

GOLD
KEY

FLASH GORDON

12c

FLASH GORDON

10148-506



1965, KING FEATURES SYNDICATE, INC.

Marooned on a monster-infested planet torn by war, Flash and Dale are hunted from every side!



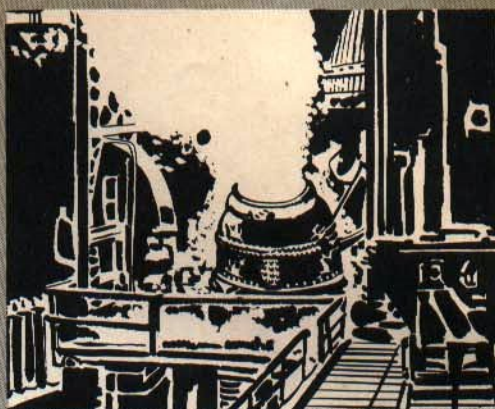
KEYS OF KNOWLEDGE

IRON and STEEL

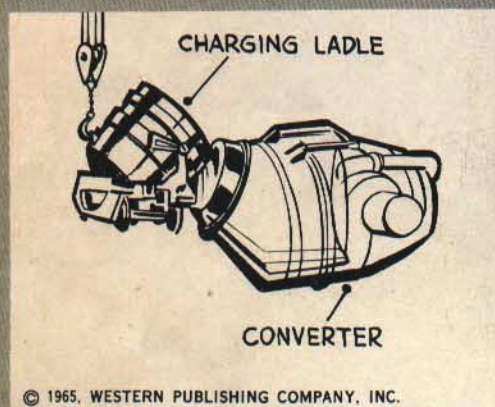
NUMBER 5

THE BESSEMER PROCESS

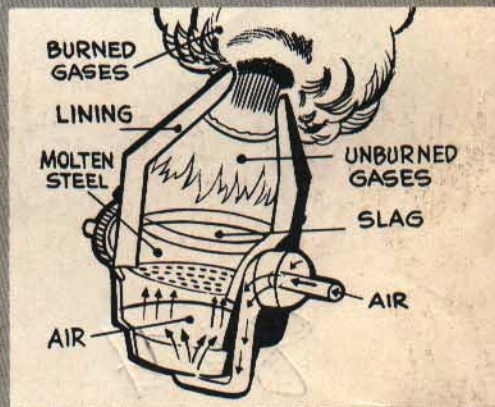
This is one of a series of information features in Gold Key Comics. Collect the whole series for useful knowledge.



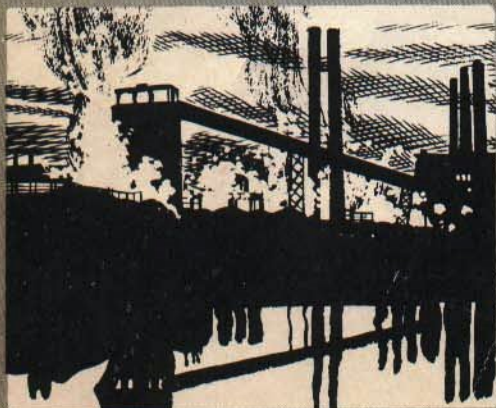
More than 100 years ago, the bessemer process made large tonnage steel output possible. Discovered by Sir Henry Bessemer.



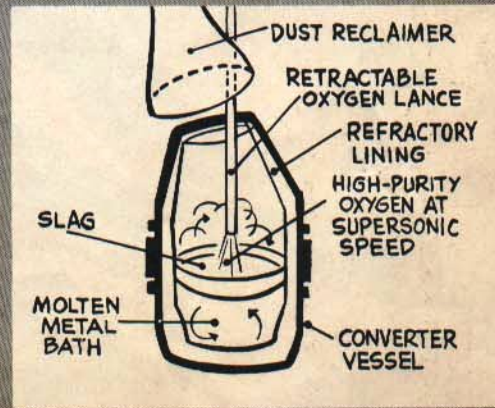
Melted iron is poured from a charging ladle into the pear-shaped converter. It is then turned upright and the air is forced in.



First flames and then sparks pour from the open end, as impurities are burned out of the iron and it is refined into the steel.



The impurities burn for about 20 minutes. Multicolored flames leap 30 feet into the air and are visible for many miles at night.



Recently, the basic oxygen process has replaced the bessemer process. A jet of high-purity oxygen is used to make better steel.

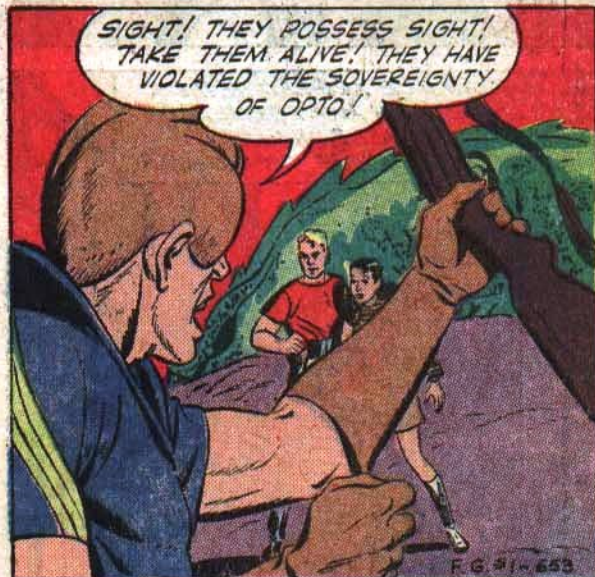
FLASH GORDON

THE EYES OF OPTO

A POWER FAILURE FORCES FLASH GORDON TO CRASH-LAND HIS SPACE SHIP IN A DEEP VALLEY ON A STRANGE UNKNOWN PLANET! AS THEY BEGIN TO SEARCH FOR HELP, THEY ARE SUDDENLY ATTACKED BY A HIDEOUS MONSTER--THE FIRST OF MANY DANGERS FLASH AND DALE ARDEN WILL ENCOUNTER ON THE STRANGE PLANET OPTO!



FLASH BLAZES AWAY AT THE CREATURE, KILLING IT INSTANTLY! BUT THE SOUND OF HIS GUN BRINGS HOSTILE SOLDIERS TO HIM...





THEY ARE TAKEN BY ARMORED CAR TO A GREAT CITY WHERE 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.

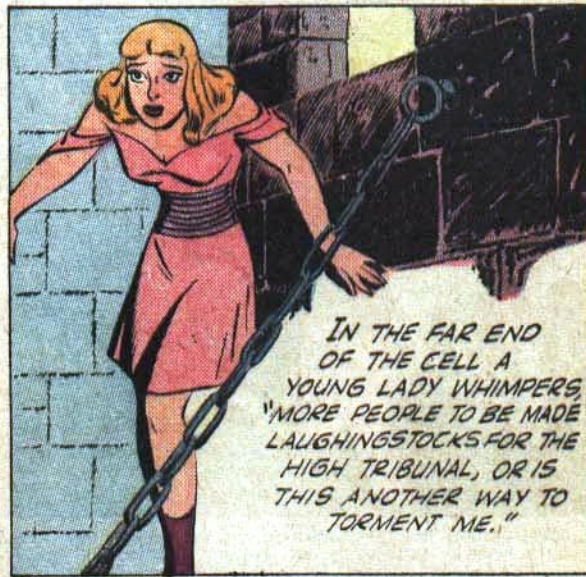
FLASH OFFERS PROTEST, BUT IS CUT SHORT....

SILENCE, PRISONER! THE PREFECT IS ABOUT TO SPEAK!



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.



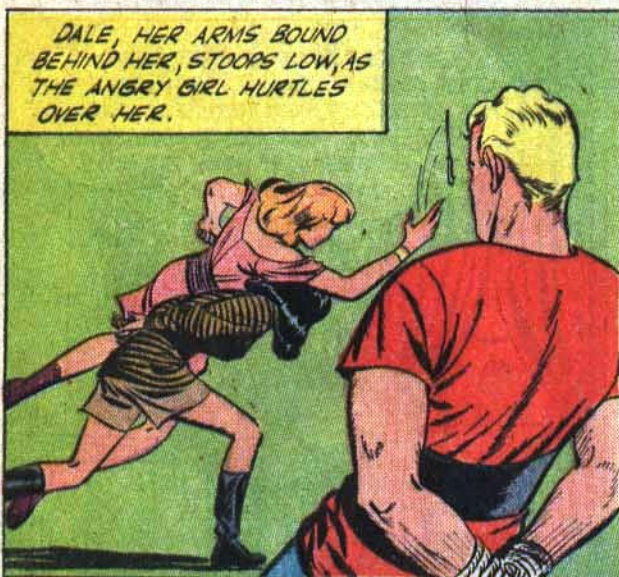
IN THE FAR END OF THE CELL A YOUNG LADY WHIMPERS, "MORE PEOPLE TO BE MADE LAUGHINGSTOCKS FOR THE HIGH TRIBUNAL, OR IS THIS ANOTHER WAY TO TORTURE ME."



