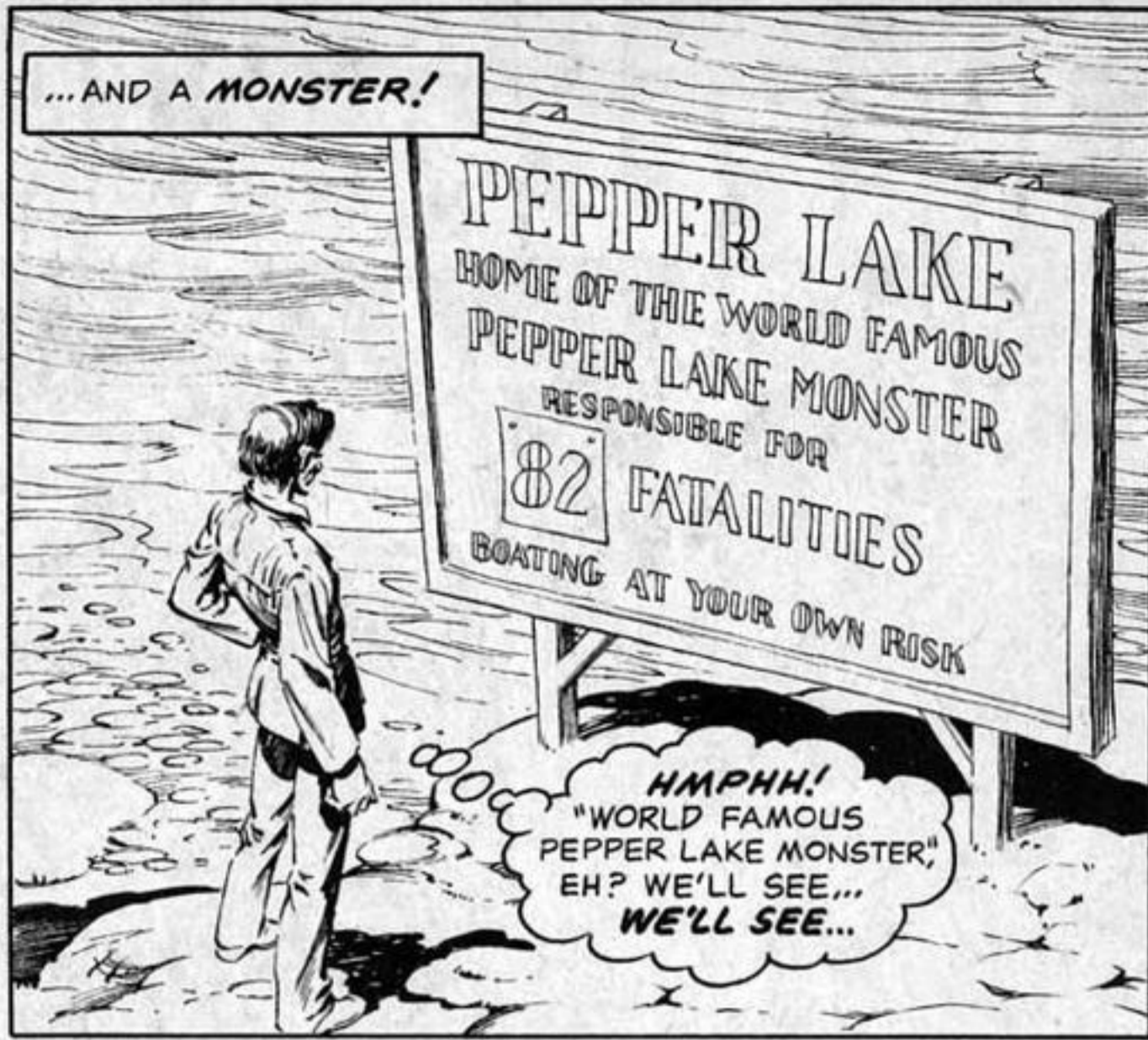


# Prologue...

WHEN GEORGE SUMMERS ARRIVED AT PEPPER LAKE HE WAS MORE THAN MILDLY APPALLED! **SMALL** WAS ONE THING... **THIS** WAS **RIDICULOUS**. PEPPER LAKE HAD **NOTHING**... NOTHING BUT A LAKE...

