

A DELL
10¢
MAGAZINE
NO. 173

FLASH GORDON



Introducing for the first time . . .

FLASH GORDON COMICS

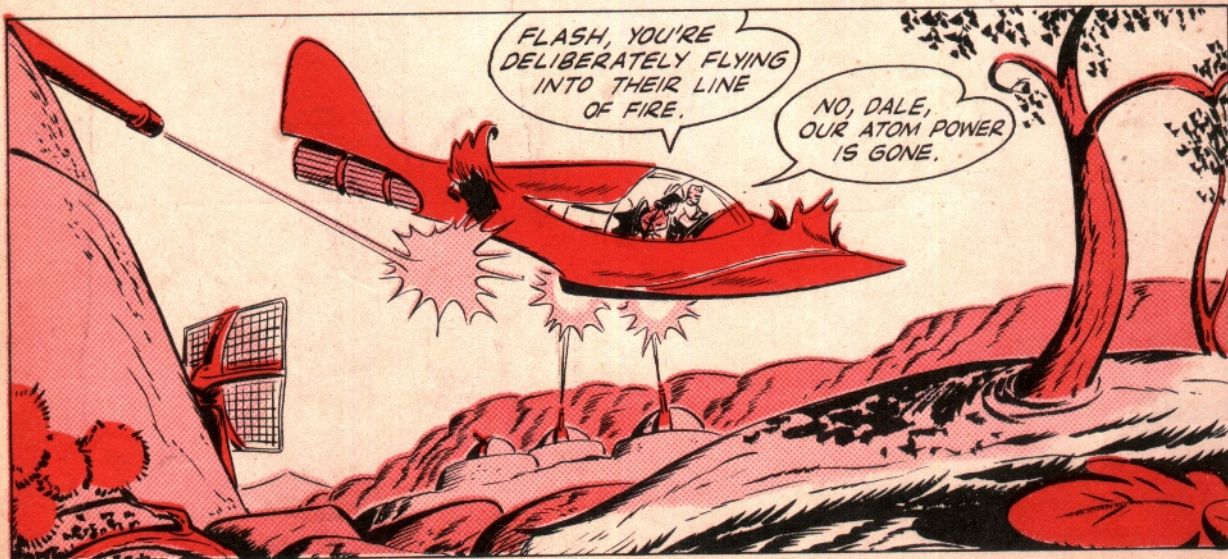
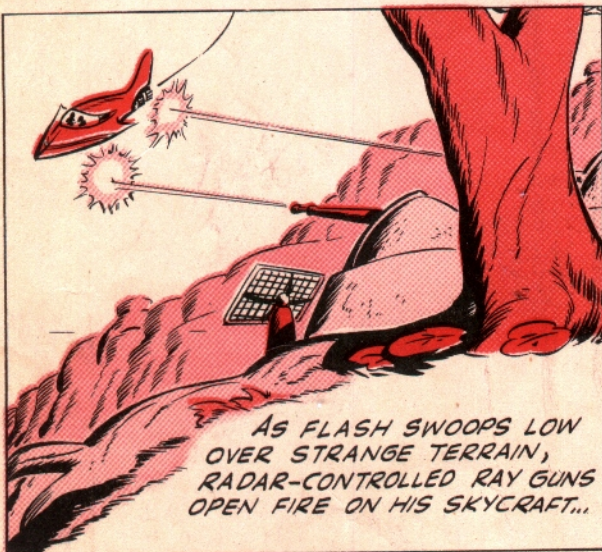
especially written and drawn for this book

FLASH GORDON

"Adventure in Opto"



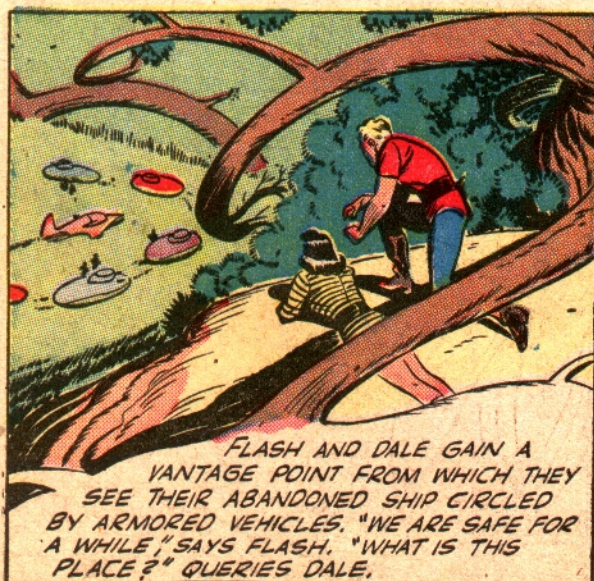
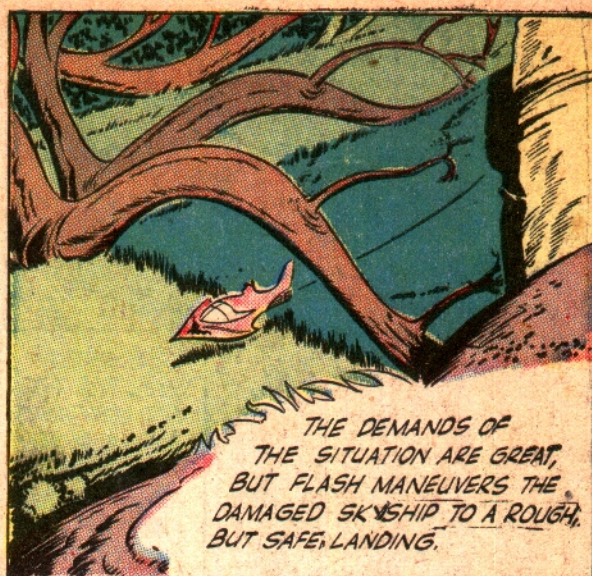
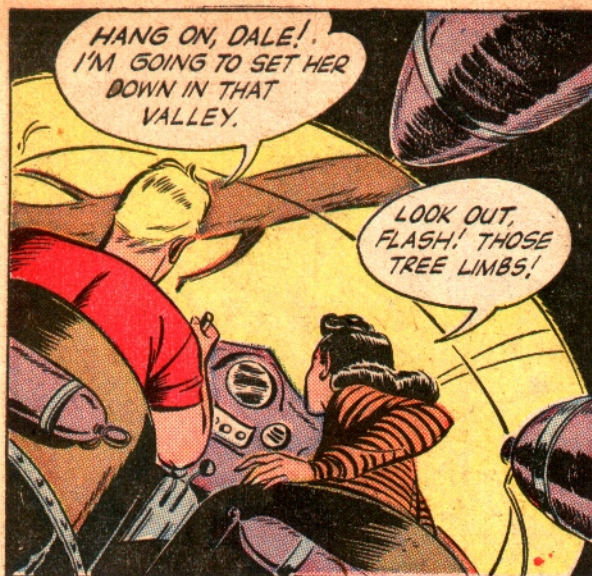
FLASH AND DALE ARDEN IN THEIR
ATOM-PROPELLED SKYSHIP GET
OFF THEIR COURSE LEAVING
MONGO.....



FLASH GORDON, No. 173—PUBLISHED BY DELL PUBLISHING CO., INC.

149 Madison Ave., New York, 16, N. Y.

Copyright, 1947, by King Features Syndicate, Inc. World Rights Reserved. Printed in U. S. A.





"A REPTO-ELECTRO. THE STING OF WHICH MEANS DEATH," FLASH SHOUTS, AS HE BLAZES AWAY AT THE MONSTER.

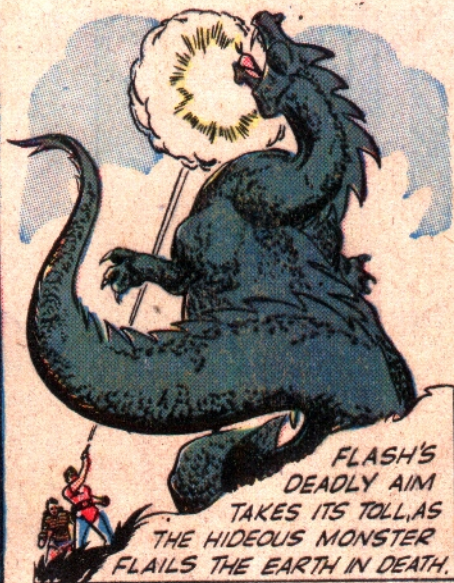


IT'S BETTER TO BE CAUGHT BY OUR PURSUERS THAN TO HAVE THIS GUY WITH US.



IN THE VALLEY BELOW-

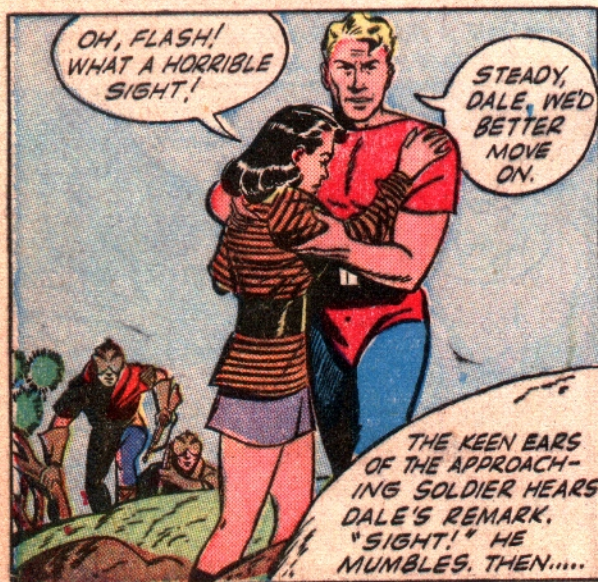
LISTEN! GUN FIRE! SERGEANT, INVESTIGATE THAT ACTION: IT MAY BE THE INVADER!



FLASH'S DEADLY AIM TAKES ITS TOLL, AS THE hideous MONSTER FLAILS THE EARTH IN DEATH.



IF THEY MOVE-FIRE!



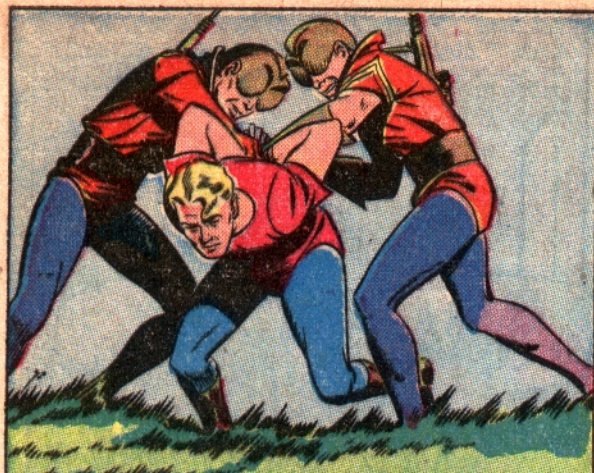
OH, FLASH! WHAT A HORRIBLE SIGHT!

STEADY, DALE, WE'D BETTER MOVE ON.

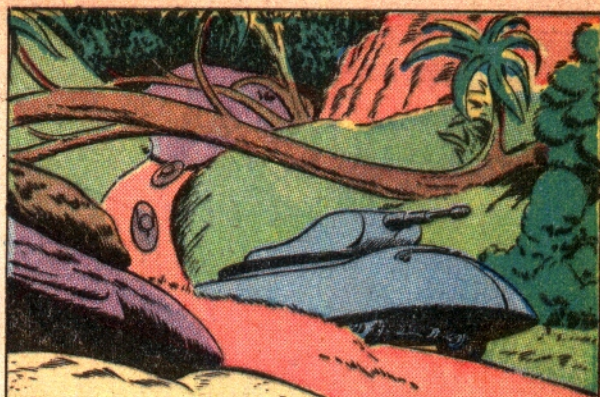
THE KEEN EARS OF THE APPROACHING SOLDIER HEARS DALE'S REMARK. "SIGHT!" HE MUMBLES. THEN....



SIGHT! THEY POSSESS SIGHT! TAKE THEM ALIVE! THEY HAVE VIOLATED THE SOVEREIGNTY OF OPTO!



THE SOLDIERS POUNCE ON FLASH BEFORE HE CAN DRAW HIS GUN. UNDER ARMS OF STEEL HE IS BOUND WITH STRONG LEATHER THONGS. DALE IS LEFT UNTIED—

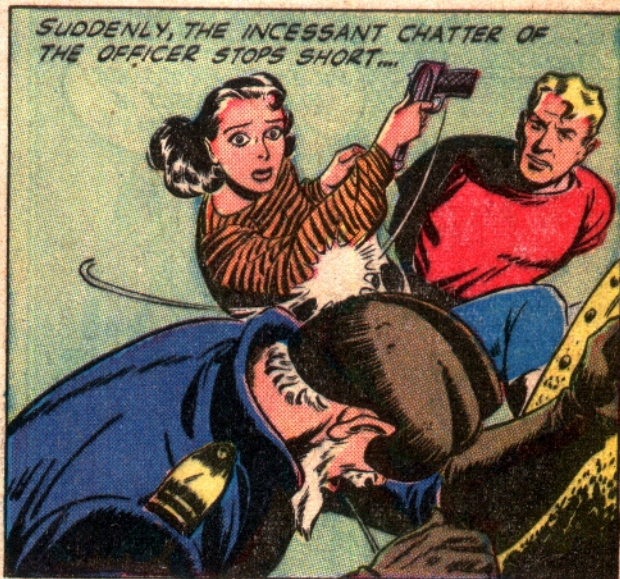


FOR THE SOLDIERS HAVE NO FEAR OF A MERE WOMAN. FLASH AND DALE ARE HURRIEDLY TAKEN TO THE ARMORED VEHICLES. THE OFFICER IN CHARGE BELLOWED A COMMAND AND THE ARMORED COLUMN MOVES OUT THROUGH A VALLEY OF WILD BEAUTY.

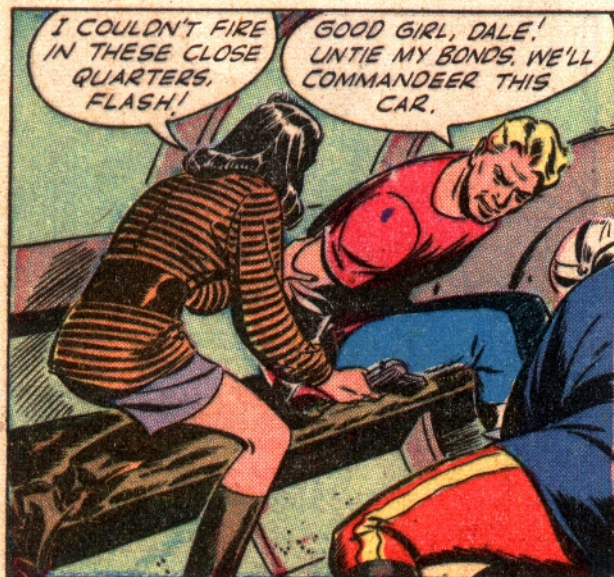


NO NEED TO WHISPER, WOMAN. MY HEARING IS KEEN. I AM THE PERFECT, ADJUTANT TO THE REGENT OPTIK, HEAD OF THE SECRET SERVICE—

CROUCHED IN THE DARK INTERIOR OF THE ARMORED CAR, FLASH FEELS DALE REMOVE HIS ATOM-PISTOL, WHILE THE OFFICER TALKS ON.



SUDDENLY, THE INCESSANT CHATTER OF THE OFFICER STOPS SHORT...



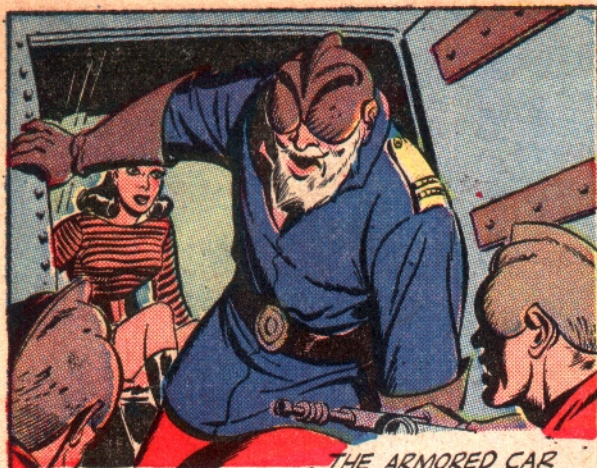
I COULDN'T FIRE IN THESE CLOSE QUARTERS, FLASH!

GOOD GIRL, DALE! UNTIE MY BONDS, WE'LL COMMANDEER THIS CAR.



I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN UNTIE THIS THING. FLASH, WHAT IS THIS PLACE CALLED—OPTO?

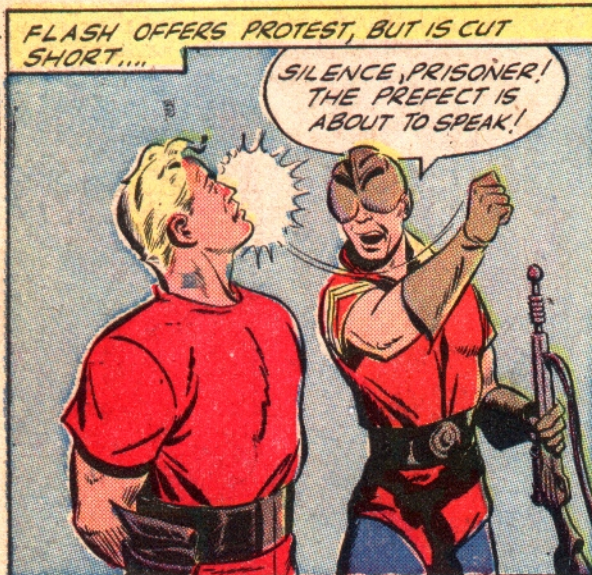
ZARKOV HAS TOLD ME ABOUT IT. THE PEOPLE OF OPTO CANNOT SEE, BUT ARE GUIDED BY A RADAR DEVICE IN THAT HEAD-GEAR THEY WEAR. WAIT! WE'RE STOPPING!



THE ARMORED CAR SWINGS TO A STOP IN A GREAT COURTYARD, THE SOLDIERS OPEN THE HATCH TO FIND A DAZED PREFECT MUMBLING, "THE WOMAN, TIE HER UP SHE HAS THE STRENGTH OF TEN MEN!"



AS THE PREFECT BUILDS A FANTASTIC STORY ABOUT DALE'S PROWESS, SHE IS DRAGGED FROM THE CAR AND BOUND.



FLASH OFFERS PROTEST, BUT IS CUT SHORT....

SILENCE, PRISONER! THE PREFECT IS ABOUT TO SPEAK!

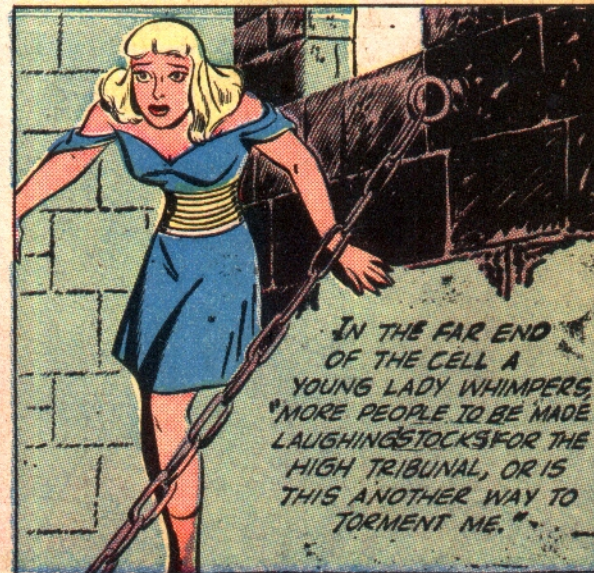


THROW THEM IN JAIL. I'LL PRESENT THE EVIDENCE AGAINST THEM TO THE HIGH TRIBUNAL. THEY WILL BE GIVEN A "FAIR TRIAL" TOMORROW.

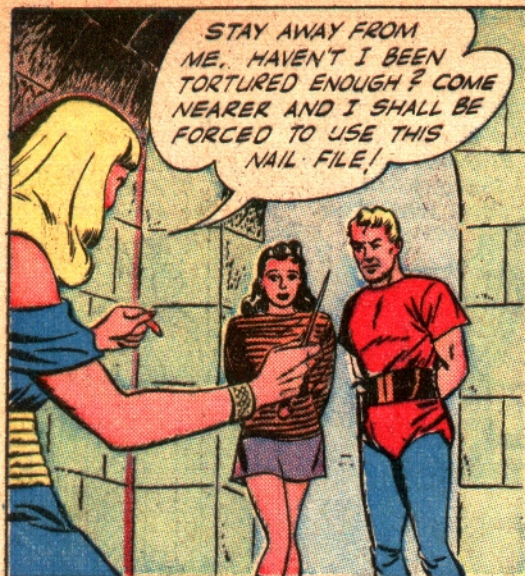
AS THE PREFECT SNARLS HIS DECLARATION, FLASH REALIZES THE BOGUS EVIDENCE THE PREFECT WILL PRESENT.



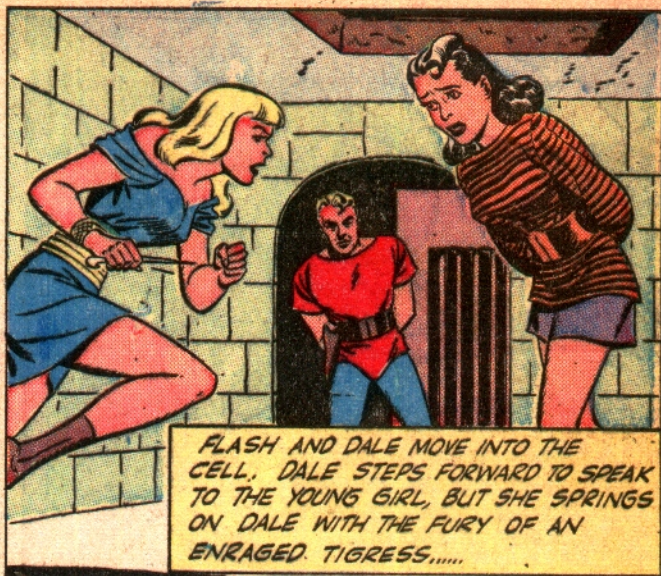
FLASH AND DALE ARE LED TO THEIR CELL. "HERE YOU AWAIT TRIAL, AFTER WHICH YOUR SIGHT WILL BE DESTROYED," SMILES THE GUARD.



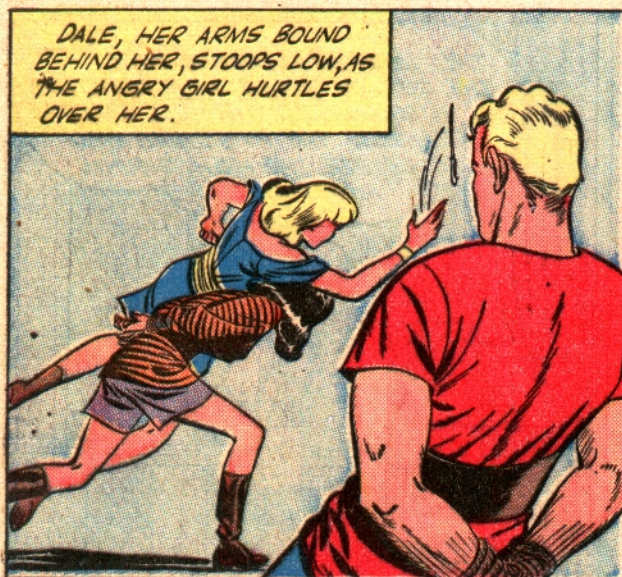
IN THE FAR END OF THE CELL A YOUNG LADY WHIMPERS, "MORE PEOPLE TO BE MADE LAUGHINGSTOCKS FOR THE HIGH TRIBUNAL, OR IS THIS ANOTHER WAY TO TORTURE ME."



STAY AWAY FROM ME. HAVEN'T I BEEN TORTURED ENOUGH? COME NEARER AND I SHALL BE FORCED TO USE THIS NAIL FILE!



FLASH AND DALE MOVE INTO THE CELL. DALE STEPS FORWARD TO SPEAK TO THE YOUNG GIRL, BUT SHE SPRINGS ON DALE WITH THE FURY OF AN ENRAGED TIGRESS.....



DALE, HER ARMS BOUND BEHIND HER, STOOPS LOW, AS THE ANGRY GIRL HURTTLES OVER HER.

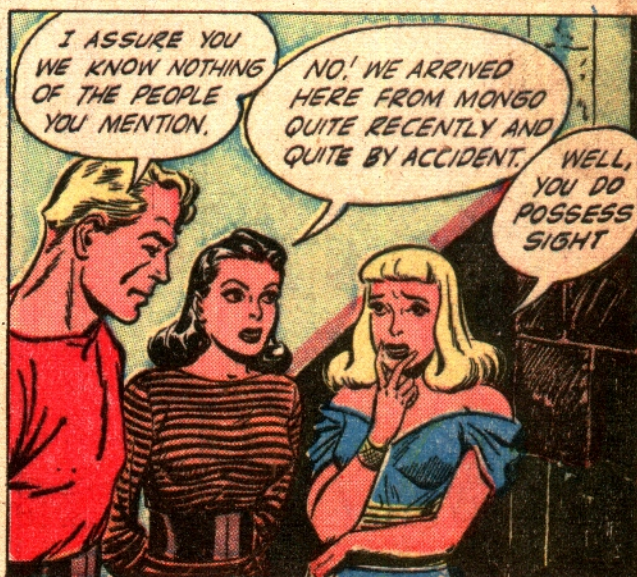


YOUNG LADY, CAN'T YOU SEE OUR ARMS ARE BOUND? WE ALL SHARE THE SAME FATE.

YOU LIE! YOU ARE AGENTS OF THE REGENT OPTIK!



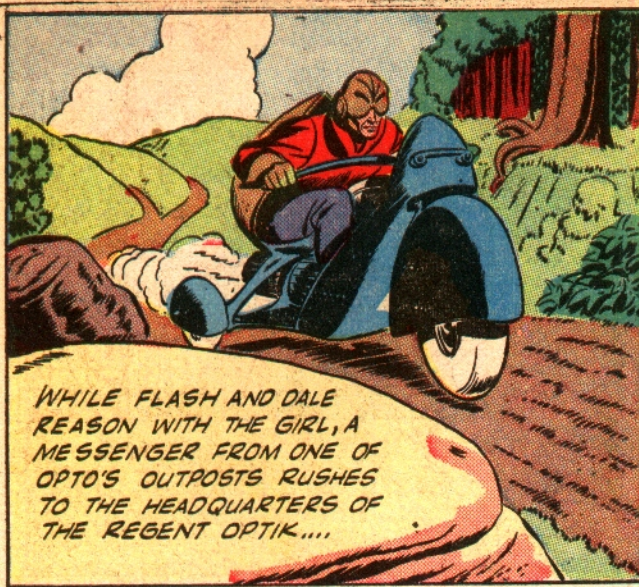
YOU HAVE BEEN PLACED HERE TO GAIN MY CONFIDENCE. THEN YOU EXPECT TO LEARN THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE OUTLAW VANGO AND THE YOUNG KING VISA. BUT I'LL NEVER TELL YOU.



I ASSURE YOU WE KNOW NOTHING OF THE PEOPLE YOU MENTION.

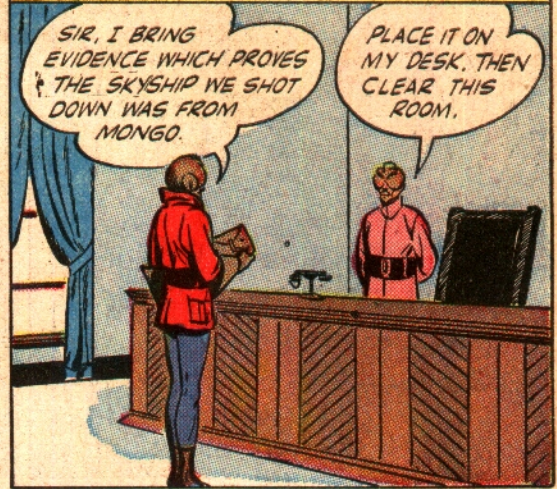
NO! WE ARRIVED HERE FROM MONGO QUITE RECENTLY AND QUITE BY ACCIDENT.

WELL, YOU DO POSSESS SIGHT



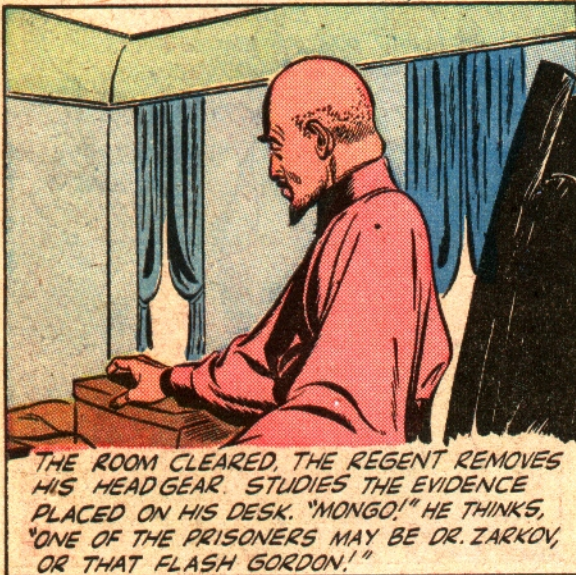
WHILE FLASH AND DALE REASON WITH THE GIRL, A MESSENGER FROM ONE OF OPTO'S OUTPOSTS RUSHES TO THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE REGENT OPTIK....

THE MESSENGER REACHES HIS DESTINATION AND IS QUICKLY ADMITTED INTO THE OFFICE OF THE REGENT

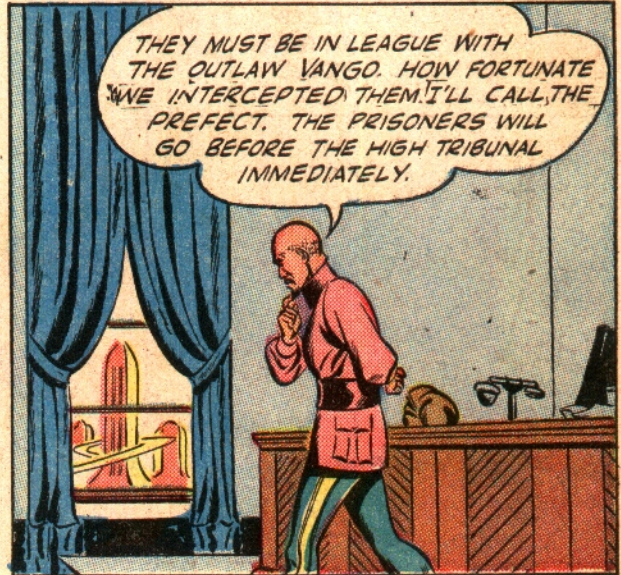


SIR, I BRING EVIDENCE WHICH PROVES THE SKYSHIP WE SHOT DOWN WAS FROM MONGO.

PLACE IT ON MY DESK, THEN CLEAR THIS ROOM.



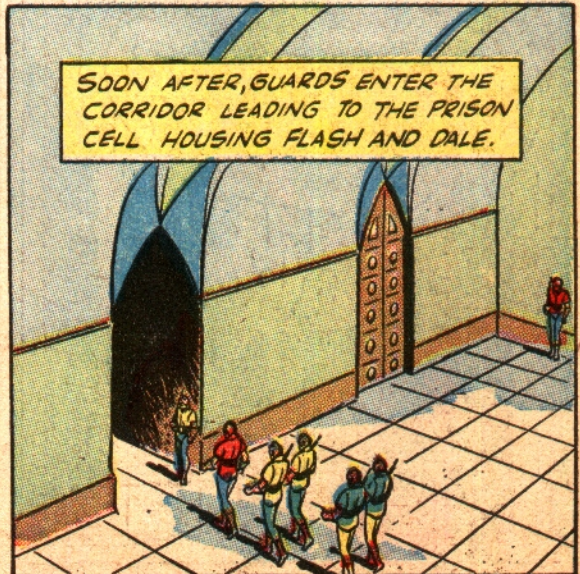
THE ROOM CLEARED, THE REGENT REMOVES HIS HEADGEAR, STUDIES THE EVIDENCE PLACED ON HIS DESK. "MONGO!" HE THINKS, "ONE OF THE PRISONERS MAY BE DR. ZARKOV, OR THAT FLASH GORDON!"



THEY MUST BE IN LEAGUE WITH THE OUTLAW VANGO. HOW FORTUNATE WE INTERCEPTED THEM. I'LL CALL THE PREFECT. THE PRISONERS WILL GO BEFORE THE HIGH TRIBUNAL IMMEDIATELY.



THE PREFECT RECEIVES THE ORDER AND PASSES IT ON IN A BURST OF FURY.



SOON AFTER, GUARDS ENTER THE CORRIDOR LEADING TO THE PRISON CELL HOUSING FLASH AND DALE.



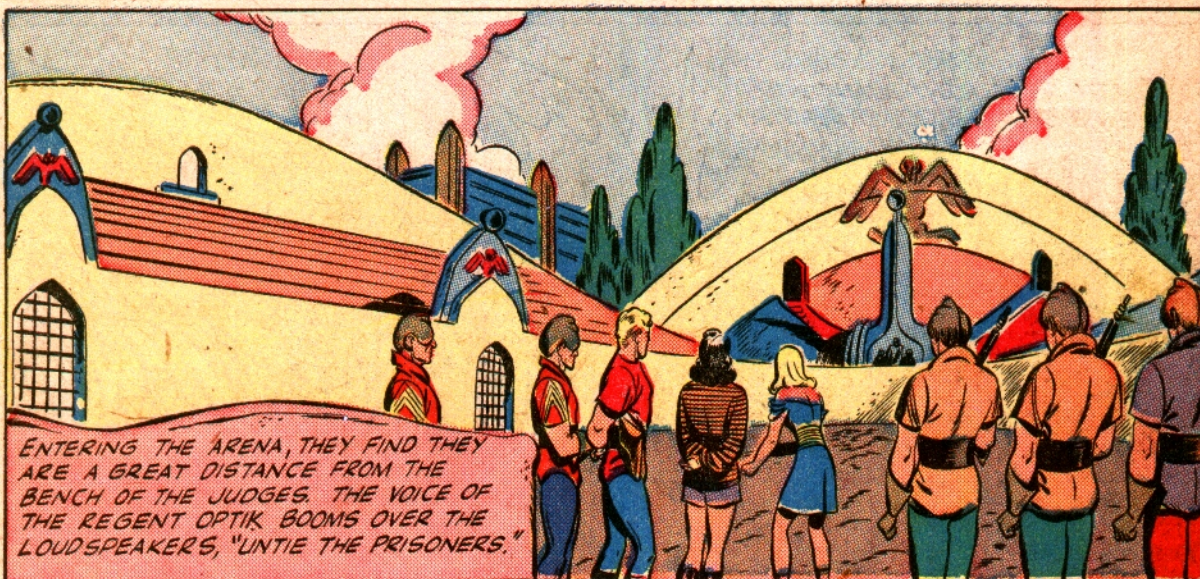
TIME OF TRIAL HAS BEEN
ADVANCED. YOU GO BEFORE
THE HIGH TRIBUNAL NOW.
ALSO THE WOMAN
NAMED "CHEE."



THE HIGH TRIBUNAL.
IT IS A TEST OF
PHYSICAL ENDURANCE
IN THE PIT — AGAINST
THE VICIOUS
TIGORYX.



SILENTLY, THE PRISONERS
ARE LED TOWARD THE ARENA,
COURT ROOM OF THE HIGH
TRIBUNAL.