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 HURTLES OVER HER.

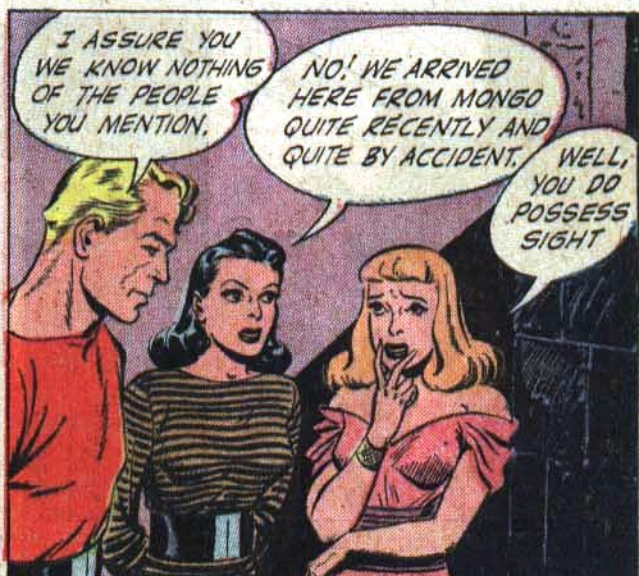


YOUNG LADY, CAN'T YOU SEE OUR ARMS ARE BOUND? WE ALL SHARE THE SAME FATE.

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



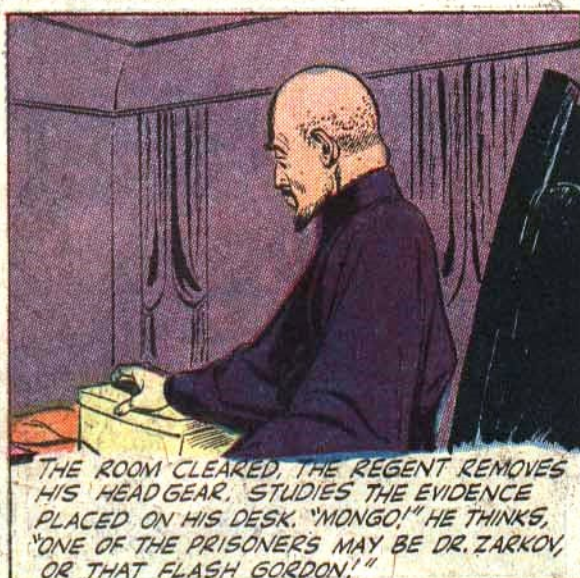
WHILE FLASH AND DALE REASON WITH THE GIRL, A MESSENGER FROM ONE OF OPTO'S OUTPOSTS RUSHES TO THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE REGENT OPTIK....

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

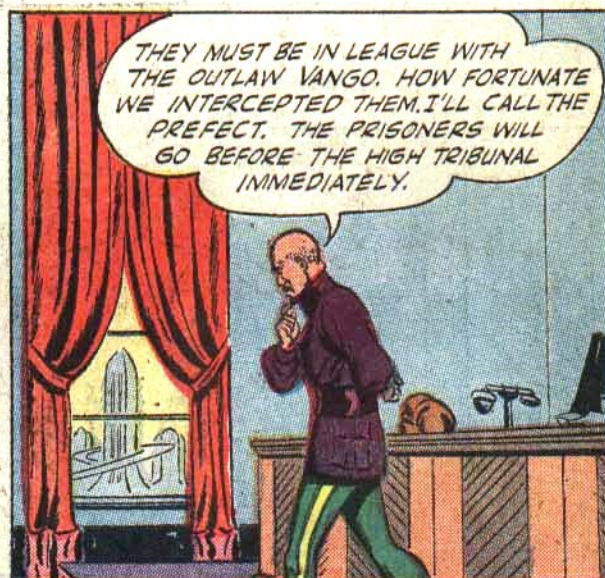


SIR, I BRING EVIDENCE WHICH PROVES THE SKYSHIP WE SHOT DOWN WAS FROM MONGO.

PLACE IT ON MY DESK, THEN CLEAR THIS ROOM.



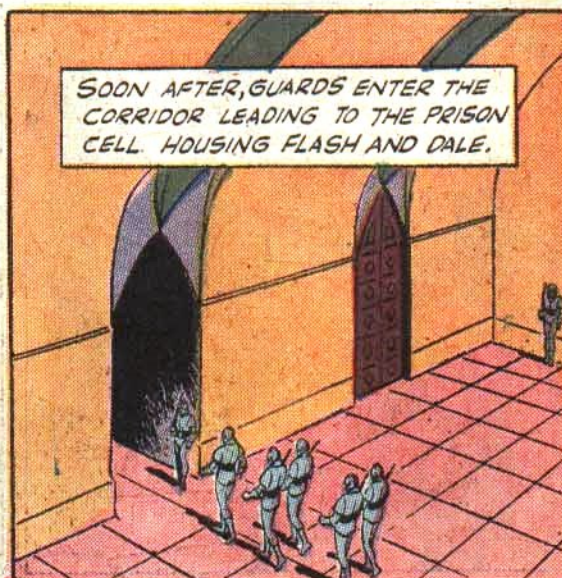
THE ROOM CLEARED, THE REGENT REMOVES HIS HEADGEAR, STUDIES THE EVIDENCE PLACED ON HIS DESK. "MONGO!" HE THINKS, "ONE OF THE PRISONERS MAY BE DR. ZARKOV, OR THAT FLASH GORDON!"



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.



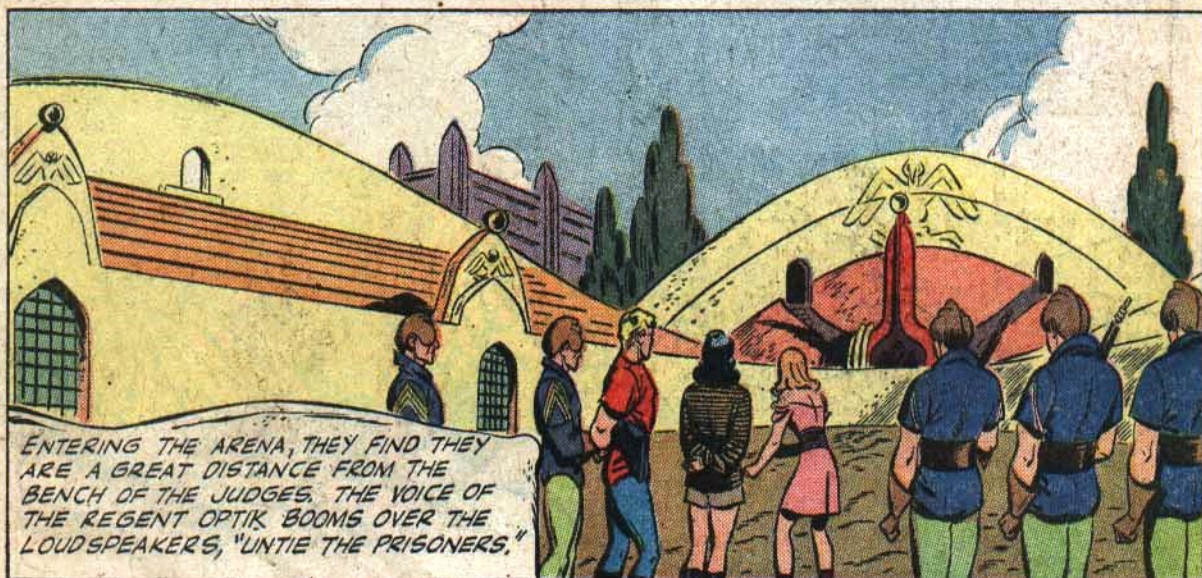
TIME OF TRIAL HAS BEEN
ADVANCED. YOU GO BEFORE
THE HIGH TRIBUNAL NOW.
ALSO THE WOMAN
NAMED "CHEE."