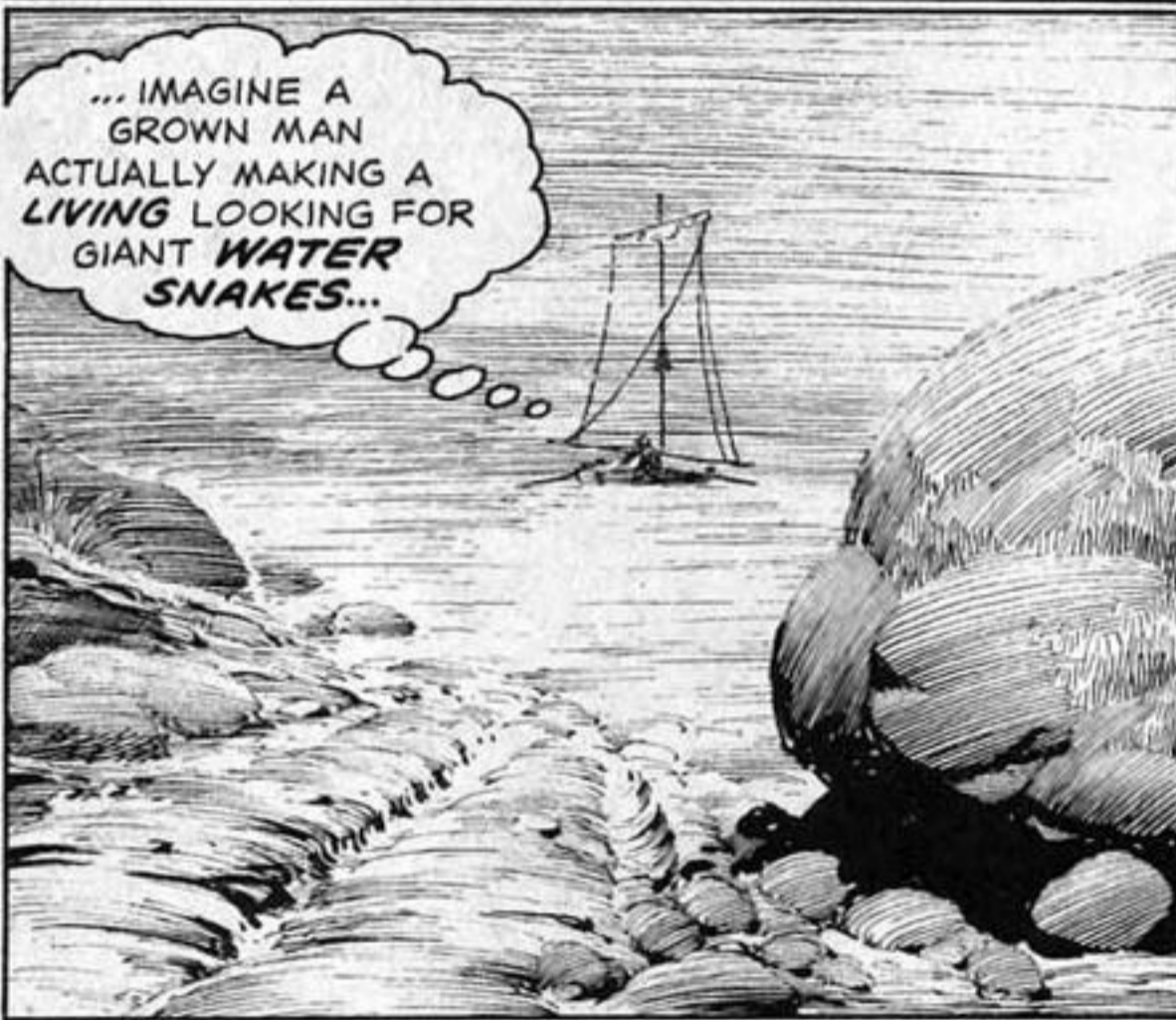


...AND A MONSTER!



SUMMERS WAS BEING PAID BY A LARGE UNIVERSITY TO INVESTIGATE CLAIMS OF "SEA MONSTERS." PEPPER LAKE WAS THE LAST STOP ON HIS LIST...

...IMAGINE A GROWN MAN ACTUALLY MAKING A LIVING LOOKING FOR GIANT WATER SNAKES...



LOOKS LIKE ANOTHER **BUST**... BEEN OUT HERE FOR **HOURS** AND **NOTHING**...



