND, FOR WHICH I HAVE WAITED LONG! I CURSE YOU AND YOUR MUTINOUS CREW OF SPIRITS! THIS NIGHT THE TIMBERS OF THIS ONCE PROUD SHIP SHALL FIND PERMANENT REST, AND YOU SHALL BE DESTROYED BY FIRE!



AS THE CAPTAIN'S VOICE RANG OUT LIKE THE KNELL OF DOOM, THERE WAS A SUDDEN GRINDING CRASH AND SICKENING JAR...



WE MUST HAVE RUN AGROUND!

THE LANTERN WAS KNOCKED FROM BILL'S HAND AND OVERTURNED ON A PILE OF TAR-SOAKED DEBRIS!



AND ALMOST INSTANTLY A HUGE FIRE SPREAD OVER THE ROTTING HOLD!



OH, BILL, WHAT CAN WE DO?

WATER IS POURING IN UP FORWARD! THE CRASH MUST HAVE KNOCKED A HOLE IN THE HULL! COME ON!

FIRE SHALL BE YOUR AGENT OF DESTRUCTION, BLACK TOM! FEEL ITS HEAT SEARING YOUR GHOSTLY SHELL!

THE ANCIENT HOLD WAS TRANSFORMED INTO A VAST CAULDRON OF WRITHING SHAPES AND BILLOWING SMOKE AS THE HUNGRY FLAMES CONSUMED ALL IN THEIR PATH!



CEASE YOUR STRUGGLES, YE DESPICABLE SCUM! THERE IS NO ESCAPE! BURN, BLAST YE, AND PLAGUE THIS EARTH NO MORE...

EEEEEEEEEYAH!!

MEANWHILE, BILL AND ANNE RAN TO THE FORWARD PART OF THE SHIP, WHERE THEY FOUND A HUGE GAP THROUGH WHICH THE SEA WAS POURING! THEY MANAGED TO MAKE THEIR WAY OUT OF THE DOOMED SHIP...



WE'RE FREE! SWIM FOR SHORE, HONEY! LUCKILY, IT ISN'T FAR!

AT LAST, SAFELY ON SHORE, THEY STOOD IN AWE AND WATCHED THE FIRE BURN ITSELF OUT AS THE LAST HORRIBLE SCREAMS OF THE CREW WERE STILLED...

WHAT A NIGHTMARE! BILL, WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE BECAME OF CAPTAIN PHINEAS?

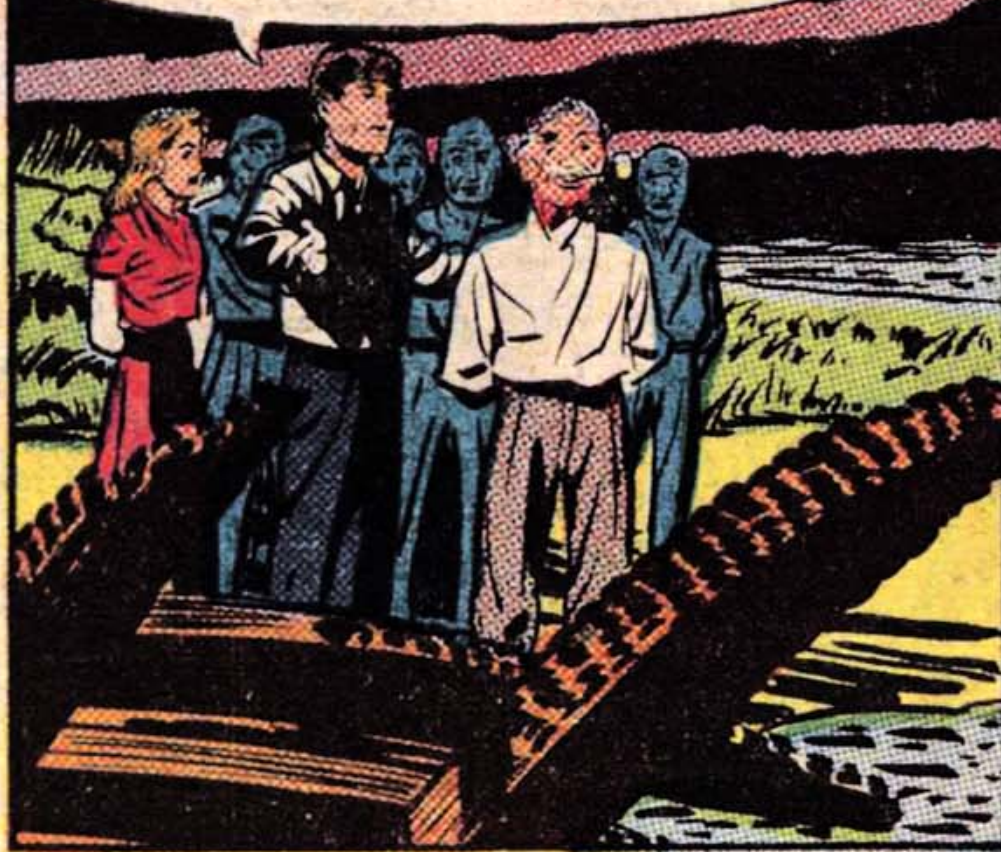
I DON'T KNOW, ANNE, BUT IT'S A CINCH HE WILL HAVE A BETTER FATE THAN THAT CREW OF MURDERERS! I IMAGINE HIS SPIRIT IS AT PEACE NOW, WHILE BLACK TOM WENT ON TO SOMETHING FAR WORSE!