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. COME ON! 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.

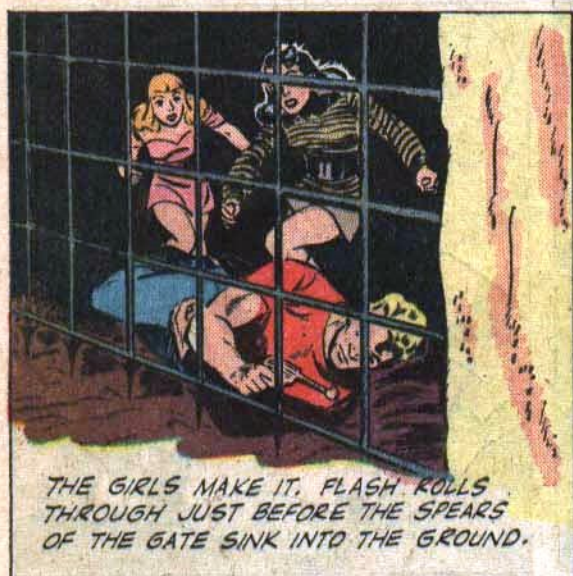
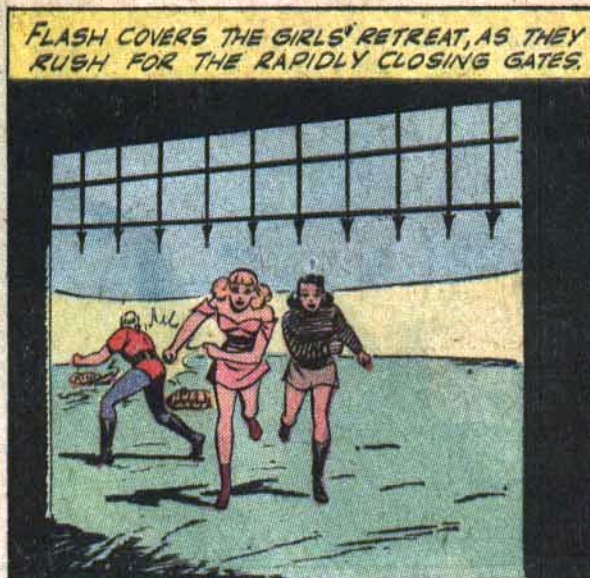
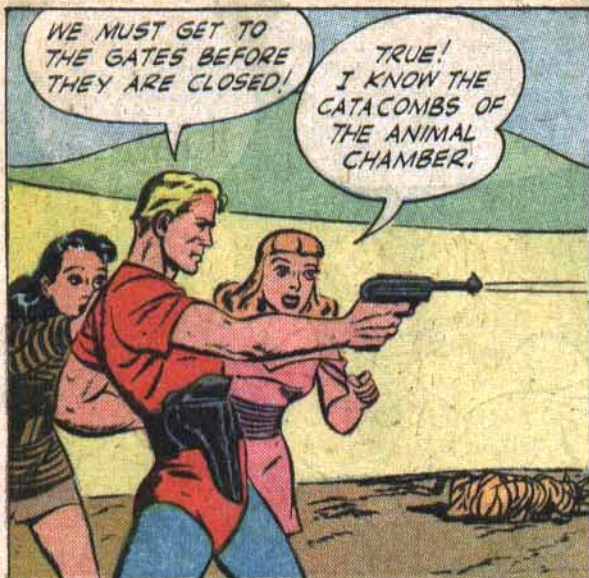


SOME ESCAPE THE BLAST TO RUSH ON AT THE ARMED PREY.....



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





OR THE MOON-
LIGHT NIGHTS
WE HAVE.

THIS IS NO TIME
FOR ROMANCE, LADY.
WHAT'S THE
CONNECTION?



IT IS SIMPLE, SIR.
OPTO HAS MANY MOONS.
CONSEQUENTLY, OUR
RIVERS HAVE MANY
CONFLICTING TIDES
AND TIDAL WAVES.

THEN THE
RIVER THAT
OFFERS US
PROTECTION
CAN ALSO
DESTROY US.



THE TUNNEL WINDS FOR NEARLY
A MILE, THEN OPENS OUT ONTO
BROAD, BOILING WATER.

THE REGENT
WILL LEAVE US
TO THIS RIVER.



I SUGGEST YOU REMOVE
ALL UNNECESSARY CLOTHING.
WE MUST SWIM TO THE
OTHER SHORE.

THAT'S
SUICIDE!



WE HAVE NO CHOICE.
I TAKE YOUR LEAVE.
SEE YOU ON THE OTHER
SIDE.



THAT GIRL
IS CRAZY!

REMEMBER,
DALE, SHE
IS A NATIVE
OF OPTO. COME
ALONG. WE MUST
TRY IT.





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



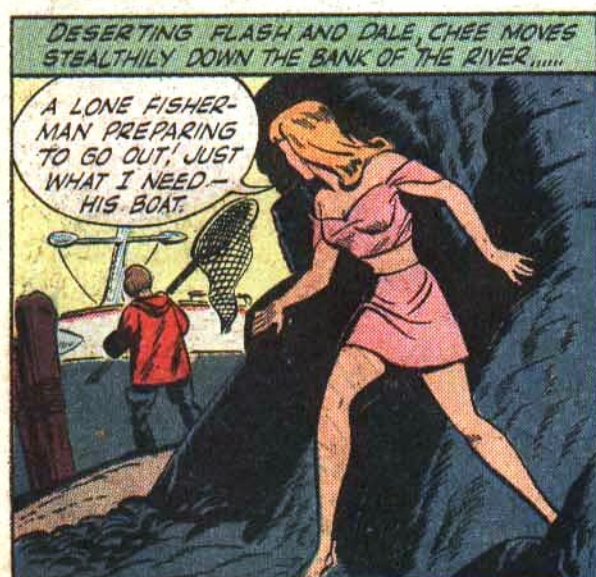
DALE, FRIGHTENED BY THE HEAVY WATERS, CLINGS TO FLASH, SCREAMING, "WE ARE LOST, FLASH, DARLING! WE ARE LOST!"



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!

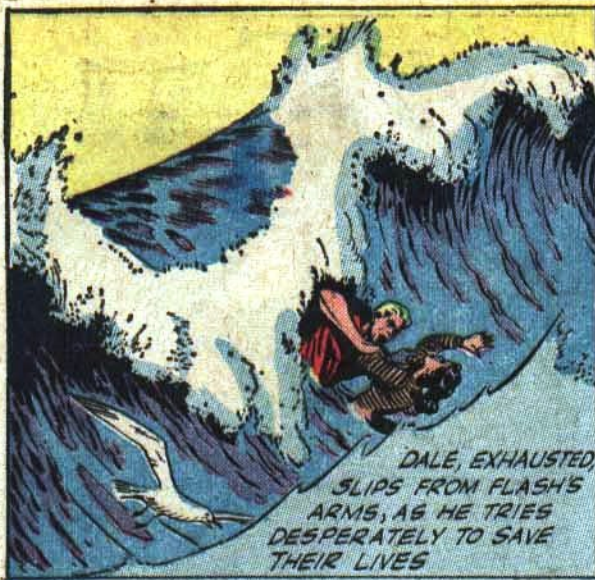


DESERTING FLASH AND DALE, CHEE MOVES STEALTHILY DOWN THE BANK OF THE RIVER.....

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



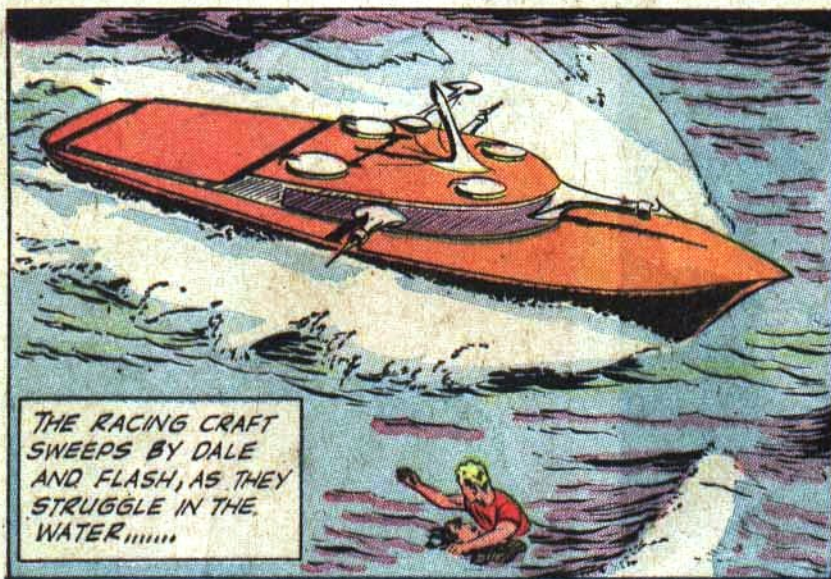
CHEE CREEPS UP TO THE UNSUSPECTING FISHERMAN AND WITH THE EDGE OF HER HAND CLIPS HIM ON THE NAPE OF THE NECK.