ONE MOMENT THE LAKE WAS SMOOTH AS GLASS. THE **NEXT**...

**MY GOD!** A **STORM!** IT'S **NO!** WAIT! SOMETHING... **MOVING** DOWN THERE... IT'S...



# THE PEPPER LAKE MONSTER





I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING SO **BIG!** IT'S CREATING A **GALE** JUST BY SURFACING!



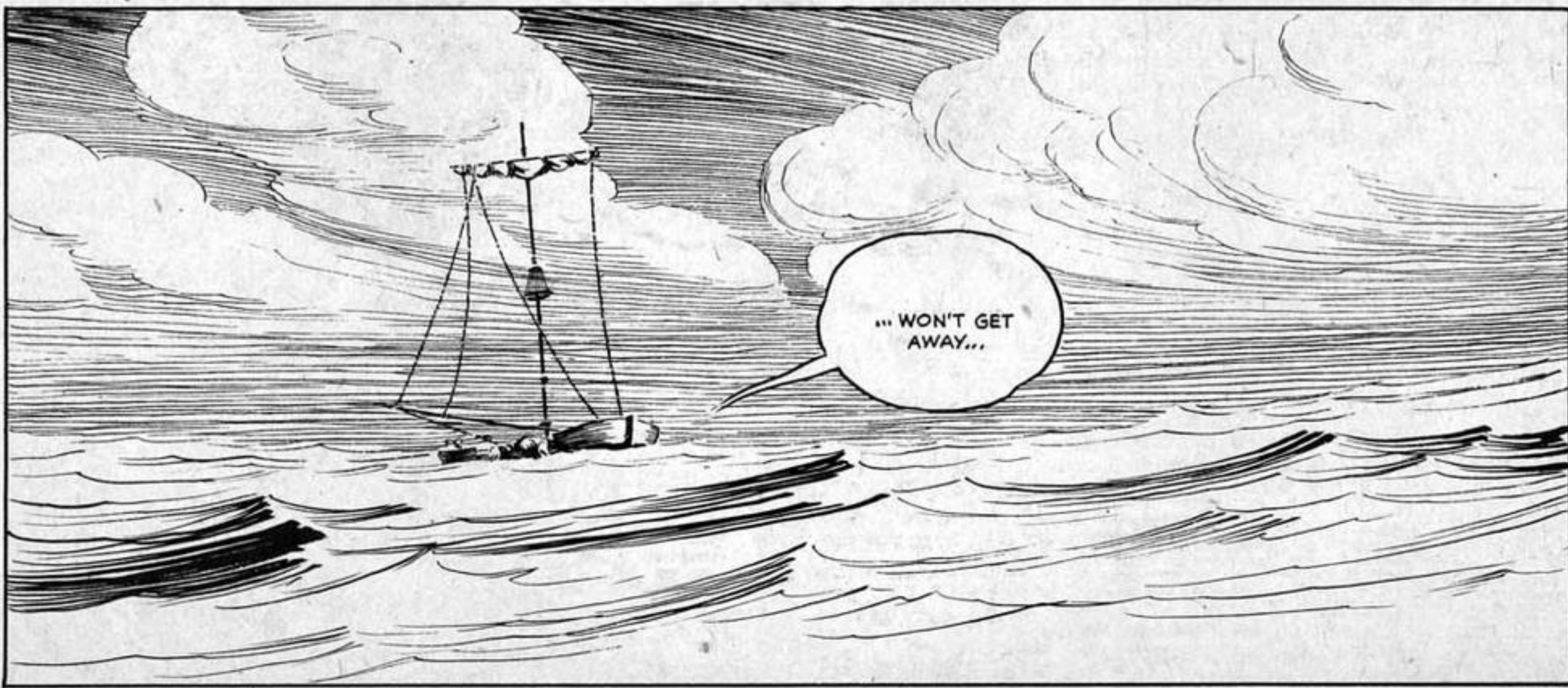
I'VE FINALLY **FOUND ONE!** AFTER ALL THESE **YEARS...** AND IT'S--