AFTER A WHILE, THE WEARY COUPLE SET OUT ALONG THE COAST IN SEARCH OF HELP! THEY WALKED ALL THAT NIGHT AND AT DAWN THEY CAME UPON A LITTLE FISHING VILLAGE! HALF-STARVED AND EXHAUSTED, THEY WERE TAKEN IN BY AN OLD FISHERMAN! THEY RESTED AT HIS HUT FOR SEVERAL DAYS, AND THEN PERSUADED HIM AND SOME OTHER FOLK FROM THE VILLAGE TO ACCOMPANY THEM TO THE WRECKED SHIP IN SEARCH OF THE PEARLS! THE TOWNSFOLK WERE SOMEWHAT DUBIOUS ABOUT A "FORTUNE IN PEARLS," BUT, CURIOUS AS TO THE WRECK, THEY WENT ALONG!

AS THEY APPROACHED THE SCENE...

WELL, THERE'S THE WRECK OF THE "FEARLESS"! IT RAN AGROUND AND BURNED THREE DAYS AGO...WE WERE LUCKY TO GET OUT ALIVE! BUT MAYBE WE CAN FIND THE PEARLS, IF THEY WEREN'T DESTROYED BY THE FIRE! THE TIDE IS OUT AND WE CAN BOARD HER!



WELL, YOUNG MAN, I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT ANY PEARLS, BUT I RECKON YOUR EXPERIENCE IN THE HURRICANE HAS LEFT YE A LITTLE WEAK IN THE HEAD! THAT OLD WRECK HAS BEEN HERE SINCE BEFORE MY GRANDFATHER WAS BORN!