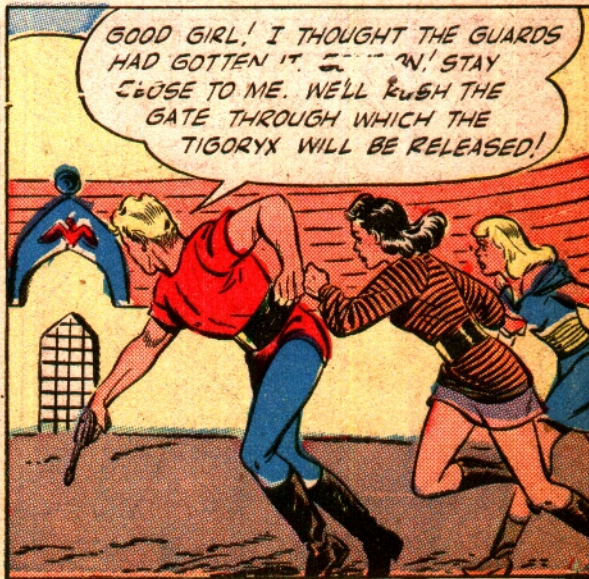


ENTERING THE ARENA, THEY FIND THEY
ARE A GREAT DISTANCE FROM THE
BENCH OF THE JUDGES. THE VOICE OF
THE REGENT OPTIK BOOMS OVER THE
LOUDSPEAKERS, "UNTIE THE PRISONERS."

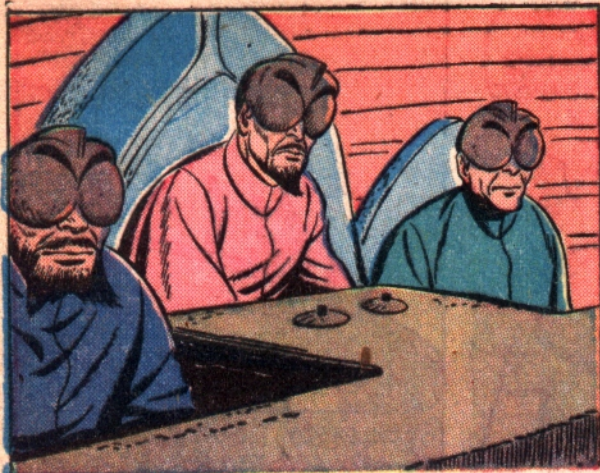


WELL, THEY ARE HUMANE
ENOUGH TO GIVE US POSSESSION
OF OUR FACULTIES.

HERE, FLASH,
YOUR ATOM-PISTOL.
I HID IT UNDER MY
TUNIC WHEN WE
LEFT THE ARMORED
CAR.



GOOD GIRL! I THOUGHT THE GUARDS
HAD GOTTEN IT. STAY
CLOSE TO ME. WE'LL RUSH THE
GATE THROUGH WHICH THE
TIGORYX WILL BE RELEASED!

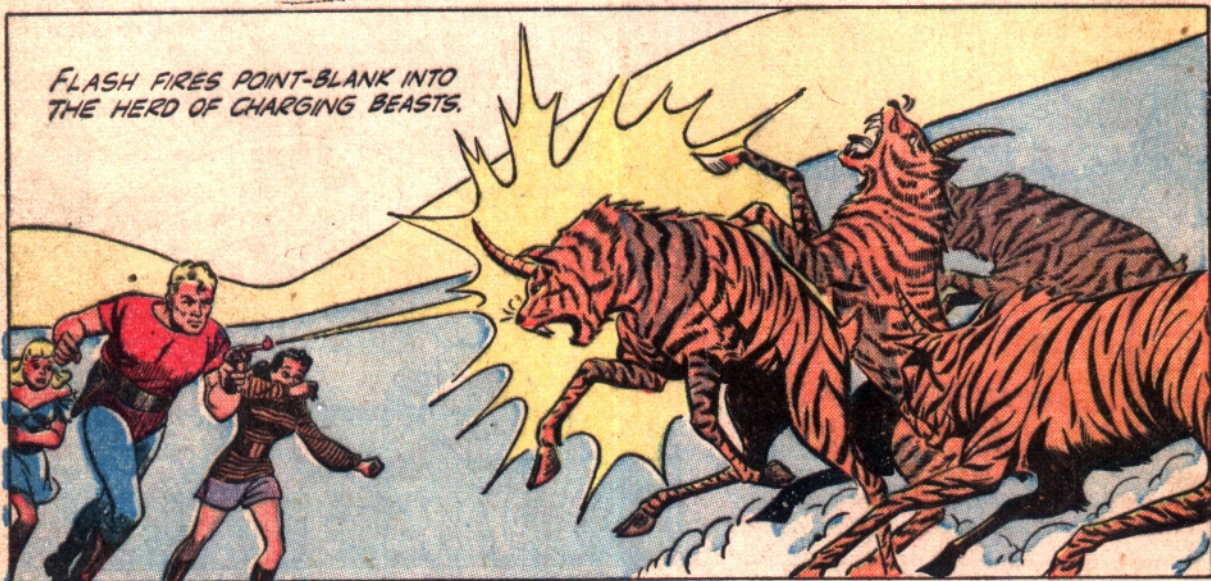


THREE GREEDY, CRUEL MEN, THE HIGH TRIBUNAL, WATCH AND LISTEN, AS FLASH, DALE AND THE GIRL, CHEE, RUSH THE GATE.....

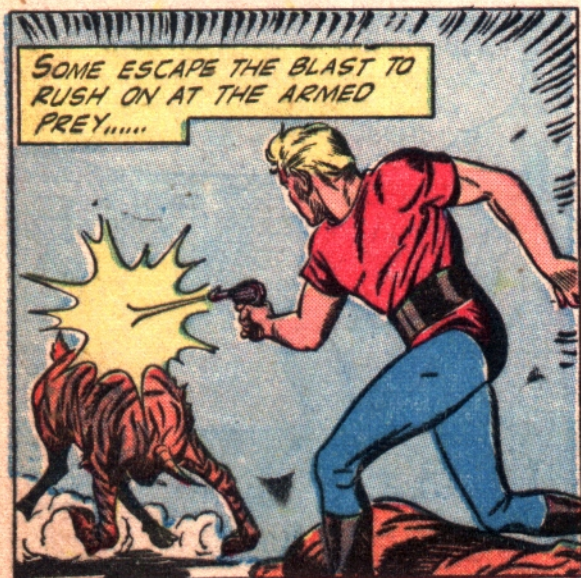
ONE, THE REGENT OPTIK, PASSES A BUTTON AND THE IRON GATE RISES — LEAVING TO DALE, FLASH AND CHEE A WILD HERD OF FANG AND HORN.



FLASH FIRES POINT-BLANK INTO THE HERD OF CHARGING BEASTS.

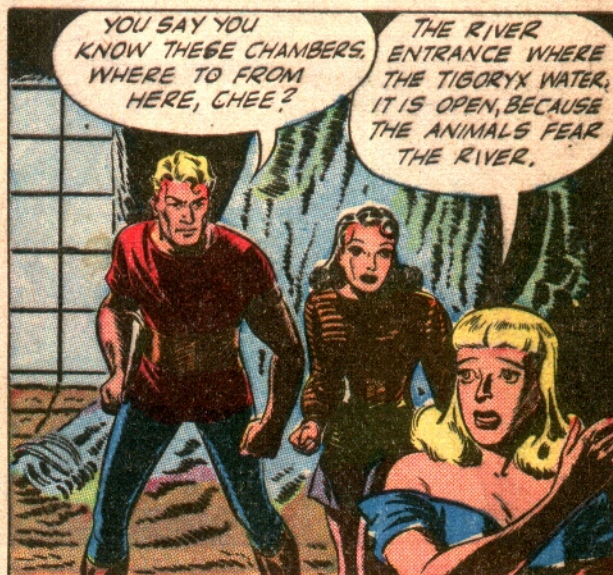
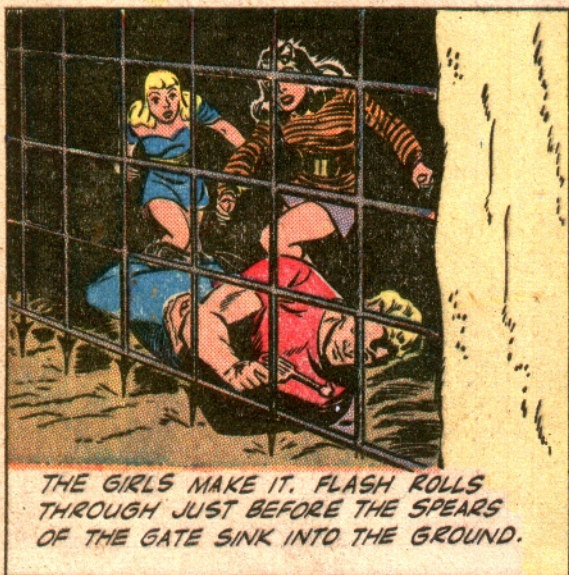
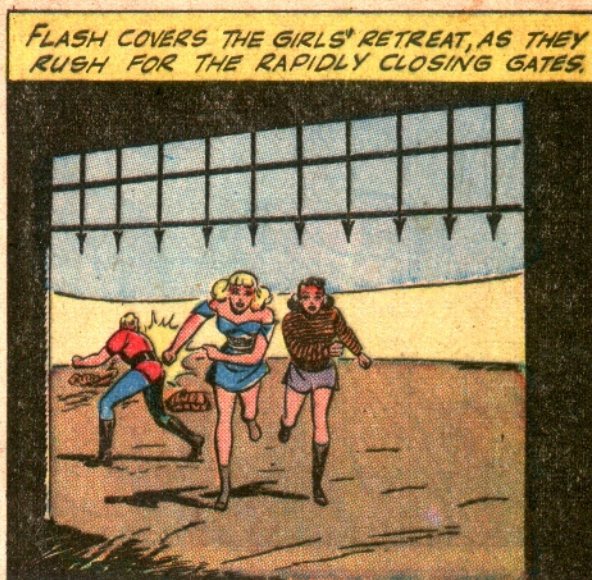


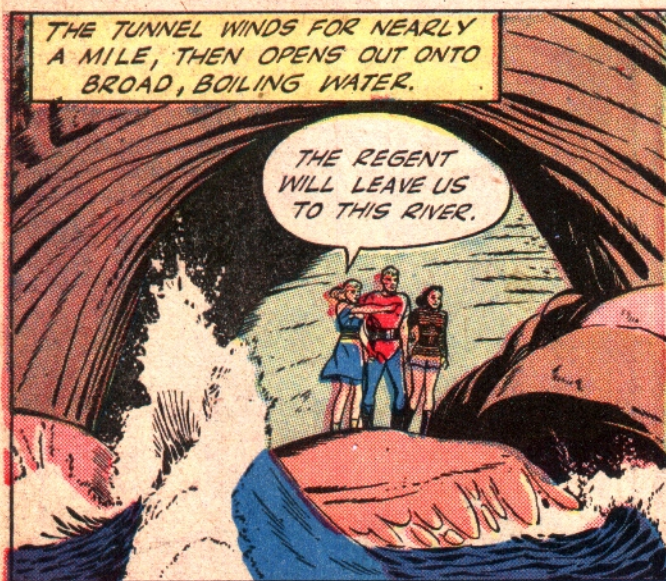
SOME ESCAPE THE BLAST TO RUSH ON AT THE ARMED PREY.....

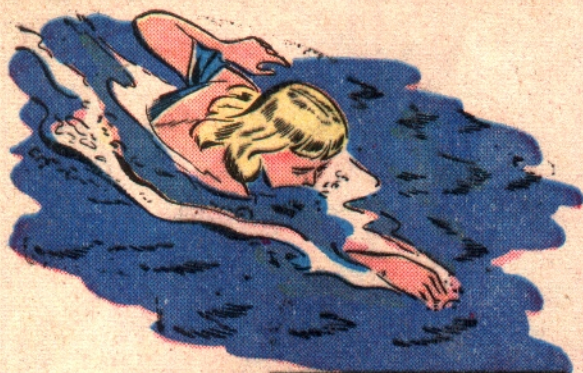


THEY HAVE A WEAPON! WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS? SEND FOR THE PREFECT. POST TROOPS AROUND THE ARENA —









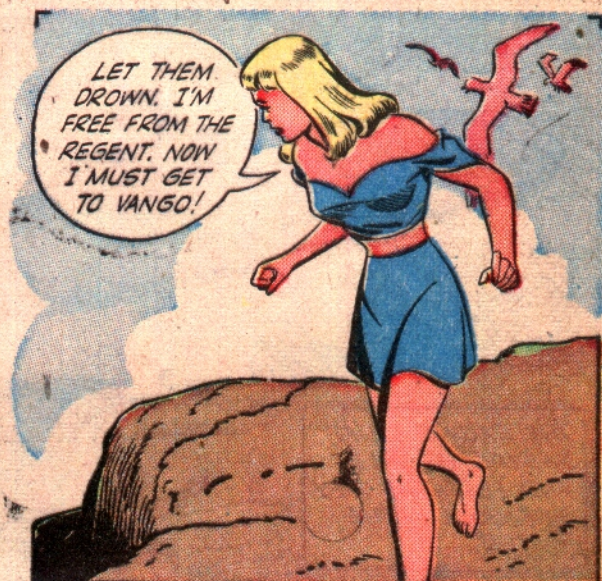
CHEE, AN EXCELLENT SWIMMER, FAMILIAR WITH THE WATERS OF OPTO RIVERS, QUICKLY KNIFES HER WAY ACROSS THE TURBULENT RIVER.....



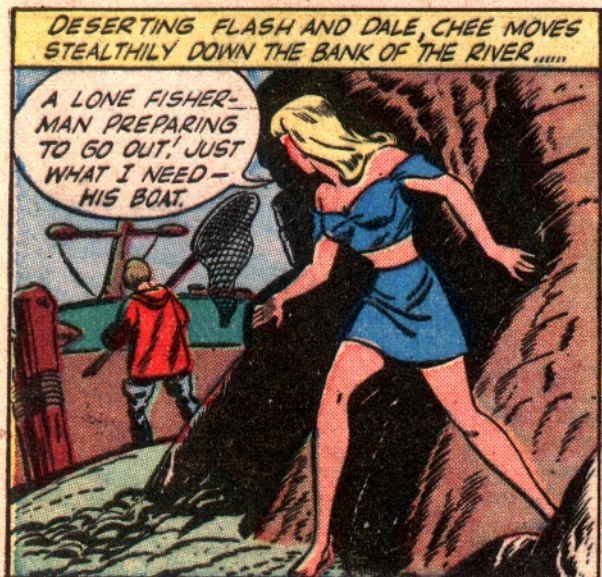
DALE, FRIGHTENED BY THE HEAVY WATERS, CLINGS TO FLASH, SCREAMING, "WE ARE LOST, FLASH, DARLING! WE ARE LOST!"



I MADE IT. THEY'LL BOTH DROWN THE WAY THAT DALE HANGS TO FLASH!

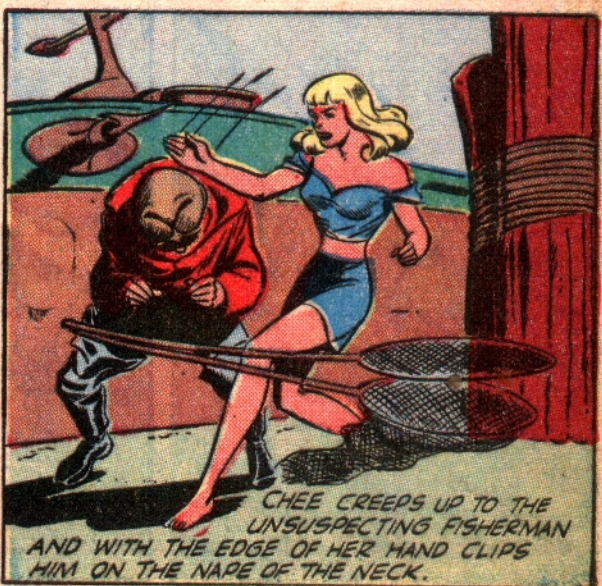


LET THEM DROWN. I'M FREE FROM THE REGENT. NOW I MUST GET TO VANGO!

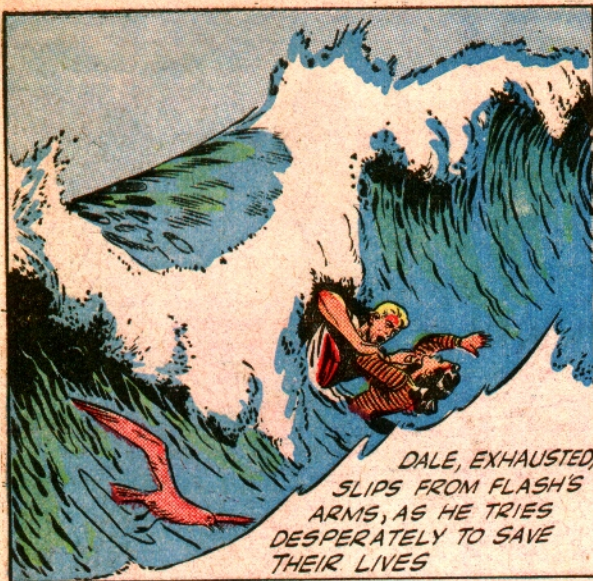


DESERTING FLASH AND DALE, CHEE MOVES STEALTHILY DOWN THE BANK OF THE RIVER.....

A LONE FISHERMAN PREPARING TO GO OUT! JUST WHAT I NEED—HIS BOAT.



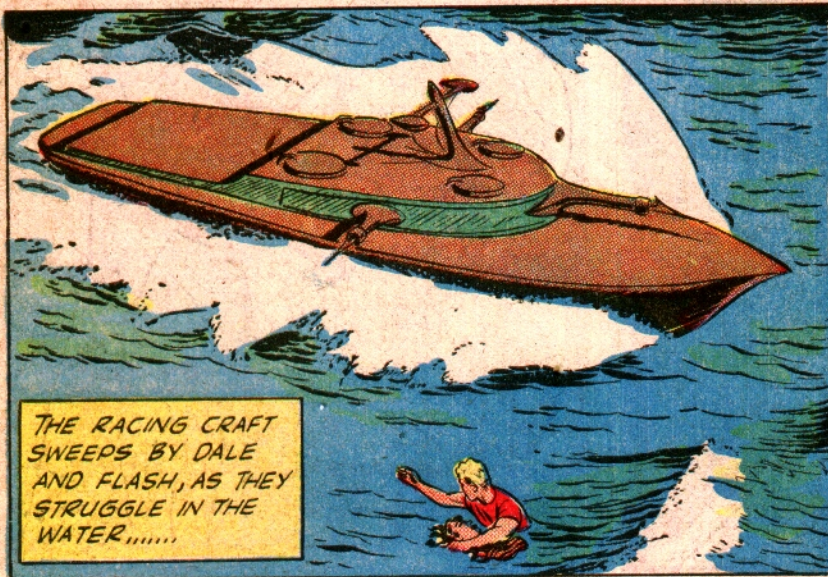
CHEE CREEPS UP TO THE UNSUSPECTING FISHERMAN AND WITH THE EDGE OF HER HAND CLIPS HIM ON THE NAPE OF THE NECK.



DALE, EXHAUSTED,
SLIPS FROM FLASH'S
ARMS, AS HE TRIES
DESPERATELY TO SAVE
THEIR LIVES



CHEE, GAINING
CONTROL OF THE FISHER-
MAN'S CRAFT, ROARS
AWAY FROM THE DOCK,
DETERMINED TO GET TO VANGO.



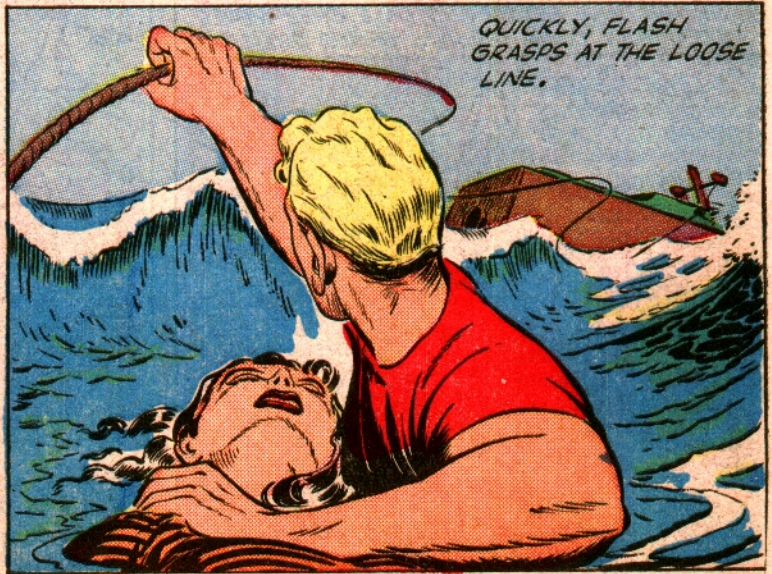
THE RACING CRAFT
SWEEPS BY DALE
AND FLASH, AS THEY
STRUGGLE IN THE
WATER.....



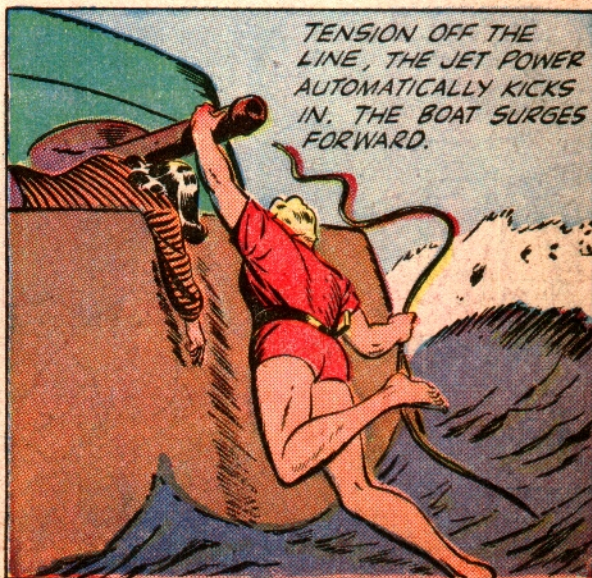
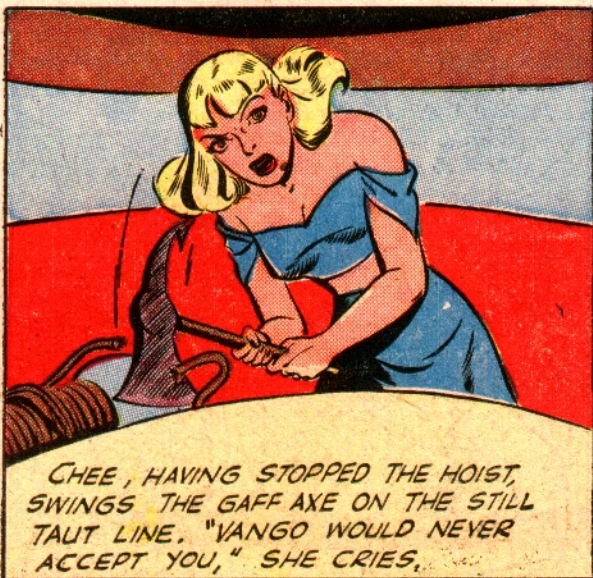
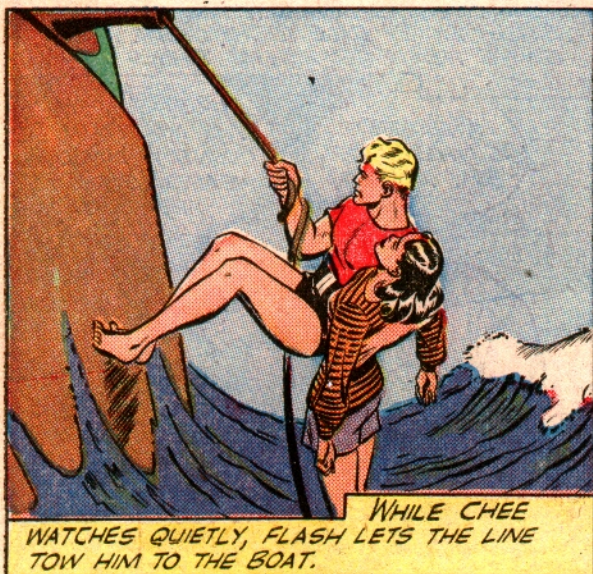
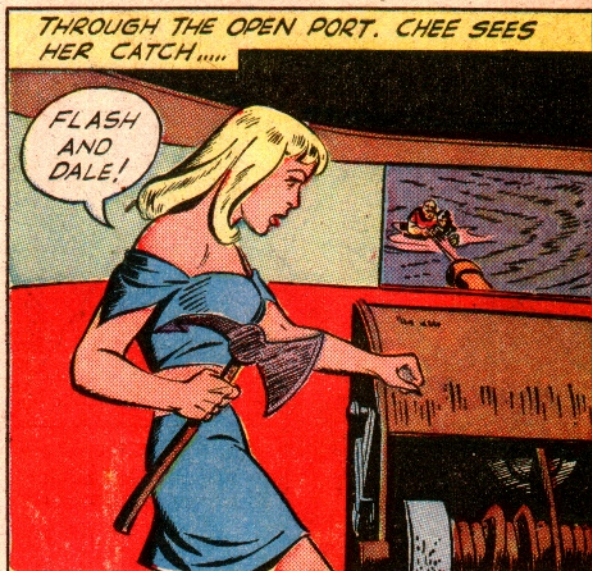
WHAT WAS THAT? —
THE RADAR-HARPOONS
HAVE FIRED. I FORGOT
TO SHUT THEM OFF.

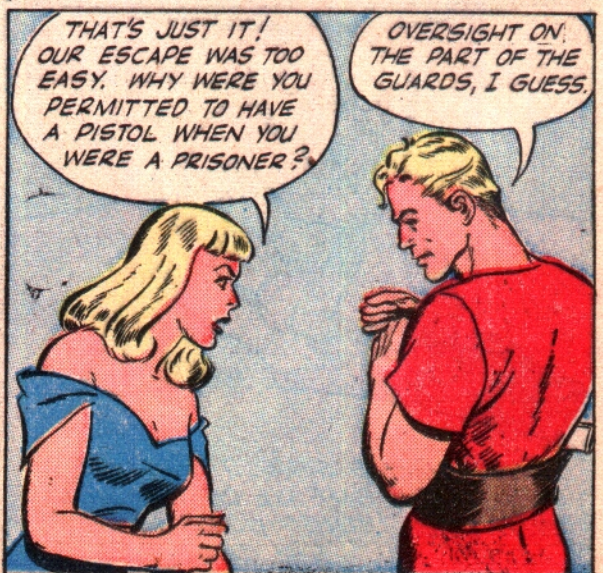
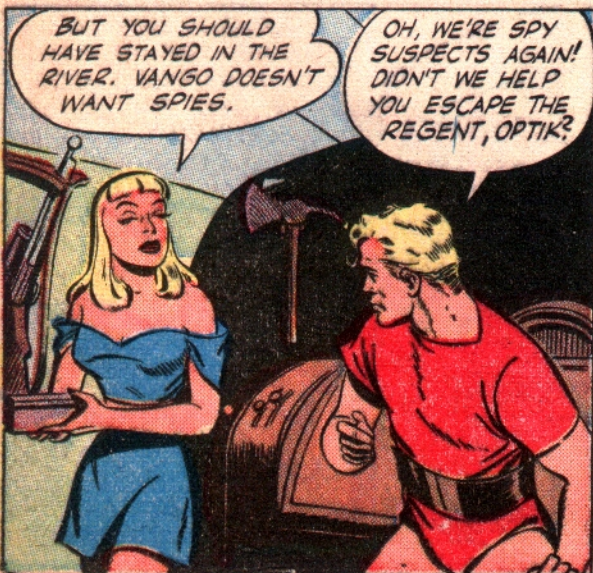
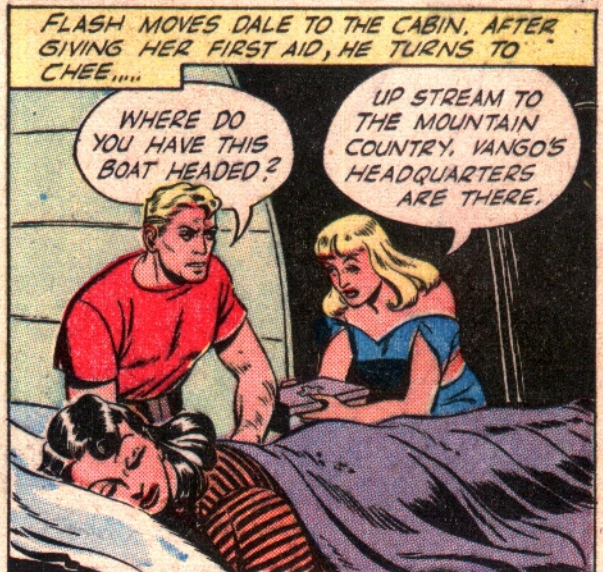
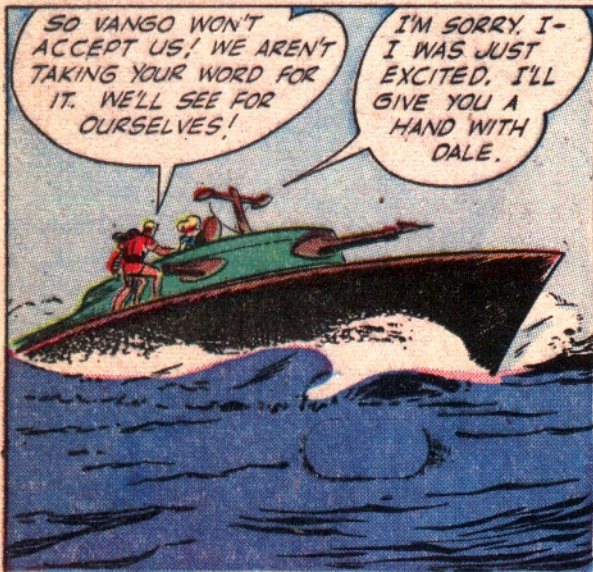
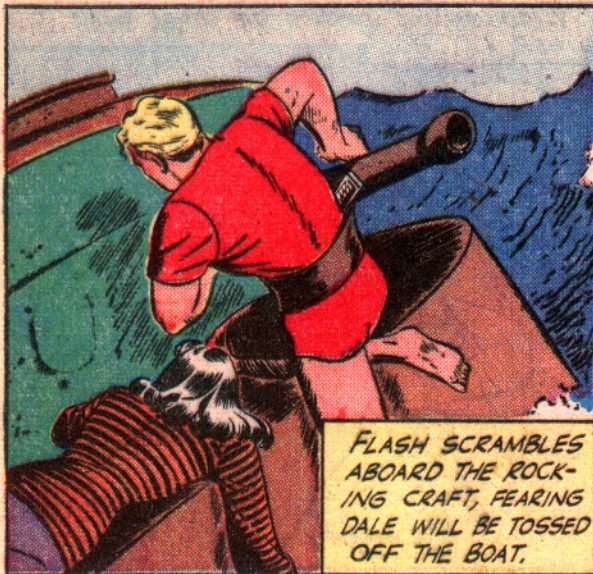


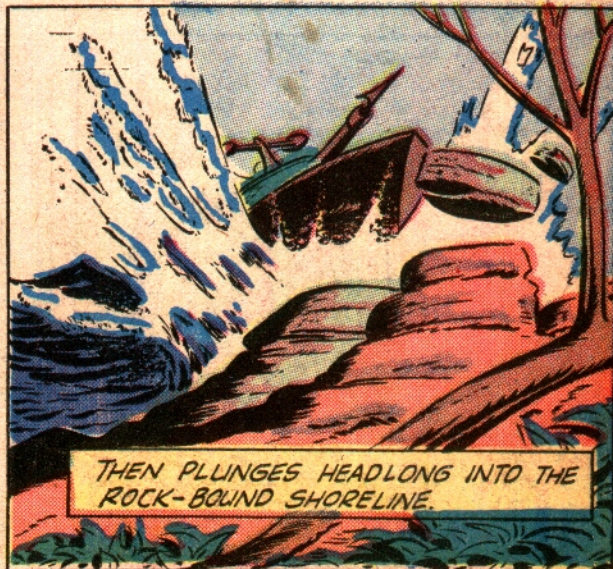
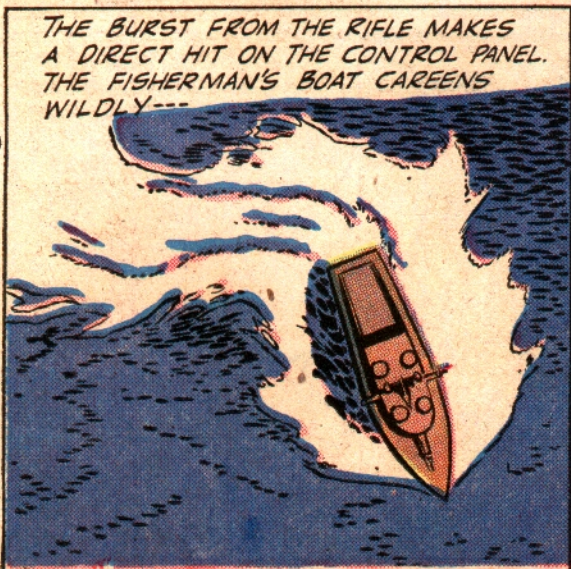
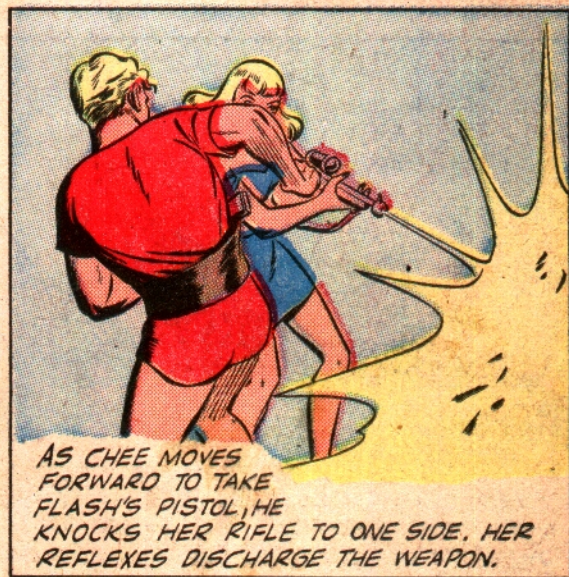
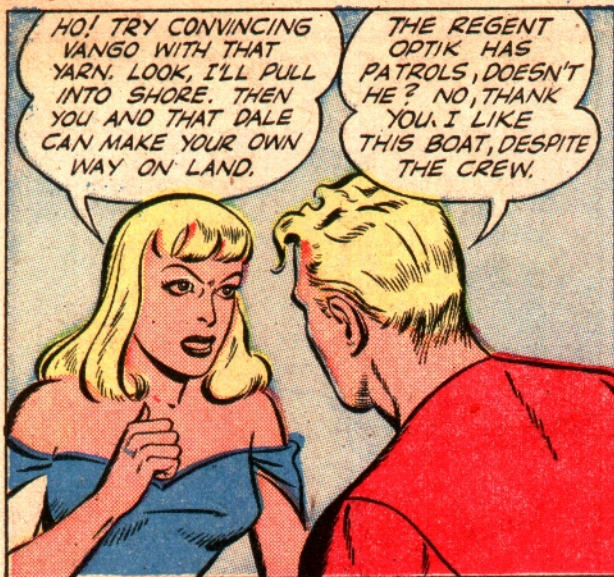
THE HARPOON
WHIZZES JUST
ABOVE THE HEADS
OF FLASH
AND
DALE....