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 YANGO.



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.



CHEE GRABS A GAFF AXE AND RUSHES TO THE HARPOON PORT THAT HAS FIRED. "WHEN THAT GUN WENT OFF IT CUT THE POWER. THIS BOAT WILL BE STALLED UNTIL I RELEASE THE TENSION ON THAT LINE," SHE MUTTERS.



THROUGH THE OPEN PORT. CHEE SEES HER CATCH.....

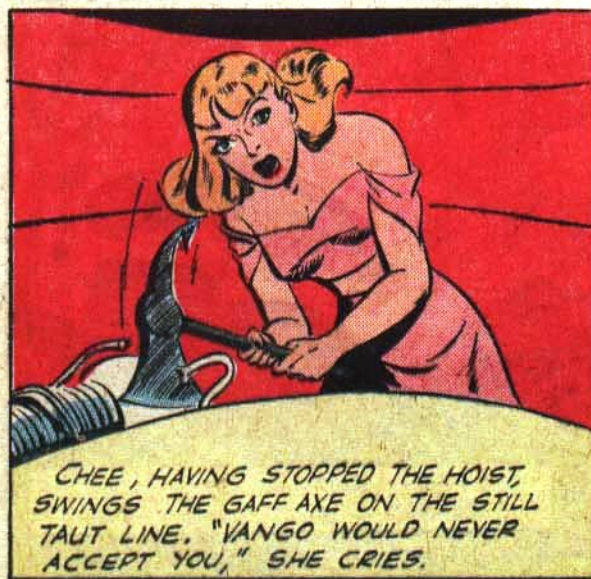
FLASH AND DALE!



WHILE CHEE WATCHES QUIETLY, FLASH LETS THE LINE TOW HIM TO THE BOAT.



HE ROLLS DALE ONTO THE EDGE OF THE BOAT, AS THE TOWLINE STOPS.



CHEE, HAVING STOPPED THE HOIST, SWINGS THE GAFF AXE ON THE STILL TAUT LINE. "VANGO WOULD NEVER ACCEPT YOU," SHE CRIES.

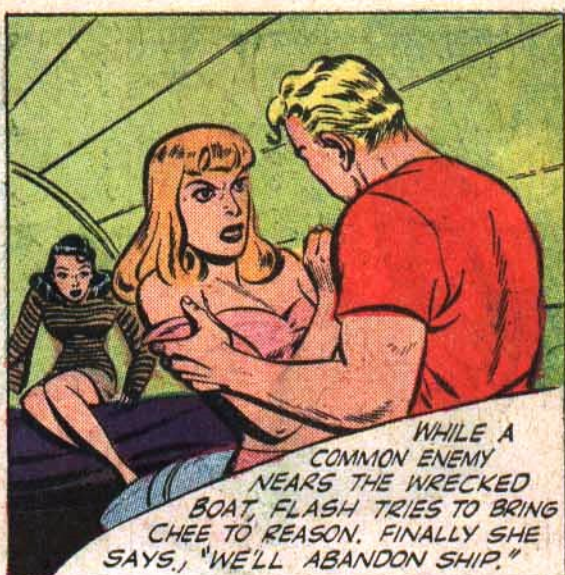


BUT FLASH GORDON'S REFLEXES ARE FAST! AS THE BOAT SURGES FORWARD, HE SCRAMBLES ABOARD...





ALMOST INSTANTLY, OPTO SOLDIERS RACE ALONG MARKED TRAILS FOR 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!



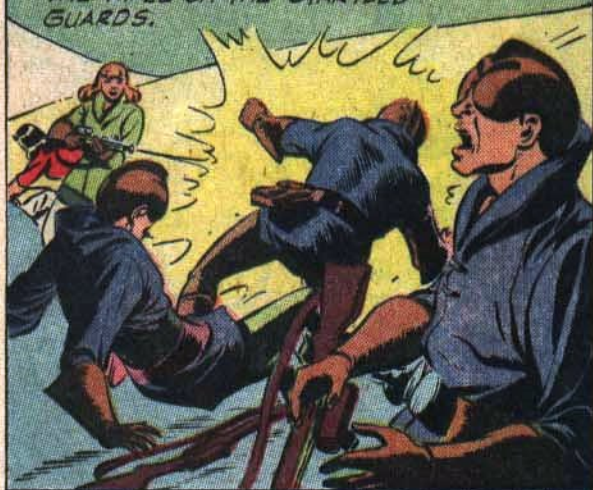
SNATCHING A RIFLE FROM ONE OF THE
GUARDS, SHE BASHES FLASH ON THE
BACK OF THE HEAD.



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.



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.



WE'RE GOING WITH YOU, CHEE! WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT!





FORCED TO TAKE THEM WITH HER, CHEE WASTES NO TIME IN EXPOSING THEM AS "SPIES" WHEN THEY REACH VANGO!



FLASH STARTS TO SPEAK, BUT IS CUT SHORT BY VANGO. "CHEE HAS TOLD ME ENOUGH ABOUT YOU. I'LL USE MY OWN METHODS OF GAINING CONFIRMATION."

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



YOU CALLED ME, SIR?

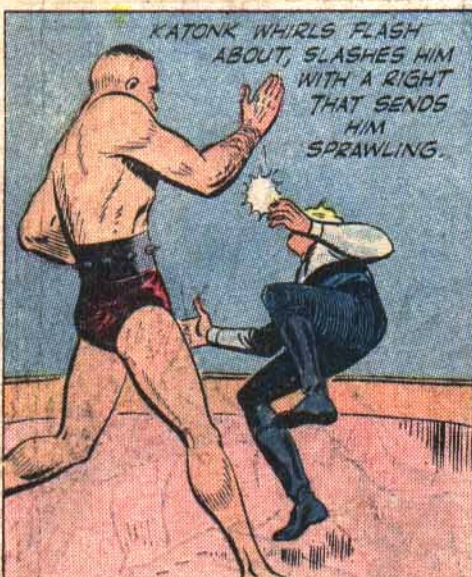
YES, KATONK, THIS MAN NEEDS SOME VIOLENT EXERCISE!



YOU, MY DEAR, MAY SIT NEAR ME DURING THIS SPECTACLE!

ONE MOMENT, VANGO—

YOU HEARD WHAT HE SAID, THEY'LL WATCH US!



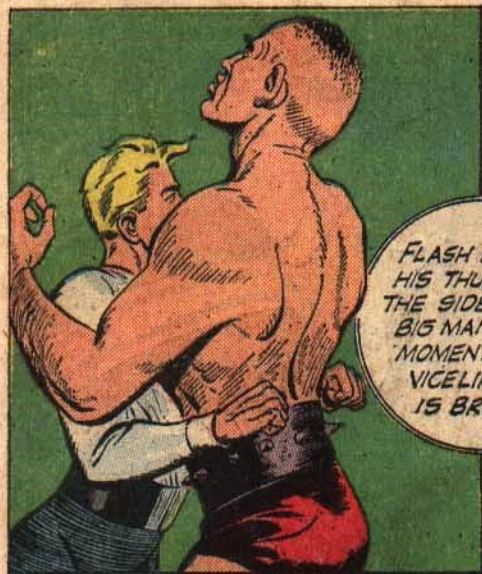
KATONK WHIRLS FLASH ABOUT, SLASHES HIM WITH A RIGHT THAT SENDS HIM SPRAWLING.