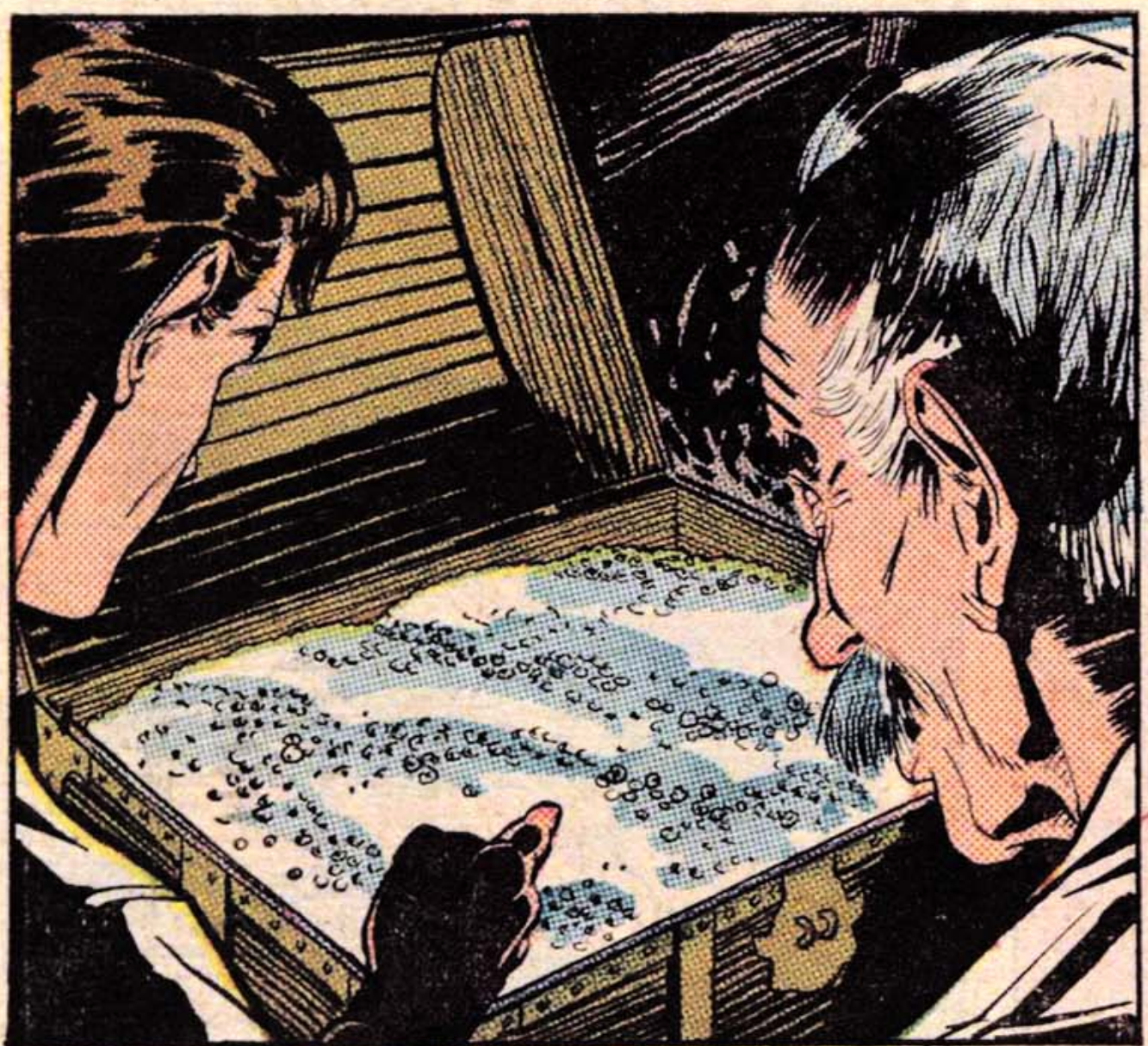


W-WHY IT CAN'T BE...W-WERE ON THIS SHIP! IT WAS A DERELICT AND THERE WERE...

YOU'D BETTER NOT SAY ANYTHING ABOUT GHOSTS, BILL, OR HE REALLY WILL THINK WE'RE CRAZY!



BUT TO THE OLD MAN'S ASTONISHMENT, BILL LED HIM TO THE SECRET SLIDING PANEL IN THE DEPTHS OF THE SHIP, AND...



THERE! WHAT DO YOU THINK NOW, OLD MAN? DO YOU BELIEVE OUR STORY OR NOT?

I--I DON'T KNOW! I TELL YOU THIS WRECK HAS BEEN HERE FOR NEARLY A CENTURY! AND YET YOU SAY...COME ON, YOUNG FELLER, LET'S MOVE THESE CHESTS! THE SOONER I GET OFF THIS OLD HULK, THE BETTER I'LL FEEL!