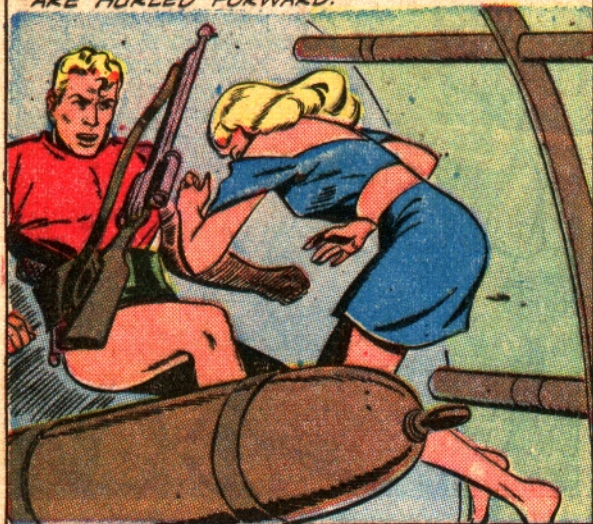
QUICKLY, FLASH
GRASPS AT THE LOOSE
LINE.



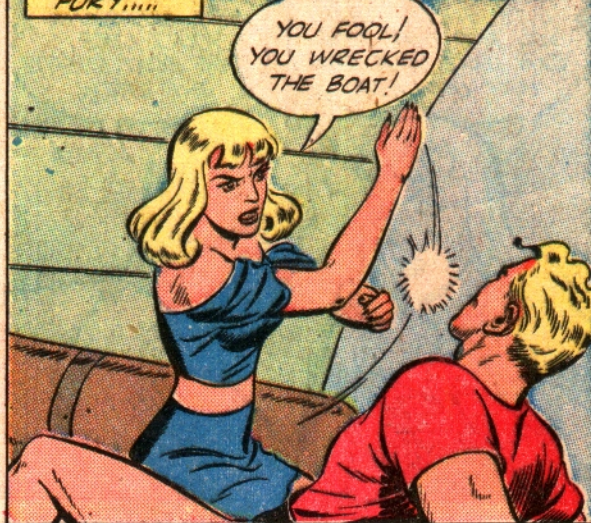




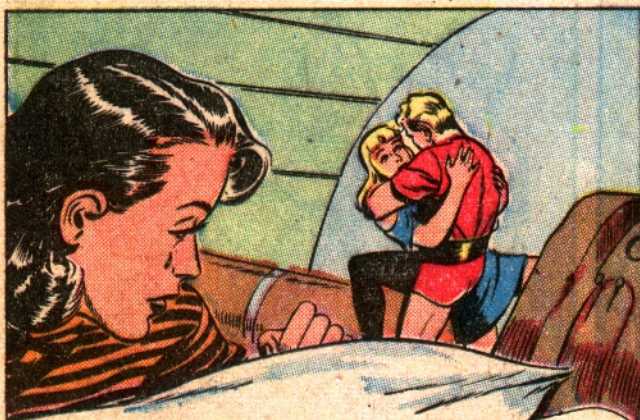
AT THE MOMENT OF IMPACT, FLASH AND CHEE ARE HURLED FORWARD.



CHEE RECOVERS QUICKLY IN A RAGE OF FURY.....

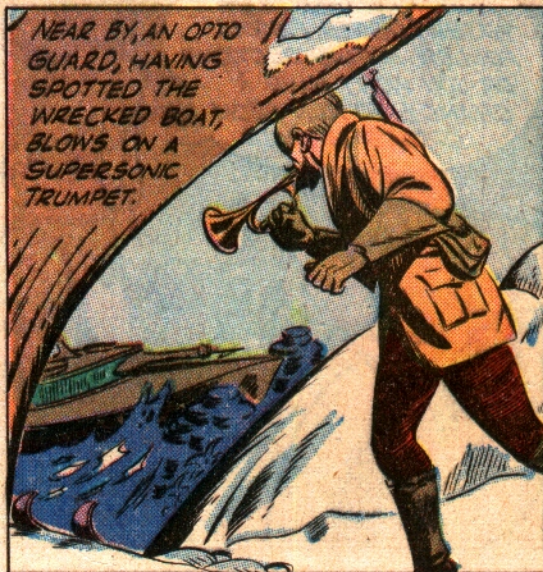


YOU FOOL!
YOU WRECKED
THE BOAT!

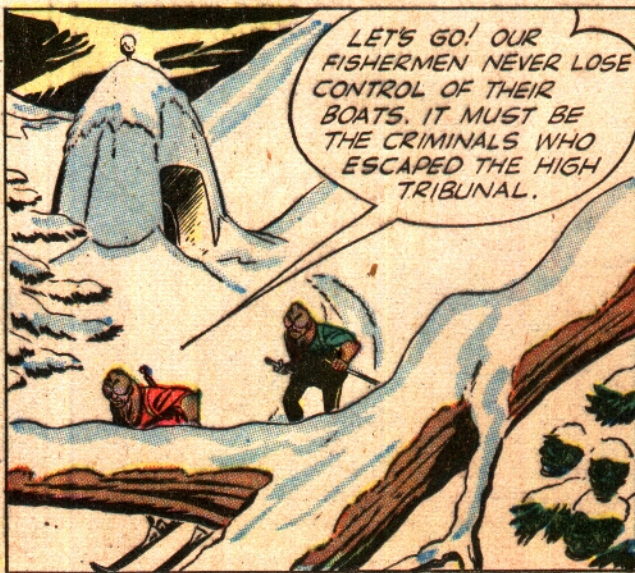


DALE, AROUSED FROM HER STUPOR, SEES FLASH PULL CHEE INTO HIS ARMS, AS HE TRIES TO SUBDUE HER ANGER. "HE LOVES HER," THINKS DALE, "BECAUSE SHE IS DARING, AN ATHLETE AND A STRANGE WOMAN."

NEAR BY, AN OPTO GUARD, HAVING SPOTTED THE WRECKED BOAT, BLOWS ON A SUPERSONIC TRUMPET.



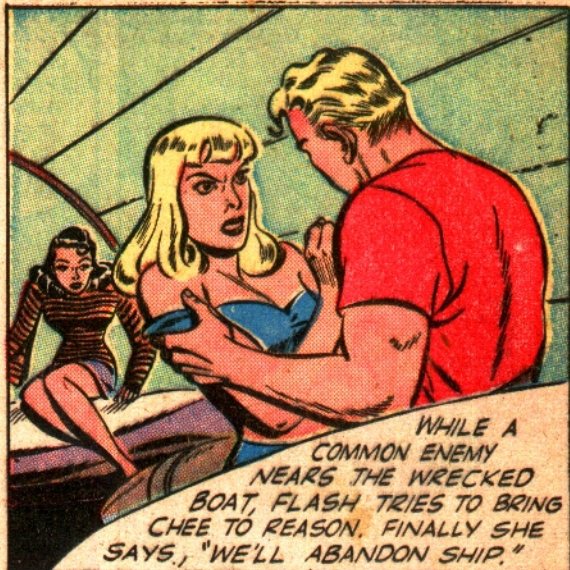
IN THE GUARD STATION THE SUPERSONIC TRUMPET CALL IS RECEIVED THROUGH A CONVERTER THAT BROADCASTS AT A LOWER FREQUENCY AUDIBLE TO HUMAN EARS.



LET'S GO! OUR FISHERMEN NEVER LOSE CONTROL OF THEIR BOATS. IT MUST BE THE CRIMINALS WHO ESCAPED THE HIGH TRIBUNAL.



GUIDED BY THEIR RADAR-EQUIPPED HELMETS, THE TWO GUARDS RACE ALONG A MARKED TRAIL TO THE RIVER'S EDGE.



WHILE A COMMON ENEMY NEARS THE WRECKED BOAT, FLASH TRIES TO BRING CHEE TO REASON. FINALLY SHE SAYS, "WE'LL ABANDON SHIP."



BUT I WON'T TAKE YOU TO VANGO. MEANWHILE, I'LL GET SOME CLOTHING FROM AN AFT COMPARTMENT. WE ARE IN THE WINTER REGION OF OPTO.

BETTER MAKE IT FAST!



GLAD YOU ARE FEELING BETTER, DALE. WE MUST KEEP CLOSE WATCH ON THAT CHEE. SHE HAS A TERRIBLE DISPOSITION.

YES, I NOTICED YOU HAD HER UP IN ARMS—YOUR ARMS.



CHEE RETURNS WITH AN ASSORTMENT OF WINTER CLOTHING. THE THREE OF THEM SLIP INTO THE SUITS, QUICKLY. "FOLLOW ME," CHEE ANNOUNCES, "WE'LL LEAVE BY NUMBER THREE HATCH!"



CHEE RAISES THE HATCH COVER TO LEAD THE WAY OUT, BUT IS WELCOMED BY A BURST OF GUNFIRE.



A SECOND BURST SENDS
CHEE BELOW....



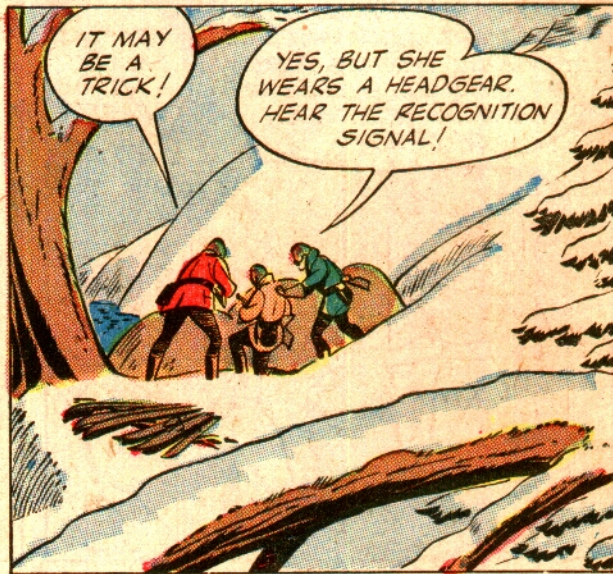
OPTO COAST
GUARDSMEN!
THERE'S BUT ONE
WAY NOW. DON'T
FIRE ON THEM,
FLASH. I'LL
BE RIGHT BACK!



CHEE RUSHES
BELOW. A FEW MINUTES
LATER SHE RETURNS, WEARING
A HEADGEAR. "WE'LL SEE HOW
THIS WORKS," SHE SAYS, AS SHE
MOVES TO THE HATCH COVER.

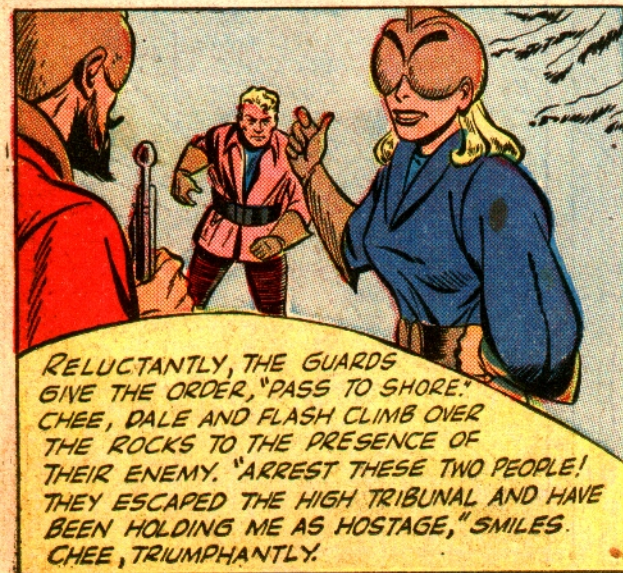


HOLD YOUR FIRE. I
AM THE DAUGHTER OF
THE FISHERMAN, ZANDRO
OF OPTOMEREY!



IT MAY
BE A
TRICK!

YES, BUT SHE
WEARS A HEADGEAR.
HEAR THE RECOGNITION
SIGNAL!

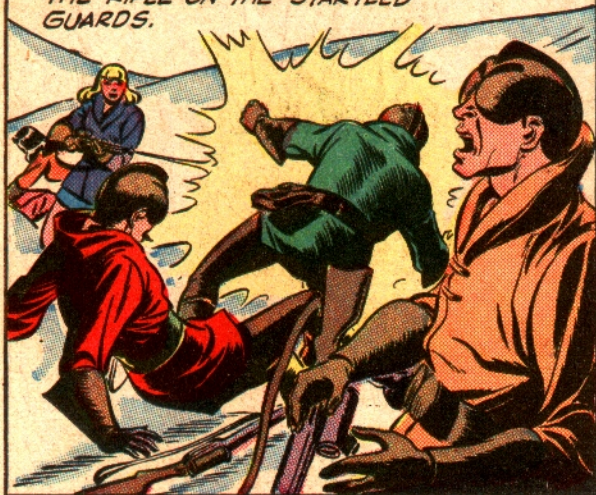


RELUCTANTLY, THE GUARDS
GIVE THE ORDER, "PASS TO SHORE."
CHEE, DALE AND FLASH CLIMB OVER
THE ROCKS TO THE PRESENCE OF
THEIR ENEMY. "ARREST THESE TWO PEOPLE!
THEY ESCAPED THE HIGH TRIBUNAL AND HAVE
BEEN HOLDING ME AS HOSTAGE," SMILES
CHEE, TRIUMPHANTLY.



SNATCHING A RIFLE FROM ONE OF THE
GUARDS, SHE BASHES FLASH ON THE
BACK OF THE HEAD.

CHEE REMOVES HER HEADGEAR FOR BETTER VISION. THEN TURNS THE RIFLE ON THE STARTLED GUARDS.



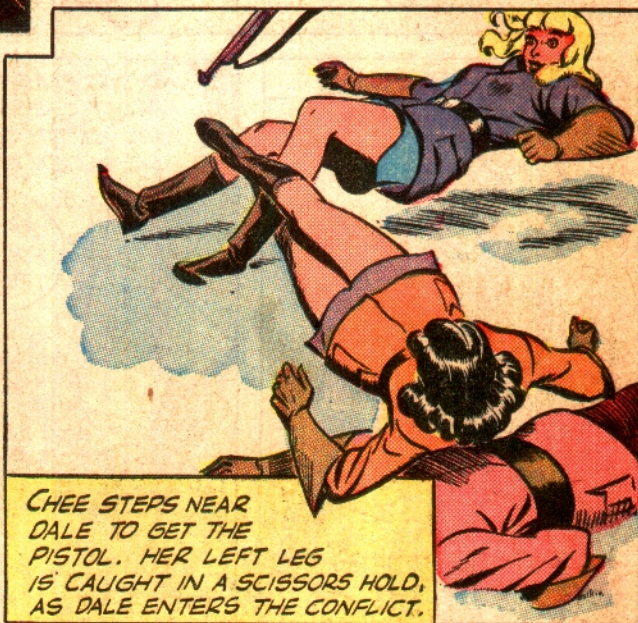
I SAID I WOULDN'T TAKE YOU TO VANGO AND I MEANT IT. YOU CAN GIVE THAT MESSAGE TO FLASH WHEN HE COMES TO.



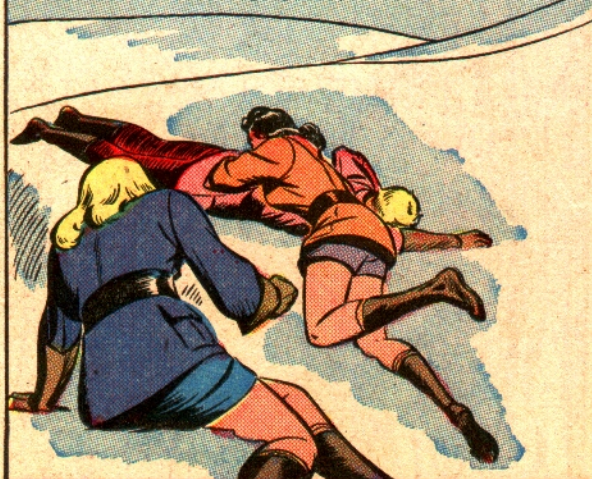
I'LL TAKE FLASH'S PISTOL. VANGO WILL BE INTERESTED IN SUCH A WEAPON.



CHEE STEPS NEAR DALE TO GET THE PISTOL. HER LEFT LEG IS CAUGHT IN A SCISSORS HOLD, AS DALE ENTERS THE CONFLICT.

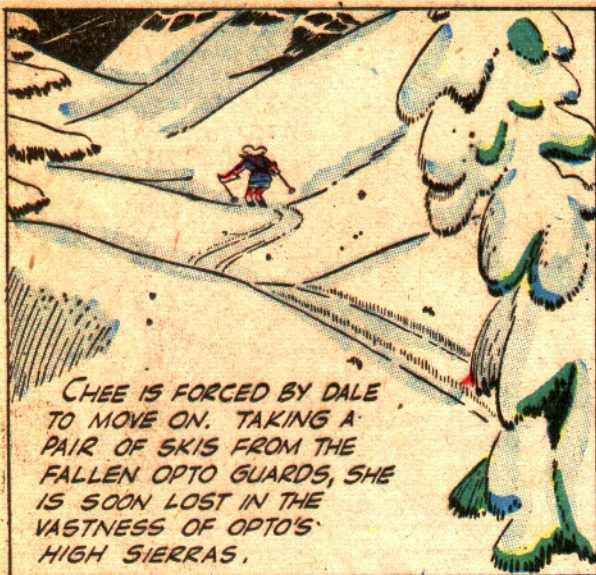


CHEE, DISARMED IN HER FALL, TRIES TO RECOVER, AS DALE PULLS FLASH'S PISTOL FROM HIS BELT.

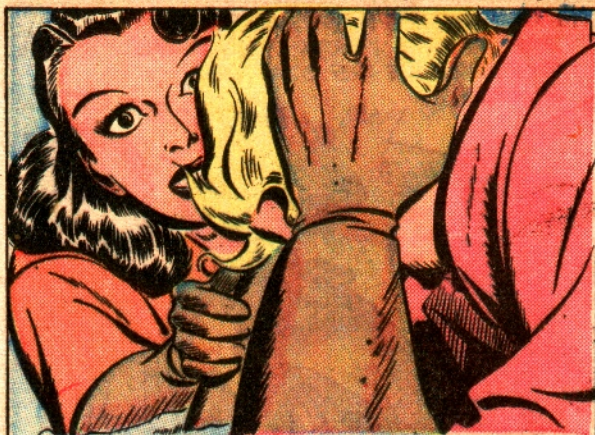


GET ON YOUR WAY, CHEE! GO TO YOUR SO WONDERFUL VANGO.





CHEE IS FORCED BY DALE TO MOVE ON. TAKING A PAIR OF SKIS FROM THE FALLEN OPTO GUARDS, SHE IS SOON LOST IN THE VASTNESS OF OPTO'S HIGH SIERRAS.



LATER, FLASH RALLIES, "WHAT HAPPENED, DALE?" DALE TELLS FLASH HOW HE WAS HIT BY CHEE, HOW SHE TURNED ON THE GUARDS — AND THAT NOW SHE IS ON HER WAY TO VANGO.

FLASH GETS TO HIS FEET...



VANGO! WE MUST FOLLOW HER!

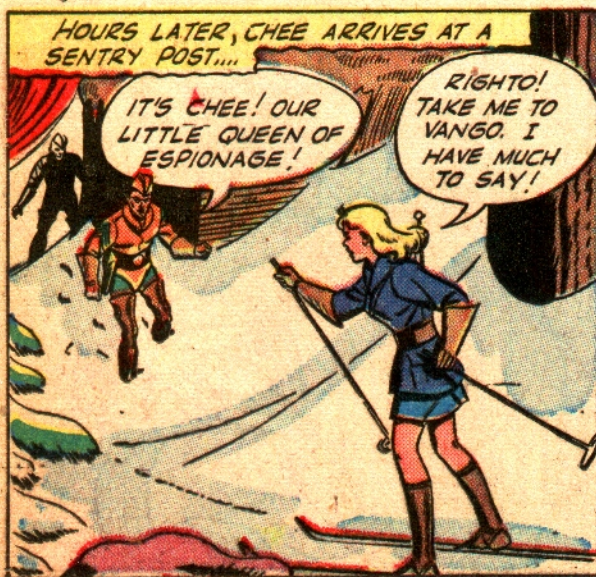


NO! NO, FLASH. LET'S FORGET CHEE AND VANGO. WHY NOT TRY CONTACTING DR. ZARKOV ON MONGO?

WE HAVE A BETTER CHANCE FOR THAT, IF WE GET TO VANGO.



DISREGARDING DALE'S PLEADING, FLASH TAKES THE REMAINING TWO PAIRS OF SKIS, AND HE AND DALE START THEIR PURSUIT OF CHEE.



HOURS LATER, CHEE ARRIVES AT A SENTRY POST...

IT'S CHEE! OUR LITTLE QUEEN OF ESPIONAGE!

RIGHTO! TAKE ME TO VANGO. I HAVE MUCH TO SAY!



SHORTLY AFTER, CHEE IS WITH VANGO.

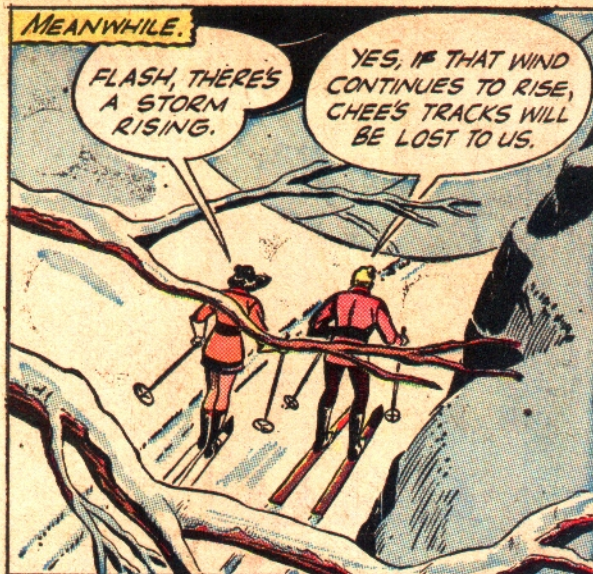
THANK SATURN, YOU GOT HERE. THERE'S A HEAVY STORM CLOSING IN ON THE REGION.

THEY'LL NEVER MAKE IT THEN—

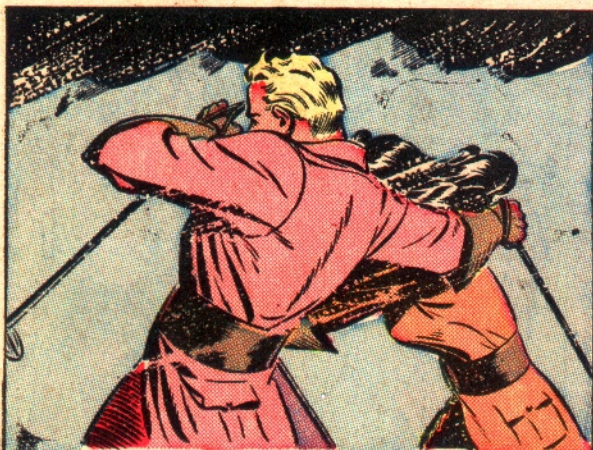
MEANWHILE.

FLASH, THERE'S
A STORM
RISING.

YES, IF THAT WIND
CONTINUES TO RISE,
CHEE'S TRACKS WILL
BE LOST TO US.



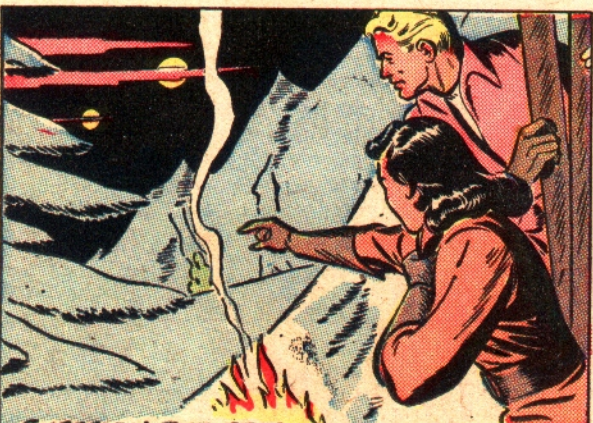
FIGHTING AGAINST
TIME, FLASH URGES
DALE ON. THE BLIZZARD
INCREASES IN INTENSITY
AND A BITTER WIND BITES
INTO THE VERY MARROW
OF THEIR BONES...



THEIR PROGRESS IS GREATLY IMPEDED,
AS THEY HUDDLE NEAR EACH OTHER. "NO
USE, DALE! WE MUST SEEK SHELTER. THIS
STORM MAY CONTINUE FOR DAYS.



FOR HOURS THE
WINTER REGION OF OPTO
IS A MAD SWIRL OF WHITE.
NIGHT CLOSES IN WITH INTENSE
COLD. FLASH BUILDS A FIRE, BUT ITS
HEAT IS LITTLE COMFORT AGAINST THE
FURY OF THE WEATHER.



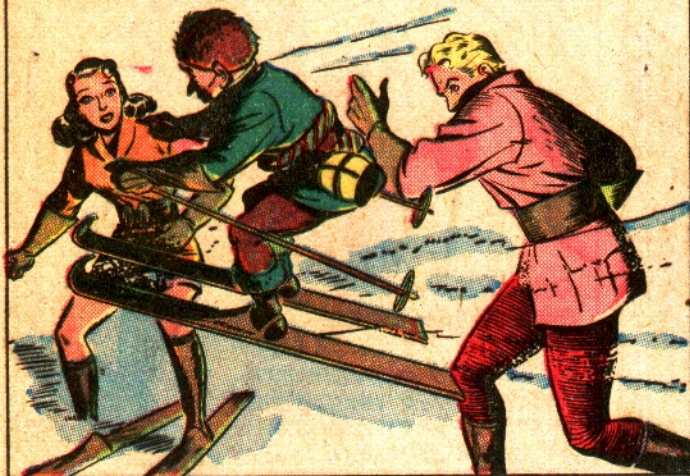
SUDDENLY, THE STORM
SUBSIDES. THE SKY CLEARS AND THE
MANY MOONS OF OPTO ILLUMINATE
A FAIRYLAND. IN WHICH ALL TRACKS
HAVE BEEN ERASED. DALE STARTLES
FLASH WITH, "LOOK! A LIGHT!"



OVER THERE,
FLASH! IT
IS A LIGHT!

DO YOU KNOW WHAT
THAT MEANS, DALE?
WHOEVER HAS THAT
LIGHT CAN SEE! IT
MAY BE ONE OF VANGO'S
— IT'S GONE!

FLASH AND DALE PREPARE TO INVESTIGATE THE LIGHT, WHEN SUDDENLY, IN A WHIRL OF SNOW, A SMALL FIGURE NEARLY LANDS ON THEM....



WHERE YOU HEADING, STRANGERS? I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU.



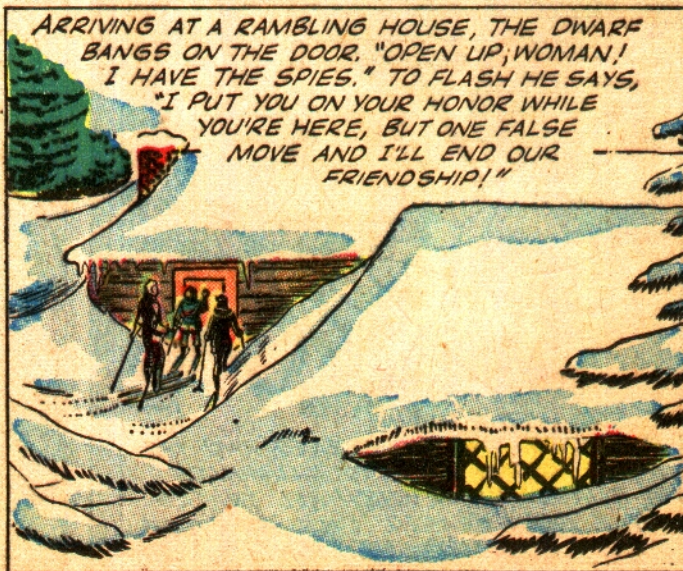
HO! KEEP YOUR DISTANCE, YOU TWO! I'M A TRIGGER-HAPPY FELLER!



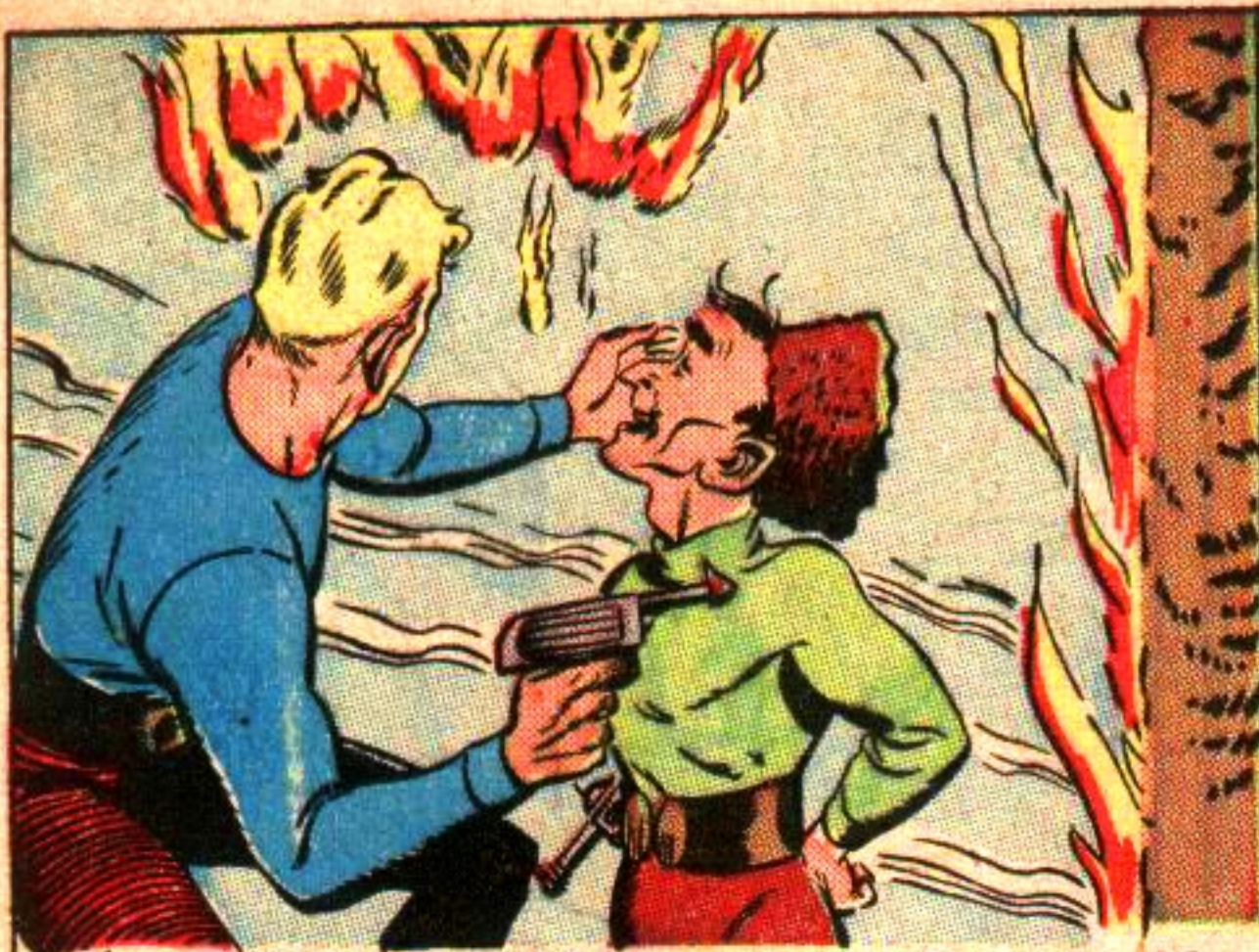
VANGO WANTS YOU. HAND OVER YOUR GUN, THEN PUT ON YOUR SKIS.



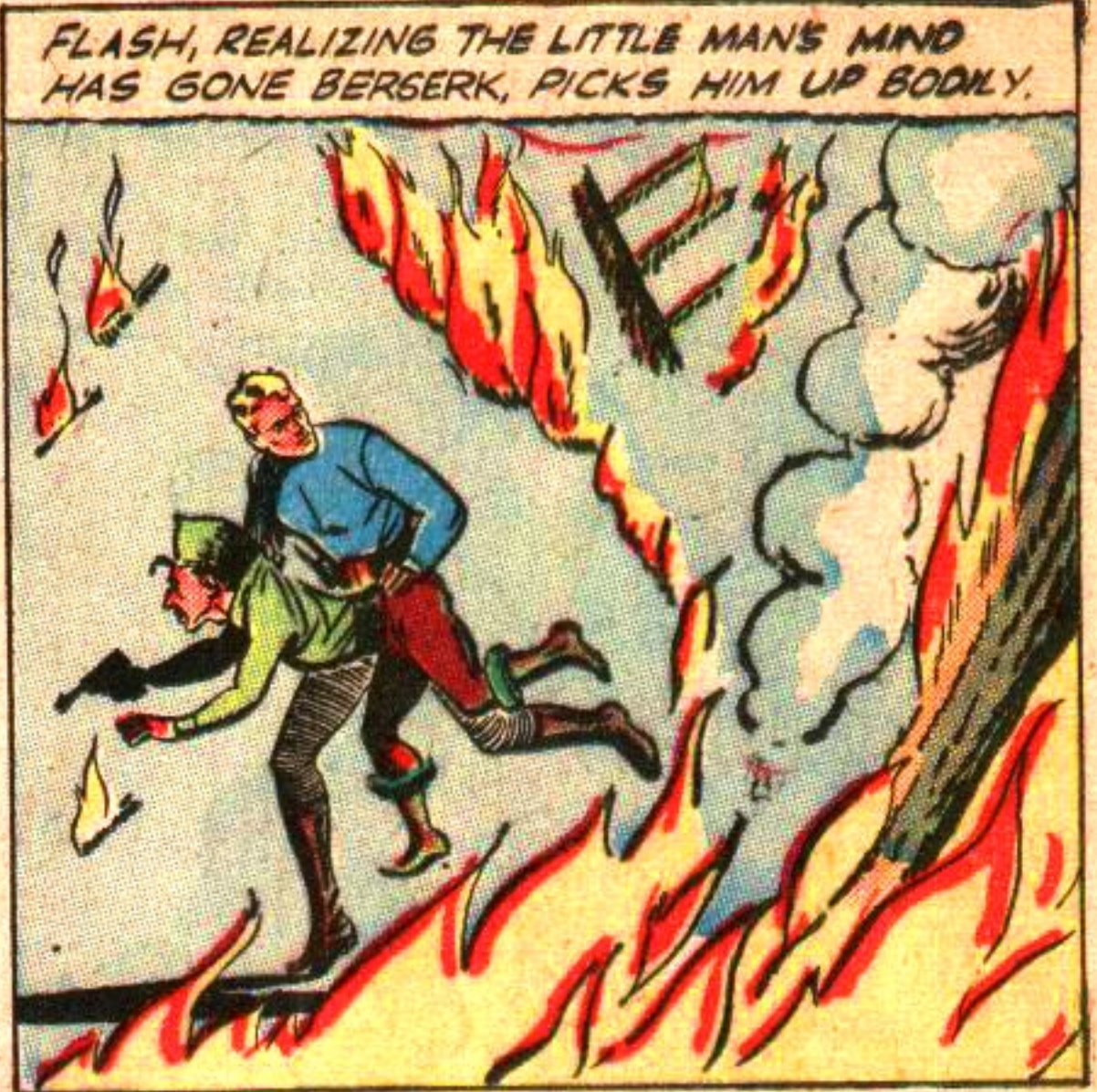
ARRIVING AT A RAMBLING HOUSE, THE DWARF BANGS ON THE DOOR. "OPEN UP, WOMAN! I HAVE THE SPIES." TO FLASH HE SAYS, "I PUT YOU ON YOUR HONOR WHILE YOU'RE HERE, BUT ONE FALSE MOVE AND I'LL END OUR FRIENDSHIP!"