**NO!** IT'S SWIMMING **AWAY...** I'LL NOT LOSE YOU **NOW!** COME **BACK!**



I'LL **GET YOU, YOU HEAR?!** IF IT TAKES **FOREVER...** YOU WON'T GET **AWAY...**



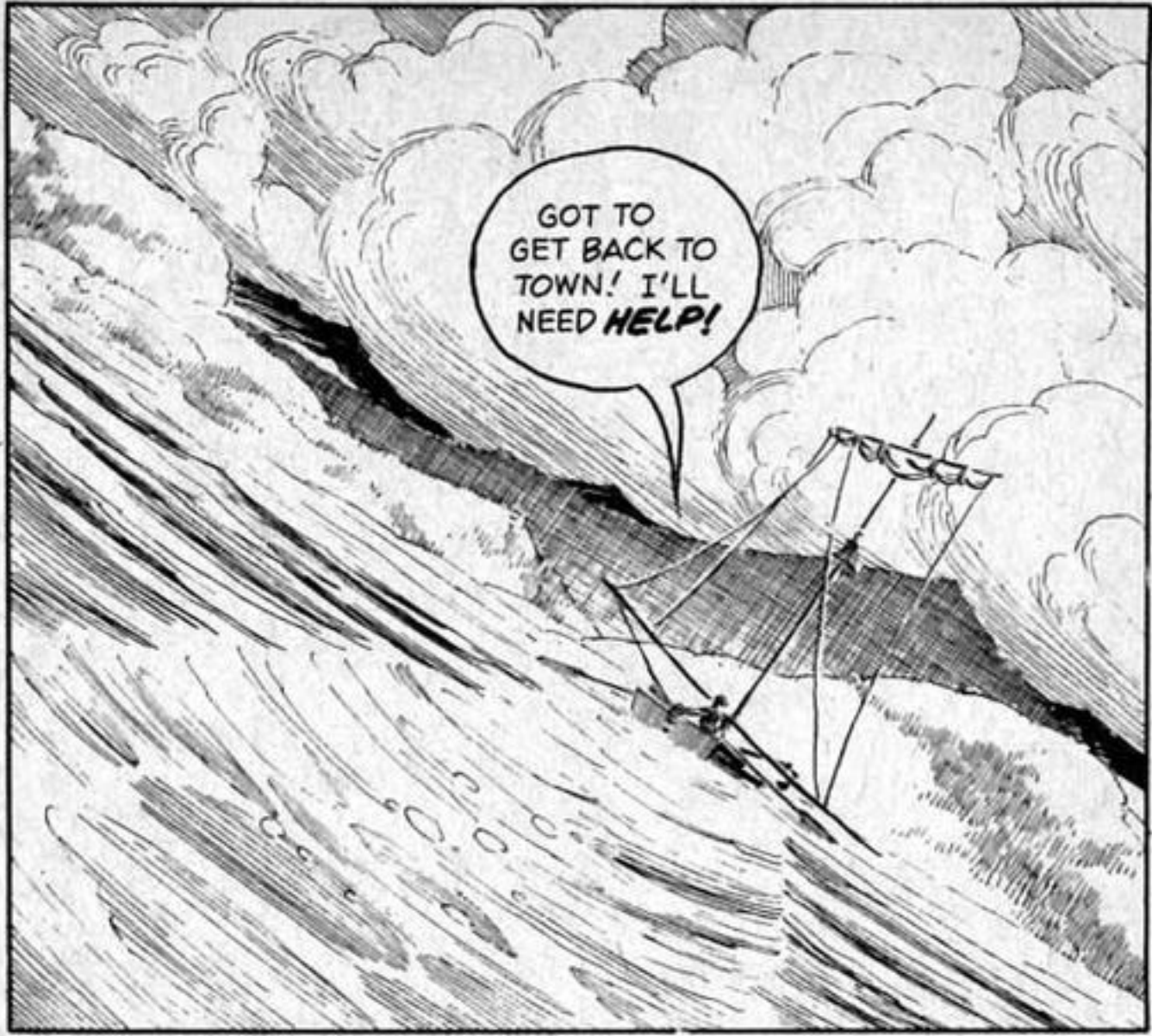
... WON'T GET **AWAY...**

EXHAUSTED, SUMMERS SLEPT SOUNDLY TILL THE FOLLOWING MORNING...

GOOD LORD!  
THE MONSTER...  
IT WAS THERE LAST  
NIGHT! IT WAS  
REALLY THERE!



GOT TO  
GET BACK TO  
TOWN! I'LL  
NEED HELP!



...THAT ENTIRE DAY WAS SPENT IN FUTILE ATTEMPTS TO RAISE SOME INTEREST IN THE HUNT FOR THE SEA MONSTER...