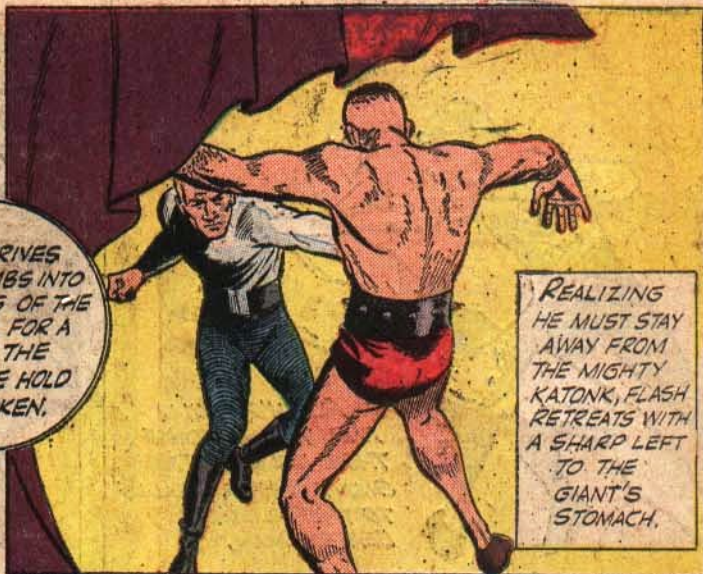
NOW, YOUNG LADY, WHILE YOUR CHAMPION IS SUBJECTED TO THE TORMENT OF KATONK YOU WILL TALK, AND HONESTLY, OR KATONK WILL BECOME MOST BRUTAL!



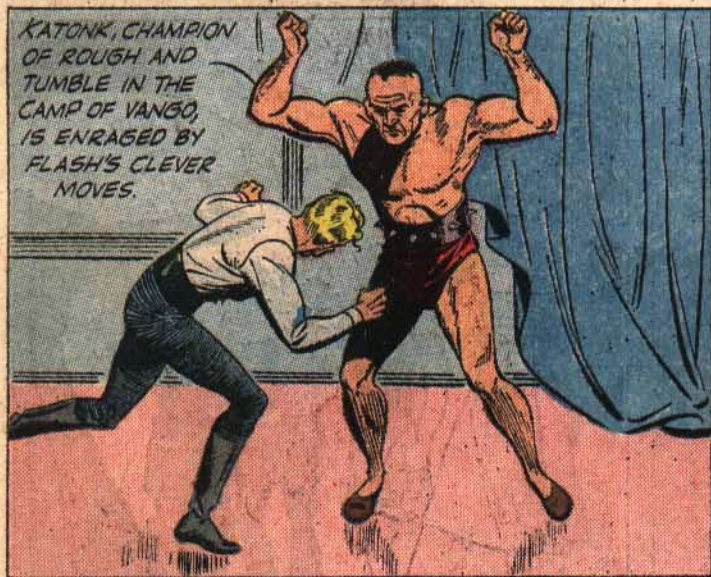
AS VANGO PASSES DALE TO TALK, KATONK PULLS FLASH FROM THE FLOOR, CLASPS HIM IN HIS ARMS AND PINS HIM AGAINST THE STUDDED POINTS OF HIS BELT.



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



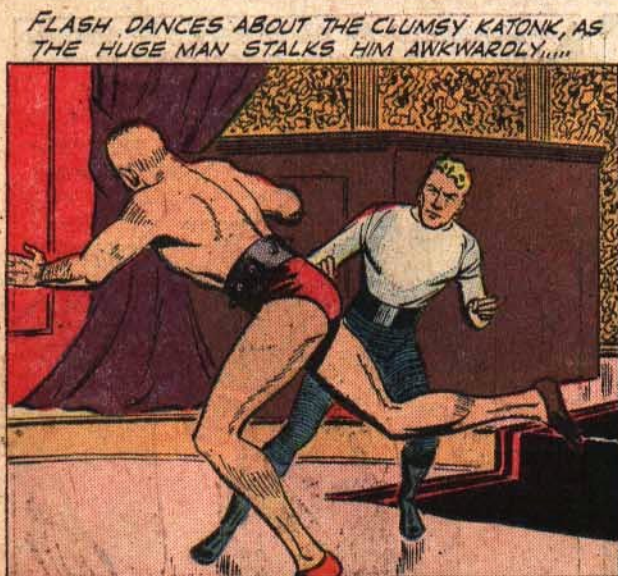
REALIZING HE MUST STAY AWAY FROM THE MIGHTY KATONK, FLASH RETREATS WITH A SHARP LEFT TO THE GIANT'S STOMACH.



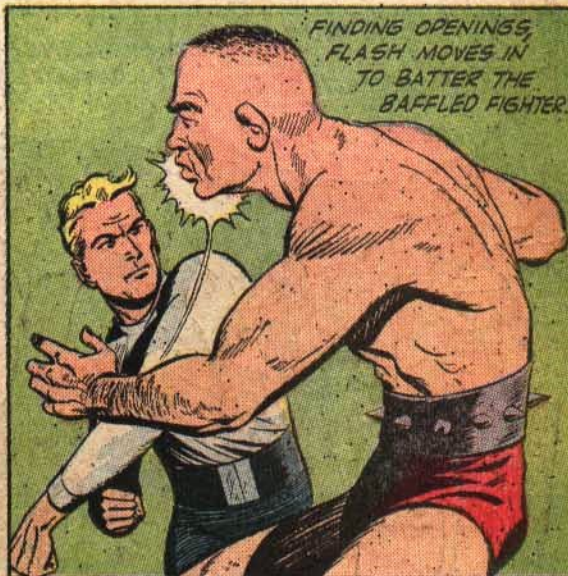
KATONK, CHAMPION OF ROUGH AND TUMBLE IN THE CAMP OF VANGO, IS ENRAGED BY FLASH'S CLEVER MOVES.



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.



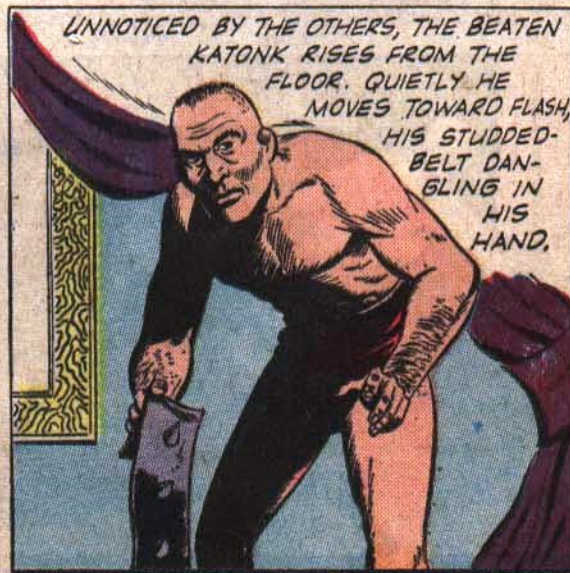
WHAT A TOUCHING SCENE!
THE GREAT VANGO GIVES
HAND AND HEART TO
HIS ENEMIES.

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 STUDD-
BELL DANG-
LING IN
HIS HAND.

KATONK TAPS FLASH ON THE SHOULDER...

THIS BELT BELONGS TO YOU NOW. YOU ARE OPTO'S NEW CHAMP.

WHAT? I COULD NOT ACCEPT IT. I AM NOT A NATIVE OF OPTO. YOU KEEP IT. YOU WEAR IT WELL.



I'M GLAD YOU SAID THAT, FLASH. IT WAS ADDED PROOF OF WHAT I HAVE LEARNED ABOUT YOU.

SUPPOSE YOU EXPLAIN THAT, WHILE I TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SHOWER BATH YOU OFFERED ME!



CHEE CAME TO ME, PROCLAIMING YOU WERE AN AGENT OF OPTIK. MENTION OF YOUR NAME STRUCK A FAMILIAR NOTE WITH ME AND I CHECKED MY FILES. I KNEW YOU COULDN'T BE AN ENEMY.

THEN WHY DID YOU SIC KATONK ON ME?



I WANTED TO SEE IF YOU WERE ALL YOUR PUBLICITY CLAIMED YOU TO BE. YOU ARE!

OKAY! WHY DOES OPTIK LIST YOU AS AN OUTLAW?



BECAUSE I AM TRYING TO LIBERATE THE PEOPLE OF OPTO, AND IN SO DOING, RESTORE THEIR SIGHT. OPTIK HAS KEPT THE PEOPLE SUBJECTED UNTO HIM. HE HAS BANISHED ALL DOCTORS WHO HAVE EXPERIMENTED WITH SIGHT RESTORATION.

DON'T TELL ME YOU ARE A DOCTOR.



NO, I'M AN EXAMPLE PATIENT, THE SAME AS ALL MY ARMY. WE RESCUED AND HAVE PROTECTED ONE DOCTOR, WHO IS NOW THE HEAD OF OUR MEDICAL DEPARTMENT.