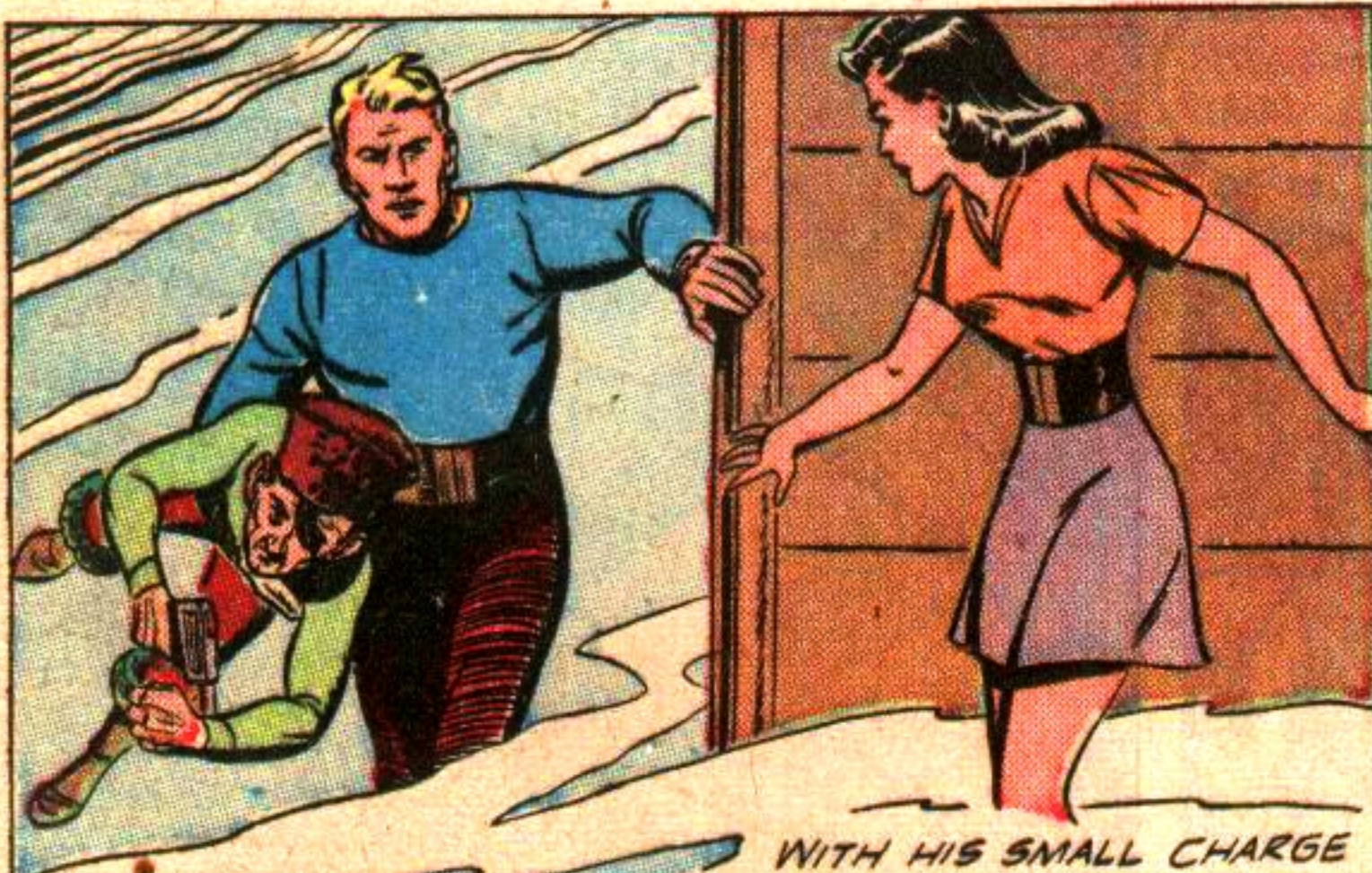
"YOU STAY AT MY HOUSE TONIGHT. GO TO VANGO IN THE MORNING!" SAYS THE DWARF AS HE LEADS THE WAY.



ABOVE THEM THE FIRE-WEAKENED TIMBERS OF THE ROOF GIVE WAY UNDER THE WEIGHT OF HEAVY SNOW. "WE'LL BOTH STAY HERE!", THE DWARF CRIES, THEN BREAKS INTO HIDEOUS LAUGHTER.



FLASH, REALIZING THE LITTLE MAN'S MIND HAS GONE BERSERK, PICKS HIM UP BODILY.



WITH HIS SMALL CHARGE FLASH WORKS HIS WAY TO THE DOOR, WHERE DALE WAITS, ANXIOUSLY. "THANK HEAVEN YOU MADE IT, FLASH DARLING," SHE WHISPERS, HAPPILY.



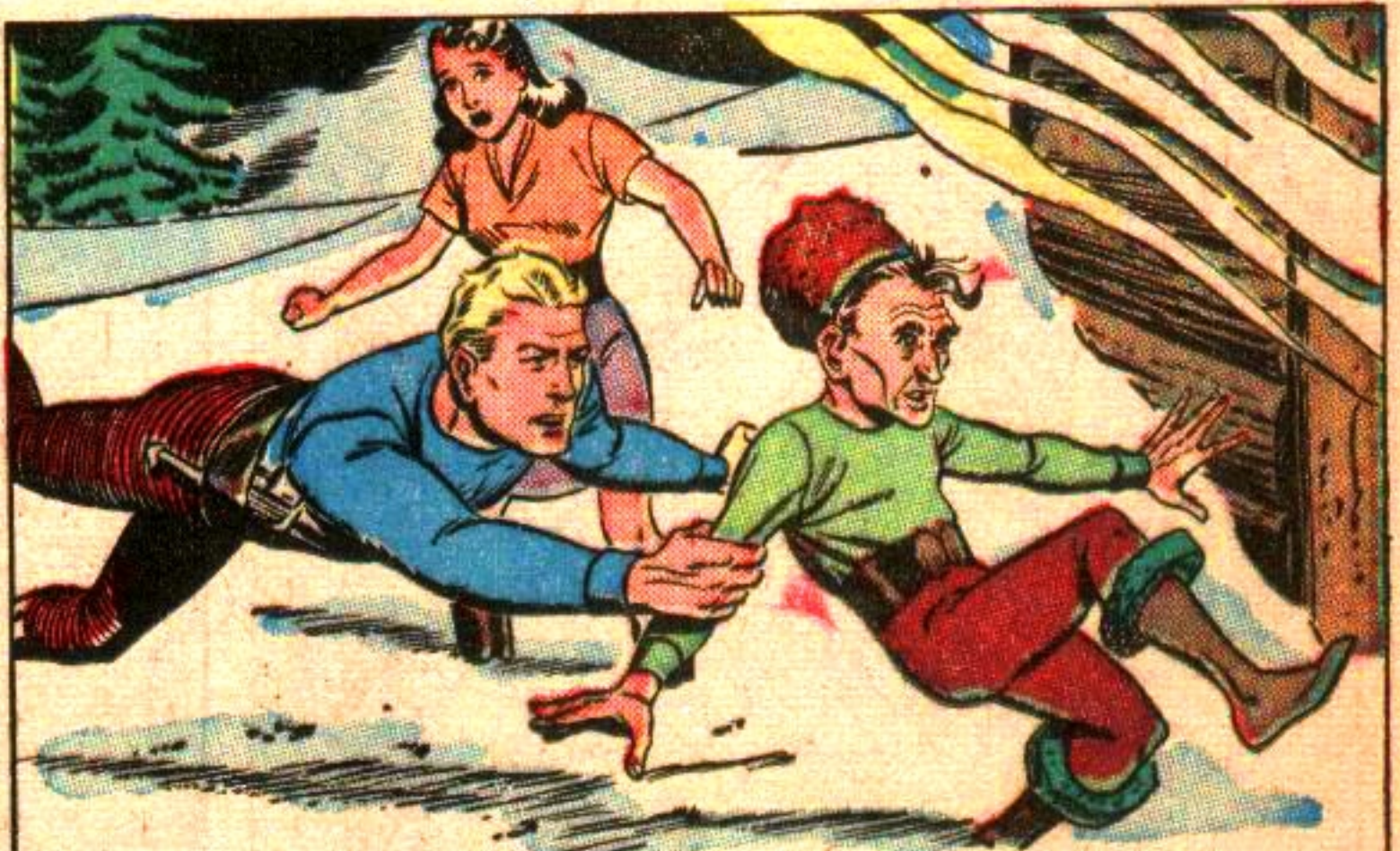
GET SOME CLOTHING AND SOME SKIS, DALE. THIS FELLOW WILL BE OF LITTLE HELP UNTIL WE GET HIM OUTSIDE.

I HAVE EVERYTHING AT THE MAIN ENTRANCE, FLASH!

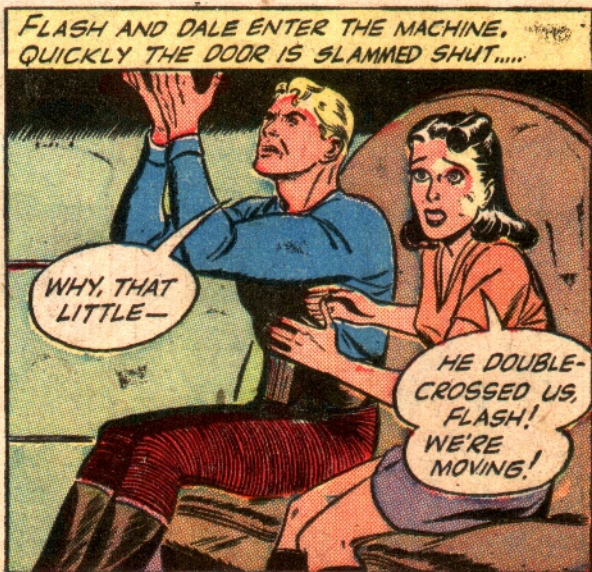
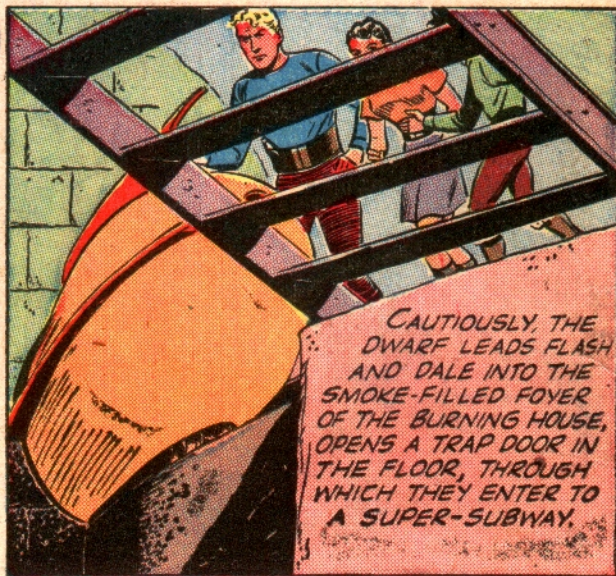
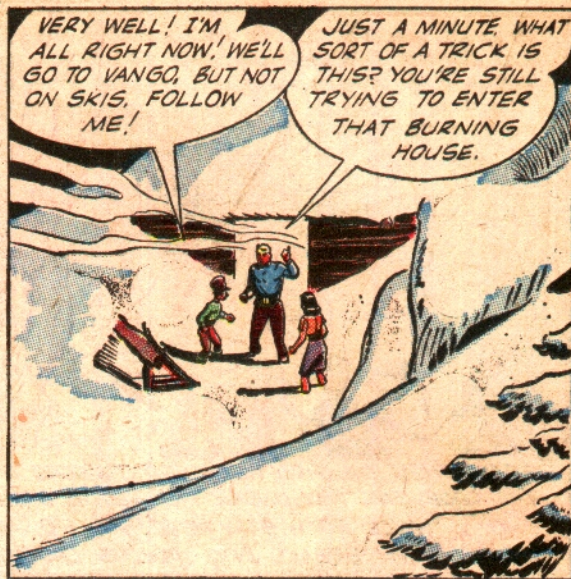


GOOD WORK! I'LL PUT SKIS ON THIS GUY AND PERHAPS HE CAN STILL LEAD US TO VANGO!

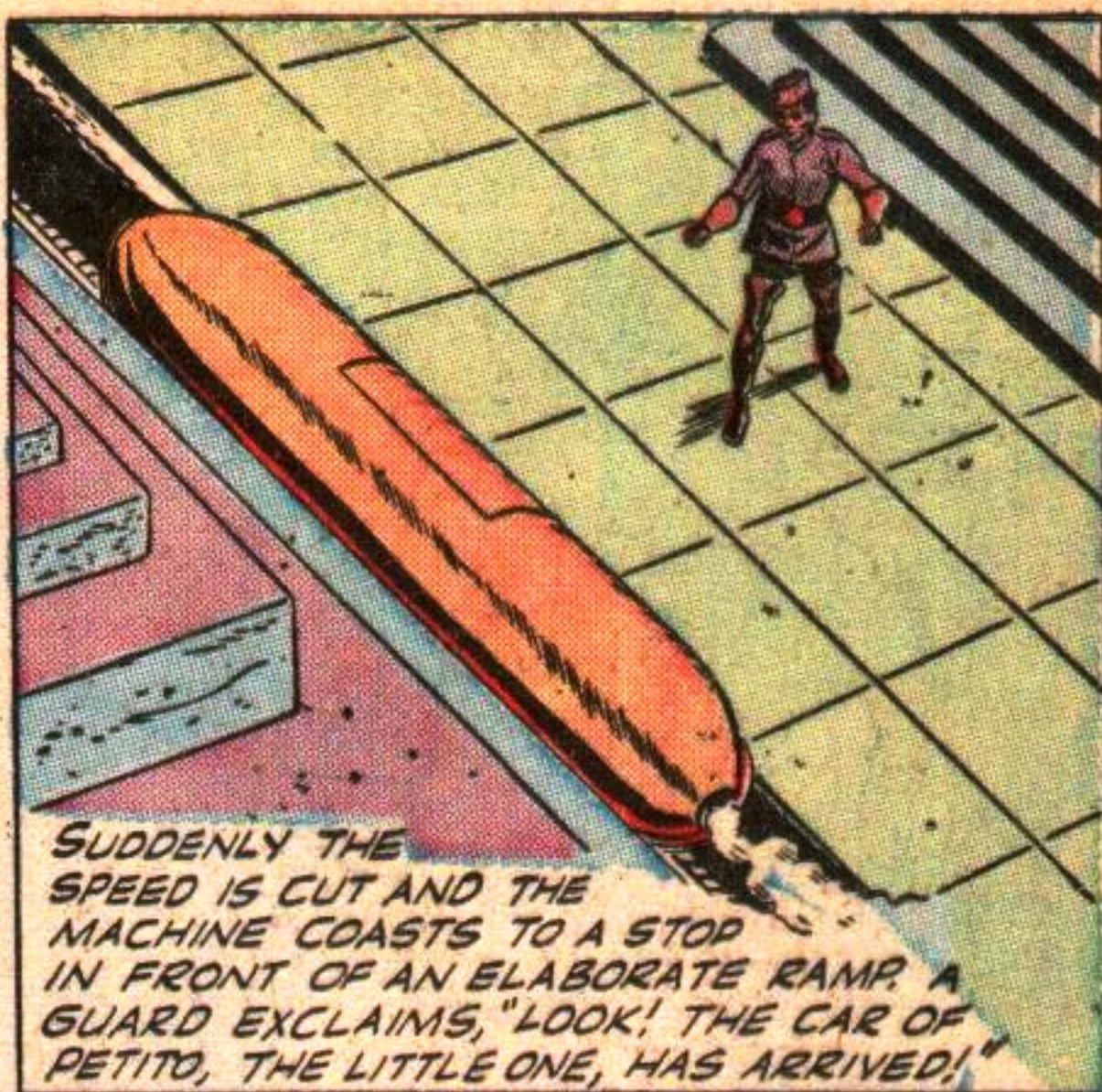
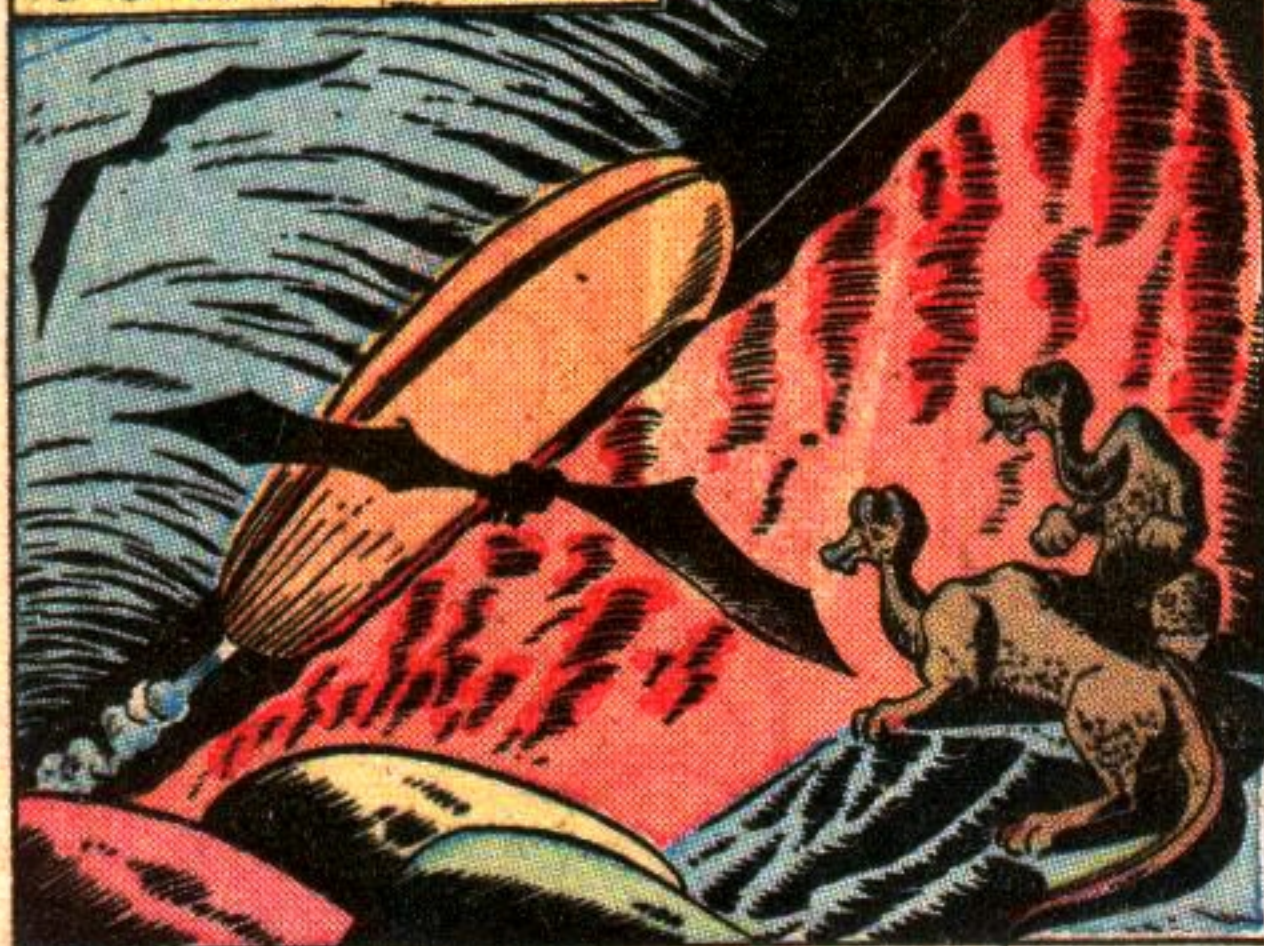
PUT ME DOWN, I'LL TAKE CARE OF MYSELF!



FLASH EASES THE LITTLE MAN TO THE GROUND. THE DWARF, GAINING HIS FEET, LUNGES TOWARD THE DOOR OF THE BURNING HOUSE. FLASH LEAPS IN PURSUIT.



MAKING HAIRPIN TURNS AND SUDDEN RISES AND DROPS, THE SUBWAY CAR SHOOTS THROUGH SUBTERRANEAN CAVERNS AT INCREDIBLE SPEED.

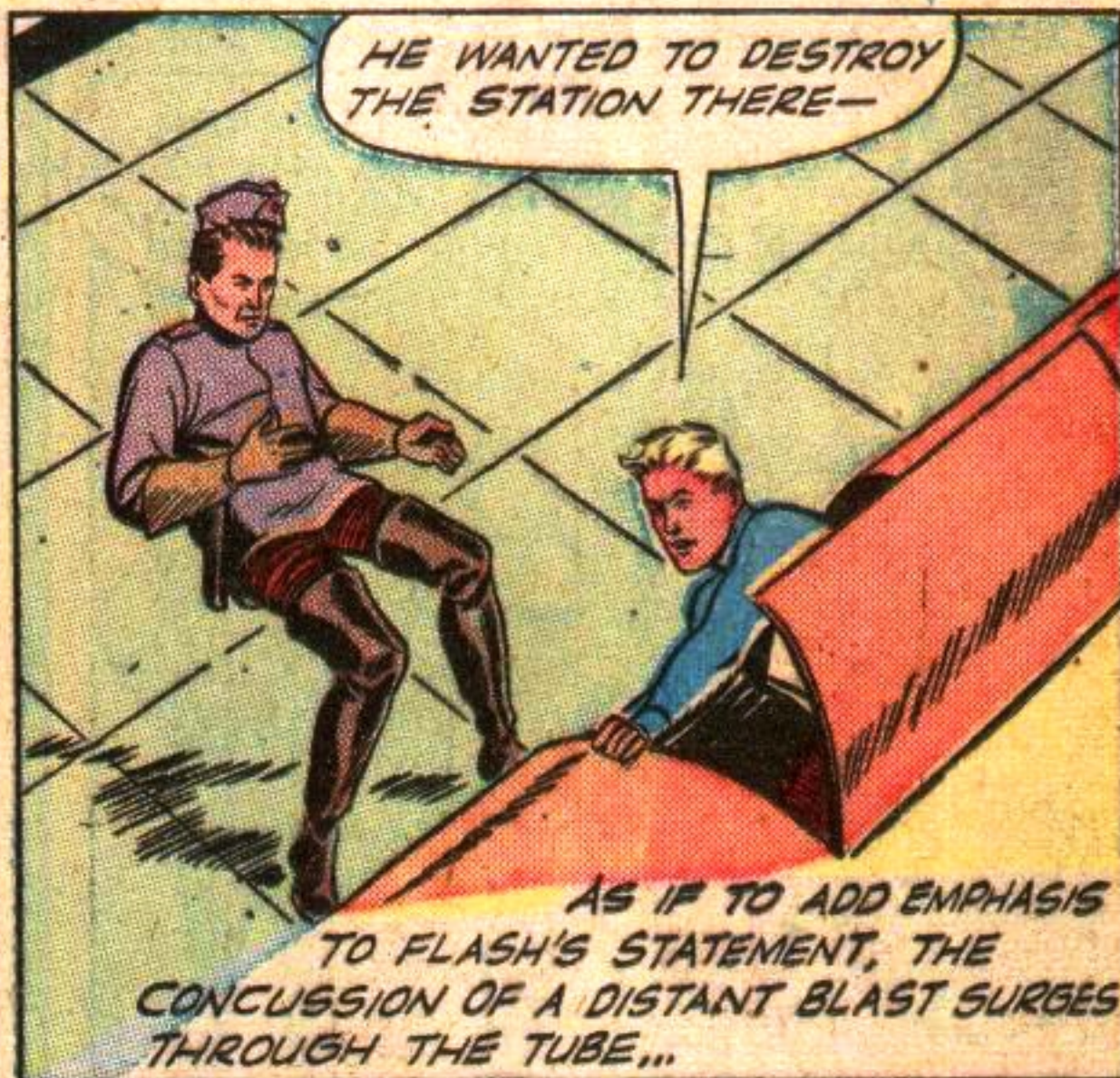


SUDDENLY THE SPEED IS CUT AND THE MACHINE COASTS TO A STOP IN FRONT OF AN ELABORATE RAMP. A GUARD EXCLAIMS, "LOOK! THE CAR OF PETITO, THE LITTLE ONE, HAS ARRIVED!"



PETITO, YOU LITTLE RUNT, DID YOU GET THE MAN—OH—WHERE IS PETITO?

IF YOU REFER TO THE MIDGET, HE'S IN HIS BURNING HOUSE AT THE OTHER END OF THE TUBE.



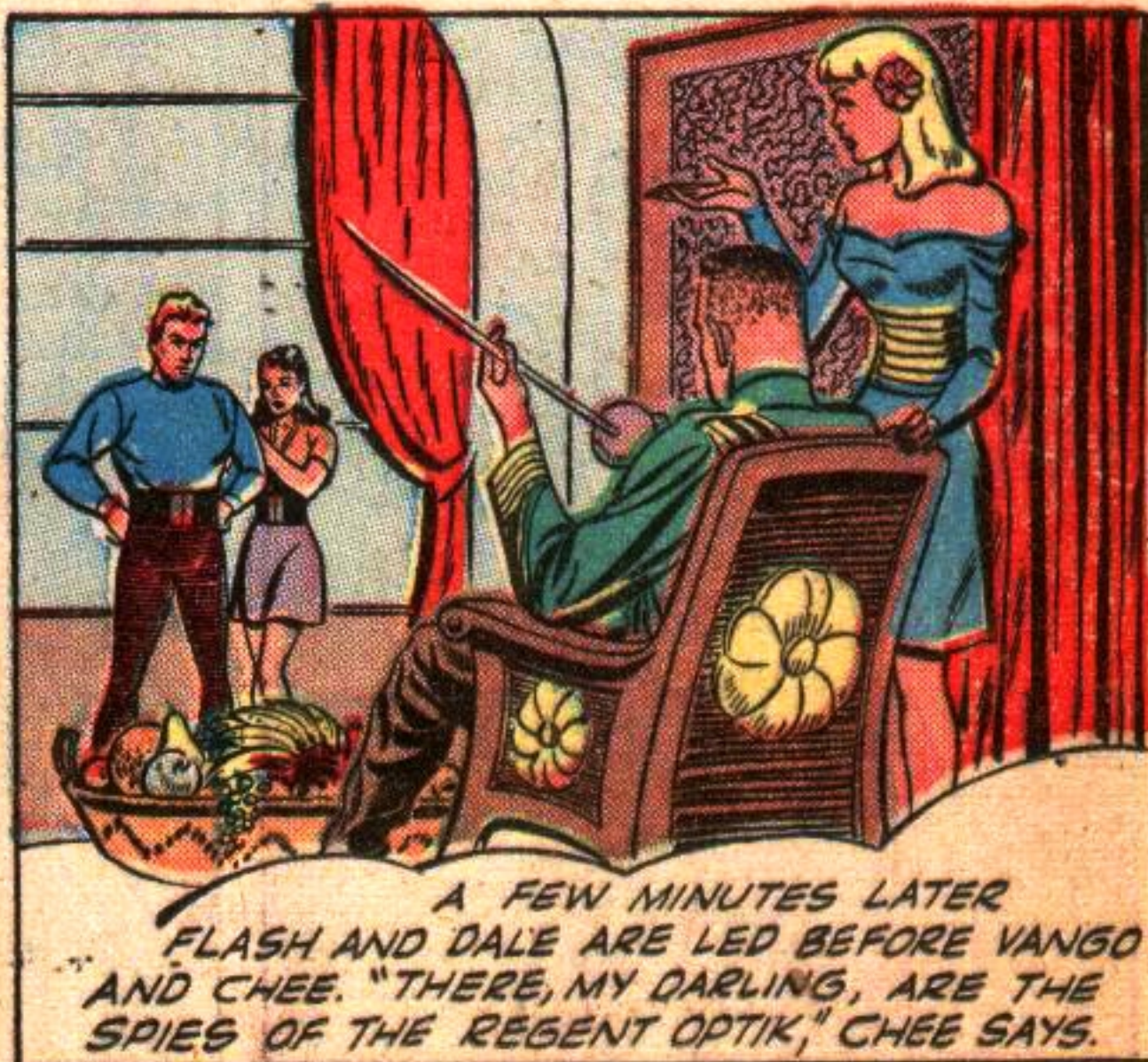
HE WANTED TO DESTROY THE STATION THERE—

AS IF TO ADD EMPHASIS TO FLASH'S STATEMENT, THE CONCUSSION OF A DISTANT BLAST SURGES THROUGH THE TUBE...

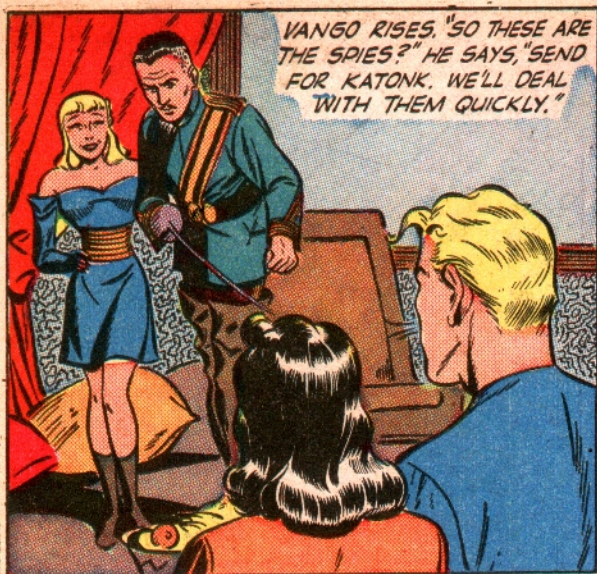


I'LL SEND SOME MEN TO CHECK YOUR STORY. MEANWHILE, YOU'LL BE TAKEN TO VANGO.

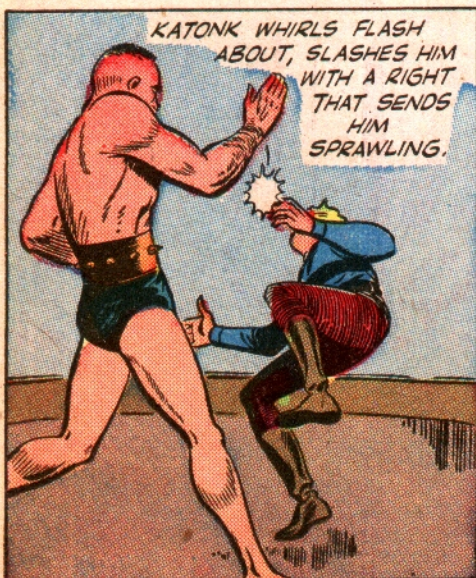
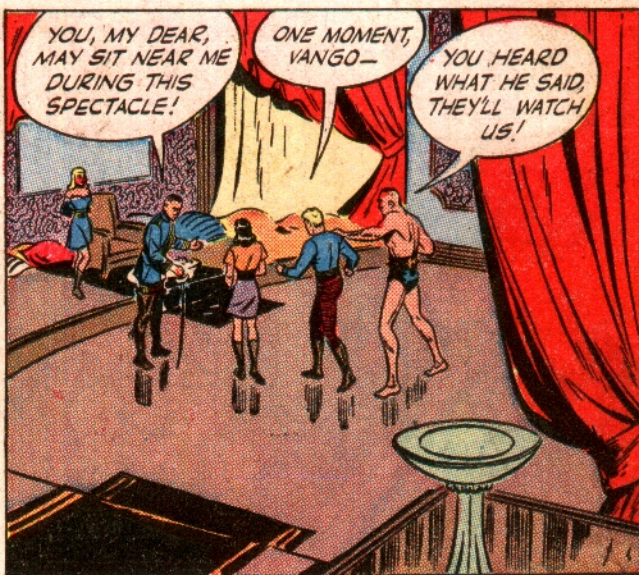
I'M AFRAID YOU WON'T LIKE WHAT THEY FIND. WHERE IS THIS VANGO?

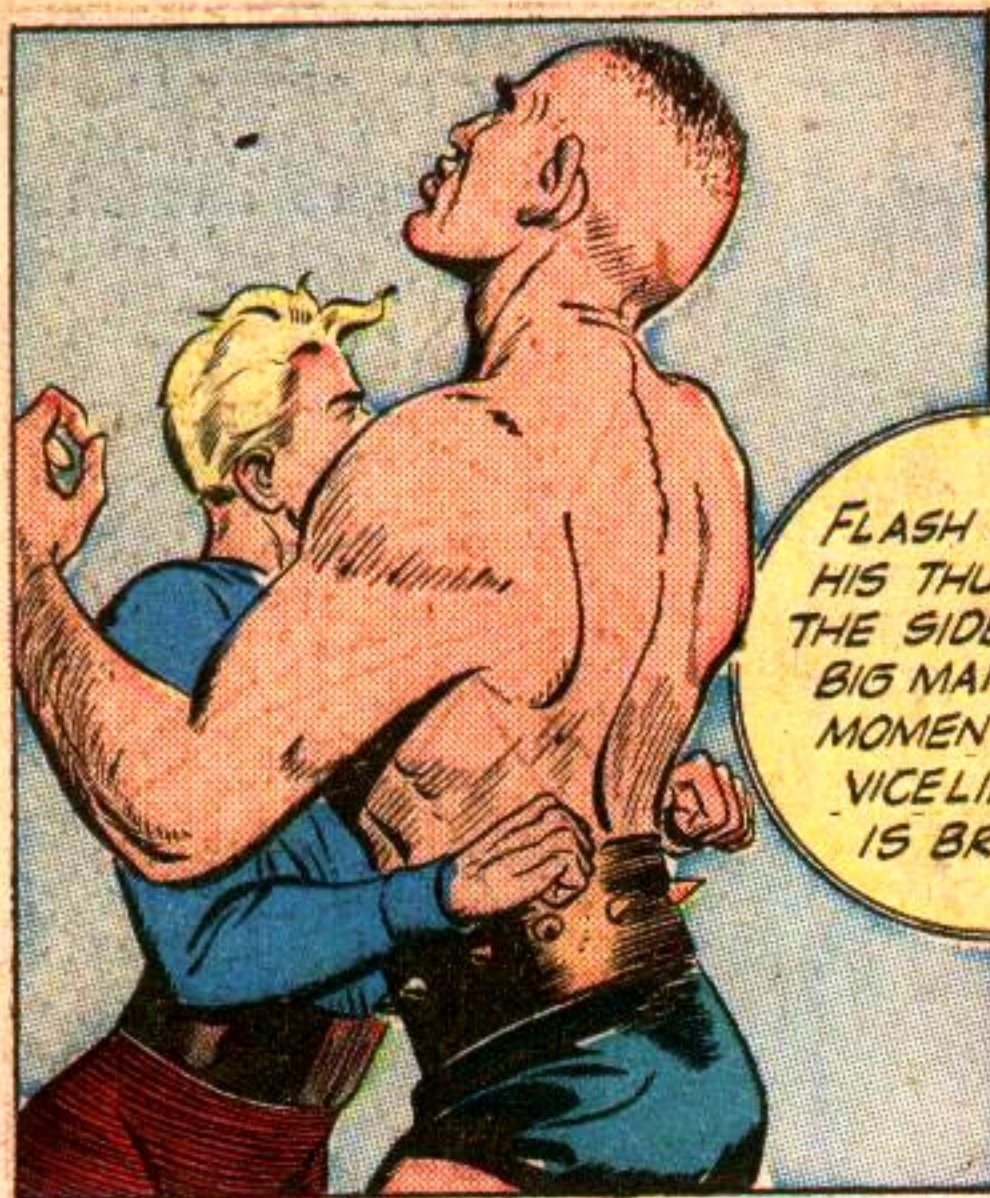


A FEW MINUTES LATER FLASH AND DALE ARE LED BEFORE VANGO AND CHEE. "THERE, MY DARLING, ARE THE SPIES OF THE REGENT OPTIK," CHEE SAYS.