...The END...

GOOSE? or Nest?

WHICH WILL YOU HAVE ?

For some reason, the goose egg stands for zero . . . nothing.

The nest egg, however, stands for a tidy sum of money, set aside for your own or your children's future.

It's hardly necessary to ask you which you'd prefer.

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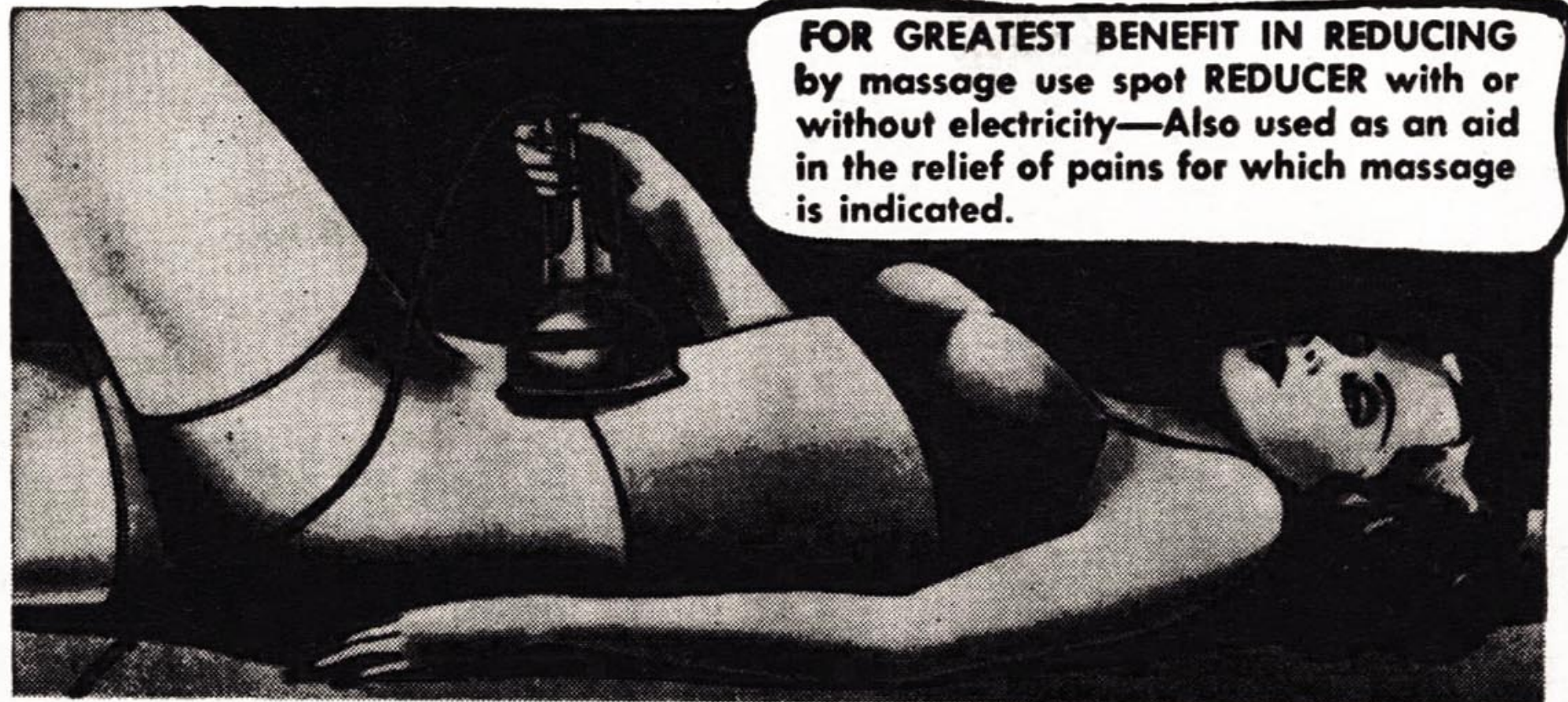
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