WHY ARE THE PEOPLE OF OPTO WITHOUT SIGHT?



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.

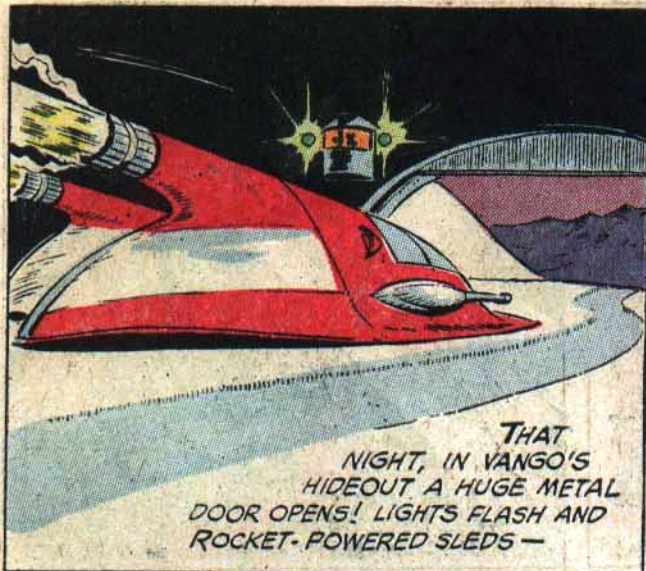
DO I HAVE TO FIGHT YOU TOO? I THOUGHT WE'D PROVEN WE AREN'T SPIES!



SAVE YOUR FIGHTING FOR OPTIK! WE GO TONIGHT!

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

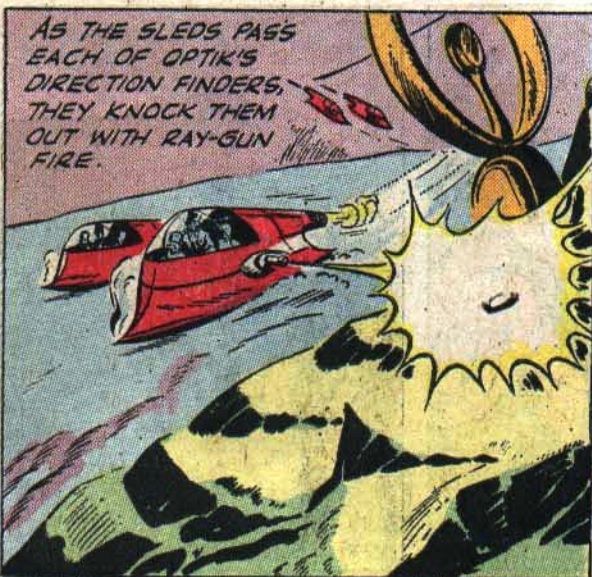




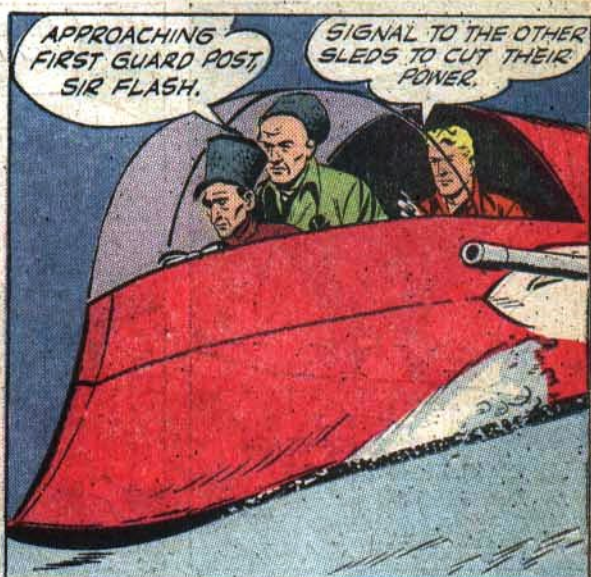
THAT
NIGHT, IN VANGO'S
HIDEOUT A HUGE METAL
DOOR OPENS! LIGHTS FLASH AND
ROCKET-POWERED SLEDS —



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

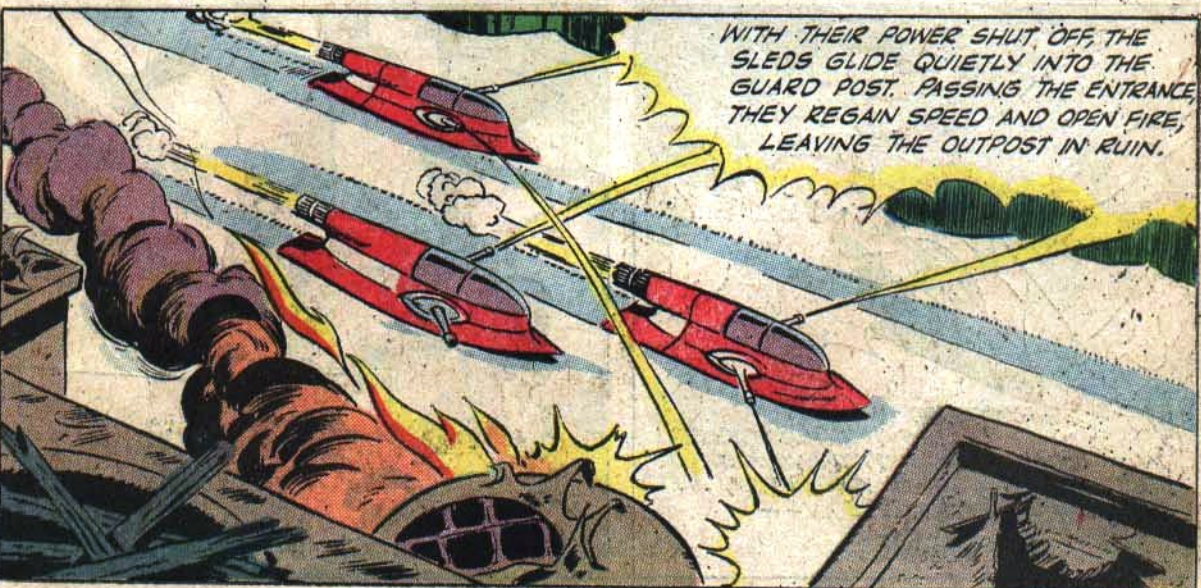


AS THE SLEDS PASS
EACH OF OPTIK'S
DIRECTION FINDERS,
THEY KNOCK THEM
OUT WITH RAY-GUN
FIRE.



APPROACHING
FIRST GUARD POST,
SIR FLASH.

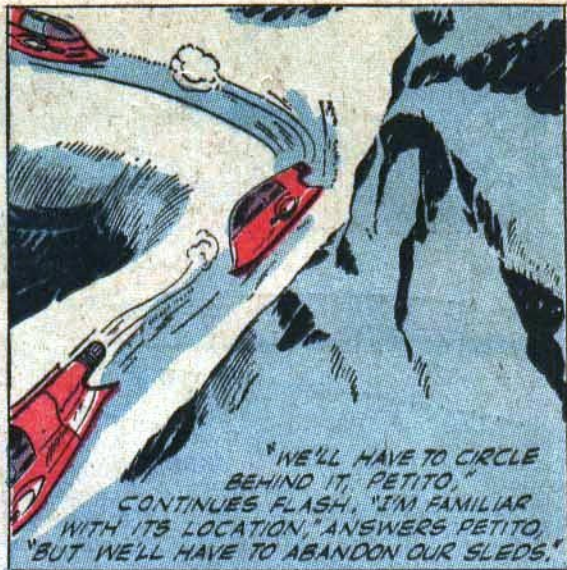
SIGNAL TO THE OTHER
SLEDS TO CUT THEIR
POWER.



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.

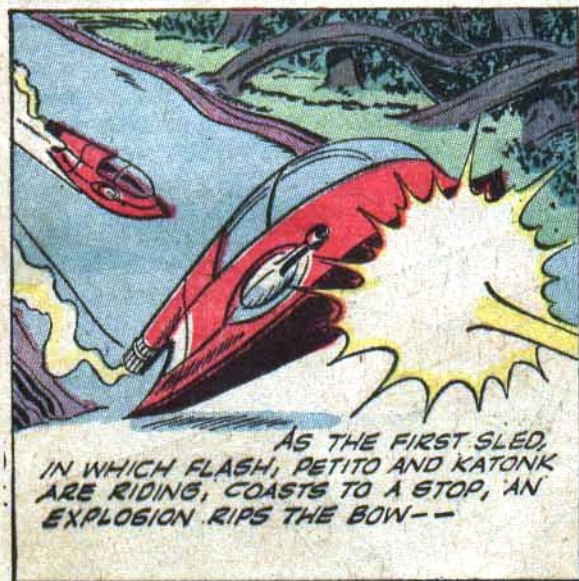


WHAT ARE YOU DOING, PETITO?