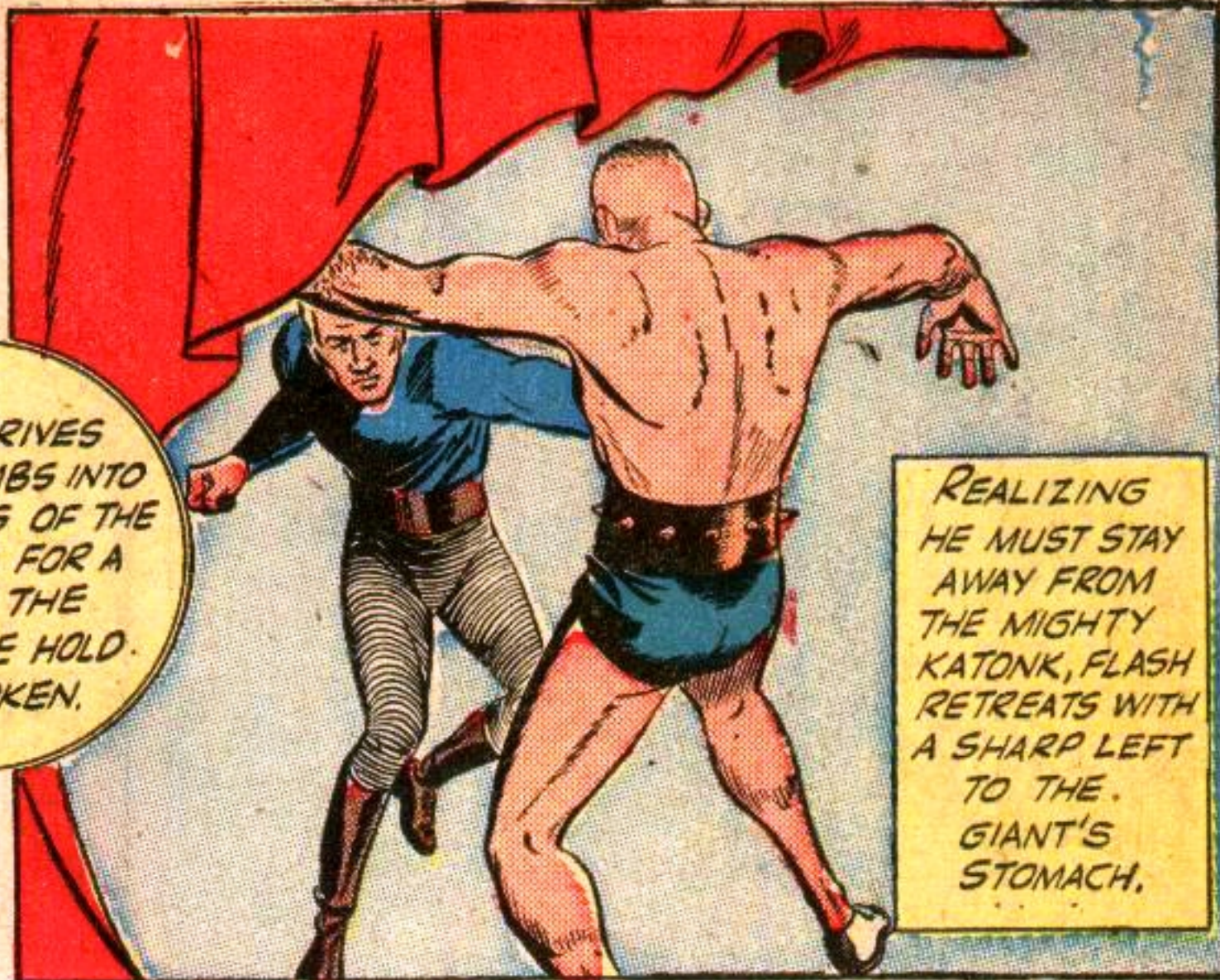


THEN A HULK OF A MAN ENTERS THE ROOM...

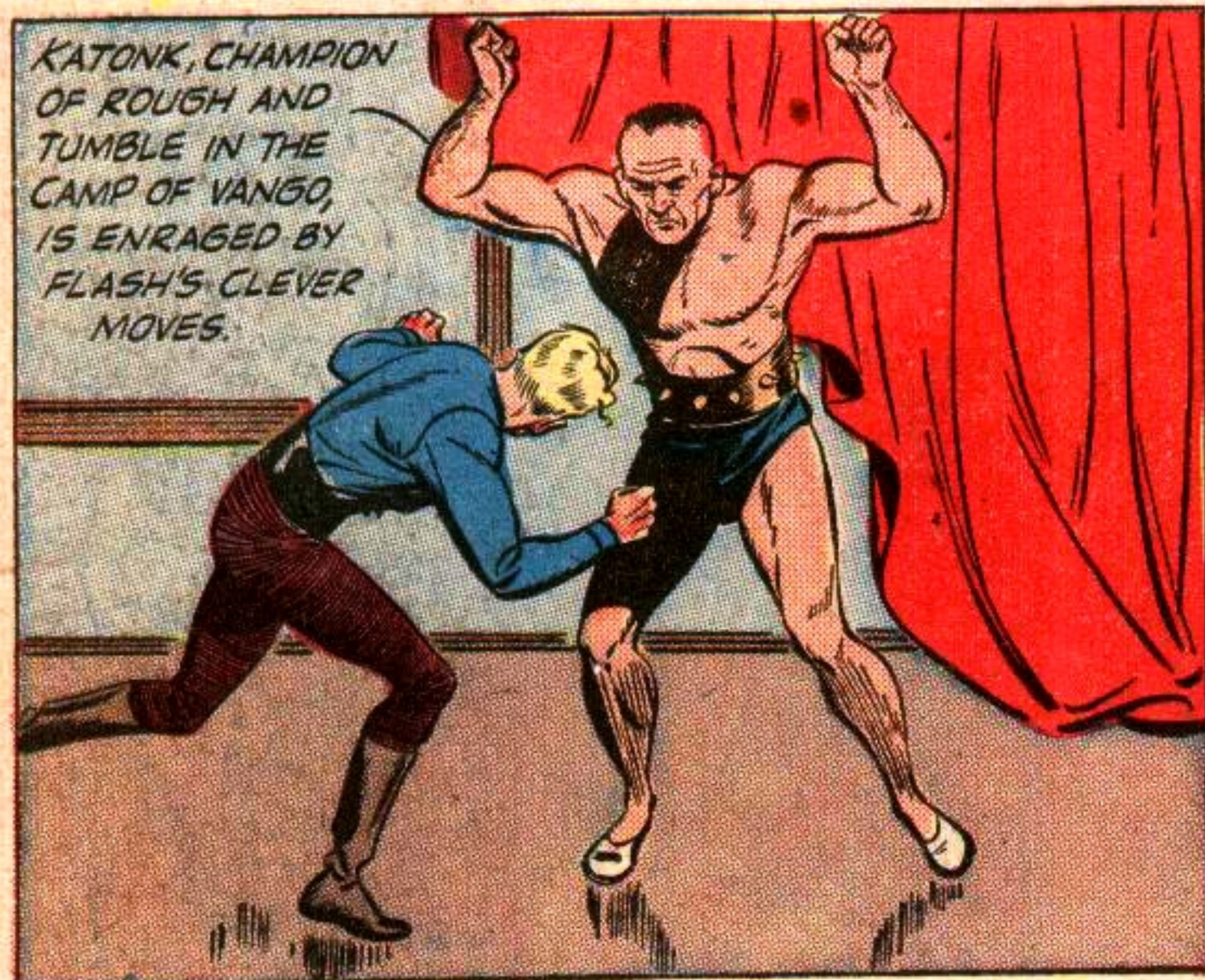




FLASH DRIVES HIS THUMBS INTO THE SIDES OF THE BIG MAN. FOR A MOMENT THE VICELIKE HOLD IS BROKEN.

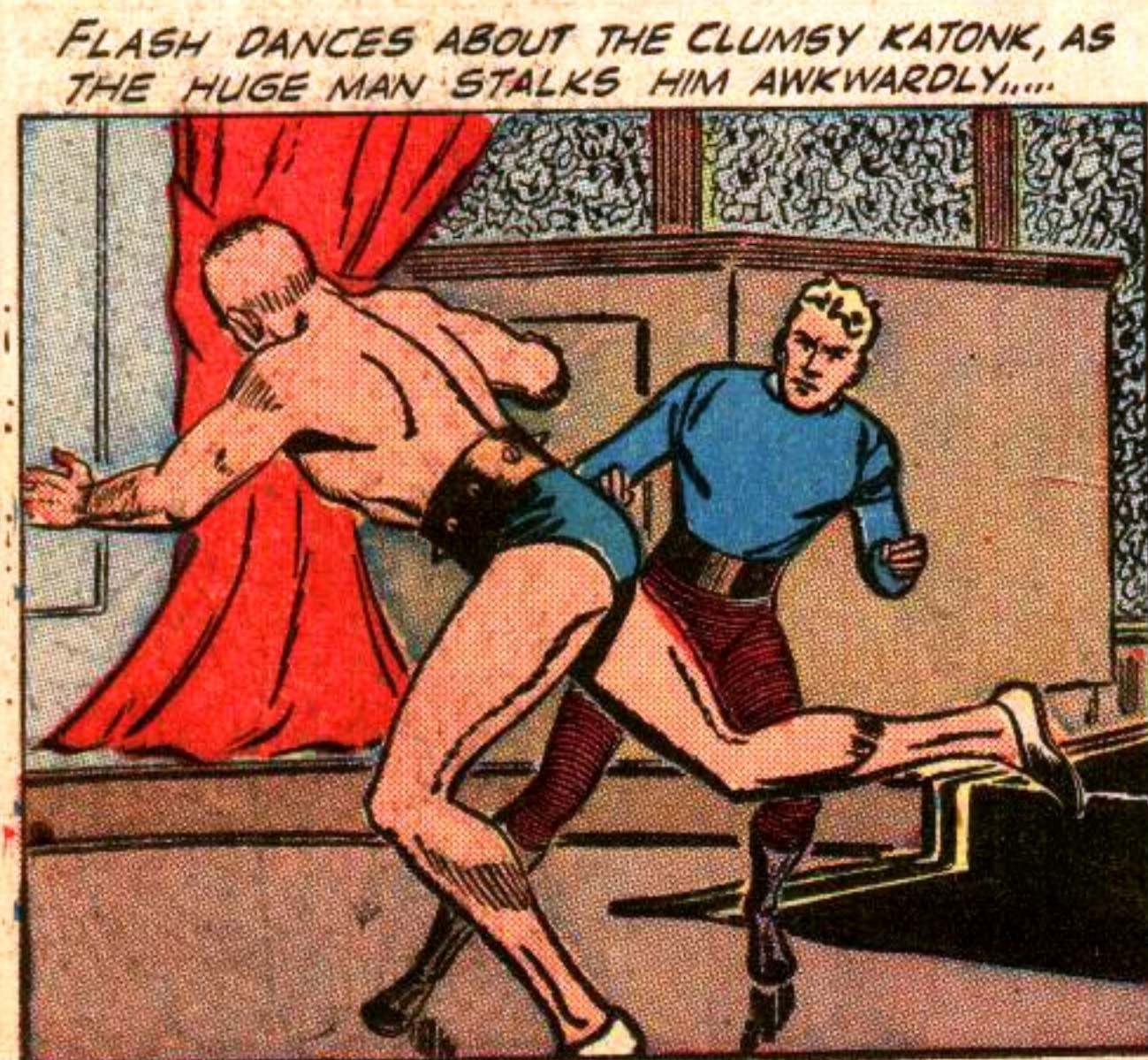
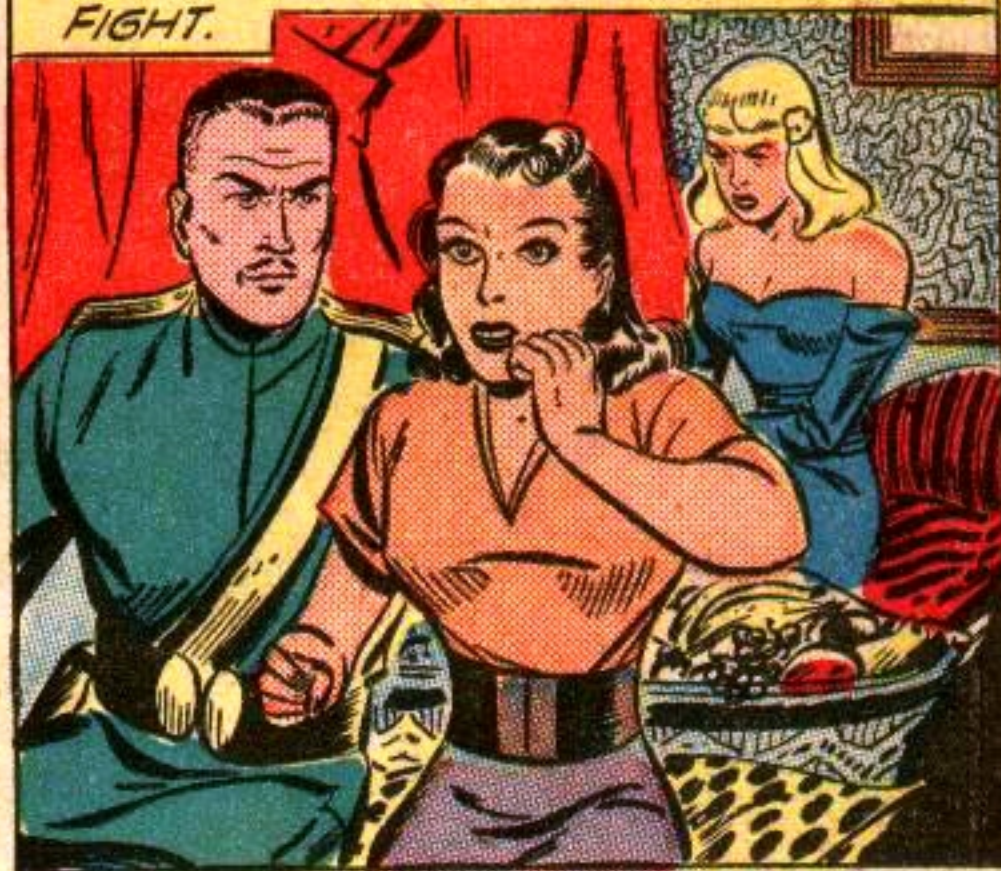


REALIZING HE MUST STAY AWAY FROM THE MIGHTY KATONK, FLASH RETREATS WITH A SHARP LEFT TO THE GIANT'S STOMACH.

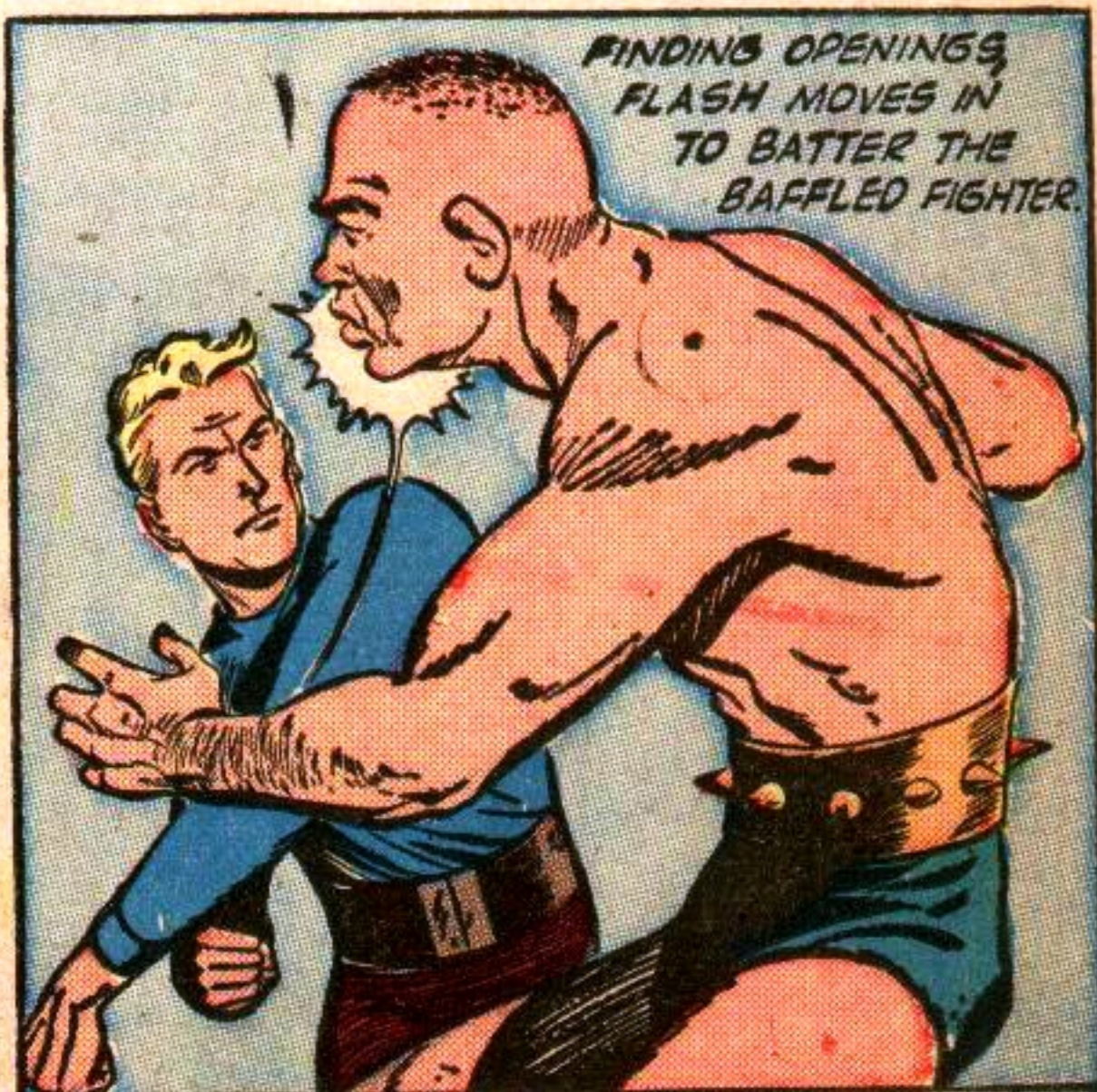


KATONK, CHAMPION OF ROUGH AND TUMBLE IN THE CAMP OF VANGO, IS ENRAGED BY FLASH'S CLEVER MOVES.

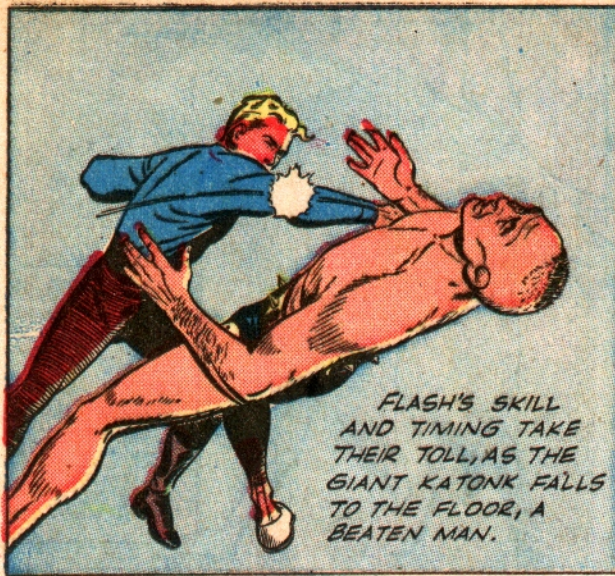
DALE, HER EYES FIXED ON FLASH, TELLS VANGO THEIR STORY, ADDING: "FLASH BELIEVED YOU WERE FIGHTING FOR A GREAT CAUSE, THAT'S WHY HE CAME HERE." VANGO SEEMS IMPRESSED, BUT MAKES NO MOVE TO STOP THE FIGHT.



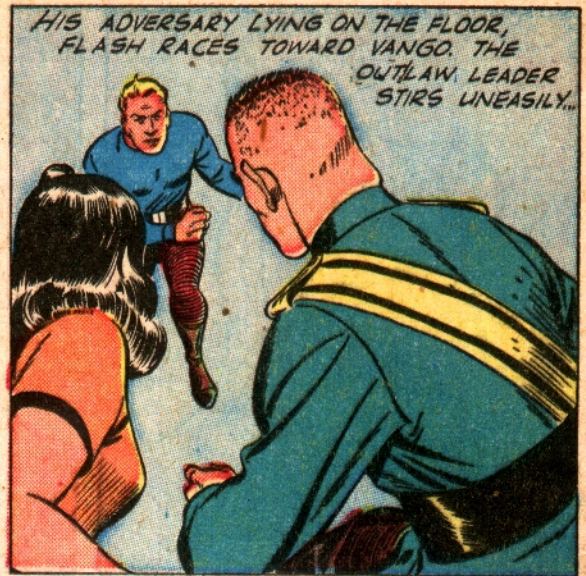
FLASH DANCES ABOUT THE CLUMSY KATONK, AS THE HUGE MAN STALKS HIM AWKWARDLY,....



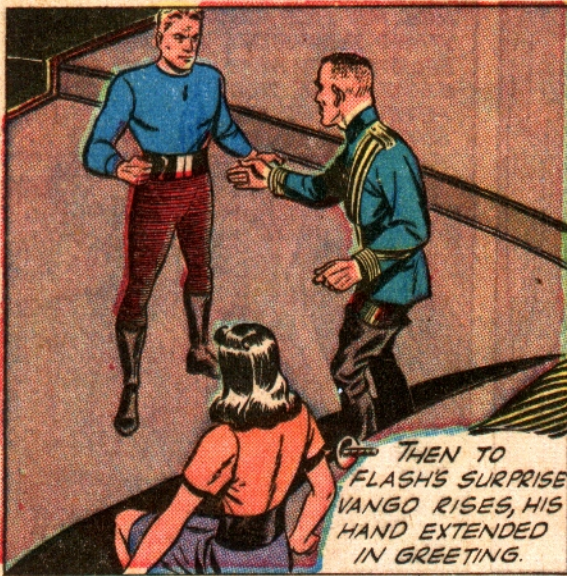
FINDING OPENINGS, FLASH MOVES IN TO BATTER THE BAFFLED FIGHTER.



FLASH'S SKILL AND TIMING TAKE THEIR TOLL, AS THE GIANT KATONK FALLS TO THE FLOOR, A BEATEN MAN.



HIS ADVERSARY LYING ON THE FLOOR, FLASH RACES TOWARD VANGO. THE OUTLAW LEADER STIRS UNEASILY.



THEN TO FLASH'S SURPRISE VANGO RISES, HIS HAND EXTENDED IN GREETING.



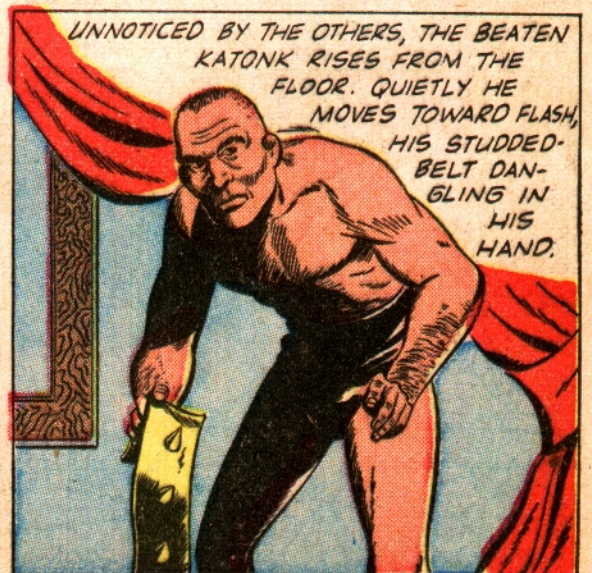
WHAT A TOUCHING SCENE! THE GREAT VANGO GIVES HAND AND HEART TO HIS ENEMIES.

ENOUGH, CHEE! PROVIDE QUARTERS FOR THIS YOUNG LADY!



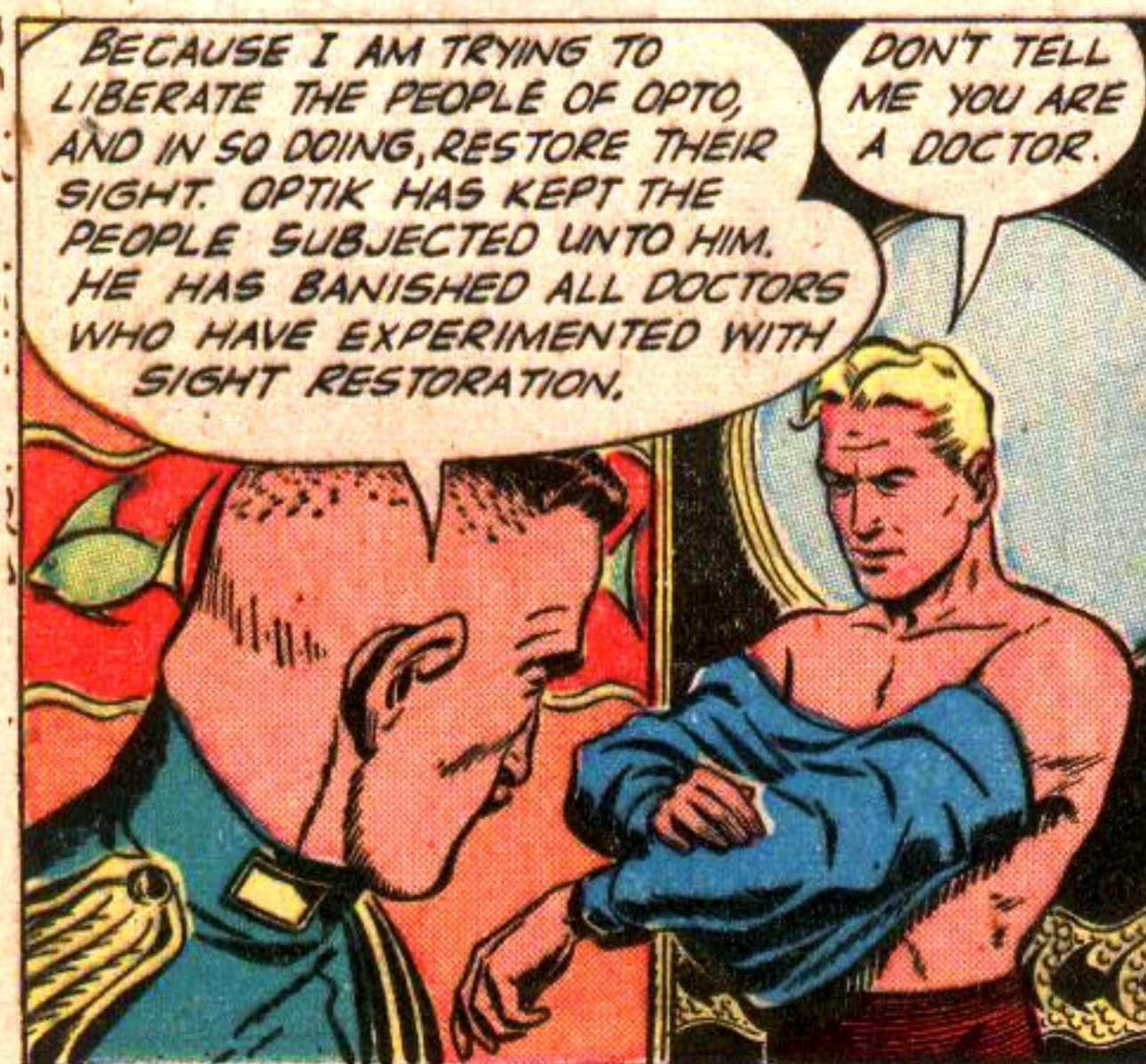
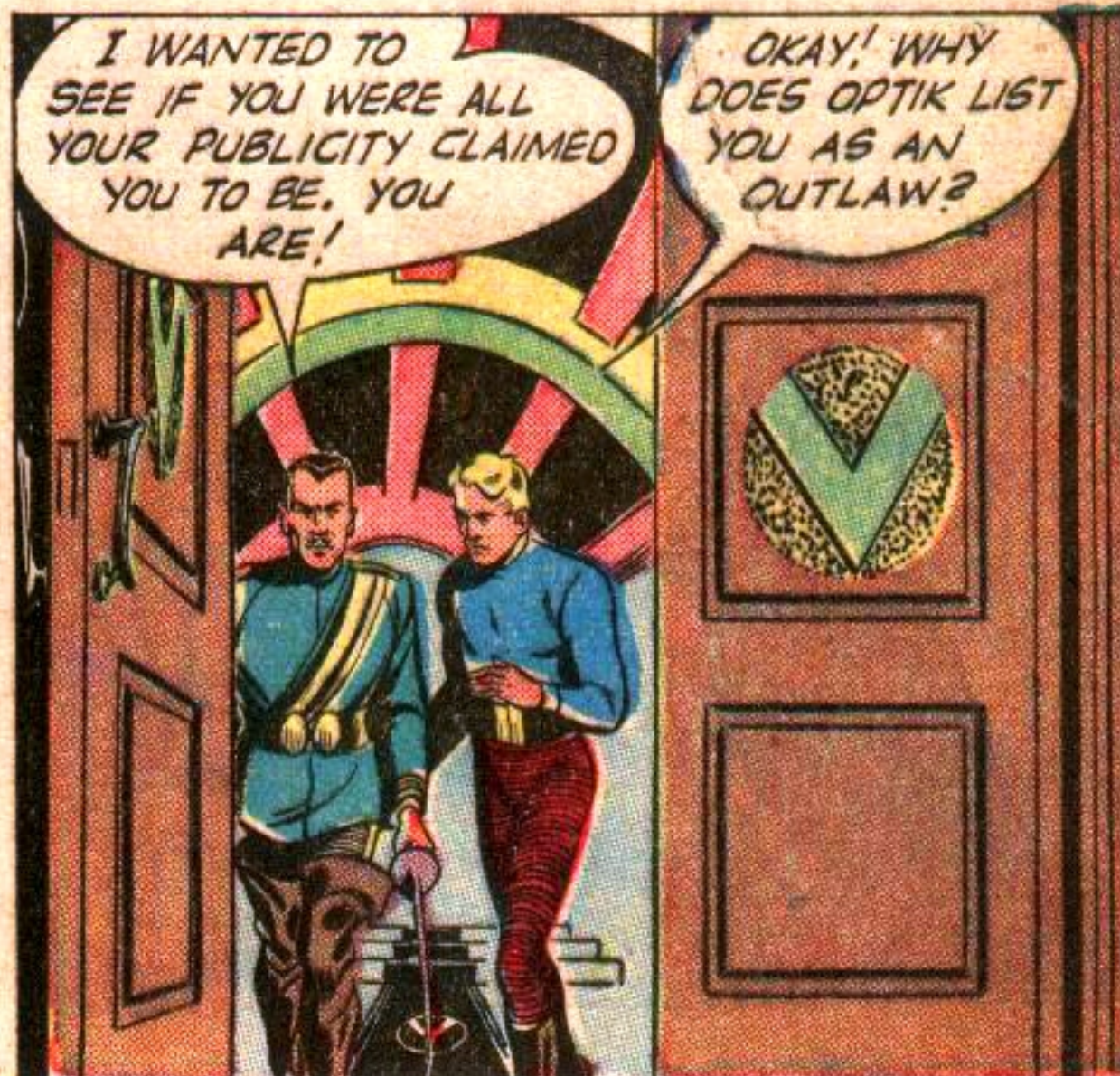
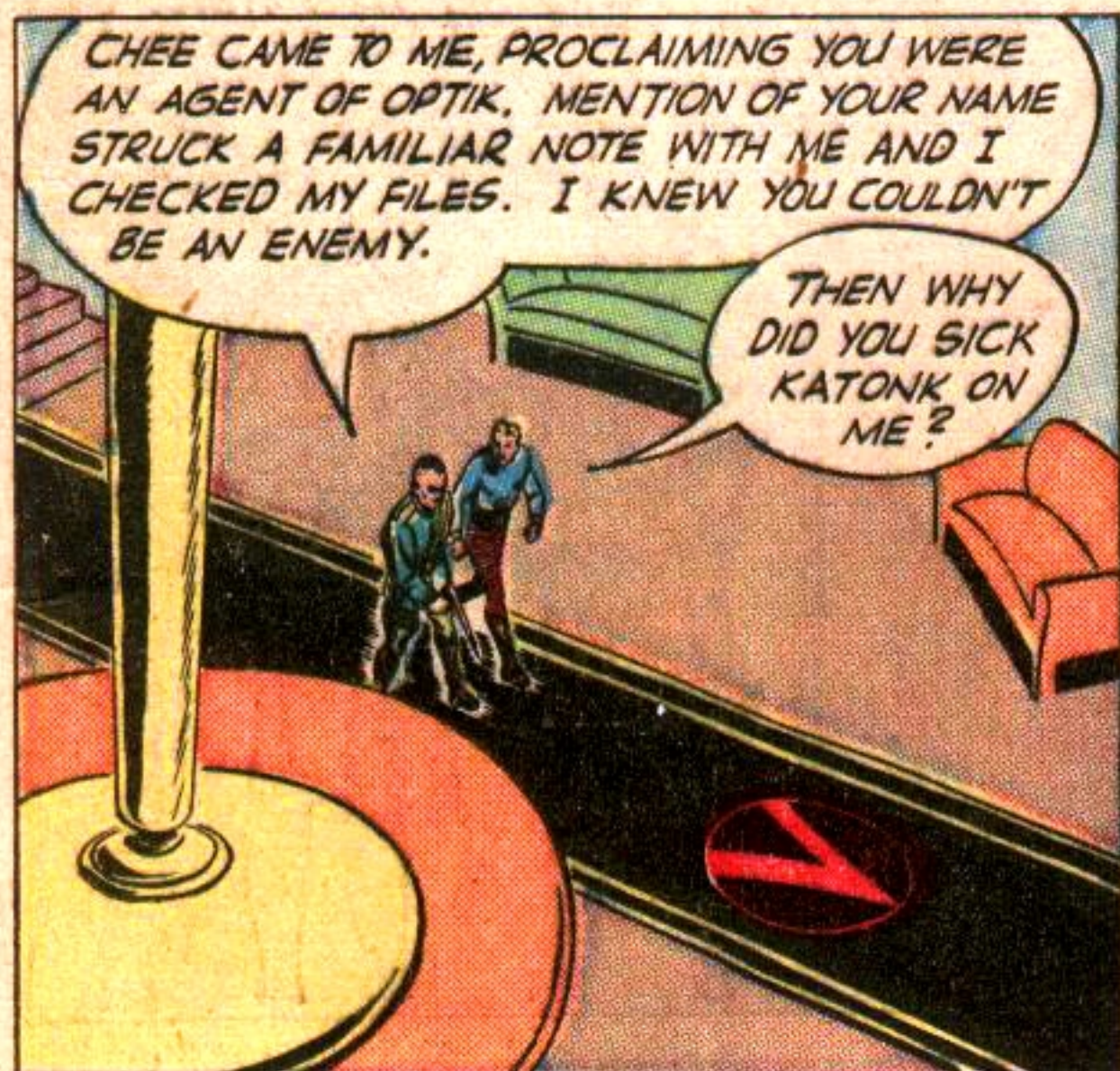
NOW I AM TO AID AND COMFORT THE ENEMY! COME ON, DALE! I'LL LEAVE VANGO TO THE ERROR OF HIS WAYS!

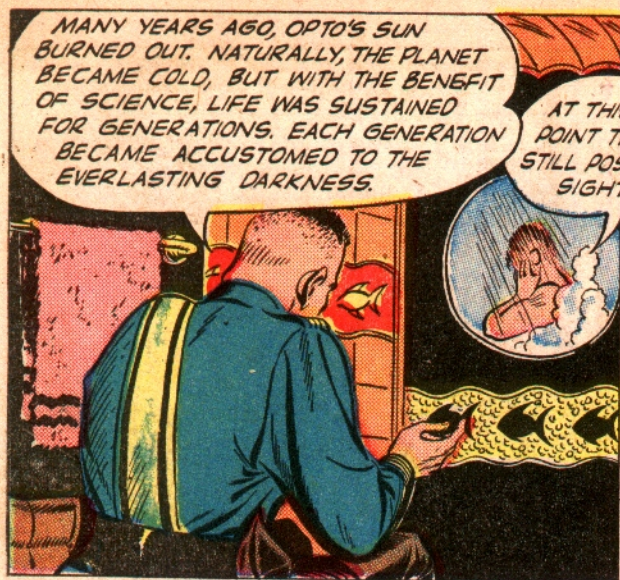
SILENCE, WOMAN! CURB YOUR TONGUE.