YOU SAW  
THE MONSTER,  
EH? THAT'S  
NICE...



YES, I  
SAW HIM  
ONCE, YEARS  
AGO... BIG  
ISN'T HE?



CATCH THE  
MONSTER? WAL,  
YOU GO RIGHT  
AHEAD AN I'LL  
THANKEE FOR  
IT...

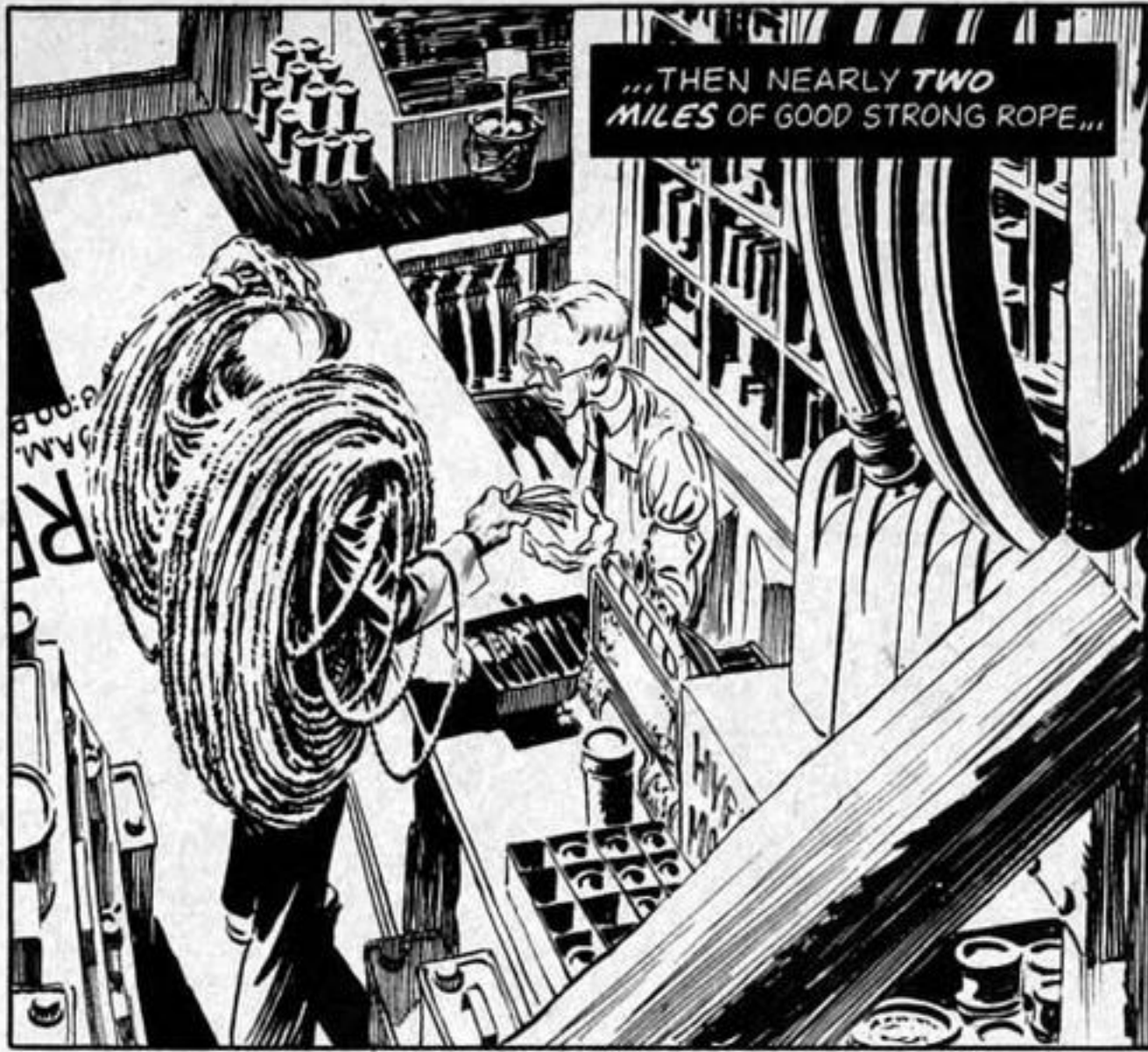
...MEBBE  
THEN FISHIN'LL  
BE BETTER...