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.



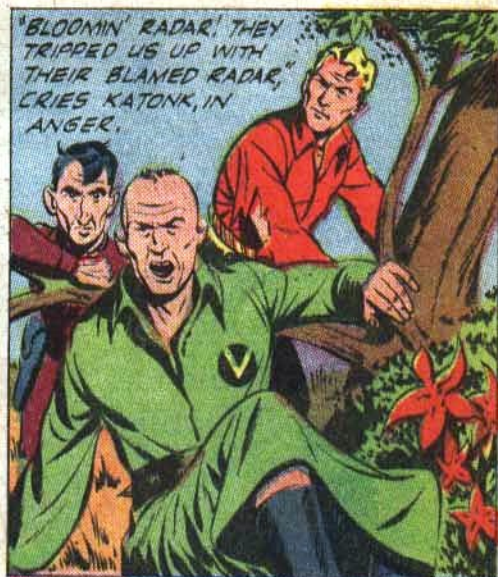
AS THE FIRST SLED, IN WHICH FLASH, PETITO AND KATONK ARE RIDING, COASTS TO A STOP, AN EXPLOSION RIPS THE BOW--



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.

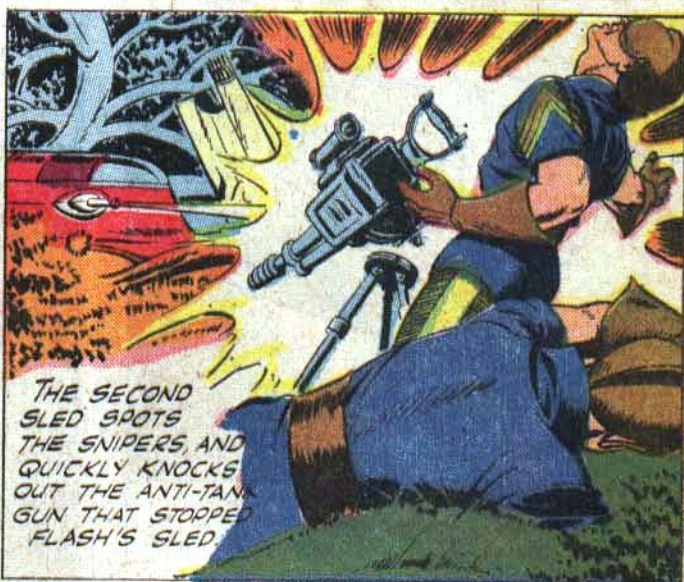


'BLOOMIN' RADAR! THEY TRIPPED US UP WITH THEIR BLAMED RADAR,' CRIES KATONK, IN ANGER.



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.

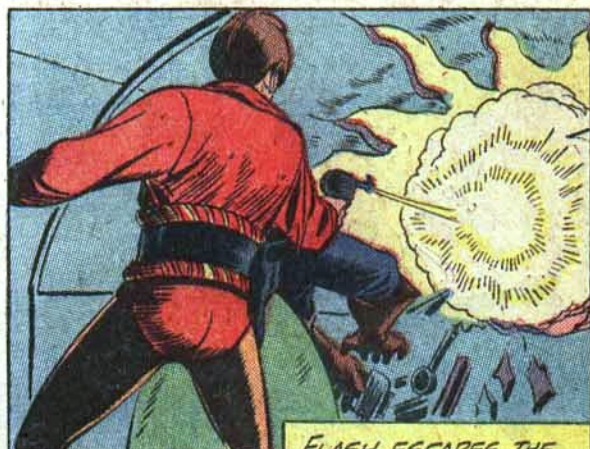


FLASH FINDS THE HATCH SEALED FROM WITHIN. RAISING HIS PISTOL, HE BLASTS THE COVER OPEN



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.

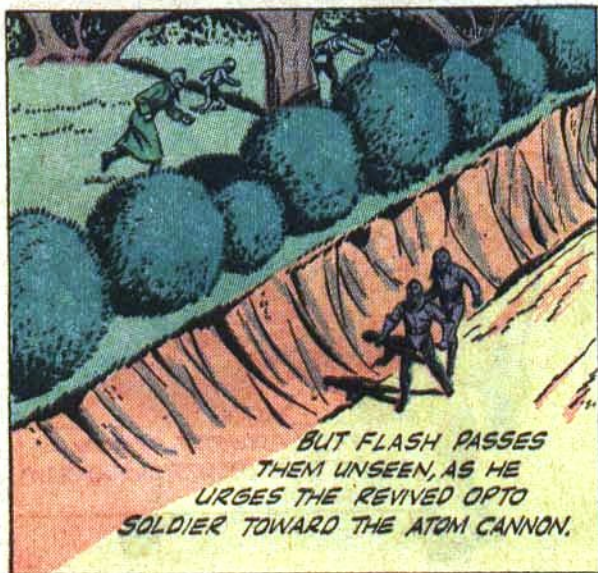
MEANWHILE, KATONK AND PETITO LEAD VANGOS'S
SOLDIERS AGAINST THE ATOM CANNON. THEY
ENTER THROUGH THE AMMUNITION ROOM.



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



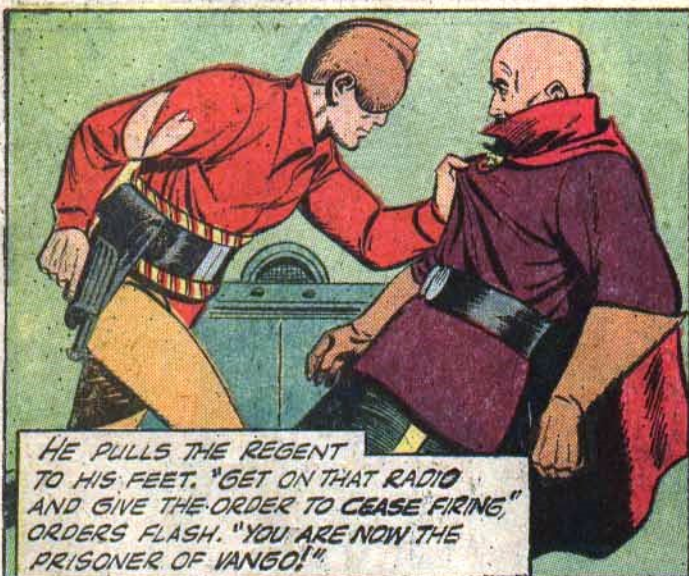
HE LEANS OVER TO DRAW A PISTOL FROM THE DESK. FLASH SLASHES THE BUTT OF HIS WEAPON AGAINST THE SOLDIER'S HEAD —



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!



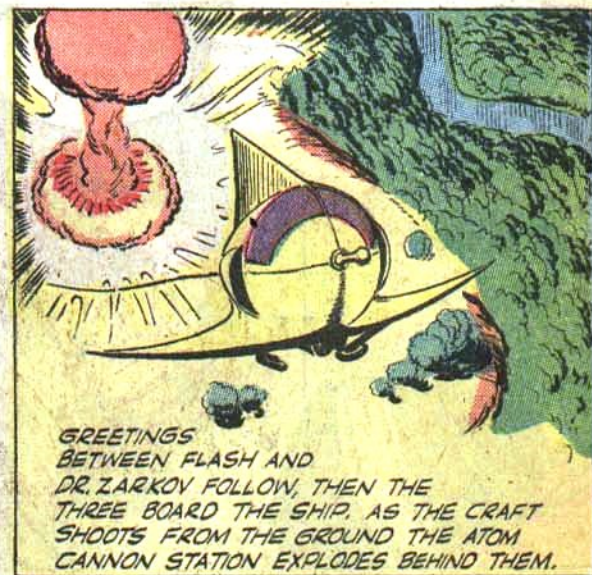
MEANWHILE, IN AN ATOM-JET SKYSHIP, NEARING OPTO, DR. ZARKOV WATCHES THE IMAGES ON HIS TELEVIEW-A-SCOPE.



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.