UNNOTICED BY THE OTHERS, THE BEATEN KATONK RISES FROM THE FLOOR. QUIETLY HE MOVES TOWARD FLASH, HIS STUDDED-BELT DANGLING IN HIS HAND.

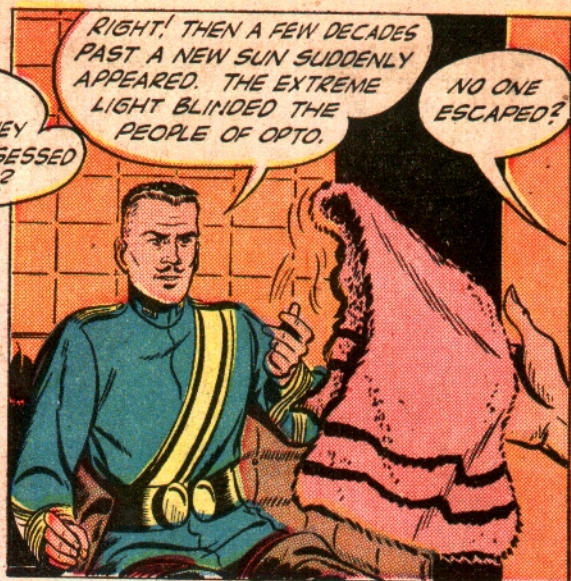
KATONK TAPS FLASH ON THE SHOULDER...





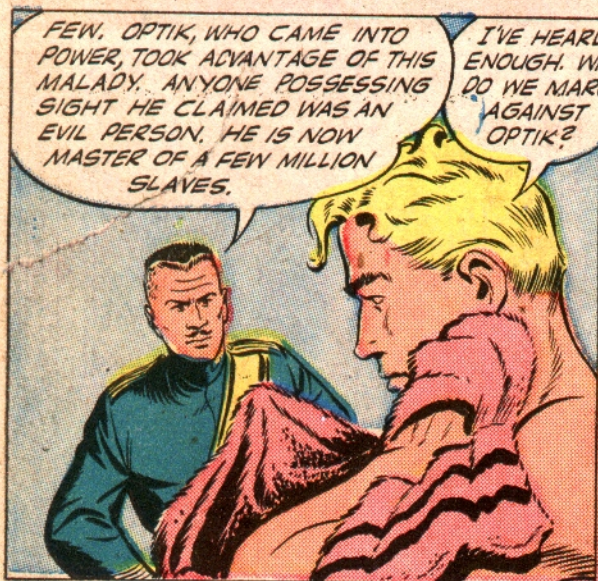
MANY YEARS AGO, OPTO'S SUN BURNED OUT. NATURALLY, THE PLANET BECAME COLD, BUT WITH THE BENEFIT OF SCIENCE, LIFE WAS SUSTAINED FOR GENERATIONS. EACH GENERATION BECAME ACCUSTOMED TO THE EVERLASTING DARKNESS.

AT THIS POINT THEY STILL POSSESSED SIGHT?



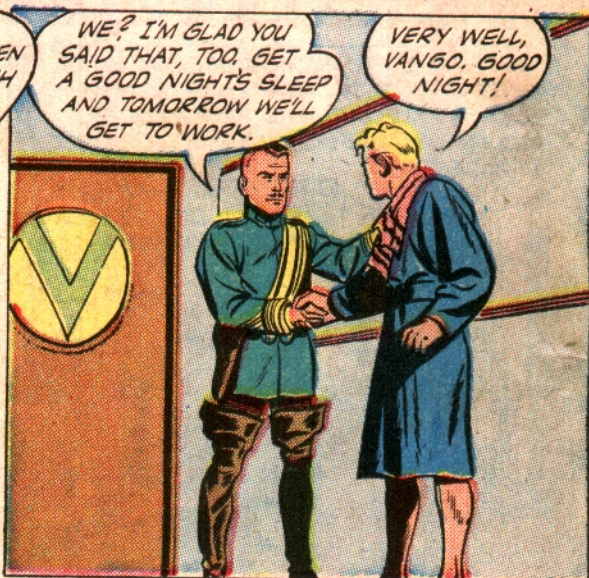
RIGHT! THEN A FEW DECADES PAST A NEW SUN SUDDENLY APPEARED. THE EXTREME LIGHT BLINDED THE PEOPLE OF OPTO.

NO ONE ESCAPED?



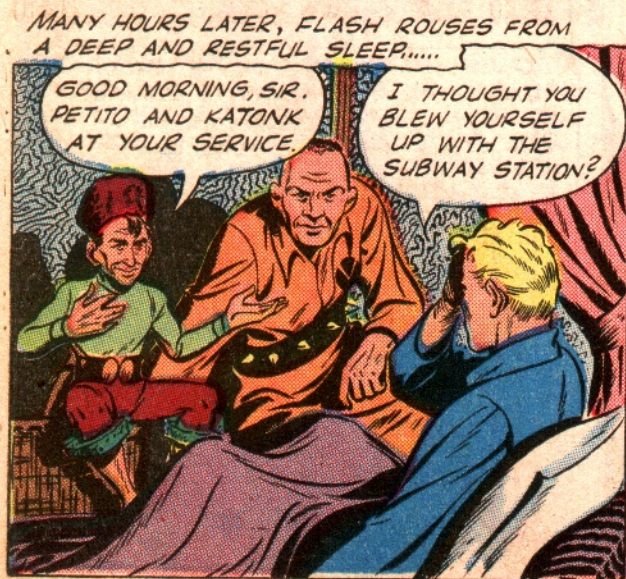
FEW, OPTIK, WHO CAME INTO POWER, TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THIS MALADY. ANYONE POSSESSING SIGHT HE CLAIMED WAS AN EVIL PERSON. HE IS NOW MASTER OF A FEW MILLION SLAVES.

I'VE HEARD ENOUGH. WHEN DO WE MARCH AGAINST OPTIK?



WE? I'M GLAD YOU SAID THAT, TOO. GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP AND TOMORROW WE'LL GET TO WORK.

VERY WELL, VANGO. GOOD NIGHT!



MANY HOURS LATER, FLASH ROUSES FROM A DEEP AND RESTFUL SLEEP.....

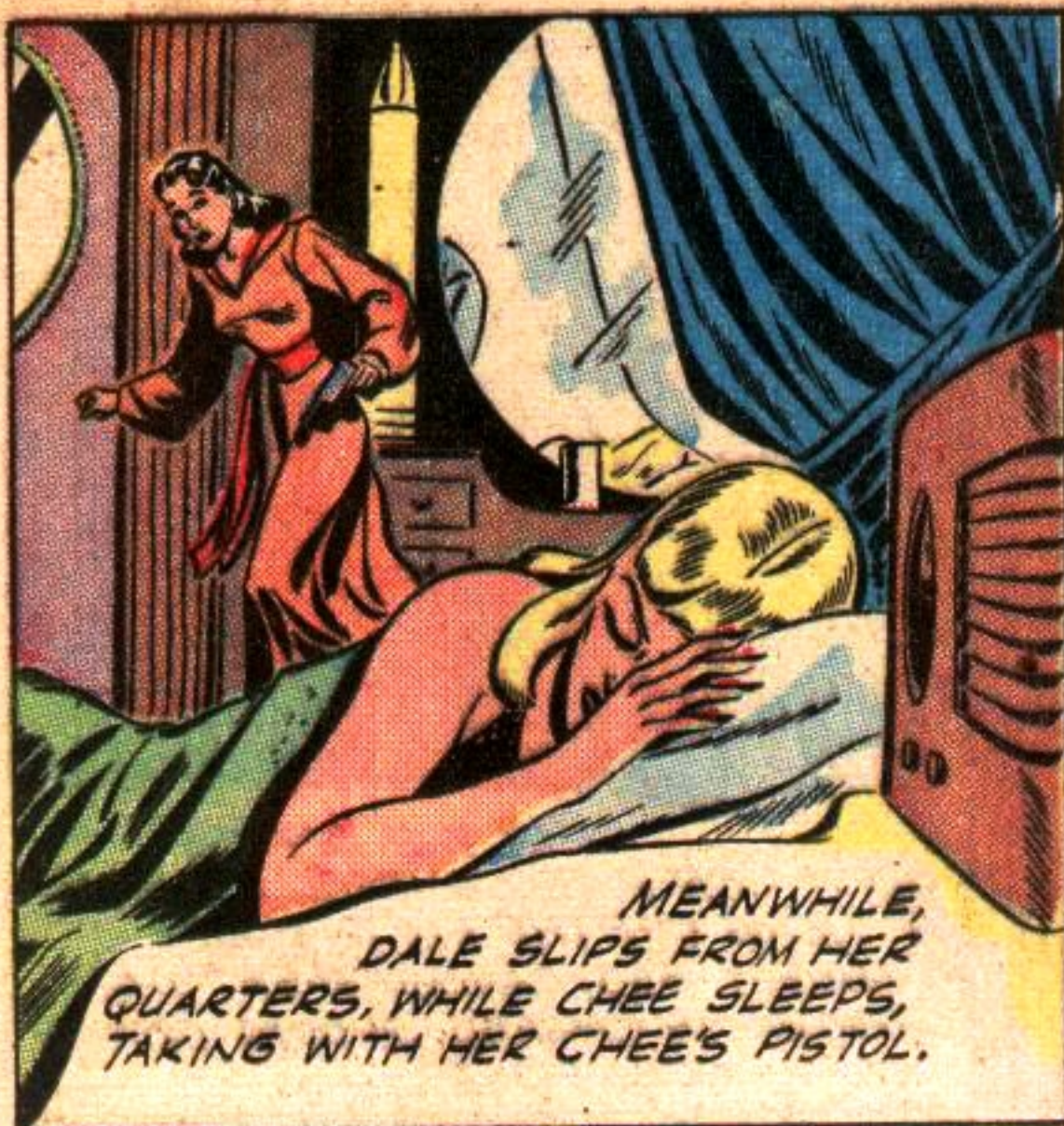
GOOD MORNING, SIR. PETITO AND KATONK AT YOUR SERVICE.

I THOUGHT YOU BLEW YOURSELF UP WITH THE SUBWAY STATION?

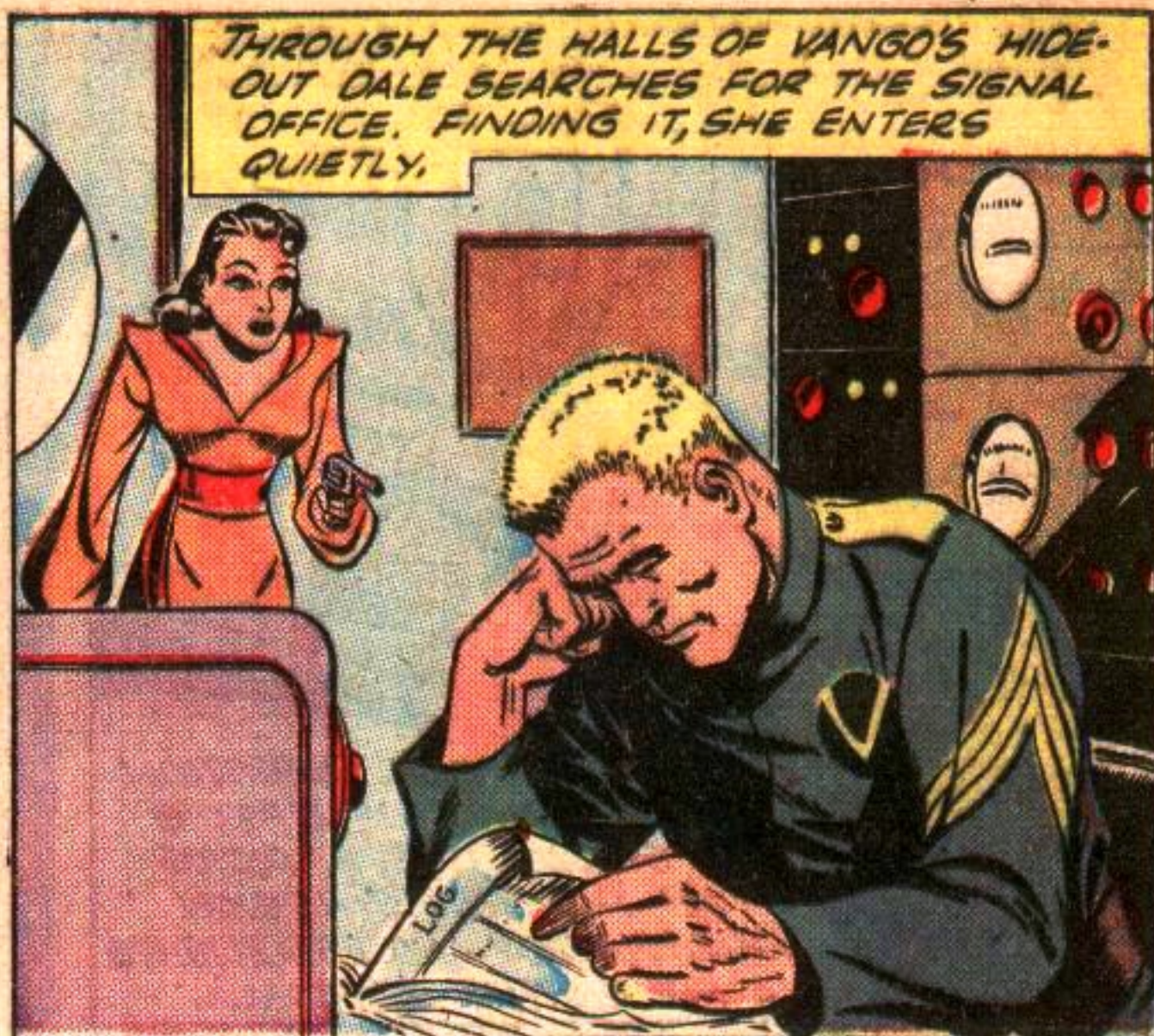


I WANTED TO WATCH IT GO BLOOIE! THAT'S WHY I STAYED.

HERE ARE YOUR NEW CLOTHES. VANGO IS ANXIOUS TO SEE YOU.



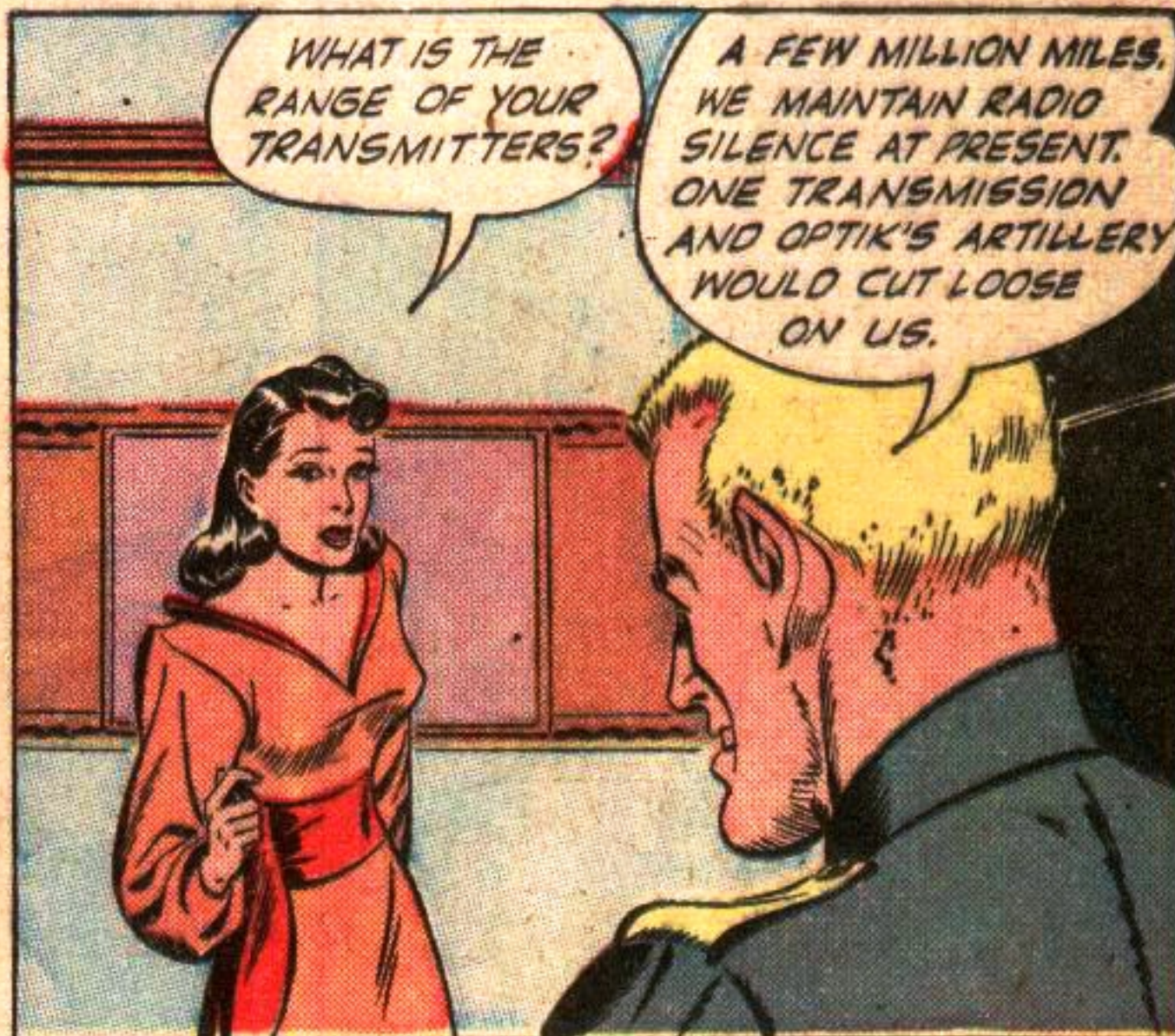
MEANWHILE,
DALE SLIPS FROM HER
QUARTERS, WHILE CHEE SLEEPS,
TAKING WITH HER CHEE'S PISTOL.



THROUGH THE HALLS OF VANGO'S HIDE-
OUT DALE SEARCHES FOR THE SIGNAL
OFFICE. FINDING IT, SHE ENTERS
QUIETLY.



A SLIGHT NOISE, AS
DALE CLOSES THE DOOR
BEHIND HER, BRINGS THE
COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER TO
HIS FEET. "GOOD MORNING,"
SAYS DALE, WARMLY.



WHAT IS THE
RANGE OF YOUR
TRANSMITTERS?

A FEW MILLION MILES.
WE MAINTAIN RADIO
SILENCE AT PRESENT.
ONE TRANSMISSION
AND OPTIK'S ARTILLERY
WOULD CUT LOOSE
ON US.

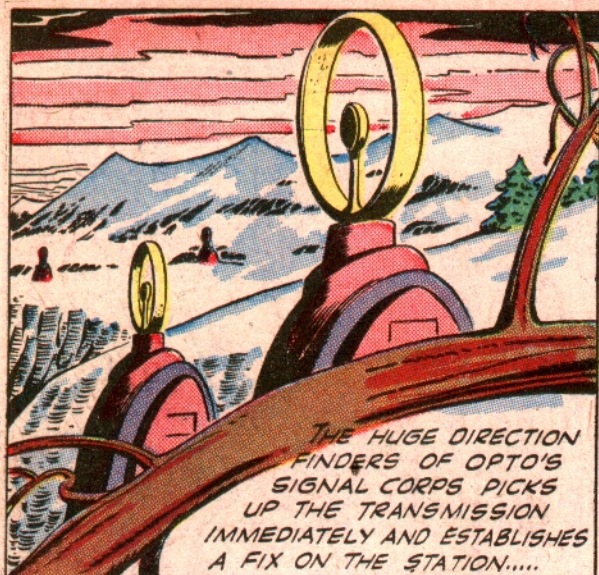


IF YOU WERE OPERATING,
COULD YOU CONTACT
MONGO?

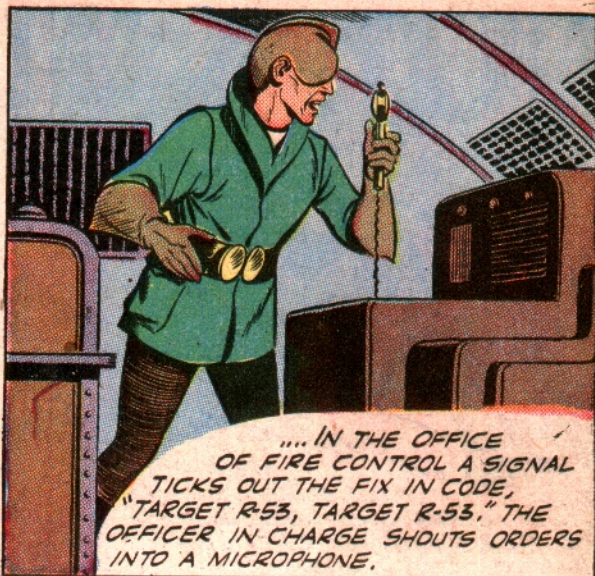
WE
HAVE IN THE
PAST!



THEN DO IT NOW. USE CALL LETTERS
"K-M-O". YOU WILL CONTACT DR. ZARKOV.
THEN I WILL SPEAK WITH
HIM.



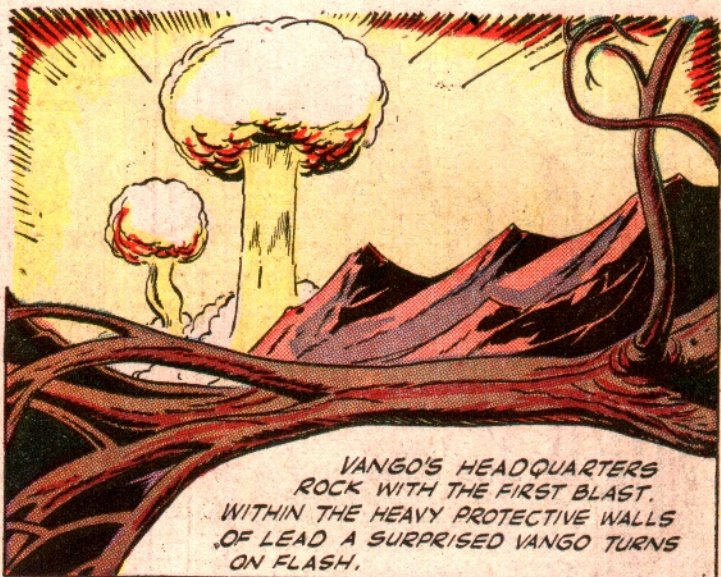
THE HUGE DIRECTION FINDERS OF OPTO'S SIGNAL CORPS PICKS UP THE TRANSMISSION IMMEDIATELY AND ESTABLISHES A FIX ON THE STATION....



....IN THE OFFICE OF FIRE CONTROL A SIGNAL TICKS OUT THE FIX IN CODE, "TARGET R-53, TARGET R-53." THE OFFICER IN CHARGE SHOUTS ORDERS INTO A MICROPHONE.



INSTANTLY, ATOM GUNS PROTRUDE FROM THEIR POSITIONS AND AT THE DESIGNATED TIME LAY DOWN THEIR FIRST BARRAGE ON TARGET R-53....



VANGO'S HEADQUARTERS ROCK WITH THE FIRST BLAST. WITHIN THE HEAVY PROTECTIVE WALLS OF LEAD A SURPRISED VANGO TURNS ON FLASH.



GORDON! IF YOU TRICKED ME, IF YOU ARE REALLY AN AGENT OF OPTIK RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS, YOU WILL NEVER LEAVE HERE ALIVE!

I HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH IT! WHERE DID CHEE TAKE DALE?

JUST THEN CHEE ENTERS THE ROOM.....



VANGO! THAT WOMAN, DALE, LEFT MY ROOM. SHE TOOK MY PISTOL. I CAN'T FIND HER ANYWHERE.



I HOPE YOU ARE SATISFIED, MISS ARDEN. DR. ZARKOV PROBABLY HAS A VAGUE IDEA WHERE YOU ARE NOW.

I'M SORRY, BELIEVE ME. I DIDN'T THINK OPTO HAD SUCH ADVANCED EQUIPMENT.



OKAY, WE'LL TRY TO KEEP THIS A SECRET BETWEEN US. IF VANGO FINDS OUT ABOUT THE TRANSMISSION, I'M IN THE SAME SPOT WITH YOU.

IT SEEMS THE SECRET DIDN'T KEEP LONG!



SO YOU BROKE RADIO SILENCE AND DREW THE FIRE OF OPTIK'S GUNS. YOU'RE UNDER ARREST, IF WE LIVE THROUGH THIS.

WAIT A MINUTE, VANGO. THIS IS THE TIME TO ATTACK OPTIK'S FORCES.



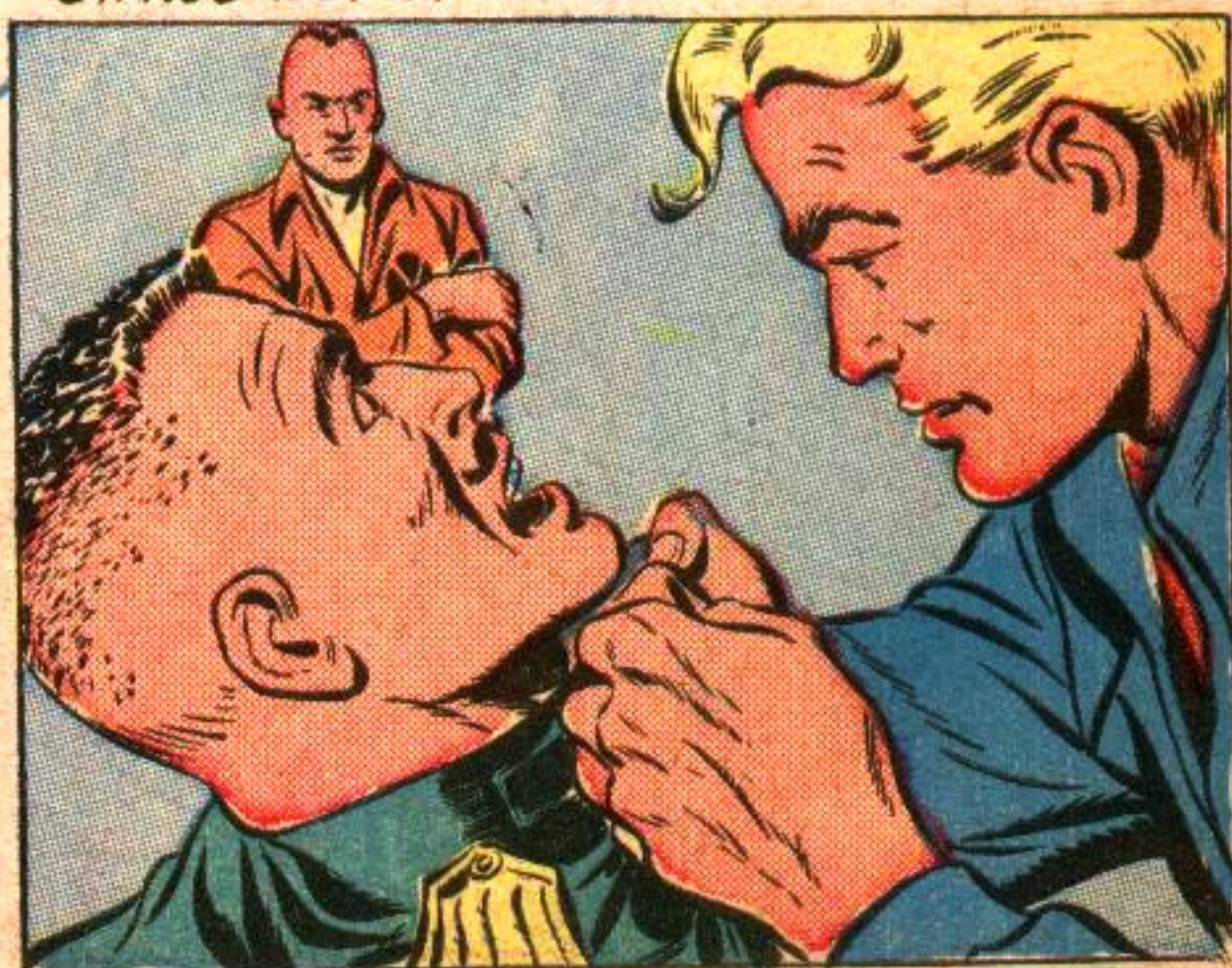
THEY WILL CONCENTRATE THEIR FIRE ON THIS INSTALLATION UNTIL THEY BELIEVE EVERYTHING IS DESTROYED—

I ASK NO ADVICE FROM YOU. I HAVE WORKED YEARS FOR THE DAY WHEN I COULD STAND AGAINST OPTIK AND HELP MY PEOPLE—



NOW, YOU AND YOUR LADY FRIEND HAVE RUINED EVERYTHING. BUT I WILL SEE YOU DESTROYED.

THE CUTTING BLOW ACROSS HIS FACE THROWS FLASH INTO ACTION. HE SPRINGS ON VANGO WHO SHOUTS FOR KATONK, BUT KATONK STANDS IDLY BY AND IGNORES THE ORDERS.





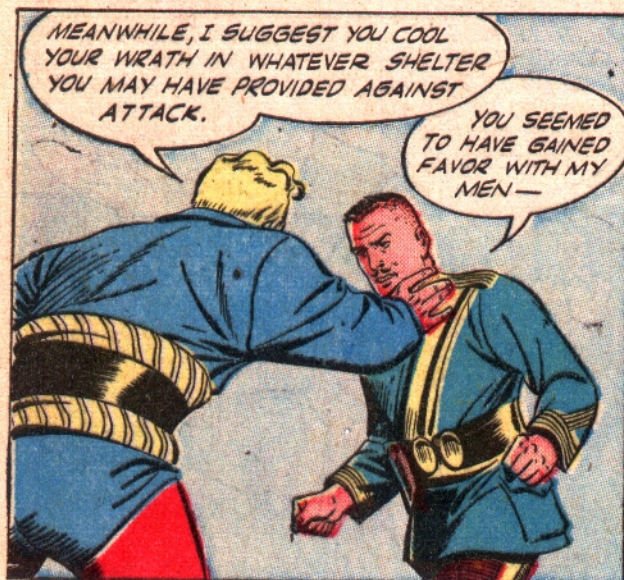
GET HOLD OF YOURSELF, VANGO. WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT, I'M GOING TO ATTACK OPTIK WITH YOUR TROOPS AND THE HELP OF KATONK!

AND ME! DON'T FORGET ME!



SUCH INSUBORDINATION! MUTINY! I'LL HAVE ALL OF YOU FOR THIS!

I'LL LEAVE DALE AS HOSTAGE. IF OUR VENTURE SUCCEEDS OR FAILS, I'LL HOLD YOU ENTIRELY RESPONSIBLE FOR HER.



MEANWHILE, I SUGGEST YOU COOL YOUR WRATH IN WHATEVER SHELTER YOU MAY HAVE PROVIDED AGAINST ATTACK.

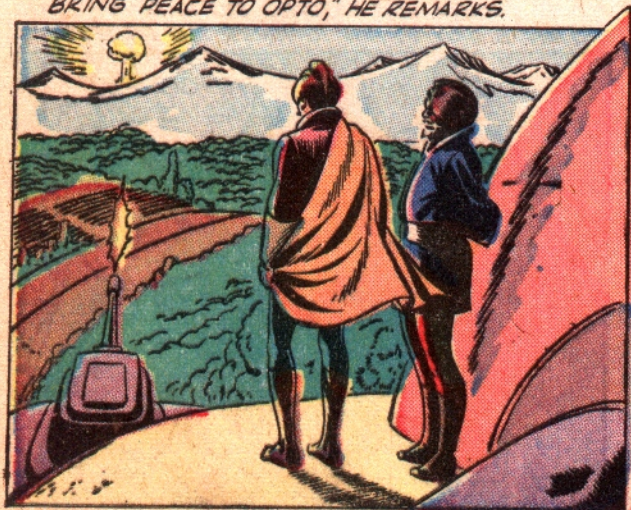
YOU SEEMED TO HAVE GAINED FAVOR WITH MY MEN —



— IF THEY WILL FOLLOW YOU, I'LL GO ALONE.

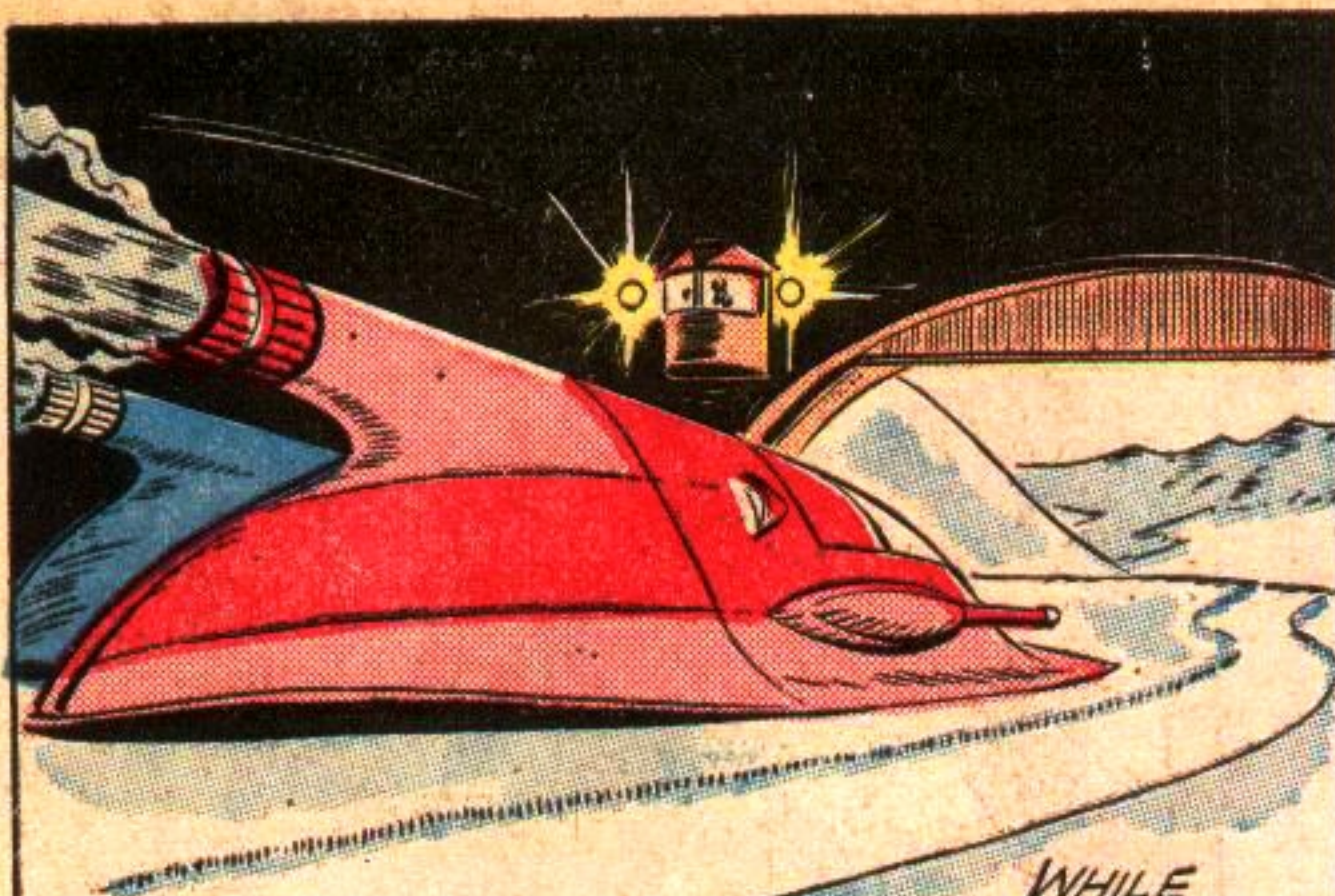
NO! YOU STAY HERE. IF WE SUCCEED, YOU'LL HAVE PLENTY TO DO LATER.