WHEREVER HE WENT, HE WAS MET WITH WAVES OF ENTHUSIASTIC INDIFFERENCE! IT WAS A FRUSTRATED BUT ODDLY DETERMINED SUMMERS WHO WATCHED THE SUN SET OVER THE LAKE...



I MEAN TO  
CAPTURE THAT THING!  
AND IF I CAN'T GET ANY  
HELP FROM THESE  
LACONIC DOLTS, THEN  
DAMMIT, I'LL DO  
IT MYSELF!

EARLY THE NEXT DAY, SUMMERS BEGAN TO EXHAUST HIS ALREADY DWINDLING EXPENSE ACCOUNT. FIRST HE BOUGHT SEVERAL HUNDRED POUNDS OF HEAVY NET...



...THEN NEARLY TWO MILES OF GOOD STRONG ROPE...



THE FOURTH DAY WAS SPENT IN CUTTING DOWN TREES... AT TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS EACH...



THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED WERE HARD AND LONG! HE HAD TO TRANSPORT HIS MATERIALS TO THE LAKE SHORE...

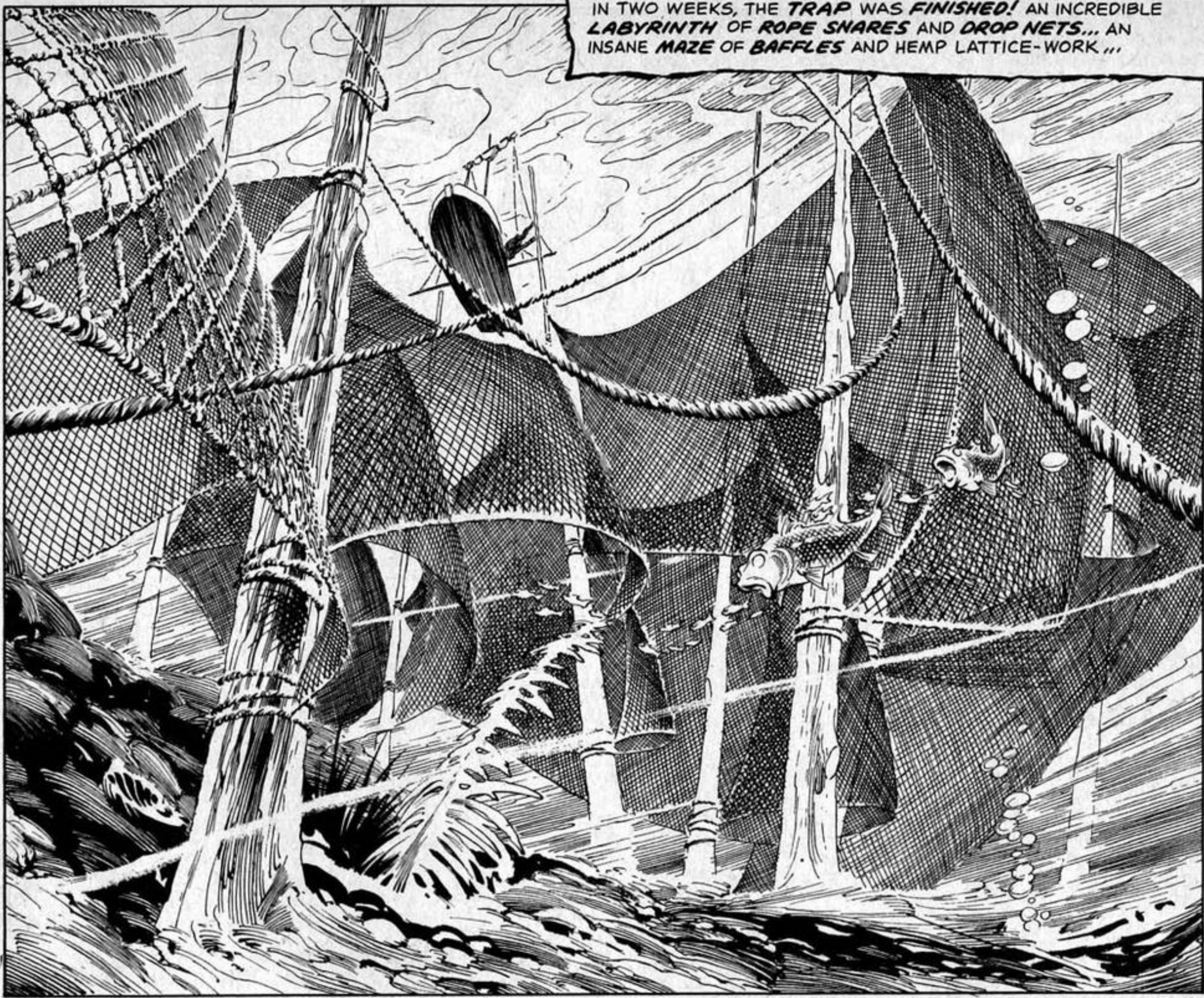


...FASTEN THE ROPES AND NETS TO THE POLES...



...THEN, DRIVE THE POLES INTO THE SOFT BOTTOM MUD IN THE SHALLOWS!

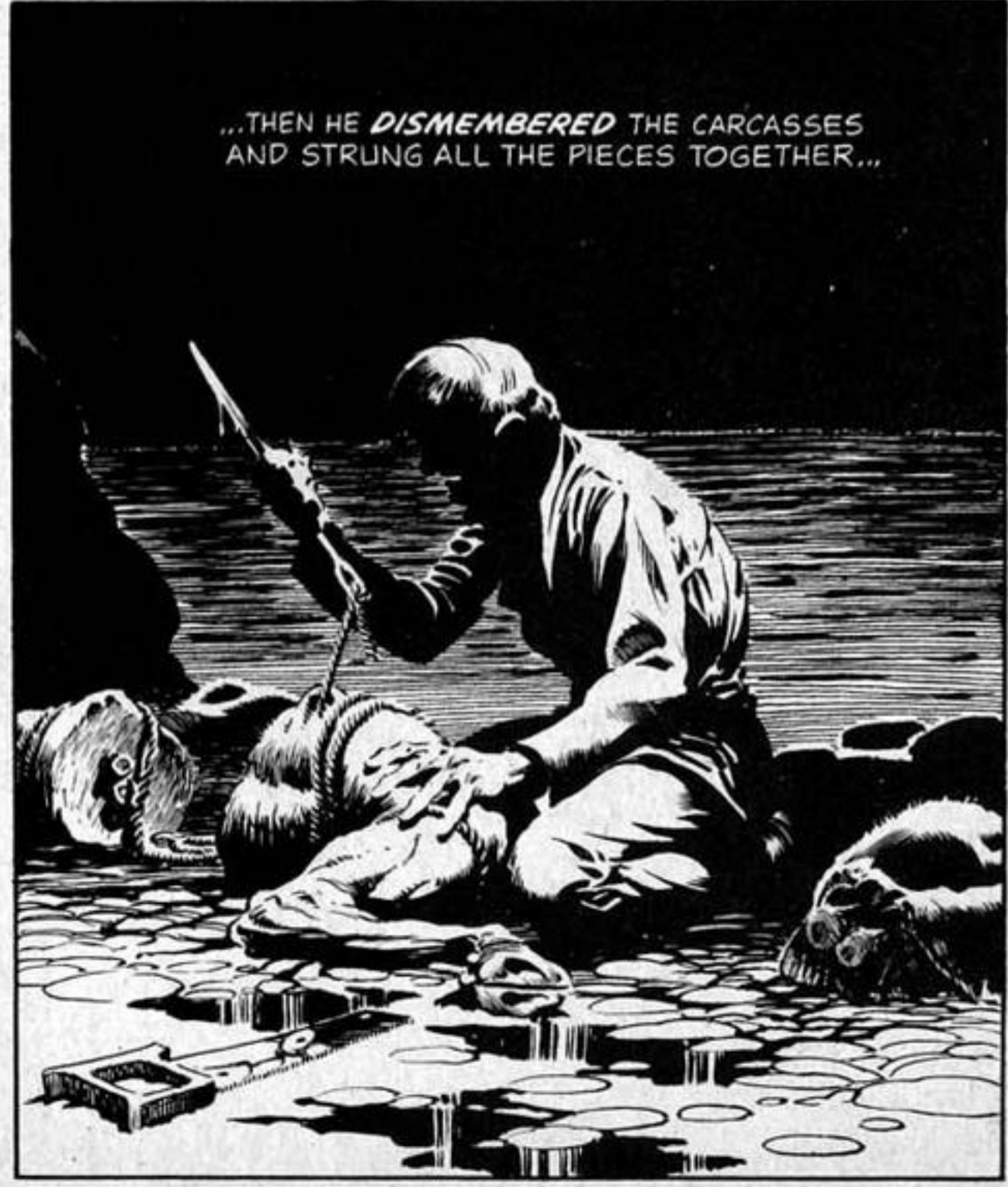
IN TWO WEEKS, THE *TRAP* WAS FINISHED! AN INCREDIBLE *LABYRINTH* OF ROPE *SNARES* AND *DROP NETS*,... AN *INSANE MAZE* OF *BAFFLES* AND *HEMP LATTICE-WORK*,...