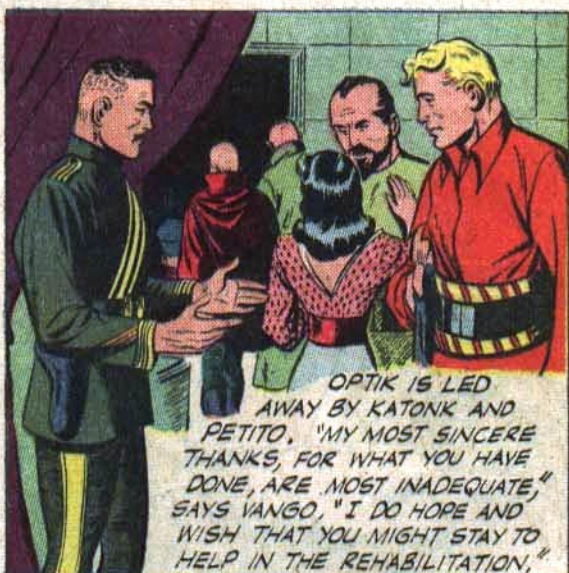
WITH LANDING GEAR RETRACTED, THE SKYSHIP LANDS ON THE SNOW NEAR THE LAUNCHING RAMP FOR VANGO'S POWER SLEDS.



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!"

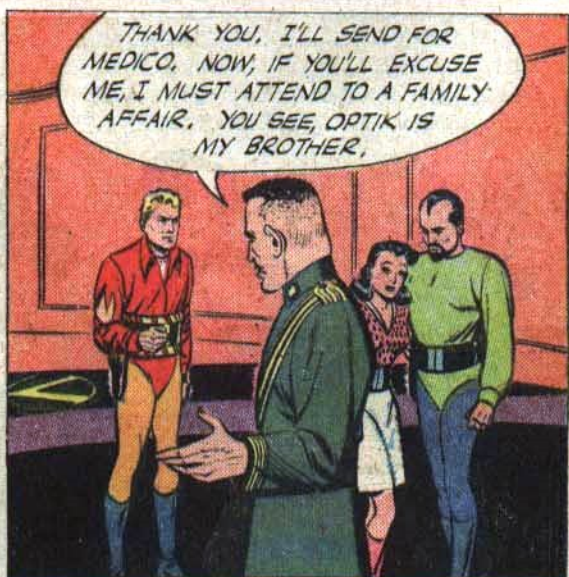


OPTIK IS LED AWAY BY KATONK AND PETITO. "MY MOST SINCERE THANKS, FOR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE, ARE MOST INADEQUATE," SAYS VANGO. "I DO HOPE AND WISH THAT YOU MIGHT STAY TO HELP IN THE REHABILITATION."



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.



VANGO ENTERS A SMALL ROOM IN WHICH OPTIK, PETITO, AND KATONK WAIT, WALKS TO A CABINET, REMOVES TWO SWORDS AND TOSSES ONE TO OPTIK. "DEFEND YOURSELF, BROTHER," HE SAYS.



"NO! NO, VANGO! I WAS WRONG! I'M YOUR BROTHER, BUT YOU HAVE GREATER WISDOM, SURELY, YOU CAN FIND FORGIVENESS FOR MY FOLLY," SAYS OPTIK.



I CAN'T FIGHT A COWARD WHO REFUSES TO RAISE A SWORD IN HIS DEFENSE, BETTER THAT I LEAVE YOU TO THE PEOPLE OF OPTO. LOCK HIM UP, KATONK!

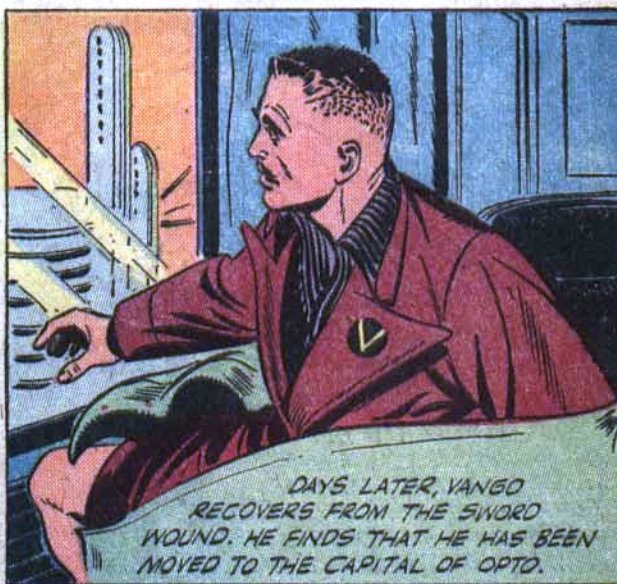
AS VANGO TURNS, OPTIK REACHES FOR THE SWORD.



BEFORE KATONK CAN STOP HIM, HE HURLS THE BLADE AT VANGO....



KATONK GRABS THE TREACHEROUS OPTIK IN THE STEEL-LIKE GRIP OF HIS HANDS. SECONDS LATER, THE LIMP FORM OF THE REGENT SLIDES TO THE FLOOR.



DAYS LATER, VANGO RECOVERS FROM THE SWORD WOUND. HE FINDS THAT HE HAS BEEN MOVED TO THE CAPITAL OF OPTO.

VANGO ALSO FINDS THAT THE PALACE HAS BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO A LARGE HOSPITAL....



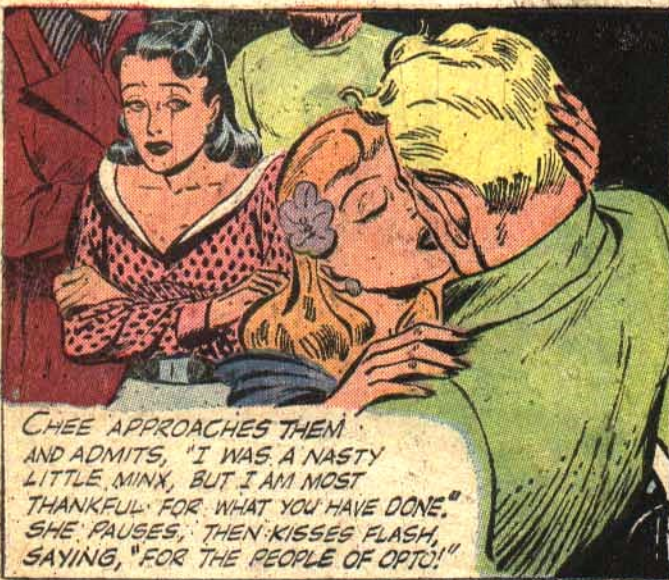
WHERE MEDICO AND DR. ZARKOV HAVE TREATED MANY THOUSANDS OF OPTO'S PEOPLE AND HAVE GIVEN TO THOSE PEOPLE A NEW WORLD — THROUGH SIGHT.



AS HE WALKS ONTO THE BALCONY, HE REALIZES THAT THE PEOPLE OF OPTO HAVE BEGUN A FESTIVAL SEASON. AT LAST HAPPINESS HAS COME TO OPTO.



FINDING FLASH READY TO LEAVE, HE APOLOGIZES FOR HIS INABILITY TO EXPRESS HIS DEEP GRATITUDE...



CHEE APPROACHES THEM AND ADMITS, "I WAS A NASTY LITTLE MINX, BUT I AM MOST THANKFUL FOR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE." SHE PAUSES, THEN KISSES FLASH, SAYING, "FOR THE PEOPLE OF OPTO!"



THEN FLASH, DALE, AND DR. ZARKOV TAKE THEIR LEAVE OF OPTO AND SET COURSE FOR MONGO. DALE MURMURS, "THAT DESIGNING CHEE, KISSING YOU ON BEHALF OF OPTO — MAY I LAUGH NOW, FLASH?"



KEYS OF KNOWLEDGE

WILD ANIMALS of AFRICA

NUMBER 14

SECRETARY BIRD

This is one of a series of information features in Gold Key Comics. Collect the whole series for useful knowledge.



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The scientific name of this relative of the eagle is *Sagittarius*, the Latin name for archer, which the bird also resembles.



Ranchers in South Africa often tame these birds and keep them around to keep the range free of dangerous snakes and rodents.



The secretary bird gets its name from the long plumes on its head which look like quill pens that once adorned secretaries.



These birds live on lizards, insects and young birds, but are best known for their ability in destroying any poisonous snakes.



The secretary bird ranges all over the African Veldt. Although it can fly well, it spends most of its time on the ground.

FLASH GORDON

PIN-UP