OPTIK, HEARING THE REPORT OF THE SHELLING, MOVES TO A FORWARD AREA. "THIS SHOULD BRING PEACE TO OPTO," HE REMARKS.



WITH VANGO OUT OF THE WAY, WE HAVE NO OPPOSITION.

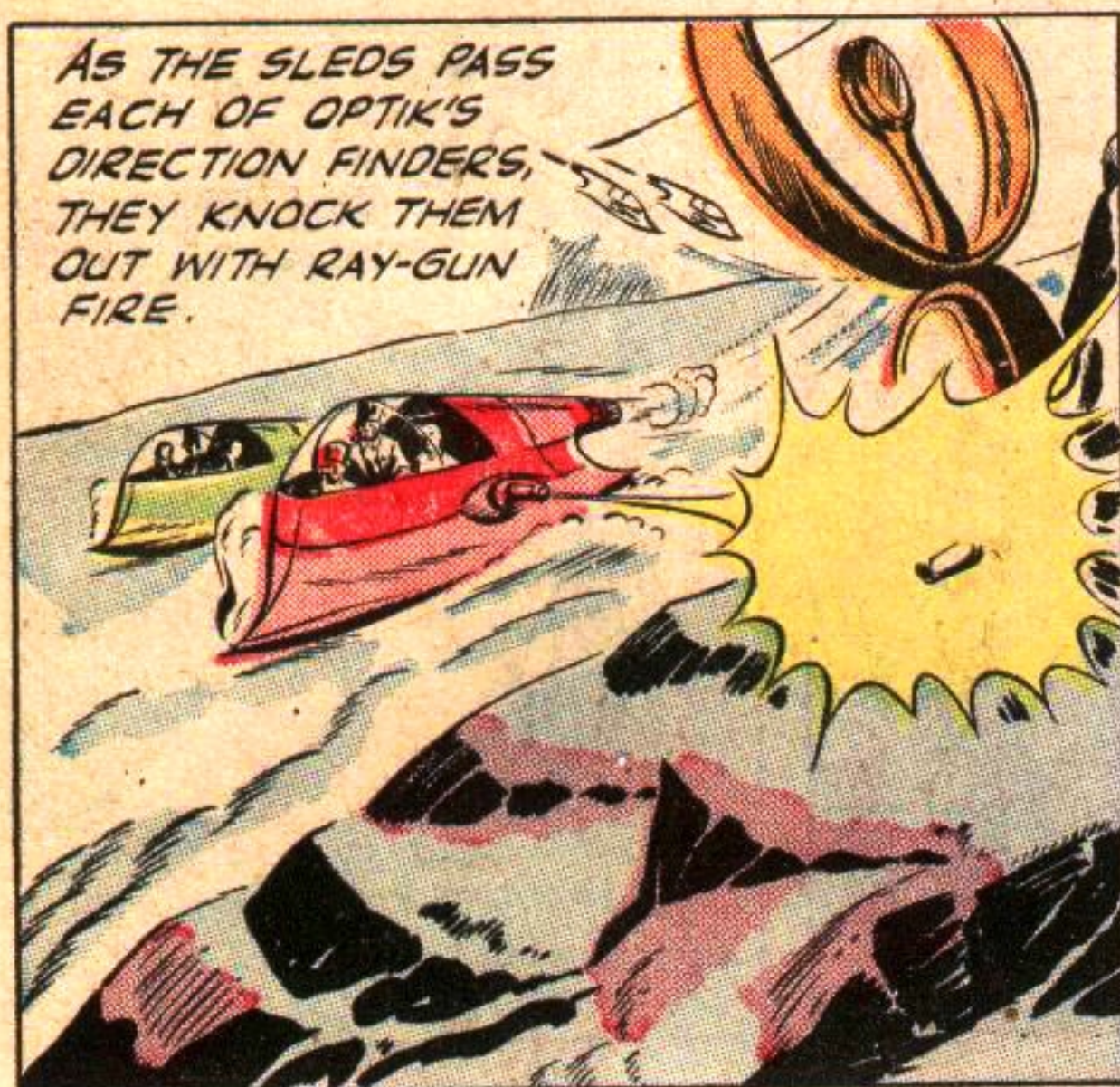
HE WILL BE. NO ONE WILL ESCAPE. RADIO-ACTIVITY WILL GET THEM, IF THE BLASTING DOESN'T.



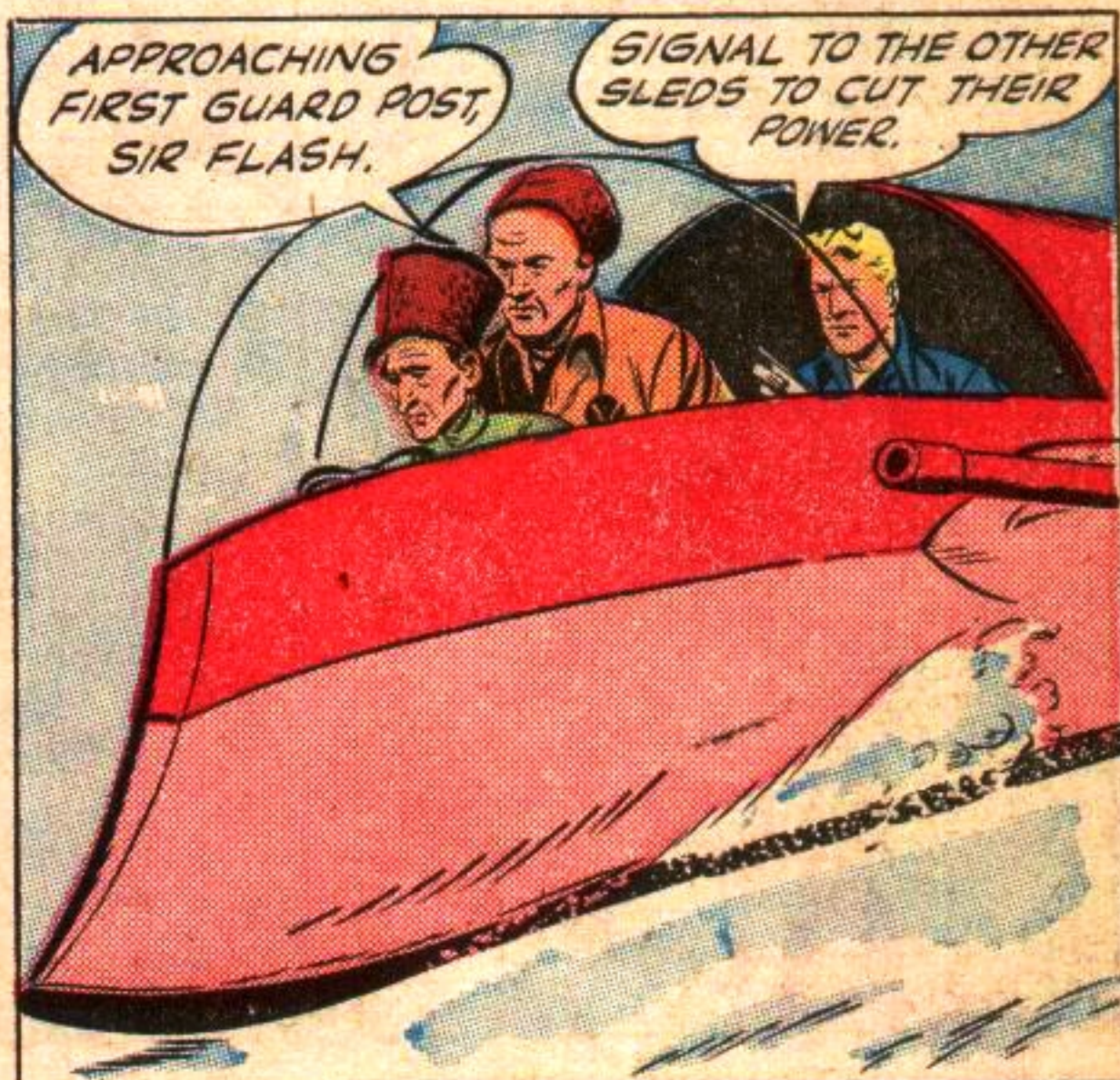
WHILE
OPTIK GLOATS OVER HIS
DISPOSITION OF VANGO,
IN VANGO'S HIDE-OUT A HUGE METAL DOOR
OPENS. TWO GREEN LIGHTS BY THE CONTROL
TOWER BLINK AND ROCKET-POWERED SLEDs-



MOVE OUT TO
ATTACK OPTIK'S OUT-
POST GARRISONS.

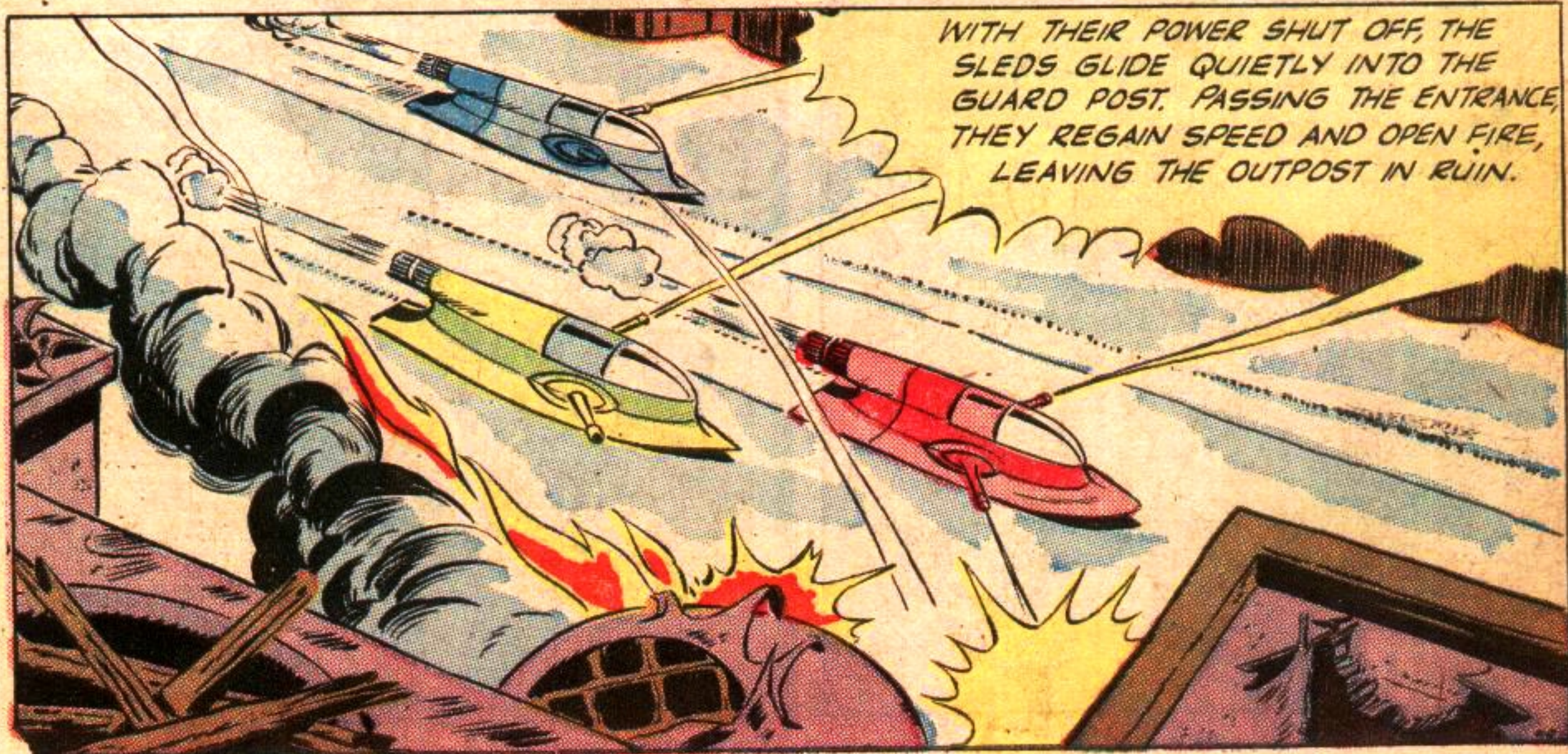


AS THE SLEDs PASS
EACH OF OPTIK'S
DIRECTION FINDERS,
THEY KNOCK THEM
OUT WITH RAY-GUN
FIRE.

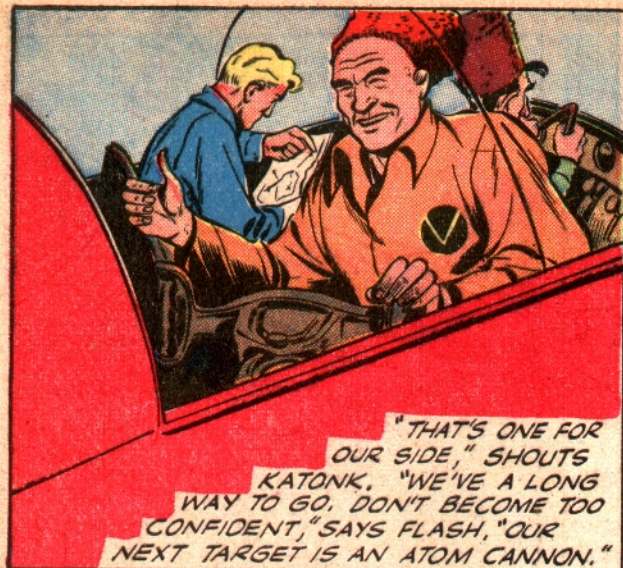


APPROACHING
FIRST GUARD POST,
SIR FLASH.

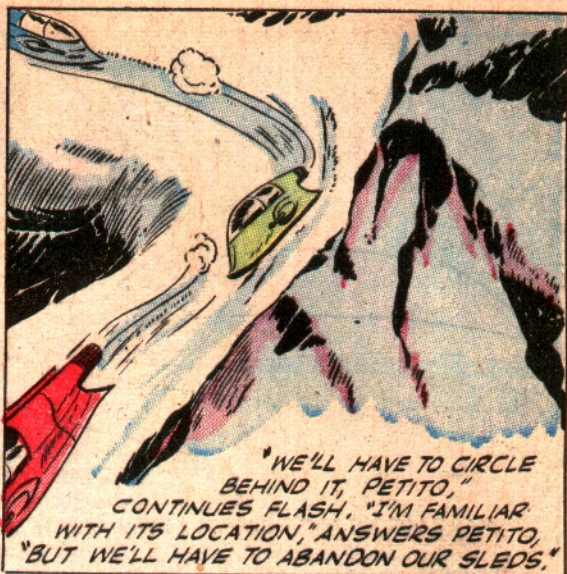
SIGNAL TO THE OTHER
SLEDs TO CUT THEIR
POWER.



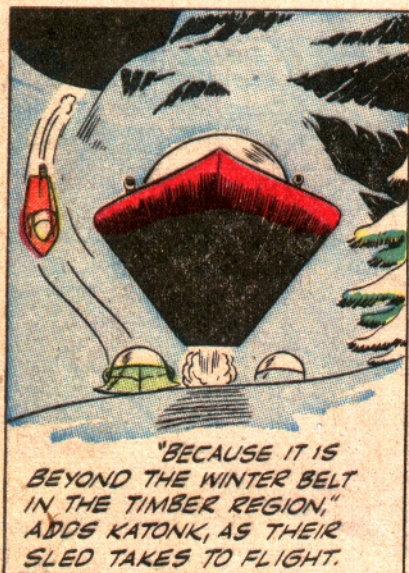
WITH THEIR POWER SHUT OFF, THE
SLEDs GLIDE QUIETLY INTO THE
GUARD POST. PASSING THE ENTRANCE,
THEY REGAIN SPEED AND OPEN FIRE,
LEAVING THE OUTPOST IN RUIN.



"THAT'S ONE FOR OUR SIDE," SHOUTS KATONK. "WE'VE A LONG WAY TO GO. DON'T BECOME TOO CONFIDENT," SAYS FLASH, "OUR NEXT TARGET IS AN ATOM CANNON."



"WE'LL HAVE TO CIRCLE BEHIND IT, PETITO," CONTINUES FLASH. "I'M FAMILIAR WITH ITS LOCATION," ANSWERS PETITO, "BUT WE'LL HAVE TO ABANDON OUR SLEDS."

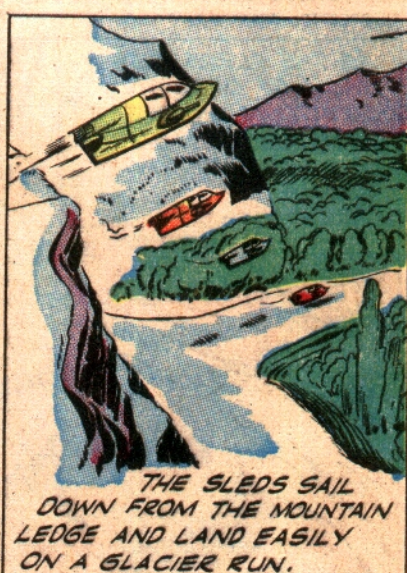


"BECAUSE IT IS BEYOND THE WINTER BELT IN THE TIMBER REGION," ADDS KATONK, AS THEIR SLED TAKES TO FLIGHT.

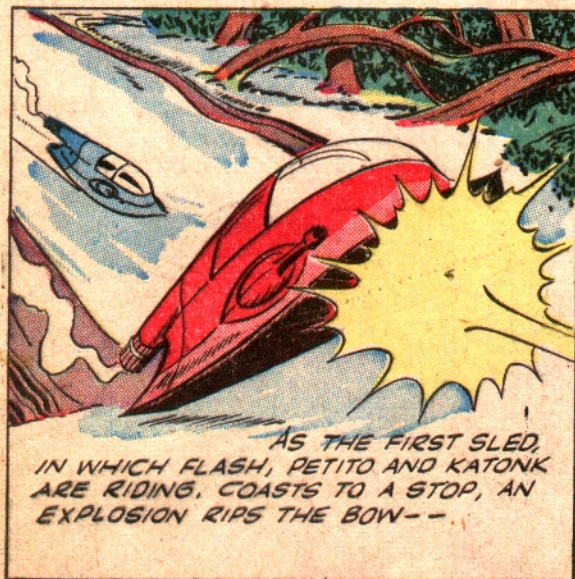


WHAT ARE YOU DOING, PETITO?

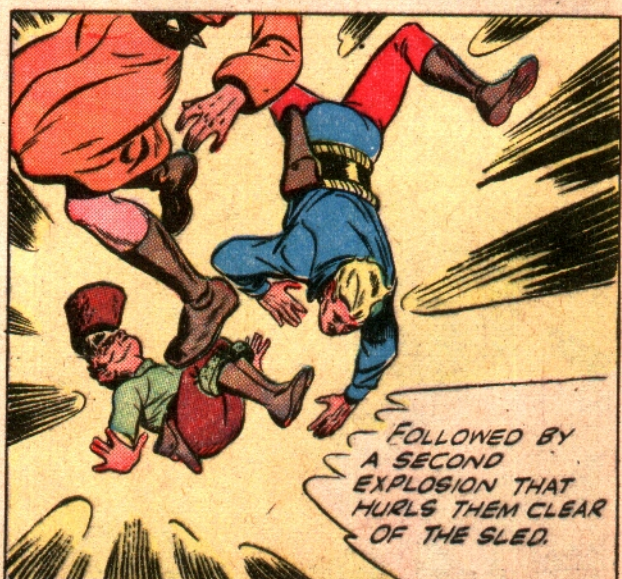
THE SAME THING I WOULD DO ON SKIS. TAKING THE SHORTEST DISTANCE TO THE LOWER LEVEL.



THE SLEDS SAIL DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN LEDGE AND LAND EASILY ON A GLACIER RUN.



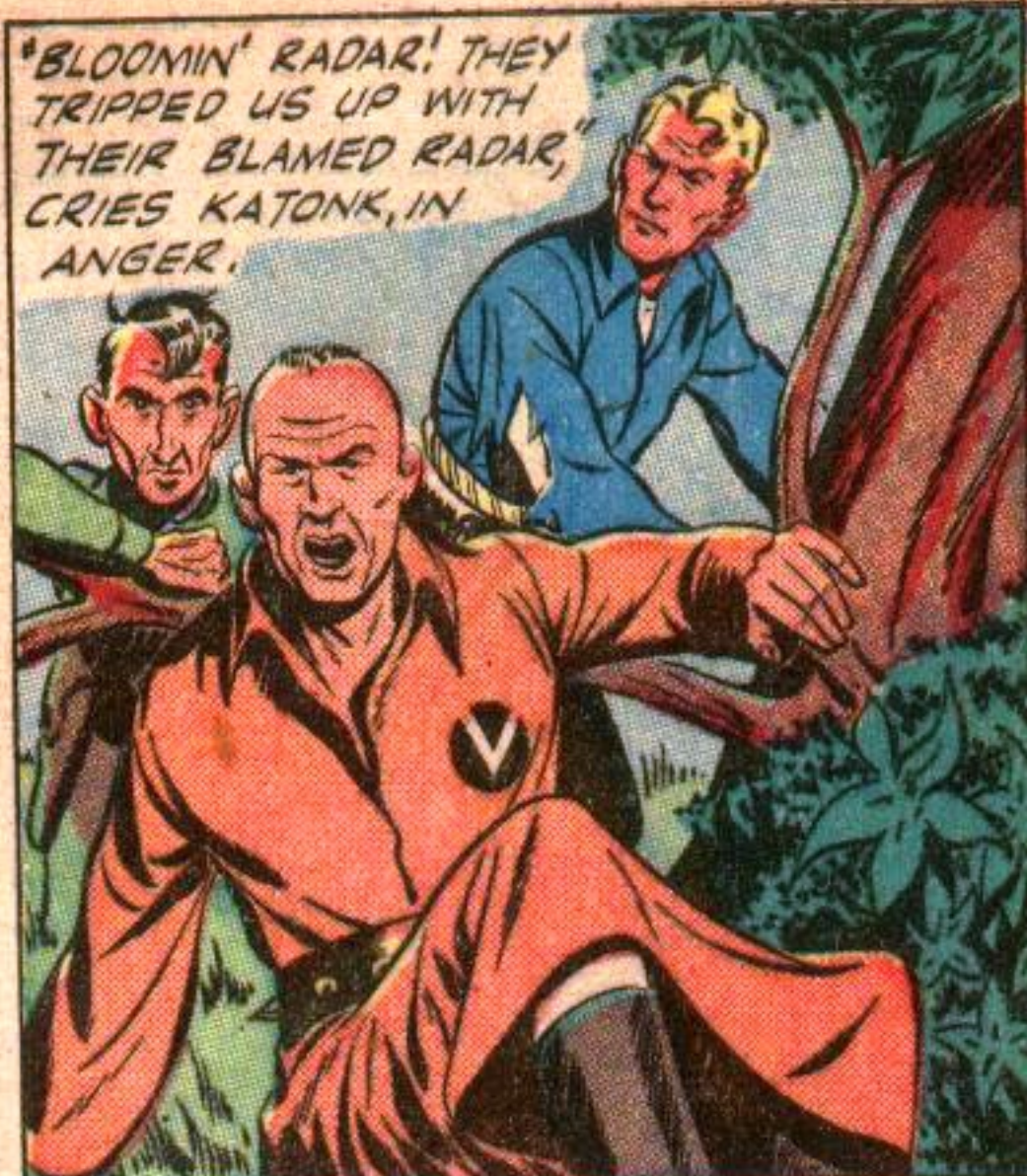
AS THE FIRST SLED, IN WHICH FLASH, PETITO AND KATONK ARE RIDING, COASTS TO A STOP, AN EXPLOSION RIPS THE BOW--



FOLLOWED BY A SECOND EXPLOSION THAT HURLS THEM CLEAR OF THE SLED.



THE HEAVY FOLIAGE ALONG THE GLACIER BREAKS THEIR FALL, AS THEIR BODIES TWIST TOWARD THE GROUND.

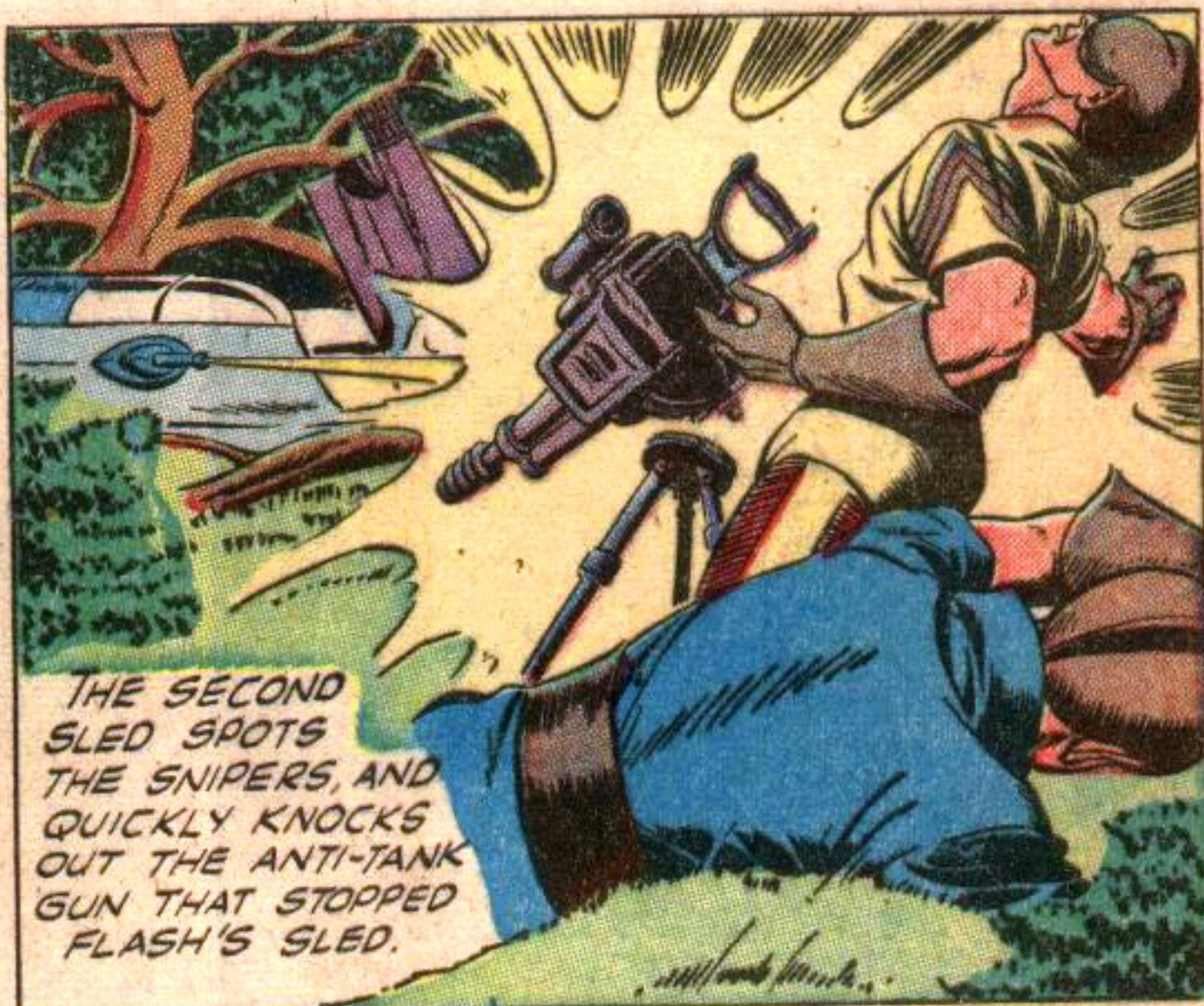


"BLOOMIN' RADAR! THEY TRIPPED US UP WITH THEIR BLAMED RADAR," CRIES KATONK, IN ANGER.



SOMETHING FUNNY ABOUT THIS. OPTIK DOESN'T HAVE ANY GUARD POSTS NEAR HERE AND WE WERE FIRED ON AT CLOSE RANGE.

LISTEN! MORE FIRING!



THE SECOND SLED SPOTS THE SNIPERS, AND QUICKLY KNOCKS OUT THE ANTI-TANK GUN THAT STOPPED FLASH'S SLED.



IT WASN'T A GUARD POST, PETITO. JUST TWO MEN!

YES! THEY WERE OPTIK'S SPECIAL GUARDS!

THAT MEANS THE REGENT IS AROUND!



OPTIK HERE? GOOD! PETITO GET THE OTHER MEN FROM THE SLEDS. BRING THE PHONY HEADGEAR. THIS IS MORE THAN WE WISHED FOR!

RIGHT!

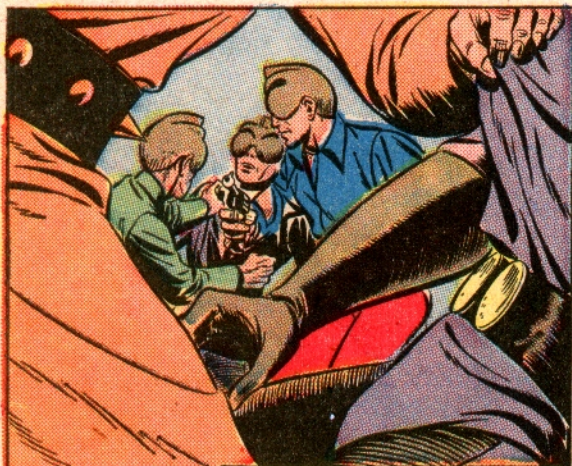
LATER, PETITO AND THE TROOPS RETURN, OUTFITTED IN HEADGEAR SIMILAR TO THE ONES WORN BY OPTIK'S SOLDIERS....

THESE HELMETS SEND OUT A RECOGNITION SIGNAL EVERY FEW MINUTES THE SAME AS THE REAL ONES, BUT THESE ARE EQUIPPED WITH PERISCOPIC LENSES, INSTEAD OF THE USUAL RADAR EQUIPMENT.

GOOD!
LET'S
GO!



FLASH LEADS THE TROOPS INTO OPTIK'S BIVOUAC. "WHAT GARRISON ARE YOU FROM?" CHALLENGES AN OPTO SERGEANT. "POST 3," ANSWERS FLASH. "WE ARE TO REPORT TO THE REGENT." "HE ISN'T HERE!" SNAPS THE SERGEANT.



FLASH GIVES A SIGNAL AND THE TROOPS OF VANGO SPRING INTO ACTION. OPTIK'S TROOPS ARE EASY PREY TO THE SURPRISE ATTACK.

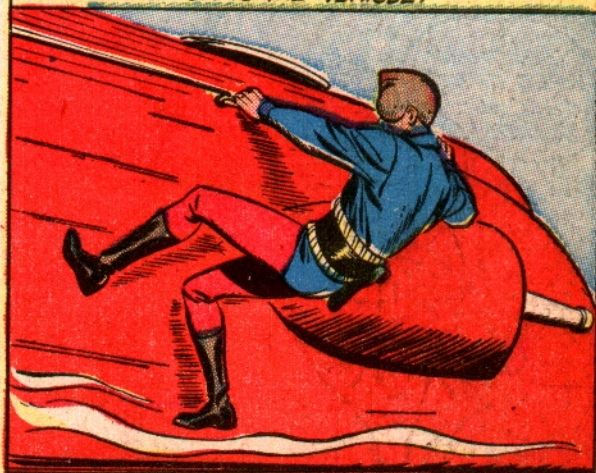
BUT ONE OF OPTIK'S SOLDIERS SLIPS AWAY AND RUSHES TO AN ARMORED CAR.



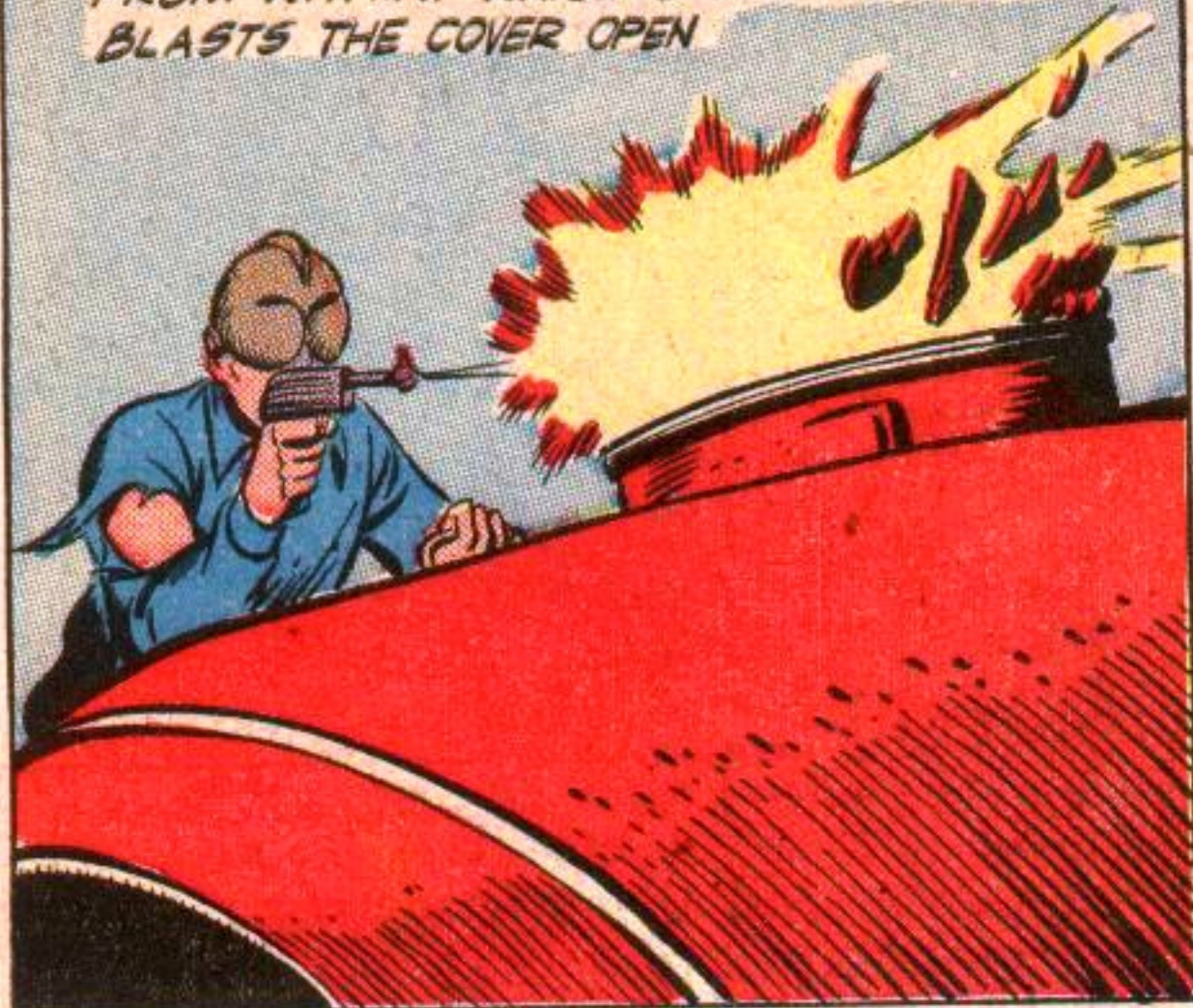
ONE OF THEM IS TRYING TO ESCAPE! TAKE CHARGE HERE, PETITO!



FLASH LUNGES TOWARD THE ARMORED CAR, AS IT PICKS UP SPEED. GAINING A HOLD, HE SWINGS ON TO THE VEHICLE.