UNDER COVER OF A CLEAR, MOONLESS NIGHT, SUMMERS STOLE INTO A NEARBY PASTURE AND *KILLED* A HALF-DOZEN *COWS*,...



...THEN HE *DISMEMBERED* THE CARCASSES AND STRUNG ALL THE PIECES TOGETHER,...




A black and white illustration showing a man in a small boat on a sea of barrels. The barrels are arranged in a line, and the man is rowing. The background shows a dark, stormy sea with a small boat in the distance.

HE FLOATED THE BAIT ON A LINE OF EMPTY **BARRELS**, THEN ROWED BACK TO SHORE...

A black and white illustration showing a man on a rocky shore. He is looking out at the sea, which is filled with barrels. The scene is dark and atmospheric.

... AND FELL INTO A SLEEP OF UTTER **EXHAUSTION**.

A black and white illustration showing a man in a boat, looking shocked and disoriented. He is surrounded by barrels and the sea. The scene is dark and dramatic.

TOWARDS DAWN, HE WAS JARRED AWAKE BY THE SOUNDS OF CRASHING **WAVES** AND UNEARTHLY **ROARS**...

WH-WHAT THE... THE **TRAP!**

A large black and white illustration showing a man on a rocky shore. He is looking at a large, dark, hairy animal that is partially submerged in the water. The animal has large, curved horns and is surrounded by barrels. The scene is dark and dramatic.

**GOOD LORD!**

...THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY STOOD ON THE SHORE OF PEPPER LAKE THAT MORNING... **SILENT**... NOT A **WHISPER** FROM THE SLACK, OPEN, DISBELIEVING MOUTHS...



I CAUGHT IT!  
I ACTUALLY  
CAUGHT  
IT!

THE TRAP  
WORKED!  
IT'S FAST AND  
IT CAN'T GET  
AWAY... IT'S  
ALL MINE!!



...NOW THAT YOU'VE  
GOT IT, WHAT DO  
YOU FIX TO DO  
WITH IT?



DO...  
WITH THE  
MONSTER?  
OH, I'VE GOT  
BIG PLANS  
FOR HIM!



I'LL EXHIBIT IT! HAVE A SPECIAL TANK CONSTRUCTED AND MOUNTED ON FLAT-BEDS AND TAKE IT ALL OVER THE WORLD!



THINK WHAT THIS MEANS TO SCIENCE! WHY, SCIENTISTS AND LEARNED MEN WILL COME FROM EVERY COUNTRY IN THE WORLD TO SEE AND STUDY IT!!!



IT WILL MAKE ME RICH... AND IMMORTAL! IT WILL STAND FOREVER AS A MONUMENT TO ME... ME! GEORGE SUMMERS! THE MAN WHO CAUGHT A SEA MONSTER!



THE PEOPLE OF PEPPER LAKE MOVED **FORWARD**, RAISED THEIR **STONES** AND THEIR **CLUBS** AND BROUGHT THEM **DOWN** UPON GEORGE SUMMERS... AGAIN AND **AGAIN** TILL HE LAY ON THE ROCKY BEACH AND THE EDGE OF THE LAKE RAN **RED** WITH HIS SPILLED **BLOOD**...!



THEN THEY **CUT** THE ROPES AND **TORE** THE NETS AND **FREED** THE MONSTER...

...AND WENT BACK **HOME**...



IT SURELY IS A **SHAME** ABOUT THAT YOUNG MAN!

TERRIBLE... TERRIBLE...!



ONE **GOOD** THING ABOUT IT, THOUGH...

OH?



...EVERYTIME THERE'S ANOTHER **DEATH**, BUSINESS PICKS UP...!