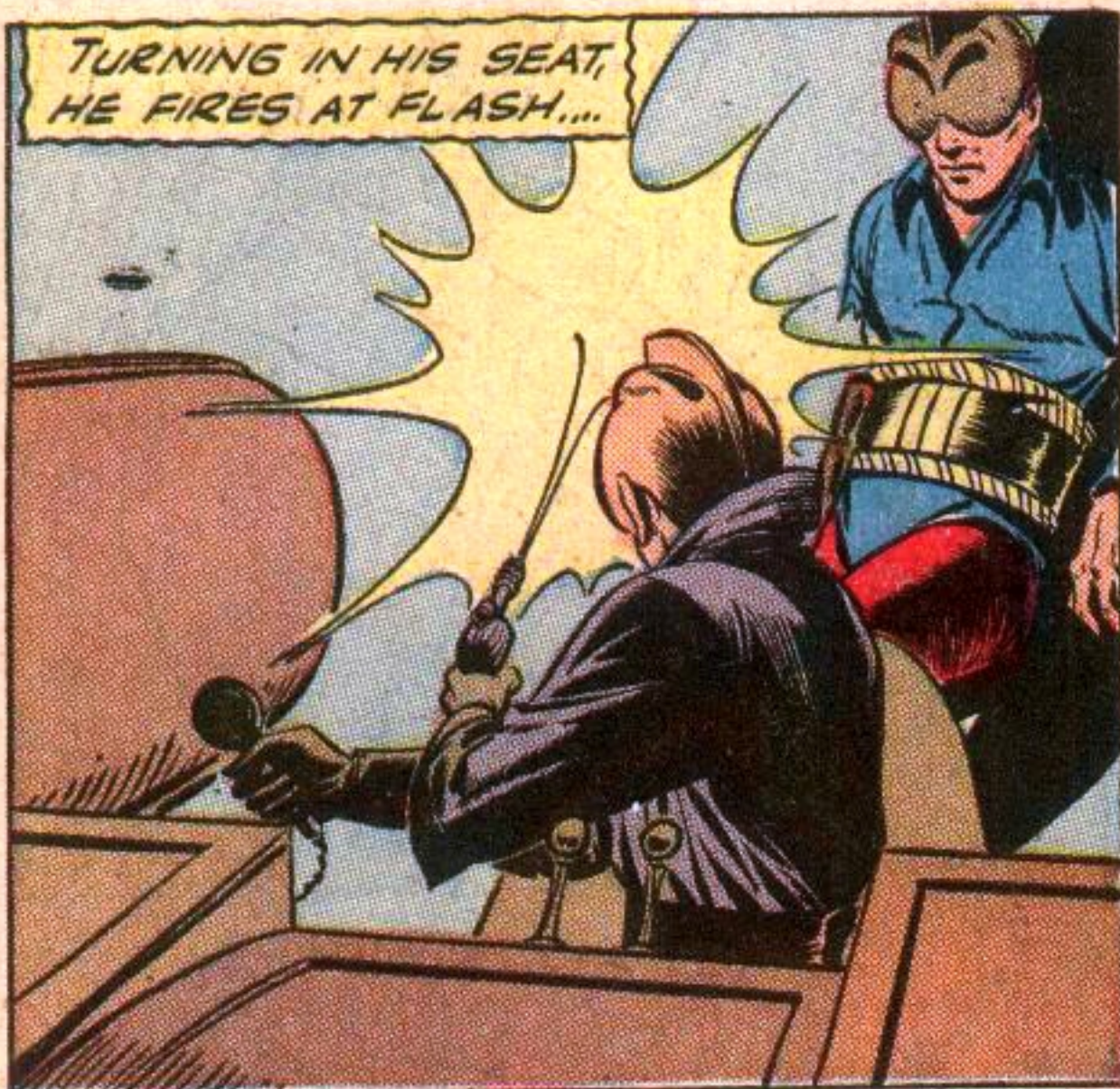
FLASH FINDS THE HATCH SEALED FROM WITHIN. RAISING HIS PISTOL, HE BLASTS THE COVER OPEN



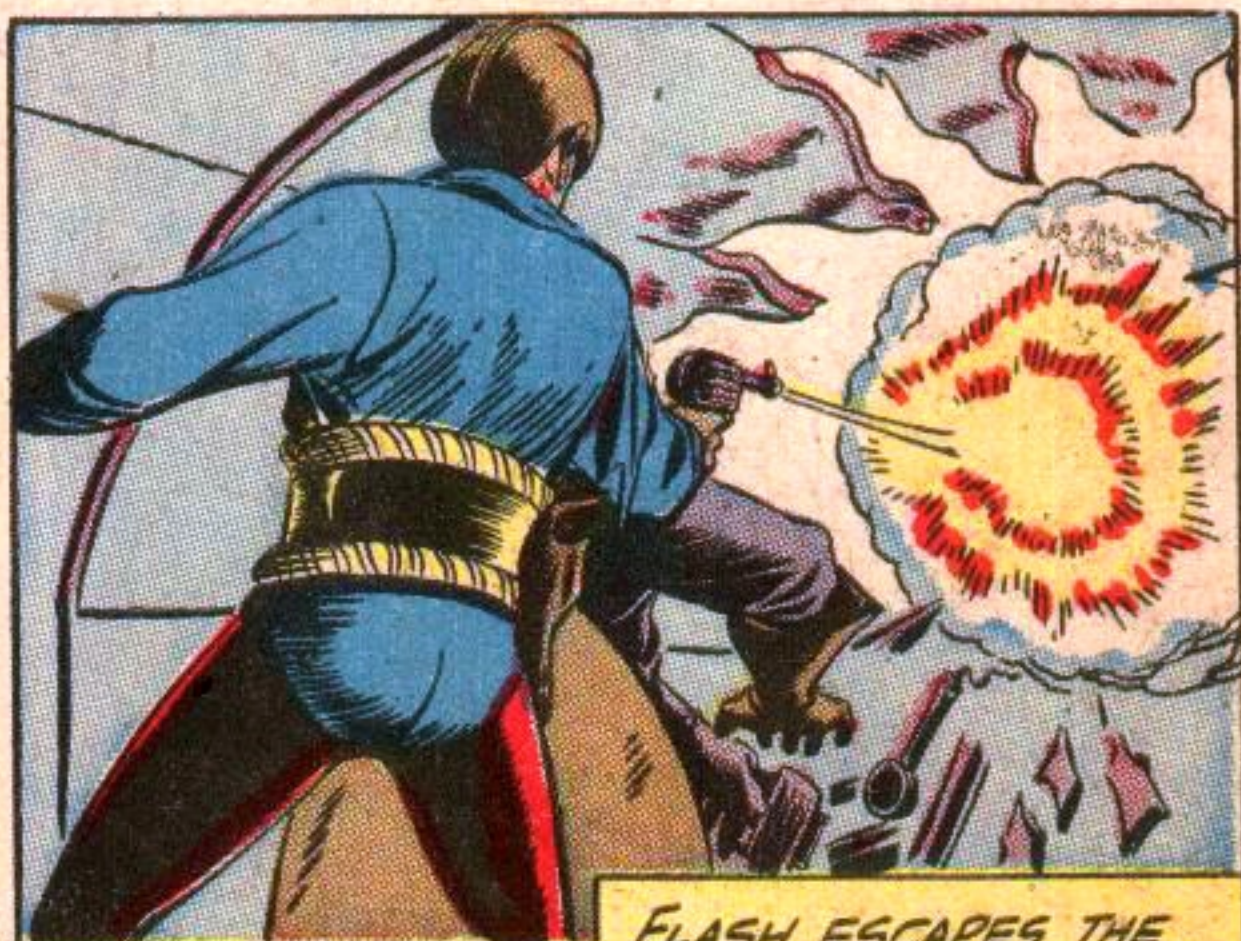
FLASH DROPS THROUGH THE HATCH, JUST AS THE OPTO SOLDIER BLURTS A WARNING TO OPTIK ON THE RADIO



TURNING IN HIS SEAT, HE FIRES AT FLASH...



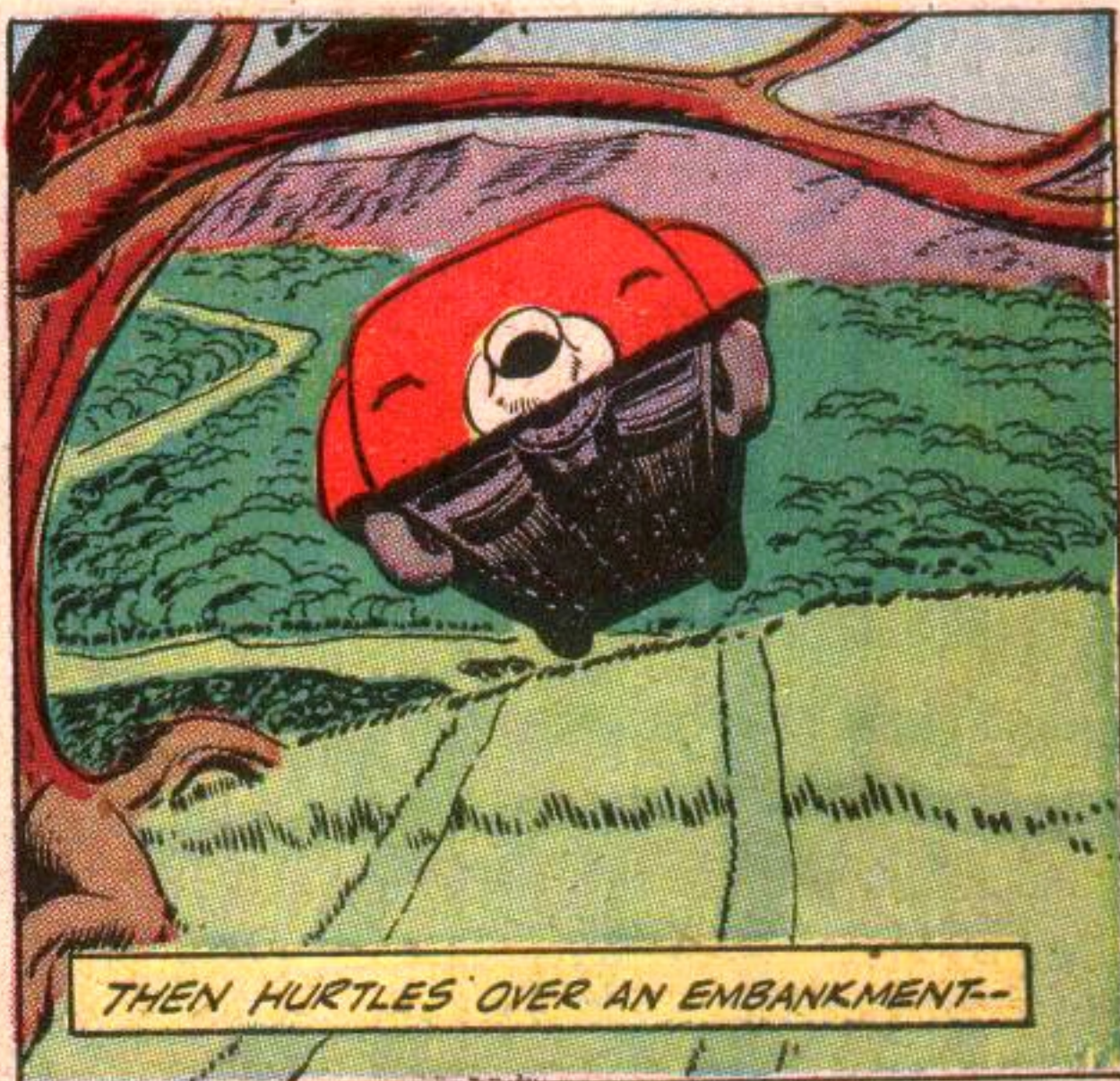
FLASH ESCAPES THE OPTO SOLDIER'S FIRE, THROWS HIMSELF TO ONE SIDE AND AIMS AT THE RADIO. THE SHOT FROM HIS PISTOL RIPS OPEN THE ENTIRE FRONT OF THE VEHICLE.



THE CAR SWERVES WILDLY OUT OF CONTROL...



THEN HURTLES OVER AN EMBANKMENT--





—AND PLUNGES INTO
THE RIVER BELOW....



THE VEHICLE SETTLES
TO THE BOTTOM. FLASH TRIES TO FREE
THE DRIVER, AS THE WATER SURGES THROUGH
THE WRECKED CAR.

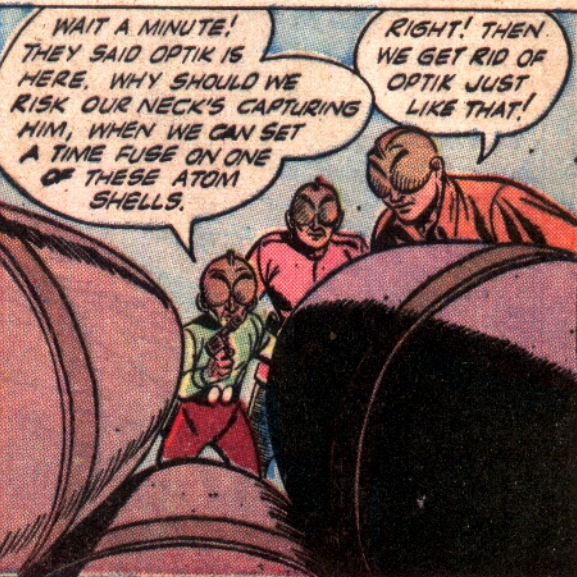
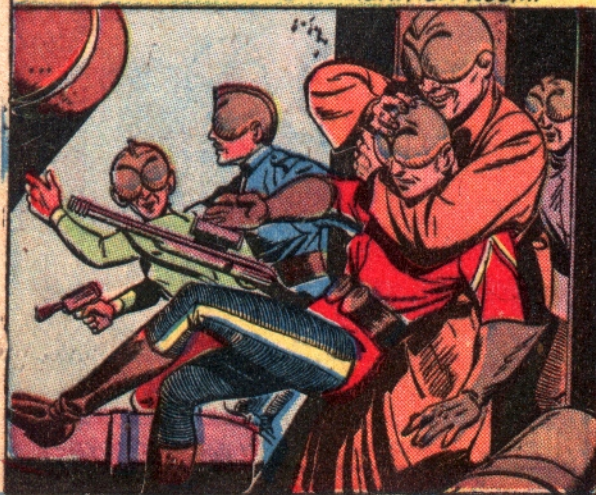


RELEASING
THE DRIVER, HE
PULLS HIM TOWARD
THE SURFACE. "HE
MAY BE ABLE TO LEAD
ME TO OPTIK," FLASH
THINKS.



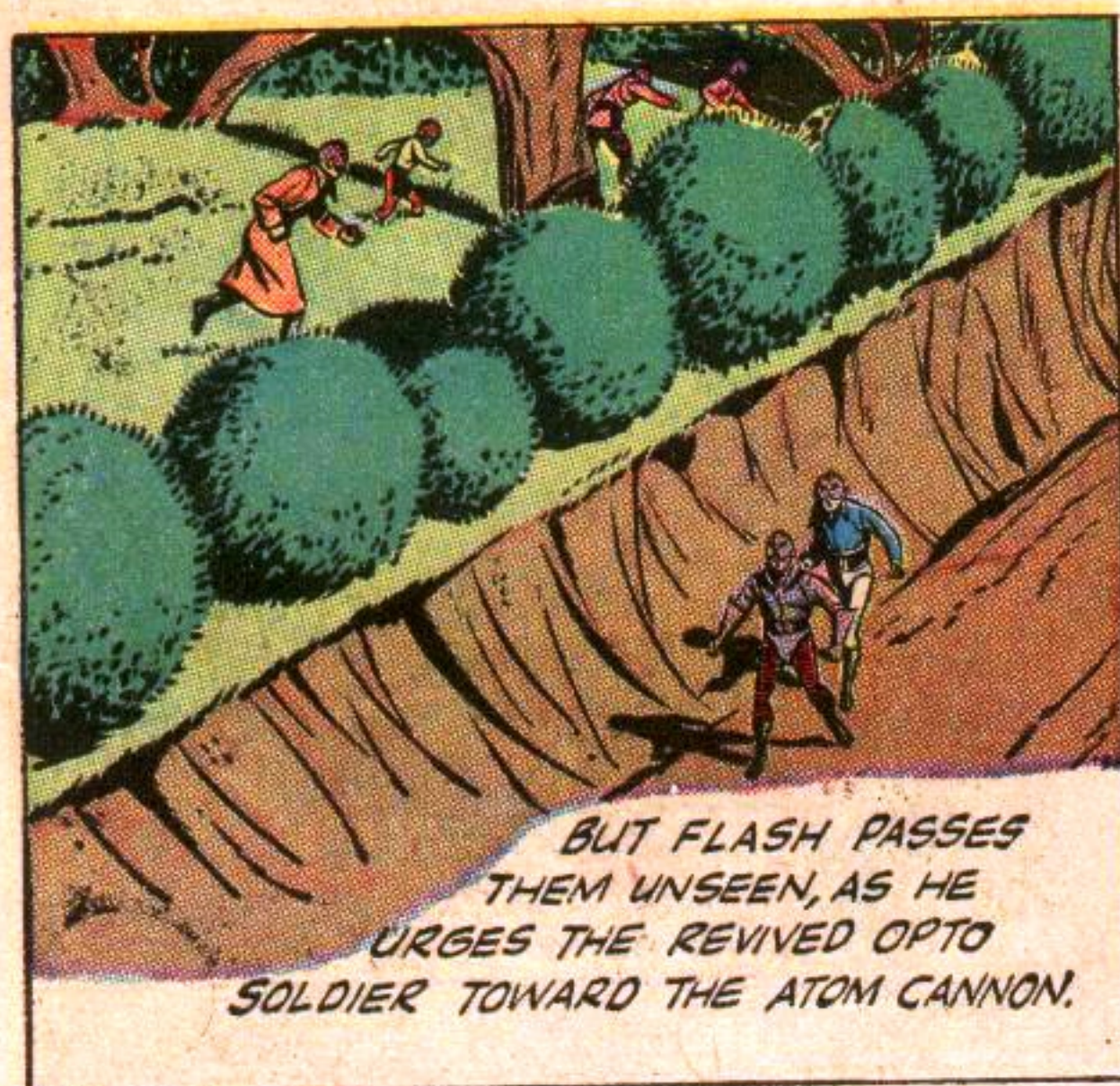
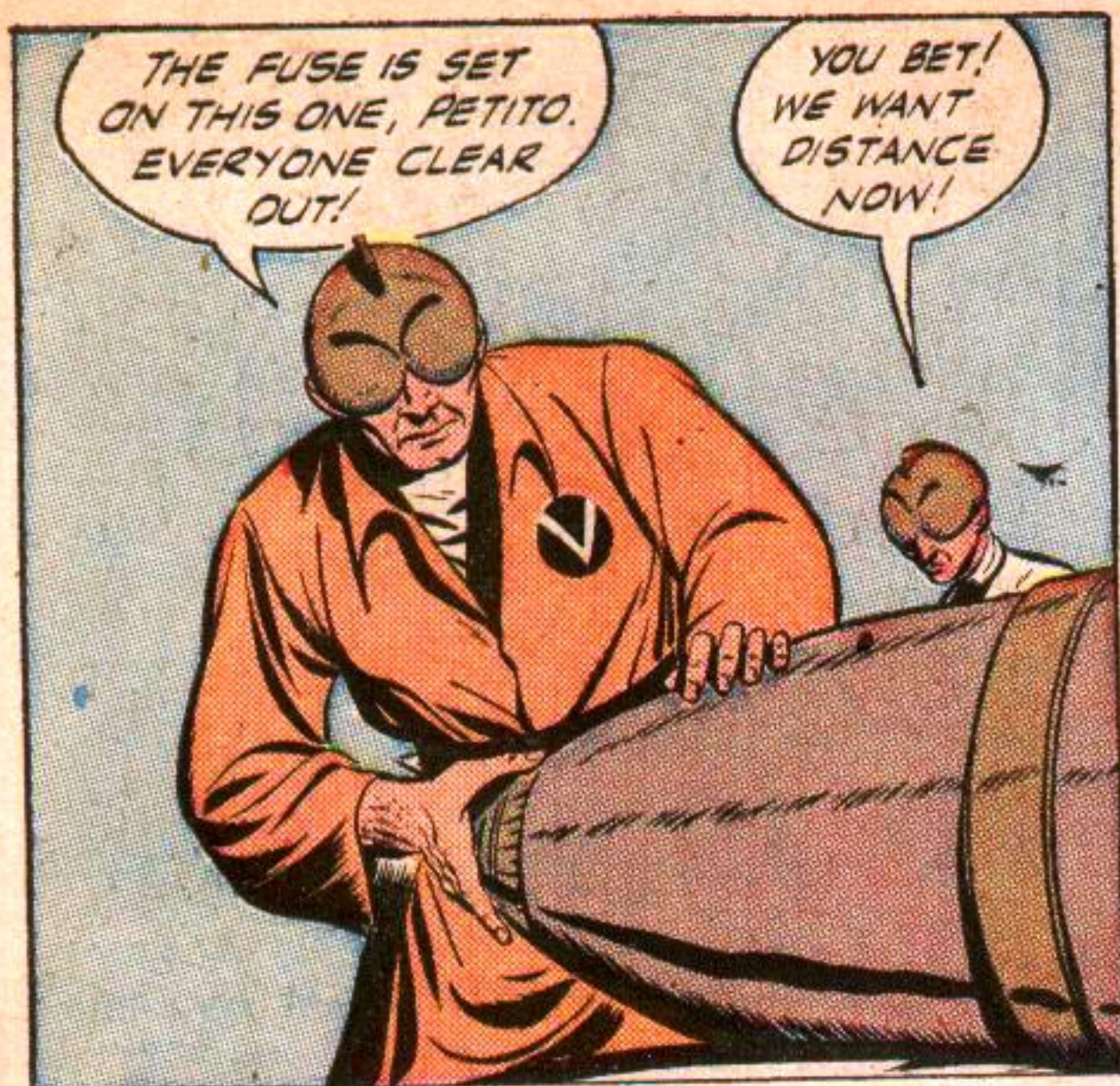
FLASH DRAGS
THE LIMP FORM
OF THE OPTO SOLDIER
TO THE ROCKY SHORE.

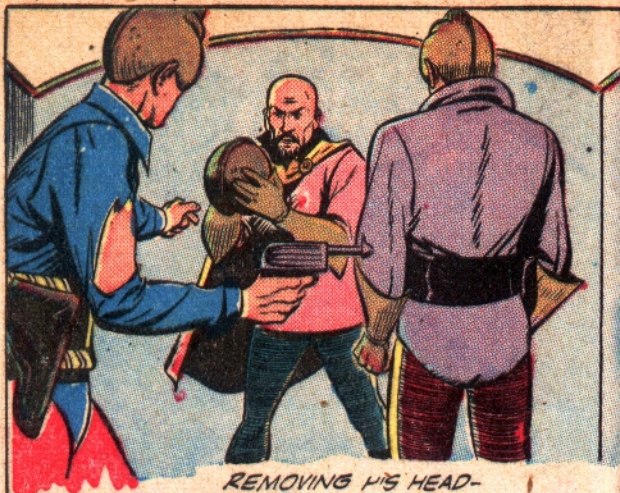
MEANWHILE, KATONK AND PETITO LEAD VANGO'S
SOLDIERS AGAINST THE ATOM CANNON. THEY
ENTER THROUGH THE AMMUNITION ROOM.



WAIT A MINUTE!
THEY SAID OPTIK IS
HERE. WHY SHOULD WE
RISK OUR NECK'S CAPTURING
HIM, WHEN WE CAN SET
A TIME FUSE ON ONE
OF THESE ATOM
SHELLS.

RIGHT! THEN
WE GET RID OF
OPTIK JUST
LIKE THAT!

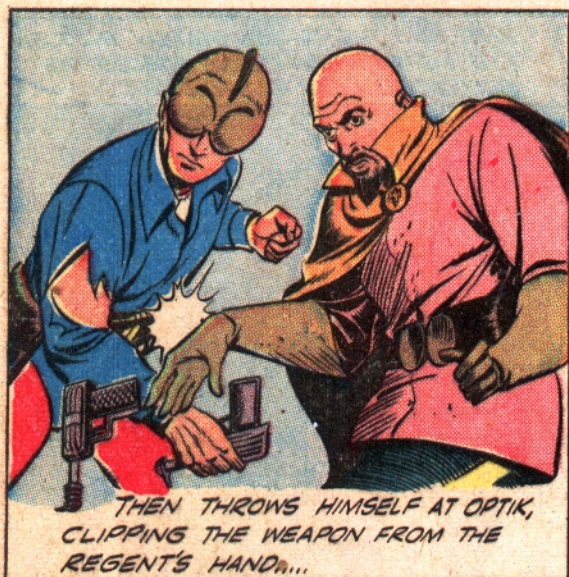




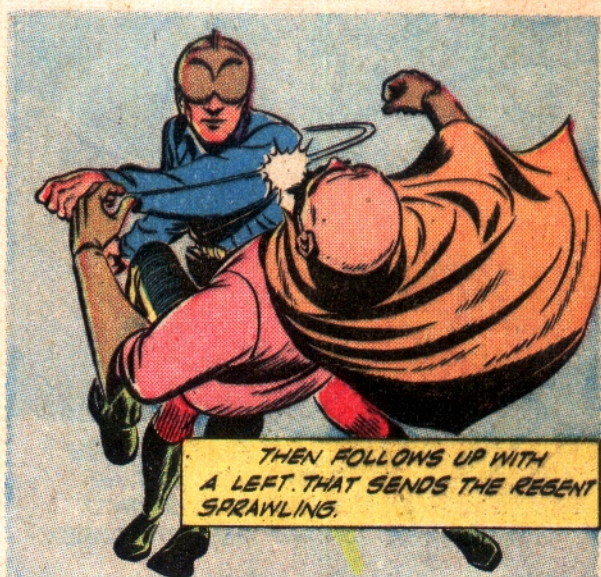
REMOVING V'S HEAD-GEAR, FOR BETTER VISION, OPTIK GLARES AT FLASH. RECOGNITION RACES THROUGH HIS MIND AND HE MUTTERS, "FLASH GORDON!"



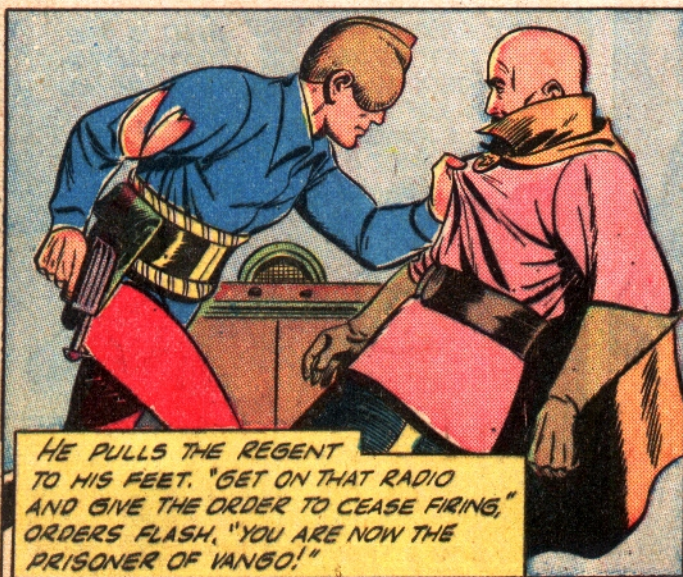
HE LEANS OVER TO DRAW A PISTOL FROM THE DESK. FLASH SLASHES THE BUTT OF HIS WEAPON AGAINST THE SOLDIER'S HEAD —



THEN THROWS HIMSELF AT OPTIK, CLIPPING THE WEAPON FROM THE REGENT'S HAND...



THEN FOLLOWS UP WITH A LEFT THAT SENDS THE REGENT SPRAWLING.



HE PULLS THE REGENT TO HIS FEET. "GET ON THAT RADIO AND GIVE THE ORDER TO CEASE FIRING," ORDERS FLASH, "YOU ARE NOW THE PRISONER OF VANGO!"



WHILE IN THE ARSENAL BELOW, THE TIMING DEVICE ON AN ATOM PROJECTILE TICKS AWAY TIME THAT CAN'T BE TURNED BACK.



OPTIK TURNS TO THE RADIO AND ANNOUNCES, "SOLDIERS OF OPTO, CEASE FIRING AND ABANDON YOUR STATIONS. THIS IS THE REGENT."

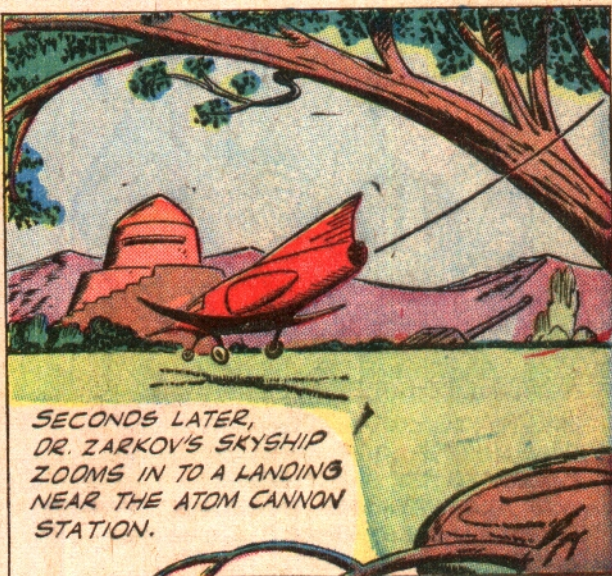


NOW, WE'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE. I'M TAKING YOU TO VANGO!

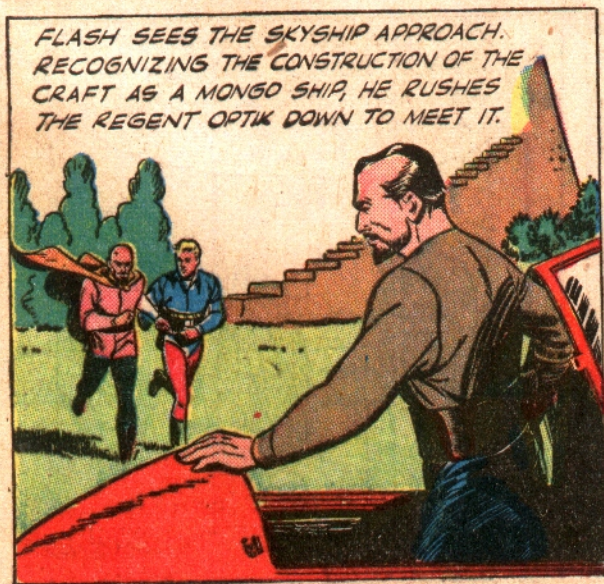
NO! NO! I'LL MAKE A BARGAIN WITH YOU! I'LL GIVE YOU A HIGH OFFICE IN MY COMMAND!



MEANWHILE, IN AN ATOM-JET SKYSHIP, NEARING OPTO, DR. ZARKOV WATCHES THE IMAGES ON HIS TELEVIEW-A-SCOPE.



SECONDS LATER, DR. ZARKOV'S SKYSHIP ZOOMS IN TO A LANDING NEAR THE ATOM CANNON STATION.



FLASH SEES THE SKYSHIP APPROACH. RECOGNIZING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE CRAFT AS A MONGO SHIP, HE RUSHES THE REGENT OPTIK DOWN TO MEET IT.



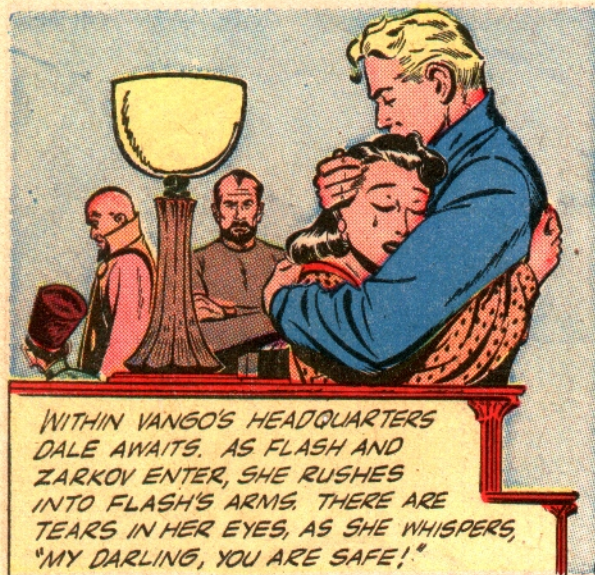
GREETINGS BETWEEN FLASH AND DR. ZARKOV FOLLOW, THEN THE THREE BOARD THE SHIP. AS THE CRAFT SHOOT FROM THE GROUND THE ATOM CANNON STATION EXPLODES BEHIND THEM.



WITH LANDING GEAR RETRACTED, THE SKYSHIP LANDS ON THE SNOW NEAR THE LAUNCHING RAMP FOR VANGO'S POWER SLEDS.



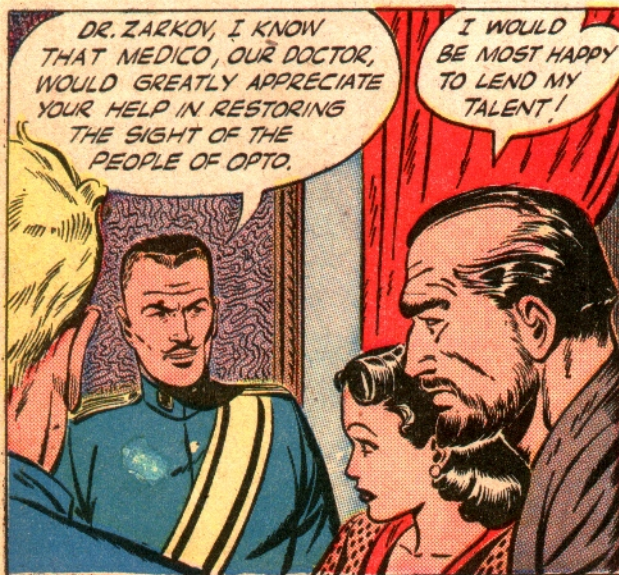
PETITO RUSHES OUT TO MEET THEM. SEEING FLASH, HE EXCLAIMS, "WHEN WE COULDN'T FIND YOU, WE THOUGHT YOU HAD DROWNED IN THAT ARMORED CAR."



WITHIN VANGO'S HEADQUARTERS DALE AWAITS. AS FLASH AND ZARKOV ENTER, SHE RUSHES INTO FLASH'S ARMS. THERE ARE TEARS IN HER EYES, AS SHE WHISPERS, "MY DARLING, YOU ARE SAFE!"

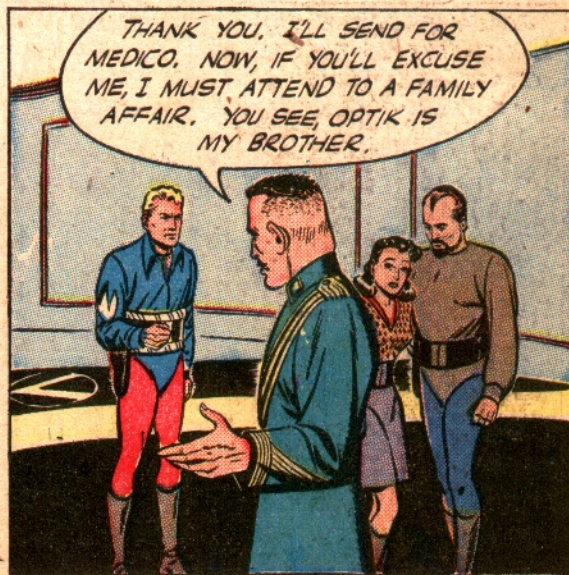


OPTIK IS LED AWAY BY KATONK AND PETITO. "MY MOST SINCERE THANKS, FOR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE, ARE MOST INADEQUATE," SAYS VANGO, "I DO HOPE AND WISH THAT YOU MIGHT STAY TO HELP IN THE REHABILITATION."



DR. ZARKOV, I KNOW THAT MEDICO, OUR DOCTOR, WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE YOUR HELP IN RESTORING THE SIGHT OF THE PEOPLE OF OPTO.

I WOULD BE MOST HAPPY TO LEND MY TALENT!



THANK YOU. I'LL SEND FOR MEDICO. NOW, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME, I MUST ATTEND TO A FAMILY AFFAIR. YOU SEE, OPTIK IS MY BROTHER.



